Better Together: Integrating Attendance and Behavior
Moderator

Cecelia Leong
Vice President of Programs
Attendance Works
1. Welcome and Overview
   Hedy Chang, Attendance Works
   Jennifer Freeman, Center on PBIS

2. Integrating Attendance and Behavior at the District Level
   Elizabeth McNally, Columbus City Schools

3. Integrating Attendance and Behavior at the School Level
   Shari Straffon, Port Huron Schools

4. Questions and Answers

5. Resources
Who is in the audience?

- District
- Elementary
- Middle
- High school
- State
- Regional
- Other (type in chat)
Presenters

Jennifer Freeman
Center on PBIS
Associate Professor
University of Connecticut

Hedy Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works
Why better together?

- The scale of the attendance crisis calls for teamwork
- Maximize effectiveness and efficiency - fewer teams, fewer meetings
- Problem solve based on multiple sources of data (for intervention planning and continuous improvement)
- Many contributing factors of chronic absenteeism are already directly addressed with PBIS
- Improving attendance allows more time to support student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs.
- Shifts focus from punitive measures to instruction and support
- Focus on systems to ensure fidelity and sustainable implementation
Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason**.

Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).
### Average Daily Attendance (ADA)
- School level measure (not student level)
- Notices aggregate attendance at certain point in time (e.g., half-days, holidays, bad weather)
- Masks individual student chronic absences

### Truancy
- Counts ONLY unexcused absences
- Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

### Chronic Absence
- Counts ALL absences (excused, unexcused, and suspensions)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and the benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family and student engagement

Improving Attendance Matters

- More likely to dropout of high school
- High School
- Middle School
- 3rd Grade
- Inability to read on grade level
- Middle School
- Lower achievement
- PK–1st Grade
- Chronic absence
- 3rd Grade

Chronic absence leads to Inability to read on grade level, which results in Lower achievement and ultimately More likely to dropout of high school.
The number of chronically absent students grew from 8,095,132 to 14,660,261.

State data from 2022–23 indicate rates remain high.
Interactive Map of Chronic Absence in U.S. School Districts: 2021-22

Interactive Map
https://edu-dsi.shinyapps.io/chronic_absence/

Who are chronically absent students?

2021-22 Chronically Absent Students by Demographic Background

- Native: 5,219,980 (36%)
- Asian: 393,550 (3%)
- Black: 2,898,919 (20%)
- Hispanic: 5,076,377 (35%)
- Multi-racial: 84,530 (0%)
- Pacific Islander: 205,275 (1%)
- White: 723,979 (5%)

Chronically absent students are from all backgrounds. But some groups are more affected.
When a Student Misses School, the Impact Ripples

66% of students attend a school with 20% or more absenteeism (SY 2021-22) versus 25% prior to the pandemic.
The vast majority of schools experience high chronic absence. The largest increase has occurred among elementary schools. Nearly 20,000 have extreme chronic absence.

For more information, see: https://www.attendanceworks.org/rising-tide-of-chronic-absence-challenges-schools/
2. The percentage of schools with high (20–29 percent of students) and extreme (30 percent or more of students) levels of chronic absence more than tripled during the pandemic.
Reducing chronic absence requires addressing underlying causes of chronic absence including challenges worsened or created by the pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Aversion</th>
<th>Disengagement</th>
<th>Misconceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Chronic and acute illness</td>
<td>• Struggling academically and/or behaviorally</td>
<td>• Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction</td>
<td>• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family responsibilities or home situation</td>
<td>• Unwelcoming school climate</td>
<td>• Bored</td>
<td>• Missing 2 days per month doesn’t affect learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trauma</td>
<td>• Social and peer challenges</td>
<td>• No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)</td>
<td>• Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor transportation</td>
<td>• Anxiety</td>
<td>• Lack of enrichment opportunities</td>
<td>• Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing and food insecurity</td>
<td>• Biased disciplinary and suspension practices</td>
<td>• Lack of academic and behavioral support</td>
<td>• Attendance only matters in the older grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inequitable access to needed services</td>
<td>• Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations</td>
<td>• Failure to earn credits</td>
<td>• Suspensions don’t count as absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• System involvement</td>
<td>• Caregivers had negative educational experiences</td>
<td>• Need to work conflicts with being in high school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of predictable schedules for learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of access to tech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High levels of absence reflect an erosion in positive conditions for learning
Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance

- **Tier 1** Universal Prevention
- **Tier 2** Early Intervention
- **Tier 3** Intensive Intervention

Students Missing 20% or More

Students Missing 10% - 19%

All Students and Families

All Students and Families

Foundational Supports Which Promote Positive Conditions for Learning

https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/
The fundamental purpose of PBIS is to make schools more effective, efficient and equitable learning environments.

Creating Positive Conditions for Learning
PBIS is...

**Framework** for enhancing adoption & implementation of

**Continuum** of evidence-based interventions to achieve

Academically & behaviorally important **outcomes** for

**All** students
Critical Features of PBIS

- Systems
- Equity
- Practices

Data

Outcomes
PBIS supports Attendance Outcomes

Improved Student Outcomes
academic achievement
(Angus & Nelson, 2021; Horner et al., 2009; Lassen et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2002)
prosocial behavior
(Metzler et al., 2001; Nelson et al., 2002)
attendance
(Flannery et al., 2020; Freeman et al., 2015)
emotional regulation
(Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Leaf, 2012)
reduced bullying behaviors
(Ross & Horner, 2009; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012)
decreased rates of drug/alcohol use
(Bastable et al., 2015; Bradshaw et al., 2012)
social & academic outcomes for SWDs
(Lewis, 2017; Tobin, Horner, Vincent, & Swain-Bradway, 2012)

Reduced Exclusionary Discipline
office discipline referrals
(Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2012; Bradshaw et al., 2021*
Elrod et al., 2022; Flannery et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2015; Horner et al., 2005; Horner et al., 2009; Metzler et al., 2001; Nelson et al., 2002; Solomon et al., 2012)
suspensions
(Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Freeman et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2018; Gage et al., 2019; Nelson, 1996; Nelson et al., 2002; Solomon et al., 2012)
restraint and seclusion
(Reynolds et al., 2016; Simonsen, Britton, & Young, 2010)
racial inequities
(Fox et al., 2021; Gion et al., 2022; McIntosh et al., 2018; McIntosh et al., 2021a; McIntosh et al., 2021b; Mukdrew & Miller, 2021; Payne-Simmons, 2021; Swain-Bradway et al., 2019)
racial inequities

Improved Teacher Outcomes
teacher efficacy & well-being
(Kelm & McIntosh, 2012; Ross & Horner, 2006; Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012)
teacher-student relationships
(Condliffe et al., 2022)
student engagement & instructional time
(Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007; Condliffe et al., 2022; Flannery et al., 2020)
school culture & organizational health
(Bradshaw et al., 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2009; McIntosh et al., 2021; Meng et al., 2016)
climatic & safety
(Elrod et al., 2022; Horner et al., 2009; McIntosh et al., 2021)

* identifies research conducted in high schools
Build a Continuum of Supports

• **Direct skill-based instruction**
  - Transportation systems
  - Job application process
  - Study skills
  - Self-management skills
  - Problem solving skills

• **Family Support**
  - Increased communication
  - Establishing positive relationships (regular positive calls for at risk students)
  - Case management support

• **Incentive based strategies**
  - Token economies
  - Group contingencies
  - Monetary incentives

• **Mentoring**
  - Check and Connect
  - Success mentors

Many of these practices are already a part of your PBIS implementation.
### Barriers
- Promote wellness (e.g., hand washing, school cleaning procedures, nutrition)
- Remove barriers (e.g., transportation)
- Clear procedures for preventing and handling harassment and bullying
- Positive, predictable safe school climate
- Intentional focus on relationships
- School-wide attendance incentives
- Information about importance of attendance
- Promote family engagement and wellness and remove barriers for specific student groups or areas of the community
- Small group skills support
- Mentorship and friendship supports
- Intensify procedures for monitoring and addressing harassment and bullying.
- Small group incentive systems
- Mentorship and friendship supports
- Clarify connection between curriculum and “real life”
- Individualized problem solving and coordination with family and community agencies

### Aversion
- Consider causes of absenteeism when building your continuum of supports

### Disengagement / Misconceptions
- Information about importance of attendance
Build a Continuum of Supports

• Start with what you are already doing!
• Consider “causes of absenteeism”
• Need for match between reason (function) and intervention increases as the severity of the problem increases
Use Data to Guide Intervention

- What percent of students are experiencing attendance problems at each level?
- What day of the week or month are the most problematic?
- What time periods are the most problematic?
- What grade levels or classes have the highest absence rates?
- What student sub-groups are most affected?
- Are attendance problems clustered in specific neighborhoods?
Audience Poll #2

How many of you have teams addressing:

- PBIS
- Attendance
- Combined PBIS and attendance
- School improvement
- Other (type in chat)
Presenter

Elizabeth McNally, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Director
Whole Child Supports
Columbus City Schools, Ohio
Columbus City Schools: At A Glance

**The Mission of Columbus City Schools:**
Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

**CCS Is Ohio’s LARGEST School District**
44,981 Students in 113 Schools
Employing Over 9,000 Teachers And Staff

**Our People**
- 65.6% Teachers Hold A Master's Degree
- 15:1 Student-to-Teacher Ratio
- 120 Countries Represented by Our Student Population
- 41% Administrators • 45% Certified • 72% Classified
- % of Staff Who List Columbus as Their City of Primary Address

**Financials**
Our Seven-Member Board Of Education Oversees A $1.6 Billion Budget

**Spending Per Pupil:**
- $21,209
- Administration: $2,864
- Building Operation: $4,456
- Instructional: $10,554
- Pupil Support: $2,095
- Staff Support: $4,456

**May 2023 5-Year Forecast**
- Cash Balance Deficit Of $67 Million Projected By FY27
- Proposed Solution: Over $1.2 Billion By End Of FY23

Six District High Schools Ranked In The Top 500 In Ohio

- Columbus Alternative High School (28)
- Centennial High School (220)
- Fort Hayes Arts and Academics High School (310)
- Whetstone High School (391)
- Columbus International High School (426)
- Eastmoor Academy (499)
# District Attendance

## January 18, 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
<th>Moderate Chronic</th>
<th>Severe Chronic</th>
<th>ALL CHRONIC (moderate + severe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## January 18, 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
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<td>22.9%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ONE YEAR CHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
<th>Moderate Chronic</th>
<th>Severe Chronic</th>
<th>ALL CHRONIC (moderate + severe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>-3.9%</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
<td>-8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
<td>-3.4%</td>
<td>-8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>-3.0%</td>
<td>-5.7%</td>
<td>-8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
<td>-8.4%</td>
<td>-4.3%</td>
<td>-12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>-7.1%</td>
<td>-5.5%</td>
<td>-12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>-5.0%</td>
<td>-4.1%</td>
<td>-9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>-5.5%</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
<td>-10.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23-24 OSS by Month

6,154 OSS
21,677 Days
3,824 Students
As a PBIS team, having access to behavior data for your school or district is helpful—but knowing how to use it to drive change for your students is critical. To unpack your data and better understand how to take action, try looking at it through the lens of the Big 5:

- **What** behaviors are being reported most frequently?
- **Where** are these behaviors being reported?
- **When** are these behavior referrals happening?
- **Who** are the students, or groups of students, demonstrating these behaviors?
- **How often** are these behavior referrals occurring?
Where We Are and Where We Are Going

- Great strides in reducing chronic absenteeism
- Consistent progress in supporting our schools in understanding the connection between PBIS and absenteeism through ongoing PD and alignment of staff
- SY 2024–2025, looking forward to increasing Tier 1 climate and culture building strategies to support warm, welcoming learning environments leading to increased engagement and ultimately achievement
Shari Straffon, LMSW
Supervisor of Behavior Supports
Port Huron Schools, Michigan
Better Together
Integrating Behavior and Attendance

Shari Straffon, LMSW; Supervisor of Behavior Supports
Integrating Attendance and Behavior
Elementary Students K-5

• Start with Tier One Strategies
• Identify student attendance concerns early
• Move to Tier Two Intervention
• Data driven decisions
• Follow the two beliefs of classroom PBIS
• The power of relationships
• Identify barriers to school absences
Integrating Attendance and Behavior

• Check in upon entry to school; calendars
• Acknowledgement ticket for being on time and present in the “bucket” (group reward)
• Acknowledgement ticket from teacher when reach the classroom (individual reward)
• Weekly meetings with behavior interventionist in a community circle format to address barriers
• Regular contact with parents
• Data collection
Integrating Attendance and Behavior

Secondary: 6-12

- Start with Tier One Strategies
- Identify student attendance concerns early
- Move to Tier Two Strategies
- Follow two beliefs of classroom PBIS
- The power of relationships
- Identify the barriers to school attendance
Integrating Attendance and Behavior

- Growing number of virtual requests due to mental health concerns
- Power of Relationships with (any) school staff
- Check in System Check Out (hourly, daily, weekly)
- Identify and address barriers
- Behavior Intervention
- Teach circle of support/Self advocacy
# Daily Connect: Progress Report

**Student Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hour</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Learning Environments</th>
<th>Common Areas</th>
<th>Technology Devices</th>
<th>All Settings</th>
<th>Comments (items of concern and/or things to celebrate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
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<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CICO**

2 - Great    1 - Occasionally    0 - Try Again

Daily Goal: greater than 51 (70%)  Points Received: _____/16  _____%  Goal Met?  Y  N
## Mentoring: Progress Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Week of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Environments</th>
<th>Common Areas</th>
<th>Technology Devices</th>
<th>All Settings</th>
<th>Grades (Indicated number of classes passing and number or classes failing)</th>
<th>Comments (items of concern and/or things to celebrate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**
- 2 - Great
- 1 - Occasionally
- 0 - Try Again

**Daily Goal:** greater than 51 (70%)  
**Points Received:** _____/8 _____%  
**Goal Met?** Y N

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**Port Huron Schools**
Advocate Innovate Educate

www.phasd.us
Questions from the Audience
Key Resources

Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic Absenteeism

Improving Attendance in a Remote Learning Environment

Supporting Schools During and After Crisis
Interventions that can be found in the Attendance Playbook

**TIER I: Foundational Support and Schoolwide Prevention**
- Community Schools
- Engaging with Families
- Student-Teacher Relationships
- Relevant—and Culturally Relevant—Instruction
- Restorative Discipline Practices
- Summer Learning and Afterschool Strategies
- Positive Greetings at the Door
- Incentives
- Rethinking Recess
- Healthy School Buildings
- School-based Health Services
- Telehealth
- Free Meals for All
- School Buses and Public Transit
- A Safer Walk to School
- Laundry at School

**TIER II: Targeted Support**
- Early Warning Systems
- Targeted Home Visits
- Mentors and Tutors
- Targeted Youth Engagement
- Addressing Asthma
- Mental Health Support and School Refusal
- Students with Disabilities
- Immigrant Students

**TIER III: Intensive Support**
- Interagency Case Management
- Housing Insecurity
- Truancy

Attendance Playbook: [https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/](https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/)
Implementation Guide: [https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/](https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/)
Fill in your own 3 Tiers Worksheet


3 Tiers of Intervention: [https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/](https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/)

Adapted from format created by Nancy Erbstein, Associate Professor of Education in Residence, with the UC Davis Center for Regional Change and Sacramento City USD.

### Attendance Pyramid Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 3: Intensive Intervention</th>
<th>Tier 2: Early Intervention</th>
<th>Tier 1: Universal Prevention</th>
<th>Foundational Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Engagement</td>
<td>Positive Student Engagement</td>
<td>Behavioral and Mental Health</td>
<td>Physical Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>Extended Learning</td>
<td>Basic Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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How many students are in each group?

- Tier 3: __________
- Tier 2: __________
- Tier 1 and Foundational Supports: __________
Join the 2024 Attendance Awareness Campaign!

https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/contact/aam-updates/
Evaluation Survey

Please complete the webinar evaluation.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/better-together-march2024

Thank you for joining us today!