



Grand Rapids Public Schools

Attendance Community of Practice

Cohort II Session I



October 18, 2023

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Welcome & Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name, role and school
- ✓ Share who or what helped you show up to school even when it wasn't easy.



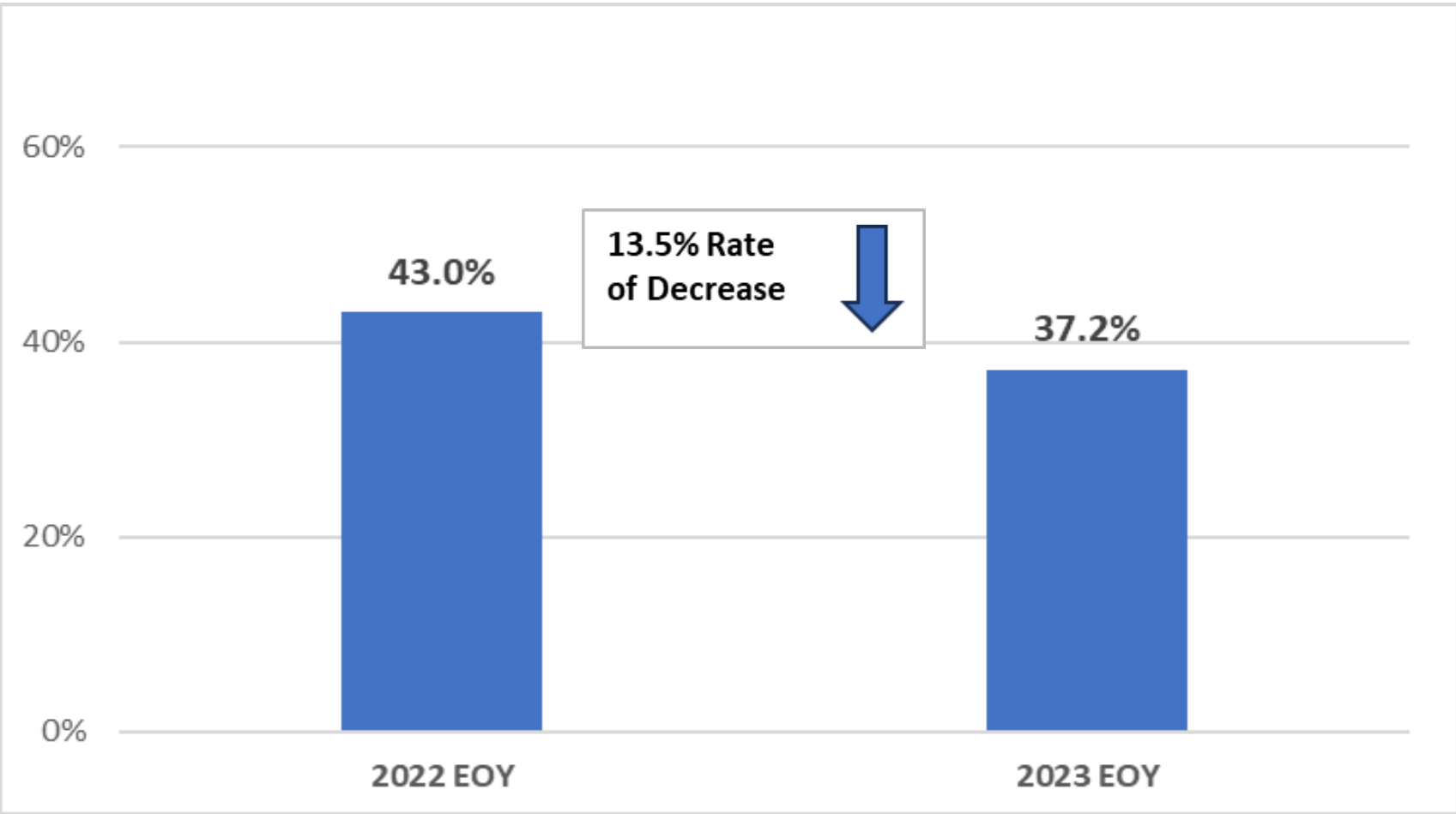
Why a Community of Practice?

Tackling chronic absence is complicated, requires:

- Re-orienting staff and family assumptions about attendance
- Ongoing analysis to understand patterns
- Planning multi-tiered strategies that emphasize prevention and early intervention
- Introducing evidence-based strategies and models
- Responding in real-time beginning with engagement and participation
- Maintaining peer support to sustain the change process

Decrease Chronic Absentee Rate in GRPS Community of Practice (CoP) Schools SY 2023-23

Scholars missing 10% or more of school





What are the Community of Practice (CoP) expectations?

- ✓ Attend CoP Sessions
- ✓ Organize a team that supports attendance
- ✓ Use information, tools, and ideas from sessions to inform site practice
- ✓ Share insights and lessons learned
- ✓ Participate in coaching calls between each CoP Session

GRPS Attendance Community of Practice 2023-24 SY

Session #1 October 18	Session #2 January	Session #3 Mid-March	End of Year Coaching and Planning
<p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered approach to attendance • Conditions for Learning • Tier 1 Interventions • Driving with data • Taking a team approach <p>Team Time: Part 1: Discuss Data Part 2: Plan foundational interventions for Fall</p> <p>Practice Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organize school team and schedule meeting dates ✓ Try a Foundational strategy 	<p>Team Sharing: Report on implemented Foundational & Tier 1 strategy</p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align interventions to Causes of Absence • Qualitative Data • Caring Conversations <p>Team Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Foundational Tier 1 interventions for Fall/Winter using Yearly Calendar <p>Practice Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Monitor chronic absence data ✓ Select and implement a Tier 1 intervention 	<p>Team Sharing: Insights about why students are missing school</p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review first semester data and focus on students at the cusp of chronic absence • Anticipate spring dips in attendance • Tier 2 Interventions <p>Team Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify additional tier 2 intervention to implement <p>Practice Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Try Tier 2 Intervention ✓ Work on Yearly Calendar (Spring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections what worked well this year? • Assess progress/continuous improvement • Address gaps in tiered interventions • Plan for Summer and Fall as part of Year Long Calendar

Coaching Calls

CoP Practice: try out one strategy, and report back on its practice

CoP Practice: try out one strategy, and report back on its practice

CoP Practice: try out one strategy, and report back on its practice



Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Overview of Chronic Absence
- III. Pathway for Change: Mindset Shift
- IV. Tiered Approach to Attendance
- V. Functions of a Team
- VI. Team Time: Patterns and Trends
- VII. Closing

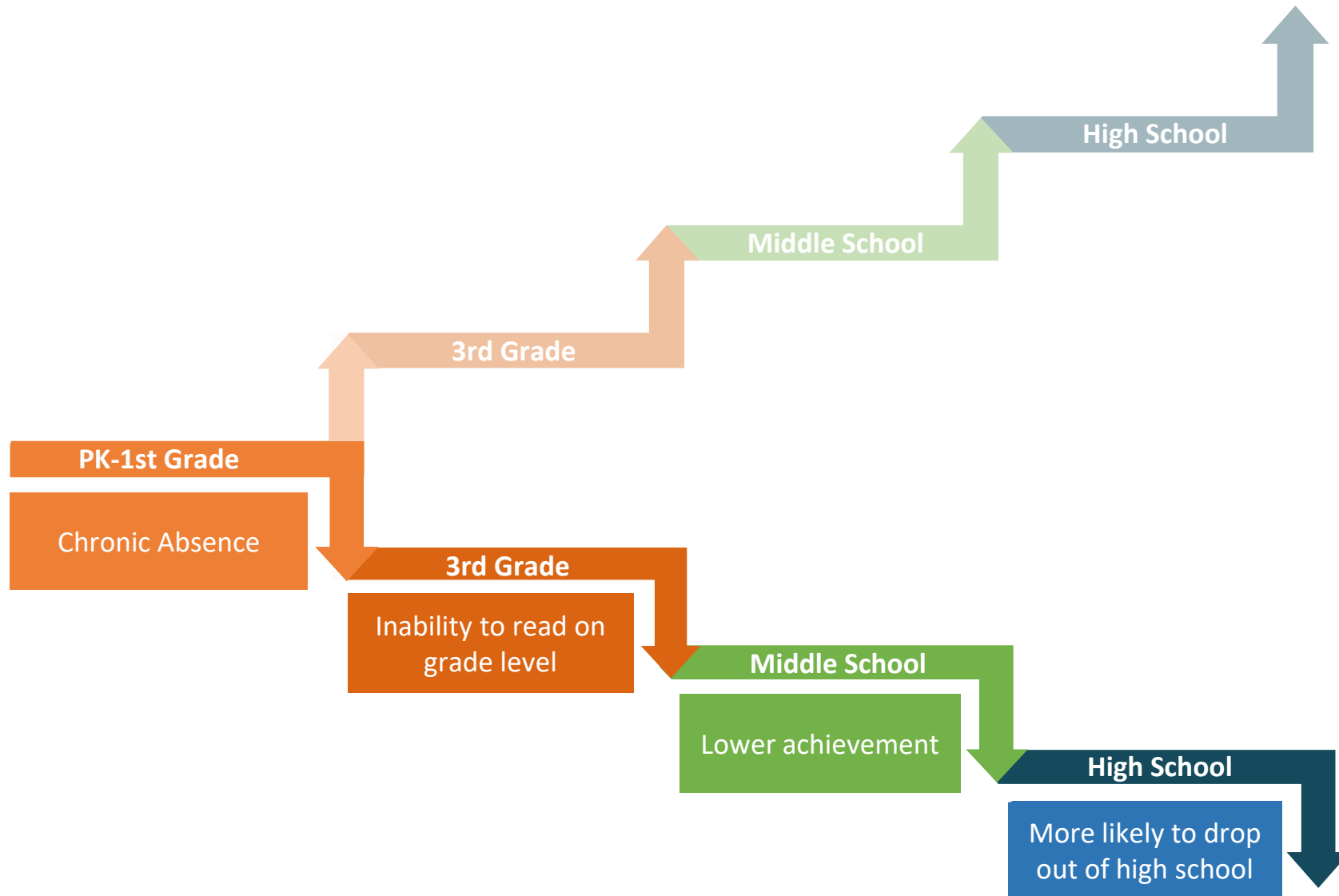
Overview of Chronic Absence



Why care about chronic absence?

Chronic absence is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational inequity

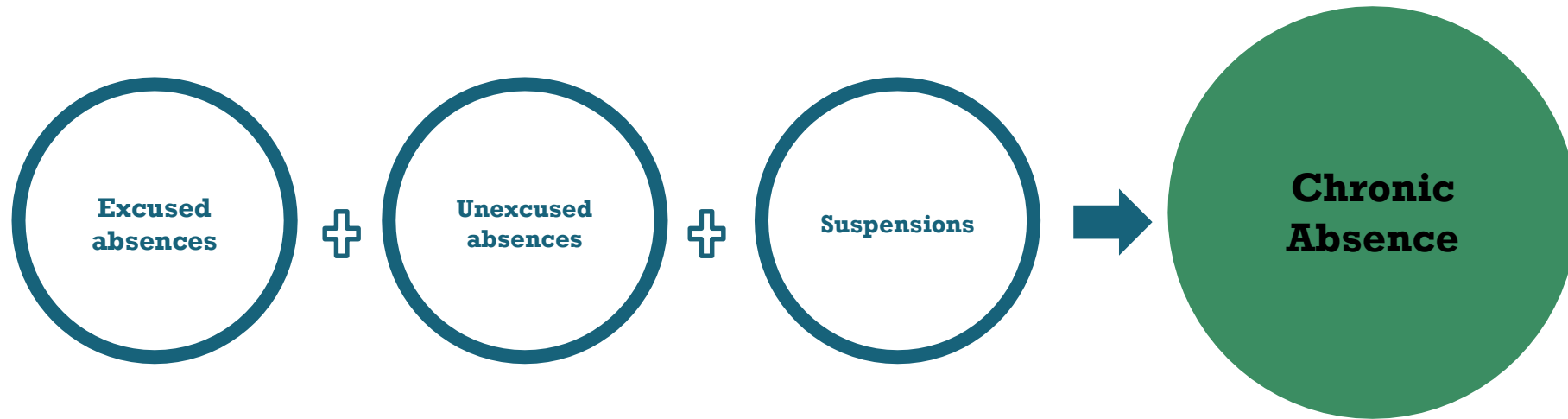
Improving Attendance Matters





What is chronic absence?

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).

What's the Difference between ADA, Chronic Absence & Truancy?

Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

- ▲ School level measure (*not student level*)
- ▲ Notice aggregate attendance at certain points 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 & suspensions*)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement

How “Unexcused” Label Can Affect Response

Response to “Excused”	Response to “Unexcused”
✓ Help with homework	✗ Denial of help or no credit for homework
✓ Make-up exams	✗ No make-up exams
✓ Home tutoring provided	✗ Denial of class credit
	✗ Removal from extracurricular activities
	✗ Send notices of truancy
	<i>*If unexcused absences accumulate despite earlier outreach from schools and districts, courts can:</i>
	➤ Fine students and parents
	➤ Require a community service program or parenting program
	➤ Charge parents with a misdemeanor



Pathway for Change

Mindset





Actionable
Data

Capacity

Strategies

Outcomes

Changing the Power Dynamics: Shifting to a Partnership Approach

Problem Focused	to	Partnership Focused
Approach family <i>only</i> to address a problem		Initial outreach focuses on building a relationship
One-way messaging to families		Start with listening to families; Find out hopes, dreams, assets, and needs
Focus <i>only</i> on barriers		Leverage student/family strengths to overcome challenges
Presume you have all the answers and know what is best for the family/student		Collaborate with families and encourage practices that build upon their assets and priorities

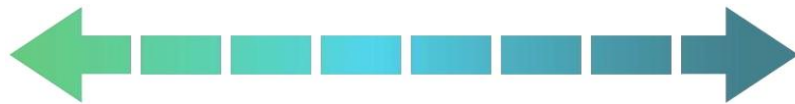
These concepts were adapted from this blog by the Search Institute: <https://blog.searchinstitute.org/six-shifts-better-family-engagement>

Small Group Discussion



Where on the spectrum between “blaming” and “partnering with families” on attendance does your school fall? What helps shift to partnership?

Blaming Families



Partnering With Families

Ground Rules

- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak
(and use the chat to express ideas)
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter “A” should facilitate.



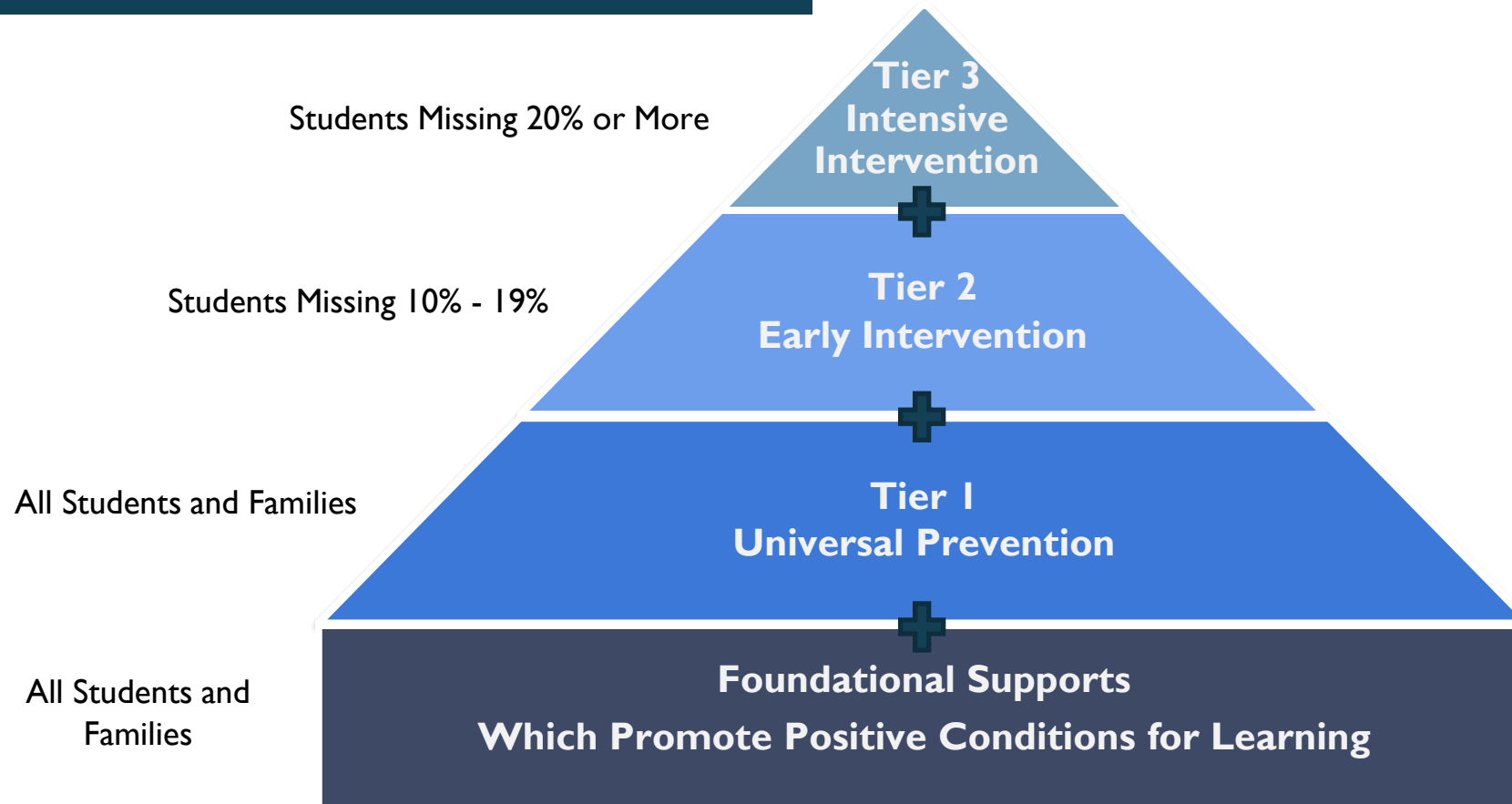
Large Group Discussion

**What ahas or insights did
you gain?**

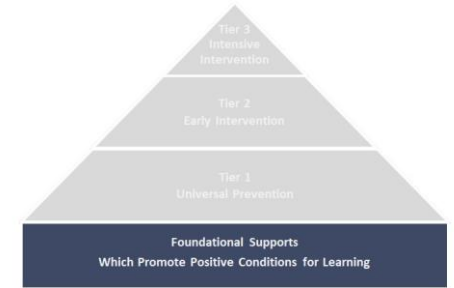
**The Key to Improving
Attendance is a Tiered Approach**



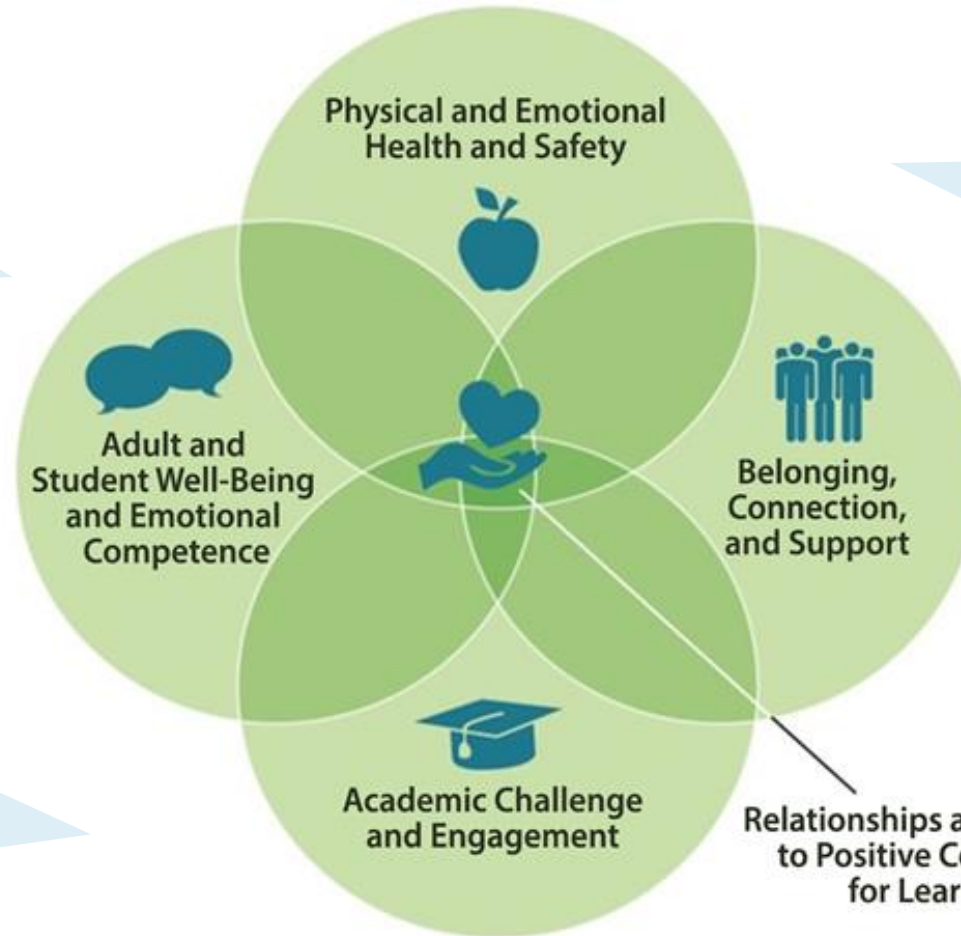
Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance



Positive Conditions for Learning Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly



- Restorative check-ins
- Access to health care & mental health supports
- Trauma-informed practice
- Staff self-care



- Healthy learning environments
- Welcoming, safe school climate
- Access to food & other basic needs
- Restorative circles

- Access to tech & internet
- Learning supports
- Project-based learning
- Credit recovery opportunities
- Internships/community service
- Alternative scheduling options

- Active student & family engagement
- Advisories/meetings to build community
- Enrichment & clubs
- Positive peer connections

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

how-to guide to relationship mapping

MAKING
CARING
COMMON
PROJECT



GRADES
K–12

IMPLEMENTED BY
School Administrators

TIME & RESOURCE INTENSITY
● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
low → high

CAPACITIES PROMOTED
Relationship-building; Student confidence; Shifting school norms

Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>

Key Elements

See all students at-a-glance.

See who is well-supported and who needs support by adults.

Involve *all* adults in relationship mapping.

Key Benefits

Connect all students to at least one school adult.

A *Relationship Map* lists *all* students in a school (or grade, team, etc.).

A *Relationship Map* allows adults in a school to have a quick and visual snapshot of students who are well supported and who most need support. Knowing this, adults can then strategize about how to best reach out to students who most need positive and supportive relationships with adults.

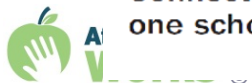
A *Relationship Map* is most effective if *all* adult stakeholders with a connection to students participate in its creation. This includes administrators, teachers, counselors, sports coaches, mentors, community partners, and other school staff.

A *Relationship Map* helps identify students who do not already have adult connections and provides opportunities for adults in school to build positive relationships with those students.

Have you mapped relationships at your school?

If so, what insights did you gain?

If not, how could you use this tool?



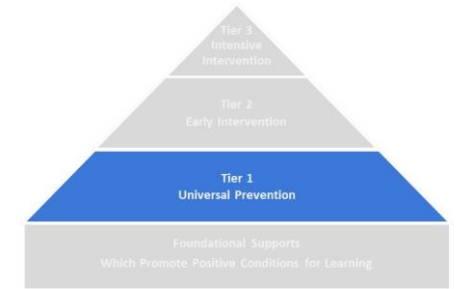
Re-establish Routines & Rituals

1. **Daily Wellness Check**
(e.g. Zones of regulation, Mood Meter)
2. **Whole Group Greeting**
(e.g. Go around Questions, Circle Games)
3. **Mindfulness/Grounding Exercises** (e.g. Collective Breaths)
4. **Greetings at the Door**
(e.g. Smile, Call person by name)



*Starting Each Class With a Warm Welcome: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/starting-each-class-warm-welcome>
Making Connections With Greetings at the Door: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/making-connections-greetings-door>*

Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports



- ❖ Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- ❖ Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- ❖ Personalized **positive** communication to families when students are absent
- ❖ Recognition of good and improved attendance
- ❖ Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood
- ❖ Connection to a caring adult in the school
- ❖ Every child and their family encouraged to develop a success plan that includes attention to attendance

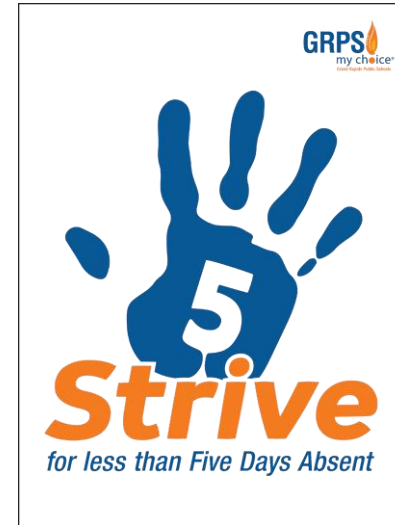
Strive for Less than Five - Update



1. Yard Sign



2. Stickers



4. Poster



3. Magnet



5. Bumper Sticker



6. Feather Flag

Creating a school calendar of interactive and fun activities to build community!

Find elementary [here](#) and secondary [here](#)

Start school with a R.E.A.L beginning 25 days of learning and building community!

This program is designed to build community connections during the first month of school! This can be done as a class/home room or as the entire school. You can choose to do one week or four weeks of community-building activities. See implementation tips below!

1 Welcome Day Name games to meet everyone in the classroom. Example: In a circle say your name and make a motion that reflects what you like to do.	2 Create a Class Quilt Students write their name and draw pictures of what they like to do. Put them together as a quilt.	3 WOW Wednesday School staff share a fun fact about themselves.	4 Student- Created Scavenger Hunt Student teams create a list of items other classmates can find in the room.	5 Share Favorite Summer Nature or City Find Students can explore and find items or draw them.
6 School Spirit Day Everyone wears school colors or draws a picture of themselves with the school colors.	7 Celebrate Languages Students write "welcome" to post on the door in different languages.	8 WOW Wednesday Share a fun fact about your class with the rest of the school.	9 Thankful Thursday Share a note with someone at school thanking them.	10 Feel Good Friday All students share something they are proud of. Students post positive "I am" statements.
11 Share a Favorite Book	12 Reading to Buddy Day	13 WOW Wednesday Students share a fun fact about themselves during class.	14 Celebrate Together We Can... Have every student finish the sentence "Together we can...."	15 Friendly Friday Shout Outs Pick a classmate's name out of a jar and write a positive note to or about them.

Encourage All Students and Families to Create a Success Plan

MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK

- 1. My Family:** List who lives in your house.
- 2. Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
- 3. Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help every day, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
- 4. Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help if you ask.

1. My Family: _____

2. Everyday Helpers: _____

3. Occasional Helpers: _____

4. Potential Helpers: _____

If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

Name: _____	Best Contact Number: _____
Name: _____	Best Contact Number: _____
Name: _____	Best Contact Number: _____

- ✓ Set attendance goals
- ✓ Make backup plans
- ✓ Track absences
- ✓ Recognize success!

2017-2018 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

August 2017							September 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
							17	18	19	20	21	22	23
							24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October 2017							November 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	1	2	3	4	5

MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help them do well in school and achieve their hopes and dreams.
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending school every day with _____.
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ a.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- If my child complains of a stomachache or headache, and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will make sure to check in with my child during the day _____ so that he/she can check in with my child during the day.

Health Guidance for Going to School



Health Guidance for Going to School

Showing up to school every day is critical for children's well-being, engagement and learning.

Make sure to send children to school if they are:

- Generally healthy and well.
- Participating in usual day-to-day activities.
- Children can even go to school if they:
 - Have a mild cold, which may include a runny nose and/or cough.
 - Have eye drainage without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness.
 - Have a mild stomachache.
 - Have a mild rash with no other symptoms.
 - Have head lice. Though they are annoying and should be treated, lice are not a reason to exclude a child from school.
 - Haven't had a fever overnight and they have not taken fever-reducing medicine during that time.

Avoid keeping children at home unless they are too sick to participate. Please see the back of this handout for details. Note that in most situations, a health-care provider's note is not needed to return.

Children may also avoid school due to anxiety (symptoms may include decreased appetite, feeling tired, stomachache, headache etc). If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child stay in school.

If your child has a compromised immune system or is at high risk for complications from common illnesses, please talk to your school (school nurse if available) about developing a plan with you and your child's health-care provider to keep your child healthy and safe while attending school.

Please note: This document is not meant to take the place of local health department/school district guidance including about contagious illnesses such as Covid-19 and the flu.



Reasons to keep me home from school and what needs to happen before I can return

What is my symptom?	When should I stay home and when to seek medical care?	When can I return to school?
Fever	I have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. Seek medical care if I have fever and any of the following: ear pain, sore throat, rash, stomachache, headache or tooth pain.	If I have not had a fever overnight without the use of fever-reducing medication and I am feeling better.
Vomiting and/or diarrhea	If I have vomited 2 or more times in the last 24 hours. If my stool is watery and I may not make it to the toilet in time. Seek medical care if I have stomach cramping and fever, I have bloody or black stool, or I am showing signs of dehydration (tired and sleepy, dry mouth and not urinating at least once in the last 8 hours).	If I did not vomit overnight and I am able to drink liquids without throwing up. If my diarrhea has improved.
Persistent cough or trouble breathing	Seek medical care if I have a persistent cough, difficulty breathing or trouble catching my breath or if I develop a fever with the cough. These symptoms may be signs of Covid-19 or flu and should be evaluated by a health-care provider.	Once I am feeling better and I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider. If my symptoms were due to asthma, please make sure that I have permission to use breathing medication at school.
Rash	Seek medical care if the rash has blisters, is draining, is painful, looks like bruises and/or if I develop a fever.	Rash has healed or I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider.
Eye irritation	Seek medical care if I have eye swelling, eye pain, trouble seeing or an eye injury.	Once I am feeling better.
Sore throat	Seek medical care if I have drooling, trouble swallowing or a fever and/or rash.	Once I am feeling better. If I was prescribed an antibiotic by my health-care provider, then I can return 12 hours after the first dose, if I am without fever and I am feeling better.

If you don't know whether to send your child to school or have specific concerns regarding your child's health, contact your child's health-care provider, a local urgent care or the school nurse.



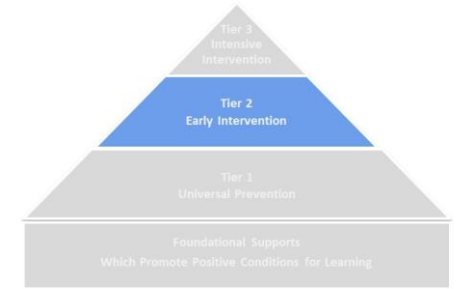
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/>



In the Chat

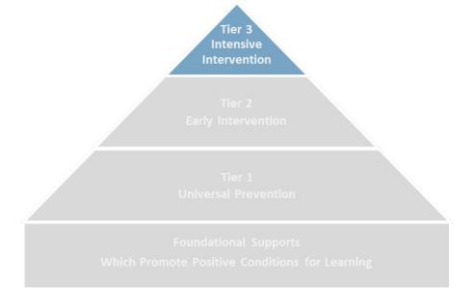
What universal strategies are you using to support engagement and attendance now?

Tier 2: Early Interventions Layer in Support and Remove Barriers to Attendance



- ❖ Common community and school barriers identified and addressed
- ❖ Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- ❖ Attendance strategies added to IEP
- ❖ Family visit
- ❖ Mentors (e.g., Success Mentors, Peer Group Connections)
- ❖ Intensive tutoring
- ❖ Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)
- ❖ Expanded learning opportunities
- ❖ Small group interventions and supports for students
- ❖ Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension

Tier 3: Intensive interventions



- ❖ Educational support champions / advocates
- ❖ Interagency case management
- ❖ Housing stability supports
- ❖ Student attendance review board
- ❖ Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- ❖ Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation
- ❖ Legal Intervention (*as a last resort*)

Reducing Chronic Absence Requires a Team Approach





Primary Purpose of a Team Approach

Organize and facilitate a schoolwide attendance strategy and ensure it is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all students.



- 1. Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention.**
- 2. Examine attendance and absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence.**
- 3. Identify assets, barriers and strategies that affect attendance.**
- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.**
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.**

Suggested Agenda Items for Teams

I. Aggregate Data Trends

High-level picture of all students by tier and attendance categories; changes since last meeting. Is it getting better? Worse? For particular groups of students?

✓ **Parents/Students/Community Partners Can be Involved**

II. Unpacking Patterns

Identify any patterns or trends across groups of students and interventions including insights about common barriers or what might be contributing to positive outliers.

III. Tiered System of Support

Strategies for strengthening your tiered system / year-long approach

IV. Tier 2 and Tier 3 Students

Review individual students as a team; determine who follows-up with individual or groups of student(s) and/or families

Outreach to students and families to determine barriers causes for absence; assign interventions and offer appropriate resources

V. Meeting Decisions and Next Steps

Option:

Teams meet twice a month with first meeting focused on reviewing data and strengthening tiered approach.

Second meeting focuses on case management.



Roles and Responsibilities

Core Team roles include:

- ❖ Team facilitator/leader
- ❖ Data coordinator
- ❖ Note taker

Tips:

- Divide up responsibilities
- Create opportunities for everyone to contribute their insights
- Encourage clarifying questions
- Don't just focus on problem but create time to reflect on assets
- Keep school staff informed and engaged
- Establish regular meeting schedule for the school year



Avoid Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Establish a team that **operates in isolation**
- ✗ **Fail to rally whole school** to support prevention & early intervention
- ✗ Focus only on students with **most absences**
- ✗ **Case management** as the sole strategy
- ✗ **Jumping to solutions** without sufficient understanding of factors behind absences
- ✗ **Team composition does not reflect the demographics, perspectives or cultural realities of the student population**



Synergy Analytics

Synergy Analytics User Guide

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JyHCMjvGzRgdm0i-yydLI6Mb7QVpfoO7/view?usp=sharing>

Synergy Analytics User Guide



This guide will enable you to navigate the new Synergy Analytics dashboards, through which you can access live data pertaining to attendance and suspensions at the district or school-level. The orange arrows accompanying the screen shots will show you where to click or enter information.

1. Log in to Synergy with your usual credentials.
2. Navigate to Synergy Analytics via the Synergy PAD Tree as pictured below:



3. For quicker access next time, add Synergy Analytics to your Synergy Quick Nav by Right Clicking and choosing "Add to Quick Nav"



- a. The Synergy Analytics Icon will now appear in the top right as highlighted above, for easier access in the future



Data

Key data points to review as a team:

- Chronic absence levels by grade level
- If your school has multiple ethnic groups, chronic absence levels by ethnicity

Team Time Discussion

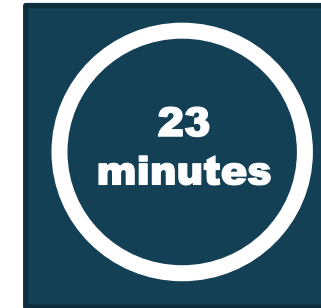
1. Review your data:

- a. Do you see any groups of students with better or struggling attendance?
- b. Any insights about why?

2. Based on your data and insights, what foundational strategies or Tier I strategies might you adopt?

3. Next Steps including:

- a. Date for a next school team meeting



Ground Rules

- Identify a note-taker
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak



Large Group Reflection

Share an idea you are excited to implement that will strengthen the four conditions for learning



Next Steps

- **Implement foundational strategy** you are excited to pilot before the next Community of Practice session
- Use **Panorama surveys** to understand student perspectives about conditions of learning.
- **Coaching call** will be scheduled before next CoP session
- **Next COP session is Tuesday, January 9**

ANY
QUESTIONS?



Evaluation Survey

We want to hear from you!

Please let us know how we can improve:

https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj

Thank you!

Appendix

Help Kids Stay Healthy!

Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

A regular attendance routine is important for your child's well-being, learning and long-term success. Below are tips to keep your child healthy and avoid unnecessary absences from school.

Nutrition, Sleep and Exercise

- Ensure your child eats a good breakfast every morning or check if your school serves breakfast.
- Maintain a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Keep screens out of the bedroom and limit use prior to bedtime.
- Encourage your child to stay active for at least 60 minutes a day.



Hygiene

- Stress hand washing, particularly before eating, and after using the restroom.
- Remind your child to brush their teeth twice a day.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick. Don't share cups, utensils, hair brushes or combs.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into an elbow.



Safety

- Make sure your child wears a seatbelt and/or appropriate car seats during car rides, and a helmet when using a bike, skateboard or scooter.
- If your child walks to school, help them find a safe route to school and to travel with at least one friend. Have a backup plan in case of bad weather.



Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

Wellness

- Ensure your child visits their health care provider for:
 - A physical once a year.
 - All recommended immunizations, including Flu and COVID-19.
 - Chronic health issues such as asthma or diabetes.
- Visit the dentist twice a year.
- Try to schedule non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours.
- If your child doesn't have health or dental insurance, reach out to your school's nurse or social worker or other staff member to help connect you with resources.
- Complete your school's annual health form.
- Agree to allow your child to participate in health and vision screenings offered at school.
- If your child has a chronic health issue such as asthma, make sure that your child's health care provider completes appropriate school forms that allow your child to keep/carry any necessary medications at school.
- If your child has a disability, work closely with the school and your child's health care provider to ensure appropriate supports and services.
- If you are concerned that your child may have a contagious illness (including COVID-19), call your child's health care provider or school nurse for advice.
- If your child needs to stay home for a prolonged period due to illness, talk to your child's teacher to find out about resources they can use at home to keep learning once they feel well enough.



Engagement

- Make sure your child feels safe and connected at school. Involve them in afterschool activities.
- If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child. If your child is missing class because of challenges with behavioral issues, contact the school and/or your child's health care provider for support and resources.
- Ask the school about health-related policies including about COVID-19.
- Monitor your child's attendance and academic progress and seek support when needed.

