Session 1:

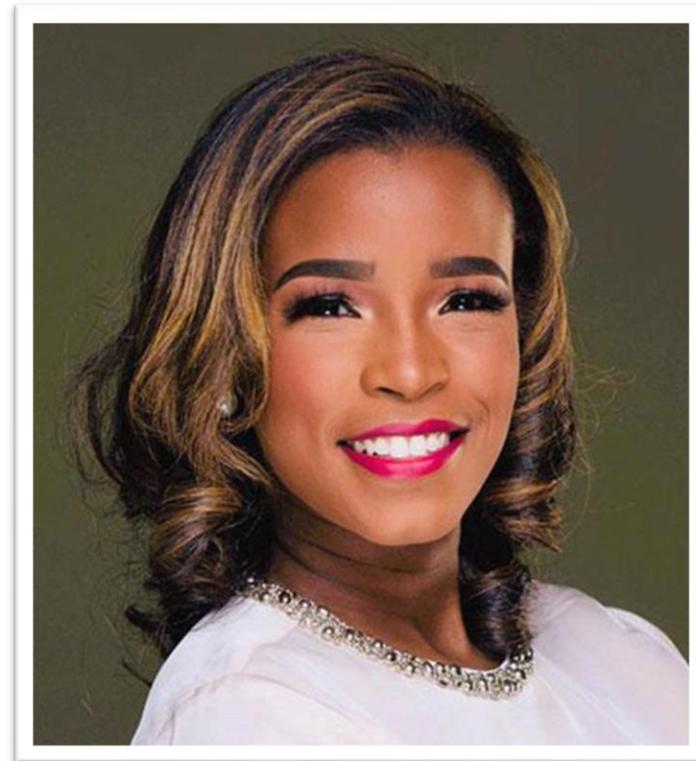# Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

March 30, 2023

Welcome!

Cecelia Leong
Vice President of Programs

Inika Williams, Ed.D.
Associate Director for Policy

Three E-Learning Sessions

During these sessions, participants will learn how to work as a team to take a multi-tiered approach to improve attendance in their schools:

❖ **Session 1** — Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support

❖ **Session 3** — Partnering to Make a Difference

Attendance Works ©

Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on whole school strategies to create
  - o positive conditions for learning and
  - o strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism

- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention

- Learn effective strategies to communicate with families about attendance

Welcome & Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

✓ Your name and role

✓ Your school and district

✓ *Who or what* motivated you to attend school every day?

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Overview of Chronic Absence

Absenteeism is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational inequity

✓ **Pre-pandemic: 8 million students were chronically absent** *(missing 10% or more of school for any reason)*

✓ **SY 2021-22: chronic absence has at least doubled**

✓ **Early data from 2022-23 show rates remain high**

✓ **Higher than ever, especially in early elementary and high school**

✓ **Adverse impact of chronic absence is much greater for economically challenged students than for their more affluent peers.**

Chronic Absenteeism in Florida
2017/18 -2021/22

6 Largest Districts

District Name	2022 Enrollment
FLORIDA	3,212,177
MIAMI-DADE	369,774
BROWARD	288,556
HILLSBOROUGH	267,172
ORANGE	232,331
PALM BEACH	208,719
DUVAL	149,606

PERCENT OF STUDENTS ABSENT 10% OR MORE IN FLORIDA'S LARGEST DISTRICTS

■ 17-18 ■ 18-19 ■ 19-20 ■ 20-21 ■ 21-22

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
FLORIDA	20.4%	20.0%	16.6%	25.1%	32.30%
MIAMI-DADE	18.8%	18.5%	19.7%	24.7%	29.50%
BROWARD	19.2%	19.2%	12.0%	21.5%	33.80%
HILLSBOROUGH	19.4%	18.8%	13.0%	26.5%	31.80%
ORANGE	22.2%	20.7%	20.9%	27.5%	39.60%
PALM BEACH	13.7%	13.2%	15.6%	15.9%	25.10%
DUVAL	28.6%	26.7%	23.0%	31.8%	39.00%
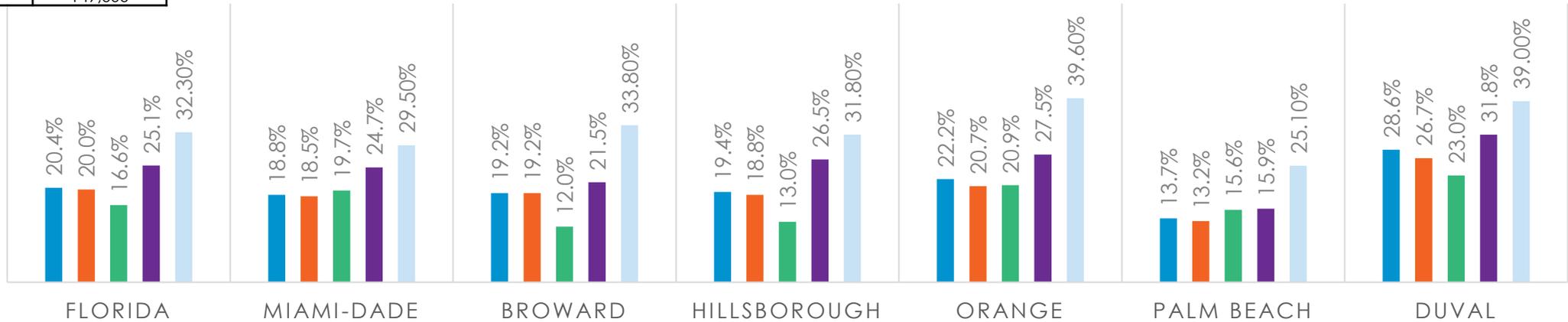
Semester 1 Attendance Data by School Type

Attendance Impact Report

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE DATA SNAPSHOT
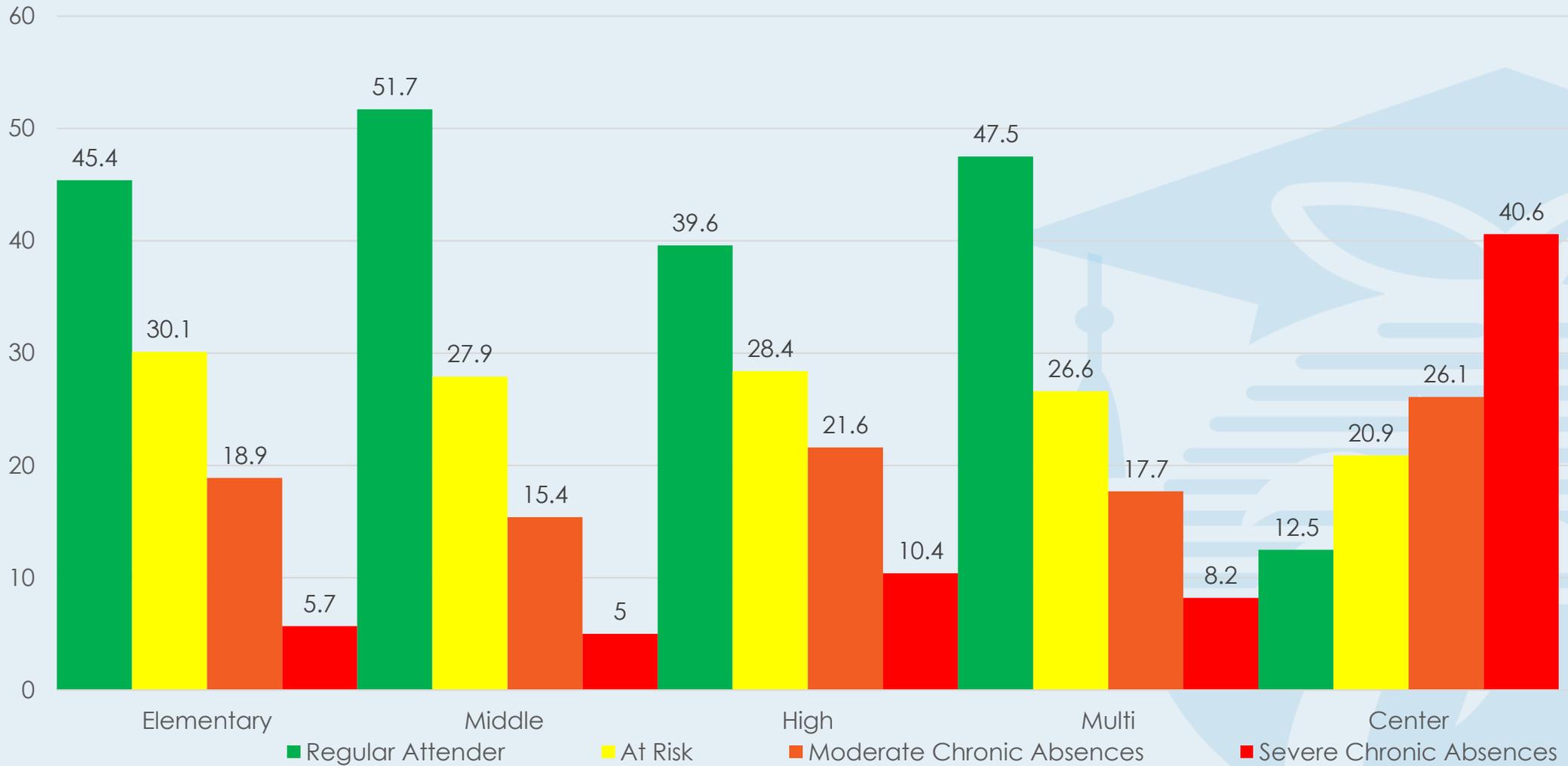
Improving Attendance Matters

PK-1st Grade
Chronic Absence

3rd Grade
Inability to read on grade level

Middle School
Lower achievement

High School
More likely to drop out of high school

3rd Grade

Middle School

High School
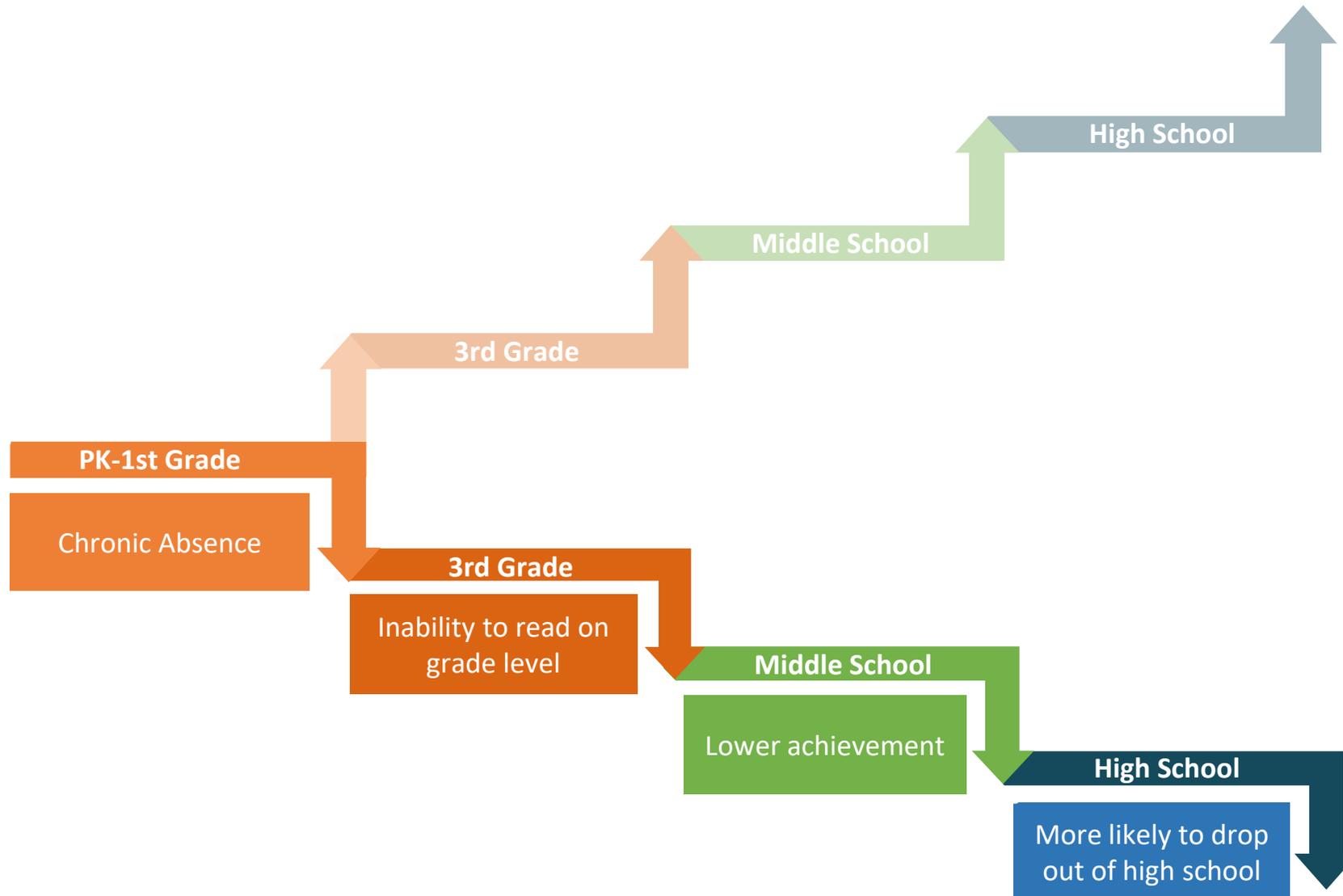
What is chronic absence?

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.**

Excused absences ✚ Unexcused absences ✚ Suspensions ➔ **Chronic Absence**
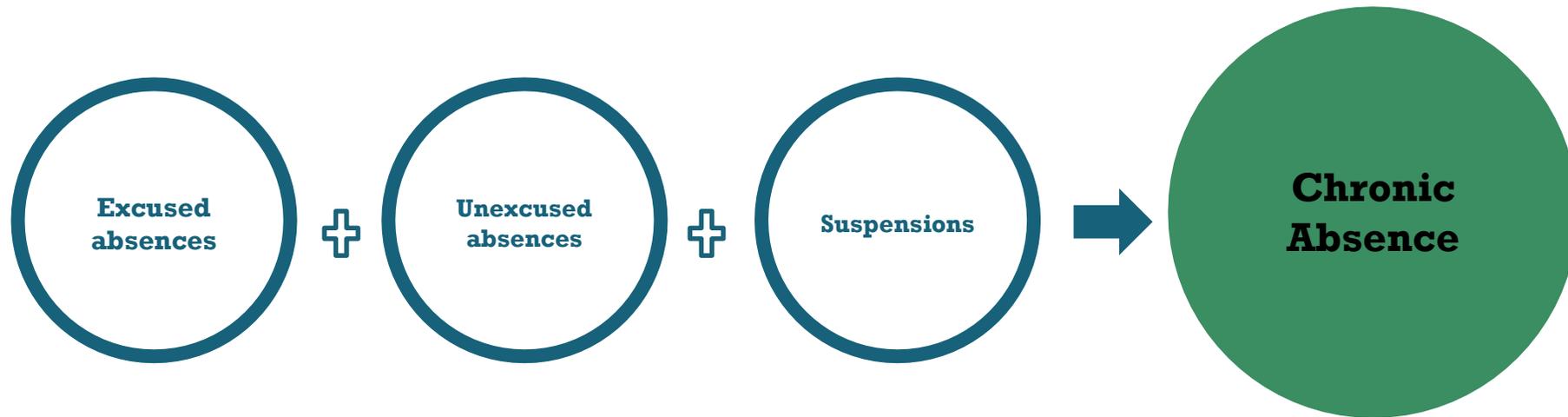
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

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Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012

Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12

Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

Number of students missing 10%
versus 10 unexcused absences
(San Francisco Unified School District)

chronic absentees - 2010-2011

of students with 10 unexcused absences (as of May 16th 2011)
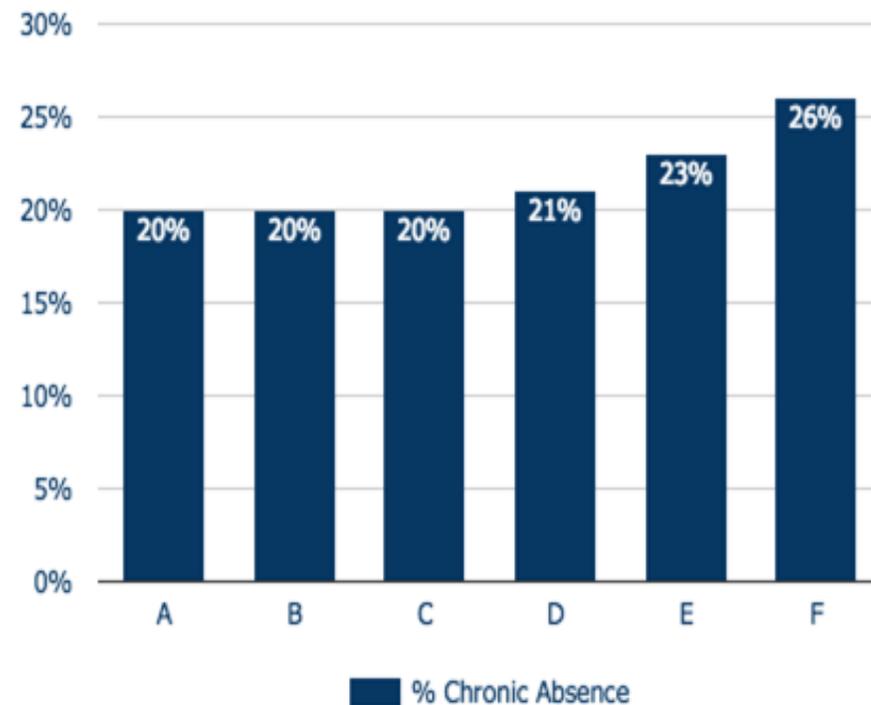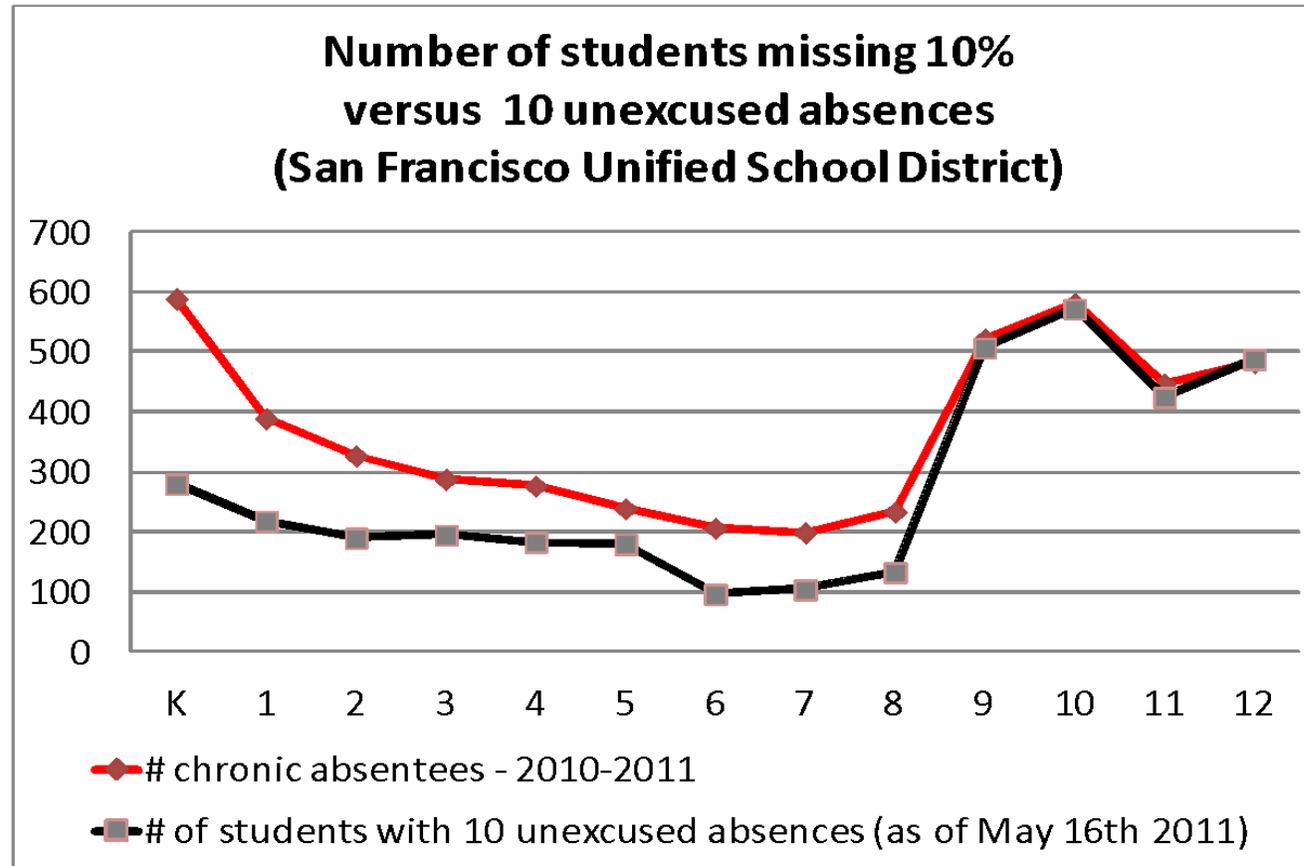
What's the Difference Between Chronic Absence vs. Truancy?

Truancy

➡️

Chronic Absence

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 and benefits of being present

- ▪ Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies

- ▪ Cultivates family & student engagement

https://www.attendanceworks.org/whats-the-difference-between-chronic-absence-and-truancy/

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Reflection

Type in the Chat:

What approach does your school or school system take to improving attendance?

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Works ©

Effective Practice Pathway

Mindset → Actionable Data → Capacity → Strategies

The Key to Improving Attendance is a Tiered Approach

We Know What Helps Get Students and Families to School: Positive Conditions for Learning

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Well-Being and Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning
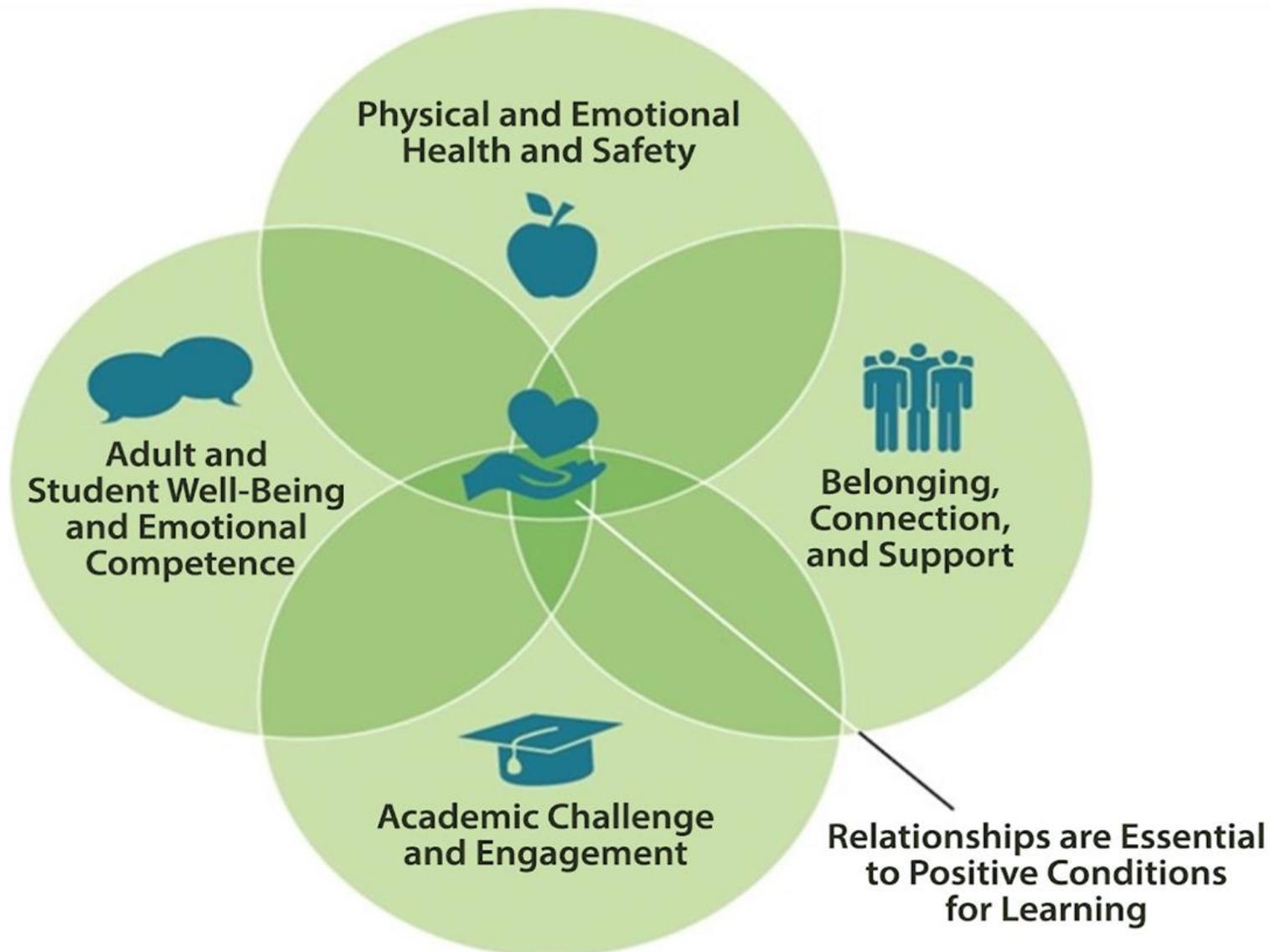
Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance

Students Missing 20% or More — **Tier 3 Intensive Intervention**

Students Missing 10% - 19% — **Tier 2 Early Intervention**

All Students and Families — **Tier 1 Universal Prevention**

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/

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
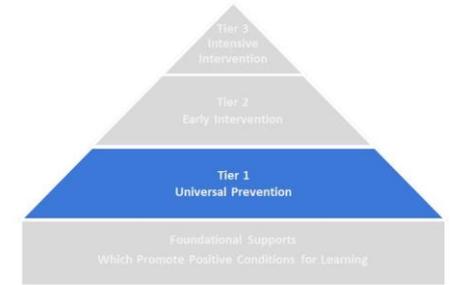
Share in Chat: In your experience, which Tier 1 attendance supports have been most essential at your school or in your district?

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Tier 2: Early Interventions Layer in Support and Remove Barriers to Attendance
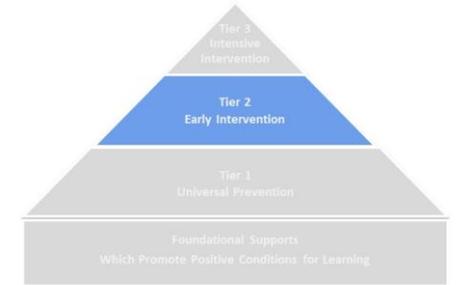
❖ Common community and school barriers identified and addressed

❖ 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
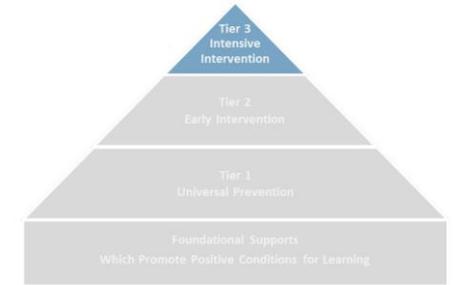
❖ Educational support champions / advocates

❖ 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)*

Positive Conditions for Learning
Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly
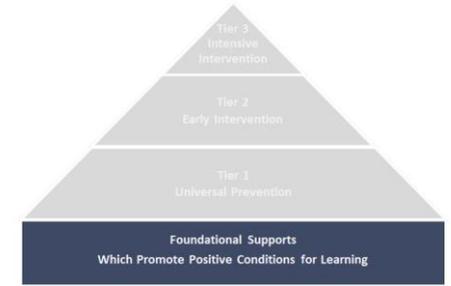
- Restorative check-ins
- Access to health care & mental health supports
- Trauma-informed practice
- Staff self-care
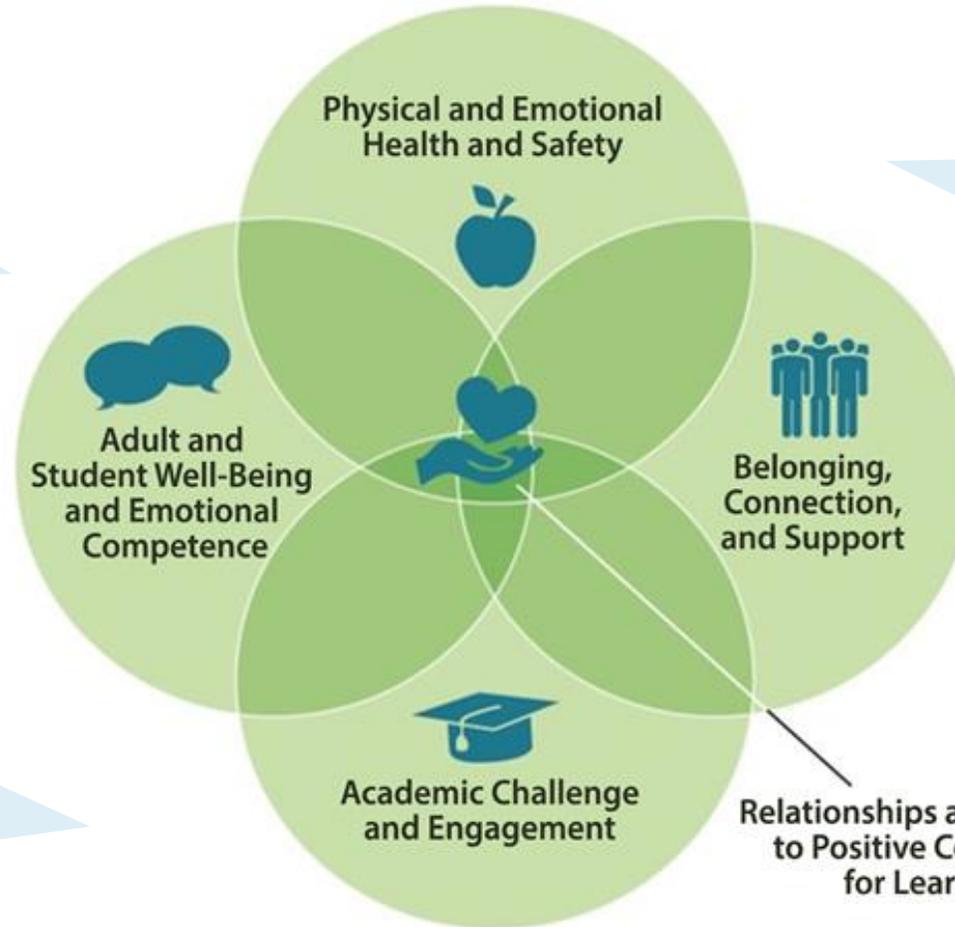
- Healthy learning environments
- Welcoming, safe school climate
- Access to food & other basic needs
- Restorative circles

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Well-Being and Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

- 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

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention
Tier 2 Early Intervention
Tier 1 Universal Prevention
Foundational Supports
Which Promote Positive Conditions for Learning

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AIR® American Institutes for Research

www.attendanceworks.org

25

What promotes positive conditions for learning?

https://vimeo.com/260252509

Reflection

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?
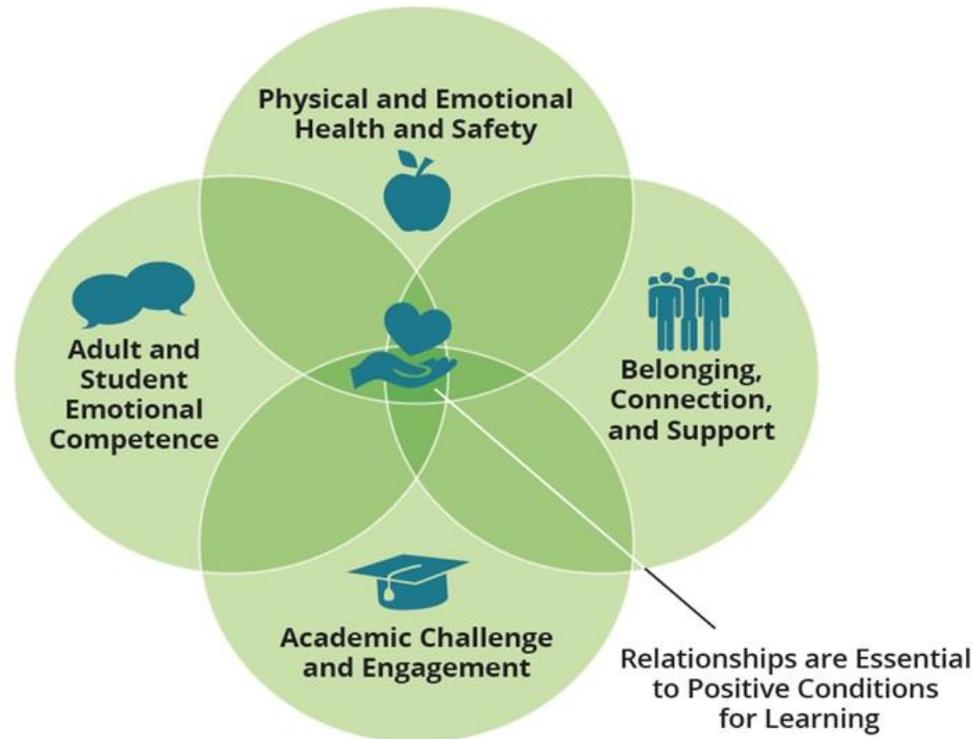
Conditions for Learning:
Adult and Student Well-Being & Social/Emotional Competence

Challenging Condition

❑ Adult dispositions that are not developmentally responsive

❑ Adults who do not manage their own emotions

❑ Adults' beliefs that limit students' potential

Positive Condition

❑ Adults attuned to student development

❑ Resources for adults to practice self-care

❑ Adult belief in the potential of all students to learn

❑ Opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making

Conditions for Learning:
Belonging, Connection and Support

Challenging Condition

❑ Limited support provided

❑ Weak relationships between students and staff

❑ Negative peer relationships

Positive Condition

❑ Meaningful connection to adults in the school

❑ Adults emotionally attuned to students

❑ Care and inclusivity

❑ Cultural respect and responsiveness

❑ Positive peer relationships

❑ Equitable, effective and available support

AIR
AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH

15 minutes

About your school:

- In your experience, what creates a sense of <u>belonging, connection and support</u> in your school?

- How do you reach students and families who've been disconnected?

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.

Attendance Works ©

Report Out

Share in Chat:

What is a strategy you've heard about today that you'd like to strengthen or adopt?

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Relationships are Essential at Every Level of Intervention

how-to guide to relationship mapping

MAKING CARING COMMON PROJECT | HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

GRADES
K–12

IMPLEMENTED BY
School Administrators

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

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

---

Key Elements
See all students at-a-glance.

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

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

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.

Involve *all* adults in relationship mapping.

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.

Key Benefits
Connect all students to at least one school adult.

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.

Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at:

https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy

Re-establish Routines & Rituals

1. **Daily Wellness Check** (e.g. <u>Zones of Regulation, Mood Meter</u>)

2. **Whole Group Greeting** (e.g. Go-around Questions, Circle Games)

3. **Mindfulness/Grounding Exercises** (e.g. Collective Breath)

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

Evidence-Based Programs

Relational Home Visits

✓ Goal is to create positive relationship between educators and parents *before* any issues arise.

✓ Example of model program:
Parent Teacher Home Visits
http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/

✓ Offers in-person and online *training*

✓ Offers in-person and online *visiting* options

Mentoring

✓ Goal is to create positive connection between mentor and student(s) to support student success in school

✓ Example of programs: MENTOR, Peer Group Connections, Success Mentor

✓ Virtual options for different age groups, https://www.mentoring.org/virtual-mentoring-portals/

- How to Guide Relationship Mapping guide
https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy

- 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank
https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyyjr/sesion_2_relationship_strategy_bank.pdf

- Edutopia – Relationship Building from Day 1
https://www.edutopia.org/article/relationship-building-day-1

- National Partnership for Student Success
https://www.partnershipstudentsuccess.org/

- Infographic: Attendance in the Early Grades

  https://attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/AW-Infographic-2.12.1311.pdf

- Broward County Truancy Intervention Program

  https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/B-TIP-brochure.pdf
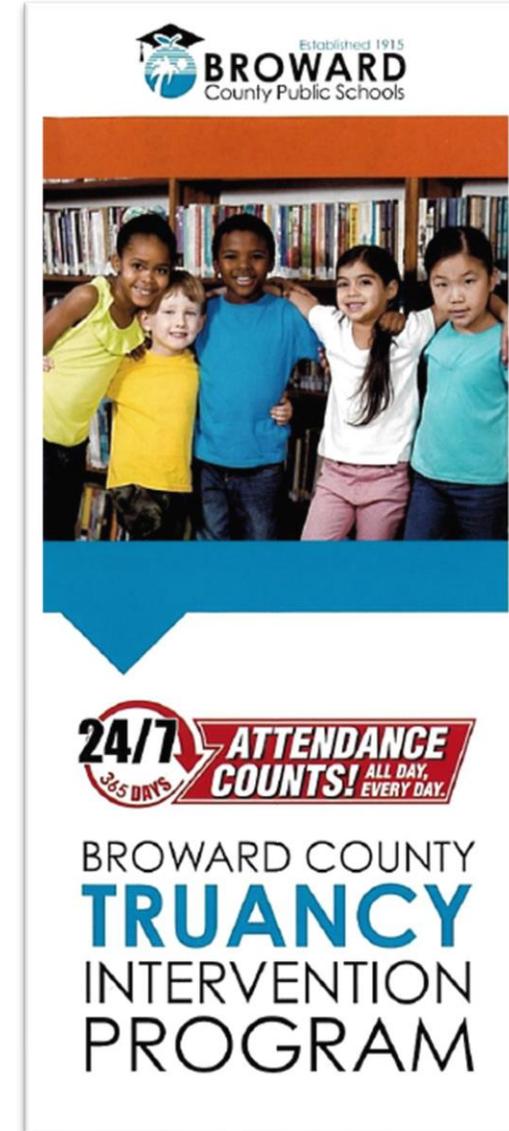
Strategies and Tools to Communicate About Attendance

Toolkit: Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/

It is an opportunity to…

✓ **Build Routines**

Daily attendance routines can reduce stress and create a sense of safety and security especially after chaotic transitions.

✓ **Increase Engagement**

Being in school helps build relationships with peers and school staff that nurture engagement.

✓ **Provide Access to resources**

Schools provide access to meals, health and mental health services, tutoring, mentoring, technology, extracurriculars (sports, clubs, music, etc.), afterschool and summer programs.

✓ **Support Learning**

Showing up to school regularly helps students become proficient in reading and math and graduate from high school.

Share in Chat: Do the messages in this toolkit resonate?

Forging Partnerships with Families to Support Engagement and Attendance

✓ Communicate supportive messages *(Stay Connected and Keep Learning)* throughout the school year

✓ Provide tailored, personalized and caring messages to students and families who are chronically absent

✓ Offer actionable steps to improve attendance

✓ Make sure families know what resources are available for basic needs as well as learning at home

Utilize Research about Effective Attendance Messaging to Improve Your Communications

1. Readable
   - Fewer words
   - Accessibility: Flesch-Kincaid readability test
   - Skimmability: bullets, format reinforces message

2. Programmatic
   - Planned *(personalized to audience)*
   - Timely
   - Routinized

3. Easy to locate and multiple modes

Todd Rogers
Todd_Rogers@hks.harvard.edu

EveryDay Labs

Attendance Works ©
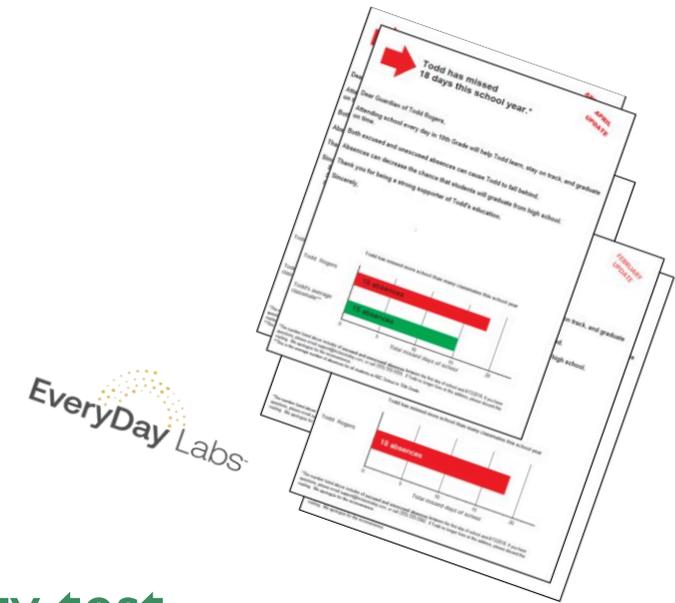
Let's Practice.
Which of these flyers aligns with research? Why?

Example A

Example B

Attendance Works ©

Additional Resources from Attendance Works

Help Your Child Succeed in School:
Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

Handouts for Families

✓ Preschool, Elementary & Secondary Grades

✓ Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole

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

Sign up for the 2023 Attendance Awareness Campaign

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

Encourage All Students and Families to Create a Success Plan

✓ Set attendance goals

✓ Make backup plans

✓ Track absences

✓ Recognize success!

http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/student-attendance-success-plans/

Better Truancy Notifications

✓ Started with positive language and moved punitive language to the end

✓ Fewer words

✓ Written at 5th grade reading level

✓ Formatted to help readers skim

✓ Makes connection between absences and achievement

[Writing Truancy Notices That Can Improve Attendance](#)

[Using Behavioral Insights to Improve School Administrative Communications: The Case of Truancy Notifications](#)

Communicating with Families

Use these resources to help your communications with families be clear and supportive:

❖ Chronic Absence letter updated for Covid-19
https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/

❖ Stay the Course - Winter Messaging
https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/stay-the-course-a-winter-messaging-toolkit/

❖ Spring Attendance Slump
https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/spring-attendance-slump/

❖ How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2022001/pdf/2022001.pdf
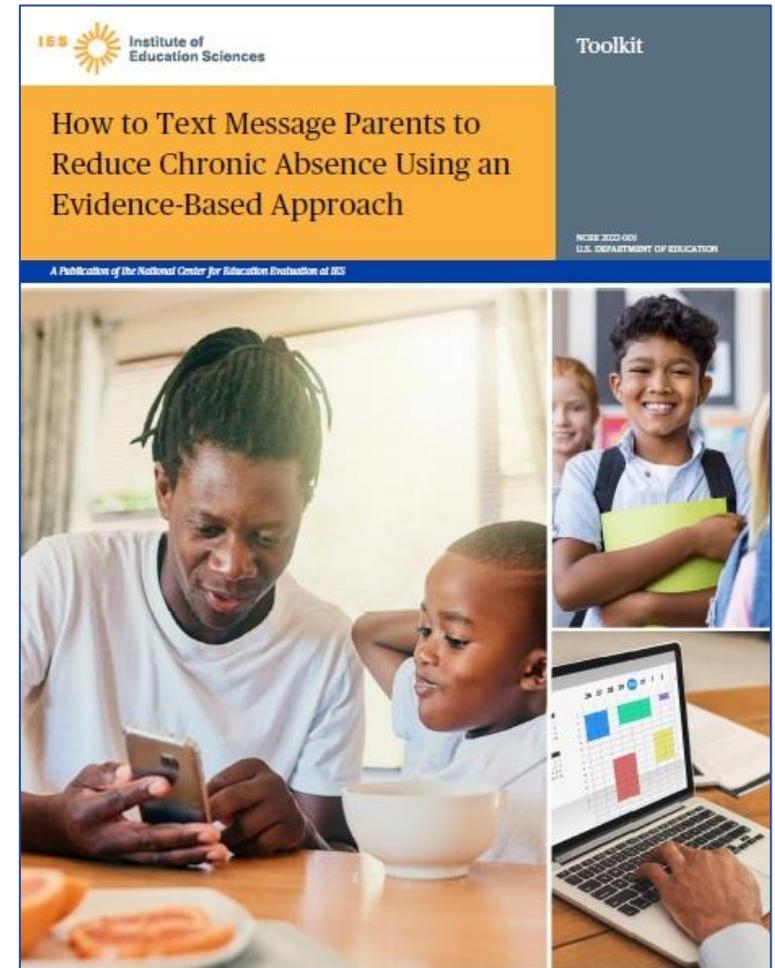
Developing a Communications Plan

Identify Your Audience:
- Students
- Families/caregivers
- Teachers
- Community partners

✓ What does each group need to know?

✓ What do you want them to do?

✓ How will you communicate it?

Communications Tips: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/transition-guide/communication-tips-for-your-transition-attendance-plan/

Strategies for Connecting with Students & Families: https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Strategies-for-Connecting-with-Students-and-Families-rev-8-27-20.pdf

Year-Round Planning

Plan activities and events that keep a focus on improving attendance all year long.

❖ See sample activities for PreK, K-12 and district teams

❖ Use blank calendars to customize the plan for your community

❖ Remember to specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure the results

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/year-long-planning/

Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on whole school strategies to create
    - positive conditions for learning and
    - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism

- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention

- Learn effective strategies to communicate with families about attendance

Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!

Attendance Works ©

Questions from the Audience

Cecelia Leong, Vice President of Programs
cecelia@attendanceworks.org

Inika Williams, Associate Director of Policy
inika@attendanceworks.org

www.attendanceworks.org

About Us

Attendance Works advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ Advances better **policy**
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- ✓ Catalyzes needed **research**

Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's "go-to" resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: www.attendanceworks.org