



## Session 1:

# Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism



Professional Learning Series

September 14, 2023



# Welcome!



**Hedy Chang**  
Executive Director



**Angela Duran**  
Senior Fellow



## 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



## 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
- Understand what chronic absence is and why it matters
- 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



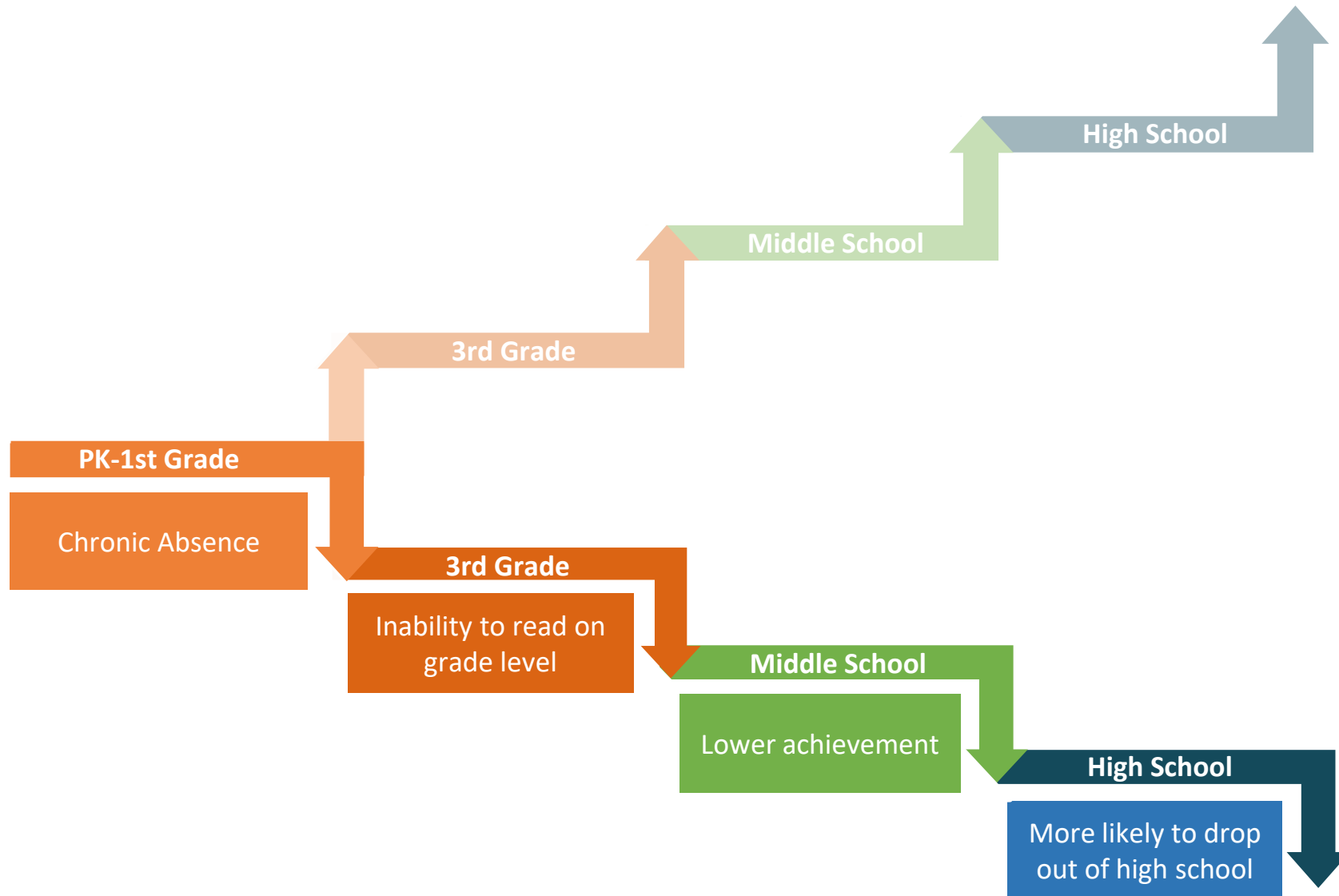
## Welcome & Introductions

### Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name and role
- ✓ Your school and district
- ✓ *Who or what* motivated you to attend school every day?

# **Overview of Chronic Absence**

# Improving Attendance Matters





**What is the relationship  
between absences & equity?**

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

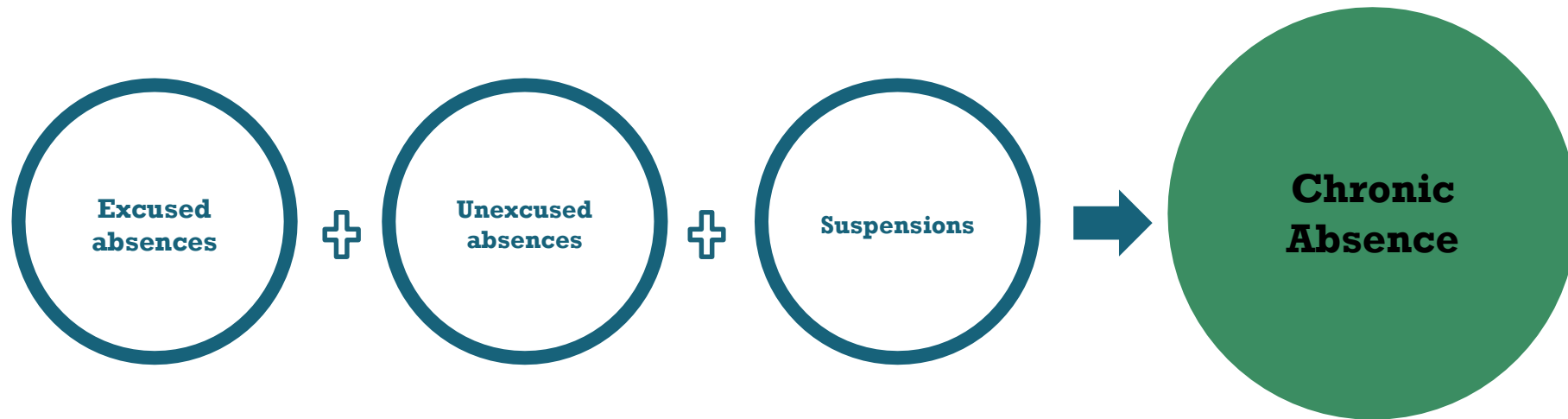




## What is chronic absence?

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).

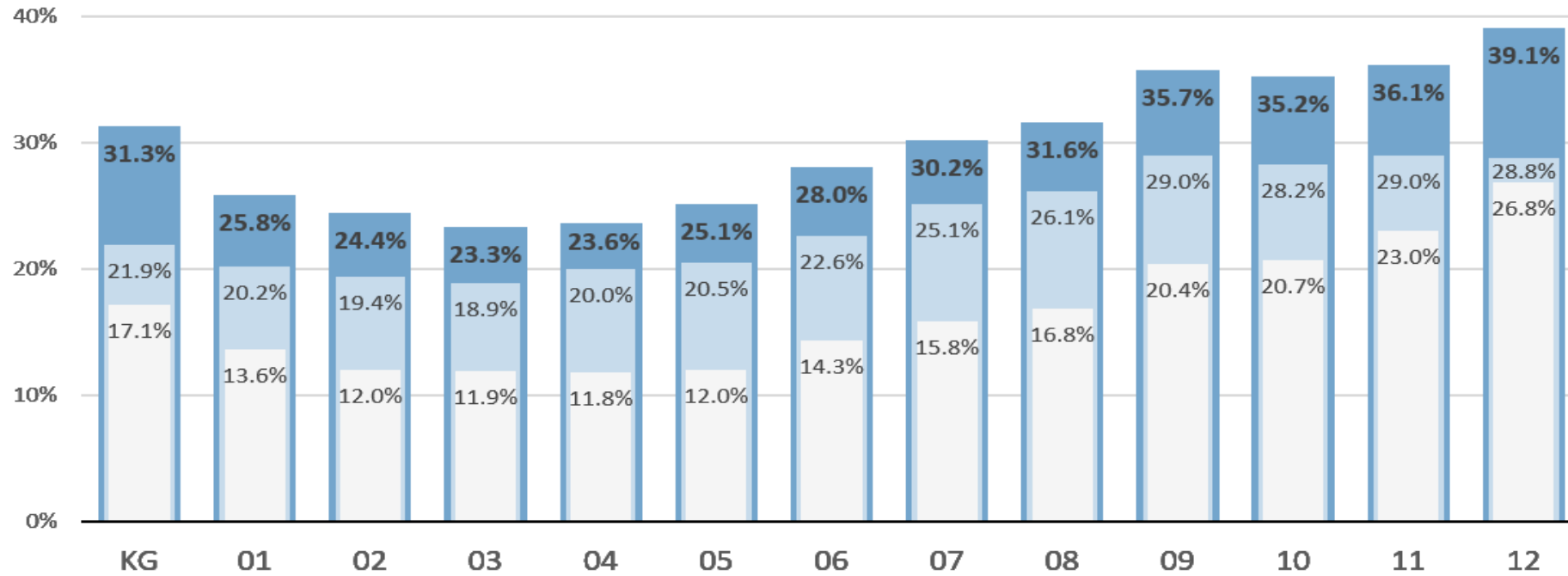
# Our Nation Faces an Attendance Crisis

- **Pre-pandemic: 8 million (1 out of 6) students were chronically absent** (*missing 10% or more of school for any reason: excused, unexcused, suspension*)
- **Chronic absence has nearly doubled.** By the end of SY 2021-22, chronic absence affected more than 1 out of 4 students. Early data from districts and states for 2022-23 data show rates remain high.
- **Economically disadvantaged students and families, as well as Native American, Black, Latino/Hispanic and Pacific Islander students are disproportionately affected.**
- **Chronic absenteeism is especially high in early elementary and high school.**



# Chronic Absence By Grade

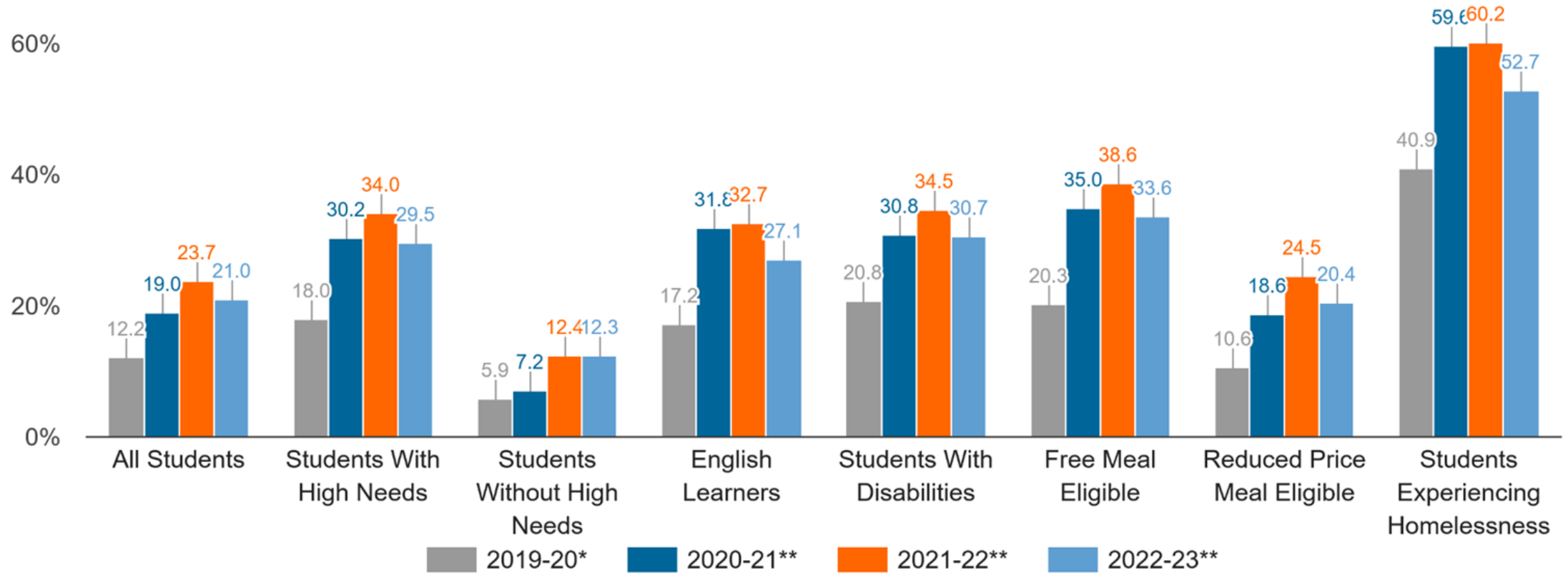
**Chronic Absence in Ohio  
SY 18-19 to SY 21-22**



2018-2019 2020-2021 2021-2022

# In CT, Chronic Absence Decreased in SY 2022-23 But Still High

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent by Student Group (YTD as of June 2023 compared to 2021-22, 2020-2021, and 2019-20)



\*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. \*\*Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

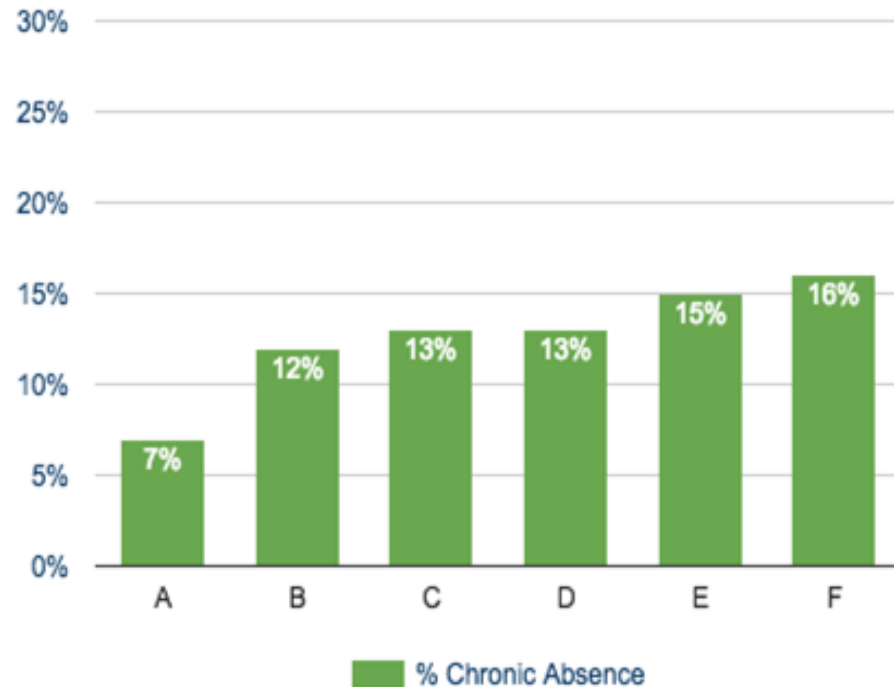
Source: EdSight





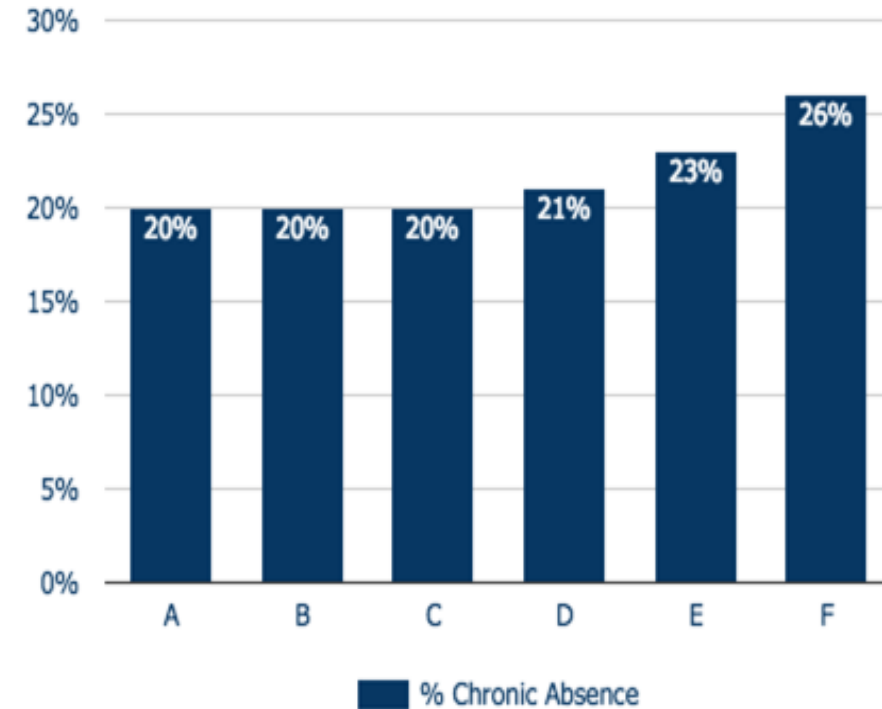
## Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

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



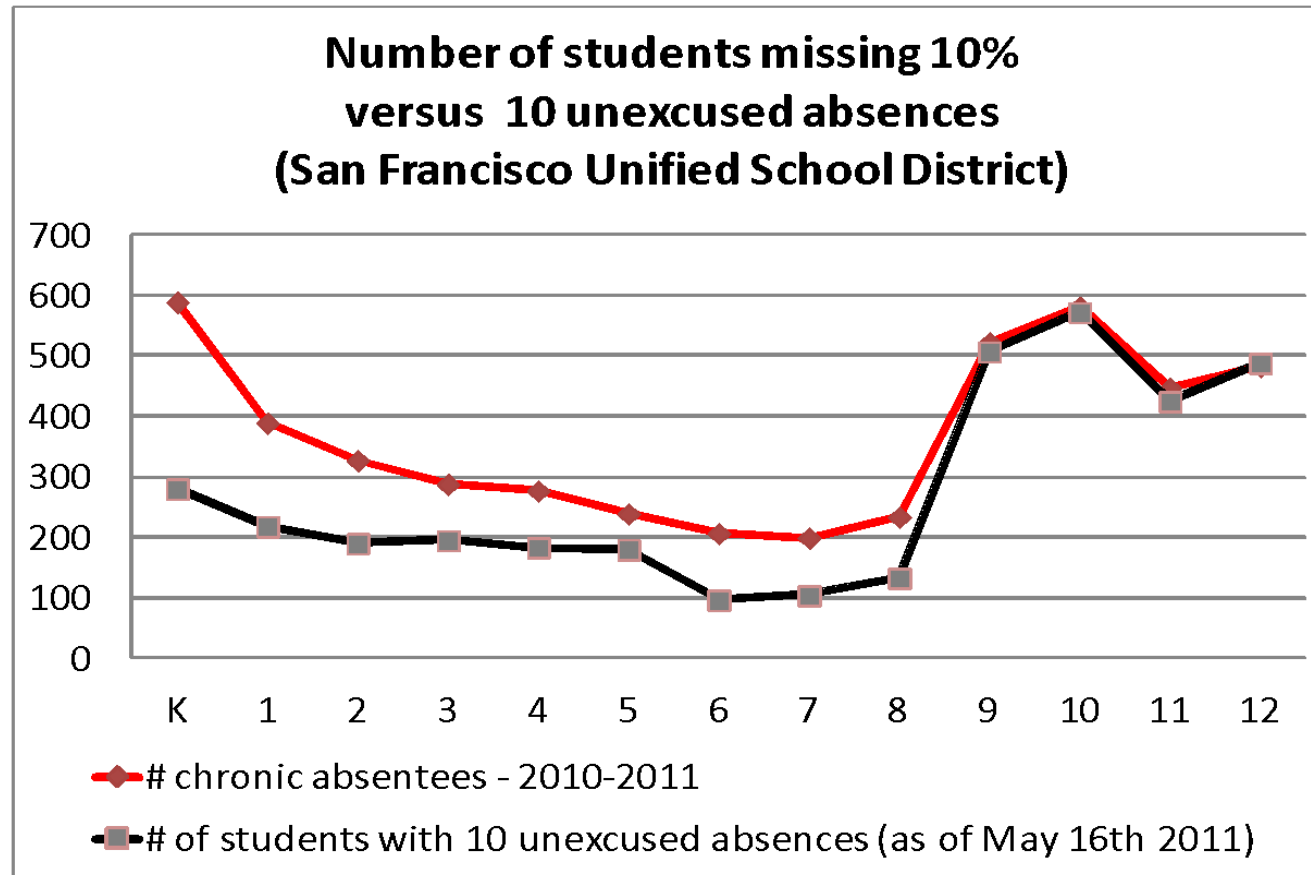
90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A

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





## Chronic Absence vs. Unexcused Absences



# What's the Difference Between Chronic Absence vs. Truancy?

## Truancy

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

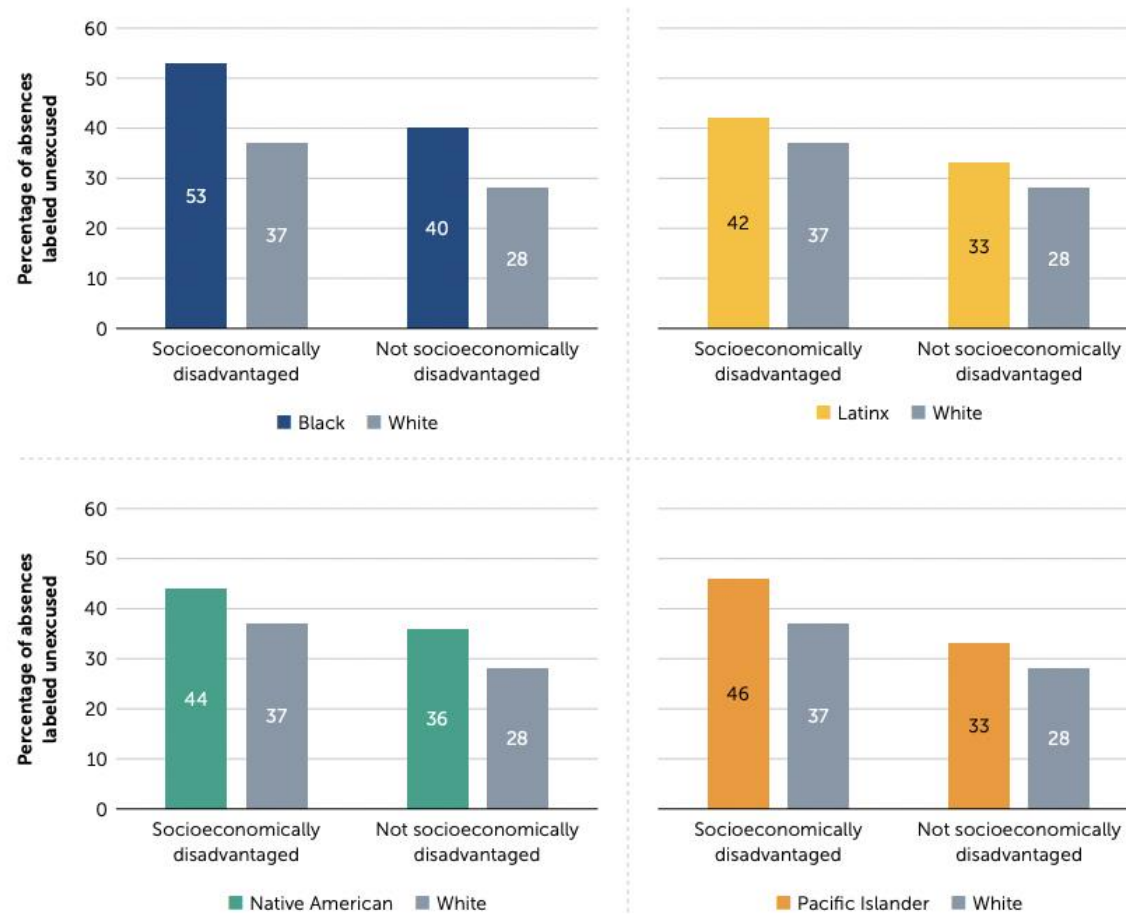


## Chronic Absence

- 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

# Unexcused absences are much higher among socioeconomically disadvantaged students and from communities of color

**Figure 6.** Racial and ethnic disparities in the percentage of absences labeled unexcused among students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and those who are not, 2021–22



*Percent of all student unexcused absences in regular K–12 California schools, by year and student socioeconomic disadvantage.*

Large disparities in unexcused absenteeism persisted within each socioeconomic stratum in SY 2021–22 for Black, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Hispanic students compared to White students.

McNeely, C., Chang, H., & Gee, K. (2023, March). Disparities in Unexcused Absences Across California Schools. [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education

<https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/disparities-unexcused-absences-across-california-schools>



# 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



## Reflection

### *Type in Chat:*

Where on the spectrum between truancy (unexcused) and chronic absence does your school fall?

**Truancy**  
(unexcused)



**Chronic  
absence**



## Pathway for Change

Mindset

Actionable  
Data

Capacity

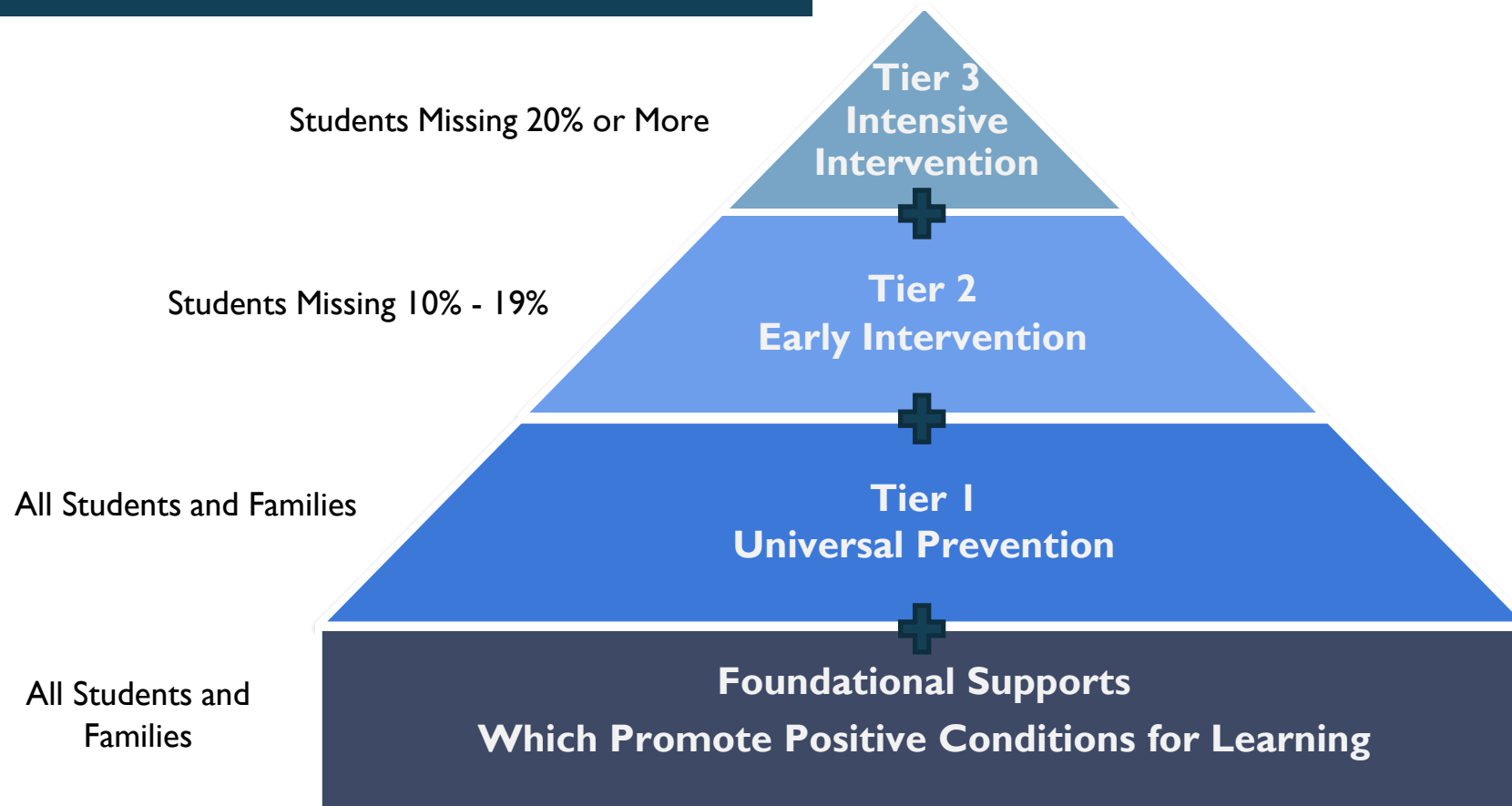
Strategies

Outcomes

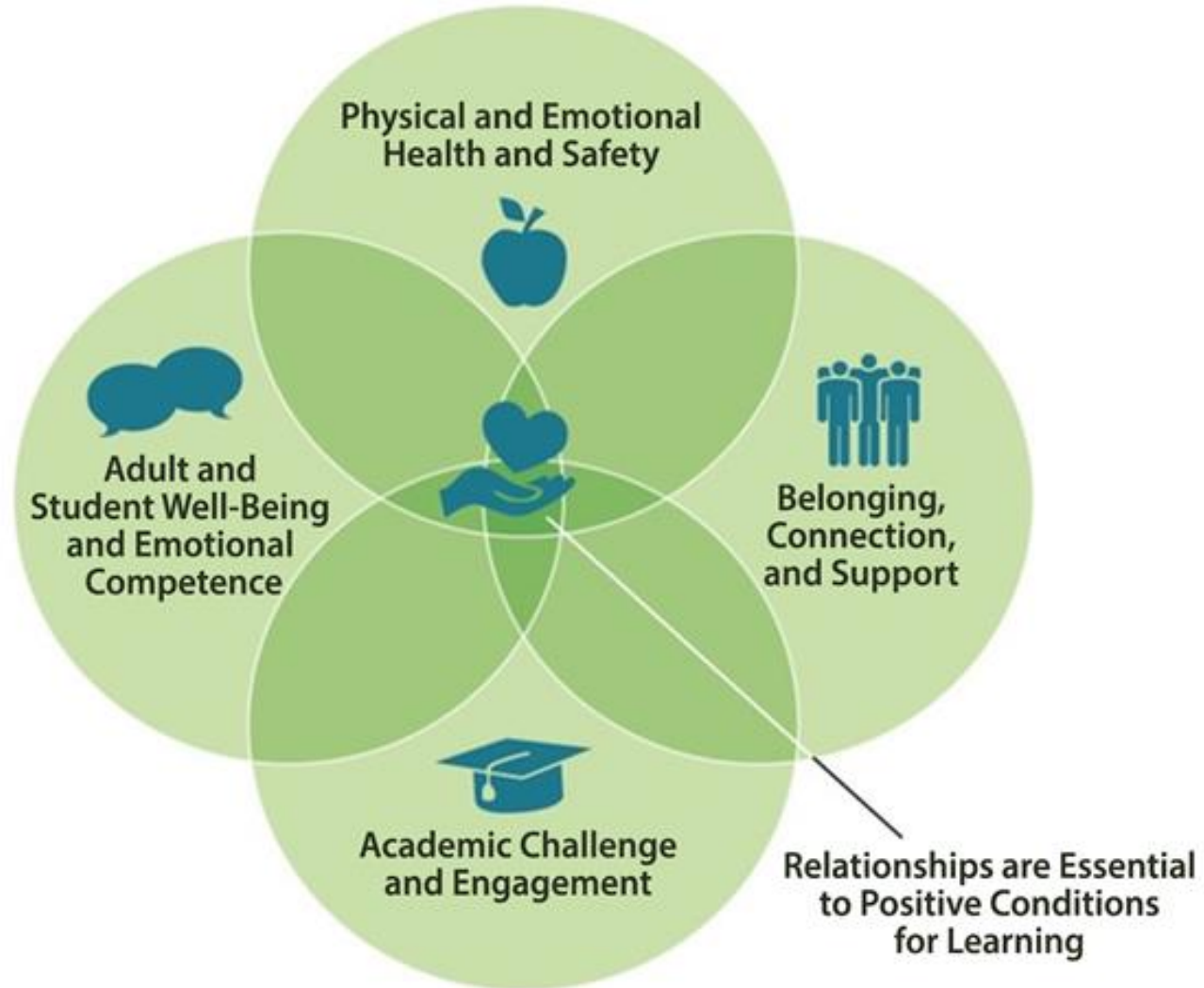
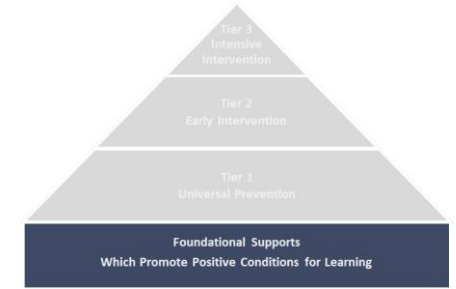
**The Key to Improving  
Attendance is a Tiered Approach**



## Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance

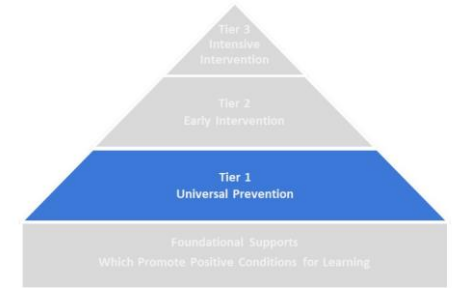


# Positive Conditions for Learning Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly



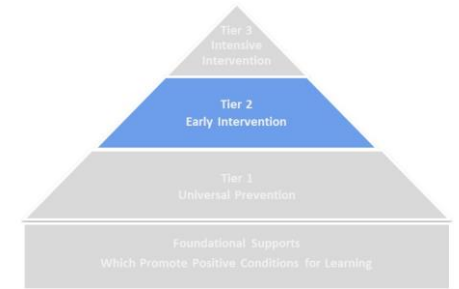
# Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports

- ❖ 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?**

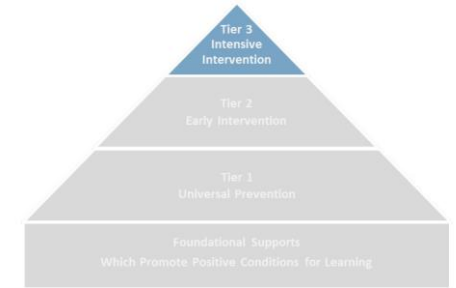
## **Tier 2: Early Interventions Layer in Support and Remove Barriers to Attendance**



- ❖ 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

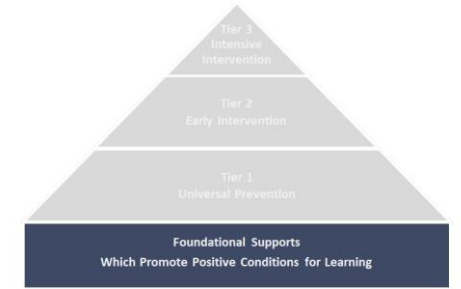


## Tier 3: Intensive interventions

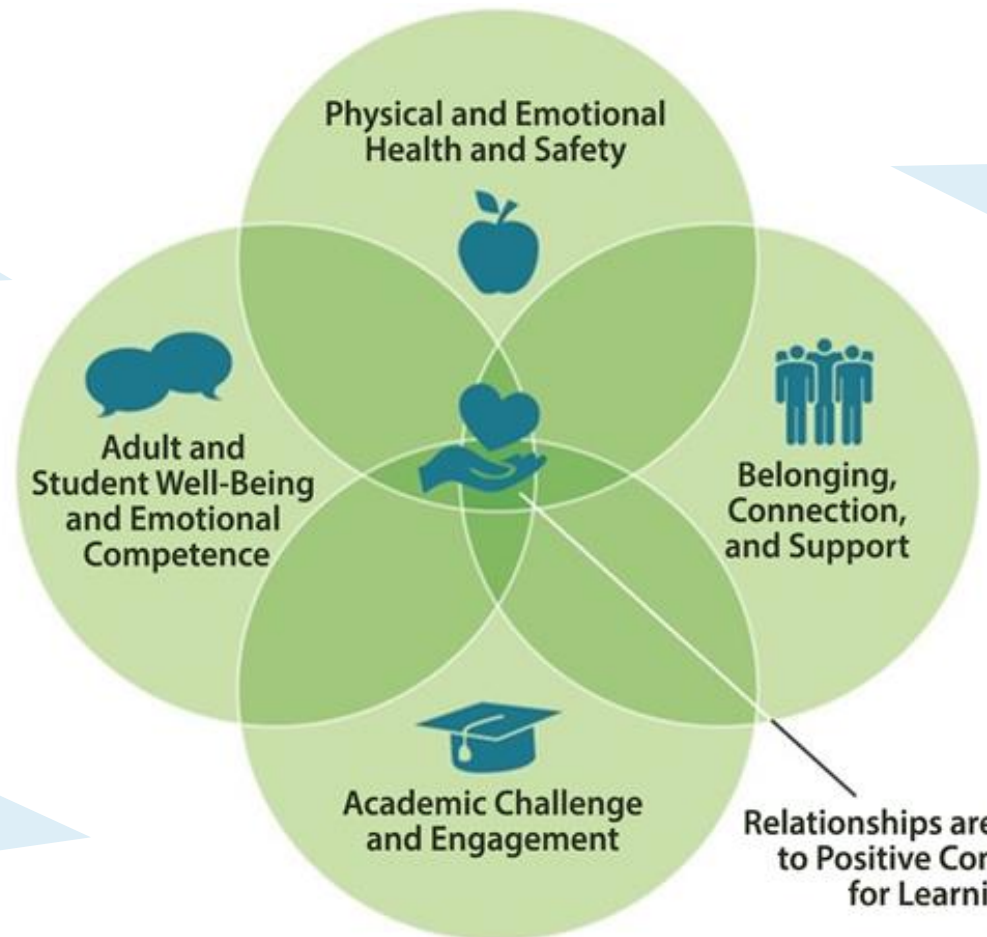


- ❖ Educational support champions / advocates
- ❖ Interagency case management
- ❖ Housing stability supports
- ❖ Student attendance review board
- ❖ Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- ❖ Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation
- ❖ Legal Intervention (*as a last resort*)

# 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

- 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

# What promotes positive conditions for learning?





# Reflection

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?



# Conditions for Learning #1: *Physical and Emotional Health and Safety*

(review)

## Challenging Condition

- Threats/acts of violence
- Unwelcoming environment
- Bullying and harassment
- Unsafe physical environment
- Lack of clear health guidance

## Positive Condition

- Physical safety
- Emotional safety
- Psychological safety
- Identity safety
- Cultural respect and responsiveness
- Low-risk learning environments

# Conditions for Learning #2: *Belonging, Connection and Support*

(review)

## 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

# Conditions for Learning #3: *Academic Challenge and Engagement*

(review)

## Challenging Condition

- Low expectations for some or all students
- Minimally challenging curriculum / instruction
- Curricula of little relevance to students' lives
- Instructional activities focused mainly on low-level skills (knowledge and comprehension)

## Positive Condition

- High expectations
- Connection to life goals
- Engaging and culturally responsive curricula and instruction
- Robust opportunities to learn

# Conditions for Learning #4:

## *Adult and Student Well-Being & Social/Emotional Competence*

(review)

### 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



## About your school:

- In your experience, what creates a sense of belonging, connection and support?
- How do you reach students and families who've been disconnected or disengaged?



## 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.



## Report Out

### *Share in Chat:*

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

**Relationships are Essential at  
Every Level of Intervention**

how-to guide to

# relationship mapping

MAKING  
CARING  
COMMON  
PROJECT



<b>GRADES</b> K–12	<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b> School Administrators	<b>TIME &amp; RESOURCE INTENSITY</b> ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ low → high
<b>CAPACITIES PROMOTED</b> 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**

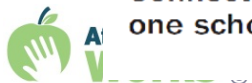
Connect all students to at least one school adult.

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.



# 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  
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 programs: Parent Teacher Home Visits  
<http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/>
- ✓ Learning Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) Home Visit  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Chronic-Absence/Learner-Engagement-and-Attendance-Program-LEAP>

### 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/>

# Resources for Intentional Relationship-Building

- **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/e40lyyjr/sesion\\_2\\_relationship\\_strategy\\_bank.pdf](https://www.scoe.net/media/e40lyyjr/sesion_2_relationship_strategy_bank.pdf)
- **Edutopia – Relationship Building from Day 1**  
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/relationship-building-day-1>
- **Search Institute - Relationships Framework** <https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/developmental-relationships-framework>

# **Strategies and Tools to Communicate About Attendance**



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

*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.*



## Forging Partnerships with Families to Support Engagement and Attendance

- ✓ Engage in two-way, supportive communications about attendance and engagement 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 receive updated health guidance, resources to meet basic needs as well as as support for learning at home



## Utilize Research about Effective Attendance Messaging to Improve Your Communications

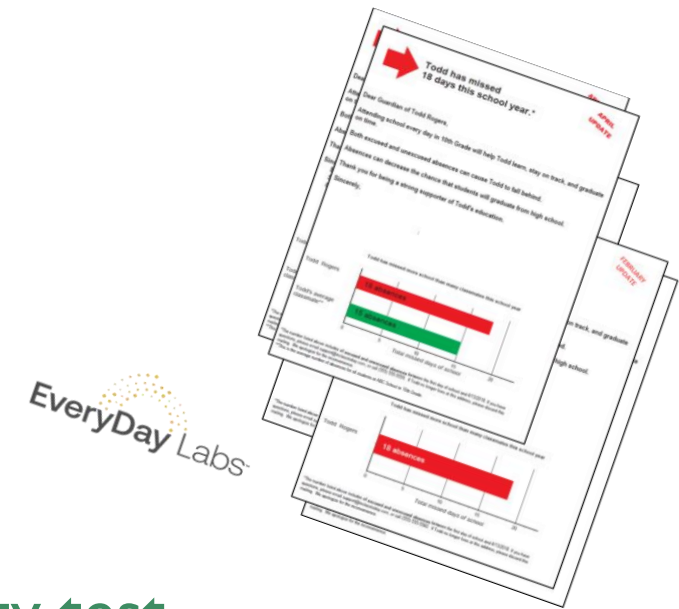
### 1. Readable

- 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



# Let's Practice.

## Which of these flyers aligns with research? Why?

### HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN

With the widespread news coverage about the coronavirus, known as "COVID-19", children may develop fears about the risk to their own health and safety. It is important for parents to listen to these fears, and learn some of the basic facts themselves.

**Be aware of your own behavior**  
It can impact how your child may feel. If you're anxious, they could take their cues from you.

**Stay up-to-date with information**  
This can help you understand and share the facts about COVID-19 with your children.

**Know whether or not to talk about COVID-19 with them**  
It is important to know what children have heard about COVID-19 already. It is likely that they are talking about it in school, so just because your child doesn't bring it up, doesn't mean they aren't thinking about it.

**Explain what is currently being done to contain COVID-19**  
Reassure children that the measures put in place are the best ways to keep them safe. The U.S. is carefully monitoring the situation and currently the risk in Chester County remains low. Health Departments, such as the Chester County Health Department, are encouraging personal preparedness and prevention tips to keep the community healthy.





**Know what information your children are exposed to**  
Be mindful about where your children are being exposed to information about COVID-19. For example, they may overhear conversations, or pick up on the continuous news headlines that adults have on as background. For teenagers and tweens who have access to news online and via social media, ask them what they are seeing and hearing about COVID-19. Help correct misinformation, and if you don't know the answer, be honest. You can research the answers together.

**Validate their feelings and reassure them**  
Parents should listen to their child's fears and try to understand what they are feeling. Avoid saying things like "you'll be fine" or "don't worry about it."

**Give them action items**  
Remind them of the importance of washing hands often (for at least 20 seconds), avoid touching their eyes, mouth, and nose, and keeping their areas clean by wiping down things that are used often. If your preparedness plans include stocking up on groceries and toiletries, like you would before a big snowstorm, ask your child to help. Invite them to go the store with you. Having a stash of their favorite snacks in the pantry may help them feel more prepared.

For more information, please visit the Chester County Health Department's website [Chesco.org/Health](https://www.chesco.org/Health)

If you are active on social media, we recommend following these sources:

 [@ChesterCountyHealthDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/ChesterCountyHealthDepartment)
 [@CDC](https://twitter.com/CDC)  
 [@ChescoHealth](https://www.facebook.com/ChescoHealth)
 [@CDCgov](https://twitter.com/CDCgov)

Example A

### SHOULD MY KID STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY?

**KEEPING SICK KIDS AT HOME IS IMPORTANT**  
For their health For preventing the spread of illness

**SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL**

**FEVER**  
Feels warm  
Appears flushed  
Has a temperature higher than 100.4 °F or 38 °C

**PERSONALITY CHANGES**  
Doesn't seem like herself  
Has no appetite  
Is acting clingy

**STOMACH SYMPTOMS**  
Nausea  
Vomiting  
Diarrhea

**LETHARGY**  
Was up coughing all night and appears tired  
Didn't wake up on her own as usual  
Seems too fatigued to participate in school activities

**PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS**

WHEN SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY IS SICK, YOU CAN HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY BY:

Teaching her to wash her hands often  
Encouraging her not to touch her eyes, nose, and mouth  
Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that may be contaminated with germs

**FLU FACTS TO KNOW**

Kids with the flu should not go to school

Flu season usually begins in October in the U.S.

The CDC recommends that individuals older than 6 months receive annual flu vaccinations

Thousands of kids under age 5 are hospitalized each year due to flu complications

Common flu symptoms include headache, fever, extreme fatigue, sore throat, dry cough, muscle aches, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

**PROVIDED BY:**  
GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL  
Part of Good Samaritan Health system  
[GOODSAMSANJOSE.COM](https://www.goodsamsanjoose.com)

**SOURCES:**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)  
Health and Human Services (HHS)  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)  
U.S. Department of Education (DOE)  
U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)  
U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)  
U.S. Department of State (DOS)  
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)  
U.S. Department of the Treasury (DO Treasury)

Example B



## Additional Resources from Attendance Works



### 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/>



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

**DID YOU KNOW?**




- Starting in preschool and kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10%, or about 2 days each month over the course of a school year, can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences and tardiness can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Eventually good attendance will be a skill that will help them succeed in high school and college.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your children to their teachers and classmates before school starts.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Keep in mind that complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teacher for resources and ideas to continue learning at home

#### When Do Absences Become a Problem?


	<b>CHRONIC ABSENCE</b> 18 or more days
	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> 10 to 17 days
	<b>SATISFACTORY</b> 9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

Visit Attendance Works at [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) for free downloadable resources and tools!

# Encourage All Students and Families to Create a Success Plan

## MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK



- My Family:** List who lives in your house.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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	31				

### 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 headache or headache, and medical resources have been ruled out, I will make sure to call the school nurse and call \_\_\_\_\_ to that he/she can check in with my child during the day.

<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 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level
- ✓ Formatted to help readers skim
- ✓ Makes connection between absences and achievement

**Condition A (Control)**  
Standard Notice

School Name  
Address  
City, State Zip

Date:

Parent Name  
Parent Address  
R.E. Student Name  
City, State Zip

Student ID#: XXXXX

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. [STATE] Education Code determines what types of absences are excused or unexcused. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant. The law and district policy requires all schools to notify parents when this occurs. The [district name] central office automatically sends these letters based on school records so that parents are aware of absences and can address these concerns.

School records indicate that your child was absent from school without a valid excuse on occasions, beginning with the following dates:

---

Thursday, September 12, 2015  
Thursday, September 19, 2015  
Thursday, September 27, 2015

---

Our goal is to partner with families to ensure that students are attending school every day. Although the following consequences may appear harsh we are mandated by Education Code Article 48260.5 to inform you of the following:

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
- That alternative education programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Please recognize that we are required to monitor attendance and notify parents of potential problems with student attendance. If you have concerns about your child's attendance, or if you believe there is an error in this notice, contact the school at «SCHOOL\_PHONE\_NUMBER». The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to assisting you.

Sincerely,

Principal Signature

Principal Name

**Condition D**  
Add-up Notice

We need your help. [STUDENT NAME]'s absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of school each month can fall seriously behind.

[STUDENT NAME] is now "truant" because [SHE/HE] missed school (or was more than 30 minutes late) without a valid excuse on:

*Thursday, September 12, 2015*  
*Thursday, September 19, 2015*  
*Thursday, September 27, 2015*

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss many days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out from high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

We are required by [STATE] law to send you this letter and to warn you of the consequences of additional unexcused absences (see sidebar).

Please remember that every absence matters and just a couple days each month adds up. **You are key to improving [STUDENT NAME]'s attendance.**

Sincerely,  
Principal X

Truancy - [STATE] Education Code School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.  
Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:  
• That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.  
• That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.  
• That alternative education programs are available in the district.  
• That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.  
• That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.  
• That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.  
• That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance or if you believe our records are inaccurate contact the school at «SCHOOL\_PHONE\_NUMBER».

## Writing Truancy Notices That Can Improve Attendance

## Using Behavioral Insights to Improve School Administrative Communications: The Case of Truancy Notifications

# Check out our health guidance!



## 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?
<b>Fever</b>	I have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. <b>Seek medical care</b> 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.
<b>Vomiting and/or diarrhea</b>	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. <b>Seek medical care</b> 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.
<b>Persistent cough or trouble breathing</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> 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.
<b>Rash</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> 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.
<b>Eye irritation</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> if I have eye swelling, eye pain, trouble seeing or an eye injury.	Once I am feeling better.
<b>Sore throat</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> 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.



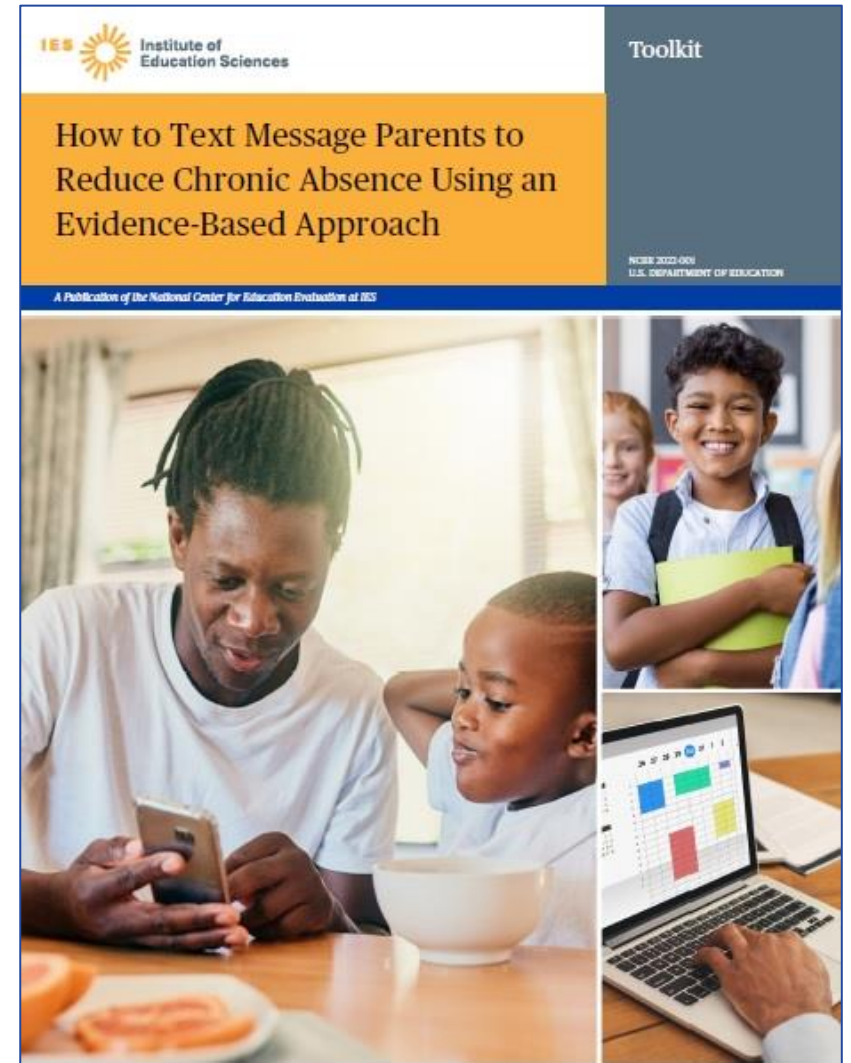
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/>



# Communicating with Families

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

- ★ Letters for Families  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/>
- ★ Spring Attendance Dips  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/spring-attendance-slump/>
- ★ Strengthen Summer Learning  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/using-r-e-a-l-to-strengthen-summer-learning/>
- ★ Stay the Course: Winter Messaging  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/stay-the-course-a-winter-messaging-toolkit/>
- ★ Holiday Messaging  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/holiday-messaging/>
- ★ How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2022001/pdf/2022001.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

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES for K-12: rev. 3-28-23

**Attendance Works**  
Make Your Student Loves to Be at School

**Attendance Activities School Year Plan (K-12)**

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities in the grid are examples. You can customize the plan for your school or program. For each activity, specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure the results. You can also recreate this chart in a larger format and use post-it notes to add activities as a group exercise. See the 3 Tiers of Intervention (<http://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>)

Timing	Summer (July/August)	Welcome Back (August/September)	Ongoing (Weekly)	Fall Semester (October – November)	Winter Semester (December – February)	Spring Semester (March-April)	End-of-Year (May/June)
School Team	Establish school team to address attendance. Develop a yearly attendance plan and goals. Agree on metrics to monitor for in-person and distance learning. Utilize start of school year PD days for teachers and school staff to discuss yearly plan and whole school strategies.	Conduct team meeting by the second week of school.	Hold team meetings.	Review <u>early warning data</u> . Ensure staff are prepared to discuss attendance in a caring manner in parent-teacher conferences, attendance improvement meetings, outreach calls and home visits.	Revisit data to measure progress and revise school-wide strategies as needed. Expand team as needed to address reasons for absence.	Ensure staff are prepared to discuss attendance in parent-teacher conferences. Assess strategies and write school improvement plan.	Review data. Share data with student's next teacher for smooth transitions and trouble shooting.
Foundational Whole School Supports	Plan welcoming traditions for incoming early grades, transition grades and new students and their families. Ensure there is attention paid to students with disabilities and other student groups with historically high levels of absenteeism.	Disseminate in-person health and safety protocols. Promote immunization activities. Establish good and improved attendance recognition schedule/process. Conduct welcoming traditions for students and families.	Coordinate with other school leaders to promote and maintain a positive school climate.	Provide a warm welcome for students who start later in the school year. Offer afterschool programs with engaging and culturally responsive curricula.	Create opportunities for students, families and staff to recharge physically and emotionally. Increase the sense of belonging for specific student groups through clubs, history months and celebrations.	Boost excitement in learning – celebrate and event such as Earth Day.	Plan end-of-year traditions including opportunities for service, e.g. students in upper grades lead tours for students entering the school next fall.
Tier I (Universal)	Promote <u>attendance messaging</u> during registration/enrollment. Have home visits/phone calls to build relationship and remind families about the first day of school.	Share back-to-school messaging about the importance of attendance for in-person and distance learning.	Ask staff to establish daily, weekly and monthly routines to build relationships in the classroom and welcome students back after absences. Hold weekly/monthly recognition. Ensure positive, regular communication with	During <u>parent-teacher conference</u> , recognize good attendance and express concerns in a supportive manner if needed. Anticipate and plan activities/supports to minimize dips in attendance during holidays. Conduct a resource fair for students and their families.	Share messaging and engaging activities around <u>winter holidays</u> . Use data to identify attendance dips and align events to mitigate low attendance days. Schedule mid-year activities to remind school community about attendance.	Hold parent-teacher conference student attendance check-in. Plan engaging activities and messaging to avoid the spring slump.	Communicate the importance of student attendance in last weeks of school. Acknowledge attendance successes.

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



## Questions from the Audience





## 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
- Understand what chronic absence is and why it matters
- 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](https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj)

**Thank you!**



**Hedy Chang, Executive Director**  
[hedy@attendanceworks.org](mailto:hedy@attendanceworks.org)

**Angela Duran, Senior Fellow**  
[aduran@excelby8.net](mailto:aduran@excelby8.net)





## About Us

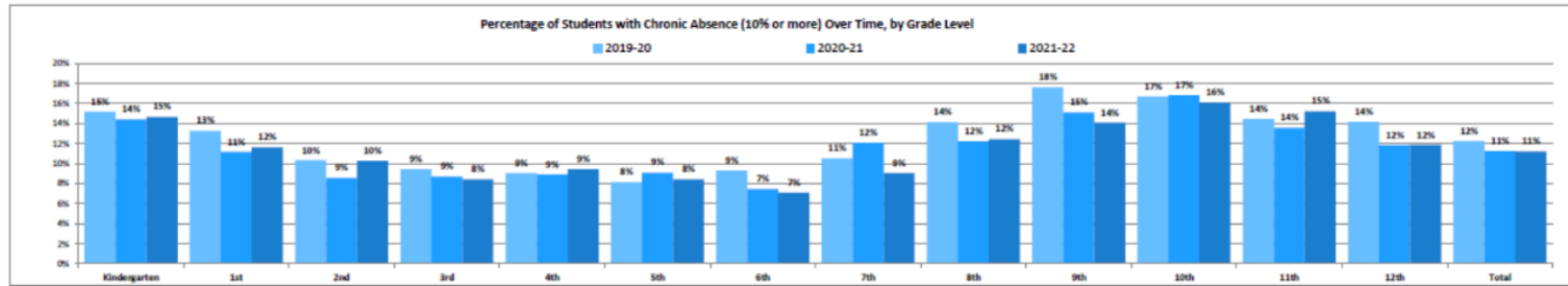
**Attendance Works** advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ 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](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# Appendix





## UPDATED! Data Tracking Tools

**What?** Attendance Works District and School Attendance Tracking tools

**Why?** These tools will help you analyze your local data. This version now captures information about students experiencing extreme chronic absenteeism (missing 50% or more of school).

**When?** Before the new school year begins is an excellent time to examine who was chronically absent last year.

Find it here: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/data-tools/calculating-chronic-absence/>