



Session 2

Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor & Identify Students in Need of Support



Professional Learning Series

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Welcome!



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Review Session 1

If you wish to review Session 1, please take a look at the slides, list of materials and the recording.

- ❖ [Recording: Session #1](#)
- ❖ [Presentation slides](#)
- ❖ [Outline & Summary of Resources](#)



Introductions

Please share in Chat:

- Name
- Role
- Organization
- When it was hard for you to attend school, who or what helped you get there?



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 2

Participants will:

- Learn which attendance measures to monitor in order to identify students in need of engagement and support.
- Identify the key functions of a school team that addresses attendance and take stock of where they are in having a high-functioning team.
- Name the assets, barriers, and strategies that affect attendance.



Session 1 Review

(poll)

1. Chronic absenteeism can result in the inability to read proficiently in 3rd grade, lower achievement in middle school, increase high school dropout, and contribute to greater gaps between student groups. *(True or False)*
2. The most effective approach to reducing high levels of chronic absence across a school is to focus on the students with the most absences. *(True or False)*
3. Effective whole school strategies are those that invest in strong relationships with students and families and create positive conditions for learning. *(True or False)*

Reducing Chronic Absence Requires a Team Approach





What makes a team effective?

Type in Chat:

Describe one value that is essential to an effective team.



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.



Attendance Functions of a School Team



Session 2

- 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.**

Session 3

- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.**
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.**

Attendance Team in Action



Ensuring Attendance Requires a Team

The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

Teams working on improving student attendance could include the school's:

- * Nurse
- * Counselor
- * Social Worker
- * Administrative support staff
- * Special education staff
- * Teachers
- * Early education staff
- * Sports coaches
- * Community School Directors and Coordinators
- * Expanded Learning program staff
- * Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- * Attendance Officers



Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.



Determine which team(s) will assume the attendance MTSS functions

- Map all the teams that currently operate in your school by purpose, membership and meeting schedule.
- Identify areas of overlap, redundancy and/or gaps.
- Consider if attendance responsibilities can be integrated into an existing team (e.g., PBIS, RTI, MTSS, EWIS grade-level, etc.).
- Consider if different teams can assume responsibility for each tier and how efforts will be coordinated across teams.
- Determine if a new team needs to be established.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Map-of-School-Teams.pdf>

Map of School Teams



Name of Team	Team Purpose	Team Members	Meeting Frequency



Poll

What teams in your school address attendance? (check all that apply)

- Stand-alone attendance team
- Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) team (attendance and behavior)
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) team
- Response to Intervention (RTI) team
- Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) team
- Case Management Team
- Other (type in chat)
- No team addresses attendance

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?
- 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



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**

School Practice & School Team Self-Assessments

How well does your school...

- Accurately & consistently take attendance every day
- Utilize a team to address attendance
- Provide a welcome & engaging climate
- Reach out to chronically absent students & families
- Partner with community agencies

School Name: _____

SCHOOL PRACTICE SELF-ASSESSMENT: rev. 5/25/2022

Does Attendance Really Count in Our School?

A Tool for Self-Assessment

Key Element	Strength	OK for Now	Could be Better	Urgent Gap	Don't Know	How do you know?
1. Accurate Data: Teachers and school staff take attendance accurately and it is entered daily into the district data system.						
2. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to: (a) monitor attendance data and trends; (b) coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy; (c) examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data; and (d) ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports.						
3. Engaging Climate: Our school has a welcoming and engaging climate that promotes safety, belonging, great teaching and learning, and interpersonal relationships with students, families, and staff.						
4. Culture of Attendance: Our school promotes a culture of attendance.						

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>

School Team Self-Assessment

Lead A Whole School Approach to Attendance	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Evidence
1. The principal makes attendance a top priority for the entire school.					
2. The group responsible for organizing the school's attendance strategy is aligned with other school teams to ensure attendance is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all children.					
3. Our team members reflect the demographics of our school community and/or are able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics.					
4. Collectively, team members have the authority, will and skill to remove barriers and address inequities.					

Organize A Multi-Tiered Strategy	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Evidence
1. Our regular team agenda is aligned to a multi-tiered system of support.					
2. We proactively promote an engaging school climate.					
3. We have defined when Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports should be offered.					
4. We have a protocol for early personalized outreach to families.					
5. We connect students who are missing too much learning time to one adult in the school (e.g., Mentor or Family Ambassador).					
6. We have a coordinated interagency response to ensure students receive the additional support they need.					

How well does your team...

- Lead a whole school approach to attendance
- Organize a multi-tiered strategy
- Examine attendance data
- Identify barriers & inequities
- Mobilize the school community
- Monitor progress

Team Function #1:

**Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy
that begins with prevention and early
intervention**



**What does prevention and early
intervention mean?**

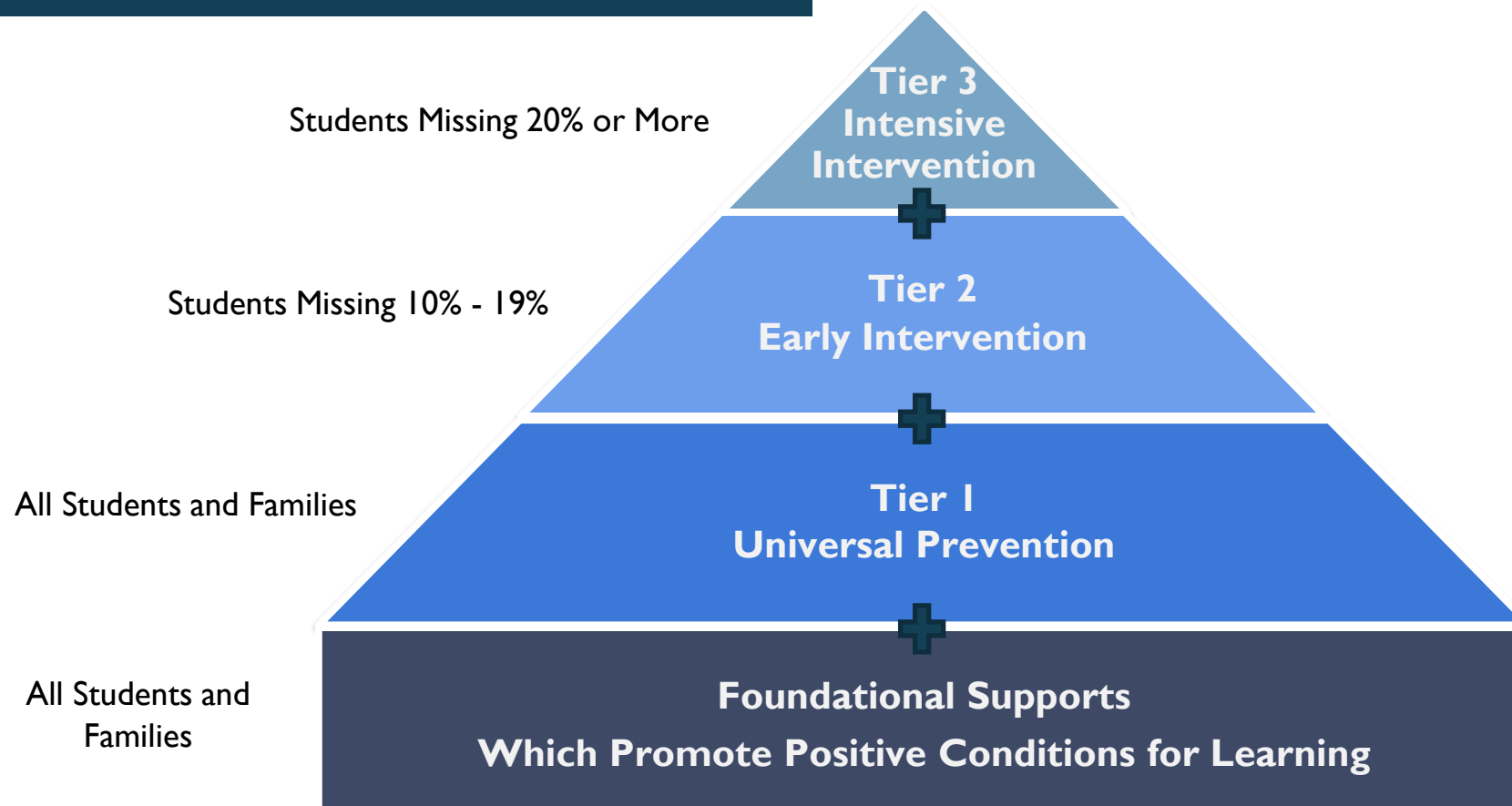


What Is Early Intervention for Chronic Absence?

- Starts with pre-k and kindergarten and continuous throughout K-12
- Starts at the beginning of the school year and continues throughout the year
- Starts with positive engagement before students have missed so much school they need additional support
- Uses data to notice students as soon as they are becoming chronic absence
- What else would you add?**

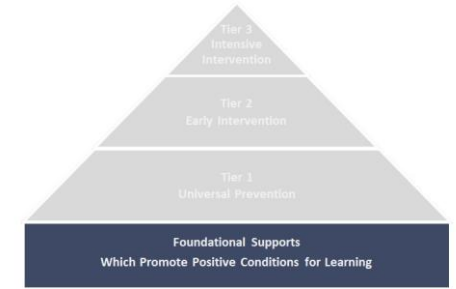


Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance

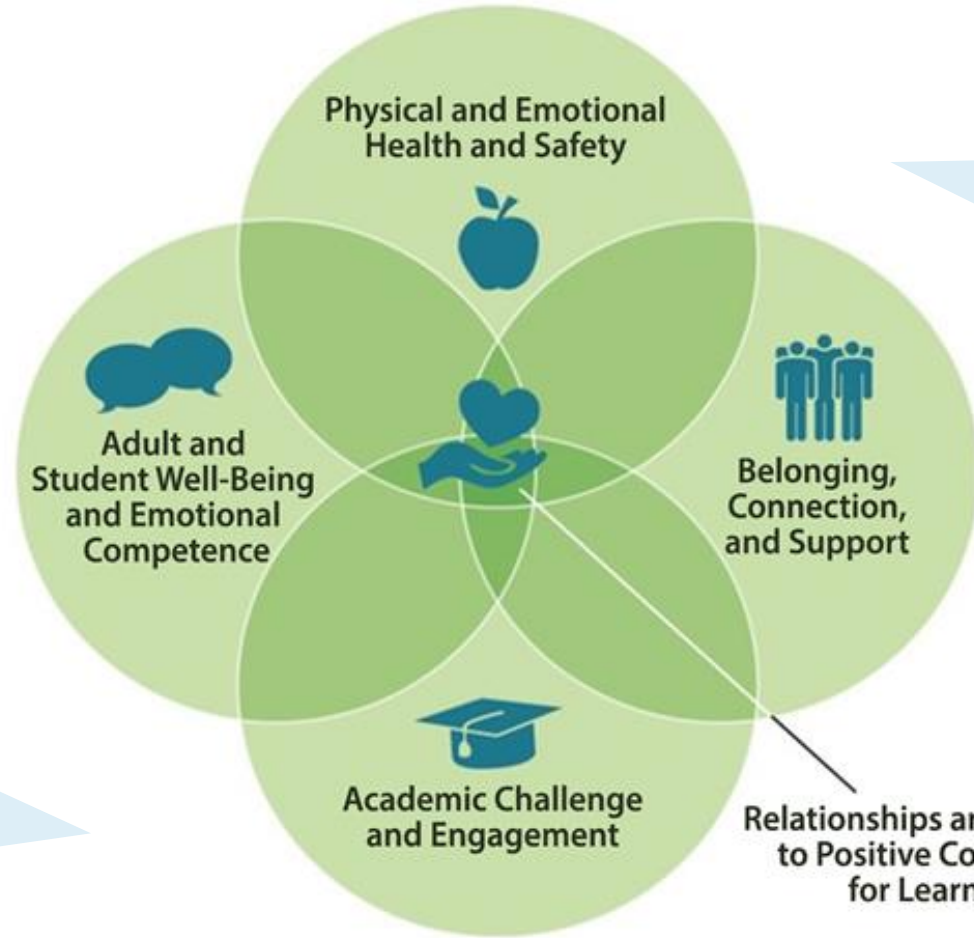


<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

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



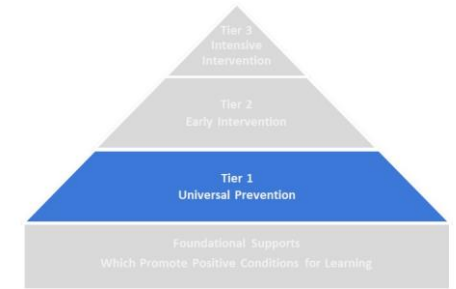
- Healthy learning environments
- Welcoming, safe school climate
- Access to food & other basic needs
- Restorative circles

- 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

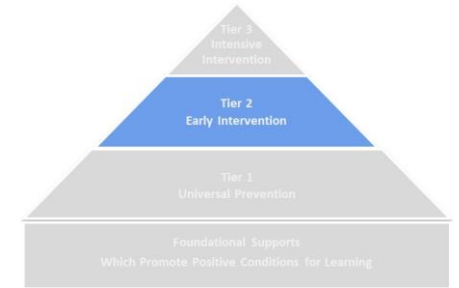
Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports



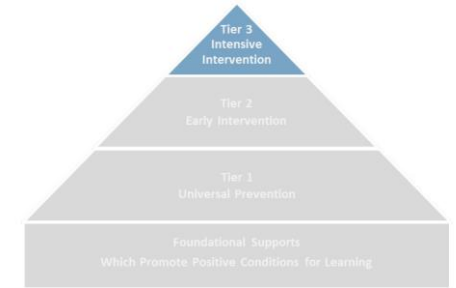
- ❖ Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- ❖ Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- ❖ Personalized positive communication to families when students are absent
- ❖ Recognition of good and improved attendance
- ❖ Impact of attendance 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

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*)



Poll

In working to improve attendance, where does your school put most of its efforts?

- Foundational Supports
- Tier 1 Absenteeism Prevention
- Tier 2 Absenteeism Early Intervention
- Tier 3 Absenteeism Intensive Supports

Attendance Pyramid Worksheet

	Family Engagement	Positive Student Engagement	Behavioral and Mental Health	Physical Health	Academic Support	Extended Learning	Basic Needs
Tier 3: Intensive Intervention							
Tier 2: Early Intervention							
Tier 1: Universal Prevention							
Foundational Supports							

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

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

Attendance Pyramid Worksheet (examples)

Sample form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Pyramid-worksheet-with-EXAMPLES-revised-June-2023.pdf>

	Family Engagement	Positive Student Engagement	Behavioral and Mental Health	Physical Health	Academic Support	Extended Learning	Basic Needs
Tier 3: Intensive Intervention	Assign family advocate to coordinate supports	1:1 connection with adult advocate (e.g. social worker)	Individual plan developed with psychologist/social worker	Coordinated care plans with local health provider	Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation	Accelerated credit recovery	Provision of targeted resources, e.g. housing assistance
Tier 2: Early Intervention	Targeted, positive family visits	Clubs Success Mentors Check-In / Check-Out	Small group counseling	Plans for students with chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes	Attendance strategies added to IEPs and 504 plans Tutoring and intensive classroom supports	Music or art program prioritized for students who have experienced trauma	Bus passes, walking school bus, bike program, or ride sharing services
Tier 1: Universal Prevention	Clear communications about attendance expectations Recognition of good and improved attendance	Connection to a caring adult (<i>Relationship Mapping</i>) Establish positive, caring, daily attendance practices and routines	Open-door policy for students, families, and staff to seek mental health services	Build time into routines for students and staff to wash hands Immunization clinic Health screenings	Learning objectives are clear and students can make up work after they are absent	Summer enrichment for every student	School-based clothing closet
Foundational Supports	Family resource centers Universal family visits	Grade-level advisories or morning meetings	Schoolwide mindfulness	Clean school campuses with good ventilation P.E. and recess	All students have access to challenging and engaging curriculum	Plentiful, high-quality afterschool programs exist in the community	Universal free meal program

Blank form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Pyramid-worksheet-BLANK-revised-June-2023.docx>


3 Tiers of Intervention: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

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

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 Activities School Year Plan (K-12)

School Name

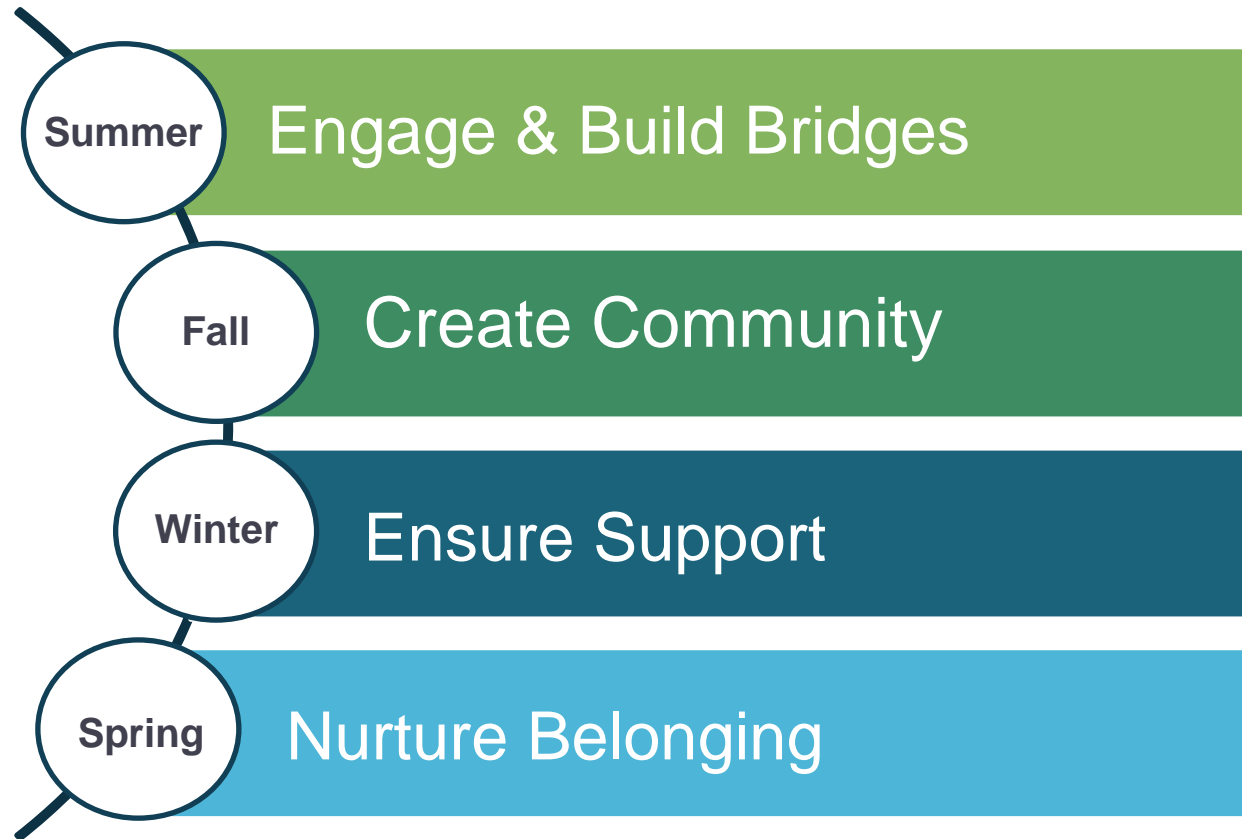
School Year

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/>

Taking A Year Long Approach

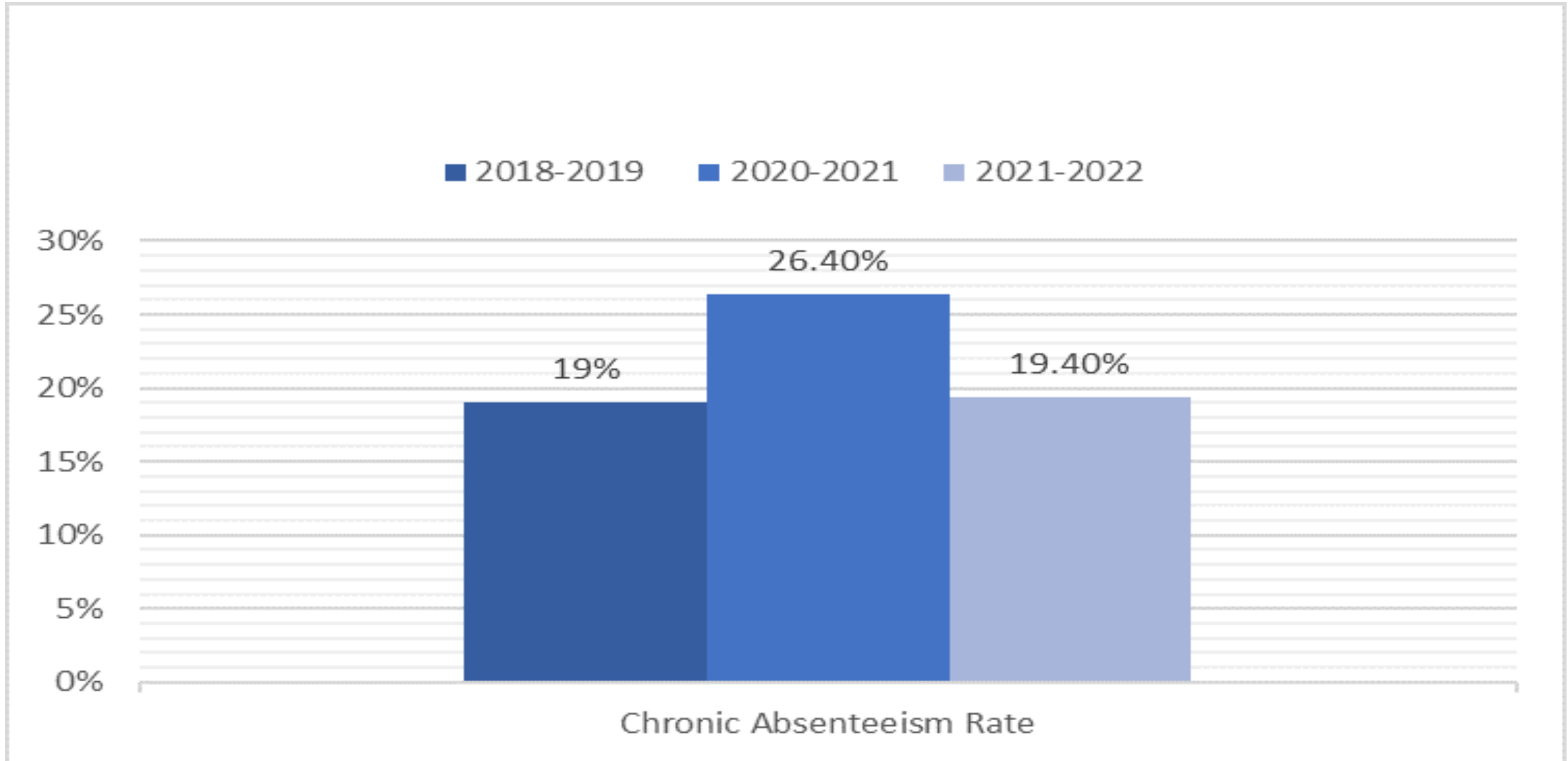


Team Function #2:

Examine attendance & absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence

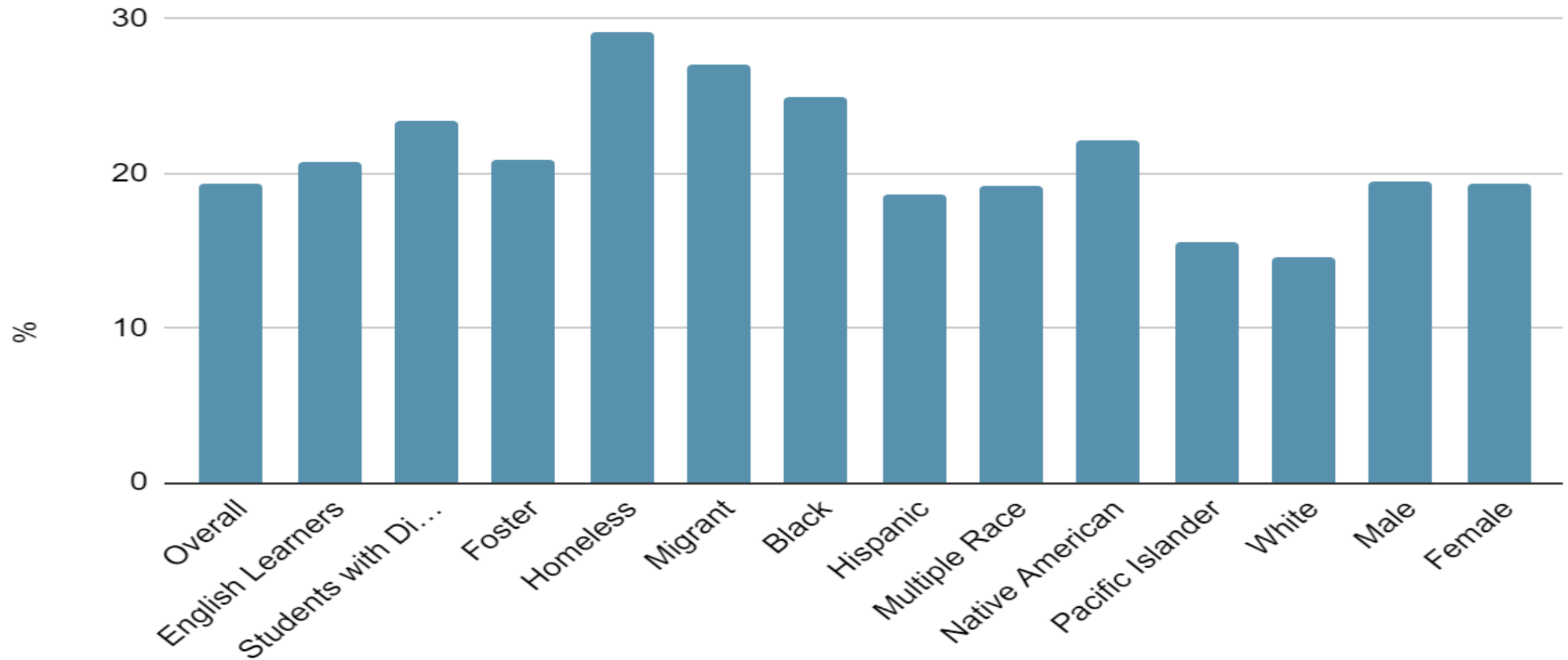


Chronic Absence Rate in Louisiana



Source: Louisiana Department of Education

Chronic Absence in Louisiana 2021-2022



Source: Louisiana Department of Education



Take Note

Which groups of students in your school have higher rates of absenteeism and require priority attention?

Please write down your answer and we'll refer back to it later.



Free Attendance Works Data Tools

The District Attendance Tracking Tools (DATT) and School Attendance Tracking Tools (SATT) are available in three modules:

- ✓ Grades K-5 or PK-5
- ✓ Grades 6-8
- ✓ Grades 9-12

We also offer a Tool to Combine the Modules for PK-12 reports
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/data-tools/>

Lessons from the Pandemic: What to Track

Chronic Absence

Missing 10% or more of the school year – A key early warning indicator.

Contact

Schools have working contact and back up information for each enrolled student and their family.

Connectivity

Students, families and staff have access to technology (computer, software and internet access) and other materials to support learning at home.



Use Data to Identify and Address Inequities

- Analyze data overall, broken down by school, grade, race/ethnicity, home language, disability and zip code.
- Use qualitative information, especially drawing upon the perspectives of students and families, to deepen an understanding of the contributing factors.
- Determine how to address unequal access to resources.



Poll

What data is your school using to activate outreach? (check all that apply)

- One absence
- Missing 10% of days enrolled
- Number of unexcused absences
- Student does not log in to class
- Cannot reach family with existing contact info
- Other (*type in chat*)

When to Reach Out and Provide Support

Tier 2 Early Intervention

Suggested Criteria for what activates early outreach:

- Missing 10% or more of school in the prior school year
- Missing 10% in the current year
- Not checking in or completing work in distance/virtual learning

Consider who should respond: *Who is most trusted by families?*

Attendance staff? Counselors? Nurses? Community partners? Teachers? Teachers on special assignment? Social work interns?

Document: Any attendance barriers staff identify, supports provided or follow up needed.

When to Reach Out and Provide Support

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention

Suggested Criteria for what activates intensive outreach:

- Missing 20% or more of school in prior school year (severely chronically absent)
- Missing 20% or more of school during current year
- Students who already qualify for McKinney Vento services, who are in foster care or involved in juvenile justice
- Students whose attendance does not improve with Tier 2 supports

Consider who should respond: *Who is already working well with families and can take the lead?* Social Workers? Staff of public agencies?

Document: Any attendance barriers staff identify, supports provided or follow up needed



Reflect

In your school, is it clear...

- ✓ when to take action to improve attendance?
- ✓ how that should happen?
- ✓ who should do it?

What should happen at our school for each level of absence?

sample form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Summary-of-Actions-SAMPLE-FORM-rev-Sept-2022.pdf>

Number of Absences	Action(s)	People Responsible	Resources to Support Action(s)	Documentation <i>What was the reason for the absence, and what intervention or support was offered?</i>
0	Welcome Letter Welcome Video on website	School secretary Principal and person who updates the school website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to resources, e.g. District letter that can be personalized by principal / school team • AW Flyers • AW Student Success Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add contacts from Student Success Plan to family contact information form.
1-2 Per month	Caring Communication (text, postcard, call)	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script for Call • Sample Text • Easy-to-Use Post Card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log in Student Screen on SIS • Track and monitor in case management system
3-4 Per month	Call Home	School Counselor or Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Script • Documentation of Reasons https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log in Student Screen on SIS • Note reasons for absence and any supports or interventions needed. • Track and monitor in case management system
5 Per month	Family Meeting	Principal or other School Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard agenda for family meeting • Student Success Plan • List of resources • Form for taking notes and follow up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use district form for family meeting • Attach

Team Function #3:

Identify assets, barriers and strategies that affect attendance



Addressing Reasons for Absences



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPw1WiE6Dkk>



Why Understanding the Perspectives of Students and Families Matter

- ❖ Students have untapped expertise and knowledge that can bring renewed relevance and authenticity.
- ❖ Addressing the challenges students experience requires considering their specific realities.
- ❖ Understanding when many students and families experience similar challenges allows for scalable solutions.
- ❖ It ensures that the engagement strategies you create are inclusive of students and families' cultural norms.

Qualitative Data Tools

Gather information about why students do or don't attend school

- ❑ **Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT):** Identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and strong attendance
- ❑ **Empathy Interviews:** Targeted, one-on-one conversations with a small group of students
- ❑ **2x10:** Relationship and trust building strategy; spend two minutes per day for 10 days talking with a student
- ❑ **Student Focus Groups:** Moderated small group discussions to explore experiences and perspectives
- ❑ **Attendance Café:** Engage parents in discussions about attendance
- ❑ **Student and Parent Surveys:** Ask about reasons behind their absences



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/qualitative-data/>

Reflecting on Root Causes

1. Go through the list of Barriers, Aversion, Disengagement or Misconceptions and highlight the ones your team believes affect the students and families in your school
2. Select a method for learning about what affects attendance
3. Listen carefully for reasons why students attend or do not attend school
4. After talking with students or families, write down what you learned about why students attend school
5. Then summarize what you learned about why they don't attend by going through the list of Barriers, Aversion, Disengagement or Misconceptions and circling the ones that you heard most frequently
6. Review the list to see if there are any significant factors that are not on the list

Reducing chronic absence requires addressing underlying challenges

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Community violence

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences

Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/>

Small Group Discussion

Reflect on the population of students you identified earlier who were most likely to be chronically absent.

1. Share, which **group** of students you notice miss most often.
2. What helps them come to school?
3. What barriers keep them from school?

Large group – share in Chat:

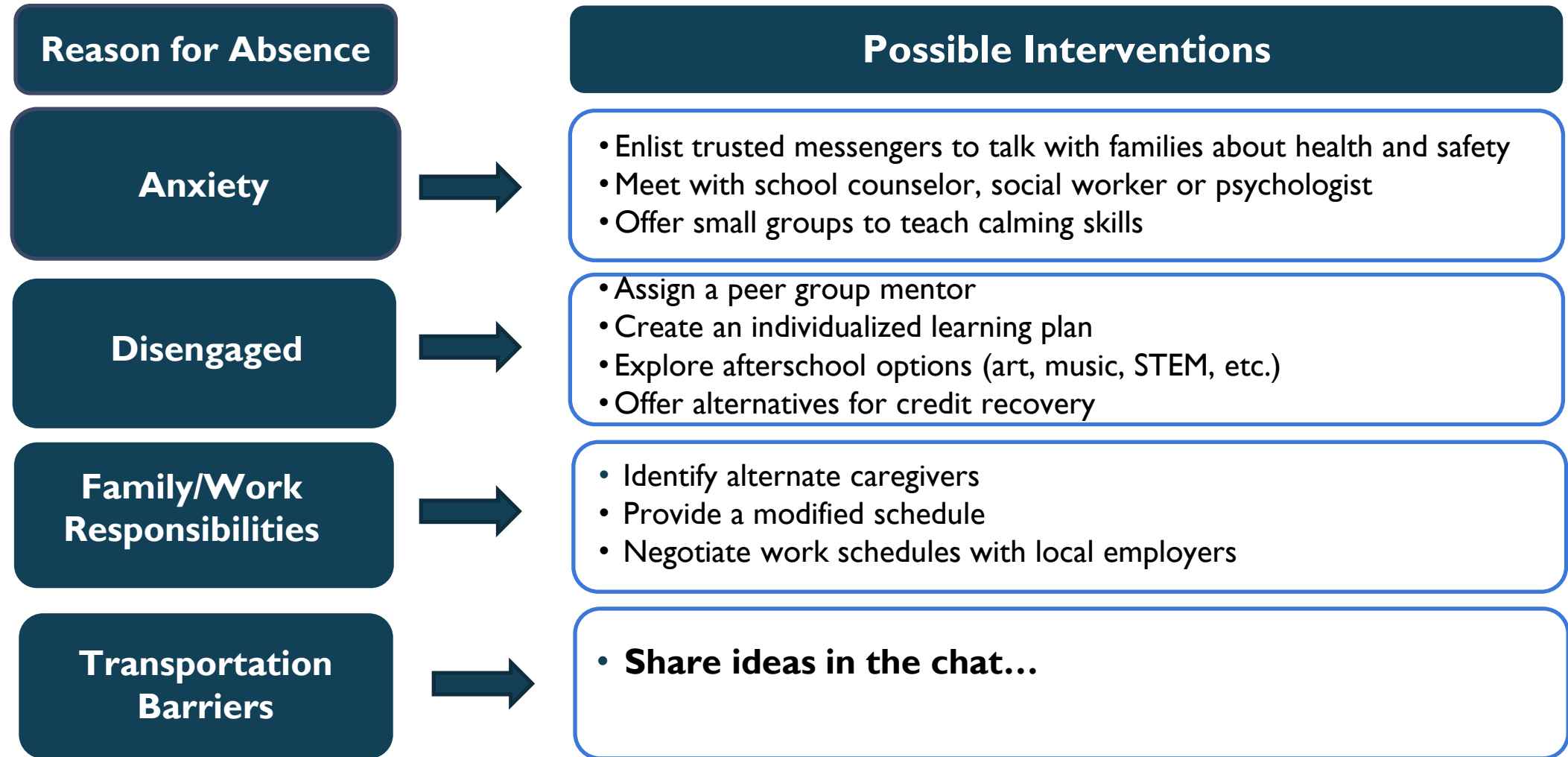
What helps students who struggle with absenteeism show up to school?



Ground Rules

- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Create space for everyone to speak (and use the chat to express ideas)
- Person whose first name is closest to the letter “M” is the facilitator

Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences





Understanding Common Causes of Absences Worksheet

- Academic Conditions
- Safety Concerns
- Social Dynamics
- Home Situation
- Health Status
- School Culture
- Student and Parent Voice

Worksheet: Understanding the root causes for student absenteeism

Use these questions to help identify the likely causes of absenteeism for a student who is chronically absent in your class. Understanding the root causes for missing too much school can help determine the best course of action. Is this something that you can help your student and his/her family overcome? Or is there an underlying issue that requires additional support, perhaps from the school social worker or guidance counselor?

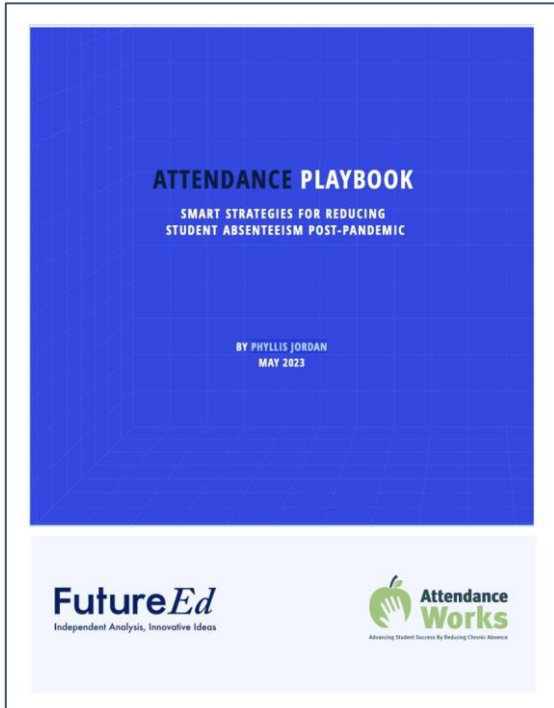
Academic Conditions	
Is the student struggling academically? Consider what skills and content the student has missed as a result of his or her absences as well as other instructional needs.	Y / N
Does the student need accommodations to benefit from classroom instructions? (e.g. peer support, access to computer, breaks, material presented in different ways)	Y / N
Does the student have language or communication challenges?	Y / N
Does the student struggle with organizational tasks?	Y / N
Are there barriers to homework completion?	Y / N
Do you suspect that the student has an unidentified disability?	Y / N
Safety Concerns	
Have there been any reports of bullying?	Y / N
Is the student exposed to race, disability, cultural or LGBTQ biases?	Y / N
Social Dynamics	
Does the student get to avoid difficult social or academic situations by staying away from school?	Y / N
Are transitions difficult for the student? (e.g. entering the school building, moving from class to class)	Y / N
Home Situation	
Do the parents/guardians recognize the importance of and support regular school attendance?	Y / N
Are there problems in the home that contribute to frequent absences? (e.g., parental illness, homelessness, joblessness, child care, needed health or mental health services for parent/caregiver)	Y / N
Health Status	
Are there conditions in the classroom, cafeteria or other school areas that affect the student's health or safety? (e.g. mold or other asthma triggers, animal dander, food allergens)	Y / N
Does the student exhibit anxiety due to separation from parent / caregiver?	Y / N
Does the student require health or mental health-related treatment that interferes with attendance?	Y / N
School Culture	
Are there any clubs, programs or resources during the school day and after school that might help engage the student?	Y / N
Is there a caring adult at the school that could mentor the student?	Y / N
Student Voice	
Has the student identified the reasons for missing school?	Y / N
Parent Voice	
Have you met with the parent/caregiver to discuss attendance concerns?	Y / N
Has the parent/caregiver identified specific barriers to attendance?	Y / N
Are there cultural, language, or other types of barriers that require extra effort on the part of the school to work with the parent/caregiver?	Y / N
Attendance Barriers for Students with Identified Disabilities	
Has the IEP/504 team met recently to review and revise the student's educational plan?	Y / N
Are the instructional and behavioral supports the rights ones?	Y / N



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Interventions that can be found in the Attendance Playbook



TIER I: Foundational Support and Schoolwide Prevention

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

TIER II: Targeted Support

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

TIER III: Intensive Support

- Interagency Case Management
- Housing Insecurity
- Truancy

Attendance Playbook: <https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/>

Implementation Guide: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/>



How to Use the Attendance Playbook

The Guide to the Attendance Playbook offers practical tips for:

- Forming a team
- Using attendance data to determine the number of strategies
- Analyzing why students are absent and selecting strategies that address those reasons
- Realistically assessing your team's capacity to implement each strategy
- Selecting strategies that are likely to have the greatest impact for the lowest effort
- Making an implementation plan
- Assessing how well the strategies worked



Questions from the Audience





Review: Learning Goals for Session 2

Participants will:

- Learn which attendance measures to monitor in order to identify students in need of engagement and support.
- Identify the key functions of a school team that addresses attendance and take stock of where they are in having a high-functioning team.
- Name the assets, barriers, and strategies that affect attendance.



Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!



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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

Appendix: Additional Resources

Qualitative Data Tools

Gather information about why students do or don't attend school

- Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT)**
- Empathy Interviews**
- 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank**
- Student Focus Groups**
- Attendance Café**
- Student and Parent Surveys**



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/qualitative-data/>



Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT)

The Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT) is designed for school leaders to engage school staff, students, parents and community members to identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and strong attendance.

The SEAT comes with:

- A user guide
- A description of how key features of school climate positively reinforce attendance
- A debriefing tool

Equipped with information about building-level practices that influence attendance, schools can take actionable steps to address some of the causes, not just the symptoms, of chronic absence.

Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT)
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

School Name _____ Date of Observation _____ Time of Day _____
Observer(s) _____

Teaching and Learning
Relationships **Environment**
Safety

School climate is made of several elements: the school's physical environment; arrangements that contribute to people's sense of physical and emotional safety; response to the quality of teaching and learning; and the presence or absence of healthy relationships between adults and students.

Purpose: The Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT) is designed for school leaders to engage school staff, students, parents and community members to identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and daily attendance. The SEAT is intended to be used multiple times over the course of the school year as part of an iterative process and should serve as a tool for qualitative analysis of the observable features of school climate that support a culture of attendance and engagement. Note that each of these characteristics may not be observable in a single walkthrough; schools are encouraged to select different times of the school day that may be conducive to observing the different climate elements. See the accompanying User Guide for more information about why each of the efforts in the checklist below can help support improved school climate and student attendance.

Empathy Interviews



About ▾ Programs ▾ Professional Learning ▾ Research Center ▾



Empathy Interviews

Learn About the Problem From a User's Perspective

<https://hthgse.edu/resources/empathy-interviews/>

2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank

Strategy	Plan & Track	Reflect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify a student who may benefit from more support● Spend 2 minutes with them over 10 consecutive days● Talk about anything they want to talk about● Focus on listening, don't get distracted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Check off or record dates● Start with one student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How did this help you learn about the student in new ways?● Bring results back to the team for sharing to understand larger themes across multiple students (if using this strategy for whole classroom or grade or school)

https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyyjr/sesion_2_relationship_strategy_bank.pdf

2 x10 Relationship Strategy Bank

2 x 10 Strategy

PURPOSE

This strategy can be layered onto universal relational supports to strengthen relationships with individual students by focusing attention on personalized understandings.

DIRECTIONS:

Use the strategy and process below to plan, track and reflect on a series of brief, informal and individualized relationship interventions.

Strategy:

THE 2 x 10



- Identify a student who may benefit from additional support.
- Spend 2 minutes per day for 10 consecutive school days with the student
- Talk with the student about anything he or she wants to talk about.
- Focus on listening and the conversation, as opposed to the time or other things happening around you.

Plan & Track:

Check off or record the dates of 2 x 10 strategy implementation. Start by trying it with one student and add more students as is necessary and feasible.

Student:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10

Reflect:

How did this help you learn about the student in new ways?

What did you notice about your relationship with the student across the 10 days?



Student Focus Groups

Student focus groups are moderated discussions held with a small number of students that help to explore experiences and perspectives.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EXJKyDFvbsBULdX1dzNrSWtISC9h2L2o/edit>

Student Attendance Focus Group

The purpose of the student attendance focus groups are to seek students' opinions and experiences with attending school. Select students who have different attendance patterns so you hear about a variety of experiences. The questions explore key reasons for student absenteeism and ways the schools can encourage increased attendance.

Scheduling Student Attendance Focus Groups

Focus groups preferably should take place during the regular school day. Coordinate with school administrators to identify the best date and time to hold the focus group.

Confidentiality Protocol:

Individual student names will not be collected or recorded.



Student Attendance Focus Group Protocol



Attendance Cafe

1. Invite Families - In Person or Virtual
2. Table Hosts - Facilitate conversations in groups of 6
3. Listen carefully for strengths and assets as well as barriers to attendance
4. Write down what you learn *after* families leave. Remember, you are trying to build relationships as well as understand what affects attendance.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/exercises/>

EXERCISE: ATTENDANCE CAFE

Time: 30 minutes

MENU:

Special Today: **ATTENDANCE**

APPETIZERS

- » Welcome and Parent Café Agreements
- » 3 Minute conversation with your designated partner. Each partner gets a turn to respond to these questions: How was school attendance for you when you were a student? Did you go every day? Did you miss a lot?

ENTREE

- » Discuss this question for 15 minutes: Did you know that children who miss 18 or more days of the school year (2 days a month) starting in kindergarten are less likely to learn to read by third grade and graduate from high school?
- » Discuss this question for 15 minutes: What are some of the obstacles that parents face in getting their children to attend school every day?
- » Discuss this question on the new table for 15 minutes: What are some ways that parents can overcome these obstacles? How can you help other parents overcome these obstacles?

DESSERT

- » Conversation reflection: Table Hosts summarize the conversations at their tables.
- » Volunteer to be on an attendance committee
- » One-word reflection

The Attendance Café is part of a series of Parent Cafes developed by Oakland Parents Together. Reprinted with permission by Attendance Works, January 2013. For more information on Parent Cafes, contact Oakland Parents Together, 510-452-9854. <http://www.parentstogether.org>

Student and Parent Surveys



Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA)

Chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days per school year, has significant impact on student outcomes. It is associated with decreased reading levels, overall academic performance, on-time graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment as well as increased dropout rates.^{1,2} Fortunately, chronic absenteeism rates are alterable at the student and system level when interventions are appropriately targeted and matched to student needs.

*PreK: <https://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/PreK%20RCA%20Parent%20Version%20Items.pdf>

*Secondary: http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/rca_educator_version.pdf

Fill in your own 3 Tiers Worksheet

Blank form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Pyramid-worksheet-BLANK-revised-June-2023.docx>

Attendance Pyramid Worksheet							
	Family Engagement	Positive Student Engagement	Behavioral and Mental Health	Physical Health	Academic Support	Extended Learning	Basic Needs
Tier 3: Intensive Intervention							
Tier 2: Early Intervention							
Tier 1: Universal Prevention							
Foundational Supports							

Sample form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Pyramid-worksheet-with-EXAMPLES-revised-June-2023.pdf>

3 Tiers of Intervention: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

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