



# Session 3:

## Partnering to Make a Difference



Professional Learning Series

August 17, 2023



**Welcome!**



**Shelneka Adams- Marsalone**  
**Child Welfare and Attendance Liaison**  
**Louisiana Department of Education**



**Welcome!**



**Cecelia Leong**  
Vice President of Programs



**Molly Balfe**  
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



# Welcome!

**If you wish to review Session 2, please take a look at the slides, list of materials and the recording.**

- ❖ [Recording: Session #2](#)
- ❖ [Presentation slides](#)
- ❖ [Outline & Summary of Resources](#)



## Getting Started: Introductions

### Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name, role, community, and state
- ✓ A key community partner for engaging students in school



## Poll

### What has been most valuable to you from the first 2 classes? (check all that apply)

- The key functions of an attendance team
- Taking a multi-tiered approach to reducing absenteeism beginning with prevention
- Effective communication strategies
- Using chronic absence data to inform action
- Identifying root causes of absenteeism
- Other (*type in chat*)



## Pop Quiz

1. Early intervention begins when students miss 20% of school. (True or False)
2. There are many factors affecting student attendance. (True or False)
3. Schools must form a stand-alone attendance team. (True or False)
4. You matter! (True or False)





## Learning Goals for Session 3

### Participants will:

- Learn strategies for mobilizing school staff and community agencies to partner with families to improve attendance and engagement.
- Find out about how to determine if your efforts are making a difference.



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.**

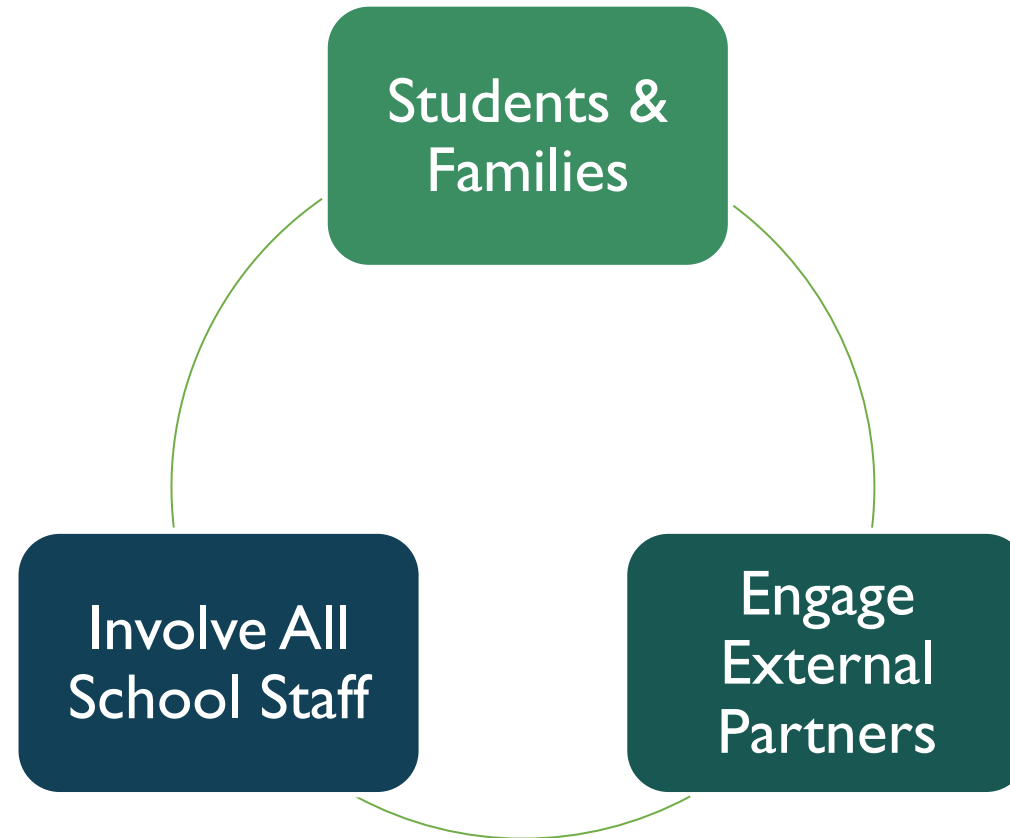
# **Team Function #4:**

**Mobilize everyone in the school  
community to address attendance**









## Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance



# Changing the Power Dynamics: Shifting to a Partnership Approach

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

These concepts were adapted from this blog by the Search Institute:

<https://blog.searchinstitute.org/six-shifts-better-family-engagement>

# We All Have a Role



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NyrIOizVo0>

[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



## Reflection

### Share your thoughts in Chat:

1. What's the connection between this video and attendance?
2. How are you encouraging everyone at your school to get involved in attendance and engagement?

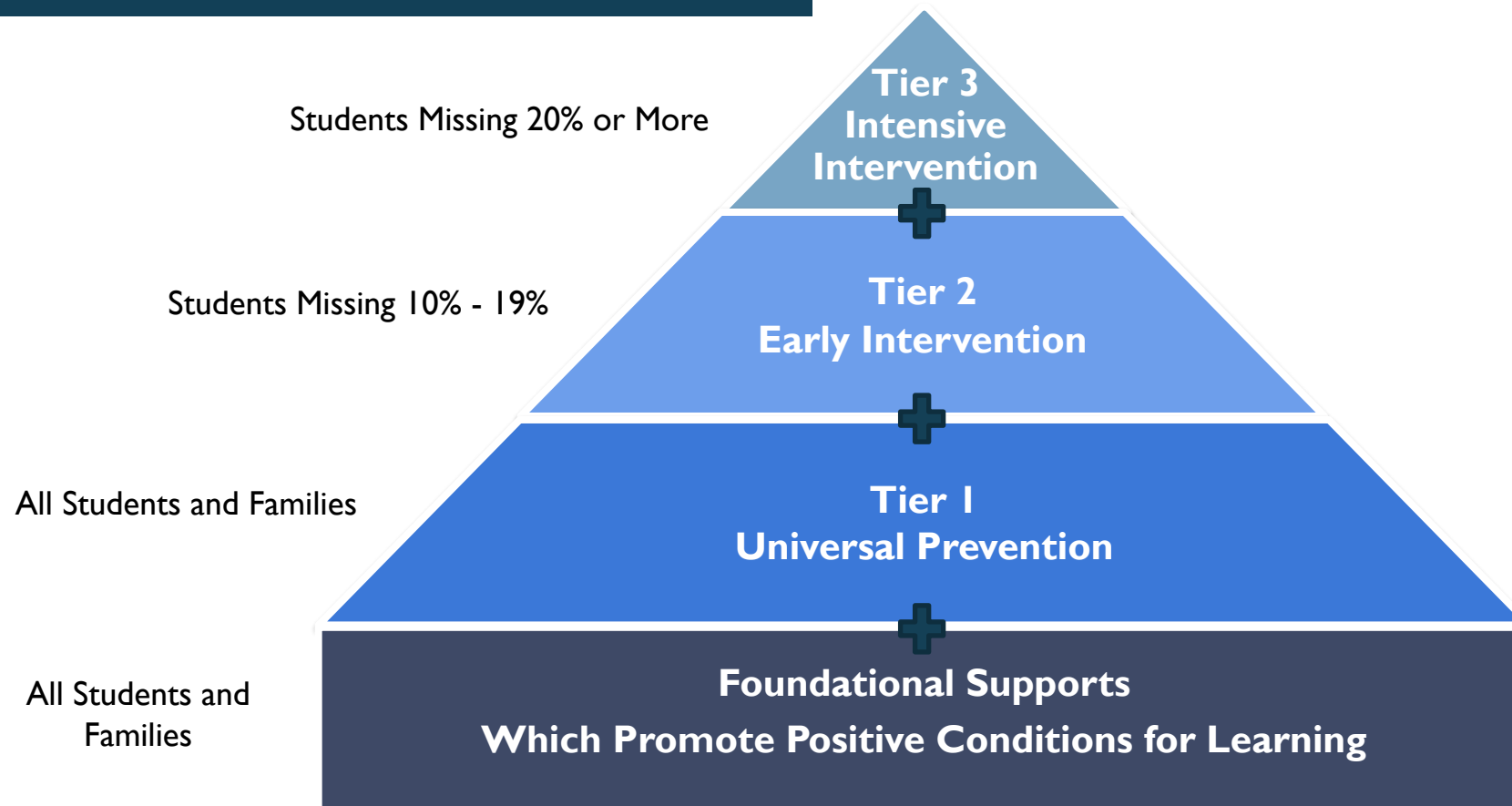
# **Mobilize the Community:** **Involve All School Staff in Caring Conversations**



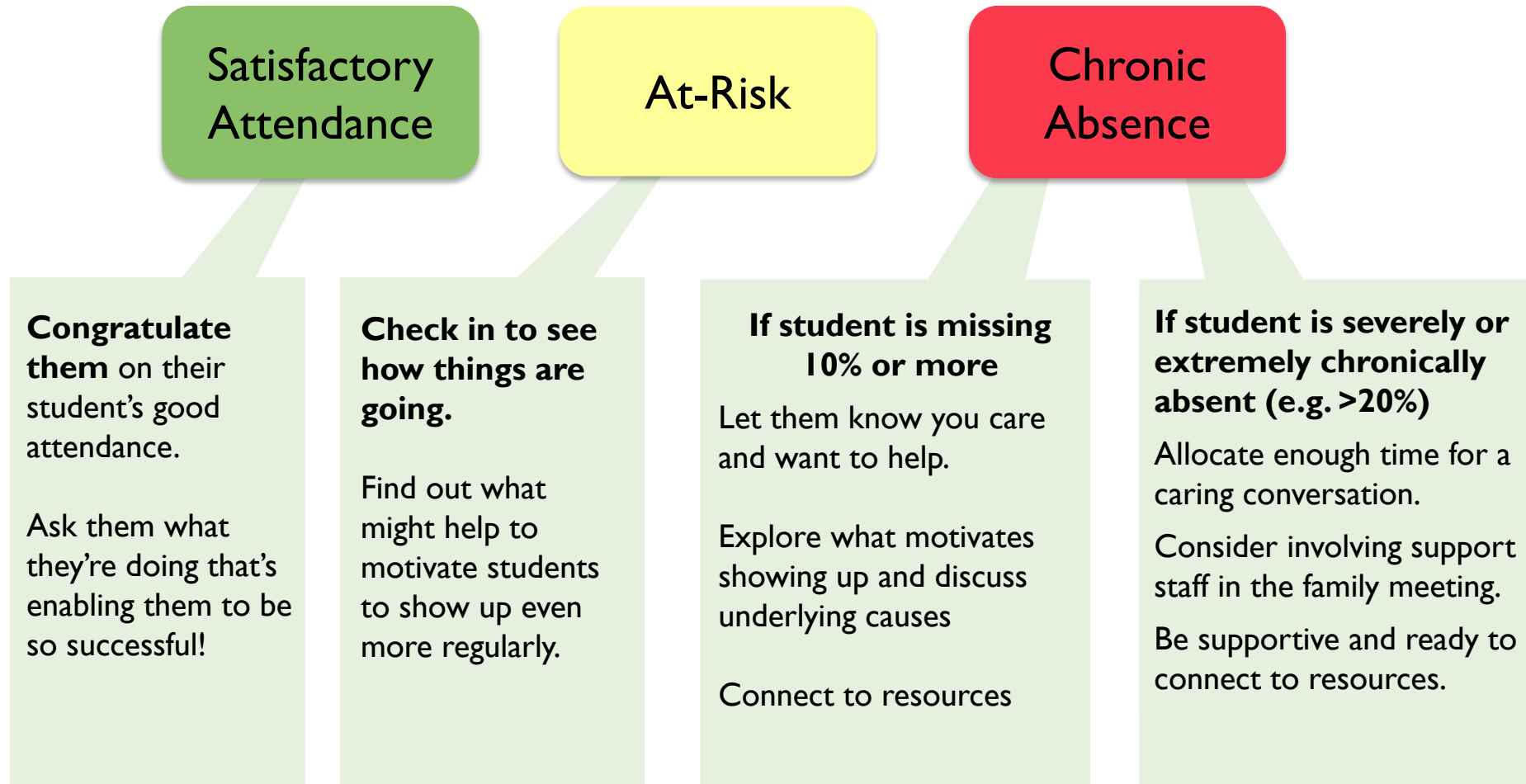




## Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance



# Tailor Conversations to Students' Attendance Status





## Small Group Reflection

We've all had the experience of conversations going poorly when trying to broach a sensitive subject. Take a moment and reflect about an instance when this happened (*Each person shares for 1 minute*)

- Why the conversation went badly
- What could have helped



## Sample Scenario: *Modeling Caring Conversations*

- **You are Peter's teacher.** Peter is a 7th grader who struggles to keep up. Since returning to school in person, he has been quiet and distracted in class. In the first 12 weeks of school, he has missed 8 days and been tardy 15 times.
- **You are Peter's parent.** Peter has the responsibility for getting his younger siblings to elementary school since his parents are at work by the time the children wake up for school. The entire family is still grieving the death of your spouse.

# The “Caring Conversations for Attendance” Process



Adapted with permission from materials created by © High Expectations Parental Service, 2011



## Steps 1 & 2: Learn and Share

### Share in Chat:

1. What excellent questions can you ask to learn about a student's family?
2. What are some positive observations about a student you might share with the student or family?

01

### Learn

Learn about the student's family. What are their hopes and dreams for their student? What does the student enjoy about school this year? What has been interesting or challenging about learning?

02

### Share

Share positive things you've observed about the student. Share your own vision for student learning & development.



# Step 3: Inform

03

## Inform

Review attendance with parents. Tailor conversation to student’s level of absenteeism & inform them of possible impacts of missing school. How might poor attendance affect their hopes and dreams for their student?

1. Show absences marked on a school calendar
2. Identify patterns
3. Share what key concepts a student missed relating back to the hopes and dreams that the student or parents shared

2021-2022 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

September 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

March 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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June 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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July 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



## Step 4: Discuss

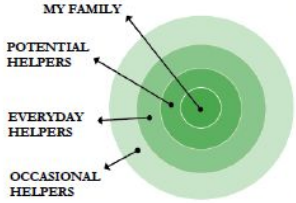
04

### Discuss

Discuss what works to get their student to school as well as challenges.  
Explore options for making up for lost learning time in the classroom.

1. Learn about student motivations.
2. Discuss reasons for absenteeism.
3. Explore what would help reduce absences and increase engagement.
4. Identify opportunities to make up for lost learning in the classroom.
5. Use help bank to identify support systems.

**MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK**  
CREATE BACKUP PLANS FOR GETTING TO SCHOOL



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

1. My Family: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Everyday Helpers: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Occasional Helpers: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Potential Helpers: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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





## Step 5: Arrive at a Plan

05

### Arrive at a Plan

Assess strategies for addressing absences. Help students and families develop an attendance and learning plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you can help.

1. Work with the family to identify specific steps that will help to prevent absenteeism in the future.
2. Develop and complete a plan for attendance and learning.
3. Ensure that the plan includes any support that the school will offer as well.
4. Provide a copy of the plan to the student/parent.
5. Agree on a timeline to check in and see how things are progressing.

**MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN**

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS AND HELP MY CHILD GAIN THE SKILLS TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL AND TO READ BY 3RD GRADE.

- Keep an attendance chart at home to track absences. Consider using the attached calendar.
- At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending preschool every day with \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., a visit to the park, a new book, a special treat, a hug, etc.)
- Make sure my child is in bed by \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.
- Find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to or from preschool if I can't. I can list who can help on the Help Bank (attached).
- Set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after preschool.
- If my child has a slight stomachache, headache or allergies, and is not sick with a contagious illness (including Covid-19), I will send my child to school. I will call the school or a health provider for advice if my child complains regularly.

To improve \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance, I commit to the following:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

To improve \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance, the program commits to:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

*We will review progress to meet this goal in one month.*

Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendance Works** To learn more, please visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)  
Adapted from materials created by Early Works at East Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Oregon (<http://www.childnet.org/connections/early-works/>)

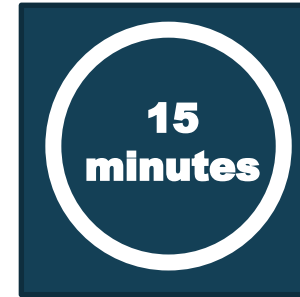
# Caring Conversations Professional Development Resources

	Key Points	Questions and Messages
<b>1. Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gather information</li><li>• Ask open-ended, supportive questions</li></ul>	<i>What is your vision for <u>student's</u> future? (ask parent and student)</i>
<b>2. Share</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive observations about student so far</li><li>• What you want students to accomplish this year</li><li>• One goal is helping students acquire good habit of attendance</li></ul>	<i>_____ is such a good listener. We love having her (you) in our class.</i>
<b>3. Inform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress you've seen (start positive)</li><li>• Areas where child is struggling</li><li>• Review report card &amp; update parents on child's attendance</li><li>• Deliver appropriate attendance messages</li></ul>	<i>_____ is excelling at math! and is making progress with reading. Reading remains the area that needs work.</i> <i>_____ has been late five times and has missed two days during this first month of school. Absences impede reading and overall learning progress.</i>
<b>4. Discuss</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenges, attendance barriers</li><li>• Learning at home activities</li><li>• How to stay connected</li></ul>	<i>What makes it hard for _____ to get to school?</i> <i>What helps ____ catch up on learning given their absences?</i>
<b>5. Ask &amp; Arrive at a Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are there any questions?</li><li>• Is there anything you can do to support a partnership between home and school?</li><li>• Make referrals to community resources</li></ul>	<i>What questions do you have?</i> <i>How can I help you?</i> <i>Would it help you to work with...?</i>

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caring-Conversation-Worksheet-2-16-22.docx>

## At your school:

- Who in your school community could benefit from learning about Caring Conversations?
- How and when can you introduce them to Caring Conversations?



## Ground Rules

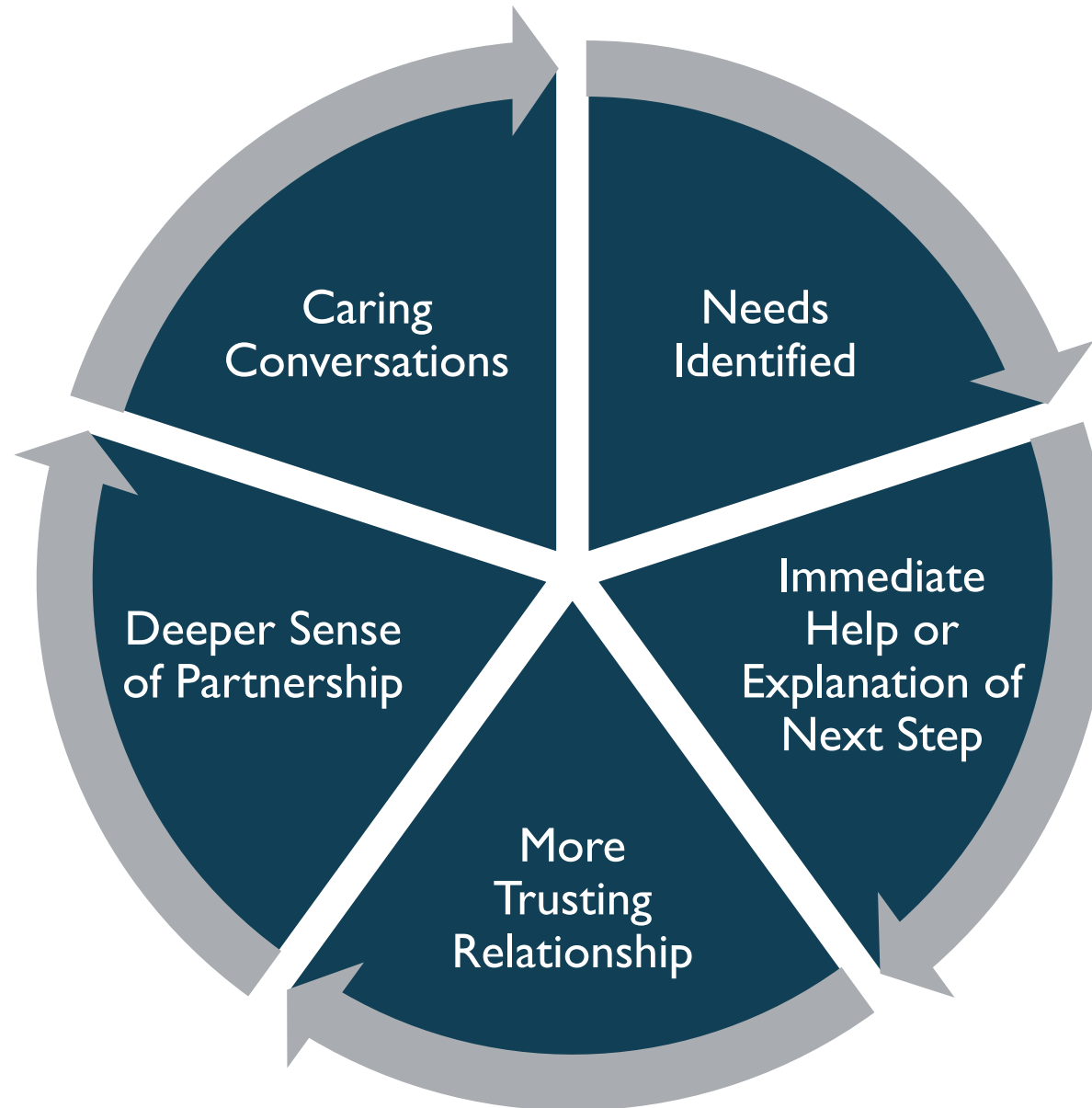
- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak (*and use the chat to express ideas*)
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter “Z” should facilitate.



## Report Out

**How and when can you equip others in your school community to have Caring Conversations?**

# The Cycle of Effective Relationship Building



# Listening to Parents

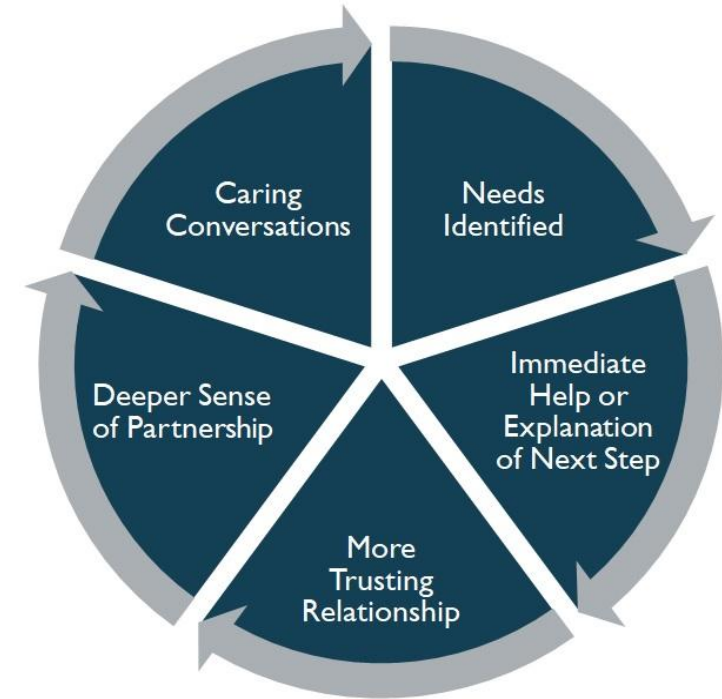


**Lorri Hobson, Former Director of Attendance**  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) in Cleveland, Ohio

<https://youtu.be/f93RjyYvHb0>



## Let's Chat



### Type in chat:

- What might cause the cycle to break down?
- What can school teams do to keep it going?

# **Mobilize the Community: Engage Partners**







## School Self-Assessment

*Poll: Sample Question*

**Community partners and public agencies are partners in providing support to students and families in my school.**

- Strongly in Place
- Measurable Progress
- Needs Improvement
- Urgent Gap

School Team Self-Assessment tool: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>

# Community Schools Strategy



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc64K3obVqE>

To learn more about community schools, contact the [Coalition of Community Schools](#)  
Or find a local [Communities In Schools affiliate](#)



## Partners for Change

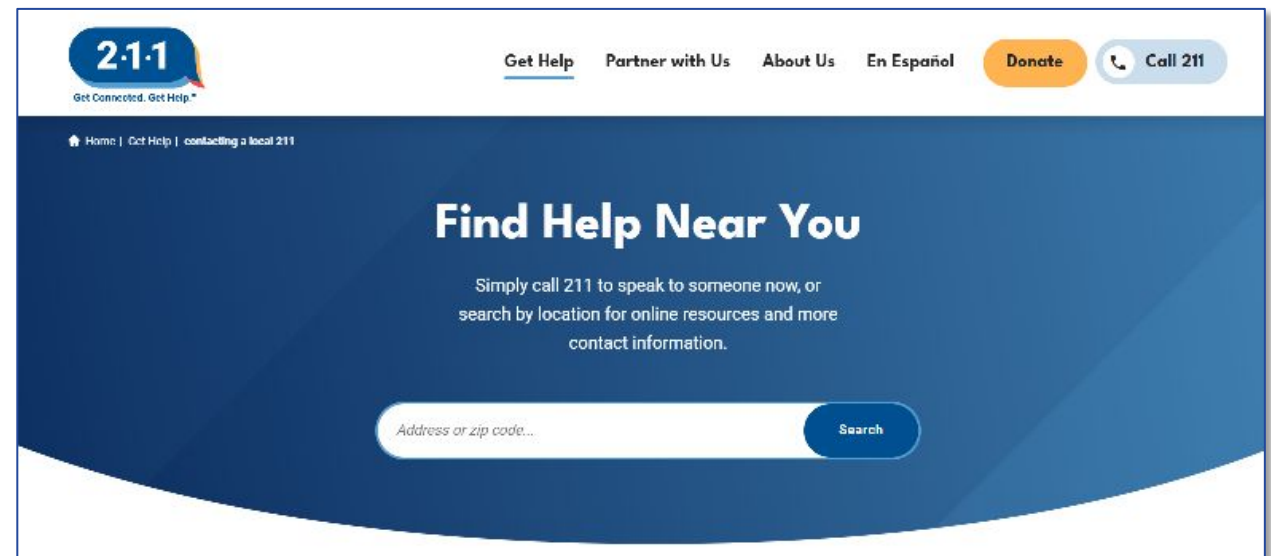
The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important. Tap into existing initiatives and coalitions to engage potential partners.

- Businesses
- Community Schools Initiatives
- Family Support Organizations
- Early Childhood Providers
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Health / Mental Health Providers
- Housing Agencies
- Hunger Relief Organizations
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Local / Tribal Governments
- National Service / Volunteers / Mentors
- Out –of-School Time providers
- Social Emotional Learning Providers
- Social Services
- Population-Specific Service or Civic Organizations
- Philanthropy (including foundations and United Ways)



## Ways to Identify External Partners and Resources

- ✓ United Way [211](#)
- ✓ Online Search – e.g. [Findhelp.org](#)
- ✓ Any other examples?  
*(type in chat)*




# Align Partners and Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence	Possible Interventions	Potential Partner
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlist trusted messengers to talk with families about health and safety</li> <li>• Meet with school counselor, social worker or psychologist</li> <li>• Offer small groups to teach calming skills</li> </ul>	<p>Local pediatricians            Promotoras (<i>community health workers</i>)            NAMI – online courses</p>
Disengaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a peer group mentor</li> <li>• Create an individualized learning plan</li> <li>• Explore afterschool options (art, music, STEM, etc.)</li> <li>• Offer alternatives for credit recovery</li> </ul>	<p>MENTOR            Parks &amp; Rec program            Boys &amp; Girls Club</p>
Family/Work Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify alternate caregivers for elderly or for children</li> <li>• Provide a modified schedule</li> <li>• Negotiate work schedules with local employers</li> </ul>	<p>Adult Day Care            Child Care Referral Networks</p>
Transportation Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking School Bus</li> <li>• Free municipal bus passes</li> <li>• Carpools</li> </ul>	<p>Parents            AmeriCorps program            City government</p>

# School Community and External Partners

- ❖ Use this worksheet to help keep track of your partners
- ❖ Be sure to update the list on a regular basis

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/List-of-Partners-2.16-22.docx>



## Partners

School \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary School / District Contact**  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Partner	Contact Info. <small>(name, email, phone)</small>	What is being provided?	Who is being served?	Time Period of Partnership	Who established this partnership? <small>(name, email, phone)</small>	Last updated on <small>(mm/dd/yy)*</small>
<i>EXAMPLE: Springfield County Food Bank</i>	<i>name, email, phone#</i>	<i>food</i>	<i>all students</i>	<i>SY 2021-2022</i>	<i>name, email, phone#</i>	<i>8/1/21</i>

\*Update the information for each partner at least annually.

# **Team Function #5:**

**Determine if you are making a difference**





## Measuring Progress

### Answer these four key questions:

1. How much did we do? (*quantity*)
2. How well did we do it? (*quality*)
3. What difference did we make for the students who received support?
4. What was the impact on the school as a whole?





# PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

*Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students*

## Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Testers: **Counselors**

Test Title: **Lunch Buddies**

Cycle #: **1**

### What change idea is being tested?

*Lunch Buddies is the change idea. Counselors will invite students who seem disconnected to eat lunch and meet with peers in small groups every Friday.*

**Date of test:** *October 23, 2023*

*(After the first attempt, review the data, discuss, and make modifications to increase outcomes for the next week. Use a new form every week to record results.)*

### What is the overall goal of this test?

*Improve attendance for students who seem to be disconnected and who have missed between 10-19% of the school year. Students who feel more connected to their peers will have better attendance. Selected students will have fewer total absences on the day of the test than on the previous Friday as a result of feeling more connected to peers.*

**Driver:**

*Positive Peer Relationships*

### Learning Questions: What do you hope to learn from this test?

*Q1 - Are counselors willing to support this intervention?*

*Q2 - Which students will show up?*

*Q3 - Does attendance improve on Fridays?*

*Q4 - Are there any spillover effects, i.e., does attendance improve the other days of the week?*

# PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

*Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students*

## Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Plan		Do	Study	
Details: What are the steps in the test? Who will implement it?	Predictions: Make a prediction for each question. Not optional.	Data you will collect	Briefly describe: what happened during the test, surprises, difficulty getting data, obstacles, successes, etc.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruit counselors</li> <li>2. Select location where groups can sit in a circle</li> <li>3. Agree on conversation starters</li> <li>4. Invite all students</li> <li>5. Special outreach to students who are chronically absent</li> <li>6. Note which students attended after each session</li> </ol>	Q1 - Prediction - All counselors are willing to help	Attendance of counselors	We had four counselors and 24 students. The students were split into groups of six. There was a miscommunication and the special outreach to chronically absent students did not happen.	
	Q2 - Prediction - Students who have satisfactory attendance and at-risk attendance will show up. Some students who are chronically absent will show up.	List of students who participate each Friday sorted into attendance categories.		All but one of the counselors showed up. She was out sick.
	Q3 - Does attendance improve on Fridays?	Compare the total number of absences for targeted students on this Friday with the total number of absences for targeted students on previous Friday.		Of the students who were invited, half showed up. Only about a quarter of the chronically absent students made it
	Q4 - Are there any spillover effects?	Compare the total number of absences on the following Monday with previous Mondays.		Yes, several of the chronically absent students who attended the lunch had been absent the previous Friday.
				The Monday absences were the same as the previous week.

# PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

*Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students*

## Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

**Act:** Describe modifications and/or decisions for the next PDSA cycle. What will you do next?

Adapt (tweak the process and try again)

Adopt (make this my standard process)

Expand (try this for a longer period of time)

Abandon (go to a new change idea)

- Ask our assistant principal to be the backup in case anyone is out
- Ask students for ideas about a special activity they want to do as a group to build connections among group members
- We will text every student with a reminder to attend
- Expand and repeat for the next two weeks.

- Download the example:

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-EXAMPLE-rev-August-2023.pdf>

- Download the blank worksheet:

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-BLANK-rev-August-2023.pdf>



## Questions from the Audience





## **Review:** *Learning Goals for Session 3*

### **Participants will:**

- Learn strategies for mobilizing school staff and community agencies to partner with families to improve attendance and engagement.
- Find out about how to determine if your efforts are making a difference.



## 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!**



**Cecelia Leong, Vice President of Programs**

[cecelia@attendanceworks.org](mailto:cecelia@attendanceworks.org)

**Molly Balfe, Senior Fellow**

[molly@attendanceworks.org](mailto:molly@attendanceworks.org)







## About Us

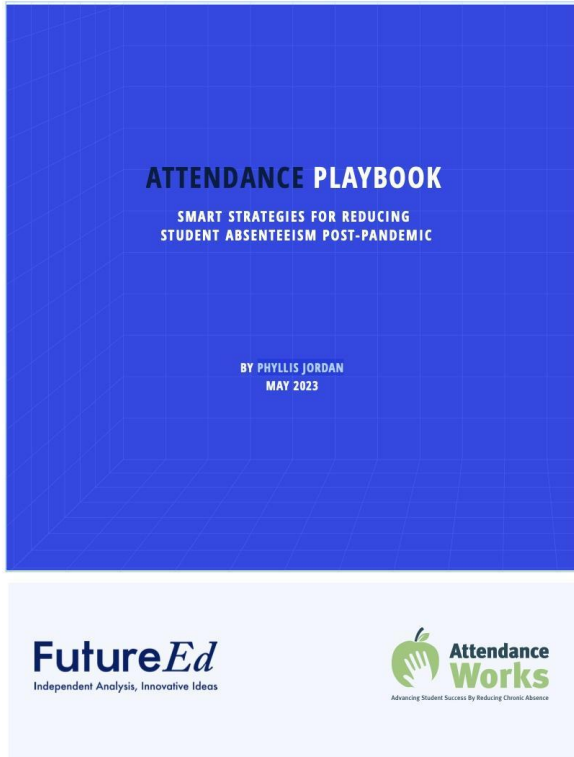
**Attendance Works** advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ 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](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



# Interventions that can be found in the Attendance Playbook



## TIER I Interventions

- Nudging Parents and Students
- Home Visits
- Positive Messaging
- Incentives
- Healthy School Buildings
- School-based Health Services
- Telehealth
- School Buses and Public Transit
- A Safer Walk to School
- Breakfast for All
- Laundry at School
- Relevant—and Culturally Relevant—Curriculum
- Threshold Greetings
- Rethinking Recess
- Restorative Discipline Practices

## TIER II Interventions

- Early Warning Systems
- Mentors
- Youth Engagement
- Addressing Asthma
- Targeted Transportation
- Students with Disabilities
- School Refusal
- Immigration Enforcement

## TIER III Interventions

- Truancy Courts
- Interagency Case Management
- Housing Challenges

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