



# Session 3:

## Partnering to Make a Difference



Professional Learning Series

September 28, 2023



**Welcome!**



**Maria Casey**  
Associate Director of Staff  
Development



**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.





# 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.**

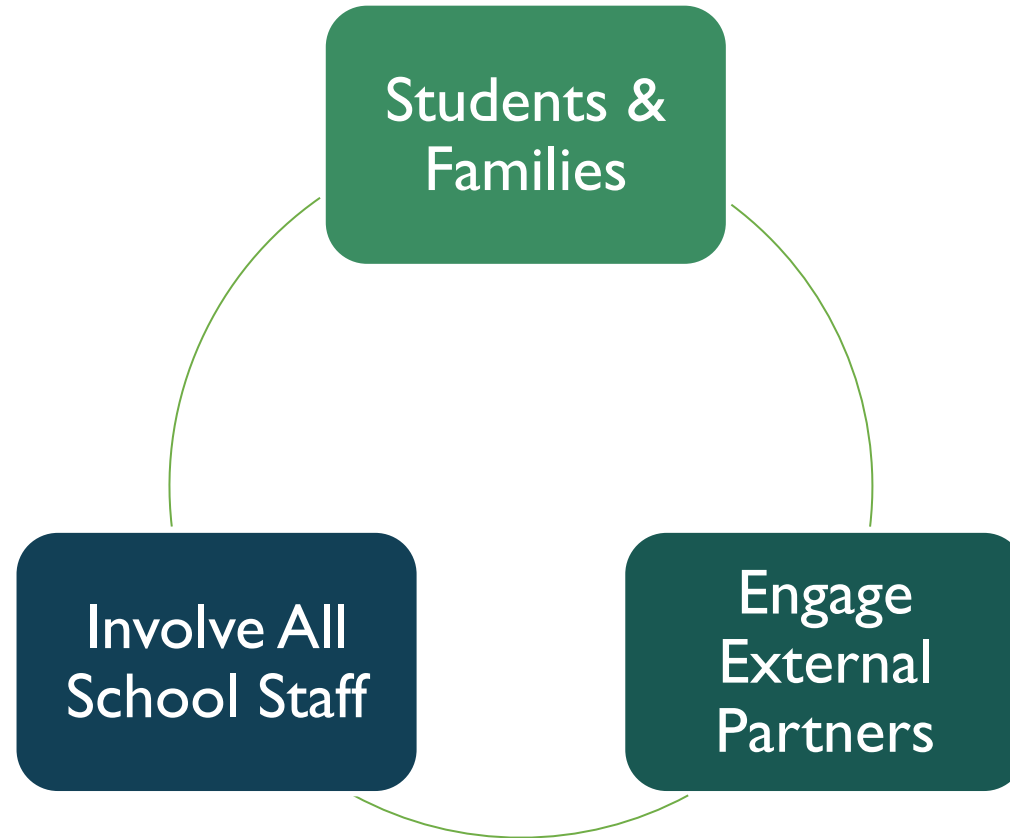
# **Team Function #4:**

**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:

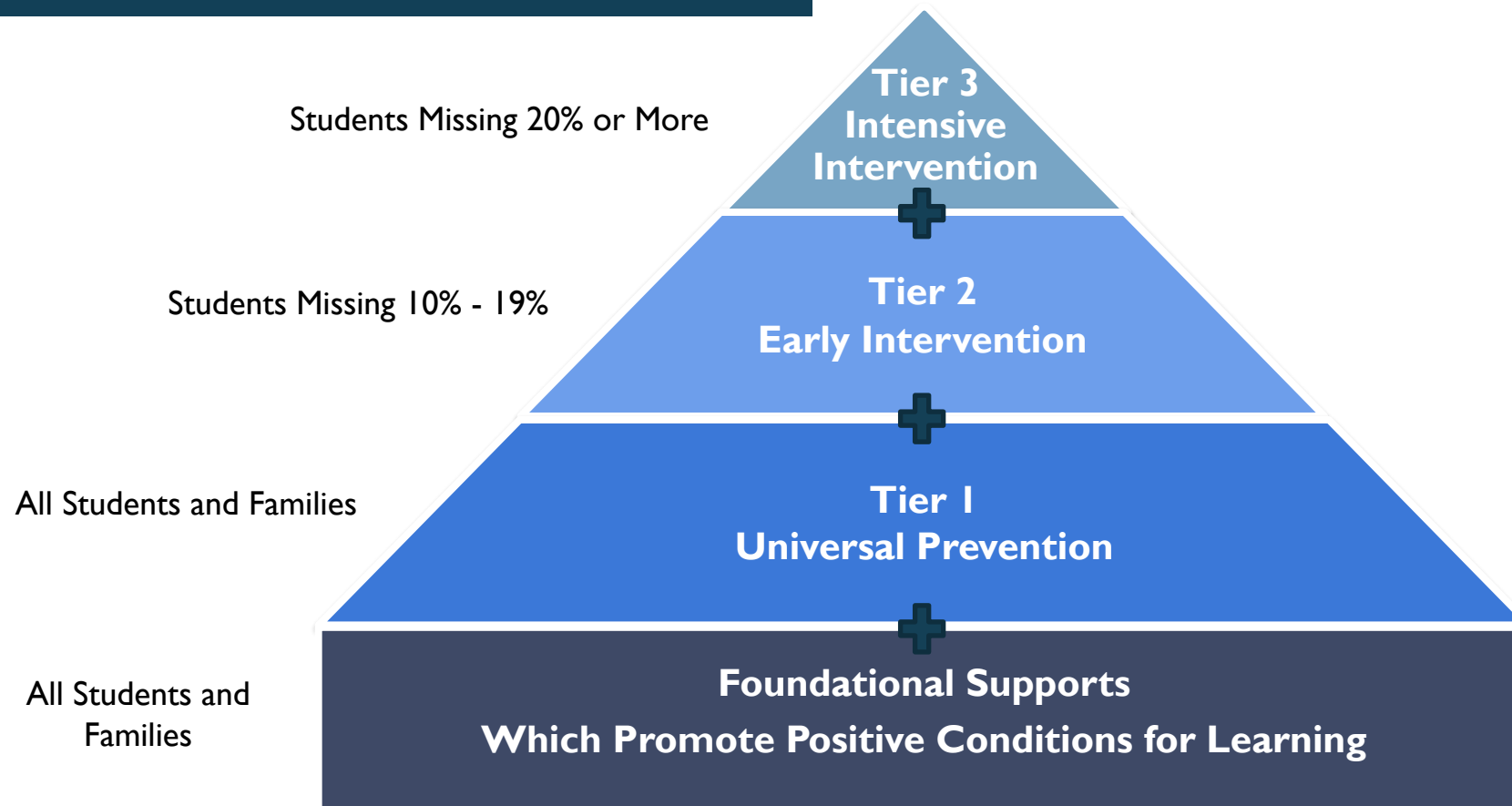
1. What's the connection between this video and attendance?
2. How are you encouraging everyone at your school to get involved in attendance and engagement?

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





## Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance

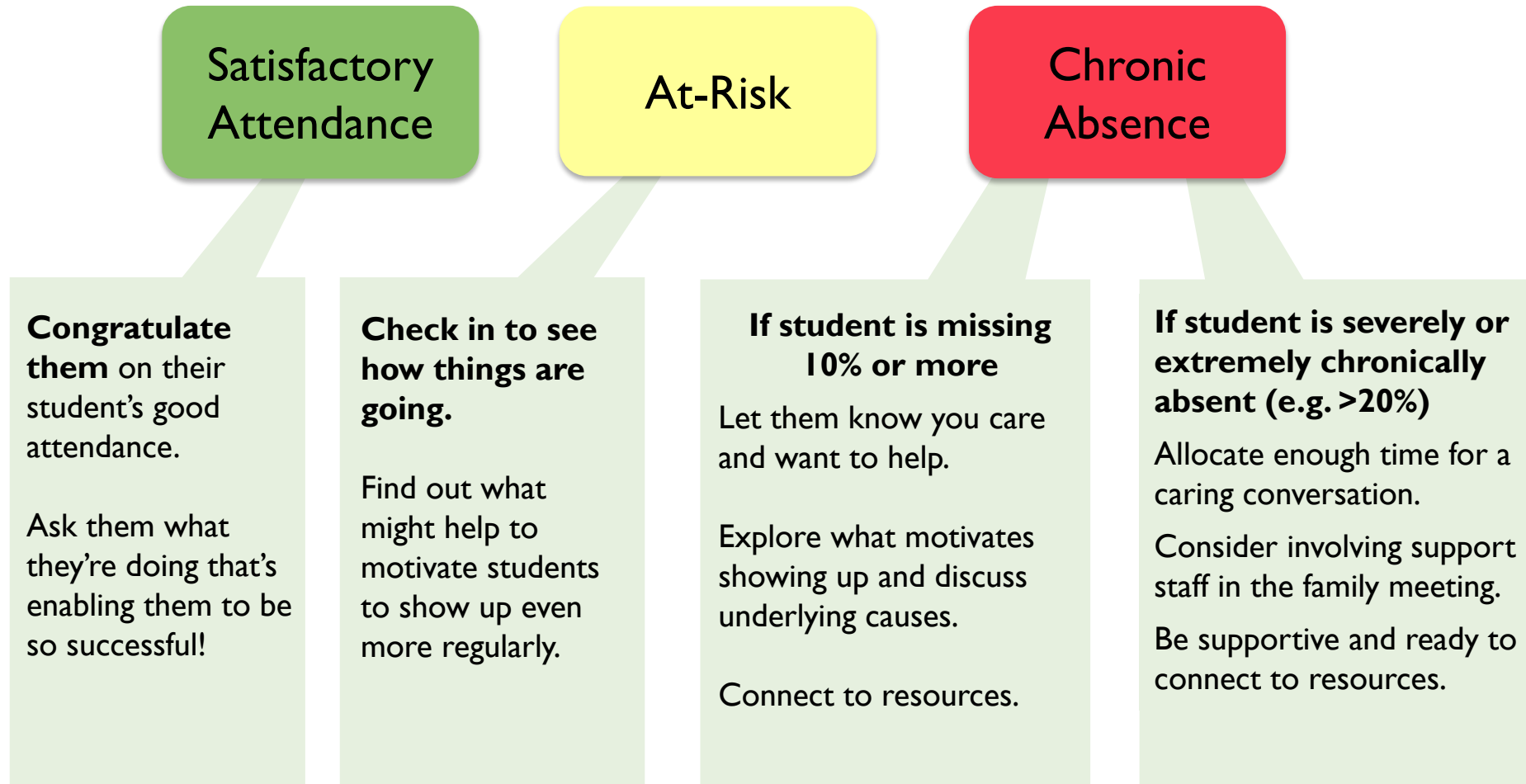




# Know Your Students' Attendance Status

DAYS MISSED IN SCHOOL YEAR	
<b>Satisfactory Attendance</b>	Missed <b>less than 5%</b> (fewer than 9 days in a 180-day school year)
<b>At-risk Attendance</b>	Missed <b>5-9.99%</b> (9-17 days in a 180-day school year)
<b>Moderate Chronic Absence</b>	Missed <b>10-19.99%</b> (18-35 days in a 180-day school year)
<b>Severe Chronic Absence</b>	Missed <b>20-49.99%</b> (36-89 days in a 180-day school year)
<b>Extreme Chronic Absence</b>	Missed <b>50% or more</b> (90 or more days in a 180-day school year)

# Tailor Conversations to Students' Attendance Status





## 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 (*Please share in chat*).

- 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 Peter's grandmother.

# 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						
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April 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June 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
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26	27	28	29	30		

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

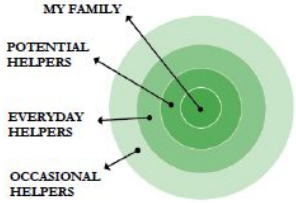
### Discuss

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.

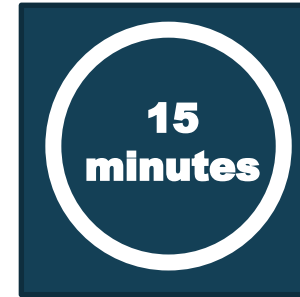
# Caring Conversations Professional Development Resources

	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

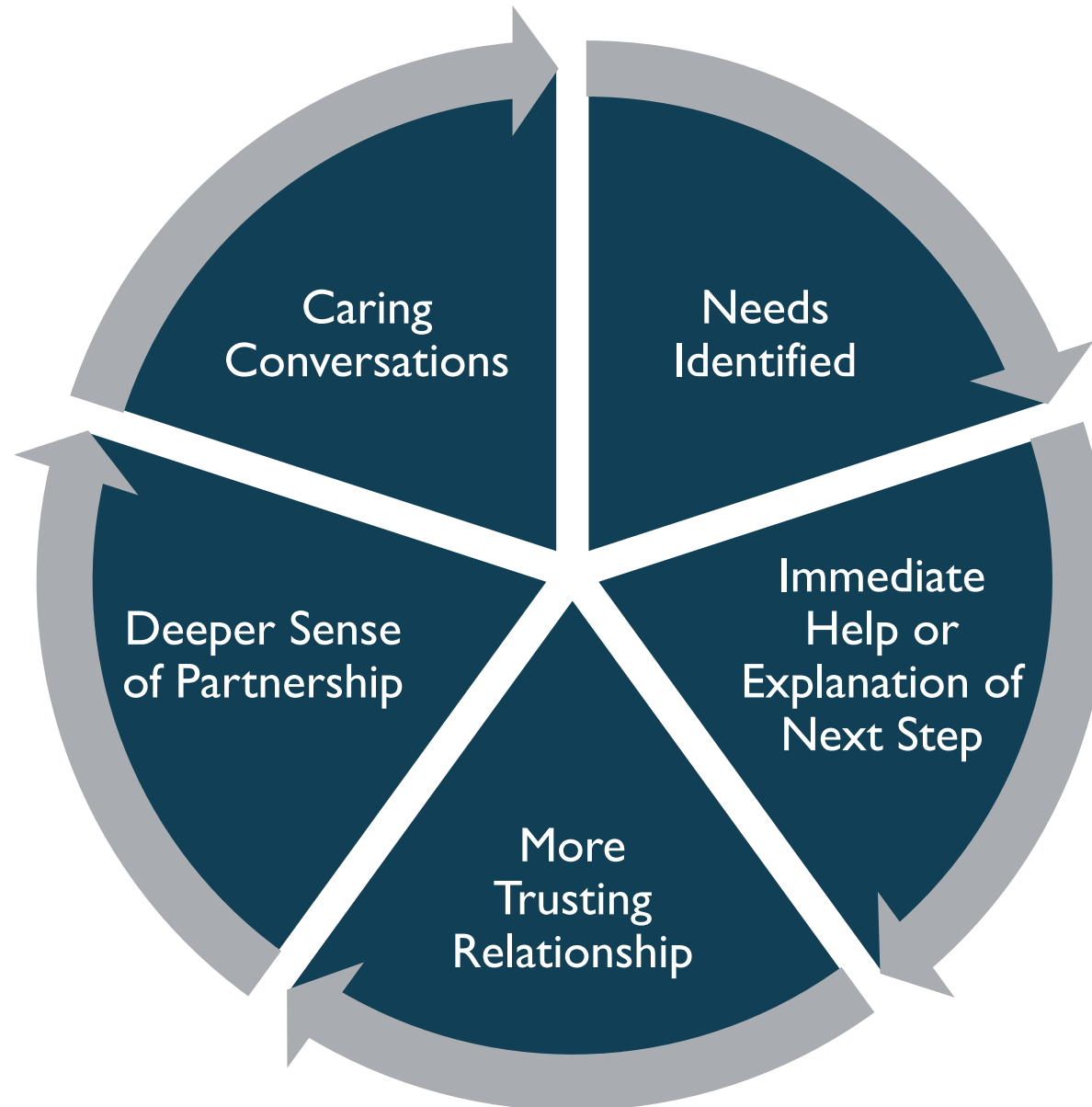
- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak (*and use the chat to express ideas*)
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter “Z” should facilitate



## 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

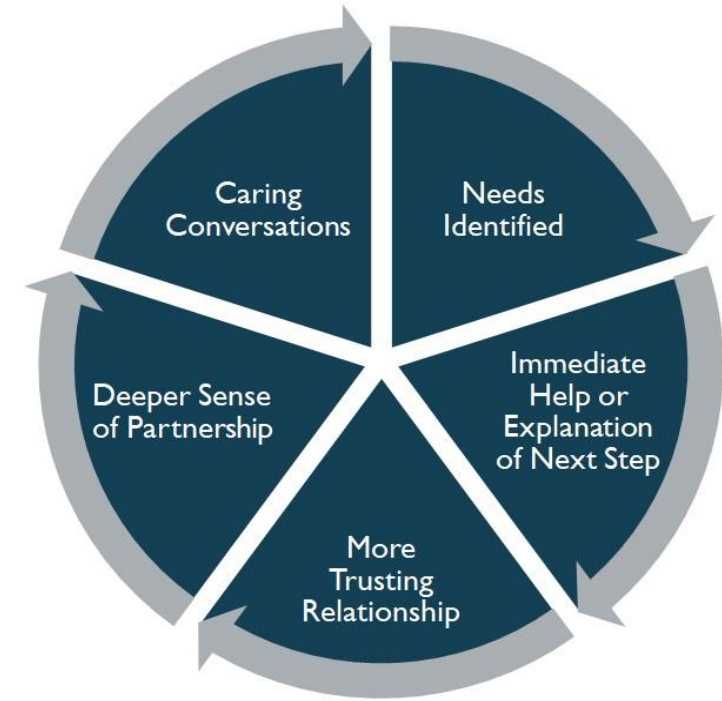


**Lorri Hobson, Former Director of Attendance**  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) in Cleveland, Ohio

<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

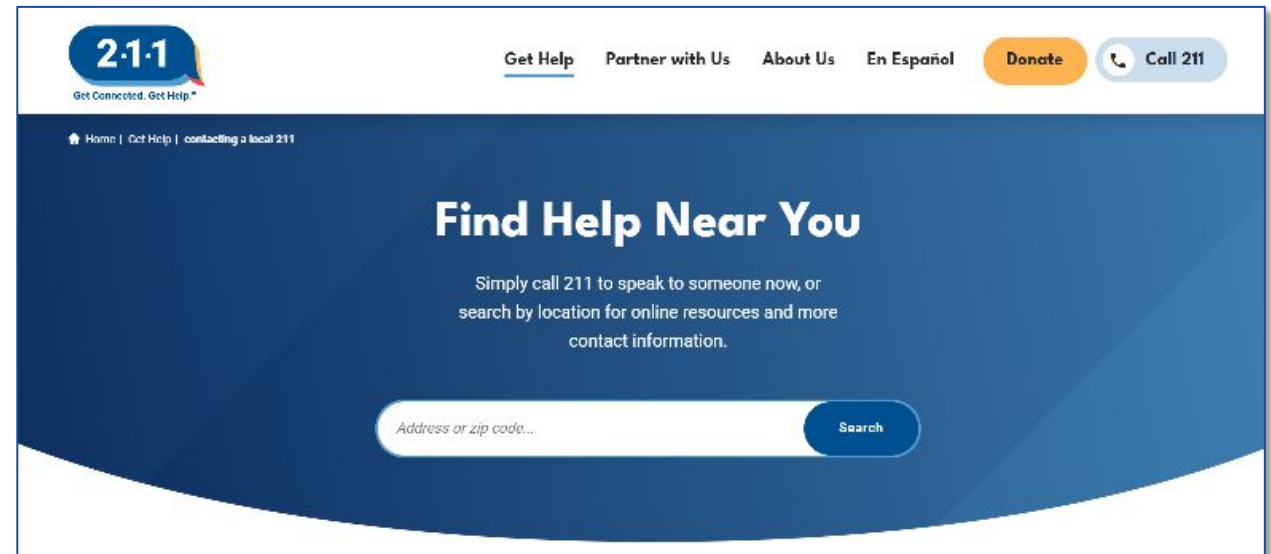
The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important. Tap into existing initiatives and coalitions to engage potential partners.

- 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>	Local pediatricians Promotoras ( <i>community health workers</i> ) NAMI – online courses
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>	MENTOR Parks & Rec program Boys & Girls Club
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>	Adult Day Care Child Care Referral Networks
Transportation Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking School Bus</li> <li>• Free municipal bus passes</li> <li>• Carpools</li> </ul>	Parents AmeriCorps program City government

# 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: 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank

*Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students*

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

Testers: <b>Attendance Team</b>	Test Title: <b>2x10 Strategy</b>	Cycle #: <b>1</b>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------

### What change idea is being tested?

*2x10 Strategy is the change idea. Attendance Team members will each identify one student who might benefit from additional support. Attendance Team members will each meet with one student for two minutes for ten consecutive days, allowing the student to talk about anything they would like.*

### Date of test: *October 2-13, 2023*

*After the ten days, reflect on the following: How did this help you learn about the student in new ways? What did you notice about your relationship with the student across the ten days? What are the implications of your learning for school practice going forward?*

### 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. Provide adults with insight into student realities. Students who feel seen, heard, and cared for will have better attendance. Selected students will have fewer total absences going forward as a result of feeling more cared for.*

### Driver:

*Insight into student realities that might strengthen positive adult-peer relationships*

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

- Q1 - Are adults willing and able to support this intervention?*
- Q2 - How many of the identified students will participate in the check-in for ten consecutive days?*
- Q3 - Does attendance for students who participate improve going forward?*
- Q4 - What are the implications for wider implementation of the 2x10 strategy?*
- Q5 - Are there any spillover effects, e.g., do some students participate more in class? Does behavior improve?*

# PDSA Example: 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank

*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.
1. Review the 2x10 process with team members to get buy-in to ensure fidelity and provide conversation starters	Q1 - Prediction - All Attendance Team members (8) are willing to participate	2x10 checklist from each Team member	Prioritizing which of the chronically absent students to contact proved to be a challenge. Once the students were selected, Team members each contacted one student to meet with.
2. Use data to identify students for outreach	Q2 - Prediction - 5 students will check in for ten consecutive days		Initially, the students thought they were in trouble, particularly when the principal contacted her student.
3. Team members invite one student to check in at a specific time/location	Q3 - Prediction - Students who participate in all 10 days improve attendance going forward.	Student attendance prior to 2x10, during 2x10, in the two weeks following the 2x10, and one month following the 2X10	Of the 8 students, 6 actually showed up all ten consecutive days.
4. At the end of each check-in, make specific plans for meeting the following day.	Q4 – Implications for wider implementation?	Meet with Attendance Team members and students for reflection	
5. Note on the 2x10 grid when the check-in is complete	Q5 - Are there any spillover effects?		
			Q1. All Team members were able to participate each of the ten days. Q2. Six students checked in all ten days. Q3. One student had two excused absences for illness. A second student had one excused absence, also for illness. Six students had no unexcused absences for the 2 weeks following the 2x10. Q4. Attendance Team members decide to implement the 2x10 with one additional student and check in at least once per week with their student from group one. Q5. There were reductions in referrals for behavior for the 6 students who participated.

# PDSA Example: 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank

*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)

- Develop criteria to prioritize students selected to participate
- Provide Caring Conversations Training and active listening techniques for Attendance Team members and other staff
- Ask Team members to do one more cycle with different students before implementing more broadly with teachers

- Download the example:  
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-EXAMPLE-2x10-rev-Aug-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>



## **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!**



## Questions from the Audience





**Maria Casey, Associate Director of Staff Development**  
[maria@attendanceworks.org](mailto:maria@attendanceworks.org)

**Molly Balfe, Senior Fellow**  
[molly@attendanceworks.org](mailto:molly@attendanceworks.org)







## About Us

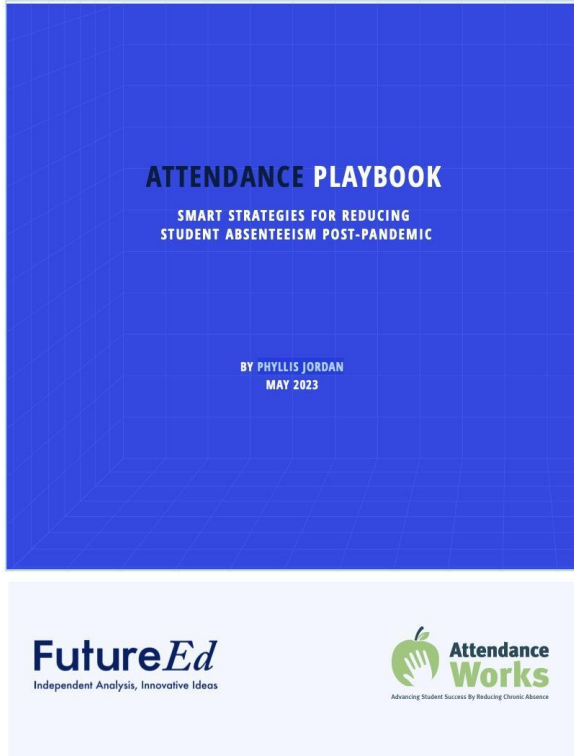
**Attendance Works** advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ 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