

Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism



Professional Learning Series

August 12, 2021

©2021 Attendance Works. All rights reserved. Materials provided under the Apache License v. 2.0 as given at https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/usage-policy-customizing/





Hedy Chang Executive Director



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 I Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism
- Session 2 Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support
- **Session 3** Partnering to Make a Difference





Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Be able to measure attendance and participation in a variety of learning settings
- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention
- Draw on a variety of high leverage, whole school strategies to create a positive school climate and strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism



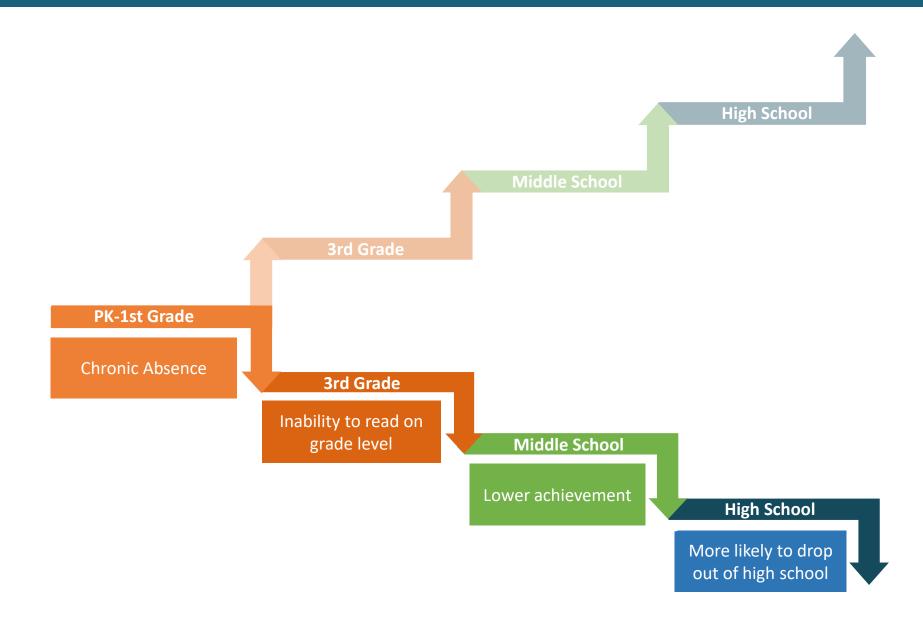


Use the Chat and share:

- \checkmark Your name and role
- \checkmark Your school and district
- The name of one person who inspired you to attend and learn, and a short sentence about how they motivated you



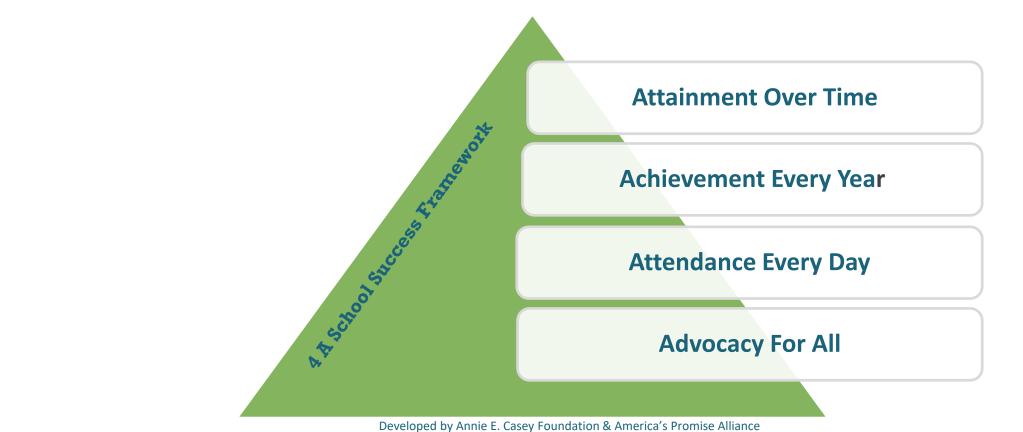
Improving Attendance Matters

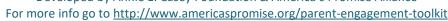






Why Does Attendance Matter?









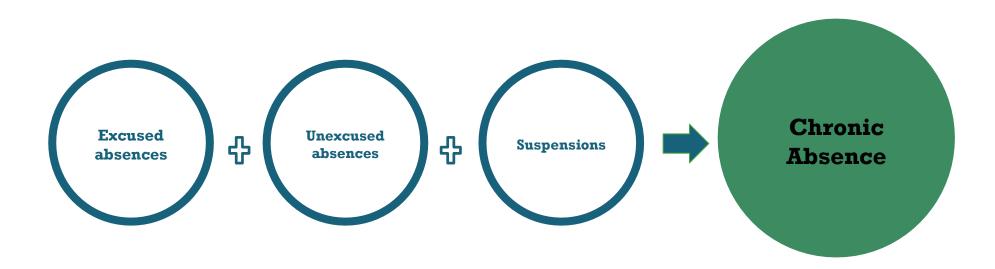
What is the relationship between absences and equity?

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





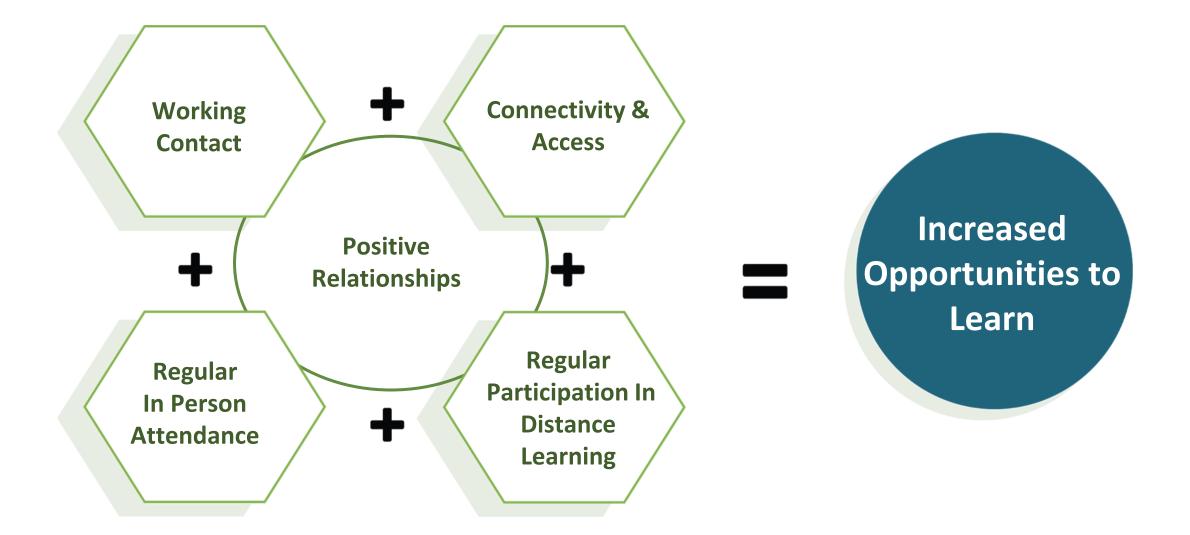
Chronic Absence Measures Lost Opportunity to Learn Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.**



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



Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn





Metrics Defined

Contact

Schools have working contact and back up information for each enrolled student and their family. Connectivity & Access Students, families and staff have access to technology (computer, software and internet access) and other materials to support learning at home.

Relationships

Students and families feel connected, supported and engaged in reciprocal, problemsolving relationships.

Chronic Absence /Attendance The extent to which students show up and are not chronically absent for in person and remote instruction.



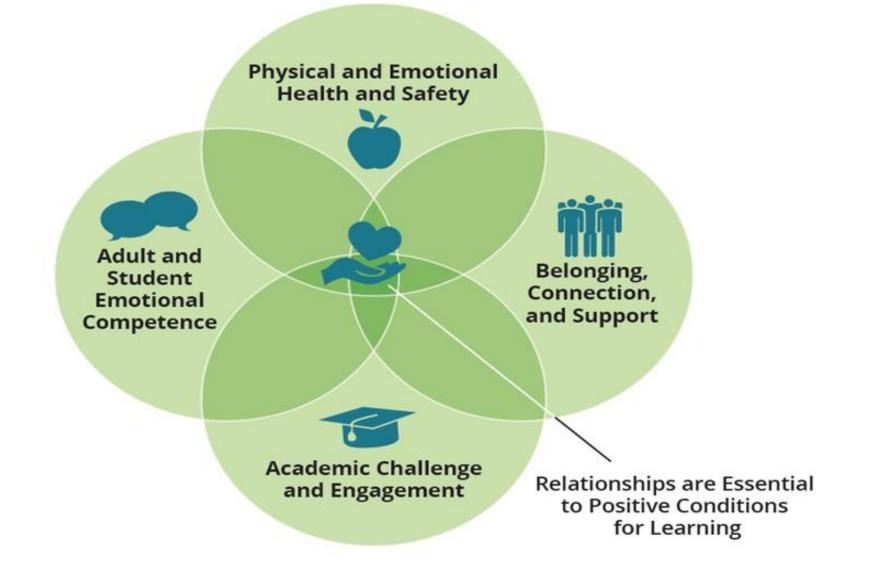


What attendance measures does your school / district track? (check all that apply)

- Daily attendance
- □ Contact information
- □ Connectivity
- □ Chronic absence
- □ Participation
- □ An existing relationship
- Daily attendance differentiated between in-person or remote
- □ None of the above
- Other (please post in the chat)



Absenteeism is a Sign that Positive Conditions for Learning are Missing, Whether Classes are In Person, Distance or Blended





Relationships are Essential

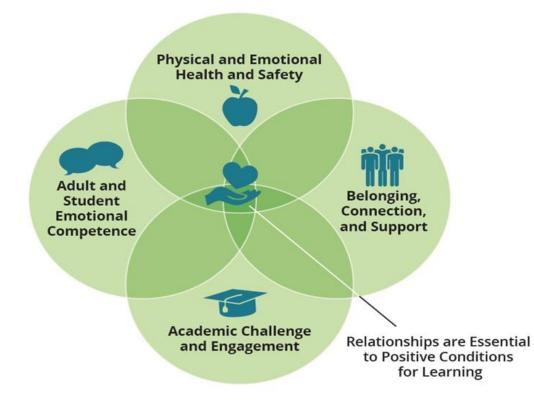




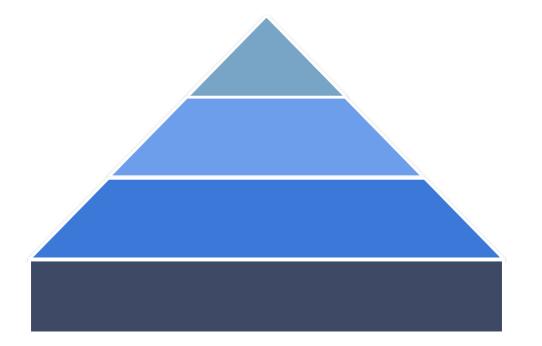
https://vimeo.com/260252509

What Did You Notice?

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?

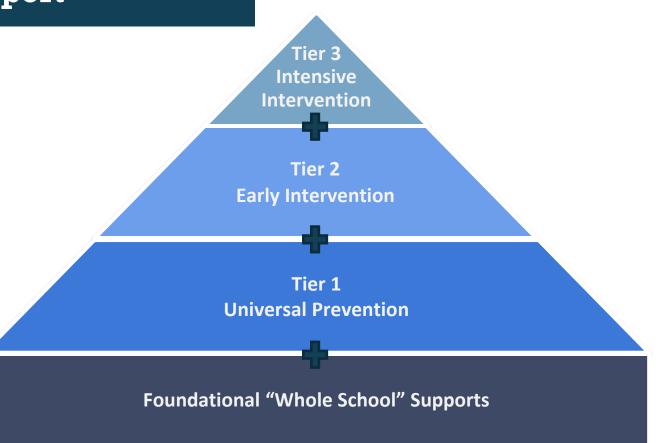






Building Your Multi-Tiered System of Support

Use Data to Support an Integrated Multi-tiered System of Support





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

 \bigcirc

Foundational Supports are Building Blocks of Schools that Promote Engagement & Build Community

Looking ahead to the coming school year, which supports are most critical for a successful transition? (type in chat)

Physically healthy learning environment	Enrichment activities and clubs	Positive relationships	Support for families to facilitate learning at home	
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Access to Learning Supports	Routines, rituals and celebrations	A culture of continuous improvement	
Welcoming, safe, trauma-informed school climate	Home rooms and/or Advisory	A published schedule of classes	Active engagement of families in planning	

Foundational "Whole School" Supports



Family and Student Engagement	Social and Emotional Learning Relationships		Behavioral and Mental health		Data Monitoring		nysical lealth	Academic Support	Basic Needs
Connect family with community supports	Conduct empathy interview	Individual Plan based on Identified Needs		to loca and fa	e outreach e student mily and situation		Connect with a tutor or other individualized academic support	Provision of targeted resources	
Virtual/physically distanced family meeting or home visit when absences add-up	Institute Success Mentor or Family Ambassador Program	cou provi for dea	all group nseling to ide support students aling with anxiety	absent to ta	Using teeism data activate orgeted opports	with i medi fam	st a family dentifying a ical home / ily health actitioner	Additional tech support and training for families and students	Assisting a family with signing up for public programs e.g. Medicaid, SNAP etc.
Community building to create belonging and connection	Invite families to design the school's drop-off and pick-up protocols	wellr and co	dividual ness check onnectivity essments	outr comn to fan Pr stud	sonalized each and nunication nilies when dents are lbsent		unization Clinic	Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations	School Community Food and Household Goods Pantry
Physically healthy learning environmen	Welcoming, soci t emotionally safe, tr informed school cl	trauma- continue		uous Home roc			Active engagement of parents and students in planning and problem solving		A leadership team that monitors attendance data
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Access to Learn Supports	cess to Learning Enrichm Supports activities an			Routines, rituals s and celebrations		A schedule of classes and where/how they are held		Support for all families to facilitate learning at home

Family and Student Engagement	Social and Emotional Learning Relationships	Behavioral and Mental Health	Data Monitoring	Physical Health	Academic Support	Basic Needs
			Tier 3 Intensive Intervention			
			Tier 2 Early Interventio	1		
			Tier 1 Universal Prevention			
		F	oundation			
			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.



Resources to Strengthen Foundational Supports

Planning for the Next Normal – Kaiser Permanente Playbook for Healthy Communities

https://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/get-inspired/coronavirus-response/schools-reopening-playbook/



Mental health and well-being

Understand how to assess and improve social-emotional health.



COVID-19 prevention

Make changes that help create a safe teaching and learning environment when school buildings reopen.

×A

Social drivers of health

Manage nonmedical health needs and provide resources to address food security, economic opportunity, housing, transportation, and more.



Physical activity and physical education

Implement strategies to safely provide physical education and activities.



Staff and teacher well-being

Address health considerations specific to adults working in your schools.





Schoolwide Strategies for Prevention

Three High Leverage Strategies

Schoolwide Strategies for Prevention

- I. Warm and welcoming School Climate
- 2. Positive Relationships with Families and Students
- 3. Clear expectations and communication about attendance





1. Warm and Welcoming School Climate

A Positive School Climate Can Motivate Students to Show Up to School Even When it is Hard





https://vimeo.com/224790634



School Climate and Attendance: Key Questions to Consider

- **Environment:** What are schools doing to promote physical health and safety? How can we create a warm welcoming feeling, with safety protocols in place?
- **Safety:** What steps have we taken to update our behavioral and mental health model, supports, and resources for a strong prevention and early intervention strategy?
- **Teaching:** Do teachers have access to attendance information? Do they understand their role in engaging students and their families about the importance of attendance to academic learning and to understand the reasons for their students' absences?
- **Relationships**: Is there a pattern of supportive and caring adult relationships for students, including high expectations for students' success, willingness to listen to students and to get to know them as individuals?





Small Group Discussion

What do you need to have in place for the fall?

Pick <u>one</u> of the four elements of school climate to discuss in your group:

- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Teaching & Learning
- ✓ Relationships



Ground Rules

- 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)

Small group handout: <u>https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Climate-Elements-rev-8-11-21.pdf</u>





- Each team shares I-2 key observations from their discussion about what they need to have in place for the fall.
- What did you learn about creating a positive climate during the pandemic that you want to carry into this next school year?



Climate Element	Strategies to Promote Positive School Climate and Culture
Relationships	 Community building opportunities for students and families that create belonging and connection with school staff Expanded learning opportunities Enrichment activities and clubs Advisories and Homeroom Mentoring and Tutoring Youth Voice
Teaching & Learning	 Fun Morning Greetings (classroom and schoolwide) and circle time Sharing activities, such as show and tell, scavenger hunts, dress up Attendance reinforced in interactions with students and families Student success plans developed with families and students Access to data about student attendance and participation with protocols for differentiated support Support for teachers returning to the classroom
Environment	 Documentation of student work on the walls Clean and safe physical environment with fully stocked cleanliness supplies Resources for learning e.g., books, learning collateral (crayons, markers, paper) Access to virtual learning (computer, internet, broadband and capacity) Warm and welcoming, e.g. natural light, pleasing color aesthetic, easily locatable office
Safety Attendance	 Individual wellness check and connectivity assessments Monitor lack of participation and attendance for outreach and support Provide a point of contact for requests for support Clearly communicated Covid-19 safety protocols Expanded behavioral and mental health services for the school community





Measuring School Climate

School Climate Survey Results

Schoand Data Sus Ut Office alon Den Of Refer vith als Attendance Data Attendance Data Use multiple measures of data to assess school climate. Review data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, disability, grade, and gender.



Climate Walks Provide the Opportunity to Gather Information & Build Community

Climate Element	Observation	Location	Observed (Y/N)	Not Observed (Y/N)	Describe
Relationships	Students are respectful to one another	Hallways, classrooms, play yard, cafeteria			
	Students are observed engaging in small group activities including project work, socializing, or in classroom discussions	Hallways, classrooms, school grounds, cafeteria			
	The school visibly acknowledges and celebrates the diversity (cultural, ethnic, sexual, ability/ disability, etc.) of the student population through displays, art, signage, etc.	Hallways, Front Office, Classrooms			

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/scan-environment-attendance/





Use Attendance Works Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool to observe key elements of climate

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.





https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/scan-environment-attendance/



2. Positive Relationships with Students & Families



Questions for Promoting Positive Relationships



Why are they important?

When students and families have meaningful relationships with school staff they are more likely to engage in school.

What are the equity implications?

Students and families who aren't connected to school are more likely to be those who are challenged by geography, poverty, language and disabilities.

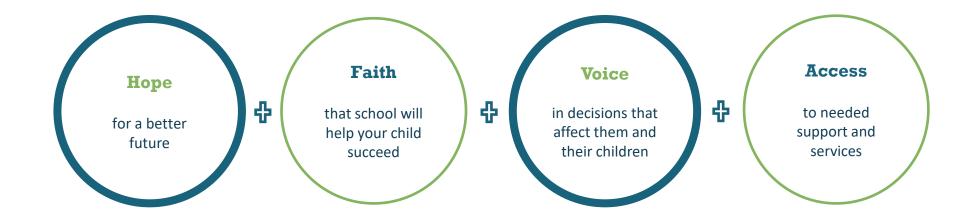
What do we need to know?

- Does each family and student have an on-going, positive, and supportive relationship with one or more members of our staff?
- How to reach each student and their family?
- ✤ Do we have a plan for early outreach when absences start to add up?





Recognize that Going to School Reflects When Families Have...





\bigcirc

Evidence-Based Programs

Relational Home Visits

- ✓ Goal is to create positive relationship between educators and parents *before* any issues arise.
- Example of model program: Parent Teacher Home Visits
 <u>http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/</u>
- \checkmark Offers in-person and online training
- Offers in-person and online visiting options

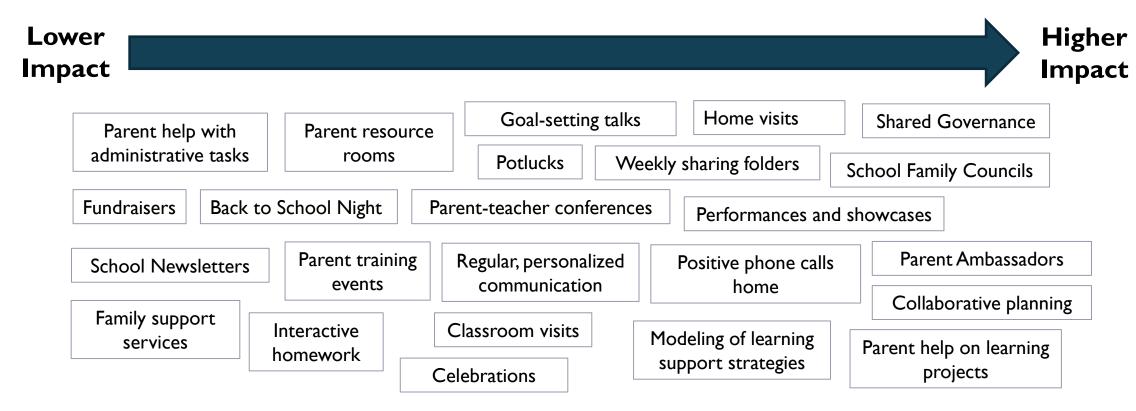
Mentoring

- ✓ Goal is to create positive connection between mentor and student(s) to support student success in school
- Example of programs: MENTOR, Peer Group Connections, Success Mentor
- Virtual options for different age groups, <u>https://www.mentoring.org/virtual-</u> <u>mentoring-portals/</u>



High Impact Family Engagement

United States Department of Education Framework: Family Engagement Should be Relational, Should Build Capacity of Families and Staff, and be Linked to Learning



Chat: What do you notice about the higher impact strategies? What high impact strategies would you add?



37



In your experience, what strategies work to forge positive relationships with students and families?

Please share your ideas in the Chat box.





Additional Resources

- Pathways to Engagement: A Toolkit for Covid-19 Recovery Through Attendance <u>https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/pathways-to-engagement-a-toolkit-for-covid-19-recovery-through-attendance/</u>
- Flamboyan Foundation, Beginning of the Year Relationship Toolkit https://flamboyanfoundation.org/beginning-of-year-relationship-building/
 - ✓ Welcome Calls
 - ✓ Wellness Checks
 - ✓ Challenging Assumptions
 - ✓ Questions for Trust-building
- America's Promise resources to work with teens <u>https://www.americaspromise.org/voices-of-young-people</u>
- Attendance Playbook, https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/





3. Clear expectations & communication about attendance



What do families of chronically absent students understand about attendance?

- ✓ Families generally underestimate the number of days their child has missed
- ✓ Families believe their child is absent less or the same amount as other students
- ✓ Families believe missing a couple days of school a month is not problematic

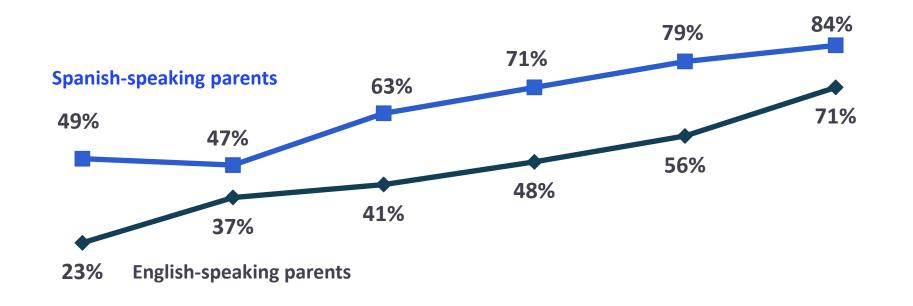


Ad Council: School Attendance Research Project (Issue brief) (2015) CA https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/tr/toolkit/QualitativeResearchReport.pdf



Families of Chronically Absent Students are More Likely to Consider Attendance a "Big Deal" in High School

Percent who say "It's a big deal to miss at this grade level"



Pre-K Kindergarten Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 Middle School High School



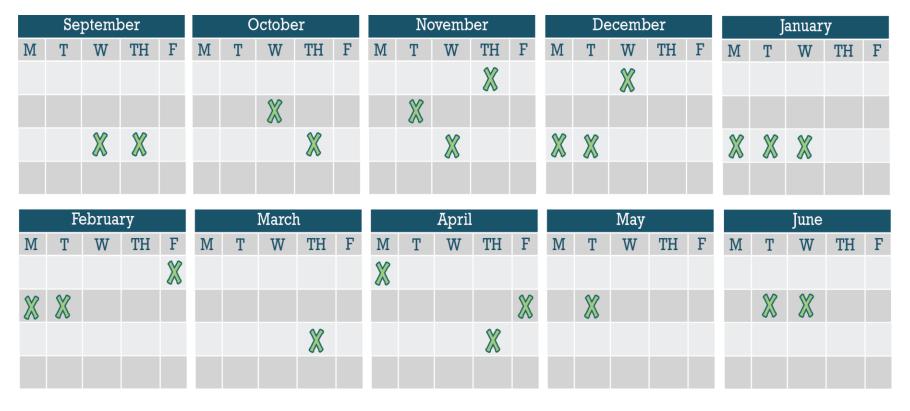
Source: Ad Council & Calif. Attorney General – Parent Ethnographies 2015 <u>https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit</u> <u>https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/tr/toolkit/QuantitativeResearchReport.pdf</u>







Sporadic Absences are More Likely to go Unnoticed



Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = As Few As 2 days a month





How familiar are...

School staff with this research?

Very familiar, Somewhat familiar, Not at all

Families with this research?

Very familiar, Somewhat familiar, Not at all



Bringing Attendance Home: *A Parent's Perspective*

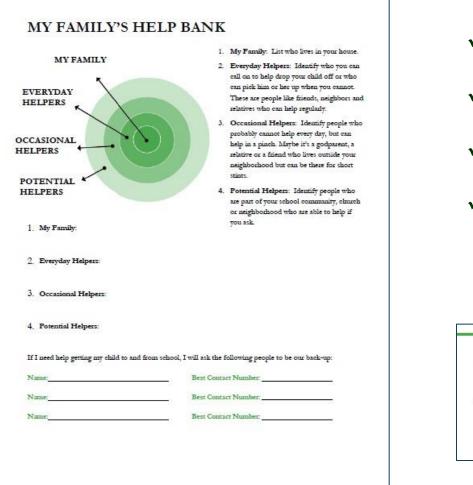




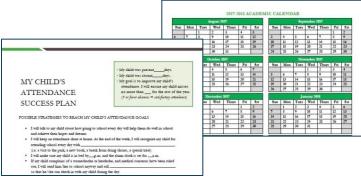
https://vimeo.com/230270780

www.attendanceworks.org

Work With Students and Families to Create a Success Plan



- ✓ Set attendance goals
- ✓ Make backup plans
- ✓ Track absences
- ✓ Recognize success!



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





Create a Communications Plan

Does our district have a centralized and comprehensive communications strategy around attendance and participation?

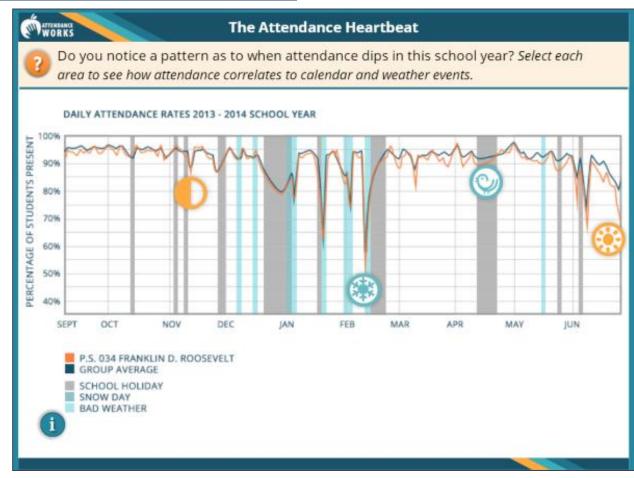
- Communications are targeted and accessible to diverse stakeholders (e.g., families, students, etc.)
- Create a year-long communications plan and calendar for timely, accessible communications about school operations, class schedules, available resources with provisions for modifying as needed.
- Stablish protocols to maintain two-way communication with families and with staff.
- Make sure families are informed in home language when students are absent.

<u>https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/District-Transitions-PLANNING-WORKSHEET-rev-</u> <u>10-26-20.docx</u>





Combating Attendance Dips







Year-Round Planning

School Name				-	ichool Year		
or each tier <mark>and tim</mark> ou can also re-creat	e frame, fill in activities for your sci e this chart in a larger format and	hool or program. For each use post-it notes to add ad	h activity, you might spec ctivities as a group exerci	ify who is responsible for lead se. (See the SAMPLE ACTIVI	ding and how to measure res TIES chart for more ideas.)	ults of the activity.	
Timing	Before Start of School Year (July/August)	Welcome Back (August/September)	Ongoing (Weekty/Monthly)	Fall Semester (October - November	Winter Semester (December – February)	Spring Semester (March-April)	End-of-Year (Mayljune)
School Staff							
Fier I universal)							
Fier 2 targeted – moderate hronic absence)							
Tier 3 targeted – severe chronic absence)			27				

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



www.attendanceworks.org



Identify Your Audience:

- Students
- Families/caregivers
- Teachers/school staff
- Community partners
- ✓ What does each group need to know?
- ✓ What do you want them to do?
- ✓ How will you communicate it?

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

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





Which of the following strategies for communicating with families about attendance do you already implement? (check all that apply)

- □ Approach the conversation with concern and optimism rather than criticism.
- Ask questions to better understand the situation, and then work together for a solution.
- Assume the best. Almost all families want their child to be in school, but many don't understand the connection between too many absences and poor achievement. Assume that once they know better, they will do better.



 \square Be specific about the number of days missed and the impact on academics.



Additional Resources from Attendance Works

Handouts for Families

- ✓ Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ English & Spanish versions

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

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

DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

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

18 or more days WARNING SIGNS 10 to 17 days SATISFACTORY 9 or fewer absences

CHRONIC ABSENCE

When Do Absences

Become a Problem?

Attendance Works

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

Sign up for the 2021 Attendance Awareness Campaign

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





Questions from the Audience







Review: *Learning Goals for Session 1*

Participants will:

- Be able to measure attendance and participation in a variety of learning settings
- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention
- Draw on a variety of high leverage, whole school strategies to create a positive school climate and strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism





Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!





Hedy Chang, Executive Director hedy@attendanceworks.org

Molly Balfe, Senior Fellow molly@attendanceworks.org



www.attendanceworks.org



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

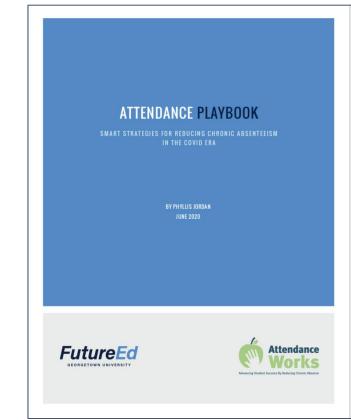
Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's "go-to" resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: <u>www.attendanceworks.org</u>



Appendix: Additional Resources

Attendance Playbook: Covid Edition

- Evidence-based interventions to improve attendance
- Links to effective programs and resources
- Listed by tiers for use
- A section on monitoring attendance in distance learning
- Covid-19 modifications for interventions
- Added guidance on clean environment



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

Implementation Guide: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/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

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/



Family and Student Engagement	Social and Emotional Learning Relationships		ivioral and Ital health	Data M	Aonitoring		nysical lealth	Academic Support	Basic Needs
Connect family with community supports	Conduct empathy interview	b	vidual Plan ased on ified Needs	to loca and fa	ve outreach ite student amily and s situation	ba	idual Plan sed on fied Needs	Connect with a tutor or other individualized academic support	Provision of targeted resources
Virtual/physically distanced family meeting or home visit when absences add-up	Institute Success Mentor or Family Ambassador Program	cou provi for dea	all group nseling to ide support students aling with anxiety	absent to ta	Using teeism data activate orgeted opports	with i medi fam	st a family dentifying a ical home / ily health actitioner	Additional tech support and training for families and students	Assisting a family with signing up for public programs e.g. Medicaid, SNAP etc.
Community building to create belonging and connection	Invite families to design the school's drop-off and pick-up protocols	wellr and co	dividual ness check onnectivity essments	outr comn to fan Pr stud	sonalized each and nunication nilies when dents are lbsent		unization Clinic	Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations	School Community Food and Household Goods Pantry
Physically healthy learning environmen	t emotionally safe, tr	Welcoming, socially- emotionally safe, trauma- informed school climate		A culture of continuous mprovement and/or Ac			Active engagement of parents and students in planning and problem solving		A leadership team that monitors attendance data
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Access to Learning Supports			nrichment Routines, ties and clubs and celebr			A schedule of classes and where/how they are held		Support for all families to facilitate learning at home

Family and Student Engagement	Social and Emotional Learning Relationships	Behavioral and Mental Health	Data Monitoring	Physical Health	Academic Support	Basic Needs
			Tier 3 Intensive Intervention			
			Tier 2 Early Interventio	1		
			Tier 1 Universal Prevention			
		F	Foundationa			
			Supports			

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

62

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.



Supporting High School Students

America's Promise Alliance:

Consideration and FAQs for Leaders Managing the High School Experience During Covid-19

<u>https://www.americaspromise.org/content/considerations-and-faqs-leaders-managing-high-school-experience-during-covid-19</u>

Including free office hours!



www.attendanceworks.org