Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

Welcome!

Cecelia Leong
Vice President of Programs

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Three E-Learning Sessions

During these sessions, participants will learn how to work as a team to take a multi-tiered approach to improve attendance in their schools:

- ❖ **Session 1** — Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

- ❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support

- ❖ **Session 3** — Partnering to Make a Difference

Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- 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
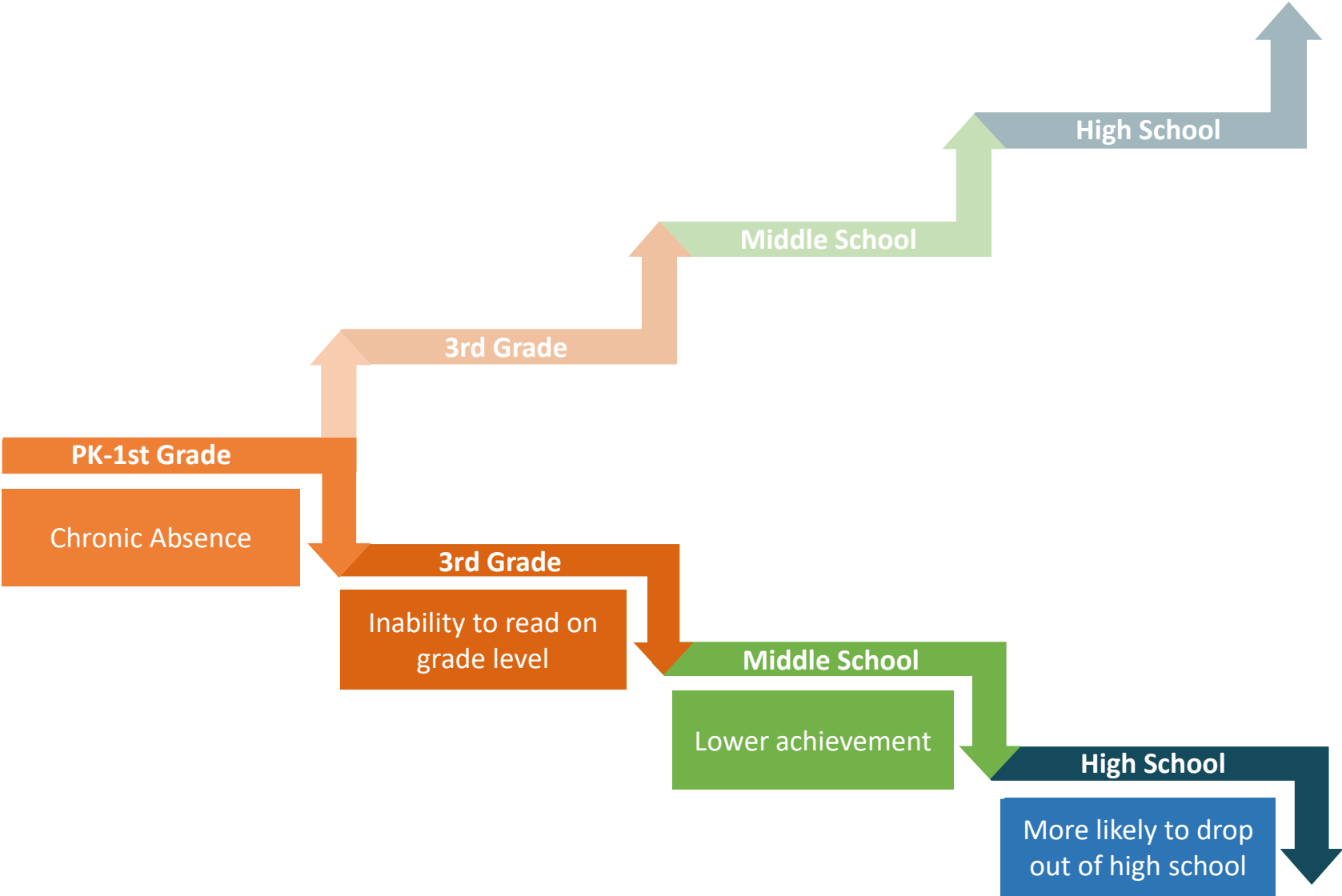
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Getting Started: Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name and role

- ✓ 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

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Improving Attendance Matters

Why Does Attendance Matter?

4 A School Success Framework

- Attainment Over Time
- Achievement Every Year
- Attendance Every Day
- Advocacy For All

Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance
For more info go to http://www.americaspromise.org/parent-engagement-toolkit

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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.**

Excused absences ➕ **Unexcused absences** ➕ **Suspensions** ➡ **Chronic Absence**
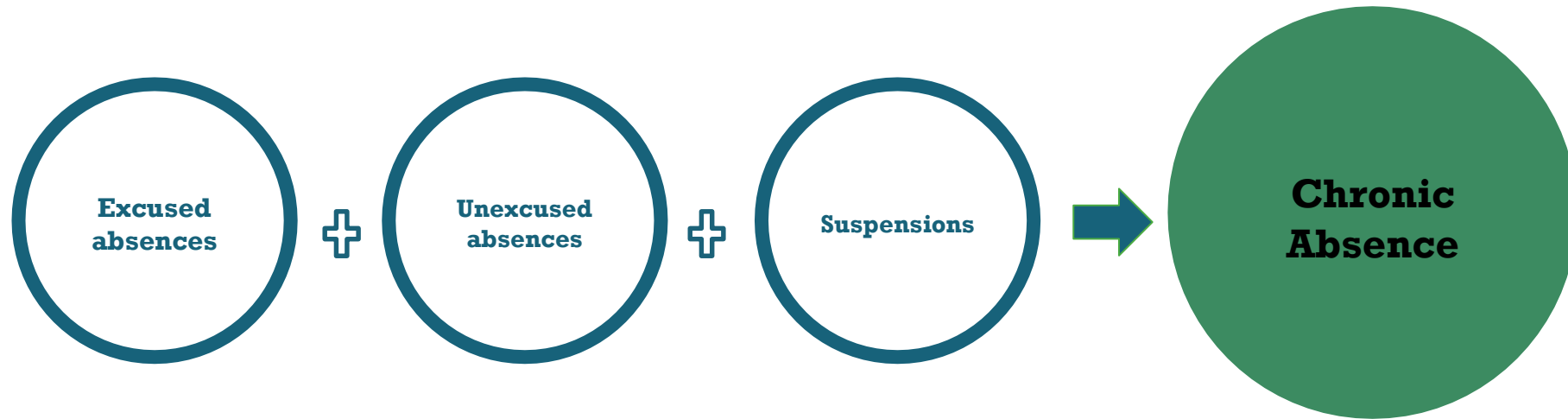
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).
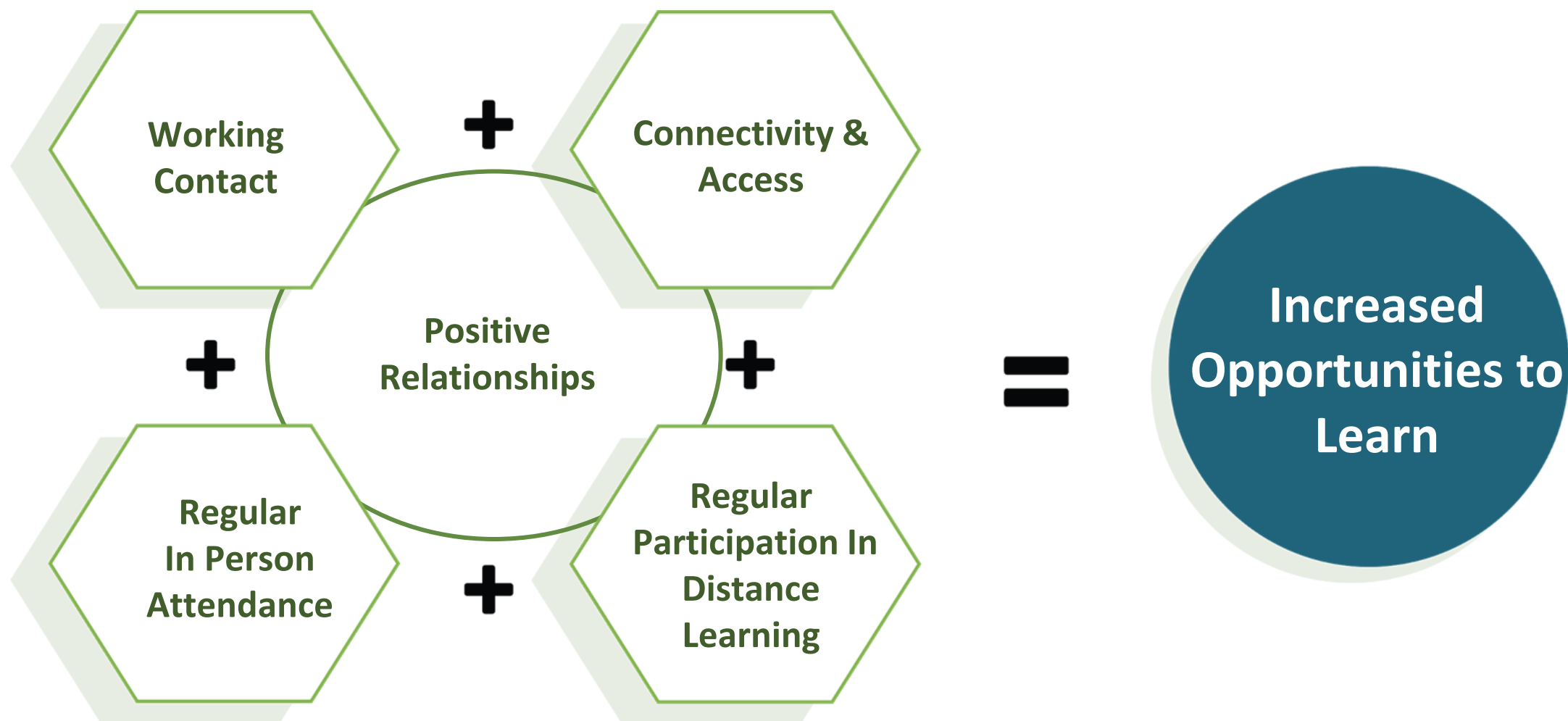
Poll

Please select the mode(s) of instruction your district is offering this year *(check all that apply)*

❑ In-person

❑ Virtual *(teacher and students online)*

❑ Mixed *(teacher simultaneously teaches in-person and online)*

❑ Independent study

❑ Other

Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn

Working Contact

+

Connectivity & Access

+

Positive Relationships

+

Regular In Person Attendance

+

Regular Participation In Distance Learning

=

Increased Opportunities to Learn

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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, problem-solving relationships.

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

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Poll

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

- ❑ Daily attendance
- ❑ Contact information
- ❑ Connectivity
- ❑ Chronic absence
- ❑ Participation
- ❑ Completion of assignments
- ❑ 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
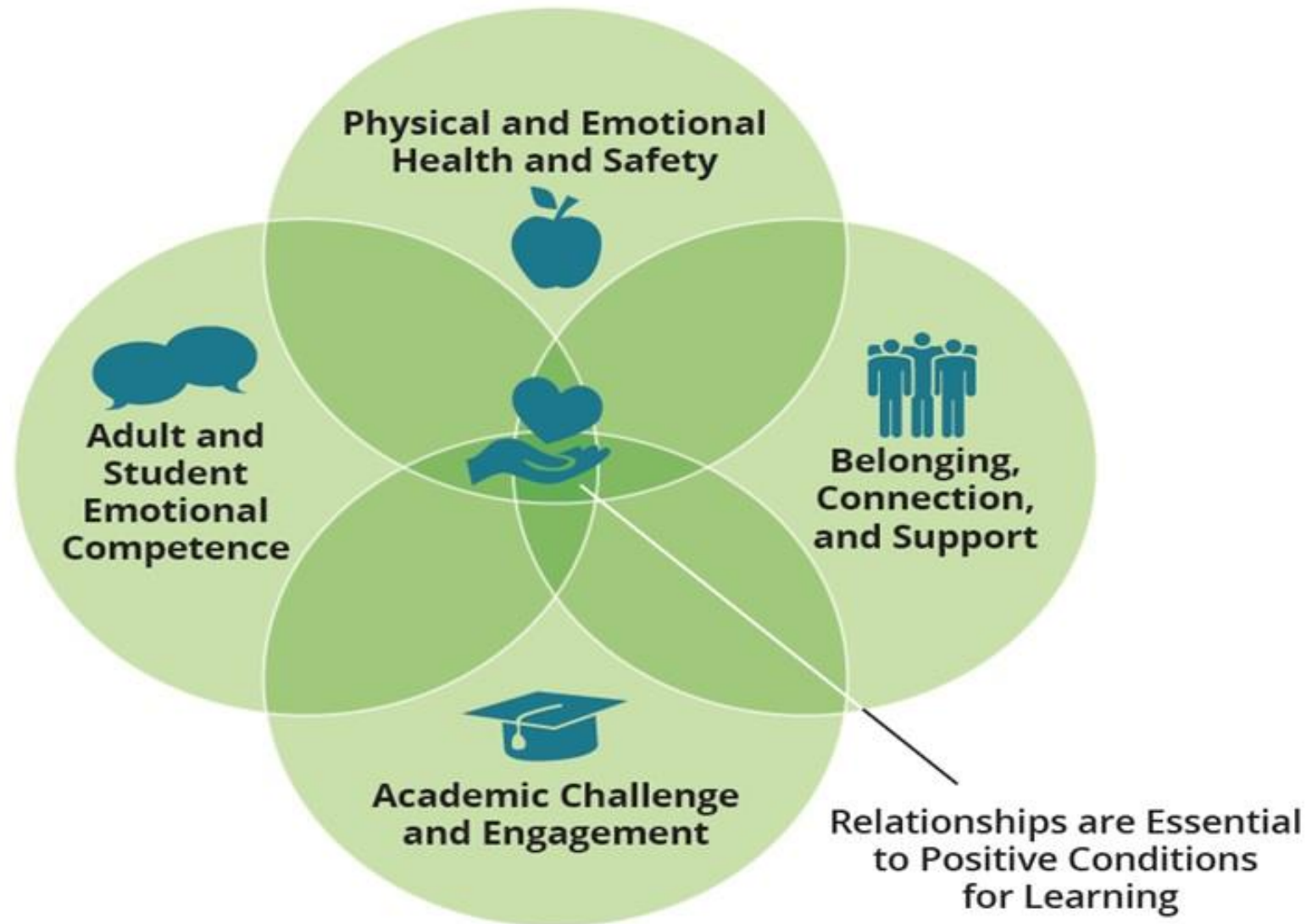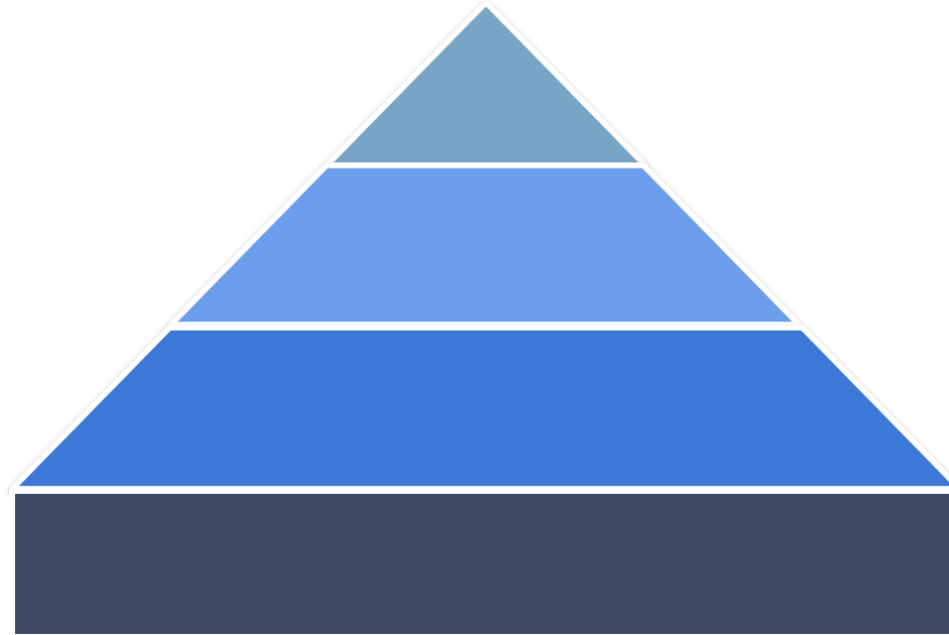
Relationships are Essential

https://vimeo.com/260252509

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Works ©
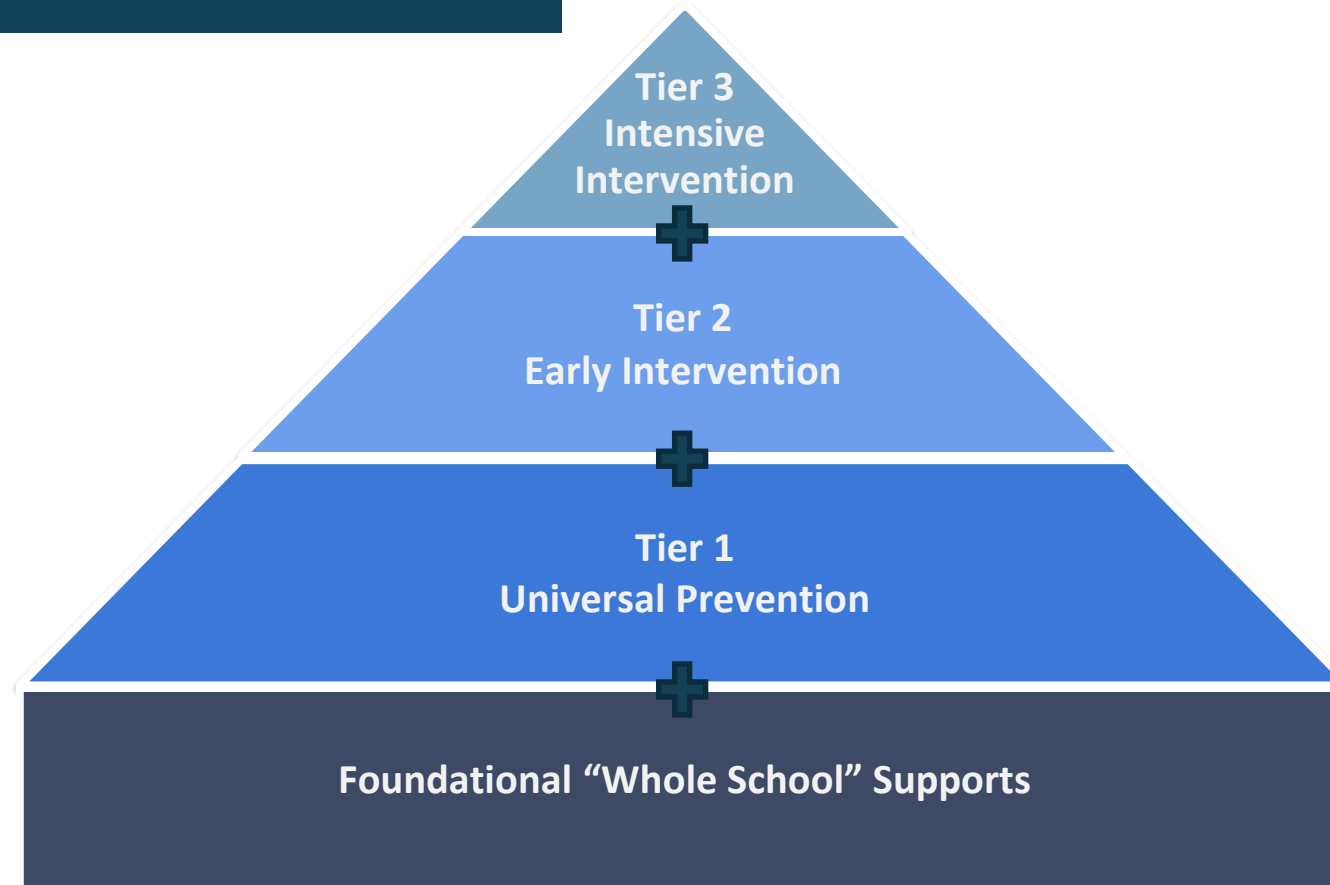
What Did You Notice?

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?

Building Your Multi-Tiered System of Support

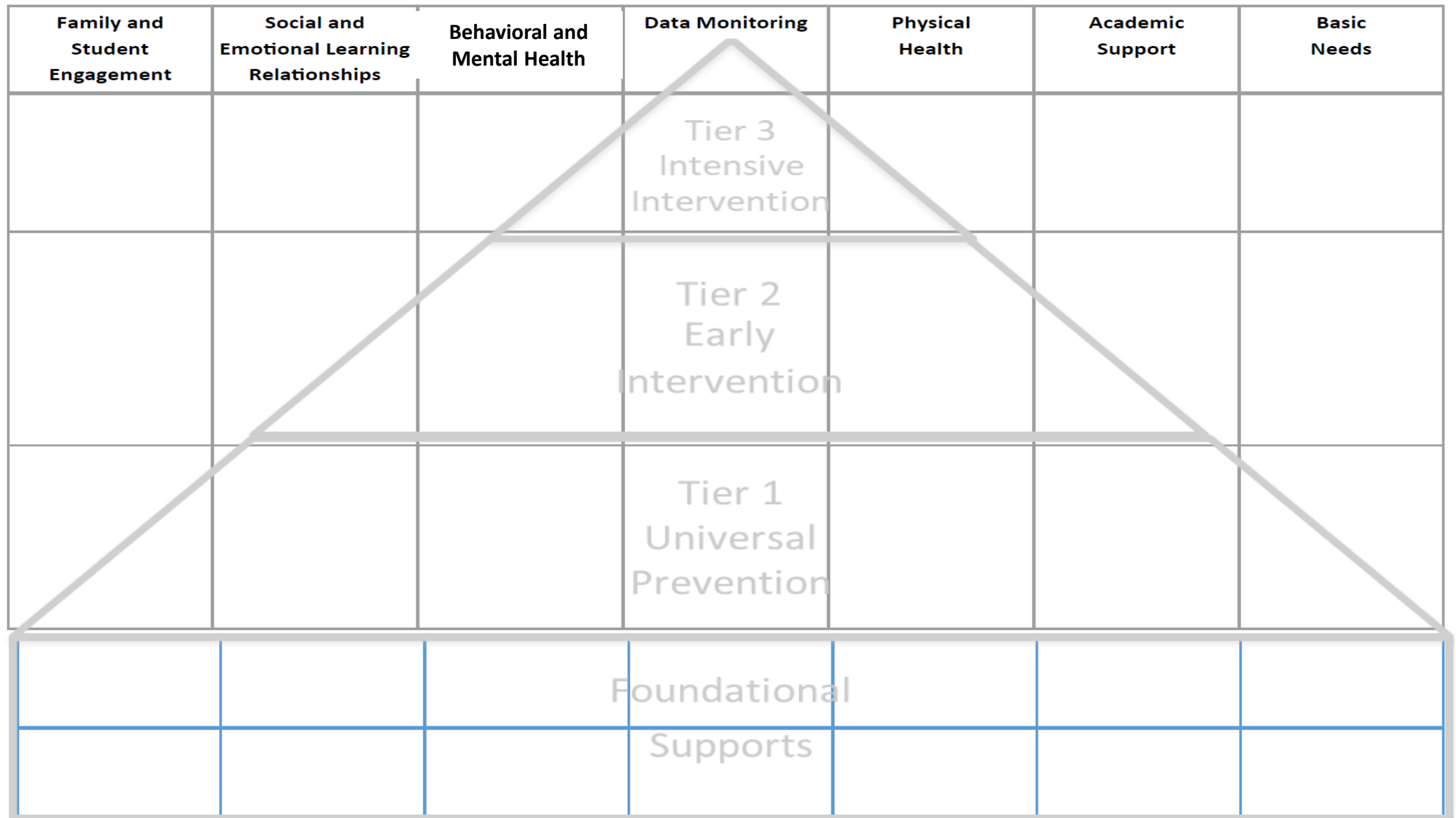# Use Data to Support an Integrated Multi-tiered System of Support

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Tier 2
Early Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Prevention

Foundational "Whole School" Supports

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

Foundational Supports are Building Blocks of Schools that Promote Attendance

In the current school year, which supports are most critical for a successful transition?

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 Supports

Family and Student Engagement	Social and Emotional Learning Relationships	Behavioral and Mental health	Data Monitoring	Physical Health	Academic Support	Basic Needs
Connect family with community supports	Conduct empathy interview	Individual Plan based on Identified Needs	Intensive outreach to locate student and family and assess situation	Individual Plan based on Identified 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	Small group counseling to provide support for students dealing with anxiety	Using absenteeism data to activate targeted supports	Assist a family with identifying a medical home / family health practitioner	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	Individual wellness check and connectivity assessments	Personalized outreach and communication to families when students are absent	Immunization Clinic	Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations	School Community Food and Household Goods Pantry

Triangle overlay labels: Tier 3 Intensive Intervention · Tier 2 Early Intervention · Tier 1 Universal Prevention

Foundation boxes:

Physically healthy learning environment	Welcoming, socially-emotionally safe, trauma-informed school climate	A culture of continuous improvement	Home rooms and/or Advisory	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	Enrichment activities and clubs	Routines, rituals 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 Intervention			
			Tier 1 Universal Prevention			
			Foundational Supports			

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.

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

1. Warm and welcoming School Climate

2. Positive Relationships with Families and Students

3. Clear expectations and communication about attendance

REBOUND WITH ATTENDANCE !

ATTENDANCE AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN 2021

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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?

Environment

Safety

Teaching and Learning
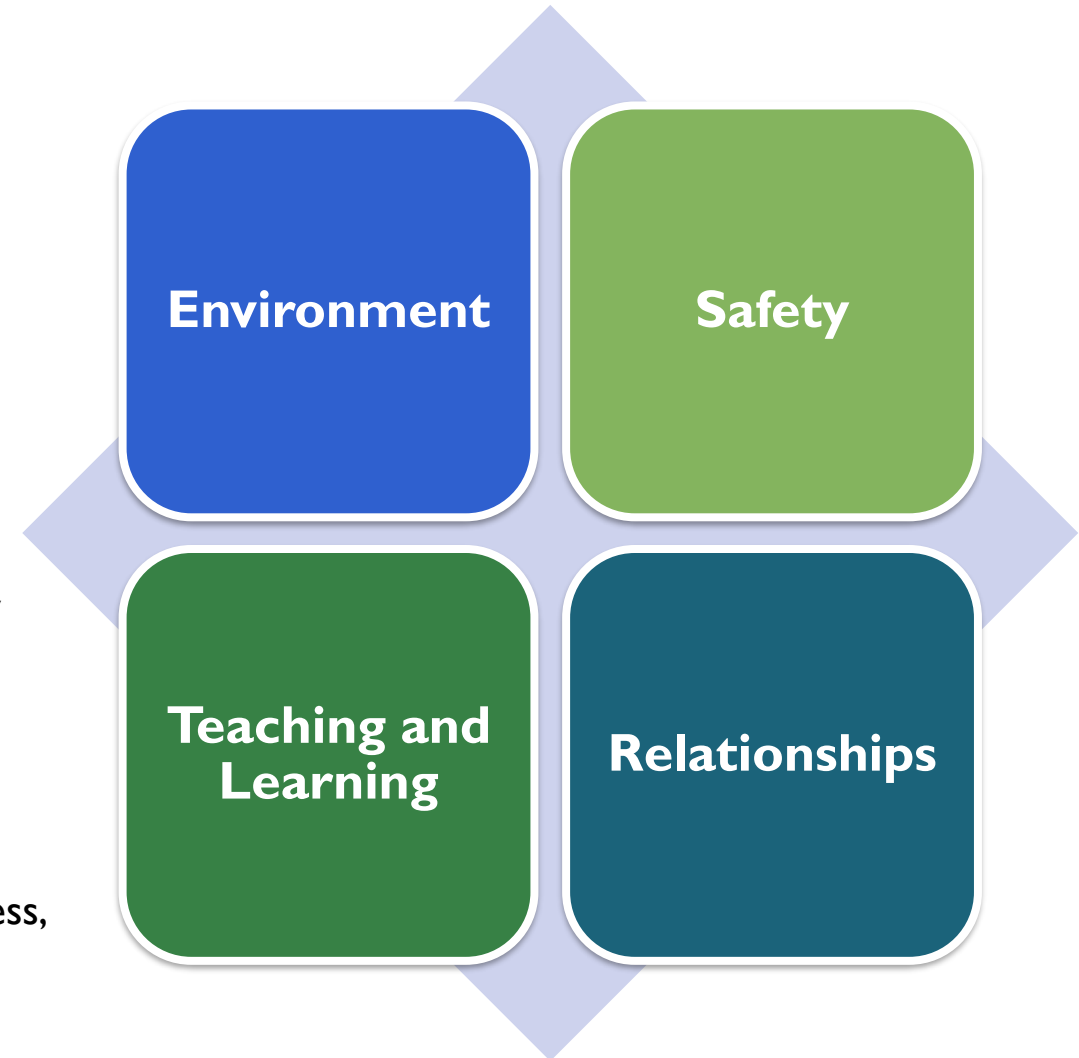
Relationships

Small Group Discussion

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

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

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

15 minutes

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)*

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

Let's Chat!

Each team, please share 1-2 key observations from your discussion about what you need to have in place for the year.

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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	• 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

Attendance and
Absence Data

In and Out of
School Suspension
Data along with
Office Referrals

Use multiple measures of data to
assess school climate.
Review data disaggregated by race and
ethnicity, disability, grade, and gender.

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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/

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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/

Adapting Routines and Rituals to Encourage Attendance and Participation

Classroom:
- ✓ Teach and reinforce attendance and behavior expectations (e.g. use PBIS 5:1 positive statements)

Daily:
- ✓ Take attendance in a caring manner
- ✓ Recognize when a student was absent and welcome him/her back
- ✓ Check-ins (e.g. mood meter)

Weekly:
- ✓ Friendship Fridays or Wellness Wednesdays
- ✓ Virtual clubs

School:

Daily:
- ✓ Morning Messages / Texts

Weekly:
- ✓ Principal pop-ins to say a few positive words
- ✓ Acknowledge good and improved attendance
- ✓ Virtual school assemblies or grade-level gatherings for fun activities or engaging programming

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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...

Hope

for a better future

✛

Faith

that school will help your child succeed

✛

Voice

in decisions that affect them and their children

✛

Access

to needed support and services

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 http://www.pthvp.org/what-we-do/pthv-model/
- ✓ 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, https://www.mentoring.org/virtual-mentoring-portals/

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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

Lower Impact ➡️ **Higher Impact**

Parent help with administrative tasks	Parent resource rooms

Goal-setting talks

Home visits

Shared Governance

Potlucks

Weekly sharing folders

School Family Councils

Fundraisers

Back to School Night

Parent-teacher conferences

Performances and showcases

School Newsletters

Parent training events

Regular, personalized communication

Positive phone calls home

Parent Ambassadors

Family support services

Collaborative planning

Interactive homework

Classroom visits

Modeling of learning support strategies

Parent help on learning projects

Celebrations

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

Let's Hear From You!

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

Please share your ideas in the Chat box.

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Additional Resources

- Pathways to Engagement: A Toolkit for Covid-19 Recovery Through Attendance
  https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/pathways-to-engagement-a-toolkit-for-covid-19-recovery-through-attendance/

- 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 https://www.americaspromise.org/voices-of-young-people

- 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

Parents Underestimate the Number of Year-End Absences

Parents were asked about their children's absences in two ways:

1. Was your child absent an average of 2 or more days a month?
2. Was your child absent more than 10 days over the year?

90% of parents said their child was absent an average of 2+ days a month, **but not** 10+ days a year

Missed an average of 2+ days per month 90%

Missed 10+ days annually 30%

The math: If a child is absent an average of 2+ days a month, then he or she is absent far more than 18+ days a year

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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"

Spanish-speaking parents: 49%, 47%, 63%, 71%, 79%, 84%

English-speaking parents: 23%, 37%, 41%, 48%, 56%, 71%

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

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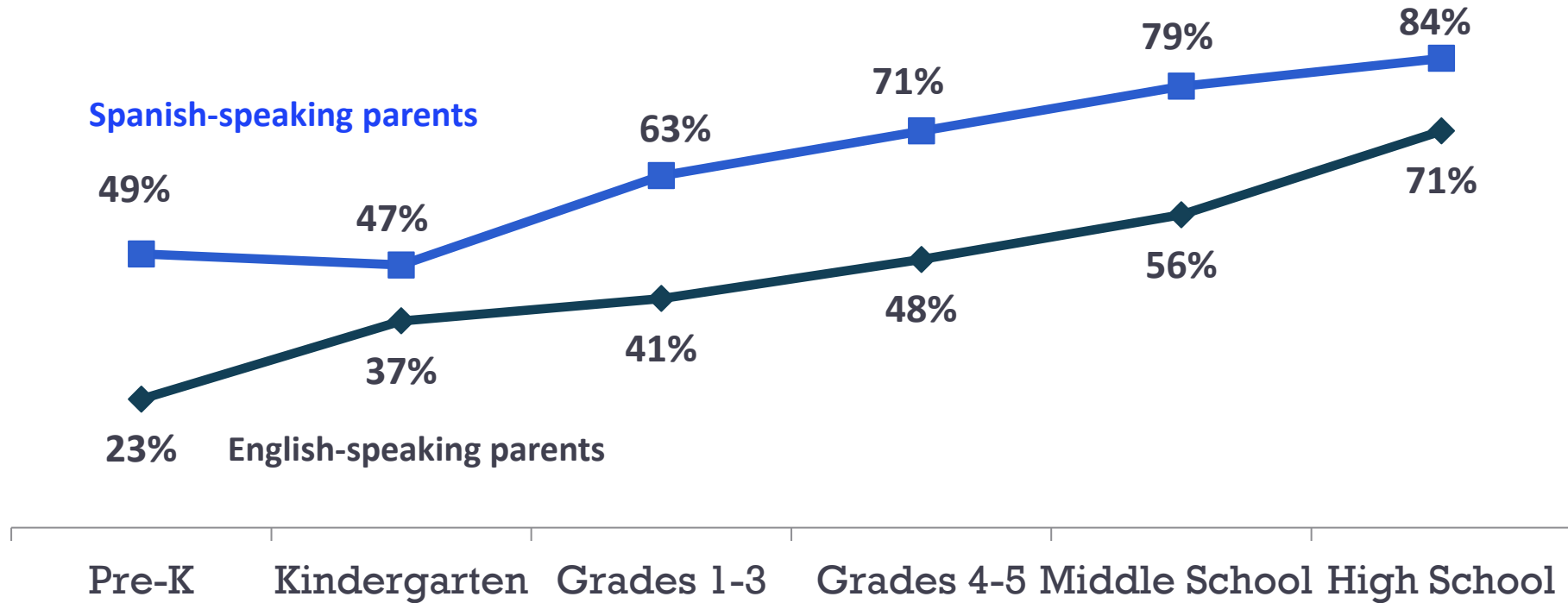
Sporadic Absences are More Likely to go Unnoticed

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

Let's Chat

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

Olga Nunez
Mom & Attendance Advocate

https://vimeo.com/230270780

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.
- ❖ Establish protocols to maintain two-way communication with families and with staff.
- ❖ Make sure families are informed in home language when students are absent or not participating in distance learning.

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

Combating Attendance Dips

Year-Round Planning

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

Developing a Communications Plan

Identify Your Audience:
- Students
- Families/caregivers
- Teachers
- Community partners

✓ What does each group need to know?

✓ What do you want them to do?

✓ How will you communicate it?

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

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

Topics to Address with Messaging & Communications tor the Return to School
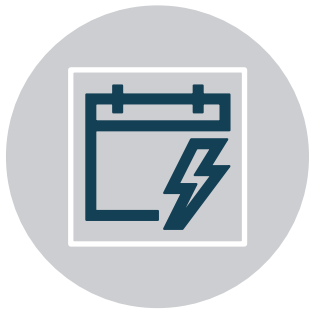
LEARNING OPTIONS & SCHEDULE

HEALTH AND SAFETY

WARM WELCOME

ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT

Back to School Letters

- Keep Safe

- Keep Healthy

- Keep Connected

- Keep Learning

https://www.attendanceworks.org/update-your-communications-with-families-for-back-to-school/

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Additional Resources from Attendance Works

Handouts for Families

- ✓ Pre-K
- ✓ Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole versions

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

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:

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- 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!

Cecelia Leong, Vice President for Programs
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Angela Duran, Senior Fellow
aduran@excelby8.net

About Us

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

- ✓ Advances better **policy**
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- ✓ Catalyzes needed **research**

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

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
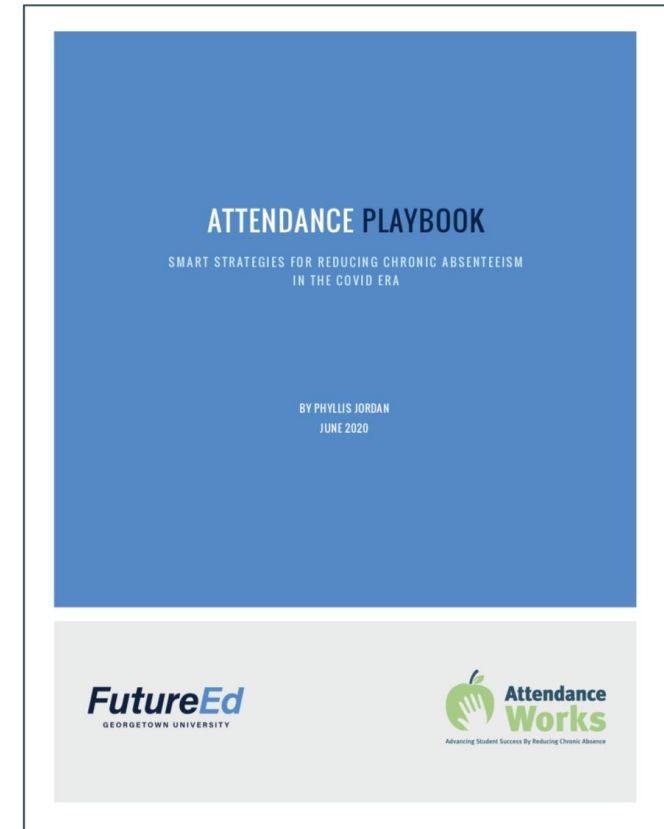
Attendance Playbook: https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/
Implementation Guide: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/

FutureEd
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

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

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

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Family and Student Engagement	Social and Emotional Learning Relationships	Behavioral and Mental Health	Data Monitoring	Physical Health	Academic Support	Basic Needs
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			Tier 1 Universal Prevention			
			Foundational Supports			

America's Promise Alliance:

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

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

Including free office hours!