Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

Welcome!

Molly Balfe
Senior Fellow

Cecelia Leong
Vice President of Programs

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:

- Draw on high leverage, whole school strategies to create
  - positive conditions for learning and
  - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism

- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention

- Learn a restorative approach to communicate with families about attendance

Welcome & Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name and role
- ✓ Your school and district
- ✓ Who motivated you to attend school every day?

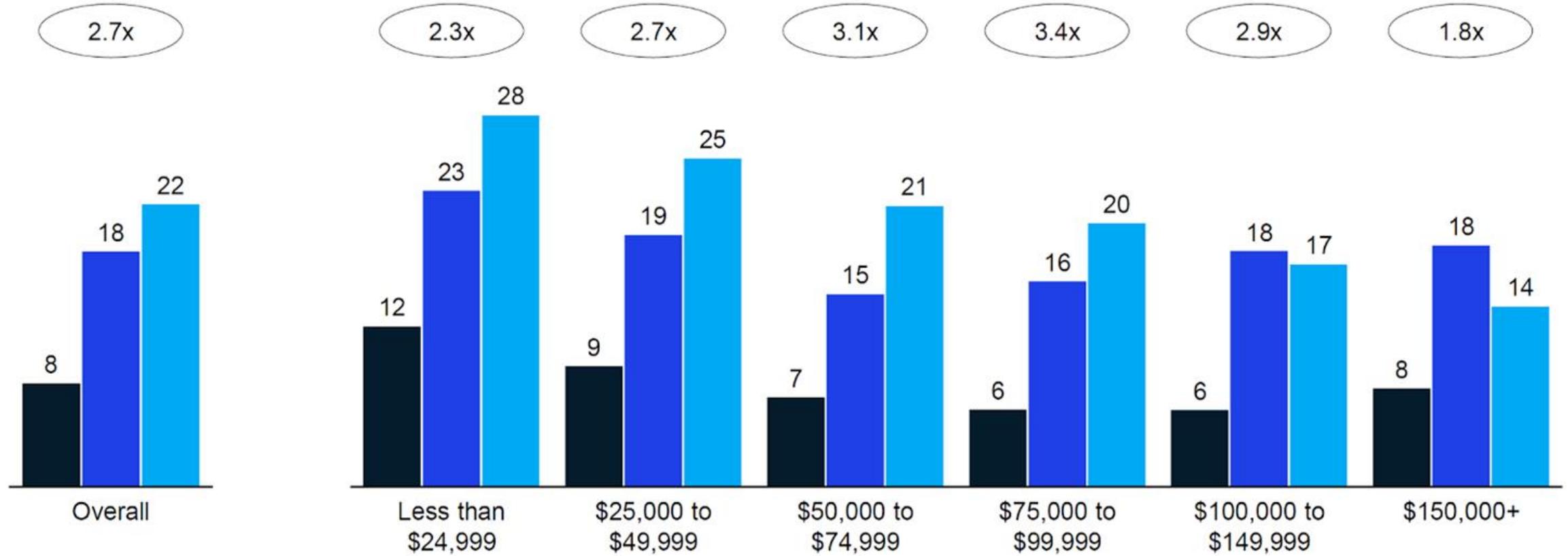Attendance Works ©

Overview of Chronic Absence

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

Attendance by income
% of parents with children in grades K-12 indicating their child could be chronically absent

■ Pre-pandemic (% of parents reporting their student used to miss 15+ days in a full year)

■ Spring 21 (% of parents reporting their student has missed 15+ days in 20-21 school year)

■ Fall 21 (% of parents reporting their student has missed 4+ days in 21-22 school year so far)

(#) Increase from pre-pandemic to Fall 21

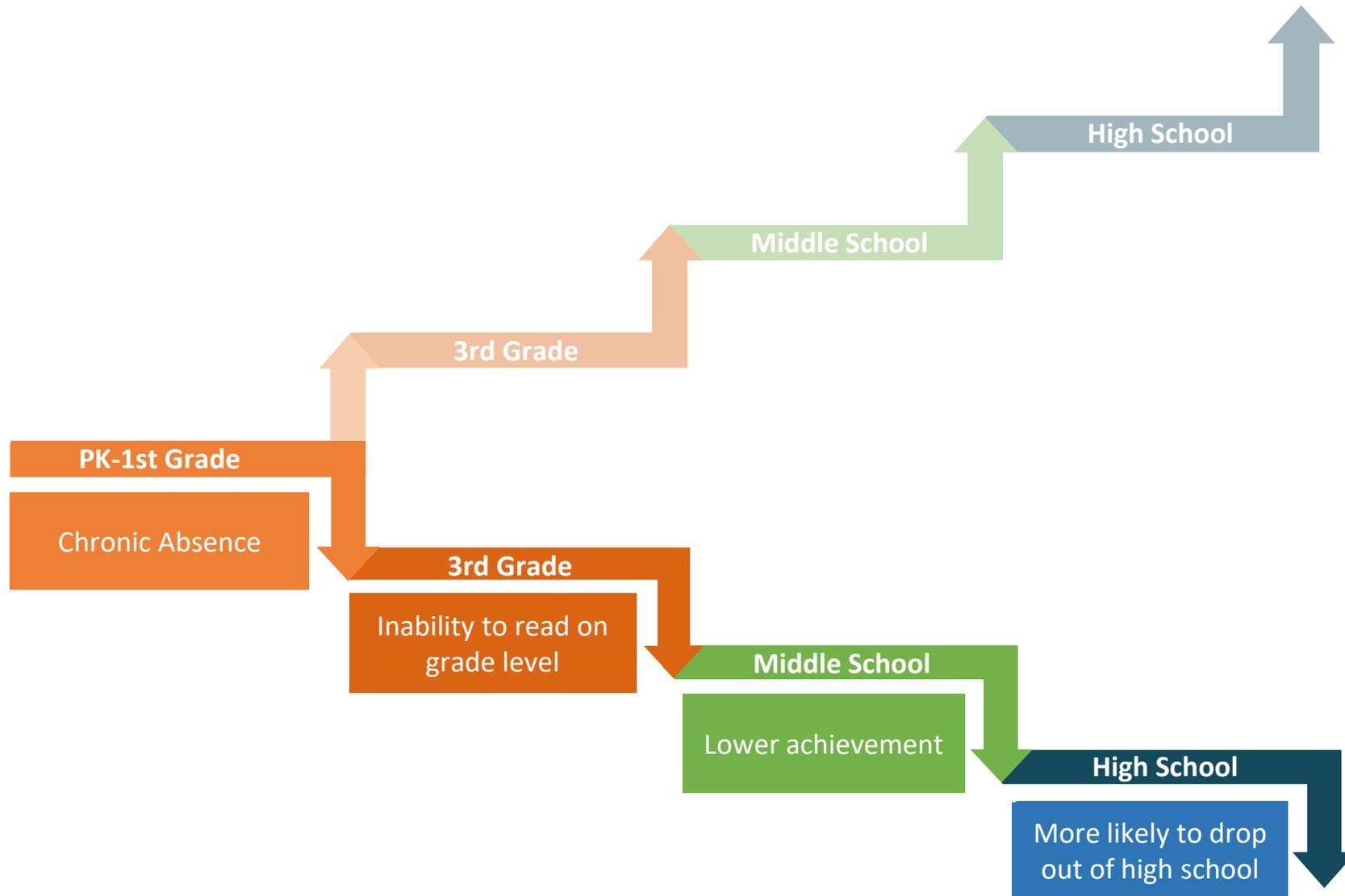| Category	Pre-pandemic	Spring 21	Fall 21	Increase
Overall	8	18	22	2.7x
Less than $24,999	12	23	28	2.3x
$25,000 to $49,999	9	19	25	2.7x
$50,000 to $74,999	7	15	21	3.1x
$75,000 to $99,999	6	16	20	3.4x
$100,000 to $149,999	6	18	17	2.9x
$150,000+	8	18	14	1.8x

Source: McKinsey Parent Survey June 2021 (n = 16,370) and November 2021 (n = 14,498)

https://www.attendanceworks.org/k-shaped-recovery-continues-to-leave-millions-of-students-behind/

Improving Attendance Matters

PK-1st Grade
Chronic Absence

3rd Grade
Inability to read on grade level

Middle School
Lower achievement

High School
More likely to drop out of high school
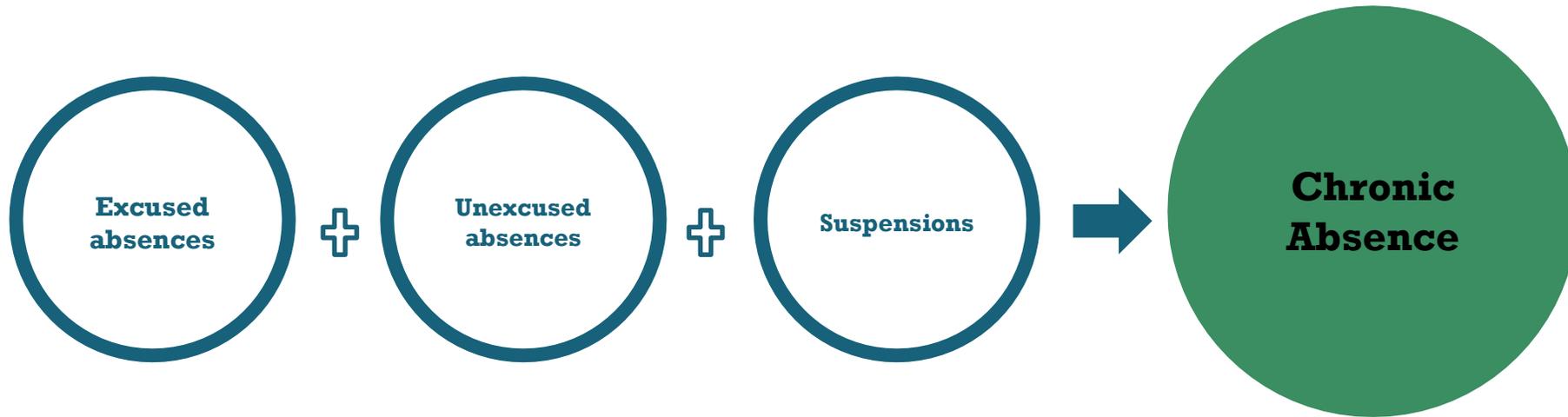
3rd Grade

Middle School

High School

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).
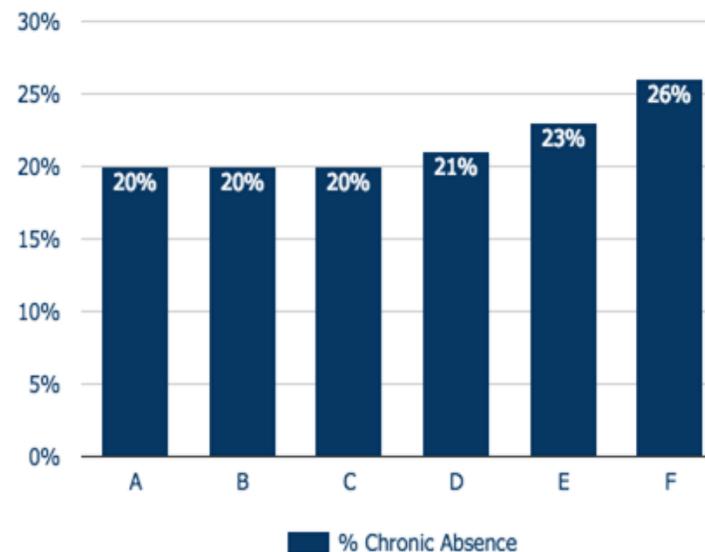
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A

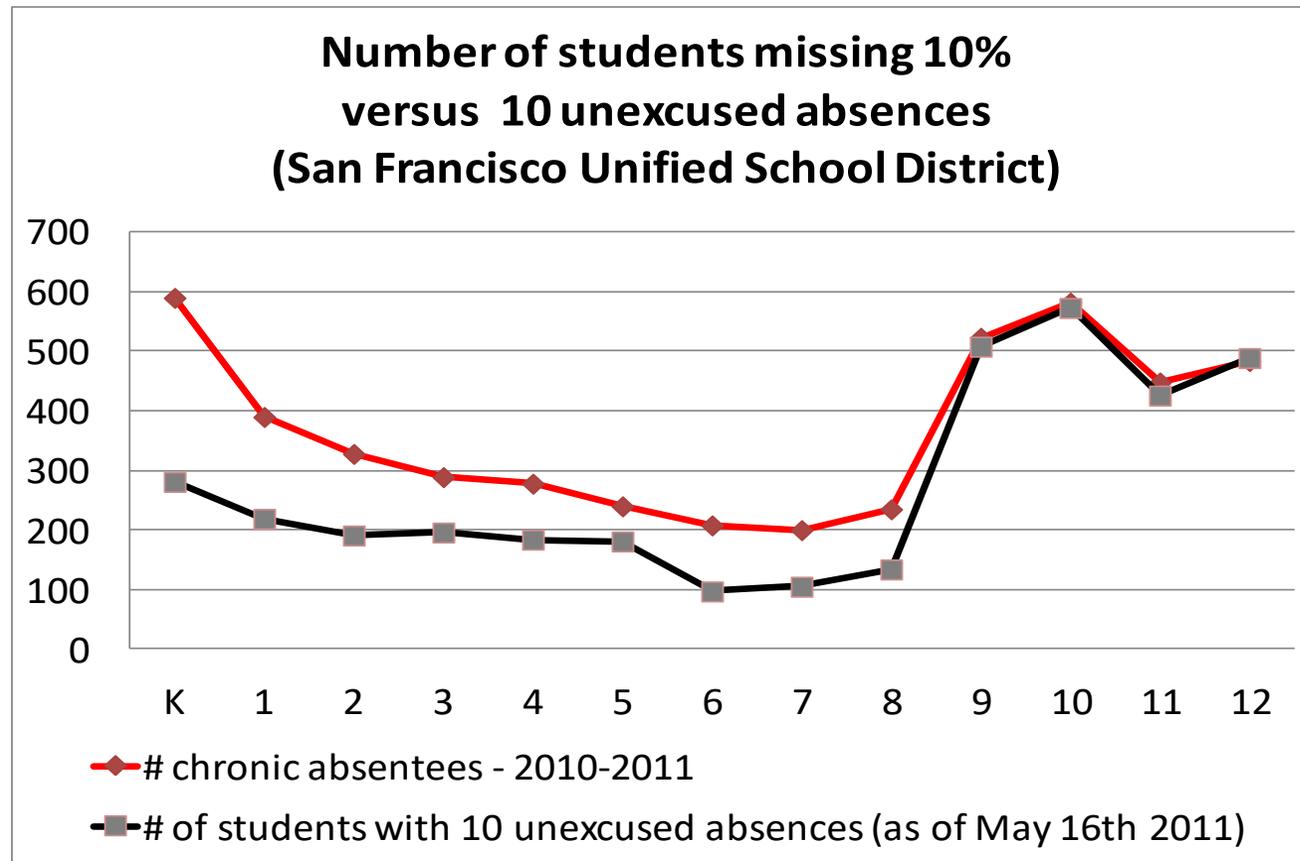### Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012

Bar chart showing % Chronic Absence:
- A: 7%
- B: 12%
- C: 13%
- D: 13%
- E: 15%
- F: 16%
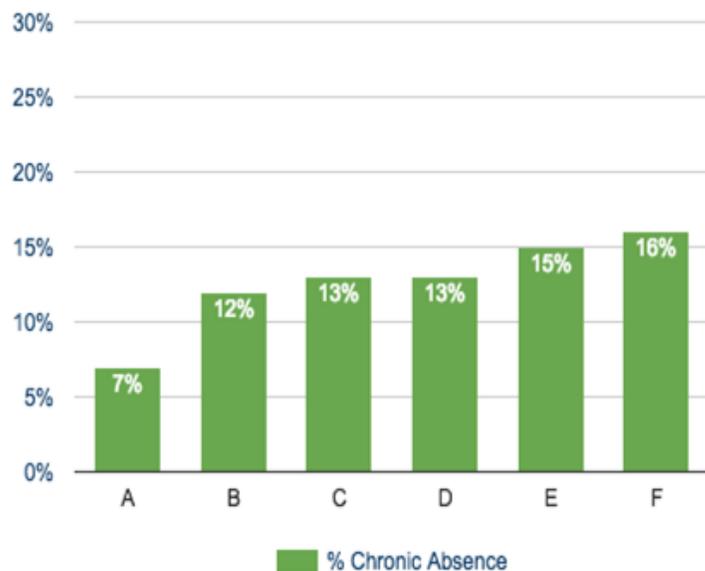
Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12

Bar chart showing % Chronic Absence:
- A: 20%
- B: 20%
- C: 20%
- D: 21%
- E: 23%
- F: 26%

98% ADA = little chronic absence

95% ADA = don't know

93% ADA = significant chronic absence

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Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

Number of students missing 10%
versus 10 unexcused absences
(San Francisco Unified School District)

chronic absentees - 2010-2011

of students with 10 unexcused absences (as of May 16th 2011)
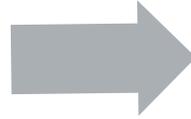
What's the Difference Between Chronic Absence vs. Truancy?

Truancy

▲ Counts ONLY unexcused absences

▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules

▲ Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

Chronic Absence

■ Counts ALL absences *(excused, unexcused & suspensions)*

■ Emphasizes impact of missed days

■ Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies

■ Cultivates family & student engagement

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Reflection

Type in the Chat:

What approach does your school or school system take to improving attendance?
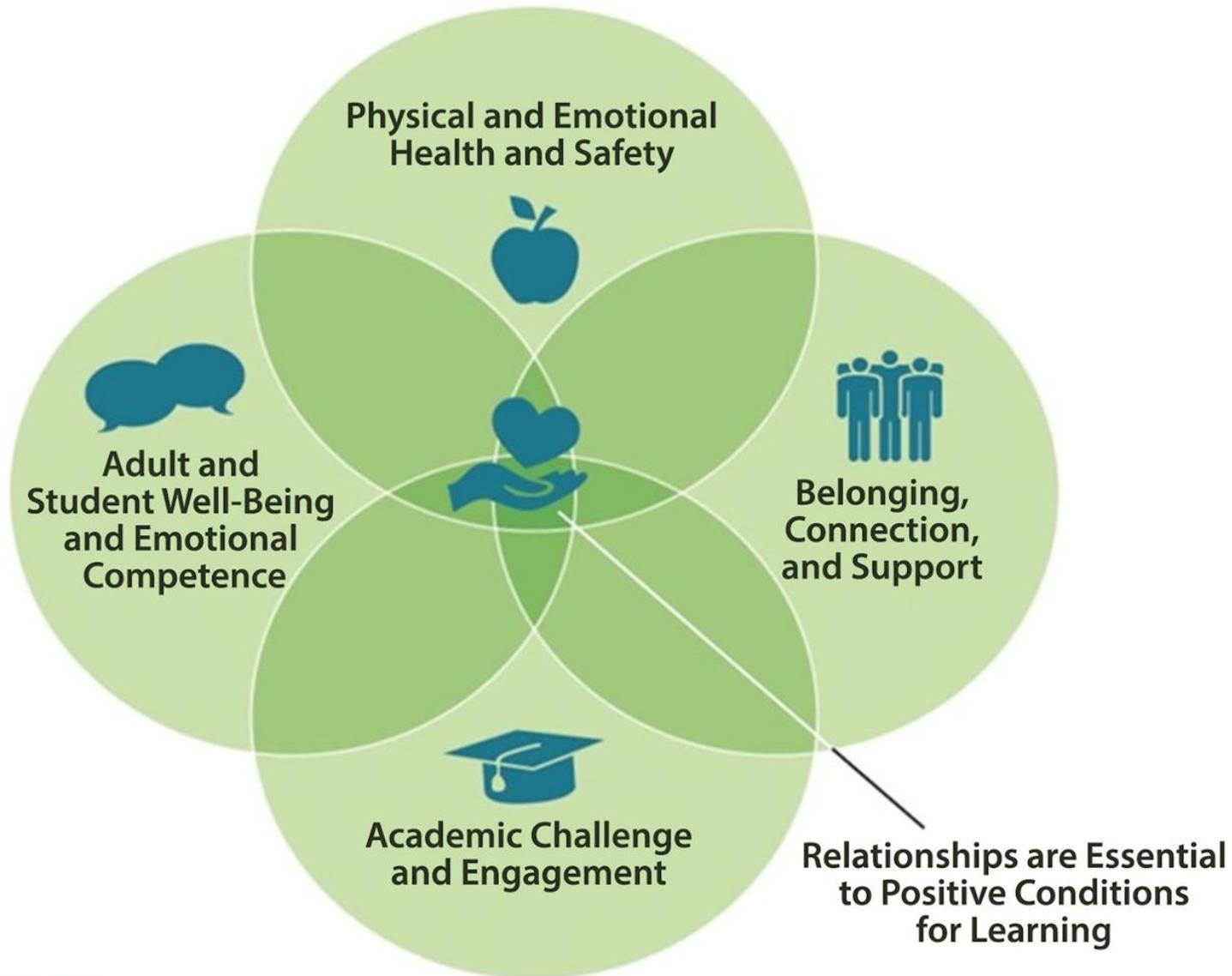
Effective Practice Pathway

Mindset → Actionable Data → Capacity → Strategies

Positive Relationships with Students & Families

Positive Conditions for Learning Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Well-Being and Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

The Push and Pull of Conditions for Learning

Examples of Push-Out Factors

Feeling:
    Ignored
    Unsafe
    That you do not belong

Experiencing:
    Bullying
    Boredom
    Harsh and Exclusionary Discipline

Examples of Pull Factors

Feeling:
    Cared for
    Safe
    That you belong

Experiencing:
    Engagement
    Support for students and their families

Relationships are Essential
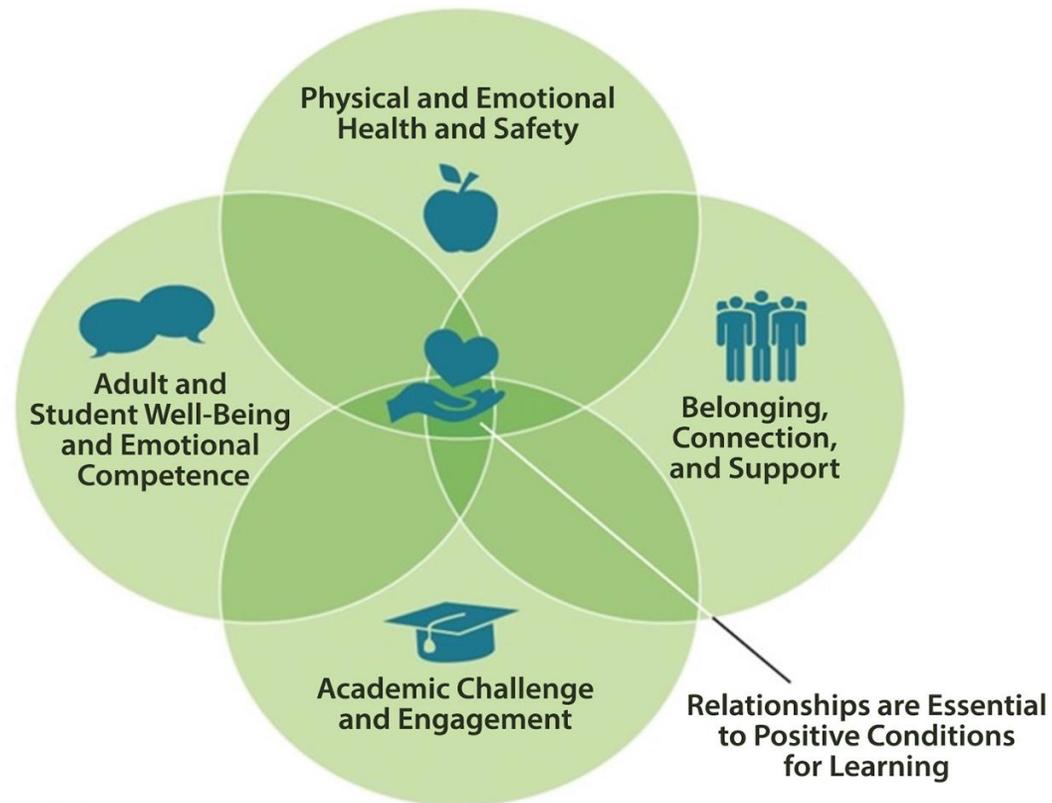

https://vimeo.com/260252509

Reflection

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?

About Your School:

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

- Share how you reach students & families who aren't connected to school because of a history of disconnection, who are experiencing poverty or racial bias, or language barriers.

12 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)*
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter "A" should facilitate.

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Report Out

Share in Chat:

a) Successful strategies for building relationships with the groups of students with the greatest attendance challenges

b) Ideas for scaling strategies to address the extraordinary level of chronic absence we are currently facing
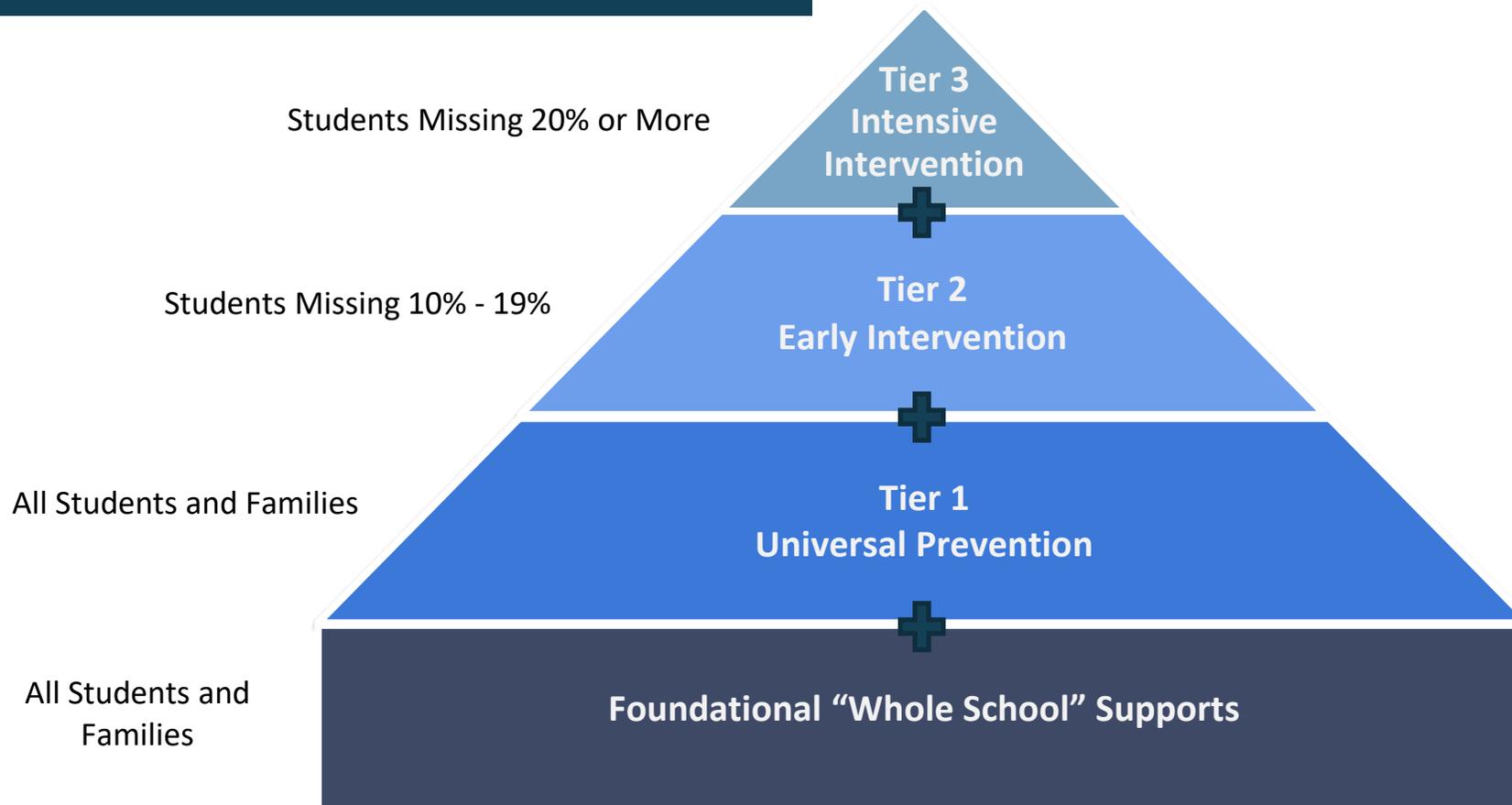
Additional Resources

- 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/

- How to Guide Relationship Mapping: Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at
  https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy

- 2x10 Relationship Strategy Bank
  https://www.scoe.net/media/e4olyyjr/sesion_2_relationship_strategy_bank.pdf

- 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/

Relationships are Essential at Every Level of Intervention

An Integrated Multi-tiered System of Support

Students Missing 20% or More

Students Missing 10% - 19%

All Students and Families

All Students and Families

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/

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Foundational Supports are Building Blocks of Schools that Promote Engagement

Share in Chat: In your experience which foundational supports have been most essential at your school or in your district?

Healthy learning environments	Enrichment activities and clubs	Positive relationships	Active family and student engagement
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Challenging and Engaging Curriculum	Traditions and celebrations	Support for families to facilitate learning at home
Welcoming, safe school climate	Advisories or Morning Meetings to Build Community	Learning Supports	Access to Food and Other Basic Needs

Foundational "Whole School" Supports

Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports

❖ Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations

❖ Predictable daily/weekly routines related to attendance

❖ Take daily attendance accurately with care

❖ Personalized communication to families when students are absent

❖ Recognition of good and improved attendance

❖ Access to wellness checks and connectivity assessments
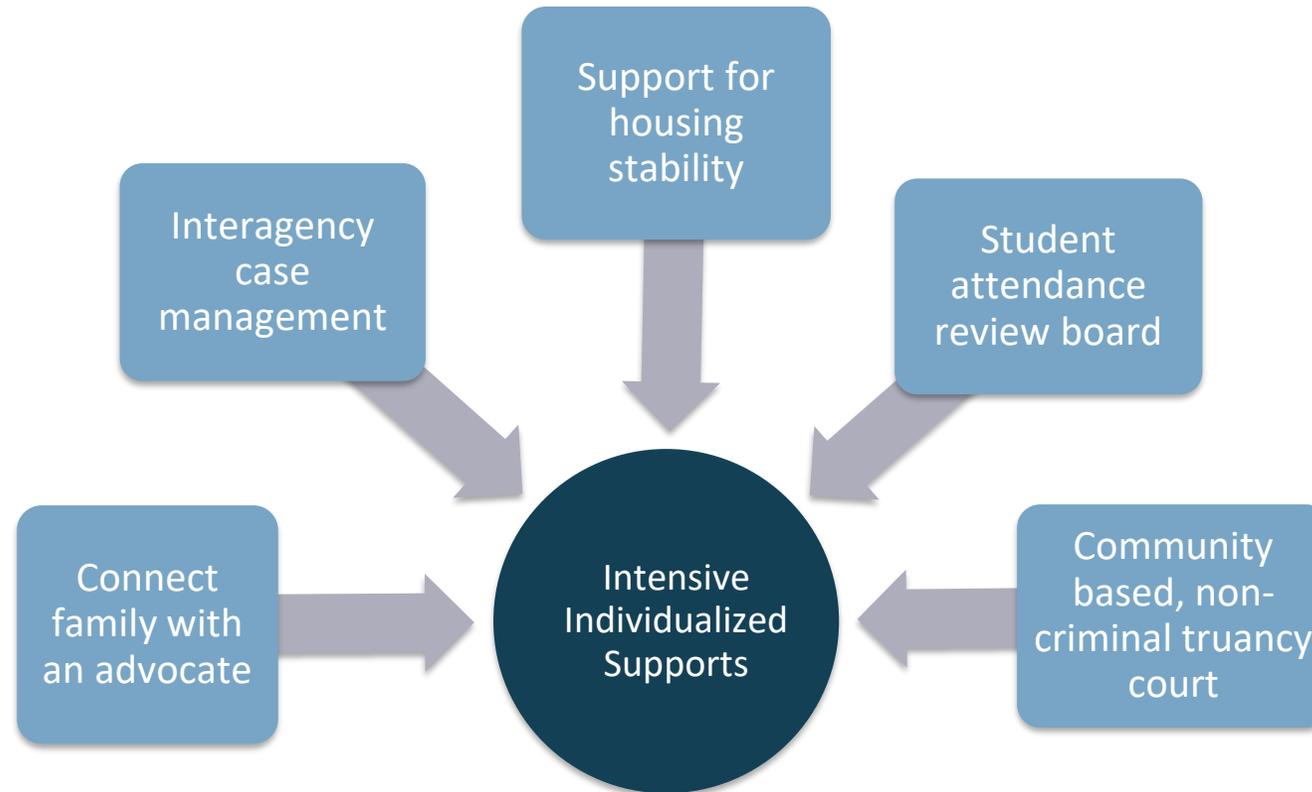
❖ Regular monitoring of attendance data

Tier 2: Strategies layer in support, strengthen relationships, and take a problem-solving approach

Expanded learning opportunities

Student Attendance Success Plan

Attendance goals and supports added to IEP

Assign caring mentors

Personalized Intervention Strategies

Small group supports

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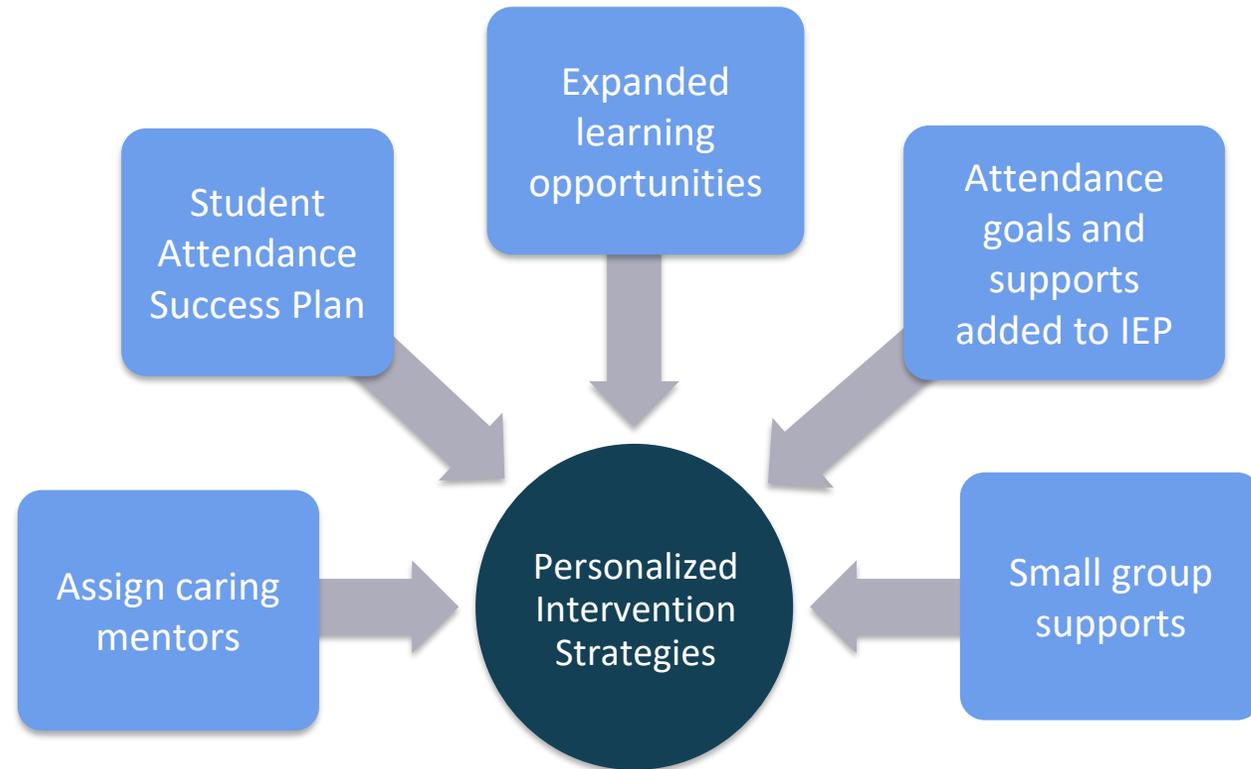
Tier 3: Strategies involve public and community partners and integrated case management

Support for housing stability

Interagency case management

Student attendance review board

Connect family with an advocate

Intensive Individualized Supports

Community based, non-criminal truancy court

Encourage Focus on High Leverage Relationship Activities

What is a high leverage activity? A high leverage activity:

❑ Lays a foundation for caring and positive relationships

❑ Can be used with staff and with students and families

❑ Offered universally with extra attention and tailoring to ensure it reaches chronically absent students

(Examples: Greeting By the Door, Giving Thanks, Individual Learning Plans, Restorative Circles, etc.)

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Re-establish Routines and Rituals

1. Positive Greeting by Name

2. Smile, offer an affirming comment

3. Give students a choice,
   low / no contact options:
   - Wave
   - Thumbs up
   - Bow
   - Elbow bump

https://www.edutopia.org/video/making-connections-greetings-door

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/

Taking a
Restorative Approach to Communications

Centering Communication on Restorative Practices

Engagement — involving individuals in decisions that affect them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their opinions into account

Explanation — explaining the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who has been involved or who is affected by it

Expectation clarity — making sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them in the future

(Kim & Mauborgne, 1997)
https://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/defining-restorative/

Impersonal Letters:
- Easy to disregard
- Many parents felt the school miscounted—but parents couldn't verify because they weren't tracking absences
- Many parents felt that the school didn't understand them

Teachers Not Addressing Absenteeism:
- Most parents reported that they regularly communicate with their children's teacher, but never about absences

https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit

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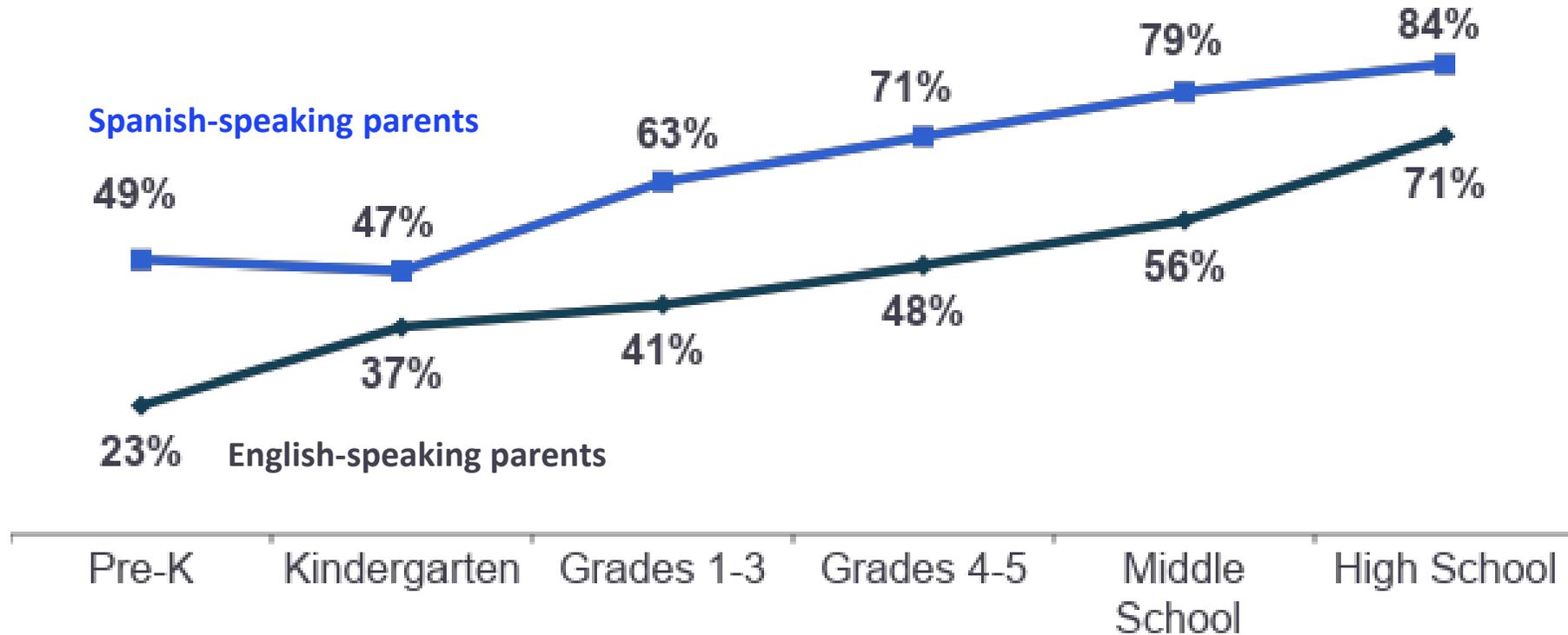
Source: Ad Council & Calif. Attorney General – Parent Ethnographies 2015
https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit
https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/tr/toolkit/QuantitativeResearchReport.pdf

Forging Partnerships with Families to Support Engagement and Attendance

- Communicate supportive messages (Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Keep Connected and Keep Learning) throughout the school year

- Provide tailored, personalized and caring messages to students and families who are chronically absent

- Offer actionable steps to improve attendance

- Make sure families know what resources are available for basic needs as well as learning at home.

Utilize Research About Effective Attendance Messaging to Improve your Communications

1. Readable
   - Fewer words
   - Accessibility: Flesch-Kincaid readability test
   - Skimmability: bullets, format reinforces message

2. Programmatic
   - Planned (connected to current events, personalized to audience)
   - Timely
   - Routinized

3. Easy to locate and multiple modes

EveryDay Labs

Todd Rogers
Todd_Rogers@hks.harvard.edu

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Communicating with Families

Use these resources to help your communications with families be clear and supportive:

❖ Chronic Absence letter Updated for Covid-19
https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/

❖ Stay the Course: A Winter Messaging Toolkit
https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/messaging/stay-the-course-a-winter-messaging-toolkit/

❖ How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2022001/pdf/2022001.pdf

Additional Resources from Attendance Works

Handouts for Families
- ✓ Preschool, Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole

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

Sign up for the 2022 Attendance Awareness Campaign

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

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*

Questions from the Audience

Learning Goals for Session 1

Participants will:

- Draw on high leverage, whole school strategies to create
    - positive conditions for learning and
    - strong relationships with students and families that prevent absenteeism

- Be introduced to the framework of multi-tiered attendance strategies that moves schools towards prevention and early intervention

- Learn a restorative approach to communicate with families about attendance

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
cecelia@attendanceworks.org

Molly Balfe, Senior Fellow
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:
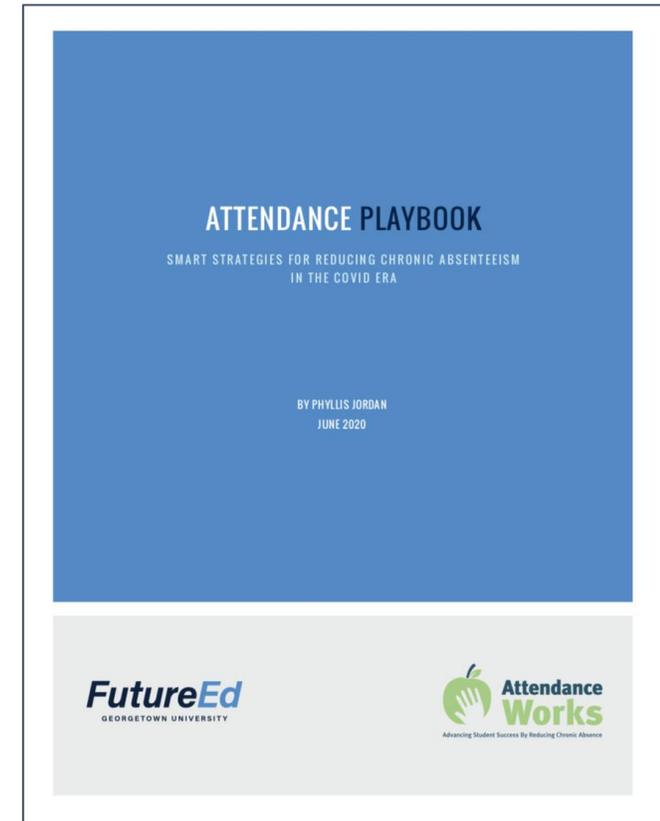
- ✓ Advances better **policy**
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- ✓ Catalyzes needed **research**

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

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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

SMART STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
IN THE COVID ERA

BY PHYLLIS JORDAN
JUNE 2020

FutureEd
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Attendance
Works
Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

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

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

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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/