



Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism



Professional Learning Series

July 13, 2021



Welcome!



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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, **Tuesday, July 13th**
- ❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Monitoring and Identifying Students in Need of Support during Distance Learning, **Tuesday, July 20th**
- ❖ **Session 3** — Partnerships that Make a Difference: Coordinated Systems Strategies, **Tuesday, July 27th**



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

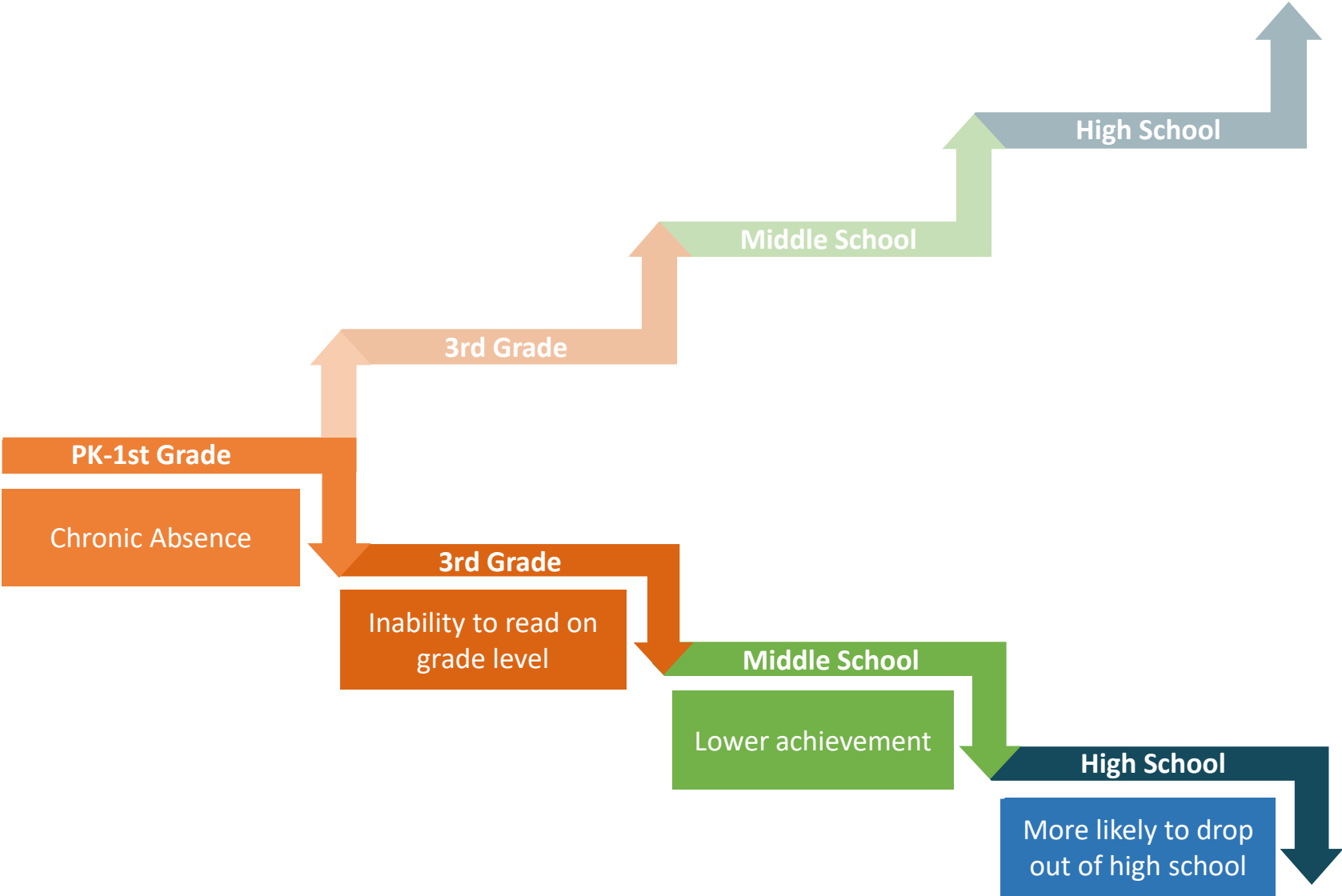


Getting Started: Introductions

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

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>



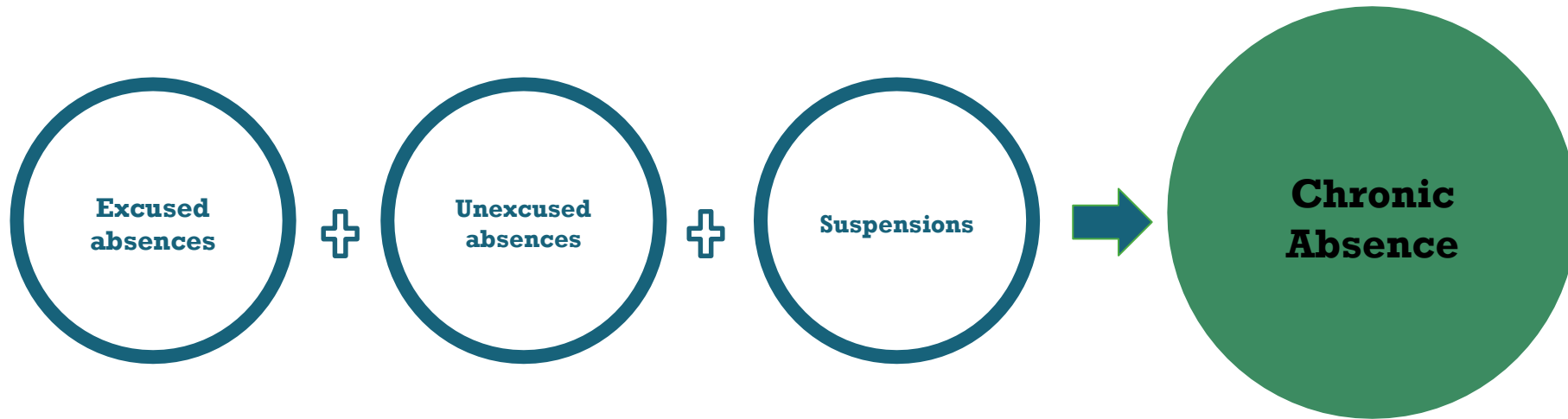
**What is the relationship
between absences and equity?**

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



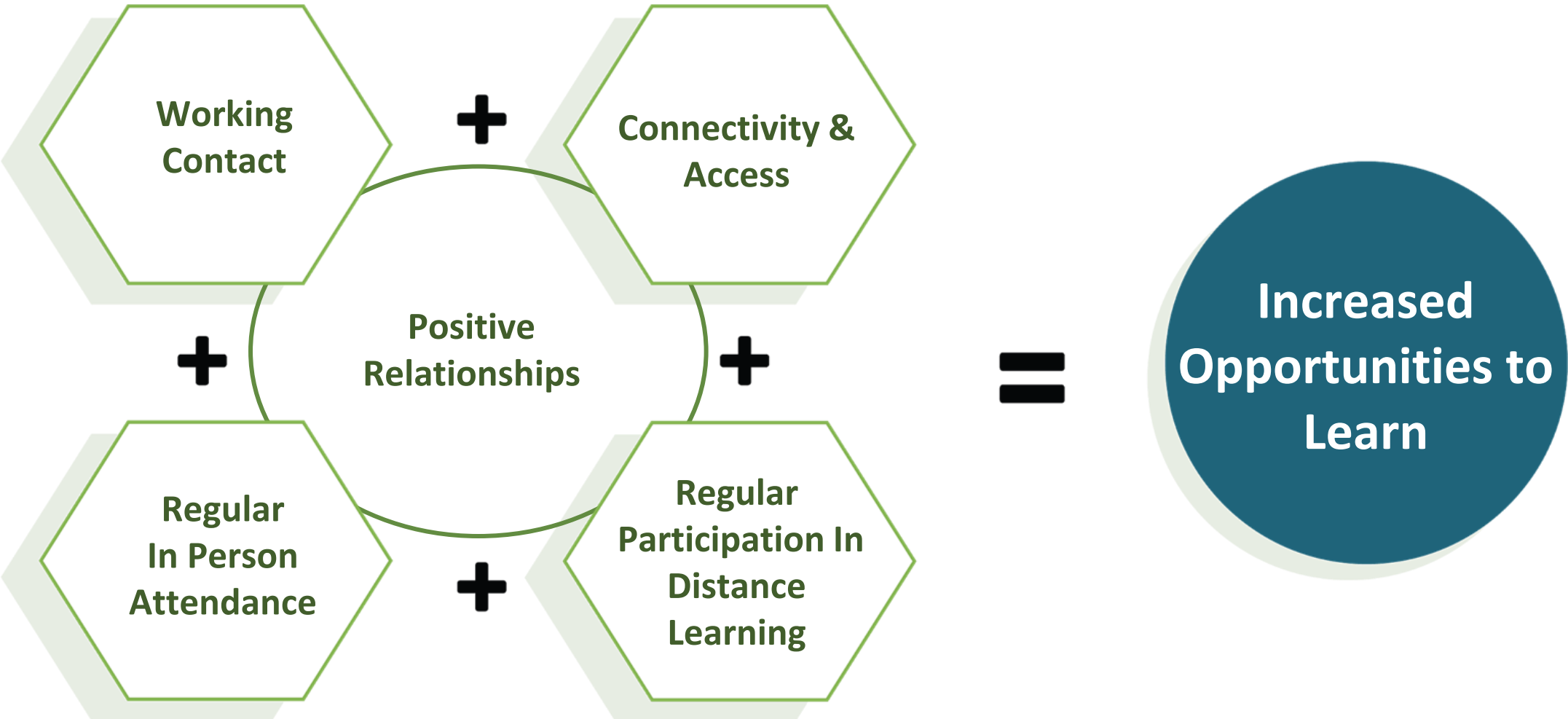
Chronic Absence Measures Lost Opportunity To Learn

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



Additional 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.

Participation/ Attendance

The extent to which students show up and complete learning activities within and across different modes of instruction.

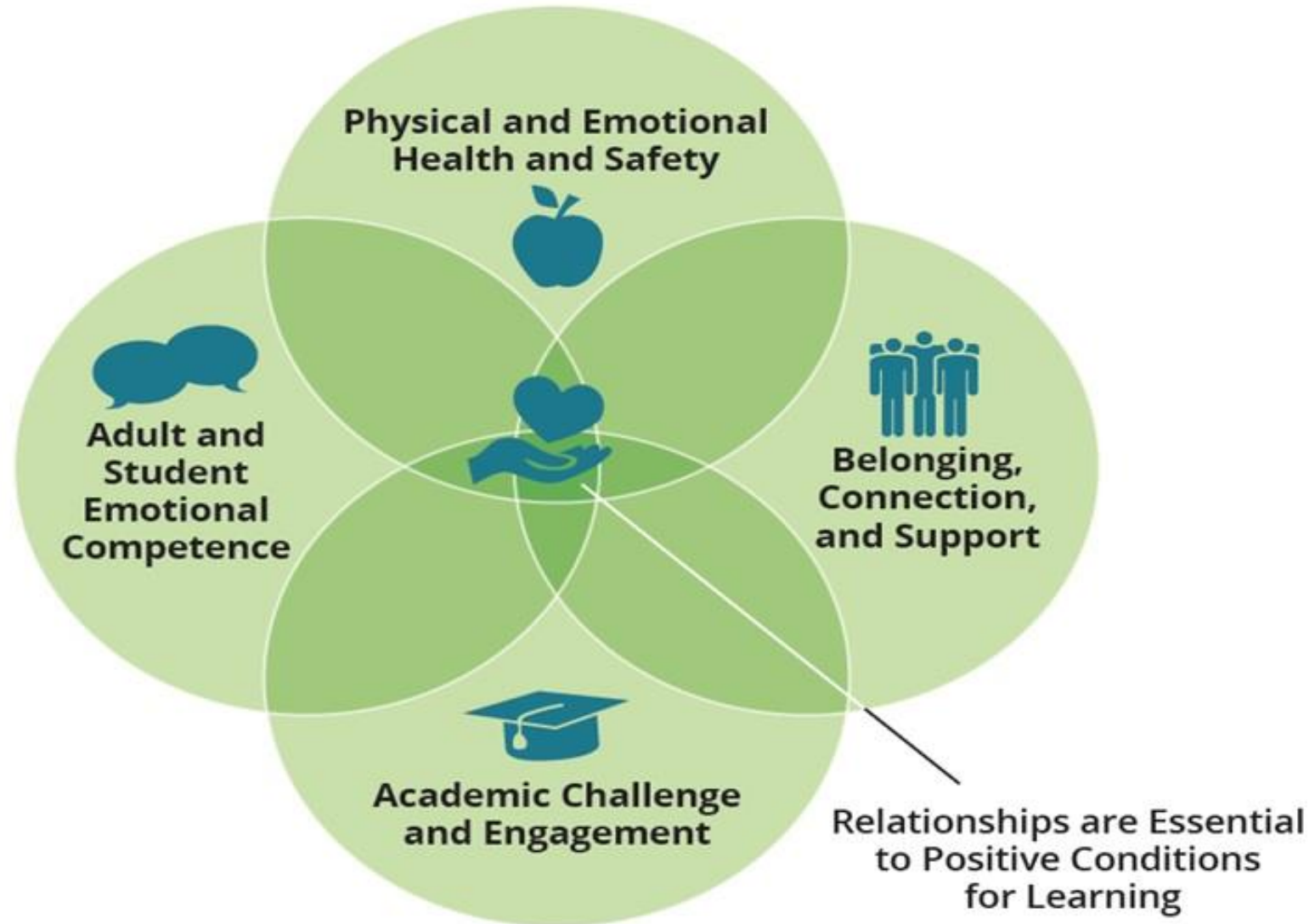


Poll

What attendance measures does your school / district track?

- 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



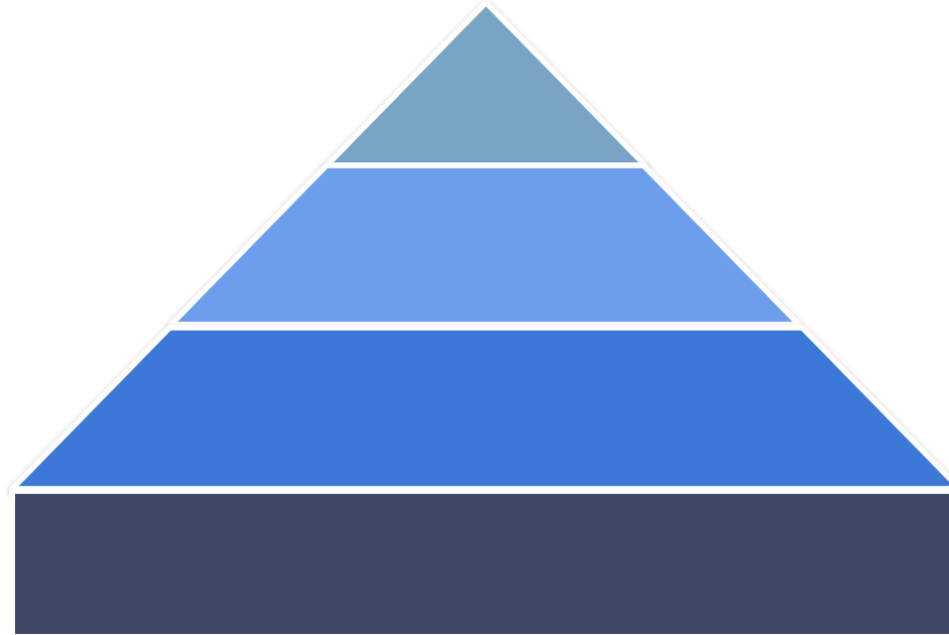
<https://vimeo.com/260252509>



What Did You Notice?

How did the video illustrate positive conditions for learning?

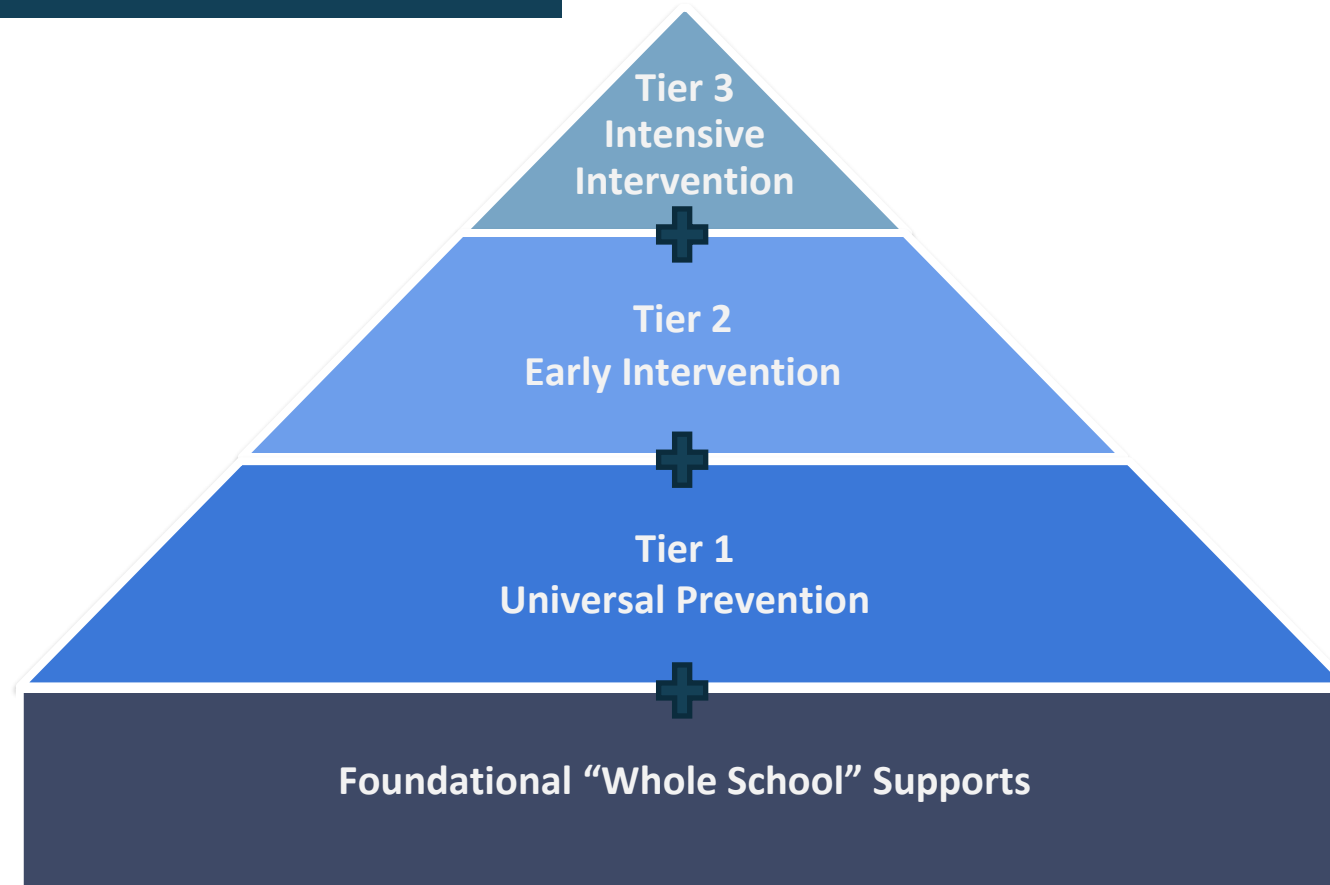




Building Your Multi-Tiered System of Support



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





Foundational Supports are Building Blocks of Schools that Promote Attendance

1. Name one or two foundational supports that became critical last school year.
2. Looking ahead to the coming 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			



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



1. Warm and Welcoming School Climate

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

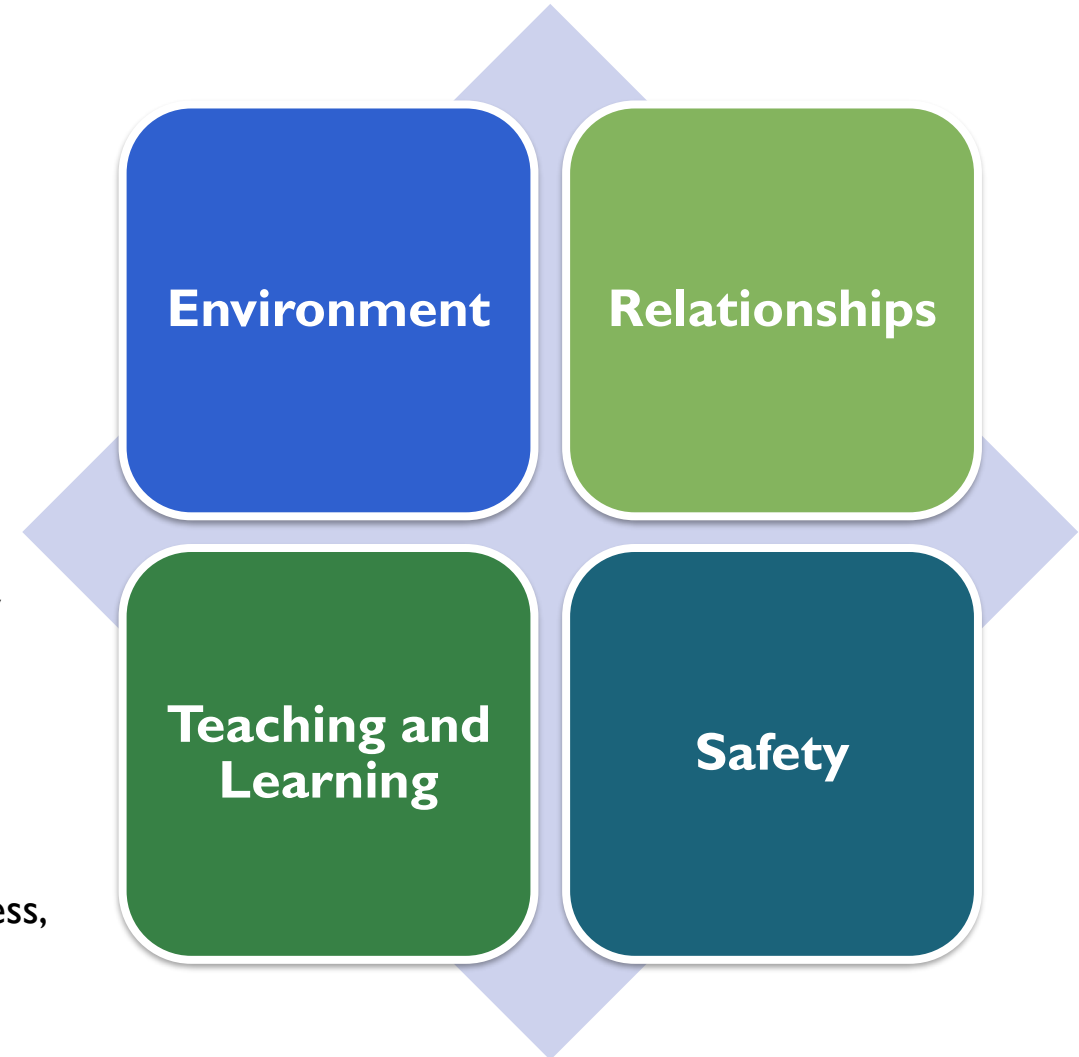


<https://vimeo.com/224790634>



School Climate and Attendance: Key Questions to Consider

- **Environment:** What modifications can we make 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



*How have we adapted our school climate during Covid-19?
What do we need to have in place this fall to welcome last year's virtual students, families & teachers back to the building and ensure that all students feel welcome and safe?*

Pick one of the four elements to discuss in your group:

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

Small group handout: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Climate-Elements-rev-7-10-21.pdf>



Let's Chat!

Please share a key insight gained or idea shared from your small group discussion.

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

Attendance and
Absence Data

School Climate
Survey Results

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.

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

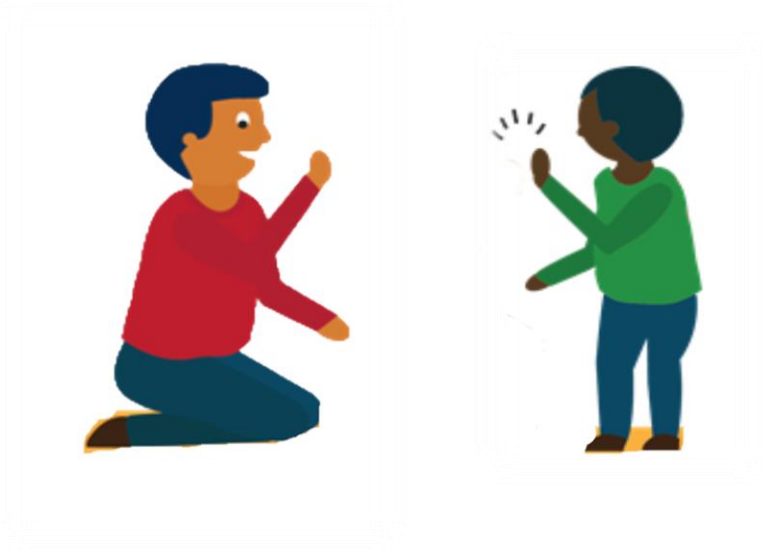
The Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT) is designed for school leaders to engage school staff, students, parents and community members to identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and strong attendance.

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.

The image shows a stack of SEAT forms. The top form is a checklist with columns for Climate Element, Observation, Location, Observed (Y/N), Not Observed (Y/N), and Describe. It includes items like '15. The school health office is easily accessible...' and '7. The school clearly communicates expectations...'. Below the checklist is an 'Instructions' section and a 'Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT) MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL' header. The SEAT form includes fields for School Name, Date of Observation, Time of Day, and Observer(s). A central diagram shows four interconnected boxes: Teaching and Learning, Environment, Safety, and Relationships. Below the diagram is a paragraph defining school climate elements and a 'Purpose' section explaining the tool's use.



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?

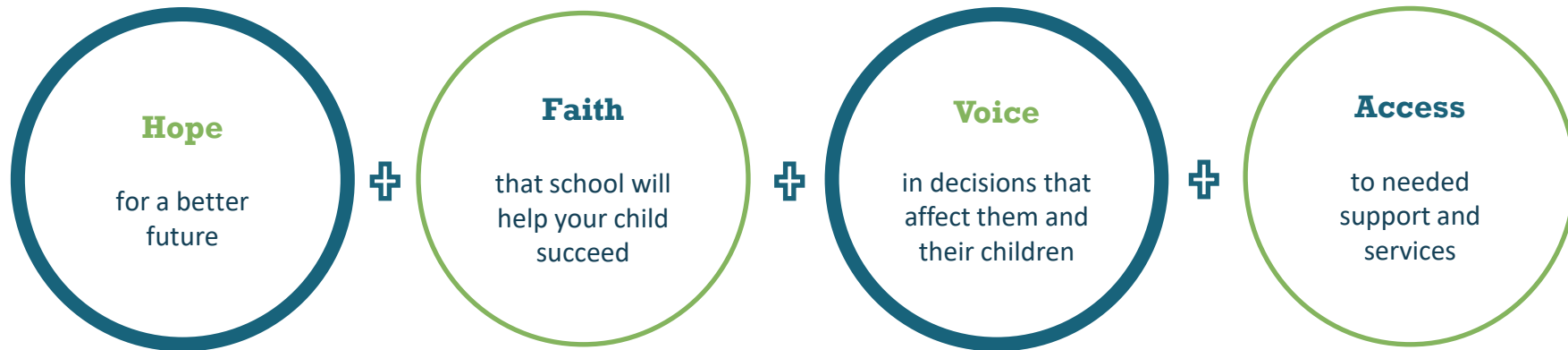
- ❖ Students and families who aren't connected to school are more likely to be those who are challenged by geography, poverty, language and disabilities.

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...





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.



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/>

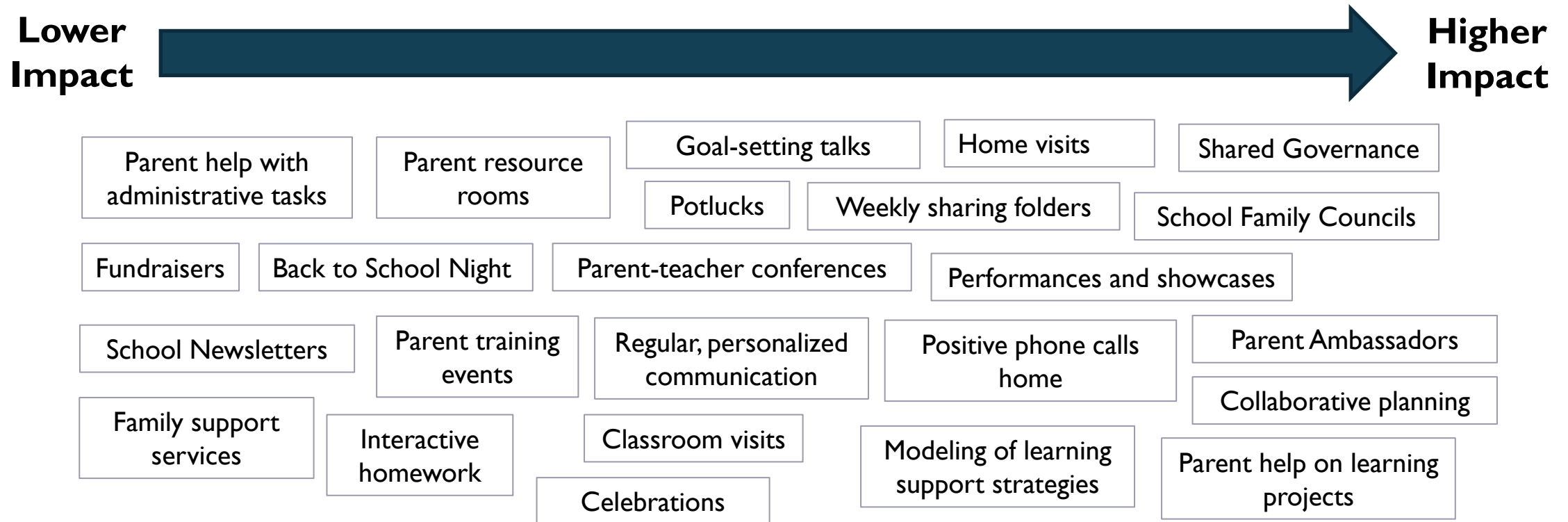


Additional Resources

- 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/>

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?**



3. Clear expectations & communication about attendance

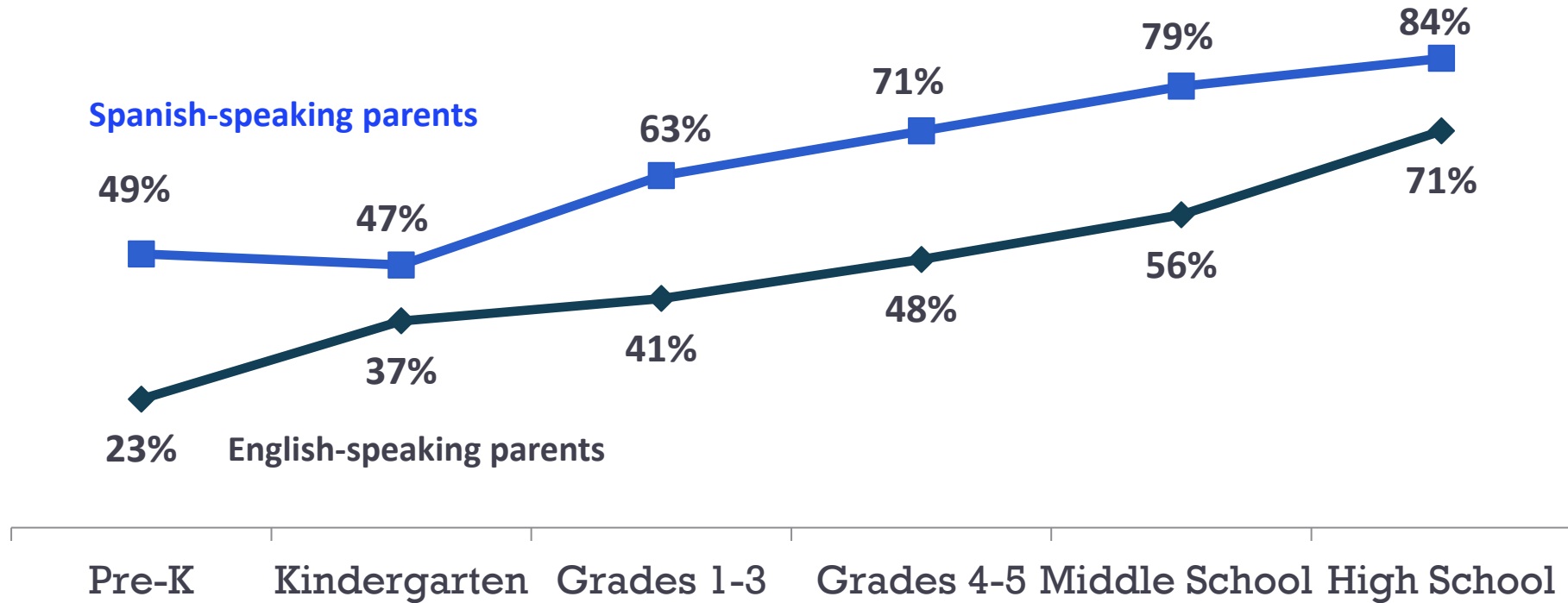


What do families of chronically absent students understand about attendance?

- ✓ 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

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”



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>





Sporadic Absences are More Likely to go Unnoticed

September					October					November					December					January					
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	
													X				X								
							X				X														
		X	X					X				X			X	X					X	X	X		
February					March					April					May					June					
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	
				X						X															
X	X													X		X						X	X		
								X					X												

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



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

Bringing Attendance Home: *A Parent's Perspective*



Work With Students and Families to Create a Success Plan

MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK

- 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 him or her 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: _____

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

MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

-My child was present _____ days.
 -My child was absent _____ days.
 -My goal is to improve my child's attendance. I will ensure my child arrives no more than _____ for the rest of the year.
 (*1 or four absences = satisfactory attendance*)

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help them do well in school and achieve their hopes and dreams.
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending school every day with _____.
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ a.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- If my child complains of a stomachache or headache, and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will make sure to call the school nurse and not _____ to that he/she can check in with my child during the day.

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



Poll

Which of the following strategies for communicating with families about attendance do you already implement?

- Approach the conversation with concern and optimism rather than blame.
- 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.
- Be specific about the number of days missed and the impact on academics.



Create a Communications Plan

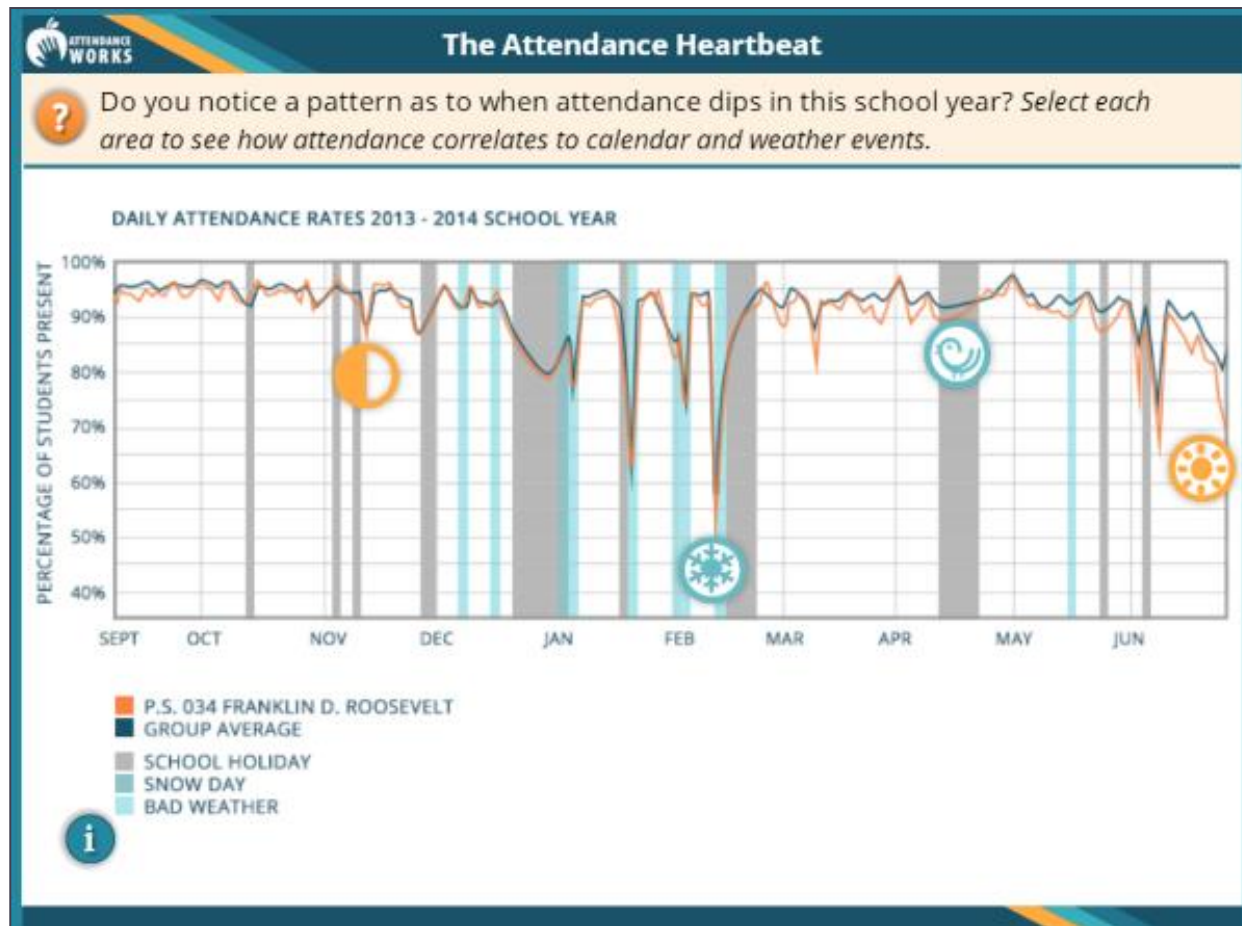
Does our district have a centralized and comprehensive communications strategy around attendance and participation?

- ❖ 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





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>



Additional Resources from Attendance Works


Handouts for Families

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

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

Sign up for the 2021 Attendance Awareness Campaign


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



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

DID YOU KNOW?

- Participation in early education programs, like preschool and Head Start, lead to better attendance in kindergarten.
- Starting in kindergarten, missing 10% of school (or just 2 days every month) can make it harder to learn to read and cause children to fall behind in school.
- Good attendance, whether class is held in person or remotely, can help children do well in school, and eventually in the workplace and in college.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Communicate with the School

- Contact your child's teacher(s) and let them know how to reach you.
- Get and post your child's class schedule and log in information on the refrigerator or your child's desk.
- Practice logging in to virtual classes and make a plan for supporting learning for children. Contact the school if you need help logging in.
- Ask about the school's attendance policy.

Make School Attendance a Priority

- Establish routines for bedtime, waking up and showing up for class.
- Identify a quiet place for your child to do school work. If you have multiple children, make a schedule. Or ask your school or community agencies if they have created places for distance learning, or if noise-canceling headphones are available for students.
- Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school or logging in to the computer if you can't be there to help. Find a family member, neighbor or older child who can help over the phone or who can help while wearing a mask and maintaining physical distance. Community-based organizations might also be able to help.
- When school is in session, avoid extended family trips and non-urgent medical appointments.
- Ask your child's teacher about attendance and tell the teacher any concerns you have.

Help Your Child Stay Healthy and Engaged

- Monitor your child's attendance and participation, and contact the teacher to address any concerns.
- Make sure your child gets the flu vaccine and other required shots.
- Find out if your child feels safe from bullies. Make sure that school discipline policies don't lead to your child becoming disengaged or pushed out of school. If these are problems, work with your school to find a solution.
- If your child seems bored or anxious about school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make them feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Ask for help when you need it. School staff, after-school program providers, and other parents or community agencies are available to help families access online learning, obtain food or housing and address other experiences that make it difficult to attend and participate.

Developed in partnership with ConnectED, Families in Schools, and Parent Institute for Quality Education. Visit www.attendanceworks.org for more downloadable resources.



Year-Round Planning



BLANK FORM for K-12 Activities: rev 6-13-19

Attendance Activities School Year Plan (K-12)

School Name	<input type="text"/>	School Year	<input type="text"/>
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For each tier and time frame, fill in activities for your school or program. For each activity, you might specify who is responsible for leading and how to measure results of the activity. You can also re-create this chart in a larger format and use post-it notes to add activities as a group exercise. (See the SAMPLE ACTIVITIES chart for more ideas.)

Timing	Before Start of School Year (July/August)	Welcome Back (August/September)	Ongoing (Weekly/Monthly)	Fall Semester (October - November)	Winter Semester (December - February)	Spring Semester (March-April)	End-of-Year (May/June)
School Staff							
Tier 1 (universal)							
Tier 2 (targeted – moderate chronic absence)							
Tier 3 (targeted – severe chronic absence)							

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www.attendanceworks.org



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

www.attendanceworks.org



Questions from the Audience





Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!



Sue Fothergill, Director of Strategic Programming

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Angela Duran, Senior Fellow

Lorri Hobson, Senior Fellow





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:

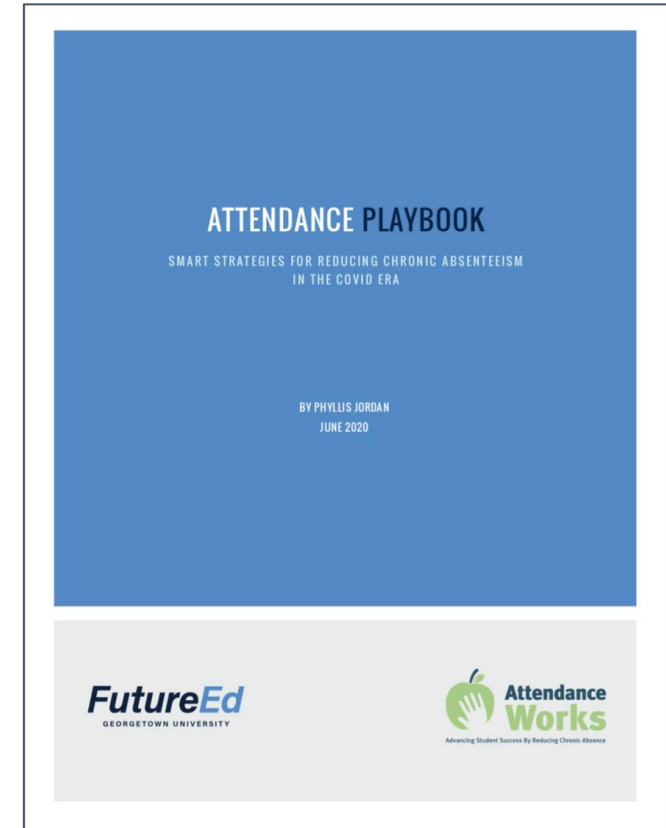
- ✓ Advances better **policy**
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- ✓ Catalyzes needed **research**

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/>



How to Use the Attendance Playbook

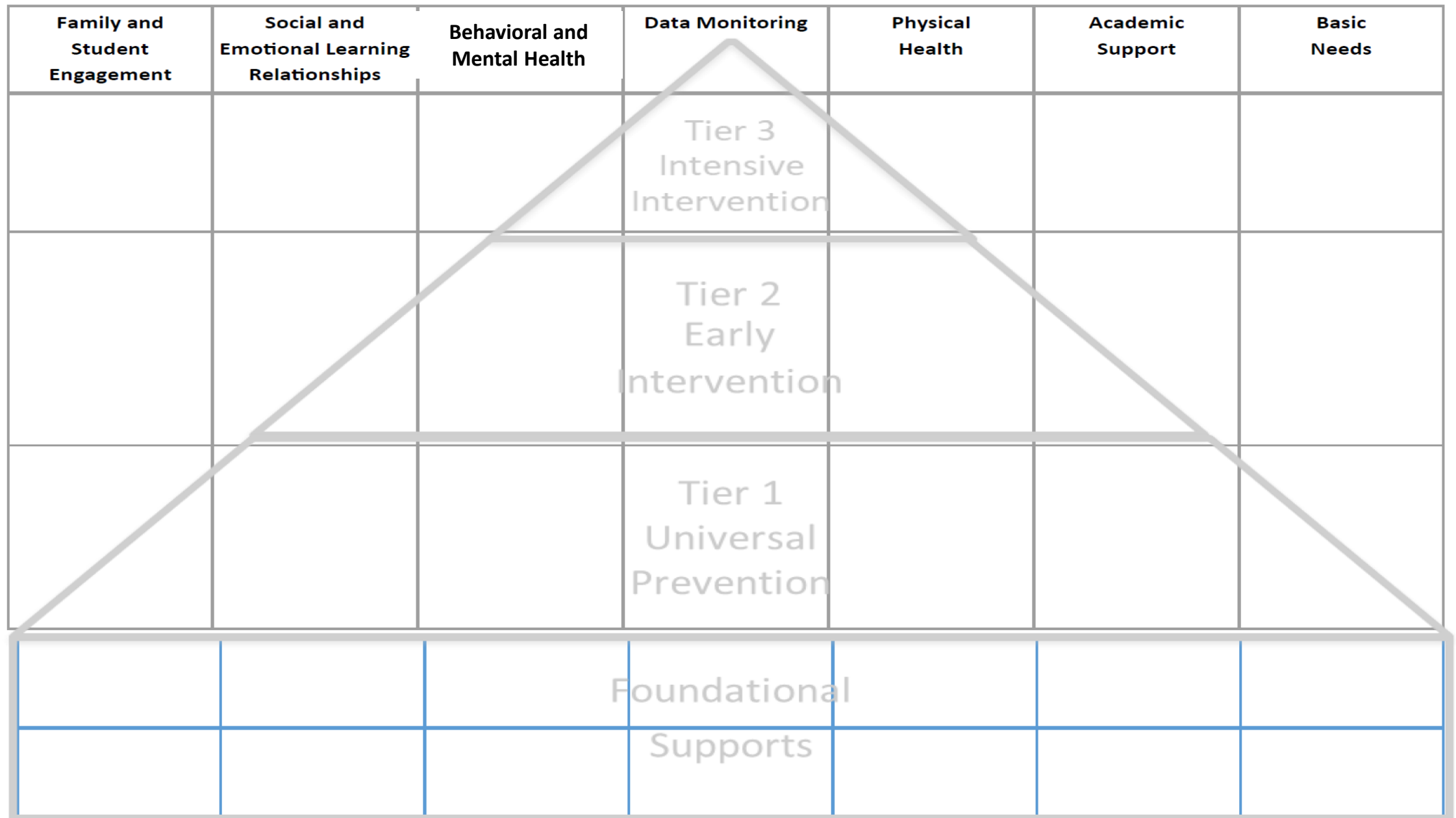
The Guide to the Attendance Playbook offers practical tips for:

- 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/>

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

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



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



Supporting High School Students

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!