Session 1:

Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism

Welcome!

Cecelia Leong
Vice President of Programs

Sue Fothergill
Director of Strategic Programming

...and members of the Attendance Works team

Read more about our team here.

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, Wednesday, January 13

❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Monitoring and Identifying Students in Need of Support during Distance Learning, Wednesday, February 3

❖ **Session 3** — Partnerships that Make a Difference: Coordinated Systems Strategies, Wednesday, February 24

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
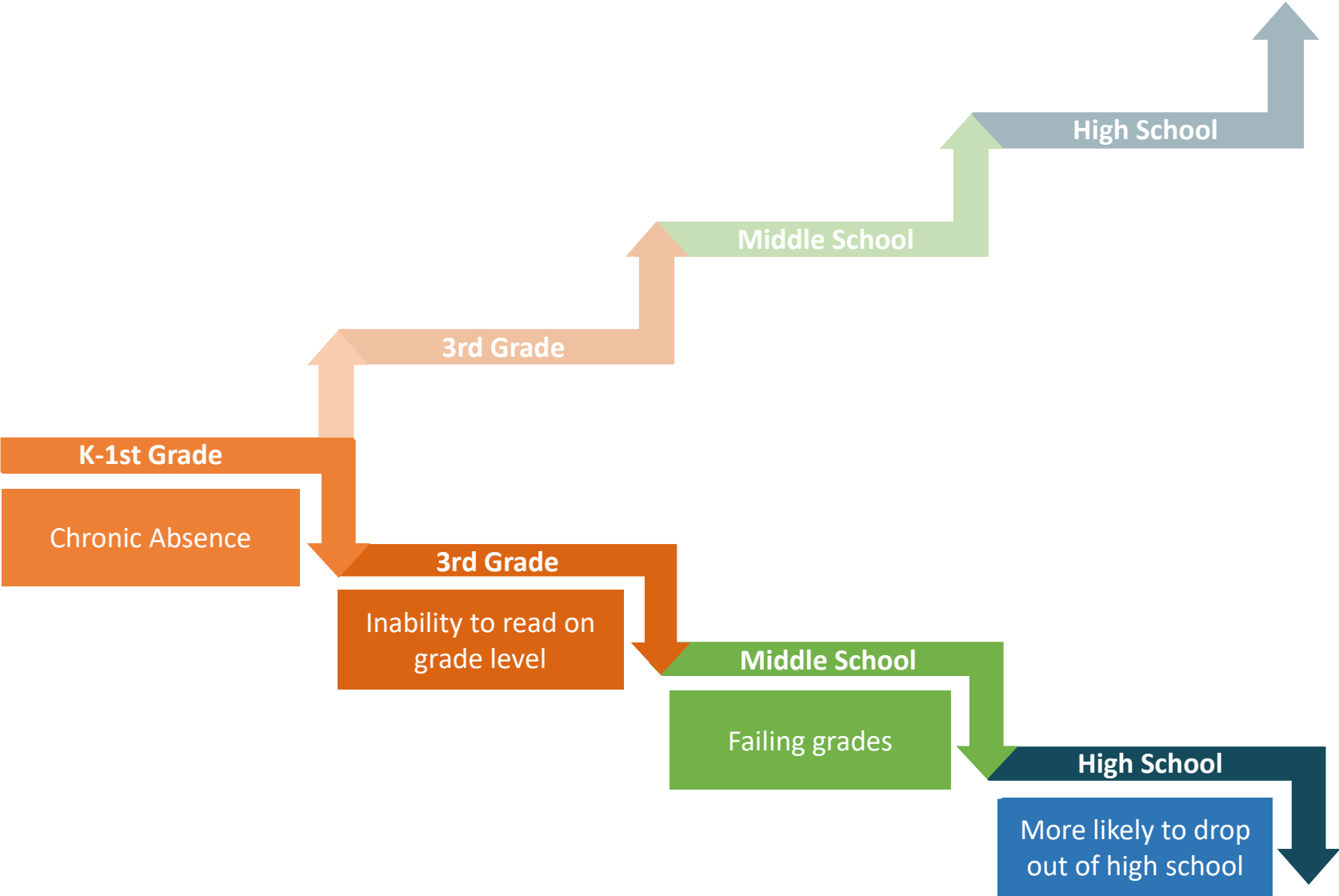
Getting Started: Introductions

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

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Improving Attendance Matters

K-1st Grade

Chronic Absence

3rd Grade

Inability to read on grade level

Middle School

Failing grades

High School

More likely to drop out of high school

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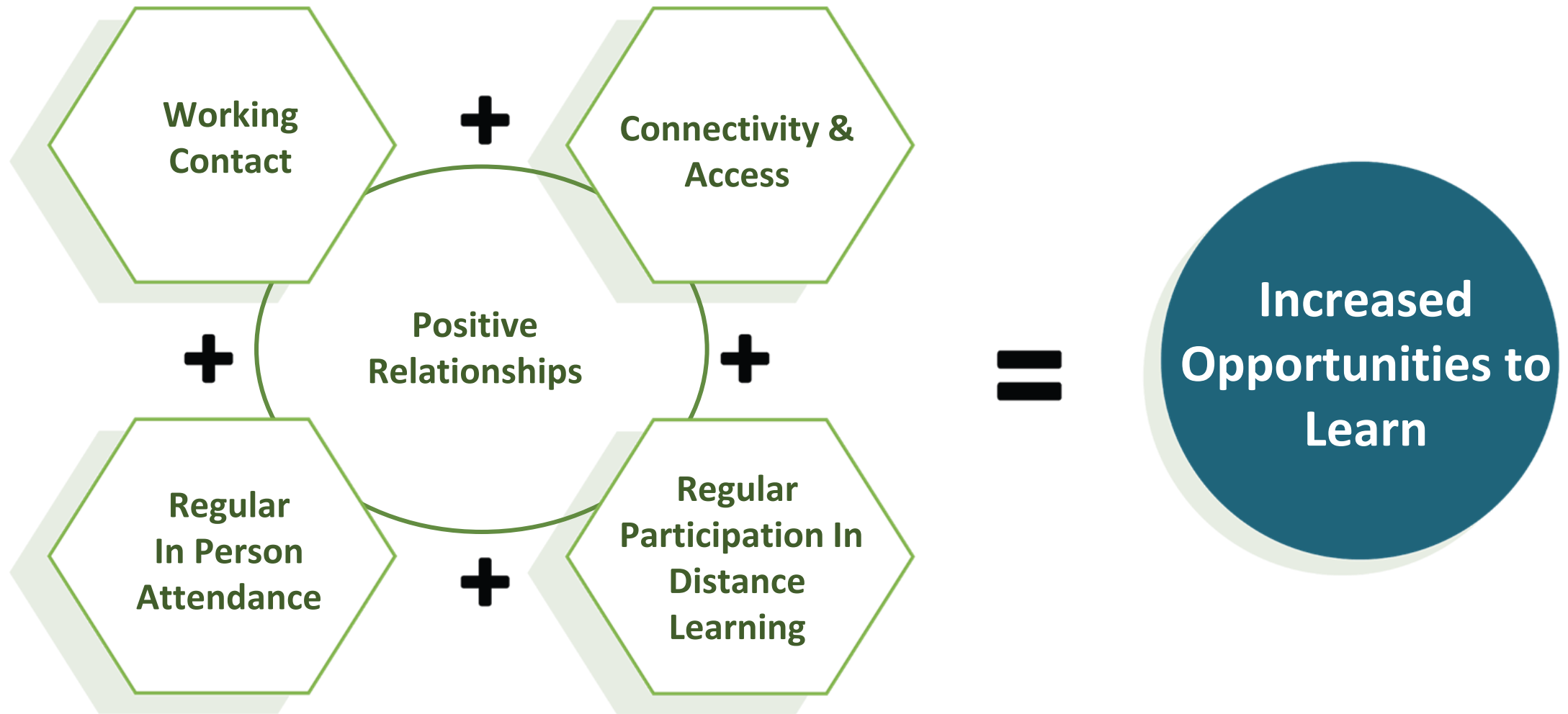# Absenteeism is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational inequity

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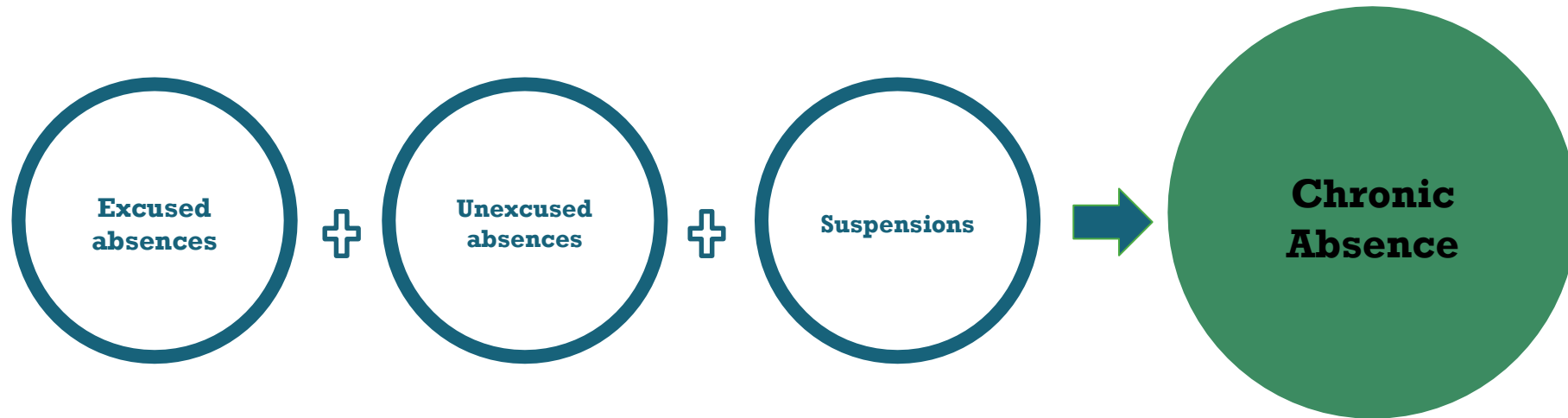
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn

Working Contact + Connectivity & Access + Regular In Person Attendance + Regular Participation In Distance Learning + Positive Relationships = Increased Opportunities to Learn

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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.

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Poll

What attendance measures does your school / district track?

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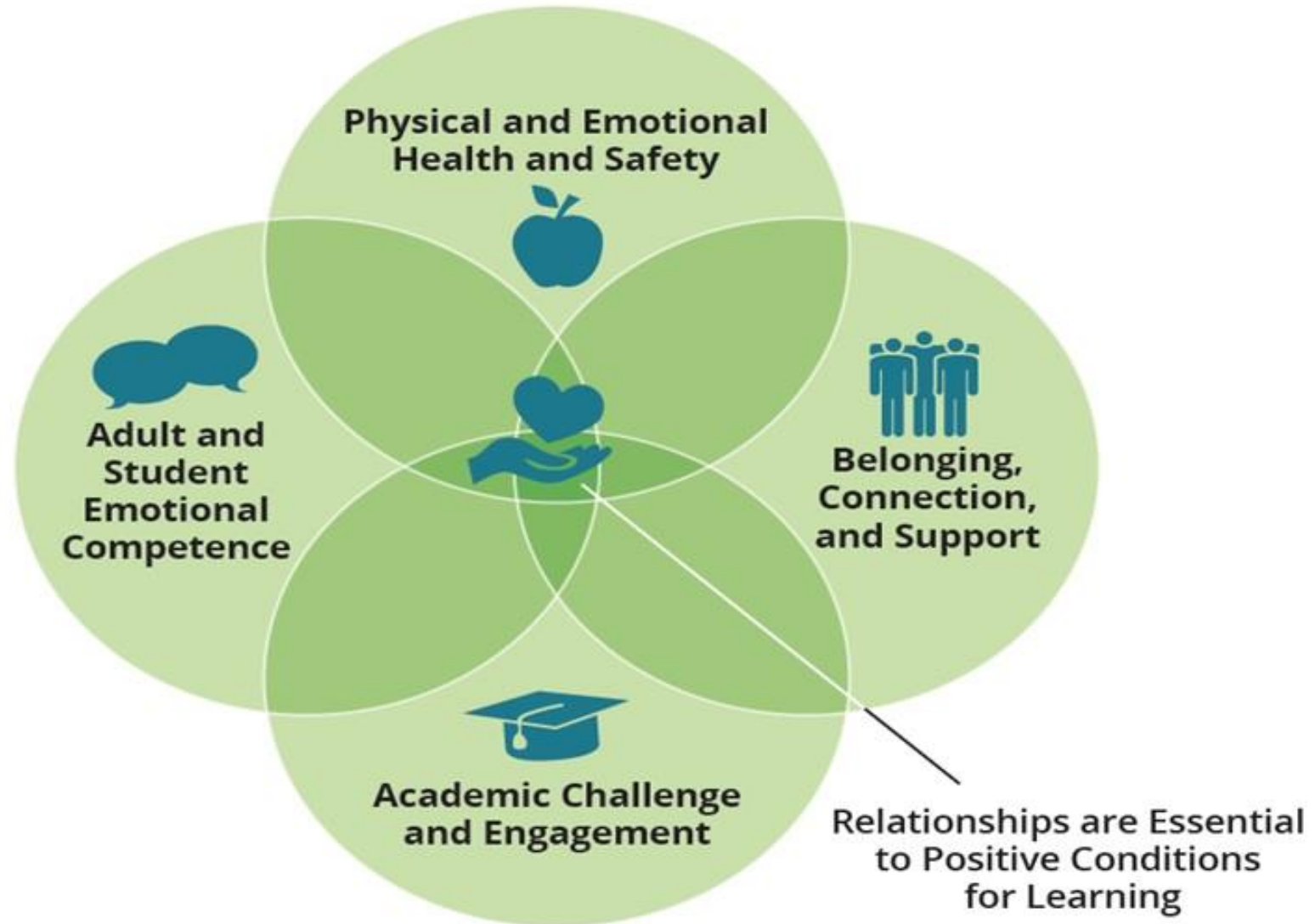- ❑ None of the above
- ❑ Other (please post in the chat)

Ideally, we would monitor across learning opportunities and differentiate in-person from remote
(synchronous & asynchronous)

1. Are the students participating in all of the opportunities to learn?
2. If not, why not?
3. How would you find out for sure?

	On Campus	On Campus	Synchronous Virtual Classroom	Synchronous Virtual Classroom	Asynchronous Virtual Assignment
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Expected Participation by Friday Morning
Sue	✓	✓	Absent	Absent	✓
Cecelia	Absent	Absent	✓	✓	✓

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

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

Let's Chat!

2020 was a year like no other.

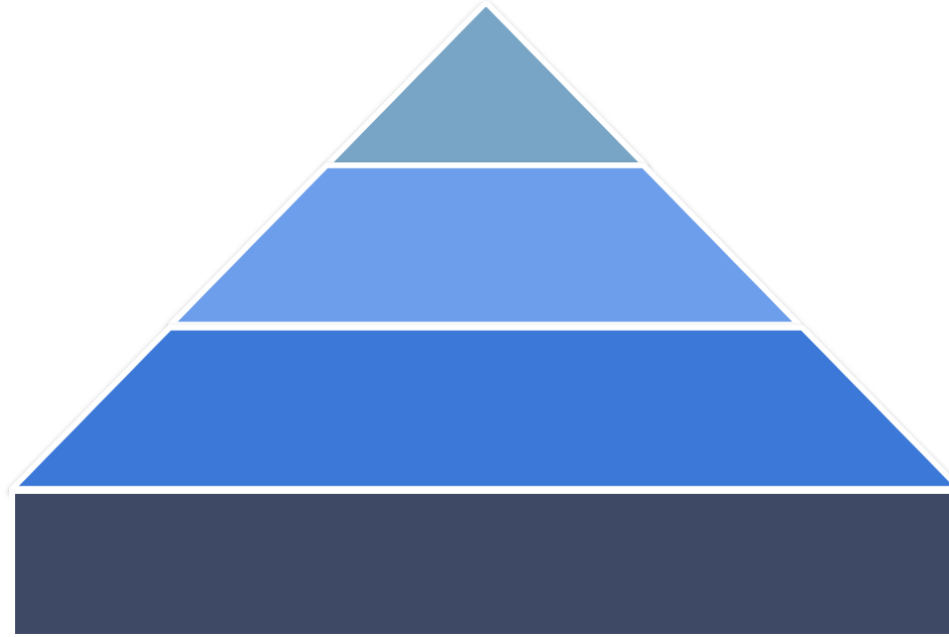How have the conditions for learning changed for students due to the events of the past year?

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning
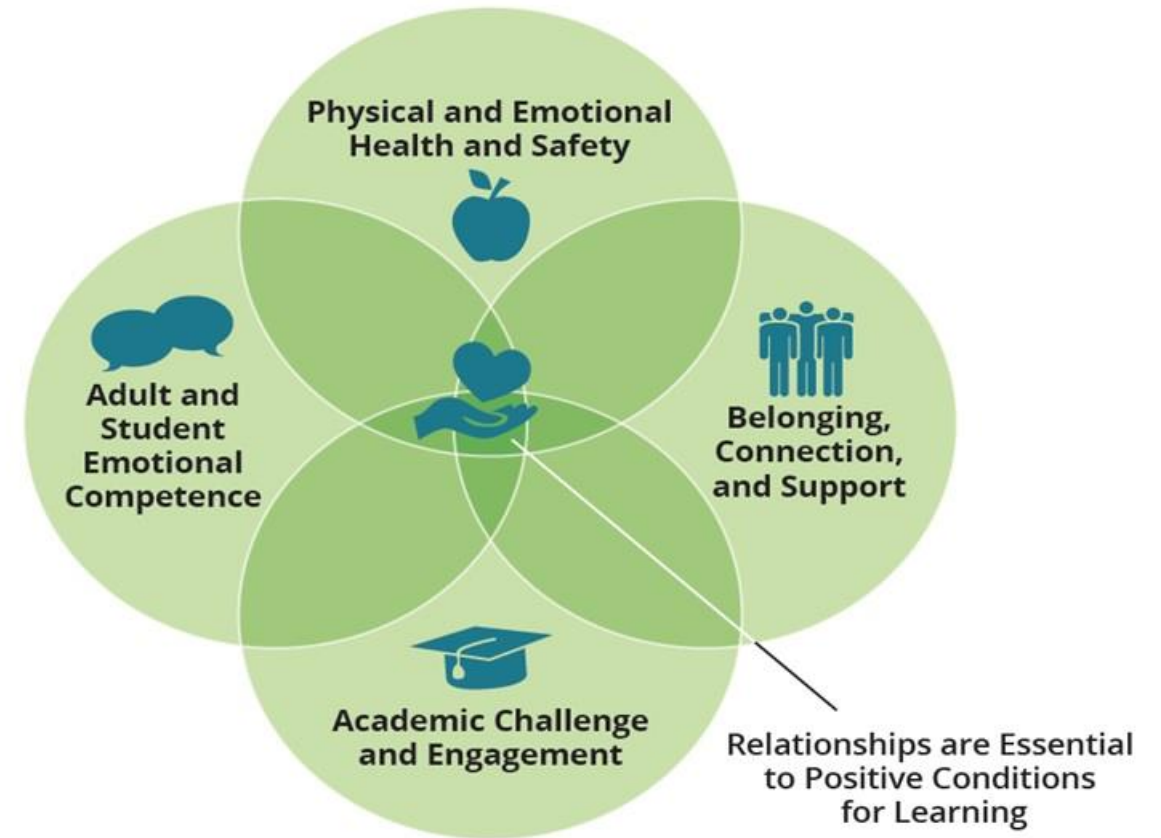
America's Promise: Voices of Young People

https://youtu.be/0oAk-NRvZ2A

Building Your Multi-Tiered System of Support

When Tackling Absenteeism, Begin with Whole School and Prevention Strategies

Tier 3
Intensive Intervention

Tier 2
Early Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Prevention

Foundational "Whole School" Supports
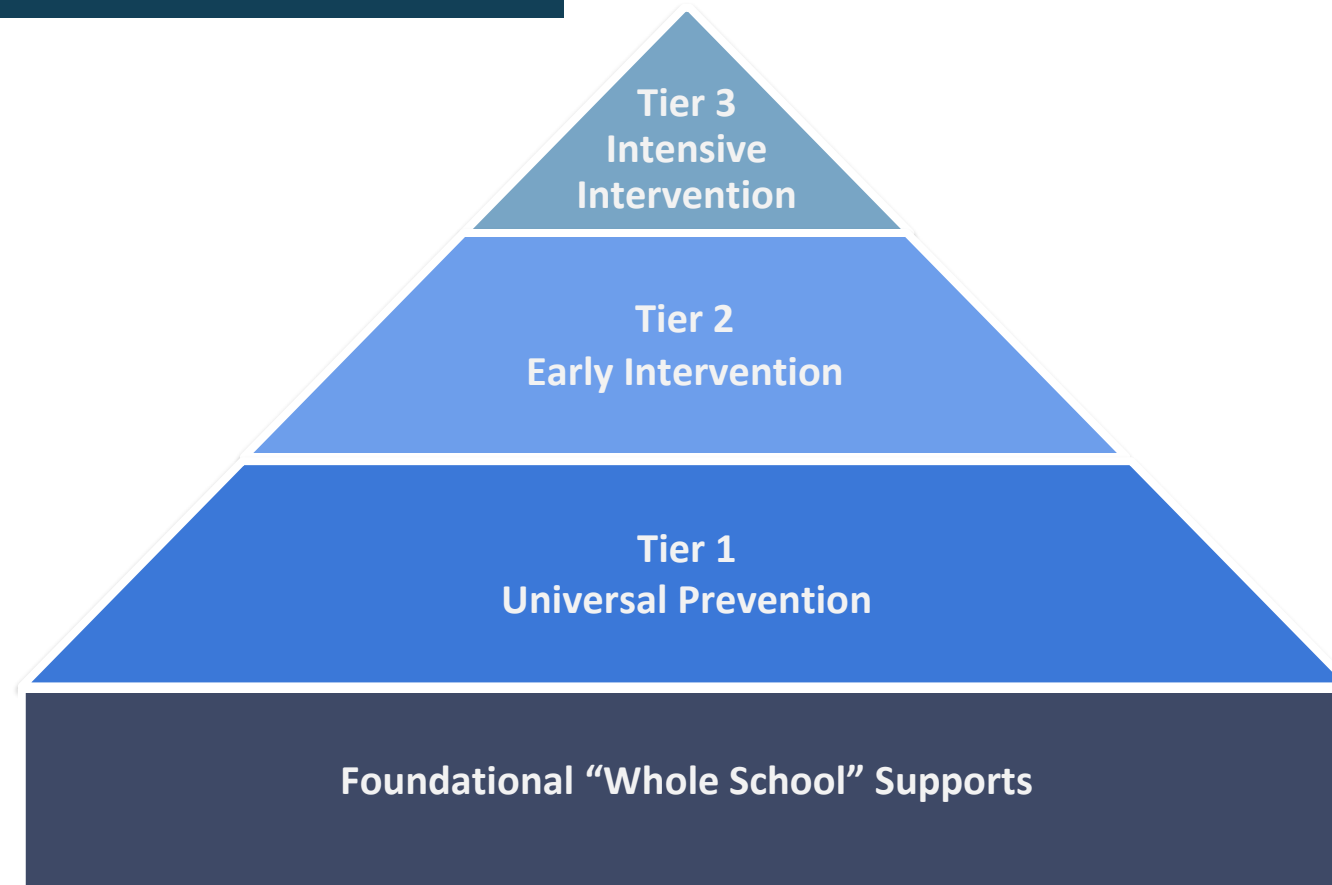
Foundational Supports are Building Blocks of Schools that Promote Attendance

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 Permanante 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

Questions for Applying the Four Elements of School Climate to Hybrid Learning

- **_Environment:_** How has our school promoted engaging learning at home? What has our school done to ensure students have access to connectivity?

- **_Safety:_** What steps has our school taken to support safe and healthy learning at home?

- **_Teaching:_** Do teachers have access to attendance information and outreach protocols for students who miss too much school?

- **_Relationships_**: Does every student and family have at least one documented supportive relationship with a member of the school staff?

Environment Relationships

Safety Teaching and Learning

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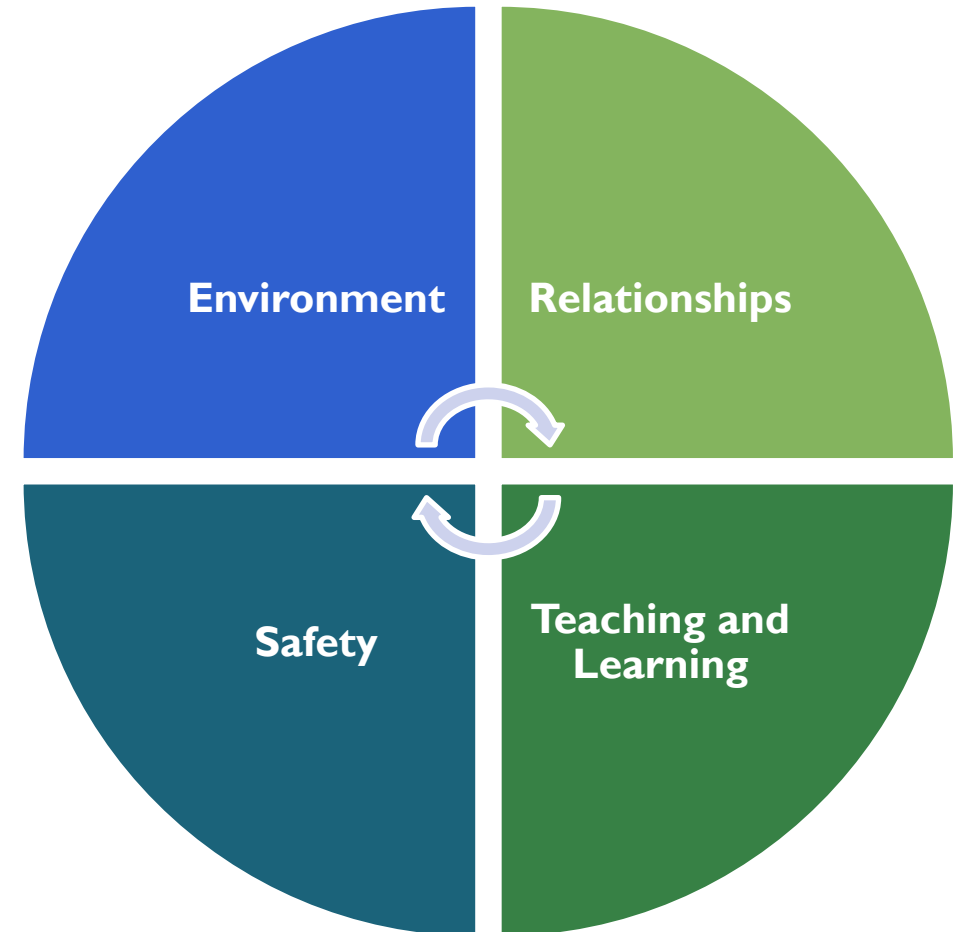
*How have we adapted our
school climate during Covid-19?*

Be sure to cover the four elements in your group:

✓ Environment

✓ Safety

✓ Teaching and Learning

✓ Relationships

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Each team shares 1-2 key observations from their discussion about what has changed about their climate and culture.

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

Climate Element	Examples
Relationships	• Virtual community building opportunities for students and families that create belonging and connection • Expanded learning opportunities • Enrichment activities and clubs • Advisories and Homeroom
Teaching & Learning	• Attendance is taken in a caring manner, whether in person or online • Fun Morning Greetings (classroom and schoolwide) • 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
Environment	• School backgrounds for students to choose from • Optional screen time, with proof of participation • Thoughtful pairing of students in breakout • Resources for at-home learning e.g., books, learning collateral (crayons, markers, paper), projects based on likely household items • Access to virtual learning (computer, internet, broadband and capacity)
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

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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?

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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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Be authentic

Center on the student

Focus on what is important to the family

Consistency is key

All families receive outreach

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Flamboyan Foundation, Beginning of the Year Relationship Toolkit, 2020

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

Hope

for a better future

Faith

that school will help you or your child succeed

Voice

in decisions that affect them and their children

Access

to needed support and services
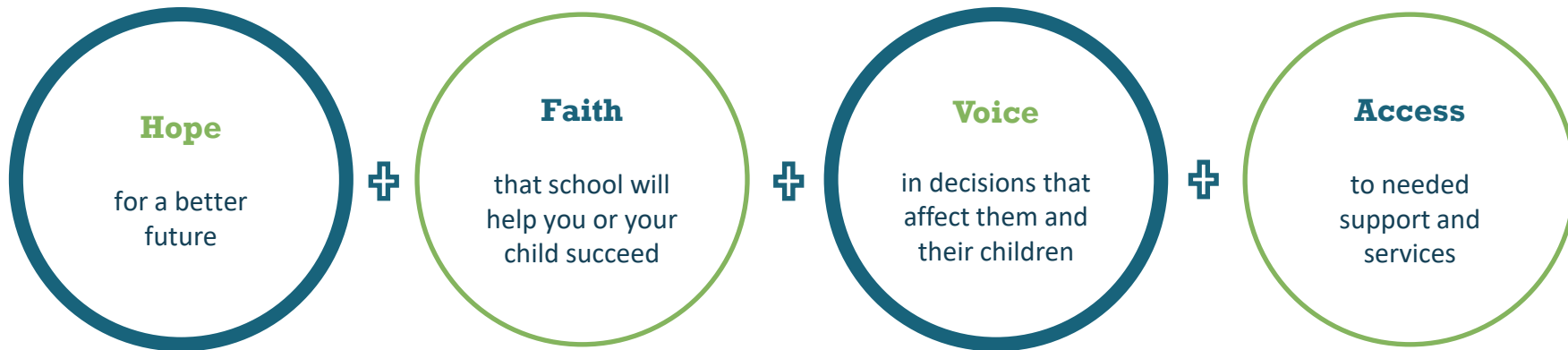
Let's Hear From You!

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

- 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

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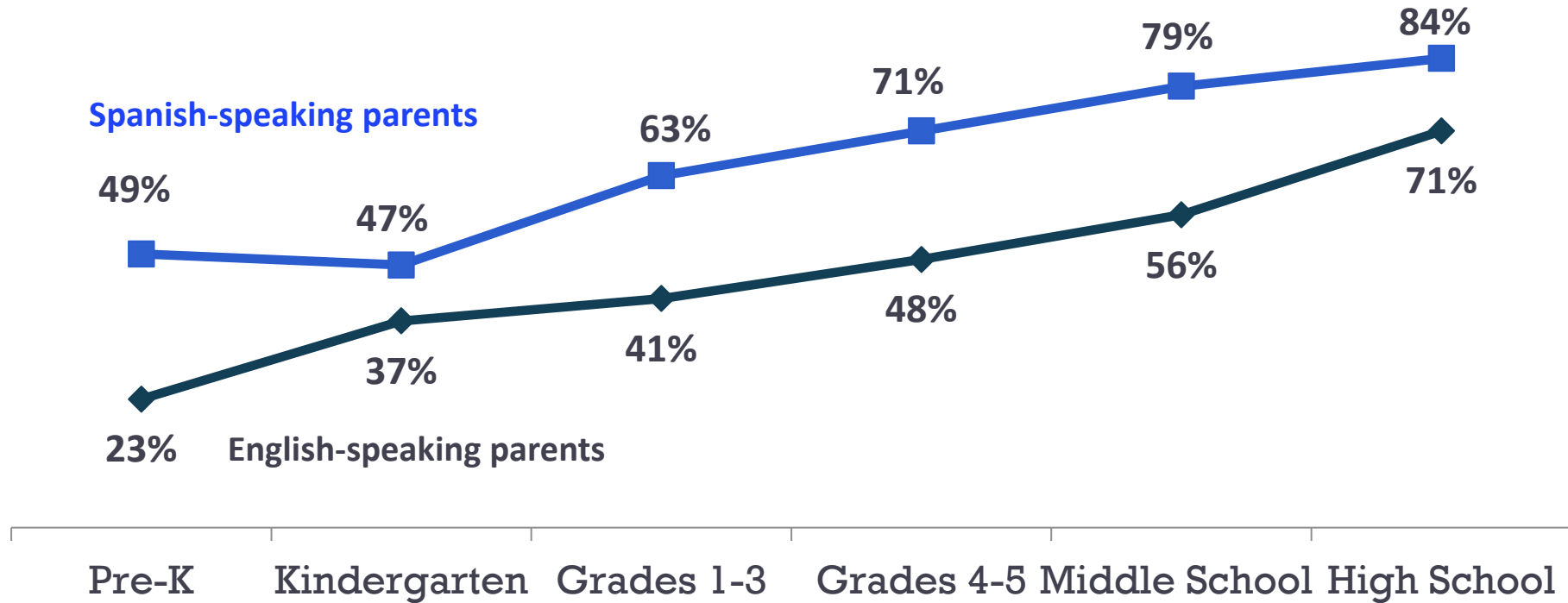
Source: Ad Council & Calif. Attorney General – Parent Ethnographies 2015
https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit
https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/tr/toolkit/QuantitativeResearchReport.pdf?

Sporadic Absences are More Likely to go Unnoticed

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

Video
Bringing Attendance Home: A Parent's Perspective

Olga Nunez
Mom & Attendance Advocate

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!

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

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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 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.

❑ 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/

Sign up for the 2021 Attendance Awareness Campaign

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

Example:

Ella Baker Elementary School

Ella Baker Elementary, SCUSD
Reducing chronic absence in 2020-21

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

MEETING NEEDS!

ACADEMIC	SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL	PHYSICAL

ACADEMIC
- Technology trouble ticket
- Hot spots
- Laptops
- Distributions
- Soil Born @ Home
- Learning hub
- Boys & Girls Club Support

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL
- Friendship fridays
- Relationships
- Morning meetings
- Support center
- Mindfulness lessons

PHYSICAL
- Wellness wednesdays
- Meals
- Monthly produce
- Food lit boxes
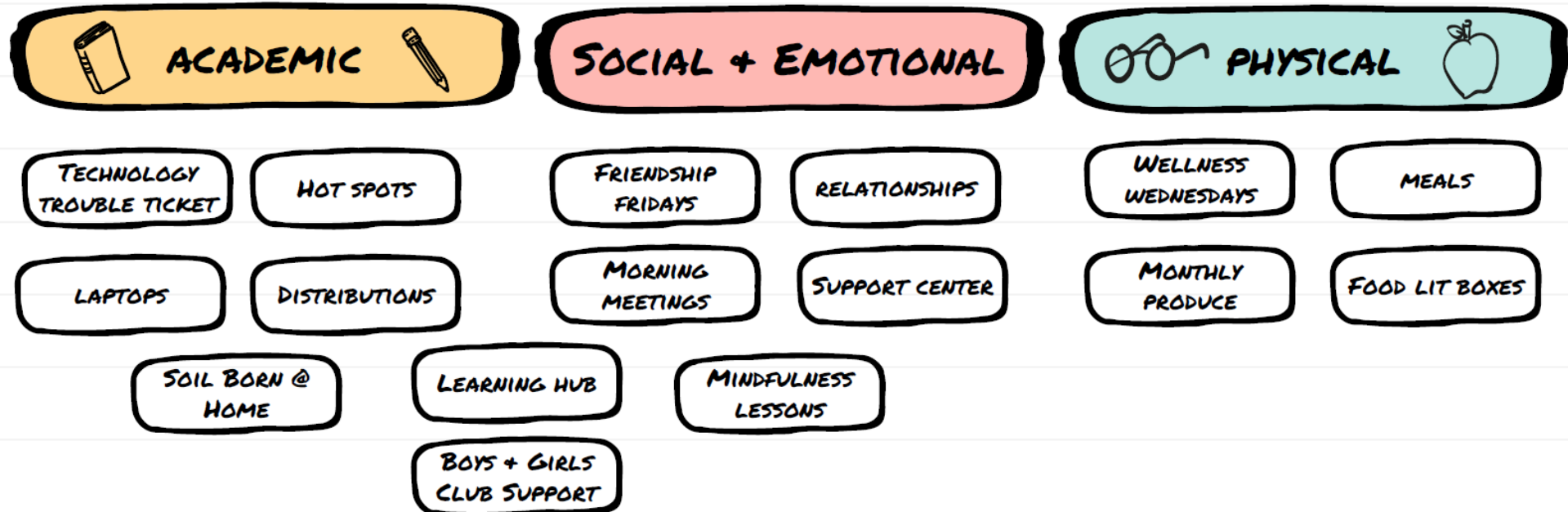
Questions from the Audience

Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!

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![Attendance Works logo]

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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

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

www.future-ed.org   @FutureEdGU   @Thomas_Toch

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/

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

Tier 3
Intensive Intervention

Tier 2
Early Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Prevention

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			

https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/
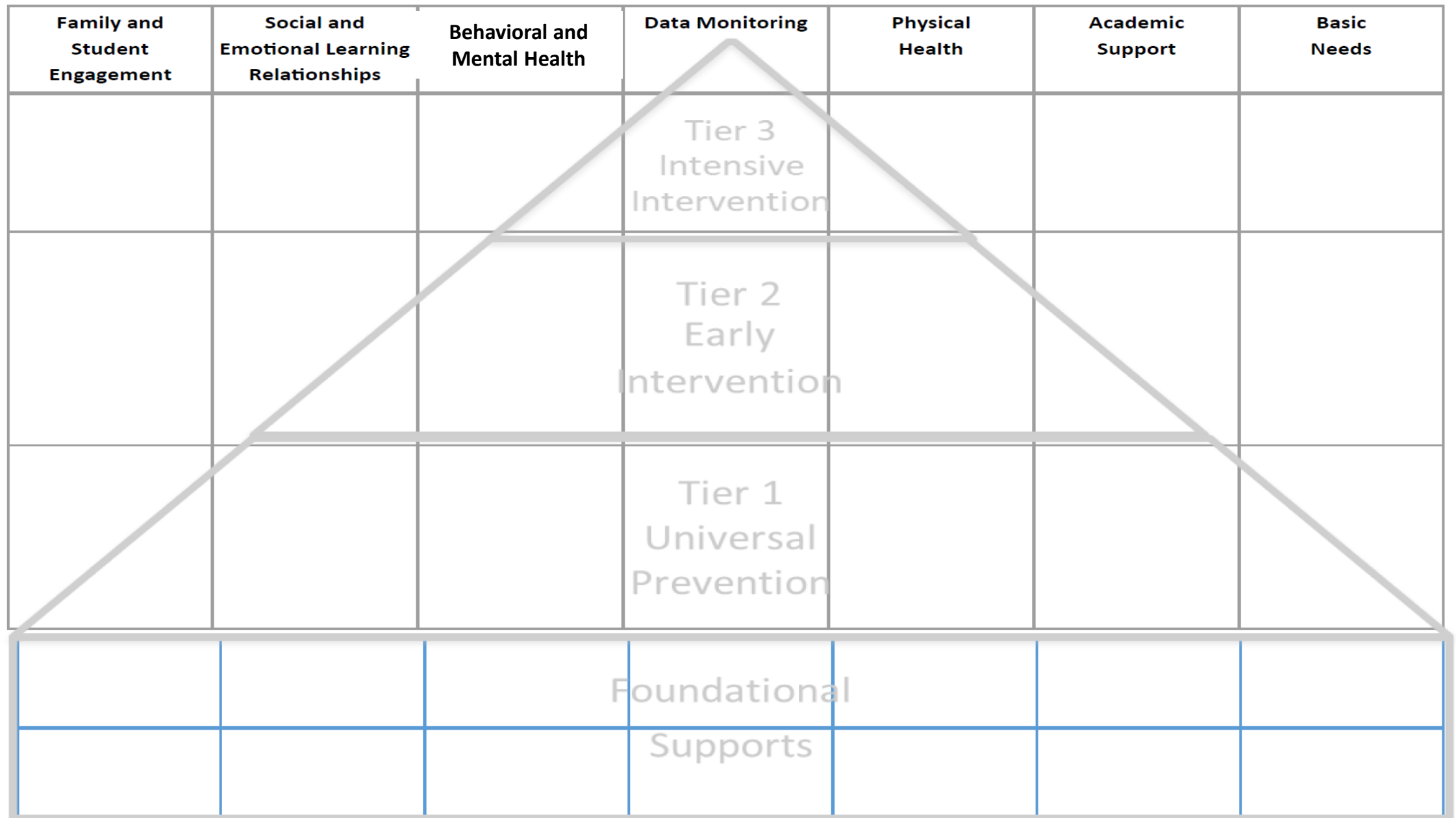
America's Promise Alliance:

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!