



## Session 2

# Early Intervention Strategies: *Monitoring & Identifying Students in Need of Support during Distance Learning*



Professional Learning Series

March 2, 2021



**Welcome!**



**Cecelia Leong**  
Vice President of Programs



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Director of Strategic Programming



## 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, February 16*
- ❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Monitoring and Identifying Students in Need of Support during Distance Learning, *Tuesday, March 2*
- ❖ **Session 3** — Partnerships that Make a Difference: Coordinated Systems Strategies, *Tuesday, March 9*



## Learning Goals for Session 2

### *Participants will:*

- ✓ Learn which attendance measures to monitor in order to identify students in need of engagement and support.
- ✓ Identify the key functions of a school team that addresses attendance and take stock of where they are in having a high-functioning team.
- ✓ Be able to draw on high leverage strategies to address common reasons for student absenteeism.



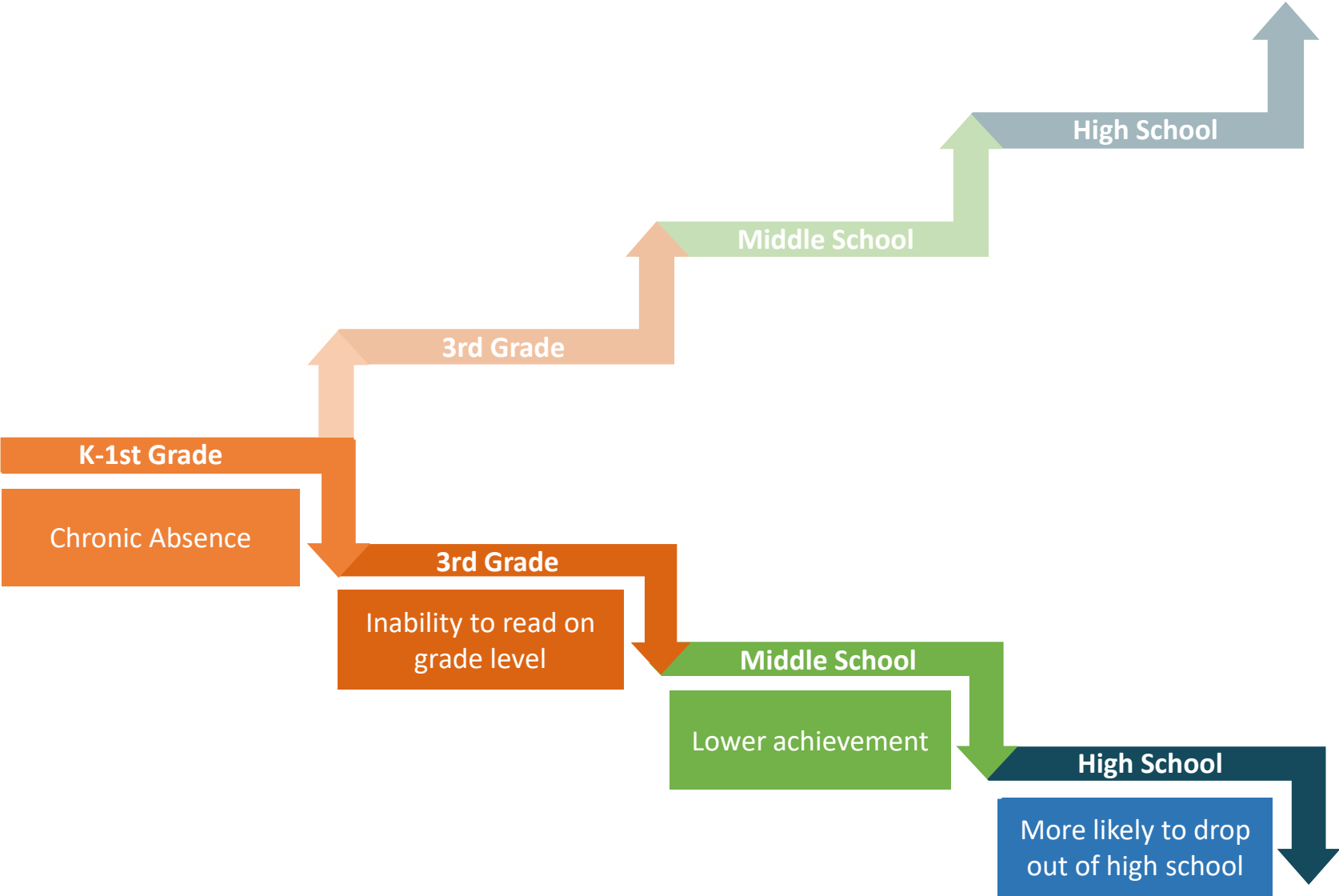
## Getting Started: Introductions

### *Use the Chat and share:*

- ✓ Your name and role
- ✓ Your school and district

# **Key Concepts from Session One**

# Improving Attendance Matters





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

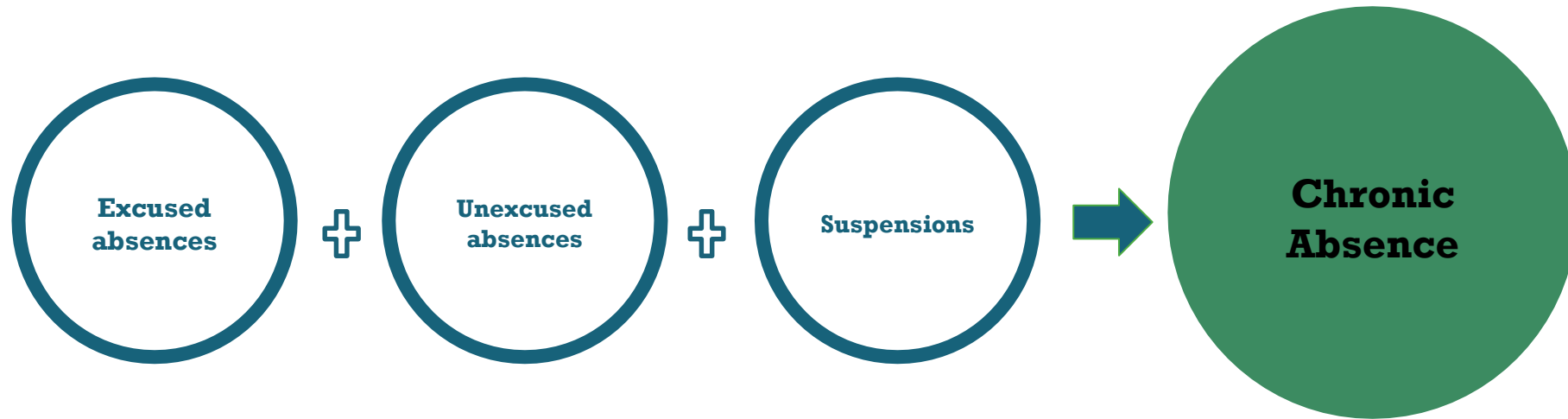
**Absenteeism is a *leading* indicator  
and a *cause* of educational  
inequity**





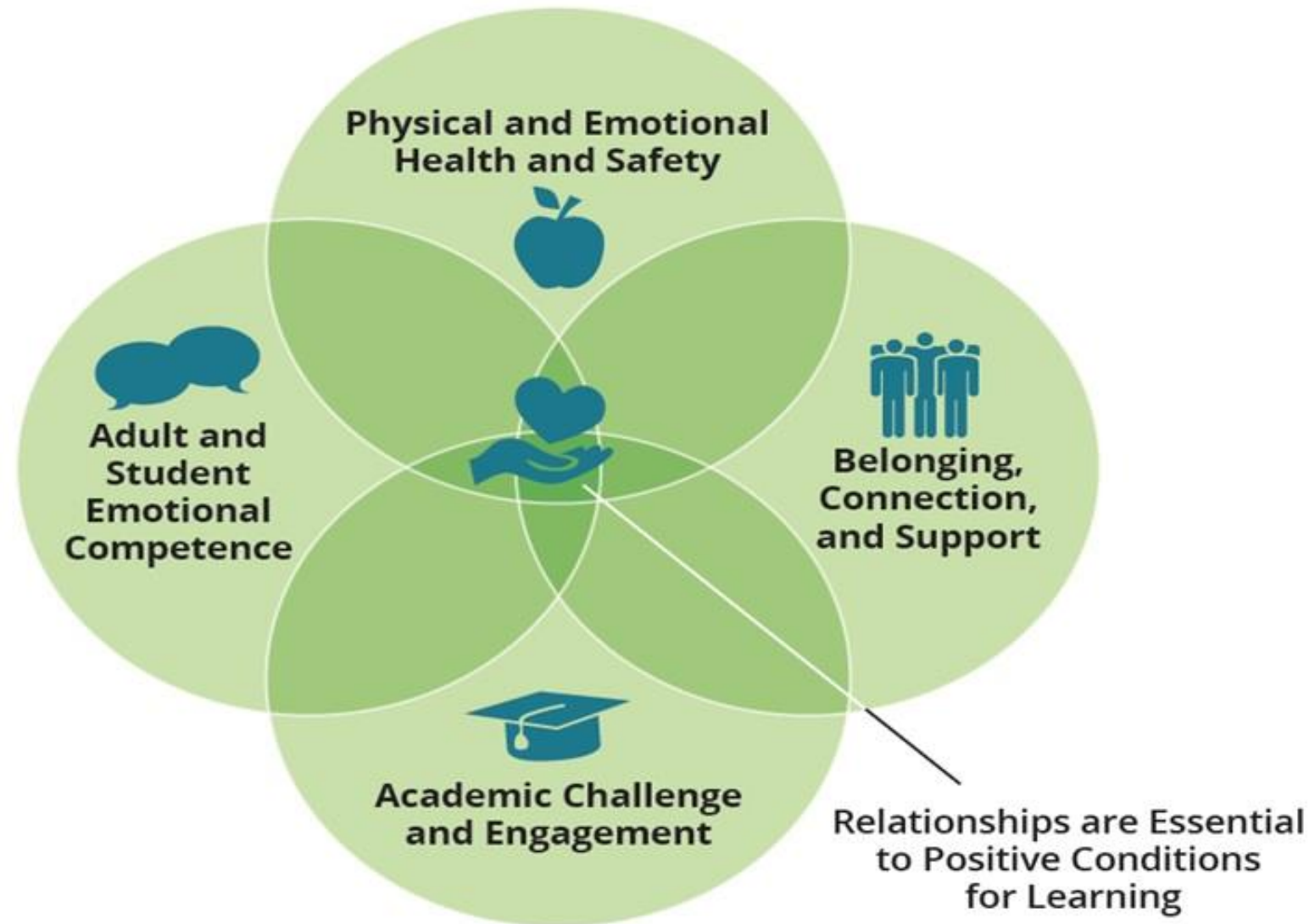
## Chronic Absence Measures Lost Opportunity to Learn

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.**



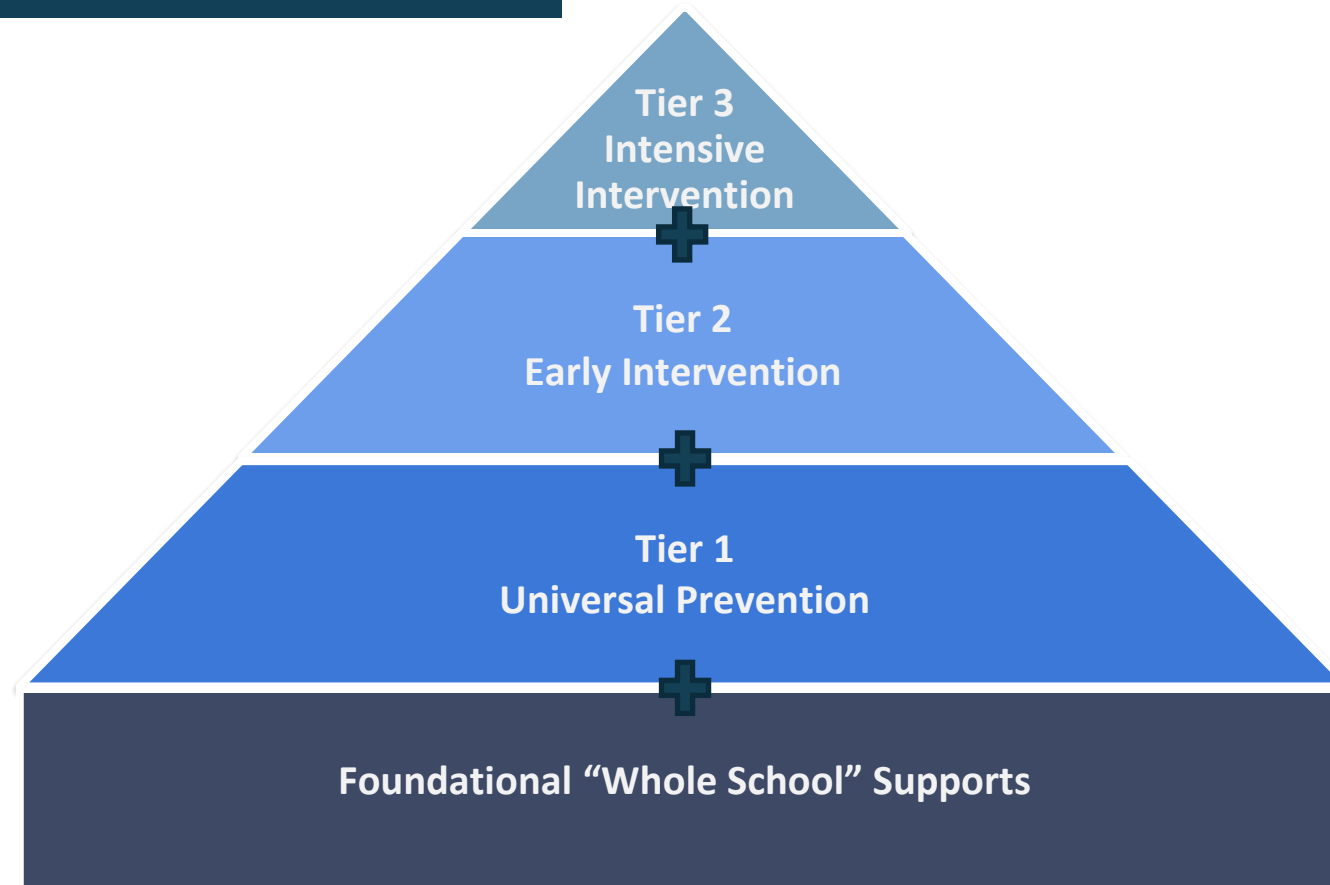
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

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





## When Tackling Absenteeism, Begin with Whole School and Prevention Strategies





## 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
<b>Foundational Supports</b>			

## Three High Leverage Strategies

### Tier I Universal Prevention

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



## Learning Reflection Chat

***Of the three high leverage strategies we reviewed during Session 1, which one are you most likely to implement or have begun exploring how to implement?***

- Warm and welcoming school climate
- Positive relationships with families and students
- Clear expectations and communication about attendance

# Reducing Chronic Absence Requires a Team Approach





## What makes a team effective?

### *Use the Chat:*

Describe one principle or value that is essential to an effective team.





## Primary Purpose of a Team Approach

Organize and facilitate a schoolwide attendance strategy and ensure it is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all students.



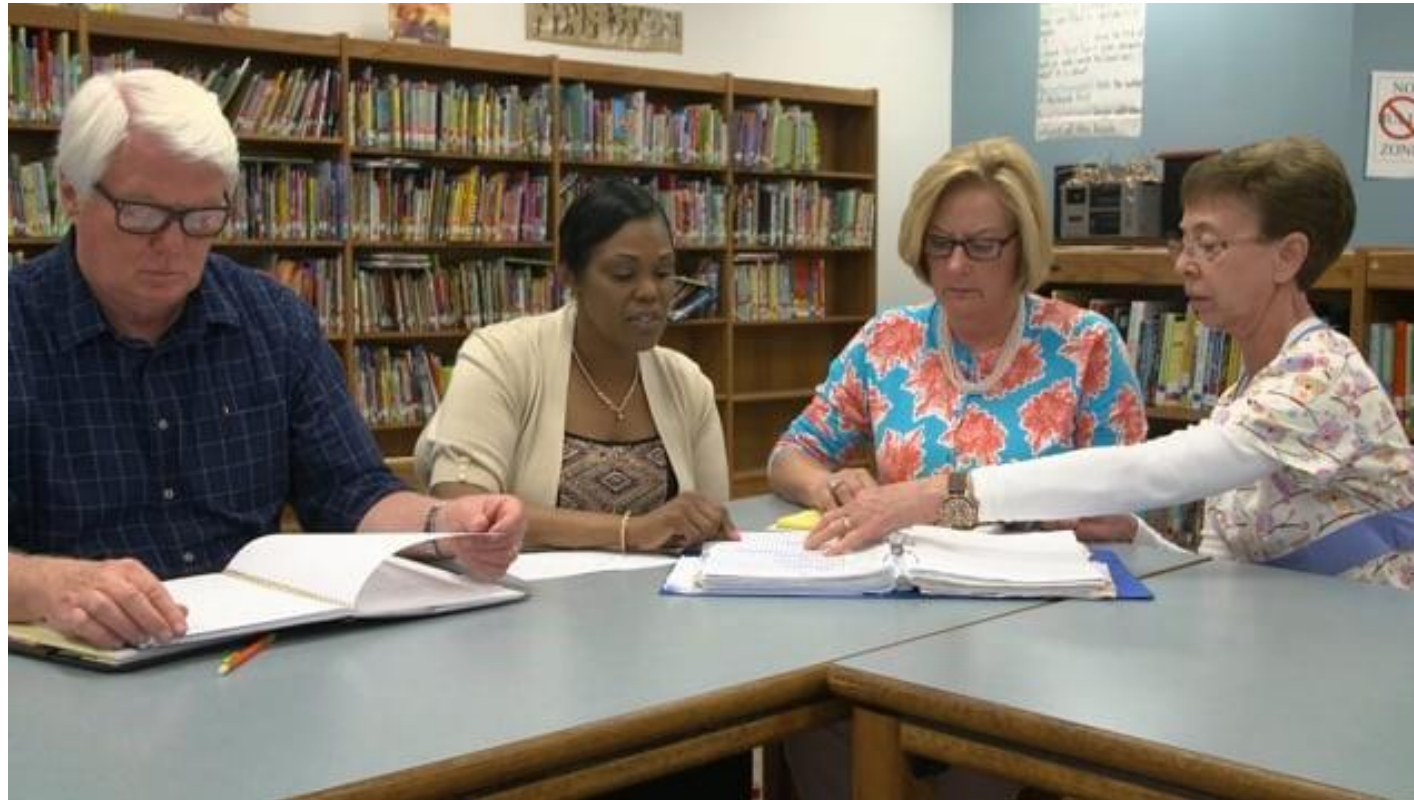
# Attendance Functions of a School Team



- 1. Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention.**
- 2. Examine attendance and absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence.**
- 3. Identify barriers and inequities that prevent students from attending school.**
- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.**
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.**



## Attendance Team in Action



<https://vimeo.com/260324608>

# Ensure Team Composition is Reflective of the School Community



The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

Teams working on improving student attendance could include the school's:

- \* Nurse
- \* Counselor
- \* Social Worker
- \* Administrative support staff
- \* Special education staff
- \* Teachers
- \* Early education staff
- \* Expanded Learning program staff

Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics.

Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.



## Determine which team(s) will assume the attendance MTSS functions

- Map all the teams that currently operate in your school by purpose, membership and meeting schedule.  
*(see this worksheet: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Map-of-School-Teams.pdf>)*
- Identify areas of overlap, redundancy and/or gaps.
- Consider if attendance responsibilities can be integrated into an existing team (e.g., PBIS, RTI, SRBI, grade-level, etc.).
- Consider if different teams can assume responsibility for each Tier and how efforts will be coordinated across teams.
- Determine if a new team needs to be established.



## Poll

### ***Which team addresses attendance?***

- Stand-alone attendance team
- Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports or PBIS team  
*(attendance and behavior)*
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) team
- Response to Intervention (RTI) team
- Case Management Team
- Other *(describe in chat)*



## Avoid Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Establish a team that operates in isolation
- ✗ Fail to rally whole school to support prevention & early intervention
- ✗ Focus only on students with most absences
- ✗ Case management as the sole strategy
- ✗ Jumping to solutions without sufficient understanding of factors behind absences
- ✗ Team composition does not reflect the demographics, perspectives or cultural realities of the student population



# Team Self-Assessment

## School Team Self-Assessment

Lead A Whole School Approach to Attendance	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Evidence
1. The principal makes attendance a top priority for the entire school.					
2. The group responsible for organizing the school's attendance strategy is aligned with other school teams to ensure attendance is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all children.					
3. Our team members reflect the demographics of our school community and/or are able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics.					
4. Collectively, team members have the authority, will and skill to remove barriers and address inequities.					

Organize A Multi-Tiered Strategy	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Evidence
1. Our regular team agenda is aligned to a multi-tiered system of support.					
2. We proactively promote an engaging school climate.					
3. We have defined when Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports should be offered.					
4. We have a protocol for early personalized outreach to families.					
5. We connect students who are missing too much learning time to one adult in the school (e.g., Mentor or Family Ambassador).					
6. We have a coordinated interagency response to ensure students receive the additional support they need.					

## How well does your team...

- Lead a Whole School Approach to Attendance
- Organize a Multi-Tiered Strategy
- Examine Attendance Data
- Identify Barriers & Inequities
- Mobilize the School Community
- Monitor Progress

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Team-Self-Assessment-rev-1-31-21.pdf>



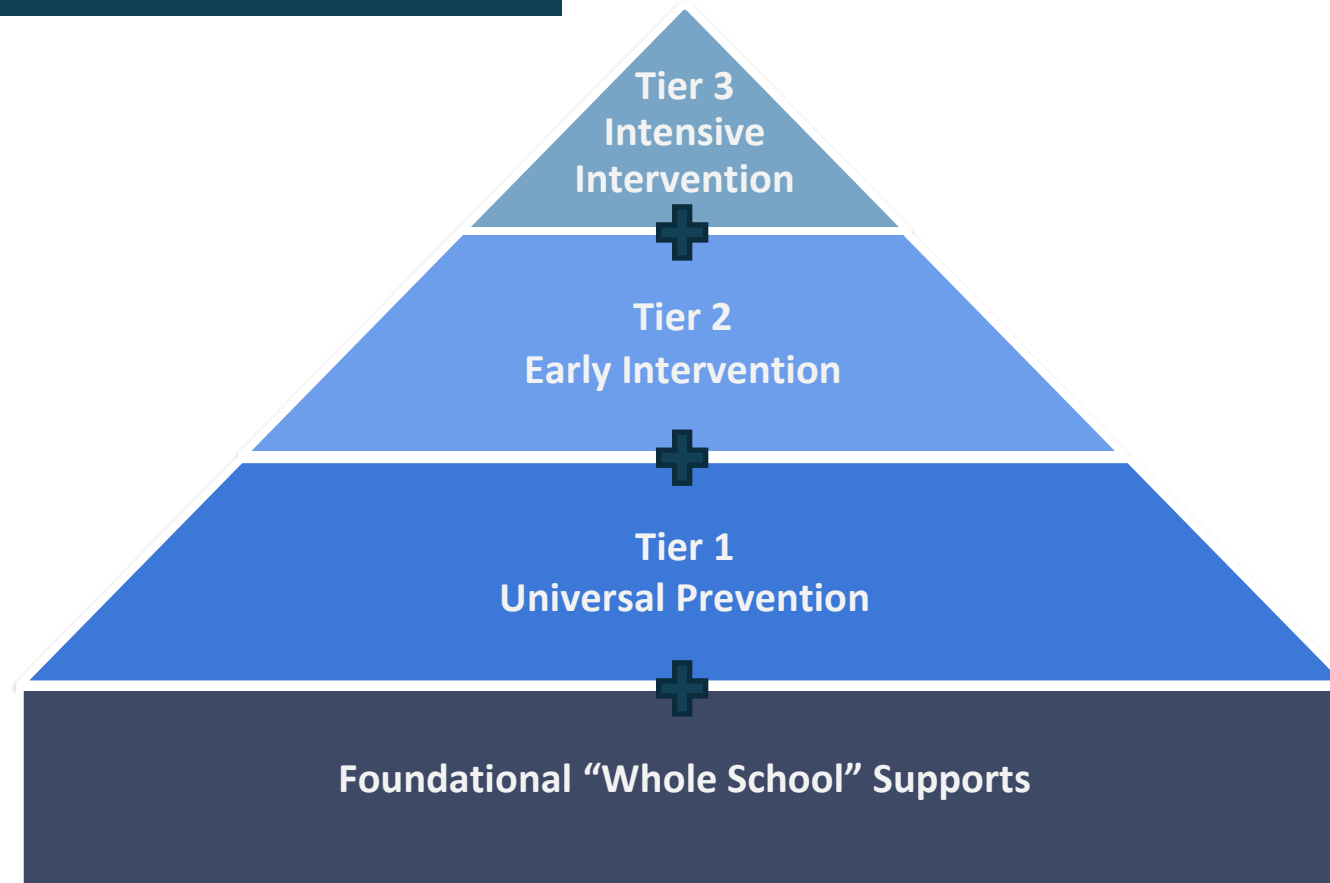
## **Team Function #1:**

***Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention.***



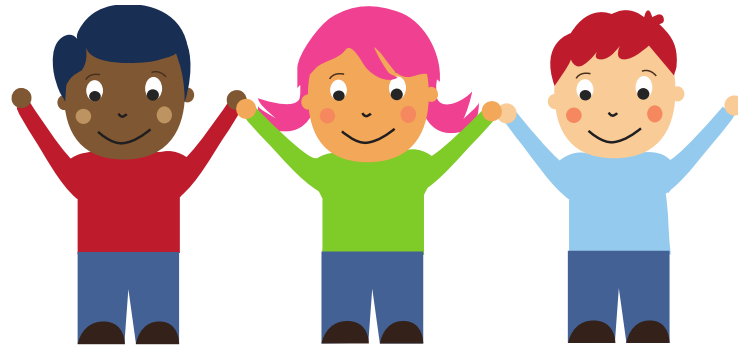


## Use Data to Support an Integrated Multi-tiered System of Support



## **Team Function #2:**

*Examine attendance & absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence*





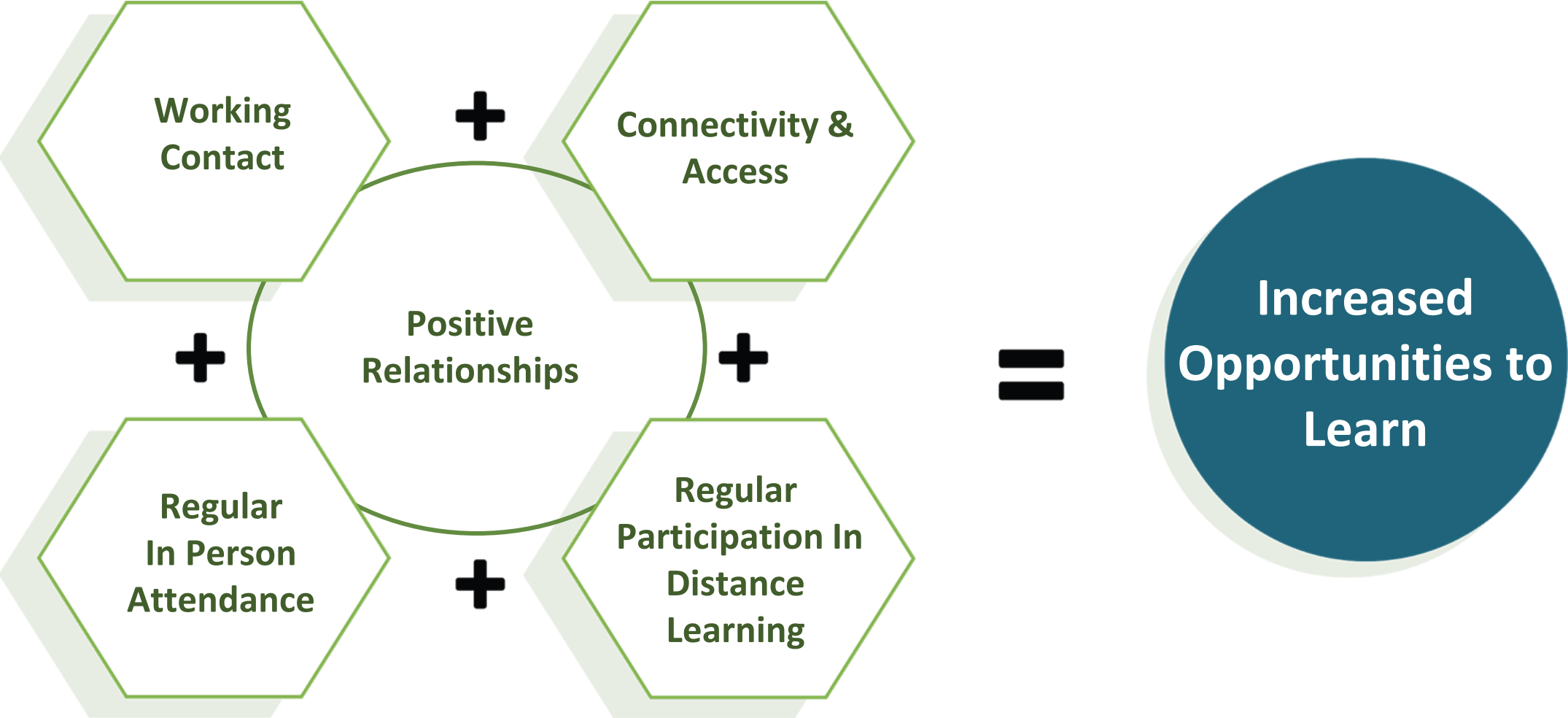
## Chat

- ❖ When are students marked present in distance learning?
- ❖ When are students marked absent?

## **An expanded framework for attendance & absenteeism data is needed to...**

1. Encourage monitoring lost learning time in school (in-person and distance) in order to promote student success.
2. Adopt a holistic approach to data collection that informs current and future efforts to improve conditions of learning.
3. Promote a tiered approach to supporting students beginning with prevention.
4. Strategically target investments that address the digital divide, lack of supports (health, economic, nutrition, housing, etc.) and other inequities.

# Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn



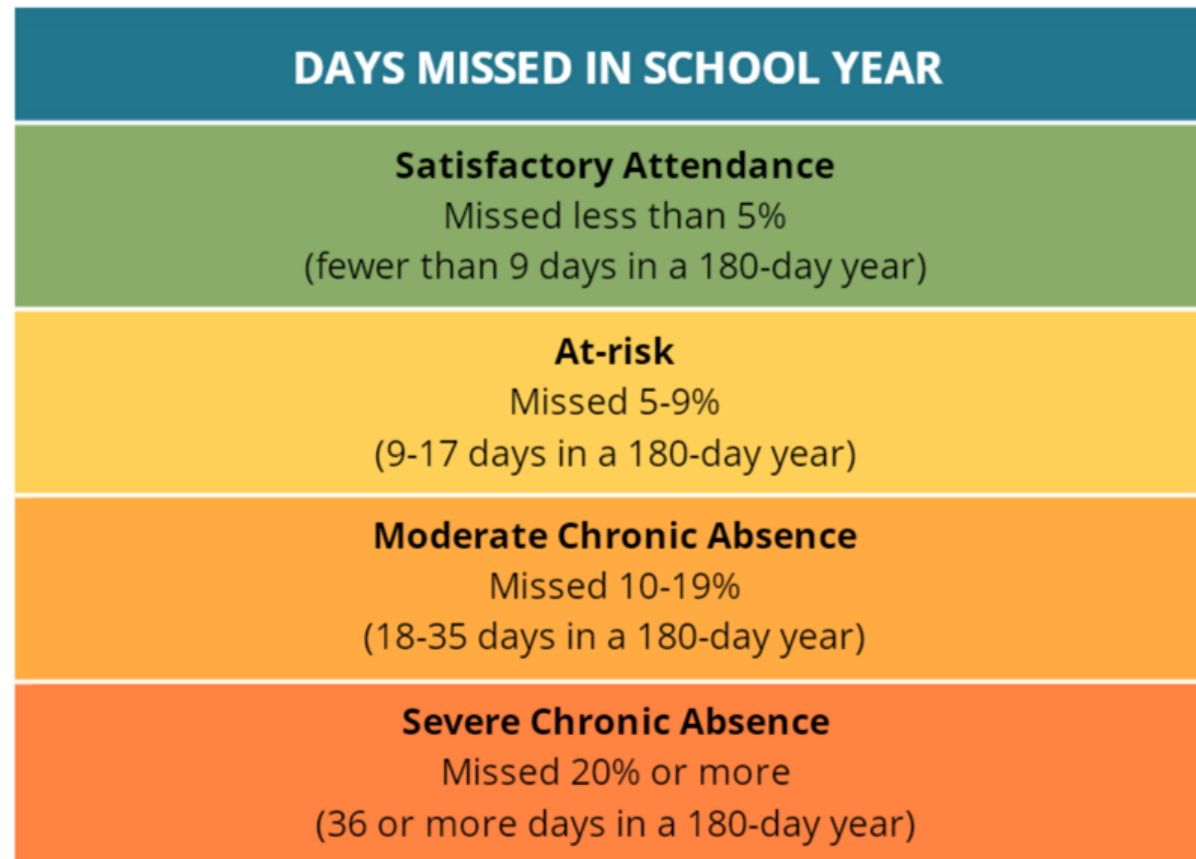


## How to Identify Students on the Cusp of Chronic Absence

### Calculating Student Attendance Rate:

$$\frac{\text{Total days of Attendance}}{\text{Total days of membership}}$$

9-13 days  
as of today 3/2/21



# Early Intervention Warning Indicators

## Tier 2 Early Intervention

### **Suggested Criteria for what activates early intervention:**

- Missing 10-19% of school in prior school year before closure
- Missing 10-19% of distance learning opportunities during closure in spring 2020 (this is assuming the school district took attendance)
- Missing 10% of learning opportunities during current year
- Lost contact with student/family – wellness check (Immediate action required)

**Consider who should respond:** Attendance staff? Counselors? Nurses? Community partners? Advisory Teachers? Social work interns?



# What should happen at our school for each level of absence?

sample form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-summary-of-actions-SAMPLE-FORM.pdf>

Number of Absences	Action(s)	People Responsible	Resources	Documentation
0	Welcome Letter  Welcome Video on website	School secretary  Principal and person who updates the school website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link to resources, e.g. District letter that can be personalized by principal / school team</li> <li>AW Flyers</li> <li>AW Student Success Plan</li> </ul>	
1-2	Call Home	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call Script</li> </ul>	Log in Student Screen on SIS
3-4	Call Home	School Counselor or Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call Script</li> <li>Documentation of Reasons <a href="https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf">https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Log in Student Screen on SIS
5	Family Meeting	Principal or other School Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard agenda for family meeting</li> <li>Student Success Plan</li> <li>List of resources</li> <li>Form for taking notes and follow up</li> </ul>	Use district form for family meeting Attach

Blank form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-summary-of-actions-BLANK-FORM.pdf>



## Small Group Discussion

1. What data is your school using to activate interventions and supports for individual students?
2. Who is responsible for responding?

Blank form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-summary-of-actions-BLANK-FORM.pdf>



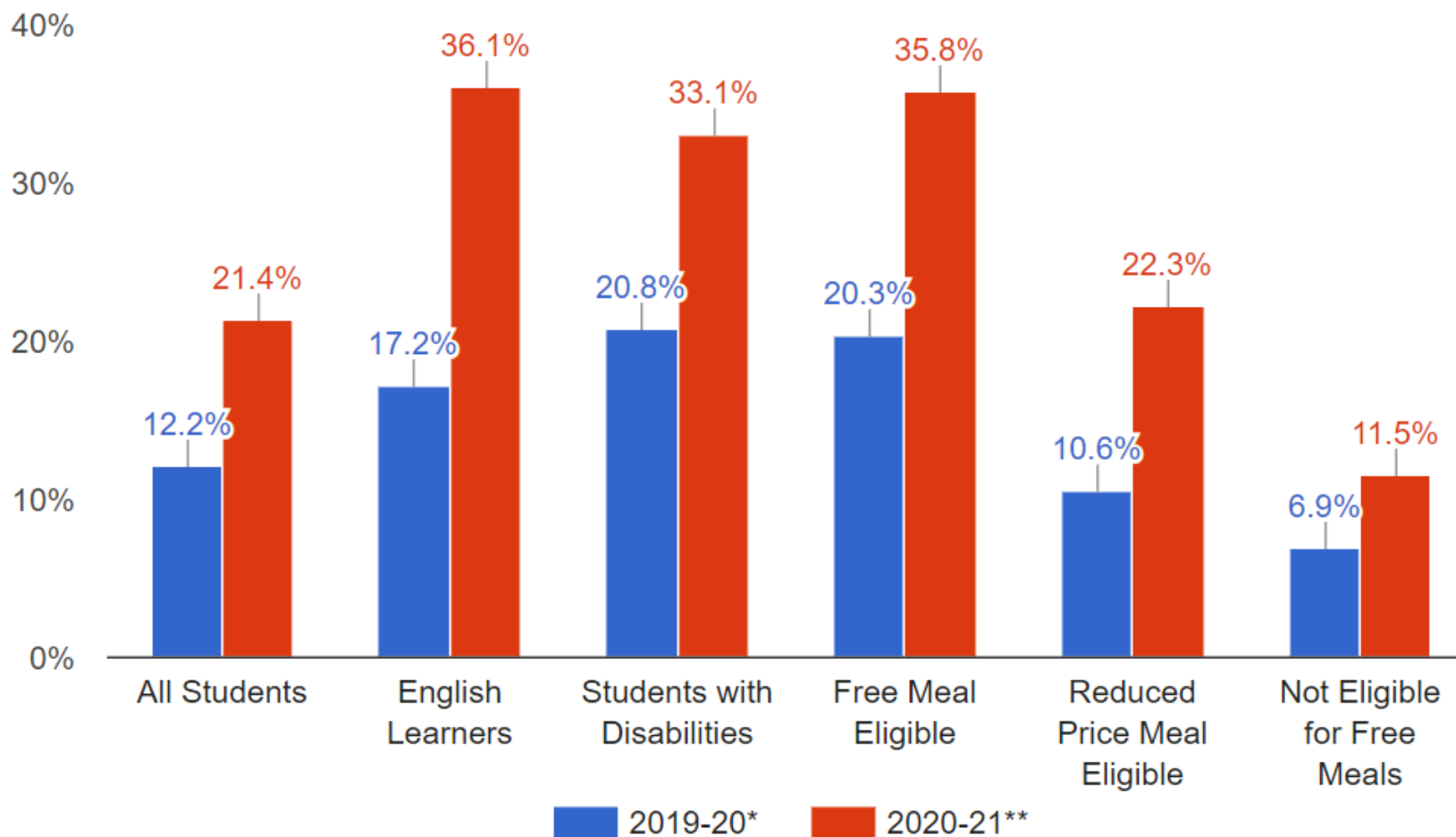
## Use Data to Identify and Address Inequities

- Analyze contact, connectivity, relationships and participation data overall, broken down by school, grade, race/ethnicity, home language, disability and zip code.
- Use qualitative information, especially drawing upon the perspectives of students and families, to deepen an understanding of the contributing factors and how they might be addressed.
- Determine how to address unequal access to resources.

# Dramatic Increases in Chronic Absence, Especially for Particular Student Groups

*This data from Connecticut is the first statewide data available in the country.*

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent (YTD as of Dec. 2020 compared to 2019-20)



\*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. \*\*Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

<http://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/Supporting%20Student%20Participation%20in%202020-21.html>

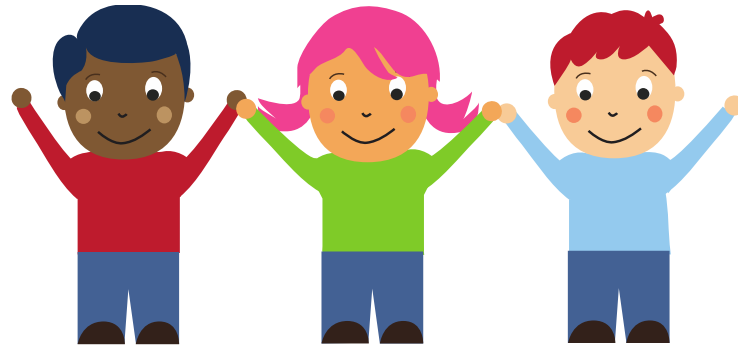


## Let's Chat

- ❖ Which groups of students in your school have higher rates of absenteeism?
- ❖ Which groups struggle most with connectivity?

## **Team Function #3:**

*Identify barriers & inequities that prevent students from attending school*





# Check Your Perceptions


Menu | Resources | Help

**Attendance Works**

## Common Misperceptions

### Dillon's Story

✓ Dillon missed 36 days of school last year. That's a lot of instruction time missed.  
*Why is he absent so often, especially in these early years?*



**Dillon Wilson**  
3rd grade

### THE PERCEPTION


Dillon's parents don't care enough to get him to school. Maybe they aren't at home during the day, or have other kids to deal with, but whatever the excuse, they obviously just don't care enough about his education.

**REVEAL THE REALITY →**

**i**




# Perception vs. Reality



## Common Misperceptions

### Dillon's Story


✓ Dillon missed 36 days of school last year. That's a lot of instruction time missed.  
*Why is he absent so often, especially in these early years?*



### THE REALITY

Dillon was diagnosed with asthma as a baby. He struggles with outdoor activities and relies on a rescue inhaler many days at school. He lives with his widowed grandmother. When the air quality is bad, his grandmother keeps him home.

[SEE ANOTHER EXAMPLE](#)







## Solutions Require Understanding What Factors Contribute to Chronic Absence

### Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Etc. and many more!

### Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Negative parental attitudes about education

### Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits

### Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

# Asking Powerful Questions

## 5 Whys Worksheet

### Define the Problem:

Students have higher rates of absences in distance learning.

### Why is this happening?

1.

Students feel disconnected and disengaged.

Why is that?

2.

Attending virtually reduces the accountability of being in person.

Why is that?

3.

In person attendance allows a teacher to connect more personally with the learner.

Why is that?

4.

Interactions aren't only limited to didactic instruction teachers can meet with a student one on one.

Why is that?

5.

Being in school allows for multiple possibilities for personalized interaction.

Use the 5 Whys to understand a problem and the system that produces it.

**Caution:** do not use it to lay blame on students or families

### Blank worksheet:

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Five-Whys-Worksheet.pdf>

### Identified Root Cause:

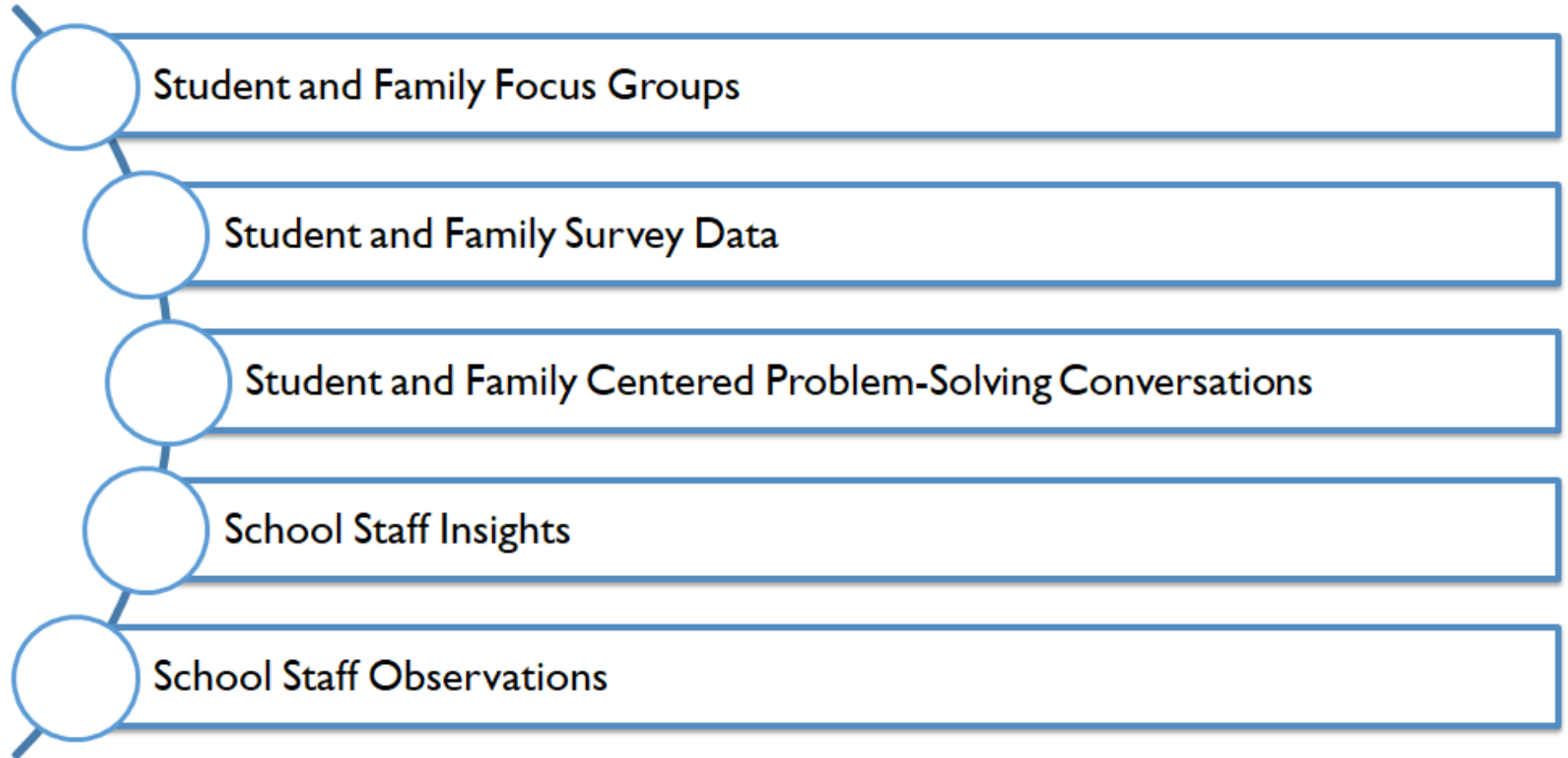
Students feel less connected to their teachers, and have a reduced sense of responsibility and have less personalized encouragement.



## Let's Chat

	Examples of Challenges Students & Families Experience during Covid-19
<b>Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family circumstances contribute to frequent absences (e.g., homelessness, joblessness, child-care, health or mental issues of the parent/caregiver)</li><li>• ?</li></ul>
<b>Aversion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student is struggling academically</li><li>• ?</li></ul>
<b>Disengagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The remote instruction/curriculum is not engaging</li><li>• ?</li></ul>
<b>Misconceptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents may not understand what it means “to be in attendance” in remote learning</li><li>• ?</li></ul>

# Take Time to Gather Information about Why Students Miss School





# Chronic Absence Survey

## New survey to help track reasons for chronic absence

- ❖ For blended or virtual school
- ❖ Designed for secondary students (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)
- ❖ Developed by Harvard Proving Ground: Center for Education Policy Research

### Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism- Blended or Virtual (RCA-BV)

Chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days per school year, has significant impact on student outcomes. It is associated with decreased reading levels, overall academic performance, on-time graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment as well as increased dropout rates.<sup>1,2</sup> Fortunately, chronic absenteeism rates are alterable at the student and system level when interventions are appropriately targeted and matched to student needs.

In order to efficiently and effectively match interventions to student needs, there is a need for reliable and valid data that provide sufficient information to understand the various challenges students experience. The Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA) Survey was developed and underwent extensive validation processes including an expert panel review, student reviewers, and a national validation study to ensure the technical adequacy of the items and instrument.

The RCA is designed for secondary students (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) who have missed 10% or more instructional days. The survey is comprised of 14 demographics and perception of absences questions; 28 items measuring multifaceted reasons for absences; and three open-ended questions asking about other reasons for missing school, the reasons they do come to school, and what would help them come to school more often. Students respond to each of the items that ask why they missed school using a 0-3 scale with response options of Never, Rarely, Sometimes, or Usually. Students may take the survey via an online survey platform (e.g. SurveyMonkey®, Qualtrics®, etc.) or hardcopy. Survey administration takes approximately 10 minutes and multiple students may take the survey at one time. Students may be provided the explanation that they are taking the survey so school staff better understand why students miss school. Please allow students privacy to independently answer questions.

Demographic Items
What is the name of your school?
What ways have you attended school this year? (check all apply: in-person, virtual, blended (in-person some days, virtual other days of the week))
How old are you? (10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)
What is your gender? (male, female, non-binary, prefer not to say)
What grade are you in? (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
Do you get free or reduced price lunch? (yes/no)
What is your Race? (*if more than one race select multi-racial)?
Multi-racial
Asian
Black/African American
Hispanic/Latino
White
American Indian or Alaskan Native
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Reasons-for-Chronic-Absenteeism-Survey-Blended-or-Virtual-Version.pdf>



## Addressing Reasons for Absences

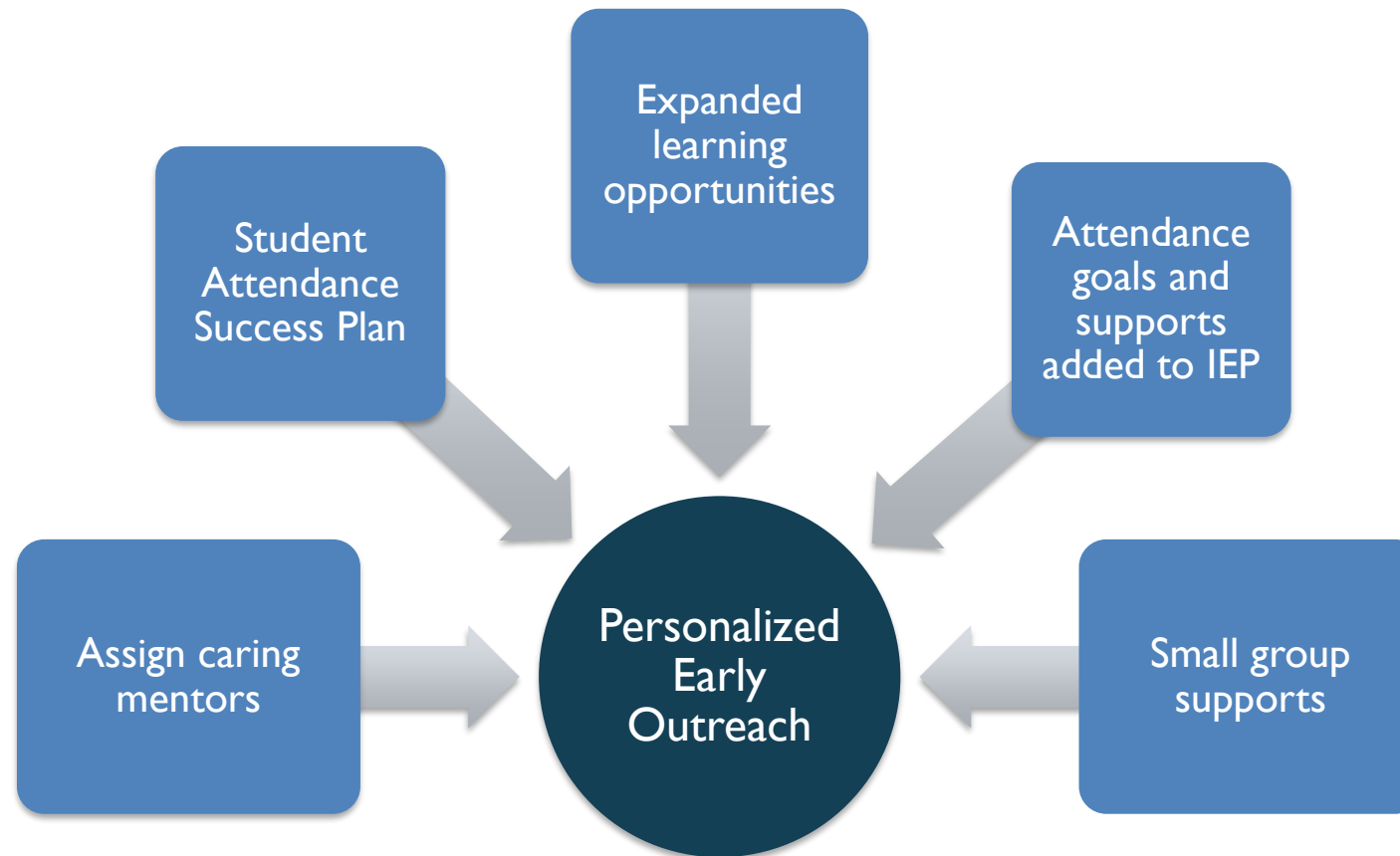


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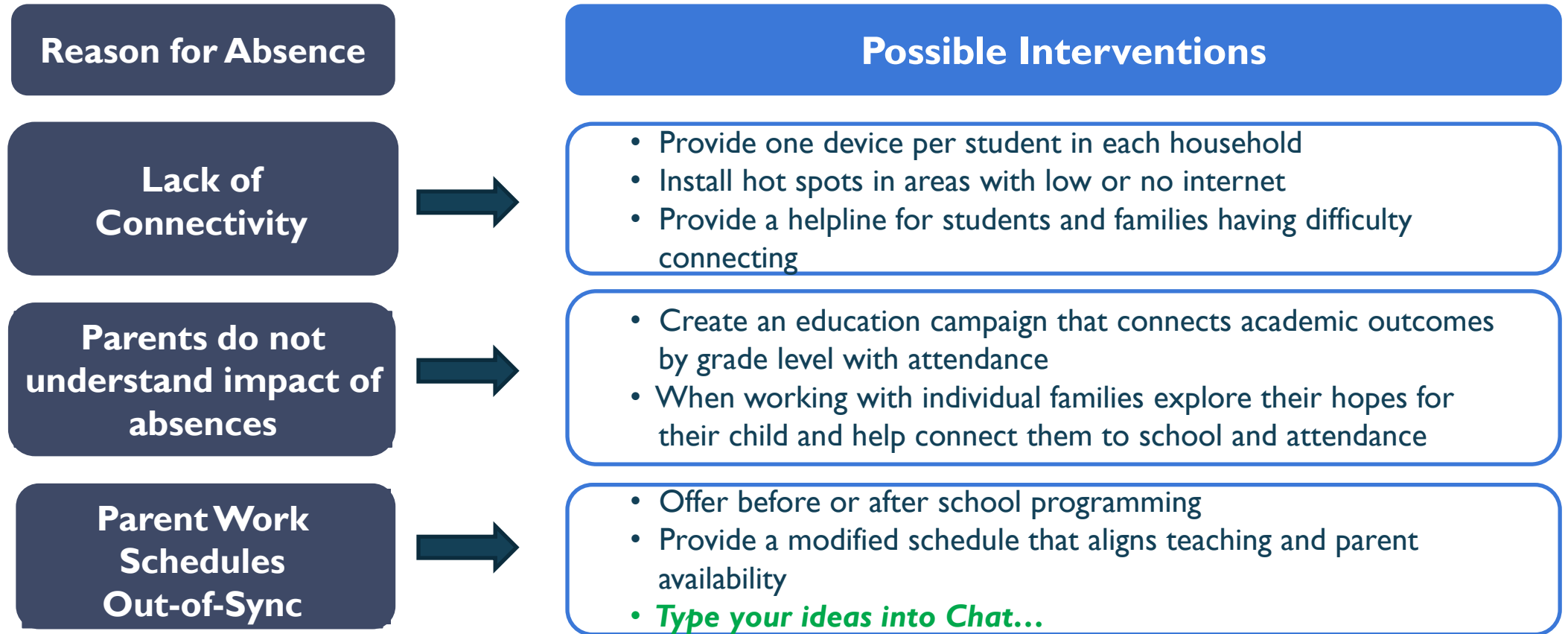
[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



## Tier 2: Early Intervention Strategies



# Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences







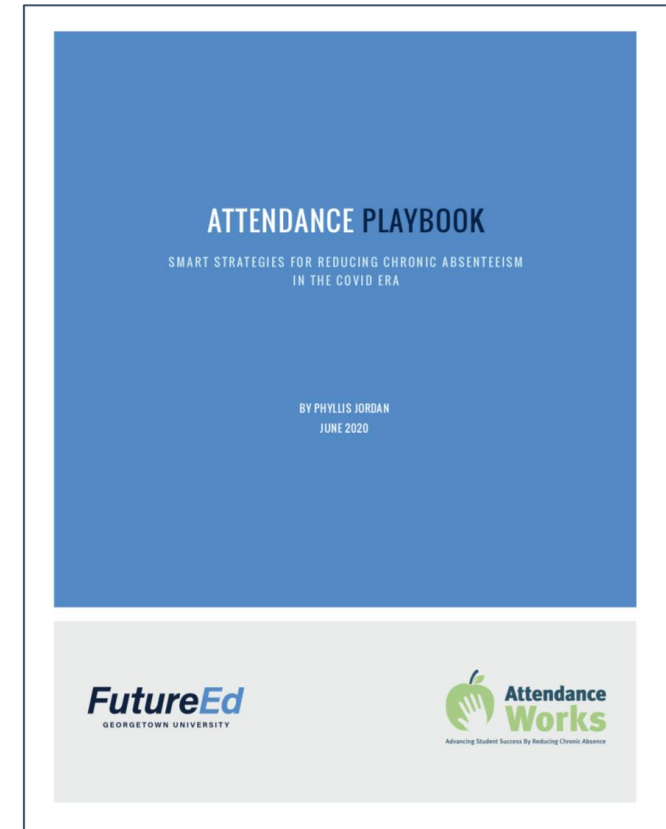
## Breakout Groups

***Select one reason students in your school are absent.***

What possible interventions can be aligned to address the reasons you have identified for students missing school?

# 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/>



## How do we know we're making a difference?

### **Answer these four key questions:**

1. How much did we do? (*quantity*)
2. How well did we do it? (*quality*)
3. What difference did we make? (*population-level indicators*)
4. Who was better off? (*impact on the population*)



## Questions from the Audience





## Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

[https://app.upmetrics.com/data\\_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj](https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj)

Thank you!



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# Map of School Teams

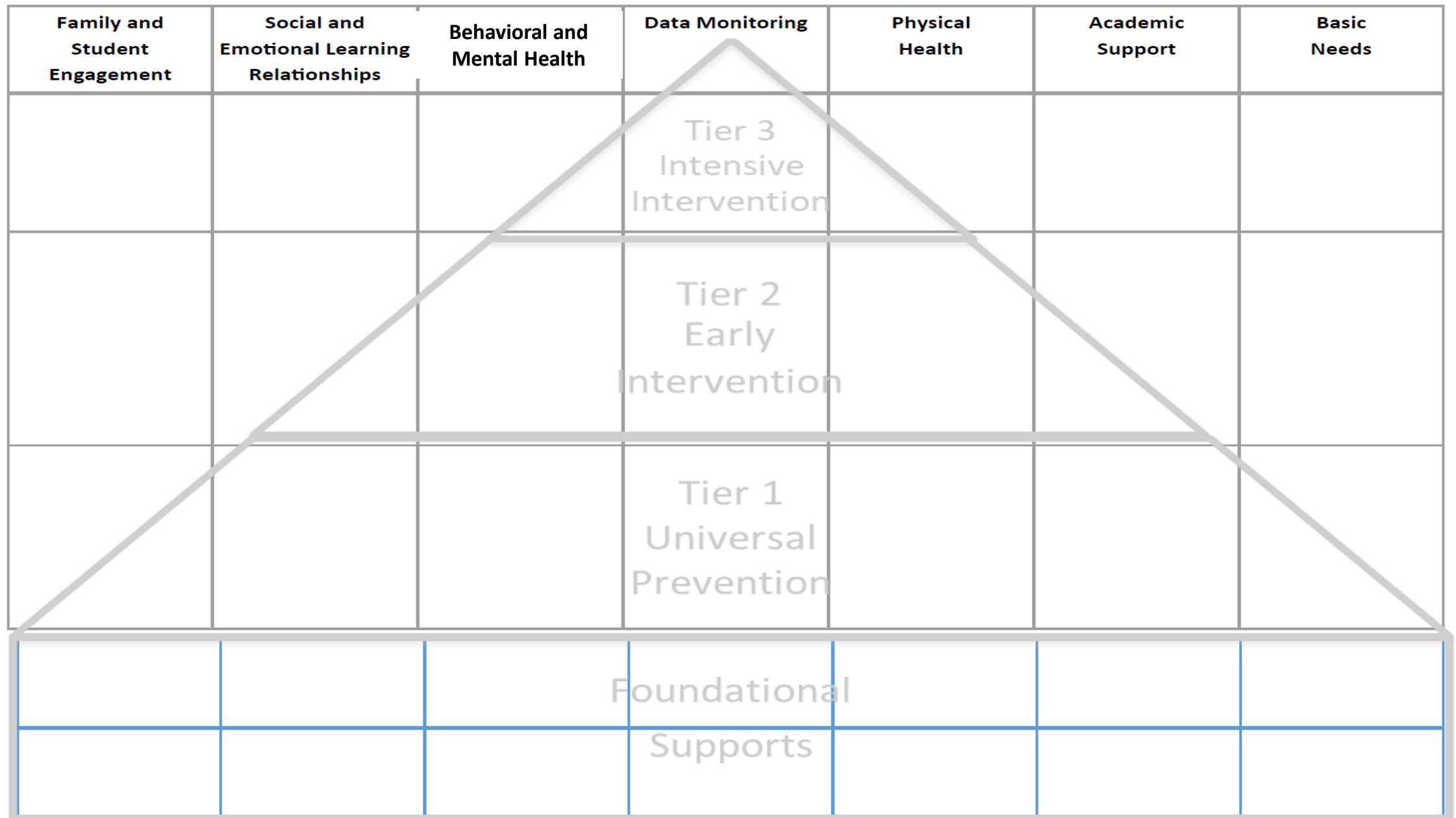


Name of Team	Team Purpose	Team Members	Meeting Frequency



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/>



## 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](http://www.attendanceworks.org)