

Session 2

Early Intervention Strategies:

*Using Teams to Monitor & Identify
Students in Need of Support*



Professional Learning Series

October 6, 2021



Welcome!



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Founder and Executive Director



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Three E-Learning Sessions

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

- ❖ **Session 1** — Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism
- ❖ **Session 2** — Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support
- ❖ **Session 3** — Partnering to Make a Difference



Learning Goals for Session 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



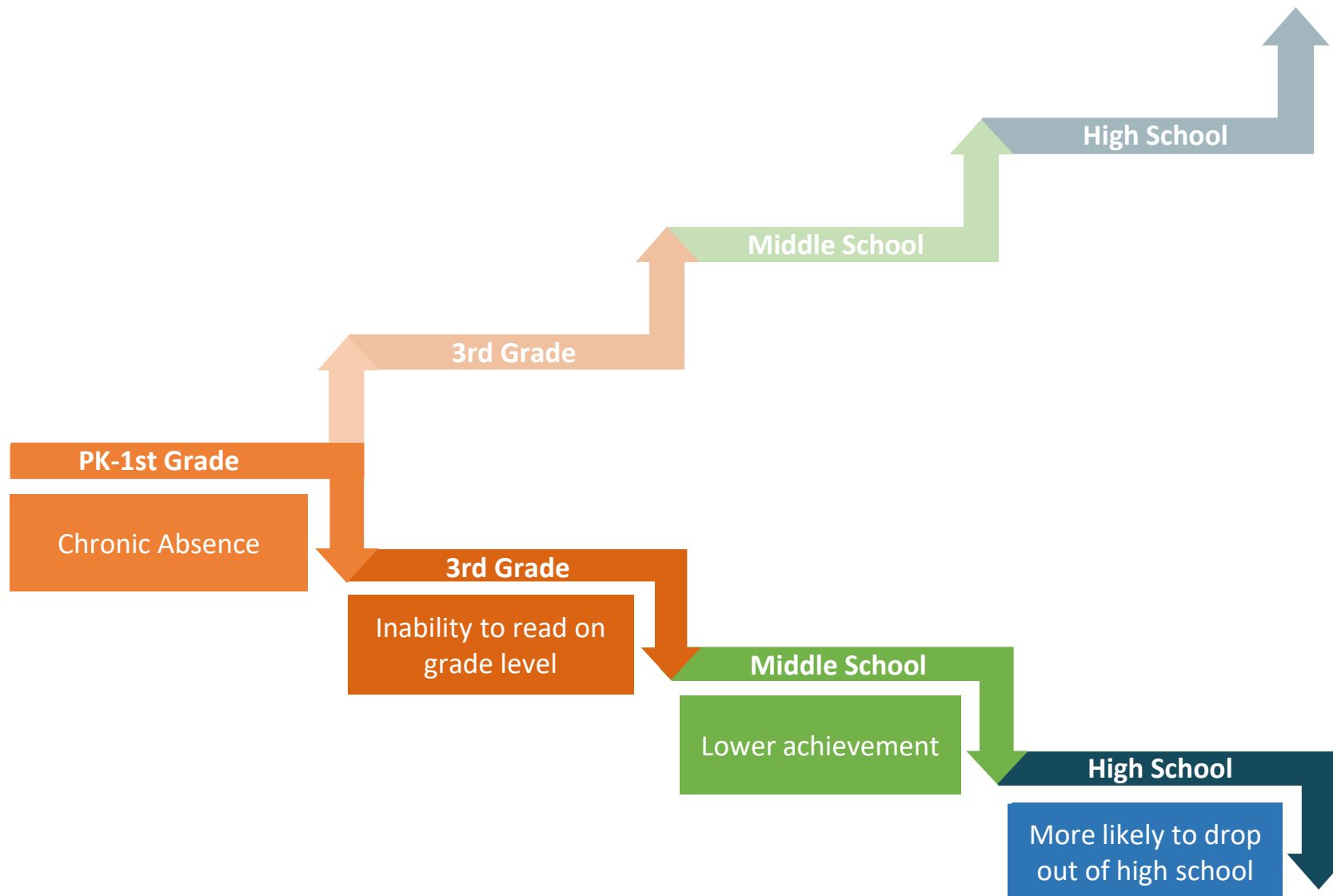
Getting Started: Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name and role
- ✓ Your school and district
- ✓ If your life were a movie, what would it be called?

Key Concepts from Session 1

Improving Attendance Matters





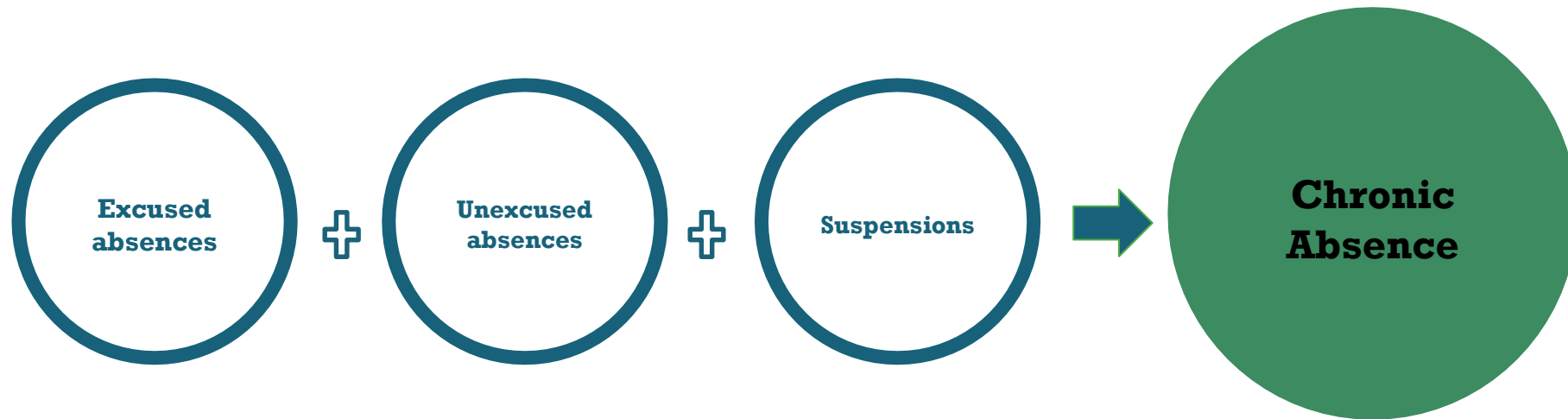
**What is the relationship
between absences and equity?**

**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.**

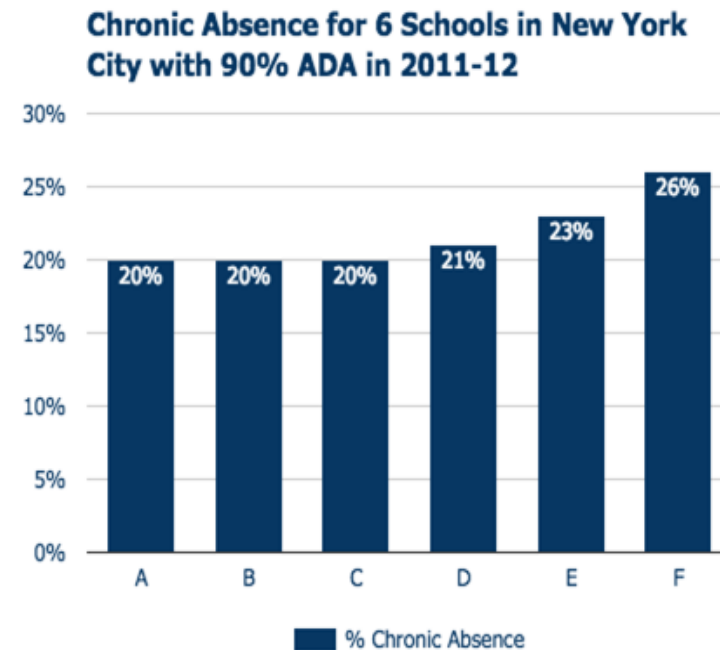
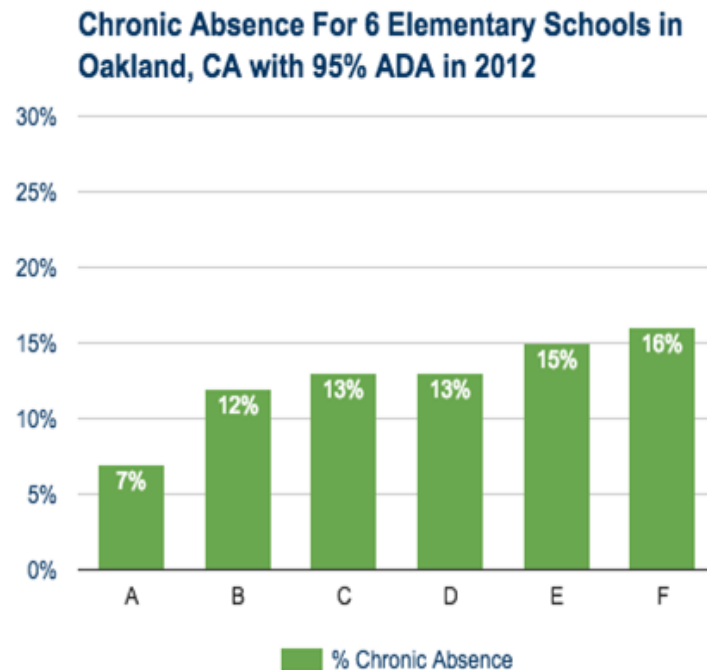


Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).



Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% \neq A



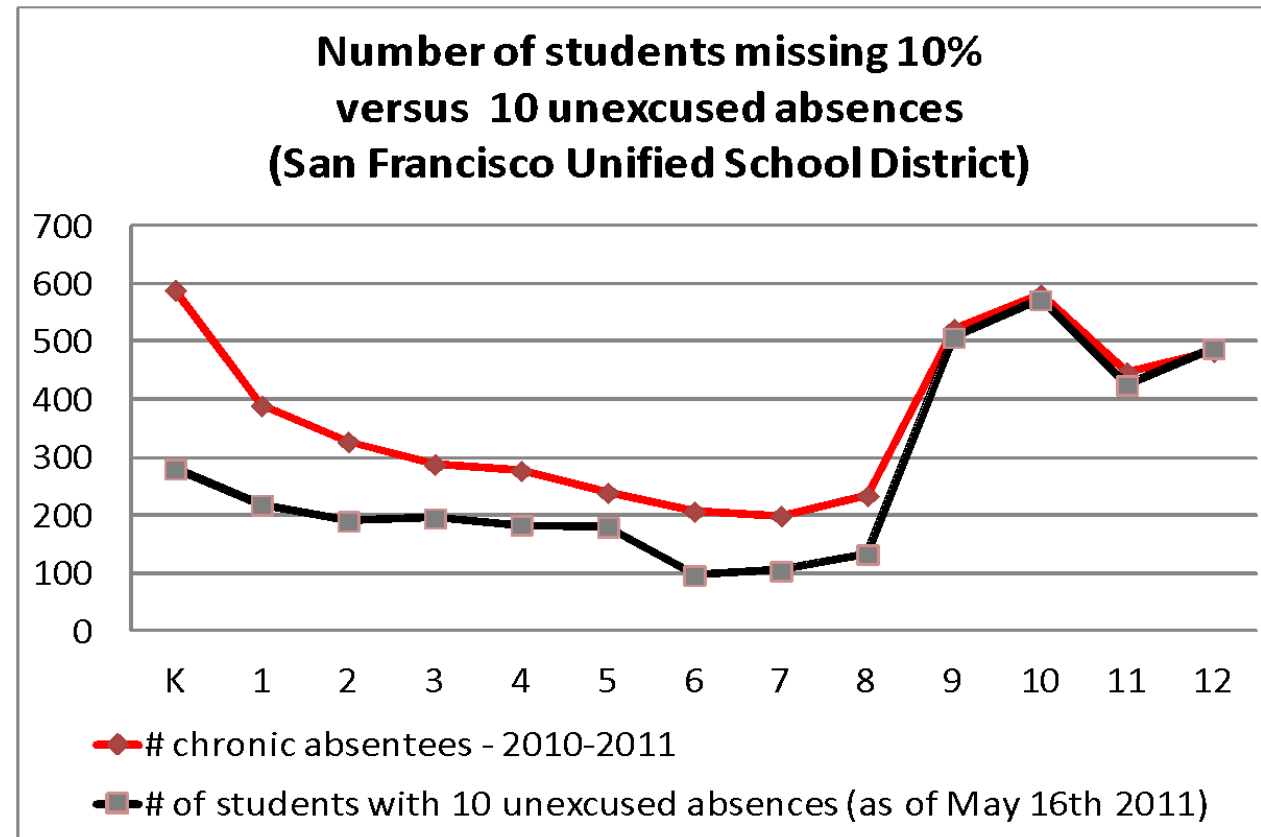
98% ADA = little chronic absence

95% ADA = don't know

93% ADA = significant chronic absence



Chronic Absence vs. Truancy





Changing outcomes requires adopting a **NEW** attendance paradigm

From: Truancy

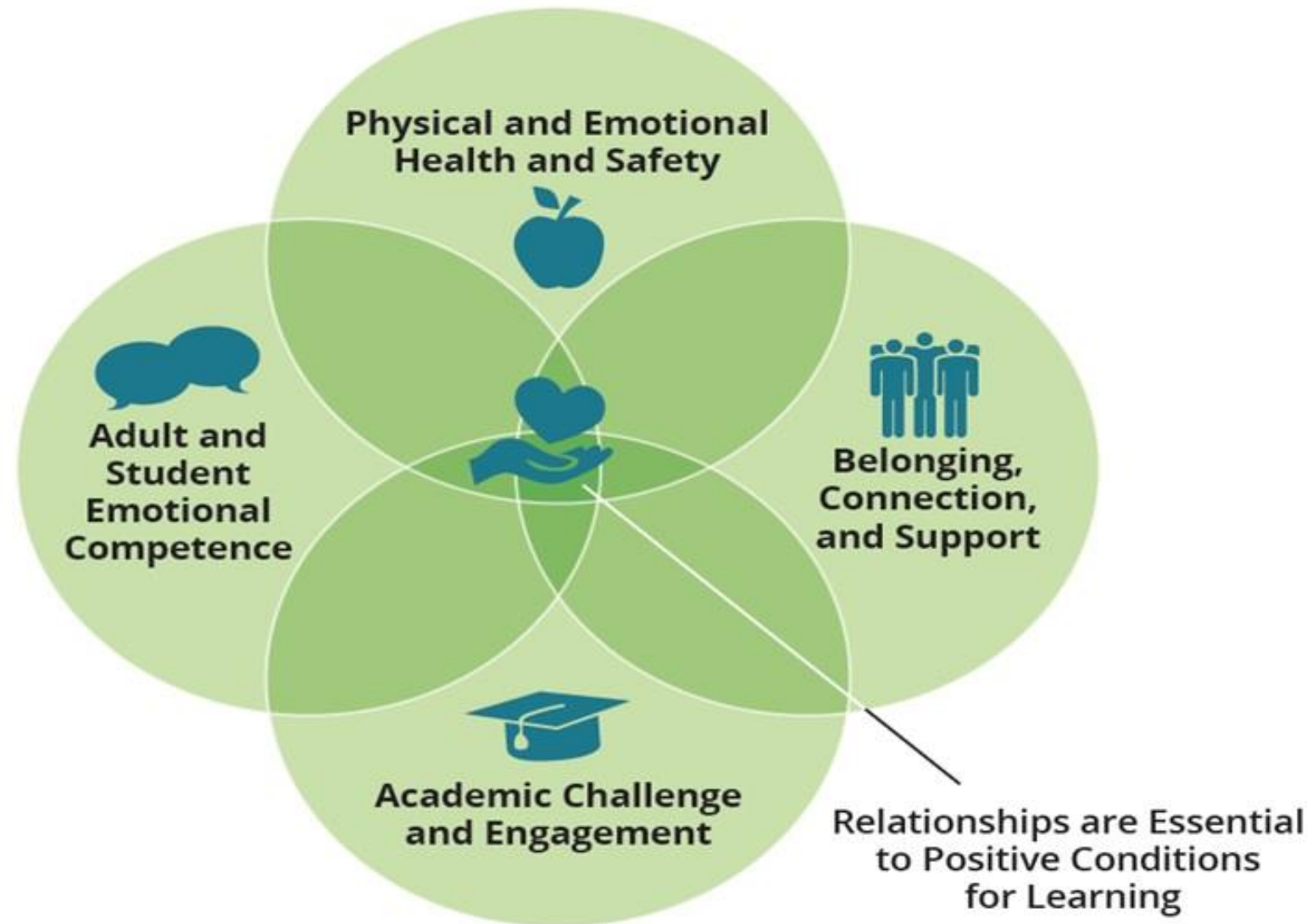
- Counts unexcused absences
- Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions



To: Chronic Absence

- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses preventive problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement

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



how-to guide to relationship mapping

MAKING
CARING
COMMON
PROJECT



GRADES
K–12

IMPLEMENTED BY
School Administrators

TIME & RESOURCE INTENSITY

low → high

CAPACITIES PROMOTED
Relationship-building; Student confidence; Shifting school norms

Key Elements

See all students at-a-glance.

See who is well-supported and who needs support by adults.

Involve *all* adults in relationship mapping.

Key Benefits

Connect all students to at least one school adult.

A *Relationship Map* lists *all* students in a school (or grade, team, etc.).

A *Relationship Map* allows adults in a school to have a quick and visual snapshot of students who are well supported and who most need support. Knowing this, adults can then strategize about how to best reach out to students who most need positive and supportive relationships with adults.

A *Relationship Map* is most effective if *all* adult stakeholders with a connection to students participate in its creation. This includes administrators, teachers, counselors, sports coaches, mentors, community partners, and other school staff.

A *Relationship Map* helps identify students who do not already have adult connections and provides opportunities for adults in school to build positive relationships with those students.

Download in-person and virtual versions of this guide at <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>

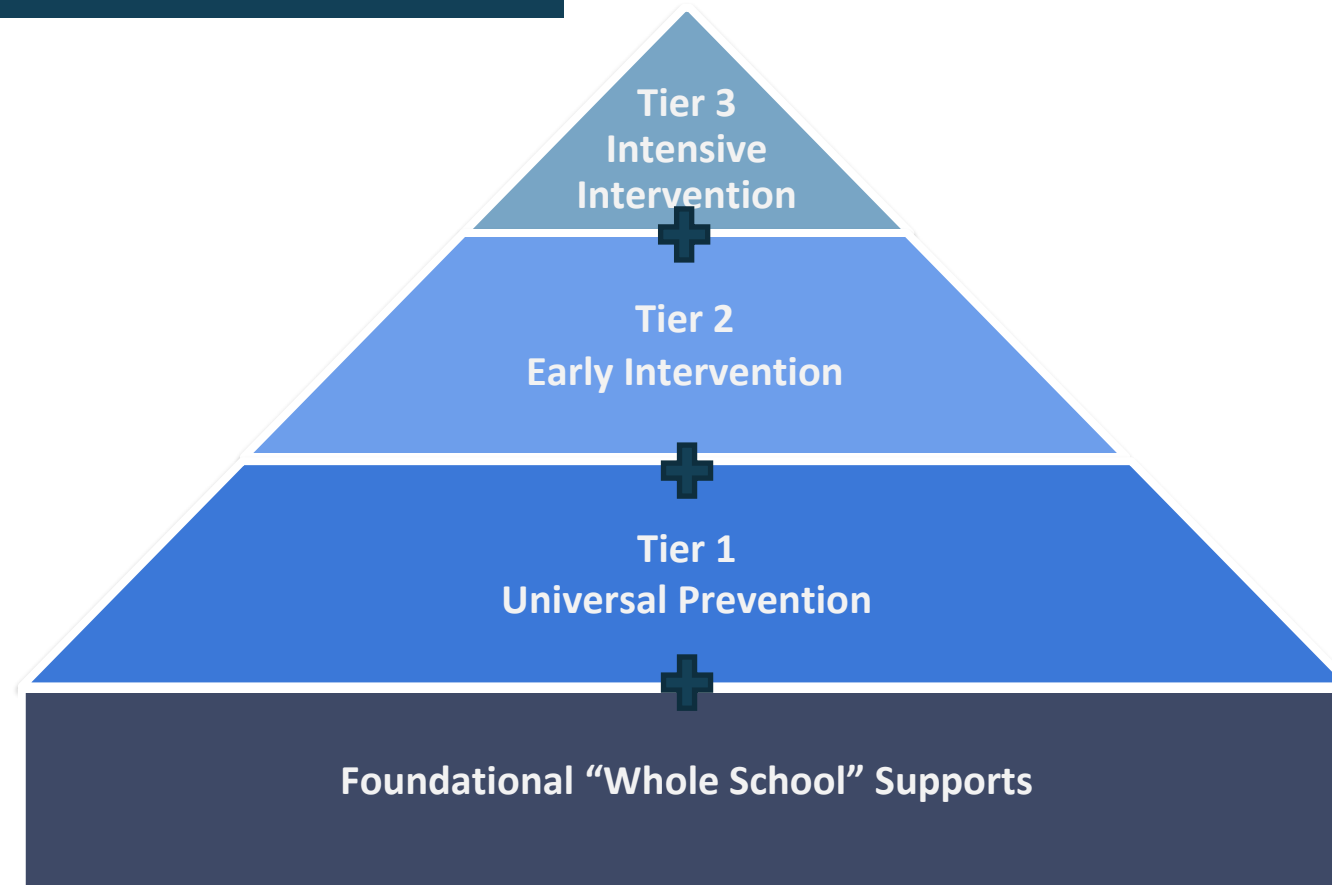
Have you mapped relationships at your school?

If so, what insights did you gain?

If not, how could you use this tool?



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
Foundational Whole School Supports			

Three High Leverage Strategies

Tier 1 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?

Type in Chat:

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



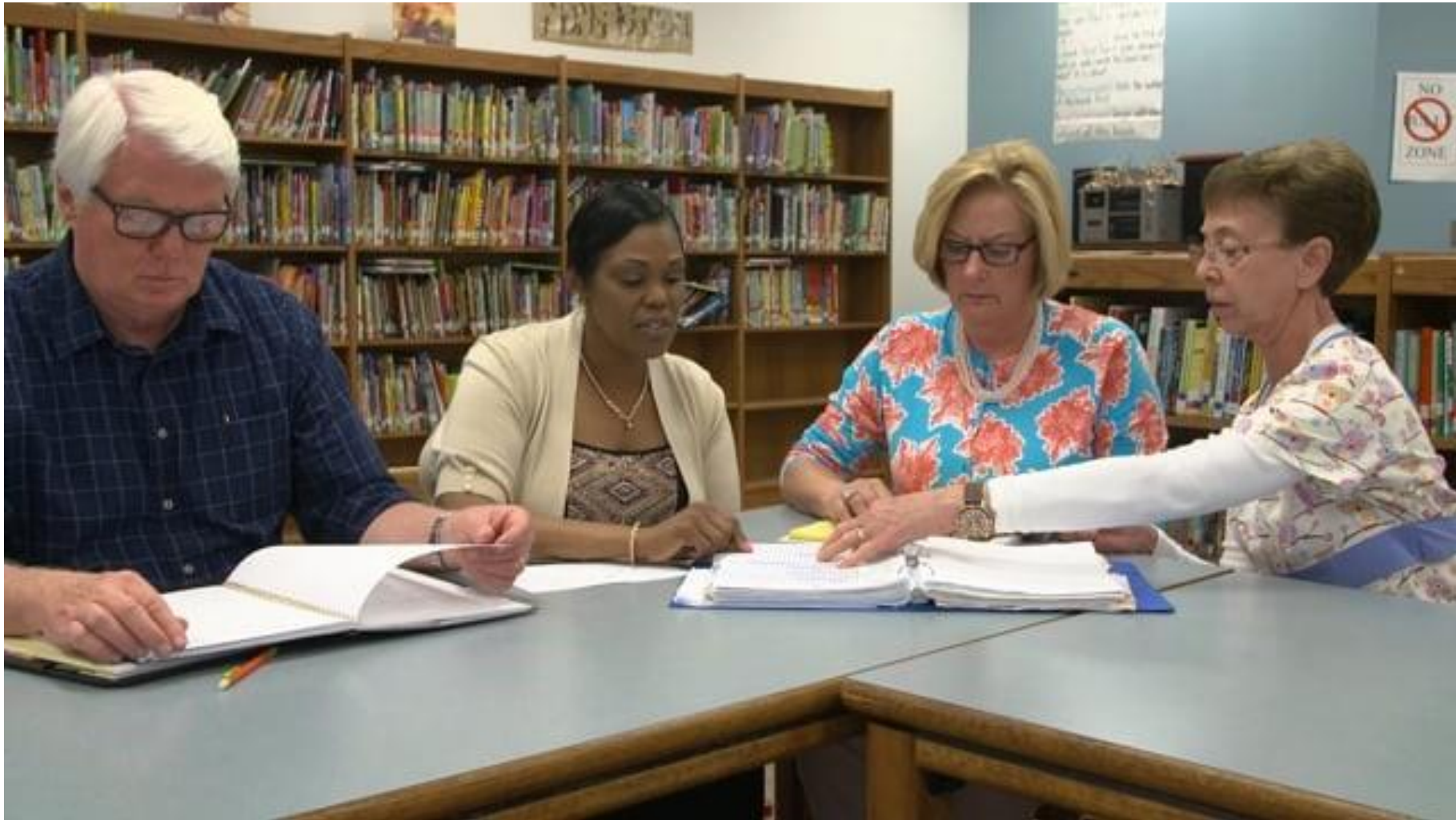
Primary Purpose of a Team Approach

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.



- 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>

Ensuring Attendance Requires A Team



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
- * Community School Directors and Coordinators
- * Expanded Learning program staff
- * Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- * Pupil Personnel Workers
- * Child Welfare and Attendance Officers

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.
- Identify areas of overlap, redundancy and/or gaps.
- Consider if attendance responsibilities can be integrated into an existing team (e.g., PBIS, RTI, 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.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Map-of-School-Teams.pdf>

Map of School Teams



Name of Team	Team Purpose	Team Members	Meeting Frequency



Poll

What teams address attendance? (check all that apply)

- ☐ 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 (type 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
- ✗ Use case management as the sole strategy
- ✗ Jump 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/resources/self-assessment/>

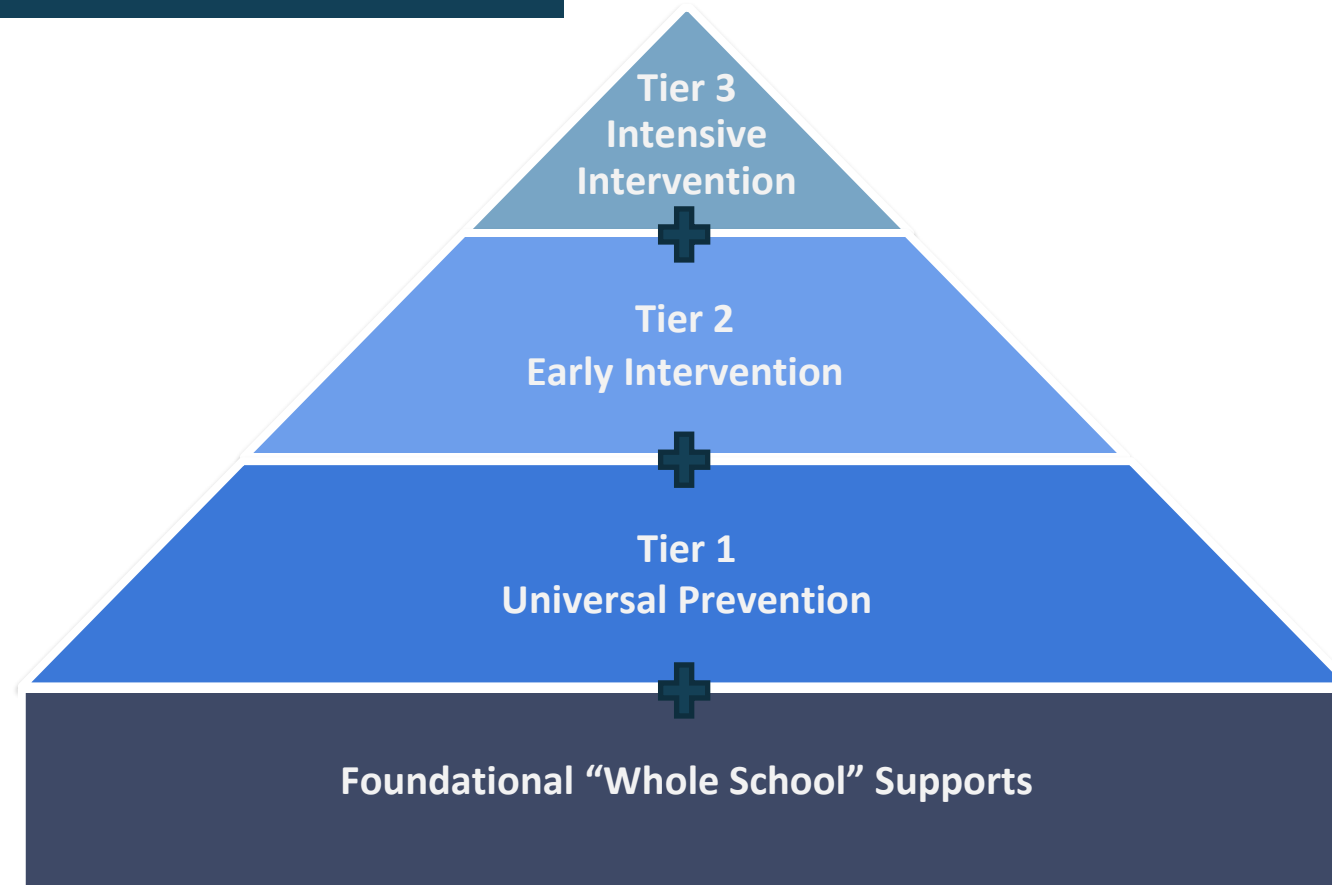
Team Function #1:

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

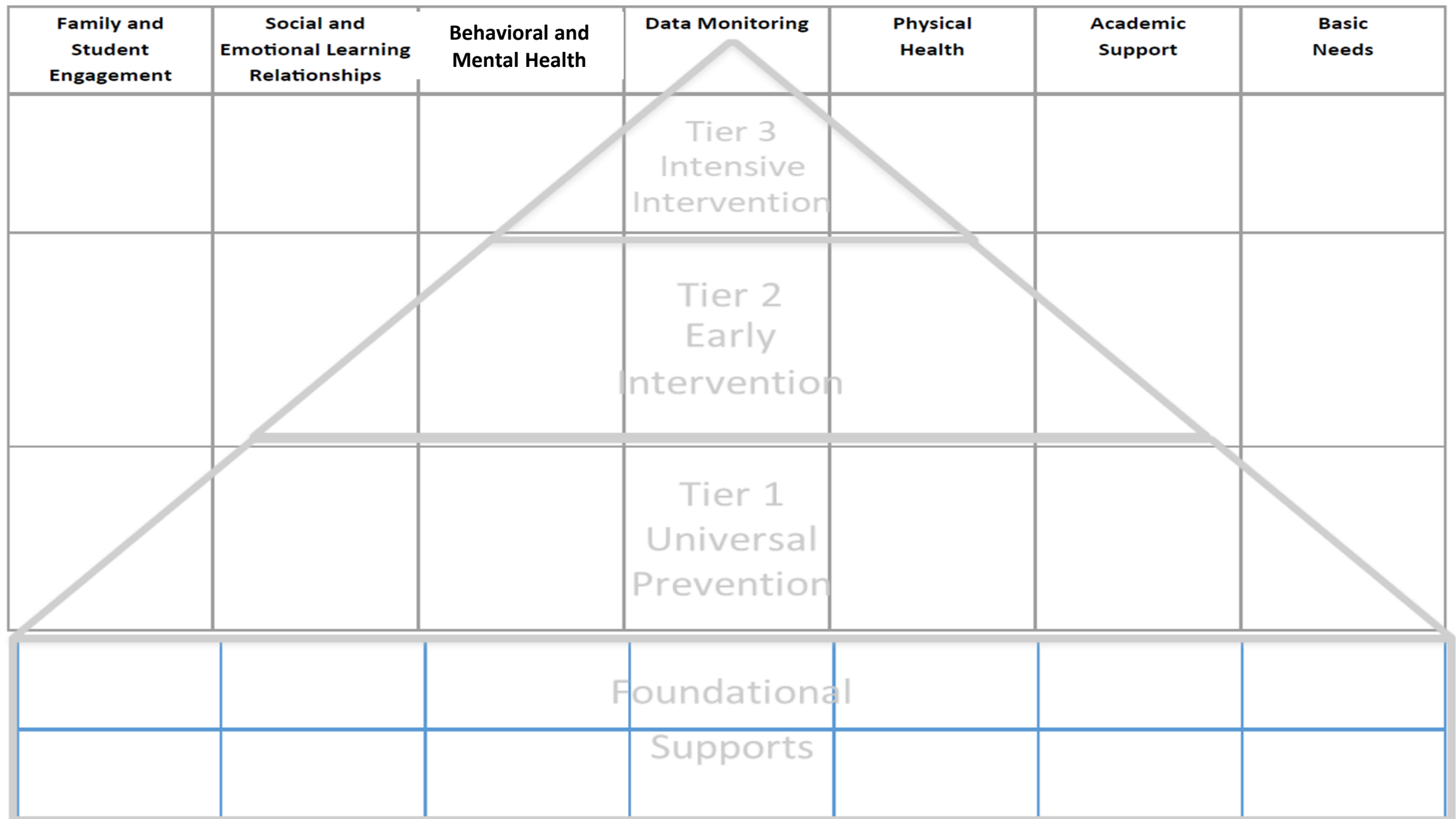




Use Data to Support an Integrated Multi-tiered System of Support



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/>



Poll

Where are the biggest gaps in your school?

(check all that apply)

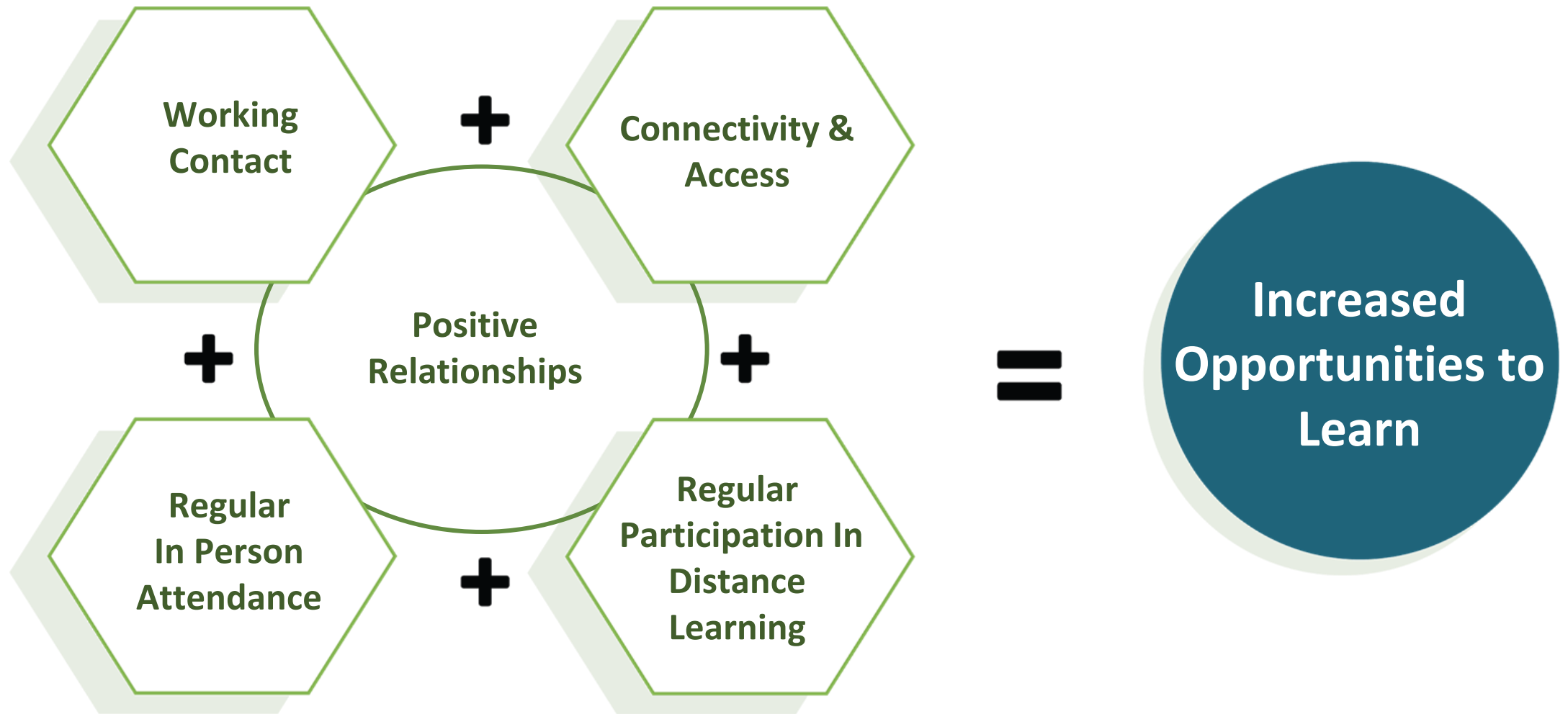
- ☐ Foundational whole school supports
- ☐ Tier 1
- ☐ Tier 2
- ☐ Tier 3

Team Function #2:

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



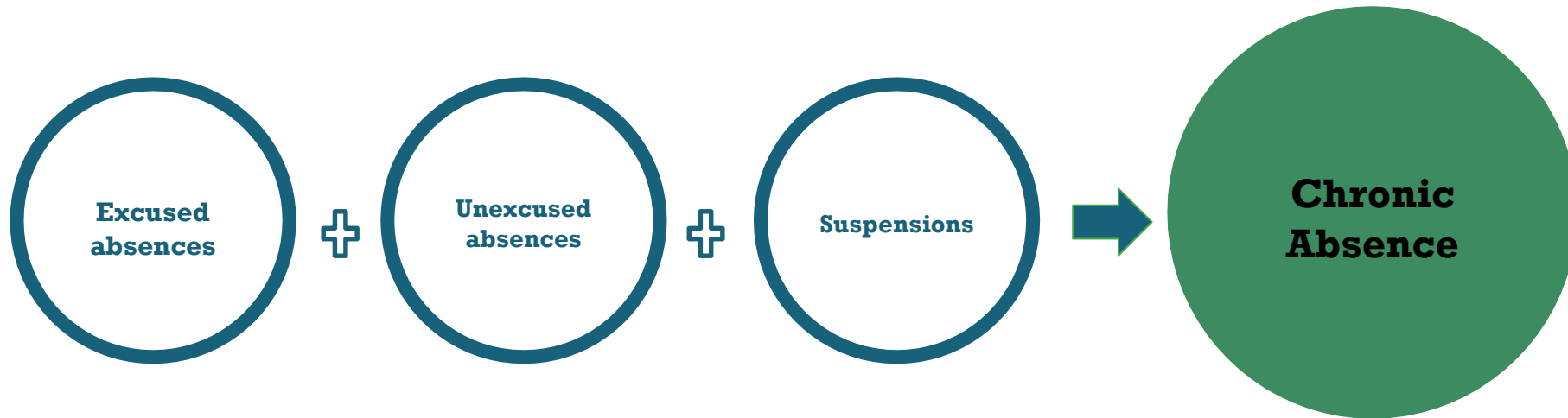
Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn





Chronic Absence Should be Monitored in Remote and In-person Instruction

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.**

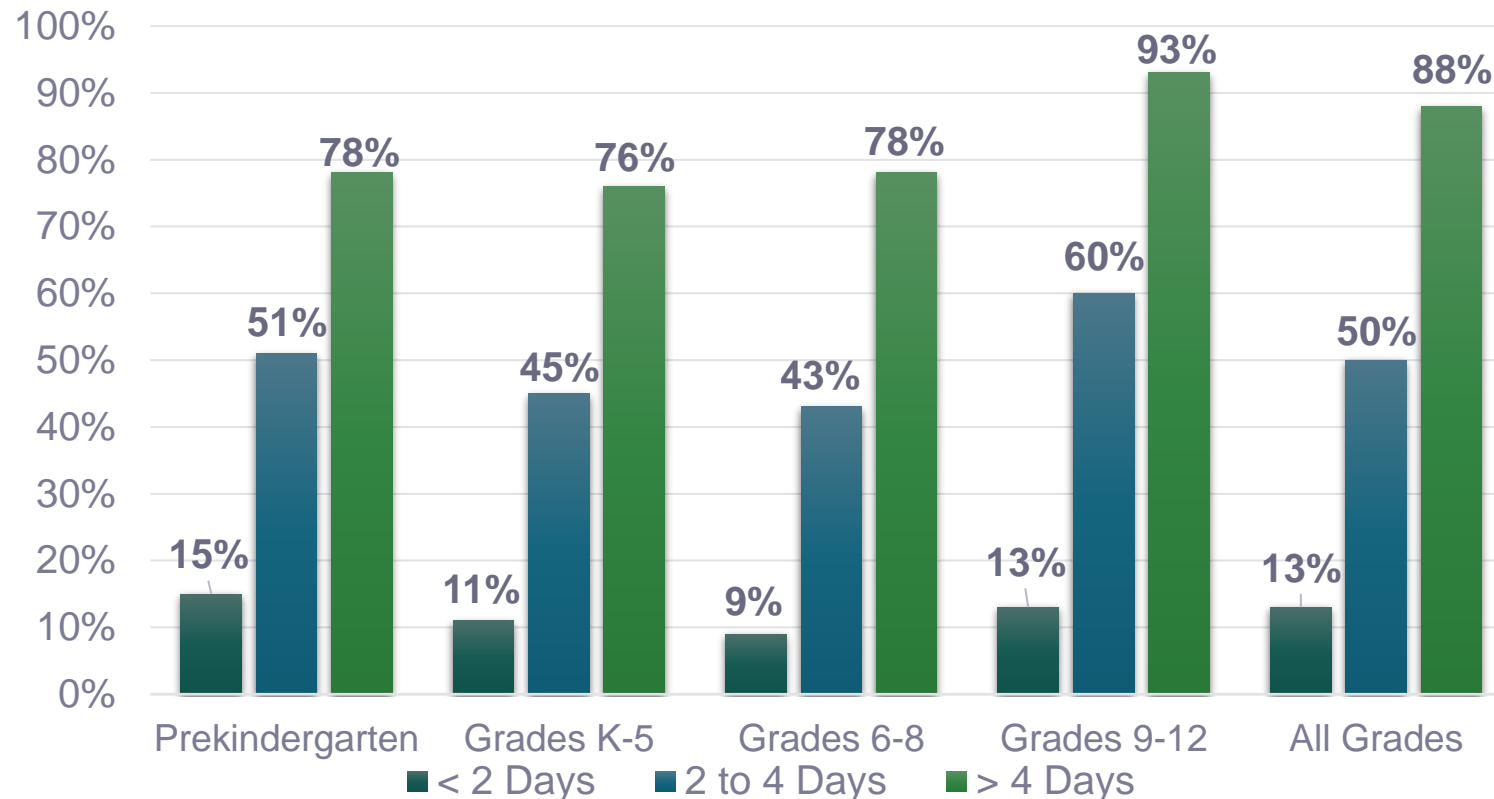


Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).



The First Month of School Predicts Chronic Absence

- Baltimore students who missed 2-4 days of school in September were **5 times** as likely to be chronically absent.
- Students who missed 5 or more days of school in September were **16 times** as likely to be chronically absent.





How to Identify Students on the Cusp of Chronic Absence

DAYS MISSED IN SCHOOL YEAR
Satisfactory Attendance Missed less than 5% (fewer than 9 days in a 180-day year)
At-risk Missed 5-9% (9-17 days in a 180-day year)
Moderate Chronic Absence Missed 10-19% (18-35 days in a 180-day year)
Severe Chronic Absence Missed 20% or more (36 or more days in a 180-day year)

Early Intervention Warning Indicators

Tier 2 Early Intervention

Suggested Criteria for what activates early outreach:

- Missing 10-19% of school—*regardless of the mode of instruction*—in the prior school year
- Missing 10% of learning opportunities during current year
- Not checking in or completing work in distance learning
- Lost contact with student/family — wellness check (immediate action required)

Consider who should respond: Attendance staff? Counselors? Nurses? Community partners? Teachers? Teachers on special assignment? Social work interns?



Poll

What data is your school using to activate outreach?

(check all that apply)

- ☐ One absence
- ☐ Missing 10% of days enrolled
- ☐ Number of unexcused absences
- ☐ Student misses daily or weekly check-ins
- ☐ Student does not log in to class
- ☐ Other *(type in chat)*

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-rev-July-2021.pdf>

Number of Absences	Action(s)	People Responsible	Resources to Support Action(s)	Documentation <i>What was the reason for the absence, and what intervention or support was offered?</i>
0	Welcome Letter Welcome Video on website	School secretary Principal and person who updates the school website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to resources, e.g. District letter that can be personalized by principal / school team AW Flyers AW Student Success Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add contacts from Student Success Plan to family contact information form.
1-2	Call Home	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call Script 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log in Student Screen on SIS Track and monitor in case management system
3-4	Call Home	School Counselor or Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call Script Documentation of Reasons https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log in Student Screen on SIS Note reasons for absence and any supports or interventions needed. Track and monitor in case management system
5	Family Meeting	Principal or other School Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard agenda for family meeting Student Success Plan List of resources Form for taking notes and follow up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use district form for family meeting Attach

Small Group Discussion

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



Ground Rules

- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak (and use the chat to express ideas)



Small group handout: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Summary-of-Actions-BLANK-FORM-rev-July-2021.pdf>



Let's Chat

***Share insights from
your small group discussions.***

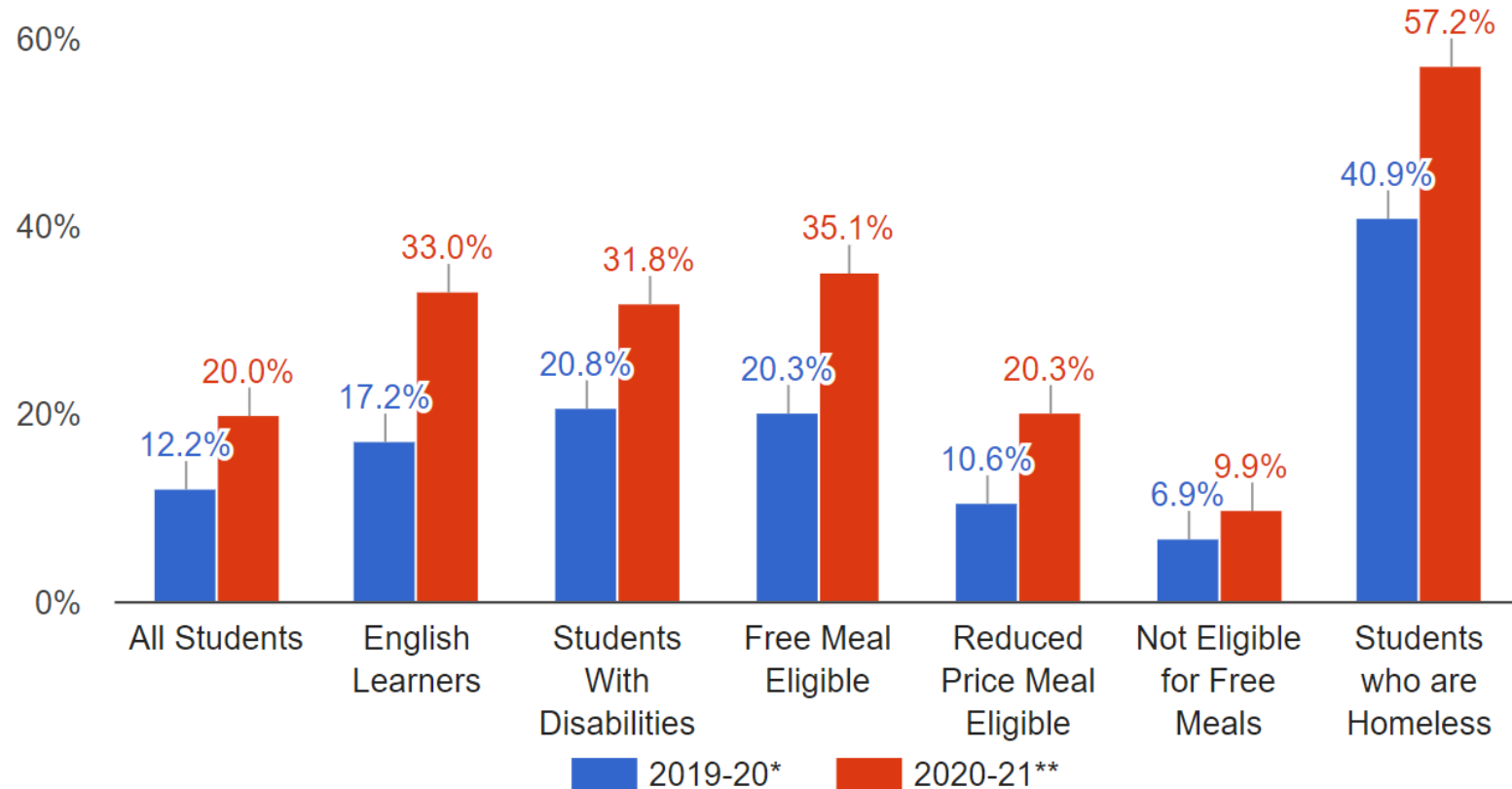


Use Data to Identify and Address Inequities

- 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.

Early SY 2020-21 Data Shows Dramatic Increases in Chronic Absence, Especially for Students Hard Hit by Pandemic

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent (YTD as of May 2021 compared to 2019-20)

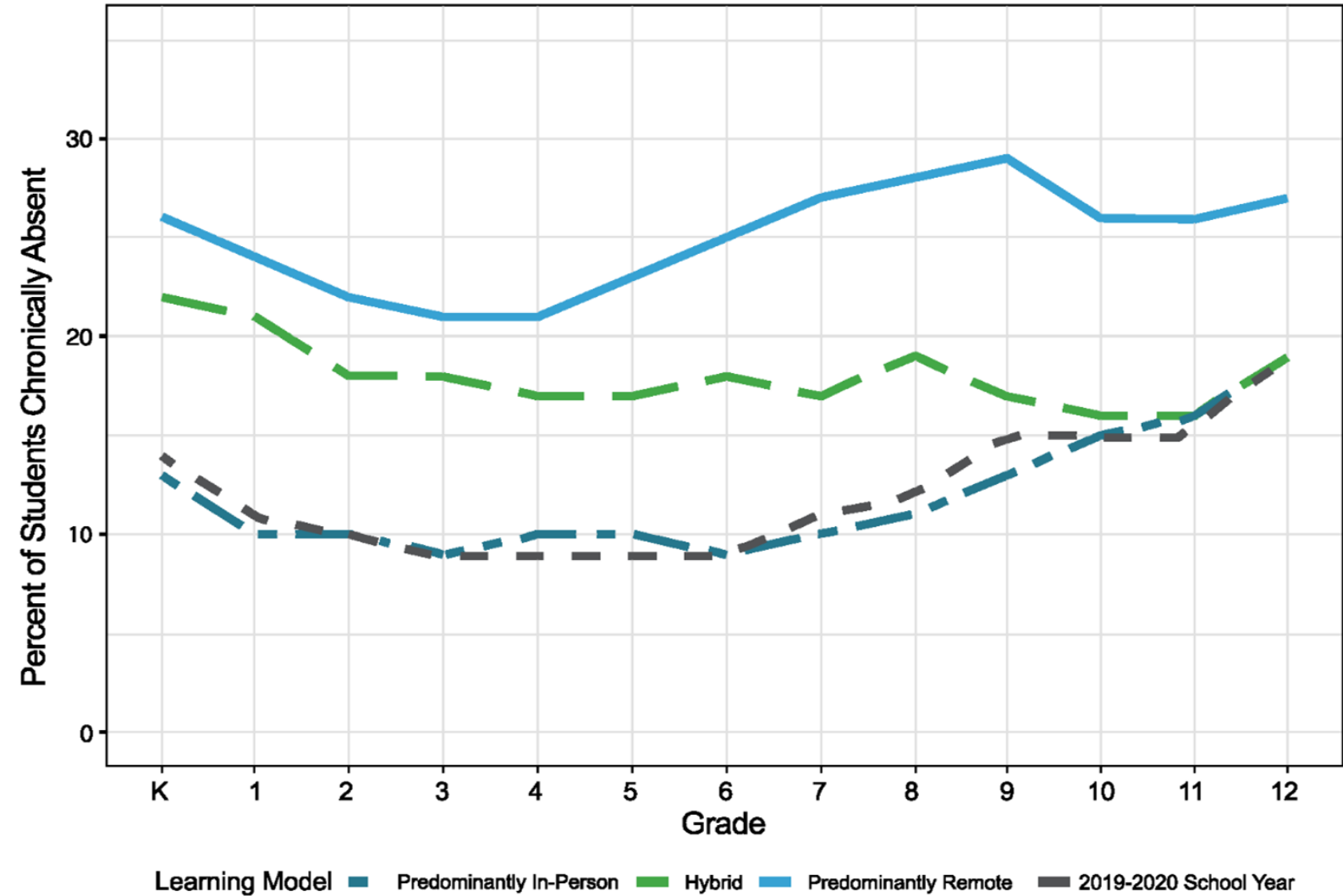


*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. **Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

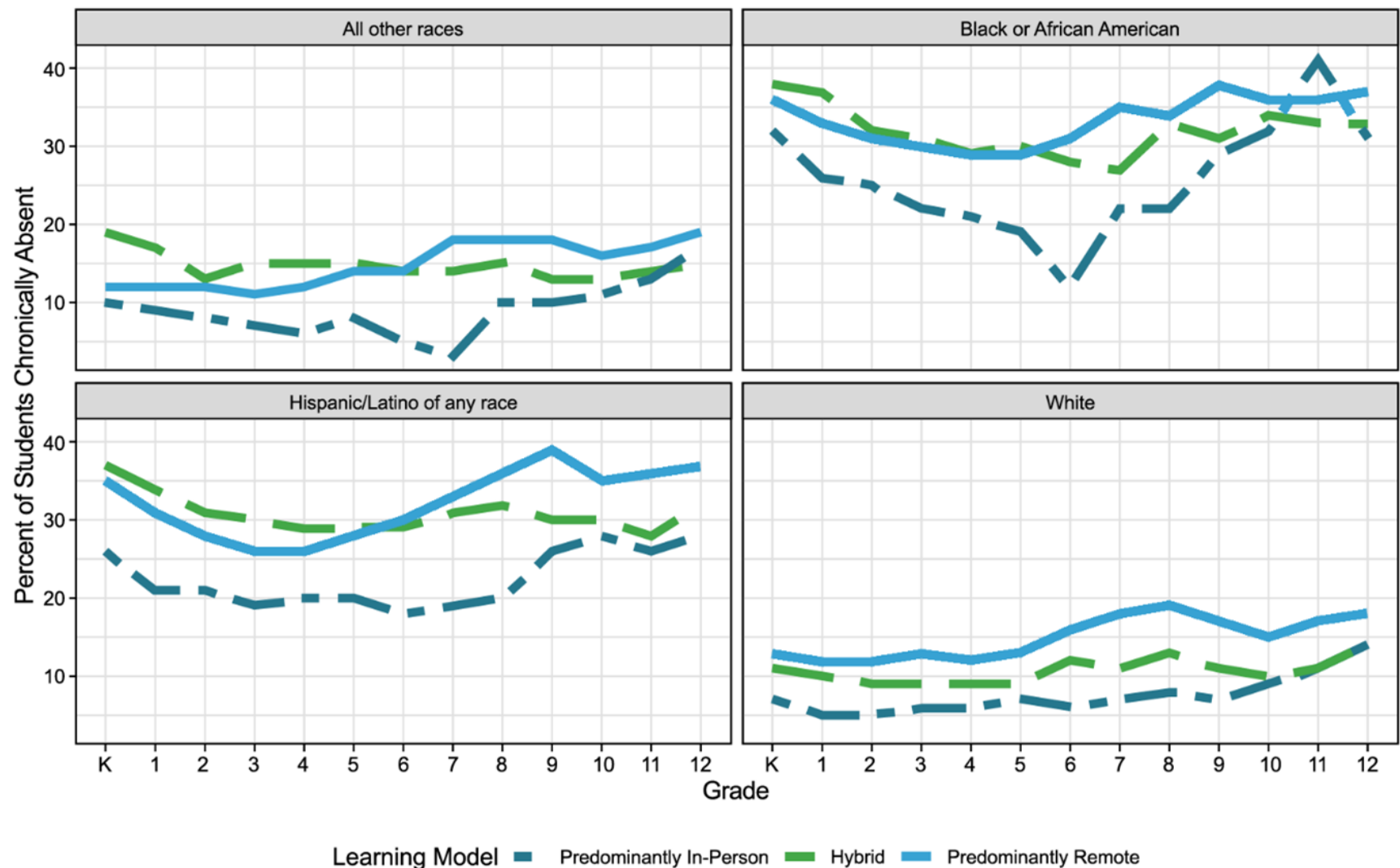
<http://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/Supporting%20Student%20Participation%20in%202020-21.html>

- This data from Connecticut is the first statewide data available in the country.
- Connecticut has a long history of investing in accurate data.
- Connecticut defined chronic absence as attending at least .5 day in distance as well as in-person learning.
- Calculations include in person and remote days
- Calculations for 2019-20 are based upon in person school days to Mid-March 2020.

Finding 5. *The patterns and grades most affected by absenteeism differed by learning model.*



Finding 6. Patterns of chronic absence by learning mode and grade were not the same across racial and ethnic groups.



https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Chronic_Absence_in_CT_062421.pdf



Let's Chat

***Which groups of students in your school
have higher rates of absenteeism?***

Team Function #3:

Identify barriers & inequities that prevent students from attending school





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?



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.



Perception vs. Reality



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.



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
- Parents had negative educational experiences

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:

A large number of middle schoolers are tardy or absent the first month of school.

Why is this happening?

1. Middle school students are not waking up early enough to get to school.

Why is that?

2. Middle school students have not been in the routine of showing up in person every day for the past year and a half.

Why is that?

3. They haven't had the opportunity to practice daily routines or allow extra time for unexpected issues such as the bus being late.

Why is that?

4. Many students do not have adults or peers to help them develop and stick to positive routines.

Why is that?

5. Adults overestimate a student's ability to organize himself/herself or plan for issues.

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

Scenario #1

Blank worksheet:

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

Identified Root Cause:

Students have not been taught, coached and supported in developing successful routines for getting to school on time.

Asking Powerful Questions

5 Whys Worksheet

Define the Problem:

Kindergartners have higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Why is this happening?

1. Families are keeping their children home out of concern for their children's health and safety.

Why is that?

2. Families are worried that their children are more vulnerable to Covid-19 given high transmission rates.

Why is that?

3. Families do not feel confident about the school's Covid-19 mitigation measures (e.g. sanitation, physical distancing, cohorting, masking, vaccination, quarantine, etc.)

Why is that?

4. School leaders have not effectively communicated procedures to keep students safe and shared how they have kept Covid-19 transmission rates low.

Why is that?

5. The district or school lack a plan to personally keep families abreast of the latest information and respond to their concerns.

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

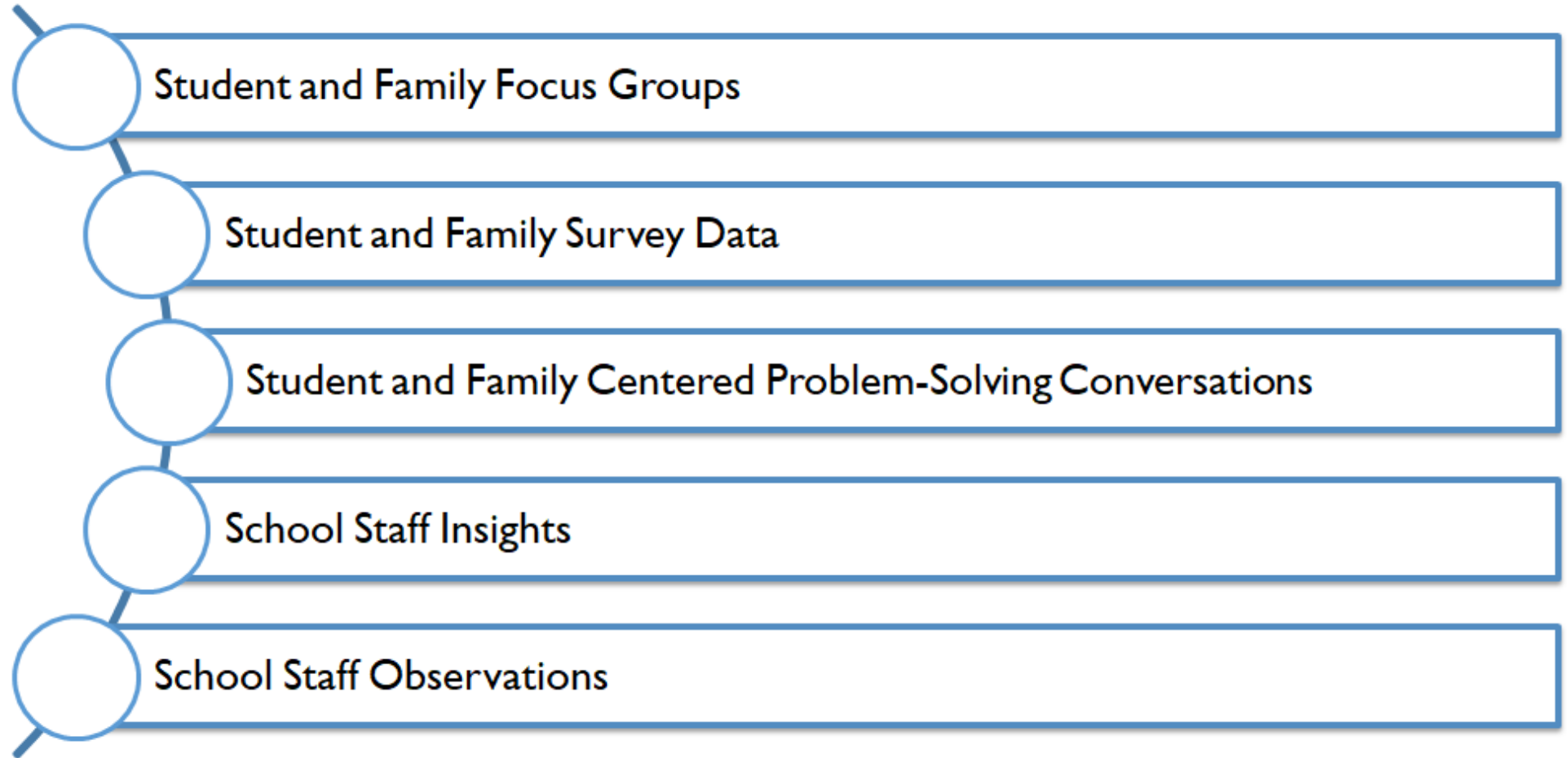
Scenario #2:

Blank worksheet:

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

Identified Root Cause: Lack of an effectively implemented and communicated plan for reducing the spread of Covid-19.

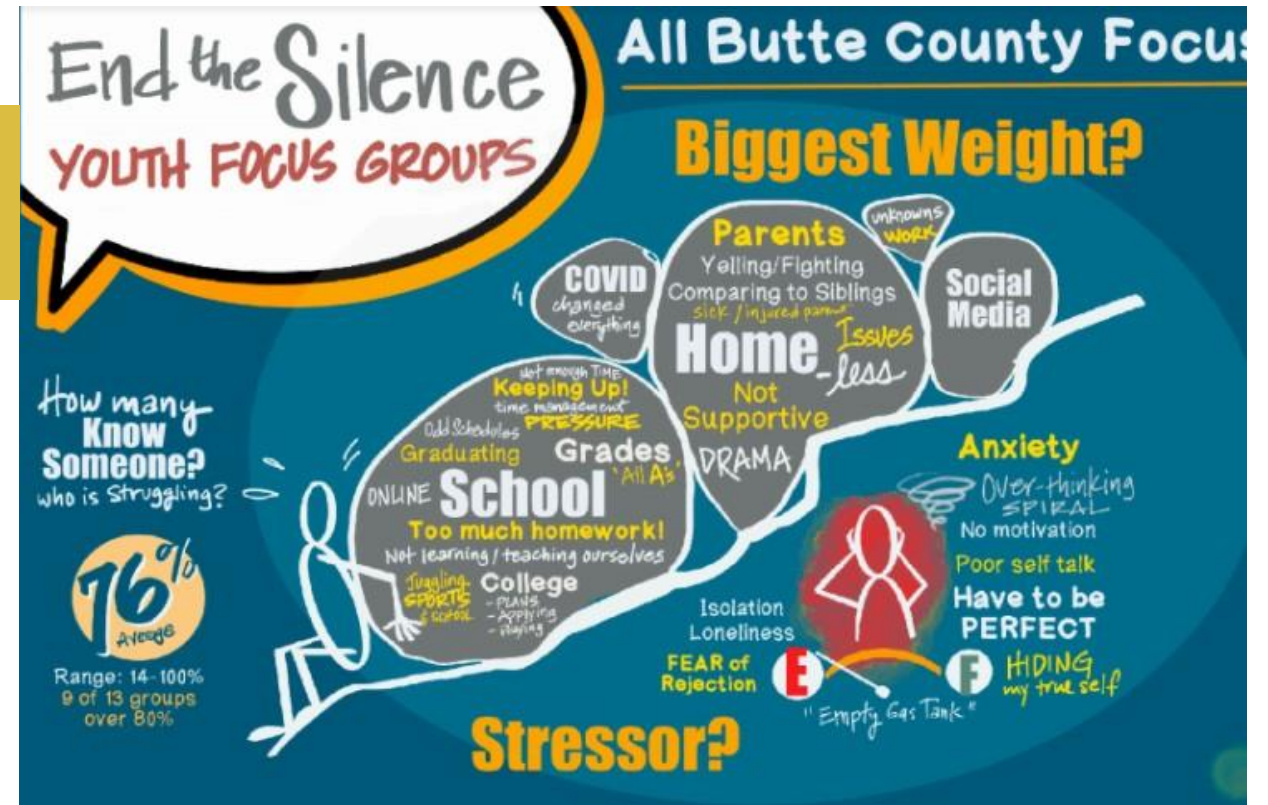
Validate Your Insights – Gather Information About Why Students Miss School





Mental
Health

Attendance



Common barriers students shared:

Stress

TIRED

family issues


unstable housing

NEED TO WORK



"We do the work to get grades, we don't learn anything"

Teachers lecture, we take notes. Then do it again the next day - in 6 classes. There's no time to learn the material. If you miss one day, you're behind & your grade drops.



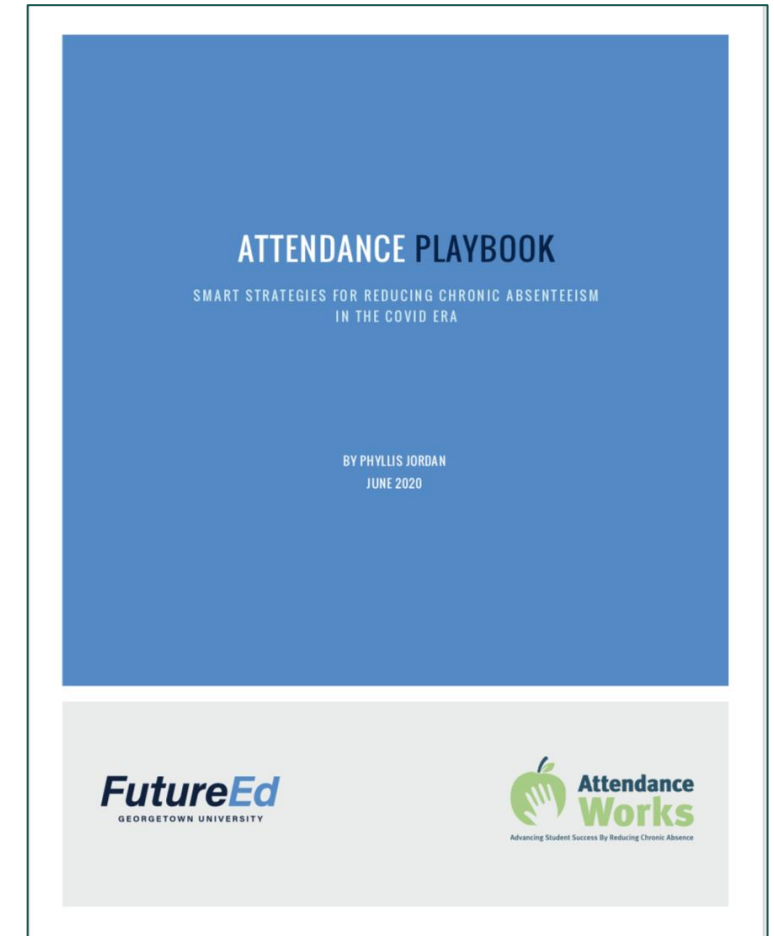
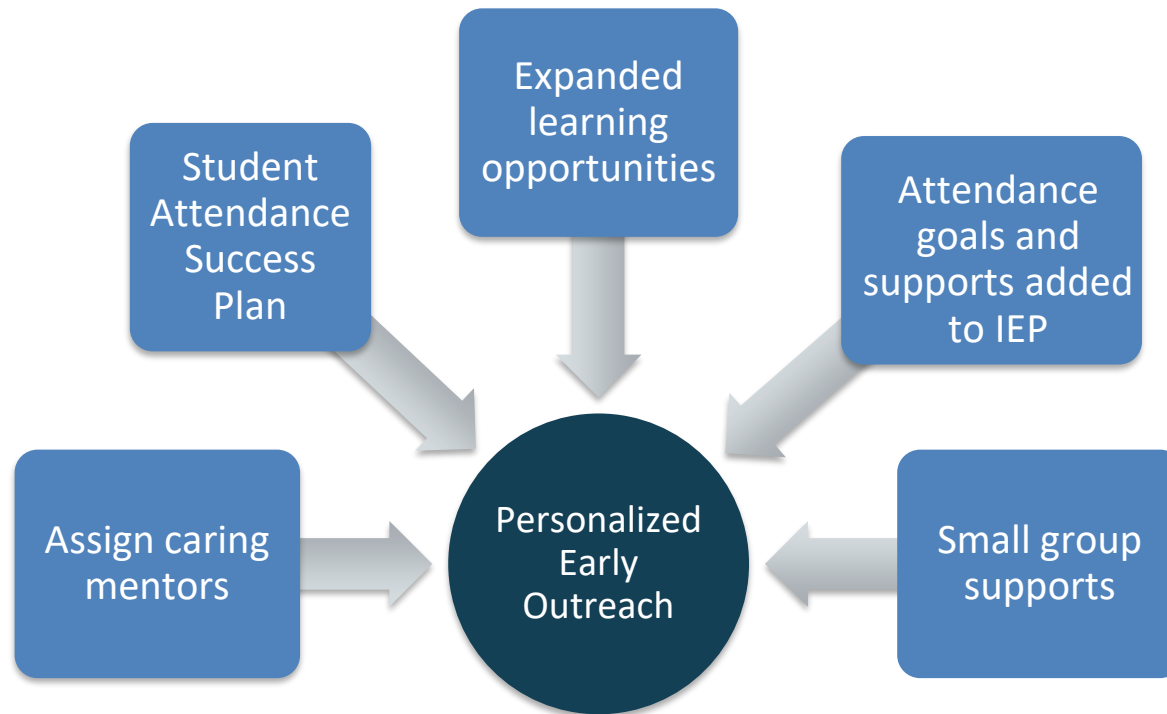
Addressing Reasons for Absences



<https://vimeo.com/260324362>



Tier 2: Early Intervention Strategies



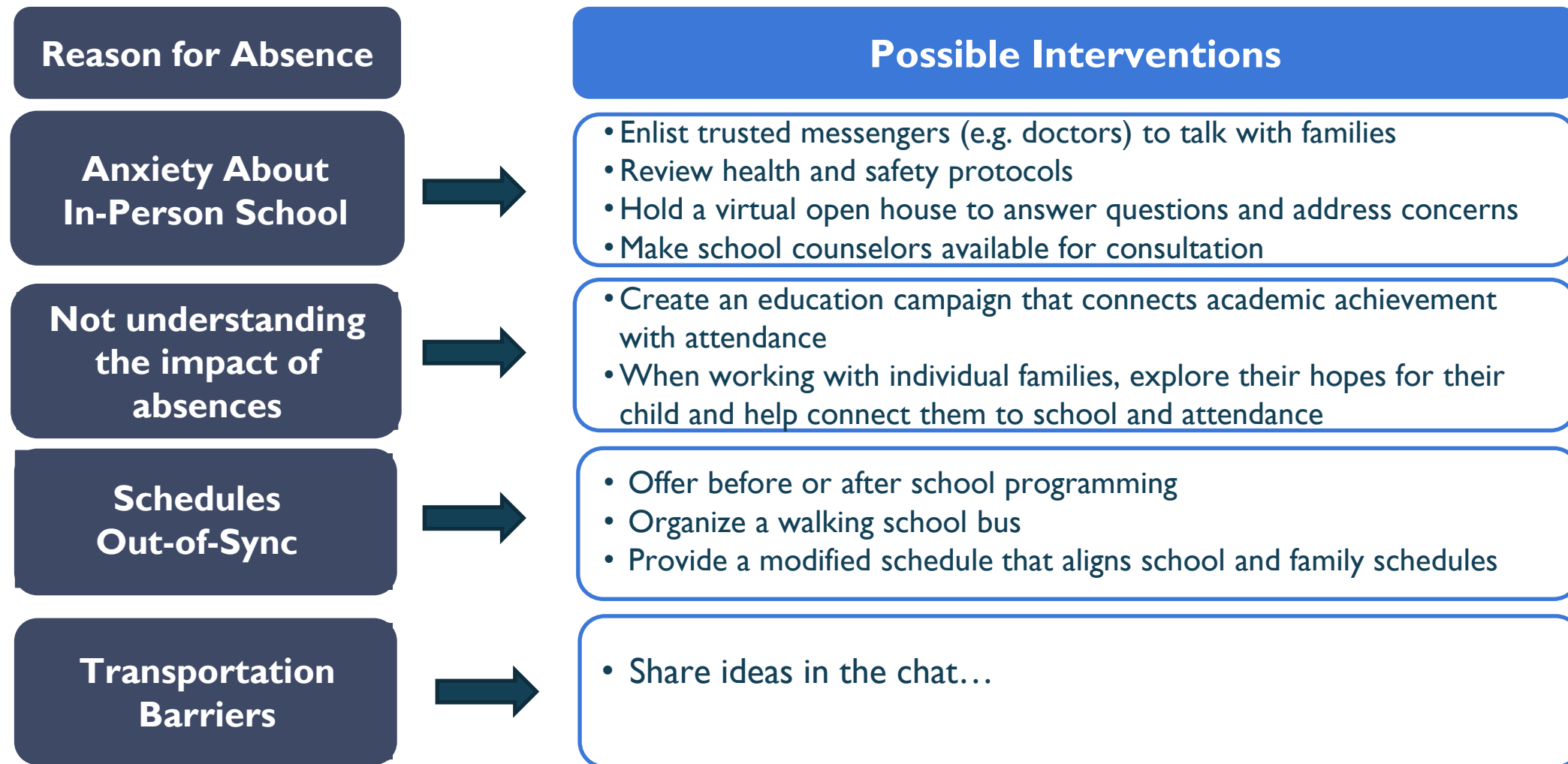


How to Use the Attendance Playbook

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

Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences





Questions from the Audience





Review: *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



Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!



Hedy Chang, Founder and Executive Director

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Emma Herdean, Senior Fellow

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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

Appendix: Additional Resources

Map of School Teams



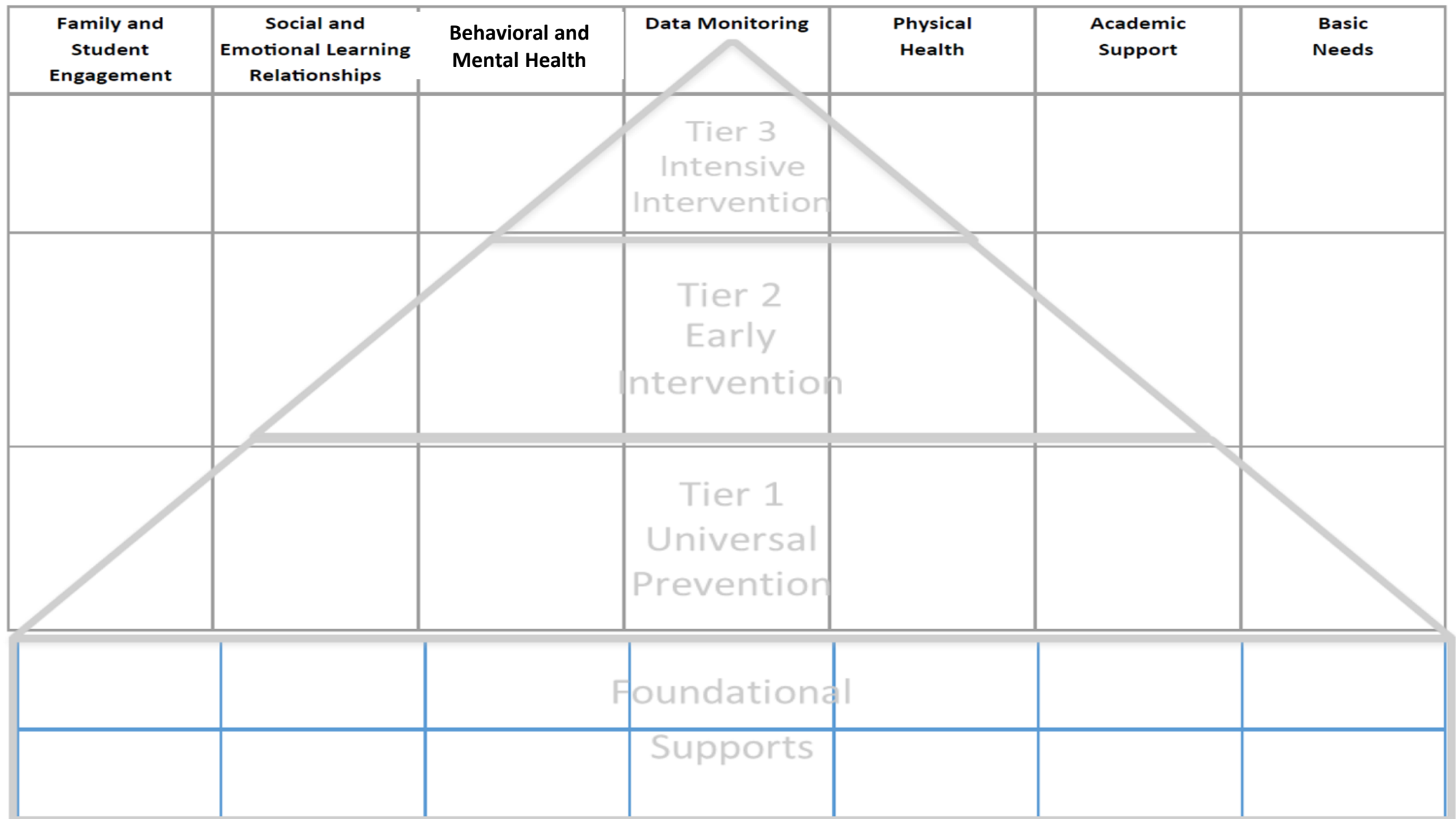
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sample form: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Summary-of-Actions-SAMPLE-FORM-rev-July-2021.pdf>

Number of Absences	Action(s)	People Responsible	Resources to Support Action(s)	Documentation <i>What was the reason for the absence, and what intervention or support was offered?</i>
0	Welcome Letter Welcome Video on website	School secretary Principal and person who updates the school website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to resources, e.g. District letter that can be personalized by principal / school team AW Flyers AW Student Success Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add contacts from Student Success Plan to family contact information form.
1-2	Call Home	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call Script 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log in Student Screen on SIS Track and monitor in case management system
3-4	Call Home	School Counselor or Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call Script Documentation of Reasons https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log in Student Screen on SIS Note reasons for absence and any supports or interventions needed. Track and monitor in case management system
5	Family Meeting	Principal or other School Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard agenda for family meeting Student Success Plan List of resources Form for taking notes and follow up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use district form for family meeting Attach

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/>