



Session 3:

Partnering to Make a Difference



Professional Learning Series

February 24, 2022



Welcome!



Molly Balfe
Senior Fellow



Cecelia Leong
Vice President of Programs



Three E-Learning Sessions

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

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



Welcome!

If you wish to review Session 2, please take a look at the slides, list of materials and the recording.

- ❖ [Recording: Session 2, Group C](#)
- ❖ [Presentation slides](#)
- ❖ [Outline & Summary of Resources](#)



Getting Started: Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name, role, community, and state
- ✓ A key community partner for engaging students in school



Poll

What has been most valuable to you from the first 2 classes?
(check all that apply)

- The key functions of an attendance team
- Taking a multi-tiered approach to reducing absenteeism beginning with prevention
- Effective communication strategies
- Expanded measures of attendance
- Identifying root causes of absenteeism
- The 5 Whys
- Other (*type in chat*)



Pop Quiz

1. Early intervention begins when students miss 20% of school. *(True or False)*
2. There are many factors affecting student attendance. *(True or False)*
3. Schools must form a stand-alone attendance team. *(True or False)*
4. You matter! *(True or False)*



Learning Goals for Session 3

Participants will:

- Learn strategies for mobilizing school staff and community agencies to partner with families to improve attendance and engagement.
- Find out about how to determine if your efforts are making a difference



Session 2

- 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 factors and strategies that affect attendance.**

Session 3

- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.**
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.**

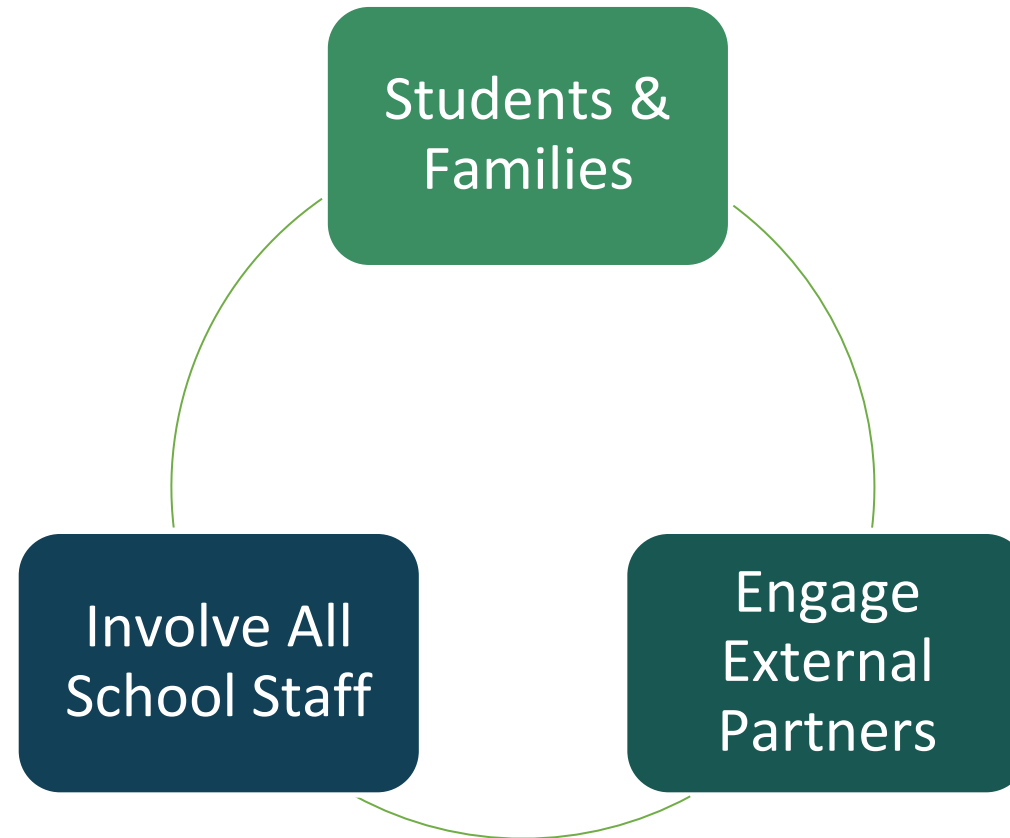
Team Function #4:

Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance





Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance



We All Have a Role



<https://vimeo.com/230451908>



Team Self-Assessment

Sample question #1

Our entire school staff has bought into an “all hands on deck” approach to attendance.

- Strongly in Place
- Measurable Progress
- Needs Improvement
- Urgent Gap

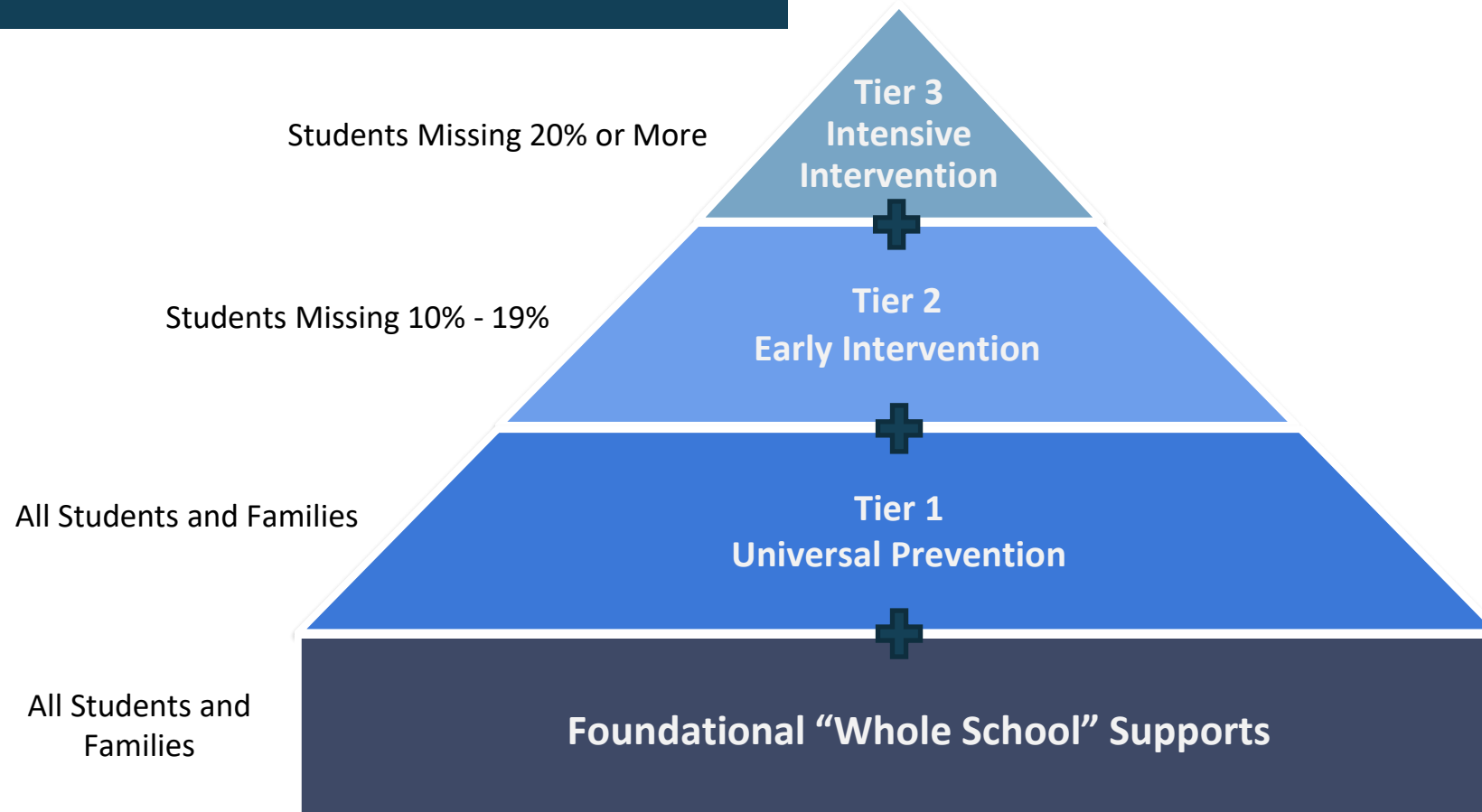
School Team Self-Assessment tool: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>

Mobilize the Community: *Involve All School Staff in Caring Conversations*





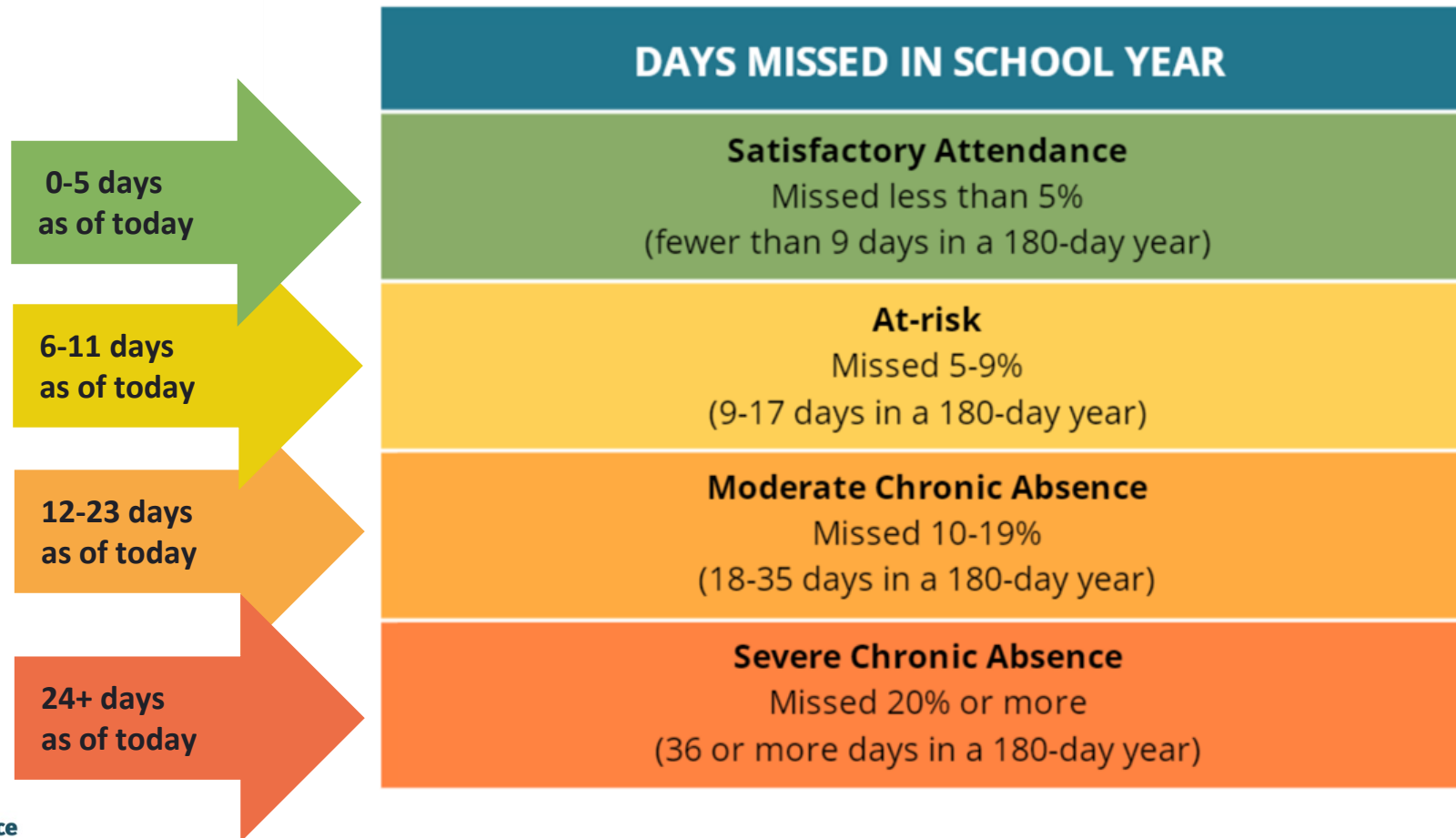
When Tackling Absenteeism, Begin with Whole School and Prevention Strategies





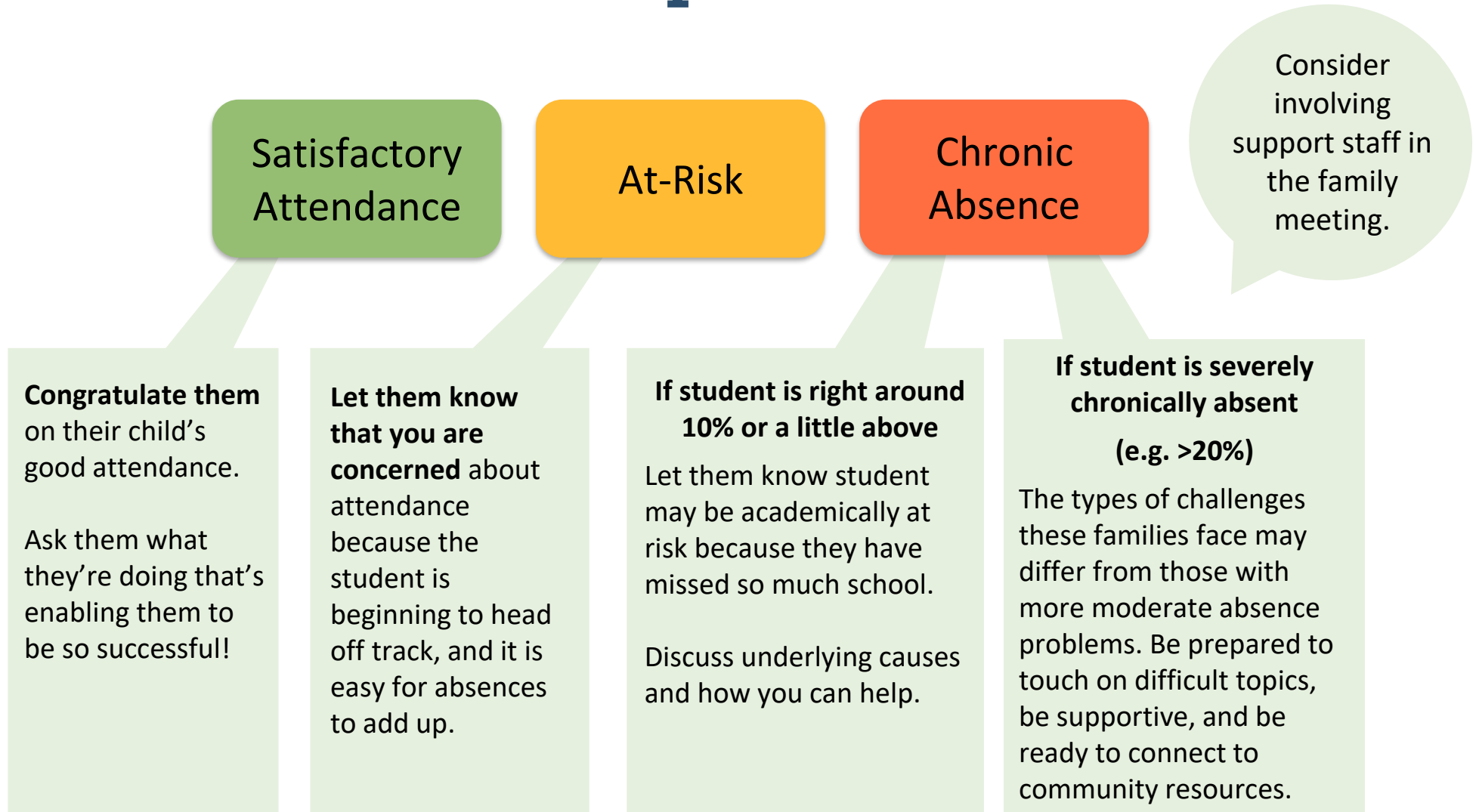
How to Identify Students' Attendance Status

Chat: How many days of school can a student miss in a single school year and sustain satisfactory attendance?



Calculating Student Attendance Rate:
$$\frac{\text{Total days of Attendance}}{\text{Total days of membership}}$$

Tailor Conversations to Students' Attendance and Participation Level





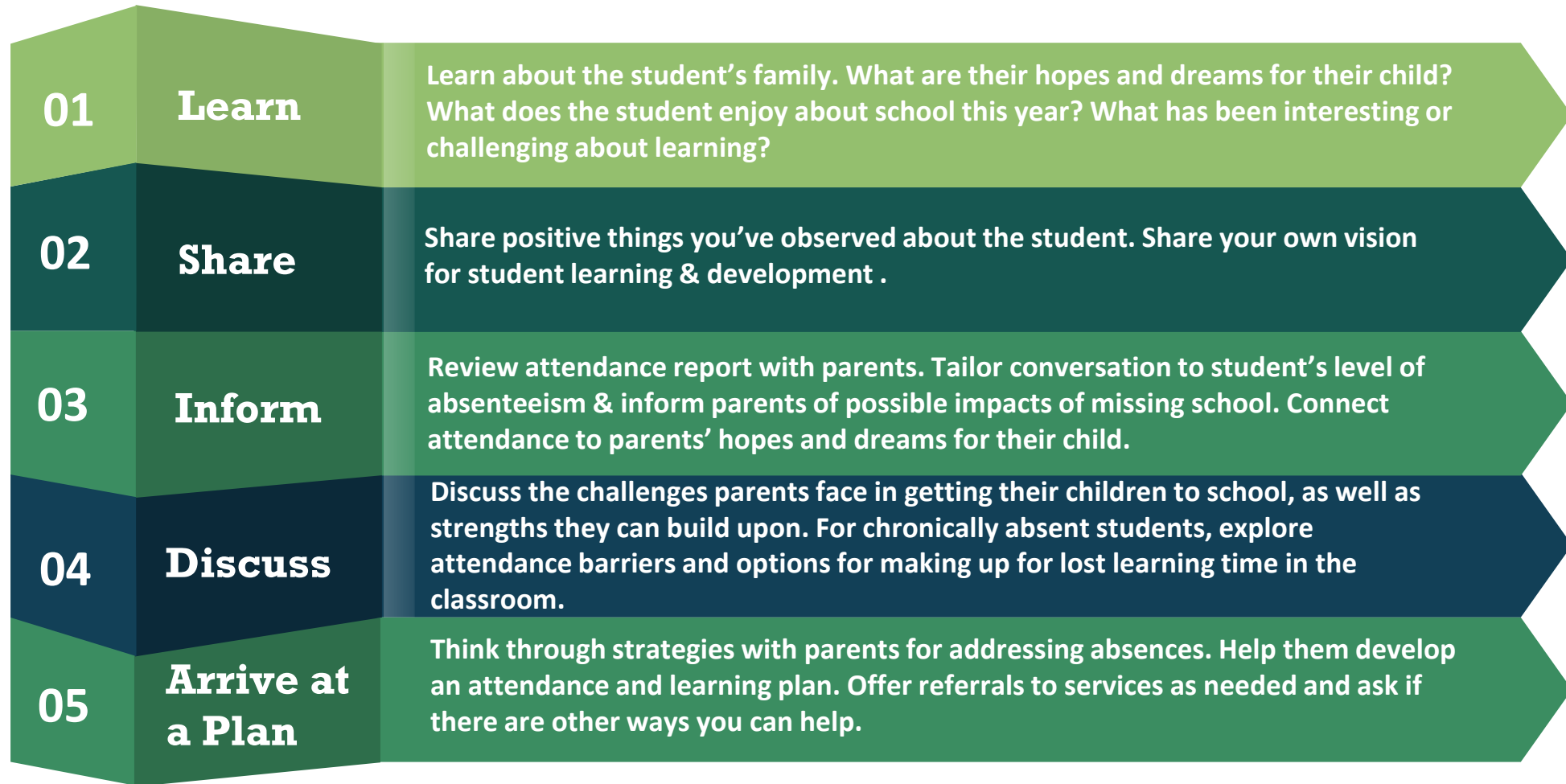
Reflection

We've all had the experience of conversations going poorly when trying to broach a sensitive subject. Take a moment and reflect...

- When this happened
- Why the conversation went badly
- What could have helped

Please share your thoughts in chat.

The “Caring Conversations for Attendance” Process



Adapted with permission from materials created by © High Expectations Parental Service, 2011



Steps 1 & 2: Learn and Share

Share in Chat:

1. What excellent questions can you ask to learn about a student's family?
2. What are some positive observations about a student you might share with the student or family?

01

Learn

Learn about the student's family. What are their hopes and dreams for their child? What does the student enjoy about school this year? What has been interesting or challenging about learning?

02

Share

Share positive things you've observed about the student. Share your own vision for student learning & development.



Step 3: Inform

03

Inform

Review attendance and participation report with parents. Tailor conversation to student’s level of absenteeism & inform parents of possible impacts of missing school. Connect attendance to parents’ hopes and dreams for their child.

1. Show absences marked on a school calendar
2. Identify patterns
3. Share what key concepts a student missed relating back to the hopes and dreams that the student or parents shared

2021-2022 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

September 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



Step 4: Discuss

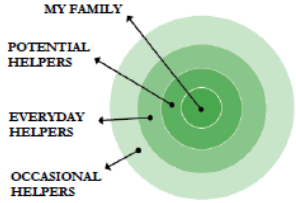
04

Discuss

Discuss the challenges parents face in getting their children to participate at school or from home, as well as strengths they can build upon. For chronically absent students, explore attendance barriers and options for making up for lost learning time in the classroom.

1. Learn about student motivations.
2. Discuss reasons for absenteeism.
3. Explore what would help reduce absences and increase engagement.
4. Identify opportunities to make up for lost learning in the classroom.
5. Use help bank to identify support systems.

MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK
CREATE BACKUP PLANS FOR GETTING TO SCHOOL



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 your child 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: _____




Step 5: Arrive at a Plan

05

Arrive at a Plan

Think through strategies with parents for addressing absences including difficulties in participating online or completing schoolwork. Work with them to develop a plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you or others can help.

1. Work with the family to identify specific steps that will help to prevent absenteeism in the future.
2. Develop and complete a plan for attendance and learning
3. Ensure that the plan includes any support that the school will offer as well
4. Provide a copy of the plan to the student/parent
5. Agree on a timeline to check in and see how things are progressing


© Attendance Works

MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS AND HELP MY CHILD GAIN THE SKILLS TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL AND TO READ BY 3RD GRADE.

- Keep an attendance chart at home to track absences. Consider using the attached calendar.
- At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending preschool every day with _____ (i.e., a visit to the park, a new book, a special treat, a hug, etc.)
- Make sure my child is in bed by _____ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- Find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to or from preschool if I can't. I can list who can help on the Help Bank (attached).
- Set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after preschool.
- If my child has a slight stomachache, headache or allergies, and is not sick with a contagious illness including Covid-19, I will send my child to school. I will call the school or a health provider for advice if my child complains regularly.

To improve _____'s attendance, I commit to the following:

- _____
- _____


To improve _____'s attendance, the program commits to:

- _____
- _____

We will review progress to meet this goal in one month.

Family Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Signature: _____ Date: _____

 To learn more, please visit www.attendanceworks.org
Adapted from materials created by Early Works at East Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Oregon (<http://www.dklbnet.org/connections/early-works/>)



Chat Reflection

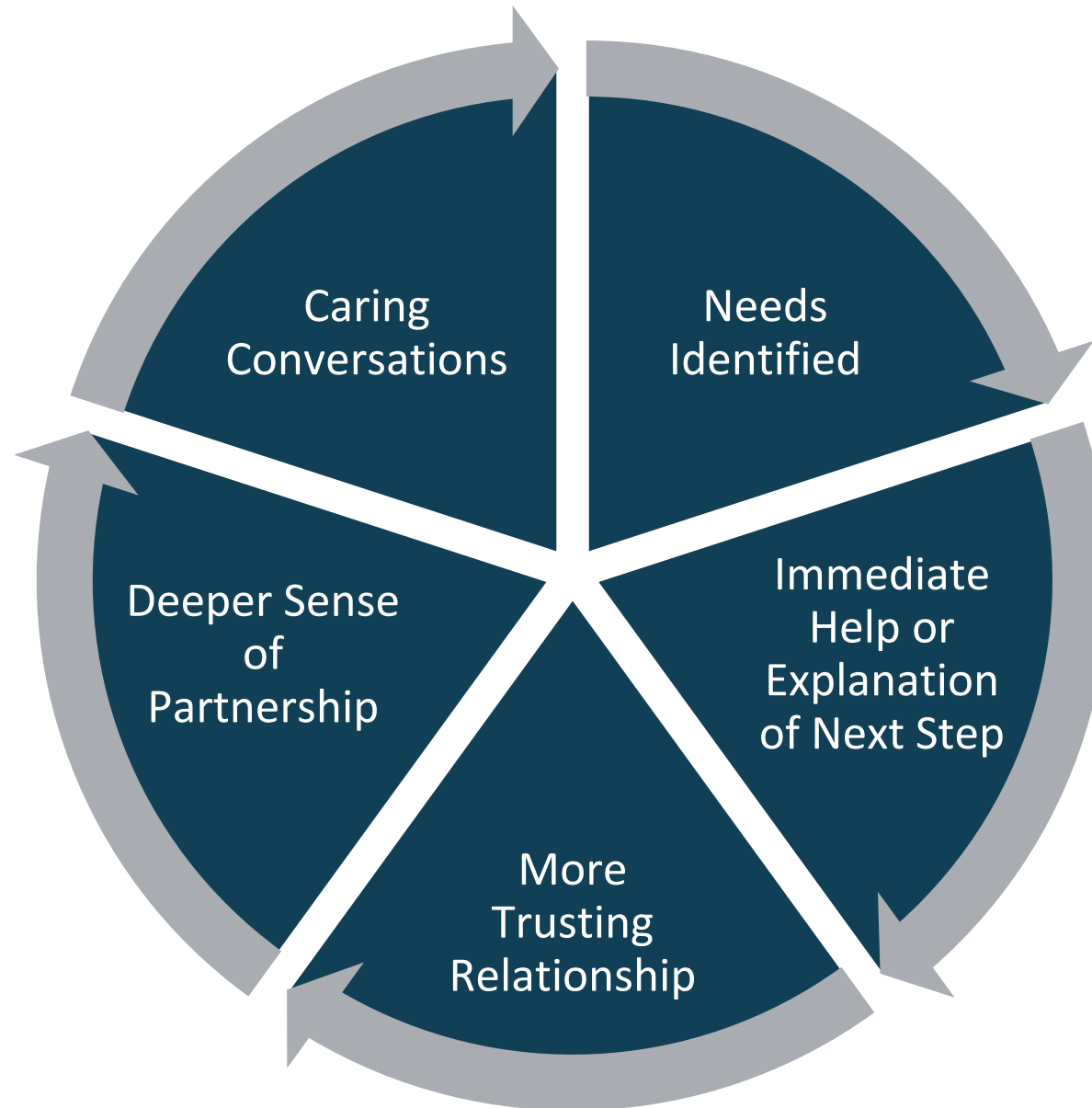
**Who in your school community
could benefit from learning about
Caring Conversations?**

Caring Conversations Professional Development Resources

	Key Points	Questions and Messages
1. Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information • Ask open-ended, supportive questions 	<i>What is your vision for <u>student's</u> future? (ask parent and student)</i>
2. Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive observations about student so far • What you want students to accomplish this year • One goal is helping students acquire good habit of attendance 	<i>_____ is such a good listener. We love having her (you) in our class.</i>
3. Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress you've seen (start positive) • Areas where child is struggling • Review report card & update parents on child's attendance • Deliver appropriate attendance messages 	<p><i>_____ is excelling at math! and is making progress with reading. Reading remains the area that needs work.</i></p> <p><i>_____ has been late five times and has missed two days during this first month of school. Absences impede reading and overall learning progress.</i></p>
4. Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges, attendance barriers • Learning at home activities • How to stay connected 	<p><i>What makes it hard for _____ to get to school?</i></p> <p><i>What helps ____ catch up on learning given their absences?</i></p>
5. Ask & Arrive at a Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any questions? • Is there anything you can do to support a partnership between home and school? • Make referrals to community resources 	<p><i>What questions do you have?</i></p> <p><i>How can I help you?</i></p> <p><i>Would it help you to work with...?</i></p>

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caring-Conversation-Worksheet-2-16-22.docx>

The Cycle of Effective Relationship Building



Listening to Parents

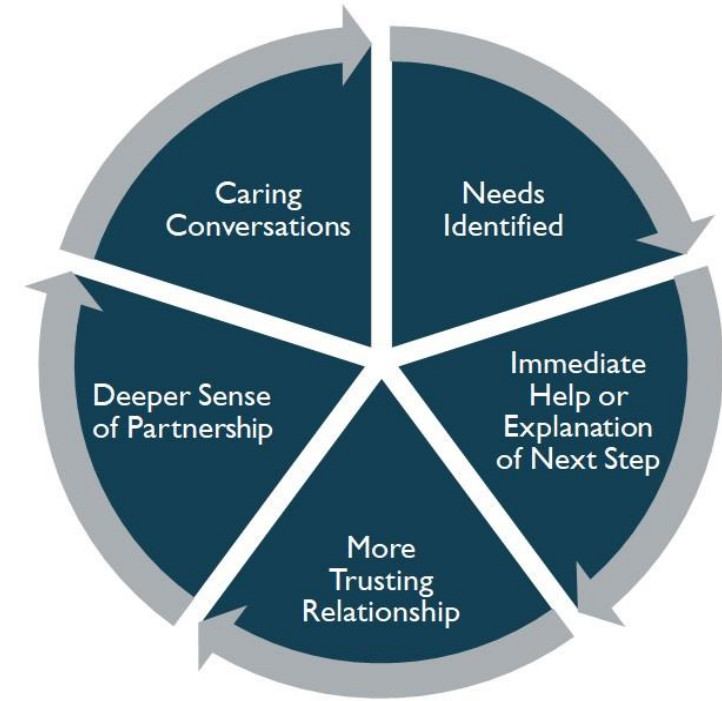


Lorri Hobson, Director of Attendance
Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) in Cleveland, Ohio

<https://youtu.be/f93RjyYvHb0>



Let's Chat



Type in chat:

- What might cause the cycle to break down?
- What can school teams do to keep it going?

Mobilize the Community: Engage Partners





School Self-Assessment

Sample Question #2

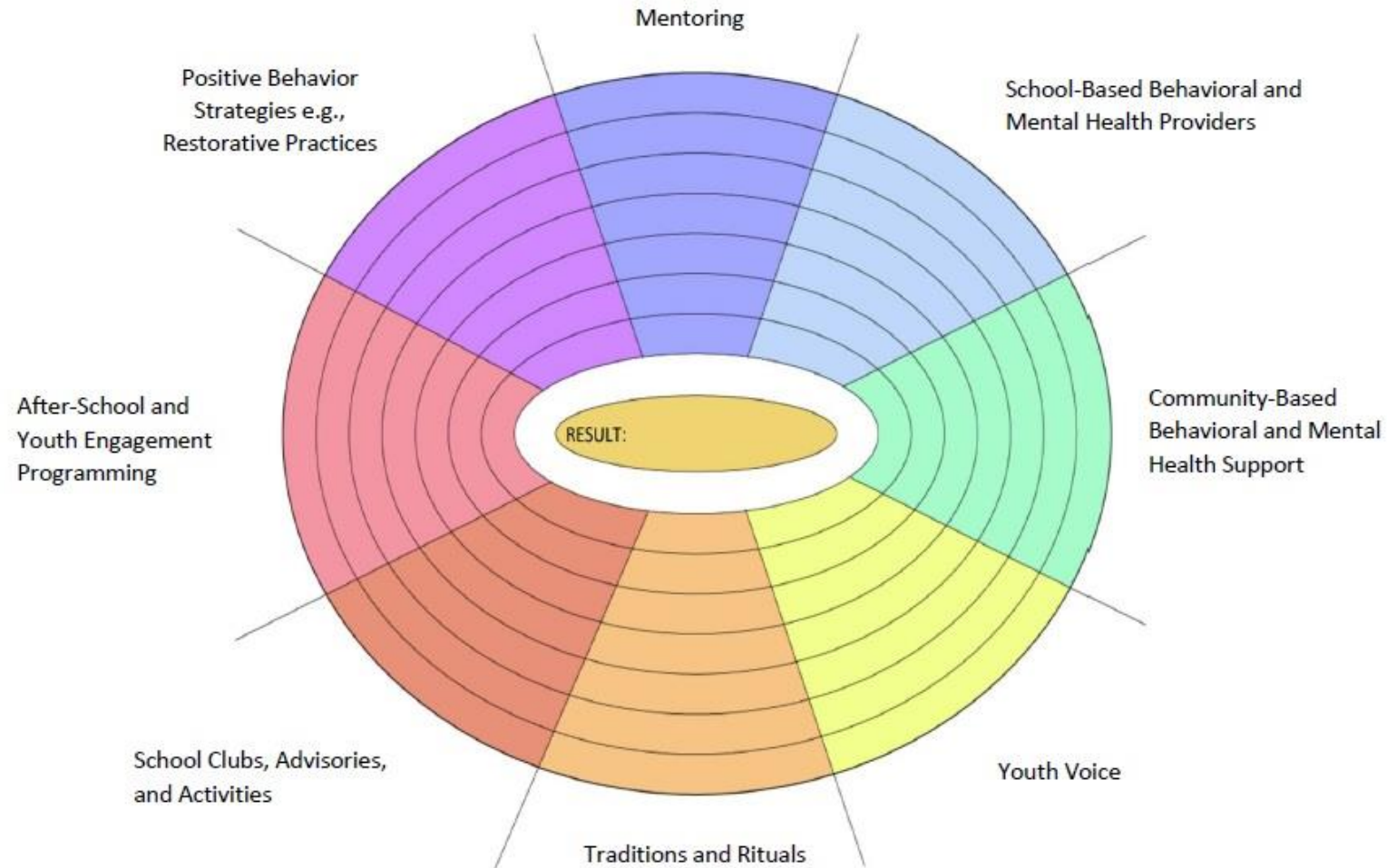
Community partners and public agencies are partners in providing support to students and families in my school.

- Strongly in Place
- Measurable Progress
- Needs Improvement
- Urgent Gap

School Team Self-Assessment tool: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>

Assess and Expand Mental, Behavioral, Relational and Emotional Supports

Results in the Center



©Jolie Bain Pillsbury

Theory of Aligned Contributions Results in the Center Chart



Partners for Change

The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important. Tap into existing initiatives and coalitions to engage potential partners.

- Businesses
- Community Schools Initiatives
- Family Support Organizations
- Early Childhood Providers
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Health / Mental Health Providers
- Housing Agencies
- Hunger Relief Organizations
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Local / Tribal Governments
- National Service / Volunteers / Mentors
- Out of School Time providers
- Social Emotional Learning Providers
- Social Services
- Population-Specific Service or Civic Organizations
- Philanthropy (including foundations and United Ways)

Breakout Groups: Asset Mapping

1. What assets do we have in place to support students, families and staff's mental, behavioral, and social & emotional needs?
2. How are they helping students stay connected and engaged in learning?

Report out:

Share one helpful idea for providing additional support to students and families that you heard in your Small Group.



Ground Rules

- Turn on your video camera
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak (and use the chat to express ideas)
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter “A” should facilitate.

Small group handout: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Results-in-the-Center-worksheet-v2.pdf>



Report Out

Share one helpful idea for providing additional support to students and families that you heard in your Small Group.



Think Abouts:


*When assessing assets,
consider these questions...*

- ✓ Do we have expertise in our building?
- ✓ What additional resources are needed to expand existing support?
- ✓ Are there untapped resources in people or programs?
- ✓ What policy changes are necessary to expand existing support?

School Community and External Partners

- ❖ Use this worksheet to help keep track of your partners
- ❖ Be sure to update the list on a regular basis

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/List-of-Partners-2.16-22.docx>



Partners

School _____ District _____

Primary School / District Contact
 Name _____ Title/Position: _____
 Email: _____ Phone _____

Name of Partner	Contact Info. <small>(name, email, phone)</small>	What is being provided?	Who is being served?	Time Period of Partnership	Who established this partnership? <small>(name, email, phone)</small>	Last updated on <small>(mm/dd/yy)*</small>
<i>EXAMPLE: Springfield County Food Bank</i>	<i>name, email, phone#</i>	<i>food</i>	<i>all students</i>	<i>SY 2021-2022</i>	<i>name, email, phone#</i>	<i>8/1/21</i>

*Update the information for each partner at least annually.

Team Function #5:

Determine if you are making a difference





Measuring Progress

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 for the students who received support?
4. What was the impact on the school as a whole?



PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students

Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Testers: **Counselors**

Test Title: **Lunch Buddies**

Cycle #: **1**

What change idea is being tested?

Lunch Buddies is the change idea. Counselors will invite students who seem disconnected to eat lunch and meet with peers in small groups every Friday.

Date of test: February 25, 2022

(After the first attempt, review the data, discuss and make modifications to increase outcomes for the next week. Use a new form every week to record results.)

What is the overall goal of this test?

Improve attendance for students who seem to be disconnected and who have missed between 10-19% of the school year. Students who feel more connected to their peers will have better attendance. Selected students will have fewer total absences on the day of the test than on the previous Friday as a result of feeling more connected to peers.

Driver:

Positive Peer Relationships

Learning Questions: What do you hope to learn from this test?

Q1 - Are counselors willing to support this intervention?

Q2 - Which students will show up?

Q3 - Does attendance improve on Fridays?

Q4 - Are there any spillover effects, i.e. does attendance improve the other days of the week?

PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students

Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan				
Plan		Do	Study	
Details: What are the steps in the test? Who will implement it?	Predictions: Make a prediction for each question. Not optional.	Data you will collect	Briefly describe: what happened during the test, surprises, difficulty getting data, obstacles, successes, etc.	What were the results? Comment on your predictions in the rows below. Were they correct? Record any data summaries as well.
1. Recruit counselors	Q1 - Prediction - All counselors are willing to help	Attendance of counselors	We had four counselors and 24 students. The students were split into groups of six. There was a miscommunication and the special outreach to chronically absent students did not happen.	All but one of the counselors showed up. She was out sick.
2. Select outdoor or well-ventilated location where groups can sit in a circle	Q2 - Prediction - Students who have satisfactory attendance and at-risk attendance will show up. Some students who are chronically absent will show up.	List of students who participate each Friday sorted into attendance categories.		Of the students who were invited, half showed up. Only about a quarter of the chronically absent students made it
3. Agree on conversation starters				
4. Invite all students	Q3 - Does attendance improve on Fridays?	Compare the total number of absences for targeted students on this Friday with the total number of absences for targeted students on previous Friday.		Yes, several of the chronically absent students who attended the lunch had been absent the previous Friday.
5. Special outreach to students who are chronically absent				
6. Note which students attended after each session	Q4 - Are there any spillover effects?	Compare the total number of absences on the following Monday with previous Mondays.		The Monday absences were the same as the previous week.

PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students

Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Act: Describe modifications and/or decisions for the next PDSA cycle. What will you do next?

Adapt (tweak the process and try again)

Adopt (make this my standard process)

Expand (try this for a longer period of time)

Abandon (go to a new change idea)

- Ask our community school coordinator to be the backup in case anyone is out
- Ask students who attended to invite one friend to join next time.
- We will text every student with a reminder to attend
- Expand and repeat for the next two weeks.

- Download the example: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-EXAMPLE-v2.pdf>
- Download the blank worksheet: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-BLANK-v1.pdf>



Questions from the Audience





Review: *Learning Goals for Session 3*

Participants will:

- Learn strategies for mobilizing school staff and community agencies to partner with families to improve attendance and engagement.
- Find out about how to determine if your efforts are making a difference



Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!



Cecelia Leong, Vice President for Programs

cecelia@attendanceworks.org

Molly Balfe, Senior Fellow

molly@attendanceworks.org





About Us

Attendance Works advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

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

Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's "go-to" resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: www.attendanceworks.org



Tips for Finding and Re-Engaging Students

- Update contact information multiple times a year
- Use multiple modes of outreach (text, US mail, calls)
- Try various media (social, radio, multiple languages, trusted messengers)
- Leverage personal and social networks
- School marquees and sign boards
- Engage public and private partners
- Home visits

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>



Chronic Absence Surveys

A variety of surveys to help track reasons for chronic absence

- ❖ For in-person, blended or virtual school
- ❖ Designed for parents and secondary students (6th-12th 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.^{1,2} 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 (6th-12th 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>

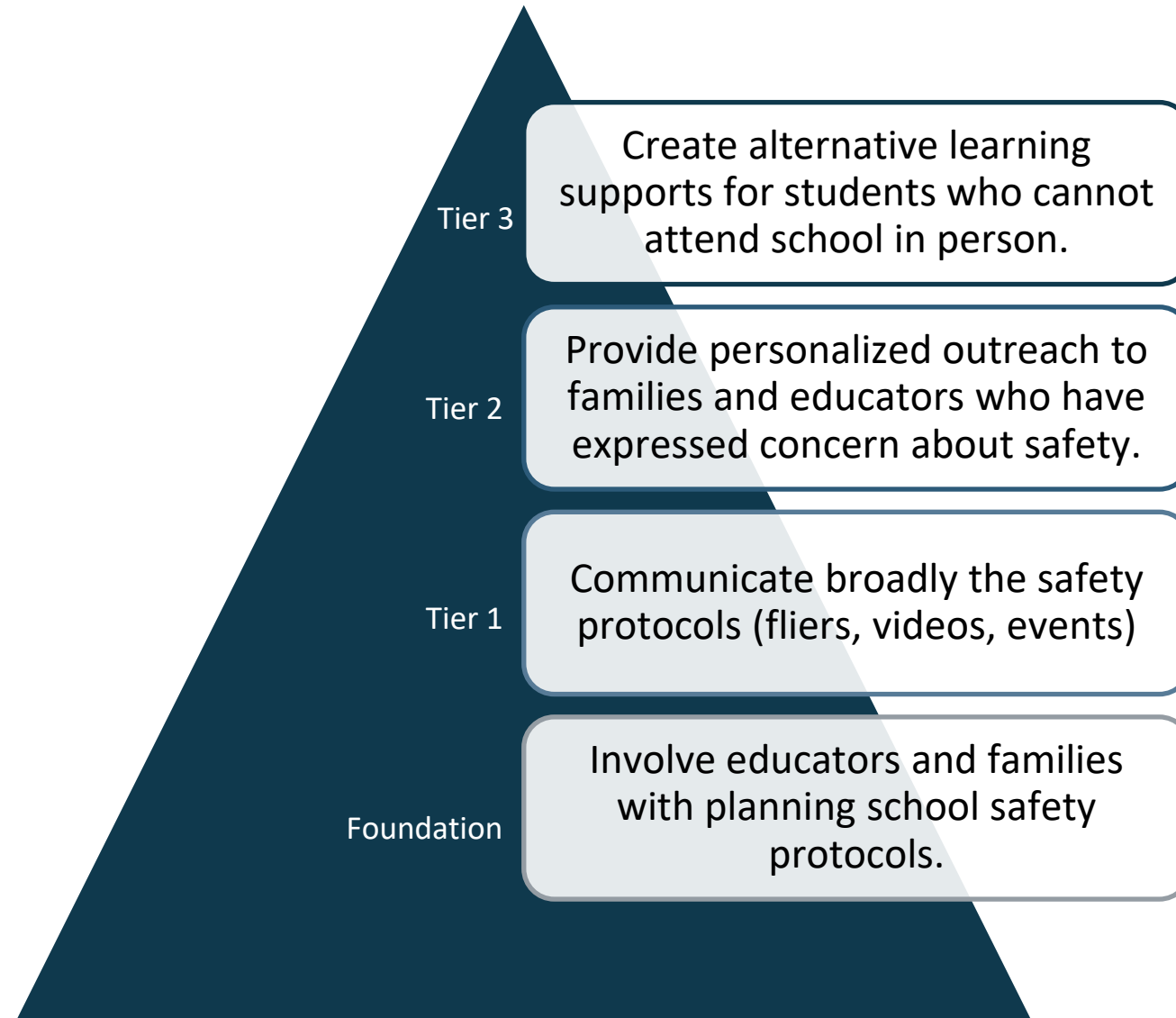


How to Use the Attendance Playbook

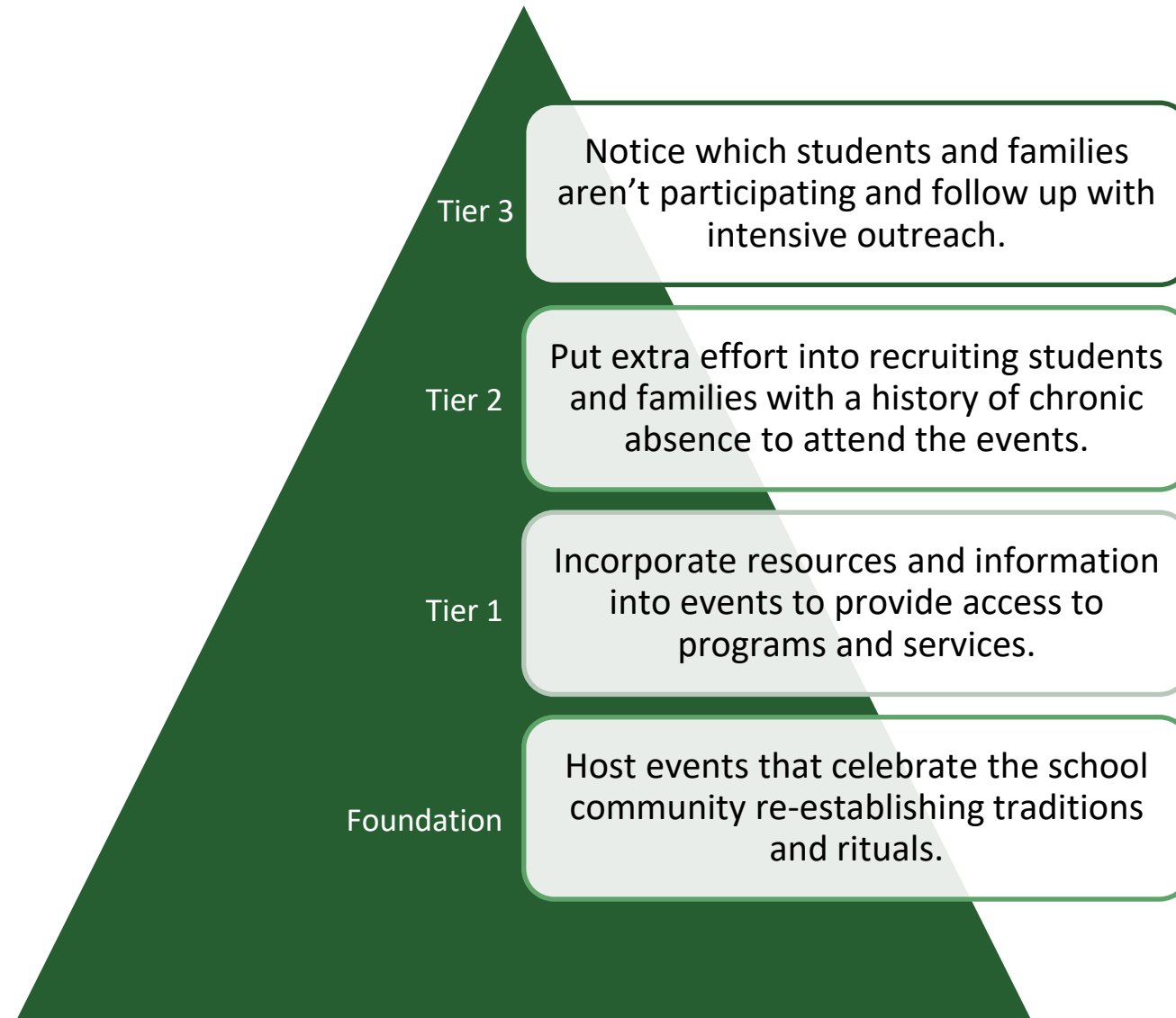
The Guide to the Attendance Playbook offers practical tips for:

- 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

Example: Taking an MTSS Approach to Involving the School Community in Health and Safety Protocols



Example: Taking an MTSS Approach to School Celebrations



Example: Taking an MTSS Approach to Pro-Social Emotional and Behavioral Development

