



Ensuring an Equal Opportunity To Learn By Reducing Chronic Absence





About Us

Attendance Works is a non-profit initiative that advances student success by reducing chronic absence. Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's “go to” resource for student attendance with more than a quarter million users of our website (www.attendanceworks.org)

We work at the local, state and national level – with each level of practice informing and influencing the other.

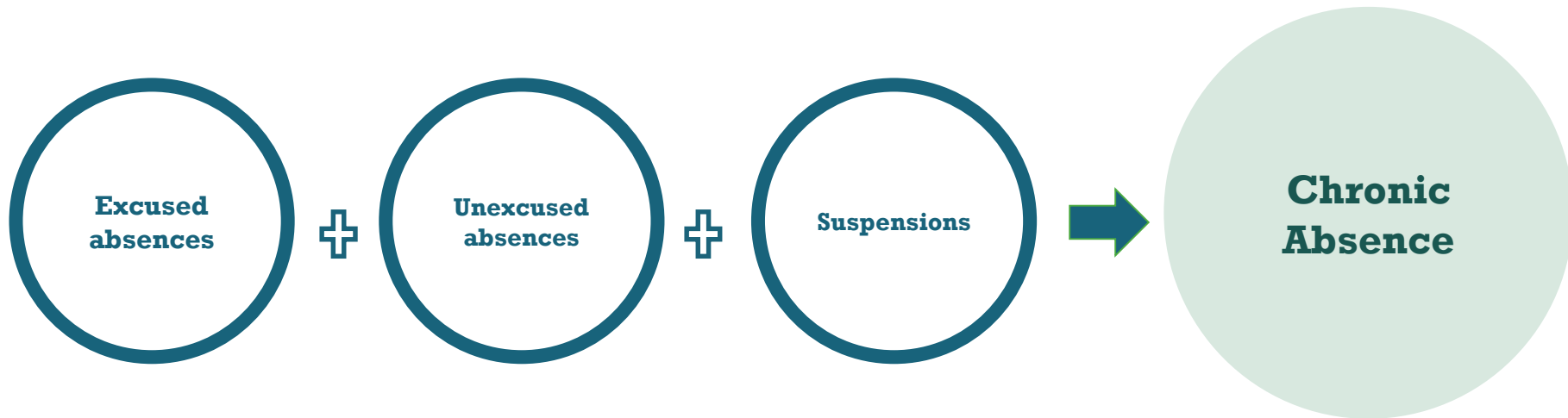
Our cross-cutting objectives are to:

- a. Promote meaningful and effective communications
- b. Nurture proven and promising practice
- c. Advance better policy
- d. Catalyze needed research



What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Attendance Works recommends defining it as **missing 10% 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).



Multiple Measures of Attendance

Average Daily Attendance

How many students show up to school every day? The percent of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.

Truancy

Who is missing school without permission? Typically refers only to unexcused absences. Each state has the authority to define truancy and when it triggers legal intervention.

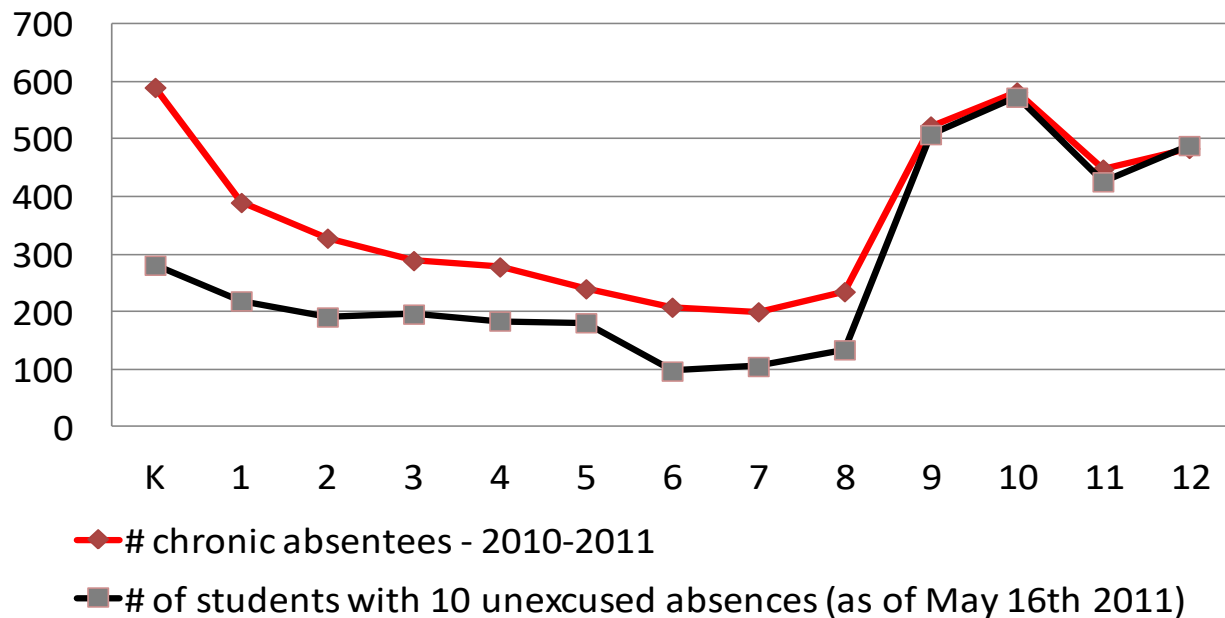
Chronic Absence

Who is missing so much school they are academically at risk? Many researchers and growing number of states define it as missing 10% of school for any reason. OCR currently defines it as missing 15 days. Chronic absence is a required reporting metric and an optional measure for school improvement in ESSA.



Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

**Number of students missing 10% versus 10 unexcused absences
(San Francisco Unified School District)**

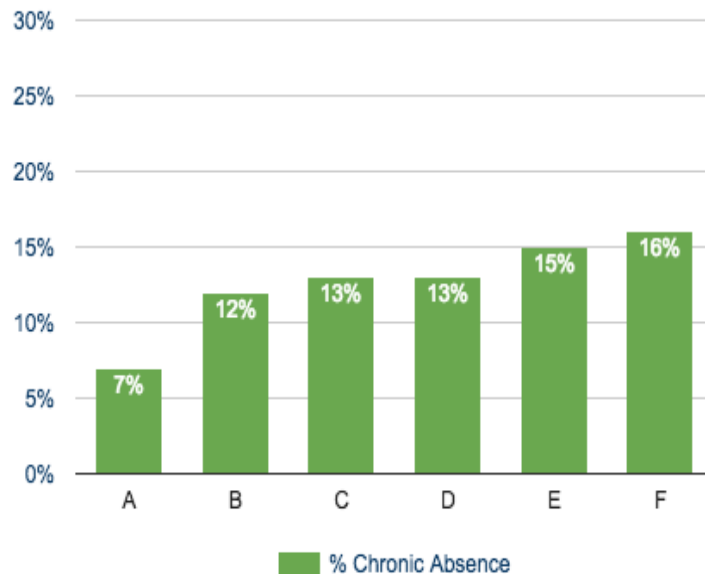




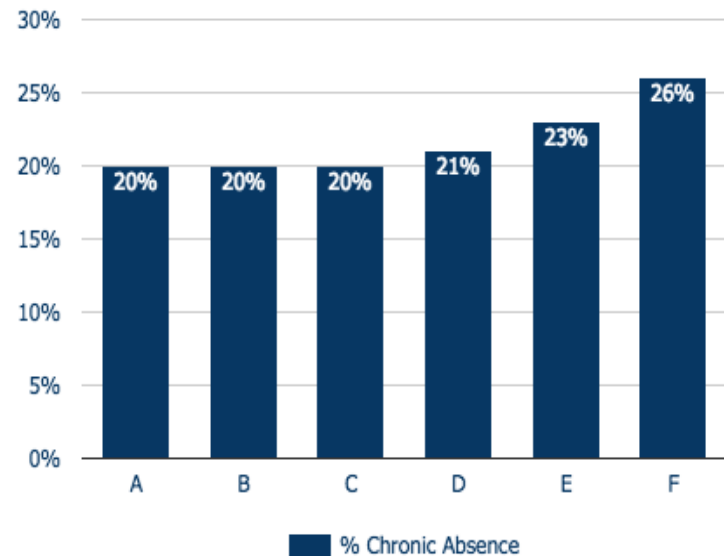
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% \neq A

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in
Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012



Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York
City with 90% ADA in 2011-12



98% ADA = little chronic absence

95% ADA = don't know

93% ADA = significant chronic absence



Chronic Absence is Easily Masked if We Only Monitor Missing Consecutive days

| September | | | | | October | | | | | November | | | | | December | | | | | January | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|----|---|---------|---|---|----|---|----------|---|---|----|---|----------|---|---|----|---|---------|---|---|----|---|
| M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | X | X | | | | | X | | | | X | | | X | X | | | | | X | X | X | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| February | | | | | March | | | | | April | | | | | May | | | | | June | | | | |
|----------|---|---|----|---|-------|---|---|----|---|-------|---|---|----|---|-----|---|---|----|---|------|---|---|----|---|
| M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F | M | T | W | TH | F |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = **As few as 2 days a month**



Reflects New Paradigm on Attendance

Truancy

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

Chronic Absence

- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days.
- Uses preventive strategies, positive messaging

Why Does Attendance Matter for Achievement?

What we know from research around the country





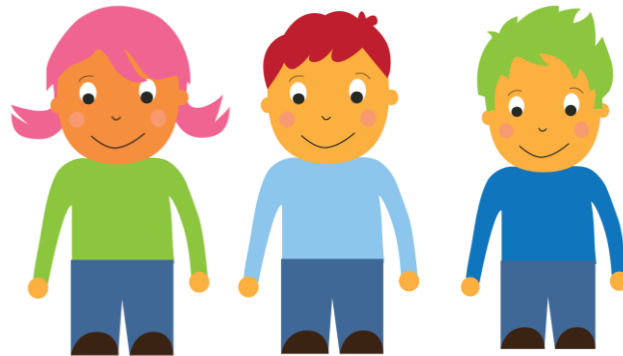
Improving Attendance Matters Because it Reflects:

Chronic absence is an essential alterable risk factor that can be addressed and systemically monitored.

- ✓ **Exposure to language:** Starting in Pre-K, attendance equals exposure to language-rich environments especially for low-income children.
- ✓ **Time on Task in Class:** Students only benefit from classroom instruction if they are in class.
- ✓ **On Track for Success:** Chronic absence is a proven early warning sign that a student is behind in reading by 3rd grade, failing courses middle and high school, and likely to drop-out.
- ✓ **College and Career Ready:** Cultivating the habit of regular attendance helps students develop the persistence needed to show up every day for college and work.
- ✓ **Engagement:** Attendance reflects engagement in learning.
- ✓ **Effective Practice:** Schools, communities and families can improve attendance when they work together.

(For research, see: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/>)

Illustrating the Gap

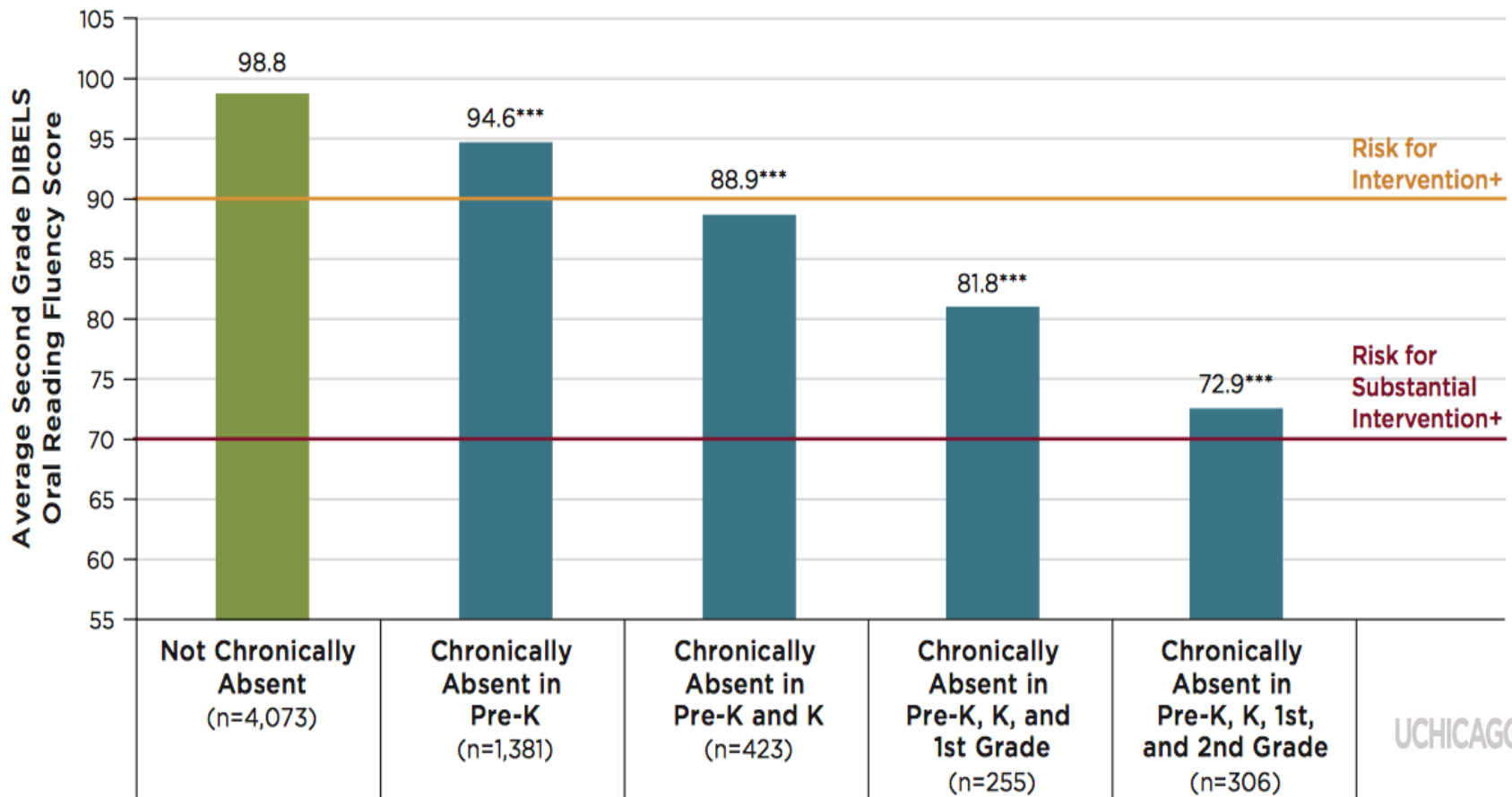


Instructions found on Bringing Attendance Home Toolkit

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-toolkit/>



Multiple Years of Chronic Absenteeism = High Risk for low 3rd Grade Reading Skills



Note: ***Indicates that scores are significantly different from scores of students who are never chronically absent, at $p < .001$ level. + In the DIBELS 6th Edition Assessment and Scoring Guide (Good & Kaminski, 2002), these are labeled as "Some Risk," indicating the need for additional intervention and "At Risk," indicating the need for substantial interventions.



Chronic Early Absence Connected to Poor Long- Term Academic Outcomes

Chronic absence in
kindergarten

Lower levels of
literacy in first grade

Lower achievement as
far out as fifth grade

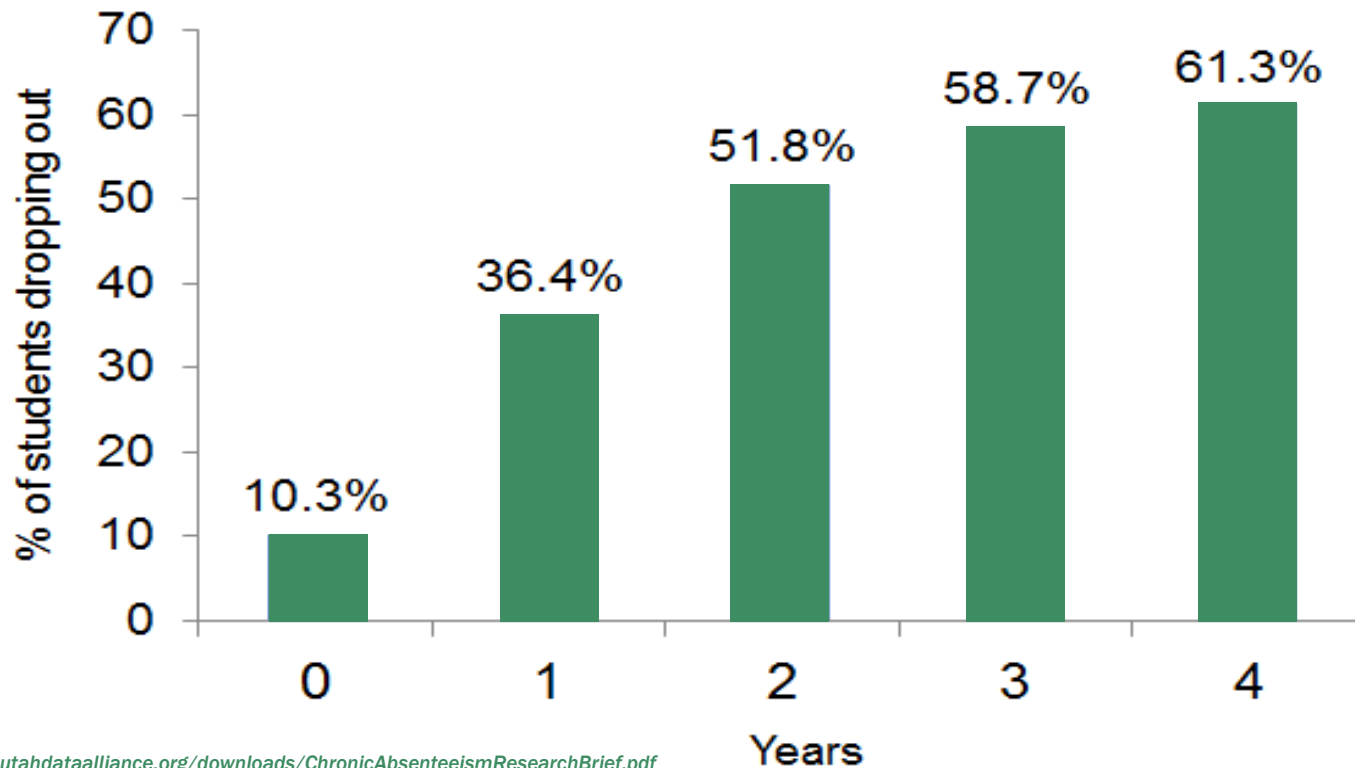
A Rhode Island Data Hub analysis found that compared to kindergartners who attend regularly, those chronically absent:

- Scored **20% lower in reading and math** in later grades and gap grows.
- **2X** as likely to be **retained** in grade.
- **2X** likely to be **suspended** by the end of 7th grade.
- Likely to continue being chronically absent.



The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates are Cumulative

Proportion of Students Dropping Out by Number of Years the Student was Chronically Absent from 8th-12th Grades



How Can We Address Chronic Absence?



This Is a Watershed Moment For Advancing The Work

No Child Left Behind

Success determined by academic standards.

Federal targets and interventions for schools; punitive system of responses.

Accountability and data for student sub-groups.

Each state defines and addresses truancy which typically emphasizes court based, punitive, interventions.

Every Student Succeeds Act

Success determined by academic & nonacademic standards.

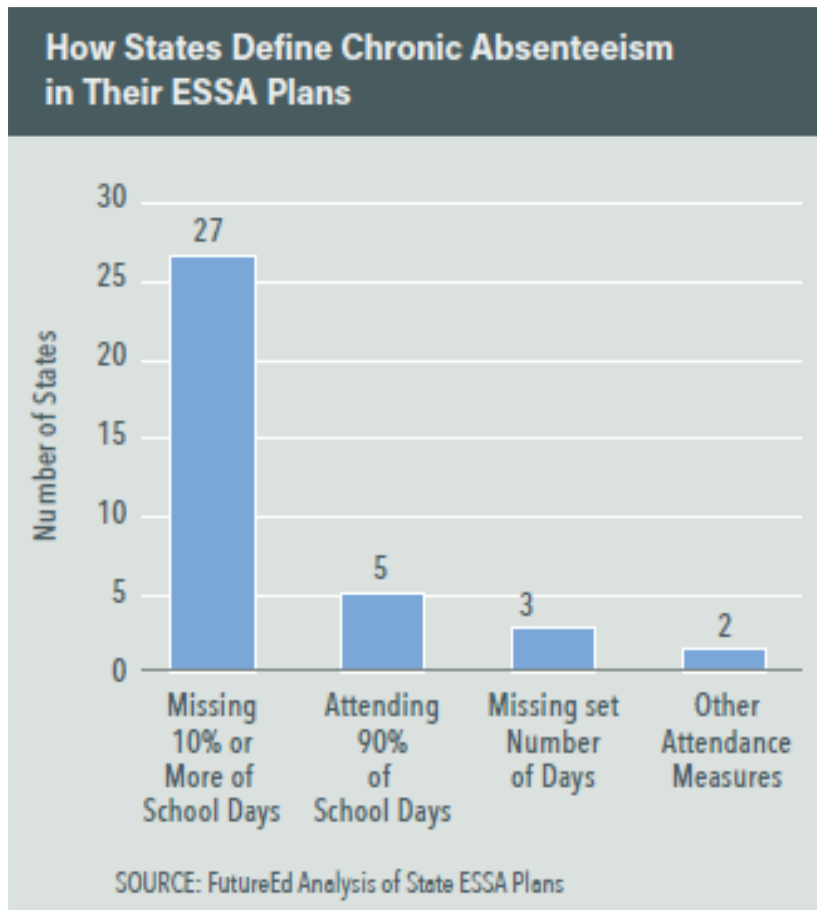
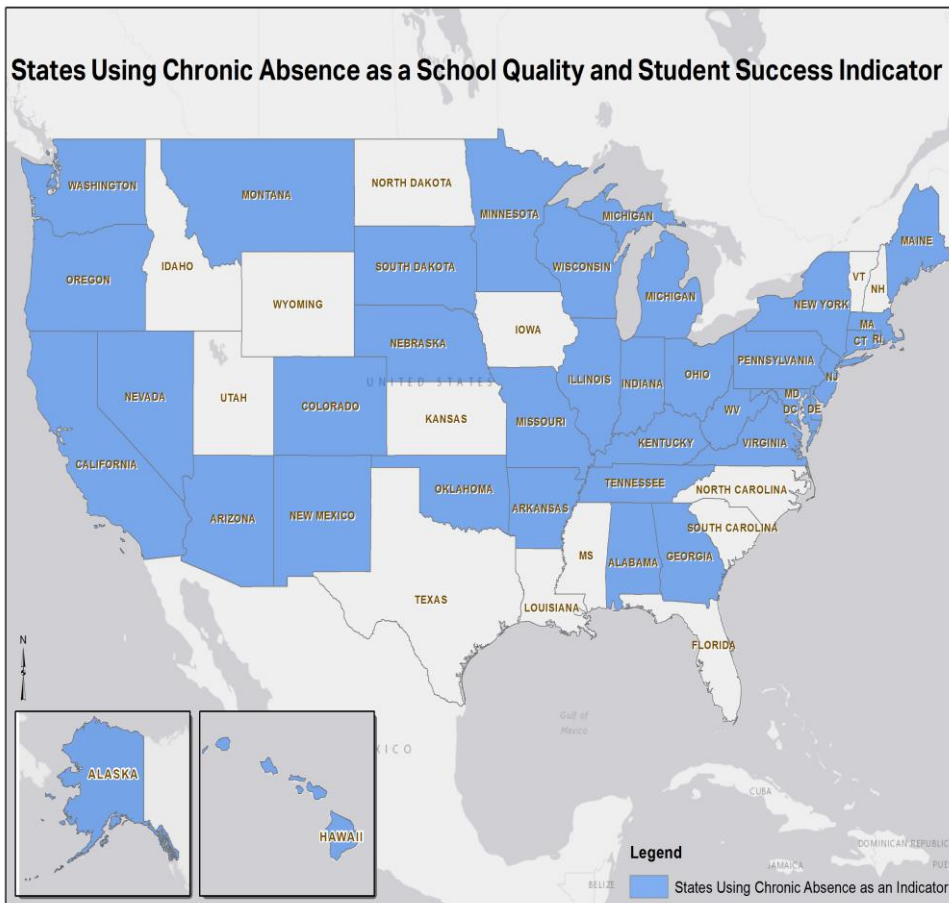
States set goals; supportive framework.

Accountability and data for student sub-groups.

Chronic absence is a required reporting & optional school quality metric. It emphasizes prevention and early intervention.

As a result, all states are now required to monitor chronic absence and had the option to include it as a metric for school accountability.

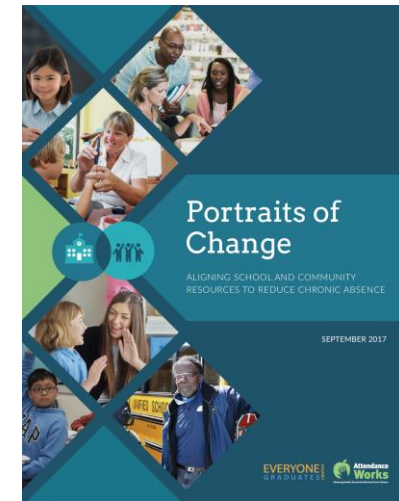
72% of states (36 + DC) adopted chronic absence as a metric in their ESSA plan.



Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act
Future Ed, Georgetown University, September 2017.



Tailor Response to Scale & Intensity of the Challenge (Portraits of Change)

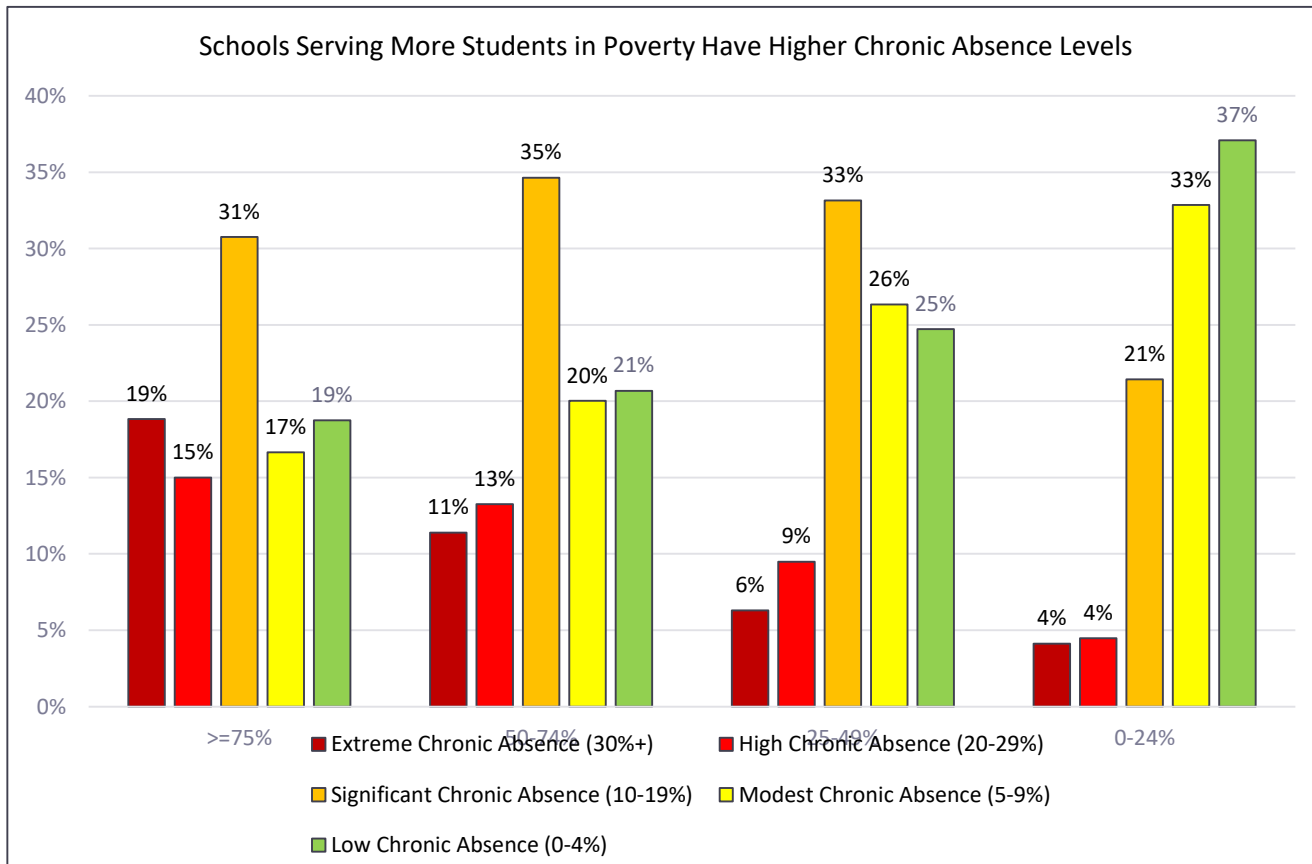


National Data for SY 2013-14

| Percent of Students Chronically Absent | Number of Schools | Percent of Schools |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Extreme Chronic Absence (30%+) | 9,921 | 11% |
| High Chronic Absence (20-29%) | 10,330 | 11% |
| Significant Chronic Absence (10-19%) | 28,320 | 31% |
| Modest Chronic Absence (5-9%) | 21,190 | 23% |
| Low Chronic Absence (0-4%) | 22,572 | 24% |
| Grand Total | 92,333 | |



Data Can Be Used To Target Intervention and Identify Bright Spots



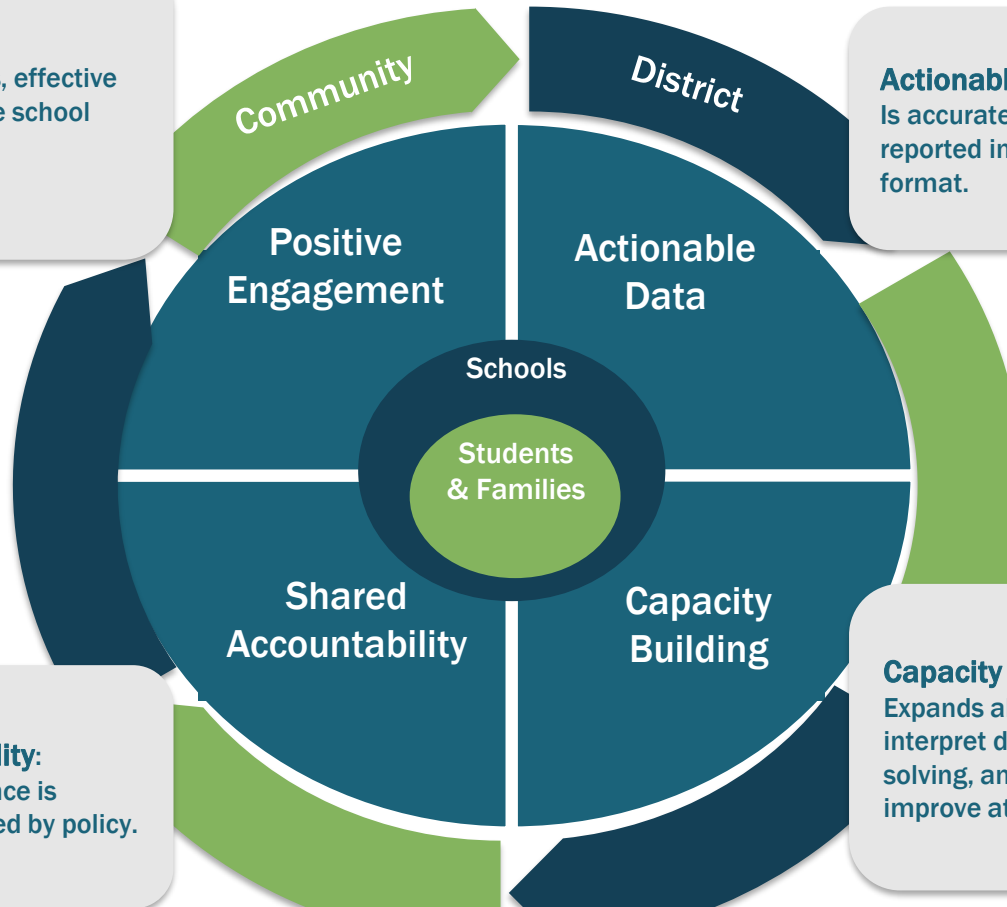
Take a Data Driven Systemic Approach

Positive Engagement:

Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

Actionable Data:

Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.



Shared Accountability:

Ensures chronic absence is monitoring & reinforced by policy.

Capacity Building

Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

Strategic partnerships

between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.

Reflection

Think about a child you know who struggles to get to school every day.

- **What is a key barrier he or she faces?**
- **What helps him/her get to school even when it is difficult?**



Unpack Contributing Factors to Chronic Absence

Myths

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Don't realize just missing 2 days per month can affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

Barriers

- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Chronic illness
- Trauma
- No safe path to school
- Poor Transportation
- Housing instability
- High mobility
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice system

Aversion

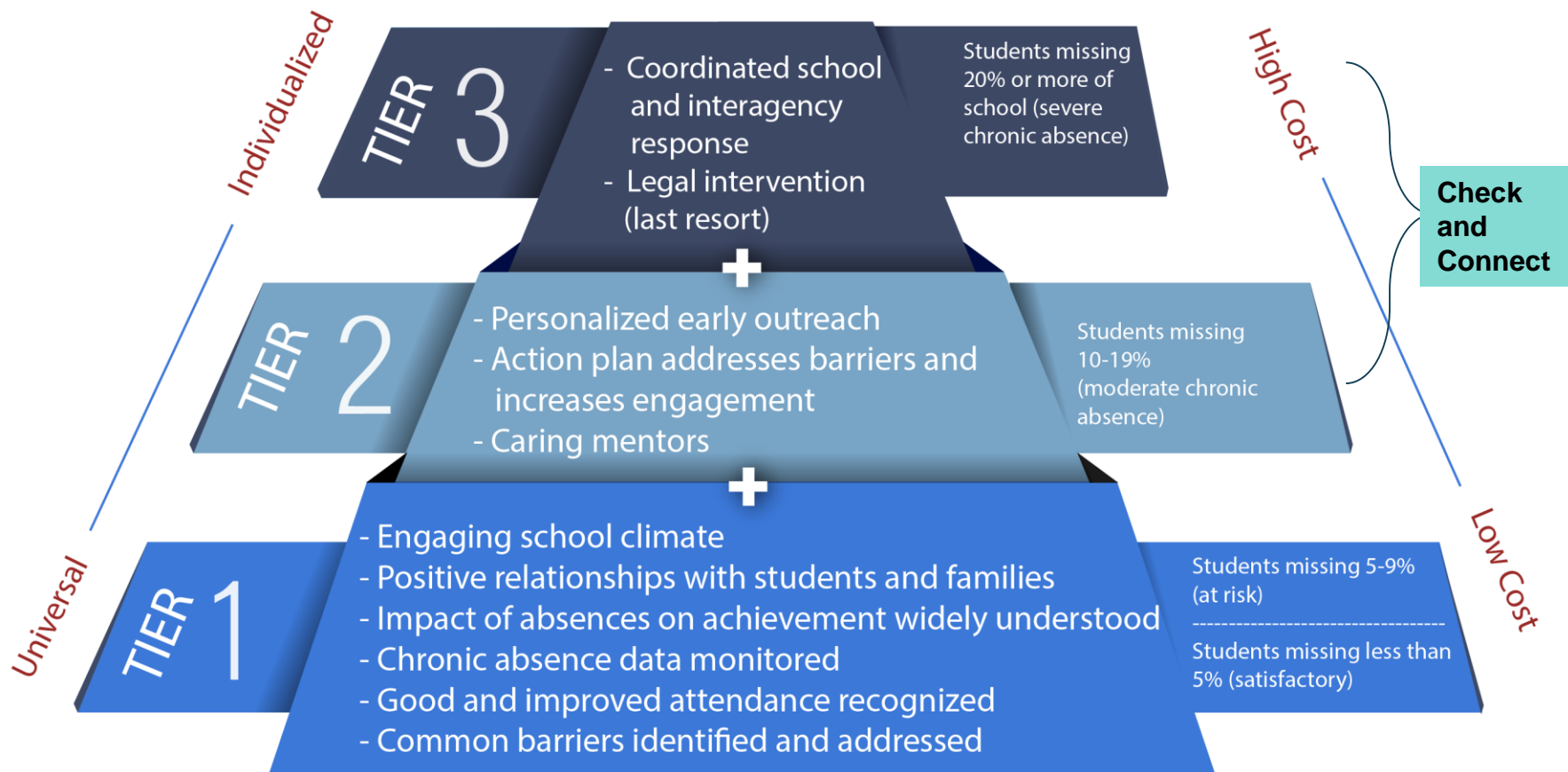
- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Ineffective / exclusionary school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience
- Undiagnosed disability

Disengagement

- Lack of engaging and culturally relevant instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
- Poor school climate
- Discouraged due to lack of credits

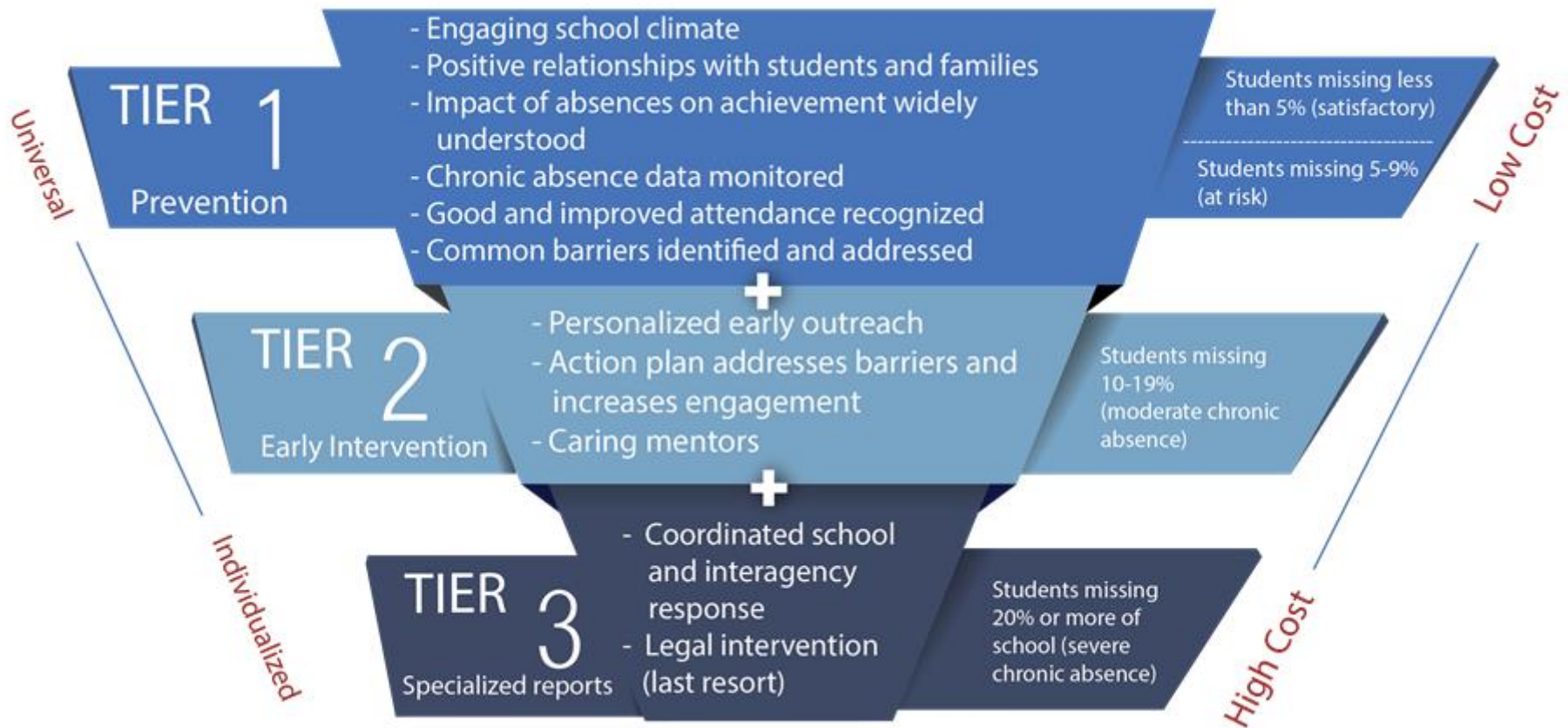


Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention





Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention





Data and Action

Tier 1 Includes all children and families

- Universal Prevention Strategies – Year Round
- Recognize and celebrate strong attendance

Tier 2 Children with 10-19% absence rate.

- Address moderate chronic absence 10-19%
- Individualized Outreach
- Recognize and celebrate improved attendance

Tier 3 Children with 20% or higher absence rate

- Address severe chronic absence 20% or more
- Individualized support coupled with intensified collaboration with community services
- Recognize and celebrate improved attendance



Tier 1: Family Engagement Strategies

Tier 1

- Family engagement strategies powerful enough to enable families to successfully partner with the school for academic success without any further intervention

Who are the families in Tier 1?

- Families of all students enrolled in your school

For which families is Tier 1 sufficient?

- Families who partner with the school
- Families who have had good experiences with school in the past



Tier 1: Creating a Positive, Engaging School Climate that Supports Attendance

Attendance is higher when schools:

- ✓ **Promote a sense of belonging** and connection including noticing when students show up
- ✓ **Make learning engaging** so students don't want to miss class
- ✓ **Engage in restorative practice** not punishment
- ✓ **Meet the basic needs** of our most economically challenged families so all have the opportunity to get to school
- ✓ **Build awareness** about how absences can easily add up to too much time lost in the classroom



Parents Underestimate the Number of Year-End Absences

Ad Council research commissioned by the CA Attorney General asked parents with students with a history of absence about their children's absences in two ways:

1. Was your child absent an average of 2 or more days a month?
2. Was your child absent more than 10 days over the year?

60% of parents said their child was absent an average of 2+ days a month, **but not** 10+ days a year

The math: If a child is absent an average of 2+ days a month, then he or she is absent far more than 10+ days a year

Missed an average of 2+ days per month 90%

Missed 10+ days annually 30%



Schools Inadvertently Reinforce Some Absence-Causing Beliefs

Reinforce Absenteeism

- Impersonal letters
- Teachers send work home in response to absences
- Teachers do not address absenteeism issue with the parent
- Parents do not feel their child is safe in school
- High levels of absenteeism in the class

Reinforces parents' existing attitudes & behaviors



<https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit>

Impersonal Letters:

- Easy to disregard
- Many parents felt the school miscounted—but parents couldn't verify because they weren't tracking absences
- Many parents felt that the school didn't understand them

Sending Work Home:

- Parents thought that completing a makeup packet caught their child up for the missed day's work

Teachers Not Addressing Absenteeism:

- Most parents reported that they regularly communicate with their children's teacher, but never about absences



Parent Video & Discussion Guide

Bringing Attendance Home Video (6 minutes)



- ✓ Facilitated conversation
- ✓ The consequences of chronic absence
- ✓ How to improve absenteeism
- ✓ Family practice
- ✓ Increase social capital
- ✓ Identify how school can help
- ✓ Community services

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-video>



Help Families Make Back-up Plans

[Insert your logo]

MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

• My child was present _____ days.
 • My child was absent _____ days.
 • My goal is to improve my child's attendance. I will ensure my child misses no more than _____ for the rest of the year.
(9 or fewer absences = satisfactory attendance)

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help them do well in school and achieve their hopes and dreams.
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending school every day with _____ (i.e. a visit to the park, a new book, a break from doing chores, a special treat).
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- If my child complains of a stomachache or headache, and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will send him/her to school anyway and call _____ so that he/she can check in with my child during the day.
- If my child has a cold but no fever (less than 100 degrees), I will send him/her to school anyway. If I don't have a thermometer, I will purchase or borrow one.
- I will find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to school if I can't make it.
- If my child is absent, I will contact his/her teacher to find out what he/she missed.
- I will set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after school.

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

- _____
- _____
- _____

We will review progress to meet this goal in two months.

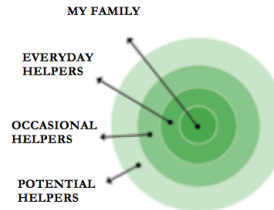
Family Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____



To learn more, please visit www.attendanceworks.org
 Adapted with permission from the DeLoach Family Foundation, and from materials created by Early Works at Earl Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Oregon.

MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK



- My Family:
- Everyday Helpers:
- Occasional Helpers:
- 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: _____

- My Family:** List who lives in your house.
- Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
- Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help everyday, 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.
- Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help—if you ask.

2015-2016 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

| August 2015 | | | | | | | September 2015 | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|----------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
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| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| October 2015 | | | | | | | November 2015 | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|---------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
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| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 29 | 30 | | | | | |

| December 2015 | | | | | | | January 2016 | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|--------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
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| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | 31 | | | | | | |

| February 2016 | | | | | | | March 2016 | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 28 | 29 | | | | | | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

| April 2016 | | | | | | | May 2016 | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |



CHRONIC ABSENCE = 18 absences
 (10% of school year)
 Warning Signs = 10 to 17 absences
 Satisfactory Attendance = 9 or fewer absences

• My child was present _____ days.
 • My child was absent _____ days.
 • My goal is to improve my child's attendance. I will ensure my child misses no more than _____ for the rest of the year.



Tier 2 Interventions

Tier 2

- Targeted interventions that remove identified barriers and increase positive connections that motivate improved attendance

Who are the families in Tier 2?

- Missing 10% or more of the prior or current school year for any reason
- Families experiencing some challenge e.g. chronic disease, job loss, divorce, etc.

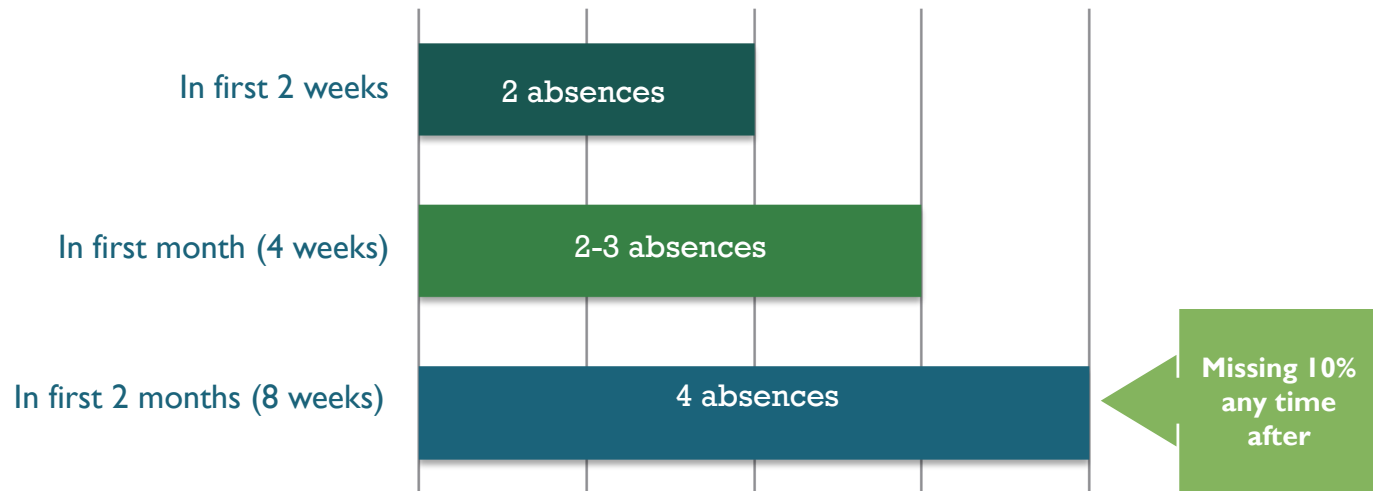
For which families is Tier 2 sufficient?

- Families with barriers to school attendance who may not understand how to access support
- Families who see school as “the deliverer of bad news”
- Families who are more successful when there is a positive relationship with someone at the school



Criteria for Identifying Priority Students for Tier 2 Supports

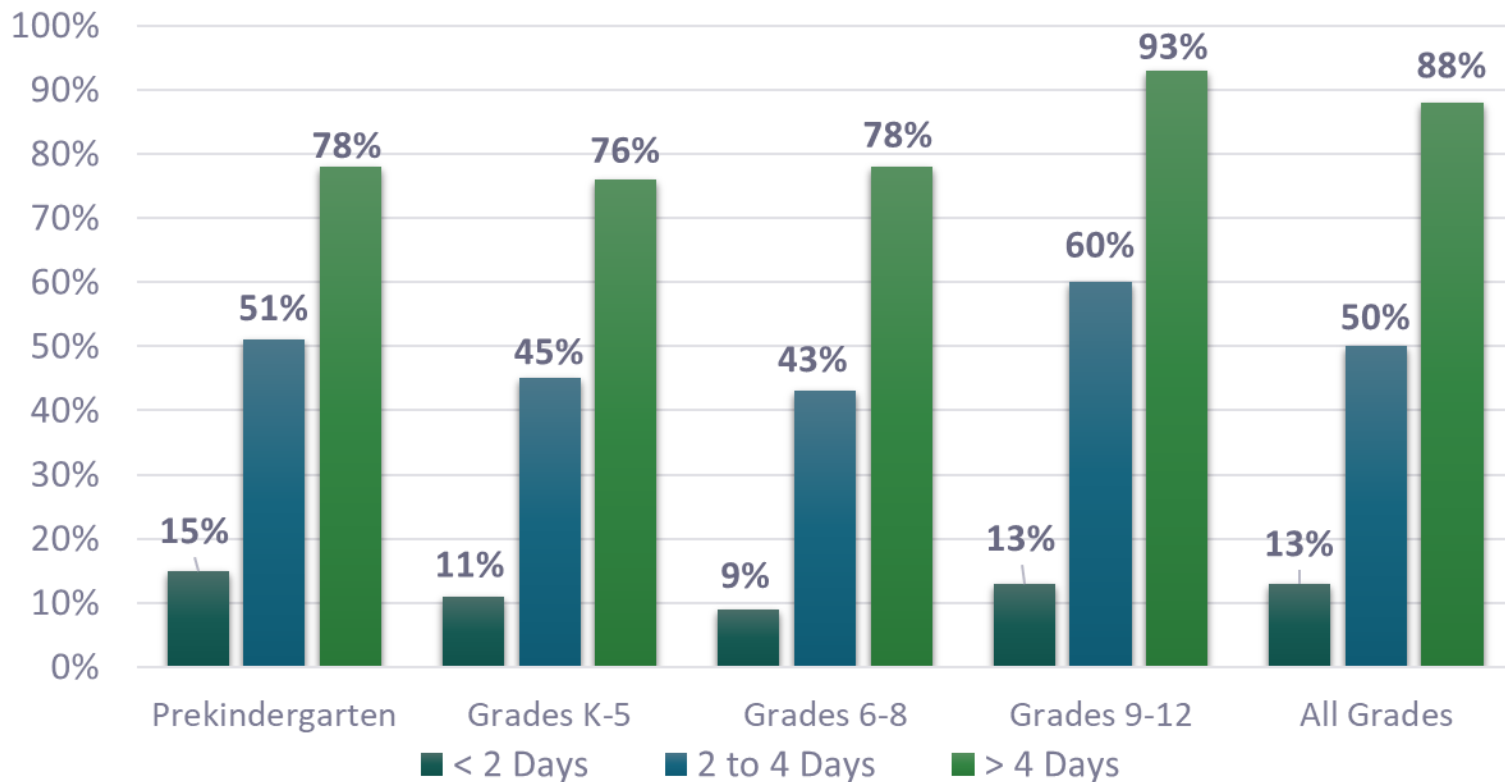
- ✓ Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- ✓ And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:





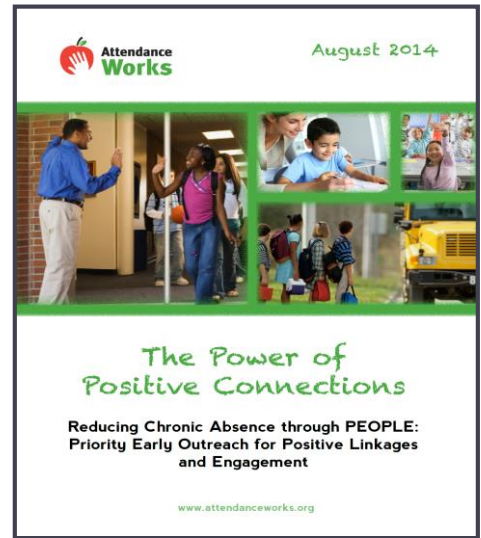
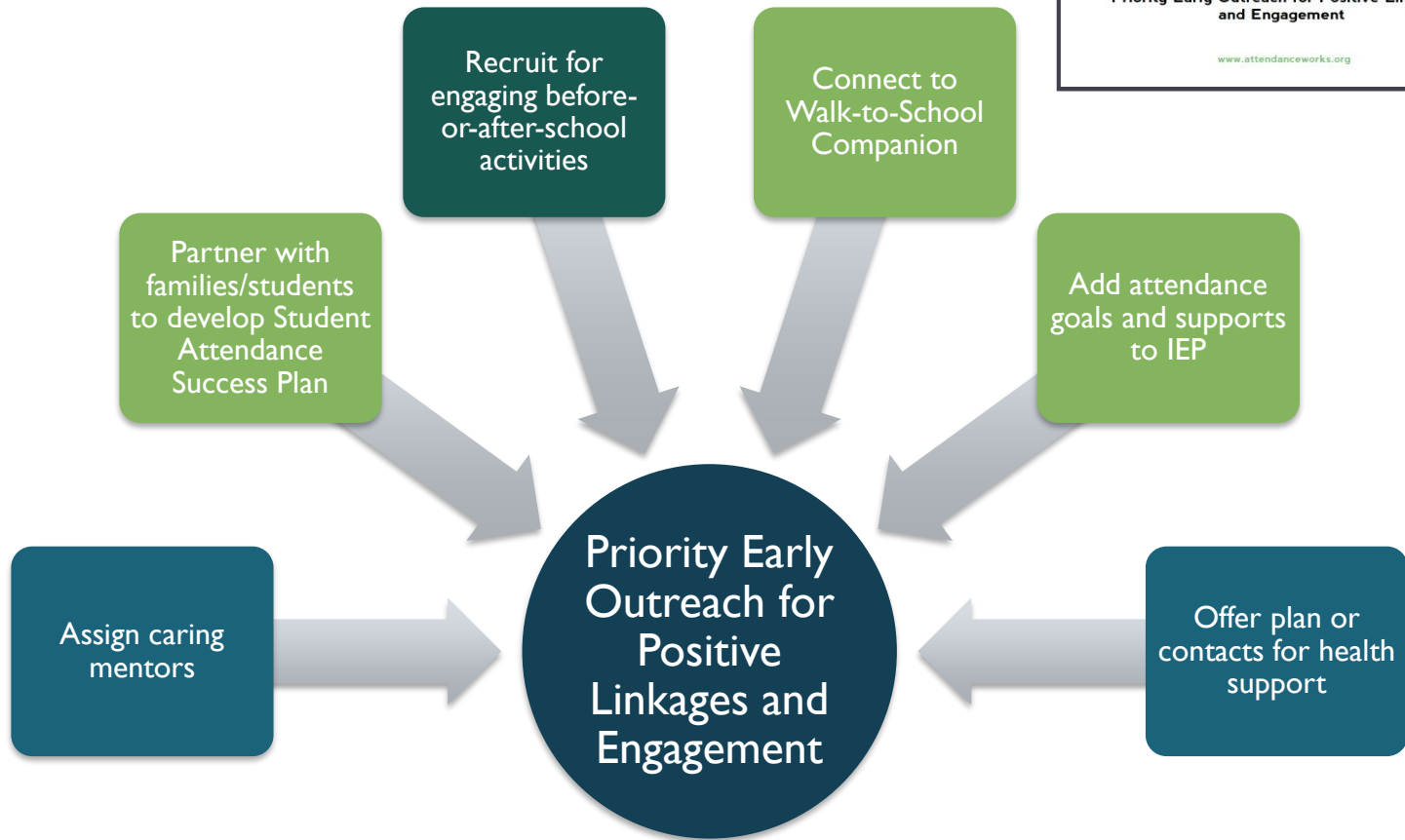
The First Month of School Predicts Chronic Absence

- 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.





Possible Tier 2 Interventions





Tier 3 Interventions

Tier 3

- Tier 3 provides intensive interventions, often from multiple agencies or specialists within a school district or community

Who are the families in Tier 3?

- Missing 20% or more of the prior or current school year for any reason
- Already involved in the system (child welfare, juvenile or criminal justice)

For which families is Tier 3 sufficient?

- Families who feel hopeless because of the barriers they face
- Families who are unable to experience success without intervention
- Families who have a negative relationship with school
- Families who require ongoing support for sustained success



Who Can Help Families in Tier 3?

- ✓ Community schools
- ✓ Family liaisons
- ✓ School integrated service teams
- ✓ IEP/504 teams
- ✓ Community mental health services
- ✓ Family resource centers
- ✓ School-based health centers
- ✓ McKinney Vento representatives
- ✓ Public agencies

Who would you add to this list?



Chronic Absence is Like a Warning Light on Your Car Dashboard



The Parallels:

- ✓ Ignore it at your personal peril!
- ✓ Address early or potentially pay more (lots more) later.
- ✓ The key is to ask why is this blinking? What could this mean?



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