



# Essential Partnerships for Showing Up: Families, Youth and Community

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2024 – Webinar 2 of 4

May 15, 2024

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



# Welcome!



**S. Kwesi Rollins**

Vice President for Leadership & Engagement  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
Chair, Advisory Board, Attendance Works



**Hedy N. Chang**

Executive Director  
Attendance Works

# About the Institute for Educational Leadership

**IEL** acts as a catalyst and capacity builder at the intersection of education, community collaboration and workforce development to effectively promote equity and better opportunities for all children and youth. IEL:

- ✓ identifies and implements innovative strategies particularly where educational, economic and social challenges or gaps exist.
- ✓ has developed, trained and supported thousands of leaders across various networks.
- ✓ works at the local, state and national level, investing in community leaders of all ages, stages and sectors.

To learn more visit: [www.iel.org](http://www.iel.org)



## About Attendance Works

**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)

# Agenda

## I. Welcome

## II. Attendance Awareness Campaign and Key Concepts

Kwesi Rollins, Vice President for Leadership & Engagement, IEL  
Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works

## III. The Role of Youth

## IV. Essential Partnerships for Engagement and Attendance

- ❖ **Yolie Flores**, CEO/President, Families in Schools, California
- ❖ **Eric Fontanez**, Supervisor of Equity Initiatives, Bethlehem Area School District, Pennsylvania
- ❖ **Jill Pereira**, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania
- ❖ **Annie Reed**, Executive Director, Thriving Schools at Kaiser Permanente

## V. Closing Reflections & Resources

# Convening Partners AAC 2024!



See the full list of national and state campaign partners here: <https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/partners-2/>



**Slogan for 2024!**

# Be Present, Be Powerful!



# Attendance Awareness Campaign 2024 Webinar Series

Register here: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/>

**Note:** Each session is accompanied by a discussion guide that can be used for webinar parties.

**Webinar 1** **On the Front Line of Attendance and Engagement: The Crucial Role of Teachers**, Wednesday, April 3: 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET (*recording available*)

**Webinar 2** **Essential Partnerships for Showing Up to School: Families, Youth and Community** Wednesday, May 15, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET **Today!**

**Webinar 3** **Creating a Culture of Belonging and Engagement: Principals in Action** Wednesday, August 7, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

**Webinar 4** **Leadership for Sustainability: Superintendents Making a Difference** Wednesday, September 25, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET



# 2024 Theme: Be Present, Be Powerful!

## Selected Key Messages

- ❖ **Ensuring students get to school provides opportunities for them to progress academically, develop socially and reach for their dreams.**
- ❖ **Building trusting relationships that promote belonging is critical for improving student attendance.**
- ❖ **Supporting the health and well-being of students, families and school staff improves attendance.**
- ❖ **An all-hands-on-deck, positive, problem-solving approach driven by data will improve attendance.**



## Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors for this Webinar!



[Kaiser Permanente](#) Thriving Schools brings together extensive health care expertise and partnerships with nationally recognized and trusted organizations to support schools in becoming a beacon of health in their community.



[RaaWee K12](#) provides a highly robust collaboration platform where school districts implement best practices for tracking students' attendance and managing interventions.



## Support Attendance Works



**We rely on contributors like you to help us keep Attendance Works resources free for everyone.**

**Join our movement and donate today!**

DONATE

# Defining Terms

## Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

- School level measure (not student level)
- Notices aggregate attendance at certain point in time (e.g., half-days, holidays, bad weather)
- Masks individual student chronic absences

## Truancy

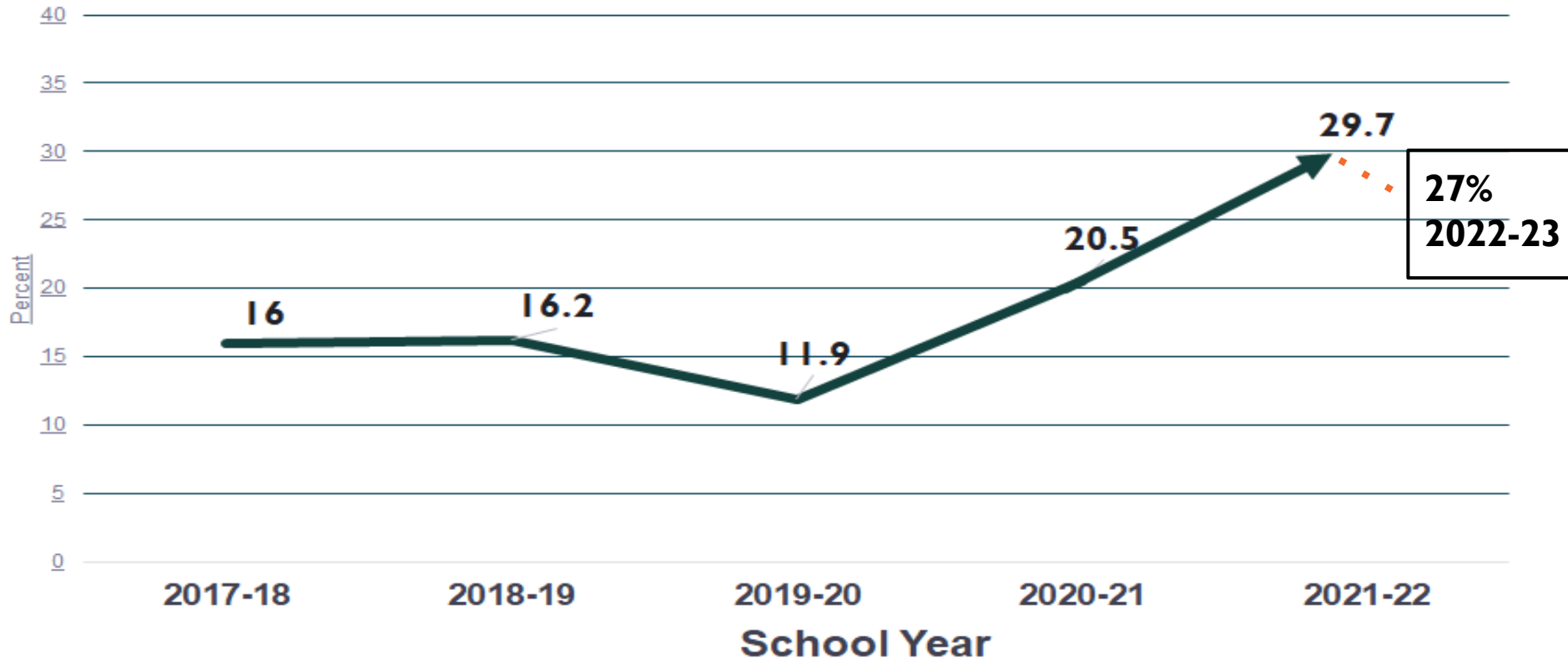
- ▲ Counts **ONLY** unexcused absences
- ▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- ▲ Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

## Chronic Absence

- Missing 10% counts **ALL** absences (*excused, unexcused, & suspensions*)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and the benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family and student engagement

# National Chronic Absence Crisis

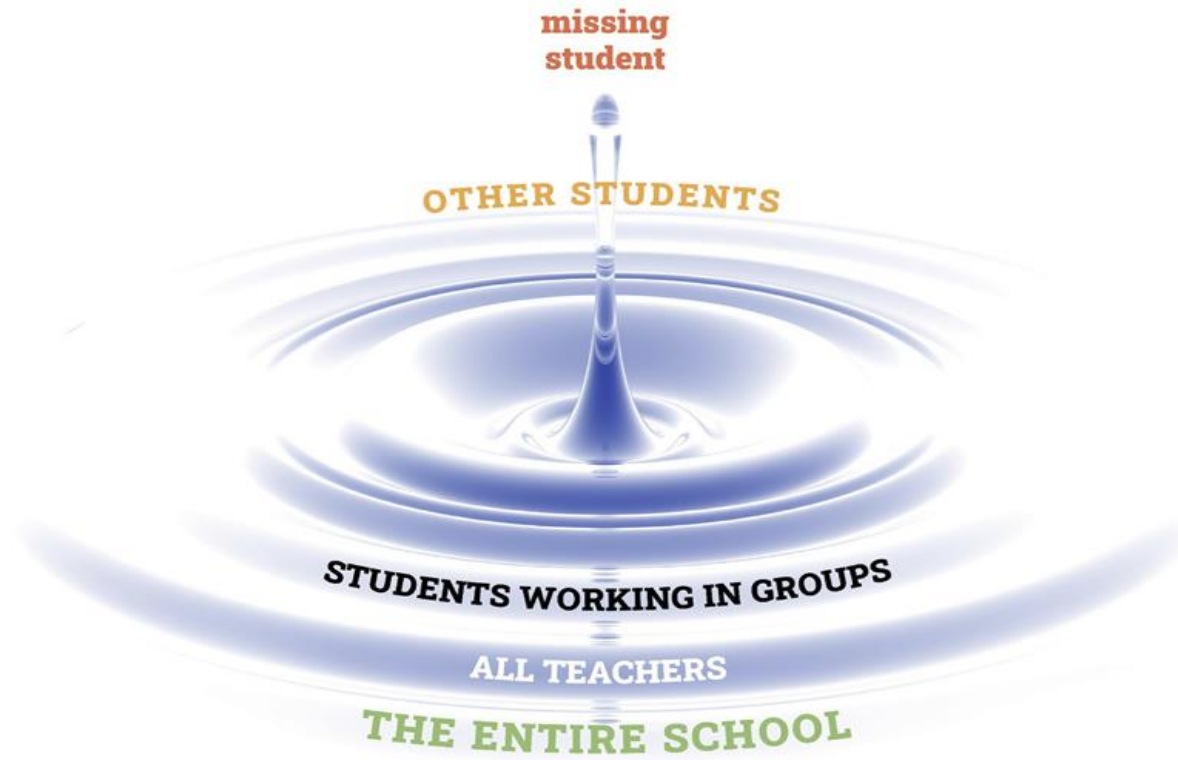
**Percentage of Students Chronically Absent Nearly Doubled Nationwide Between SY 2017-18 to SY 2021-22**



- ✓ The number of chronically absent students grew from 8,095,132 to 14,660,261.
- ✓ State data from 2022-23 indicate rates remain high.

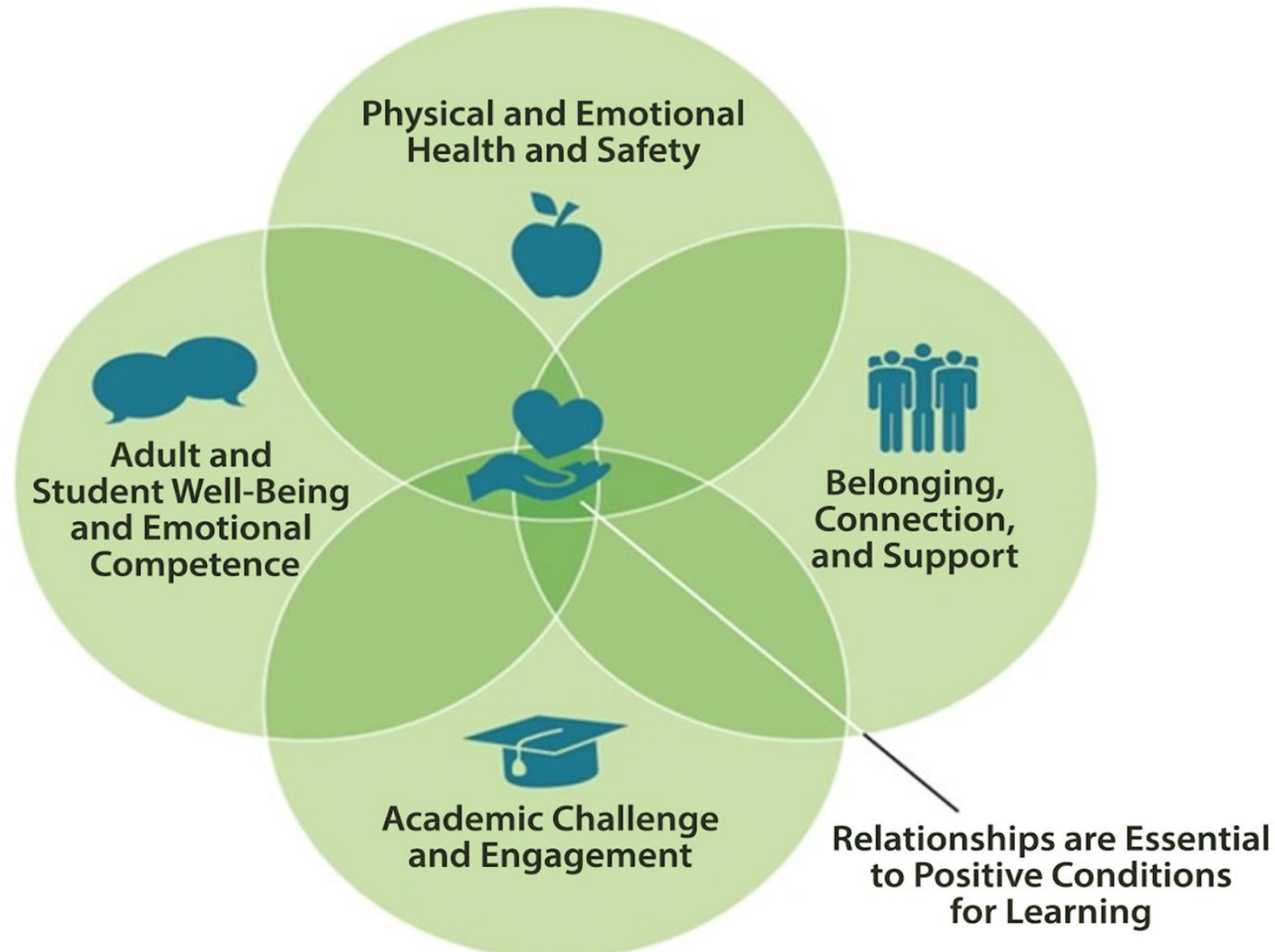


## When a Student Misses School, the Impact Ripples



**66%** of students attend a school with 20% or more chronic absenteeism (*SY 2021-22*) versus **25%** prior to the pandemic

# High levels of absence reflect an erosion in positive conditions for learning





# The key to reducing chronic absence is finding out and addressing what causes students to miss too much school in the aftermath of the pandemic

## Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services (including health)
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to technology
- Community violence

## Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or lack of disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences

## Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

## Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/>



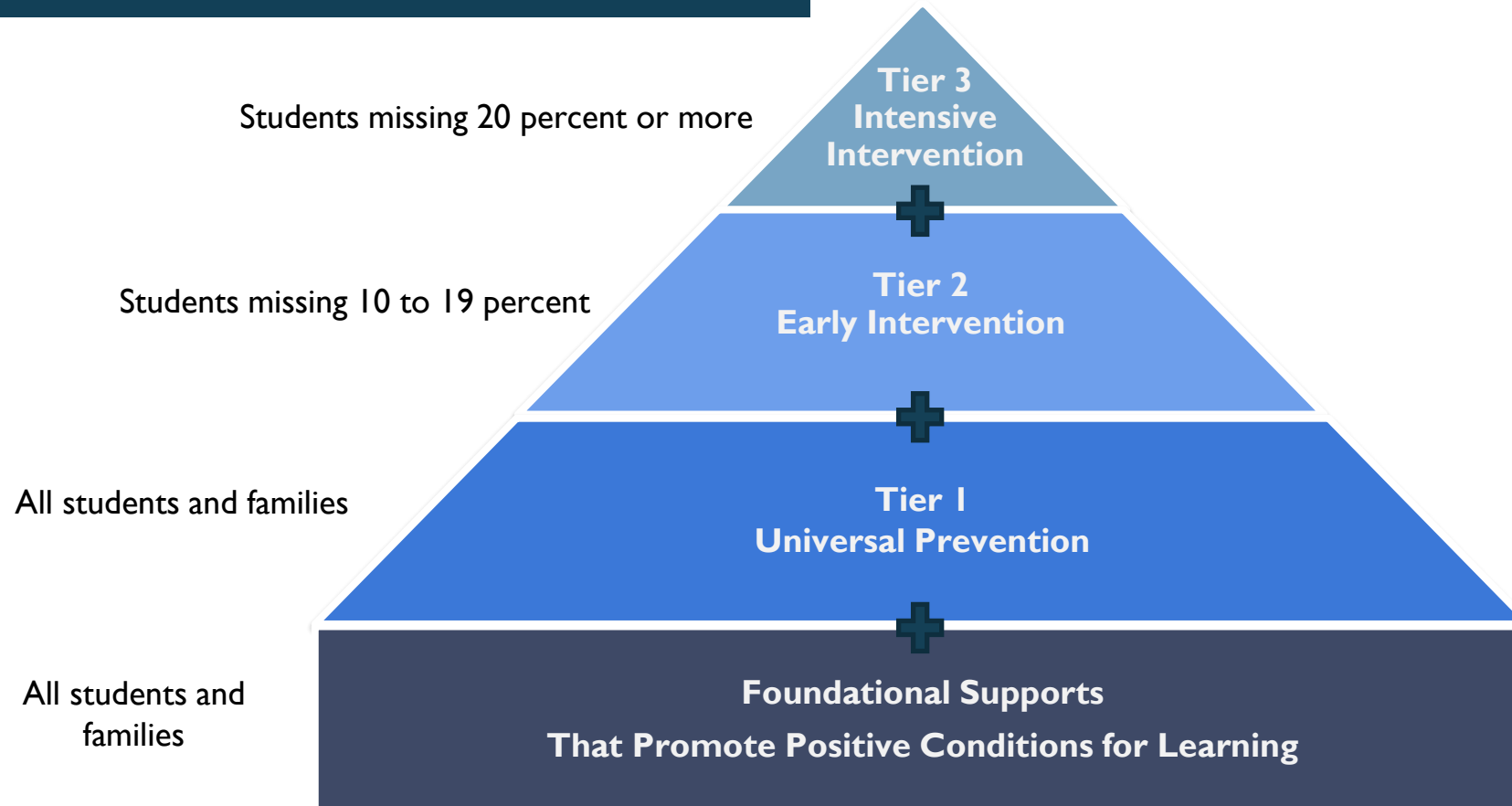
# Children's Aid



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbry6mEgDkA>

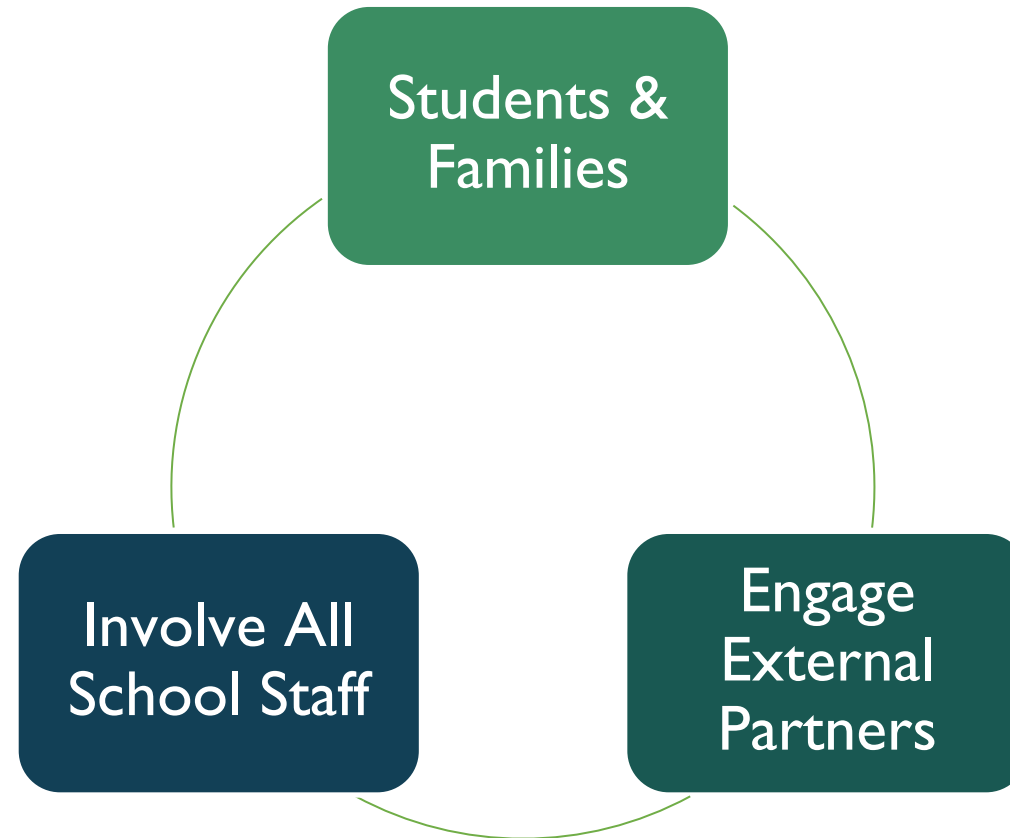


## Multi-tiered support systems that begin with prevention are essential





## Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance





## Partners for Change

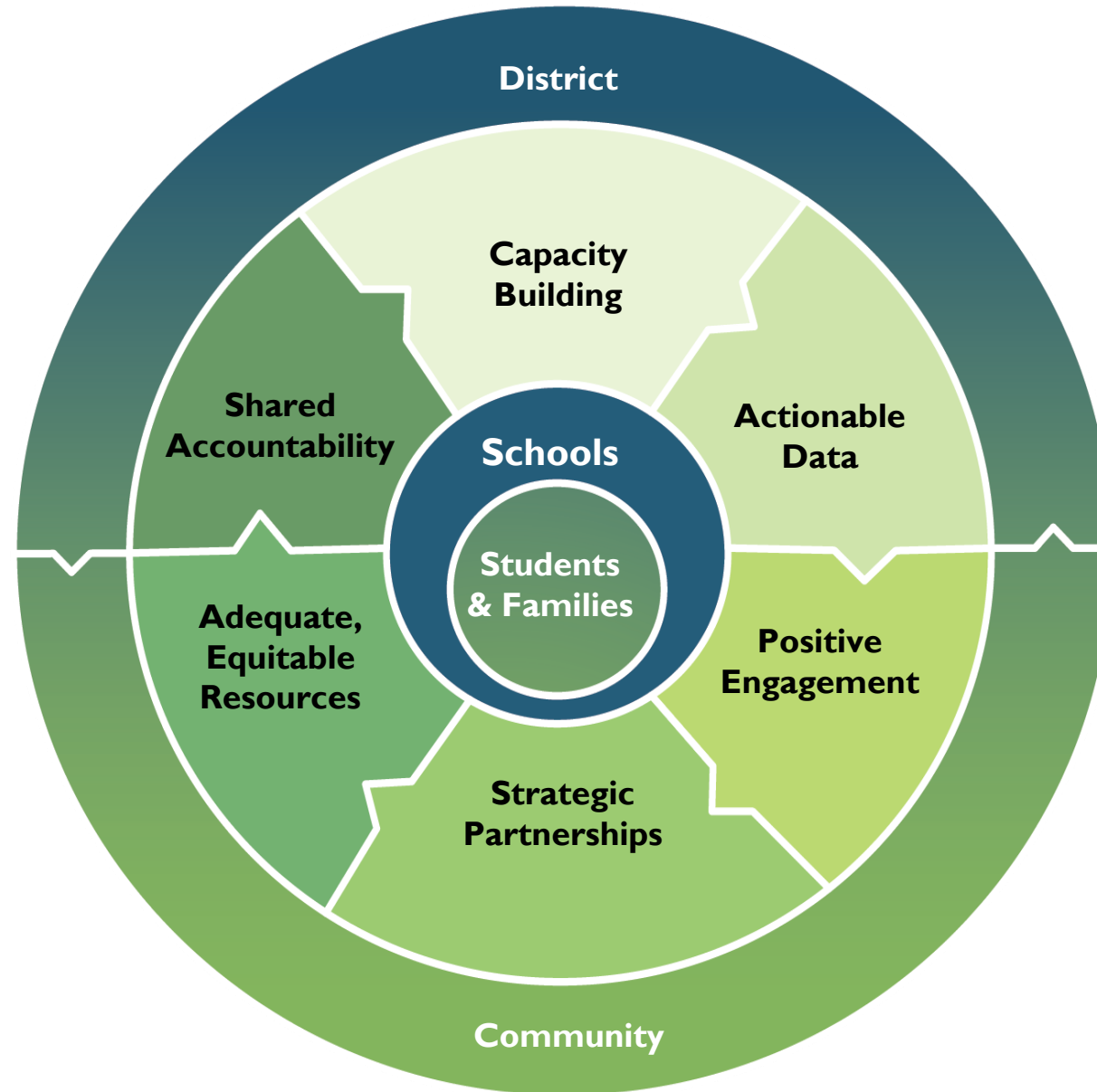
The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important. Tap into existing initiatives and coalitions to engage potential partners.

- 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)

# Align Partners and Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence	Possible Interventions	Potential Partner
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlist trusted messengers to talk with families about health and safety</li> <li>• Meet with school counselor, social worker or psychologist</li> <li>• Offer small groups to teach calming skills</li> </ul>	<p>Local pediatricians            Promotoras (<i>community health workers</i>)            NAMI – online courses</p>
Disengaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a peer group mentor</li> <li>• Create an individualized learning plan</li> <li>• Explore afterschool options (art, music, STEM, etc.)</li> <li>• Offer alternatives for credit recovery</li> </ul>	<p>MENTOR            Parks &amp; Rec program            Boys &amp; Girls Club</p>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messaging on how to stay health</li> <li>• School nurse educates on preventing spread of illness</li> <li>• Ensure hygiene supplies available (soap,tissues, hand sanitizer)</li> <li>• Onsite flu and Covid shots</li> </ul>	<p>School-based health center            Local Clinic / Pediatrician</p>
Transportation Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking School Bus</li> <li>• Free municipal bus passes</li> <li>• Carpools</li> </ul>	<p>Parents            AmeriCorps program            City government</p>

# Key Ingredients for Improving Attendance



# Panelists



**Yolie Flores**  
CEO/President  
Families in Schools,  
California



**Eric Fontanez**  
Supervisor of Equity  
Initiatives, Bethlehem Area  
School District,  
Pennsylvania



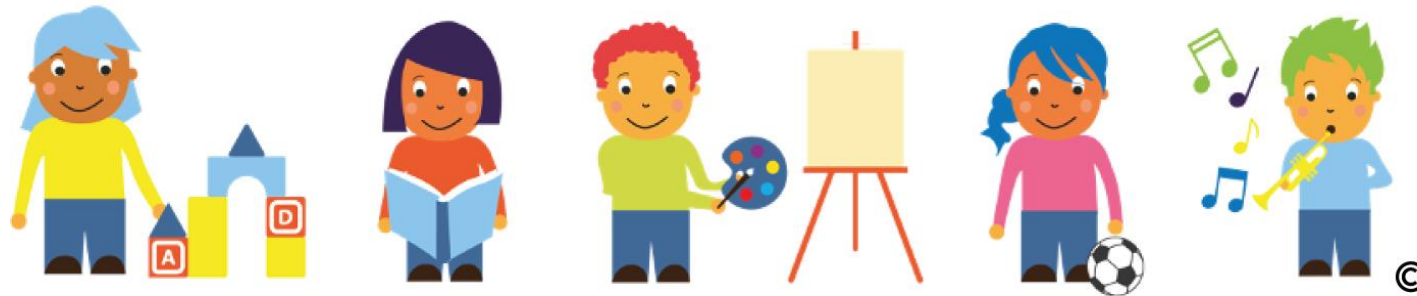
**Jill Pereira**  
Vice President of Strategic  
Partnerships, United Way of  
the Greater Lehigh Valley,  
Pennsylvania



**Annie Reed**  
Executive Director  
Thriving Schools at Kaiser  
Permanente

**What do you see as the top 2-3 drivers of the continued high levels of chronic absenteeism? How were these affected by the pandemic and its aftermath?**

**What do you think helps to address these challenges?**







## Participant Share Out

**Use the chat and share:**

**What are the top drivers of chronic absenteeism in your community?**

**In the aftermath of Covid, how have you seen schools partner with youth, families, health providers and communities to improve attendance?**

**What is a great example in your experience?  
Any data showing they made a difference?**



# United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOmlBeH\\_mSc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOmlBeH_mSc)



## Participant Share Out

**Use the chat and share:**

**What are examples of successful partnerships in your communities?**

**What are your priorities as you move forward,  
especially given the looming fiscal cliff?**



# Q & A



# Examples of Qualitative Data Tools

*Gather information about why students do or don't attend school*

- ❑ **Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT):** Identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and strong attendance
- ❑ **Empathy Interviews:** Targeted, one-on-one conversations with a small group of students
- ❑ **2x10:** Relationship and trust building strategy; spend two minutes per day for 10 days talking with a student
- ❑ **Student Focus Groups:** Moderated small group discussions to explore experiences and perspectives
- ❑ **Attendance Café:** Engage parents in discussions about attendance
- ❑ **Student and Parent Surveys:** Ask about reasons behind their absences



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/qualitative-data/>

# Help Kids Stay Healthy!

## Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

A regular attendance routine is important for your child's well-being, learning and long-term success. Below are tips to keep your child healthy and avoid unnecessary absences from school.

### Nutrition, Sleep and Exercise

- Ensure your child eats a good breakfast every morning or check if your school serves breakfast.
- Maintain a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Keep screens out of the bedroom and limit use prior to bedtime.
- Encourage your child to stay active for at least 60 minutes a day.



### Hygiene

- Stress hand washing, particularly before eating, and after using the restroom.
- Remind your child to brush their teeth twice a day.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick. Don't share cups, utensils, hair brushes or combs.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into an elbow.



### Safety

- Make sure your child wears a seatbelt and/or appropriate car seats during car rides, and a helmet when using a bike, skateboard or scooter.
- If your child walks to school, help them find a safe route to school and to travel with at least one friend. Have a backup plan in case of bad weather.



## Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

### Wellness

- Ensure your child visits their health care provider for:
  - A physical once a year.
  - All recommended immunizations, including Flu and COVID-19.
  - Chronic health issues such as asthma or diabetes.
- Visit the dentist twice a year.
- Try to schedule non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours.
- If your child doesn't have health or dental insurance, reach out to your school's nurse or social worker or other staff member to help connect you with resources.
- Complete your school's annual health form.
- Agree to allow your child to participate in health and vision screenings offered at school.
- If your child has a chronic health issue such as asthma, make sure that your child's health care provider completes appropriate school forms that allow your child to keep/carry any necessary medications at school.
- If your child has a disability, work closely with the school and your child's health care provider to ensure appropriate supports and services.
- If you are concerned that your child may have a contagious illness (including COVID-19), call your child's health care provider or school nurse for advice.
- If your child needs to stay home for a prolonged period due to illness, talk to your child's teacher to find out about resources they can use at home to keep learning once they feel well enough.



### Engagement

- Make sure your child feels safe and connected at school. Involve them in afterschool activities.
- If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child. If your child is missing class because of challenges with behavioral issues, contact the school and/or your child's health care provider for support and resources.
- Ask the school about health-related policies including about COVID-19.
- Monitor your child's attendance and academic progress and seek support when needed.





# Health Guidance for Going to School



## Health Guidance for Going to School

Showing up to school every day is critical for children's well-being, engagement and learning.

Make sure to send children to school if they are:

- Generally healthy and well.
- Participating in usual day-to-day activities.
- Children can even go to school if they:
  - Have a mild cold, which may include a runny nose and/or cough.
  - Have eye drainage without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness.
  - Have a mild stomachache.
  - Have a mild rash with no other symptoms.
  - Have head lice. Though they are annoying and should be treated, lice are not a reason to exclude a child from school.
  - Haven't had a fever overnight and they have not taken fever-reducing medicine during that time.

Avoid keeping children at home unless they are too sick to participate. Please see the back of this handout for details. Note that in most situations, a health-care provider's note is not needed to return.

Children may also avoid school due to anxiety (symptoms may include decreased appetite, feeling tired, stomachache, headache etc). If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child stay in school.

If your child has a compromised immune system or is at high risk for complications from common illnesses, please talk to your school (school nurse if available) about developing a plan with you and your child's health-care provider to keep your child healthy and safe while attending school.

Please note: This document is not meant to take the place of local health department/school district guidance including about contagious illnesses such as Covid-19 and the flu.



## Reasons to keep me home from school and what needs to happen before I can return

What is my symptom?	When should I stay home and when to seek medical care?	When can I return to school?
<b>Fever</b>	I have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. <b>Seek medical care</b> if I have fever and any of the following: ear pain, sore throat, rash, stomachache, headache or tooth pain.	If I have not had a fever overnight without the use of fever-reducing medication and I am feeling better.
<b>Vomiting and/or diarrhea</b>	If I have vomited 2 or more times in the last 24 hours. If my stool is watery and I may not make it to the toilet in time. <b>Seek medical care</b> if I have stomach cramping and fever, I have bloody or black stool, or I am showing signs of dehydration (tired and sleepy, dry mouth and not urinating at least once in the last 8 hours).	If I did not vomit overnight and I am able to drink liquids without throwing up. If my diarrhea has improved.
<b>Persistent cough or trouble breathing</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> if I have a persistent cough, difficulty breathing or trouble catching my breath or if I develop a fever with the cough. These symptoms may be signs of Covid-19 or flu and should be evaluated by a health-care provider.	Once I am feeling better and I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider. If my symptoms were due to asthma, please make sure that I have permission to use breathing medication at school.
<b>Rash</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> if the rash has blisters, is draining, is painful, looks like bruises and/or if I develop a fever.	Rash has healed or I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider.
<b>Eye irritation</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> if I have eye swelling, eye pain, trouble seeing or an eye injury.	Once I am feeling better.
<b>Sore throat</b>	<b>Seek medical care</b> if I have drooling, trouble swallowing or a fever and/or rash.	Once I am feeling better. If I was prescribed an antibiotic by my health-care provider, then I can return 12 hours after the first dose, if I am without fever and I am feeling better.

If you don't know whether to send your child to school or have specific concerns regarding your child's health, contact your child's health-care provider, a local urgent care or the school nurse.



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/>



## Parent Handout on Anxiety

**This new, 2-page handout provides answers to key questions:**

- ❖ What are the symptoms?
- ❖ When does anxiety become a problem?
- ❖ What can families do to support their child?
- ❖ How can schools and health providers help?
- ❖ Where can I find additional information?

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/take-action/community-and-agency-partners/health-care-providers/>



### Is your child missing school due to anxiety?

**Definition of anxiety:** Feeling of fear and uneasiness about everyday situations.

**If your child is suffering from anxiety, you are not alone.** The good news is that in most situations, anxiety is normal and temporary. Anxiety becomes a concern if it persists - it can impact relationships with family, peers and teachers, contribute to academic challenges, and lead to school avoidance/refusal. Addressing anxiety is important for a child's overall well-being, not just attendance.

In addition, if your child starts to complain of symptoms like a headache or stomach ache, it is important to **quickly determine** if this is related to anxiety or a physical illness which might require missing school. If the challenge is anxiety, then staying home may worsen the situation.



### What are the symptoms of anxiety?

**Persistent anxiety can present in many ways, making it difficult to recognize.**

Symptoms may vary depending on the age of the child, and some children may keep worries to themselves or have difficulty explaining their feelings making it hard to identify symptoms. Anxiety symptoms can include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- Feeling tired, irritable or easily tearful
- Having trouble separating from parents
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Trouble getting out of bed or dressed for school
- Lack of appetite
- Trouble concentrating which may lead to difficulty starting tasks, problems with homework and falling behind in school
- Physical symptoms, including stomachaches and headaches
- Avoiding activities they previously enjoyed
- Negative or continuous thoughts that something bad is going to happen





FOR MAYORS AND CITY LEADERS:

## Why Engagement and Attendance Matters

**The Attendance Imperative:** Attending school regularly is essential to students gaining the academic and social skills they need to thrive. Chronic absence - defined as missing 10% of the academic year - has more than doubled since the start of the pandemic, from 8 million to an estimated 16 million students nationwide, and absenteeism is especially high among students and families most adversely impacted by the pandemic. Chronic absence, no matter its cause, has real life consequences for students, families, and society as a whole. Research shows that starting as early as preschool and kindergarten, chronic absence can leave third graders unable to read proficiently, sixth graders struggling with coursework, and high school students off track for graduation.

**DOWNLOAD**



### For Mayors and City Leaders: Why Student Engagement and Attendance Matters



**The City of Avondale, AZ Lends Support to Increase Student Engagement**



**Student Reengagement: Hartford Connecticut's Efforts to Address Chronic Absenteeism**



## AAC 2024 Proclamation!



Mayors and other elected leaders, school boards and superintendents can signal the importance of school attendance by declaring that **September** is **Attendance Awareness Month**.

**We will update the template Proclamation for 2024 in late May!**

Find it here: <https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/proclamations-2023/>



**Register today!**

## **2024 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference** May 29-31 | Atlanta, GA

Atlanta, May 29 - 31

**SUCCESS FOR UP LEVEL 2024**

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE

**IEL** Institute for Educational Leadership  
Innovation. Equity. Leadership.

COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

See you at **#CSxFE24**

<https://bit.ly/csxfe24>

<https://bit.ly/csxfe24>



## Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

- ✓ Download our free social media materials and share with local districts
- ✓ Join our listserv: 44,000+ members

# PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN

Attendance  
Awareness  
Campaign 2024

[Attendance Works](#) [About](#) [Resources](#) [Partners](#) [Sponsors](#)  
[Blog](#) [Newsroom](#) [Donate](#) [Contact](#) [Join the Campaign!](#)

Keep up on New Messaging & Resources to Stay  
connected & Learning Today!

[Learn More](#)

Sign up for updates:  
[www.awareness.attendanceworks.org](http://www.awareness.attendanceworks.org)





# 2024 Count Us In! Toolkit

An easy on-ramp for developing or expanding a local or statewide attendance awareness campaign.

- ★ Tips
- ★ Templates
- ★ Proven strategies

## What to Do When: At a Glance



### Let's get started!

- Convene coalition
- Recruit partners
- Meet with district
- Enlist health care providers
- Launch poster contests and other marketing campaigns

### Early Summer

#### Getting into specifics

- Distribute talking points
- Enlist elected officials & celebs
- Line up incentives
- Analyze data



### Late Summer

#### It's Go Time

- Tape PSAs
- Begin media outreach
- Print banners & posters
- Plan assemblies and Back-to-School events
- Launch door-knocking campaigns

### Back to School!

- Release proclamations
- Host Back-to-School events
- Host press conferences
- Share data
- Spread the word!



<https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>



## Opportunities to Promote AAC 2024!

Share the Attendance Awareness website:  
<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>

- ✓ Like us on Facebook 
- ✓ Tweet on X using #schooleveryday @attendanceworks
- ✓ Follow us on LinkedIn 
- ✓ Add a badge to your signature line or materials







## Webinar Recording

We will post a recording of this webinar  
within 72 hours:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/>



## Feedback

Please let us know how we can improve:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AAC-May-2024>

**Thank you!**

**And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!**

**Heising-Simons Foundation  
And individual donors**