Teams Make all the Difference for Improving Attendance

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025 – Webinar 1 of 4

April 2, 2025

www.attendanceworks.org

Welcome!

S. Kwesi Rollins
Chief Program Officer
Institute for Educational Leadership
Chair, Advisory Board, Attendance Works

Hedy N. Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works

About the Institute for Educational Leadership

IEL's vision is an equitable society in which shared leadership effectively uses all available resources for the betterment of their communities. IEL partners with communities, working with local entities to fill service needs and support them in the long-term on their transformational leadership journey. 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

About Attendance Works

Attendance Works advances student success in school and beyond for all students 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

Agenda

I. Welcome

II. Attendance Awareness Campaign and Key Concepts
Kwesi Rollins, Chief Program Officer, IEL
Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works
Video: Rey Saldaña – "Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow"

III. Teams in Make All the Difference
❖ **Jerimie L. Acree**, Attendance & Residency Coordinator, Euclid City
   School District, Ohio
❖ **Kamie Cowan,** Principal, Compass Berclair Elementary School, Tennessee
❖ **William J. Reilly**, Principal, Nathanael Greene Middle School, Rhode Island

V. Closing Reflections & Resources

Convening Partners
AAC 2025!

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

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025
Webinar Series
Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

Webinar 1 **Teams Make all the Difference for Supporting Attendance**
April 2, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 2 **Health, Well-being and Safety is Essential to Showing Up**
May 14, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 3 **Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement**
August 6, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 4 **Family Engagement is the Foundation for Attendance & Learning**
September 24, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/

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Thank You to our Campaign Sponsors for supporting this webinar!

School Technology is an exclusive partner of Skyward and provides a wide range of integrated hardware and software solutions to improve data quality. From student attendance to employee time tracking, School Tech solutions help so schools can focus on the bigger issues.

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 Solutions has been focused on chronic absence and truancy for more than 10 years. RaaWee's K12 Attendance+ provides tracking, outreach, 2-way communication, document preparation and data analysis that result in successful student attendance improvement.

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

Slogan for 2025!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

AAC 2025 Slogan!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

- Highlights the role that school plays in promoting student well-being and achievement.

- Connects school attendance with realizing our hopes and dreams.

- Emphasizes the link between regular attendance and a well-prepared, next generation workforce.

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Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

(Research evidence from Communities in Schools)

Rey Saldaña, President, Communities in Schools
https://youtu.be/RS0ujUyK_8o

Goldman, B, Gracie, J, Every Day Counts: Absenteeism and the Returns to Education in High Poverty Schools, November 6, 2024, unpublished paper.

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

https://www.attendanceworks.org/whats-the-difference-between-chronic-absence-and-truancy/

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National Chronic Absence Crisis

US Chronic Absence Rates K-12

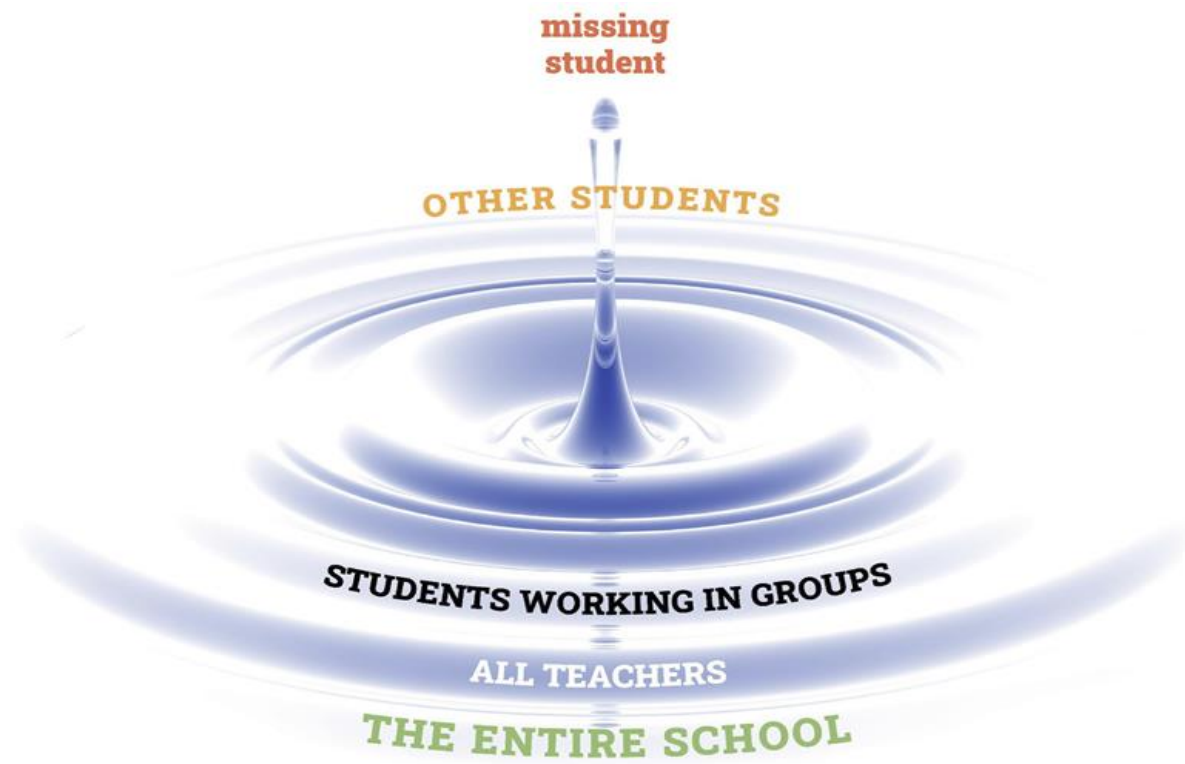| Year	Rate
2018	16%
2019	16%
2022	30%
2023	28%
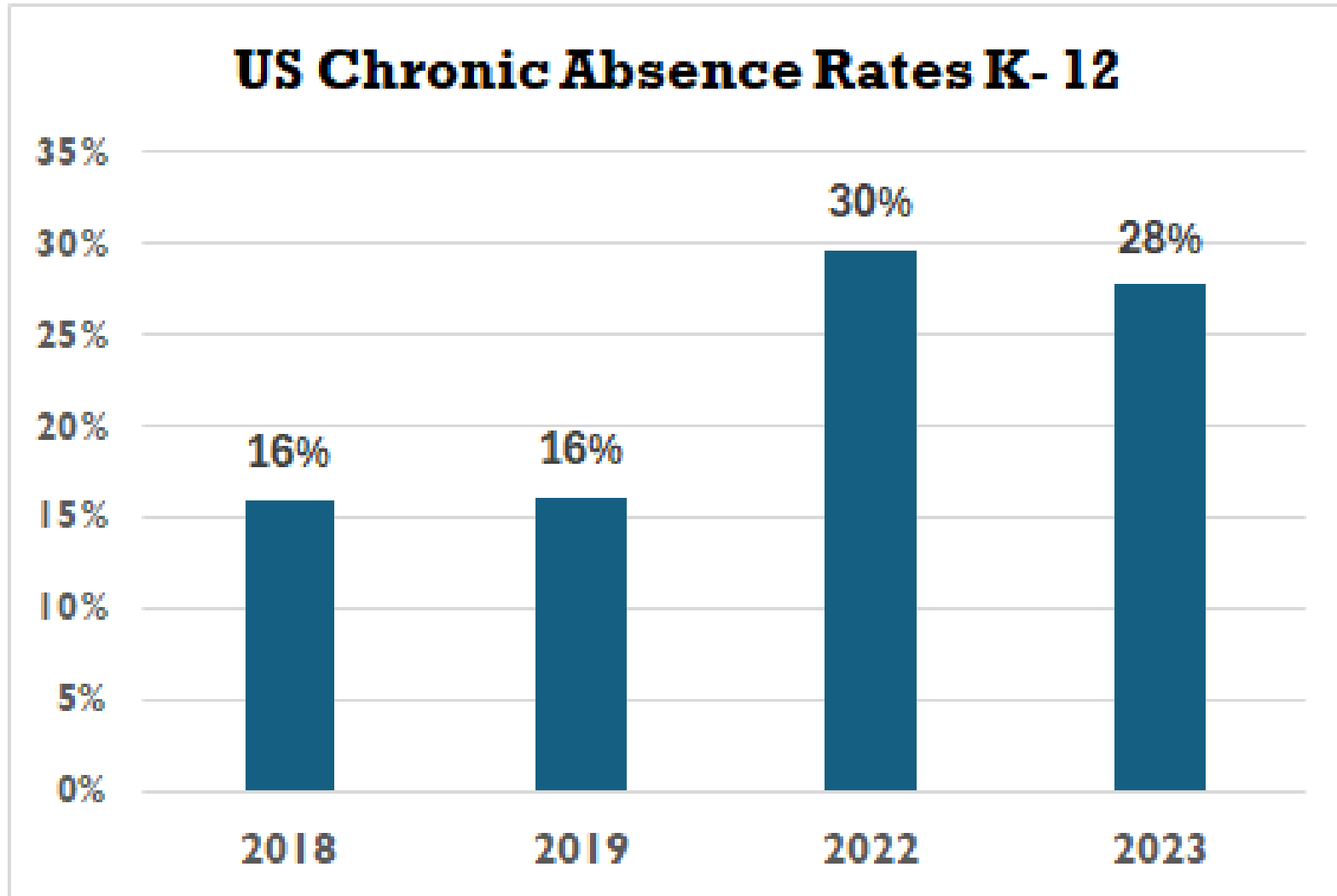
Source: US Department of Education, Ed Facts

✓ **The number of chronically absent students grew from 8.1 to 14.7 million in 2022. It still affected 13.4 million in 2023.**

✓ **2024 data from states shows some decrease but still elevated.**

✓ **2025 data still not available.**

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When Multiple Students Miss School, the Impact Ripples

missing student

OTHER STUDENTS

STUDENTS WORKING IN GROUPS

ALL TEACHERS

THE ENTIRE SCHOOL

In SY 2022-23
61% of schools had a chronic absence rate of 20%+
versus
28% prior to the pandemic

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The key to reducing chronic absence is building relationships and addressing what causes students to miss too much school

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
- 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
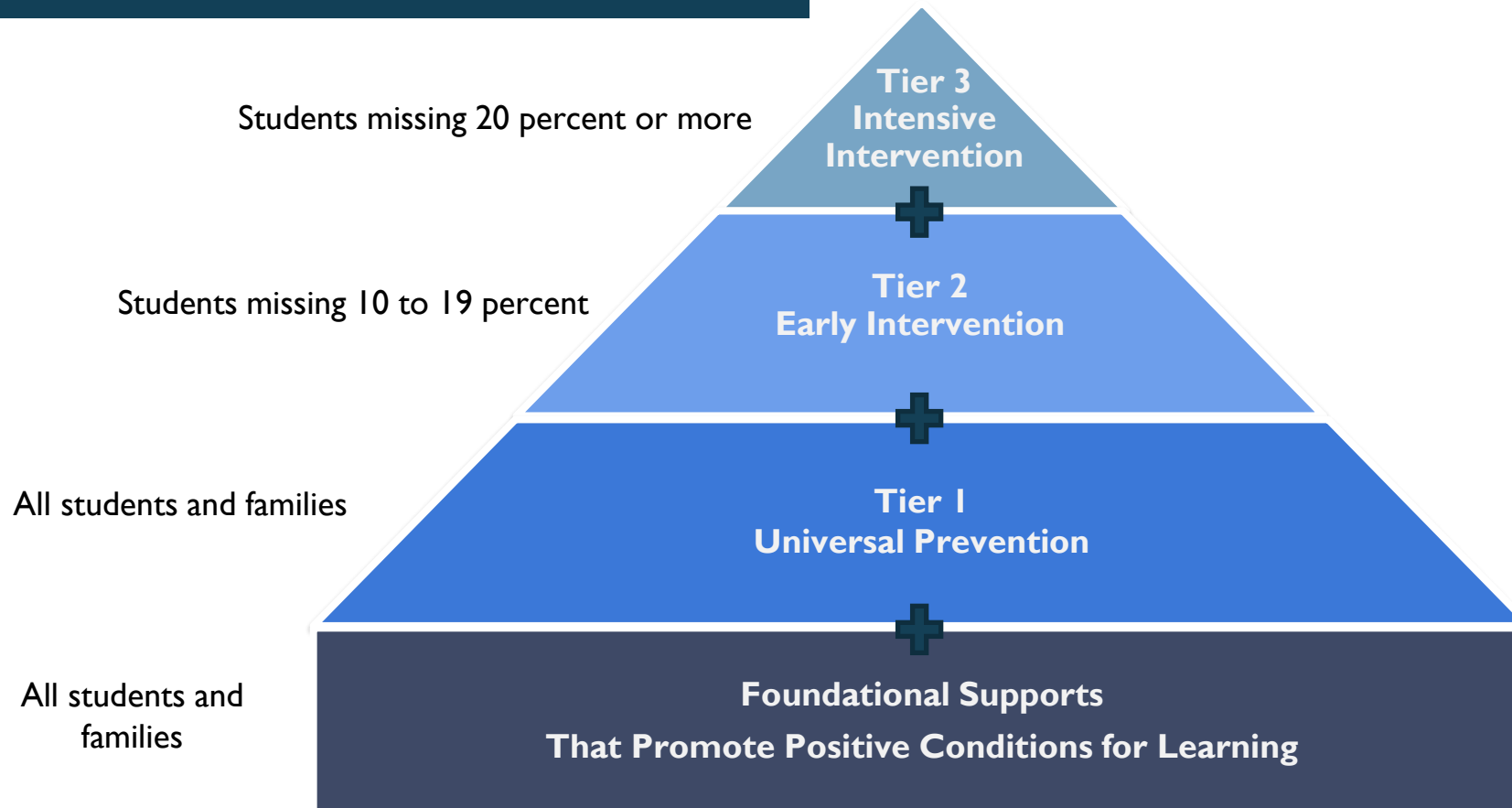
Misconceptions

- 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

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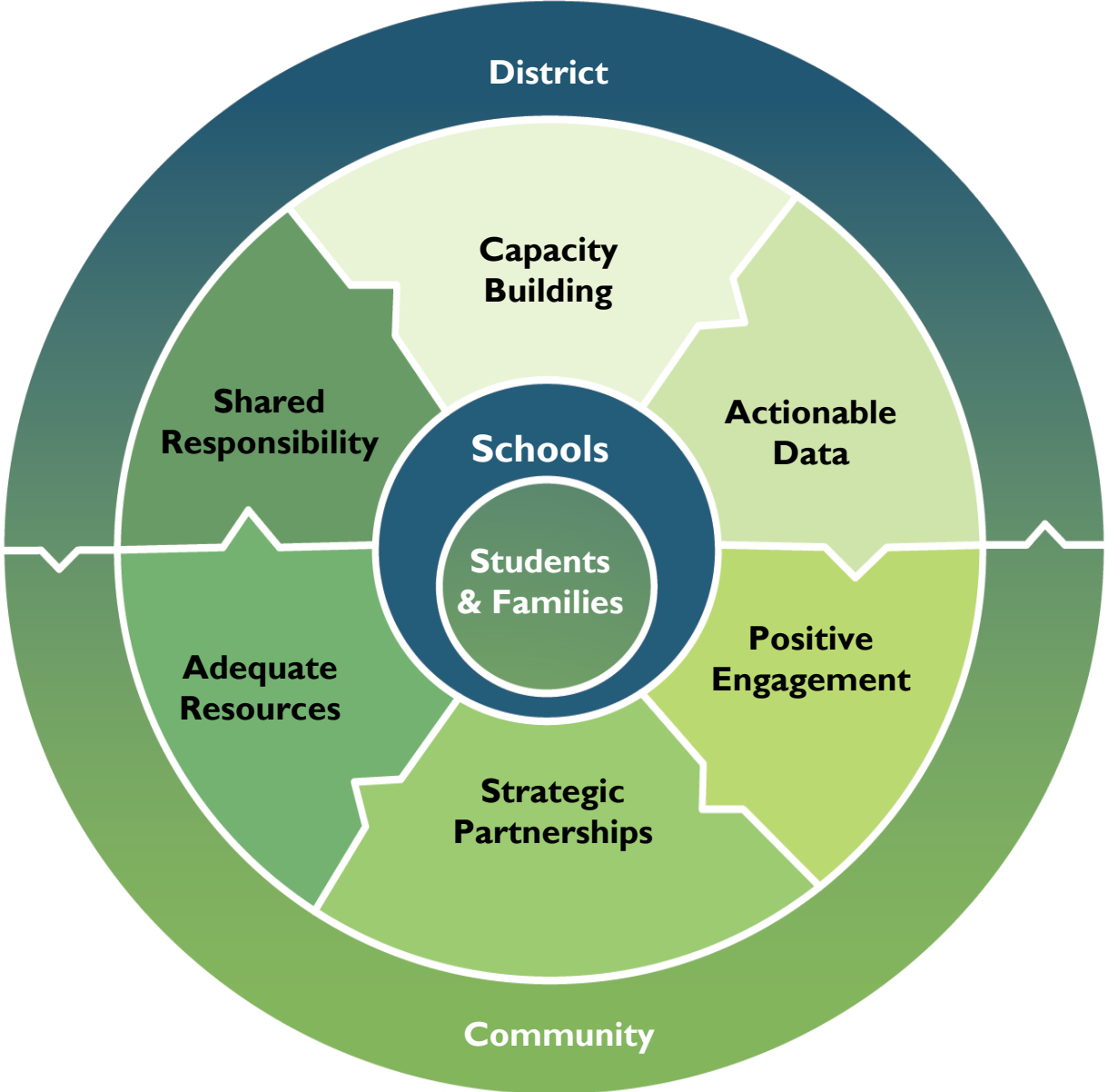# High levels of absence reflect an erosion in positive conditions for learning

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Well-Being and Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning
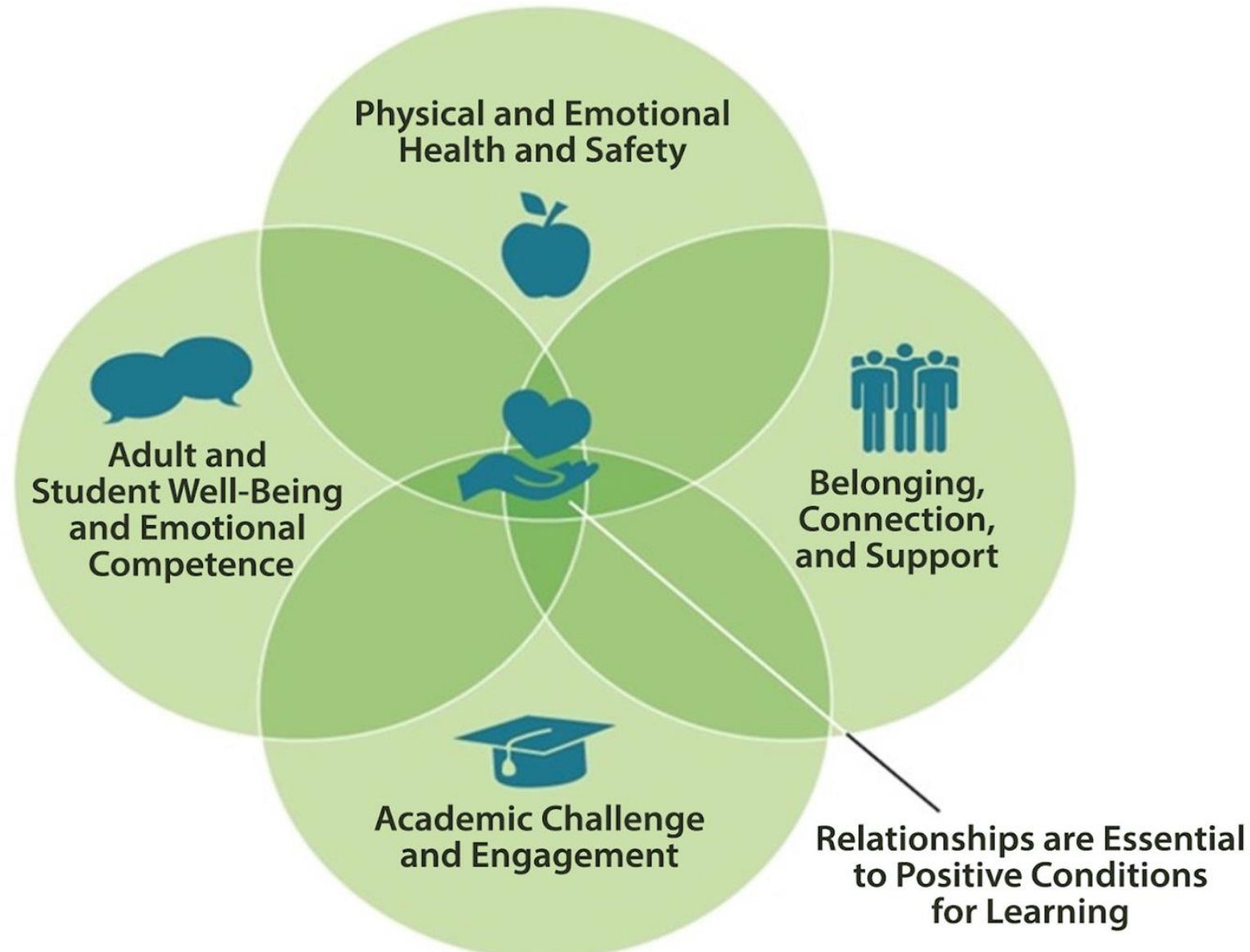
Multi-tiered support systems that begin with prevention are essential

Students missing 20 percent or more

Students missing 10 to 19 percent

All students and families

All students and families

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Tier 2
Early Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Prevention

Foundational Supports
That Promote Positive Conditions for Learning

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Key Ingredients for Improving Attendance

District

Capacity Building

Actionable Data

Shared Responsibility

Schools

Students & Families

Positive Engagement

Adequate Resources

Strategic Partnerships

Community

District and School Teams are Crucial

District Team

❑ Organize a systemic, districtwide response for policy and practice improvements

❑ Routinely unpack data, analyze and utilize data to inform district-wide action

❑ Equip site leaders in the implementation of effective school attendance teams

❑ Promote shared accountability and continuous improvement

School Team

❑ Coordinate the whole school's multi-tiered strategy to reduce chronic absence by implementing evidence-informed prevention & early intervention

❑ Match strategies with root causes that address the needs of individual & groups of chronically absent students using qualitative and quantitative data

❑ Ensure students and families receive needed supports

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The cross-departmental team is responsible for ensuring attendance is aligned with all existing initiatives to improve academic outcomes. Can be integrated into an existing team focused on continuous improvement.

District department staff with the following responsibilities should be included:

* Academics (Teaching & Learning)
* Student Supports (Social Work, Counselors, SEL, PBIS, MTSS)
* Communications
* Community Partnerships
* Data and Research
* Special Populations (SWD, ELL, Homeless)
* Health/Mental Health
* Family Engagement
* Equity Office
* Professional Development
* Transportation Director
* Building Administrators, when possible

The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal. Could be an existing or new 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
* Sports coaches
* Community School Directors and Coordinators
* Expanded Learning program staff
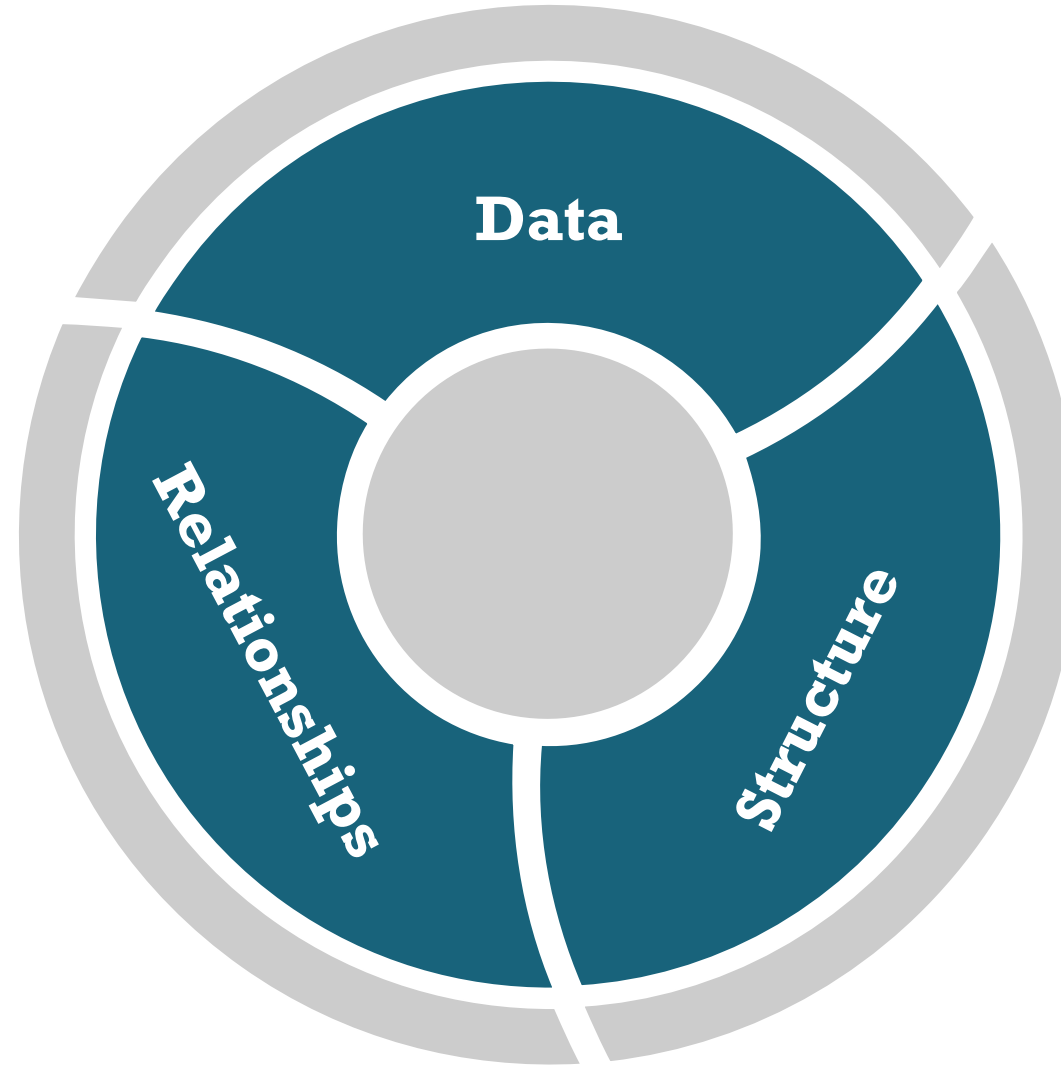* Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
* Attendance Advocates

Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.

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Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance

Students & Families

Engage External Partners

Involve All School Staff

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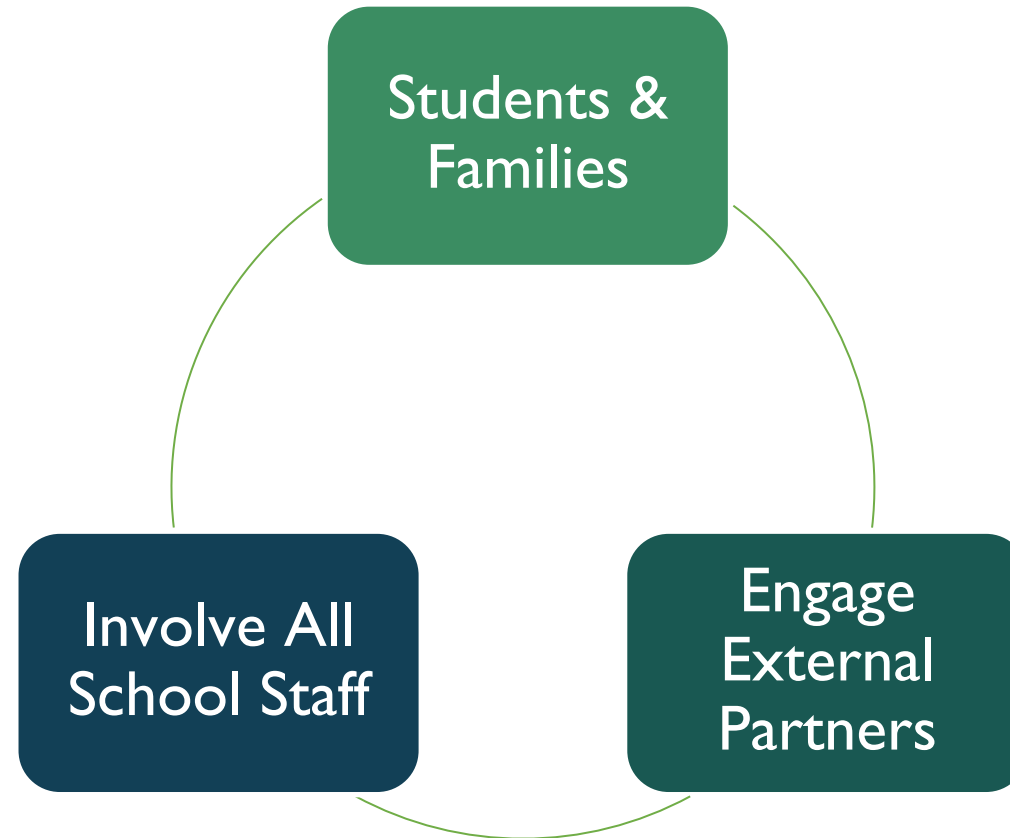
Components of a Sustained Approach

How to Organize an Effective School Team

Step One: How to Organize an Effective School Team to Improve Attendance

School leaders and educators know from experience and common sense what research confirms: showing up for class matters. Students can't benefit from investments in high quality instruction and engaging curriculum unless they are present and engaged. While everyone can help ensure students show up to class every day, the leadership role of a principal is irreplaceable. Principals are uniquely positioned to ensure their school community adopts a comprehensive, tiered approach to improving attendance that fits with their overall goal of promoting academic achievement.

How to Organize an Effective District Team to Improve Attendance

District office leaders and school-based educators know from experience and common sense what research confirms: showing up for class matters. Students can't benefit from investments in high quality instruction and engaging curriculum unless they are in attendance. The Covid-19 pandemic not only laid bare existing inequities for marginalized students and families; it further exposed the frailty of the systems that need to be in place to support positive conditions of learning for all students. Whether working in a district office or in a school building, everyone has an obligation and an opportunity to assist with cultivating a culture of high attendance.

How to Organize an Effective District Team

School and District Self-Assessment Tools

School Team Self-Assessment

Lead A Whole School Approach to Attendance	Solidly in place	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Don't Know	Rationale for Rating
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.					

Panelists

Jerimie L. Acree
Attendance & Residency Coordinator
Euclid City School District
Euclid, Ohio

Kamie Cowan
Principal
Compass Berclair
Elementary School
Memphis, Tennessee

William J. Reilly
Principal
Nathanael Greene Middle School
Providence, Rhode Island

Questions

1. Tell us about how long you've been in your position, why did you tackle chronic absence and what improvements have you seen?

2. Who is on your team? How does the team function?

3. What have been the most effective strategies for reducing chronic absence?

Compass Berclair Data

Berclair Race and Ethnicity (24-25)

Black 4.3%

Latinx 93.5%
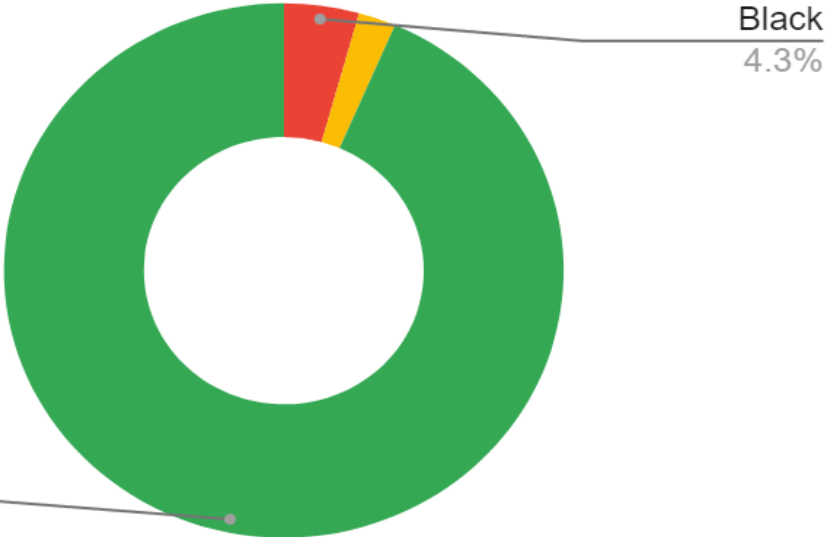
Berclair Demographics 24-25

	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Total Students	231	
Black	10	4%
White	5	2%
Latinx	216	94%

Berclair Chronically Out of School (COS) 24-25

	Q1	Q1-Q2	Q1-Q3	# Students (Q3)
Overall	4%	2%	2%	4

Berclair Historical Data and Goals

	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
ADA	96%	86%	93%	95%
Chronically Out of School (COS)	13.9%	55.5%	28%	7%

28

Quarter Breakdown for 24-25

Summer	Q1-Q2	Q3	Q4
• Whiteboard in main hall to update daily with ADA/highest class • Plan out quarterly incentives; get on calendar • Get agenda prepared for the year • Create schedule of standing blocks for daily calls, AM/PM attendance meetings • Morning Meeting priority; daily from 8:00-8:30 am (No matter what)	• Bi-weekly attendance team meetings begin • Create "watch list" • Begin consistent attendance meetings • Lunch buddies (T3 specific) • Field Trip for Attendance: Hustle Game • Counselor observes Morning Meeting to insure consistency & see what needs support	• Lunch buddies by grade band (watch list; moderate) • Continue Q1/Q2 • Field Trip for Attendance: All Around the World; AttenDANCE	• Feedback from staff on 25-26 (Keep, Stop, Start) • Big focus: tardies; monthly family meetings • Continue Q1-Q3

Nathanael Greene MS

About the Building

- 900 Students

- 69 teachers

- 28% MLL

- 20% Sp. Ed

- 90% Free and Reduced Lunch

- 15 Buses

About the Data

- 1 STAR School → bottom 1% of all schools in RI

- 6 ATSI and TSI Subgroups

- 50% of students chronically absent

- 30% of teachers chronically absent

Coming into Greene...

Issues

- Administratively, a tornado
- Gun incident
- One STAR CSIP School
- More kids in halls than classes
- Low morale
- Little joy -- nothing celebrated
- No systems and structures
- No instructional priorities
- Building work orders

Opportunities

- Really fantastic teachers trying to do their best
- Really good students, but no structures to support them
- On the cusp in many data areas -- attendance, ACCESS, etc

What we achieved
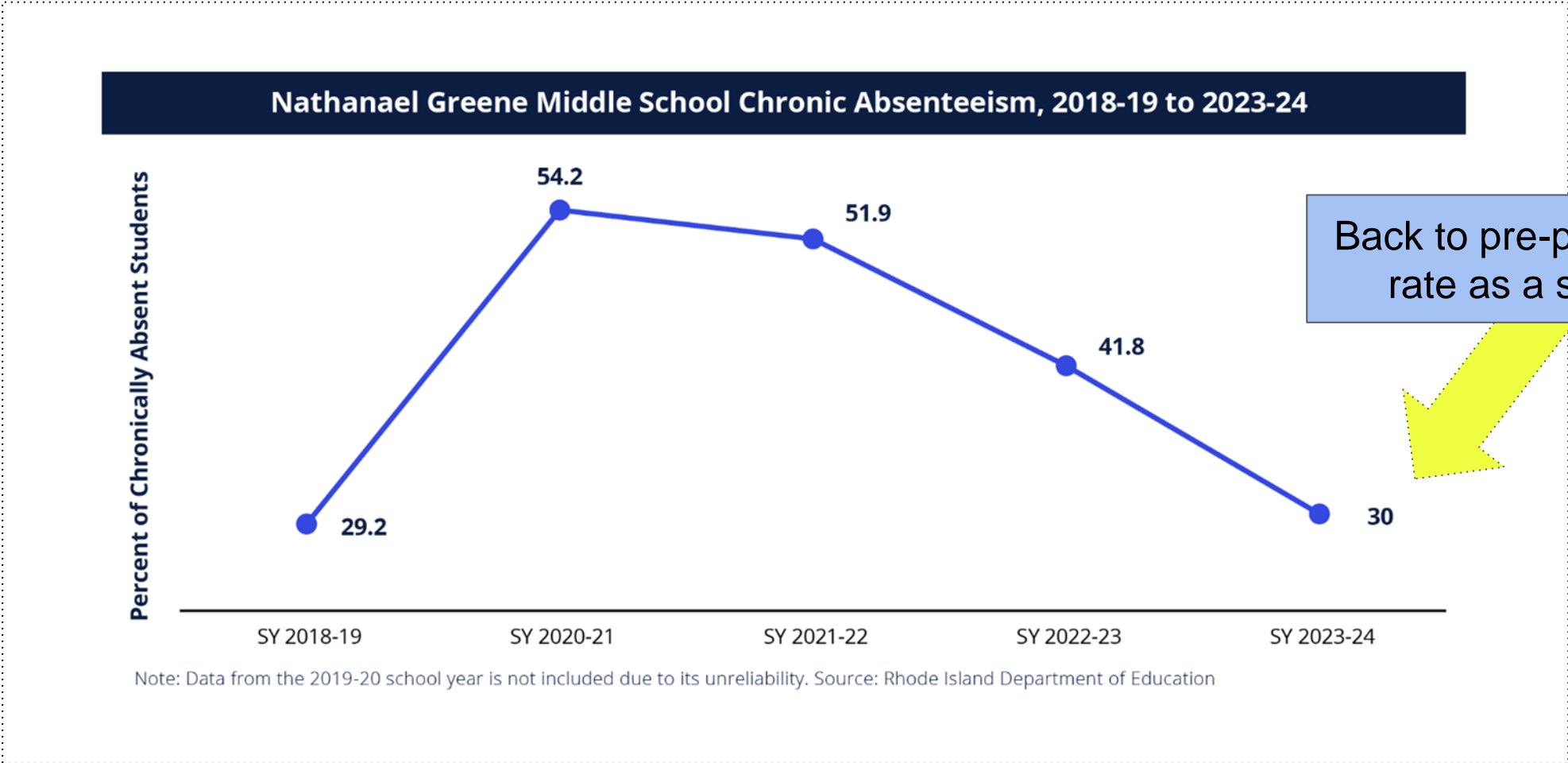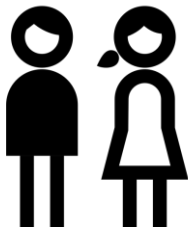
Nathanael Greene Middle School Chronic Absenteeism, 2018-19 to 2023-24

Percent of Chronically Absent Students

- SY 2018-19: 29.2
- SY 2020-21: 54.2
- SY 2021-22: 51.9
- SY 2022-23: 41.8
- SY 2023-24: 30

Back to pre-pandemic rate as a school

Note: Data from the 2019-20 school year is not included due to its unreliability. Source: Rhode Island Department of Education

How we did it

Summer: warm and personalized outreach
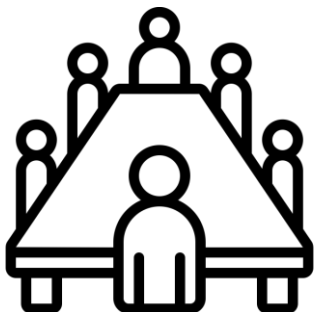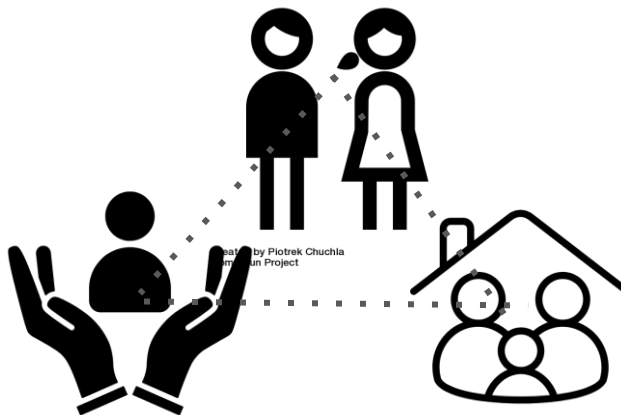
School year: Connections, check in, ongoing support

7 Period Schedule → Teaming

- 4 core teachers per team
  - 1 science, 1 SS, 1 math, 1 ELA
  - Position of team lead for each team posted
  - Students travel in pods of 26 → each team has max of 104 students
- Each core teacher teaches 4 core classes and DSZ or ELD depending on student makeup of team
- Prep is same period for each teacher
  - We take one prep each week for team meetings with AP and coaches

- ❖ Public School serving 4,425 students K - 12
- -   5 primary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, 1 online
- ❖ 84% of students enrolled are African American
- ❖ 22% of students identified as SPED
- ❖ All students qualify for FREE lunch

E EUCLID SCHOOLS

- ❖ SITG Campaign
- ❖ Proving Ground Network (Attendance Nudges)
- ❖ Class Cuts Intervention (EHS)
- ❖ Attendance Calendars (K - 5)
- ❖ Monthly Check ins w/administrators

EUCLID SCHOOLS

How do you equip school staff to be aware of this issue and to create a system of support?

How are health and behavioral health involved?

What kind of other community partners support your work? How have you engaged them?

Q & A

Key Resource:
Attendance Awareness Website

PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN

✓ **Download our free social media materials and share with local districts**

✓ **Proclaim September Attendance Awareness Month building off our sample proclamation**

✓ **Join our listserv: 44,000+ members**

Attendance Works   About   Resources   Partners   Sponsors
Blog   Newsroom   Donate   Contact   Join the Campaign!

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow! Join the campaign and receive regular updates.

Sign Up

Sign up for updates:
www.awareness.attendanceworks.org

2025 Count Us In! Toolkit

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

★ **Tips**
★ **Templates**
★ **Proven strategies**

https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/

Opportunities to Promote AAC 2025!

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

✓ Like us on Facebook

✓ Tweet using #schooleveryday @attendanceworks

✓ Follow us on LinkedIn

✓ Add a badge to your signature line or materials

AAC 2025 Proclamation!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

2025 Attendance Awareness Campaign

Attendance Works.

Mayors and other elected leaders, school boards and superintendents can signal the importance of school attendance by declaring that **September is Attendance Awareness Month**, especially while we are still experiencing impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will update the template Proclamation for 2025 in May!

Find it here: https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/proclamations-2024/

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More Resources from Attendance Works

Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.
A Toolkit for Communicating with Students and Families

Step 1: Explain Why Attendance Matters

Step 2: Cultivate A Culture of Engagement and Attendance for Students and Families

Step 3: Use Data to Determine Need for Intervention and Additional Support

Step 4: Engage Community Partners

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/showing-up-matters-for-real/

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/

Register today!

2025 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference
May 28-30 | Minneapolis, MN

http://bit.ly/csxfe25

Webinar Recording

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

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

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Feedback

Please let us know how we can improve:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AAC-April-2025

Thank you!

Attendance Works®

And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!

**Heising-Simons Foundation
Overdeck Foundation
And individual donors**