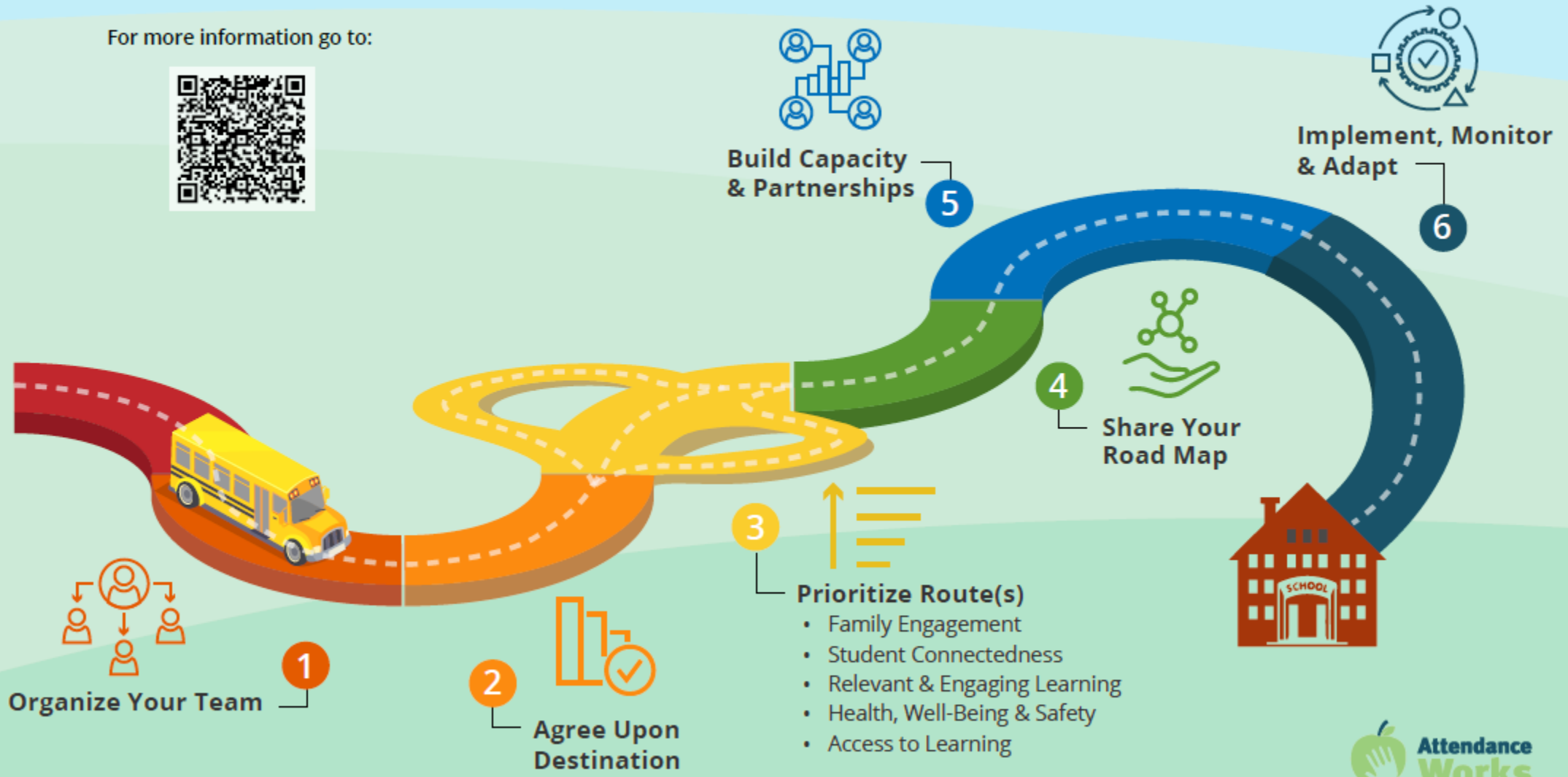


# **The 50% Challenge**

**Crafting Your State's Engagement  
and Attendance Road Map**

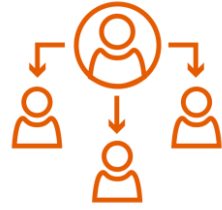
# Craft Your Engagement & Attendance State Road Map

For more information go to:



# Introduction

- ❖ During the pandemic, chronic absence almost doubled to nearly one out of three students. While it is slowly decreasing, it remains elevated.
- ❖ If we do not tackle these high levels of chronic absenteeism now, pandemic recovery will be slow, achievement gaps will widen and teaching will become even more challenging. Student and community outcomes will suffer.
- ❖ States are uniquely positioned to take action. They can build awareness, mobilize resources & partnerships, engage in data analysis, offer guidance, T.A. & peer learning. Some states have already taken actions that are yielding results.
- ❖ Every state will need to create its own road map that reflects local realities & available assets to reach the goal of reducing chronic absence 50% in five years.



## 1. Organize Your Team

- Determine who can lead the team and ensure it operates effectively. Consider co-chairs from the SEA and Governor's office.
- Include members who can offer insights and secure resources from the array of departments, agencies and disciplines that affect chronic absence. Use this opportunity to take a systems approach & connect parallel efforts.
- Identify groups that can offer student and family perspectives, as well as an understanding of rural, urban and suburban realities.
- Ensure the team has the support of skilled staff and clear agreements about how it will operate.
- Assess if this is a new group or an expansion of an existing team.



## 2. Agree Upon Destination

- As a team, determine where you are headed over the next five years.
- Use data to set goals for overall improvements and annual targets.
- Examine chronic absence by grades, student groups, geographic areas or districts.
- Use data to prioritize support and identify bright spots.
- Determine what metrics you will collect/analyze on a regular basis to measure progress throughout the year.



### 3. Prioritize Route(s)

- Consider these routes that reflect current research and insights about major barriers and solutions to chronic absence.
- These routes support [a tiered approach](#) that begins with prevention and early intervention and nurture [positive conditions for learning](#) that motivate showing up to school.
- These routes recognize that punitive approaches are often counterproductive, and legal action is best used as a last resort.
- More than one route will be needed to get to your state's destination.

#### Proposed Routes:

- ❖ **Family Engagement**
- ❖ **Student Connectedness**
- ❖ **Relevant and Engaging Learning**
- ❖ **Health, Well-Being and Safety**
- ❖ **Access to Learning**

# Examining Each Route (More Details)

**For each route, we will offer an online resource with guidance to help states examine:**

**1. What is this concept?**

**2. Why does it matter?**

**3. What is the evidence that this concept improves attendance?**

**4. Should this be a major route to reducing chronic absenteeism in our state?**

- What do we know about current levels given qualitative and quantitative data?
- What existing assets can be built upon?
- How does this route reflect or change relevant current state plans or initiatives (e.g. ESSA implementation)?

**5. Do our policies support this concept?**

- What are counterproductive policies?
- What are reinforcing policies?



## 4. Share Your Road Map

- Before moving forward, summarize, share and get feedback on your draft road map from a wide array of groups.
- Take care to field test ideas with those whose buy-in is most essential to implementation as well as with students, families and communities affected by chronic absenteeism.
- Find out what works across communities and what needs to be tailored for different realities.





## 5. Build Capacity & Partnerships

- Strengthen the ability of the state agencies and team to take a collaborative and long-term approach.
- Develop the capacity of districts and schools to support teams that can create their own road maps and advance local strategies aligned with the state plan and existing school improvement efforts.
- Cultivate, deepen and organize external partnerships needed to implement and sustain your priority routes.



## 6. Implement, Monitor & Adapt

- Implement the plan by the beginning of the subsequent school year.
- Use qualitative and quantitative data to monitor how well the plan is being implemented and whether it is improving attendance.
- Assess continuously how the road map should be revised or adapted to reach your destination.