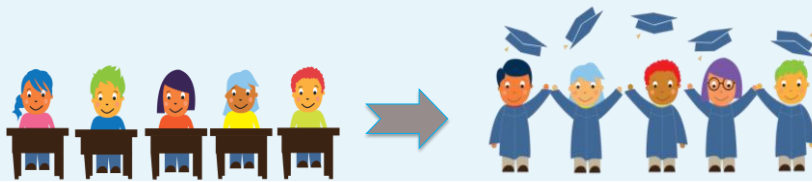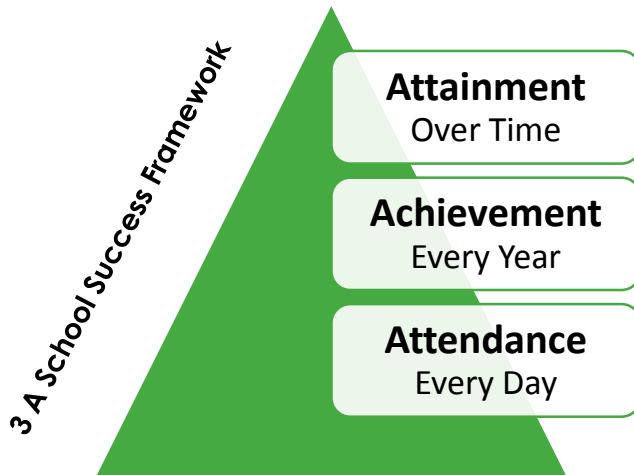# Attendance
Works

Reducing Chronic Absence

An Overlooked Opportunity for Raising Student Achievement

May 16, 2015

www.attendanceworks.org

Attendance is An Essential Ingredient of Academic Success

3 A School Success Framework

Attainment
Over Time

**Achievement**
Every Year

Attendance
Every Day

Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance
For more info go to www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement

2

What is Chronic Absence?

Califorinia now defines chronic absence as missing 10% or more of school for any reason.   Over 250 thousand elementary school children in CA are chronically absent.

Excused Absences

+

Unexcused absences → **Chronic Absence**
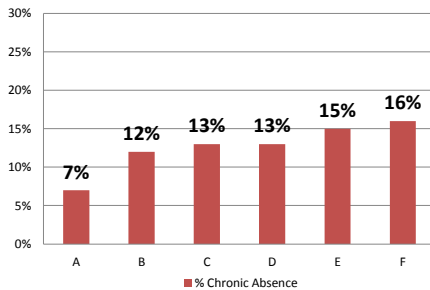
+

Suspensions
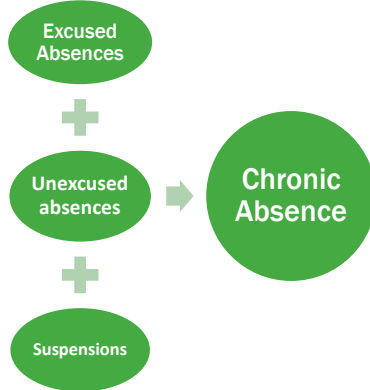
Chronic absence is different from truancy (3 unexcused absences tardies of 30 minutes or more) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).
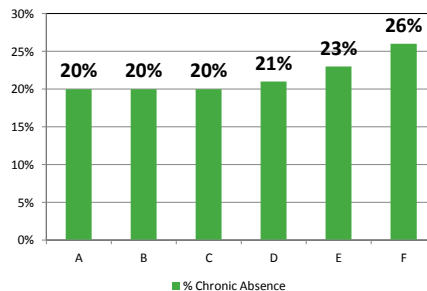
3

High Levels of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A

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

A: 7%
B: 12%
C: 13%
D: 13%
E: 15%
F: 16%

■ % Chronic Absence

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

A: 20%
B: 20%
C: 20%
D: 21%
E: 23%
F: 26%

■ % Chronic Absence

98% ADA = little chronic absence
95% ADA = don't know
93% ADA = significant chronic absence

4

Truancy (unexcused absences) Can Also Mask Chronic Absence

Number of Chronically Absent Versus Chronically Truant Students San Francisco Unified School District

- # chronic absentees - 2010-2011
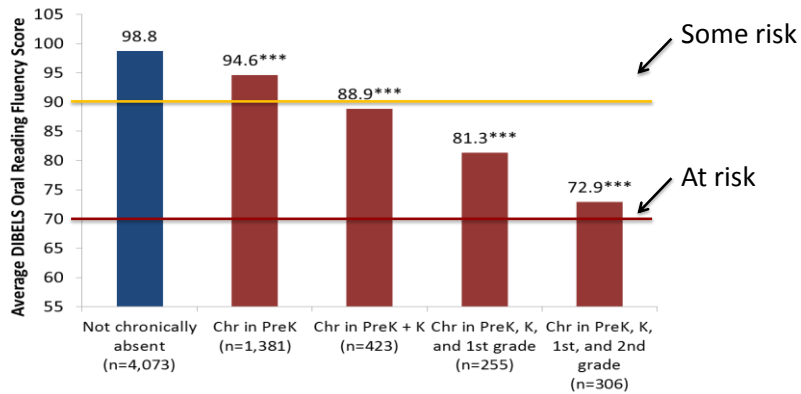- # students missing 10 days unexcused (as of May 16th 2011)
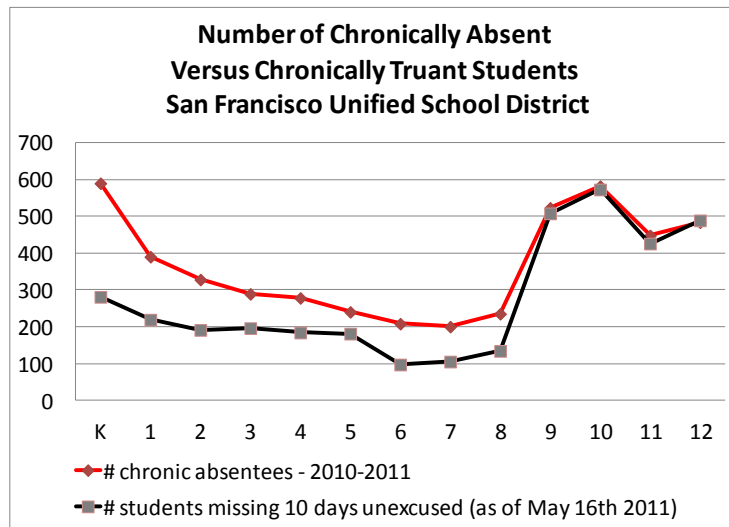
Why Does Attendance Matter for Achievement?

What we know from research around the country

Starting in PreK, More Years of Chronic Absence = Need for Intensive Reading Support By 2nd Grade
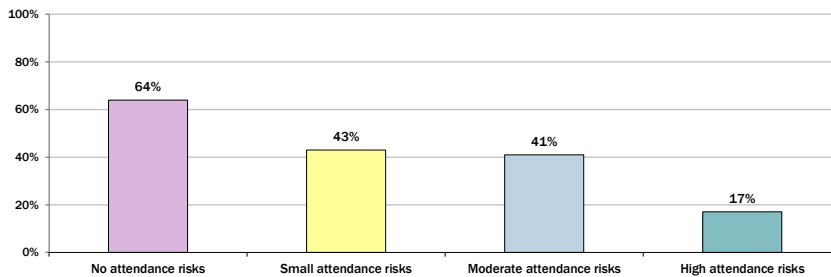

* Indicates that scores are significantly different from scores of students who are never chronically absent, at p<.05 level; **p<.01; ***p<.001

UCHICAGO**CCSR**

Chronic Absence in Kindergarten and 1st Grade = Lower 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and in 1st Grade
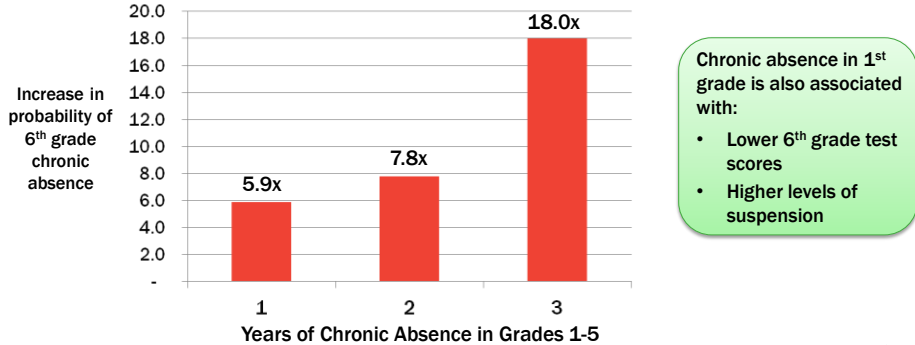

No risk	Missed less than 5% of school in K & 1st
Small risk	Missed 5-9% of days in both K & 1st
Moderate risk	Missed 5-9% of days in 1 year & 10% in 1 year
High risk	Missed 10% or more in K & 1st

Source: Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011)

Multiple Years of Elementary Chronic Absence = Worse Middle School Outcomes

Each year of chronic absence in elementary school is associated with a substantially higher probability of chronic absence in 6th grade

Increase in probability of 6th grade chronic absence

20.0
18.0
16.0
14.0
12.0
10.0
8.0
6.0
4.0
2.0
-

18.0x

7.8x

5.9x

1   2   3
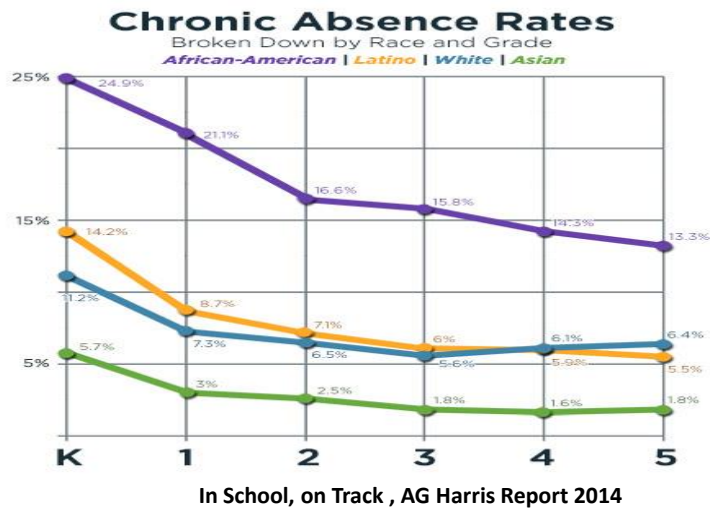
Years of Chronic Absence in Grades 1-5

Chronic absence in 1st grade is also associated with:
- Lower 6th grade test scores
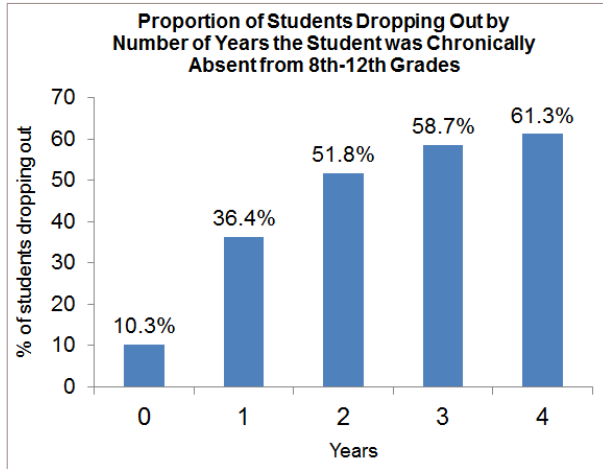- Higher levels of suspension

Oakland Unified School District SY 2006-2012, Analysis By Attendance Works

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Chronic Absence, Starting in the Early Grades, Contributes to the Achievement Gap

Chronic Absence Rates
Broken Down by Race and Grade
African-American | Latino | White | Asian

25%   24.9%
       21.1%
       16.6%   15.8%   14.3%   13.3%
15%   14.2%
       11.2%   8.7%   7.1%   6%   6.1%   6.4%
       5.7%   7.3%   6.5%   5.6%   5.9%   5.5%
5%   3%   2.5%   1.8%   1.6%   1.8%

K   1   2   3   4   5

In School, on Track , AG Harris Report 2014

10

5

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

With every year of chronic absenteeism, a higher percentage of students dropped out of school.

http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf

Attendance Is Even More Important for Graduation for Students In Poverty

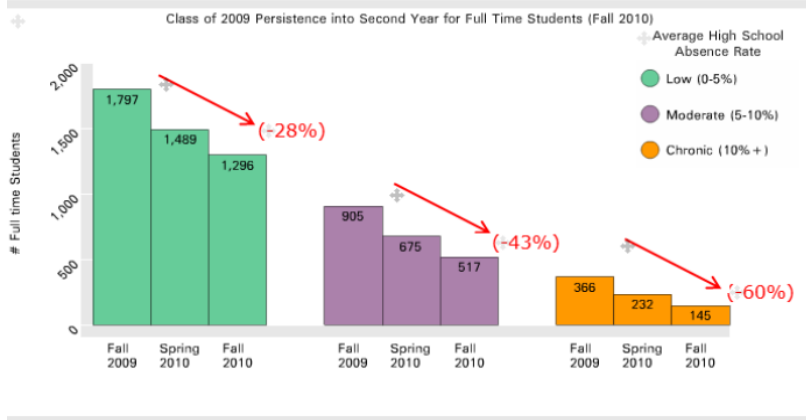Attendance in 9th Grade and Graduation in 4 Years by Lunch Eligibility
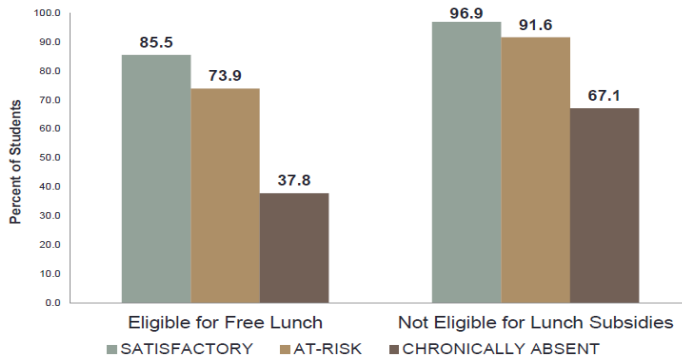
Presentation to: The Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap
November 7, 2013, CT State Dept of Education.

Chronic Absence in High School Predicts Lower College Participation

In Rhode Island, only 11% of chronically absent high school students persisted into a 2nd year of college vs. 51% of those with low absences.

Class of 2009 Persistence into Second Year for Full Time Students (Fall 2010)

Average High School Absence Rate
- Low (0-5%)
- Moderate (5-10%)
- Chronic (10%+)

Full time Students

	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010
Low	1,797	1,489	1,296	(-28%)
Moderate	905	675	517	(-43%)
Chronic	366	232	145	(-60%)

Rhode Island Data Hub: May 2014

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How Can We Address Chronic Absence?

Find Out Why Students Are Chronically Absent

Myths

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Sporadic versus consecutive absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

Barriers

- Chronic disease
- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Poor transportation
- No safe path to school

Aversion

- Child struggling academically
- Lack of engaging instruction
- Poor school climate and ineffective school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience

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Going to School Every Day Reflects When Families Have …

Hope
for a better future

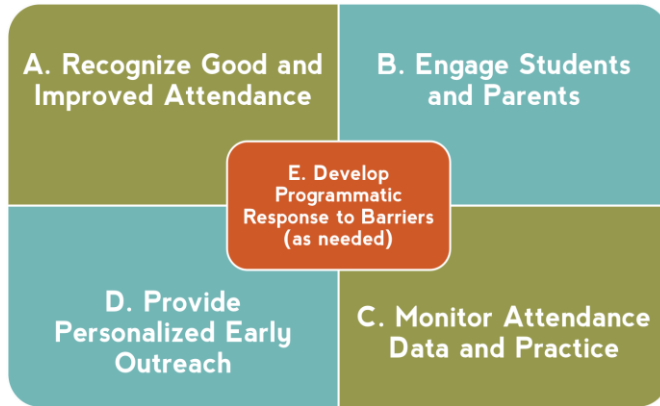+

Faith
that school will help you or your child succeed

+

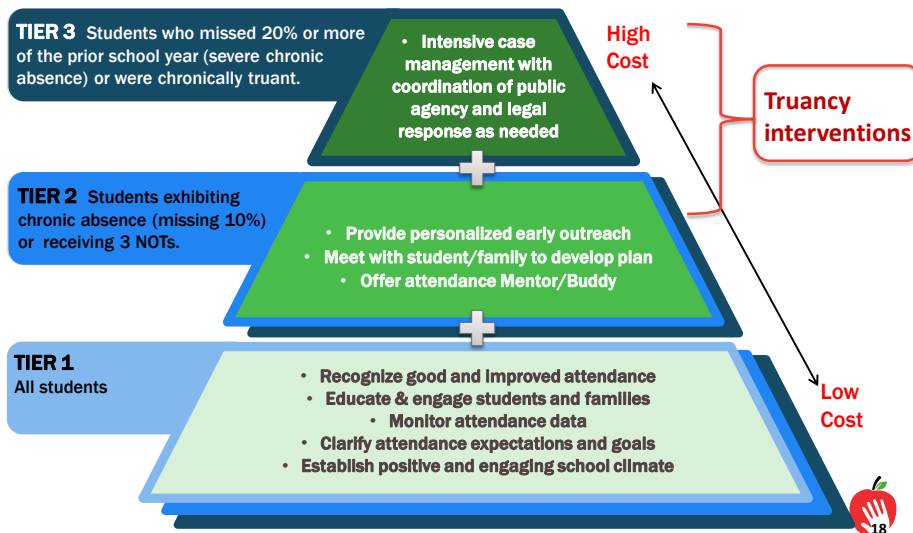## Capacity
Resources, skills, knowledge needed to get to school

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AW Recommended Site Level Strategies

A. Recognize Good and Improved Attendance

B. Engage Students and Parents

E. Develop Programmatic Response to Barriers (as needed)

D. Provide Personalized Early Outreach

C. Monitor Attendance Data and Practice

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Improving Attendance Requires a
Multi-Tiered Approach

TIER 3 Students who missed 20% or more of the prior school year (severe chronic absence) or were chronically truant.
- Intensive case management with coordination of public agency and legal response as needed

High Cost

Truancy interventions

TIER 2 Students exhibiting chronic absence (missing 10%) or receiving 3 NOTs.
- Provide personalized early outreach
- Meet with student/family to develop plan
- Offer attendance Mentor/Buddy

TIER 1 All students
- Recognize good and improved attendance
- Educate & engage students and families
- Monitor attendance data
- Clarify attendance expectations and goals
- Establish positive and engaging school climate

Low Cost

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Tier 1: Creating a positive , welcoming & engaging school climate

Attendance is higher when schools:

- promote a sense of belonging and connection to the school and among students and families
- make learning so engaging students don't want to miss class
- engage in restorative practice not punishment
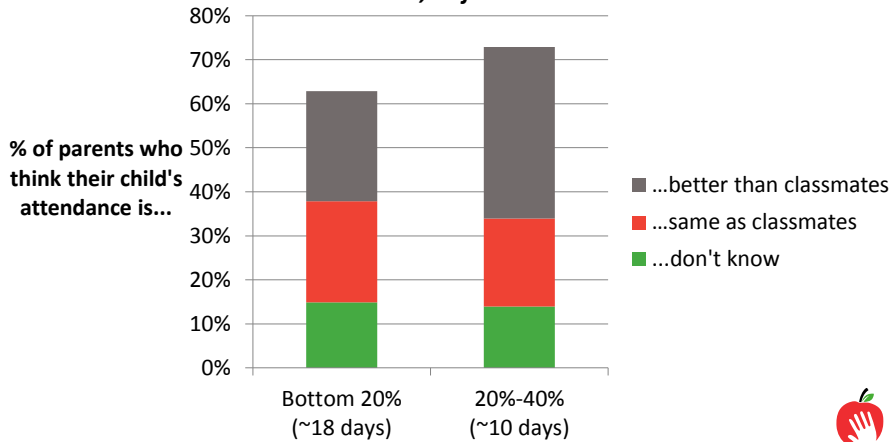- help our most economically challenged families and students meet their basic needs

Tier 1: Communication, Education, and Engagement
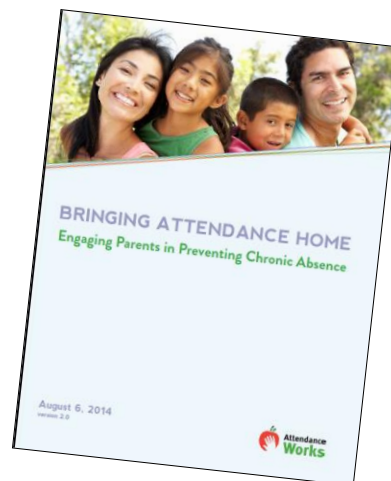
Pilot Survey by Todd Rogers At Harvard

Vast majority of parents, even those of students with excessive absences, believe their child's attendance is same as classmates, better than classmates, or just don't know

% of parents who think their child's attendance is...

- ...better than classmates
- ...same as classmates
- ...don't know

Bottom 20% (~18 days) 20%-40% (~10 days)

Harvard research study found comparison reduced absence by 5-10% for all students, regardless of severity of absenteeism

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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:

In first 2 weeks	2 absences
In first month (4 weeks)	2-3 absences
In first 2 months (8 weeks)	4 absences

Missing 10% any time after

23
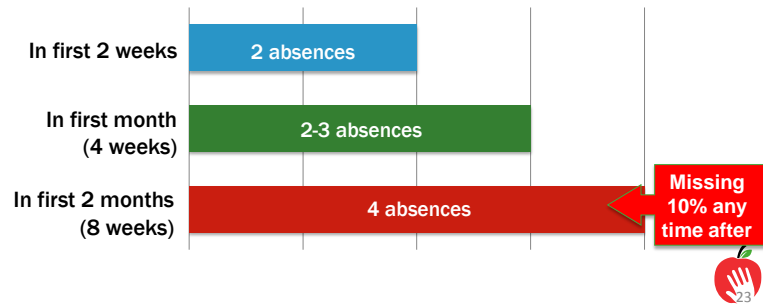
Possible Tier 2 Interventions
(*See Power of Positive Connections Toolkit*)

Recruit for engaging **Before- or After-School Activities**

Partner with families/students to develop **Student Attendance Success Plan**

Connect to **Walk- to-School Companion**

Assign **Attendance Buddies**

Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and Engagement

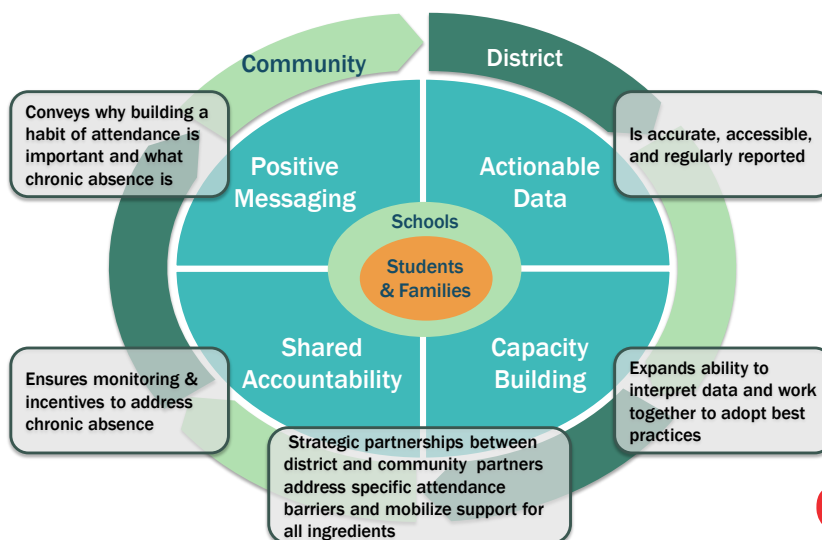Offer plan or contacts for **Health Support**

24
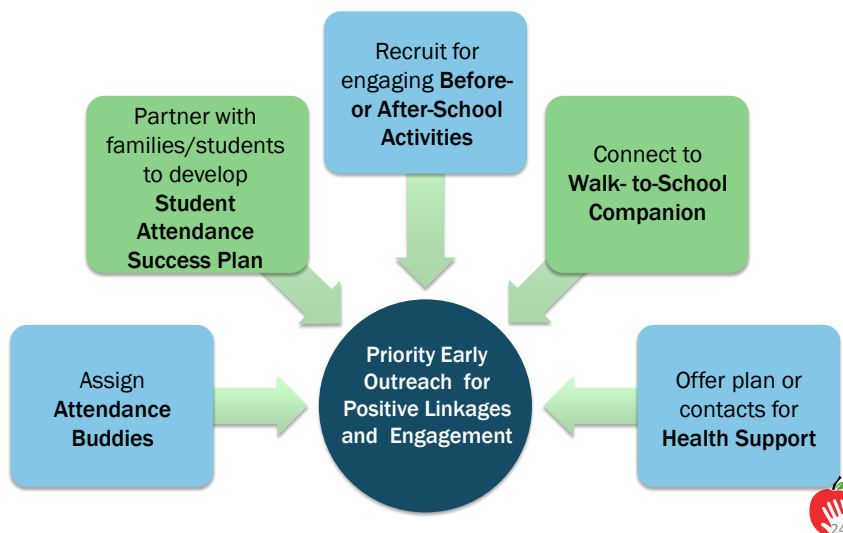
Key Finding: Success Mentors & Supporting Infrastructure Substantially Improved Student Attendance

- **Students with prior histories of chronic absenteeism with a Success Mentor gained nearly two additional weeks of school (9 days), which is educationally significant.**

- **In the top 25% of schools, students with Success Mentors gained one additional month of school.**

- **High School students with Success Mentors (including those overage for their grade) were 52% more likely to remain in school the following year.**

- **Mentees reported they liked having a mentor and the mentor helped improve their attendance, schoolwork, motivation, and confidence.**

MAYOR'S INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE 25

Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability

Community

District

Conveys why building a habit of attendance is important and what chronic absence is

Positive Messaging

Actionable Data

Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported

Schools

Students & Families

Ensures monitoring & incentives to address chronic absence

Shared Accountability

Capacity Building

Expands ability to interpret data and work together to adopt best practices

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

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Accountability for Chronic Absence Built into LCAP Eight Priorities

1. Teachers, Materials, Facilities
2. Academic Standards
3. Parent involvement
4. Student achievement
5. Pupil Engagement: Measured by all of the following, as applicable: School attendance rates; Chronic absenteeism rates; Middle school dropout rates; High school dropout rates; High school graduation rates.
6. School Climate: Measured by all of the following, as applicable: Pupil suspension rates; Pupil expulsion rates; Other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness.
7. Access to Courses
8. Other student outcomes.

CH1LDREN NOW   27   PRO-KID

What Tools are Available to Calculate Chronic Absence?

FREE FROM ATTENDANCE WORKS!

The District Attendance Tracking Tools (DATT) and School Attendance Tracking Tools (SATT) are available in Three Modules!

- Grades K-5
- Grades 6-8 and
- Grades 9-12

We also offer a Tool to Combine the Modules for K-12 reports.

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New California Tools Available Soon

Additional Features in CalDATT and CalSATT:

- **Elementary Module expanded to include TK**

- **Supplemental Truancy Module**

- **Additional Detail on Days of Suspension**

- **Easy One-Button Interface for Aeries users**

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How Can Chronic Absence Data Be Used?
To identify the right points for interventions

What percentage of students in each grade level were MODERATELY or SEVERELY chronically absent?
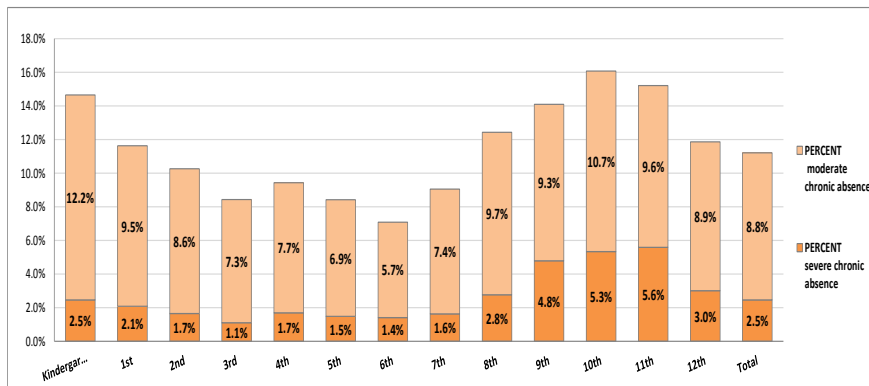
Example from K-12 Combination Tool

30

How Can Chronic Absence Data Be Used?
### *To Find Positive Outliers and Schools Needing Greater Support*

Chronic Absence Levels Among Oakland Public Schools (2009-10)

	Elementary	Middle	High School
# Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence	9	0	0
# Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence	17	4	1
# Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence	25	8	6
# Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence	9	4	9
Total No. Schools	60	16	16
Highest % of Chronic Absence	31.5%	32.8%	42.1%
Lowest % of Chronic Absence	0.3%	6.9%	7.9%
Median	12.7%	14.9%	21.0%
Mean	11.9%	15.6%	22.4%

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California Truancy Supplement Looks at Absences by Excused, Unexcused, and Suspensions

How much school did *chronically absent* students miss due to excused absences, unexcused absences, or suspensions?

32

16
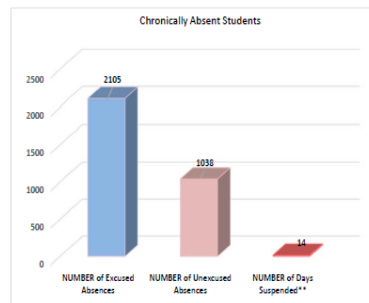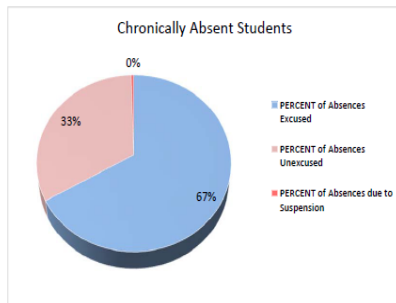
Los Angeles
Attendance Improvement Program

- **Data-driven action:** Data are used identifying where to place counselors, which students to target & to evaluate success.

- **Attendance Improvement Counselors:** Attendance Improvement Counselors, along with Vista national service members helped the schools track data, adopt universal and targeted interventions, create incentives for good attendance, reach out to students and parents, and ensure a timely response to poor attendance.

- **Capacity-building:** The Attendance Improvement Counselors also charged with building the capacity of the school staff, parents and community partners to understand attendance laws, use data, and develop a comprehensive approach that includes prevention and early intervention.

LAUSD Attendance Improvement Program Outcomes

Program Impact in Year 1 (2011-2012)

	Missing 7 days or less (96%+)			Missing 15 or more days (<91%)		
AIP Schools	2010-11	2011-12	Increase	2010-11	2011-12	Reduction
Kindergarten	37.24%	57.56%	+20.32%	31.32%	17.87%	-13.45%
Grade 9	51.45%	58.82%	+7.37%	27.65%	22.30%	-5.35%
School-Wide	2010-11	2011-12	Increase	2010-11	2011-12	Reduction
Elementary	55.56%	63.03%	+7.47%	18.64%	13.71%	-4.93%
Secondary	54.29%	58.65%	+4.36%	23.59%	20.36%	-3.23%

Note: Program operated in 77 schools including 52 elementary and 25 high schools with poor K and 9th grade attendance

Characteristics of More Successful AIP programs

- **Strength-based approach with more positive perceptions of parents, higher expectations of their students and parents**
- **Greater levels of parent engagement**
- **A shared belief that everyone had a role in improving attendance and should work together**
- **Deeper levels of commitment to program implementation and delving into the causes of absence**
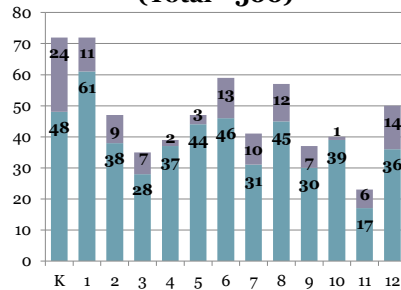- **School leadership made improving attendance a high priority**

Initial analysis found @ 500 (16%) of Del Norte students were chronically absent

No. of Del Norte Students with Problematic Attendance (2009-2010) (Total = 509)
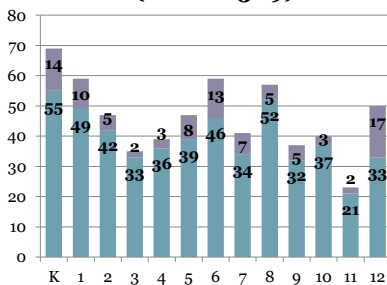
chronic absence

No. of Del Norte Students With Problematic Attendance (2010-2011) (Total =500)

chron absence   # severe chronic absence

Chronic Absence in Del Norte (elementary) 11/12 – 13/14

Percentage of Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence Over Time, by Grade Level
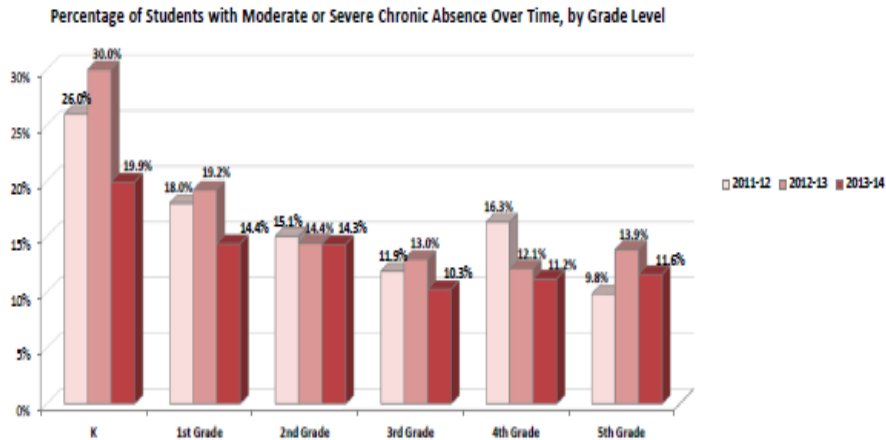
Addressing Chronic Absence in Del Norte

- Attendance is a top priority
- Monthly attendance reports to the board
- Provide chronic absence data
- Professional development for principals and social workers
- Positive messaging
- Leveraged LCAP/LCFF funds to hire social workers for every school
- Partnering with the Yurok tribe to improve attendance of tribal members

Scaling Up: Proposed Local to State Pathway

Advance local practice through peer learning
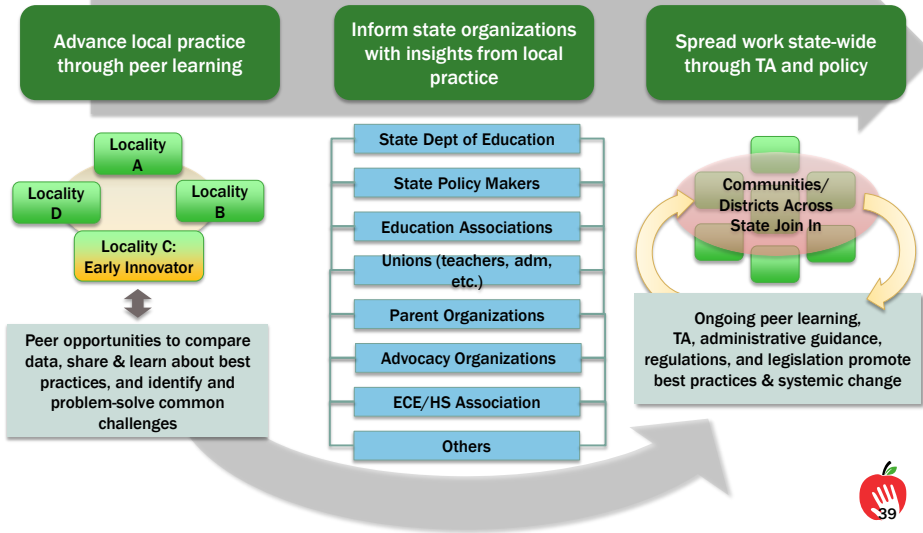
Inform state organizations with insights from local practice

Spread work state-wide through TA and policy

Locality A

Locality D

Locality B

Locality C: Early Innovator

Peer opportunities to compare data, share & learn about best practices, and identify and problem-solve common challenges

State Dept of Education

State Policy Makers

Education Associations

Unions (teachers, adm, etc.)

Parent Organizations

Advocacy Organizations

ECE/HS Association

Others

Communities/ Districts Across State Join In

Ongoing peer learning, TA, administrative guidance, regulations, and legislation promote best practices & systemic change

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The Superintendents Call to Action
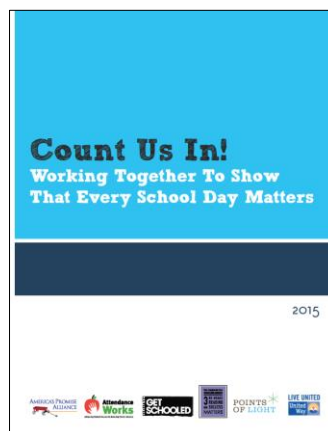
Own the Issue

Mobilize the Community

Drive With Data

To sign-up for the Call to Action, or to learn more, please visit: www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action

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Count Us In Toolkit : A How To Guide

- **Download our free materials and toolkit and share with local districts**

- **Encourage schools and community partners to join our listserv: 2,300+ members**

Count Us In!
Working Together To Show
That Every School Day Matters

2015

http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkit/

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2015 Webinar Series

All webinars held from 2-3:30 Eastern Time.

- ➢ **April 15, 2015**, **Ready, Set, Go!: Launching Attendance Awareness Month 2015**

- ➢ **May 13, 2015**, **Start Strong: Address the Attendance Gap in the Early Grades**

- ➢ **August 12, 2015**, **Finish Strong: Close the Attendance Gap in High School**

- ➢ **September 9, 2015**, **Map the Attendance Gap: Use Data to Target Action**

For sign up and recordings see:
http://www.attendanceworks.org/peer-learning-resources/

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Additional Resources

- **Revised CSBA Board Policy**
- **AG Harris– sample LCAP guidance**
  http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/tr/draft-sample-lcap.pdf
- **Attendance Works: Accountable for Attendance:**
  http://www.attendanceworks.org/policy-advocacy/state-reports/california/

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Chronic Absence =
The Warning Light On A 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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Discussion: Does this resonate? What are implications?

- What might districts be doing to improve attendance that might be a disservice?
- What might you tackle first given which students are most affected?
- Any successful communication devices or programs that engage more parents?
- What interventions does your district provide to truant or chronically absent students?
- How might you address this in your LCAP?