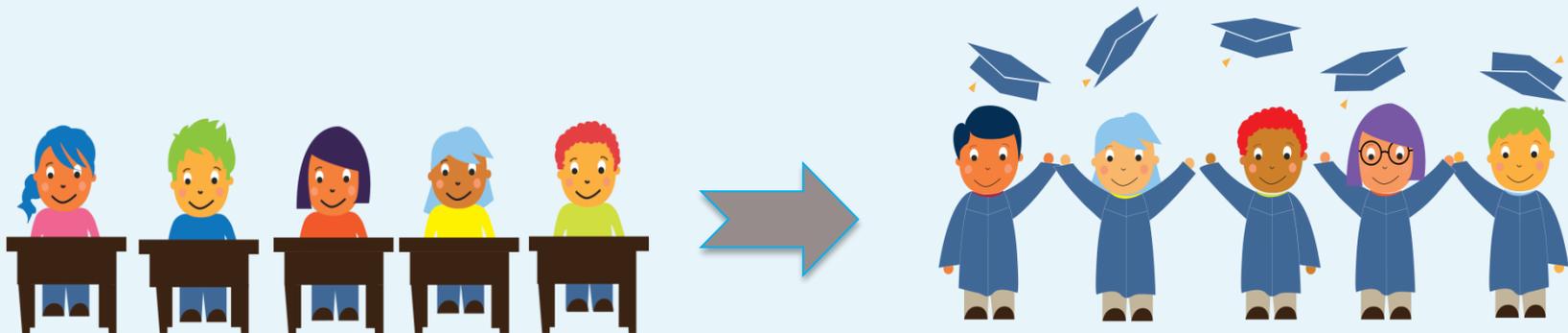
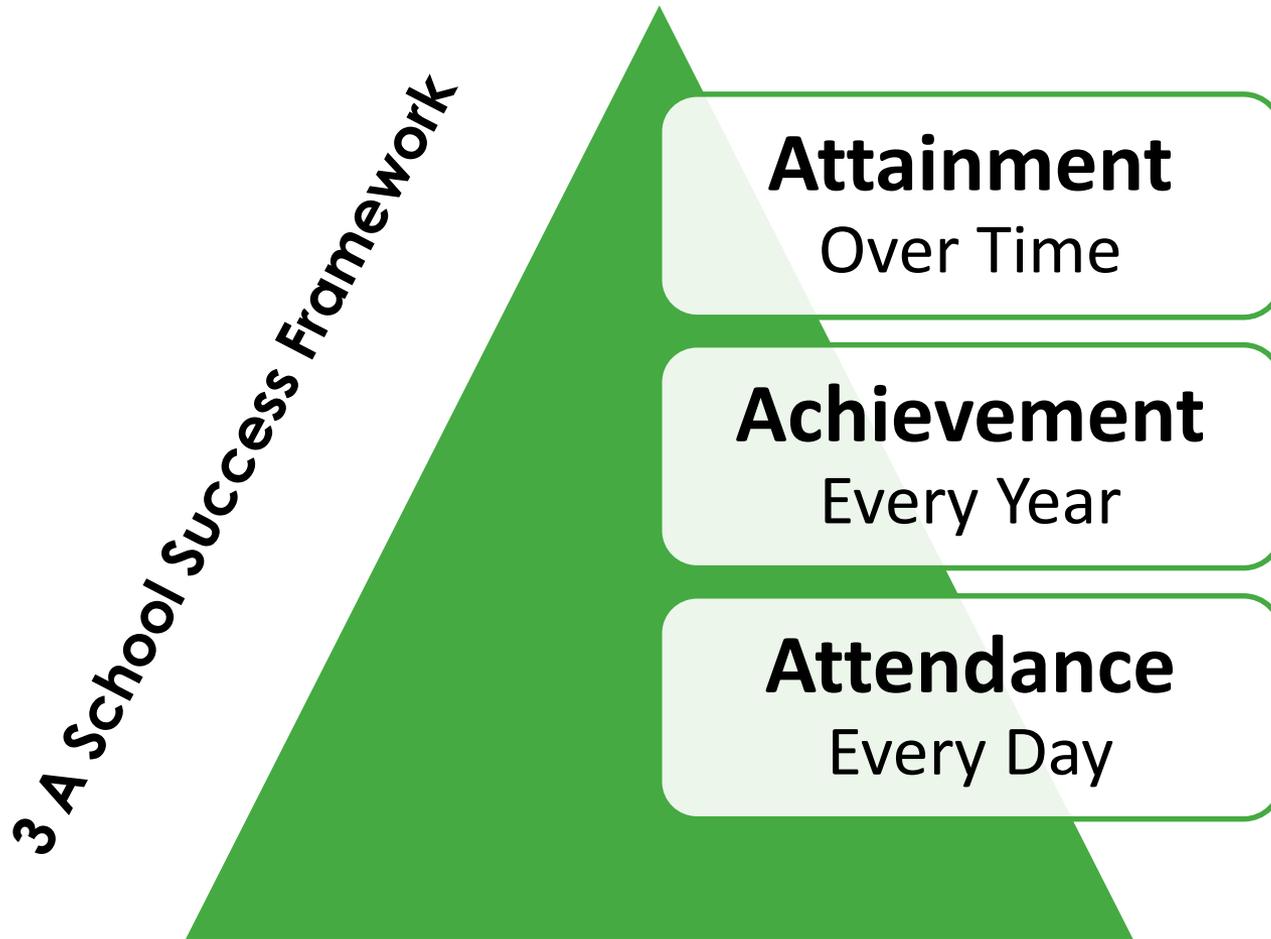


# Reducing Chronic Absence

*An Overlooked Opportunity for Raising Student  
Achievement*



# Attendance is An Essential Ingredient of Academic Success



Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance  
For more info go to [www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement](http://www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement)



# What is Chronic Absence?

California 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.



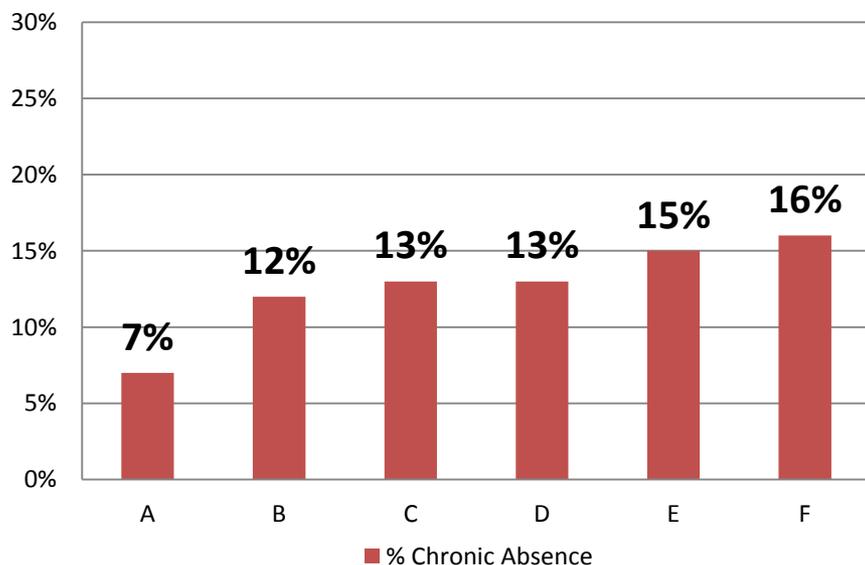
Chronic absence is different from truancy (3 unexcused absences tardies of 30 minutes or more) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).



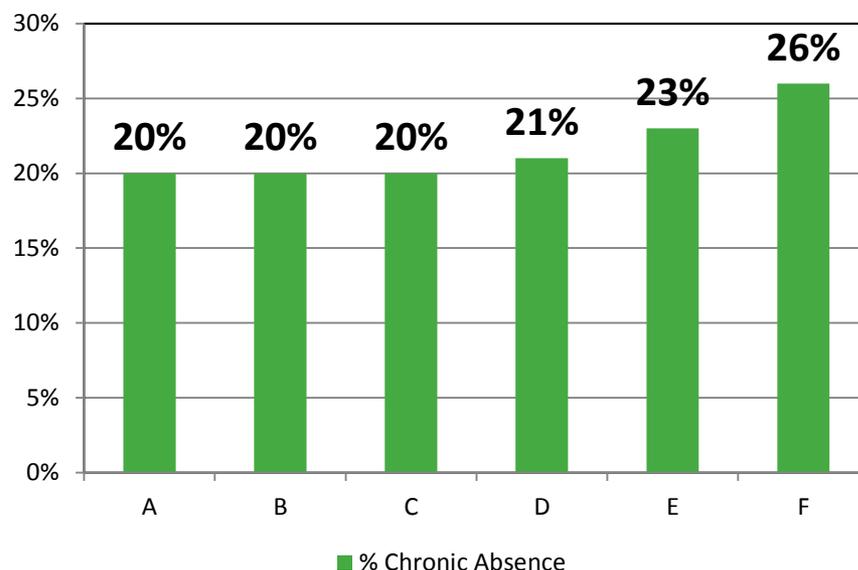
# High Levels of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

**90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A**

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



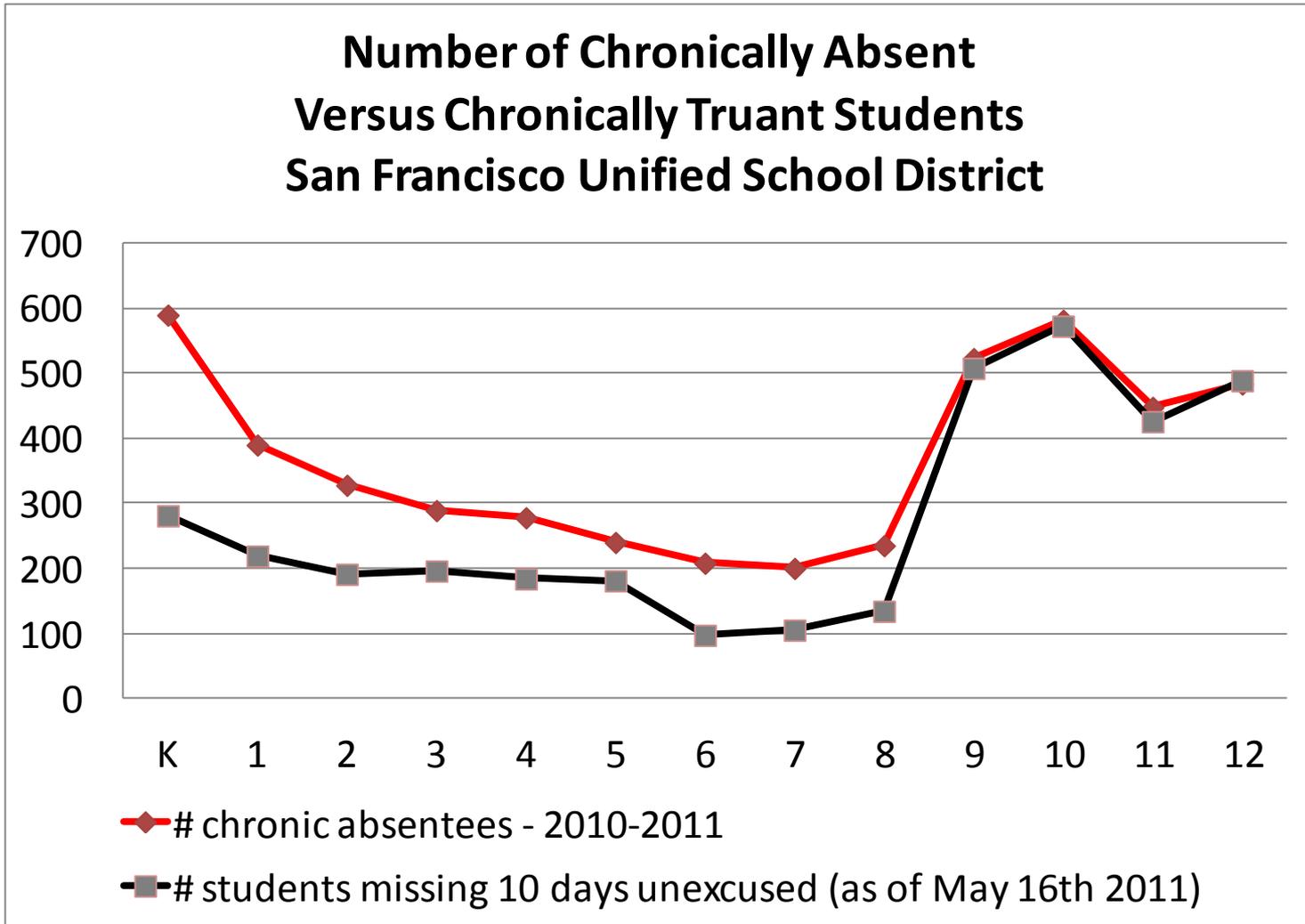
Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12



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



# Truancy (unexcused absences) Can Also Mask Chronic Absence

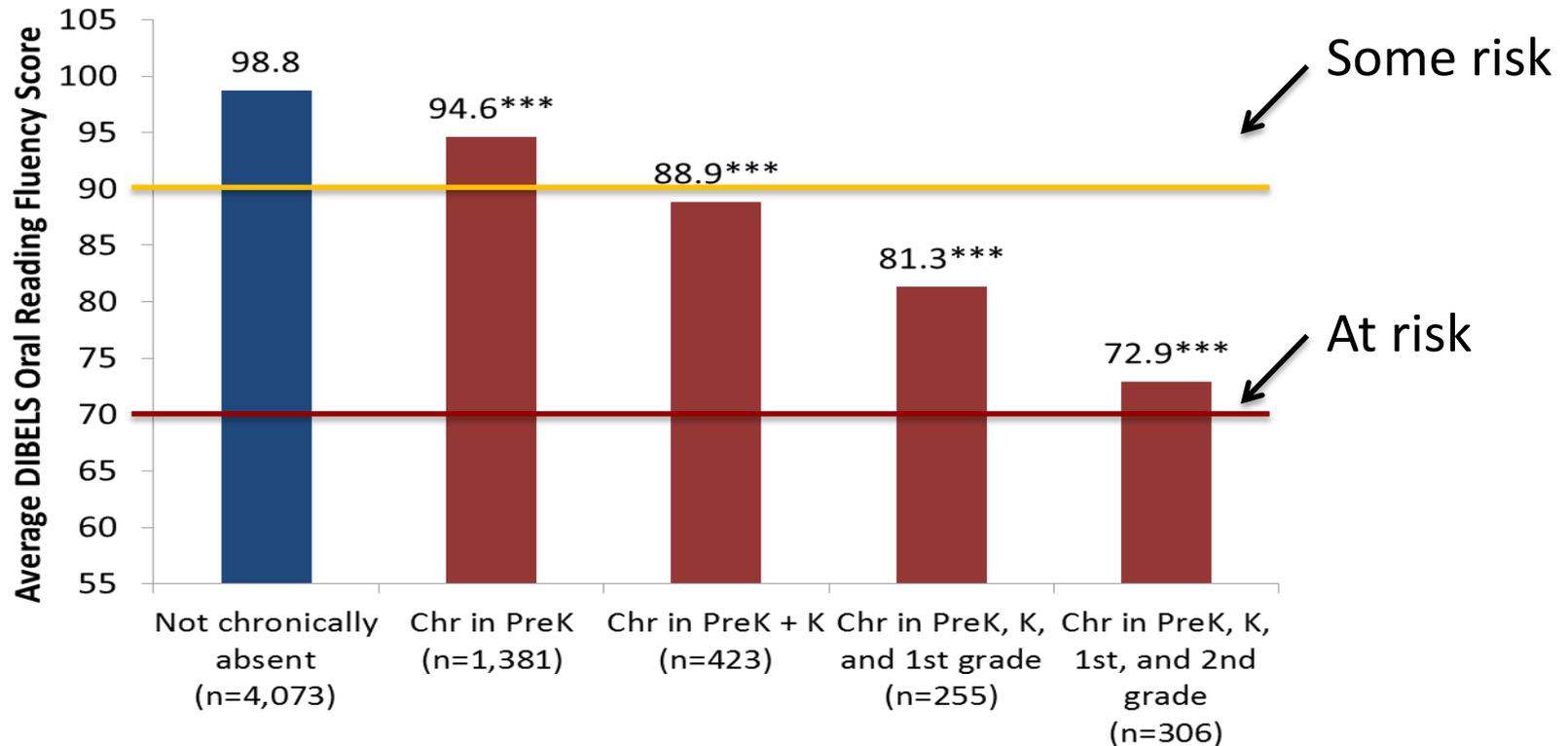


# Why Does Attendance Matter for Achievement?

*What we know from research around the country*



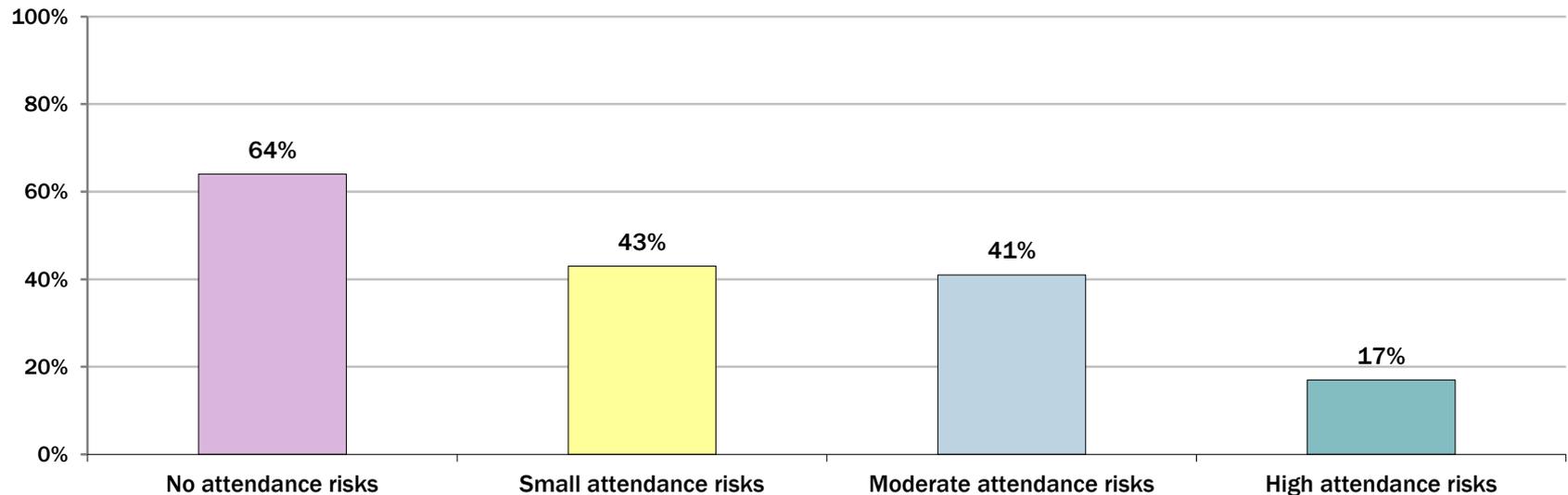
# Starting in PreK, More Years of Chronic Absence = Need for Intensive Reading Support By 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade



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

# Chronic Absence in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade = Lower 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency

*Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade*



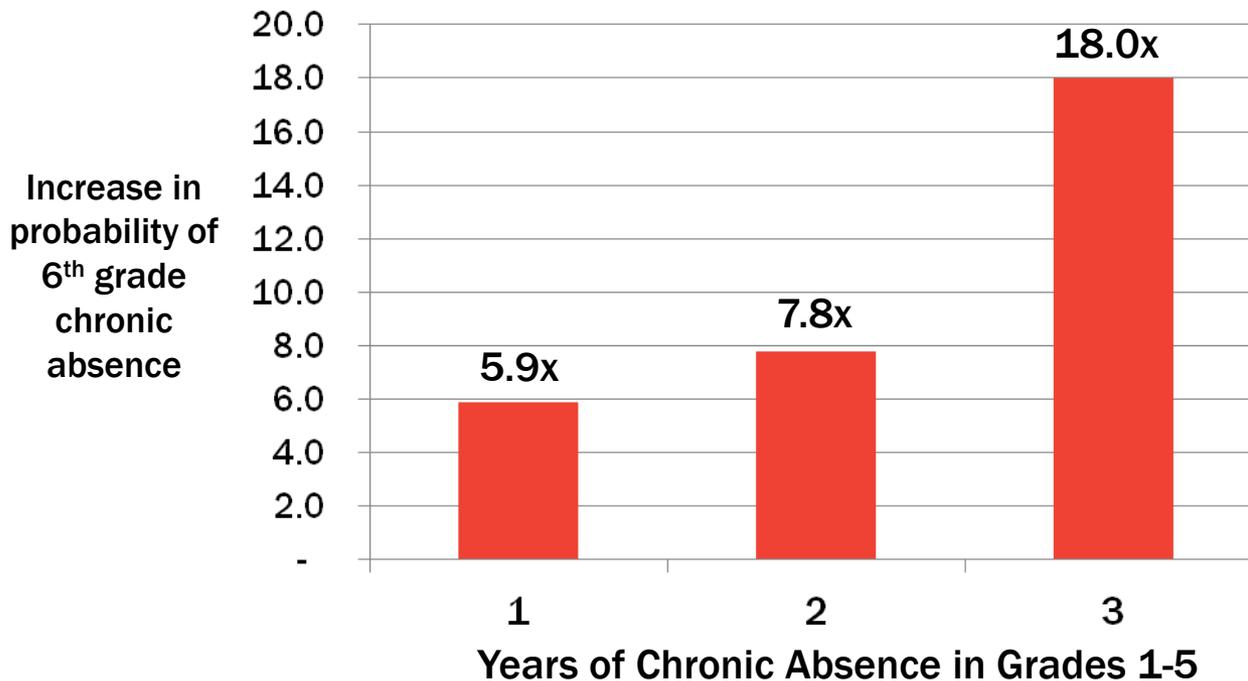
<b>No risk</b>	<b>Missed less than 5% of school in K &amp; 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Small risk</b>	<b>Missed 5-9% of days in both K &amp; 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Moderate risk</b>	<b>Missed 5-9% of days in 1 year &amp; 10% in 1 year</b>
<b>High risk</b>	<b>Missed 10% or more in K &amp; 1<sup>st</sup></b>

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



# Multiple Years of Elementary Chronic Absence = Worse Middle School Outcomes

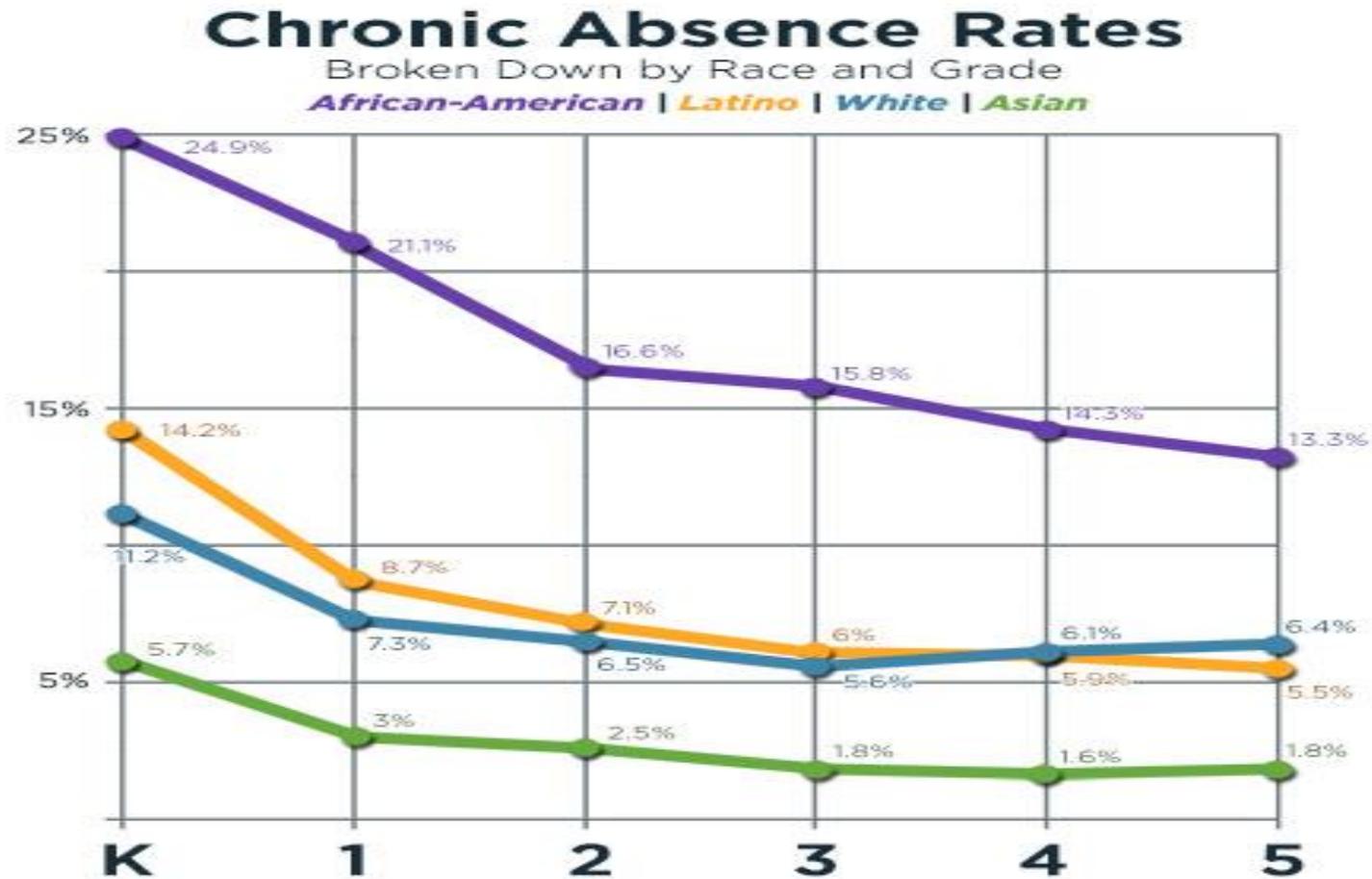
Each year of chronic absence in elementary school is associated with a substantially higher probability of chronic absence in 6<sup>th</sup> grade



Chronic absence in 1<sup>st</sup> grade is also associated with:

- Lower 6<sup>th</sup> grade test scores
- Higher levels of suspension

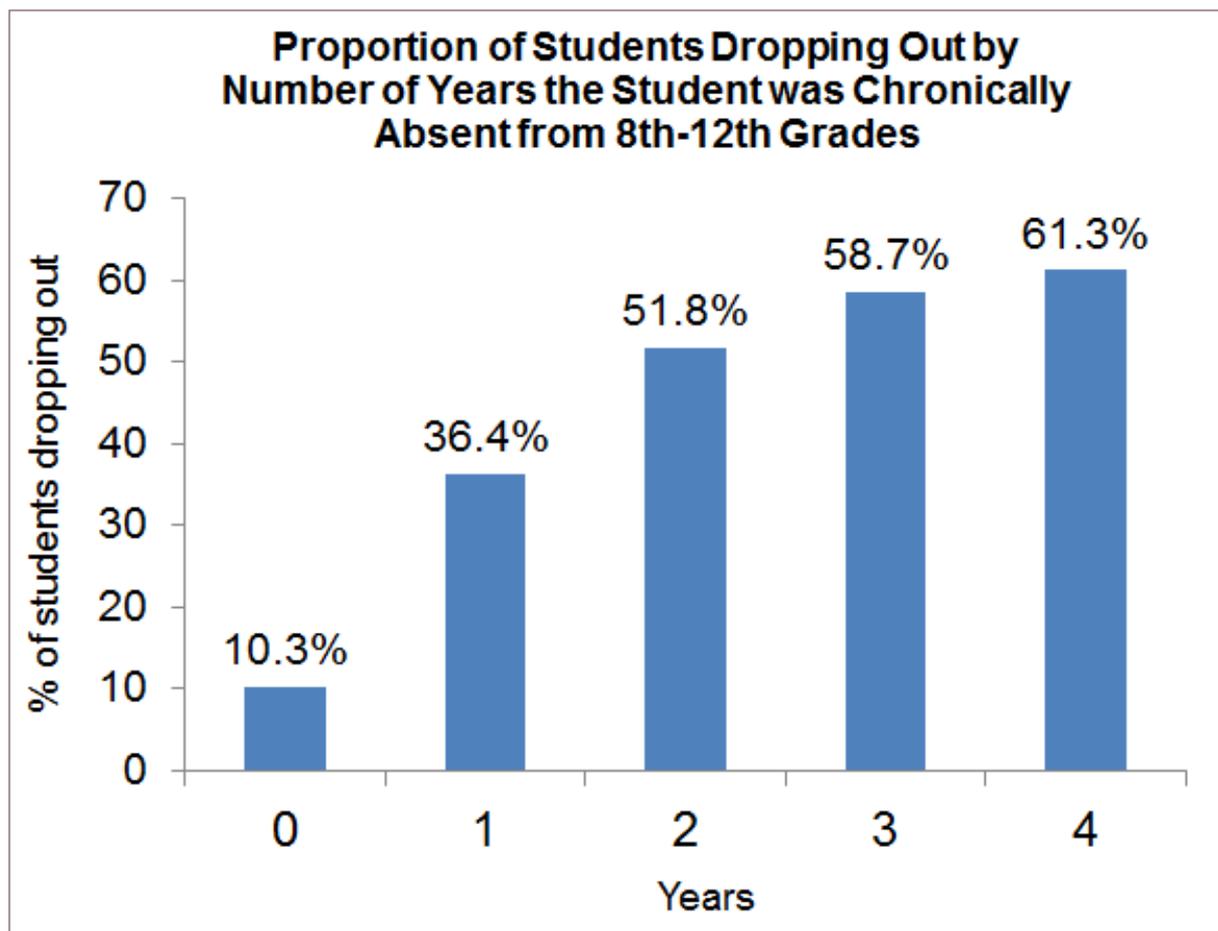
# Chronic Absence, Starting in the Early Grades, Contributes to the Achievement Gap



In School, on Track , AG Harris Report 2014



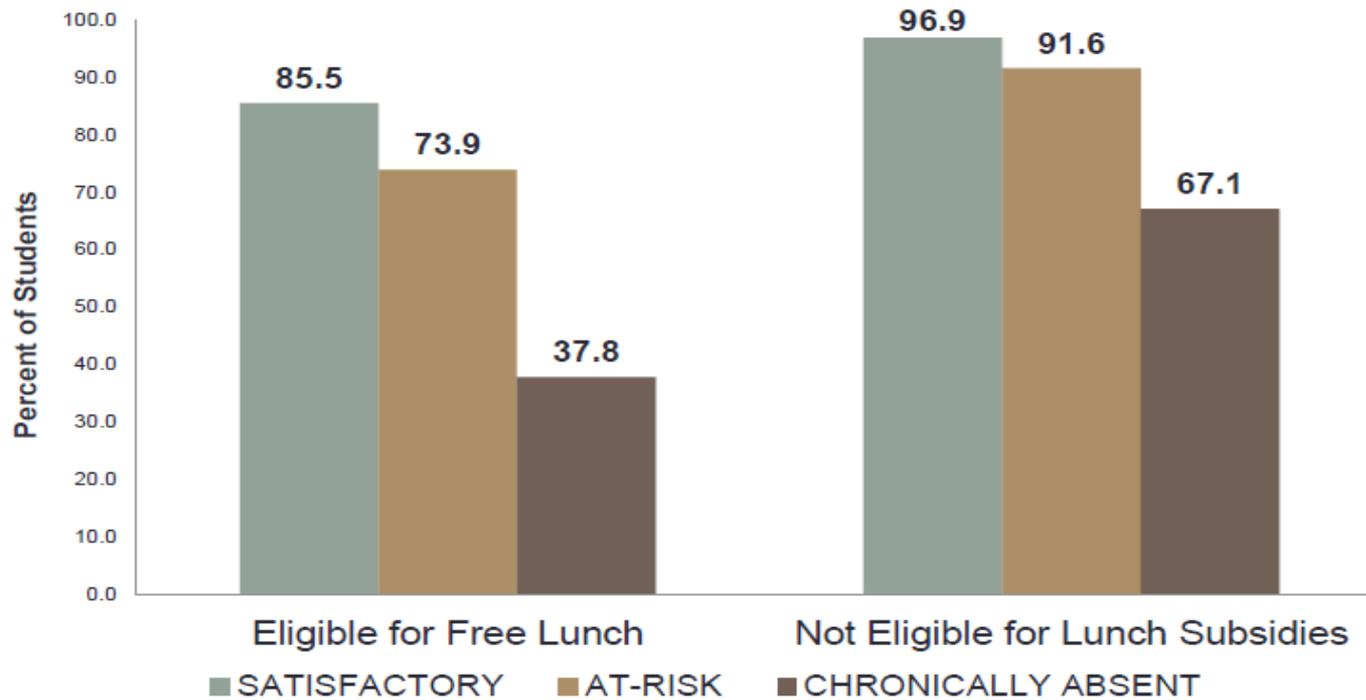
# The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative



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

# Attendance Is Even More Important for Graduation for Students In Poverty

## Attendance in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade and Graduation in 4 Years by Lunch Eligibility

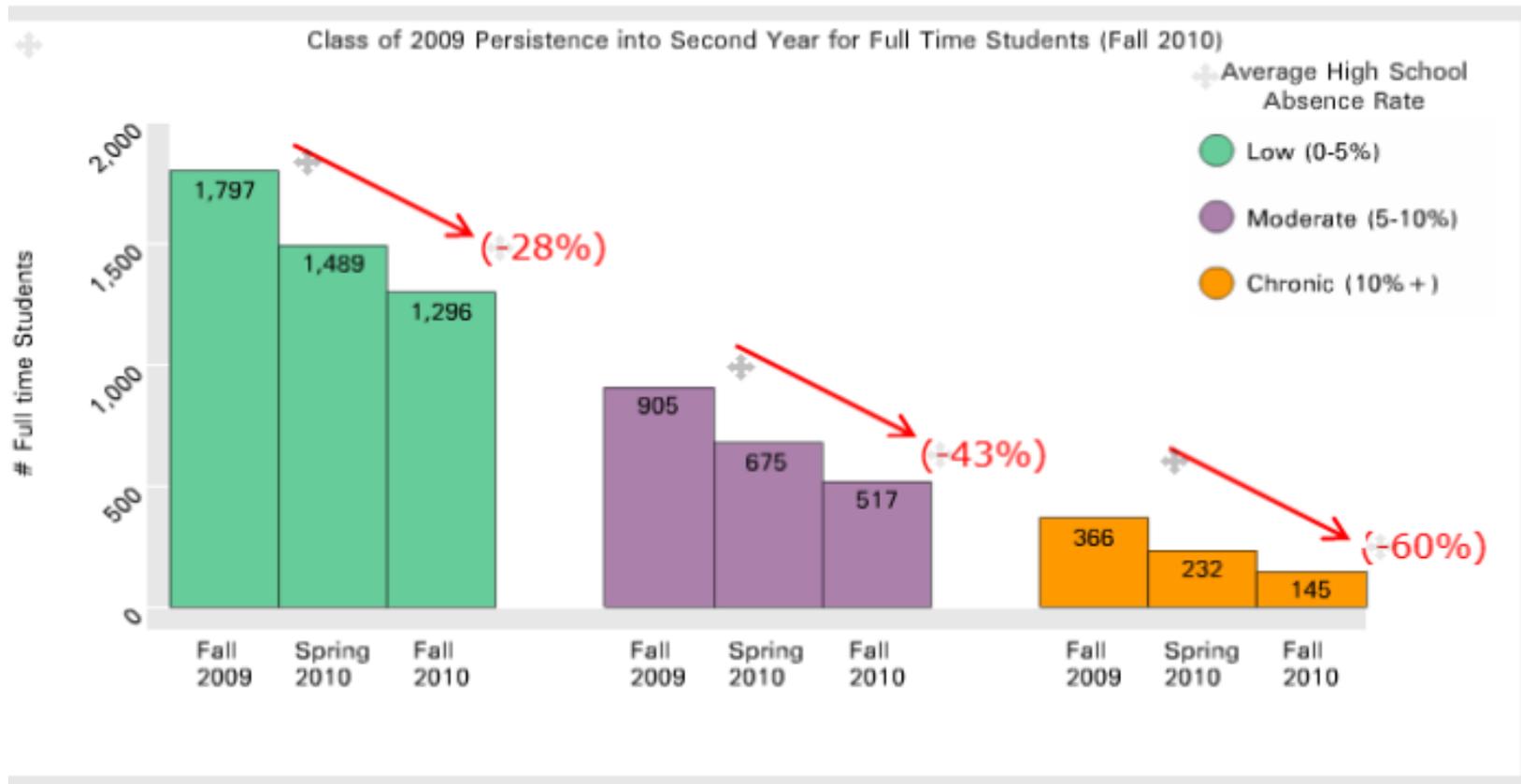


Presentation to: The Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap  
November 7, 2013, CT State Dept of Education.



# Chronic Absence in High School Predicts Lower College Participation

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



# 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

# Going to School Every Day Reflects When Families Have ...

**Hope**

for a better future

+

**Faith**

that school will help you or your child succeed

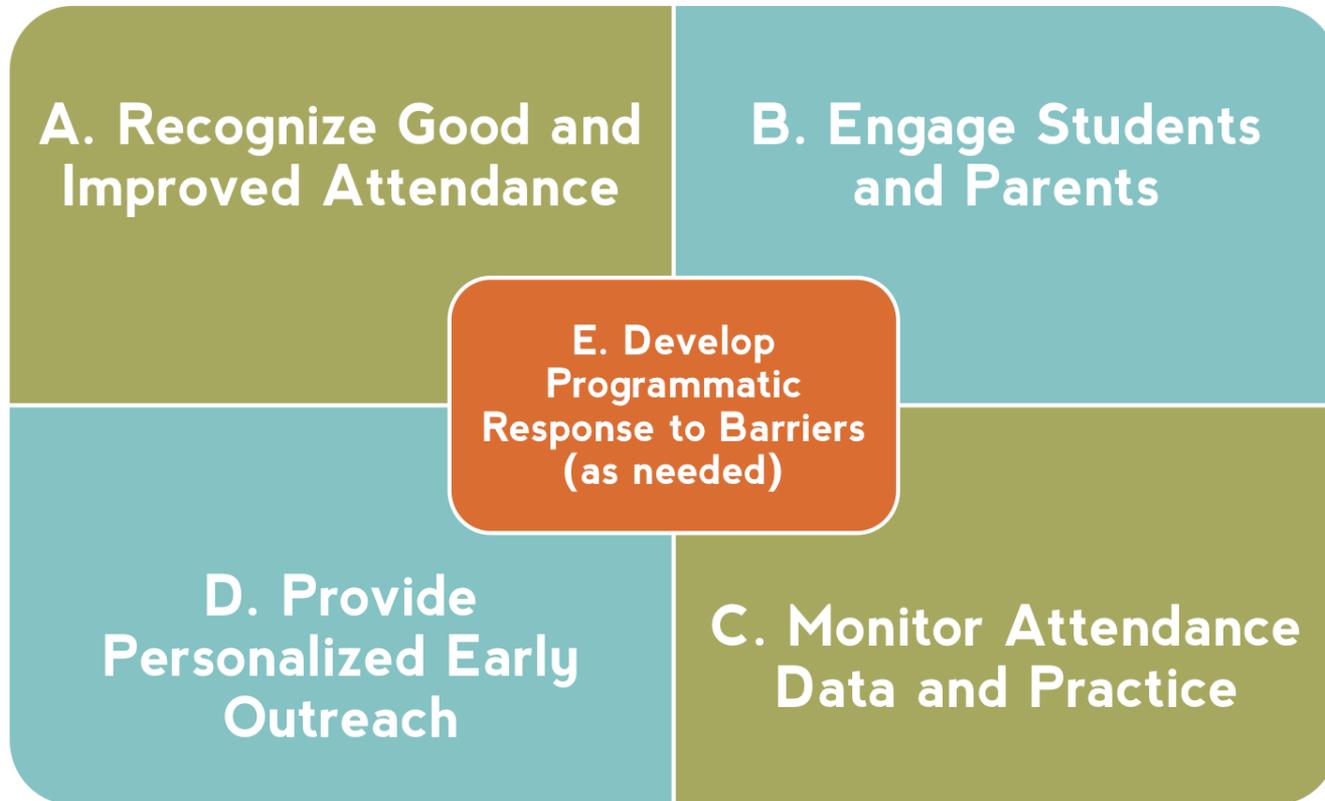
+

**Capacity**

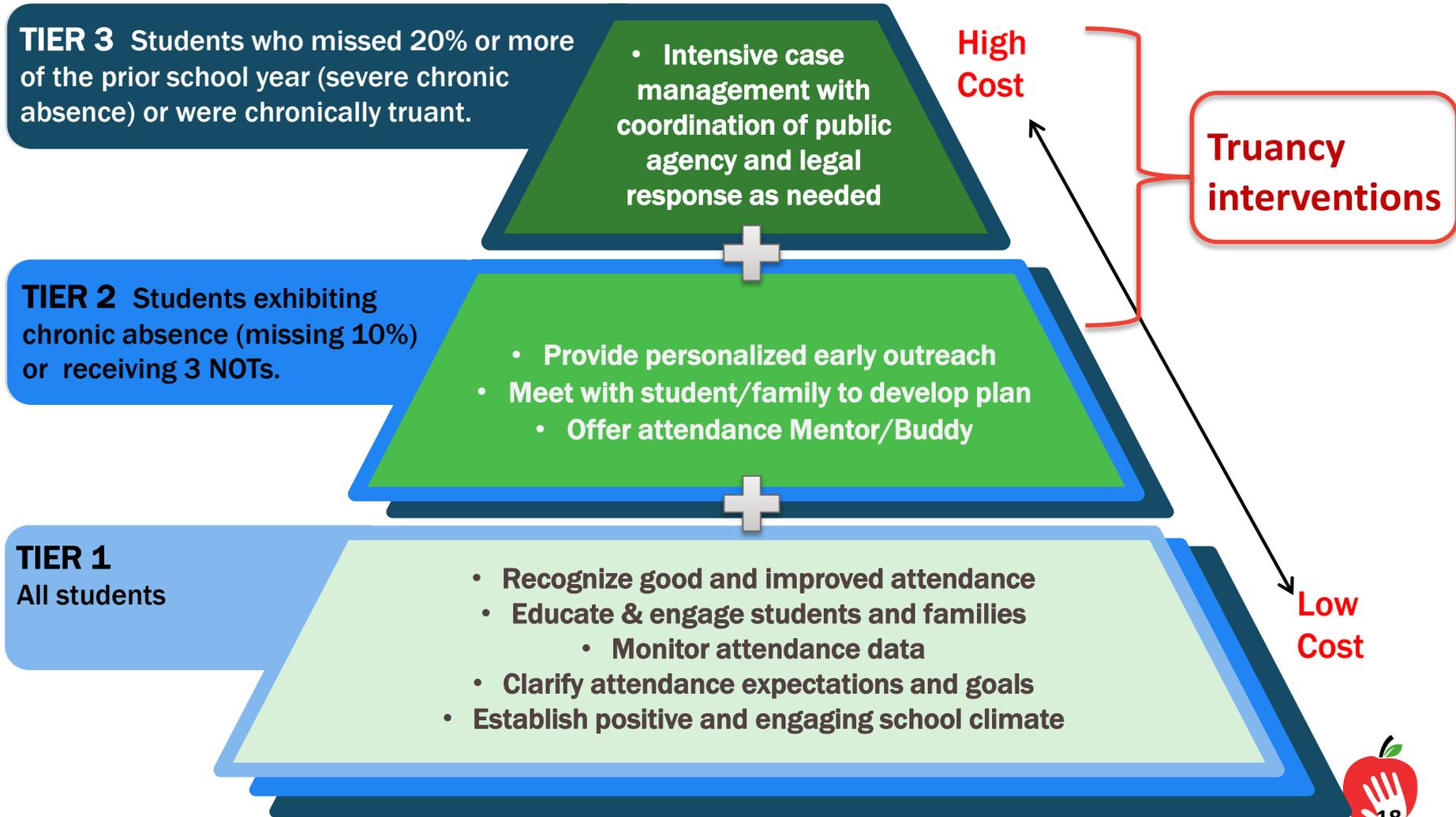
Resources, skills, knowledge needed to get to school



# AW Recommended Site Level Strategies



# Improving Attendance Requires a Multi-Tiered Approach



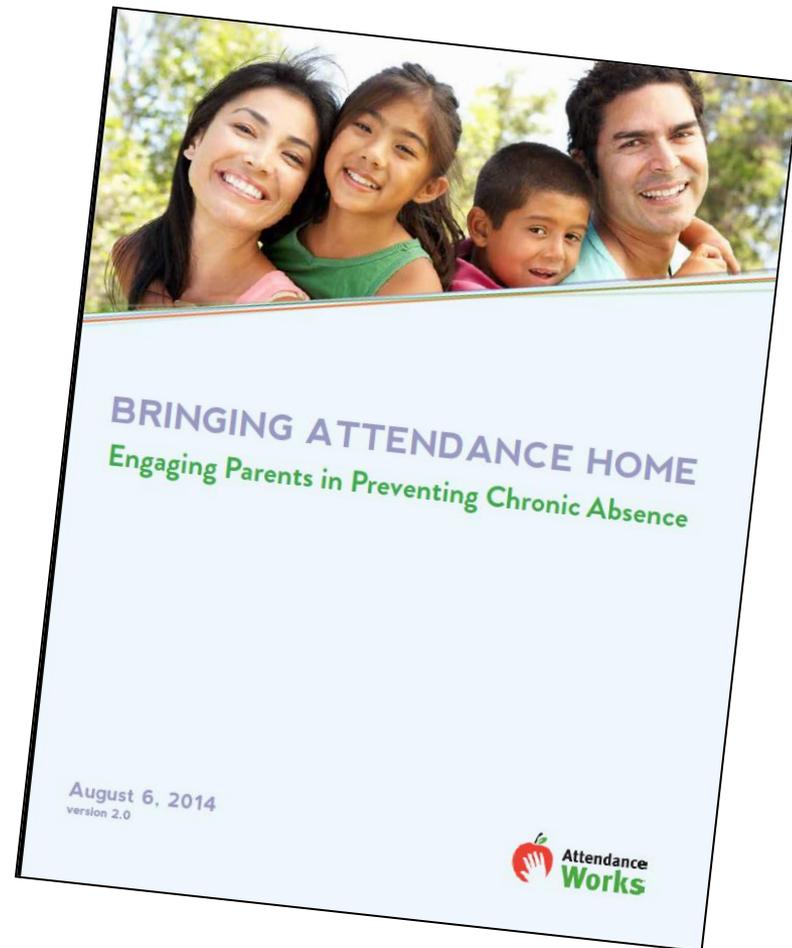
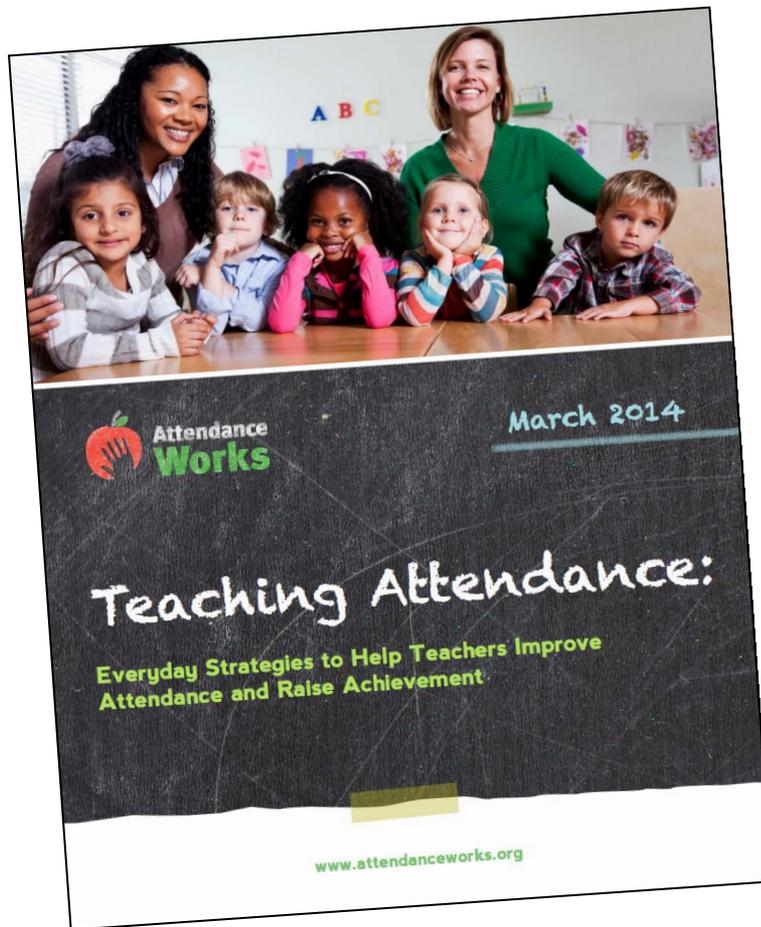
# **Tier 1: Creating a positive , welcoming & engaging school climate**

**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**

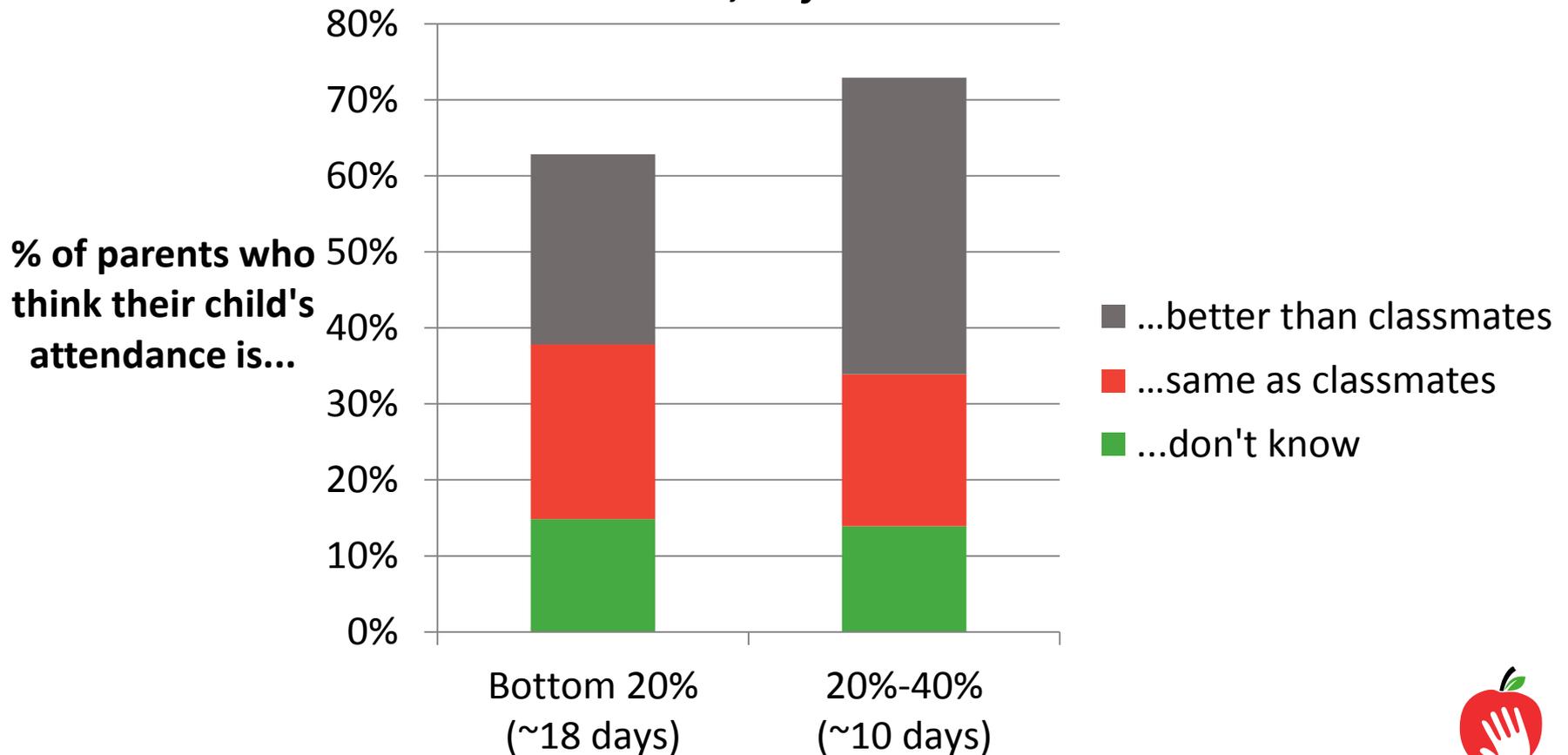


# Tier 1: Communication, Education, and Engagement



# 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*



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

## ABSENCES MATTER AND YOU CAN HELP

[DATE]

Dear Parent/Guardian of [Todd Rogers],

[Todd] has missed more school than [his] classmates.

[Todd] was absent [6] day(s) so far this school year.

Students fall behind when they miss school - whether students are absent for excused or unexcused reasons.

You can have a big effect on [Todd]'s absences this semester - and we appreciate your help.

Sincerely,  
Superintendent  
School District

Parental Efficacy ✓

Social Comparison ✓

Re-calibrate parental under-estimate ✓

Correct mistaken belief about excused > unexcused ✓

Parental efficacy ✓

On the same team, gratitude ✓

<50 words for low literacy individuals ✓

## TODD HAS MISSED MORE SCHOOL THAN HIS CLASSMATES



[Todd]'s absences are compared to the typical number of absences among [his] classmates in [5th grade] at [Harvard MS].

\*\* This card is part of the XYZ Attendance Project, which aims to increase awareness about the importance of attendance. This is a follow-up to cards we sent earlier in the year. The number of absences listed above includes excused and unexcused absences as of [DATE]. If you have questions, or you do not want to receive future cards, please call [PHONE], email [EMAIL], or visit [www.attendanceproject.org](http://www.attendanceproject.org). Please be sure to provide the following code: [UNIQUE CODE]. If you received this card in error or have already opted out of receiving these cards, please disregard this one. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Social comparison in writing for low numeracy individuals ✓

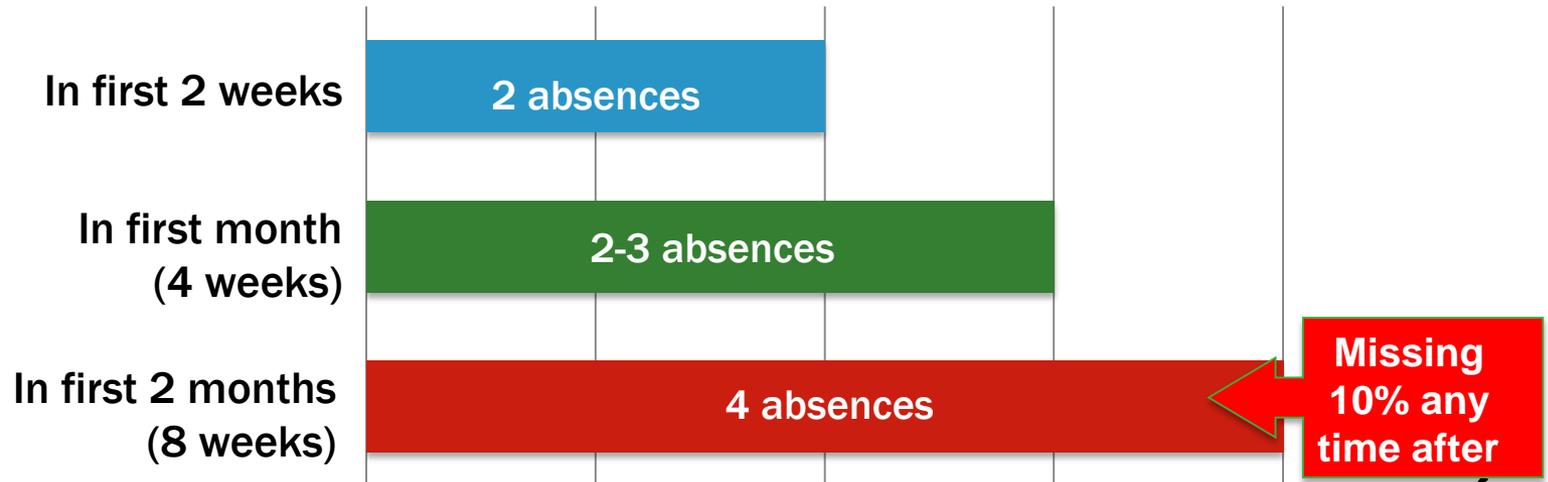
Red bar signifies "needs improvement" ✓

Horizontal graphs with vertical gray axis lines tested as clearest to low numeracy individuals ✓

Public website for more information and to opt-out of further mail ✓

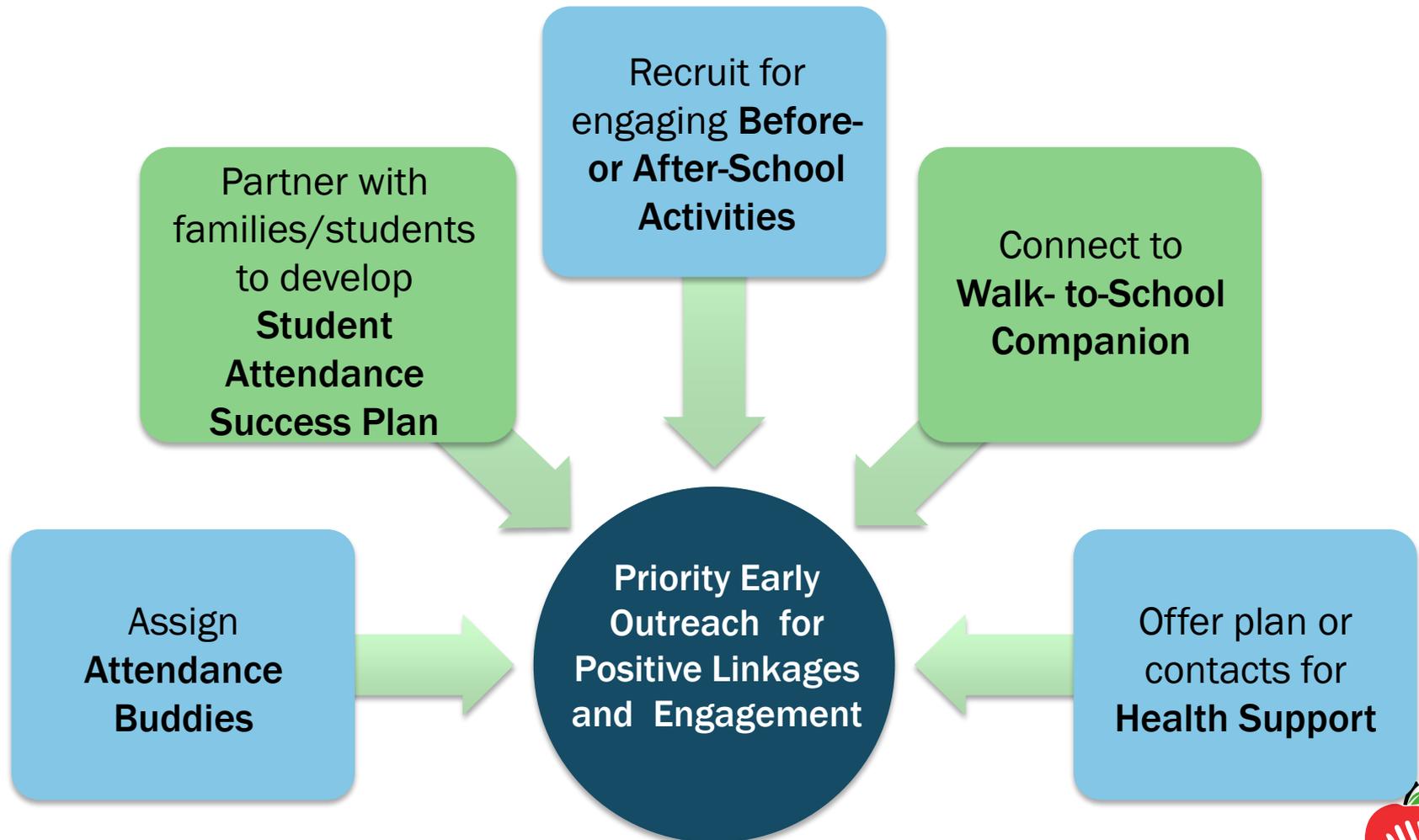
# Criteria for Identifying Priority Students for Tier 2 Supports

- ❑ 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:



# Possible Tier 2 Interventions

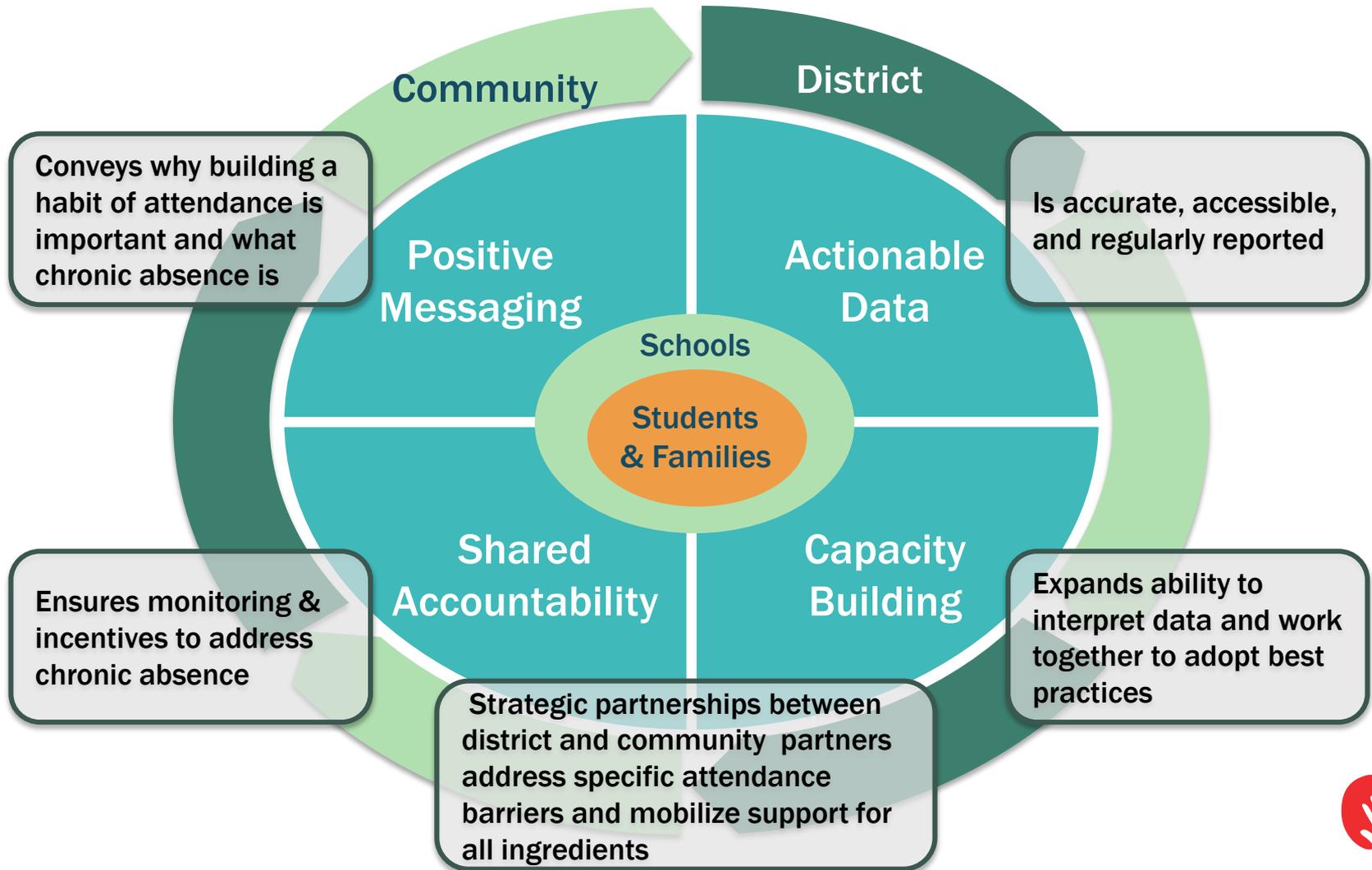
(See *Power of Positive Connections Toolkit*)



## **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.**

# Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



# 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.

# 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.**



# **New California Tools Available Soon**

## **Additional Features in CalDATT and CalSATT:**

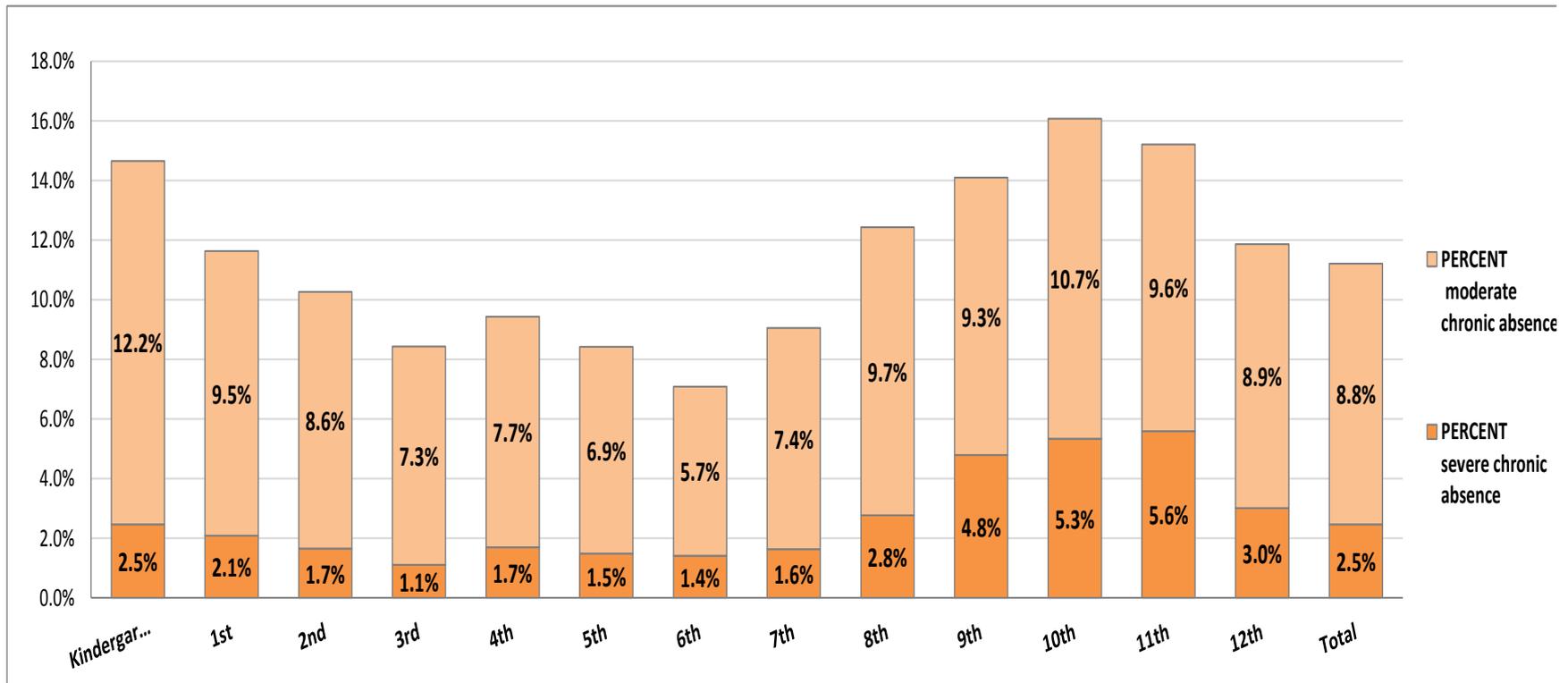
- **Elementary Module expanded to include TK**
- **Supplemental Truancy Module**
- **Additional Detail on Days of Suspension**
- **Easy One-Button Interface for Aeries users**



# 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*



# How Can Chronic Absence Data Be Used?

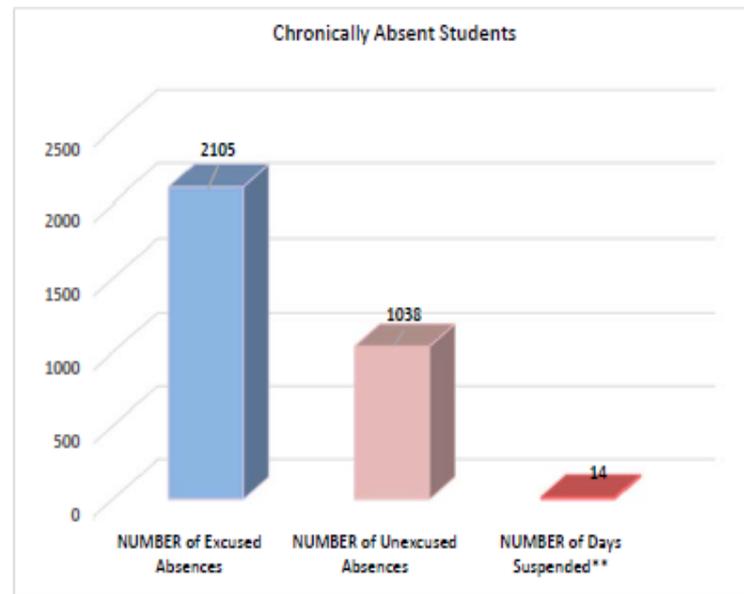
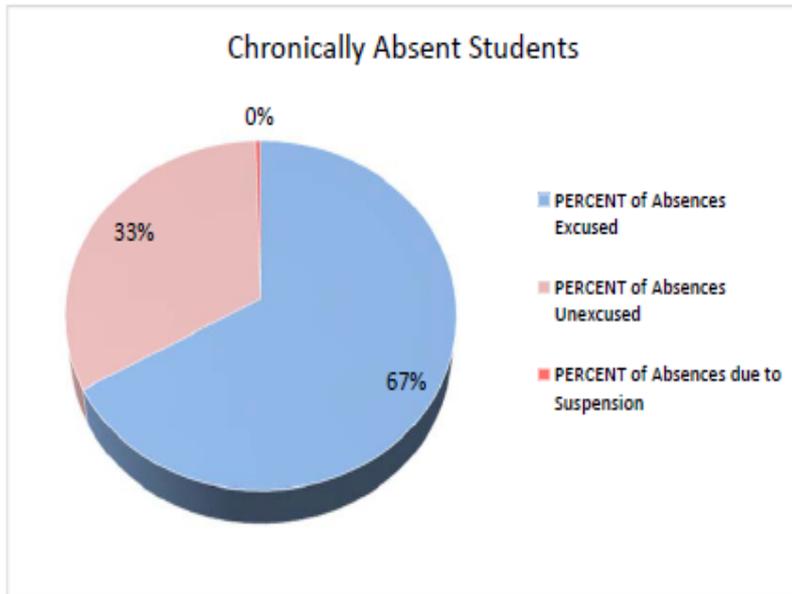
## *To Find Positive Outliers and Schools Needing Greater Support*

### *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%

# 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?



# 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 9<sup>th</sup> grade attendance*

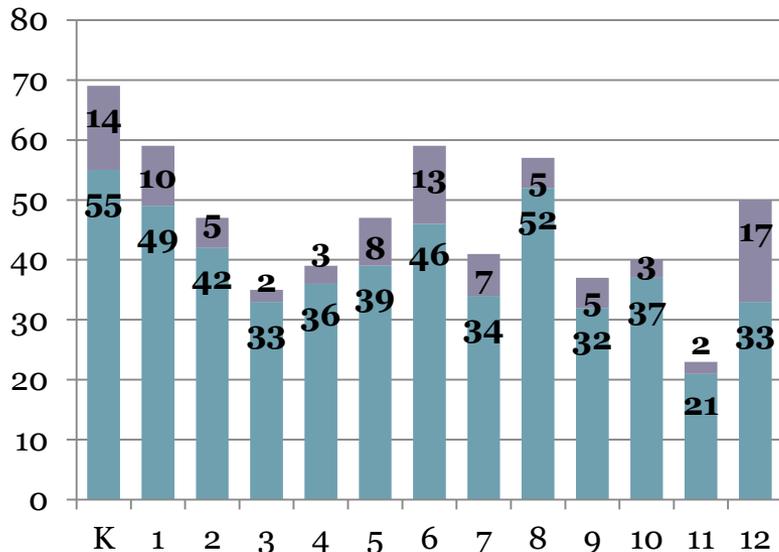
# Characteristics of More Successful AIP programs

- **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**



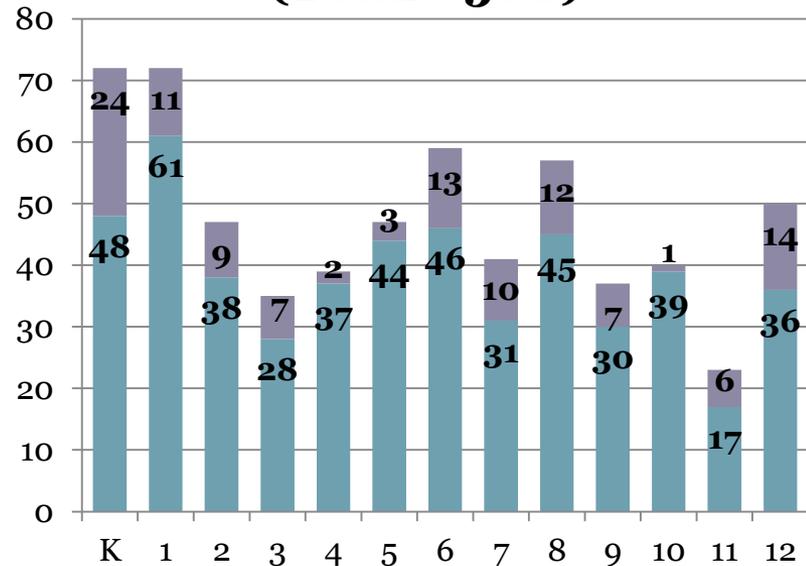
# Initial analysis found @ 500 (16%) of Del Norte students were chronically absent

**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

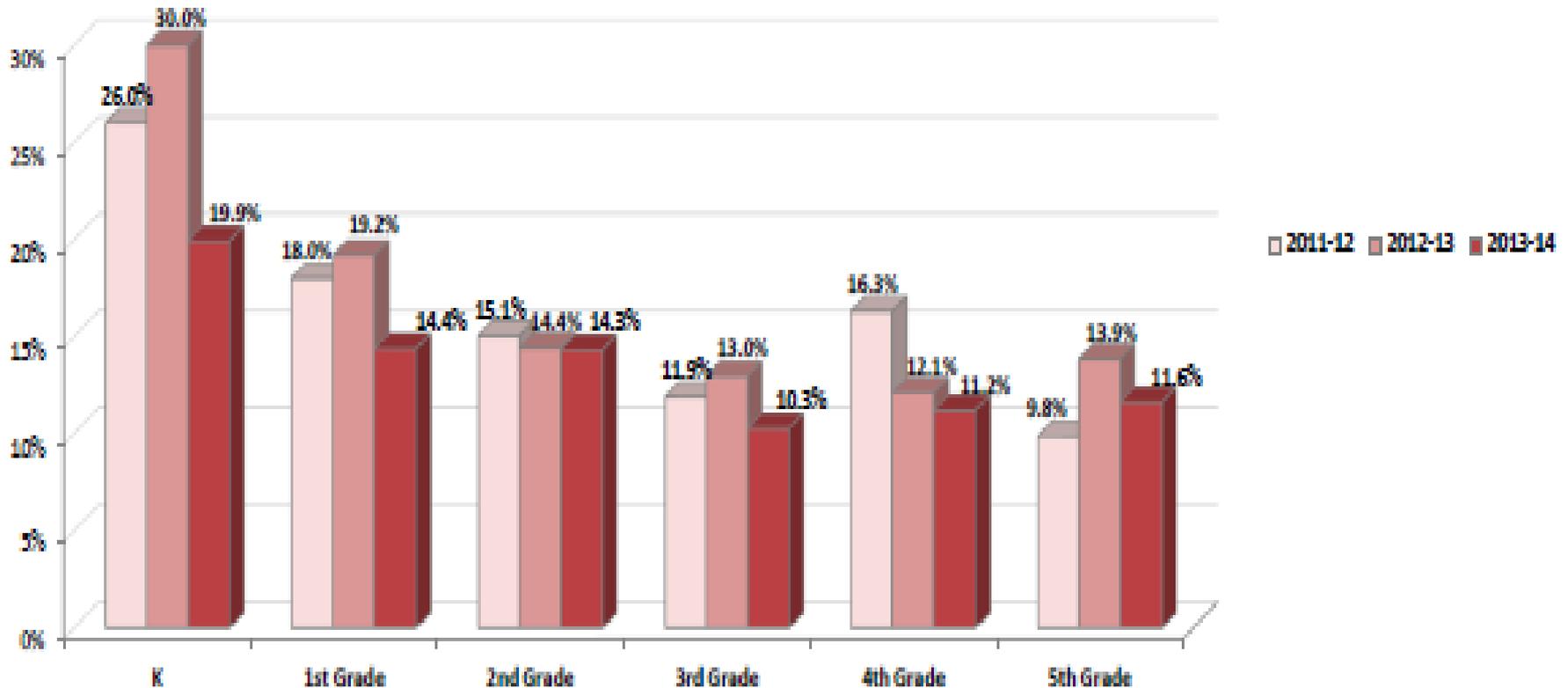
■ # severe chronic absence



# 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

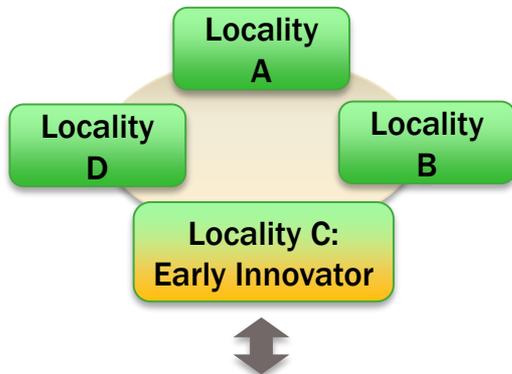


# Scaling Up: Proposed Local to State Pathway

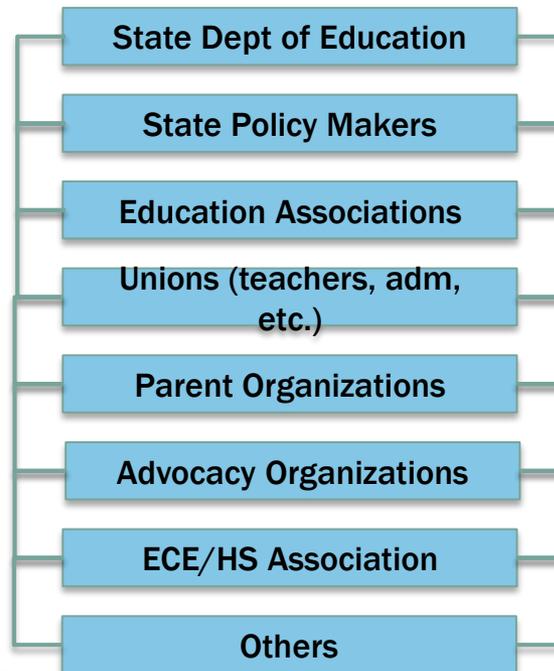
Advance local practice through peer learning

Inform state organizations with insights from local practice

Spread work state-wide through TA and policy



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



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

# 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](http://www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action)*



# 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



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



# 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/>



# 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/>



# 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?

# 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?

