



Teams Make all the Difference for Improving Attendance

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025 – Webinar I 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!

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

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/>



Thank You to our Campaign Sponsors for supporting 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.



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.



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.

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

(Research evidence from Communities in Schools)



Rey Saldaña, President, Communities in Schools

https://youtu.be/RS0ujUyK_8o

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

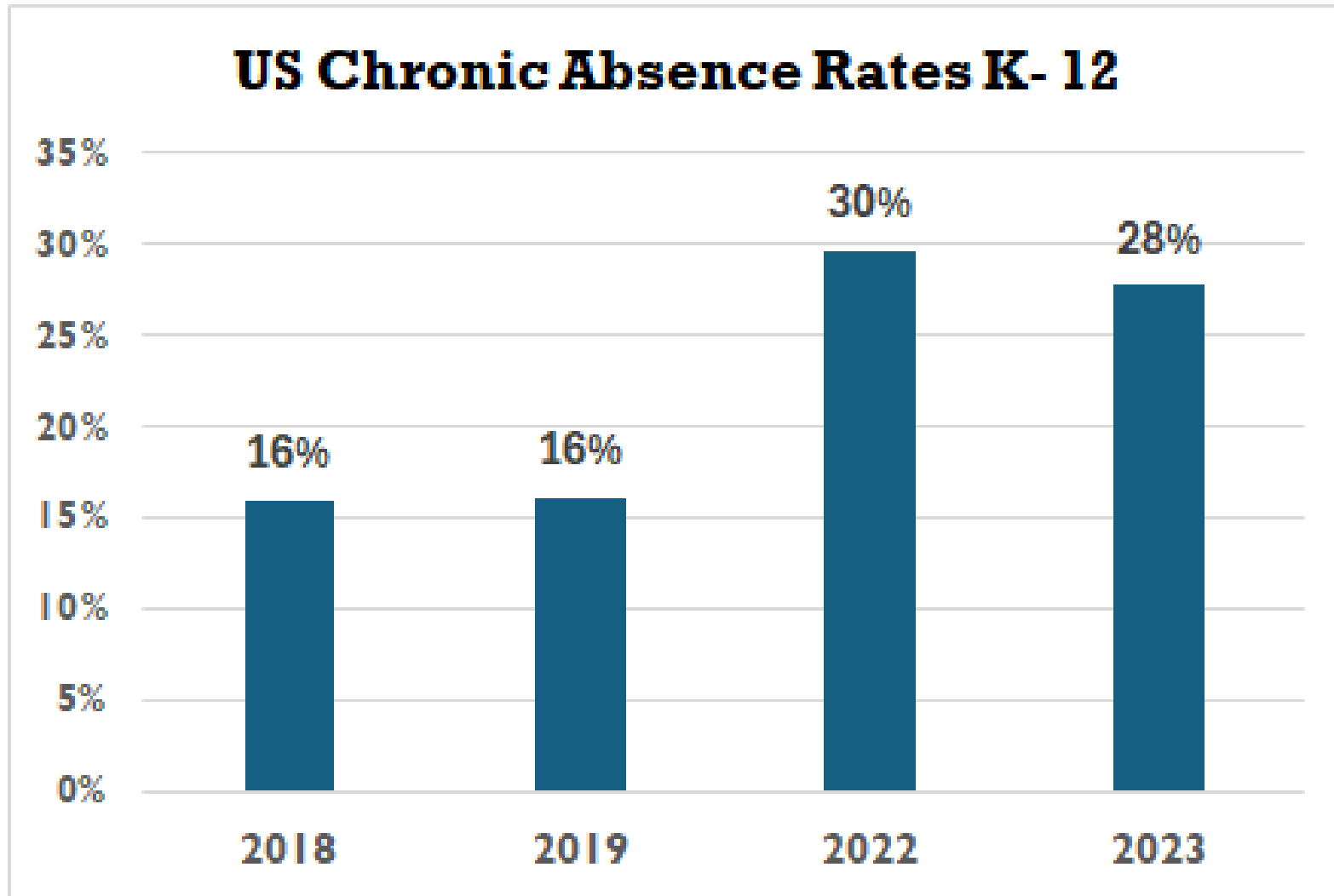
Truancy

- ▲ 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

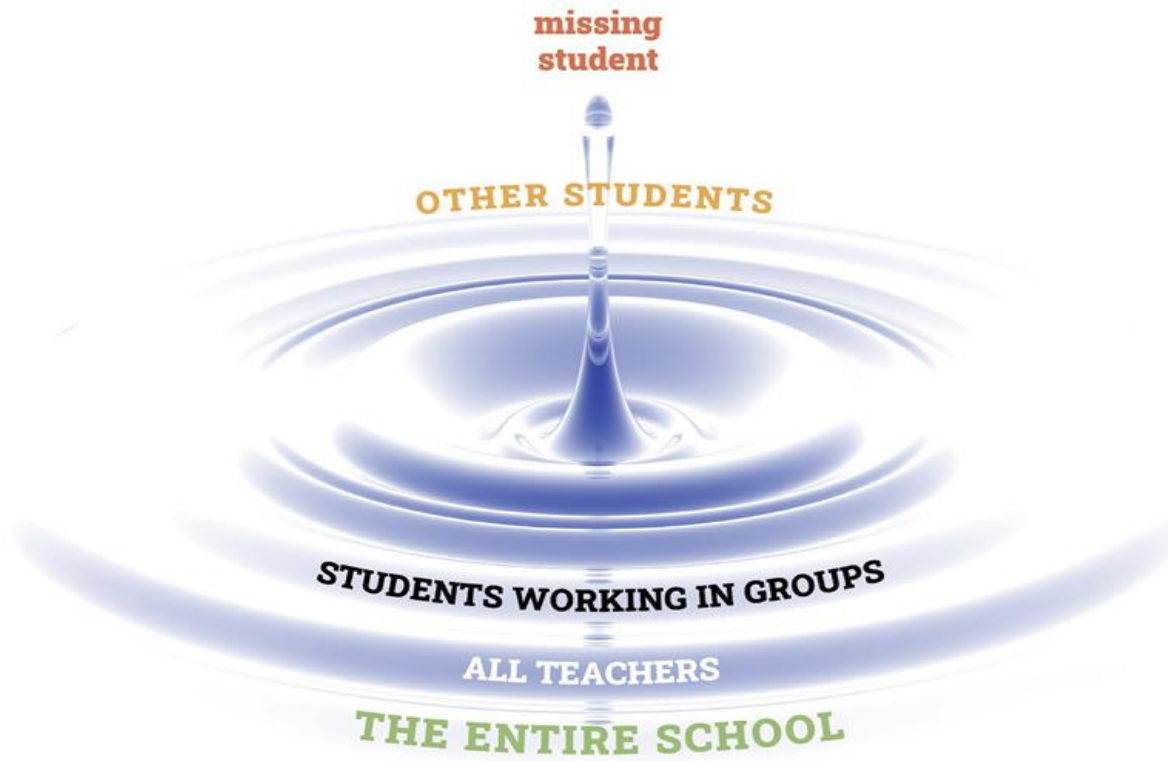


Source: US Department of Education, Ed Facts

- ✓ 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.



When Multiple Students Miss School, the Impact Ripples

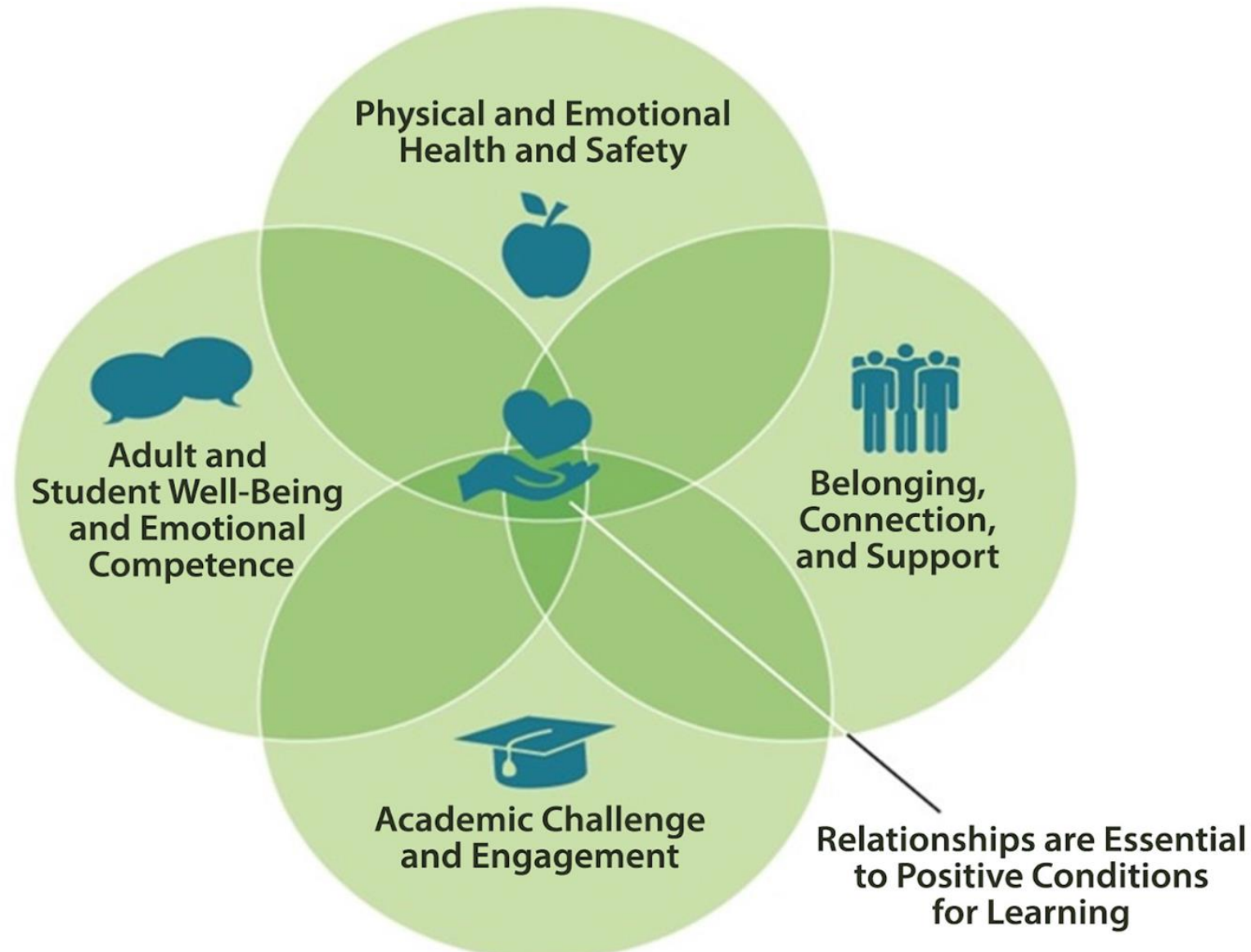


In SY 2022-23
61% of schools
had a chronic
absence rate of
20%+
versus
28% prior to the
pandemic

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

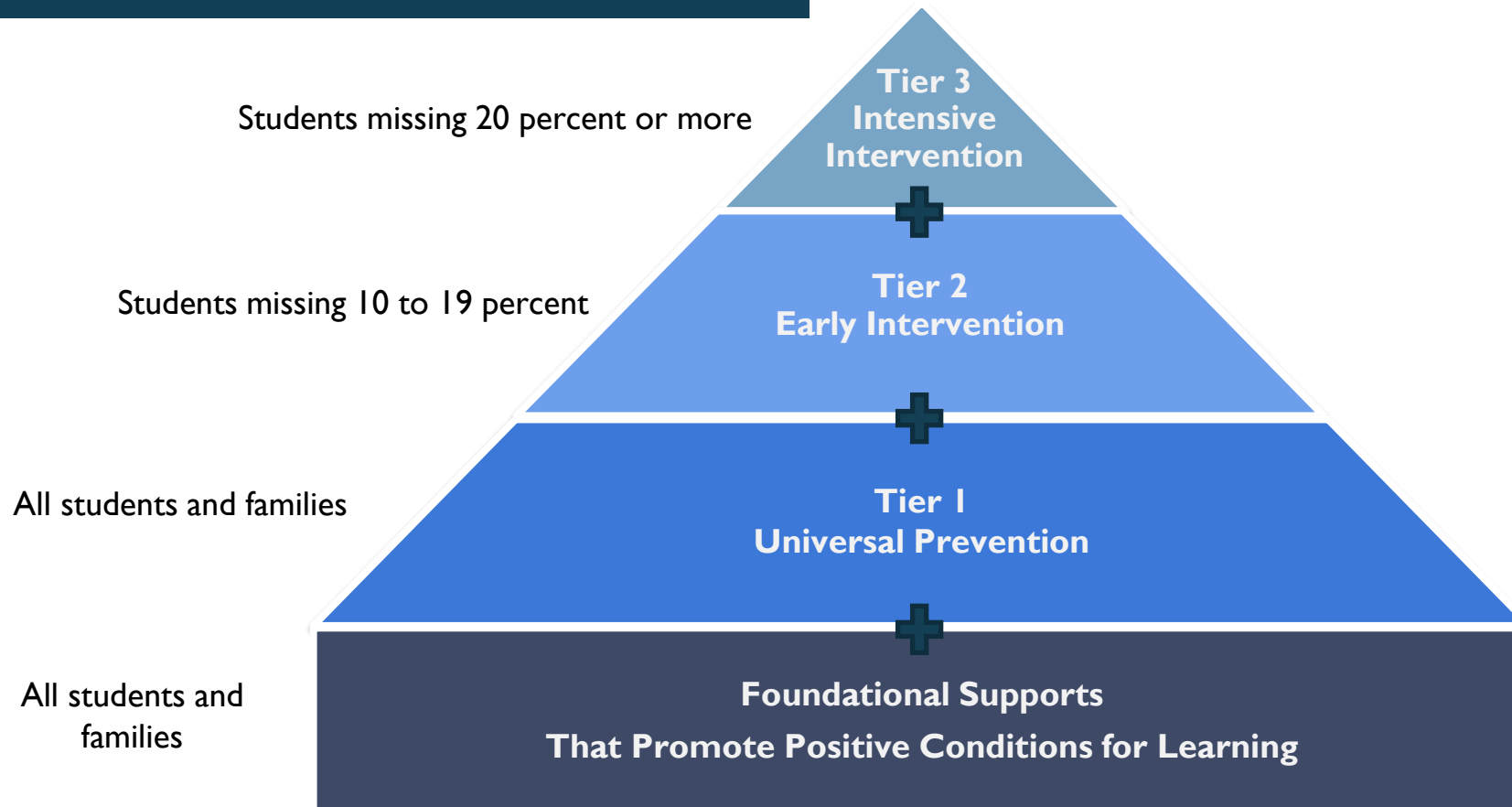
Barriers	Aversion	Disengagement	Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic and acute illness• Family responsibilities or home situation• Trauma• Poor transportation• Housing and food insecurity• Inequitable access to needed services (including health)• System involvement• Lack of predictable schedules for learning• Lack of access to technology• Community violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

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

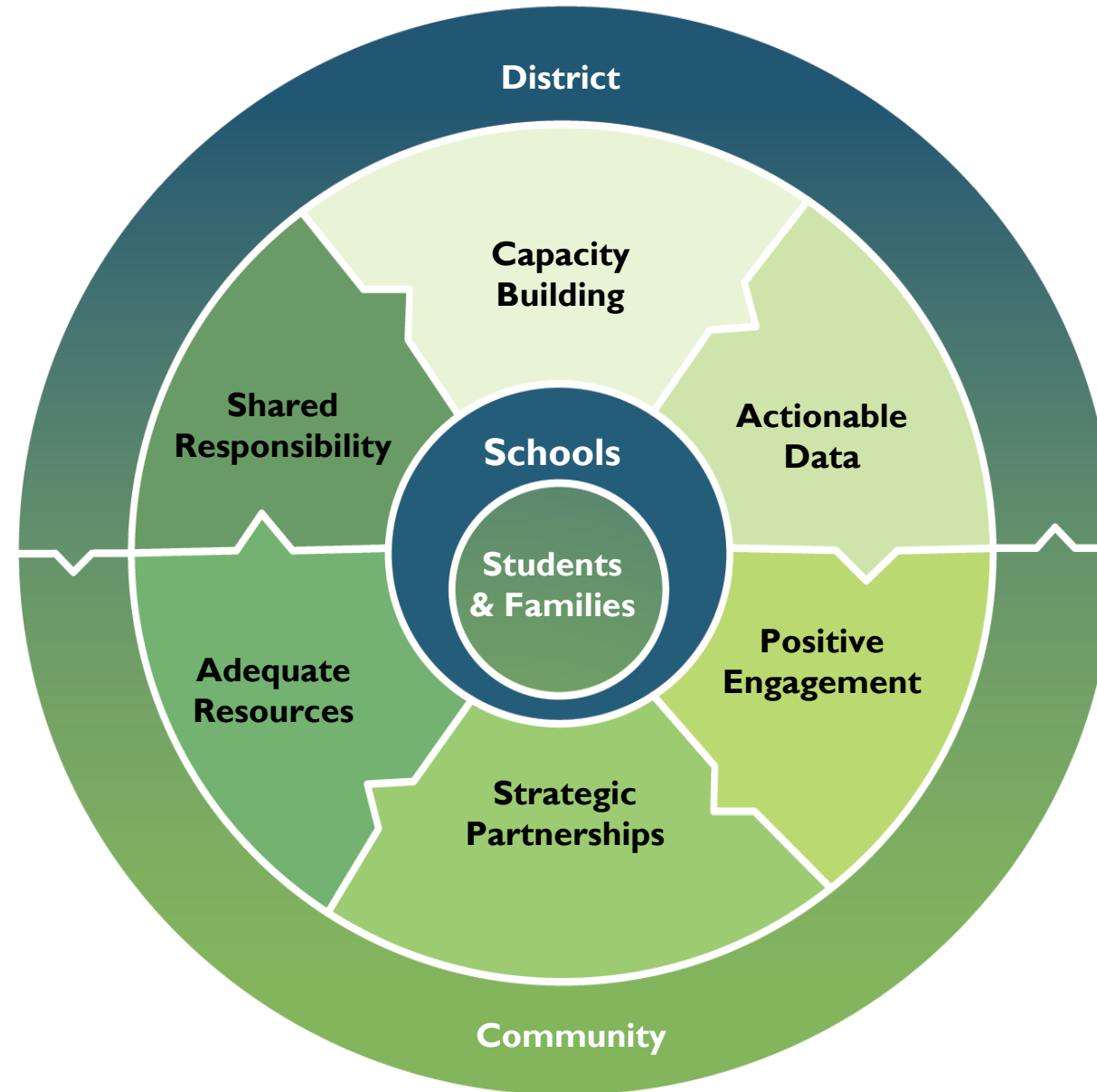




Multi-tiered support systems that begin with prevention are essential



Key Ingredients for Improving Attendance



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

Membership of District Attendance Teams

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



Membership of School Attendance Teams

**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:

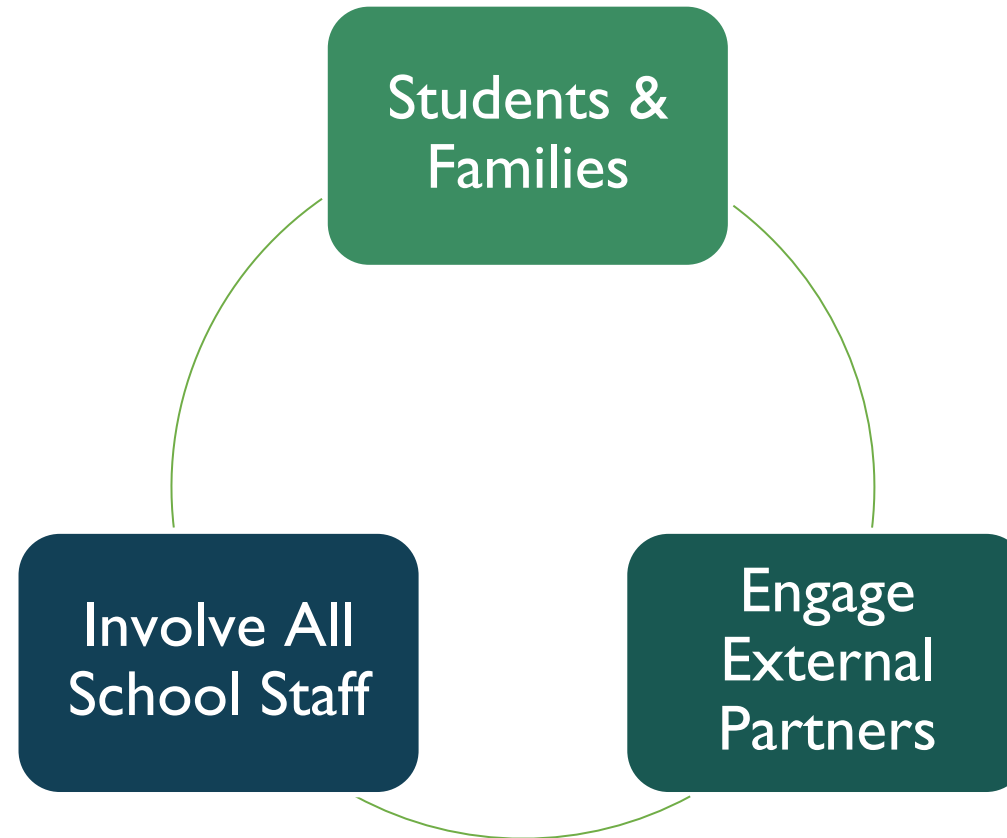
- * Nurse
- * Counselor
- * Social Worker
- * Administrative support staff
- * Special education staff
- * Teachers
- * Early education staff
- * Sports coaches
- * Community School Directors and Coordinators
- * Expanded Learning program staff
- * Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- * Attendance Advocates



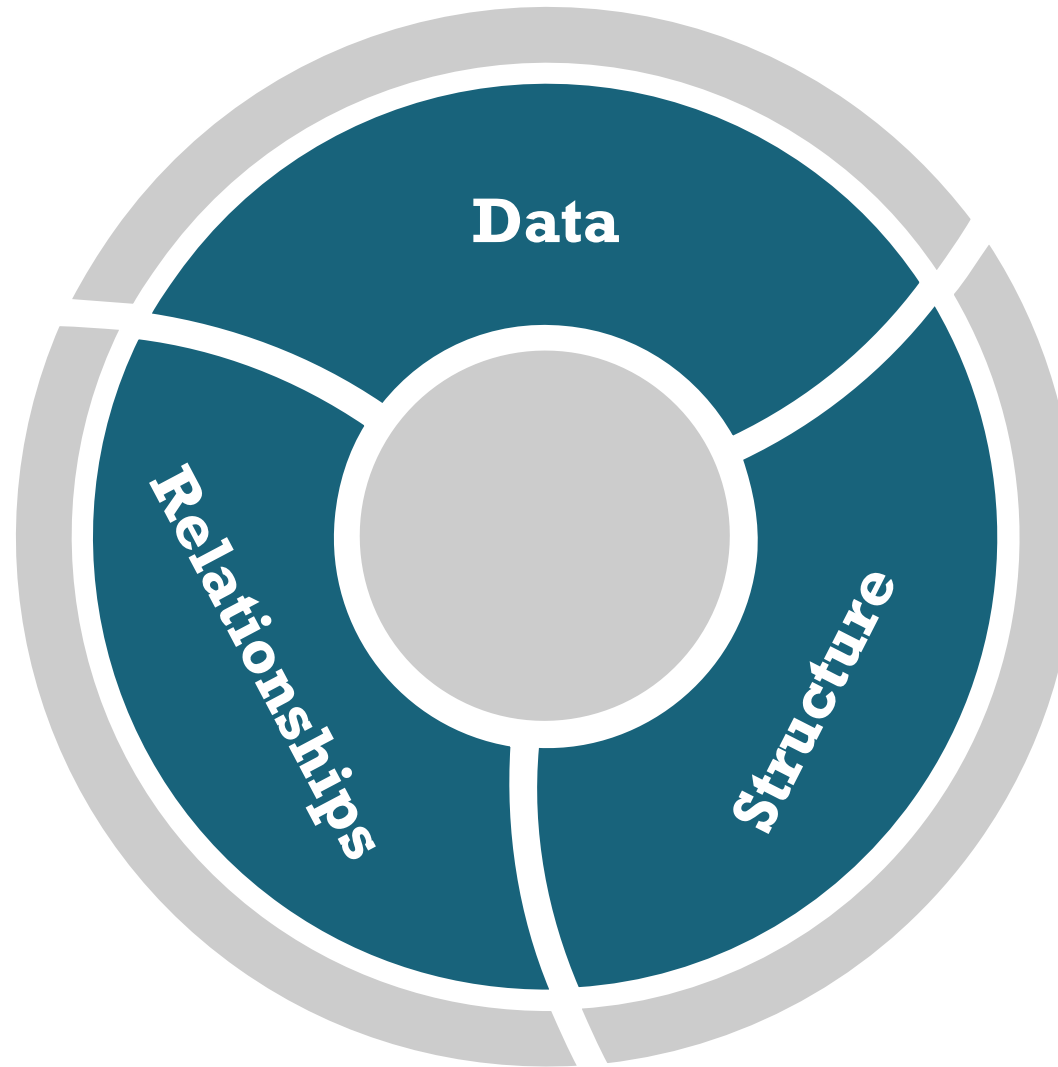
Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.



Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance



Components of a Sustained Approach



For more information, see AW's Free Resources!

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

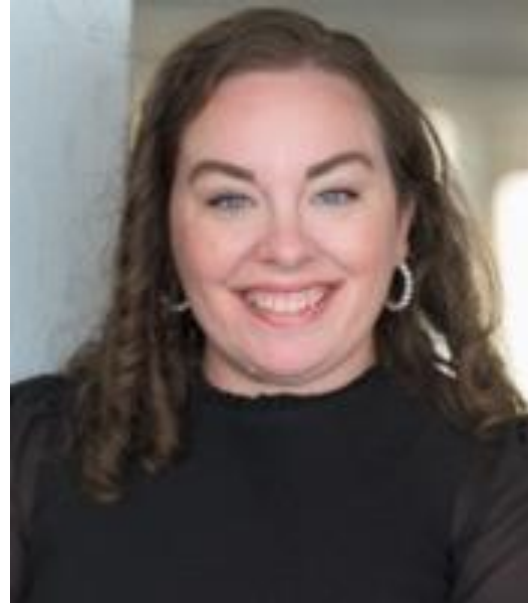
School Team Self-Assessment

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

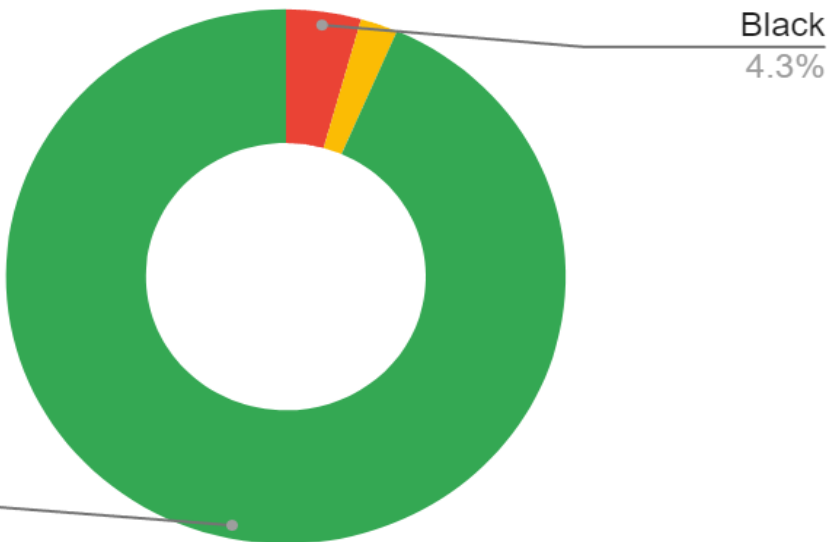
Questions

- 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)



Berclair Demographics 24-25

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%

Quarter Breakdown for 24-25



Summer	Q1-Q2	Q3	Q4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (<u>No matter what</u>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch buddies by grade band (watch list; moderate) • Continue Q1/Q2 • Field Trip for Attendance: All Around the World; AttenDANCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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...



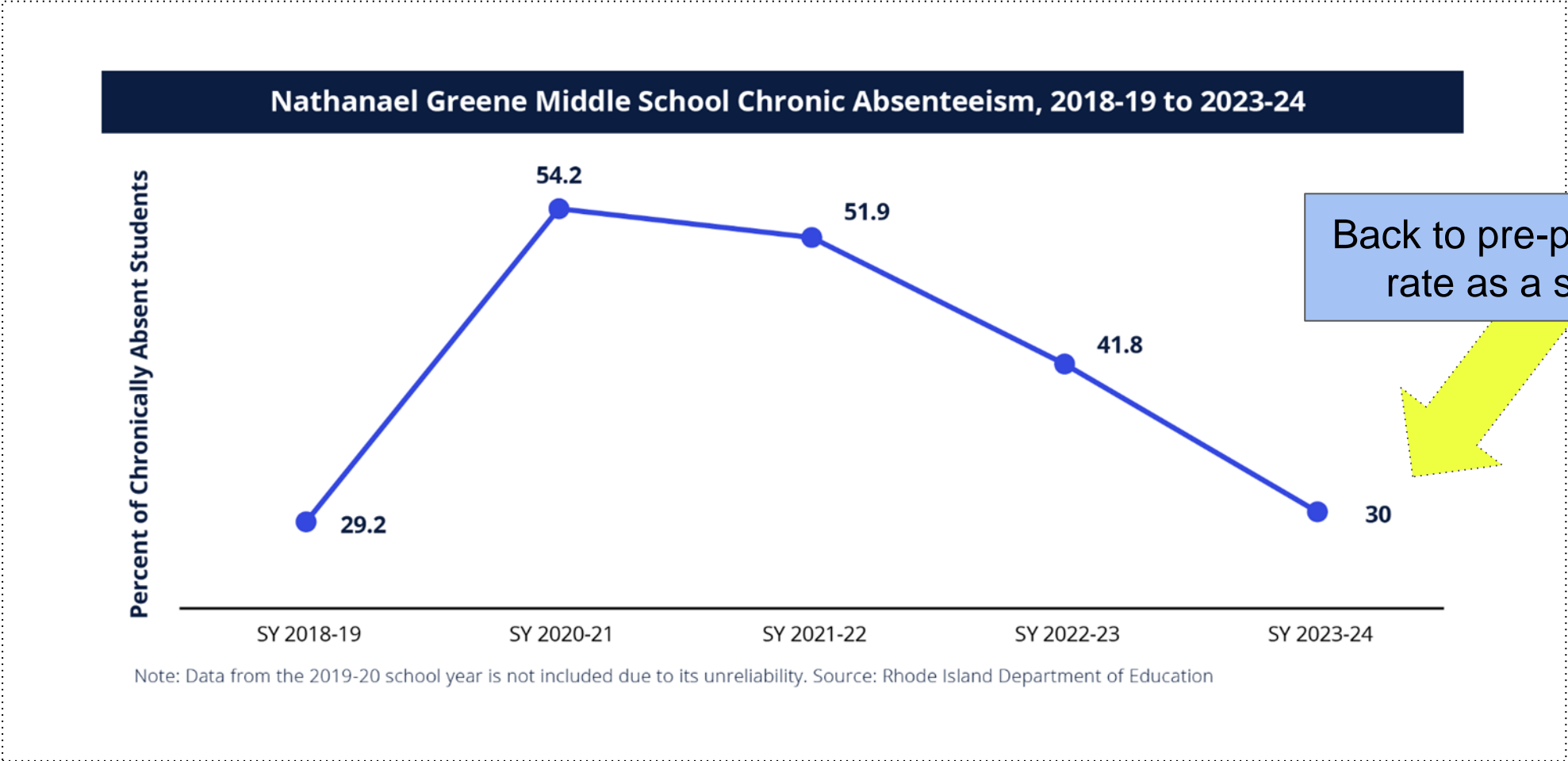
Issues

- 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

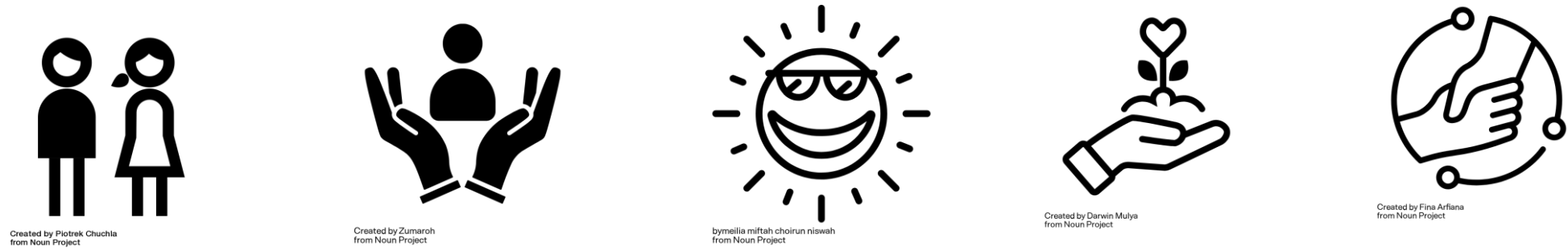
Opportunities

- 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

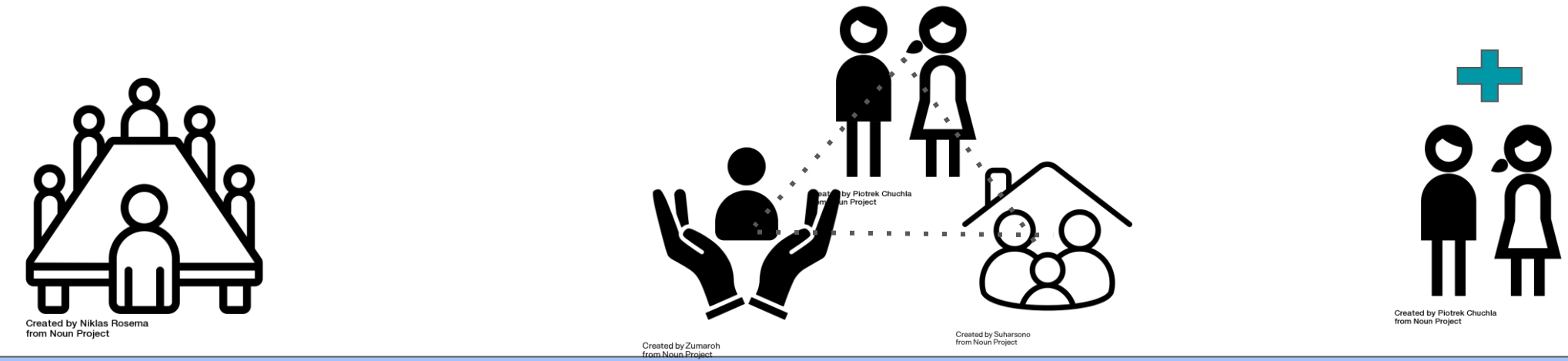
What we achieved



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

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

**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

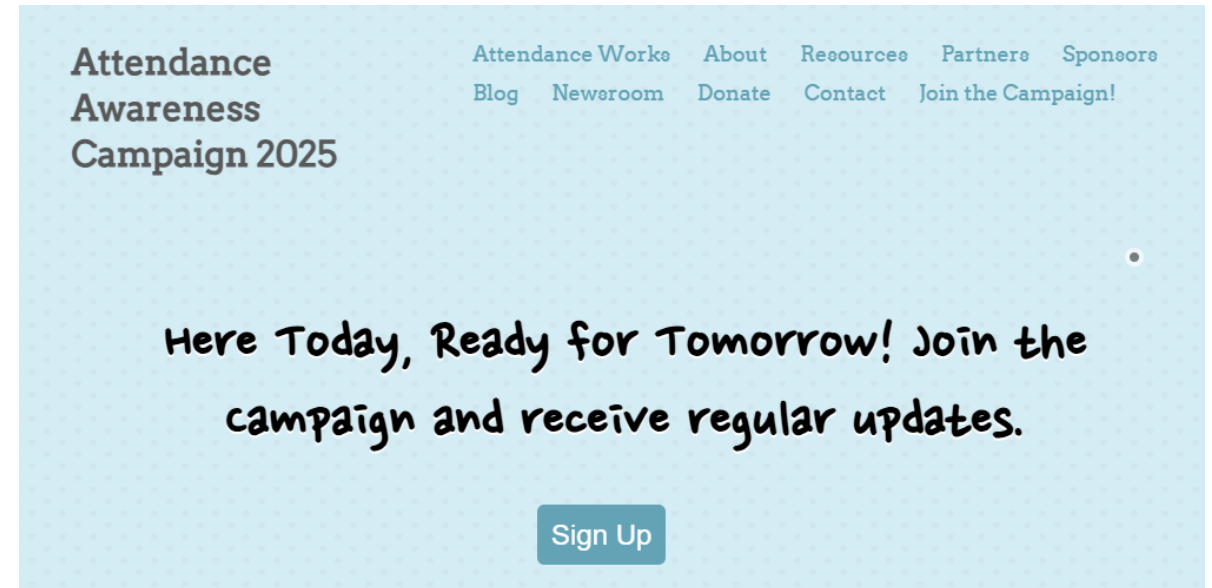




Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

- ✓ 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

PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN



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

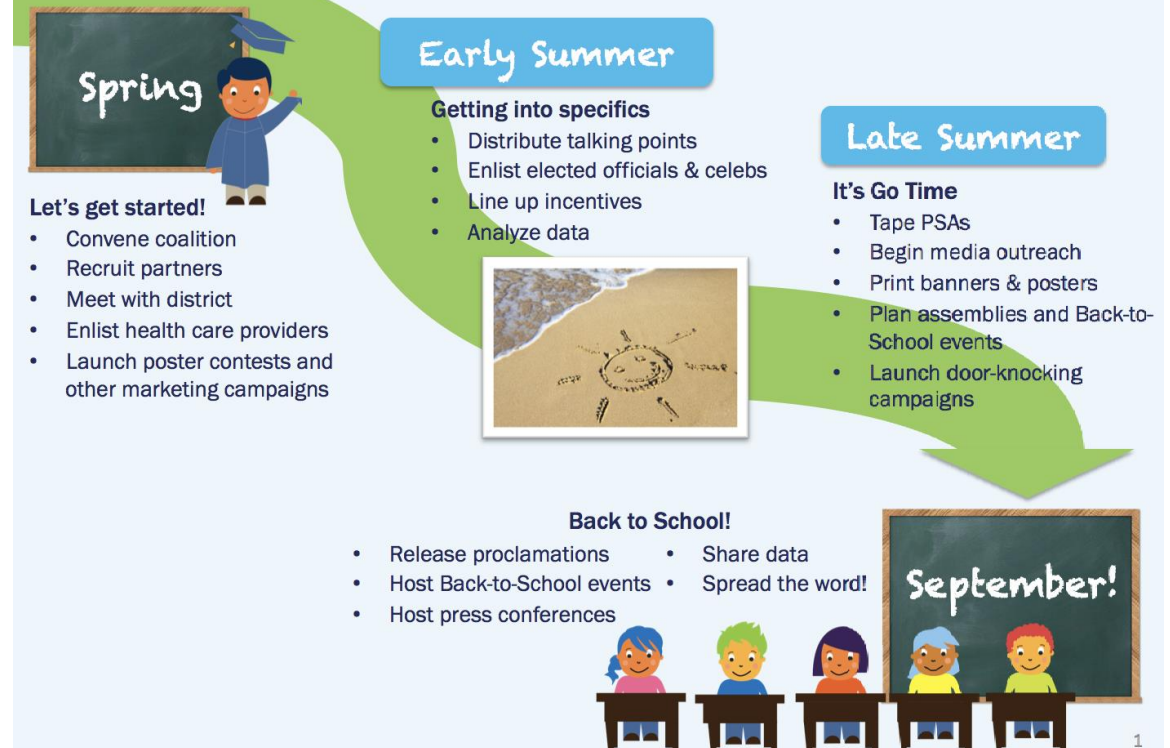


2025 Count Us In! Toolkit

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

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

What to Do When: At a Glance





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!



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/>



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?



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



Register today!

2025 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference

May 28-30 | Minneapolis, MN



**2025 NATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
& FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE**

May 28-30

**Minneapolis,
Minnesota**

REGISTER NOW: <https://bit.ly/csxfe25>



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-April-2025>

Thank you!

And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!

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