2018 National Convening

May 9–10, 2018
Baltimore, Maryland
Integrating Chronic Absenteeism into Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

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Introductions

- Everyone Graduates Center
- Attendance Works
- University of Illinois
Chronic Absence + MTSS

TIER 1
- Engaging school climate
- Positive relationships with students and families
- Impact of absences on achievement widely understood
- Chronic absence data monitored
- Good and improved attendance recognized
- Common barriers identified and addressed

Students missing 5-9% (at risk)
Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)

TIER 2
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)

TIER 3
- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)

High Cost

Low Cost

Individualized
Universal
Four Key Elements

- Actionable data
- Strong, functioning school attendance teams
- Understanding root causes of absences
- Evidence-based interventions
Actionable Data

- Accessible
- Accurate
- Regularly reported
- Simple-to-read formats

“When schools create a collaborative culture around data use—when they use data not to point fingers but to inform collective decisions—something powerful can happen.”

—KATHRYN PARKER BOURDETT

JENNIFER L. STEELE,
DATA WISE IN ACTION

2018 NATIONAL CONVENING

NSAESC
National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center
Paul Verstraete, EWS Data Specialist, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University
### Actionable Interventions

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**Paul Verstraete**, EWS Data Specialist, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University

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NSAESC National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center
Actionable Data

Classroom Combination Report for 2017-18 Students

Christina Ethier, Analyst, Aurora Public Schools, Colorado
Schools and districts need actionable data in order to effectively implement an MTSS to reduce chronic absence.

To what extent does your school or district have actionable data?

Walk to the corner of the room (marked A, B, or C) that best describes where your school or district practice is at this time.
Peer Sharing

- **A:** This area is a strength. We have data to look at trends and patterns. We also have the ability to flag and monitor individual groups of students who need support.
- **B:** This is mostly a strength. We have most of the data we need but would like to do a bit more.
- **C:** This is an area where we struggle.
Strong, Functioning Attendance Teams

- The primary purpose of an attendance team is to organize the schools’ attendance strategy and foster improved attendance for all students.
- Attendance teams use chronic absence data to identify patterns and individual, chronically absent, students.
Specific Functions of an Attendance Team

1. **Coordinate** the whole school’s multi-tiered strategy to reduce chronic absence by implementing evidence-informed prevention and early intervention.

2. **Match strategies with root causes**: Adopt strategies that address the needs of chronically absent students (individually and in groups) using qualitative and quantitative data.

3. **Triage**: Provide triage to ensure students receive needed supports from both the school and the community.
Principal Leadership Is Key

1. Cultivate a schoolwide culture of attendance
2. Take a team approach to addressing chronic absence and truancy
3. Develop staff capacity to adopt effective practices
4. Use data in communications and decision-making

http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/principals/
Peer Sharing

- **A**: This area is a strength. We have one team that integrates chronic absence and MTSS that meets regularly to create, implement, and assess strategies.

- **B**: This is mostly a strength. We have a team but occasionally struggle.

- **C**: This is an area where we struggle. We do not yet have a functioning team.
Understanding Root Causes of Absences

**BARRIERS**
* Lack of access to health or dental care
* Chronic illness
* Poor transportation
* Trauma
* No safe path to school
* Immigration status
* Homelessness

**MYTHS**
* Absences are only a problem if they’re unexcused
* Missing two days a month would not affect learning
* Attendance only matters in the upper grades

**DISENGAGEMENT**
* Lack of engaging, relevant, culturally responsive instruction
* No meaningful relationships with adults in school
* Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
* Poor school climate

**AVERSION**
* Students’ academic or social struggle
* Bullying
* Ineffective and exclusionary school discipline
* Parents’ negative school experience
* Undiagnosed disability

Source: Adapted with permission from Attendance Works
## How Many People and Children Experience Economic Hardship in the USA?

<table>
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<th>Economic Hardship Status (Percent of Poverty Level)</th>
<th>Total # of People Experiencing Economic Hardship in U.S.</th>
<th>Income Range for Family of Four</th>
<th>Total Number and Percent of All Children Experiencing Economic Hardship in U.S.</th>
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<td>Low Income (100–199%)</td>
<td>60 million</td>
<td>$24,251–$48,500</td>
<td>16 million (22%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty (50–99%)</td>
<td>25.6 million</td>
<td>$12,125–$24,250</td>
<td>8.6 million (12%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extreme Poverty (&lt; 50%)</td>
<td>20.4 million</td>
<td>$0–$12,125</td>
<td>7.2 million (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total All Economic Hardship Status</strong></td>
<td>106 million</td>
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<td>31.8 million (44%)</td>
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Low-Income or Poor in a High-Poverty Neighborhood Creates a Double Burden

- Living in communities with a large concentration of poverty causes additional burdens on residents
  - Beyond their own family circumstances
    • Must confront the poverty of those around them
  - Additional burdens associated with poverty
    • Higher crime rates, poor housing conditions, fewer job opportunities, and more limited access to healthy food

*The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America, 2008*
[http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2008/10/24-concentrated-poverty](http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2008/10/24-concentrated-poverty)
In NYC’s lowest-income elementary schools, chronic absenteeism and risk load reveal the following:

- More than one-third of the children were chronically absent for five years in a row in 130 elementary schools.
- These schools have very low levels of academic achievement as measured by standardized tests.
- Chronic absenteeism correlates with deep poverty—high rates of homelessness, child abuse reports, male unemployment, and low levels of parental education.

In fact, the report states, chronic absenteeism is a much better index of poverty than the traditional measure of the number of children eligible for free lunch.
In order to intervene effectively to reduce absences, schools and districts need ways to understand what drives absences. Some common methods include surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

To what extent does your school or district have a grasp of what is driving absences?

Walk to the corner of the room (marked A, B, or C) that best describes where your school or district practice is at this time.
Peer Sharing

- **A**: This area is a strength. We use multiple methods to understand why our students are absent.
- **B**: This is mostly a strength. We could do more.
- **C**: This is an area where we struggle. We rely on anecdotal evidence.
Evidence-Based Interventions

Adoption of Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs)

Patricia A. Graczyk, PhD
University of Illinois at Chicago
ESSA’s Definition of Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs) & Four Levels of Evidence

Evidence-based intervention: *Activity, strategy or intervention* that demonstrates a statistically *significant* effect on improving *student outcomes or other relevant outcomes* based on...

I. STRONG EVIDENCE  
- At least one high-quality *experimental* study

II. MODERATE EVIDENCE  
- At least one high-quality *quasi-experimental* study

III. PROMISING EVIDENCE  
- At least one high-quality *correlational* study

IV. STRONG RATIONALE  
- Based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that activity, strategy, or intervention is *likely to improve* student or other relevant outcomes
Process to Identify Appropriate EBIs for Attendance

Examples of guiding questions...
1. What data do we need to identify our needs and root causes?
2. Were studies of this EBI done with a similar population to ours?
3. Do we have the resources we need to implement the EBI?
4. How will we monitor implementation quality?
5. Is it working?

Examples of EBIs for School Attendance by Tiers

• Tier 1 (Universal)
  • Mental Health and Social-Emotional Learning – e.g., *Positive Action* (Snyder et al., 2010)
  • Safety-Oriented Strategies – e.g., *Bully Free* (Beane et al., 2008)

• Tier 2 (Targeted)
  • Cognitive-behavioral interventions for school refusal (Pina et al., 2009)
  • Student Engagement – e.g., *Check & Connect* (Lehr et al, 2004)

• Tier 3 (Intensive)
  • School-community partnerships – e.g., *Systems of Care* (Manteuffel et al., 2008)
  • Alternative educational programs – e.g., *Career Academies* (Klima et al., 2009)
Adoption of Evidence-Based Interventions

Schools and districts can reduce chronic absence by using promising or proven practices.

To what extent does your school or district use promising or proven practices?

Walk to the corner of the room (marked A, B, or C) that best describes where your school or district practice is at this time.
Peer Sharing

- **A**: This area is a strength. We are disciplined in making sure our interventions are evidence based. When we try an intervention that is not a proven practice, we carefully evaluate its impact in order to see if it is worth repeating.

- **B**: This is mostly a strength. We could be more rigorous.

- **C**: This is an area where we need to grow.
Questions?
Please contact

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Patricia A. Graczyk  pgraczyk@uic.edu
Richard Lofton  rlofton1@jhu.edu
Maria G. Waltemeyer  mwaltemeyer@jhu.edu

List of resources available
Thank You
Organizations that we work with:

Attendance Works: http://www.attendanceworks.org

MENTOR: http://www.mentoring.org

My Brother’s Keeper Alliance: https://www.mbkalliance.org