

NATIONAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE,
ENGAGEMENT, AND SUCCESS CENTER



2018 National Convening

May 9–10, 2018
Baltimore, Maryland



NSAESC

National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center



Leading Attendance: How to Nurture a Whole-School Approach to Reducing Chronic Absence

Cecelia Leong, Attendance Works
Session Moderator



Today's Speakers

- **Lukas Weinstein**, Senior Director of Regional Initiatives, Children's Aid National Center for Community Schools
- **Susan Lieberman**, Director, Count ME In
- **Patti Gilley**, Principal, Hanson School and Lebanon Elementary School, Lebanon, Maine
- **Dr. Barbara McKeon**, Educational Consultant & former Head of Broome Street Academy Charter High School, New York



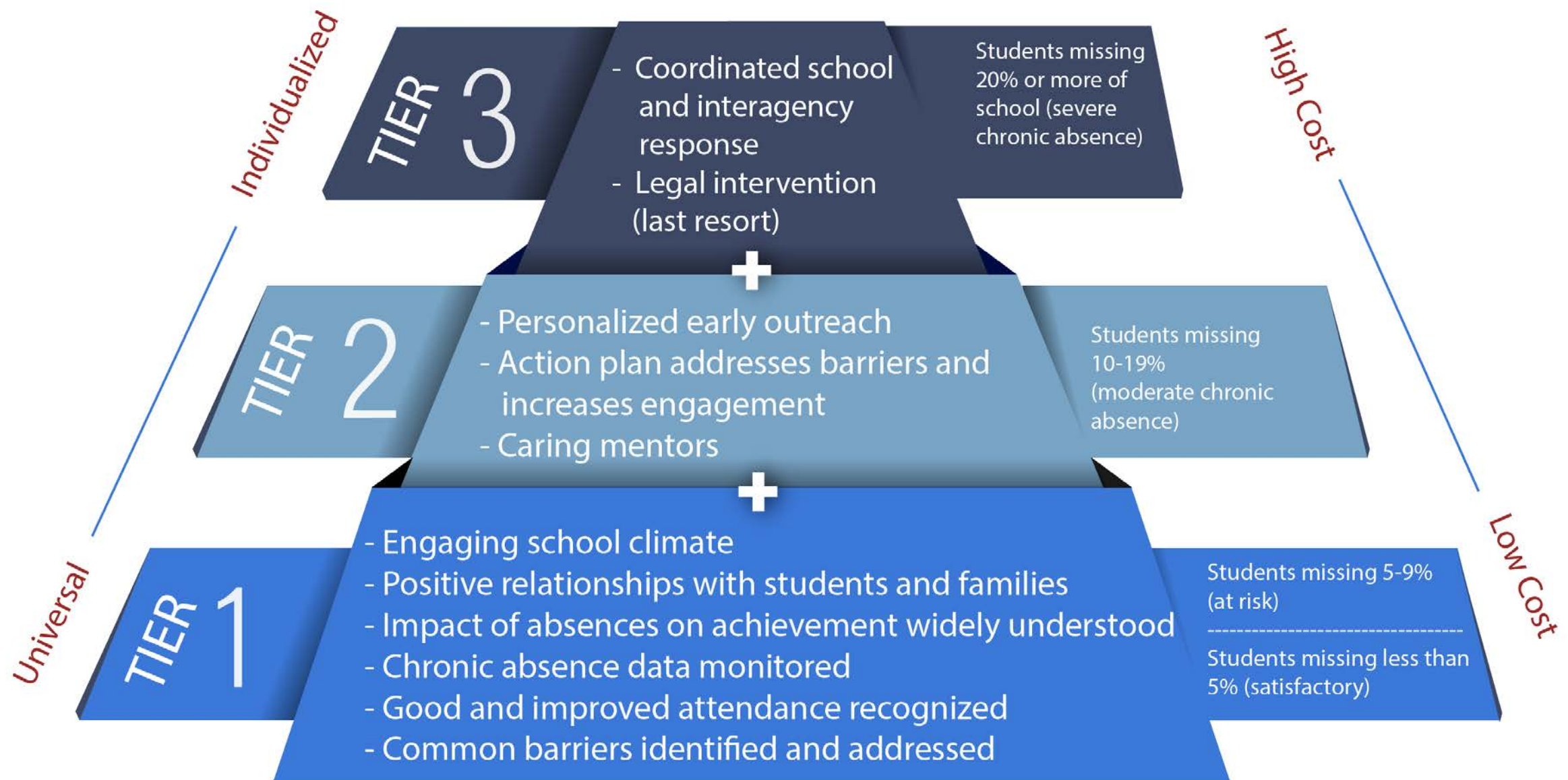
Principal Leadership Is Key

1. Cultivate a schoolwide culture of attendance
2. Use chronic absence data to determine need for additional supports
3. Develop staff capacity to adopt effective practices—team approach is critical
4. Advocate for resources and policies to improve attendance

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/principals/>



The attendance team is responsible for implementing a tiered set of strategies



Source: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>



Principal Perspectives

- Tell us a bit about your school and your community.
- How and why did you focus on attendance and chronic absence?
- Any insights into why your students were missing school?
- What strategies did you develop to address chronic absence?



Lebanon Elementary School



Count ME In Attendance Initiative
Patti Gilley, Principal

Why Partner with Count ME In?

- In June 2017, 102 students were absent for more than 10 days.
 - Combined, those students missed a minimum of 6,120 minutes of instruction.
- In June 2017, 32 students were chronically absent.
 - Combined, those students missed a minimum of 3,264 minutes of instruction.



Then and Now

Isolated



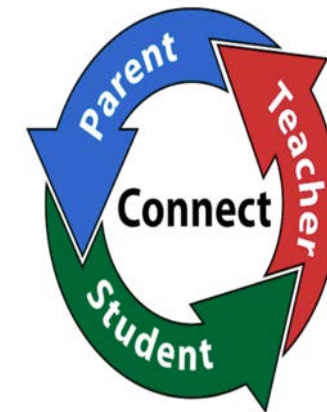
Schoolwide



Punitive



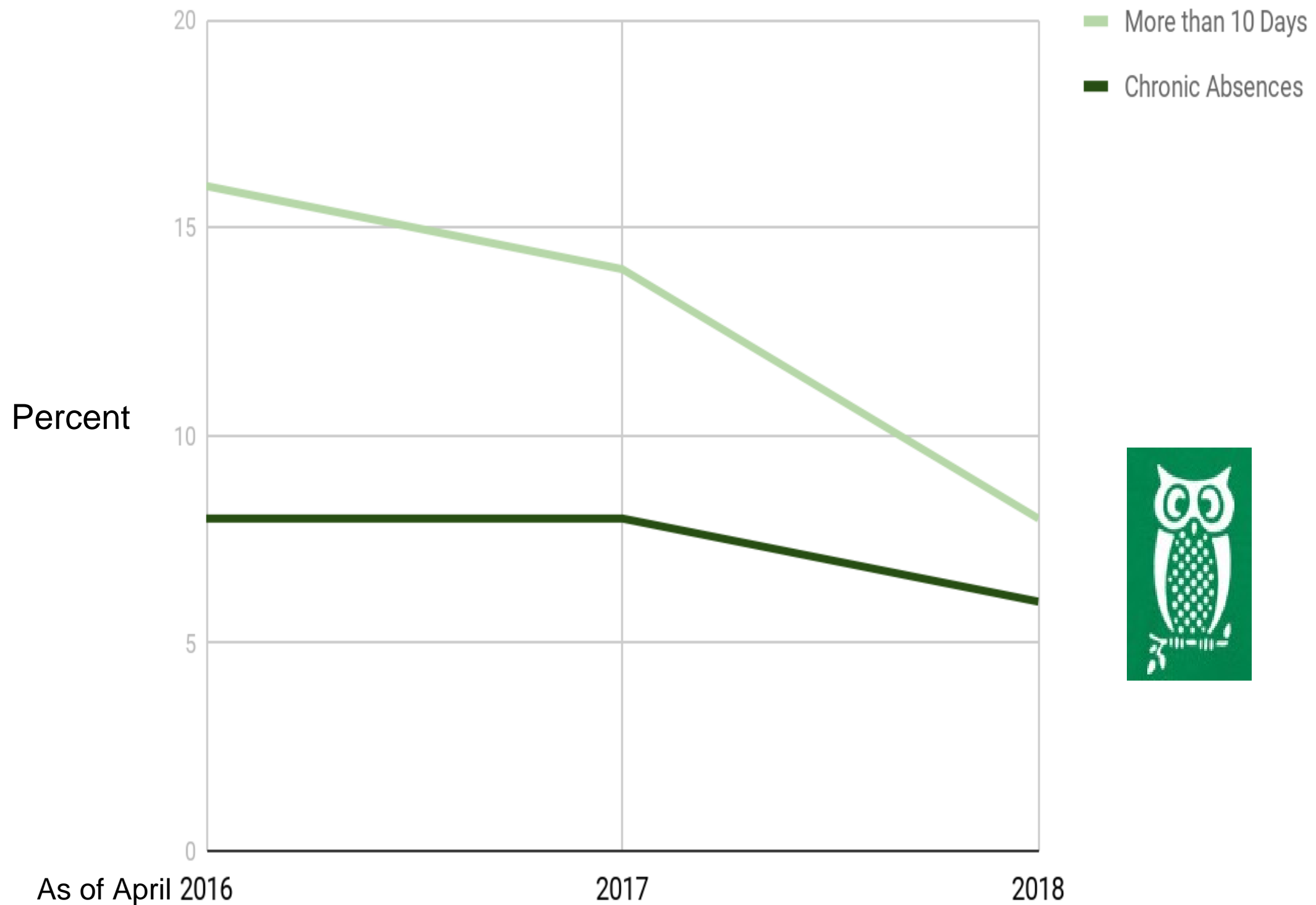
Positive



Inspiring Attendance



Our Results



Relational Trust & Mentorship

{ KEYS TO IMPROVING
ATTENDANCE & ACHIEVEMENT

Presented by:
Dr. Barbara McKeon
Educational Consultant
May 10, 2018

BROOME STREET ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

- ⌘ 50 percent of our lottery set-aside devoted to homeless/transitionally housed youth or students in the child welfare system
- ⌘ 65 percent attendance rate in 2014
- ⌘ 48 percent of students suspended for fighting in the first year
- ⌘ 95 percent of students economically disadvantaged
- ⌘ 82 percent of the student body entered the school below grade level in math
- ⌘ 61 percent of the student body entered the school below grade level in reading
- ⌘ Over 30 percent of students classified as special education (more than double the average rate at NYC schools)

Developed a **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MODEL** that includes:

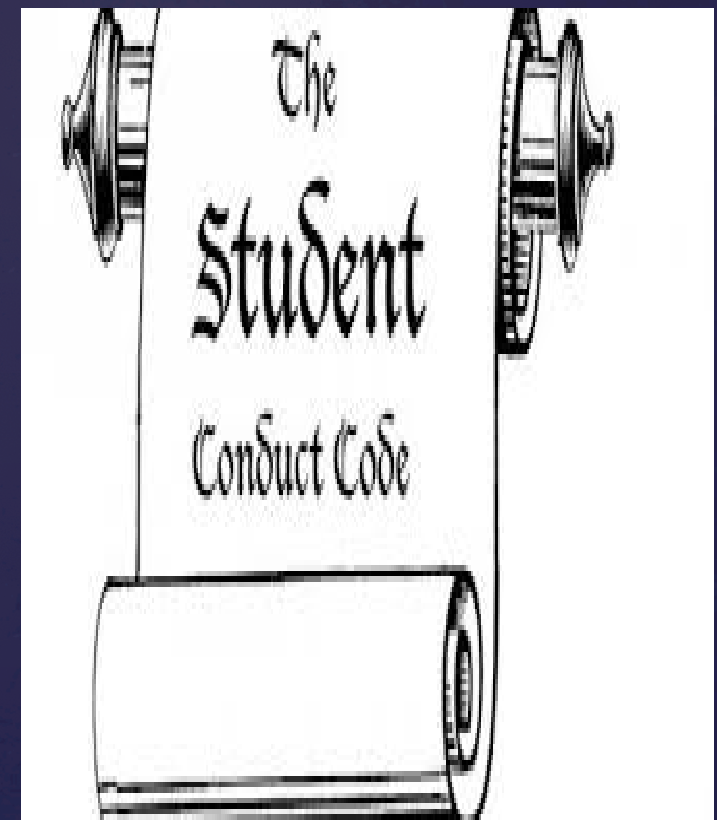
Staff Code of Conduct

Student Code of Conduct

No-Nonsense Nurturing

The HELP DESK

Focus on Restorative Practices





The CHAMPION Model.®

Key Design Elements

- Involves all adults
- Enhances staff-student engagement outside of the classroom
- Provides staff-staff support
- Builds meaningful relationships
- Fosters home connections
- Builds relational trust
- Teaches problem-solving skills
- Promotes self-advocacy
- Acts as a stable adult in an unstable life
- Supports academic growth
- Facilitates social-emotional development
- Navigates the complexities of adolescence
- Models mutual respect for others
- Helps students abide by the Code of Conduct

Qualitative Evidence of Success

STAFF

- ⌘ Relationships
- ⌘ Information
- ⌘ Achievement
- ⌘ Motivation
- ⌘ “The best thing is having someone you can trust and talk to, even if it’s nothing serious.”

STUDENTS

- ⌘ Relationships
- ⌘ Structure
- ⌘ Accountability
- ⌘ “I hadn’t realized how much these kids could grow on me and how much I could actually care for them. It motivates me to want to push them and keep them on the right track so they can do better for themselves.”

Quantitative Evidence of Success

✧ CHAMPION OUTCOMES:

- ✧ Both boys and girls teams win the BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS!
- ✧ English passing rate : 44% to 74%
- ✧ Math passing rate: 54% to 83%
- ✧ Attendance rate: 65% to 85%
- ✧ Of the 40 students in our first graduating class, 78 percent have been accepted to college.
- ✧ The school was granted a FULL FIVE-YEAR reauthorization by SUNY in its first term.
- ✧ In the past two years, we outpaced the city rate for graduating black/African American students.
- ✧ In 2018, BSA was one of seven schools in the country to be awarded GOLD status as a SCHOOL OF OPPORTUNITY.

THE RECIPE

Begin with BELIEF

Mix in

One part EMPATHY

One part TRUST

Add

One part RESPECT

Stir in

STRUCTURE, SYMBOLISM, and STANDARDS

Blend everything together

SUCCESS FOR ALL!

Lessons from the Field

- What supports help school teams address chronic absence?
- Where do schools tend to get stuck in trying to implement whole-school strategies?
- What have you seen effective school leaders do to create a schoolwide approach?



Maine: Rural State

Population: 1.3 million

204 School districts

- Under 200,000 K–12 Students

Local Control

Regional vs. Statewide

- Superintendent regions
- Geographic regions

Power of grassroots



Count ME In



- Established 2013
- Community of educators and youth-serving organizations
- Data driven
- Focus on whole-school and whole-community approach

Count ME In Steps, Challenges, and Supports



Universal messaging and positive engagement

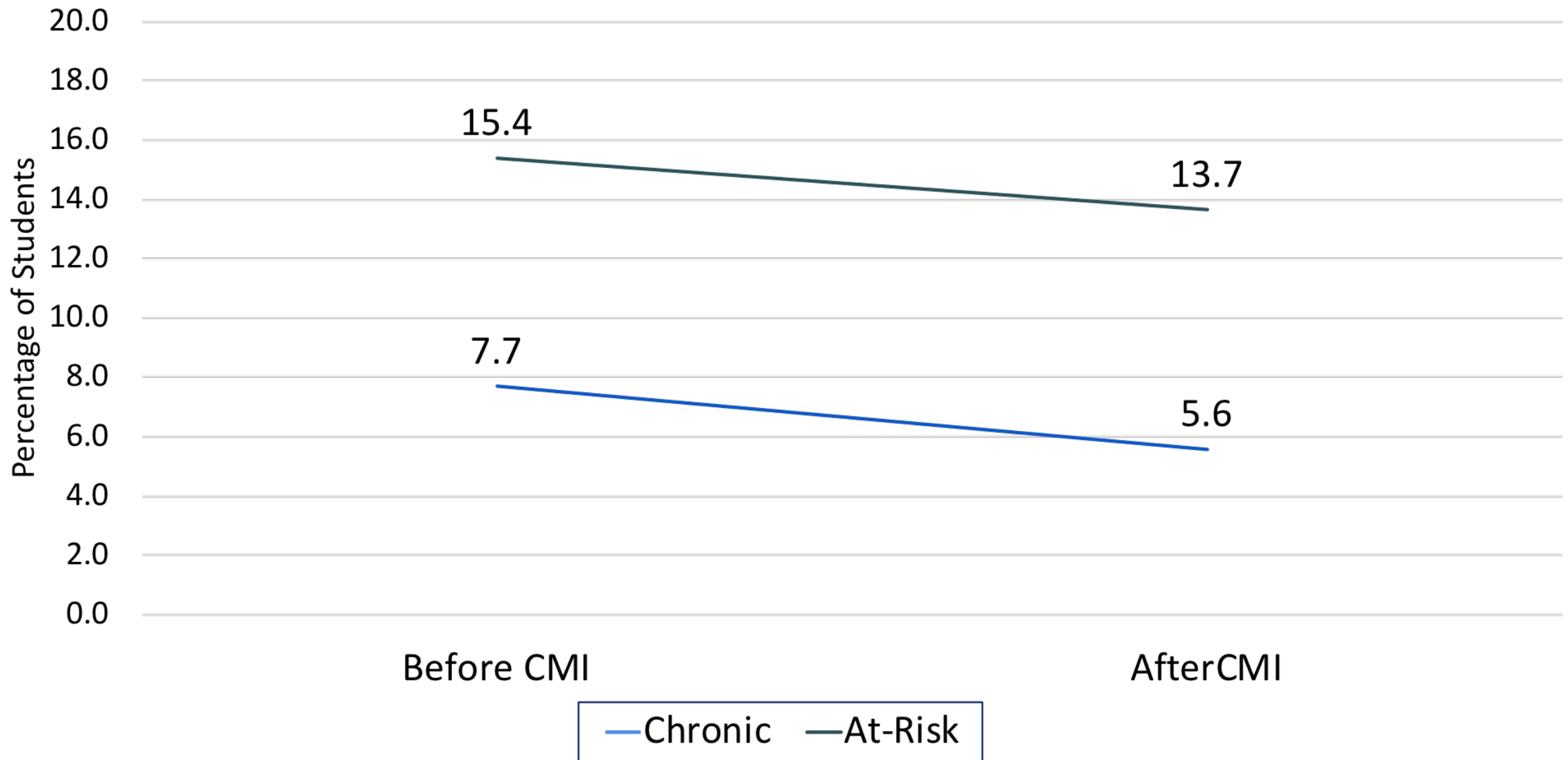
Implement early warning and response system

Establish review structure

Implement data-driven interventions

**Incorporate partners and continuous quality
improvement review**

Changes in Chronic and At-Risk Absence



Effective Leadership

- Administrative and district leadership team support
- Adapt attendance protocol
- Involve and support all staff throughout the year
- Positive approach with families and students
- Persevere and make it a priority
- Modify approach based on data

National Center for Community Schools



- ◆ Technical assistance provider
- ◆ Community school strategies
- ◆ Attendance and chronic absenteeism are key elements of a strong community school strategy

Strategies: District and Site Level



- ◆ Understand the context of the current situation
- ◆ Develop a tiered intervention strategy to address chronic absenteeism
- ◆ Develop protocols at both the system and site levels to ensure strong implementation and continuous improvement

Accurate and Actionable Data



◆ District Level

- Aggregate District-Level Data
 - Average daily attendance
 - Attendance cohorts
 - 90–100%
 - 80–89%
 - 70–79%
- Site-Level Data
 - Average daily attendance
 - Attendance cohorts

Accurate and Actionable Data



◆ Site Level

- Average daily attendance
 - Period by period when applicable
- Attendance cohorts
- Discipline
- Grades
- Credit accumulation
- Interventions
 - We need to know WHO to target and WHY

Moving Forward



- ◆ Review current targeted/universal/family engagement strategies
- ◆ Complete Attendance Works Tiered Intervention Pyramid
- ◆ Complete our Starting Strong tool and process to ensure ongoing success
- ◆ For our targeted interventions, we need to be clear: WHO are we targeting; WHY are we targeting; HOW are we targeting?

Challenges



- ◆ Weekly meeting spent discussing only a few severely chronically absent students (a.k.a. long-term absences, 407s, truants, etc.)
 - Ensure a tight agenda that focuses on all tiers of students
 - Potentially hold two separate meetings
- ◆ Getting whole-school support to implement Tier 1 strategies
 - Climate and culture are integral to success
 - Start with small asks
 - Make sure the halls speak to universal strategies

Successful Strategy: Principal



- ◆ School had approximately 50 percent of its students living in transitional housing (shelters), and most were chronically absent
- ◆ There were three main shelters housing the families that attended her school
- ◆ The principal went to each shelter personally and knocked on the door of each of her families
 - To build the relationship that was necessary for the children to succeed in school

Resources for school leaders

- Leading Attendance, a toolkit for principals from Attendance Works
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/for-principals-leading-attendance/>
- Teaching Attendance, online learning modules for school teams from Attendance Works
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/teaching-attendance-curriculum/>
- Resources from the National Center for Community Schools



Organizations that we work with:

Everyone Graduates Center: <http://new.every1graduates.org>

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

MENTOR: <http://www.mentoring.org>

My Brother's Keeper Alliance: <https://www.mbkalliance.org>

Jobs for the Future: <http://jff.org>

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