

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG:

IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Presented at the

*NSAESC National Convening
Baltimore, MD
Thursday, May 10, 2018*

*By Treva Haugaard, Brigid Howard,
Rebecka Theurer, and Shelley Boyd*



Icebreaker/Introductions



Today's Agenda:

1. What is the problem?
2. What causes this problem?
3. What can be done?
4. What are WE doing?
5. How well does it work?
6. How can you use this?
7. What can you learn from our experiences?



What is the problem?



Average Daily Attendance

Truancy

Problematic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism

National Data on Absenteeism



About 30 percent of U.S. schools have **significant** rates of chronic absenteeism; more than 20 percent more have **high** or **extreme** absenteeism.

11 percent of elementary students were chronically absent



Nearly **20 percent** of high school students were



And **14 percent** (or **1 in 7**) students overall



Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

Grade-level reading

Achievement gaps

Risky behavior

Dropout rates

What causes chronic absenteeism?



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 illness

Lack of access to health or dental care

Poor transportation

Trauma

Unmet basic needs

No safe path to school

Aversion

Child struggling academically

Poor school climate, ineffective school discipline

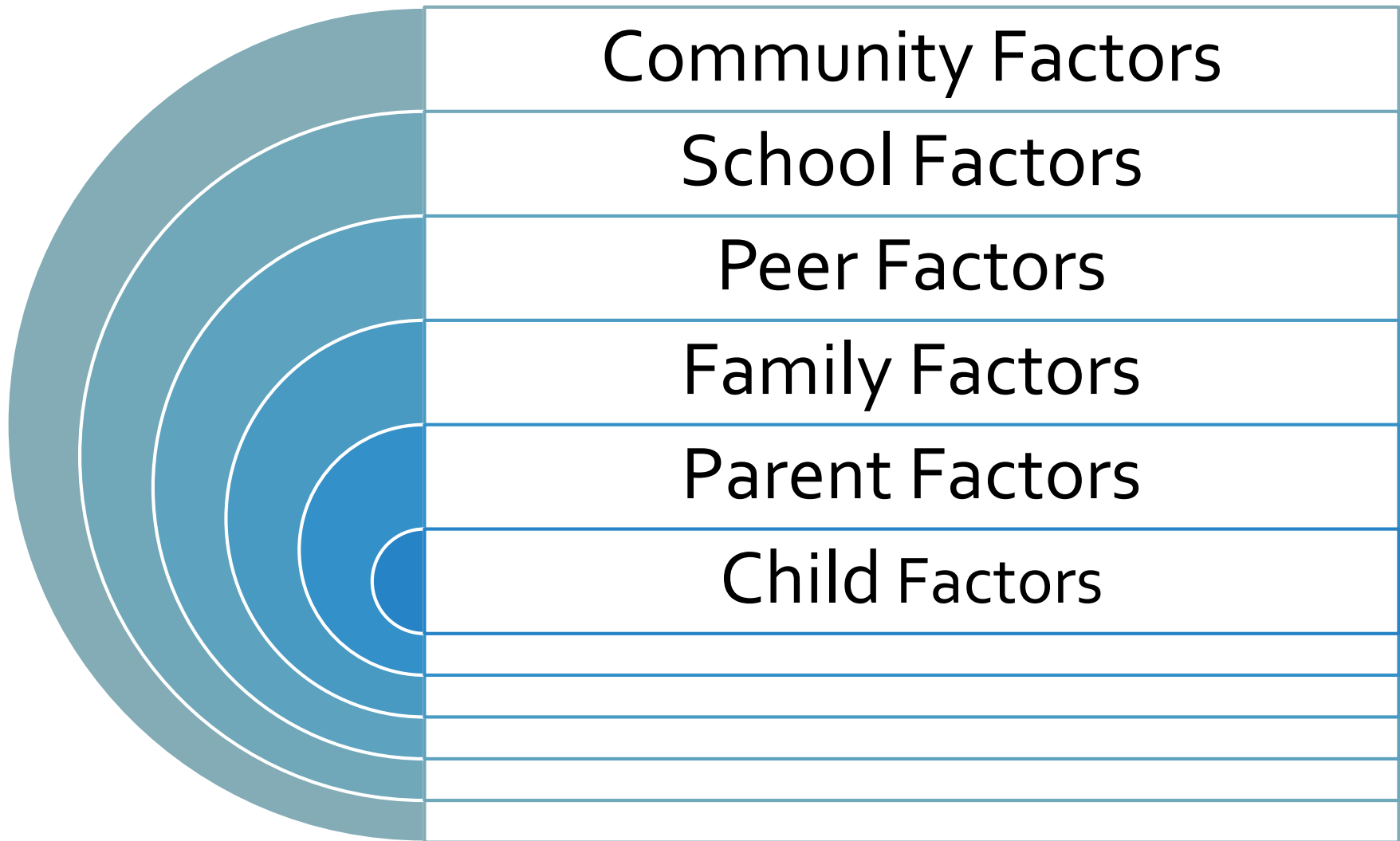
Parents had negative school experience

Lack of Engagement

Lack of relevant instruction

No meaningful relationships with adults at school

More exciting to be out of school than in



Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism Report



93 percent cited health issues



41 percent preferred activity out of school



53 percent cited transportation



39 percent questioned the value of school



42 percent cited personal stress

ATTENDANCE ICEBERG



The diagram features a central iceberg with a white tip above a horizontal line representing the water surface. The submerged portion is a large, dark blue mass. Various text labels are placed around the iceberg, categorized by their position relative to the water line.

mental health transportation student behavior at school
avoidance/refusal/truancy physical illness work (parent or student)
attitude toward education parent engagement

trauma

lack of health care

parent work schedules

lack of resources

child abuse/neglect

mental health

safety in neighborhood

lack of engagement

juvenile justice involvement

parenting skills

substance abuse
(student or parent)

unemployment

homelessness

bullying

school phobia

foster care

poverty

divorce

single parent

nutrition issues

caring for siblings

mobility

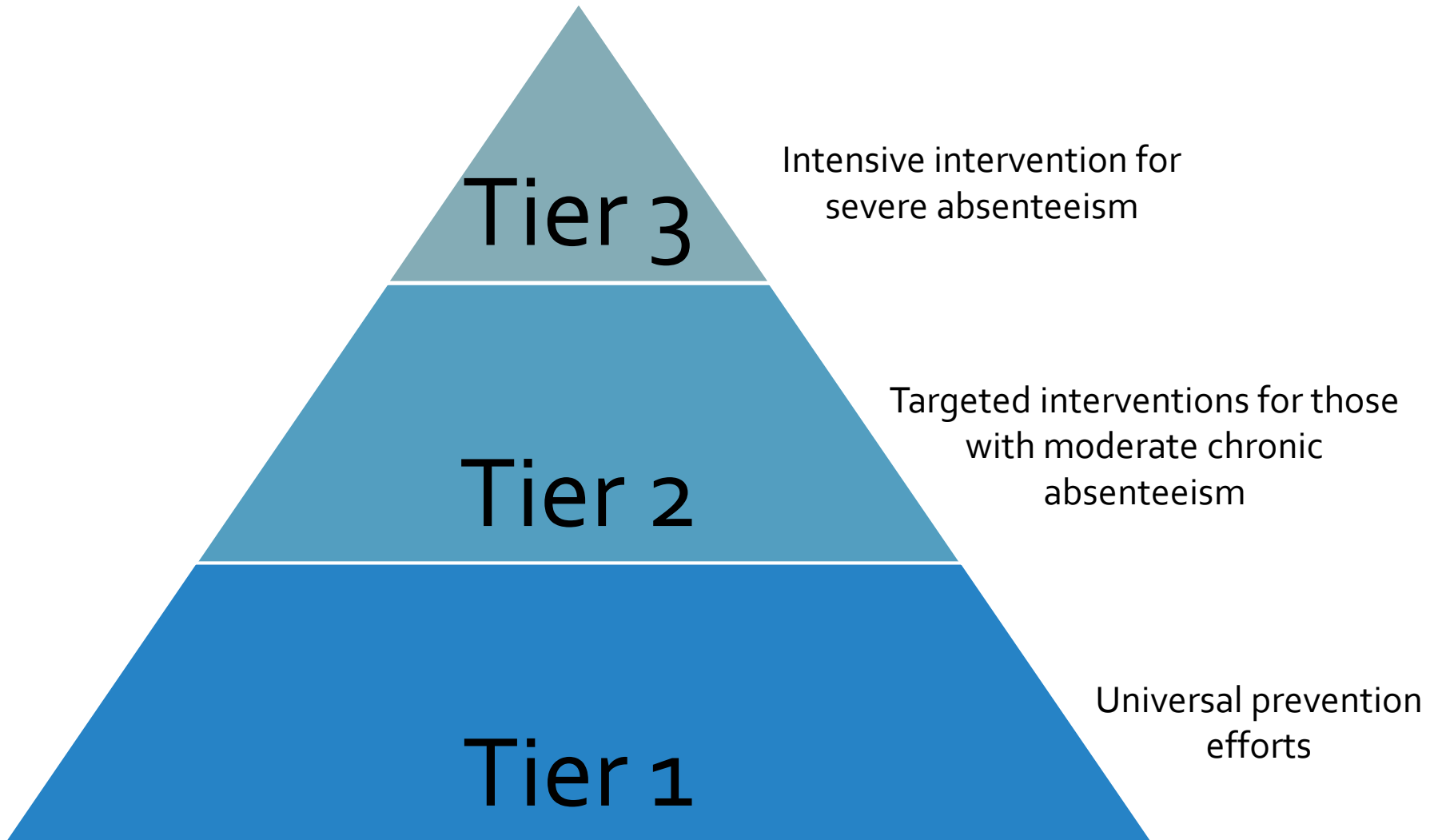
learning problems

ATTENDANCE ICEBERG

What can be done?



Multi-Tiered Intervention Strategy:



Intervention Strategies



Monitor data



Personalized outreach



Engage students and parents



Recognition for good or improved attendance



Remove barriers

What are we doing?

The chalkboard features various educational icons: a microscope, a trophy, a pencil, a lightbulb, a magnifying glass, a stack of books, a pair of glasses, and a yellow eraser. The text "Attendance Matters!" is written in large, stylized letters. At the bottom, the hashtag "#WeDon'tCoastWeAttend" and "#SchoolEveryday" are visible. A yellow banner at the bottom right says "Call Your School if Your Child is Sick".

GOALS CENTER
Greater Omaha Attendance and Learning Services
www.goals-center.org

Boys Town National Hotline
800-448-3000 **BOYS TOWN** National Hotline

Nebraska Family Helpline
888-866-8660 **NEBRASKA FAMILY HELPLINE**

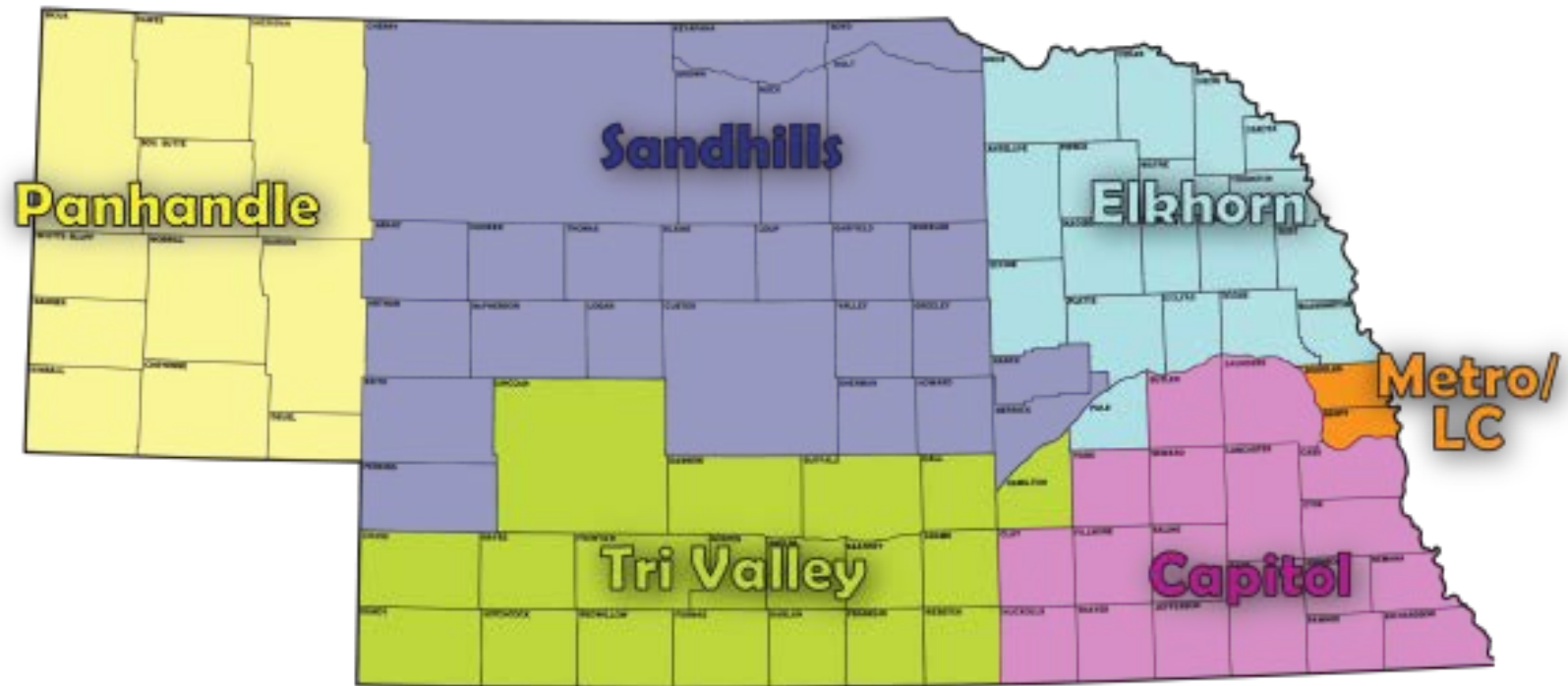
United Way of the Midlands
2-1-1 **United Way** **2-1-1** Get Connected. Get Results.

Attendance Matters!

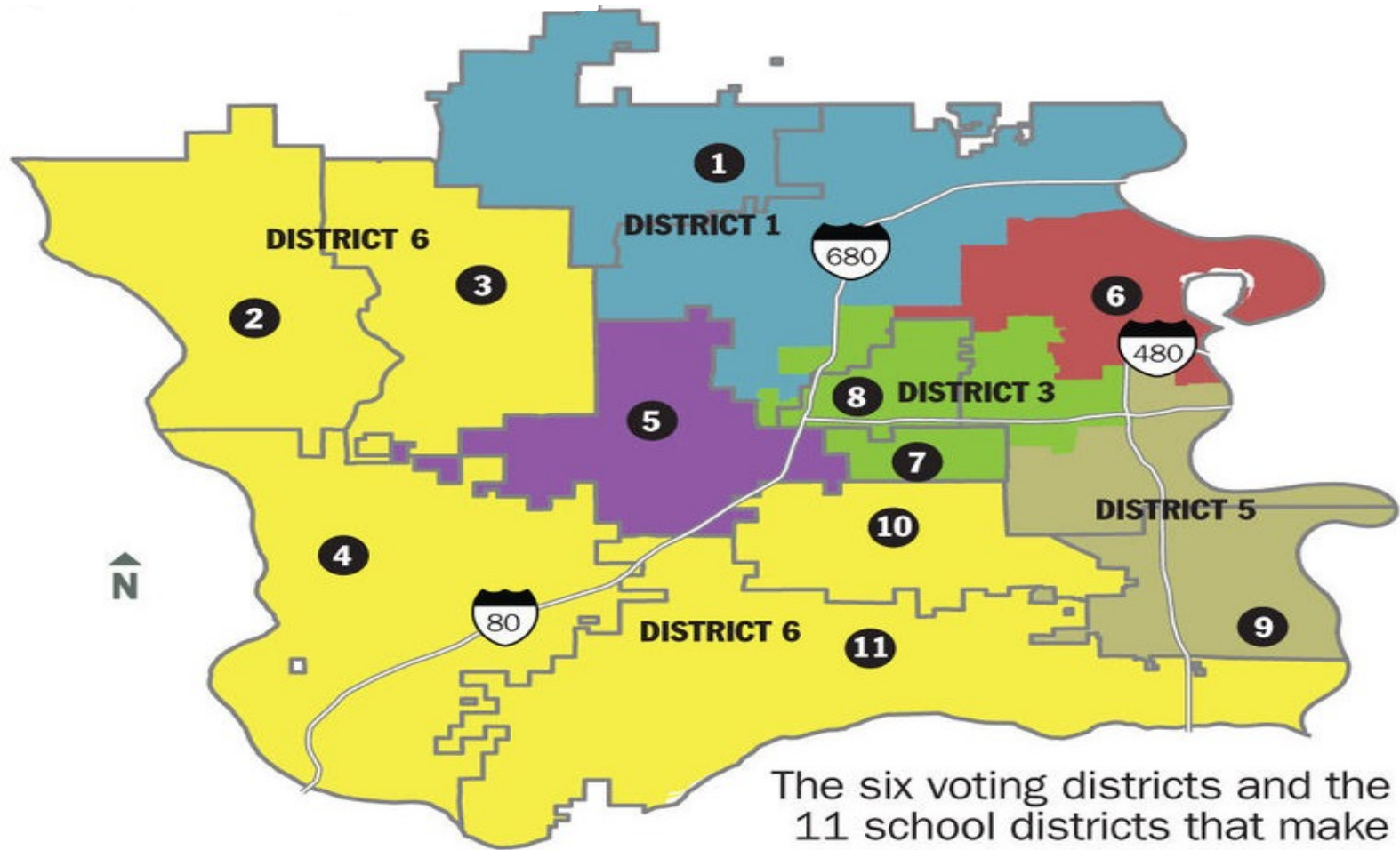
Call Your School if Your Child is Sick:

#WeDon'tCoastWeAttend #SchoolEveryday

Nebraska State Education Association Districts



Eleven Districts in Two Counties

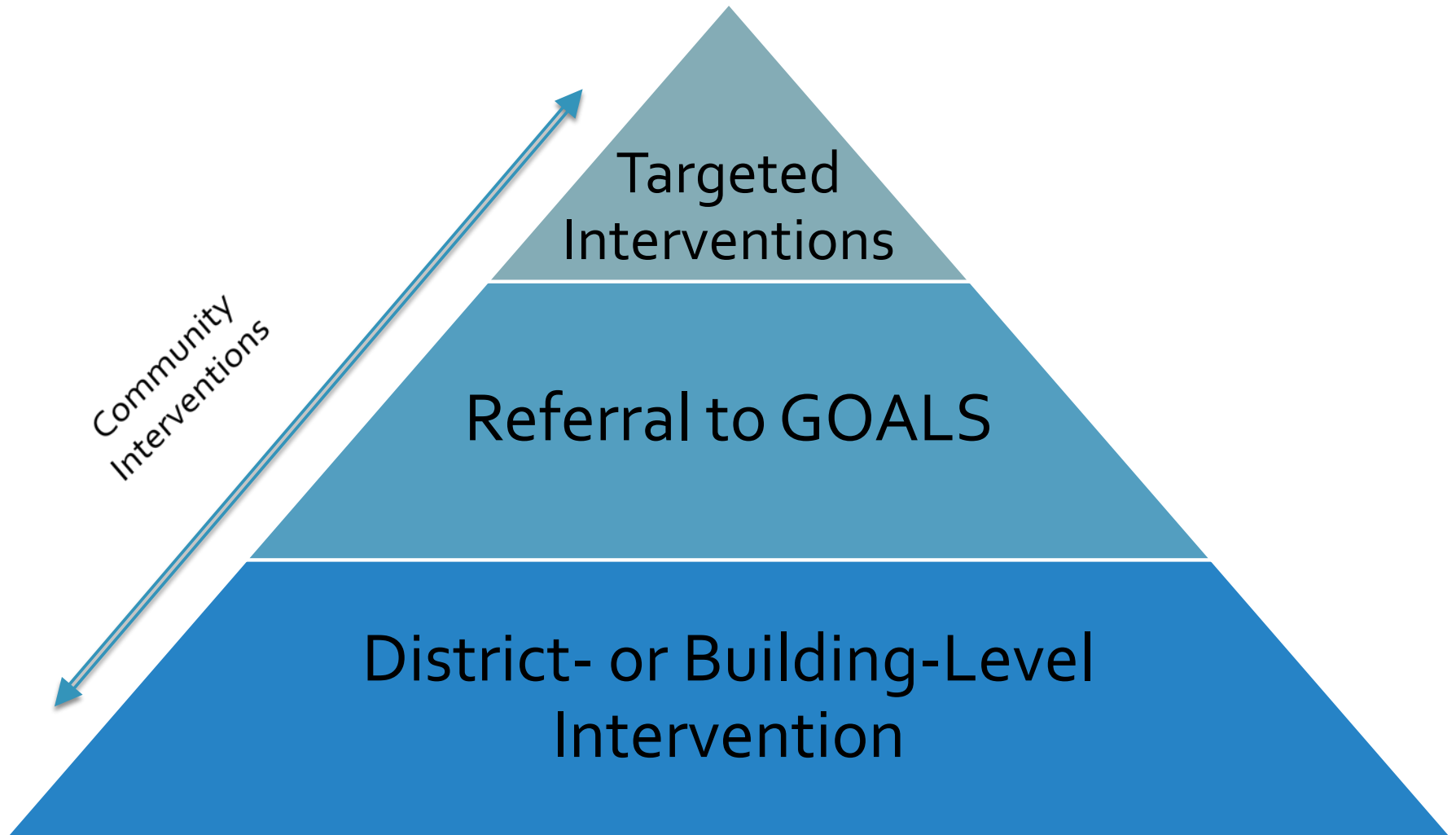


School boundaries

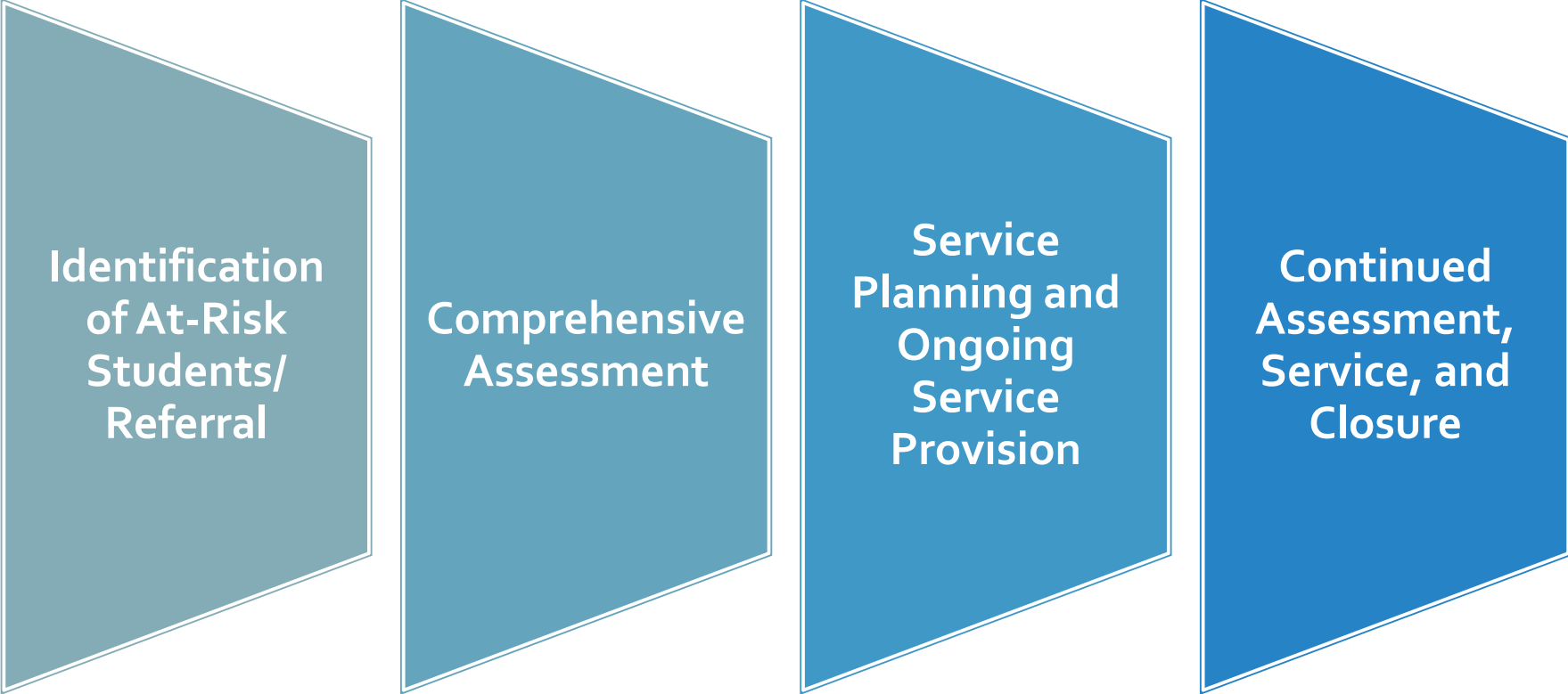
- 1 Bennington 2 Douglas County West 3 Elkhorn 4 Gretna 5 Millard
6 Omaha 7 Ralston 8 Westside 9 Bellevue 10 Papillion-La Vista 11 Springfield Platteview

SOURCE: Douglas County Election Commissioner's Office

Greater Omaha Community Pyramid of Intervention



GOALS Center Service Model



Identification
of At-Risk
Students/
Referral

Comprehensive
Assessment

Service
Planning and
Ongoing
Service
Provision

Continued
Assessment,
Service, and
Closure

Working with Community Providers



How well does it work?



GOALS Center Key Outcomes

Prevention of Involvement with
Juvenile Justice/Child Welfare



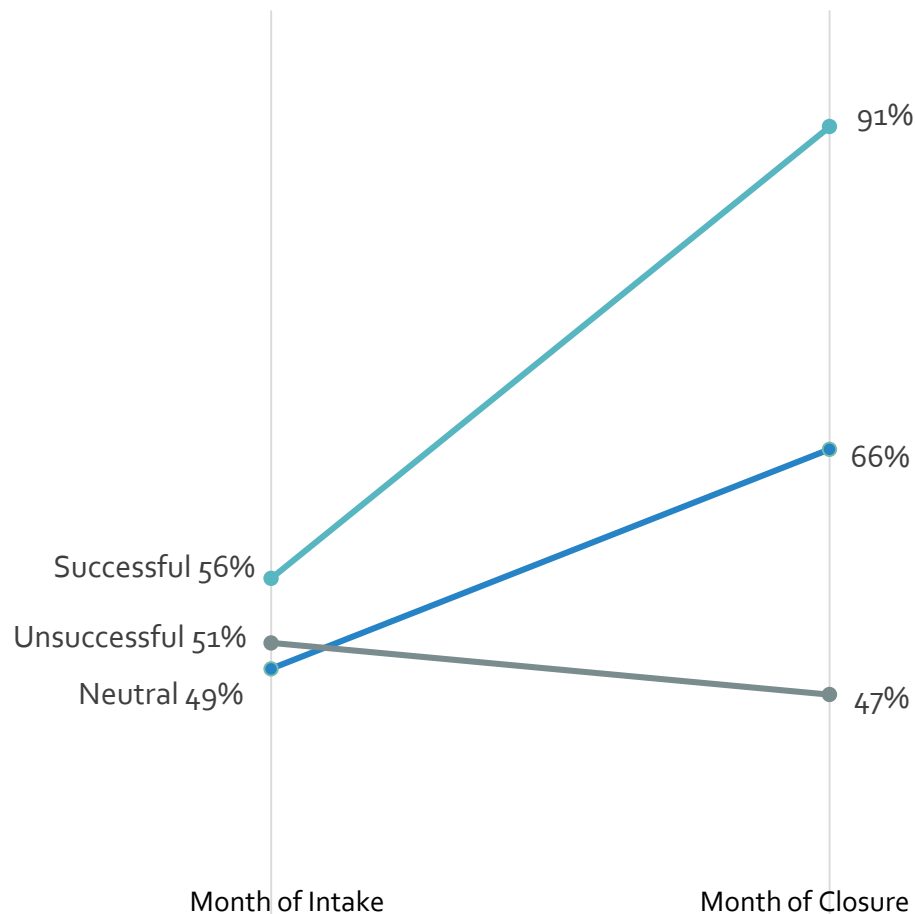
Increase in Attendance
for Students Served

Other outcomes measured:

- Academic performance at referral and closure
- Involvement with community resources at closure
- Consumer satisfaction
- Ohio Scales assessment protocol

Outcomes Data (Dec 2014–March 2018)

Successful closures (n=131) demonstrated **dramatic** improvement in the proportion of days attended; **Neutral closures** (n=74) saw some improvement; **Unsuccessful closures** (n=130) did not improve.



58%

of all served showed improvement
of at least two days a month

82%

were not involved with the court
for truancy

98%

those completing the service plan were
passing all or most classes at closure

What can you learn from our experience?

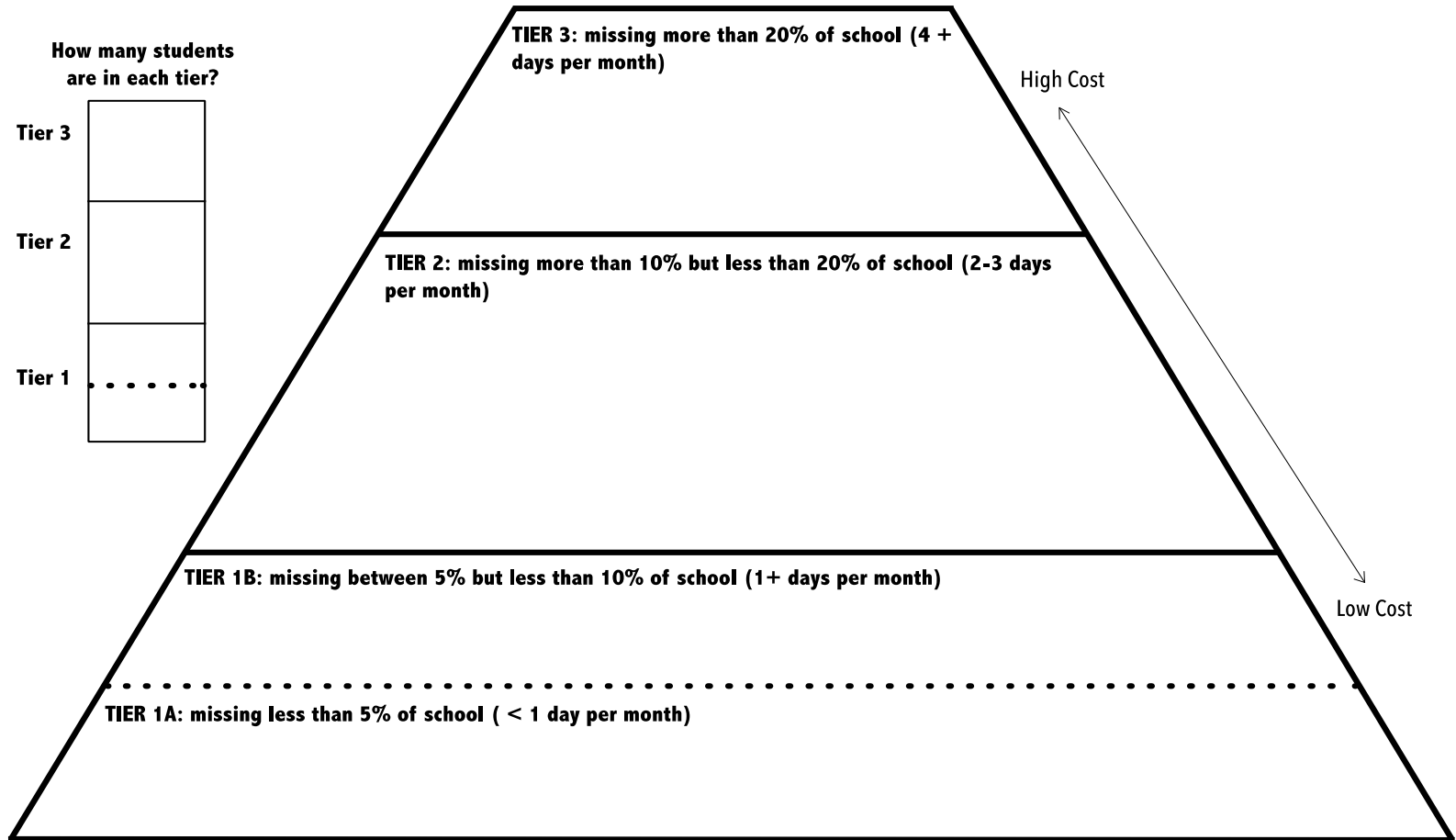




Fill Out Your Pyramid

For each tier, fill in the activities/supports currently in place.

School District/ School Name: _____



Anecdotal Impact

"Knowing there was someone on my side and who had my back was reassuring. He gave us great suggestions and was able to guide us to better school years."



"This lady right here was a huge part in the success and him graduating...She was a tremendous help to him and to myself! Thank you so much for all you did for my son and family!"

Questions? Takeaways? Next steps?

Presenters:

Treva Haugaard, MSW & MPA,

Executive Director

Treva.Haugaard@goals-center.org

Rebecka Theurer, MPA,

Lead Family Advocate

Rebecka.Theurer@goals-center.org

Brigid Howard, MA,

Quality Assurance Coordinator

Brigid.Howard@goals-center.org

Shelley Boyd, LCSW,

School Social Worker, Millard Public Schools

sboyd@mpsomaha.org

References

- Attendance Works. (2015). Tiers of intervention to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- Attendance Works and Everyone Graduates Center. (2017). Portraits of Change: Aligning School and Community Resources to Reduce Chronic Absence.
- Balfanz, R. & Byrnes, V. (2012). Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing What We Know From Nationally Available Data. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools.
- Brundage, A. H., Castillo, J. & Batsche, G. (2017). *Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA) Among Secondary Students: Survey Summary Report*. Florida's Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project, University of South Florida.
- Kearney, C.A. (2008a). An interdisciplinary model of school absenteeism in youth to inform professional practice and public policy. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20, 257–282.
- Kearney, C.A. (2008b). School absenteeism and school refusal behavior in youth: a contemporary review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 28, 451–471.
- Kearney, C.A. (2003). Bridging the gap among professionals who address youths with school absenteeism: Overview and suggestions for consensus. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34:1, 37–65.
- Kearney, C. & Graczyk, P. (2013). A response to intervention model to promote school attendance and decrease school absenteeism. *Child Youth Care Forum* 43:1–25.
- U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2016). Chronic absenteeism in the nation's schools: An unprecedented look at a hidden educational crisis.
- Icon credits: School by Scarlett McKay; First Aid Kit by Mello; Bus by Yuvika Koul; Sad by Barracuda; Analytics by Adnen Kadri; Chatting by Kathleen Black; Award by Iconosphere; Contact by Dorothea C. Cornelius; Barrier by Bakunetsu Kaito (from www.thenounproject.com).

