



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism in Our Schools

Model of Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention

- A belief that the behavior can be changed.
- An increased focus on prevention and proactive measures.
- An understanding that our efforts should attempt as much as possible to address causes of the problematic behavior.

Guiding Principles

- Schools should work to address all types of absenteeism, including excused, unexcused, and suspension-based absences.
- ALL stakeholders should have a role to play in the efforts created to address absenteeism.
- We cannot punish students into wanting to attend school.

Truancy Vs. Chronic Absence

TRUANCY

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal & administrative solutions

Vs.

CHRONIC ABSENCE

- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies

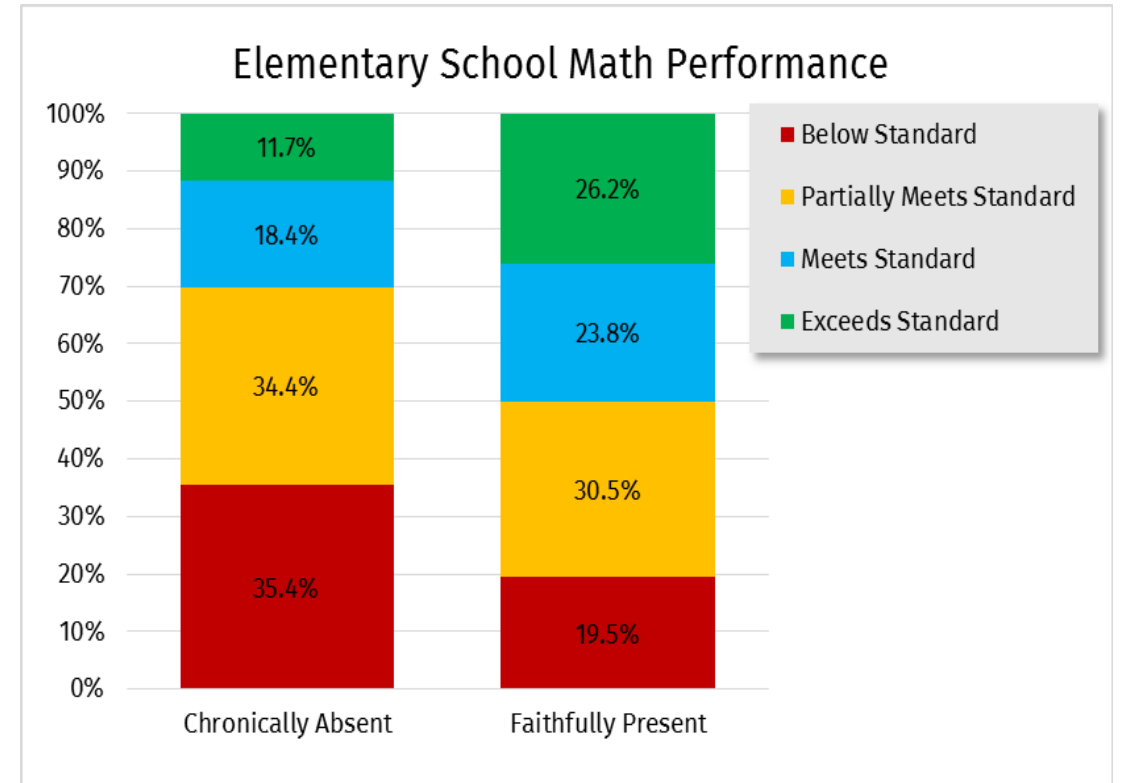
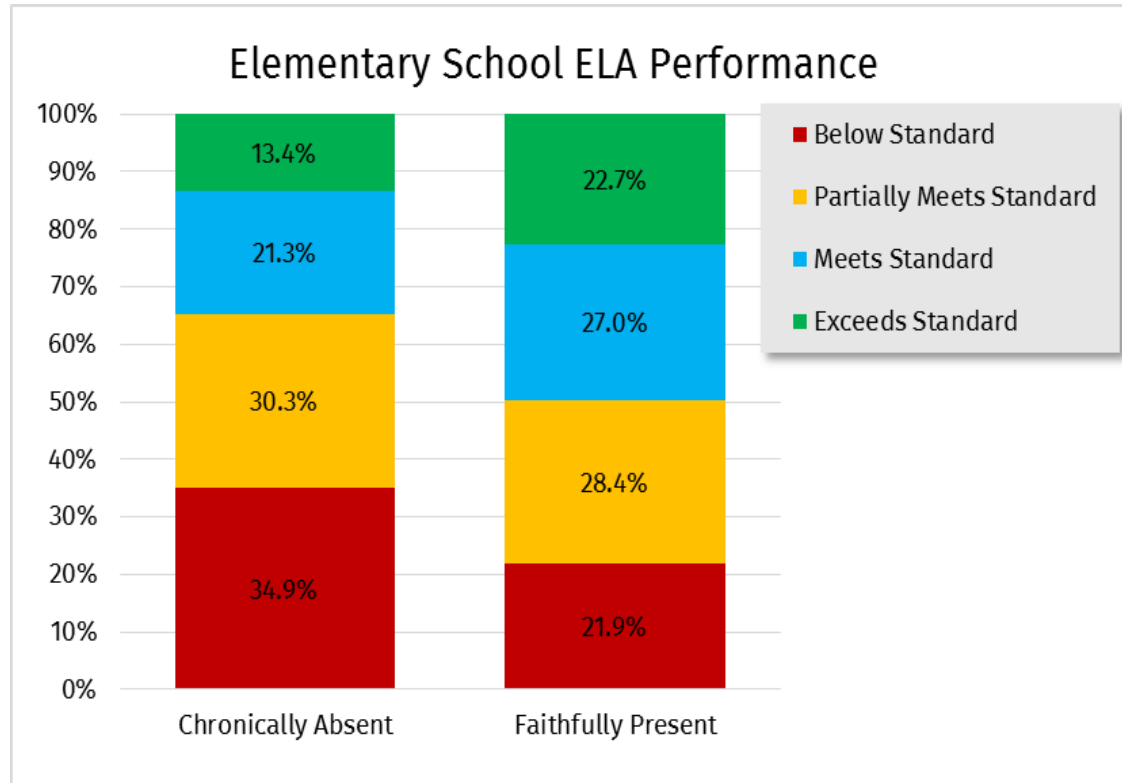


Student Chronic Absenteeism

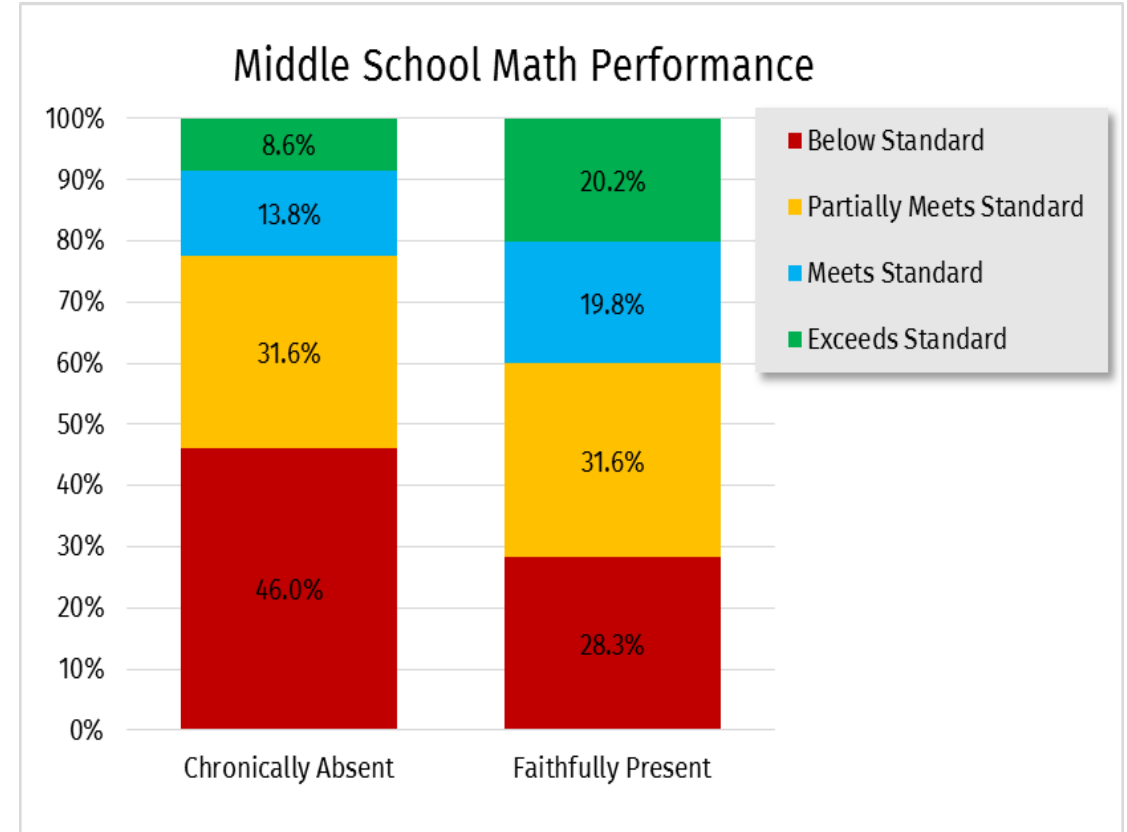
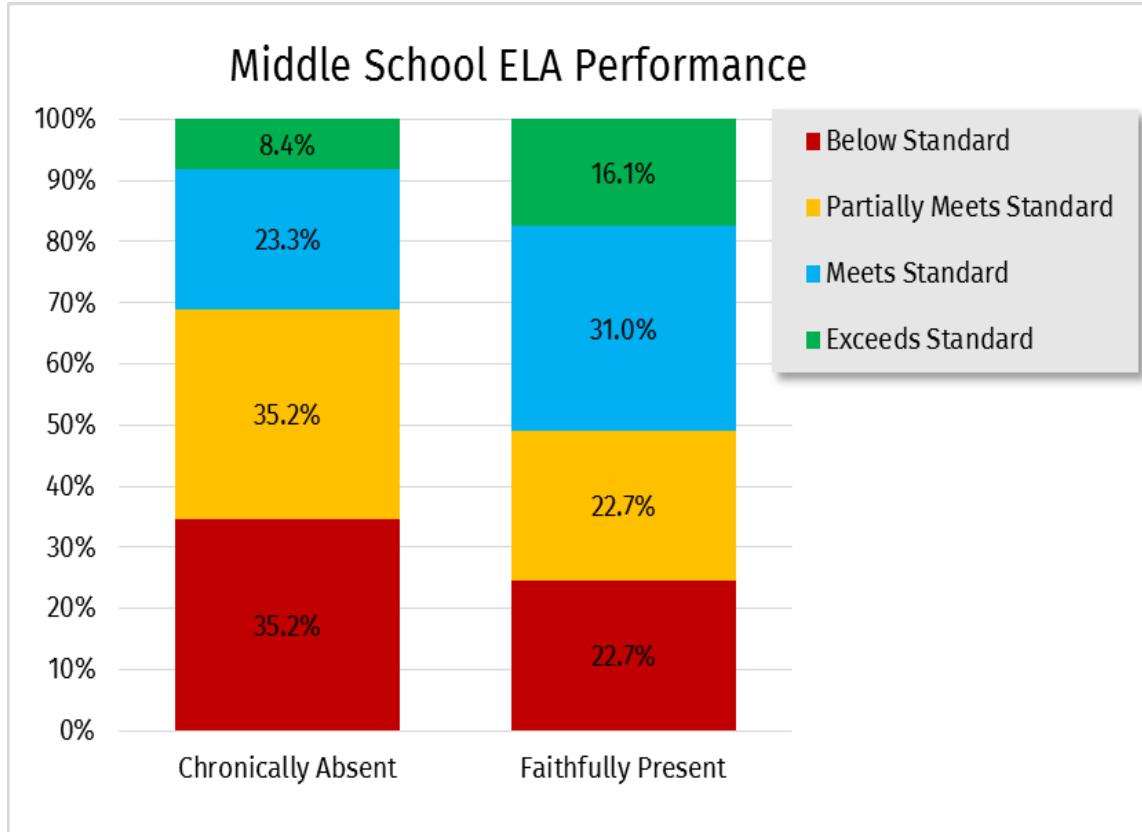
- A measure of the total instructional time missed by a student and is defined as individual students missing at least 10% of school for any reason.
- 20% of our students were chronically absent last year. National trends are the same.

We need to change the conversation!

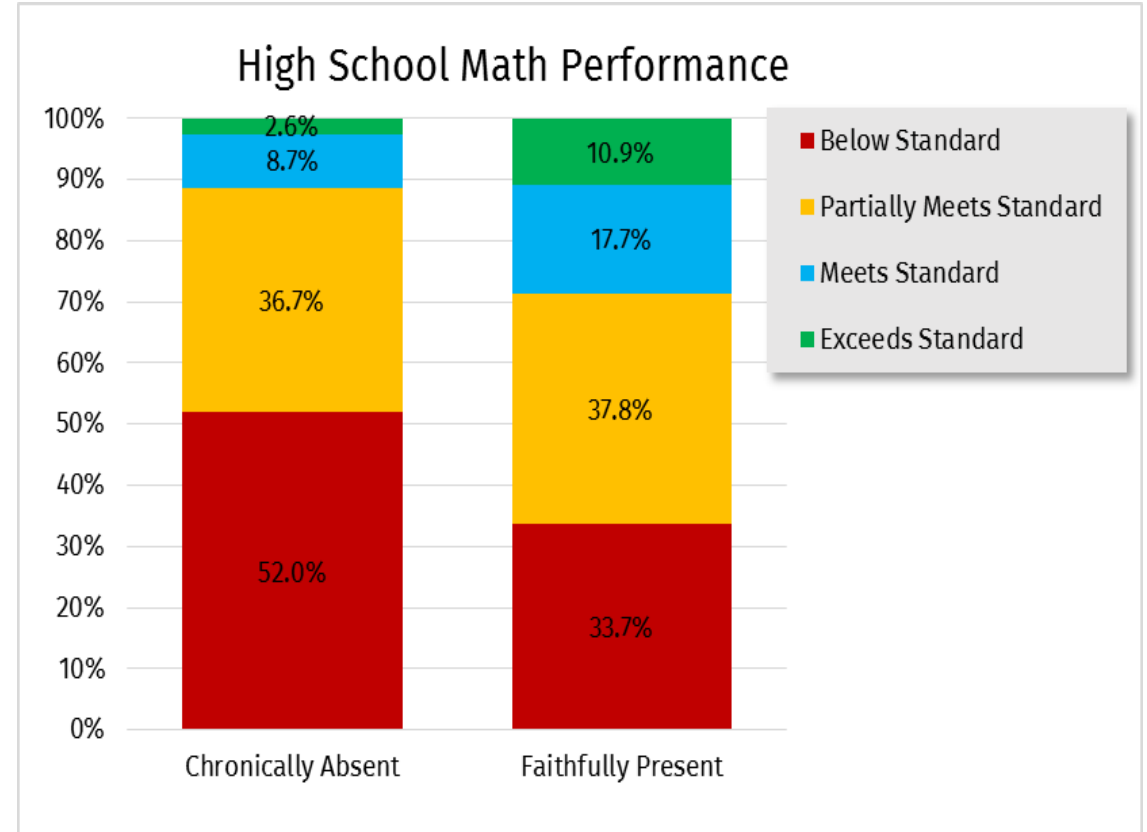
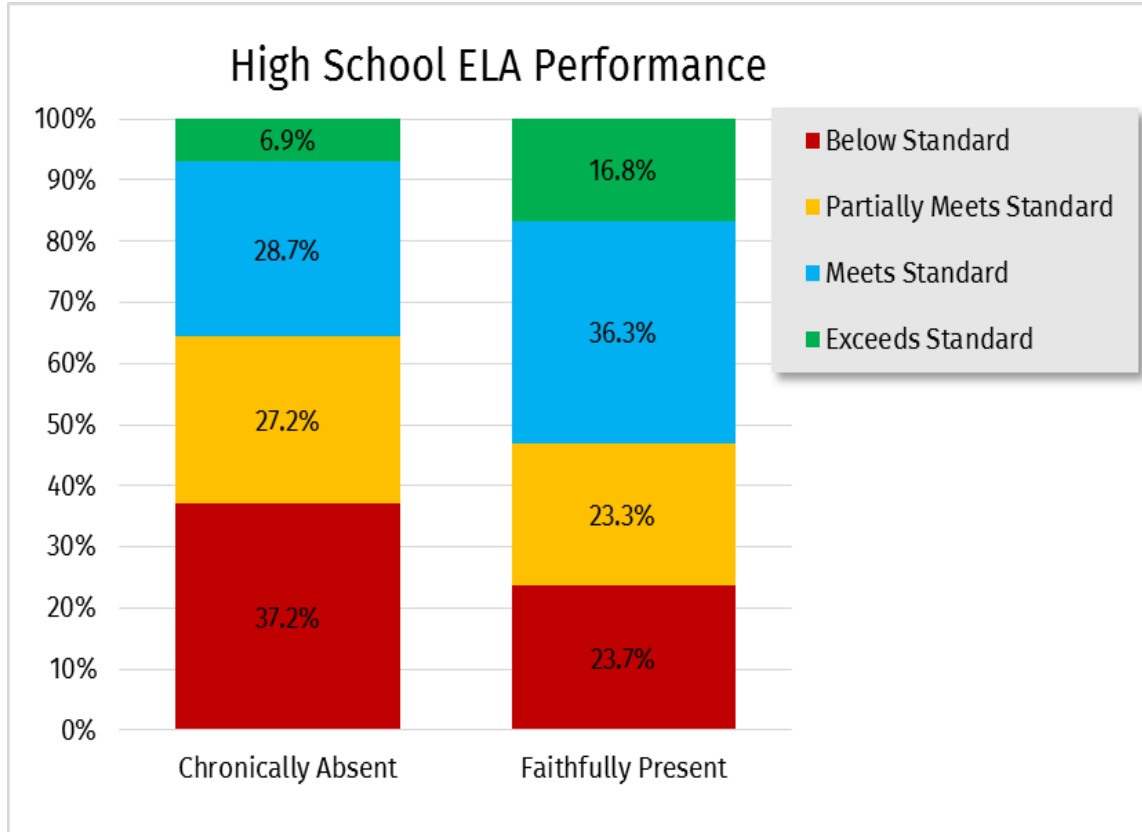
Impact of Attendance on Achievement



Impact of Attendance on Achievement



Impact of Attendance on Achievement



Within Our Sphere Of Influence

CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

Four Factors in a School's Environment that Affect Students



Research shows four primary conditions in a school's environment can have a positive or negative effect on students, including their academic outcomes and attendance record.



Safety

- Physically, emotionally and identity-safe environment
- Low-risk environment
- An absence of microaggressions and stereotype threat
- Respectful



Connectedness & Belonging

- Meaningful connection between adults and students
- Cultural respect, inclusiveness, and responsiveness
- Positive peer relationships
- Belonging and membership
- Sense of support



Academic Challenge

- High goals and expectations
- Connection to life goals
- Culturally responsive & engaging
- Robust opportunities to learn
- Strong individual motivation
- Developmentally appropriate



Social & Emotional Support

- Attention to student development, experience, and circumstance
- Support of young people's potential
- Humble, persistent, responsible, and empathetic educators
- Creativity and collaboration modeled and valued
- Growth mindset
- Social and emotional learning and support

SOURCE: Conditions for Learning (CFL) Reference Guide, National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH | AIR.ORG



WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

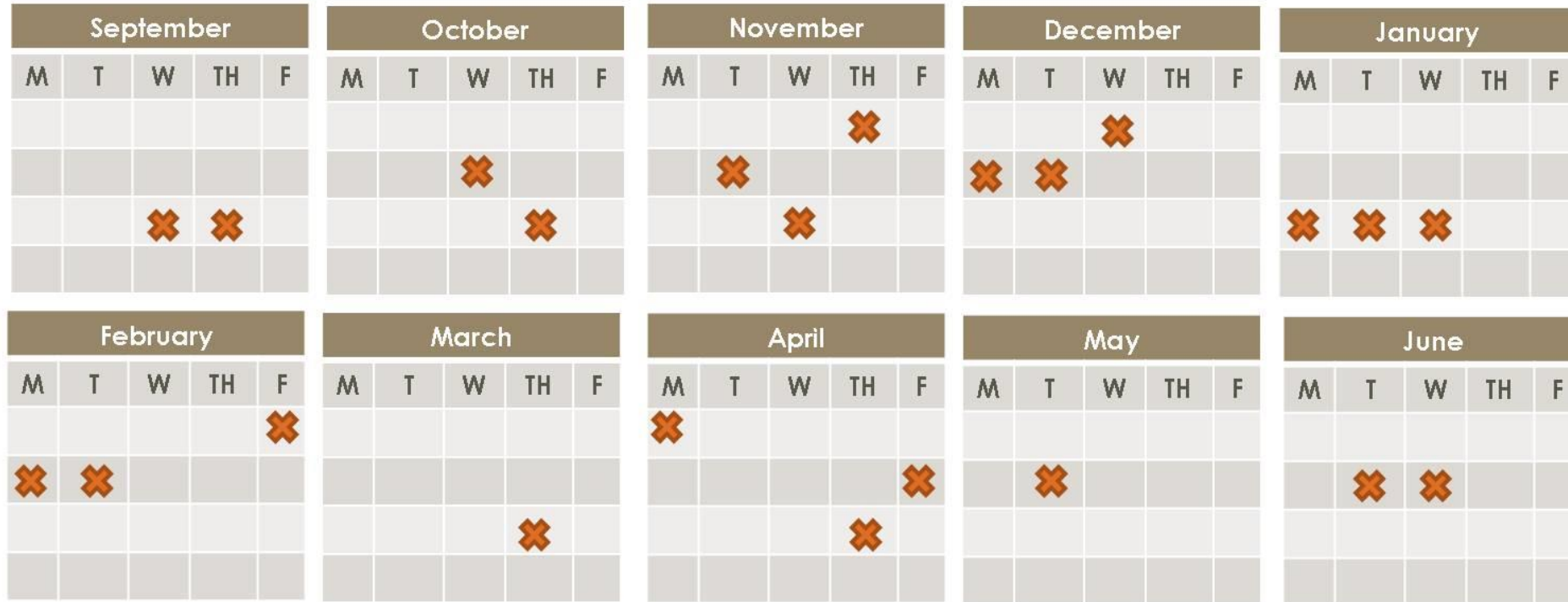
Attendance Tips

- Rethink the way we approach attendance with a focus on preventative over punitive measures
- **Change the conversation** regarding absences from only being concerned with unexcused absences to **focusing on instructional time lost**
- Create **good school attendance habits in the early grades**
- **Examine their data to look for trends** (particular classes with high absenteeism, days of the week, etc.)

Attendance Tips

- Plan meaningful, engaging activities to **improve attendance prior to school breaks**
- **Work with local health care providers to get information to parents** on when they should keep their child home or send them to school (i.e. Fever versus runny nose and/or cough)
- Engage in **current best practices** regarding health concerns

Attendance



Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = As Few As 2 days a month

Why are students chronically absent?

Myths

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Don't realize just missing 2 days per month can affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

Barriers

- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Chronic illness
- Trauma
- No safe path to school
- Poor Transportation
- Housing instability
- High mobility
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice system

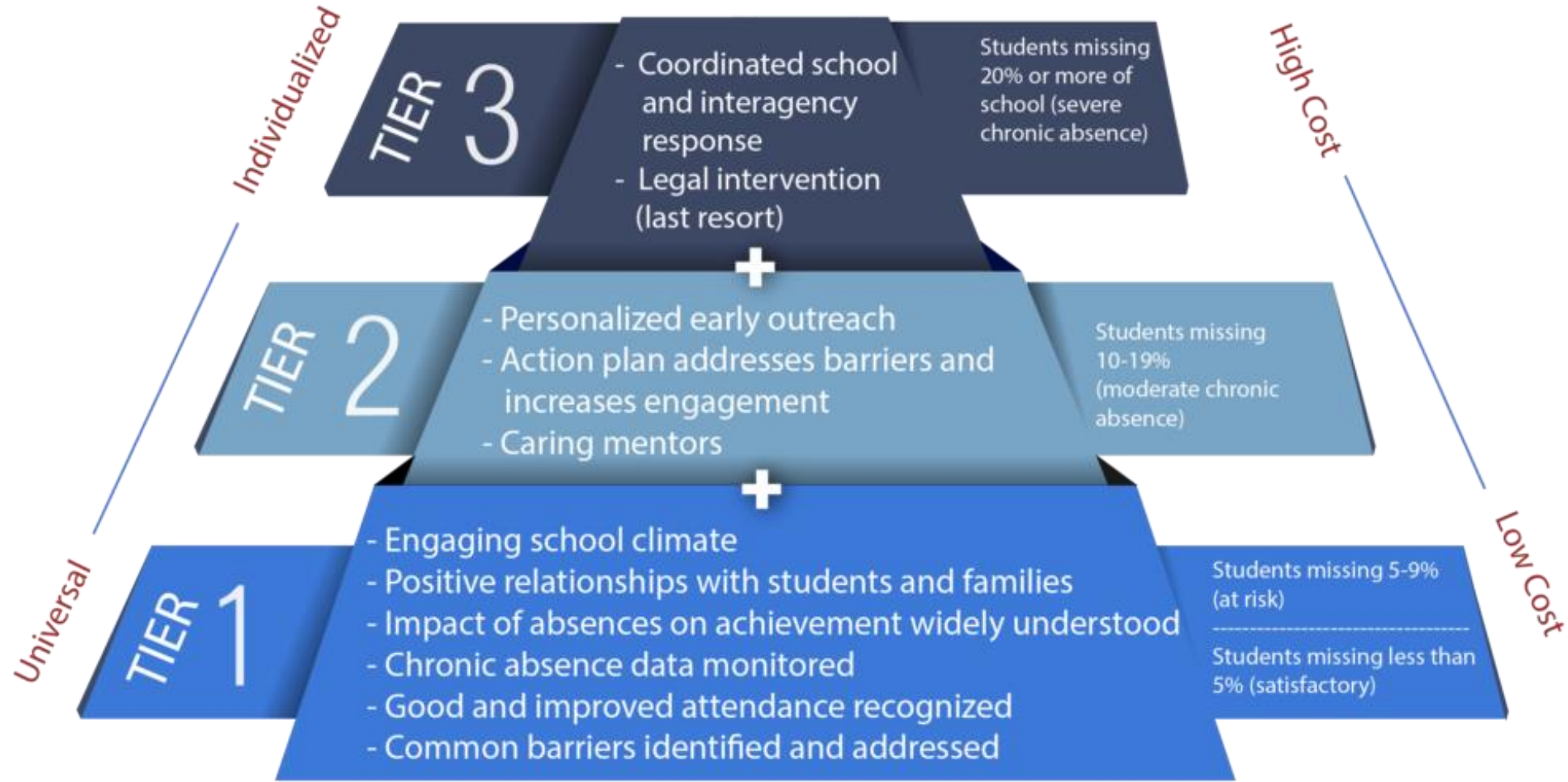
Aversion

- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Ineffective / exclusionary school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience
- Undiagnosed disability

Disengagement

- Lack of engaging and culturally relevant instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
- Poor school climate
- Discouraged due to lack of credits

Three-Tiered System of Intervention



Tier I: Promote Awareness



**Help Your Child Succeed in School:
Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early**
School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org

ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW

GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEANS...



ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

read well by the end of third grade

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

pass important courses

HIGH SCHOOLERS

stay on track for graduation

COLLEGE STUDENTS

earn their degrees

WORKERS

succeed in their jobs

Too many absences—excused or unexcused—can keep students from succeeding in school and in life. How many are too many? 10% of the school year—that's 18 missed days or 2 days a month—can knock students off track.



Berkeley County-Tier 1



Tier 2: Early Intervention

- The key is to ask why?
- What barriers are families facing?
- What support do they need?

- [Attendance Success Plan](#)





Incentive Programs: What to Remember

- Effective when part of a comprehensive approach that includes outreach to families with more significant challenges to attendance.
- Avoid recognizing only perfect attendance.
- Offer incentives for families, not just students.

Kanawha County – Tier 2



Tier 3: Strategic Partners

<p><i>for</i> Business Leaders</p>	<p><u><i>Why Attendance Matters</i></u></p> 
<p><i>for</i> Health Providers</p>	<p><u><i>Why Attendance Matters</i></u></p> 

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-public-messaging/making-case/>

Resources

Webinar Series

- Each webinar series includes the webinar, presentation slides, and a discussion guide.
- Encourage team members to watch and use the discussion guide to prompt conversation.
- Find the webinar recording for all the webinar series on [the website](#).

Spread the Word on Twitter

Tweet This!

- Use data showing #chronicabsence in the last SY to identify Ss who need extra support this year: <http://bit.ly/2xvPWVZ> #SchoolEveryDay
- Report shows extreme #chronicabsence affects 30% of Ss in 11% of schools: <http://bit.ly/2xztw50> @AttendanceWorks @JHU_EGC #SchoolEveryDay

Spread the Word on Facebook

Sample Facebook Post

Improving attendance and reducing chronic absence is not rocket science, but it does take commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to the particular strengths and challenges of each school or community. Across the nation, schools, communities and advocates have successfully taken steps to ensure children are attending school more regularly. <http://bit.ly/1oqfID7>

Toolkits



West Virginia
Office of
Early Learning
Attendance Toolkit



**Attendance
Works**

Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

[CGLR Toolkit Link](#)

[Attendance Works Toolkits](#)

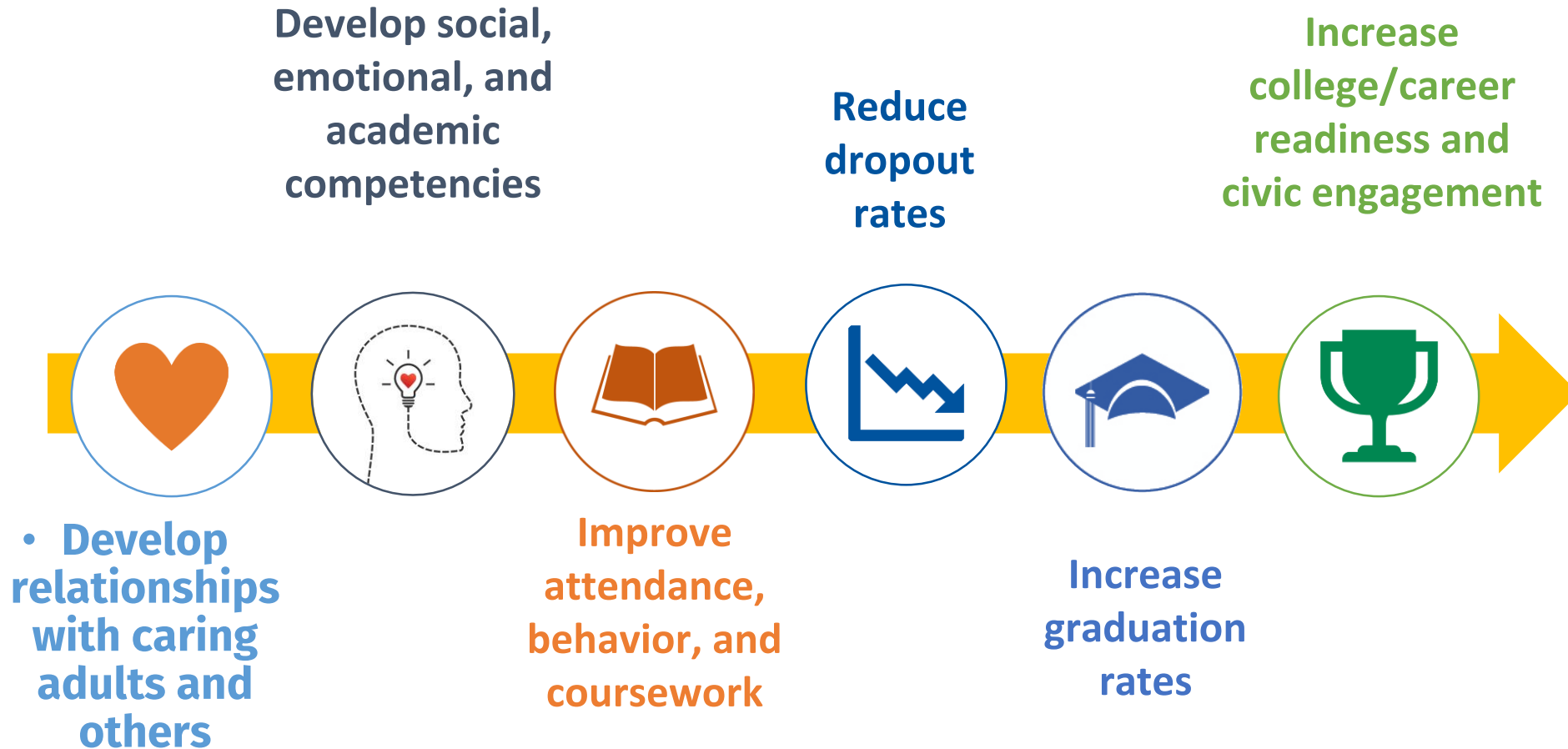
What is Communities In Schools?

- The leading provider of integrated student supports for 40 years.
- National Organization working directly in 2,300 schools in 25 states and the District of Columbia.
- A model which recognizes that traditional education reform strategies fail to address what kids are dealing with every day:
 - poverty, lack of adult role models, and the absence of such basic needs as food, shelter, and health care. In addition, these students often endure toxic stress that impedes their ability to learn even though they are fully capable of achieving in school.

The Role of a CIS Site Coordinator

- Work in partnership with superintendents, principals, and key school staff
- Arrange for volunteers and community partners to deliver school-wide supports, targeted groups and individualized supports for case-managed students.
- Work with the school support team to ensure students reach their goals and succeed both inside and outside the classroom

CIS Theory of Change



Addressing Chronic Absenteeism with Community Partnerships

Businesses

Family Support Organizations

Early Childhood Education Programs

Faith Based Organizations

Health Providers

Housing Agencies

Hunger Relief Organizations

Institutions of Higher Education
Organizations

The Juvenile Justice System

Local Governments

Parent and Youth Leadership Organizations

Volunteers and National Service Members

Out of School Time (OST) Programs

Philanthropy

Social Service Agencies

Population-Specific Service or Civic

Relationships Matter

Data + Caring Relationships=Improved Attendance

- NBA (Never Been Absent) Program
- Rise and Shine
- Teen Mom Group
- Personal Phone Calls Home – Day 1
- Feed the Fish
- No ISS Bags
- Drug Court attendance



"Does Attendance Really Count in Our School?"

- Complete the Self-Assessment (10 Minutes)
- In the "How do you know?" column, think about data sources to support your rating.

Determining Root Causes

- Using the students you identified in the previous activity, try to determine the root cause for why students are not attending school.
- You can use the student profile page in Zoom WV-e to help determine the root cause.

Student Groups in Zoom WV-e

- Can group students in any configuration you want
- Examples:
 - Academic
 - Safety Concerns (Reported Bullying, Race, LGBTQ, etc.)
 - Social (Transitions, Anxiety)
 - Home Situation
 - Chronic Health Problems
 - Special Education
 - Clubs
 - Athletic Teams

School Plan

- Considering the data you reviewed today, complete a plan for each Tier for the Winter, Spring, and End of Year columns.
- Be prepared to share at least one intervention you are going to use to target your chronically absent students.

Attendance Goal for the Strategic Plan

- Look at attendance data and needs assessment to determine how many students were chronically absent.

Example:

During the 2019-2020 school year, 30% of students were absent 10 or more days during a one semester period.

Attendance Goal for the Strategic Plan

- Determine the objective that you want to link to the area of improvement.

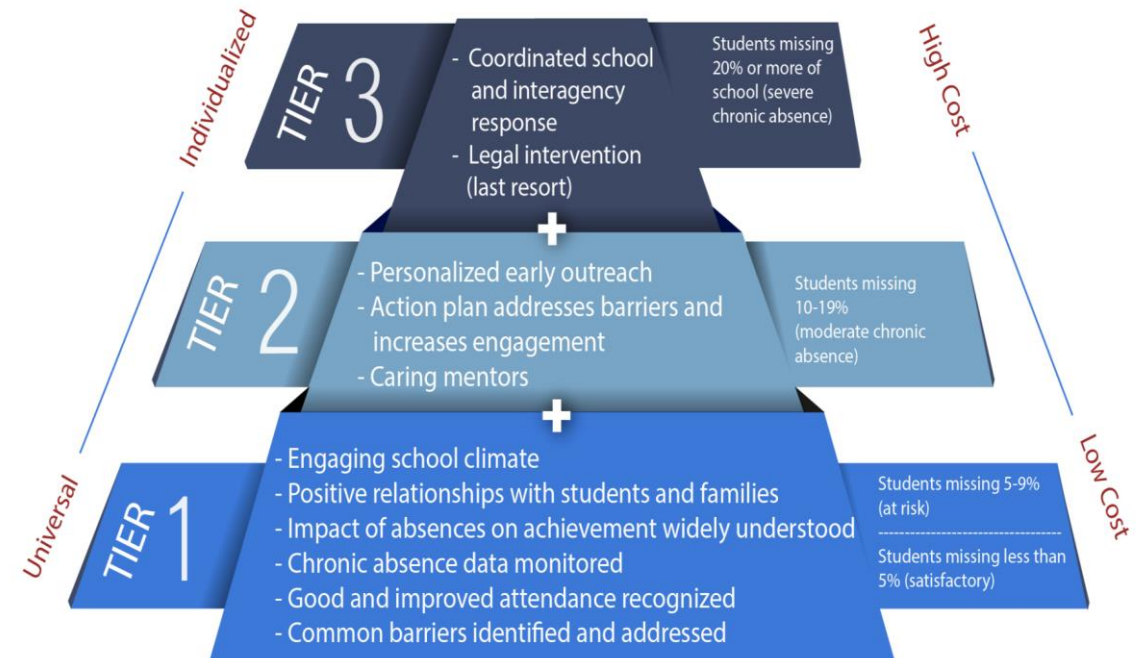
Example:

By January 2021, less than 10% of our students will be absent from school for 10 or more days.

Attendance Goal for the Strategic Plan

- Create action steps to address each tier:
- **Tier 1-** Universal strategies
- **Tier 2-** Targeted, moderate chronic absences
- **Tier 3-** Targeted, severe chronic absence

Tiered System of Supports For Improving Attendance



Tier I- Universal Strategies

- School-wide reinforcement program that includes focus on improved attendance
- Community awareness
- Communication strategies
- Planning engaging activities before break

Tier 2- Targeted Strategies for Moderate Chronic Absence

- Build personalized relationships with students and families who are at risk
- Mentors
- Personalized student plans
- Identify barriers

Tier 3- Targeted Intervention for Severe Chronic Absence

- Use Early Warning System to identify students
- Refer to social worker and provide interventions
- Convene case-management conferences with all relevant stakeholders

Attendance Goal for the Strategic Plan

- Determine who will be the person responsible for monitoring the action step.
- Decide on what process and data will be used to determine the effectiveness of the action step.

Using Zoom WV-e to Support Student Impact Goals

- Sample Goal – “By May 1, 2020 the school counselor will collaborate with other school staff to decrease absences of chronically absent students by 15%.”

Using Zoom WV-e to Support Student Impact Goals

- Sample Goal – “By May 1, 2020 the school counselor will work collaboratively with other educators to reduce bullying incidences by 15%.”

Using Zoom WV-e to Support Student Impact Goals

- Sample Goal - “The counselor will utilize DFI reports to identify academically struggling students and collaborate with other educators to improve grade averages of identified students by an average of .25 by the end of the 3rd grading period.”