



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Talk Tuesdays

Student Attendance, Engagement, and Support Series

Please sign-in using the chat - include your name, title, district/school or agency.

Developed by the CSDE in collaboration with SERC



***Notice: This meeting is
being recorded.***

Agenda

1. Welcome

Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE



Stephen Proffitt, Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design, SERC

2. What's New at CSDE and Partners

3. Spark Innovation, Focusing on Attendance & Engagement in the New Normal



Kari Sullivan Custer & Stephen Proffitt

4. Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Notice: This meeting is being recorded.



WHAT'S NEW AT CSDE AND PARTNERS



What's New at CSDE

July 26, 2021

- [Fall 2021 Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention](#)
- [Governor Partners with the Office of Workforce Strategy \(OWS\) and Yale to Launch a Series of Summer STEM Challenges](#)
- PSIS Monthly Attendance Data for 2020-21 is Now Closed



July 22, 2021

- [Fall Athletics and Vaccinations](#)
 - [Sigam Jugando - Aliente a los Atletas Jóvenes, Entrenadores y a sus Familias a Vacunarse](#)

July 19, 2021

- [CSDE Guidance Regarding the Future of Remote Learning in Connecticut Schools](#)
- [Reminder: Spark Innovation Webinar Series; webinar recordings available](#)



July 9, 2021

- [Guidance for COVID-19 Presentation in Kindergarten K-12 Schools](#)
[Register](#) - DPH/SDE COVID-19 Health and Safety Meeting Series, Tuesdays, July 13 - September 28, 2021

July 8, 2021

- [Commission for Educational Technology \(CET\) Welcomes Community Input through "Thought Exchange"Reminder: Spark Innovation Webinar Series; webinar recordings available](#)

July 1, 2021

- [New Update: African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Course of Studies – Professional Learning and Training Schedule](#)





Parent Teacher Home Visits Training

August 18, 2021

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Virtual Training via Zoom

REGISTER NOW

The research is clear - families are essential to student success. Therefore, the Parent-Teacher Training focuses on building the capacity of educators to build meaningful relationships with the families.

The PTHV Training prepares educators to conduct in-person home visits and virtual visits, giving schools and educators options to build and deepen relationships of trust with their students' families.

The training will prepare teachers and family engagement specialist to:

- Understand the PTHV model and why it is effective.
- Be prepared to do both in-person home visits and virtual bridge visits.
- Take next steps to launch PTHV visits.
- Have a date and plan for future action.
- Participants will also have the opportunity for connecting practice support session.

Who should attend?

Parents, Teachers, school administrators, family engagement liaisons, Title I Directors, and family engagement teams.



For additional information please visit the CT Family School Partnerships website: www.ct-fsp.org

Contact: Betsy LeBorjous at bleborjous@crec.org OR Mary Lou Molloy at mmolloy@crec.org

This training is funded by the USDE Statewide Family Engagement Center Grant. There is no fee to attend this training.

Priority will be given to Alliance School Districts and to National Network of Partnership Schools in CT.



[Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)



Spark Innovation



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



FOCUSING ON ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT IN THE NEW NORMAL

*Ways to reimagine school to engage **all** students*

Kari Sullivan, Education Consultant

Connecticut State Department of Education

Stephen Proffitt, Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design

State Education Resource Center



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Overview

- **Begin with the Data**

Chronic Absence Patterns and Predictions During COVID-19: Insights from Connecticut, June 2021

- **Align Strategic Plans**

AccelerateCT and Reimagining Schools to Transform Student's Lives

- **Build Systems to Support ALL Students – Call to Action**

Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention & Intervention Guide

- **Stay Connect & Learn Together as Partners**



Begin with the Data

*Chronic Absence Patterns and Predictions
During COVID-19: Insights from Connecticut, June 2021*

Attendance Works and Connecticut State Department of Education



Chronic Absence Patterns and Predictions During COVID-19: *Insights from Connecticut*

Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut

By Hedy N. Chang, Kevin Gee, Briana Hennessy, David Alexandre and Ajit Gopalakrishnan



Overview

Monitoring chronic absence is widely recognized as an essential tool for reducing educational inequity. The recent shift to distance and/or hybrid learning during the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the collection and utilization of attendance data across the country. Putting in place consistent, reliable and actionable data has been a major challenge for states and school districts.

This report describes how Connecticut took steps to collect consistent attendance data by learning mode (or modes), and publicly released data in a timely manner during the pandemic. For example, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) agreed upon a standard definition of attendance — showing up to school for half of a day — to ensure consistency with prior year data and across learning modes. CSDE also invested in frequent collection and public reporting of attendance and chronic absence data throughout the 2020-21 school year. As a result, Connecticut is uniquely positioned to analyze how patterns of chronic absence differ across learning modes, grades and student groups.

The report offers key insights from the analysis of Connecticut's chronic absence data that can inform Covid-19 educational recovery efforts and attendance initiatives. It shares lessons learned from Connecticut and recommends steps that other states can take to improve their data systems and ensure actionable data for the next school year.

I. Why Monitoring Chronic Absence Matters for Reducing Educational Inequity

Prior to the pandemic, 8 million students were chronically absent (missing 10% of school) in the 2017-18 school year. Chronic absence rates in 2017-18 were higher for groups hardest hit during the pandemic by poor health, economic hardship and unequal access to schooling.

Research on in-person learning shows that chronic absence has a wide ranging impact on student outcomes including lower academic achievement,^{1,2,3,4} a higher probability of high school dropout,^{5,6} and worse social emotional outcomes.⁷ The adverse impact was greatest for students living in poverty who are less likely to have the resources to make up for lost learning time in the classroom and more likely to experience multiple systemic barriers to getting to school.⁸

Studies conducted prior to the pandemic also reveal the importance of noticing and addressing, as early as possible, when absences are adding up. Missing more than two days in September predicts higher levels of chronic absence for that school year.⁹ Mounting evidence finds that each additional day of missed school contributes to worse educational outcomes.^{10,11,12}

Chronic absence, calculated throughout the school year, can serve as an early warning sign that particular or groups of students and families need additional engagement and support. It can be used to indicate when a school, district or community is struggling to put in place positive conditions for learning, such as physical and emotional health and safety; a sense of belonging, connection and support; academic challenge and engagement; and adults and peers with social emotional competence.¹³

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1. **Most prevalent among predominantly remote students** and least prevalent among in-person students, with rates for hybrid students falling in between.
2. Declined between September-November and January-March across all three learning modes.
3. Rates between in-person and hybrid students were less pronounced for high school students relative to elementary or middle school students.
4. **Rates were higher for students who were receiving free or reduced-price lunch, Black or Hispanic, English learners, identified as having a disability and male.** These gaps persisted between Fall and Winter.
5. Patterns and grades most affected by absenteeism differed by learning model.
6. Patterns of chronic absence by learning mode and grade were not the same across racial and ethnic groups.
7. Students were predicted to have a higher chance of winter chronic absence if, in the fall, they were chronically absent, compared to peers with satisfactory attendance (i.e., missed less than 5% of total school days).

[Chronic Absence Patterns and Prediction During Covid-19: Insights from Connecticut - Attendance Works](#)



Align to Strategic Plans

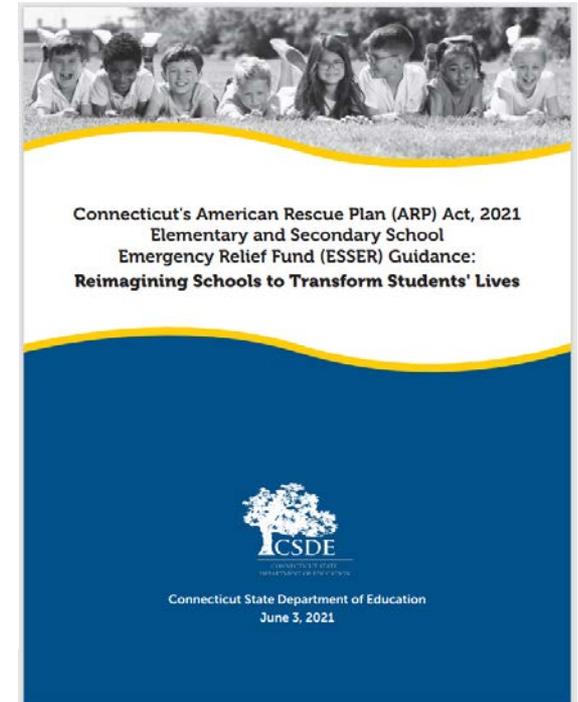
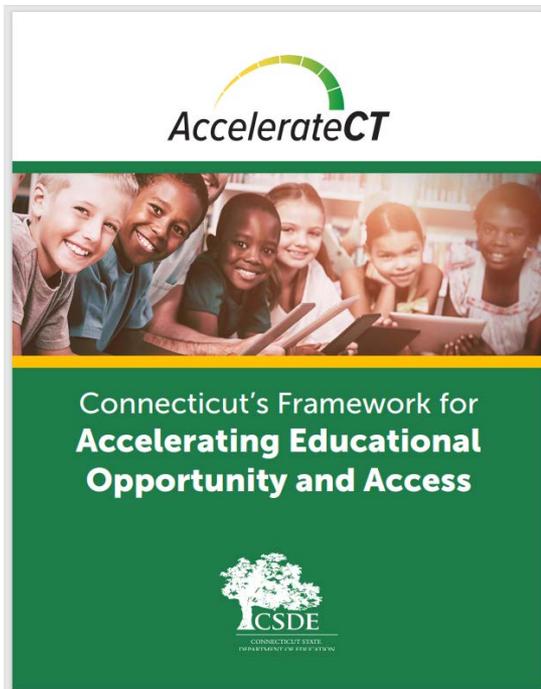
AccelerateCT

&

Reimagining Schools to Transform Students' Lives



An Asset-Based Mindset



Strategic Acceleration Habits



Building Systems to Support *All* Students



MOBILIZE Attendance Teams

District Leadership Team –

- ensures the district, as a whole, is systematically addressing chronic absence and is promoting and supporting a districtwide culture of attendance.
- ensures evidence-based attendance policies and procedures are implemented consistently in all schools.
- spearheads connections with community service providers as partners in this work.
- elevates the importance of this work by designating a cabinet-level administrator to lead and facilitate the district's attendance efforts.

District Attendance Team –

- brings together district-level administrators and community agencies to address chronic absence across the entire district.
- Key functions:
 - Routinely unpack, analyze, and utilize data to inform action.
 - Organize a systemic districtwide response and policy/practice improvement.
 - Promote shared accountability and continuous improvement.



MOBILIZE Attendance Teams

School Attendance Team – ensures that the school adopts a comprehensive, actionable tiered approach to improving attendance that is based on data and outcomes.

Organizing a School Attendance Review Team:

- Conduct a [school self-assessment](#).
- Establish a weekly meeting schedule.
- Define roles and responsibilities.
- Establish group norms.
- Develop a standard meeting agenda.
- Fill-in a tiered pyramid of students and resources.

Include families in planning and decision-making – Reach out to families to find out what might be preventing their children from coming to school; educate students and families about how absences can add up and result in lost learning time; empower families to help their children attend school; and offer trainings for school staff on engaging families and building productive partnerships to prevent chronic absenteeism.



DIVE into the Data

Locate your 2020-21 data

- [EdSight Student Participation Data](#), 2020-21

Examine your data and ask strategic questions using a [protocol](#).

- What does the data tell you? Problems of Practice?
- Key conclusions and recommendations for addressing the problems of practice?



BUILD a Plan of Action

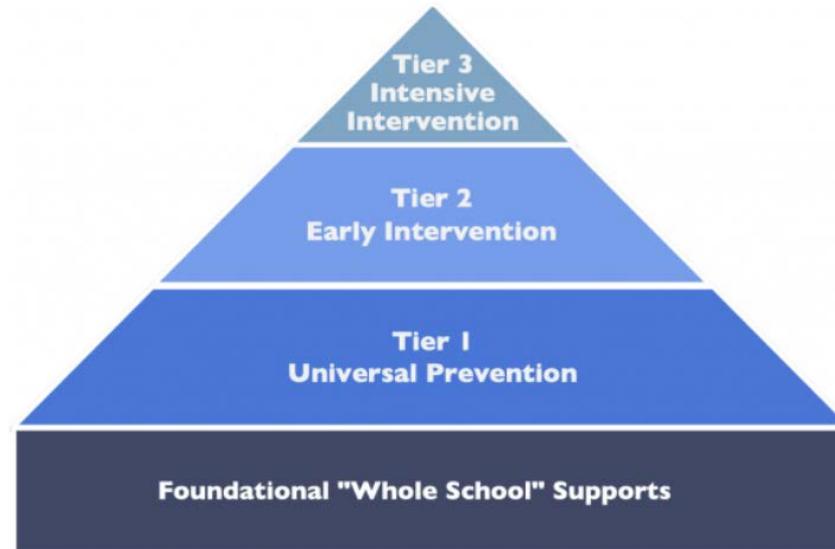
Attendance Playbook: Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era

Attendance Playbook Implementation Guide

- Start with a team.
- Analyze your data before selecting strategies.
- Consider the reasons for the absences.
- Explore possible interventions with your team considering, time, effort, potential impact, and cost. (questionnaire tool).
- Select the strategies.
- Determine the steps to implement strategy.
- Assess success of strategy.



BUILD a Plan of Action



Physically healthy learning environment	Enrichment activities and clubs (with virtual options)	Positive relationships between school staff, students and families	Support for all families to facilitate learning at home
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Access to Learning Supports	Predictable daily/weekly routines, rituals and celebrations	A culture of continuous improvement
Welcoming, socially-emotionally safe, trauma-informed school climate	Home rooms and/or Advisory (with virtual options)	A schedule of classes and where/how they are held	Active engagement of parents and students in planning and problem solving
Foundational "Whole School" Supports			



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Tier 1 Strategies

Call to Action: Partner with Families

Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV)

- Visits are always voluntary for educators and families, and arranged in advance.
- Teachers are trained and compensated for visits outside their school day.
- Focus of the first visit is relationship-building; we discuss hopes and dreams.
- No targeting – visit all or a cross-section of students so there is no stigma.
- Educators conduct visits in pairs, and after the visit, reflect with their partner.

Studies found that:

- PTHV interrupts the assumptions and implicit biases that educators and family members have about each other.
- Most study participants agreed that PTHV's five core practices ensured that home visits result in positive relationships between educators and families.
- Schools that systematically implemented PTHV experienced decreased rates of student chronic absenteeism and increased rates of student English Language Arts and math proficiency.



LEAP Home Visits

Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)

- Voluntary, scheduled opportunities for a school district member or community partner to go, in pairs, to the home of a student with prior chronic absence (or other location) to meet with a parent or guardian.
- Purpose is to strengthen the school-family relationship in a positive and relational manner.
- Conversation is focused on families' strengths and capabilities, as well as their aspirations for their child. The visitors are there to learn from families, not to enforce attendance policies or sanctions.
- Ideally, families receive multiple home visits that support building relationships over time.
- 15 districts/coordinated by RESC Alliance.



Tier 2 Strategies

Call to Action: Intentional Relationships

National Success Mentors

VISION: Every chronically absent student in the country has a supporting, caring adult to help them navigate their school experience and become college and career ready.

- Conduct a needs assessment to understand how students who are chronically absent are distributed throughout a district's schools.
- Provide consistent and continuous school-based mentoring.
- Draw on multiple sources (e.g., non-profit partners, college work-study students, school staff, trained peer mentors, etc.) to amass sufficient school-based mentors.
- Principals lead/support weekly meetings in which school-wide trend data on attendance, behavior, and course performance is analyzed and used to craft school-wide targeted interventions.

<https://sites.ed.gov/nsaesc/national-success-mentors/>



Tier 2 Strategies

Call to Action: Intentional Relationships

Check & Connect

- **Mentor:** builds strong relationship with student based on mutual trust and open communication, nurtured through a long-term commitment focused on success at school and with learning.
- **“Check”:** monitoring of student performance variables (warning signs of disengagement such as attendance, grades, and behavior referrals) using data readily available to school personnel.
- **“Connect”:** timely, personalized, data-based interventions designed to provide support tailored to individual student needs, based on the student's level of engagement with school (“check” data), associated influences of home and school, and leveraging of local resources.
- **Parent/Family Engagement:** mentors partner with parents/families.

Mentors work with caseloads of students and families for at least two years, functioning as liaisons between home and school and striving to build constructive family-school relationships.

<http://www.checkandconnect.umn.edu/model/default.html>



Tier 3 Interventions

Call to Action: Interagency Case Management

Interagency Case Management

Students facing more complex problems—such as homelessness, pregnancy, and/or mental illness—require coordination and case management with agencies beyond the school yard.

Community Schools New York City

- Establish partnerships between community school directors and community-based organizations.
- Allow students expanded learning time by lengthening the traditional school day and/or offering afterschool and summer enrichment programs.
- Integrate a tiered system of wellness and student supports to address mental health, reproductive health, vision, mentoring for students at risk of chronic absenteeism, and services for vulnerable youth, such as those who are homeless or victims of domestic violence.
- [New York City schools using the model saw reductions in chronic absenteeism in all grades and across all years of the study.](#)



EVALUATE and ADJUST to Ensure Success

Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of strategies and actions are critical components to ensure the plan is on track so that adjustments can be made as needed along the way.

District Team Self-Assessment Tool:

- Complete the assessment,
- Tabulate results,
- Discuss and set goals/benchmarks, and
- Create an action plan, and communicate the results to all stakeholders.

Six Key Ingredients

- Capacity Building
- Actionable Data
- Positive Engagement
- Strategic Partnerships
- Adequate & Equitable Resources
- Shared Accountability



Source: Attendance Works

EVALUATE and ADJUST to Ensure Success

ADEQUATE & EQUITABLE RESOURCES	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Comments
1. Our district has mapped school, district and community-based resources that promote attendance.					
2. Our district has identified gaps in funding and resources that affect attendance.					
3. Our district team has a system in place to hear from and respond to school attendance teams about their needs, service gaps for underserved student groups, and resource implications.					
4. Our district prioritizes the distribution of financial, staffing and community resources to schools with higher rates of chronic absence and large populations of vulnerable students.					
5. Our district promotes equity by hiring staff and procuring services from community-based partners that reflect the diversity of our student and family population.					
6. Our district advocates for funding and resources from government entities at the local, state and national level to address identified gaps.					

Example



Stay Connected & Learn Together



Stay Connected & Learn Together

- **State Partnerships to Support Improved Attendance for ALL Students**
 - SERC – Professional Learning Opportunities
 - Attendance Works – Capacity-building, state, regional and local districts
 - RESC Alliance – LEAP and local district support
- **Stay Up-to-Date with the District Attendance Leads Contact List**
- **Join our Virtual Communities**
 - Student Attendance ***Community of Practice for District Attendance Leads*** – ALL School Districts (third Thursday of each month)
 - ***Talk Tuesdays*** – Alliance Districts and NetSTAT Schools (every other Tuesday)





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CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Resources

- [AccelerateCT, Connecticut's Framework for Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access](#), CSDE, May 2021
- [Guidance Regarding Special Education Recovery for Students with Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), CSDE, May 2021
- [Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism During the COVID Era](#), FutureEd, Attendance Works, 2020
- [Guide to Using the Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era](#), Attendance Works, 2020
- U.S. Department of Education Roadmap to reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs
 - Volume 1, [Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools](#), Feb. 2021
 - Volume 2, [Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs](#), April 2021
- [Learning Acceleration Toolkit](#), TNTP
- [Strengthening Student Attendance and Assignment Completion During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), TNTP

Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Next Talk Tuesday

Tuesday, **August 10**, 2021
10 to 11 a.m.

Have a **promising practice or success** you want to share?

Concerns you want to share through peer discussion?

Send ideas for topics for discussion to
Kari.Sullivan@ct.gov.

Community of Practice *District Attendance Leads*

Thursday, **July 29th**, 2021
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Using Accelerated Learning to Improve Student Attendance and Engagement

Join key leaders from CSDE, Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, and Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Division Director, to hear about and discuss insights into new resources, strategies and tools provided in [AccelerateCT](#).

Save the date!

Thursday, **August 19**, 2021, 10 to 11:30 a.m.





Keep in touch!



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Connect with CSDE for more information
on student attendance and engagement:



[Facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation](https://www.facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation)



<http://www.ct.gov/sde>



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