CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Talk Tuesdays

Student Attendance, Engagement, and Support Series

Summer Series

Back-to-Basics

July 18, 2023

Developed by the CSDE in collaboration with Attendance Works & SERC

Today's Agenda

Welcome

Stephen Proffitt, Christine Kuehlewind, and Ann Marie Cordisco, State Education Resource Center (SERC)

What's New at CSDE and Partners

Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE

Jay Brown, Bureau of Special Education Consultant (Academic Office), CSDE

Attendance & Engagement 101

Caroline Calhoun, EdAdvance, Professional Learning and Attendance Specialist & LEAP Coordinator

Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Christine Kuehlewind, SERC

What's New at CSDE

May 26, 2023
•[ARPA-Right to Read Grant](#)

May 22, 2023
•[The Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy (ADTLS) Program Reminder](#)
•[Dual Credit Expansion Grant Program – IHE Information Sessions](#)
•[Dual Credit Opportunities Website Launched](#)
•[2022-23 Racial Imbalance Report](#)

May 18, 2023
•[Grant Announcement: Summer Mental Health Supports Grant - $8 Million](#)
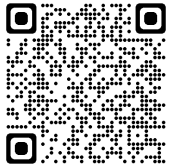
June 5, 2023
•[2021-22 Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates on EdSight](#)

June 9, 2023
•[PSIS Summer Rollup and CT-SEDS](#)

[Superintendent's Digest (ct.gov)](#)

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CSDE

What's New at CSDE

June 20, 2023
•For questions about CT-SEDS and the Medicaid reimbursement process for eligible students receiving Medicaid-reimbursable services within their IEPs and Section 504 Plans, please **email Bryan Klimkiewicz**.

June 29, 2023
•**Connecticut Summer at the Museum Program**

June 26, 2023
•**Summary of Education Cost Sharing and Choice Grant Legislative Changes for FY 2024 & FY25**

July 10, 2023
•**Joint OEC & CSDE Memo - Minimum Age to Enroll in School**

July 14, 2023
•**Designation of Certification Shortage Areas for 2023-24**
•**CSDE Memo: Public Act 23-137 Extends IDEA Eligibility through the End of the School Year during which a Student Turns Age 22**

Superintendent's Digest (ct.gov)

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Chronic-Absence/LEAP/June-July-Aug-Sept-101-Sessions.pdf

A Welcoming and Healthy Return to School: Ensuring Showing Up

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

12pm-1:30pm PT | 1-2:30pm MT | 2-3:30pm CT | 3-4:30pm ET

In this webinar, speakers will offer strategies for:

- reaching out to students and families, especially in transition grades
- cultivating a school-wide culture of attendance and engagement, and
- ensuring positive conditions for learning are in place when school doors open

Confirmed Speakers:

- **Erin Helgren**, Principal, Yoncalla Elementary School
- **Naomi Tolentino**, Coordinator of Student Support Programs, Kansas City Kansas Public Schools
- **Elliott S. Attisha, MD**, Senior Fellow, Attendance Works
- **Kwesi Rollins**, Vice President, Institute for Educational Leadership
- **Hedy Chang**, Executive Director, Attendance Works

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xl2pN7FaQpGfOHGhQs-XGg#/registration

Chronic Absence Trend Data 2019-20 to May 2023

THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT — Back-to-School 2022-2023

CSDE — CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent by Student Group (YTD as of May 2023 compared to 2021-22, 2020-2021, and 2019-20)

Chart data — values by student group (2019-20*, 2020-21**, 2021-22**, 2022-23**):

Student Group	2019-20*	2020-21**	2021-22**	2022-23**
All Students	12.2	19.0	23.7	21.0
Students With High Needs	18.0	30.2	34.0	29.1
Students Without High Needs	5.9	7.2	12.4	12.6
English Learners	17.2	31.6	32.7	26.5
Students With Disabilities	20.8	30.8	34.5	30.6
Free Meal Eligible	20.3	35.0	38.6	33.0
Reduced Price Meal Eligible	10.6	18.6	24.5	20.4
Students Experiencing Homelessness	40.9	59.6	60.2	52.2
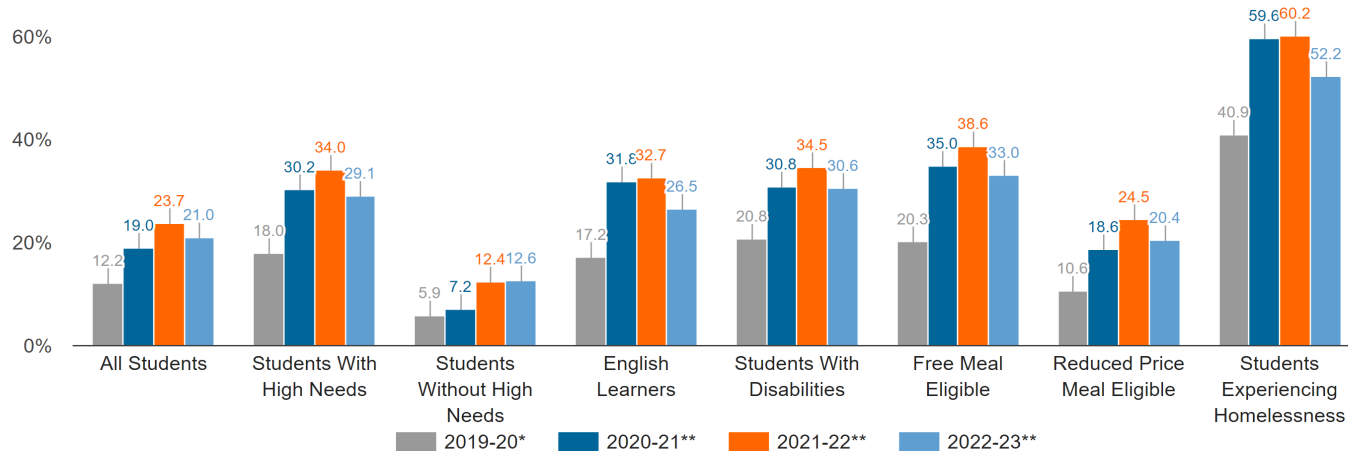
*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. **Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

Current Data Files
- Attendance Rates for State and Districts, Student Groups by tab (.xlsx)
- Chronic Absence Rates and Remote Attendance Information for State and Districts, Student Groups by tab (.xlsx)
- Attendance Rates for Schools (.xlsx)

Source: CT EdSight, Monthly Attendance Reports, Supporting Student Participation (ct.gov)

CSDE Updates

Reminders

June Collection -- school and district review and certification of data. Deadline is August 11

LEAP 101 Trainings for ALL districts

Update District Attendance Lead in CSDE on-line Contact Manager

Attendance & Engagement 101

Caroline Calhoun, EdAdvance

Professional Learning and Attendance Specialist & LEAP Coordinator

with content contributions from CSDE partner Attendance Works

Today's Agenda

❖ Building Context

❖ Creating Positive Conditions for Learning

❖ Identifying & Implementing Interventions via a

   Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Building Context

Before we dive in, let's think big picture about your school.

Please answer the following in the chat:

1. What are the root causes of and reasons for absenteeism

    in your building?

2. What are the barriers to attendance?

3. Are there patterns or themes that stand out?

Root Causes/Reasons/Barriers	Patterns/Themes/Categories
Late buses, no buses, no public transportation, traffic, drop-off infrastructure, general confusion	Transportation
Illness, medical appointments, medical plans, hospitalization	Medical
Mental health, social emotional health, anxiety	Socioeconomic
Childcare for siblings, parent illness	Parent understanding or value around attendance/education
Jobs, working late hours, low income challenges	Understanding policies
Lack of knowledge re: attendance, parent and/or student disengagement, lack of motivation	Family matters/obligations
Expulsions, suspensions, discipline, time between expulsion hearings	Discipline
International travel to visit family, international funerals, cultural holidays, vacation	Students with high needs
	Staffing shortages

Building Context

Next, think about any school/district-wide initiatives that have been put forward by your district's administration in the last few years.

Please note one or two of these initiatives in the chat. *(for example, a focus on Marzano's work, or a focus on the Science of Reading)*

Building Context

★ Using Common Language

- ○ How do we define **chronic absenteeism**?
- ○ How does chronic absenteeism differ from **truancy**?

What is chronic absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.**

Excused absences + Unexcused absences + Suspensions → **Chronic Absence**
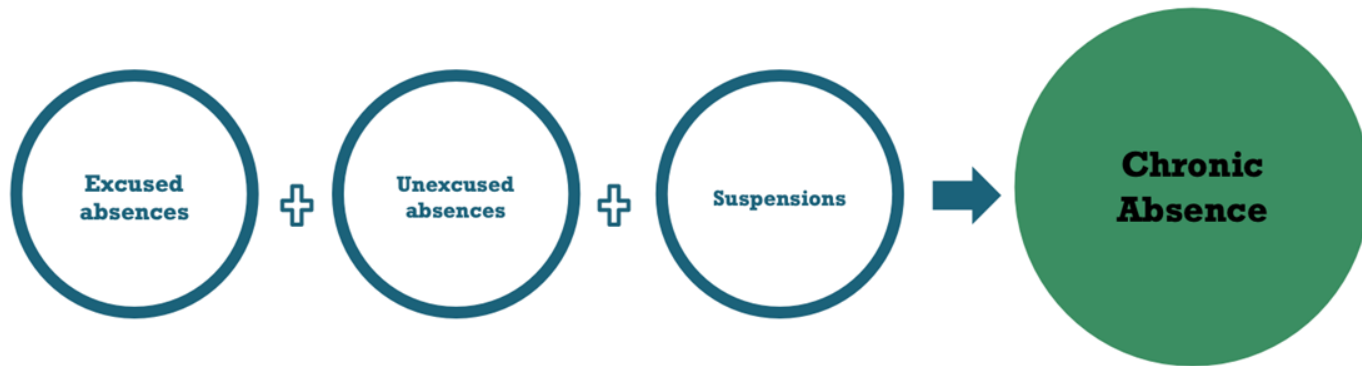
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

What's the Difference Between Chronic Absence vs. Truancy?

Truancy

▲ Counts ONLY unexcused absences

▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules

▲ Uses typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

Chronic Absence

▪ Counts ALL absences *(excused, unexcused & suspensions)*

▪ Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present

▪ Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies

▪ Cultivates family & student engagement

Mindset Shift

TRUANCY   *to* →   CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

punitive → supportive

working **on** a family → working **with** a family

attendance enforcement → how can we help?

PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

1 Build collaborative, trusting relationships focused on learning.

2 Listen to what families say about their children's interests and challenges.

3 Model high-quality learning practices.

4 Share information frequently with families about how their children are doing.

5 Talk with students about how they want teachers and families to support their learning.
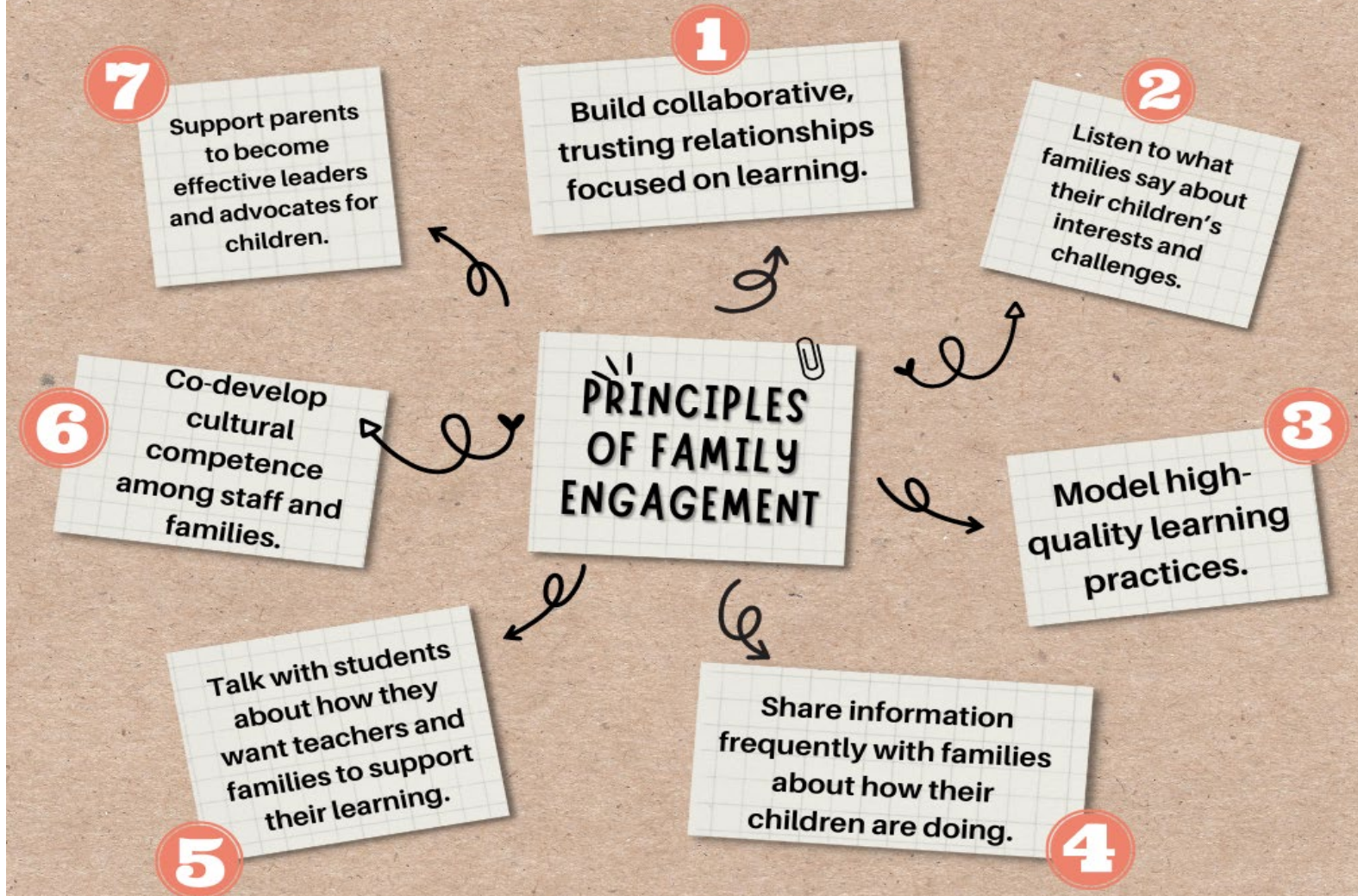
6 Co-develop cultural competence among staff and families.

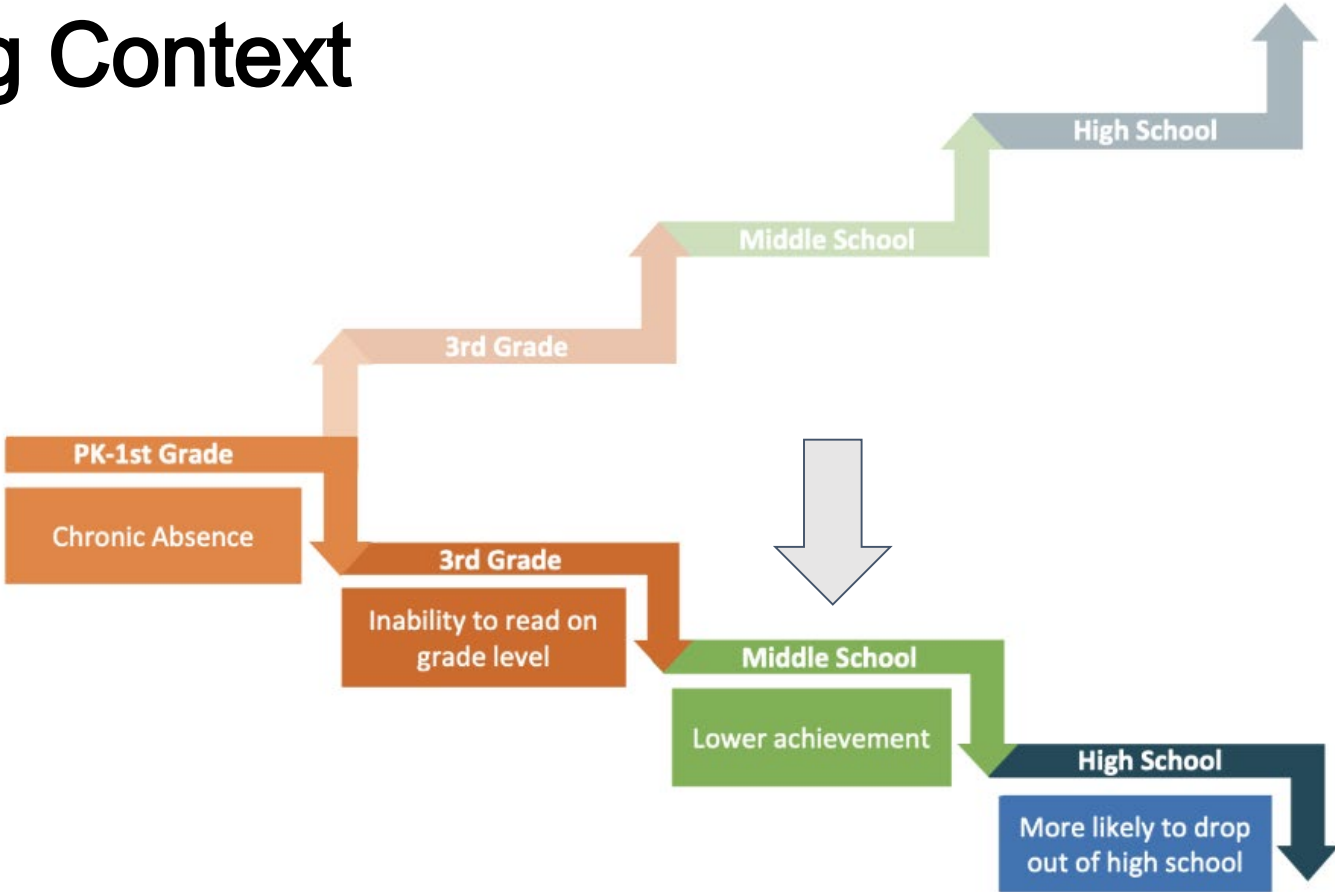**7** Support parents to become effective leaders and advocates for children.

Building Context

★ Data:

- Pre-pandemic **8 million students** were chronically absent

- SY 2021-22 chronic absence **doubled to 16 million students**

- SY 2022-23 chronic absence rates **remained high** and was **higher than ever for early elementary and high school**
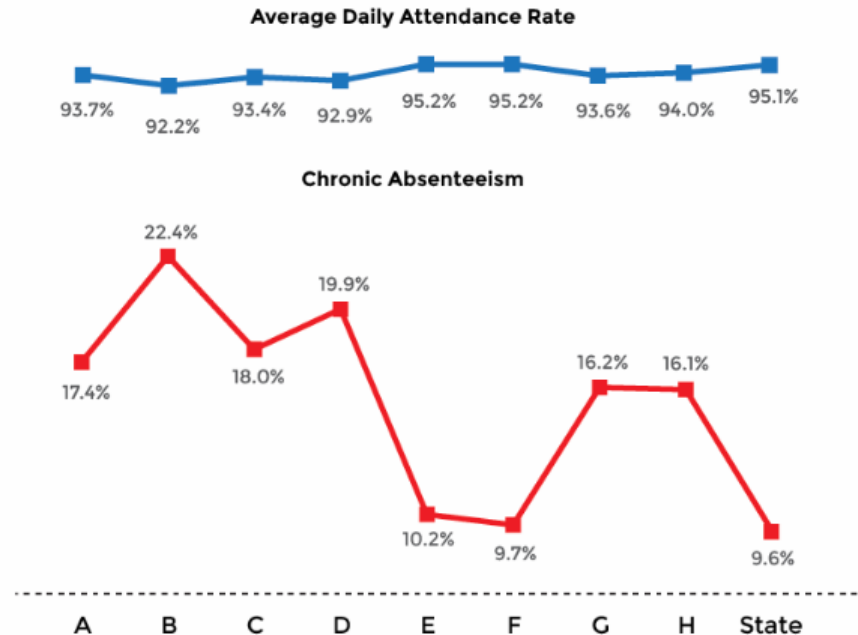
Building Context

PK-1st Grade — Chronic Absence

3rd Grade — Inability to read on grade level

Middle School — Lower achievement

High School — More likely to drop out of high school

Attendance Works ©

90% and even 95% ≠ A

2015–16 Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism
(Eight Alliance Districts with Network Schools)

Source: Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut Schools: How do we know if chronic absence is affecting learning in our district
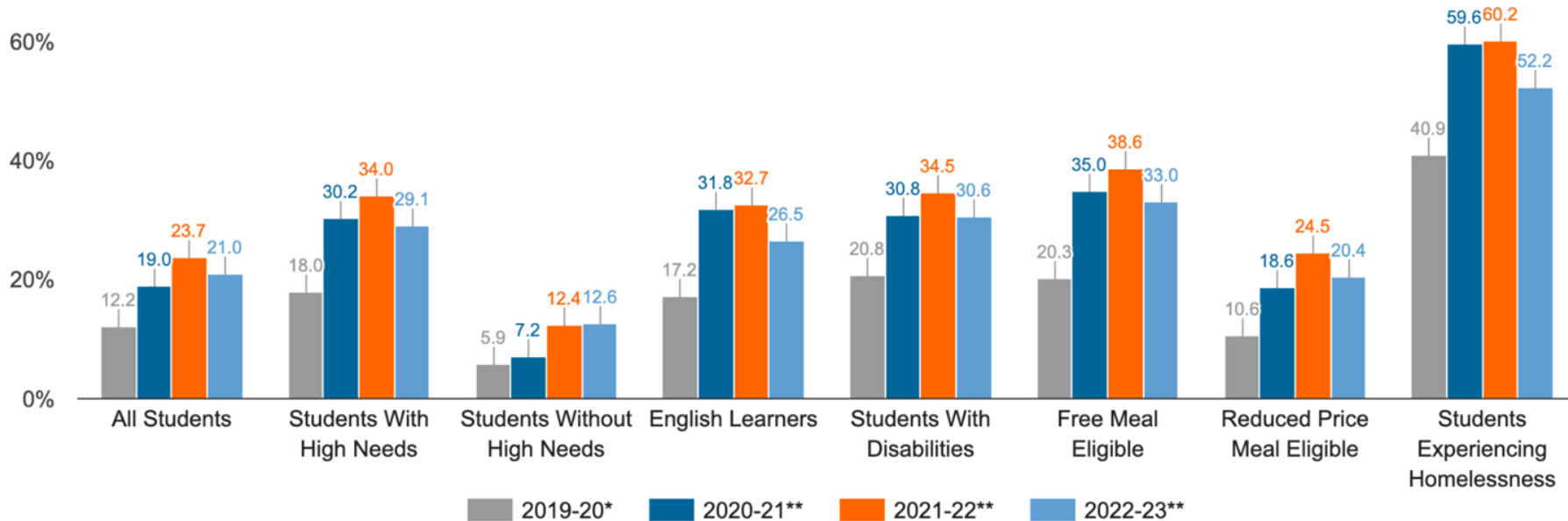
www.attendanceworks.org

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Statewide Trends in Chronic Absence

Percentage of Students Chronically Absent by Student Group (YTD as of May 2023 compared to 2021-22, 2020-2021, and 2019-20)

*Calculations are based only on in-person school days until mid-March 2020. **Calculations include both in-person and remote days.

Building Context

★ So much of the work we do as educators is interrelated.

★ Attendance and engagement are at the heart of it all.

Today's Agenda

❖ Building Context

❖ **Creating Positive Conditions for Learning**

❖ Identifying & Implementing Interventions via a

   Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

priorities

diversity   privilege   white   values

cultural   community

responsiveness   partners   climate

competence

perspectives   asset-based

engagement

implicit   voices

supremacy   change   leadership

norms

systemic-racism   blindspots   inclusivity   cultural-responsiveness

language   equity   belonging

bias

families   culture

Positive Conditions for Learning
Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly
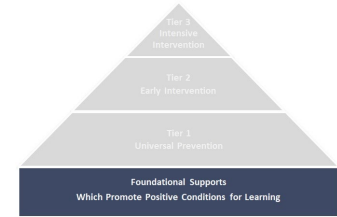
• Restorative check-ins
• Access to health care & mental health supports
• Trauma-informed practice
• Staff self-care

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety
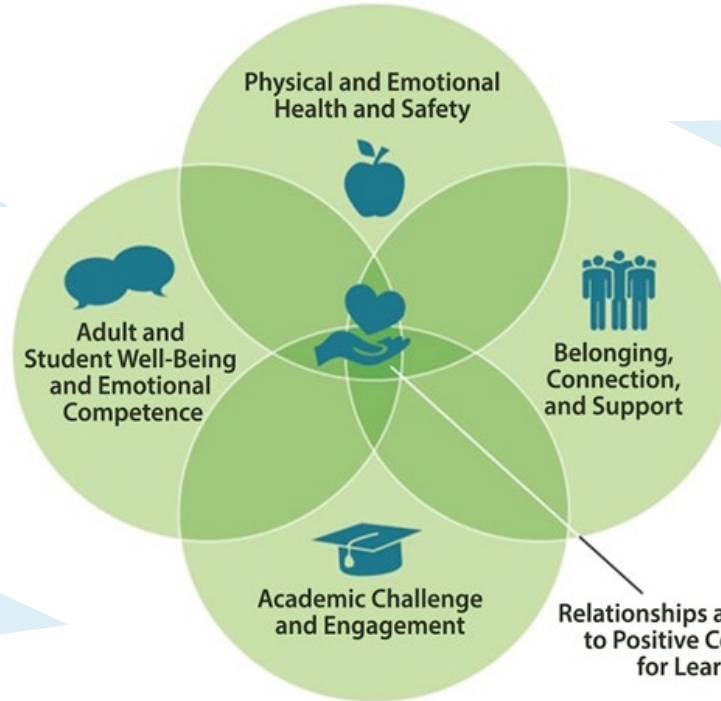
• Healthy learning environments
• Welcoming, safe school climate
• Access to food & other basic needs
• Restorative circles

Adult and Student Well-Being and Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

• Access to tech & internet
• Learning supports
• Project-based learning
• Credit recovery opportunities
• Internships/community service
• Alternative scheduling options

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

• Active student & family engagement
• Advisories/meetings to build community
• Enrichment & clubs
• Positive peer connections

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention
Tier 2 Early Intervention
Tier 1 Universal Prevention
Foundational Supports Which Promote Positive Conditions for Learning

Attendance Works © AIR American Institutes for Research

EQUITY
meeting students where they are, *as they are*

"

It is critical for educators to go beyond doing equity or implementing equity…to *being equity.*

Equity is a reflection of an educator's humanity toward the students he or she serves.

"

Being equity requires constant self-reflection and internal examination of how one interacts with students and seeks to meet their learning and social needs–as they are. It requires developing an equity mindset.

Baruti Kafele
3 Non-Negotiables of Equity

- ❏ Are you **centering equity** as a district priority?
- ❏ Are you **consciously working to be an equity leader** and change agent?
- ❏ Are **all voices and perspectives** represented at the table?
- ❏ Are you **acknowledging white privilege** and considering its impact on decision-making?
- ❏ Do you have **inclusive processes in place** when developing district initiatives?
- ❏ Are you using **strengths-based language** and avoiding offensive language?
- ❏ Are you being mindful of **avoiding implicit bias**?
- ❏ Do you have a system to check for **blind spots** in your thinking?
- ❏ Are you aiming high on the **cultural competence continuum**?
- ❏ Are you working to improve your district's **cultural responsiveness**?
  - ❏ Are you considering culturally responsive **language, policies, communications, curriculum, resources, staff development**?
- ❏ Are you working to create, model, and practice district cultural norms that challenge **white dominant cultural norms**?

Today's Agenda

❖ Building Context

❖ Creating Positive Conditions for Learning

❖ **Identifying & Implementing Interventions via a**

  Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Reducing chronic absence requires addressing challenges worsened or created by the pandemic

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Community violence
- Etc. and many more!

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Parents had negative educational experiences
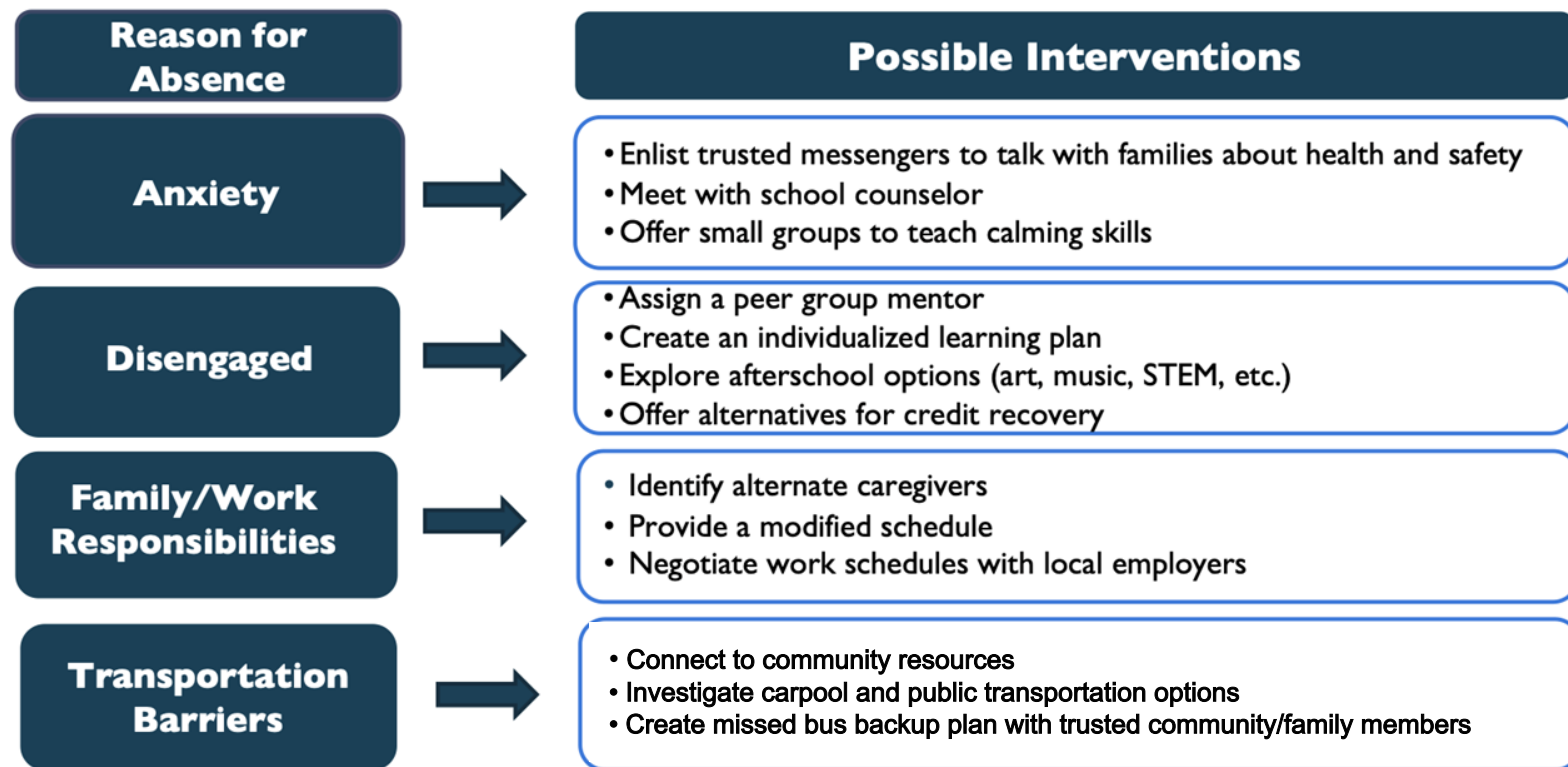
Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Drawn to low-wage job vs. being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence
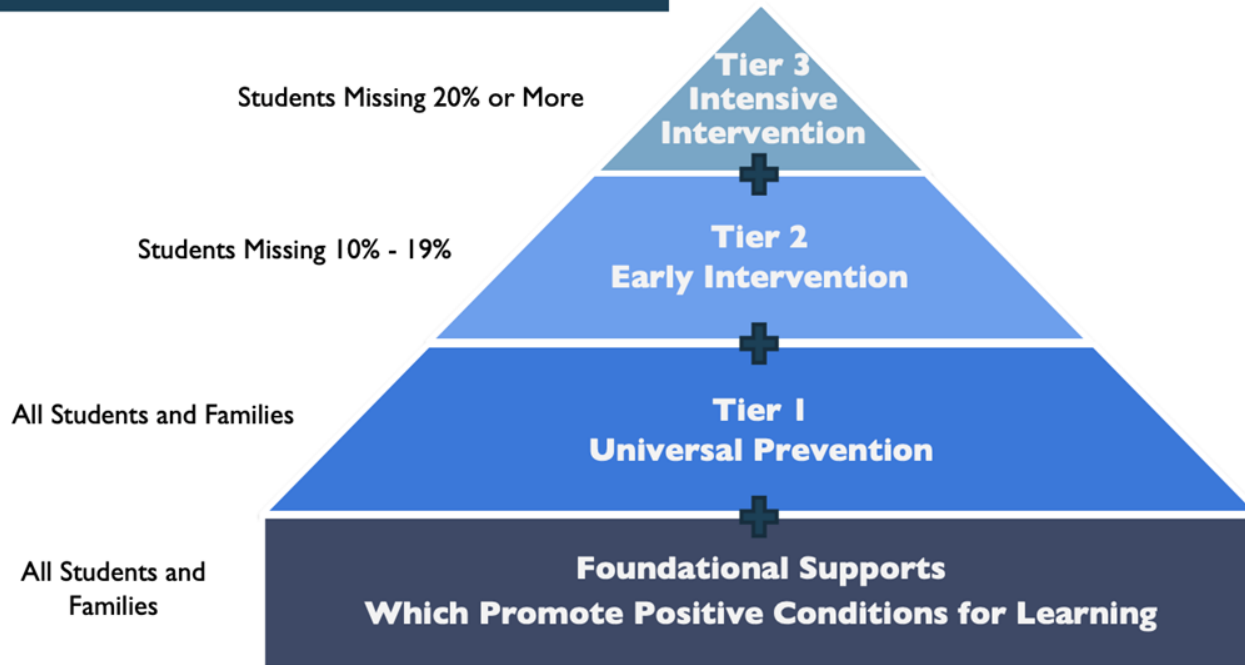
Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence	Possible Interventions
Anxiety	• Enlist trusted messengers to talk with families about health and safety • Meet with school counselor • Offer small groups to teach calming skills
Disengaged	• Assign a peer group mentor • Create an individualized learning plan • Explore afterschool options (art, music, STEM, etc.) • Offer alternatives for credit recovery
Family/Work Responsibilities	• Identify alternate caregivers • Provide a modified schedule • Negotiate work schedules with local employers
Transportation Barriers	• Connect to community resources • Investigate carpool and public transportation options • Create missed bus backup plan with trusted community/family members

Attendance Works ©

Identifying & Implementing Interventions

★ A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for attendance
   ○ Tier 1
   ○ Tier 2
   ○ Tier 3

Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance

Students Missing 20% or More — **Tier 3 Intensive Intervention**

Students Missing 10% - 19% — **Tier 2 Early Intervention**

All Students and Families — **Tier 1 Universal Prevention**

All Students and Families — **Foundational Supports Which Promote Positive Conditions for Learning**

https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/

Attendance **Works** ©

Tier 1: Universal Attendance Supports

❖ Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations

❖ Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement

❖ Personalized positive communication to families when students are absent

❖ Recognition of good and improved attendance

❖ Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood

❖ Connection to a caring adult in the school

❖ Every child and their family encouraged to develop a success plan that includes attention to attendance

Attendance Works ©

Tier 2: Early Interventions Layer in Support and Remove Barriers to Attendance
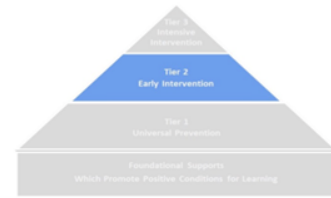
❖ Common community and school barriers identified and addressed

❖ Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance

❖ Attendance strategies added to IEP

❖ Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)

❖ Family visit

❖ Mentors (e.g., Success Mentors, Peer Group Connections)

❖ Intensive tutoring

❖ Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)

❖ Expanded learning opportunities

❖ Small group interventions and supports for students

❖ Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension

Attendance Works ©

Tier 3: Intensive interventions

❖ Educational support champions / advocates

❖ Interagency case management

❖ Housing stability supports

❖ Student attendance review board

❖ Community-based, non-criminal truancy court

❖ Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation

❖ Legal Intervention *(as a last resort)*

Connecticut Resources

Connecticut State Department of Education *in collaboration with* **CREC** *and* **EdAdvance**

Connecticut Resources

- Attendance and Awareness Campaign 2022-23
- EdSight,
- Supporting Student Attendance - Updated for 2022-23 (monthly attendance reports)
- Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences
- LEAP - Learner Engagement and Attendance Program
- Mental Health Wellness Days Guidance (January 24, 2022)
- Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts Guide
- Talk Tuesdays – peer learning community, every other Tuesday, open to all
- Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules Form; Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide and Catalog of Truancy Models

State Support & Technical Assistance

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Q&A

★ What questions do you have?

★ Any thoughts you would like to share?

★ **Feel free to raise your hand/unmute and share your thinking!**

Talk Tuesday 2022-2023 Survey

https://forms.gle/FcfL2yyGN42bRjG4A

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeJdnBga2h1-wGrreH7MJEKpFw4xnXILu_MkzXzRu85x5cmPA/viewform?usp=pp_url

*copy/paste link into browser if both links aren't working

Talk Tuesdays
Summer Series
Back-to-Basics

- **August 8 and August 22nd**

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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