

# Attendance & Engagement System of Support & Professional Communities



Developed by the CSDE in collaboration with SERC

**11/12/2024**



# Today's Agenda

## **Welcome**

Christine Kuehlewind, Ann Marie Cordisco, and Holli Ryan, 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

## **Shifting Mindsets Around Attendance & Engagement**

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

Gemma Joseph Lumpkin, Chief, Office of Youth, Family & Community Engagement, New Haven Public Schools

## **Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings**

Christine Kuehlewind, SERC



# Welcome

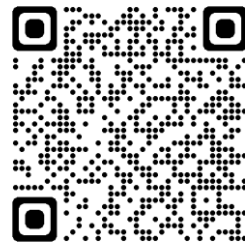
November 4, 2024

- [2023-24 Education Financial System, Special Education Excess Cost Grant System, Public School Information System, and Independent Accountant's Report](#)

November 8, 2024

- [Special Education Summit Notification](#)
- [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ESSER\) Liquidation Extension](#)
- [Press Release: Accountability Results Show Improvement Across Most Indicators](#)

[Superintendent's Digest](#)





# A UNIVERSE OF OPPORTUNITIES



CONNECTICUT  
Education

**2024-2025**

## Talk Tuesday

Kari Sullivan Custer  
November 12, 2024

Connecticut State  
Department of Education



# Attendance Teams

Do you participate on a district  
or school attendance team?



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How often do you meet?



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# Attendance Teams

Do you participate on a district or school attendance team?

How often do you meet?

What topics are you discussing in your team meetings?

Did you find something in particular that really made a difference?

Would you be willing to share the successes and challenges of your district or school attendance team?



# State Statute: Attendance Teams

[C.G.S. Sec. 10-198c](#), Chronic Absence, definitions and attendance review teams. (PA 15-225)

- Each local and regional board of education that
  - (A) has a district chronic absenteeism rate of **ten percent or higher** shall establish an attendance review team for the school district,
  - (B) has a school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of **fifteen percent or higher** shall establish an attendance review team at such school,
  - (C) has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of **fifteen percent** or higher shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school, or
  - (D) has a district chronic absenteeism rate **of ten percent or higher** and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of **fifteen percent or higher** shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school.
- Such attendance review teams shall be established to address chronic absenteeism in the school district or at the school or schools.
- Any attendance review team established under this subsection may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school counselors, school social workers, teachers and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined in section [10-198a](#), and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians.
- Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.





# Districts with 10% or less in 2024

Andover	Essex	North Haven	Side By Side
Ashford	Fairfield	School	Charter
Avon	Farmington	Orange	Simsbury
Bethany	Glastonbury	Preston	South Windsor
Bethel	Granby	Redding	Tolland
Bolton	Greenwich	Regional 05	Trumbull
Bozrah	Guilford	Regional 10	<u>Voluntown</u>
Brookfield	Hartland	Regional 12	Waterford
Canterbury	Hebron	Regional 13	Weston
Cheshire	Madison	Regional 15	Westport
Chester	Marlborough	Regional 16	Wethersfield
Columbia	Monroe	Regional 17	Wilton
Darien	New Canaan	Regional 18	Wolcott
Deep River	<u>New Fairfield</u>	Ridgefield	Woodbridge
East Hampton	<u>New Hartford</u>	Rocky Hill	
East Lyme	Newtown	Salem	
Easton	North Branford		



Note: Districts with 10 percent or less chronic absence that have one or more schools with chronic absence rate over 15% must have a district or school attendance team.

Source: [EdSight](#)



# Connecticut Prevention & Intervention Guide



## Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts

### [What can schools do to improve attendance](#)



#### Acknowledgments

#### Introduction

#### What is chronic absence?

#### Why are students chronically absent?

#### Why is chronic absence an important issue for Connecticut?

#### How do we know if chronic absence is affecting learning in our district?

#### What can a district do to improve attendance?

#### What can schools do to improve attendance?


## What can schools do to improve attendance?

The key functions of a School Attendance Review Team are to:

1. **Understand and monitor attendance trends.**
2. **Organize the schoolwide attendance strategy.**

The School Attendance Review Team's charge is to ensure that the school adopts a comprehensive, actionable, tiered approach to improving attendance. These teams could be a new team or part of an existing site-based team (e.g., PBIS—Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, school climate).

### Organizing a School Attendance Review Team

1. Conduct a **school self-assessment** .
2. Establish a weekly meeting schedule.
3. Define roles and responsibilities.
4. Establish group norms.



## School-Based Mentoring Initiative

The Connecticut State Department of Education is partnering with the Governor's Prevention Partnership on an initiative to strengthen school-based mentoring to support disengaged students, students who are chronically absent, or impacted by substance use, and community violence.

This initiative includes a needs assessment to inform training and technical assistance efforts and identify school districts needs.

- A survey of school superintendents.
- Interviews with school faculty and staff who are interested in launching a school-based mentoring program.



## Survey of School Districts about School-based Mentoring



<https://wkf.ms/4gH1VFe>

- To determine school districts that would like to access training and technical on mentoring-related issues.
- Our goal is to have all school districts complete the survey.
- Look for an email from The Governor's Prevention Partnership in your inbox with the link or have the designated person use this link or use the QR code below to complete the survey.
- The survey will be open until November 27<sup>th</sup>.



## Interviews with School Administrators

- The Governor's Prevention Partnership is also conducting interviews with school faculty, administrators, or staff who are interested in starting a new school-based interview in their district.
- Interviews last approximately ½ hour and address school specific needs, challenges, and planning issues.
- If interested, contact:

Aristede Hill, Associate Director

Email: [Aristede@gppct.org](mailto:Aristede@gppct.org)

Phone: (860) 757-3579

# Meet the Facilitators



**Caroline C. Calhoun**

Professional Learning and  
Attendance Specialist &  
LEAP Coordinator



**Gemma Joseph Lumpkin**

Chief, Office of Youth, Family &  
Community Engagement  
New Haven Public Schools

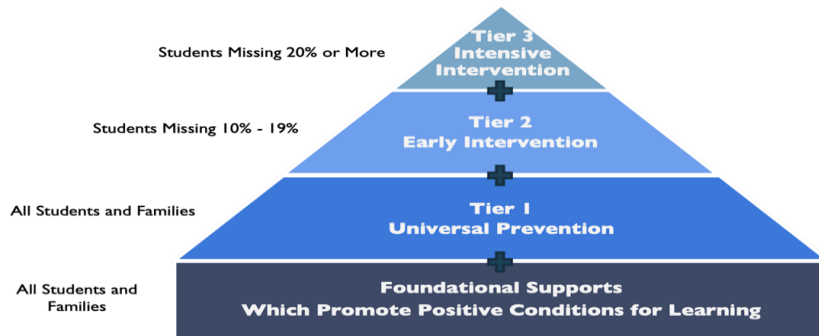


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*With content contributions from consultant **Kathy K. Taylor, Esq.***



# Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)



Healthy learning environments	Enrichment activities and clubs	Positive relationships	Active family and student engagement
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Challenging and Engaging Curriculum	Traditions and celebrations	Support for families to facilitate learning at home
Welcoming, safe school climate	Advisories or Morning Meetings to Build Community	Learning Supports	Access to Food and Other Basic Needs
<b>Foundational “Whole School” Supports</b>			

## Key Ingredients

What are the key ingredients to a **comprehensive, all hands on deck approach** to attendance and engagement?

- ★ District Attendance Team
- ★ School Attendance Team
- ★ Data Tracking & Analysis
- ★ Equitable Policies & Procedures
- ★ Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- ★ Strategic Partnerships
- ★ Shared Accountability & Continuous Improvement

Source: [Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention & Intervention Guide for Schools & Districts](#)

What do you think a mindset is?

What about a mindset shift?

Unmute or  
add to the  
chat

**What are mindsets?** Mindsets are deep, assumed patterns of thinking that shape how we make sense of the world and what we do.

**How do mindsets happen?** We acquire mindsets through our participation in ongoing social life. Mindsets are a part of culture - we gain them through civil society, family, schools, community institutions, the military - and through news and entertainment media.

**Why do mindsets matter?** Mindsets matter because they shape our behavior and decisions.

**How can we shift our own mindset or someone else's?** Mindsets are like channels that direct the flow of thinking, and **thinking must be funneled in new directions many times** in order for this thinking to wear new grooves in culture and cognition. Mindset shifts depend on **repetition**. Mindset shifts can take **many years**.

Source: <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/>



## Old School Truancy Punitive Mindset

punitive

working on a family

attendance enforcement



## Supportive Chronic Absenteeism Model

supportive

working **with** a family

how can we help?



# Mindset Shift

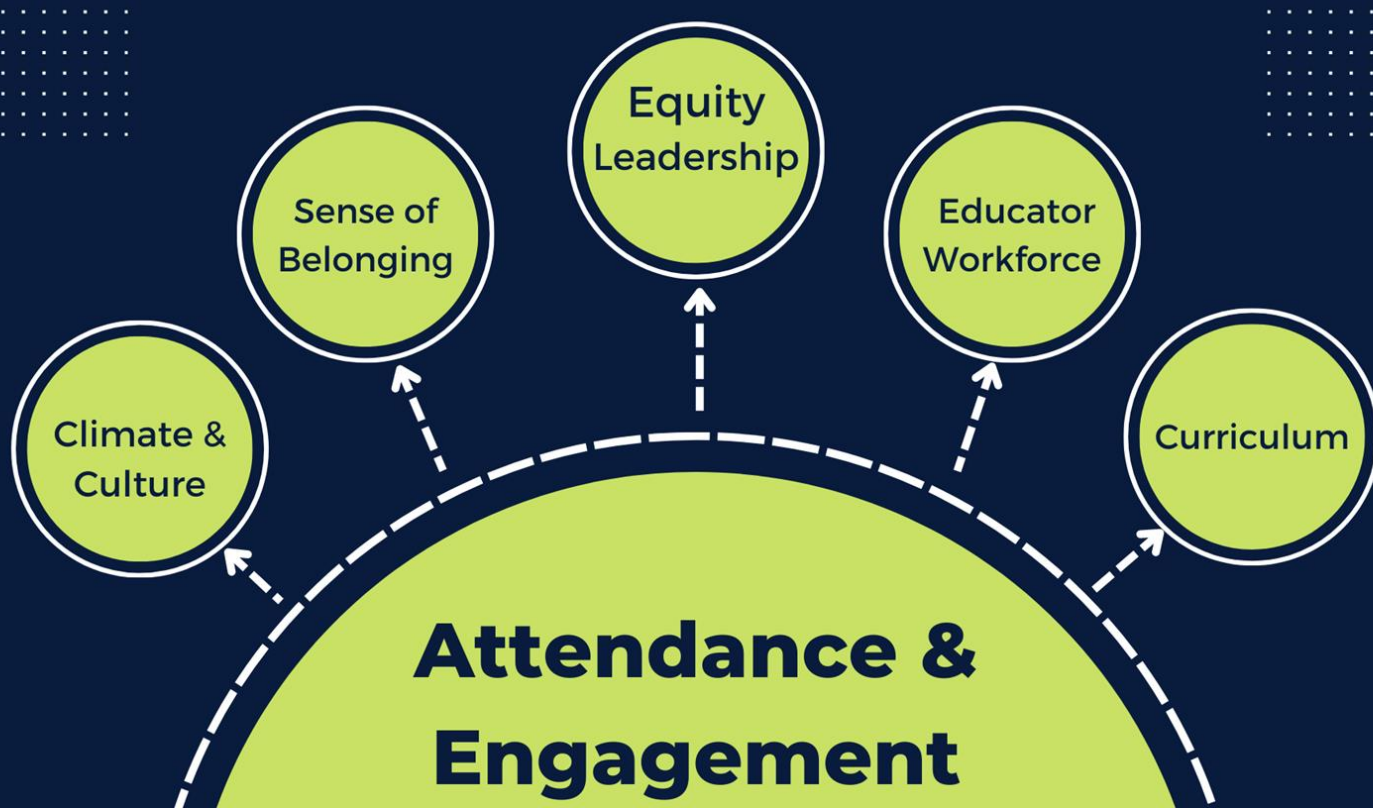


So much of the work we do as educators is **interrelated**.



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

# Mindset Shift



- One of the largest urban centers in Connecticut
- Over 50 schools
- 19,000 students
- 3,400 educators

**13,500  
LEAP  
Home Visits**

## Chronic Absence Data

District	Chronically Absent									
	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Student Count	%	Student Count	%	Student Count	%	Student Count	%	Student Count	%
New Haven School District	4,067	21.1	6,380	34.3	10,464	58.1	6,498	36.6	6,708	37.5





# Mindset Shift



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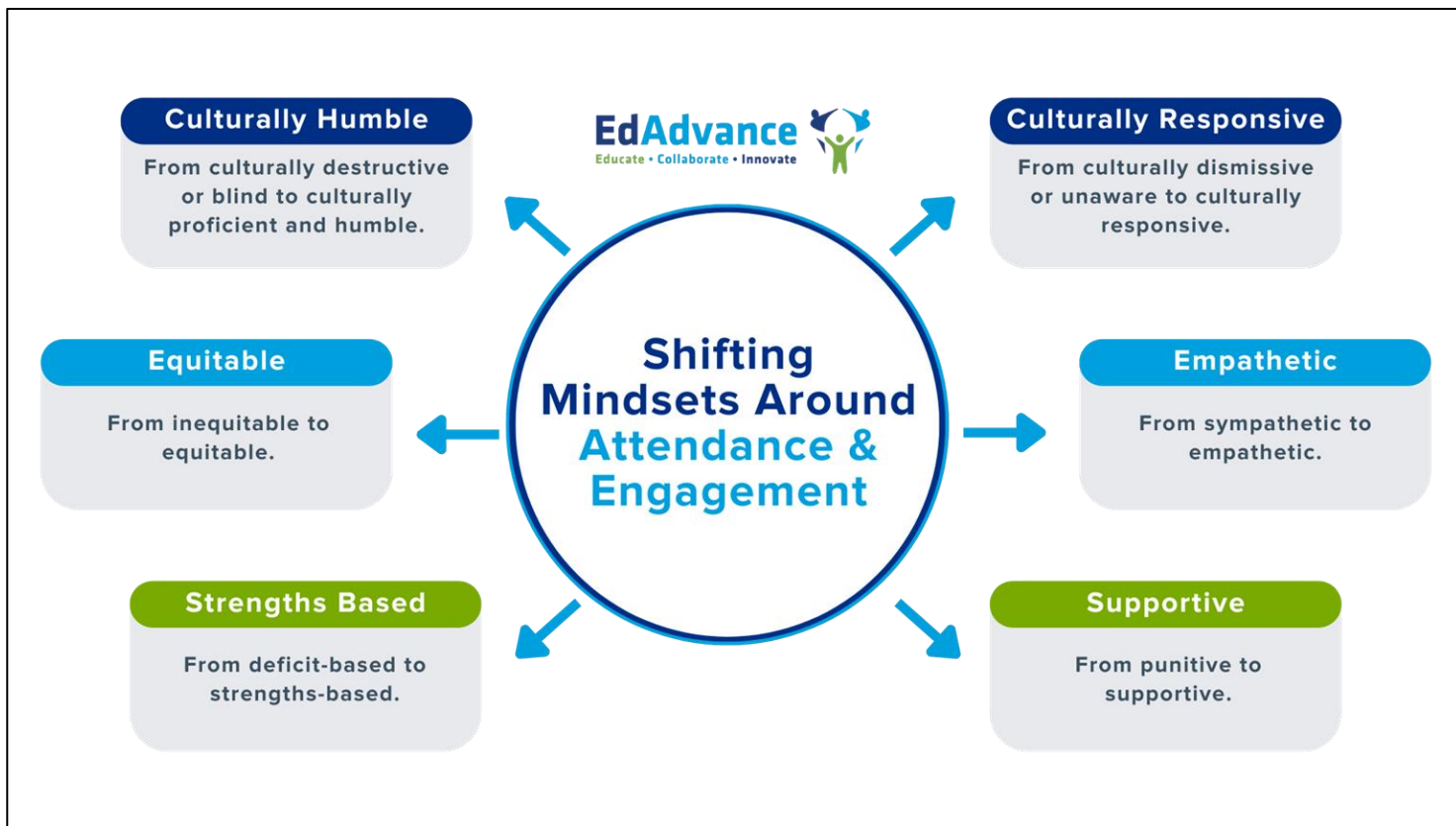
## Supportive **Chronic** **Absenteeism** Model

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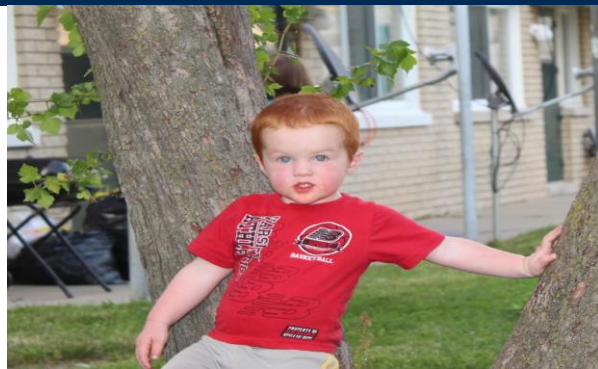
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# Students: Our North Star

Hello my name is Nathaniel. I just started school. I love kindergarten but I have only been in school for three days. My mother says she will bring me. She also has a hard time with half-days. I'm not sure why we continue to miss school, please help!



**Hi, I'm Cristina. I am in grade 10 this year. I am not really connected to school. I have friends and some of the teachers are nice. When I go to school, I get good grades and understand the work. I'm just not motivated to be there.**



# Real Stories vs. Bias & Deficit Thinking

While engaging with a student or family:

1. Check for bias...*is that leading you to make assumptions and think through a deficit lens?*
2. Be aware of your emotional reactions
3. Evaluate yourself

Unmute or  
add to the  
chat

★ How would you define culture?



# Culture & Bias

Our list may look something like this:

- ★ Culture has to do with values and beliefs.
- ★ Culture involves customs and traditions.
- ★ Culture is collective, shared by a group.
- ★ Everyone has a culture.
- ★ Culture is learned.
- ★ Culture influences and shapes behavior.
- ★ Culture is transmitted from generation to generation.
- ★ Culture is often unconscious; people are often unaware of how their behaviors and attitudes have been shaped by their culture.

Culture is a system of beliefs, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and are shared by a group of people. It includes customs, language, and material artifacts. These are transmitted from one generation to another, rarely with explicit instructions.

**Surface Culture** - what we can see

VS

**Deep Culture** - unspoken and unconscious rules

Unmute or  
add to the  
chat

*What are some examples of  
unspoken or unconscious rules  
you can think of in your own  
culture?*

## The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface



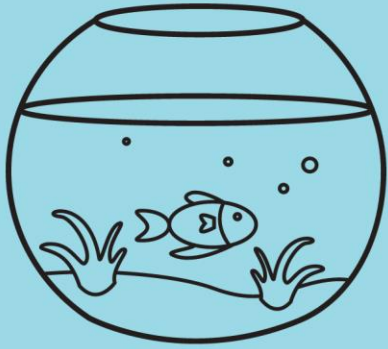
Source: Indiana Department of Education. Used by permission.



# Culture & Bias



As diversity consultant Kathy K. Taylor, Esq. states, **unconscious, instinctive negative judgement about others or “implicit bias”** is inextricably tied to culture: a person’s multiple identities that give rise to cultural affiliations, and **cultural affiliations are often at the root of implicit bias.**



THE LONGER YOU SWIM IN  
A CULTURE, THE MORE  
INVISIBLE IT BECOMES.

"Remember:  
white supremacy  
is not a shark;  
it is the water  
-Guante

## Cultural Competence

- Set of attitudes, skills, behaviors, and policies enabling individuals and organizations to establish effective interpersonal and working relationships that supersede cultural differences.
- Policies and practices at the organizational level and values, beliefs, and behaviors at the individual level enabling effective cross-cultural interactions among a learning community.





# Cultural Proficiency Continuum



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Where are  
you?

**Cultural Humility**

**Cultural Proficiency**

**Cultural Competence**

**Cultural Pre-Competence**

**Cultural Blindness**

**Cultural Incapacity**


**Cultural Destructiveness**



# Cultural Proficiency Continuum



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Cultural Proficiency: The Continuum					
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Pre-Competence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency
<p>Seeking to eliminate the culture of others in all aspects of the school and in relationship to the community served.</p> <p><i>See the difference and stomp it out.</i></p> <p>"In this class, we speak English only."</p> <p>"If we could get rid of our special needs students, our scores would improve."</p>	<p>Trivializing and stereotyping other cultures; seeking to make the cultures of others appear to be wrong or inferior to the dominant culture.</p> <p><i>See the difference and make it wrong.</i></p> <p>"You know that those parents never show up to school functions."</p> <p>"Asian students come to this country and succeed. Why wouldn't the other students do so as well?"</p>	<p>Not noticing or acknowledging the cultures of others within the school community; treating everyone in the educational system the same without recognizing the needs that require differentiated interaction.</p> <p><i>See the difference and act like you don't.</i></p> <p>"I don't see color. I just see kids."</p> <p>"Racism and discrimination don't exist anymore. I really hate it when parents use the race card."</p>	<p>Increasing awareness of what you and the school don't know about working in diverse settings; at this level of development, you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can falter, stop, and possibly regress.</p> <p><i>See the difference and at times, respond inappropriately.</i></p> <p>"During Christmas time I have a menorah in my classroom."</p> <p>"We value all cultures. We have a night where parents bring food representing their country."</p>	<p>Aligning your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive of cultures that are new or different from yours and the school's; enables healthy and productive interactions.</p> <p><i>See the difference and value it.</i></p> <p>"A student made a derogatory remark and I used it as a teachable moment to remind students of the right thing to do."</p> <p>"The co-teach model with the push-in Special Education teacher is allowing us to have honest conversations about differentiation in the classroom."</p>	<p>Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy; interacting with your colleagues, students, families, and the community as an advocate for life-long learning to effectively serve the educational needs of all cultural groups.</p> <p><i>See the difference and esteem it as an advocate for equity.</i></p> <p>"Our school's Social Justice and Equity Vertical Team is doing a great job embedding culturally relevant lessons into our curriculum."</p> <p>"My job as an educator is not only to teach content. I also openly embrace my role as an advocate for each child and their family."</p>
<p>Adapted from Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2009)</p> 					

Part of this work is **examining ourselves.**

We have to examine how we show up in the work, the beliefs we have, the attitudes that influence our **perspectives, and the biases that form unknown blind spots in our thinking.**

In other words, **we have to know our own story...and how that story impacts the work we do with students, families, and colleagues.**



# What's the point?

*We each arrive at this work with our own lens and lived experience, our own culture, and a shared experience in a white-dominant culture.*

- ★ In my case, my story and my lens is one of white privilege.
- ★ I need to recognize that, name it, see my own cultural context clearly, be on the alert for implicit bias, ***and how that might affect my work.***
- ★ I need to be a “culturally humble” educator.
- ★ I need to know I will make mistakes and that I am not perfect. I cannot fall into the trap of white perfectionism.
- ★ I need to be open-minded rather than defensive.
- ★ I need to know that I am on the **cultural proficiency continuum** and it is an ongoing lifelong process to keep evolving and learning.
- ★ Similarly, as I lead this work, I need to know that individuals and organizations are all at different places on this continuum.



# Identity & Bias



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## Reflect

Unmute or  
add to the  
chat

- What is *your* story?
- What is your lens, your perspective, your cultural context?
- When you think about the demographics of your students/families and your colleagues— in contrast to your own cultural context and perspective—how might that affect your work?



# Final Thoughts

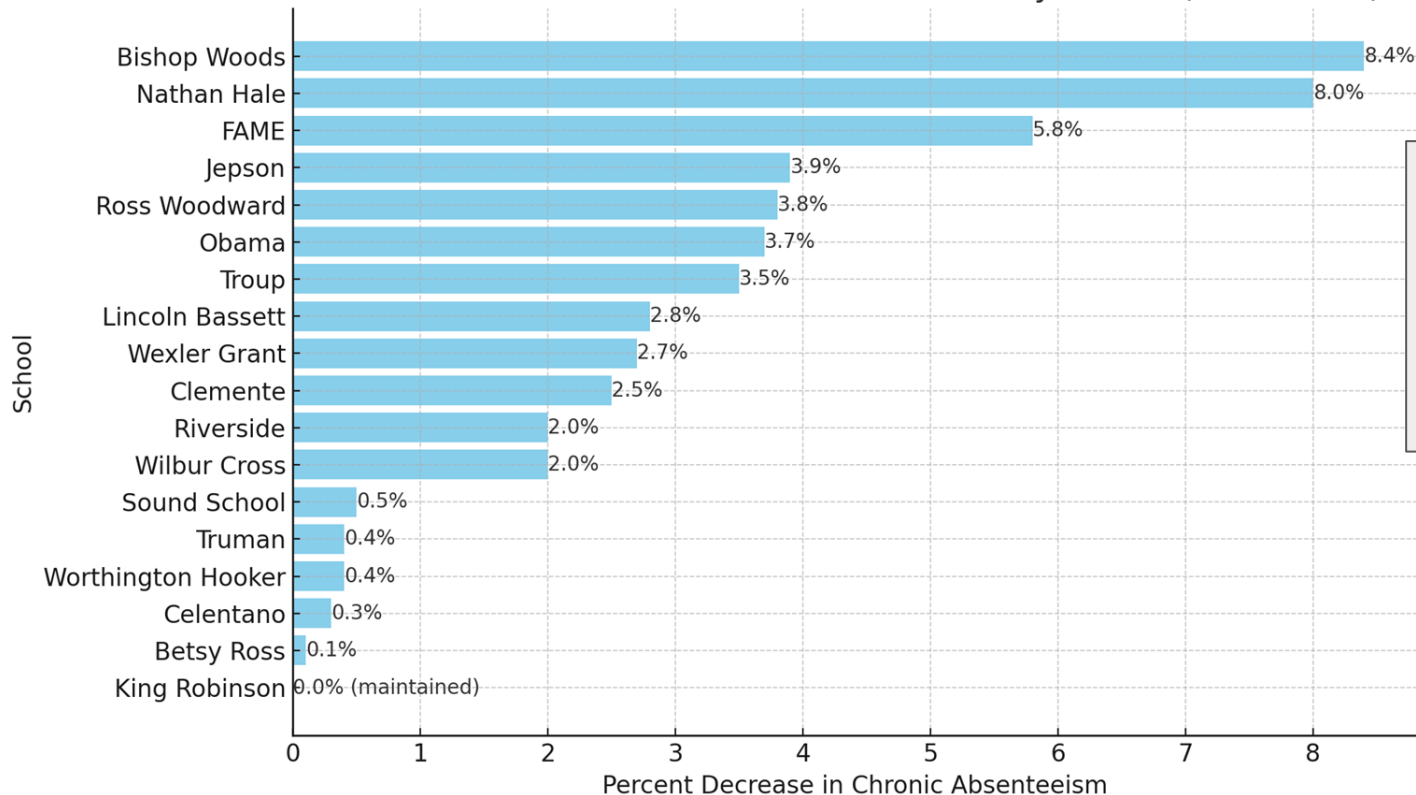


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As we think about **attendance and engagement**, let's remember to

- View it as the **intersection of everything we do**
- Continue the work of **shifting our mindset**
- Keep **relationships** at the center of our work

Percent Decrease in Chronic Absenteeism by School (2022-2024)



2023-24  
New Haven  
Public Schools  
that decreased  
chronic  
absenteeism



## Q & A



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What questions do you have?



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# Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

## Talk Tuesdays for the 2024-25 School Year

### 2024-2025

- December 10
- January 7
- January 23
- February 4
- March 4
- March 18
- April 1
- April 29
- May 13
- May 27

**Register for Talk Tuesdays**





# Keep in Touch!

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