



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Talk Tuesdays
*Student Attendance,
Engagement, and Support Series*

Kari Sullivan, State Attendance Lead
John Frassinelli, Division Director

Connecticut State Department of Education
December 15, 2020

Agenda

1. Welcome
Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE
2. What's New at CSDE
3. FAQs Added to Tracking Attendance Guidance
4. Post Pandemic Planning: A “do now” to improve Kindergarten Attendance
*Gemma Joseph Lumpkin, Chief of Youth Family and Community
New Haven Public Schools*
5. Participant Engagement: Successes & Challenges
6. Closing & Next Meeting



Talk Tuesday will **NOT** be held on 12/29/2020





Throughout today's presentation, ask yourself:

**WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE TO
STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH
FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN?**

LATEST RESOURCES



What's New at CSDE

December 10, 2020

- [Governor Lamont Announces CT First State in Nation to Require High Schools Provide Course on Black and Latino Studies](#) Press Release, 1/9/2020
- [Free Yale Course for School Staff – Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress](#)

December 7, 2020

- [Reminding Families to Take Advantage of Free Internet Access for Students](#)
- [Encourage Students to Have their Voices Heard through ThoughtExchange](#)

December 3, 2020

- [Governor Lamont Announces Full Delivery of 141,000 Laptops to PK-12 Students, Making Connecticut First State in Nation to Provide Access to Learning Devices for All PK-12 Students in Need](#), Press Release, 1/2/2020
- [Governor Lamont's Executive Order 90 – Flexible Staffing](#)
- [Annual Report on the Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion for the 2018-19](#)
- [CT Learning Hub and Wide Open School Parent Webinars \(Bilingual\) Wednesday, December 9, 2020](#)
 - [Cómo aprovechar al máximo el tiempo en línea de su hijo](#)



Webinar for Families of English Learners

Como Hechar Pa' Lante en el Tiempo de Covid-19:
Ayudando a Nuestros Hijos a Tener Éxito Escolar
Mientras Aprenden Ingles



Información sobre como apoyar a
nuestros hijos que están aprendiendo
Inglés



Sesión de Preguntas y Respuestas para Familias con Expertos de Programas
Bilingües y Programas de Inglés como Segundo Idioma

- Familias, ¿tienen?, preguntas sobre:
 - Programas Bilingües
 - Programas de Inglés como segundo Idioma
 - Leyes y derechos que existen sobre programas bilingües
 - Maneras en que pueda ayudar a sus hijos(a)s a tener éxito escolar
- Venga a compartir con nosotros sus dudas, preocupaciones y sus preguntas acerca de los programas bilingües o de Inglés como Segundo Idioma.
- El Departamento de Educación del Estado (CSDE, por sus siglas en Inglés) El Centro de Recursos de Educación del Estado, (SERC, por sus siglas en Inglés), le invitan a una reunión virtual para responder a sus preguntas sobre sus derechos como padres y también ofrecerle estrategias para apoyar a sus hijos(a)s a tener éxito escolar.
- Las familias tendrán la oportunidad de conversar sobre lo que han aprendido durante este viaje de aprendizaje remoto al mismo tiempo que sus hijos(a)s están aprendiendo Inglés

¡Regístrate Ahora!

Fecha: Jueves, Diciembre 17, 2020

Hora: 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Enlace de Registro: <https://ctserc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJckceppzoiEtHShKIcldbVZ2yzOptS0Sx>

Preguntas sobre la sesión, contacte a: Dr. Gladys Labas, gladys.labas@ct.gov o Nitza M. Diaz, diaz@ctserc.org

Thriving During COVID-19: Helping Our Children
Succeed in School While Learning English



Informational Session on How to
Support our Children who are Learning
English



Question and Answer Session for Families with Experts from Bilingual and
English as a Second Language Programs

- Families, do you have questions about:
 - Bilingual Programs
 - English as a Second Language Programs
 - The laws and rights that exist regarding Bilingual Programs
 - Ways you can help your children succeed in school
- Come share with us your doubts, concerns, and questions about these programs.
- The State Department of Education (CSDE) and The State Education Resource Center (SERC), along with experts from bilingual programs, invite you to a virtual meeting to answer your questions and provide you with strategies to support children learning English.

Register Now!

Date: Thursday, December 17th, 2020

Time: 6:30 pm-7:30 pm

Registration Link: <https://ctserc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJckceppzoiEtHShKIcldbVZ2yzOptS0Sx>

Questions: Contact: Dr. Gladys Labas, gladys.labas@ct.gov or Nitza M. Diaz, diaz@ctserc.org

[Download the flyer \(in Spanish & English\) Here!](#)

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Additional Resources


PBIS in a Remote Learning Environment

- [Improving Attendance in a Remote Learning Environment](#), Center on PBIS, August 2020

Upcoming Webinar!

- 12/7/2020 – Thriving During COVID-19: Helping Our Children Succeed in School While Learning English, CSDE/SERC, [Download the flyer \(in Spanish & English\) Here!](#)

Kindergarten Resources

- [Kindergarten Entry, Enrollment, and Attendance](#), CSDE 
- [Why Attendance Matters in Early Education Programs](#), Attendance Works, 2015
- [Improving Prekindergarten Attendance: School-level Strategies for Messaging, Engaging Parents, and Responding to Absences in Four DC Public Schools](#), Urban Institute, 2016
- [Strategies for Improving Attendance in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten: Toolkit for Districts, Schools, and Early Childhood Providers](#), REL Mid-Atlantic, 2019
- [Reducing Student Absenteeism in the Early Grades by Targeting Parental Beliefs](#), American Educational Research Journal, 2018
- [Attendance Works Library of Toolkits](#), Resources targeting many different audiences, e.g.,
 - [Early and Often: Showing Up in Preschool Matters 2.0](#), Attendance Works, 2018
 - [Early Matters. Integrating Attendance Into Kindergarten Transition](#), Attendance Works, 2019

For Your Information

- **CTCARES for All Young Children**, Office of Early Childhood, outreach to families who are disconnected from educational programming during the pandemic. Funding provided to state-funded sites and FRCS. Application closed on 12/11/2020. (FYI)



**TRACKING DAILY ATTENDANCE ON
REMOTE DAYS
NEW FAQs**

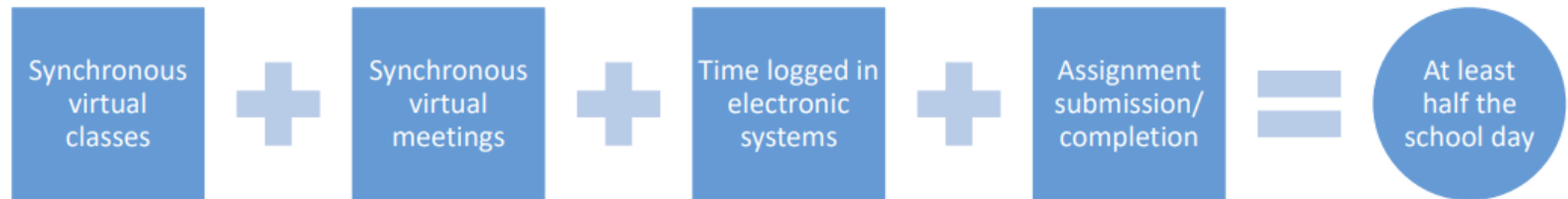


Tracking Daily Attendance on Remote Days in 2020-21

State Board of Education Policy (2008):

“A student is considered to be ‘in attendance’ if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day.”

A remote student can be considered as being ‘in attendance’ on a particular day if the total time spent on one or more of the following activities equals at least half the school day.



Synchronous virtual classes are live classes that are streamed real time to students using a videoconferencing platform like Google Meets, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.

Synchronous virtual meetings may be with a teacher, counselor, social worker, paraprofessional, etc. using a videoconferencing platform or via telephone. They may be homeroom opportunities, daily routine check-ins, or other synchronous conversations.

Time logged in electronic systems can be used to identify *any time over and above the synchronous virtual classes and meetings* that the student may have participated in during the school day.

Assignment submission/completion time can be determined by the teacher by starting with an estimate of time it will take for a typical student to submit/complete that assignment, and using that estimate to gauge the attendance time for the day that should be allotted to each student.

Notes:

- If a student is absent on a given day (either in-person or remote), they cannot make up for that absence on another day.
- Districts should track membership and attendance *separately* for a student’s in-person vs remote days.

[Download updated guidance 12/11/2020.](#)

FAQ #6

A district has learned that a student is in a different town, state, or country but is still participating in remote learning offered by the district, is this permissible? Can the student remain enrolled in the district?

6. *A district has learned that a student is in a different town, state, or country but is still participating in remote learning offered by the district. Is this permissible? Can the student remain enrolled in the district?*

The increase in COVID-19 cases in Connecticut and the higher incidence of remote learning models will affect families, their ability to access childcare, and sometimes their location. For example, parents may have to rely on family members in a different town, or even state, to care for their children. Families may struggle to locate childcare, or face issues with finding a reliable residence. The choices families must make to ensure their children are supervised while also engaged in educational opportunities has the potential to disproportionately affect Connecticut's families with limited resources.

If a student is temporarily attending school remotely from a location outside the usual school district for reasons related to the pandemic on any given day, and the family has expressed an intention to return to the school district or have the child continue residing in the district, the school district should maintain the student's enrollment and allow for continued participation in remote learning. Attending school remotely in a location outside the district does not, in and of itself, mean that the student has not remained a legal resident of the district. Further, this may be a matter of equity for children whose families cannot afford to take time off or stay home to watch their children in their town of residence. Such a temporary move or use of short term childcare outside of the district should not interrupt a student's education. In this pandemic, continuity of education and routines are critically important for our students.

Ultimately, if there are questions about residency, the district may conduct an investigation. School districts are encouraged to be thoughtful and are reminded that where a child is still residing in the district but not attending school, the district must implement its due process procedures and practices to ensure that the child starts attending school. The reporting of educational neglect must be the last resort in these situations. A district may wish to consult its own attorneys to seek advice on individual cases. If a school district denies school accommodations based on residency, the parent and student would have the hearing rights provided in C.G.S. Section 10-186. Additional information on residency disputes can be found in the [School Accommodations Guide for Parents and Guardians](#), Section C, page 4.

FAQ #7

What constitutes presence in a synchronous, virtual class? Does presence need to be verified through video?

7. *What constitutes presence in a synchronous, virtual class? Does presence need to be verified through video?*

Synchronous virtual classes may be synchronous for the entire duration of the class (e.g., teacher lecture with class discussion); they may also be a combination of some synchronous time (e.g., opening lecture, closing review) coupled with some asynchronous time where students may disconnect from the live class and work independently (e.g., complete class assignments). A student can be deemed “remote-present” in a synchronous, virtual class if the student is present in the class (e.g., through video, audio, live chat, or other means) for any part of that class. Districts are recommended to not rely solely on video evidence to record a student as “remote-present” in synchronous virtual classes because students may prefer to have their video cameras off for a variety of reasons (e.g., low bandwidth and associated data costs, increased anxiety and stress , other personal reasons such as concerns about privacy).

FAQ #8

If a student who is participating in-person or hybrid is assigned to remote instruction for a specific period for quarantine purposes, and the student is absent from remote instruction, should that absence be treated as excused or unexcused?

- 8. *If a student who is participating in-person or hybrid is assigned to remote instruction for a specific period for quarantine purposes, and the student is absent from remote instruction, should that absence be treated as excused or unexcused?***

A student may participate remotely on a given day for a variety of reasons (e.g., quarantine period necessitated due to health reasons, entire district/school switched to remote instruction due to health conditions, parent opted into remote learning). Regardless of the reason why a student is remote on a given school day, the determination of whether an absence on that remote day is excused or unexcused should be made pursuant to CSDE's [Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences](#). Note that emergencies beyond the control of the student's family can already serve as an acceptable "Level 2" reason (beyond the first 9 days) for a student's absence to be considered excused; in 2020-21 school year, these emergencies may include new situations (e.g., device/connectivity issues) created by the construct of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

KINDERGARTEN ENTRY, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE



Post Pandemic Planning:

A “do now” to improve Kindergarten Attendance

Gemma Joseph Lumpkin

Chief of Youth Family and Community Engagement



New Haven Public Schools



New Haven Public Schools

Our AIMS

- **Review how NHPS is addressing this problem now to impact the kindergarten through early grade levels in 2021-22**
- **Discuss a parent education model that would dramatically reduce chronic absenteeism beyond the pandemic.**
- **Make peer-to-peer connections statewide to support each other and work to learn from each to improve outcomes for all of our students.**
- **We know that children in poverty and children of color are the demographic mostly impacted by chronic absenteeism**

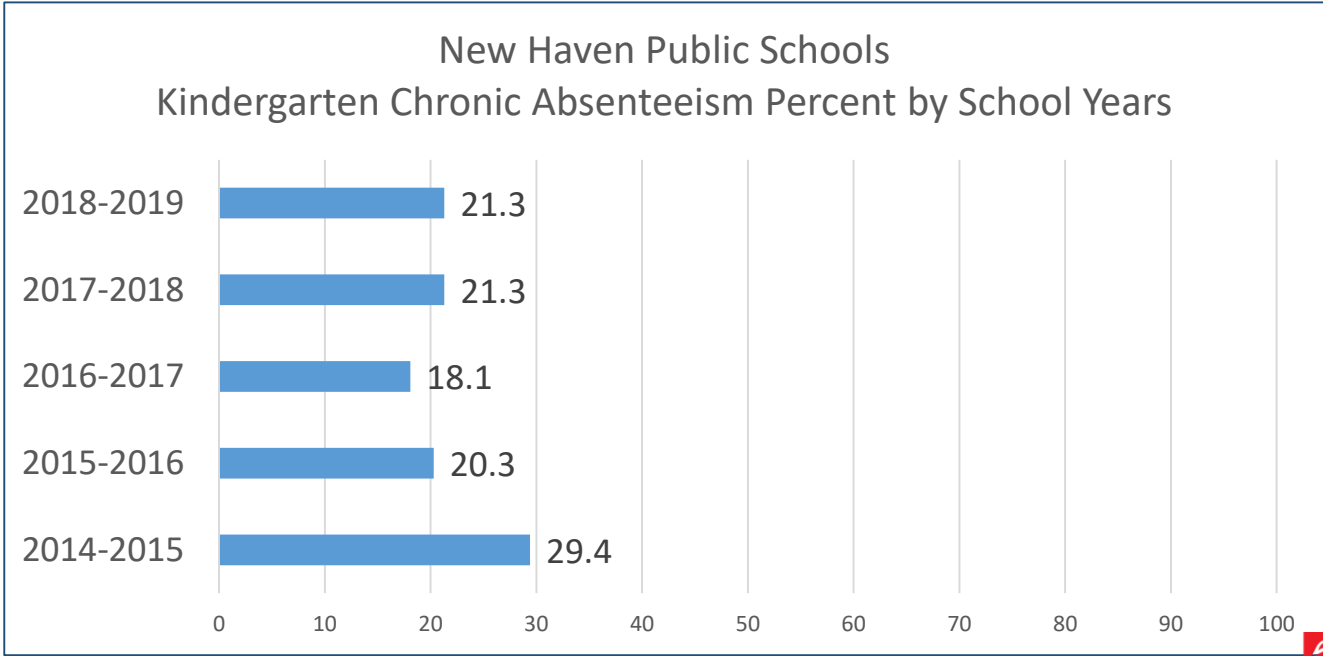
Facing our reality

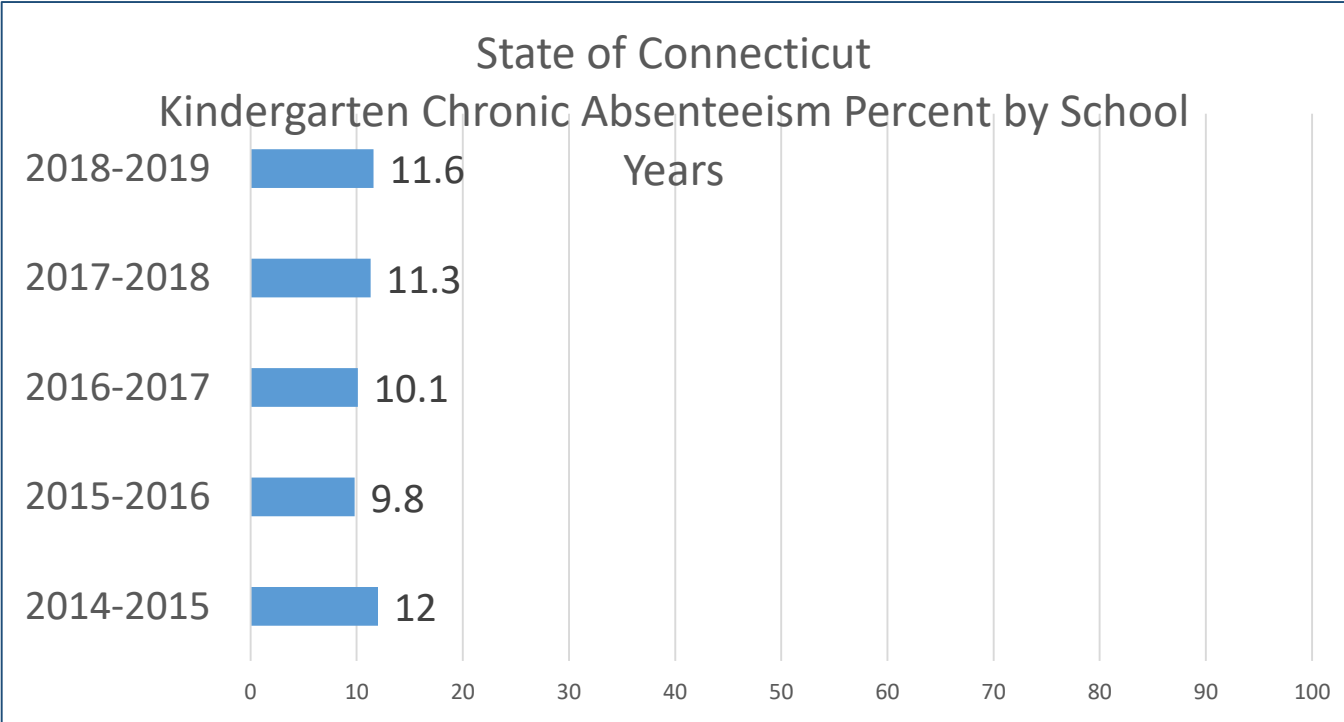


New Haven Public Schools

- The unexpected shift to online learning posed challenges such as learners' and teachers' access to, and knowledge of, educational technology.
- However, an examination of data in previous years show that student attendance in New Haven was problematic even in the absence of a pandemic.

We have made substantial progress over time





New Haven Public Schools

New Haven District Chronic Absenteeism Data K -8
by School Year

Grade	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019
	%	%	%	%	%
Kindergarten	29.4	20.3	18.1	21.3	21.3
Grade 1	21.9	16	16	18.1	17
Grade 2	20.1	15.8	13.7	14.8	17
Grade 3	19.1	12.5	13.8	14.8	14.8
Grade 4	19.6	13.4	12.2	12.8	15.3
Grade 5	17	13.2	12.1	15.3	12.6
Grade 6	19.7	14.9	12.4	13.5	12.3
Grade 7	20.8	16.1	14	16.2	15.3
Grade 8	21.2	16.1	13.7	17.5	15.7

New Haven District Chronic Absenteeism Data
 9-12
 by School Year

Grade	2014- 2015	2015 -2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019
	%	%	%	%	%
Grade 9	34.9	29.2	27	28	29.4
Grade 10	33.7	31.9	27	28.8	29
Grade 11	39	28.5	28.3	26.2	26.2
Grade 12	42.3	35.6	33.9	35.2	29

Mapping from Kindergarten to 7 grade

- Our internal data suggested that students who are chronically absent in kindergarten are likely to be chronically absent in 7th grade.

What the research says..

- Research shows schools must direct attention towards the elementary level since chronic absenteeism starts in the early grades, and "absenteeism in the early years can set a pattern of academic trouble and poor attendance in later grades."

("Mapping the Early Attendance Gap," 2015).



New Haven Public Schools

What the Research Says

- When the problem persists in the early grades, students fall behind in reading by grade 3.

(Ehrlich et al., 2018)

- Chronic Absenteeism disproportionately impacts Black students. Studies show that nationwide, 22% of black students in the fourth grade and 23% of black students in eighth grade missed an excessive amount of school compared to 19% of whites; and, studies confirm that the attendance gap begins in Kindergarten.

("Mapping the Early Attendance Gap," 2015).

What the research says

- The reasons behind the high rates of problematic attendance in early grades are varied and complex. Studies show that students who live in high-poverty communities miss the most amount of time in school.
- ("Absences Add Up," 2014)

Focusing on Evidence-based Solutions

- One solution being discussed in this presentation is based on Robinson et al. (2018), titled “*Reducing Student Absenteeism in the Early Grades by Targeting Parental Beliefs.*”

What we love about this work....

- The researchers highlight extensive current studies that confirm the connections between kindergarten and early grade attendance and positive student outcomes.
- The researchers argue that despite these studies, there is minimal literature on how to reduce attendance.
- An important acknowledgment in this study is that the variables that lead to poor attendance, including poverty and household burdens, are out of schools' control
- The researchers posit that "parents and guardians, on the other hand, tend to exert more control over factors that affect attendance. Particularly in early grades, parents have influence over school routines that affect attendance, including transportation to and from school, communication with the central office, and planning vacations. Thus, school-based

(Robinson et al., 2018).

What we love about this work..

- *“School-based attendance improvement efforts would benefit from engaging parents of kindergarten and elementary-aged students.”*

• (Robinson et al., 2018).

Dealing with some realities from the literature that we must confront

- Students from low-income families may be particularly likely to have parents who undervalue daily attendance. As compared with more affluent parents, low-income parents tend to feel excluded from a school system that may not necessarily reflect or acknowledge their beliefs, socioeconomic challenges, or cultural backgrounds
- (Anderson & Minke, 2007)

What can schools and districts do?

- Consider an intervention to permanently reverse "parents' mistaken beliefs about their child's attendance that may restrain parents from engaging in attendance-promoting behaviors (e.g., that attendance in the early grades is not important, perceiving their child missed fewer school days than he or she actually missed).“

(Robinson et al., 2018)

How the intervention was implemented

- Targeted commonly held parental misbeliefs undervaluing the importance of regular K–5 attendance as well as the number of school days their child has missed.
- This intervention was conducted across 10 school districts -enrolling 26,338 K–5 students and 42,853 students in total - across urban, suburban, and rural settings

Overview of Six Mailings Sent to K-5 Grade Households

Mailing	Date Received	Messaging
1	Nov 16–20, 2015	Attendance in early grades affects student learning (English Language Arts Common Core State Standards).
2	Feb 2–5, 2016	Absences in earlier grades can build long-lasting habits that result in absences in later grades.
3	Mar 1–7, 2016	Absences result in missed learning opportunities that cannot be replaced.
4	Mar 23–25, 2016	Attendance is linked to literacy skill development.
5	Apr 25–27, 2016	Attendance in early grades affects student learning (Math Common Core State Standards).
6	May 11–13, 2016	Strong attendance is associated with higher likelihood of high school graduation.

RESULTS & CONCLUSION:

- The intervention had positive results. The major outcomes lead to "students attending 3,486 more days of school over the course of the year (0.53 days * 6,579 students in the treatment conditions) and appeared to be more effective for the most at-risk students.
- The treatment effect was larger for students for whom English is a second language and who come from socioeconomically disadvantaged households." The most critical outcome was that the chronic absenteeism rate was decreased by 15%.

• (Robinson et al., 2018)

Thank you

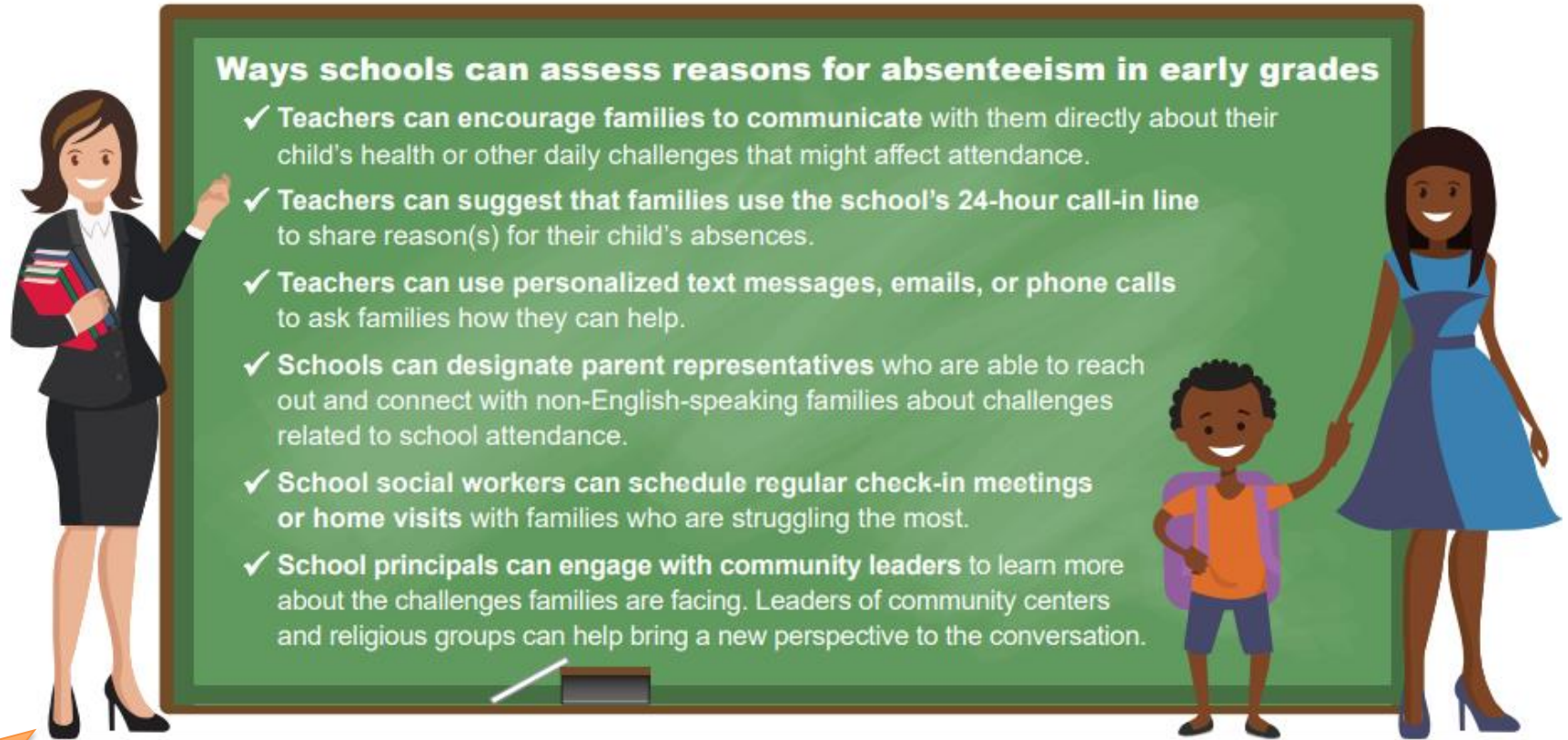


New Haven Public Schools

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT SUCSESSES & CHALLENGES



★ Ways schools can assess reasons for absenteeism in early grades ★



Ways schools can assess reasons for absenteeism in early grades

- ✓ Teachers can encourage families to communicate with them directly about their child's health or other daily challenges that might affect attendance.
- ✓ Teachers can suggest that families use the school's 24-hour call-in line to share reason(s) for their child's absences.
- ✓ Teachers can use personalized text messages, emails, or phone calls to ask families how they can help.
- ✓ Schools can designate parent representatives who are able to reach out and connect with non-English-speaking families about challenges related to school attendance.
- ✓ School social workers can schedule regular check-in meetings or home visits with families who are struggling the most.
- ✓ School principals can engage with community leaders to learn more about the challenges families are facing. Leaders of community centers and religious groups can help bring a new perspective to the conversation.

- [Strategies for Improving Attendance in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten: Toolkit for Districts, Schools, and Early Childhood Providers](#), REL Mid-Atlantic, 2019

New Federal Study Finds that Text Messages to Parents Can Reduce Chronic Absences in Elementary School



Can Texting Parents Improve Attendance in Elementary School? A Test of an Adaptive Messaging Strategy

A Publication of the National Center for Educational Evaluation at IES



Evaluation Report

NOV 2020/04
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Study Findings

The researchers sought to determine whether text messages helped reduce chronic absenteeism, especially among students who had a prior history of high absences. They also studied the effectiveness of the different types of basic and intensified messaging and whether the messaging strategy had an impact on student achievement. Among the findings:

- **All versions of the adaptive text messaging strategy reduced chronic absence.** The messaging lowered the expected chronic absence rate of 20.5% for students overall by 2.4 to 3.6 percentage points. For students with a prior history of high absence, the messaging lowered the expected chronic absence rate of 47.1% by 3.5 to 7.3 percentage points.
- **The two approaches to basic messaging were similarly effective at reducing chronic absence.** Both types of messages—those that focused on benefits, as well as those that focused on consequences—reduced chronic reduced chronic absence rates in the first half of the school year.
- **For intensified messaging, texts from school staff were more effective in reducing chronic absences.** The chronic absence rate in the spring was lower for students whose parents received direct outreach from staff compared to those whose parents received goal-setting messages, particularly for students with a history of high absences.
- **The text messaging strategy did not have an impact on student achievement.** Reading and math achievement of students in Grades 3 through 5 was similar for students whose parents did and did not receive text messages during the year of the study. It is possible that improved learning, facilitated by an increase in instructional time, takes longer and could be observed after a longer period of messaging.
- **The costs of text messaging are low, compared to other attendance programs.** The different versions of the adaptive messaging strategy ranged in cost from \$6.90 to \$8.53 per student, which is substantially lower than other programs that seek to reduce chronic absences.

The report, *Can Texting Parents Improve Attendance in Elementary School? A Test of an Adaptive Messaging Strategy*, was co-authored by Heppen and AIR researchers [Anja Kurki](#) and [Seth Brown](#).

[New Federal Study Finds that Text Messages to Parents Can Reduce Chronic Absences in Elementary School](#), American Institutes for Research (AIR), 2020



Kindergarten Entry, Enrollment, and Attendance



What Parents Should Know About **KINDERGARTEN** Entry, Enrollment, and Attendance



Why should my child attend kindergarten?

- Kindergarten instruction develops the foundation for all other learning through grade 12. Students learn important skills such as early reading and self-regulation.
- Dual language learners can get support in kindergarten. They can learn English and the value of their language spoken at home.
- Any problems that may affect a child's ability to learn can be identified in kindergarten. Developmental concerns will be identified. The child will receive appropriate services through general education and/or special education. The earlier a problem is identified, the sooner the child can receive support. This will improve their ability to achieve throughout their school years.
- Keeping children out of kindergarten typically does not have long-term benefits. In fact, some education experts have found keeping children out of kindergarten may be detrimental for some children.

For more information, contact andrea.brinnel@ct.gov or 860-713-6910, or visit <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Early-Childhood-Special-Education/>

The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal employment opportunity employer.

Frequently asked questions about kindergarten entry, enrollment, and attendance

At what age can my child enter kindergarten?

Connecticut law requires public schools to be open to all children who reach age 5 on or before January 1 of any school year.*

If my child is not 5 years old until after January 1 of the school year, can he or she still enter kindergarten?

It is the local board of education's decision to admit your child before he or she is age eligible for kindergarten.*

If my child is 5 on or before January 1 of the school year, do I have to send my child to kindergarten?

Parents of a child who is 5 years old have the option not to send their child to school until the child is 6 or 7 years old. If they choose not to send their child when the child is age eligible, they must go to the school district office and sign an opt-out form.**

Does my child have to be tested in order to enter kindergarten?

There isn't any state requirement for a child to be tested to enter kindergarten. Your school district may require testing or screening but your child can't be excluded from school when he or she is age eligible, regardless of the results of any test or screening.

How long is the school year for kindergarten?

Public schools must provide half-day kindergarten programs for 450 hours of actual school work during school hours. If a public school chooses to offer full-day kindergarten, it must provide 900 hours of school work.***

Can my child attend full-day kindergarten?

Some schools do not offer full-day kindergarten for all children. If the school that your child will attend provides full-day kindergarten for all children then your child will attend full day kindergarten.

Should I hold my child out of kindergarten even though he or she is age eligible?

The Connecticut State Department of Education strongly encourages parents to send their children to kindergarten when they are age eligible: 5 years old on or before January 1 of any school year. However, some parents do not send their children when eligible. This can be due to concerns that the kindergarten program may not be appropriate; that their child may be among the youngest in the class or may not be "socially mature enough"; or that their child is generally not yet "ready for kindergarten." Please know that all school districts are responsible for meeting the needs of all kindergarten students. School districts are required to provide an appropriate kindergarten experience for all children that are age eligible.

* C.G.S. Sec. 10-15c ** C.G.S. Sec. 10-184 *** C.G.S. Sec. 10-15

[What Parents Should Know About Kindergarten Entry, Enrollment and Attendance](#), CSDE



Closing & Next Meeting

January 12, 2021

10 to 11 a.m.

Talk Tuesday will **NOT** be held on 12/29/2020



Keep in touch!



**Kari
Sullivan Custer**

Kari.Sullivan@ct.gov

860-807-2041

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



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



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



[@EducateCT](https://twitter.com/EducateCT)

