



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

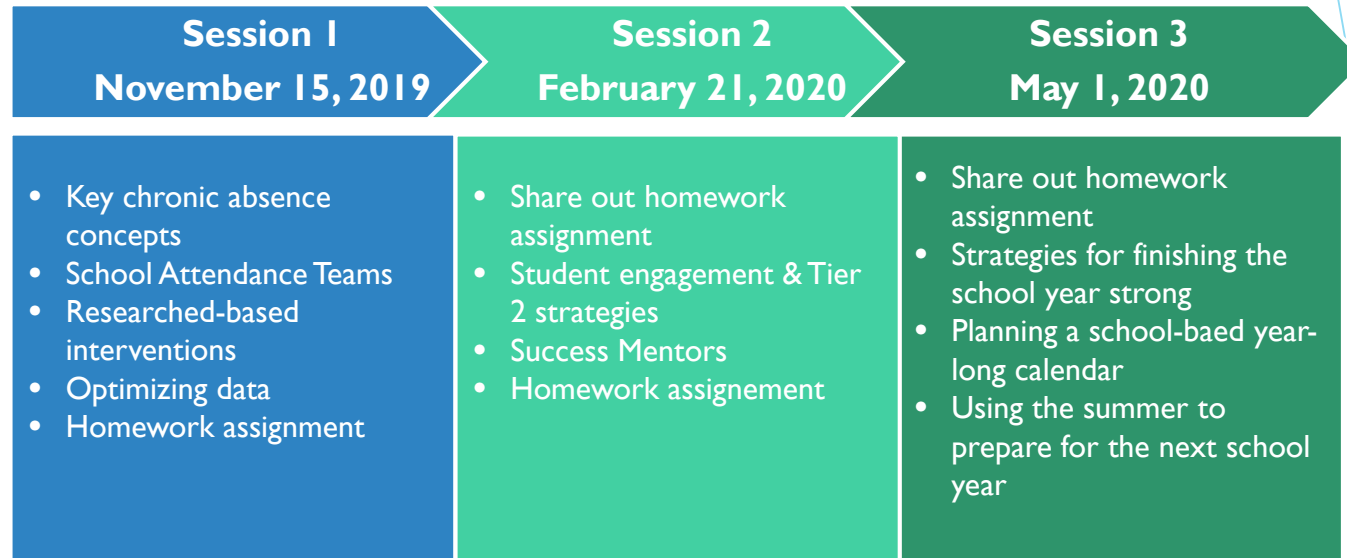
Building Foundational Supports to Address Chronic Absence at the School Level

NetSTAT: School Leadership Workshop Series
Improving Student Attendance

November 15, 2019

School Leadership Workshop Series

Improving Student Attendance



**Coaching Call
January**



**Coaching Call
February**



Welcome & Introductions

How is your school currently organizing your work to reduce chronic absenteeism?

1. Chamberlain Elementary School, New Britain, (K-5)
2. Smalley Elementary School, New Britain (K-5)
3. Clinton Avenue School, New Haven (K-8)
4. Wexler-Grant School, New Haven (K-8)
5. Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport (6-11)
6. New Britain High School, New Britain (9-12)
7. Explorations Charter School, Winsted (9-12)
8. Stamford Academy, Stamford (9-12)

Today's Agenda

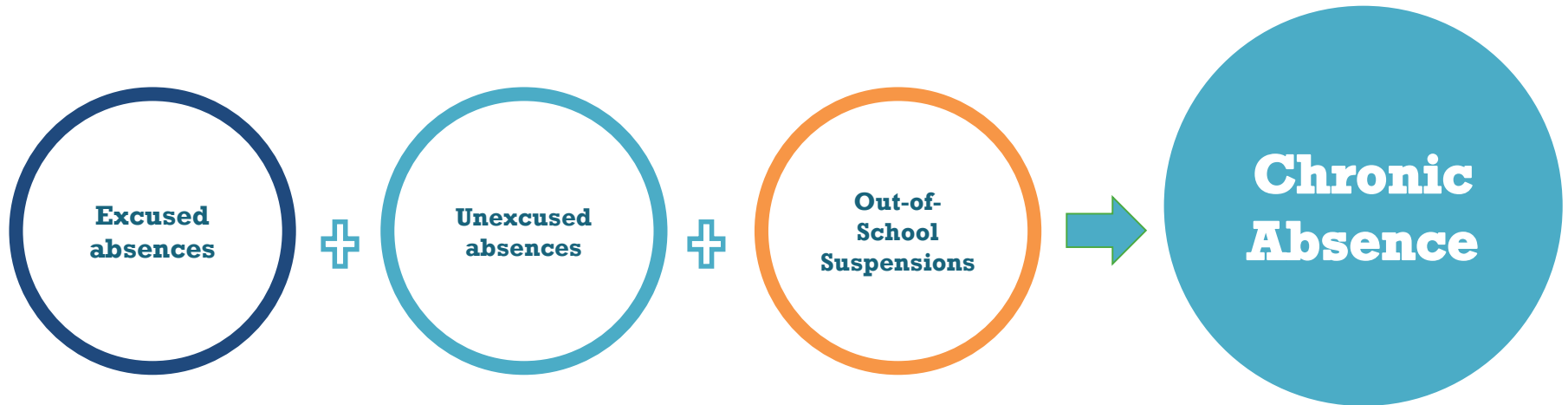
- ▶ Welcome & Introductions
- ▶ Key Concepts and Frameworks
- ▶ Effective School Attendance Teams, structures and functions
- ▶ Research-based Resources for Interventions
- ▶ Homework Assignment
- ▶ Optimizing data - how to best use historic and current data to identify trends and individual students that will help improve attendance outcomes

Key Concepts & Frameworks

Addressing Chronic Absence

What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. C.G.S. Section 10-198c(1) defines it as **missing 10% or more of school for any reason.**



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

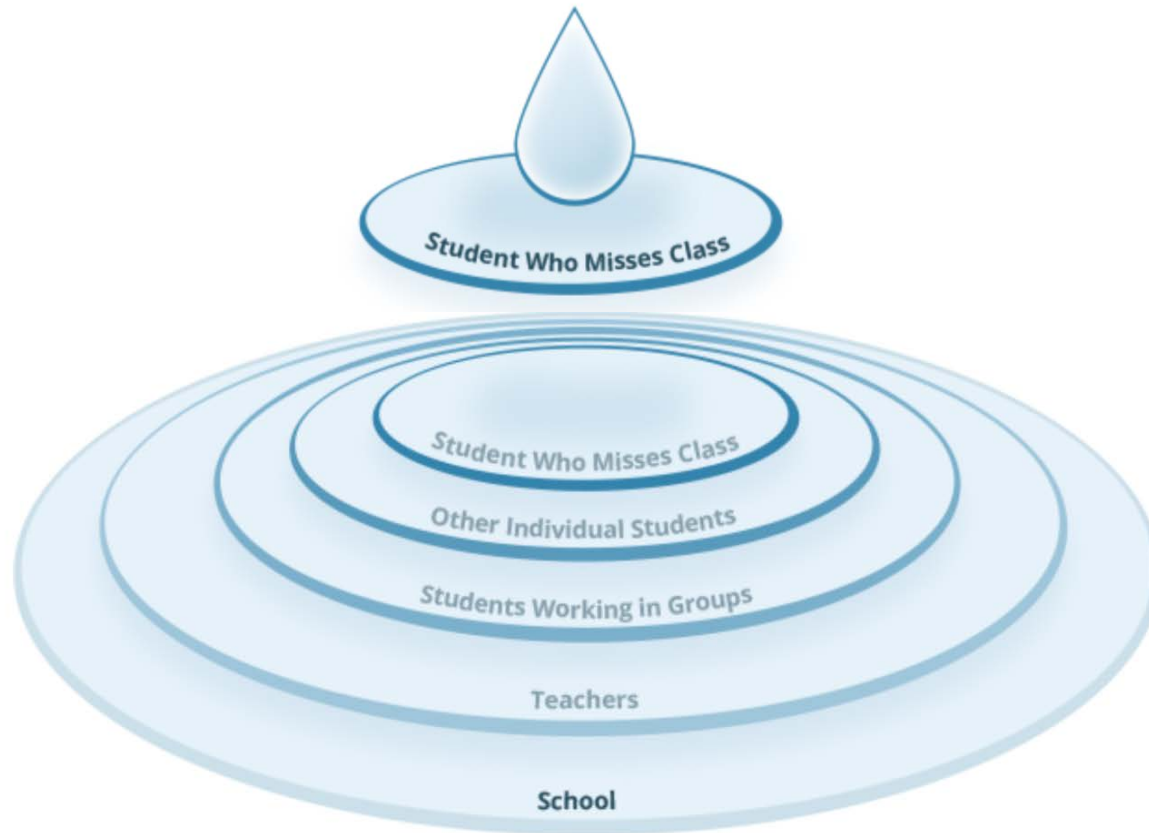


Days Missed Add Up

- Most K-12 academic school years run from September – June
 - 10 months of school in a defined academic calendar year
 - If a student misses just 2 days of school each month he//she will have missed a total of 20 days for the school year; by most definitions the student would be categorized as chronically absent.



Impact of Absences Ripples



Attendance Matters!

National Research

At every age and every stage, chronic absence erodes the academic and social skills needed to succeed in school

- Children in poverty are more likely to be chronically absent at a young age

Ability to Read at Grade Level

Being chronically absent significantly affects a student's ability to read at grade level, perform academically and graduate on time

- Students who are chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to read proficiently by the end of third grade
- By sixth grade, chronic absence is a key early indicator of dropout from high school
- By ninth grade, attendance may be a better indicator of dropout than eighth-grade test scores.



Solutions Require Understanding What Factors Contribute Chronic Absence

Barriers

- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Family responsibilities
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Frequent school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- Inequitable access to resources due to bias & discrimination.

Negative School Experiences

- Struggling academically and behaviorally
- Ineffective or harmful interventions
- Bored
- Social challenges
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Harsh, biased disciplinary practices especially for students of color
- Negative attitudes of parents due to their own school experience
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

Lack of Engagement

- Lack of or inequitable access to challenging, culturally responsive, engaging instruction & enrichment
- Lack of academic, emotional and behavioral support
- No meaningful or negative relationships to adults in the school
- Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Failure to earn credits/ no future plans
- Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes

Misconceptions

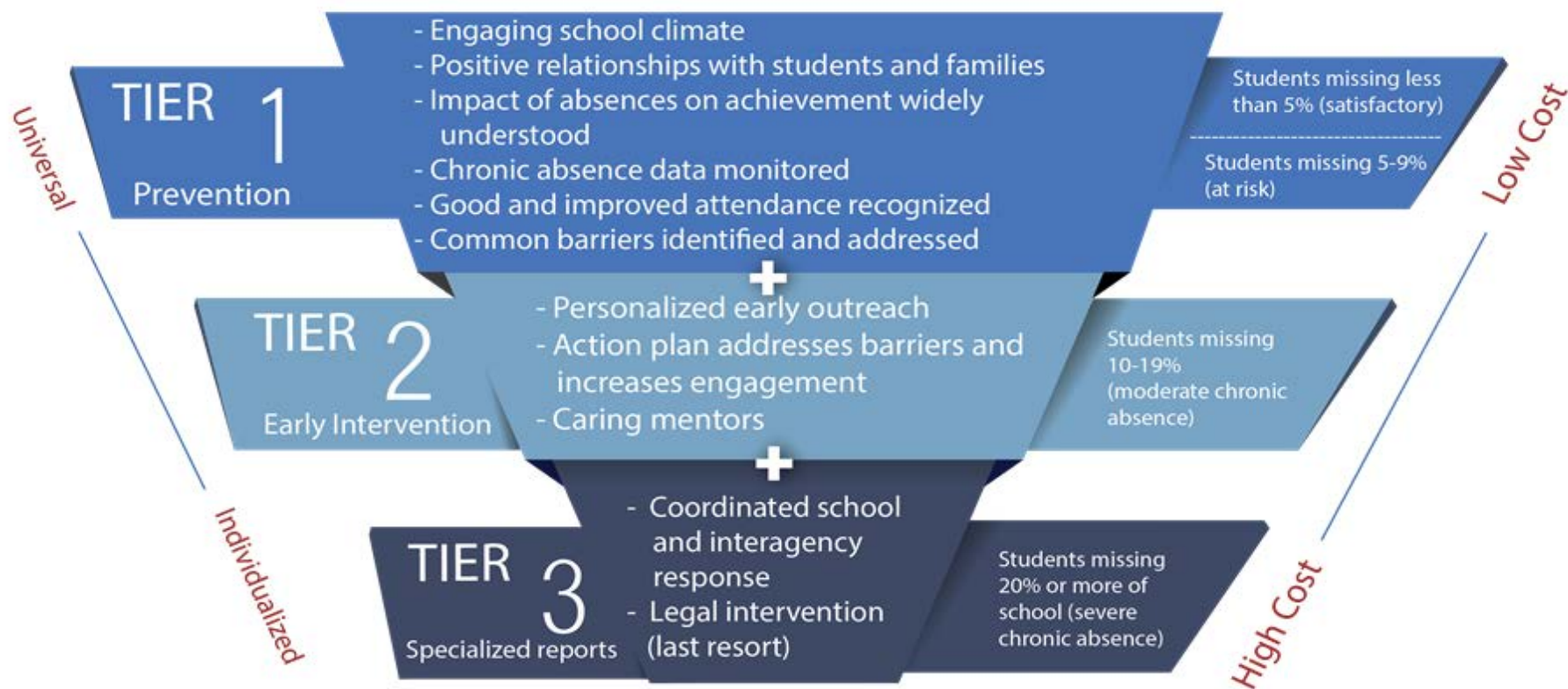
- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions are not relevant

High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional investment is needed to unpack and address common causes of missing school.





Promote Investing in Prevention and Early Intervention



The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the slide, creating a modern, dynamic feel.

Effective School Attendance Teams

Addressing Chronic Absence

Effective School Attendance Teams

(C.G.S. Sec. 10-198c)

1. Improving attendance is not a solo sport - requires a team
2. Meets regularly (minimum: bi-weekly) and is Principal-led
3. Each school principal decides the best fit for their school:
 1. Team devoted exclusively to attendance or
 2. Existing team that has attendance added to its broader functions
4. Ultimately responsible for organizing the schools' attendance strategy.
5. Two primary responsibilities are monitoring:
 1. attendance of individual students who are or at-risk of becoming chronically absent and ensuring their needs are met
 2. overall attendance trends at the school and within subgroupings of students.

Effective School Attendance Teams (continued)

Ideally, School Attendance Teams:

1. Coordinate the school's multi-tiered strategy to reduce chronic absence.
 - ▶ Engage in triage for tier 2 and 3 students (make sure students are being assigned to someone who can help)
2. Use qualitative and quantitative data to understand the attendance challenges at their school.
3. Use trend data to identify which sub-groups of students are most vulnerable to absenteeism.
4. Connect families and students to need-based resources.
 - ▶ Develop and enlist support for a schoolwide strategy that builds upon existing assets and challenges.
5. Monitor progress.

Team Membership

- Principal and/or another high level administrator
- School social worker
- Nurse
- Guidance counselor
- Attendance clerk or school secretary
- Teachers (engage on an as-needed basis, related to specific students, classrooms, or grades)
- District staff (engage as needed, to identify resources and partnerships)
- Parent liaison (engage as needed, focus on whole school and population strategies)
- Site-based community partners (engage as needed, focus on whole school and population strategies)

Determine roles: To increase the effectiveness of meetings, identify a lead to facilitate the meetings while another member takes notes.

School Team Self-Assessment

Group Activity

Three Key Implementation Indicators

- Leadership
- Data-drive Approach
- Multi-tiered Supports

Rating Categories

- Emerging
- Developing
- Proficient

What is Teaching Attendance?

Attendance Works Learning

The mission of Attendance Works is to advance student success and reduce equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Here you will find learning you can apply in the classroom.

Click on the course below and start learning today!



Module 1 - Why We Teach Attendance?



Module 2: Creating a Culture of Attendance (Primary and Secondary)



Module 3: Using Data for Intervention and Support (Primary and Secondary)

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/teaching-attendance-curriculum/>

Research-based Interventions

Addressing Chronic Absence

Resources for Identifying Research-based Interventions

1. [Attendance Playbook](#), Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism, FutureEd
2. Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: [A Prevention and Intervention Guide](#) for Reducing Chronic Absence
3. ESSA Evidence-based Guides - [Climate and Culture](#)
4. Leading Attendance, [A Toolkit for Principals](#), Attendance Works
5. PSIS Guidance
 - ▶ [Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance](#)
 - ▶ [PSIS Appendix L - Reporting Information about Students who are Disengaged](#)
6. Truancy Referral Resources
 - ▶ [Catalog of Truancy Models](#)
 - ▶ Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules [Form](#)
 - ▶ Youth Service Bureau Referral [Guide](#)

Examples of Effective Strategies

Tier I Interventions

Effective Messaging and Engagement

- Nudging Parents and Students
- Home Visits
- Positive messaging
- Incentives

Removing Barriers to Attendance

- School-based Health Centers
- School Buses and Public Transit
- Safe Walks to School
- Breakfast for All
- Laundry at School

Improving School Climate

- Relevant and Culturally Relevant Curriculum
- Threshold Greetings
- Rethinking Recess
- Restorative Discipline Practices

Tier II Interventions

Effective Messaging and Engagement

- Early Warning
- Mentoring
- Youth Engagement

Removing Barriers to Attendance

- Addressing Asthma
- Targeted Transportation

Tier III Interventions

- Truancy Courts/Interagency Case Management
- Housing Supports

Source: Attendance Playbook, FutureEd
(2019)



Homework Assignment

Addressing Chronic Absence



Homework Assignment

1. Convene your School Attendance Team and review the team's self-assessment
 - ▶ Identify and implement 2 assessment indicators to strengthen your school's approach to addressing chronic absence
2. Review and compare current and historic data to identify those students that are or at risk of becoming chronically absent. Also, identify trends for subgroups, e.g., neighborhoods, grades levels, students identified with disabilities.
 - ▶ Identify and implement one Tier 2 strategy to address a trend uncovered in your data review.
3. Be prepared to report back at the February meeting.