



Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025
Webinar 3 of 4

August 6, 2025

www.attendanceworks.org



Welcome!



S. Kwesi Rollins
Chief Program Officer
Institute for Educational Leadership
Chair, Advisory Board, Attendance Works



Hedy N. Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works

About the Institute for Educational Leadership

IEL's vision is an equitable society in which shared leadership effectively uses all available resources for the betterment of their communities.

IEL partners with communities, working with local entities to fill service needs and support them in the long-term on their transformational leadership journey. IEL:

- identifies and implements innovative strategies particularly where educational, economic and social challenges or gaps exist.
- has developed, trained and supported thousands of leaders across various networks.
- works at the local, state and national level, investing in community leaders of all ages, stages and sectors.

To learn more visit: www.iel.org



About Attendance Works

Attendance Works advances student success in school and beyond for all students by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state and national level, Attendance Works:

- Advances better **policy**
- Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- Catalyzes needed **research**

Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's “go-to” resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: www.attendanceworks.org.

Convening Partners AAC 2025!



See the full list of national and state campaign partners here: <https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/partners-2/>

Agenda

I. Welcome

I. Attendance Awareness Campaign

Kwesi Rollins, Chief Program Officer, IEL

I. Why Student Connectedness Matters for Attendance

Hedy Chang, Executive Director, Attendance Works

I. Panel: Strategies for Nurturing Student Connectedness

- **Naomi Tolentino Miranda**, Coordinator of Attend to Achieve, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
- **Zaneta Boles**, Principal of Silver City Elementary School, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
- **Stacey Losh**, Manager of Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support, West Virginia Department of Education
- **Cynthia Sorsaia**, Coordinator of Communities In Schools, West Virginia Department of Education

IV. Closing Reflections & Resources

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2025 Webinar Series

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

Note: Each session is accompanied by a discussion guide that can be used for webinar parties.

Webinar 1 Teams Make all the Difference for Supporting Attendance

April 2, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 2 Health, Well-being and Safety is Essential to Showing Up

May 14, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

Webinar 3 Student Connectedness Fosters Attendance and Engagement

August 6, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET (**TODAY**)

Webinar 4 Family Engagement is the Foundation for Attendance & Learning

September 24, 12pm-1:30pm PT / 3pm-4:30 pm ET

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/>

Five Key Actions & Messages for 2025

- ❖ **Embrace a problem-solving approach driven by data to improve attendance.**
- ❖ **Engage parents and guardians as vital partners.**
- ❖ **Create a safe, connected and engaged learning environment.**
- ❖ **Support the health and well-being of students, families and school staff.**
- ❖ **Involve the whole community in your strategies and tactics.**

<https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/count-us-toolkit/what-are-the-key-messages-2/>



**Thank You to our Campaign
Sponsors for supporting this
webinar!**



Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools brings together extensive health care expertise and partnerships with nationally recognized and trusted organizations to support schools in becoming a beacon of health in their community.



School Technology is an exclusive partner of Skyward and provides a wide range of integrated hardware and software solutions to improve data quality. From student attendance to employee time tracking, School Tech solutions help so schools can focus on the bigger issues.



**Welcome to our new
AAC partners!**



Learn more about the Attendance Awareness Campaign partners on [our website!](https://www.attendanceworks.org)



Support Attendance Works



We rely on contributors like you to help us keep Attendance Works' resources free for everyone.

Join our movement and donate today!

Donate





Slogan for 2025!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!





AAC 2025 Slogan!

Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow!

- Highlights the role that school plays in promoting student well-being and achievement
- Connects school attendance with realizing our hopes and dreams
- Emphasizes the link between regular attendance and a well-prepared, next generation workforce

National Chronic Absence Crisis

- **Chronic absence doubled from 1 in 6 students pre-pandemic to 1 in 3 in 2021-22.**
- **It slightly decreased in 2022-23.**
- **It is now approximately 1 in 4.**
- **Chronic absence remains strongly associated with worse outcomes for achievement, graduation and executive functioning.**

Source: US Department of Education, Ed Facts

Reducing Chronic Absence Requires Identifying and Addressing Root Causes of Chronic Absence

Barriers	Aversion	Disengagement	Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic and acute illness• Family responsibilities or home situation• Trauma• Poor transportation• Housing and food insecurity• Lack of access to needed services• System involvement• Unpredictable schedules for learning• Lack of access to technology• Community violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggling academically and/or behaviorally• Unwelcoming school climate• Social and peer challenges• Anxiety• Unfair disciplinary and suspension practices• Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations• Caregivers had negative educational experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of challenging, engaging 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• Need to work conflicts with being in high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused• Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning• Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences• Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness• Attendance only matters in the older grades• Suspensions don't count as absence

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/>

Qualitative Data Tools

Gather information about why students do or don't attend school

- ❑ **Scan of Environment and Attendance Tool (SEAT):** Identify strengths and opportunities to promote positive school culture and strong attendance
- ❑ **Empathy Interviews:** Targeted, one-on-one conversations with a small group of students
- ❑ **2x10:** Relationship and trust building strategy; spend two minutes per day for 10 days talking with a student
- ❑ **Student Focus Groups:** Moderated small group discussions to explore experiences and perspectives
- ❑ **Attendance Café:** Engage parents in discussions about attendance
- ❑ **Student and Parent Surveys:** Ask about reasons behind their absences
- ❑ **Shadow a Student:** See school through your student's eyes and take action to create change.



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/qualitative-data/>

Address Aversion & Disengagement Through Student Connectedness

Barriers	Aversion	Disengagement	Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic and acute illness• Family responsibilities or home situation• Trauma• Poor transportation• Housing and food insecurity• Lack of access to needed services• System involvement• Unpredictable schedules for learning• Lack of access to technology• Community violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggling academically and/or behaviorally• Unwelcoming school climate• Social and peer challenges• Anxiety• Unfair disciplinary and suspension practices• Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations• Caregivers had negative educational experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of challenging, engaging 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• Need to work conflicts with being in high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused• Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning• Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences• Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness• Attendance only matters in the older grades• Suspensions don't count as absence

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Students are connected to school when they:

01

Believe that there is an adult in the school who cares about them

02

Have a supportive peer group

03

Engage in activities that bring meaning

04

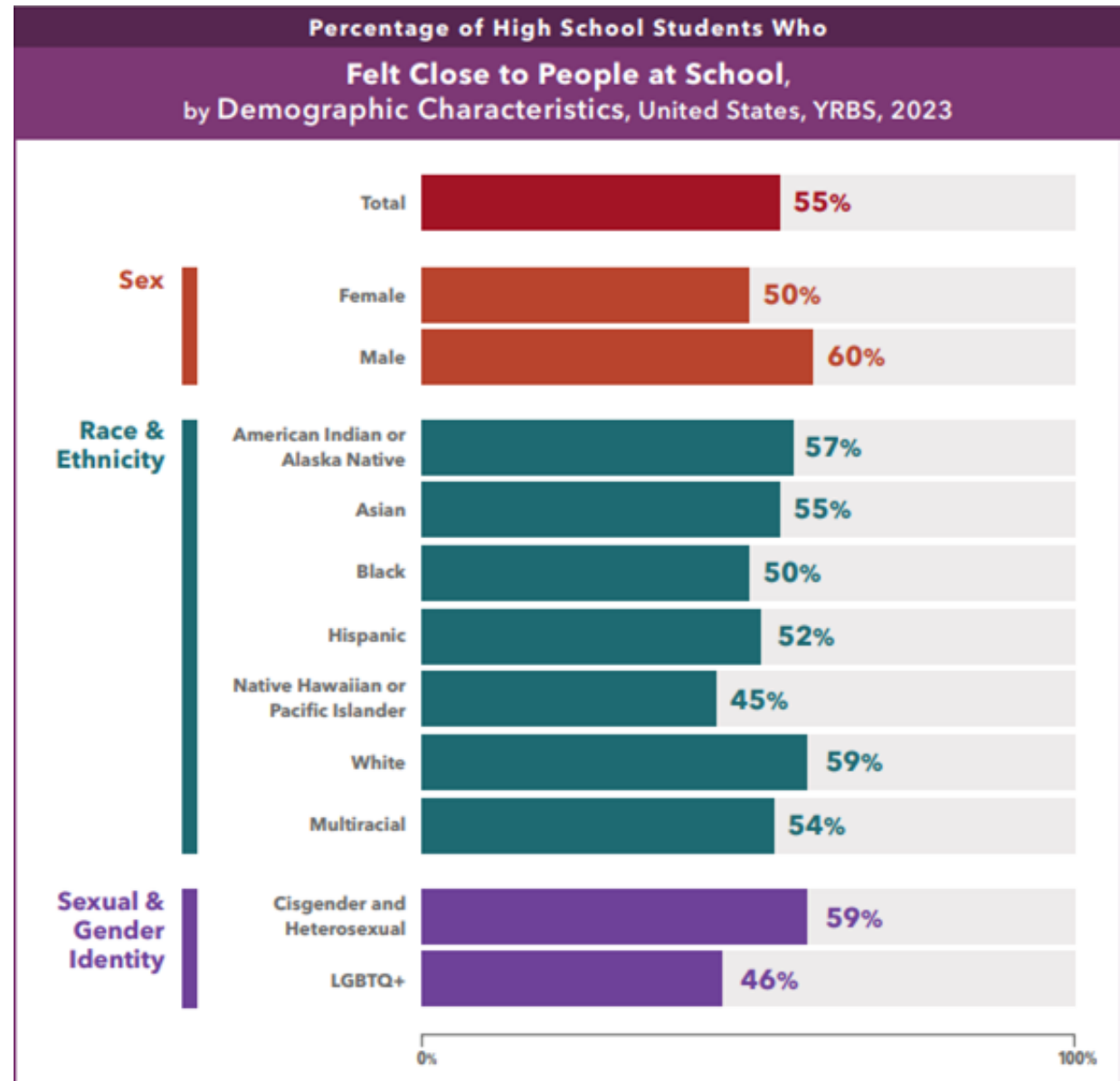
Feel seen, heard and welcome at school

Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023

SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

In 2023, 55% of high school students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt close to people at their school, also referred to as school connectedness. Male students were more likely than female students to feel close to people at school. Cisgender and heterosexual students were more likely than LGBTQ+ students to feel close to people at school.

Source: Centers for Disease Control YRBS, 2023
<https://www.cdc.gov/yrebs/dstr/index.html>



Addressing Student Connectedness

(Examples of Tiered Supports)

Universal

- Greetings by the door
- Morning meetings / Advisories
- Connection surveys
- Celebration of student successes
- Clubs, activities and athletics
- Student leadership opportunities
- Peer learning
- Bullying prevention programs

Tier II

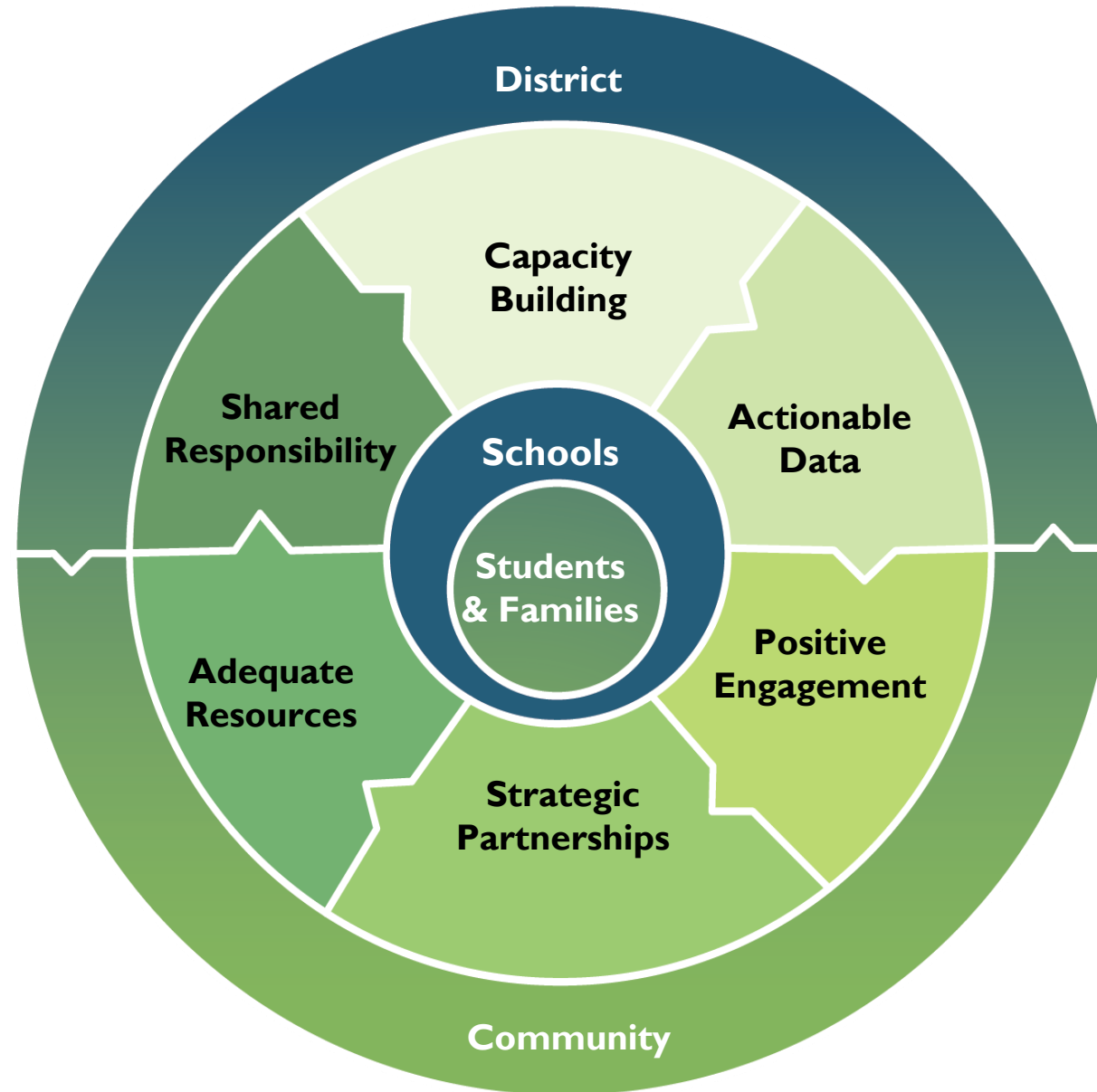
- Success Mentoring
- Skill building small groups
- Intensive Tutoring
- Check-in/Check-out or check and connect
- Prioritizing students for expanded learning
- Interest inventory

Tier III

- Targeted outreach
- Therapeutic supports
- Motivational interviewing
- Wraparound support
- Deeper evaluation to determine root causes

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/>

Key Ingredients for Improving Attendance



When we encourage students to show up to school regularly, even when it is difficult, we are helping them learn the life skill of taking on challenges. This is a real skill for real life—one that helps students succeed now and in the future.

Ellen Galinsky, President & Co-Founder, Families and Work Institute

Healing requires relationships, hope and time, not labels. With our young people we can build a plan to do the work, chunk it into manageable sizes and celebrate successes as they achieve their goals.

Dr. Pam Cantor, Founder & CEO, The Human Potential LAB

Panelists



Naomi Tolentino Miranda
Coordinator of Attend to
Achieve, Kansas City, Kansas
Public Schools



Zaneta Boles
Principal of Silver City
Elementary School, Kansas
City, Kansas Public Schools



Stacey Losh
Manager of ESEA,
Improvement and Support
Office, West Virginia
Department of Education



Cynthia Sorsaia
Coordinator of
Communities In Schools,
West Virginia Department
of Education

Kansas City Kansas Public Schools

Building Connection to End Chronic Absenteeism

Naomi Tolentino Miranda
Coordinator of Attend to Achieve



Kansas City Kansas Public Schools

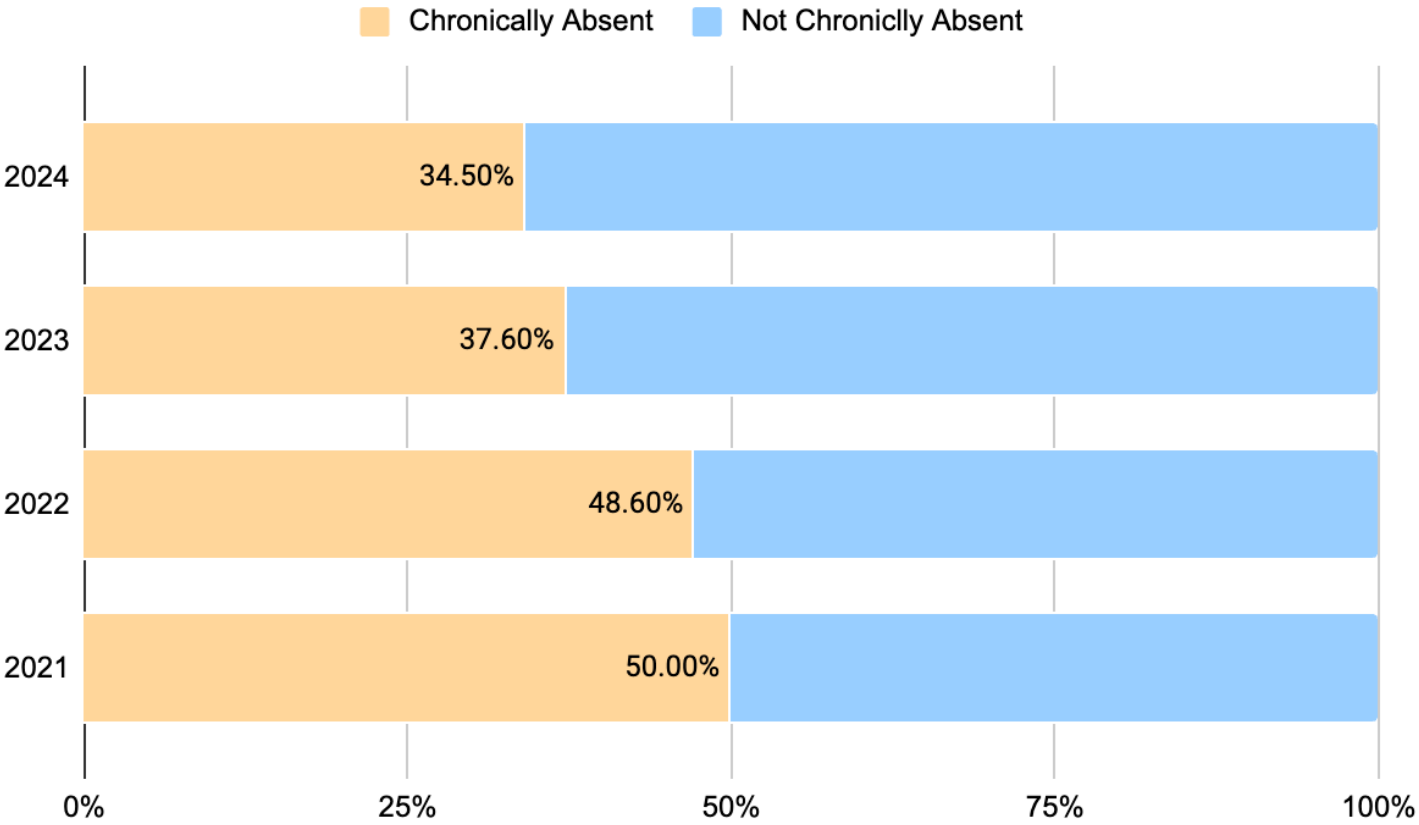
- **Urban** public school district located in Wyandotte County (WyCo)
- Population **156,607**
- Largest school district in WyCo and the fifth largest school district in the state of Kansas with just **over 22,000 students enrolled**
- **ESOL : 65 languages** spoken and represented throughout the entire district.
The top five languages other than English spoken are: Spanish, Swahili, Karen, Kinyarwanda, Burmese
- 50 building (including EC and Alternative)

KCKPS launched the Attend to Achieve (AtoA) team to **shift from punitive measures toward early, relationship-based interventions** that address chronic absenteeism.

By building student connectedness and fostering a welcoming school culture, AtoA partners with schools, families, and the community to provide tiered supports and equip every building with the tools needed to help students feel supported and attend consistently.



KCKPS Chronic Absence Data



A District Wide Approach

1. District **Attendance Awareness Campaign** around student connectedness
2. Establishment of **Building Attendance Teams**
 - a. Coaching and targeted Professional Development around Chronic Absenteeism and SEL-TS practices
 - b. Ongoing attendance data review
 - c. **Building Level Attendance Plans**

At the end of the 2023-24 SY,
100% of schools will have
developed an Attendance
Plan for the upcoming school
year following the
Attendance/TS-TS-SEL MTSS
model

Building Attendance Plans

1. District provided the interventions around student connectedness
 - a. Tier 1: Morning meeting or Restorative Practice Circles
 - b. Tier 2: Relationship Building Activity to ensure all students are connected to an adult: Relationship Mapping / 2x10
2. Supplementary strategy selected by the building
 - a. Positive Calls
 - b. Student Celebrations
 - c. Mentoring



Attendance Plan (School Name)	
Tier 1	Building Tier 1 Intervention: Consistent Parent Communication to Increase School Connectedness District Tier 1 Intervention: Daily Morning Meetings, Back-to-School Letter
Tier 2	Building Tier 2 Intervention: Caring Calls / Positive contact with families of students who are moderately chronically absent District Tier 2 Intervention: Relationship Building Activity (like 2x10 Strategy / Relationship Mapping) & Student Success Plan for CA students last Year
Tier 3	Tier 3: Attendance Meetings / Attendance Plans: The team will schedule an attendance 101 meeting monthly to facilitate the parents' meetings

Example 2025-26 Attendance Plan

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<i>Back to School</i>	Include attendance messaging in back-to-school letters, newsletters, orientation materials, recorded messages, and open houses.	Identify and call the families of students who were moderately chronically absent last year with a positive, welcoming message before school starts.	Identify the families of students who were severely chronically absent or truant last year and create a Student Success Plan for the current school year in collaboration with the parents.
Admin	Ensure all back-to-school communications include attendance expectations and support. Share clear expectations with staff for promoting attendance from Day	Assign staff to call families of moderate CA students; share the flagged student list.	Review Tier 3 list, guide the success plan process, ensure families are invited to FA.
Attendance Team	Add attendance to family night agendas and provide sample language.	Provide sample language for letters/calls. Track calls.	Plan a parent meeting during FA for students who were severely CA and/or truant last year
Teachers	Share attendance messaging with families.	Make welcome calls to moderate CA families; log in PLP.	Support FA meetings and contribute to student success plans.
<i>August - October</i>	Tier 1 Celebrate good and improved attendance weekly during announcements or bulletin	Tier 2 Teachers make a quick, positive call or message home when a student reaches 2 absences (excused or	Tier 3 Design a plan and calendar for Attendance 101 Interventions (small group or individual support) for the

Kansas City Kansas Public Schools

Silver City Elementary School



Zaneta Boles
Principal



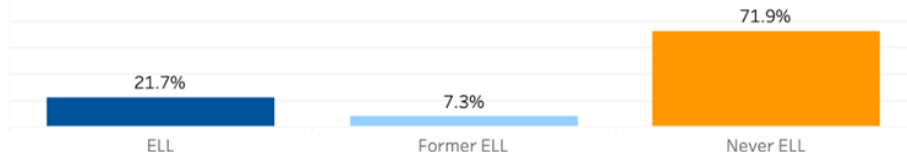
Silver City Elementary

Total Enrollment	SPED Students	Female Students
313	20.1%	48.9%

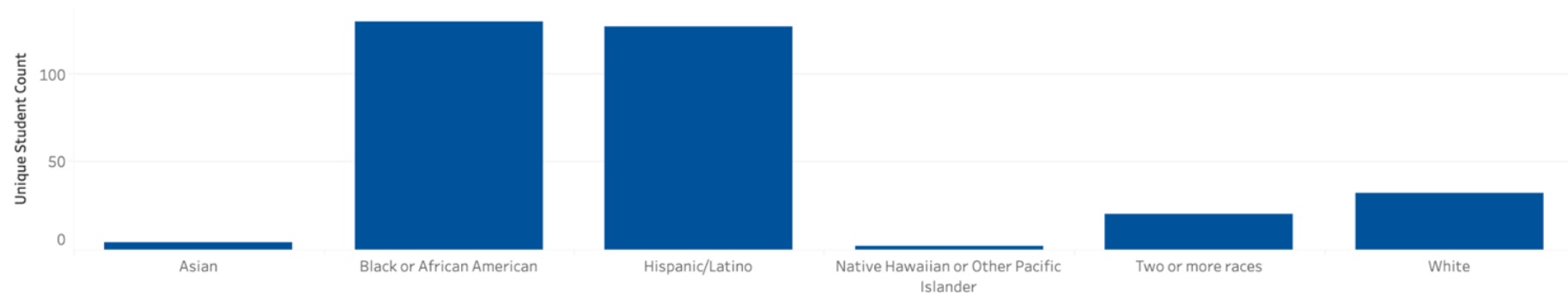
Top 5 ELL home languages



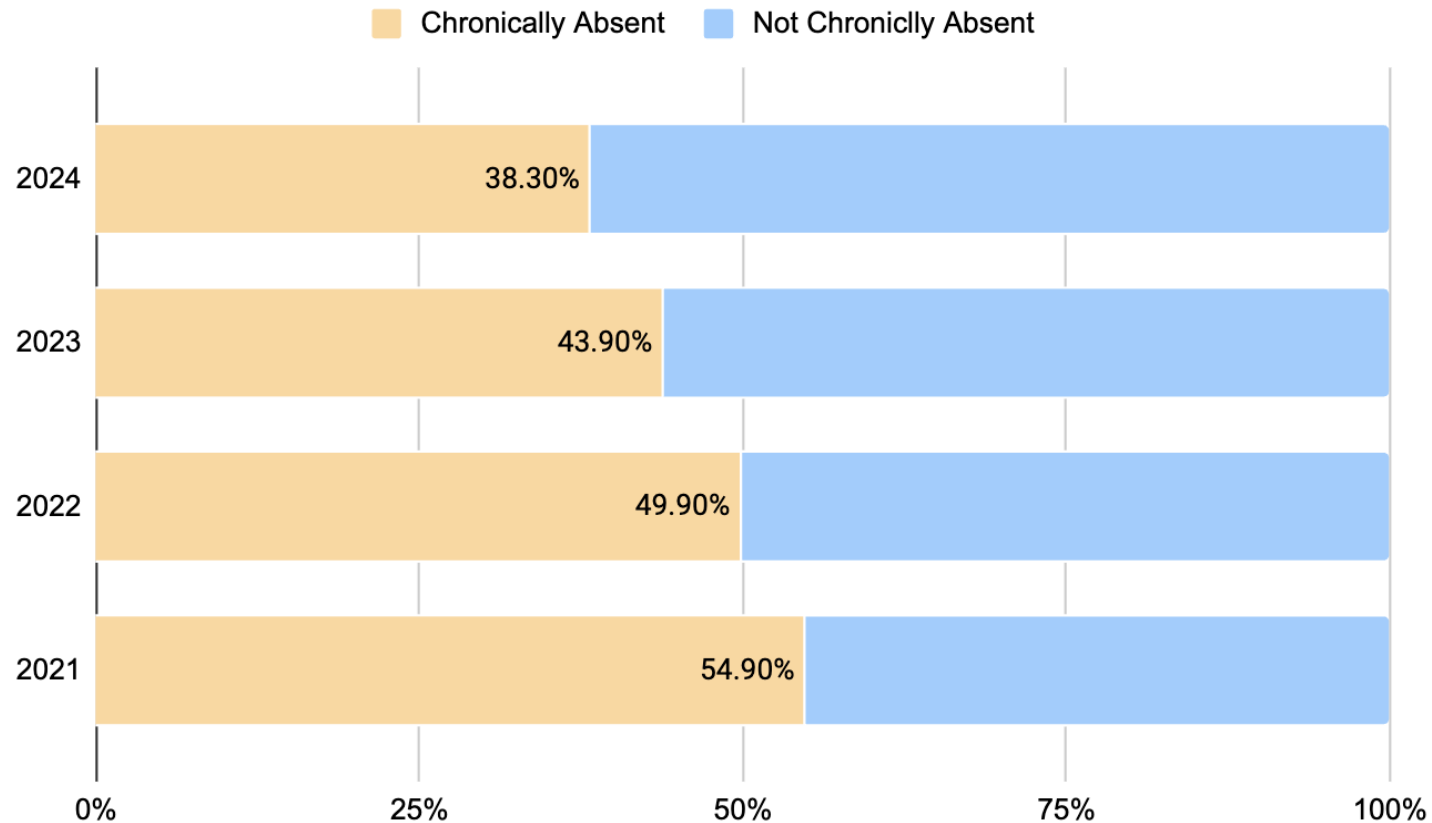
Percent ELL



Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Chronic Absence Data



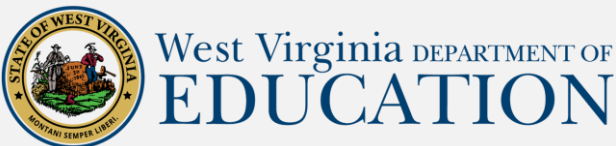


**Every Student
Deserves a Champion**



Addressing Chronic Absenteeism: West Virginia's Comprehensive Approach

West Virginia



Group	Population
Enrollment	201,101
Number of Schools	617
FRPL	113,337
Disabilities	43,710
ELL	2,119

Chronic Absenteeism 2022	Chronic Absenteeism 2023	Chronic Absenteeism 2024
29.1%	27.55%	23.53%

Race/ Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Multi-Racial	Pacific Islander	White
Population	155	8,063	1,357	4,895	9,193	103	177,335



Our State Strategic Approach

- **S**trengthened Behavior Responses
- **T**argeted Assistance
- **R**egular Attendance
- **I**ncreased Achievement
- **V**alid Data Practices
- **E**mpowered Support Teams



Key Strategies



Continue and expand the West Virginia Attendance Collaborative Leadership Team and regional support meetings.



Communities In Schools site coordinators have attendance-focused goals aligned with school strategic plans.



Continue professional development on MTSS, including student connectedness, and begin recognizing schools for exemplary practices.



Communities In Schools

Our Mission: We surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Our Site Coordinators: Trained professionals who work with school administrators and staff to assess needs, develop a plan and build a team to provide supports to schools and students.

Our Work: The difference is “In”. The site coordinator is in schools and an integral part of the school community and the students’ lives.





STRIVE & Communities In Schools

Attendance-Focused Strategies

- Schoolwide Attendance Goals
- Student Needs Assessment
 - Identify cause of absenteeism
 - [Root Causes - Attendance Works](#)
 - CIS Student Engagement Survey
- Plan Student Supports
 - Intervention Menu of Tiered Supports
 - Robust Tier I Supports
- Support Team Framework

Community Connection

- *Share the Success of CIS* – September Campaign
- Stakeholder Survey
- Resource Mapping





West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

**WE SHOW UP
FOR STUDENTS,
SO THEY SHOW
UP FOR SCHOOL.**



Communities
In Schools[®]

Licensed Partner

BEING PRESENT MATTERS

Jefferson County High School

- **“Make Each Connection Count”**
- JCS High School Attendance Collaborative
- “Just Because You’re Here Today”
 - Selfie Stations
 - Concerts
 - Speakers
- Grade-Level Small Group Meetings

Capon Bridge Middle School

- Daily Follow-Up Protocol – Immediate Response System
- Attendance Ambassadors

Q & A



Promoting Health Guidance

Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

A regular attendance routine is important for your child's well-being and learning. These tips can help you keep your child home when they don't feel well.

Nutrition, Sleep

- Ensure your child eats a good breakfast.
- Maintain a regular bedtime and wake-up time.
- Keep screens out of the bedroom.
- Encourage your child to stay active.

Hygiene

- Stress hand washing, particularly before and after school.
- Remind your child to brush their teeth.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who have coughs or colds.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow.

Safety

- Make sure your child wears a seat belt and a helmet when using a bike.
- If your child walks to school, have at least one friend. Have a backup plan.



When is sick too sick for school?

A regular attendance routine is important for your child's well-being and learning. These tips can help you keep your child home when they don't feel well.



SEND ME TO SCHOOL

- I have a runny nose.
- I have NOT had a fever.
- I have a mild stomach ache.
- I have not thrown up.
- I have a mild rash.
- I have eye drainage.



KEEP ME AT HOME

- I have a temperature over 100.4°F.
- I have thrown up twice or more.
- My stool is watery.



SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

- I have a temperature over 100.4°F for more than 24 hours.
- I have ear pain, sore throat, or difficulty swallowing.
- I have stomach pain or diarrhea.
- I have a persistent cough.
- I have eye swelling or discharge.
- I have a rash that is not fading.
- I have a fever and/or I have a headache.

If you don't know whether to send your child to school or are worried your child will spread illness, contact your local health department. These tips are not meant to take the place of local health department guidance.



For more information, visit www.attendanceworks.org.



Is your child missing school due to anxiety?

Definition of anxiety: Fear or worry in everyday situations.

If your child is suffering from anxiety, it can impact their ability to go to school. Anxiety can be a challenge for both the child and the family.

In addition, if your child starts to have anxiety or stomach ache, it is important to talk to your doctor. Anxiety or a physical illness which challenge is anxiety, then staying home is the best option.

What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Persistent anxiety can present itself in many ways. Symptoms may vary depending on the child's age and the severity of the anxiety.

- Feeling tired, irritable or sad.
- Having trouble separating from you.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent waking up.
- Trouble getting out of bed.
- Lack of appetite.
- Trouble concentrating when doing homework or falling asleep.
- Physical symptoms, including stomach aches, headaches, or dizziness.
- Avoiding activities they used to enjoy.
- Negative or continuous thoughts.



Health Guidance for Going to School

Showing up to school every day is critical for children's well-being, engagement and learning.

Make sure to send children to school if they are:

- Generally healthy and well.
- Participating in usual day-to-day activities.
- Children can even go to school if they:
 - Have a mild cold, which may include a runny nose and/or cough.
 - Have eye drainage without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness.
 - Have a mild stomachache.
 - Have a mild rash with no other symptoms.
 - Have head lice. Though they are annoying and should be treated, lice are not a reason to exclude a child from school.
 - Haven't had a fever overnight and they have not taken fever-reducing medicine during that time.

Avoid keeping children at home unless they are too sick to participate. Please see the back of this handout for details. Note that in most situations, a health-care provider's note is not needed to return.

Children may also avoid school due to anxiety (symptoms may include decreased appetite, feeling tired, stomachache, headache etc). If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child stay in school.

If your child has a compromised immune system or is at high risk for complications from common illnesses, please talk to your school (school nurse if available) about developing a plan with you and your child's health-care provider to keep your child healthy and safe while attending school.

Please note: This document is not meant to take the place of local health department/school district guidance including about contagious illnesses such as Covid-19 and the flu.



- Back-to-school packets
- Use technology and awareness campaigns
- Staff and parent meetings
- Peer to peer messaging
- Catalyze a conversation with the local health department

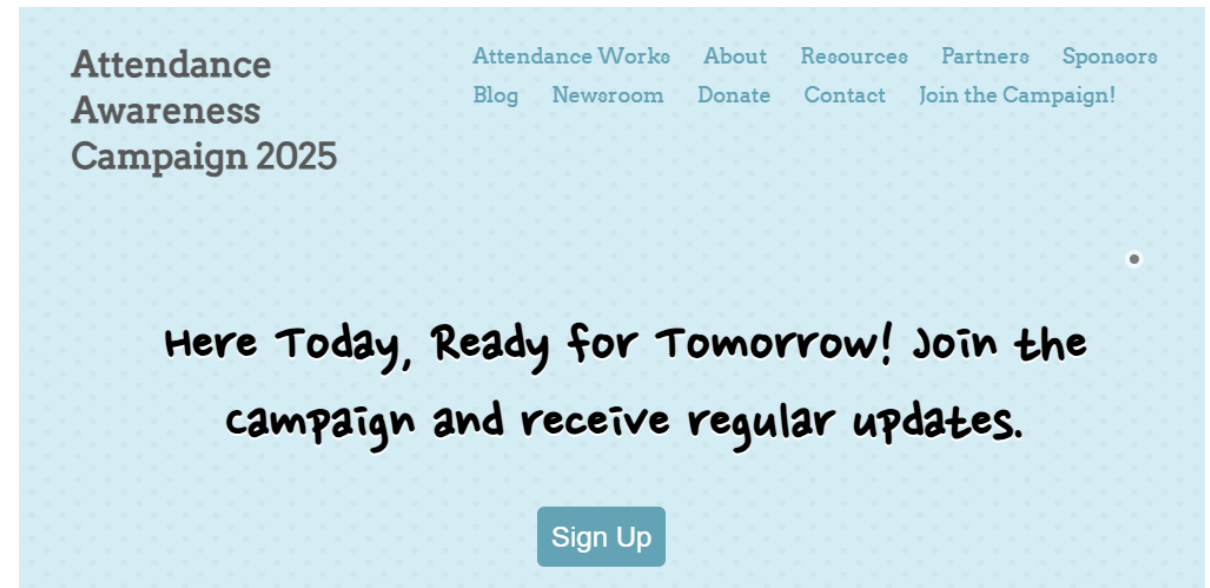
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/health-handouts-for-families/>



Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

- ✓ **Proclaim September Attendance Awareness Month** building off our sample proclamation
- ✓ **Share our free social media materials** with local districts!
- ✓ **Follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X**
- ✓ **Add an AAC badge** to your signature line website or materials
- ✓ **Access the Count Us In! toolkit**

PROMOTE THE CAMPAIGN



Join 44,000+ listserv members and receive updates:
www.awareness.attendanceworks.org



Webinar Recording

We will post a recording of this webinar
within 72 hours:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/webinars/>



Feedback



Please let us know how we can improve:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AAC-August-2025>

Thank you!

And special appreciation to our philanthropic partners!

**Heising-Simons Foundation
Overdeck Foundation
And individual donors**