Reducing Chronic Absence: It’s a Matter of 1, 2, 3!
Welcome

Alicia Lara
Senior Vice President
United Way Worldwide
Convening Partners
2016 By the Numbers

• More than 431 communities in 47 states plus DC pinned on the Attendance Action Map

• 203,294 website page views in September

• Over 10,000 listserv subscribers

• 1,571 media hits

• 7,458 tweets using #schooleveryday creating 15.8 million impressions

• 455 superintendents signed Call to Action appearing in EdWeek
1. **Expand the public’s awareness** of the important role that regular attendance plays in student achievement as well as the need to address common barriers to getting to school particularly for our most vulnerable children. Given its impact on early attendance, we promote special attention to challenges related to physical and behavioral health;

2. **Promote** schools and community partners using data to drive and take action; and

3. **Activate a wide array of stakeholders** (educators and a wide array of likely and unlikely public agencies and community allies) to partner with students and families to reduce chronic absenteeism.
1. Submit stories and ideas for the 2017 AAM Map to catherine@attendanceworks.org

2. Superintendent’s Call to Action: Goal is to reach 600 superintendents!

3. September Brief: “Portraits of Change”

4. Look for new graphics to celebrate the 2017 AAM slogan: Engagement = Attendance.
Welcome

Hedy Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works

& Members of the Attendance Works Team
1. Did your community participate in Attendance Awareness Month last year?

2. Is your community planning to participate in Attendance Awareness Month in 2017?
Agenda

1. Review of Key Concepts
2. Tier 1 Strategies – What Works
   - Todd Rogers
     Harvard University
   - Shauna McMillan
     United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania
   - Stephen Weiss
     His Place Community Center
   - Beth Duda
     The Patterson Foundation
   - Diana Greene
     Manatee County Schools
3. Announcements and Resources
What is Chronic Absence?

**Chronic absence** is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Attendance Works recommends defining 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).
**Multiple Measures of Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Daily Attendance</strong></td>
<td>How many students show up to school every day? The percent of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Truancy</strong></td>
<td>Who is missing school without permission? Typically refers only to unexcused absences. Each state has the authority to define truancy and when it triggers legal intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chronic Absence</strong></td>
<td>Who is missing so much school they are academically at risk? Broadly means missing too much school for any reason—excused, unexcused, etc. Many researchers and growing number of states define it as missing 10% of school. OCR currently define it as missing 15 days. Chronic absence is a required reporting metric and an optional measure for school improvement in ESSA.</td>
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</table>
98% ADA = little chronic absence
95% ADA = don’t know
93% ADA = significant chronic absence
Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

Number of students missing 10% versus 10 unexcused absences
(San Francisco Unified School District)

- # chronic absentees - 2010-2011
- # of students with 10 unexcused absences (as of May 16th 2011)
**Chronic Absence is Easily Masked if We Only Monitor Missing Consecutive days**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
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<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
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**Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = As few as 2 days a month**
Why Does Attendance Matter for Achievement?

What we know from research around the country
Over 6.8 million students missed 15 days or more

- Highly concentrated: half of the students in 4% of districts
- Rural districts: many have high rates of chronic absence

Source: U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-14
https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html
Why Does Attendance Matter?

Attainment Over Time

Achievement Every Year

Attendance Every Day

Advocacy For All

Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America’s Promise Alliance
For more info go to http://www.americaspromise.org/parent-engagement-toolkit
A Rhode Island Data Hub analysis found that compared to kindergartners who attend regularly, those chronically absent:

- Scored **20% lower in reading and math** in later grades and gap grows.
- **2X** as likely to be retained in grade.
- **2X** likely to be suspended by the end of 7th grade.
- Likely to continue being chronically absent.
The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative

Proportion of Students Dropping Out by Number of Years the Student was Chronically Absent from 8th-12th Grades

How Can We Address Chronic Absence?
### Unpack Contributing Factors to Chronic Absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Myths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Barriers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Aversion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Disengagement</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused</td>
<td>- Lack of access to health or dental care</td>
<td>- Struggling academically or socially</td>
<td>- Lack of engaging and culturally relevant instruction</td>
</tr>
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<td>- Don’t realize just missing 2 days per month can affect learning</td>
<td>- Chronic illness</td>
<td>- Bullying</td>
<td>- No meaningful relationships with adults in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sporadic absences aren’t a problem</td>
<td>- Trauma</td>
<td>- Ineffective / exclusionary school discipline</td>
<td>- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attendance only matters in the older grades</td>
<td>- No safe path to school</td>
<td>- Parents had negative school experience</td>
<td>- Poor school climate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Poor Transportation</td>
<td>- Undiagnosed disability</td>
<td>- Discouraged due to lack of credits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Housing instability</td>
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<td>- High mobility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice system</td>
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</table>
Positive Engagement:
Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

Actionable Data:
Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.

Capacity Building
Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

Shared Accountability:
Ensures chronic absence is monitoring & reinforced by policy.

Strategic partnerships
between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

**TIER 1**
- Engaging school climate
- Positive relationships with students and families
- Impact of absences on achievement widely understood
- Chronic absence data monitored
- Good and improved attendance recognized
- Common barriers identified and addressed

**TIER 2**
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

**TIER 3**
- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

- Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)
- Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)
- Students missing 5-9% (at risk)
- Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
3. What do you think is the most effective way to message the importance of attendance?
Harvard University
Effective Attendance Messaging

Todd Rogers

Associate Professor of Public Policy

Kennedy School of Government,
Harvard University

Director

Student Social Support R&D Lab
Questions

1. Tell us a bit about the Student Social Support R&D Lab and how you came to focus on attendance?

2. What have you and your collaborators learned about what works and what does not?
Robocalls:
- Very few listen

Notices of Truancy:
- 12th grade+ reading level
- Lots, lots, lots of words
- Oppositional, threatening
Dear Parent/Guardian of Todd Rogers,

Todd has been absent 23 days this school year.

Excused and unexcused absences affect Todd’s learning.

Thank you for continuing to help Todd attend school as much as possible.

Sincerely,
William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia

** Todd has missed 23 days of school this year**

** This card is part of the XYZ Attendance Project, which aims to increase awareness about the importance of attendance. This is a follow-up to cards we sent earlier in the year. The number of absences listed above includes excused and unexcused absences as of February 1, 2015. If you have questions, or you do not want to receive future cards, please call [PHONE], email [EMAIL], or visit www.XYZattendanceproject.org. Please be sure to provide the following code: [UNIQUE CODE]. If you received this card in error or have already opted out of receiving these cards, please disregard this one. We apologize for the inconvenience.

N=28,080 K–12 students (School District of Philadelphia)
Pre-registration #AEARCTR–0000829; [Paper #1 here]

N=10,967 K–5 students (10 San Mateo districts)
Pre-registration osf.io/gb9w8; [Paper #2 here]

N=20,000 K–12 students (Chicago Public Schools); unpublished replication
See also this paper by MDRC (NYC PS)
(Some) **false beliefs** matter; other candidates

**Mail** is read & remembered

Reduces chronic absenteeism **11%-15%**

~$6/incremental day + improving

Replicated in 12 districts

**Cost effective**…Tier 1.5 **complement**

Easily implemented at **scale** (admin data, automated)

**In Class Today** helping districts implement this approach

*(johannes@inclasstoday.com)*
Dear Parent/Guardian of Todd Rogers,

Todd has missed more school than his classmates'.

Todd was absent 6 days so far this school year.

Students fall behind when they miss school – whether students are absent for excused or unexcused reasons.

You can have a big effect on Todd's absences going forward – and we appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

John Smith
Superintendent
Questions from the Audience
United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania & His Place Community Center
Be There Campaign

Stephen Weiss

Shauna McMillan
Positive environments fostering meaningful relationships between students and adults will improve school attendance.
In 2016, Be There has served:

29 school districts

69 schools

800+ trained on chronic absenteeism, data, and attendance best practices

27,500+ students engaged in the Be There Campaign to some capacity
# Attendance Challenges and Mini-grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Feb 2015 Rate</th>
<th>Feb 2016 Rate</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>-15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
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<td>School 6</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 7</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>-15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 8</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
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<td>School 9</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
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<td>School 10</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>-18%</td>
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<td>School 11</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School 12</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 13</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>2012-13 Chronic Absence Rate</th>
<th>2015-16 Chronic Absence Rate</th>
<th>Change in Chronic Absence Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All PPS Students</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary School Students</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School Students</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Students</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be There Partners
Attendance Initiatives:

Strategies: Messaging, Incentives and Attendance Buddies
Be There Support:

- Messaging
- Materials
- Ideas
- Funding
- Networking
The Patterson Foundation & Manatee County School District
Every Day Counts Campaign

Beth Duda

Dr. Diana Greene
School District of Manatee County, Florida
Grade Level Reading

Our War on Absenteeism
IN THE BEGINNING....

Joined the Campaign for Grade Level Reading in 2015-16

– The Readiness Gap (Pre-K/Early Learning)
– Summer Slide
– Parent Engagement
– Healthy Learners
– The Attendance Gap*

* Major focus and investment
The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Attendance Awareness Poster Contest
Open to all Public School Students in Manatee County and Sarasota County

- Templates provided to each school

- Easy to follow instructions were provided to be played on the School News programs.

- Each school selects one winner per grade level

- Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading provides prizes for each school-level winning student

- Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading provides an iPad for the regional winners in every grade level.
Number of schools participating:
- Year One 2015-16: 83 schools
- Year Two 2016-17: 94 schools

Number of students participating:
- Year One 2015-16: 38,000
- Year Two 2016-17: 44,000
Participation

Number of grade level winners:

Year One 2015-16: 386

Year Two 2016-17: 456
• Aligned with Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

• Positive Attendance Messaging for schools, families, and the community

• Poster Creation helps students internalize the importance of outstanding attendance

• Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Outreach Team works with each school on implementation.

• Cost is about $2.00 per child
Our Plan to address Chronic Absenteeism

Graduation Enhancement Technicians

• Wrote and received Board approval for a new job description
• Assembled a district wide Attendance Task Force
• Hired and trained 25 Graduation Enhancement Technicians
CHECK AND CONNECT
A mentoring program out of the University of Minnesota

BRIGHT BYTES
An electronic early warning system that uses predictive analysis to foresee and prevent at-risk behaviors before students drop out.
Reductions in the percentages of students missing 18+ days (as compared to themselves) from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016

Students assigned a Graduation Enhancement Technician had improved attendance:

- 55% reduction in Title 1 elementary schools
- 36% reduction in Title 1 secondary schools
- 58% reduction in Title 1 Charter schools
- 50% overall reduction in all Title 1 schools
Connect With Us

Website: GradeLevelReadingSuncoast.net

Facebook.com/SuncoastCampaignforGradeLevelReading
Facebook.com/Leerpara3ro.Suncoast

@SuncoastCGLR
@Leer para 3ro
@ReadingBy3rd
#GLReading

Beth Duda: bduda@thepattersonfoundation.org
Discussion
Questions from the Audience
Announcements and Resources
Announcements

Cecelia Leong

Associate Director for Programs

Attendance Works
Resources Available

★ Attendance Campaign Webinar Series
★ Regular Email Blasts to Campaign Supporters
★ Updating the Count Us In! Toolkit
★ Attendance Awareness Month Website
★ Research Brief
★ **May 23:** It Takes Two: Adding Early Intervention Strategies to Address Chronic Absence

★ **August 8:** The Secret Formula 1+2+3: Improving Attendance for our Most Vulnerable Students

★ **September 12:** Portraits of Change
Virtual National Convening

NATIONAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT, AND SUCCESS CENTER
Virtual National Convening | April 3-4, 2017 | Via WebEx

Virtual National Convening
April 3-4, 2017

Hosted by the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Safe and Healthy Students and its National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center (NSAESC)

http://www.theeventconn.com/Virtual_Convening
Support AAC 2017

http://www.attendanceworks.org/donate-to-attendance-works/
Call to Action: Role of Collaborating Partners

• Download our free materials and toolkit and share with local districts.

• Encourage schools and community partners to join our listserv: 10,000+ members.
What to Do When: At a Glance

Spring

Let's get started!
• Convene coalition
• Recruit partners
• Meet with district
• Enlist health care providers
• Launch poster contests and other marketing campaigns

Early Summer

Getting into specifics
• Distribute talking points
• Enlist elected officials & celebs
• Line up incentives
• Analyze data

Late Summer

It's Go Time
• Tape PSAs
• Begin media outreach
• Print banners & posters
• Plan assemblies and Back-to-School events
• Launch door-knocking campaigns

Back to School!
• Release proclamations
• Host Back-to-School events
• Host press conferences
• Share data
• Spread the word!
Pin on the 2017 Action Map

Post your community’s plans for Attendance Awareness Month 2017 on the map!

Superintendent’s Call to Action

Own the issue  Mobilize the Community  Drive with Data

To sign-up for the Call to Action, or to learn more, please visit: www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action
We will post a recording of this webinar within 72 hours at:

http://www.attendanceworks.org/peer-learning-resources/
Feedback

Please let us know how we can improve:

Thank you to our sponsors!

With special appreciation to:

Annie E. Casey Foundation
Kellogg Foundation
The California Endowment