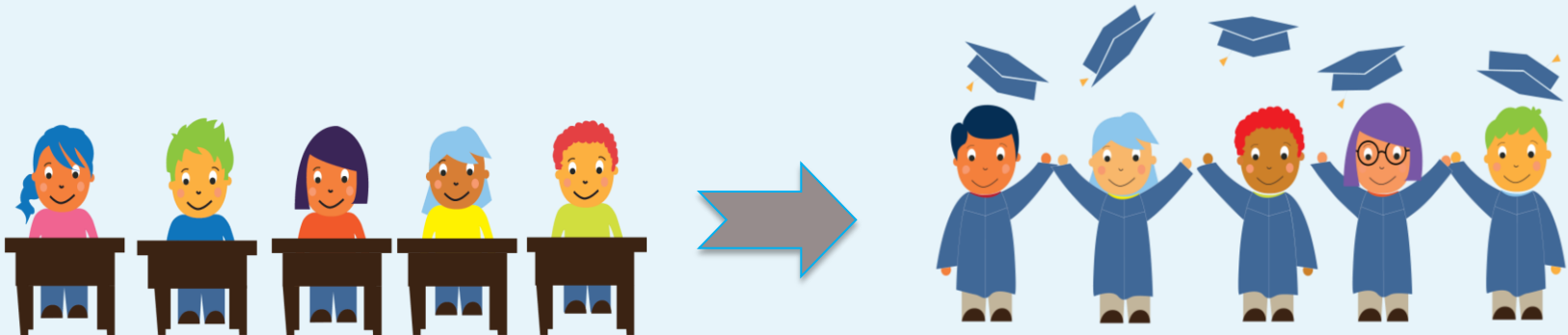


The Power of Positive Connections

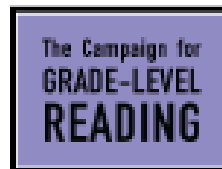
*Reducing Chronic Absence Through PEOPLE
(Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and
Engagement)*



Welcome!



Sammy Moon
Senior Advisor
United Way Worldwide



Raising Awareness Across the Country!



284 Communities
Are Already on the
Action Map

*Make sure you put
your community
on the map before
the month is over!*

<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org>



AAM By the Numbers



- **2,161** people signed up for updates
- **284** pins on community action map
- **70** proclamations from school boards and elected officials
- Nearly **12,000** downloads of Count Us In!
- Websites visited over **328,000** times
- More than **300** media hits



Poll Questions

1. What is your field of work?
2. Did your community participate Attendance Awareness Month 2014?



Attendance Works



Hedy Chang
Director



Cecelia Leong
Associate Director

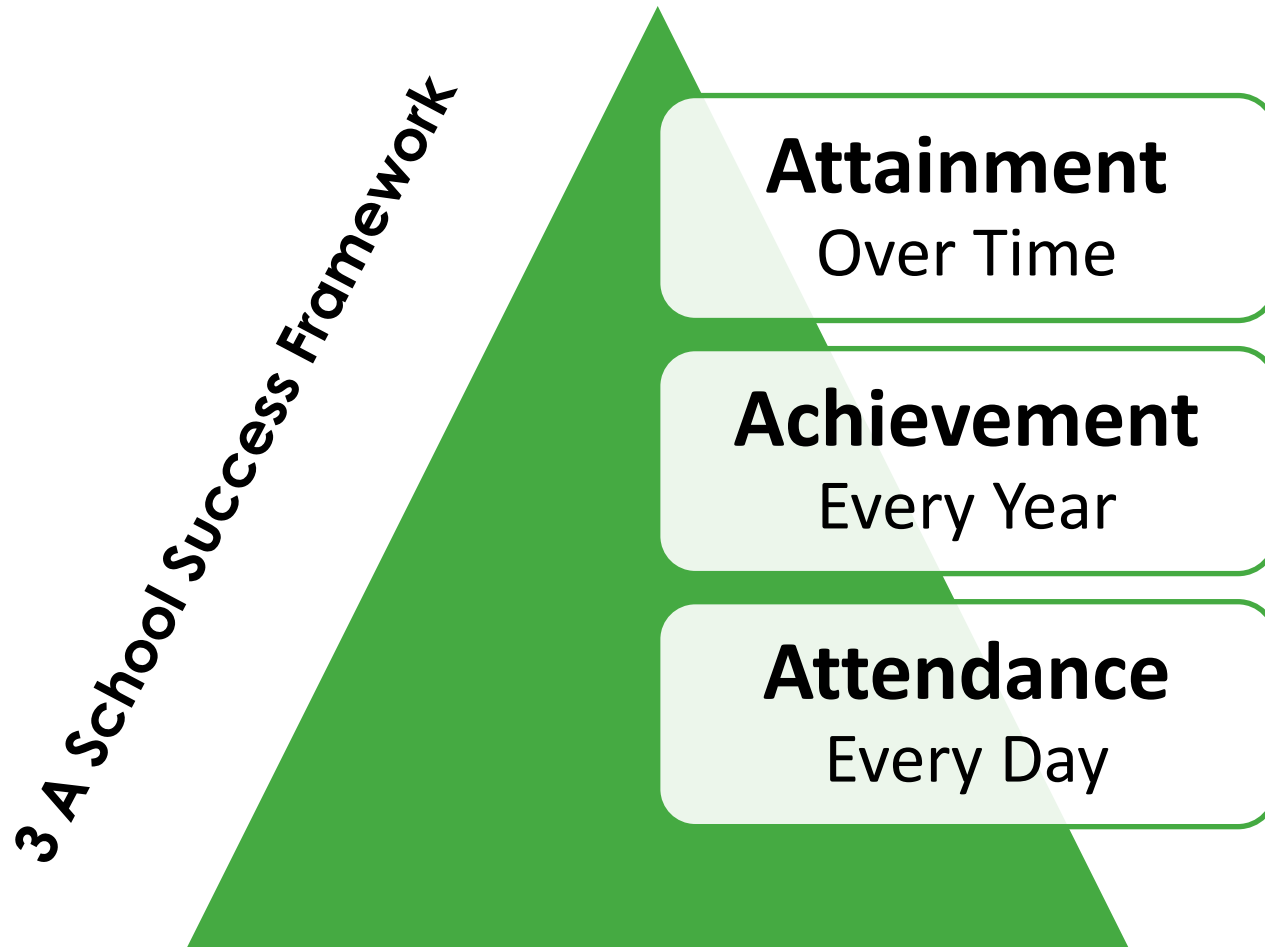


Agenda

1. Overview
2. Who Needs PEOPLE?
3. Panel Presentation
 - New York, New York
 - New Britain, Connecticut
 - Del Norte, California
4. Questions and Answers
5. Resources and Announcements



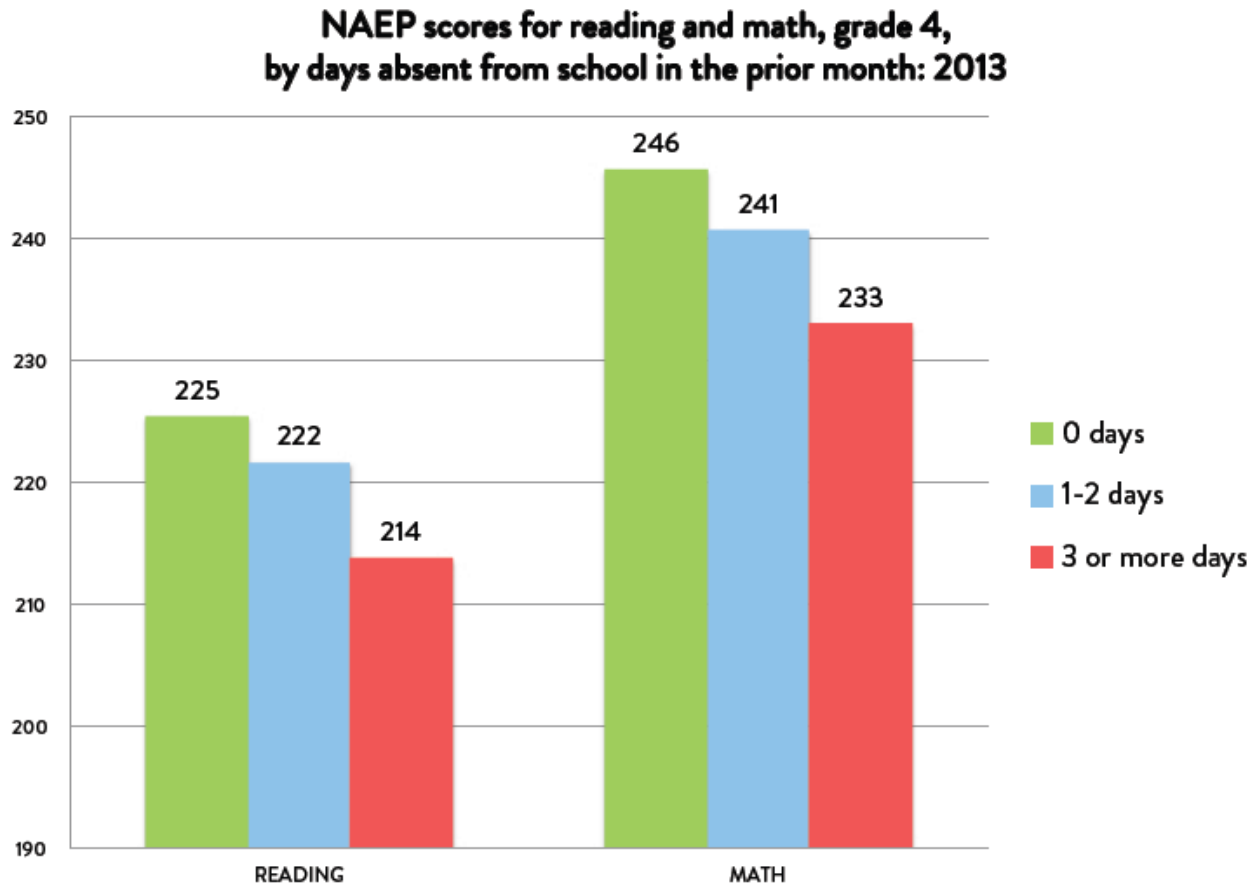
Attendance is an Essential Ingredient of Academic Success



Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance
For more info go to www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement



Absences Add Up: Less School = Lower Scores



A 10-point difference on the NAEP is equivalent to a year of learning.

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/absences-add/>



Improving Attendance Matters Because It Reflects:

Exposure to language: Starting in Pre-K, attendance equals exposure to language-rich environments especially for low-income children.

Time on Task in Class: Students only benefit from classroom instruction if they are in class.

On Track for Success: Chronic absence is a proven early warning sign that a student is behind in reading by 3rd grade, failing courses middle and high school, and likely to drop-out.

College Readiness: Attendance patterns predicts college enrollment and persistence.

Engagement: Attendance reflects engagement in learning.

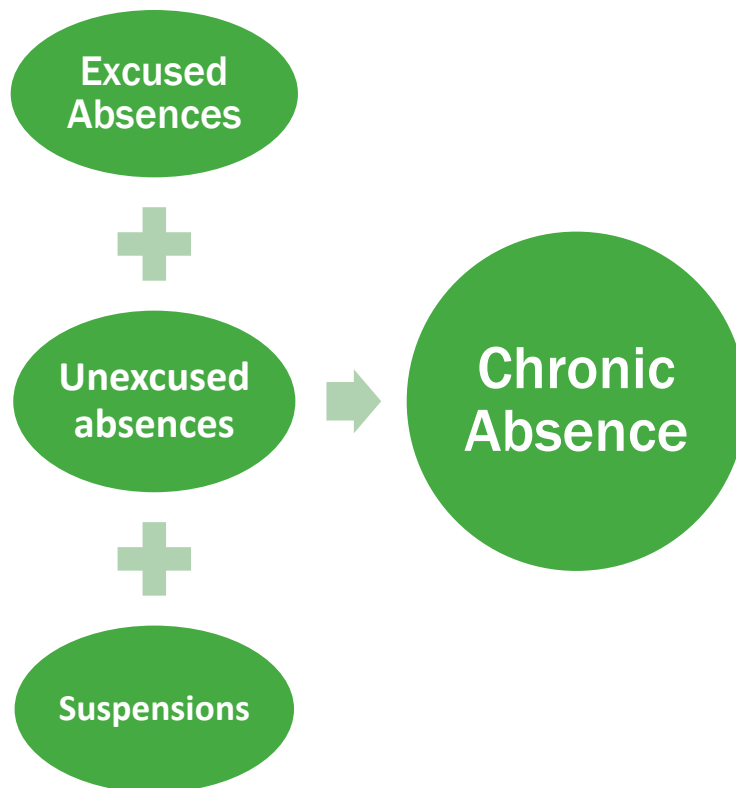
Effective Practice: Schools, communities and families can improve attendance when they work together.

(For research, see: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/>)



What is Chronic Absence?

Attendance Works recommends defining chronic absence as **missing 10% or more of school for any reason.**

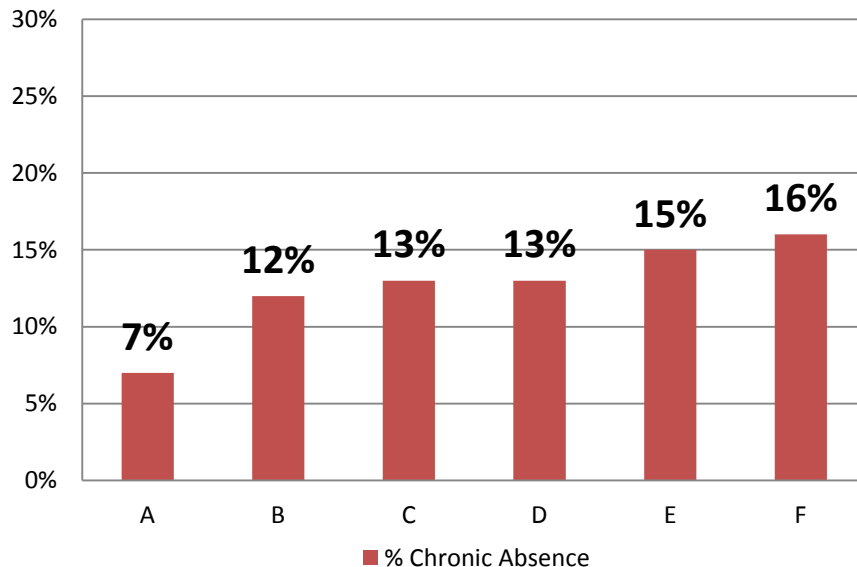


Chronic absence is different from truancy (unexcused absences only) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).

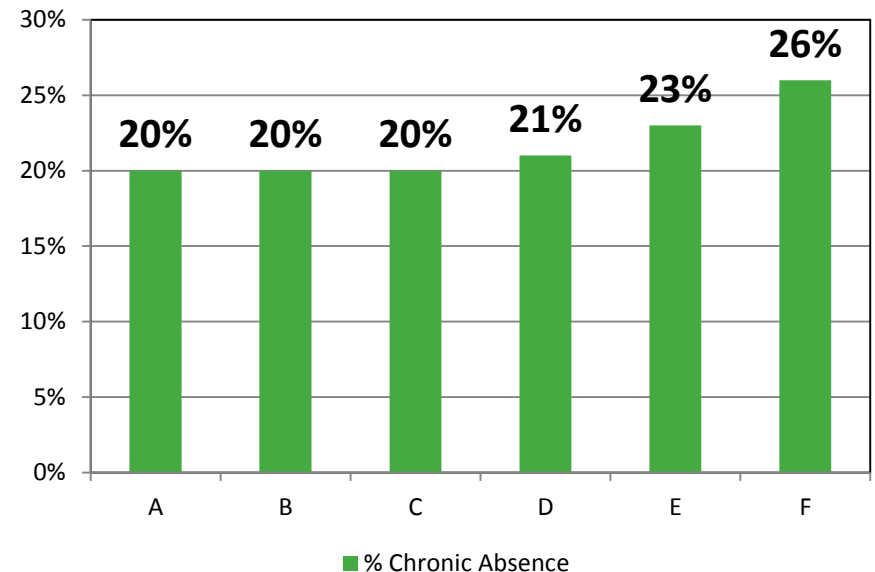
High Levels of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012



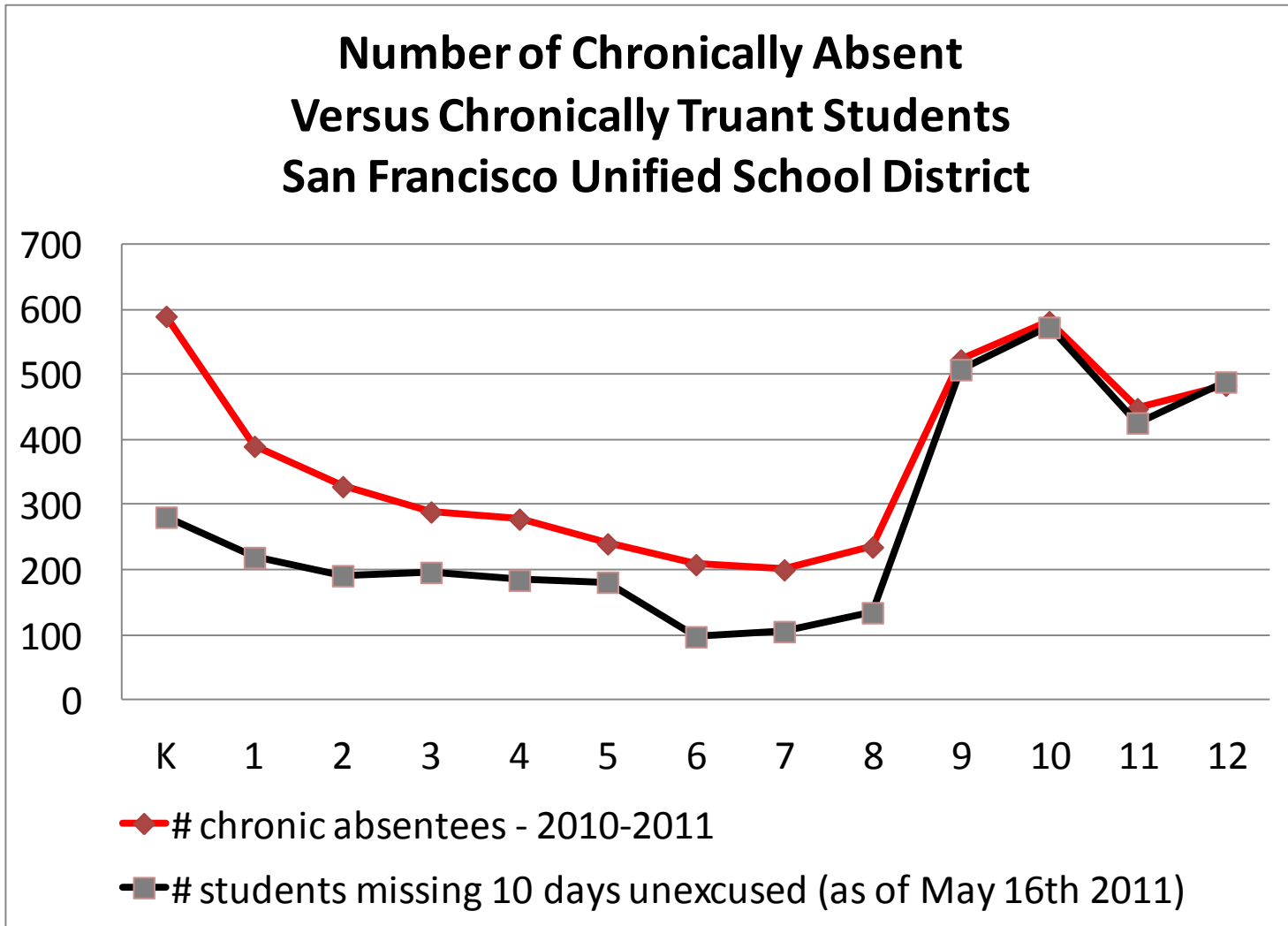
Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12



98% ADA = little chronic absence
95% ADA = don't know
93% ADA = significant chronic absence



Truancy (unexcused absences) Can Also Mask Chronic Absence



Chronic Absence: A Hidden National Crisis

- ❑ Nationwide, as many as **7.5 million students** miss nearly a month of school every year. That's 135 million days of lost time in the classroom.
- ❑ In some cities, as many as **one in four students** are missing that much school.
- ❑ Chronic absenteeism is a **red alert** that students are headed for academic trouble and eventually for dropping out of high school.
- ❑ Research shows that chronically absent students **are less likely to succeed academically**, and are **more likely to be suspended and eventually dropout**.
- ❑ Poor attendance isn't just a problem in high school. It can start **as early as pre-kindergarten**.



How Can We Address Chronic Absence?



Find Out Why Students Are Chronically Absent

Myths

Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused

Sporadic versus consecutive absences aren't a problem

Attendance only matters in the older grades

Barriers

Chronic disease

Lack of access to health or dental care

Poor transportation

No safe path to school

Aversion

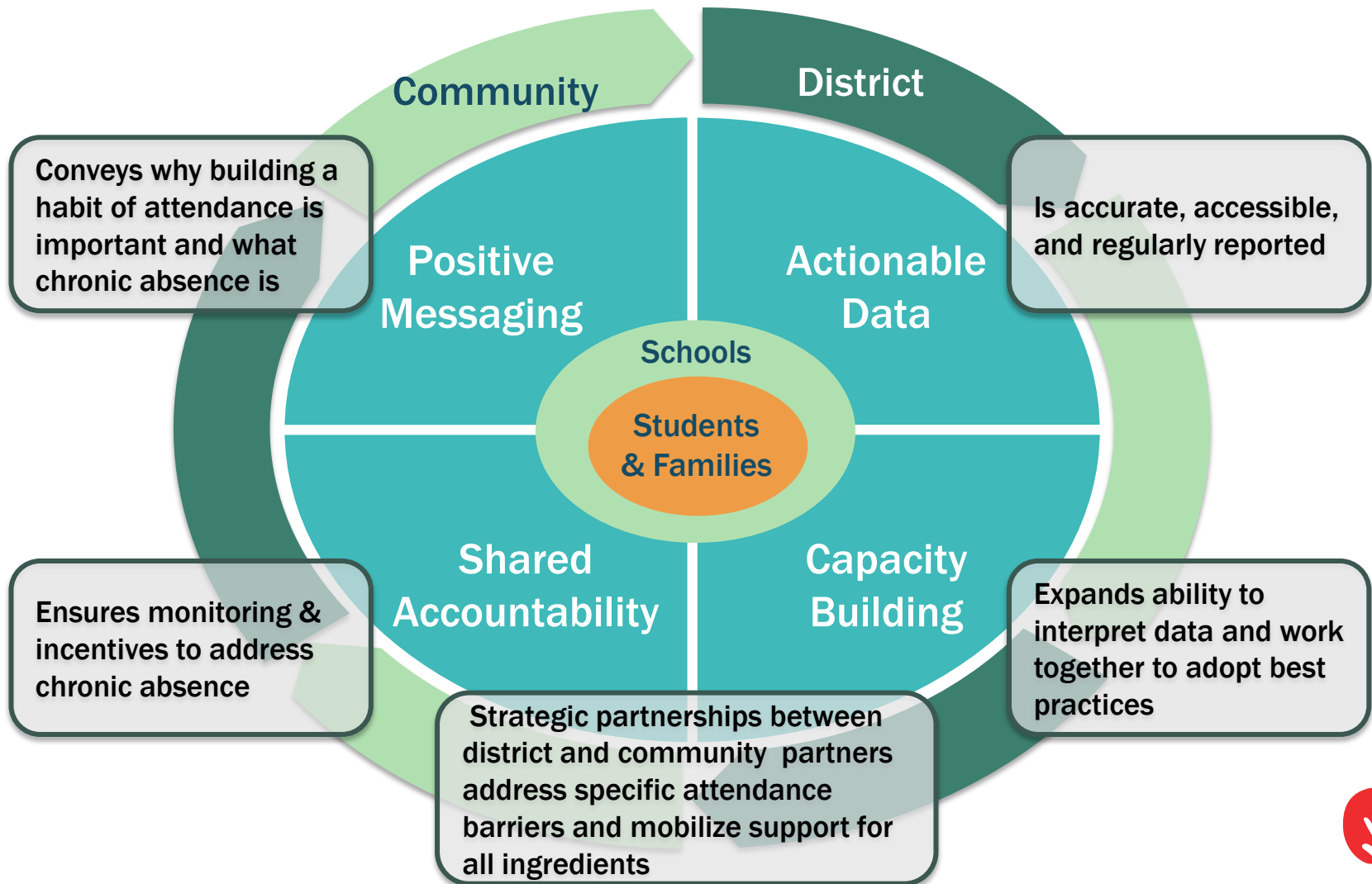
Child struggling academically

Lack of engaging instruction

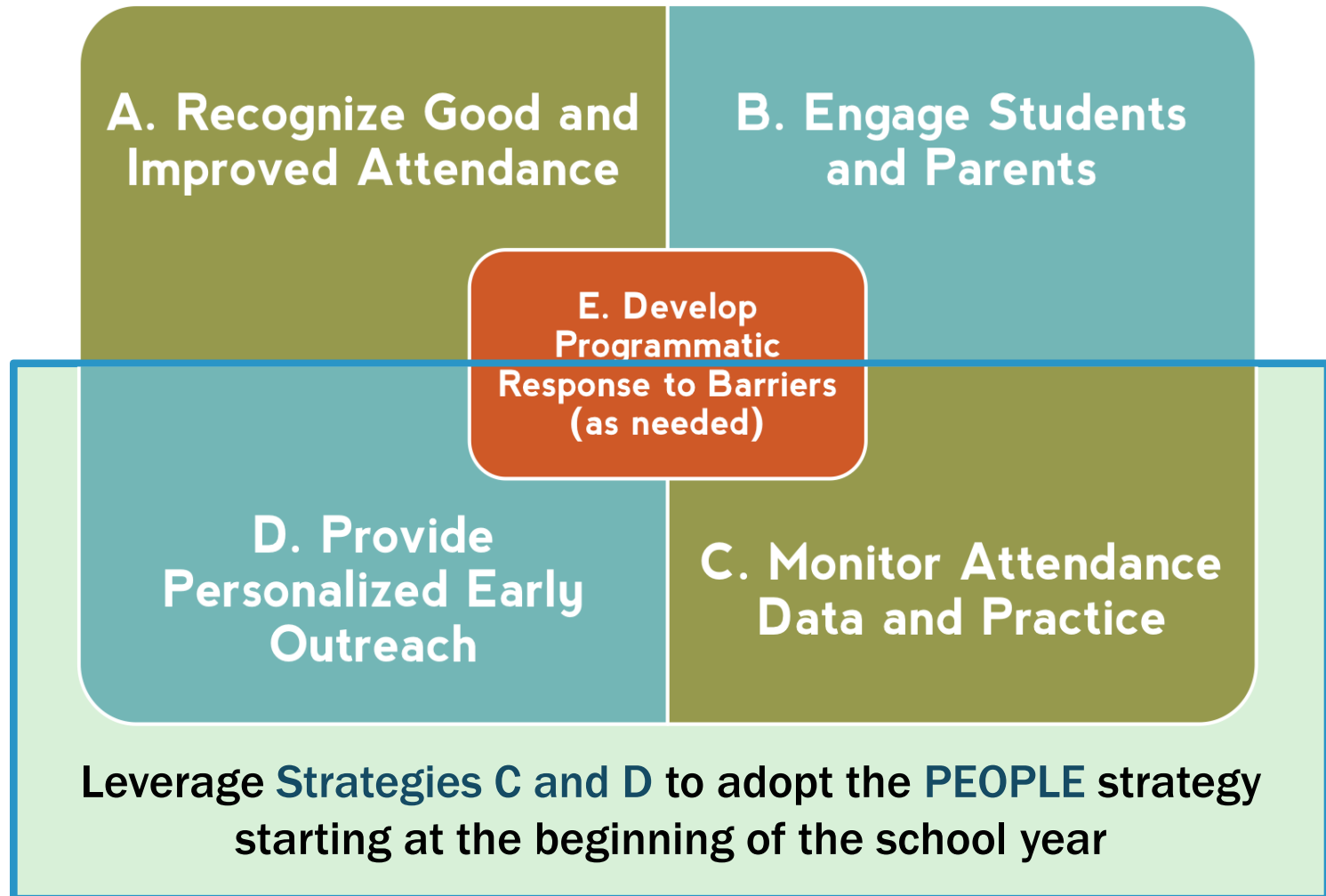
Poor school climate and ineffective school discipline

Parents had negative school experience

Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



AW Recommended Site-Level Strategies

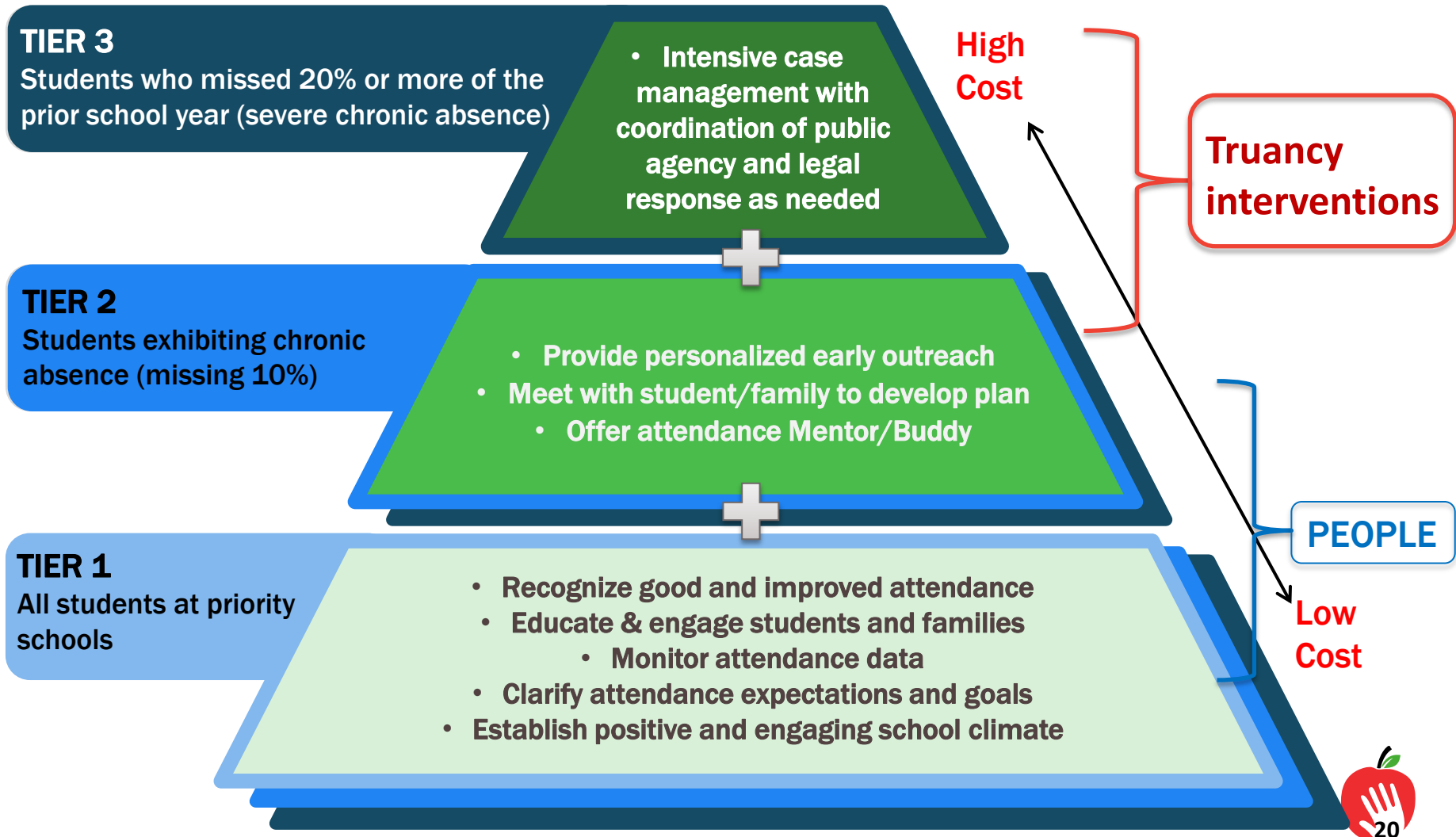


Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and Engagement (**PEOPLE**)

- **P**riority: Focuses on at-risk students in grades, schools and neighborhoods with high levels of chronic absence
- **E**arly: Begins with the start of school.
- **O**utreach: Connects to students and families
- **P**ositive: Promotes preventive, supportive approaches rather than punitive responses
- **L**inkages Taps the full community for support
- **E**ngagement: Motivates showing up to class & offers students & families a role in improving attendance.

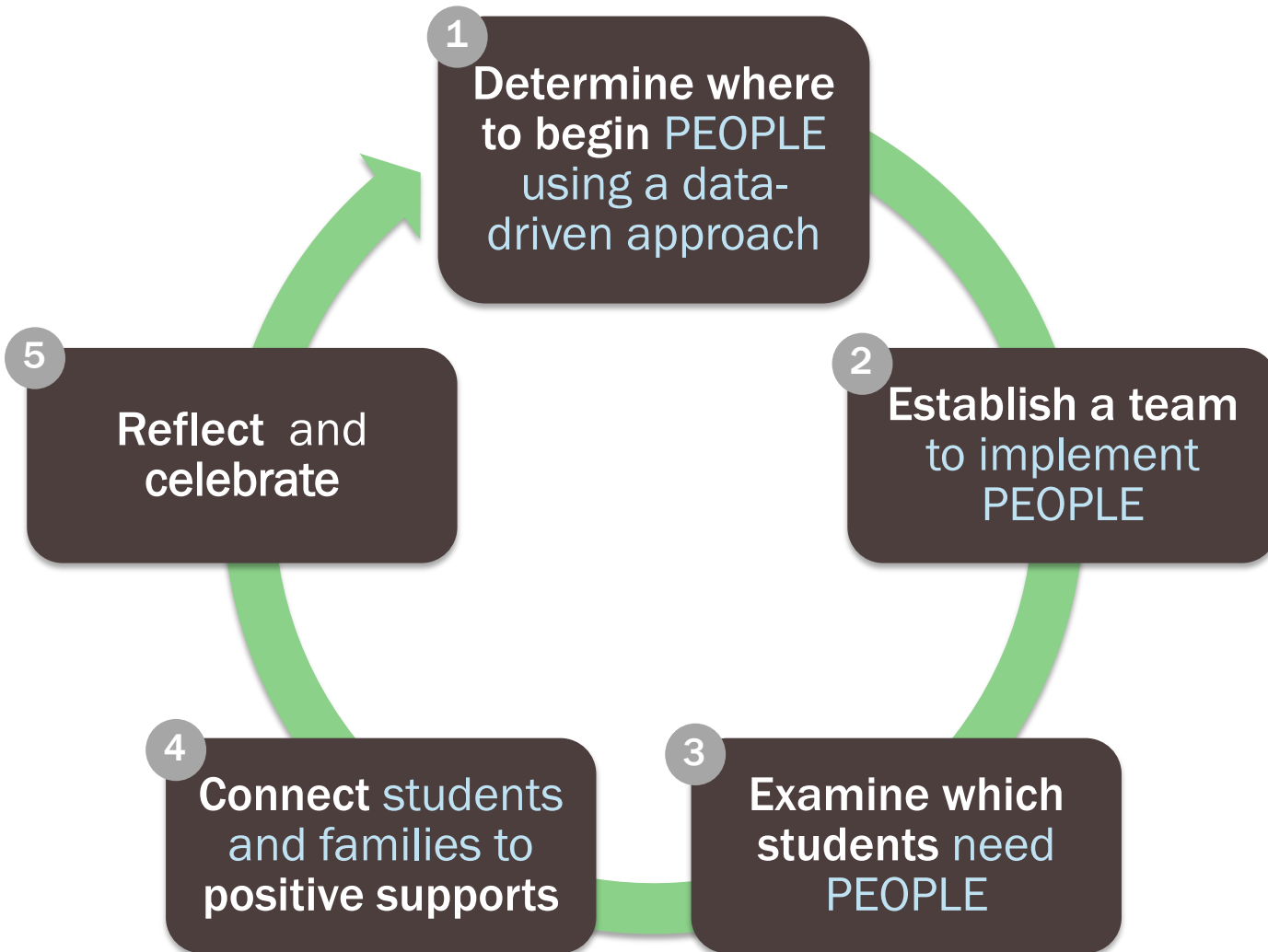


PEOPLE helps ensure adoption of a tiered approach that begins with prevention

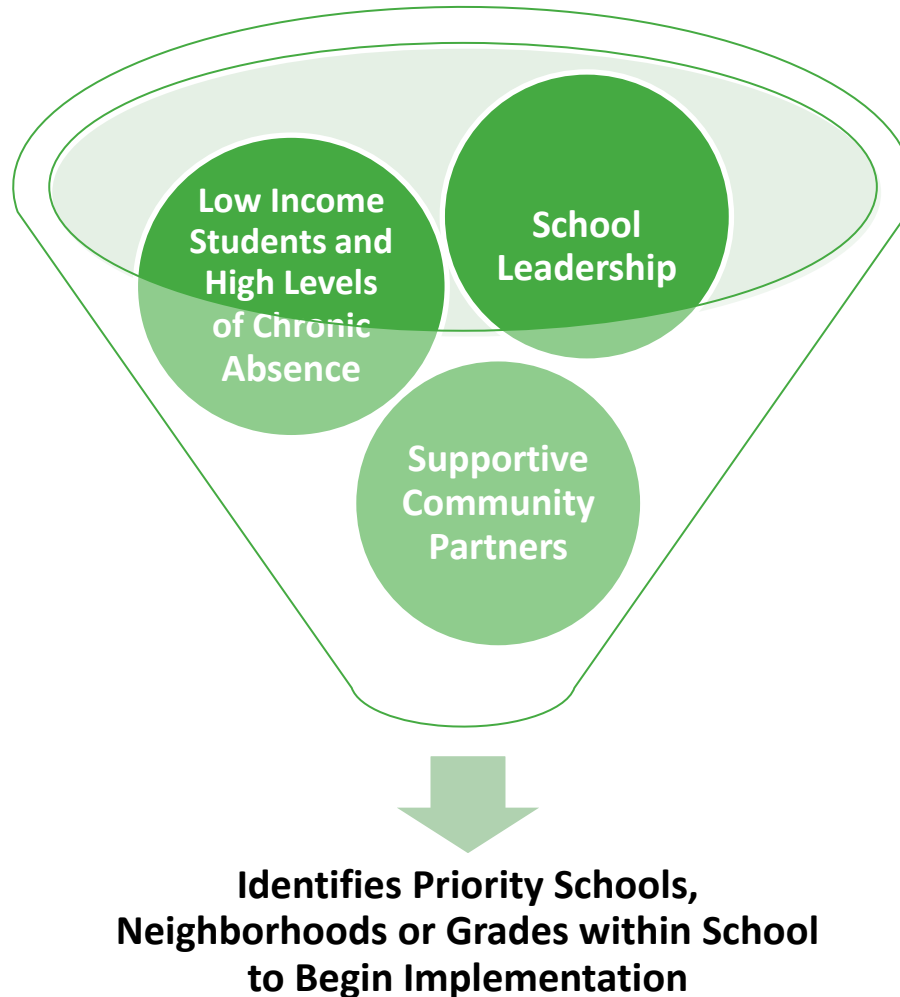


Implementing PEOPLE

(Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and Engagement)



Identifying Where To Begin Implementation



For Tier 1:

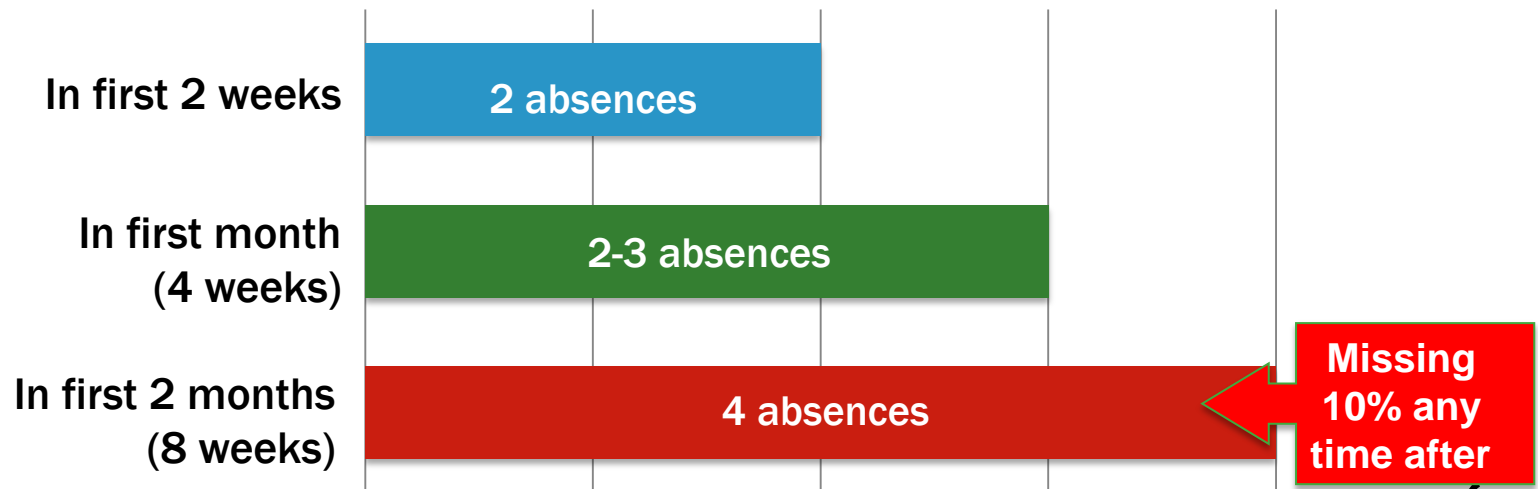
Leverage Our Resources!

- **Bringing Attendance Home Parent Video:**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-video/>
- **Bringing Attendance Home Toolkit:**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-toolkit/>
- **Parent flyers:** <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/>
- **Student Attendance Success Plans:**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/student-success-plan-facilitator-handout/>
- **Count Us In Toolkit:**
<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkit/>



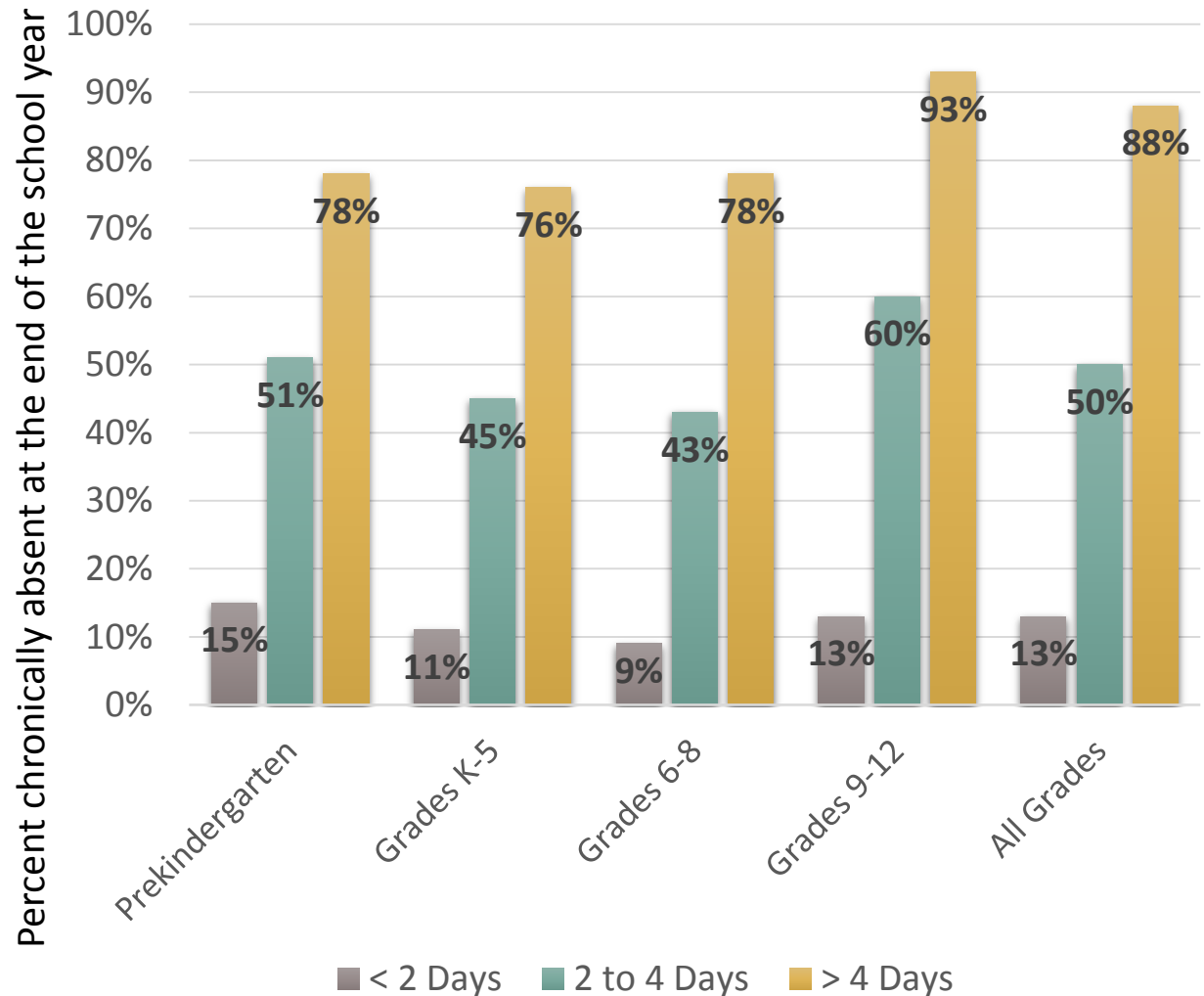
Criteria for Identifying Priority Students for Tier 2 Supports

- ❑ Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- ❑ And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:

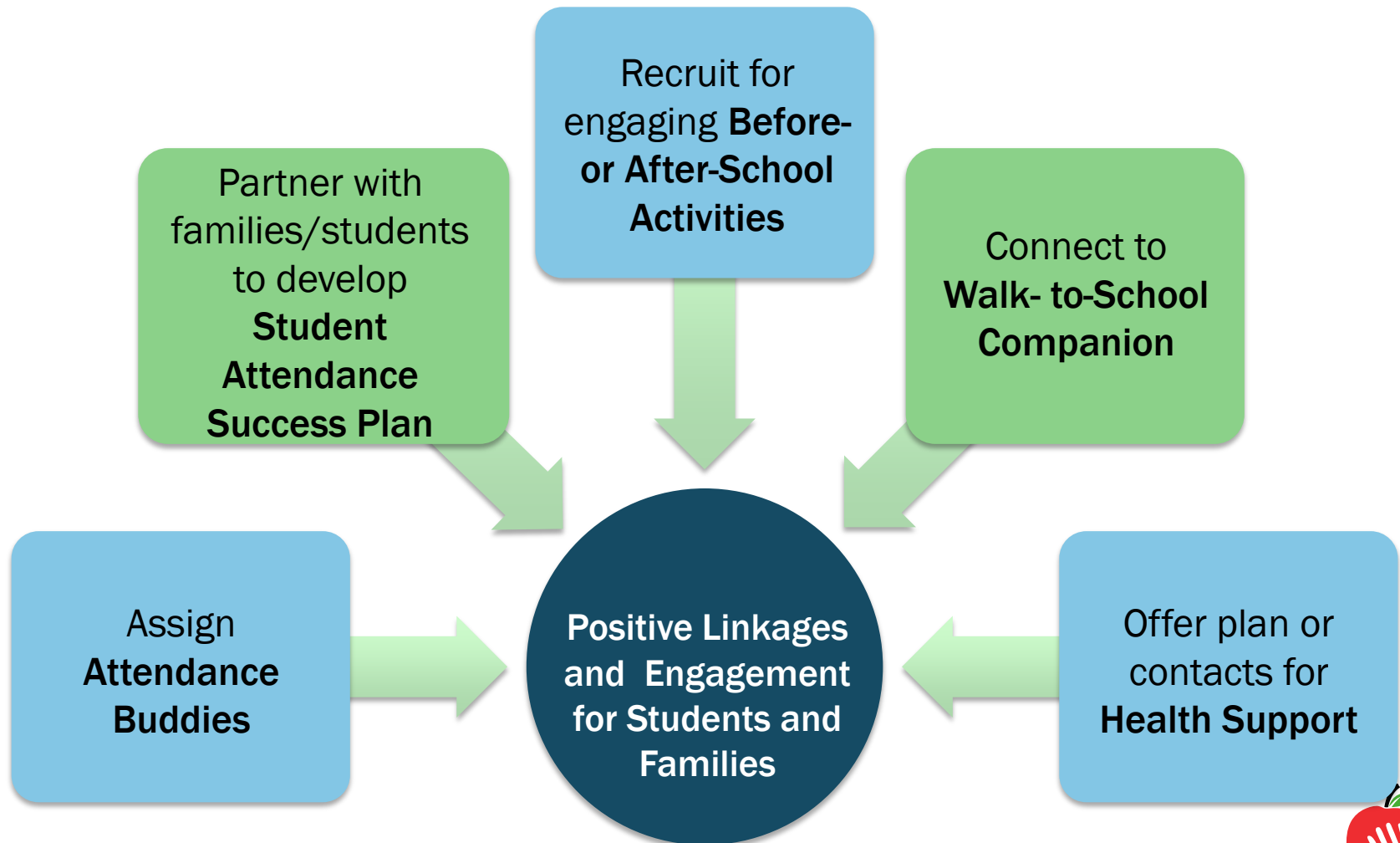


Students Who Miss 2 or More Days of School in The First Month of School Are Significantly More Likely to Be Chronically Absent by the End of the School Year

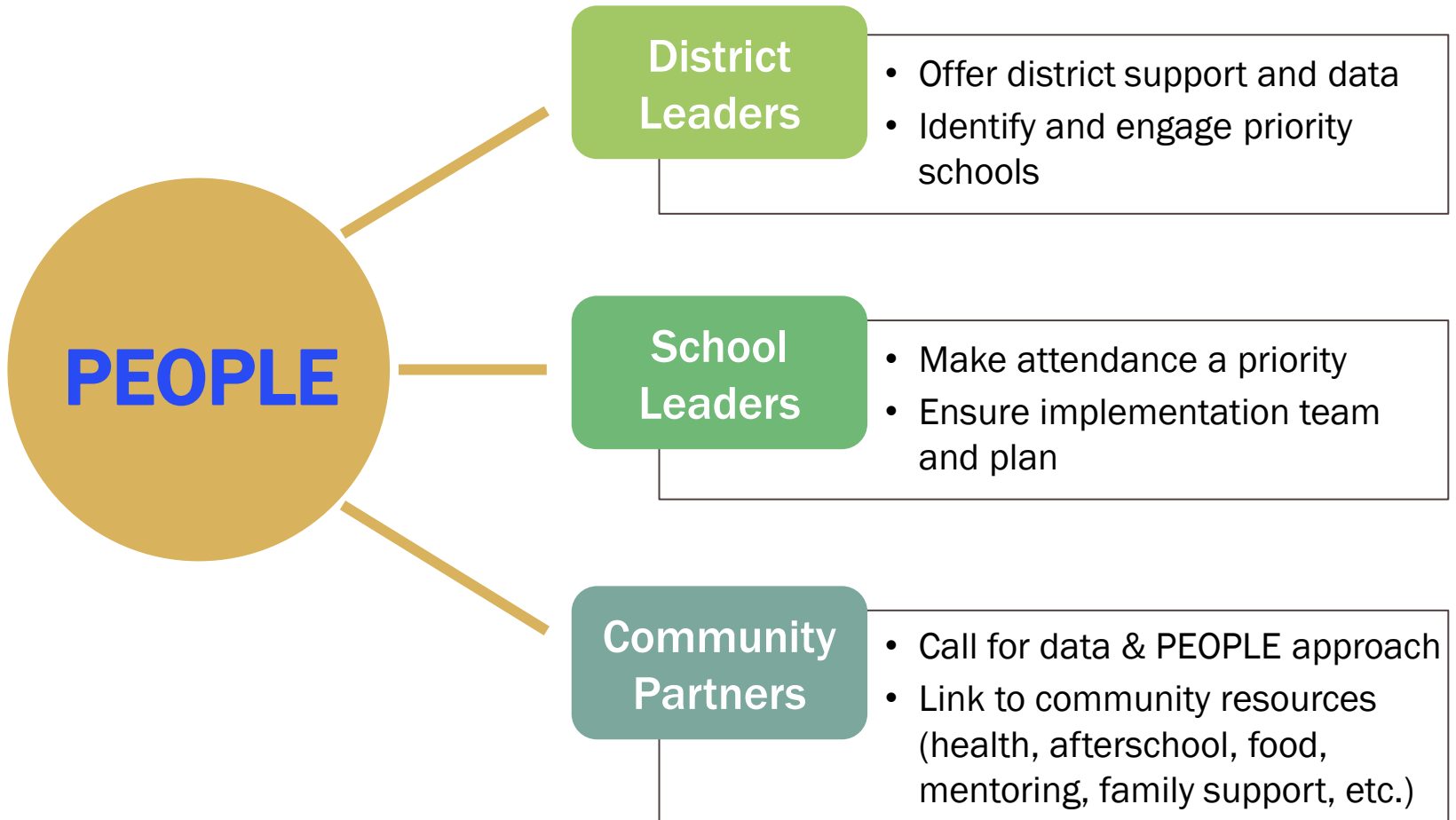
- Baltimore students who missed 2-4 days of school in September were 5 times as likely to be chronically absent.
- Students who missed 5 or more days of school in September were 16 times as likely to be chronically absent.



Possible Tier 2 Interventions



Who Can Help Advance a **PEOPLE** Approach?



Today's Panelists

From New York City:

- Sarah Jonas, Senior Director of Regional Initiatives, National Center for Community Schools, The Children's Aid Society
- Dr. Joshua Solomon, Principal, Business of Sports School, New York City

From New Britain, CT:

- Joe Vaverchak, Director, Attendance/Residency and McKinney Vento Liaison
- Sarah Harris, Principal, Vance Village School, New Britain, Connecticut

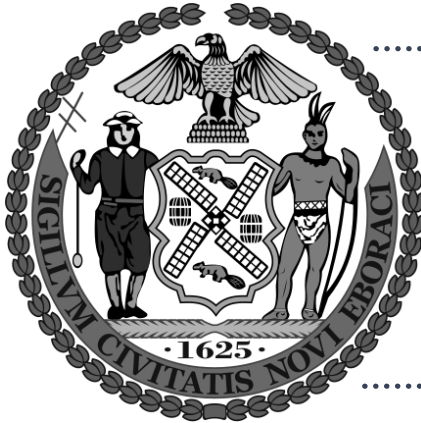
From Del Norte, CA:

- Don Olson, Superintendent, Del Norte County Unified School District, Del Norte, California
- Paige Swan, Principal, Smith River Elementary School, Del Norte, California



Discussion Questions

1. Would you give us a little background on your community and why it was important to address chronic absence?
2. How and why did you decide where to begin? Did you identify particular priority groups or schools for action?



MAYOR'S INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE
ON TRUANCY, CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

SUCCESS MENTOR CORP

NYC.GOV/EveryStudent



EVERYONE
GRADUATES CENTER

NYC Department of Education Snapshot

- **Serves 1.1 million students**
- **Over 1,800 schools**
- **Three quarters of all students qualify for free or reduced-price meals**
- **During 2013-2014 school year:**
 - Approx. 30,000 students in homeless shelters
 - About 84,000 students in temporary housing (shelters, doubled-up, etc.)

The Challenge

Students can be *chronically absent*, meaning they miss

20 DAYS OR MORE

of school and still have an 89% attendance rate. Being *severely chronically absent* - **missing 38 days or more** of school - still results in a 79% attendance rate.

3 OUT OF 4

students who are chronically absent in the **sixth grade** never graduate from high school.



More than 200,000 NYC public school students - **roughly 1 out of 5** - were chronically absent last year.

Nationally, **5 to 7.5 million** students are chronically absent annually.

79%

of NYC children in the juvenile justice system have records of chronic absenteeism; and half, approximately 40 percent, were severely chronically absent.

15%

of NYC elementary school students



missed one month of school or more in the 2009-2010 academic year.

34%

of NYC high school students



66%

of NYC students with ACS cases are chronically absent or severely chronically absent.

NYC Success Mentor Model

■ **Subset of Schools:**

- Focus on schools with highest rates of chronic absenteeism
- Began with 25 schools
- Expanded to 50 and then 100
- Each school received “target list” of students with a history of chronic absenteeism



Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT

- **We are aware that chronic absenteeism in New Britain is a contributing factor to our achievement gap and the lack of reading by the end of 3rd grade.**
- **District-wide data identified kindergarten and first grade along with high school as our most affected grade levels for chronic absenteeism.**



What do we know about attendance in Del Norte?



Del Norte

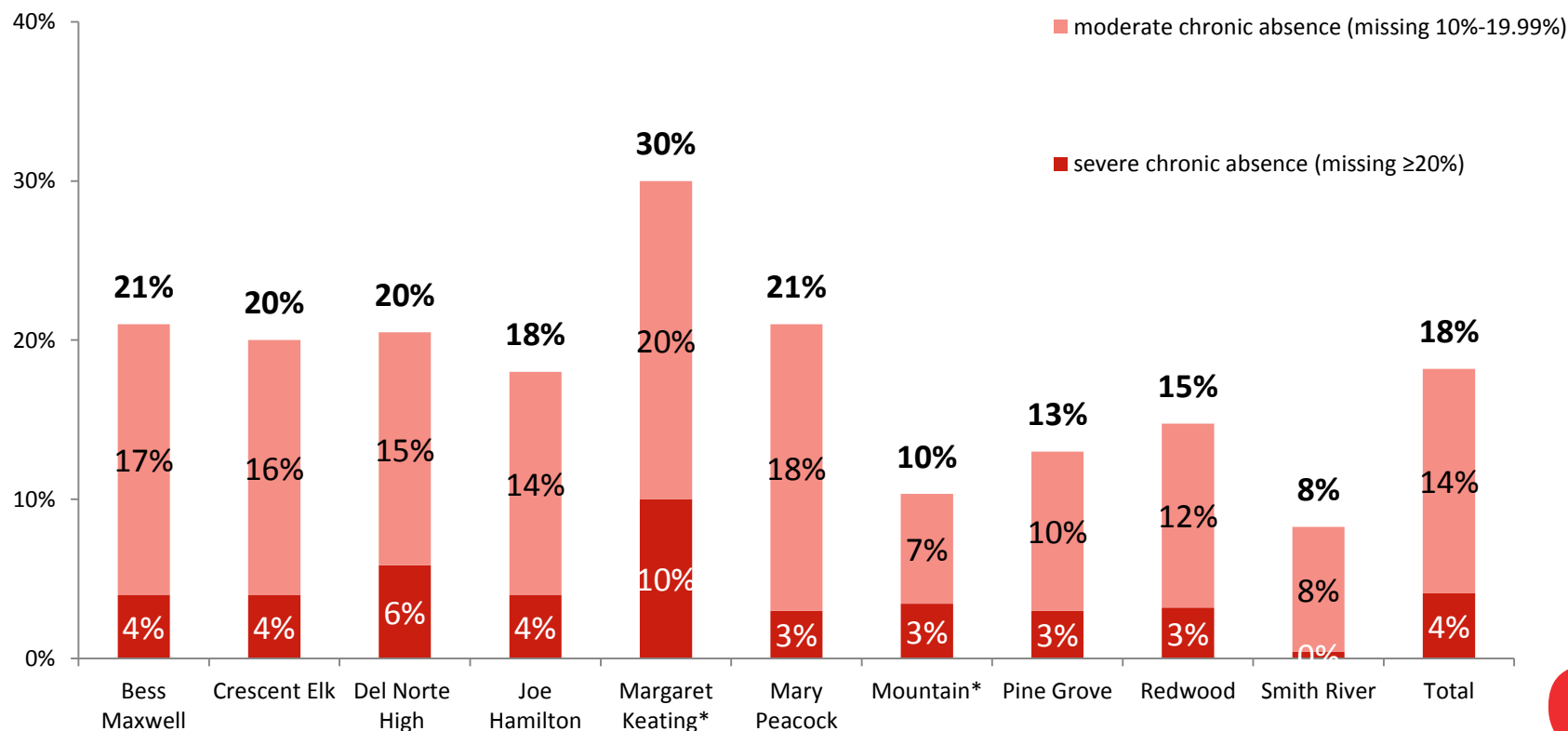
- Rural district in Northern California
- Eleven schools
- Highest levels of chronic absence in K and 12th grades

**DEL NORTE COUNTY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

301 WEST WASHINGTON BOULEVARD, CRESCENT CITY, CA 95531 + TEL: (707) 464 - 6141

Chronic Absence by School In Del Norte, 2012-13

Del Norte County Unified School District: Percent of Students with Chronic Absence by School, 2012-13



Discussion Questions

3. What did you do to equip schools to engage in early outreach to improve attendance?
Did it make a difference?

4. What does the work look like in a school?

NYC Success Mentor Model

- **3 Data-Driven Models:**
 - External: community partners
 - Internal: school staff
 - Peer-to-Peer: seniors targeting 9th graders
- **Scale:**
 - Reaching over 9,000 at-risk students
 - Largest, most comprehensive school-linked mentoring program in the nation

Key Finding: Task Force Schools Significantly Reduced Chronic Absenteeism

- All three cohorts of task force schools **consistently outperformed** comparison schools
- **Positive impacts were consistent** across elementary, middle, high schools, and alternative schools.
- **Impacts greatest for students who benefit most from being in school:** high poverty students & students in temporary housing.

Key Finding: Success Mentors & Supporting Infrastructure Substantially Improved Student Attendance & Outcomes

- Students with prior histories of chronic absenteeism with a Success Mentor **gained nearly two additional weeks of school (9 days)**, which is educationally significant.
- In the top 25% of schools, students with Success Mentors **gained one additional month of school.**
- High School students with Success Mentors (including those overage for their grade) were **52% more likely to remain in school** the following year.
- Mentees reported they liked having a mentor and the mentor helped **improve their attendance, schoolwork, motivation, and confidence.**



Our Attendance Model

- Weekly Attendance Summits with key staff (Guidance team, Parent coordinator, and FEES Partnership Coordinator) to review Marking Period data
- Each chronically absent student (80-92% attendance) has an internal Success Mentor (faculty member)
- Each severely chronically absent students has a CBO Success Mentor
- Perfect/Improved attendance breakfasts
- Monthly Awards for improved attendance in each class





Success Mentor Role

- Check in with their student daily and let them know that they are happy they came.
- If their student is not in school- make a friendly call home to see what happened and tell their student that they were missed. Log it into Skedula at least 2x/month
- If there is a reason (babysitting, family illness, etc.) that they are absent, log it into Skedula and send Attendance Coordinator an email. Attendance Team team will try to find services to help.
- Positive Intervention: Goal is to get to know their Mentee and make them feel welcome at BOSS
- Mentor lunches with mentees in the Library





Raising Engagement

- External mentorships from the professional community (esp. sports and business) through iMentor and Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Students and parents have access to password-protected website (Skedula) with real-time attendance data
- Students learn how to read their own ATS attendance reports (RISA) to monitor for accuracy.
- Incentives (awards, gifts from partner organizations, breakfasts)
- Appreciation (Starbucks cards) for Mentors who log the most contact and/or have mentees that increase





Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT

- **Addressing chronic absence is a key component of New Britain's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading / Early Childhood Collaborative**
- **Support from the Campaign and the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain supported technical assistance from Attendance Works to launch the work which leveraged the district's historical commitment to reducing truancy.**
- **New Britain is now a recognized "bright spot" in light of successes to date**



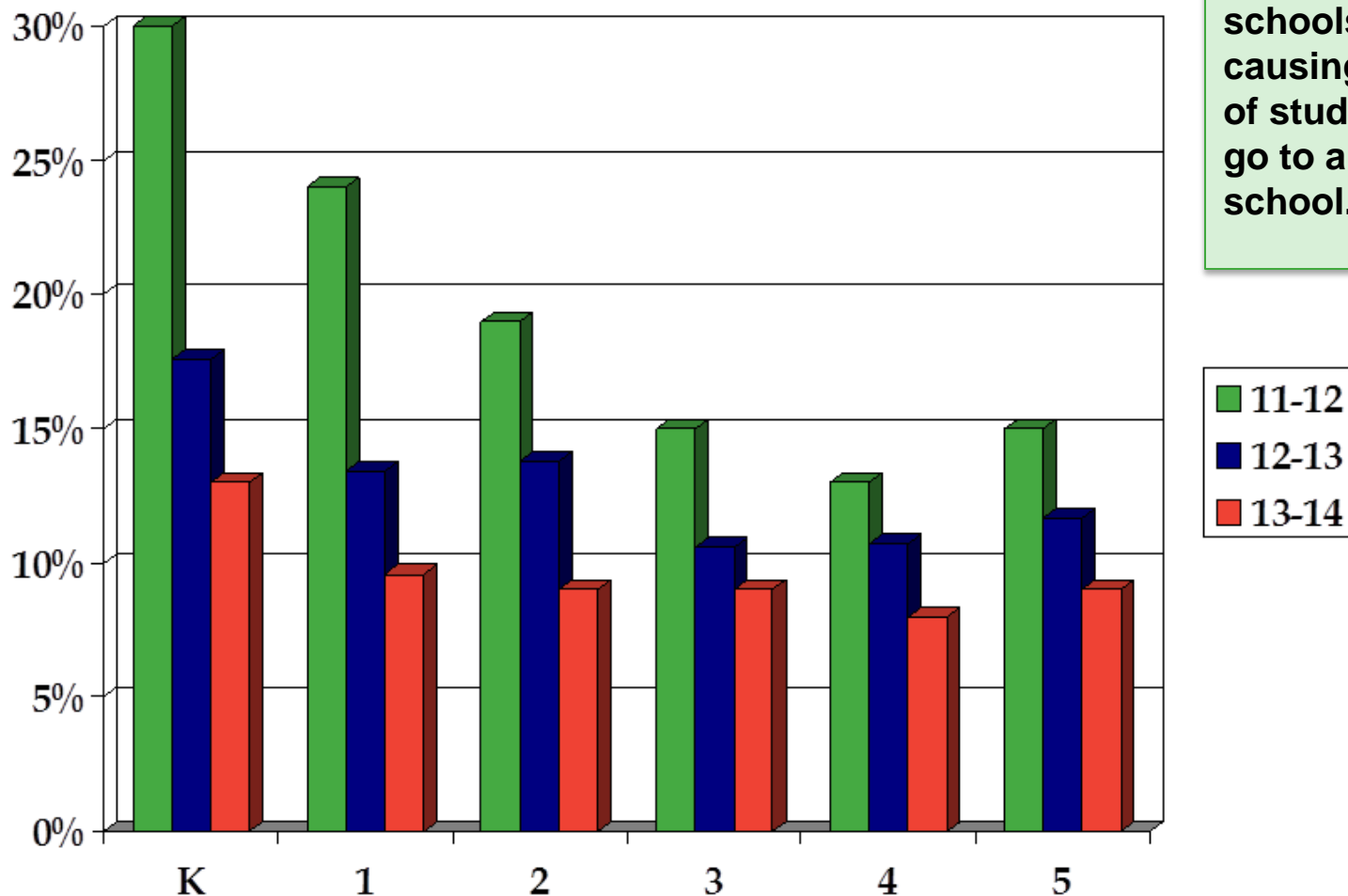
Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT

- **Professional development:** trained site administrators and teams to interpret attendance data, adopt best practices and engage in peer learning.
- **Actionable data:** sent report to school(s) every 10 days. The report indicates how many and which students are chronically absent
- **School attendance teams:** monitored the data and ensured appropriate supports are in place.
- **Home visits:** hired two family intervention specialists to conduct home visits to chronically absent kindergartners.
- **Parent engagement and communications:** messaged through newsletters, daily interactions with parents, and attendance incentives.
- **Community partnerships:** used community agencies to offer supports at school sites and through a district Attendance Review Committee formed as a diversion to juvenile court and referral to the Department of Children and Families.



Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT

Chronic Absenteeism by Grade Level



Improvements continued despite a move to neighborhood schools causing 50% of students to go to a new school.

Vance Village School

New Britain, Connecticut





- Vance Village Urban students were missing more than 10% of the school year.
- In grades K, 1, 2: 65% of our students were below grade level in reading and math
- In grades 3, 4, 5: 55% were below grade level
- We analyzed the number of days of students who were chronically absent and compared that to the number of students who were below grade level-correlation
- **Bottom Line: Students miss out on instructional time and learning opportunities when they are not in school.**

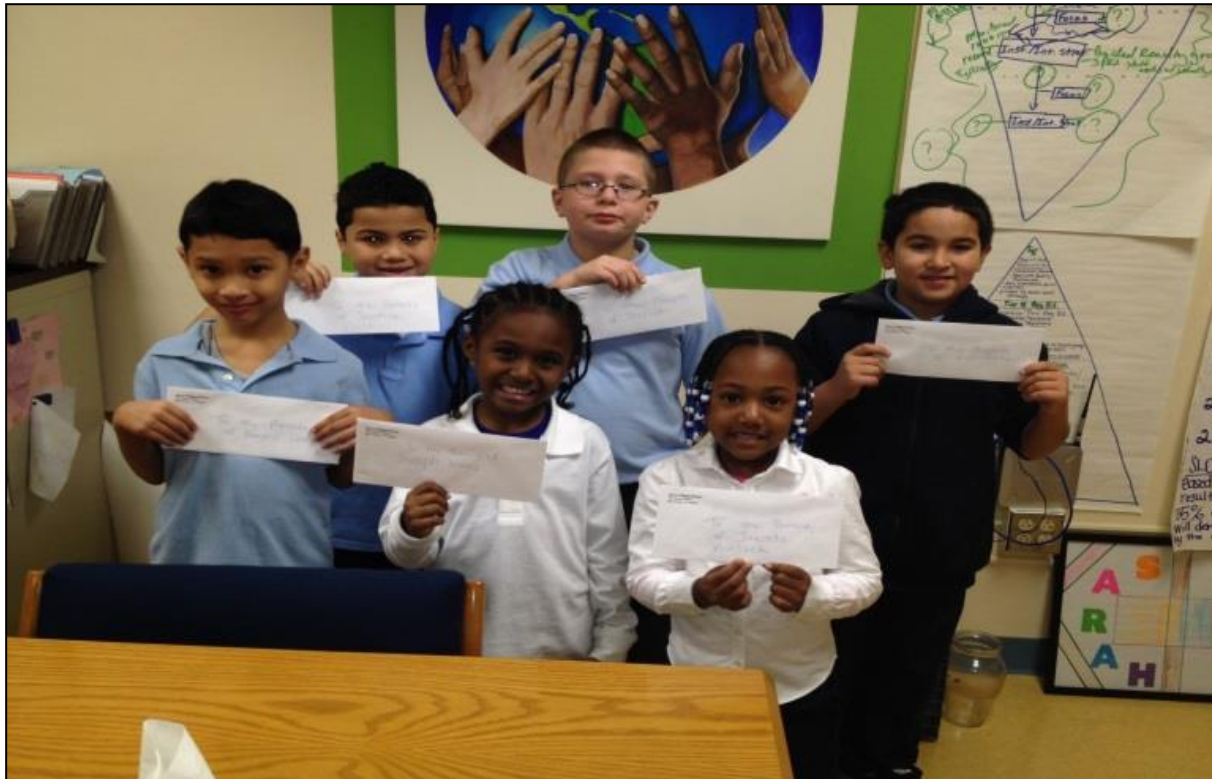
As a school we had to decrease the number of students who were chronically absent



- Developed a school-wide initiative to uncover the reasons why
- Created a team in the school – social worker, principal, 2 classroom teachers, P.E. teacher
- Principal participated in district professional development session with Attendance Works
- Constructed an action plan
- Reviewed plan with entire staff

Who Helps Improve Attendance?

- All Vance Village Staff participate
- Community members have become partners with the school to support our initiative



Vance Village Attendance Strategies

- Welcome Back to School message sent in mail to parents from the Principal in August
- Daily morning announcement message by fifth graders encouraging students to come to school every day
- Weekly communication with families on phone message about value of attending school
- Grade-level teachers send a.m. monthly message to their students to come to school

- Daily: Students are filling out an attendance star for attending school. Attendance Stars go into box in café for a raffle
- Monthly attendance raffle
- Showcase with photos of students who win the raffle outside office
- CCSU Mentors every Friday 2-3pm

★★★★★★ Attendance Star Name _____ Grade _____ Room _____ ★★★★★★	★★★★★★ Attendance Star Name _____ Grade _____ Room _____ ★★★★★★
★★★★★★ Attendance Star Name _____ Grade _____ Room _____ ★★★★★★	★★★★★★ Attendance Star Name _____ Grade _____ Room _____ ★★★★★★
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Student Attendance Meetings

- Every Tuesday at 8:45 a.m. School Attendance Team meets to review chronic absences and set up meeting schedule
- Meetings with families occur every week to dig deeper and find out why students are not attending school
- Plan of support is put in place
- Follow up date to meet is set up

What Do We Do?

- All staff state same message!
- Raffle prizes and donations for students: South Church, Max's Pizza, Walmart
- C-Town, Target, staff dress down days
- CCSU Mentors every Friday meet with students
- Grade-level teams look at attendance data during monthly staff meeting and devise additional strategies to support students
- In our monthly Vance At A Glance newsletter we display graphs indicating our progress and photos



Our Results at Vance Village

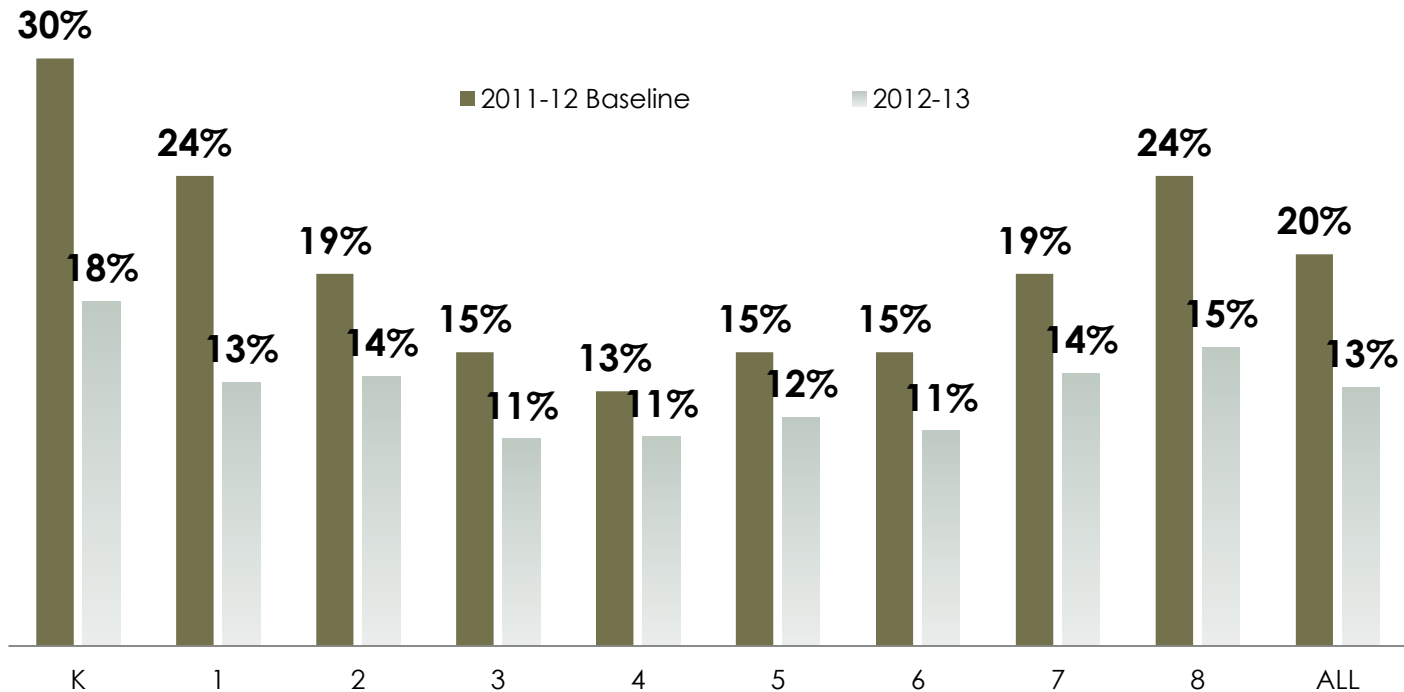
- Number of students who are chronically absent has decreased the past two years. Ended 2013-14 at 8% (down from 24%)
- Higher scores on districtwide assessments from our students
- Decrease number of below grade-level students



Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT



**Chronic Absence Drops from 20% to
13% in grades K-8 in New Britain, CT**

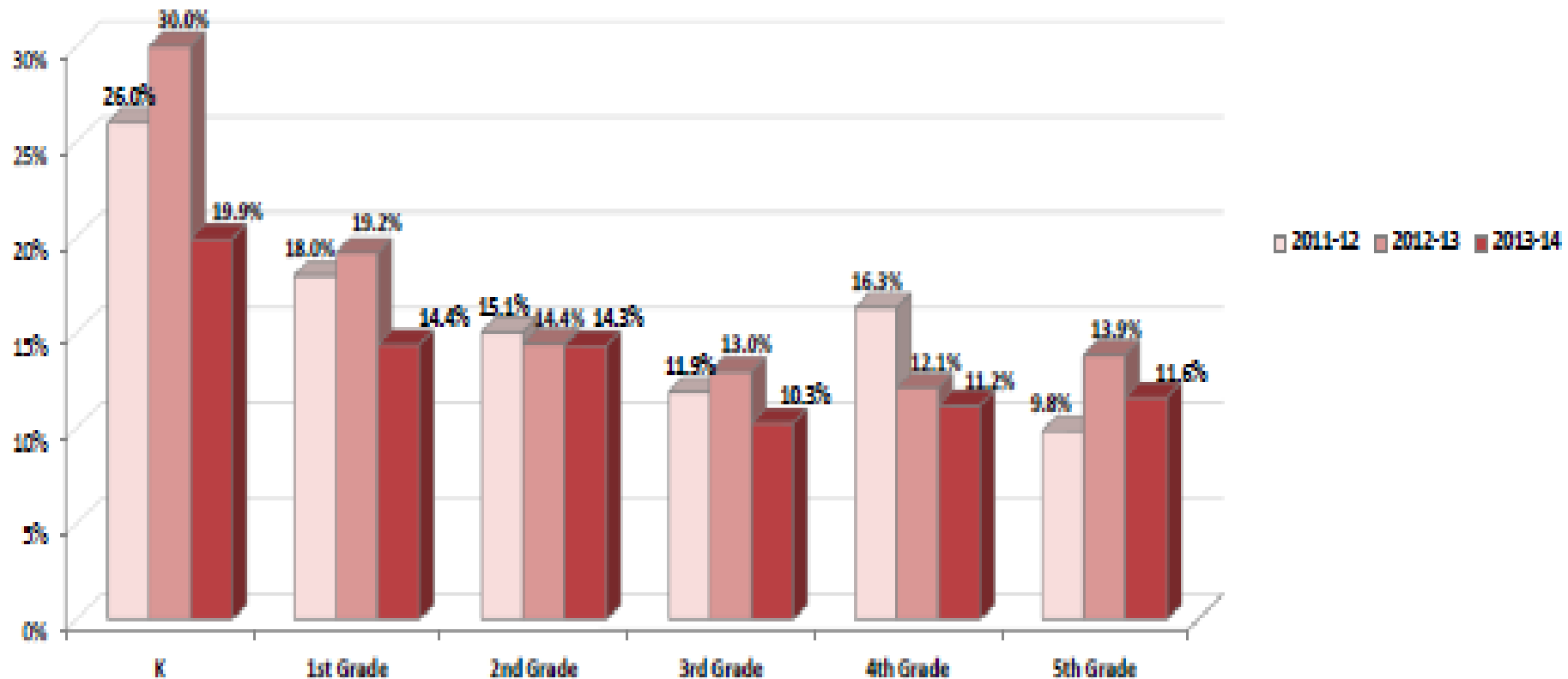


Addressing Chronic Absence in Del Norte

- Attendance is a top priority
- Monthly attendance reports to the board
- Provide chronic absence data
- Professional development for principals and social workers
- Positive messaging
- Leveraged LCAP/LCFF funds to hire social workers for every school

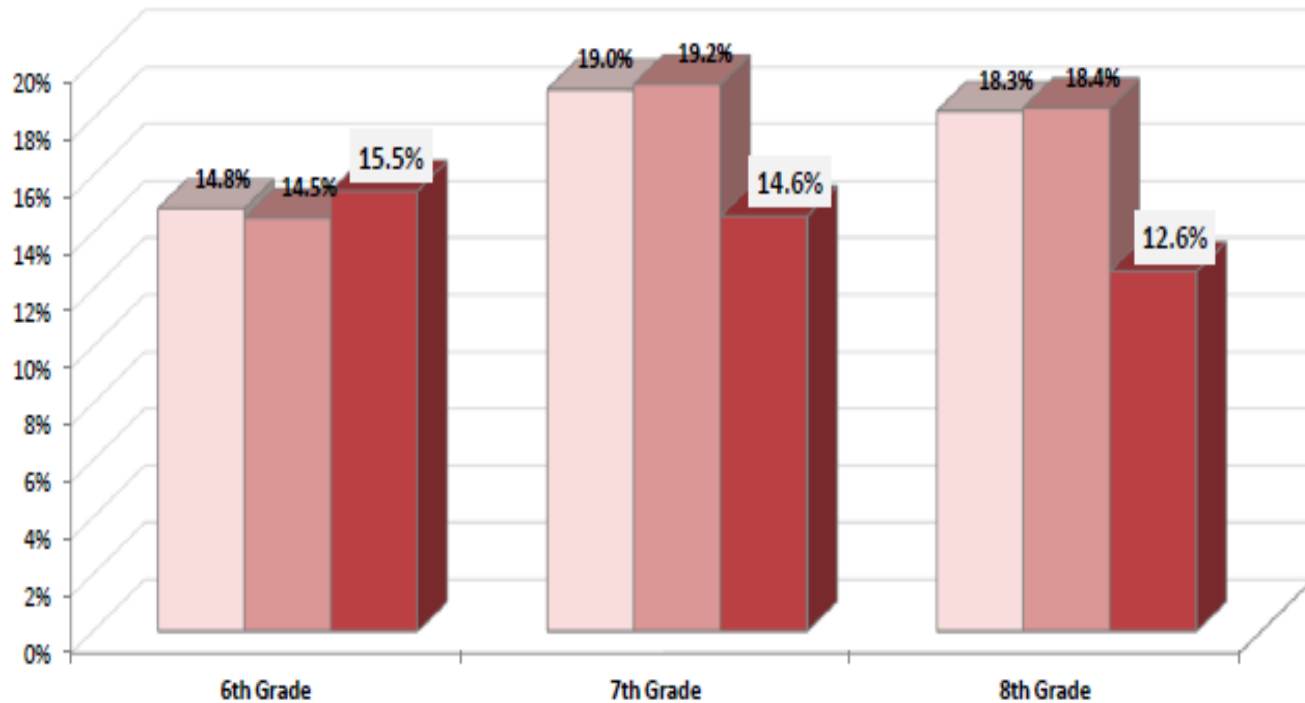
Reductions in Chronic Absence in Del Norte (elementary) 11/12 – 13/14

Percentage of Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence Over Time, by Grade Level



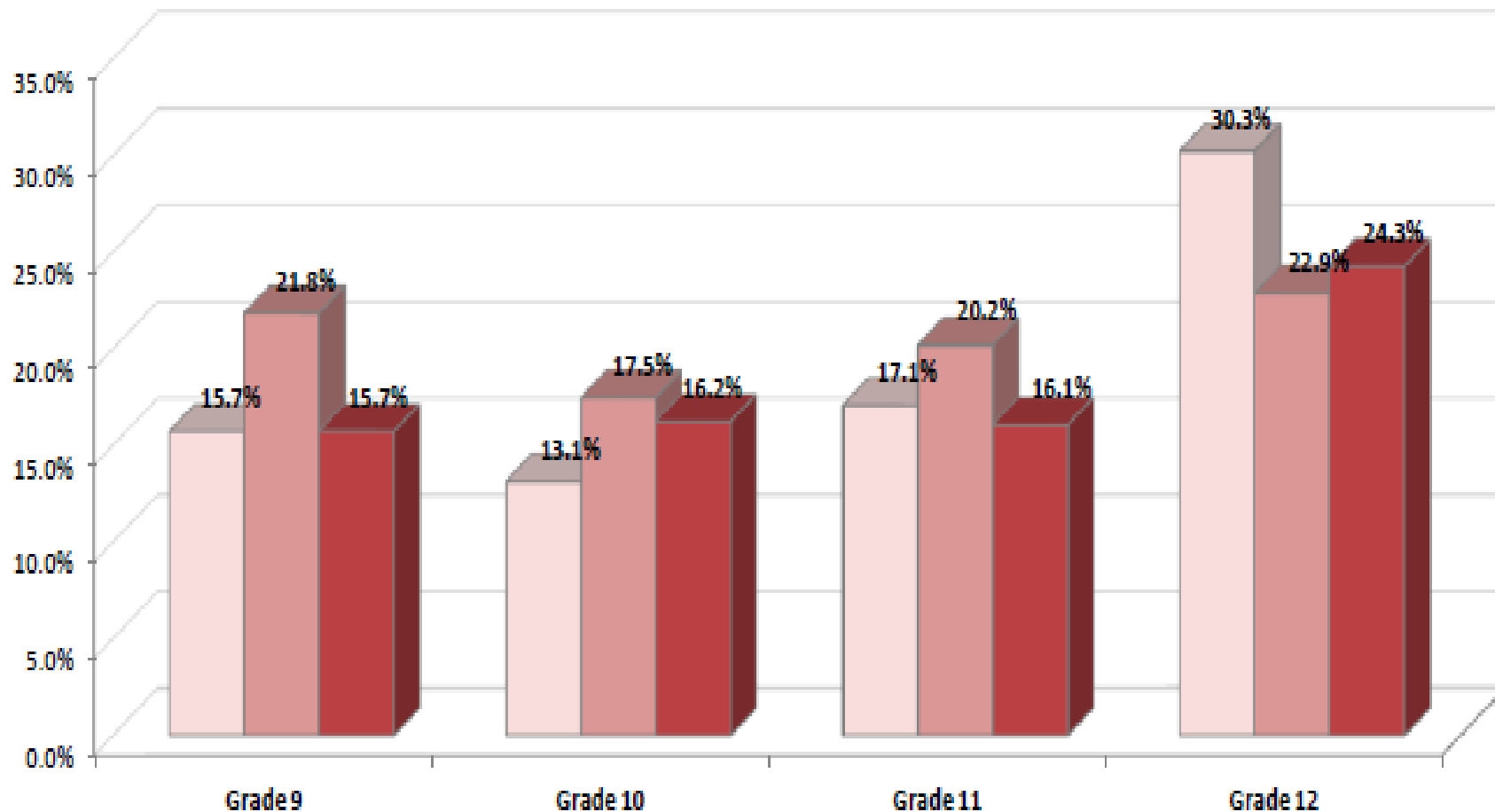
Chronic Absence Over Time (middle school) (11/12 – 13/14)

Percentage of Students with Moderate or Severe Chronic Absence Over Time, by Grade Level



Chronic Absence over time (high school)

(11/12 - 13/14)



An overview of attendance at SMITH RIVER SCHOOL

**Guiding Change Through
Attendance Accountability**

School Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absences

- Create Attendance team
- Look for trends that lead to chronic absences
- Talk about attendance and it's importance everyday.
- Monitor weekly or monthly attendance data
- Offer short-term incentives for student to attend school

Making positive connections with caring adults:

- Check in, check out – Helps build positive relationships
- Teacher calls all students with one absence.
- Principal talks with absent students as they enter school.
- Three days of absence the family is scheduled with the attendance team.
- We have to do personalized outreach!

Results at Smith River

- 2014-2015 98%
Average Daily
Attendance
- 2013-14 Chronic
Absence Rate of 5.9%
- 103 out of 153
students with perfect
attendance!

Discussion Questions

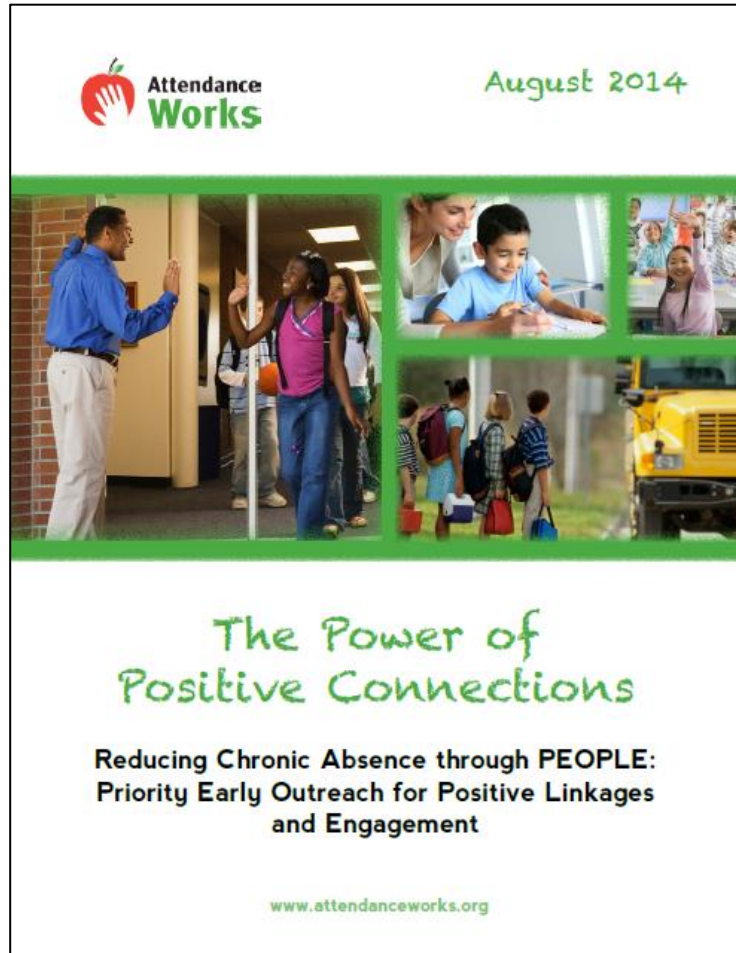
5. How can community-based partners make a difference?
6. Questions from the audience.
7. Final: What advice would you offer to other schools and communities?



Role of Community Partners in NYC

- **Advocacy**
 - Getting and analyzing the data
 - Shining a light on the extent of the problem
 - Sustained focus on the issue of chronic absenteeism
- **Providing Services and Supports to Prevent/Reduce Chronic Absenteeism**
 - Community based organizations partner with schools to offer health, mental health, positive youth development, and educational supports to students and their families to help remove barriers to good attendance

Announcements



**Download the
toolkit today!**

[http://www.attendanceworks.org/
tools/assessments/power-
positive-connections-toolkit/](http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/assessments/power-positive-connections-toolkit/)

Tools for PEOPLE

- Equip your team with key messages, phone scripts and flyers
- Attendance Buddy
- Out-of-School Time Activities
- Walking School Bus
- Health Supports
- Connecting to Social Services

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools-people/>



Thank you for participating in Attendance Awareness Month!



*Make sure you put
your community
on the map!*

*Be on the lookout
for the new District
Data Map in
October!*

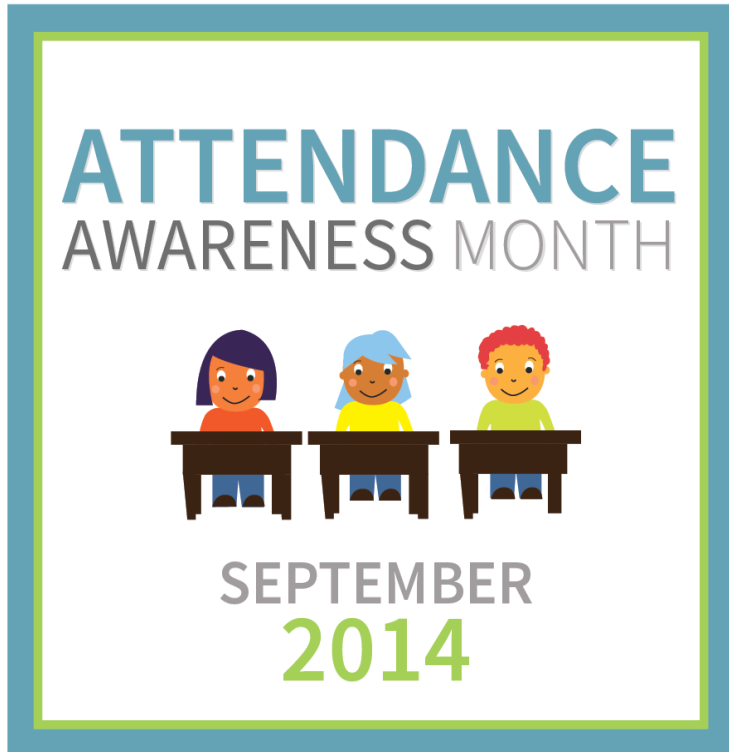
<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org>



**Special thanks to all the partners
and our funders!**



Thank You for Attending!



- For more information about Attendance Awareness Month 2014, go to:
<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>
- A recording of today's webinar will be posted within 72 hours:
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/peer-learning-resources/>
- Please take a moment to provide feedback about today's webinar:
https://surveymonkey.com/s/PEOPLE_2014

