Portraits of Change:
Aligning School and Community Resources to Reduce Chronic Absence

Attendance Awareness Webinar
September 12, 2017
www.attendanceworks.org
Welcome

Alicia Lara
Senior Vice President
United Way Worldwide
Convening Partners
New AAM Partners

- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Children’s Health Fund
- Georgetown University Center for Children and Families
- FutureEd
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.
Welcome

Hedy Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works

& Members of the Attendance Works Team
Poll Question

Do you work at the school, district, state, or national level?
1. Review of Key Concepts

2. Portraits of Change
   - Hedy Chang, Attendance Works
   - Bob Balfanz, Johns Hopkins & Everyone Graduates Center

3. State Response
   - Robin Shobe, Oregon Department of Education

4. Native American/Rural District Response
   - Ramona Halcomb, Oregon Department of Education
   - Carrie Zimbrick, Willamina Public Schools

5. Urban District Response
   - Lorri Hobson, Cleveland Metropolitan School District

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

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**. For this brief, it refers to **missing 15 or more days** since this is the data point captured in the Civil Rights Data Collection for School Year 2013/14, the only currently available national dataset.
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 and Career Ready:** Cultivating the habit of regular attendance helps students develop the persistence needed to show up every day for college and work.

✓ **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/](http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/))
Portraits of Change

Hedy Chang
Attendance Works

Bob Balfanz
Johns Hopkins University,
Everyone Graduates Center
Key questions examined

1. What are the chronic absence levels in schools across the country?

2. How do levels of chronic absence in schools vary across states?

3. Is there a relationship between particular school characteristics (e.g., ages of students, type of locale and presence of poverty) and higher or lower levels of chronic absence?
Office of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) survey providing data on how many students missed 15 or more school days, for 95,507 public schools in 16,758 public districts. This report also included updated information submitted by the New York City Department of Education.

Common Core of Data (CCD), provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, offering background information on each school. CRDC is the only available source of national data on chronic absence. The CCD includes a school’s type (regular, special education, vocational, alternative), level (elementary, middle, high, other) and locale (urban, suburban, town, rural), as well as the percentage of enrolled students eligible for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program (a proxy for low income level).
In one out of five schools, 20 percent of students or more are chronically absent, while in slightly more than half of all schools it is < 10 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Students Chronically Absent</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percent of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Chronic Absence (30%+)</td>
<td>9,921</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Chronic Absence (20-29%)</td>
<td>10,330</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Chronic Absence (10-19%)</td>
<td>28,320</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modest Chronic Absence (5-9%)</td>
<td>21,190</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Chronic Absence (0-4%)</td>
<td>22,572</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>92,333</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Schools with More Students in Poverty Have Higher Chronic Absence Levels

Schools Serving More Students in Poverty Have Higher Chronic Absence Levels

- Extreme Chronic Absence (30%+)
- High Chronic Absence (20-29%)
- Significant Chronic Absence (10-19%)
- Modest Chronic Absence (5-9%)
- Low Chronic Absence (0-4%)

- >75%: 19% (Extreme), 17% (Significant), 15% (High), 9% (Modest), 4% (Low)
- 50-74%: 31% (Extreme), 19% (Significant), 13% (High), 6% (Modest), 21% (Low)
- 25-49%: 35% (Extreme), 20% (Significant), 21% (High), 33% (Modest), 33% (Low)
- 0-24%: 33% (Extreme), 26% (Significant), 25% (High), 37% (Modest), 37% (Low)
While nationally chronic absence levels are higher in urban areas, this was not always true across states.
Nationally, chronic absence is highest in high school.

Note: The low overall levels of chronic absence in elementary schools could still be masking high levels of chronic absence in K and 1st.
Alternative schools and those serving special education populations experience the highest levels of chronic absence.

Percentage of U.S. High Schools by Chronic Absence Concentration and School Type

Percentage of U.S. Elementary and Middle Schools by Chronic Absence Concentration and School Type

Legend:
- Extreme Chronic Absence (30%+)
- High Chronic Absence (20-29%)
- Significant Chronic Absence (10-19%)
- Modest Chronic Absence (5-9%)
- Low Chronic Absence (0-5%)
Across 50 States, the Percentage of Schools with Extreme Levels of Chronic Absenteeism Varies Significantly

Note: Data files for all 50 states are available at http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/portraits-of-change/
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

**TIER 1**
- Universal
- Prevention
- 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**
- Low Cost
- Early Intervention
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

**TIER 3**
- High Cost
- Specialized supports
- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

**Outcome**
- Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
- Students missing 5-9% (at risk)
- Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)
- Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)
The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important.

- Businesses
- Community Schools Initiatives
- Family Support Organizations
- Early Childhood Providers
- Faith Based Organizations
- Health Providers
- Housing Agencies
- Hunger Relief Organizations
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Local Government
- National Service/Volunteers/Mentors
- Out of School Time providers
- Social Emotional Learning Providers
- Social Services
- Population-Specific Service or Civic Organizations
- Philanthropy (including foundations and United Ways)

We also encourage folks to tap into existing initiatives and coalitions as resources for engaging/convening potential partners.
ESSA will promote greater public access to chronic absence data since it is a required reporting metric on school and district report cards.

Chronic absence is an excellent option for inclusion as an accountability indicator since connected to achievement, reliable, can be disaggregated, comparable, and valid.

14 out of 17 states submitted ESSA plans with measure of chronic absence included in their accountability systems. Most have defined chronic absence as missing 10% or more of days.
**Recommendations for State Action**

 ✓ **Step 1: Review Data and Ensure Quality.**
   Use current data to calculate levels of chronic absence. Look for trends and assess if steps are needed to improve data consistency and accuracy.

 ✓ **Step 2: Form a State Leadership Team.**
   Include a cross-sector team that will take responsibility for organizing action.

 ✓ **Step 3: Develop a Data-Informed Comprehensive System of T.A.**
   Offer universal supports, group professional development and intensive T.A.

 ✓ **Step 4: Publicize the Challenge and Available Resources.**
   Highlight the scope of the challenge, bright spots and plan for reducing chronic absence.
State Response

Robin Shobe, Education Specialist
Oregon Department of Education
Oregon

• Approximately 4.1 million people live in Oregon
• 2015-2016 Oregon Department of Education served approximately 550,000 students (Kindergarten through 12th grade)
• 197 School Districts; 19 Education Service Districts
• One of the most geographically diverse states in the U.S.
• 138 of Oregon’s 197 School Districts are Rural or Frontier (<= 6 people per square mile)
Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon by Grade (2015-16 SY)

Roughly 1 in 6 students were chronically absent
### Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon by Population (2015-16 SY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% CA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Average</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented and Gifted</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population Categories:
- **Low (0-5%)**
- **Modest (5-9%)**
- **Significant (10-19%)**
- **High (20-29%)**
Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon by Geographic Location (2015-16 SY)

- Extreme CA 30% (or more)
- High CA 20-29%
- Significant CA 10-19%
- Modest CA 5-9%
- Low CA 0-4%
Oregon’s Statewide Chronic Absenteeism Plan

• 2015 Legislative session enacted House Bill 4002 which directed the development of a **statewide education plan to address chronic absenteeism**

• Plan written with **broad stakeholder engagement** e.g. Early Learning Division, Public Health Division, Oregon Education Association, school district administrators and teachers, among others.

• 2017 Legislative Session **funded** the State Chronic Absenteeism Plan designed to reduce the number of students and frequency of CA among Oregon students (P-20) who are chronically absent – approximately 102,000 students (2015-16)

• Oregon enjoys support from **key leadership**
Components of Oregon’s Statewide Chronic Absenteeism Plan

• A process for publicly disclosing chronic absenteeism data
  • Oregon publishes “Not Chronically Absent Data” annually disaggregated by: district, school, grade level and population
  • Chronic Absenteeism identified in Oregon’s ESSA plan as non-academic measure

• Best Practice Guidelines and Technical Assistance to assist Districts in identifying and addressing systemic barriers and put multi-tiered systems in place to prevent and respond to CA and improve attendance

• A process for identifying and supporting districts in most need of support (extreme & high rates of CA)

• Development of a consortia model to support the needs of all districts across the state including resource allocation and funding
Use of a **Consortia Model** to support districts identify root causes, address systemic barriers, implement tiered intervention systems, acquire resources, and braid funding sources when necessary.

- Statewide & Local Awareness Champaign
- Accessible Chronic Absenteeism Data
- Local Messaging Tool Kit
- Technical Assistance
- Professional Development
- Best Practice Guidelines
- Targeted support to districts with extreme & high levels of chronic absenteeism
- Attendance Coaches
Questions from the Audience
Recommendations for Local Action

- Step 1: Form A Local Leadership Team
- Step 2: Map Assets and Secure Additional Partners
- Step 3: Unpack Causes (Myths, Barriers, Aversion, Disengagement)
- Step 4: Develop and Implement Solutions
- Step 5: Assess Results
Demonstrate that chronic absence has been reduced in a whole range of settings. The size of the problem shapes the response.

- **Cleveland, Ohio** – *An urban district tackles extreme chronic absence through a combination of strong district leadership, staff training and community partners.*

- **Grand Rapids, Michigan** – *Persistence, partnership and clear messaging help reduce chronic absence districtwide in an urban district.*

- **New Britain, Connecticut** – *Using data to target resources to reduce chronic absence among young students in a diverse district.*

- **Long Beach, California** – *Enlisting the community to focus on schools with the highest chronic absence as part of a district-wide campaign.*

- **Contra Costa County, California** – *An alternative school improves attendance by leveraging the power of a learning network and county education office.*

- **Oregon Tribal Attendance Pilot Project** – *Schools, Native American families and tribes partner to reduce chronic absence in rural communities.*
Demonstrate that chronic absence has been reduced in a whole range of settings. Size of the problem shapes the response.

- Trenton, New Jersey – A “full court press” makes a difference in improving attendance in an urban middle school.

- Springdale, Arkansas – An elementary school tailors strategies to the culture and needs of families.

- West Newfield, Maine – A small rural school benefits from a larger prevention-oriented attendance effort.

- Phoenix, Arizona – A K-8 school improves attendance by creating a positive and safe school climate.

- Baltimore, Maryland – A K-12 Charter school network lays a foundation for excellent attendance through relationship building and engaging educational experiences.
33% 19%

TAPP Overview
TAPP’s Key Components

- Trust-building
- Co-constructing family advocate position with School District and Tribe
- Applicant Pool is screened by tribe and hired by school district
- Attendance incentives, family engagement activities and positive marketing campaign regarding attendance
- $155K for Biennium
Preliminary Results

Working in seventeen schools in nine school districts

Results from 2016-17 Tribal Attendance Pilot Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>2015-16 to 2016-17-TAPP Year # of schools</th>
<th>Change in Percent Across Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease (or Improvement) in Students Chronically Absent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 to 38 percent improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Students Chronically Absent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-3 to -15 percent among five schools; one outlier school increased rate by a -34.5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Willamina School District

At A Glance

- Total enrollment K-12: 911 students (485 ES, 140 MS, 286 HS)
- Two schools: one elementary, one middle and high school
- Covers 254 sq. miles of Western Yamhill and Polk counties along with small portions of Tillamook and Lincoln counties
- A majority of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Reservation land lies within the District boundaries
## Willamina School District Changes Chronic Absence Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>American Indian Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willamina Elementary School</td>
<td>38.43%</td>
<td>28.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willamina Middle School</td>
<td>49.24%</td>
<td>35.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willamina High School</td>
<td>45.12%</td>
<td>39.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!

Ramona Halcomb  
Indian Education Specialist  
Oregon Department of Education  
ramona.halcomb@ode.state.or.us  
www.ode.state.or.us  
503-947-5695

Carrie Zimbrick  
Superintendent  
Willamina School District  
carrie.zimbrick@willamina.k12.or.us  
http://www.willamina.k12.or.us/dist rict  
503-876-1501

Tribal Attendance Pilot Projects:  
Urban Response

Lorri Hobson
Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Cleveland Metropolitan School District Demographics

- Cleveland has 37,000 scholars
  - 67 K-8 schools
  - 3 K-12 schools
  - 32 9-12 schools
- 100% on Free and Reduced Price Lunch
- 65% African-American, 15% White, 16% Hispanic/Latino; 9% Limited English Proficient
Data Context

• In 2014-15, chronic absenteeism (missing more than 18 days) approached 50% district-wide.

• Attendance strongly related to:
  – Math and Reading scores on state assessments (OAA & OGT)
  – The probability of being on-track to graduate

• The first 10 absences from school decreases Math scores by 15 points.
  – The next 10 absences decrease Math scores by 5 points

• The first 10 absences from school decreases Reading scores by 12 points.
  – The next 10 absences decrease Reading scores by 4 points.

• Increased absences are significantly and substantively related to going off track to graduate.
  – The first 10 absences are associated with a 34% drop in probability of being “on-track” to graduate for 9th and 10th graders
  – Change from 73% to 39%
Predicted Reading Scores, as absences increase

Blue: Black Students
Red: Latino Students
Green: White Students
“Get 2 School, You Can Make It!”

• In the summer of 2015, with the CEO’s commitment and leadership, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) launched an attendance campaign to address one of the most significant barriers to student achievement, chronic absenteeism.

  – Ohio Department of Education = Chronic Absenteeism missing at least 10% (18 days) of the full academic year for any reason
  – CMSD = Chronic Absenteeism missing at least 10 days for the full academic year for any reason
Campaign Activities

• Established a campaign committee
• Outreach to stakeholders in labor, central office and departments who touch attendance: transportation, security, secretaries, principals to be a part of the campaign
• Outreach to partners in the community including the Cleveland Browns, McDonalds, Cleveland City Council and county leaders, Faith Based Community, local businesses, parent groups
Attendance Strategies

- Phone Banking
- Canvassing
- Clap Ins
- College Scholarship Opportunities with PBS
- Giveaways/Celebrations
- Social Media
- Professional Development
Outcomes: The Numbers

Percent Chronically Absent

Students missing 10+ days

- Percent Chronically Absent
- Students missing 10+ days

2013 2014 2015 2016
Stable last year and with results showing where work needs to deepen

• Seeing some impact from immigrant scholars feeling insecure due to broader community challenges
• High school grades still have highest chronic absence
• Most significant improvement in middle school where we see the benefits of a long-standing investment in social emotional learning
• Improvements occurring in third grade but still need to expand work in K and 1st
Outcomes

• Became known as state leaders on truancy and began to be invited by legislators to share results and findings
• Became involved in My Brother’s Keeper initiatives
• Advocated on bills introduced in the state legislature on truancy using data that shows what works for large urbans
• Began changing culture in schools on attendance
• Built trust in our organization from residents
• Created a brand for the next school levy
• Developed a system of phone banking that created a volunteer culture among central office
• Connected to residents and community leaders on something that resonated with all citizens
Questions from the Audience
Cross-Cutting Discussion

How can states and districts support schools with extreme levels of chronic absence?
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
★ **March 28:** Reducing Chronic Absence: It’s a Matter of 1, 2, 3!

★ **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

http://www.attendanceworks.org/peer-learning-resources/
Mentoring *In Real Life* & Attendance Week

- September 11-17, 2017
- Week is focused on amplifying the message that quality mentoring *In Real Life* can be instrumental to improving attendance and academic success.
- Join us for an engaging Twitter chat 9/14!
- Promotional toolkit will be available soon with social media messages, graphics and more.
Join us for two sessions from the Success Mentor Peer Learning Convening, broadcast via Facebook Live!

View both sessions at The Everyone Graduates Center’s Facebook page, located at: [www.facebook.com/EveryoneGraduatesCenter](http://www.facebook.com/EveryoneGraduatesCenter)

9/19 at 1:15 Eastern & 9/19 at 4:00 Eastern
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!

September!
Pin on the 2017 Action Map

- Post your community’s plans for Attendance Awareness Month 2017 on the map!
- Prize will be awarded to the state with the most pins!

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/
Please let us know how we can improve:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Portraits-of-Change
Thank you to our sponsors!

With special appreciation to:

Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Kellogg Foundation
The California Endowment