The Secret Formula 1+2+3:
Improving Attendance for Our Most Vulnerable Students

Attendance Awareness Webinar
August 8, 2017
www.attendanceworks.org
Welcome

Ayeola Fortune
Director, Youth Success in Education
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.
Going Big in 2017

1. The 2017 Action Map is live. Be sure to put your community on the map!  
   http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/map-2017/

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

3. 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
Poll Question

What percent of students in your community / district would you guess missed 35 days or more of school last year?
1. Review of Key Concepts

2. Tier 3 Strategies

   Taking a Citywide Approach
   ★ Janet Meeks, City of Delray Beach

   Foster Youth
   ★ Minsun Meeker, National Center for Youth Law’s FosterEd CA

   Trauma-Informed Approach
   ★ Dr. Martha Merchant, UCSF HEARTS
   ★ Silvia Cordero, San Francisco Unified School District

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).
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

- A: 7%
- B: 12%
- C: 13%
- D: 13%
- E: 15%
- F: 16%

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

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

- A: 20%
- B: 20%
- C: 20%
- D: 21%
- E: 23%
- F: 26%
Chronic Absence is Easily Masked if We Only Monitor Missing Consecutive days

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Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = **As few as 2 days a month**
Truancy
• Counts unexcused absences
• Emphasizes compliance with school rules
• Uses legal, typically more punitive solutions

Chronic Absence
• Counts all absences
• Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
• Uses preventive strategies, positive messaging
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
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/]*)
### Unpack Contributing Factors to Chronic Absence

#### Myths
- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Don’t realize just missing 2 days per month can affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren’t a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

#### Barriers
- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Chronic illness
- Trauma
- No safe path to school
- Poor Transportation
- Housing instability
- High mobility
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice system

#### Aversion
- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Ineffective / exclusionary school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience
- Undiagnosed disability

#### Disengagement
- Lack of engaging and culturally relevant instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
- Poor school climate
- Discouraged due to lack of credits
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)

High Cost:
- Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)

Low Cost:
- Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)
- Students missing 5-9% (at risk)
- Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

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

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

Students missing 5–9% (at risk)

Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)

Students missing 10–19% (moderate chronic absence)

Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)
Take a Data Driven Systemic Approach

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.

Strategic partnerships between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.

Shared Accountability:
Ensures chronic absence is monitored & reinforced by policy.
City of Delray Beach, Florida
Taking a Citywide Approach

Janet Meeks

Education Coordinator, City of Delray Beach, Florida
Community Snapshot

Delray Beach:
- City Population – 66,255
- 8 Public Schools (6,023)
- 78% live in poverty
- 84% Minority

Palm Beach County:
- Countywide School District – 191,692 students
- 11th largest in the Nation

Attendance Focus:
- 7 Elementary Schools
- K-3rd Grade – Citywide Cohort (2710 students)
- 2,214 FRL students (low-income)
CAMPBELL FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

Attendance

Summer Learning

Kindergarten Readiness

3rd Grade Reading

80% of students living in poverty and don’t read on grade level BY 3rd grade

Will NOT graduate high school

Delray Beach looses 200+ high school graduates annually
City of Delray Beach – Convening Entity – Office of the Mayor

- Obtained data to determine if we had an absenteeism problem
  - Chronically absent (21+ days absent); On the bubble (11-20 days absent)
- Implemented Tier 1 strategies
- Determined drivers of both cohorts via focus groups
- Set communitywide goals and created strategic 5 year plan
- Met with our principals to discuss their data and our goals
- Implemented a pilot program to reward students and parents for exemplary attendance – *Perfectly Punctual Campaign*
- Developed communitywide messaging around attendance and scaled our program communitywide using our data to keep the momentum

**Memorandum of Understanding with the School District**
Chronic Absenteeism:
- 2012 - 8% miss 21 or more school days/year (226 students)
  Goal: reduce percentage by 2.5% over 5 years
- 2016 - Results: 3.7% reduction over 5 years = 62%

Emerging Pattern:
- 2012 - 20% miss 11-20 school days/year (569 students)
  Goal: reduce percentage by 6.5% over 5 years
- 2016 - Results: 8.2% reduction over 5 years = 84%
CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

ALL STUDENT RESULTS – 5 YEAR TREND

8.2% Reduction = 84%

3.7% Reduction = 62%
2012 Chronic Absenteeism:
- 2,059 children k-3 grade cohort 76% were on FRL
- 6.54% of students found to be chronically absent

2016 Chronic Absenteeism:
- 2,214 children k-3 grade cohort 80% on FRL
- 2.1% of the student were chronically absent

68% reduction despite 4% increase in poverty!
CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING
LOW-INCOME CHILDREN – DISAGGREGATED DATA

Cohort of Low Income Children:

- 77% Reduction for Black students!
- 66% Reduction for Hispanic students!
- 71% Reduction for FRL students!
- 54% Reduction for ELL students!

Joined Campaign for Grade-Level Reading!

Perfectly Punctual Pete

Attendance Wall of Fame
CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING
VULNERABLE FOOTPRINT

**SHADED AREA – Vulnerable footprint**
- Primarily African-American and Haitian
- 68% households and 78% of children live 200% BELOW Federal Poverty Level

- Moving 185 Early Head Start children to Village Academy (Pre-natal to 12th grade school)
- Engaging a wide variety of out-of-school partners
- Providing affordable childcare with family wrap around services meeting social and emotional well-being of the child
- Connecting our Campaign with HDB – Mental Health support and connection to services
- Florida Atlantic University Nursing School – screenings

**Collective Impact!**
Questions from the Audience
National Center for Youth Law’s FosterEd CA
Minsun Meeker
Director

National Center for Youth Law’s FosterEd: California
The Secret Formula 1+2+3: Improving Attendance for Our Most Vulnerable Students

Tuesday, August 8, 2017
Our Vision

FosterEd operates in multiple states to build a reality in which the vast majority of system-involved youth graduate high school with the widest array of possibilities for their future.

We work to ensure that students in foster care and involved in the juvenile justice system are positively engaged in school and learning, empowered to take charge of their educational futures, and have meaningful relationships with caring adults who support their educational success.
Foster Youth and Attendance

• Nationally, 1 in 100 children spent time in the foster care system in 2015

• Research consistently shows that students in foster care experience high rates of student mobility, which negatively impacts attendance

• A 2014 report from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago found that about 1/3 of California foster students had missed at least a month of school at some point due to changes in their home placement

• A study from Policy Lab at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia followed a cohort of children who entered foster care in Philadelphia between 2006 and 2008, and found those children missed twice as many school days as children in the district overall
FosterEd’s Systems Improvement Framework – Tiered Interventions

Education Liaisons (mentors) provide individualized and long term (18 month to 2-year) intensive interventions (weekly) serving highest needs students.

Responsive Education Liaisons provide short-term (3-4 month) youth-level interventions triggered by a pressing student need putting them at risk of dropout.

Successful implementation of system-level policies and practices ensuring youth are accessing academic and SEL interventions intended for all students.
Practice Framework

Education Champions who can support the student's long-term success

Student Centered Engagement using positive youth development principles to build strong connections with every young person

Education Team of engaged adults, including the Education Champion, caregiver, agency staff, and youth

Promoting student empowerment, connections, and engagement

Student enters State Care or Supervision →

Student graduates with wide array of possibilities for future
Working with Education Champions to Improve Student Attendance

FosterEd strategies to improve student attendance include working with Education Champions on each of the following:

• Understanding the importance of consistent attendance
• Strategies to encourage the student to attend school regularly
• Improving communication between school and home to encourage and ensure regular attendance
Working with Education Teams to Improve Student Attendance

FosterEd strategies to improve student attendance include working with Education Teams on each of the following:

• Setting clear goals to improve student attendance

• Ensuring that each broad goal related to student attendance has associated action steps and intermediate milestones

• Encouraging all team members to take on some actions and responsibilities related to attendance goals
Evidence of Effectiveness

An independent evaluation of FosterEd’s work in Santa Cruz County found the following:

• About two-thirds of students who entered FosterEd without very high attendance rates increased their attendance rates (see graph at right)

• The vast majority of students who entered FosterEd with a very high attendance rate maintained it
What can schools do to support foster youth attendance?

1. Support students in staying in their school-of-origin, provide transportation when necessary by implementing the foster youth education stability/transportation provisions of the federal ESSA

2. Raise attendance issues ASAP with student’s “team” – e.g., caregivers, education rights holder, social workers, and other supportive adults in the student’s life – and coordinate strategies to improve attendance

3. Provide professional development opportunities for staff on the needs of foster youth students, particularly around trauma-informed care and connecting with caregivers
For More Information
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mmeeker@youthlaw.org
213-988-7091
National Center for Youth Law: www.youthlaw.org
FosterEd: www.foster-ed.org

Sources

Questions from the Audience
UCSF HEARTS
(Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools)

San Francisco Unified School District
Trauma-Informed Approach

Dr. Martha Merchant
Psychologist
UCSF HEARTS

Silvia Cordero
Principal
San Francisco Unified School District
El Dorado
Cognitive Skills that Can Be Affected by Complex Trauma

(Cole et al., 2005)
Shift Your Perspective

What is wrong with you?!

What has happened to you?

Healthy Environments And Response to Trauma in Schools

- Empowerment & Collaboration
- Resilience & Social Emotional Learning
- Compassion & Dependability
- Leadership
- Cultural Humility & Responsiveness
- Safety & Predictability

Understand Trauma & Stress

Students and Families

Staff

Modified from SFDPH Trauma Informed Systems Initiative, 2015

J. Dorado (2015), UCSF HEARTS, Child & Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH
Understanding Trauma and Stress

Classroom Strategy: Brain Breaks for Stress Relief

Take deep breath

J. Dorado & L. Dolce (2013), UCSF HEARTS, Child & Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH
We are practicing to be kind, friendly and respectful.
More informed staff

Established common school-wide practices/language

Talking about social emotional development alongside academic development
17 % decrease in chronic absenteeism

27% increase in time on task
36% increase in time in class
(year end surveys at all schools)

87% decrease in referrals
95% decrease in suspensions
(after 5 years in one school)

J. Dorado (2015), UCSF HEARTS, Child & Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH
Healthy Environments And Response to Trauma in Schools

- **Understand Trauma & Stress**
- **Leadership**
- **Cultural Humility & Responsiveness**
- **Safety & Predictability**
- **Compassion & Dependability**
- **Students and Families**
- **Staff**
- **Empowerment & Collaboration**
- **Resilience & Social Emotional Learning**

Modified from SFDPH Trauma Informed Systems Initiative, 2015

J. Dorado (2015), UCSF HEARTS, Child & Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH
Resources

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network
  - www.nctsn.org
    - For Educators: Resources for School Personnel

- Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative
  - Helping Traumatized Children Learn (Cole et al.)
    - Freely downloadable at traumasensitiveschools.org/

- Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt: Strategies for Your Classroom (Susan Craig)

- Fostering Resilient Learners (Kristin Souers & Peter A. Hall)

- Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain (Zaretta Hammond)
Resources

• The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel)
  • www.iirp.org

• The Heart of Learning: Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success (Ray Wolpow, et al.)
  • Freely downloadable at the website below
  • http://www.k12.wa.us/CompassionateSchools/HeartofLearning.aspx

• Lost at School (Ross Greene) (Collaborative Problem Solving)
  • www.livesinthebalance.org

• Mindfulness in Education
  • www.mindfuleducation.org/resources.html

J. Dorado (2014), UCSF HEARTS, Child & Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH
Acknowledgements

• Lynn Dolce, MFT, for collaboration on UCSF HEARTS Training of Trainers Curriculum
• San Francisco Unified School District
• Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative
• UCSF HEARTS made possible through generous funding from Metta Fund, as well from the John and Lisa Pritzker Family Fund; the SF Dept. of Children, Youth, and Their Families (Mayor’s Wellness Fund); Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP; The Tipping Point Foundation; and SFUSD School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds
Questions from the Audience
Discussion
Cecelia Leong
Associate Director for Programs
Attendance Works
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 9/13!
- Promotional toolkit will be available soon with social media messages, graphics and more.
#PromiseChat Twitter Chat
Working Together to Reduce Chronic Absence
Thursday, August 17
3:00pm ET/2:00pm CT
Resources Available

- Attendance Campaign Webinar Series
- Regular Email Blasts to Campaign Supporters
- Count Us In! Toolkit
- Attendance Awareness Month Website
- Research Brief
Join for the Entire 2017 Webinar Series

- **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/
Support AAC 2017

http://www.attendanceworks.org/donate-to-attendance-works/
The Essential Resource for Planning

• 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

Deadline for EdWeek Ad: September 1st

To sign-up for the Call to Action, or to learn more, please visit: www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action
Webinar Recording

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:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Secret-Formula
Thank you to our sponsors!

With special appreciation to:

Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Kellogg Foundation
The California Endowment