

Using Data to Drive Action: Portraits of Chronic Absence





Welcome



Marci Young

Vice President

U.S. Network Impact

(Education, Income & Health)

United Way Worldwide





2016 Convening Partners





2015 By the Numbers

- More than **400 communities** in **45 states** pinned on the **Attendance Action Map**
- **182,300** website page views in **September**
- **4,400** listserv subscribers
- **1,351** media hits
- **8,800** tweets using **#schooleveryday** creating **15.7** million impressions
- **212** superintendents signed **Call to Action** appearing in **EdWeek**



2016 Campaign Goals

- **Expand the public's awareness** of the importance of attendance particularly for our most vulnerable children with special attention to addressing barriers related physical and behavioral health;
- **Use data** to drive and take action; and
- **Activate a wide array of stakeholders** -- educators and likely and unlikely public agencies and community allies



What's New in 2016

- **Greater emphasis on strategic messaging throughout the year** with September as a launch activity.
- **Leveraging Every Student, Every Day Initiative** (including national success mentor initiative, June Summit, OCR data release)
- New momentum created by inclusion of chronic absence in **ESSA**
- Even greater emphasis on the chronic absence as a **barrier to equal opportunity to learn**, especially for our most vulnerable students.



Attendance Works



Cecelia Leong

Associate Director for Programs
Attendance Works



Hedy Chang

Executive Director
Attendance Works

**& Members of the
Attendance Works Team**



Poll Question

**Do you know your school or district's
chronic absence rate?**



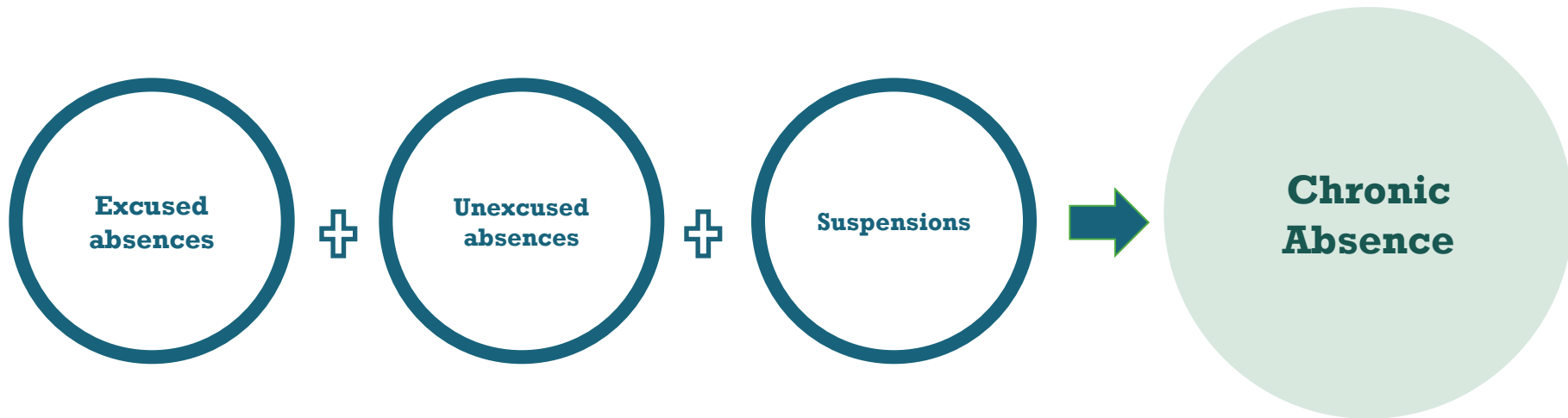
Agenda

- **Review of Key Concepts**
- **Portraits of Chronic Absence: Oregon, New Jersey and Mississippi**
 - **Betsy Hammond**
The Oregonian
 - **Cynthia Rice**
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
 - **Linda Southward**
Mississippi KIDS COUNT
 - **Toni Kersh**
Mississippi Department of Education
- **Data Tools**
- **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

Average Daily Attendance

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.

Truancy

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.

Chronic Absence

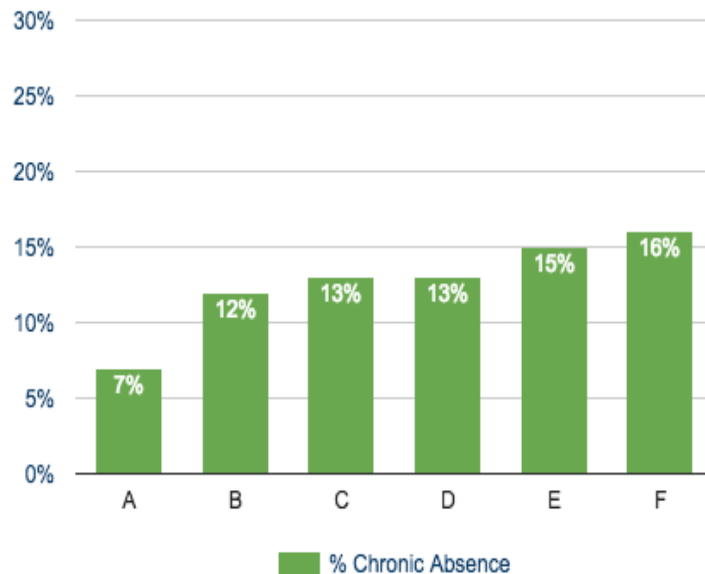
Who is missing so much school they are academically at risk? Broadly means missing too much school for any reason -- excused, unexcused, etc. Researchers commonly define it as missing 10% of school. OCR currently defines it as missing 15 days and will be releasing a report in Summer 2016. Chronic absence is a required reporting metric in ESSA.



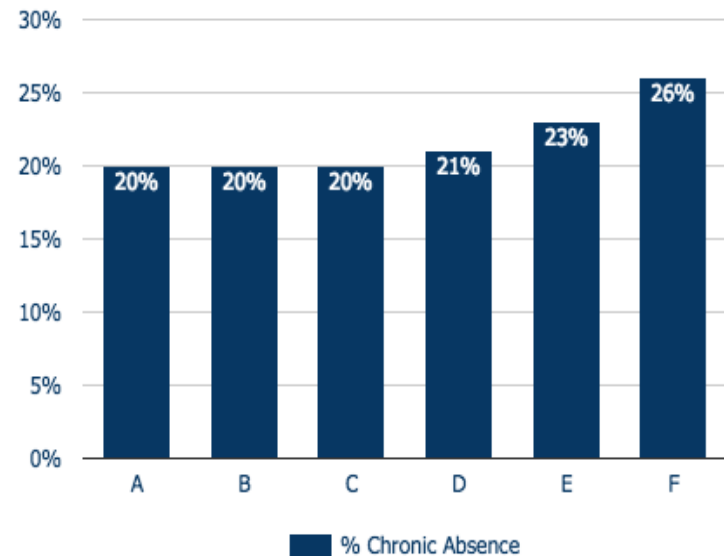
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% \neq 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



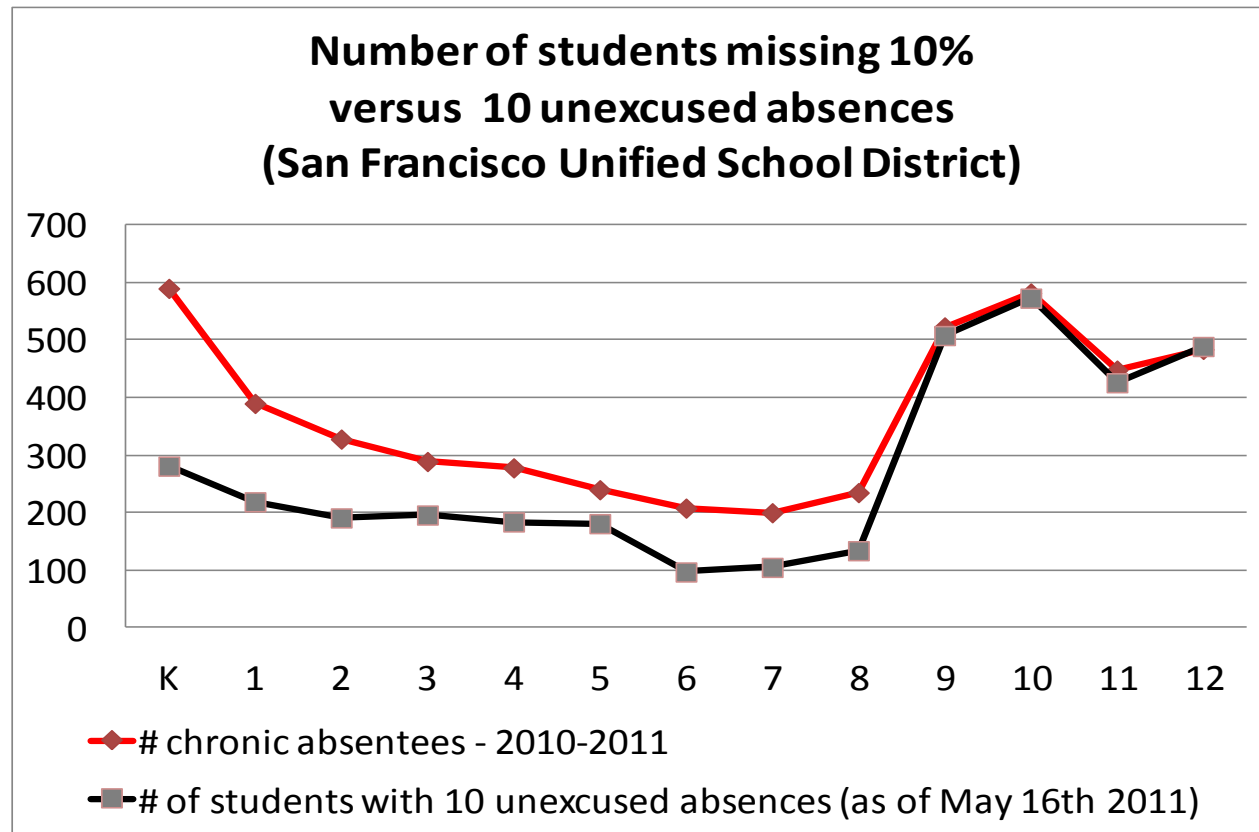
98% ADA = little chronic absence

95% ADA = don't know

93% ADA = significant chronic absence



Chronic Absence Vs. Truancy





Chronic Absence Is Easily Masked If We Only Monitor Missing Consecutive days

September					October					November					December					January				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
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		X	X					X				X			X	X				X	X	X		

February					March					April					May					June				
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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





Why Does Attendance Matter?



Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance
For more info go to <http://www.americaspromise.org/parent-engagement-toolkit>



Chronic Early Absence Connected to Poor Long- Term Academic Outcomes

Chronic absence in
kindergarten

Lower levels of
literacy in first grade

Lower achievement as
far out as fifth grade

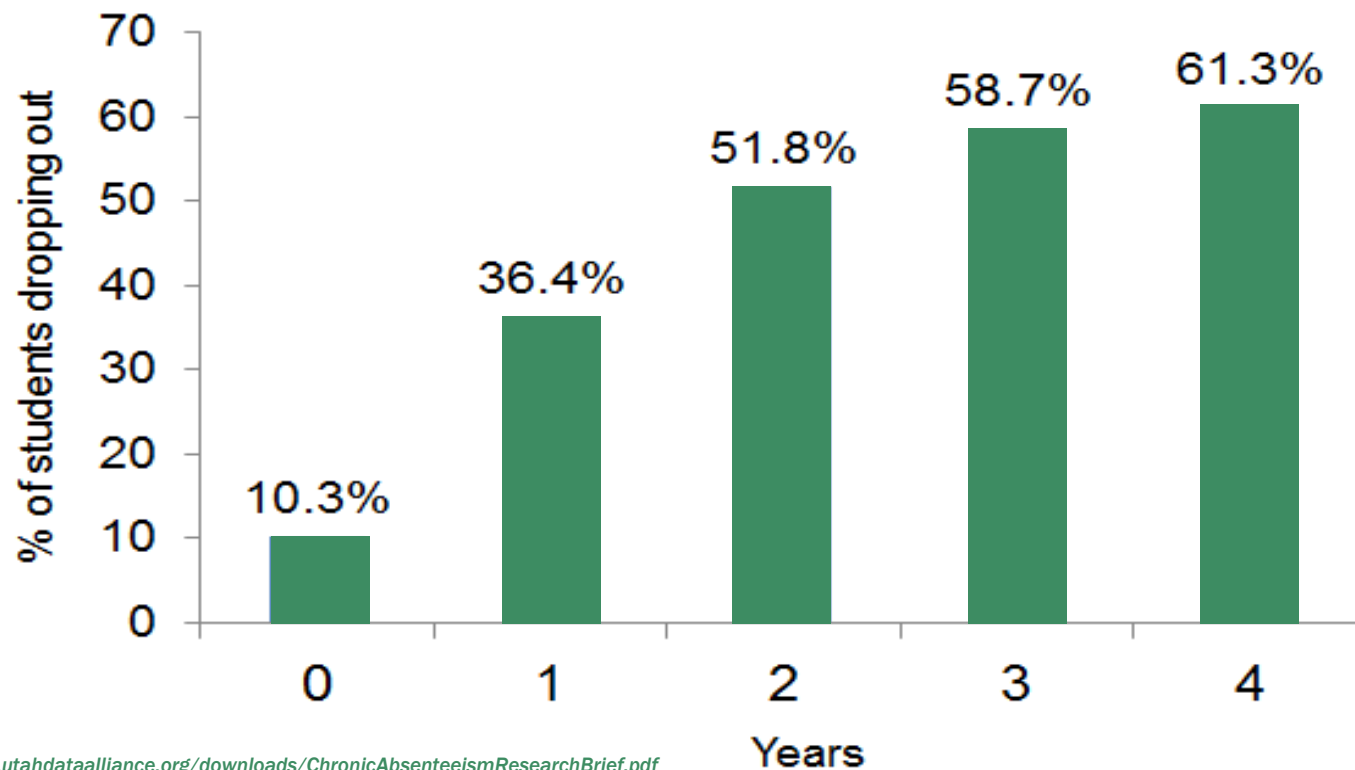
A Rhode Island Data Hub analysis found that compared to kindergartners who attend regularly, those chronically absent:

- 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

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

- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Poor Transportation
- Trauma
- No safe path to school
- Homelessness

Aversion

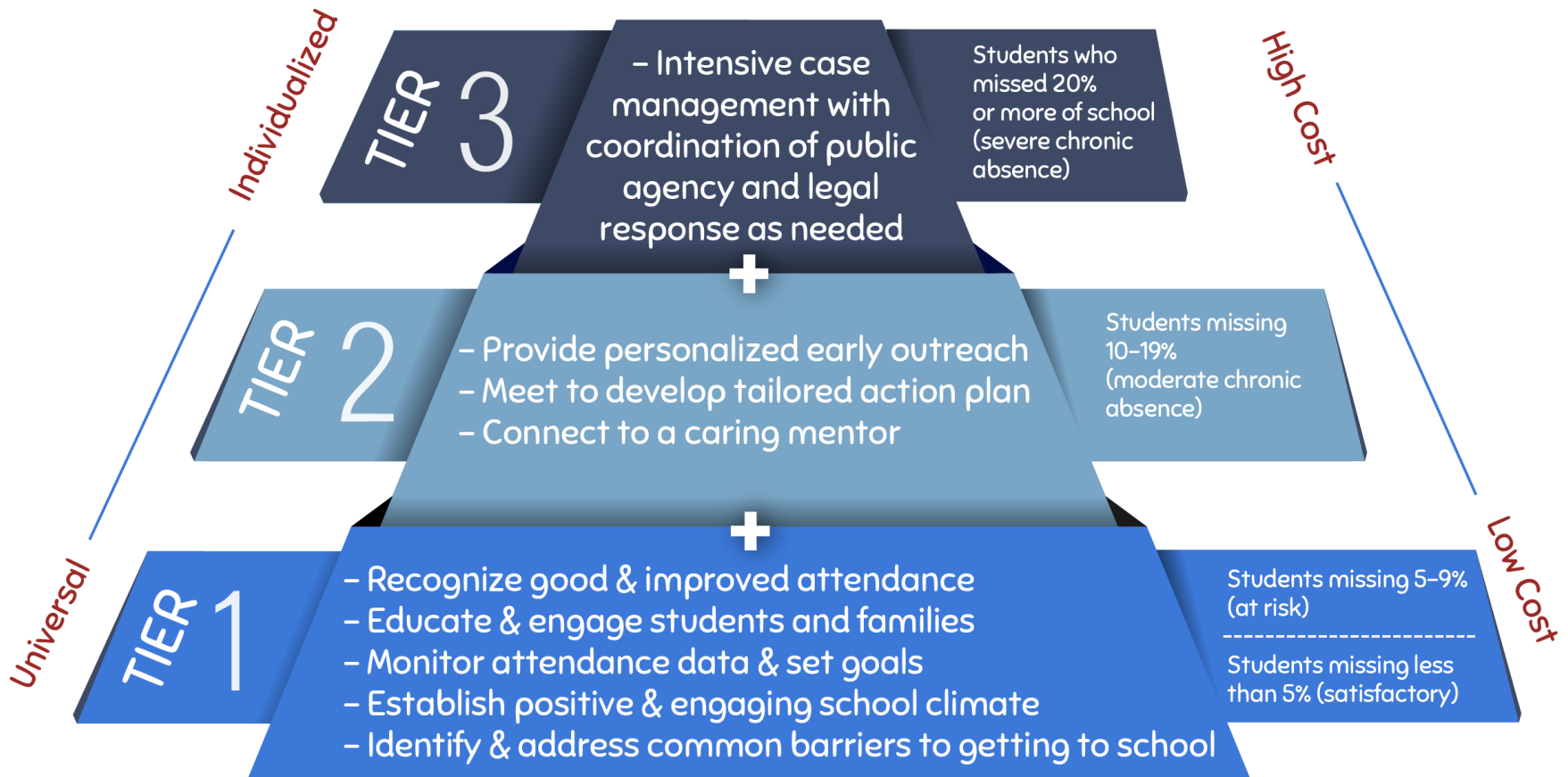
- Child struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Ineffective school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience
- Undiagnosed disability

Disengagement

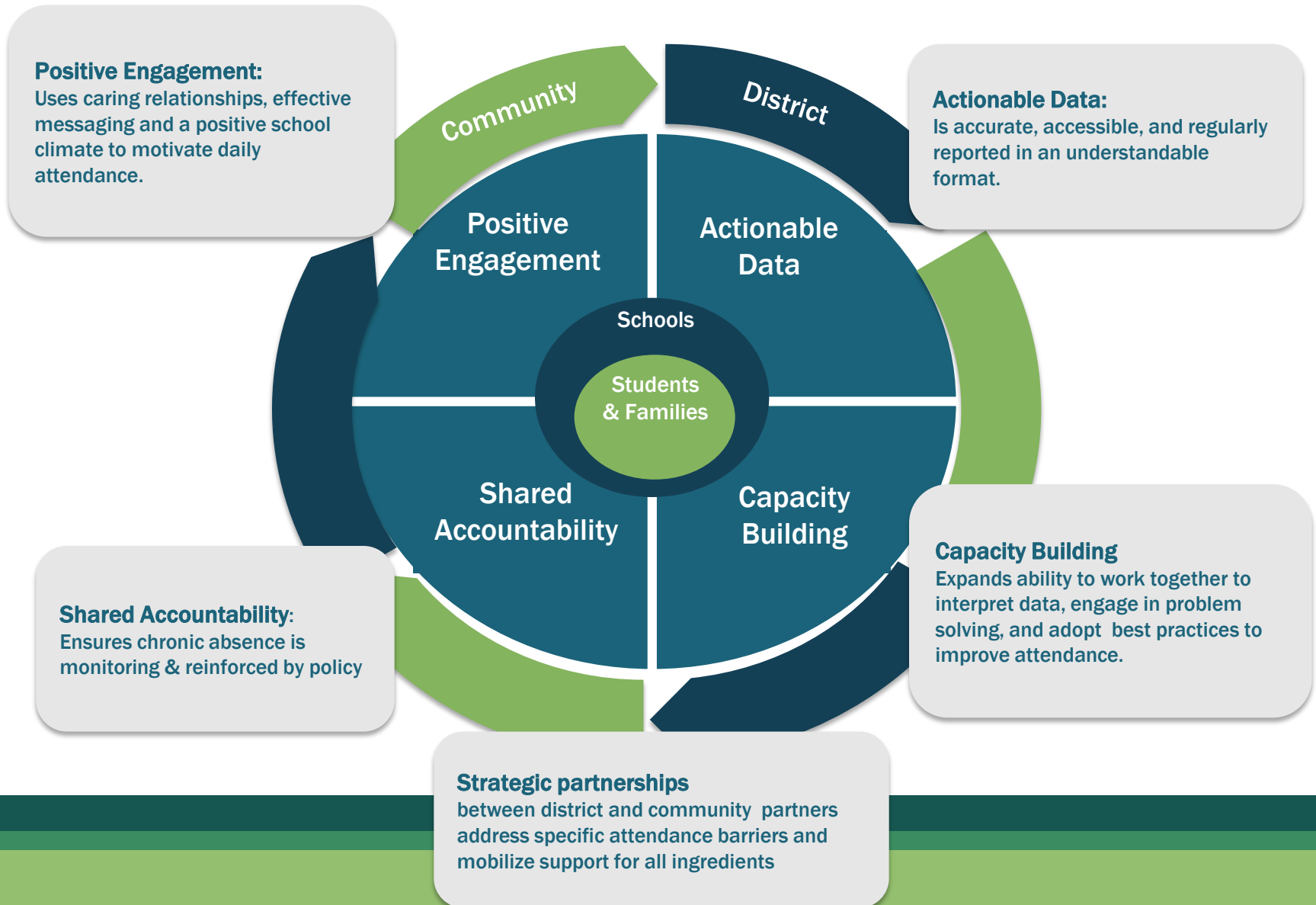
- Lack of engaging and relevant instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
- Poor school climate



Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention



Take a Data Driven Systemic Approach





National Chronic Absence Data in 2016

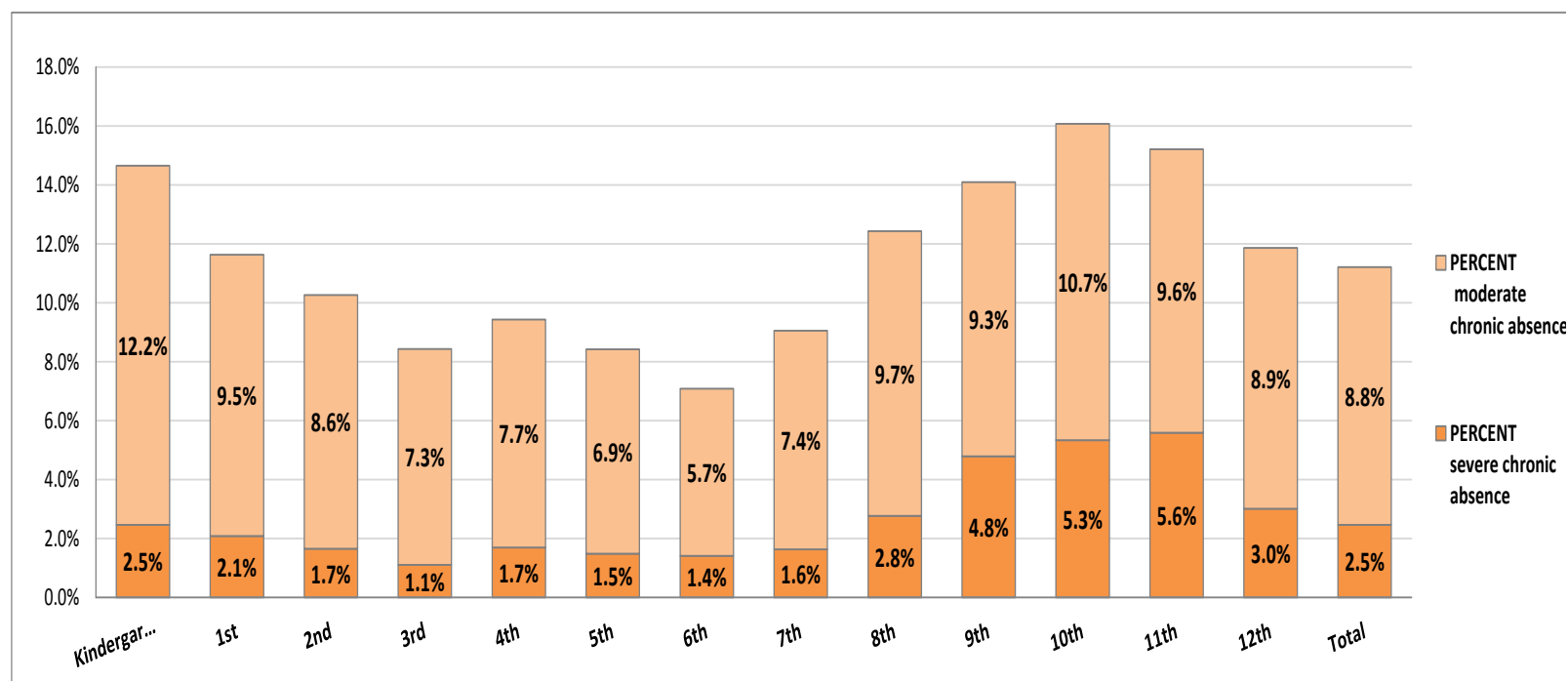


In Summer 2016, the Office of Civil Rights will release the first national data on chronic absence from its 2013-14 survey.



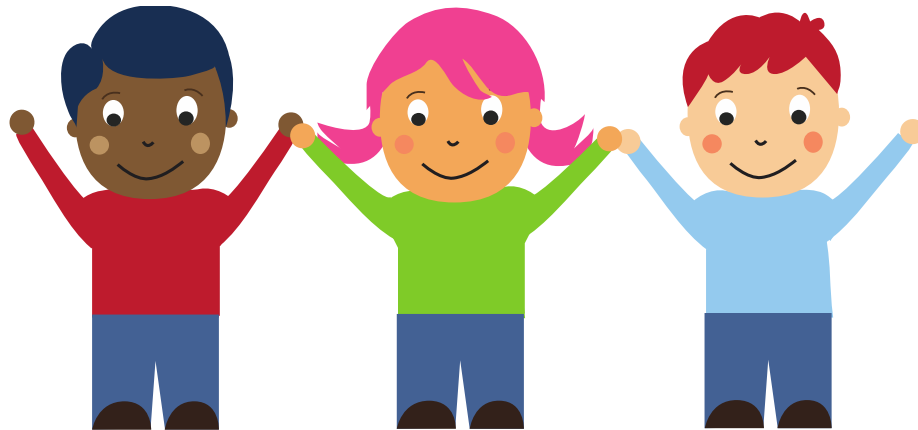
Data is a flashlight

What percentage of students in each grade level were MODERATELY or SEVERELY chronically absent?



It can illuminate how many and which students are chronically absent

Oregon





Oregon



Betsy Hammond

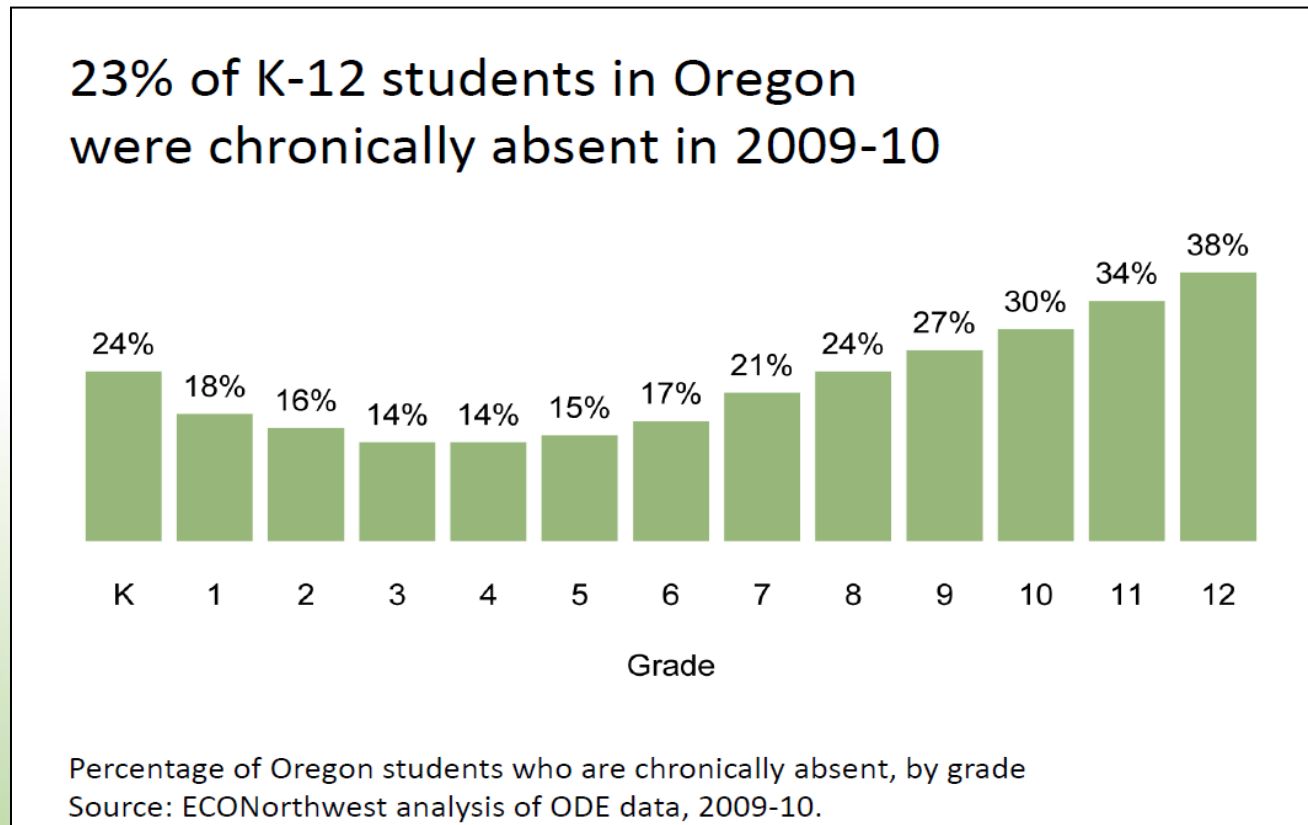
Education Reporter
The Oregonian

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betsyhammond@oregonian.com

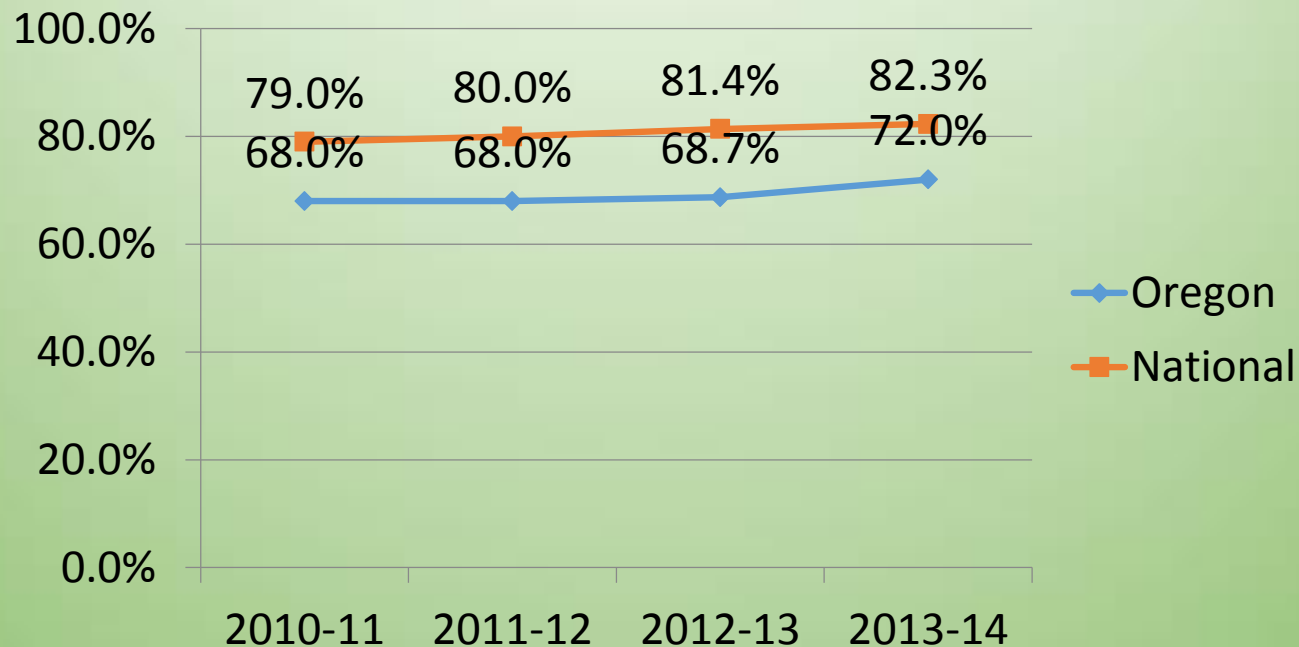
503-294-7623

Why look into chronic absenteeism?



A 2012 statewide study by Attendance Works and Oregon research partners indicated nearly a quarter of Oregon students were chronically absent. *Could that possibly be true?*

What is the link between absenteeism and graduation rates?



Oregonians were puzzled why Oregon has one of the lowest graduation rates in the nation. Absenteeism a logical driver of low graduation rates.

Source: <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/data-element-explorer.cfm/tab/data/deid/5320/sort/iup/>

In February 2014, The Oregonian ran a 5-part series about the state's epidemic of chronic absenteeism

The Sunday Oregonian

\$2.00

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FEBRUARY 9, 2014

Ex-health official's past work had issues

Oregon officials say they didn't know about California's inquiry into her contract dealings

By Jeff Manning
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Miss Budnick
mbudnick@oregonian.com

Carolyn Lawson, the former Oregon Health Authority official at the center of the state's Oregon Health Insurance exchange, was investigated by the state of California for inappropriate contracting in 2008. The Oregonian has learned.

Upon being hired by the California Public Utility Commission in 2008, Lawson funneled five contracts worth nearly \$500,000 in a four-month period to the small consulting company run by her former boss.

Lawson later hired as her senior deputy in Oregon.

When Lawson was asked to resign in December, the state promoted Powell to replace her. In three years Powell rose from running a tiny consulting company to being interim chief information officer for the Oregon Health Authority and the Department of Human Services, one of the highest-ranking technology jobs in the state.

The California incident raises more questions about Lawson's judgment and decision-making, issues that have already come up in the still-unfolding controversy over Oregon's health exchange, Cover Oregon.

State officials were tight-lipped about the matter Friday, other than saying they didn't know about California's contracting investigation when they hired Lawson.

"This was not disclosed by Lawson or any of her references," OHA spokeswoman Patty Wentz said.

Lawson could not be reached for comment. Powell declined to comment.

Despite spending more than \$160 million on the project, the state was forced by the botched project to devise a stopgap apparatus to manually process health

Please see HEALTH, Page A17

'Atrocious' attendance puts learning at risk

Empty desks | No state looks worse

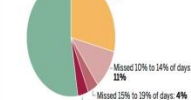


MICHAEL LLOYD/THE OREGONIAN

A single empty desk is not normally a cause for alarm. More than 99 percent of students miss at least a day of school. But Oregon has an epidemic of chronic absenteeism that goes unnoticed. A student who misses school two days a month ends up missing more than a tenth of the school year, enough to put him or her in academic jeopardy.

Rampant absenteeism

One in 5 Oregon students missed 10 percent or more of the school year in 2012-13.



Source: Analysis by Betty Hammond of The Oregonian, using 2012-13 school year data from the Oregon Department of Education.

Absent from class

About 100,000 Oregon students missed 10 percent or more of the 2012-13 school year.



Note: Excludes students who enrolled after the midpoint of the school year and those attending alternative schools.

DAN ADAMS/THE OREGONIAN

Go to oregonlive.com/education to find:

- A searchable database with absentee statistics on every public school in Oregon
- Interactive maps where you can zoom in to find statistics by school and area, with schools color-coded to show low, medium and high proportions of chronically absent students
- An interactive chart that shows the relationship between absenteeism and economic status
- Videos on absenteeism's disastrous effect on education, on Vermont and its struggle with high absenteeism, and on Classroom High School and its successful approach to enforcing attendance
- Photo galleries and online-only stories
- An invitation to share your experiences with absenteeism, whether as a parent, educator or community member

By Betty Hammond
bettyhammond@oregonian.com

A huge but overlooked problem is jeopardizing the success of tens of thousands of Oregon students, leaving them at risk of never learning to read well or failing to graduate from high school.

It's not class size, curriculum or teacher training.

It's attendance.

Last school year nearly 1 in 5 Oregon students missed at least 10 percent of the school year, an investigation by The Oregonian shows. Those roughly 100,000 students were absent 3½ weeks of school or more, in most cases without raising alarms at their school.

No other state has been shown to have a chronic absenteeism rate as bad as Oregon's.

"It's atrocious," said Rob Saxton, Oregon schools chief.

Students are deemed chronically absent if they miss 10 percent or more of school days.

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The Oregonian

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Empty desks | The listless truths

Early missed classes hold kids back for years

Unlikely pair back marijuana measure

By Jeff Mason
jeffmason@oregonian.com

SALEM — Norman Frink and Mark McDonnell, two former Multnomah County prosecutors with tough-on-crime reputations, say they decided after the 2012 election that marijuana legalization was coming to Oregon.

That's the year when Washington and Colorado became the first states to legalize marijuana and when an underfunded and much more wide-open legalization initiative in Oregon failed by less than 7 percentage points.

"It's going to happen," said Frink, who retired last year as the county's chief deputy district attorney. "This is just a political fact in Oregon, even if some people don't want to admit it."

As a result, Frink and McDonnell, who headed the district attorney's drug unit before retiring, on Tuesday announced that they wanted legislators to refer a marijuana legalization measure to voters in November.

In doing so, the two former prosecutors joined the Oregon District Attorneys Association, the Oregon State Sheriff's Association and the chiefs of Peace and Justice.

In Metro
• Bills dealing with problem gambling bills pass House | **BL**
• Developments on Native American treaties and bird hunting | **B6**

Follow our coverage of the Oregon Legislature's session at OregonLive.com/politics

One-fourth of Oregon 1st-graders are Latino

By Betty Hammond
bettyhammond@oregonian.com

Latino students make up one-fourth of Oregon's first-grade enrollment, a record-high share, the state's new data shows.

The proportion of Oregon students who are Latino has slowly but steadily increased in recent years, while the share of students who are white non-Hispanic has declined.

At the Oregon Department of Education, the share of students who are Latino has grown from 20 percent in 2000 to 25 percent in 2012.

Over the past four years, Latino enrollment in Oregon public schools has grown by 15,000 students, to 125,000, while white enrollment has dropped by nearly 15,000, to 114,000.

Latino students make up a larger proportion of Oregon's youngest students



BETTY HAMMOND/THE OREGONIAN

Michelle Eggleston, who teaches kindergarten and first grade at Vernonia Elementary, gets her students to work tirelessly because learning to read requires mastering so much information. She uses songs, movement and encouragement to keep it fun and keep her students engaged. "Kiss your brain," she says after they master a new sound. "You are getting smarter!"

Kindergarten's long shadow

Students who miss too much kindergarten trail their peers even years later.



Source: 2012-13 Oregon Department of Education data.

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Questions for Betty Hammond? Join Betty at oregonlive.com/education at 10 a.m. with questions, comments and personal experiences.

Please see ABSENT, Page A16

By Betty Hammond
bettyhammond@oregonian.com

Some of the most frequent truths in Oregon aren't sunny high school students or moody middle schoolers. They're 6-year-olds, almost one-fifth of whom missed at least 10 percent of first grade in 2012-13.

Rampant first-grade absenteeism is most common in poor rural communities, including the Warm Springs reservation and in small towns such as Gresham, Myrtle Point and La Pine, an investigation by The Oregonian found.

But it happens in Happy Valley, Northwest Portland and Fairview, too. First-graders who miss three or four weeks of school are likely to trail behind their classmates years later, even if they start coming to school regularly, teachers say and studies confirm.

That's because, for most Oregon children, first grade is the magic year during which they learn to follow along with their classmates, to read simple sentences and to write simple words.

As kindergartners, students learn to map sounds onto letters, form them into words and read simple sentences. In first grade, young students upgrade and fine-tune those skills, so that unlearning chains of letters and words becomes automatic and

the meaning can shine through. But students who stay home from school once every two weeks or so during those critical early years don't get proper introduction to some letters, blends and sight words, then get insufficient practice modeling them into words and phrases.

A first grader out for only one day misses at least an hour and a half of intensive coaching and practice at reading.

"What we find is those kids get stuck," said Cyndi Hager, achievement specialist at Fairview Elementary in Southeast Portland. "They're still having to sound out every word because they just haven't had enough practice. They get bogged down and can't go faster, can't understand that it's a sentence that has meaning."

Across Oregon, 10 percent of first-graders missed at least 10 percent of last school year, leaving most of them

Please see ABSENT, Page A16

Oregon's absenteeism epidemic

Sunday: Rampant absenteeism puts thousands of students at risk of failure.

Tuesday: Missing too much first grade sets students back for years.

Wednesday: Despite a sparkling new school, Vernonia students skip at sky-high rates.

Thursday: Middle and high school absences put diplomas in jeopardy.

Friday: Vigilance at Classroom High School helps keep kids in class.

Saturday: Vigilance at Classroom High School helps keep kids in class.

Sunday: Vigilance at Classroom High School helps keep kids in class.

Monday: Vigilance at Classroom High School helps keep kids in class.

Tuesday: Vigilance at Classroom High School helps keep kids in class.

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Sunday: Vigilance at Classroom High School helps keep kids in class.

The Oregonian

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2014

Empty desks | A culture of not caring

In Vernonia, absences soar as families shrug off school

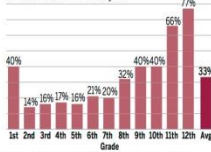


MICHAEL LLOYD/THE OREGONIAN

Justin Ward, who grew up in Vernonia and returned to teach there, is frustrated when families in his hometown don't put a high priority on children attending school.

Vernonia absences

Percentage of students in each grade who missed 10 percent or more of the 2012-13 school year.



Source: Analysis by The Oregonian of 2012-13 attendance data from Oregon Department of Education.
 DAN ALQUIRY/THE OREGONIAN

- Go to oregonlive.com/education to find:**
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By **Betsy Hammond**
betsyhammond@oregonian.com

VERNONIA — This sleepy former mill town, surrounded by miles of verdant forest, is trying to throw off a tradition that may stem from its deep logging roots: It is a community that doesn't put a whole lot of stock in sending its children to school.

At Vernonia Elementary last year, 40 percent of first-graders were chronically absent, missing an average of more than a month of school apiece.

Among high school juniors and seniors, skipping school was epidemic. Seventy-two percent were absent more than 10 percent of the time, and half of those missed the equivalent of five to nine weeks of classes.

Oregon's absenteeism epidemic
Sunday: Rampant absenteeism puts thousands of students at risk of failure.
Wednesday: Missing too much first grade sets students back for years.

Today: Despite a sparkling new school, Vernonia students were what the state terms "chronically absent" because they missed 10 percent or more of the school year.

Surprisingly, however, even school officials who kept the records and walked the halls of the city's sparkling new \$40 million school building had no idea attendance was off-the-charts bad.

In a combined elementary, middle and high school with 540 students

Please see **ABSENT**, Page A9

The Oregonian

5.00

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2014

Empty desks | Diplomas in jeopardy

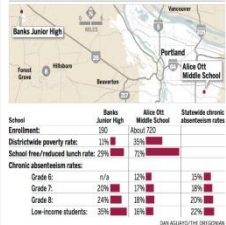
How to ride herd on middle school truants



MICHAEL LLOYD/THE OREGONIAN

Alice Ott Middle School counselors Steve Berner (left) and Alicia Wendler assist Principal James Johnston during a call to the parents of a student who has missed 11 days of the school year. Johnston informed the parents of the consequences of their child's absences, including a possible court-ordered fine.

A tale of two schools



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By Betsy Hammond
betsyhammond@oregonian.com

Last January, Principal Shelley Mitchell realized that Banks Junior High had a big problem. A virus was sweeping through her small town school, infecting every other wave of students.

As the illness peaked, 30 percent of students were absent on single days. Mitchell took offense measures to protect her students and their learning.

She hired an anti-gem team from free-freelance management giant Sodexo, which twice sent cleaners overnight to wipe down each desk, doorknob and wall surfaces.

It was a huge relief, Mitchell recalled, when normalcy returned to the school, which serves remote Banks of rural Washington County as well as the town of Banks. What Mitchell didn't notice, however, was a more significant problem: From September to June, one-fourth of her school's eighth-graders missed nearly a month of school apiece. That was enough to jeopardize their ability to learn math and their likelihood of graduating from high school.

Chronic absenteeism, defined by the state as missing at least 10 percent of the school year, can be devastating to a student's success and can undermine the success of an entire school. It can go unnoticed, as it did in Banks, because students who miss only one or two days a month end up exceeding that 10 percent.

The problem is ubiquitous in Oregon middle schools: rich and poor, urban and rural, large and small. Including magnet schools, Oregon has 223 schools in almost every metro-area district. **Metro, B1**

Inside
View which high schools and middle schools have the best and worst attendance in Oregon. **A5**

The Sunday Oregonian

5.00

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FEBRUARY 16, 2014

Empty desks | Steps to success

Minimum wage can be a boon at state line

Idaho workers come to Oregon for higher pay, in a snapshot of what a federal change could mean

By **Kirk Johnson**
kirkjohnson@oregonian.com

ONTARIO — Carly Lynch dreams of a life one day on the professional rodeo circuit, but for now the 20-year-old from Idaho to work as a waitress. There are restaurants close to home, but she's willing to drive the extra miles for a simple reason: Oregon's minimum wage is \$8.85 higher per hour than Idaho's. "It's a big difference in pay," said Lynch, 20, who would have had more from her parents' home in Boise, 30 miles farther east, to make her Oregon commute more bearable. "I can actually put some in the bank."

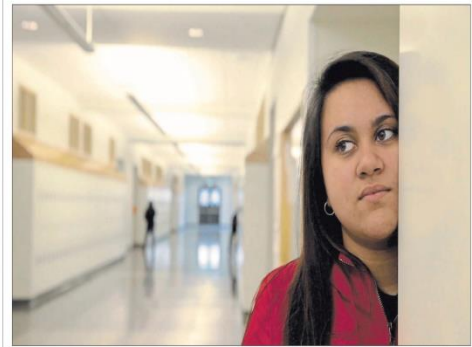
In the nation's debate over the minimum wage, which President Barack Obama has proposed increasing at the federal level to \$10.10 from \$7.25, this handful of Oregon firms and 400 mostly provides a real-time snapshot of how the minimum wage works in daily life, and how differences in the rate can affect a local economy in sometimes unexpected ways.

Lynch is one of the many minimum wage migrants who travel from homes in Idaho, where the rate is \$7.25, to work in Oregon, where it is the second highest in the country at \$8.85. Similar migrations unfold every day in other parts of Idaho at the border with Washington, which has the highest state minimum, \$9.32, and into Nevada, where the minimum rate tops out at \$8.25.

Their experiences underscore what many proponents of raising the wage assert: that even seemingly small increases in pay can galvanize people's lives, allowing workers to quit second jobs, buy cars or take vacations.

See **Wage, A3**

Clackamas High School cracks the attendance code



MICHAEL LLOYD/THE OREGONIAN

Heather Dubaut, a Clackamas High junior, is on track to graduate on time with her class. When she got tired of a pattern of skipping classes and failing them, the school responded with relentless prodding to do better.

By Betsy Hammond
betsyhammond@oregonian.com

Ray Brynswell, dean of students at Clackamas High School, gets straight to the point with Jonathan, a junior at the big suburban school.

"You have 42 missed class periods. I need to know what is going on."

The teen, who enrolled at Clackamas High a few weeks into the school year, did not see this coming. He routinely skipped class at his previous school, and no one called him on it like this.

He verbally dodges and weaves, claiming the records are wrong, that he's been in class, that there was a family emergency, that he's thinking of trying for a GED.

Brynswell, however, has done his homework and has none of it. He often helps by says firmly, "While you are here at Clackamas High, you will go to class."

And like that, the dark-haired junior finds himself on a path familiar to many Clackamas students, one with firm guardrails on each side. School officials will make it impossible to go unnoticed and as difficult as possible to skip class.

There's a reason Clackamas High School has the fourth-lowest chronic absenteeism rate among Oregon's 100 largest high schools and a top-10 graduation rate for low-income students.

Brynswell and other adults have formed a web designed to catch every student who misses its classes, the equivalent of five days of school. They check on red-flagged students every day, calling them how much they care about their success.

They hand out candy and high-fives to students who show. But students who keep skipping may find a parent or community member.

See **ABSENT, A15**

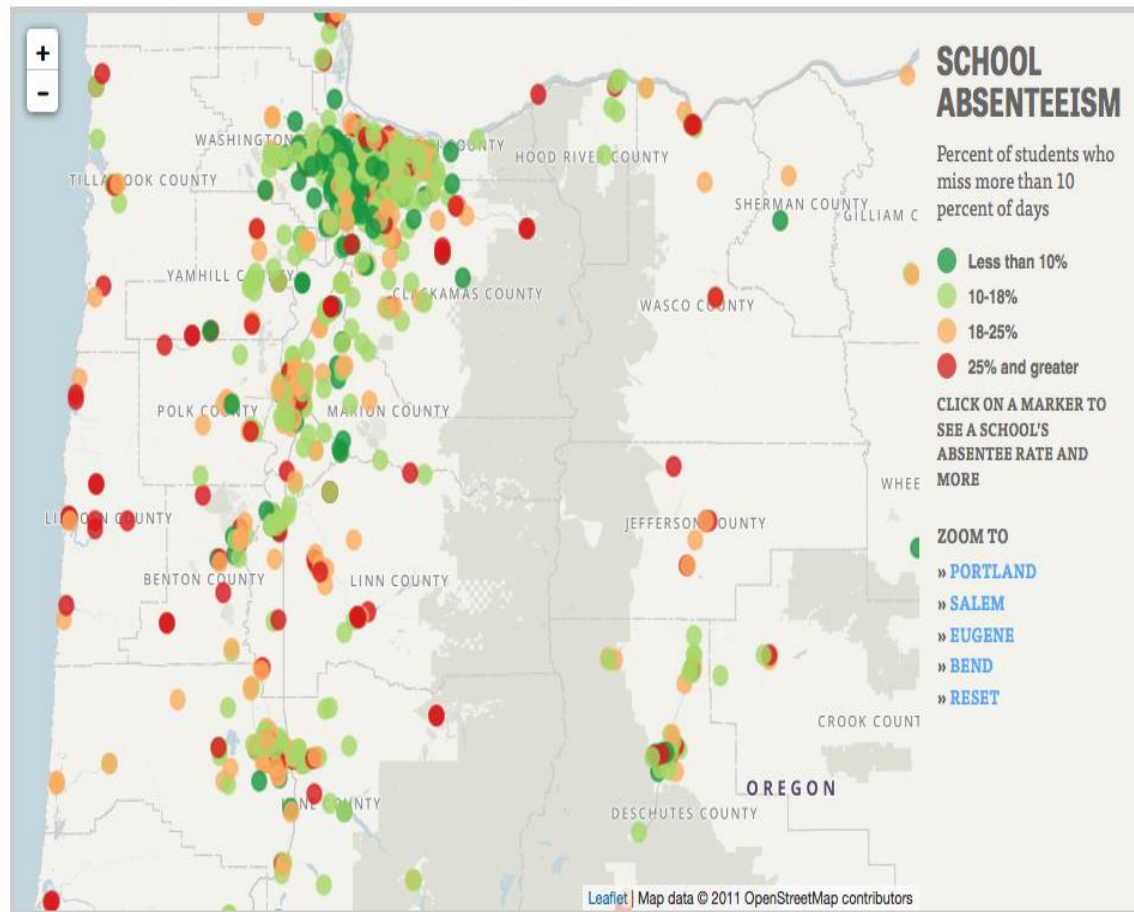
How does Portland's class size stack up?

Teachers' workbooks and class sizes are a huge sticking point in contract negotiations between Portland Public Schools and the union, but they're actually smaller than in almost every metro-area district. Metro, B1

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- An interactive chart that shows the relationship between absenteeism and economic status
- A photo gallery and online story notes
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The Oregonian provided a state-wide picture



Source: Oregon Department of Education

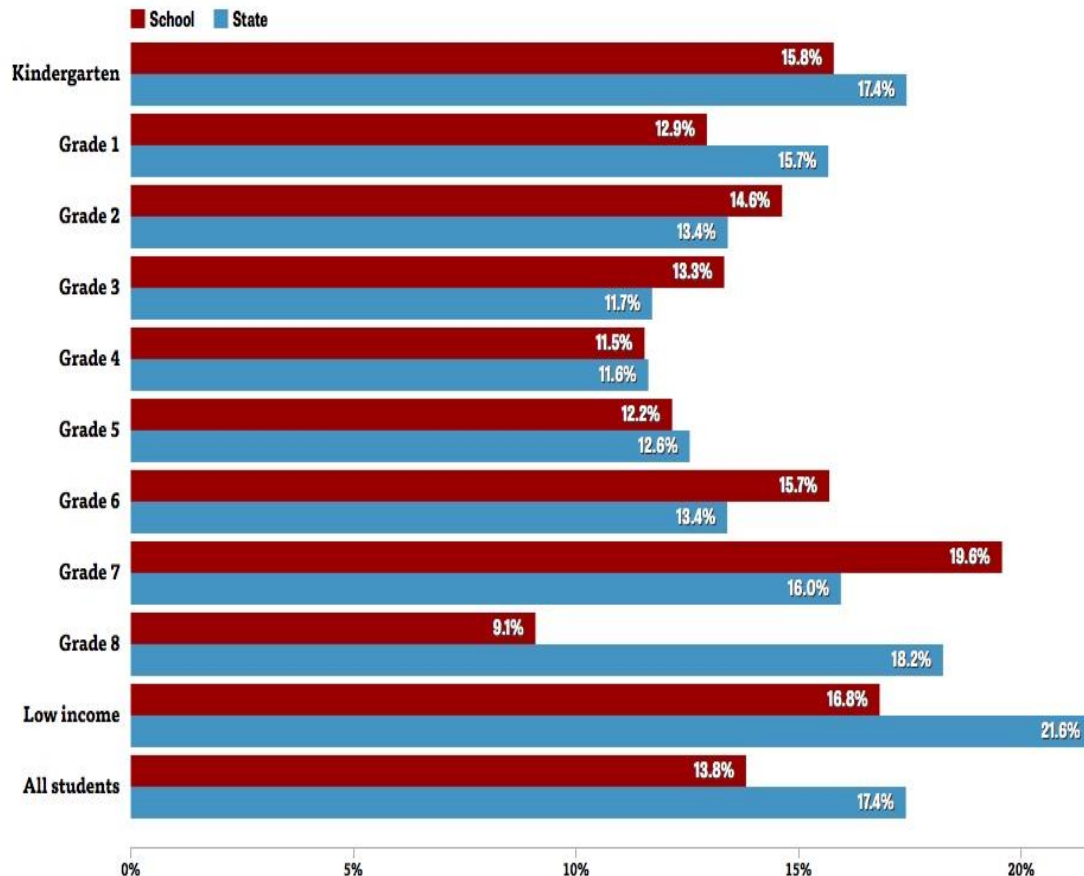
MARK FRIESEN/THE OREGONIAN

Find your school's absentee rate »

Readers needed to see it was in *their* school

2015 Chief Joseph/Ockley Green School absentee rate: **13.8%**

Percentage of Chief Joseph/Ockley Green School students who missed more than 10 percent of school days during the 2014-2015 school year, below broken down by grade and income level and compared with statewide numbers.



[See scores and ratings for all schools in the Portland School District »](#)

Key takeaways of our series

- Problem is worst in the primary grades and in high school
- Oregon's problem is serious and affects every community
- Schools that have excellent attendance don't get it by accident. They track it, talk it up, reward it. Willing to share their blueprints.
- Schools with terrible attendance problems often have no clue it's even an issue
- This is a great cheap fix for poor outcomes. Don't have to redo teacher training, curriculum – just get kids in class

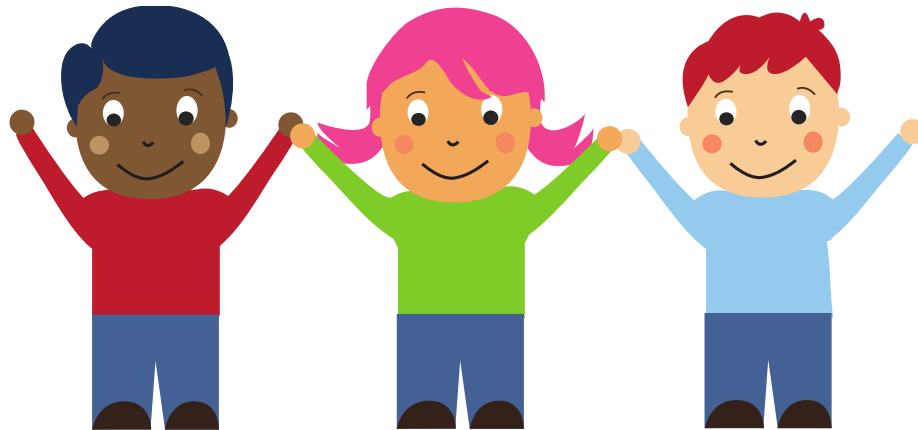
What happened as a result?

- *Public suddenly knew what chronic absenteeism was
- *State's chief education officer named reducing chronic absenteeism as one of 2 top priorities
- *Oregon Department of Education sped up plans to report disaggregated school-level data to the public
- *Legislature awarded \$1.5 million for a pilot program to improve Native American students' attendance
- *Many schools visited the successful high school we highlighted

What can other media outlets do?

- Several newspapers already have done similar stories (I coached other reporters on how to get the data)
- The civil rights data coming out soon will make this easy
- Highlighting success stories and pointing out the worst problems is a natural inclination among reporters

New Jersey



Showing Up Matters: The State of Chronic Absenteeism in New Jersey

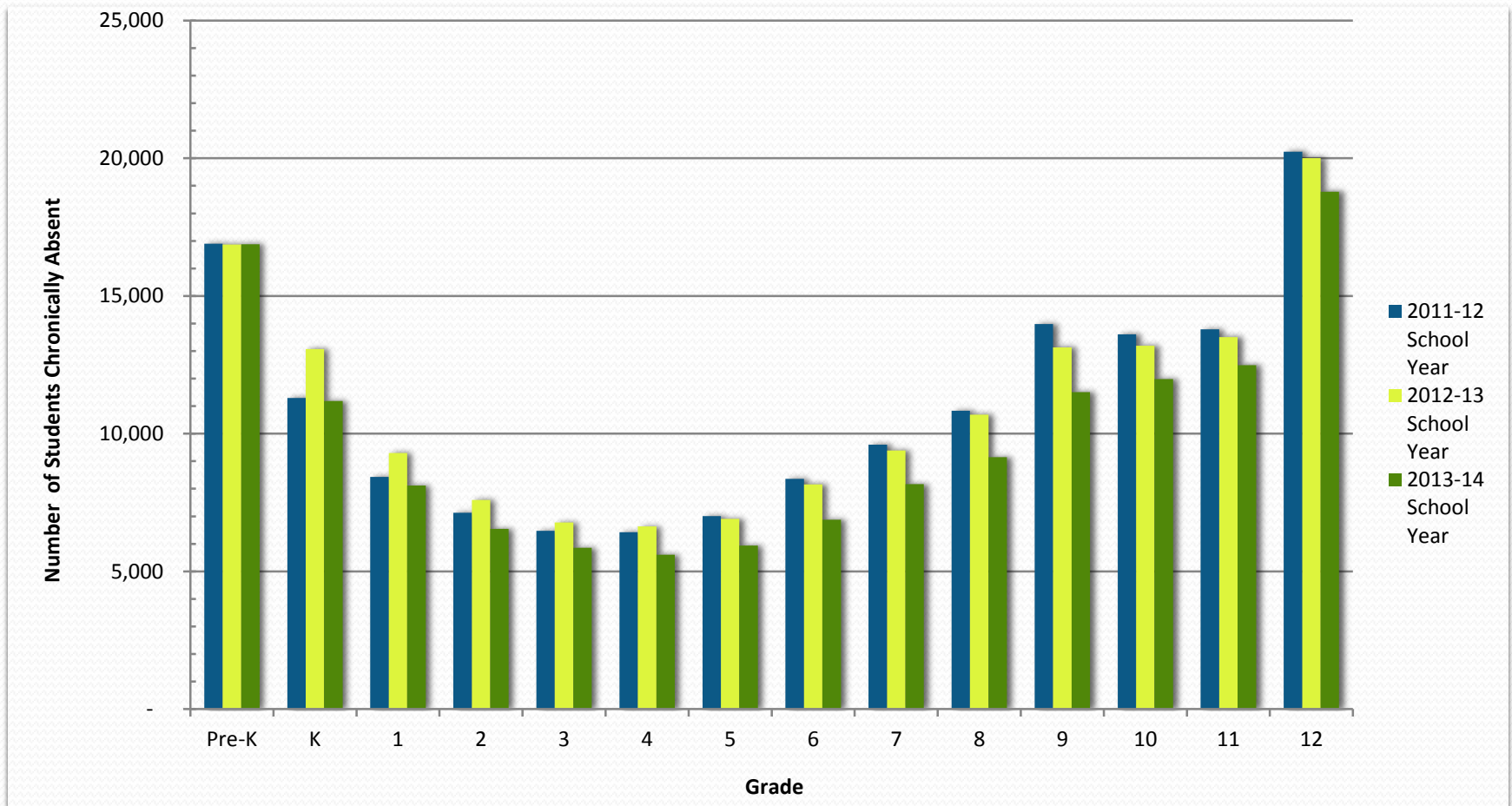


Cynthia C. Rice, Esq.
Advocates for Children of New Jersey



NJ's Chronic Absenteeism by Grade

Source: NJ Department of Education



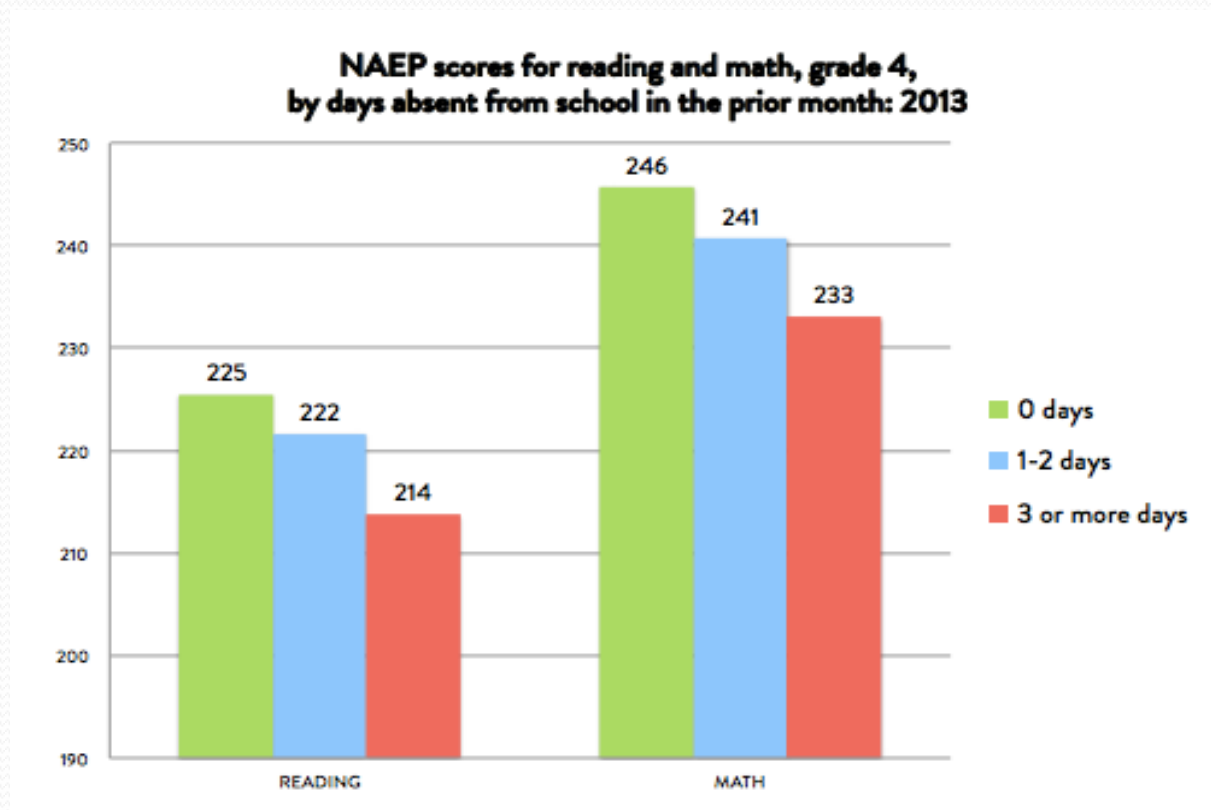
Disaggregated Data on Chronic Absenteeism

Source: NJ Department of Education, 2013-2014

Demographic	Total Enrolled	Enrollment Percentage	Students Chronically Absent	Percentage of Demographic Chronically Absent	Percentage of State's Absenteeism Rate	Median # of School Days Missed
Asian/ Pacific Islander	131,800	9.5%	6,554	5.0%	4.7%	23
Black	226,006	16.2%	33,523	14.8%	24.0%	24
Hispanic	346,473	24.9%	41,990	12.1%	30.1%	23
Multiracial	16,263	1.2%	1,543	9.5%	1.1%	22
White	670,799	48.2%	55,658	8.3%	39.9%	22
STATE TOTAL	1,393,120	-	139,534	10.0%	-	23
Economically Disadvantaged	528,040	37.9%	77,295	14.6%	55.4%	23
Limited English Proficiency	73,491	5.3%	7,545	10.3%	5.4%	24
Homeless	8,005	0.6%	2,219	27.7%	1.6%	24
Immigrant	28,297	2.0%	2,705	9.6%	1.9%	21
Migrant	841	0.1%	84	10.0%	0.1%	21
Special Education	216,290	15.5%	33,281	15.4%	23.9%	24
Female	677,498	48.6%	67,895	10.0%	48.7%	23
Male	715,621	51.4%	71,740	10.0%	51.4%	23

Impact on Chronic Absenteeism on Assessment Outcomes

Source: NJ Department of Education



NJ Districts & their Students who are 10%+ Chronically Absent

In the 2013-2014 School Year:

- 177 NJ school districts had 10%+ of their students who are chronically absent**
- In those districts, the percentage of chronically absent students was on average more than 16%**
- Although these districts made up approximately 30% of the total number of NJ districts, more than 60% of the chronically absent students statewide were educated in their classrooms**

Chronic Absenteeism:

A major barrier to learning

Atlantic County, New Jersey

School Districts with 10 Percent or More of their Students Chronically Absent (2013-14)

School District	Percent of K-3rd Graders Chronically Absent	Percent of 11th & 12th Graders Chronically Absent	Percent of Total K-12 Students Chronically Absent	Total # of K-12 Students Chronically Absent
Atlantic City	18	37	21	1,452
Buena Regional	14	22	17	314
Charter~Tech High School	n/a	36	30	96
Egg Harbor City	18	n/a	18	79
Greater Egg Harbor Regional	n/a	22	18	622
Hamilton Township	10	n/a	11	343
Hammonton Town	6	17	11	396
Mainland Regional	n/a	21	15	206
Margate City	14	n/a	15	66
Pleasantville City	17	44	20	670
Port Republic City	9	n/a	12	15
Somers Point City	13	n/a	13	127
TOTAL: 12 DISTRICTS				4,386

Wait, What
problem??



The Report's Impact...

Bills introduced in both Senate and Assembly that:

- **Would define chronic absenteeism**
- **Require chronic absenteeism to be included in school report cards**
- **Require schools with 10 percent or more of their students identified as chronically absent to convene “coalitions” to develop plans to address the problem**

Newark's Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Years

In focus groups, parents described the struggle to get kids to school:

- Health issues
- Transporting children to school
- Conflicting work and school schedules
- Weather and safety

Each factor was exacerbated by Newark's high poverty rate.

Next Steps in Newark

- **Newark Public Schools**
 - Internal Working Group
 - Attendance Committee-Community stakeholders
- **City of Newark**
 - Mayor's Office
 - Newark Children's Cabinet



Contact Information

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Mississippi





Mississippi



Linda Southward

Director

Mississippi KIDS COUNT

*Coordinator, Family & Children's
Research Unit, Social Science Research
Center, Mississippi State University*



Toni Kersh

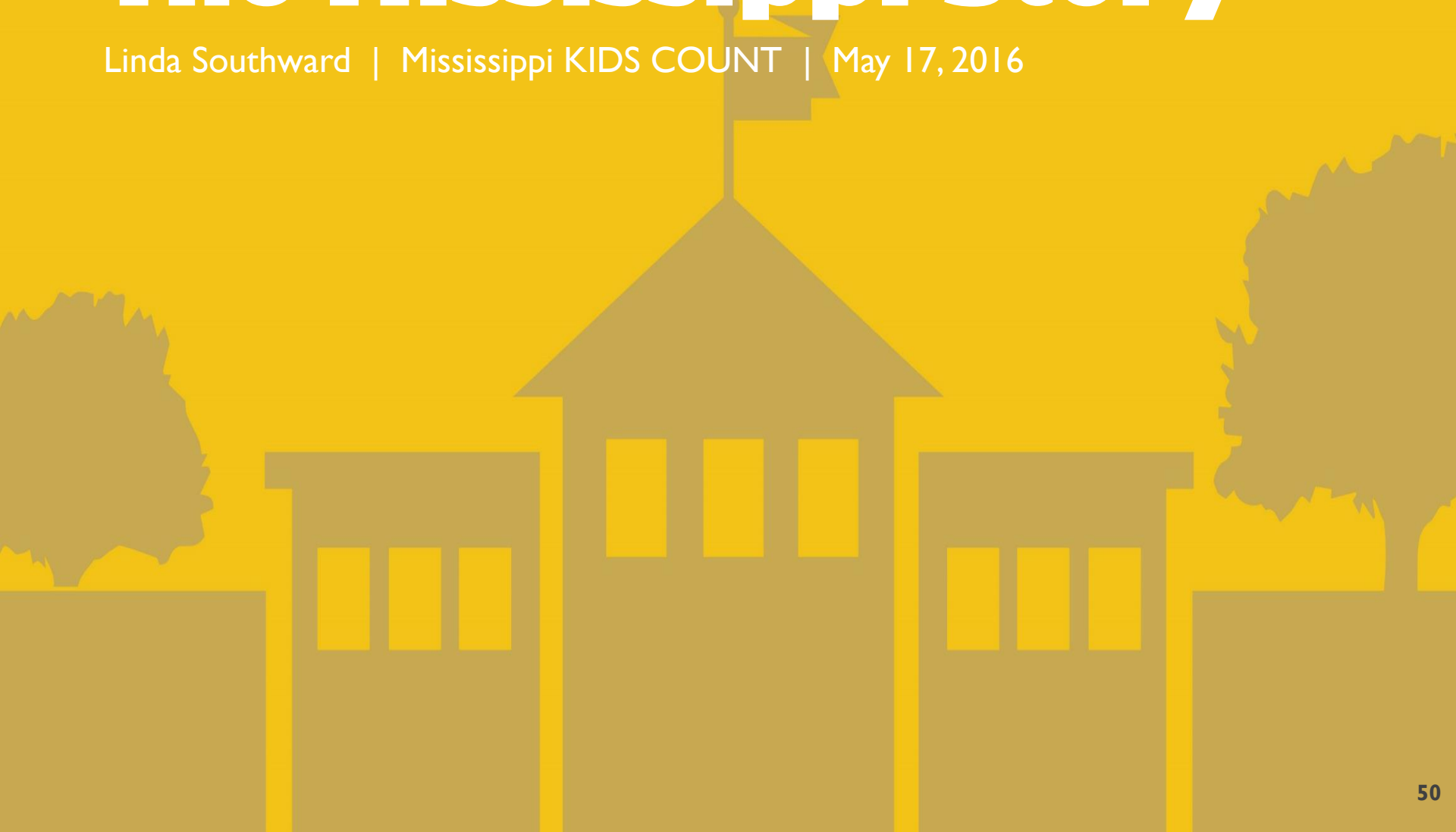
Bureau Director

*Office of Compulsory School
Attendance Enforcement*

Mississippi Department of Education

The Mississippi Story

Linda Southward | Mississippi KIDS COUNT | May 17, 2016



Kids Count: Overview

The Family & Children Research Unit of Mississippi State University's (MSU) Social Science Research Center is in the 10th year of being the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT grantee for the state of Mississippi.

GOALS

Be the premier data source on children and families for the state of Mississippi in the areas of health, education, economic well-being and child safety

Present that data in a format that can be used to improve outcomes for Mississippi's children



Utilizing Chronic Absenteeism Data as a Dropout Prevention Tool

Toni Y. Kersh, Bureau Director

Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement

Tkersh@mdek12.org



State Board of Education

Vision: To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens.

Mission: To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community.

State Board Goals

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes

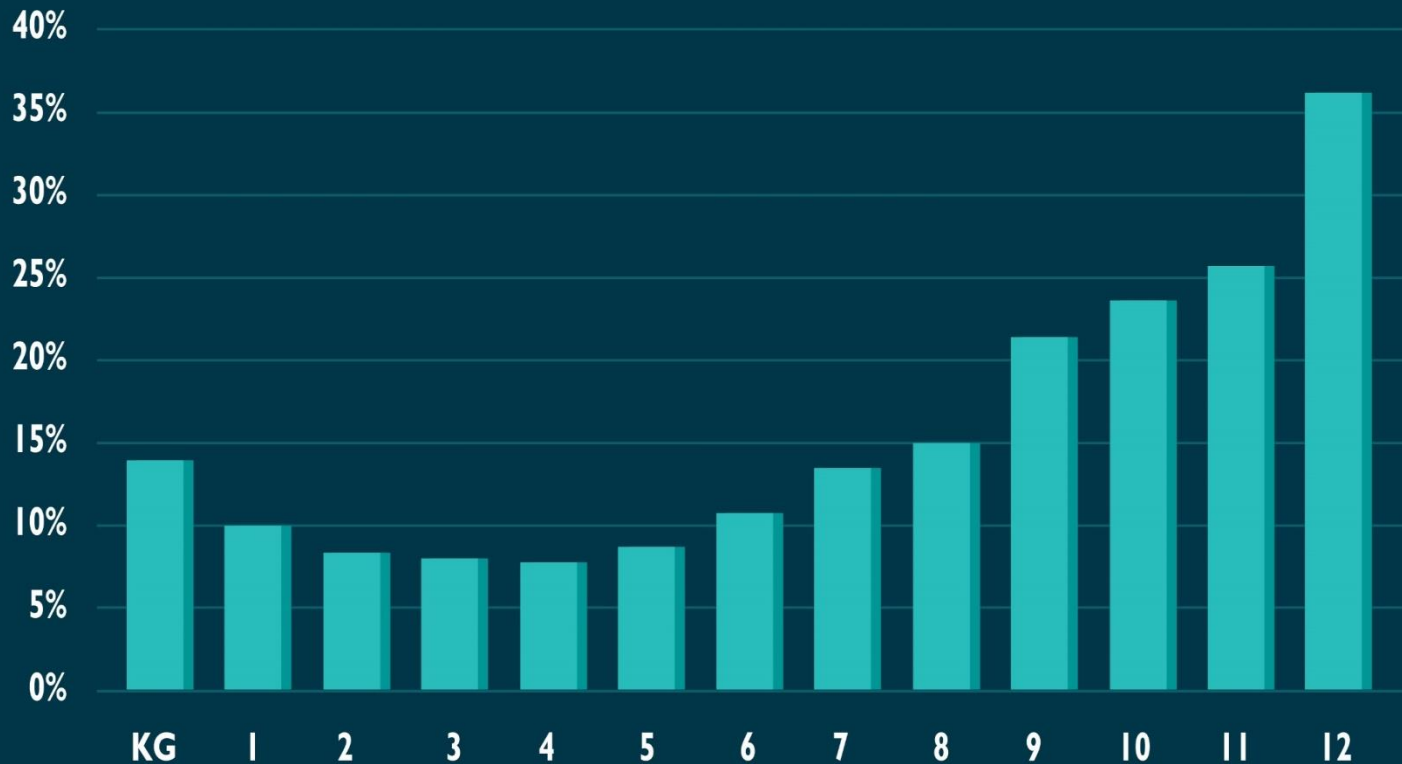
Following the Data Policy Grants

- Awarded by AECF July 2014 & 2015
- Began in 2014 to study chronic absence at school district-level at the interest of Mississippi's Senate Education Committee Chair
- Data use agreement with MDE for student-level data in 2015

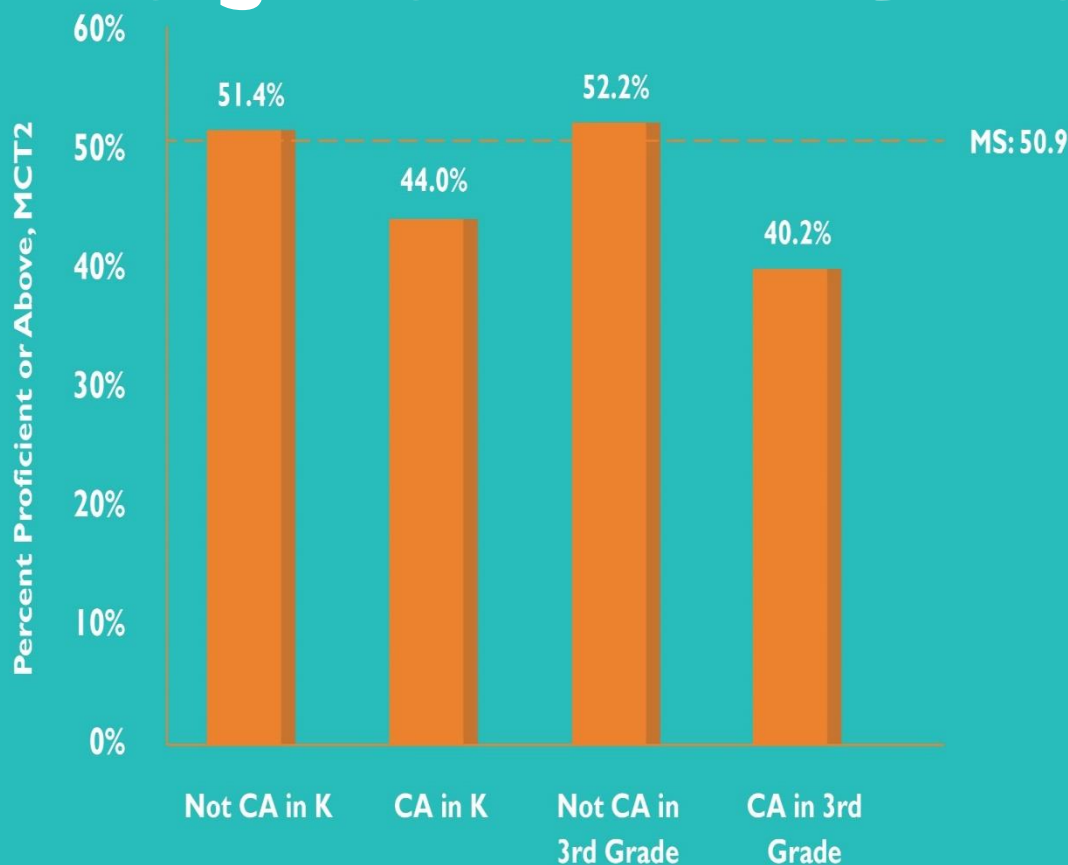
Mississippi's Chronic Absence Rates by Grade

Mirror Those of Other States

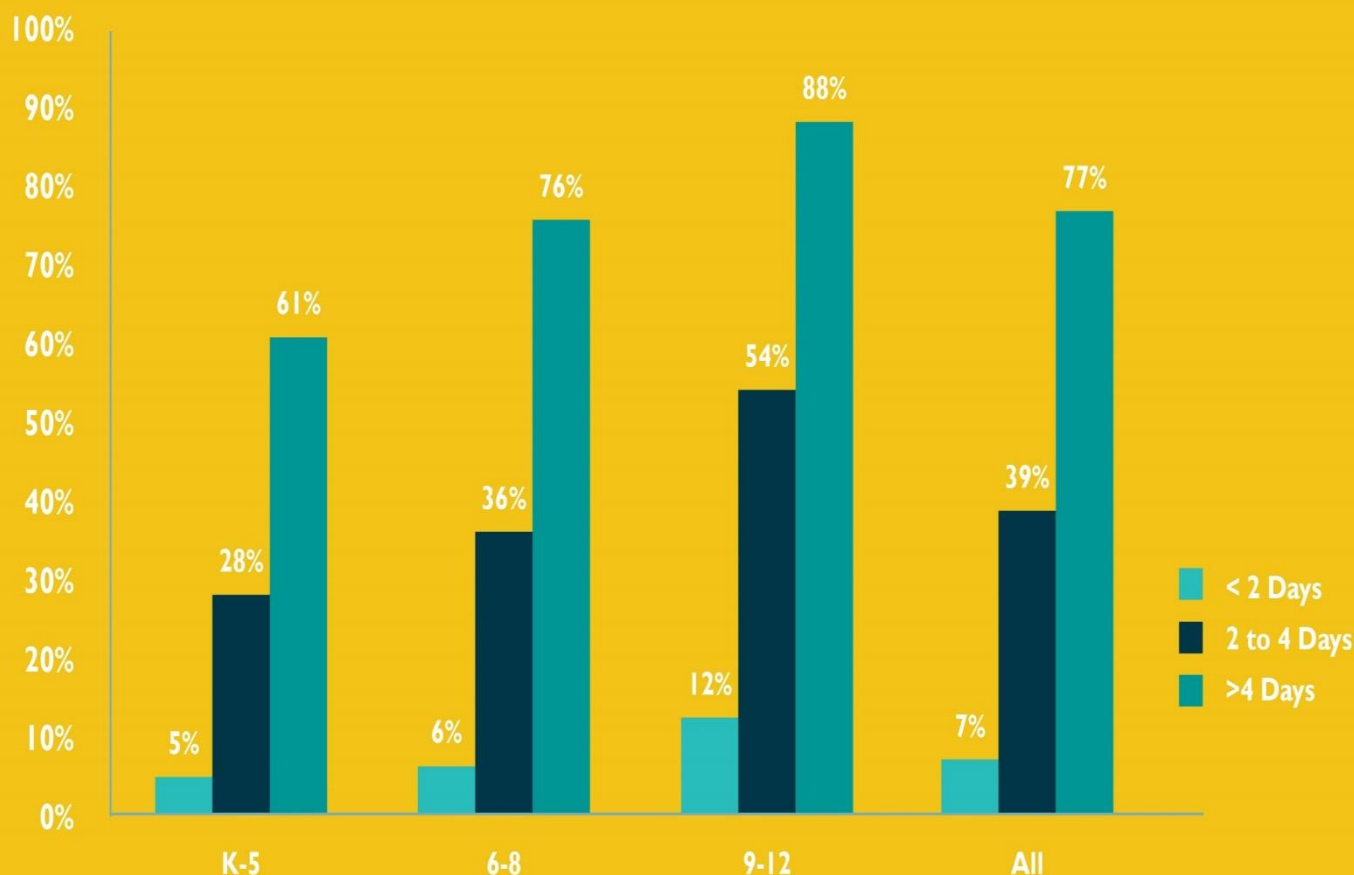
Chronic Absence Rates in Mississippi by Grade, 2013/14 SY



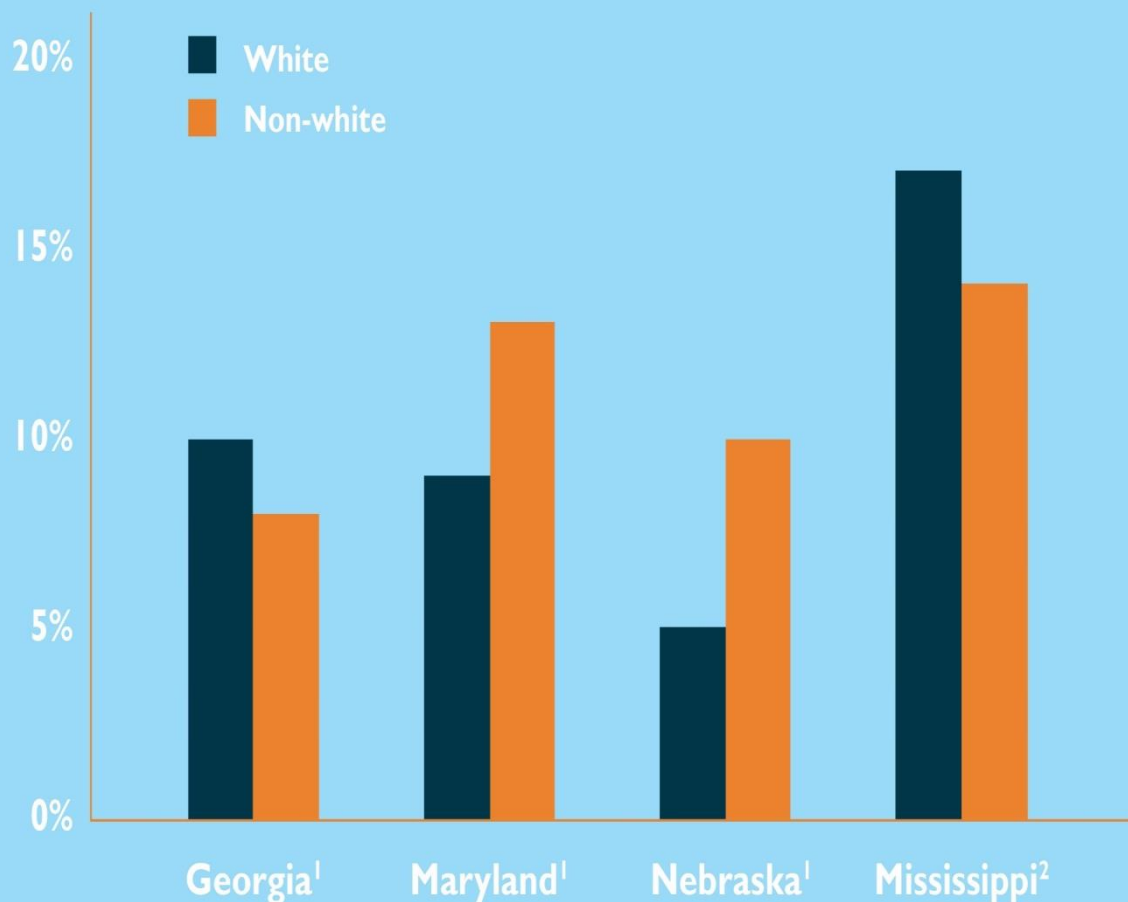
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Above on 3rd Grade Language Arts Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and 3rd Grade



Percent Chronic Absence in Mississippi by Days Missed in September, 2013/14



Percent of Students Chronically Absent by State



Sources:

¹ Balfanz & Byrnes (2012)

² Analysis of MDE data by MS KIDS COUNT, 2013/14 SY



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

Flawed Perception



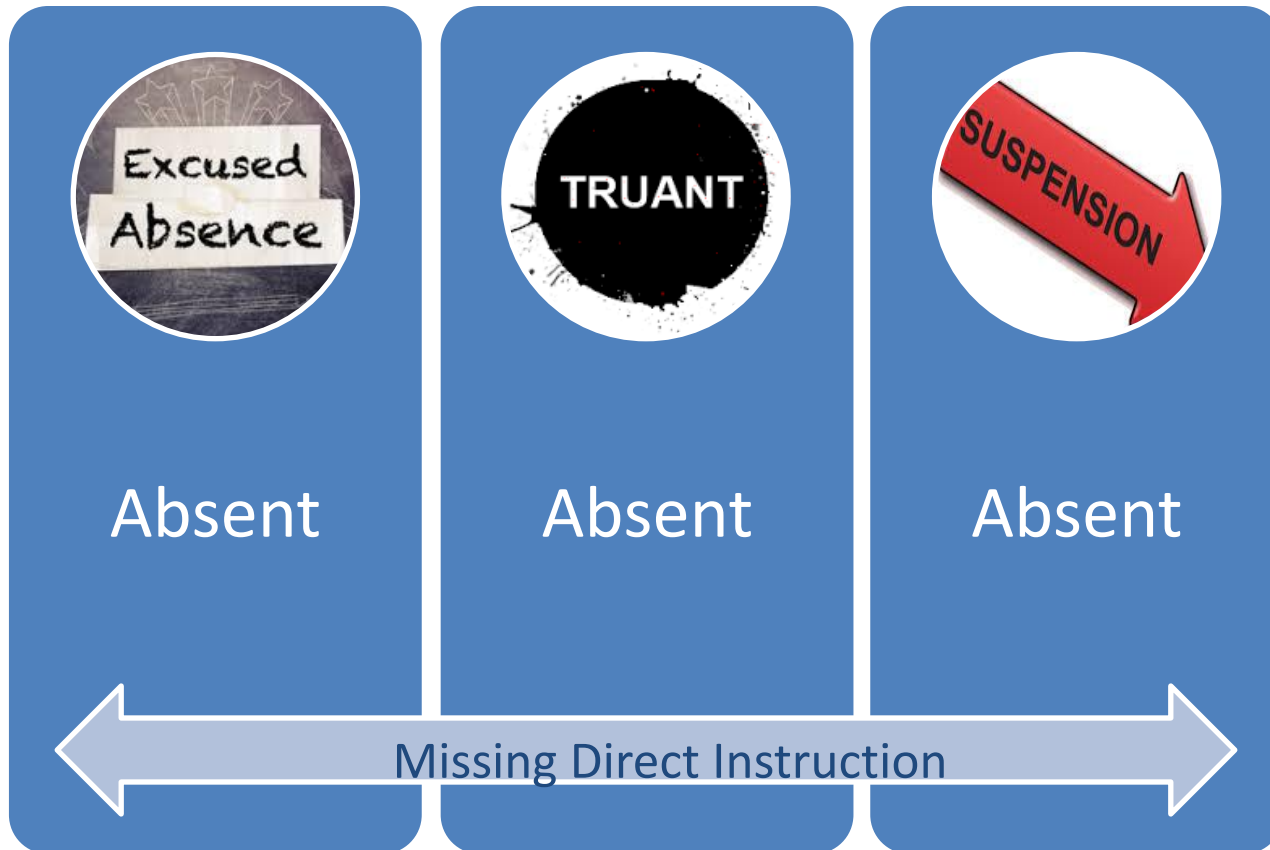
NEW MINDSET



NEW RESULTS



Commonalities



18 Days x 330 minutes of instruction= 5,940 minutes

Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism not only affects student success, it can affect a student's attitude and conduct in the educational setting.

Attendance is the foundation for all other school programs.

Attendance issues have a direct correlation to achievement issues and behavior issues which increases the risk of students dropping out of school.



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

Accurate Student Records



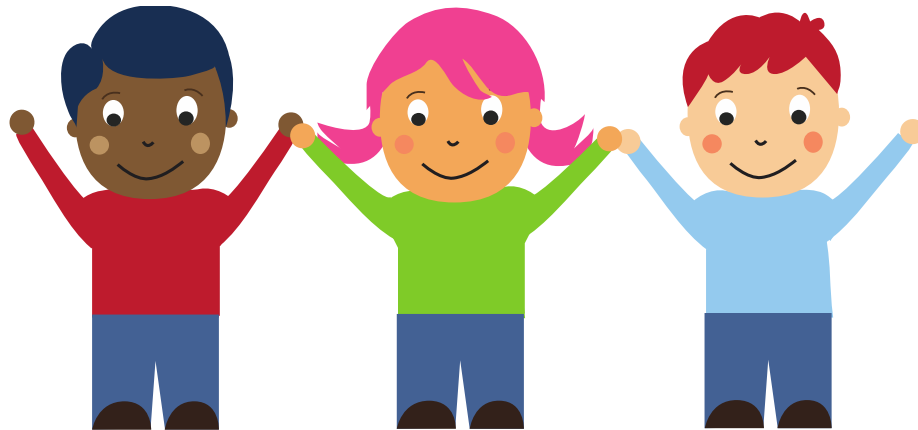
Strategies

Based on the existing research, it does not appear that any single strategy is the most effective strategy (Maynard, et al., 2012).

Strategies to reduce student absenteeism generally involve some form of:

- ✓ Monitoring
- ✓ Prevention
- ✓ Intervention
- ✓ Truancy or legal intervention as a final step

Discussion





Questions

- With chronic absence included in the Every Student Succeeds Act, how can we avoid the danger of schools seeing it as a matter of compliance with federal reporting vs. a data point to take action to improve outcomes?
- How can we leverage the OCR data release?
- When chronic absence data is released, how can we avoid the blame game for either families or educators while still sharing responsibility for addressing it?



Questions from the Audience





To Learn More

Go to State Pages:


- **Oregon**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/policy-advocacy/state-reports/oregon/>
- **New Jersey**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/policy-advocacy/state-reports/new-jersey/>
- **Mississippi**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/policy-advocacy/state-reports/mississippi/>

Data Tools





Tools for Calculating Chronic Absence



Watch for
Version 4.0
this summer!

FREE FROM ATTENDANCEWORKS!

The District Attendance Tracking Tools (DATT) and School Attendance Tracking Tools (SATT) is available in Three Modules:

- Grades K-5 (**PK-5 this summer**)
- Grades 6-8 and
- Grades 9-12

We also offer a Tool to Combine the Modules for PK-12 reports.

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/>



How Do Districts Use the DATTs & SATTs?

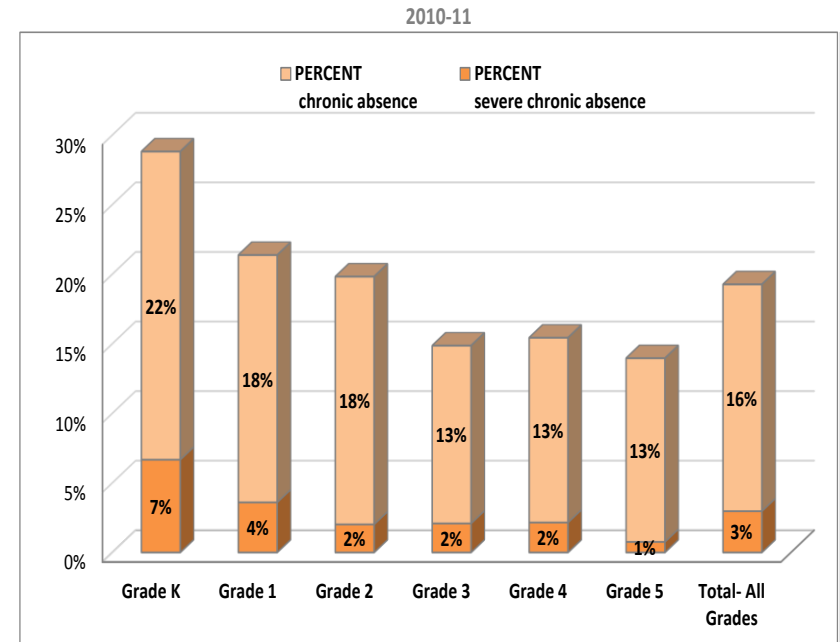
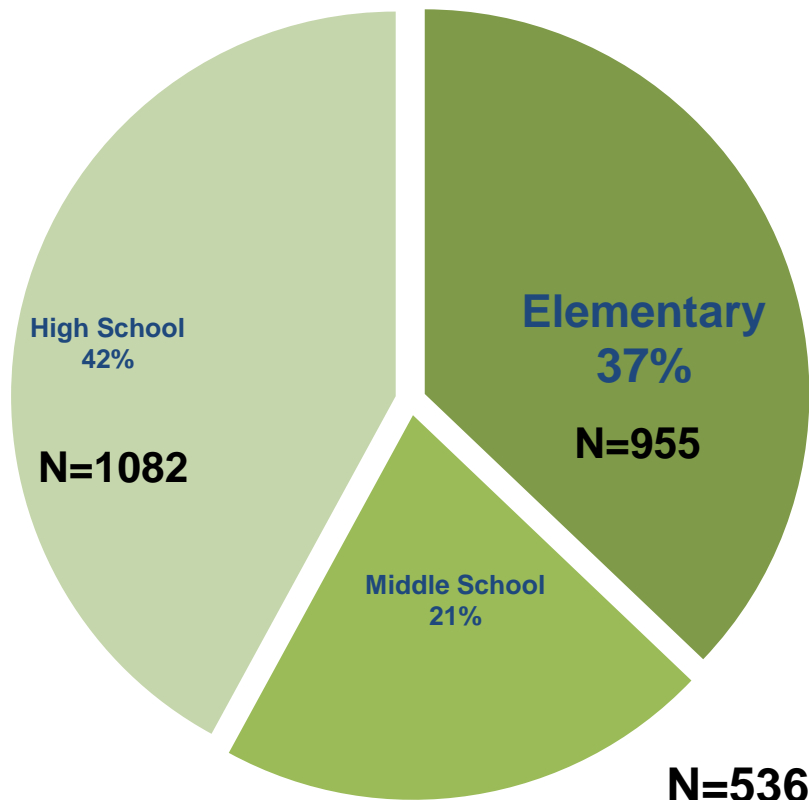
Method 1: Download data and paste into the DATT module



Method 2: Create a customized district dashboard using the DATT reports as examples



How Data Drives Action: Earlier Intervention





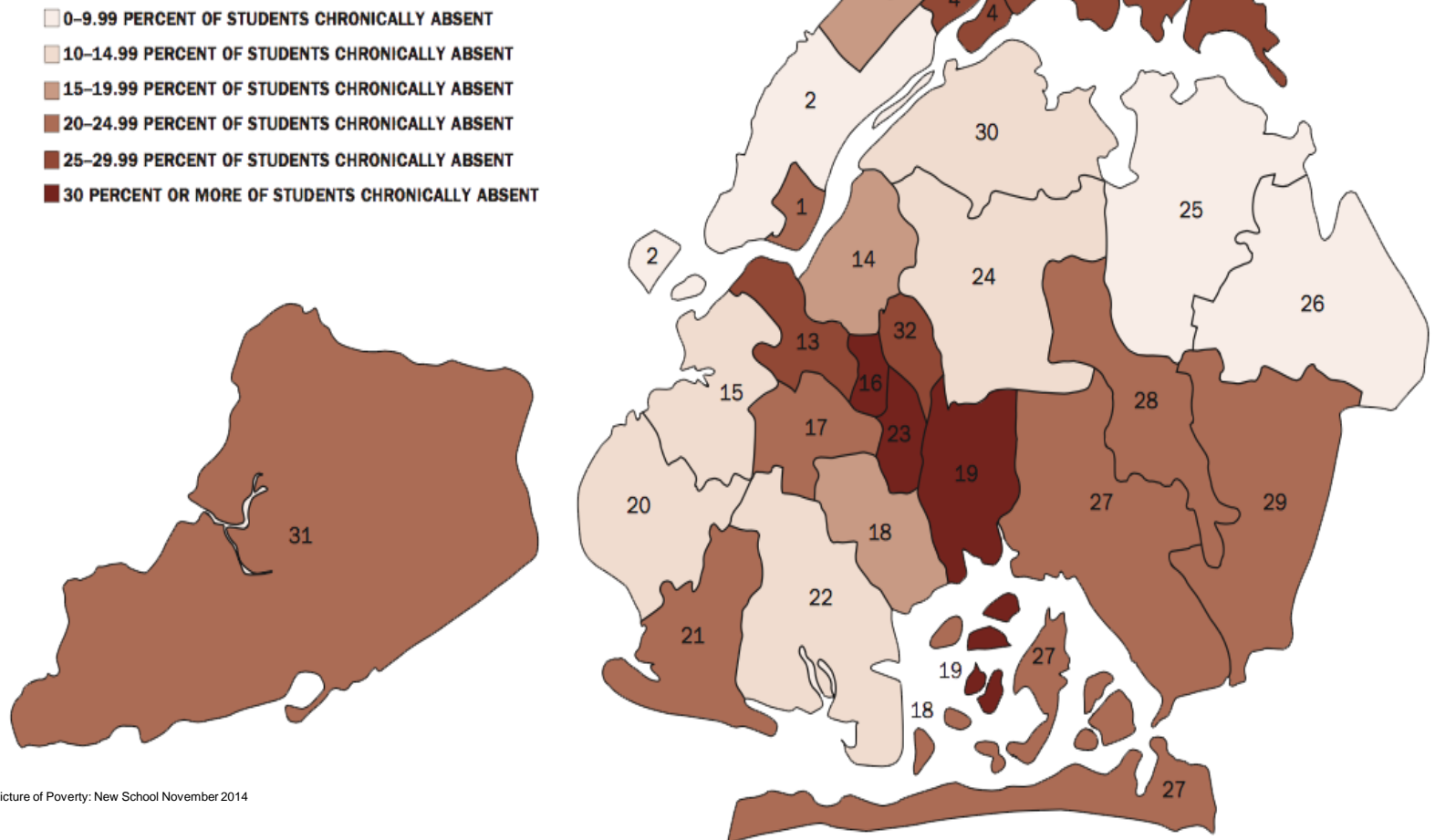
How Data Drives Action: Identifying Outliers

Finding Bright Spots and Schools Needing More Supports

	Elementary	Middle	High School
# Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence	9	0	0
# Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence	17	4	1
# Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence	25	8	6
# Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence	9	4	9
Total No. Schools	60	16	16
Highest % of Chronic Absence	31.5%	32.8%	42.1%
Lowest % of Chronic Absence	0.3%	6.9%	7.9%
Median	12.7%	14.9%	21.0%
Mean	11.9%	15.6%	22.4%



In NYC, chronic elementary school absence is higher in low-income neighborhoods



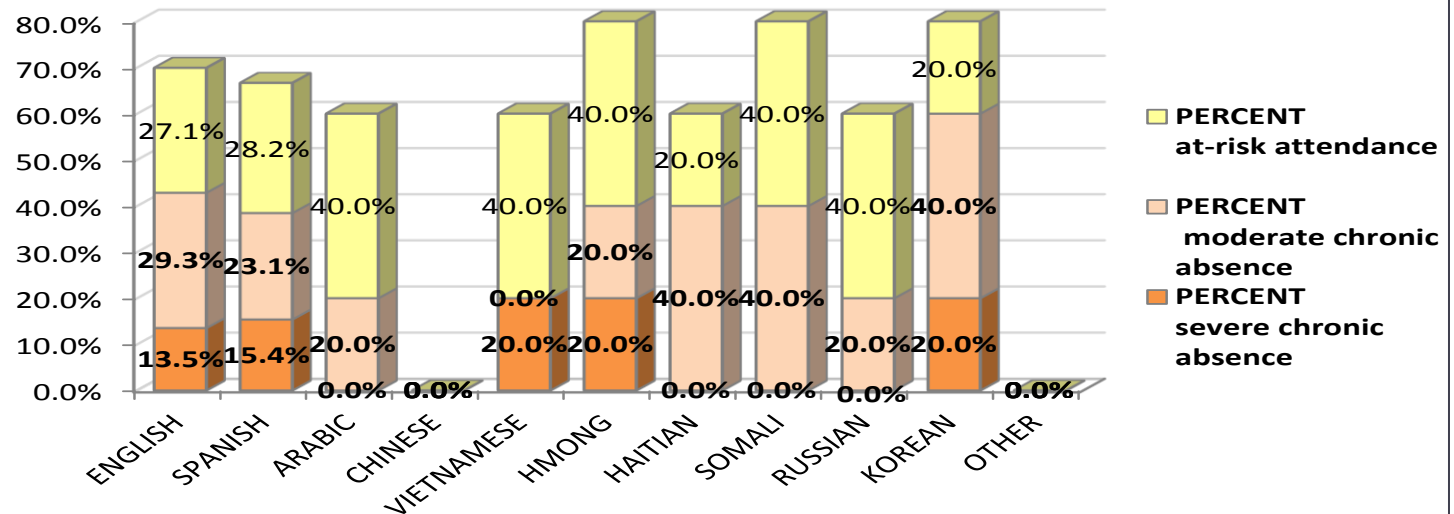


New Data Reports

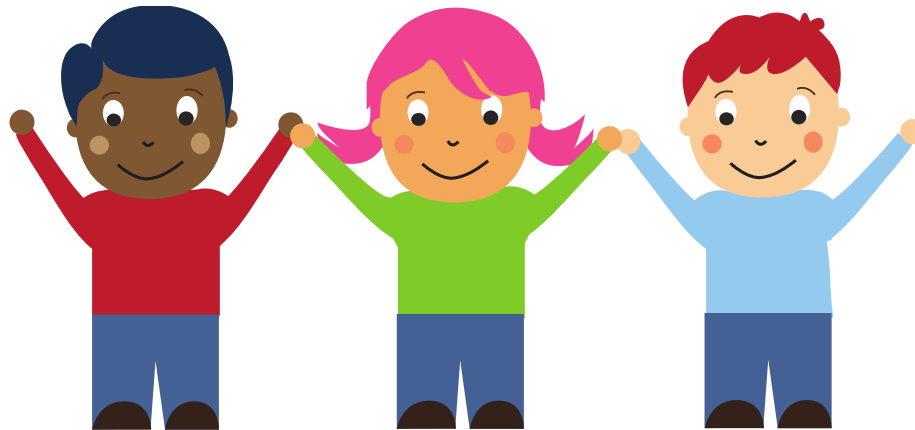
Chronic Absence by Home Language

What percentage of students have moderate or severe chronic absence, or at-risk attendance, by home language?

2016



Resources & Announcements





Resources for Spring and Summer

Prevent the spring slide in attendance!

To learn more, go to

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/spring-learning-slump/>

AVOIDING THE ATTENDANCE SLUMP

A troubling pattern begins in May and worsens in June.

Across city elementary and middle schools, there's a **5.8 percentage point difference** between April and June attendance rates.*

In struggling schools, the attendance drop is **nearly twice that.**



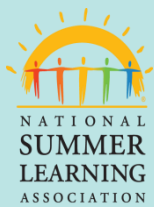
*MONTHLY ATTENDANCE DATA COMES FROM THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WEBSITE: [HTTP://SCHOOLS.NYC.GOV/](http://schools.nyc.gov/)



National Summer Learning Day is July 14, 2016!

Post your summer learning program or event at
SummerLearningDay.com

Follow the story with **#KeepKidsLearning**





Resources Available

- ★ **Attendance Campaign Webinar Series**
- ★ **Regular Email Blasts to Campaign Supporters**
- ★ **Updating the Count Us In! Toolkit**
- ★ **Attendance Awareness Month Website**
- ★ **Research Brief**

<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org>



Save the Date! 2016 Webinar Series

- ★ **April 12:** Motivating Good Attendance All Year Long
- ★ **May 17:** Using Data to Drive Action; Portraits of Chronic Absence
- ★ **August 16:** Collective Action: Taking a Cross-Sector Approach
- ★ **September 8:** Understanding and Addressing the Attendance Gap: A National Study
- ★ **November 1:** Attendance Awareness All Year Long: Reviewing and Sustaining Progress

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

Support AAC 2016



<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: 4,400+ members.

<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/count-us-toolkit-2016/>

PROMOTE LOCALLY



What to Do When: At a Glance



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!



1



- [illegible]

84



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



Webinar recording

We will post a recording of this webinar on our website 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/Portraits_Data

Thank you to our funders!

With special appreciation to:

**Annie E. Casey Foundation
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
The California Endowment**

