

# The First Month of School and Beyond: Nurturing Attendance Every Day

October 17, 2023



# Moderator



**Hedy Chang**

*Executive Director and President  
Attendance Works*



# The URGENT Need to Support Attendance Every Day for Our Youngest Students

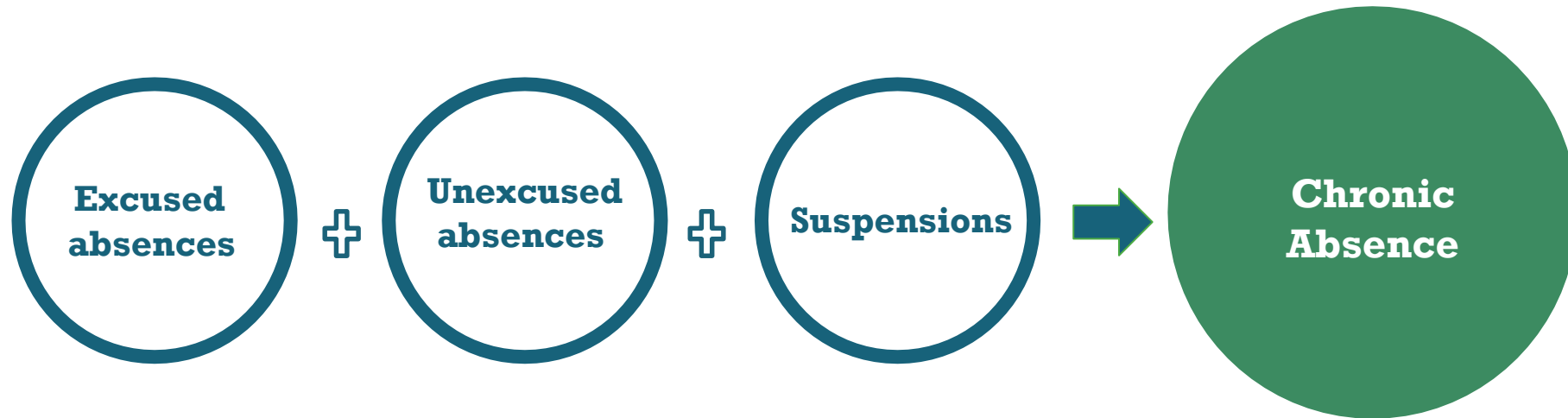




## What is chronic absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk.

Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent 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).



## Why do we care?

**Chronic absenteeism is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational inequity**

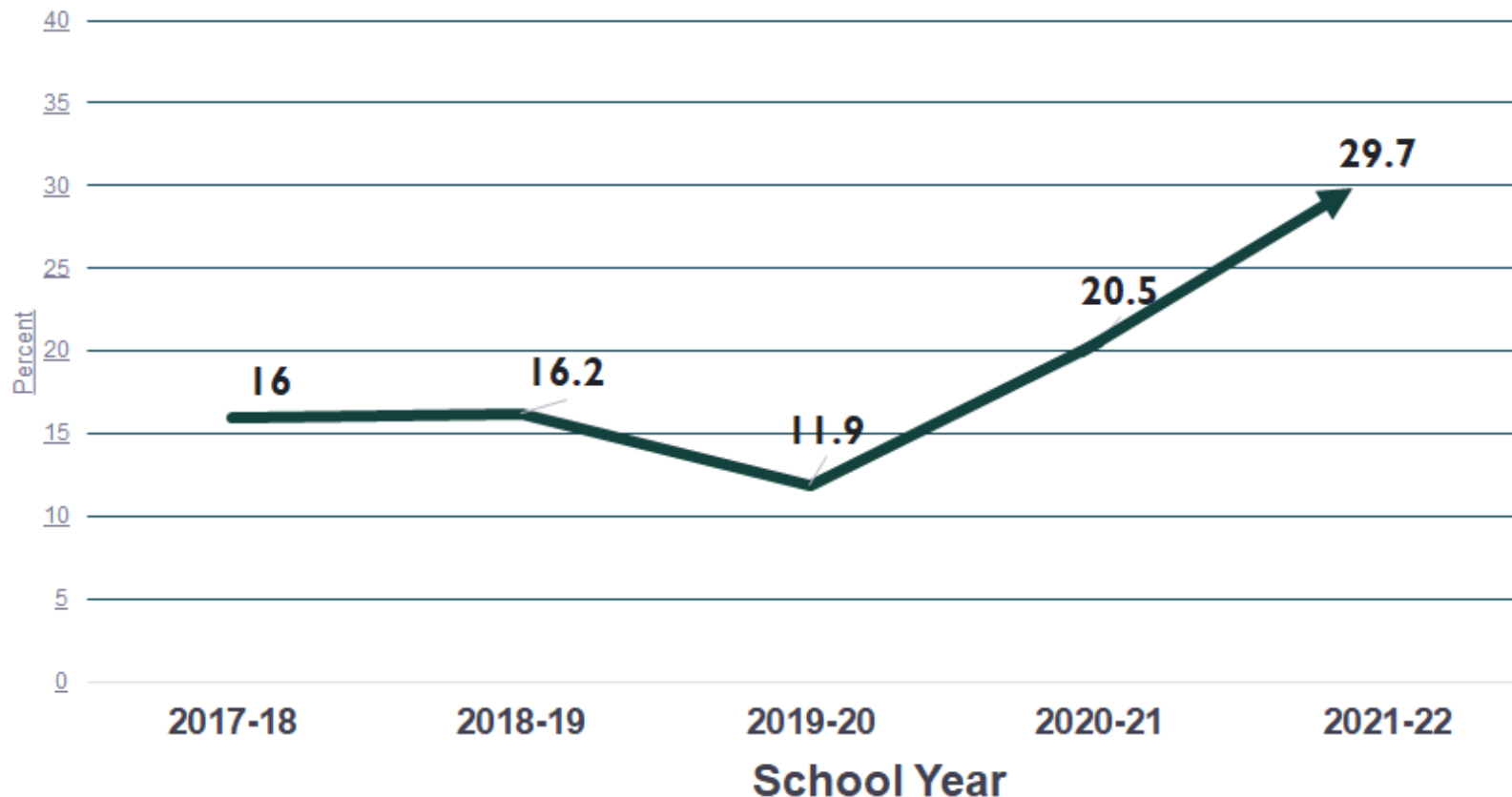


## Why Does Attendance Every Day Matter for Young Learners

- Students chronically absent in prek/K are more likely to be chronically absent in later grades and less likely to read and count proficiently by the end of third grade.
- Chronic early absence is associated with declines in educational engagement, social-emotional development and executive functioning.
- Economically challenged students are especially affected as they have less access to resources to make up for the lost opportunities to learn.
- A regular routine of attendance helps young children and their families become less anxious about school, connect to peers as well as teachers, access resources and engage in learning.

# Our unprecedented attendance crisis now affects nearly 1 out of 3 students

## Percentage of Students Chronically Absent Nearly Doubled Nationwide Between SY 2017-18 to SY 2021-22



- ✓ The number of chronically absent students grew from 8,095,132 to 14,660,261.
- ✓ Increases are occurring in tandem with significant drops in achievement.
- ✓ Chronic absence is higher than ever, especially in early elementary and high school.
- ✓ Early data from 2022–23 indicate rates remain high.

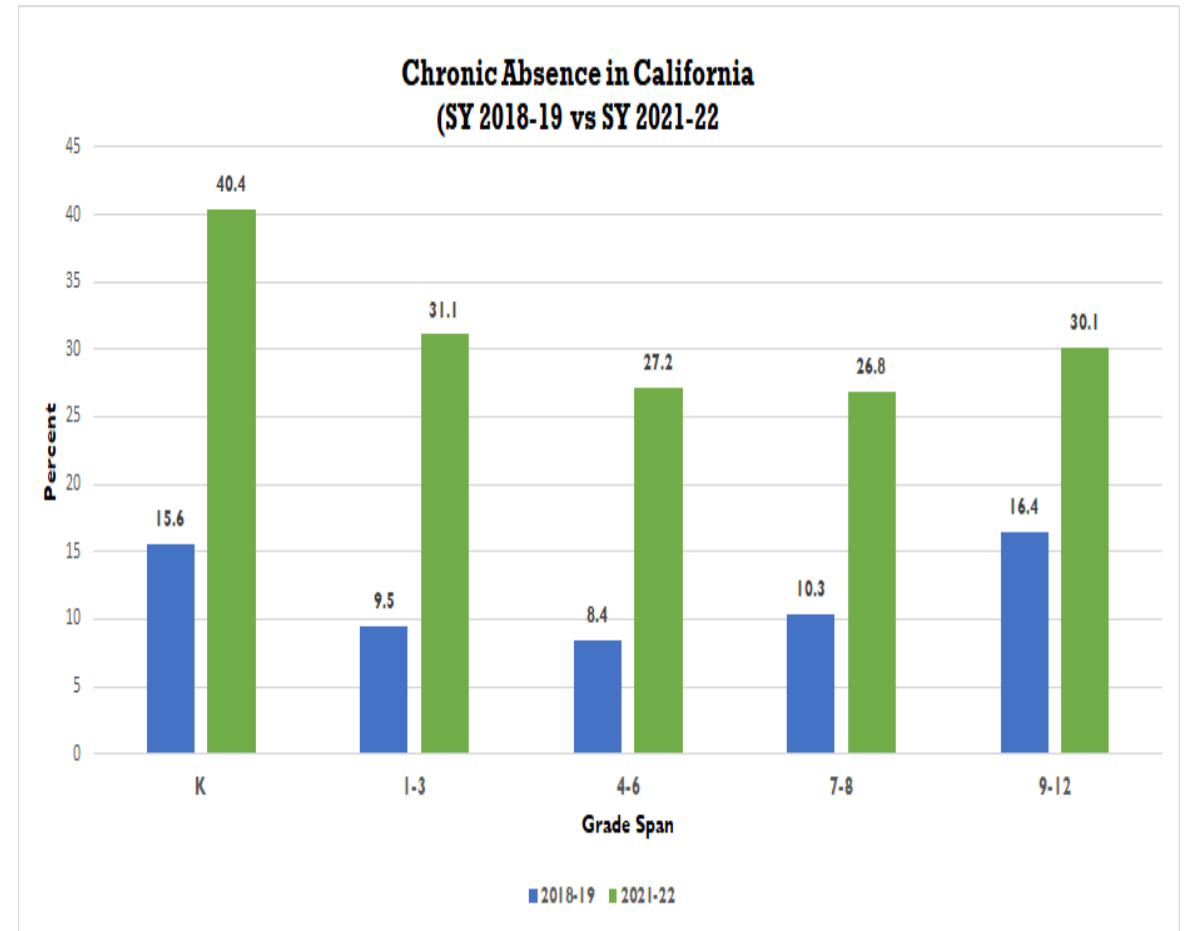
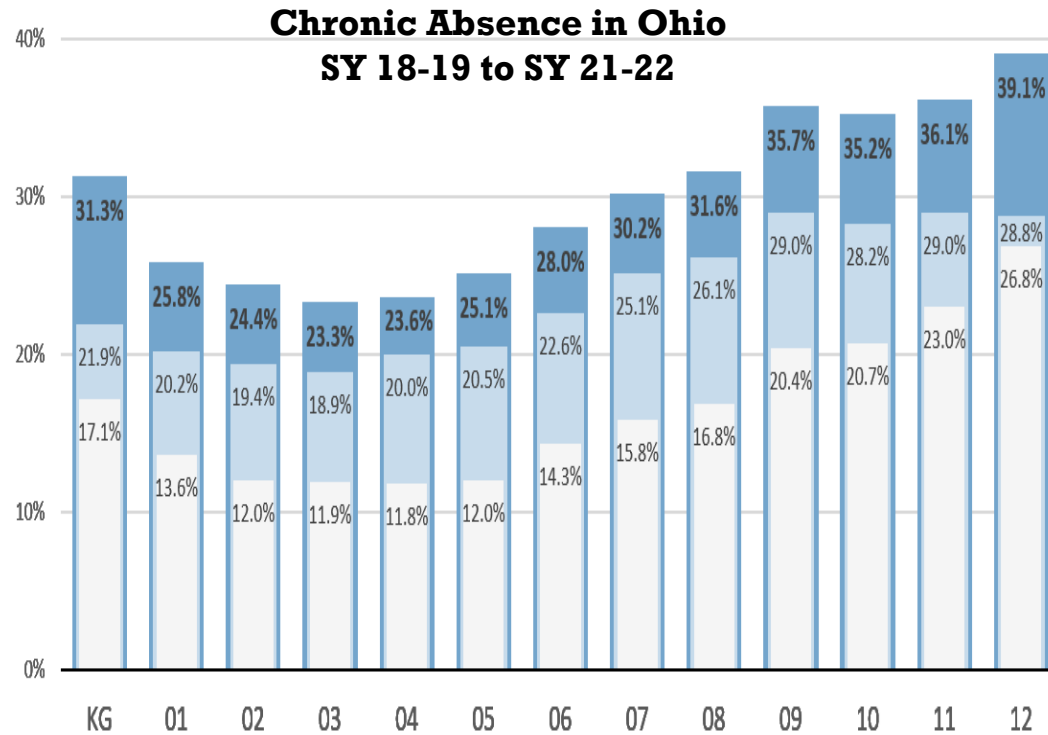
# The majority of elementary schools now face high and extreme levels of chronic absence

	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools		High Schools		All Schools	
	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22
<b>Percent of Schools with 30%+ or more chronically Absent</b>	7%	38%	8%	40%	31%	56%	14%	43%
<b>Percent of Schools with 20% or more Chronically Absent</b>	18%	60%	22%	66%	50%	77%	28%	65%
	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools		High Schools		All Schools	
	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22
<b>Number of Schools with 30% or more Chronically Absent</b>	3,550	19,828	1,353	6,430	6,433	11,778	12,493	39,890
<b>Number of Schools with 20% or more Chronically Absent</b>	9,233	31,362	3,640	10,541	10,474	16,126	24,912	60,379

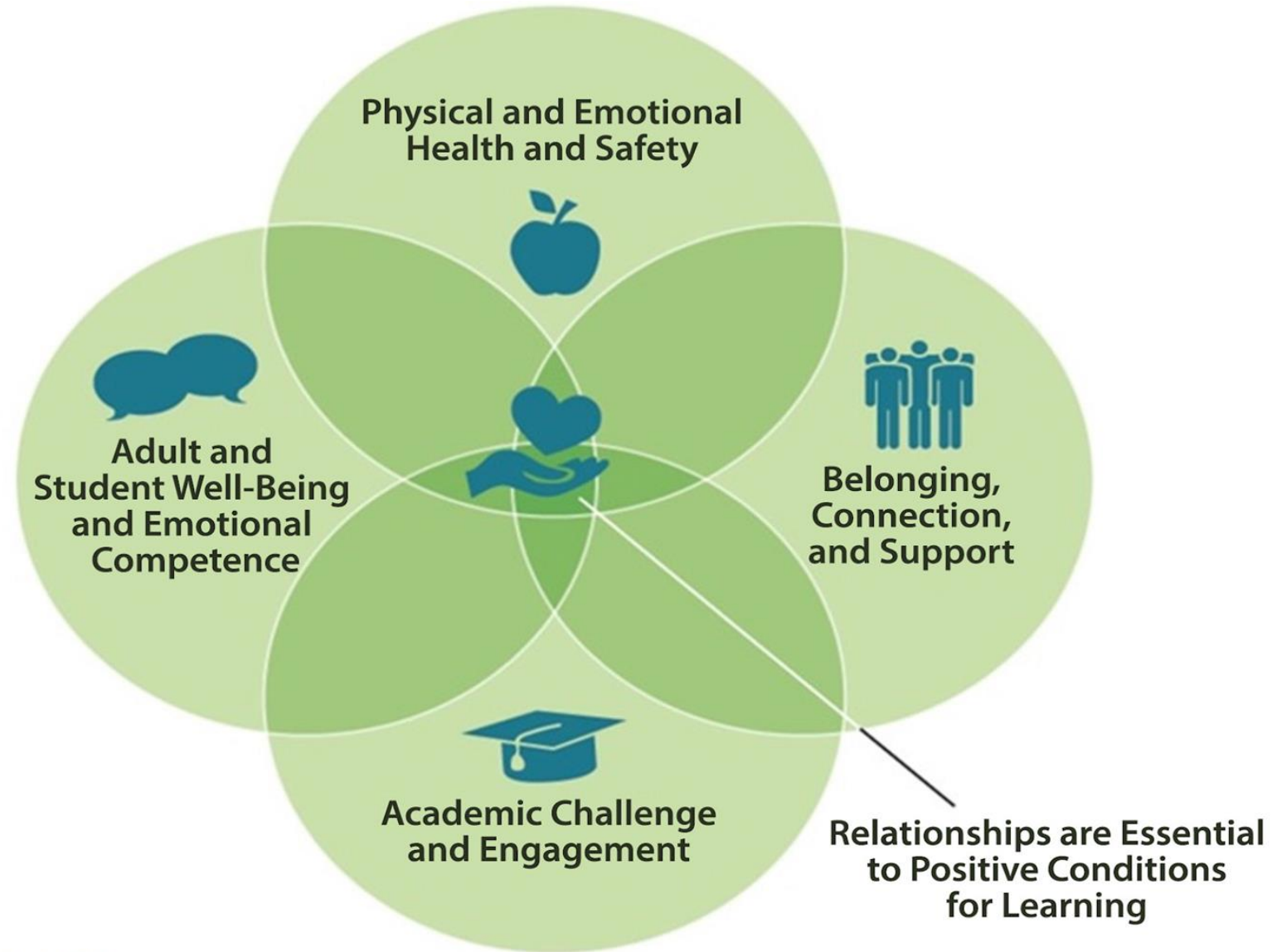




# Stemming this wave must start in K (or prek)

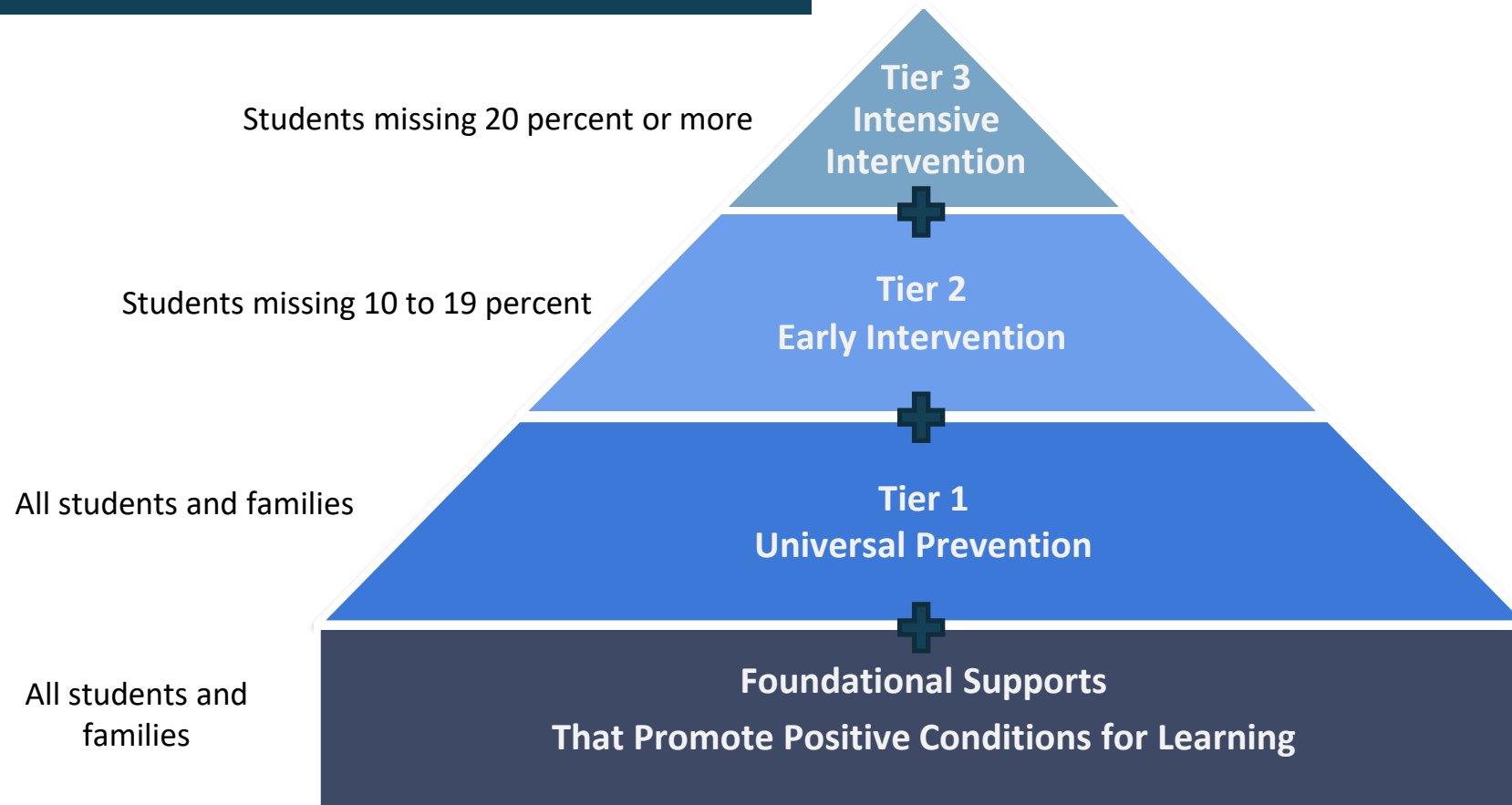


# We Must Redouble Investment in Positive Conditions for Learning





## All Hands On Deck Needed to Ensure A Tiered Approach



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>



## Updated Early Matters Toolkit

### Schools and Districts

- a. Reach Out Before Kindergarten
- b. Start with a Warm Welcome & Engagement
- c. Partner with Families All Year Long
- d. Offer Supports to Reduce Health Related Absence
- e. Establish Data Informed Teams

### Find it here:

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/integrating-attendance-into-kindergarten-transition/>

### Communities:

1. Engage Community Partners
2. Organize Attendance Campaigns That Reach Families with Young Children

# Panelists



**Lysandra Agosto, MBA**  
*Director of Compliance  
and ERSEA*  
Children's Aid,  
Early Childhood Division  
New York, NY



**Benjamin Barlow**  
*Director, Attendance Supports*  
Albuquerque Public Schools,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



**Anel Garza**  
*Principal*  
Woodbury Elementary  
Marshalltown Community School  
District, Marshalltown, IA

# Panelists



**Sandra Romero**  
*Community School Director*  
Whitney Young Jr. Campus  
Children's Aid, New York,  
NY



**Monica Rossi**  
*Health Coordinator*  
Early Childhood Division  
Children's Aid, New York, NY



**Brandis Stockman**  
*Program Manager*  
Education & Expanded Learning  
National League of Cities

How are you ensuring families experience and know the benefits of showing up to school?

[gradelevelreading.net](http://gradelevelreading.net) @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays #GLRKeepers



# #SchoolEveryday Campaign Videos

**Student Video:**



**Why Do Our Kiddos Love  
Coming to School?**

**Caregiver Video:**







**Children's Aid**

Every step of the way



The First Month of School and Beyond: Nurturing Attendance Every Day

**October 2023**

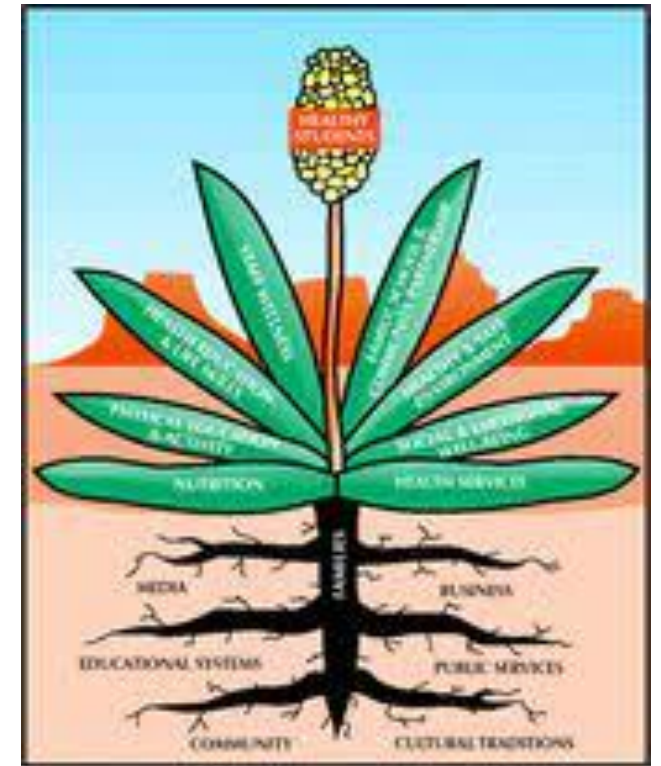
# Attendance Matters

- Welcoming Environment
- Morning Greetings- Music
- Celebrating great attendance during parent teacher conferences.
- Rallies
- Parent attendance certificates
- Staff celebrate students birthdays.
- Connection between academic growth and attendance.
- Celebrate parent during attendance cafes.



# Seeing & Experiencing the Benefits: Families with Young Children

- General Awareness Efforts
  - Video content
  - Community-level awareness campaigns
  - Social media
- Dual Capacity Framework Orientation
  - Biannual attendance conference
  - Family engagement training
  - Building capacities to identify root causes
- Structured Methods of Connecting
  - Parent-teacher conferencing
  - Conferences for school teams
  - Connecting learning at school & at home
- Connecting Families to Web of Support



What are some strategies you are using to help young children and families develop a regular routine of attendance?

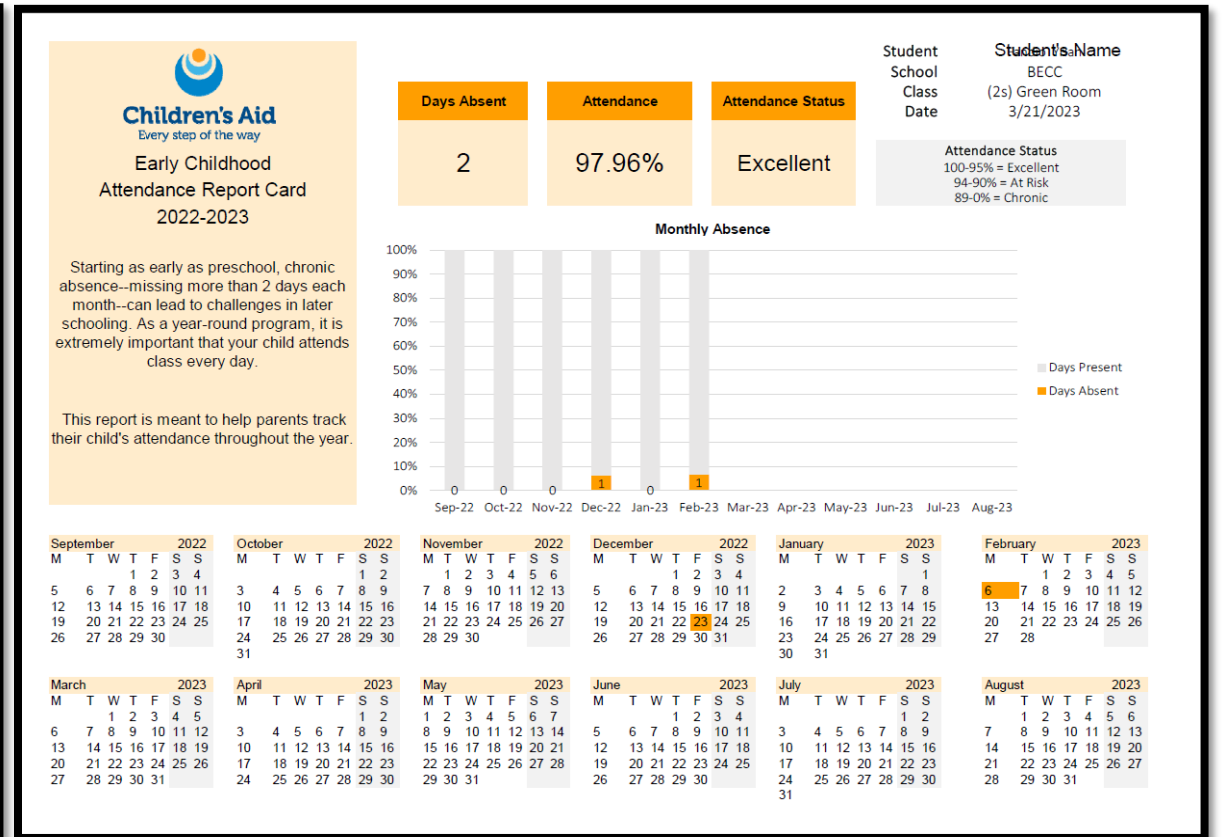
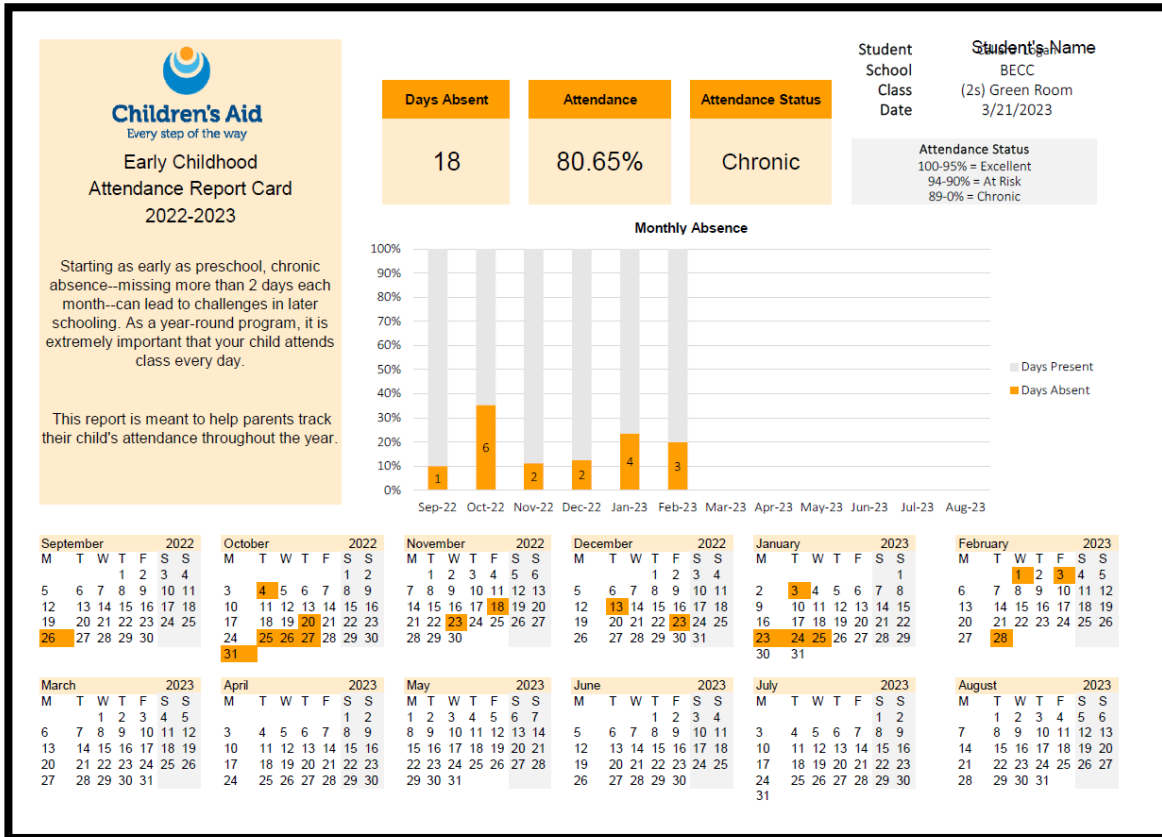


# Attendance Awareness

- Understanding the nature of what a routine is in school.
- Connecting it to the caregivers daily routine.
- Sharing the loss of instructional time when student is out.
- Helping parent create a routine and the benefits of it.

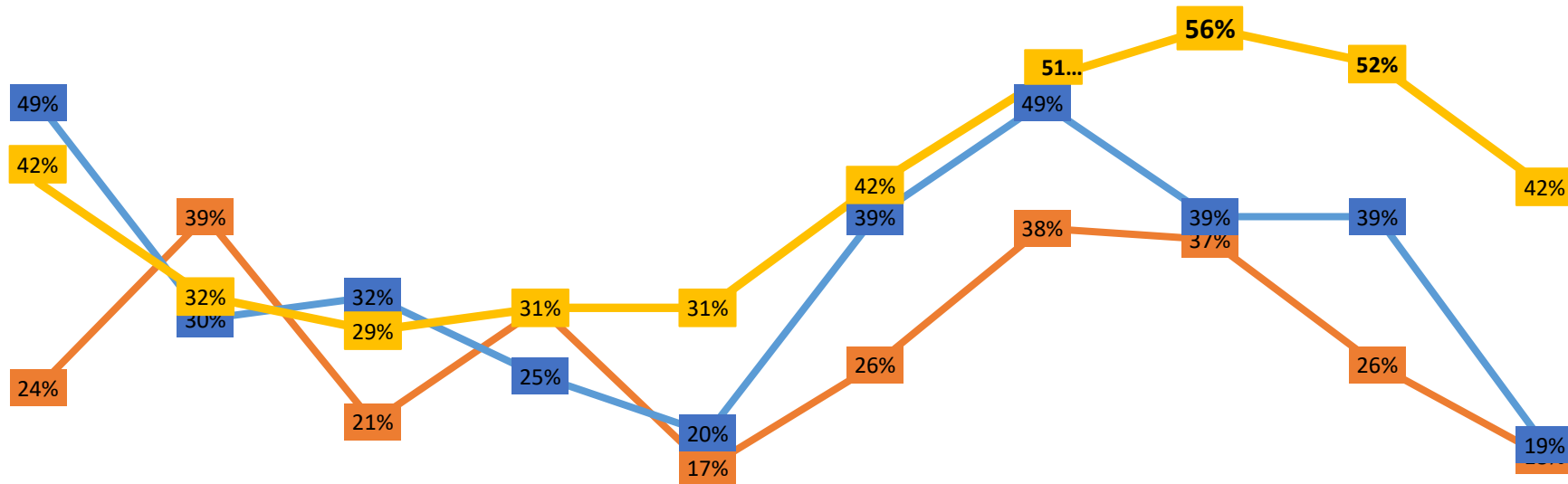


# Attendance Report Cards



# Tracking of Students in Attendance >90%

**Attendance Trends**  
>90% Center Based Attendance



	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
2020-2021	24%	39%	21%	31%	17%	26%	38%	37%	26%	18%
2021-2022	49%	30%	32%	25%	20%	39%	49%	39%	39%	19%
2022-2023	42%	32%	29%	31%	31%	42%	51%	56%	52%	42%

2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023

# Establishing Regular Routines with the Youngest Learners

- District level
  - Transformational coaching
  - Technical assistance
  - Identifying root causes
  - Goals & Guardrails
- Unit level
  - Kinder Initiative
  - Indian Education Department Initiative
  - Pre K Initiative
  - McKinney Vento Program Project
  - Foster Care Project





What are top attendance barriers for the families you serve? How are you addressing them?



# Top Barriers to Attendance: Health-Related & SEL

- District Policy & State Law
  - Tiered approach
  - Identify thresholds & root causes
- School Nurses & Health Assistants
  - Advocacy with teams
  - Student success plans
- Medicaid enrollment
  - Case workers
  - Health fairs at schools
- Behavioral & Mental Health Needs
- Recently Arrived English Learners



How can other partners help schools and districts promote attendance and address barriers to getting to school?

[gradelevelreading.net](http://gradelevelreading.net) @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays #GLRKeepers





# Brandis Stockman

## Program Manager, Education & Expanded Learning

[stockman@nlc.org](mailto:stockman@nlc.org)



# WHY STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE MATTERS TO MAYORS AND CITY LEADERS:



**Stronger Economy:** Good schools are key to creating a healthy and vibrant city that attracts businesses as well as new residents. Chronic absenteeism can undermine efforts to improve school performance and can contribute to higher dropout rates.




**Better Schools:** School quality is an important consideration for families thinking about where they will live. Students who feel safe in school, are engaged, and attend more regularly have better mental and physical health, higher test scores, and increased opportunities to achieve their dreams.



**Safer Communities:** Better attendance and engagement in school means safer streets in our cities. When students are in school, they are more likely to be in settings that support learning and nurture positive relationships with peers and adults while keeping them out of harm's way.

- Increase public awareness & sustain public attention
  - Initiate media coverage
  - Assist with home visits
  - Issue proclamations
  - Public recognition of students
- Convene a broad set of partners
- Provide staff volunteers/mentors
- Partner on school and community events
- Assist with basic needs
  - Transportation
  - Healthcare, including vaccinations
- Scale programs by combining SLFRF, taxes, and other city funds





**NLC** NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES  
CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

**Attendance Works**  
National Center for Attendance, Retention & Engagement

FOR MAYORS AND CITY LEADERS:

## Why Engagement and Attendance Matters

**The Attendance Imperative:** Attending school regularly is essential to students gaining the academic and social skills they need to thrive. Chronic absence - defined as missing 10% of the academic year - has more than doubled since the start of the pandemic, from 8 million to an estimated 16 million students nationwide, and absenteeism is especially high among students and families most adversely impacted by the pandemic. Chronic absence, no matter its cause, has real life consequences for students, families, and society as a whole. Research shows that starting as early as preschool and kindergarten, chronic absence can leave third graders unable to read proficiently, sixth graders struggling with coursework, and high school students off track for graduation.

DOWNLOAD



### For Mayors and City Leaders: Why Student Engagement and Attendance Matters



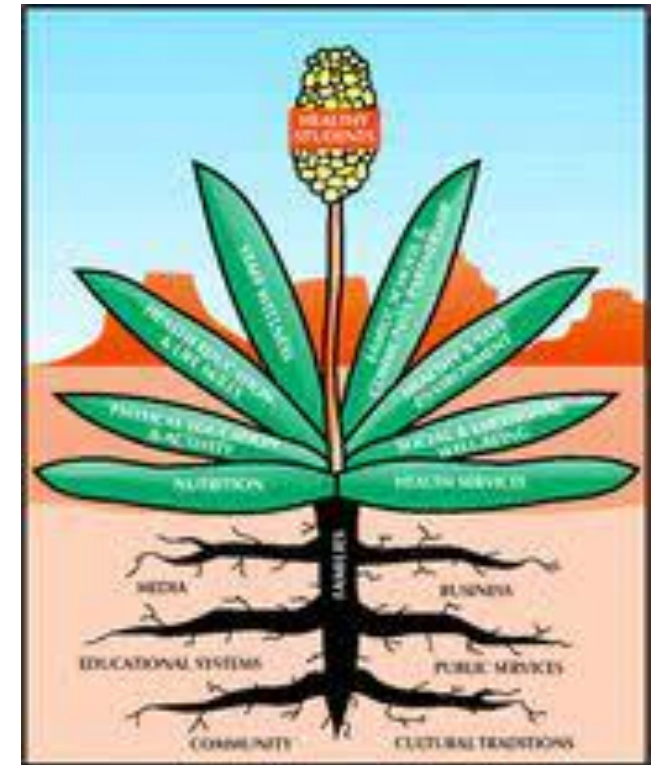
The City of Avondale, AZ Lends Support to Increase Student Engagement



Student Reengagement: Hartford Connecticut's Efforts to Address Chronic Absenteeism

# Partnerships: Promoting Attendance & Addressing Barriers

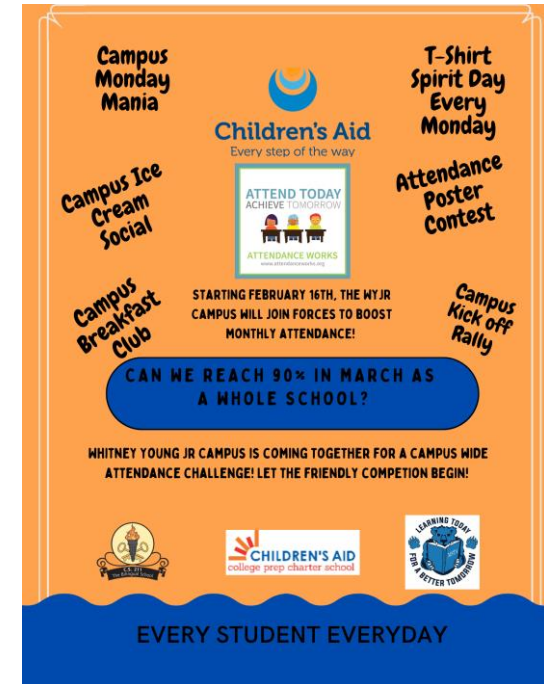
- United Way of North Central New Mexico
  - Monthly attendance awareness webinars
  - Highlighting schools efforts to engage families
  - Biannual statewide attendance conference
- Other Community Partners
  - Target populations
  - Community schools strategy
  - Transformational coaching around partnerships





# We are all in this together

- Asking for support in your own school.
- nurses, school cafeteria, custodian, security agents, school staff, Parent Coordinators, Social Workers
- Nearby local stores share attendance information.
- District Point Person
- Attendance Teacher
- Send letters to school district with school information.
- Attendance Matters logo in your school letters and all marketing.
- #BEHEREEVERYDAY part of your marketing.



# Questions?

[gradelevelreading.net](http://gradelevelreading.net) @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays #GLRKeepers



# Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars

## GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS: LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE

Building Parent Power: Fostering a Movement of Informed Learning Agents

October 24, 2023, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

## GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS: LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE

Making Money Matter

October 31, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

## GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS WEBINAR

Early Grade Retention: A Conversation About the Potential Benefits and Risks

November 7, 2023, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

Please Join Us

[gradelevelreading.net](https://gradelevelreading.net) @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays #GLRKeepers

