

Beyond Bricks & Mortar: How Housing Agencies Can Promote Showing Up to School

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@readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays



Moderator



Hedy Chang

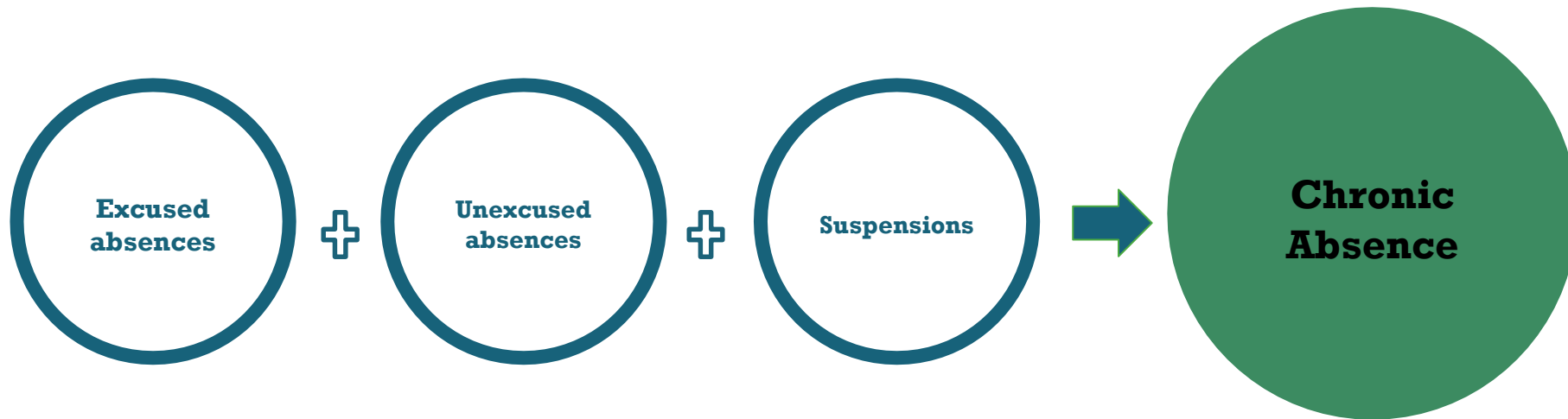
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What is chronic absence?

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).

Chronic absence is a national crisis

- ✓ **Pre-pandemic: 8 million students chronically absent**
(missing 10% or more of school for any reason)
- ✓ **SY 2021-22: chronic absence has at least doubled.**
- ✓ **Higher than ever, especially in early elementary and high school.**
- ✓ **More students experiencing extreme levels of absenteeism.**
- ✓ **The risk is greatest for students with more remote learning.**



Chronic Absence & Equity

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



Reducing chronic absence requires working together to address the challenges facing students and families

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Etc. and many more!

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Parents had negative educational experiences

Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Drawn to low-wage job vs. being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence



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Resident Services Manager
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Panelists



Angie Garcia-Nguyen
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Portland, ME

- Largest city in the State of Maine
- 67,000 residents
- Very welcoming & supportive to new Americans
- Economically and racially diverse

Portland Housing Authority

- 13 communities around the city
- 1,000 public housing units (in RAD process)
- 1,800 vouchers
- 5,500 residents
- 18% of public school students in subsidized housing
 - 9% in 3 public housing neighborhoods
 - >50% BIPOC

Resident Services

- Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS)
- Resident Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (ROSS)
- Resident Services Coordinators
- Study Centers
- Scholarships
- Community partnerships for
 - Adult and youth programming
 - Job & skill building
 - Health services
 - Food and household item pantries
- Always adjusting to needs of communities



HousED Chronic Absence Network (CAN)

Attendance Works Partnership with PCY (Partnership for Children and Youth)

- HousED CAN consist of 6 housing agencies based in California who are part of PCY's HousED Network. These agencies elected to participate in a 2-year effort to work with targeted elementary schools to improve attendance of children living in designated affordable housing developments
- Participating organizations were a mix of public and affordable housing agencies located in urban and more rural areas. While a two agencies had a strong history of working together with schools, this was a new area of work for the rest.
- We held 6 group sessions bringing teams together to learn new concepts and engage in peer sharing. Individual coaching support was provided in between sessions.
- While this initiative took place before the pandemic (Fall 2017- Spring 2019), insights continue to be relevant.

Valley of Sun United Way

[Valley of the Sun United Way](#) is a non-profit partner in the community where we envision a community where every child, family and individual is healthy, has a safe place to live, and has every opportunity to succeed in school, in life, and in work.

As part of that role we directly we our [Read On Arizona](#), our state literacy lead for the Campaign for Grade Level Reading. We lead Read On Avondale/SW Valley and co-lead Read On Phoenix.

Chronic Absenteeism Work

VSUW roles:

Funder:

- We have funded Peer Learning Networks
- Recently received ESSER III funding to support Read On Arizona in
 - Building a Chronic Absenteeism Leadership Team
 - Arizona Chronic Absenteeism Resource Guide
 - Develop a professional learning community of stakeholders through the local literacy hubs

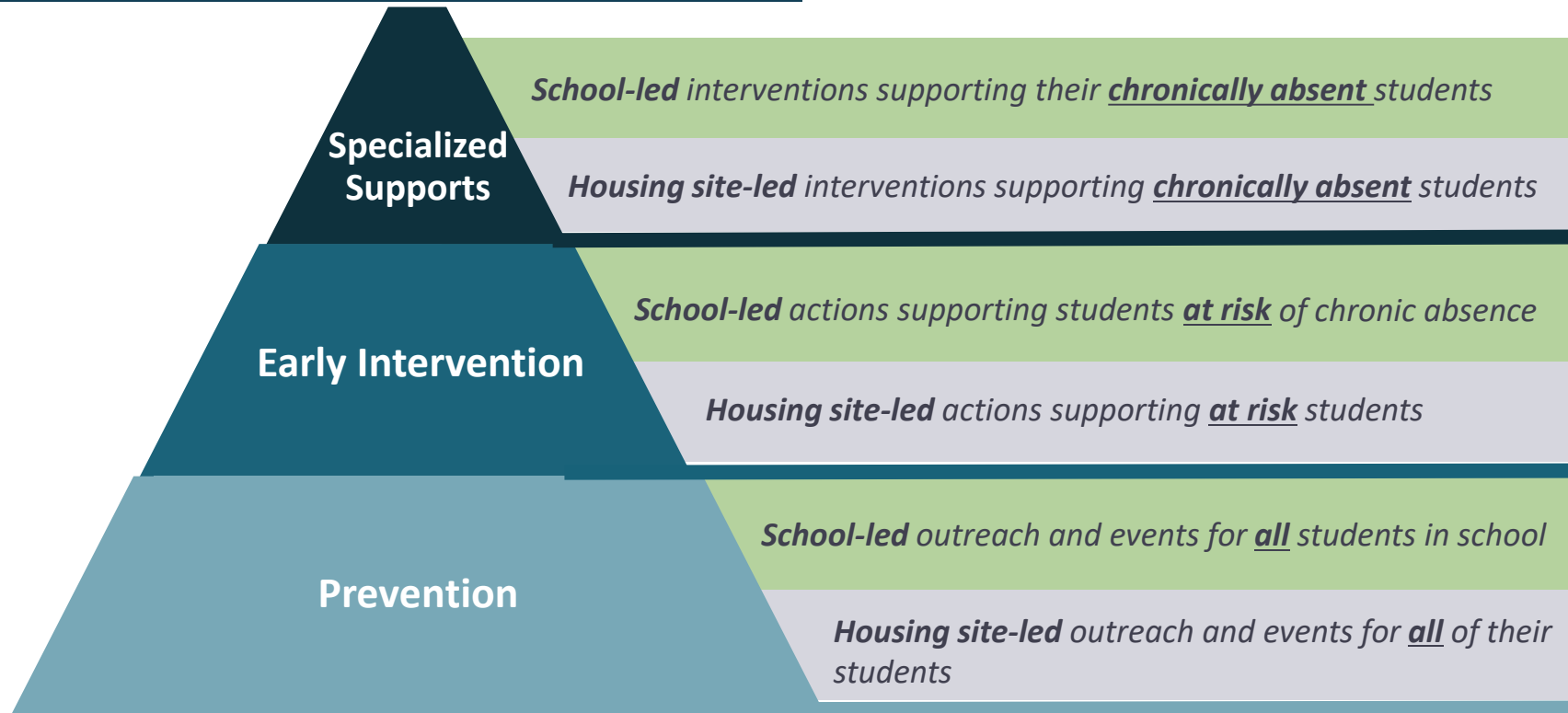
Read On Community Lead

- Analyze the community specific data
- Work directly with schools, community partners, housing, etc. to build data driven strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism.

AW Framework For Housing and Schools Working Together



Efforts Led by Each Agency Should Be Integrated and Collaborative.



Building relationships is always a critical first step.
Outreach and Early Intervention are ongoing and incorporate both school and housing site staff.

Housing Agencies		Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap-around Supports for Families/ Inter-agency Case Management • Direct Connection to Health and Other Services 	<p>Tier 3 Specialized Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency Case Management • Direct Connections to Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Workshops on Student Success • Help Schools Develop Individual Action Plans • Ensure Families Access School Supports (e.g., IEP or Parent Teacher Conferences) 	<p>Tier 2 Early Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Visits/Meeting with Family • Student Success Plan That Addresses Barriers and Increases Engagement • Caring Mentor • Personalized Recruitment into School-based Family Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Events Engaging Families in Academics & Attendance • Written and Visual Communications/ attendance messaging campaign • Home Visits • Walking School Bus 	<p>Tier 1 Prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming, Positive School Climate • Hopes and Dreams Conversations with Families • Breakfast in the Classroom • Clothes and Food Bank • Family Literacy Program/ Parent Education Workshops • Clear Expectations for Academics and Attendance



Laying a Foundation for Change

Housing Site Capacity

Functioning team at housing site

Ability to convene and conduct outreach to schools

Staffing dedicated to resident/family services

Community and school partners represented or consulted

Committed to developing resident leaders

Trauma-informed PD



School Site Capacity

- Functioning school attendance team
- Frequent access to attendance data
- Community partners including housing represented or consulted
- Positive school climate
- Bandwidth for and prioritization of engagement of hardest-to-reach families
- Trauma-informed PD



Key Outcomes

Housing Agency Attendance Teams:

- Routinely included messaging about the importance of school attendance in communications to parents and offer activities to help families understand the correlation between attendance and school achievement
- A few partnered with target schools to implement Tier 2 strategies, like Walking School Bus, Success Mentor Program and having caring conversations with families
- Developed and implemented Yearly Housing School Attendance Team Plans

School Sites: Observed some reductions in two school sites where deeper collaboration was possible.



Our Goals

- Students as life-long learners
- Increase school attendance and success
- Combat effects of ACEs on childhood development
- Caregivers equipped with resources and skills to support their student(s)

Our Focus

- Social Emotional Learning
- Strengthening communication
- Relationship building
- Wholistic services

Specialized supports
Early intervention
Prevention



What the strategy looks like

- Out of School Time Programming
 - Educational supports
 - Parent engagement activities
 - Skill Building & community building workshops and programs for youth and caregivers
 - Enrichment activities
 - Walking School Bus
 - Individual connections to families
 - Technology and internet access
 - Parent Teacher Conferences in public housing
 - Community events
- Service Coordination
 - Wrap around services
 - Referrals
 - Building family & financial capacity
 - Home visits
- Surveying
- Building & Enhancing Community Partnerships
 - Portland Public Schools
 - Head Start
 - Portland Adult Education
 - Food Security programs
 - Basic Needs referral programs
 - Workforce Development



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**THRIVING
STUDENTS**

#thrivingSWValley

Questions & Discussion

Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

PARTNERS WEBINAR

A Pivotal Year: Kindergarten's Important Role in Students' Education

Co-sponsored by New America

Tuesday, October 25, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET/12:00–1:30 p.m. PT

LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE WEBINAR

What's Next? Identifying & Advancing Initiatives to Accelerate Learning Recovery

Tuesday, November 1, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET/12:00–1:30 p.m. PT

ELECTION DAY

On Nov. 8, we will rebroadcast a previous high-demand session. Stay tuned for registration info!

