

Foundations for Attendance: Examining How Funders Can Help Reduce Chronic Absence

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Panelists



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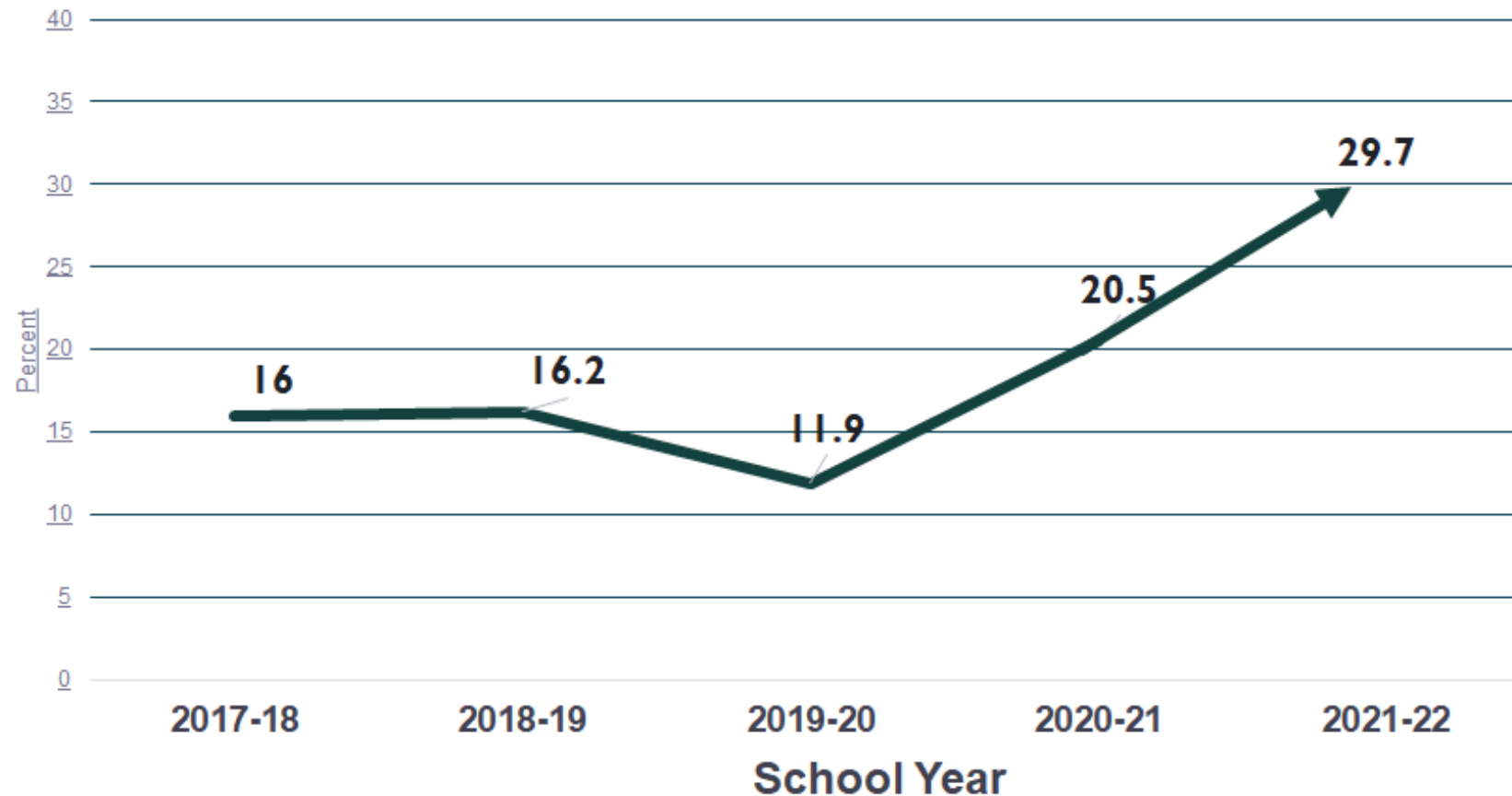
Moderator



Hedy Chang
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Attendance Works

National Chronic Absence Crisis

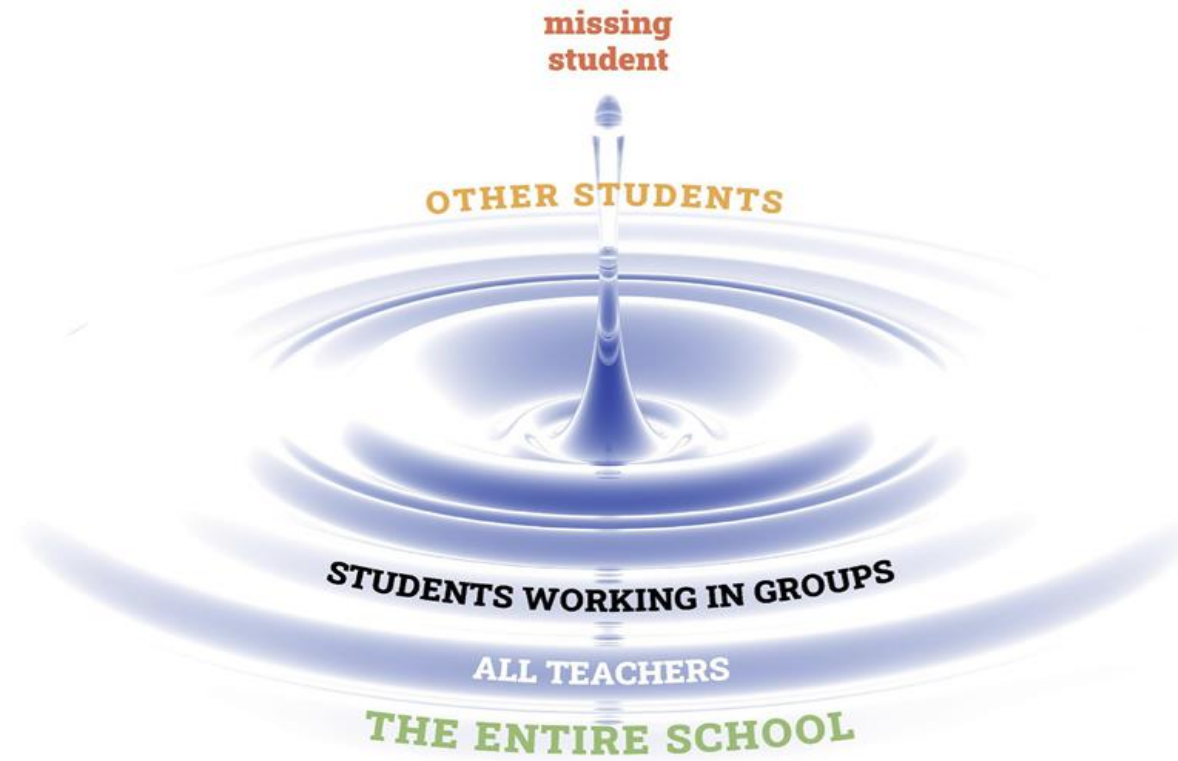
Percentage of Students Chronically Absent Nearly Doubled Nationwide Between SY 2017-18 to SY 2021-22



- ✓ The number of chronically absent students (missing 10% of school) grew from 8,095,132 to 14,660,261.
- ✓ State data from 2022–23 indicate rates remain high.



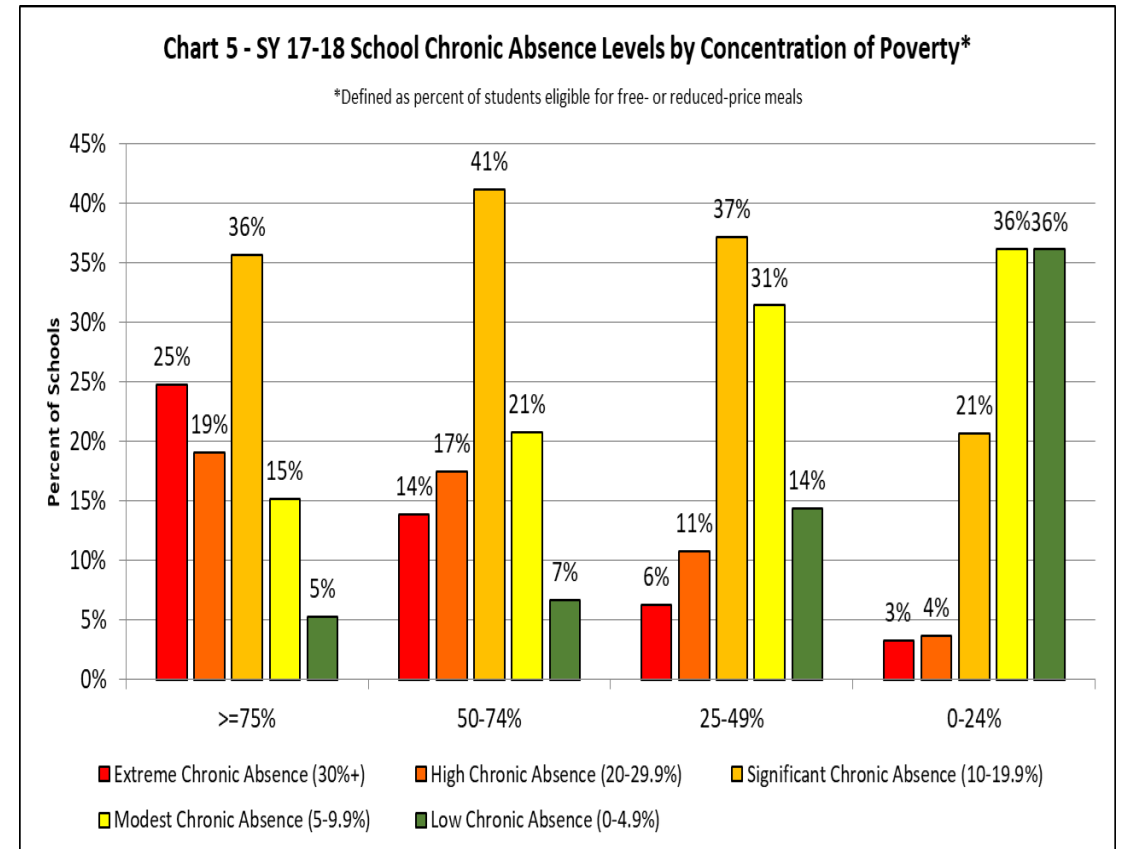
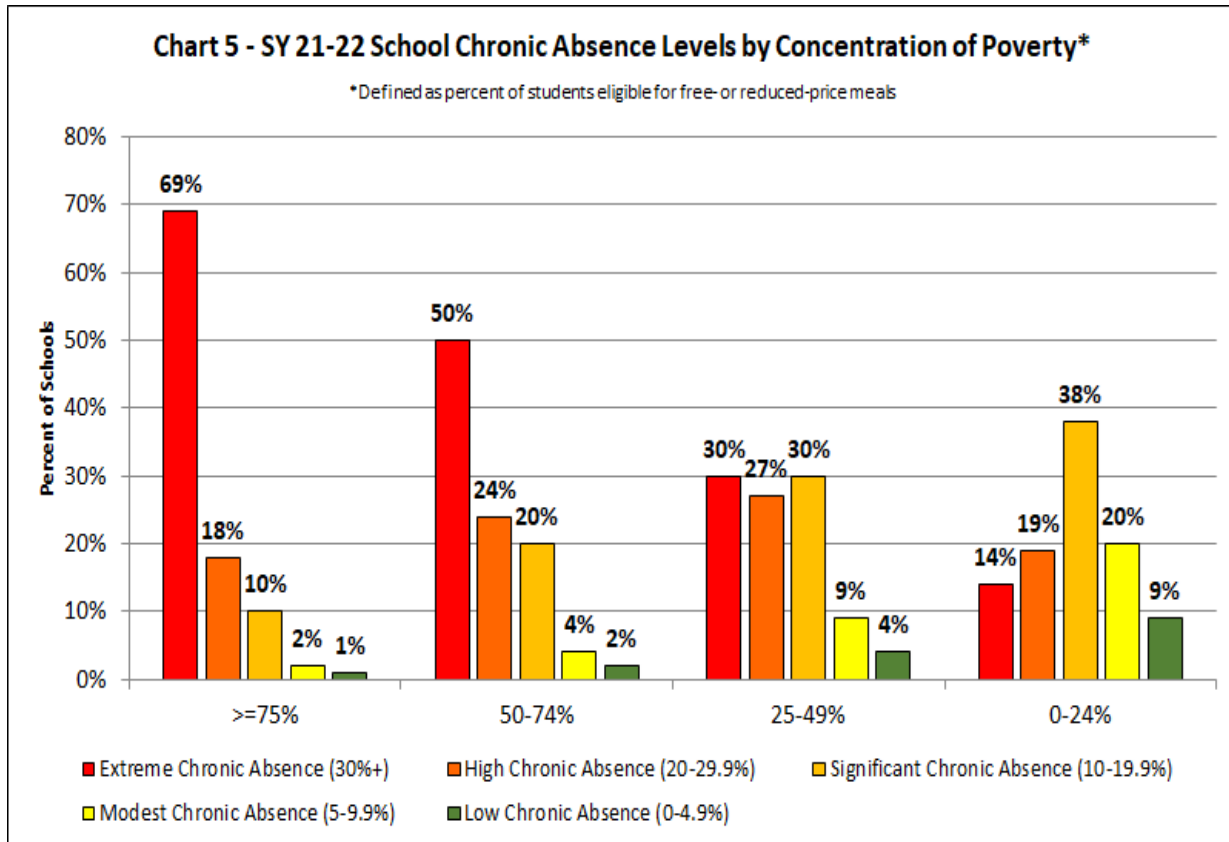
When a Student Misses School, the Impact Ripples



66% of students attend a school with 20% or more absenteeism (SY 2021-22) versus **25%** prior to the pandemic

Inequities are widening

The % of schools with extreme chronic absence increased dramatically in schools with higher levels of poverty; this pattern is similar for schools with 75% non-white students

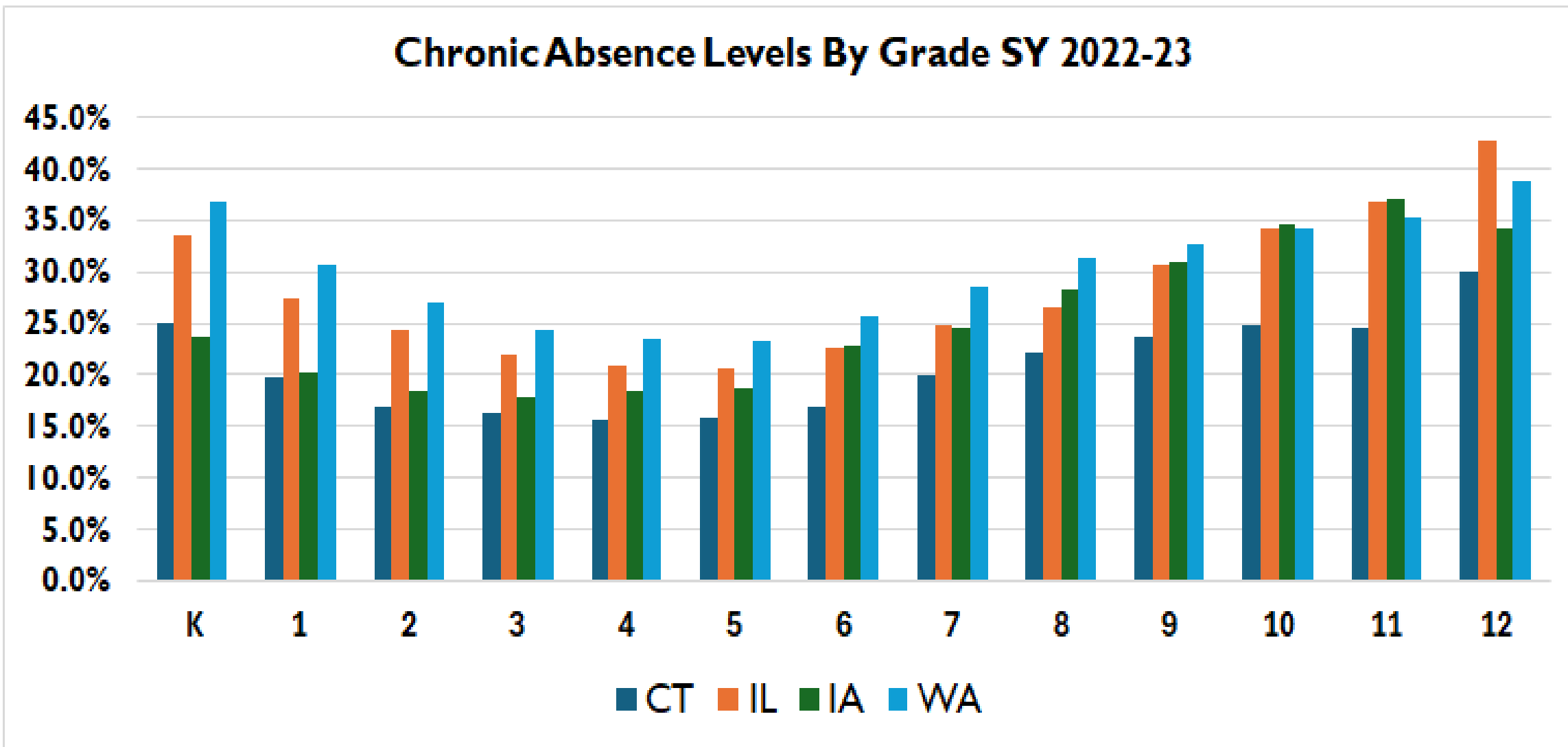


The vast majority of schools experience high chronic absence.
 The largest increase has occurred among elementary schools.
 Nearly 20,000 have extreme chronic absence.

2021-22 School Year	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools		High Schools		All Schools	
	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22	2017-18	2021-22
Number of Schools with 30% or more students Chronically Absent	3,550	19,828	1,353	6,430	6,433	11,778	12,493	39,890
Number of Schools with 20% or more students Chronically Absent	9,233	31,362	3,640	10,541	10,474	16,126	24,912	60,379

For more information, see: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/rising-tide-of-chronic-absence-challenges-schools/>

Reducing Chronic Absence Must Begin in Kindergarten (ideally preschool)





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 also associated with declines in educational engagement, social-emotional development and executive functioning.
- Students must be in school to benefit from what's offered. The adverse impact of chronic absence is 75% greater for economically challenged young students who are also more likely to be chronically absent.
- A regular routine of attendance is especially critical in this first experience with school. It helps young children and their families become less anxious about school, connect to peers as well as teachers, access resources and engage in learning.

Reducing chronic absence requires addressing what causes young children and families to miss too much school

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services (including health)
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to technology for parents
- Community violence

Aversion

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

Disengagements

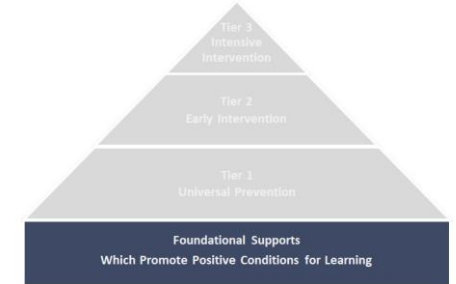
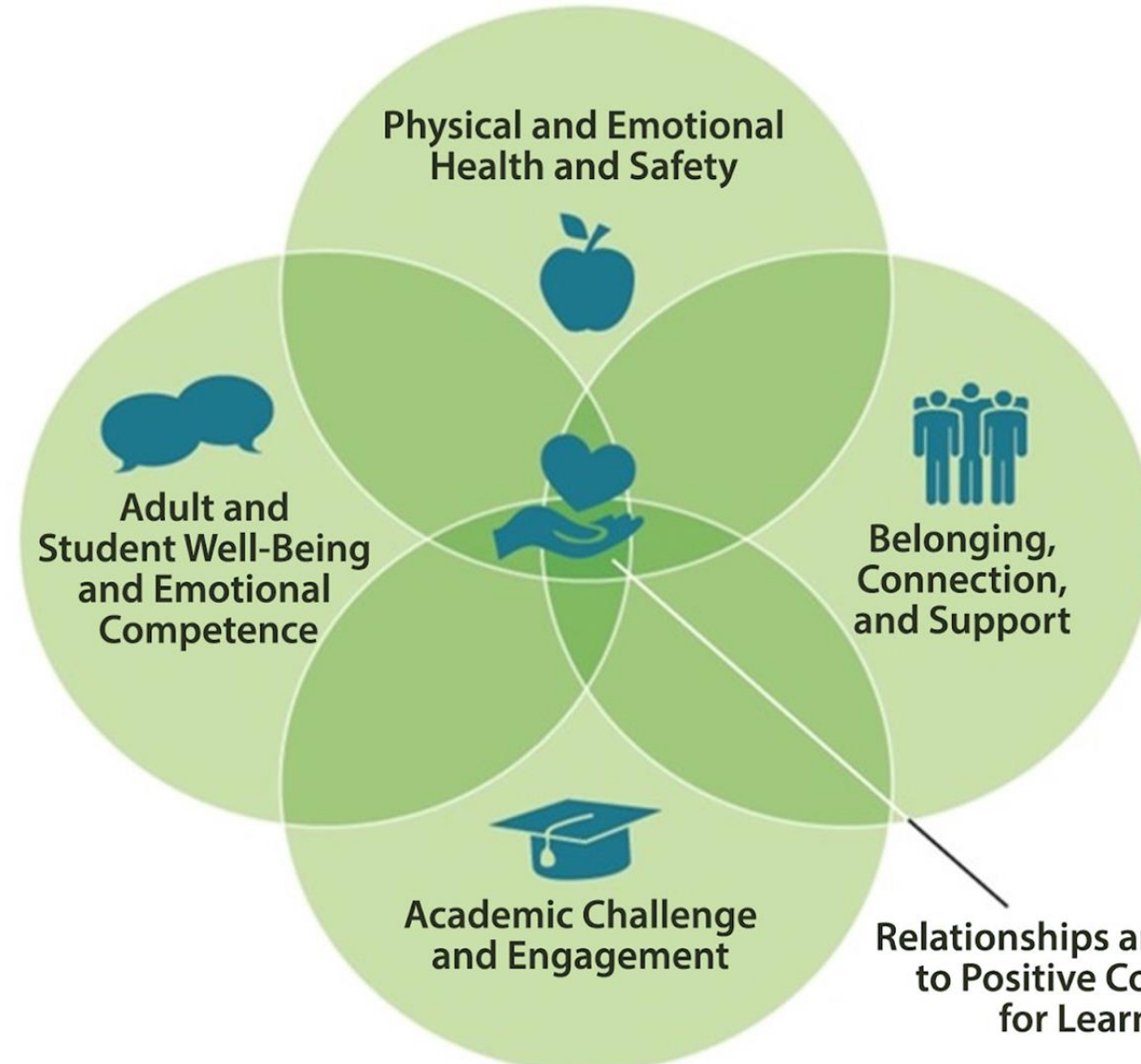
- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support

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
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

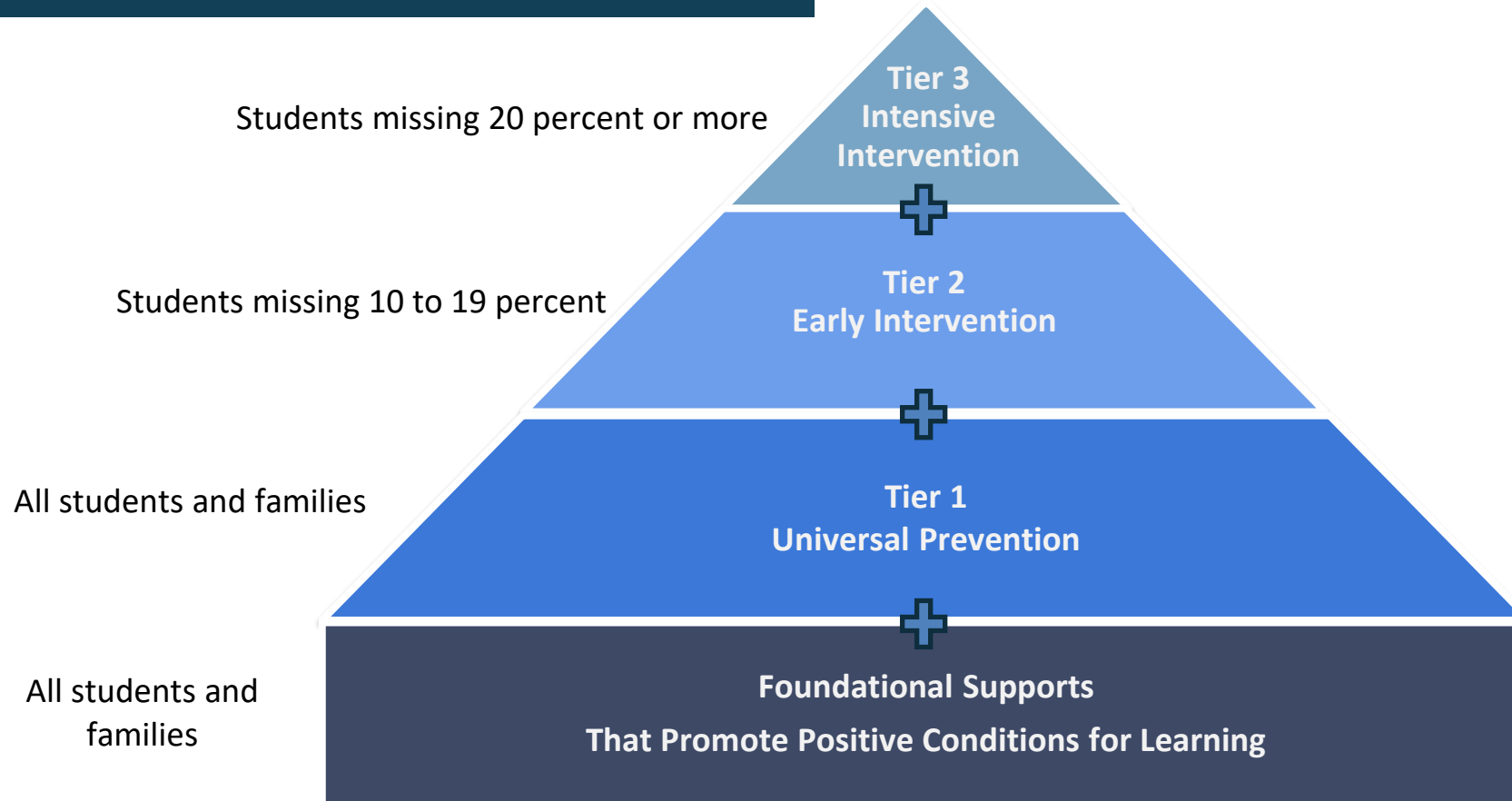
<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/root-causes/>

High levels of absence reflect an erosion in positive conditions for learning





Many struggle to create comprehensive approaches that begin with prevention



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

Tiered Supports Must Be Tailored to Realities of Particular Student Populations

Grade Span: Kindergarten

[Reset Filters](#)

Race / Ethnicity	Chronic Absenteeism Eligible Enrollment	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
African American	24,096	11,569	48.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2,080	961	46.2%
Asian	50,075	11,790	23.5%
Filipino	9,759	3,059	31.3%
Hispanic or Latino	289,323	120,967	41.8%
Pacific Islander	1,899	1,004	52.9%
White	102,809	26,935	26.2%
Two or More Races	27,101	8,126	30.0%
Not Reported	9,539	3,308	34.7%

Report Totals

Name	Chronic Absenteeism Eligible Enrollment	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
Statewide	516,681	187,719	36.3%

Developing effective strategies requires which groups of students are especially affected by chronic absence. In California, African American, American/Indian, Latino/Hispanic and Pacific Islander kindergartners are disproportionately affected. At the same time, 120,967 (64%) of chronically absent kindergartners are Latino.

Sources: California Department of Education, Dataquest SY 2022-23

Grantmaking Roles

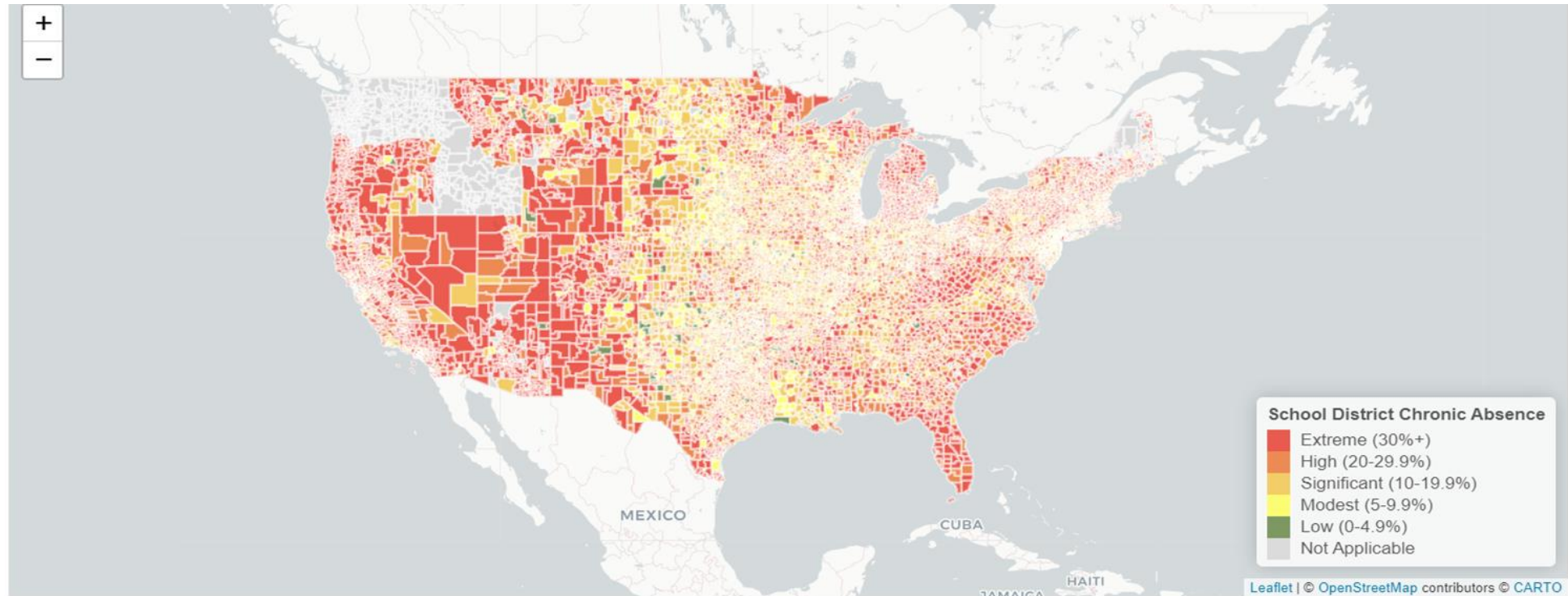
Examples

01	Investor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support adoption of effective practices to improve attendance
02	Broker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage multiple funding streams to promote sustainable efforts to improving attendance
03	Connector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convene and link key groups to nurture strategic partnerships
04	Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invest in research on causes of absences, effective interventions, and strategic communications
05	Influencer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build awareness among grantees, policy makers & public about why chronic absence matters and how to address it

WHO WE ARE



Find State Data Charts & Interactive Map of Chronic Absence in U.S. School Districts: 2021-22



SOURCE: [Everyone Graduates Center](#) and [Attendance Works](#) analysis of data from the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/state-data-charts-for-2021-22/>

Questions & Discussion

Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars

GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS, BIG BETS WORKING WEBINAR

Implementation, Replication, Fidelity: How to REALLY Scale High-Impact Tutoring
Tuesday, April 16, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS, BIG BETS WORKING WEBINAR

EdTech Working: Enhancing Teaching & Learning AND Scaling Needed Interventions
Tuesday, April 23, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS

Lessons from California's \$2Billion Settlement: Implementation of State Spending to Advance Equity
Tuesday, April 30, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS, KINDERGARTEN MATTERS WEBINAR

Back to School: Reducing Barriers to a Successful Start

Please Join Us

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