

Ready, Set, Go (Part 2): Realizing the Potential of OST to Deliver High-Quality Programming for Early Learners and Their Parents

September 24, 2024



Moderator



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Panelists



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Panelists



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Executive Director
Attendance Works



Addressing Chronic Absence: The Untapped Potential of Expanded Learning Programs



Defining Terms

Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

- School level measure (not student level)
- Notices aggregate attendance at certain point in time (e.g., half-days, holidays, bad weather)
- Masks individual student chronic absences

Truancy

- ▲ Counts ONLY unexcused absences
- ▲ Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- ▲ Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

Chronic Absence

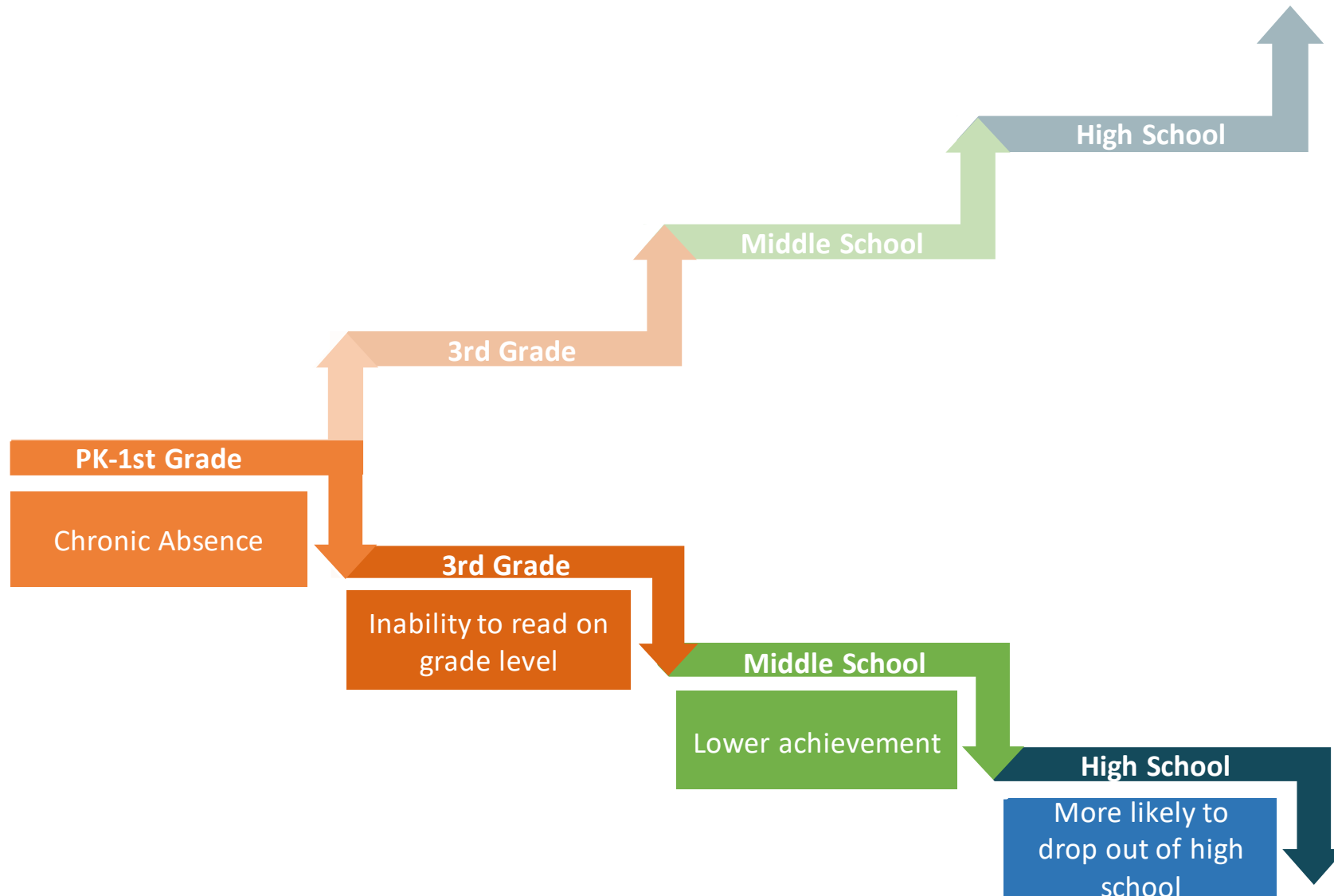
- Missing 10% counting ALL absences (*excused, unexcused, & suspensions*)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and the benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family and student engagement



Why Does Attendance Matter for Young Learners ?

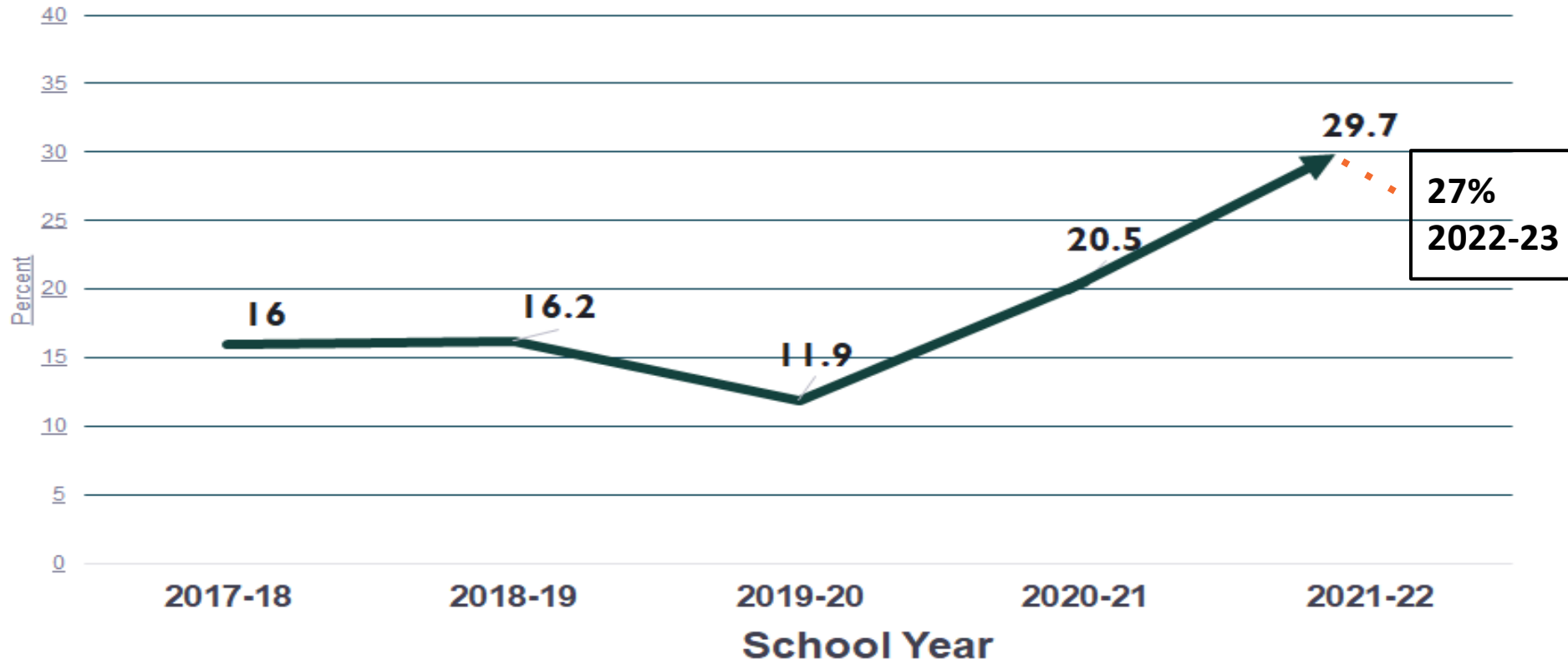
- Students chronically absent in prek/K are more likely to be chronically absent in later grades, and less likely to read and count proficiently by the end of third grade. Chronic absence is also associated with declines in educational engagement, social-emotional development and executive functioning.
- 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.

Improving Attendance Matters K-12



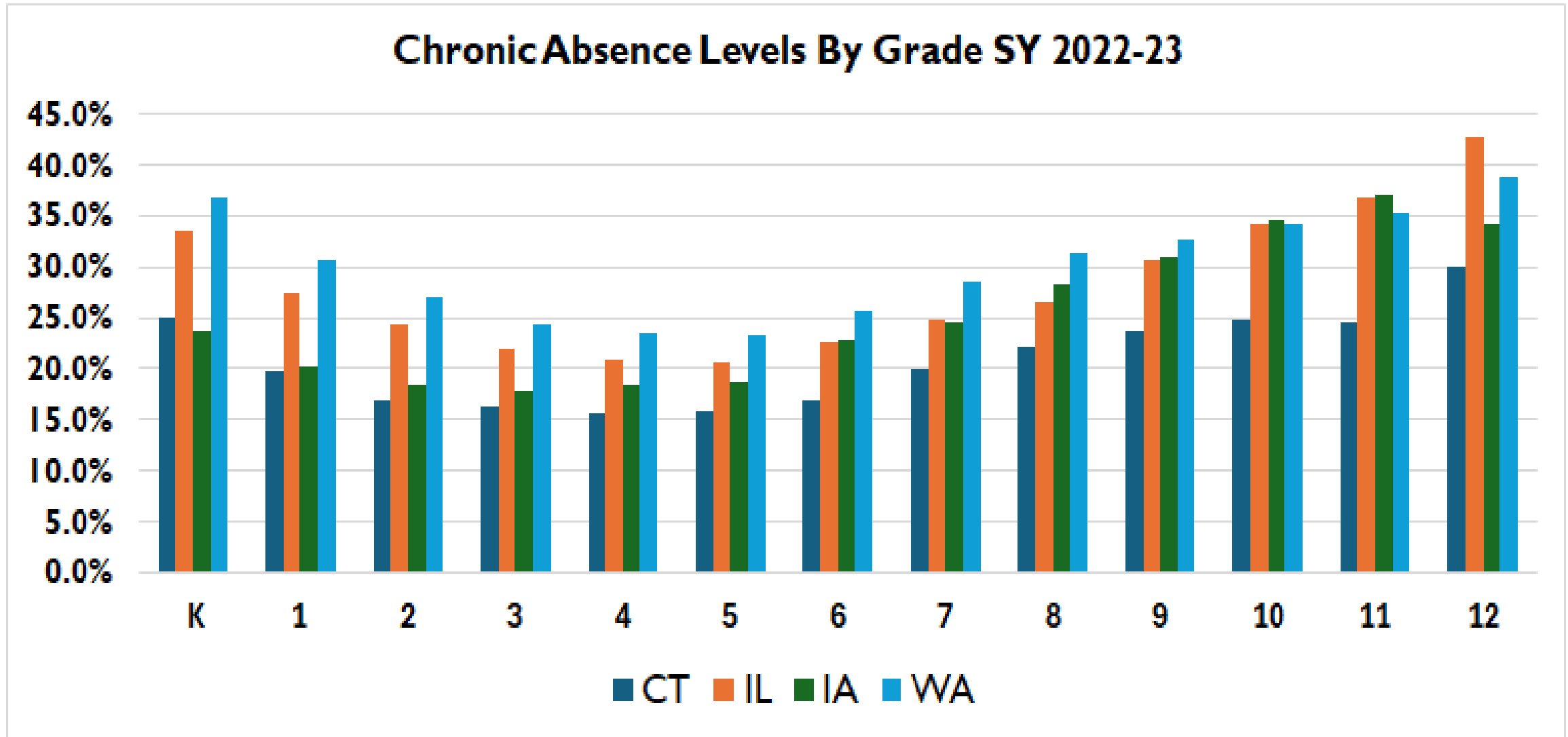
National Chronic Absence Crisis

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

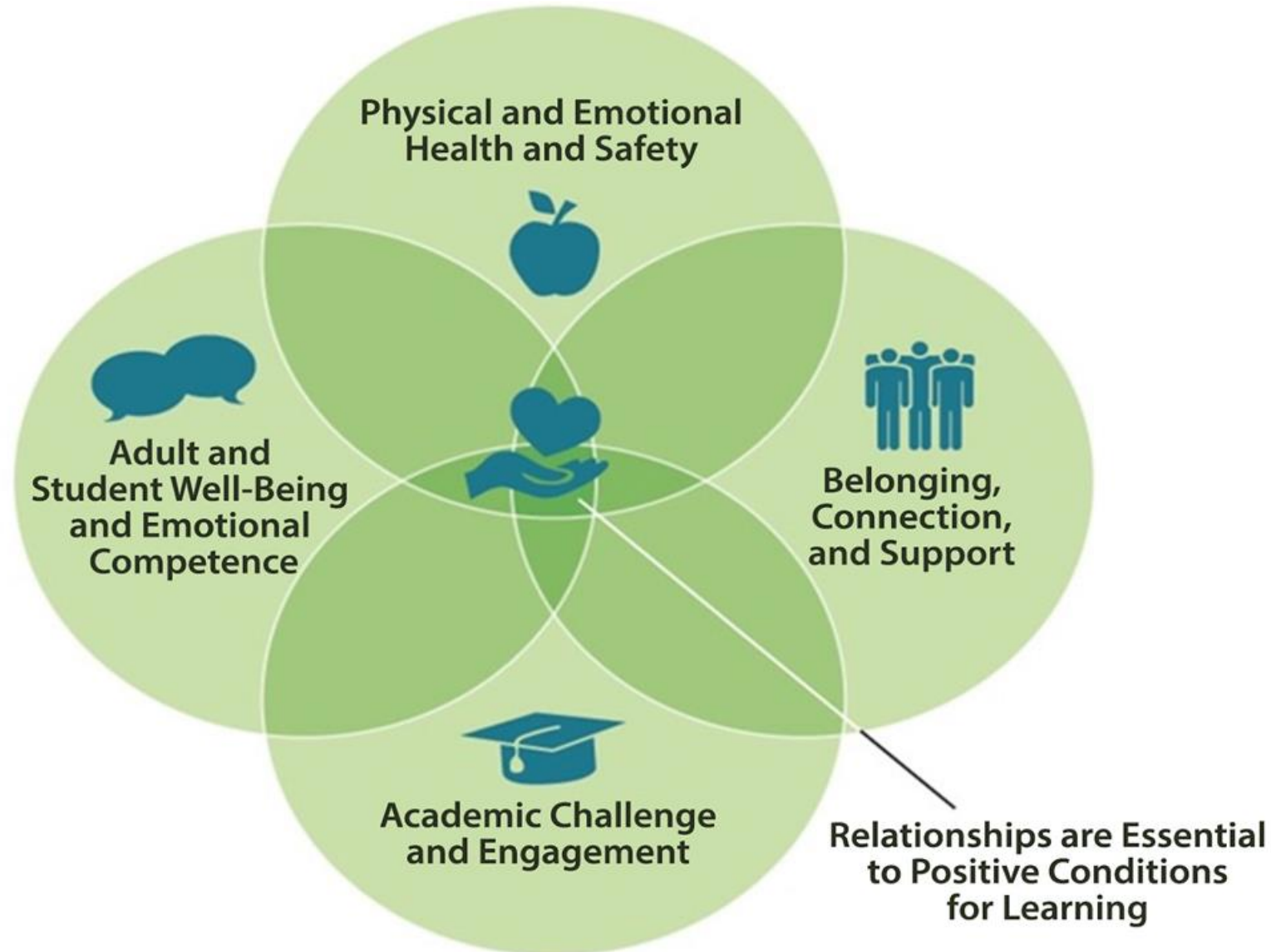


- ✓ The number of chronically absent students grew from 8,095,132 to 14,660,261.
- ✓ State data from 2022–23 indicate slight decrease.
- ✓ Emerging data for 2023-24 shows still much higher than before pandemic.

Reducing Chronic Absence Must Begin in Kindergarten (ideally preschool)



High Levels of Absence Reflect An Erosion in Positive Conditions for Learning



Reducing Chronic Absence Requires Addressing Underlying Causes of Absenteeism

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- 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
- 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

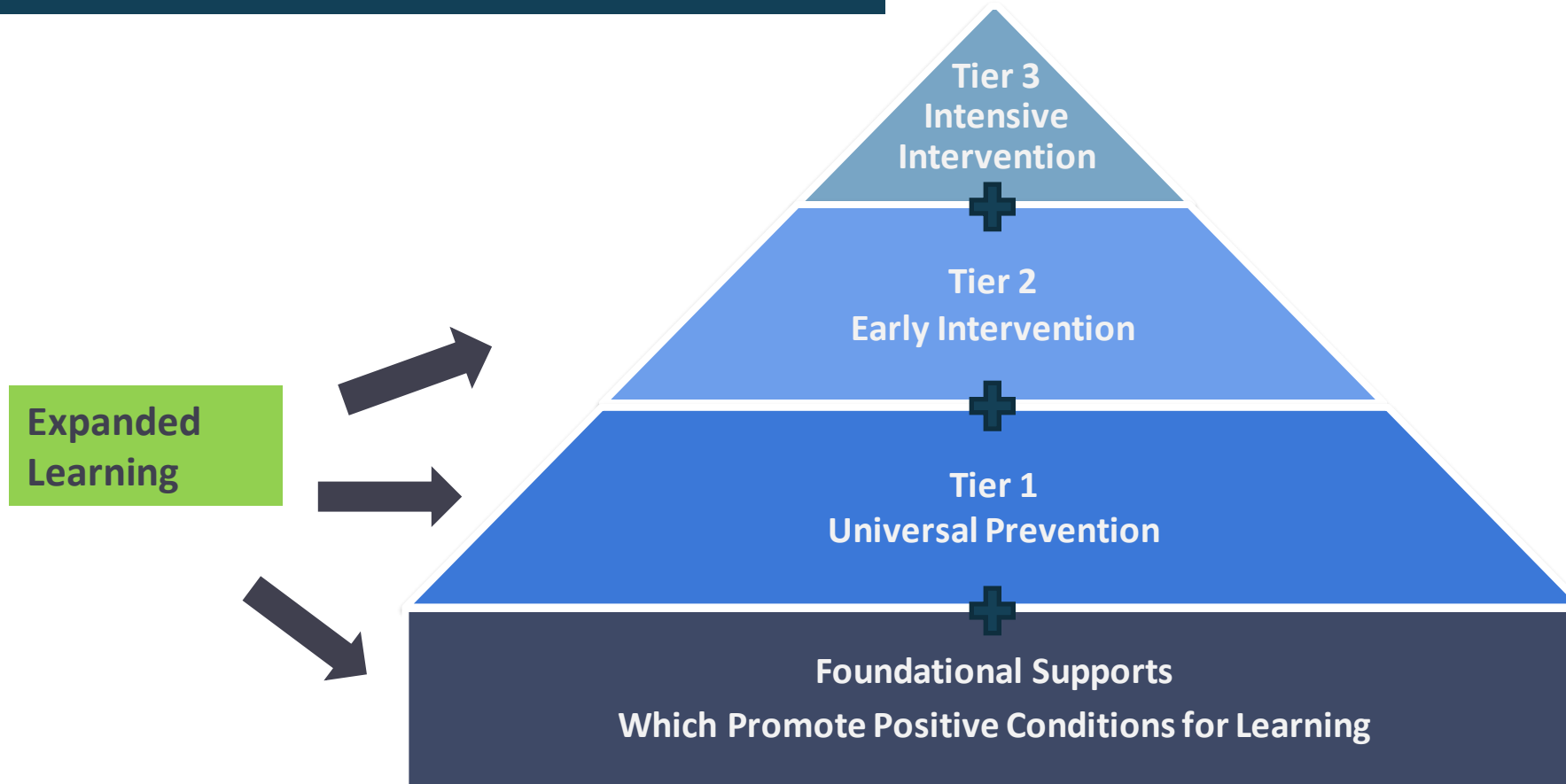
- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

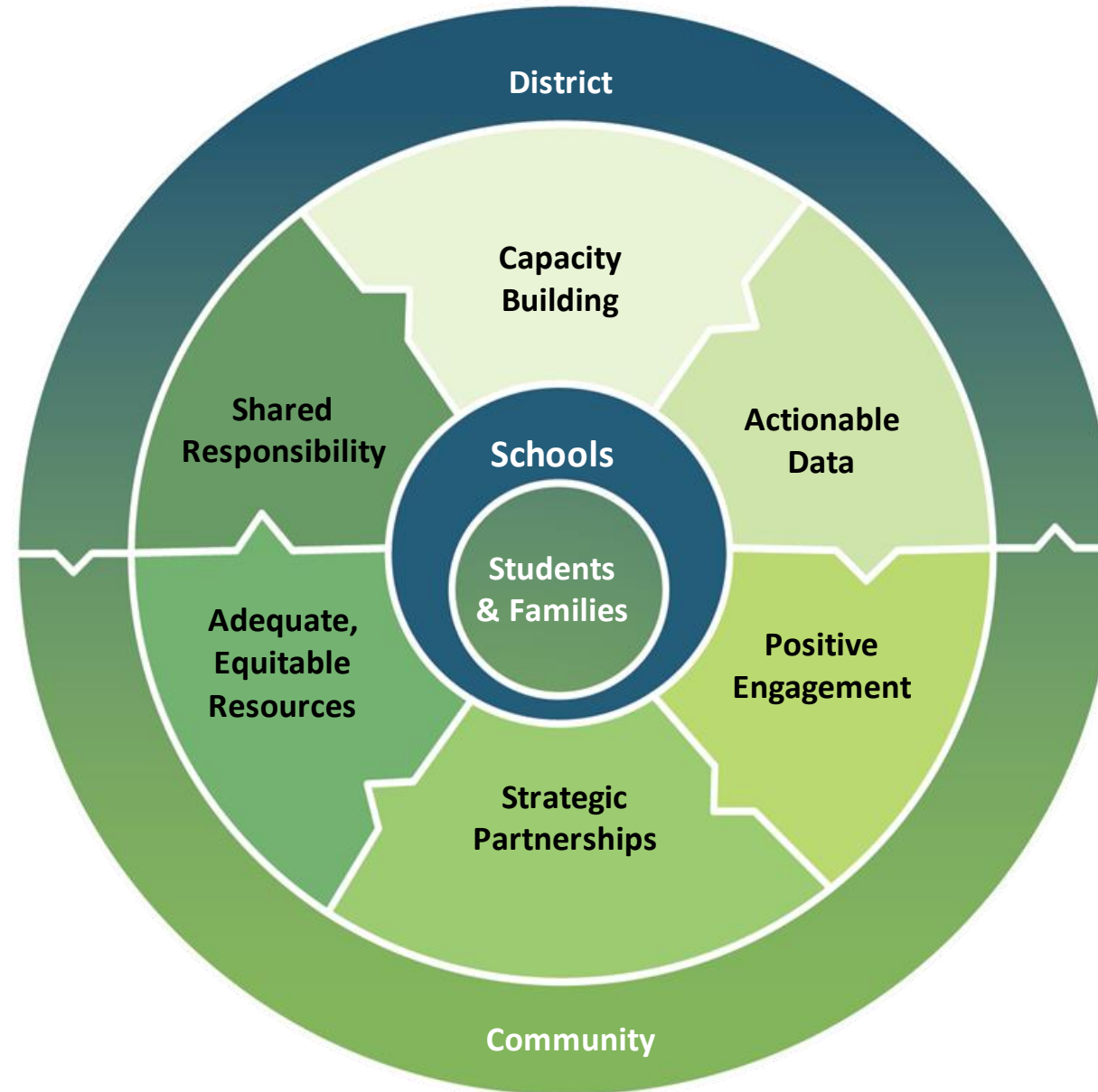
- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence



Expanded Learning is Part of a Multi-tiered Response



Key Ingredients for Improving Attendance





The Challenge and Opportunity

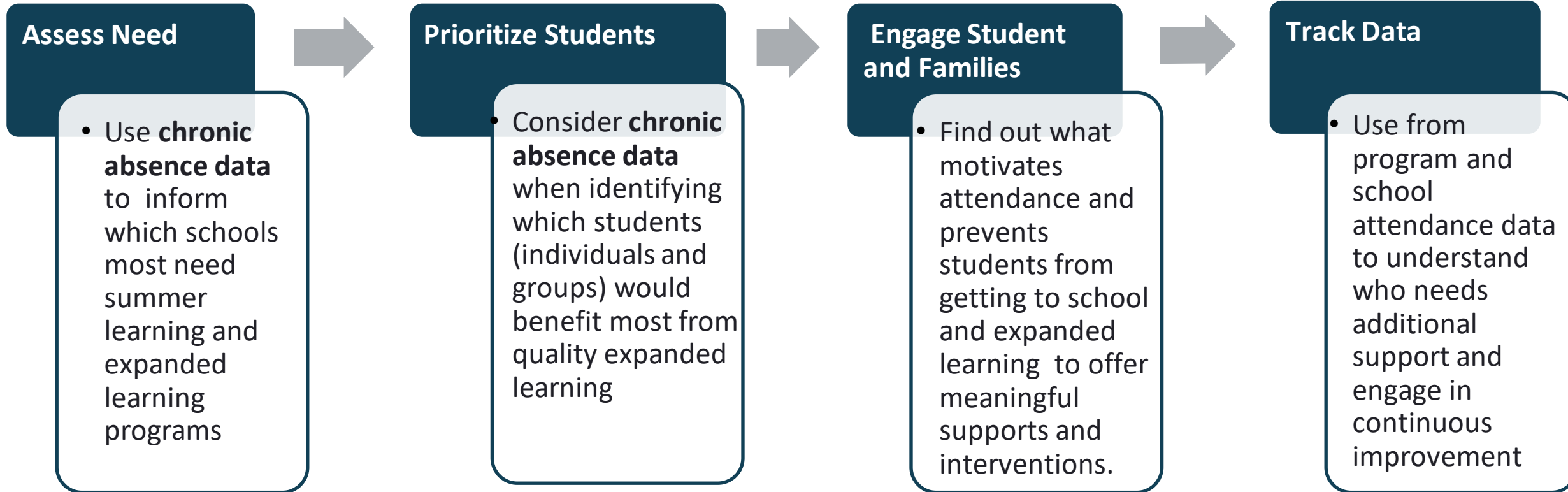
Concept developed in partnership with Pam Allyn, CEO of Dewey

Students who suffered most in the pandemic need:

- experiences that nurture the joy of learning,
- receive support over time,
- expanded amount of time in enriching environments that support socialization and learning.

And, we need to use data to notice where our effort are succeeding or need improvement and to identify which students and families would benefit from extra support to show up.

The Opportunity: Use Expanded Learning to Increase Engagement, Attendance, and Achievement





What Can Expanded Learning Programs Do?

Step 1: Create Culture of Attendance

- a. Take roll every day in a caring manner
- b. Partner with schools to educate families and students about the importance of attendance
- c. Reach out to students/families with poor attendance
- d. Offer incentives for attendance
- e. Use engaging program activities to motivate attendance.
- f. Analyze program attendance data to identify areas in need of improvement.
- g. Engage students in helping develop meaningful attendance messaging

Insights From “*Back to the Classroom*” (9/10/2024)

Ad Council Research Institute

Attendance messaging that most resonated with 5,000 parents:

- Is positive in tone.
- Communicates the opportunities associated with in-person learning, not just the consequences of missing school.
- Focuses on how school develops children holistically, beyond academic performance.
- Includes realistic goals for parents to work toward not being chronically absent, such as to attend as much as possible vs. citing a specific number of days or saying “every day.”
- Acknowledges their hesitations and avoids chastising or shaming parents by telling them what’s acceptable or not.
- Is delivered by a child’s teacher, whom parents say they trust the most.

Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.

It is an opportunity to:

✓ Build **Routines**

Daily attendance routines can reduce stress and create a sense of safety and security especially after chaotic transitions.

✓ Increase **Engagement**

Being in school helps build relationships with peers and school staff that nurture engagement.

✓ Provide **Access to resources**

Schools provide access to meals, health and mental health services, tutoring, mentoring, technology, extra-curriculars (sports, clubs, music etc), afterschool and summer programs.

✓ Support **Learning**

Showing up to school regularly helps students become proficient in reading and math and graduate from high school.



What Can Expanded Learning Programs Do?

Step 2: Monitor Attendance Data on Program Participants

- a. Seek parent waiver allowing A/S to see attendance and grades, ideally as standard part of enrollment.
- b. Regularly get data on in-school attendance for program participants.
- c. Find out if you are serving any students with problematic attendance.
- d. Use poor attendance in afterschool to identify students who might begin to have trouble showing up to school day program.
- e. Partner with school staff to find out what are the challenges facing students with poor attendance and what would help get them to school.



What Can Expanded Learning Programs Do?

Step 3: Find Out About Attendance In Schools Served

- a. Find out what the school is doing to reduce chronic absence and improve attendance. Identify if there is a role for the afterschool program, for example, serving as a success mentor.
- b. Learn if your school has a team that monitors attendance data; Seek membership on the team or at least access to review school day attendance
- c. Use the afterschool program as an opportunity to solicit insights from students and parents about what are the barriers to attendance in the school day and what could help overcome them.

Cut Chronic Absenteeism by 50% Over 5 Years

- Aspirational, yet Plausible
- A Clear Target
- Adapts to Different Contexts
- Trackable & Accountable
- Comprehensive Effort
- Commitment Over Time

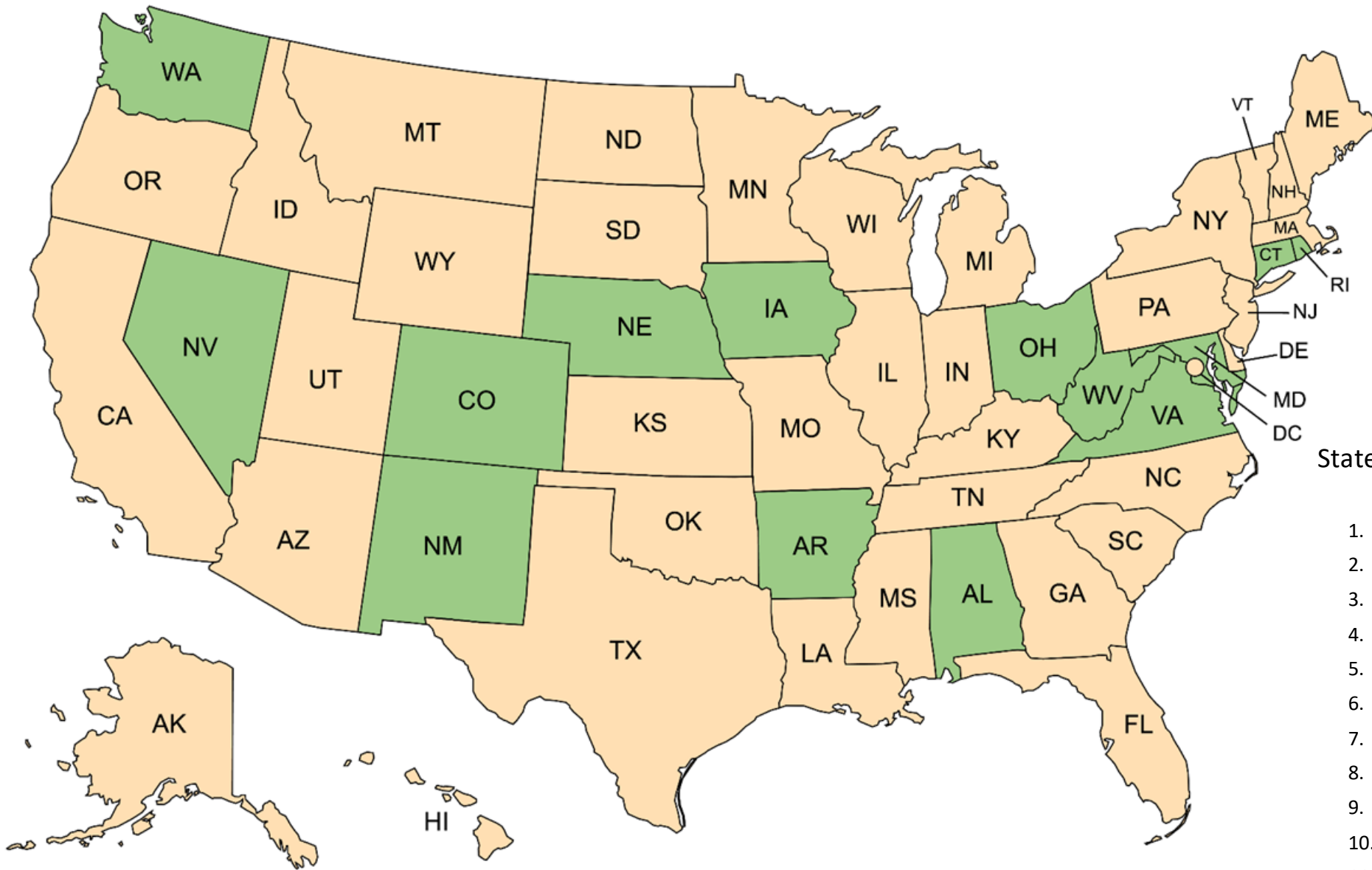


The Education Trust



Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence





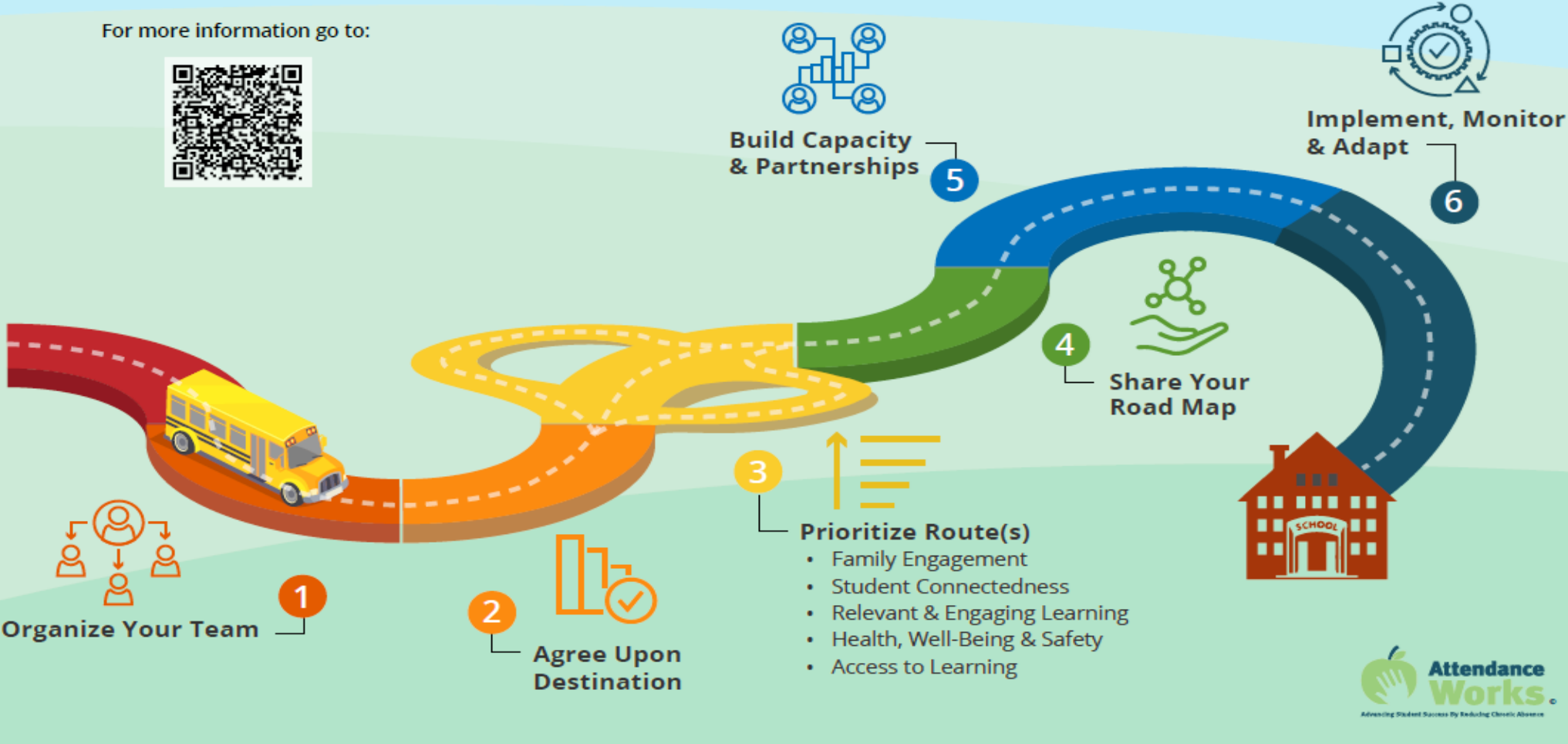
States in green are committing publicly to
 “Cut Chronic Absenteeism Half”

1. Alabama
2. Arkansas
3. Colorado
4. Connecticut
5. Iowa
6. Maryland
7. Nebraska
8. Nevada
9. New Mexico
10. Ohio
11. Rhode Island
12. Virginia
13. Washington
14. West Virginia

Cut Chronic Absence by 50% in 5 years

Craft Your Engagement & Attendance State Road Map

For more information go to:



UNITED WAY

Unlocking the Power of Our Community

*Realizing the Potential of Out-of-School Time to
Deliver High-Quality Programming for Early Learners
and Their Peers*



United Way of
Massachusetts Bay

UNITING PEOPLE. UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES.

About United Way

OUR MISSION

To improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world.

OUR IMPACT

United **Way** uses its global reach and local presence to build stronger, more resilient communities where everyone can thrive. We work to improve the health, education, and economic mobility of every person in every community we serve.

OUR APPROACH

- We address problems no one organization can solve alone
- We develop integrated solutions that meet the complexities of communities and people's lives
- We get leaders and organizations from all sectors to work together
- We engage millions of people to be part of the change
- We focus on what's most needed and what works locally with global scale via almost 1,000 LUWs in 36 countries

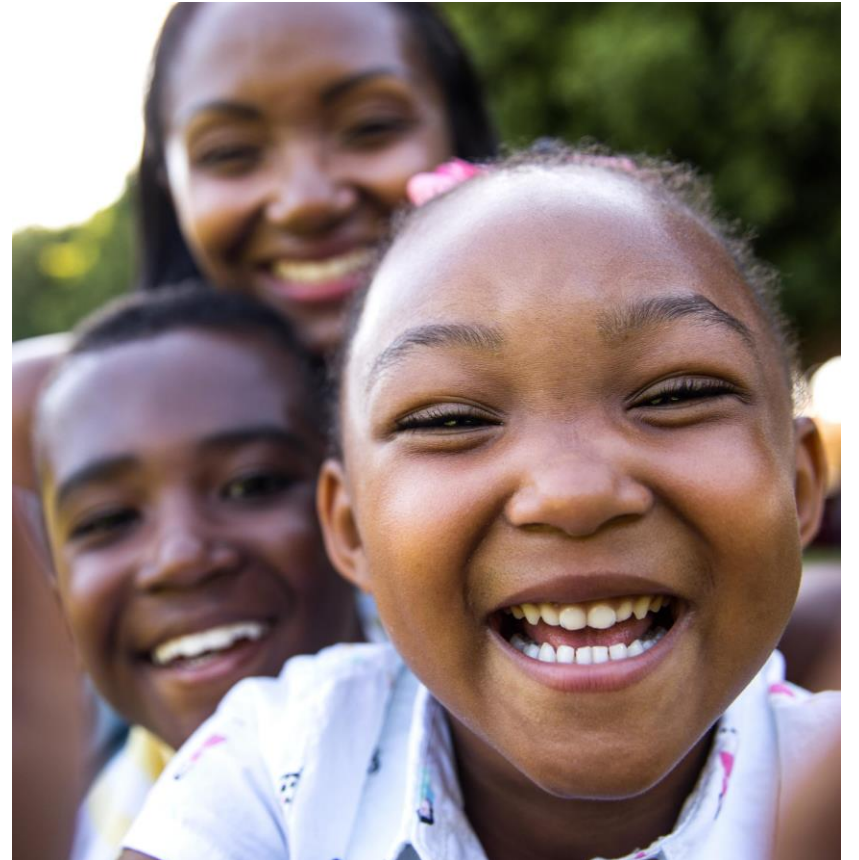
United Way Strategies - Youth Opportunity

Number of United Ways Reporting: 253

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY STRATEGIES	NUMBER OF UNITED WAYS	PERCENTAGE
Increased access to quality early learning environments	179	70.8%
Provided early literacy supports	206	81.4%
Engaged families to support early childhood development	171	67.6%
Partnered with schools and community-based organizations to support in-school learning	173	68.4%
Provided individualized/group supports for students, especially those academically at-risk	156	63.4%
Engaged families to support development and in-school success	108	43.9%
Partnered with schools to provide whole-school, wraparound supports	111	45.1%
Enabled college/university and career access	81	32.9%

United Way Roles in Out-of-School Time

- Bringing stakeholders together to establish shared goals, align efforts identify types of programming needed, focus on quality and access, fill gaps, etc.
- Making strategic investment and leveraging resources
- Targeting resources to students in greatest need of support
- Collecting and using data to inform strategy, investment, and improvement
- Supporting capacity building of programs and initiatives
- Raising awareness about the importance of OST



Our Goals

Together, we are advancing thriving, equitable communities.

We're working toward a future where access to financial wellbeing is universal, and prosperity is shared across race and ethnicity.

To measure our progress against this vision, we are tracking population-level change in 12 communities of greatest need in our region.



Our Work

- A targeted focus to direct our resources to who and where they are needed the most
- Advocate for changes in public policy & practice
- Lead thought leadership & research
- Advance systemic change through multi-faceted grant-making



Our Work

Change that's close to home

Five interrelated impact areas that expand economic inclusion and financial wellbeing

1

**Wealth
Building**

2

**Housing
Stability**

3

**Pathways
for Young
Adults**

4

**Early
Education and
Out-of-School
Time**

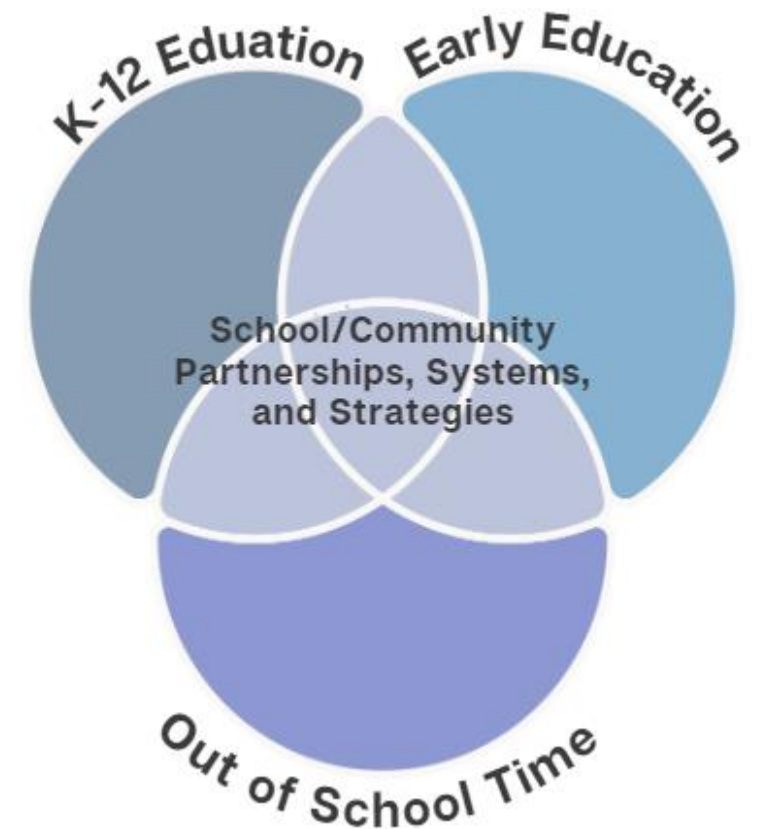
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**Crisis
Response**

Early Education & Out of School Time

United Way envisions a Massachusetts where all children and youth have opportunities to explore their interests, engage in school and community-based activities that ignite their passions, develop hopes and dreams for their future, and where all parents and caregivers have access to the EEOST care they need to work and learn.

United Way envisions a regional education sector that is integrated and connected, has adequate resources and funding, and is centered on the needs of children, youth, and families.



New Way Forward Grantmaking

- ❑ Direct Service and Advocacy Organizations
- ❑ 7 years of Unrestricted Funding that supports sustainability
- ❑ Opportunities to build the region's collective capacity by learning what is working and bringing it to scale
- ❑ A shared commitment to systems change and collaboration that leverages the expertise of diverse
- ❑ Centers Community Voice



2Gen Strategies are the Foundation of Our Work

United Way's Key Priorities:

- Developmental and Social Emotional Screening (DRIVE)
- Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative
- Shared Services
- Summer Step Up Program
- Community Schools

Summer Step Up Program

- ❑ Partnership between Massachusetts Department of Education and Care and United Way
- ❑ Funding, coordination supports, and technical assistance to school districts and community partners to implement summer learning
- ❑ Requires school district and community partner collaboration

Program Requirements

Children Served: Pre-k to 2nd grade

Duration: at least 6 weeks, 6.5 hours per day

Curriculum/Structure: addresses school readiness



About Summer Step Up Program

33

Communities

\$20M+

invested

90+

Nonprofit
organizations
and school
districts

1,500-2,300

Children served
each summer



Community Schools in MA

- 5 Districts and a new Statewide Coalition
- Increasing family engagement
- Decreasing chronic absenteeism
- Integrating student supports
- Identifying and aligning partnerships to school and community needs
- Deepening community and school relationships



Thank You!



United Way of
Massachusetts Bay

UNITING PEOPLE. UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES.

LIVE UNITED

United Way of Delaware | Get Delaware Reading
Unlocking Potential Through Literacy



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS ACROSS FOUR AREAS OF IMPACT



DELAWARE'S

HELPLINE

Answering the Call for Help
through Delaware 211



EARLY STUDENT

SUCCESS

Helping Children
to become proficient at reading through
out-of-school time, parent engagement,
and literacy support.



CAREER & COLLEGE

SUCCESS

Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce
by fostering career/ college readiness and
financial literacy



FINANCIAL

EMPOWERMENT

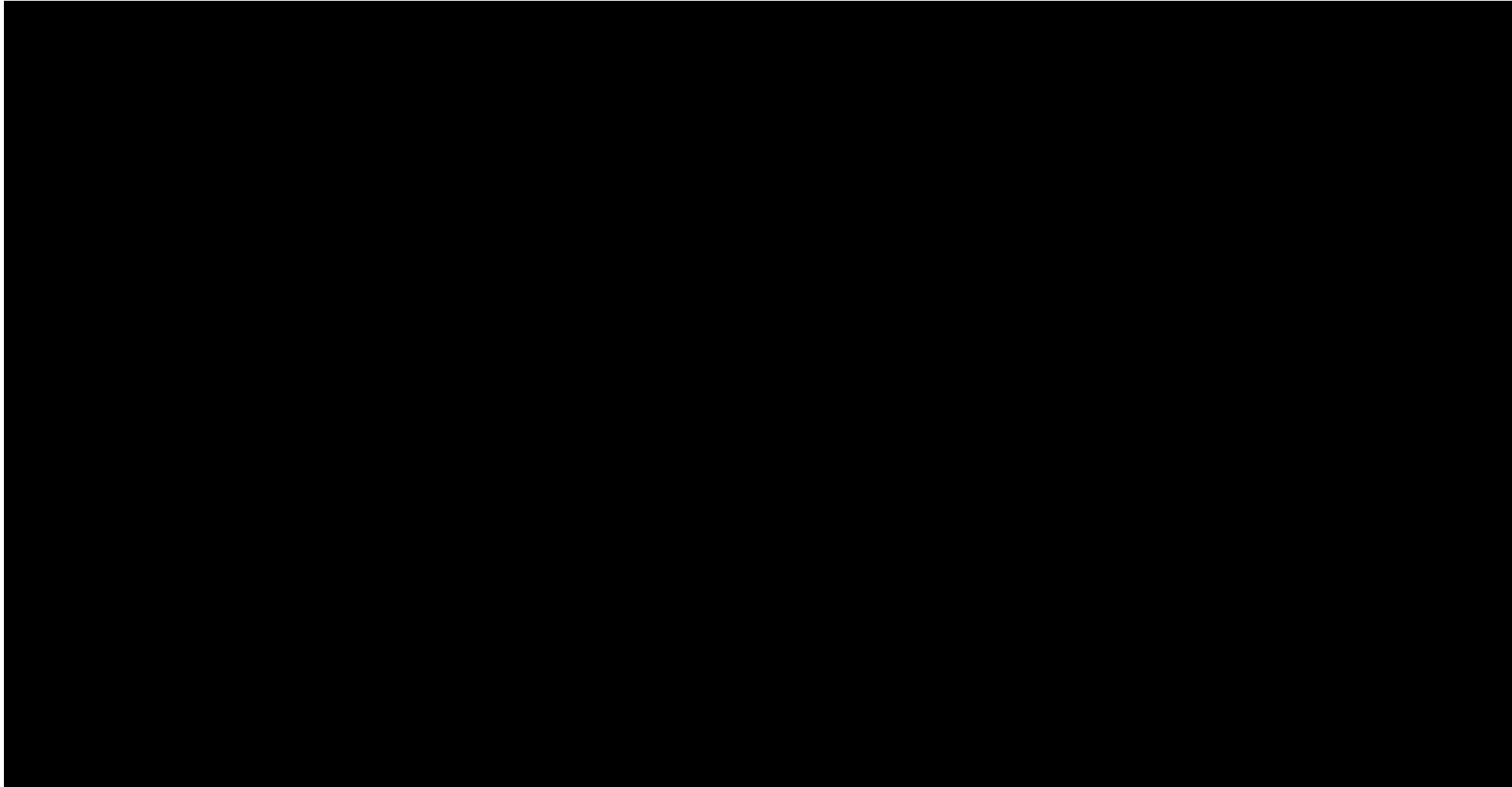
Helping Families
acquire assets & build wealth through 1:1
Stand By Me financial and business coaching

LIVE UNITED 2027



“Our Challenge, Our Why”

Reading on Grade Level by the completion of 3rd Grade



“Our Solution, Our How”

Get Delaware Reading

Making sure our kids are healthy and ready for school

Making sure they grow up in a word and book rich environment

Engaging them in healthy and educational activities over the summer

Working with parents and schools focus to on school attendance strategies.

“Our Programs & Partnership, Our What”

Supporting Early
Development

Building Home
Libraries

Closing the Literacy
Gap for Our
Youngest Learners

Minimizing Summer
Learning Loss

Engaging Parents in
Literacy

Enabling Community
Engagement and
Celebratory Events

Creating Meaningful
and Rewarding
Volunteer
Opportunities

My Very Own Library At A GLANCE



Questions



Questions & Discussion

Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars

GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS, PARTNER WEBINAR

Locked Out of Literacy: Tackling the Illiteracy Crisis Together
Tuesday, September 17, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

PEER EXCHANGE LEARNING CONVERSATION

Ready, Set, Go (Part 2): Realizing the Potential of Out-of-School Time to Deliver High-Quality Programming for Early Learners & Parents
Tuesday, September 24, 1–2:30 p.m. ET/10–11:30 p.m. PT

GLR LEARNING TUESDAYS, LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE

Charting the Path Forward: State Education Chiefs on Accelerating Learning Recovery
Tuesday, September 24, 3–4:30 p.m. ET/12–1:30 p.m. PT

Please Join Us

gradelevelreading.net @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays #GLRKeepers

