

# The Promise of Peer Learning Networks to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

CGLR Partner Webinars  
With Attendance Works

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# Reducing Chronic Absence

*Why does it matter? What can we do?*





## About Attendance Works

**Attendance Works** advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ Advances better **policy**
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising **practice**
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective **communication**
- ✓ Catalyzes needed **research**

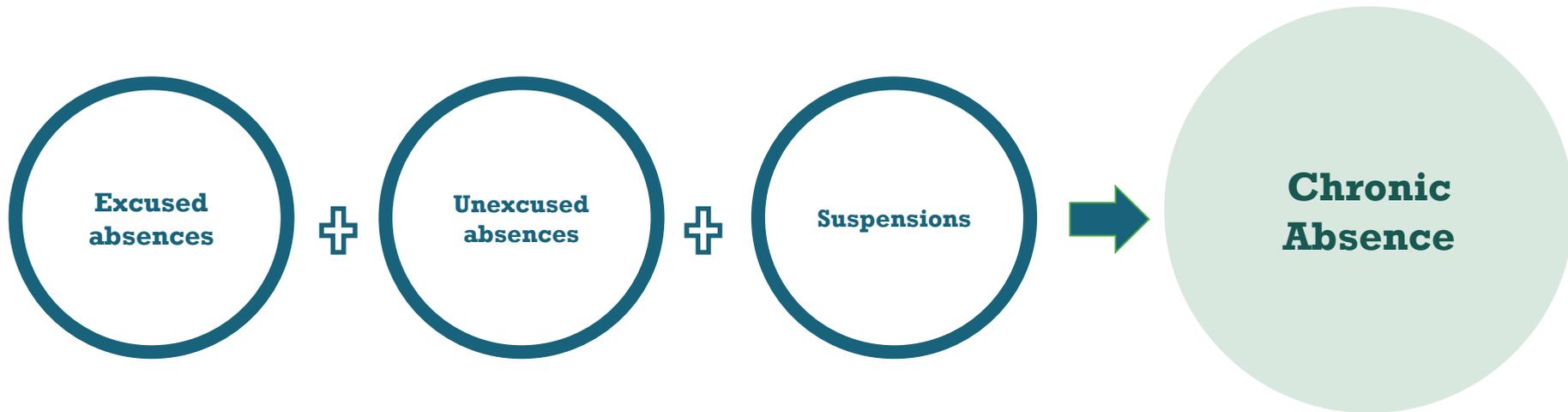
Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation’s “go-to” resource for improving student attendance. We are an implementation partner with the GLR Campaign. To learn more, visit our website: [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

For consultation and t.a. inquiries: [consulting@attendanceworks.org](mailto:consulting@attendanceworks.org)



## Defining Chronic Absence to Support Prevention and Early Intervention

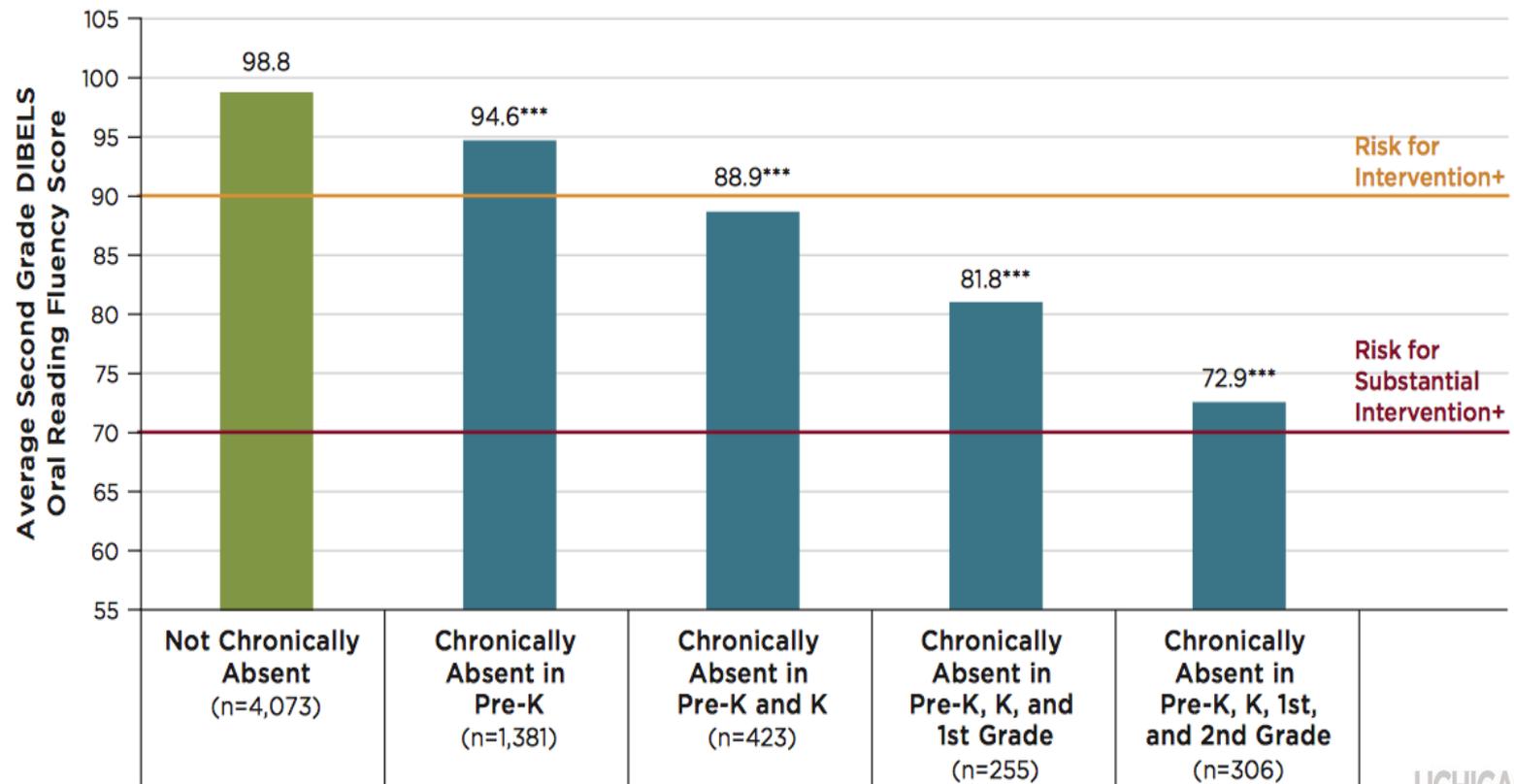
**Chronic absence** is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. To ensure it acts as an early warning sign, Attendance Works recommends defining it as **missing 10% or more of school for any reason.**



Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).



## Multiple Years of Chronic Absenteeism = High Risk for low 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Skills



**Note:** \*\*\*Indicates that scores are significantly different from scores of students who are never chronically absent, at  $p < .001$  level. + In the DIBELS 6th Edition Assessment and Scoring Guide (Good & Kaminski, 2002), these are labeled as “Some Risk,” indicating the need for additional intervention and “At Risk,” indicating the need for substantial interventions.



## Chronic Early Absence Connected to Poor Long- Term Academic Outcomes

Chronic absence in  
kindergarten

Lower levels of  
literacy in first grade

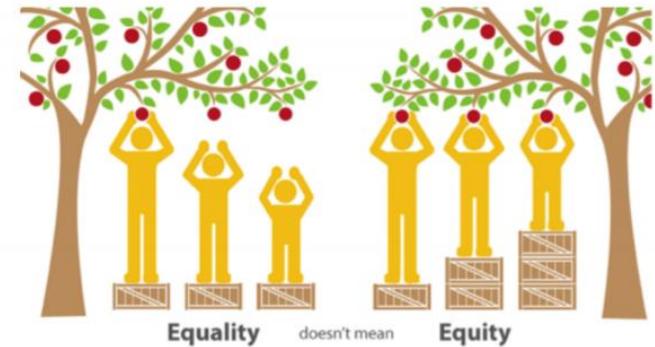
Lower achievement as  
far out as fifth grade

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 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Likely to continue being chronically absent.



## Reducing Chronic Absence Can Help Close Equity Gaps



- Vulnerable children, especially those living in poverty, are 2-3 times more likely to experience chronic absence at earlier ages.
- Vulnerable children are much less likely to have the resources to make up for lost learning time in the classroom.
- Vulnerable children are more likely to experience multiple years of chronic absence



## Solutions Require Understanding What Factors Contribute to Chronic Absence

***High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional investment is needed to unpack and address common causes of missing school.***

### Barriers

- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Family responsibilities
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Frequent school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- Inequitable access to resources due to bias & discrimination.

### Negative School Experiences

- Struggling academically and behaviorally
- Ineffective or harmful interventions
- Bored
- Social challenges
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Harsh, biased disciplinary practices especially for students of color
- Negative attitudes of parents due to their own school experience
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

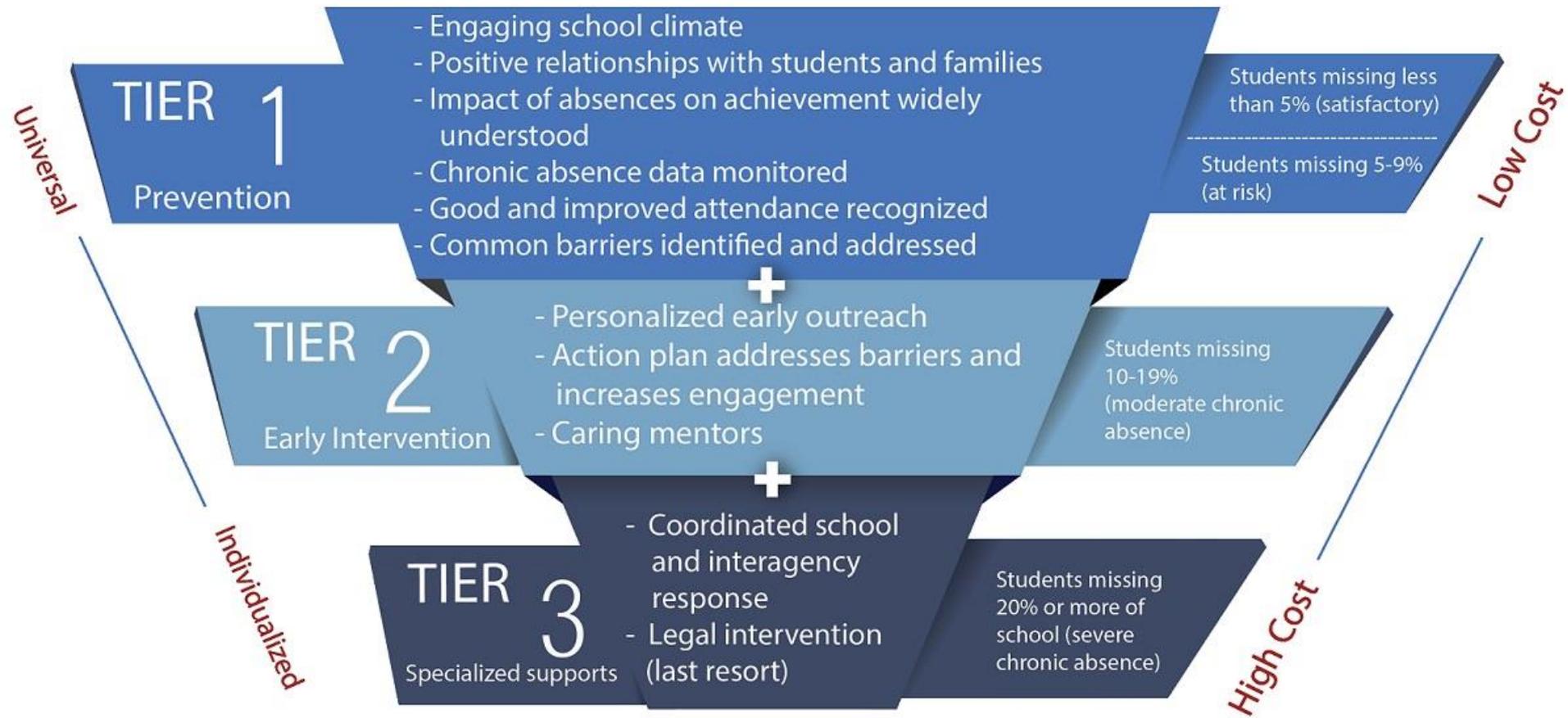
### Lack of Engagement

- Lack of or inequitable access to challenging, culturally responsive, engaging instruction & enrichment
- Lack of academic, emotional and behavioral support
- No meaningful or negative relationships to adults in the school
- Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Failure to earn credits/ no future plans
- Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes

### Misconceptions

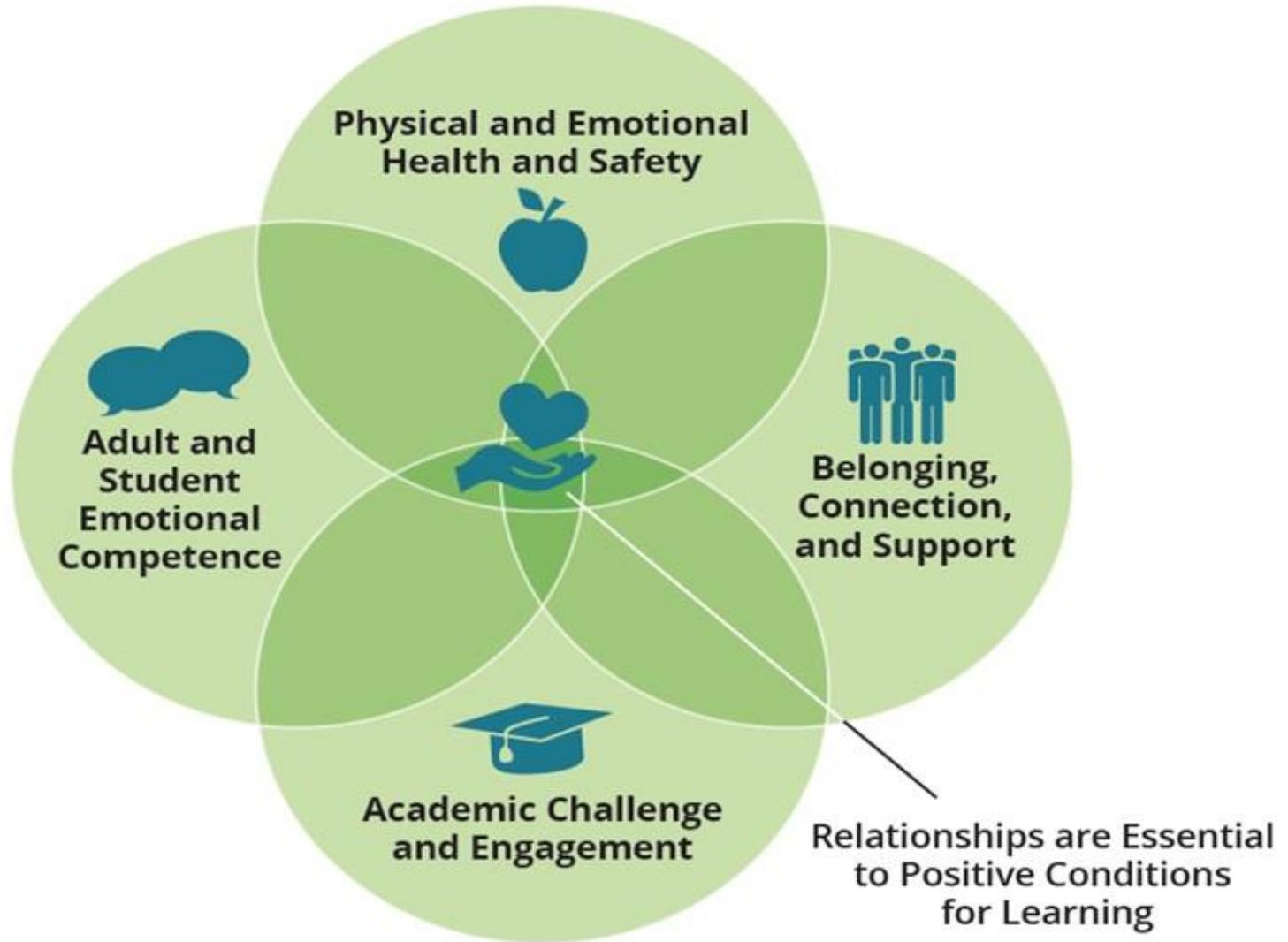
- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions are not relevant

# Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention



**High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional support is needed to address chronic absence.**

# What are Conditions for Learning?





# The Push and Pull of Conditions for Learning

## Examples of Push-Out Factors

### *Feeling:*

Ignored

Unsafe

That you do not belong

### *Experiencing:*

Bullying

Boredom

Harsh and Exclusionary

Discipline

## Examples of Pull Factors

### *Feeling:*

Cared for

Safe

That you belong

### *Experiencing*

Engagement

Support for students  
and their families



## Requires a **NEW** attendance paradigm

### From: Truancy

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



### To: Chronic Absence

- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses preventive problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement

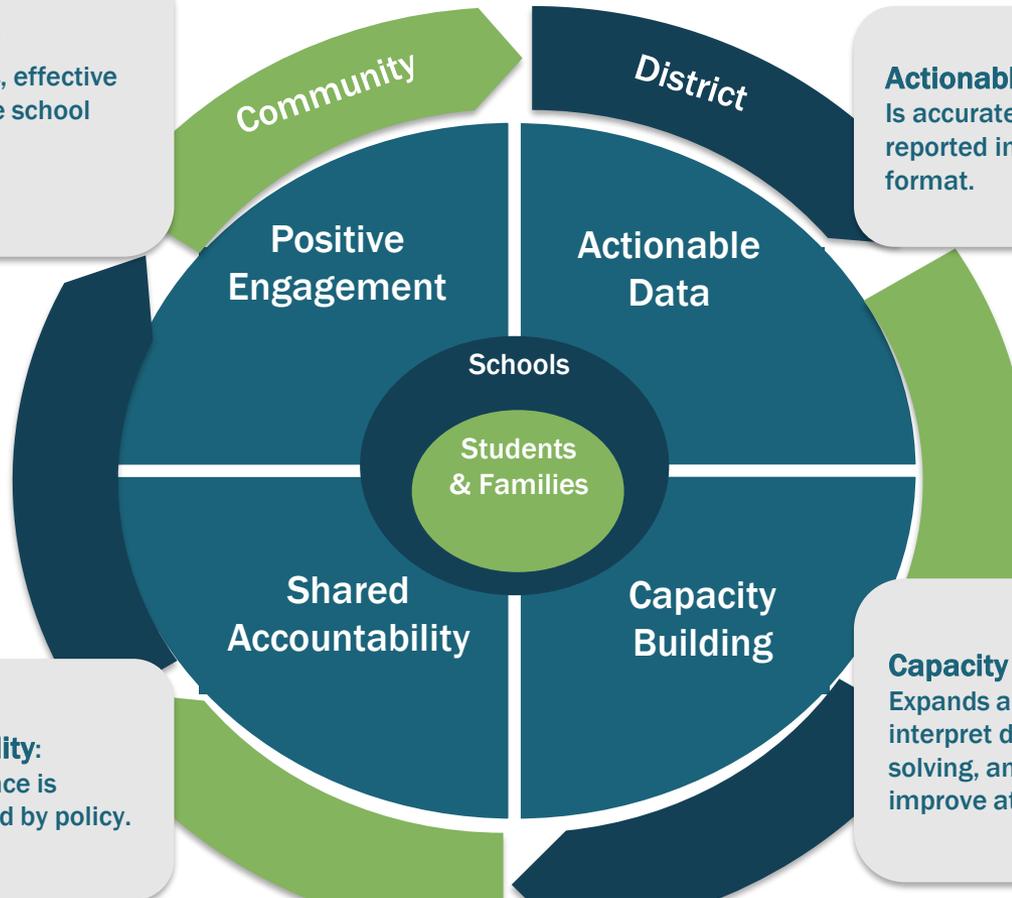
# Takes a Data Driven Systemic Approach

## Positive Engagement:

Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

## Actionable Data:

Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.



## Shared Accountability:

Ensures chronic absence is monitored & reinforced by policy.

## Capacity Building

Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

## Strategic partnerships

between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.

# Need Data Driven District and School Teams



## District Team

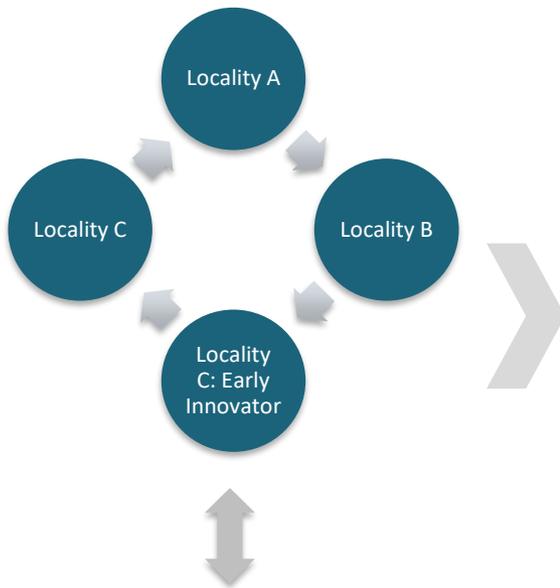
- Ensure the availability of actionable data and routinely analyze districtwide attendance patterns and trends
- Build school-level capacity to implement best practices to improve attendance
- Implement and monitor systemic policy and practice responses
- Secure community partnership agreements
- Provide schools with effective communication strategies and resources

## School Team

- Monitor and act upon attendance data
- Coordinate a year-round multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention
- Engage the whole school community in the effort
- Use qualitative and quantitative data to understand and remove common attendance barriers
- Ensure students receive needed supports

# Proposed Pathway for Change: Cultivating peer learning to inform broader policy change and practice

## Advance practice through peer learning



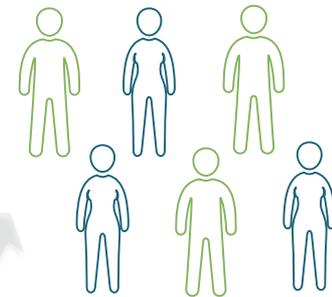
### Peer opportunities to:

- Compare data
- Share, demonstrate & learn about best practices
- Identify & problem-solve common challenges

## Inform actions w/ insights from local practice

- Policymakers
- Education Leaders & Assoc. (K-12 & ECE)
- Associations of public health agencies (housing, health, social services, transportation)
- Unions
- Parent Organizations
- Advocacy organizations
- Philanthropy
- Others

## Spread work through TA and policy



**Ongoing peer learning, technical assistance, administrative guidance, regulations, legislation, etc. promote best practices & systemic change**



## Why a PLN?

- Tackling chronic absence is complicated, requiring:
  - Re-orientation of staff and parent assumptions about attendance.
  - New data reporting and ongoing analysis to understand patterns.
  - Planning multi-tiered strategies that emphasize prevention and early intervention
  - Introducing evidence-based strategies and models
  - Peer support to sustain the change process



## What's involved in a PLN?

- Multiple group sessions for teams over time; at least 3 each year
- Coaching visits and calls in between sessions
- Data analysis – parsing patterns and trends
- Developing and executing local implementation plans
- Development and support of local attendance teams.



## Supports broader Continuous Quality Improvement efforts

- ❑ Attendance is an easy to grasp concept that makes CQI process understandable.
- ❑ Attendance data is already collected, typically every day
- ❑ Chronic absence and attendance data can be easily reviewed on an on-going basis
- ❑ Chronic absence and attendance data are easily broken down into relevant sub-categories.





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The Patterson Foundation



**Dawn Gerundo**

Director of Education and Children  
Valley of the Sun United Way



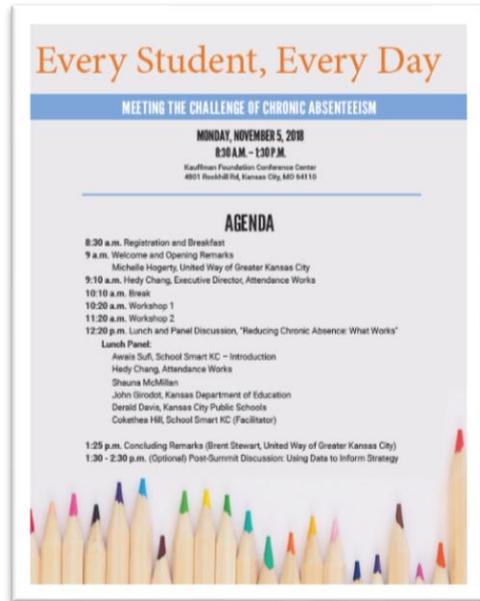
**Jim MacDonald**

Chief Community Investment Officer  
United Way of Greater Kansas City

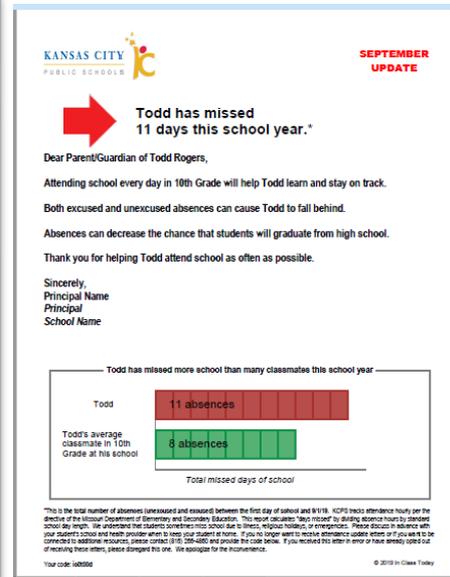
# United Way of Greater Kansas City School Attendance Initiative



*White Paper*



*Summit*



*Nudge Letters*



*Training*



## The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Attendance Awareness Poster Contest

# Open to all Public School Students in Manatee County and Sarasota County

- Templates provided to each school
- Easy to follow instructions were provided to be played on the School News programs.



- Each school selects one winner per grade level
- Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading provides prizes for each school-level winning student
- Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading provides an iPad for the regional winners in every grade level.

# Read On Avondale's approach ...

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- Awareness to What is Chronic Absenteeism
  - Community Awareness Campaign
  - Training and Resources
- Data Research
  - Attendance Works Model
  - Pilot Program
- Policy Change
  - Custom Form
  - Tier Approach
  - Awareness Support



# Goal Setting and Monitoring

<b>Chronic Absenteeism Goal</b>	<b>Attendance</b> Decrease chronic absenteeism by % moving from 12.4% in SY17-18 to 10% in SY18-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honor students and families each quarter for perfect attendance with perfect attendance awards.</li> <li>• Progress monitor students attendance and have CUTS Lite meetings when necessary.</li> <li>• Have CUTS hearing officer come out and speak to all students about the impact of truancy.</li> <li>• Random drawing for Positive referral incentives two times a month for students with perfect attendance.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication Goal</b>	Increase Communication between parents, students, and teachers.	<p>School Wide (only admin has access)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook / Twitter Communication</li> <li>• School Messenger as a vehicle (this does not cover every parent)</li> <li>• Hard copy flyers to parents via backpack</li> </ul> <p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind app for teachers to use specific to their grade level/Homeroom</li> <li>• Weekly Positive Phone Calls/text messages</li> <li>• Communication postcards home to families for all grade levels - provided by Dorian</li> <li>• Weekly Positive Referrals - Copies sent home to all families</li> <li>• Update your personal School Website</li> </ul>

<b>Culture Goal</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Total Students (K-8th)</b>	<b>Total Number of students with 1 or more absences</b>	<b>Total Number of Students with 5 or more absences</b>	<b>Total number of students with 17 or more</b>		
	9/12/18	1052	491	50	0		
		<b>Total Students (K-8th)</b>	<b>Total Number of students with 1-5 absences</b>	<b>Total Number of Students with 6 -10 absences</b>	<b>Total Number of Students with 11-17 absences</b>	<b>Total number of students with 18 or more</b>	<b>Chronic Absence Rate (18 or more Days)</b>
	10/5/18	1058	584	66	10	3	0.28%
	11/1/18	1058	617	156	25	4	0.38%
	12/7/18	1059	647	184	45	8	0.76%
	12/19/18	1067	620	214	62	11	1.03%
	1/30/19	1063	566	272	84	19	1.79%

# Participation



Number of schools participating:  
 Year One 2015-16: 83 schools K-12  
 Year Two 2016-17: 94 schools K-12  
 Year Three 2017-18: 65 schools K-5

Number of students participating:

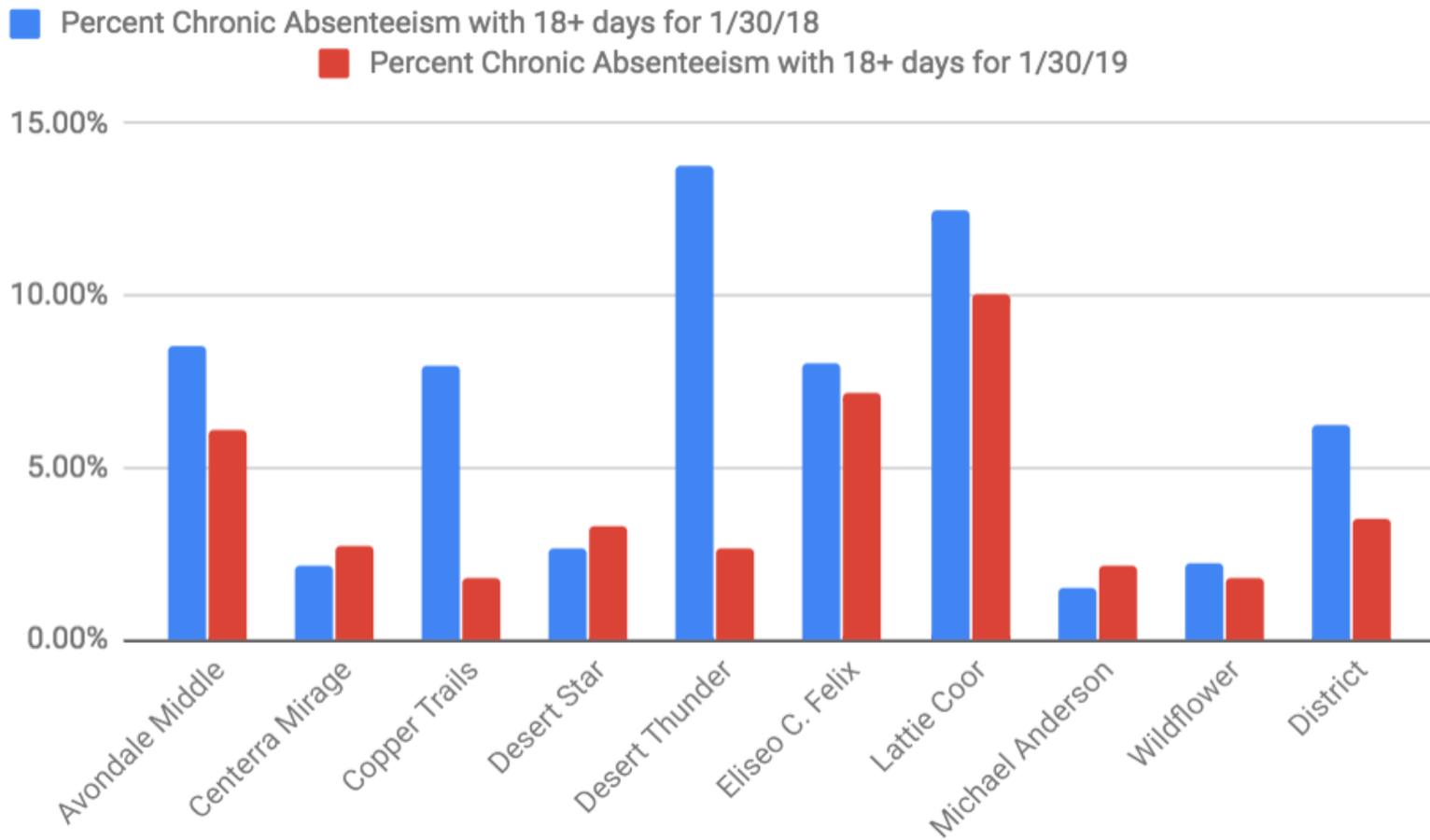
Year One 2015-16: 38,000  
 Year Two 2016-17: 44,000  
 Year Three 2017-18: 38,000



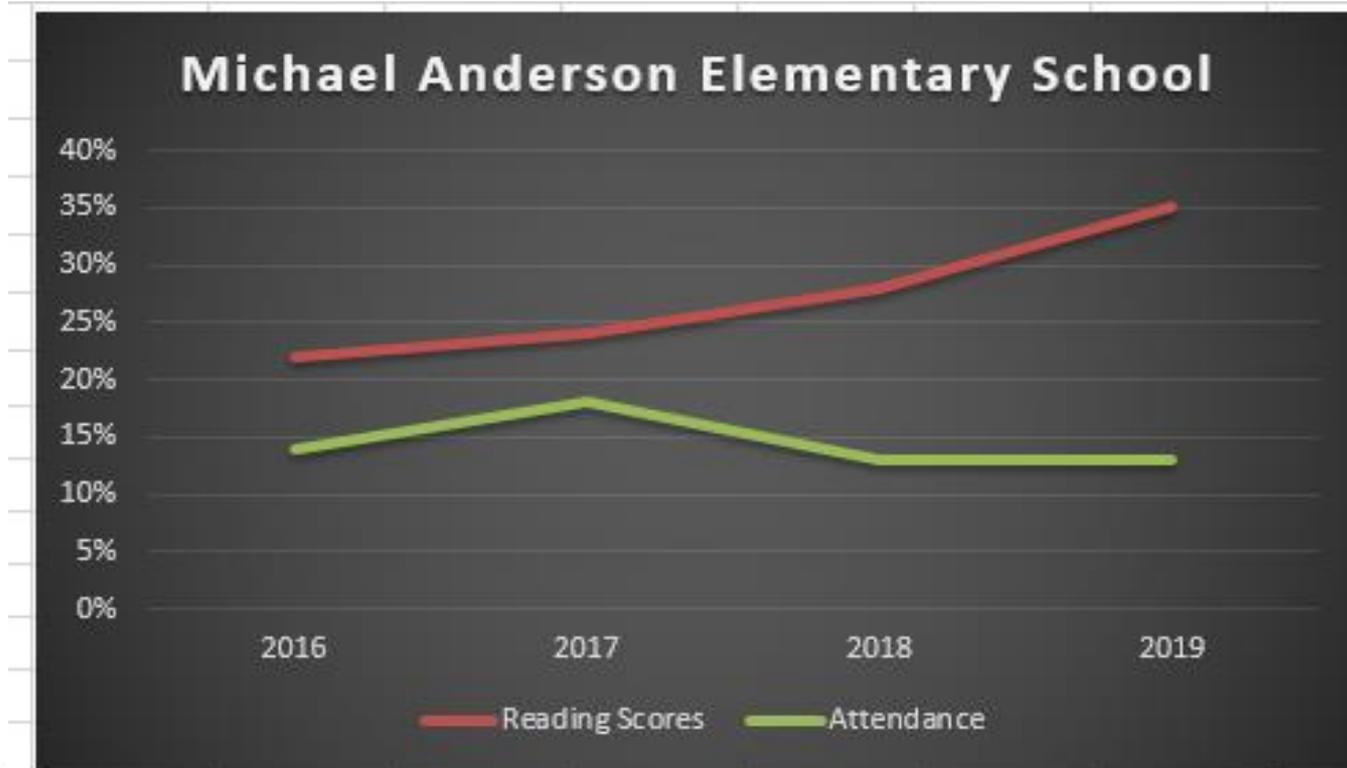
# WELCOME PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS!

County	School
<b>Charlotte County</b> 	Peace River Elementary School
	Liberty Elementary School
	Myakka River Elementary School
	Neil Armstrong Elementary School
<b>De Soto County</b> 	Memorial Elementary School
	Nocatee Elementary School
	West Elementary School
<b>Manatee County</b> 	Palm View Elementary School
	Samoset Elementary School
	GD Rogers Garden Elementary School
	Manatee Elementary School
<b>Sarasota County</b> 	Brentwood Elementary School
	Lamarque Elementary School
	Tuttle Elementary School
	Wilkinson Elementary School

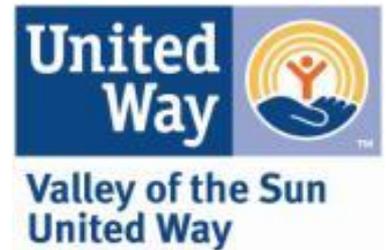
# Avondale's Trajectory from January to January



# Michael Anderson Elementary School



#AvondaleAttends



**2017/18 and 2018/19**  
**Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties**

County	School Name	2017-18 Enrollment	2017-18 10% + absent		2017-18 15% + absent		2018-19 Enrollment	2018-19 10% + absent		2018-19 15% + absent	
			Number	%	Number	%		Number	%	Number	%
Manatee	School Two	376	63	<b>17%</b>	23	6%	387	44	<b>11%</b>	13	3%
Charlotte	School Three	784	111	<b>14%</b>	43	5%	796	98	<b>12%</b>	27	3%
Charlotte	School One	626	90	<b>14%</b>	36	6%	563	73	<b>13%</b>	36	6%
Charlotte	School Two	533	60	<b>11%</b>	12	2%	534	72	<b>13%</b>	19	4%
Manatee	School One	443	93	<b>21%</b>	47	11%	380	49	<b>13%</b>	19	5%
Sarasota	School Three	814	94	<b>12%</b>	30	4%	787	102	<b>13%</b>	31	4%
DeSoto	School Three	802	79	<b>10%</b>	27	3%	821	117	<b>14%</b>	28	3%
Charlotte	School Four	638	100	<b>16%</b>	42	7%	602	96	<b>16%</b>	52	9%
DeSoto	School Two	648	123	<b>19%</b>	35	5%	606	95	<b>16%</b>	23	4%
Manatee	School Four	595	92	<b>15%</b>	38	6%	560	87	<b>16%</b>	41	7%
DeSoto	School One	951	147	<b>15%</b>	46	5%	943	167	<b>18%</b>	52	6%
Sarasota	School One	757	122	<b>16%</b>	55	7%	747	139	<b>19%</b>	59	8%
Sarasota	School Two	967	204	<b>21%</b>	84	9%	980	198	<b>20%</b>	91	9%
Sarasota	School Four	592	128	<b>22%</b>	69	12%	577	127	<b>22%</b>	59	10%
Manatee	School Three	535	141	<b>26%</b>	65	12%	470	109	<b>23%</b>	40	9%



# Questions & Discussion

# Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

## PARTNER WEBINARS WITH

## PARTNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN & SESAME WORKSHOP

WE COUNT!: Preventing an Undercount of Young Children in the 2020 Census

Tuesday, Oct. 29, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

## EMERGING MODELS WEBINARS

Building Towards Scale: The Promise of Virtual Home Visiting

Tuesday, Nov. 5, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

## PRODUCTIVE PARENT/TEACHER PARTNERSHIP WEBINARS

Prioritizing Parent/Teacher Relationships:

Lessons From 50 Years of Research and Practice

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

Please join us!

