



# Chronic Absenteeism

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July 9, 2018

3:00PM – 4:00PM Eastern Time

## Discussion Norms

1. Please use the chat box to pose a question to the presenters or to the group at any time.
2. Please mute your line if you are not speaking.
3. Please click the “Raised Hand” icon and we will unmute you



4. At the end of the session, we will discuss the following: *Given the opportunity to learn about the strategies employed in other states during a smaller group discussion, what education policy areas would you like to focus on?*





# Agenda

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- Welcome and Overview
- Framing the Discussion
  - Dr. Robert Balfanz
  - Hedy Chang
- State Examples
  - Robin Shobe, Oregon Department of Education
  - Susan Dawson, E3 Alliance
- Q & A



# Dr. Robert Balfanz

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- Director
- Everyone Graduates Center
- Johns Hopkins University



# Hedy Chang

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- Executive Director
- Attendance Works



# Reducing Chronic Absence



July 9, 2017



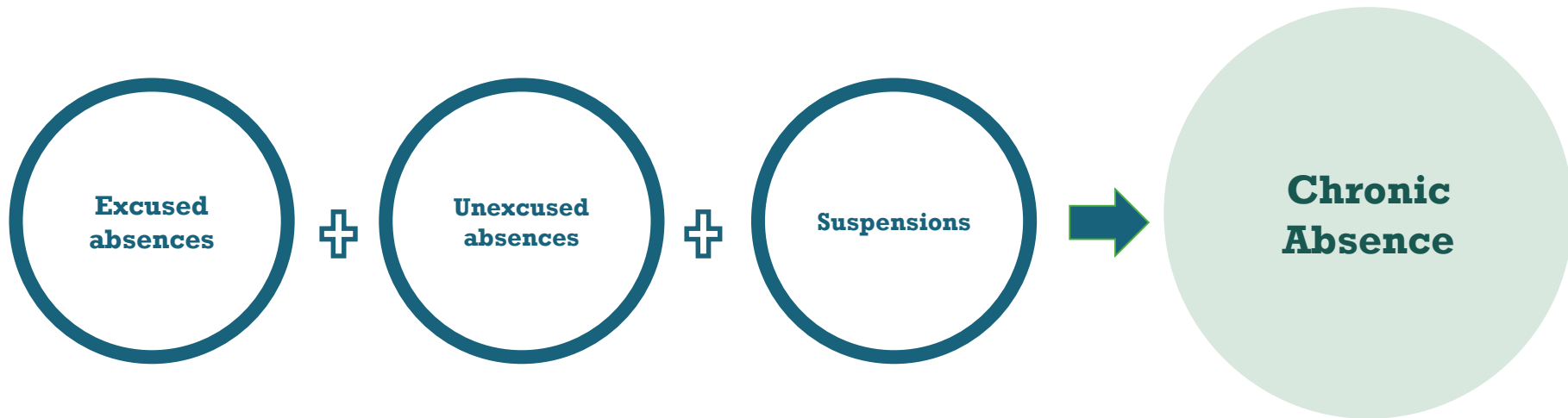
**EVERYONE**  
GRADUATES

[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



## What is Chronic Absence?

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



## **Recognize Need For New Paradigm on Attendance**

### **Truancy**

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

### **Chronic Absence**

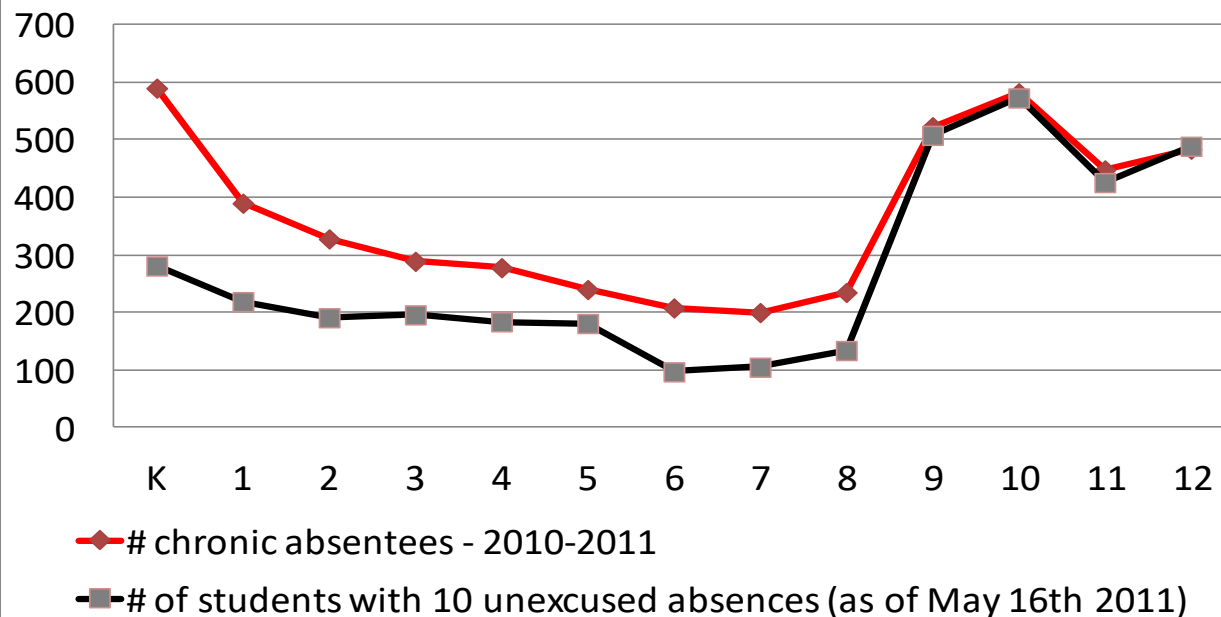
- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses preventive problem-solving, trauma-informed strategies





## Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

**Number of students missing 10%  
versus 10 unexcused absences  
(San Francisco Unified School District)**





**Chronic absence is easily masked if we only monitor missing consecutive days**

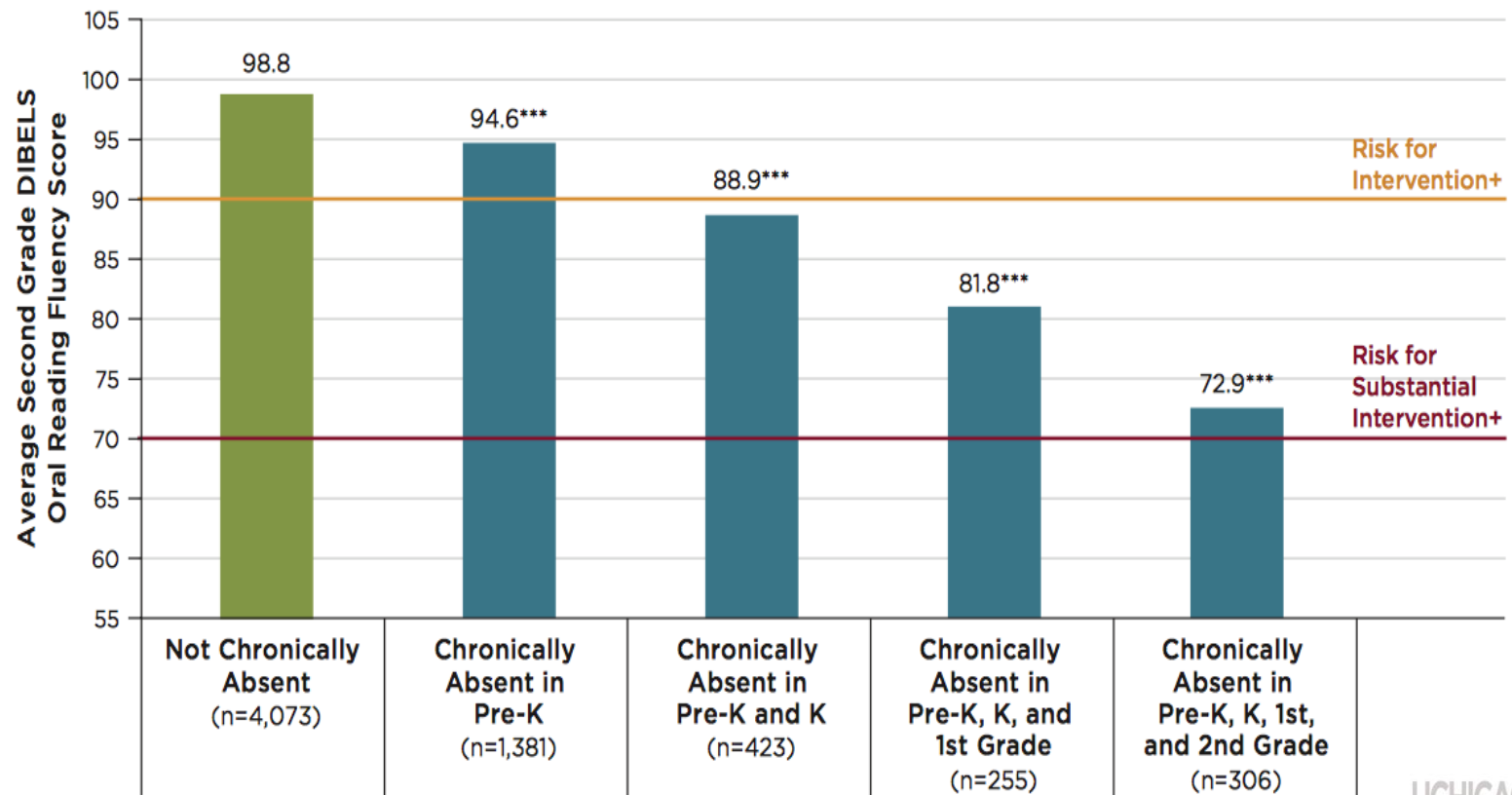
September					October					November					December					January				
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Chronic Absence = 18+ days of absence = **As few as 2 days a month**



## 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.

UChicagoCCSR



## 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

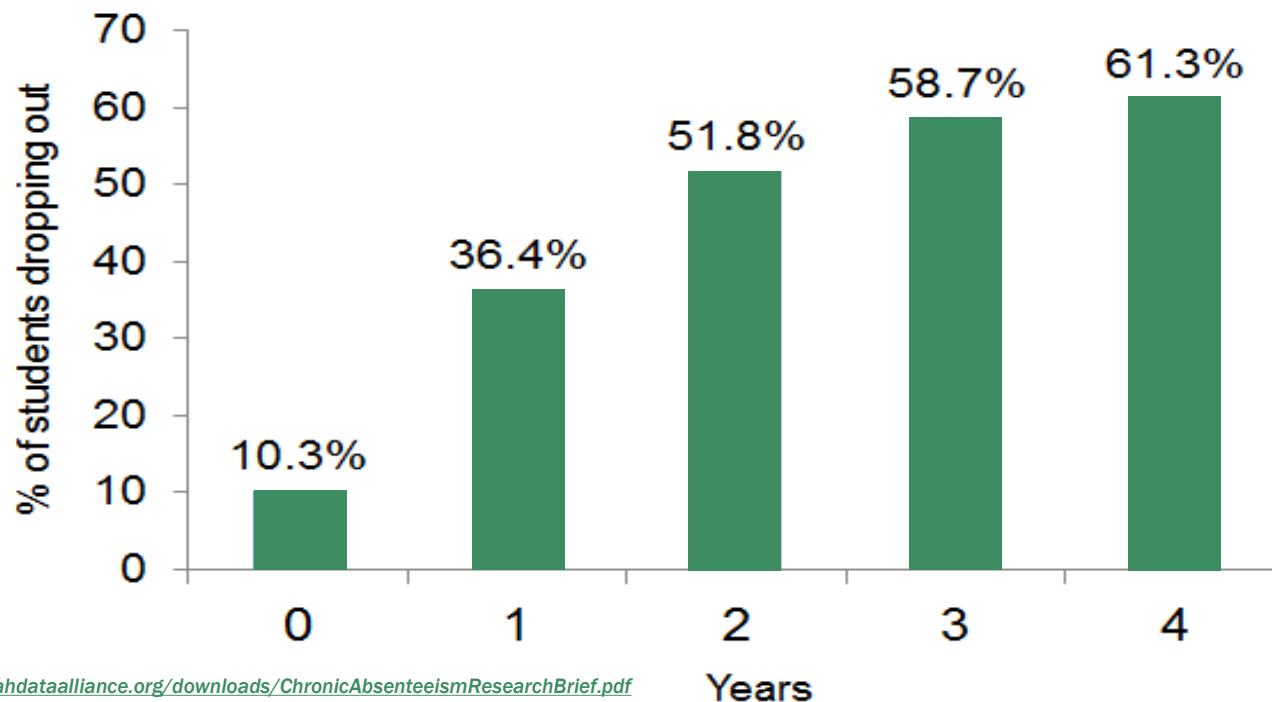
A Rhode Island Data Hub analysis found that compared to kindergartners who attend regularly, those chronically absent:

- 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.



## The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates are Cumulative

### Proportion of Students Dropping Out by Number of Years the Student was Chronically Absent from 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades

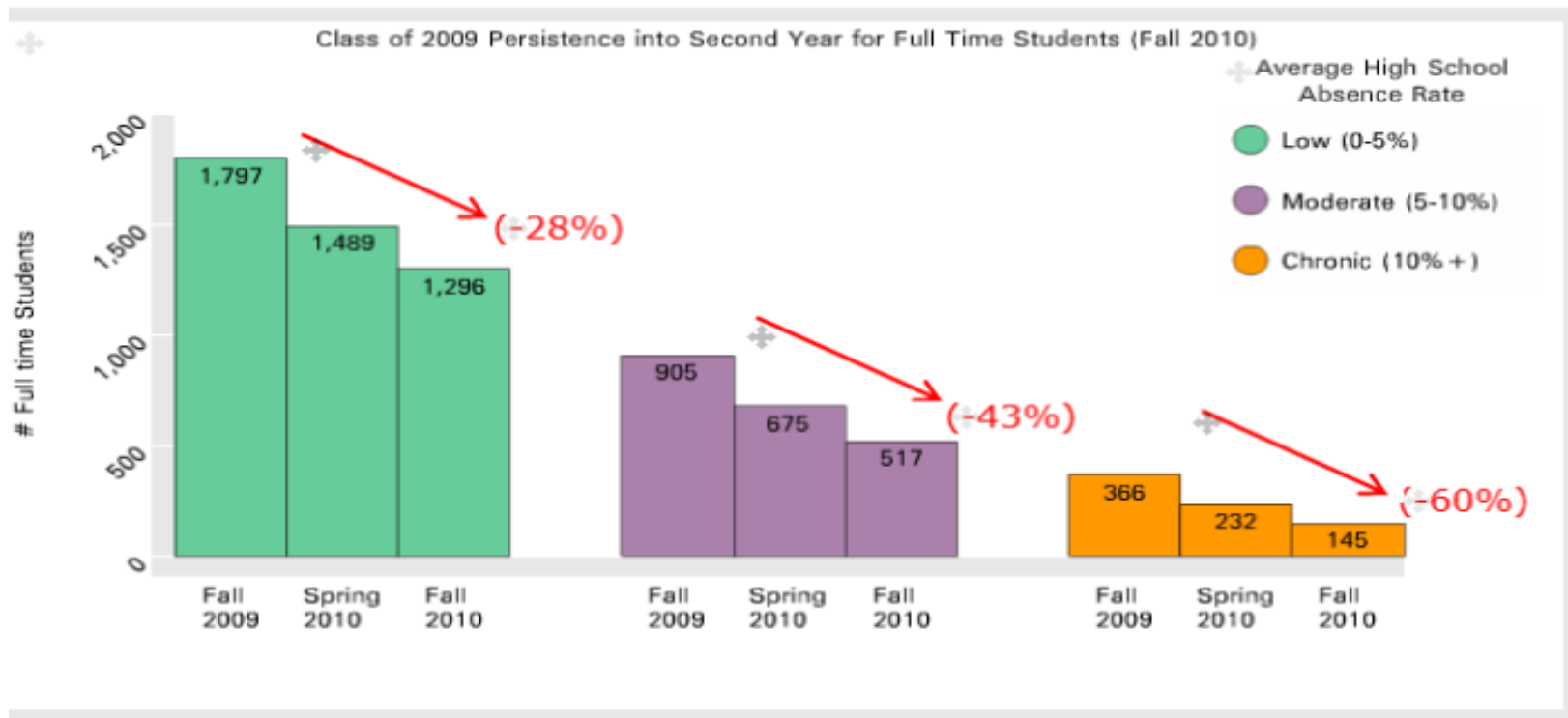


<http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>



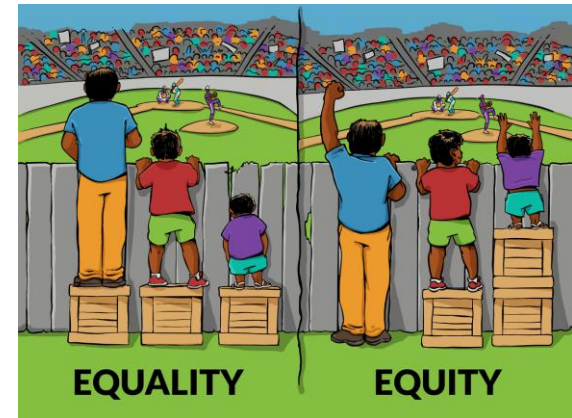
## Chronic Absence in High School Predicts Lower College Persistence

*In Rhode Island, only 11% of chronically absent high school students persisted into a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of college vs. 51% of those with low absences.*



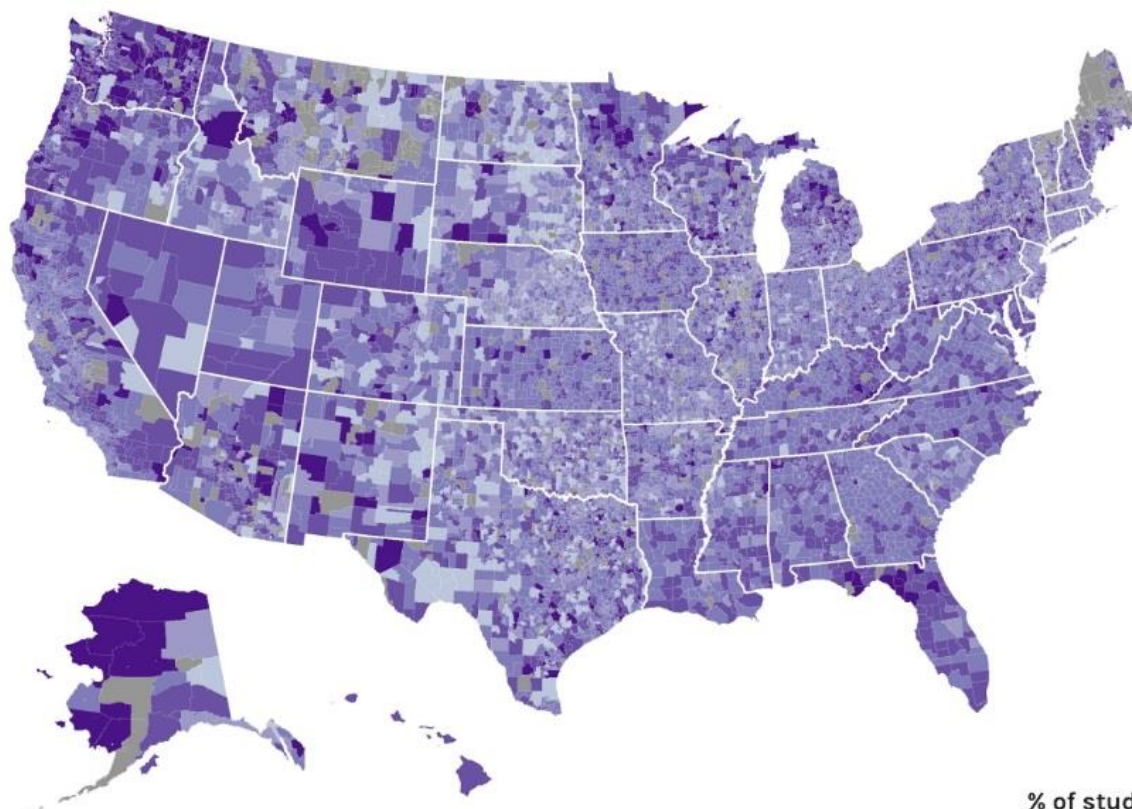


## Reducing Chronic Absence Can Help Close Equity Gaps



- 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

## 1 of 7 students misses 15 days or more



- **Highly concentrated:** half of all chronically absent students in 4% of districts
- **Rural districts:** many have high rates of chronic absence
- **Schools with high levels:** In 1 out of 5 schools, 20% or more of students are chronically absent.

% of students who were chronically absent in 2013-14



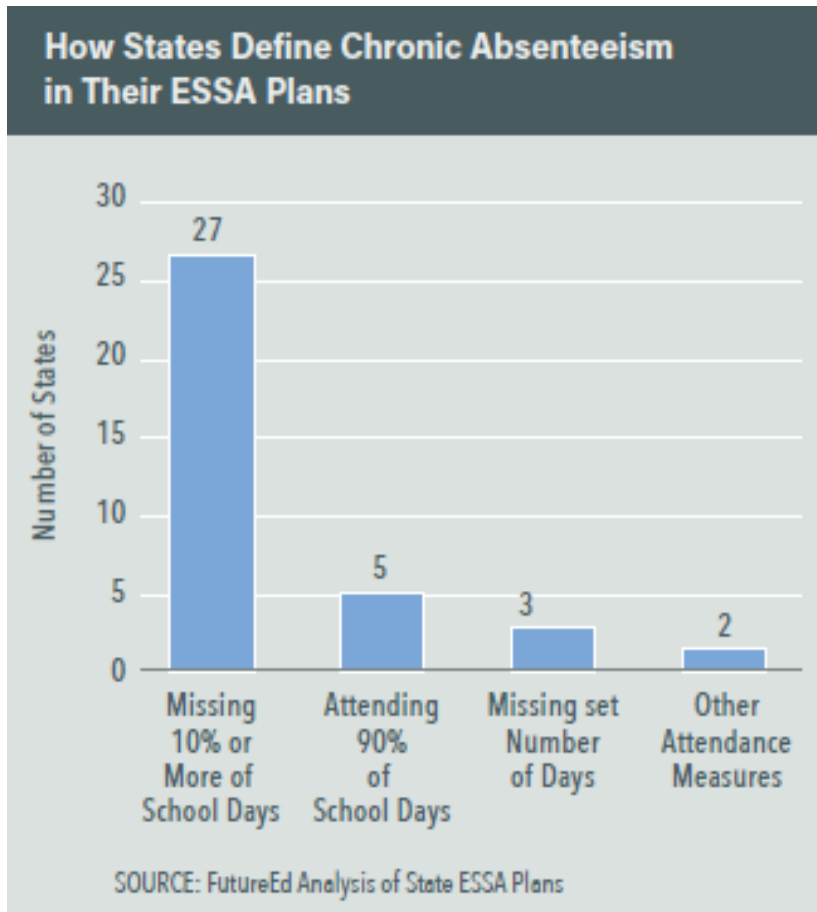
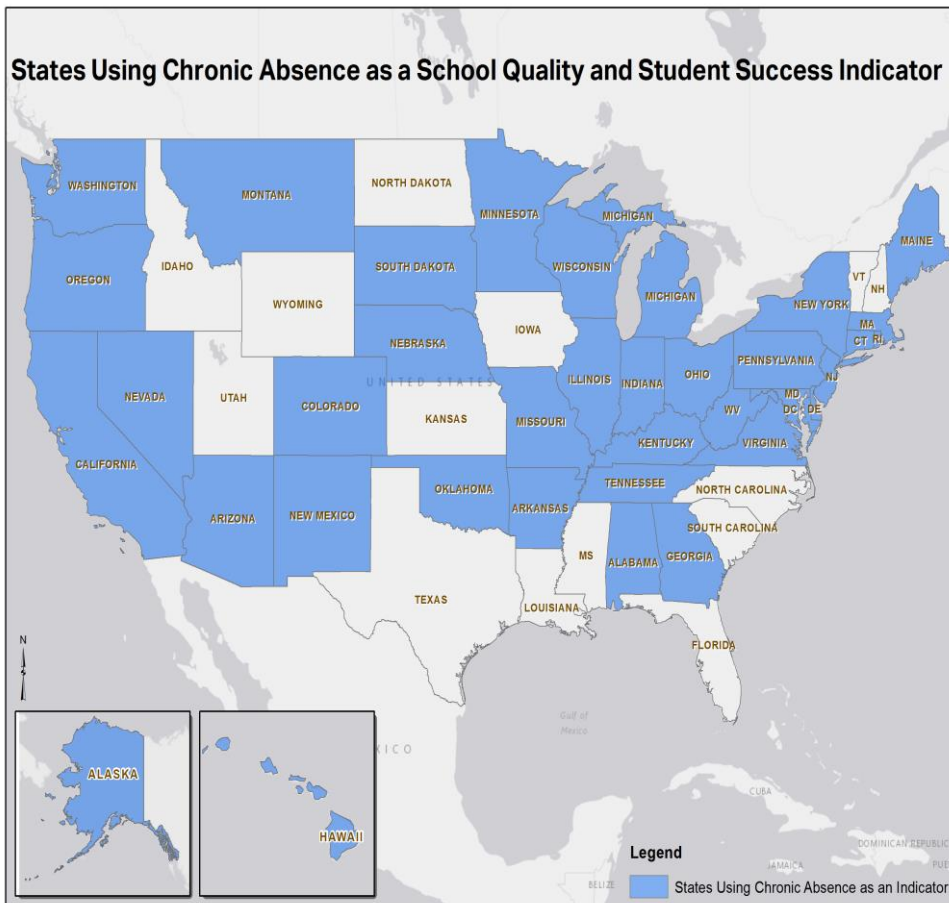
Missing data\*

Source: U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection SY 2013-14

<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html>



**36 states + DC adopted chronic absence as a metric in their ESSA plans.  
The vast majority adopted the definition recommended by Attendance Works.**



**Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act**  
**Future Ed, Georgetown University, September 2017.**



## **ESSA Implementation Offers Unprecedented Opportunities and Challenges**

### **Spring 2018**

- States establish business rules to ensure attendance data is accurate, consistent and reliable

### **Summer 2018 – Fall 2018**

- States establish rating systems and targets for school accountability.
- States develop their school report cards
- LEAs create ESSA plans

### **Winter 2019**

- The bottom 5% of low performing schools will be identified and will be required to conduct a needs assessment

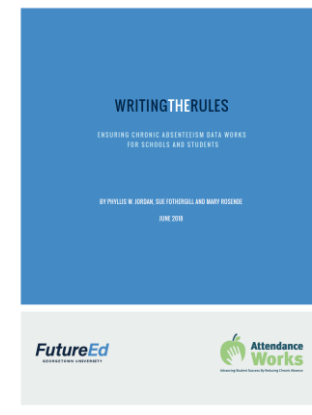
### **Spring 2019**

- Schools build chronic absence into school improvement plans



## Key Immediate Challenges To Be Addressed By States

- Set a consistent definition of the length of the school day
- Define what counts as an absence
- Establish clear procedures on withdrawing or disenrolling students
- Ensure data systems are set up to audit and catch anomalies
- Provide public access to chronic absenteeism records
- Train attendance clerks and teachers to record attendance accurately
- Equip school and district leaders to use the data effectively



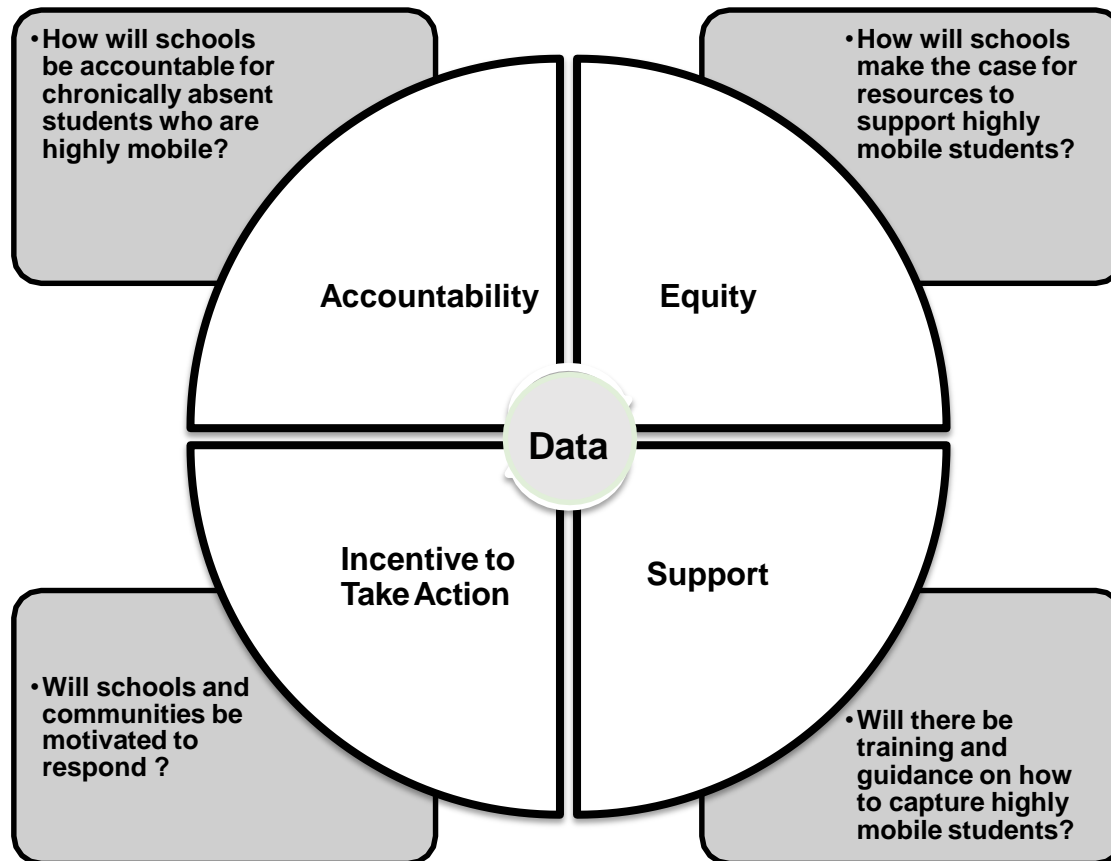


## Carefully Consider the Consequences of Your State's Decisions

**Ed Facts:** A student counts in any school attended for at least 10 days.

### What is, for example, the impact if:

- Students must be on role a significant number of days to count? Eg 45 or 60 days
- Students are easily disenrolled?





## Develop Solutions Based On Analysis of What Contributes to Absences

### Barriers

- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Poor Transportation
- Frequent moves or school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems

### Negative School Experiences

- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Negative attitudes of parents due to their past and current school experiences
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

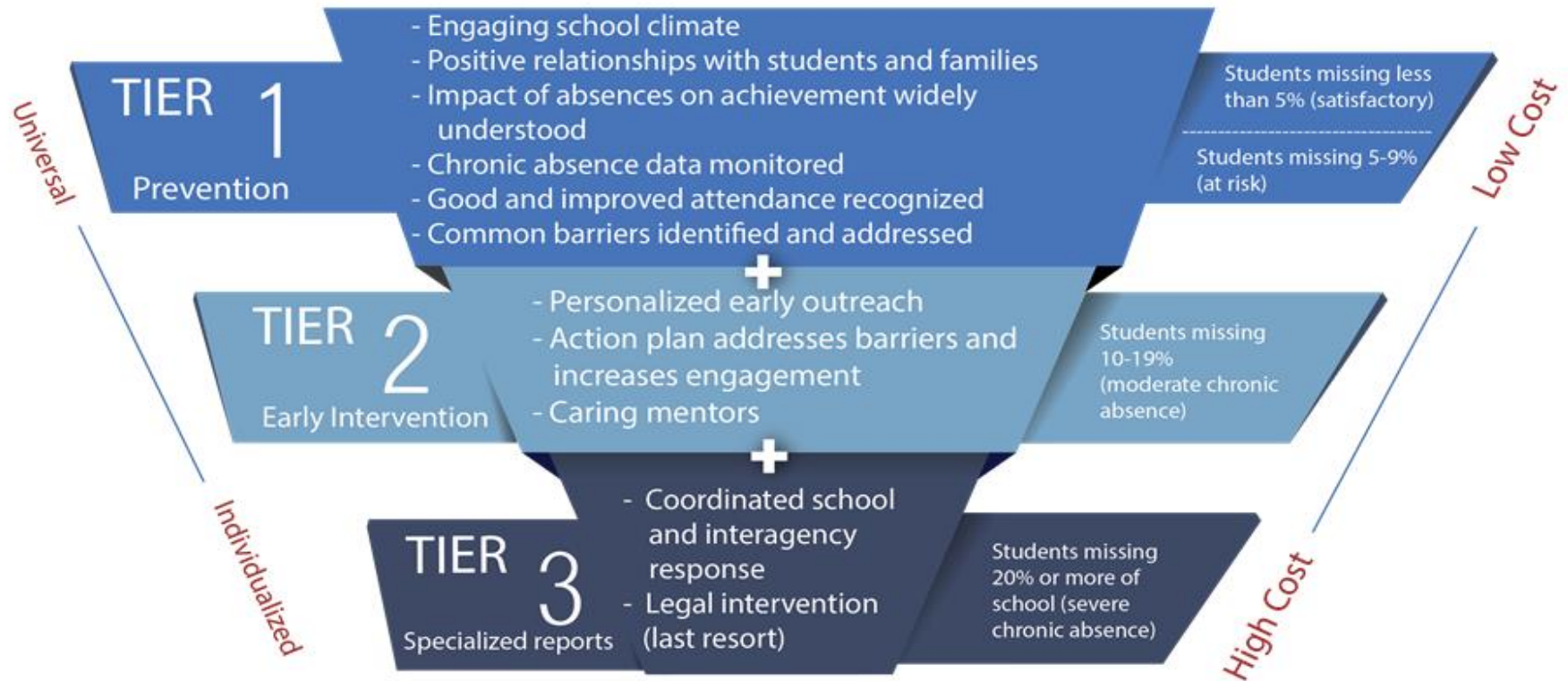
### Lack of Engagement

- Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in 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

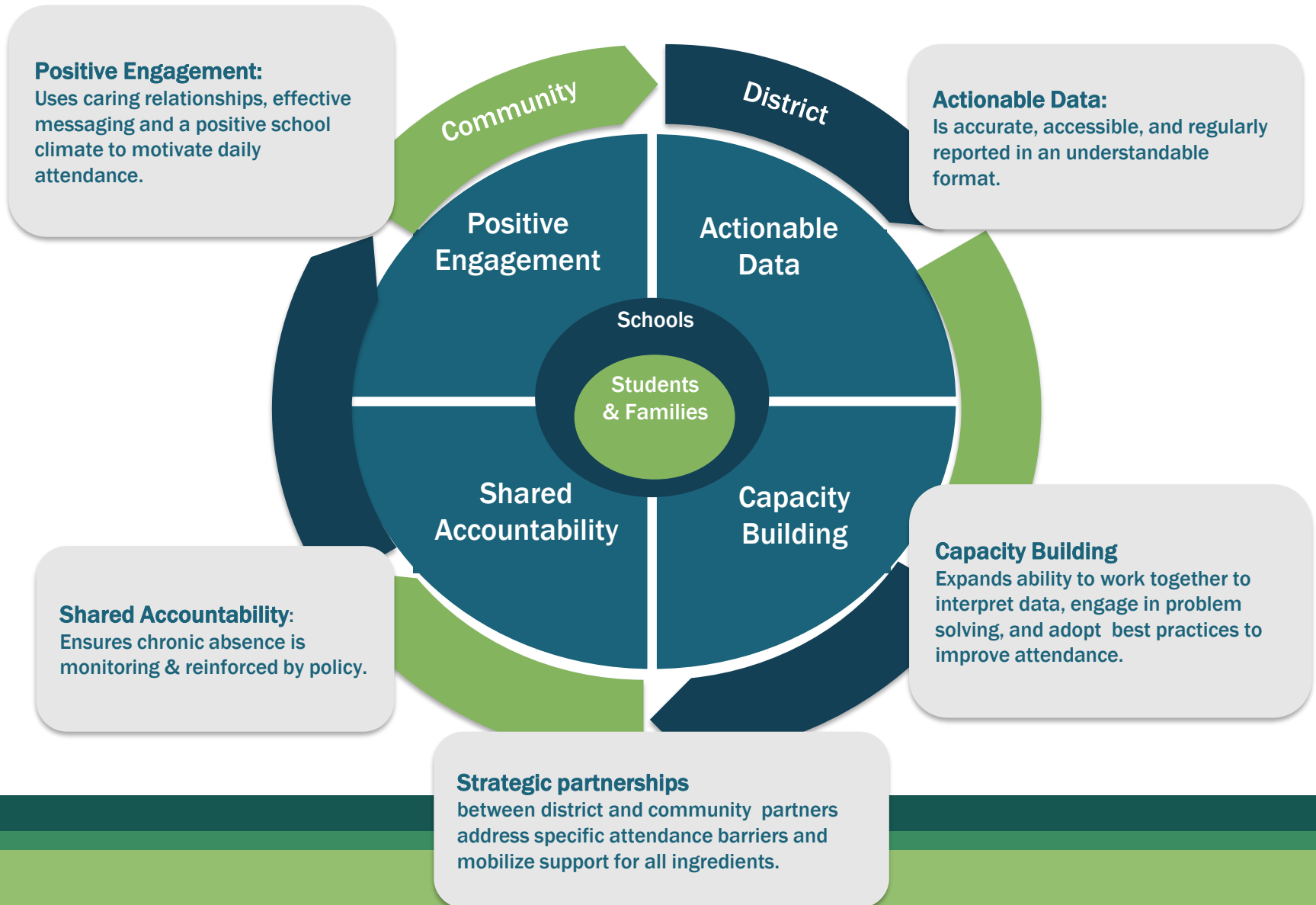
### Misconceptions

- 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

# Invest in Early Intervention and Prevention



# Key Ingredients of Change



# Addressing Chronic Absence

*in schools*

# A Cross-Sector Approach





# Strategic Collaboration & Transformative Impact

## Executive Branch

- *Leader of the Interagency Council on Ending the Achievement Gap with attendance focus*
- *Strong supporter of the state attendance efforts*

## Legislative Branch

- *State statute to address chronic absence includes: Prevention and Intervention Guide; district and school-level attendance teams; and adoption of official definition for chronic absence*

## Judicial Branch

- *Member of Strategic Action Group on Chronic Absence*
- *Leader on issues on diversion and truancy*

## State Board of Education

- *Five-year Comprehensive Plan includes reduction of chronic absence*
- *Board requires plans to address chronic absence in applications for state funding (selected districts)*

## CSDE

- *Next Generation Accountability System/Guidance and EdSight Data Portal*
- *Early Indication Tool*
- *Focus on subgroups with high levels of chronic absence (students with disabilities)*

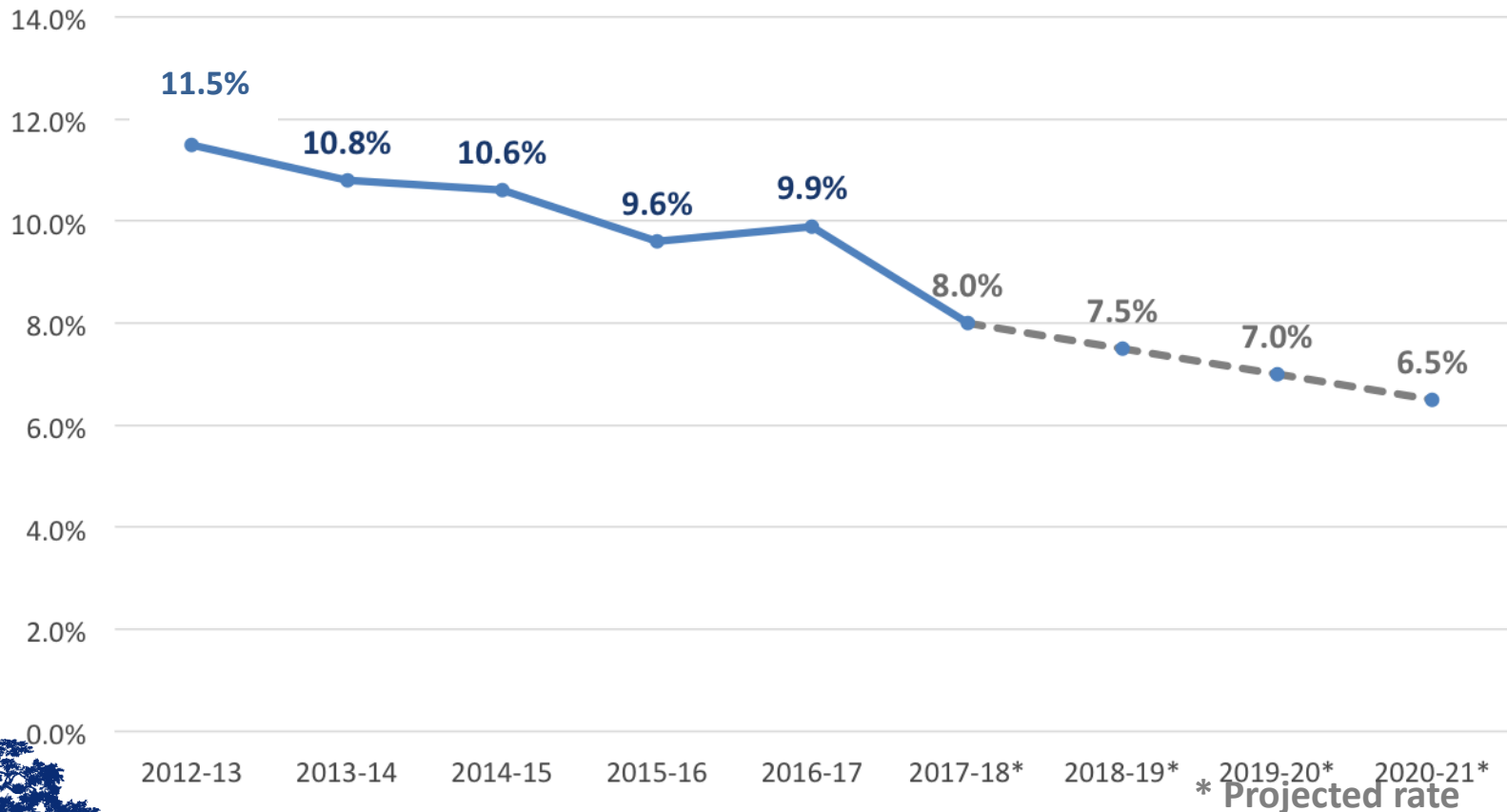
## Other Partners: LEAs, State, National

- *Leverage partnerships to support strategic direction*
- *Utilize as external experts*
- *Collaborate for Attendance Awareness Month*

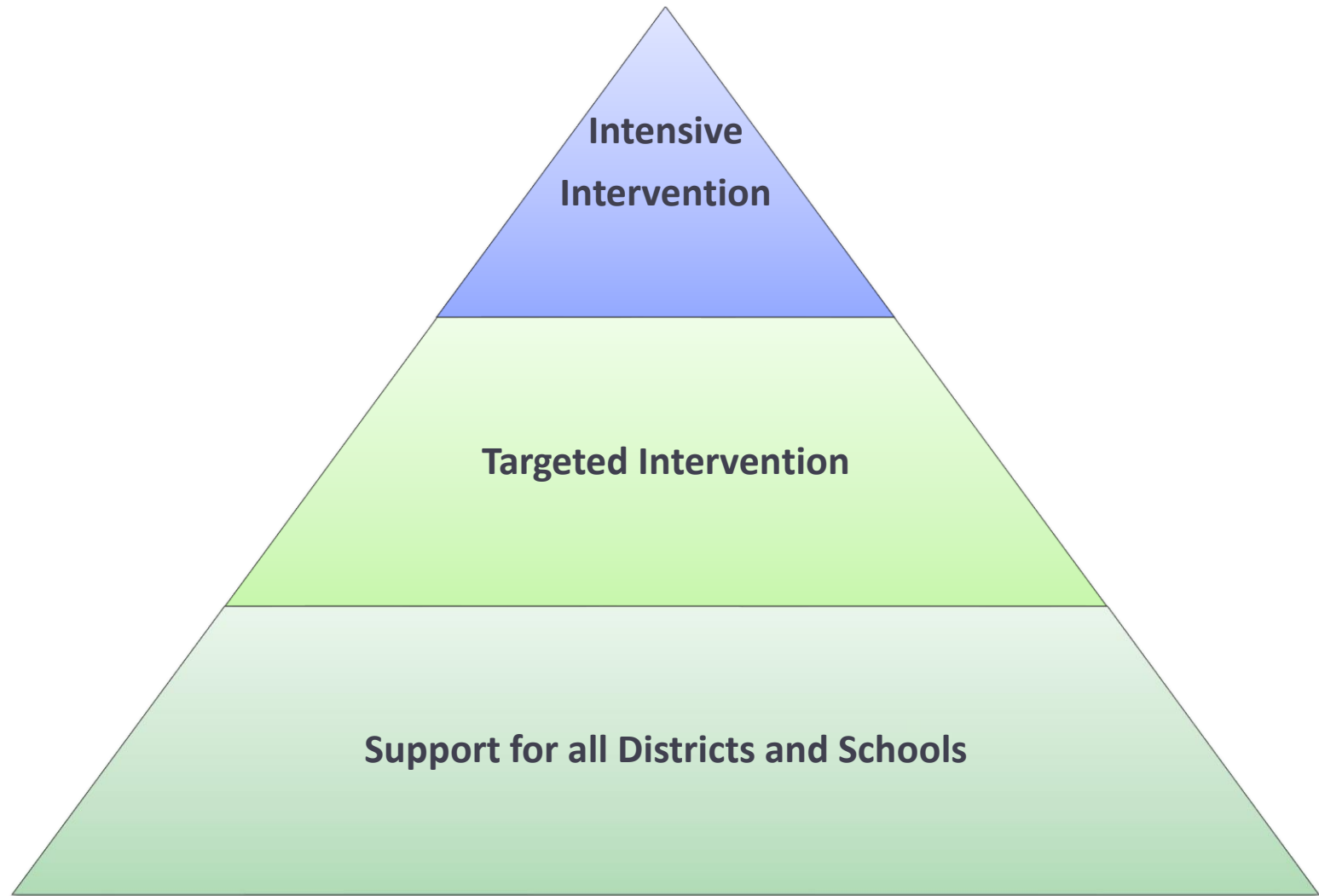


# Chronic Absence Trend & 4-year Target

*[Kotter: Consolidate improvements and produce still more change]*



# A Framework for a State System of Tiered Supports





## **Comprehensive State Support – Tier 1**

1. Create state definitions and standards to ensure the accurate and consistent collection and reporting of attendance data
2. Produce on-line public reports showing chronic absence levels by school, grade and sub-population with the capacity to cross-tabulate with other variables such as race and poverty (annual, trend over time for state, districts, schools and subgroups)
3. Provide school discipline guidance geared toward minimizing suspension
4. Offer easy to tailor attendance messaging materials and
5. Identify and promote examples of effective practice
6. Ensure that Districts and Schools have real-time chronic absence report
7. Publicize complimentary resources from Attendance Works: Teaching Attendance Modules 1 and 2; recorded webinars, on-line toolkits



## **Targeted Intervention - Tier 2**

1. Provide guidance for an in-depth assessment of attendance data to identify policy and practice challenges
2. Prioritize allocation of state attendance related resources to districts with high rates of absenteeism (e.g., expanded learning, health resources, and access to early childhood, etc.)
3. Identify resources to address specific identified factors that are driving absenteeism
4. Provide training and coaching via regional entities such as county offices of education, educational service districts, and area education agencies
5. Peer Learning networks run by the state education agency or experienced peer learning facilitators



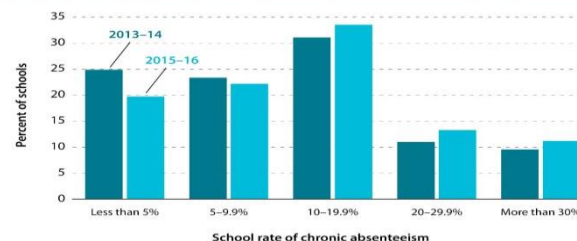
## **Key Questions for Targeted Intervention**

- What level of chronic absence in a district or a school should trigger this support?
- What are essential tools that the TA providers need? (training on attendance teams, data, Teaching Attendance, other?)
- How many districts or schools potentially need this level of support?
- If there is a lack of capacity, how will they meet it short-term and long-term?



## 2018 September Brief To be Released Labor Day Weekend

FIGURE 1  
Percent of Schools by School Rate of Chronic Absenteeism, 2013–14 and 2015–16



Source: Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), U.S. Department of Education, 2013–14, 2015–16.  
Note: The CRDC defines chronic absenteeism as missing 15 or more days of school in a school year.

THE HAMILTON  
PROJECT  
BROOKINGS

Co-published with the Brookings Institute and Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins, it will:

- Compare changes in school level chronic absence across SY 13-14 and SY 15-6 nationally and for every state
- Examine the association between school levels chronic absence and type of school, locale, poverty and % non-white students nationally and for every state
- Offer a searchable map of school level chronic absence for the entire United States
- Provide an overview of implications of ESSA for the use of chronic absence data to inform and develop plans for improving outcomes for children, especially our most vulnerable students. It requires a tiered approach grounded in an understanding of local barriers to attendance.



# Alexandra Cawthorne

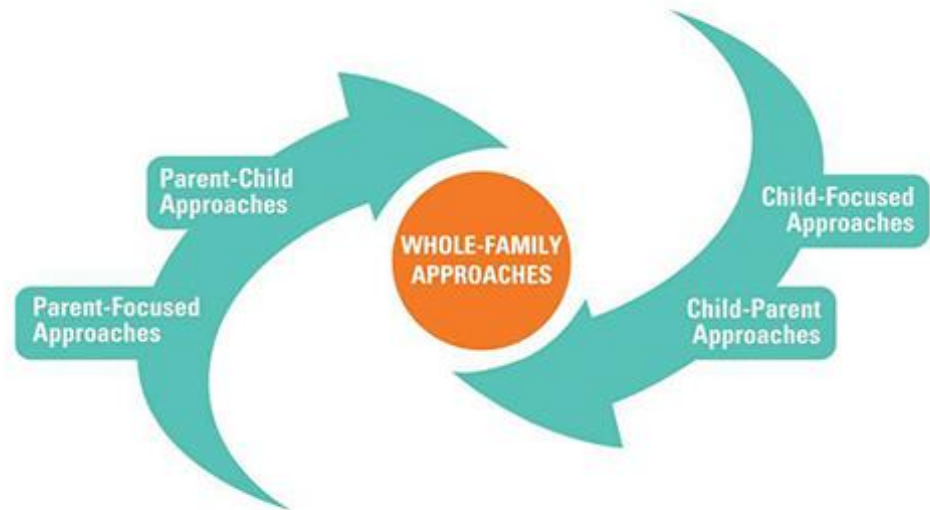
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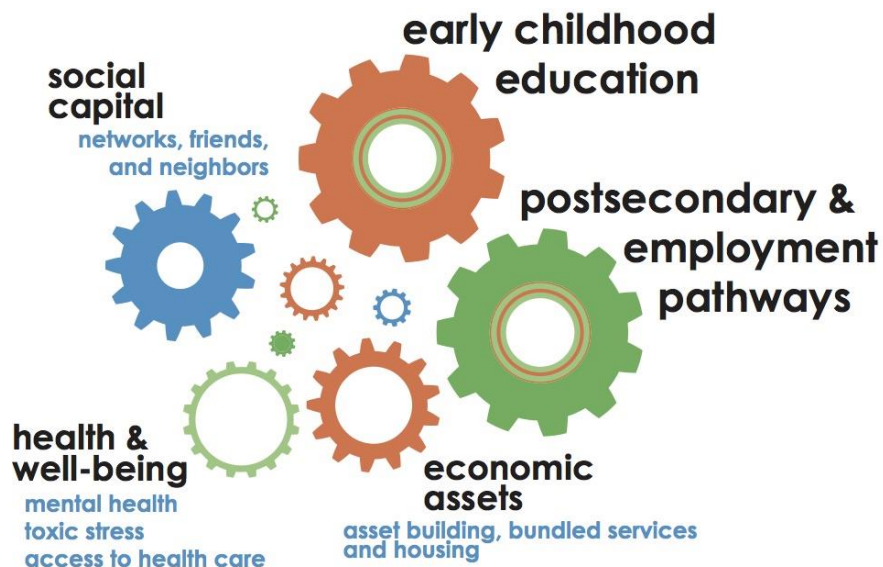
- Program Director for Human Services Programs
- Economic Opportunity Division
- NGA Center for Best Practices
- National Governors Association



## Chronic absence and human services

- Every child has adult caregivers = family
- Every family is part of a community
- A whole community effort to impacting chronic absence includes a **tiered approach** with **cross-system coordination**



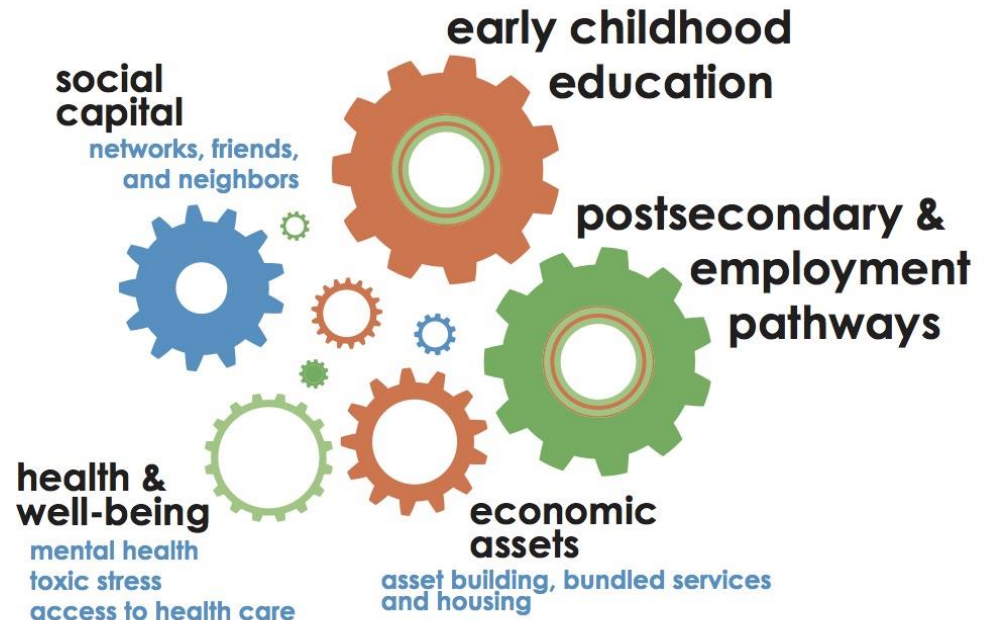


## Parents and Children Thriving Together: Two-Generation State Policy Network (PACTT Network)

- Policy academy focused on helping states develop solutions to simultaneously promote children's healthy development and parents' success as caregivers and breadwinners
- Cross-agency state teams work toward policy change by reshaping child- and adult-focused service delivery systems to better meet the needs of low-income families
- Five-state peer network: **Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon**

## Oregon's PACTT plan: whole-family approach to chronic absence

- Human Centered Design to develop innovative interventions to disrupt inter-generational poverty.
- Goal is to create a two-generation, client-informed plan to:
  - raise the school attendance rates of the most disadvantaged children and youth,
  - help their parents achieve economic security,
  - support the parents' role as caregivers

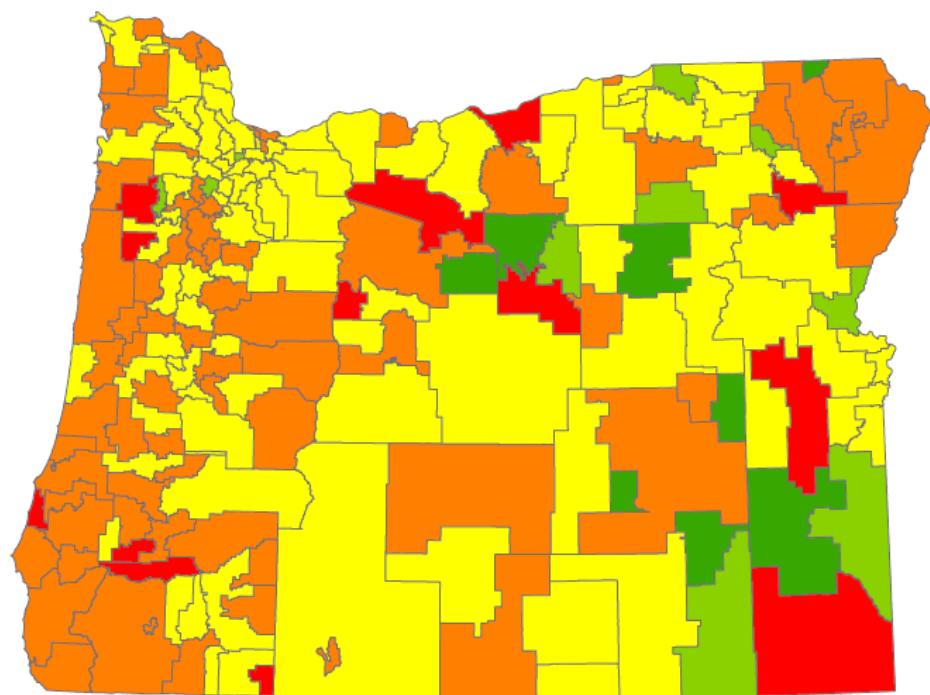


# Robin Shobe

- Education Specialist
- Oregon Department of Education



# Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon by Geographic Location (2015-16 SY)



Extreme CA 30% (or more)

High CA 20-29%

Significant CA 10-19%

Modest CA 5-9 %

Low CA 0-4%





**OREGON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**EDUCATION**

*Oregon achieves... together!*

Statewide & Local Awareness Campaign  
Accessible Chronic Absenteeism Data  
Local Messaging Tool Kit

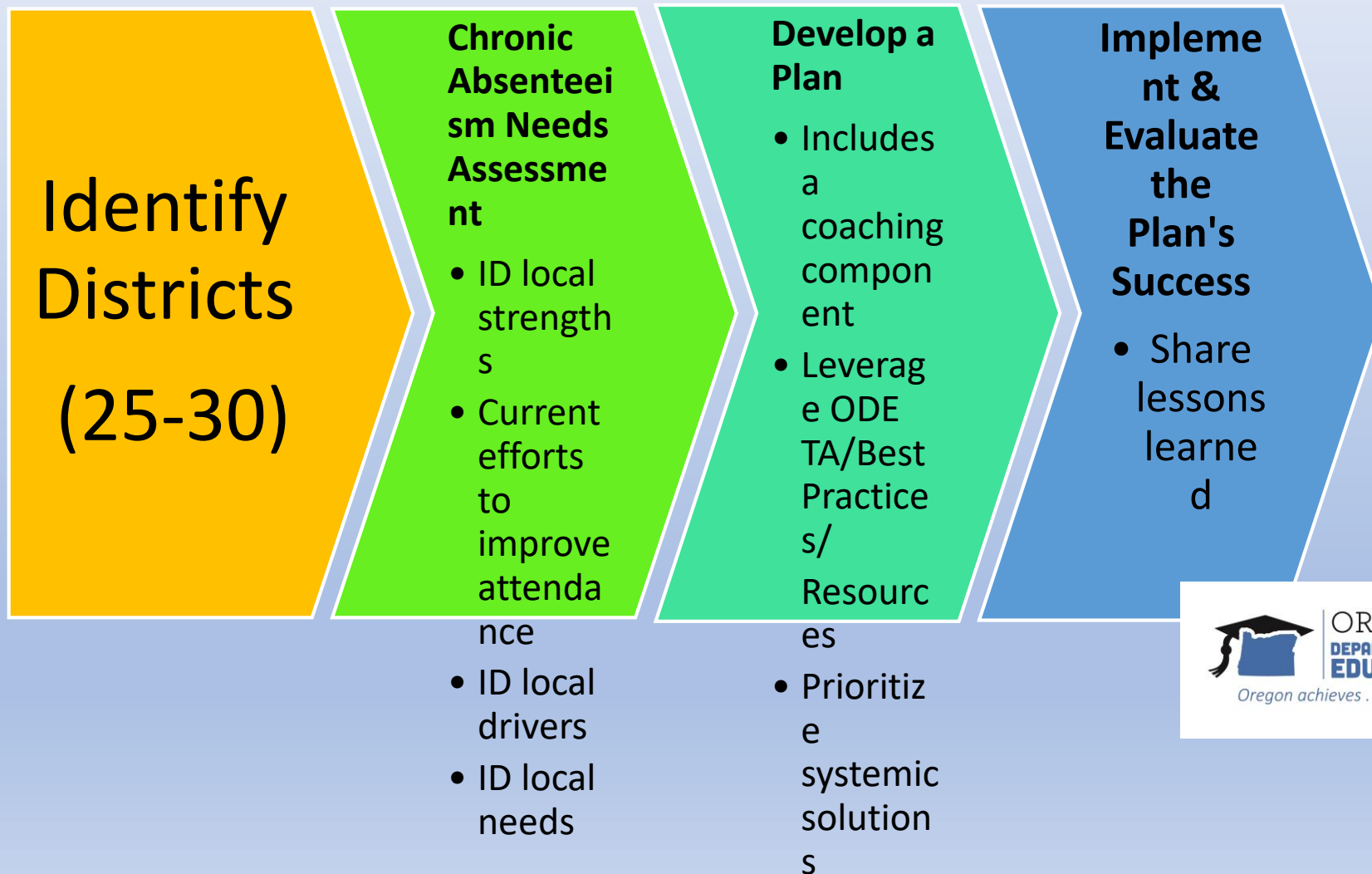
Technical Assistance  
Professional Development  
Best Practice Guidelines

Statewide Chronic  
Absenteeism Plan

Use of a **Consortia Model** to support districts identify root causes, address systemic barriers, implement tiered intervention systems, acquire resources, and braid funding sources when necessary.

Targeted support to districts with extreme & high levels of chronic absenteeism  
Attendance Coaches

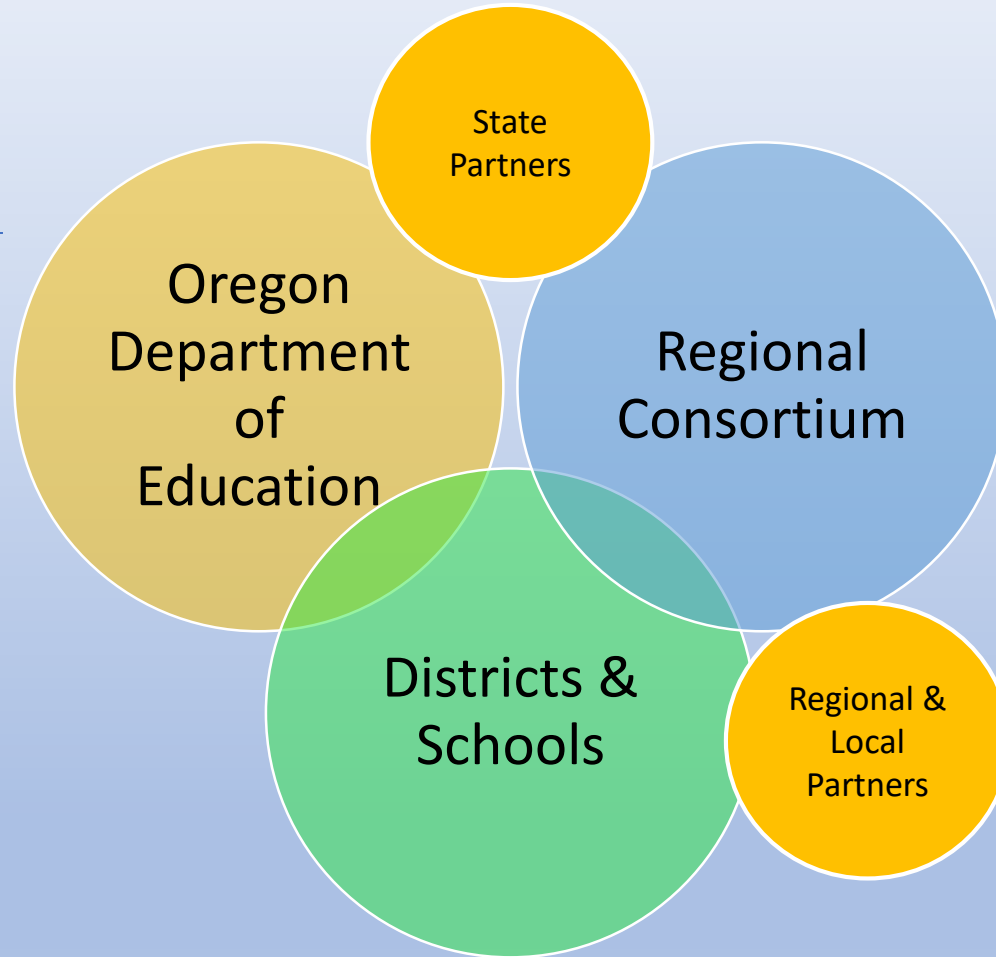
# Targeted & Differentiated Assistance

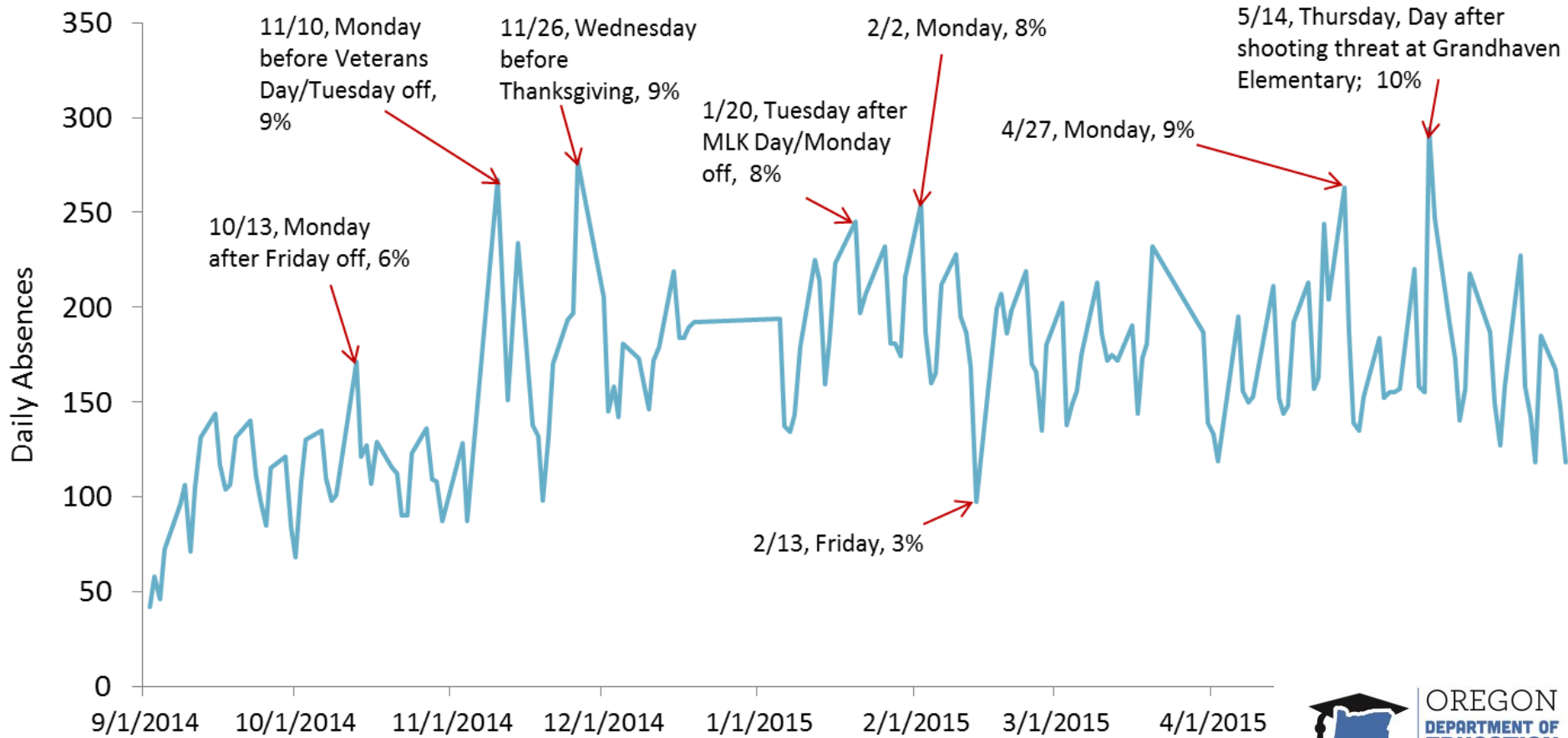




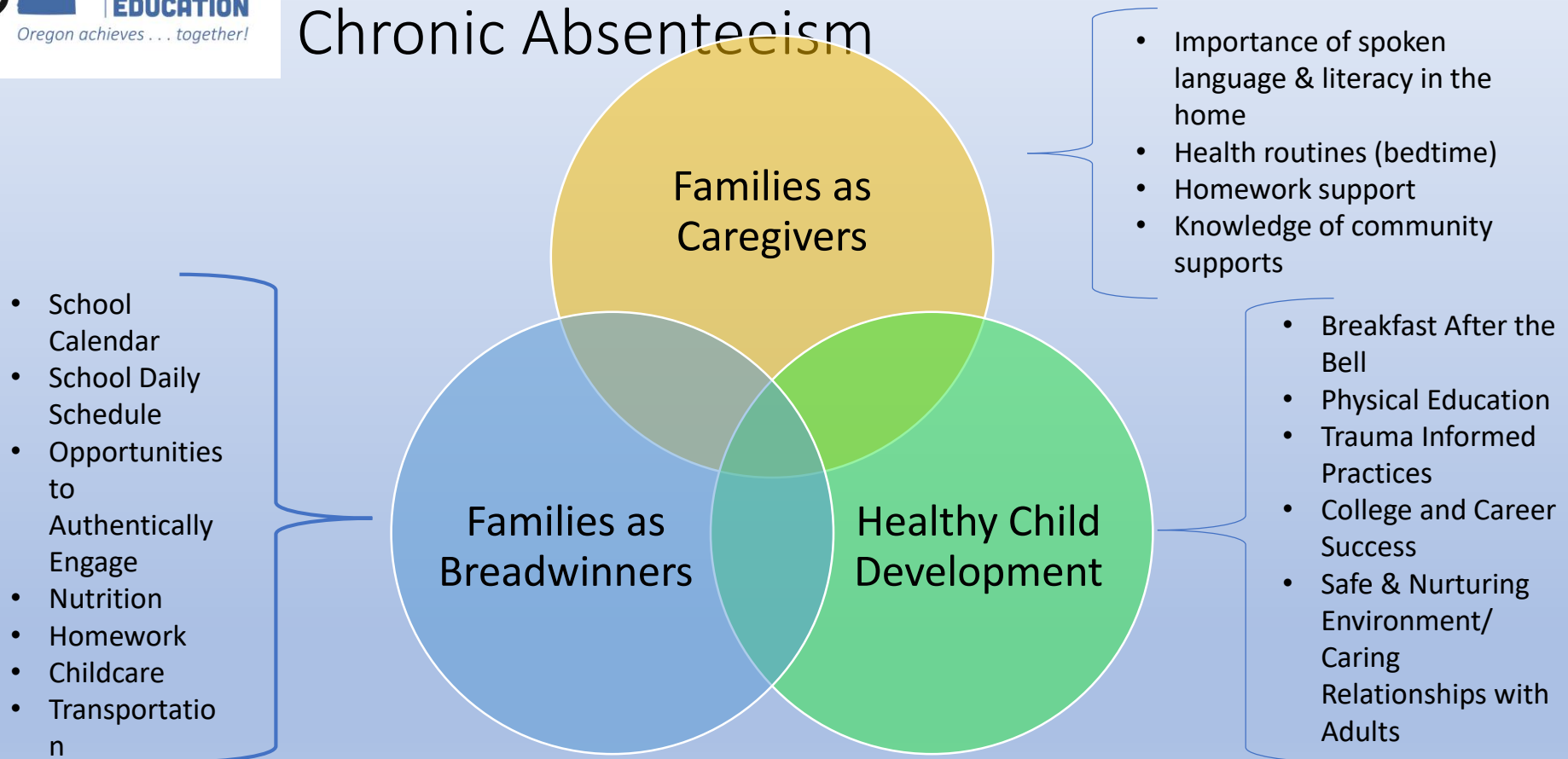
# Regional Consortia

- Department of Human Services
- Public Health Department
- Transportation
- Workforce Development
- Coordinated Care Organizations
- Culturally Specific and Community Based Organizations
- Early Learning Division
- National Partners





# Two-Generation Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism





# Health Division

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- NGA Center for Best Practices
- National Governors Association



# Susan Dawson

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- President and Executive Director
- E3 Alliance

# **Leveraging Objective Data to Improve Absenteeism and Save Millions**

Susan Dawson, President, E3 Alliance

# Building Community Around Attendance

In 2011, Central Texas superintendents chose increased attendance as #1 way community and funders could assist districts:

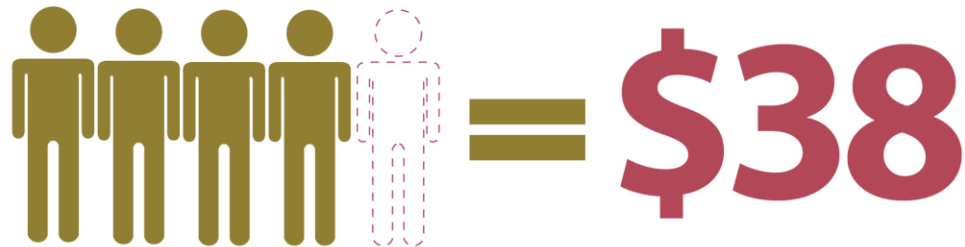
1. **“Triple Bottom Line” benefit:**
  - Students can learn when in class
  - Teachers have more time to teach
  - Increased revenue to districts
2. **Unlike teacher quality or staffing, communities can directly and positively impact student attendance**
3. **E3 Alliance spearheading regional approach to increase attendance**



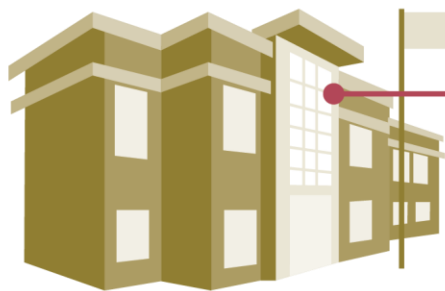
- A Regional Awareness Campaign
- Task Force Mission: Galvanize education champions to execute a focused awareness campaign
  - Primary targets: parents, community groups
  - Spread the word that 'Missing School Matters' via strategic, measurable activities
  - Integrate learning into future target segment outreach



Every school day a student misses costs their district:

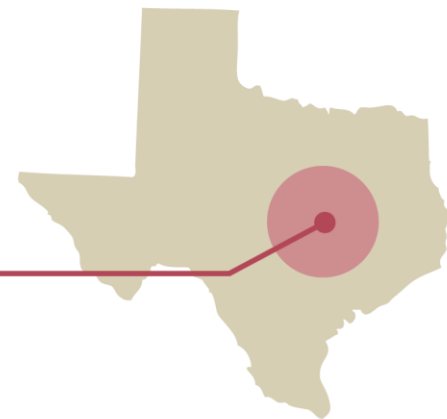


These absences come at a price:



Average high school cost:  
**\$20,000/week**

Central Texas region loses:  
**\$91,000,000/year**



Reducing absences by just **3 days per student** can  
save Central Texas school districts **\$34,000,000**



 = \$1,000,000

# Capital Metro Signs





# Booth at SXSW EDU Expo





# Holiday Flyer, pushed to parents

## In this Season of Giving...

- ✓ **Give students the chance to learn**  
*Only miss school on scheduled school holidays.*
- ✓ **Give teachers the chance to teach**  
*Teachers can't teach effectively when they are "catching up" students who miss extra days.*
- ✓ **Give school districts needed dollars**  
*Every day missed costs schools money that could support more teachers, sports programs and electives.*

### **Plan family vacations only during school holidays.**

- Students in Central Texas miss MORE days of school than their peers in Texas in ALL grades.
- The problem is worse in high school!
- Over half of the absences in Central Texas are potentially preventable (including routine medical, dental check-ups, traveling or just skipping school).

### **Central Texas school districts save millions of dollars when students are in school.**

- Each day a student misses costs the school about \$38.
- Absences add up quickly: a typical high school in Central Texas can lose \$20,000 a week due to student absences.
- Our schools are losing over \$91 million a year due to student absences.

### **Wrap up the year right!**

- Let's give our students the gift of education and keep them in class during school days in November and December!
- Over the past two years Central Texas has saved \$12 million in revenue for schools by reducing absences. Let's do our part to continue this positive trend this season of giving!

## En esta época de bondad...

- ✓ **Dé a los estudiantes la oportunidad de aprender**  
*Solo falte a clases los días festivos escolares programados.*
- ✓ **Dé a los maestros la oportunidad de enseñar**  
*Los maestros no pueden enseñar debidamente cuando tienen que poner al corriente a los estudiantes que faltaron en días regulares.*
- ✓ **Dé a los distritos escolares los dólares que tanto necesitan**  
*Cada día de ausencia, la escuela pierde dinero que podría usar para proporcionar más maestros, programas deportivos y clases optativas.*

### **Planee las vacaciones familiares solamente durante los días festivos escolares.**

- Los estudiantes en el Centro de Texas faltan a clases MÁS días que sus compañeros en el resto del estado en TODOS los grados.
- El problema es peor en la preparatoria.
- Más de la mitad de las faltas en el Centro de Texas se pueden evitar, incluyendo las faltas debido a exámenes de rutina médicos y dentales, viajes, o simplemente las faltas sin justificación.

### **Los distritos escolares del Centro de Texas ahorran millones de dólares cuando los estudiantes asisten a clases.**

- Cada día que su hijo falta, le cuesta a la escuela \$38.
- Las ausencias se acumulan rápidamente. Una preparatoria típica del Centro de Texas puede perder \$20,000 a la semana debido a las faltas de los estudiantes.
- Nuestras escuelas están perdiendo más de \$91 millones al año debido a las faltas de los estudiantes.

### **¡Termine bien el año!**

- Démosles el regalo de la educación a nuestros estudiantes procurando que asistan a clases durante los días escolares en noviembre y diciembre.
- En los últimos dos años, el Centro de Texas ha ahorrado \$12 millones en ingresos para las escuelas al reducir las ausencias. Hagamos nuestra parte para que continuemos la tendencia positiva esta época de bondad.

## A Parent's Guide to Student Attendance

*Each year, Central Texas students are absent 2.4 million days of school. Here are a few ways & reasons to help keep your child (and others) in school.*

### Don't make others sick

- Given that acute illnesses like flu count for almost half of all absences, you can keep your child healthy by getting a flu vaccine.
- Your child should stay home for at least 24 hours if:  
She is running a fever of 100 degrees or more  
He has vomited more than once or has diarrhea  
She has flu symptoms, like fever, cough, sore throat, chills, aches and pains

### Appointment times matter

Schedule appointments when they are least disruptive to school – Saturdays or late afternoons.

### Listen to the nurse

School nurses are trained in how to understand symptoms. If your child contacts you from school, call the school nurse FIRST before deciding what to do.

### Keep your child safe

If your child is being bullied or is scared to go to school, keeping him home won't solve the problem. Go to your counselor or assistant principal for help.

### Don't miss out if you don't have to

Missing school has long-term impacts: if your high school student misses 10 days, he is 3 times more likely to drop out than a child who missed 5 days.



Here Everything's Better.®

Find tools to help at [www.MissingSchoolMatters.org](http://www.MissingSchoolMatters.org)



# Moving Deeper into Root Causes

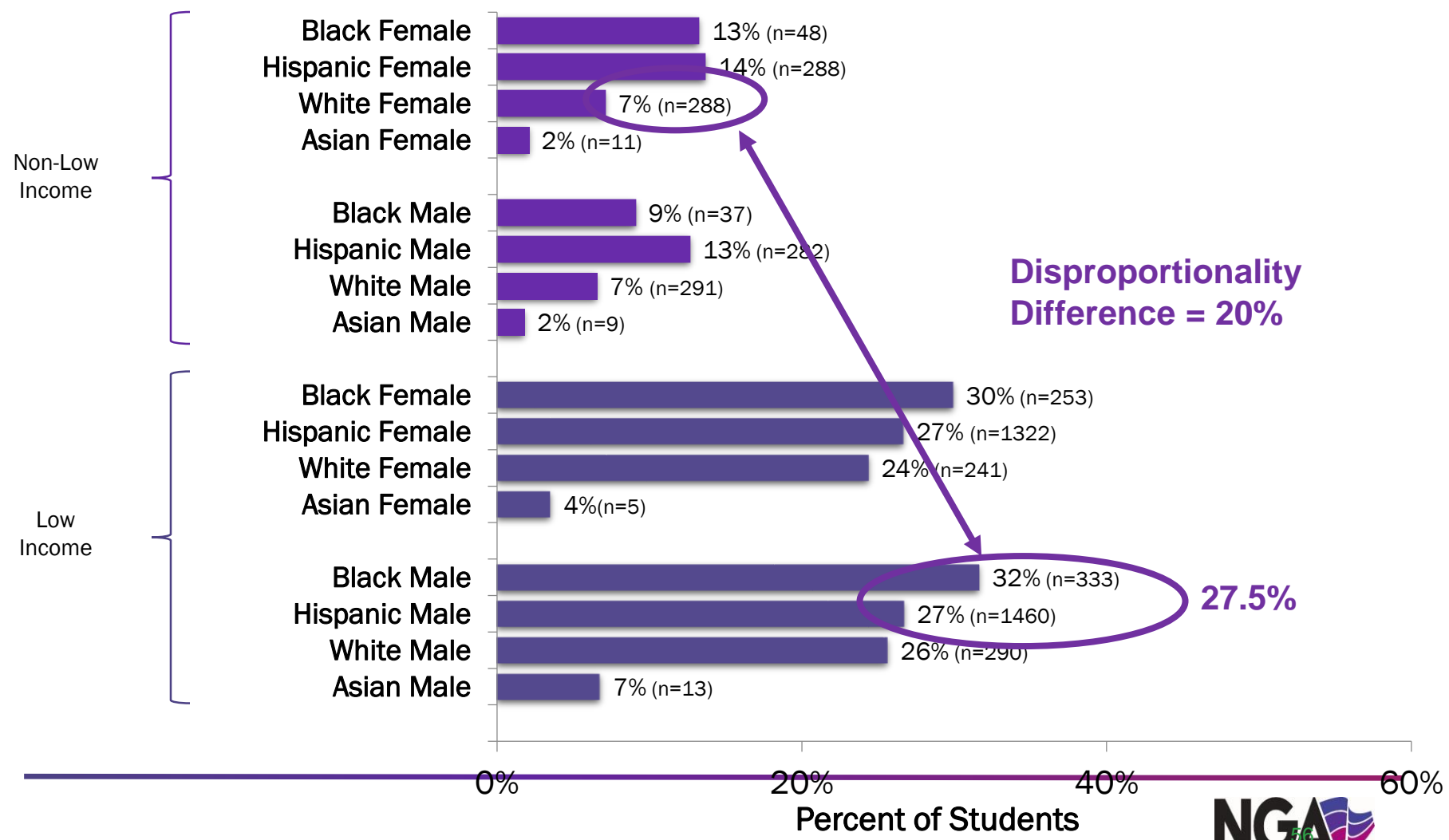
- 2013 Absence Reasons Study
  - Mapping of Absences in Region
  - Overlay of Data on Health Data
- 
- Flu Immunization Campaign
    - Awarded national model flu campaign by CDC!
    - Comparison school evaluation showed \$500K savings during 3 peak weeks of flu season alone!
    - Planning 100,000+ vaccines in 2018

# Focus Metric: Percent Chronically Absent

- ✓ Strong predictor of student achievement
- ✓ Low-income young men of color have 2 ½ X higher rate of chronic absences
- ✓ Incorporates social (nonacademic) factors in student success
- ✓ Builds on work already started in region (School Success Mentors being piloted in 3 schools)
- ✓ National studies and local data show chronic absence behavior can be changed for many students

# Chronic Absence Rates

## Grade 9, 2015-2016



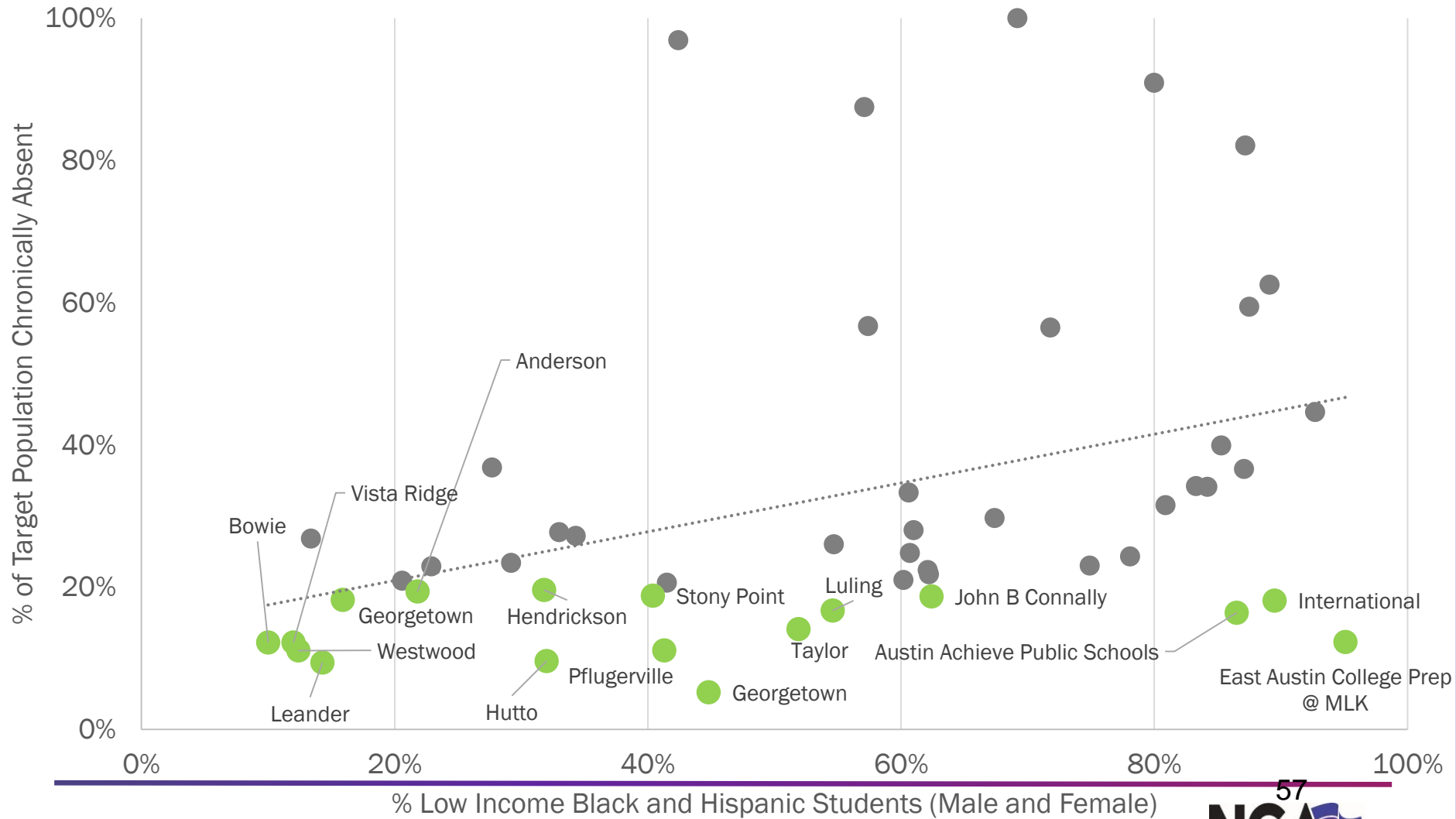
Source: E<sup>3</sup> Alliance analysis of PEIMS data at the UT Austin Education Research Center





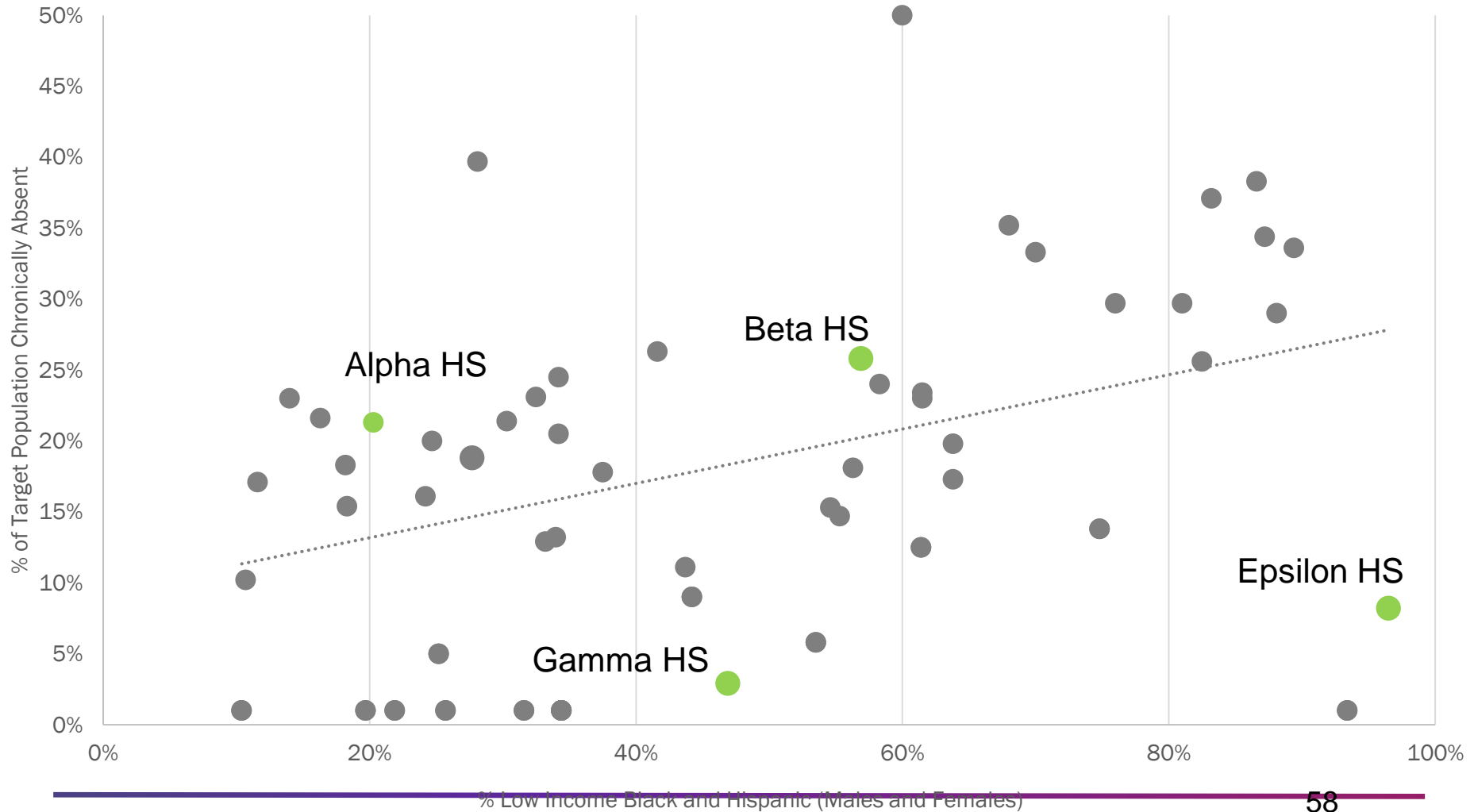
# Chronic Absence Rate Bright Spot Schools

## Grade 9 Only, 2015-16



# Chronic Absence Rate District Focus

## Example ISD, 2013-14



% Low Income Black and Hispanic (Males and Females)

58



CONFIDENTIAL- DRAFT IN PROCESS

\*Excluding all Juvenile Justice-focused schools and schools with <10% target population

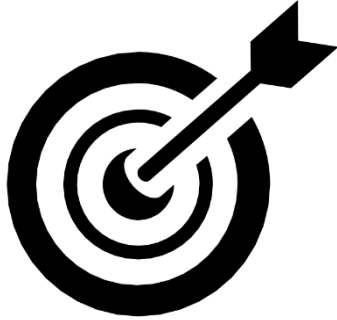
# SUCCESS MENTORS INITIATIVE



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER



## **Travis ECHS Goal:**



**Improve 9<sup>th</sup> grade SSM student attendance by 3% compared to end of previous year's attendance rate.**

## **Intervention to Test:**

**Pair student success mentors with targeted chronically absent students.**

# Continuous Improvement & Small Tests of Change

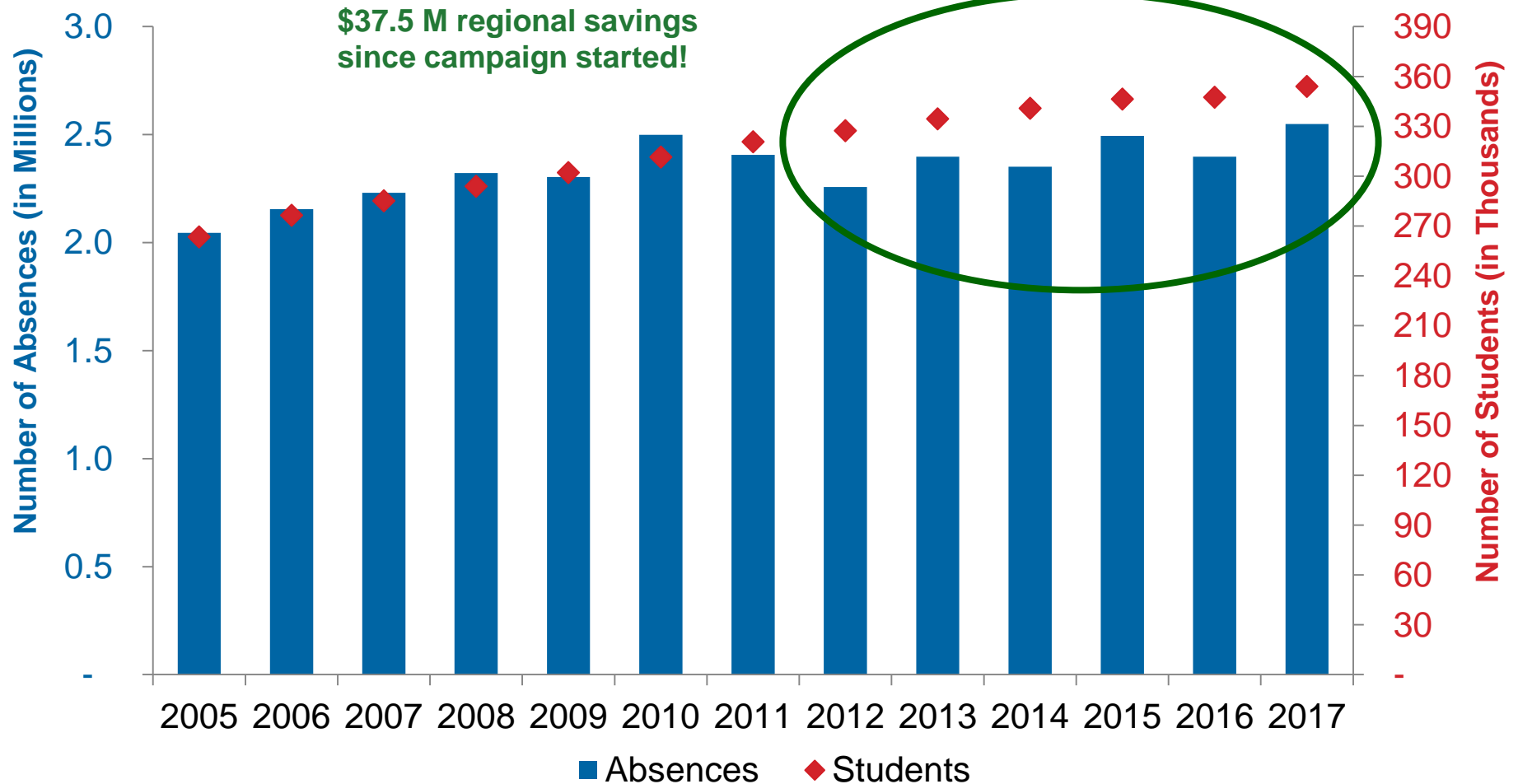
- Used CI tools to measure progress toward goal:
  - Process Map
  - Key Driver Diagram
  - FMEA
  - Pareto and Run Charts

***Over half of students (57%) were no longer chronically absent after 1 semester in the program!***

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# It's Working!

## Student and Absence Counts, Central Texas



# QUESTIONS?



Email us at [education@nga.org](mailto:education@nga.org)



**NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION**