Chronic Absenteeism

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

• 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

- Director
- Everyone Graduates Center
- Johns Hopkins University
Hedy Chang

- Executive Director
- Attendance Works
Reducing Chronic Absence
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 absentees - 2010-2011
- # of students with 10 unexcused absences (as of May 16th 2011)
Chronic absence is easily masked if we only monitor missing consecutive days

Chronic Absence = 18+ days of absence = As few as 2 days a month
Multiple Years of Chronic Absenteeism = High Risk for low 3rd 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.
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 7th 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 8th-12th Grades

Chronic Absence in High School Predicts Lower College Persistence

In Rhode Island, only 11% of chronically absent high school students persisted into a 2nd 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.

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

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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? E.g. 45 or 60 days
- Students are easily disenrolled?

- Will there be training and guidance on how to capture highly mobile students?
- Will schools and communities be motivated to respond?
- How will schools make the case for resources to support highly mobile students?
- How will schools be accountable for chronically absent students who are highly mobile?

Accountability
Equity
Incentive to Take Action
Support
Data
Develop Solutions Based On Analysis of What Contributes to Absences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Negative School Experiences</th>
<th>Lack of Engagement</th>
<th>Misconceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Illness, both chronic and acute</td>
<td>• Struggling academically or socially</td>
<td>• Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction</td>
<td>• Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care</td>
<td>• Bullying</td>
<td>• No meaningful relationships with adults in school</td>
<td>• Missing 2 days per month doesn’t affect learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trauma</td>
<td>• Suspensions and expulsions</td>
<td>• Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school</td>
<td>• Sporadic absences aren’t a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unsafe path to/from school</td>
<td>• Negative attitudes of parents due to their past and current</td>
<td>• Unwelcoming school climate</td>
<td>• Attendance only matters in the older grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor Transportation</td>
<td>school experiences</td>
<td>• Failure to earn credits/ no future plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequent moves or school changes</td>
<td>• Undiagnosed disability</td>
<td>• Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems</td>
<td>• Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Invest in Early Intervention and Prevention

TIER 1: Prevention
- Engaging school climate
- Positive relationships with students and families
- Impact of absences on achievement widely understood
- Chronic absence data monitored
- Good and improved attendance recognized
- Common barriers identified and addressed

TIER 2: Early Intervention
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

TIER 3: Specialized reports
- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
Students missing 5–9% (at risk)
Students missing 10–19% (moderate chronic absence)
Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)
Key Ingredients of Change

- **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.
- **Capacity Building**: Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.
- **Shared Accountability**: Ensures chronic absence is monitoring & reinforced by policy.
- **Strategic partnerships** between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.
Addressing Chronic Absence

**Strategic Partnerships**
Common Goals and Shared Responsibilities

**Inside the School House**
- District Attendance Teams
- School Attendance Teams
- Enrichment Activities
- Mentoring Programs
- Awards and Incentives

**Outside of the School House**
- Local Government Agencies
- Health Care Centers
- Social Service Agencies
- Museums, Arts & Culture
- Faith Communities

**Positive Community Outreach**
Communitywide messaging and awareness campaign reinforcing a communitywide culture of good attendance

**Shared Accountability & Continuous Improvement**
- Regular review of data and outcomes
- Ongoing strategic planning

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

 CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Chronic Absence Trend & 4-year Target

[Kotter: Consolidate improvements and produce still more change]
A Framework for a State System of Tiered Supports

- Support for all Districts and Schools
- Targeted Intervention
- Intensive Intervention
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?
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

- 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%
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.

**Statewide & Local Awareness Champaign**
- Accessible Chronic Absenteeism Data
- Local Messaging Tool Kit

**Technical Assistance**
- Professional Development
- Best Practice Guidelines

**Statewide Chronic Absenteeism Plan**

**Targeted support to districts with extreme & high levels of chronic absenteeism**
- Attendance Coaches
Targeted & Differentiated Assistance

Identify Districts (25-30)

Chronic Absenteeism Needs Assessment
- ID local strengths
- Current efforts to improve attendance
- ID local drivers
- ID local needs

Develop a Plan
- Includes a coaching component
- Leverage ODE TA/Best Practices/Resources
- Prioritize systemic solutions

Implement & Evaluate the Plan's Success
- Share lessons learned
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

Oregon Department of Education

State Partners

Regional Consortium

Districts & Schools

Regional & Local Partners
Two-Generation Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

- Importance of spoken language & literacy in the home
- Health routines (bedtime)
- Homework support
- Knowledge of community supports

Families as Caregivers

- School Calendar
- School Daily Schedule
- Opportunities to Authentically Engage
- Nutrition
- Homework
- Childcare
- Transportation

Families as Breadwinners

- Breakfast After the Bell
- Physical Education
- Trauma Informed Practices
- College and Career Success
- Safe & Nurturing Environment/Caring Relationships with Adults

Healthy Child Development

- Importance of spoken language & literacy in the home
- Health routines (bedtime)
- Homework support
- Knowledge of community supports
Health Division

- NGA Center for Best Practices
- National Governors Association
Susan Dawson

• 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: $38

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
Capital Metro Signs

MISSING SCHOOL MATTERS.ORG

DAYS MISSED: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CAPITAL METROBUS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
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 $250,000 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 ahorrarán millones de dólares cuando los estudiantes asistan 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!**
- Démese 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. Hágamos nuestra parte para que continuemos la tendencia positiva esta época de bondad.

www.missingschoolmatters.org

NGA
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.

Find tools to help at www.MissingSchoolMatters.org

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Find tools to help at 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 $2 \frac{1}{2} \times$ 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 9</th>
<th>Non-Low Income</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Female</td>
<td>13% (n=48)</td>
<td>30% (n=253)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female</td>
<td>14% (n=288)</td>
<td>27% (n=1322)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>7% (n=298)</td>
<td>24% (n=241)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Female</td>
<td>2% (n=11)</td>
<td>4% (n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Male</td>
<td>9% (n=37)</td>
<td>32% (n=333)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male</td>
<td>13% (n=282)</td>
<td>27% (n=1460)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>7% (n=291)</td>
<td>26% (n=290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Male</td>
<td>2% (n=9)</td>
<td>7% (n=13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: E³ Alliance analysis of PEIMS data at the UT Austin Education Research Center
**Chronic Absence Rate Bright Spot Schools**

*Grade 9 Only, 2015-16*

- Hendrickson
- Anderson
- Stony Point
- John B Connally

- Georgetown
- International
- Luling
- Austin Achieve Public Schools
- East Austin College Prep @ MLK

*Excluding all Juvenile Justice-focused schools and schools with <10% target population*
Chronic Absence Rate District Focus
Example ISD, 2013-14

% of Target Population Chronically Absent

% Low Income Black and Hispanic (Males and Females)

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

CONFIDENTIAL - DRAFT IN PROCESS
SUCCESS MENTORS INITIATIVE
Travis ECHS Goal:

Improve 9th 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!
It’s Working!

Student and Absence Counts, Central Texas

$37.5 M regional savings since campaign started!

Source: E3 analysis of PEIMS data at UT Austin Education Research Center for 2002-2013, 2017; TEA ad hoc request for 2014-16
QUESTIONS?

Email us at education@nga.org