



# Impact of student absenteeism on student outcomes





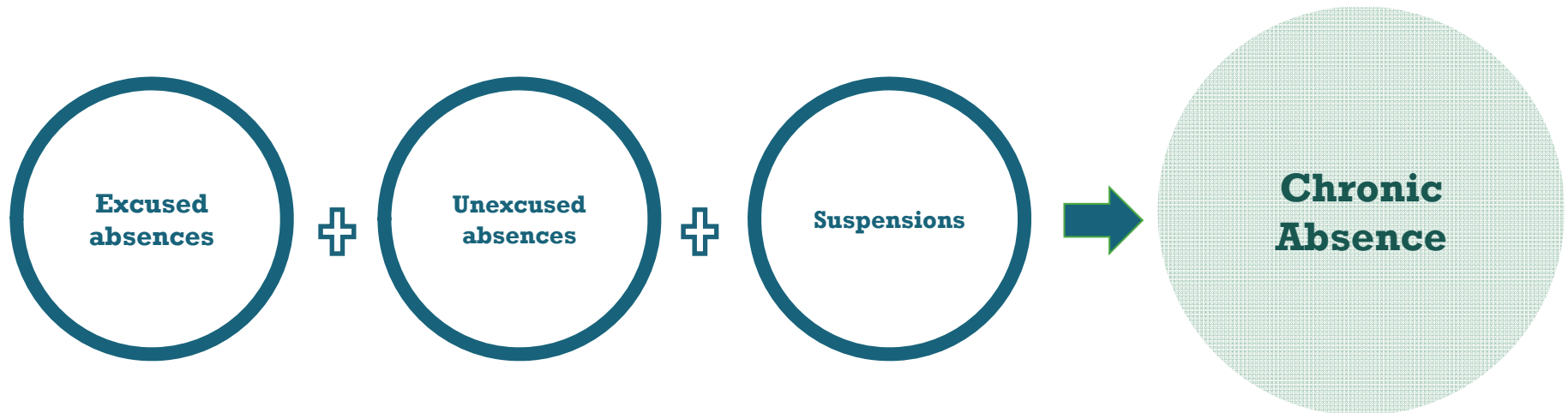
## **What does Attendance Matter:** From a health perspective

- ✓ **Poor health and undiagnosed conditions can cause too many absences:** Even when absences are excused, missing too much school can lead children to fall behind. Challenges related to poor physical, dental and mental health are leading reasons students miss too much school.
- ✓ **Successful learners are healthier adults:** Showing up to school is essential to higher levels of academic achievement, which are associated with lower incidence of disease and longer lives for adults.
- ✓ **Health providers are uniquely positioned to address chronic absence:** They are especially crucial allies for conveying the importance of avoiding unnecessary absences. They can use their knowledge to identify and develop solutions when health-related barriers are causing significant absences.



## 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).



## Multiple Measures of Attendance

### Average Daily Attendance

**How many students show up to school every day?** The percent of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.

### Truancy

**Who is missing school without permission?** Typically refers only to unexcused absences. Each state has the authority to define truancy and when it triggers legal intervention.

### Chronic Absence

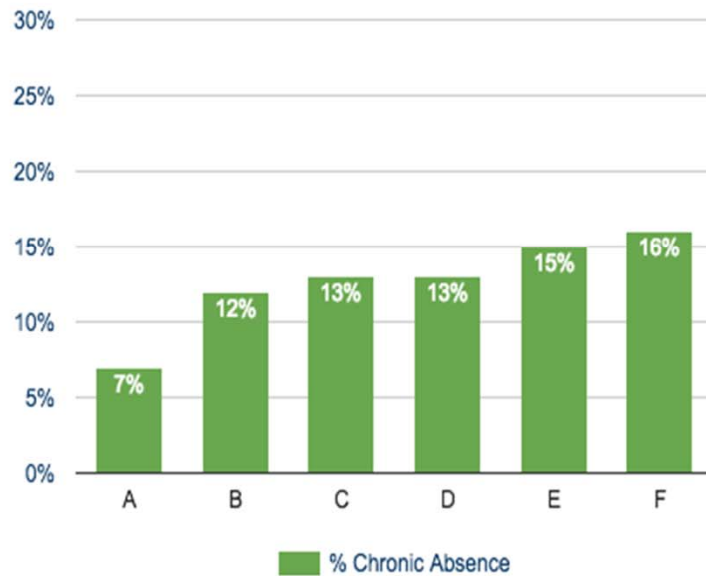
**Who is missing so much school they are academically at risk?** Broadly means missing too much school for any reason -- excused, unexcused, etc. Researchers commonly define it as missing 10% of school. OCR currently defines it as missing 15 days. Chronic absence is a required reporting metric in ESSA.



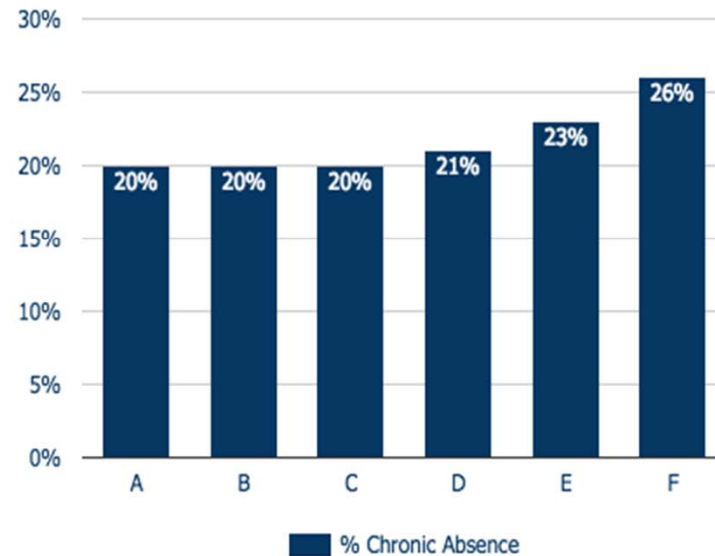
## Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in  
Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012



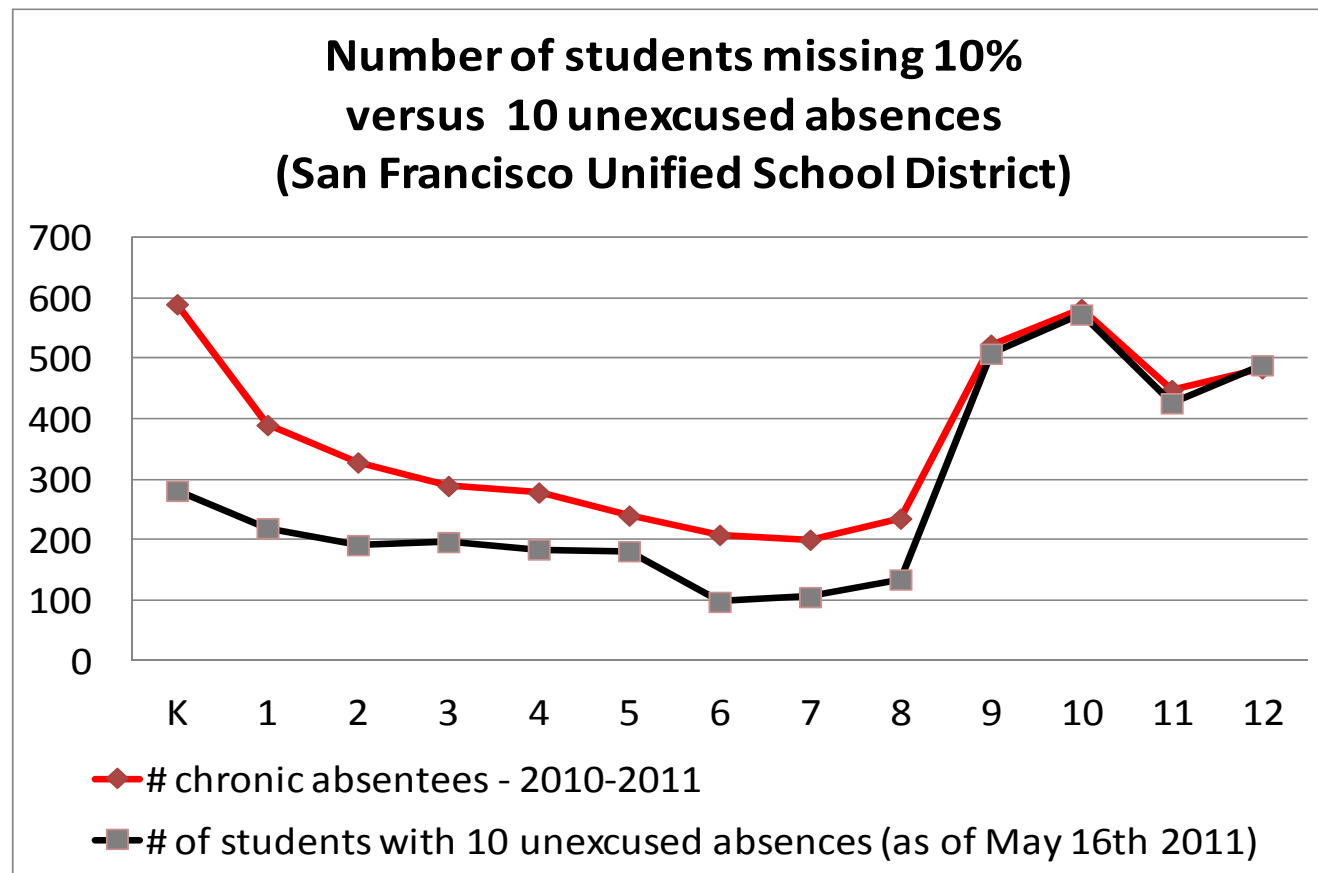
Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York  
City with 90% ADA in 2011-12



98% ADA = little chronic absence  
95% ADA = don't know  
93% ADA = significant chronic absence



## Chronic Absence Vs. Truancy





## Chronic Absence Is Easily Masked If We Only Monitor Missing Consecutive days

September					October					November					December					January				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
													X				X							
							X				X													
		X	X					X				X			X	X				X	X	X		
February					March					April					May					June				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
				X						X														
X	X													X	X					X	X			
								X					X											

Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = **As Few As 2 days a month**

# Why Does Attendance Matter for Achievement?

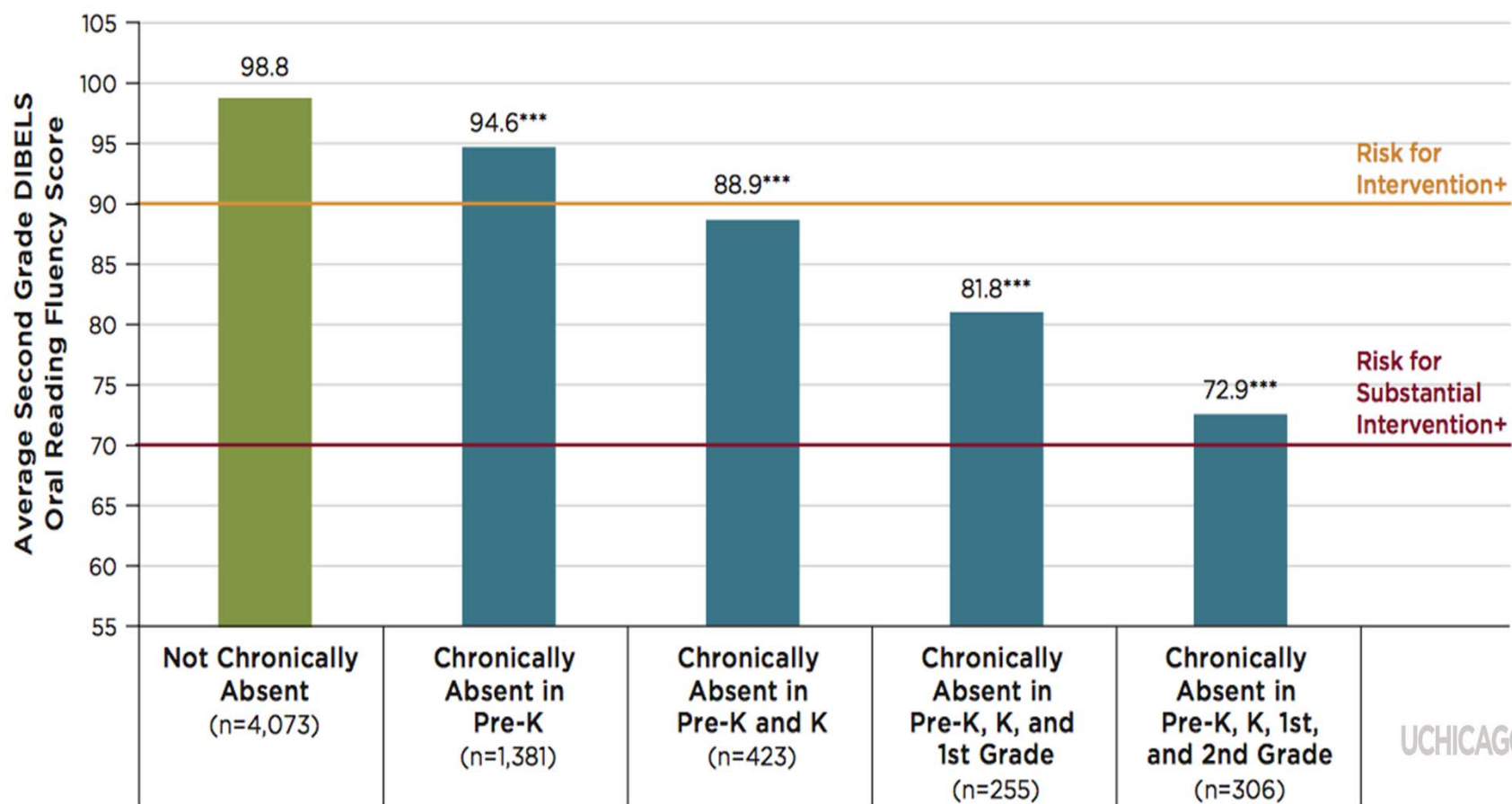
*What we know from research around the country*







## 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



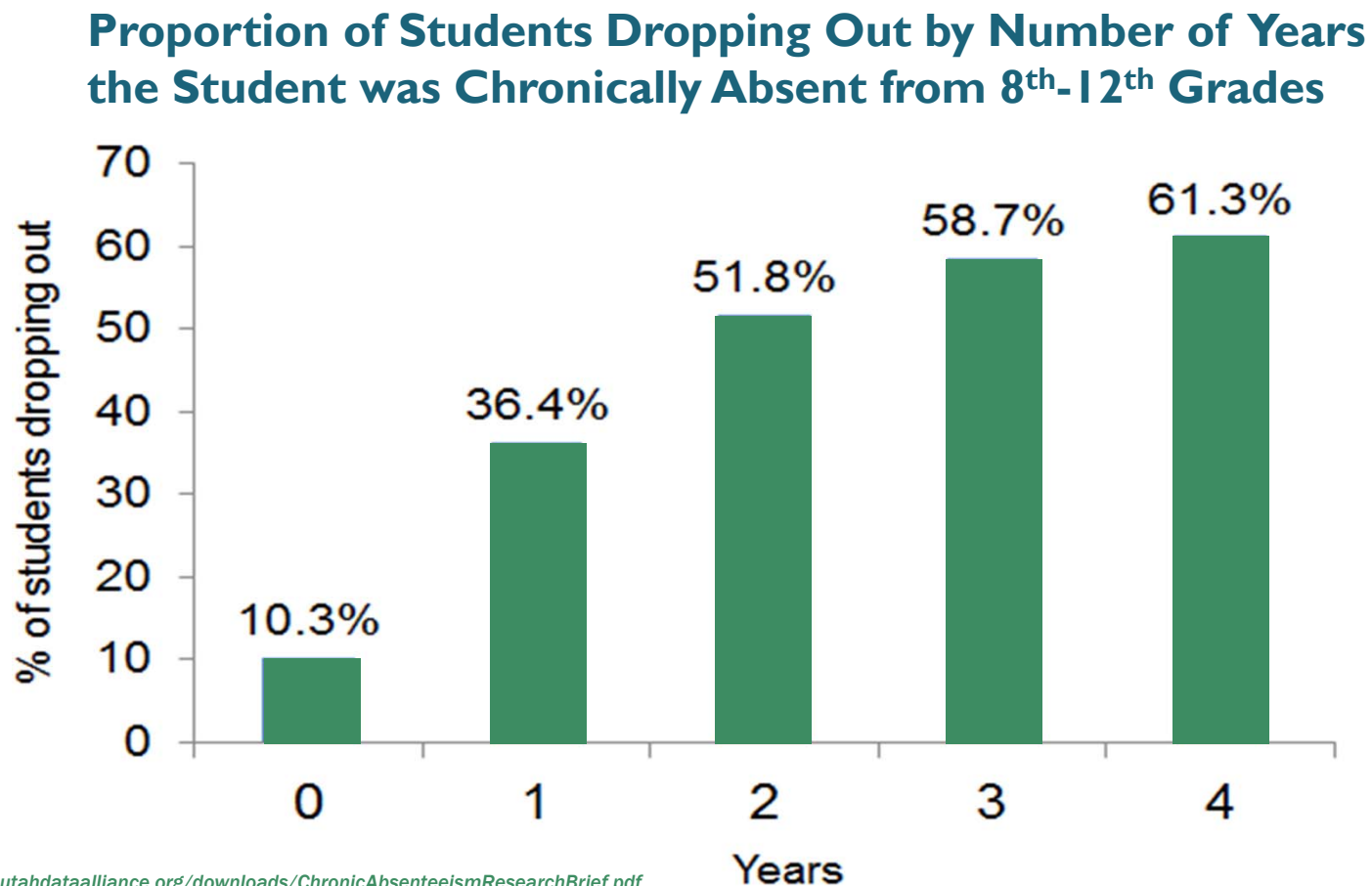
## Chronic absence is especially challenging for low-income children

- ✓ Poor children are **4x** more likely to be chronically absent in K than their highest income peers.
- ✓ Children in poverty are more likely to lack basic health and safety supports (health care, transportation, stable housing, food, clothes, etc.) that ensure a child is more likely to get to school.
- ✓ The adverse impact of absenteeism on literacy development is **75% greater** for these children than for their middle class peers.

\* (Romero & Lee 2007)

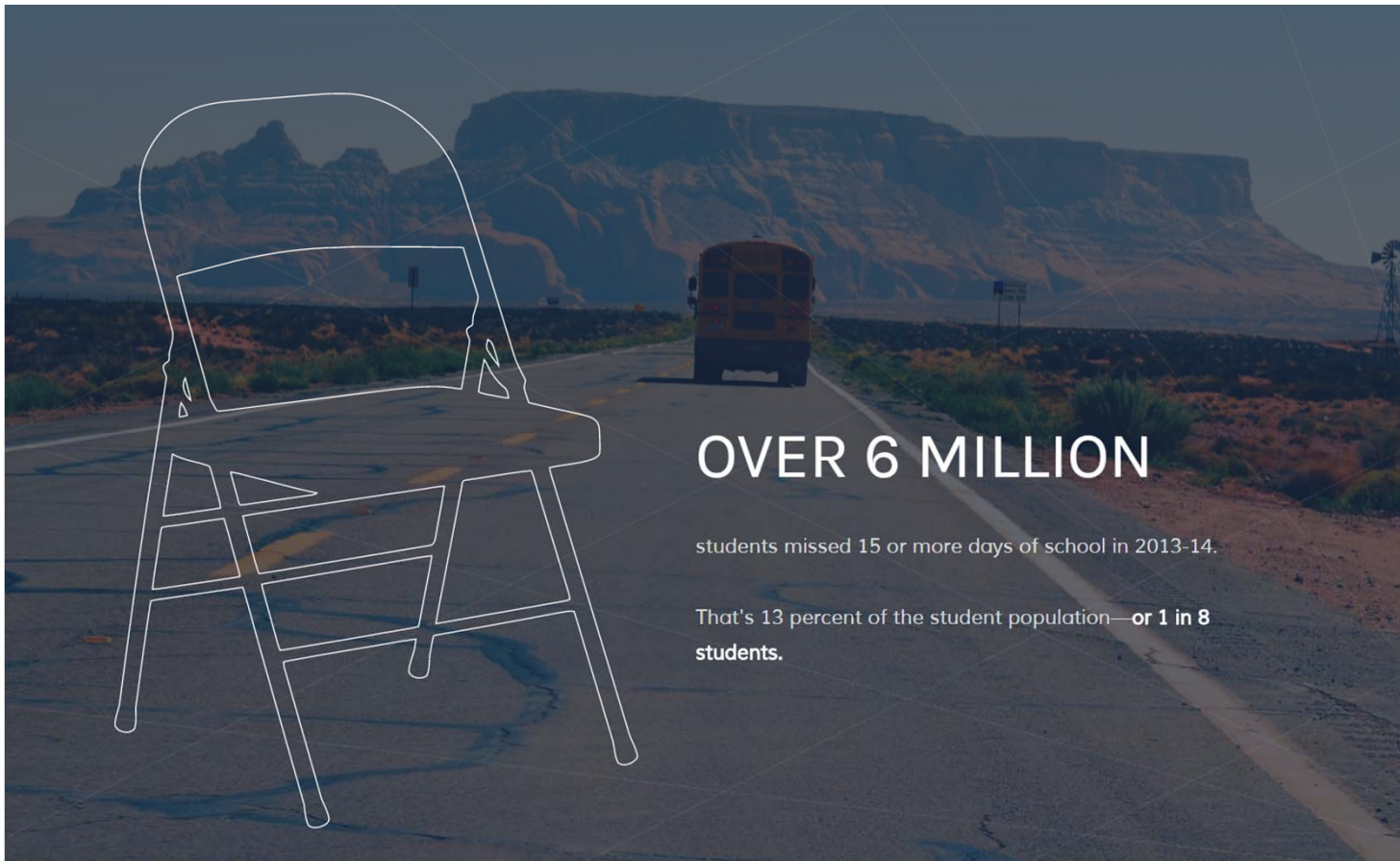


## The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative





## Chronic Absence a Huge National Problem



Source: U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection



## Preventing Missed Opportunity

**Now available!**



EVERYONE  
GRADUATES

### PREVENTING MISSED OPPORTUNITY:

Taking Collective Action to Confront Chronic Absence



<http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/preventing-missed-opportunity/>



## What data sources were used?

- ✓ **Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Civil Rights Data Collection (SY 2013–14):** Data is available at the school level and was aggregated up where reported at the district and state levels.
- ✓ **National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data:** % minority students or % eligible for the Free/Reduced Lunch Program
- ✓ **American Community Survey (US Census):** Children ages 5-7 living in poverty using 5-year average 2009–2014



## What insights were gained about where chronic absence is found?

Chronic absence is both widespread (found across 89% of districts) and highly concentrated.

**Table 1. Where are the Nation's CA Students found, By Quarter and By District? 2013-14**

	Total Number of Students Chronically Absent (CA)	Number of Districts	Average Number of Students CA	Min Number Students CA	Max number of Students CA	Percent of All Districts
ALL	6,472,466	16,240	399	0	72,376	100
1st Quarter	1,618,012	13,943 *	116	0	587	86
2nd Quarter	1,617,319	1,642	985	587	1,805	10
3rd Quarter	1,618,036	530	3,053	1,806	5,729	3
4th Quarter	1,619,079	124	13,057	5,817	72,376	1

*\* Includes 1, 798 districts reporting 0 chronically absent students*





**Over 50% of chronically absent students were found in 4% of districts and 12% of schools.**

### Where are the Nation's Chronically Absent Students Found?

Chronic Absence Story Map



Introduction

Where are the 4% of Districts?

Two Large Suburban Districts

High Minority-High Poverty Urban Districts

High Rates - Mostly Rural

Data Notes

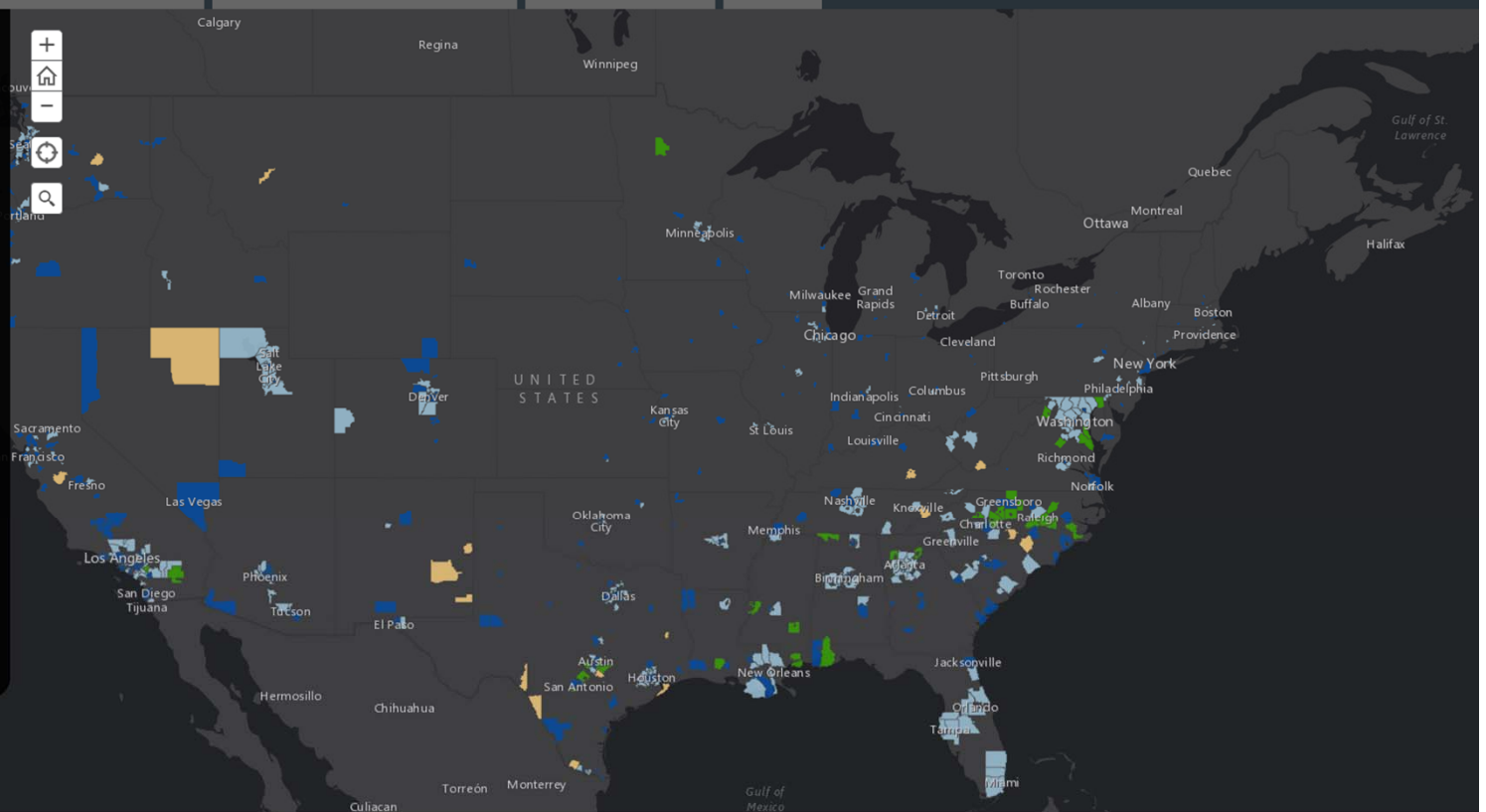
Half of the nation's chronically absent students were concentrated in 4 percent of the 16,240 school districts that reported the number of chronically absent students. These 654 districts were spread across 47 states and Washington D.C.

Overall, 47 percent were modest to large urban districts. About half of the urban districts had extremely high rates of chronic absence and poverty and were mostly comprised of students from communities of color (largely African American and Latino). Another 45 percent were suburban districts, and while their rates often were close to the national average, their large numbers reflect the sheer size of each district and their growing populations of low-income students.

Click on a school district to view its data.

#### School Districts

- City
- Suburb
- Town
- Rural



See Chronic Absence Story Map at <http://arcg.is/29jPgaZ>



## What districts make up the 4%?

### We found two types:

- Some of the places with the largest numbers of chronically absent students are affluent, suburban districts known for academic achievement.

**Table 3. Chronic Absenteeism in Two Large Suburban Districts 2013-2014**

State	School District	Number of Students Chronically Absent (CA)	Percent of All Students CA	Percent FRL	Percent Minority	Enrollment	Locale	CA Rate in Elementary Schools	CA Rate in Middle Schools	CA Rate in High Schools	Percent of Children 5-17 living in poverty
MD	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	24,149	16	34	68	152,013	Suburb	13	12	23	7
VA	FAIRFAX	21,565	12	27	58	183,640	Suburb	9	10	17	7



## What districts make up the 4%?

- Districts serving disadvantaged urban neighborhoods with high rates of poverty typically have both high rates and large numbers of chronically absent students.

**Table 4. Poverty, Percent Minority, and Chronic Absenteeism by Grade Level in Highly Impacted Cities 2013-2014**

State	School District	Number of Students Chronically Absent (CA)	Percent of All Students CA	Percent FRL	Percent Minority	Enrollment	Locale	CA Rate in Elementary Schools	CA Rate in Middle Schools	CA Rate in High Schools	Percent of Students 5-17 living in poverty
PA	PHILADELPHIA	52,770	37	83	86	143,964	City	32	35	51	36
MD	BALTIMORE	31,199	37	85	92	85,035	City	31	20	54	32
MI	DETROIT	31,162	58	80	98	54,181	City	59	52	54	51
WI	MILWAUKEE	30,196	38	83	86	78,645	City	31	42	57	40
OH	CLEVELAND	18,023	47	87	85	38,551	City	41		63	48



**Trend of large numbers of students in a handful of districts holds true across states.**

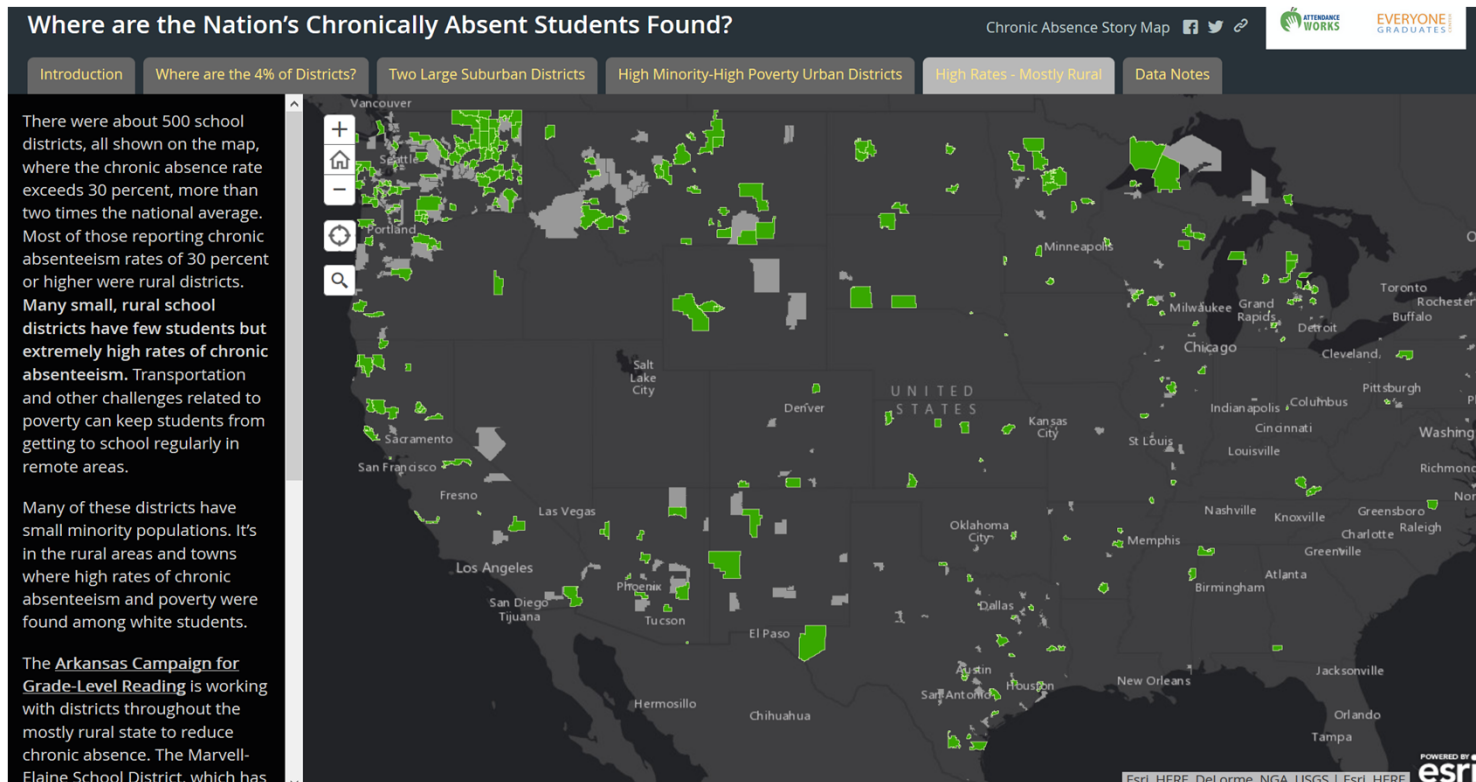
**Table 7. Concentration of Chronic Absenteeism at School District Level Across States 2013-2014**

State	Enrollment	Total Students Chronically Absent (CA)	Percent of Students CA	Total Districts	Number of Districts that Account for...			Percent of Districts that Account for...		
					25% of CA Students	50% of CA Students	75% of CA Students	25% of CA Students	50% of CA Students	75% of CA Students
ND	104,730	10,226	10	170	2	5	13	1	3	8
OH	1,764,066	265,086	15	975	10	82	250	1	8	26
OK	685,574	78,916	12	529	3	16	59	1	3	11



## What about rural communities?

Many small, poor rural school districts have few students but face high rates of chronic absenteeism.



See Chronic Absence Story Map at <http://arcg.is/29jPgaZ>



## Reflection

What surprised or struck you?

# How Can We Address Chronic Absence?





## **What are implications for action?**

All states and districts should use current data to determine how much chronic absence is a challenge for students

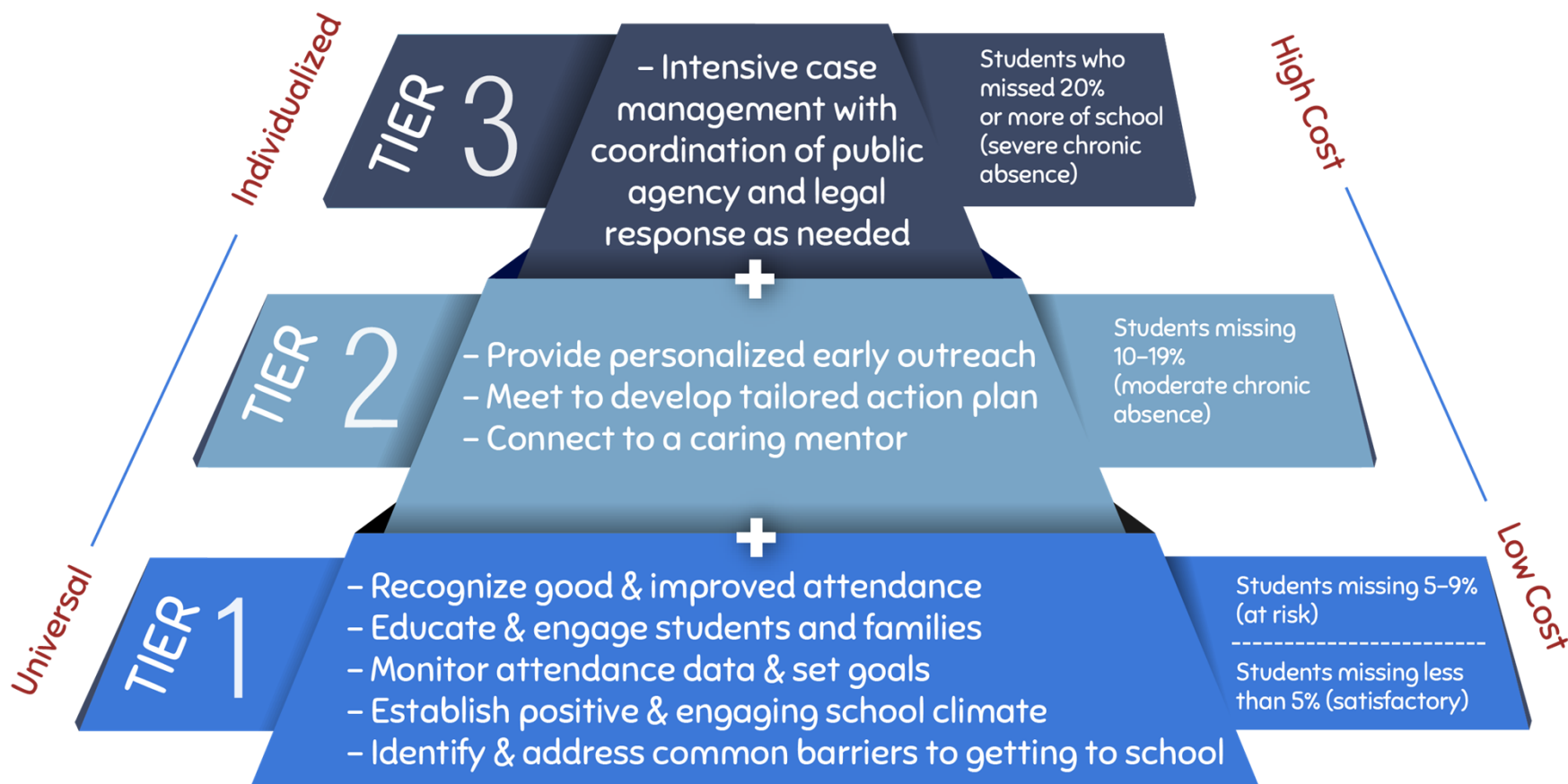
- 1. Invest in consistent and accurate data collection**
- 2. Use data to understand need and disproportionate impact in order to target resources**
- 3. Leverage data to identify places getting results**
- 4. Share data with key stakeholders**
- 5. Equip stakeholders to unpack barriers and take action**
- 6. Create shared accountability, leveraging ESSA.**





**Adopt a multi-tiered support system for students, schools and districts.**

Everyone should help make schools warm, welcoming engaging places that motivate students to show up & encourage students and families to monitor when absences are adding up.





## **Tier 1: Creating a positive, engaging school climate that supports attendance**

### **Attendance is higher when schools:**

- ✓ Promote a sense of belonging and connection including noticing when students show up
- ✓ Make learning engaging so students don't want to miss class  
Engage in restorative practice not punishment
- ✓ Meet the basic needs of our most economically challenged families so all have the opportunity to get to school
- ✓ Build awareness about how absences can easily add up to too much time lost in the classroom



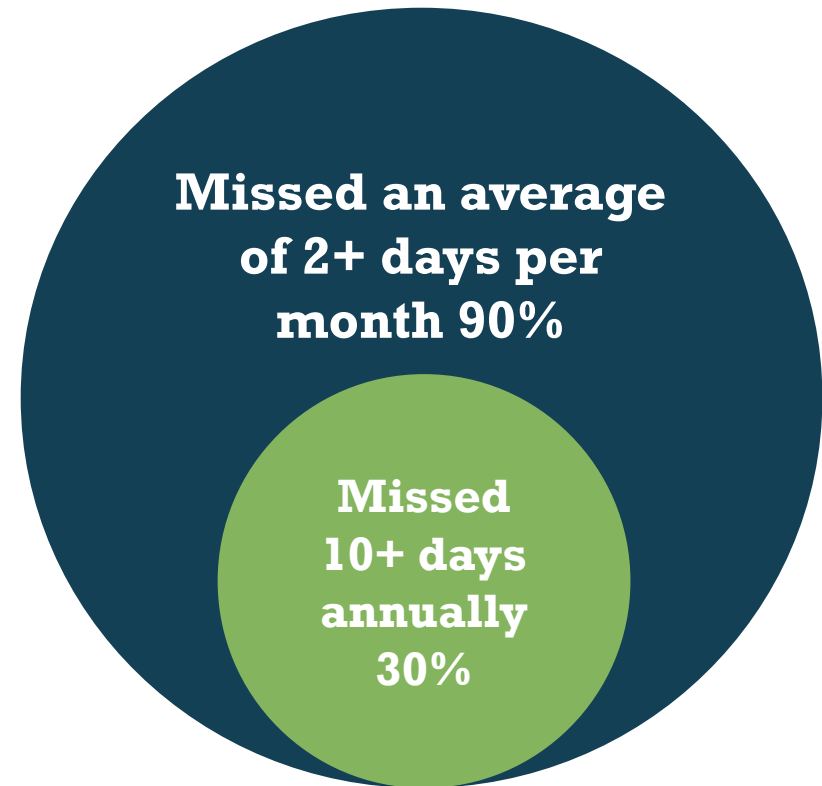
## Parents underestimate the number of year-end absences

Ad Council research commissioned by AG Harris asked parents with students with a history of absence about his their children's absences in two ways:

1. Was your child absent an average of 2 or more days a month?
2. Was your child absent more than 10 days over the year?

**60%** of parents said their child was absent an average of 2+ days a month, **but not** 10+ days a year

**The math: If a child is absent an average of 2+ days a month, then he/she is absent far more than 10+ days a year**





## Parent Video & Discussion Guide



### Bringing Attendance Home Video (6 minutes)

- ✓ Facilitated conversation
- ✓ The consequences of chronic absence
- ✓ How to improve absenteeism
- ✓ Family practice
- ✓ Increase social capital
- ✓ Identify how school can help
- ✓ Community services

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-video>



# Help families make back-up plans

[Insert your logo]

## MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help them do well in school and achieve their hopes and dreams
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending school every day with \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. a visit to the park, a new book, a break from doing chores, a special treat)
- I will make sure my child is in bed by \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.
- If my child complains of a stomachache or headache, and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will send him/her to school anyway and call \_\_\_\_\_ so that he/she can check in with my child during the day.
- If my child has a cold but no fever (less than 100 degrees), I will send him/her to school anyway. If I don't have a thermometer, I will purchase or borrow one.
- I will find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to school if I can't make it.
- If my child is absent, I will contact his/her teacher to find out what he/she missed.
- I will set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after school.

To improve my child's attendance, I commit to the following:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

We will review progress to meet this goal in two months.

Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

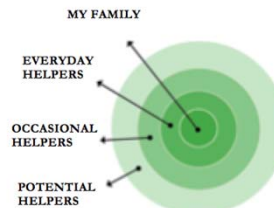
Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



To learn more, please visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)  
Adapted with permission from the [DeVos](http://www.attendanceworks.org) Family Foundation, and from materials created by [Early Works](http://www.attendanceworks.org) at Earl Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Oregon.

• My child was present \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
• My child was absent \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
• My goal is to improve my child's attendance. I will ensure my child misses no more than \_\_\_\_\_ for the rest of the year.  
(9 or fewer absences = satisfactory attendance)

## MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK



1. My Family:
2. Everyday Helpers:
3. Occasional Helpers:
4. Potential Helpers:

If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **My Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help everyday, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help—if you ask.

### 2015-2016 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

August 2015							September 2015						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
30	31												

October 2015							November 2015						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
							29	30					

December 2015							January 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						

February 2016							March 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31		
28	29												

April 2016							May 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
							29	30	31				



CHRONIC ABSENCE = 18 absences  
(10% of school year)  
Warning Signs = 10 to 17 absences  
Satisfactory Attendance = 9 or fewer absences

• My child was present \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
• My child was absent \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
• My goal is to improve my child's attendance. I will ensure my child misses no more than \_\_\_\_\_ for the rest of the year.



## Tier 2 Interventions

### Tier 2

- Targeted interventions that remove identified barriers and increase positive connections that motivate improved attendance.

### Who are the families in Tier 2?

- Missing 10% or more of the prior or current school year for any reason.
- Families experiencing some challenge e.g. chronic disease, job loss, divorce, etc.

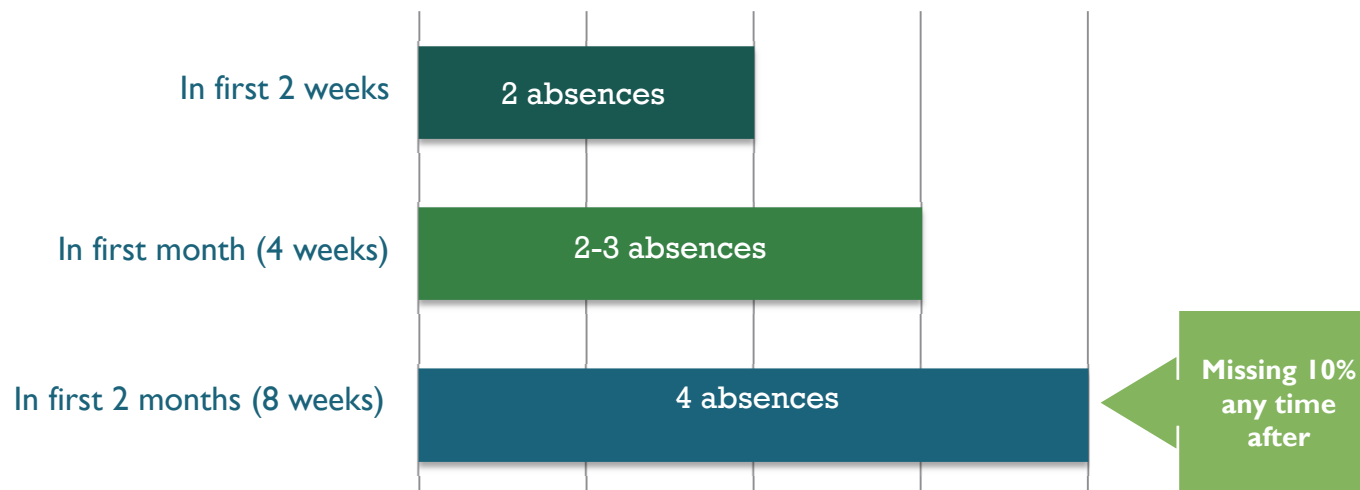
### For which families is Tier 2 sufficient?

- Families with barriers to school attendance who may not understand how to access support.
- Families who see school as “the deliverer of bad news.”
- Families who are more successful when there is a positive relationship with someone at the school.



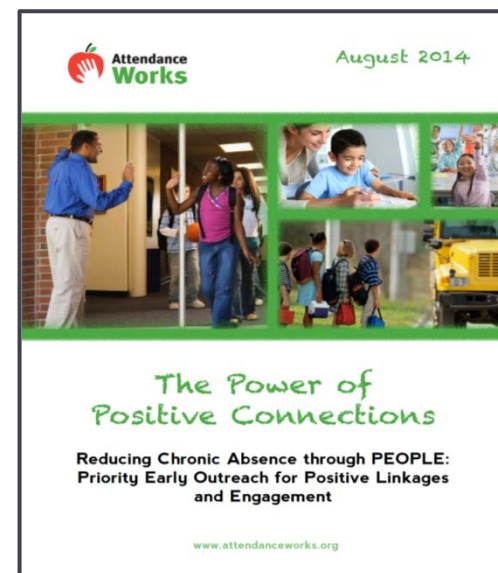
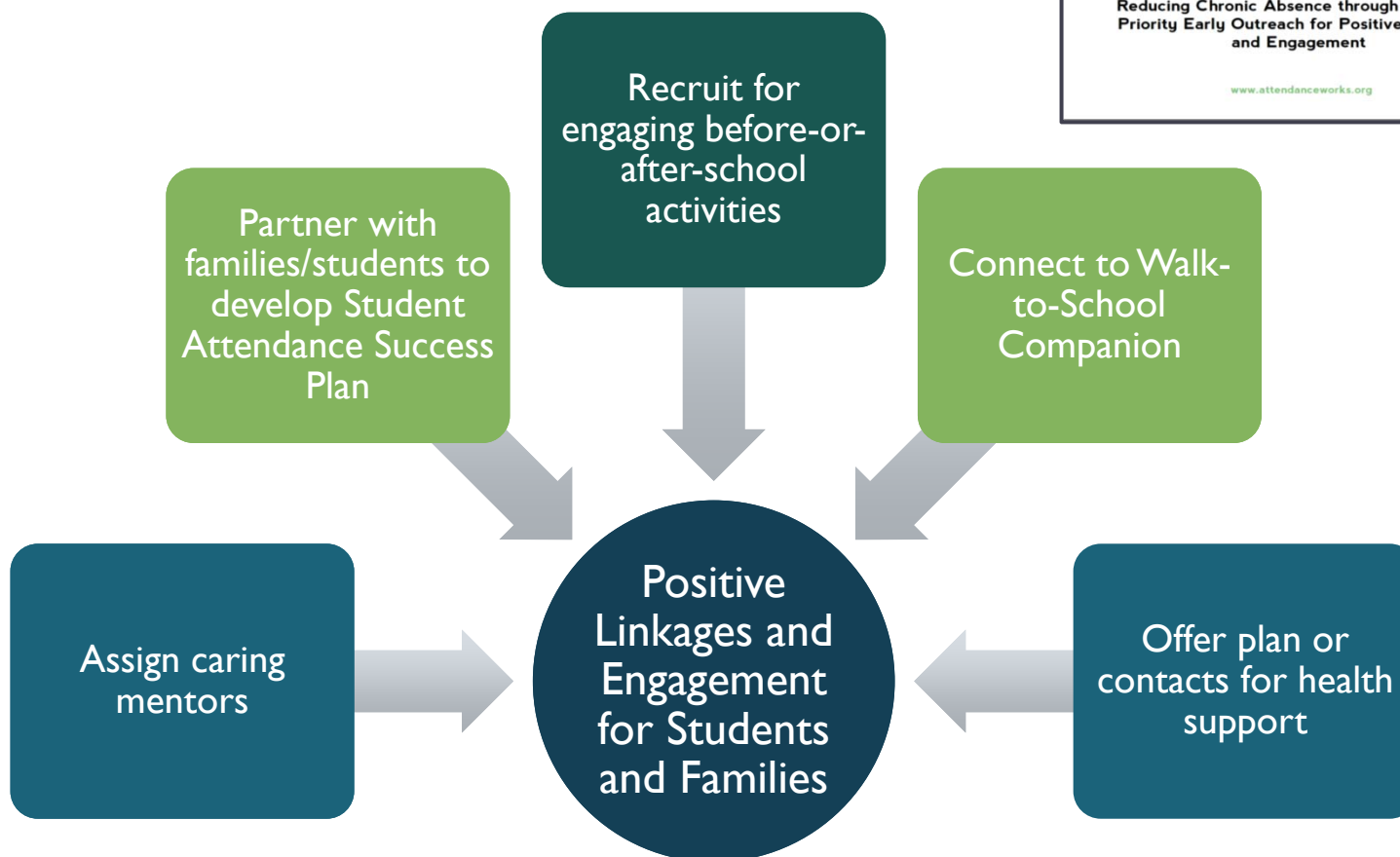
## Criteria for Identifying Priority Students for Tier 2 Supports

- ✓ Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- ✓ And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:





## Possible Tier 2 Interventions







## Tailor Response to Scale And Intensity of the Challenge

The approach needs to also reflect local realities— i.e. large suburban, high poverty urban or small rural school district.

- **At the District Level:** is there a need for a community-wide response or targeted efforts in a sub-set of schools?
- **At the School Level:** how many students are chronically absent?
- **If it's 30 or less**, a student support team can lead the effort.
- **If it's closer to 50 or more**, teachers will need to play a critical role.
- **If it's over 100**, community partners will likely be needed to provide additional person power

*Source: Everyone Graduates Center*



## Unpack contributing factors to chronic absence

### Myths

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Sporadic versus consecutive absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

### Barriers

- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Poor Transportation
- Trauma
- No safe path to school
- Homelessness

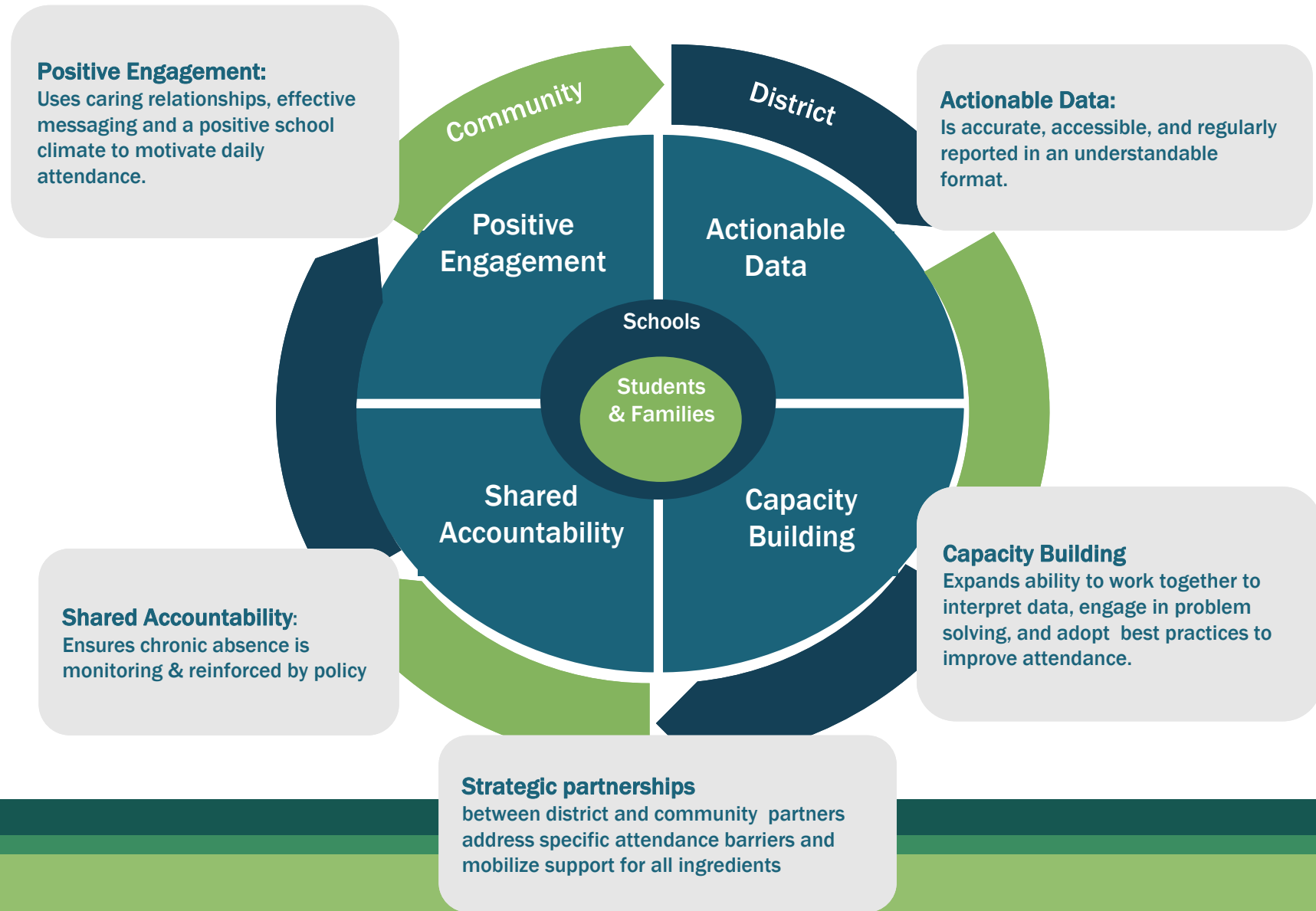
### Aversion

- Child struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Ineffective school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience
- Undiagnosed disability

### Disengagement

- Lack of engaging and relevant instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Vulnerable to being with peers out of school vs. in school
- Poor school climate

# Take a Data Driven Systemic Approach





## Take advantage of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) to create greater accountability.

ESSA already requires State Education Agencies receiving Title I to produce a state report card including chronic absence.

Chronic Absence could also be added as an indicator of school quality or student engagement. It meets all requirements.

- ✓ Applicable to every student
- ✓ Can be Disaggregated
- ✓ Can be used to distinguish performance across school
- ✓ Valid
- ✓ Reliable
- ✓ Proven impact on achievement

New Brief Available in Policy @  
[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

### Chronic Absence: Our Top Pick for the ESSA School Quality or Student Success Indicator

A Policy Brief



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states the responsibility of choosing at least one indicator to measure school quality or student success. This brief makes the case that the chronic absence rate, either alone or as a part of an index, is among the best measures that states could choose to fulfill this requirement. Chronic absence, defined as missing 10 percent of school days within one academic year for any reason, is a powerful early warning predictor of student performance. It also meets or exceeds all of the rigorous criteria ESSA has established for accountability measures. Finally, and importantly from a cost standpoint, it is a measure which school districts must already report to the U.S. Department of Education and is based upon data that they already maintain in their systems.

#### What is Chronic Absence and What is its Impact?

Most children miss a few days of school each year without long-term consequences. However, when they miss many days, the effects are almost always negative. Researchers have defined absences as "chronic" when they reach the level at which a child's school success is at significant risk. Chronic absence is different from truancy, which counts only unexcused absences, and average daily attendance, which reports the average number of students who attend school each day.

As early as pre-kindergarten, students who are chronically absent are less likely to read proficiently by the end of third grade and more likely to be retained in later grades.<sup>1</sup> Chronically absent kindergartners are also less likely to develop the social skills needed to persist in school.<sup>2</sup> The problems multiply for students who are chronically absent several years in a row.<sup>3</sup> By

sixth grade, absenteeism is one of three early warning indicators that influence whether students will graduate from high school.<sup>4</sup> By ninth grade, it's a better predictor of graduation than eighth grade test scores.<sup>5</sup> And, even if they manage to graduate, high school students with a history of chronic absence are less likely to enroll and persist in college. Importantly, chronic absenteeism, especially when defined as a percentage of days missed, is a leading indicator and can reveal that a student needs help long before test scores or grades do.

#### Why Choose Chronic Absence as the ESSA School Quality or Student Success Indicator?

Chronic absence is one of the few metrics available now to all states and that meets or exceeds the rigorous ESSA selection criteria for indicators. We have summarized these requirements below:

ESSA Indicators Must:	
Be applicable to every student	All enrolled students are included in attendance counts; no students are excluded.
Provide summary and disaggregated data	Chronic absence rates can be reported separately for all subgroups of students in a school, district, and state.
Be comparable across a state's school districts	States already have protocols that standardize attendance taking and reporting. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has recently required states to track and report a standard measure of chronic absence. As a result, chronic absence rates will be comparable within states and, unlike many indicators, across the nation.
Be able to distinguish differences in performance among schools	Chronic absence levels vary substantially among students and schools within any district or state. These variations are not random; they represent meaningful differences in student engagement, achievement, and success. <sup>6</sup>
Be valid	Test scores are measures of test success, which can be strongly or weakly related to subject matter mastery. Chronic absence, on the other hand, measures how much school has been missed.
Be reliable	Counting errors aside, taking attendance and computing chronic absence repeatedly will yield a consistent result.
Have a proven impact on Achievement	An abundance of studies link chronic absence to academic achievement. Click <a href="#">here</a> for a compilation of research on chronic absence and its relationship to student success.

<sup>1</sup> See CORE district experiences at <http://coredistricts.org/why-is-core-needed/>



**Chronic absence is like a warning light on your car dashboard**



## The Parallels:

- ✓ Ignore it at your personal peril!
- ✓ Address early or potentially pay more (lots more) later.
- ✓ The key is to ask why is this blinking? What could this mean?