Partnering with Expanded Learning to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

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INTRODUCTIONS

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Who’s Joining Us Today?
Leveraging Afterschool to Reduce Chronic Absence
What is Chronic Absence?

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

**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**.
Student Attendance is Strongly Associated with Academic Success

Chronic Absence = Warning Sign of Academic Risk

PK-1st Grade: Students who attend regularly in the early grades perform better on measures of academic and social and emotional capacities.

3rd Grade: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to be able to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.

Middle School Success: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to have passing grades in middle school.

High School Completion: Students who attend school regularly in high school are more likely to graduate from high school.

College Completion: Students who attend school regularly in high school are more likely to persist in college and graduate.

www.attendanceworks.org
Chronic Absence Offers A New Attendance Paradigm

**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
Take 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.

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 monitored & reinforced by policy.

Strategic partnerships between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.
II. Chronic Absenteeism Indicator

» **New!** Reported for first time in 2018 Dashboard

» One of two statewide indicators for students’ level of Academic Engagement

» The indicator appears for LEAs, schools, and student groups in grades K–8 with **30 or more students** who meet the **eligible enrollment requirements** in both the current and prior year will receive a performance level for this indicator on the Dashboard.

» Schools that do not certify (or submit) attendance data are automatically assigned an **Orange** performance level.
LEARN MORE

Chronic Absenteeism

Yellow

9% chronically absent

Maintained 0.3%

EQUITY REPORT
Number of Student Groups in Each Color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

View More Details ➔
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Chronic Absentage</th>
<th>Absentage Change</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td>21,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
<td>234,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>+0.4%</td>
<td>544,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Learners</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>+0.6%</td>
<td>1,088,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Youth</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>32,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
<td>183,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pacific Islander
Orange
16.1% chronically absent
Increased 2%
Number of Students: 19,676

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
Orange
11.4% chronically absent
Maintained 0.4%
Number of Students: 2,773,532

Hispanic
Yellow
9.7% chronically absent
Maintained 0.4%
Number of Students: 2,367,648

Two or More Races
Yellow
9.3% chronically absent
Maintained -0.2%
Number of Students: 203,294

White
Yellow
7.7% chronically absent
Maintained No Data
Number of Students: 992,430

Asian
Green
3.2% chronically absent
Maintained 0.3%
Number of Students: 396,095

Filipino
Green
4.3% chronically absent
Maintained 0.2%
Number of Students: 96,617
How Can We Address Chronic Absence?
Factors That Contribute to Chronic Absence

Barriers
- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Family responsibilities
- 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

High or extreme levels of chronic absence often indicate multiple causes of chronic absence exist for large numbers of students and further resources are needed to unpack factors affecting student attendance.
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.

TIER 1
Universal
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
Individualized
Early Intervention
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

TIER 3
High Cost
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)
Making a Difference Within A School Year Requires Attention to At-Risk and Moderate Bands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAYS MISSED IN SCHOOL YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory Attendance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed less than 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(fewer than 9 days in a 180-day year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At-risk</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed 5-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9-17 days in a 180-day year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Chronic Absence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed 10-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18-35 days in a 180-day year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severe Chronic Absence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed 20% or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(36 or more days in a 180-day year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 the CA Attorney General asked parents with students with a history of absence about 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

Help families make back-up plans

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**MY CHILD’S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN**

**POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD’S ATTENDANCE GOALS**

1. **I will...**
2. **I will...**
3. **I will...**

**My child has present...**

**My child was absent...**

**We will review together...**

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**MY FAMILY’S HELP BANK**

1. **My Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Help:** Identify who can call me to help drop off your child or who can pick him up for you when you can’t. These are people like family members or people who are neighbors or friends.
3. **Unexpected Help:** Identify people who can help in unexpected situations. These are people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who can help in a pinch.
4. **Financial Help:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who can help if you ask.

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**DREAM ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

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***To learn more, please visit www.attendanceworks.org***

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www.attendanceworks.org
## Tier 2 Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Who are the families in Tier 2?</th>
<th>For which families is Tier 2 sufficient?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Targeted interventions that remove identified barriers and increase positive connections that motivate improved attendance. | • Missing 10-20% of the prior or current school year for any reason.  
• Families experiencing some challenge e.g. chronic disease, job loss, divorce, etc. | • 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. |
Tier 2 Interventions Are Especially Critical

Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and Engagement

- Assign caring mentors
- Recruit for engaging before-or-after-school activities
- Partner with families/students to develop Student Attendance Success Plan
- Connect to Walk-to-School Companion
- Add attendance goals and supports to IEP
- Offer plan or contacts for health support
Research Shows Impact of Quality Out of School Time

7th and 8th graders attending Boys & Girls Club afterschool programs skipped school fewer times, increased school effort and gained academic confidence. (2009)

Afterschool participants attending Pathways to Progress in Minneapolis and St. Paul came to school an average 18.4 more days than their peers. (2004)

School-day attendance improved for students in California’s Afterschool Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program. Students absent 10% of the year came an additional 11 days. (2002).
What Can Expanded Learning Programs Do?

**Step 1: Create Culture of Attendance**

a. Forge caring relationships that motivate students to show up every day
b. Partner with schools to educate families and students about the importance of attendance
c. Reach out to students/families with poor attendance
d. Offer incentives for attendance
e. Use engaging program activities to motivate students to come to school.
f. Analyze program attendance data to identify areas in need of improvement.
g. Engage students in helping develop messages for other students about what is good attendance.
Step 2: Monitor Attendance Data on Program Participants

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

Step 3: Find Out About Attendance In Schools Served

a. Find out what the school is doing to reduce chronic absence and improve attendance. Identify if there is a role for the afterschool program, for example, serving as a success mentor.

b. Learn if your school has a team that monitors attendance data; Seek membership on the team or at least access to review school day attendance.

c. Use the afterschool program as an opportunity to solicit insights from students and if possible parents about what are the barriers to attendance in the school day and what could help overcome them.
Reducing Chronic Absence Requires A Team
Primary Purpose of A Team Approach

Organize and facilitate a schoolwide attendance strategy and ensure it is an integral component of the school’s plan to improve outcomes for all students.
Key Team Functions

1. **Monitor attendance data** to assess which groups of students are most affected and what works to reduce chronic absence.

2. **Develop and organize a year-round multi-tiered attendance strategy** that begins with prevention and early intervention and determine which teams and/or staff are responsible for implementation.

3. **Use data to understand and remove common attendance barriers** for students.

4. **Ensure chronically absent students receive services** from a student support team.
The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

Teams working on improving student attendance should include the school’s:
* Nurse
* Counselor
* Social Worker
* Administrative support staff
* Special education staff
* Teachers
* **Afterschool staff**

Teams should seek to incorporate input from families and students along with the community.

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**Tackling Student Absenteeism Requires a Whole School Strategy**
Key Resource: Attendance Awareness Website

✔ Download our free materials and our online Count Us In! toolkit and share with local districts.

✔ Encourage schools and community partners to join our listserv: 18,000+ members.

Sign up for Updates: www.awareness.attendanceworks.org
Expanded Learning Context

Jeff Davis
Executive Director
California AfterSchool Network

Staci Wendt
Senior Research Associate
WestEd
Supportive Environments with Meaningful Youth Engagement: A Research-Based Approach for Promoting Success in School and Life

Youth Development Process: Resilience in Action

- **Caregiver Beliefs**
  - Developmental supports & opportunities
    - Protective Factors:
      - Caring Relationships
      - High Expectations
      - Meaningful Participation
    - In:
      - Families
      - Schools
      - Communities
      - Peers

- **Environmental Inputs**
  - that meet developmental needs
    - Safety
    - Love & Belonging
    - Respect
    - Power
    - Challenge
    - Mastery
    - Meaning

- **Personal Inputs**
  - promoting developmental strengths & outcomes
    - Personal Resilience Strengths:
      - Social
      - Emotional
      - Cognitive
      - Moral-spiritual

- **Personal Outputs**
  - thus producing positive prevention, education, & successful life outcomes

- **Societal Impacts**
A groundbreaking report validates decades of research
Meaningful youth engagement is generally lacking

- Opportunities for meaningful participation are a critical factor leading to success in school and in life

- But since 2003, the lowest scores from 5th – 11th grade (on the CA Healthy Kids Survey) are related to Opportunities for Meaningful Participation.

  Afterschool can change that!

- When people have meaning and purpose, they show up
Why meaningful participation matters

“After school programs literally saved my life.”
Protective Factors Associated with Expanded Learning Participation

CalSCHLS and the California Healthy Kids Survey

- Addresses school climate, health risks and behaviors, and youth resiliency
- Provide local data to schools, districts, and partner communities to improve student achievement and socio-emotional, behavioral, and physical health
- Students self-report afterschool participation
  - “How many days a week do you usually go to your school’s afterschool program?”
Protective Factors Associated with Expanded Learning Participation

• Identified Expanded Learning Participants and non-Participants

• Developed a comparison group of non-Participants who were demographically similar to Participants
  • Sex
  • Ethnicity
  • Language spoken at home
  • Student grades
  • Free and reduced lunch participation
Protective Factors Associated with Expanded Learning Participation

Students who regularly attended Expanded Learning programs had significantly higher levels of meaningful participation.

Expanded Learning participation was particularly beneficial for high school students:

- Increased school connectedness
- Increased caring adult relationships
- Increased high expectations
Protective Factors Associated with Expanded Learning Participation

Higher levels of protective factors like:

- Meaningful participation
- School connectedness
- Caring adult relationships
- High expectations

Directly related to the “Lack of Engagement” factors that contribute to chronic absence.

- We can then posit that increases in protective factors experienced as a result of Expanded Learning participation will increase school day attendance.
Featured Program: Sac City USD

Marcus Strother
Director, Youth Development Support Services
Sacramento City USD

Onniel Sanchez
Be HERE Grant Supervisor
Sacramento City USD
Be HERE
EVERY DAY COUNTS
LCSSP Grant to address Chronic Absenteeism

3 Departments:
Attendance and Enrollment, Student Support Services, Youth Development

- **Be HERE Marketing Campaign**
  - Youth Led Awareness and Education Campaign
  - Rallies/ Outreach
  - MLA/WLA

- **Standardization of District-Wide Attendance Practices**

- **Attendance Improvement Program**
  - Targeted Site work to address chronic absence
Be HERE Marketing Campaign

PERSONALITY SHINES HERE

School attendance is important.

BeHereSac.com
Standardization of District-Wide Attendance Practices

• Developed Attendance Business Process for all school sites
• Created district-wide Attendance Toolkit
• Formed district-level Attendance MTSS Team
• Scheduled quarterly trainings for all attendance staff
• Completed district-level attendance diagnostic with Attendance Works
• Provided site administrators and district staff with consistent actionable attendance data
Attendance Improvement Program
20 identified Grant Schools

● Current Chronic Absence Best Practices - Creating a System
  ○ Form Site Attendance Teams that meet regularly
  ○ Establish site attendance goals based on data
  ○ Create site specific attendance MTSS
  ○ Regularly review Attendance Data (patterns, trends)

● Peer Learning Network (AIM)
  ○ Monthly meeting: Principals, Attendance Staff, Student Support Staff
Source Media is working with Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) attendance office, and the Youth Development and Support Services in order to decrease chronic absenteeism.
Source Media Agency

- Founded in November 2017
- Youth led marketing
- Currently have 9 members
- We run the Be Here Campaign
- Some of our other projects:
  - YTAC
  - Sacramento Kings
  - Future Forward
  - Building Healthy Communities
  - California Endowment
How to reduce chronic absenteeism at a state level?

- Identify what is preventing students from attending school
- Create reasonable solutions to these barriers
- Ensure there is a support and motivational system for students who are chronically absent
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>2018 (Fall)</th>
<th>2019 (Spring)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiram Johnson High</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harkness Elementary</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>9.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakridge Elementary</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>15.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkway Elementary</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont High</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion
Resources & Next Steps

- Current Resources:
  - Attendance Works: Self-Assessments
  - Attendance Works: Expanded Learning Self-Assessment
  - Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference

- Future Resources:
  - First ever CDE EXLD Biennial Report to the Legislature
  - Short Brief

- The opportunity moving forward:
  - Partnership with Schools & Expanded Learning
    - California Expanded Learning Summits (Sept 17 - Bakersfield | Oct 1 - Sacramento | Oct 4 - San Diego)
  - District Plan/LCAP
  - September is Attendance Awareness Month!
Get Connected

- Attendance Works
  - attendanceworks.org
  - @attendanceworks
- California AfterSchool Network
  - www.afterschoolnetwork.org
  - @ca_afterschool
- Sacramento City Unified School District
  - www.beheresac.com
  - @BeHereSac
  - @sourcemediagency
  - @wlasacramento
  - @mlasacramento
- WestEd
  - www.wested.org
  - @WestEd
THANK YOU!