

Every Day – On Time

Encouraging Student Attendance

Scott Perry

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Medford, Oregon

“Last school year, nearly one in five Oregon students missed at least 10 percent of the school year, an investigation by The Oregonian shows. Those roughly 100,000 students were absent 3½ weeks of school or more – in most cases without raising alarms at their school.

No other state has been shown to have a chronic absenteeism rate as bad as Oregon's."

Oregonian: February, 2014

Why the focus on attendance?

“ A school that does not attend to this factor risks undermining all other efforts at school improvement.”

Robert Marzano

What Works In Schools

What do you believe is “at the root”
of student attendance problems?

Systemic Attendance Improvement

**Developed at Linn Benton Lincoln Education
Service District**

Albany, Oregon

Continuums of Capacity for Improvement



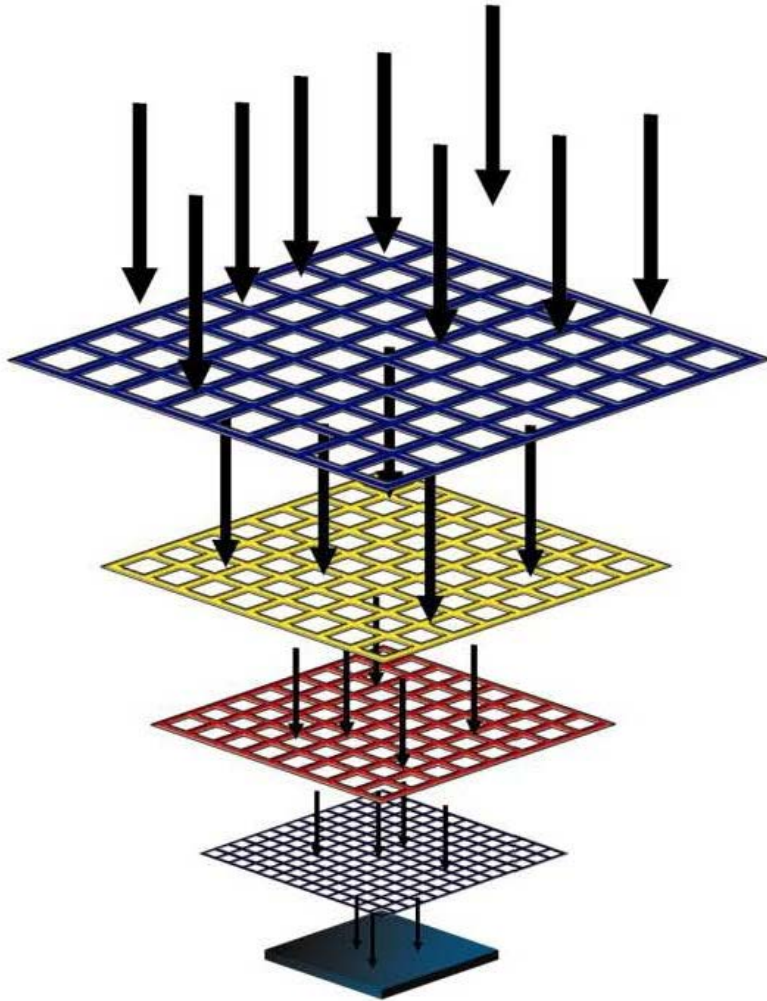
Administrator Conversation

- Shift resource allocation
- Get the right people in the right seats on the bus - and the wrong people off the bus
- Change school policies and procedures
- Take heat from some staff, parents, etc.

Attendance Improvement Process

- Identify Team
- Half-day: Team trained, develops process for data collection, collect data
- Half-day: Team reviews data, develops action plan based on data
- Half-day: Review strategies and progress to date and next steps

Attendance Support Systems



- Universal Attendance Supports**
 - Effective Instruction
 - Schoolwide Staff Agreements
 - Systems of Reinforcement: School & Classroom

- Parent communication systems**
 - Same Day Response
 - Person-to-Person Contact

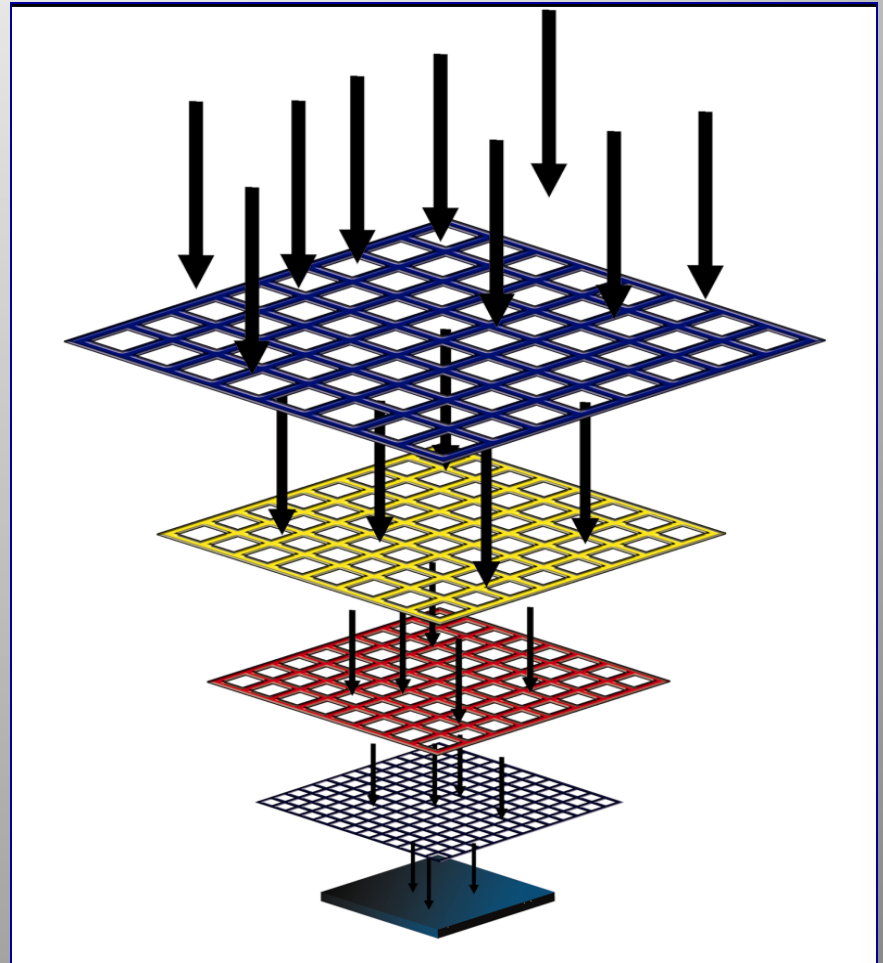
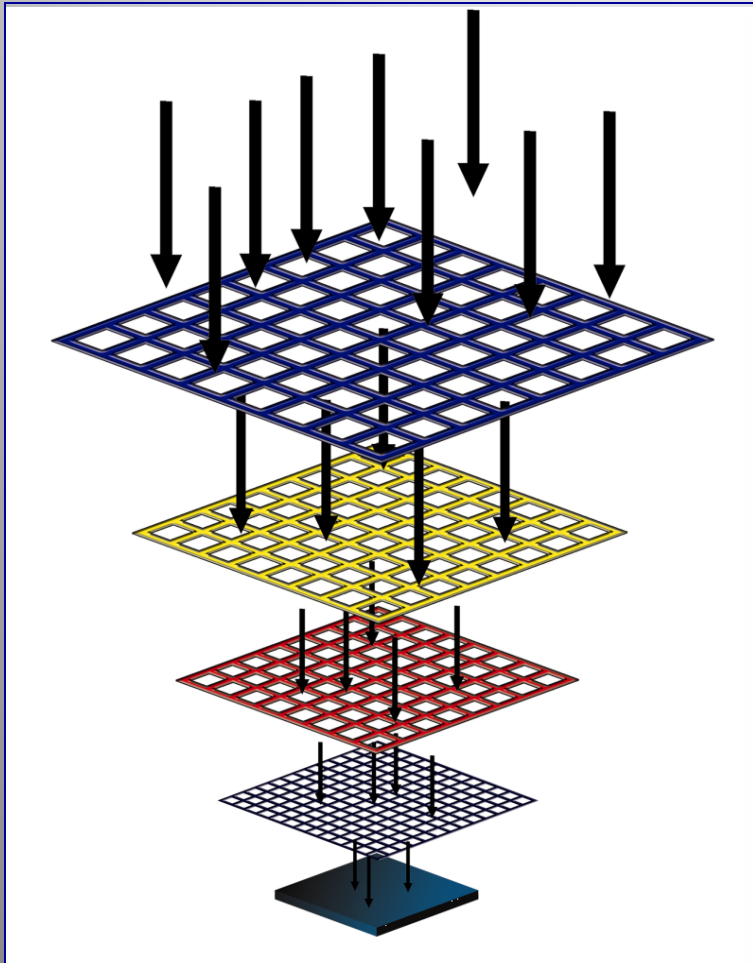
- Consequence Systems**
 - Clear
 - Consistent

- Individual assesment & support**
 - Barriers & Needed Supports
 - Mentoring
 - Alternative Education Options

- Community supports & legal consequences**
 - Interagency Staffing
 - Wraparound/Case Management
 - Attendance Officer Support

Attendance Support Systems

Elementary Level



Universal Attendance Supports

Current Status			Feature	Priority		
In place	Partial In place	Not in Place		High	Medium	Low
			1. The school systematically works to insure that classrooms are inviting, instructionally sound, and lessons are presented in a positive and engaging manner.			
			2. The school environment is generally perceived by students and staff as safe from verbal and physical threat.			
			3. Positive interventions (not just punitive consequences) are systematically used for students with attendance problems (e.g. verbal reinforcement, talking with student to problem solve, phone call home, development of attendance contract, etc.)			
			4. Policies and procedures are in place <u>and in practice</u> which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for student relative to attendance .			
			5. Policies and procedures are in place <u>and in practice</u> which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for students relative to tardiness .			
			6. Policies and practices delineate the attendance-related responsibilities of parents, school staff and administrators.			
			7. 90% or more of the students can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.			
			8. 90% or more of the staff can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.			
			9. Students are taught skills related to attendance and punctuality at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the school year.			
			10. Over the past 12 months there have been several significant staff discussions or training opportunities re: both attendance and tardies.			
			11. Systems are in place whereby a responsible adult is aware of each student's whereabouts at all times during the school day.			
			12. Adults, including teachers and administrators, are regularly in the hallways during passing periods and as classes begin; reminding and encouraging students to be to class on time.			
			13. All adults in the school share and act upon the responsibility to approach a student and inquire if that student is potentially skipping a class.			
			14. If the school has "open" or "unassigned" class periods for some students, there is an area designated for those students coupled with the expectation that they remain in that area.			

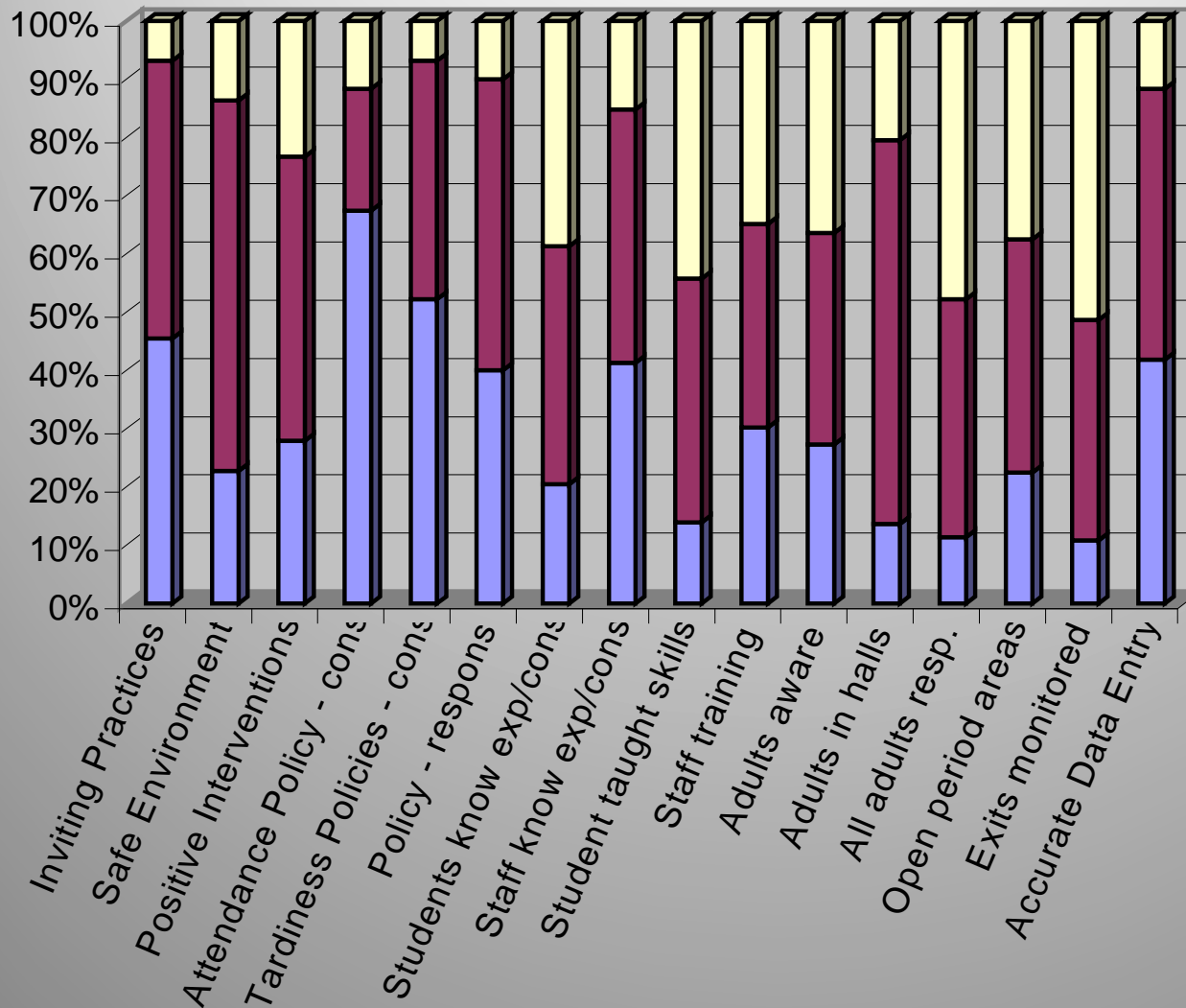
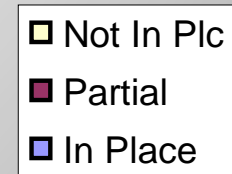
Parent Communication Systems

Current Status			Feature	Priority		
In place	Partial In place	Not in Place		High	Medium	Low
			1. Parents are informed of policies at the beginning of the year and at appropriate times throughout the year. The school has a mechanism in place to assure that parents have reviewed policies and procedures.			
			2. Parents are contacted via person-to-person contact within two class periods of a report that a student is absent without substantiated explanation (parent note, parent phone call, pre-authorization, etc.).			
			3. Parents of chronically truant students receive occasional positive phone calls when their student is beginning to show a pattern of improved attendance.			

			Consequence Systems			
			1. Policies and procedures are in place <u>and in practice</u> which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for student relative to attendance .			
			2. Policies and procedures are in place <u>and in practice</u> which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for students relative to tardiness .			
			3. 90% or more of the staff can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.			
			4. 90% or more of the students can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.			
			5. Consequences for truancy and tardiness occur within 24 hours of the student behavior.			
			6. Consequences for truancy and tardiness are coupled with problem-solving/instruction relative to attendance expectations.			

XYZ High – Universal Systems

Current Status
84 Responses



What are some examples of Universal Level Challenges?



Common Challenges Universal Level

- Staff intentionally or unintentionally disinviting to returning students
- Lack of school-wide emphasis on attendance
- Culture of punitive-only responses to attendance issues (lack of positive interventions)
- Grading and homework policies that fail to celebrate “renewed efforts”
- Policies not in line with practice
- Policies and expectations not clear to staff or students

Common Challenges

Universal Level

- Inaccurate data collection
- Adults in building reluctant to “share” responsibility for intervening (he or she not one of “my students”)
- Hall pass system inconsistency

What are some examples of Common Universal Level Considerations?



Common Universal Level Considerations

- Staff dialogue/training re: “immediately engaging instruction”
- Staff dialogue/training on invitational responses to returning students.
- School wide leadership focus on attendance (staff meetings, assemblies, etc.)
- Develop processes re: tests, assignments and homework that make progress “doable”
- Review/align policies and practices

Common Universal Level Considerations

- Develop inviting procedures for students and families who move in mid-year
- Teach attendance expectations to staff and students
- Leadership focus on accurate data collection and reporting
- Develop clear “excused/unexcused” policy and procedures
- Review hall pass system

www.attendanceworks.org

Establishing School-wide Attendance Incentives

School attendance is a simple, easily understood measure of student performance. One strategy for improving attendance is engaging students, parents, educators and community members in a campaign that offers positive rewards for getting to school on-time.

What to Remember:

- Attendance incentives are most effective when part of a comprehensive approach that includes outreach to families with more significant challenges to attendance. Incentives should be part of creating a school-wide culture of attendance and accompanied by a deep commitment to ensuring students are engaged in the classroom once they show up.
- Incentives don't need to be costly. Simple rewards—recognition from peers and the school through certificates or assemblies, extra recess time, homework passes or even dancing in the hallways—go a long way toward motivating students. Ask students what they consider a meaningful incentive.
- Interclass competition is a powerful motivator. The sense of competition between classes (with rewards like a party for the class with the best monthly attendance) can be a powerful motivator. Such strategies encourage students to feel accountable to each other for attending class.
- Avoid recognizing only perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is not always the goal since it is not wise to encourage children to come to school when they're sick. Students should be rewarded for improved attendance, not just perfect records. Offering weekly perfect attendance awards can allow students to still have a chance to succeed the next week if they are absent.
- Reward timeliness not just showing up to school. Since tardiness also has an adverse impact on learning, many schools only count on-time attendance toward rewards.
- Send home information highlighting both the value of attendance and incentives and the consequences of poor attendance. Ensure families know about the incentive program and the importance of attendance for academic success, as well as school policies in which poor attendance can result in failing a course or being retained. Sanctions should never be used without incentives.
- Offer incentives for families, not just students. Often, families appreciate access to resources such as food baskets, transportation passes, etc.
- Implement incentives school wide. To fostering a culture of attendance, every classroom needs to participate!!

RADIO

Radio public service announcements are offered as a community service by stations and are reserved for nonprofit organizations publicizing initiatives, events or services and requesting volunteers. PSAs can play an important role in an overall communications strategy and can be done quickly with a short script and few minutes of recording time.

- **Craft scripts for 15- and 30-second PSAs:** Radio stations like to use both lengths, and providing two versions will increase the likelihood that your PSA will air. When drafting a script keep your language simple and consider your audience. PSAs can be targeted to specific markets or states.
- **Find a spokesperson:** It's tempting to find a celebrity, but for local PSAs, a mayor, politician or local sports star will do the trick. Use different voices for different PSAs. Or you can ask the radio station if it would like to use their on-air personalities.
- **Record your PSA:** Recording can be done in person with a digital recorder or over the phone with a recording line. The overall recording process should take no more than 10 minutes but be sure to get several takes. Once you have the audio you will need a computer program to clean it up, removing any "ums," stumbles or deep breaths. If you need help, try a local ad agency or radio station.
- **Submit to local stations:** Most stations accept PSAs only via email as an attached MP3 audio file. A simple website search or phone call can help locate the appropriate email address. PSAs are often submitted to a group of stations, for example, Clear Channel DC takes submissions for all 11 stations it manages. When submitting a PSA, always include the script, since some stations may choose to record the PSA with their own on-air personalities. Your script should include an email address, phone number or website. Most stations need about three weeks lead time before running a PSA. Be sure to include your preferred air dates, but recognize that most stations can't provide you with an exact time when your PSA will be aired.



Sample PSA scripts:

15 seconds:

Did you know that your children can suffer academically if they miss 10 percent of school days? That works out to just one day every two weeks, and that can happen before you know it. So get your children off to a good start. Make sure they attend school on time every day...Because Every Day Counts!

30 seconds:

Nationwide, 7.5 million students miss nearly a month of school every year in excused and unexcused absences. Locally, XX percent of our students are chronically absent, including XX percent of our kindergartners. Developing the habit of going to school regularly is critical to doing well in school, college and on the job. We've got to turn this around. Parents, teachers and community groups are working together to find ways to make sure more students attend school on time every day...Because Every Day Counts!

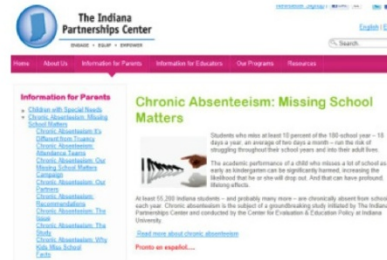
G. WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Any attendance campaign needs a digital component, allowing parents, students or policymakers to access material online. In Baltimore, the school district has [dedicated a page](#) to its attendance effort. In Indiana, the Indiana Partnerships Center has [created a microsite](#) for the report it initiated on chronic absence.

Beyond websites, social media can amplify your message, particularly for reaching students. Text messages can reach many low-income families. Here are some social media tips.

- **Create accounts:** If your organization isn't already on Facebook or Twitter, sign up today. Or create a separate account for your grade-level reading coalition. Make sure the icons are on your website. Feel free to go beyond these two platforms to explore other social media approaches, such as LinkedIn, Pinterest and Youtube.
- **Decide who will manage your accounts:** Several people can update your social media platforms, but you should have one person designated to update and maintain your sites.
- **Update regularly:** Social media works better the more you use it. Make time or make sure someone in your group has the time to keep your sites fresh:
 - **Facebook:** Facebook should be updated no more than once a day, preferably every other day. Weekday mornings tend to have the heaviest traffic. Share links from news outlets or partner organizations. To build your fan base, "like" similar groups and share their posts with your fans. You can also build fans by buying a Facebook ad at a low cost.
 - **Twitter:** Twitter should be updated a couple of times a day. Like Facebook, the best tweets have links to news stories. Statistics and inspirational quotes are often popular and likely to be retweeted, which broadens your exposure and garners new followers. Don't hesitate to retweet the same news or report a couple of times, wording it differently each time. If you're at an event or watching on livestream, tweet what the speaker is saying. Be sure to use hashtags (with #) and handles (with @). If you use hashtags when tweeting from a conference, others at the conference will see your posts and follow you. You can also use generic hashtags (ours is #cglr) to connect with folks interested in the same topics. Look for twitter chats on topics of interest, too.
 - **Other platforms:** LinkedIn, Pinterest and other sites also provide opportunities to connect with like-minded organizations. Linked In tends to be used more by professionals, while Pinterest has a strong following among women with children. Pinterest involves posting photos or graphics. YouTube is a good platform for sharing videos, while Flickr allows you to share photographs more easily.

Top Nonprofits offers [this guide for nonprofits](#) getting started with social media.



What are some Parent Communication Level Challenges?



Common Parent Communication Challenges

- Parents intentionally or unintentionally disinvited re: participation in attendance efforts regarding their child
- Parents not informed of attendance policies in a way that insures understanding
- Parents of chronically truant students not informed of positive changes
- Parents not informed of unexcused absences

What are some examples of Parent Communication Level Considerations?



Common Parent Communication Level Considerations

- Adopt policies and practices that intentionally invite parent involvement
- Insure that written materials to parents are accessible and readable.
- Inform parents of chronically truant students re: positive changes
- Rapid information to parents re: unexcused absences



Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

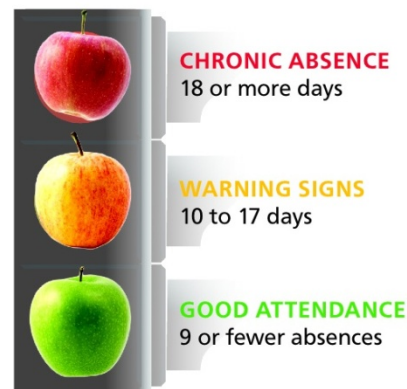
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.



Pay Attention to Attendance: Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10 percent, or about 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school everyday, make that the expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, work with your school.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Communicate with the school

- Know the school's attendance policy – incentives and penalties
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you're having trouble getting your child to school.



Using Parent Meetings to Increase Attention to Attendance

Throughout the course of a school year, schools hold meetings with parents. Each meeting is an opportunity to increase awareness among parents of the importance of promoting excellent school attendance for the long-term academic success of their children and the steps that they can take on their own and in partnership with others to get their students to school every day.

Here are possible ideas to cover during meetings with parents. Consider this list. What makes sense for your school? What else would you want to cover? How might you use the attached attendance handout for parents?

- Share data on attendance and chronic absence for your school alerting them to areas of concern and goals for improvement.
- Educate parents about research demonstrating the negative impact of school absences on academic achievement and funding for your schools if school attendance is used to determine how education resources are allocated in your state. Consider using the handout provided with this unit.
- Orient parents to school policies and expectations for student attendance and on-time arrival. Help parents understand that school staff is monitoring attendance and staff will reach out to find out what is preventing a child from getting to school when children are frequently absent.
- Create opportunities for parents to share common barriers and effective strategies for getting their children to school. Consider asking parents who go the extra mile to get their children to school despite challenging conditions to share their stories. Use the 2nd page of the handout for this unit to stimulate discussion by asking parents to discuss their reactions to the ideas for what parents can do and offer their insights about what they would add.
- Encourage parents to meet other families living nearby so they can, as needed, help each other with transporting or walking children to school.
- Inform parents about how your school's attendance incentive program works; offer tips for how they can support it at home.
- Provide parents with information about local community organizations and resources that can offer valuable economic and social supports.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our goal this year is to ensure that every student attends school regularly.

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school—regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically.

Your child is less likely to succeed if he or she is chronically absent—which means missing 18 or more days over the course of an entire school year. Research shows:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- By 9th grade good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8th grade test scores.

Absences can add up quickly. A child is chronically absent if he or she misses just two days every month!!

Clearly going to school regularly matters!

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time. Here are a few practical tips to help support regular attendance:

- Make sure your children keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers and counselors for advice if your children feel anxious about going to school.
- Develop back up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

Let us know how we can best support you and your children so that they can show up for school on time every day. We want your child to be successful in school! If you have any questions or need more information please contact your child's school.

Sincerely,

ABRIENDO PUERTAS

Opening Doors Literacy Pledge Card for Parents

The Campaign for
GRADE-LEVEL
READING



I, _____ understand that

- I am my child's first teacher.
- Reading is key to my child's success in school and in life.
- I can help my child develop brain power with the activities I provide outside of school.
- Every day my children miss school, they are losing a chance to learn.

I PLEDGE TO:

- Read, talk, and sing to my child every day.
- Encourage play that involves naming and describing.
- Encourage my children to ask questions about things they see: What? Why? How? What if?
- Teach my children to love reading by having books in our home.
- Take my children to the library every week to pick out books they want to read.
- Help my children develop the habit of on-time attendance.
- Talk to my child's teacher regularly on how we can help at home.
- Talk to other parents in my community about the importance of reading.

My child's name: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____

PRACTICAL TIPS

You don't always need to read. A child's love of reading grows from language, knowledge, and interest.

- Find after-school activities that promote reading and learning.
- Help your children develop the habit of on-time attendance.
- Tell your own stories using pictures in books, magazines, and newspapers.
- Watch and discuss educational TV together, such as nature programs and public television.
- Talk with your children while you're cooking, shopping, or walking with them.
- Get library cards for every family member. Make reading a part of family life.
- Tell stories about something that happened when you were young.
- Before reading, share the cover and title of the book. Ask your child to guess what's inside.
- While you read, pause often to ask and answer questions.
- When reading with your child, take turns reading sentences and paragraphs. If your child makes a mistake, don't interrupt. Wait your turn and then make your point.
- After reading, talk to your child about the story and ask what made it interesting.
- Always praise your child's efforts and progress.



TALKING POINTS:

Attendance Works has developed talking points and sample messages for school leaders hoping to encourage good attendance around the winter holidays. Consider using these talking points in your interactions and communications with students and families.



- This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get that education is in school. Every day. On time.
- Building a habit of good attendance is your child's ticket to success in school and eventually on the job.
- But every year, absences spike in the weeks before and after winter break. It's time to break that cycle.
- We know it's tempting to extend your vacation by a few days on either side of the holiday.
- We recognize that holidays are an important time for reconnecting with families far away and exposing your children to your home and language, whether you grew up in another part of the United States or a different country. The costs of plane tickets often influence when you want to travel. But keep in mind the costs to your children's education if they miss too much school.
- Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time and put your child behind in school. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school.
- So make sure your child is in school every day, right up until vacation starts. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning. But it's harder to teach and it's harder to learn when too many students are absent.
- If missing school is unavoidable, talk to your children's teachers in advance to create a plan for making up missed work.
- So give your child the gift of attendance and the habit of attendance.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR ROBO CALLS:

You can use local radio stations or the robo-call system in district schools to broadcast your message. Feel free to use these template scripts or tailor them to your community. Read our [tips for creating PSAs](#).

PSA 30 seconds

This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get an education is in school. It's tempting to extend your vacation by a few days, but remember, those days count as absences. Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused, can add up to too much lost learning time. So make sure your child is in school every day, right up until vacation starts. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning.

PSA 15 seconds

Every year, school absences spike in the weeks before and after winter break, as families squeeze a few more days of vacation into the holiday season. Let's break that cycle. Make sure your child is in school every day. Because the best gift you can give your child is a good education.

We are thankful!

As we take a short break from school for Thanksgiving, we want to express our gratitude for everyone who makes it possible for as many students as possible to come to school every day, on time, ready to learn. We thank:

- Our students and families for making daily attendance a priority since they know the habit of attendance will help them do well in the classroom and eventually in a job.
- Our wonderful teachers who pour their energy into making each classroom an exciting place for exploration and knowledge so children do not want to miss out on learning
- Our support staff and community volunteers who provide the extra hands and attention our children need

We appreciate each one of you so much. We look forward to seeing you after the Thanksgiving holiday. We also hope you will keep in mind that school is closed on (fill in day of week, date, time) and reopens (fill in week, date, time).

We especially appreciate everyone's efforts to avoid taking extra time off during the Thanksgiving holiday. Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time and leave your child behind in school. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school.

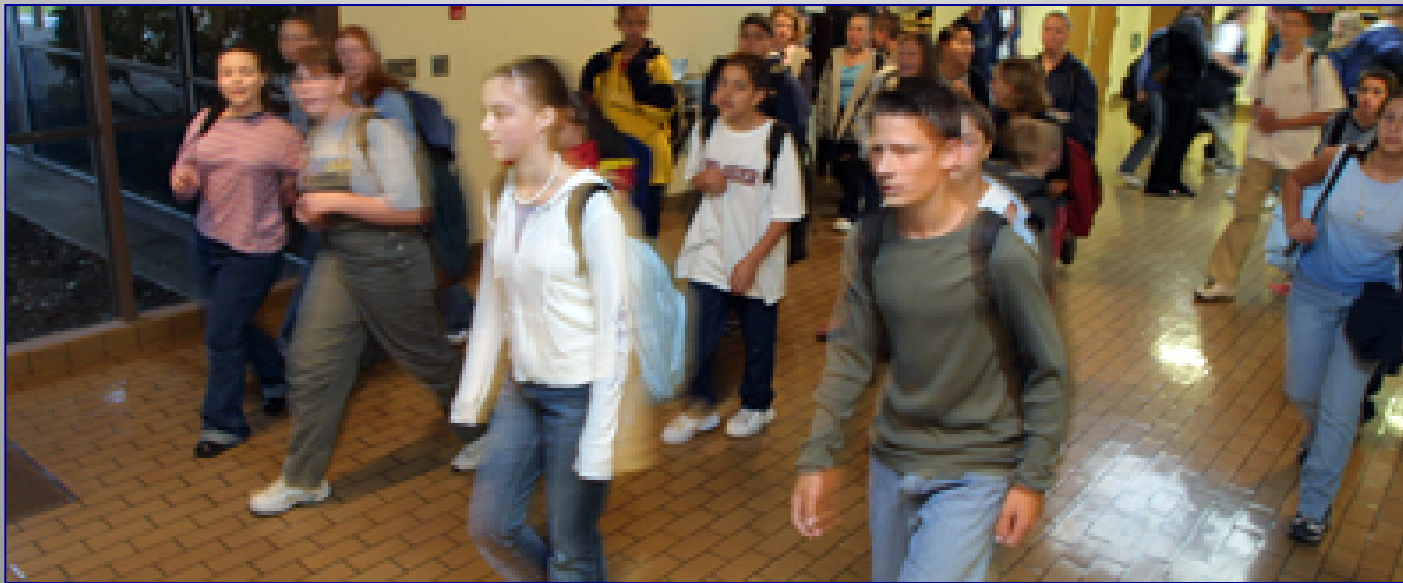
What are some Consequence System Challenges? (Secondary)



Common Challenges Consequence Systems

- Negative consequence system viewed as “most important” or “only” system strategy
- Policies and procedures re: consequence system not clear to students, parents and/or staff
- Significant delay between infraction and consequence
- Lack of problem-solving element in consequence system
- Students repeatedly experience consequence system with no change in intervention or supports

What are some examples of Consequence Systems Considerations?



Common Considerations Consequence Systems

- Staff development/staff discussion to enhance systemic understanding that consequence systems, although necessary, are relatively weak system elements.
- Review Policies and procedures re: consequence system and insure it is clear to students, parents and staff
- Reduce delay between infraction and consequence
- Include problem-solving element in consequence system
- Insure that repeated consequence system involvement triggers increased evaluation/supports

What are some Individual Level Systems Challenges?



Common Challenges Individual Level Systems

- No systematic way of identifying students in need of individual focus
- Lack of available assessment and intervention tools for providing more intensive intervention/support
- Minimal or no identified intervention personnel/resources
- Individual intervention personnel lack skills/training to provide more intensive supports
- Individual support personnel overwhelmed by referrals due to absence of earlier screens

What are some examples of Individual Level Systems Considerations?



Common Considerations Individual Level Systems

- Develop clear criteria for triggering access to individual supports including regular team review
- Adopt effective tools for individual supports (e.g. assessment of barriers to attendance, attendance contracting, effective mentoring program, etc.)
- Identify/allocate resources for intervention personnel
- Train individual intervention personnel
- Insure that all screens are addressed (refrain from reliance on just this level)

What are some examples of Community Level Systems Challenges?



Common Challenges Community Level

- No systematic way of identifying students in need of community focus
- Lack of strong school-community agency relationship
- Unfocused or unclear community system(s) for accessing supports
- Lack of case coordination
- Lack of judicial system support

What are some examples of Community Level Considerations?



Common Considerations Community Level

- Establish inviting process that build relationship with community partners
- Establish systematic process of identifying students in need of community focus
- Establish clear process with partners for accessing community supports re: school attendance
- Advocate for availability of case coordination
- Encourage judicial system support by helping larger system understand all screens

10 Steps Communities Can Take to Reduce Chronic Absence

Research and common sense tell us that school attendance has a direct bearing on student achievement. But too often, we think of reducing absences as the job of parents or school clerks in the front office. Communities across the country have started to help schools address chronic absence, recognizing that they can build public awareness and leverage resources to address a problem that we can solve.

- 1. Find out how many students and schools are affected by chronic absence.** The first step to reducing absences is understanding the depth and scope of the problem in your community. Community leaders can ask school districts to conduct an analysis of chronic absence—the number of students missing 10 percent of the school year. Or, if needed, ask districts for attendance data and then city or county data offices can crunch the numbers themselves. For help, ask Attendance Works for its free data tools.
- 2. Convene a task force on student attendance** to ensure that it becomes a priority across the community. The task force should bring together senior leadership from across school and community agencies from a range of disciplines: early childhood, K-12 education, family engagement, social services, public safety, afterschool, faith-based, philanthropy, public housing and transportation.
- 3. Launch a public awareness campaign to convey that every day counts.** Community leaders can send a clear message about the importance of school attendance and the adverse impact of missing too much school. Speeches, proclamations and billboards can reinforce that message to parents and children, as can parent summits at the start of the school year and public service messages.
- 4. Recognize and appreciate good and improved attendance.** Simple rewards—recognition from peers and the school through certificates, assemblies, stickers, extra recess or ice cream parties—go a long way toward motivating students. Mayors can help link schools to businesses that can provide incentives, such as sports tickets, backpacks or movie tickets.
- 5. Use chronic absence data to shape budget priorities.** High chronic absence rates at a school can often signal a community in distress. Use the data when deciding where to invest in child care, early education and afterschool programs, all of which can help families build good habits and bring absenteeism under control.
- 6. Use chronic absence as an accountability metric.** Make sure data on chronic absence is regularly shared with you and your agency chiefs and ideally included in data dashboards. Ask programs applying for funding to explain what they will do to improve attendance. Use evidence of reduced chronic absence to identify which programs should continue to receive funding in tight budget times.
- 7. Partner with schools and public agencies to address health concerns.** Asthma and dental problems are leading causes of chronic absence in many cities, especially when students have little access to health care. Use the health department to provide preventative care in targeted communities or at school-based clinics.
- 8. Work with the transportation department** to ensure that students and parents can get to school safely. Adjust bus lines and provide passes for students who use public transit. Work with police and community groups to develop safe routes to schools or “walking school buses” in neighborhoods where street violence is a concern.
- 9. Recruit an extra shift of adults to mentor chronically absent students.** Volunteers and National Service programs such as City Year and Experience Corps can provide mentors to monitor attendance, reach out to families and make sure students are showing up.
- 10. Don't forget the parents.** Parents are on the front line of the attendance battle. Don't assume that they even know about the negative effects of too many student absences especially in the early grades. Make it easy for them to access data and find resources that will help them improve their children's attendance.

For more information:

Example 1

Rogue River High School

Sample Action Plan Elements

Universal Supports

- Regular teacher discussions regarding attendance data and strategies to encourage attendance. Focus on issue of students coming to class and then being allowed out again.
- Develop hall pass consistency – stop use of planners for passes and develop alternate system.
- Explore camera monitors and radio system to help monitor exits.
- Teacher sweep periodically for students not in class.

Parent Supports

- Teachers encouraged to call home when students are absent and not rely on front office to make all calls. This needs discussion by all staff together to implement.
- Seek staff commitment to “adopt” one or two at-risk students and their parents. This would reach a significant number, if not all.
- Seek community agency support through Regional Achievement Collaborative to assist with at-risk student support including home connections (Maslow, Kairos, College Dreams, other)

Consequence Supports

- Monthly meetings with all staff to review attendance data and review consistent implementation of consequence system.
- Re-invigorate PBIS. Tie problem solving component with consequence system.
- Explore shifting from in-school suspension as an option to after school – will require activity bus.

Individual Supports

- Work with Regional Achievement Collaborative to access D/A counseling for students.
- Make teachers more aware of SST and how it works with student attendance issues.
- Review SST process with community partners to make sure it is maximally effective. Explore partner agency consolidation of workers at school so we have 1 FTE instead of two .5 people from two different agencies as we do now.

Community Supports

- Review and refine SST process and strengthen community partner participation as per strategies outlined above.

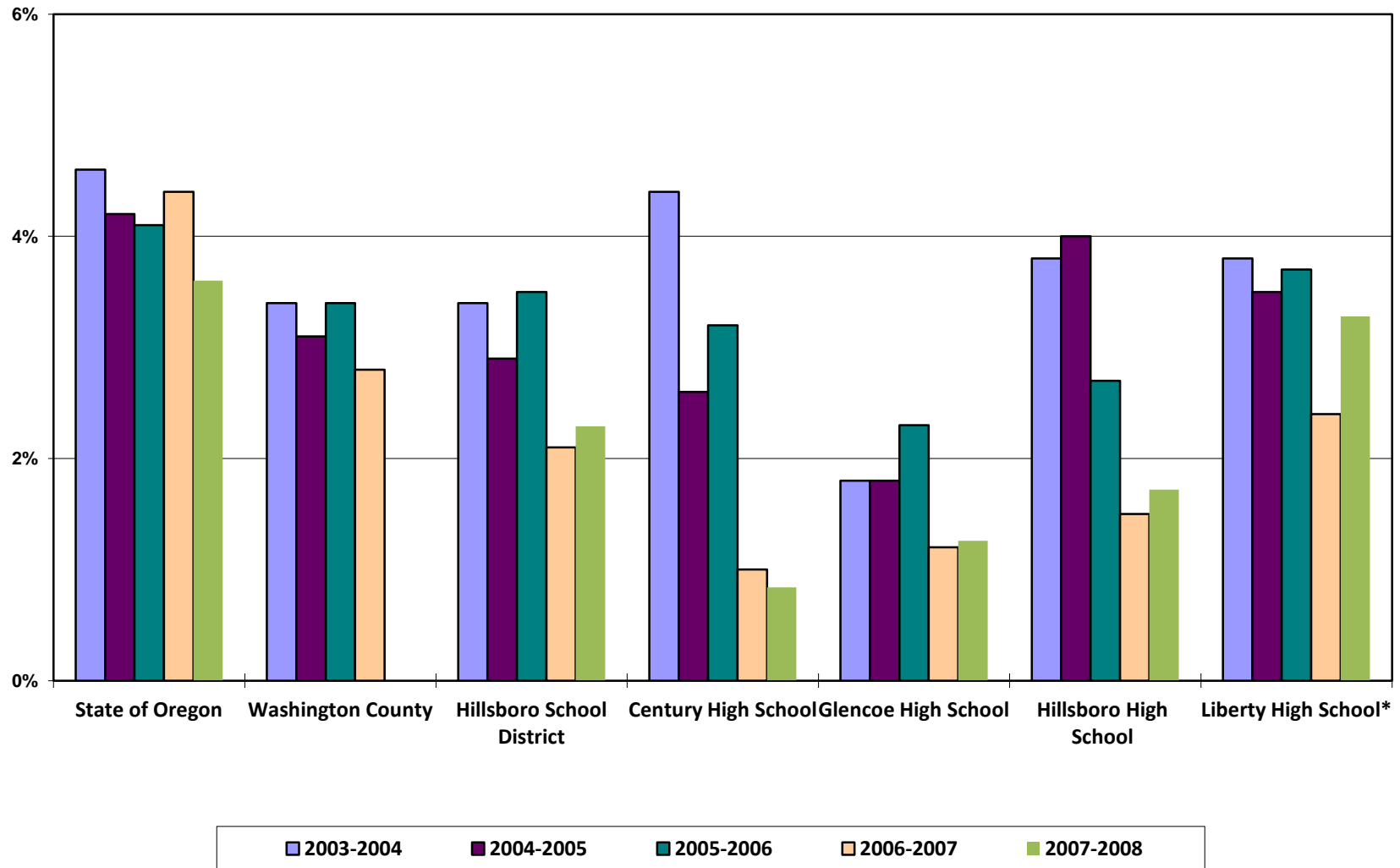
Example 2

Hillsboro, Oregon

Century High School

- Century High School piloted the LBLESD model in the fall of 2006 using the self audit model.
- Concurrently Century also piloted the CARE team model for identifying and staffing students of concern due to attendance.

Drop-Out Rates Grades 9-12



Early Leaver Data (CHS)

2005-2006	71 students
2006-2007	47 students
2007-2008	37 students

Attendance Data (CHS)

Year	Number of Days Absent	% (n) of Students
07-08	Total 10+ Days	24.4% (373)
06-07		64.8% (991)
05-06		45.9% (686)
07-08	10-19 Days Absent	15.9% (242)
06-07		35.6% (545)
05-06		24.8% (371)
07-08	20-29 Days Absent	4.6% (70)
06-07		16.4% (250)
05-06		10.4% (156)
07-08	30-39 Days Absent	2.6% (39)
06-07		5.4% (83)
05-06		5.6% (86)

For More Information

- For information about the Systemic Attendance Improvement model, contact Scott Perry at scott_perry@soesd.k12.or.us.