



WestEd 
Western Educational
Equity Assistance Center

Data-Driven School Attendance Teams

April 3, 2023



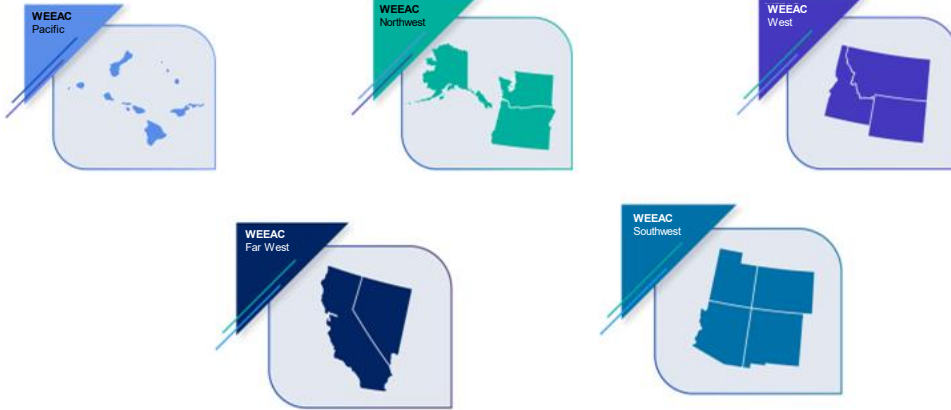
Technical Assistance

Professional Learning

- By request—school boards, governmental agencies
- Through equity-centered capacity-building to better serve students who have experienced ongoing inequities in our educational system because of their race, national origin, sex, or religion



WEEAC Sub-Regions



Pacific

American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawai'i

Northwest

Alaska, Oregon, and Washington

West

Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming

Far West

California and Nevada

Southwest

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah

Six Webinar Series

- Session 1 – Data to Identify Patterns of Inequity Friday, February 17
- Session 2 – Organizing a District Team to Address Chronic Absenteeism Monday, February 27
- Session 3 – Data-Driven School Attendance Teams **Monday, April 3**
- Session 4 – Increasing Attendance and Engagement for American Indian and Alaska Native Students Tuesday, September 12
- Session 5 – Increasing Attendance and Engagement for Black/African American Students Wednesday, October 11
- Session 6 – Increasing Attendance and Engagement for English Learners Wednesday, December 6

Learning Goals for Session 3



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Participants will:

- Identify the key functions of a school team that addresses attendance
- Learn about assets, barriers, and strategies that affect student attendance
- Identify processes for incorporating student and family perspectives in identifying barriers and developing solutions



Audience Poll: Getting to Know You

What type of organization do you represent?

- State Education Agency
- Tribal Government
- District
- School
- Community Organization
- Other, please describe in chat box

Welcome!



Maria Casey
Associate Director of Staff
Development
Attendance Works



Helen Duffy
Senior Fellow
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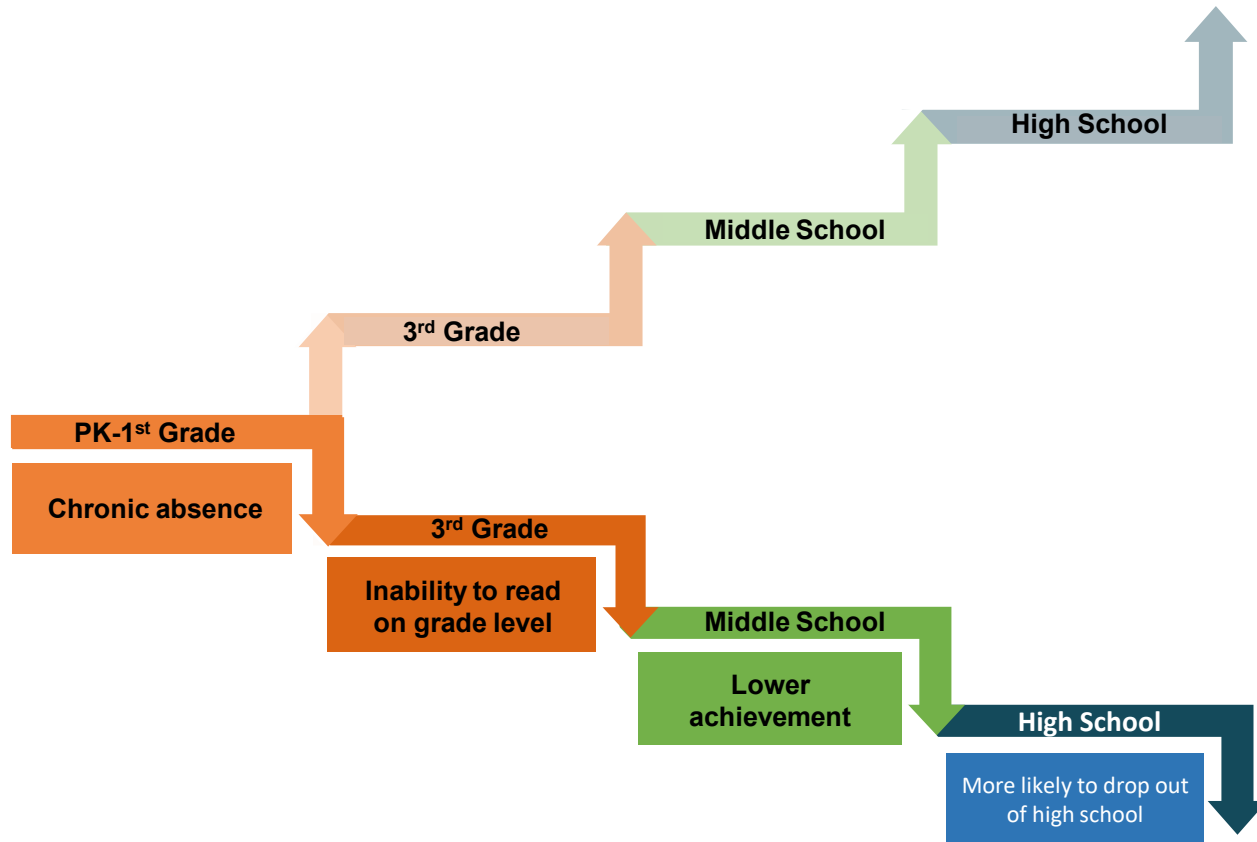


Dr. Estephany Balcazar
Assistant Principal
Ramona High School,
Riverside Unified School
District

Review of Chronic Absence



Improving Attendance Matters





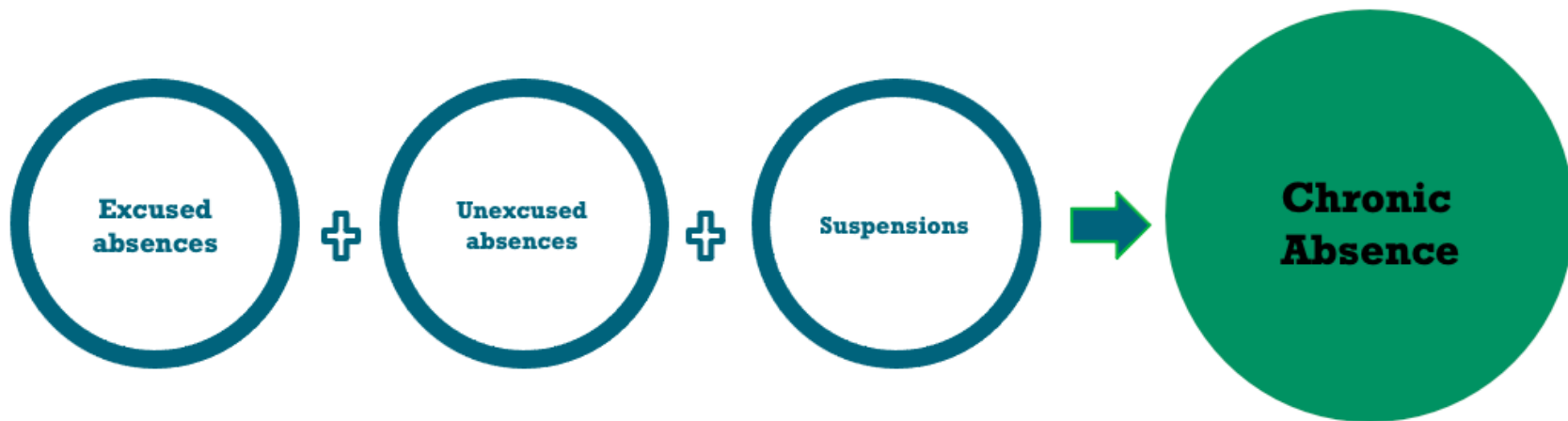
Chronic Absence & Equity

Chronic absence reflects and exacerbates existing inequities.



What is chronic absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent 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).

Reducing Chronic Absence Requires a Team Approach





What makes a team effective?

Type in Chat:

Describe one value that is essential to an effective team.



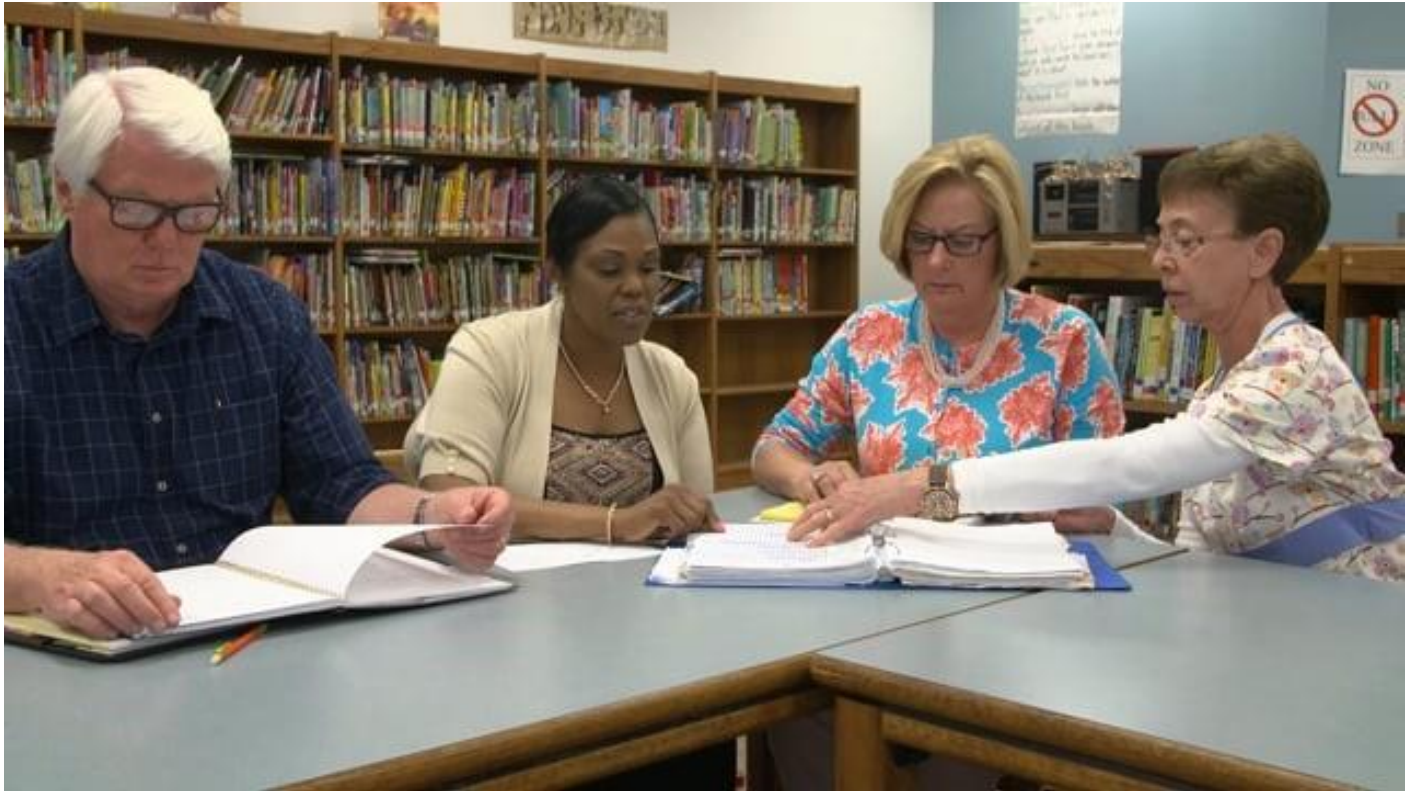
Primary Purpose of a Team Approach

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.



- 1. Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention.**
- 2. Examine attendance and absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence.**
- 3. Identify assets, barriers and strategies that affect attendance.**
- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.**
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.**

Attendance Team in Action



<https://vimeo.com/260324608>

www.attendanceworks.org

Ensuring Attendance Requires a Team

The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

Teams working on improving student attendance could include the school's:

- * Nurse
- * Counselor
- * Social Worker
- * Administrative support staff
- * Special education staff
- * Teachers
- * Early education staff
- * Sports coaches
- * Community School Directors and Coordinators
- * Expanded Learning program staff
- * Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- * Attendance Officers
- * Tribal nation representatives



Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.



Determine which team(s) will assume the attendance MTSS functions

- Map all the teams that currently operate in your school by purpose, membership and meeting schedule.
- Identify areas of overlap, redundancy and/or gaps.
- Consider if attendance responsibilities can be integrated into an existing team (e.g., PBIS, RTI, MTSS, EWIS grade-level, etc.).
- Consider if different teams can assume responsibility for each tier and how efforts will be coordinated across teams.
- Determine if a new team needs to be established.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Map-of-School-Teams.pdf>



Poll

What teams in your school address attendance? *(check all that apply)*

- Stand-alone attendance team
- Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports or PBIS team (attendance and behavior)
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) team
- Response to Intervention (RTI) team
- Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) team
- Case Management Team
- Other (type in chat)
- No team addresses attendance



Avoid Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Establish a team that **operates in isolation**
- ✗ **Fail to rally the whole school** to support prevention & early intervention
- ✗ Focus only on students with **most absences**
- ✗ **Case management** as the sole strategy
- ✗ **Jumping to solutions** without sufficient understanding of factors behind absences
- ✗ **Team** composition **does not reflect the demographics, perspectives or cultural realities of the student population**

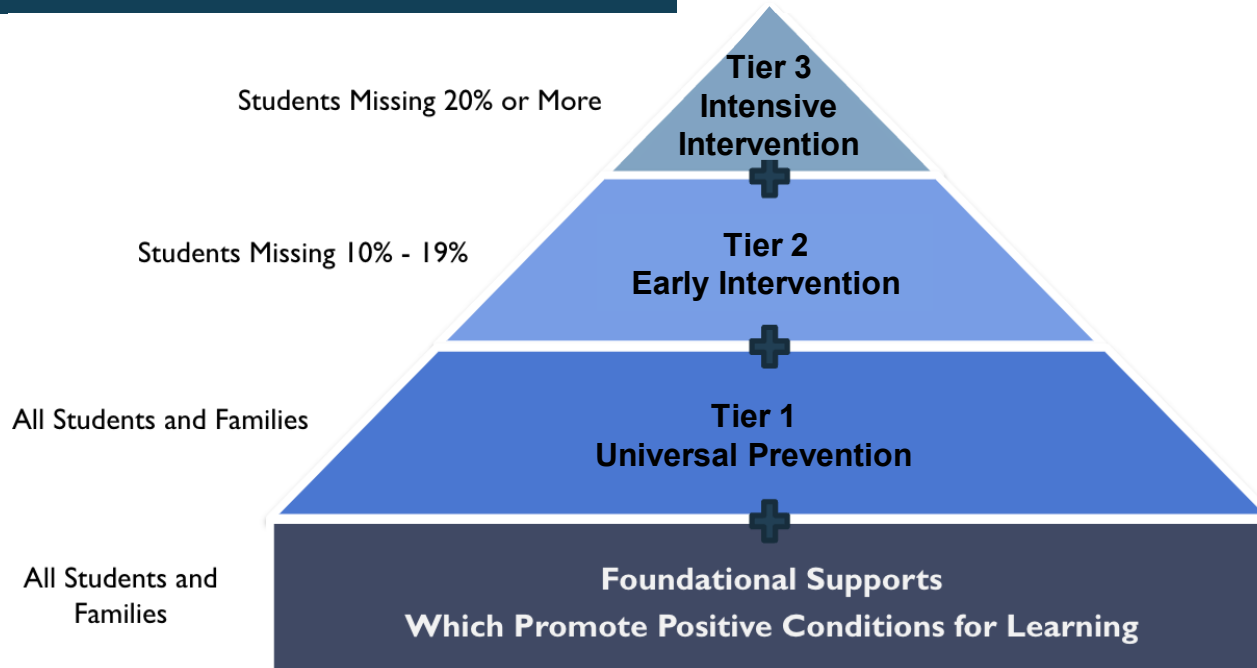
Team Function #1:

*Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy
that begins with prevention and early
intervention*

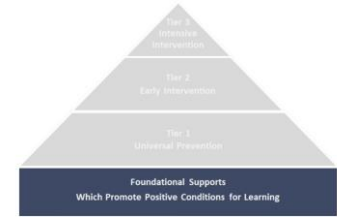




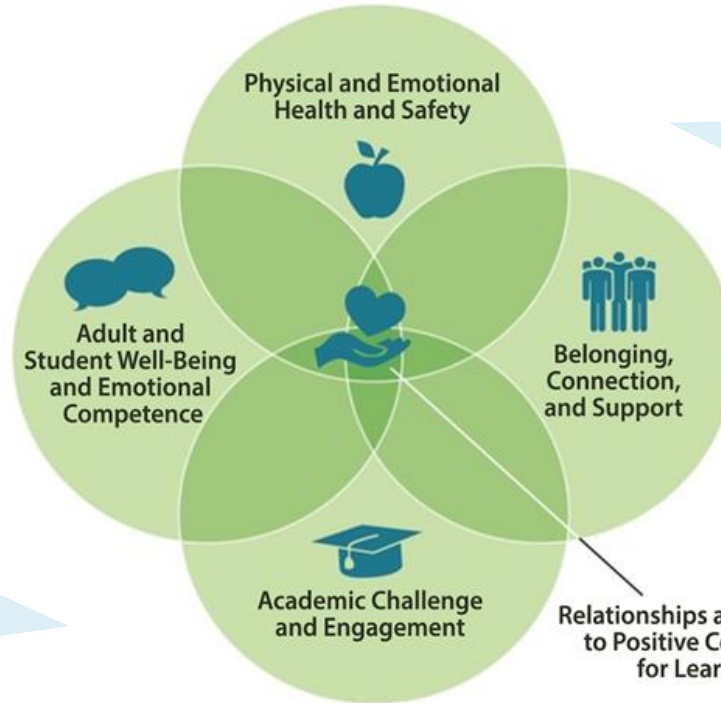
Multi-tiered System of Support for Attendance



Positive Conditions for Learning Lead to Students Being Engaged and Attending Regularly



- Restorative check-ins
- Access to health care & mental health supports
- Trauma-informed practice
- Staff self-care



- Healthy learning environments
- Welcoming, safe school climate
- Access to food & other basic needs
- Restorative circles

- Access to tech & internet
- Learning supports
- Project-based learning
- Credit recovery opportunities
- Internships/community service
- Alternative scheduling options

- Active student & family engagement
- Advisories/meetings to build community
- Enrichment & clubs
- Positive peer connections

Relationships are Essential
to Positive Conditions
for Learning



Poll

In working to improve attendance, where does your school put most of its efforts?

- Foundational Supports
- Tier 1 Absenteeism Prevention
- Tier 2 Absenteeism Early Intervention
- Tier 3 Absenteeism Intensive Supports

Team Function #2:

Examine attendance & absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence





Use Data to Identify and Address Inequities

- Analyze data overall, broken down by school, grade, race/ethnicity, home language, disability, and zip code.
- Use qualitative information, especially drawing upon the perspectives of students and families, to deepen an understanding of the contributing factors.
- Determine how to address unequal access to resources.

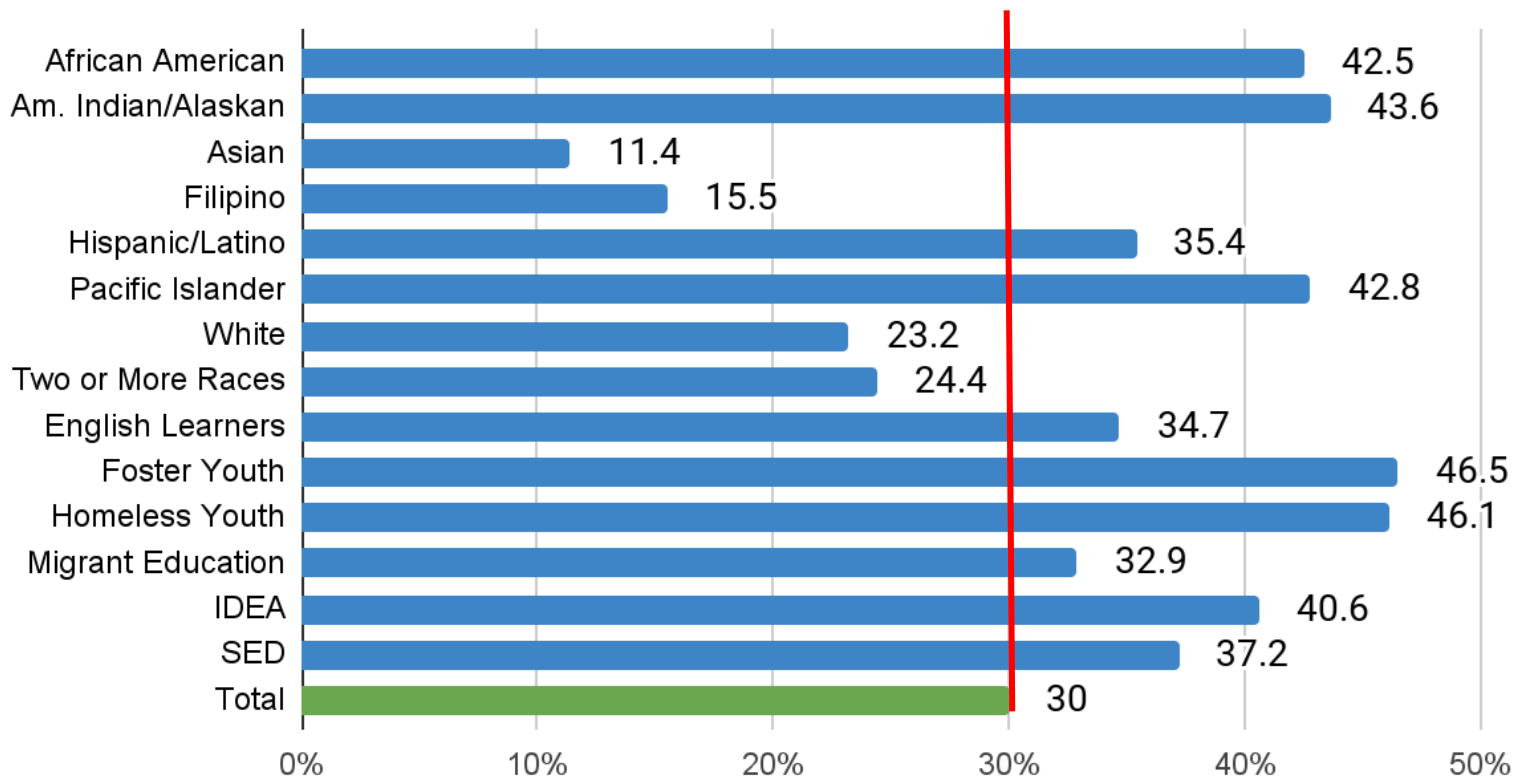


Disaggregating Data to Understand Who Is Chronically Absent

Break attendance data down into smaller categories. For example, by:

- Grade level
- Subgroup, such as ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, migrant, foster, homeless
- Language and/or English Learner status
- Disability
- Geographic area or zip code

California Chronic Absence Rates by Student Subgroup 2021-22



Team Function #3:

Identify assets, barriers and strategies that affect attendance

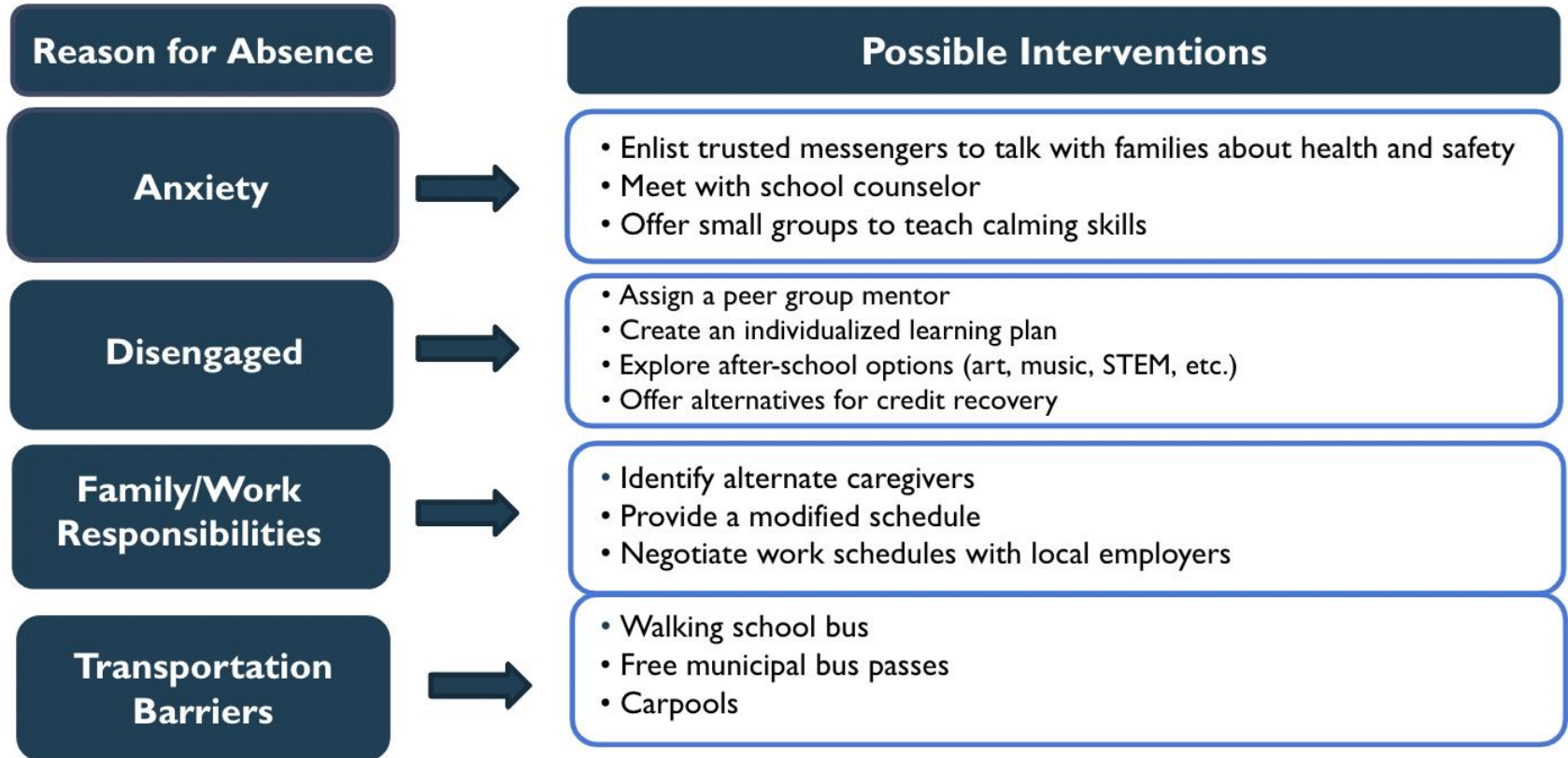




Why Understanding the Perspectives of Students and Families Matter

- ❖ Students have untapped expertise and knowledge that can bring renewed relevance and authenticity to classrooms and school reform efforts.
- ❖ Addressing the challenges students experience requires considering their specific realities. The goal is to hear student opinions and experiences while attending school
- ❖ Understanding when many students and families experience similar challenges allows you to create scalable solutions.
- ❖ It ensures that the engagement strategies you create are inclusive of students and families' cultural norms.

Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences



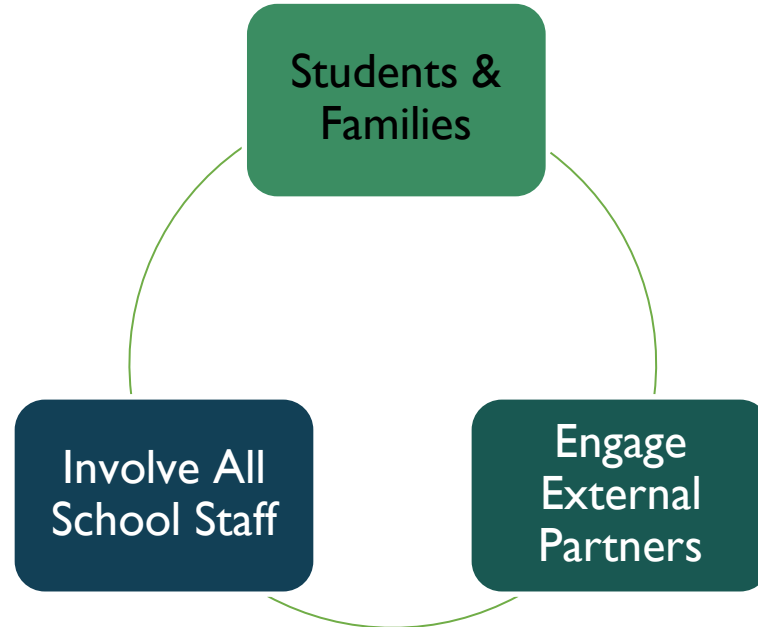
Team Function #4: *Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance*





Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance

In chat, share examples of what you are doing in your school.



Team Function #5: *Determine if you are making a difference*



Measuring Progress

Answer these four key questions:

1. How much did we do? (*quantity*)
2. How well did we do it? (*quality*)
3. What difference did we make for the students who received support?
4. What was the impact on the school as a whole?



PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students

Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Testers: **Counselors**

Test Title: **Lunch Buddies**

Cycle #: **1**

What change idea is being tested?

Lunch Buddies is the change idea. Counselors will invite students who seem disconnected to eat lunch and meet with peers in small groups every Friday.

Date of test: *February 25, 2022*

(After the first attempt, review the data, discuss and make modifications to increase outcomes for the next week. Use a new form every week to record results.)

What is the overall goal of this test?

Improve attendance for students who seem to be disconnected and who have missed between 10-19% of the school year. Students who feel more connected to their peers will have better attendance. Selected students will have fewer total absences on the day of the test than on the previous Friday as a result of feeling more connected to peers.

Driver:

Positive Peer Relationships

Learning Questions: What do you hope to learn from this test?

Q1 - Are counselors willing to support this intervention?

Q2 - Which students will show up?

Q3 - Does attendance improve on Fridays?

Q4 - Are there any spillover effects, i.e. does attendance improve the other days of the week?

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-EXAMPLE-v2.pdf>

PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students

Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Plan		Do	Study	
Details: What are the steps in the test? Who will implement it?	Predictions: Make a prediction for each question. Not optional.	Data you will collect	Briefly describe: what happened during the test, surprises, difficulty getting data, obstacles, successes, etc.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Recruit counselors</i> 2. <i>Select outdoor or well-ventilated location where groups can sit in a circle</i> 3. <i>Agree on conversation starters</i> 4. <i>Invite all students</i> 5. <i>Special outreach to students who are chronically absent</i> 6. <i>Note which students attended after each session</i> 	<p><i>Q1 - Prediction - All counselors are willing to help</i></p>	<p><i>Attendance of counselors</i></p>	<p>What were the results? Comment on your predictions in the rows below. Were they correct? Record any data summaries as well.</p> <p><i>All but one of the counselors showed up. She was out sick.</i></p> <p><i>Of the students who were invited, half showed up. Only about a quarter of the chronically absent students made it</i></p> <p><i>Yes, several of the chronically absent students who attended the lunch had been absent the previous Friday.</i></p> <p><i>The Monday absences were the same as the previous week.</i></p>	
	<p><i>Q2 - Prediction - Students who have satisfactory attendance and at-risk attendance will show up. Some students who are chronically absent will show up.</i></p>	<p><i>List of students who participate each Friday sorted into attendance categories.</i></p>		<p><i>We had four counselors and 24 students. The students were split into groups of six. There was a miscommunication and the special outreach to chronically absent students did not happen.</i></p>
	<p><i>Q3 - Does attendance improve on Fridays?</i></p>	<p><i>Compare the total number of absences for targeted students on this Friday with the total number of absences for targeted students on previous Friday.</i></p>		
	<p><i>Q4 - Are there any spillover effects?</i></p>	<p><i>Compare the total number of absences on the following Monday with previous Mondays.</i></p>		

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-EXAMPLE-v2.pdf>

PDSA Example: Lunch Buddies

Goal: Improve attendance for disconnected students

Plan → Do → Study → Act (PDSA) Plan

Act: Describe modifications and/or decisions for the next PDSA cycle. What will you do next?

Adapt (tweak the process and try again)

Adopt (make this my standard process)

Expand (try this for a longer period of time)

Abandon (go to a new change idea)

- Ask our community school coordinator to be the backup in case anyone is out
- Ask students who attended to invite one friend to join next time.
- We will text every student with a reminder to attend
- Expand and repeat for the next two weeks.

- Download the example: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-EXAMPLE-v2.pdf>
- Download the blank worksheet: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PDSA-Plan-Do-Study-Act-worksheet-BLANK-v1.pdf>

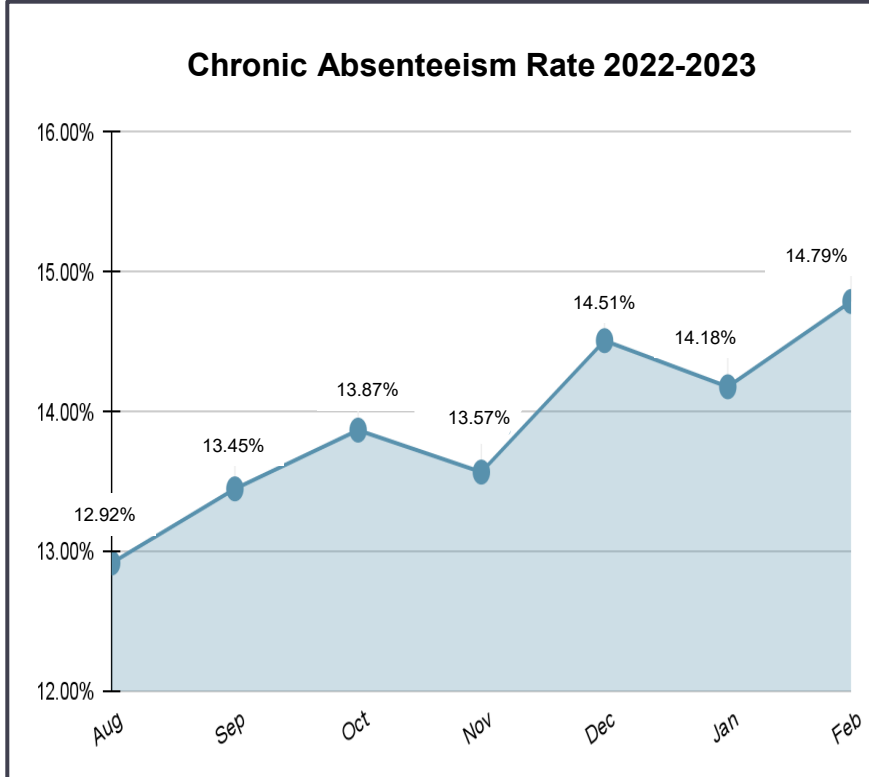
**Ramona High School
Riverside Unified School District**



Our purpose is to connect with students and their families in order to learn their story, strengths, and hardships. Our goal is to provide them with adequate resources, connect them with the correct stakeholders, and provide individualized support.

2,229 Students Enrolled	
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	86.3%
English Learners	13.86%
McKinney-Vento	14.04%
Students with Disabilities	12.88%
Hispanic/Latino	80.57%
White	9.47%
Black/African American	6.06%
Asian	2.74%





Chronic Absence Data by Subgroup for 2022-23

Chronic Absenteeism Rate for All Students, Average 13.9%

- Asian (5.32%)
- Black/African-American (13.51%)
- Hispanic/Latino (14.01%)
- English Learners (15.49%)
- McKinney Vento (21.27%)
- Students with Disabilities (22.52%)

RAMONA MTSS ROADMAP

We label the supports, not the individual, and the supports are provided according to identified needs.

The MTSS Framework, as a whole, is a problem solving process that is transparent, and everyone is 'on the team and at the table' sharing information and decision-making.



TIER 1 ALL

- Office Hours
- Saturday Enrichment
- Paper Tutoring
- School +2 Involvement
- Grade level counseling meetings
- Grammarly
- Ramona Wellness Center

Tier 2 Some

- Wellness Center – Groups
- Peer Helper Counseling
- Ram Academy
- AP Academy
- RAM-U Credit Recovery
- Acceleration Plan – Credit Recovery
- Check-in/Check-out Program

Tier 3 Few

- Crisis Response
- Risk Assessment (Self harm and threats)
- Senior 'Reds' Data
- D/F Grade Communications
- Individual SAP Referrals
- Parent Conference
- SST/504 Plans

Tier 1 All

- Ramona Wellness Center
- Saturday Enrichment
- School +2 Involvement

Tier 2 Some

- Check-in/check-out Program
- Peer Helper Counseling

Tier 3 Few

- Senior Reds Data
- Parent Conferences
- Crisis Response



The A-Team's To-Do List

- ❑ Monitor student chronic absenteeism
- ❑ Connect and establish a relationship with the students
- ❑ Provide incentives and recognize attendance improvements
- ❑ Offer support to the student, family, and teachers with attendance and sometimes academic goals
- ❑ Set short-term and personalized attendance goals for each student
- ❑ Help students troubleshoot issues that are interfering with their attendance
- ❑ Counsel, mentor, and support students in reaching their attendance goals
- ❑ Regularly meet with students to review their attendance progress
- ❑ Promote student involvement; school +2

A-Team

- Administrative Team
- Heritage Coordinator
- Legacy Coordinator
- Wellness Center
- Counseling Team
- Family Services Team
- Community Assistants
- Family Engagement Center
- Family Resource Center
- MTSS Liaison
- Teachers & Classified Staff
- Activities Director
- Club Advisors
- Athletic Coaches
- Psychologists
- SST Coordinator
- Student Advisor
- SPED Case Carriers
- CWA Manager
- Attendance Clerks
- AVID Coordinator
- RUSD Site Attendance Team
- Attention To Attendance (A2A)





Reasons for Absences

- Motivation
- Challenges at home
- They believe it is too late to improve their grades
- They believe a teacher does not like them
- They're afraid of other peers
- Mental health issues, including anxiety or depression
- Parents can't provide reliable or consistent transportation
- Caring for siblings or sick relatives
- Recurring health issues
- Sleep issues
- They see alternative school as an alternative to HS — they've lost hope
- Socializing or peer influences
- Responsibility of sibling drop-off



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Questions?

Please type your questions into
the chat.

School Self-Assessments

How well does your school...

- Accurately & consistently take attendance every day
- Utilize a team to address attendance
- Provide a welcome & engaging climate
- Reach out to chronically absent students & families
- Partner with community agencies

School Name: _____

SCHOOL PRACTICE SELF-ASSESSMENT: rev. 5/25/2022

Does Attendance Really Count in Our School?

A Tool for Self-Assessment

Key Element	Strength	OK for Now	Could be Better	Urgent Gap	Don't Know	How do you know?
1. Accurate Data: Teachers and school staff take attendance accurately and it is entered daily into the district data system.						
2. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to: (a) monitor attendance data and trends; (b) coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy; (c) examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data; and (d) ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports.						
3. Engaging Climate: Our school has a welcoming and engaging climate that promotes safety, belonging, great teaching and learning, and interpersonal relationships with students, families, and staff.						
4. Culture of Attendance: Our school promotes a culture of attendance.						

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/>

School Team Self-Assessment

Lead A Whole-School Approach to Attendance	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Evidence
1. The principal makes attendance a top priority for the entire school.					
2. The principal responsible for organizing the school's attendance strategy is aligned with other school teams to ensure attendance is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all children.					
3. Our team members reflect the demographics of our school community and/or are able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics.					
4. Collectively, team members have the authority, will and skill to remove barriers and address inequities.					

Organize a Multi-Tiered Strategy	Solidly in Place	Measurable Progress	Needs Improvement	Urgent Gap	Evidence
1. Our regular team agenda is aligned to a multi-tiered system of support.					
2. We proactively promote an engaging school climate.					
3. We have defined when Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports should be offered.					
4. We have a protocol for early personalized outreach to families.					
5. We connect students who are missing too much learning time to one adult in the school (e.g., Mentor or Family Ambassador).					
6. We have a coordinated interagency response to ensure students receive the additional support they need.					

How well does your team...

- Lead a whole school approach to attendance
- Organize a multi-tiered strategy
- Examine attendance data
- Identify barriers & inequities
- Mobilize the school community
- Monitor progress



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Thank you.

Please complete our [evaluation form](#).

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