



# Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

## Session Ten

### *Identifying Barriers*

#### **Presentation Description**

Module ten provides a framework for schools and school divisions to use when seeking to understand the underlying causes for why students are chronically absent.

#### **Participant Goals**

- Educators will learn what the most common barriers are to good attendance.
- Educators will learn several methods for identifying attendance barriers facing students and families in their schools and communities.

#### **Facilitation**

Have the participants review the module and reflections. Each reflection is designed to help participants further their understanding and learning of key concepts, frameworks, and strategies for reducing chronic absence.



*If there are problems that prevent students from coming to school, we let parents know... we will do what we can as a school to try to support them."*

- **Joe Manko**, *Liberty E.S.*, Baltimore, MD



## Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

Module 10: Identifying Barriers

### The Purpose

- This PowerPoint serves as No. 10 in a series of modules designed to equip Virginia school divisions to reduce truancy and absenteeism.
- This module identifies possible barriers to good attendance including the health and transportation barriers.

### Virginia Absenteeism & Truancy Professional Development Series

1. Understanding Chronic Absenteeism
2. Learning What Works to Reduce Chronic Absence
3. Establishing School Attendance Teams
4. Using Data to Drive Action
5. Messaging Attendance
6. Integrating Attendance In Parent Engagement
7. Utilizing Parent-Teacher Conferences to Talk with Families about Attendance
8. Recognizing Good and Improved Attendance
9. Providing Personalized Early Outreach
10. Identifying barriers
11. Creating opportunities for peer learning
12. Engaging Community Partners
13. State Attendance Laws and Regulations

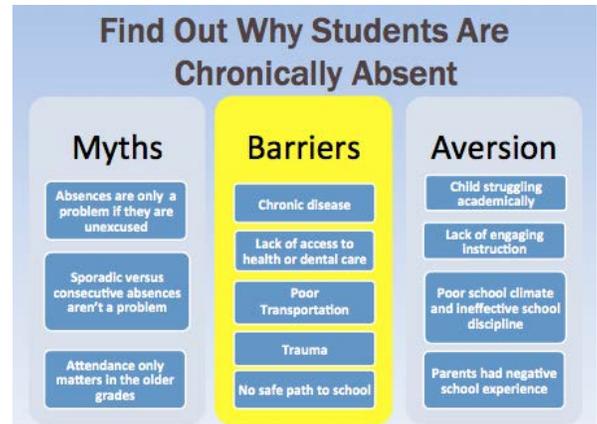
## Warm Up - Reflection One

Make a Top 10 list of the reasons why students in your school or division were absent last year.

### Warm Up Notes

## Reflection Two

Go back to your list of reasons why students were absent last year. Which of these reasons are Barriers?



### Reflection Notes

## Reflection Three

To what extent does your Top 10 list reflect the national data on health-related causes of absences?



### Reflection Notes

\*Additional information can be found on the last page of this guide

## Reflection Four

What transportation barriers are you aware of in your community? How do these barriers affect student attendance?

### Transportation as a Barrier

**Transportation and Attendance**

Transportation is one of the key barriers to attendance that contributes to chronic absenteeism and tardiness



### Often Cited Transportation Barriers

- Missed the bus and school is a long distance away
- The walking pathway is dangerous
- Parent/Guardian too ill to walk a child to school
- The public transportation is too expensive or unsafe
- Public transportation staff treat students inappropriately

### Reflection Notes

\*Additional information can be found on the last page of this guide

## Reflection Five

What method will you use to identify the barriers to good attendance in your school or division?

### Identifying Specific Barriers in Your School or Division

Methods:

- Examine chronic absence data
- Obtain information from public data sources
- Contact families when students are absent
- Focus groups with families
- Surveys

### Identifying Barriers for a Specific Student

Fill out the Hypothesis Development Worksheet for Attendance:

- Extent of Absenteeism?
- Possible factors? (Academic, Safety, Transportation, Social, Home, Health/Mental Health, School Climate)
- Attempted Interventions?

### Action Steps

What method will you use to identify the barriers to good attendance in your school or division?

### Reflection Notes

# Learn More

Before moving on with the additional modules, we would like to encourage you to learn more about this issue. Specifically, please consider reading/viewing:

- Leading Health Conditions Impacting Student Attendance, <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/School-Health-and-Attendance-Chart.pdf>
- Learn how Springfield, Massachusetts reduced absenteeism with a Walking School Bus, <http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/springfield-walking-school-bus/>
- Breaking Barriers to Attendance: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BreakingBarrierstoattendance.pdf>, particularly page 6.