



Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

Session Two

Frameworks for Reducing Chronic Absence

Presentation Description

Module two describes frameworks and strategies for reducing chronic absence.

Participant Goals

- Educators will receive an overview of frameworks for reducing chronic absence.
- Educators will learn five evidence-based strategies for reducing chronic absence.
- Educators will learn how to organize attendance strategies in a tiered system of support.
- Educators will learn the key ingredients for sustainable, systemic reductions in chronic absence.

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.



Chronic absence is a solvable problem. Students are more likely to attend regularly so they can gain the knowledge and skills to succeed in school when parents, schools and communities work together to create a comprehensive system of supports.”

- **Hedy Chang**, Executive Director, *Attendance Works*



Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

Module 2: Frameworks for Reducing Chronic Absence

The Purpose

- This PowerPoint serves as No. 2 in a series of modules designed to equip Virginia school divisions to reduce truancy and absenteeism.
- This module provides a framework and overview of key strategies for reducing chronic absence.

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

Remember a time that you helped a student or a school improve attendance.

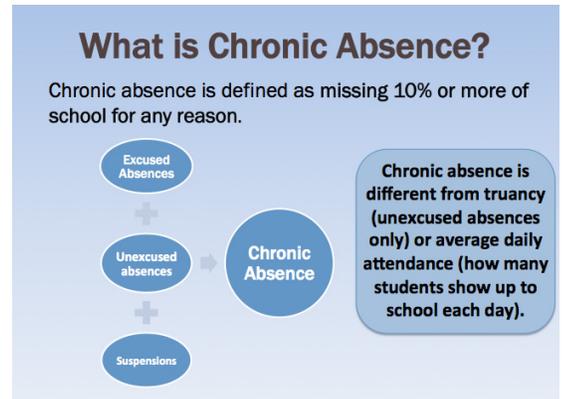
1. What made the situation hard to address?
2. What helped you to assist the student or school?

Warm Up Notes

Reflection Two

In module 1 you learned that when students are chronically absent they are less likely to be successful in school and achieve critical educational milestones.

How has your view of absenteeism changed now that you know about chronic absence and how absences for any reason can add up over time?

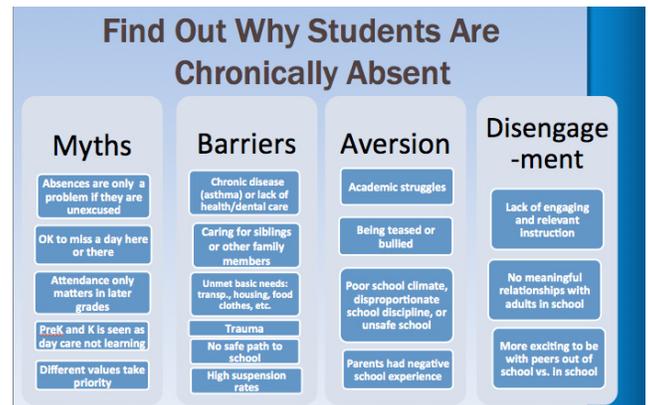


Reflection Notes

Reflection Three

Reflect on a student who you know was missing too much school that you helped.

Which of these issues was getting in the way of the student's attendance? What did you do to help them? How did you help resolve the issue?

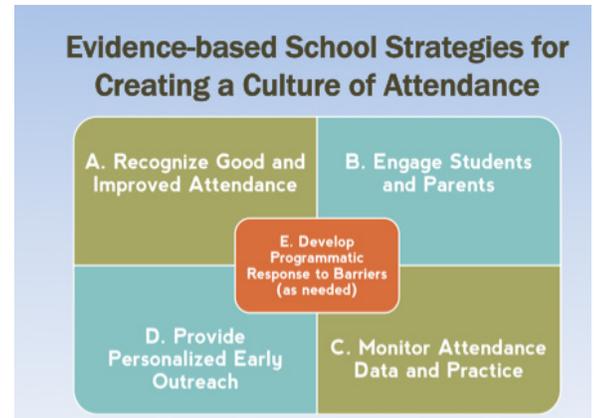


Reflection Notes

Reflection Four

In your school or in your division's schools which of these five site-based strategies do you think is being implemented with fidelity?

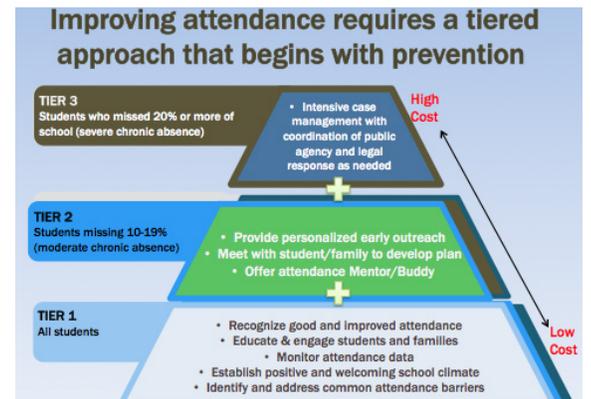
Which of these practices is not currently in place? What would it take to help schools implement the practice?



Reflection Notes

Reflection Five

Does your school use a tiered response system for academic or behavioral interventions? What would it take to incorporate attendance data as part of the school's tiered response system? If your school doesn't have a tiered response system what would it take to help your school put one in place?



Reflection Notes

Reflection Six

A positive school climate contributes to better student attendance. How do you feel when you are welcomed when you visit a school? What happened that made you feel that way?

Tier 1 Interventions

Tier 1: For all students and families, attendance is higher when schools:

- Promote a sense of belonging, inclusiveness & connection among students and families
- Provide engaging learning.
- Engage in restorative practice not punishment.
- Help our most economically challenged families and students meet their basic needs.

Reflection Notes

Reflection Seven

Imagine a parent of a student in Tier 2. Who are they? What do they look like? What kind of barriers are they experiencing? Write down the description of who this person is. Given the reality of this parent, what do they need from you to help them successfully support their child's improved attendance?

Tier 2 Interventions

Tier 2: Targeted interventions that remove identified barriers and increase positive connections that motivate improved attendance.

Who are the students and families in Tier 2?

- Students 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.

For which families is Tier 2 sufficient?

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

Reflection Notes

Reflection Eight

List school personnel and community based agencies that you can partner with in your school to provide support to families in Tier 3?

Tier 3 Interventions

Tier 3 provides intensive interventions, often from multiple agencies or specialists within a school district or community. Who are families in Tier 3?

- Missing 20% or more of the prior or current school year.
- Already involved in the system (child welfare, juvenile or criminal justices).

For which families is Tier 3 necessary?

- Families who feel hopeless because of the barriers.
- Families who are unable to experience success without intervention.
- Families who have a negative relationship with school.
- Families who require ongoing support for sustained success.

Who Can Help Families at Tier 3?

- School integrated service teams
- Family resource centers
- County Social Services
- McKinney Vento representatives
- Community schools
- District team

Reflection Notes

Reflection Nine

Are these measures of student attendance commonly understood and used to flag students for tiered interventions at your school? If not how would you help to introduce these concepts to your school community?

Attendance Categories: Recapped

Satisfactory Attendance

Student has missed fewer than 5% of school days (generally less than 4 or 5 days in a semester)

At-Risk

Student has missed between 6% and 9% of school days (generally between 5-9 days in a semester)

Chronic Absence

Student has missed 10% or more of school days (generally 9 days or more in a semester)

Reflection Notes

Reflection Ten

What are your school's greatest strengths? Where are gaps or areas in need of improvement? List ideas for where you might start to take action?

Action Step

Does Attendance Really Count in Our School?
A Tool for Self-Assessment - (Revised August 1, 2014)

| Key Element | Strong | OK for Now | Could be Better | Significant Gap | Don't Know | How do you know? |
|--|--------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. Attendance is accurately taken and entered daily into the district data system in all classrooms. | | | | | | |
| 2. Our school has a clear and widely understood attendance policy. | | | | | | |
| 3. A team including the site administrator reviews attendance data on a regular basis to identify chronically absent students and monitor attendance patterns by grade, student sub-groups and classroom. | | | | | | |
| 4. We offer such rich and engaging learning activities that students do not want to miss school. | | | | | | |
| 5. We recognize and appreciate good and improved attendance. | | | | | | |
| 6. We inform parents about the importance of attendance and encourage families to help one another get their children to school. | | | | | | |
| 7. From the beginning of the school year, we identify and reach out to students at risk for chronic absence and their families in a positive, caring manner to see how we can support good attendance. | | | | | | |
| 8. Our school partners with community agencies that offer resources (pre-K, after-school, health services, volunteer mentors, and transportation) that can help engage students & their families and remove barriers to getting to school. | | | | | | |
| 9. Individual learning plans are developed for high-risk students and address poor attendance along with low academic performance. | | | | | | |
| 10. Our school's discipline policy and practice ensure students do not miss instruction due to suspensions for non-threatening behaviors. | | | | | | |
| 11. Our strategies for supporting student attendance are reflected in our school improvement plan. | | | | | | |

(Note: Chronic Absence is missing > 10% of school over a year including any type of absence; Satisfactory Attendance is missing < 1% of school over a year)

School Name: _____

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:

- **Develop Programmatic Responses to Systemic Barriers**
If large numbers of students are affected by chronic absence, that suggests some type of systemic barrier or barriers are at play. Identifying the barriers to attendance can indicate the appropriate solutions, whether that involves establishing uniform closets, improving access to health care, launching walking school buses, providing tutoring, offering mentoring, developing morning or afterschool care and other approaches.
- **Identifying Factors Contributing to Chronic Absence**
Once you know whether chronic absence is a problem in your school and for which groups of children, it is important to begin examining what factors might be affecting attendance. This guide discusses how you can use quantitative and qualitative data to inform your understanding. It includes a matrix to help you analyze factors that contribute to chronic absence, as well as what assets might help in addressing the issue.
 - <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/ID-Cont-Factors-DEC-2010-.pdf>
 - <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BreakingBarrierstoattendance.pdf>
 - <http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/>
 - <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/3-tiers-of-intervention/>
 - <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/School-Self-Assessment-Tool-revised-August-2014.pdf>