



Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

Session Four

Using Data to Drive Action

Presentation Description

Module four trains school and division teams on what type of data analysis is useful when seeking to understand the scale and scope of chronic absence along with providing in depth explanation of sub-population analysis and the type of questions attendance teams should use when working to understand the chronic absence challenge for their school or school division.

Participant Goals

- Learn what makes data actionable.
- Understand what questions are answered with different attendance measures including ADA, truancy, chronic absence, and suspensions.
- Find out how to use chronic absence data to make strategic choices about where to target attendance interventions.

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.



Reducing chronic absence is now a key part of raising student achievement for our entire school district. When we took a deep dive into our data we could really see how big a problem chronic absence was in our district. We developed the capacity to identify which kids and schools need extra support, put strategies in place to help them, and discovered what works from peers across the country.”

-Tony Smith, Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District



11/13/25

Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

Module 4: Using Data to Drive Action

The Purpose

- This PowerPoint serves as No. 4 in a series of modules designed to equip Virginia school divisions to reduce truancy and absenteeism.
- This module identifies the types of attendance data available to divisions to monitor and address absenteeism.

Warm Up

What attendance data do your division leaders regularly review?

Average Daily Attendance	Suspension
Truancy	Expulsion
Chronic Absence	Absences due to Health

Jot down the most common measures reviewed and, if you know, how often they review these data

Warm Up - Reflection One

What attendance data do your division leaders regularly review? Jot down the most common measures reviewed and, if you know, how often they review these data.

Warm Up Notes

Reflection Two

Does your division provide attendance data in an actionable way?

Uses of Different Attendance Measures

- Average Daily Attendance**
 - ADA = How many students typically show up to school each day
- Truancy**
 - Truancy = Who is missing school without permission? It is a trigger for possible legal action. Defined by each state.
- Chronic Absence**
 - CA = Who is academically at risk because they missed too much school any reason – excused, unexcused, suspensions. Defined as missing 10% or more of school days.

What is Actionable Data?

For decision-makers to use data, the data must be:

- Accurate
- Accessible
- Timely
- Regularly reported

Uses for Actionable Data

- Allocate resources more efficiently (staff or funds)
- Signal need for prompt corrective actions
- Address inequitable outcomes
- Identify positive outliers and best practices

Reflection Notes

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

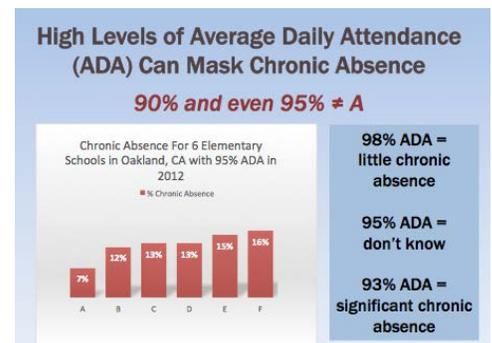
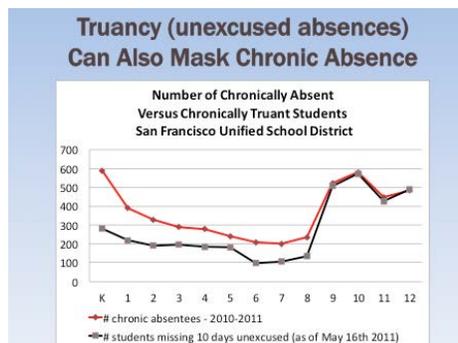
Reflection Three

If you know your division's chronic absence rate, write it down. If you know your division's ADA, write it down. What is the relationship between the chronic absence rate and ADA? If you have not yet calculated your division's chronic absence rate, based on the information presented in slide 12, what might you deduce about the likely levels of chronic absence in your division?

Managers Can Use the Measure of Chronic Absence to Inform Decisions.

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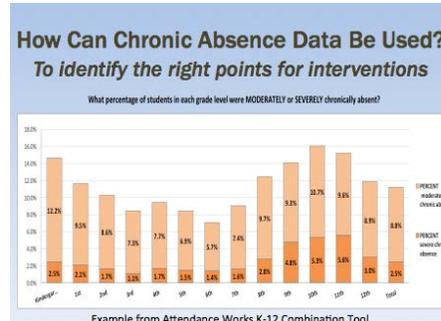
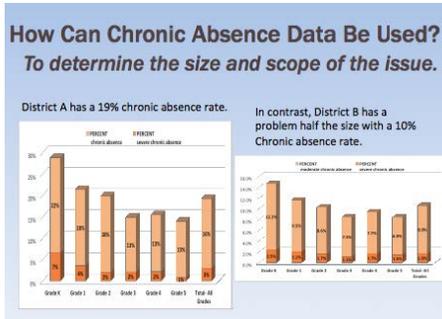
    graph TD
      EA[Excused Absences] --> CA((Chronic Absence))
      UA[Unexcused absences] --> CA
      S[Suspensions] --> CA
  
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Reflection Notes

Reflection Four

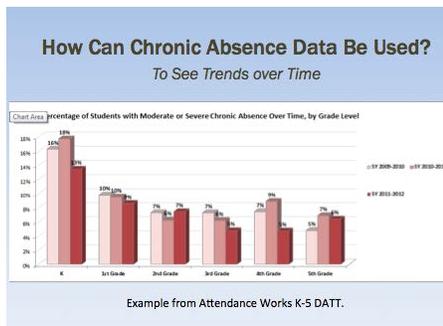
Let's take a moment and analyze the By Grade chart on slide 16. Which grades have the highest levels of chronic absenteeism? Which grades have lower levels of chronic absenteeism? While this is not your district, use your experience and think about what some possible explanations might be for the differences by grade. What might account for the drop in chronic absence in 12th grade?



Reflection Notes

Reflection Five

What do you observe about the range of chronic absence between schools? How many schools need greater levels of support to address absenteeism? How many schools are possibly positive outliers?



How Can Chronic Absence Data Be Used?
To Find Positive Outliers and Schools Needing Greater Support

Chronic Absence Levels Among Oakland Public Schools (2009-10)

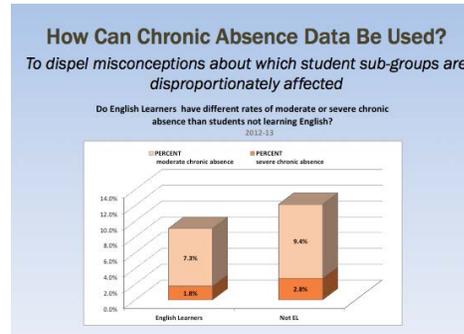
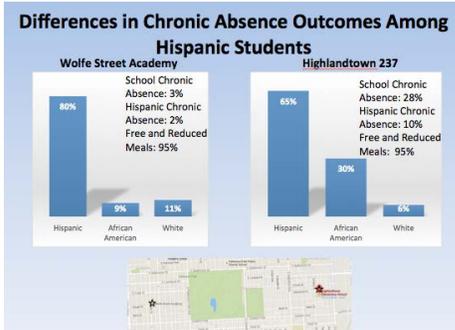
	Elementary	Middle	High School
# Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence	9	0	0
# Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence	17	4	1
# Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence	25	8	6
# Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence	9	4	9
Total No. Schools	60	16	16
Highest % of Chronic Absence	31.5%	32.8%	42.1%
Lowest % of Chronic Absence	0.3%	6.9%	7.9%
Median	12.7%	14.9%	21.0%
Mean	11.9%	15.6%	22.4%

Reflection Notes

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Reflection Six

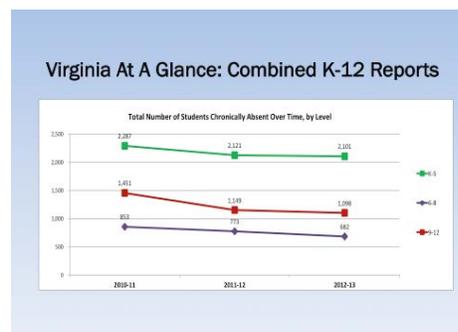
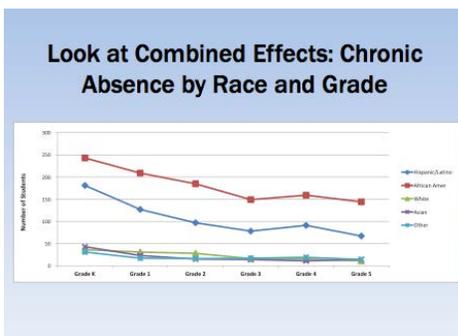
Compare and contrast the outcomes in chronic absence between the Hispanic students attending Highlandtown 237 and Wolfe Street Academy in Baltimore. Read the profile about Wolfe Street Academy: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/principals/mark-gaither-wolfe-street-academy/>. What strategies have the principal and his school team put in place that you believe are helping him achieve different results?



Reflection Notes

Reflection Seven

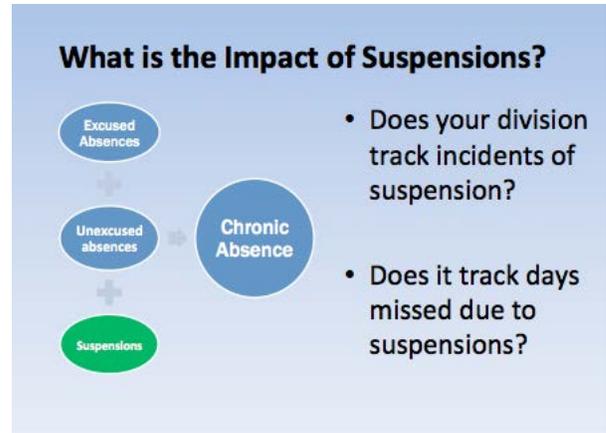
Which grade span (elementary, middle or high) has the greatest number of chronically absent students? What are the implications for how division leaders allocate staff or resources?



Reflection Notes

Reflection Eight

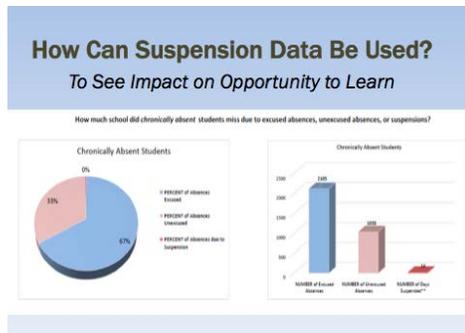
Write down what type of suspension data your division tracks. Does your division track incidents of suspension? Does it track the number of days missed due to suspensions?



Reflection Notes

Reflection Nine

What is the relationship between suspensions and chronic absence in your division? What policies or practices might be contributing to better outcomes, i.e. fewer students missing school due to suspensions? What discipline policies or practices might you want to reconsider?



How Can Suspension Data Be Used?

To Identify Outliers

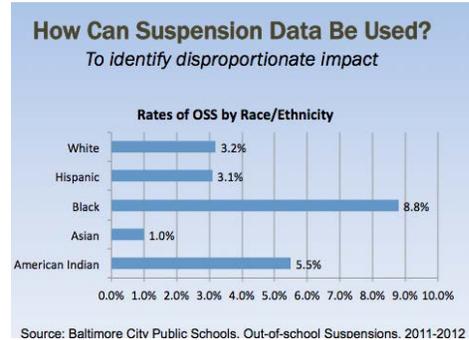
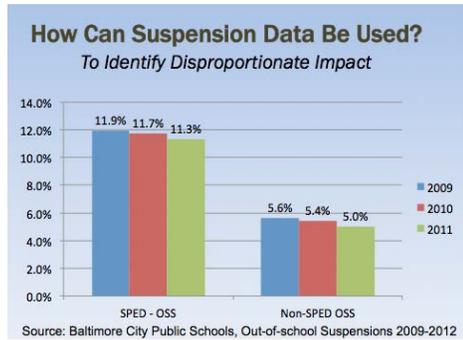
High School	Enrollment	Incidents of Suspension	# Students Chronically Absent	% of all Chronically Absent students with at least 1 suspension
1	1976	84	206	9.2%
2	1511	93	202	13.4%
3	1474	137	355	15.2%
4	1654	35	121	5.8%
5	448	119	329	21.9%
6	1245	103	270	15.9%

Reflection Notes

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Reflection Ten

List three possible reasons that special education students or African American students might have higher rates of suspension. Of those reasons, which ones can be impacted by changes in discipline policy? By professional development?



Reflection Notes

Summary Reflections

To what extent does our division have data that helps us make management decisions to reduce absenteeism? Can we currently identify which schools, grades, sub-groups and individual students have high levels of chronic absenteeism? What is our most urgent need as far as actionable data?

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:

- “Leveraging the Power Of Attendance Data: Analyzing Trends in Attendance”
This memo provides guidance for analyzing multiple measures of attendance including chronic absence and ensuring all involved have a common understanding about:
 1. Why conduct an analysis of attendance data including chronic absence?
 2. What questions could this analysis answer?
 3. What would the analysis involve? How might the results be used?
- <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Power-of-Attendance-Data-Drft-6-3-2011.pdf>
- Read the story of Garfield Elementary School which is a positive outlier.
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/oakland/garfield-elementary/>
What effective practices can you learn from?
- For information on how to calculate your chronic absence data visit: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/>
- Read the following summary to learn more about evidence-based alternatives to suspensions. Evidence-Based Alternatives to Suspensions and Expulsions, <https://www.aclusocal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Ev-Based-Practices-LCFF-Discipline-Toolkit.3.17.14.public.pdf>
- Determine how you will address your most urgent need for actionable data. Consider using the free Attendance Works tools to calculate chronic absence. <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/>