




Cohort Meeting

September 17, 2025



Logistics

Before we get started,

-  This meeting is being recorded so we can share key takeaways and support those who couldn't attend live.
-  Please stay muted unless you're speaking, to help reduce background noise.
-  If you have a question or comment, feel free to unmute yourself or type it in the chat—we want to hear from you!

Thanks for helping us create a respectful and engaging space for everyone.

Meet the Illinois State Board of Education SCTAC team

- **Carl Amos**- Safe and Healthy Climate
- **Nanette Coley**-Safe and Healthy Climate
- **Sarah Littrell**- Learning Renewal – Safe and Healthy Climate
- **Thersa Olsen**- Wellness and Student Care



Agenda

- Inclusive Welcome
- Resource Spotlight
- Pass the Mic
- Announcements
- Intentional Close



The purpose of this Cohort

 Everyday Counts Illinois

Student Engagement Cohort on Chronic Absenteeism

Building Belonging, Connection, and Equity—One Day at a Time

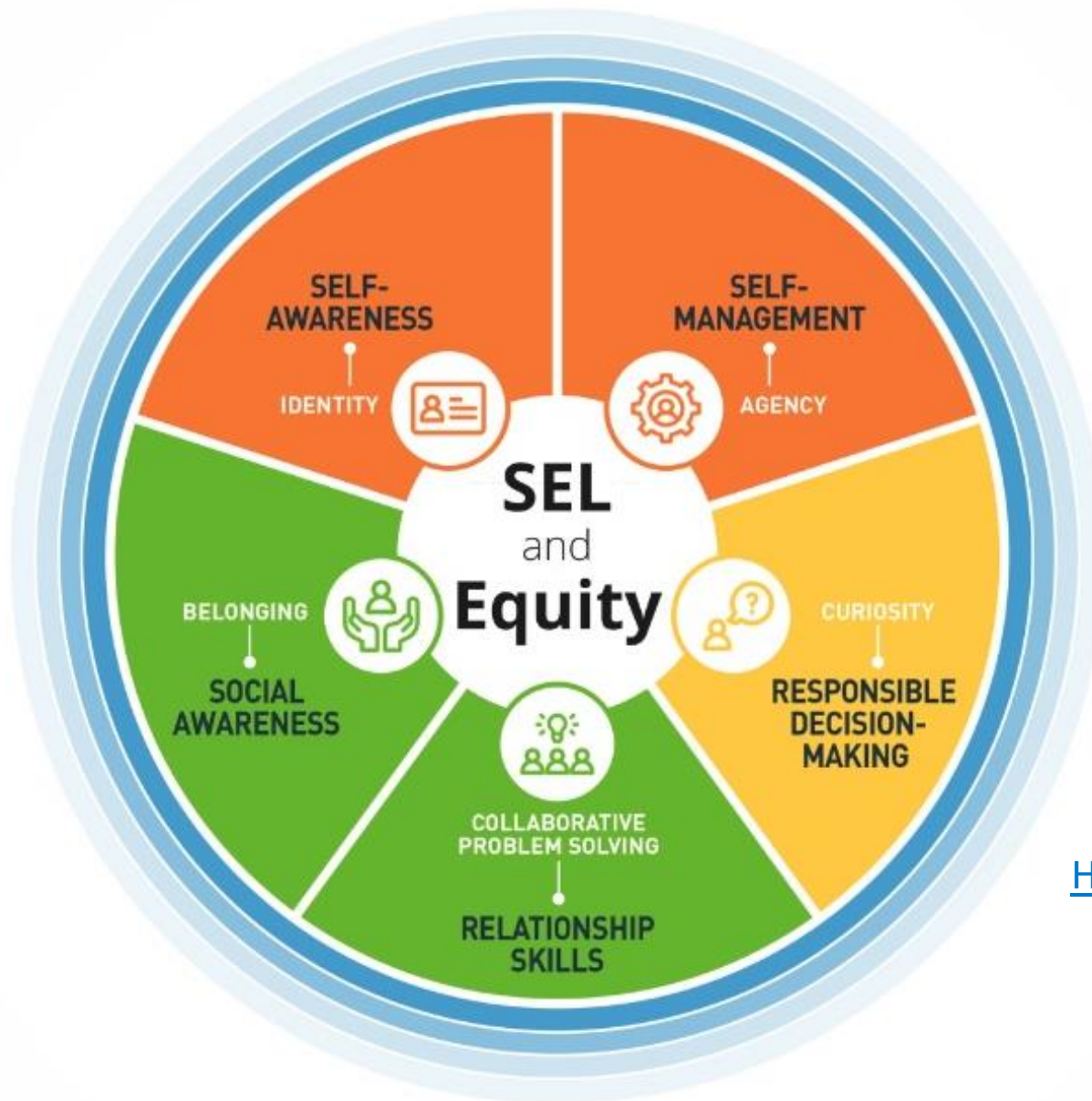
Chronic absenteeism is more than missed day it's a signal of disconnection. This cohort is about reconnecting students through relationships, equity, and SEL.

Together, we'll share strategies, celebrate wins, and build systems that help every student feel seen, supported, and engaged.

Creating Space for Engagement



- [CASEL](#) – Collaborative for Social Emotional and Academic Learning
- [5 SEL Competencies & Focal Constructs](#)
- [3 Signature Practices](#)
- [School](#) and [District](#) SEL Implementation



CASEL 5 SEL Competencies and Focal Constructs

[How does SEL Support Equity?](#)



3 Signature Practices

**Inclusive
Welcome**

**Engaging
Strategies**

**Intentional
Close**

*research-based practices that can be
part of a systemic approach to SEL.*



3 Signature Practices



Inclusive
Welcome

- Build community
- Connect to work ahead

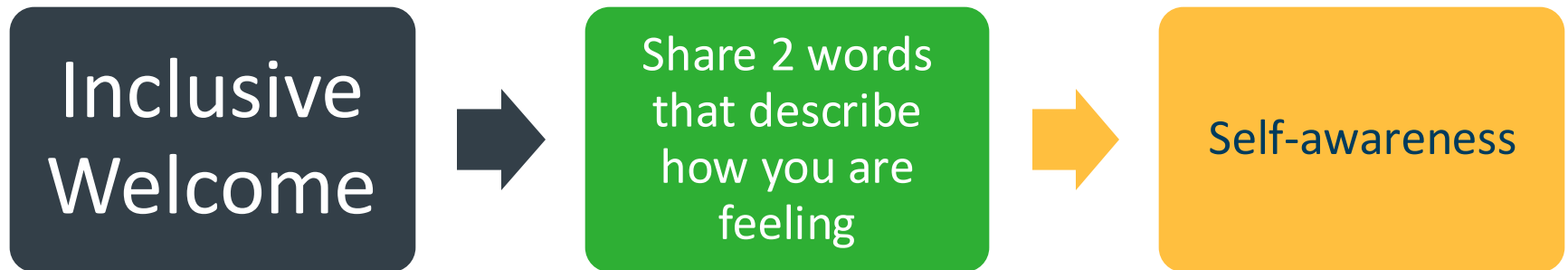
Engaging
Strategies

- Connect learning to personal context
- Interactive and reflective

Intentional
Close

- Highlight understanding and purpose
- Forward thinking

Two Word Check-in



[Mood Meter Graphic for 2 word check in](#)

[Mood Meter - Free Printables](#)

Tap one of the words on the Mood Meter



Cohort Kickoff



EACH PARTICIPANT,
PLEASE SHARE:



1. YOUR NAME, ROLE,
AND SCHOOL DISTRICT

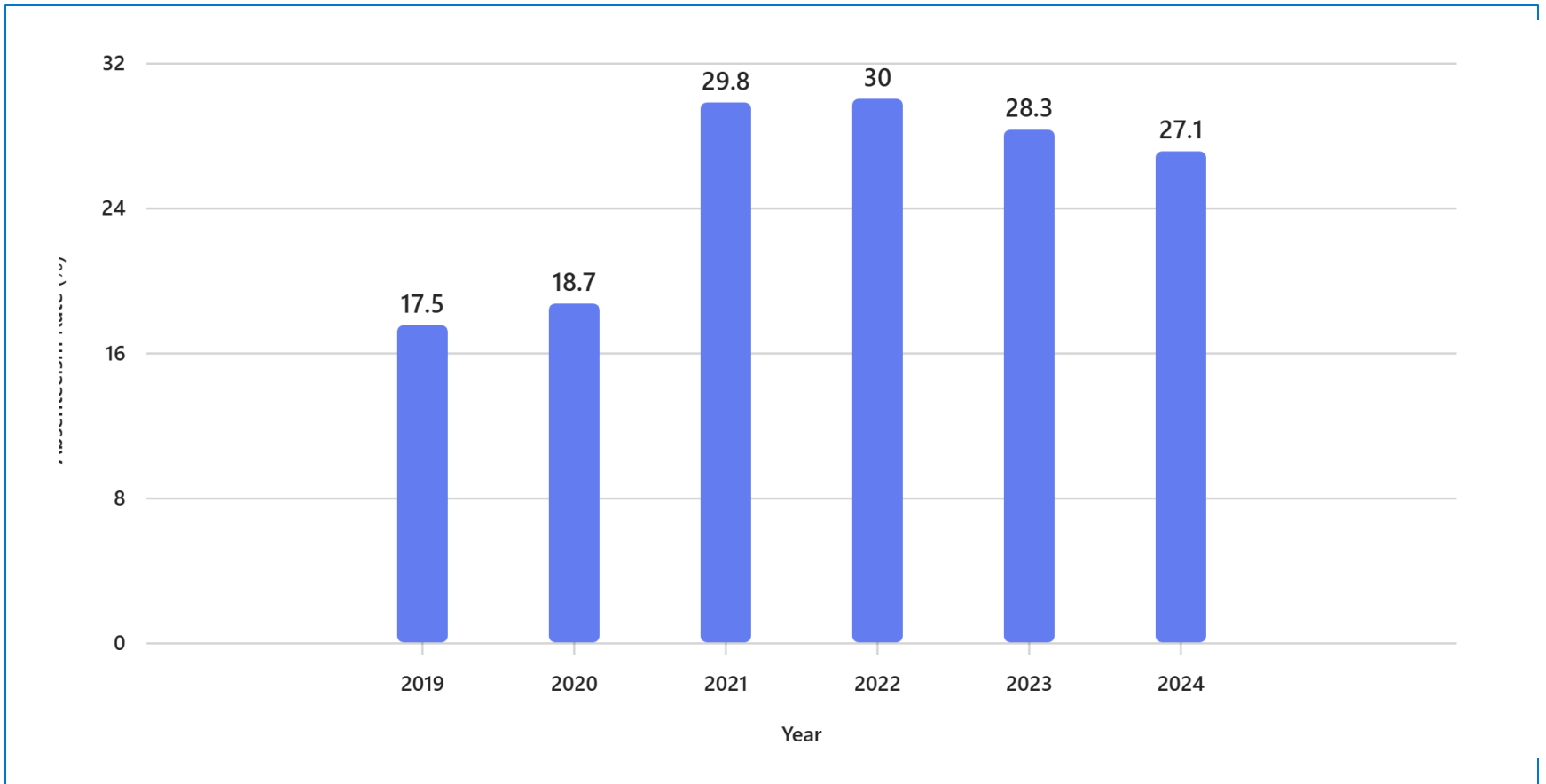


2. ONE ATTENDANCE
WIN OR CHALLENGE

What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Illinois law defines “Chronic Absenteeism” as a student missing 10 percent of school days within an academic year with or without valid excused or unexcused.

Chronic Absenteeism in Illinois



Resource Spotlight

[Attendance Works](#) is a national initiative that promotes equitable, data-driven strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism and improve student outcomes.

The mission is to advance student success by reducing chronic absence through collaboration and capacity-building.

Resource Spotlight

- ["The Problem"](#) page on Attendance Works explains the scope and impact of Chronic Absenteeism in U.S. schools.
- Chronic absence affects:
 - Difficulty learning to read by third grade
 - Poor academic performance in middle school
 - Lower high school graduation rates

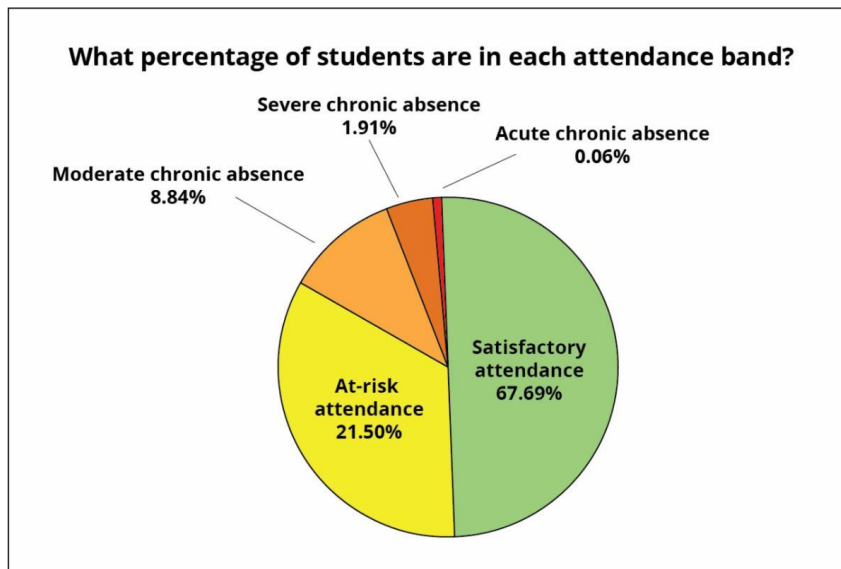
Who is most affected?

- Disproportionate Impact
 - Students in poverty, students of color, and those with disabilities are most affected.
- Systemic Impact
 - High levels of absenteeism disrupt classroom learning for all students

Solutions


- The site emphasizes a data-driven, preventive approach involving schools
- Engage with school, families, and communities.
- Focus on early identification and removing barriers to attendance.

Updated District Data Tools



- Need help understanding your data?
 - Use Attendance Works updated, free data tools designed for school districts.
 - DATTS: District Attendance Tracking Tools
 - SATTS: School Attendance Tracking Tools

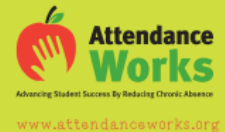
What the tools offer

- Paste your Data  Get Insights
- Benefits
 - Identify student groups needing immediate intervention
 - Save staff time
 - Generate powerful visualization for dashboards and reports
- Analyze chronic absence by:
 - School
 - Grade
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Individual students

Attendance Works

ATTENDANCE in the early grades

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten, and even preK, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?



Who Is Affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.

1 in 10 kids

in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.¹



2 in 10
low-income kids
miss too much
school. They're also
more likely to suffer
academically.¹

2.5 in 10
homeless kids
are chronically
absent.²

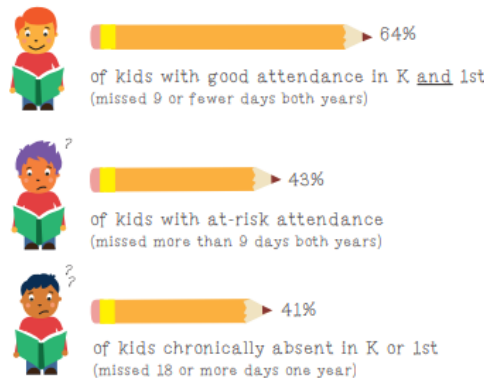
4 in 10
transient kids
miss too much
school when
families move.³

Why It Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

Preliminary data from a California study found that children who were chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?³



What We Can Do



Engage Families

Many parents and students don't realize how quickly early absences can add up to academic trouble. Community members and teachers can educate families and build a culture of attendance through early outreach, incentives and attention to data.



Fix Transportation

The lack of a reliable car, or simply missing the school bus, can mean some students don't make it to class. Schools, transit agencies and community partners can organize car pools, supply bus passes or find other ways to get kids to school.



Address Health Needs

Health concerns, particularly asthma and dental problems, are among the leading reasons students miss school in the early grades. Schools and medical professionals can work together to give children and families health care and advice.



Track the Right Data

Chronic Absenteeism VS. Truancy

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM VS. TRUANCY

Truancy

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal & administrative solutions

Chronic Absence

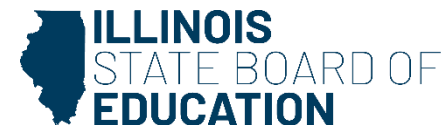
- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies

Why This Matters to District Leadership

- Chronic Absenteeism affects academic outcomes; funding, and equity.
- Leadership alignment is key to sustainable change.
- Districts set the tone for engagement and support.

SEL as a Strategy - Resources

- [Social-Emotional Learning Hubs](#)
 - Provide professional development, training, coaching and capacity building to schools, districts and ROEs to example SEL and trauma-responsive programming.
 - Provide coaching supports for RSSI
- [Resilience Supportive Schools Illinois \(RSSI\)](#)
 - Choose your focus: Trauma-Responsiveness, Social & Emotional Learning, Mental Health, Cultural Responsiveness, Anti-Racism & Equity
 - 15 question survey and build your plan with an SEL coach
- [Learning and Resource Hub](#)
 - FREE educational resource in support of strategies pertaining to social and emotional learning, trauma-responsive practices, mental health, and healing for both staff and students.
 - Approved provider for ISBE professional development.
 - *NEW information and modules added regularly.*



Pass the Mic

What's one barrier to attendance you've seen that surprised you?

Intentional Close

Reflect and Respond

Answer the questions to help us gather more information to inform future sessions!

How often do you use SEL signature practices in your role?

1
Never



2
Rarely



3
Sometimes



4
Often



5
Always



How confident are you in addressing chronic absenteeism in your district?

1

2

3

4

5

Not confident at all

Slightly confident

Moderately confident

Very confident

Extremely confident



How often does your district use data to inform attendance strategies?

1
Never

2
Rarely

3
Sometimes

4
Often

5
Always



Announcements



Next Meeting Date: October 15, 2025



Resources: All Materials and tools will be posted on the ISBE website

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[ISBE Chronic Absenteeism Website](#)

Thank you