



# Illinois State Board of Education

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**James T. Meeks**  
Chairman

**Tony Smith, Ph.D.**  
State Superintendent

December 15, 2016

**TO:** The Honorable John J. Cullerton, Senate President  
The Honorable Christine Radogno, Senate Republican Leader  
The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Jim Durkin, House Republican Leader  
James T. Meeks, Chairman, State Board of Education

**FROM:** Tony Smith, Ph.D.   
State Superintendent of Education

**SUBJECT:** Report of the Attendance Commission

Pursuant to its obligations under Public Act 99-0432, the Attendance Commission submits this annual report to the General Assembly and State Board of Education. If you have questions or comments, please contact Stephanie Donovan, General Counsel, at (217) 782-8535.

**cc:** The Honorable Bruce Rauner, Governor  
Tim Mapes, Clerk of the House  
Tim Anderson, Secretary of the Senate  
Legislative Research Unit  
State Government Report Center

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# ATTENDANCE COMMISSION

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## **Report to the Illinois General Assembly and the State Board of Education**

December 15, 2016

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Public Act 99-0432 called for the creation of a commission to study chronic absenteeism in the schools in this state and make recommendations for strategies to prevent its occurrence. This commission was directed to identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) address and prevent chronic absenteeism. The commission must make recommendations to the General Assembly and ISBE in order to achieve five outcomes designed to remediate attendance issues across the state.

In this second annual report to the General Assembly, the Illinois Attendance Commission (the “Commission”) has several recommendations to make at this date after a series of meetings in which legislation was examined and solutions to chronic absence and truancy were researched and discussed. It is essential that the term “chronic absence” be defined in statute in order for data to be collected and reported for statewide consistency and for the purpose of federal reporting. It is additionally necessary that definitions be legislated for “excused” and “unexcused” absences for consistency across the state. Finally, it has also become apparent that a statewide public relations campaign be initiated to communicate the importance of daily school attendance.

In accordance with the legislation that created the Commission, the appointed members have met on a monthly basis (with the exception of August) to study chronic absenteeism in this state and to make recommendations to ameliorate this problem that has lifelong effects for our state’s absent and truant students. The Commission continues its efforts to gather research, gain perspectives, and obtain information relative to best and effective practices that will enable members to develop comprehensive and actionable strategies and approaches. The work of the Commission is centered on the following five outcomes. The status of the work and the anticipated activities related to each of these outcomes are summarized below.

### **Outcome 1**

**A standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal(s) a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment**

- In order to report chronic absence data, a definition of “chronic absence” has to be legislated to ensure the collection of accurate data around defined parameters. The standard definition employed by the federal government and many states across the country counts chronic absence as missing 10 percent of the previous 180 school days for any reason - excused absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions.
- The Commission asserts the need for guidance and/or definition of the difference between excused and unexcused absences.
- The Commission additionally asserts the need to examine the way the state currently calculates average daily attendance and the current method’s impact on the generation of accurate attendance and absenteeism data.

- A survey of school and district administrators, educators, and parent groups will be conducted to determine current practices/policies across the state, including what constitutes a full day and a half day of instruction for students.

## **Outcome 2**

### **Mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this state in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans**

- The Attendance Commission forecasts the need for improved data systems, mechanisms for reporting data, and heightened accountability around accurate and timely data. Districts must avail themselves of programs to help schools gather the data, disaggregate the data, monitor and report the data, and determine trends across student groups so that school communities can effectively respond to the attendance realities revealed by the data. Data systems should be accessible to staff and easily produce monthly and annual public reports. School districts should allocate funding for districtwide professional development on understanding, collecting, tracking, disaggregating, and interpreting attendance data.
- The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) was adopted in 2009. The last meeting of the ILDS Governing Board was March 3, 2016, when the group discussed ILDS plan priorities, data privacy issues, and data sharing agreements. The Commission recommends that superintendents ensure the use of a data collection system that is compatible with ISBE in order to share district- and school-level data.
- Principals and educators should accurately identify and report all student absences throughout the school day and engage in timely communication with students and families about absences. School attendance logs should be audited and evaluated on a quarterly basis by school district staff to ensure that schools are actively identifying warning signs of excessive absenteeism and truancy. Designated staff at the school level should continually monitor attendance data to inform strategies and initiatives to improve attendance.
- Parents need to be informed about the connection between school attendance and student achievement and provided support for their role in their home languages. Attendance data should be shared with families in real time (phone call, text, or email). Principals should designate a school contact person with whom parents can develop a relationship regarding attendance. Appropriate data should be shared with parents to foster collaboration and to reinforce and support student and parental engagement.

## **Outcome 3:**

### **Mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this state, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting**

- Strategies to meet this outcome are aided by the enactment of two significant pieces of legislation: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Illinois Public Act 99-0193.

- ESSA is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or No Child Left Behind and holds states accountable for student achievement in accordance with several indicators within a flexible framework: test results, language proficiency, graduation rates, and choices that can include student engagement, educator engagement, access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate/safety, or any barrier to student success particular to a state. Most importantly to the work of the Commission, ESSA requires that states report chronic absence numbers in recognition of the fact that regular school attendance aids student achievement. ESSA was signed into law in December 2015, but will not take effect fully until the 2017-18 school year. ISBE has conducted three listening tours across the state to gain stakeholder input on the implementation of the new law.
- The Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) Committee was created by Public Act 99-0193, which requires ISBE to “develop recognition standards for student performance and school improvement...provides that standards must be ... outcomes-based, balanced accountability measure(s).” Antoinette Taylor, chairperson of the Illinois Attendance Commission, and IBAM Chairperson Sara Boucek communicated regarding the inclusion of attendance as an indicator under IBAM, and Ms. Taylor was invited to attend the committee’s November 9, 2016, meeting. IBAM committee members requested information regarding a definition for “chronic absence” and discussed the collection of chronic absence data and the point value for attendance accountability measures. (Appendix Q)
- A concern that was voiced in the Truancy in the Chicago Public Schools report remains an unaddressed concern of members of the Commission: examination of the way the state currently calculates average daily attendance and its impact on generating accurate attendance and absenteeism data, the use of that data to develop and implement improvement plans, and the implications for school funding. The Commission is concerned that average daily attendance and absenteeism are currently unrelated calculations.
- The Commission is additionally concerned about an examination of the current mechanisms for reporting attendance data, the level of accountability inherent in these mechanisms, and any additional mechanisms used by districts that seek to address gaps in the state’s system.
- A related concern is the determination of multiple measures that can be used to get more complete pictures of attendance and absenteeism at the district and school levels and the measures that can be most effective in generating data that can support effective improvement plans and develop priorities and targets for improvement, including the disaggregation of data based on student populations and excused and unexcused absences.

- The Commission's goal is to develop informed recommendations concerning data sharing structures, systems for identifying absenteeism patterns early and creating intervention plans, and ways to engage families using clear, actionable data.
- Given that average daily attendance rates are connected to the amount of state funding schools and districts receive, the Commission will also look at the proposed changes to the state school funding formula to see how those ideas are factoring in attendance rates.

#### **Outcome 4**

##### **Best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career**

- At the February 19, 2016, meeting of the Commission, presentations were provided by representatives from the Illinois Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Network, an amalgam of state-sponsored efforts to build the capacity of districts to provide interventions in response to students' areas of need, including attendance-related issues.
- Attendance Works representatives also provided input at the February meeting and addressed the importance of a tiered approach to improving student attendance and driving academic success from universal interventions to those that are more intensive based on student need.
- Senate Bill 100 was signed into law as Public Act 99-0456 on August 24, 2016, by Governor Bruce Rauner and took effect on September 15, 2016. It mandates that schools use non-exclusionary types of discipline, apply appropriate behavioral interventions, permit suspended students to make up missed work, and provide professional development to entire school staffs on the adverse effects of school exclusion and involvement of the justice system, effective classroom management strategies, and developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climates. The Commission recognizes that implementation of this new addition to the School Code will necessitate communication and collaboration among districts and intends to be the means through which districts can share innovative practices and revised methodologies to ensure adherence to this new law. Healthier school climates and non-exclusionary disciplinary tactics have the potential to contribute to improved attendance statistics.

#### **Outcome 5**

##### **New initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism**

- Legislation, research studies, government programs, and practitioner and parent testimony all seek to provide remedies to a problem that is now viewed as a predictor of diminished expectations for the youth of our state and throughout our nation. The toughest battle, however, in the recently proclaimed war on chronic absence and truancy is one that cannot be fought with the usual weapons of punitive measures and educator pleas for compliance. Much of the struggle lies within the perceptions people have about

missed school days, particularly for the youngest students. Many perceive it is okay for a student to miss an occasional day of school, but a loss of just two attendance days a month tallies to an amount that equals the chronic absence standard. Children who are not taken to school because of some family logistics or who meet little resistance from their parents when they want to stay home not only are on record for achieving below their same grade peers, but they also develop the lifelong habit of irregular attendance, an unreliability that affects the ability to not only stay in school but to maintain employment as well. Older students who may be worn down from the cycle of missed school days and low achievement are uninspired to meet the challenge of regular school attendance and are unable to grasp the connection between school success and career readiness.

Something else is needed to change minds and to foster a public awareness that every day does indeed count -- that each missed school day is a loss of precious time. The members of the Commission have determined that a public relations campaign can help accomplish what state laws, federal studies, and educator involvement cannot completely do: It can change minds.

- Certain transition stages in a child's academic life trigger school attendance difficulties: preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to first grade, and elementary or middle school to high school. Commission members expressed the need for schools, parents, and communities to recognize the difficulty of these transitions and to strategize solutions to keep students engaged at these critical junctures.
- The Commission has also established the need for maintenance of a live binder, a compendium of resources, initiatives, and exemplary efforts related to the reduction of instances of chronic absence and truancy across the state. The Commission will continue its research into current practices in the remediation of attendance-related problems, both locally and nationally, and use that information to highlight successful practices, make recommendations to districts in the formulation or revision of policies, and inform districts of changes in legislation.
- The Commission advocates the dissemination of the information contained within the components of the *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*. The toolkit reveals strategies to engage everyone from government, school, health, and public safety officials to parents, mentors, community leaders, and the students themselves to lend their talents and energy to make a difference in the lives of young people who lack both a commitment to their education and a vision of their future.
- The Commission anticipates that the combination of the following factors will guide the mission to address chronic absenteeism in Illinois:
  - analysis and discussion of research and reports by experts and policymakers, such as the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force report
  - proven successful state and national initiatives
  - school and community input from public hearings across Illinois
  - input from stakeholders

- best practices that emerge from practitioners in the field

### **Hearings**

The Commission was additionally advised to hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance. Three hearings were held during the last year:

- A practitioner hearing was held at the Illinois Coalition for the Education of At-risk Youth (ICEARY) 2016 Conference on March 3, 2016, in Bloomington – Normal. This hearing provided Commission members with invaluable input from truancy professionals who are working across the state to alter the lives of young people who find the barriers to school attendance too formidable to surmount. ICEARY members offered invaluable insight into situations that impact their effectiveness including a lack of the following components: timely access to attendance data, uniform policies across districts, adequate mentoring programs, sufficient consequences and interventions, and transition programs for returning, chronically absent students.
- A public hearing was co-sponsored by Illinois State Senator Jacqueline Collins and Illinois State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia on the evening on September 13, 2016, on the south side of Chicago at St. Sabina Catholic Parish's McMahon Hall. The parents and community members in attendance voiced many concerns about attendance data, reasons for absenteeism/truancy, and the strategies needed to combat the problems. Recommended remedies included the application of interventions on a timely basis, collaboration among all professionals in a student's life, increased positive family engagement strategies, and development of transition protocols when students move from middle/elementary school to high school.
- A practitioner hearing was held at the joint annual conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Association of School Business Officials on November 18, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago. Attendees voiced several concerns, including funding irregularities in truancy program funding, the difficulty of remediating chronic absence and truancy through the courts, the need to address inadequacies in parenting that often stem from a misunderstanding about the value of education, the lack of absence/truancy intervention outreach for primary grade children, and the responsibilities of schools to welcome returning students after successful retrieval efforts.
- On November 3, 2016, the College Changes Everything (CCE) component of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) sponsored an event titled *Continuing the Conversation ... A Learning Community Focused on Student College and Career Readiness and Success* to discuss the importance and the impact of attendance. Participants shared ideas about ways to address student attendance that included accessible information for everyone; ongoing messaging about existing state statutes, policies, and administrative procedures; family engagement and education; early warning and alert systems that start with chronic absence rather than chronic truancy; ongoing attendance awareness and district policy orientation for students, faculty, staff, and families; measurable accountability systems for students, faculty, staff, and families; and

increased communication among all stakeholders from prekindergarten through higher education, including community partners like the police departments, public libraries, and park districts. This event was attended by several members of the Commission.



## I. FRAMING THE ISSUE

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Education is, simply stated, a vital preparatory process for life. An education enables the acquisition of facts and skill mastery and also fosters the development of higher order thinking skills and provides a context for socialization. The life that beckons a young person after 12th grade is meant to offers choices about college, training, employment, and “for living within a family ... within a community ...and for participating effectively in the democratic process.”<sup>1</sup> The incremental effect of daily school attendance facilitates the transition of a student from school to career as a functioning and productive member of society.

Conversely, the incremental effect of missed school days renders a young person ill-equipped to compete or contribute. Chronic rates of absence and truancy portend prospects that provide less of a transition but rather an eventual erosion of choices, possibilities, and hope.

Diminished dreams were the reality for 9.8 percent of Illinois students who were chronically truant during the 2015-16 school year, compared to 1.9 percent reported for 2003. Chronic truants include students subject to compulsory attendance who have been absent without valid cause for nine or more of the past 180 school days. (In July 2011, the Illinois chronic truancy rate calculation was changed from missing 10 percent of school days to 5 percent.)

It is the chronic absence rate, however, that has caused alarm among educators as growing numbers of students are absent from school at a skyrocketing rate. Nationwide, an estimated 5 million to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year, meaning they miss 10 percent or more of the school year in excused and unexcused absences. That is typically 18 days in a typical year.<sup>2</sup>

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) within the U. S. Department of Education issued the first national report on chronic absence in 2016. The report was subtitled “an unprecedented look at a hidden educational crisis” because of the alarming lack of national focus on this problem. The report cites the fact that 6 million students missed 15 or more days of school in 2013-14, a figure that represents 14 percent of the population as it includes one in seven students overall. One in five adolescent high school students is chronically absent, and students with disabilities miss school at a rate one-and-a-half times more than their nondisabled peers. OCR explained, “Education can only fulfill its promise as the great equalizer — a force that can overcome differences in privilege and background — when we work to ensure that students are in school every day and receive the supports they need to learn and thrive.”<sup>3</sup> (Appendix F)

Here in Illinois, the Chicago Tribune laid bare school attendance issues in districts across the state, but most notably in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The newspaper produced an investigative series of stories titled *An Empty Desk Epidemic*, which reported that during the

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, James, Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Attendance Works. Balfanz, R., and Byrnes, V. The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools. Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools, Baltimore, Maryland. 2012.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation’s Schools: An unprecedented look at a hidden educational crisis*. U. S. Department of Education. 2016.



2010-11 school year 32,000 CPS students missed at least four weeks of school. When the data was disaggregated, it revealed that 20 percent of African-American students missed at least four weeks of school as did large percentages of students with disabilities: 42.2 percent of those with emotional disorders, 15.4 percent of those with learning disabilities, and 21.7 percent of students with cognitive impairments, autism, and sensory disabilities. This data did not include students with disabilities requiring 504 plans for classroom accommodations. It is believed that including these students would actually increase the percentages of student with disability absences.

Perhaps one of the more shocking statistics highlighted in this series was the fact that 36 percent of African-American kindergartners missed at least four weeks of school. Students who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are less likely to read proficiently by the time they finish third grade. Preliminary data in California found that 17 percent of students with demonstrated school attendance difficulties were reading at grade level by the end of third grade, compared to 62 percent who attended regularly.<sup>4</sup>

Researchers have also trained their lenses of preschool attendance irregularities. A recent report by the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research highlights a nearly 40 percent spike in absenteeism among preschoolers in Chicago because of either illness or family logistics. The loss of valuable school time is naturally a concern, but research demonstrates that irregular preschool attendance fosters a lifelong pattern of absence as these are the children who later drop out of school.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the stunning revelations in the Chicago Tribune series and national absence and truancy revelations, Illinois State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia sponsored a bill (HJR 0001) to identify the scope of truancy within Chicago and convene a Task Force to address these pressing issues. The Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force met monthly for eight months and issued a report with recommendations to address the issues of truancy and absenteeism within CPS; these recommendations are summarized in Section IV of this report.

Shortly after the Task Force concluded its work, Representative Chapa LaVia moved to facilitate the establishment of an attendance commission to operate statewide for a five-year period to provide a longer time frame for representatives from educator and administrator professional organizations and affiliations, state agencies with education and child welfare relevance, and several nonprofits that advocate for children and families to research, analyze, propose, and implement the means through which absenteeism and truancy will be sharply curtailed in our state.

Finally, the spotlight on chronic absence and truancy was expanded when ESSA was signed into law on December 10, 2015, by President Barack Obama. This legislation marks the first time lawmakers have inserted the requirement that states must report chronic absenteeism rates. ESSA

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<sup>4</sup> Jackson, David; Marx, Gary; and Richards, Alex. *An Empty Desk Epidemic*. Chicago Tribune. 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Ehrlich, Stacy B.; Gwynne, Julia A.; Pareja, Amber Stitzel; and Allensworth, Elaine M.; with Moore, Paul; Jagesic, Sanja; and Sorice, Elizabeth. *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*. University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research. 2013.

is notable for reducing the federal government's control over education by increasing states' accountability for student achievement, and this law recognizes the need to count and report the numbers of students who are not in school and, therefore, not on track to be prepared to lead productive, fulfilling lives.

## II. PUBLIC ACT 99-0432 AND THE DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

Pursuant to Public Act 99-0432, the Commission is created to study chronic absenteeism in this state and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission shall have the following duties:

- A. Identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:
  - 1) a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;
  - 2) mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this state in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;
  - 3) mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this state, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;
  - 4) best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and
  - 5) new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.
- B. Hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance;
- C. Submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than December 15 of each year through December 15, 2020.

House Bill 4343, filed on November 24, 2015, by Representative Chapa LaVia, delayed the filing deadline for the Commission's initial report to March 15, 2016 since the Commission did not begin to meet until December 2015. This bill was enacted as Public Act 99-0601 and was approved by Governor Rauner on July 22, 2016.

### III. CURRENT STATUTORY AND REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

Section 26-2 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/26-2] subjects all children between the ages of 6 (on or before September 1) and 17 years with identified exceptions to compulsory attendance. Further, Section 26-2a [105 ILCS 5/26-2a] provides the following definitions:

A “truant” is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

“Valid cause” for absence shall be illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and shall include such other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the board of education in each district, or such other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student.

“Chronic or habitual truant” shall be defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

“Truant minor” is defined as a chronic truant to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy, or have been offered and refused.

A “dropout” is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district enrollment roster for any reason other than the student’s death, extended illness, removal for medical noncompliance, expulsion, aging out, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school and is not known to be home-schooled by his or her parents or guardians or continuing school in another country.

Further, pursuant to 23 Ill Admin. Code 1.420 (f):

Sections 10-19, 18-8.05, 18-12, and 18-12.5 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-19, 18-8.05, 18-12, and 18-12.5] establish certain requirements regarding the school year and the school day. School districts shall observe these requirements when preparing their calendars and when calculating average daily attendance for the purpose of claiming general state financial aid.

The School Code also provides for truant officers, duties of truant officers, and penalties for noncompliance with compulsory attendance laws. As further noted in the regulatory provisions of 23 Ill Admin. Code 1.290, “[e]ach school district shall develop an absenteeism and truancy policy including at least the following elements:

- 1) A definition of a valid cause for absence in accordance with Section 26-2a of the School Code;

- 2) A description of diagnostic procedures to be used for identifying the causes of unexcused student absenteeism, which shall, at a minimum, include interviews with the student, his or her parents or guardians, and any school officials or other parties who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem; and
- 3) The identification of supportive services to be made available to truant or chronically truant students. These services shall include, but need not be limited to, parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and information about existing community services which are available to truant and chronically truant students and relevant to their needs.”

Further, pursuant to 23 Ill Admin. Code 1.420 (f):

Sections 10-19, 18-8.05, 18-12, and 18-12.5 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-19, 18-8.05, 18-12, and 18-12.5] establish certain requirements regarding the school year and the school day. School districts shall observe these requirements when preparing their calendars and when calculating average daily attendance for the purpose of claiming general state financial aid.

- 1) Section 18-8.05(F)(2)(c) of the School Code provides that, with the approval of the State Superintendent of Education, four or more clock-hours of instruction may be counted as a day of attendance when the regional superintendent certifies that, due to a condition beyond the control of the district, the district has been forced to use multiple sessions. The State Superintendent’s approval will be granted when the district demonstrates that, due to a condition beyond the control of the district, its facilities are inadequate to house a program offering five clock-hours daily to all students.
  - A) The district superintendent’s request to the State Superintendent shall be accompanied by an assurance that the local school board has approved the plan for multiple sessions, including the date of the meeting at which this occurred, and evidence of the approval of the responsible regional superintendent.
  - B) Each request shall include a description of the circumstances that resulted in the need for multiple sessions; information on the buildings and grades affected; the intended beginning and ending dates for the multiple sessions; a plan for remedying the situation leading to the request; and a daily schedule showing that each student will be in class for at least four clock-hours.
  - C) Approval for multiple sessions shall be granted for the school year to which the request pertains. Each request for renewed approval shall conform to the requirements of subsections (f)(1)(A) and (B).

- D) Students who are in attendance for at least 150 minutes of school work but fewer than 240 minutes may be counted for a half day of attendance. Students in attendance for fewer than 150 minutes of school work shall not be counted for purposes of calculating average daily attendance.
- 2) Section 18-8.05(F)(2)(h) of the School Code allows for a determination under rules of the State Board regarding the necessity for a second year's attendance at kindergarten for certain students so they may be included in a district's calculation of average daily attendance. Districts may count these students when they determine through an assessment of their individual educational development that a second year of kindergarten is warranted.
- 3) A school district shall be considered to have conducted a legal school day, which is eligible to be counted for General State Aid, when the following conditions are met during a work stoppage.
  - A) Fifty percent or more of the district's students are in attendance, based on the average daily attendance during the most recent full month of attendance prior to the work stoppage.
  - B) Educational programs are available at all grade levels in the district, in accordance with the minimum standards set forth in this Part.
  - C) All teachers hold educator licenses that are registered with the regional superintendent of schools for their county of employment. Other than substitute teachers, licensure appropriate to the grade level and subject areas of instruction is held by all teachers.
- 4) Sections 18-12 and 18-12.5 of the School Code set forth requirements for a school district to claim General State Aid in certain circumstances when one or more, but not all, of the district's school buildings are closed either for a full or partial day. A school district shall certify the reasons for the closure in an electronic format specified by the State Superintendent within 30 days from the date of the incident.
  - A) If the certification is submitted under Section 18-12 of the School Code, it shall indicate whether instruction was provided to students using an e-learning day authorized under Section 10-20.56 of the School Code and Section 1.422 of this Part.

- B) If the certification is submitted for reasons of a public health emergency under Section 18-12.5 of the School Code, it shall be accompanied by a signed statement from the local health department to the State Superintendent that includes:
  - i) the name of the building that is being recommended for closure;
  - ii) the specific public health emergency that warrants the closure; and
  - iii) the anticipated building closure dates recommended by the health department.
- 5) Attendance for General State Aid Purposes
  - A) For purposes of determining average daily attendance on the district's General State Aid claim, students in full-day kindergarten and first grade may be counted for a full day of attendance only when they are in attendance for four or more clock hours of school work; provided, however, that students in attendance for more than two clock hours of school work but less than four clock hours may be counted for a half day of attendance. Students in attendance for fewer than two hours of school work shall not be counted for purposes of calculating average daily attendance.
  - B) For purposes of determining average daily attendance on the district's General State Aid claim, students enrolled full time in grades 2 through 12 may be counted for a full day of attendance only when they are in attendance for five or more clock hours of school work; provided, however, that students in attendance for more than two and one-half clock hours of school work but less than five clock hours may be counted for a half day of attendance. Students in attendance for fewer than two and one-half hours of school work shall not be counted for purposes of calculating average daily attendance.
  - C) For purposes of determining average daily attendance for General State Aid received under Sections 18-12 and 18-12.5 of the School Code, "immediately preceding school day" shall include school days in the previous school year in instances in which the building closure occurs before three or more days of instruction have been provided in the school year for which attendance is being counted.
  - D) For the purposes of determining average daily attendance for General State Aid under Section 10-20.56 or 10-29 of the School

Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.56 and 10-29], a school district operating a remote educational program shall document the clock hours of instruction for each student, and make available to the State Superintendent of Education or his or her designee upon request, a written or online record of instructional time for each student enrolled in the program that provides sufficient evidence of the student's active participation in the program (e.g., log in and log off process, electronic monitoring, adult supervision, two-way interaction between teacher and student, video cam). "Clock hours of instruction" shall be calculated in accordance with Section 18-8.05(F)(2)(j) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/18-8.05(F)(2)(j)].



#### IV. TRUANCY IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS TASK FORCE DEBRIEF

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House Joint Resolution 0001 (HJR 0001) sought to identify the scope of truancy within Chicago and convene a Task Force to address pressing issues as exemplified by the large number of students in Chicago Public Schools who missed four weeks or more of classes during the 2010-11 school year, including large numbers of students who were in kindergarten through eighth grade, were African-American, or were students with disabilities, according to a series of stories titled *An Empty Desk Epidemic* in the Chicago Tribune.

##### **Recommendations of the Task Force**

Final recommendation of the Task Force, submitted to the General Assembly in July 2014, centered around six specific areas, each with various action items and recommendations:

##### **A. Terminology**

The Task Force emphasized the need for review of terminology related to attendance, absence, and truancy for the sake of consistency within districts across the state.

##### **B. Data Collection and Application**

Accurate attendance data should be gathered throughout the school day and be accessible to key stakeholders. Training should occur and guidelines issued concerning data review, interpretation, and application. Data should include details regarding individual students' circumstances in relation to achievement levels, disciplinary history, disability status, attendance barriers, demographics, and other personal factors as these variables help identify patterns and target interventions.

The Task Force suggested the development of a central, accessible database for CPS attendance data that is aligned with state data systems for easier tracking of individual students. Attendance data should be reviewed on at least a quarterly basis and be available to parents and community liaisons within the parameters of the Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act and the Illinois School Student Records Act for collaboration to support student engagement.

##### **C. Prevention**

The Task Force addressed the need for both a marketing campaign to promote the benefits of regular school attendance and intentional efforts to create more nurturing and supportive school environments.

The Task Force also promoted the hiring or training of personnel to serve as attendance liaisons to interact with students and their families to monitor attendance progress and intercede to remove barriers to attendance. Interactions with community-based groups and governmental agencies with youth service components were also recommended.

The Chicago Public Schools system was additionally reminded of its responsibility under federal law to locate students with disabilities and provide them with a free, appropriate public education with necessary services to enable learning and to observe the rights of students in temporary living situations who are guaranteed the right to attend either their school of origin or the school of temporary residence and participate in all school programs and activities.

The Chicago Public Schools system was encouraged to continue its revision of the Student Code of Conduct and to reflect trends toward the incorporation of restorative justice practices. The district is additionally encouraged to direct that the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program be instituted at all schools.

Widespread professional development was advised in order to support the changes in policies, practices, and procedures to ameliorate excessive absences and widespread truancy in the Chicago Public Schools.

#### **D. Interventions**

The Task Force also advocated for the provision of prevention outreach and targeted interventions that embrace a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework that creates system and schoolwide practices, cohort level interventions, and individualized interventions as necessary to ensure efficiency of fiscal and human resource allocation.

Targeted interventions at the prekindergarten/kindergarten and ninth-grade levels were promoted within the report as necessary to effect change at critical junctures in students' academic and personal growth.

#### **E. Program Evaluation and Progress Monitoring**

The Task Force cautioned that the effectiveness of any effort to stem and remedy unexcused student absences can only be evaluated by monitoring progress. As such, progress toward goals should be evaluated on a regular basis by comparing actual and anticipated statistics related to attendance, as well as achievement and behavior. If progress is not noted, then the attendance team has to strategize and apply new interventions.

#### **F. Implications for Further Review and Analysis**

The Task Force recommended that a permanent commission be created that addresses truancy, excessive absences, and student re-engagement on a statewide basis; enables monitoring of progress in the Chicago Public Schools; and provides a clearinghouse for resources, best practices, and data collection related to absenteeism and truancy solutions.

The Task Force recommended that any further evaluation of these issues contemplate a statutorily directed definition of "chronic absenteeism."

The Task Force advocated for the creation of a permanent Special Education Programming Commission to address factors in special needs populations that contribute to increases in absences and truancy among students in early childhood programs, elementary school, and high school; among the homeless population; among students involved in the Juvenile Justice System; and among those who are perceived to be harshly disciplined at a disproportionate rate.

#### **Additional Considerations**

Chicago Public Schools' administration was advised to review and update current board policies using existing data and information to inform each policy. Upon Board of Education approval, Chicago Public Schools District 299 was mandated to immediately create, distribute, and

implement administrative procedure manuals to all schools (including charter schools) within the district and community and civic community partners.

The Task Force found that there are possibilities that exist for the State of Illinois to review current statutes that would not only support the Chicago Public Schools system in its effort to improve attendance and decrease truancy, but would be preventive and proactive in nature for the entire state. The State of Illinois was advised to review its current policy on average daily attendance and the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program.

1. *Average Daily Attendance:* The current statute yields a false positive indicator of school attendance for the entire state as it calls for the average of the three best months of pupil attendance, which is not representative of the entire school year. A statute change that requests both the best three and the worst three months of pupil attendance will give school districts the opportunity to analyze the gap between the best months and worst months of attendance and use that data to inform interventions, strategies, and practices.

Alternatively, a Multiple Measure Index indicator would be a more inclusive representation of student attendance as it would factor in chronic absence, chronic truancy, average daily attendance (with calculation change), and satisfactory attendance (students attending at least 95 percent of the past 180 days).

2. *Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP):* This program serves students with attendance problems and/or dropouts up to and including those who are 21 years of age and provides truancy prevention and intervention services and/or optional education. Chicago Public Schools and Community Colleges of Chicago receive about 40 percent of grant funds in the state, with Chicago Public Schools receiving 26.8 percent of TAOEP funding as part of their block grant.

In fiscal year 2013, Chicago Public Schools served 1,915 students with \$3,082,000. Support is necessary for ISBE to have the resources needed to strengthen its oversight and monitoring of per pupil allocations reported by the Chicago Public Schools from block grant funds.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ATTENDANCE COMMISSION

Illinois is a leader among states in that it has a commission/task force in place to study and resolve chronic absence and truancy among its youngest residents. Members of the Illinois Attendance Commission have held monthly meetings over the last year to lay the foundational groundwork for future deliberations. The statutory provisions related to school attendance, absence, and truancy within the Illinois School Code were examined over the span of several meetings as well as the federal and state laws protecting the education rights of those experiencing homelessness and the statutory repercussions of truancy (Appendices O and P). Three hearings were held to gauge the parameters of the problem from the points of view of both practitioners and parents. *The Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*, conceived as part of a collaborative effort of four federal agencies that included the U. S. Department of Education, was reviewed over several meetings. The toolkit provides salient guidance for everyone who can impact a child's life, from parents, teachers, and mentors to government officials, community partners, and homeless service providers. The meetings also featured robust discussions among members about the causes and solutions of chronic absence and truancy due to members' varied backgrounds and affiliations.

The legislative review demonstrated the existence of definitions in statute for nearly every term associated with attendance, except for "chronic absence." The enactment of ESSA means Illinois must take steps to craft a formal definition of this phrase since one of the accountability measures in this legislation is the responsibility of each state to report its chronic absence numbers. A definition has to be legislated to ensure the collection of accurate chronic absence data so that it may be reported.

Attitudes and perceptions are not changed through legislation and district policy revisions alone, however. Public opinion is very often swayed by strategic marketing and clever advertising as has been demonstrated by the anti-smoking campaign and heightened public awareness about the importance of recycling. The Commission advocates a public relations campaign initiative to message parents and students about the importance of being in school every day. The Commission seeks to partner with many entities in the business, communication, civic, and government sectors to design and launch a major promotion across the state to make it cool to be in school.

More recommendations follow on the next pages in this second annual report of the Attendance Commission to the General Assembly. In accordance with the legislation that created the Commission, the appointed members have been meeting on a monthly basis to study chronic absenteeism in this state and have made and will continue to make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism after gathering and analyzing data, exploring various resources, holding hearings, consulting experts, and collaborating for solutions.

The legislation included five main goals for action that provide a sequential thread for deliberation and action:

- The first outcome advises standard definitions for "attendance" and "chronic absenteeism."
- The second outcome calls for mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor absenteeism.

- The third outcome calls for mechanisms for districts and schools to report the data and account for it.
- The fourth outcome advises the utilization of the data to intervene with students and families to increase attendance.
- The fifth outcome posits the need for new initiatives in response to chronic absenteeism.

Factored into the legislation is the identification of various tiers of participants in the process to remedy chronic absenteeism in Illinois: parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and ISBE.

### **Outcome 1**

**A standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal(s) a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and full day per learning environment**

- The legislative review demonstrated the existence of definitions in statute for nearly every term associated with attendance, except for “chronic absence.” There are some on the Commission who wish to defer to the districts on this matter due to the long-held practice in Illinois of affording districts local control as districts are responsive to individual community needs and characteristics. The enactment of ESSA, however, has made this a moot point since one of the accountability measures in this legislation is the responsibility of each state to report its chronic absence numbers. A definition of “chronic absence” has to be legislated to ensure the collection of accurate data around defined parameters in order to report it. The standard definition employed by the federal government and many states across the country describes “chronic absence” as missing 10 percent of the previous 180 school days for any reason - excused absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions. The Commission has scheduled further discussion of the definition for the December 15, 2016, meeting.
- The Commission additionally asserts the need to continue discussion regarding a definition of what constitutes a school day in conjunction with the definition of “chronic absence.” Discussion around this need was initiated at the November 18, 2016, meeting; therefore, the Commission has no proposal to make at this time but may recommend at a future date after research, consultation with ISBE, and discussion at future meetings that a definition is warranted.
- The Commission also asserts the need for guidance and/or definition of the difference between “excused” and “unexcused” absences.
- There also needs to be more widespread communication regarding the mandatory minimum age for school attendance in Illinois, which was changed to the age of six (student is six years old as of September 1) in 2013 and went into effect when the 2014-15 school year started.

### **Outcome 2**

**Mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this state in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans**

- Commission members who attended the Every Student, Every Day National Conference titled *Eliminating Chronic Absenteeism by Implementing and Strengthening Cross-Sector Systems of Support for All Students*, which took place June 9-10, 2016, in Washington, D.C., reported much discussion on the need to have mechanisms for improved data systems, mechanisms for reporting data, and heightened accountability. Members also explained there are many vendors and programs to help schools gather the data, disaggregate the data, monitor and report the data, and determine trends across student groups so that school communities can effectively respond to the attendance realities revealed by the data.
- The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) was adopted in 2009. The last meeting of the ILDS Governing Board was March 3, 2016, when the group discussed ILDS plan priorities, data privacy issues, and data sharing agreements. The Commission recommends that superintendents ensure the use of a data collection system that is compatible with ISBE in order to share district- and school-level data. This system should be accessible to staff and easily produce monthly and annual public reports. School districts should allocate funding for districtwide professional development on understanding, collecting, tracking, disaggregating, and interpreting attendance data.
- Principals and educators shall accurately identify and report all student absences throughout the school day and engage in timely communication with students and families about absences. School attendance logs should be audited and evaluated on a quarterly basis by school district staff to ensure that schools are actively identifying warning signs of excessive absenteeism and truancy. Designated staff at the school level should continually monitor attendance data to inform strategies and initiatives to improve attendance
- Parents should be informed about the connection between school attendance and student achievement and provided support for their role in their home languages. Attendance data should be shared with families in real time (phone call, text, or email). Principals should designate a school contact person with whom parents can develop a relationship regarding attendance. Appropriate data should be shared with parents to foster collaboration and to reinforce and support student and parental engagement.
- The Attendance Commission also seeks to integrate some of the statutory and regulatory provisions around special interest groups, such as those experiencing homelessness and those with documented disabilities, in order to maintain their educational services such as when these might be delayed pending the outcome of some dispute around residency or enrollment. The main portion of the School Code addresses attendance and truancy, but there are other situations – homelessness, special needs, English Learners, pregnant students – that have to be integrated into broader discussions.



### **Outcome 3**

#### **Mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this state, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting**

- Strategies to meet this outcome are aided by the enactment of two significant pieces of legislation: ESSA and Illinois Public Act 99-0193.
  - ESSA is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and holds states accountable for student achievement in accordance with several indicators within a flexible framework: test results, language proficiency, graduation rates, and choices that can include student engagement, educator engagement, access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate/safety, or any barrier to student success particular to a state. Most importantly to the work of the Commission, ESSA requires that states report chronic absence numbers in recognition of the fact that regular school attendance aids student achievement. ESSA was signed into law in December 2015, but will not take effect fully until the 2017-18 school year. ISBE has conducted three listening tours across the state to gain stakeholder input on the implementation of the new law.
  - The Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee was created by Public Act 99-0193, which requires ISBE to “develop recognition standards for student performance and school improvement...provides that standards must be ... outcomes-based, balanced accountability measure(s).” Antoinette Taylor, chairperson of the Illinois Attendance Commission, and IBAM Chairperson Sara Boucek communicated regarding the inclusion of attendance as an indicator under IBAM, and Ms. Taylor was invited to attend the committee’s November 9, 2016, meeting. IBAM committee members requested information regarding a definition for “chronic absence” and discussed the collection of chronic absence data and the point value for attendance accountability measures. (Appendix Q)
- A concern that was voiced in the Truancy in the Chicago Public Schools report remains an unaddressed concern of members of the Commission: examination of the way the state currently calculates average daily attendance and its impact on generating accurate attendance and absenteeism data, the use of that data to develop and implement improvement plans, and the implications for school funding. The Commission is concerned that average daily attendance and absenteeism are currently unrelated calculations.
- The Commission is additionally concerned about an examination of the current mechanisms for reporting attendance data, the level of accountability inherent in these mechanisms, and any additional mechanisms used by districts that seek to address gaps in the state’s system.
- A related concern is the determination of multiple measures that can be used to get more complete pictures of attendance and absenteeism at the district and school levels and the

measures that can be most effective in generating data that can support effective improvement plans and develop priorities and targets for improvement.

- Quantifying a day of attendance through state policy changes.
  - Disaggregating excused and unexcused absences for the purposes of addressing underlying causes of absenteeism.
  - Disaggregating attendance data based on student populations so as to prioritize actions to address chronic absenteeism.
  - Including community contexts in developing attendance improvement goals (e.g., mobility rates).
  - Recommending a different method for determining average daily attendance.
- Furthermore, the Commission's goal is to develop informed recommendations concerning data sharing structures, systems for identifying absenteeism patterns early and creating intervention plans, and ways to engage families using clear, actionable data.

#### **Outcome 4**

**Best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career**

- At the February 19, 2016, meeting of the Commission, presentations were provided by representatives from the Illinois Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Network, an amalgam of state-sponsored efforts to build the capacity of districts to provide interventions in response to various areas of need, from behavior and academic deficits to parent/family engagement and attendance-related issues. "A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a framework for continuous improvement that is systemic, prevention-focused, and data-informed, providing a coherent continuum of supports responsive to meet the needs of all learners," according to Michele Carmichael and Julie West of the MTSS Network.

The utilization of an MTSS framework to respond to student need, in general, and chronically absent or truant students, in particular, requires district organizational support around funding and policy determination. A district leadership team would then be charged with the task of developing individual building capacity to provide tiered interventions through professional development, coaching, and evaluation. Interventions should be data-based and targeted to specific student need, implemented faithfully, and progress-monitored to determine effectiveness.

The initiative described in the outcome that follows in Outcome 5 is an example of a tier one intervention. A public service campaign to educate and inform the public is designed to reach everyone regardless of the school attendance status of themselves or their loved ones. More specific interventions are provided when data reveals a student is at risk for attendance difficulties. The MTSS PowerPoint is available in Appendix G.



- Attendance Works representatives also provided input at the February meeting and addressed the importance of a tiered approach to improving student attendance and driving academic success.
  - They encouraged universal interventions to recognize good and improved attendance, educate and encourage students and their families, clarify attendance expectations, establish positive and engaging school climates, and address common barriers to school attendance.
  - They promoted targeted interventions for students who exhibit chronic absence by missing 10 percent of their school days: proactive text messaging, personalized early outreach, meetings with student and family, and the offer of an attendance buddy or mentor.
  - Intensive interventions were advised for students who miss 20 percent or more of the school year that include intensive case management with coordination of agency and legal response.
- Senate Bill 100 was signed into law as Public Act 99-0456 on August 24, 2016, by Governor Rauner and took effect on September 15, 2016. It mandates that schools use non-exclusionary types of discipline, apply appropriate behavioral interventions, permit suspended students to make up missed work, and provide professional development to entire school staffs on the adverse effects of school exclusion and justice-system involvement, effective classroom management strategies, and developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climates. The Commission recognizes that implementation of this new addition to the School Code will necessitate communication and collaboration among districts and intends to be the means through which districts can share innovative practices and revised methodologies to ensure adherence to this new law. Healthier school climates and non-exclusionary disciplinary tactics have the potential to contribute to improved attendance statistics. (Appendix I)
- The Commission has also established the need for maintenance of a live binder resource guide, a compendium of resources, initiatives, and exemplary efforts related to the reduction of instances of chronic absence and truancy across the state. The Commission will continue its research into current practices in the remediation of attendance-related problems, both locally and nationally, and use that information to highlight successful practices, make recommendations to districts in the formulation or revision of policies, and inform districts of changes in legislation.

## **Outcome 5**

### **New initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism**

- Legislation, research studies, government programs, and practitioner and parent testimony all seek to provide remedies to a problem that is now viewed as a predictor of diminished expectations for the youth of our state and throughout our nation. The toughest battle, however, in the recently proclaimed war on chronic absence and truancy is one that cannot be fought with the usual weapons of punitive measures and educator pleas for compliance. Much of the struggle lies within the perceptions people have about

missed school days, particularly for our youngest students. Many perceive it is okay for a student to miss an occasional day of school, but a loss of just two attendance days a month tallies to an amount that equals the chronic absence standard. Children who are not taken to school because of some family logistics or who meet little resistance from their parents when they want to stay home are not only on record for achieving below their same grade peers, but they also develop the lifelong habit of irregular attendance, an unreliability that affects the ability to not only stay in school but to maintain employment as well. Older students who may be worn down from the cycle of missed school days and low achievement are uninspired to meet the challenge of regular school attendance and are unable to grasp the connection between school success and career readiness.

Something else is needed to change minds and to foster a public awareness that every day does indeed count, that each missed school day is a loss of precious time. The members of the Commission have determined that a public relations campaign can help accomplish what state laws, federal studies, and educator involvement cannot completely do: it can change minds.

Such an undertaking requires the collaborative efforts of Illinois residents who are willing to commit their time, talent, and expertise to a public relations campaign that needs to have broad appeal and extensive media coverage. State and municipal leaders, state legislators, civic leaders, advertising companies, marketing agencies, newspaper outlets, television and radio stations, public transit companies, and area celebrities must be contacted to volunteer their services to communicate to parents and students that it is cool to be in school, that every day counts, that school attendance can be the ticket to a life of promise and fulfillment. The linchpin of the campaign is “Every Student Counts, Every Day Matters,” a catchphrase that succinctly condenses the message of the necessity of regular school attendance. It must be so broadly communicated in a variety of ways so it permeates the consciousness of everyone who is a child, who parents a child, or who knows a child. (Examples: “Just do it.” – Nike, “You deserve a break today.” – McDonalds, “Where’s the beef?” – Wendy’s, “A mind is a terrible thing to waste.” – United Negro College Fund)

The General Assembly will be asked to vote on an Attendance Awareness Joint Resolution in January 2017. Illinois State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia and State Senator Jacqueline Collins will introduce the following resolution.

**Attendance Awareness House Resolution Draft**

**WHEREAS** the early years are a critical period in children’s learning and development, and set the foundation for higher level thinking skills later in life; and

**WHEREAS** missing too many days of school can make it difficult for youth to stay on track in classes and maintain momentum for graduation from high school; and

**WHEREAS** chronic absenteeism is a powerful predictor of the students who may eventually drop out of school; and

**WHEREAS** chronic absenteeism can lead to poor educational and life outcomes for children; and

**WHEREAS** students with documented disabilities are more likely to be absent from school than their same-aged peers; and

**WHEREAS** children and youth who are homeless benefit from being in school and yet are more likely to be chronically absent; and

**WHEREAS** the hard work of educators is undermined by chronic absenteeism among students; and

**WHEREAS** positive re-engagement strategies can decrease chronic absenteeism and youth involvement in the juvenile justice system; and

**WHEREAS** children with involved families have better school attendance, lower suspension rates and overall higher graduation rates; and

**WHEREAS** students who are in school every day are much more likely to engage in positive behaviors; and

**WHEREAS** community involvement decreases chronic absenteeism and potentially increases the local quality of life; and

**WHEREAS** school attendance promotes college and career readiness, thereby increasing the number of students in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials, therefore be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS**, that we encourage the Illinois State Board of Education and each school district in this State to consider the benefits of the attendance awareness campaign *Every Student Counts, Every Day Matters* encouraged by the Illinois Attendance Commission; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the Illinois State Board of Education and the Regional Offices of Education.

- Certain transition stages in a child's academic life trigger school attendance difficulties: preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to first grade, and elementary or middle school to high school. Commission members expressed the need for schools, parents, and communities to recognize the difficulty of these transitions and to strategize solutions to keep students engaged at these critical junctures.
- The Commission has also established the need for maintenance of a live binder, a compendium of resources, initiatives, and exemplary efforts related to the reduction of instances of chronic absence and truancy across the state. The Commission will continue its research into current practices in the remediation of attendance-related problems, both locally and nationally, and use that information to highlight successful practices, make recommendations to districts in the formulation or revision of policies, and inform districts of changes in legislation.
- A discussion of the components of the *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* revealed strategies to engage everyone from government, school, health, and public safety officials to parents, mentors, community leaders, and the students themselves to lend their talents and energy to make

a difference in the lives of young people who lack both a commitment to their education and a vision of their future. These strategies can be communicated through a public relations campaign and wide scale promotion of this toolkit. (Appendix E)

- The Commission anticipates that the combination of the following factors will guide the mission to address chronic absenteeism in Illinois:
  - analysis and discussion of research and reports by experts and policymakers, such as the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force report
  - proven successful state and national initiatives
  - school and community input from public hearings across Illinois
  - input from stakeholders
  - best practices that emerge from practitioners in the field

### **Hearings**

The legislation additionally called for the Commission to “hold periodic hearings to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance.” The Commission held three hearings this year: two with practitioners and one with the general public.

#### ***ICEARY Practitioner Hearing***

On March 3, 2016, several Commission members were present at the Illinois Coalition for the Education of At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) 2016 Conference in Bloomington-Normal in order to hold a hearing with the conference attendees. ICEARY is an organization whose members work in the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP), truancy intervention and alternative education, regional safe schools that serve students who have been expelled or repeatedly suspended, the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program for youth who are credit-deficient, and in programs of service to the community experiencing homelessness. ICEARY includes a wide representation of people who work directly with children and teens with attendance-related problems.

This hearing provided Commission members with feedback on situations that impact the effectiveness of truancy response efforts as well as strategies that enabled students to recover from deficits caused by chronic absence and truancy.

The practitioners in attendance remediation efforts felt they had neither timely access to attendance data, nor prompt referrals for assistance from district and school staffs. These practitioners felt warning signs were missed, particularly at the transition level grades: fourth, seventh, and ninth. They also cited inconsistent absence/truancy policies among and within districts as well as a lack of effective consequences for students who are chronically absent and/or truant.

Several strategies were cited as effective, but most require expansion and increased maintenance of effort. One such strategy that resulted in improved school attendance for students who are chronically absent involved increased levels of communication with and among all stakeholders - students, families, district/school staffs, and community groups - in order to build strong, interactive, responsive relationships. Another effective strategy was the timely provision of interventions, although many felt these were provided on an inconsistent basis. Mentoring

programs were cited as effective, but these need to be expanded in many areas to include peer mentors, community-based partners, and faith-based collaborators.

Other well-intentioned strategies fell short, however, for unsurprising reasons: inconsistent application, uneven adherence to policy, insufficient time for personal outreach, incorrect attendance data, uncooperative families, the difficulty of navigation within the courts and other governmental bodies, and funding shortfalls.

The solutions provided by these foot soldiers in the school attendance battle include many proactive measures such as enhanced mentoring, social service support, personal empowerment campaigns, incentive programs, peer sharing of best practices, and increased efforts at prevention.

Documents related to this event can be accessed in Appendix J.

#### ***Public Hearing at St. Sabina Church in Chicago***

A public hearing was co-sponsored by Illinois State Senator Jacqueline Collins and Illinois State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia on the evening on September 13, 2016 on the south side of Chicago at St. Sabina Catholic Parish's McMahon Hall. The parents and community members in attendance voiced many concerns about attendance data, reasons for absenteeism/truancy, and the strategies needed to combat the problems.

There were some in attendance who felt the schools report attendance data incorrectly to authorities and insufficiently to parents and faulted the state for not maintaining a statewide early warning system. Some attendees cited shortcomings with regard to the legal ramifications of chronic absence and truancy, such as the length of the legal process, inconsistencies within the process, and the fact that court ordered mandates do not change behaviors.

Funding issues were cited as roadblocks to efforts to stem the tide of absenteeism, especially with regard to providing families the supports that are needed to remedy domestic ills that contribute to students' absences. Others decried the practice of doctors supplying releases from school attendance at the request of the parents.

Suggestions for remedies included the application of interventions on a timely basis; opportunities for education, medical, and legal professionals to share best practices and work cohesively; increased positive family engagement strategies; and development of transition protocols when students move from middle/elementary school to high school.

Documents related to this event can be accessed in Appendix K.

#### ***Practitioner Hearing at Triple I Conference***

The Commission held a hearing at the joint annual conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Association of School Business Officials on November 18, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago.

Among those in attendance were many who expressed difficulty with judicial remedies for truancy:

- The court requires factual information on excused or unexcused absences, and there is nothing uniform across the state to address excused versus unexcused absences.
- Judges' hands are tied because they can't put students in jail, and there is no one to monitor students' completion of public service hours assigned by the court.
- Districts cannot take the students to court unless every possible/reasonable intervention has been attempted.
- Another issue is that Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) may have to work with different judicial systems within their jurisdiction, all with different expectations

Hearing attendees also expressed concern over what they perceive to be funding anomalies within the Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP):

- The feel that TAOEP should not be competitive – the Chicago Public Schools and community colleges are given 40 percent of the funds and the ratio of number of students served versus the amount of money they receive is not equitable.
- One ROE has three specialists working with 350 truants and only gets \$115,000 a year.

Those present at the hearing offered positive points of view about the Alternative Learning Opportunities Programs (ALOP), which provides a broad range of academic, behavioral, and social/emotional interventions not provided in conventional school programming in order to ensure the achievement of students at risk for failure:

- ALOP is focused on the needs of the districts.
- Students never have to leave their home school.
- There was general agreement that ALOPs need to continue as they allow the ROEs to keep students in school who normally would just drop out.
- ALOP allows time for restorative justice practices.

There were several issues cited by hearing attendees as contributing to the overall growing problems of chronic absence and truancy.

- Poverty is a contributing factor.
- Ineffective parenting is evident and reflects a misunderstanding of the value of education, a situation that requires a cultural shift and greater family engagement:
  - Parents allow their children to stay home or they just don't take their children to school.
  - By the time some students reach eighth grade, their parents have already given up the battle over school attendance.
  - ROEs provide alarm clocks, clothes, socks, lice removal products, etc.
- Mental health issues also impact truancy – districts need more social workers.
- Administrators voiced the need to be able to start to refer earlier at a younger age (first or second grade) to be proactive and offer a preventative to stop the trend of truancy.
- Some administrators voiced concern about the way students are treated when they do return to school.
- Some areas have tried to align school calendars across all of the districts in their area to help working parents with students' days off.



- Finally, inequitable funding across the state was cited as another factor in the battle to address chronic absence and truancy rates.

A document related to this event can be accessed in Appendix L.

### **Illinois Student Assistance Commission - College Changes Everything**

On November 3, 2016, the College Changes Everything (CCE) component of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) sponsored an event titled *Continuing the Conversation ... A Learning Community Focused on Student College and Career Readiness and Success* to discuss the importance and the impact of attendance. Participants shared ideas about ways to address student attendance that included accessible information for everyone; ongoing messaging about existing state statutes, policies, and administrative procedures; family engagement and education; early warning and alert systems that start with chronic absence rather than chronic truancy; ongoing attendance awareness and district policy orientation for students, faculty, staff, and families; measurable accountability systems for students, faculty, staff, and families; and increased communication among all stakeholders from prekindergarten through higher education, including community partners like the police departments, public libraries, and park districts. This event was attended by several members of the Commission.

Documents associated with this event can be accessed in Appendix M.

CCE was initiated to facilitate the goal of the P-20 Council in Illinois to have 60 percent of the state's young adult population have a degree or some other working credential by 2025. Sam Nelson of the CCE initiative explained the term "college" is used to refer to any postsecondary schooling or training. He said employers look for students with "soft" skills, such as showing up for work each day on time. Mr. Nelson said this work ethic derives from good attendance while in school. Scattered throughout the state are more than 80 members of the ISAC Corps, young people who are recent college graduates who are helping students and families navigate academic and training opportunities for postsecondary students.

### **Attendance Works Survey - Survey Monkey**

In preparation for the Every Student, Every Day Conference (which was held in Washington, D.C., in June 2016), Attendance Works distributed a survey to all prospective conference attendees to assess their state's attendance policies and practices. The Attendance Commission made this survey available to all Commission members and to the participants of the ISAC CCE event (described above) in order to measure how practitioners across the state who are engaged in attendance remediation efforts perceive the state's efforts in this regard.

Those surveyed were asked to provide responses to 20 questions about the policies and practices within Illinois around attendance data collection and sharing, formation of community-based partnerships and other collaborative alliances, the state's guidance on improvement measures and professional development, and the state's use of data to target resources. Survey respondents were to assess the state's position on each practice/policy question according to the following

choices for response: *Strength, Okay for now, Could be better, Urgent gap, Not the role of an SEA, or Don't know.*

Eleven of the first twelve survey questions dealing with policy (#3-13) elicited “Could be better” responses from the majority of survey respondents. These questions focused on a state longitudinal data system, a standard definition for “chronic absence,” LEAs’ early warning systems for at-risk students, efforts of the state superintendent to promote attendance awareness, how well the state leverages its investment in early childhood and programming outside regular school hours by tracking student attendance, distribution of state resources to districts with high absence patterns, state’s communication of exemplary programming to struggling districts, existence of a statewide attendance policy manual, ability of LEAs across the state to analyze data to guide solutions and interventions, and availability of professional development on chronic absence data collection and analysis and corrective responses.

The only question in the survey that received a majority response of “Strength” was whether or not the state had convened “a task force that includes key community stakeholders and public agency representatives (physical and behavioral health, transportation, law enforcement, etc.) that meets regularly to review chronic absence data in the context of other student, school, and community data, to identify causes of absence and opportunities for action, to discuss implications for targeting available resources, and to set goals for improved attendance.”

The full results of this survey can be viewed in Appendix N.



## VI. IN SUMMARY.....

The Illinois Attendance Commission had its inaugural meeting in early December 2015 and since then has laid a solid foundational groundwork. The recommendations of the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force report provided a springboard for research, discussion, and action. The participation of Commission appointees from various educational associations, state agencies, and public service nonprofits assures a collaboration that encompasses the responsibilities of all tiers of participants in the formulation of strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to address and prevent attendance-related difficulties among the student-age population in our state.

Central to the work of the Commission in its first year of meetings was the legislative review that was spread out over the span of five meetings to provide adequate coverage of all laws in the state that pertain to school attendance in the School Code, including compulsory school attendance, truancy, chronic truancy, and other related attendance terms. The School Code additionally sets forth the responsibility of school districts to adopt absenteeism policies and truancy policies subject to the approval of ISBE. As expansive as the School Code is, however, it does not embody a valid definition of “chronic absence” or what constitutes an “excused” absence versus an “unexcused” one, nor does it address the particular needs of students from certain populations, such as those who are homeless, have special needs, are English learners, or are pregnant.

In the span of the last twelve months, the Commission has held three hearings to gauge the perceptions and the practices of parents and practitioners on issues related to chronic absence and truancy. These hearings have provided invaluable information that included the concerns of parents about timely, accurate data and the provision of early interventions and the pragmatic point of view from practitioners in the field who want greater equity in program funding and more public awareness around the problem.

At this early juncture, Commission members have projected a number of goals related to each of the five outcomes that encompass common definitions for all attendance-related words, especially “chronic absence” and “excused” and “unexcused” absences, new methods to tabulate the average daily attendance rate, improved methods for data tracking, methods to plumb the data to understand the scope and causes of the problem, the provision of targeted interventions to rectify patterns of nonattendance, a broad public relations campaign to bring a message of the importance of school attendance into every state household, and the formulation of new policies to decrease the likelihood that so many Illinois students will have diminished their prospects for fulfilling and productive lives by missing time in class.

## APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Public Act 99-0432

Appendix B: Roster of Commission Members

Appendix C: Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Appendix D: Public Act 99-0601

Appendix E: U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Department of Education: *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

Appendix F: U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights: *Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools: An unprecedented look at a hidden educational crisis*

Appendix G: Illinois MTSS Network PowerPoint Presentation

Appendix H: Attendance Works PowerPoint: *Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic Absence in Illinois: Why Does It Matter? What Can We Do?*

Appendix I: Public Act 99-0456

Appendix J: Illinois Coalition for the Education of At-risk Youth (ICEARY) Practitioner Hearing Documents

Appendix K: St. Sabina Public Hearing Documents

Appendix L: Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Association of School Business Officials Practitioner Hearing Documents

Appendix M: College Changes Everything (CCE) Event: Continuing the Conversation: A Learning Community Focused on Student College and Career Documents

Appendix N: Attendance Works Survey Results

Appendix O: Illinois State Board of Education PowerPoint: *Statutory Repercussions for Truancy*

Appendix P: Illinois State Board of Education PowerPoint: *McKinney-Vento and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act*

Appendix Q: Public Act 99-0193

Appendix R: Attendance Awareness Joint Resolution

Appendix S: Binder of Resources

## **Appendix A: Public Act 99-0432**

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by adding Section 2-3.163 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.163 new)

Sec. 2-3.163. Attendance Commission.

(a) The Attendance Commission is created within the State Board of Education to study the issue of chronic absenteeism in this State and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission shall consist of all of the following members:

(1) The Director of the Department of Children and Family Services or his or her designee.

(2) The Chairperson of the State Board of Education or his or her designee.

(3) The Chairperson of the Board of Higher Education or his or her designee.

(4) The Secretary of the Department of Human Services or his or her designee.

(5) The Director of the Department of Public Health or his or her designee.

(6) The Chairperson of the Illinois Community College

Board or his or her designee.

(7) The Chairperson of the State Charter School Commission or his or her designee.

(8) An individual that deals with children's disabilities, impairments, and social emotional issues, appointed by the State Superintendent of Education.

(9) One member from each of the following organizations, appointed by the State Superintendent of Education:

(A) A non-profit organization that advocates for students in temporary living situations.

(B) An Illinois-focused, non-profit organization that advocates for the well-being of all children and families in this State.

(C) An Illinois non-profit, anti-crime organization of law enforcement that researches and recommends early learning and youth development strategies to reduce crime.

(D) An Illinois non-profit organization that conducts community-organizing around family issues.

(E) A statewide professional teachers' organization.

(F) A different statewide professional teachers' organization.

(G) A professional teachers' organization in a city having a population exceeding 500,000.

(H) An association representing school administrators.

(I) An association representing school board members.

(J) An association representing school principals.

(K) An association representing regional superintendents of schools.

(L) An association representing parents.

(M) An association representing high school districts.

(N) An association representing large unit districts.

(O) An organization that advocates for healthier school environments in Illinois.

(P) An organization that advocates for the health and safety of Illinois youth and families by providing capacity building services.

(Q) A statewide association of local philanthropic organizations that advocates for effective educational, health, and human service policies to improve this State's communities.

(R) A statewide organization that advocates for partnerships among schools, families, and the community that provide access to support and remove barriers to learning and development, using schools as hubs.

(S) An organization representing statewide programs actively involved in truancy intervention.

Attendance Commission members shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for their travel expenses from appropriations to the State Board of Education available for that purpose and subject to the rules of the appropriate travel control board.

(b) The Attendance Commission shall meet initially at the call of the State Superintendent of Education. The members shall elect a chairperson at their initial meeting. Thereafter, the Attendance Commission shall meet at the call of the chairperson. The Attendance Commission shall hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance.

(c) The Attendance Commission shall identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:

(1) a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;

(2) mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this State in a way that



identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;

(3) mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this State, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;

(4) best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and

(5) new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.

(d) The State Board of Education shall provide administrative support to the Commission. The Attendance Commission shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than December 15 of each year.

(e) The Attendance Commission is abolished and this Section is repealed on December 16, 2020.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.

## **Appendix B: Roster of Commission Members**

# Illinois Attendance Commission Attendance Roster

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
V-Tel Room, Fourteenth Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
V-Tel Room, Third Floor  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Commission Member	12/04/15	01/25/16	02/19/16	03/10/16	04/04/16	05/06/16	06/23/16	07/28/16	09/22/16	10/27/16	11/18/16	12/15/16
Anderson, Karen Hunter <i>Illinois Community College Board</i> Appointed March 24, 2016					NP	NP	NP	PS	PSX	NP	PSX	
Aranowski, Jeff <i>Illinois State Board of Education</i>	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PS	NP	PC	PC	PC	
Stephanie Bernoteit <i>Illinois Board of Higher Education</i> Appointed January 4, 2016, notification provided March 18, 2016					NP	NP	PS	PS	PS	PP	NP	
Bishop, Mark <i>Healthy Schools Campaign</i> Resigned February 1, 2016	PC	PC										
Campos, Christina <i>Family Focus</i> Appointed May 27, 2016							NP	PC	NP	NP	NP	
Carroll, Emily <i>Healthy Schools Campaign</i> Appointed June 23, 2016 Resigned September 22, 2016								PP	NP			
Fanello, Lori <i>Illinois Association of Regional</i>	PC	PP	PP	PP	PP	NP	PC	PP	NP	PP	PC	

<i>Superintendents of Schools</i>												
Fox, Karen <i>United Way</i>	PC	PC	PC	PP	PP	PC	PP	PP	PP	PP	PC	
Gholson, Tiffany <i>Department of Children and Family Services</i> Appointed January 2016		PC	PC	NP	NP	NP	PP	PC	PC	NP	NP	
Gill, Jennifer <i>Illinois Association of School Administrators</i>	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	PPX	
Grigsby-Jackson, Diane <i>Illinois Department of Human Services</i>	PP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	PPX	NP	NP	
Grove, Heidi <i>Illinois Federation of Teachers</i>	PS	PP	PP	PP	NP	NP	NP	PP	PP	NP	PP	
Jackson, Victoria <i>Illinois Department of Public Health</i> Appointed January 2016		PS	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP	NP	PS	PS	PP	
James, Madelyn <i>Voices for Illinois Children</i>	PC	NP	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	NP	NP	
Johnson, Shenita <i>Illinois State Charter School Commission</i> Appointed October 25, 2016											PP	
Jones, Hosanna <i>Illinois State Charter School Commission</i> Appointed April 1, 2015 Resigned October 20, 2016					PC	PP	NP	NP	PP			
Malik, Elizabeth C. <i>Law Project of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless</i>	PC	NP	PC	NP	PC	NP	PC	PC	PC	NP	PC	
Mann Ryan <i>Healthy Schools Campaign</i> Appointed October 25, 2016											PP	
Mays, Alexandra			PC	PP	NP	PP	NP					

<i>Healthy Schools Campaign</i> Appointed February 1, 2016 Resigned June 23, 2016												
McMahon, Joseph <i>Kane County State's Attorney</i> Appointed March 24, 2016					PP	PP	NP	NP	PP	PP	NP	
Mitchell, Melissa <i>Federation for Community Schools</i>	PC	PC	PC	PP	PC	PC	NP	PP	PP	NP	PP	
Rodriguez, Matthew <i>Illinois Parent Teacher Association</i>	PP	PC	NP	NP	NP	NP	PC	PC	PP	NP	PC	
Rutledge, Diane <i>Large Unit District Association</i>	NP	PP	PS	NP	NP	NP	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP	
Stamps, Tara <i>Chicago Teachers Union</i> Resigned February 11, 2016	NP	NP										
Sullivan, Deanna <i>Illinois Association of School Boards</i>	PS	PS	PS	PS	NP	NP	PS	PS	PS	PS	NP	
Sweeney, Harold <i>Truants Alternative Optional Education Program</i>	PC	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP	PC	PP	PP	PPX	PC	
Taylor, Antoinette <i>Exceptional Needs Consultant</i>	PC	PS	PC	PC	PS	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	
Wakeley, Scott <i>High School District Organization of Illinois</i>	PC	NP	PP	NP	PP	NP	NP	NP	PP	NP	NP	
Weitekamp, Crysta <i>Illinois Education Association</i>	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP	NP	NP	PP	NP	NP	NP	
Westall, Kevin <i>Illinois Principals Association</i> Appointed February 25, 2015			PS	PP	NP	NP	PP	PP	NP	NP	NP	

Code:

PC -Present in Chicago

PS - Present in Springfield

PP – Present via telephone

NP – Not Present

PX – Present by Proxy (effective July 29, 2016 after roll call vote to amend the Rules of Procedure)

## **Appendix C: Meeting Agendas and Minutes**

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda

March 10, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

- 
- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from February 19, 2016 Meeting
  - IV. Public Hearing Debrief
  - V. Final Report Update
  - VI. Discussion of the Possible Public Relations Campaign
  - VII. Discussion of Attendance Works Survey
  - VIII. Public Comment
  - IX. New Business and Open Discussion
  - X. Adjourn

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Commission members seeking to participate by telephone may do so by dialing 1-888-494-4032 and entering the following access code: 3 6 3 3 7 5 2 7 0 9



# Illinois Attendance Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor V-tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor V-tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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## I. Roll Call

### Present

Jeff Aranowski (Chicago)  
Lori Fanello (telephone)  
Karen Fox (telephone)  
Heidi Grove (telephone)  
Victoria Jackson (telephone)  
Madelyn James (Chicago)  
Alexandra Mays (telephone)  
Melissa Mitchell (telephone)  
Deanna Sullivan (Springfield)  
Harold Sweeney (telephone)  
Antoinette Taylor (Chicago)  
Crysta Weitekamp (telephone)  
Kevin Westall (telephone)

### Not Present

Tiffany Gholson  
Jennifer Gill  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson  
Elizabeth C. Malik  
Matthew Rodriguez  
Diane Rutledge  
Scott Wakeley

## II. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chairperson Antoinette Taylor welcomed the commission members to the meeting.

## III. Approval of Minutes from February 19, 2016 Meeting

Victoria Jackson wished to correct the minutes by indicating she had been present on the telephone during the February 19 meeting. Jeff Aranowski noted that the word 'Agenda' was in the heading rather than 'Minutes.'

Madelyn James moved to accept the minutes with corrections and Mr. Aranowski seconded. The minutes were then approved by all present.

## IV. Public Hearing Debrief

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Ms. Taylor asked the members of the Public Hearing Committee (Jeff Aranowski, Madelyn James, Lori Fanello, Harold Sweeney, and Deanna Sullivan) to provide a summary of the hearing that was held on March 3, 2016, at the Illinois Coalition for Educating At-risk Youth (ICEARY) Conference in Bloomington-Normal.

Ms. Sullivan said the hearing was widely attended by many people throughout the state who have expertise in the areas of attendance and truancy, and the information they shared was especially instructive. She categorized the ideas expressed by hearing attendees under three headings: Identification, Interventions and Supports, and Challenges.

#### Identification (of the Problem)

- Lack of access to attendance data – need immediate access
- Need standard, uniform attendance policies, not building to building differences
- Need immediate response to each incident of truancy
- Must see warning signs earlier
- Referral to truancy officers earlier
- Special attention to fourth, seventh, and ninth graders, students entering transition grade levels

#### Interventions and Supports

- Community- and faith-based supports are vital
- Peer juries and/or truancy review boards have benefits
- Use of mentors who were formerly truant students
- Transition back to school setting from alternative programs specific to students who have long term absenteeism
- Home visits are very important
- Need more choices for reporting attendance data
- Power to administer consequences
- Outside agency help with the population under age 10
- Have constructive consequences in each Regional Office of Education (ROE)

#### Challenges

- No real consequences for absent/truant students (repeatedly stated)
- Lack of consequences even after extensive provision of services
- Special interest groups tie the hands of state's attorneys
- Funding

Ms. Fanello shared her impressions and expressed how grateful the members of the ICEARY group were to share their thoughts and ideas with members of the commission as they are people who are very passionate about their jobs. She categorized the comments expressed by hearing attendees according to the following divisions:

#### What Is Working?

- Many positive relationships among students and families and administrators and secretaries
- Truancy review boards (need more) that hold hearings to get kids back in school and parents on board with measures

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### What Is Not Working?

- Inconsistencies between the ROEs and the county courts – not everyone does it the same way and when you have many counties in a ROE, you have to know what the court is going to do in one county and what it will do in the next.
- Mental health issues came up multiple times and the fact that there is very little support to address those issues with children and their families.
- Mentioned very often is the fact there are no real consequences, and the courts do not have the power to change behaviors.
- Need more consequences and need more support to help students overcome issues

### What Else?

- Preventative grants to work with students with excessive excused absences either individually or in small groups
- Professionals need to share their best practices instead of working in siloes, need to share their exemplary work.

Ms. James concurred with Ms. Fanello and Ms. Sullivan. She referred to her recent attendance at a P-20 Council meeting with Representative Linda Chapa LaVia where there had been a presentation and discussion of the Governor's Cabinet for Children and Youth, an effort that would facilitate targeted, collaborative efforts by different state agencies and departments to address issues together rather than in a series of overlapping and separate programs. She felt the attendance issue would garner attention and promote concerted efforts.

At the hearing, Ms. James said people were basically in two camps:

- Those who advocated for preventive measures, intervention strategies, building relationships, and trying to get to the root of truancy problems
- Those who think the laws we have should be followed, and there should be uniform consequences when they are not.

Ms. James advocated for an examination of early school attendance problems in order to resolve issues before they become truancy problems. School and district staffs have to find the underlying reasons for younger students' attendance and truancy issues. It is incumbent upon them to figure out why children are not getting to school on time or, more specifically, why their families are not getting them to school on time rather than simply relying on enforcement of the laws. She feels families are not acting in defiance of laws but rather in response to other pressing needs like finding secure housing, stable employment, and sufficient food; however, there are some families that must also be engaged in a way that they see that it is in their own self-interest for their children to attend school.

Mr. Aranowski explained that public hearings will yield different results depending on the particular community that is being heard. The public hearing at the ICEARY conference was attended by those who deal with at-risk youth whose school attendance issues have devolved into chronic truancy. Many participants in that discussion are truant officers or run alternative education programs. He said that when the commission conducts hearings in other areas, we may hear more about issues of particular communities – crime, poverty, and other root causes – so the commission has to look at this holistically. He recalled the public hearings that were held when he was a member of the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force in three different Chicago communities when attendees expressed disdain for punitive measures in response to chronic

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absence and truancy. He said the public hearings are an incredible opportunity to engage with the public on all sides of the issue.

Mr. Aranowski also expressed his gratitude to the ICEARY members for going out of their way to accommodate the commission by not only providing an opportunity to hold a hearing at their annual conference but for attending it in large numbers as well. He looks forward to the possibility of an annual hearing at the group's conference and the opportunity for commission members to be conference presenters.

Ms. Taylor addressed the concept that prevention through proactive measures to initiate change is a good strategy with the families of children who are very young. She said everyone agrees that if we get to children and their families early, we can prevent attendance problems from occurring. By fourth grade, the concept of school attendance has to be ingrained within both. She explained further, conversely, that when proactive policies fail, schools must be reactive in the face of attendance problems. One reactive response is to look at excused absences because for some children they occur too frequently and when children are not in school, they are missing out.

Mr. Aranowski informed the commission that the National Association for the Education of Homeless Youth and Children (NAEHYC) has an annual conference this year in Orlando and another one planned for next year here in Chicago. They will be soliciting presentations and he would like the commission to present at this conference.

## **V. Final Report Update**

Mr. Aranowski informed the commission that the annual report that had been prepared by the commission administrator with input from commission members, had been sent to an editor in Springfield, was finalized, signed by Superintendent Tony Smith, and sent for publication in Springfield. It will be delivered to the state Board of Education and the General Assembly on Monday, March 14.

Ms. Taylor reminded everyone that HB 4343 is still on the back burner. This is the bill establishing an extended timeline for this annual report, from December 15, 2015 to March 15, 2016. The text of this bill was included in the appendix of the report.

## **VI. Discussion of the Possible Public Relations Campaign**

Ms. Taylor launched a discussion of a possible public relations campaign to be conducted by the commission. She said the annual "Back to School" awareness campaign is not sufficient but could be encompassed into a larger effort. An attendance awareness campaign would educate people about the compulsory age of attendance in the state (age six) and could convince parents they are accountable for their children's attendance patterns. Ms. Taylor suggested everyone on the Commission could use their websites as vehicles to promote the public relations messages about school attendance to parents and stakeholders, and on the Attendance Commission's website, there could be a resource tab for parents and educators.

Ms. James said her organization would cooperate and she wondered if there was a way to link this effort with the national *Every Student, Every Day* campaign which offers a broader, stronger message than just a back to school reminder. She feels the only tagline we need is the *Every Student, Every Day – Illinois* so people understand children have to be in school every day.

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Melissa Mitchell agreed that our effort should be linked to the national campaign because of the amount of resources that are available through this campaign. She said her organization's website would love to promote a statewide attendance campaign and wondered if the state superintendent would include it in his newsletters.

Mr. Aranowski said once we have a message, we can approach the superintendent for inclusion in his weekly bulletin. He suggested that the commission could also conduct webinars. He referred to information that Ms. Taylor had shared about the involvement of Attorney General Kamala Harris in California who spearheads a statewide effort aimed at bolstering school attendance in partnership with other government agencies, professional alliances and associations, and foundations. He suggested the launch of a similar statewide effort with the collaborative involvement of many state agencies, educational administrators, civic entities, private business, and charitable foundations.

Ms. Taylor said there are so many boards and associations represented on the attendance commission, that that would provide a way to get started to before launching a full out campaign in 2017.

Ms. James said Matthew Rodriguez would be very helpful to a public relations campaign startup as he is head of the Illinois Parent Teacher Association. She said we should begin to communicate our message to administrator academies and other gatherings of administrative stakeholders across the state, and there has to be a plan to roll things out in 2017 and engage with various stakeholder sectors around the issue of school attendance.

Mr. Aranowski asserted the need for a strategic plan as the commission has a long life span and has the potential to be quite thorough. The commission needs to be very intentional and strategic in its planning because the execution of a plan in a scattered approach will dilute the message. The plan must also be regularly evaluated to assure effectiveness.

Ms. Mitchell concurred and said we need a strategic plan

Ms. Taylor suggested a short term strategic plan and a long term one.

Mr. Aranowski suggested the commission administrator gauge the interest of commission members to form a subcommittee to examine this issue and present a plan.

## **VII. Discussion of Attendance Works Survey**

Ms. Taylor explained that Attendance Works had sent a survey entitled *State Attendance Policy and Practice* through the Network to Advance State Attendance Policy and Practice (NASAPP) which was to be completed on behalf of the commission. Ms. Taylor and Mr. Aranowski considered the survey's questions, many of them centered on longitudinal data systems, types of attendance data used in state calculations, guidance on excused absences, the level of disaggregation of statewide attendance data, state policies on district accountability for absences, etc., and realized they could provide either limited answers or no responses to many of the questions. As a result, the questions for which they had no answers or only partial responses could serve as a guide for what the commission needs to accomplish during its tenure. Ms. Taylor requested a pdf of the survey from Attendance Works for the commission members to reference.

Mr. Aranowski explained that the survey focuses on chronic absences and truancy, fits in perfectly with what we are trying to do, and will generate thoughtful direction.

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Ms. Taylor said the commission has generated a lot of interest and Deanna Sullivan explained there was a piece of legislation that was heard last week in the House Education Committee, and it had to do with removing the penalties for truancy and making certain interventions priorities over others (HB4240).

Harold Sweeney explained that ICEARY has expressed its opposition to the bill as it is written. Ms. Sullivan said her alliance has opposed it as well. HB 4240 would remove the stipulation that if a parent is found guilty of assisting his/her child in not attending school, that parent can be found guilty of a Class C misdemeanor, be fined up to \$500, and serve 90 days in jail and substitute a requirement that the parent take a parenting class instead. ICEARY opposes this bill because right now they feel they don't have a whole lot going for them to back them up, and unfortunately, the possible hammer of penalties is the only thing people notice.

Mr. Sweeney referred also to his attendance brochure *No Big Deal* which will be sent out to commission members.

Ms. Taylor said there is much interest in the work of the commission. Rep. Madigan has a task force in the House that is looking at funding reform and Senator Manar is working on a solution on the Senate side. A recommendation from the Truancy in the Chicago Public Schools Task Force regarding calculating average daily attendance for the state report card and GSA was included in HB3200 which was introduced last year but did not move beyond rules; however, it could be possible for similar measures to be included during this or future sessions. The P-20 Council was very involved with the truancy task force and Ms. Taylor will reach out to the Council in hopes of a similar collaboration with the Attendance Commission.

Ms. Taylor reminded members that it is one thing to be appointed to the commission, but it is another thing to serve. She asked that if anyone knows of anyone who would be interested in attending meetings or presenting at a meeting, they should contact the commission administrator or be referred to the official attendance e-mail address and/or website.

### **VIII. Public Comment**

A representative from Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), a parent advocacy group, was present. She said her organization completed a study entitled *Why Isn't Johnny in Preschool?* which examined why more than half of preschool-aged children in Chicago were either not enrolled or not present in school. Transportation difficulties, work schedules, lack of awareness of available programs, navigation difficulties with online enrollment procedures were commonly cited barriers. Punitive measures for nonattendance of an enrolled child would dissuade parents from enrolling their children. Ms. Taylor invited the representative from COFI to forward a pdf of their study to the Attendance Commission e-mail address.

Ms. James cited some findings of Attendance Works with regard to encouraging preschool attendance: punitive measures rarely worked but an explanation of the effects of irregular school attendance on future achievement was effective.

### **IX. New Business and Open Discussion**

Kevin Westall explained that many students with school attendance problems come from homes with little access to the internet, so online efforts to promote school attendance for that audience will fall flat. There has to be an effort to communicate in another way with these families. He also

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reminded his peers that many younger students in pre-kindergarten to kindergarten have poor attendance rates. While pre-k attendance is not mandatory, efforts still have to be directed at families with children enrolled who are not attending regularly; otherwise, non-attendance patterns develop and are difficult to break.

Ms. James referenced the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research's report - *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*. She said the report highlights a nearly 40% spike in absenteeism among preschoolers in Chicago with a 54% - 46% split over the causes, illness vs. family logistics. She said this is the level at which we must intervene in order to create lifelong school attendance habits. Ms. James also reiterated the need to intervene during the key transition periods, from pre-kindergarten and kindergarten to the primary grades, to the intermediate grades, to middle school, and at the ninth grade level with both the children and their families because of the heightened expectations at each new educational phase.

Mr. Aranowski concurred with Mr. Westall about the lack of technology in poverty-level homes and the need to develop other venues of communication. He also explained that while the mandated age for school attendance in Illinois is the age of six, there is a law in Illinois that if you enroll your child in school, the child must attend school.

Mr. Sweeney said he has found when you question parents whose children are under the age of six who are enrolled in school but not showing up, they usually pull their children out of school. He explained this is no one's intention but it happens.

Ms. Taylor said she had received an email about a national conference around school attendance issues that will take place in Washington, D. C. during the first full week of June. She explained that she would like commission members to attend, but they would have to do so at their own expense or through the support of their agency, organization, or other affiliation.

## **X. Adjourn**

Kevin Westall moved to adjourn the meeting, and Madelyn James seconded the motion. The move to adjourn met with the acceptance of all members present.

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda

April 4, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
14th Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from the March 10, 2016 Meeting
  - IV. Legislative and Regulatory Review
  - V. Attendance Works Survey Discussion
  - VI. Literature Review
  - VII. Strategic Plan Discussion
  - VIII. Public Comment
  - IX. New Business and Open Discussion
  - X. Adjourn

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Commission members seeking to participate by telephone may do so by dialing 1-888-494-4032 and entering the following access code: 3 6 3 3 7 5 2 7 0 9



# Illinois Attendance Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor V-tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor V-tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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## I. Roll Call

### Present

Jeff Aranowski (Chicago)  
Lori Fanello (telephone)  
Karen Fox (telephone)  
Victoria Jackson (telephone)  
Madelyn James (Chicago)  
Hosanna Jones (Chicago)  
Elizabeth C. Malik (Chicago)  
Joseph McMahon (telephone)  
Melissa Mitchell (Chicago)  
Harold Sweeney (telephone)  
Antoinette Taylor (Springfield)  
Scott Wakeley (telephone)  
Crysta Weitekamp (telephone)

### Not Present

Karen Hunter Anderson (represented by proxy Ashley Beeker, Springfield)  
Stephanie Bernoteit  
Tiffany Gholson  
Jennifer Gill  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson  
Heidi Grove  
Alexandra Mays  
Matthew Rodriguez  
Diane Rutledge  
Deanna Sullivan  
Kevin Westall

## II. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Antoinette Taylor at 10:04 a.m.

There were four representatives from Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) present who wanted to know when a member of their organization was going to be appointed to the Commission. Ms. Taylor advised the members of this group that they would have to wait until the public participation portion of the meeting to speak. The group was informed, however, that appointments to the Commission emanate from the governor's office.

## III. Approval of Minutes from the March 10, 2016 Meeting

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Harold Sweeney said the March 10 minutes did not reflect his presence on the telephone. Crysta Weitekamp indicated via email that she also had been present on the telephone. Both had joined the meeting shortly after attendance had been recorded by a substitute administrator.

The motion to approve the minutes, as amended, was made by Madelyn James and seconded by Beth Malik. There were no objections to the Commission's adoption of the minutes.

#### **IV. Legislative and Regulatory Review**

Jeff Aranowski said all the references to legislation and regulatory provisions with respect to attendance and truancy are available on the Commission's Google drive. Article 26 of the School Code is the chief citation for all attendance related terms as it deals with compulsory school attendance, defines truancy and chronic truancy and other related terms, and sets forth the responsibility of school districts to adopt absenteeism policies and truancy policies subject to the approval of the State Board of Education, among other things. It also discusses those instances of nonattendance that are exempt from the compulsory attendance regulations in the state of Illinois: confirmation classes, legal engagement in work during the school day, enrollment in private school, etc. He said the Commission should look at what is currently on the books in terms of truancy and attendance.

What is not seen in Article 26 is what it means to be in attendance at either a public or a private school. While there is an operative definition of what is meant by missing school without a valid cause, such as truancy, Mr. Aranowski said we do not, however, have a valid definition of excessive absenteeism or what constitutes an excused absence vs. an unexcused one. The regulations from the state board of education offer some specificity in guidance for districts to develop their own absenteeism and truancy policies, but by and large the responsibility lies with the districts and how they want to approach school, community, and family engagement. The Illinois Association of School Boards (Deanna Sullivan) offers a widely used school board policy template to subscribers of their services, so there are many similarities in these policies across the state.

Mr. Aranowski said all these legislative resources are available on the Commission's Google docs page. This easy access to rules and statutes ensures that Commission members have a handy compendium of what is already on the books instead of starting from scratch when they look at recommendations for legislative change. Mr. Aranowski explained that sometimes people make recommendations for legislation when all it might really take is to change a word or two in current legislation

He said we have to integrate some of the statutory and regulatory provisions around special interest groups such as the homeless, particularly those with special needs, in order to maintain their educational services such as when these might be delayed pending the outcome of some dispute around residency or enrollment. The main portion of the School Code addresses attendance and truancy but there are other situations – homelessness, special needs, English language learners, pregnant students – that have to be integrated into our broader discussions.

Ms. Taylor informed the Commission that Senator Jacqueline Collins had sponsored some bills related to education and is very involved in juvenile justice because of the number of young people who miss school and become involved with the police and the juvenile justice system. She explained further that juvenile justice is also an emphasis in the Every Child, Every Day national initiative with which the Commission should be aligned. Referring back to Mr. Aranowski's point about the needs of the homeless, Ms. Taylor asked Beth Malik of the Chicago

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Coalition for the Homeless to extract some relevant information from the homelessness piece in the Every Child, Every Day national initiative to make sure we are not missing anything on that end. This subject would likely be an agenda item in June.

Victoria Jackson asked if Article 26 has language about district reporting requirements. Mr. Aranowski said that it does.

**V. Attendance Works Survey Discussion**

Ms. Taylor explained the survey was provided to all fifty states by the Attendance Works initiative. The survey questions can help the Commission analyze the gaps in what the state is currently doing and what needs to be done. It can provide guidance on the direction to go in and the areas in which the Commission might want to dig deeper.

Harold Sweeney asked if the survey was intended for individual school districts, and Mr. Aranowski said it was a survey of the State Educational Authority (SEA) across the country. He added that this can be a very useful tool to help Commission members see where the deficiencies are in statute or regulation or, conversely, to determine if that state has excessive regulatory and statutory provisions that are not working.

Madelyn James asked about early childhood and explained that there is an early childhood longitudinal data system, but she was not sure how it will dovetail with the state's planned K-12 longitudinal data system. Ms. James expressed her hope that when the Commission looks at programs funded through the state, that preschool programs and truancy prevention initiatives will be part of the focus due to the data around preschool attendance issues and early interventions.

Mr. Aranowski agreed that grant funded pre-kindergarten programs should be studied. Mr. Aranowski also said he understands her wish that the early childhood data be one with K-12 data, as the data is there, but the state does not currently integrate the data.

Miss James said if someone wanted to start tracking the segment of the student population that is chronically absent and determine what kinds of supports and investments are needed, it is important to know when the absenteeism started. It is essential to track patterns over time, look at preschool and initiate prevention patterns.

Harold Sweeney said that nothing in the truancy statute applies to the issue of preschool attendance.

Ms. James said the concept of truancy is not attached to preschool attendance because it is actually the parent who is truant when a child misses a certain number of school days.

Harold Sweeney wants the courts to treat nonattendance all through elementary school as a parent issue. As someone involved in anti-truancy efforts, he said when they try to get involved with families whose children are under the age of six, the mandatory age for school attendance, the parents would rather pull their children out of school than deal with truancy representatives, so they wind up actually doing them a disservice. (Note: Article 26 of the Illinois School Code mandates compulsory school attendance for children under the age of six years old if they have been registered for school).

Mr. Aranowski said this discussion reflects the dual nature of the Commission, that we should not just focus on truancy but on school attendance and keeping kids in school. He said a positive

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focus on attendance will help as opposed to where we may be already losing the child through truancy.

Ms. Taylor referenced the comments made at the public hearing held at the ICEARY Conference in March when members expressed the wish that they could have an attendance focus on the early school years. They said by the time children with attendance difficulties are in third and fourth grades, the pattern is set and is hard to reset with them or their parents as it is “a done deal.” She went on to explain that the Every Child, Every Day initiative provides a community action guide to keep early learners in school

Ms. Taylor said when the legislation was being written for the Commission, the inclusion of early childhood was intentional based on the work of the truancy task force. She also stated that Illinois is the only state seriously looking at attendance through the P-12 spectrum, not just the 9-12 or K-12 lenses.

Ms. Taylor emphasized also that while on the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force, she heard from people in higher education that the chronic absenteeism trends follow students into the community colleges and universities. For that reason, Ms. Taylor welcomed the appointment of Karen Hunter Anderson of the Illinois Community College Board to the Commission since students’ attendance issues translate into a lack of success on the college levels. Some of these students have gotten into the habit of showing up when they want to show up. Ashley Becker, who was attending the meeting as the proxy for Karen Hunter Anderson, said students with spotty high school attendance records tend to think that they can skip college classes and someone will be around to hold their hand and help them catch up with what assignments they missed. Attendance and attrition are huge issues at nearly every institution in the country. These students enter college in developmental education sequences, and they are barely making it after having struggled through elementary and high schools, partly because they do not want to be there. Ms. Baker explained further that if they had irregular attendance in K-12, they obviously were not acquiring the skill sets they needed to succeed on the college level. In Illinois, 70% of the community college students have to take developmental math and only 1 in 10 of this group finish college

Melissa Mitchell, who is a member of the Illinois P-20 Council, said college and career-readiness is a priority with the Council, and the definitions they have developed have been around academic skills, nonacademic mindsets and behaviors, career readiness and career exploration, and opportunities to structure program pathways.

## **VI. Literature Review**

A literature review from the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force was provided to the Commission. This review offers a summary of a dozen major reports, studies, and research articles that offer varied analyses of school attendance problems and strategies for solutions. Ms. Taylor asked the Commission members to read the summaries which identified key findings and recommendations, so Commission members do not have to duplicate efforts. She also asked for suggestions for additional resources that should be provided to the Commission administrator to be disseminated to the group.

Ms. James said she would look at Every Child, Every Day and see if they referenced other readings and studies with relevance to the Commission.

## **VII. Strategic Plan Discussion**

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Mr. Aranowski reminded the group the Commission is active for five years, an amount of time not usually provided to commissions, councils, and task forces. Along the way the Commission must produce an annual report every December, so planning is necessary in order to reach various short and long term goals. He said this can be approached in different ways: an annual one year plan or an intentional five year plan and several one year plans within. He cautioned that the group should not become bogged down in strategic planning, but should aim for a planning strategy that is intentional and focused but also flexible. During the March meeting, the group had discussed a short term plan and a long term plan, both of which can be revised at any time. A plan will keep the Commission focused, on time, and accountable to themselves. Mr. Aranowski asked for volunteers to strategize the planning process and asked the Commission administrator to send an email out in which goals are set for plan targets. This issue will be explored further at upcoming meetings.

### **VIII. Public Comment**

Mr. Aranowski reminded members of the public what the protocol is for public discussion and that the Commission adheres to the terms of the Open Meetings Act. He said members of the public have the right to ask questions, make comments, or offer suggestions.

Maralda Davis, a member of the public who had attended the meeting with a delegation from Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) asked what Chairperson Taylor meant when she said “parents were a done deal.” She posed the question on behalf of another COFI representative who had to leave the meeting but wanted the question asked.

Ms. Taylor and Mr. Aranowski both asserted that they would need more context in order to respond to the question as neither could recall that particular statement being made. (A subsequent review of the recording of the meeting revealed a reference to the need to focus on our state’s youngest students to promote and maintain healthy, lifelong attendance habits because by the time children are in third and fourth grades, they and their parents are “done deals” (see page 3). In the context of that reference, it was understood that young students with a history of poor school attendance and their parents who have not emphasized regular school attendance have developed habits that are hard to break.

Veronica Mercado of COFI said that organization is looking at ways to improve attendance. She wanted to know what the Commission is doing with regard to the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) markers and about school climate.

Mr. Aranowski said the state is in a holding pattern prior to drafting a consolidated plan for ESSA implementation (a requirement for all states). Illinois is holding a series of listening tours around the state to explain what ESSA’s directives are and gather ideas about how Illinois can achieve ESSA goals. One piece for example, is making a determination about how to meet the educational needs of the homeless. We know what the law says about homeless students, the definition of homelessness, and the requirements for providing services to these students, but how are we going to get there?

Mr. Aranowski added that anyone who is interested in updates on the planning process and listening tour can email the Commission administrator to place them on a list for release of information for public consumption.

Mr. Aranowski also explained there is a new emphasis on school climate in ESSA, and through the 5Essentials Surveys, we have a lot of data on bullying and other school climate issues such as

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the degree to which students feel safe in school. Mr. Aranowski thanked the COFI contingent for bringing up the school climate issue as student perceptions predict behaviors.

The 5Essential Elements Survey is a biannual requirement for districts and is completed in the fall. It identifies effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environments, and ambitious instruction as the factors that matter most for student learning. Teacher, student, and parent responses are calculated and included with the school and district report cards on the ISBE website. Mr. Aranowski said he would check on the availability of cumulative results for the state.

Ms. Taylor stressed the importance of listening to what the students have to say, as their voices need to be heard. The 5Essential Elements Survey records the student point of view also. She said the Commission should know what they say, why some feel disenfranchised.

Scott Wakeley said 30% of students in grades 6 -12 should take part in the survey.

## **IX. New Business and Open Discussion**

Ms. James referenced the ESSA listening tours mentioned by Dr. Tony Smith in his Weekly Message and wondered if the Attendance Commission could piggyback with the state and be present to hear about attendance-related issues. She said Northern Illinois University has a P-20 Council regional group with lots of collaborators and partners.

Commission members were informed that the dates for listening tour are on the opening page on the ISBE website.

Hosanna Jones was introduced as a new member of the Commission. She represents the Illinois Charter School Commission.

The official announcement of the Every Student, Every Day conference is out. It will be held June 8-10, 2016, in Washington, D. C. State superintendents and state directors of education have been notified.

HB 4343, the bill introduced by Representative Linda Chapa LaVia to extend the due date for the first annual report of the Illinois Attendance Commission, is out of the rules committee and should move quickly to passage.

## **X. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Aranowski and seconded by Melissa Mitchell. There was no one opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda

May 6, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from the April 4, 2016 Meeting
  - IV. Legislative and Regulatory Review – Deeper Dive
  - V. Illinois Association of School Boards - Attendance Policy Template Review
  - VI. Outcome #1 Discussion
  - VII. Every Student, Every Day Initiative – Toolkit Debrief
  - VIII. Public Comment
  - IX. New Business and Open Discussion
  - X. Adjourn

## **Attendance Commission**

### **Meeting Summary**

May 6, 2016

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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#### **I. Roll Call**

##### **Present**

Jeff Aranowski (Chicago)  
Karen Fox (Chicago)  
Victoria Jackson (telephone)  
Madelyn James (Chicago)  
Hosanna Jones (telephone)  
Alexandra Mays (telephone)  
Joseph McMahon (telephone)  
Melissa Mitchell (Chicago)  
Harold Sweeney (telephone)  
Antoinette Taylor (Chicago)

##### **Not Present**

Karen Hunter Anderson  
Stephanie Bernoteit  
Lori Fanello  
Tiffany Gholson  
Jennifer Gill  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson  
Heidi Grove  
Elizabeth C. Malik  
Matthew Rodriguez  
Diane Rutledge  
Deanna Sullivan  
Scott Wakeley  
Crysta Weitekamp  
Kevin Westall

As there were only ten Commission members present in person in Chicago or via telephone, a quorum was not reached. Chairperson Taylor announced that the meeting would be held, but there would be no official business conducted on any agenda item.

#### **II. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Ms. Taylor opened the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

#### **III. Approval of Minutes from the April 4, 2016 Meeting**

The minutes were not considered for member acceptance as a quorum had not been achieved



#### IV. **Legislative and Regulatory Review – Deeper Dive**

Ms. Taylor asked Jeff Aranowski to provide Commission members with a thorough legislative review of current regulations and statutes that address school attendance, absenteeism, and truancy. This review will result in an understanding of what laws the state currently has and what laws may need to be amended or created through legislation.

Mr. Aranowski suggested that the Commission's review of the School Code should occur in installments due to the amount of information. The first four statutory provisions form the basis of an understanding of who must be enrolled in an Illinois school, who may be denied enrollment, and the legal definitions of attendance-related terms, including what constitutes compulsory attendance and truancy. At a future meeting, he would like to talk about consequences that are currently on the books. The Commission can eventually talk about how that ties into average daily attendance and how general state aid is calculated. Mr. Aranowski said the Commission would also discuss the implications of not attending school from a legal perspective and from a financial perspective for the individual school districts. During one of those discussions, the Commission can consider the implications for highly mobile students, like the homeless, migrant, and special education populations.

##### Who Must Attend Public School

Mr. Aranowski reminded everyone that compulsory minimum age of attendance changed recently in Illinois (effective 2014-2105 school year) in that it is now age 6. So any child who turns 6 or is 17 years of age or younger before September 1 must be enrolled in a public school in Illinois. There are exceptions to this requirement for the following populations:

1. those who are enrolled in a private school or are home-schooled,
2. students who are physically or mentally unable to attend school as certified by their physicians,
3. those who are lawfully employed in accordance with child labor laws,
4. a child who is between the ages of 12 and 14 who is enrolled in a confirmation class,
5. those whose religion forbids secular activity in observance of a religious holy day, or
6. a person 16 years of age or older who provides evidence of necessary and legal employment and enrollment in a graduation incentives program.

With regard to the second group of students, there are provisions for home and hospital care here in Illinois, so when someone looks at this portion of law, they find a patchwork of provisions that have been inserted throughout the years. The likelihood is that this issue has not had the benefit of the long view for a long time. So if a child is physically unable to attend school as verified by a physician, he/she is not considered to have unexcused absences or to be truant, but the district is required to provide a minimum amount of service through home or hospital care.

The same thing is true with the third group, those students who are lawfully or gainfully employed. As many people may or may not be aware, a child under the age of 16 in Illinois can be employed (actors and models, usually) but require work permits to do so. These are issued by ISBE, the regional office of education, or the school district.

Confirmation classes or some other religious observance are considered exceptions to the compulsory attendance school law.

Some people may not be aware that Illinois has compulsory attendance laws for children who are under 6 or older than 17. You are not required to attend school if you are younger than 6 or

September 1 or older than 17 unless you are enrolled in school. There is a statutory obligation that once a child is enrolled in school, that child must either stay enrolled and attend school or drop out, that a student cannot intermittently attend school without repercussions.

### Denial of Enrollment

ISBE fields many calls from regional and district superintendents regarding a mandatory exclusion of some children based on not just age but their dropout status as well.

According to 105 ILCS 5/26-2, a district is required to deny re-enrollment to a dropout who is 19 years of age or older and who, because of age and a lack of credits, would not have a sufficient amount of time to earn those credits in order to graduate before 21 years of age. He said the parent or guardian of the student can petition for due process which is exactly what an expulsion hearing is. If the district decides that all the facts of the matter are accurate, the district is required to offer counseling resources about alternative programs, graduation incentives programs, an adult education program (depending on the age of the dropout), or some other way for the former student to continue his/her education. ISBE fields a lot of calls about situations like this.

Melissa Mitchell asked if there were exceptions for medical reasons like an illness that kept a student out of school for a period of time. Mr. Aranowski said the provision in Article 26-2 applies to dropouts

Madelyn James asked about the number of young people this involves. Mr. Aranowski said he did not have those numbers but typically around this time of year ISBE gets calls from people in their twenties saying they are missing one high school credit and they want to go back, but the school district has denied their re-enrollment because of their age. Districts are not under an obligation to let the state know about these decisions, and ISBE would never second guess a district's decision about the reenrollment of a student.

Mr. Aranowski asked Kimberly Small who was on the phone representing Deanna Sullivan of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) if school districts have policies, resources, or guidance about this aspect of the law. Ms. Small said they have attendance, admissions, and student transfer policies as well as policies for students who are at risk for academic failure or dropping out of school, and this also includes the graduation incentives program. Mr. Aranowski explained that the vast majority of the school districts around the state subscribe to their model policies and updates. As a result policies are pretty much the same district to district.

Mr. Aranowski explained that the reason he brought all this up was not just because the Commission wanted to go through the first parts of Article 26 today, but so we can see if there are good ideas moving forward after we delve deeply or if there will be recommendations for legislative change from the Commission. It is a good idea for the group to know where the law is.

There are two other provisions in Article 26-2 that would allow a school district to deny enrollment or exclude a student for various reasons:

- The first is temporary exclusion for failure to meet the minimum academic standards of the school district. If a student is 17 years of age or older and has a GPA that is below a D, the district must send a warning letter informing the student that he/she will be subject to exclusion the next semester if he/she does not rectify the GPA. During this period of time, the student is to be provided an academic improvement plan which is open-ended; there are no statutory or regulatory provisions about what this plan should look like. If the following semester, the student has not improved the GPA to at least a D average, the district may hold

a hearing or appoint a hearing officer to determine if the student can be excluded for one semester if the D average is not reached. ISBE does not have any data on how often this occurs in districts or if it is even done.

- The second provision concerns failure to meet minimum attendance standards. A student can be excluded for up to one semester if he/she is between the ages of 17 and 19 and was absent without valid cause for 20% or more of the days in the last semester. So if a student was absent without valid cause or truant for 20% of the last semester, that student will receive a warning letter as well as some attendance remediation services and guidance from the school district. If in the next semester, however, that student fails to meet the minimum attendance standard, if he/she is still absent without an excuse or truant for 20% of the days in the semester, that student can be excluded for a semester.

Mr. Aranowski made the distinction that this is something districts are allowed to do, not required to do. Neither the School Code, ISBE nor the regional offices of education require this be done, but it is allowed under current statute. He asked Commission members to consider what this provision is about. There is a chronic truancy rate in state law that is substantially less than this -- a student who misses 5% of 180 days (9 days) is considered a habitual truant -- but the standard in the second provision above is up to 20% (36 school days) before remediation and disciplinary actions are called for. Mr. Aranowski explained this is an example of how the laws are patched together. This might have meant something at one time and could have been a good tool for districts to use 20-30 years ago. The idea now is that it is counter-productive to tell a student not to come to school as a punishment for not coming to school enough. He said laws were patched together for reasons, and it is conceivable that at one point in time there were laws that were not strong enough. He cautioned that just because a law is on the books does not mean districts are using it or that it needs to be revised although that may be something the Commission may want to think about.

Melissa Mitchell asked what 17 or 18 year old would return to school after being pushed out for a semester. This question prompted Ms. Taylor to recall that during the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force there were concerns raised at the public hearings that some schools were pushing some students out the door without giving them the benefit of systems of support before they got to the point of no return with regard to attendance and academic achievement. There were very strong, continuous allegations from some of the public school parents that this was actually happening.

Mr. Aranowski referenced Senate Bill 100 (Public Act 099-0456) which becomes law this fall and will amend the School Code in areas related to discipline. One of the provisions in this bill is a prohibition on counseling students to drop out in the face of disciplinary actions. The bill requires districts to provide appropriate supports while a student is on suspension and opportunities for re-engagement. This legislation does not intend to eliminate exclusionary discipline but to ensure that students are able to find their way back.

Ms. James asked if there is an average dropout rate in the state. Mr. Aranowski said the individual district rates are calculated and are available online, but he is unaware of an average calculation. She said she asked because she is wondering about the 17-21 year olds and the fact the state's graduation numbers are not great. That's why she is interested in seeing the dropout rate and whether it is increasing or decreasing so the commission has some idea if this patchwork of regulations does really need to be looked at.

Mr. Aranowski compared her question to a conversation he had with someone about the numbers related to the identification of homeless people. A decrease in the number of identified homeless people does not necessarily mean we have had a decrease in the number of homeless students in our schools. It may also mean we have not identified all the homeless people. He compared this to the examination of graduation and dropout rates in that an actual increase in graduation rates might not signal a decrease in dropout rates as there are many reasons students stop attending school. An uptick in dropout rates might indicate the districts gathered more complete data and noticed more red flags and other warning signs.

Ms. James said she worries about at-risk students such as the homeless as they approach an age when mandatory school attendance no longer applies. She also mentioned dropouts, students with emotional behavioral disorders, and students with disabilities, all of whom may be counselled to dropout.

Mr. Aranowski does not want the Commission to come out with broad, sweeping arguments that discourage alternative options for struggling students. He said there is frequent discussion about the subgroups of kids for whom it makes sense to keep them in the traditional learning environment. As we move forward, we want to strike the right balance as there are many legitimate alternate programs. GED is a great option for many kids, but it should not be the default option for everyone.

What Ms. James would like is a better sense of these critical junctures in education where we see kids dropping out or being pushed out tied to attendance difficulties: preschool, eighth to ninth grade, and junior year in high school. The Commission needs recommendations based on certain populations and at certain age and grade levels because the data tell us these seem to be critical junctures when students experience transition.

Ms. Taylor referenced the upcoming Office for Civil Rights (OCR) report that may provide some relevant information tied to these issues. She said the report was delayed because of the amount of data that had to be examined. They have to drill down state by state. She suggested that it might be useful to invite them back to speak to the commission as they did with the task force to provide greater insight into the data.

### Definitions

Mr. Aranowski returned to his discussion of the existing regulations under Article 26 of the School Code by referencing the definitions and explaining how they work in conjunction with one another. A truant is a child who is absent for an hour without valid cause, or two hours, or three hours or a day. Truancy as a concept is generally not discussed until you get to the habitual or chronic stage which is defined as missing 5% or more of the previous 180 school attendance days. Usually remediation services do not kick into gear until we get to the critical or chronic category for individual students. Technically, if you are missing for a part of a day without valid cause, you are considered truant.

Harold Sweeney said the TAOEP program (Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program) will intervene before students hit the 5% mark, for students who are repeatedly absent or who produce a doctor's note 3 times a week. They look at excused and unexcused absences.

Mr. Aranowski explained that a valid cause for absence, as defined in the School Code consists of the following situations:

1. illness,
2. a religious holiday,
3. a death in the immediate family,
4. a family emergency,
5. any other cause that the school district finds to be beyond the control of the student, or
6. other circumstances which cause reasonable concern for the parent for the safety and health of the child.

The fifth valid cause is a broad category (situations beyond the control of the student), he explained, and some districts would accept a Disney World vacation as a valid cause in that category as a family vacation is out of the control of the student. With regard to the sixth valid cause, bullying is often cited as contributory to this decision. Problems arise when the district does not concur with the parent's assessment of the potential for harm. The law cites parental concern which makes this another broad category.

We can think of this along a continuum: a truant student who misses part of day without cause, a chronic habitual truant who misses more than 5% of the school days over the previous 180 attendance days, and a truant minor who is an habitual or chronic truant who is offered diagnostic or remedial services (counseling) to little effect or whose parents refused such services. A chronic habitual truant designation is based on the numbers. A truant minor depends on what you do with the information. If you are not able to solve the problem after providing services, you have to ask when it is legally okay to drop a student from your attendance roll for nonattendance. If you haven't seen a student in several weeks, when is it okay to remove that student?

Mr. Sweeney said that is also the point at which a petition would be filed with the court.

A dropout is someone who no longer attends school and is removed from a district's attendance rolls for any reason except for the death of the student, extended illness, removal for non-medical noncompliance, expulsion, aging out, graduation, or completion of a program of studies, and who has not transferred to another school (including home school)..

Ms. Taylor expressed her gratitude to Mr. Aranowski for his careful explanation of the covered rules. She also referenced the commission goals worksheet that is a graphic organizer for members to use to track the commission's progress and determine via a regulatory review what needs to be maintained or amended in alignment with planned outcomes.

Mr. Aranowski said when the state has finite resources and you have families that do not provide back-up support for school services, you have a counter-productive situation. With regard to the upcoming legislative and regulatory instalments coming up at the next meetings, he explained that the discussion is not really about chronic absences, but rather unexcused absences and chronic truancy. Any type of absence is a red flag, but Article 26 is not about what constitutes chronic absenteeism, it is about truancy. Clearly there is not a statutory connection, but we know districts and practitioners are dealing with absenteeism on an everyday basis. It would be great as we move forward to hear from folks either on the Commission or from the community about how they are tackling absenteeism more generally than just these unexcused absences.

Ms. Taylor reminded the group that they had talked previously about what a public awareness campaign would look like. She said the average parent/guardian, who in some cases is a great grandmother, needs resources that are user-friendly, like a one page or bulleted document that they

could look at and say, “Oh, I didn’t know this.” We can assume positive intent on the part of most parents and guardians as most people want their children in school, so it would be beneficial to increase their awareness about the importance of school attendance and the supports that are out there for them to utilize. There is so much families do not know.

Ms. James echoed this sentiment and said the philosophy of engagement must be taught so parents understand their level of responsibility at all levels of their children’s education, from preschool when they are fully responsible to high school when one would expect the students to assume some responsibility for themselves.

Ms. Taylor said ISBE is very proactive in family engagement issues. This gets back to public awareness. Many families and districts are not aware of the tools available to families to inform and engage them. She said we will be able to loop people into what is already available to them and collect quantitative and qualitative data around the information available to make it more accessible. We also need to inform on a general level as there are still some district superintendents who do not realize the minimum age for mandatory school attendance is no longer age seven as it changed to six two years ago.

#### **V. Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) - Attendance Policy Template Review**

Kimberly Small, who was present on the telephone on behalf of Commission member Deanna Sullivan who was unable to attend the meeting, discussed the assistance the IASB provides to the majority of school boards across the state. The legal department at the IASB formulates the Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS) to which member boards subscribe. PRESS is an encyclopedic collection of sample policies for use on the local level. Reference guides are heavily footnoted to explain the legal requirements for each issue for which a school board must develop policies and procedures, instructive details and background information about each policy issue, and guidance on policy and procedural alignment with regulation and law. Sometimes the law is silent and provides no guidance, according to Ms. Small, so the IASB tries to communicate to boards their options, such as the required language and what the law requires versus what is best practice.

The commission members were provided with a sample copy of the IASB’s *Attendance and Truancy Policy*. The first footnote explained to the reader that state law requires boards to adopt a policy that covers some but not all of the topics contained in the document and mandates a policy on supportive services and available resources for truant. These advisory documents also provide all the legal citations and definitions. This document additionally covers the state requirements for public school attendance and the permitted exceptions and the valid causes for absence. The rest of the document is devoted to the Absenteeism and Truancy Program that is a requirement for every school district in Illinois. Each of the eleven program components that follow are heavily footnoted with legal citations, explanatory statements, and directives. At the end of each of the policy guides are cross references to other School Code components with tangential applications.

Ms. Small also explained that the services districts are required to provide are not always defined under the law. It is good to have local control and for districts to determine what is needed, but there is a lot of confusion in the field about what services are included in this context of truancy and who provides the services. You have a few layers -- the district, the ROE -- before a truancy situation escalates into a petition for a minor in need of supervision in the court. There is also confusion in the field because student need varies by district and school boards are locally controlled.

Melissa Mitchell said there must be confusion over defining what the needs are and what options are there when the need you identify is outside a district's area of expertise. If a student's attendance problem is related to the mental health of the mother, the school social worker is not the professional who should be expected to solve this problem. She would imagine that a lot of districts are struggling with the question of appropriate services in response to student problems, but some of the prescriptive services are way outside the scope of what a district or school can feasibly provide. There has to be some definition of what services are required, how they are going to be set up, and what principles will guide the process. Community ownership must be encouraged as well.

Karen Fox said there are lots of changes in districts due to RTI, PBIS, and other tiered supports. She also notices greater partnerships between districts and community groups that are more formally structured.

Ms. Taylor asked Ms. Small if the IASB has a connection with the Illinois MTSS Network. Ms. Small said they did not because their focus is on policy and legal advice in accordance with school code.

Ms. Taylor explained that tiered supports, especially those based on the initiatives of the Illinois MTSS Network as they present a holistic approach under one umbrella, can be especially effective tools for district/community partnerships to utilize for attendance solutions as people collaborate to seek and share wisdom.

Mr. Aranowski said state board regulations implement the laws just as administrative procedures implement district policy. He said partnerships such as were being discussed encourage greater understanding of the law and implementation of the policies.

Ms. Small said the policy is going to state what the law requires and if you look at IASB's directives regarding the Absenteeism and Truancy Program specifications, IASB provides school boards with the directives for the superintendent to manage such a program in accordance with the School Code. External groups would be helpful to the work of the IASB as they could advise on procedures which would implement the policies.

## **VI. Outcome #1 Discussion**

The purpose of the legislative and regulatory review and a discussion of the templates the IASB provides school boards to facilitate their policy development was to serve as a lead-in to a discussion regarding Outcome #1. Ms. Taylor thinks this discussion should take place at a later date until members of the commission have completed the legislative and regulatory review which shall occur on a sequential basis. The discussion of Outcome #1, as reiterated below, was temporarily tabled.

- (1) *a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;*

## **VII. Every Student, Every Day Initiative – Toolkit Debrief**

Melissa Mitchell was asked to provide a summary of the Parent and Family Toolkit from *Every Child, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*. Ms. Mitchell felt the information presented was helpful but surprisingly brief -- 2.5 pages long including

the resources provided. She said she understands the need to be concise but felt there was an opportunity here to present more information. The toolkit did explain why attendance is important and why chronic absenteeism is a problem (not just unexcused absences but excused absences that add up). It did presuppose a certain level of engagement of parents with their children's schools and with supports in the community; consequently, there was no advice on developing these liaisons. She thought the steps provided parents were good but broad and generic as they lacked problem-solving advice and ample supports. Ms. Mitchell felt the links to the resources were good but they seemed like the type of resources people working with parents would go to rather than the parents themselves. The toolkit did not mention the need for parents to acquaint themselves with school policy to be informed about such things as how their child's school defines a full day of attendance. The toolkit also did not refer parents to the resources available through their state education agencies or through their local PTA chapters. She felt that despite the shortcomings, this toolkit provided a good starting point

Mr. Aranowski tied in the importance of community connections and the parent engagement framework that will be essential in solving attendance problems. Ms. Mitchell said there was nothing about creating a culture among parents and the community or about building relationships with teachers. Parents need concrete tools to turn ideas into action.

Ms. Fox mentioned the student handbook as the bridge between the parent and school policy.

Ms. Taylor advised postponing the overview of the Early Learning Provider toolkit until the June meeting and explained that several of the items on the agenda for this meeting were to be serialized due to the amount of material. Ms. Taylor additionally advised Commission members to determine if an aspect of the *Every Child, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* is within their area of expertise for the purpose of providing a summary to the Commission.

#### **VIII. Public Comment**

Patricia Graczyk of the University of Illinois in Chicago thanked the Commission for its work and concurred that the student handbook is a great tool for parents and that tiered interventions are instrumental in solutions for children with significant and varied needs. She also acknowledged the importance of cross-sector collaboration beyond the school walls and shared accountability

Veronica Mercado voiced her appreciation for the conversation around students and vulnerable populations. In anticipation of the implementation of SB100, her organization (Community Organizing and Family Issues) created an implementation document for this bill which features resources for administrators regarding parent engagement and involvement. Ms. Mercado said she would forward this document to the Commission administrator.

#### **IX. New Business and Open Discussion**

The *Every Student, Every Day* conference is in June. Superintendent Tony Smith accepted the invitation to attend on behalf of State partners, and members of the Illinois Attendance Commission members are welcome to be part of the Illinois contingent at the conference.

#### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.





## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda

June 23, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2016 and May 6, 2016
  - IV. Every Student, Every Day - Conference Debrief and Discussion
  - V. IAC Member Self-assessment
  - VI. Office of Civil Rights Data Release
  - VII. Public Comment
  - VIII. New Business and Open Discussion
  - IX. Ethics and OMA update and deadline
  - X. Adjourn

## Attendance Commission

Meeting Minutes,  
June 23, 2016

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

### I. Roll Call

#### Present

Jeff Aranowski - Springfield  
Stephanie Bernoteit - Springfield  
Lori Fanello - Chicago  
Karen Fox - telephone  
Tiffany Gholson - telephone  
Victoria Jackson - telephone  
Madelyn James - Chicago  
Elizabeth Malik - Chicago  
Matthew Rodriguez - Chicago  
Diane Rutledge- telephone  
Deanna Sullivan - Springfield  
Harold Sweeney - Chicago  
Antoinette Taylor - Chicago  
Kevin Westall - telephone

#### Not Present

Karen Hunter Anderson- sent proxy  
Christina Campos  
Jennifer Gill  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson  
Heidi Grove  
Hosanna Jones  
Alexandra Mays – sent proxy  
Joseph McMahon – sent proxy  
Melissa Mitchell  
Scott Wakeley  
Crysta Weitekamp

### II. Welcome and Opening Remarks

There was initially an insufficient number of attendees to constitute a quorum, so Jeff Aranowski proposed a revision to the Rules of Procedure for the Attendance Commission. He volunteered to draft a resolution for the July meeting to allow a commission member's proxy to fully represent the member at Commission meetings. In order for this resolution to pass, a quorum must be achieved at the July 28 meeting and two-thirds of the members must approve.

A quorum was achieved minutes later, and the Commission was able to move forward with the third agenda item.

Chairperson Antoinette Taylor referenced the current Illinois budget crisis and explained both sides have the best interests of the people of Illinois in mind. She was hopeful that a resolution would soon be reached.

### III. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2016 and May 6, 2016

The motion to approve the minutes from April 4 was made by Lori Fanello and seconded by Madelyn James. The minutes were then unanimously approved. Since a quorum had not been achieved at the May meeting, the minutes of that meeting did not require approval as no official business had taken place.

### IV. Every Student, Every Day Conference - Debrief and Discussion

The *Every Student, Every Day (ESED) National Conference: Eliminating Chronic Absenteeism by Implementing and Strengthening Cross-Sector Systems of Support for All Students* took place June 9-10 in Washington D. C. and was attended by representatives from 39 states. The Commission was

represented at the conference by Ms. Taylor, Deanna Sullivan, and Madelyn James. Alexandra Mays was also in attendance at the conference as her agency, Healthy Schools Campaign, had a role in conference development.

Deanna Sullivan said the conference provided an enormous amount of information and expressed high praise for the U. S. Department of Education's capacity to serve as a clearinghouse for the variety of data and documents related to the multiple facets of this issue.

One important take-away from the conference was the fact that conference speakers emphasized that the measurement of absence needed to include every single day out of school, regardless of the reason, for the purposes of defining "chronic absence."

The U. S. Department of Education, in collaboration with the National Ad Council, has begun a public relations campaign to make the public aware of the importance of getting children to school every day. Ms. Sullivan also explained there were many sessions at the conference to support the engagement of parents: helping them understand the importance of attendance, listening to parents about obstacles to school attendance in the community, and developing supports/resources within the school setting and with community partners.

Communication and shared responsibility were also stressed as vehicles for change such as through an awareness campaign for local school personnel and families/communities about LEA policy changes, state regulatory changes to data systems, and/or changes in state law.

Two of the Commission's outcomes concern the need to have mechanisms for improved data systems, mechanisms for reporting data, and heightened accountability. Ms. Sullivan explained there are lots of vendors and programs to help schools gather the data, disaggregate the data, monitor and report the data, and determine trends across student groups so that school communities can effectively respond. Many vendors and schools have developed systems to allow school personnel to easily track absenteeism data on a daily/weekly basis or on a more actionable timetable. The keys to data mechanisms for the purposes of intervention on a daily or weekly basis that provide for immediate supports are reviewing daily to determine dips in attendance and viewed in the aggregate for groups like grade levels or boys/girls either weekly or monthly.

Illinois has a longitudinal data system (ILDS) adopted in 2009. The last meeting of the ILDS Governing Board was March 3, 2016 where the group discussed ILDS plan priorities, data privacy issues, and data sharing agreements.

Ms. Sullivan reminded the Commission that outcome number four calls for utilizing data to target supports on a multi-tiered basis to increase college and career readiness. She said there's no question that supports are critical to efforts to make sure chronically absent students get to school. There was much iteration of the basic recommendations of weekly meetings, organization of resources, personalized student interventions, and utilization of community resources. Across this country, there are all kinds of people doing many innovative things to provide those supports. There is no one correct approach because of the variety of challenges there are to school attendance. Conference attendees reflected on the diversity of the communities, schools, families and students involved, emphasizing that recommendations for support must be flexible to accommodate diversity in all its forms.

Ms. Sullivan added that Illinois is way ahead of other states by virtue of the fact it has established an Attendance Commission. Illinois is ahead of most states in providing statewide leadership to help districts and communities identify the best practice for their students.

In her recap of the conference, Madelyn James said she noticed a paradigm shift had occurred in the discussion of chronic absenteeism, from a view toward compliance to a focus on the diminished opportunities for children who miss school.

Conference speakers advised a focus on the root causes of chronic absenteeism through data collection, analysis, and sharing among all partners in a child's education – school leaders and teachers, families, and community stakeholders - via visual presentations, data dashboards, and graphs to build strategies and interventions to address the attendance gap.

Certain transition stages in a child's academic life trigger school attendance difficulties: preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to first grade, and elementary or middle school to high school. Ms. James said we have to be very strategic about what those transitions look like so children do not fall through the safety net; we have to figure out ways to stay engaged with them.

Ms. James reminded everyone that there are ways to share information without violating Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) such as the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) laws. It may be difficult to share information but not impossible.

Ms. James also shared with the Commission some of the efforts of the federal government to track and support migrant student populations whose mobility puts them at high risk for chronic absence (Migrant Education Program and the Migrant Students Information System).

Other vulnerable populations who must be tracked and targeted for specific supports locally and statewide include the homeless, English language learners, and students with disabilities.

Ms. James further explained that at the conference there was discussion of the fact that among all the causes of chronic absenteeism, there are some that are beyond the control of the child. A family in distress over economic, emotional, or physical health factors may consider school less than a priority, especially when a child is very young as evidenced by a high rate of absenteeism in preschool. There have been some interesting initiatives to address health and housing issues and unmet needs with pediatricians, housing authorities, mentoring programs, homeless advocacy advocates, after/out school programs, coaches, etc.

Current theory advocates a holistic approach to solving the attendance problem in our country such as engaging the health community in identifying and supporting children's health so they can be present in school. It was suggested that schools become Medicaid providers and also hire staff to handle wraparound services such as dental and mental health since health is cited as the number one cause for early childhood absences, from pre-kindergarten to third grade.

Finally, Ms. James said there were several high level questions raised specific to data needs:

- How will chronic absence data be incorporated into accountability and support structures for ESSA?
- How will states and communities build capacity to use data and implement effective practices?
- How will states and communities sustain cross sector partnerships?

Ms. Taylor said that if health is a factor that affects a child's ability to attend school, we have to address 504 plans. If a child is on a 504 plan, the student is medically involved as there is something going on that adversely affects that student's ability to be engaged in the general education

curriculum and in the learning environment. The data for students with 504 plans was not included in the Chicago Tribune series (*An Empty Desk Epidemic*) as this data is hard to find. The Chicago Tribune reporters said they suspected that if 504 data was included the absentee rate for students with disabilities, the numbers would have been off the chart. Ms. Taylor advised we should just say students with documented disabilities because that would include both groups. If children have those health concerns that are adversely impacting school attendance, we should engage a process within our districts to see if certain students are eligible to receive services under a 504 plan which then means protections under the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. We have to make sure we identify all applicable initiatives so that districts have a lot in their arsenals to help children.

Harold Sweeney asked a question that he said might betray his cynicism because of his work in truancy prevention. He wondered if students were considered absent for medical reasons simply because their parents called them in sick or if the children were verifiably sick.

Ms. James restated her emphasis on children's medical, dental, and mental health as she said health is the number one reason for absences in early childhood. She has been working with the Early Learning Council around health-related reasons for chronic absenteeism. She said that the American Academy of Pediatrics says the number one reason children go to the emergency room is related to dental health. She said Illinois is a state with a severe dental shortage of pediatric dentistry practitioners. She said children from poverty level families suffer an exposure to bacteria that impact their physical and dental health.

Mr. Sweeney reiterated his question and reasserted his skepticism and inquired who is determining the status of the child's health, a parent or a health practitioner.

Emily Carroll, who was on hand to represent the Healthy Schools Network and has since been appointed as a member to the Commission, said the Office of Civil Rights within the U. S. Department of Education considers chronic absence to include excused absences. She said there is data that distinguishes between children who are called in sick by a parent and those who are experiencing long term health issues, and this data supports that most excused absences are for treatable illnesses with problems related to oral hygiene and asthma as the two most likely causes for absence.

Deanna Sullivan suggested that the way we should look at absences is to look at who is not in school, period. We need to be asking why children are not in school, getting to students early on before they get into the spiral. We have to look at trends and decide what needs to be discussed with parents.

Mr. Sweeney said his concern is that there are different interventions and you have to know which to use. You may have a child with a true medical condition or you may have a parent who is not parenting and simply calling his/her children in sick. It is essential to know the difference because you have to direct the interventions based on the real reason a child is not in school, you have to know which agency or agencies have to be utilized to fix the problem. He said truancy prevention efforts are being pushed down to the earliest levels of education because that's where the problem starts. When we have kids in middle or high school who have been chronically absent for years, the success rate is very minimal.

Ms. Taylor said you have to drill down the data and determine what the reasons for absence are in order to determine which resources should be used. You have to determine the pattern and the reason for the pattern. She said if we move toward a definition of attendance that includes both excused and unexcused absences, an idea that is proposed by the Department of Education and Attendance Works – everyone is encouraging states to look at a definition of attendance that incorporates both excused and unexcused.

Mr. Sweeney said the average student in his program receives six interventions which are administered repeatedly. He wondered what would constitute a health-related absence if the definition of attendance is amended to include all absences

Mr. Aranowski reminded the Commission that the state of Illinois does not have a statutory or regulatory definition for chronic absenteeism. There is one for truancy. He said we know that a lot of districts incorporate the concept of missing 5% of the last 180 school days as constituting truancy.

Ms. Sullivan said the decision about what constitutes chronic absence must be decided locally, the district has to decide what chronic absence is and the recommendation in Washington is two days a month which is significant for a student.

Mr. Sweeney said when the student gets older and has missed more than 20 percent of the school year, they can actually be removed from school for a semester.

Emily Carroll said OCR's data release was a first-look at national trends. They will be releasing more specific data in the fall of 2016. She also said one of the outcomes of the commission is to establish a working definition of chronic absenteeism. She said that is a good idea because under the new education law that is to take effect during the 2017-18 school year, the state will need to collect data on nonacademic indicators for all the schools in the state, and ISBE must choose what indicator or indicators that will be. The suggested indicator that was just released by the U. S. Department of Education is the indicator on chronic absenteeism. Ms. Carroll explained further that when it comes to the causes of absenteeism and the interventions that can be provided, there is a lot of flexibility because every district is different. She feels a common definition wouldn't necessarily be prescriptive because of the differences among districts.

Ms. Taylor said the commission was going to resume its legislative review in the July meeting which will enable the commission to concur on a definition of chronic absence.

## **V. IAC Member Self-assessment**

Ms. Taylor would like all commission members to respond to the Attendance Works' survey that was distributed prior to the Every Student, Every Day Conference to all conference attendees. She said it will be interesting for all Commission members to see the scope of the U. S. Department of Education's view of the attendance issue and to see the responses of commission members and their determination of priorities. The survey is expansive and offers queries on topics that might not be familiar to everyone. Ms. Taylor explained that it was apparent at the conference that the teams from the many states (39) in attendance all experienced a degree of surprise when they found they could not answer some of the survey questions. This survey could provide a guiding light to efforts to meet the strategic outcomes of the commission.

## **VI. Office of Civil Rights Data Release**

Ms. Taylor asked for any reactions commission members may have had to the release of data by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights that reflected gaps in key areas affecting

education equity and opportunity for students, including in matters of attendance. Ms. James said she was struck by the disproportionate number of students of color and students with disabilities who are absent from school. In reference to Ms. James' earlier statements about student health, she said there is a disproportionate number of African-American children who are admitted to hospital emergency rooms across the state for asthma-related problems. She said good physical health in early childhood is very important to overall development and cognitive capacity. We have to examine why there is disproportionality with regard to physical health and to achievement levels.

Deanna Sullivan said there was much discussion at the conference about the partnerships that should be forged between schools and communities in order to remediate situations that lead to reduced school attendance. Mackenzie Montgomery, proxy for Karen Hunter Anderson of the Illinois Community College Board, informed the Commission that she had previously worked for a Head Start program. Part of their model included a Family Partnership Specialist (caseworker/case manager) whose job involved going into the homes and instructing parents on oral hygiene. She wondered if school districts have the capacity to provide such instruction to parents to reduce the incidents of early-onset tooth decay and matters related to personal health.

Ms. Taylor said the Head Start framework has been in place for a very long time and there is a lot to be learned from that model and incorporated into pilot programs on other levels across the state. She added that early childhood interventions are a priority of State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia.

Ms. James cautioned that it is not productive to blame families for their children's absences from school. She explained it was not a serendipitous decision on the part of the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice to join forces to solve the chronic absence problem in our country as they seek to provide a seamless array of solutions for the families whose children are missing from school.

Stephanie Bernoteit's agency (Illinois Board of Higher Education) works closely with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, and there are a number of initiatives underway that speak very much to the kinds of things considered here, ways to engage multiple partners within communities to both find children and families who might not typically seek out early learning and care services and then provide a robust array of wrap-around supports around the kind of issues we are talking about. She can point the commission to applicable models of such interventions and to current research through the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

Ms. Bernoteit's offer of assistance prompted Ms. Taylor to explain that since the commission includes representatives from all education sectors in Illinois, from prekindergarten to college, the Commission is looked upon very favorably by the U. S. Department of Education.

## **VII. Public Comment**

Patricia Graczyk, from the University of Illinois at Chicago, presented at the Every Student Every Day Conference on a multi-tiered approach she knows Illinois is considering. A common theme at the conference was shared responsibility because schools cannot solve the problem alone. She appreciates the fact the Commission includes people from many different sectors in Illinois, so the idea of shared responsibility is apparent in the identification of which agencies, organizations, and nonprofits were selected.

## **VIII. New Business and Open Discussion** August Meeting Cancelled



Ms. Taylor informed the Commission that the August meeting will not take place as many members indicated their inability to be present that month. Members will be asked to respond to the Attendance Works survey during that time period.

### Legislative Updates

With regard to legislative updates, Ms. Taylor said HB 4343, sponsored by State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia passed both Houses and was sent to Governor Rauner's desk on June 16. This bill extended the date for submission of the first annual report of the Commission to March 15, 2016, a date the Commission met.

New bills concerning the Illinois Attendance Commission:

- SB100 (passed) concerns student discipline policies
- HB306 (did not pass) opting out of testing – Senator Manar wants the Commission to look at this bill and see if there are any implications for students insofar as attendance is concerned.
- HB 3190 (passed the House and is in the Senate) concerns pupil residency
- HB4606 passed both houses (this session's reworking of 3190 and has passed both houses) concerns pupil residency and funding is one of the iterations of school funding reform

Ms. Sullivan said if the commission is going to look into how attendance factors into the GSA, we need to look into the context of all those iterations of the original funding bill: one is an evidence-based funding model, one is the Manar bill, and another is a blend of those components. The Speaker of the House is forming a task force and the Senate President is as well for school funding reform.

### Rules of Procedure Revision

Other new business included the proposition by Mr. Aranowski to repeal Section 4.4 of the Rules of Procedure in its entirety and replace it with the following text:

*Attendance by proxy shall be permitted. Proxies representing commission members may vote and their attendance shall be counted for purposes of a quorum.*

This will need to be its own agenda in July and requires a two-thirds vote to pass via a roll call vote.

### Spotlight on Illinois

Ms. Taylor said there was great interest in the fact Illinois already has in place the initiatives suggested by conference organizers.

- Bringing together a cross-section of stakeholders – We have a standing Attendance Commission.
- Looking at multi-tiered systems of support to address chronic absence and truancy - We have the Illinois MTSS-Network which provides a holistic approach to interventions to guide greater student success in all problem areas.  
Emphasizing early childhood focus - There is an early childhood steering committee working with the IL MTSS-Network.

The fact that Illinois has initiated efforts to remedy chronic absence ahead of other states prompted a representative of the acting Secretary of Education to request a meeting with Ms. Taylor, so on

June 14, she and Representative Chapa LaVia met with one of the Secretary's aides by phone. This person commented on the potential that is there with an attendance commission already created and at work and asked for specifics around the language that was used to draft the legislation and requested a copy of the commission's first annual report which was submitted to the General Assembly in March.

She explained further that Illinois Representative Bob Pritchard is in frequent contact with her about the Commission and communicates the Commission's work to his caucus.

**IX. Ethics and OMA Update and Deadline**

Members were reminded of the necessity to complete their Open Meetings Act training and to submit a certificate for that training to the Commission administrator. Members were additionally advised that everyone had to complete the ethics training on an annual basis and several members had not submitted certificates indicating they had completed the 2016 training.

**X. Adjourn**

Ms. James moved to adjourn the meeting and this motion was seconded by Beth Malik at 11:37 a.m.

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda

July 28, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

- 
- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2016
  - IV. Amendment to Section 4.4 of the Rules of Procedures for the Attendance Commission
  - V. Every Student, Every Day Initiative – Toolkit Debrief
  - VI. Public Comment
  - VII. Ethics and Open Meetings Act Requirements
  - VIII. New Business and Open Discussion
  - IX. Adjourn

## Attendance Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

### I. Roll Call

#### Present

Karen Hunter Anderson- Springfield  
Stephanie Bernoteit – Springfield  
Christina Campos – Chicago  
Emily Carroll - telephone  
Lori Fanello - telephone  
Karen Fox - telephone  
Tiffany Gholson – Chicago  
Heidi Grove - telephone  
Madelyn James - Chicago  
Elizabeth Malik – Chicago  
Melissa Mitchell - telephone  
Matthew Rodriguez - Chicago  
Diane Rutledge- telephone  
Deanna Sullivan - Springfield  
Harold Sweeney - telephone  
Antoinette Taylor – Chicago  
Crysta Weitekamp - telephone  
Kevin Westall - telephone

#### Not Present

Jeff Aranowski  
Jennifer Gill  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson – sent proxy  
Victoria Jackson  
Hosanna Jones  
Joseph McMahon – sent proxy  
Scott Wakeley

### II. Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Matthew Rodriguez and seconded by Madelyn James. A voice vote indicated unanimous approval of the minutes.

### III. Amendment to Section 4.4 of the Rules of Procedures for the Attendance Commission

The motion to amend the Rules of Procedures, as proposed by Jeff Aranowski at the June 23 meeting, was approved by more than the required two-thirds majority (72%, 18/25) via a roll call vote. Section 4.4 was changed from –

*Section 4.4 Proxy votes shall not be permitted. A Commission member must be present to record his or her vote and to present a motion or motions. Commission members, when unable to attend, may present signed and dated written communications which may be distributed or read to Commission members by the Chairperson; a motion or motions may be made by other members concerning the contents of such communications.*

***Section 4.4 (Amended) Attendance by proxy shall be permitted. Proxies representing commission members may vote and their attendance shall be counted for purposes of a quorum.***

The following members were present and voted in favor of the amended change to the Rules of Procedures to allow full representation at future Commission meetings by proxy designees: Karen Hunter Anderson, Stephanie Bernoteit, Christina Campos, Emily Carroll, Lori Fanello, Karen Fox, Tiffany Gholson, Heidi Grove, Madelyn James, Elizabeth Malik, Melissa Mitchell, Matthew Rodriguez, Diane Rutledge, Deanna Sullivan, Harold Sweeney, Antoinette Taylor, Crysta Weitekamp, and Kevin Westall

The following members were not present and therefore unable to vote: Jeff Aranowski, Jennifer Gill, Diane Grigsby-Jackson, Victoria Jackson, Hosanna Jones, Joseph McMahon, and Scott Wakeley.

#### **IV. Every Student, Every Day Initiative – Toolkit Debrief**

Ms. Taylor said the commission has to analyze the *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* so it can incorporate federal plans and resources into local efforts. Three commission members presented summaries of portions of the toolkit (Community Action Guide) which involved their particular areas of expertise:

- Madelyn James - Early Learning Providers
- Beth Malik - Homeless Service Providers
- Matthew Rodriguez - Mentors and Volunteers

##### Early Learning Providers

Ms. James explained that early childhood is one of those age ranges where there is a significant spike in chronic absenteeism primarily because of health issues but also because of family logistics involving transportation and child care during non-program times. Ms. James pointed out further that missing as little as two days a month creates a chronic absence pattern over the course of a school year as eighteen missed days constitute chronic absence.

She explained there were four action steps that were proposed to alleviate absences at the earliest grade levels:

1. *Communicate with parents and students that attendance matters and that good preschool through third grade attendance contributes to later school success.*
2. *Monitor the attendance patterns of individual students to identify children and families who may need support.*
3. *Acknowledge children and families who demonstrate good or improved attendance.*
4. *Create partnerships with community organizations to ensure that families have the supports they need to ensure good attendance, such as healthcare, reliable transportation, child care, and stable housing.*

Ms. James concurred that parents and students need to be informed about the importance of regular school attendance but added a cautionary note about the third action step. She feels school administrators and staffs have to be very careful about awarding incentives to early learners and their families because the stakes keep getting higher. It would be more advantageous to figure out how parents and students can internalize the benefits of regular school attendance.

The community partnership piece, the fourth action step, is the one Ms. James considers a key element. There are several early learning funding streams with different infrastructures insofar as funding, monitoring, and compliance are concerned: Head Start, state-based preschool, state-based child care, and programs at public elementary schools. Only one of them requires developing relationships with community groups. The commission has to consider what strategies to suggest

for those other three funding streams to encourage collaboration within the early learning community.

Melissa Mitchell asked about the level of emphasis that is placed on regular school attendance as well as the provision of attendance-related supports in any of the programs in any of the four funding streams. Ms. James replied that she knows that Head Start requires 85% attendance levels, but she does not know if that is a group or an individual standard. She said most programs focus on getting the slots filled and are not necessarily following through to determine who may need some supports in order to attend school regularly. Kevin Westall concurred and said the emphasis is on getting the slots filled and not day-to-day attendance.

Ms. Taylor recalled that at several of the public hearings that were held as part of the mission of the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force, parents and teachers both reported that once the attendance count was completed for the purpose of state funding, regular attendance was not emphasized. On every level there was a perceptible lack of effort in the monitoring process to determine which children and families need supports. The commission has to figure out a way to keep the momentum going after the official attendance days pass.

Kevin Westall said in his district they tell parents whose children are not attending their early education programs regularly that they will bump them out so they can let families who are willing to have their children attend on a regular basis register their children. Sometimes this gets the parents motivated and other times repeated conversations take place during the year. He thinks preschool should be mandated, so parents don't think they have the option of keeping their children home.

Stephanie Bernoteit stated that she thought the commission might want to do a crosswalk with the Illinois Early Learning Council as attendance and participation issues are an important conversation within this group. One area of interest in this group is the assortment of different funding streams and the array of programs families have to navigate and the capacity of those programs to provide service for the full length of time that is helpful for families. Sometimes attendance issues are related to family life needs such as work schedules. Some preschool schedules do not fully enable a family to participate.

Ms. Taylor said that through the Early Learning Council and ISBE, the commission might have the opportunity to write some language into the preschool grant programs around attendance and systems of support so people will know how to respond when they see children's attendance trailing off.

Ms. James decried the lack of a statewide system for collecting attendance data. Most of the data that is cited in reference to preschool absenteeism is from a study that was done in Chicago two years ago. Chicago is not an anomaly, but it is difficult to say if there is a chronic, acute issue of absenteeism in the early childhood field. She said the state needs to collect data across these four funding streams to get a clearer picture of what is happening in in state preschool programs, childcare, and educational programming for preschoolers. The Chicago report said 54 percent of the absences among preschoolers was related to issues of health, and the remaining 46 percent were absent because of family situations related to transportation, childcare schedules, etc. Early childhood principals and teachers need professional development regarding chronic absence, both the causes and the solutions.

Matthew Rodriguez referred to his recent involvement with an Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) committee and he said the subject of school chronic absenteeism was referenced in every discussion and was the content of every recommendation for action.

Ms. Taylor said the unfortunate fact is that it does not matter what law is passed, what reform is out there, or what initiative is launched, if the teachers do not have the children sitting in front of them, they cannot help children succeed. Children need to be present to learn, so she is gratified by the growing spotlight that is focused on this problem. Everyone knows this so we have to do fidelity checks to determine who is not being faithful to the goal of school attendance. Sometimes we have to figure out what people do not know.

#### Homeless Service Providers

Beth Malik of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless presented her summary of the Every Student, Every Day toolkit for homeless service providers. Ms. Malik wanted to point out that the vast majority of Illinois schoolchildren who are “homeless” are actually doubled up with relatives or friends and have no contact with homeless service providers who can assist them with their housing and related problems; consequently, they suffer from the lack of supportive services. For this reason, it is not enough to train homeless providers; there must be training on the school level also. Children in doubled-up situations are not considered to be homeless under the HUD definition, but they are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento definition. She said the toolkit explains how homelessness affects children’s school attendance patterns and why these children have such high rates of chronic absence and truancy. It addresses the importance of school stability for homeless children.

She explained further that Illinois students benefit from the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act which was recently renewed in ESSA and Educational Rights for Homeless Students, but also have the benefit of an Illinois law under the Education for Homeless Children Act which reflects the requirements under the McKinney-Vento Act. Illinois also has a state policy for the education of homeless students as well. She said her agency works very closely with CPS crunching numbers to determine rates of attendance and talking with their attendance teams to see how they are intervening. These activities are very important because they are reaching students who might otherwise not be considered truly homeless and therefore would not be on the receiving end of services specified in the toolkit for homeless service providers.

The toolkit recommends the following actions:

1. Learn about chronic absenteeism and how it affects the education and life outcomes of homeless children and youth.
2. Determine who the local liaison for homeless children and youth is in your community by contacting the local school district or the State Coordinator for Homeless Education in your State. Please visit the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) for State coordinator contact information at [www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf](http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf)
3. Establish contact with the local liaison for the school district in their area, who can help identify homeless students who are chronically absent from school.
4. Discuss and act on possibilities for school district/service provider collaboration to support school attendance for homeless children and youth.

Ms. Malik said these recommendations are very basic and have been in federal and state law for a long time. She said there is a lot more that can be done such as the mandate in federal law for schools to review policies in order to remove barriers to attendance. It is critical for school districts to work with community providers and parents to identify what those barriers are such as

residential instability, poor living conditions, loss of community, and transportation. Schools and communities need to take a deeper dive to figure out why students who are experiencing housing instability are also experiencing chronic absenteeism. Look and see what schools and communities can do to provide supports for those students.

The resources listed in the toolkit go into the requirements of McKinney-Vento for immediate enrollment no matter what time of year it is and regardless of what records the family can produce. Homeless students are allowed immediate enrollment even without immunization records, birth certificates, or previous school records. Homeless students have the additional right to attend either their school of origin or the area school within the community of their temporary residence. They are entitled to transportation to their school of origin so students' basic rights are listed. There is a National Center for Homeless Education that has some really good issue briefs and resources and guidelines for best practices for school districts and community providers about how to implement the federal law.

In terms of financial support, the toolkit references McKinney-Vento subgrant funding although very few districts are able to get this money as it goes to the ROEs and larger districts like Chicago or Aurora. There is mention that homeless students can be supported through Title I funding, and most schools are unaware they can support homeless students for such items as transportation, medical and dental services, school supplies, clothing, and food with Title I funds. She thinks there should be more information out there about how districts can use Title I funds this way.

The final directive was about collaboration between school districts and service providers, but the reality is that many service providers lack the capacity to do as much as they would like given current funding levels and economic realities. There has to be a lot of work performed at the school level to support homeless students because that is really the only place it can happen. She thinks the information in the toolkit is brief, but there is so much more than can and should be done. There should be a deeper look into what the barriers are and what resources exist to remove barriers to school attendance for homeless students.

Ms. Malik said her organization looked at data for the recent school year and noticed there was a 25-30% decline in the identification of homeless preschool students. Data revealed the presence of 500 homeless students within CPS, a number that is known to be wrong. There are many homeless students who are not counted as such who are not able to access the transportation they need to get to school and others who are denied admission at the schools near the shelters where they may be making a temporary home, despite the mandates of existing laws. School staffs must be made aware of students' legal rights and remove the barriers for homeless families.

Diane Rutledge said she knew of some large districts in the state that receive McKinney-Vento funding for homeless students and have hired coordinators to work with the homeless. Ms. Rutledge said many larger districts and ROEs are trying to connect with HUD programs. She said we have to be thinking of linkages so that students in smaller districts have access to programming.

Ms. Taylor said we have to find the exemplary programs and replicate them to the benefit of homeless children in Illinois. We have to determine if everyone knows what should be occurring according to current statute in the state of Illinois as well as federal law.

Matthew Rodriguez said that parents do not know what is available and what is required by law. He said some families are not willing to declare themselves homeless. He said Little Village



Elementary School is bursting at the seams because of the number of families who are doubled up, but they do not consider themselves homeless.

Ms. Malik said it is incumbent upon school districts according to the mandates of state and federal law, to sensitively identify homeless students. If people cannot produce proof of ownership or a lease, that should trigger a response from school officials. The family should not have to say, ‘Hey, I’m homeless.’ Many doubled-up families simply do not realize they are technically homeless and have disdain for the term. Clerks and other school-based staff should be trained to know that if families are likely in a doubled-up housing situation, they should be identified to receive the right supports. Identification is a huge issue.

Ms. Taylor said the phrasing should refer to people in temporary living situations. Ms. Malik said that term is enjoying greater usage as people tend to not want to be identified as “homeless” as it is stigmatizing. For its part, the Chicago Public School system refers to homeless students as students in temporary living situations. She also said every Chicago school has a homeless liaison but federal and state law only require one per district. She wondered how much information is trickling down to the staffs at smaller districts throughout the state.

Ms. Taylor said our baseline area of need is the parent level, and what parents need to know to find supports for their children. Each step will inform the next. Most people have no idea what is available to them through the various agencies and programs. She said the average school clerk/secretary is trying to do justice to a large number of tasks and does not know the answers to these questions. There is something to be said for simple awareness. This has to be the first part of our campaign.

#### Mentors and Volunteers

Mr. Rodriguez provided a summary of the Community Action Guide for Mentors and Volunteers. He reminded everyone that the Parent Teacher Association has been in existence for 117 years, and is present in every school; nevertheless, there are people who do not know who they are and what they do. He said he understands how people are unaware of the supports available to them and overlook the community-based organizations.

The toolkit recommends the following actions:

1. Learn the facts about chronic absenteeism, its causes and effects, and why every absence from school matters in the life of a young person.
2. Check every day, or as much as possible, to see if the young people you work with are in school, and talk about the importance of being in school every day and what it means for their future.
3. As necessary, create a safe space for mentees to share what’s keeping them from participating in school on a regular basis.
4. Help inform the places where you volunteer to understand what chronic absenteeism is and explore the role they can play in eliminating chronic absenteeism within their community.

Mr. Rodriguez stressed the importance of the first and second tips and the need for mentors and volunteers to communicate the facts about the benefits of regular class attendance and the effects of chronic absenteeism to families as they are unaware of what constitutes chronic absence. The third suggestion for action prompted Mr. Rodriguez to say he concurred with Ms. Malik about the hesitancy of people to identify as homeless and cited another factor families are slow to report – that children are being raised by grandparents and great-grandparents who are unfamiliar with resources. He added that the concept of a safe space for children is important also for children who

are victims of abuse which can also be a trigger for frequent absences from school. Building trust with these students is a delicate endeavor.

Mr. Rodriguez would like to see additional resources provided to aid children who are involved in the criminal justice system, either as victims or offspring of the incarcerated. He closed by citing the inclusion of Attendance Works as a resource because of their expertise in the field and AARP for its volunteer tutoring program, but he felt there should have been some resources for volunteer efforts such as Generations Serving Generations.

Ms. Malik expressed her support for Mr. Rodriguez's comments on the importance of the school climate and said the commission cannot emphasize enough the importance of welcoming, safe, and supportive environments for promoting school attendance for at-risk students.

Ms. Rutledge said it would be helpful if a reference and support list was provided to districts for the start of the new school year.

Ms. Taylor asked commission members to provide resources with which they are familiar which other commission members can share with partner organizations, school districts, and governmental agencies and boards.

## **V. Public Comment**

Patricia Graczyk, a University of Illinois (Chicago) faculty member, addressed the commission and said she has worked for years with LEAs to improve attendance statistics. She acknowledged that the toolkit summaries have been very instructive and informative. She advised the commission of the need to prioritize activities around various goals. She said many people in the districts are very unfamiliar with the Every Student, Every Day initiative but are quite familiar with ESSA. She said what everyone really needs is a definition for chronic absenteeism since it is in ESSA. She said the commission should also define what is meant by an 'at-risk student.' She said inter-agency collaboration is necessary because schools cannot do it alone.

## **VI. Ethics and Open Meetings Act Requirements**

Sixteen of the commission's twenty-five members have not submitted certification of completion of training on the Open Meetings Act. Another sixteen commission members have not submitted evidence of completion of the ethics training for 2016.

## **VII. New Business and Open Discussion**

There will be no meeting in August.

Members will be sent the Attendance Works pre-conference state survey via Survey Monkey.

Federal comment period on ESSA ends August 1. Ms. Taylor will provide a link. Any comments on the Federal Register are made by individuals and do not represent the opinion of the Commission.

Attendance Works has provided some guidance on chronic absence in ESSA which mandates the reporting of chronic absence. The U. S. Department of Education's proposed ESSA regulations mention chronic absence very infrequently and do not require its use in state or district plans for interventions. Chronic absence is only one of a few measures that meet all the requirements for ESSA's school quality indicator. They are looking at the concern that the states have the freedom to determine their own quality measure, one of the most flexible provisions of ESSA and they feel

this is unlikely to change. Attendance Works has some ideas on their website about this issue, so Ms. Taylor suggested everyone read their ESSA comments as this will soon become law.

Attendance Works is also about to begin its annual attendance awareness campaign, and there are four superintendents from Illinois who have actively been engaged: Deerfield Public School District 109 and Leyden High School District 212 (both from last year) and Rock Island /Milan School District 41 and Reavis High School District 220 (both new this year). Ms. Taylor informed the commission she has a 'Call to Action' template which every district can retrofit for use in each system and asked Deanna Sullivan if the Illinois Association of School Boards could distribute it to member districts.

Emily Carroll mentioned that Healthy Schools Campaign has developed a toolkit for addressing the health-related causes of chronic absenteeism and thinks it should be a good resource to the rest of the commission.

[https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Overview-Addressing\\_Health-Related\\_Chronic\\_Absenteeism\\_Toolkit\\_for\\_Action.pdf](https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Overview-Addressing_Health-Related_Chronic_Absenteeism_Toolkit_for_Action.pdf)

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

There was a motion to adjourn by Mr. Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. James. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda  
September 22, 2016  
10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from July 28, 2016
  - IV. Every Student, Every Day Initiative – Toolkit Debrief
  - V. Attendance Works Survey on Survey Monkey
  - VI. Ethics and Open Meetings Act Requirements
  - VII. Public Comment
  - VIII. New Business and Open Discussion
  - IX. Adjourn

## Attendance Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2016

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

### I. Roll Call

#### Present

Karen Hunter Anderson - Springfield (Mackenzie Montgomery, proxy)  
Jeff Aranowski - Chicago  
Stephanie Bernoteit – Springfield  
Karen Fox - telephone  
Tiffany Gholson – Chicago  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson - telephone (Marie Versher, proxy)  
Heidi Grove - telephone  
Victoria Jackson - Springfield  
Hosanna Jones - telephone  
Heidi Grove - telephone  
Madelyn James - Chicago  
Elizabeth Malik – Chicago  
Joseph McMahon - telephone  
Melissa Mitchell - telephone  
Matthew Rodriguez - telephone  
Diane Rutledge- telephone  
Deanna Sullivan - Springfield  
Harold Sweeney - telephone  
Antoinette Taylor – Chicago  
Scott Wakeley – telephone

#### Not Present

Christina Campos  
Emily Carroll  
Lori Fanello  
Jennifer Gill  
Crysta Weitekamp  
Kevin Westall

### II. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chairperson Antoinette Taylor convened the meeting at 10:02 a. m.

### III. Approval of Minutes from July 28, 2016

Ms. Taylor suggested that one word be changed within the minutes on page 3:

*Ms. Taylor said that through the Early Learning Council and ISBE, the commission ~~will~~ **might** have the opportunity to write some language into the preschool grant programs around attendance...*

Madelyn James moved to approve the minutes, and Beth Malik seconded her motion. The minutes were then unanimously approved.

### IV. Every Student, Every Day Initiative – Action Guide Toolkit Debrief

Harold Sweeney - Superintendents, Staff, and School Personnel  
Victoria Jackson – Health Care, Public Health, and Human Services Agencies and Providers  
Karen Fox – Community, Faith-based, and Philanthropic Organizations

### Superintendents, Staff, and School Personnel

Harold Sweeney began his presentation by comparing the commonly accepted definition of chronic absenteeism - missing 10% or more school days per year - to chronic truancy which is missing 5% or more of the last 180 school days without valid cause. What these two definitions tell us is that it is possible to be chronically absent without being identified as chronically truant. This is important because there is no program in place to provide interventions for chronic absenteeism. Interventions are activated by reports of truancy.

The academic effects of chronic absenteeism/truancy are great as these students face greater struggles and are more likely to drop out of school. The gaps created by frequent absences become insurmountable to students who may already be frustrated, and when they get old enough they stop attending school altogether. These students are likely to be members of the following subgroups: low income, minorities, homeless, disabled, highly mobile, and involved in the juvenile justice system. The warning signs exhibited by the affected students include depression/anxiety, decreased health/hygiene/nutrition, patterns of absence, decreased interest in schoolwork, and feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness. District personnel must recognize these signs and be aware of patterns to the absences; if a child misses every Thursday, someone should find out what happens on Wednesday evenings.

Staff should be familiar with area resources to provide students with immediate access, not wait to research solutions when faced with a problem. Discipline policies should be reviewed and revised to ensure chronically absent students are supported when in or returning to school. When the student is in school, districts need to provide enrichment and supportive activities in safe, encouraging, supportive environments for learning in response to the student's needs and not according to staff preferences or convenience. Staff must regularly engage with students and families to build trust and discover the underlying reasons for students' absences from school. Positive phone calls home are important because too many times parents only hear the negative. Mr. Sweeney said home visits are important because you will never truly understand a student's situation until you see where he lives.

Attendance must be tracked and monitored on a daily basis. The automated reports must be viewed by someone in real time. Every staff member must have a role in the push to improve student attendance. There must be a system in place to identify students before they become chronically absent. If you wait until the student has accrued the number of absences that can be characterized as chronic, you are way too late.

Student attendance has to be the responsibility of every person working within a school: cafeteria workers, custodians, librarians, school bus personnel, etc. Never underestimate the contributions of the non-teaching staff as they can connect with students and have a profound influence on a chronically absent student.

### Health Care, Public Health, and Human Services Agencies and Providers

Ms. Taylor read Victoria Jackson's summary of the Every Student, Every Day suggested action steps for health care, public health agencies, and providers to help eliminate chronic absenteeism:

1. Understand the relationship between chronic absenteeism and unmet health and behavioral health needs of children and youth in the local community that affect students' daily school attendance.
2. Ask about school and school attendance in a positive way at every health care visit. Encourage families to develop strategies that allow children to attend school on a regular basis. Work in partnership with school staff to support attendance of your patient-students.

3. Partner with local school districts and schools to support school health improvement plans to improve access to necessary and preventative health and behavioral health services for children and youth.
4. Promote school-based mental health and behavioral health services that support children's unique social emotional needs.
5. Ensure that physical and mental health needs of children and youth are reflected in local nonprofit hospital community needs assessments as per the Affordable Care Act community benefit provision.  
(For more information, visit [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/community\\_benefit.html](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/community_benefit.html)).
6. Learn from successful public health and health provider collaborations with school districts to inform local partnerships and action plans.

Ms. Jackson explained this portion of the toolkit reviews the common causes of chronic absenteeism, including respiratory illness (asthma), dental pain, hunger, abuse and neglect, economic insecurity, fear of bullying, and unmet mental health needs. It encourages medical providers to ask about school and school attendance during patient visits and to be involved with school wellness teams, supports school-based mental health services, and also provides seven pages of broad range of resources that can be used to inform community partners and educate parents.

One of these resources is *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents* developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics for use by providers when completing child and adolescent well-child visits. Areas assessed include nutrition, physical activity, dental health, school performance, family peer relationships, risk of violence, tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, sexual health (i.e. partners, use of condoms, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, coercion), and mental health (i.e. bullying, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation). Many, actually most, of these risk behaviors interfere with school attendance and school performance. Surprisingly, students are very open with their responses. A determination of risk triggers the provision of related education, treatments, or referrals based on those findings. There are 66 certified School Health Centers (SHCs) monitored by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) across the state that complete age appropriate assessments of risk according to *Bright Futures* guidelines.

Ms. Jackson posed a question for commission members: ***“Should risk assessment be required with mandated school physicals?”*** She said the state should consider formalizing a partnership with the Illinois Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics to broaden the use of *Bright Futures* tools by all health providers.

Ms. Jackson posed another question for commission members: ***“What message do we need to get out to school nurses about the role they can play?”*** School nurses can play a significant role in eliminating chronic absenteeism through the following actions:

1. Promote good health through education - one-on-one, newsletter, bulletin boards, and daily announcements. Topics may include handwashing, flu shots, nutrition tips, resources, etc.
2. Monitor absences - contact parents and students, identify issues, and provide resources.
3. Work with those absent for medical reasons, and work with parent to develop individual IHPs. Maintain ongoing communication with the parent and child as well as the health care provider regarding disease management.
4. Open lines of communication with students. Ask and listen. As a school nurse for 26 years, Ms. Jackson said she can assure everyone that the student who comes in every day with a minor complaint has something else going on.

IDPH holds School Health Days in 5 locations with 1,000 attendees and has an email list of 2,300 school health personnel. Ms. Jackson said the commission should consider a partnership with the Illinois Association of School Nurses to identify best practices training for school nurses using IDPH resources. Ms. Jackson posed a final question for consideration by the commission: ***“Should we share these resources with healthcare providers, health departments, etc. and formally ask that they identify and adopt strategies they can implement to reduce absenteeism?”***

#### Community, Faith-based, and Philanthropic Organizations

Karen Fox explained the toolkit offers information, suggests action steps, and lists existing tools and resources—including evidence-based resources—for individuals, leaders, and systems to begin or enhance the work of effective, coordinated community actions to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism, including action steps for groups.

According to the toolkit, community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations should -

1. Learn about what chronic absenteeism is and promote efforts to raise awareness among local stakeholders, especially youth and families.
2. Organize your congregation or community to take action within your own community to support students and families in achieving 100% daily attendance.
3. Encourage the local community to convene a taskforce with representatives from different constituencies and organizations—including education, health, public housing, and justice agencies as well as youth, families, faith, community, and child welfare agency representatives—that can research the root causes of chronic absenteeism among local youth and recommend research and evidence-based solutions for those youth.
4. Partner with schools and school districts and your organizations—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—in order to provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and their families.

Good resources to learn how to enhance the participation of community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations include the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, the U.S. Department of Education’s Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO), Attendance Works, and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Community, faith-based and philanthropic organizations are very different from one another. For example, a United Way agency, a church congregation, and a family foundation all have different interests and goals, but they represent the types of groups in any community that can help inform, advocate, and “raise awareness about and support the implementation of solutions to chronic absenteeism in local communities.” The suggested actions include a call to action to “learn, encourage, and partner.”

Jeff Aranowski commented on the home visits that had been referred to by Harold Sweeney because of the delicate balance between a family’s right to privacy and the school district’s need to know why a child is not attending a school. Mr. Aranowski also drew attention to the inclusion of a line of inquiry about school attendance habits during a physical examination by medical professionals which he thinks would be extremely helpful but may also dissuade people in a fluid housing situation from accessing healthcare in order to avoid that level of scrutiny.



There was a discussion of the need to integrate health and education since health is a primary reason for absence for so many children. Health care providers could also seize the opportunity to encourage regular school attendance as part of a larger public relations effort. Chairperson Taylor concurred and added that such an external partnership is advantageous to create additional awareness of the importance of school attendance. Melissa Mitchell said engaging the health community on this issue in a strategic way makes a lot of sense. Medical offices are good places to disseminate information and doctors and clinical staff would be very useful in asking the right questions and reinforcing the importance of regular school attendance

Madelyn James said the IDPH has an interactive map that shows physician coverage across the state and reflects an uneven distribution of medical personnel in many areas. She suggested we let The Children Cabinet (Governor Rauner's initiative to coordinate services to Illinois children) know of this issue as they are mapping inter-departmental goals. Illinois is home to twenty of the school districts that are included in the four percent of districts nationally with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism. We have to look for the intersections of insufficient health care and heightened rates of chronic absenteeism.

Ms. Taylor asked Ms. James to reach out to a contact she has at the Illinois Academy of Pediatrics to begin a discussion about collaboration. She also requested that Ms. Jackson reach out to the 66 Student Health Centers across the state to initiate the conversation about their participation in efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism among students as the commission needs as many external partners as possible. Ms. Jackson informed the commission she has a contact at the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics that she will contact reach out to.

Ms. Taylor summarized by saying the commission's study of the toolkit has enabled the group to understand the toolkit's directives and apply them locally.

**V. Attendance Works Survey on Survey Monkey**

Thirteen commission members have participated in the survey. The other members were asked to please participate in the survey.

**VI. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**VII. Ethics and Open Meetings Act Requirements**

There are still nine commission members who have not completed the Open Meetings Act training and ten who have not completed their 2016 Ethics Training.

**VIII. New Business and Open Discussion**

HB 3199 was based on recommendations from the Truancy in the Chicago Public Schools Task. It was introduced by State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia in February 2015 and was signed into law by Governor Rauner on July 22, 2016. This act requires a charter school to comply with all applicable absenteeism and truancy policies and requirements applicable to public schools under the laws of the State of Illinois and sets forth how a charter school must define a truant, chronic or habitual truant, truant minor, and dropout.

Ms. Taylor acknowledged the fact that the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) and the Illinois Charter School Commission did not oppose this bill or any of its provisions and expressed her appreciation for the fact that everyone is on the same page insofar as wanting children in school so learning can occur.

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In June 2016, the University of Chicago Urban Attendance Lab held a forum in downtown Chicago. Ms. Taylor said their message is so important for people engaged in the effort to boost school attendance, they will present a condensed version of the forum at the December 15 Attendance Commission meeting which will necessitate extending the meeting by a half an hour as they require one hour for their presentation.

Ms. Taylor introduced Sam Nelson of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) which sponsors the College Changes Everything (CCE) initiative. On November 3, CCE is sponsoring an event entitled *Continuing the Conversation ... A Learning Community Focused on Student College and Career Readiness and Success* to discuss the importance and the impact of attendance. This event will take place between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at ISAC's Deerfield office at 1755 Lake Cook Road.

Mr. Nelson referenced the 60 by 25 goal of the P-20 Council to have 60 percent of our young adult population have a degree or some other working credential by 2025. CCE was started in support of this goal, and Mr. Nelson explained the term 'college' is used to refer to any postsecondary schooling or training. He said employers look for students with 'soft' skills such as showing up for work each day on time. Mr. Nelson said this work ethic derives from good attendance while in school. Scattered throughout the state are over 80 members of the ISAC Corps, young people who are recent college graduates who are helping students and families navigate academic and training opportunities for postsecondary students. Stephanie Bernoteit thanked Mr. Nelson for his external partnership with the commission by convening a conversation on the importance of school attendance. She said ISAC is one of those organizations that bridges people with common goals who operate in different circles.

Deanna Sullivan requested a brief on the public hearing held by Illinois State Senator Jacqueline Collins at St. Sabina Church on September 13. She also reminded the commission about the public hearing the commission will hold at the joint annual conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Association of School Business Officials to be held on November 18 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. She is interested in any materials the commission may have to share with conference attendees prior to the public hearing so they can be prepared with some observations and suggestions. Ms. Sullivan also said she would like to involve Jennifer Gill, Diane Rutledge, and Scott Wakeley in the public hearing as their advisory roles with district administrators render them great sources of information.

Ms. Mitchell said the commission has a role to play in addressing comments about the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to ISBE as this legislation emphasizes school attendance and climate. The commission can support ISBE with recommendations for strategies in the state implementation plan.

Mr. Aranowski said ISBE is on the second round of listening tours and a draft version of ISBE's implementation plan is available online at [isbe.net/essa](http://isbe.net/essa). The plan will go to the governor in January, the board in February, and to the federal government in March. Ms. Taylor asked that commission members review the implementation plan in preparation for the October meeting at which time members can discuss if the commission as a body wishes to formally provide its input. There is also a reader's guide on the ISBE/ESSA webpage.

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Ms. Mitchell informed the commission that Attendance Works compiled a brief in which the organization advocates for the choice of the chronic absence rate as a primary indicator to measure school quality or student success.

Ms. James asked about the possibility of the commission drafting a strategic plan for future activities. Mr. Aranowski advocated for the development of both short- and long-term plans after the annual report is submitted to the legislature in December. Ms. Taylor said the first foundational year was necessary to explore the landscape and determine priorities. She said one of most critical aspects that became apparent through discussion and the input of people at the two public hearings which had been held was the family engagement piece. Some people need all the help they can get to parent well and properly guide their children. Some parents are unaware of the law or the resources out there for them. Ms. Taylor said if something is not accessible, it is not actionable.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Ms. Bernoteit moved to adjourn, and Mr. Aranowski seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda  
October 27, 2016  
10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from September 22, 2016
  - IV. Legislative Review
  - V. Outcomes 2 and 3 Discussion
  - VI. Ethics and Open Meetings Act Requirements
  - VII. Public Comment
  - VIII. New Business and Open Discussion
  - IX. Adjourn

## Attendance Commission

Meeting Summary

**October 27, 2016**

10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

### **I. Roll Call**

#### **Present**

Jeff Aranowski - Chicago  
Stephanie Bernoteit – telephone  
Lori Fanello - telephone  
Karen Fox - telephone  
Victoria Jackson - Springfield  
Joseph McMahon - telephone  
Diane Rutledge- telephone  
Deanna Sullivan - Springfield  
Harold Sweeney – Amber Kidd, proxy  
Antoinette Taylor – Chicago

#### **Not Present**

Karen Hunter Anderson  
Christina Campos  
Tiffany Gholson  
Jennifer Gill  
Diane Grigsby-Jackson  
Heidi Grove  
Madelyn James  
Elizabeth Malik  
Melissa Mitchell  
Matthew Rodriguez  
Scott Wakeley  
Crysta Weitekamp  
Kevin Westall

### **II. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was begun at 10:17 due to v-tel connection problems with Springfield.

### **III. Approval of Minutes from September 22, 2016**

A quorum was not achieved as only 46% of the Attendance Commission members attended the meeting or sent a proxy, so the minutes could not be approved.

### **IV. Legislative Review**

Jeff Aranowski reminded the commission that he had previously provided them with a legislative overview related to definitions of attendance-related words such as truancy and chronic truancy, explanations of valid causes for absence, and exemptions from school attendance requirements (105 ILCS 5/26).

During this meeting, he provided an overview of the statutory repercussions for truancy beginning with the information that districts can employ their own truant officers, or they can rely on the services of a truant officer hired by the county/regional office of education.

Article 26 of the School Code includes the requirement that a noncompliance notice be provided in person or by mail to the parent/guardian of a child or the person who registered the child for school when a child is absent without cause or notification, and the child must be in school the day after this notice was received. Two additional notices must be sent if the student's truancy continues, and a lack of response to these notices shall prompt the district superintendent to hold a truancy hearing. The outcomes of the truancy hearing will look different depending on the age of the student and the circumstances. The regional superintendent may require the child to perform community service on an age-appropriate basis. If the truancy continues to persist, the

county superintendent may bring charges against the person responsible for the child through contact with the local state's attorney office or conduct a truancy mediation. Such a mediation may have different components depending on the age of the child. Older students may be provided with an alternate educational program to enable them to obtain their high school diplomas. If the truancy continues unabated, the superintendent can petition the court for a dispositional order for a truant minor in need of supervision in order to develop one or more of the following:

- A service plan or comprehensive youth service plan by the Regional Superintendent or referral to a comprehensive community based youth service agency as specifically provided by the appropriate Regional Office of Education
- Counseling or other supportive services
- A fine of between \$5-100 per day
- Public service work assignment
- Suspension of driver's license or privilege

The School Code additionally addresses the following consequences for a persistently truant student's parent/guardian:

- Any person to whom notice has been given of a child's truancy and who knowingly and willfully permits such a child to persist in his truancy within that school year, upon conviction thereof shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor and shall be subject to not more than 30 days imprisonment and/or a fine of up to \$500.
- Any person who induces or attempts to induce any child to be absent from school unlawfully, or who knowingly employs or harbors, while school is in session, any child absent unlawfully from school for 3 consecutive school days, is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

Mr. Aranowski asked commission members/ practitioners who regularly deal with truancy statute enforcement for their input on the statutory consequences. Lori Fanello referenced the inclusion of community service as a remedial consequence of chronic truancy as an unfunded activity, so it is rarely enforced unless it is court-ordered because then it is court-monitored. She referred also to continuing noncompliance in relation to Senate Bill 100 (the new state law on school discipline) which discusses getting students to enroll in a graduation incentive program. She said they cannot counsel students to drop out of school and enroll in an alternative program. She does not know how Senate Bill 100 will change that.

Mr. Aranowski said there have been some districts that counselled students to drop out rather than face expulsion (usually discipline-related) or a transfer to an alternate educational program. Diane Rutledge and Mr. Aranowski concurred that it was the intent of Senate Bill 100 to counsel students to take advantage of programs that could be beneficial to them, not encourage them to drop out.

Deanna Sullivan spoke in reference to the truant minor in need of supervision dispositional orders that include a fine of \$500 a day to state that is rarely applied due to the fact most of the families involved in truancy dilemmas cannot afford to pay the penalty. Enforcement would impact lower socio-economic children too greatly. Ms. Sullivan said the penalty of imprisonment was only used once in her experience with these situations because removal of the parent from the home would negatively impact the children as well. She said they find other ways to elicit the cooperation of parents.

Mr. Aranowski asked Ms. Fanello if she could identify a bill that had been introduced last year to eliminate the financial penalty and the threat of jail time from the state statutes on truancy. This was a move that was opposed by ICEARY and some people from alternative programming options as well. He recalled that at a previous commission meeting, Harold Sweeney said you need the threat of a high fine or imprisonment to get some parents to cooperate with authorities. Ms. Fanello said Mr. Sweeney feels these threats succeed in getting the attention of recalcitrant parents. Ms. Sullivan said this bill advised schools to forgo suspension, apply behavioral interventions, decrease incidents of expulsion, and be less punitive overall. (This bill, HB4240 which did not win a majority vote in April 2015, was actually explained later in the meeting during New Business.)

Ms. Sullivan explained that state law requires school boards to adopt policies that cover some but not all of the topics covered in the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) school policy document: mandates, policies, supportive services, and available resources for truants. The document additionally covers state requirements on public school attendance and permitted exceptions and valid causes for absence, an absenteeism and truancy program which is required of every school district in Illinois, and some of the legislative changes that have occurred in this regard (Students can now have an excused absence to play “Taps” at a function). The amended policy also includes the ages of students it impacts for age-appropriate responses. A school board policy manual requires constant review and revision in response to changing state and federal laws, regulations, court cases, and changes in society and the community.

Segueing into Senate Bill 100 (Public Act 99-0456, effective September 15, 2016), Ms. Sullivan feels there are some things in this act related to the commission’s efforts to keep kids in school. This new law –

- prohibits school personnel from encouraging students to drop out (even to access alternative programming)
- requires schools to use forms of non-exclusionary types of discipline
- requires schools to allow students who were suspended to complete or make up work for equivalent academic credit
- obligates districts to exhaust appropriate behavioral interventions and either attempt other interventions or determine that no further interventions will work before suspending a student
- maintains that schools must provide opportunities for students who are barred from the school bus and have no alternate means of travel to complete missed work for equivalent academic credit
- seeks to discontinue the practice of suspending a student for repeated disciplinary infractions
- discontinues the practice of tallying the points a student receives over a period of time to determine exclusion from school as the new law calls into question the validity of relying on past misconduct in suspension and expulsion decisions
- Provides that districts must make the effort to provide ongoing professional development for administrators, teachers, school board members, school resource officers, and staff on the following:
  - adverse effects of school exclusion and justice-system involvement
  - effective classroom management strategies
  - culturally responsive discipline
  - developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climates

With regard to the aspects of the law that discourage suspensions and expulsions, Ms. Sullivan said these have prompted some discussion among attorneys and will probably eventually be sorted out in the courts. Ms. Sullivan said these changes in the School Code will be significant for districts as well as for students. Finally, she thinks this will all have a huge impact on the work of the Attendance Commission and its goal to return more students to the classroom.

Ms. Taylor commented that the professional development mandate in this Public Act will ensure that professional learning communities will understand the new mandates around disciplinary matters but will also have the support of all district personnel because attendance and disciplinary issues are everyone's problem. She asked if anyone knew how this was playing out on any district level since this mandate went into effect on September 15, 2016. Lori Fanello said there is a lot of training occurring to implement these legislated changes and district policies are being rewritten. She said there is a groundswell of practice revisions and related professional development opportunities. She informed Ms. Taylor she would provide the commission with anecdotes from the field after an upcoming meeting with superintendents across the state. Ms. Taylor wants to use the commission as a portal to highlight districts with exemplary practices to inform other districts that may be struggling with the new requirements.

Mr. Aranowski wondered if the required professional development related to new discipline standards has been linked to Educator Licensure's requirements for professional development as allowable activities for license renewal requirements. Ms. Fanello said these professional development opportunities are allowed as they relate to student discipline and classroom behaviors.

Ms. Taylor reminded the commission of the upcoming Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), and Illinois Association of School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO) on November 18-20. The Attendance Commission will be holding a hearing at the conference the afternoon of November 18 at 2:00 p.m.

## **V. Outcomes 2 and 3 Discussion**

### *Chronic Absence*

Ms. Taylor reminded the commission members that chronic absenteeism remains undefined in Illinois. She said the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force final report referenced the fact that a definition of chronic absenteeism needs to be set forth. She suggested the definition for chronic absenteeism should be aligned with the numerical component in the definition for chronic truancy: missing 5 percent of the last 180 school days for any reason. In the absence of a definition, however, when a student's accumulated absences total more than 5 percent of the last 180 school days, including excused and unexcused absences and suspensions, there must be action taken that is not punitive but preventive and designed to ameliorate the problem such as the application of multi-tiered interventions. Ms. Taylor said this could be the standard for chronic absence, or one that references a higher number of missed school days could be used.

Mr. Aranowski suggested the commission should learn what measure is employed by many of the districts in the state. The commission administrator cited the fact that the Chicago Public Schools define a chronically absent student as one who has missed 10 percent of 180 school days for any reason and added that this equation was an unofficial national standard. The



commission administrator communicated, however, the fact that the U. S. Department of Education has been using a 15-day standard (8 percent).

Mr. Aranowski said he understands why truancy was defined through legislation to be calculated as missing school on an unexcused basis 5 percent or more of the last 180 school days, but feels it would be good to know the reasons behind definitions of chronic absence that were adopted by individual school districts.

Patricia Graczyk, a University of Illinois at Chicago professor was in attendance at the meeting in Chicago and was asked for her input on this issue. She explained that while the Office of Civil Rights within the U. S. Department of Education had been using the 15-day standard, plans were underway to switch to the 10 percent standard, including excused and unexcused absences as well as suspensions. Dr. Graczyk went on to explain that across the country, chronic absence is commonly defined as missing 10 percent of the previous 180 school days for any reason as this criterion is one that is based on research on negative student outcomes. She said she works with many area schools, and they are all waiting for an official word on what standard Illinois will adopt. Dr. Graczyk recommends that the commission propose a state definition of chronic absence soon. Insofar as interventions for chronic absence are concerned, the first tier encompasses students who are in school 95 percent or more of the time while students who are present 85-95 percent of the time are considered at risk requiring tier 2 interventions.

Ms. Sullivan expressed her point of view that a definition of chronic absence may not have to be statutory. She thinks a public awareness campaign on school attendance will create an understanding of what chronic attendance is. Mr. Aranowski agreed that he is not sure of the benefit of a definition of chronic absence. Ms. Taylor wondered if districts need the definition to function as a target for action, whereupon Mr. Aranowski said the commission can do one of two things: statutorily define chronic absence or tell districts to set their own. Some districts may opt for 10 percent while other districts might want their standard to be lower. He asked if we really want to apply this across the board or if we want to provide resources to districts so they can make a determination themselves as to what defines chronic absenteeism for their students.

Ms. Sullivan recommends getting feedback from districts first and making a recommendation for a definition later.

Ms. Taylor suggested that in the annual report which is due December 15, the commission should make a recommendation for a legislated definition of chronic attendance, and spend the next year gathering input from districts through hearings on the exact parameters of the definition. Then in the 2017 annual report, the commission can recommend a definition based on practitioner input. Ms. Fanello concurred and said the commission should also look into the Every Student Succeeds Act to see what directives are contained within.

#### *House Bill 2683 (Public Act 99-0193)*

Ms. Taylor referred commission members to the following House Bill which is now Public Act 99-0193 because it establishes a Multiple Measure Index which may include attendance as one of the indicators for the annual measurable objectives.

#### *House Bill 2683*

*Amends the School Code. Makes changes concerning references to adequate yearly progress with respect to the State Board of Education's recognition standards for student performance and school improvement, the State Board's system of rewards for school districts and schools,*

*the State Board's system to acknowledge schools, State interventions, and remote educational programs. Removes provisions concerning academic early warning and watch status. Instead, requires the State Board to establish a Multiple Measure Index and Annual Measurable Objectives for each public school in this State that address the school's overall performance in terms of academic success and equity and sets forth provisions concerning priority and focus districts. Makes changes concerning student outcome data on a school report card. Repeals a Section concerning appeals from school districts pertaining to school or district status levels, recognition levels, or corrective action. Effective July 1, 2015.*

*Senate Committee Amendment No. 1*

*Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Reinserts the contents of the bill as introduced with the following changes. Requires the State Board of Education to develop recognition standards for student performance and school improvement for all school districts and their individual schools (instead of in all public schools operated by school districts), and removes provisions concerning the design of the standards. Instead, provides that the standards must be an outcomes-based, balanced accountability measure. Sets forth provisions concerning the balanced accountability measure. Makes changes concerning the State Board's establishment of a Multiple Measure Index and Annual Measurable Objectives. Changes the definition of "focus school". Requires a school report card to include the most current data possessed by the State Board related to a school district's and its individual schools' balanced accountability measure. Effective July 1, 2015.*

Ms. Taylor was contacted by Sara Boucek, an attorney for the Illinois Association for School Administrators, for information related to this index and the index objectives as she serves as the chairperson for the committee charged with developing the index. Ms. Boucek only became aware of the Attendance Commission two weeks ago through a conversation with Hedy Chang of Attendance Works and reached out because one the proposed measures of performance for this index may be school attendance. She expressed her concern that if attendance is selected to be an annual measurable objective, the state must have a definition of chronic absence.

Ms. Boucek has a meeting on November 9 with other members of a group working to implement the Multiple Measure Index and Annual Measurable Objectives. Hedy Chang of Attendance Works is scheduled to confer with this group via telephone to recommend that attendance be selected as an indicator for this index especially since ESSA has a reporting requirement for chronic absenteeism.

Mr. Aranowski asked if attendance would be the indicator or chronic absenteeism. Ms. Taylor explained that attendance would likely be the indicator and would include its attendant components such as chronic absence.

*House Bill 4240*

Ms. Taylor brought a pending House Bill to the attention of the commission since it seeks to remedy student truancy without making demands on parents that would increase their burden. She said people have assumed that this legislation stemmed from the work of the Attendance Commission when, in fact, it did not. The co-sponsor of this bill is Representative La Shawn Ford who was involved with the Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force. He has been an advocate of efforts to involve parents to a greater degree in the education of their children. He is not interested in punitive measures but rather seeks ways to draw parents in in a positive, collegial way.

#### *HB4240 Synopsis As Introduced*

*Amends the Compulsory Attendance Article of the School Code. Provides that any person having custody or control of a child subject to the Article to whom notice has been given of the child's truancy and who knowingly and willfully permits such a child to persist in his or her truancy within that school year must complete a parent education course or undergo family counseling upon a finding by the school board of a violation (instead of providing that the person is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor and is subject to not more than 30 days imprisonment or a fine of up to \$500 or both upon conviction thereof). Makes related changes.*

#### *House Floor Amendment No. 1*

*Provides that any person having custody or control of a child to whom notice has been given of the child's truancy and who knowingly and willfully permits the child to persist in his or her truancy within a school year may (rather than must) be required, upon a finding by the school board of a violation of the truancy provisions, to complete a parent education course, undergo family counseling, or engage in another support service as agreed upon by the person having custody or control of the child and the school board (rather than just complete a parent education course or undergo family counseling).*

Commission members addressed the fact that while some prefer more relaxed, forgiving measures to draw parents of truant students into compliance with school attendance requirements, there are practitioners in the field who feel that the punitive measures currently in the School Code provide an incentive to motivate some parents who are not responsive to the efforts of school, district, and regional staff to enlist their cooperation.

ISBE has taken a neutral position with regard to this bill.

Ms. Rutledge addressed the fact that bills that mandate specific supports are unfunded mandates, and questions then arise about the source of funding.

#### **VI. Ethics and Open Meetings Act Requirements**

A list had been circulated to members of the commission in preparation for this meeting which conveyed the names of the commission members who had completed their Ethics and Open Meetings Act trainings and submitted certification of each. Members whose name were not a on the list were reminded to complete these two tasks. Mr. Aranowski explained that ISBE could be subject to audit findings if all members do not comply with these simple, required tasks.

#### **VII. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **VIII. New Business and Open Discussion**

The roster for the Multiple Measures Index Committee includes the following people:

- Daniel Booth, appointed by the Illinois Principals Association
- Sara Boucek, appointed by the Illinois Association of School Administrators, committee chair
- Roger Eddy, appointed by the Illinois Association of School Boards
- Mark Klaisner, appointed by the Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents
- Kathy Mannen, appointed by the Illinois Federation of Teachers
- Karl Goeke, appointed by the Illinois Education Association
- Mary Jane Morris, appointed by the Illinois Education Association

- Matthew Rodriguez, of the Illinois Parent Teacher Association
- Kurt Hilgendorf, of the Chicago Teachers Union
- Ryan Crosby, from the Chicago Public Schools
- Vacancy for a representative of the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association

Other new business included a reminder about the College Changes Everything event entitled *Continuing the Conversation ... A Learning Community Focused on Student College and Career Readiness and Success* on November 3 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at 1755 Lake Cook Road in Deerfield.

**IX. Adjourn**

Since there had been no quorum, the meeting did not require a formal adjournment.

## **Attendance Commission**

Meeting Agenda  
November 18, 2016  
10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street  
Fourteenth Floor, V-Tel Room  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Third Floor, V-Tel Room  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

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- I. Roll Call
  - II. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - III. Approval of Minutes from September Meeting
  - IV. Legislative Review
  - V. Discussion and Approval of Report Writing Procedures
  - VI. Public Comment
  - VII. New Business and Open Discussion
  - VIII. Adjourn

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Commission members seeking to participate by telephone may do so by dialing 1-888-494-4032 and entering the following access code: 3 6 3 3 7 5 2 7 0 9

## **Appendix D: Public Act 99-0601**

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by renumbering and changing Section 2-3.163 as added by Public Act 99-432 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.164)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on December 16, 2020)

Sec. 2-3.164 ~~2-3.163~~. Attendance Commission.

(a) The Attendance Commission is created within the State Board of Education to study the issue of chronic absenteeism in this State and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission shall consist of all of the following members:

(1) The Director of the Department of Children and Family Services or his or her designee.

(2) The Chairperson of the State Board of Education or his or her designee.

(3) The Chairperson of the Board of Higher Education or his or her designee.

(4) The Secretary of the Department of Human Services or his or her designee.

(5) The Director of the Department of Public Health or

his or her designee.

(6) The Chairperson of the Illinois Community College Board or his or her designee.

(7) The Chairperson of the State Charter School Commission or his or her designee.

(8) An individual that deals with children's disabilities, impairments, and social emotional issues, appointed by the State Superintendent of Education.

(9) One member from each of the following organizations, appointed by the State Superintendent of Education:

(A) A non-profit organization that advocates for students in temporary living situations.

(B) An Illinois-focused, non-profit organization that advocates for the well-being of all children and families in this State.

(C) An Illinois non-profit, anti-crime organization of law enforcement that researches and recommends early learning and youth development strategies to reduce crime.

(D) An Illinois non-profit organization that conducts community-organizing around family issues.

(E) A statewide professional teachers' organization.

(F) A different statewide professional teachers' organization.



(G) A professional teachers' organization in a city having a population exceeding 500,000.

(H) An association representing school administrators.

(I) An association representing school board members.

(J) An association representing school principals.

(K) An association representing regional superintendents of schools.

(L) An association representing parents.

(M) An association representing high school districts.

(N) An association representing large unit districts.

(O) An organization that advocates for healthier school environments in Illinois.

(P) An organization that advocates for the health and safety of Illinois youth and families by providing capacity building services.

(Q) A statewide association of local philanthropic organizations that advocates for effective educational, health, and human service policies to improve this State's communities.

(R) A statewide organization that advocates for partnerships among schools, families, and the community that provide access to support and remove

barriers to learning and development, using schools as hubs.

(S) An organization representing statewide programs actively involved in truancy intervention.

Attendance Commission members shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for their travel expenses from appropriations to the State Board of Education available for that purpose and subject to the rules of the appropriate travel control board.

(b) The Attendance Commission shall meet initially at the call of the State Superintendent of Education. The members shall elect a chairperson at their initial meeting. Thereafter, the Attendance Commission shall meet at the call of the chairperson. The Attendance Commission shall hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance.

(c) The Attendance Commission shall identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:

(1) a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;

(2) mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this State in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;

(3) mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this State, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;

(4) best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and

(5) new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.

(d) The State Board of Education shall provide administrative support to the Commission. The Attendance Commission shall submit an initial report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than March 15, 2016. The Attendance Commission shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than December 15, 2016 and each December 15 thereafter ~~of each year.~~

(e) The Attendance Commission is abolished and this Section is repealed on December 16, 2020.

(Source: P.A. 99-432, eff. 8-21-15; revised 10-5-15.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon

Public Act 099-0601

HB4343 Enrolled

LRB099 15482 NHT 39769 b

becoming law.

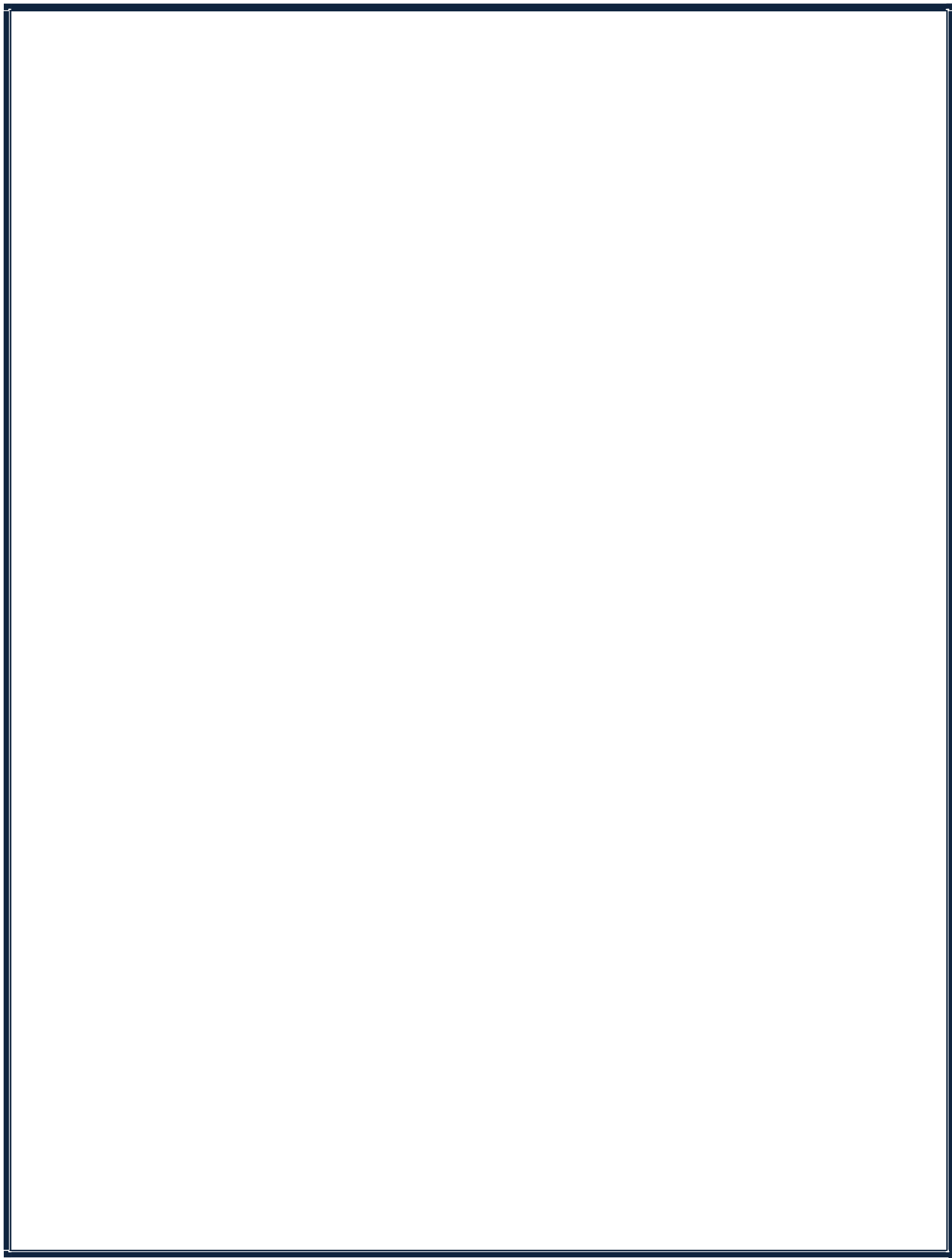
**Appendix E: U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban  
Development and U.S. Department of Education: *Every Student,  
Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic***

U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
U.S. Department of Education

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**Every Student, Every Day:**  
*A Community Toolkit to Address and  
Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*





# **Every Student, Every Day:**

## *A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

Including information and resources for:

***Youth***

***Parents and Families***

***Mentors and Volunteers***

***School District Superintendents and Staff, and School Personnel***

***Early Learning Providers***

***Health Care, Public Health & Human Service Agencies & Providers***

***Public Housing Authorities***

***Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement***

***Homeless Services Providers***

***Mayors and Local Government***

***Community, Faith-Based, and Philanthropic Organizations***

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U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
U.S. Department of Education

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October 2015



This report contains the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites with information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. This information is provided for the user's convenience. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, or Justice. The inclusion of this information is not intended to reflect its importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. None of the four federal agencies listed here controls or guarantees the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in this report.

**U.S. Department of Education**

Arne Duncan  
*Secretary*

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
*Secretary*

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Julián Castro  
*Secretary*

**U.S. Department of Justice**

Loretta E. Lynch  
*Attorney General*

October 2015

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This report is available on the Department's website at [www.ed.gov/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit](http://www.ed.gov/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit).

**Availability of Alternate Formats**

Requests for documents in alternate formats such as Braille or large print should be submitted to the Alternate Format Center by calling 202-260-0852 or by contacting the 504 coordinator via email at [om\\_eaos@ed.gov](mailto:om_eaos@ed.gov).

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If you have difficulty understanding English you may request language assistance services for Department information that is available to the public. These language assistance services are available free of charge. If you need more information about interpretation or translation services, please call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (TTY: 1-800-437-0833), or email us at [Ed.Language.Assistance@ed.gov](mailto:Ed.Language.Assistance@ed.gov). Or write to at U.S. Department of Education, Information Resource Center, LBJ Education Building, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202.

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There are consequences to inaction. There are consequences to indifference. And they reverberate far beyond the walls of the projects, or the borders of the barrio, or the roads of the reservation. They sap us of our strength as a nation. It means we're not as good as we could be. And over time, it wears us out. Over time, it weakens our nation as a whole.

The good news is, it doesn't have to be this way. We can have the courage to change. We can make a difference. We can remember that these kids are our kids. "For these are all our children," James Baldwin once wrote. "We will all profit by, or pay for, whatever they become."

Remarks by **President Barack Obama** at Launch of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, May 4, 2015, Lehman College, West Bronx, New York



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

October 7, 2015

Dear Colleague:

A growing and compelling body of research demonstrates that chronic absence from school—typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused<sup>1</sup>—is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of which students will eventually drop out of school.<sup>2</sup> With an estimated five to seven and a half million students chronically absent each year,<sup>3</sup> chronic absenteeism is a national problem that seriously undermines our collective efforts to improve education and life outcomes among our youth.

Today, we, the leaders of the U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Justice (DOJ), announce our long-term commitment to building capacity across the Federal government to support States and local communities in the work of addressing and eliminating chronic absenteeism. We also call upon States and local education, health, housing, and justice agencies and organizations, in partnership with community stakeholders, to join forces and commit to creating or enhancing coordinated, cross-sector systems for identifying and supporting students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent, with the goal of reducing chronic absenteeism by at least 10 percent each year, beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

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<sup>1</sup> Therriault, S., Heppen, J., O'Cummings, M., Fryer, L., & Johnson, A. (2010). *Early Warning System Implementation Guide: For Use with the National High School Center's Early Warning System Tool v2.0*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, National High School Center. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED521686>.

<sup>2</sup> Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Available at [http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport\\_May16.pdf](http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

In order to support communities in addressing and eliminating barriers to students' daily attendance at, and meaningful engagement with, school—particularly for students who are low-income, of color, homeless, highly mobile, juvenile justice-involved, and/or who are students with disabilities—we are pleased to announce the release of *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*, which is available at <http://www.ed.gov/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit>. This Toolkit will provide community stakeholders with information and resources to help ensure that all young people are in school every day and benefitting from coordinated systems of support. Further, to achieve our ambitious but attainable goal of reducing chronic absenteeism by at least 10 percent per year, we ask that leaders of State and local education, health, housing, and justice systems work immediately and collaboratively to take the following action steps:

**Action Step 1: Generate and act on absenteeism data.** Prioritize the development of early warning prevention and intervention systems that identify students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent before they miss enough school that it is nearly impossible for them to catch up. Data from such systems should be shared—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—between school districts and other key public and private organizations to ensure coordinated systems of support for students who are chronically absent.<sup>4</sup>

**Action Step 2: Create and deploy positive messages and measures.** Focus on developing positive messages for youth and families as well as implementing supportive engagement strategies. For instance, these strategies may include mentoring, counseling, and creating safe and supportive school climates through approaches such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports<sup>5</sup> to improve students' attendance at, connection to, and success in school. Punitive messages and measures are often ineffective and can lead to disproportionate suspensions and expulsions from school and inappropriate referrals of students and families to law enforcement.<sup>6</sup>

**Action Step 3: Focus communities on addressing chronic absenteeism.** Launch local initiatives to raise public awareness about the causes and effects of chronic absenteeism, including awareness among families and youth. Prioritize training within communities and across sectors to conduct root-cause analyses of

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<sup>4</sup> For information on data-sharing consistent with FERPA, please refer to guidance provided by ED's Family Policy Compliance Office at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on implementing positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), please visit ED's PBIS Technical Assistance Center at [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

<sup>6</sup> Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., Cohen, R. (2014). *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center. Available at <http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report/>.

local absenteeism trends. Implement research and evidence-based strategies and programs—such as *Check & Connect*<sup>7</sup>—that effectively engage and support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent.

**Action Step 4: Ensure responsibility across sectors.** Regularly communicate that chronic absenteeism is a problem that affects the whole community, not just those students who are chronically absent and their families. Drive and evaluate cross-sector performance, at least in part, based on that principle. Education, health, housing, and justice system leaders should work together to ensure shared accountability within and across sectors to successfully address the local, underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.

As a nation, we must acknowledge that frequent absences from school can be devastating to a child's future. For example, children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade.<sup>8</sup> Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.<sup>9</sup> By high school, irregular attendance is a better predictor of school dropout than test scores. A study of public school students in Utah found that a student who is chronically absent in even a single school year between the eighth and twelfth grades is over seven times more likely to drop out of school than a student who is not chronically absent.<sup>10</sup> Students who are homeless and those who reside in public housing are also particularly at risk of being chronically absent from school.<sup>11</sup>

Research further demonstrates that completing high school is not only a strong predictor of adult success but also of adult physical and mental health outcomes and involvement with the criminal justice system. Students who do not graduate from high school have

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on research findings of *Check & Connect* implementation, please see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=78>.

<sup>8</sup> Ehrlich, S., Gwynne, J. A., Pareja, A. S., and Allensworth, E. M. (2013). *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Reform. Available at <https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/preschool-attendance-chicago-public-schools-relationships-learning-outcomes-and-reasons>.

<sup>9</sup> Hernandez, D. (2011). *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, p. 6. Available at [www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah. (2012). *Research Brief: Chronic Absenteeism*. Available at <http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Nauer, K. et al. (2014). *A Better Picture of Poverty: What Chronic Absenteeism and Risk Load Reveal About NYC's Lowest-Income Elementary Schools*. New York: Center for New York City Affairs, The Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. Available at [www.centernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/](http://www.centernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/).

worse health and greater health risks as adults than their peers who graduate.<sup>12</sup> They also have more frequent, negative contact with law enforcement,<sup>13</sup> contributing to a cycle of poverty, poor health, homelessness, and incarceration. These data strongly suggest that the long-term consequence of chronic absenteeism is a population that is less educated, less healthy, underemployed, less financially stable, and more disenfranchised.

We recognize that attendance tracking systems in many school districts across the country are not required or designed to measure chronic absenteeism among local youth. In fact, efforts to improve average daily attendance often mask the extent of a school's chronic absenteeism problem and fail to address its underlying causes.<sup>14</sup> Adding to the challenge, educators, families, and youth are not sufficiently aware of the frequency and negative impact of chronic absence from school.<sup>15</sup> In many school districts and communities, the focus is on "unexcused" absences or truancy at the middle and high school level, even though research shows that chronic absence in the early grades is also a major problem, whether excused or unexcused.<sup>16</sup> Common interventions are often punitive in nature and blame is frequently placed on students and their families. Ultimately, such responses have the deleterious, if unintended, effect of making school less, not more, engaging for students and families, and these practices undermine efforts to assist our most struggling schools and students.<sup>17</sup>

In spring 2016, ED will release the 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), including the first-ever school-level data on all students across the nation who missed at least 15 days of school for any reason, which translates into approximately 8.5 percent of a typical school year. We anticipate that the CRDC will shed new light on the scope of the chronic absenteeism problem, including where it is most prevalent and whom it most

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<sup>12</sup> Cutler, D. M., Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). *Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence*. National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper No. 12352. Retrieved at [www.econ.ucla.edu/alleras/research/books/Education\\_and\\_Health\\_July\\_2006.pdf](http://www.econ.ucla.edu/alleras/research/books/Education_and_Health_July_2006.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Page, A., Petteruti, A., Walsh, N., Zidenberg, J. (2007). *Education and Public Safety*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Center. Retrieved at [www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-08\\_rep\\_educationandpublicsafety\\_ps-ac.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-08_rep_educationandpublicsafety_ps-ac.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Bruner, C., Discher, A., Chang, H. (2011). *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight*. Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center. Available at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012), p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Applied Survey Research. (2011). *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Associations with Student Characteristics, School Readiness, and Third Grade Outcomes*. Report prepared for Attendance Works. Available at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ASR-Mini-Report-Attendance-Readiness-and-Third-Grade-Outcomes-7-8-11.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Black, A. T., Seder, R. C., & Kekahio, W. (2014). *Review of research on student nonenrollment and chronic absenteeism: A report for the Pacific Region* (REL 2015-054). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

affects, and further catalyze efforts to engage students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent.

However, we can and must do more now to address the negative and disparate outcomes experienced by students who are chronically absent. By acting early and effectively in a coordinated, cross-sector manner—from the Federal government to every school and community in the country—we can dramatically improve the academic and life outcomes of millions of young people who have been disengaged from a daily, supportive school experience. The health and well-being of our nation demands that we do no less.

Sincerely,

Loretta Lynch  
Attorney General  
of the United States

Sylvia Burwell  
Secretary of Health  
and Human Services

Julián Castro  
Secretary of Housing  
and Urban Development

Arne Duncan  
Secretary of Education



# Every Student, Every Day:

## *A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

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Chronic absenteeism—or missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year for any reason, excused or unexcused—is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school. An estimated five to seven and a half million students miss 18 or more days of school each year, or nearly an entire month or more of school, which puts them at significant risk of falling behind academically and failing to graduate from high school. Because they miss so much school, millions of young people miss out on opportunities in post-secondary education and good careers.

But we can change that.

### Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as **two days** of school a month.

**2 DAYS PER MONTH x 9 MONTHS =  
CHRONIC ABSENCE**

The U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Justice (DOJ) have developed this toolkit to support coordinated community action that addresses the underlying causes of local chronic absenteeism affecting millions of children in our Nation's public schools each year. We believe—and research and best practices confirm—that when a diverse coalition of local stakeholders work together to engage students who are chronically absent, youth and family outcomes of entire communities can be dramatically improved. In short, we believe chronic absenteeism in communities is a solvable problem.

Models of coordinated community action to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism exist across the country, and each model is different; different communities make different choices about how to use time and resources. But one element of promising efforts to reengage chronically absent students tends to stand out: *coordination and collaboration among a diverse collection of local stakeholders is central to the work.* Representatives of education, health, housing, and justice-

related agencies and organizations are at the table, alongside youth, families, local government, and community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations. This collaborative approach can enable whole communities to acquire the resources and develop the networks they need to provide well-informed and effective guidance, motivation, and support to students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school and their families.

It is time to encourage coordinated community action across our country in order to ensure that we support every student, every day to attend and be successful in school and, ultimately, in life.

### **Purpose of this Toolkit**

Many of the education, health, housing, and justice-related challenges some of our young people face can be effectively addressed when people and organizations within a community join forces, set aggressive yet achievable goals, and work together to provide all children, particularly our most disadvantaged, with the encouragement and support they need when they need it.

This Toolkit offers information, suggested action steps, and lists of existing tools and resources—including evidence-based resources—for individuals, leaders, and systems to begin or enhance the work of effective, coordinated community action to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism, including actions steps for:

- Youth
- Parents and Families
- Mentors and Volunteers
- School District Superintendents and Staff, and School Personnel
- Early Learning Providers
- Health Care, Public Health & Human Service Agencies & Providers
- Public Housing Authorities
- Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement
- Homeless Services Providers
- Mayors and Local Government
- Community, Faith-Based, and Philanthropic Organizations

### **Know the Facts about Chronic Absenteeism**

It is important to know the facts about chronic absenteeism in order to effectively address and eliminate it. Everyone should understand what chronic absenteeism is, whom it affects, and why we must work in a deeply coordinated and collaborative fashion to support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school.

When engaging with someone on this issue, we suggest sharing the following important statistics about chronic absenteeism in the United States.

## Did You Know?

An estimated **5 to 7.5 million students** are chronically absent from school each year.

### Chronic absenteeism:

- Is a primary cause of lower academic achievement, even when the absences are “excused” or understandable.<sup>18</sup>
- Is a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school.<sup>19</sup> A study of public school students in Utah found that a student who is chronically absent in any year between the eighth and twelfth grades is over seven times more likely to drop out of school than a student who was not chronically absent.<sup>20</sup>
- Affects an estimated five to seven and a half million students each year.<sup>21</sup>
- Can even affect students in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade, who are then much less likely to read at grade level by the end of third grade.<sup>22</sup>
- Is caused by a variety of issues, including chronic health conditions, housing instability, involvement with the juvenile justice system, and unsafe conditions in school, among many others.<sup>23</sup>
- Is particularly prevalent among students who are low-income, students of color, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or

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<sup>18</sup> Gottfried, M. A. (2009). Excused Versus Unexcused: How Student Absences in Elementary School Affect Academic Achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 215–229.

<sup>19</sup> Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Available at [http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport\\_May16.pdf](http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf). and Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., & Kabbani, N. (2001). The dropout process in life course perspective: Early risk factors at home and school. *The Teachers College Record*, 103(5), 760-822.

<sup>20</sup> Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah. (2012). *Research Brief: Chronic Absenteeism*. Available at [www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf](http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf).  
<http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012), p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Ehrlich, S., Gwynne, J. A., Pareja, A. S., and Allensworth, E. M. (2013). *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Reform. Available at <https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/preschool-attendance-chicago-public-schools-relationships-learning-outcomes-and-reasons>.

<sup>23</sup> Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012), p. 30.

- juvenile justice-involved youth—in other words, those who already tend to face significant challenges and for whom school is particularly beneficial.<sup>24</sup>
- Is particularly prevalent among those students who are homeless or reside in public housing.<sup>25</sup>
  - May lead to substance abuse. When students are skipping school, many of them become engaged in risky behavior such as substance abuse and delinquency.<sup>26</sup>
  - Affects other students, too. Not only are frequent absences harmful to the absentee, but they also have a negative effect on the achievement of other students in the classroom.<sup>27</sup>
  - Can negatively influence future adult health outcomes. Indeed, the mortality rate of high school dropouts is over two times greater than that for adults with some college education.<sup>28</sup>
  - Can increase likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system.<sup>29</sup>
  - Is not measured by most states or school districts in this country, which leaves many educators and communities without information they need to identify students who could use additional support to maintain regular attendance.<sup>30</sup>

### **Community-Wide Action Steps to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

<sup>24</sup> Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Available at [http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport\\_May16.pdf](http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Nauer, K. et al. (2014). *A Better Picture of Poverty: What Chronic Absenteeism and Risk Load Reveal About NYC's Lowest-Income Elementary Schools*. New York: Center for New York City Affairs, The Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. Available at [www.centrernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/](http://www.centrernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/). Available at <http://www.centrernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/>

<sup>26</sup> Henry, K. L., & Thornberry, T. P. (2010). Truancy and Escalation of Substance Use During Adolescence. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 71(1): 115–124, and Henry, K.L. & Huizinga, D. H. (2007). Truancy's Effect on the Onset of Drug Use among Urban Adolescents Placed at Risk. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 40 (4), 358.e9–358.e17.4.

<sup>27</sup> Gottfried, M. A. (2011). Absent peers in elementary years: The negative classroom effects of unexcused absences on standardized testing outcomes. *Teachers College Record*, 113(8).

<sup>28</sup> Cutler, D. M., Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). *Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence*. National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper No. 12352. Retrieved at [www.econ.ucla.edu/alleras/research/books/Education\\_and\\_Health\\_July\\_2006.pdf](http://www.econ.ucla.edu/alleras/research/books/Education_and_Health_July_2006.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Page, A., , Petteruti, A., Walsh, N., Ziedenberg, J. (2007). *Education and Public Safety*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Center. Retrieved at [www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-08\\_rep\\_educationandpublicsafety\\_ps-ac.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-08_rep_educationandpublicsafety_ps-ac.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Bruner, C., Discher, A., Chang, H. (2011). *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight*. Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center. Available at [www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf). Available at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf>

Research and experience demonstrate that several actions can help mobilize the kind of awareness, commitment to action, and community-based coalitions that are necessary to ensure that every student who is, or is at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school receives the necessary support to maintain regular school attendance. The following suggested **community-wide actions** can help lay the foundation for progress within and across schools and communities. Education, health, housing, and justice-system leaders, including school, community, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders, should work together to make meaningful progress on each action step.

**Action Step 1:       Generate and act on absenteeism data.**

- ✓ **Prioritize** the development of early warning prevention and intervention systems.
- ✓ **Identify** both the students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school as well as the underlying causes of absenteeism.
- ✓ **Increase** every student's access to support services to address absenteeism *before* any student misses so much school that it is nearly impossible to catch up.
- ✓ **Explore** and enter into partnerships—consistent with applicable Federal and State laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—between school districts and other important public and private organizations, such as public housing authorities and public health agencies, to increase and improve coordinated supports and interventions to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

**Action Step 2:       Create and deploy positive messages and measures.**

- ✓ **Implement** positive and supportive engagement strategies—like mentoring, counseling, and positive behavioral interventions and supports<sup>31</sup>—to improve students' attendance at, connection to, and success in, school.
- ✓ **Refrain** from punitive messages and measures—for example, blaming or threatening students and families with punishment—which are often ineffective and can lead to disproportionate suspensions and expulsions

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<sup>31</sup> For more information on implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), please visit ED's PBIS Technical Assistance Center at [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

from school and inappropriate referrals of students and families to law enforcement.<sup>32</sup>

**Action Step 3: Focus communities on addressing chronic absenteeism.**

- ✓ **Raise** awareness about the causes and effects of and potential solutions to chronic absenteeism, especially among youth and families.
- ✓ **Prioritize** trainings for school staff and affiliated community partners to conduct root cause analyses of absenteeism trends among students.
- ✓ **Support** the development of effective strategies to eliminate chronic absenteeism and use research and evidence-based tools and programs that work to engage and support student success.

**Action Step 4: Ensure responsibility across sectors.**

- ✓ **Communicate** that chronic absenteeism is a problem that affects the entire community.
- ✓ **Drive** and **evaluate** cross-sector system performance, at least in part, on progress toward eliminating chronic absenteeism.
- ✓ **Work together** as a community so that everyone feels responsible for successfully addressing underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.

*In every community in America, there are young people with incredible drive and talent, and they just don't have the same kinds of chances that somebody like me had. They're just as talented as me, just as smart. They don't get a chance. And because everyone has a part to play in this process, we brought everybody together. We brought business leaders and faith leaders, mayors, philanthropists, educators, entrepreneurs, athletes, musicians, actors—all united around the simple idea of giving all our young people the tools they need to achieve their full potential.*

Remarks by President Barack Obama at Launch of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, May 04, Lehman College, West Bronx, New York

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<sup>32</sup> Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., Cohen, R. (2014). *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center. Available at <http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report/>.

## **Implementing Coordinated Supports for Students at Risk for Chronic Absenteeism**

It is important to generate the necessary enthusiasm and support to implement solutions that can successfully support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent. Engaging a diverse collection of stakeholders—including the education, health, housing, and justice sectors, as well as youth, families, community organizations, child welfare agencies, and local government—could be a particularly useful strategy to promote and sustain community action. Because community needs differ from place to place, decisions about which approaches and programs to adopt should be informed by multiple stakeholders following an analysis of local data on chronic absenteeism. Once local needs are known, communities can deploy the right supports to the right students at the right time.<sup>33</sup>

Across the country, community stakeholders have joined forces to implement comprehensive systems of support that work to support students' regular school attendance and thereby improve critical academic and youth life outcomes. Educators, system leaders, and concerned citizens everywhere can learn from the results of these approaches. They are demonstrating the power of coordinated community action in building a stronger future for all our kids. The task now is for every community to begin or continue the work of understanding the extent of any chronic absenteeism problem it may have and then work in a collaborative, coordinated fashion to provide students with necessary supports so they stay on-track for success in school and in life.

**For more information on community-based efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism across the country, visit:**

- Attendance Works at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/>
- Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University at: <http://new.every1graduates.org/tools-and-models/>
- School Turnaround AmeriCorps Program at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/task-force-expanding-national-service/school-turnaround-ameri-corps>
- The Campaign for Grade-level Reading at <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/chronic-absence>.

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<sup>33</sup> Maynard, B. R., McCrea, K., T., Pigott, T. D., & Kelly, M. S. (2013). Indicated truancy interventions for chronic truant students: A Campbell Systematic Review. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(1), 5-21. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535217.pdf>.



## **Developing Meaningful Partnerships to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

Many schools and school districts across the country regularly partner and collaborate with outside organizations to provide supports and services that can help address the underlying causes of students' chronic absenteeism, in addition to other challenges. Students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent may benefit from supports and services best provided by third-party providers or agencies (e.g. public health agencies, homeless service providers, nonprofit youth-serving organizations) in collaboration with their local school or school district.

Such partnerships between schools and third-party organizations could entail the sharing of students' personal information and related data. It should be noted that student-level data sharing between schools and community partners must be consistent with applicable Federal and State laws concerning privacy and the sharing of student-level data, especially including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). ED's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO), the office that administers FERPA, can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcr/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>

## **Community Action Guides: Taking Coordinated Action to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

The following **Community Actions Guides** are designed to support coordinated, community-wide action on behalf of students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. Each Guide includes important information about chronic absenteeism, suggested actions steps, and a list of resources that stakeholders may be able to use when working with youth in their communities.

Let's get started.



# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

## *Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for* **YOUTH**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Youth**

As a young person, you are in a unique position to help your friends, classmates, and family understand a simple but important fact: *every day absent from school matters*.

Even though it may seem okay to miss a day of school every once in a while, these absences can add up and can take a toll on your future success. Missing too many days of school can make it hard for you to stay on track in your classes, which could put your high school graduation at risk. You may also miss out on all of the exciting opportunities to learn and pursue your interests that you might only be able to get at school.

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school every day increases your chances of success in school and in life.

The good news is that it is possible to change things for the better and have the greatest chance of success. Even if you are not chronically absent from school, as a young person, you have the power to take action and help eliminate chronic absenteeism in your community. You can help your friends, classmates, and family become informed and motivated to do something about it.

### **Did You Know?**

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as **two days** of school a month.

**2 DAYS PER MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE**

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

You Should:

1. Help your friends and classmates understand what *chronic absenteeism* is—missing more than 10 percent (18 days) of school days in a year.
2. Attend school every day, encourage your friends to attend school every day and remind them that every absence from school matters.
3. Talk with your school principal and teachers about the kind of support that you and/or students in your school need to attend and be successful at school every day.
4. Be active in your community to support projects to help eliminate chronic absenteeism and support other young people in schools.

### **Resources to Support Youth to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

- Brought to you by [USA.gov](http://USA.gov), **Kids.gov** is the official kids' portal for the U.S. government. We link kids, parents and teachers to U.S. government information and services on the web from government agencies, schools, and educational organizations, all geared to the learning level and interest of kids. See more at: [www.kids.usa.gov/index.shtml](http://www.kids.usa.gov/index.shtml).
- Learn more about President Obama's **My Brother's Keeper Initiative**, which works to provide supports to students who are at risk of falling off-track and not being successful in school so that they think more broadly about their future. See more at: [www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper](http://www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper)
- **Youth.gov**. Learn more about the strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools, youth-serving organizations, and community partnerships related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth. See more at: <http://youth.gov> and <http://engage.youth.gov/>.
- **StopBullying.gov** provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying. See more at: [www.StopBullying.gov](http://www.StopBullying.gov).
- **Resources for Homeless Youth**: This page is a one-stop spot for helping youth find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat homelessness. See more at: [www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/](http://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/)
- For more information on **preventing youth violence**, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention for more information and resources to support youth violence prevention activities in your community. See more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.
- **Additional Resources from the Family and Youth Services Bureau can be found here:** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

*Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for*

## **PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Parents and Families**

Your child's daily, on-time attendance in school is critical to his or her success in school and in life. It's understandable that some challenges to your child's school attendance are unavoidable, such as an illness or a family emergency. However, it's important to understand the impact of absences from school, especially if they become frequent. *Chronic absenteeism*, typically defined as missing 10 percent (18 days) or more of a school year – as few as a couple of days per month – can cause your child to fall behind in school. Absences can add up and impact your child's reading, writing, and math skills, which will have a negative effect on his or her future.

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school everyday increases a child's chances of success in school and in life.

While chronic absenteeism can be especially harmful to children in preschool and kindergarten, you also should know that any student who is chronically absent at any grade level is less likely from graduate high school or go on to succeed in college.

Families are their children's first, most important, and longest lasting teachers, advocates, and nurturers. Take the following action steps so that your children can develop a more positive attitude toward school, stay in school longer, have better attendance, and an overall rewarding school experience.

### **Did You Know?**

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

**2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE**

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Parents and Families Should:

1. Make getting to school on time everyday a high priority in your family.
2. Talk with your child about the important of school attendance from an early age and the negative effects of too many absences.
3. When necessary, create a safe space for your child to share what's keeping them from participating in school on a regular basis.
4. Have a back-up plan for getting your child to school when there are difficulties with transportation, family illness, or other challenges.
5. Schedule doctor and other appointments for after-school hours whenever possible.
6. Monitor students' school attendance to make sure your child is in class every day.
7. Contact your child's school to discuss supports and services that can help your child maintain regular school attendance.

### **Resources to Support Parents and Families to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

- **Attendance Works** is a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for parents and families. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/>.
- Raising the next generation is a shared responsibility. When families, communities and schools work together, students are more successful and the entire community benefits. Visit the **U.S. Department of Education's Family & Community Engagement Webpage** for more information at: <http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement>.
- The **US Department of Education** provides links and resources to support parents and families to encourage their children to attend and succeed in school every day. See more at: <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml>.
- **Youth.gov**. Learn more about the information, strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools, youth-serving organizations, and community partnerships related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth. See more at: <http://youth.gov> and <http://engage.youth.gov/>.
- **StopBullying.gov** provides information from various government agencies on [what bullying is](#), [what cyberbullying is](#), [who is at risk](#), and how you can [prevent](#) and [respond to bullying](#). See more at: [www.StopBullying.gov](http://www.StopBullying.gov).

- **Resources for Homeless Youth:** This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat homelessness. See more at: [www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/](http://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/)
- For more information on **preventing youth violence**, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention for more information and resources to support youth violence prevention activities in your community. See more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.
- Visit the Centers for Disease control and Prevention's **Division of Adolescent and School Health** for more information and resources for parents and families, teachers and other school staff, and school districts and administrators to implement to increase the extent to which students feel connected to school at [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health and academics/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/index.htm).
- **Additional Resources from the Family and Youth Services Bureau can be found here:** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

## Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

*Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for*

### **MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

#### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Mentors and Volunteers**

As a mentor, you know that high-quality, sustained mentoring can support young people in their efforts to stay on track in school, engage in positive behaviors, and avoid participating in negative activities that could put opportunities for academic or life success at risk. As a mentor or youth-serving volunteer, you are in a unique position to positively influence the life of a young person, especially if that young person is, or is at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. In short, what you do as a mentor or volunteer is life-changing and can be life-saving for a young person.

#### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school everyday increases a child's chances of success in school and in life.

When students are in school every day, they are much more likely to engage in positive behaviors, stay on track academically, and graduate from high school. By helping your mentee or the young people you work with know how important daily attendance is—and that every absence from school matters—you can help eliminate chronic absenteeism in your community.

Below are actions steps that you can take to support young people and eliminate chronic absenteeism. Thank you for your service.

#### **Did You Know?**

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

**2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE**

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Mentors and Volunteers Should:

1. Learn the facts about chronic absenteeism, its causes and effects, and why every absence from school matters in the life of a young person.
2. Check every day, or as much as possible, to see if the young people you work with are in school, and talk about the importance of being in school every day and what it means for their future.
3. As necessary, create a safe space for mentees to share what's keeping them from participating in school on a regular basis.
4. Help inform the places where you volunteer to understand what chronic absenteeism is and explore the role they can play in eliminating chronic absenteeism within their community.

### **Resources to Support Mentors and Volunteers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

#### ***National Mentoring Resource Center***

The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

#### ***Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), US Department of Justice***

OJJDP provides access to free resources for mentors, families, and communities to support high-quality mentoring for all youth. This comprehensive online resource provides mentoring tools and information, program and training materials, and technical assistance to help local programs and practitioners improve the quality and effectiveness of their mentoring efforts. See more at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>.

#### ***Institute for Youth Success at Education Northwest***

With a mission to empower youth organizations to improve outcomes and reduce social costs, the Institute for Youth Success provides relevant, evidence-based information on topics ranging from recruitment to program management and offers services that create efficiencies and make youth-development programs stronger. For more information, please visit <http://educationnorthwest.org/institute-for-youth-success>.

#### ***MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership***

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit: <http://www.mentoring.org/>.

***Attendance Works***

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including for mentors. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-leveraging-volunteers/>.

***AARP Foundation Experience Corps***

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for Americans who are 50 years of age and older. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.



## **Every Student, Every Day:**

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

*Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for*

### **SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS AND STAFF, AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

#### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for School District Superintendents and School Personnel**

The research on chronic absenteeism is clear: Chronic absenteeism is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school. An estimated five to seven and a half million students are chronically absent each year. But too often, sole reliance on average daily attendance figures masks the high numbers of students who may be chronically absent and in danger of falling behind. Much of the work you do to improve public education and student outcomes each year can be seriously undermined by chronic absenteeism among your students, which makes it imperative that we work urgently to ensure that every student is supported so that they can be in school every day.

#### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

As superintendents, administrators, classroom educators, and school-based personnel, you are in a unique position to identify struggling students and then mobilize systems of support for students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. In addition, you can review and revise discipline policies to ensure that chronically absent students are supported and reengaged in school, rather than further excluded from class through punitive disciplinary policies. By providing engaging and relevant instruction, opportunities for enrichment and extra support, and safe, supportive learning

environments, you can help ensure not only all students' daily attendance, but also regular engagement and communication with families that can build trusting relationships that can help ensure students are in school every day.

To eliminate chronic absenteeism, schools must first track daily attendance figures for students, and then enable district staff, classroom educators, school administrators, and other school-based staff to work in a coordinated and collaborative fashion to support students who are missing too many days of school. Every member of a school's staff should be encouraged to play an active role in engaging students and ensuring that they are supported to attend and succeed in school every day. The action steps below are crafted for different groups of professionals in schools—who will play different roles in this work, but who also should work collaboratively to achieve maximum impact

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

School District Superintendents and District Staff Should:

1. Understand the research about chronic absenteeism, which students are most often affected and how it affects them. Ensure awareness of these facts among district personnel.
2. Invest in sustainable early warning prevention and intervention systems and procedures that support schools in tracking daily attendance and identifying students who are, or are at-risk of becoming, chronically absent, and intervene *before* they miss too much school.
3. Direct your student support team to work with schools to provide necessary services that address the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism to ensure students' daily attendance in school.
4. Mobilize efforts at the district and school levels to partner with third-party providers and agencies—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—that can provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and to their families (for more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>).
5. Engage in and lead community-wide, cross-sector efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism among students within the community by addressing its underlying causes.
6. Regularly communicate with your staff, students, and their families about the importance of daily attendance and the availability of any support services that can help keep students in school and on track to success.

## Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

**2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE**

### *Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

Preschool-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Educators and School Staff Should:

1. Understand the research about chronic absenteeism, which students are most often affected and how it affects them. Ensure awareness among school personnel.
2. Use data from early warning prevention and intervention systems to track daily attendance and identify students who are, or are at-risk of becoming, chronically absent and intervene *before* they miss too much school.
3. Revise discipline policies to remove punitive consequences such as suspension and expulsion for chronically absent students, and implement supports for such students.
4. Engage third-party providers and agencies—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—that can provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and to their families (for more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>).
5. Support and engage in community-wide, cross-sector efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism among students within the community by addressing its underlying causes.
6. Regularly communicate to all staff, students, and their families about the importance of daily attendance and the availability of any support services that can help keep students in school and on track to success.
7. Acknowledge students and families that demonstrate improved attendance, and use that occasion as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of daily school attendance.

## **Resources to Support Educators to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

### **Information and Resources**

#### ***Attendance Works***

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for school districts and educators. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org>.

#### ***ED and DOJ School Discipline Guidance Package***

This package of resources explains how schools can administer school discipline free of race discrimination, offers guiding principles for improving school climate and discipline practices, provides a directory of federal school climate and discipline resources, and includes a compendium of school discipline laws and regulations. See more at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/fedefforts.html#guidance>.

#### ***ED and HHS Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings***

Includes recommendations from federal agencies to support families, early childhood programs, and states in preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings. See more at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/reducing-suspension-and-expulsion-practices>

#### ***Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University***

The Everyone Graduates Center seeks to identify the barriers that stand in the way of all students graduating from high school prepared for adult success, to develop strategic solutions to overcome the barriers, and to build local capacity to implement and sustain them. See more at: <http://www.every1graduates.org/>.

#### ***Family & Youth Services Bureau: Resources for Runaway and Homeless Youth***

For information and resources from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the success and health of runaway and homeless youth, please visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

#### ***HUD Resources for Homeless Youth***

This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat this problem. See more at: [www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/](http://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/)

#### ***National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)***

NCSSLE is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students to help address issues related to the implementation and sustainability of safe and supportive learning environments for all students. NCSSLE's website includes information

about the Center's training and technical assistance, products and tools, and latest research findings. We welcome you to explore and discover, ask questions, and share your perspective. For more information, please visit: <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>.

### ***National Center on School Engagement***

NCSE collaborates with school districts, law enforcement agencies, courts, and state and federal agencies to support youth and their families to be engaged at school. We pay special attention to truancy, dropout, and bullying prevention. See more at: <http://schoolengagement.org/>.

### ***National Dropout Prevention Center/Network***

Since inception, the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network has worked to improve opportunities for all young people to fully develop the academic, social, work, and healthy life skills needed to graduate from high school and lead productive lives. By promoting awareness of successful programs and policies related to dropout prevention, the work of the Network and its members has made an impact on education from the local to the national level. See more at: <http://dropoutprevention.org/>.

### ***U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)***

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcoc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

## **Programs to Help Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

### ***AARP Foundation Experience Corps***

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for Americans who are 50 years of age and older. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

### ***Check & Connect***

*Check & Connect* is an evidence-based, comprehensive intervention designed to enhance student engagement at school and with learning for marginalized, disengaged students in grades K-12, through relationship building, problem solving and capacity building, and persistence. A goal of *Check & Connect* is to foster school completion with academic and social competence. See more at: <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/>.

### ***Institute for Youth Success at Education Northwest***

With a mission to empower youth organizations to improve outcomes and reduce social costs, the Institute for Youth Success provides relevant, evidence-based information on topics ranging from recruitment to program management and offers services that create efficiencies and make youth-development programs stronger. For more information, please visit <http://educationnorthwest.org/institute-for-youth-success>.

### ***School Turnaround AmeriCorps***

The School Turnaround AmeriCorps program supports the placement of a dedicated cadre of AmeriCorps members from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) in persistently underachieving schools across the country. These AmeriCorps members will be serving in schools implementing school turnaround interventions as required by Department of Education's (ED) School Improvement Grant (SIG) program or as required through Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility. AmeriCorps members will help keep students on track to graduate by working to increase student academic achievement, attendance and high school graduation rates; improve college and career readiness; and provide college enrollment assistance and advisement. For more information, please visit: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/task-force-expanding-national-service/school-turnaround-ameri-corps>.

### ***The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading***

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade—as well as addressing chronic absenteeism among youth. For more information, please visit: <http://gradelevelreading.net/about-us>.

## **Early Warning System Implementation Resources**

### ***A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing Early Warning Systems***

Developed by ED's Northwest Regional Education Lab and the Institute for Education Sciences, this guide summarizes what is known about early warning system implementation and describes how states, districts, and schools can draw on the research to inform their work locally. To download this guide free of charge, please see: [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/rel\\_2015056.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/rel_2015056.pdf).

### ***National High School Center Early Warning System Tools and Resources***

The National High School Center was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that ended March 31st, 2013. However, the website and its free resources remain available. This includes resources to support local school districts and schools in understanding more about the purpose and use of early warning systems to identify and better support students at risk of dropping out of school. For more information, please visit: <http://www.betterhighschools.org/>.

## **Mentoring Resources**

### ***MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership***

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide, and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit: <http://www.mentoring.org/>.

***National Mentoring Resource Center***

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is proud to partner with *MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership* to bring this resource to the youth mentoring field. The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

***Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), US Department of Justice***

OJJDP provides access to free resources for mentors, families, and communities to support high-quality mentoring for all youth. This comprehensive online resource provides mentoring tools and information, program and training materials, and technical assistance to help local programs and practitioners improve the quality and effectiveness of their mentoring efforts. See more at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>.



## Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

### *Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for* **EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS**

#### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Early Learning**

Advances in neuroscience and cognitive science research demonstrate that the early years are a critical period in children's learning and development, and set the foundation for higher level thinking skills later in life. The benefits of high-quality early education for young children are wide-ranging and can contribute to academic achievement and stronger social-emotional and health outcomes for young children. Children who attend high-quality preschool programs are more likely to enter school healthy and ready to learn, and are less likely to be retained in their grade or to become involved with the criminal justice system. Chronic absenteeism—or missing at least 10 percent or more of school days in a year—negatively affects all students, particularly young children. Whether because of poor child and/or parent health, lack of transportation or child-care support, family-related issues, or suspensions or expulsions—chronic absenteeism can have a devastating effect on a child's education and future. Children with lower preschool attendance are less ready for kindergarten, and those who are chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to be reading at grade-level by the end third grade. If not reading on grade-level by the end of third grade, a child is four times more likely to drop out of high school.

#### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Meaningful, supportive conversations about attendance between families and program staff are critical. Schools should work with families to identify the root causes of frequent absences from school (i.e., health, transportation, or employment issues) and then connect families to social supports and services in the community that can help address those



issues. Moreover, early learning educators and program staff can help to reduce or eliminate a pattern of absenteeism by acknowledging and promoting the importance of consistent attendance and forming community partnerships to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism. You can help eliminate chronic absenteeism among young children by taking the following action steps.

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Early Learning Providers should:

1. Communicate with parents and students that attendance matters and that good preschool through third grade attendance contributes to later school success.
2. Monitor the attendance patterns of individual students to identify children and families who may need support.
3. Acknowledge children and families who demonstrate good or improved attendance.
4. Create partnerships with community organizations to ensure that families have the supports they need to ensure good attendance, such as healthcare, reliable transportation, child care, and stable housing.

### **Resources to Support Communities and Early Learning Providers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

- [\*Health Services to Promote Attendance\*](#) This tip sheet from the National Center on Health (NCH) discusses the impact of health on chronic absenteeism.
- [\*September is Attendance Awareness Month\*](#) is a web page promoting the nationwide recognition of the importance of attendance on development, learning, and academic achievement.
- [\*Civil Rights Data Collection: Early Childhood Education Snapshot\*](#) provides data on preschool access and discipline, as well as kindergarten retention.
- [\*ED and HHS Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings\*](#) includes recommendations from federal agencies to support families, early childhood programs, and states in preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings.  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/reducing-suspension-and-expulsion-practices>
- [\*ED and DOJ School Discipline Guidance Package\*](#) (Jan. 2014), which explains how schools can administer school discipline free of race discrimination, offers guiding principles for improving school climate and discipline practices, provides a directory of federal school climate and discipline resources, and includes a compendium of school discipline laws and regulations.  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/fedefforts.html#guidance>
- **Resources from the Administration for Children and Families**  
[\(https://www.acf.hhs.gov/\)](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/)
  - **Action Plan for Attendance**

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/docs/sample-action-plan.pdf>

- **Interactive Homelessness Lessons- Enrollment and Attendance**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/family/Homelessness/hmls/enrollment/attendance.html>
- **Asthma Resource Starter Kit**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/enviro-protect-efforts/asthma-toolkit.html>
- **Well Child Health Care and Importance for Young Children**  
[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health\\_lea\\_00215\\_070605.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_lea_00215_070605.html)  
[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health\\_lea\\_00757\\_110905.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_lea_00757_110905.html)
- **Health Services to Promote Attendance**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness/strategies/promoting-attendance.html>

- ***AARP Foundation Experience Corps***

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for Americans who are 50 years of age and over. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

## **Every Student, Every Day:**

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

*Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for*

### **HEALTH CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES AND PROVIDERS**

#### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Health Care, Public Health, and Human Service Agencies and Providers**

Chronic absenteeism can lead to poor educational and life outcomes for children, and it can also be an indicator of underlying social, health, or economic challenges facing children, youth, and their families and communities.

Research indicates that among the many common causes of chronic absenteeism include respiratory illness (e.g. asthma), dental pain, hunger, abuse and neglect, unstable housing and family economic insecurity, punitive school discipline practices, fear of bullying, and mental health needs of children, youth, and their families, such as depression.

#### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

School-based health centers and school-based health services, such as those provided by school nurses, can have a positive influence on school attendance. Moreover, all schools can improve student health and health outcomes by promoting hand washing; supporting asthma and dental interventions; better addressing child and family behavioral and mental health needs; engaging parents and families to assist with housing and other family financial needs; and connecting children and families to other necessary health and social service interventions.

Health care, public health, and human service agencies and providers play a critical role in the well-being of children and can help improve school attendance, especially among the most at-risk children, by establishing effective partnerships with school districts and schools so that children get the support they need when they need it. The following action steps can help such health agencies and providers support community-wide efforts to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Health Care and Public Health Agencies and Providers Should:

1. Understand the relationship between chronic absenteeism and unmet health and behavioral health needs of children and youth in the local community that affect students' daily school attendance.
2. Ask about school and school attendance in a positive way at every health care visit. Encourage families to develop strategies that allow children to attend school on a regular basis. Work in partnership with school staff to support attendance of your patient-students.
3. Partner with local school districts and schools to support school health improvement plans to improve access to necessary and preventative health and behavioral health services for children and youth.
4. Promote school-based mental health and behavioral health services that support children's unique social emotional needs.
5. Ensure that physical and mental health needs of children and youth are reflected in local nonprofit hospital community needs assessments as per the Affordable Care Act community benefit provision (for more information, visit [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/community\\_benefit.html](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/community_benefit.html)).
6. Learn from successful public health and health provider collaborations with school districts to inform local partnerships and action plans.

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Human Service Agencies and Providers Should:

1. Invest in infant and early childhood mental health services that can identify early young children who are at high risk of chronic absenteeism in preschool and school settings.
2. Promote school-based mental health and behavioral health services that support children's unique social emotional needs.
3. Partner with schools to engage parents and support parents in their children's education and connect parents with family resources to promote family economic stability, housing stability, and positive social emotional development of children.
4. Homeless-serving agencies can partner with McKinney-Vento liaisons at schools to identify homeless youth and support their continued engagement in school.

### **Federal Resources to Support Health Care, Public Health & Human Service Agencies and Providers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

#### **Operating Division/Staff Division Key**

- ACF – Administration for Children and Families
- CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- HRSA – Health Resources and Services Administration
- OASH – Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health
  - OAH – Office of Adolescent Health
  - ODPHP – Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<b>Operating Division / Staff Division</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Website</b>
<b>ACF</b>	<b><i>Health Services to Promote Attendance Tip Sheet</i></b>	This tip sheet from the National Center on Health (NCH) discusses the impact of health on chronic absenteeism.	<a href="http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness/strategies/promoting-attendance.html">http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness/strategies/promoting-attendance.html</a>
<b>ED</b>	<b><i>ED OCR Civil Rights Data Collection: Early</i></b>	ED OCR Civil Rights Data Collection: Early Childhood Education Snapshot provides data on preschool access	<a href="http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-">http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-</a>

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
	<b><i>Childhood Education Snapshot</i></b>	and discipline, as well as kindergarten retention.	<a href="#">Early-Childhood-Education-Snapshot.pdf</a>
ACF	<b><i>ED and HHS Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings</i></b>	Includes recommendations from federal agencies to support families, early childhood programs, and states in preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings.	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf">http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf</a>
ACF	<b><i>Asthma Resource Starter Kit</i></b>	The contents may be used to raise awareness about asthma and environmental triggers, to help families manage or eliminate environmental triggers in their homes, and to reduce children's exposure to indoor asthma triggers in Head Start and child care facilities.	<a href="http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/environmental-protection-efforts/asthma-toolkit.html">http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/environmental-protection-efforts/asthma-toolkit.html</a>
ACF	<b><i>Well Child Health Care and Importance for Young Children</i></b>	This learning tool for health and other program staff presents key concepts related to well-child health care in Head Start programs.	<a href="http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_002_15_070605.html">http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_002_15_070605.html</a>
CDC	<b><i>School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth</i></b>	Protective factors include personal characteristics such as a positive view of one's future; life conditions such as frequent parental presence in the home at key times (e.g., after school, at dinner time); and behaviors such as active participation in school activities. This publication defines and describes the components of school connectedness and identifies specific actions that schools can take to increase school connectedness.	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth - <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness.pdf</a>  Fostering school connectedness :

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
			<p>improving student health and academic achievement : information for school districts and school administrators - <a href="http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21067">http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21067</a></p> <p>Fostering school connectedness : improving student health and academic achievement : information for teachers and other school staff - <a href="http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21066">http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21066</a></p> <p>Helping your child feel connected to school : information for parents and families - <a href="http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21065">http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21065</a></p> <p>Promoting parent engagement in schools to prevent HIV and other STDs among teens : information for state and local education agencies - <a href="http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/32925">http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/32925</a></p>
CDC	<b><i>Whole School, Whole Community, Whole</i></b>	The WSCC is a unified and collaborative approach designed to improve learning and health in our nation's	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc/index">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc/index</a>

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
	<b><i>Child Model (WSCC)</i></b>	schools. This model serves as the foundation for the health and education sectors along with families and communities to improve each child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.	<a href="#">x.htm</a>
CDC	<b><i>School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide (SHI)</i></b>	The SHI is an online self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs by identifying their strengths and weaknesses and developing an action plan for improvement.	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/shi/index.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/shi/index.htm</a>
CDC	<b><i>Health and Academic Achievement</i></b>	Public health and education professionals can use the tools on this page to communicate the link between healthy eating, physical activity, and improved academic achievement to engage stakeholders in supporting healthy school environments.	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf</a>
CDC	<b><i>Putting Local School Wellness Policies into Action: Stories from School Districts and Schools</i></b>	A local school wellness policy is a written document that guides a local educational agency or school district's efforts to create supportive school nutrition and physical activity environments. This compilation of 11 stories provides examples of steps and strategies used to implement wellness policies.	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/npao/pdf/SchoolWellnessInAction.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/npao/pdf/SchoolWellnessInAction.pdf</a>
CDC	<b><i>Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)</i></b>	A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) is a multi-component approach by which school districts and schools use all opportunities for students to be physically active, meet the nationally-recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day, and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime. This page contains an implementation guide for school districts and schools as well as supporting materials.	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/physicalactivity/cspap.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/physicalactivity/cspap.htm</a>
CDC	<b><i>School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and</i></b>	CDC synthesized research and best practices related to promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools, culminating in nine guidelines accompanied by a set of implementation strategies developed to help	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6005.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6005.pdf</a>



Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
	<b>Physical Activity</b>	schools work towards achieving each recommendation.	
CDC	<b>Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health</b>	This strategy guide can help schools evaluate their efforts to increase parent engagement in school health to learn which actions have the greatest impact.	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf</a>
HRSA	<b>Bullying Prevention Initiative</b>	Children who are bullied are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school. In 2012, HRSA released a Bullying Prevention Training Module and Community Action Toolkit designed to help local community leaders understand best practices in stopping bullying and supporting youth, as well as empowering them to facilitate multidisciplinary action planning in prevention on the local level.	<a href="http://www.StopBullying.gov/training">www.StopBullying.gov/training</a>
HRSA	<b>Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents</b>	Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents emphasizes the importance of school for children and adolescents starting at the age 5 preventive services visit.	<a href="https://brightfutures.ap.org/Pages/default.aspx">https://brightfutures.ap.org/Pages/default.aspx</a>
	<b>Healthy People 2020's Adolescent Health</b>	Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. The adolescent health topic area contains several objectives addressing academic achievement, including on-time high school graduation (a Leading Health Indicator), reading and math proficiency, and reducing school absenteeism due to illness and injury.	<a href="http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Adolescent-Health">http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Adolescent-Health</a>
OASH/OAH	<b>OAH website</b>	The OAH website provides a wealth of information on adolescent health topics, evidence-based programs, and resources and publications, including data resources and national and state facts.	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/">http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/</a>
OASH/OAH	<b>Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow (TAG)</b>	Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow (TAG) is a national call to action to improve adolescent health in the United States. The TAG section of the OAH website provides current information about American adolescents, a Playbook that outlines five essentials for adolescent	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/tag/">http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/tag/</a>

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
		health and identifies specific action steps and resources for youth-serving individuals and organizations, families and teens.	
OASH/OAH	<b><i>Teen Pregnancy Prevention Resource Center</i></b>	The TPP Resource Center serves as a repository of resources for professionals working to prevent teen pregnancy. The Resource Center includes “training areas” focused on choosing an evidence-based program; recruitment, retention, and engagement; implementation; engaging vulnerable populations; strategic communication; sustainability; and evaluation as well as “resources by topic” including resources on the link between teen pregnancy and mental health, violence, and substance abuse; adolescent development; staff development; and healthy relationships.	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/">http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/</a>
OASH/OAH	<b><i>OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Resource and Training Center Website</i></b>	To facilitate easy access to targeted information including webinars, e-learning modules, current teen pregnancy information, and other resources to support expectant and parenting teens. (Note:  In addition to preventing teen pregnancy, providing critical supports to students who are expectant or parenting, is also a key strategy to help reduce chronic absenteeism. The PAF program is the only grant program specifically focused on supporting expectant and parenting teens with the services they need to help them stay in high school and continue with further education.)	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/paf">http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/paf</a>
OASH/OAH	<b><i>The National Resource Center for HIV/AIDS Prevention among Adolescents</i></b>	The Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) supports The National Resource Center for HIV/AIDS Prevention among Adolescents (Center). The Center supports adolescent service providers by providing web-based resources, evidence-based program information, and links to training and technical assistance to help prevent HIV/AIDS among adolescents, in particular adolescents	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/national-resource-center.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/national-resource-center.html</a>

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
		from minority and high-risk populations.	
OASH/ODPHP	<b><i>Reframing school dropout as a public health issue</i></b>	This article summarizes knowledge on the health benefits of high school graduation and discuss the pathways by which graduating from high school contributes to good health. Strategies for reducing school dropout rates are examined, and in addition, the article provides recommended actions health professionals can take to reframe the school dropout rate as a public health issue.	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/pd/issues/2007/oct/pdf/07_0063.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/pd/issues/2007/oct/pdf/07_0063.pdf</a>
OASH/ODPHP	<b><i>Prolonged school non-attendance in adolescence: a practical approach</i></b>	This research finds that by using a specific framework, an understanding of the factors contributing to a young person's school non-attendance can be developed. Interventions leading to a successful return to school have the potential to lower the risk of associated long-term adverse health outcomes.	<a href="http://adc.bmj.com/content/early/2014/06/09/archdischild-2013-304595">http://adc.bmj.com/content/early/2014/06/09/archdischild-2013-304595</a>
OASH/ODPHP	<b><i>The school environment and adolescent well-being: Beyond academics</i></b>	This brief is designed to be of particular interest to school principals, district staff, and others who are responsible for all aspects of school functioning. It is also useful to those focusing on a narrower range of school functions (e.g., academics, health and safety, civic development) who want a better sense of how their concerns fit into the larger environment.	<a href="http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resources/school-environment-and-adolescent-well-being-beyond-academics">http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resources/school-environment-and-adolescent-well-being-beyond-academics</a>
SAMHS A	<b><i>KnowBullying: Put the power to prevent bullying in your hand</i></b>	Empowers parents, caregivers, and educators with the tools they need to start the conversation with their children about bullying. KnowBullying, a 2014 recipient of the Bronze Award in the Mobile category from the Web Health Awards, describes strategies to prevent bullying and explains how to recognize warning signs that a child is bullying, witnessing bullying, or being bullied. Includes a section for educators.	<a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/product/KnowBullying-Put-the-power-to-prevent-bullying-in-your-hand/PEP14-KNOWBULLYAPP">http://store.samhsa.gov/product/KnowBullying-Put-the-power-to-prevent-bullying-in-your-hand/PEP14-KNOWBULLYAPP</a>
SAMHS A	<b><i>Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools</i></b>	Assists high schools and school districts in designing and implementing strategies to prevent suicide and promote behavioral health. Includes tools to implement a multi-faceted suicide prevention program that responds to the	<a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-">http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-</a>

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
		needs and cultures of students.	<a href="#">4669</a>
SAMHS A	<b><i>Talk. They Hear You</i></b>	The <b><i>Talk. They Hear You</i></b> campaign includes easy ways to incorporate support for teachers and staff to address underage drinking into an already busy school day, including <a href="#">Help Students Get a Good Start (PDF   622 KB)</a> .	<a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/partner-resources/materials-school">http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/partner-resources/materials-school</a>
SAMHS A	<b><i>Talk. They Hear You. Underage Drinking Prevention Campaign DVD – Shopping</i></b>	Provides parents of children ages 9 to 15 with the tools and information they need to start talking with their children early about the dangers of alcohol. Includes a suite of materials that helps reinforce the underage drinking prevention campaign's messages.	<a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA13-4755-SHOPPING">http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA13-4755-SHOPPING</a>
SAMHS A	<b><i>Talk. They Hear You. Mobile App</i></b>	Helps parents and caregivers learn the do's and don'ts about talking to their children about the dangers of underage drinking. Allows parents to practice bringing up the topic of alcohol, learn questions to ask, and adjust their approach with help from coaches.	<a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-Talk-They-Hear-You-Mobile-App/PEP15-TALKAPP">http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-Talk-They-Hear-You-Mobile-App/PEP15-TALKAPP</a>
SAMHS A	<b><i>The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative: A Legacy of Success</i></b>	By focusing on five key areas, Safe Schools/Healthy Students communities use data to decide what their students and families need and then develop initiatives and programs to satisfy those needs.	<a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4798/SMA13-4798.pdf">http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4798/SMA13-4798.pdf</a>

# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

## *Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for* **PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters to Public Housing Authorities (PHAs)**

Chronic absenteeism is closely correlated with both students' poverty and their neighborhoods, including available housing options. A 2014 study of absenteeism in New York City elementary schools demonstrates this relationship: according to the study, schools with public housing in their attendance zones and more students in temporary housing experienced higher rates of chronic absenteeism (see more at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/547ccfefe4b03f842b275001/1417465839022/Better+Picture+of+Poverty+PA+FINAL.pdf>).

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

We know that housing challenges are a major cause of chronic absenteeism. Addressing the challenges outlined below is often at the core of PHAs' missions:

- ***Substandard housing conditions.*** Poor housing conditions such as moisture, mold, lack of heat, lead paint, overcrowding, or pest infestations can affect children's physical and psychological health. In turn, these health consequences keep students home from school. Asthma, for example, is a leading cause of absenteeism and often results from substandard housing conditions.
- ***Homelessness.*** Some evidence indicates that homeless students are more likely to be absent from school than children with stable housing.
- ***Frequent moves.*** Low-income families are more likely to move than the average family. When students move frequently, they can struggle to integrate into their

new schools and receive the services they need. As a result, students who move frequently tend to experience worse outcomes in school, particularly when the move is in reaction to turbulence within their family. Student mobility can lead to absenteeism, which in turn affects student achievement.

PHAs can play a critical role in ensuring that all children are supported to be in school every day. In partnership with school districts and schools, PHAs can help educators and communities provide support and services to students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. Consider taking the following actions steps.

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Public Housing Authorities are encouraged to:

1. Partner with local school districts and schools to track attendance of PHA residents.\*
2. Create access for children and families to supports and resources they need to mitigate issues causing absenteeism.
3. Seek resources and funding to create incentives to encourage school attendance.
4. Promote attendance through back-to-school events, outreach programs, and informational materials such as flyers and posters throughout the year.

**\*NOTE:** Tenant consent may be required for certain data.

## **Resources to Support Public Housing Authorities to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

### ***Attendance Works***

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for housing authorities. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/housing-authorities/>

### ***Tacoma Housing Authority***

An innovative partnership between the Tacoma Housing Authority, the Tacoma Public School District and McCarver Elementary School, and parents to stabilize the school's population. Learn more at: <http://www.tacomahousing.net/content/mccarver-elementary-school-housing-program>

### ***Housing and School Partnerships to Address Student Mobility***

The Urban Institute has compiled recommendations on how housing and school organizations can work together to reduce the negative effects of student mobility, including absenteeism.

Learn more at: <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/housing-and-schools-working-together-reduce-negative-effects-student-mobility/view/full-report>

***National Center for Safe Routes to School--Walking School Bus Online Training Program***

Many parents cite safety as a primary concern as children walk to and from school. Public Housing Authorities like San Francisco have begun Walking Bus Programs to help ensure students arrive safely. The National Center for Safe Routes to School has launched an online training that provides strategies and tips for planning a Walking School Bus program. Learn more at:

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/about-us/newsroom/national-center-launches-walking-school-bus-online-training>

***HUD Office of Housing Counseling/HUD Approved Housing Counseling Agencies***

HUD sponsors housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues. This page allows you to select a list of agencies for each state below. You may search more specifically for a reverse mortgage counselor or if you are facing foreclosure, search for a foreclosure avoidance counselor. Find this useful tool at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm>

***U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)***

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

## *Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for* **JUVENILE JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement**

Chronic school absenteeism arises from complex and diverse causes, including student struggles with anxiety and depression, poor performance in school and schools' failure to meet students' educational needs, poverty-based family difficulties and obligations, concern and fear from victimization and harassment, and transitions to new schools. In addition, students who are suspended or subject to other school disciplinary interventions—a disproportionately large percentage of whom are youth of color, students with disabilities, and youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender—are at a significantly higher risk of falling behind academically and becoming chronically absent from school.

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Policymakers should carefully weigh the costs and benefits of invoking the power of the judiciary to enforce school attendance laws. Research has shown that court-based truancy interventions are no better at improving truancy outcomes than interventions based in schools and community organizations (for more information, visit: [http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/news\\_/Truancy\\_programs\\_improve\\_attendance.php](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/news_/Truancy_programs_improve_attendance.php)). Indeed, school and community-based positive reengagement strategies for chronically absent youth can often effectively improve student attendance and achievement. On the other hand, court intervention can inflict on youth the trauma of incarceration, further stigmatization, a police and court record that provides an entryway into the school-to-prison pipeline, and court attendance obligations that further prevent the child from attending school. Parents and families can also be negatively impacted by the burden of court fees, costs, fines, and penalties that they are unable to pay.



Courts, law enforcement agencies, and schools should work closely with families and other community partners to develop strategies that address the root causes of chronic absenteeism without resorting to expulsion, suspension and court referral. School completion and diversion away from juvenile justice system involvement must be the primary goals of school and community programs designed to address chronic absenteeism, truancy and school safety and discipline challenges.

***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement Should:

1. Understand the relationship between chronic absenteeism and youth involvement in the juvenile justice system.
2. Reform truancy court systems to avoid, where possible, court-based truancy interventions, and instead rely on school and community-based interventions for struggling students.
3. Partner with local school districts to understand the local, underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.
4. Implement positive reengagement strategies for chronically absent youth in collaboration with courts and local school districts.
5. Learn from juvenile justice and law enforcement collaborations with school districts to inform local partnerships and action plans.

Juvenile justice and law enforcement system leaders and personnel should consider taking the following action steps to help address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

***When Kids Go to Court:  
The Requirements of Due Process***

Courts must follow fundamentally fair procedures that may include some or all of the following due process protection:

- The right to appointed counsel if the child cannot afford to hire one;
- The right to notice of the specific allegations delivered in language and a manner that is appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child;
- The right to have sufficient time to investigate, gather evidence, and prepare a defense;
- The right to cross examine witnesses;
- The right to remain silent and to consult with an attorney before being questioned;
- The right to harness the power of the court to require that individuals appear as witnesses on the child's behalf;
- The right to a trial and, if the trial is to be waived, the right for that waiver to be knowing, intelligent, and voluntary with an understanding of the available options and their consequences, carried out in a manner that is appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child.

**Federal Constitutional and Statutory Requirements for Court-Based Chronic Absenteeism Interventions**

Should a jurisdiction include court-based interventions as a strategy to combat truancy and chronic absenteeism, court actions at every stage – intake, fact-finding, adjudication, disposition, probation and other forms of supervision – must be consistent with the requirements of the United States Constitution and federal law. At each decision point along a case's progress through the court system, judges and other court personnel must take care to ensure fundamental fairness and to base judgments and orders on objective, verifiable criteria so as to avoid biased decision making, whether subconscious or overt. The two primary constitutional sources for court procedural requirements are the Due Process Clause's requirement that courts provide procedures necessary to ensure fundamental fairness and the Equal Protection Clause's prohibition against biased processes and decision making.

### ***When Kids Go to Court: Federal Law***

- Americans with Disabilities Act

Courts must provide meaningful access to children with disabilities by making reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures so as to avoid discrimination, unless the modifications would result in a fundamental alteration of the court's services, programs or activities. Meaningful access includes the right to be heard, to observe, and to participate meaningfully in judicial proceedings.

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Recipients of federal funds may not have policies and practices that impose an unjustified discriminatory effect on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and they must provide meaningful language access to limited English proficient children and families/guardians.

### ***Due Process***

In defining the procedures necessary for due process, courts balance the severity of the state intrusion, the risks to the child of an erroneous court decision, and the costs to the state of additional procedural safeguards. A court's disposition of truancy cases can create risks to children and their families that include imposition of fines, required community service, and court-ordered mental health, family, or substance abuse counseling. To ensure fairness in the face of these risks, courts will often need to provide children with a wide range of due process protections. When the potential state intrusion is most severe – threatening a child with the risk of incarceration – the child's interest in full and fair procedures is at its strongest and courts must provide the full panoply of due process protections.

### ***Equal Protection***

The Equal Protection Clause prohibits a state from conduct that would “deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws” and therefore prohibits courts from treating similarly situated children differently, including on the basis of the child's race or sex. Although proof of discriminatory intent or purpose is required to show a violation of the Equal Protection Clause, this intent or purpose can be inferred when court actions show a clear pattern, unexplainable on grounds other than the child's constitutionally protected status. Equal Protection concerns can arise in any number of the decision points common to the juvenile justice system, including decisions about diversion, pretrial detention, filing of formal charges, adjudication, disposition and disposition modification or revocation proceedings.

## ***Federal Law***

Federal law prohibits race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age discrimination by entities that receive federal financial assistance. The prohibition against national origin discrimination requires that courts covered by the law ensure that language minority youth with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to proceedings and court processes. Federal law also requires that courts provide meaningful access to all children with disabilities, including those children with learning, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, or physical disabilities.

## **Federal Resources to Support Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

To stem the school-to-prison pipeline and advance the use of positive discipline and learning policies and practices in schools nationwide, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education launched the [Supportive School Discipline Initiative](#) (SSDI). One of the central focuses of the SSDI is on partnerships between education, police, and court officials that is dedicated to preventing youth arrests or referrals to the juvenile justice system for minor school-based offenses. For example, this [Supportive School Discipline Webinar Series](#) event explored how schools and police agencies can work collaboratively to improve school safety, while minimizing the use of arrest and ensuring that law enforcement officials are not responsible for enforcing minor school discipline offenses. Additionally, the webinar highlighted a decision-making tool, included in the School Discipline Consensus Report. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) has created a National Resource Center for School Justice Partnership. This online resource is designed to support school discipline reform and disseminates information on evidence-based programming, school referrals to the justice system, the collateral consequences of school push-out and zero tolerance policies, and innovative tools and strategies to support positive school discipline practices. The resource center functions as a portal for juvenile courts, schools & educators, law enforcement agencies, and behavioral health providers and supports school discipline reform efforts at the local level. It can be assessed at: [www.schooljusticepartnership.org](http://www.schooljusticepartnership.org).

## **Additional Resources:**

### ***Legal Resources***

- *In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1, 36 (1967)
- *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)
- *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974)
- *Tennessee v. Lane*, 541 U.S. 509, 528 (2004)
- U.S. Constitution, amendment XIV § 1 (Due Process Clause, Equal Protection Clause)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d.

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Part A, 42 U.S.C. 12131 – 12134 and implementing regulations at 38 C.F.R. Part 35 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability by entities of state and local government).
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (“JJDP Act”), 42 U.S.C. § 5601 *et seq.*

### ***Federal Agency Resources***

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section work protecting the rights of juveniles <http://www.justice.gov/crt/rights-juveniles>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention <http://www.ojjdp.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division’s website containing information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)
- Federal interagency clearinghouse website regarding limited English proficiency and language services [www.lep.gov](http://www.lep.gov)
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section <http://www.justice.gov/crt/federal-coordination-and-compliance-section>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section <http://www.justice.gov/crt/educational-opportunities-section>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Title VI Legal Manual, available at <http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-vi-legal-manual-0#2>.
- Language Access Guidance Letter to State Courts from Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez (August 16, 2010), available at [http://www.lep.gov/final\\_courts\\_ltr\\_081610.pdf](http://www.lep.gov/final_courts_ltr_081610.pdf)
- Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 67 Fed. Reg. 41455 (June 18, 2002), available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2002-06-18/pdf/02-15207.pdf>
- **U.S. Department of Education’s Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)**  
FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

### ***Other Resources***

- National Juvenile Defender Center, National Juvenile Defense Standards, available at <http://njdc.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/NationalJuvenileDefenseStandards2013.pdf>
- Sydney McKinney, Truancy: A Research Brief, available at [http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/status%20offense%20reform%20center%20research%20brief%202013%20Truancy\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/status%20offense%20reform%20center%20research%20brief%202013%20Truancy_Final.pdf)

- Tool Kit for Creating Your Own Truancy Reduction, prepared by National Center for School Engagement, available at <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/truancytoolkit.pdf>
- [The Council of State Governments \(CSG\) The School Discipline Consensus Report](#)
- [School Justice Collaborative Program: Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court OJJDP FY14](#)
- [IACP National Summit Report, Law Enforcement's Leadership Role in Juvenile Justice Reform: Actionable Recommendations for Practice & Policy](#)
- [IACP's Youth Focused Policing Agency Self-Assessment Tool](#)  
[IACP Youth Focused Policing Resource Center](#)  
<http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report>

# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

## *Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for* **HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Homeless Service Providers**

The correlation between school attendance and academic achievement is strong; simply put, students need to attend school every day to succeed. By contrast, chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as a student missing 10 percent or more of a school year, is associated with lower academic achievement, standardized test scores, and graduation rates. Of particular concern for educators and service providers working with homeless children and youth, students living in poverty benefit the most from being in school and yet are more likely than their higher-income peers to be chronically absent. Add to this the many challenges specific to homelessness—residential instability, poor living conditions, and loss of community and sense of security, to name a few—and the need for homeless students to attend school every day becomes even more pressing. Schools and communities must work together to develop policies and practices that support daily school attendance for all students, but particularly for those most at risk of chronic absenteeism and school failure. Homeless service providers can help eliminate chronic absenteeism among homeless youth by taking the following action steps.

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Homeless service providers should:

1. Learn about chronic absenteeism and how it affects the education and life outcomes of homeless children and youth.
2. Determine who the local liaison for homeless children and youth is in your community by contacting the local school district or the State Coordinator for Homeless Education in your State. Please visit the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) for State coordinator contact information at [www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf](http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf)
3. Establish contact with the local liaison for the school district in their area, who can help identify homeless students who are chronically absent from school.
4. Discuss and act on possibilities for school district/service provider collaboration to support school attendance for homeless children and youth.

### **Resources to Support Homeless Service Providers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) administers the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program, authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento), and most recently reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. As outlined in the statute's statement of policy [42 U.S.C. § 11431], one of the goals of the EHCY Program is to assist State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) in implementing policies and practices that remove barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The following rights and services required under McKinney-Vento may be particularly effective in supporting regular school attendance for homeless students:

- ***Immediate enrollment:*** McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documentation normally required for enrollment [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C)]. For more information regarding the school enrollment requirements under McKinney-Vento, consult the following resources available through the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE):
  - Issue briefs, available at [www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php):
    - *Enrolling Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School*
    - *Immediate Enrollment Under McKinney-Vento: How Local Liaisons Can Keep Homeless Students Safe*
    - *Immediate Enrollment Under McKinney-Vento: How Schools Can Keep Homeless Students Safe*
    - *Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students without Records*
    - *When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own*
  - *Enrollment: Ready Reference for School* enrollment foldout, available at [www.serve.org/nche/pr/enroll\\_foldout.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/pr/enroll_foldout.php)



- ***School placement and transportation:*** Under McKinney-Vento, LEAs must make school placement determinations on the basis of the “best interest” of the homeless student. Using this standard, an LEA must (1) continue the homeless student’s education in the school of origin (i.e., the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled) or (2) enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(A)]. In determining a student’s best interest, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless student in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student’s parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)(i)]. If a student continues to attend the school of origin, the LEA must provide or arrange for the student’s transportation to and from school, if requested [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)]. For more information on school placement and transportation under McKinney-Vento, consult the following NCHE briefs, available at [www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php):
  - *School Selection*
  - *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*
  - *Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness*

In addition to statutory requirements under McKinney-Vento, school districts receive funding that may be targeted specifically to support school attendance for homeless children and youth, including:

- ***McKinney-Vento subgrant funding:*** SEAs award McKinney-Vento subgrants to LEAs competitively on the basis of an LEA’s needs with respect to their homeless youth and the quality of their applications. For a complete list of authorized uses of McKinney-Vento subgrant funds, visit <http://center.serve.org/nche/legis/mv-auth-act.php>
- ***Title I, Part A funding:*** Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, provides financial assistance to LEAs and schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. For more information on supporting homeless children and youth under Title I, see question G-11 of ED’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Non-Regulatory Guidance (September 2009) at [www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf) and ED’s August 15, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at [www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/homelesscoord0815.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/homelesscoord0815.pdf).

In addition to its own agency efforts, ED collaborates with other federal agencies to support school attendance for homeless students. Under the leadership of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), ED partners with 18 other federal agencies to work to prevent and end homelessness within the United States. For more information, consult the following NCHE briefs, available at [www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php):

- *Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students*
- *Housing and Education Collaborations to Serve Homeless Children, Youth, and Families*
- *Supporting School Success for Homeless Children of Veterans and Active Duty Military Members*
- *Youth Homelessness and Juvenile Justice*

**HUD Resources for Homeless Youth:** This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat this problem. See more at: [www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/](http://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/)

***Family & Youth Services Bureau: Resources for Runaway and Homeless Youth***

For information and resources from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the success and health of runaway and homeless youth, please visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

***HUD Office of Housing Counseling/HUD Approved Housing Counseling Agencies***

HUD sponsors housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues. This page allows you to select a list of agencies for each state below. You may search more specifically for a reverse mortgage counselor or if you are facing foreclosure, search for a foreclosure avoidance counselor. Find this useful tool at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm>

***U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)***

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

## *Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for* **MAYORS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Mayors and Local Government**

Mayors and local government officials are uniquely positioned to help eliminate chronic absenteeism in their communities by using their convening power to bring groups of people and organizations together to engage youth who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. As the leaders and decision-makers who control and influence important programs and large initiatives, what you do to provide access to resources for youth can have a significant impact on the ability of many young people to engage in their educations and attend school every day. Further, you can help the public not only understand what chronic absenteeism is but also how it affects the local quality of life, especially among youth and their families, and the responsibility that all people have to identify young people who are disengaged from school and provide them with the love, motivation, and support to help them get back on track.

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

The best solutions to chronic absenteeism will be identified, implemented, and sustained locally. Your leadership in building a constituency to eliminate chronic absenteeism in your community is essential to the work of local schools as well as health, public housing, and justice agencies and other youth-serving organizations, including child welfare agencies.

The action steps suggested below can help support your office's efforts to engage the local community to support youth and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

### ***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Mayors and Local Government Should:

1. Learn about what chronic absenteeism is and invest in the systems and structures (e.g. early warning prevention and intervention systems) that can identify youth who are chronically absent from school.
2. Convene and sustain a local taskforce with representatives from different constituencies and organizations—including education, health, public housing, and justice agencies as well as youth, families, faith and community representatives, and child welfare agencies—that can research the root causes of chronic absenteeism among local youth and recommend research and evidence-based solutions for those youth.
3. Support efforts by school district and schools to partner with a broad range of third-party providers and agencies—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—that can provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and their families.
4. Explore opportunities to provide mentoring and other important support services for local youth to promote daily school attendance and to help deal with personal or family challenges that become barriers to daily attendance and school success.

### **Resources to Support Mayors and Local Governments to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

#### ***Attendance Works***

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for city leaders. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-city-leaders/>.

#### ***The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading***

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade—as well as addressing chronic absenteeism among youth. For more information, please visit: <http://gradelevelreading.net/about-us>.

#### ***National Mentoring Resource Center***

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is proud to partner with *MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership* to bring this resource to the youth mentoring field. The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools,

program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

***Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), US Department of Justice***  
OJJDP provides access to free resources for mentors, families, and communities to support high-quality mentoring for all youth. This comprehensive online resource provides mentoring tools and information, program and training materials, and technical assistance to help local programs and practitioners improve the quality and effectiveness of their mentoring efforts. See more at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>.

***Institute for Youth Success at Education Northwest***

With a mission to empower youth organizations to improve outcomes and reduce social costs, the Institute for Youth Success (IYS) supports more than 190 youth programs, including camps, sports, STEM, leadership, afterschool, independent living, and mentoring programs. In addition to providing professional development to volunteers and staff of youth programs, IYS provides relevant, evidence-based information on topics ranging from recruitment to program management and offers services that create efficiencies and make youth-development programs stronger. For more information, please visit <http://educationnorthwest.org/institute-for-youth-success>.

***MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership***

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit: <http://www.mentoring.org/>.

***AARP Foundation Experience Corps***

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for 50+ Americans. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

***U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)***

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

# Every Student, Every Day:

*A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*

*Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for*

## **COMMUNITY, FAITH-BASED, AND PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Community, Faith-based, and Philanthropic Organizations**

As a member of a community, faith-based, or philanthropic organization working with schools, you can be a strong and helpful voice to raise awareness about and support the implementation of solutions to chronic absenteeism in local communities. Community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations have a long history of supporting and working with schools and school districts to provide supports and services to students that are better provided by those organizations inside or outside of school. It is critical to leverage that long history of collaboration with schools to help address the underlying causes of and eliminate the chronic absenteeism experienced by an estimated five to seven and a half million young people across the country.

### **Did You Know?**

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Depending on the mission and goals of your organization, there are many roles you can play in supporting schools and school districts in eliminating chronic absenteeism. Your organization can offer services directly to schools or even support another outside organization that works directly with students. While there are many ways to help eliminate chronic absenteeism, it is most important that there is broad understanding about the impact of chronic absenteeism, its underlying causes, and then to align organizational goals and services with effective, research and evidence-based approaches to eliminating chronic absenteeism within a community.

In order to support schools and school districts in eliminating chronic absenteeism, community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations can take the following action steps:

***Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism***

Community, Faith-based, and Philanthropic Organizations Should:

1. Learn about what chronic absenteeism is and promote efforts to raise awareness among local stakeholders, especially youth and families.
2. Organize your congregation or community to take action within your own community to support students and families in achieving 100% daily attendance.
3. Encourage the local community to convene a taskforce with representatives from different constituencies and organizations—including education, health, public housing, and justice agencies as well as youth, families, faith, community, and child welfare agency representatives—that can research the root causes of chronic absenteeism among local youth and recommend research and evidence-based solutions for those youth.
4. Partner with schools and school districts and your organizations—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—in order to provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and their families.

**Resources to Support Community and Philanthropic Organizations to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism**

***Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships***

The Center is part of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which works to form partnerships between government at all levels and nonprofit organizations, both secular and faith-based, to more effectively serve Americans in need. The office advances this work through Centers and staff at 13 federal agencies across the administration. Our primary goals are to:

- Engage community-based organizations, both secular and faith-based, in building a culture of high expectations and support for education.
- Develop and support initiatives within the federal government to help maximize the education contributions of community-based organizations, including faith and interfaith organizations.
- Strengthen partnerships between community-based organizations and schools to help improve the nation's lowest-achieving schools.

See more at: <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/fbnp/>.

***U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)***

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please



visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

***Attendance Works***

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for faith-based and community organizations. See more at:

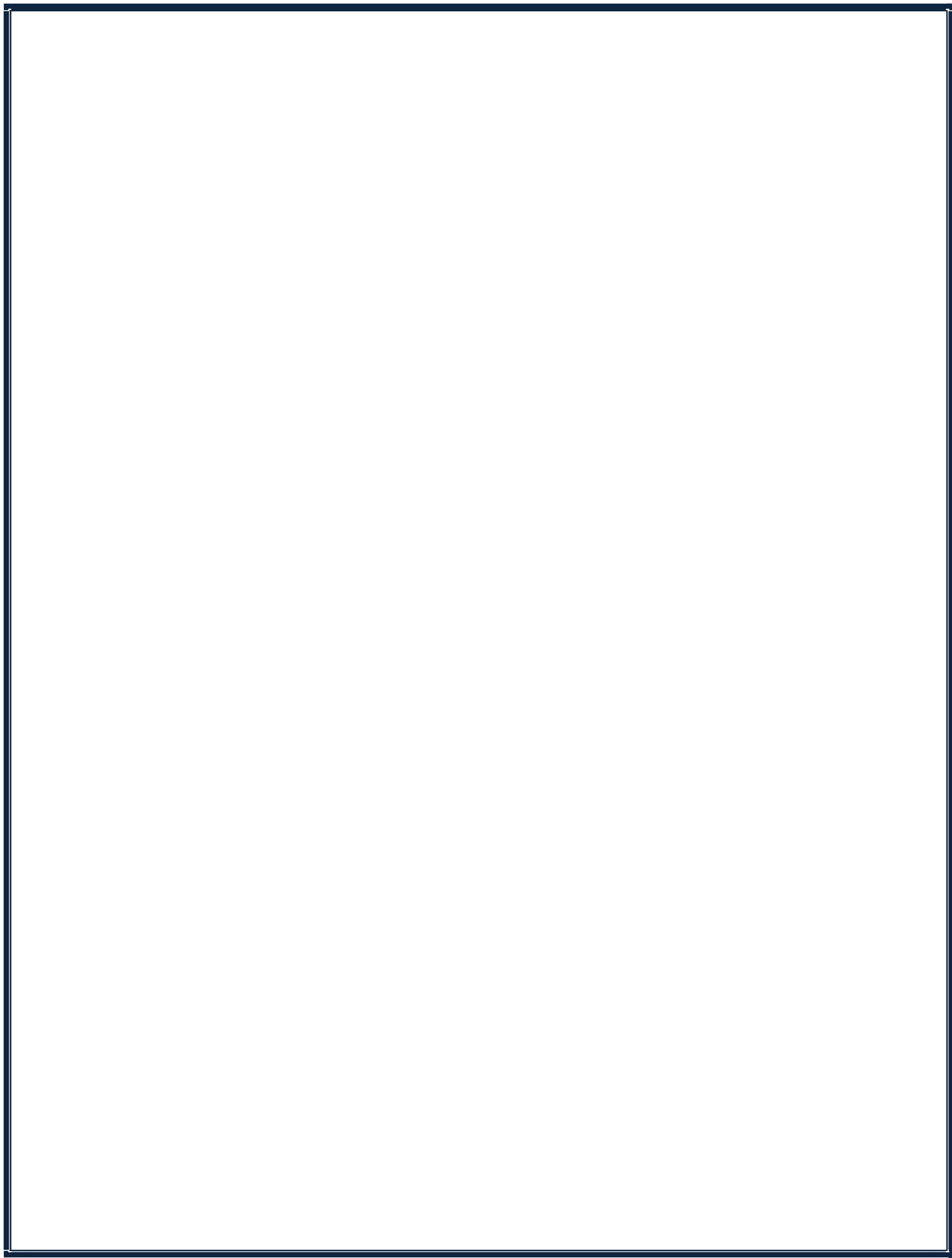
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/>.

***The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading***

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade—as well as addressing chronic absenteeism among youth. For more information, please visit:

<http://gradelevelreading.net/about-us>







**Appendix F: U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights:**  
*Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools: An unprecedented look  
at a hidden educational crisis*

**Technical difficulties prevented the reproduction of this report  
for inclusion in this Appendix.**

**This report can be accessed at the following link:**  
**<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html#four>**

## **Appendix G: Illinois MTSS Network PowerPoint Presentation**



# Illinois MTSS Network

## Attendance Commission February 19, 2016

*Presented by:*  
*Michele Carmichael*  
*ISBE*

*Principal Consultant-Behavioral Health  
Supports*

*Julie West*  
*Roberta Brown*  
*IL MTSS-N*

*Statewide Program Co-Coordinators*

*The Illinois MTSS Network is a federally funded (IDEA Discretionary Part B & Part D SPDG) project of the Illinois State Board of Education.*



The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

# Illinois MTSS Network Components



**Illinois MTSS Network**  
*(coaching to build capacity within school districts)*



**Illinois IHE Partnership**  
*(working with educator preparation programs)*



**Parent/Family Engagement** *(strengthening parent/family engagement & leadership in I-Rtl Network participating districts)*



**External Evaluation**



# Illinois MTSS Network



2 Statewide Program Co-ordinators



Regionally-based staff (serving 8 areas)

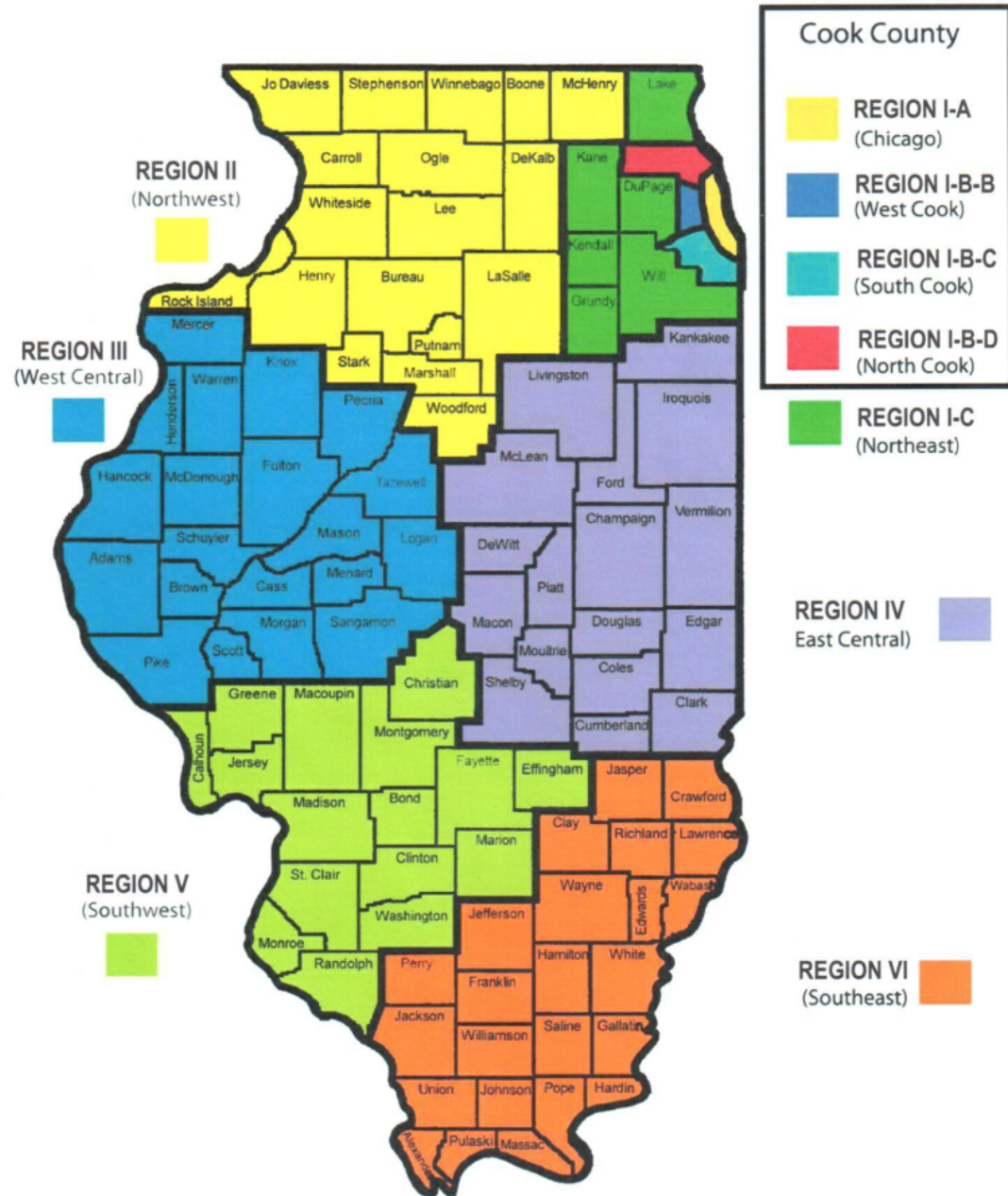


Work focused at district level



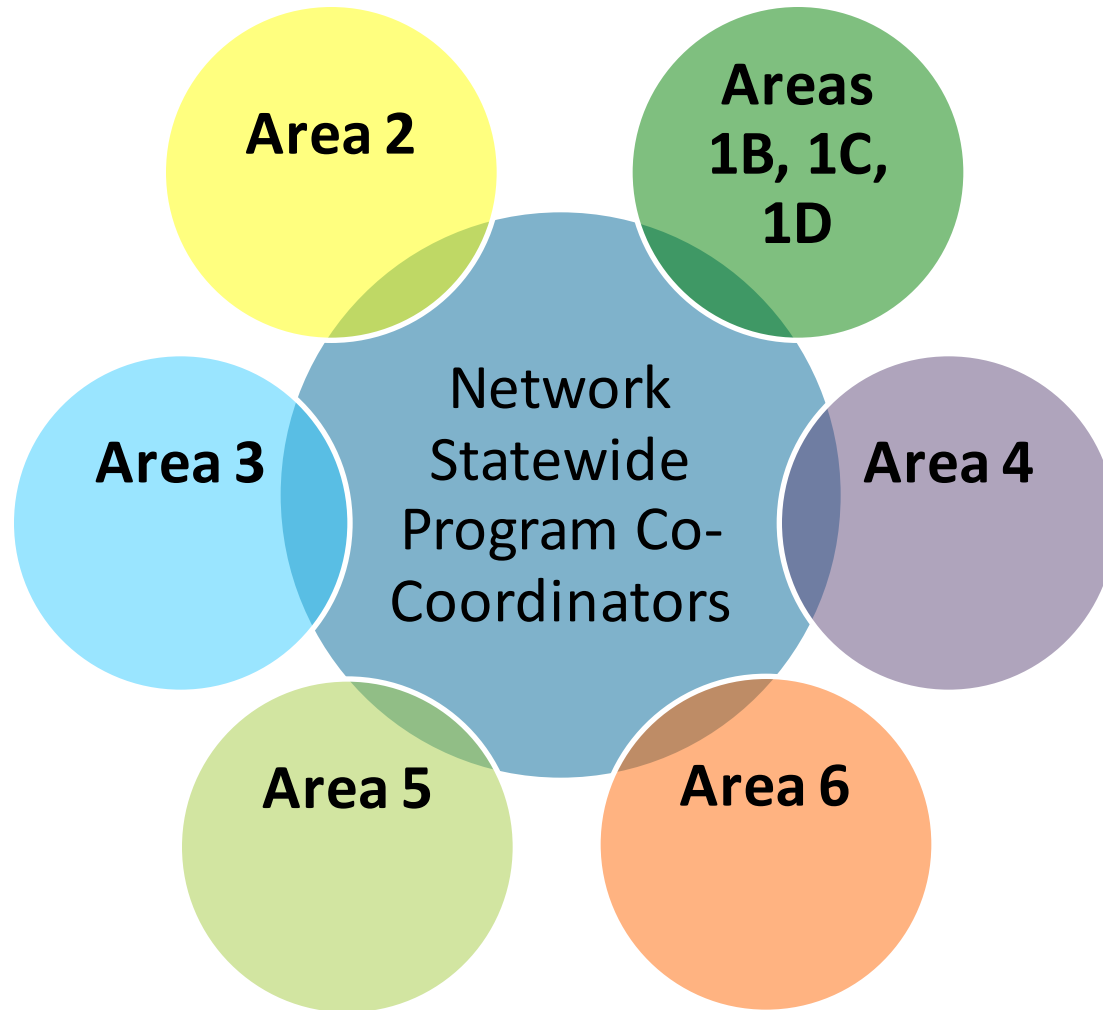
Directly serve District Leadership Teams & Coaches;  
connected to district improvement process

# Illinois' Regional System





# IL MTSS Network Staffing Pattern

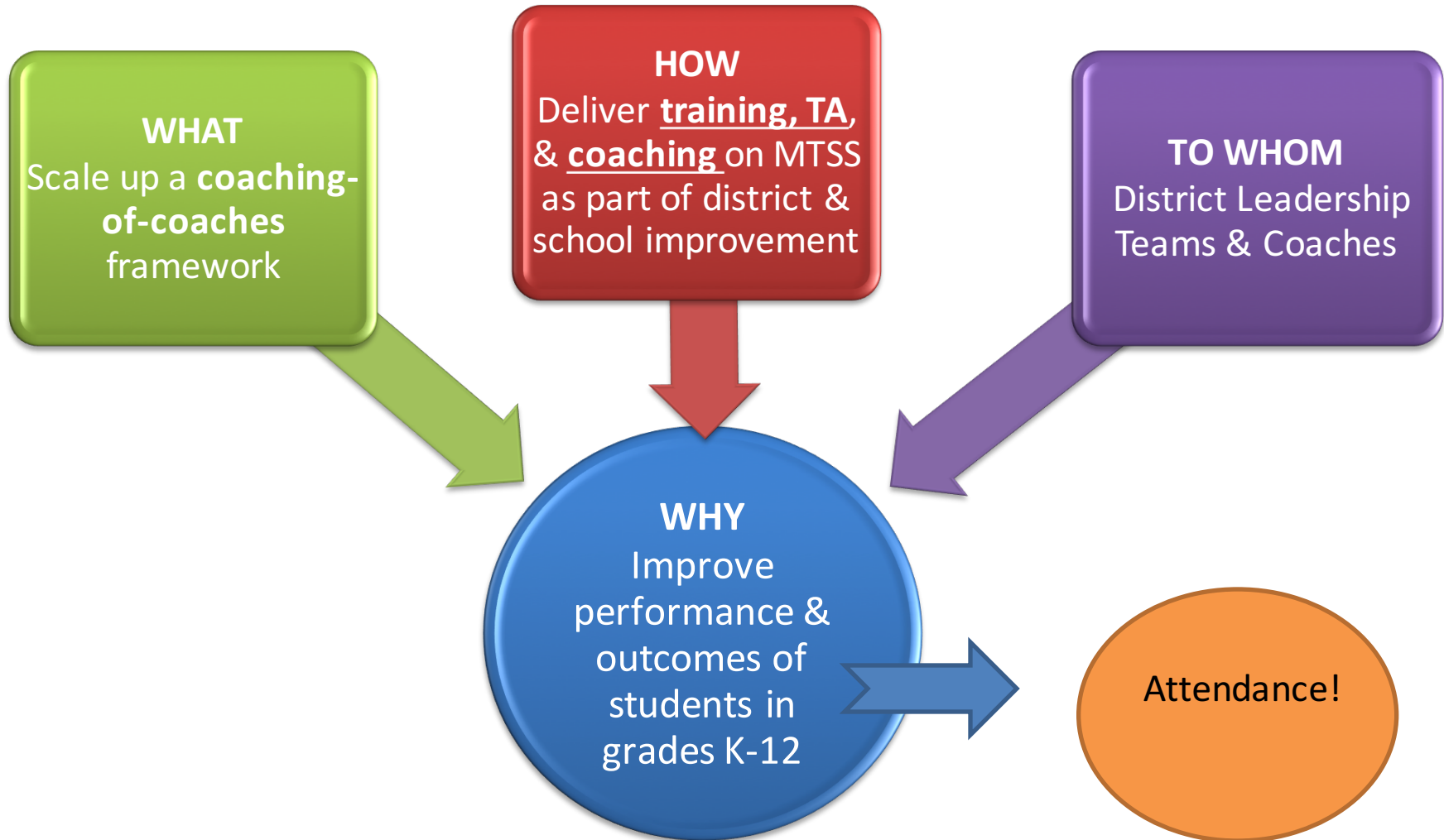


- \*1 Area-wide Implementation Coordinator per region
- \*Implementation Coaches allocated by need per region

# Evidence-based Professional Learning



# IL MTSS Network: Focusing “What” on “Why”



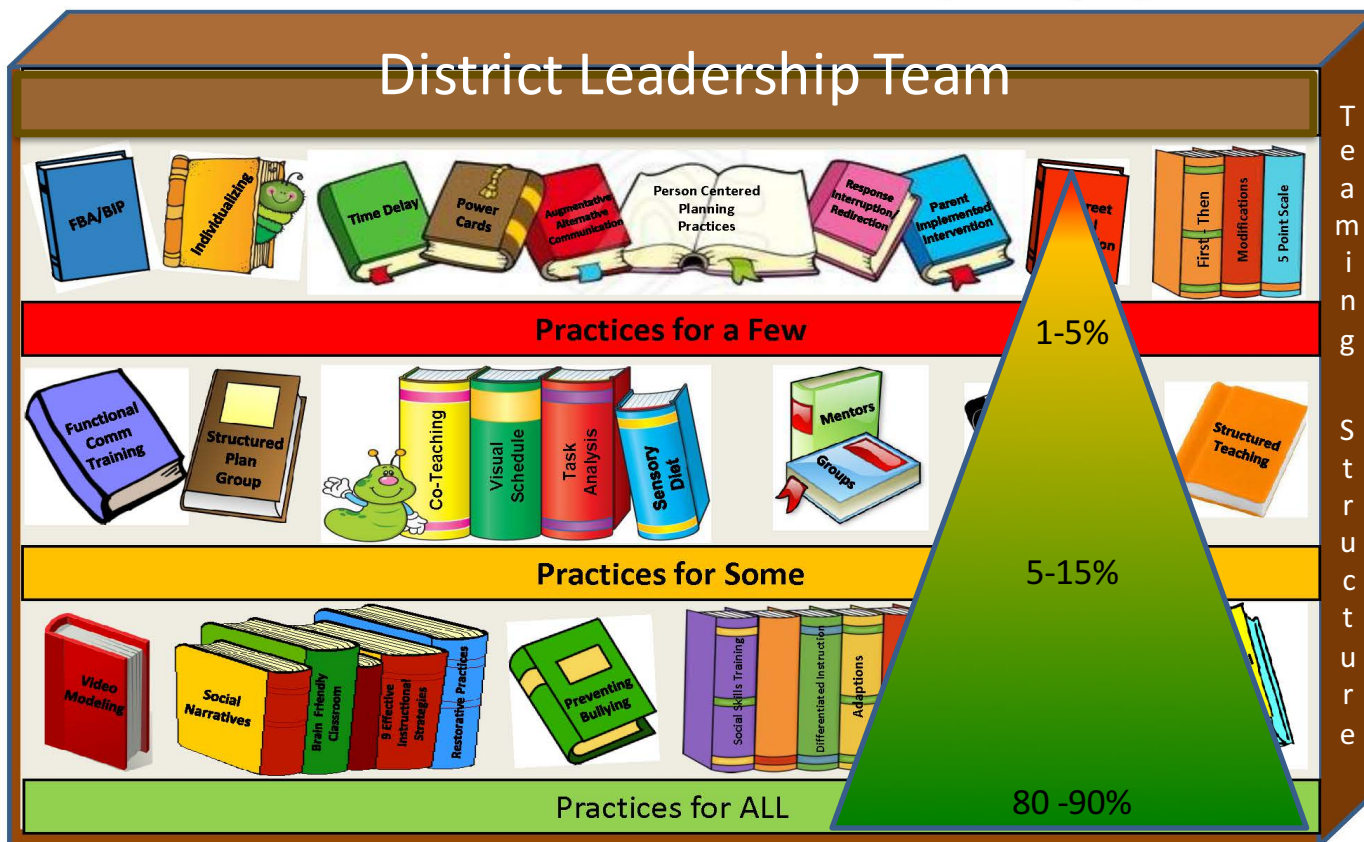
# MTSS Definition in Illinois

**A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a  
framework  
for continuous improvement that is  
systemic, prevention focused, and data-  
informed,  
providing a  
coherent continuum of supports  
responsive to meet the needs of  
all learners**

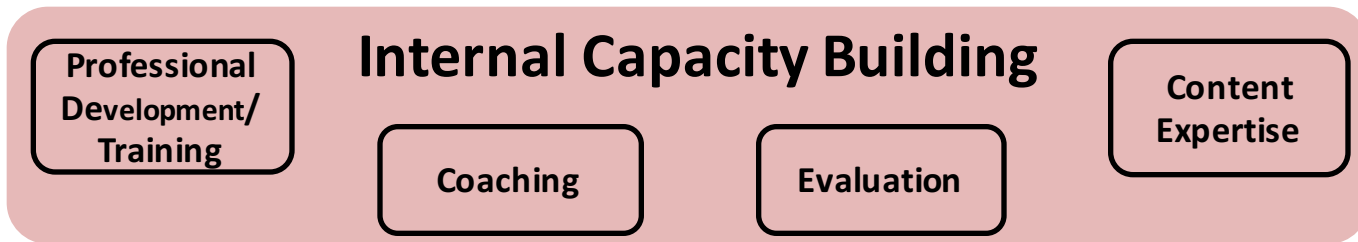
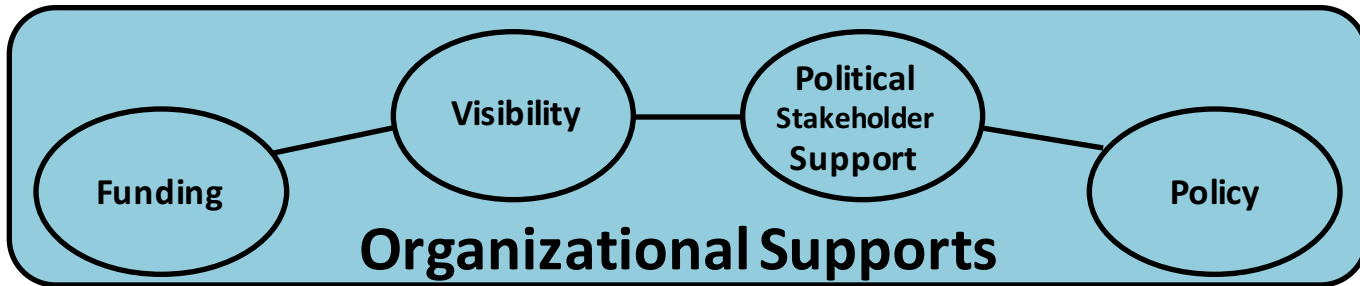


# Framework with Supports

## Student Intervention Framework (Example)



# DISTRICT CAPACITY BUILDING



# **SCHOOL LEVEL MODEL OF IMPLEMENTATION**

**Leadership**

**Data Informed Decisions**

**Teaming**

**Tiered System of Curriculum, Instruction,  
Assessment and Learning Supports**

**Professional Learning**

**Partnering and Communication**

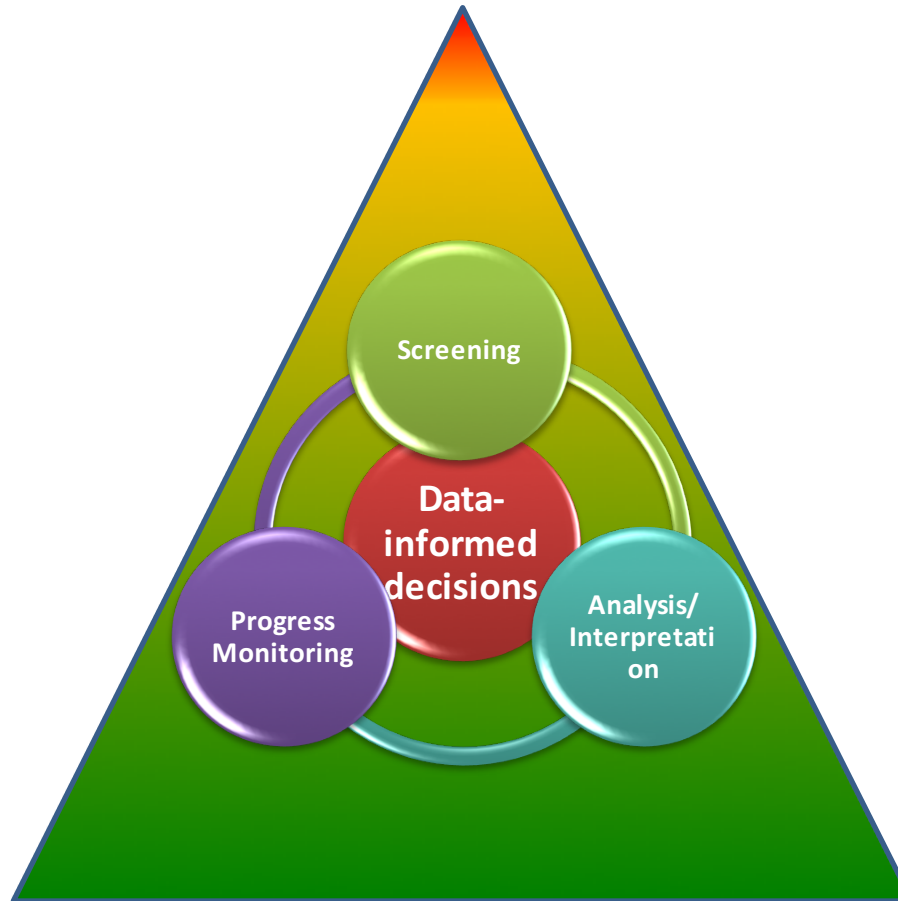
**Evaluation**

# Prevention

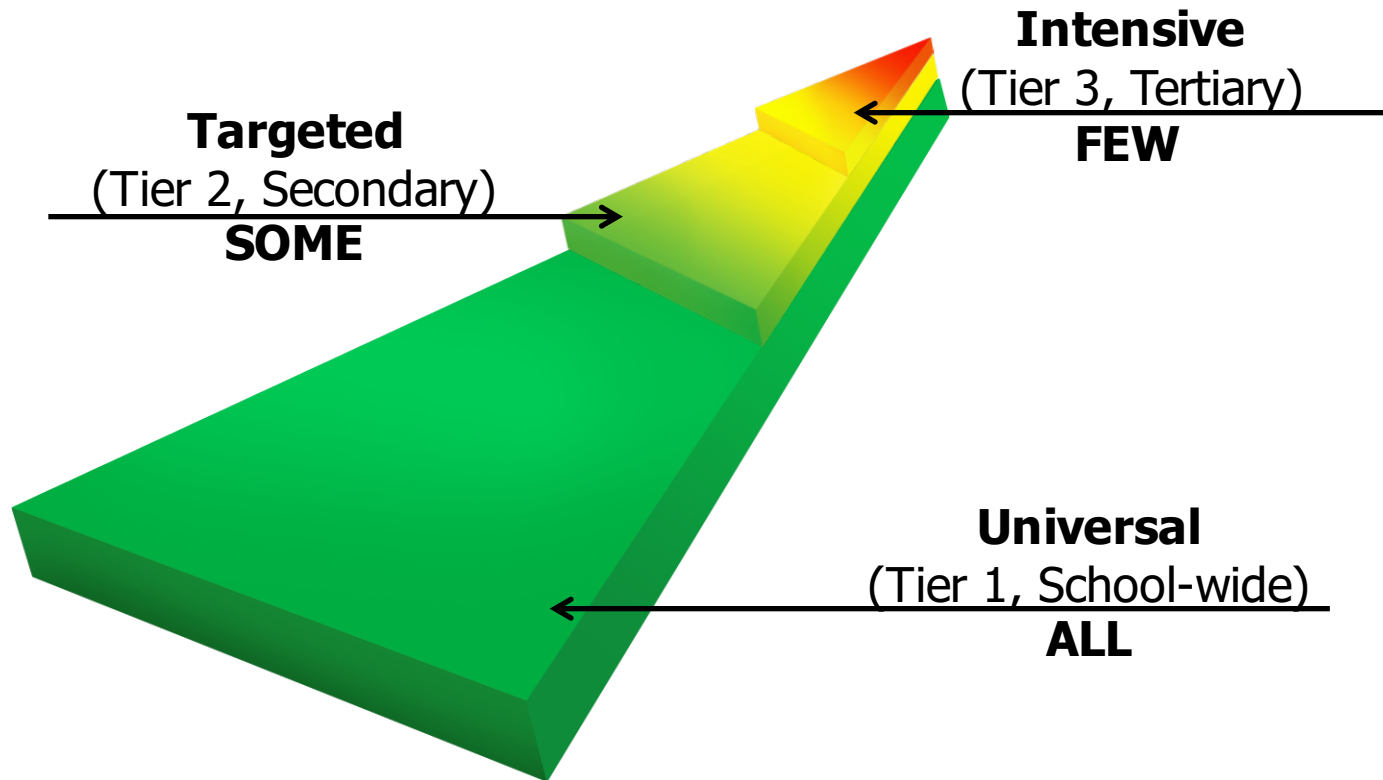


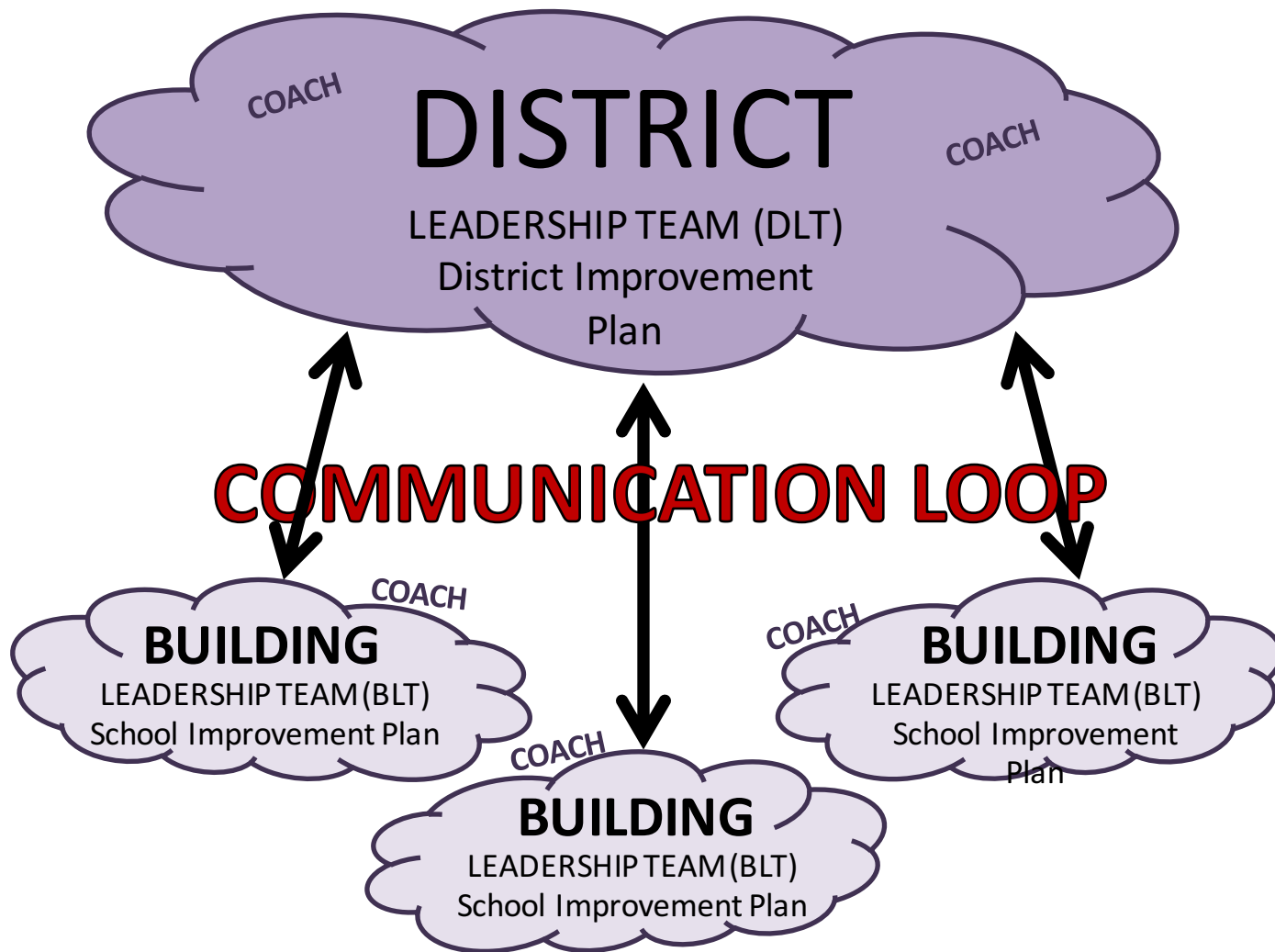


# Continuous Improvement



# Continuum of Supports





## IL MTSS-N Supports



### ***Training***

is a purposeful, skill-based, and adult-learning informed process designed to support educators to enhance knowledge, skills, and practices. Trainings are based on specific learning outcomes and delivered through face-to-face and/or online learning experiences.



### ***Coaching***

is a process that supports educators to utilize their knowledge and skills developed during training with fidelity. Coaching is based on building relationships and facilitative questioning to help an individual or group take action toward its goals.



### ***Technical assistance***

(TA) is a process designed to facilitate the transference of specialized information and skills through consultation, problem-solving and connection to resources. TA works with and supports the training and coaching processes.

# The Why, the How, & the What



## Training

- Provide rationale for the importance of component and understand critical features.



## Coaching

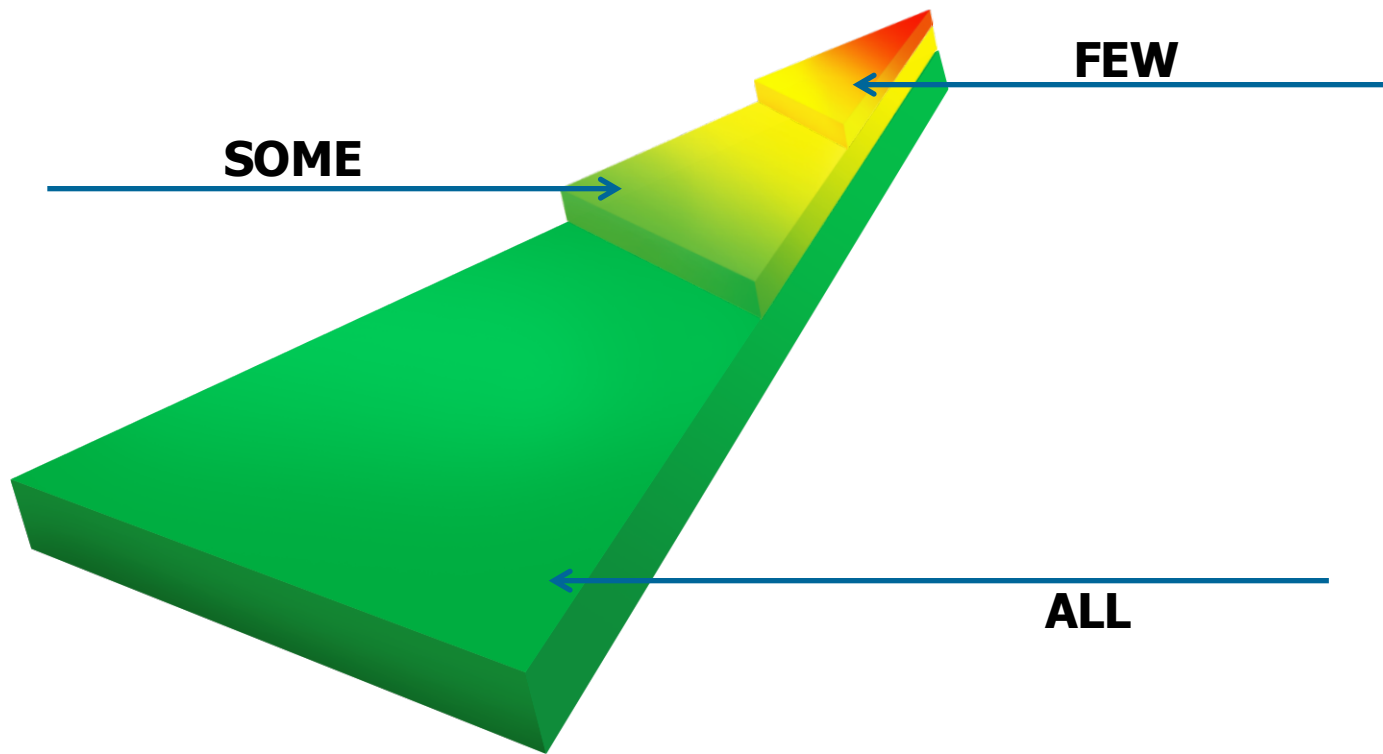
- Facilitate the application (and implementation) of content knowledge and critical features of component/skill in school/district settings.

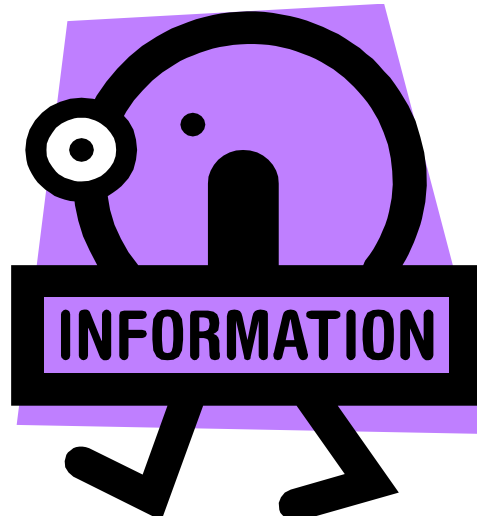


## Technical Assistance

- Specific tools, activities, examples or plans to facilitate application and implementation, including coaching questions to ask to facilitate application of knowledge and coaching tips.

# Statewide Delivery Model





Michele Carmichael [mcarmich@isbe.net](mailto:mcarmich@isbe.net)

Roberta Brown [roberta.brown@istac.net](mailto:roberta.brown@istac.net)

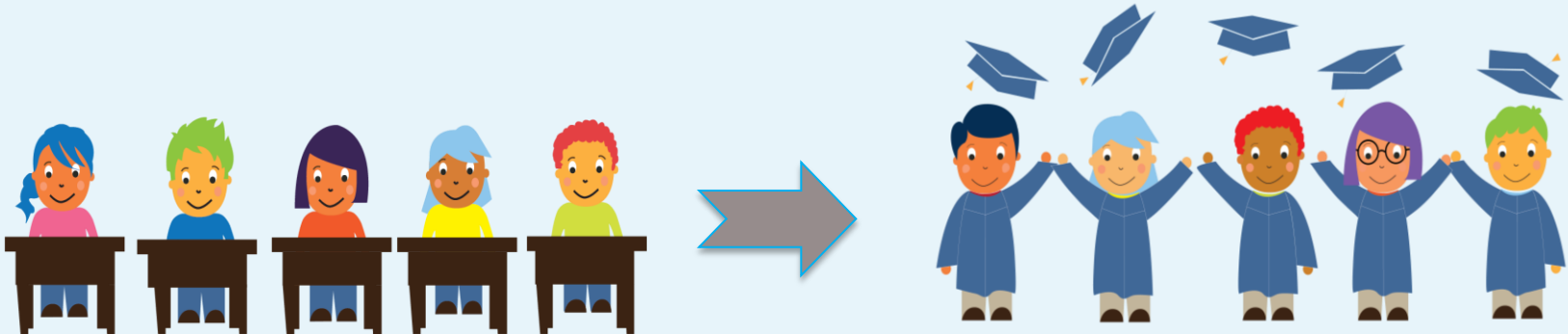
Julie West [jwest@roe47.org](mailto:jwest@roe47.org)

**Appendix H: Attendance Works PowerPoint: *Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic Absence in Illinois: Why Does It Matter? What Can We Do?***



# Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic Absence in Illinois

*Why Does It Matter? What Can We Do?*



# The Attendance Works Team



Cecelia Leong  
Associate Director of Programs



Sue Fothergill  
Associate Director of Policy



# Attendance Works

Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes awareness of the important role that school attendance plays in achieving academic success starting with pre-school. We are an implementation partner for attendance with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

**Our three focus areas to improve student attendance are:**

- Build public awareness and political will
- Foster state campaigns
- Encourage local practice

[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



# The Go-To Resource on Attendance

- Since our founding in 2010, nearly a million hits on the Attendance Works website
- Users have downloaded free toolkits including: Teaching Attendance, Leading Attendance, Bringing Attendance Home and Count Us In
- Users in all 50 states registered for our free data tools



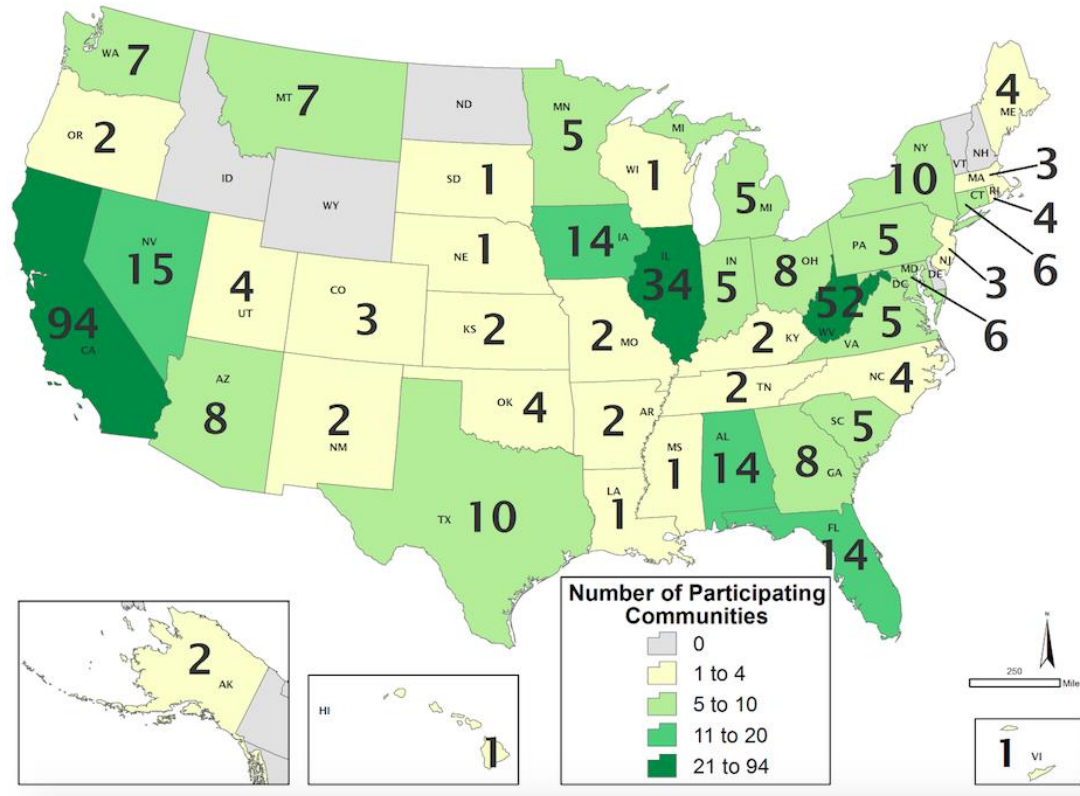


# Attendance Awareness Month and Nationwide Campaign 2015



# Who participated?

## Participation in Attendance Awareness Month



- 404 schools & communities pinned on the Attendance Action Map.
- California, West Va. & Illinois dominated



# The Superintendents Call to Action

**Prioritize  
Attendance**

**Mobilize  
the  
Community**

**Drive With  
Data**

*To sign-up for the Call to Action, or to learn more, please visit:  
[www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action](http://www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action)*



# Attendance Awareness 2016

**Save the Date!**

**April 12, 2016 at 1 Central Time**

**This webinar launch will include speakers  
from: Attendance Works**

**US Department of Education**

**California Attorney General's Office**

**Harvard University**

**Parent Teacher Home Visit Project**





# Frameworks and Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absence



# We promote the utilization of multiple measures of attendance

## Average Daily Attendance

- **How many students show up to school every day?** The % of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in Illinois for allocating funding.

## Truancy

- **Who is missing school without permission?** Typically refers only to unexcused absences. Each state has the authority to define what is truancy and when does it trigger legal intervention.

## Chronic Absence

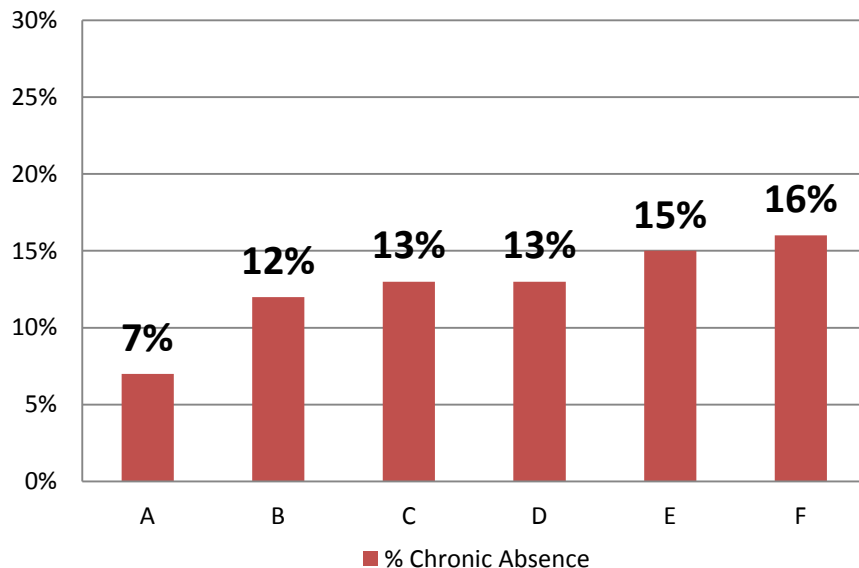
- **Who is missing so much school they are academically at risk?** Broadly means missing too much school for any reason -- excused, unexcused, etc. Researchers commonly define it as missing 10% of school. *OCR currently defines it as missing 15 days and will be releasing a report in Spring 2016. Chronic absence is a required reporting metric in ESSA.*



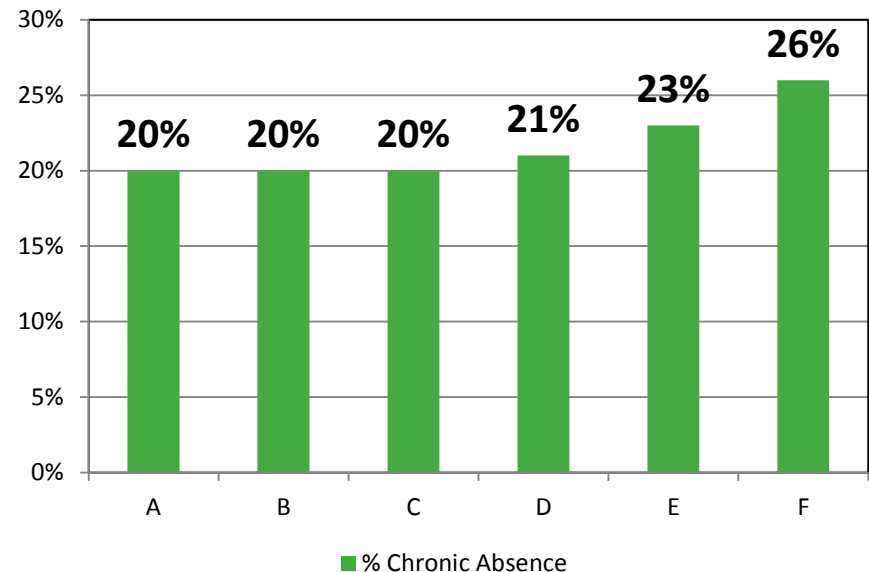
# High Levels of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

*90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A*

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012



Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12

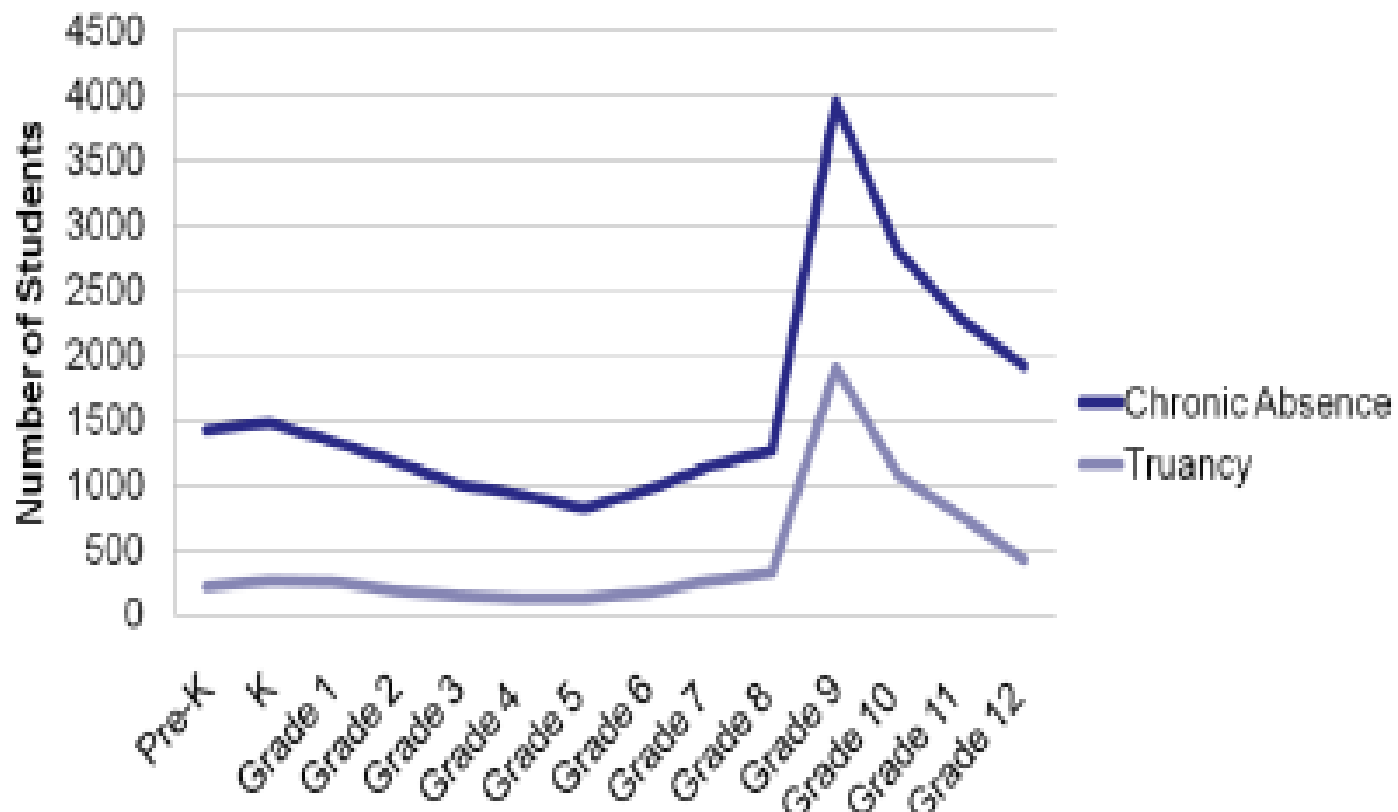


**98% ADA = little chronic absence**  
**95% ADA = don't know**  
**93% ADA = significant chronic absence**

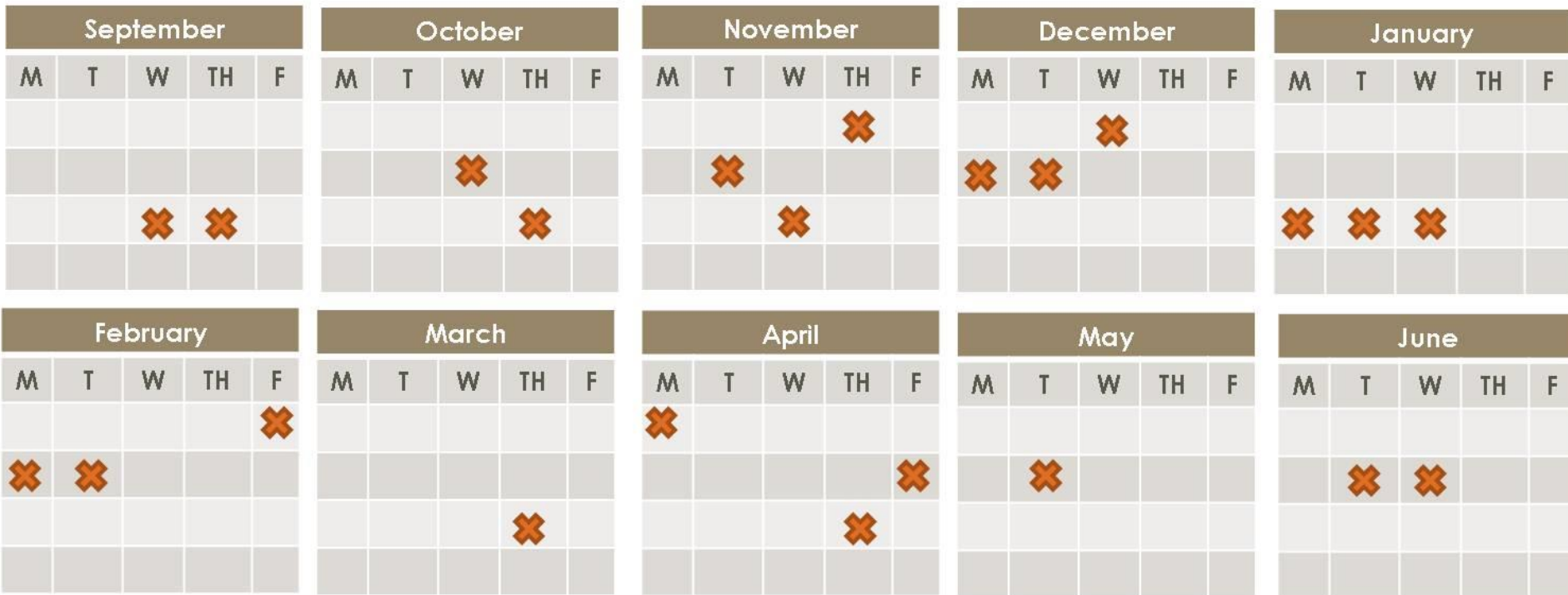


# ***Truancy (unexcused absences) can underestimate chronic absence***

**Chronic absence vs Truancy**  
**(Baltimore City Public Schools SY 2009-10)**



# Why We May Not Notice Chronic Absence



## Absences Add Up

Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = 2 days a month



# Improving Attendance Matters Because It Reflects:

**Exposure to language:** Starting in Pre-K, attendance equals exposure to language-rich environments especially for low-income children.

**Time on Task in Class:** Students only benefit from classroom instruction if they are in class.

**On Track for Success:** Chronic absence is a proven early warning sign that a student is behind in reading by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, failing courses middle and high school, and likely to drop-out.

**College Readiness:** Attendance patterns predicts college enrollment and persistence.

**Engagement :** Attendance reflects engagement in learning.

**Effective Practice:** Schools, communities and families can improve attendance when they work together.

*(For research, see: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/>)*



# Chronic absence is solvable, especially if data is used to help unpack contributing factors

## Myths

Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused

OK to miss a day here or there

Attendance only matters in later grades

PreK and K are seen as day care, not learning

## Barriers

Chronic disease (asthma) or lack of health/dental care

Caring for siblings or other family members

Unmet basic needs: transp., housing, food clothes, etc.

Trauma

No safe path to school

High suspension rates

## Aversion

Academic struggles

Being teased or bullied

Poor school climate, disproportionate school discipline, or unsafe school

Parents had negative school experience

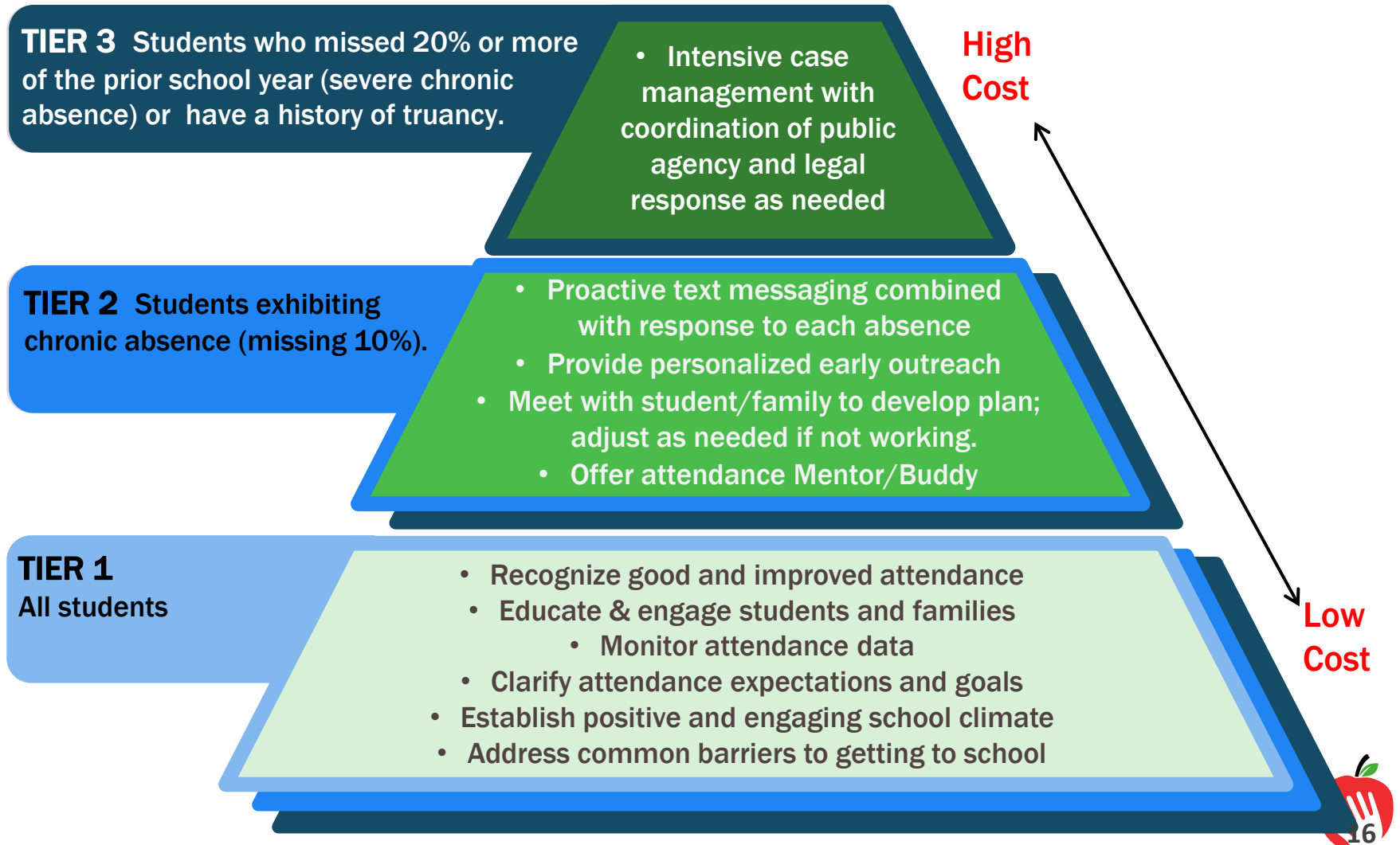
## Disengagement

Lack of engaging and relevant instruction

No meaningful relationships with adults in school

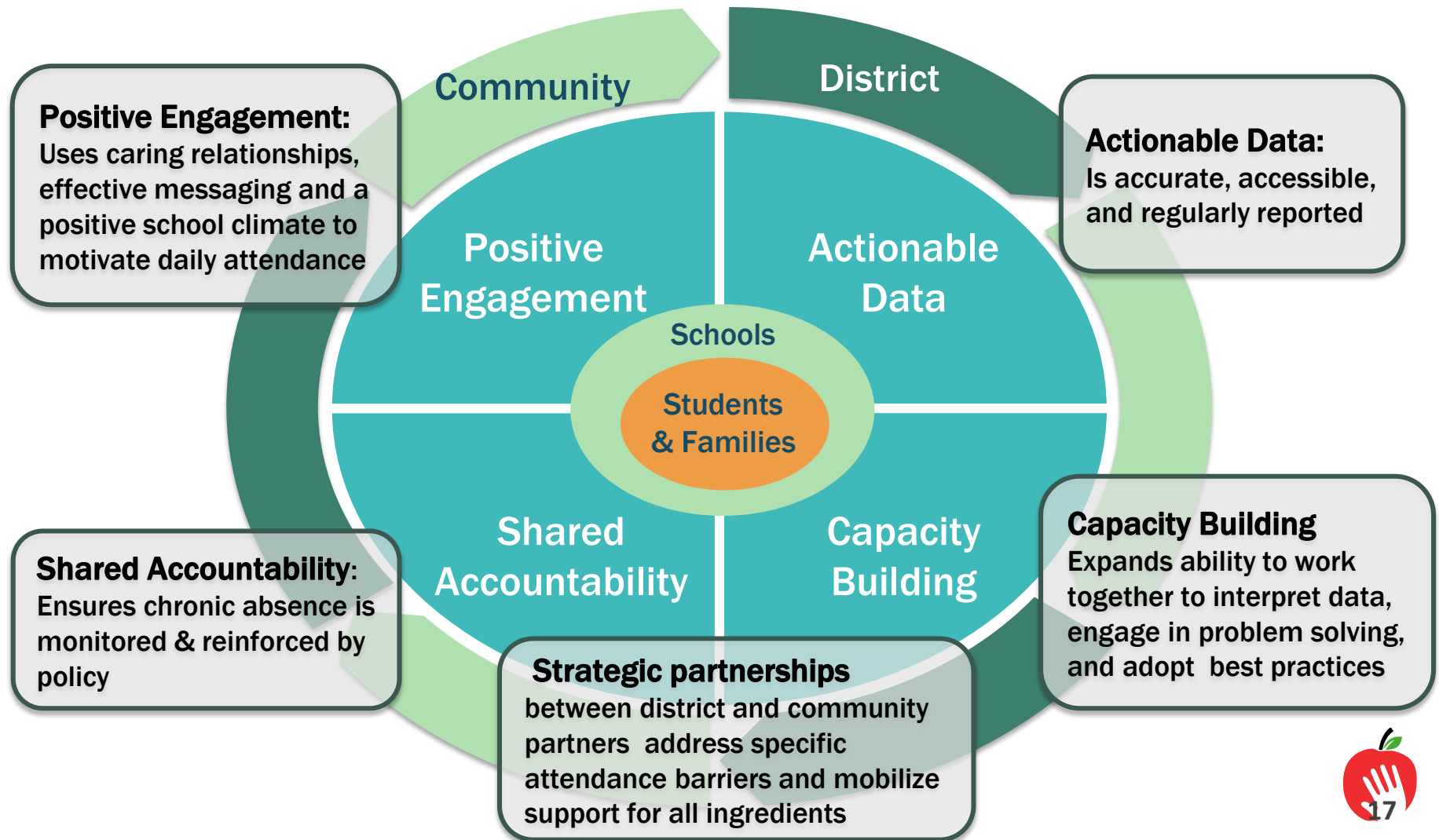
More exciting to be with peers out of school vs. in school

# A Tiered Approach is Essential to Improving Attendance to Drive Student Success





# These key ingredients are essential to systems change and sustainability.



# What is Actionable Data?

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

- Accurate
- Accessible
- Timely
- Regularly reported



# How Can Chronic Absence and Suspension Data Be Used?

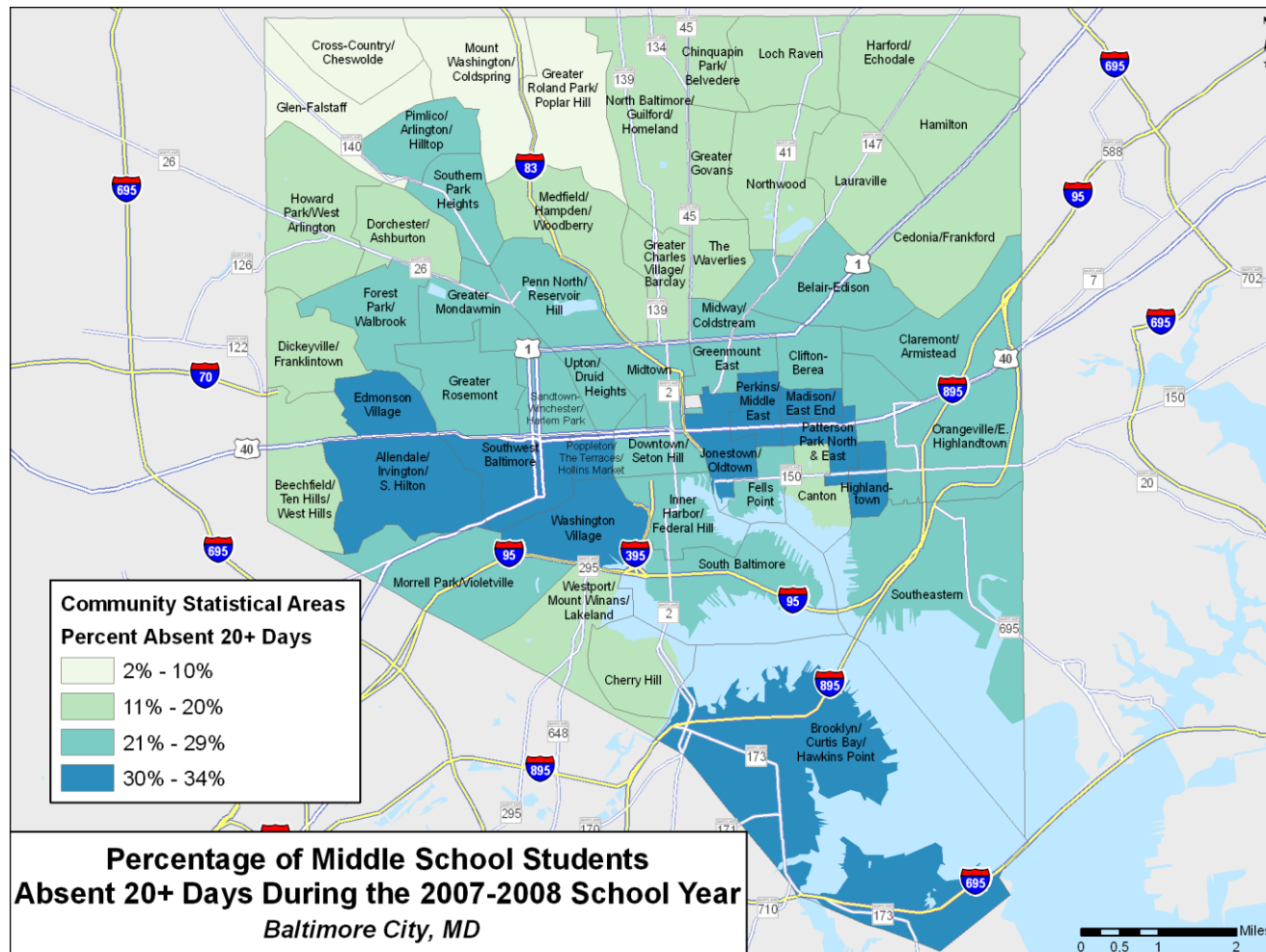
- To determine the size and scope of the issue
- To identify the right points for interventions
- To see trends over time
- To identify positive outliers and best practices
- To find schools needing greater support
- To identify student sub-groups disproportionately affected
- To allocate scarce resources more efficiently



# How Can Chronic Absence Data Be Used?

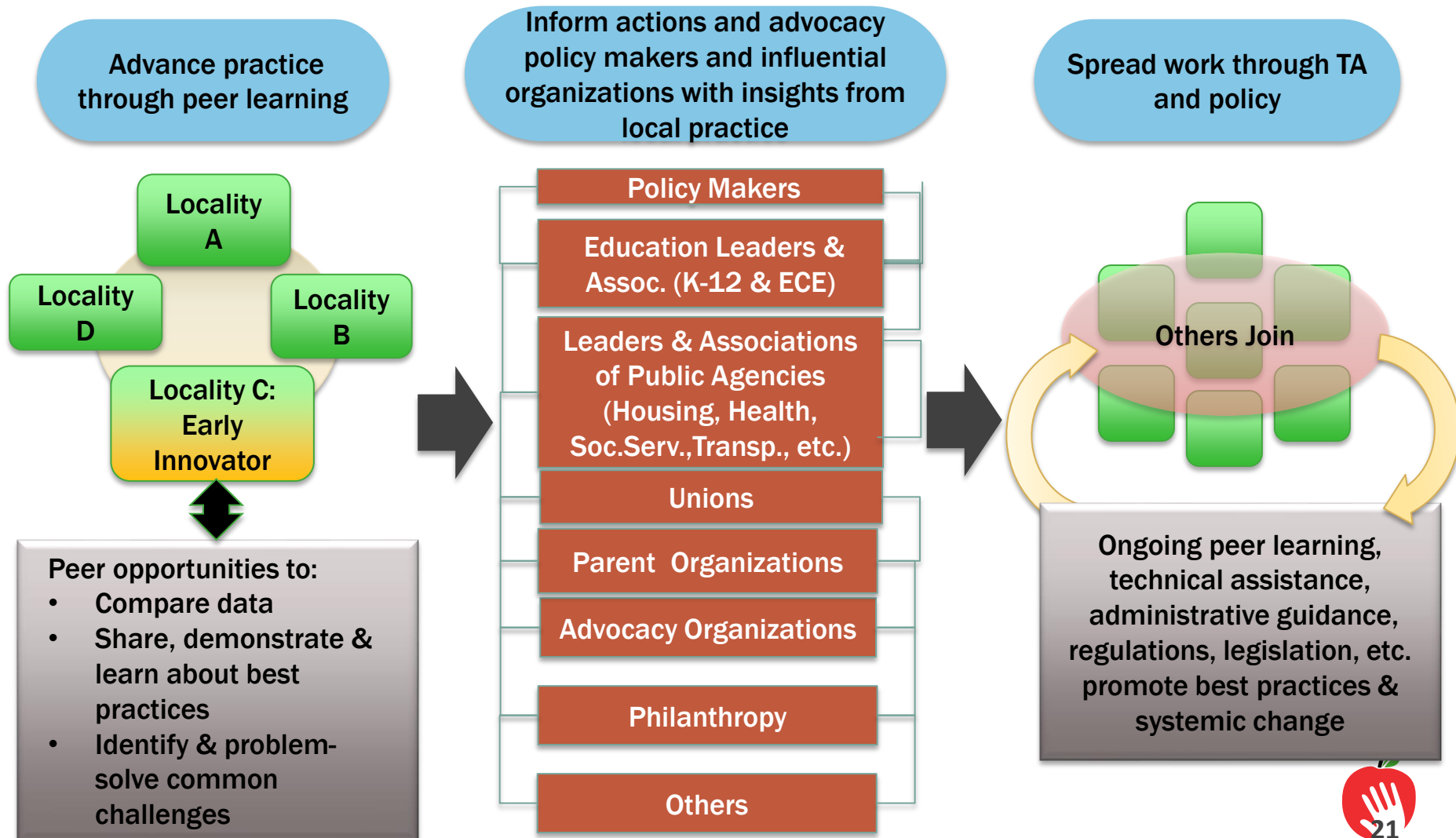
## *To See Where It Is Concentrated by School or Zip Code.*

Where are students with high levels of absences concentrated?



# Proposed Pathway for Change:

## Cultivating peer learning to inform broader policy change and practice



# Opportunities Offered by Changing National Policy



# ***Every Student, Every Day***

## **Resource Package**

The federal resource package for ***Every Student, Every Day*** includes:

- “Dear Colleague” letter with guidance for states, schools, and local communities
- ***Every Student, Every Day*** community toolkit
- ***Every Student, Every Day*** Virtual Summit on Nov. 12
- National awareness campaign sponsored by ED, the Ad Council, and the Mott Foundation, beginning in January 2016
- National Success Mentor initiative for districts
- Civil Rights Data Collection release of first-ever national chronic absenteeism data in Spring 2016
- National chronic absenteeism summit in June 2016
- ED.gov webpage on ***Every Student, Every Day***:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/index.html>

# Opportunities created by ESSA

- Chronic absence included in Every Student Succeeds Act and is a required reporting metric for schools
- Title II funds can be used for professional development on chronic absence
- Chronic absence could be adopted by states as an additional metric for measuring school performance
- Title IV requires health needs assessments





# Office of Civil Rights

## First National Report of Chronic Absence

### Section IV: Chronic Student Absenteeism

#### 10. Chronic Student Absenteeism NEW FOR 2013-14 & 2015-16!

##### Schools and justice facilities, grades K-12, UG

- A chronically absent student is a student who is absent 15 or more school days during the school year. A student is absent if he or she is not physically on school grounds and is not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for the school day. Chronically absent students include students who are absent for any reason (e.g., illness, suspension, the need to care for a family member), regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused.

##### Instructions

- Enter the number of chronically absent students. Include students in grades K-12, and comparable ungraded levels.

Data Element	Hispanic or Latino of any race	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Black or African American	White	Two or more races	Total	LEP	Students with Disabilities (Section 504 Only)	Students with Disabilities (IDEA)
Students absent 15 or more school days during school year:											
Male											
Female											
Total											

Data from the CRDC are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, limited English proficiency and disability.



# Questions?



## **Appendix I: Public Act 99-0456**

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Sections 10-20.14, 10-22.6, 27A-5, and 34-19 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/10-20.14) (from Ch. 122, par. 10-20.14)

Sec. 10-20.14. Student discipline policies; Parent-teacher advisory committee.

(a) To establish and maintain a parent-teacher advisory committee to develop with the school board or governing body of a charter school policy guidelines on pupil discipline, including school searches and bullying prevention as set forth in Section 27-23.7 of this Code. School authorities shall,~~to~~ furnish a copy of the policy to the parents or guardian of each pupil within 15 days after the beginning of the school year, or within 15 days after starting classes for a pupil who transfers into the district during the school year, and the school board or governing body of a charter school shall ~~to~~ require that a ~~each~~ school inform ~~informs~~ its pupils of the contents of the ~~its~~ policy. School boards and the governing bodies of charter schools, along with the parent-teacher advisory committee, must ~~are encouraged to~~ annually review their pupil discipline policies, the implementation of those policies, and any other

factors related to the safety of their schools, pupils, and staff.

(a-5) On or before September 15, 2016, each elementary and secondary school and charter school shall, at a minimum, adopt pupil discipline policies that fulfill the requirements set forth in this Section, subsections (a) and (b) of Section 10-22.6 of this Code, Section 34-19 of this Code if applicable, and federal and State laws that provide special requirements for the discipline of students with disabilities.

(b) The parent-teacher advisory committee in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies shall develop, with the school board, policy guideline procedures to establish and maintain a reciprocal reporting system between the school district and local law enforcement agencies regarding criminal offenses committed by students. School districts are encouraged to create memoranda of understanding with local law enforcement agencies that clearly define law enforcement's role in schools, in accordance with Section 10-22.6 of this Code.

(c) The parent-teacher advisory committee, in cooperation with school bus personnel, shall develop, with the school board, policy guideline procedures to establish and maintain school bus safety procedures. These procedures shall be incorporated into the district's pupil discipline policy.

(d) The school board, in consultation with the parent-teacher advisory committee and other community-based

organizations, must include provisions in the student discipline policy to address students who have demonstrated behaviors that put them at risk for aggressive behavior, including without limitation bullying, as defined in the policy. These provisions must include procedures for notifying parents or legal guardians and early intervention procedures based upon available community-based and district resources.

(Source: P.A. 91-272, eff. 1-1-00; 92-260, eff. 1-1-02.)

(105 ILCS 5/10-22.6) (from Ch. 122, par. 10-22.6)

Sec. 10-22.6. Suspension or expulsion of pupils; school searches.

(a) To expel pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct, including gross disobedience or misconduct perpetuated by electronic means, pursuant to subsection (b-20) of this Section, and no action shall lie against them for such expulsion. Expulsion shall take place only after the parents have been requested to appear at a meeting of the board, or with a hearing officer appointed by it, to discuss their child's behavior. Such request shall be made by registered or certified mail and shall state the time, place and purpose of the meeting. The board, or a hearing officer appointed by it, at such meeting shall state the reasons for dismissal and the date on which the expulsion is to become effective. If a hearing officer is appointed by the board he shall report to the board a written summary of the evidence heard at the

meeting and the board may take such action thereon as it finds appropriate. If the board acts to expel a pupil, the written expulsion decision shall detail the specific reasons why removing the pupil from the learning environment is in the best interest of the school. The expulsion decision shall also include a rationale as to the specific duration of the expulsion. An expelled pupil may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this Code. A pupil must not be denied transfer because of the expulsion, except in cases in which such transfer is deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program.

(b) To suspend or by policy to authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students of any school to suspend pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct, or to suspend pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct on the school bus from riding the school bus, pursuant to subsections (b-15) and (b-20) of this Section, and no action shall lie against them for such suspension. The board may by policy authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students of any school to suspend pupils guilty of such acts for a period not to exceed 10 school days. If a pupil is suspended due to gross disobedience or misconduct on a school bus, the board may suspend the pupil in excess of 10 school days for safety reasons.

Any suspension shall be reported immediately to the parents or guardian of a ~~such~~ pupil along with a full statement of the reasons for such suspension and a notice of their right to a review. The school board must be given a summary of the notice, including the reason for the suspension and the suspension length. Upon request of the parents or guardian the school board or a hearing officer appointed by it shall review such action of the superintendent or principal, assistant principal, or dean of students. At such review the parents or guardian of the pupil may appear and discuss the suspension with the board or its hearing officer. If a hearing officer is appointed by the board he shall report to the board a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting. After its hearing or upon receipt of the written report of its hearing officer, the board may take such action as it finds appropriate. If a student is suspended pursuant to this subsection (b), the board shall, in the written suspension decision, detail the specific act of gross disobedience or misconduct resulting in the decision to suspend. The suspension decision shall also include a rationale as to the specific duration of the suspension. A pupil who is suspended in excess of 20 school days may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this Code. A pupil must not be denied transfer because of the suspension, except in cases in which such transfer is deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program.



(b-5) Among the many possible disciplinary interventions and consequences available to school officials, school exclusions, such as out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, are the most serious. School officials shall limit the number and duration of expulsions and suspensions to the greatest extent practicable, and it is recommended that they use them only for legitimate educational purposes. To ensure that students are not excluded from school unnecessarily, it is recommended that school officials consider forms of non-exclusionary discipline prior to using out-of-school suspensions or expulsions.

(b-10) Unless otherwise required by federal law or this Code, school boards may not institute zero-tolerance policies by which school administrators are required to suspend or expel students for particular behaviors.

(b-15) Out-of-school suspensions of 3 days or less may be used only if the student's continuing presence in school would pose a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities. For purposes of this subsection (b-15), "threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities" shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the school board or its designee. School officials shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve such threats, address such disruptions, and minimize the length of suspensions to the greatest extent practicable.

(b-20) Unless otherwise required by this Code,

out-of-school suspensions of longer than 3 days, expulsions, and disciplinary removals to alternative schools may be used only if other appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted and the student's continuing presence in school would either (i) pose a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community or (ii) substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school. For purposes of this subsection (b-20), "threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community" and "substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school" shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by school officials. For purposes of this subsection (b-20), the determination of whether "appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted" shall be made by school officials. School officials shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve such threats, address such disruptions, and minimize the length of student exclusions to the greatest extent practicable. Within the suspension decision described in subsection (b) of this Section or the expulsion decision described in subsection (a) of this Section, it shall be documented whether other interventions were attempted or whether it was determined that there were no other appropriate and available interventions.

(b-25) Students who are suspended out-of-school for longer than 4 school days shall be provided appropriate and available

support services during the period of their suspension. For purposes of this subsection (b-25), "appropriate and available support services" shall be determined by school authorities. Within the suspension decision described in subsection (b) of this Section, it shall be documented whether such services are to be provided or whether it was determined that there are no such appropriate and available services.

A school district may refer students who are expelled to appropriate and available support services.

A school district shall create a policy to facilitate the re-engagement of students who are suspended out-of-school, expelled, or returning from an alternative school setting.

(b-30) A school district shall create a policy by which suspended pupils, including those pupils suspended from the school bus who do not have alternate transportation to school, shall have the opportunity to make up work for equivalent academic credit. It shall be the responsibility of a pupil's parent or guardian to notify school officials that a pupil suspended from the school bus does not have alternate transportation to school.

(c) The Department of Human Services shall be invited to send a representative to consult with the board at such meeting whenever there is evidence that mental illness may be the cause for expulsion or suspension.

(c-5) School districts shall make reasonable efforts to provide ongoing professional development to teachers,

administrators, school board members, school resource officers, and staff on the adverse consequences of school exclusion and justice-system involvement, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive discipline, and developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climates.

(d) The board may expel a student for a definite period of time not to exceed 2 calendar years, as determined on a case by case basis. A student who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school-sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year:

(1) A firearm. For the purposes of this Section, "firearm" means any gun, rifle, shotgun, weapon as defined by Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, firearm as defined in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act, or firearm as defined in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 2012. The expulsion period under this subdivision (1) may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

(2) A knife, brass knuckles or other knuckle weapon regardless of its composition, a billy club, or any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including "look alike" of any firearm as defined in

subdivision (1) of this subsection (d). The expulsion requirement under this subdivision (2) may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

Expulsion or suspension shall be construed in a manner consistent with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A student who is subject to suspension or expulsion as provided in this Section may be eligible for a transfer to an alternative school program in accordance with Article 13A of the School Code. ~~The provisions of this subsection (d) apply in all school districts, including special charter districts and districts organized under Article 34.~~

(d-5) The board may suspend or by regulation authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students of any school to suspend a student for a period not to exceed 10 school days or may expel a student for a definite period of time not to exceed 2 calendar years, as determined on a case by case basis, if (i) that student has been determined to have made an explicit threat on an Internet website against a school employee, a student, or any school-related personnel, (ii) the Internet website through which the threat was made is a site that was accessible within the school at the time the threat was made or was available to third parties who worked or studied within the school grounds at the time the threat was made, and (iii) the threat could be reasonably interpreted as threatening to the

safety and security of the threatened individual because of his or her duties or employment status or status as a student inside the school. ~~The provisions of this subsection (d-5) apply in all school districts, including special charter districts and districts organized under Article 34 of this Code.~~

(e) To maintain order and security in the schools, school authorities may inspect and search places and areas such as lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school, as well as personal effects left in those places and areas by students, without notice to or the consent of the student, and without a search warrant. As a matter of public policy, the General Assembly finds that students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in these places and areas or in their personal effects left in these places and areas. School authorities may request the assistance of law enforcement officials for the purpose of conducting inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or materials, including searches conducted through the use of specially trained dogs. If a search conducted in accordance with this Section produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law, local ordinance, or the school's policies or rules, such evidence may be seized by school authorities, and

disciplinary action may be taken. School authorities may also turn over such evidence to law enforcement authorities. ~~The provisions of this subsection (c) apply in all school districts, including special charter districts and districts organized under Article 34.~~

(f) Suspension or expulsion may include suspension or expulsion from school and all school activities and a prohibition from being present on school grounds.

(g) A school district may adopt a policy providing that if a student is suspended or expelled for any reason from any public or private school in this or any other state, the student must complete the entire term of the suspension or expulsion in an alternative school program under Article 13A of this Code or an alternative learning opportunities program under Article 13B of this Code before being admitted into the school district if there is no threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program. ~~This subsection (g) applies to all school districts, including special charter districts and districts organized under Article 34 of this Code.~~

(h) School officials shall not advise or encourage students to drop out voluntarily due to behavioral or academic difficulties.

(i) A student may not be issued a monetary fine or fee as a disciplinary consequence, though this shall not preclude requiring a student to provide restitution for lost, stolen, or

damaged property.

(j) Subsections (a) through (i) of this Section shall apply to elementary and secondary schools, charter schools, special charter districts, and school districts organized under Article 34 of this Code.

(Source: P.A. 96-633, eff. 8-24-09; 96-998, eff. 7-2-10; 97-340, eff. 1-1-12; 97-495, eff. 1-1-12; 97-813, eff. 7-13-12; 97-1150, eff. 1-25-13.)

(105 ILCS 5/27A-5)

Sec. 27A-5. Charter school; legal entity; requirements.

(a) A charter school shall be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, non-home based, and non-profit school. A charter school shall be organized and operated as a nonprofit corporation or other discrete, legal, nonprofit entity authorized under the laws of the State of Illinois.

(b) A charter school may be established under this Article by creating a new school or by converting an existing public school or attendance center to charter school status. Beginning on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly, in all new applications to establish a charter school in a city having a population exceeding 500,000, operation of the charter school shall be limited to one campus. The changes made to this Section by this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly do not apply to charter schools existing or approved on or before the effective date of this amendatory



Act.

(b-5) In this subsection (b-5), "virtual-schooling" means a cyber school where students engage in online curriculum and instruction via the Internet and electronic communication with their teachers at remote locations and with students participating at different times.

From April 1, 2013 through December 31, 2016, there is a moratorium on the establishment of charter schools with virtual-schooling components in school districts other than a school district organized under Article 34 of this Code. This moratorium does not apply to a charter school with virtual-schooling components existing or approved prior to April 1, 2013 or to the renewal of the charter of a charter school with virtual-schooling components already approved prior to April 1, 2013.

On or before March 1, 2014, the Commission shall submit to the General Assembly a report on the effect of virtual-schooling, including without limitation the effect on student performance, the costs associated with virtual-schooling, and issues with oversight. The report shall include policy recommendations for virtual-schooling.

(c) A charter school shall be administered and governed by its board of directors or other governing body in the manner provided in its charter. The governing body of a charter school shall be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act.

(d) A charter school shall comply with all applicable health and safety requirements applicable to public schools under the laws of the State of Illinois.

(e) Except as otherwise provided in the School Code, a charter school shall not charge tuition; provided that a charter school may charge reasonable fees for textbooks, instructional materials, and student activities.

(f) A charter school shall be responsible for the management and operation of its fiscal affairs including, but not limited to, the preparation of its budget. An audit of each charter school's finances shall be conducted annually by an outside, independent contractor retained by the charter school. To ensure financial accountability for the use of public funds, on or before December 1 of every year of operation, each charter school shall submit to its authorizer and the State Board a copy of its audit and a copy of the Form 990 the charter school filed that year with the federal Internal Revenue Service. In addition, if deemed necessary for proper financial oversight of the charter school, an authorizer may require quarterly financial statements from each charter school.

(g) A charter school shall comply with all provisions of this Article; the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act; all federal and State laws and rules applicable to public schools that pertain to special education and the instruction of English language learners, referred to in this Code as

"children of limited English-speaking ability"; and its charter. A charter school is exempt from all other State laws and regulations in this Code governing public schools and local school board policies, except the following:

(1) Sections 10-21.9 and 34-18.5 of this Code regarding criminal history records checks and checks of the Statewide Sex Offender Database and Statewide Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Database of applicants for employment;

(2) Sections 10-20.14, 10-22.6, 24-24, 34-19, and 34-84a ~~34-84A~~ of this Code regarding discipline of students;

(3) the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act;

(4) Section 108.75 of the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of 1986 regarding indemnification of officers, directors, employees, and agents;

(5) the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act;

(6) the Illinois School Student Records Act;

(7) Section 10-17a of this Code regarding school report cards;

(8) the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act;  
~~and~~

(9) Section 27-23.7 of this Code regarding bullying prevention; and ~~and~~

(10) ~~(9)~~ Section 2-3.162 ~~2-3.160~~ of this ~~the School~~

Code regarding student discipline reporting.

The change made by Public Act 96-104 to this subsection (g) is declaratory of existing law.

(h) A charter school may negotiate and contract with a school district, the governing body of a State college or university or public community college, or any other public or for-profit or nonprofit private entity for: (i) the use of a school building and grounds or any other real property or facilities that the charter school desires to use or convert for use as a charter school site, (ii) the operation and maintenance thereof, and (iii) the provision of any service, activity, or undertaking that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the terms of its charter. However, a charter school that is established on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly and that operates in a city having a population exceeding 500,000 may not contract with a for-profit entity to manage or operate the school during the period that commences on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly and concludes at the end of the 2004-2005 school year. Except as provided in subsection (i) of this Section, a school district may charge a charter school reasonable rent for the use of the district's buildings, grounds, and facilities. Any services for which a charter school contracts with a school district shall be provided by the district at cost. Any services for which a charter school

contracts with a local school board or with the governing body of a State college or university or public community college shall be provided by the public entity at cost.

(i) In no event shall a charter school that is established by converting an existing school or attendance center to charter school status be required to pay rent for space that is deemed available, as negotiated and provided in the charter agreement, in school district facilities. However, all other costs for the operation and maintenance of school district facilities that are used by the charter school shall be subject to negotiation between the charter school and the local school board and shall be set forth in the charter.

(j) A charter school may limit student enrollment by age or grade level.

(k) If the charter school is approved by the Commission, then the Commission charter school is its own local education agency.

(Source: P.A. 97-152, eff. 7-20-11; 97-154, eff. 1-1-12; 97-813, eff. 7-13-12; 98-16, eff. 5-24-13; 98-639, eff. 6-9-14; 98-669, eff. 6-26-14; 98-739, eff. 7-16-14; 98-783, eff. 1-1-15; 98-1059, eff. 8-26-14; 98-1102, eff. 8-26-14; revised 10-14-14.)

(105 ILCS 5/34-19) (from Ch. 122, par. 34-19)

Sec. 34-19. By-laws, rules and regulations; business transacted at regular meetings; voting; records. The board

shall, subject to the limitations in this Article, establish by-laws, rules and regulations, which shall have the force of ordinances, for the proper maintenance of a uniform system of discipline for both employees and pupils, and for the entire management of the schools, and may fix the school age of pupils, the minimum of which in kindergartens shall not be under 4 years, except that, based upon an assessment of the child's readiness, children who have attended a non-public preschool and continued their education at that school through kindergarten, were taught in kindergarten by an appropriately certified teacher, and will attain the age of 6 years on or before December 31 of the year of the 2009-2010 school term and each school term thereafter may attend first grade upon commencement of such term, and in grade schools shall not be under 6 years. It may expel, suspend or, subject to the limitations of all policies established or adopted under Section 10-22.6 or 14-8.05, otherwise discipline any pupil found guilty of gross disobedience, misconduct, or other violation of the by-laws, rules, and regulations, including gross disobedience or misconduct perpetuated by electronic means. An expelled pupil may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this Code. A pupil must not be denied transfer because of the expulsion, except in cases in which such transfer is deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program. A pupil who is suspended in excess of

20 school days may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this Code. A pupil must not be denied transfer because of the suspension, except in cases in which such transfer is deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program. The bylaws, rules and regulations of the board shall be enacted, money shall be appropriated or expended, salaries shall be fixed or changed, and textbooks, electronic textbooks, and courses of instruction shall be adopted or changed only at the regular meetings of the board and by a vote of a majority of the full membership of the board; provided that notwithstanding any other provision of this Article or the School Code, neither the board or any local school council may purchase any textbook for use in any public school of the district from any textbook publisher that fails to furnish any computer diskettes as required under Section 28-21. Funds appropriated for textbook purchases must be available for electronic textbook purchases and the technological equipment necessary to gain access to and use electronic textbooks at the local school council's discretion. The board shall be further encouraged to provide opportunities for public hearing and testimony before the adoption of bylaws, rules and regulations. Upon all propositions requiring for their adoption at least a majority of all the members of the board the yeas and nays shall be taken and reported. The by-laws, rules and regulations of the board shall not be

repealed, amended or added to, except by a vote of 2/3 of the full membership of the board. The board shall keep a record of all its proceedings. Such records and all by-laws, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, may be proved by a copy thereof certified to be such by the secretary of the board, but if they are printed in book or pamphlet form which are purported to be published by authority of the board they need not be otherwise published and the book or pamphlet shall be received as evidence, without further proof, of the records, by-laws, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, as of the dates thereof as shown in such book or pamphlet, in all courts and places where judicial proceedings are had.

Notwithstanding any other provision in this Article or in the School Code, the board may delegate to the general superintendent or to the attorney the authorities granted to the board in the School Code, provided such delegation and appropriate oversight procedures are made pursuant to board by-laws, rules and regulations, adopted as herein provided, except that the board may not delegate its authorities and responsibilities regarding (1) budget approval obligations; (2) rule-making functions; (3) desegregation obligations; (4) real estate acquisition, sale or lease in excess of 10 years as provided in Section 34-21; (5) the levy of taxes; or (6) any mandates imposed upon the board by "An Act in relation to school reform in cities over 500,000, amending Acts herein named", approved December 12, 1988 (P.A. 85-1418).



Public Act 099-0456

SB0100 Enrolled

LRB099 04290 NHT 24315 b

(Source: P.A. 96-864, eff. 1-21-10; 96-1403, eff. 7-29-10;  
97-340, eff. 1-1-12; 97-495, eff. 1-1-12; 97-813, eff.  
7-13-12.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect September  
15, 2016.

**Appendix J: Illinois Coalition for the Education of At-risk Youth  
(ICEARY) Practitioner Hearing Documents**



**Attendance Commission**  
Notice of Public Hearing

**Attendance Commission: Notice of Public Hearing**

**Date:** March 3, 2016

**Time:** 3:30 p.m.

**Host:** Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth

**Venue:** Marriott Bloomington-Normal Conference Center  
Redbird Rooms C and D  
201 Broadway Avenue  
Normal, Illinois 61761

**Agenda:**

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
- II. Invitation for Attendees to Address the Commission/Public Comment
- III. Closing Remarks and Next Steps
- IV. Adjourn

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**About the Attendance Commission**

Pursuant to P.A. 99-432, the Attendance Commission is created to study chronic absenteeism in this State and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission shall have the following duties:

1. Identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:
  - a) a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;
  - b) mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this State in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;
  - c) mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this State, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;
  - d) best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and
  - e) new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.
2. Hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance;
3. Submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than December 15 of each year through December 15, 2020.



## Attendance Commission Public Hearing Comments

The work and of the Attendance Commission can be successful only through significant and intentional engagement with parents, educators, community members and others within the school community. Your feedback on these important issues is critical to ensure that State and local policymakers are fully informed and that future policy reflects the specific needs of all students.

Please consider addressing the questions below in public comment at this public hearing. You may also respond to the questions in writing and submit this document to a Commission member at the conclusion of the meeting. Alternately, feel free to email your thoughts on these questions to [attendancecommission@isbe.net](mailto:attendancecommission@isbe.net). We thank you for your support and guidance.

- 
1. What success stories have you seen with respect to attendance, truancy prevention, and student/family engagement in your districts?
    - A. What local, district or community factors led to these success stories?
    - B. How does current State law empower districts to make gains in attendance?
  2. What barriers do families, students and districts encounter in student enrollment and retention?
    - A. What local, district or community factors present barriers to attendance?
    - B. How does current State law present barriers to attendance?
  3. How have you approached attendance issues with special student populations (highly mobile, homeless, students with documented disabilities, students in the criminal justice system, students with family demands/obligations, etc.)?
  4. What else would you like the Commission to consider in moving its work forward related to student attendance?

## **Appendix K: St. Sabina Public Hearing Documents**

# Illinois Attendance Commission



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**Sept. 13, 2016 • 6 - 7 p.m.**

**Doors open at 5:45 p.m. • Hearing begins at 6 p.m.**

**St. Sabina Church - McMahon Hall  
1210 West 78th Place, Chicago**

*Hearing objective: To receive input from the general public on ways to address chronic absenteeism and improve attendance throughout the state from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.*



*Host*

**Senator Jacqueline Y. Collins**

[senatorjacquelinecollins.com](http://senatorjacquelinecollins.com)

*Co-Host*

**Representative Linda Chapa LaVia**



**ADA Accommodations Available** (*Seating begins at 5:30*)

**Hablamos Español**



## **Attendance Commission**

### **Notice of Public Hearing and Agenda**

#### **Attendance Commission: Notice of Public Hearing**

**Date:** September 13, 2016

**Time:** 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**Hosts:** The Honorable Jaqueline Collins, State Senator, 16<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Linda Chapa Lavia, State Representative, 83<sup>rd</sup> District

**Venue:** St. Sabina Church- McMahon Hall  
1210 W. 78<sup>th</sup> Place  
Chicago, Illinois 60620

**Goal:** The Attendance Commission seeks to receive input from the general public about ways to address chronic absenteeism and improve attendance throughout Illinois from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **Agenda**

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - II. Invitation for Attendees to Address the Commission/Public Comment
  - III. Closing Remarks and Next Steps
  - IV. Adjourn
- 

#### **About the Attendance Commission**

Created by Public Act 099-0432, the Illinois Attendance Commission was created within the State Board of Education to study the issue of chronic absenteeism in this State and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission has the following duties:

- A. Identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:
  1. a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;
  2. mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this State in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;
  3. mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this State, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;
  4. best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and
  5. new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.
- B. Hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance;
- C. Submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than December 15 of each year through December 15, 2020.

**Appendix L: Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Association of School Business Officials Practitioner Hearing Documents**





## **Attendance Commission**

### **Notice of Public Hearing and Agenda**

#### **Attendance Commission: Notice of Public Hearing**

**Date:** November 18, 2016

**Time:** 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Host:** IASB – IASA – IASBO Annual Conference

**Address:** Sheraton Grand Chicago  
Room: Michigan A/B, Level II  
301 East North Water Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

**Goal:** The Attendance Commission seeks to gather information about attendance-related experiences, challenges, and solutions from the state's educational administrators.

#### **Agenda**

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - II. Invitation for Attendees to Address the Commission/Public Comment
  - III. Closing Remarks and Next Steps
  - IV. Adjourn
- 

#### **About the Attendance Commission**

Created by Public Act 099-0432, the Illinois Attendance Commission was created within the State Board of Education to study the issue of chronic absenteeism in this State and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission has the following duties:

- A. Identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:
  - 1. a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;
  - 2. mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this State in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;
  - 3. mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this State, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;
  - 4. best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and
  - 5. new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.
- B. Hold hearings on a periodic basis to receive testimony from the public regarding attendance;
- C. Submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education no later than December 15 of each year through December 15, 2020.



## Attendance Commission Public Hearing Comments

The work and of the Attendance Commission can be successful only through significant and intentional engagement with parents, educators, community members and others within the school community. Your feedback on these important issues is critical to ensure that State and local policymakers are fully informed and that future policy reflects the specific needs of all students.

Please consider addressing the questions below in public comment at this public hearing. You may also respond to the questions in writing and submit this document to a Commission member at the conclusion of the meeting. We thank you for your support and guidance.

- 
1. What strategies are currently implemented in your district that address attendance and prevent chronic absenteeism (unexcused, excused, suspensions) total number of days of non-attendance?
  2. What success stories have you seen with respect to attendance, truancy prevention, and student/family engagement in your districts?
    - A. What local, district or community factors led to these success stories?
    - B. How does current state law empower districts to make gains in attendance?
  3. What barriers do families, students and districts encounter in student enrollment and retention?
    - A. What local, district or community factors present barriers to attendance?
    - B. How does current state law present barriers to attendance?
  4. How have you approached attendance issues with special student populations (highly mobile, homeless, students with documented disabilities, students in the criminal justice system, students with family demands/obligations, etc.)?
  5. How are you working with cross-sector community stakeholders in your district?
  6. What else would you like the Commission to consider in moving its work forward related to student attendance?
-

**Appendix M: College Changes Everything (CCE) Event:  
Continuing the Conversation: A Learning Community Focused on  
Student College and Career Documents**



## ***College Changes Everything . . . Continuing the Conversation***

A Learning Community Focused on Student College and  
Career Readiness and Success

Our Subject: The Importance and Impact of Attendance

November 3, 2016 • ISAC, Deerfield, IL

### **Agenda**

8:30 - 9 am Registration Check-In & Networking Conversations

9 - 9:15 am Welcome

9:15 - 9:30 am Illinois Attendance Commission Overview

9:30 - 9:45 am Feedback Protocol Exercise Introduction & Scope

9:45 - 10 am Individual Feedback Protocol Time

10 - 10:30 am Small Group Feedback Protocol Time

10:30 - 10:45 Break

10:45 - 11:30 am Small Group Feedback Share Out

11:30 - 12 pm Wrap-up & Next Steps

12 pm Adjourn





## ***College Changes Everything . . . Continuing the Conversation***

### **Our Subject: The Importance and Impact of Attendance**

November 3, 2016 • ISAC, Deerfield, IL

### **Illinois Attendance Commission Overview**

The work of the Illinois Attendance Commission (IAC) can be successful only through significant and intentional engagement with parents, educators, community members and others within the school community. Your feedback on these important issues is critical to ensure that State and local policymakers are fully informed and that future policy reflects the specific needs of all students. The feedback offered on this protocol will help the IAC address these outcomes as required by statute:

The Commission has the following duties:

1. Identify strategies, mechanisms, and approaches to help parents, educators, principals, superintendents, and the State Board of Education address and prevent chronic absenteeism and shall recommend to the General Assembly and State Board of Education:
  - a standard for attendance and chronic absenteeism, defining attendance as a calculation of standard clock hours in a day that equal a full day based on instructional minutes for both a half day and a full day per learning environment;
  - mechanisms to improve data systems to monitor and track chronic absenteeism across this State in a way that identifies trends from prekindergarten through grade 12 and allows the identification of students who need individualized chronic absenteeism prevention plans;
  - mechanisms for reporting and accountability for schools and districts across this State, including creating multiple measure indexes for reporting;
  - best practices for utilizing attendance and chronic absenteeism data to create multi-tiered systems of support and prevention that will result in students being ready for college and career; and
  - new initiatives and responses to ongoing challenges presented by chronic absenteeism.



## Feedback Protocol Process

- Step 1.** On your own please review and answer the questions below. The forms will be collected. You can include your name and contact information on the form or complete the form anonymously.
- Step 2.** In your small group discuss your thoughts to the questions. In so doing, your group will discover what if anything “bubbles up” and becomes a consensus for further discussion with the whole group. Please choose a **scribe** and a **spokesperson** for your group. The large post-its will be kept for IAC and ISAC debriefing and data collection purposes.
- Step 3.** Each group will share their thoughts with the whole group. In so doing the larger body will discover what if anything “bubbles up” and becomes a priority to share with the Illinois Attendance Commission for the upcoming report to the General Assembly, ISAC and the College Changes Everything Conference 2017 committee, and other interested stakeholders.

## Feedback Protocol Questions

1. What success stories have you seen or heard of with respect to attendance, truancy prevention, and student/family engagement?
  - A. What local, district or community factors led to these success stories?
  - B. How does current state law empower districts to make gains in attendance?
2. What barriers do families, students, and districts encounter in student enrollment and retention?
  - A. What local, district or community factors present barriers to attendance?
  - B. How does current state law present barriers to attendance?
3. How have you approached attendance/attending issues with special student populations (highly mobile, homeless, students with documented disabilities, students in the criminal justice system, students with family demands/obligations, etc.)?
4. What else would you like the Commission to consider in moving its work forward related to student attendance?





## ***College Changes Everything . . . Continuing the Conversation***

### **Our Subject: The Importance and Impact of Attendance**

November 3, 2016 • ISAC, Deerfield, IL

### **Wrap-Up & Next Steps**

Please spread the word about the Illinois Attendance Commission (IAC) and keep up with the work of the IAC by attending a meeting (you can participate via phone, not just in person), talking with your colleagues, family members, business partners and community partners including those in the Faith Based Community.

Stay connected:

- Illinois Attendance Commission website: <http://www.isbe.net/AC/default.htm>
- Illinois Attendance Commission e-mail address: [attendancecommission@isbe.net](mailto:attendancecommission@isbe.net)

In addition please complete the online survey. The survey results from the will be included in the upcoming report to the General Assembly. This survey monkey was created based off of research gathered at a national level for the U.S. Department of Education's Summit on Absenteeism held in June 2016 in Washington D.C.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MFX866M>



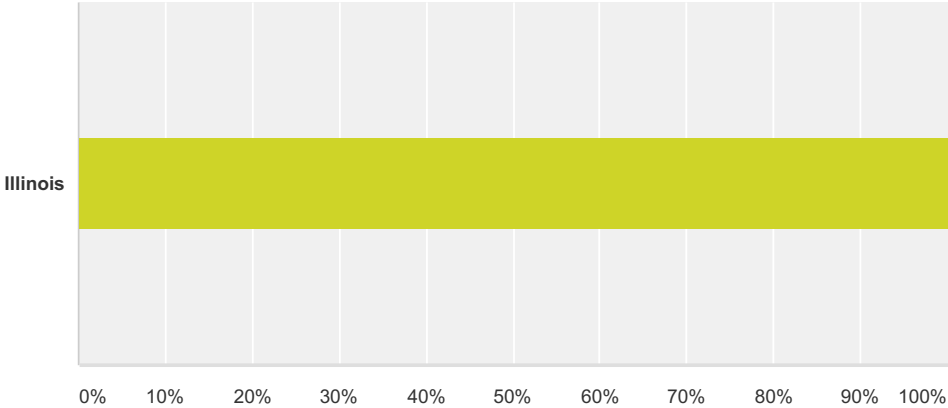
## **Appendix N: Attendance Works Survey Results**



**Q1 Attendance Works, in support of the Every Student Every Day initiative, has made available its state self-assessment of attendance policy and practice to equip state teams attending the Every Student Every Day National Conference with information to maximize their participation and facilitate peer learning. State self-assessment results will be aggregated into a composite score for each survey question, compiled by state and made available to the state teams. We encourage your team to look at the results to identify common priorities for action, learn from differences in perspectives, and determine how you can leverage the learning opportunity presented by June Summit. Actionable data, positive messaging, capacity building, shared accountability, and strategic partnerships all play an integral role in reducing chronic absence in your state. While assessing your state across all five ingredients, think about the actions your state takes on its own, as well as whether you are making strategic use of community partnerships and agency resources to advance your strategies. There are a total of twenty policy and practice questions and the self-assessment shouldn't take more than 15 - 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.\*1. Please choose your state.**

Answered: 28 Skipped: 2

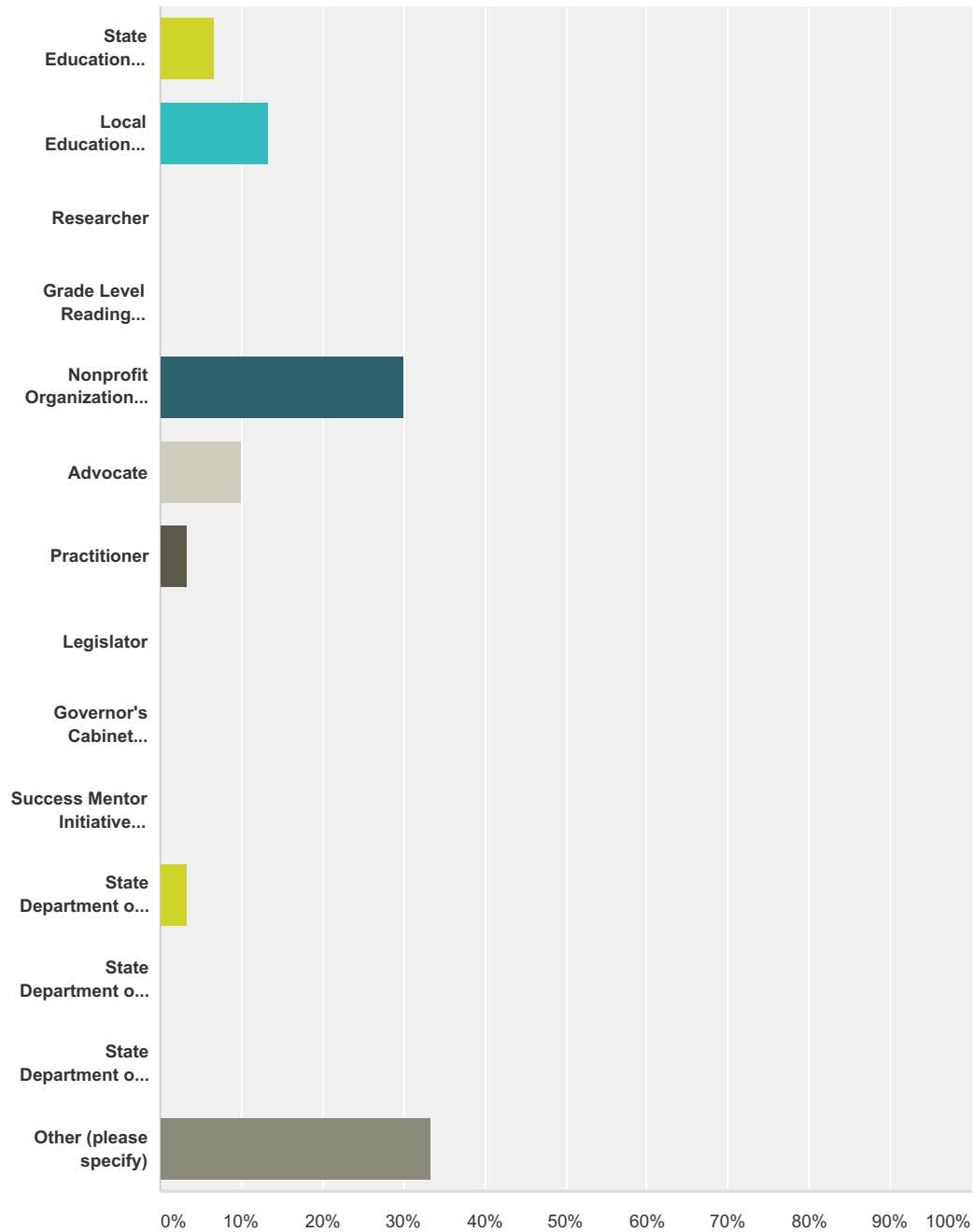
Attendance Works Survey



Answer Choices	Responses
Illinois	100.00%28
Total	28

## Q2 How would you describe your role?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



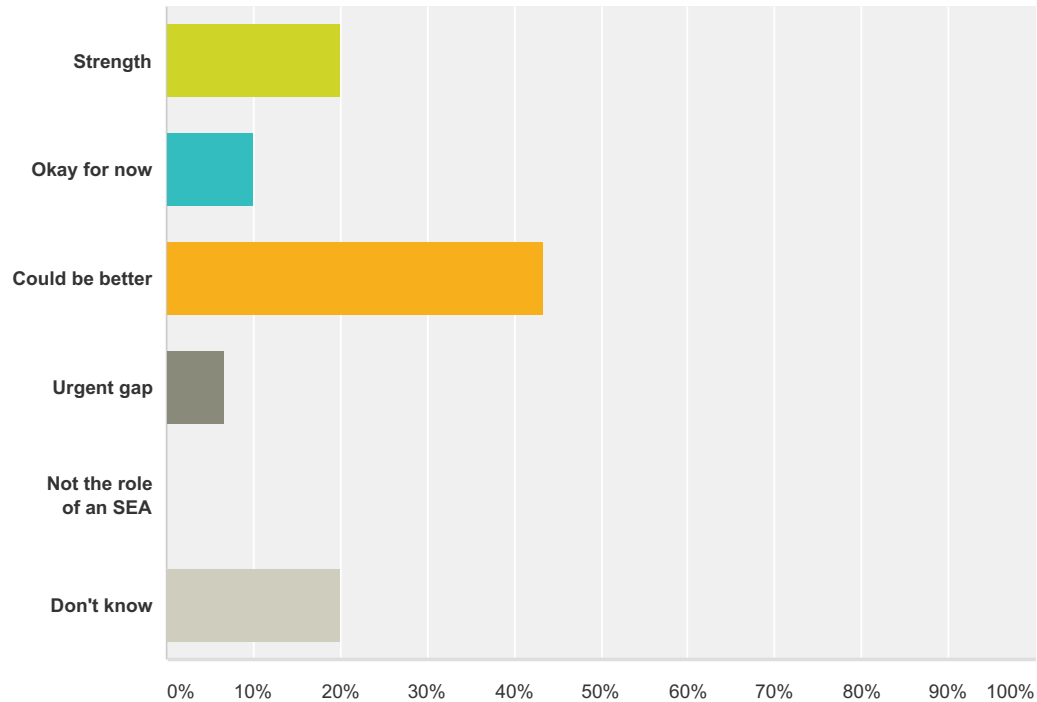
Answer Choices	Responses	
State Education Agency (SEA) Representative	6.67%	2
Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative	13.33%	4
Researcher	0.00%	0
Grade Level Reading Campaign Lead or Liaison	0.00%	0
Nonprofit Organization Leadership	30.00%	9

## Attendance Works Survey

Advocate	10.00%	3
Practitioner	3.33%	1
Legislator	0.00%	0
Governor's Cabinet (Children and Families Representative)	0.00%	0
Success Mentor Initiative District Captain or Representative	0.00%	0
State Department of Public Health/Human Services Representative	3.33%	1
State Department of Juvenile Justice Representative	0.00%	0
State Department of Public Housing Representative	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	33.33%	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q3 Our state requires districts to maintain and submit accurate attendance data which is included in our state longitudinal student data base.**

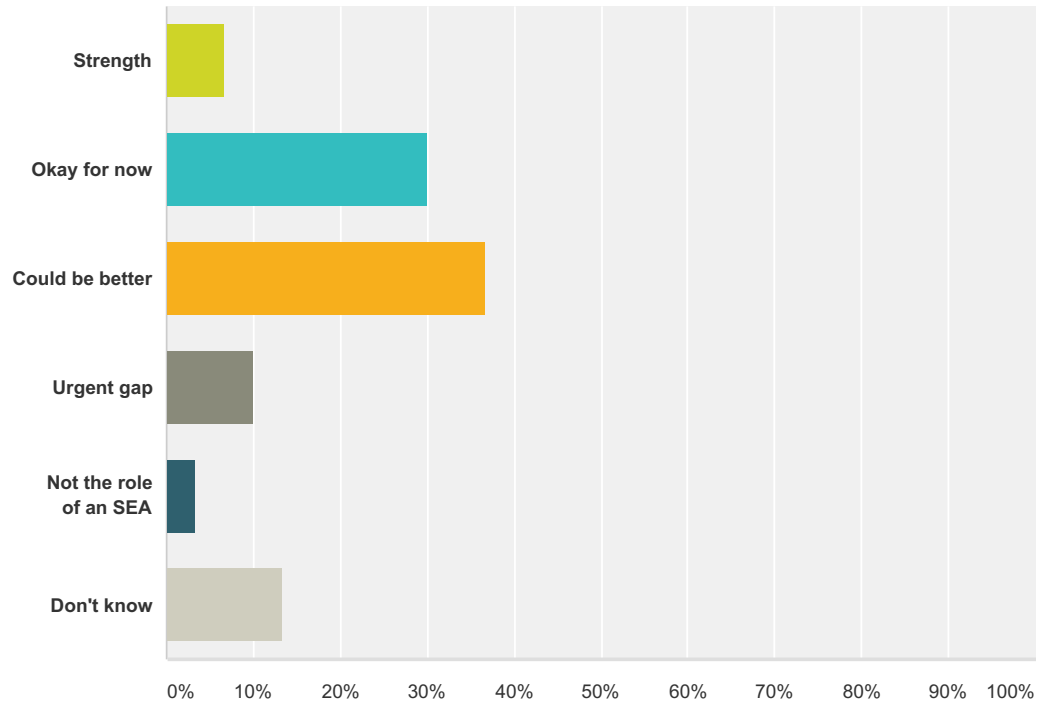
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	20.00%	6
Okay for now	10.00%	3
Could be better	43.33%	13
Urgent gap	6.67%	2
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	20.00%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q4 Our state has a standard definition of chronic absence. (ideally missing 10% or more of school for any reason including excused and unexcused absences along with suspension).**

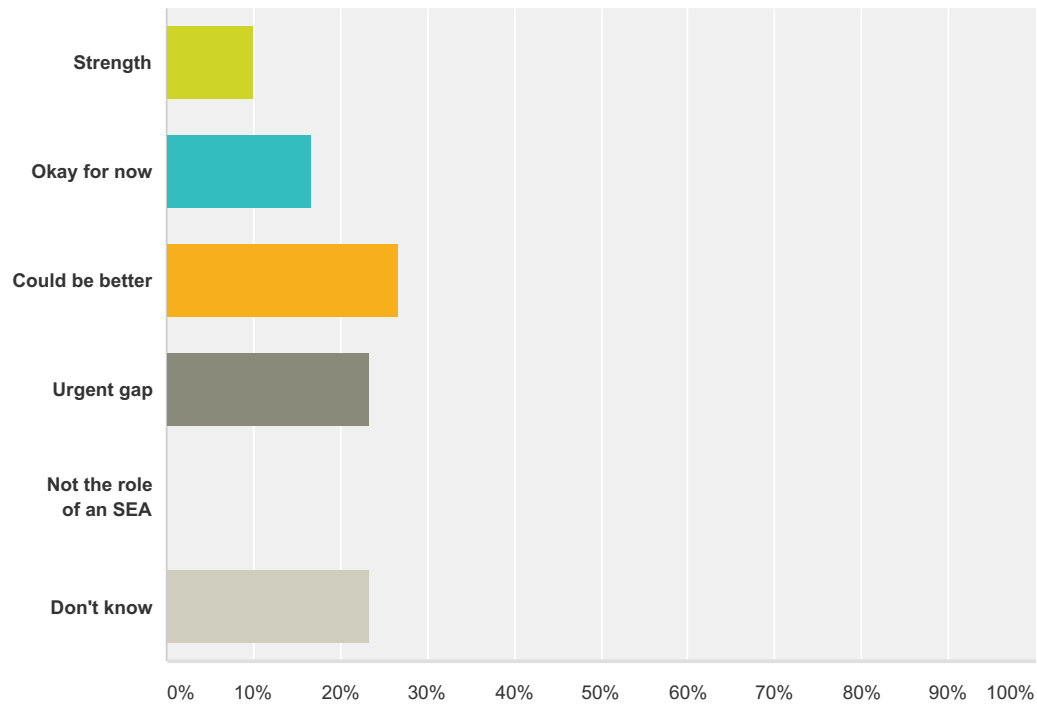
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Strength	6.67% 2
Okay for now	30.00% 9
Could be better	36.67% 11
Urgent gap	10.00% 3
Not the role of an SEA	3.33% 1
Don't know	13.33% 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

**Q5 LEAs can produce and share real time reports on rates of chronic absence (along with other measures of student attendance including ADA, truancy, and satisfactory attendance) by school, grade, and student sub-population.**

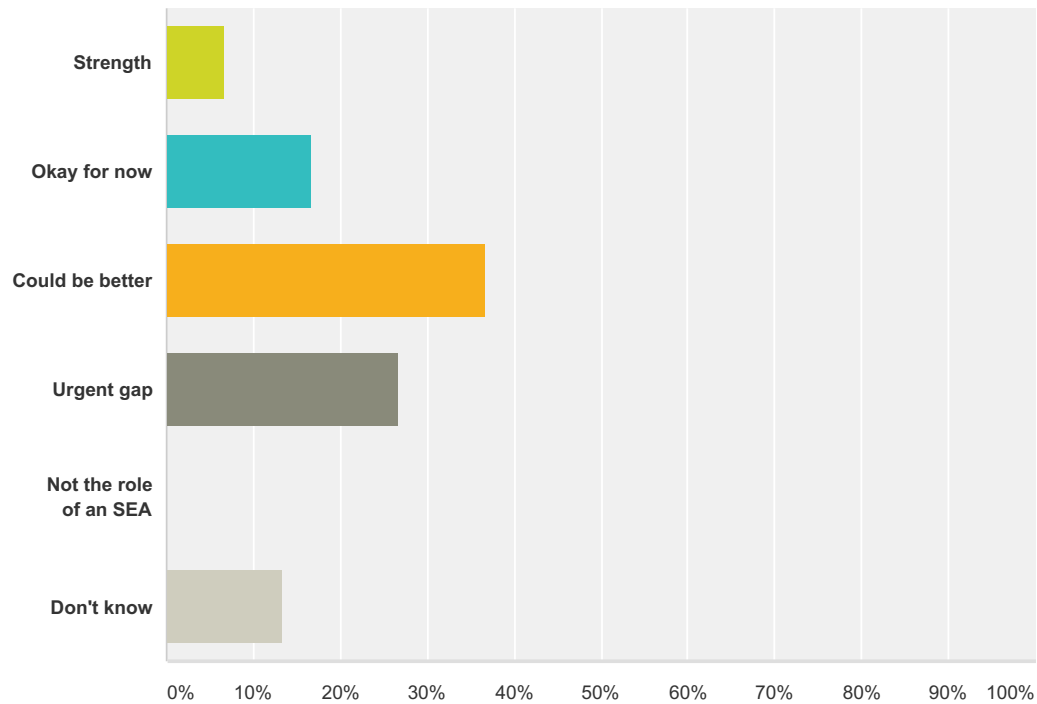
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	10.00%	3
Okay for now	16.67%	5
Could be better	26.67%	8
Urgent gap	23.33%	7
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	23.33%	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q6 LEAs have early warning systems in place that ensure school staff is alerted as soon as a student becomes academically at-risk, including when the risk is due to poor attendance even when they enroll from another district.**

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

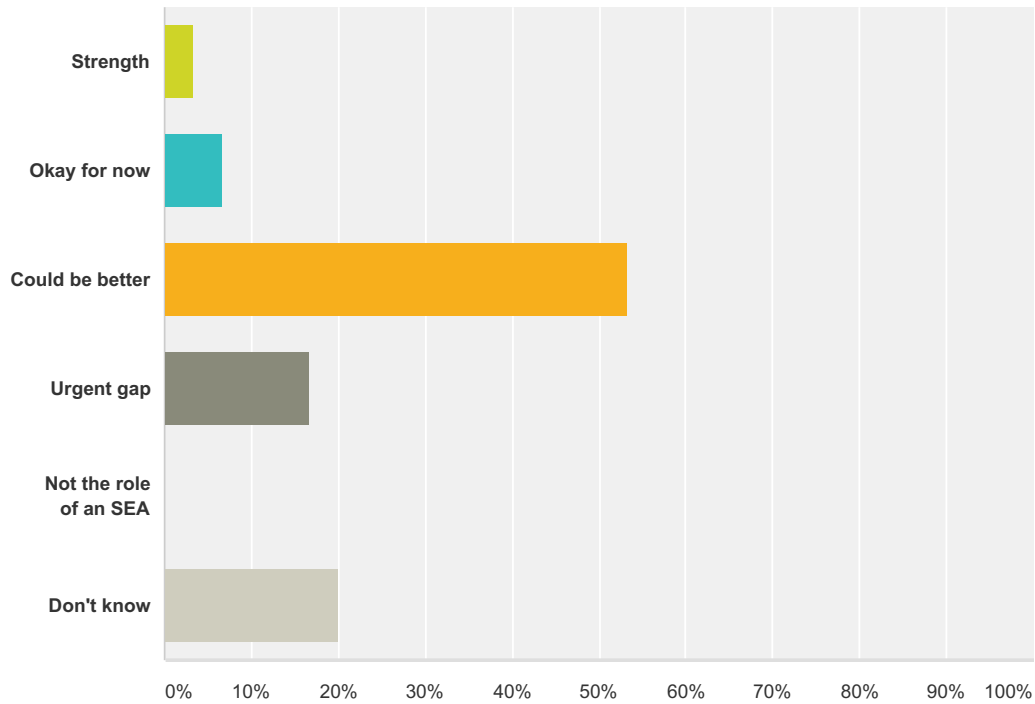


Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	6.67%	2
Okay for now	16.67%	5
Could be better	36.67%	11
Urgent gap	26.67%	8
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	13.33%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>



**Q7 The state superintendent consistently and clearly promotes public awareness about chronic absence, why it matters, and the need for a comprehensive approach in communications with parents and the general public, as well as other key stakeholders.**

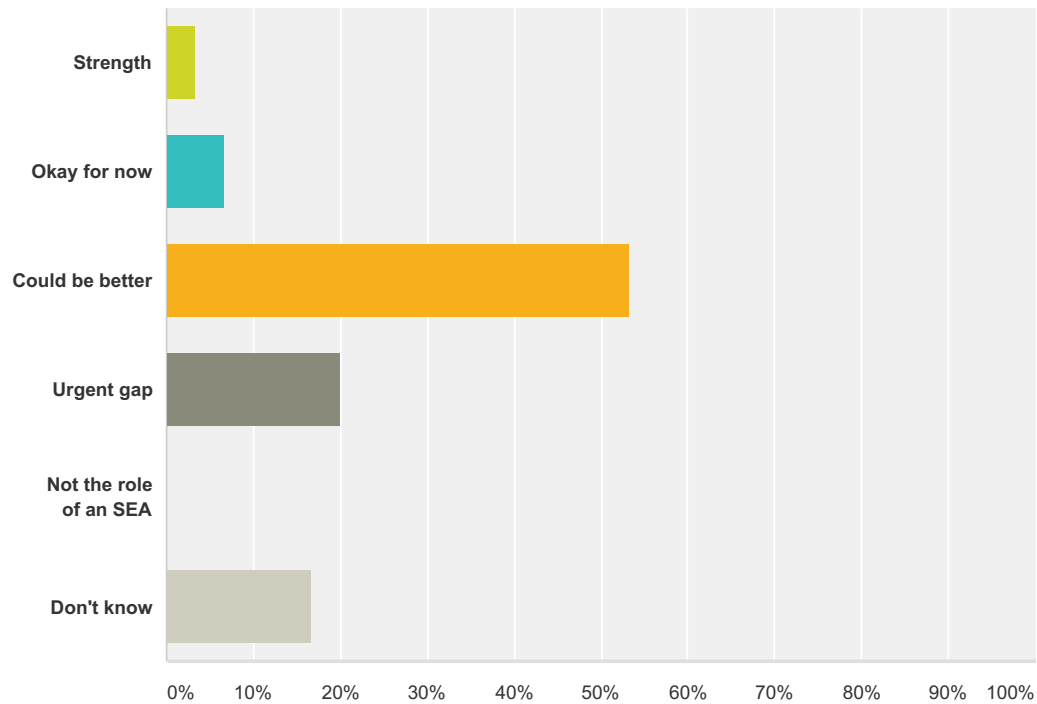
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	3.33%	1
Okay for now	6.67%	2
Could be better	53.33%	16
Urgent gap	16.67%	5
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	20.00%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q8 The state leverages its state investment in high quality early education and after school and summer learning programming to motivate daily attendance and ensures attention to attendance is integrated into the program design.**

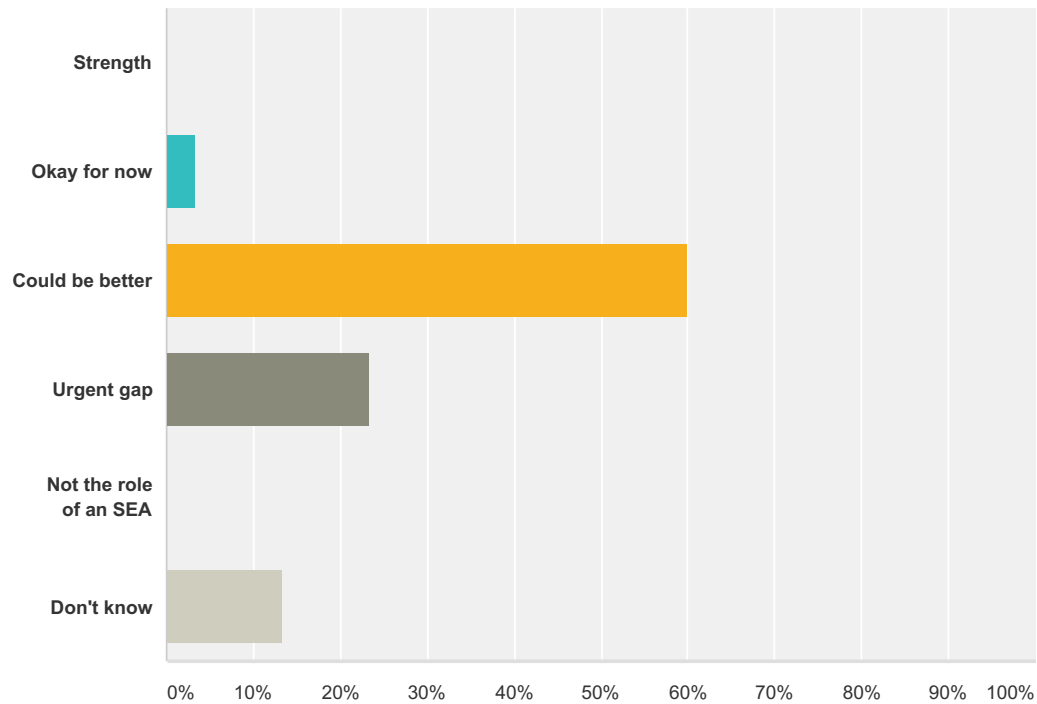
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	3.33%	1
Okay for now	6.67%	2
Could be better	53.33%	16
Urgent gap	20.00%	6
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	16.67%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q9 Our state policy supports investments in positive engagement by prioritizing distribution of resources from other public agencies to help schools and school districts with high rates of chronic absence reach out to students and families.**

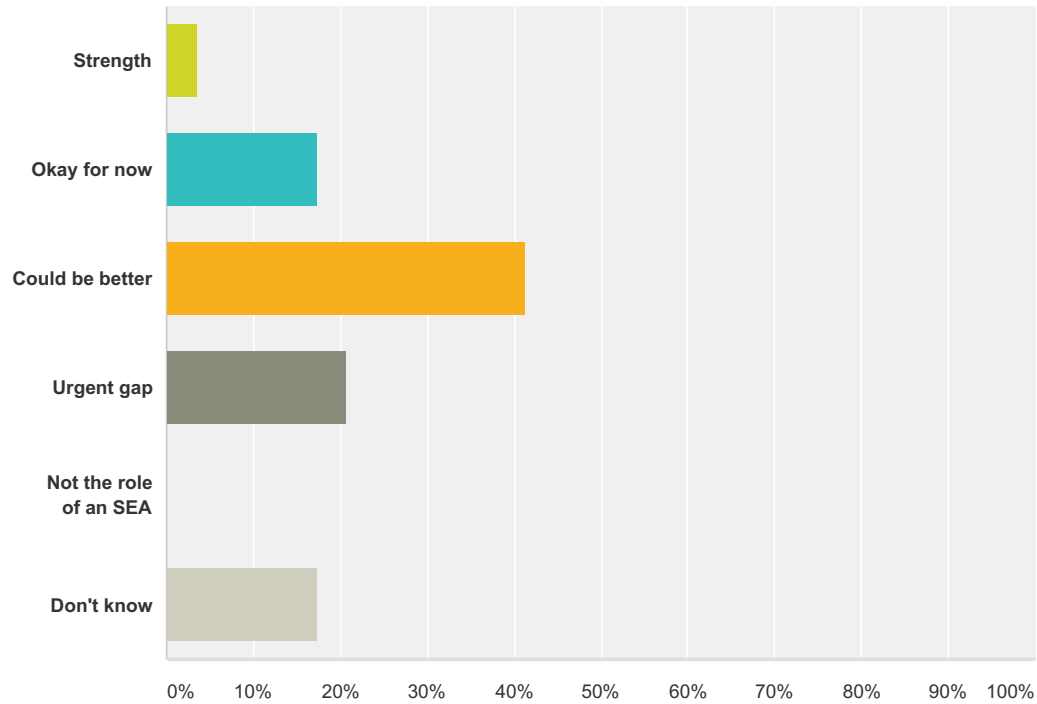
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Strength	0.00% 0
Okay for now	3.33% 1
Could be better	60.00% 18
Urgent gap	23.33% 7
Not the role of an SEA	0.00% 0
Don't know	13.33% 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

**Q10 The state recognizes bright spot schools, community partners, and LEAs that achieve measurable reductions in chronic absence and uses these examples to inspire action and inform best practice.**

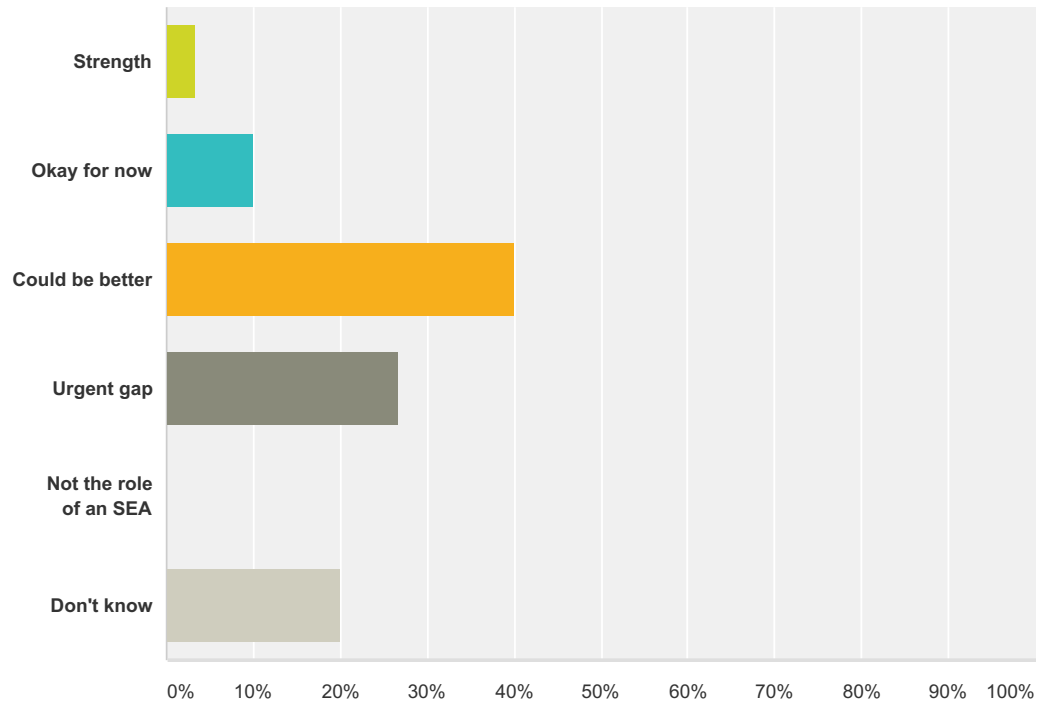
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	3.45%	1
Okay for now	17.24%	5
Could be better	41.38%	12
Urgent gap	20.69%	6
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	17.24%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>

**Q11 Our state has a widely disseminated, comprehensive attendance policy and practice manual that clearly lays out why attendance matters, describes what LEAs and schools can do to build a positive culture of attendance, and outlines strategies for reducing chronic absence.**

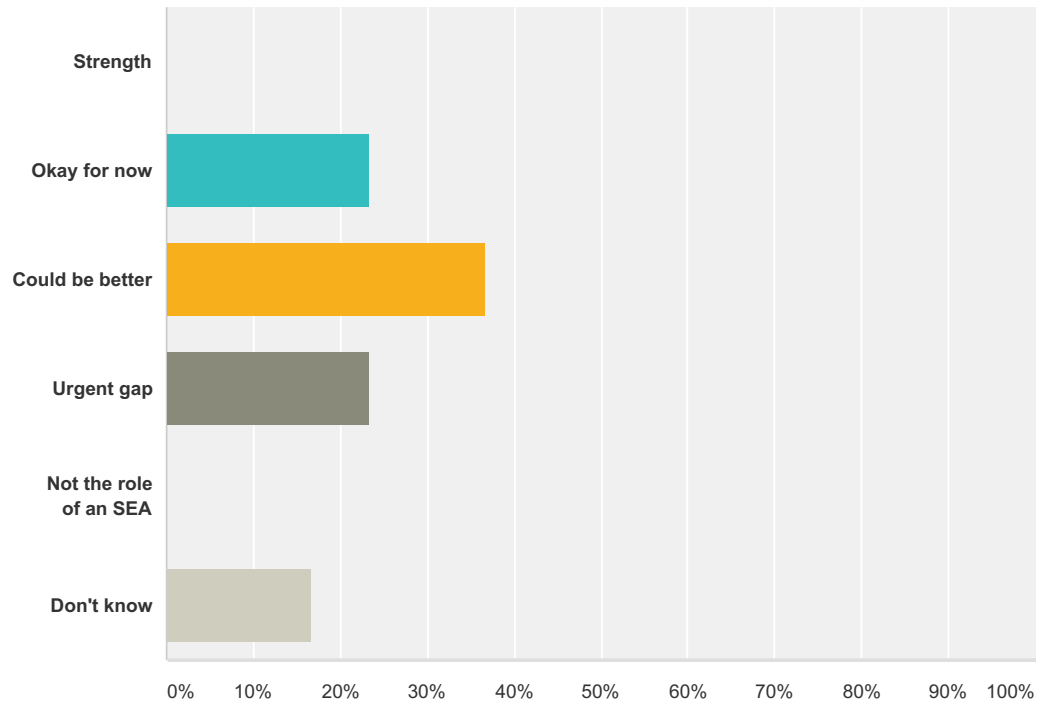
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	3.33%	1
Okay for now	10.00%	3
Could be better	40.00%	12
Urgent gap	26.67%	8
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	20.00%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q12 LEAs across the state have the capacity to interpret chronic absence data and use it to identify and solve barriers to attendance as well as put in place a multi-tiered system of supports in collaboration with community partners and sister agencies.**

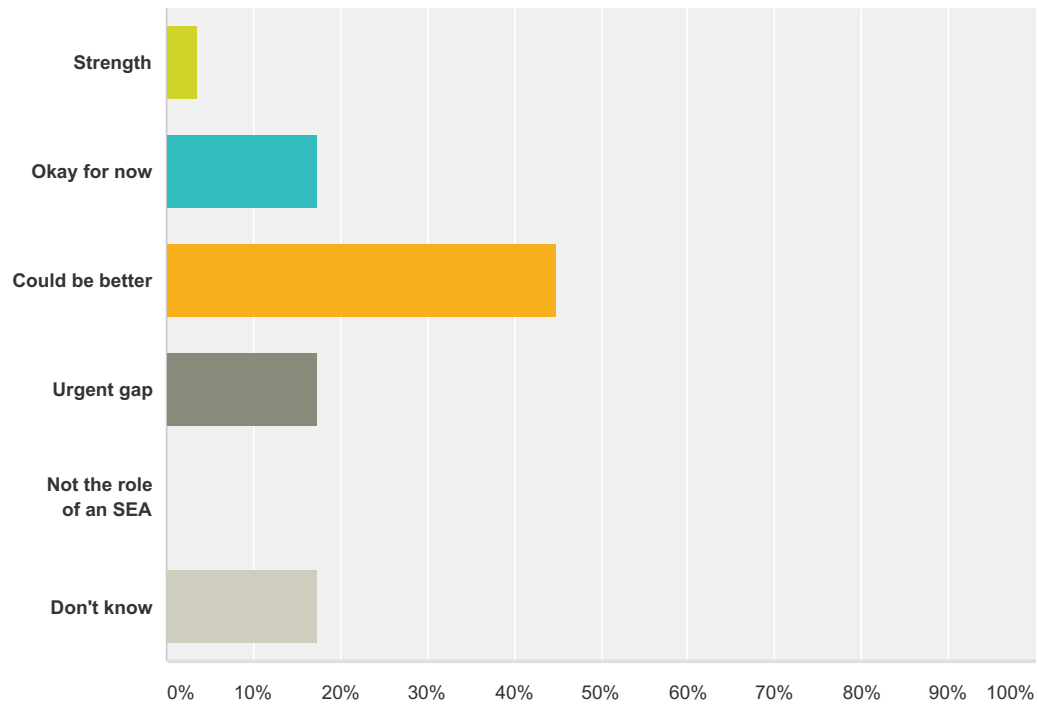
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	0.00%	0
Okay for now	23.33%	7
Could be better	36.67%	11
Urgent gap	23.33%	7
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	16.67%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q13 Professional development on chronic absence is widely available and integrated with related resources also promoting multi-tiered systems of support to improve behavior (e.g., PBIS or MTSS) and academics (e.g., RTI).**

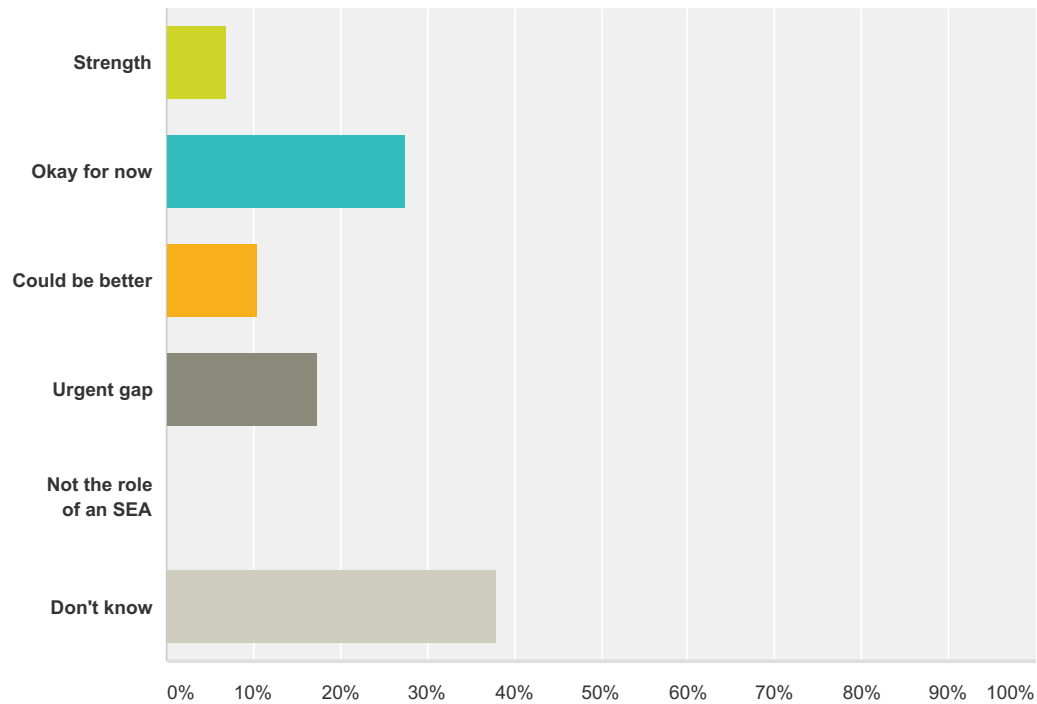
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	3.45%	1
Okay for now	17.24%	5
Could be better	44.83%	13
Urgent gap	17.24%	5
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	17.24%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>

**Q14 Our state ensures LEAs are aware they can use Title I and Title II dollars to equip principals and educators to recognize and address the early warning signs of academic risk and dropping-out, including chronic absence.**

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

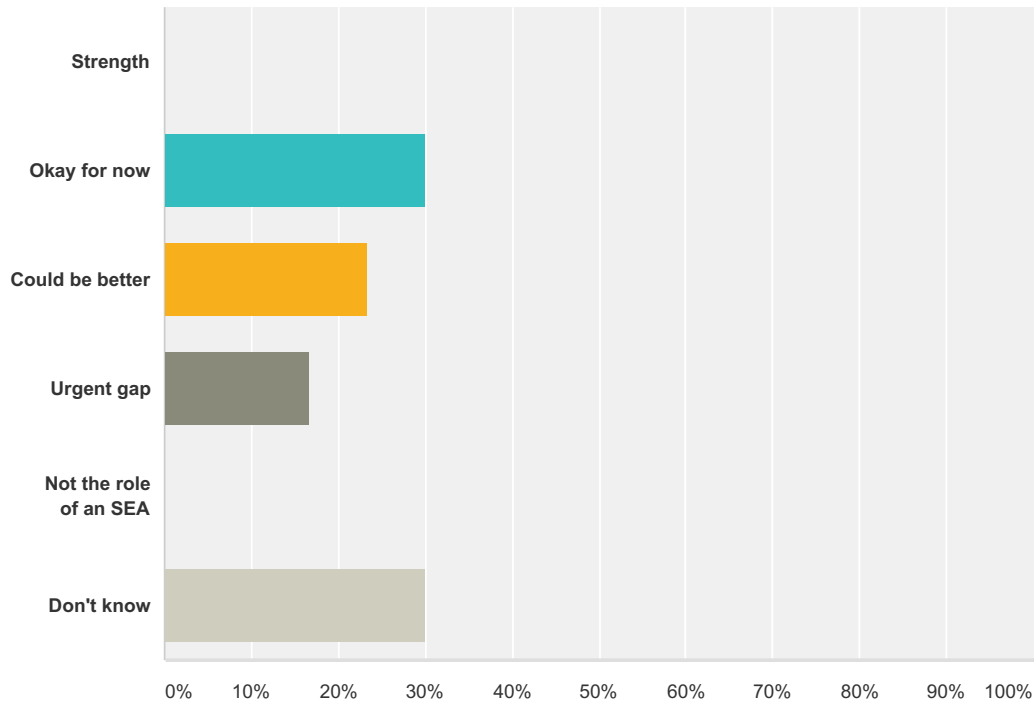


Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	6.90%	2
Okay for now	27.59%	8
Could be better	10.34%	3
Urgent gap	17.24%	5
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	37.93%	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>



**Q15 Our state calculates and makes publicly available reports on chronic absence rates on an annual basis (along with other measures of student attendance including ADA, truancy, and satisfactory attendance) by school, grade, and student sub-population on an annual basis.**

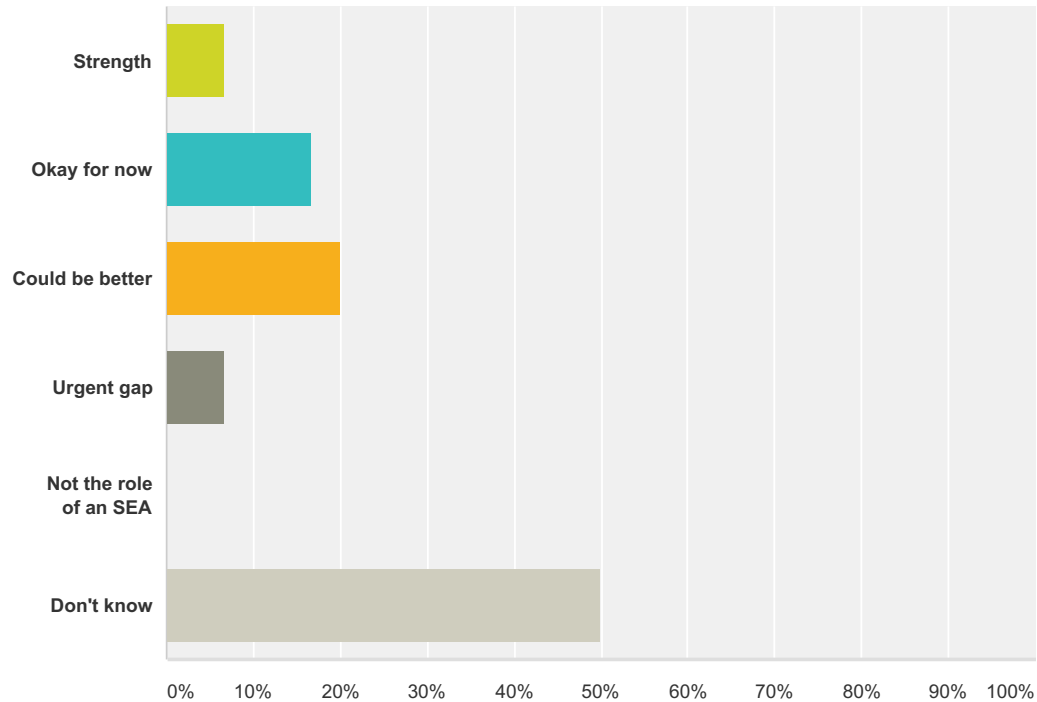
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	0.00%	0
Okay for now	30.00%	9
Could be better	23.33%	7
Urgent gap	16.67%	5
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	30.00%	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q16 Our state policy requires LEAs and schools to create improvement plans if chronic absence rises above an agreed upon threshold of poor attendance.**

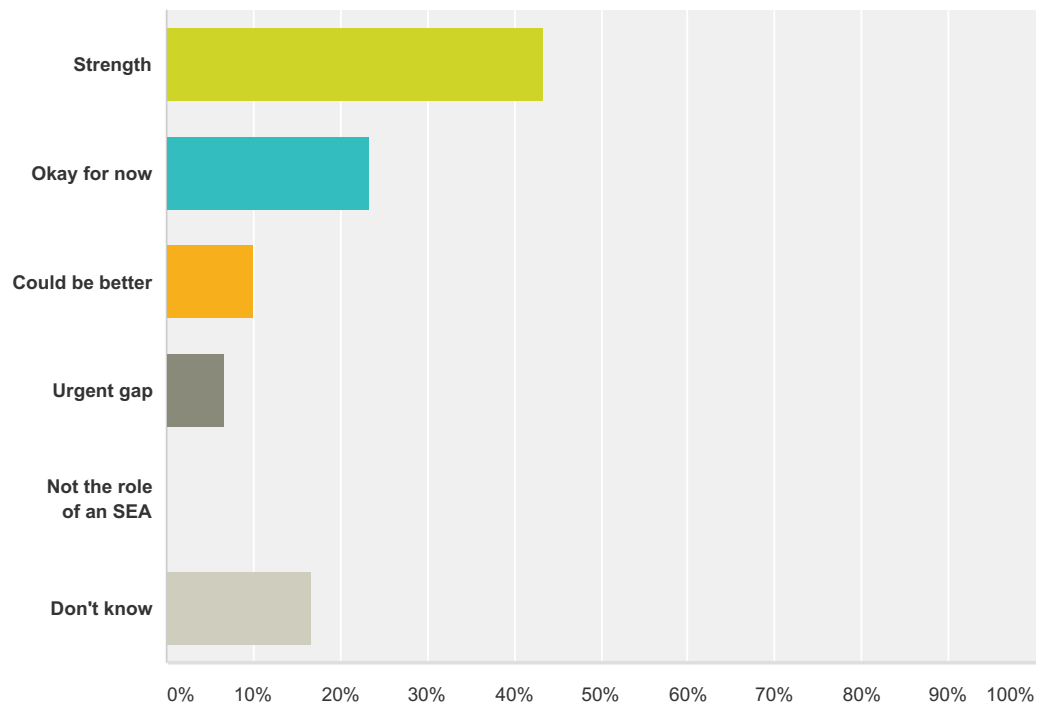
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	6.67%	2
Okay for now	16.67%	5
Could be better	20.00%	6
Urgent gap	6.67%	2
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	50.00%	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q17 Our state has a state task force that includes key community stakeholders and public agency representatives (physical and behavioral health, transportation, law enforcement, etc.) that meets regularly to review chronic absence data in the context of other student, school, and community data, to identify causes of absence and opportunities for action, to discuss implications for targeting available resources, and to set goals for improved attendance.**

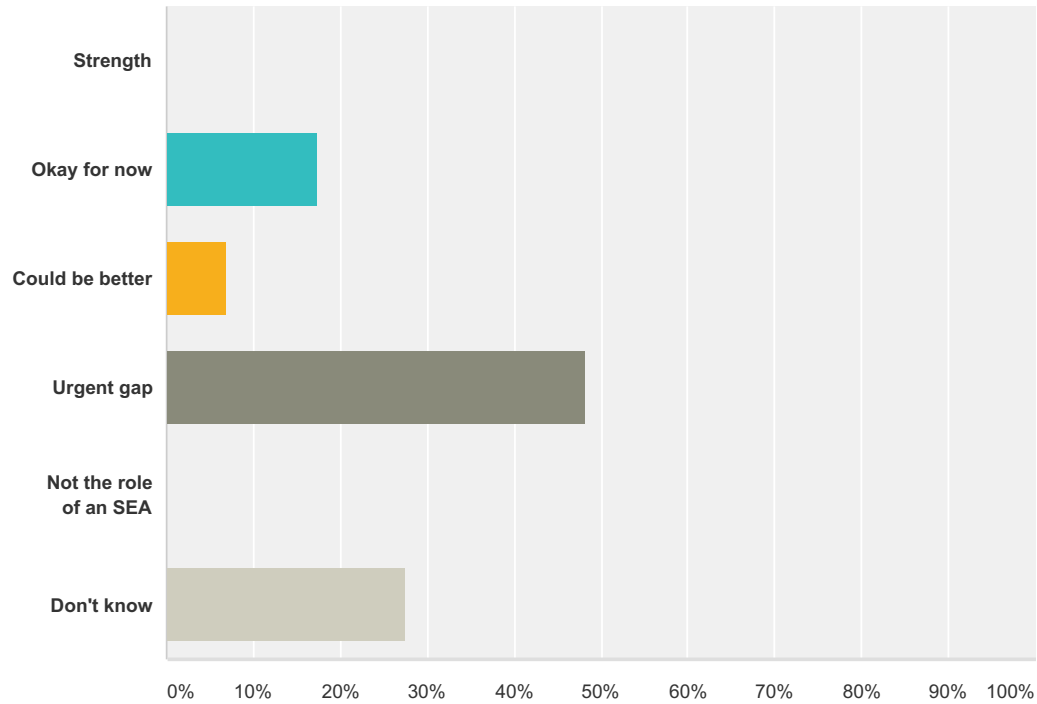
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	43.33%	13
Okay for now	23.33%	7
Could be better	10.00%	3
Urgent gap	6.67%	2
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	16.67%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q18 Our state can monitor and address chronic absenteeism among highly mobile students, for example, students who are in foster care or are homeless even as they move across districts.**

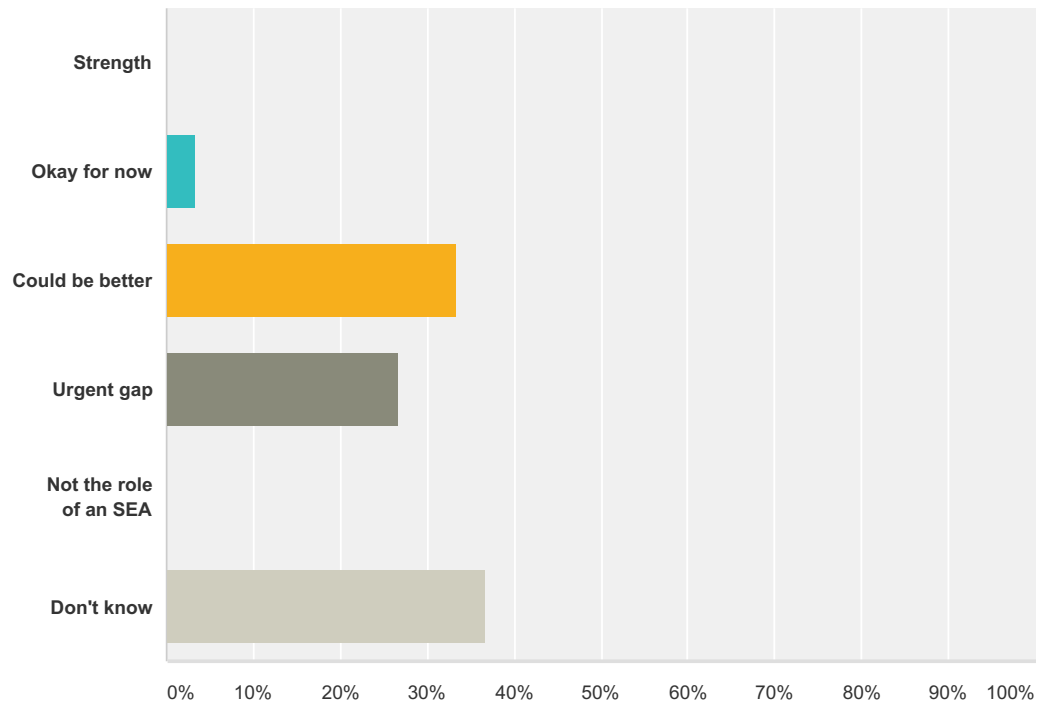
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	0.00%	0
Okay for now	17.24%	5
Could be better	6.90%	2
Urgent gap	48.28%	14
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	27.59%	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>

**Q19 Data on chronic absence are used to target and allocate public and community resources (e.g., physical and behavioral health services, transportation, early childhood education, after school, economic supports, etc.).**

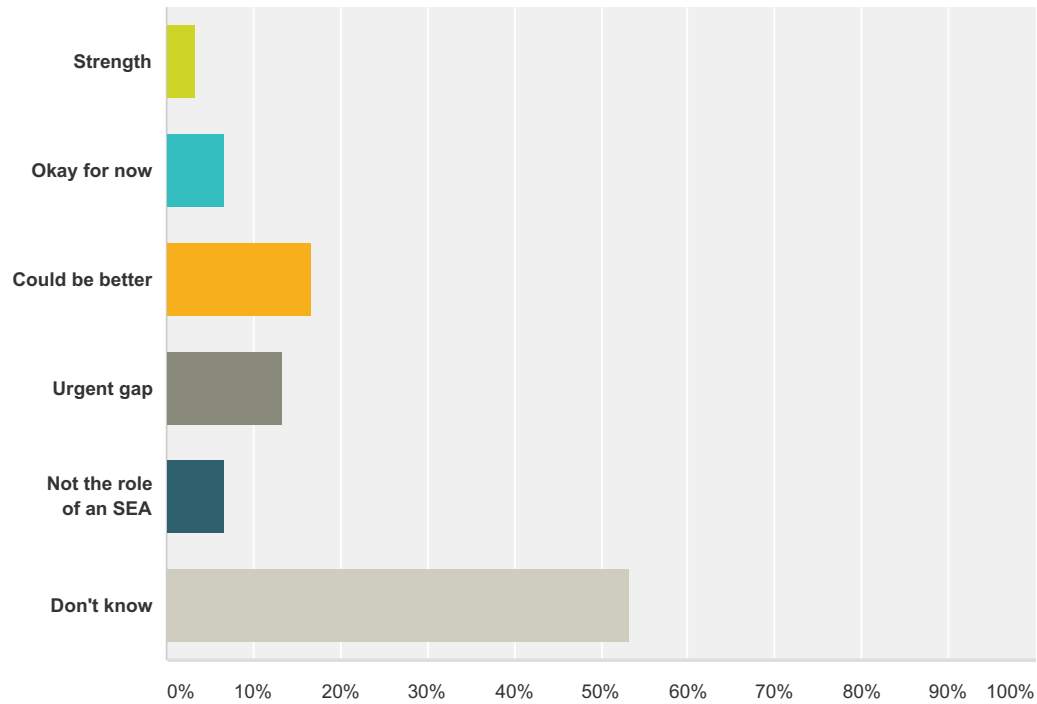
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	0.00%	0
Okay for now	3.33%	1
Could be better	33.33%	10
Urgent gap	26.67%	8
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	36.67%	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q20 Our state provides examples of contracts or MOUs for LEAs to use with community organizations and public agencies to outline how they will share data, support LEAs and schools in improving school attendance, and how they will assess their impact.**

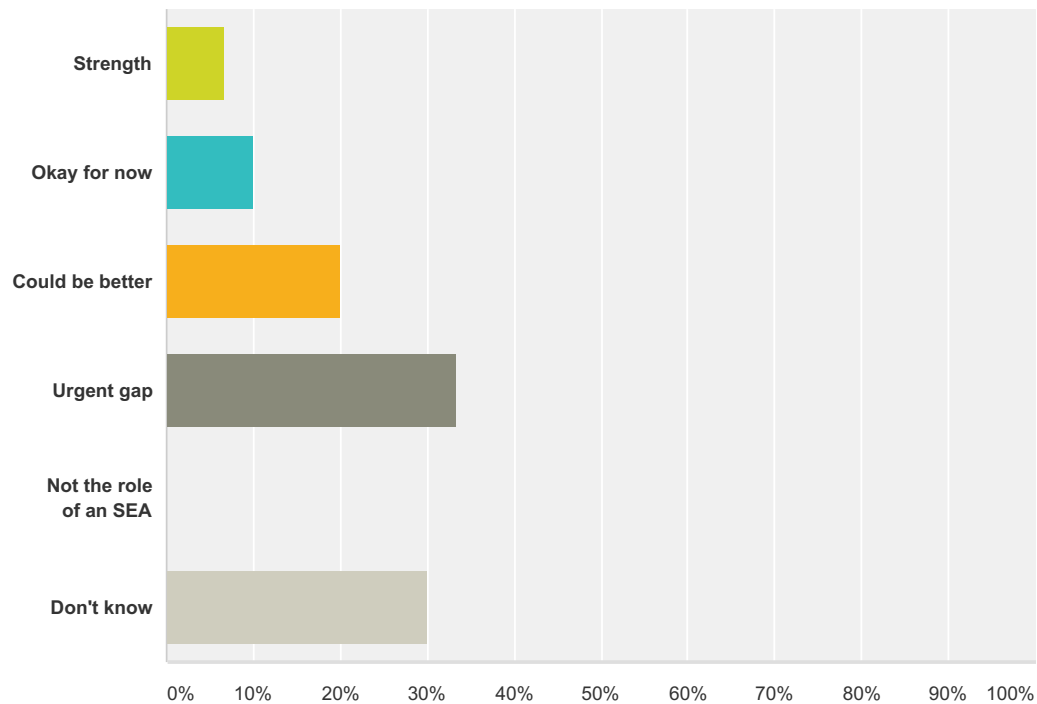
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	3.33%	1
Okay for now	6.67%	2
Could be better	16.67%	5
Urgent gap	13.33%	4
Not the role of an SEA	6.67%	2
Don't know	53.33%	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q21 Our state provides civic and volunteer organizations, parent organizations, health providers, homeless shelters, housing authorities, law enforcement, and other community agencies with tools and information about how they can help reach out and engage chronically absent students and their families.**

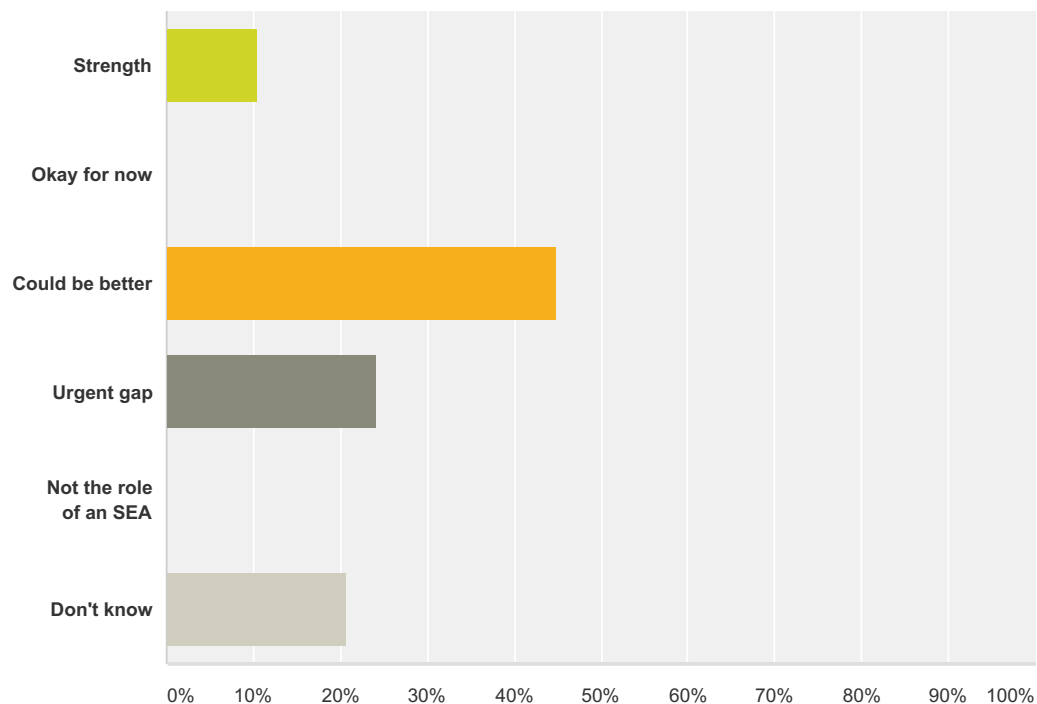
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	6.67%	2
Okay for now	10.00%	3
Could be better	20.00%	6
Urgent gap	33.33%	10
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	30.00%	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>

**Q22 Professional development and materials are available to help community partners (including physical and behavioral health providers, early education providers, youth development organizations, businesses, faith and civic organizations, etc.) understand how they can help build a culture of attendance and partner with schools to help children and families overcome barriers to getting to class.**

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

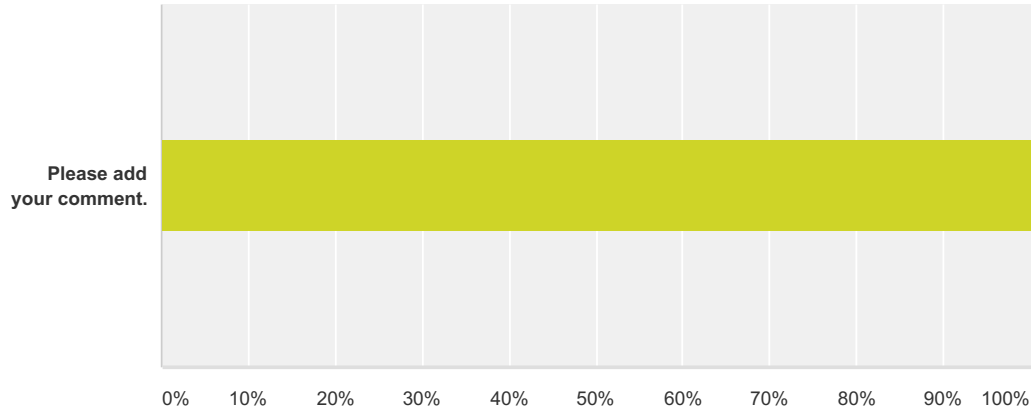


Answer Choices	Responses	
Strength	10.34%	3
Okay for now	0.00%	0
Could be better	44.83%	13
Urgent gap	24.14%	7
Not the role of an SEA	0.00%	0
Don't know	20.69%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>



**Q23 Please provide any additional insight about your state's policy and practice you would like to share.**

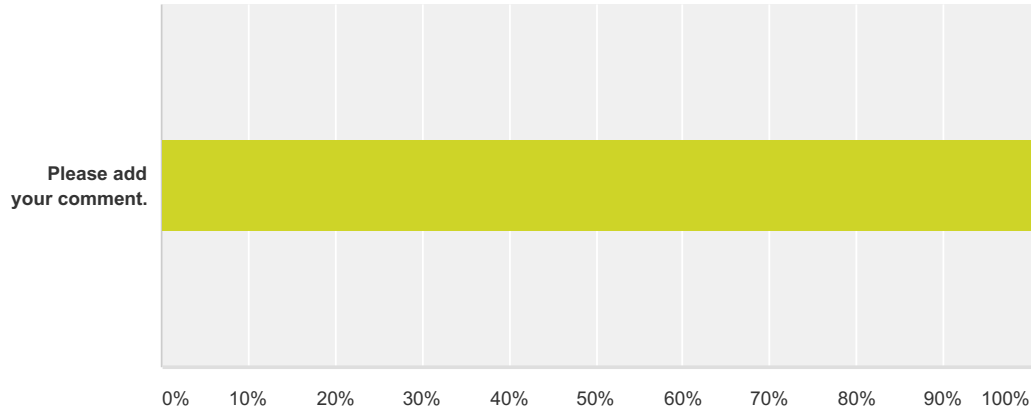
Answered: 6 Skipped: 24



Answer Choices	Responses
Please add your comment.	100.00% 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

**Q24 Please identify areas of chronic absence policy and practice that you believe are most relevant for your state and why.**

Answered: 5 Skipped: 25



Answer Choices	Responses
Please add your comment.	100.00% 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

**Appendix O: Illinois State Board of Education PowerPoint:**  
*Statutory Repercussions for Truancy*

**Legislative Review Part 2**

***Statutory Repercussions for Truancy***

October 27, 2016

Jeffrey Aranowski, Deputy of Regulatory Support, Illinois State Board of Education

**Appointment of Truant Officers**

District truant officers

County truant officers

Shall in the exercise of their duties be conservators of the peace and shall keep the same, suppress riots, routs, affray, fighting, breaches of the peace, and prevent crime; and may arrest offenders on view and cause them to be brought before proper officials for trial or examination.

**Notice of Non-Compliance**

Give notice in person or by mail to the parent/custodian

Must be in school on the day following the receipt of the notice

The notice shall state the date that attendance at school must begin and that such attendance must be continuous and consecutive in the district during the remainder of the school year.

**Determination of Non-Compliance**

If after three (3) notices the truancy persists, the Regional Superintendent will hold a truancy hearing.

If the Regional Superintendent determines that the child is truant, he/she shall require 20-40 hours of community service within 90 days (if age appropriate).

**Continuing Non-Compliance**

If the truancy persists, the regional superintendent shall:

- A. Make complaint against the persons having custody or control to the state's attorney or in the circuit court; or
- B. Conduct truancy mediation and encourage the student to enroll in a graduation incentives program.

If, however, after giving the notice provided in Section 26-7 the truant behavior has continued, and the child is beyond the control of the parents, guardians or custodians, a truancy petition shall be filed under the provisions of Article III of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.



**Truant Minor in Need of Supervision**

Dispositional orders for a truant minor in need of supervision in the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 include:

Development of a service plan or comprehensive youth service plan by the Regional Superintendent or youth as specifically provided by the appropriate Regional Office of Education;

Obtain counseling for other supportive services;

**Truant Minor in Need of Supervision**

Dispositional orders for a truant minor in need of supervision in the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 include (cont.):

Subject to a fine between \$5-\$100 per day;

Required to perform some reasonable public services work;

Subject to having his or her driver's license or privilege suspended.

**Other Fines and Punishments**

Any person whom notice has been given of the child's truancy and who knowingly and wilfully permits such a child to persist in his truancy within that school year, upon conviction thereof shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor and shall be subject to not more than 30 days imprisonment and/or a fine of up to \$500.

Any person who induces or attempts to induce any child to be absent from school unlawfully, or who knowingly employs or harbors, while school is in session, any child absent unlawfully from school for 3 consecutive school days, is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

# Attendance Commission Legislative Review (Part 2)



**Appendix O: Illinois State Board of Education PowerPoint:**  
***Statutory Repercussions for Truancy***

**Legislative Review Part 2**

***Statutory Repercussions for Truancy***

**October 27, 2016**

**Jeffrey Aranowski, Deputy of Regulatory Support, Illinois State Board of Education**

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Subject to having his or her driver's license or privilege suspended.

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# Attendance Commission Legislative Review (Part 2)



**Appendix P: Illinois State Board of Education PowerPoint:**  
***McKinney-Vento and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children***  
***Act***

**Legislative Review Part 3**

***McKinney Vento and the Illinois Education for  
Homeless Children Act***

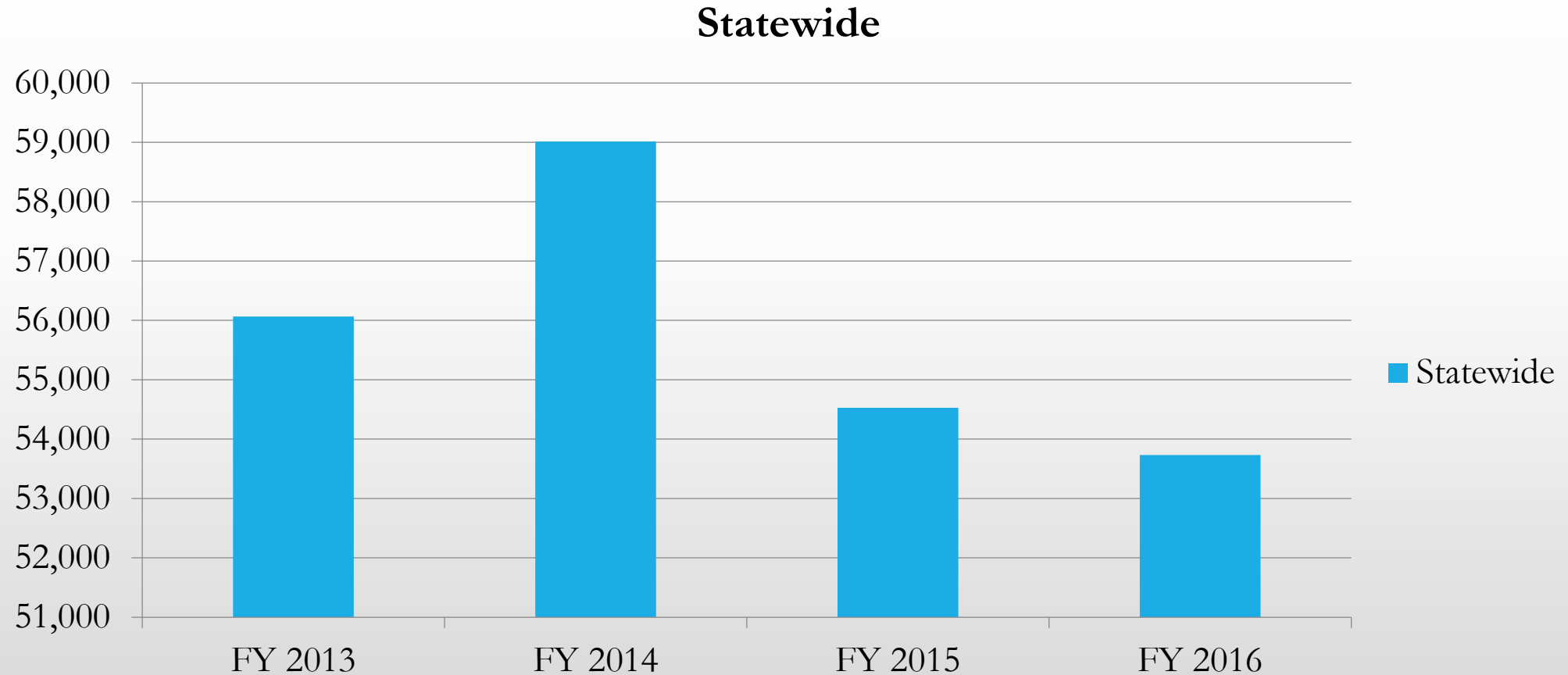
November 18, 2016

Jeffrey Aranowski, Deputy of Regulatory Support  
Illinois State Board of Education



- I. Scope of Homelessness in Schools**
- II. Defining Homelessness in Schools**
- III. Enrollment and School Selection**
- IV. Duties of School Districts**
- V. Provision of Transportation**
- VI. Dispute Resolution**

## Scope of Homelessness in Schools



# Defining Homelessness in Schools

Pupils are homeless if they “lack a **fixed**, **regular**, and **adequate** nighttime residence,” including children:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (doubled-up);
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement (*until December 10, 2016*);

# Defining Homelessness in Schools

Pupils are homeless if they “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,” including children:

- Who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Defined as “migratory children” who qualify as homeless based on the aforementioned scenarios.

Where may a McKinney Vento eligible student attend school?

1. **School of Origin.** The school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including “feeder schools”.
2. **School of Residence.** The public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

Enrollment decisions are made pursuant to the “best interest” of the pupil by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

McKinney-Vento presumes the best placement is the school of origin, unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

## Enrollment and School Selection

McKinney Vento eligible students must be immediately enrolled even if they lack required paperwork, documents, immunizations, etc.

It is the duty of the enrolling school to immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic and other records.

Districts have the duty to enroll students presenting themselves as homeless **and** to identify homeless students.

“Enrollment” means full enrollment and participation in all school programs and activities.

## Duties of School Districts

1. Allow and promote access of homeless children, youth and families in all programs and activities offered by the school and to refrain from any segregation, discrimination or stigmatization of such students;
2. Wherever possible, and consistent with the wishes of the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, to keep a homeless child or youth at his or her “school of origin”;
3. Adopt a policy and practice for providing appropriate transportation services to enable homeless children and youth to attend the school of origin;
4. Designate a local homeless liaison within the district;

## Duties of School Districts

5. Provide notice (forms, brochures, web sites, handbooks and instructional materials) throughout the community and all school locations of the rights of, and services for, homeless children and youth, including school choices and transportation availability as well as the name/phone number of the liaison;
6. Provide outreach to homeless families and youth to ensure that all school-age and pre-school age children not enrolled in school are promptly enrolled;
7. Enroll students in free breakfast/lunch and waive all fees subject to waiver;
8. Review and revise any policies, websites, forms, etc. that may act as **barriers** to the enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth.



## Common Barriers:

- Lack of training to school personnel in recognizing homelessness;
- Lack of immunization and medical records;
- Lack of school records, good standing form, birth certificates, etc;
- Frequent mobility;
- Inability to complete school assignments;
- Poor health and nutrition, increase of stress and emotional instability;
- Lack of transportation to or from temporary residence.

## Provision of Transportation

- 1. Comparable Services.** McKinney Vento eligible students must be provided services comparable to non-homeless pupils. McKinney Vento eligible students must be provided transportation if non-homeless pupils are provided transportation.
- 2. School of Origin.** Transportation of McKinney Vento eligible students to and from the school of origin (upon request) is also an enumerated responsibility of districts—this requirement is in addition to the requirement to provide comparable services.
- 3. Removing Barriers.** For all other situations that do not fit into (1) and (2) above, districts must eliminate all barriers that would impede a McKinney Vento eligible student's full participation in district programs. Therefore, regardless of whether or not the aforementioned scenarios apply, a district must still provide transportation if not doing so would create a barrier to attendance and participation.

## Provision of Transportation

The school district of origin and the school district in which the McKinney Vento eligible student lives shall meet to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin.

If the school districts are unable to agree, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

Transportation may include public transit cards, mileage reimbursement, bussing service, cab service, gas cards, etc.

# Dispute Resolution Process

The Dispute Resolution Process Is:

- A. The only process to formally determine the outcome of a homeless-related dispute between an eligible student and a district;
- B. A method of sensitively resolving disagreements with respect to eligibility;
- C. To be used for resolving disputes regarding enrollment, full participation in school activities, transportation, and any other issue related to a pupil's homelessness;
- D. To be structured as informally as possible in order to allow parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth as much assistance as possible in navigating the process.

# Dispute Resolution Process

The Dispute Resolution Process Is Not:

- A. A formal legal proceeding, administrative hearing (under the Administrative Procedures Act) or judicial hearing;
- B. An opportunity to vet disagreements about any other matter other than issues related to homelessness;
- C. An opportunity for a district to intimidate, scorn or otherwise marginalize a pupil or family;
- D. An opportunity for pupils or parents to unlawfully gain access to a district's educational program.

# Dispute Resolution Process

## The Dispute Resolution In Detail:

1. Immediately enroll the student(s) and arrange for transportation and other services as appropriate;
2. With the involvement of the district's liaison, attempt to discuss the issues with the parent/youth to determine if more information can clear up the issues;
3. Issue a letter to the parent/guardian or youth explaining, with a degree of specificity, the district's position as to the homelessness-related dispute. In this letter, the district must also include referrals to free/reduced cost legal help and an outline of the dispute resolution procedure. The district must copy on such letter the applicable regional superintendent of schools and Illinois' Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth ("State Coordinator");

## Dispute Resolution Process

### The Dispute Resolution In Detail:

4. Refer the child or parent/guardian to the fair and impartial ombudsperson appointed by the district's regional superintendent of schools (the "Ombudsperson"). The district's liaison should exercise responsibility for facilitating access to legal help and advocacy and other information;
5. The Ombudsperson shall convene a meeting of all parties (within 5 days if possible);
6. At the conclusion of the meeting or promptly thereafter, the Ombudsperson shall, in writing, communicate his or her decision to the parties and inform the parties of the ability to have the State Coordinator review compliance with applicable law.

# Dispute Resolution Process

## The Dispute Resolution In Detail:

The district must immediately enroll the student(s) and arrange for transportation /other services as appropriate pending the outcome of the dispute.

With the involvement of the district's liaison, the district must attempt to discuss the issues with the parent/youth to determine if more information can clear up the issues.

The notice of dispute resolution issued by the district to the parent/guardian must include, with a degree of specificity, the district's position as to the homelessness-related dispute.

The notice of dispute resolution issued by the district to the parent/guardian must include referrals to free/reduced cost legal help and an outline of the dispute resolution procedure.

Facilitate the disclosure of relevant documentation prior to meeting if requested in order to enable a full and fair presentation of each position.



## Dispute Resolution Process

### Appealing the Decision of the Ombudsperson:

- Either party may, within 5 school days of the Ombudsperson's decision, send a written request to the State Coordinator asking the State Coordinator to review such decision for compliance with applicable law. Such request must include any documentation related to the dispute resolution proceeding.
- Upon receiving a request for review, the State Coordinator may request from either party any additional information that he or she deems relevant to determining compliance with applicable law.
- No later than 10 school days after receiving the request for review, the State Coordinator shall make a recommendation to the State Superintendent of Education regarding the Ombudsperson's decision and the appropriate placement of the student (deferring, in this review, to any and all findings of fact by the Ombudsperson).
- Within 10 days of receiving the State Coordinator's recommendation, the State Superintendent of Education or designee will inform all parties of the final determination.



## **Appendix Q: Public Act 99-0193**

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Sections 2-3.25a, 2-3.25c, 2-3.25d, 2-3.25e-5, 2-3.25f, 2-3.136, 7-8, 10-17a, 10-29, 11E-120, and 21B-70 and by adding Section 2-3.25d-5 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25a) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.25a)

Sec. 2-3.25a. "School district" defined; additional standards.

(a) For the purposes of this Section and Sections 3.25b, 3.25c, 3.25d, 3.25e, and 3.25f of this Code, "school district" includes other public entities responsible for administering public schools, such as cooperatives, joint agreements, charter schools, special charter districts, regional offices of education, local agencies, and the Department of Human Services.

(b) In addition to the standards established pursuant to Section 2-3.25, the State Board of Education shall develop recognition standards for student performance and school improvement for all ~~in all public schools operated by~~ school districts and their individual schools, which must be an outcomes-based, balanced accountability measure. ~~The~~

~~indicators to determine adequate yearly progress shall be limited to the State assessment of student performance in reading and mathematics, student attendance rates at the elementary school level, graduation rates at the high school level, and participation rates on student assessments. The standards shall be designed to permit the measurement of student performance and school improvement by schools and school districts compared to student performance and school improvement for the preceding academic years.~~

Subject to the availability of federal, State, public, or private funds, the balanced accountability measure must be designed to focus on 2 components, student performance and professional practice. The student performance component shall count for 30% of the total balanced accountability measure, and the professional practice component shall count for 70% of the total balanced accountability measure. The student performance component shall focus on student outcomes and closing the achievement gaps within each school district and its individual schools using a Multiple Measure Index and Annual Measurable Objectives, as set forth in Section 2-3.25d of this Code. The professional practice component shall focus on the degree to which a school district, as well as its individual schools, is implementing evidence-based, best professional practices and exhibiting continued improvement. Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, the balanced accountability measure shall consist of only the student performance component, which shall account

for 100% of the total balanced accountability measure. From the 2016-2017 school year through the 2021-2022 school year, the State Board of Education and a Balanced Accountability Measure Committee shall identify a number of school districts per the designated school years to begin implementing the balanced accountability measure, which includes both the student performance and professional practice components. By the 2021-2022 school year, all school districts must be implementing the balanced accountability measure, which includes both components. The Balanced Accountability Measure Committee shall consist of the following individuals: a representative of a statewide association representing regional superintendents of schools, a representative of a statewide association representing principals, a representative of an association representing principals in a city having a population exceeding 500,000, a representative of a statewide association representing school administrators, a representative of a statewide professional teachers' organization, a representative of a different statewide professional teachers' organization, an additional representative from either statewide professional teachers' organization, a representative of a professional teachers' organization in a city having a population exceeding 500,000, a representative of a statewide association representing school boards, and a representative of a school district organized under Article 34 of this Code. The head of each association or

entity listed in this paragraph shall appoint its respective representative. The State Superintendent of Education, in consultation with the Committee, may appoint no more than 2 additional individuals to the Committee, which individuals shall serve in an advisory role and must not have voting or other decision-making rights. The Committee is abolished on June 1, 2022.

Using a Multiple Measure Index consistent with subsection (a) of Section 2-3.25d of this Code, the student performance component shall consist of the following subcategories, each of which must be valued at 10%:

(1) achievement status;

(2) achievement growth; and

(3) Annual Measurable Objectives, as set forth in subsection (b) of Section 2-3.25d of this Code.

Achievement status shall measure and assess college and career readiness, as well as the graduation rate. Achievement growth shall measure the school district's and its individual schools' student growth via this State's growth value tables. Annual Measurable Objectives shall measure the degree to which school districts, as well as their individual schools, are closing their achievement gaps among their student population and subgroups.

The professional practice component shall consist of the following subcategories:

(A) compliance;

(B) evidence-based best practices; and

(C) contextual improvement.

Compliance, which shall count for 10%, shall measure the degree to which a school district and its individual schools meet the current State compliance requirements. Evidence-based best practices, which shall count for 30%, shall measure the degree to which school districts and their individual schools are adhering to a set of evidence-based quality standards and best practice for effective schools that include (i) continuous improvement, (ii) culture and climate, (iii) shared leadership, (iv) governance, (v) education and employee quality, (vi) family and community connections, and (vii) student and learning development and are further developed in consultation with the State Board of Education and the Balanced Accountability Measure Committee set forth in this subsection

(b). Contextual improvement, which shall count for 30%, shall provide school districts and their individual schools the opportunity to demonstrate improved outcomes through local data, including without limitation school climate, unique characteristics, and barriers that impact the educational environment and hinder the development and implementation of action plans to address areas of school district and individual school improvement. Each school district, in good faith cooperation with its teachers or, where applicable, the exclusive bargaining representatives of its teachers, shall develop 2 measurable objectives to demonstrate contextual



improvement, each of which must be equally weighted. Each school district shall begin such good faith cooperative development of these objectives no later than 6 months prior to the beginning of the school year in which the school district is to implement the professional practice component of the balanced accountability measure. The professional practice component must be scored using trained peer review teams that observe and verify school district practices using an evidence-based framework.

The balanced accountability measure shall combine the student performance and professional practice components into one summative score based on 100 points at the school district and individual-school level. A school district shall be designated as "Exceeds Standards - Exemplar" if the overall score is 100 to 90, "Meets Standards - Proficient" if the overall score is 89 to 75, "Approaching Standards - Needs Improvement" if the overall score is 74 to 60, and "Below Standards - Unsatisfactory" if the overall score is 59 to 0. The balanced accountability measure shall also detail both incentives that reward school districts for continued improved performance, as provided in Section 2-3.25c of this Code, and consequences for school districts that fail to provide evidence of continued improved performance, which may include presentation of a barrier analysis, additional school board and administrator training, or additional State assistance. Based on its summative score, a school district may be exempt from

the balanced accountability measure for one or more school years. The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Balanced Accountability Measure Committee set forth in this subsection (b), shall adopt rules that further implementation in accordance with the requirements of this Section.

(Source: P.A. 96-734, eff. 8-25-09.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25c) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.25c)

Sec. 2-3.25c. Rewards ~~and acknowledgements~~. The State Board of Education shall implement a system of rewards for school districts, and the schools themselves, through a process that recognizes (i) high-poverty, high-performing schools that are closing achievement gaps and excelling in academic achievement; (ii) schools that have sustained high performance; (iii) schools that have substantial growth performance over the 3 years immediately preceding the year in which recognition is awarded; and (iv) schools that have demonstrated the most progress, in comparison to schools statewide, in closing the achievement gap among various subgroups of students in the 3 years immediately preceding the year in which recognition is awarded ~~whose students and schools consistently meet adequate yearly progress criteria for 2 or more consecutive years and a system to acknowledge schools and districts that meet adequate yearly progress criteria in a given year as specified in Section 2-3.25d of this Code.~~

~~If a school or school district meets adequate yearly~~

~~progress criteria for 2 consecutive school years, that school or district shall be exempt from review and approval of its improvement plan for the next 2 succeeding school years.~~

(Source: P.A. 93-470, eff. 8-8-03.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25d) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.25d)

Sec. 2-3.25d. Multiple Measure Index and Annual Measurable Objectives ~~Academic early warning and watch status.~~

(a) Consistent with subsection (b) of Section 2-3.25a of this Code, the State Board of Education shall establish a Multiple Measure Index and Annual Measurable Objectives for each public school in this State that address the school's overall performance in terms of both academic success and equity. At a minimum, "academic success" shall include measures of college and career readiness, growth, and the graduation rate. At a minimum, "equity" shall include both the academic growth and college and career readiness of each school's subgroups of students. ~~Beginning with the 2005 2006 school year, unless the federal government formally disapproves of such policy through the submission and review process for the Illinois Accountability Workbook, those schools that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for 2 consecutive annual calculations in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall be placed on academic early warning status for the next school year. Schools on academic early warning status that do not meet adequate~~

~~yearly progress criteria for a third annual calculation in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall remain on academic early warning status. Schools on academic early warning status that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a fourth annual calculation in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall be placed on initial academic watch status. Schools on academic watch status that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a fifth or subsequent annual calculation in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall remain on academic watch status. Schools on academic early warning or academic watch status that meet adequate yearly progress criteria for 2 consecutive calculations shall be considered as having met expectations and shall be removed from any status designation.~~

~~The school district of a school placed on either academic early warning status or academic watch status may appeal the status to the State Board of Education in accordance with Section 2-3.25m of this Code.~~

~~A school district that has one or more schools on academic early warning or academic watch status shall prepare a revised School Improvement Plan or amendments thereto setting forth the district's expectations for removing each school from academic early warning or academic watch status and for improving student performance in the affected school or schools.~~

~~Districts operating under Article 34 of this Code may prepare the School Improvement Plan required under Section 34-2.4 of this Code.~~

~~The revised School Improvement Plan for a school that is initially placed on academic early warning status or that remains on academic early warning status after a third annual calculation must be approved by the school board (and by the school's local school council in a district operating under Article 34 of this Code, unless the school is on probation pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 34-8.3 of this Code).~~

~~The revised School Improvement Plan for a school that is initially placed on academic watch status after a fourth annual calculation must be approved by the school board (and by the school's local school council in a district operating under Article 34 of this Code, unless the school is on probation pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 34-8.3 of this Code).~~

~~The revised School Improvement Plan for a school that remains on academic watch status after a fifth annual calculation must be approved by the school board (and by the school's local school council in a district operating under Article 34 of this Code, unless the school is on probation pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 34-8.3 of this Code). In addition, the district must develop a school restructuring plan for the school that must be approved by the school board (and by the school's local school council in a district operating under Article 34 of this Code).~~

~~A school on academic watch status that does not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a sixth annual calculation shall implement its approved school restructuring plan beginning with the next school year, subject to the State interventions specified in Sections 2-3.25f and 2-3.25f-5 of this Code.~~

(b) Beginning in 2015, all schools shall receive Annual Measurable Objectives that will provide annual targets for progress of each school's Multiple Measure Index. Each element of the Multiple Measure Index shall have an Annual Measurable Objective. ~~Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, unless the federal government formally disapproves of such policy through the submission and review process for the Illinois Accountability Workbook, those school districts that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for 2 consecutive annual calculations in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall be placed on academic early warning status for the next school year. Districts on academic early warning status that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a third annual calculation in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall remain on academic early warning status. Districts on academic early warning status that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a fourth annual calculation in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall~~

~~be placed on initial academic watch status. Districts on academic watch status that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a fifth or subsequent annual calculation in the same subject or in their participation rate, attendance rate, or graduation rate shall remain on academic watch status. Districts on academic early warning or academic watch status that meet adequate yearly progress criteria for one annual calculation shall be considered as having met expectations and shall be removed from any status designation.~~

~~A district placed on either academic early warning status or academic watch status may appeal the status to the State Board of Education in accordance with Section 2-3.25m of this Code.~~

~~Districts on academic early warning or academic watch status shall prepare a District Improvement Plan or amendments thereto setting forth the district's expectations for removing the district from academic early warning or academic watch status and for improving student performance in the district.~~

~~All District Improvement Plans must be approved by the school board.~~

~~(c) All revised School and District Improvement Plans shall be developed in collaboration with parents, staff in the affected school or school district, and outside experts. All revised School and District Improvement Plans shall be developed, submitted, and monitored pursuant to rules adopted by the State Board of Education. The revised Improvement Plan~~

~~shall address measurable outcomes for improving student performance so that such performance meets adequate yearly progress criteria as specified by the State Board of Education. All school districts required to revise a School Improvement Plan in accordance with this Section shall establish a peer review process for the evaluation of School Improvement Plans.~~  
(d) All federal requirements apply to schools and school districts utilizing federal funds under Title I, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

~~(e) The State Board of Education, from any moneys it may have available for this purpose, must implement and administer a grant program that provides 2-year grants to school districts on the academic watch list and other school districts that have the lowest achieving students, as determined by the State Board of Education, to be used to improve student achievement. In order to receive a grant under this program, a school district must establish an accountability program. The accountability program must involve the use of statewide testing standards and local evaluation measures. A grant shall be automatically renewed when achievement goals are met. The Board may adopt any rules necessary to implement and administer this grant program.~~  
(Source: P.A. 98-1155, eff. 1-9-15.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25d-5 new)

Sec. 2-3.25d-5. Priority and focus districts.

(a) Beginning in 2015, school districts designated as



priority districts shall be those that have one or more priority schools. "Priority school" is defined as:

(1) a school that is among the lowest performing 5% of schools in this State based on a 3-year average, with respect to the performance of the "all students" group for the percentage of students deemed proficient in English/language arts and mathematics combined, and demonstrates a lack of progress as defined by the State Board of Education;

(2) a beginning secondary school that has an average graduation rate of less than 60% over the last 3 school years; or

(3) a school receiving a school improvement grant under Section 1003(g) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

The State Board of Education shall work with a priority district to perform a district needs assessment to determine the district's core functions that are areas of strength and weakness, unless the district is already undergoing a national accreditation process. The results from the district needs assessment shall be used by the district to identify goals and objectives for the district's improvement. The district needs assessment shall include a study of district functions, such as district finance, governance, student engagement, instruction practices, climate, community involvement, and continuous improvement.

(b) Beginning in 2015, districts designated as focus districts shall be those that have one or more focus schools. "Focus school" means a school that is contributing to the achievement gaps in this State and is defined as:

(1) a school that has one or more subgroups in which the average student performance is at or below the State average for the lowest 10% of student performance in that subgroup; or

(2) a school with an average graduation rate of less than 60% and not identified for priority.

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25e-5)

Sec. 2-3.25e-5. Two years as priority school ~~on academic watch status~~; full-year school plan.

(a) In this Section, "school" means any of the following named public schools or their successor name:

(1) Dirksen Middle School in Dolton School District 149.

(2) Diekman Elementary School in Dolton School District 149.

(3) Caroline Sibley Elementary School in Dolton School District 149.

(4) Berger-Vandenberg Elementary School in Dolton School District 149.

(5) Carol Moseley Braun School in Dolton School District 149.

(6) New Beginnings Learning Academy in Dolton School District 149.

(7) McKinley Junior High School in South Holland School District 150.

(8) Greenwood Elementary School in South Holland School District 150.

(9) McKinley Elementary School in South Holland School District 150.

(10) Eisenhower School in South Holland School District 151.

(11) Madison School in South Holland School District 151.

(12) Taft School in South Holland School District 151.

(13) Wolcott School in Thornton School District 154.

(14) Memorial Junior High School in Lansing School District 158.

(15) Oak Glen Elementary School in Lansing School District 158.

(16) Lester Crawl Primary Center in Lansing School District 158.

(17) Brookwood Junior High School in Brookwood School District 167.

(18) Brookwood Middle School in Brookwood School District 167.

(19) Hickory Bend Elementary School in Brookwood School District 167.

(20) Medgar Evers Primary Academic Center in Ford Heights School District 169.

(21) Nathan Hale Elementary School in Sunnybrook School District 171.

(22) Ira F. Aldridge Elementary School in City of Chicago School District 299.

(23) William E.B. DuBois Elementary School in City of Chicago School District 299.

(b) If, after 2 years following its identification as a priority school under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code ~~placement on academic watch status~~, a school remains a priority school ~~on academic watch status~~, then, subject to federal appropriation money being available, the State Board of Education shall allow the school board to opt into the process of operating that school on a pilot, full-year school plan, approved by the State Board of Education, upon expiration of its teachers' current collective bargaining agreement until the expiration of the next collective bargaining agreement. A school board must notify the State Board of Education of its intent to opt into the process of operating a school on a pilot, full-year school plan.

(Source: P.A. 98-1155, eff. 1-9-15.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25f) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.25f)

Sec. 2-3.25f. State interventions.

(a) The State Board of Education shall provide technical

assistance to assist with the development and implementation of School and District Improvement Plans.

Schools or school districts that fail to make reasonable efforts to implement an approved Improvement Plan may suffer loss of State funds by school district, attendance center, or program as the State Board of Education deems appropriate.

(a-5) (Blank).

(b) Beginning in 2017, if ~~if~~ after 3 years following its identification as a priority district under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code, a district does not make progress as measured by a reduction in achievement gaps commensurate with the targets in this State's approved accountability plan with the U.S. Department of Education ~~placement on academic watch status a school district or school remains on academic watch status, then~~ the State Board of Education may (i) change the recognition status of the school district or school to nonrecognized or (ii) authorize the State Superintendent of Education to direct the reassignment of pupils or direct the reassignment or replacement of school district personnel ~~who are relevant to the failure to meet adequate yearly progress criteria~~. If a school district is nonrecognized in its entirety, it shall automatically be dissolved on July 1 following that nonrecognition and its territory realigned with another school district or districts by the regional board of school trustees in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7-11 of the School Code. The effective date of the

nonrecognition of a school shall be July 1 following the nonrecognition.

(b-5) The State Board of Education shall also develop a system to provide assistance and resources to lower performing school districts. At a minimum, the State Board shall identify school districts to receive priority services, to be known as priority districts under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code. In addition, the State Board may, by rule, develop other categories of low-performing schools and school districts to receive services.

~~Districts designated as priority districts shall be those that fall within one of the following categories:~~

~~(1) Have at least one school that is among the lowest performing 5% of schools in this State based on a 3-year average, with respect to the performance of the "all students" group for the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading and mathematics combined, and demonstrate a lack of progress as defined by the State Board of Education.~~

~~(2) Have at least one secondary school that has an average graduation rate of less than 60% over the last 3 school years.~~

~~(3) Have at least one school receiving a school improvement grant under Section 1003(g) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.~~

~~The State Board of Education shall work with a priority~~

~~district to perform a district needs assessment to determine the district's core functions that are areas of strength and weakness, unless the district is already undergoing a national accreditation process. The results from the district needs assessment shall be used by the district to identify goals and objectives for the district's improvement. The district needs assessment shall include a study of district functions, such as district finance, governance, student engagement, instruction practices, climate, community involvement, and continuous improvement.~~

Based on the results of the district needs assessment under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code, the State Board of Education shall work with the district to provide technical assistance and professional development, in partnership with the district, to implement a continuous improvement plan that would increase outcomes for students. The plan for continuous improvement shall be based on the results of the district needs assessment and shall be used to determine the types of services that are to be provided to each priority district. Potential services for a district may include monitoring adult and student practices, reviewing and reallocating district resources, developing a district leadership team, providing access to curricular content area specialists, and providing online resources and professional development.

The State Board of Education may require priority districts identified as having deficiencies in one or more core functions

of the district needs assessment to undergo an accreditation process as provided in subsection (d) of Section 2-3.25f-5 of this Code.

(c) All federal requirements apply to schools and school districts utilizing federal funds under Title I, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

(Source: P.A. 97-370, eff. 1-1-12; 98-1155, eff. 1-9-15.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.136)

Sec. 2-3.136. Class size reduction grant programs.

(a) A K-3 class size reduction grant program is created. The program shall be implemented and administered by the State Board of Education. From appropriations made for purposes of this Section, the State Board shall award grants to schools that meet the criteria established by this subsection (a) for the award of those grants.

Grants shall be awarded pursuant to application. The form and manner of applications and the criteria for the award of grants shall be prescribed by the State Board of Education. The grant criteria as so prescribed, however, shall provide that only those schools that are identified as priority schools under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code and ~~on the State Board of Education Early Academic Warning List or the academic watch list under Section 2-3.25d~~ that maintain grades kindergarten through 3 are grant eligible.

Grants awarded to eligible schools under this subsection



(a) shall be used and applied by the schools to defray the costs and expenses of operating and maintaining classes in grades kindergarten through 3 with an average class size within a specific grade of no more than 20 pupils. If a school's facilities are inadequate to allow for this specified class size, then a school may use the grant funds for teacher aides instead.

(b) A K-3 pilot class size reduction grant program is created. The program shall be implemented and administered by the State Board of Education. From appropriations made for purposes of this subsection (b), the State Board shall award grants to schools that meet the criteria established by this Section for the award of those grants.

Grants shall be awarded pursuant to application. The form and manner of application and the criteria for the award of grants shall be prescribed by the State Board of Education.

Grants awarded to eligible schools under this subsection (b) shall be used and applied by the schools to defray the costs and expenses of operating and maintaining classes in grades kindergarten through 3 of no more than 15 pupils per teacher per class. A teacher aide may not be used to meet this requirement.

(c) If a school board determines that a school is using funds awarded under this Section for purposes not authorized by this Section, then the school board, rather than the school, shall determine how the funds are used.

(d) The State Board of Education shall adopt any rules, consistent with the requirements of this Section, that are necessary to implement and administer the class size reduction grant programs.

(Source: P.A. 93-814, eff. 7-27-04; 94-566, eff. 1-1-06; 94-894, eff. 7-1-06.)

(105 ILCS 5/7-8) (from Ch. 122, par. 7-8)

Sec. 7-8. Limitation on successive petitions. No territory, nor any part thereof, which is involved in any proceeding to change the boundaries of a school district by detachment from or annexation to such school district of such territory, and which is not so detached nor annexed, shall be again involved in proceedings to change the boundaries of such school district for at least 2 ~~two~~ years after final determination of such first proceeding, unless during that 2-year ~~2-year~~ period a petition filed is substantially different than any other previously filed petition during the previous 2 years or if a school district involved is identified as a priority district under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code, is placed on ~~academic watch status or~~ the financial watch list by the State Board of Education, or is certified as being in financial difficulty during that 2-year ~~2-year~~ period or if such first proceeding involved a petition brought under Section 7-2b of this Article 7.

(Source: P.A. 93-470, eff. 8-8-03.)

(105 ILCS 5/10-17a) (from Ch. 122, par. 10-17a)

Sec. 10-17a. State, school district, and school report cards.

(1) By October 31, 2013 and October 31 of each subsequent school year, the State Board of Education, through the State Superintendent of Education, shall prepare a State report card, school district report cards, and school report cards, and shall by the most economic means provide to each school district in this State, including special charter districts and districts subject to the provisions of Article 34, the report cards for the school district and each of its schools.

(2) In addition to any information required by federal law, the State Superintendent shall determine the indicators and presentation of the school report card, which must include, at a minimum, the most current data possessed by the State Board of Education related to the following:

(A) school characteristics and student demographics, including average class size, average teaching experience, student racial/ethnic breakdown, and the percentage of students classified as low-income; the percentage of students classified as limited English proficiency; the percentage of students who have individualized education plans or 504 plans that provide for special education services; the percentage of students who annually transferred in or out of the school district; the per-pupil

operating expenditure of the school district; and the per-pupil State average operating expenditure for the district type (elementary, high school, or unit);

(B) curriculum information, including, where applicable, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or equivalent courses, dual enrollment courses, foreign language classes, school personnel resources (including Career Technical Education teachers), before and after school programs, extracurricular activities, subjects in which elective classes are offered, health and wellness initiatives (including the average number of days of Physical Education per week per student), approved programs of study, awards received, community partnerships, and special programs such as programming for the gifted and talented, students with disabilities, and work-study students;

(C) student outcomes, including, where applicable, the percentage of students deemed proficient on assessments of ~~meeting as well as exceeding~~ State standards ~~on assessments~~, the percentage of students in the eighth grade who pass Algebra, the percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary institutions (including colleges, universities, community colleges, trade/vocational schools, and training programs leading to career certification within 2 semesters of high school graduation), the percentage of students graduating from

high school who are college and career ready, ~~the percentage of students graduating from high school who are career ready,~~ and the percentage of graduates enrolled in community colleges, colleges, and universities who are in one or more courses that the community college, college, or university identifies as a developmental ~~remedial~~ course;

(D) student progress, including, where applicable, the percentage of students in the ninth grade who have earned 5 credits or more without failing more than one core class, a measure of students entering kindergarten ready to learn, a measure of growth, and the percentage of students who enter high school on track for college and career readiness; ~~and~~

(E) the school environment, including, where applicable, the percentage of students with less than 10 absences in a school year, the percentage of teachers with less than 10 absences in a school year for reasons other than professional development, leaves taken pursuant to the federal Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, long-term disability, or parental leaves, the 3-year average of the percentage of teachers returning to the school from the previous year, the number of different principals at the school in the last 6 years, 2 or more indicators from any school climate survey selected or approved by the State and administered pursuant to Section 2-3.153 of this Code, with the same or similar indicators included on school report cards for all surveys selected or approved by the State

pursuant to Section 2-3.153 of this Code, and the combined percentage of teachers rated as proficient or excellent in their most recent evaluation; and ~~and~~

(F) a school district's and its individual schools' balanced accountability measure, in accordance with Section 2-3.25a of this Code.

The school report card shall also provide information that allows for comparing the current outcome, progress, and environment data to the State average, to the school data from the past 5 years, and to the outcomes, progress, and environment of similar schools based on the type of school and enrollment of low-income, special education, and limited English proficiency students.

(3) At the discretion of the State Superintendent, the school district report card shall include a subset of the information identified in paragraphs (A) through (E) of subsection (2) of this Section, as well as information relating to the operating expense per pupil and other finances of the school district, and the State report card shall include a subset of the information identified in paragraphs (A) through (E) of subsection (2) of this Section.

(4) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Section, in consultation with key education stakeholders, the State Superintendent shall at any time have the discretion to amend or update any and all metrics on the school, district, or State report card.

(5) Annually, no more than 30 calendar days after receipt of the school district and school report cards from the State Superintendent of Education, each school district, including special charter districts and districts subject to the provisions of Article 34, shall present such report cards at a regular school board meeting subject to applicable notice requirements, post the report cards on the school district's Internet web site, if the district maintains an Internet web site, make the report cards available to a newspaper of general circulation serving the district, and, upon request, send the report cards home to a parent (unless the district does not maintain an Internet web site, in which case the report card shall be sent home to parents without request). If the district posts the report card on its Internet web site, the district shall send a written notice home to parents stating (i) that the report card is available on the web site, (ii) the address of the web site, (iii) that a printed copy of the report card will be sent to parents upon request, and (iv) the telephone number that parents may call to request a printed copy of the report card.

(6) Nothing contained in this amendatory Act of the 98th General Assembly repeals, supersedes, invalidates, or nullifies final decisions in lawsuits pending on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 98th General Assembly in Illinois courts involving the interpretation of Public Act 97-8.

(Source: P.A. 97-671, eff. 1-24-12; 98-463, eff. 8-16-13; 98-648, eff. 7-1-14.)

(105 ILCS 5/10-29)

Sec. 10-29. Remote educational programs.

(a) For purposes of this Section, "remote educational program" means an educational program delivered to students in the home or other location outside of a school building that meets all of the following criteria:

(1) A student may participate in the program only after the school district, pursuant to adopted school board policy, and a person authorized to enroll the student under Section 10-20.12b of this Code determine that a remote educational program will best serve the student's individual learning needs. The adopted school board policy shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) Criteria for determining that a remote educational program will best serve a student's individual learning needs. The criteria must include consideration of, at a minimum, a student's prior attendance, disciplinary record, and academic history.

(B) Any limitations on the number of students or grade levels that may participate in a remote educational program.

(C) A description of the process that the school district will use to approve participation in the



remote educational program. The process must include without limitation a requirement that, for any student who qualifies to receive services pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, the student's participation in a remote educational program receive prior approval from the student's individualized education program team.

(D) A description of the process the school district will use to develop and approve a written remote educational plan that meets the requirements of subdivision (5) of this subsection (a).

(E) A description of the system the school district will establish to calculate the number of clock hours a student is participating in instruction in accordance with the remote educational program.

(F) A description of the process for renewing a remote educational program at the expiration of its term.

(G) Such other terms and provisions as the school district deems necessary to provide for the establishment and delivery of a remote educational program.

(2) The school district has determined that the remote educational program's curriculum is aligned to State learning standards and that the program offers instruction

and educational experiences consistent with those given to students at the same grade level in the district.

(3) The remote educational program is delivered by instructors that meet the following qualifications:

(A) they are certificated under Article 21 of this Code;

(B) they meet applicable highly qualified criteria under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and

(C) they have responsibility for all of the following elements of the program: planning instruction, diagnosing learning needs, prescribing content delivery through class activities, assessing learning, reporting outcomes to administrators and parents and guardians, and evaluating the effects of instruction.

(4) During the period of time from and including the opening date to the closing date of the regular school term of the school district established pursuant to Section 10-19 of this Code, participation in a remote educational program may be claimed for general State aid purposes under Section 18-8.05 of this Code on any calendar day, notwithstanding whether the day is a day of pupil attendance or institute day on the school district's calendar or any other provision of law restricting instruction on that day. If the district holds year-round classes in some buildings, the district shall classify each

student's participation in a remote educational program as either on a year-round or a non-year-round schedule for purposes of claiming general State aid. Outside of the regular school term of the district, the remote educational program may be offered as part of any summer school program authorized by this Code.

(5) Each student participating in a remote educational program must have a written remote educational plan that has been approved by the school district and a person authorized to enroll the student under Section 10-20.12b of this Code. The school district and a person authorized to enroll the student under Section 10-20.12b of this Code must approve any amendment to a remote educational plan. The remote educational plan must include, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Specific achievement goals for the student aligned to State learning standards.

(B) A description of all assessments that will be used to measure student progress, which description shall indicate the assessments that will be administered at an attendance center within the school district.

(C) A description of the progress reports that will be provided to the school district and the person or persons authorized to enroll the student under Section 10-20.12b of this Code.

(D) Expectations, processes, and schedules for interaction between a teacher and student.

(E) A description of the specific responsibilities of the student's family and the school district with respect to equipment, materials, phone and Internet service, and any other requirements applicable to the home or other location outside of a school building necessary for the delivery of the remote educational program.

(F) If applicable, a description of how the remote educational program will be delivered in a manner consistent with the student's individualized education program required by Section 614(d) of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 or plan to ensure compliance with Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

(G) A description of the procedures and opportunities for participation in academic and extra-curricular activities and programs within the school district.

(H) The identification of a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult who will provide direct supervision of the program. The plan must include an acknowledgment by the parent, guardian, or other responsible adult that he or she may engage only in non-teaching duties not requiring instructional

judgment or the evaluation of a student. The plan shall designate the parent, guardian, or other responsible adult as non-teaching personnel or volunteer personnel under subsection (a) of Section 10-22.34 of this Code.

(I) The identification of a school district administrator who will oversee the remote educational program on behalf of the school district and who may be contacted by the student's parents with respect to any issues or concerns with the program.

(J) The term of the student's participation in the remote educational program, which may not extend for longer than 12 months, unless the term is renewed by the district in accordance with subdivision (7) of this subsection (a).

(K) A description of the specific location or locations in which the program will be delivered. If the remote educational program is to be delivered to a student in any location other than the student's home, the plan must include a written determination by the school district that the location will provide a learning environment appropriate for the delivery of the program. The location or locations in which the program will be delivered shall be deemed a long distance teaching reception area under subsection (a) of Section 10-22.34 of this Code.

(L) Certification by the school district that the

plan meets all other requirements of this Section.

(6) Students participating in a remote educational program must be enrolled in a school district attendance center pursuant to the school district's enrollment policy or policies. A student participating in a remote educational program must be tested as part of all assessments administered by the school district pursuant to Section 2-3.64a-5 of this Code at the attendance center in which the student is enrolled and in accordance with the attendance center's assessment policies and schedule. The student must be included within all ~~adequate yearly progress and other~~ accountability determinations for the school district and attendance center under State and federal law.

(7) The term of a student's participation in a remote educational program may not extend for longer than 12 months, unless the term is renewed by the school district. The district may only renew a student's participation in a remote educational program following an evaluation of the student's progress in the program, a determination that the student's continuation in the program will best serve the student's individual learning needs, and an amendment to the student's written remote educational plan addressing any changes for the upcoming term of the program.

(b) A school district may, by resolution of its school board, establish a remote educational program.

(c) Clock hours of instruction by students in a remote educational program meeting the requirements of this Section may be claimed by the school district and shall be counted as school work for general State aid purposes in accordance with and subject to the limitations of Section 18-8.05 of this Code.

(d) The impact of remote educational programs on wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment of educational employees within the school district shall be subject to local collective bargaining agreements.

(e) The use of a home or other location outside of a school building for a remote educational program shall not cause the home or other location to be deemed a public school facility.

(f) A remote educational program may be used, but is not required, for instruction delivered to a student in the home or other location outside of a school building that is not claimed for general State aid purposes under Section 18-8.05 of this Code.

(g) School districts that, pursuant to this Section, adopt a policy for a remote educational program must submit to the State Board of Education a copy of the policy and any amendments thereto, as well as data on student participation in a format specified by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education may perform or contract with an outside entity to perform an evaluation of remote educational programs in this State.

(h) The State Board of Education may adopt any rules

necessary to ensure compliance by remote educational programs with the requirements of this Section and other applicable legal requirements.

(Source: P.A. 97-339, eff. 8-12-11; 98-972, eff. 8-15-14.)

(105 ILCS 5/11E-120)

Sec. 11E-120. Limitation on successive petitions.

(a) No affected district shall be again involved in proceedings under this Article for at least 2 years after a final non-procedural determination of the first proceeding, unless during that 2-year ~~2-year~~ period a petition filed is substantially different than any other previously filed petition during the previous 2 years or if an affected district is identified as a priority district under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code, is placed on ~~academic watch status or~~ the financial watch list by the State Board of Education, or is certified as being in financial difficulty during that 2-year ~~2-year~~ period.

(b) Nothing contained in this Section shall be deemed to limit or restrict the ability of an elementary district to join an optional elementary unit district in accordance with the terms and provisions of subsection (d) of Section 11E-30 of this Code.

(Source: P.A. 94-1019, eff. 7-10-06.)

(105 ILCS 5/21B-70)

Sec. 21B-70. Illinois Teaching Excellence Program.



(a) As used in this Section:

"Poverty or low-performing school" means a school identified as a priority school under Section 2-3.25d-5 of this Code ~~in academic early warning status or academic watch status~~ or a school in which 50% or more of its students are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches.

"Qualified educator" means a teacher or school counselor currently employed in a school district who is in the process of obtaining certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or who has completed certification and holds a current Professional Educator License with a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards designation or a retired teacher or school counselor who holds a Professional Educator License with a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards designation.

(b) Beginning on July 1, 2011, any funds appropriated for the Illinois Teaching Excellence Program must be used to provide monetary assistance and incentives for qualified educators who are employed by school districts and who have or are in the process of obtaining licensure through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The goal of the program is to improve instruction and student performance.

The State Board of Education shall allocate an amount as annually appropriated by the General Assembly for the Illinois Teaching Excellence Program for (i) application fees for each qualified educator seeking to complete certification through

the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, to be paid directly to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and (ii) incentives for each qualified educator to be distributed to the respective school district. The school district shall distribute this payment to each eligible teacher or school counselor as a single payment.

The State Board of Education's annual budget must set out by separate line item the appropriation for the program. Unless otherwise provided by appropriation, qualified educators are eligible for monetary assistance and incentives outlined in subsection (c) of this Section.

(c) When there are adequate funds available, monetary assistance and incentives shall include the following:

(1) A maximum of \$2,000 towards the application fee for up to 750 teachers or school counselors in a poverty or low-performing school who apply on a first-come, first-serve basis for National Board certification.

(2) A maximum of \$2,000 towards the application fee for up to 250 teachers or school counselors in a school other than a poverty or low-performing school who apply on a first-come, first-serve basis for National Board certification. However, if there were fewer than 750 individuals supported in item (1) of this subsection (c), then the number supported in this item (2) may be increased as such that the combination of item (1) of this subsection (c) and this item (2) shall equal 1,000 applicants.

(3) A maximum of \$1,000 towards the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' renewal application fee.

(4) (Blank).

(5) An annual incentive equal to \$1,500, which shall be paid to each qualified educator currently employed in a school district who holds both a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards designation and a current corresponding certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and who agrees, in writing, to provide at least 30 hours of mentoring or National Board for Professional Teaching Standards professional development or both during the school year to classroom teachers or school counselors, as applicable. Funds must be dispersed on a first-come, first-serve basis, with priority given to poverty or low-performing schools. Mentoring shall include, either singly or in combination, the following:

(A) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification candidates.

(B) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards re-take candidates.

(C) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards renewal candidates.

(D) (Blank).

Funds may also be used for instructional leadership training for qualified educators interested in supporting

implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards or teaching and learning priorities of the State Board of Education or both.

(Source: P.A. 97-607, eff. 8-26-11; 98-646, eff. 7-1-14.)

Section 10. The School Breakfast and Lunch Program Act is amended by changing Section 2.5 as follows:

(105 ILCS 125/2.5)

Sec. 2.5. Breakfast incentive program. The State Board of Education shall fund a breakfast incentive program comprised of the components described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Section, provided that a separate appropriation is made for the purposes of this Section. The State Board of Education may allocate the appropriation among the program components in whatever manner the State Board of Education finds will best serve the goal of increasing participation in school breakfast programs. If the amount of the appropriation allocated under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of this Section is insufficient to fund all claims submitted under that particular paragraph, the claims under that paragraph shall be prorated.

(1) Additional funding incentive. The State Board of Education may reimburse each sponsor of a school breakfast program at least an additional \$0.10 for each free, reduced-price, and paid breakfast served over and above the number of such breakfasts served in the same month during

the preceding year.

(2) Start-up incentive. The State Board of Education may make grants to school boards and welfare centers that agree to start a school breakfast program in one or more schools or other sites. First priority for these grants shall be given through August 15 to schools in which 40% or more of their students are eligible for free and reduced price meals, based on the school district's previous year's October claim, under the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). Depending on the availability of funds and the rate at which funds are being utilized, the State Board of Education is authorized to allow additional schools or other sites to receive these grants in the order in which they are received by the State Board of Education. The amount of the grant shall be \$3,500 for each qualifying school or site in which a school breakfast program is started. The grants shall be used to pay the start-up costs for the school breakfast program, including equipment, supplies, and program promotion, but shall not be used for food, labor, or other recurring operational costs. Applications for the grants shall be made to the State Board of Education on forms designated by the State Board of Education. Any grantee that fails to operate a school breakfast program for at least 3 years after receipt of a grant shall refund the amount of the grant to the State Board of Education.

(3) Non-traditional breakfast incentive. Understanding that there are barriers to implementing a school breakfast program in a traditional setting such as in a cafeteria, the State Board of Education may make grants to school boards and welfare centers to offer the school breakfast program in non-traditional settings or using non-traditional methods. Priority will be given to applications through August 15 of each year from schools that are identified as priority schools under Section 2-3.25d-5 of the School Code ~~on the Early Academic Warning List~~. Depending on the availability of funds and the rate at which funds are being utilized, the State Board of Education is authorized to allow additional schools or other sites to receive these grants in the order in which they are received by the State Board of Education.

(Source: P.A. 96-158, eff. 8-7-09.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.25m rep.)

Section 15. The School Code is amended by repealing Section 2-3.25m.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2015.

## **Appendix R: Attendance Awareness Joint Resolution**

## **Attendance Awareness House Resolution**

**WHEREAS the early years are a critical period in children's learning and development, and set the foundation for higher level thinking skills later in life; and**

**WHEREAS missing too many days of school can make it difficult for youth to stay on track in classes and maintain momentum for graduation from high school; and**

**WHEREAS chronic absenteeism is a powerful predictor of the students who may eventually drop out of school; and**

**WHEREAS chronic absenteeism can lead to poor educational and life outcomes for children; and**

**WHEREAS students with documented disabilities are more likely to be absent from school than their same-aged peers; and**

**WHEREAS children and youth who are homeless benefit from being in school and yet are more likely to be chronically absent; and**

**WHEREAS the hard work of educators is undermined by chronic absenteeism among students; and**

**WHEREAS positive re-engagement strategies can decrease chronic absenteeism and youth involvement in the juvenile justice system; and**

**WHEREAS children with involved families have better school attendance, lower suspension rates and overall higher graduation rates; and**

**WHEREAS students who are in school every day are much more likely to engage in positive behaviors; and**

**WHEREAS community involvement decreases chronic absenteeism and potentially increases the local quality of life; and**

**WHEREAS school attendance promotes college and career readiness, thereby increasing the number of students in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials, therefore be it**



**RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,**  
that we encourage the Illinois State Board of Education and each school  
district in this State to consider the benefits of the attendance awareness  
campaign *Every Student Counts, Every Day Matters* encouraged by the Illinois  
Attendance Commission; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** that suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the Illinois  
State Board of Education and the Regional Offices of Education.

## **Appendix S: Binder of Resources**



## Illinois Department of Children and Family Services — Office of Education & Transition Services

Illinois DCFS is the largest child welfare agency to earn accreditation from the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services. From helping more than 15,000 Illinois children find permanent, loving homes through adoption and reunifying over 21,000 children with their birth families over the last decade; to the licensing of nearly 11,000 day care facilities; answering of more than 220,000 calls to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and provision of services to 60,000 families annually; the department and its 2,600 staff are dedicated to providing unrivaled professional service to ensure safe, loving homes and brighter futures for every child in Illinois.

There are approximately 12,000 youth in Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade across the state. DCFS is committed to helping children do well in school, stay in school and find the best schools available for their emerging skills. From early childhood through college-level training, the attention of caseworkers, caregivers and other staff to the educational programs of children in care is critical. DCFS strives to improve educational outcomes of children in care through a range of services provided through the Office of Education & Transition Services:

- **School Readiness Team:** Ensures that all children 3-5 years old are enrolled in a quality early childhood program or Head Start within 5 days of entering care. The team removes barriers to enrollment in order to increase and support attendance and achievement for the child.
- **Education Advisors:** Help youth in the care of DCFS receive appropriate education services through advocacy, consultation and support. All youth in preschool, elementary school, junior high, high school and college or vocational training programs are eligible to receive assistance from an education advisor. Education advisors also provide training to child welfare staff, foster parents and caregivers, youth, school staff and others on education topics. The education advisors are part of the Educational Access Project, a program that works to improve educational services for children in foster care.
- **School Resource Guide:** This guide is being created to assist school and community agencies on understanding all aspects of school issues including attendance and where to get help.
- DCFS offers the Statewide Provider Database which provides information and connects caseworkers and community agencies to service providers related to parenting, attendance, and school issues across the state.  
<https://illinoisoutcomes.dcps.illinois.gov/>
- Support is provided to caseworkers who provide monthly monitoring of school attendance of youth in care as well as case management. Caseworkers can also refer resources such as parenting classes, counseling, tutoring if school recommended and family meetings which could include school personnel.

DCFS encourages the building of strong relationships with parents/ foster parents and school systems. In addition to knowing the teacher/s, it is important to know the support staff—school social workers, counselors and paraprofessionals.

### Helpful Resources:

**The School Enrollment Guide** highlights requirements, definitions and other information helpful to foster parents when enrolling children in school:

[https://www.illinois.gov/dcps/brighterfutures/independence/Documents/School\\_Enrollment\\_and\\_Placement\\_Guidance\\_7-2015.pdf](https://www.illinois.gov/dcps/brighterfutures/independence/Documents/School_Enrollment_and_Placement_Guidance_7-2015.pdf)

**Center for Child Welfare and Education Advisors:**

<http://ccwe.niu.edu/ccwe/advisors/index.shtml>

**National Child Traumatic Stress Network Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators:**

[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/NCTSN\\_ChildTraumaToolkitForEducators.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/NCTSN_ChildTraumaToolkitForEducators.pdf)

**Family Advocacy Centers** provide support to caseworkers and to families by helping them to deal with the issues that can affect school attendance and success. They provide general counseling, parenting education as well as assist families with community linkages and applications for community resources. Many Family Advocacy Centers offer services unique to their home communities. For more information, please call 1-888-280-1176.

<https://www.illinois.gov/dcps/lovinghomes/families/Pages/Family-Preservation-Services.aspx>

### Have a question?

Contact: Dr. Tiffany Gholson, Office of Education and Transition Services - Associate Deputy Director – tel. 312-814-2409

[Tiffany.Gholson@illinois.gov](mailto:Tiffany.Gholson@illinois.gov)

# Inclusion



## Early Childhood Inclusion for Each and Every Child in Illinois

Inclusion is about each and every child.

Inclusion is the principle that supports the education of children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers rather than separately. Both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Sec. 504) require schools and agencies to provide equal education opportunities for children with disabilities. The primary source for the inclusion requirement is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. For preschool and school age children (ages 3-21), IDEA requires that children with disabilities be educated in the “least restrictive environment” (§1412(a)(5) and §1413(a)(1)). For infants and toddlers (ages

0-3) with disabilities, IDEA promotes the use of “natural environments” for early intervention services (§1432(4)(G)).

Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development, friendships with peers, and belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities.

Center for Language and  
Early Child Development



Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman  
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Education

## Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion

“Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.”

Definition from the Joint  
Position Statement of Inclusion  
from Division of Early  
Childhood (DEC) and National  
Association for the Education of  
Young Children (NAEYC)

“Being included at age 3 laid  
the foundation for success  
when my son entered  
kindergarten.”

Parent

## What Is an Early Childhood Program?

According to the federal government, an  
*Early Childhood Program*  
is a program that includes children with disabilities and the  
majority of the children in the program are non-disabled children.

These programs may include, but are not limited to:

- Head Start Programs;
- Kindergartens;
- Preschool classes offered to an eligible pre-kindergarten population by the public school system;
- Private kindergartens or preschools; *and*
- Group child development centers or childcare.

## Early Childhood Programs Should:

- Promote learning that is child-centered and active
- Provide learning activities on the developmental levels of the children
- Have activities that are relevant to the children in the program
- Offer a variety of hands-on learning activities and materials in learning centers
- Provide learning experiences that correspond to the interest of the children
- Include conversations and interactions between the children and adults throughout the day







## Benefits of High Quality Inclusive Preschool for Each and Every Child

- ★ Research indicates that meaningful inclusion is beneficial to children with and without disabilities across a variety for developmental domains.
- ★ Children with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities and the highest needs, can make significant developmental and learning progress in inclusive settings.
- ★ Children with disabilities in inclusive early childhood programs also demonstrate stronger social-emotional skills than their peers in separate settings.
- ★ Meaningful inclusion in high quality early childhood programs can support children with disabilities in reaching their full potential resulting in broad societal benefits.

US Dept. of Health and Human Services and US Dept. of Education's Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, Full Text, Sept. 14, 2015.



## Defining Features of Inclusion

### Access:

Providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.



### Participation:

Using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child.

### Supports:

Broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.

From the Joint Position Statement of Inclusion from Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

# Where Can Inclusion Happen for My Child?

Anywhere young children are together! Some common options are:



## How Can My Child Receive Special Education Services in a High Quality Inclusive Environment?

Itinerant	Team Teaching	Blended
Special educator and related service staff deliver support in classrooms, moving from room to room.	Two teachers (special and general educator) team together to teach all the children.	One teacher dually licensed to teach both special and general education teaches all the children together.

The above supports for inclusion could take place wherever young children are cared for and educated. Some common options are community childcares, Head Starts, Preschool For All classrooms, and early childhood classrooms in public schools.

With each support the goal is to provide special education services to children with disabilities in the high quality program that includes children with and without disabilities.



## References & Resources

CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge. (2012). Policy advisory: The law on inclusive education (Rev. ed.). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author.

DEC/NAEYC. (2009). Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute available as a free download from: [http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early\\_Childhood\\_Inclusion](http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion)

Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

US Dept. of Health and Human Services and US Dept. of Education's Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, Full Text, Sept. 14, 2015.



# Inclusión



## Inclusión de la Infancia Temprana para Cada uno y Todos los Niños en Illinois

**Inclusión es de cada uno y todos los niños.**

La inclusión es el principio que apoya la educación de los niños con discapacidades junto a sus compañeros sin discapacidades más que por separado. Tanto los estadounidenses con Acta de Discapacidad (ADA) y la Sección 504 del Acta de Rehabilitación (Sección 504) requieren escuelas y agencias proveer oportunidades de educación igual para los niños con discapacidades. La Fuente principal del requisito de la inclusión es la Acta de Educación para Individuos con Discapacidades o IDEA. Para niños en edad preescolar y los niños en edad escolar (edades 3-21), IDEA requiere que los niños con discapacidades sean educados en el “ambiente menos restrictivo” (1421(a)(5) y

1413 (a)(1)). Para los bebés y niños pequeños (edades 0-3) con discapacidades, IDEA promueve el uso de “ambientes naturales” para servicios de intervención temprana (1432 (4)(G)).

La inclusión en programas de la infancia temprana se refiere a la inclusión de niños con discapacidades; manteniendo altas expectativas y promover intencionalmente la participación en todas las actividades de aprendizaje y sociales, facilitado por el alojamiento individual; utilizando soportes y servicios basados en la evidencia para fomentar su desarrollo, amistades con sus compañeros y pertenencia. Esto se aplica a todos los niños pequeños con discapacidad, niños con discapacidad más suave, y niños con discapacidad más significativas.

**Centro de Lenguaje y  
Desarrollo de la Infancia  
Temprana**



**Illinois State Board of Education**

James T. Meeks, Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Education



## Definición de Inclusión de la Infancia Temprana

“La inclusión de la infancia temprana encarna los valores, políticas y prácticas que apoyan el derecho de todos los niños y los jóvenes y sus familias, independientemente de su capacidad, de participar en una amplia variedad de actividades y contextos como miembros de pleno derecho de familias, comunidades y la sociedad. Los resultados deseados de las experiencias inclusivas de los niños con y sin discapacidad y sus familias incluyen un sentido de pertenencia y membresía, relaciones sociales positivas y amistades y el desarrollo y el aprendizaje para alcanzar su máximo potencial. Las características que definen la inclusión se pueden utilizar para indentificar la calidad de los programas de la infancia temprana y los servicios son el acceso, la participación y apoyos.”

Definición de la declaración de posición conjunta sobre la Inclusión de la división de la Infancia Temprana (DEC) y la Asociación Nacional para la Educación de los Niños (NAEYC)

“Ser incluido a los 3 años sentó las bases para el éxito cuando my hijo entró en el jardín de infantes”  
Padre

## ¿Qué es un Programa de la Infancia Temprana?

Según el gobierno federal, un *Programa de Educación Temprana* es un programa que incluye a niños con discapacidades y la mayoría de los niños en el programa que no tienen discapacidades.

Estos programas pueden incluir, pero no se limitan a:

- Programas de Head Start
- Jardines de Infantes
- Clases preescolares de una población de pre-kinder ofrecidas por el sistema de las escuela públicas
- Guarderías privadas o programas preescolares; y
- Centros de desarrollo infantil o guardería

## Los programas de la Infancia Temprana debe:

- Promover el aprendizaje activo y centrado en el niño
- Proporcionar actividades de aprendizaje en los niveles de desarrollo de los niños
- Tener actividades que son relevantes para los niños en el programa
- Ofrecer una variedad de actividades de aprendizaje prácticas y materiales en centros de aprendizaje
- Proporcionar experiencias de aprendizaje que corresponde a los intereses de los niños y
- Incluir conversaciones e interacciones entre los niños y adultos durante todo el día





## Beneficios Inclusivos de Alta Calidad de Preescolares para Cada Uno y Todos Los Niños

- ★ Las investigaciones indican que la inclusión significativa es beneficiosa para niños con y sin discapacidad a través de una variedad de dominios de desarrollo.
- ★ Los niños con discapacidad significante, incluyendo aquellos con la más importante discapacidad y las mayores necesidades, pueden contribuir de manera significativa el desarrollo y progreso de aprendizaje en ambientes inclusivos.
- ★ Los niños con discapacidad en programas inclusivos de la infancia temprana también demuestran habilidades sociales y emocionales más fuertes que sus compañeros en ambientes separados.
- ★ La inclusión significativa en programas de la infancia temprana de alta calidad puede apoyar a niños con discapacidad en el alcance de su máximo potencial resultando en grandes beneficios para la sociedad.

Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de los Estados Unidos y la Declaración Política del Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos sobre la Inclusión de Niños con Discapacidades en Programas de la Infancia Temprana, Texto Completo, 14 de Septiembre de 2015.



## Definir las Características de la Inclusión

### Acceso:

Ofreciendo una amplia gama de actividades y ambientes para todos los niños, eliminando barreras físicas y ofreciendo múltiples maneras de promover el aprendizaje y desarrollo.



### Participación:

Usando una variedad de métodos de enseñanza para promover la participación en el juego y aprender las actividades y un sentido de pertenencia para cada niño.

### Apoyar:

Aspectos más amplios del sistema como desarrollo profesional, incentivos para la inclusión y oportunidades para la comunicación y colaboración entre familias y profesionales para asegurar la inclusión de alta calidad.

De la declaración de posición conjunta sobre la Inclusión de la división de la Infancia Temprana (DEC) y la Asociación Nacional para la Educación de los Niños (NAEYC)

## ¿Donde Puede Ocurrir la Inclusión para Mi Hijo(a)?

¡En cualquier lugar que los niños pequeños estén juntos! Algunas opciones comunes son:



## ¿Cómo Puede Mi Hijo(a) Recibir Servicios de Educación Especial en un Ambiente Inclusivo de Alta Calidad?

Itinerante	Enseñanza en Equipo	Mezclado
El educador especial y el personal del servicio relacionado brindan apoyo en el salón de clase, moviendose de salón a salón.	Dos profesores (educador especial y general) se juntan en equipo para enseñar a todos los niños.	Un profesor con doble licencia para enseñar educación especial y general enseña a todos los niños juntos.

Los soportes anteriores para la inclusión podrían ocurrir donde los niños son cuidados y educados. Algunas opciones comunes son cuidado de niños en la comunidad, Programa de Head start, Jardín de Infantes, y salones de clase de infancia temprana en escuelas públicas.

Con cada apoyo el objetivo es proporcionar servicios de educación especial a niños con discapacidad en el programa de alta calidad que incluye a niños con y sin discapacidad.



## Referencias y Recursos

CONECTAR: El Centro para movilizar el conocimiento de la Infancia Temprana. (2012). Asesor de la Política: La ley de educación inclusiva (Rev. ed.). Colina de la Capilla: La Universidad de Carolina del Norte, Instituto del Desarrollo Infantil de FPG, Autor.

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2004 Acta de Mejoramiento para la Educación de Individuos con Discapacidad 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.

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