




Every Day Counts Cohort Meeting

February 18, 2026



Logistics

Before we get started,

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

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

Meet the Illinois State Board of Education SCTAC team

- **Carl Amos**- Safe and Healthy Climate
- **Nanette Coley**-Safe and Healthy Climate
- **Sarah Littrell**- Supervisor, Wellness and Student Care
- **Theresa Olsen**- Wellness and Student Care



Agenda

- Inclusive Welcome
- Resource Spotlight
- **Breakout Discussion**
- Announcements
- Intentional Close



The purpose of this cohort

☀ Everyday Counts Illinois

Student Engagement Cohort on Chronic Absenteeism

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

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

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

Inclusive Welcome

2 Word Check-in

Inclusive Welcome

Two
Word
Check-In



Share 2 words
that describe
how you are
feeling



SEL
Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness

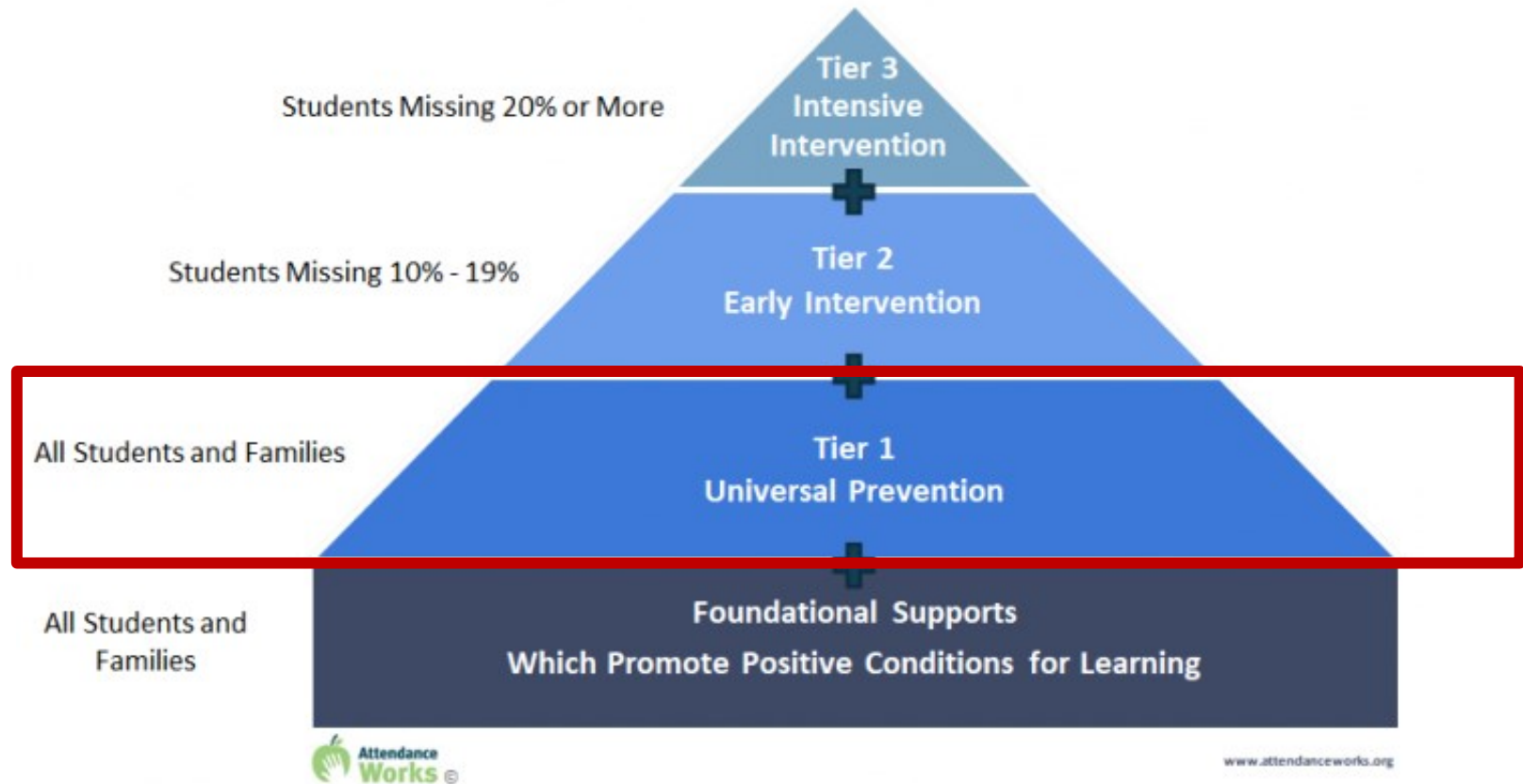
Tap one of the words on the Mood Meter



[Mood Metter Graphic for 2 word check in](#)
[Mood Meter - Free Printables](#)

Attendance Playbook – Tiered Interventions

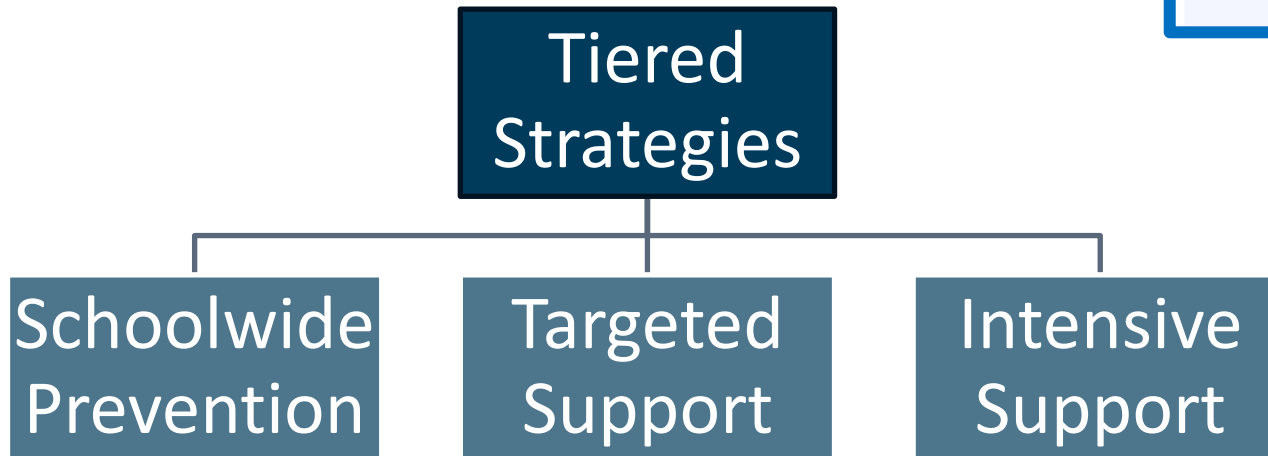
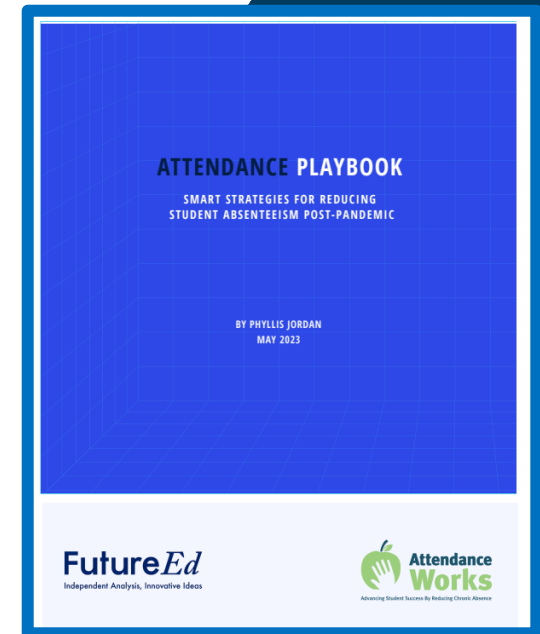
Tiered Supports for Improving Attendance



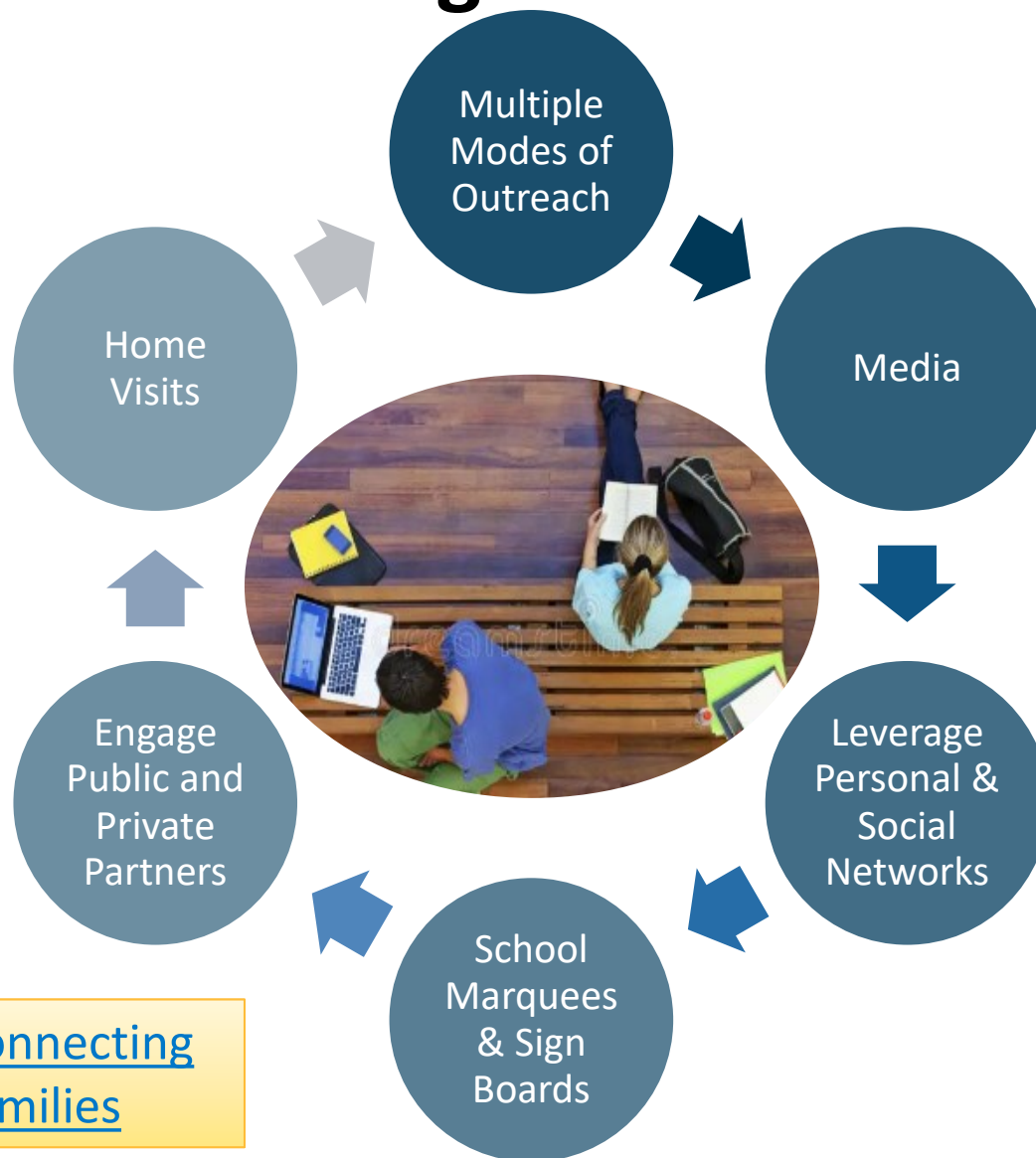
Source: Attendance Works; <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

Attendance Playbook

- Developed in collaboration between [FutureEd](#) and [Attendance Works](#) – May 2023
- Examples of evidence-based tiered strategies for attendance



Connecting with Families



[Strategies for Connecting Students and Families](#)

Student-Teacher Relationships

Cultivating Student Belonging

- Strong teacher-student relationships foster students' feelings of acceptance and inclusion, enhancing social-emotional well-being.

Role of Teacher Empathy

- Teacher empathy supports emotional and cognitive development, promoting trust and reducing student anxiety.

Impact of Teacher Beliefs

- Growth-oriented teacher beliefs encourage motivation and resilience, shaping positive student mindsets and engagement.

Teacher Behaviors and Classroom Climate

- Fair, consistent, and empathetic teacher behaviors create inclusive climates that foster participation and perseverance.

Relevant and Culturally Relevant Instruction

- Content related to real life **increases** engagement and achievement
- Culturally relevant content is associated with improved attendance



Build Connections for Classrooms

- Full plan; 30 min
- Help students relate to content
- Multi-lingual

Elevating Student Voice in Education

- Article with strategies and case studies
- Empower students

Restorative Practices

- Creates a safer, fairer school climate shown to improve attendance
- Most effective when schools completely shift from punitive disciplinary frameworks
- All staff is involved, and additional training is required.

[Restorative Practices for School Discipline, Explained](#)

- Article by FutureEd
- Brief overview of framework

[International Institute for Restorative Practices](#)

- Accredited graduate school
- Training, research and practical applications



Summer Learning/Afterschool Programs

- **Strengthening School–Community Partnerships That Support Attendance**

FutureEd highlights that districts partnering with community organizations can increase engagement, capacity, and space for safe in-person programs.

- **Increasing Engagement Through Enrichment + Academics**

Traditional summer school resembles regular school, which many students avoid. FutureEd recommends blending sports, recreation, arts, and enrichment with academic learning.

- **Providing Safe, Structured Environments During High-Risk Months.**

Many chronic absentees are disconnected during summer, losing academic ground and disengaging socially.

Positive Greetings at the Door



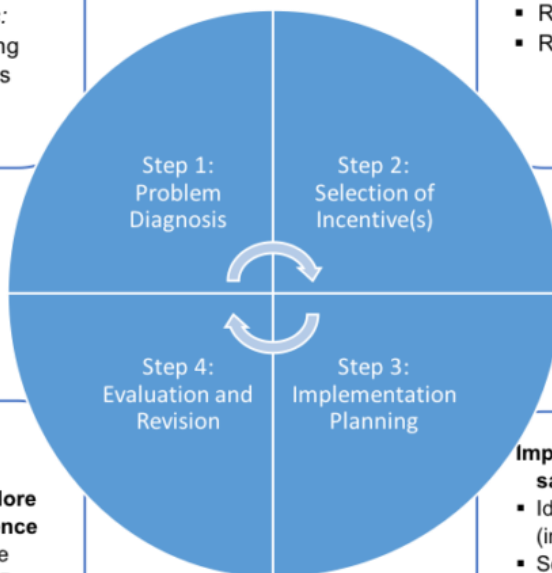
Incentives

Employ behavioral insights to identify myths, barriers and aversion

- *Questions:* In which grades, schools, families do we see high rates of absences? When are students absent? Why?
- *Potential Behavioral Reasons:*
- Incorrect beliefs/ understanding
- Overload/ Planning challenges related to logistics
- Low motivation or trust

Develop a theory of action for which incentive mechanisms can reduce absences

- Define problem *behavior*
- Hypothesize *mechanisms* for behavior change:
- Encouragement
- Recognition
- Reward



Use evidence on incentives' effectiveness to refine implementation and further explore the root causes of student absence

- How did the use of this incentive work? Did it reduce absences? By how much, and compared to whom?
- Why did it work or not? What other mechanisms might be at play?
- What designs and tests could better match other types of incentives with those other mechanisms?

Implement incentives to increase salience and decrease trade-offs

- Identify incentive recipient and level (individual, group or family)
- Select frequency and intensity
- Scope and amount
- Who delivers the incentive?
- What is the attendance behavior (reaching a target, any improvement)
- Time lag from behavior to receiving incentive
- Amount

Rethinking Recess

- Abundant research on the benefits of recess on learning and school climate
- Consistently supervised recess can be a supportive and engaging experience for all
- [Public Act 102-0357](#)- all public schools provide daily time for supervised, unstructured, child-directed play for all students in kindergarten through fifth grade



ISBE Play Time Guidance

- Update December 2025
- Benefits of play, FAQ, links to additional resources

Playworks

- Creates environments where every child can join
- Game library, Tools & Tips, Recess Lab

Breakout Room Discussion

Tier I Strategies – Universal Supports

- Any experience with strategies?
- Implementation challenges
- A strategy you would like to try?

Engaging with Families

Relationships

Relevant Instruction

Restorative Practices

Summer/Afterschool

Positive

Incentives

Rethinking Recess

Want to learn more about Tiered Interventions for Attendance?

[Examples of tiered supports](#)

[Link to other resources for planning tiered responses for attendance](#)

Source: Attendance Works; <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

Intentional Close

Next Steps...

What is **one strategy** you learned about today that you would like to focus on in your school or district?

Self-management

Responsible Decision
Making

Announcements



Next Meeting Date: March 18, 2026



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

Contact Information

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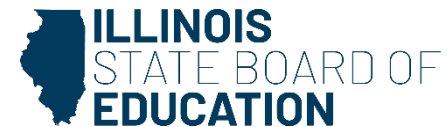
Theresa Olsen: tolsen@isbe.net

Email: everydaycounts@isbe.net

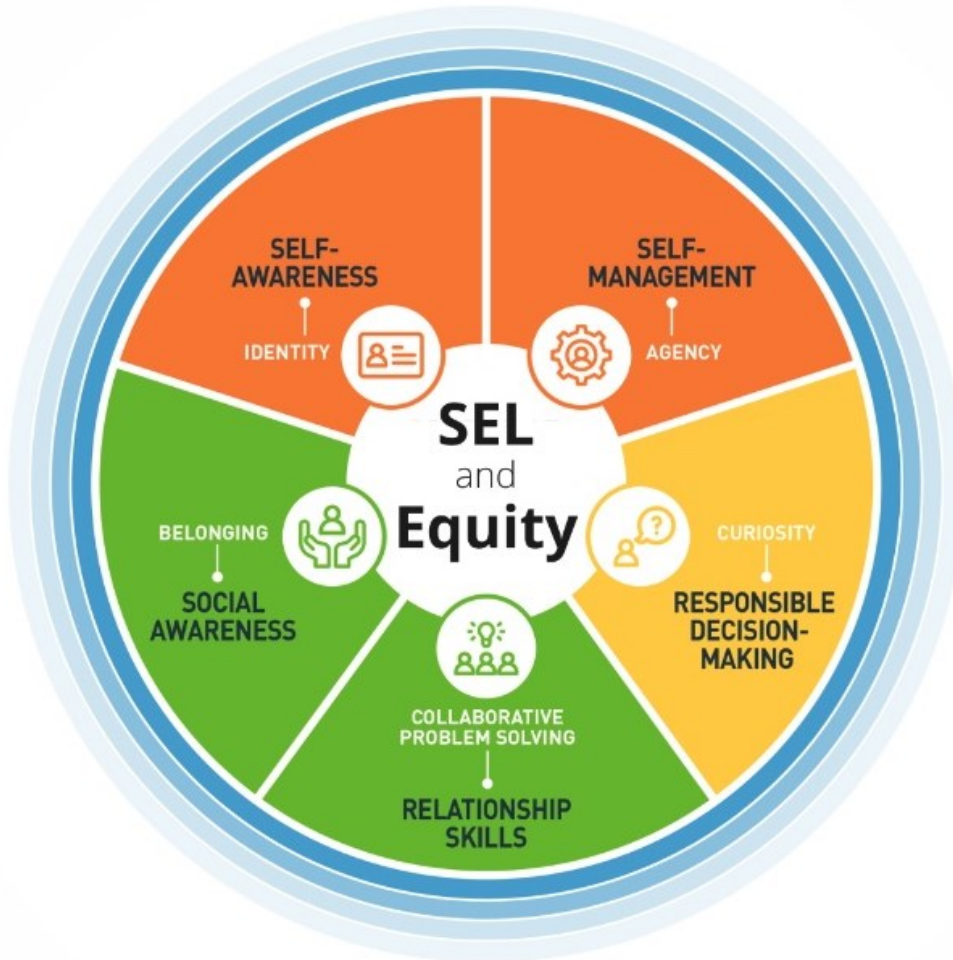
[ISBE Chronic Absenteeism Website](#)

SEL as a Strategy - Resources

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



CASEL Resources



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

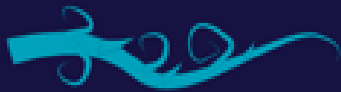
Thank you



One **rose**, or something positive that happened this week, is



One **bud**, or something that I'm looking forward to next week, is



One **thorn**, or something that I need help with, is



One thing I will try next week to **turn my thorn into a rose** is



PANORAMA
EDUCATION