



# **Welcome to the Attendance Workshop!**

**8:30am-9:00am: Sign-in, Refreshments, and Networking**





# **Welcome and Opening Activity**

## **Melissa Shields, ALSDE**



# **Understanding Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism:**

## **Dan Stephens, United Way**





## Sources:

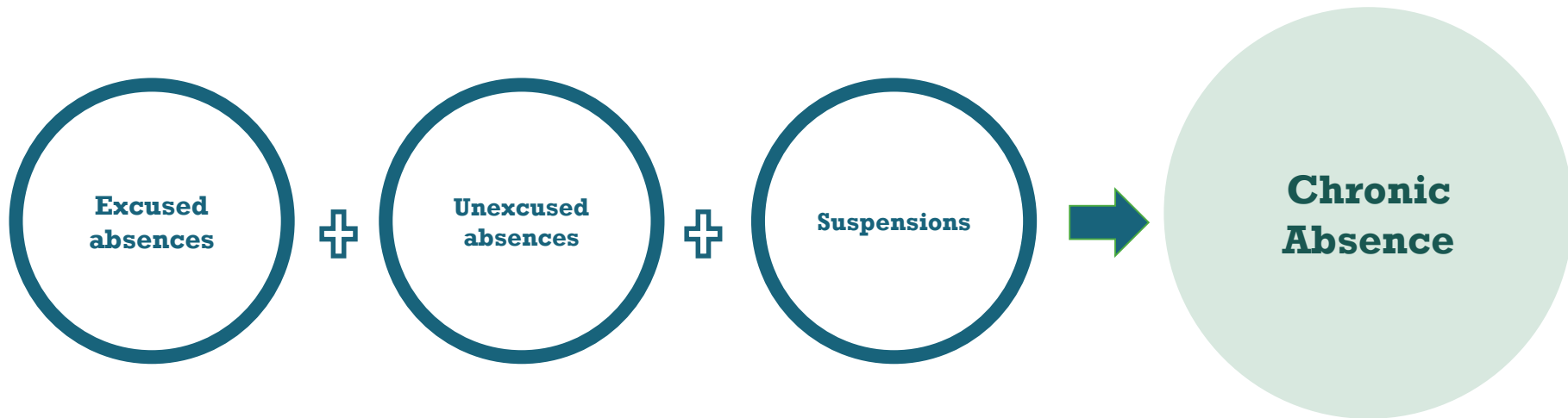
Many of the slides that follow were developed by the  
Attendance Works organization:

[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



## What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. Attendance Works recommends defining it as **missing 10% or more of school for any reason.**



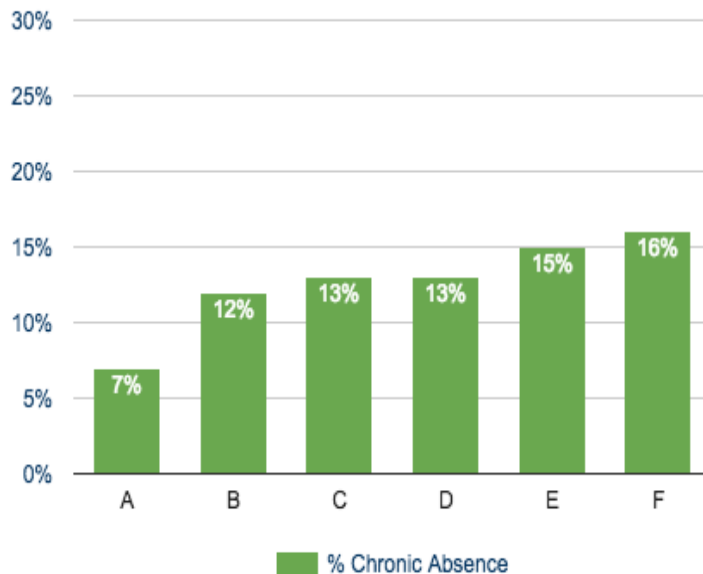
Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).



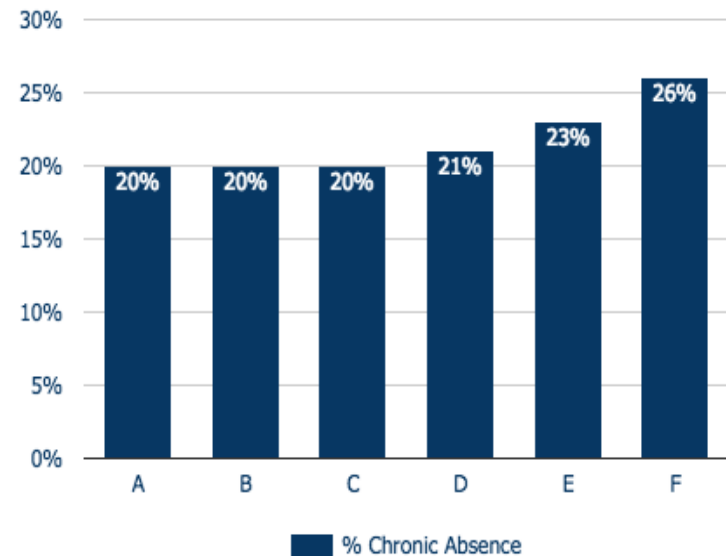
## Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

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



## Chronic Early Absence Connected to Poor Long- Term Academic Outcomes

Chronic absence in  
kindergarten

Lower levels of  
literacy in first grade

Lower achievement as  
far out as fifth grade

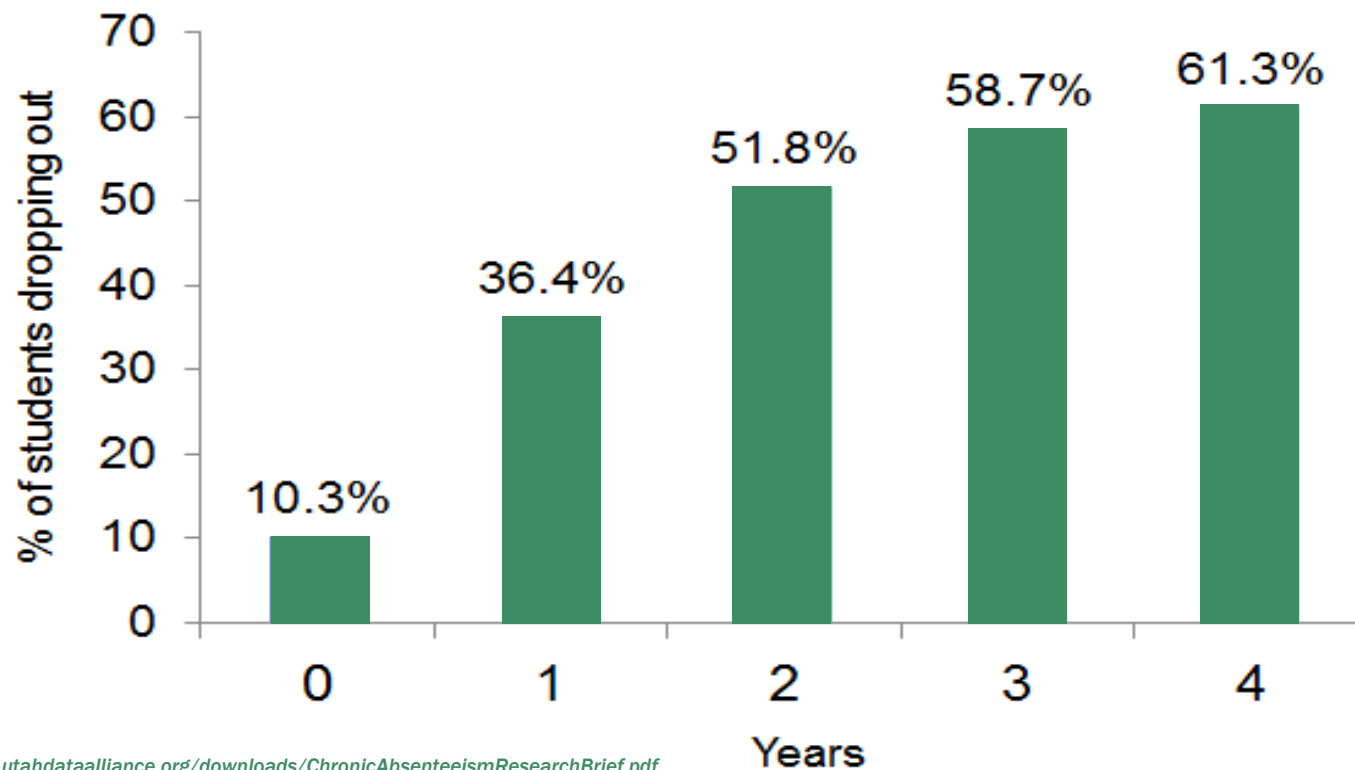
A Rhode Island Data Hub analysis found that compared to kindergartners who attend regularly, those chronically absent:

- Scored **20% lower in reading and math** in later grades and gap grows
- **2X** as likely to be **retained** in grade.
- **2X** likely to be **suspended** by the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Likely to continue being chronically absent



## The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative

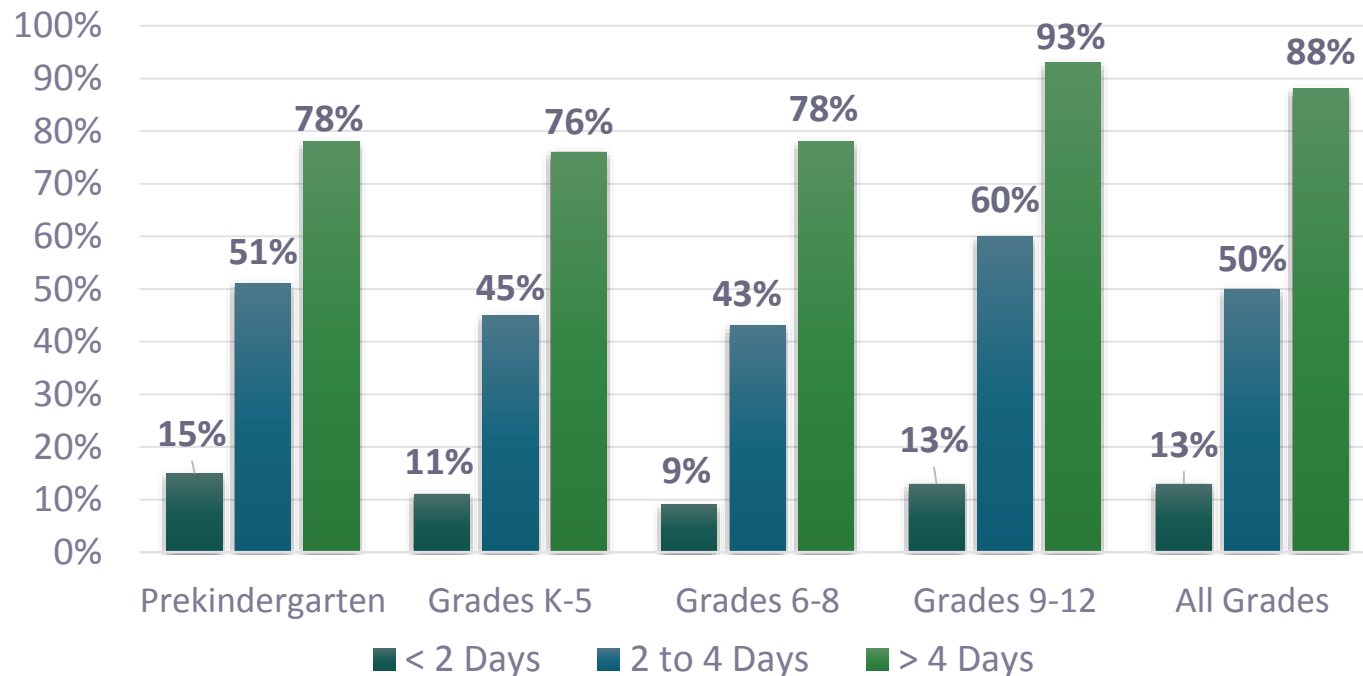
### Proportion of Students Dropping Out by Number of Years the Student was Chronically Absent from 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades





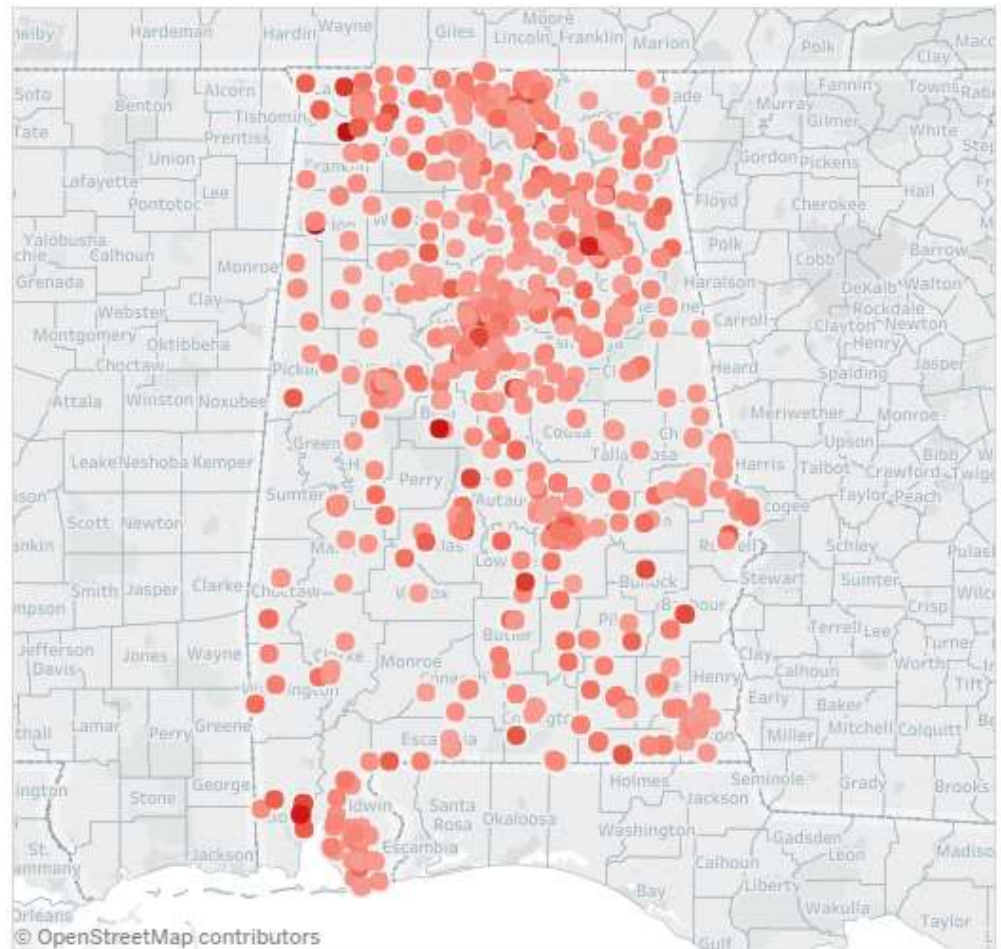
## The first month of school predicts chronic absence

- Baltimore students who missed 2-4 days of school in September were **5 times** as likely to be chronically absent.
- Students who missed 5 or more days of school in September were **16 times** as likely to be chronically absent.



# % Students Absent 15 or More Days

10.0% 100.0%



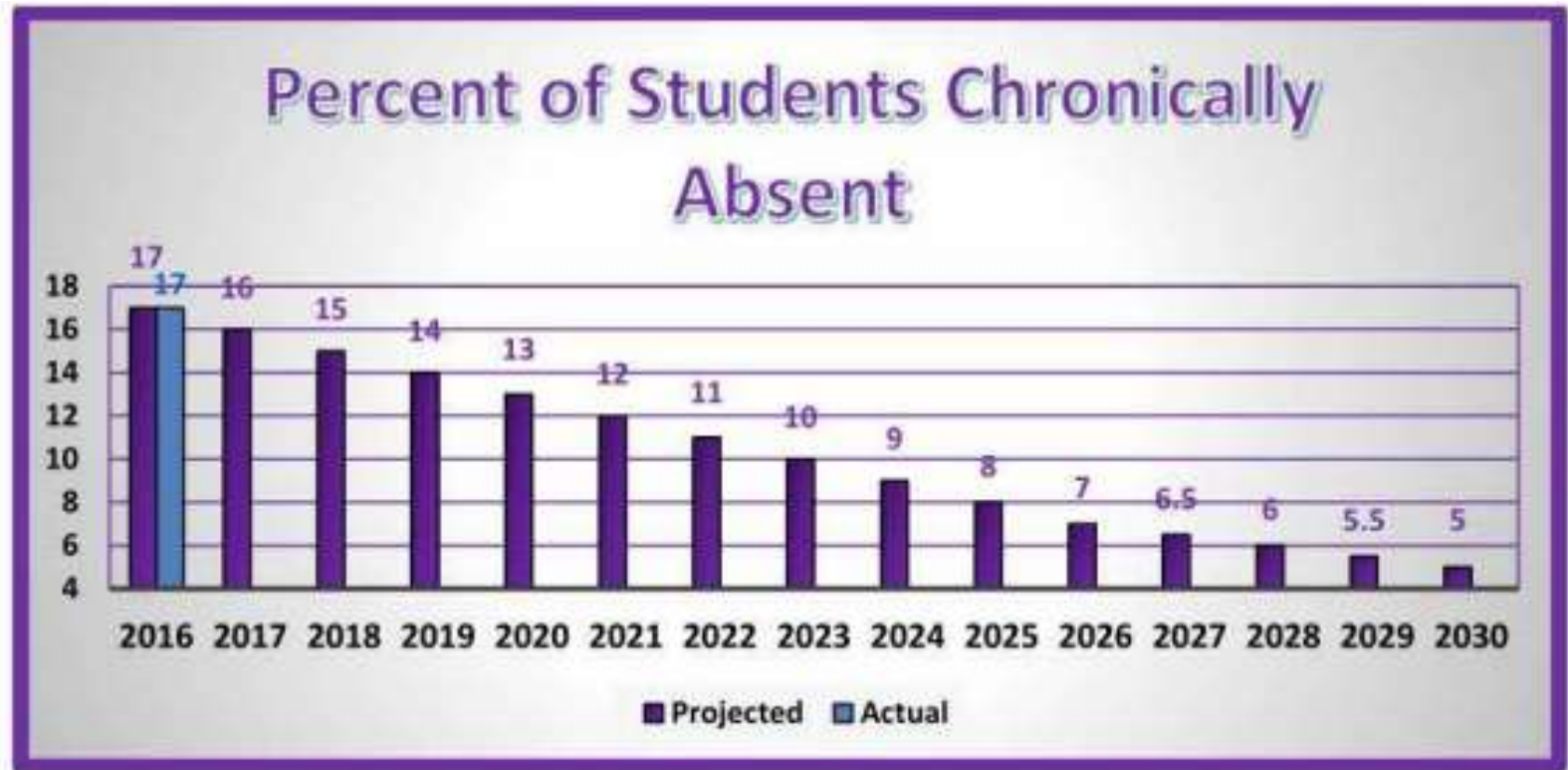
© OpenStreetMap contributors

% Students Absent >15 Days

0.0% 100.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection, 2013-2014, retrieved June 7, 2016.

# Alabama's ESSA Plan Goals



## Key Concepts:

1. We need to look at ALL absences, not just unexcused.
2. Elementary absences are serious.
3. Intervening early in the school year is important.
4. Attendance is an indicator for Alabama's ESSA Plan and for local accountability measures.



**The Helping Families Initiative:**  
**Melissa Niven, HFI**



# Helping Families Initiative

Jefferson County District Attorney



# **AL Compulsory Attendance Law**

## **AL Code 16-28-12**

The district attorney  
***shall vigorously enforce*** this section  
to ensure proper conduct and  
required attendance by children  
enrolled in public school.

**strengthen families**

**improve educational outcomes**

**reduce crime**

Information Sharing

Individualized Intervention Plans

Case Management Support

**BEFORE** students are in trouble

**Recognize Warning Signs**

**Identify Root Causes**

**Empower Families**



T. MICHAEL ANDERTON  
District Attorney  
Tenth Judicial Circuit of Alabama  
Helping Families Initiative  
120 2<sup>nd</sup> Court North, Birmingham, AL 35204  
(205) 264-8181



December 28, 2017

To the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Re: [REDACTED] - Student ID: [REDACTED]

School Attended: [REDACTED] School

Date(s) of Unexcused Absences: 10/10/2017 Unex Absence 11/17/2017 Unex Absence 12/20/2017 Unex Absence

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Our office has received school attendance reports from [REDACTED] City Schools indicating your child has two or more unexcused absences.

If this information is incorrect and the appropriate excuses were submitted within the required time frame, contact the school within five (5) business days from the date of this letter to resolve this matter.

Non-compliance with the Compulsory Attendance Law may result in you being taken to court, fined, and/or jail time. **Attendance must improve immediately.**

The Jefferson County District Attorney's Office and [REDACTED] City Schools want your child to be successful. We hope this letter draws your attention to the serious nature and consequences of unexcused absences and excessive tardies, and that no further intervention will be necessary.

If you have questions or need assistance from our Helping Families Initiative, please call (205) 264-8181.

Failure to cooperate may result in legal consequences.

Sincerely,

T. MICHAEL ANDERTON  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

TMA/mm

# North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS)

- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Parental Capabilities
- ☐ Family Interactions
- ☐ Family Safety
- ☐ Child Well-Being
- ☐ Social/Community Life
- ☐ Self-Sufficiency
- ☐ Family Health/Mental Health
- ☐ Trauma

# Inter-Agency Team

- ☐ HFI Staff
- ☐ School System Personnel
  - ☐ Director of Student Services
  - ☐ Director of Attendance
  - ☐ Attendance Officers
  - ☐ Director of Special Education
  - ☐ Social Workers
- ☐ Police Department
- ☐ DHR
- ☐ Service Providers
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Family Court
  - ☐ Probation
  - ☐ Truancy Intervention

# Current Schools

## ☐ Birmingham:

- ☐ Avondale
- ☐ Hayes K-8
- ☐ Oliver
- ☐ Putnam Middle
- ☐ Woodlawn High

## ☐ Tarrant:

- ☐ Tarrant Elementary
- ☐ Tarrant Intermediate
- ☐ Tarrant High

# HFI Montgomery



**24.5%**  
unexcused absense rate

# Helping Families Initiative

Jefferson County District Attorney





Practical Approaches and Tools:  
Dan Stephens, United Way





### How do we get started?

- Identify or establish school-level teams to address attendance
- Develop an initial plan of action (use self-assessment tool)
- Create a tiered system of supports



# Self-Assessment

## Does Attendance Really Count in Our School?

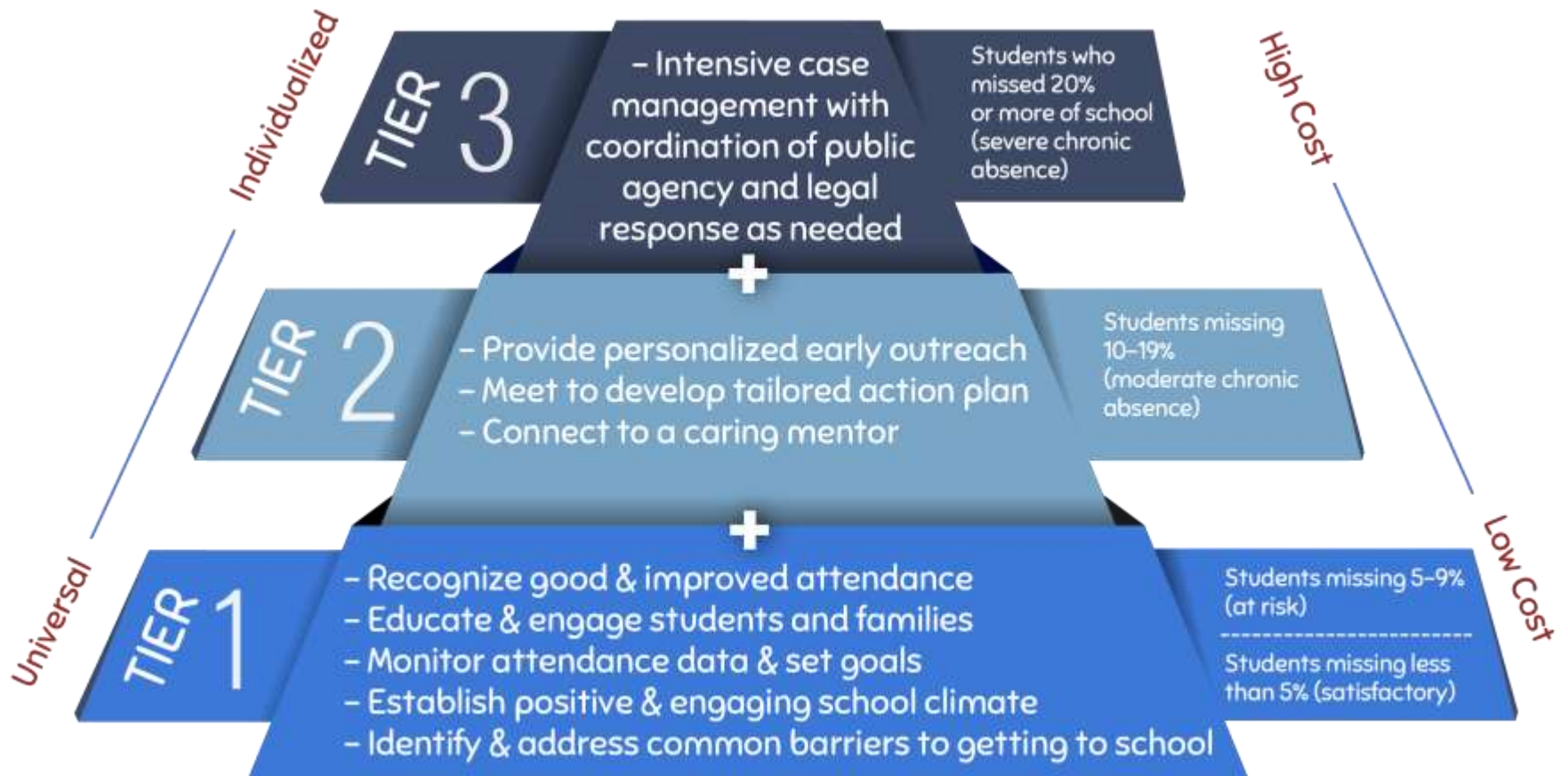
*A Tool for Self Assessment - (Revised February 2011)*

Key Element	Strength	OK for Now	Could be Better	Urgent Gap	Don't Know	How do you know?
1. Every day, in every class, teachers take roll <i>accurately</i> and in a <i>caring</i> manner.						
2. Attendance data is entered daily into an electronic data base that can generate regular reports on average daily attendance, satisfactory attendance, chronic absence, truancy and suspension.						
3. Our school has clear guidelines in place about when absences are excused versus unexcused and has clearly communicated them to staff, students and families.						
4. An attendance team meets at least monthly to identify and share information about students in trouble as well as review attendance patterns by grade, student population and classroom.						
5. An effective school wide system of attendance incentives is in place.						
6. Our school informs parents about the importance of attendance, works with parents to identify common barriers and encourages parents to help each other get their children to school.						
7. Our school tracks and reaches out to chronically absent students and their families to see how attendance could be improved.						
8. Our school partners with community agencies that can help reach out and offer resources to assist chronically absent students and their families.						
9. Individual learning plans are developed for high-risk students and address poor attendance along with low academic performance.						
10. Our school discipline policy and practice ensure students do not miss instruction due to unnecessary suspensions.						
11. Our strategies for supporting student attendance are reflected in our school improvement plan.						

(Note: Chronic Absence is missing=> 10% of school over a year including any type of absence; Satisfactory Attendance is missing=< 5% of school over a year)



# Establish tiered supports





## **Tier 1: Creating a positive, engaging school climate that supports attendance**

### **Attendance is higher when schools:**

- ✓ Promote a sense of belonging and connection including noticing when students show up
- ✓ Make learning engaging so students don't want to miss class
- ✓ Engage in restorative practice not punishment
- ✓ Meet the basic needs of our most economically challenged families so all have the opportunity to get to school
- ✓ Build awareness about how absences can easily add up to too much time lost in the classroom



## Tier 2 Interventions

### Tier 2

- Targeted interventions that remove identified barriers and increase positive connections that motivate improved attendance.

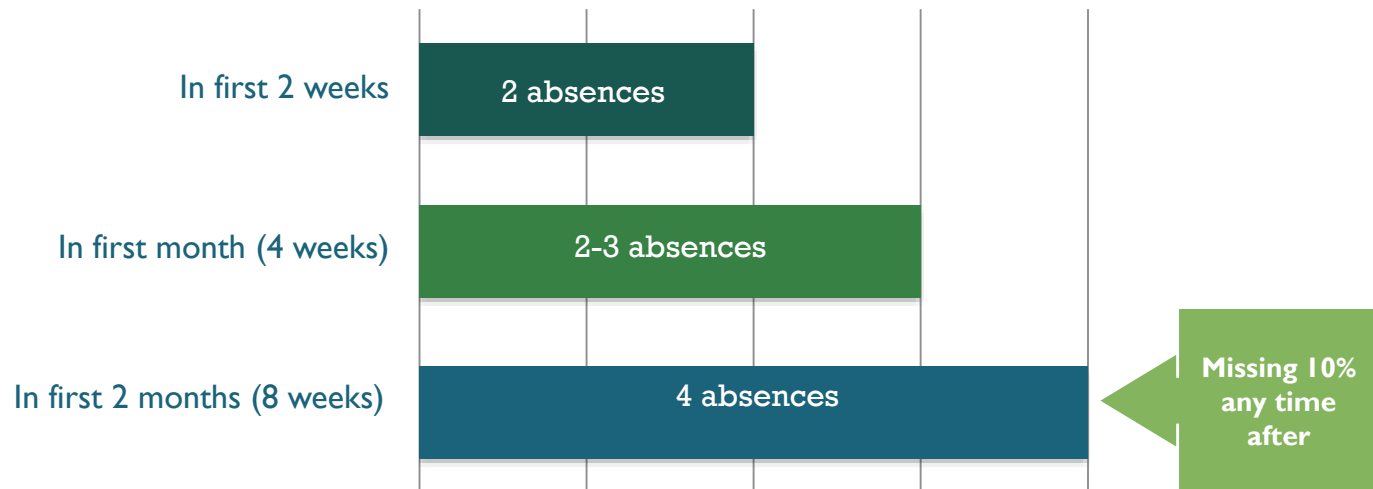
### Who are the families in Tier 2?

- Missing 10% or more of the prior or current school year for any reason.
- Families experiencing some challenge e.g. chronic disease, job loss, divorce, etc.



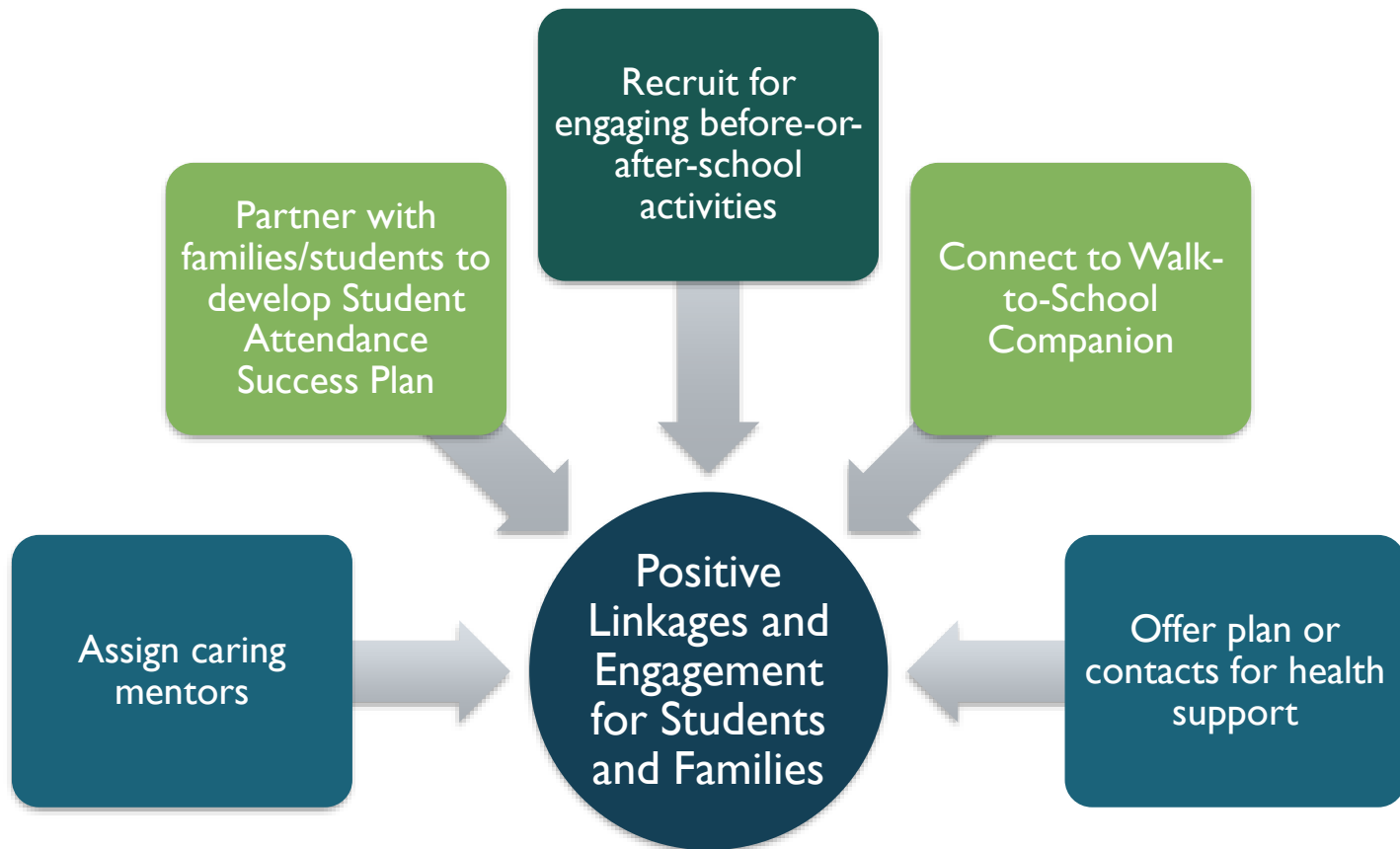
## Criteria for Identifying Priority Students for Tier 2 Supports

- ✓ Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- ✓ And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:





## Possible Tier 2 Interventions





## Tier 3 Interventions

### Tier 3

- Tier 3 provides intensive interventions, often from multiple agencies or specialists within a school district or community.

### Who are the families in Tier 3?

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

## Tools and Resources:

1. [www.boldgoals.org/attendance](http://www.boldgoals.org/attendance)
2. [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)



### Parent Video & Discussion Guide



### Bringing Attendance Home Video (6 minutes)

- ✓ Facilitated conversation
- ✓ The consequences of chronic absence
- ✓ How to improve absenteeism
- ✓ Family practice
- ✓ Increase social capital
- ✓ Identify how school can help
- ✓ Community services

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools-for-parents/bringing-attendance-home-video>

## Spotlight: Tarrant Intermediate School



## Spotlight: Oliver Elementary School





**Q and A:**  
**Melissa Shields, ALSDE**





**Table Discussion and Report-Out:  
Melissa Shields, ALSDE**



**Thank you!**

