

# ***In Class, Ready to Learn? Why and How to Improve Student Attendance***

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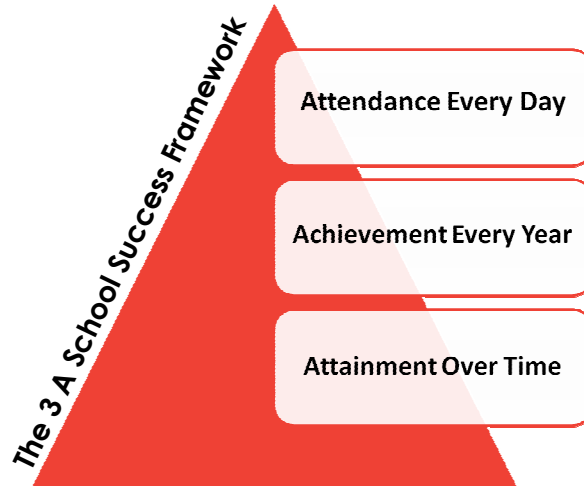
## **Workshop Objectives**

- Identify the poor academic outcomes associated with chronic absenteeism.
- Evaluate local school health, mental health, or SBHC strategies to improve student attendance.
- Apply a quality improvement approach for the SBHC, health services, or mental health services team to collaboratively work to increase student attendance.





## An Antidote to Drop-Out



Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance  
For more info go to [www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement](http://www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement)

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## Defining Key Terms

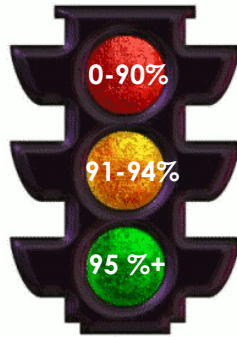
- ❑ **Average Daily Attendance:** The percentage of enrolled students who attend school each day.
- ❑ **Satisfactory Attendance:** Missing 5% or less of school in an academic year.
- ❑ **Chronic Absence:** Missing 10% or more of school in an academic year for any reason—excused or unexcused.
- ❑ **Severe Chronic Absence:** Missing 20% or more days of school per year – approximately two months of school.
- ❑ **Truancy:** Typically refers *only* to unexcused absences and is defined by each state. In CA, it is missing 3 days of school without a valid excuse, or being late to class 3 times without a valid excuse. In MD, it is unlawfully absent 20% of days if enrolled 90 days.

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## When 90% Doesn't Earn an "A"

**Students Who Miss More Than 10% Of School Are At Grave Risk**



**Chronic Absence**  
(=>10% absence)

**Warning Signs**  
(<10% but >5% absence)

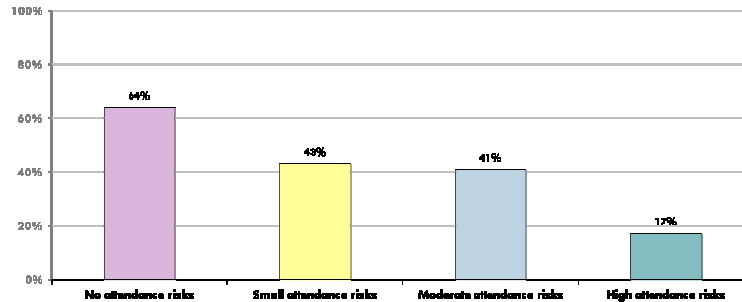
**Satisfactory Attendance**  
(=<5% absence)

**Emergency:** =>20% absence



## Students Chronically Absent in Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Much Less Likely to Read Proficiently in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

**Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**



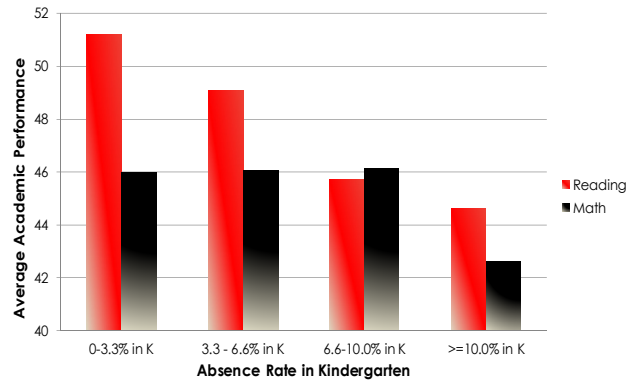
No risk	Missed less than 5% of school in K & 1 <sup>st</sup> t
Small risk	Missed 5-9% of days in both K & 1 <sup>st</sup>
Moderate risk	5-9% of days absent in 1 year & 10 % in 1 year
High risk	Missed 10% or more in K & 1 <sup>st</sup>

Source: Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011)



## The Long-Term Impact of Chronic Kindergarten Absence Is Most Troubling for Poor Children

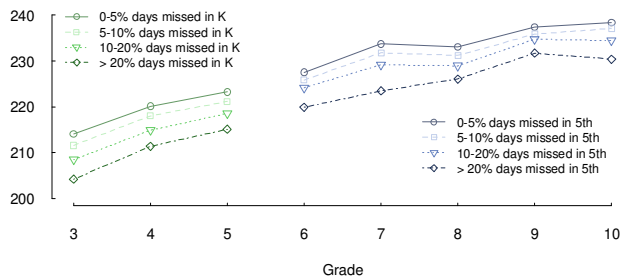
5<sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Reading Performance By K Attendance



Source: ECLS-K data analyzed by National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)  
 Note: Average academic performance reflects results of direct cognitive assessments conducted for ECLS-K.



## Bottom Line: Poor Attendance Predicts Lower Achievement For Students of All Ages



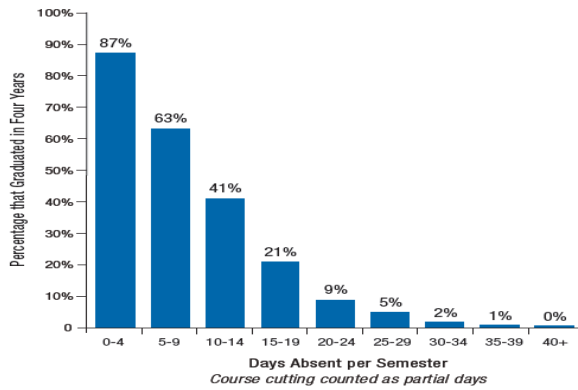
Average reading RIT scores for two cohorts of Oregon students, by absence rates in kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data, 2009-10.

Source: Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011)



## 9th Grade Attendance Predicts Graduation for Students of All Economic Backgrounds



Note: This Chicago study found attendance was a stronger graduation predictor than 8th grade test scores.

Source: Allensworth & Easton, *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools*, Consortium on Chicago School Research at U of C, July 2007

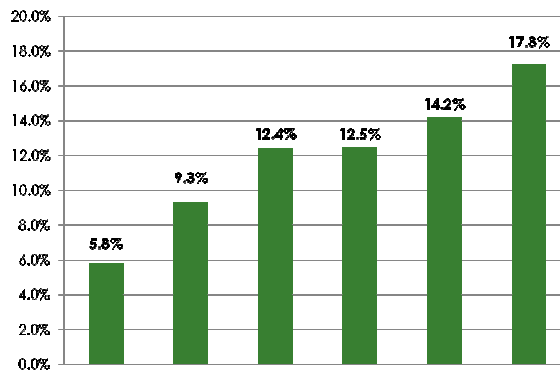
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## Moving into Action Requires Knowing If Chronic Absence is a Problem

***Most Schools Only Track Average Daily Attendance and Truancy. Both Can Mask Chronic Absence.***

Variation in Chronic Absence for Schools with 95% ADA in Oakland, CA

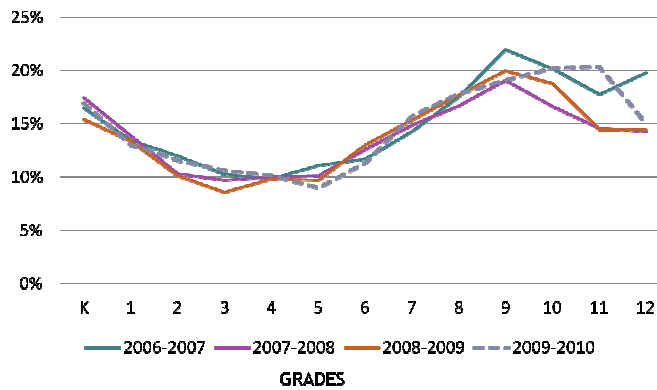


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## Emerging Data Shows High Levels

Over 14% (nearly 1 out of 7) are chronically absent in Oakland Unified School District



If the 5,421 students chronically absent in 09/10 had each attended 6 more days, OUSD would have received more than \$1,147,000 in additional ADA.

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## Schools + Communities CAN Make a Difference

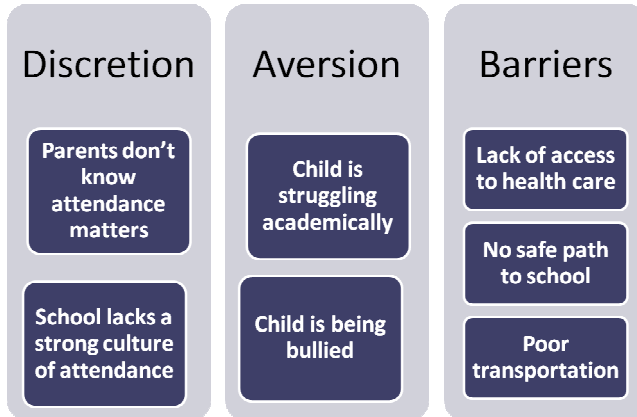
### Characteristics of Successful Attendance Initiatives

- ❑ Partner with community agencies to help families carry out their responsibility to get children to school.
- ❑ Make attendance a priority, set targets and monitor progress over time.
- ❑ Engage parents and students in identifying and addressing school, family, and community issues that contribute to chronic absence.
- ❑ Clearly communicate expectations for attendance to students and families.
- ❑ Begin early, ideally in Pre-K.
- ❑ Combine targeted interventions with universal strategies that nurture an engaged learning environment, build a culture of attendance and ensure physical health and safety at school.
- ❑ Offer positive supports before punitive action.

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## ***Solutions Must Be Grounded in Understanding Of What Leads to Chronic Absence***



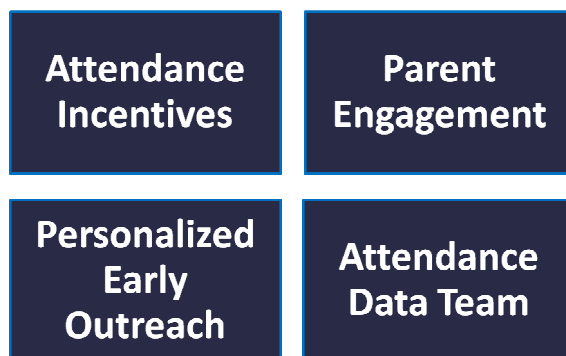
*Special thanks to Dr. Robert Balfanz, Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD for providing this framework.*

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## **Proposed Universal Strategies For Influencing Discretion and Identifying Causes of Absence**

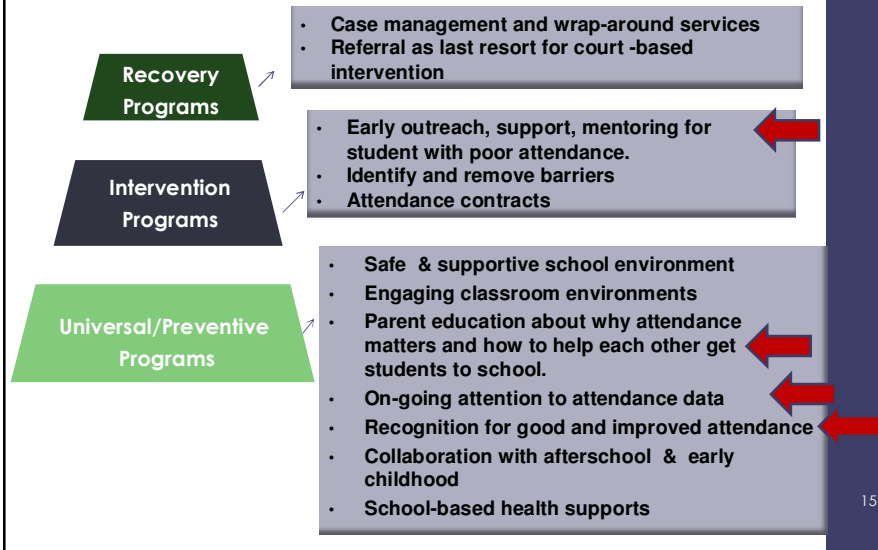


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## Strategies Fit with 3 Tiered Approach



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## Considerations for Younger Children

- Many parents may not be aware that attendance in pre-K & K matters.
- Young children's attendance is affected by what happens to parents. Multiple maternal and family risk factors increase chronic absence.
- Participation in formal child care is associated with lower chronic absence in kindergarten.
- Developing good on-time attendance habits begin in pre-K.
- Poor health was associated with higher chronic absence for in K-3 for children from 200-300% of poverty.
- While attendance is more affected by family conditions, children's attitudes are a factor too.

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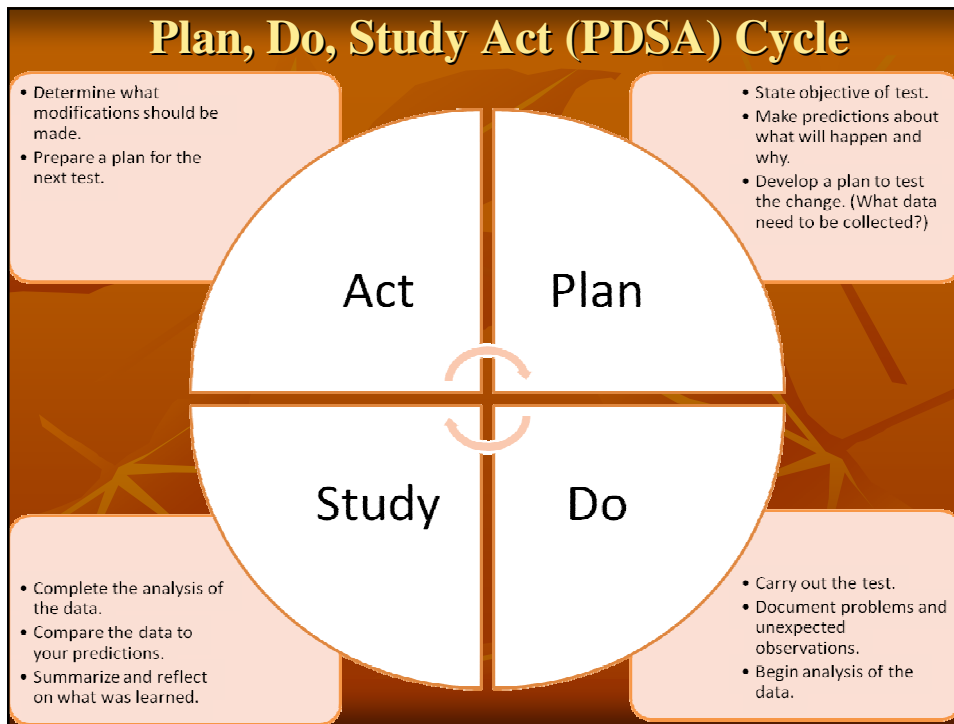
## Considerations for Older Youth


- ❑ Attendance is more heavily influenced by the youth although family still matters.
- ❑ Older youth may miss school due to family responsibilities ( e.g. caring for siblings or ill parent, holding a job).
- ❑ Mental health, teen pregnancy, chronic conditions, and dental disease are top health concerns that affect attendance
- ❑ Safety issues (in-school and community) play even greater role.
- ❑ Students miss school due to suspensions for non-violent behaviors.
- ❑ Students become discouraged as they fall behind in credits and graduation feels increasingly unattainable.
- ❑ Direct and meaningful engagement of youth in the classroom and activities on campus even more essential.

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## Self-Assessment, Pair and Share

1. Please complete the chronic absence self-assessment regarding one or more SBHCs or school health programs you work with.
2. Then turn to a partner and share something you're doing well regarding chronic absence, and something you'd like to do more work on.





## PDSA Quality Improvement: Attendance

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**OVERALL PLAN:** *Improve student attendance*

- Objective for **this cycle:** *Establish process for assessing SBHC clients' attendance*
- Questions you may consider to help you achieve this objective:



## PDSA Quality Improvement: Attendance

**OVERALL PLAN:** *Improve student attendance*

- Theory of change (by doing "X" will we achieve our objective?)
- Plan for change
  - What
  - Who
  - When



## PDSA Quality Improvement: Attendance

**OVERALL PLAN:** *Improve student attendance*

- How will we demonstrate the effectiveness of our actions?



## PDSA Quality Improvement: Attendance

### DO:

Carry out the plan for change. Collect information and/or data. Describe observations, problems encountered, and special circumstances.

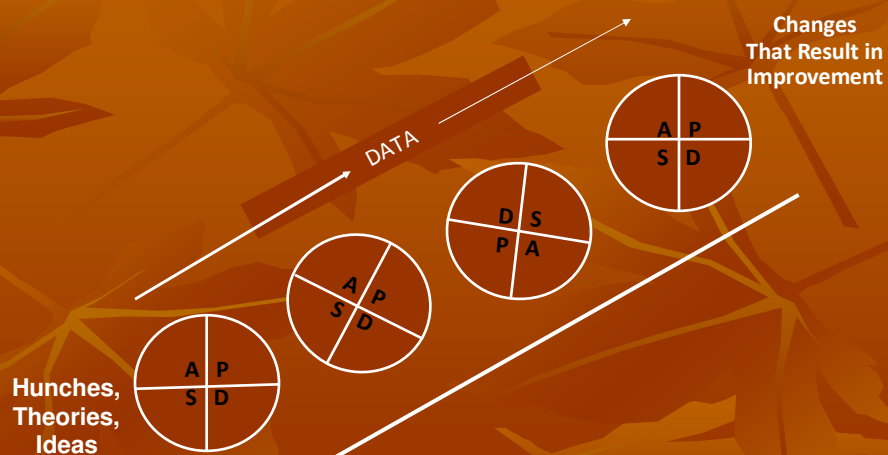
### STUDY:

Analyze effectiveness of plan and summarize what was learned.

### ACT:

Plan for the next cycle: How shall we modify our existing plan, or shall we start a new one?

## Repeated use of PDSA cycle





## Suggestions for Successful QI Teamwork to Improve Attendance

- Frame as a process to formalize existing work (not a new project!), and to validate and refine the good work you are already doing
- Complete at least two time-bound PDSA cycles
- Must have a leader/facilitator
- Get the plan in writing, and hold all partners accountable
- More team members = better ideas and implementation
- Engage both school and SBHC leadership/staff in PDSA planning, implementation, and analysis



## Case Study: Roosevelt Middle School

### Attendance Data & Intervention

#### Team:

- Principal
- School Social Worker (Intern)
- School Nurse/SBHC
- Attendance Clerk
- Family Advocate
- Community School Coordinator
- After School Coordinator
- Interns





School Health Centers

## CSHC Resources

### Tools and Resources:

*Ready Set Success! How to Maximize the Impact of School Health Centers on Student Achievement*

*From Vision to Reality: How to Build a School Health Center from the Ground Up*

*Guidelines for California's School Health Centers*

*CSHC's website: [www.schoolhealthcenters.org](http://www.schoolhealthcenters.org) sections on collaboration and chronic absence in particular!*



School Health Centers

### **Thank you! To contact us:**

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