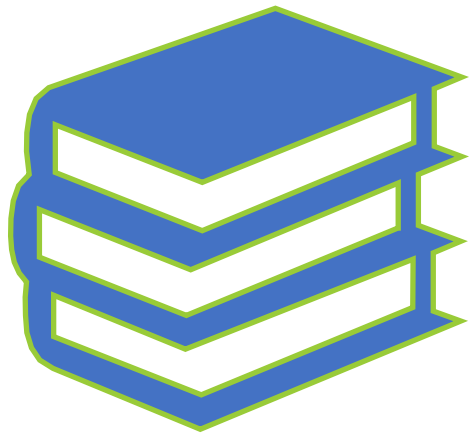




ATTENDANCE IS THE  **KEY**

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2020-2021 PST TRAININGS



Absenteeism is a
leading indicator of
educational inequity

Facts About School Attendance

Over 8 million U.S. students miss nearly a month of school each year. Research shows that missing 10% of school or about 18 days in most school districts negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month!

Students who live in communities with high levels of poverty are 4 times more likely to be chronically absent than others for reasons beyond their control such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation, and lack of access to health care.

Vulnerable children, especially those living in poverty, are 2-3 times more likely to experience chronic absence at earlier ages, are much less likely to have the resources to make up for lost learning time in the classroom and are more likely to experience multiple years of chronic absence.

Research demonstrates that students who are eligible for free and reduced meals are three to four times more likely to be chronically absent.

Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2 to 4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.

One in 10 KG and 1st grade students are chronically absent.

Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade or be retained.

By 6th grade, chronic absences becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.

Chronic Absenteeism

Focus is on reducing chronic absenteeism, which is defined as missing 10 percent of school days for any reason, whether excused or unexcused absences, including out-of-school suspensions.

Research shows that chronic absenteeism is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor that students will eventually drop out of school.

VCS goal for the 2020-2021 school year is to decrease our chronic absenteeism rate by 10%.



Chronic Absenteeism Rate Five Year Comparison

(Students are considered chronically absent if they accumulate 10% or more absences in a school year)

| LEVEL | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020** |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Elementary Schools | 15.7% | 17.3% | 17.4% | 15.0% | 13.9% |
| Middle Schools | 15.8% | 18.0% | 17.4% | 14.8% | 15.1% |
| High Schools | 13.4% | 15.4% | 14.8% | 12.0% | 19.6% |
| Alternative Education | 64.4% | 75.8% | 76.8% | 52.5% | 59.0% |
| Charter Schools | 26.2% | 25.8% | 19.1% | 15.1% | 20.4% |
| Online Learning* | 8.8% | 9.0% | 2.7% | --- | --- |
| TOTALS | 15.6% | 17.4% | 16.9% | 14.2% | 16.2% |

*Note: Calculations for Online Learning attendance data began in the 2013-2014 school year. For the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, Online Learning only included full-time Volusia Virtual School. In the 2018-2019 school year, Online Learning attendance reporting was not available in the Student Information System.

**Note: Beginning the 2019-2020 school year, a new Student Information System (FOCUS) was implemented. The chronic absenteeism report was not developed until the summer of 2020. All Florida schools were closed due to COVID-19 and no attendance was taken during Phase 1 (3/30/20-4/15/20) of Distance Learning in Volusia County Schools. Attendance was captured during Phase 2 of Distance Learning in Volusia County Schools (4/16/20-5/29/20). Absences were defined as no evidence of engagement in a digital platform and/or no response to contact attempts within a week. At the end of the third quarter (3/12/20), the district wide chronic absenteeism rate was 21.2%.

| Grade Level | # Students Enrolled | # Students Chronically Absent | % Students Chronically Absent | # Students Chronically Absent per 100 |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Elementary | 27,285 | 3,806 | 13.9% | 14 |
| Middle | 14,121 | 2,131 | 15.1% | 15 |
| High | 18,184 | 3,562 | 19.6% | 20 |
| Alternative Education | 122 | 72 | 59.0% | 59 |
| Charter Schools | 2,445 | 499 | 20.4% | 20 |
| Totals | 62,157 | 10,070 | 16.2% | 16 |

VCS Chronic Absenteeism for 2019-2020

Positive Engagement:

Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

Actionable Data:

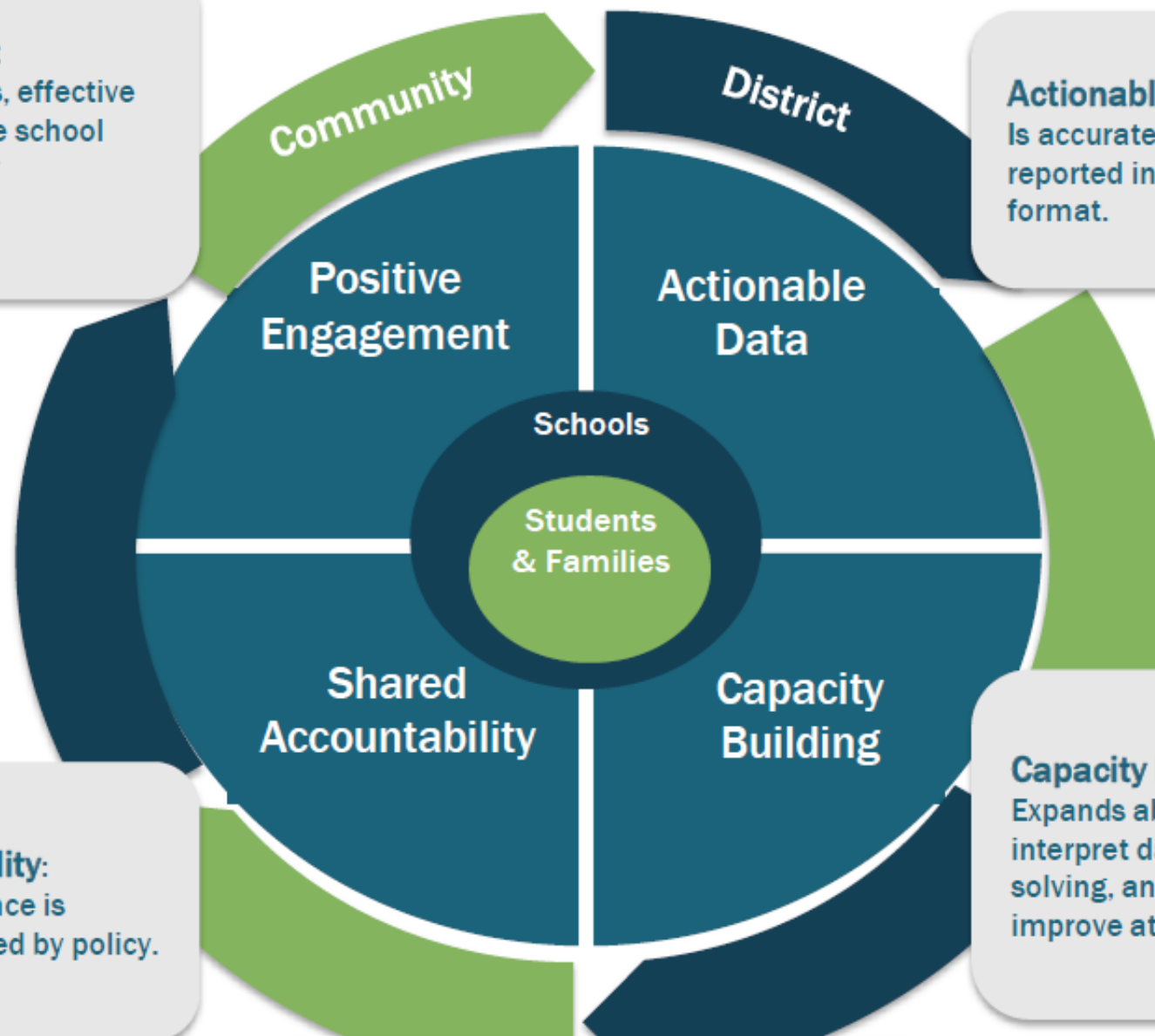
Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.

Capacity Building

Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

Shared Accountability:

Ensures chronic absence is monitoring & reinforced by policy.



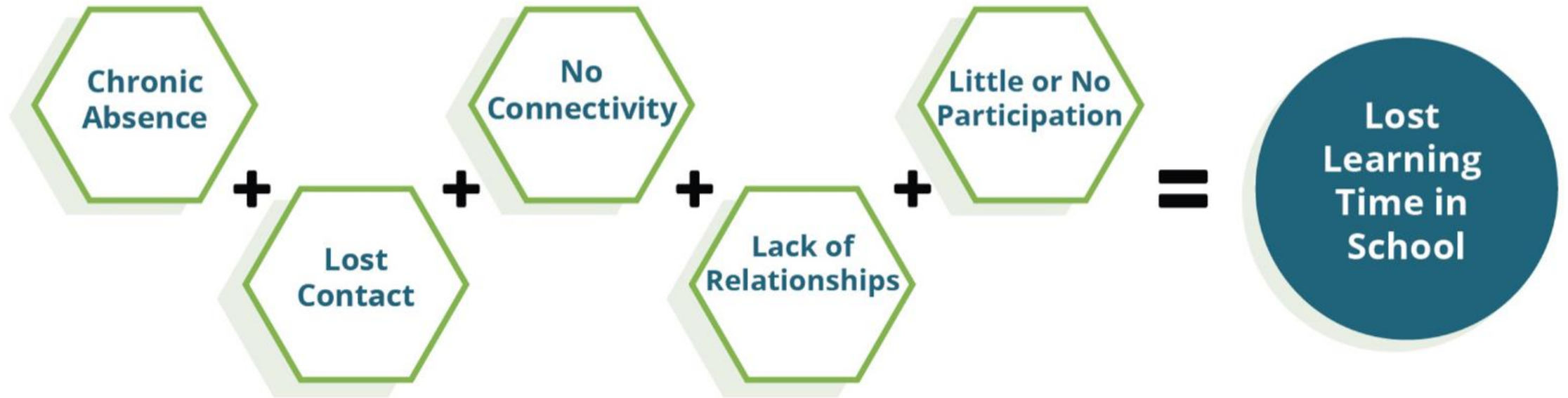
Does Attendance Really Count in Our School?

A Tool for Self-Assessment

| Key Element | Strength | OK for Now | Could be Better | Urgent Gap | Don't Know | How do you know? |
|--|----------|------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. Accurate Data: The principal ensures that teachers and school staff take attendance accurately and that it is entered daily into the district data system. | | | | | | |
| 2. Attendance Team: Our attendance team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to: (a) monitor attendance data and trends; (b) coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy; (c) examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data, and; (d) ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports. | | | | | | |
| 3. Engaging Climate: Our school has a welcoming and engaging climate that promotes safety, great teaching and learning, and interpersonal relationships with students, families, and staff. | | | | | | |
| 4. Culture of Attendance: Our school promotes a culture of attendance in year-round communication to families and students (back to school events, letters, flyers, personal phone calls, etc.) and regularly recognizes good and improved attendance. | | | | | | |
| 5. Family Engagement: Our school staff reaches out to families and engages them as partners in problem-solving. | | | | | | |
| 6. District Policy: Our district policy promotes taking a problem-solving approach that includes all staff, students, families and partners at our school. | | | | | | |
| 7. Policy Dissemination: Our school ensures the district attendance policy is communicated to families through printed materials, posted on our website, and shared at school events. | | | | | | |
| 8. Staff Capacity: Our school ensures staff knows what is chronic absence, why it matters, and what are best practices for reducing it. | | | | | | |
| 9. Improvement Plan: Our strategies for supporting student attendance are reflected in our school improvement plan. | | | | | | |
| 10. Community Partners: Our school partners with community agencies that offer resources (afterschool, health services, mentors) that help engage students and remove attendance barriers. | | | | | | |

(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)

Identifying Students At Risk Due to Absenteeism



What can schools do to encourage good attendance?

01

Make Attendance a priority even during a pandemic

02

Begin intervention strategies early

03

Develop targeted intervention strategies for students with chronic attendance problems

04

Develop strategies to increase student engagement

05

Use data to identify areas of concern and concentrate resources in those areas

06

Recognize that students in transition may be at risk

07

Publicize attendance policies and communicate expectations to students and parents

Compassion, sensitivity, and flexibility are key in addressing attendance during this pandemic



Present, Engaged and Supported

Key Messages

Supporting regular attendance and monitoring absenteeism reduces educational inequities.

Building strong, trusting relationships that promote belonging is fundamental to improving student attendance and participation.

Students are more likely to attend school if they feel safe (emotionally + physically), connected, supported, and are encouraged to believe they can learn and achieve.

Reducing health-related absences is key because illness is the top reason students and families give for missing school.


The key to success is a proactive, positive, data driven, problem-solving approach.

Poor participation is a problem we can solve when the whole community collaborates with families and schools to support the transitions into school, whether it be in person, virtual or a blend.


<https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkit-2020/what-are-the-key-messages/>

Compulsory School Attendance Law


All children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years on or before February 1 of the school year up to the age of 16 years (only if a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment has been completed and filed with the school district) are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term (Florida Statute 1003.21)



According to Florida Statute 1003.24, each parent of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance.



15 day policy-after 15 absences (either excused or unexcused) have been accrued in a school year, doctor verification must be provided to excuse absences due to illness



Habitual Truancy is defined as 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days

House Bill 7069

Effect of Proposed Changes - July 2017

- School boards are to adopt student policies regarding student appointments to receive autism spectrum disorder therapy.
- Allows parents to request and be granted permission for a student's absence resulting from an appointment to receive therapy.
- Allows a student who is continually sick and repeatedly absent to satisfy nonattendance requirement by being under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner or certified behavior analyst for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder.



Enforcement of School Attendance

Florida Statute 1003.26

School districts must take an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance.

Daily Notification-Schools must notify parents of each unexcused absence (i.e. personal contact, phone calls, Volusia Connect, letters, etc.) to determine the reason for the absence.

Students who are exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance must be referred to the Child Study Team (PST) for assistance with the remediation of the problem. A meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies.

Enforcement of School Attendance: Problem Solving Team Process

Encourage teachers to take every opportunity to notify parents of developing patterns of nonattendance and determine the cause.

Parent contact must be made or attempted prior to referral to the Child Study Team (PST). (At minimum, this should occur when a student has 5 unexcused absences within 30 calendar days.)

If a nonattendance pattern continues (reaches 10 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days)

- Ask teachers to submit PST 5
- During the meeting, Teachers bring documentation of all contacts/attempts at contacts with the parent/student and interventions tried. If the teacher is not able to attend the meeting, PST Chair should elicit their feedback prior to the meeting.
- Complete PST 6A/H during meeting
- Complete Attendance Contract AND Notice of Right to Appeal WITH the parent and/or student, when appropriate
- ESE-ONLY contact DPS/IEP Facilitator if it is determined that the student's attendance issues are directly linked or related to their exceptionality. Otherwise, follow the PST process.

Enforcement of School Attendance: Monitoring Intervention Results

If nonattendance pattern continues,

Make additional contact with the family to review the plan and barriers to implementation OR

Schedule a follow-up meeting OR

Complete an Attendance Referral for School Social Worker to provide follow-up

Enforcement of School Attendance: School Social Worker Interventions

Consultation with school/district staff regarding attendance cases and compulsory reports

Parent and/or student contacts, including home visits when necessary

Create and/or review attendance contracts with parent and/or student

Connect families to community resources

Attendance monitoring and follow-up with the parent/student and school staff





Enforcement of School Attendance: Legal Action and Consequences

If the parent/student continues to be noncompliant with the Compulsory Attendance Law, the School Social Worker may make the following referrals:

- CINS/FINS (ages 6-17)
- Teen Court (ages 10-17)
- ASAP -Achieving School Attendance Program
- Adult Court-misdemeanor of the 2nd degree

Other Consequences:

- Learnfare families may lose benefits
- Students may lose driving privileges/license
- Students more likely to engage in delinquent behavior
- Lifetime earning potential is limited

**PRESENT, ENGAGED
AND SUPPORTED!**



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Works

**ATTENDANCE AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN 2020**



For additional Questions, contact:
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