



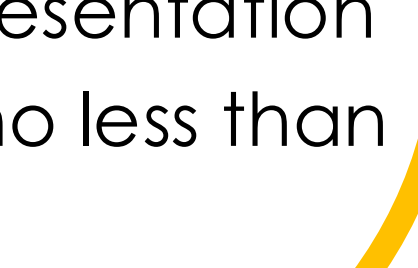
2025

WCSD COUNSELING & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES TEAM

*Spring Advisory Council Meeting
April 30, 2025*

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ADVISORY COUNCIL PURPOSE

- Provide feedback on program goals
 - Review program results
 - Make recommendations
 - Advocate for the school counseling program
 - Required to have diverse representation of stakeholders and to meet no less than twice each year
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GOALS 2024-2025

GOAL #1:

**To increase attendance at SY & Lafayette to 94%
and at WMS & WHS to 92%.**

GOAL #2:

**To increase student participation and decrease
overall school avoidance (in and out of school)**



WHY DOES ATTENDANCE MATTER?

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS IN A CHILD'S ACADEMIC LIFE...

" The effects of lost school days build up one absence at a time on individual students. Penalties for students who miss school may unintentionally worsen the situation. The disciplinary response to absenteeism too often includes loss of course credits, detention, and suspension. Any absence, whether excused or not, denies students the opportunity to learn in accordance with the school's instructional program, but students who miss school are sometimes further excluded from learning opportunities as a consequence of chronic absenteeism."

[Every School Day Counts: The Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data - Why Does Attendance Matter?](#)

WHAT DOES NYSED SAY ABOUT ATTENDANCE?

"Attendance policy and programming, coupled with school climate and increased academic performance, offers a unique opportunity to engage the entire school community – parents, staff, students, and community members – in a process that will build upon the strengths of all concerned. "

- [Attendance Incentives | New York State Education Department](#)



ATTENDANCE DATA

**GOAL: TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE RATE FOR EACH BUILDING TO 94% (SY & LAF)
AND TO 92% (WMS & WHS)**

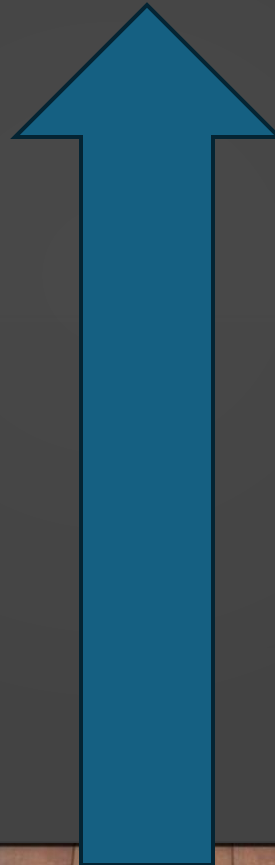
**SEPT. 7,-MARCH 8
2022-2023**

**Skoi-Yase Primary (K-2): 90.78%
(Pre K-2): 90.29%**

Lafayette Intermediate: 92.28%

Waterloo Middle School: 91.45%

Waterloo High School: 89%



**SEPT. 7-MARCH 8
2024-2025**

**Skoi-Yase Primary
92.5%**

Lafayette Intermediate: 92.5%

Waterloo Middle School:

Waterloo High School: 90.54 %

KEY FACTS ON ABSENTEEISM

[ED592870.PDF](#)

Chronic absenteeism is widely defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days in a school year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences. This can translate into missing 15 or more days per year or 3 days per month.

Students who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by third grade—which would make them 4 times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.

It starts early. More than 10 percent of kindergartners and first graders are chronically absent.

A student who is chronically absent any year between grades 8 and 12 is more than 7 times more likely to drop out.

On average, a college graduate is likely to live about 9 years longer than someone who has not completed high school.

HEALTH MATTERS- AREAS TO ADDRESS

HEALTH AFFECTS ATTENDANCE CHILDREN ARE CHRONICALLY ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF ISSUES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL HEALTH.

- **Physical Health. Asthma is one of the most common causes of school absences, together with significant health concerns such as poor dental health, vision impairment, diabetes, and obesity.** Research suggests that U.S. schoolchildren with this treatable and remediable condition miss a combined 14 million days of school each year. The same research suggests that dental pain, often due to untreated decay, accounts for almost two million missed days of school annually.
- **Mental Health. Fear, depression, social anxiety, and other mental health issues can make it difficult for children to feel comfortable going to school.** When children are exposed to significant stress, violence, or trauma in their homes or communities, it can also trigger mental health issues that cause them to be chronically absent from school.
- **Safety Issues. Students who fear or experience violence or bullying are at risk for being chronically absent from school.** This is especially true among racial and ethnic minority students. A 2015 report suggests that nearly 35 percent of black students and more than 28 percent of Hispanic students were involved in a physical fight the previous year, compared with about 20 percent of white students. The same report indicates 20 percent of high school students said they had been bullied in the past year.
- **Social Factors. Food insecurity or hunger, unstable housing arrangements, unreliable transportation, job loss within the family, and lack of health insurance also contribute to chronic absenteeism.** In spite of substantial progress in the area of health insurance coverage for children, more than 15 percent of all U.S. children under age 17 remain uninsured, and thus have more limited ability to access health care and treatment.

The key to reducing chronic absence is building relationships and addressing what causes students to miss too much school

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Trauma
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Inequitable access to needed services (including health)
- System involvement
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to technology
- Community violence

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Biased disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or lack of disability accommodations
- Negative educational experiences

Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults in the school (especially given staff shortages)
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence

WHAT'S WORKING



WHAT'S WORKING AT SKOIYASE

- More School Wide activities and events this year—kids looking forward to events, theme days, etc....
- Therapy Dog visits
- Collaboration and regular communication with agency workers (CPS, preventative, etc..)
- Tier 3- Daily Attendance Check- Ins: Ex: 1 student that began this intervention in March had the following attendance rates: 33% in Feb., up to 35% in March and increased to 53% in April.
- Principal Hearings (began in Feb.)

WHAT'S WORKING AT LAFAYETTE

- Home visits at the start of the school year to chronically absent students to strengthen home to school connections and relationships.
- Attendance Letters, daily calls, and check ins.
- Therapy dog visits.
- Parent and school team meetings.
- Movie Day at the High school day before Thanksgiving Break (only 8 absences!)
- Theme weeks, LaFayette Fun Fridays (theme Fridays) and other fun days like Fall Fest.

WHAT'S WORKING AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Project HOPE
- Therapy dog visits! Students and staff are very excited to have weekly visits with our furry friends.
- Year-round circles during advisement have really helped to build community among staff and students.
- Weekly grade-level meetings have helped strengthen our MTSS response through consistent communication and collaboration between support staff and teachers.
- 5 students have been accepted into PTECH and plan on attending next school year.
- Fingerlakes Community Health has serviced roughly 50 Middle School students this year with a school-based dental clinic in the Fall and Spring.
- Incoming freshmen student support.
- Tiger Mentors
 - Help deliver Trevor's Gift
 - New student tours
 - Middle School tours in May for incoming 6th graders
 - Planning for 6th grade orientation

WHAT'S WORKING AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

- The high school has been engaging in a quarterly attendance competition this year. Each quarter we change themes and the Advisements compete for the top score to receive a free pizza party sponsored by Marks.
- There is a Tardy policy that has been in place for the past two years. Students are given a consequence when they are late too many times. This has been working as a deterrent for many of our kids.
- MTSS Group meets weekly and we discuss and plan for our students that are dealing with chronic absenteeism. These meetings are allowing us to try and look for other target reasons that students are not attending.
- Therapy Dogs are in the school several days a week.

LOOKING FORWARD




FUTURE VISIONS FOR SKOI YASE

- Weekly attendance meetings with administration and student support team to be scheduled before/after school as current schedule of meeting during day is impacted by needs of students/crises.
- Tier 1- All students will have own attendance calendar monthly to color in and track attendance.
- Attendance awards monthly at Tiger Time (school wide assembly), and grade level competition for 100% attendance



FUTURE VISIONS FOR LAFAYETTE

- Dedicated time once a month for attendance meetings with administration and student support team (possibly during ERF next year).
 - Continued tier 3 support of families (family meetings, community support involvement)
 - Continued home visits to families in August to build positive relationships between home and school and strengthen the home school connection.
 - Continued transition meetings in June and August for the SY/LF and LF/MS transition.
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FUTURE VISIONS FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Continuing to develop transition plans LF/MS & MS/HS
- Continued meetings to discuss attendance concerns and build supports for students and families.
- Social/emotional groups
- NJHS/Respect Team/TMT
- Peer tutoring

FUTURE VISIONS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL

- Increase our incentives for students that are regularly attending school
- Build more close relationships to encourage willingness to attend school
- Continue with our free lunches and breakfasts and our TG program that allows our students to be fed
- Build more fun into learning (assemblies, games, interactive lessons)
- Build our inclusivity so that all students feel welcome and safe while in school
- Limit outside noise (IE Phones) so that the school day is full of learning and not the stressors of the outside world.

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND....
WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?



ATTENDEES:

Present: Heather Elisofon, Sophia Elisofon, Mark Pitifer, Catherine Rieck, Tammy Anhorn, Tiffany Williams, Taylor Vogler, Jada Bryant, Cori Turchetti, Suzie Burroughs, Sage Burkhart, Madison Bowman, Molly Lahr, Shelli Tam

RESOURCES:

[A Solution To The Student Mental Health Crisis: Independence](#)

[Webinars - Attendance Works](#)

Health Policy Snap shot [ED592870.pdf](#)