

C&I Committee Meeting

October 6, 2025

Understanding Chronic Absenteeism

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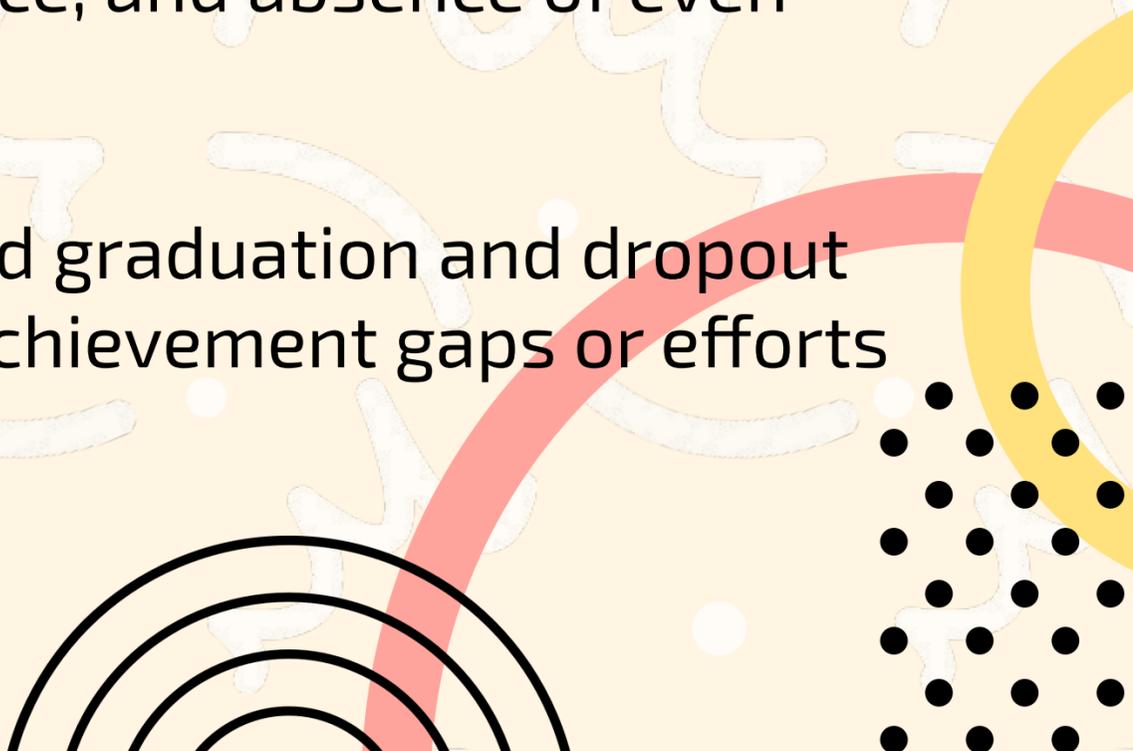
Why We Need to Pay Attention to Chronic Absenteeism

America's education system is based on the assumption that barring illness or an extraordinary event, students are in class every weekday.

Chronic absenteeism can wreak havoc long before it is discovered and students need to attend school daily to succeed.

Achievement, especially in math, is very sensitive to attendance, and absence of even two weeks during one school year matters.

Attendance also strongly affects standardized test scores and graduation and dropout rates. Educators and policymakers cannot truly understand achievement gaps or efforts to close them without considering chronic absenteeism.



What does New Jersey State Law Require?

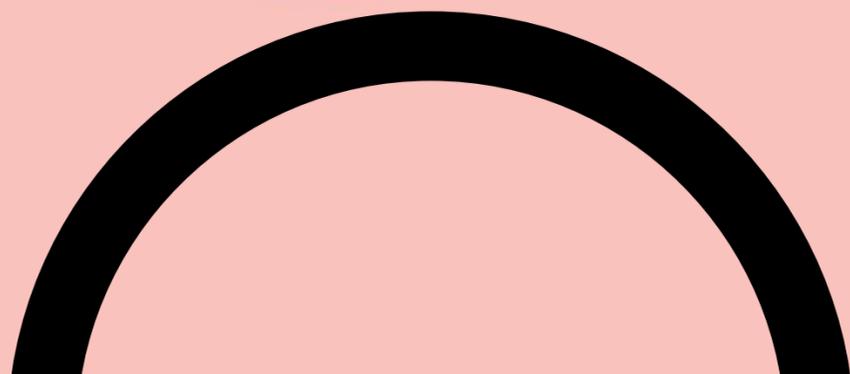
The compulsory education law (*N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31*) requires all children between the ages of 6-16 to attend school. The attendance regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6*), require each district board of education to develop, adopt and implement policies and procedures regarding the attendance of students, including the adoption of a definition of "unexcused absence" that counts towards truancy.

While the regulations allow for the parent to be referred to municipal court for a truant child, consideration should be made to refer or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency, other community resource, or the juvenile/family crisis intervention unit (FCIU).

State Definition: Chronically Absent vs. Truant

Chronic Absenteeism Definition Chronic absence is defined as having missed 10 percent or more days of school for any reason—this includes locally excused and unexcused absences. Source: New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) 6A:32-8.6

Conversely, Truancy charges may be filed against the parent or guardian of any child who accrues ten (10) unexcused absences.



Truancy Vs. Chronic Absence

TRUANCY

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal & administrative solutions

Vs.

CHRONIC ABSENCE

- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies

Student Absentee Rate Calculation

Each student's absentee rate is calculated based on two variables:

- Number of Days Present and
- Number of Days Absent.

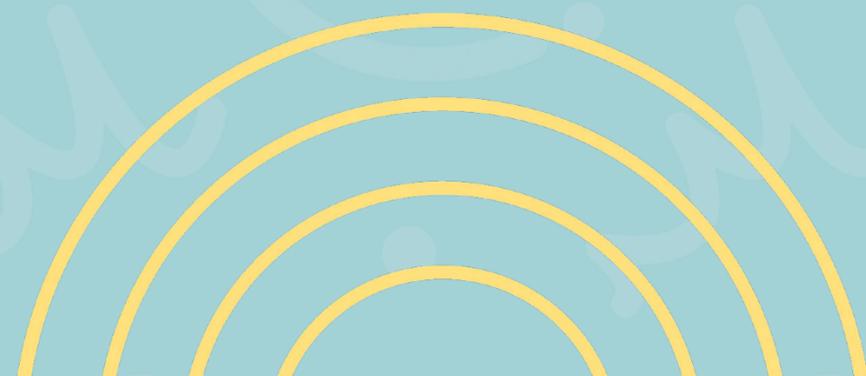
Number of Days Absent is divided by the Total Number of Student Days.

If a student's absentee rate is equal to or greater than 10 percent, the student is considered chronically absent.

How Chronic Absenteeism is Measured in New Jersey

School Chronic Absenteeism Rate

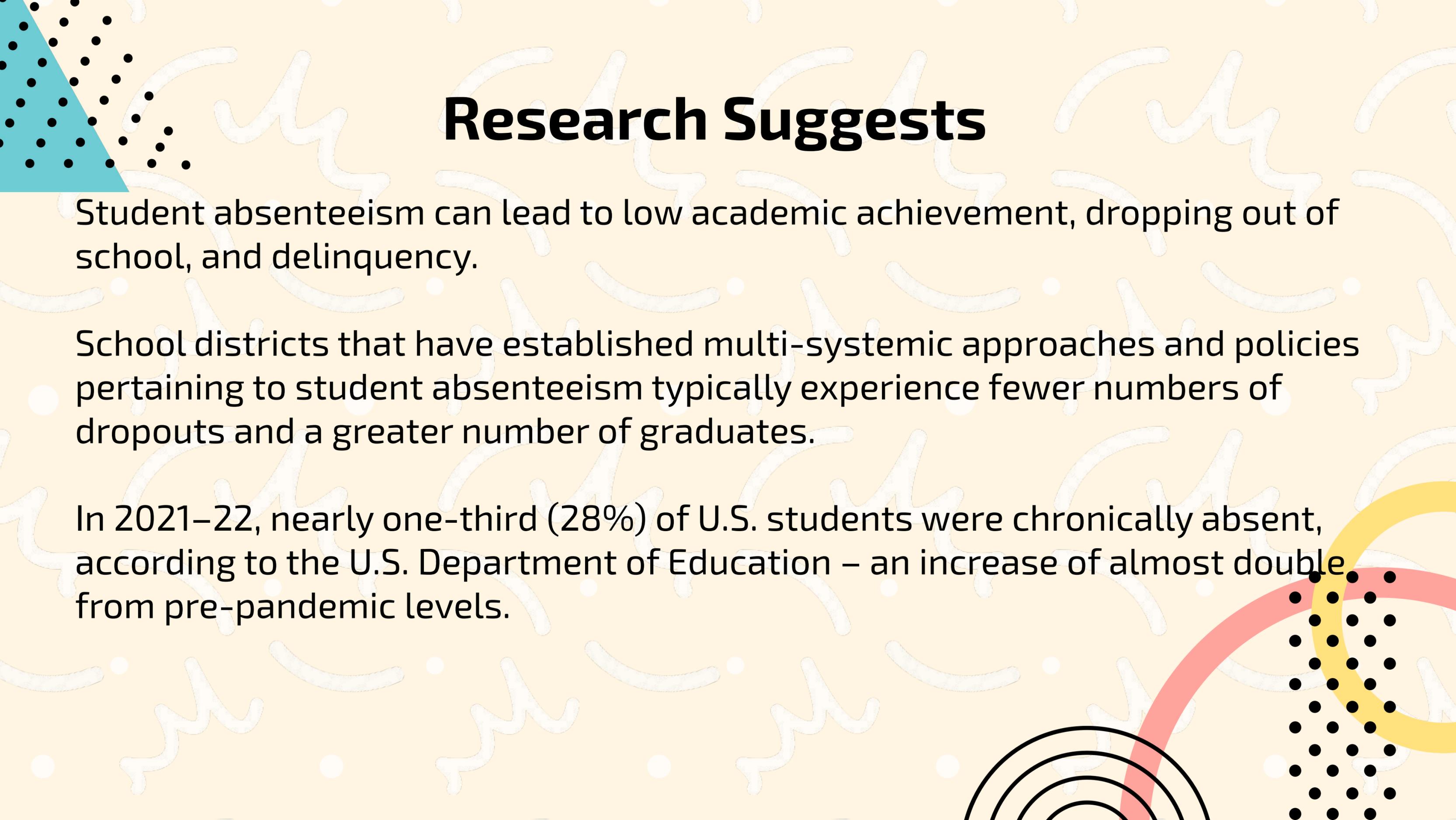
- A school's chronic absenteeism rate, as defined in New Jersey's ESSA State Plan, is the percentage of a school's students that were chronically absent.
- A school's chronic absenteeism rate is calculated by dividing the total number of chronically absent students during the school year by the total number of students enrolled in the school during the school year.





IMPACT

What does the research suggest?



Research Suggests

Student absenteeism can lead to low academic achievement, dropping out of school, and delinquency.

School districts that have established multi-systemic approaches and policies pertaining to student absenteeism typically experience fewer numbers of dropouts and a greater number of graduates.

In 2021–22, nearly one-third (28%) of U.S. students were chronically absent, according to the U.S. Department of Education – an increase of almost double from pre-pandemic levels.

Level Specific Research

Early Grades:

Students who are chronically absent in **kindergarten and 1st grade** are **much less likely to read proficiently by 3rd grade** — a key predictor of academic success. (Source: *Annie E. Casey Foundation*)

Missing 2+ days per month in K–3 puts students at serious risk of falling behind in reading and math.

Middle & High School:

Chronically absent middle schoolers are **less likely to pass core academic subjects** like math and English.

By 6th grade, chronic absenteeism becomes a **strong early warning sign for dropping out**. (Source: *Johns Hopkins University's Balfanz Study*)



Predicting Success

Missing school matters:

In a nationally representative data set, chronic absence in kindergarten was associated with lower academic performance in first grade.

The impact is twice as great for students from low-income families.

A Baltimore study found a strong relationship between sixth-grade attendance and the percentage of students graduating on time or within a year of their expected high school graduation.

Chronic absenteeism increases achievement gaps at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Because students reared in poverty benefit the most from being in school, one of the most effective strategies for providing pathways out of poverty is to do what it takes to get these students in school every day. This alone, even without improvements in the American education system, will drive up achievement, high school graduation, and college attainment rates.

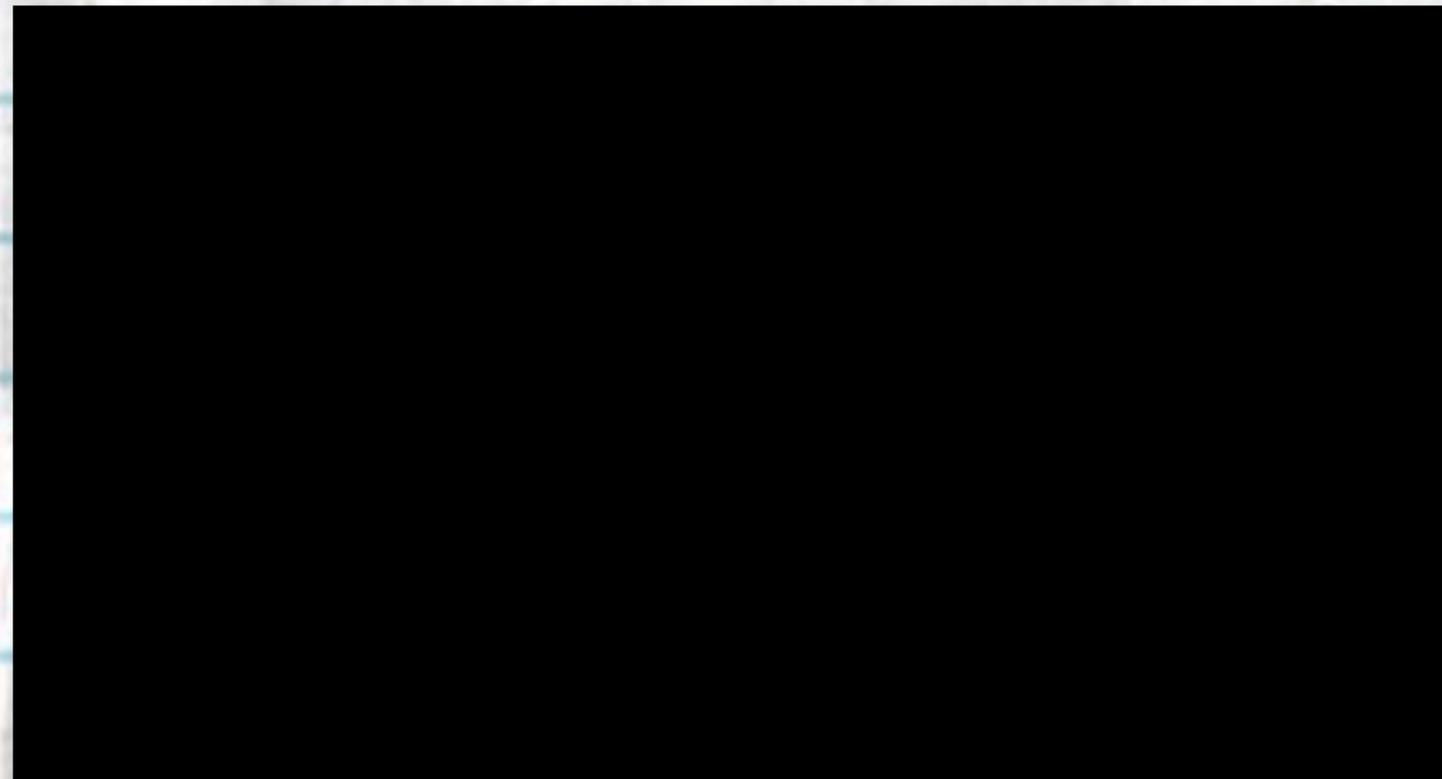
QUIZ TIME...

Missing more than

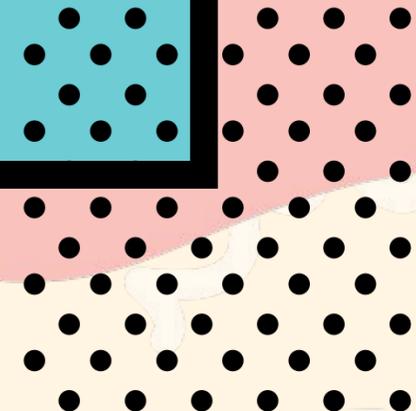


15 DAYS OF CLASS

has what effect on students?



Cherry Hill Data





2025-2026 YEAR ATTENDANCE

Filters

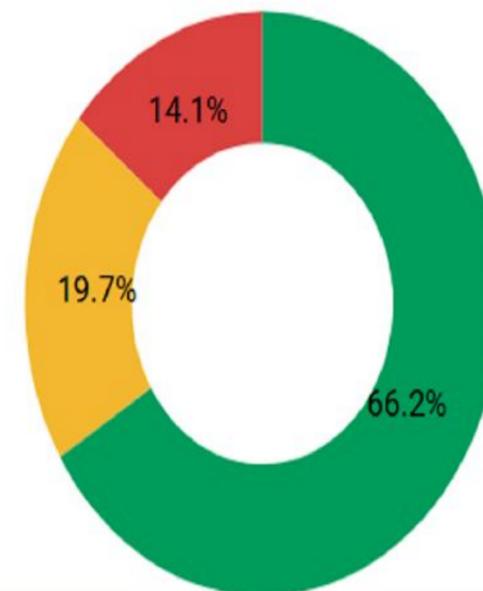
School ▾ Grade Level ▾ Race/Ethnicity ▾ Students with ... ▾ Multi-Lingual ... ▾ Gender ▾

Note: Groups and subgroups with fewer than 11 students will not be shown.

Overall Attendance Rate

96.3%

Overall Chronic Absenteeism



- 1. Low Risk (<5%)
- 2. At Risk (5-9.99%)
- 3. Chronically Absent (10%+)



2024-2025 YEAR ATTENDANCE

Filters

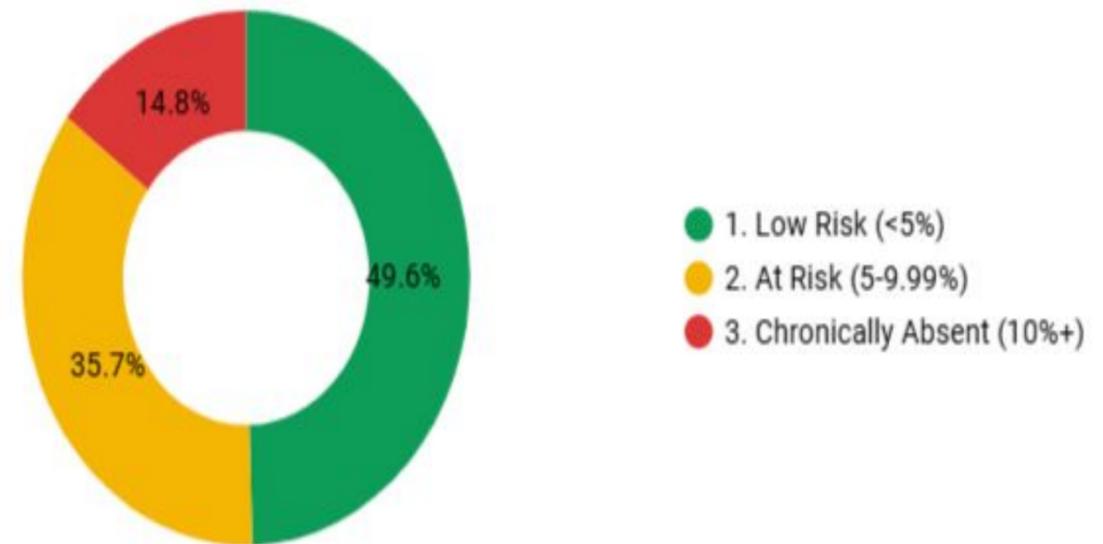
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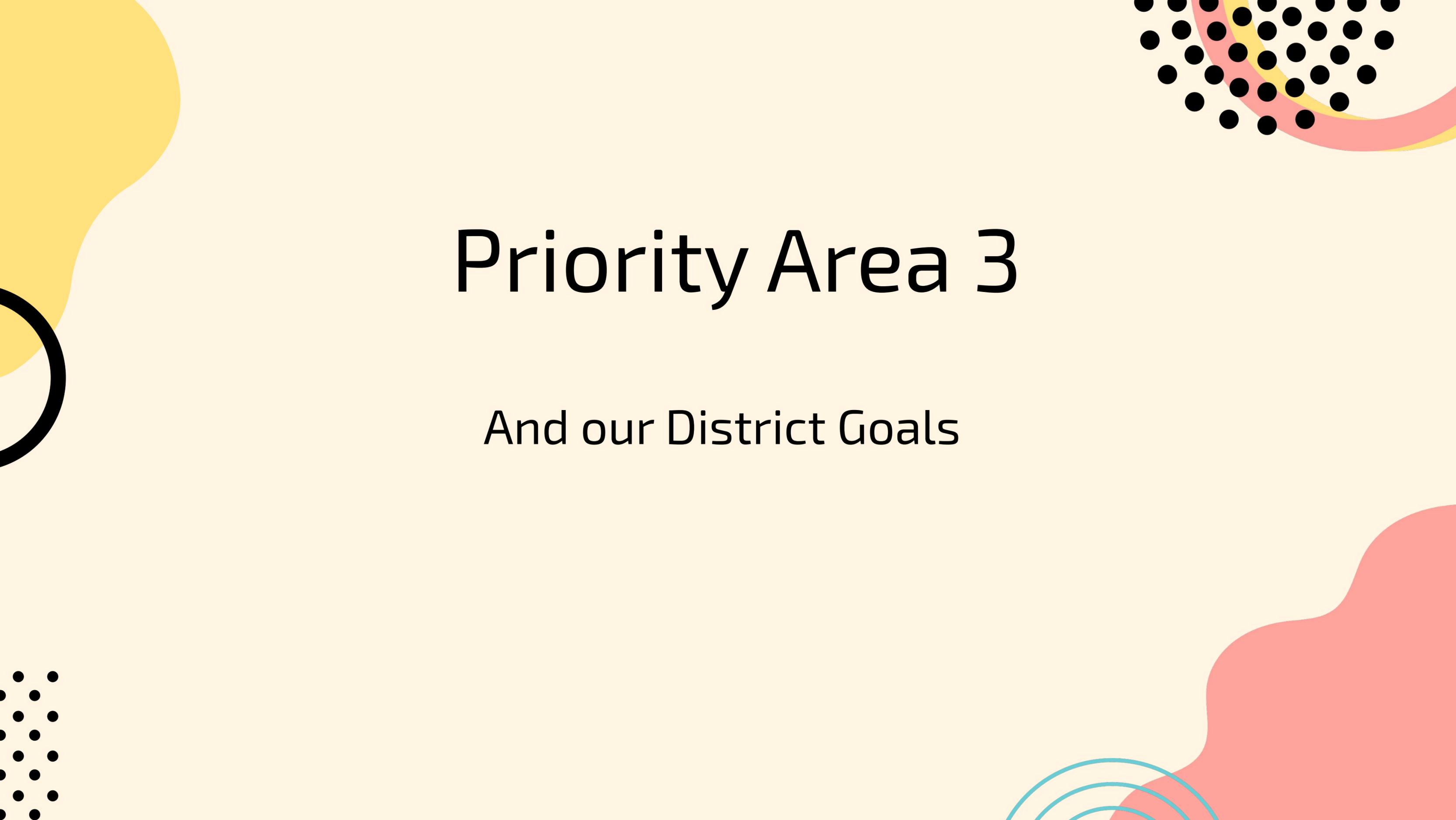
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Overall Attendance Rate

94.0%

Overall Chronic Absenteeism





Priority Area 3

And our District Goals

PRIORITY 3

ALIGNING STUDENT SUPPORTS TO MIRROR STUDENT NEEDS

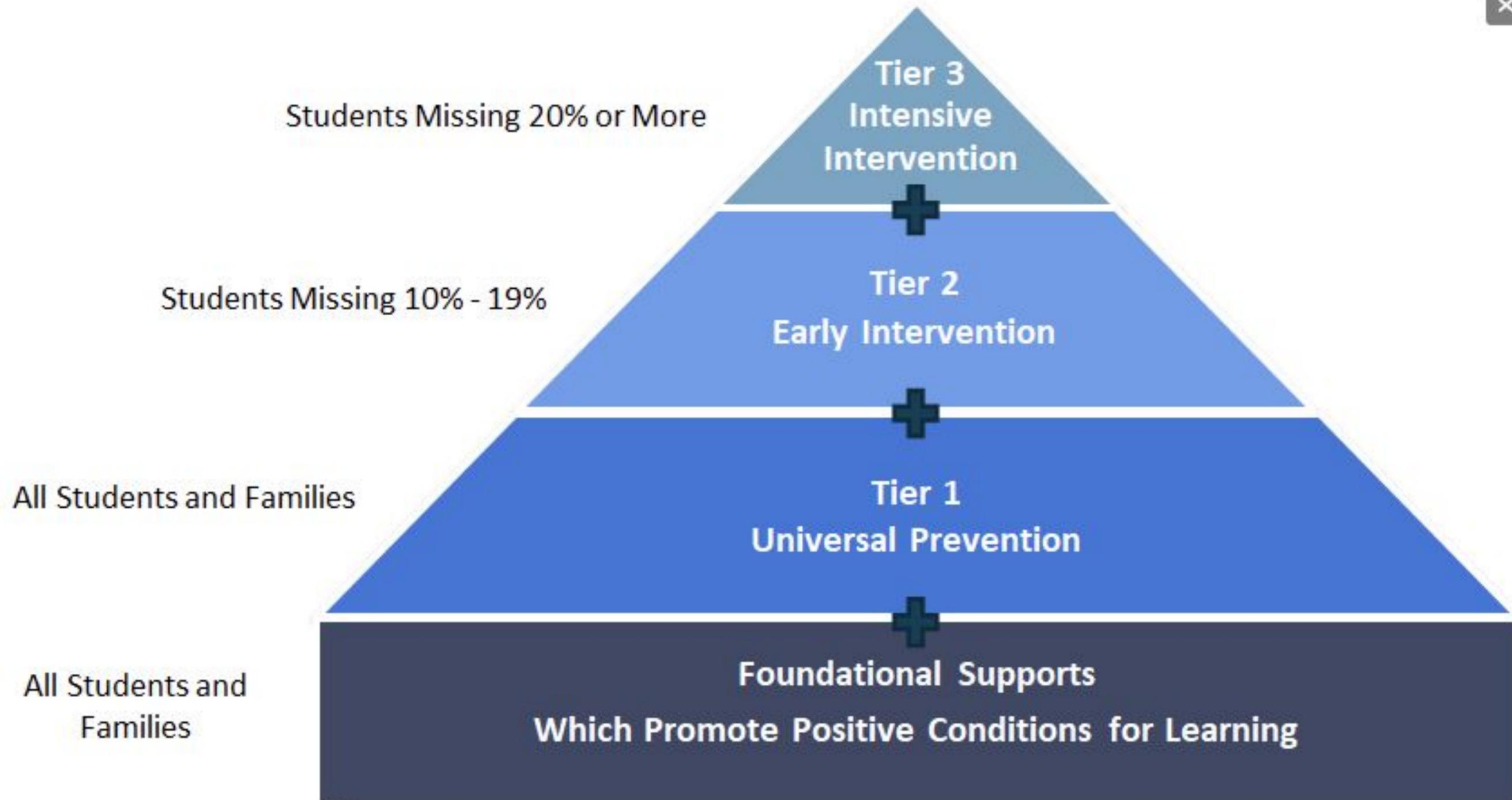
CHERRY HILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL ENSURE THAT EACH CHILD RECEIVES THE ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL, AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT UNIQUELY SUITED TO ENSURE THEIR SUCCESS.

AIM 3A

Increase the alignment of student instruction and support to most effectively meet the needs of each child.

Goal:

By 2030, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) data will indicate an increase in the percentage of students whose needs are effectively supported through tiered programming.



Students Missing 20% or More

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Students Missing 10% - 19%

Tier 2
Early Intervention

All Students and Families

Tier 1
Universal Prevention

All Students and
Families

Foundational Supports
Which Promote Positive Conditions for Learning



www.attendanceworks.org

Tiered Pyramid Graphic with Percents

Response via NJTSS/ MTSS

Interventionist:

An academic interventionist is an educator who delivers targeted, research-based instruction to students who are not meeting grade-level expectations as identified through the MTSS process. Their role centers on addressing specific skill gaps in areas such as reading, writing, or mathematics so that students can progress toward mastering academic standards.

Goal:

To accelerate learning, close achievement gaps, and ensure that all students can meet grade-level standards.



Working with Families

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Working with Families: PreK and Elementary

DID YOU KNOW?

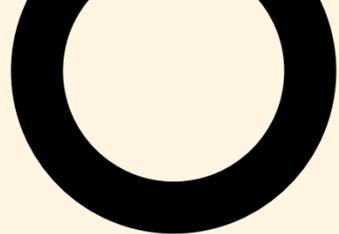
- As early as preschool and kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10%, or about 2 days each month over the course of a school year, can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences and tardiness can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves.

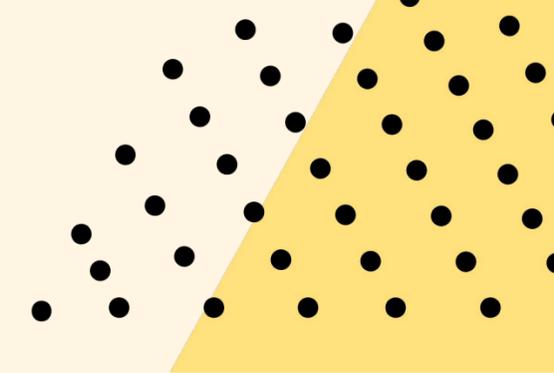
Working with Families: Pre K and Elementary

What you can do:

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Keep your child healthy and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your children to their teachers and classmates before school starts.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Try to schedule non-urgent related medical appointments and extended trips when school isn't in session.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- If you are concerned that your child may have a contagious illness, call your school or health care provider for advice.
- If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teacher for resources and ideas to continue learning at home.

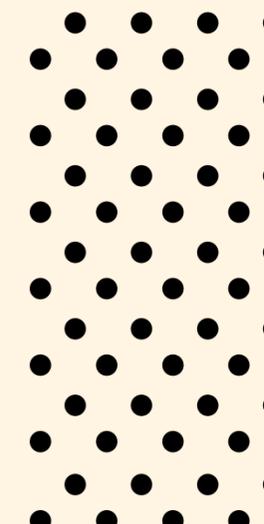
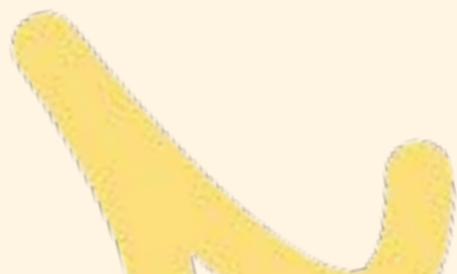
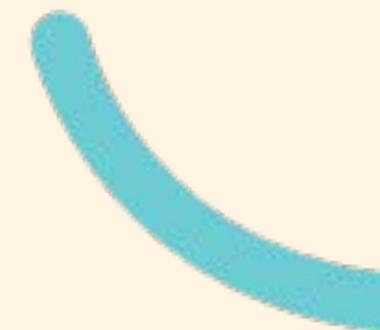


Working with Families: Secondary



Did you know:

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- Frequent absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other difficulty.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10%, or 2 days a month, over the course of the school year, can affect a student's academic success.



Working with Families: Secondary

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Resources

<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/sandp/attendance/>

https://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf

https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/sandp/attendance/docs/AttendanceAwarenessFamiliesOn_ePager.pdf

<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/sandp/attendance/docs/CAWhatWeKnow.pdf>



Questions?