



Organizing an Attendance Improvement Strategy

Taking a Team Approach

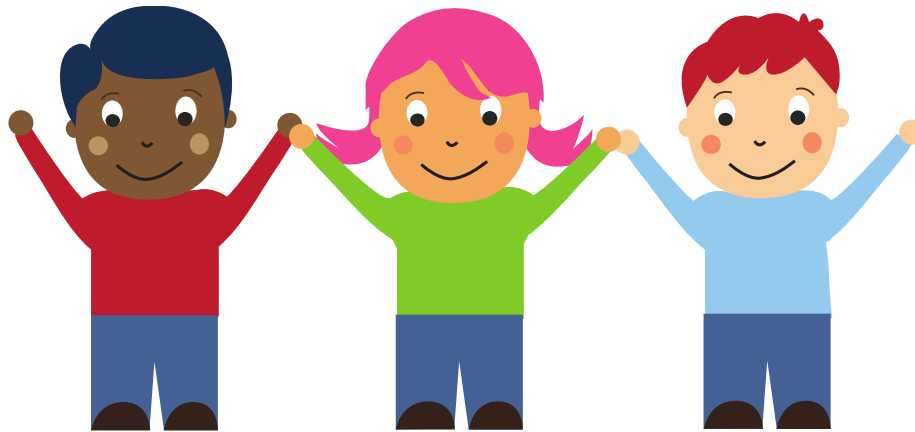




Introductions Warm Up

- Elementary school, middle school or high school?
- Who currently has an attendance team?
- How long have you served on your team?
- When you think about the work of an attendance team what questions come to mind?

Taking a School Wide Approach to Attendance





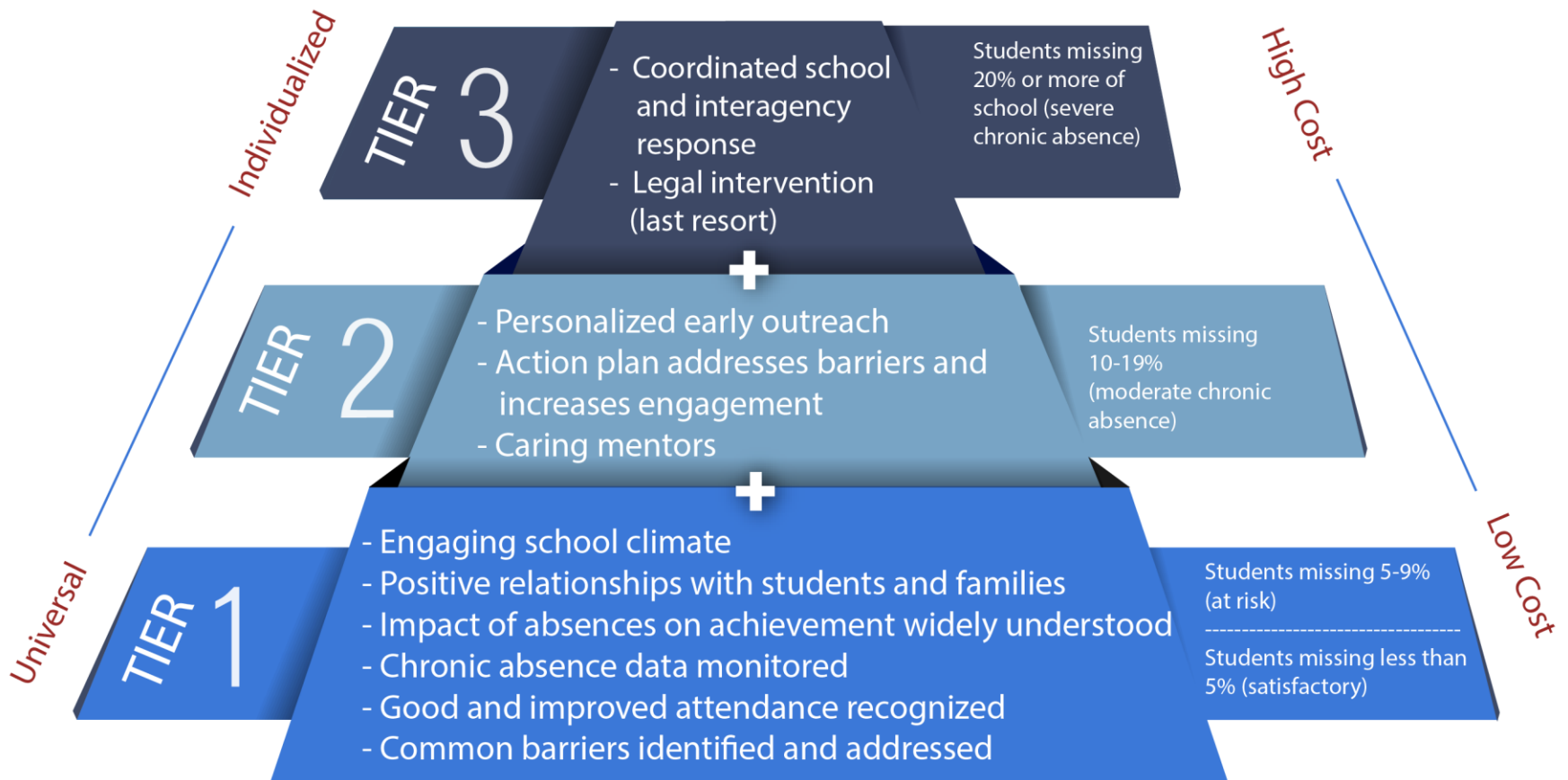
Principal Leadership is Key

1. Cultivate a schoolwide culture of attendance
2. Take a team approach to address chronic absence and truancy
3. Develop staff capacity to adopt effective practices
4. Utilize data in communications and decision-making

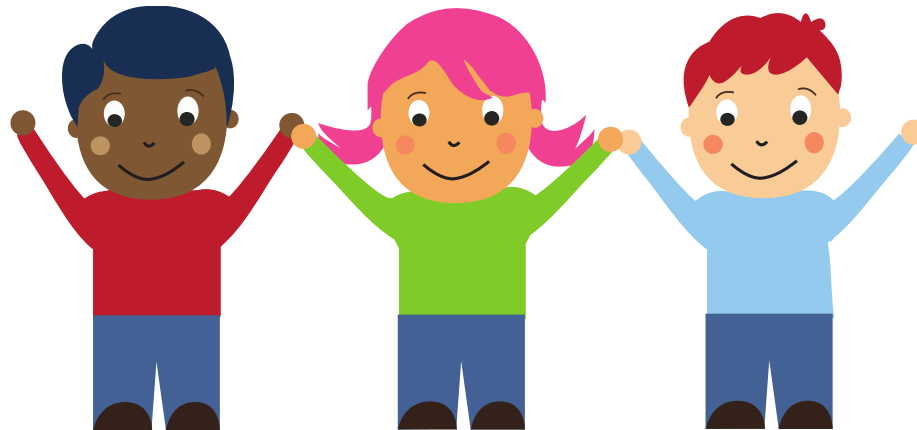
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/principals/>



The Attendance Team is responsible for the School Attendance Strategy



Taking a Team Approach





What is the purpose of an Attendance Team?

The primary purpose of an attendance team is to organize the schools' attendance strategy and foster improved attendance for all students.



Attendance Teams: Shifting Paradigms

Old Practice:

- ✓ Reacted to lagging indicators often after many absences had added up.
- ✓ Monitored only unexcused absences.
- ✓ Focused on individual students and their families.
- ✓ Offered punitive responses.



A mother is led away in handcuffs during a 2011 “truancy sweep” in Orange County, California.
MICHAEL GOULDING/THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER, VIA ZUMA PRESS



Attendance Teams: Organizing the School Attendance Strategy

New Practice:

- ✓ Goal and action oriented.
- ✓ Coordinates the school's multi-tiered strategy to reduce chronic absence.
- ✓ Uses qualitative and quantitative data to understand the attendance challenges at their school.
- ✓ Uses trend data to identify which sub-groups of students are most vulnerable to absenteeism.
- ✓ Connects families and students to needed resources.
- ✓ Monitors progress.



Attendance Teams Look for Patterns in Data

They see the **BIG
PICTURE:**
Trends Over
Time
By Grade
Sub-groups





Attendance Teams use Data to Identify Chronically Absent Students

They use data to identify individual students and groups of students who are headed off-track and provide resources and supports to help them get to school every day.





Specific Functions of the Attendance Team Include:

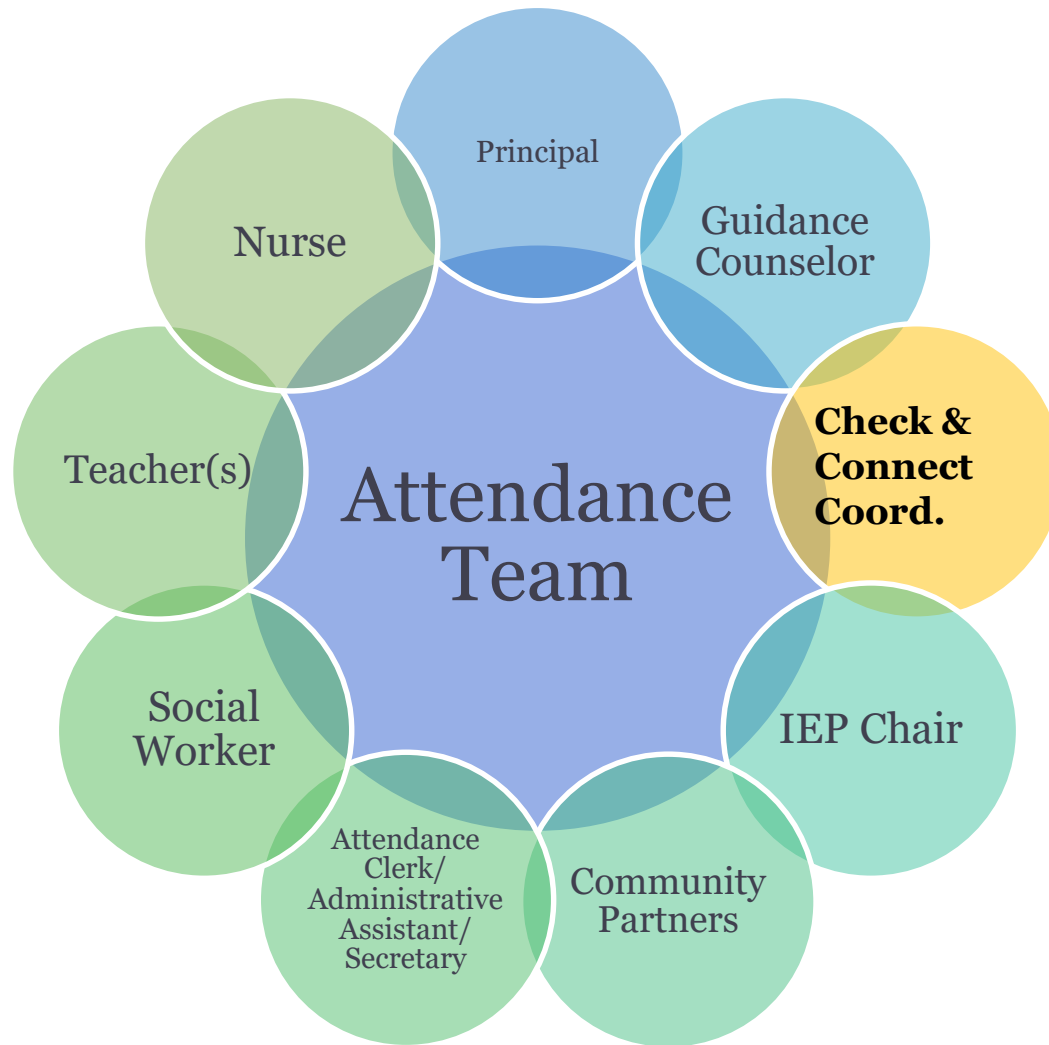
1. **Coordinate** the whole school's multi-tiered strategy to reduce chronic absence by implementing evidence-informed prevention and early intervention.
2. **Matches strategies with root causes** - Adopt strategies that address the needs of individual and groups of chronically absent students using qualitative and quantitative data
3. **Triage** - Provide triage to ensure students receive needed supports from both the school and the community.



What makes an effective Attendance Team?

- They involve the right people
- Have established group norms
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Regularly scheduled meetings
- Shared responsibility and accountability
- Utilize a standard meeting agenda
- Maintain school calendar of attendance related events or opportunities

The Attendance Team should be Led by the School Principal and have Diverse Representation





School Attendance Team Members have clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities

Core Attendance Team roles include:

- Team facilitator/leader
- Data coordinator
- Note taker



Effective Attendance Teams have Shared Accountability

All team members should have access to a common system to record interactions and interventions and to track progress on agreed upon tasks and monitor student outcomes.



Standard Attendance Team Meeting Agenda

**Minimum Meeting Time:
One hour**

Aggregate Data Trends (15 min)

High-level picture of all students by tier and attendance categories; changes since last meeting

Tier 1 Strategies (10 min)

Review upcoming events for attendance recognition and school climate improvements. Any communications/messaging needs in the next month?

Early Warning Systems (20 min)

Review of students on the “cusp” of tiers; identify any patterns or trends across groups of students and interventions

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Students (20 min)

Review individual students; causes for absence; assign interventions

Meeting Decisions and Next Steps (5 min)



Example: NYC Weekly Attendance Team

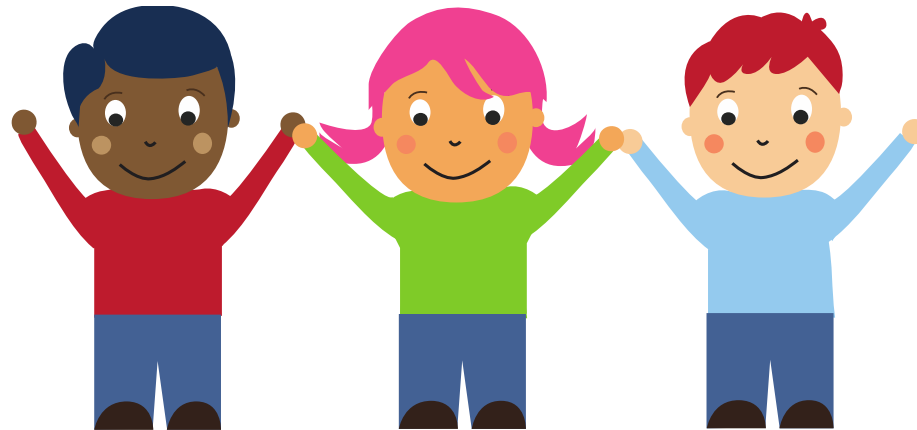
1. Watch the Video.
2. Discussion Questions:
 - What roles did different people take?
 - How does your attendance team compare to the description of the roles and responsibilities and characteristics that we've just discussed?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2SGt6oOc3E>

Share Out

- What were your “ah-ha’s”?
- What could you do to strengthen the functioning of your attendance teams?

Driving with Data





Fill Out Your Pyramid

For each tier, fill in the activities/supports currently in place.

School District/ School Name: _____

TIER 3

Students at risk of missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)

High Cost

TIER 2

Students at risk of missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)

TIER 1

All students

How many students are in each tier?

Tier 3

Tier 2

Tier 1

Low Cost



Review results

Where are strengths?

Where are gaps?

What resources/interventions would you like to add if you could?

Scalability and Monitoring Progress Requires an Iterative Approach to Attendance Improvement

