



# BENCHMARKING SUPPORTIVE ATTENDANCE PRACTICES

Prepared for AASA, The School Superintendent's Association

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# INTRODUCTION

States and districts across the United States face challenges maintaining strong attendance in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Also, states and districts have moved away from traditional law enforcement-focused approaches to truancy due to research suggesting that punitive approaches may be less effective in encouraging school attendance and lead to long-term negative consequences for students and families.<sup>2</sup> In this report, Hanover Research (Hanover) reviews recent state practices focused on addressing attendance challenges. The report consists of state profiles aimed at improving attendance by addressing mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) supports, improving learning environments, and engaging community partners. Within, Hanover also provides links to resources developed by state education agencies and partner organizations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, Hanover suggests district leaders consider the following recommendations:

-  **Use data to identify the root causes, especially causes linked to students' and families' mental health and SEL needs, in addressing attendance challenges and plan appropriate responses.** Across states, guidance on addressing attendance challenges emphasizes there is no single strategy that will be effective in all cases, because attendance challenges may reflect a variety of root causes associated with the student, family, school, or community. Effective attendance teams analyze attendance data to identify root causes and plan interventions to address these causes. For example, New Jersey developed a data-based decision-making process attendance teams can use to review attendance data and plan interventions for individual students, classrooms, and the school.
-  **Integrate attendance supports into a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that addresses barriers to attendance such as mental health challenges, school climate issues, and lack of awareness of the importance of attendance.** For example, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Virginia recommend districts adopt an MTSS structure for attendance or integrate attendance supports into a comprehensive MTSS. MTSS ensures that all students receive the level of support they need, with universal supports creating a positive school climate and ensuring awareness of the importance of attendance and targeted or intensive support, including mental health resources, for students who face barriers to attendance.
-  **Conduct outreach to families to build positive relationships and identify students' mental health and SEL needs.** Several states identify family outreach as an essential strategy to ensure families have the resources they need to support attendance and to engage families as partners in supporting attendance. Connecticut's Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP), which relies on home visits to build positive school-family relationships, has demonstrated a significant positive effect on attendance for participating students.
-  **Engage constituents across the district and community in identifying challenges and solutions for attendance.** States profiled in this report leverage expertise and resources of community partners to support attendance improvement efforts. For example, the Illinois Department of Human Services and Chicago Public Schools collaborate with three organizations that work with young people in Chicago to support the Back to Our Future program, while the Ohio Department of Education works with higher education partners, sports teams, the juvenile justice system, and




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<sup>1</sup> Blad, E. "5 Challenges School District Leaders Will Face in 2024." *Education Week*, December 15, 2023. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/5-challenges-school-district-leaders-will-face-in-2024/2023/12>

<sup>2</sup> MacGillis, A. "Skipping School: America's Hidden Education Crisis." *ProPublica*, January 8, 2024. <https://www.propublica.org/article/school-absenteeism-truancy-education-students>

other community partners to support an awareness campaign and identify best practices for improving attendance.

## KEY FINDINGS

-  **Several states specifically incorporate mental health into their recommended strategies to improve attendance.** For example, Wisconsin has developed an FAQ sheet with recommendations for supporting students with mental health challenges to attend school regularly. Other states, such as Ohio, New Mexico and Connecticut, integrate mental health supports and SEL into MTSS frameworks for attendance.
-  **Interventions to address attendance challenges often focus on building positive relationships between students and adults in schools.** For example, several school districts in South Dakota hired attendance liaisons who work with students and their families to overcome barriers to attendance. Similarly, Virginia recommends schools consider Relationship Mapping, a strategy in which schools identify students who do not currently have a positive connection with an adult in the school, and assigns these students an adult mentor as a strategy to improve attendance outcomes.
-  **State education agencies collaborate with other state agencies interested in promoting positive outcomes for youth to provide guidance on best practices for improving attendance and support for attendance initiatives.** For example, the Ohio Department of Education collaborates with the Ohio Supreme Court and local juvenile courts to develop a guide to addressing truancy, with the goal of reducing truancy referrals to the juvenile justice system. Similarly, the Office of the Attorney General of California developed a guide to reducing truancy in collaboration with several government agencies, community groups, and professional organizations across the state, including the California Department of Education.
-  **In some cases, recent attendance initiatives build on or update initiatives in place before the COVID-19 pandemic.** For example, New Jersey recently updated guidance published before the pandemic to emphasize using student data to identify effective attendance interventions. Ohio expanded on a statewide attendance awareness campaign launched in 2019 by convening a statewide attendance task force and publishing a guide to improving district level attendance in 2023. Similarly, Connecticut published guidance to addressing chronic absenteeism for school districts in 2017 and launched an attendance initiative focused on home visits for chronically absent students, the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) to support attendance as students returned to in-person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic.
-  **Several states require schools and districts to establish formal attendance improvement plans and establish teams to review and act on attendance data on a case-by-case basis that ultimately will require addressing students' mental health and SEL.** For example, New Mexico requires all districts to establish Attendance Improvement Plans that will include mental health and SEL supports when needed for those students. New Jersey requires schools with high chronic absenteeism rates to develop corrective action plans by establishing problem-solving teams made up of diverse constituents to implement data-based decision-making processes. Because solutions for students are identified based on the root causes for their absenteeism, mental health and SEL supports are applied as needed.

## SECTION I: STATE PROFILES

Below, Hanover profiles strategies used by states to support improved attendance outcomes. States were selected for inclusion in this report based on the availability of information from secondary sources on state-led strategies to improve attendance. Several states support districts in improving attendance through guidance for schools and districts in implementing data-based interventions to address attendance challenges including mental health and SEL supports. Notably, Illinois, profiled below, has adopted a more targeted approach, working directly with Chicago Public Schools, the largest district in the state, to implement an initiative designed to reengage students who are chronically absent or have become disengaged from school.<sup>3</sup>

### CALIFORNIA

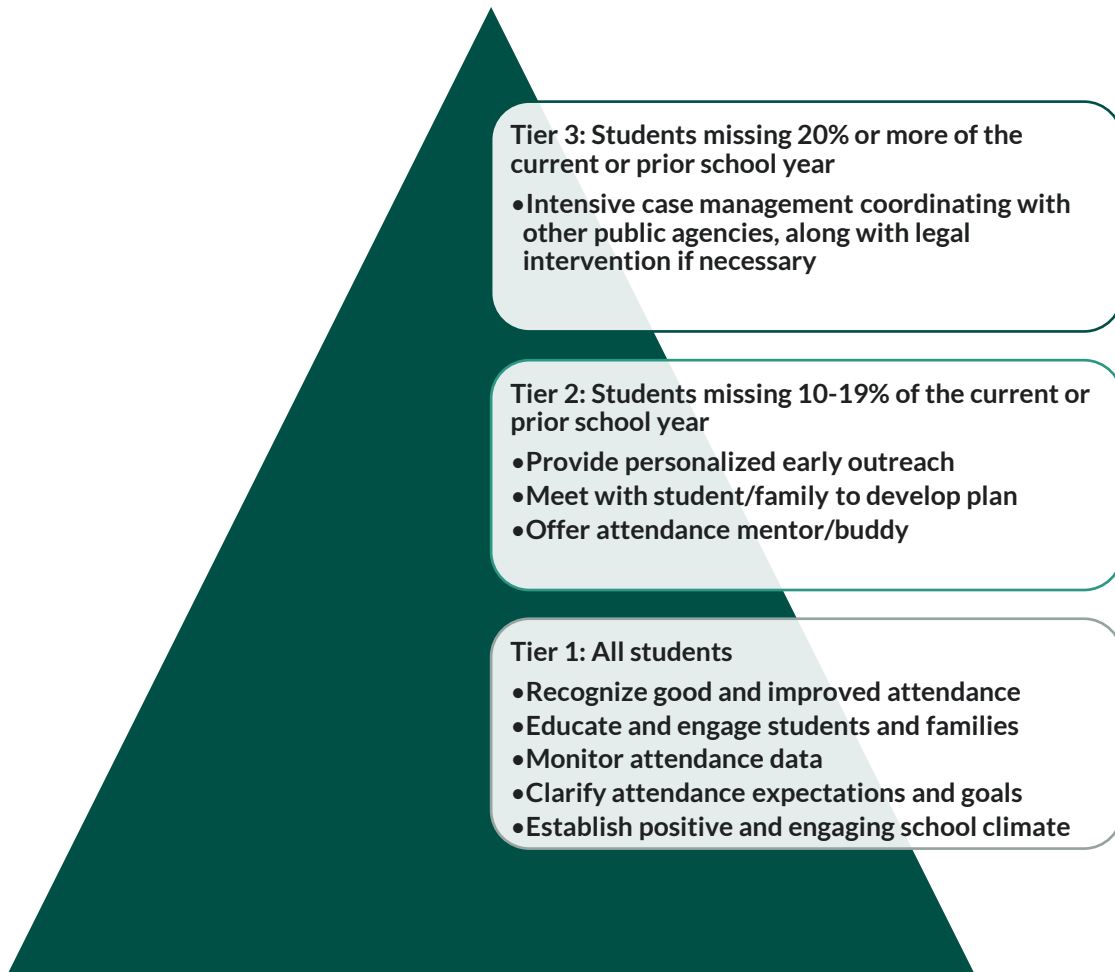
The California Attorney General's Office has partnered with several government agencies, community groups, and professional organizations across the state, including the California Department of Education, to develop a [Truancy Toolkit](#) with resources schools and districts can use to address attendance challenges. This toolkit recommends adopting the MTSS for attendance challenges presented in Figure 1.1. Tier 1 supports include schoolwide strategies to ensure shared expectations for attendance among schools, families, and students as well as creating a positive school climate that supports mental health and encourages attendance and monitoring data to identify students who may need additional support. Tier 2 supports include early interventions for students beginning to demonstrate attendance challenges, while Tier 3 supports include intensive case management supports for students with mental health challenges or other barriers to attendance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Community Organizations, IDHS and CPS Unite to Provide Summer Jobs and Support to Young People in Chicago." State of Illinois, June 16, 2022. <https://www.illinois.gov/news/press-release.25069.html>

<sup>4</sup> "Truancy Toolkit." State of California - Department of Justice - Office of the Attorney General, July 29, 2017. <https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit>

Figure 1.1: California MTSS for Attendance



Source: California Office of the Attorney General<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the recommended MTSS, the Truancy Toolkit includes research and recommendations on attendance developed by the Ad Council, a consortium of advertising agencies that researched effective messaging strategies to encourage positive attendance among parents of elementary students in California in 2015. The report finds a number of potential barriers to attendance, including mental health or other challenges facing parents, physical illness (particularly asthma) facing children, and negative perceptions of safety in the school or community, and also notes that many parents do not fully understand the importance of consistent attendance. This research finds messaging that emphasizes negative consequences of absenteeism is more effective than messaging emphasizing positive consequences of attendance. Also, absenteeism often reflects challenges such as school safety and a poor connection to the school community as well as parents' misconceptions around absenteeism. The Ad Council recommends schools implement strategies presented in Figure 1.2.<sup>6</sup> The Truancy Toolkit also links to tools developed by Attendance Works, a nonprofit organization focused exclusively on improving attendance outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "California School Attendance Research Project." Ad Council, June 2015. pp. 5–6.  
<https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/tr/toolkit/QualitativeResearchReport.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> "Truancy Toolkit," Op. cit.

**Figure 1.2: Ad Council Recommended Attendance Strategies**

- Class-wide rewards for low absenteeism;
- Recognizing parents for improved attendance;
- Home visits;
- An MTSS that includes school climate improvements and early intervention for students with attendance challenges;
- Attendance awareness campaigns at the school level;
- Text message outreach to parents;
- Engaging parents with the academic curriculum; and
- Letters to parents to alert them of absences.

Source: Ad Council<sup>8</sup>

## CONNECTICUT

Connecticut combines a statewide initiative to improve attendance with guidance for schools and districts. In 2017, the Connecticut State Department of Education published a [guide to addressing chronic absenteeism](#) with recommendations for improving attendance at the district and school levels. This guide recommends districts and schools create Attendance Review Teams composed of staff members and community partners to analyze attendance data and plan interventions to improve attendance outcomes. The Connecticut State Department of Education supports districts in reviewing data through an [online data portal](#) that disaggregates absenteeism data for the categories listed in Figure 1.3 and guidance on collecting and reporting accurate attendance data. Data collected by the state includes both average daily attendance and the chronic absenteeism rate because relying exclusively on average daily attendance can mask chronic absenteeism.<sup>9</sup> The Connecticut State Department of Education supplements this guidance with several professional learning networks and information-sharing sessions, including weekly sessions for any professionals in the state working on attendance issues to share information and address common concerns.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 1.3: Connecticut State Department of Education Attendance Data Disaggregation Factors**



Source: Connecticut State Department of Education<sup>11</sup>

The Connecticut State Department of Education’s guide to improving attendance recommends creating attendance review teams at both the district and school levels. These teams should include school and district leaders responsible for teaching and learning, student health and student support, data, and early childhood education, as well as school leaders and community partners. Attendance review teams may be existing teams such as student assistance or data teams, and may include community partners such as mental health providers. Districts are required to establish attendance review teams when the chronic absenteeism rate for the district passes ten percent or the chronic absenteeism rate for an individual school passes 15 percent, but the Connecticut State Department of Education recommends establishing an attendance review team when the chronic absenteeism rate passes ten percent. Attendance review teams fulfill the functions listed in Figure

<sup>8</sup> Chart contents adapted from: “California School Attendance Research Project,” Op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> “Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut’s Schools.” Connecticut State Department of Education, April 2017. <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Reducing-Chronic-Absence-in-Connecticuts-Schools>

<sup>10</sup> “Bright Spots: Improving High School Student Attendance in Connecticut.” Attendance Works, October 2023. p. 11. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Chronic-Absence/BrightSpotsCTReport2023Final.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Chart contents adapted from: “Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut’s Schools,” Op. cit.

1.4, and the Connecticut State Department of Education provides links to resources developed by Attendance Works to support each function.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 1.4: Functions of Attendance Review Teams**

**Routinely unpack, analyze and utilize data to inform action.**

**Organize a systemic districtwide response and policy/practice improvement.**

**Promote shared accountability and continuous improvement.**

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education<sup>13</sup>

At the school level, the Connecticut State Department of Education recommends implementing an MTSS for attendance, aligned to Connecticut’s statewide MTSS frameworks for academic and behavioral interventions. This framework embeds supports for students’ mental health and wellbeing throughout the tiers, with an emphasis on creating a positive school climate and implementing schoolwide **SEL** at Tier 1, mentoring and targeted behavioral interventions such as **Check and Connect** and **restorative practices** in Tier 2, and referral to professional mental health services as appropriate at Tier 3.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this guidance, chronic absenteeism rates in Connecticut increased substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic, rising from 11.7 percent during the 2018-2019 school year to 23.7 percent during the 2021-2022 school year. Chronic absenteeism rates are particularly high in the high school grades, increasing from 14.5 percent during the 2019-2019 school year to 29.1 percent in 2021-2022. In response, the Connecticut State Department of Education collaborated with Attendance Works, a nonprofit organization focused exclusively on improving attendance outcomes, to review strategies used by a selection of ten high schools that had either substantially improved chronic absenteeism rates or had reduced chronic absenteeism rates from the previous year. Attendance Works conducted interviews with leaders at these schools, who identified the key themes for attendance improvement strategies presented in Figure 1.5.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> “Bright Spots: Improving High School Student Attendance in Connecticut,” Op. cit., p. 4.



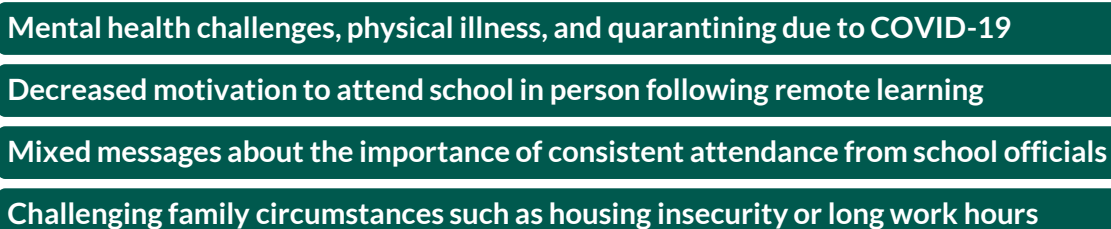
**Figure 1.5: Common Themes of Schools with Successful Attendance Initiatives**



Source: Attendance Works<sup>16</sup>

The Connecticut State Department of Education also launched the [Learner Engagement and Attendance Program \(LEAP\)](#) in April 2021 to support attendance as students returned to in-person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic. LEAP consists of home visits for students identified as chronically absent in a targeted sample of 15 districts.<sup>17</sup> These students face a number of barriers to attendance, including those listed in Figure 1.6. During these home visits, two school or community partner organization staff members meet with the families of chronically absent students. Home visits are educational rather than punitive in nature and provide an opportunity for schools to learn more about families’ strengths and needs and build positive school-family relationships. LEAP aims for initial outreach to result in multiple home visits that build positive relationships over time.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 1.6: Barriers to Attendance for Chronically Absent Students in Connecticut**



Source: Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Chart contents adapted from: Ibid., pp. 4–10.

<sup>17</sup> Stemler, S.E. et al. “An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Home Visits for Re-Engaging Students Who Were Chronically Absent in the Era of Covid-19.” Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration, December 31, 2022. p. 6. [https://portal.ct.gov/ccerc/-/media/CCERC/Reports/CCERC-Report-LEAP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/ccerc/-/media/CCERC/Reports/CCERC-Report-LEAP_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> “Learner Engagement and Attendance Program - LEAP--How To.” Connecticut State Department of Education. <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Chronic-Absence/Learner-Engagement-and-Attendance-Program-LEAP/How-To>

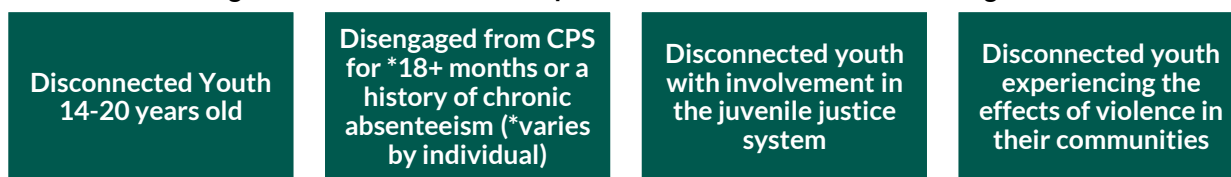
<sup>19</sup> Chart contents adapted from: Stemler et al., Op. cit., pp. 17–19.

An evaluation of LEAP published in 2022 by the Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration (CCERC), a consortium of the Connecticut State Department of Education and several colleges and universities in the state, finds a significant positive effect on attendance rates. Overall, attendance rates for students participating in LEAP increased by around four percentage points in the month following their first home visits and continued to increase thereafter, with a total increase of seven percentage points for students participating in the summer of 2021 and 15 percentage points for students participating during the 2021-2022 school year. The effects of LEAP were stronger for students in Grades 6-12, but weaker for English learners and students in New Haven Public Schools, which did not implement the program as intended. The evaluation also finds home visits that occurred in person at the student’s home or school were more effective than visits conducted remotely by telephone or video conferencing.<sup>20</sup>

## ILLINOIS

The Illinois Department of Human Services collaborates with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to support the [Back to Our Future](#) program to reengage students in CPS.<sup>21</sup> The program focuses on students between the ages of 14 and 21 who are both disconnected from school and at risk of involvement in gun violence. Many of these students also face barriers to attendance such as mental health challenges, involvement in the justice system, and special educational needs.<sup>22</sup> CPS aims to support 1,000 students who meet the criteria presented in Figure 1.7. Notably, Back to Our Future includes both students who have been fully disengaged from CPS for 18 months and students who remain enrolled but meet the criteria for chronic absenteeism depending on individual student needs.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 1.7: Criteria for Participation in the Back to Our Future Program**



Source: Chicago Public Schools<sup>24</sup>

Program designers decided to focus on disconnected students because these students are underserved by existing violence prevention programs, which are often delivered through schools, and because not graduating high school is a risk factor for gun violence.<sup>25</sup> Students are referred to the program through one of the four pathways listed in Figure 1.8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> “Community Organizations, IDHS and CPS Unite to Provide Summer Jobs and Support to Young People in Chicago,” Op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Avila, D. et al. “Back to Our Future (B2OF) Policy Brief.” University of Chicago Crime Lab, December 2023. p. 1.

<https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/UChicago-Crime-Lab-Back-to-Our-Future-Policy-Brief-Dec-2023.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> “Back to Our Future.” Chicago Public Schools. <https://www.cps.edu/strategic-initiatives/back-to-our-future/>

<sup>24</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Avila et al., Op. cit., p. 1.

**Figure 1.8: Back to Our Future Referral Pathways**

Partner referrals from community organizations

Institutional referrals from city agencies and other institutions such as Cook County Juvenile Probation, Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office,

Community-based organization (CBO) reverse referrals from internal staff

Data driven referrals that leverage administrative data from CPS to identify youth who may be likely to engage in gun violence and be inactive in school

Source: University of Chicago Crime Lab<sup>26</sup>

Illinois supports the implementation of Back to Our Future through a grant of \$16.2 million to CPS and operates youth development and violence prevention programs that align with the goals of Back to Our Future.<sup>27</sup> CPS works with the three community organizations listed in Figure 1.9 to identify eligible students and provide services. The University of Chicago Crime Lab provides implementation support to partner organizations and conducts focus groups with participating students to evaluate the program.<sup>28</sup>

**Figure 1.9: Back to Our Future Partner Organizations**

ORGANIZATION	SERVICES
<u><a href="#">Breakthrough</a></u>	Youth development, community economic development, supportive housing, behavioral and physical health resources, violence prevention, and religious services
<u><a href="#">Youth Advocate Programs</a></u>	Community-based alternatives to youth incarceration, including mental health supports and advocacy
<u><a href="#">UCAN</a></u>	Services for youth exposed to trauma, including mental health counseling, workforce development, foster grandparenting, and violence prevention

Source: Chicago Public Schools<sup>29</sup>

Back to Our Future includes three phases, summarized in Figure 1.10. During the intensive services phase (Phase 2), students participate in 12 weeks of paid soft skills training leading to a transitional job placement, combined with case management, family support, and mental health treatment. Also in Phase 2, students identify an educational option that will facilitate positive attendance and enable students to obtain a valued credential. Attendance options include reenrolling in a traditional high school, enrolling in CPS’ alternative school, and obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Back to Our Future uses cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to provide mental health services to students experiencing mental health challenges such as trauma, anxiety, and depression. In Phase 3, students receive ongoing support to ensure attendance in their selected educational pathway.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> “Community Organizations, IDHS and CPS Unite to Provide Summer Jobs and Support to Young People in Chicago,” Op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Avila et al., Op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Chart contents obtained through: “Back to Our Future,” Op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 1.10: Back to Our Future Program Phases**

**Phase 1: Partner organizations conduct outreach to referred students, including at least two phone calls and two home visits.**

**Phase 2: Participating students complete a 12-week program of intensive services, during which they receive a salary and complete a plan for returning to education.**

**Phase 3: After completing the intensive services, Back to Our Future provides individual follow-up services to support a stable transition to students' chosen educational pathways, followed by one year of light-touch support services.**

Source: University of Chicago Crime Lab<sup>31</sup>

The University of Chicago Crime Lab has published a program evaluation of Back to Our Future. This evaluation finds that the program was successful in referring and recruiting young people in need of its services, but that attendance in the program was limited. On average, participating students attended seven hours of programming per week compared to the expected 20 hours. Students with the most intensive academic needs were unlikely to engage in the academic recovery classes included in the program, and some students were reluctant to participate in group mental health counseling due to stigma, previous trauma, and fears that other participants in group programming were engaged in violence.<sup>32</sup>

## NEW JERSEY

New Jersey requires schools with a chronic absenteeism rate above 10 percent to develop a corrective action plan for attendance to be approved by the district's school board. The planning process must include family engagement through at least one family survey assessing family members' perceptions of the reasons for chronic absenteeism and recommendations for improving attendance, and fulfill the functions listed in Figure 1.11. Boards must revise and reapprove corrective action plans annually until the chronic absenteeism rate drops below 10 percent.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 1.11: Functions of Corrective Action Plans for Attendance**

Identifying problems and barriers to school attendance

Developing recommendations to address the problems and barriers to school attendance that have been identified

Outlining communication strategies to educate and inform parents on the importance of school attendance

Establishing protocols on informing and engaging parents when a child begins to show a pattern of absences

Reviewing school policies to ensure they support improved school attendance

Source: New Jersey Department of Education<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Avila et al., Op. cit., pp. 2–3.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> "Data-Based Decision-making for Addressing Chronic Absenteeism: Working Together to Increase Regular Attendance to Improve District Performance and Educational Outcomes." New Jersey Department of Education, 2023. p. 4. <https://nj.gov/education/safety/sandp/attendance/docs/DataBasedDecisionMakingChronicAbsenteeism.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

The New Jersey Department of Education supports district-level attendance initiatives by releasing guidance for districts. Initially published in 2018 under the title *Getting Students to School: Strategies for Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic Absenteeism*, this guidance was updated in 2023 and retitled [Data-Based Decision-making for Addressing Chronic Absenteeism](#) to reflect the New Jersey Department of Education's emphasis on using student data to identify effective attendance interventions.<sup>35</sup> This document includes templates schools and districts can use to develop corrective action plans and document progress and outcomes.<sup>36</sup>

This guidance recommends schools create problem-solving teams made up of diverse constituents within the district and community to implement the data-based decision-making process outlined in Figure 1.12. This process ensures absenteeism prevention strategies address the root causes of absenteeism, such as mental health challenges, a negative school climate, or family challenges. Schools can use existing teams or committees such as an MTSS team to serve as their problem-solving teams. Teams should meet regularly to review attendance data and plan interventions for individual students, classrooms, and the school.<sup>37</sup>

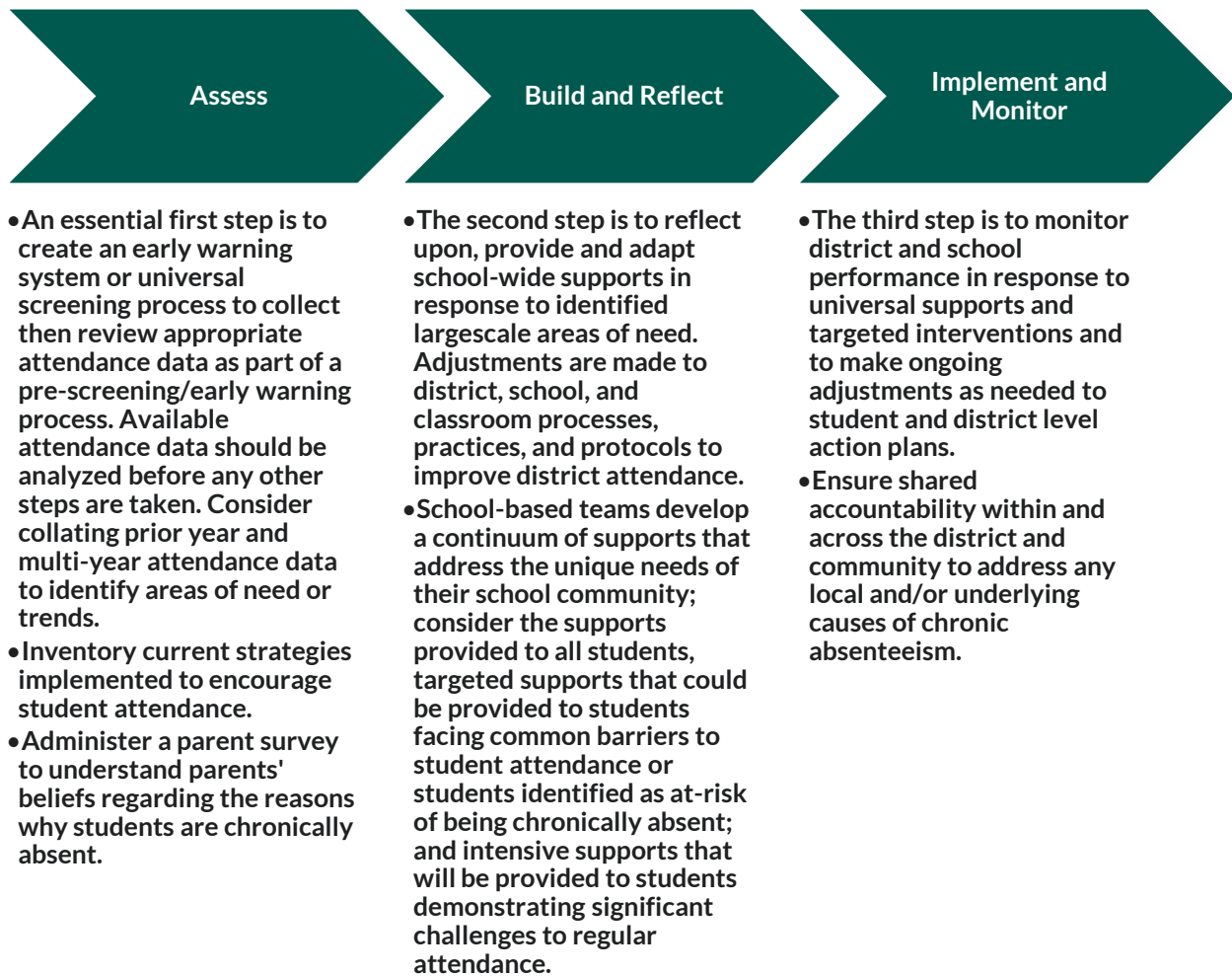
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<sup>35</sup> Parmalee, T. "NJDOE Updates Guidance on Curbing Chronic Absenteeism." New Jersey School Boards Association, June 30, 2023. <https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/school-board-notes/july-3-2023-vol-xlvii-no-1/njdoe-issues-updated-guidance-on-curbing-chronic-absenteeism/>

<sup>36</sup> "Data-Based Decision-making for Addressing Chronic Absenteeism: Working Together to Increase Regular Attendance to Improve District Performance and Educational Outcomes," Op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

Figure 1.12: Data-Based Decision-making Process for Attendance Improvement



Source: New Jersey Department of Education<sup>38</sup>

The New Jersey Department of Education recommends schools integrate corrective action plans into the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS), a statewide MTSS.<sup>39</sup> NJTSS is a comprehensive MTSS designed to provide academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports within the same framework.<sup>40</sup> The incorporation of attendance supports into a comprehensive MTSS draws on secondary research finding that attendance challenges often reflect a school environment that is not conducive to learning.<sup>41</sup> The New Jersey Department of Education's guidance for school districts includes detailed recommendations to support the essential components of the NJTSS listed in Figure 1.13 across each tier of support.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> "New Jersey Tiered System of Supports." New Jersey Department of Education. <https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/>

<sup>41</sup> Chang, H., and C. Leong. "A Tiered Approach to Ensuring Students Are Present, Engaged, and Supported in the 2020–21 School Year." Policy Analysis for California Education. <https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/tiered-approach-ensuring-students-are-present-engaged-and-supported-2020-21-school-year>

<sup>42</sup> "Data-Based Decision-making for Addressing Chronic Absenteeism: Working Together to Increase Regular Attendance to Improve District Performance and Educational Outcomes," Op. cit., pp. 22–29.

Figure 1.13: Essential Components of the NJTSS



Source: New Jersey Department of Education<sup>43</sup>

## NEW MEXICO

New Mexico enacted a substantial reform to attendance support, titled the *Attendance for Success Act*, in 2019.<sup>44</sup> This reform moved attendance policy in the state away from a truancy-focused approach by removing local district attorneys from the attendance process.<sup>45</sup> Instead of referring students with attendance challenges to law enforcement, districts are expected to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan which includes the four tiers of intervention outlined in Figure 1.14. Tier 4 services are the most intensive and must include mental health counseling, family supports, and collaboration with community service providers.<sup>46</sup>

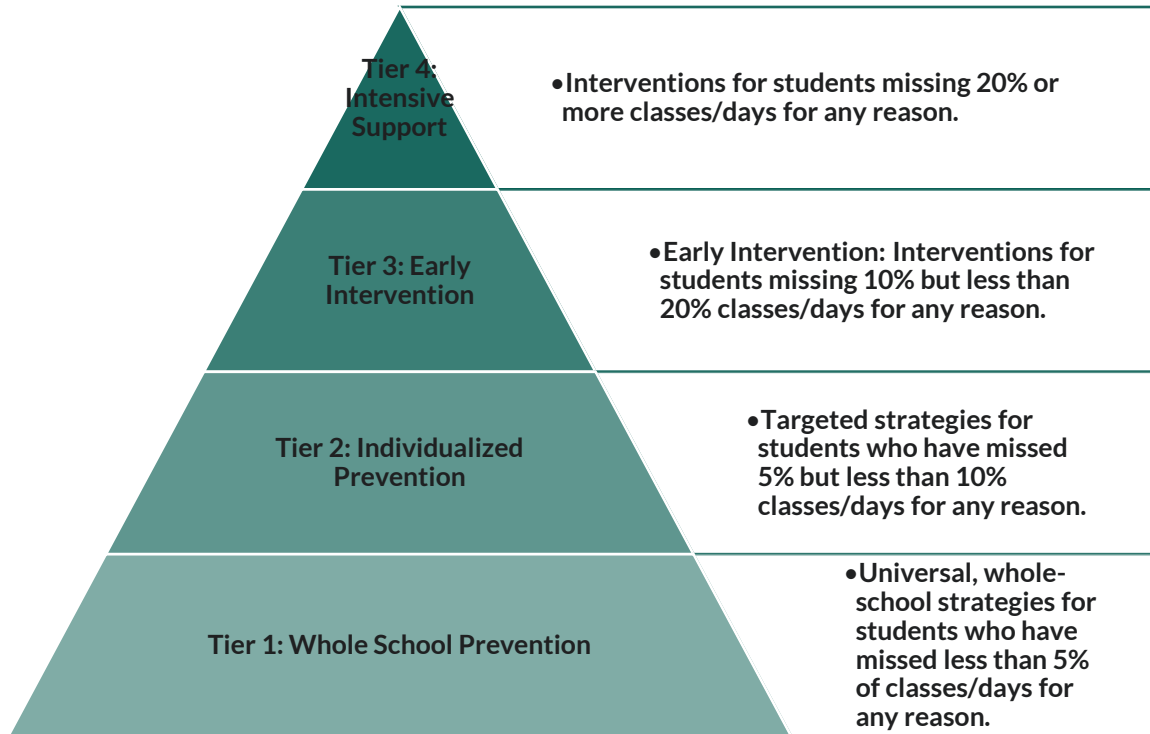
<sup>43</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> "Attendance for Student Success Act." New Mexico State Legislature, 2019. [https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SHSB\\_Chaptered-Attendance-For-Success-Act.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SHSB_Chaptered-Attendance-For-Success-Act.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> MacGillis, Op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> "Attendance for Success Act Presentation." New Mexico Public Education Department, 2019. p. 17. [https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SHSB\\_Afsa-PPT-final.Suman\\_.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SHSB_Afsa-PPT-final.Suman_.pdf)

**Figure 1.14: New Mexico Attendance for Success Act Tiers of Intervention**



Source: New Mexico Public Education Department<sup>47</sup>

Attendance Improvement Plans are developed and implemented by Attendance Teams composed of staff, administrators, and community members at each school. Each Attendance Improvement Plan includes the overall absence rate for the school and the chronic absenteeism rate disaggregated by grade and demographic. New Mexico requires Attendance Teams to identify and report early warning indicators for excessive absence. Attendance Teams use these data to identify the root causes of absenteeism and appropriate strategies to address root causes at each tier of intervention.<sup>48</sup>

Despite implementing reforms to attendance policies in 2019, New Mexico has faced some of the most severe attendance challenges of any state, with a chronic absenteeism rate of 40 percent following the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>49</sup> To help districts address ongoing attendance challenges, the New Mexico Public Education Department partnered with the United Way of New Mexico to deliver [presentations](#) on attendance to district staff throughout the 2021-2022 school year.<sup>50</sup> Presentation topics include the connection between mental health and attendance and resources available for attendance teams, students, and families.<sup>51</sup> The New Mexico Public Education Department has also developed training to support schools and districts in using the state’s attendance data portal to track attendance.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 16.

<sup>49</sup> MacGillis, Op. cit.

<sup>50</sup> Bossarte, S. “United Way - SY22 Presentations.” New Mexico Public Education Department.

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/safe-healthy-schools/attendance-for-success/united-way-sy22-presentations/>

<sup>51</sup> Moore, A. “SEL and Attendance.” presented at the New Mexico Public Education Department.

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/187cL1itnqotqefnFENXImSwmIWmNhyXNFw\\_137CIRlc \[2\]](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/187cL1itnqotqefnFENXImSwmIWmNhyXNFw_137CIRlc [2]) “NM Attendance Toolkit.” presented at the New Mexico Public Education Department.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1E7oFLrg0sOHRJbTL9VuhVLG6lnAa0g2bPhptblySbkU>

<sup>52</sup> “Attendance Tracking Training.” New Mexico Public Education Department.

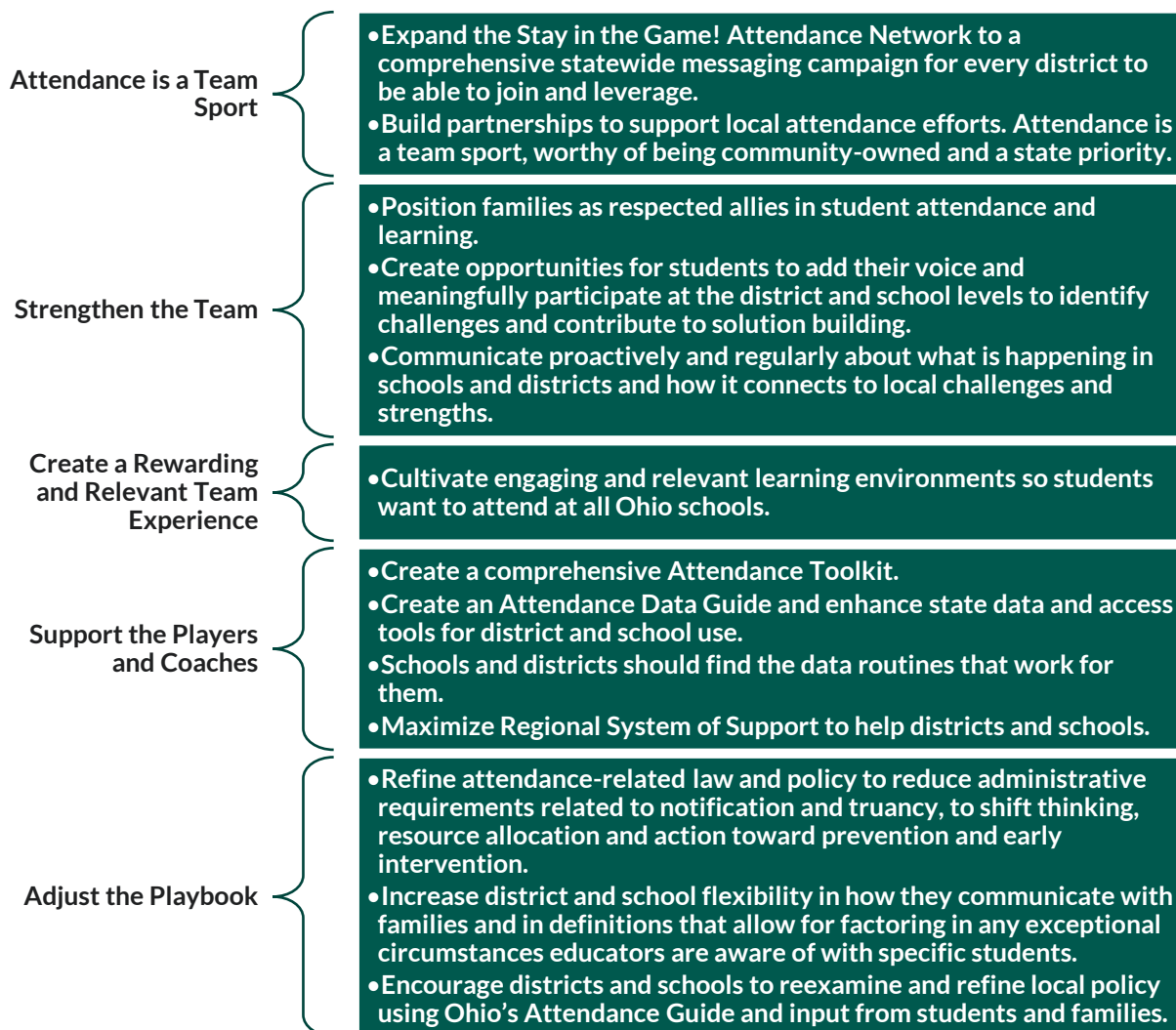
<https://afsa.ped.state.nm.us/Training/AttendanceTrackingTraining.m4v>



## OHIO

In response to increasing absenteeism following the COVID-19 pandemic, Ohio convened an [Ohio Attendance Task Force](#) composed of school administrators, community leaders, representatives of the juvenile justice system, and academic experts on attendance to make recommendations for improving attendance.<sup>53</sup> The task force’s work builds on the [Stay in the Game! Initiative](#), a statewide attendance awareness campaign sponsored by two professional sports teams in the state in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and Harvard University.<sup>54</sup> The Ohio Attendance Task Force released the recommendations presented in Figure 1.15.

**Figure 1.15: Ohio Attendance Task Force Recommendations**



Source: Ohio Attendance Task Force<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Hancock, A. “State School Task Force Takes Aim at High Chronic Absenteeism among Students.” *Dayton Daily News*, October 27, 2023. <https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/state-school-task-force-takes-aim-at-high-chronic-absenteeism-among-students/BV6AY4DQ6BEZTB2ISDD7SIZY4Y/>

<sup>54</sup> “Stay in the Game! Attendance Network - Keep Learning, Every Day.” Stay in the Game! <https://stayinthegame.org/>

<sup>55</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: “Recommendations Report.” Ohio Attendance Task Force, October 27, 2023. p. 35. [https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHED/2023/10/27/file\\_attachments/2661880/Attendance%20Recommenda%20ions.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHED/2023/10/27/file_attachments/2661880/Attendance%20Recommenda%20ions.pdf)

As part of this process, the Ohio Department of Education has partnered with the Ohio Supreme Court to develop a [guide](#) to creating attendance plans for school districts and juvenile courts.<sup>56</sup> The Supreme Court’s involvement in this attendance initiative reflects the Court’s belief that “schools and courts share a common goal and a vested interest in students attending school regularly as absenteeism can increase the likelihood of juvenile court involvement,” and that “schools and courts can work collaboratively to address attendance issues” and prevent criminal truancy charges.<sup>57</sup>

This guide recommends districts, juvenile courts, and community organizations collaborate to develop a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) aligned with the Ohio Department of Education’s [Whole Child Framework](#) for comprehensive student supports.<sup>58</sup> This MTSS relies on a student attendance team to regularly analyze attendance data and identify the supports students and their families need to improve attendance. Attendance teams can be existing teams such as an MTSS team and can include community partners and family representatives as well as staff members.<sup>59</sup>

The recommended MTSS includes both student and family interventions as shown in Figure 1.16, as well as foundational supports that focus on creating a school climate conducive to attendance. Including family-focused interventions in the MTSS reflects research finding that a strong connection between families and schools is essential to positive attendance.<sup>60</sup> Both student and family interventions include access to mental health supports, as research finds that mental health challenges can contribute to chronic absenteeism. The guide recommends schools work with community partners to provide students with access to mental health services in schools or their homes, as this can reduce barriers to accessing services.<sup>61</sup>

**Figure 1.16: Sample Student and Family-Focused Interventions for Absenteeism**

TIER	SAMPLE STUDENT-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS	SAMPLE FAMILY-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS
Tier I – Universal Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addressing attendance with compassion and empathy.</li> <li>▪ Personalized outreach for student absences.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and reward improved school attendance.</li> <li>▪ Review of attendance data through school-based teams (teacher-based teams, building leadership teams).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance campaigns.</li> <li>▪ Clear and consistent communication about schedules and school expectations.</li> <li>▪ Community events.</li> </ul>
Tier II – Early Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School-based peer mediation.</li> <li>▪ School-based truancy mediation.</li> <li>▪ Mentoring programs.</li> <li>▪ Transportation assistance.</li> <li>▪ Basic needs assistance.</li> <li>▪ Community outreach and attendance messaging.</li> <li>▪ Recognize good attendance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parent education.</li> <li>▪ Calls to the family from the school.</li> <li>▪ Warning letter to parents, guardians, or custodians indicating potential future court involvement if attendance does not improve.</li> <li>▪ Meet with parents, guardians, or custodians to determine the cause of absences.</li> <li>▪ Conduct home visits.</li> </ul>

<sup>56</sup> Sukosd, C. “Guidance for Schools and Courts to Stem Truancy.” Court News Ohio, August 25, 2023. [http://www.courtnewsOhio.gov/happening/2023/schoolAttendance\\_082523.asp](http://www.courtnewsOhio.gov/happening/2023/schoolAttendance_082523.asp)

<sup>57</sup> “Developing an Effective School Attendance Program.” Ohio Supreme Court in Collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, 2023. p. 11. <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/courtSvcS/resources/schoolAttendanceToolkit.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 5, 9.

TIER	SAMPLE STUDENT-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS	SAMPLE FAMILY-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize improved attendance (e.g., send an email thanking the family for getting the child to school that week).</li> </ul>
Tier III – Intensive Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Counseling referral.</li> <li>▪ Mentoring programs.</li> <li>▪ Absence intervention plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parent education.</li> <li>▪ Family support services.</li> <li>▪ Counseling referral.</li> <li>▪ Food pantry referral.</li> <li>▪ Clothing assistance.</li> <li>▪ Rental and utility assistance.</li> </ul>

Source: Ohio Supreme Court and Ohio Department of Education<sup>62</sup>

Students receiving Tier III supports may also be classified as habitually truant under Ohio law and may be referred to the juvenile justice system. However, Ohio deems a court intervention as a last resort for habitually truant students and requires school districts to implement an absence intervention plan before referring a habitually truant student. Schools must implement the steps listed in Figure 1.17 and refer the student to the court if they do not make satisfactory progress on the plan after 60 days, are absent for 30 hours consecutively or 42 hours in a month during the implementation phase, or if they fail to engage with the intervention plan.<sup>63</sup> The Ohio Department of Education provides sample truancy notification documents and absence intervention plan templates that schools can use to support this process.<sup>64</sup>

**Figure 1.17: Ohio Absence Intervention Plan Requirements**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Within seven school days of the triggering absence, the district will:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Select members of the absence intervention team; and</li> <li>○ Make three meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the student’s parent, guardian, custodian, guardian ad litem, or temporary custodian on the absence intervention team.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Within 10 calendar days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team.</li> <li>▪ Within 14 school days after the assignment of the team, the district will develop the student’s absence intervention plan.</li> <li>▪ Within seven calendar days after the plan is developed, the district must make reasonable efforts to provide written notification to the student’s parent or guardian.</li> </ul>
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Source: Ohio Supreme Court and Ohio Department of Education<sup>65</sup>

## SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota provides school districts with grants of up to \$500,000, funded by the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, to address chronic absenteeism.<sup>66</sup> In addition to grants to school districts, the state promotes attendance through an advertising campaign using newspaper, radio, television, and social media channels.<sup>67</sup> The state identified improving attendance as a key priority after the chronic absenteeism rate for all students increased from 14 percent during the 2018-2019 school year to 21 percent during the 2022-

<sup>62</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., pp. 21–24.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> “Attendance Support.” Ohio Department of Education. <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Attendance-Support#:~:text=Attendance%20in%20Ohio,notification%20and%20attendance%20intervention%20plans>.

<sup>65</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: “Developing an Effective School Attendance Program,” Op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>66</sup> “Addressing Chronic Absenteeism Grant.” South Dakota Department of Education. <https://doe.sd.gov/grants/aca.aspx>

<sup>67</sup> “DOE Targets Absenteeism in Attendance Campaign.” South Dakota Department of Education, November 22, 2023. <https://doe.sd.gov/teachsd/emails/112223/Story-1.html>

2023 school year, while the chronic absenteeism rate for Native American students increased from 31 percent to 54 percent.<sup>68</sup> Districts eligible to receive grant funding meet the criteria listed in Figure 1.18.

**Figure 1.18: Criteria for South Dakota Chronic Absenteeism Grants**

- The district, building, or population subgroup attendance is below 85%;
- Its high absenteeism rate (more than 30 days per school year) is above 5%; or
- Its chronic absenteeism rate (missed 10 % or more of enrolled days within the school year) more than doubled since the same statistic pre-pandemic.

Source: South Dakota Department of Education<sup>69</sup>

As of January 2024, nine school districts in South Dakota have received grant funding. Districts vary in the attendance improvement strategies they select, although the most common use of funding is to hire attendance liaisons to work with students and families with attendance challenges.<sup>70</sup> For example, Sioux Falls School District hired six liaisons for schools with particularly high rates of chronic absenteeism. These liaisons connect families with resources such as food and transportation and create school-based activities and programs to encourage attendance.<sup>71</sup> Figure 1.19 lists eligible expenditures for grant funding, which include school-based mental health services and counseling as well as schoolwide behavior strategies to improve behavior and create a school climate more conducive to attendance.

**Figure 1.19: South Dakota Chronic Absenteeism Grants Eligible Uses of Funds**

- School-based mental health services;
- Implementation of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports;
- Mentoring and school counseling;
- Designating a site resource/attendance coordinator at a school or LEA to provide a variety of services such as:
  - Establishing a family/school attendance partnership through an attendance liaison or attendance coordinator;
  - Establishing partnerships within the community to provide resources and support for schools;
  - Ensuring that all service and community partners are aligned with the academic expectations of a community school to improve student success through student attendance;
  - Strengthening relationships between schools and communities.
- Activities that promote the involvement of parents in the activity or program;
- Activities that are coordinated with other schools and community-based services and programs;
- Transportation - If transportation will be included in the grant application, please keep in mind the following:
  - Transportation should include mileage rate, anticipated number of miles, and staff pay/benefits in the budget;
  - The LEA should have a policy showing how mileage is addressed;
  - SDDOE will not allow the purchasing of vehicles.

Source: South Dakota Department of Education<sup>72</sup>

The South Dakota Department of Education requires districts receiving grant funding to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of funded programs and report these evaluations, along with expenditure reports and uses of funds, to the South Dakota Department of Education and the United States Department

<sup>68</sup> Huber, M. "1 in 5 Students, Majority of Native American Pupils, Chronically Absent in SD." *The 74*, January 11, 2024. <https://www.the74million.org/article/south-dakota-awarding-millions-to-address-chronic-absenteeism/>

<sup>69</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: "Addressing Chronic Absenteeism Grant," Op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> Huber, Op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Terrall, G. "New School Liaisons Encourage Student Attendance." *KELOLAND Local News and Weather*, September 19, 2023. <https://www.keloland.com/keloland-com-original/new-school-liaisons-encourage-student-attendance/>

<sup>72</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: "Addressing Chronic Absenteeism Grant Information and Application." South Dakota Department of Education, August 2023. p. 2. Downloaded from: <https://doe.sd.gov/grants/aca.aspx>

of Education.<sup>73</sup> Although districts have not published formal program evaluations as of January 2024, individual districts report positive outcomes. For example, Sisseton School District, which used grant funding to employ attendance liaisons using the Check and Connect relationship-building intervention, reports that the chronic absenteeism rate for high school students declined from 26 percent during the 2021-2022 school year to 11 percent during the 2023-2024 school year.<sup>74</sup>

## VIRGINIA

The Virginia Department of Education has established a [Chronic Absenteeism Task Force](#) to address statewide challenges around attendance.<sup>75</sup> The Task Force published a [toolkit](#) to support schools and districts in the state in implementing best practices to improve attendance. The toolkit recommends establishing attendance teams at both the school and district levels to make data-driven decisions around attendance strategies.<sup>76</sup> Figure 1.20 presents recommended best practices for school and district-level attendance teams.

**Figure 1.20: Virginia Department of Education Best Practices for School and District-Level Attendance Teams**

District Level	School Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and refine attendance policies to be personalized and proactive.</li> <li>• Create structures that focus on improved attendance not just on perfect attendance</li> <li>• Led by cabinet-level administrator.</li> <li>• Cross-departmental that can meet the diverse barriers students may encounter.</li> <li>• Regularly scheduled meetings that meet frequently enough to manage needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze individual student data and attendance trends.</li> <li>• Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy for prevention and intervention focused on localized data.</li> <li>• Led by a leader with authority to implement strategies determined by the team.</li> <li>• Develop and implement communications strategies that creates a school-wide and community culture of attendance.</li> <li>• Regularly scheduled meetings (at least every two weeks) with standard agenda.</li> </ul>

Source: Virginia Department of Education<sup>77</sup>

The Chronic Absenteeism Task Force recommends Attendance Teams implement a multi-tiered approach to attendance support which includes family engagement, recognition for positive attendance, and improvements to school climate.<sup>78</sup> Schoolwide climate strategies recommended by the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force include strategies to support students’ mental health and connection to school such as **Relationship Mapping**, a strategy in which schools identify students who do not currently have a positive connection with an adult in the school and assign these students an adult mentor, and [Warm Welcomes](#), a classroom management strategy in which teachers begin each class session with a brief relationship-building exercise.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Huber, Op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> “Chronic Absenteeism Task Force.” Virginia Department of Education. <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/all-in-va/attendance-matters/chronic-absenteeism-task-force>

<sup>76</sup> “Superintendent’s ‘ActionKit’ for Improving Attendance.” Virginia Department of Education. p. 1. <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/51954/638402550086170000>

<sup>77</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> “Chronic Absenteeism Task Force,” Op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> “Starting Each Class with a Warm Welcome.” Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/video/starting-each-class-warm-welcome/> [2] “Relationship Mapping Strategy.” Making Caring Common, March 23, 2020. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>

For students needing more intensive support, the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force recommends Attendance Teams implement evidence-based interventions identified based on a root cause analysis of attendance data. Teams can use a resource mapping process to identify existing resources that can support evidence-based interventions.<sup>80</sup> Specific interventions recommended for consideration by the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force include a 2X10 strategy, in which teachers work to build relationships with an individual student for two minutes each day over ten days, and a [student attendance success plan](#), in which students and families collaboratively set and monitor goals for attendance.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to providing a toolkit for school and district-level teams, the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force hosts a monthly meeting with presentations on topics related to attendance. Figure 1.21 lists previous meeting topics.<sup>82</sup> The presentation on mental health connected Virginia’s efforts to improve attendance with other mental health supports provided by the state, including Right Help, Right Now, a statewide initiative to ensure access to immediate care for Virginians experiencing behavioral health crises, and the Virginia Mental Health Access Program, which provides professional development focused on supporting pediatric mental health to primary care providers.<sup>83</sup>

**Figure 1.21: Virginia Chronic Absenteeism Task Force Meeting Topics**



Source: Virginia Department of Education<sup>84</sup>

## WISCONSIN

Wisconsin state law requires all school districts to maintain plans for truancy prevention and requires districts containing the county seat of each county to convene a committee composed of district and state agency representatives to review truancy plans and make recommendations for improvement every four years.<sup>85</sup>

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction supports districts in implementing best practices to improve attendance by providing information and professional development.<sup>86</sup> Professional learning opportunities include Truancy Prevention Learning Communities, which enable practitioners around the state to learn from one another and Department of Public Instruction staff about promising practices for improving attendance.<sup>87</sup> Figure 1.22 shows topics for the spring semester of 2024.

<sup>80</sup> “Superintendent’s ‘ActionKit’ for Improving Attendance,” Op. cit., pp. 2–3.

<sup>81</sup> “Student Attendance Success Plans and My Family’s Help Bank.” Attendance Works. <https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/student-attendance-success-plans/>

<sup>82</sup> “Chronic Absenteeism Task Force,” Op. cit.

<sup>83</sup> “Right Help, Right Now: A Transformational Behavioral Health Plan for Virginians.” Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. <https://www.hhr.virginia.gov/12-14-2022-Two-Page-BH-Plan-Summary.pdf> [2] “Virginia Mental Health Access Program.” <https://vmap.org/>

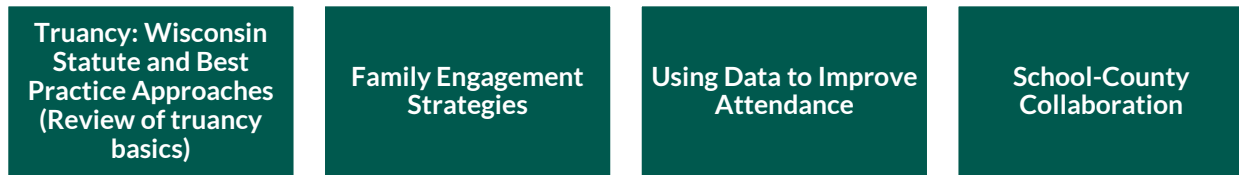
<sup>84</sup> Chart contents obtained through: “Chronic Absenteeism Task Force,” Op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> “School Attendance.” Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, September 11, 2019. <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/safe-schools/school-attendance>

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> “Truancy Prevention Learning Communities.” Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Spring 2024. [https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Truancy\\_Learning\\_Communities\\_Spring\\_2024.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Truancy_Learning_Communities_Spring_2024.pdf)

**Figure 1.22: Truancy Prevention Learning Community Topics, Spring 2024**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction<sup>88</sup>

Information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction includes internally developed resources and links to resources developed by partner organizations such as Attendance Works and the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. Resources developed by the Department of Public Instruction include FAQ sheets addressing topics such as the relationship between mental health challenges and truancy and attendance in Kindergarten and Grade 1, guidance for reporting attendance data, and a best practices guide for attendance officers.<sup>89</sup> The FAQ sheet on mental health includes guidance for excusing absences due to mental health challenges and recommended strategies to support students with mental health challenges in attending school regularly, listed in Figure 1.23.<sup>90</sup>

**Figure 1.23: Recommended Strategies to Support Students with Mental Health Challenges**

- Increase real and perceived safety. Students need to feel safe.
- Build and improve welcoming and inclusive environments that honor identities and cultures.
- Establish routines, incorporate regulation activities, and build relationships.
- Build and improve a trauma sensitive and culturally responsive lens and practices.
- Students need appropriate academic support and high interest, engaging programs.
- Engage a mental health team and provider when possible to support clinical goals in the school setting and to consult on effective practices. Ensure a sharing record agreement is in place to authorize the disclosure of pupil records.
- Consider individualized and appropriate expectations around goals and progress rates, and expect set-backs.
- Meaningfully engage the student, family, and natural supports.
- Keep in mind the purpose of attendance improvement planning is to further connect the student to the school community, and not to isolate them, shame, or punish.
- Improve mental health literacy and stigma reduction for all staff and students.
- Build and improve a Comprehensive School Mental Health System with a robust continuum of mental health supports and services.
- Ensure that plans are individualized and include follow up, adding support and services as necessary, and adjusting plans over time.
- Provide evidence-based interventions such as, but not limited to: Check and Connect; Checkin Check Out; and mentoring.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction<sup>91</sup>

The guidance for attendance officers recommends developing a continuum of support that engages families and community resources and uses a trauma-sensitive approach. The guidance also recommends that

<sup>88</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

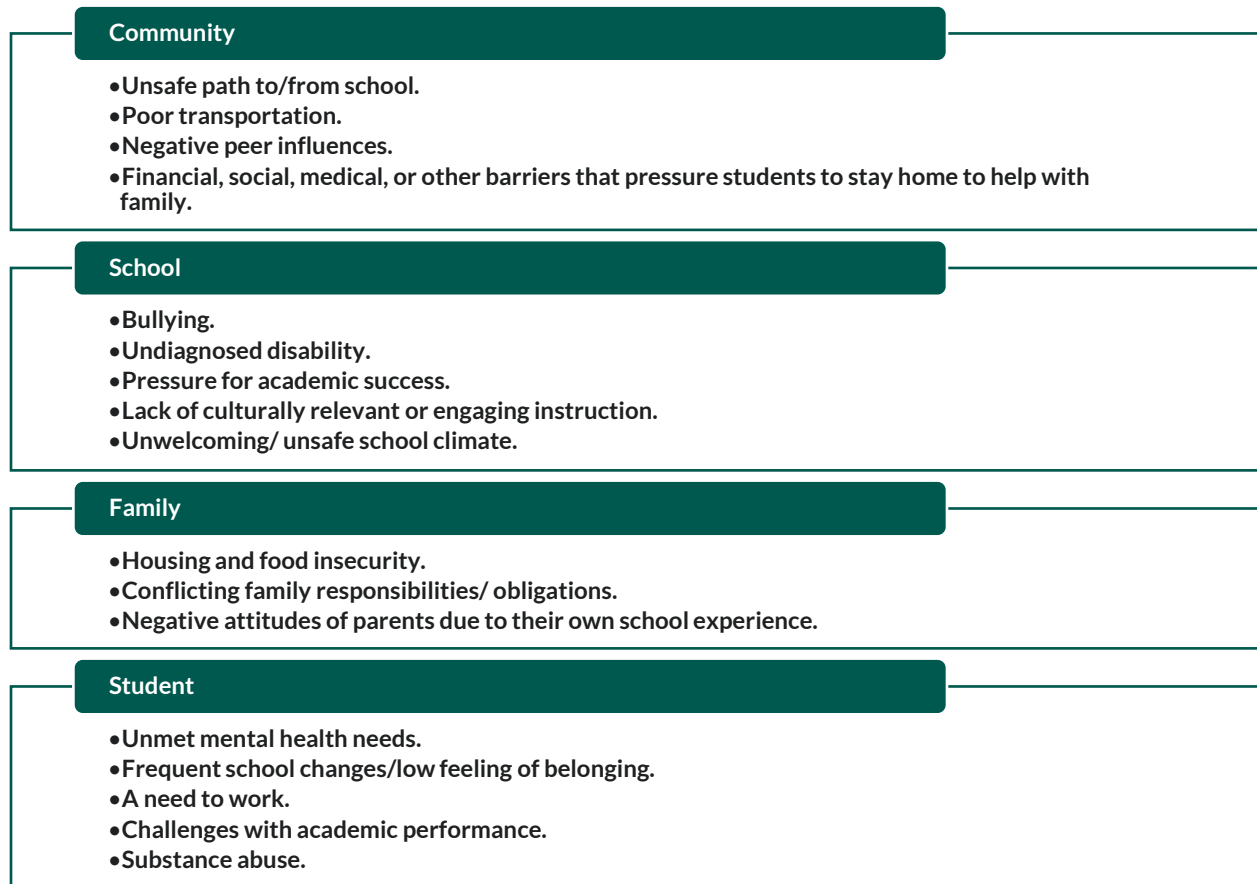
<sup>89</sup> "School Attendance," Op. cit.

<sup>90</sup> "When Mental Health Challenges Contribute to Truancy: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers." Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, March 3, 2023. pp. 1–4.  
[https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/When\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Challenges\\_Contribute\\_to\\_Truancy\\_FAQ.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/When_Mental_Health_Challenges_Contribute_to_Truancy_FAQ.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., pp. 4–5.

attendance improvement plans address factors that may contribute to truancy across domains, as shown in Figure 1.24.<sup>92</sup>

**Figure 1.24: Potential Factors Contributing to Truancy**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> “Best Practice Approaches to Truancy Reduction: Information for School Attendance Officers.” Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. pp. 2–4.  
[https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Best\\_Practice\\_Approaches\\_to\\_Truancy\\_Reduction.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Best_Practice_Approaches_to_Truancy_Reduction.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 3.



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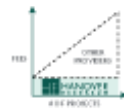
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