The background features a dynamic, abstract design with flowing, curved lines in various shades of blue. A grid of fine lines is visible, particularly on the right side, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Reengaging Students,
Addressing
Absenteeism, and
Strengthening School-
to-Community
Connections

Unpacking Attendance Terms

Average Daily Attendance

- The % of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used for allocating funding.

Truancy

- Typically refers only to unexcused absences and is defined by each state

Chronic Absence

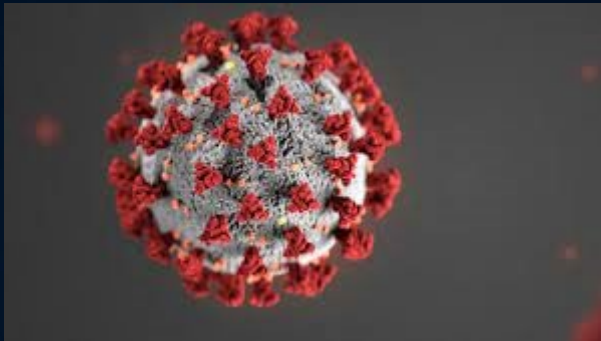
- Missing 10% or more of school for any reason – excused, unexcused, etc.

Why Abating Truancy and Chronic Absence Matters



POST-COVID CHRONIC ABSENCE

- 2017/18 SCC Chronic Absence = 9%



- 2021/22 SCC Chronic Absence = 19%

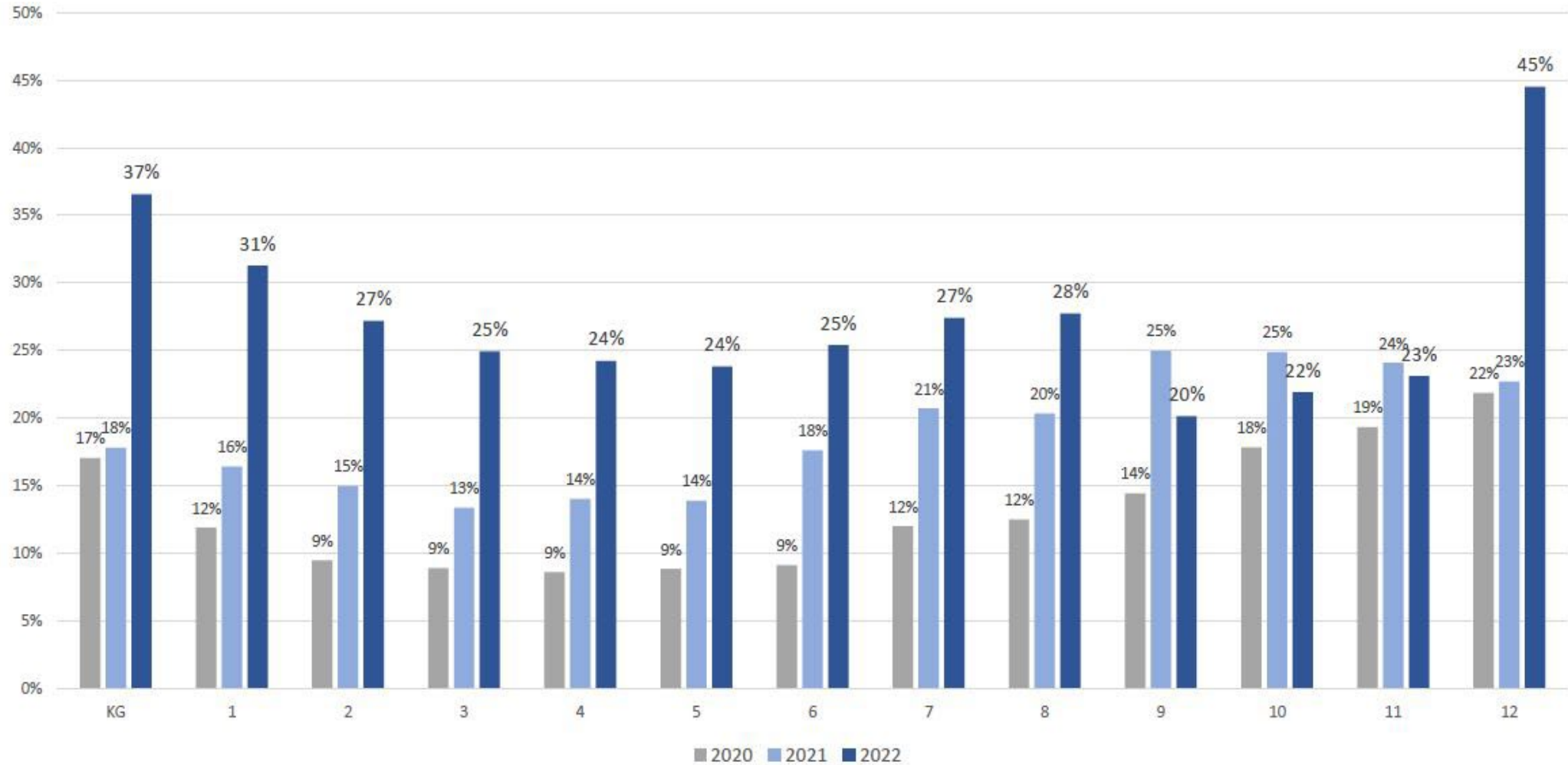
Chronic Absenteeism and Disproportionality



Over **75%** of Chronically Absent Students are **Low-Income**.

- SCC C.A. = **19%**
 - **35%** of Pacific Islander
 - **31%** of Latino/a/x
 - **26%** of Native American
 - **25%** of Black

Chronic Absence Rate By Grade



K-3 Focus

83%

of Students Chronically
Absent in Kindergarten & 1st
Grade Are Unable to Read
On-Level by 3rd Grade

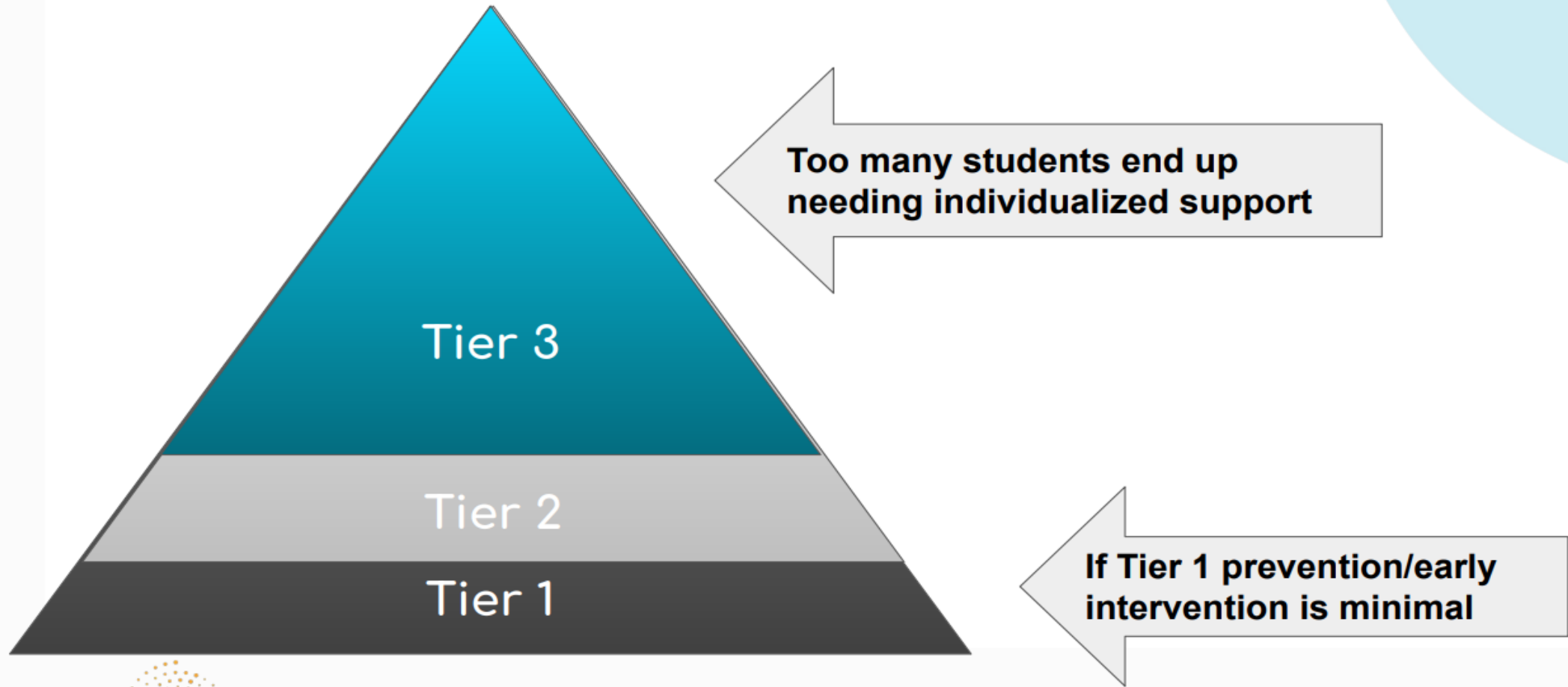
**Absences Lead to
Dropouts**

Students Who Cannot Read
On-Level in 3rd Grade Are

4X

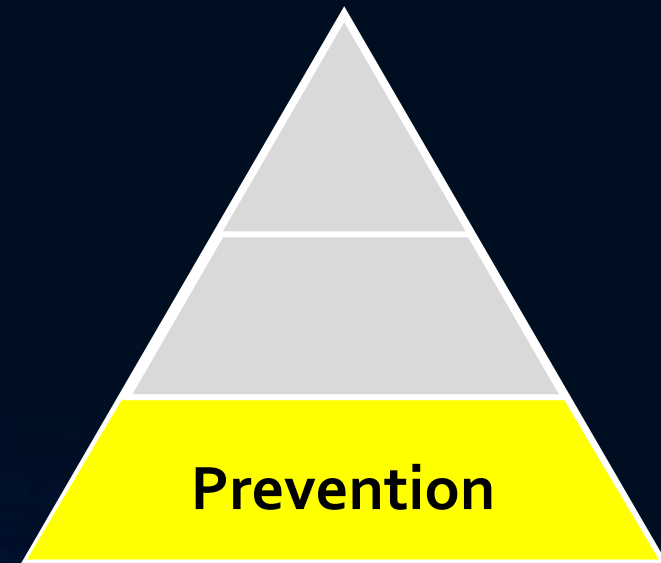
More Likely to Drop Out
Than Kids Who Can

What often happens...



DAO Work to Abate Truancy Without Prosecution

- Back to School nights
- Attendance Awareness PSA
- County Attendance Collaborative COE
- Nuts and Bolts trainings
- DFCS partnership



CONSISTENCY

Policies Should Include:

- Definition of an absence
- Clear difference between excused and unexcused absences
- The academic impact of *all* absences
- On-site and community resources available to families
- How families can take these actions:
 - Excuse absences
 - Look up total absences
 - Speak with someone at school about attendance
 - Connect to resources



CONSISTENCY

- What gets excused?
- How many excused illnesses before a doctor's note is needed?
- Admin excused?

TARDY SLIP

Student Amma M. Grade PK

Date(s) 3/20 Time 8:45 AM
PM

Reason Forgot to put underwear on my littlest. Emergency trip to Wal-Mart. You know how it goes.

Excused
 Unexcused

BH
(Signature)

EXCUSING CHILD FOR TARDINESS AT SCHOOL.

Miss Ella Watson,
Fourth Ward School,
City.

Dear Madam:

Please excuse my daughter Susan for tardiness this morning. I am without a servant at present, and our housekeeping arrangements are somewhat disarranged.

Yours truly,
(Mrs.) Marie W. Strong.

12 French St.
Nov. 12, 1900.

CONSISTENCY

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students are much more likely to have their absences labeled unexcused. This is also true for Black, Native American, Latinx, and Pacific Islander students relative to White, Asian American, and Filipino students. Black students experience the largest disparity. These disparities cannot be fully explained by poverty since they remained across differences in socioeconomic status.

Proactive Steps

1. Created Truancy Manual
2. **Trained Admin on truancy processes**
 - Admin Excused
 - Create Truancy Plan
 - Truancy Letter Tracker
 - Chronic Absenteeism Drive
 - Sample of SARB packet (Example here)
 - SART Training (with DA)

3. Trained Registrars, Support Staff, and Attendance Clerks.

- Ensure everyone knows their role
- Same information and message to all staff
- Provide support tools and people to **contact**



MHUSD Truancy Manual

*Everyday is an opportunity;
It's closer than you think*

Truancy steps

Important dates

Interventions

Excused Absences

Attendance Laws

Dr notes

FAQ

Digital Links

Truancy Process At A Glance

Truancy Steps

Important Dates

Interventions

- Letter 1** 3 unexcused absences (and document an intervention, phone call, email, etc.)
- Letter 2** 6 unexcused absences (and document an intervention, phone call, email, etc. and hold a SART meeting at your school site. People who can be present during these meetings, Admin, Attendance Clerk, CARE, maybe a counselor or community liaison. This meeting has to be documented or attempted and documented)
- Letter 3** 9 unexcused absences (Document intervention, and a home visit needs to be made)
- The student then is referred to **DA mediation** sending out the letter and the due date for names. Designated Truancy staff will complete the DA form and mail it to all students that qualify (names received all three letters and have all three documented interventions, including held or attempted a SART meeting).
- After DA mediation** whether they attended or not can be referred to **SARB**. That is the meeting with District staff. The referral form for that can be shared google drive.
- After SARB** if the student hasn't improved, DO or DA to see if they are a candidate for Court or J program for high school kids). If they do, the DO will do a referral to the District attorney to review and court calendar. Someone from the DO will attend hearings.

Important Dates

Truancy Steps

Important Dates

Interventions

Excused Absences

Attendance Laws

Dr Notes

FAQ

Digital Links

September is Attendance Month

- DA mediations 6:00-7:30 pm** (Doors will close after 5 min of start time)
 - October 2nd Send names by September 25th
 - November 6th Send names by October 30th
 - January 22nd Send names by January 16th
 - March 11th Send names by March 4th
 - May 6th Send names by April 29th

SARB 8:30am-3:00 pm

(8 slots available per meeting total)

- > November 2nd (elementary), 3rd (secondary) Names by are due by October 19th
- > December 7th (elementary), 8th (secondary) SARB packets are due by November 16th.
- > February 29th (elementary), March 1st (secondary) SARB Packets are due by February 8th.
- > April 25th (elementary), 26th (secondary) SARB Packets are due by April 11th.





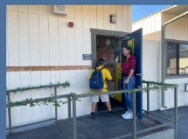
SEPTEMBER 2023



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--------|--|---|---|--|--|--------|
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 Introduction to Attendance Month | |
| 3 | 4 This is your planning day to think about how you are going to win the Trophy this year! | 5 Teachers at their door greeting "on timers (5 pts)*" | 6 Congrats letters (max 10 total) (1 pt. per letter)* | 7 PLC agenda with attendance data (different department from previous) (2 pts)* | 8 Office staff (att. Clerk, CARE, Liaison) welcoming Students min of 3 pics (5 pts)* | |
| 10 | 11 Attendance Lesson plan that is used in class (homeroom, advisory, SEL) (5 pts)* | 12 On time crew pictures with admin or attendance clerk min of 3 pics (5pts)* | 13 PLC agenda with attendance data different department from previous) (2 pts)* | 14 Parent Square post about the importance of attendance (5pt)* | 15 Pick a process and improve it (10 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts) | |
| | | 19 Parent meeting/entertainment (parent night, ELAC, SSC, etc.) where attendance data is discussed (10 pts)* | 20 PLC agenda with attendance data (different department from previous (2 pts)* Student PSA due (20 pts) | 21 On time crew pictures with admin or attendance clerk min of 3 pics (5 pts)* | 22 Truancy Letter query (10 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts) | 23 |
| | | 26 School Choice with proof" (3 pts)* | 27 PLC agenda with attendance data (different department from previous (2 pts)* | 28 Attendance Flyer* (10) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts) | 29 ATTENDANCE CELEBRATION | 30 |



Teachers, Office Staff/Clerk, CARE & Liaison Greeting Students



I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...

| I HAVE A FEVER | I AM VOMITING | I HAVE DIARRHEA | I HAVE A RASH | I HAVE HEAD LICE | I HAVE AN EYE INFECTION | I HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | | | |
| Temperature of 100 degrees F or higher | Within the past 24 hours | Within the past 24 hours | Body rash with itching or fever | Itchy head, active head lice | Redness, itching, and/or pus draining from eye | Hospital stay and/or emergency room visit |

I AM READY TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL WHEN I AM...

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Fever free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours (i.e., Tylenol, Motrin, Advil) | Free from vomiting for 24 hours. | Free from diarrhea for 24 hours. | Free from rash, itching or fever. I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed. | Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home. | Free from drainage and/or have been evaluated by my doctor if needed. | Released by my medical provider to return to school. |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|

If your child has strep throat or another bacterial infection, he/she should stay home until the antibiotic has been given for at least 24 hours and your health care provider has given permission for your child to return to school. We encourage you to seek medical attention when your child is sick and to follow your health care provider's recommendations about returning to school and other activities.

5 reasons your child may be too sick for school



1. Fever

If a child has a temperature of 100° F or higher, your child is too sick for school. Keep them home until they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of anti-fever medications.

2. Diarrhea or Vomiting

If a child has 3 or more loose bowel movements, even if there are no other signs of illness, your child is too sick for school. Any vomiting is a reason to send a child home or keep a child home. Keep them home until vomit and diarrhea-free for 24 hours.



3. Rash

There are different rules for returning to school depending on the cause of the rash. Children with contagious rashes, such as chicken pox and measles, need to be kept home. If your child has a rash AND a fever, keep them at home and talk with your healthcare provider.

4. Cough or Sore throat

Children with a cough or sore throat should be watched closely. If the cough or sore throat becomes worse or if the child develops a fever, the child is too sick for school.



5. Other conditions

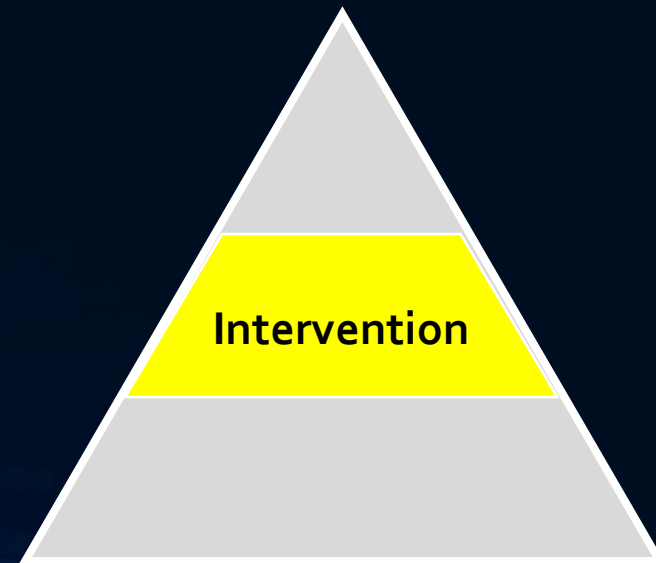
Children with other communicable conditions such as head lice, ringworm, or scabies may need to be kept home from school. Children may need to see a healthcare provider for treatment.

Not sure if your child is too sick for school?

Talk to your school nurse or school administration about exclusion policies for these and other illnesses.

DAO Work to Abate Truancy Without Prosecution

- Consulting with schools/districts
- **SARBS** (School Attendance Review Board meeting)
- DA Mediation



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGES

- Use the fewest words possible
- Write at a 5th grade reading level
 - [Flesch-Kincaid](#) readability test
- Use formatting to highlight key information
- Make the desired action as easy as possible



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

- Harvard research study found comparison reduced absence by 5-10%, regardless of the severity of absenteeism
 - “Absences matter and you can help.”
 - “Todd has missed more school than his classmates.”
 - “Todd has missed 6 days this year.”
 - “You can have a big effect on Todd’s absences and we appreciate your help.”

CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGES

Simplification

standard = ~350 words
10th grade reading level

Senior High School
1234 Main Street
Town, CA 55555

October 20, 2015

John & Mary Rogers
124 1st Street
Town, CA 55555

RE: Todd
Student ID#: 12345

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian:

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. California Education Code section 48260 provides that a pupil (child) subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, shall be classified as a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

School records indicate that the pupil named above was absent from school without a valid excuse on 5 occasions, beginning with the following dates:
9/23/2015, 10/2/2015, 10/5/2015

"For a complete report of your pupil's absences, contact the school"

Our goal is to partner with families to ensure that students attend school every day. While the following consequences may appear harsh, based upon your pupil's initial classification as a truant, we are mandated by Education Code section 48260.5 to inform you that:

- The parent or legal guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school
- Parents or legal guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27 of the Education Code
- Alternative education programs are available in the district
- The parent or legal guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy
- The pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code section 48264
- The pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code
- It is recommended that the parent or legal guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

This report is being issued under Education Code section 48264.5(a). As the parent/legal guardian you may be requested to attend a meeting with a school counselor or other school designee to discuss the root causes of the attendance issue and to develop a joint plan to improve the pupil's attendance.

Please recognize that we are required to monitor attendance and notify parents/legal guardians of potential problems with student attendance. If you have concerns about your pupil's attendance or if you believe there is an error in this report, contact the school at (555) 555-5555. The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to assisting you.

Sincerely,

John Smith
Principal

modified = ~150 words
5th grade reading level



PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Our Children. Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

October 20, 2015

John & Mary Rogers
123 Main Street
Town, CA55555

We need your help. Todd's absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of school each month can fall seriously behind.

Todd is now "truant" because he missed school (or was more than 30 minutes late) without a valid excuse 5 days, beginning with:

- September 23, 2015
- October 2, 2015
- October 5, 2015

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss more days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out of high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

We are required by California law to send you this letter and to warn you of the consequences of additional unexcused absences (see bottom bar).

Please remember that every absence matters and just a couple days can add up. You are key to improving Todd's attendance.

Sincerely,
John Smith, Principal

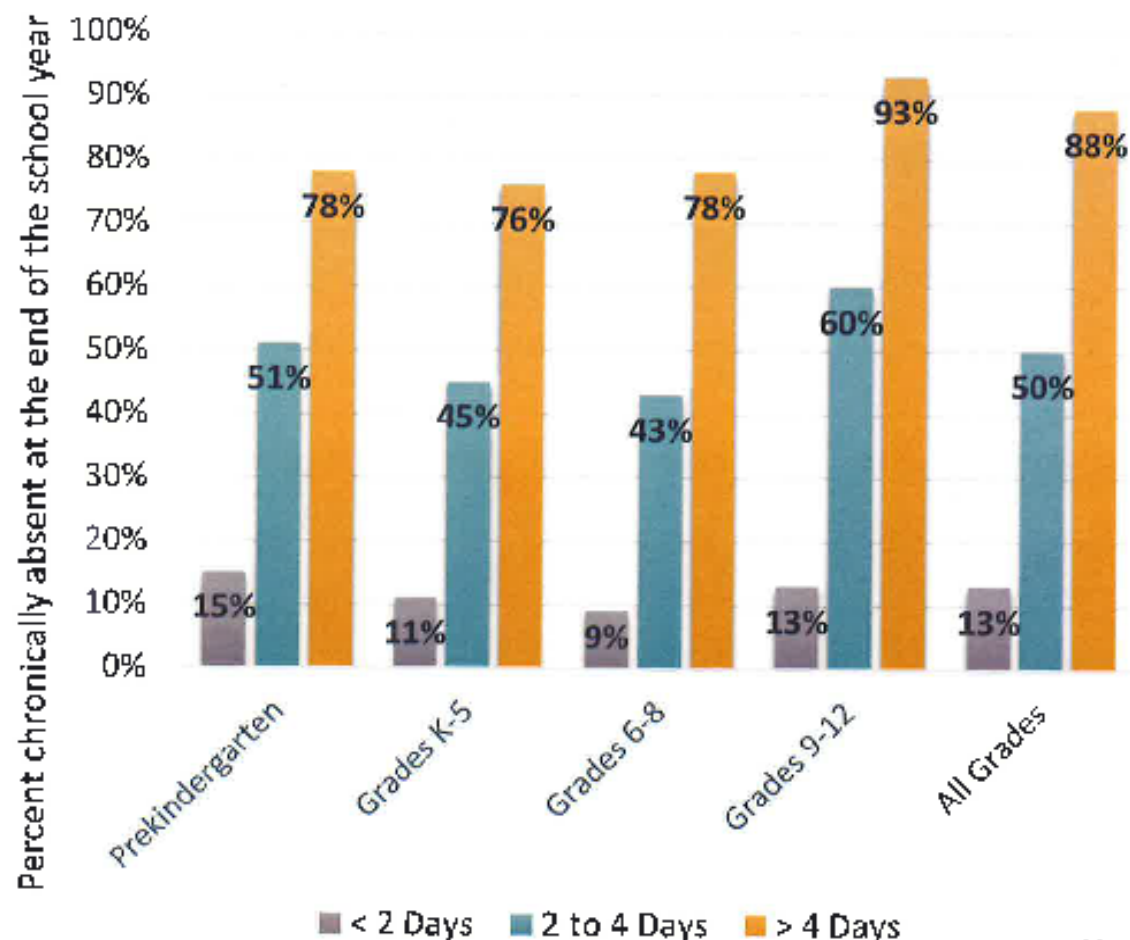
Truancy: California Education Code School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.

- Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:
- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
 - That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
 - That alternative education programs are available in the district.
 - That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
 - That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
 - That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
 - That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.
- If you have concerns about your child's attendance or if you believe our records are inaccurate contact the school at (555) 555-5555, English #1F

40%
improvement
in absences

Students Who Miss 2 or More Days of School in The First Month of School Are Significantly More Likely to Be Chronically Absent by the End of the School Year

- Baltimore students who missed 2-4 days of school in September were 5 times as likely to be chronically absent.
- Students who missed 5 or more days of school in September were 16 times as likely to be chronically absent.



HOME VISITS

- CT funded 15 districts to meet with students at home or in another location, using LEAP program
- One district (Hartford) saw **30% increase** in attendance
- On average across the 15 districts, **15-20% increase** in attendance 6 months after home visits

LEAP Home Visit Series



Home Visit 1

Goals:

- Begin building a positive relationship

- Learn about family and student

- Offer resources and supports if needed

Follow-up Calls

Goals:

- Reconnect

- Check in on how student and family are doing

- Follow up with requests for information

Home Visit 2

Goals:

- Build relationship

- Connect student to teacher and school

- Provide helpful attendance and school resources

Home Visit 3, 4, 5...

Goals:

- Deepen Relationship

- Check in on well-being, especially for students who continue to be chronically absent

- Ask Family if they want to continue visits

Making The Call (10-15 Minutes)

1. Introduce yourself and explain why you're calling
2. Ask if the family would be interested in a visit
 - Set the time frame as 30-40 minutes
 - Offer a neutral location or a Zoom room, if need be
 - Offer specific dates and times that
 - Say who is coming as your partner
 - Ask if interpretation will be required
 - Confirm the family's address and phone number

Sample Script

Setting Home Visit 1

Hi! May I speak with _____. My name is _____.

I'm an educator with _____. Our goal is to connect with students' families during this semester to see how things are going and offer supports. I am one of the team members setting up meetings with families.

I'm calling to see if you would be interested in setting up a visit--in person or online--to talk about how we can work with you to support (student name(s))'s learning to finish this school year strong.

Home Visit 1

Purpose - to begin a positive relationship and work together to support student's success

Introduce yourselves - briefly share something personal that the family might relate to in order to find common ground, e.g. number of children you have, experience during pandemic.

Thank the family for this opportunity to get together.

Conversation starters:

1. The pandemic has affected families & students, in many ways including school experience. What has it been like for (*name of student*)?
2. What has it been like for you as a parent?
3. Would you share a bit about - (*name of student*) strengths? Passions or interests?
4. How can we support you or (*name of student*)?

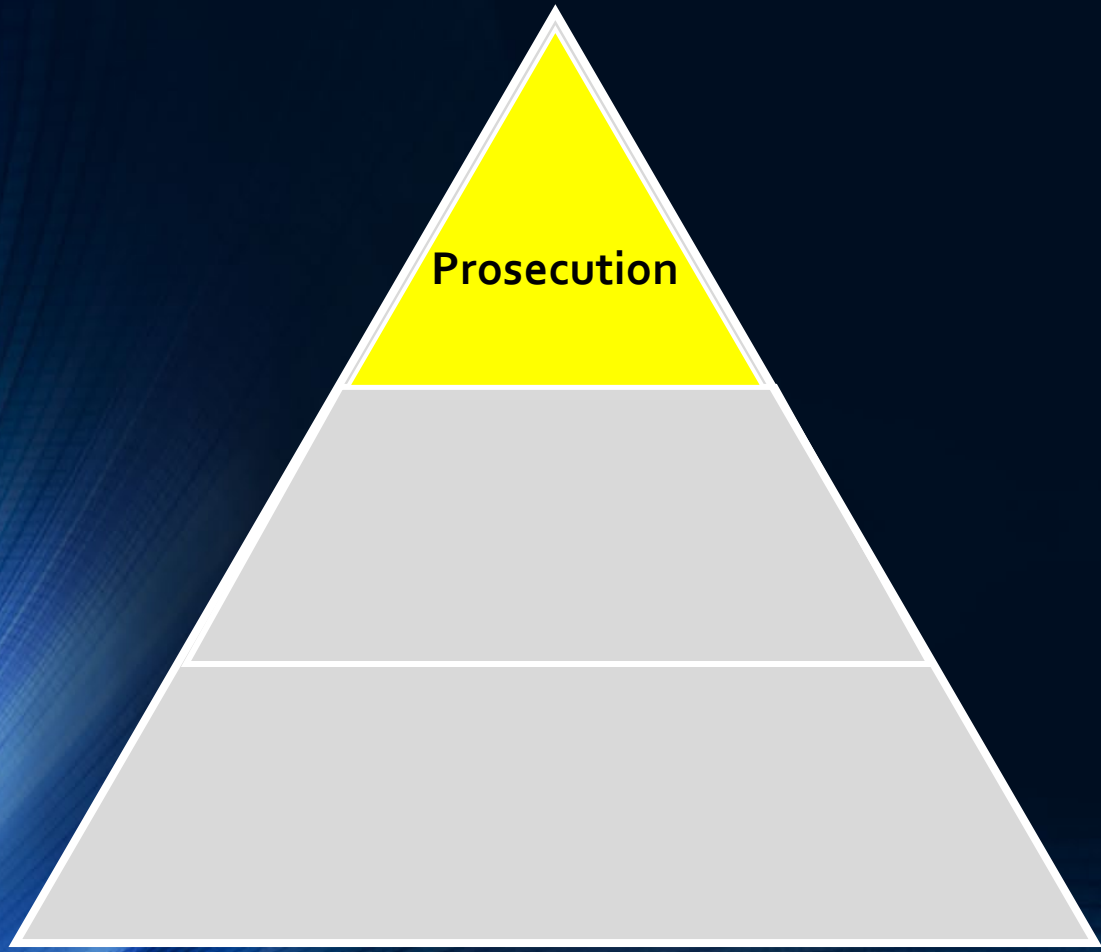
Conclude with a summary of any follow up needed and when you will be in touch.
Ask permission to check in again to see how things are going.

DA MEDIATION

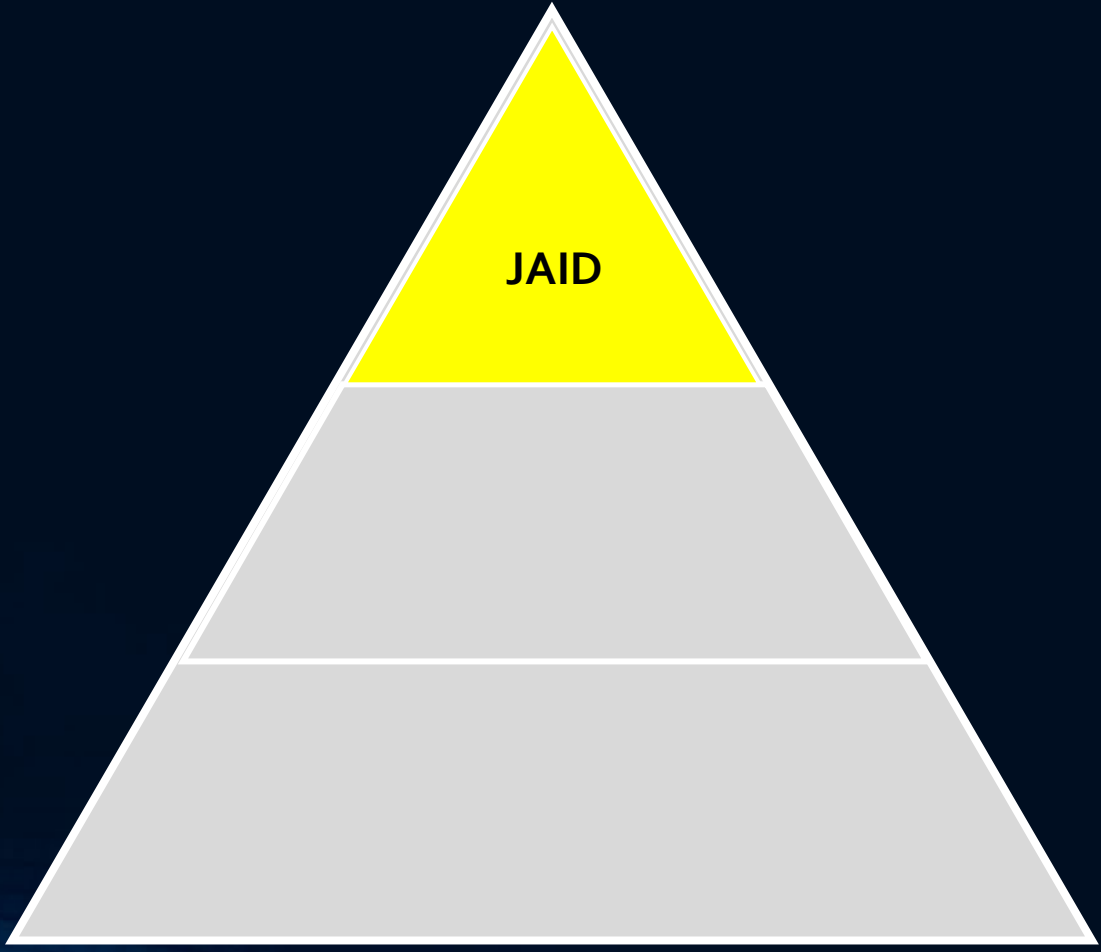
- Community Prosecutors
 - Adam Flores: South County
 - Hugo Meza: Washington/ SJUSD
 - Salezka Aguirre: Alum Rock
 - Byron Suarez: Eastside SJ
 - Phong Banh: Santee/Little Saigon
 - Alisha Schoen: Campbell, PAUSD



K-8



High School



Before a Case Goes to Court:

- Multiple attempts to call/email/text parents
- 3 truancy notification letters
- School-site meeting with parents
- District-level meeting with parents
- Attendance contract, inclusive of: changes to schedule, check-in/check-out, referral to community resources, etc.
- Home visit(s)
- IEP amendment meeting if applicable

Need For a New Court Model



What We Know

- School attendance problems “are often traceable to **family instability, poverty, homelessness, transportation issues, safety concerns, trauma, mental health challenges, or learning disabilities**, and that appropriate guidance and assistance to students and their families can ameliorate such problems.” *In re A.N.* (2020), 9 Cal.5th 343, 365 (Liu, J., concurring)

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce



Court for Achieving Reengagement with Education (C.A.R.E.)

- **FIRST COLLABORATIVE TRUANCY COURT**

- All infractions
- Dismissal offer
- Purpose
- Emphasis
- Focus



C.A.R.E.

- Collaborative Crt. Judge
- Educators
- Behavioral Health
- Public Health
- Family Navigator (pilot)
- Parent Project

C.A.R.E. Outcomes

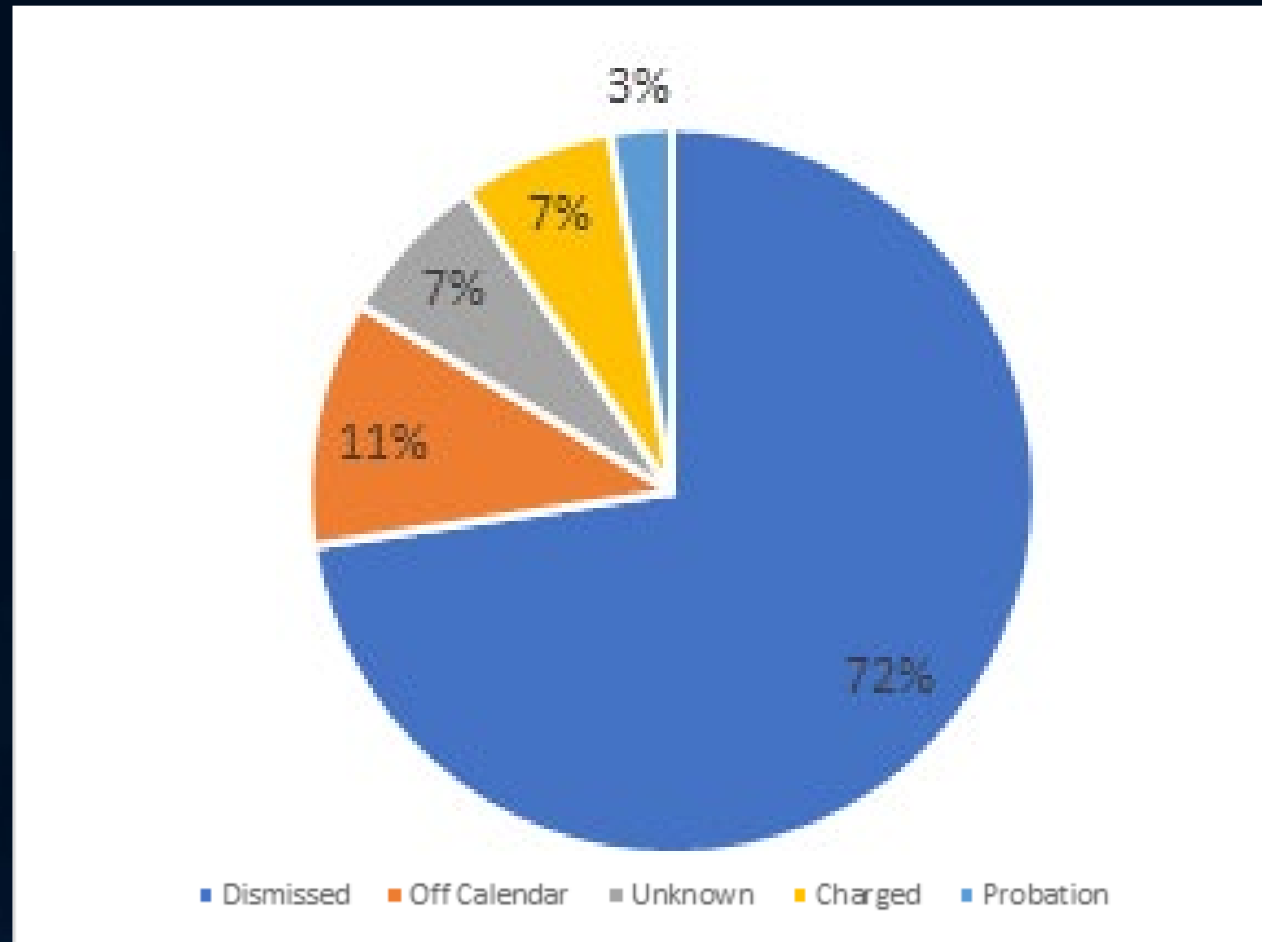
- 11% increase in successful “graduations” ...despite Covid!



Juvenile Attendance Improvement Diversion (JAID) Hearings

- Who: Freshman/sophomore, parents, school personnel, district personnel, DDA
- Where: DAO
- When: 3-12 months
- How: Restorative practices

Juvenile Attendance Improvement Diversion (JAID)



Alisha Schoen

aschoen@dao.sccgov.org

(408) 808-3766