Cracking the Code on Chronic Absenteeism

January 2020
Your Presenters

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Session Objectives

- Offers overview of chronic absenteeism and its negative impact on academic achievement, particularly for students in temporary housing (STH).

- Shares an "Every Student, Every Day" toolkit of take-home evidenced-based tips and resources to use in your school or district.
Interactive Activity

- Turn to your elbow partner.
- Share one thing that made it difficult for you to get to school every day.
True or False?

Regular attendance in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is less important than attendance in middle and high school.
FALSE.

Students with poor attendance (or are chronically absent) in K & 1st grade are much less likely to read proficiently in 3rd grade.

- No attendance risks: 64%
- Small attendance risks: 43%
- Moderate attendance risks: 41%
- High attendance risks: 17%
What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism—or missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year for any reason, excused or unexcused—is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school.

Absent 2 days per month \( \times \) 9 months of school = Chronic Absence
The Challenge

Students can be chronically absent, meaning they miss 20 days or more of school and still have an 89% attendance rate. Being severely chronically absent - missing 38 days or more of school - still results in a 79% attendance rate.

3 out of 4 students who are chronically absent in the sixth grade never graduate from high school.

More than 200,000 NYC public school students - roughly 1 out of 5 - were chronically absent last year.

Nationally, 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent annually.

15% of NYC elementary school students missed one month of school or more in the 2009-2010 academic year.

34% of NYC high school students of NYC elementary school students.

79% of NYC children in the juvenile justice system have records of chronic absenteeism; and half, approximately 40 percent, were severely chronically absent.

66% of NYC students with ACS cases are chronically absent or severely chronically absent.
Chronic Absence Is Easily Masked If We Only Monitor Missing Consecutive days

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Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = As Few As 2 days a month
During elementary school, the typical student who was homeless ...

... missed 88 days of school—almost half of a school year.
Students in Shelters have Highest rates of Chronic Absenteeism

Source: IBO analysis of Department of Education data (2013-14). Students in grades K-12 only. New York City Independent Budget Office
Chronic Absence in High School Predicts Lower College Participation

In Rhode Island, only 11% of chronically absent high school students persisted into a 2nd year of college vs. 51% of those with low absences.

Rhode Island Data Hub: May 2014
The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative

With every year of chronic absenteeism, a higher percentage of students dropped out of school.

True or False?

Students miss school for hundreds of different reasons.
“Could someone help me with these? I’m late for math class.”

Scott Spencer
### Three Categories of Chronic Absence

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| - Illness  
  - Family responsibilities  
  - Homelessness  
  - Involvement with juvenile justice  
  - Transportation | - Bullying  
  - Unsafe  
  - Harassment  
  - Embarrassment | - Want to do other things than school  
  - Attendance only matters in older grades |

*Source: Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012*
Interactive Activity

- Turn to your elbow partner.
- Discuss the barriers that keep students affected by homelessness from attending school in your town or district.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states the responsibility of choosing at least one indicator to measure school quality or student success, and NYSED chose chronic absence as an accountability metric for every school in the State. Thus, more principals, superintendents and other education leaders are looking for guidance and support.
It’s about Changing Mindset

By focusing on chronic absenteeism, attendance was seen as increasing instructional time and no longer just an administrative task.

With chronic absenteeism at…

- 30% or more, school attendance rates have not exceeded 91.1%
- 20% or more, school attendance rates have not exceeded 93.5%
- 10% or more, school attendance rates have not exceeded 95.8%
IT'S 09 00 AM

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR KIDS ARE?

If your kids miss 20 days or more in a school year, there's a good chance they won't graduate.

Get the help you need and find out how many days your child missed.

TEXT “SCHOOL” to 30364 or call 311.
Launch a Campaign: Every Student, Every Day

- Develop an Active Attendance Team
- Define Clear School Systems and Practices
- Personalize Student Interventions
- Partner with Communities for Supportive Environment
Because STH have a unique set of needs, making the right investments can help educators and partners:

- Use best practices and knowledge to effectively support students in temporary housing
- Continuously improve through ongoing data collection and analysis
- Coordinate programs for students in temporary housing
- Support families and students in temporary housing in an equitable and culturally responsive way
The Every Student, Every Day Toolkit includes:

- Attendance mailings to prompt families to act on attendance, developed by Harvard University;

- User-friendly guide on how to launch a low cost, evidenced-based Success Mentor Program for chronically absent youth; and

- Agenda & training video to guide your school’s weekly attendance meeting
ESED Toolkit: Component I
Attendance “Nudge” - Mailings

Across Households, Heightened Awareness of Attendance Challenge
Welcome NYC Parent or Guardian!

Email

Password

☐ I have read and agree to the Terms of Use.

SIGN IN

Forgot your password?  Create account

Sign in to see your child's recent test scores, attendance records, and grades.

To set up an account you will need your child's Student ID number, which you can find on his or her report card, as well as an Account Creation Code, which your school will supply. You can also open an account by visiting your school—you will need a photo ID such as a driver's license or passport.
For Families, A Little Nudge in form of a “Mailing” Goes a Long Way

ABSENCE MATTER AND YOU CAN HELP

Dear Parent/Guardian of Johannes Demarzi,
Johannes has missed 23 days at [school name] this school year.
Missing just a few days each month can add up to a lot of lost learning time.
Excused and unexcused absences affect Johannes’ learning.
Our classrooms are a better place when Johannes is present.
Thank you for continuing to help Johannes attend school as much as possible.

If you need assistance or have questions, please contact your principal or community school director.

Sincerely,

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

Johannes has missed 23 days this school year**

- 23 absences
- Average absences in Johannes’ grade at [school name]
- 20 absences

Total missed days of school

**This card is sent on behalf of New York City Department of Education by In Class Today. The number of absences listed above includes excused and unexcused absences between the first day of school and 9/20/2017. If you have questions, please email TDD or call (212) 590-5355. If you received this card in error, please disregard the one. We apologize for the inconvenience.

ABSENCE MATTER AND YOU CAN HELP

Dear Parent/Guardian of Todd Rogers,
Todd has missed 9 days at [school name] this school year.
Missing just a few days each month can add up to a lot of lost learning time.
Excused and unexcused absences affect Todd’s learning.
Our classrooms are a better place when Todd is present.
Thank you for continuing to help Todd attend school as much as possible.

If you need assistance or have questions, please contact your principal or community school director.

Sincerely,

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

Todd has missed 9 days this school year**

- 9 absences

Total missed days of school

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Impact of letters

- Philly: 30,000 Hhs, 10% reduction in chronic absenteeism
- Chicago: 20,000 Hhs, 11%
- San Mateo, CA (10 districts): 10,000 Hhs, 15%
- NYC: 8% increase in attendance following delivery of one round to 7000 families

For more information: http://www.inclasstoday.com/
ESED Toolkit: Component II
Success Mentors

Connecting Chronically Absent Students to a Caring Adult
HOW DO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FEEL IN SCHOOL?
TOP 3 FEELINGS

TIRED

BORED
70% of the time

STRESSED
80% of the time
HOW H.S. STUDENTS WANT TO FEEL
Watch MBK Success Mentors
#EveryStudentEveryDay
Clip
1. What resonated for you?

2. What would you like to know more about?
What is a Success Mentor?

- Success Mentors are caring adults (or peers) who mentor chronically absent students to identify the barriers preventing them from attending school each day.

- **Anyone** can be a Success Mentor: teacher, principal, school safety agent.

- Low cost AND scalable.
Success Mentors – The Day to Day

What do They Do?

- Morning meet and greet
- Phone call home every time student is absent and share a positive message
- Meet one-on-one and/or in small groups
- Recognize and celebrate even small successes

How do They Do it?

- Track students’ attendance and improvement and identify supports and interventions
If you are mentoring individuals or groups, check out Free mentoring SEL activities at https://inspired.fb.com/activities
Interactive Activity: One Kind Word

• Recall a time when someone did something kind for them and how that felt.

• Briefly share those feelings in pairs or trios.

Resources available at https://inspired.fb.com/activities/
Robert Balfanz released third party study on effectiveness of Success Mentoring

To read the report in full, please visit

www.every1graduates.org
Results are Strong

“I had people who encouraged me…wonderful teachers and community leaders…they never gave up on me, and so I didn’t give up on myself.”

- President Barack Obama

“My Brother’s Keeper is connecting kids with Success Mentors to help kids come to school and reach their potential.”

- Kevin Durant, NBA MVP
Interactive Activity

- Pair with your elbow partner

- Develop a 30-second elevator pitch to convince colleagues back at work to create a Success Mentor Program in your school

- Consider how you will support students in temporary housing

- Note: Use the Success Mentor Guide as a resource in creating your pitch
ESED Toolkit: Component III
The Weekly Student Success Summit

Be Data Driven to Get the Right Service to the Right Student at the Right Time
Best Practice: **Weekly Attendance Meeting**

- **Train Schools on Success Mentoring:**
  - Use the Success Mentor Guide as a blueprint for work. Go to www.communityschools.nyc for resources.

- **Get Help:**
  - OCS Success Mentors Summits (next date: Jan 11, 2019)
  - Shelter Director or Coordinator or Family Assistant

**PRINCIPAL**

- Includes STH Coordinator or Family Assistant
- **PRINCIPAL’S LEADERSHIP TEAM**
- **SUCCESS MENTORS**
- **CBO LEADERS**

**GOAL = STRATEGIC COLLABORATION FOR IMPROVED OUTCOMES**
1. What were two best practices you noticed in the video?

2. Who in your school or shelter should participate in the weekly attendance meetings?
Strategy/Project Planning Roadmap

Working Title or Marketing Tagline:

Tasks:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Next 30 days:

Next 60 days:

Next 90 days

Key partners/resources

Notes:

Name:

Date:

My Bright Idea!

2019-2020

NYC Department of Education
Additional Resources

- NYC Community Schools Website
  http://www.communityschools.nyc

- Attendance Works
  http://www.attendanceworks.org

- ESSA

- National Mentoring Partnership
  http://www.mentoring.org

- inspired activities and teams
  http://www.inspired.fb.com