

## **Appendix D: Committee Materials**

# **Attendance Handbook**

## **2024-2025 School Year**



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## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

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This handbook is available both in print and electronic versions.

Please contact Student Services to get a print copy.

Electronic access is available on the Best Practices website.

## District Policy & State Statute

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Regular attendance in school is essential to the success of our students. Students who are well should be at school every day that school is in session. Students who are ill should not be in school. Generally, students don't miss more than six days of school a year from illness. If there are chronic health concerns, consult the school nurse.

### Compulsory Education Law

Under the compulsory education law, children between the ages of seven and seventeen are required to receive instruction each year. Children under age seven who are enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade are also subject to the law.

#### Minnesota statutes, section 120A.22 - Compulsory instruction

*Subdivision 1.* Parental responsibility. The parent of a child is primarily responsible for assuring that the child acquires knowledge and skills that are essential for effective citizenship.

*Subdivision 5.* Subd. 5. Ages and terms. (a) Every child between seven and 17 years of age must receive instruction unless the child has graduated. Every child under the age of seven who is enrolled in a half-day kindergarten, or a full-day kindergarten program on alternate days, or other kindergarten programs shall receive instruction. Except as provided in subdivision 6, a parent may withdraw a child under the age of seven from enrollment at any time.

*Subdivision 6.* Children under seven.

- (a) Once a pupil under the age of seven is enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade in a public school, the pupil is subject to the compulsory attendance provisions of this chapter and section 120A.34, unless the board of the district in which the pupil is enrolled has a policy that exempts children under seven from this subdivision.
- (b) In a district in which children under seven are subject to compulsory attendance under this subdivision, paragraphs (c) to (e) apply.
- (c) A parent or guardian may withdraw the pupil from enrollment in the school for good cause by notifying the district. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, enrollment of the pupil in another school, as defined in subdivision 4, or the immaturity of the child.
- (d) When the pupil enrolls, the enrolling official must provide the parent or guardian who enrolls the pupil with a written explanation of the provisions of this subdivision.
- (e) A pupil under the age of seven who is withdrawn from enrollment in the public school under paragraph (c) is no longer subject to the compulsory attendance provisions of this chapter.

### Absent or Late to School

If a student is not at school and the school has not received notice of an absence, the school will call a parent or guardian. If the school does not hear from the parent or guardian, the student's absence will be recorded as unexcused. Absence due to weather concerns will be excused only if reported by a parent or guardian.



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## Absence Guidelines for Grades K-5

- ❖ A student is considered tardy if he or she arrives up to 60 minutes late.
- ❖ A student is considered absent for a half day if he or she arrives more than 60 minutes late up to half of the school day.
- ❖ A student is considered absent for a full day if he or she arrives to school and is picked up within 90 minutes.
- ❖ A student is considered absent for a full day if he or she misses four or more hours of the school day.

## Absence Guidelines for Grades 6-12

- ❖ Student attendance is recorded each class period.
- ❖ A student is considered tardy if he or she arrives up to 15 minutes late to a class period.
- ❖ A student is considered absent for the class period if he or she arrives more than 15 minutes late to class.

## Early Dismissal

Early dismissals should occur only in rare circumstances and requests must go through the school office.

- ❖ Students leaving early will be marked as early out. This is considered the same as a tardy.

## Unexcused Absences and Tardies

Regular attendance is a crucial part of success in school. There are consequences when students are continually absent from school. If an elementary student is absent three days within a single school year; or a secondary student is absent from three or more class periods on three days within a school year without excuse that student is considered a “continuing truant,” according to state law (section 260A.02). The school is required by law to notify a parent when a child is a “continuing truant” and if the child continues to be truant there may be juvenile court proceedings. Once a student is considered a “continuing truant”, parents and guardians are given an opportunity to explain their child’s absences. When an elementary student is absent seven or more days within a single school year; or a secondary student is absent from two class periods at the high school level or three class periods at the middle school level on seven days within a single school year without excuse, that student is considered a “habitual truant,” according to state law (section 260C.007). Anoka-Hennepin schools refer “habitually truant” students to the county attorney.

Attendance letters will be sent home when absences or tardies become excessive so families can take corrective action and address the issue. If a student will not be attending school due to cold weather or other concerns, a parent or guardian must call the school to report the absence. Absence due to weather or other concerns will be excused if reported by a parent or guardian.

## Release of Students: Late Arrival/Leaving Early

Students can be released to persons other than legal parents or guardians when a note is received from the parent/guardian, a phone call is received from the parent/guardian and staff document the phone call or, an email is received from the parent/guardian. A valid photo ID must be presented when students are released to persons other than legal parents or guardians. If a student arrives late or leaves early, parents/guardians must sign their students in or out at the office. A student arriving late with required notification from their parent/guardian or doctor’s office may sign themselves in.

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Students leaving early (up to 60 minutes) on a regular basis (multiple times per week) for an activity can result in a legitimate report of truancy. Families are encouraged to consider alternative options (homeschool or virtual) to ensure students receive all instructional minutes for academic success.

## 2024-2025 Additions and Updates

|  |
|--|
| Electronic Delivery  |
| <p>Attendance letters will be emailed this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the parents/guardians listed have the same address, the email will be sent to the parent/guardian in position 1 in Synergy.</li> <li>• If the parents/guardians listed have different addresses, the email will be sent to all listed parents/guardians with different addresses.</li> <li>• The letter will also be available to review under the documents tab in ParentVue.</li> <li>• The letter will be emailed when the report is generated.</li> <li>• If there is no email listed or the email is undeliverable.</li> </ul>   |
| Synergy Codes  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FLU: Flu code used instead of ILL when these two symptoms are present: temperature over 100 and cough or sore throat. This code will now be included in the 10, 20, and 30 day letters.</li> <li>• MOD: Modified schedule code used when students are absent from school because of a modified schedule indicated on a student's IEP or 504 plan.</li> <li>• NPT: Not present for targeted services code used for school year targeted services.</li> <li>• TAB: Teacher absence code used for when a teacher is absent for homeservices or homebound instruction.</li> <li>• TSN: Transportation code used for McKinney Vento qualified students who are absent from school due to a transportation related reason.</li> </ul> |
| Letters  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10, 20, and 30 day total absence letters are required to be sent at the elementary level. 10 day total absence letters are required at the secondary level. Secondary schools have the option to send the 20 and 30 day letters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 10, 20, and 30 day letters will pull codes HOS, ILL, IMM, FLU, MED, OTH, PER, UNE, and UNV</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communication to families as a result of these letters is mandatory before requiring medical documentation to excuse illness related absences, no longer excusing personal related absences, or requesting a meeting with the family to identify and problem-solve barriers to attendance.</li> </ul>                               |
| <p>The <a href="#">15 Day Drop Notification Letter</a> can be sent to the parent/guardian when a student is dropped after 15 consecutive absences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This letter will not automatically generate. You will need to manually send it by mail or email. Make a copy of the letter to edit and print on the school's letterhead.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Hennepin County schools will automatically generate the 12 and 17 unexcused days letter for filing the second and third reports with the county.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student name, grade, and ID number will appear on the attendance letter.</li> <li>• Because the principal signature could not be adjusted, attendance letters direct parents/guardians to contact the school's main office for questions regarding the letter.</li> </ul>   |

## Every Student Succeeds Act

Attendance is a new ESSA accountability measure. If a student attends 90 percent or more of the time they are enrolled, they are considered consistently attending. Missing 6 days per trimester, regardless of reason, equals chronic absenteeism.

## District Procedures

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### Attendance Codes in Synergy - Elementary

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| Synergy Code  | Title                   | Code Definition  | Synergy Type | File Truancy w/County | Blackboard notification |
|---|-------------------------|--|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>UNVERIFIED: Absent; reason to be determined</b>  |                         |  |              |                       |                         |
| UNV   | Unverified              | Used by the teacher to indicate that the student is not present.   | Unverified   | NA                    | Y                       |
| UNI   | Verification in Process | Used by attendance staff to indicate reason for absence is being verified  | Unverified   | NA                    | Y                       |
| <b>ABSENCE: Absent from school (missing more than 60 minutes of an attendance period)</b> |                         |  |              |                       |                         |
| DIS   | Dismissal               | Administrative removal from school for one day or less.  | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| HOS   | Hospital                | Hospitalization  | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| FLU   | Flu                     | Used instead of ILL when these two symptoms are present: Temperature over 100 and cough or sore throat   | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| ILL   | Illness                 | Student illness or medical appointment (no medical documentation).   | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| IMM   | ImmunExcls              | Student does not have the required immunization(s) and has been sent home by an administrator.   | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| MED   | Medical                 | Documentation received from a health care provider.  | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| MOD   | Modified Schedule       | Students absent from school because of a modified schedule per IEP or 504.   | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| NPT   | Not PresentTS           | SY Targeted Services attendance code.  | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| PER   | Personal                | Personal or family excuse.   | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| REL   | Religious               | Religious reason or cultural holiday. Child may be excused for up to three hours per week for religious instruction.   | Excused      | N                     | N                       |
| SUS   | Suspended               | Student not allowed in school by administrative decision. Removal is for longer than a full day and up to 10 consecutive days or Pending expulsion, days 11-15, for a student not on an IEP. | Excused      | N                     | N                       |

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|   |                 |   |                   |   |   |
|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| TAB   | Teacher Absence | Teacher absence for homeservices/homebound  | Excused           | N | N |
| TSN   | Transportation  | MV students who are absent from school while waiting for their transportation route to start.   | Excused           | N | N |
| UNE   | Unexcused       | Absent without valid excuse.  | Unexcused Absence | Y | N |
| <b>SCHOOL ACTIVITY: Absent from class; under our care/receiving service</b> |                 |   |                   |   |   |
| AES   | AltEduServ      | All dual enrolled students and students receiving home service. Also for students on IEPs that are past 10 days of suspension and for non IEP students pending expulsion out more than 15 days. | School Activity   | N | N |
| ACT   | Activity/Trip   | Student attending a school activity.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| DML   | DistModLrn      | Attendance at a district site which provides instructional materials and IEP services.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| HBD   | Homebound       | Student is temporarily at home getting instruction due to medical confinement.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| MLC   | ModLrnCntr      | Removal from class; attendance in an in-school administrative placement which provides instructional materials and IEP services.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| <b>TARDY: Late to school or class</b>                                       |                 |   |                   |   |   |
| BLA   | Bus Late        | Late arrival due to late bus/district transportation.   | Excused Tardy     | N | N |
| LAE   | Late Arrival-E  | Late arrival with valid excuse.   | Excused Tardy     | N | N |
| TDY   | Tardy           | Late to school, up to 60 minutes.   | Unexcused Tardy   | N | N |
| OEE   | Out Early-E     | Leave school 1-60 minutes before the end of day with a valid excuse.  | Excused Tardy     | N | N |
| OEU   | Out Early-U     | Leave school 1-60 minutes before the end of day without a valid excuse.   | Unexcused Tardy   | N | N |

## Attendance Codes in Synergy - Secondary

| Synergy Code                                       | Title                   | Code Definition  | Synergy Type | File Truancy w/ County | Blackboard notification |
|--|-------------------------|--|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>UNVERIFIED: Absent; reason to be determined</b> |                         |  |              |                        |                         |
| UNV  | Unverified              | Used by the teacher to indicate that the student is not present.   | Unverified   | NA                     | Y                       |
| UNI  | Verification in Process | Used by attendance staff to indicate reason for absence is being verified  | Unverified   | NA                     | Y                       |
| <b>ABSENCE: Absent from school</b>                 |                         |  |              |                        |                         |
| DIS  | Dismissal               | Administrative removal from school for one day or less.  | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| HOS  | Hospital                | Hospitalization  | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| FLU  | Flu                     | Used instead of ILL when these two symptoms are present: Temperature over 100 and cough or sore throat   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| ILL  | Illness                 | Student illness or medical appointment (no medical documentation).   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| IMM  | ImmunExcls              | Student does not have the required immunization(s) and has been sent home by an administrator.   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| MED  | Medical                 | Documentation received from a health care provider.  | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| MOD  | Modified Schedule       | Students absent from school because of a modified schedule per IEP or 504.   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| NPT  | Not Present TS          | SY Targeted Services attendance code.  | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| PER  | Personal                | Personal or family excuse.   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| REL  | Religious               | Religious reason or cultural holiday. Child may be excused for up to three hours per week for religious instruction.   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| RTR  | Redeemed TR             | Detention has been served for an unexcused absence. The unexcused absence will not count toward HS Truancy Rule.   | Excused      | N                      | N                       |
| SUS  | Suspended               | Student not allowed in school by administrative decision. Removal is for longer than a full day and up to 10 consecutive days or Pending expulsion, days 11-15, for a student not on an IEP. | Excused      | N                      | N                       |

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|   |                 |   |                   |   |   |
|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| TAB   | Teacher Absence | Teacher absence for homeservices/homebound.   | Excused           | N | N |
| TSN   | Transportation  | MV students who are absent from school while waiting for their transportation route to start.   | Excused           | N | N |
| UNE   | Unexcused       | Absent without valid excuse. (For Anoka County Schools only not in class and in the building, not following the assigned schedule for the period.)  | Unexcused Absence | Y | N |
| <b>SCHOOL ACTIVITY: Absent from class; under our care/receiving service</b> |                 |   |                   |   |   |
| OTH   | Other           | Not in class and in the building, not following the assigned schedule for the period. (Hennepin County schools only)  | School Activity   | N | N |
| AES   | AltEduServ      | All dual enrolled students and students receiving home service. Also for students on IEPs that are past 10 days of suspension and for non IEP students pending expulsion out more than 15 days. | School Activity   | N | N |
| ACT   | Activity/Trip   | Student attending a school activity.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| DML   | DistModLrn      | Attendance at a district site which provides instructional materials and IEP services.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| HBD   | Homebound       | Student is temporarily at home getting instruction due to medical confinement.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| HEA   | Health Office   | Student was in the health office.   | School Activity   | N | N |
| MLC   | ModLrnCntr      | Removal from class; attendance in an in-school administrative placement which provides instruction and IEP services.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| POF   | Prin/AP         | Student was in the office.  | School Activity   | N | N |
| SSS   | Student Support | Student was with student support staff.   | School Activity   | N | N |
| SUP   | Support Center  | Student with an IEP was in SpEd support center.   | School Activity   | N | N |
| TES   | Testing         | Student missing class due to testing.   | School Activity   | N | N |
| <b>TARDY: Late to school or class</b>                                       |                 |   |                   |   |   |
| BLA   | Bus Late        | Late arrival due to late bus/district transportation  | Excused Tardy     | N | N |
| LAE   | Late Arrival-E  | Late arrival with valid excuse.   | Excused Tardy     | N | N |
| TD3   | 3rd TDY         | 3 tardies or late arrivals.   | Unexcused Tardy   | N | N |

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|     |                    |  |                 |   |   |
|-----|--------------------|--|-----------------|---|---|
| TDY | Tardy              | Late to class, up to 15 minutes.   | Unexcused Tardy | N | N |
| OEE | Out Early- E       | Leave class up to 15 minutes before the end of the period with a valid excuse. | Excused Tardy   | N | N |
| UNP | Unverified Partial | Late to class, more than 15 minutes  | Unexcused Tardy | N | N |

## Authority to Excuse Absences

In most cases, parent(s) or guardian(s) with legal custody of the student or foster parents can authorize absences and early outs during the school day. In McKinney-Vento situations, please consult the Homeless Education lead for the student's building/program (typically the school social worker).

Unaccompanied youth under 18 years:

- If a Responsibility Agreement is on file, Responsible Adult can authorize absences and early check-outs during the school day.
- Student is able to authorize an early check-out during the school day.
- Student is able to authorize an excused absence.
- If no Responsible Adult is identified, parent communications regarding attendance are routed to the student.

*(Do not put a Responsibility Agreement in place without first consulting the Homeless Education lead.)*

Students 18-years and older or emancipated under 18-years:

- Student is able to authorize an early check-out during the school day. No additional form or self-permission contract is required for this.
- Student is able to authorize an excused absence.

## Synergy Thresholds

Secondary letters will be prompted using a "total across bell period" threshold.

- High school students with a 5 period day will receive a 3 day letter when they miss 2 or more unexcused bell periods on 3 different days and a 6 or 7 day letter when they miss 2 or more unexcused bell periods on 6 or 7 different days.
- Middle school students with a 7 period day will receive a 3 day letter when they miss 3 or more unexcused bell periods on 3 different days and a 6 day letter when they miss 3 or more unexcused bell periods on 6 different days.

Elementary letters will be prompted using a "total by all day amount" threshold.

- Elementary students will receive a 3 day letter when the total half day or full day unexcused absences equal 3 days.
- Elementary students will receive a 6 or 7 day letter when the total half day or full day unexcused absences equal 6 or 7 days.
- All Day Codes will no longer be selected by the end user.

## 15 Consecutive Absences

Minnesota statute, section 126C.05 subd 8 states, "...a pupil, regardless of age, who has been absent from school for 15 consecutive school days during the regular school year or for five consecutive school days during summer school or intersession classes of flexible school year programs without receiving instruction in the home or hospital shall be dropped from the roll and classified as withdrawn."



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- Students should be withdrawn from enrollment after 15 consecutive absences, regardless of the reason.
- If 6 (in Anoka County) or 7 (in Hennepin County) or more of the absences are unexcused or unverified, file truancy with the appropriate county and note on the referral that the student will be dropped
- When a student is withdrawn from school after 15 consecutive absences, it is the school's responsibility to continue to reach out to the student and/or family to determine if the student has enrolled in another school or if they need to be enrolled again in the school that they were attending prior to being withdrawn.
- McKinney Vento identified students should not be dropped after 15 consecutive days of absence if the barrier to attending is housing related (moving, transportation, etc.). Please consult with your building's Homeless Education Lead or Heidi Geiss, Homeless Liaison, at 763-433-4685 before dropping any McKinney Vento qualified students.
- For questions, reference the [15 Day Drop Guidance](#) or contact Kate Grimm, MARSS Coordinator at 763-506-1035.
- The [15 Day Drop Notification](#) letter should be sent to the parent/guardian of a student who is dropped.

## Mental Health Absences

Anoka-Hennepin School District recognizes that students can experience mental health symptoms to a degree that can impact their functioning and attendance. Student support staff are available to support, empower, and promote mental health and emotional wellbeing for schools, families, and students. Plans may be created to specifically meet student needs within a school setting as it relates to mental health.

1. Office staff communicate with the team about absences. Upon notification that a student is absent due to hospitalization (for any reason), notify the administrator, licensed student support staff, and nurse via email. Include any known information about the facility, length of stay, and reason for admittance. If you speak with a guardian directly, inform them a staff member may reach out to offer support to the student and family.
  - a. 15 Day Drops. If a student amasses 15 consecutive school days absent for any reason, proceed with a 15 day drop. MARSS state reporting requires the district to end all enrollments, for any reason (including Illness [ILL]), when a student is absent for 15 consecutive days. This is linked to funding. If 6 (in Anoka County) or 7 (in Hennepin County) or more of the absences are unexcused or unverified, file truancy with the appropriate county and note on the referral that the student will be dropped. Notify the administrator and licensed school support staff via email.
  - b. Absences for mental health concerns. When a student is reported absent for a "mental health day" or for other mental health related concerns, code the absence as ILL without provider documentation or MED with provider documentation. Pass along any provider documentation to the school nurse or licensed student support staff.
    - i. Mental health days (MED/ILL) are included in the count for 10 day letter notices. Notify the administrator and licensed school support staff via email when a student receiving a 10 day letter has more than one mental health related absence.
    - ii. Alert support staff after 2 consecutive absences or multiple absences in one month for mental health reasons.
    - iii. Support staff can offer resources, strategies, or interventions to support a student's attendance and mental health symptoms.

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2. Communicate with the team about returns. If you become aware that a student has returned to school before the expected return date or after a prolonged unverified absence (3+ days), notify the administrator, student support staff, and nurse via email.

In an effort to support students who are seeking care for their mental or chemical health symptoms, every effort will be made to ensure students continue on a trajectory towards graduation. When a treatment facility does not provide an academic component, students will continue to be enrolled in their home school while attending treatment for longer than 15 days.

1. Students in this situation will be coded AES (Alternative Educational Service).
2. Communicate with the student's treatment team to determine academic rigor and feasibility of completing academic tasks while in treatment.
3. Efforts will be made to excuse or reduce any noncritical academic tasks.
  - a. Consider having a designated person (i.e. guardian) pick up assignment materials weekly to bring to the student.
  - b. Consider Google Classrooms as an option for supporting access to academic content and work completion.
  - c. Consider credit recovery options, if necessary.
4. Communicate academic plans with the treatment team, student, and student's guardian/s.

## Frequently Asked Questions on Attendance Code Selection

### Selection of Codes for Attendance

#### 1. What attendance code should I select?

- Four definitions are helpful in determining how to code a student for a given period:
  - Unverified: Absent; reason to be determined.
  - Absence: Absent from school.
  - School activity: Absent from class; under our care/receiving services.
  - Tardy: Late to school or class.
- Refer to attendance code definitions on previous pages.

#### 2. How do I decide if the absence is excused?

- Parent/guardian notification\*, for any reason, warrants an excused absence. Select the absence code that most closely aligns to the parent/guardian's explanation.
- **Exception:** Even when there is parent/guardian notification\*, if there are absence concerns for any reason, the building administrator can make a determination that student absences are no longer considered excused and send the 10 day absence letter. Communication should be made to the parent/guardian informing them that absences will no longer be excused.

\*Unaccompanied youth under 18 years:

- If a Responsibility Agreement is on file, Responsible Adult can authorize absences and early check-outs during the school day.
- Student is able to authorize an early check-out during the school day.
- Student is able to authorize an excused absence.
- If no Responsible Adult is identified, parent communications regarding attendance are routed to the student.

\*Students 18-years and older or emancipated under 18-years:

- Student is able to authorize an early check-out during the school day. No additional form or self-permission contract is required for this.
- Student is able to authorize an excused absence.

**3. How long do we allow UNV to await a response from parent/guardian before they get changed to UNE?**

- It is recommended to change UNV to UNE if no parent/guardian information is provided within 2 days.
- The attendance notifications on the next pages outline timelines to communicate attendance concerns to families.

**4. How do I determine when to code as Tardy or Absent?**

- Tardy: Secondary student missed 15 minutes or less of the class period. Elementary student is up to 60 minutes late to school or leaves school up to 60 minutes early.
- Absent: Secondary student is more than 15 minutes late to a class period. Elementary student is more than 60 minutes late (half day absence) or leaves more than 60 minutes early (half day absence).
- Refer to [attendance code definitions](#) on the previous pages.

**5. When does an unexcused change to a truant?**

- As part of our attendance updates, there is no longer an option to mark a student as TRU (Truant). Schools in Minnesota are given the jurisdiction to determine if a student's absence is excused or unexcused. Child welfare agencies and juvenile court offices have the jurisdiction to determine if a student's unexcused absences meet statutory thresholds for educational neglect or truancy (see reference [Minnesota Statute 260A.02](#)). As such, our attendance practices have been updated to reflect our responsibility to 1) determine if an absence is unexcused and 2) to align with mandated communication requirements to parents/guardians regarding unexcused attendance concerns and our mandated reporting requirements to the county regarding unexcused absences.

**6. What happens when you use a Mass Change Attendance?**

- This process can be used for a group of students who are absent for the same reason (athletic event, testing, etc.)
- Be careful when using MASS attendance, because there is not an “undo” button. If you make a mistake you may not be able to easily change the information back.
- Does it override information that might have been entered for an individual? For example, the student was already marked ILL because the parent/guardian called. YES, mass change will override daily/period absences that have already been entered.

**7. Student arrives at school/period (under 15 minutes) with a note from a medical provider. Should I use the MED code, which will cover the entire period, or Late Arrival-Excused (LAE)?**

- First consider the amount of time the student is gone. If the time the student is out of class falls within the tardy code definitions, use the excused tardy code (LAE). In this instance, staff can note that the student had a medical note as verification for the excused tardy code.
- If the student has been out of class for a portion of time greater than the designated tardy time limits, use the MED absence code as this designates the student was gone for a full period.

**8. If a student is sent home due to fever or vomiting, can we automatically mark them out as ILL (excused) for the following day?**

- If the health office has sent a student home, the attendance reason for the following day can be coded as Illness (ILL) in advance.

**9. Why do we use the ILL code when a parent/guardian informed us that the student was at a medical appointment but has not provided us with the documentation?**

- Use ILL for medical appointments when no documentation is received to avoid confusion and reporting errors.
- Use ILL when a student is absent for illness related reasons without medical documentation.

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- Use ILL when a student is sent home from school by the nurses office.
- Use MED for absence reasons that include medical documentation.
- Should a parent/guardian later produce a note from a medical provider regarding the absence, the code can be switched to MED.

**10. What if a student misses Period 1 & Period 2, and then arrives late to Period 3 stating they overslept?**

- Code will be UNV until absence reason is verified by a parent/guardian or converted to UNE.
- With valid excuse, Period 1 & 2 could be PER and Period 3 LAE or PER (depending on when the student arrives for Period 3)
- Without valid excuse, Period 1 & 2 would be UNE and Period 3 would be TDY or UNE. (depending on when the student arrives for Period 3).

**11. What if a student is at school, but they are not in their assigned class and they are hiding in or wandering around the building while staff attempt to locate the student. How do you code this in Synergy?**

- OTH: not in class but in a staff approved or directed alternative location for elementary schools
- OTH: not in class but in the building for secondary Hennepin County schools
- UNE: not in class but in the building for secondary Anoka County schools

Using the UNE code in these situations will put students on the same trajectory of intervention at the county level when needed if school-based interventions are unsuccessful at the Anoka County schools. Use [this](#) guidance to refer habitually truant students to Anoka County. It is important to be aware that because Anoka County accepts truancy referrals for these situations and Hennepin County does not, there will be differences in the way students are coded for the same reason.

**12. What if a student leaves for part of the day and returns to school? How do I code that?**

- Students should be marked ILL or MED for medical appointments that occur during the school day. Please use appropriate codes (PER, REL) if a student is absent for part of the day and returns to school for something other than a medical appointment.
  - Elementary students can be marked ILL or MED, please indicate the time the student was absent in the notes (i.e. 1:15 pm–2:30 pm).
  - Secondary students can be marked ILL or MED for each full class period missed. If a student leaves or arrives within the tardy code definitions, use the excused tardy code (LAE). In this instance, staff can note that the student had a medical note or appointment as verification for the excused tardy code.

\*If absences are ongoing: Best practice is for school staff to meet or call family to attempt to schedule future appointments outside of school day if possible.

**15. When should Out Early-Excused be used? How about if a student is leaving early for an appointment or because they are sick?**

- OEE should be used when a student leaves 1-60 minutes before the end of the day for an excused reason even if the reason can be explained through a different synergy code.
- OEE is not reported in MARSS whereas other excused absence codes are.

\*If absences are ongoing: Best practice is for school staff to meet or call family to attempt to schedule future appointments/extracurricular activities outside of school day if possible.

**16. How do I determine what a half day is? If a student leaves before the cutoff time for a half day, what should I do?**

- Use the middle point of your school's start and end times. Consider this the half-day cutoff time.
- Consider using discretion when a student arrives or leaves within 45 minutes of the half-day window as students should be given the benefit of attending in those circumstances rather than marking them absent a full day.

**17. Coding and distinguishing between Home Services and Homebound.**

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- Home Services is coded as AES (Alternative Education Services)
  - Students receiving Home Services will have an IEP. Services are usually offered for a short duration (2-6 weeks).
- Homebound is coded as HBD (Homebound)
  - Less common, difficult to qualify for, need doctor's note with specific information and indicating a need for homebound services.
  - Homebound status will be noted on enrollment records and the student will continue to be enrolled in Synergy.
  - Future attendance should be entered for at least 14 days to prevent accidental attendance calls.
- When a teacher is unable to provide scheduled education for a student, they will contact the SOS or Attendance Secretary and attendance should be coded TAB (Teacher Absence).

For questions on students with Home Services or Homebound, please contact Kate Grimm at 763-506-1035.

## Attendance Notifications for Elementary Families

| Timeframe     | Attendance Concern   | Communication  |
|---------------|--|--|
| Every morning | Unverified absence (UNV)   | Automated InTouch phone call to family   |
| Weekly        | Unexcused absences (UNV & UNE)<br>Total absences (HOS, ILL, IMM, FLU, MED, OTH, PER, UNE, and UNV) | Report will automatically generate determining letters to be sent.<br><u>Required letters:</u><br>3 unexcused absences<br>6 or 7 unexcused absences<br>12 unexcused absences (Hennepin County)<br>17 unexcused absences (Hennepin County)<br>10 absences (any reason)<br>20 absences (any reason)<br>30 absences (any reason)<br><u>Optional letters:</u><br>5 absences (any reason) |
| As Needed     | Student is dropped after 15 consecutive absences.  | 15 Day Drop Letter   |

## Attendance Notifications for Secondary Families

| Timeframe | Attendance Concern             | Communication   |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---|
| Daily     | Unverified absence (UNV)       | Automated InTouch phone call to family  |
| Weekly    | Unexcused absences (UNV & UNE) | Report will automatically generate determining letters to be sent.<br><u>Required letters:</u><br>3 unexcused absences<br>6 or 7 unexcused absences<br>12 unexcused absences (Hennepin County)<br>17 unexcused absences (Hennepin County)<br>10 absences (any reason) |

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|           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
|           |   | <u>Optional letters:</u><br>5 absences (any reason)<br>20 absences (any reason)<br>30 absences (any reason) |
| As Needed | Student is dropped after 15 consecutive absences. | 15 Day Drop Letter  |

## Synergy Organization for Anoka County Letters in Elementary Schools

| Required Letters   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Letter Threshold   | Letter for our Anoka Schools   | Letter Highlights   |
| <b>3 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at any combination of 6 UNE across AM/PM.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">3 Unexcused Days Elementary Anoka Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>           | Parent/guardian awareness<br>School-based interventions<br>Student is classified continuing truant  |
| <b>6 unexcused days Anoka County Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at any combination of 12 UNE across AM/PM.</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">6 Unexcused Days Elementary Anoka Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>           | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Notices of referral to educational neglect diversion program   |
| <b>10 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at any combination of 20 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">10 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with school staff</li> <li>School social worker</li> <li>Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <b>20 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at any combination of 40 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">20 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with school staff</li> <li>School social worker</li> <li>Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <b>30 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at any combination of 60 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">30 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with school staff</li> <li>School social worker</li> <li>Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <b>15 day drop</b> ( <i>15 consecutive absences for any reason</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manually track and send letter at 15 consecutive absence days.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">15 Day Drop Notification</a></li> </ul>   | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Notification of requirement to reenroll  |

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

| Optional Letters  |   |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| Letter Threshold  | Letter for our Anoka Schools  | Letter Highlights         |
| <b>5 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 10 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">5 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> </ul> | Parent/guardian awareness |

## Synergy Organization for Hennepin County Letters in Elementary Schools

| Required Letters   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Letter Threshold   | Letter for our Hennepin Schools  | Letter Highlights   |
| <b>3 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 6 UNE across AM/PM.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">3 Unexcused Days Elementary Anoka Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>           | Parent/guardian awareness<br>School-based interventions<br>Student is classified continuing truant  |
| <b>7 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 12 UNE across AM/PM.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">7 Unexcused Days Elementary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>        | Be@School Report #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be@School letter invite to view informational video</li> </ul>   |
| <b>12 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 24 UNE across AM/PM.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">12 Unexcused Days Elementary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>       | Be@School Report #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational Neglect &amp; Truancy Reporting</li> <li>● Parent and team meeting, may be referred to county services</li> </ul>  |
| <b>17 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 34 UNE across AM/PM.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">17 Unexcused Days Elementary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>       | Be@School Report #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students with county services continue</li> <li>● Under 12 = CPS</li> </ul>  |
| <b>10 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 20 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">10 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions (selection of options determined by team) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with school staff</li> <li>● School social worker</li> <li>● Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>● Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul>          |
| <b>20 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 40 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">20 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with school staff</li> <li>● School social worker</li> <li>● Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>● Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <b>30 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> )   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">30 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> </ul>   | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> )   |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 60 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with school staff</li> <li>● School social worker</li> <li>● Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>● Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|
| <b>15 day drop</b> ( <i>15 consecutive absences for any reason</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manually track and send letter at 15 consecutive absence days.</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">15 Day Drop Notification</a></li> </ul>                                | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Notification of requirement to reenroll  |
| Optional Letters  |   |   |
| Letter Threshold  | Letter for our Hennepin Schools   | Letter Highlights   |
| <b>5 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 10 Absence Codes across AM/PM.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">5 Absences Elementary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> </ul> | Parent/guardian awareness   |

## Synergy Organization for Anoka County Letters in Secondary Schools

| Required Letters  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Letter Threshold  | Letter for our Anoka Schools  | Letter Highlights  |
| <b>3 unexcused days</b> (at least 2 or 3 unexcused periods over 3 different days)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) UNE periods on 3 different days days.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">3 Unexcused Days Secondary Anoka Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | Parent/guardian awareness<br>School-based interventions<br>Student is classified continuing truant   |
| <b>6 unexcused days</b> (at least 2 or 3 unexcused periods over 6 different days)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) UNE periods on 6 different days.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">6 Unexcused Days Secondary Anoka Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Notifies of report to the county attorney's office  |
| <b>10 absent days</b> (combination excused/unexcused periods over 10 different days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) absence codes (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 10 different days.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">10 Absences Secondary Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>            | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting with school staff</li> <li>● Health office/Requirement for medical excuse moving forward</li> <li>● Future absences marked unexcused</li> </ul> |
| Optional Letters  |   |  |
| Letter Threshold  | Letter for our Anoka Schools  | Letter Highlights  |
| <b>10 tardies</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">10 Tardies Secondary Notification</a></li> </ul>   | Parent/guardian awareness  |



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|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at any combination of 10 LAE/TD3/TDY/UNP.</li> </ul>   |   |  |
| <p><b>5 absent days</b> (combination excused/unexcused periods over 5 different days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there is at least one Absence Code (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 5 different days.</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">5 Absences Secondary Notification</a></li> </ul>   | Parent/guardian awareness  |
| <p><b>20 absent days</b> (<i>combination excused/unexcused</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) absence codes (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 20 different days.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">20 Absences Secondary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | <p>School-based interventions (<i>selection of options determined by team</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with school staff</li> <li>● School social worker</li> <li>● Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>● Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>30 absent days</b> (<i>combination excused/unexcused</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) absence codes (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 30 different days.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">30 Absences Secondary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | <p>School-based interventions (<i>selection of options determined by team</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with school staff</li> <li>● School social worker</li> <li>● Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>● Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>15 day drop</b> (<i>15 consecutive absences for any reason</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter at 15 consecutive absence days.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">15 Day Drop Notification</a></li> </ul>  | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Notification of requirement to reenroll   |

## Synergy Organization for Hennepin County Letters in Secondary Schools

| Required Letters   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Letter Threshold   | Letter for our Hennepin Schools  | Letter Highlights  |
| <p><b>3 unexcused days</b> (at least 2 or 3 unexcused periods over 3 different days)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) UNE periods on 3 different days.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">3 Unexcused Days Secondary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | Parent/guardian awareness<br>School-based interventions<br>Student is classified continuing truant   |
| <p><b>7 unexcused days</b> (at least 2 or 3 unexcused periods over 6 different days)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) UNE periods on 6 different days.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">7 Unexcused Days Secondary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Be@School Report #1 (at 7 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be@School letter invite to view informational video</li> </ul> |

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|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>12 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) UNE periods on 12 separate days.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">12 Unexcused Days Secondary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>       | Be@School Report #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Neglect &amp; Truancy Reporting</li> <li>Parent and team meeting, may be referred to county services</li> </ul>  |
| <b>17 unexcused days</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) UNE periods on 17 separate days.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">17 Unexcused Days Secondary Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>       | Be@School Report #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with county services continue</li> <li>Children over 12, no longer filing with truancy court</li> </ul>   |
| <b>10 absent days</b> (combination excused/unexcused periods over 10 different days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) absence codes (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 10 different days.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">10 Absences Secondary Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul>                      | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with school staff</li> <li>Health office/Requirement for medical excuse moving forward</li> <li>Future absences marked unexcused</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Optional Letters</b>   |   |   |
| <b>Letter Threshold</b>   | <b>Letter for our Hennepin Schools</b>  | <b>Letter Highlights</b>  |
| <b>10 tardies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at any combination of 10 LAE/TD3/TDY/UNP.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">10 Tardies Secondary Notification</a></li> </ul>   | Parent/guardian awareness   |
| <b>5 absent days</b> (combination excused/unexcused periods over 5 different days)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">5 Absences Secondary Notification</a></li> </ul>   | Parent/guardian awareness   |
| <b>15 day drop</b> ( <i>15 consecutive absences for any reason</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter at 15 consecutive absence days.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">15 Day Drop Notification</a></li> </ul>  | Parent/guardian awareness<br>Notification of requirement to reenroll  |
| <b>20 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) absence codes (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 20 different days.</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">20 Absences Secondary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with school staff</li> <li>School social worker</li> <li>Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |
| <b>30 absent days</b> ( <i>combination excused/unexcused</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergy generates letter when there are at least 3 (middle school) or 2 (high school) absence codes (excludes School Activity &amp; Tardy codes) on 30 different days.</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">30 Absences Secondary Anoka &amp; Hennepin Notification</a></li> <li><a href="#">Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish Translations</a></li> </ul> | School-based interventions ( <i>selection of options determined by team</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with school staff</li> <li>School social worker</li> <li>Requirement for medical documentation or school nurse assessment</li> <li>Future absences marked as unexcused</li> </ul> |

## Frequently Asked Questions on Attendance Letters &amp; Communications

## Attendance Letters & Communications

### 1. What does our district handbook tell parents about attendance?

- See pages 4-5 of the [Anoka-Hennepin School Handbook](#).

### 2. What letters are required?

- 3 unexcused days (at least 3 (middle school) and 2 (high school) unexcused periods on 3 different days).
  - Synergy generates letter when the threshold is met.
- 6 unexcused days or 7 unexcused days (at least 3 (middle school) and 2 (high school) unexcused periods on 6 or 7 different days).
  - Synergy generates letter when the threshold is met.
- 10 days total absence letter, 20 days total absence letter (required for elementary, optional for secondary), 30 days total absence letter (required for elementary, optional for secondary)

See Synergy Organization for Attendance Letters on the previous pages for more information about attendance letter thresholds for each county.

### 3. Do the unexcused days to trigger a required letter start over at the beginning of a trimester or does Synergy pull from the student's first day of school?

- The letter triggers do not take trimesters into consideration and they do not reset at the end of a trimester. The amounts will continue to accumulate throughout the entire school year.

### 4. What if the student lives in a county different from the school?

- Each school will utilize the letters from the county that the school resides in. Although you will likely have students who reside in a county other than the one your school is located in due to open enrollment, McKinney-Vento, ESSA foster care status, etc.
- The school building team working to support consistent attendance will need to make sure that if there is a need to file a report of educational neglect or truancy regarding a student, the report should be filed with the county in which the student resides.

### 5. What languages have our attendance letters been translated into and where do I access those letters?

- The 3, 6, 7, and 10 day letters have been translated in Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, and Spanish.
- Letters will be generated based on the home language selection in Synergy.
- All translated letters can be found [here](#).
- If you choose to send the English version of the letter with the translated letter. You can find the letter templates [here](#). You will need to make a copy of the letter in order to edit it.

### 6. Are principal signatures required on the letters? What if a school wants to change the signature portion of the letter to indicate a specific Asst. Principal who is in charge of attendance for a student?

- The principal's name needs to be included on the letter; however, the principal's signature is not required.
- Version 2 only allows the principal's name to appear in the signature. The school's logo is printed on the letter which includes the phone number for the main office.
- Attendance letters indicate that parents/guardians should contact the school's main office for questions regarding the letter.

### 7. What attendance information can parents/guardians view regarding their student?

- Parents can see an abbreviated version of Daily/Period attendance in the parent portal. All unexcused absences and tardies show as "unexcused" to the parent with a red x. If the parent hovers their cursor over the day on the calendar showing the absence, it will show the specific reason such as MED or PER.

**8. How does InTouch pull and send out the automatic calls regarding attendance?**

- Data is pulled for all schools at 9:50, 10:50 & 2:10 for all students with (UNV) Unverified & UNI (Verification in Progress) absences. The lists are used to generate the InTouch phone calls which start calling at 10:10, 11:10 & 2:30. Schools can choose which time works best for them. To update preferences, contact the ACS department.
- Middle schools have been set-up to pull student's who have 2 UNV/UNI per day. If a building wants to change this so students are pulled with 1 UNV/UNI, contact the ACS department.

**9. Can we send attendance letters electronically?**

- According to [statute](#), notification to parents/guardians regarding attendance concerns must be sent "by first-class mail or other reasonable means." Other reasonable means may be email if that is the known, preferred method of communication by parents.

**10. Can we write a manual 3-unexcused day or 6-unexcused day letter when a student has passed the point that they require the next letter and a report has not been run yet?**

- The [attendance notifications for families](#) on the previous pages guidance outlines best practices for the timelines to communicate attendance concerns. The Synergy reports are automatically run and will both generate the letters and attach the letter record to the student's Attendance Letter history in Synergy. It is important to have a history of the attendance letters in Synergy, therefore manually writing an attendance letter is not allowed.

**11. When the attendance letters are generated for a student, where does this information need to go?**

- A copy of the attendance letter can be seen in two locations in Synergy.
- The letter will automatically attach to the student record in Synergy under Period/Daily Attendance.
- The letter will also automatically attach to the student profile under the category "Attendance Ltr" in the documents tab.
- Physical copies of letters do not need to be retained by the school.

**12. Once attendance letters are sent, should we also be entering this into discipline? Some of the schools do and some don't.**

- No. All truancy reporting comes from the attendance section of Synergy, not discipline. The only time attendance concerns are entered into discipline is when an administrator assigns a consequence or disposition (example - student is tardy for the 3rd time and is assigned detention).
- Referrals to the county for truancy/educational neglect should be noted in the MTSS Activity Tracker and the completed educational neglect report should be scanned into Synergy in the Documents tab. Scanning into Synergy is recommended as best practice.

**13. How should the high schools handle part-time enrollments & students concurrently enrolled at STEP?**

- Attendance is tracked and totaled across enrollments within the district.
- Students who are concurrently enrolled in programs throughout the district will have primary enrollment at their attendance area designated high school.
- For students taking one or more courses at their attendance area designated high school:
  - Attendance letters will be sent and truancy will be filed by the attendance area designated high school.
  - Collaborate and communicate with alternative programs, if needed when filing truancy.
- For students not taking any classes at their attendance area designated high school:
  - Student classes and enrollment can be found under the "classes" and "enrollment information" tabs in Synergy. Enrollment and class information is viewable by all schools and programs where the student is concurrently enrolled.
  - Attendance letters will be sent by the attendance area designated high school for the Teen Parenting Program and AH Online.
  - Truancy will be filed by Compass for Compass Bell Center, Compass Online, and the Teen Parenting Program. Truancy will be filed by STEP for AH Online.

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## Roles &amp; Responsibilities

| Staff Role             | Staff Responsibilities   |
|------------------------|--|
| Assistant Principals   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Receive generated attendance reports from the attendance secretary.</li> <li>❖ Before student reaches 6 days absent and TIPS/Be@School Report is filed, attempt to contact family &amp; meet with the student to problem-solve attendance issues. (Multiple attempts should be made via email, text, phone, and home visit if no success.)</li> <li>❖ Document all contacts with students/families regarding Attendance in the MTSS Activity Tracker the same week that they occur.</li> <li>❖ Attend county meetings and court hearings as indicated.</li> <li>❖ <i>ANOKA</i>: If student/family does not attend TIPS, admin or secretary should contact family and student to share TIPS information before we can file again.</li> <li>❖ Stay in communication with probation officers and/or CPS workers assigned.</li> </ul>   |
| Assigned Support Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Before county report is filed, contact home and meet with student to problem-solve attendance concerns. (Multiple attempts should be made via email, text, phone, and home visit if no success.)</li> <li>❖ Document all contacts with students/families regarding Attendance in the MTSS Activity Tracker the same week that they occur.</li> <li>❖ Support students with significant attendance concerns through <a href="#">MTSS framework using evidence-based interventions</a> (reference next pages).</li> <li>❖ Support students with resources, strategies, and school-based interventions when needed.</li> </ul>   |
| School Nurse           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Document all contacts with students/families regarding Attendance in the MTSS Activity Tracker the same week that they occur.</li> <li>❖ Advise on next steps for students with significant or chronic illness and on which students should have doctor notes required.</li> </ul>  |
| School Social Workers  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Consult with the attendance secretary/administration on filing educational neglect/truancy.</li> <li>❖ Elementary school social workers file educational neglect when needed.</li> <li>❖ File again on students as indicated by county expectations.</li> <li>❖ Consult and/or provide support for any students where a CPS response is indicated.</li> </ul>   |
| Attendance Secretary   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Maintain daily attendance.</li> <li>❖ Receive attendance reports per district protocol and send electronic reports to assigned student support staff, APs and School Nurse.</li> <li>❖ Keep documentation of all steps in the process (<a href="#">template</a>).</li> <li>❖ <i>At elementary</i>- notify the School Social Worker on all students who get the 6 or 7 day letter. <i>At secondary</i>- file on all students where attendance concerns continue after receiving the attendance letter and attempting to engage the family.</li> <li>❖ <i>ANOKA</i>: Give students/families reminders of TIPS meetings as requested by county staff and document the date a student is scheduled and if they attended, rescheduled, or missed.</li> <li>❖ File again on students as indicated by county expectations.</li> <li>❖ Give students/families reminders of court hearings as requested by county staff. Notify APs and Support Staff of these hearings and file a copy of the notice in the student's cumulative file.</li> </ul> |

## School Attendance Best Practices

|                     | Practice  | Responsible   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Tier 1              | Student/family awareness of attendance policy   | Student Handbook<br><a href="#">Support Documents</a>     |
|                     | Automated phone calls   | InTouch   |
|                     | Student/family access to attendance report  | ParentVue, StudentVue                                     |
|                     | Teaching and reinforcing attendance expectations  | Classroom teachers  |
|                     | Student/guardian communication (email, phone, text) and <a href="#">general problem-solving</a> (see Appendix B for example) or the Best Practices website. | Teachers, Secretaries                                     |
| Tier 2<br>(6+ days) | Student/guardian communication (email, phone, text) and advanced assessment/problem-solving to identify root cause of chronic absenteeism                   | Admin, Student Support                                    |
|                     | Reports filed with county   | Attendance Secretary (sec)<br>School Social Worker (elem) |
|                     | Strategic small group (or individual) <a href="#">evidence-based intervention</a> that addresses the root cause of attendance concerns                      | Varies by building and need                               |
| Tier 3              | Intensive individualized <a href="#">evidence-based intervention</a> that addresses the root cause of attendance concerns                                   | Varies by building and need                               |
|                     | Coordination with courts or CPS   | Admin, Student Support                                    |

### Support Documents for Families

- [Attendance Information for Families](#)
- [Illness Information for Families](#)
- [Extended and Excessive Absence Information for Families](#)
- [Attendance Support for Secondary Families](#) (English Only)

The above documents are available in English, Somali, Spanish, Arabic, Hmong, and Russian.

### Considerations for Contacting Home

- Review with the parent/guardian school attendance expectations & state law
- Remind the parent/guardian of their ability to view attendance data through Parent Vue
- Assess [attendance barriers](#) from parent/guardian perspective & provide problem-solving assistance

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- Physical or mental health (refer to school nurse or assigned student support staff)
- A signed [Release of Information](#) is required to communicate with community-based providers.
- Sleep habits and daily routines (refer to assigned student support staff)
- Unmet basic needs (refer to assigned student support staff)
- Explain the next steps the school will be taking
- Request parent/guardian have a conversation with their student

## When Unable to Connect with Parents/Guardians

- Try multiple modes of communication (call, text, email, note home, mail)
  - Once identified, utilize the preferred method of communication consistently
- Try different times of the day and different days of the week
  - Identify the best time to connect & explain the importance of returning school messages
- If there are students in the household attending another school, connect with that school's team
- If still unsuccessful, utilize emergency contacts to inquire about updated contact information
- Consider a home visit or a welfare check if there is no contact for several days

## Evidence-Based Practices for Attendance Intervention

Students who reach 6 or more unexcused absences or have 10 or more overall absences should be assessed for needs by student support staff and considered for more intensive intervention.

1. Identify the likely causes of absenteeism for the student. Use the [Attendance Root Cause](#) worksheet for support.
2. Rule out any medical or physical health concerns preventing consistent attendance. Consult with school nurse or medical providers as-needed. A signed [Release of Information](#) is required for communicating with community-based providers.
  - a. For excessive illness or personal excused absences, send the 10 absences letter and request a meeting with the family to discuss absence concerns and strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers to attendance.
2. Rule out other barriers such as transportation issues, caring for siblings or family members, etc.
3. If mental health concerns are determined to be the root of attendance concerns, a support staff member should use an evidence-based practice that targets the root cause (anxiety, depression, etc.) that they are qualified and trained in to provide tier 2 or tier 3 intervention.
4. Once the above are ruled out or addressed, an evidence-based attendance intervention can be provided by a trained staff member (support staff trained in EBP).
  - a. Check & Connect
  - b. Check In-Check Out

## Frequently Asked Questions on School Attendance Practices

- |   |
|---|
|   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Do we have any district-wide consequence or standard response to 10 tardies?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No; there is no standardized district consequence.</li> <li>● The standard response is to send the 10 tardies letter.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |



**2. What information and action can the school/district take when an open-enrolled or in-district transfer student has attendance concerns?**

- District policy [509 Enrollment Options](#) describes termination of enrollment messages for open-enrolled and in-district transfer students.

**3. What is the guidance for students consistently leaving early for an activity?**

- For students leaving early (up to 60 minutes) regularly (multiple times a week) for an activity
- 60 minutes or more is considered a half day absence
- Up to 60 minutes is considered “out early” or “tardy”
- Consistent parent removals (for this type of activity) would result in a legitimate report of truancy and encourages families to consider homeschool or virtual learning options.

**4. Are we able to file truancy with the county for a student who misses one class period on 7 different days?**

- No, intervention and support for this student should be provided at the building level.
- According to state law (section 260A.02), a secondary student who is absent from three or more class periods on three days within a school year without excuse is considered a “continuing truant.”
- According to state law (section 260C.007), a secondary student who is absent from one or more class periods on seven days within a single school year without excuse is considered a “habitual truant.”
- Based on the inconsistencies of the state definitions, Anoka Hennepin has set thresholds for considering an “unexcused day” as 2 missed periods at the high school level and 3 missed periods at the middle school level.
- Given this threshold, letters will not be generated until a student has met the threshold on 3 different days and then 6 or 7 different days. Truancy cannot be filed until the 3 and 6 or 7 day letters are sent.
- Anoka County high schools can use [this](#) process, when needed, to file truancy for students who miss one class period on 7 different days.

**5. How should I mark attendance for students in the Teen Parenting Program?**

- Students on maternity/parenting leave should be excluded from attendance reporting. Contact your school’s ACS staff. They will add an exclusion for the student who is out on parenting leave.
- Excluding students from attendance reporting will ensure that students do not receive attendance letters or accrue absences while on maternity/parenting leave.
- Students who are concurrently enrolled or not attending Compass full time will need to have the attendance area designated high school complete the exclusion.



## County Attendance Processes & Interventions

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### Anoka County Collaborative Attendance Program

The law presumes that it is a parental responsibility to ensure attendance for children age 11 and younger. State law allows for school districts, county attorneys, and law enforcement to establish programs and coordinate them with other community-based diversion services to provide the necessary and most effective interventions for children and their families. The matter will be referred to Child Protection and/or Criminal and/or Juvenile Court if families do not participate in this program or there are ongoing unexcused absences. The school is required to make initial efforts to remedy attendance issues with the parents and student (phone calls, meeting with parents, letters, etc).

1. The school documents their efforts to resolve the attendance issues with the family. Students must have at least 6 unexcused absences from an academic period (not homeroom, lunch, after school activities). Typically, tardies do not equal truancy unless noted by school or district policy.
2. [Complete the Educational Neglect Diversion referral form \[online form\]](#)
3. The Anoka County social worker will contact the school administrator to arrange a meeting time and will then notify the family of this meeting by mail and or phone.
4. At the meeting, the school administrator and an Anoka County social worker will be present to meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the issues surrounding the child(ren)'s truancy. The group will come to terms on a diversion contract. The parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be informed of the law and the consequences for not keeping their child(ren) in school.
5. The school administrator will continue to monitor the child(ren)'s attendance and provide notice to the Anoka County social worker of any additional absences or concerns.

[Parent Guide to Educational Neglect Diversion](#)

[Overview: Educational Neglect Diversion in Anoka County](#)

### Anoka County Truancy Intervention Program

School attendance is mandatory in the state of Minnesota. It is important for children to acquire the necessary skills to become successful adults. Studies show a link between truancy and criminal activity, which can have a negative ripple effect on a person's future opportunities. By addressing truancy, we can improve the lives of our children and give them a chance to choose a better path.

The Anoka County Attorney's Office Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) is designed to provide children and families with resources and information to address issues underlying truancy. The program utilizes multiple phases with the aim of keeping the child out of the court system. The success of the truancy program relies on collaboration between the County Attorney's Office, school officials, law enforcement, corrections and social services, as well as families. The ultimate goal is to get kids off the streets, out of juvenile court, and back in school. It gives kids a better chance at life and benefits all of us as a community.

1. All truancy referrals must be submitted online via eAttorney: [Link to eAttorney](#) (for schools).
2. When the school reports to the Attorney's Office at six unexcused absences, each truancy referral will be reviewed to determine if a student is eligible for the intervention program. If eligible, the

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Attorney's Office will send a letter to parent(s) inviting them and their student to attend a Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) meeting. At this meeting, an Attorney's Office representative will explain attendance laws and consequences of continued unexcused absences and the benefit of education.

3. If unexcused absences continue after the TIP meeting, the school is required to make a second report to the Attorney's Office. A minimum of nine unexcused absences is required for the student to be referred to Anoka County Juvenile Corrections. Corrections will send a letter to parent(s) notifying that Corrections is now monitoring the student's attendance. If unexcused absences continue, Corrections will send a letter inviting the parent(s) and child to attend a Diversion Hearing. Historically, a probation officer, student, parent(s) and school official attend this hearing. An evaluation is completed, and goals are set to address the unexcused absences. At this time, the student is under a signed contract and the probation officer will have contact with the school to monitor attendance.
4. Juvenile Corrections will refer a student back to the Attorney's Office for petition if unexcused absences continue after the diversion hearing.
5. At this time, the Attorney's Office will file a petition with the courts. The student must have a minimum of 14 unexcused absences to be formally petitioned. Once a student is petitioned, parent(s) will receive a Notice of Hearing notifying of their child's court date.

#### Contacts

- Anoka County Attorney's Office Truancy Program Coordinator: 763-324-5413
- Anoka County Attorney's Office, front desk: 763-324-5550
- Anoka County Juvenile Corrections: 763-324-4810
- Truancy Email: [RS-Atty-Truancy@anokacountymn.gov](mailto:RS-Atty-Truancy@anokacountymn.gov)

[Truancy Intervention Program Anoka County](#)

## Hennepin County Truancy Intervention Program

**Mission:** The Be@School mission is to address barriers to school attendance for Hennepin County's K-12 students and their families through early interventions which are collaborative and family-focused.

**Vision:** We envision improved equity, wellness, and opportunity for all Hennepin County students through improved school attendance and engagement.

**Values:** Education, Equity, Collaboration, Respect, Accountability, Interconnectedness

Our goal is to keep students and families out of child protection and the court system.

Our process balances providing early intervention, allowing time for interventions to take effect, and not allowing students to get too far behind in their education due to unexcused absences.

#### Six Days or Less of Unexcused Absences

- School staff works with families to identify and address barriers to school attendance.
- At three days of unexcused absences, schools must send a letter to families informing them about possible consequences of further unexcused absences including. The letter is required by Minnesota law.

#### Seven Days of Unexcused Absences

- Schools make a report to Be@School. A letter will be sent to the parents/guardians that provides information about education laws, the Be@School program, and resources. The letter also invites parents/guardians and students (12 and older) to view an informational video online. In the letter,

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

there is a unique family code. Parents can use this code to view the informational video and receive credit.

- The video explains the benefits of education, school attendance laws, possible consequences for unexcused absences, and services available to assist families. The informational video is available in English, Spanish and Somali languages. Families can reach out to Be@School if they want additional resources or if they can't access the online video.

### 12 Days of Unexcused Absences

- Schools make a second report to the Be@School program. Be@School social workers review every report. Some families will be invited to a meeting with school staff and a Be@School social worker to discuss goals, strengths, and barriers to school attendance and create an intervention plan to support the student and family. Students ages 12 and older should also attend the meeting.
- Other families will be immediately assigned to a community agency or county service.
- Be@school has a variety of community agencies and county services available to support families ranging from emergency assistance to mental health to tutoring. We do have bilingual staff available to work with families who speak languages other than English. We try to match families with a culturally specific provider when possible.
- All services are voluntary. The goal of the Be@School is to provide students and families with the resources they need to address barriers to school attendance and keep families out of child protection or the court system.

### 17 Days of Unexcused Absences

- Schools make a third report to the Be@School program. Be@School social workers review every report.
- Students and families who are engaged in voluntary services will continue with those services.
- If the family has declined services or we have been unable to reach the family, the report will be sent to child protection if:
  - The student is under the age of 12, or
  - The student is not enrolled in school, regardless of age.

Please contact Be@School for any questions or resources.

Email: [be.at.school@hennepin.us](mailto:be.at.school@hennepin.us)

Phone: 612-348-6041

Website: <https://www.hennepinattorney.org/prevention/students-youth/be-at-school>

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

**Be@School Reporting Process****Hennepin County's Truancy Intervention Program**

| <b>Unexcused Absences</b>                    | <b>School</b>   | <b>Be@School</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| 0 – 6 Days<br><br>Recommended best practices | School contacts family and problem solves for any student learning needs and barriers to attendance.<br><br>Resources are provided to the family, attendance interventions implemented and ongoing communication with the family occurs.<br><br>* School must mail 3-day attendance letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) | Be@School social workers available for case consultation.<br><br>Students with multiple years of referrals to Be@School are contacted for a voluntary fall meeting.   |
| 7 Days                                       | <b>Report #1:</b><br>School sends initial report to Be@School.<br><br>School staff continue to engage students and family.  | Be@School sends intervention letter inviting parent(s)/guardian(s) and student (12 and older) to view an online informational video.<br><br>The letter provides information about education law and Be@School, as well as resources.  |
| 12 Days                                      | <b>Report #2:</b><br>School sends report 2 to Be@School, which includes additional information about the student, known or suspected barriers, and attendance interventions.<br><br>School staff continue to engage students and family.  | Be@School social worker reviews the case.<br><br>Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting to discuss attendance barriers and create a voluntary intervention plan.<br><br>If the student already receives other county services, the case will be redirected to the open Hennepin County program.<br><br>Student and family may be referred to a contracted community agency or county services. |
| 17 Days                                      | <b>Report #3:</b><br>School sends report 3 to Be@School to update attendance, contact information, or any additional concerns.<br><br>School staff continue to engage students and family.  | Be@School social worker reviews the case for updates.<br><br>Students with ongoing services continue to work with county provider or community agency.<br><br>Students 5-11 who have not responded to outreach or declined voluntary services are sent to Child Protection intake.  |

[be.at.school@hennepin.us](mailto:be.at.school@hennepin.us) | Phone (612) 348-6041 | [www.be-at-school.org](http://www.be-at-school.org)

Schools submit all reports through Be@School information link (BASIL) website.

## Frequently Asked Questions on Educational Neglect & Truancy

| <b>Educational Neglect &amp; Truancy</b>   |
|--|
| <p><b>1. Why is there so much confusion about truancy reporting and what are we doing about it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State statutes do not align:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing Truant = 3 or more periods on 3 or more days (9 missed periods).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ District must communicate attendance concerns with parent/guardian following continuing truant notification statute.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Habitual Truant = 1 or more periods on 7 or more days (7 missed periods)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ District must report students with 6 or more unexcused absences in Anoka County and 7 or more unexcused absences in Hennepin County to the county authority.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Counties require the continuing truant notification to parents/guardians in order to accept an educational neglect/truancy referral. The way these statutes read, a student could be considered habitual truant BEFORE continuing truant for many reasons (part-time student, all day absences, etc.)</li> <li>● To meet county requirements for reporting, our Synergy system has been set-up to trigger the 3 unexcused days letter when a student has accumulated 2 or 3 or more missed periods on 3 days.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ By using this threshold, we are ensuring that absences meet the state statute should the school later file concerns of educational neglect or truancy with the county authority.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>6. What do we do with reports of educational neglect?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Compulsory attendance concerns for students ages 11 and younger may result in school staff filing educational neglect reports with the county.</li> <li>● These reports to the county require the school to include written notices sent to the parent/guardian regarding the student's attendance concern. The inclusion of the 3 unexcused days or 6 unexcused days letter into the report is an acceptable practice.</li> <li>● Documentation of the referral should be noted in the MTSS Activity Tracker and the completed educational neglect report should be scanned into Synergy in the student's Documents tab under the category "Attendance". Scanning into Synergy is recommended as best practice.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>3. What do we do with reports of truancy?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Compulsory attendance concerns for students ages 12 and older may result in school staff filing truancy reports with the county.</li> <li>● These reports to the county require the school to include written notices sent to the parent/guardian regarding the student's attendance concern. The inclusion of the 3 unexcused days or 6 unexcused days letter into the report is an acceptable practice.</li> <li>● Documentation of the referral should be noted in the MTSS Activity Tracker and the completed educational neglect report should be scanned into Synergy in the student's Documents tab under the category "Attendance". Scanning into Synergy is recommended as best practice.</li> </ul> <p>Hennepin County's Be@School Program: When filing a truancy report using the BASIL system, users will be prompted to provide information on the school's "ratio." Select 0 or 1 for the field. Then edit this required note for comments referencing the student's attendance record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anoka-Hennepin has established the ratio of 1 unexcused period per day equals 1 unexcused day. This ratio is applicable to all dates referenced in this report with the expectation of the following dates in which the student was unexcused for 1 or more periods on the indicated date: xx/xx/xx, xx/xx/xx, xx/xx/xx, etc.</li> </ul>   |

**4. Might the county require a copy of the attendance letters that were sent on behalf of a student when we file an attendance concern?**

- Yes, this may be a requirement of the county. Some counties require the dates of contact with the family. Reporting expectations vary across jurisdictions.

**5. What expectations do we have from the district and the county regarding 15 day drops?**

- MARSS state reporting requires the district to end all enrollments, for any reason (including illness, travel, and hospitalizations), when a student is absent for 15 consecutive days.
  - If the school has not received an enrollment request from another school/district, the counties require that a referral be made to the county. In instances of referring to the county when a student is unenrolled following a 15 day drop, the required 3 unexcused day and 6 unexcused day letters are not required for reporting the concern.
- Send the [15 Day Drop Notification](#) letter to the family.
- Refer to the [15 Day Drop Guidance](#).
- It is the school's responsibility to continue to reach out to the student and/or family to determine if the student has enrolled in another school or if they need to be enrolled again in the school that they were attending prior to being withdrawn.

**6. What are the district and county expectations when a student does not show up for their anticipated enrollment or leaves the district but no enrollment transfer requests are received?**

- If an enrolled student doesn't show up, they must be dropped after 15 school days.
- Send the [15 Day Drop Notification](#) letter to the family.
- Report concern to the county.
  - Hennepin County prefers that 15 day drops be reported to Be@School instead of Child Protection.
- Recommended best practice, reach out to the prior district to see if there has been a change of plans regarding the student enrollment. Notify the previous district the student has not attended.

**7. What do we do when a family is going to be gone for a month? I.e. Out-of-country or out-of-state etc.**

- If the student reaches the 15 consecutive days absent benchmark, then the enrollment must be ended. If the 15 days are at the beginning of the school year, and the student has not been in school at all yet that year, then the enrollment record needs to be documented as "no showed."

# McKinney-Vento & Foster Care Considerations

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## Transportation

The Anoka-Hennepin HOPE Office often utilizes Type III transportation (i.e. cabs and vans) for students identified as McKinney-Vento or ESSA foster care. If this district transportation is not set-up for a student and the student is not in school because they are awaiting their district transportation, the appropriate attendance code would be PER (Personal: Personal or family excuse). This type of absence is excused. The building may find it helpful to note on these days that the reason is due to district transportation not being available to the family yet. These days should NOT be included in a 10 day absence total when considering a 10 day letter.

This delay in transportation may happen each time a student/family moves. Each time it is excused until district transportation starts. If the family can transport the student in the meantime, they will.

Type III transportation can also have more late arrivals due to weather, driver shortages, long commutes, etc. If a student arrives late on a type III vehicle, it is excused, similarly to if a bus were to arrive late. However, please notify the Homeless Education Lead for the building/program if this is a repeated occurrence.

## Attendance

If a student identified as McKinney-Vento or ESSA Foster Care is unverified for two or more days in a row, notify the Homeless Education Lead for the building/program who can check in with the family to see if they have moved, have a transportation or communication barrier, etc.

McKinney Vento identified students should not be dropped after 15 days of absence if the barrier to attending is housing related (i.e. transportation, moving). Please consult with Heidi Geiss before dropping any McKinney Vento qualified students.

The federal McKinney Vento Law supersedes the county law in these situations:

The McKinney-Vento Act requires LEAs to review and revise policies that act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless children and youth, including barriers caused by absences. 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(I). Therefore, if students miss school due to their homelessness, it should not count toward the 15 days. The key really is to intervene immediately, when the student is absent just for one or two days, to find out why and to provide support and mentorship. In addition, if informing the parents of an unaccompanied youth would create a barrier to retention or re-enrollment, the school should not inform the parent.

## Unaccompanied Youth

Unaccompanied youth under 18 years:

- If a Responsibility Agreement is on file, Responsible Adult can authorize absences and early check-outs during the school day.
- Student is able to authorize an early check-out during the school day through a designated school staff.
- Student is able to authorize an excused absence through a designated school staff.
- If no Responsible Adult is identified, parent communications regarding attendance are routed to the student.

Students 18-years and older or emancipated under 18-years:

- Student is able to authorize an early check-out during the school day. No additional form or self-permission contract is required for this.
- Student is able to authorize an excused absence.

## Notify the Homeless Education Lead

Notify the Homeless Education Lead for the student's building/program if a student identified as McKinney-Vento or ESSA Foster Care:

- Is late to school 2 or more times in a row or 3 or more times overall
- Is UNV (unverified) 2 or more days in a row
- Reports a change in location where they are staying
- Is approaching a 6 day letter, 10 day letter, or 15 day drop

## HOPE Office Contact Information

If your Homeless Education Lead is unavailable for an urgent question about a McKinney-Vento situation, please contact the HOPE Office directly.

Anoka-Hennepin Homeless Liaison: Heidi Geiss at 763-433-4685

HOPE Office Social Worker: 763-433-4686

HOPE Office Secretary: 763-433-4692

McKinney-Vento Transportation Coordinator: Allison Eilers at 763-506-1141

## ESSA Foster Care Contact Information

If your Homeless Education Lead is unavailable for an urgent question about an ESSA foster care situation, please contact: Heidi Geiss at 763-433-4685

Anoka-Hennepin ESSA Foster Care Point-of-Contact: Heidi Geiss at 763-433-4685

HOPE Office Social Worker: 763-433-4686

HOPE Office Secretary: 763-433-4692

McKinney-Vento Transportation Coordinator: Allison Eilers at 763-506-1141



## Appendix A - Considerations to Reduce Barriers

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Every contact home:</b>                         | <p><b>1. What is your preferred way of being contacted?</b> (student - email or Google Classroom; parent/guardian - call, email, or text)</p> <p><b>2. What is the best time to contact you?</b><br/>Explain the importance of returning messages.</p>   |
| <b>Consider:</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Did the teacher reach out using multiple modes of communication?</li> <li>● If needed, admin/support staff will utilize emergency contacts to reach the family</li> <li>● Language barriers and supporting EL families with resources from the Family Welcome Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using the Language Line or translating text/email in families preferred language.</li> <li>○ Offering families an alternative way to communicate absences</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Who has the strongest relationship with the family (Special Education Case Manager, PE teacher, Paraprofessional) as the secretary or health office staff may not be the best point of contact for the family.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Talk with the student:</b>                      | <p><b>Does the student/family know how to access student/parentvue for grades/missing work?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Checking grades through the lock/key</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">StudentVue</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">ParentVue -How to slideshow</a></li> <li>● It is easiest to use the ParentVue app because it can retain the login info: there are links to both iOS and Android in the presentations linked above.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Family needs childcare</b>                      | <p>If students are being kept home or not attending online because they are provided care to other children, discuss alternative options and help connect to resources.</p>  |
| <b>Other unmet basic needs</b>                     | <p>Provide resources. Consult the school social worker.</p>  |
| <b>Student emotional or mental health concerns</b> | <p><b>If crisis, follow district protocol.</b><br/>Provide resources. Refer to support staff for increased emotional support. Consider referral to SBMH therapist if openings.</p>   |

## Appendix B - 509 Enrollment Options

### 509.0 ENROLLMENT OPTIONS POLICY

#### **Attendance Area Enrollment Options**

Students are automatically enrolled in the school that is designated for the attendance area where his/her parent or legal guardian resides. The District of Residence for students of parents who are divorced, legally separated or residing separately, who have joint physical custody, is designated by the students' parents. Students who reside within the boundaries of AnokaHennepin Independent School District No. 11 will be permitted to attend the schools of said district tuition free.

A student is considered a legal resident if they:

- are receiving their personal care, supervision and nurturing, emotional and financial support, such as is usually provided in a home, rather than for educational purposes.
- reside within the legal boundaries of the school district.
- are from age five on or before September 1 through completion of high school, but not beyond the twenty-first birthday except for students with disabilities.
- are from birth through completion of high school, but not beyond September 1 after the twenty-second birthday for students with disabilities.

If the residence of the parent or legal guardian changes from one District 11 attendance area to another during the school year, the student may remain enrolled in the same school until completion of the current school year. They are not eligible to return for the following school year.

**High School.** If the change in residence occurs after the student has completed the 10th grade year, the student may continue enrollment in the same school under Continued Enrollment of 11th and 12th Grade Students enrollment options (M.S. 124D.08, Subd 3).

**Middle School.** If the change in residence occurs after the student has completed the 7th grade year, the student may continue enrollment in the same school for completion of grade 8. They must attend the boundary assigned high school.

**Elementary School.** If the change in residence occurs after two consecutive years at the school and the student has remained with the same daycare provider while at that school, the student will be allowed to remain in that school until fifth grade.

If the attendance area is changed due to the boundary change process, exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the School Board.

At any point where the residence area and assigned boundary area do not match, transportation of the student becomes the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or student. If space is available on a bus traveling to the school, the student may be picked up at a scheduled stop and ride this bus to the school, with corresponding transportation fees in effect.

A full-time employee who is a resident of the District may elect to have his/her children attend the school where they are assigned, coach or advise co-curricular activities.

When new residential building plats are approved by a city in the attendance area of a school that is currently at or near capacity, the Superintendent may recommend to the School Board a 509.0 2 change in the attendance area boundary for all or part of the plat to that of an attendance area of a school that can accommodate an increased enrollment. The School Board may adopt the new attendance boundary

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

without conducting a boundary change process. Students living in existing residences in the newly platted area will be allowed to complete their experience at that school and will not be required to change schools.

### Exceptions - Student Transfer Request

A student may be eligible to transfer from his/her attendance area to a school in another attendance area if it is the judgment of the Superintendent that the welfare of the student may be better served. Transfer is to be made only by completion of a formal application to the Principal of the school within the boundary area whose school a student is scheduled to attend. The two principals involved shall review the application to determine if the transfer is in the best educational interest of the student.

One of the following conditions must be met:

1. Attendance at a particular school may cause health problems for the student (mental or physical). A physician's statement regarding such problems shall accompany the request for transfer.

2. The student has educational needs which will not be met at a particular school. These needs should be identified, documented and an explanation made as to how the transfer will aid the student adjustment.

The following conditions must be met before a transfer may be considered:

1. Transportation of the student shall be the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or student. If space is available on a bus traveling to the school, the student may be picked up at a scheduled stop and ride this bus to the school, with corresponding transportation fees in effect.

2. Students will be allowed to transfer to another school only if space is available.

3. Students who transfer between schools shall meet the requirements of the Minnesota State High School League transfer rules.

### Open Enrollment Options

Open Enrollment Defined: All Non-resident Kindergarten through twelfth grade students and Pre K students with disabilities (ECSE) may apply to attend an Anoka-Hennepin school (MS 124D.03).

Non-Resident Agreement Defined

- Agreement Between School Boards. MS 124D.08, Subd 1-2. School district may waive the open enrollment timelines and accept non-resident students for enrollment on a one year basis.
- Continued Enrollment of 11th and 12 Grade Students. MS 124D.08, Subd 3. Students who have completed grade 10 in Anoka-Hennepin may be accepted for continuation of grades 11 and 12.
- High School Graduation Incentives. MS 124D.68. Non-resident students enrolling in a State approved Alternative Learning Center. 509.0 3

## I. PURPOSE

The school district desires to participate in the Enrollment Options Program established by Minn. Stat 124D.03. It is the purpose of this policy to set forth the application and exclusion procedures used by the school district in making said determination.

## II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Eligibility. Applications for enrollment under the Enrollment Options (Open Enrollment) Law will be approved provided that acceptance of the application will not exceed the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school building as established by school board resolution and provided that:

1. space is available for the applicant under enrollment cap standards established by school board policy or other directive; and

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

2. in considering the capacity of a grade level, the school district may only limit the enrollment of nonresident students to a number not less than the lesser of: (a) one percent of the total enrollment at each grade level in the school district; or (b) the number of school district resident students at that grade level enrolled in a nonresident school district in accordance with Minn. Stat. 124D.03.

3. the applicant is not otherwise excluded by action of the school district because of previous conduct in another school district.

**B. Application.** The student and parent or guardian must complete and submit an Application for Enrollment School District Enrollment Options Program developed by the Minnesota Department of Education.

1. The application window is December 1, to January 15, for enrollment the following school year. Applications must be postmarked by midnight January 15, to be eligible for consideration.

2. Assignments to schools will be made by February 15 and resident school districts will be notified by March 15.

3. Parents/guardians must confirm the intent to enroll by March 1. This obligates the student to attend the new school for one year. Once enrolled, the pupil may remain enrolled in the district and is not required to submit annual or periodic applications.

**C. Approval/Disapproval**

1. When the maximum number of applications exceeds the established maximum, approvals will be approved by random lot.

**D. Standards that may not be used for rejection of application.** The school district may not use the following standards in determining whether to accept or reject an Application for open enrollment:

1. previous academic achievement of a student;
2. athletic or extracurricular ability of a student;
3. disabling conditions of a student;
4. a student's proficiency in the English language;
5. the student's district of residence; or
6. previous disciplinary proceedings involving the student.

This shall not preclude the school district from proceeding with exclusion as set out in Section F of this policy.

**E. Standards that may be used for rejection of application: 509.0 4**

1. In addition to the provisions of Paragraph IIA, the school district may refuse to allow a pupil who is expelled under Section 121A.45 to enroll during the term of the expulsion if the student was expelled for:

- a. possessing a dangerous weapon, including a weapon, device, instruments, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, at school or a school function;
- b. possessing or using an illegal drug at school or a school function;
- c. or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function; or
- d. committing a third-degree assault involving assaulting another and inflicting substantial bodily harm.

2. Administrator's initial determination. If a school district administrator knows or has Could subject the applicant to expulsion or exclusion under law or school district policy, the administrator will transmit the application to the superintendent or their designee with a recommendation of whether exclusion proceedings should be initiated.

3. Superintendent's review. The superintendent or their designee may make further inquiries. If the superintendent determines that the applicant should be admitted, he or she will notify the applicant. If the superintendent determines that the applicant should be excluded, the superintendent will notify the

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

applicant and determine whether the applicant wishes to continue the application process. Although an application may not be rejected based on previous disciplinary proceedings, the school district reserves the right to initiate exclusion procedures pursuant to the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act as warranted on a case-by-case basis.

#### F. Termination of Enrollment

1. The school district may terminate the enrollment of a nonresident student enrolled under an enrollment options program pursuant to Minn. Stat. 124D.03 or 124D.08 at the end of a school year if the student meets the definition of a habitual truant, the student has been provided appropriate services for truancy under Minn. Ch. 260A, and the student's case has been referred to juvenile court. A "habitual truant" is a child under 16 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school or high school, or a child who is 16 or 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. 120A.22, Subd. 8.

2. The school district may also terminate the enrollment of a nonresident student over 16 years of age if the student is absent without lawful excuse for one or more periods on 15 school days and has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. 120A.22, Subd. 8. 509.0 5

#### **In-District Transfer Enrollment Options**

In-District Transfer Defined Enrollment for a student who is a legal resident of the Anoka-Hennepin School District in a school building other than the building assigned by district attendance boundaries.

I. PURPOSE The school district desires to provide In-District Transfer enrollment options. It is the purpose of this policy to set forth the application and exclusion procedures used by the school district in making said determination.

#### II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Eligibility. Applications for enrollment under the In-District Transfer option will be approved provided that acceptance of the application will not exceed the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school building as established by school board resolution and provided that:

1. space is available for the applicant under enrollment cap standards established by school board policy or other directive; and
2. the applicant is not otherwise excluded by action of the school district because of previous conduct in another school in the district.

B. Application. The student and parent or guardian must complete and submit an Application for In-District Transfer.

1. The application window is December 1, to January 15, for enrollment the following for consideration.
2. Assignments to schools will be made by February 15 and schools will be notified by March 15.
3. Parents/guardians must confirm the intent to enroll by March 1. This obligates the student to attend the new school for one year.

C. Approval/Disapproval

1. When the maximum number of applications exceeds the established maximum, approvals will be made by random lot.

D. Standards that may not be used for rejection of application. The school district may not use the following standards in determining whether to accept or reject an Application for open enrollment:

1. previous academic achievement of a student;
2. athletic or extracurricular ability of a student;
3. disabling conditions of a student;
4. a student's proficiency in the English language;

## Anoka-Hennepin School District Attendance Handbook

## E. Standards that may be used for rejection of application:

1. In addition to the provisions of Paragraph IIA, the school district may refuse to allow a pupil who is expelled under Section 121A.45 to enroll during the term of the expulsion if the student was expelled for:

- a. possessing a dangerous weapon, including a weapon, device, instruments, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, at school or a school function;
- b. possessing or using an illegal drug at school or a school function; 509.0 6
- c. or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function; or
- d. committing a third-degree assault involving assaulting another and inflicting substantial bodily harm. e. student's discipline history.

## F. Termination of Enrollment

1. The school district may require the In-District Transfer student to return to their attendance area assigned school at the end of the school year if the student meets the definition of a habitual truant, the student has been provided appropriate services for truancy under Minn. Ch. 260A, and the student's case has been referred to juvenile court. A "habitual truant" is a child under 16 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school or high school, or a child who is 16 or 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. 120A.22, Subd. 8.

2. The school district may also terminate the In-District Transfer enrollment of a student over 16 years of age if the student is absent without lawful excuse for one or more periods on 15 school days and has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. 120A.22 , Subd. 8.



# Attendance Project

# Columbia Heights Public Schools

Bondo Nyembwe, Assistant Superintendent

December 2, 2024

Creating College and Career-Ready Graduates

## OUR MISSION

Columbia Heights Public Schools

Creating worlds of opportunity for each and every learner.

*"All Belong, All Succeed"*



## OUR MISSION

Columbia Heights Public Schools

Creating worlds of opportunity for each and every learner

*"All Belong, All Succeed"*



## CORE VALUES

### Community

*Where we all belong  
and believe in ourselves  
and each other*



### Excellence

*Being our best,  
expecting our best,  
every day*



### Collaboration

*Working together  
for common goals*



### Integrity

*Doing what is right,  
even when no one  
is watching*



### Respect

*Celebrating who we are,  
honoring our differences,  
treating others well*



### Courage

*Facing challenges with  
hope and persistence*



### Innovation

*Finding new ways  
to excel and grow*

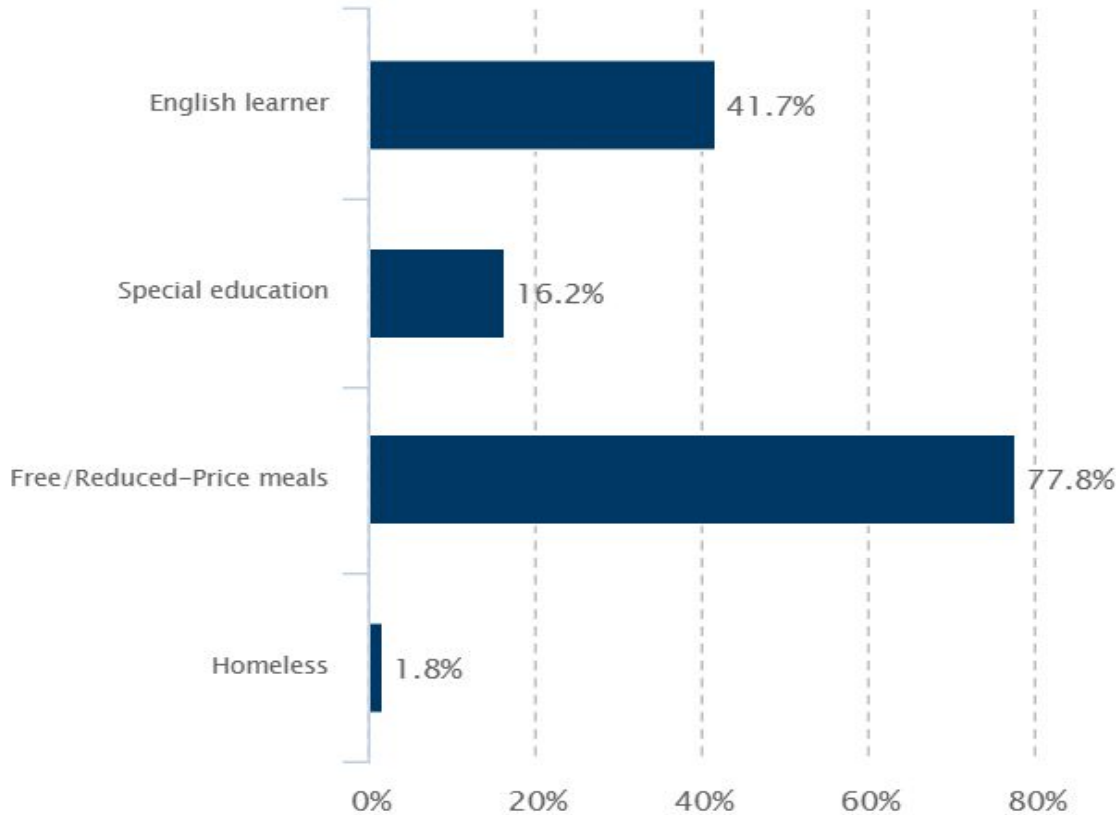


The CHPS Core Values are aligned with the CHPS Board of Education Equity Statement.

### OUR MISSION

Columbia Heights Public Schools  
Creating worlds of opportunity for each and every learner  
"All Belong, All Succeed"

# Enrollment



American Indian **2%**

Asian **3%**

African American **27.3%**

Hispanic **48.1%**

White **14.6%**

Two or more races **5.1%**

# Attendance GOAL

To increase the percentage of students who are consistently attending school from 68% in 2024 to 80% in 2026 district wide.

# 5 Strategies

## **Strategy #1**

Increase communication about attendance using various platforms.

## **Strategy #2**

Establish an attendance team (AT) at each school site

## **Strategy #3**

Increase sense of belonging for students to prevent chronic absenteeism

## **Strategy #4**

Implement Nudge Letters

## **Strategy #5**

Establish a 6:00 am health line for parents or guardians to call and talk to a medical professional.

# Strategy #1 Progress

**Increase communication about attendance using various platforms.**

- Send text using TalkingPoints
- Post “Attendance Matters” on every school marquee
- Use School events to remind students about attendance
- Send written communication weekly

- Create Attendance Matters videos in three languages for parents
- Create information sheets posted in key locations (English/Spanish)
- Create Attendance Matters videos in three languages for parents
- Send ALL calls three times per month

# Strategy #2 Progress

**Establish an attendance team (AT) at each school site**

- Identify students with chronic and consistent absences
- Identify reasons why students are consistently absent
- Create strategies for supporting students
- Complete weekly phone calls for absent students
- At the end of the quarter send an Attendance Postcard

**100% of the schools have completed this strategy**

# Aviso de asistencia para su estudiante de CHPS

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 Columbia Heights, MN 55421  
 1440 49th Ave. NE  
 Independent School District 13

| If your child misses... | That equals...    | Which is...       | And over 13 years of schooling... |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 day every 2 weeks     | 20 days per year  | 4 weeks per year  | Almost 1.5 years                  |
| 1 day per week          | 40 days per year  | 8 weeks per year  | Over 2.5 years                    |
| 2 days per week         | 80 days per year  | 16 weeks per year | Over 5 years                      |
| 3 days per week         | 120 days per year | 24 weeks per year | Almost 8 years                    |

To the Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_

You are being notified that your child has missed school without a valid, legally justifiable excuse throughout this school year. Columbia Heights Public School knows that showing up on time, every day leads to student success. CHPS staff members want to see your child here at school each day, learning alongside their peers.

|                 |                             |                      |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>ABSENCES</b> | <b>Total Unexcused Days</b> | <input type="text"/> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|

Attendance Line Number: \_\_\_\_\_



# Strategy #3 Progress

**Increase sense of belonging for students to prevent chronic absenteeism**

- Identify students with poor attendance, behavioral issues and low grades
- Assign a mentor to build strong relationships (Take Five Initiative)
- Monitor student performance across attendance, behavior and academics
- Provide personalized and timely interventions and build skills in specific areas

100% of Licensed staff have been assigned 5 students to support.

Non licensed staff have been assigned 3 students to support.



# Strategy #4 Progress

## Implement Nudge Letters

- Engaging parents or guardians in their child's school attendance
- Reducing student absenteeism by providing actionable insights and encouragement through letters
- Sending letters home starting in the second quarter

Not yet implemented

# Strategy #5 Progress

**Establish a 6:00 am health line for parents or guardians to call and talk to a medical professional.**

- Identify a qualified person
- Create a magnet and distribute to families
- Post information on CHPS attendance website
- Provide magnet or other information to teachers (facilitate communication with parents)

A licensed Registered Nurse has been identified

Magnets is under development

# Allocation of funds

- Hiring of Promise fellows (4)
- Home visit stipends for Home School Liaisons
- Training for Home School Liaisons
- Purchase of TalkingPoints for secondary schools
- Contracting Registered Nurse
- Production of postcard
- Printing of Marketing materials
- Postage

# Impact on attendance

1. School staff attendance communication has improved
2. Parents awareness of attendance expectations has improved
3. Students referred for truancy have decreased in quarter 1
4. Students referred for truancy have received services
5. Staff involvement to support attendance initiatives has increased

| Educational Neglect filed in Q1 | Truancy filed in Q1 | Total |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| 4                               | 26                  | 30    |

# Red Lake School District Attendance Pilot Program Presentation

Presented by: Dr. Delana Smith, Red Lake Secondary  
Complex Principal



# Introduction

The Red Lake School District is located on the Red Lake Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota.

We are also located in Beltrami County.

We are unique because we are a Sovereign Tribal Nation.

We are a closed reservation which means we own the land in common. We are not a checkerboard reservation like most reservations throughout Minnesota and the country.





# Tribal vs. County

**Most of our work collaborates with the tribe vs. the county.**

**We work closely with the tribal council and tribal programs within the reservation.**

**Some of the programs we work with:**

|                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Red Lake Tribal Council      | Red Lake Tribal Courts    |
| Chemical Health              | Truancy Court             |
| Comprehensive Health         | Healing to Wellness Court |
| Family and Children Services |                           |
| Red Lake Youth Shelter       |                           |
| Group Home                   |                           |
| Oshkimajitahdah              |                           |

# Goals and Strategies for Funding

Red Lake School District plans to utilize the Attendance Pilot funding in the following way (draft):

## Home School Liaison

Use for .5 for a home school liaison and supplement with .5 from American Indian Education.

Attendance and truancy training for home school liaisons in the district.

## Universal Process for District

Develop a process so everyone across the district will be reporting and managing attendance the same way.

## Surveys

Create a survey with approximately 5 questions which may include:

Why did they choose to leave school?

What are ideas to assist us with skipping?

Teen Parents: How do we better assist them to progress to graduation?

## Tribal Court and Community

Work with AIPAC to develop a truancy prevention program with their input.

We have weekly meetings with Tribal Court.

## Inventory

Take inventory and assess the programs we have within the district and how we can integrate them into a better working system.

We have the diversion program, weekly meeting with tribal court, RLES attendance program, Beltrami Area Service Collaborative attendance incentive program, Thrill share app for parent communication, PBIS, MN MTSS cohort, and peer leaders.

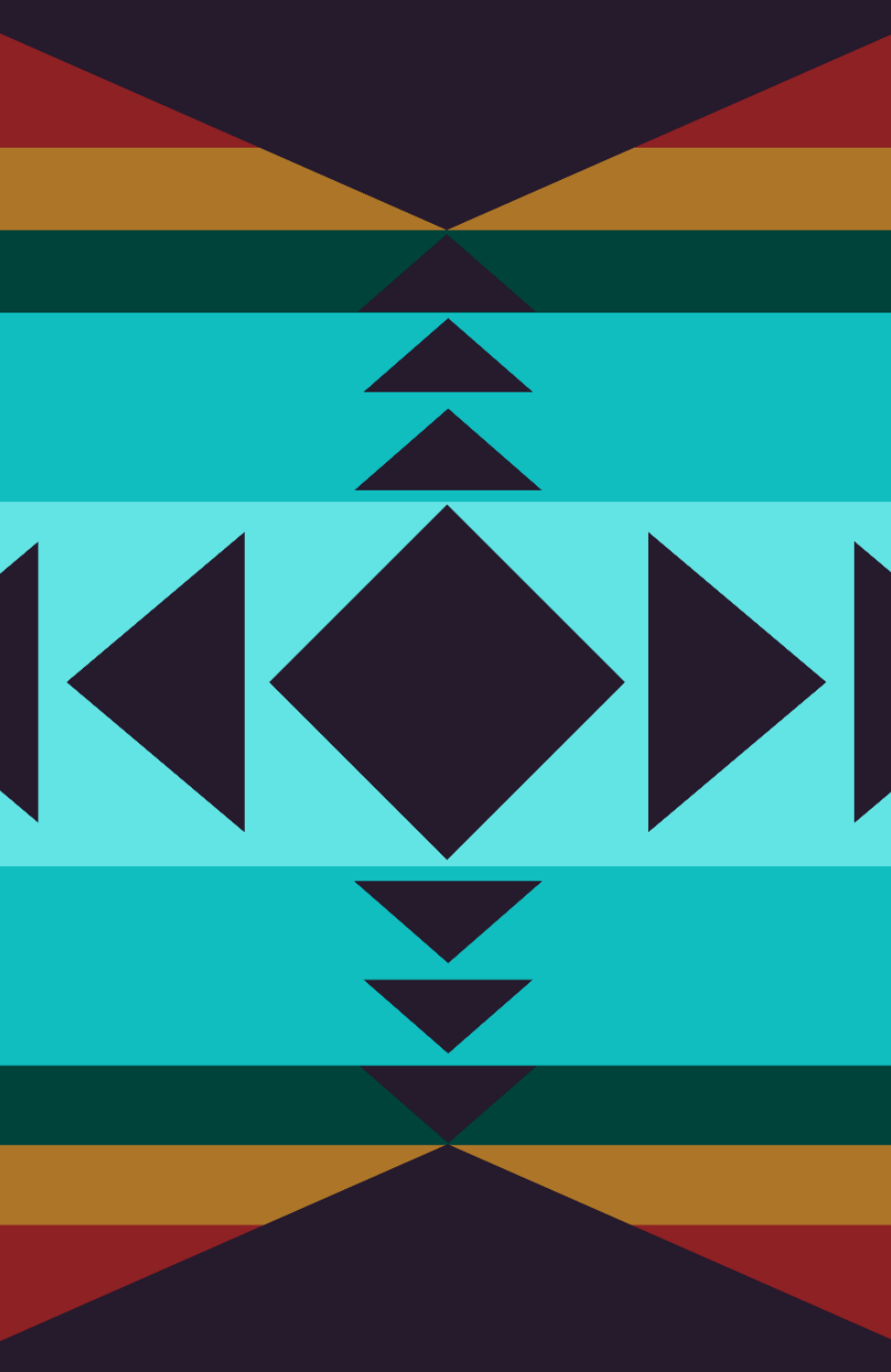
## Charter School

Meet with leaders from the charter school to discuss their attendance needs and set parameters around the grant.

Serve as the fiscal host.







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**Miigwech  
Thank You**

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# Sauk Rapids-Rice

Karrie Boser  
Director of Teaching and Learning



Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools

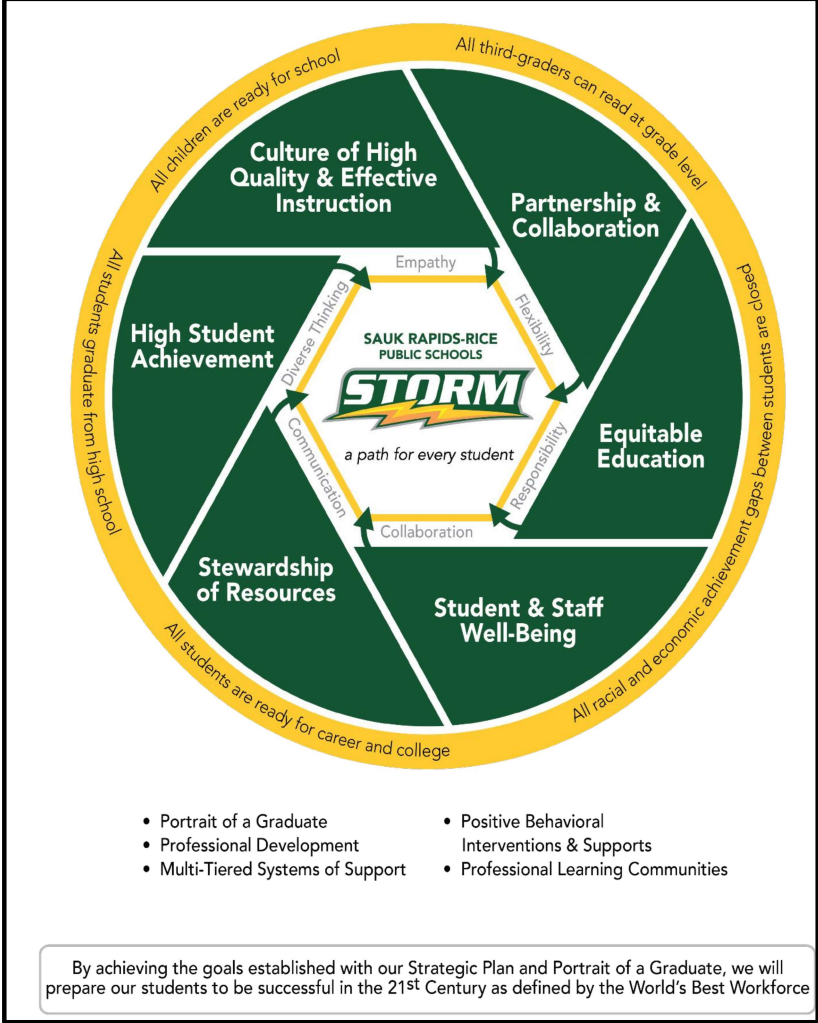
*A path for every student*

# Sauk Rapids-Rice (SRR) Strategic Plan

## Improving Attendance Pilot Project

### Goal:

By June 2027, Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools will achieve a consistent district wide attendance rate of 90% or greater.






## SRR Why...

“Parents, schools, and communities must work together to ensure that students understand the importance of making every school day counts. The earlier that absences are identified and addressed, the more successful students will become.”

– Carey M. Wright, EdD. State Superintendent of Education for Mississippi






# Sauk Rapids-Rice Strategies Overview

-  Address the inconsistent coding throughout our district
-  Provide training for social workers and counselors to lead a multi-tiered system of support in the area of attendance
-  Advocate for recognizing the value and cultural/lived experiences of students and the impact on attendance



# Sauk Rapids-Rice Strategies Overview

-  Research barriers and develop a plan to address system wide and individual transportation needs
-  Develop and train building attendance teams (1 EC, 3 Elementary, 1 MS, 1 HS)
-  Research and engage community partners including cultural liaisons, school-linked mental health, and local and county resources





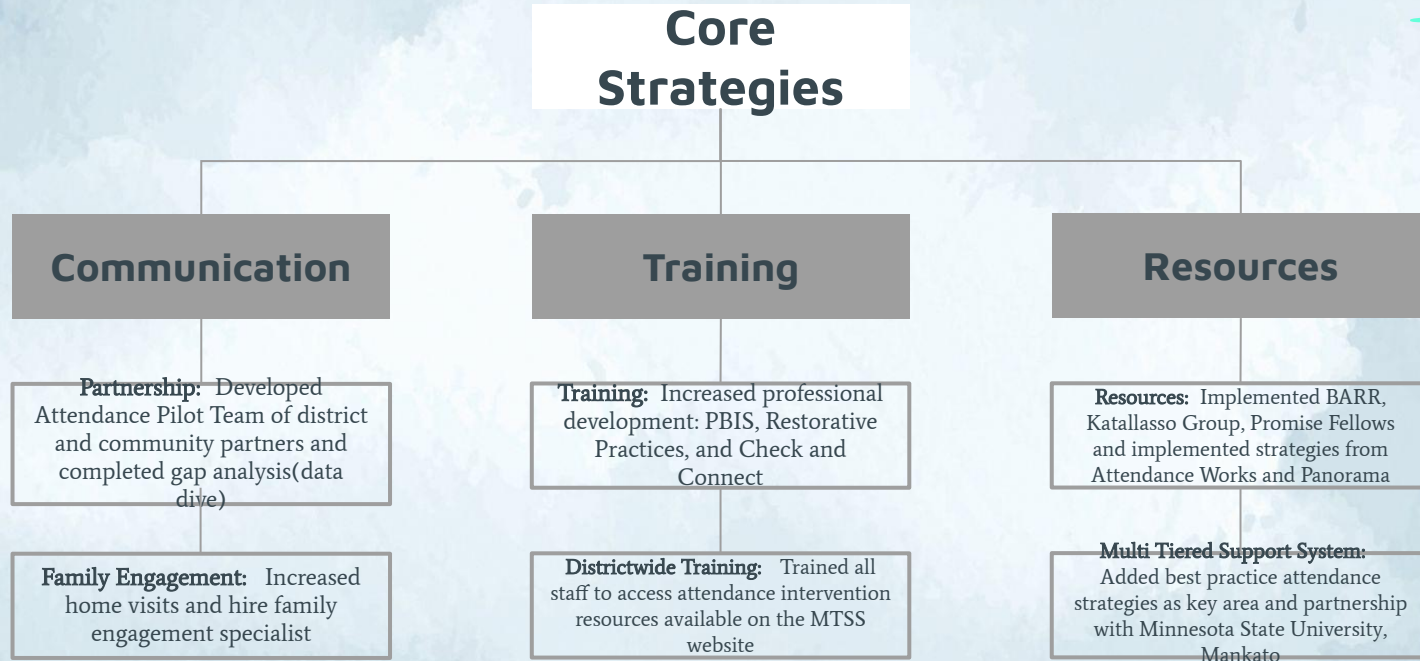
# Attendance Pilot



A New Journey  
July 1, 2024



# Goal: Achieve district wide consistent attendance rate of 90% for all student groups



# Gap Analysis and Addressing Barriers

| Organization/<br>Reason | Parent Issue/<br>Home Barriers   | Physical Health/ Doctor's<br>Appts   | Chronic Skipping- In<br>school, but not class   | Motivation   | Mental Health   |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| <b>MAPS</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building level attendance teams</li> <li>• Building teams adhering to policies and communication related to attendance issues</li> <li>• Various forms of communication utilized to prevent and respond to attendance concerns</li> <li>• Home visits by student support staff</li> <li>• County/District partnership and increased referrals (TIP/SART)</li> <li>• School Social worker supports: Individualized for families</li> <li>• Following attendance responses with fidelity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required medical verification</li> <li>• Partnering with our school nurses and development of effective health plans</li> <li>• Accommodations offered to students who have medical conditions that may impact participation at the classroom level. (Class pass, access to private bathrooms, etc.)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff contact to encourage students to go into class</li> <li>• Success Coaches or admin team walking students to class, going through bathrooms, being in hallways</li> <li>• Staff visibility</li> <li>• Consequences connected to extracurricular participation (no pass list, behavior referrals,</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HS level- students are tired, burned out, recently attended therapy, avoid because they think they are doing okay in a class               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Proactively- circulate with IC, meet students in hallways to talk about grades, supports, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ADSIS- Individual goals for students to attend</li> <li>• Athletic consequences- tardies, absences</li> <li>• Food rewards</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups and as individuals- school counselors, social workers, meeting with parents to remain connected</li> <li>• Connecting to resources- echo, YMCA, summer programs</li> <li>• HOPE Squad/Mental Health Connections</li> <li>• Referral to mental health navigator</li> <li>• School linked mental health</li> <li>• Relationships with all outside resources- clinics, YMCA, YW, backpack food program, county resources, housing resources</li> <li>• Referrals to therapy</li> </ul> |
| <b>County</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County staff conducting regular meetings (in-person)</li> <li>• Additional staff, juvenile probation officer, children's mental health case management</li> <li>• Strong incentive programs</li> </ul>  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited on agents</li> <li>• Taking away cell phone for an unexcused absence, follow home and school rules, may look at out-of-home placement (avoided if possible)</li> <li>• BEC ankle monitor/house arrest</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discharge</li> <li>• Gift cards, bikes, passes</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's mental health referrals, connecting students with therapists</li> <li>• Court order mental health diagnostic, follow recommendations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Other</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFS/ Prairie Care</li> </ul>  |  |   |  |   |

# Key Strategies

1. Meet quarterly with principals to review attendance data and strategies being utilized to increase attendance.
2. Work to implement attendance support plans
3. Use positive reinforcement for increased attendance.
4. Increase home visits for students needing more support.
5. Student support team working with students to reinforce SEL targets with focus on attendance.
6. Student Success Coaches working one on one with students with check and connect.
7. Collaborate with partner agencies including mental health. School Linked Mental Health, Youth Mental Health Navigator, and Prairie Care
8. Implement BARR and Katallasso
9. Hire Family Engagement Specialist



# Attendance Pilot

## Moorhead Area Public Schools

Isaac Lundberg, Supervisor in Teaching and Learning

LIFELONG  
LEARNING  
STARTS  
**HERE**

# Overview

- Layered approach
- Review of attendance related practices, procedures, and outcomes in district
- Team: district admin, principals, social workers, counselors, teachers, support staff
- Funding devoted to:
  - Purchase of data visualizer to streamline data analysis
  - Support for BARR process through staffing



# What was uncovered?

- Inconsistency in reporting/attendance coding
- Inconsistency in building-level attendance interventions and criteria
- Inconsistent MTSS-B processes, generally
- Unclear roles and responsibilities related to attendance monitoring and intervention
- Desire to better partner with the county and community agencies

# Goals and related action steps

1. By June of 2027, establish improve attendance rate from 67% (MDE Data Center) to 85% or better.
  - a. Establish District MTSS-B Team with sub-focus/committee
    - i. Consistent district attendance coding
    - ii. Review of district-wide attendance data and goals
    - iii. Collaborate with community partners
    - iv. Establish Consistent PowerSchool Insites dashboards for aggregate and per pupil attendance metrics
  - b. Establish consistent building level MTSS-B processes
    - i. Clarify building-level attendance interventions
      1. Finalizing goals around building level interventions in December
    - ii. Clarify Student Support Team roles in MTSS-B processes, specifically attendance
  - c. District Communication Attendance Campaign
  - d. Communications campaign
    1. Survey - student and family
    2. Social media/communication information campaign
2. Initiate and collaborate with county and community about attendance review board

# Cook County Schools

ISD 166, Grand Marais, MN

Nov 27, 2024 Attendance Pilot Update ~ Sarah Lakosky, Dean of Students

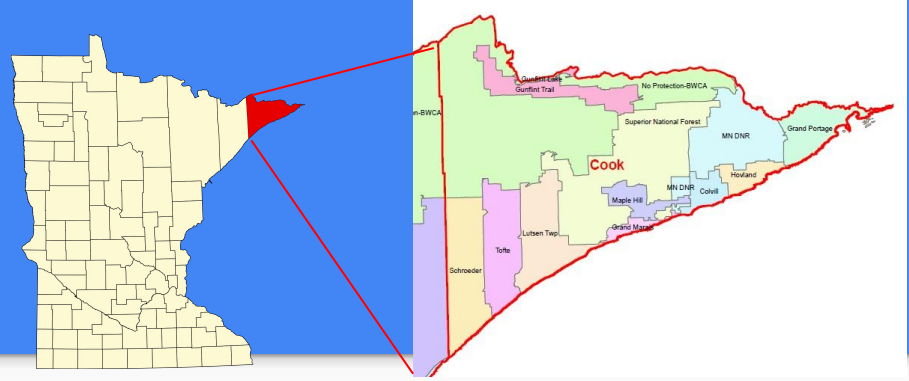


**Cook County ISD 166**

Home of the Vikings



# Cook County, MN



- Cook County Schools ISD 166 has 470 students in Preschool through 12th grades
- Approximately 100 staff/faculty
- Our students travel a distance, from the northern Canadian border, from the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa, from the Gunflint and Sawbill Trails, and from the southwest near Schroeder, MN to our school in Grand Marais.

# ISD 166 Focus

- The 2024-2025 school year has seen improved focus on attendance protocols, data collection, communication, and follow through.
- Attendance and tardies continue to be a work in progress.

# ISD 166 Action Items

- A full time position was created and filled for the Check and Connect program. This person is in training.
- We work steadily with the Assistant County Attorney's office to share data, schedule Diversion meetings, and file truancy petitions.
- We communicate with families to support students who may benefit from more access to resources.

# ISD 166 Goals

- We want every child in Cook County to have access to education.
- We want to build and strengthen relationships between Cook County families and the ISD 166 community.
- We strive to recognize the challenges and differences in culture, mental health, and socio-economic disparities and will work hard to bridge the gaps many of our students experience.



# Windom Area Schools

Attendance Pilot Implementation



## Goals & Strategies

- Decrease federal chronically absence totals by .25% per year.
- Increase family engagement using our learning management system as well as our overall communication regarding student whereabouts.
- Help students create connections to school and form a sense of belonging by increasing the amount of students involved in extracurricular activities by 2% over the course of the pilot.
- Employ an attendance coordinator to focus on attendance for all students K-12 and carry out duties listed below.



## Progress Thus Far

- **Successes**
  - Hired attendance coordinator - 25 hours per week
    - Huge growth in building relationships and helping students succeed
  - Supporting students
    - Mental health supports available on site through school counselors/social workers as well as partners from our community, Greater MN & SWWC - all these connections have a positive impact on attendance
  - Ensuring students have adequate resources, in and out of school
  - Our buildings are safe and welcoming of all
  - Our buildings have minimal disruptions to the learning environment
  - Communication with families has grown with our attendance coordinator position



## Progress Thus Far

- Struggles
  - Encouraging consistent and efficient parent communication and engagement
  - Students who work to support their families - sometimes 40 hours/week





## Daily Duties of Our Attendance Coordinator

- Pick students up (roughly 8:00-8:45 daily)
  - As needed
- High School attendance rounds (roughly 8:45-9:45 daily)
  - Contacts - HS Secretary, HS Principal, Social Worker
- Middle School attendance support (roughly 9:45-10:15 daily)
  - Contacts - MS Secretary, MS Behavior/Attendance Support Dean, MS Principal, Social Worker
- Elementary attendance support (roughly 10:30-11:00 daily)
  - Contacts - Elementary Secretary, Elementary Principal, Social Worker
- Student support activities
  - Making phone calls
  - Driving to homes to meet with families/pick students up
  - Setting up attendance meetings
  - Relationship building with students at lunches - 11-1 daily as able
  - Making connections with families using our LMS

# EAGLES

WINDOM AREA SCHOOLS

# **School District 191 Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Attendance Pilot**

Amy Piotrowski, Director of Student Support Services

Morgan McDowell, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Teacher on Special Assignment

December 2, 2024

# Vision

In 2024-26, One91 will create a three pronged approach to system redesign around the question:

*How might we proactively decrease the amount of chronically absent students in our system?*

## In the three pronged approach, we will:

- Cultivate inclusive partnerships
- Integrate Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Collectively leverage data systems

## Resource needs identified:

- Coordination and facilitation
- Proactive strategies
- Development and training

# Our Students

**7,500 K-12 Students**

72% Students of Color, 28% White

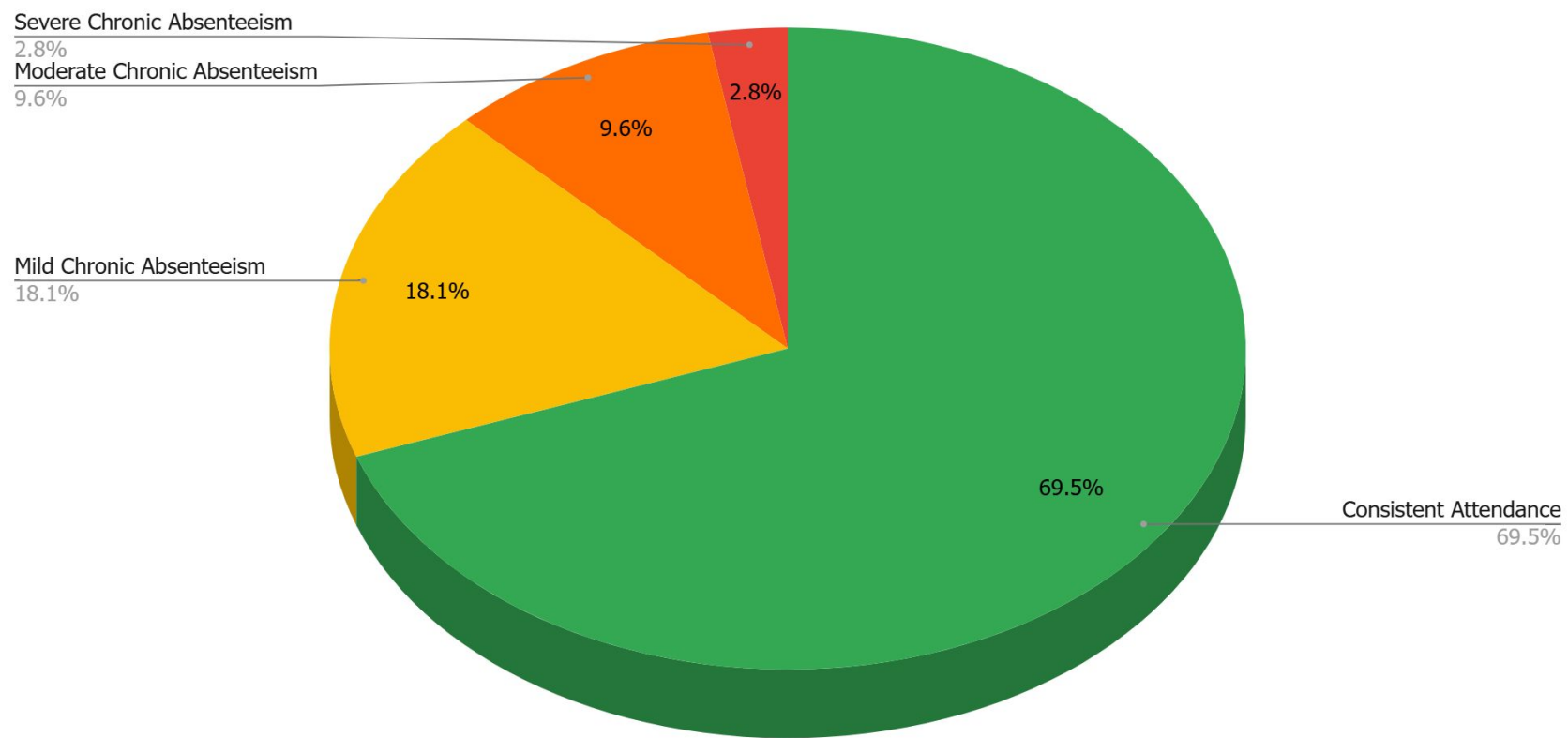
17% Special Education Services Eligible

27% Limited English Proficiency Eligible

56% Free/Reduced Meal Eligible



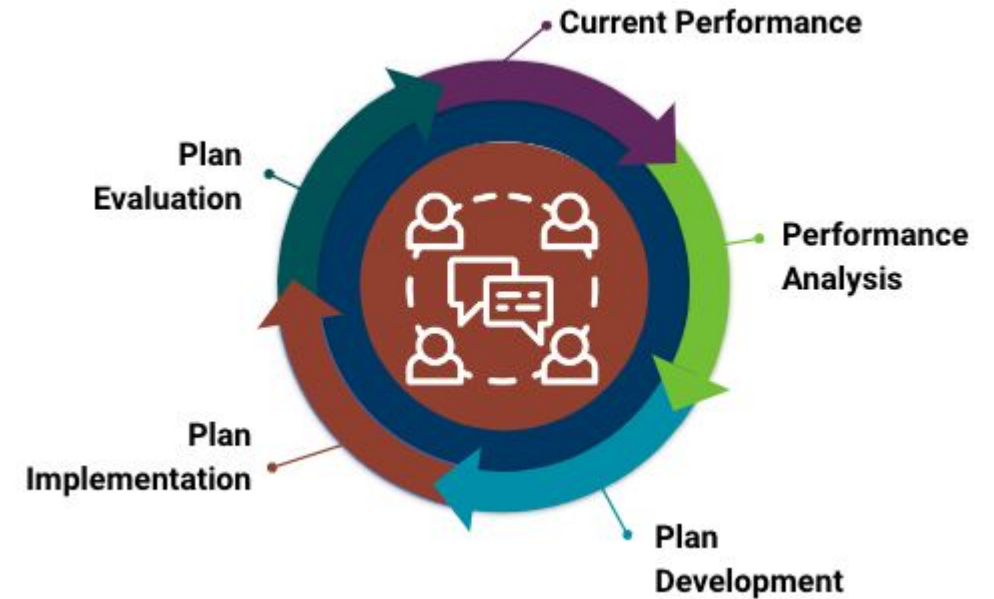
# Current Reality





# Process

- Understanding Root Cause
  - Staff Focus Groups
    - Social Workers, Cultural Liaisons, Clerical Staff
  - District Systems Self Assessment
  - Pilot Sites School Self Assessment
  - Chronic Absenteeism Data



# Inclusive Partnerships

- Scott County & Dakota County - Prevention Partnerships
- Communications - Tier 1 Communication, Parent Square
- Clerical Staff - Consistent Guidance
- Support Staff - Data Based Decision Making
- Family Engagement





# Next Steps

- Engage with students, families, and community
- Partner with District Attendance Team and School Pilot Sites to develop comprehensive plan



**[ Thank You ]**



## **Student Attendance & Truancy Legislative Study Group Presentation**

Angi McAndrews, Director of Student Engagement & School Climate

December 2, 2024

# Chronic Absenteeism Key Initiative

---

Develop and begin to implement a comprehensive strategy to reduce chronic absenteeism.

# County Collaboration

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- Connection
- Ed Neglect process
- Truancy process
  - 15 Day Drop
- Team members

# Create a Data System

---

- Review historic data
- Aligning our data processes
- System for documentation
  
- Dashboard
  - eduCLIMBER

# Clarify Processes - Elementary

---

- Handbook
- Regular attendance team meetings
  - Attendance alone
  - Integrated team
- Educational Review Team (ERT)

# Clarify Processes - Secondary

---

- Handbook
- Attendance team meetings
- Truancy Process
  - Parent Information Meeting
  - School Attendance Review Team
  - Truancy Petition



# Consider External Partners

---

- Considering external partners
  - Dashboard
  - Interventions
  - Norm setting
- Preference to internal processes
  - Sustainable

# Interventions

---

- Select
- Launch
- Study

# Media Campaign

---

- Social Norm Theory
  - Making families aware
- Why attendance matters

# Youth Voice

---

- Student School Board
  - Focus Group
  - Gather feedback from students
- Anticipate a broader conversation about engagement

# Study the Data

---

- Ongoing review of data
  - Cleaner reporting immediately
  - Better picture of improvement over time



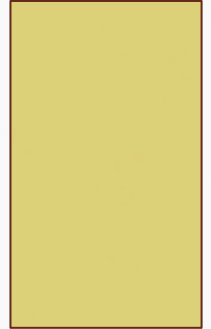
THANK YOU!

Angi McAndrews, Director of Student Engagement & School Climate  
[anmcandrews@rochesterschools.org](mailto:anmcandrews@rochesterschools.org)

# Northfield Public Schools

ISD 659

Carrie Duba, EdS, NCSP Systems Coach/MTSS Coordinator



**Clarify definitions** and align data practices in order to target correct students and measure and scale what's working

1

**Support families** with connections, strategies and information. Grow our family liaison and navigator team

2

## Northfield Public Schools Attendance Pilot Projects

**Collaborate** with our community partners: Rice County, HCI, Fernbrook, Carleton

3

**Clearly communicate** expectations to families using consistent definitions and data, and aligned procedures

4



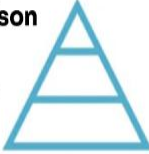
## Collaboratively Linked Teams

- Collaboratively linked school and **community** teams
- SBMH and Cradle to Career **partners**
- Shared practices
- **Attendance Teams Identified our needs**



## Layered Practices

- Added **secondary attendance liaison**
- Key intensification of supports
- **Addresses a current support gap**
- Flexible cohort model
- Liaison attendance team member



## Assessment

- Identified what was **currently working**
- Elementary attendance liaison evaluation - **scaled** up
- Pilot program evaluation



## Family Engagement

- Feedback from parent focus groups
- Parents requested **support**
- We will offer **parent groups**
- Home visiting and strategies
- Modeled after **SPACE Treatment** plans



## Data-based Decision Making

- Partnership with Carleton Statistics group - **deep data dive**
- Identified the **correct** students for cohort
- Outliers distorting data became our **high-risk** cohort

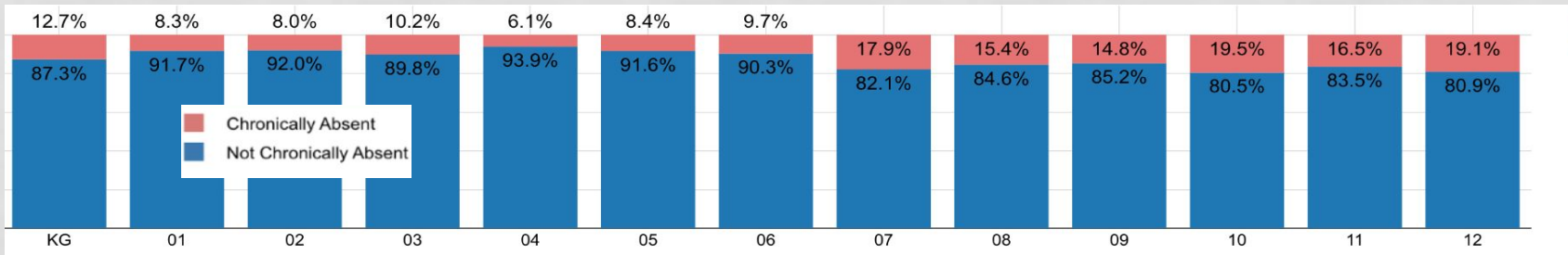


Utilize and leverage our well-developed MTSS

# Consistent definitions to guide discussions about the who, when, where and why

- Absent/Attending
- Consistent Attendance
- Chronic Absence
- Habitually Truant
- Excused
- Unexcused
- Tardy

What does it mean  
to be in attendance,  
or absent, or tardy  
and why does it  
matter?



**Students who are chronically absent and referred to the Rice County SARB are more likely to be:**

- At the secondary level
- Students of color
- Multilingual learners
- Low income students

**Additional deep dive into our data yielded important clarification:**

- The averages for SOC and low income much higher than medians
- Median rates much closer to white and non-low income students rates
- Data suggest that there are more significant outliers in the SOC and low-income groups.

# Barriers for Students and Families

- Transportation
- No medical insurance
- New to country families
- Academic challenges for - students and guardians
- Mental health concerns - students and guardians
- Limited awareness of attendance expectations
- Lack of information about how to help their child (support group)

# Family Engagement Navigator/Attendance Liaison Roles

1. Go to the student and family - supportive 'hopes and dreams' home visits
2. Develop relationships with cohort group
3. Advocate for cultural understanding of attendance patterns
4. Coach and support access to school learning platforms and offering paperwork assistance
5. Connect family to community resources so that they may re-prioritize school
6. They are a trusted resource and consistent point of contact

# Family Engagement Navigator Program Evaluation Data

25%

Reduction in number of students  
meeting the threshold for Chronic  
Absenteeism

75%

Of students in the cohort improved  
their rate of attendance year over  
year

# Data Gathering to Plan Outcomes

## Data Review

- FEN evaluation data
- Carleton Statistics Research Group
- MnMTSS team data reviews
- Family focus meetings

## Learnings

- Families need help
- Families need information
- Our FEN model is effective
- We are lacking support at the secondary level

# District Plan

- Secondary Attendance Navigator
  - ◆ Home Visits
  - ◆ Parent Groups
  - ◆ Student Groups
- SPACE: Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions training for SWs and SLMH
- **Cohesive and intentional communication push**

- Attendance Works designed messaging
  - Information about our local data on attendance and absence impact
  - Awareness about attendance policies, expectations and procedures
  - Consistent messaging district-wide
- 



# Consistent Definition

Examined our own district practices and have identified a need to bring the definition of elementary tardy into standard alignment

- Students arriving before 9:30 am are tardy
- Students arriving after 9:30 am are half-day absent
- Students leaving after 2:00 pm have 'left early'
- Students leaving before 2:00 pm are half-day absent

**Current district language:** Any student that arrives after the bell rings or leaves school early, for any reason, will be counted tardy. You must call the attendance line to report that your child will be tardy.

We continue our work of bringing consistency to our attendance definitions and recording habits. So that we have clear actionable data.

## Next steps:

1. Further development of student and family cohort for the liaison
2. Identify processes for increased family support with the SPACE strategies
3. Per pilot guidance, develop logic frames and robust progress monitoring and consistent data reporting strategies
4. Continue to bring our attendance tracking and reporting practices into coherence
5. Edit, finalize and roll - out attendance messaging

# Questions?



# Chisholm Public Schools

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ISD 695

Attendance Pilot

Chisholm 695 Attendance Pilot

Presented by:

Carrie McDonald/Director of Teaching & Learning

Ryan Bennett/Attendance Pilot Coordinator



# Financial Impact of Attendance Pilot for ISD 695

- **Funding allowed the district to hire an Attendance Pilot Coordinator**
- **Attendance Coordinator's role - solely to improve student attendance by implementing effective practices**

# Attendance Pilot Coordinator

## Family & Administration Communication and Support

Supportive conversations are the foundation that will motivate family engagement in the school and community and build relationships. The Attendance Coordinator is dedicated to increasing student attendance, removing barriers, assisting in accessing community and school-wide support, and acting as a liason for families and students.

## Students & Family

Having conversations with families daily through phone calls, texts, and emails. These conversations build relationships and allow families to gain an understanding of procedures & policy, share barriers, and learn about community supports.

## School Staff

Daily conversions with administration, teachers, support staff, and secretaries are required for understanding and accurately reporting student attendance. These conversations assist in finding strategies to support the student and family to ultimately increase student attendance.



# Chisholm Attendance Policy

## K-6th Grade - Elementary

- 3 unexcused absences or a combination of 7 unexcused/excused prompts the 1st Attendance Letter and a Phone Call home from the School Attendance Coordinator.
- 5 unexcused absences or a combination of 10 unexcused/excused prompts the 2nd Attendance Letter and a Phone Call home from the School Attendance Coordinator.
- 7 unexcused absences or a combination of 10 unexcused/excused prompts an Intervention Meeting with administration, school staff, and the family.
- 7 Unexcused Tardies Documented as an Unexcused Absence.
- All Communication is documented by the School Attendance Coordinator to tell the student/family's story.
- Minnesota State Law defines Habitually Truant as 7 or more unexcused absences which may result in an Ed Neglect Referral or Truancy Petition.

# Chisholm Attendance Policy

## 7th-12th Grade - Secondary

- 3 unexcused absences prompt the 1st Attendance Letter and a Phone Call home from the School Attendance Coordinator.
- 5 unexcused absences prompt the 2nd Attendance Letter and a Phone Call home from the School Attendance Coordinator.
- 7 unexcused absences prompt an intervention meeting with a representative from the county, administration, school staff, and the family.
- 7 Unexcused Tardies Documented as an Unexcused Absence .
- All Communication is documented by the School Attendance Coordinator to tell the student/family's story.
- Minnesota State Law defines Habitually Truant as 7 or more unexcused absences which may result in an Ed Neglect Referral or Truancy Petition.



# Year Round Attendance Campaign

Using social media and instant alerts sent directly to families weekly. These notifications share:

- Health tips relating to school
- Family/Student routine strategies
- School academic deadlines & conference information
- Reminders on what documentation is needed for absences
- Reminders to log into the School Communication Apps and Accounts



# Recognition and Positive Affirmations

- Parent and student good attendance recognition by letter, certificate, or instant alerts sent directly to families.
- Participating in PBIS and supporting a positive mindset to earn rewards at the school store, setting positive goals for the student body around being in school, and building in-school engagement.
- Creating motivation for being present in school.
- Acknowledging students and families who stay after school for homework help, ask for make-up work, and call the school to report absences with face-to-face recognition or a phone call.
- Celebrating the students and families who have improved attendance and call them and praise them for achieving goals.



# Strategies



## MTSS System Component

- Running attendance reports to identify what students are reaching attendance thresholds
- Supporting and assisting in interventions
- Recognizing the student's level of engagement at school
- Reviewing data and discussing student progress
- Referring students to MTSS Team

## Attendance Plan

Working with students and families to create a plan that will focus on individual challenges:

- Creating attainable goals and meaningful strategies with students and families
- Providing time management resources and skills to achieve goals
- Consistent school and family communication: reminders, progress, and identifying solutions
- Alternative transportation, when necessary, by staff with a Type 3 license in a school vehicle

# Possible Barriers

Working with the school, community, students and families to reduce barriers.

- Time management skills
- School and family consistent communication
- Transportation
- Engagement
- Sense of belonging
- Academic challenges
- Social Emotional challenges



## Stage 1

- Relationship building with the students, families, school, and community
- Identifying barriers
- Improving consistent procedures & coding within the district
- Identifying support systems within the city & county
- Sharing recommendations and feedback as data is collected

## Stage 3

- 3-year data collection report
- Implementing updated procedures & policies for the state, county, school as changes are made

# Timeline

2024/2025

2026/2027

2025/2026

## Stage 2

- Full implementation of consistent procedures & coding throughout the district
- Problem solving to reduce barriers
- Implementing student & family interventions
- Working alongside community and county supports
- Collecting data and understanding the county and school roles for data sharing
- Working with the state to understand and support discussion of statutory changes

# ● ● ● Topics for Consideration

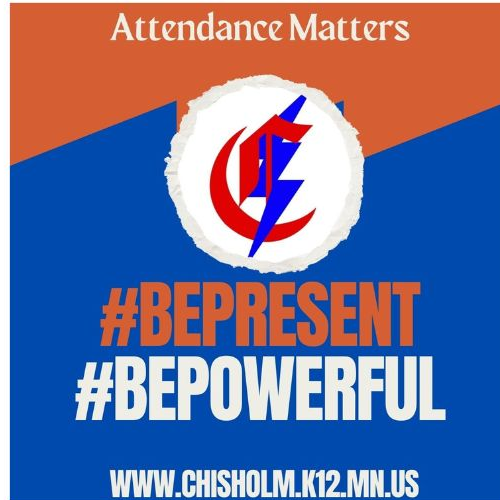


- 1** Consistent definitions & reporting procedures for attendance at MDE
  - Period to Day Attendance Conversions for FTE Regular
- 2** Consistent school/county collaboration & procedures
  - Meeting with County Commissioners & Judge
  - Meeting with St. Louis County & Local Schools



**Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.**

**We look forward to continuing this momentum and prioritizing our school attendance for students & families.**



**Minneapolis Public Schools**  
**Colleen Kaibel**  
**Director, Student Retention & Recovery**

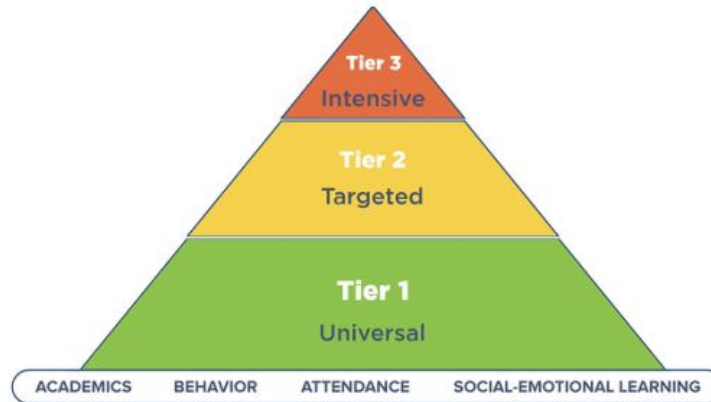
December 2nd, 2024

**Minnesota  
State  
Attendance  
Pilot  
Presentation**

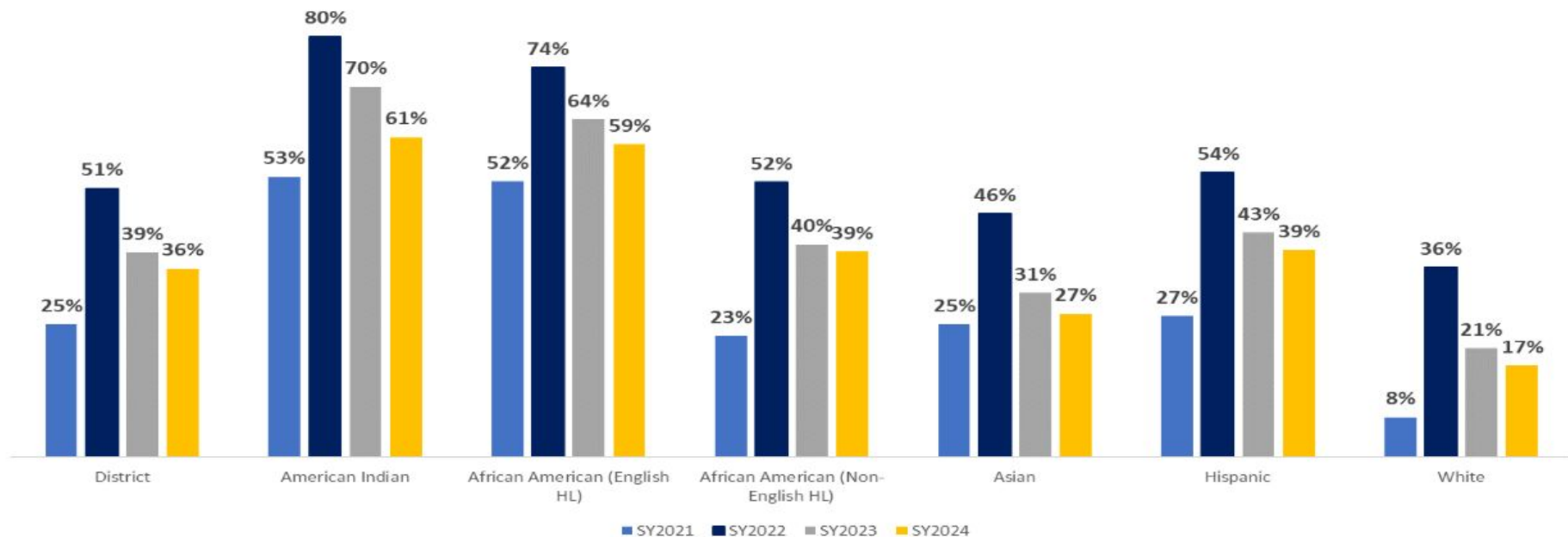


# MPS State Attendance Pilot Objectives

- Support schools in prevention of absences and the ability to rapidly identify and respond to students who are chronically absent using best practices with the understanding that attendance efforts are about engagement and partnership, not solely about compliance.
- Foster the development of student, family, school, and community partnerships to create strong, ongoing working collaborations addressing student attendance, engagement, and well-being.



# Review of MPS Chronic Absenteeism



# Student Led Attendance Teams

Empowering students to actively participate in building the culture of their school and positively impact daily attendance and the overall well-being of students.

## **Deliverables: Student Led Attendance Teams will**

- become informed and understand the impact absences have on their peers and school.
- engage peers in identifying obstacles to daily attendance.
- develop ideas/actions that create a sense of belonging, positively impact daily attendance, and are inclusive to all students.
- implement ideas.
- review outcomes and identify next steps.

# Caring Adult – Mentoring

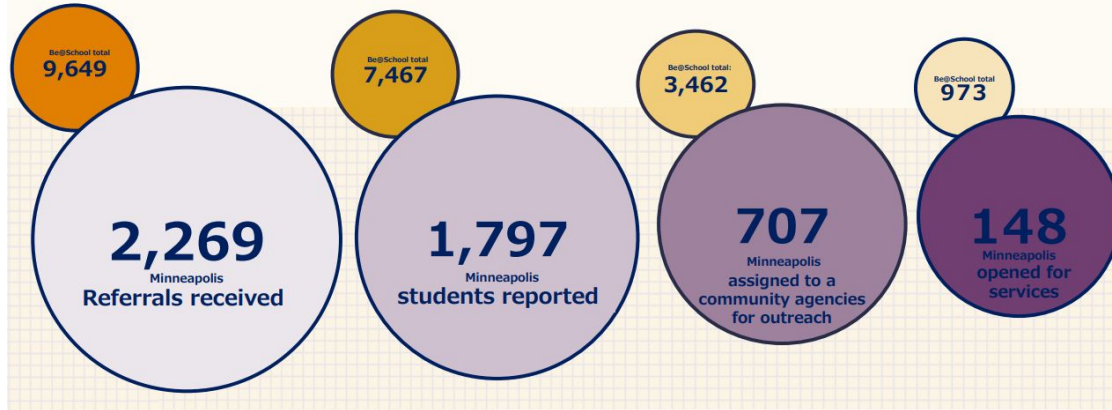
Check, Connect, & Expect will be implemented with existing school staff to promote engagement in learning by creating a sense of belonging through a meaningful, intentional relationship.

## **Deliverables: Check, Connect & Expect will**

- create positive adult relationships with disengaged learners.
- foster a sense of belonging.
- allow students to identify a caring adult at school.
- address daily attendance and barriers to success.
- promote strength-based development.
- review outcomes and identify next steps.

# MPS Be@School Referral Outcomes

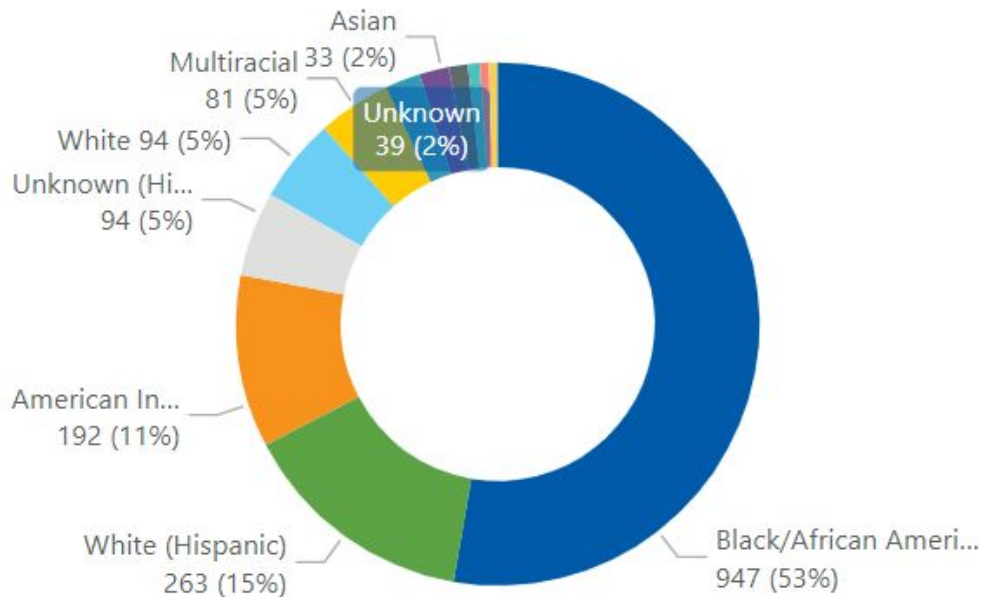
## Minneapolis Student Report Totals: 23/24 school year



- 
- 39.3% (707) of 1797 students were referred to an agency.
- 20.9% (148) of the 707 referred to an agency accept service.
- 8.2% of MPS 1797 reports served by an agency.

# MPS BASIL Reported Students Race/Ethnicity

Count of Reported Students by Race/Ethnicity



## Minneapolis Public School District

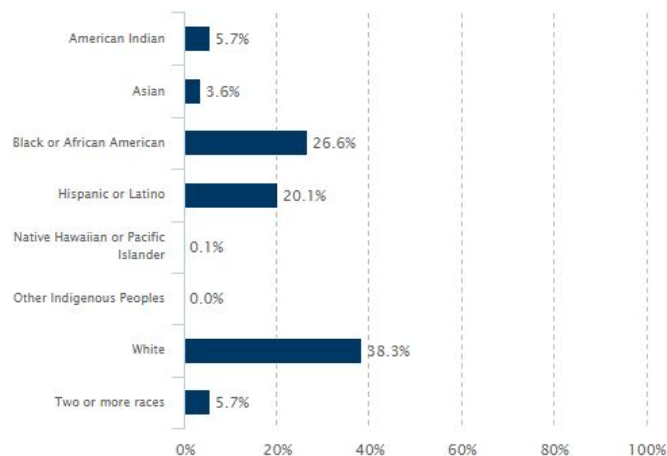
Year: 2024 Demographics: All Students



### 2024 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Note: Data are reported by fiscal year based on October 1 enrollment for the most recent year available. The fiscal year is the year in which the school year ends (e.g., 2017 is the 2016-2017 school year).

Export to PDF



# MPS BASIL Reported Students

## Minneapolis District data

Highly mobile/  
Homeless:

**447**

students

Be@School total: 930

Were eligible for  
Medical Assistance:

**425**

students

Be@School total: 2358

Sent to child protection via  
Be@school:

**103**

students

Be@School total: 417

# Student Engagement Specialists

*Mentor, Advocate, Case Manager*

Student Engagement Specialists will serve our most chronically absent students by working directly and collaboratively with a caseload of students and their families, school site staff, MPS district staff, county service units, and community service providers to implement comprehensive and inclusive strategies that address engagement with learning and a sense of belonging.

Students and their families will be served for  
a minimum of one year.

*A Caring Adult*



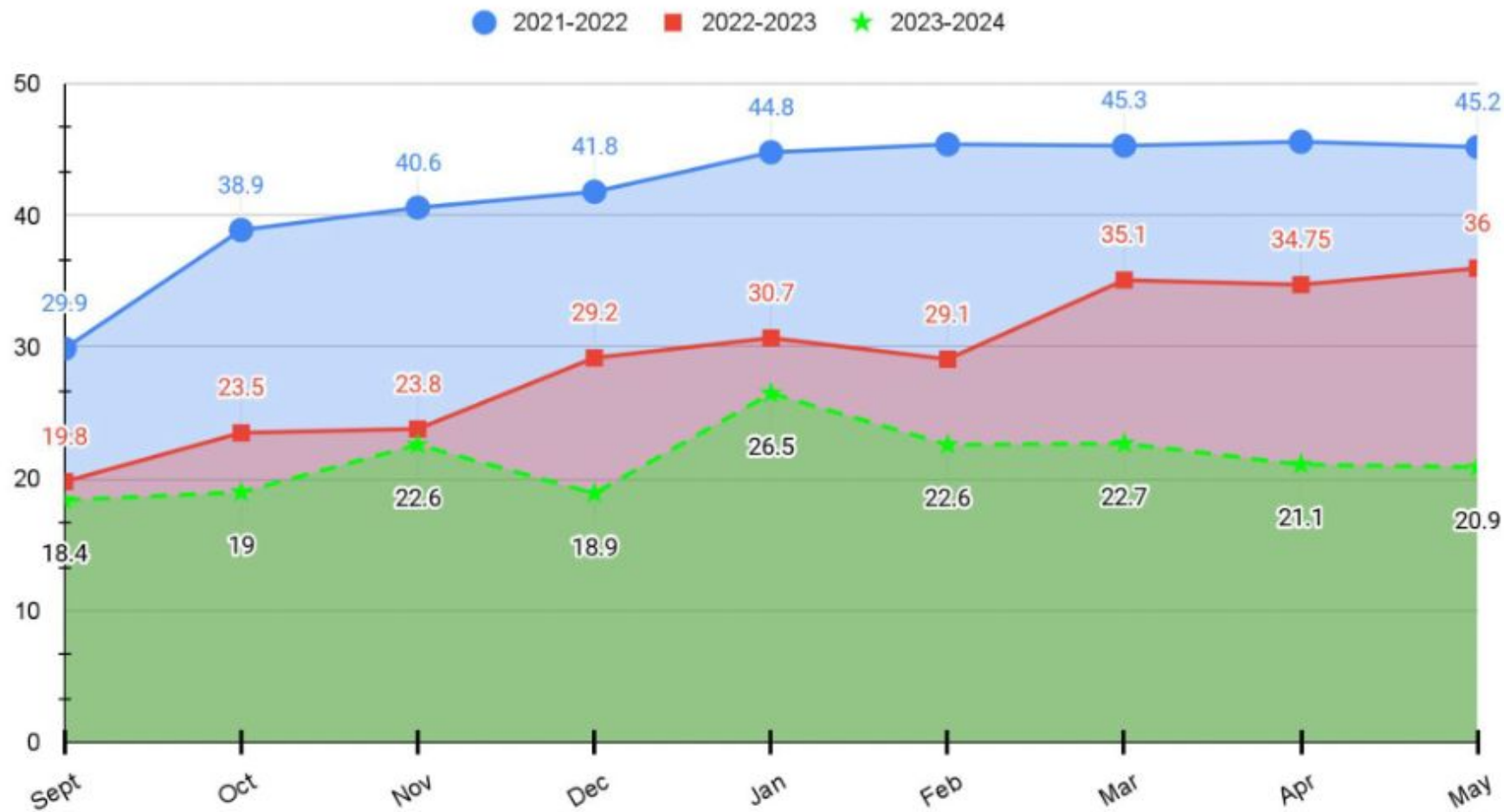
# Questions?



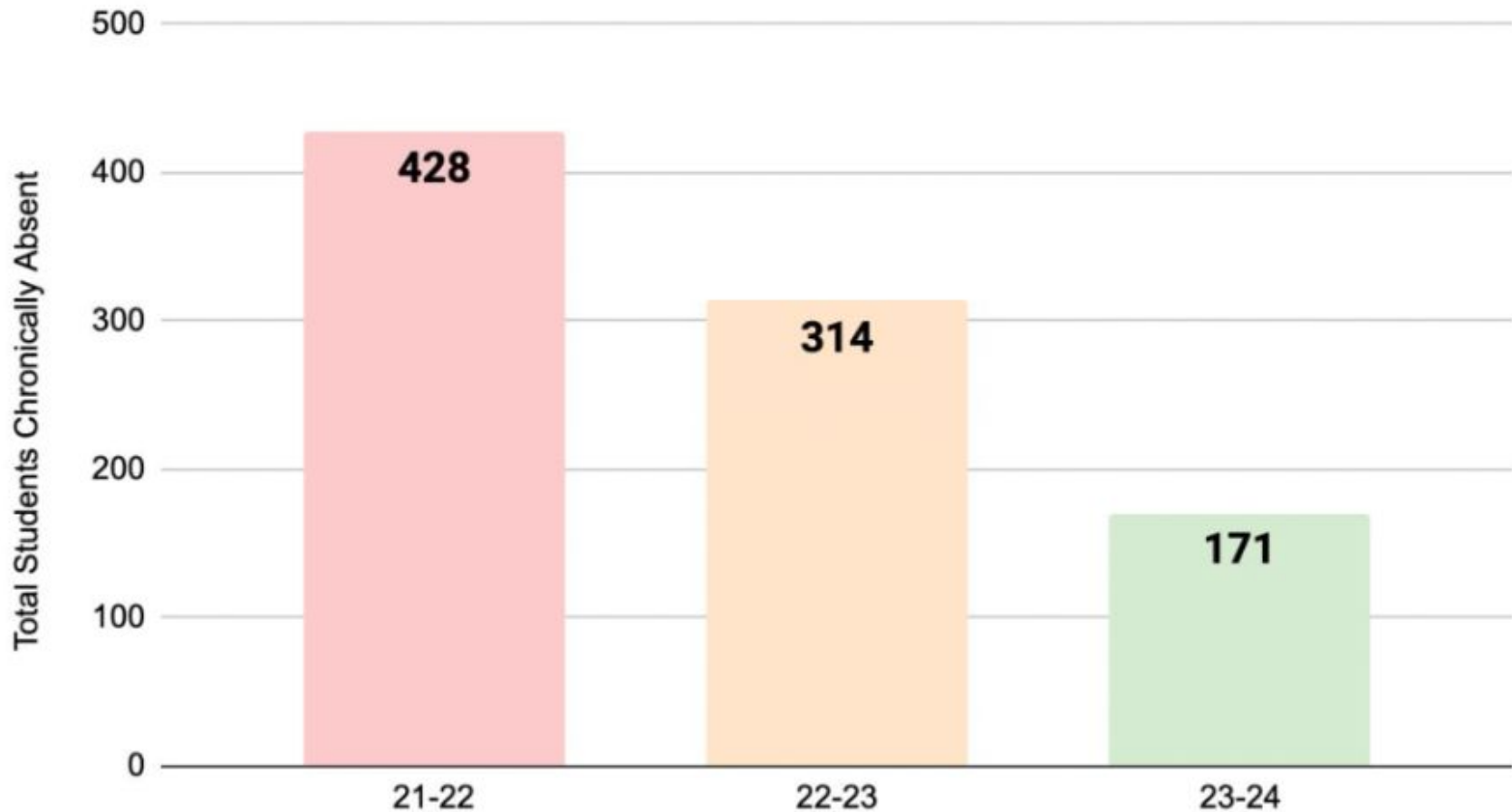
# MN Legislative Student Attendance and Truancy Study Group

BARR SLIDES

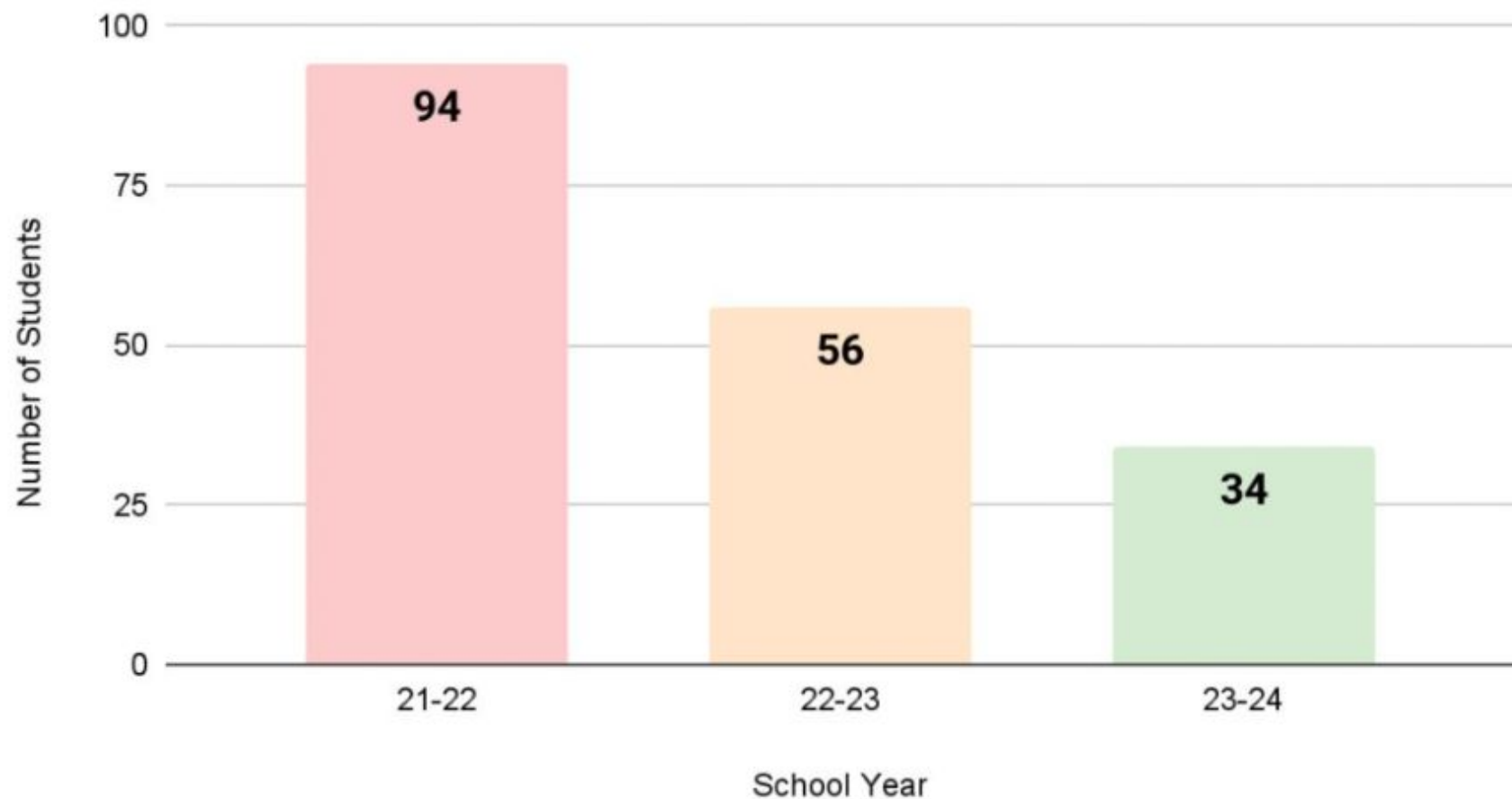
# Percent of Students Chronically Absent by Month 2021-Present



## Total Students Chronically Absent 2021-2024



# Number of American Indian Students Chronically Absent



## Brown County Truancy Intervention Program Examples of data findings

**Table 1: Status of Students from April to June 2024**

|                        | Successful Completion | Still Involved | Unsuccessful | Voluntarily Left |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| Pre-truancy (N=40)     | 45%                   | 43%            | 13%          |                  |
| Truancy (N=39)         | 10%                   | 74%            | 3%           | 13%              |
| Total in Program(N=79) | 28%                   | 58%            | 8%           | 6%               |

**Table 2: Status of Students from April to June 2023**

|                    | Successful Completion | Still Involved | Unsuccessful | Voluntarily Left |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| Pre-truancy (N=69) | 29%                   | 62%            | 10%          |                  |
| Truancy (N=46)     | 9%                    | 65%            | 24%          | 2%               |
| Total (N=115)      | 21%                   | 63%            | 16%          | 1                |

*Note:* Unsuccessful includes moving out of the county, aging out of court status, going to placement, and for pre-truants, meeting criteria as truant status.

**Table 3. Primary Barrier to Attendance for Pre-Truants, April to June 2023 & 2024.**

| Barrier:                | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------------------------|------|------|
| Lack of Support at Home | 63%  | 67%  |
| Mental Illness          | 21%  | 10%  |
| Physical Illness        | 8%   | 23%  |
| Disability              | 6%   |      |
| Bullying                | 2%   |      |

**Table 4. Outcomes of All Students in Truancy Intervention Program, Four year report from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2023 (N=242).**

| Outcomes of All Participating Students                 |     |
|--|-----|
| Currently Open cases                                   | 20% |
| Successful Closures                                    | 53% |
| Parent withdrew when student was at least 17 years old | 6%  |
| Student “aged out” upon reaching 18 years old          | 10% |
| Families moved out of county                           | 8%  |
| Student entered placement                              | 3%  |
| Medical excuse   | 1%  |

**Table 5. Student Involvement, Four year report from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2023 (N=242).**

| Student Involvement                                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Number of referrals                                    | 253                |
| Percent of referrals having first meeting with Program | 96% (244 students) |
| Percent of referrals who joined the program            | 96% (242 students) |
| Students with CHIPS prior to entering                  | 5% (13 students)   |
| Number of CHIPS Filed                                  | 35% (89 students)  |

**Table 6. Impact on Delinquency by Participants (2019-2021).**

|  | Oct. 2019 –<br>June 2019 | July 2019 –<br>Dec 2020 | Jan. 2021 –<br>June 2021 |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>New Admissions</b>                      | 52                       | 59                      | 20                       |
| <b>Caseload Size</b>                       | 52                       | 87                      | 93                       |
| <b>Case Closed</b>                         | 67%                      | 25%                     | 22%                      |
|  | 46%                      | 10%                     | 12%                      |
|  | <b>Time 1</b>            | <b>Time 2</b>           | <b>Time 3</b>            |
| <b>% of caseload with prior offenses</b>   | 53%                      | 8%                      | 30%                      |
| <b>% of referred on probation</b>          | 11%                      | 8%                      | 9%                       |
| <b>% committing crime while in program</b> | 5%                       | 1%                      | 11%                      |
|  | N=52                     | N=87                    | N=93                     |

|  | Oct. 2019 –<br>June 2019 | July 2019 –<br>Dec 2020 | Jan. 2021 –<br>June 2021 |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>% of those with prior offenses committing no new crime while in program</b> | 86%                      | 87%                     | 79%                      |
|  | N=28                     | N=8                     | N=28                     |



## **WARNs – Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students.**

### **Barrier Scales**

Aggression/Defiance

Depression/Anxiety

Substance Abuse

Peer Deviance

Family Environment

School Engagement



# Supporting Attendance Through a Statewide System

Angela Mansfield – Assistant Commissioner, Office of Educational Opportunity

Lana Peterson – Director of Data Practices and Analytics

Ivy Wheeler- Director of COMPASS

# Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. **Prioritize equity.**
2. Start from within.
3. **Measure what matters.**
4. **Go local.**
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. **Improve conditions for learning.**
10. Start students options.



# MDE's Definition of Educational Equity

Educational equity is the condition of **justice, fairness, and inclusion** in our systems of education so that **all students have access** to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.

The pursuit of educational equity **recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success** in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions.

**Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers** to educational opportunities **requires systemic change** that allows for the distribution of resources, information, and other support depending on the student's situation to **ensure an equitable outcome**.

# COMPASS

*Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success*



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Statewide System for Continuous Improvement

Statewide Framework for Continuous Improvement

# Statewide System of Support

Our purpose is to design a collaborative, supportive system in Minnesota to ensure rigorous and equitable outcomes for each student, without exception. Through integrating COMPASS (Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success), the state continuous improvement system, into each service cooperative, all public, charter, and tribal schools will have regional access to:

- cohesive guidance;
- aligned, evidence-based professional learning;
- flexible, layered, and differentiated support that intensifies as needed;
- expanded continuous improvement support to all districts, charter schools, and tribal schools in Minnesota;
- local regional access to research-based guidance within the local context;
- free guidance, professional learning, and flexible support in all areas of continuous improvement.

# Statewide System of Support

- **Statewide System of Support Attendance Positions:**
  - **Temporary Data Practices and Analytics Attendance Data Specialist:** provide guidance and support to districts and schools on the use of local and state data. This position will also support the work of the pilot districts in the implementation and monitoring of selected interventions. Advanced analytics of attendance data at the state and local level. Develop literature reviews and conduct scans of how SEAs are utilizing and sharing attendance data.
  - **Temporary COMPASS Attendance Specialist:** lead the programmatic work of the regional COMPASS attendance positions and align regional and COMPASS attendance work to attendance work across the state and across the agency.
  - **Four Temporary Regional Attendance Specialists:** work with the MDE COMPASS Attendance Specialist to provide research-based guidance and support implementation at the local level, informed by local data, and selected to meet the unique strengths and barriers for students and families at the local level.



# Statewide System of Support

- **Attendance Framework:** MDE is developing a statewide attendance framework. This framework will focus on continuous improvement of systems and the implementation of evidence-based practices to remove barriers faced by students, families and communities.
- **Attendance Pilot Program:** COMPASS and Data Practices and Analytics are working in partnership with the pilot districts to provide focused access to the statewide system of support, including access to and use of state and local data, professional learning as requested, and additional flexible support as needed. MDE will learn from the implementation at the pilot districts to better understand promising practices, and how to support districts across the state to increase consistent attendance.
- **Legislative Study Group:** MDE will support this study group as requested, including providing information and presentations. MDE will learn from the findings of the study group and include this information in future planning for support for districts, charter schools, and Tribal Schools.



# Thank You!

Angela Mansfield – Assistant Commissioner, Office of Educational Opportunity  
Lana Peterson – Director of Data Practices and Analytics  
Ivy Wheeler- Director of COMPASS

# Counties Response to School Attendance Concerns

Nikki Conway – Scott County

Jim Miklausich - Asst. Superintendent Shakopee Schools

# State and Statutory Guidance

## **Failure to ensure education** [Minn. Stat. 260E.03, subd. 15(a)(4)]

“(4) failure to ensure that the child is educated as defined in sections [120A.22](#) and [260C.163, subdivision 11](#), which does not include a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications, consistent with section [125A.091, subdivision 5](#)”

**MN DCYF Screening Guidance:** Failure to ensure education means persons responsible for children’s care have not ensured they are enrolled in school, and attending school according to expectations of school districts; children are not in compliance with statutory requirements defined in Minn. Stats.120A.22 and 260C.163, subd. 11. Children’s absence from school is presumed to be due to parents’, guardians’, or custodians’ failure to comply with compulsory instruction laws [Minn. Stat. 260C.163, subd. 11 (a)-(b)] if:

- Children are under age 12, and
- School made appropriate efforts to resolve a child’s attendance problems, such as sending letters, phone, and in-person contact with child’s parents or guardian.

## **Habitual truant** 260C.007 Subd. 19.

"Habitual truant" means a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under section [120A.22, subdivision 8](#).

# Counties Response

## Under 12- Educational Neglect

- In MN, neglect makes up approximately 62% of child protection (CP) cases
- In Minnesota, the role of child protection includes addressing concerns of educational neglect.
- Children 11 and under with 7 unexcused absences fall under the child protection statute.



## 12 and Over- Truancy

- Child welfare response
- Varying practice based on County structure and access to resources
- Frequent crossover from ed neglect to truancy



# Background

- Child protection response to school attendance concerns/educational neglect may be “too big of a response” and not most effective
  - MN is one of 35 states that include education neglect in the child protection system
  - Growing interest nationally and in MN to create alternative pathways to serve families where school attendance is a concern
- School attendance concerns linked to overrepresentation of BIPOC families in our CW system:
  - 2021 Educational Neglect Data: 82% were children from BIPOC communities, whereas they make up 36% of enrolled students
- Increased need for focus on providing earlier, more fitting interventions outside the child protection system to:
  - Address underlying causes such as basic needs, home stressors, cultural barriers, resource and referral connections
  - Provide an immediate, concrete action towards addressing disproportionality and reducing entry into our CP system

**IS THERE ANOTHER WAY? Yes!**

# Another Way – Olmsted School Community Partnership

- PACE Program- Parents and Children Excel: a diversionary program that allows BIPOC children and their families to be provided services outside the child protection system.
- **County-School District Liaisons**
  - Two social workers-One responsible for Elementary Aged and one responsible for Middle School Aged students
  - Work within and with schools to identify students early who have attendance or other worries getting in the way of their education
  - Facilitate a meeting with school, caregivers and student as early as 3 absences
  - Develop an Educational Action Plan with all parties to be reviewed in near future (approx. 30 days)
  - Liaisons can make referrals to mental health services, community resources, basic needs options, etc
  - Goals: identify students early and address the underlying worries; build partnerships between school and family early; avoid need for CW or CP services

## **Successes:**

- Schools state they appreciate liaisons ability to provide expertise on community or voluntary county services to offer families
- Schools routinely report they do not want to have to utilize CP to address school worries as it causes undue stress and conflict with families
- Families feel more supported, less judged; receive individualized services

## **Worries:**

- Despite early successes, only small portion of schools/students that would be eligible can access due to staffing and tentative funding
- Sustainability is in jeopardy; persistent problem with creative earlier intervention programs across the state without additional resources at a state and federal level.

# Another Way- Scott County Approach

**PASS Program  
(Promoting  
Attendance and  
School Success) for  
children under 12**

**PATH Program  
(Promoting  
Attendance  
Through Hope) for  
children over 12**

# PASS Prevention

- Enables school to make referral directly to community provider, St. David's, when a student (under age 12) has 3 unexcused absences
- St. David's engages the student and family and school to overcome barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services, etc.)
- Engagement across all Scott County School Districts

# PASS Diversion

- Schools make mandated report for educational neglect to child protection after student has 7+ unexcused absences and school intervention is not effective
- Scott County CP will screen report and, if appropriate, screen-out and divert it to community provider, St. David's.
- St. David's will engage student, family and school in addressing and overcoming barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services)
- Strong engagement and coordination between St. David's and local school districts
- If student/family refuses to engage in PASS Diversion, the case may be referred back to child protection



# PATH Program

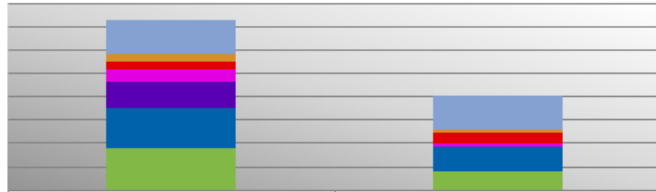
## Partnership with TreeHouse and The Katallasso Group

➤ [Home | Path Prevention](#)

- Schools make prevention referrals directly to PATH Prevention when they identify a student with unexcused absences
  - Schools can make truancy referrals to CAO after student (age 12+) has 7 or more unexcused absences and school intervention is not effective
- PATH will engage student, family and school in addressing and overcoming barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services)
- Strong engagement and coordination between PATH staff and local school districts
- If student/family refuses to engage in PATH diversion, the case may be referred back to County for formal truancy intervention

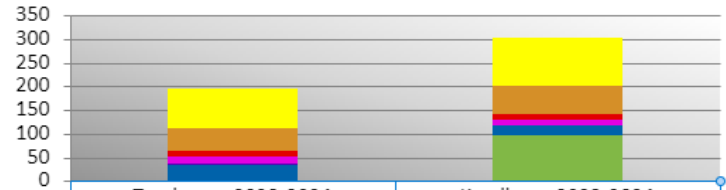
# Demographics of Students Served by PASS and PATH Programs

## PASS Referrals by Race and Ethnicity for School Year



|                     | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Hispanic (any race) | 29        | 29        |
| Pacific Island      | 1         | 0         |
| Native Amer.        | 6         | 3         |
| Multi Racial        | 7         | 9         |
| Asian               | 10        | 2         |
| Unknown             | 23        | 0         |
| Caucasian           | 35        | 22        |
| African Amer.       | 35        | 15        |
| Total               | 146       | 80        |

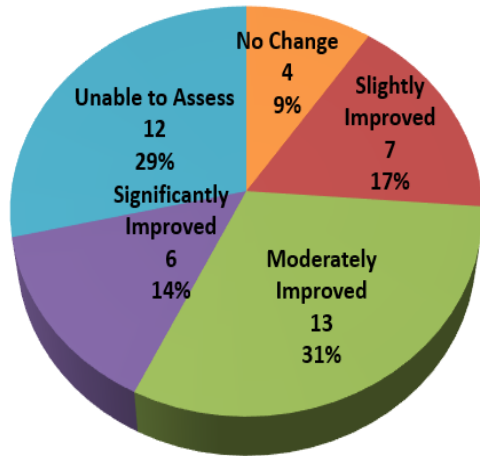
## Truancy Prevention Referrals by Race and Ethnicity for School Year



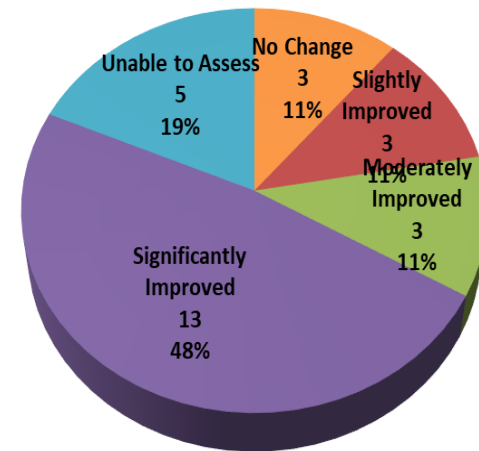
|                  | Treehouse 2023-2024 | Katallasso 2023-2024 |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Caucasian        | 84                  | 102                  |
| African American | 47                  | 62                   |
| Native American  | 12                  | 12                   |
| Asian            | 15                  | 11                   |
| Pacific Islander | 2                   | 1                    |
| Hispanic         | 35                  | 19                   |
| Unknown          | 0                   | 97                   |
| Total            | 195                 | 304                  |

# PASS: Improved School Attendance

PASS Diversion Program: Improved Attendance  
for School Year 2022-2023

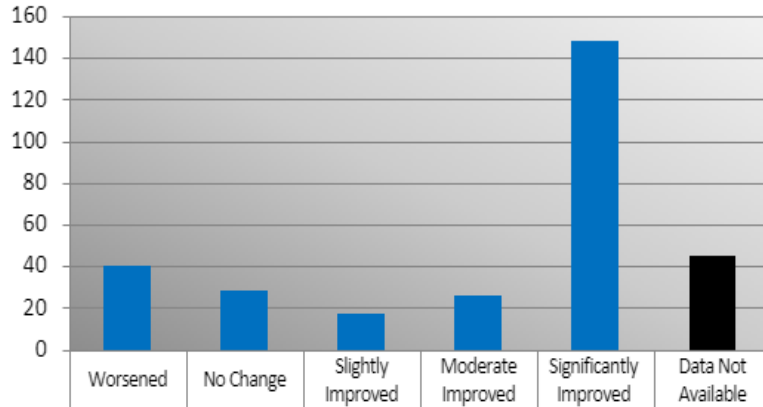


PASS Diversion Program: Improved Attendance  
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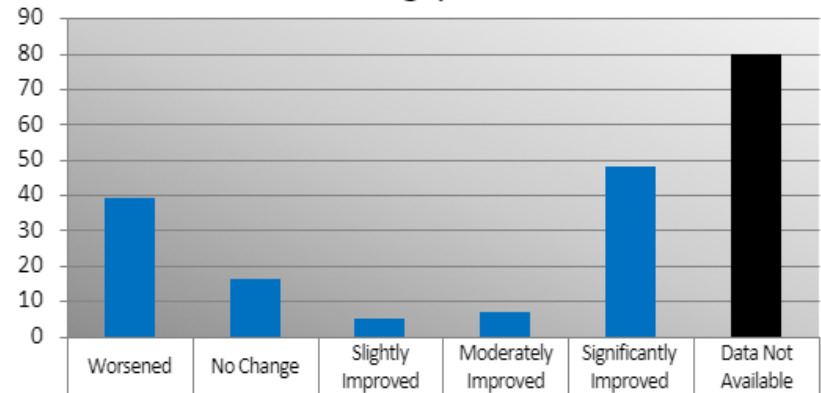
# PATH: Improved School Attendance

**The Katallasso Group: PATH Prevention Student Attendance Change, 2023-2024**



|                                     |       |       |      |       |       |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|----|
| ■ Students                          | 40    | 28    | 17   | 26    | 148   | 45 |
| Percent of Students with Known Data | 15.4% | 10.8% | 6.6% | 10.0% | 57.1% |    |

**TreeHouse: PATH Prevention Student Attendance Change, 2023-2024**



|                                     |       |       |      |      |       |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|----|
| ■ Students                          | 39    | 16    | 5    | 7    | 48    | 80 |
| Percent of Students with Known Data | 33.9% | 13.9% | 4.3% | 6.1% | 41.7% |    |

# Scott County/Shakopee Schools Partnership

Shakopee Schools and Scott County have been consistently working to improve attendance and targeted approaches to improving individual student attendance outcomes.

- Joint meetings were held throughout the 2023-24 school year and direct attendance meetings were held in the summer of 2024 to prepare for this school year.
- The School Board authorized agreement with Scott County for Attendance Specialist Services at the end of the 2023-24 school year = 100% funded by Scott County.



# Scott County/Shakopee Schools Partnership

- Improve student attendance = shared vision
- Continually enhance practices, and procedures that support increased student attendance.
- Develop direct connections of the impact that attendance practices and procedures have on students and families.
- Recognize any inequities of our current system of reporting absences and making referrals for programming.
- Strengthen the partnership with Scott County and the referrals process.
- Build greater understanding across the district of programs to support students who are chronically truant including PASS and PATH- prevention and diversion.



# What is a Family Resource Center?

Universal access point for education, supports, services, and community building.



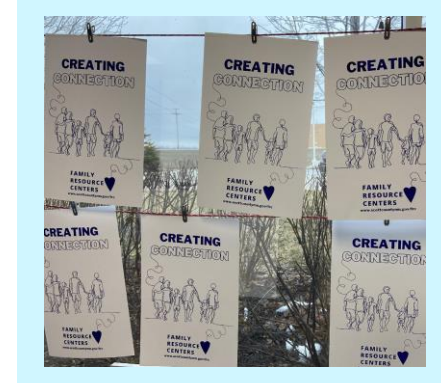
**Safe, accessible place for families to connect with supports and services.**



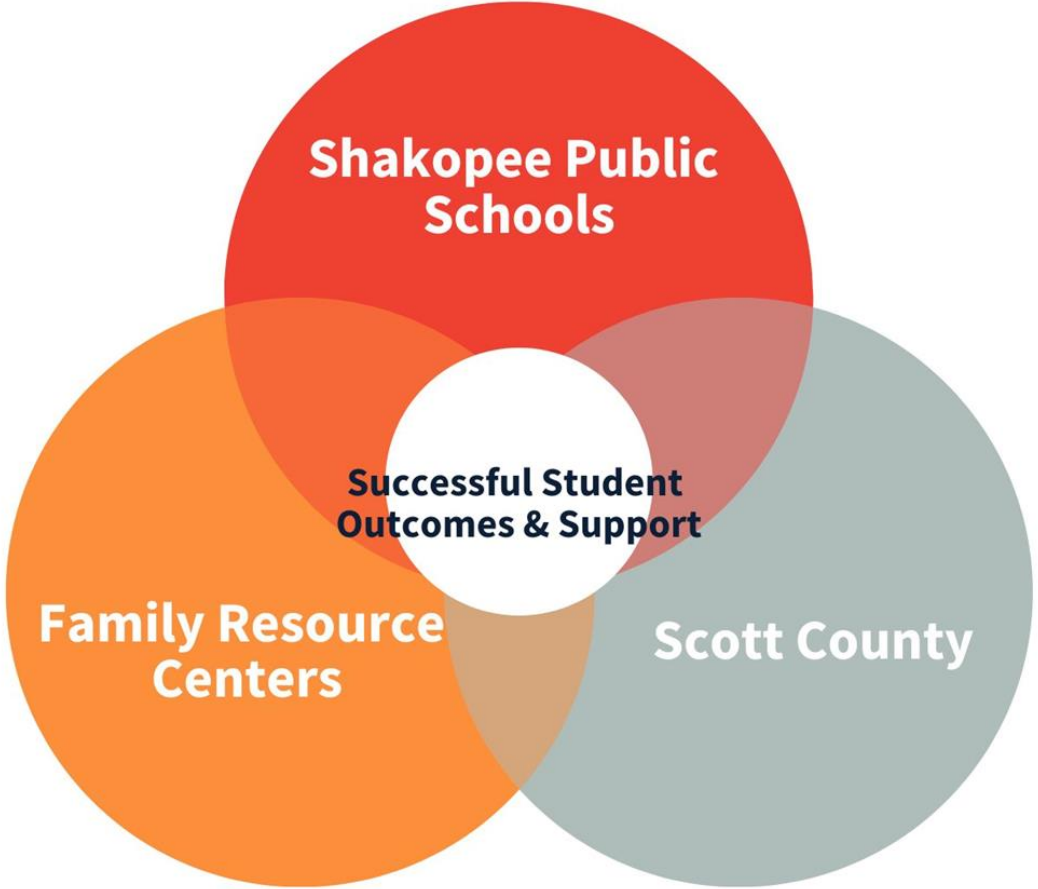
**Programs tailored to the culture and needs of the community they serve.**



**Core services focus on parenting education and skills, early childhood literacy, and access to concrete supports.**



**A place where individuals and organizations come together to help families thrive.**



**Shakopee Public  
Schools**

**Successful Student  
Outcomes & Support**

**Family Resource  
Centers**

**Scott County**



# Opportunities and Recommendations



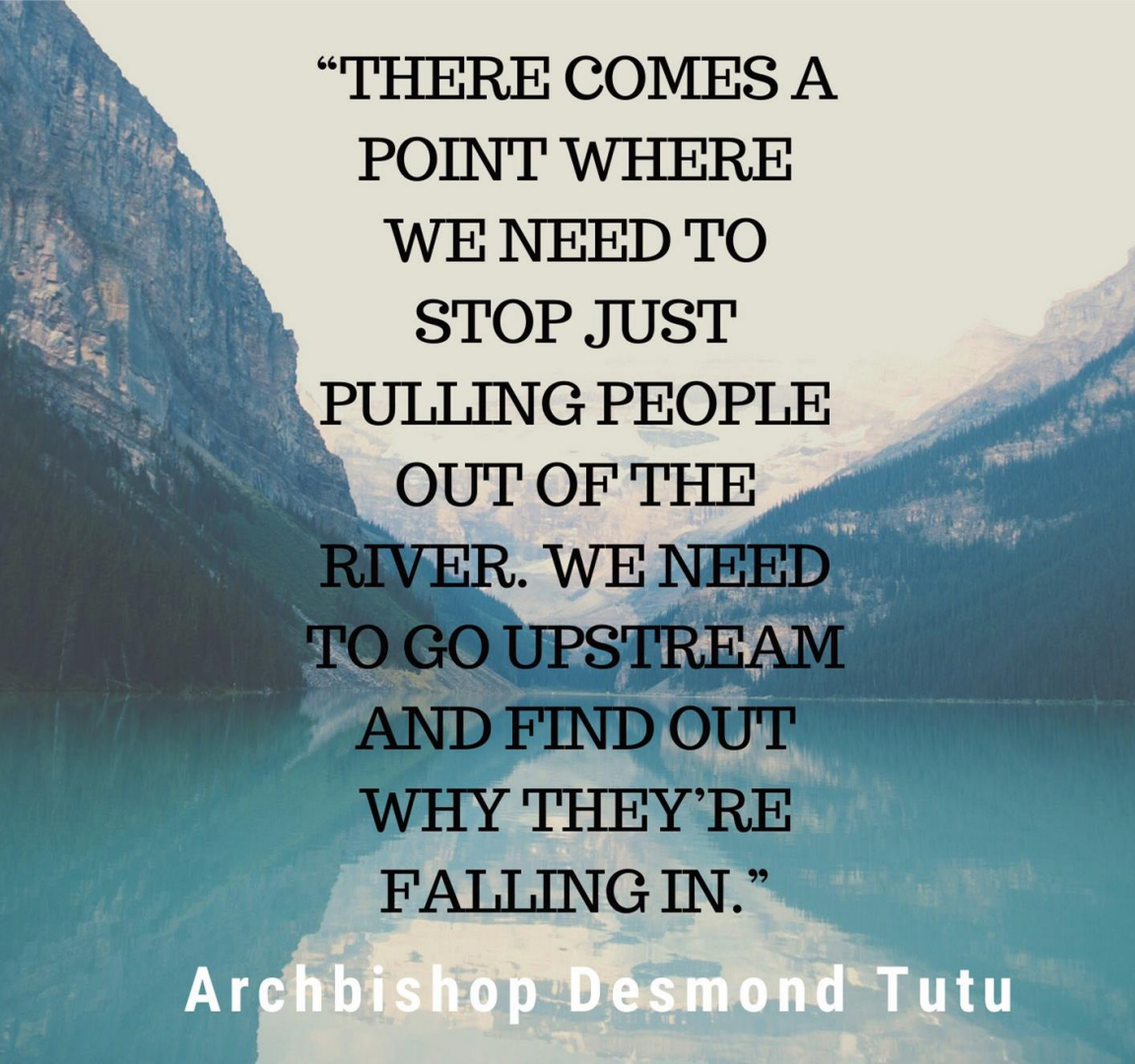
**Amend the language** from statute 260E and MN Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines that identifies educational neglect as a mandatory child protection response and amend language to allow a discretionary child welfare response, with a mandated offer of services or to enable a county to pilot an alternative response in partnership with a community provider to offer services to a family when school attendance concerns emerge.



**Invest in and sustain community-based prevention efforts** and programming such as Family Resource Centers, full service community schools and other initiatives and programs with the goal of ensuring access to these supports throughout all counties. This aligns with the vision of community and culturally specific agencies taking on work with families in the community.



**Modernize and invest in data systems** that support the work



**“THERE COMES A  
POINT WHERE  
WE NEED TO  
STOP JUST  
PULLING PEOPLE  
OUT OF THE  
RIVER. WE NEED  
TO GO UPSTREAM  
AND FIND OUT  
WHY THEY’RE  
FALLING IN.”**

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

## Why Focus on Prevention?

- Government cannot do it all.
- Less Government intrusion, more community support, and more family choices.
- Try new things. Cannot get different results from the same programs.
- Minimize the deep-end county programs that are more costly and tend to have less positive outcomes for the community, families, and individuals.

Thank you

# Counties Response to School Attendance Concerns

Jessie Stratton – Olmsted County

Nikki Hallberg – Scott County

Jim Miklausich - Asst. Superintendent Shakopee Schools

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**IS THERE ANOTHER WAY? Yes!**

# Another Way – Olmsted School Community Partnership

- PACE Program- Parents and Children Excel: a diversionary program that allows BIPOC children and their families to be provided services outside the child protection system.
- **County-School District Liaisons**
  - Two social workers-One responsible for Elementary Aged and one responsible for Middle School Aged students
  - Work within and with schools to identify students early who have attendance or other worries getting in the way of their education
  - Facilitate a meeting with school, caregivers and student as early as 3 absences
  - Develop an Educational Action Plan with all parties to be reviewed in near future (approx. 30 days)
  - Liaisons can make referrals to mental health services, community resources, basic needs options, etc
  - Goals: identify students early and address the underlying worries; build partnerships between school and family early; avoid need for CW or CP services

## **Successes:**

- Schools state they appreciate liaisons ability to provide expertise on community or voluntary county services to offer families
- Schools routinely report they do not want to have to utilize CP to address school worries as it causes undue stress and conflict with families
- Families feel more supported, less judged; receive individualized services

## **Worries:**

- Despite early successes, only small portion of schools/students that would be eligible can access due to staffing and tentative funding
- Sustainability is in jeopardy; persistent problem with creative earlier intervention programs across the state without additional resources at a state and federal level.



# Another Way- Scott County Approach

**PASS Program  
(Promoting  
Attendance and  
School Success) for  
children under 12**

**PATH Program  
(Promoting  
Attendance  
Through Hope) for  
children over 12**

# PASS Prevention

- Enables school to make referral directly to community provider, St. David's, when a student (under age 12) has 3 unexcused absences
- St. David's engages the student and family and school to overcome barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services, etc.)
- Engagement across all Scott County School Districts

# PASS Diversion

- Schools make mandated report for educational neglect to child protection after student has 7+ unexcused absences and school intervention is not effective
- Scott County CP will screen report and, if appropriate, screen-out and divert it to community provider, St. David's.
- St. David's will engage student, family and school in addressing and overcoming barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services)
- Strong engagement and coordination between St. David's and local school districts
- If student/family refuses to engage in PASS Diversion, the case may be referred back to child protection

# PATH Program

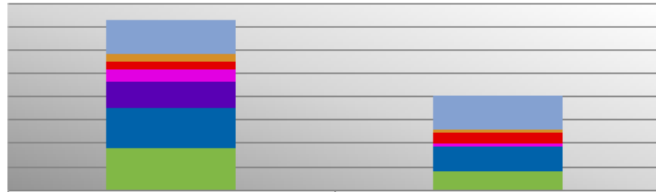
## Partnership with TreeHouse and The Katallasso Group

➤ [Home | Path Prevention](#)

- Schools make prevention referrals directly to PATH Prevention when they identify a student with unexcused absences
  - Schools can make truancy referrals to CAO after student (age 12+) has 7 or more unexcused absences and school intervention is not effective
- PATH will engage student, family and school in addressing and overcoming barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services)
- Strong engagement and coordination between PATH staff and local school districts
- If student/family refuses to engage in PATH diversion, the case may be referred back to County for formal truancy intervention

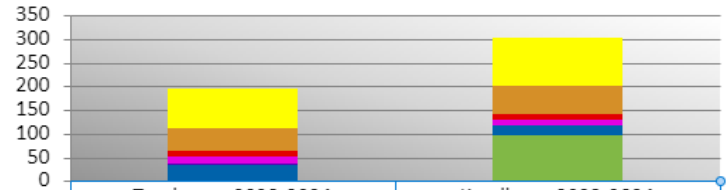
# Demographics of Students Served by PASS and PATH Programs

**PASS Referrals by Race and Ethnicity for School Year**



|                     | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Hispanic (any race) | 29        | 29        |
| Pacific Island      | 1         | 0         |
| Native Amer.        | 6         | 3         |
| Multi Racial        | 7         | 9         |
| Asian               | 10        | 2         |
| Unknown             | 23        | 0         |
| Caucasian           | 35        | 22        |
| African Amer.       | 35        | 15        |
| Total               | 146       | 80        |

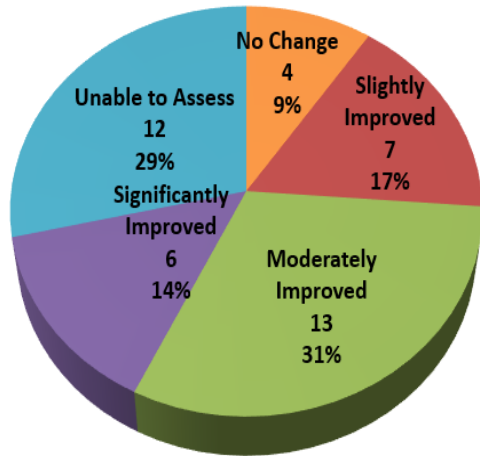
**Truancy Prevention Referrals by Race and Ethnicity for School Year**



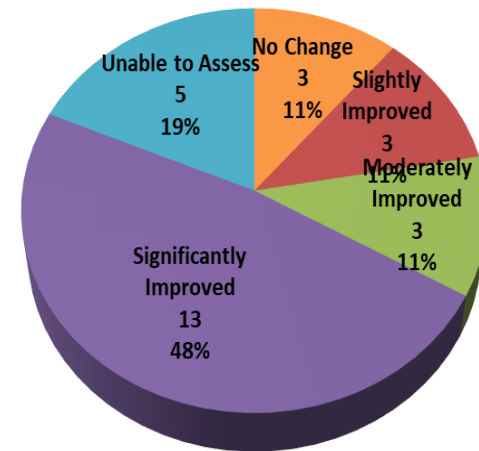
|                  | Treehouse 2023-2024 | Katallasso 2023-2024 |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Caucasian        | 84                  | 102                  |
| African American | 47                  | 62                   |
| Native American  | 12                  | 12                   |
| Asian            | 15                  | 11                   |
| Pacific Islander | 2                   | 1                    |
| Hispanic         | 35                  | 19                   |
| Unknown          | 0                   | 97                   |
| Total            | 195                 | 304                  |

# PASS: Improved School Attendance

PASS Diversion Program: Improved Attendance  
for School Year 2022-2023

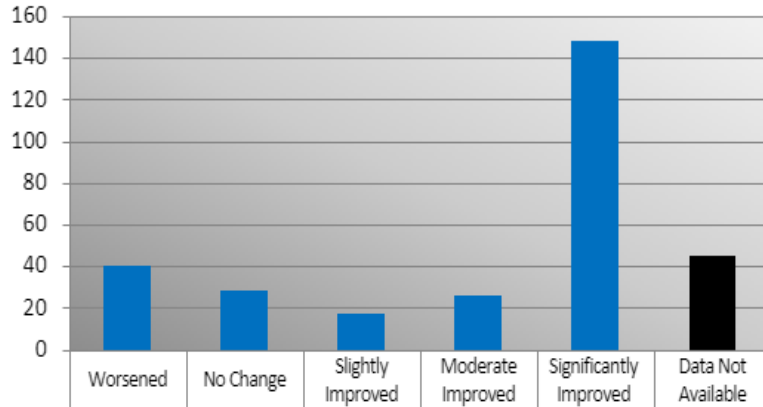


PASS Diversion Program: Improved Attendance  
for School Year 2023-2024



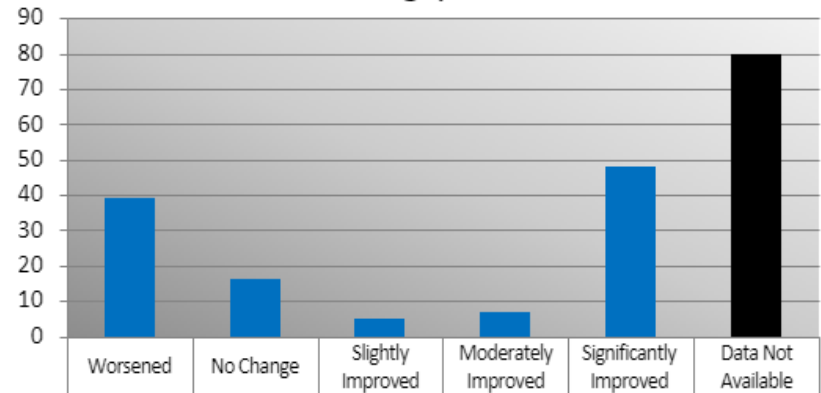
# PATH: Improved School Attendance

**The Katallasso Group: PATH Prevention Student Attendance Change, 2023-2024**



|                                     |       |       |      |       |       |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|----|
| ■ Students                          | 40    | 28    | 17   | 26    | 148   | 45 |
| Percent of Students with Known Data | 15.4% | 10.8% | 6.6% | 10.0% | 57.1% |    |

**TreeHouse: PATH Prevention Student Attendance Change, 2023-2024**



|                                     |       |       |      |      |       |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|----|
| ■ Students                          | 39    | 16    | 5    | 7    | 48    | 80 |
| Percent of Students with Known Data | 33.9% | 13.9% | 4.3% | 6.1% | 41.7% |    |

# Scott County/Shakopee Schools Partnership

Shakopee Schools and Scott County have been consistently working to improve attendance and targeted approaches to improving individual student attendance outcomes.

- Joint meetings were held throughout the 2023-24 school year and direct attendance meetings were held in the summer of 2024 to prepare for this school year.
- The School Board authorized agreement with Scott County for Attendance Specialist Services at the end of the 2023-24 school year = 100% funded by Scott County.



# Scott County/Shakopee Schools Partnership

- Improve student attendance = shared vision
- Continually enhance practices, and procedures that support increased student attendance.
- Develop direct connections of the impact that attendance practices and procedures have on students and families.
- Recognize any inequities of our current system of reporting absences and making referrals for programming.
- Strengthen the partnership with Scott County and the referrals process.
- Build greater understanding across the district of programs to support students who are chronically truant including PASS and PATH- prevention and diversion.





# What is a Family Resource Center?

Universal access point for education, supports, services, and community building.



**Safe, accessible place for families to connect with supports and services.**



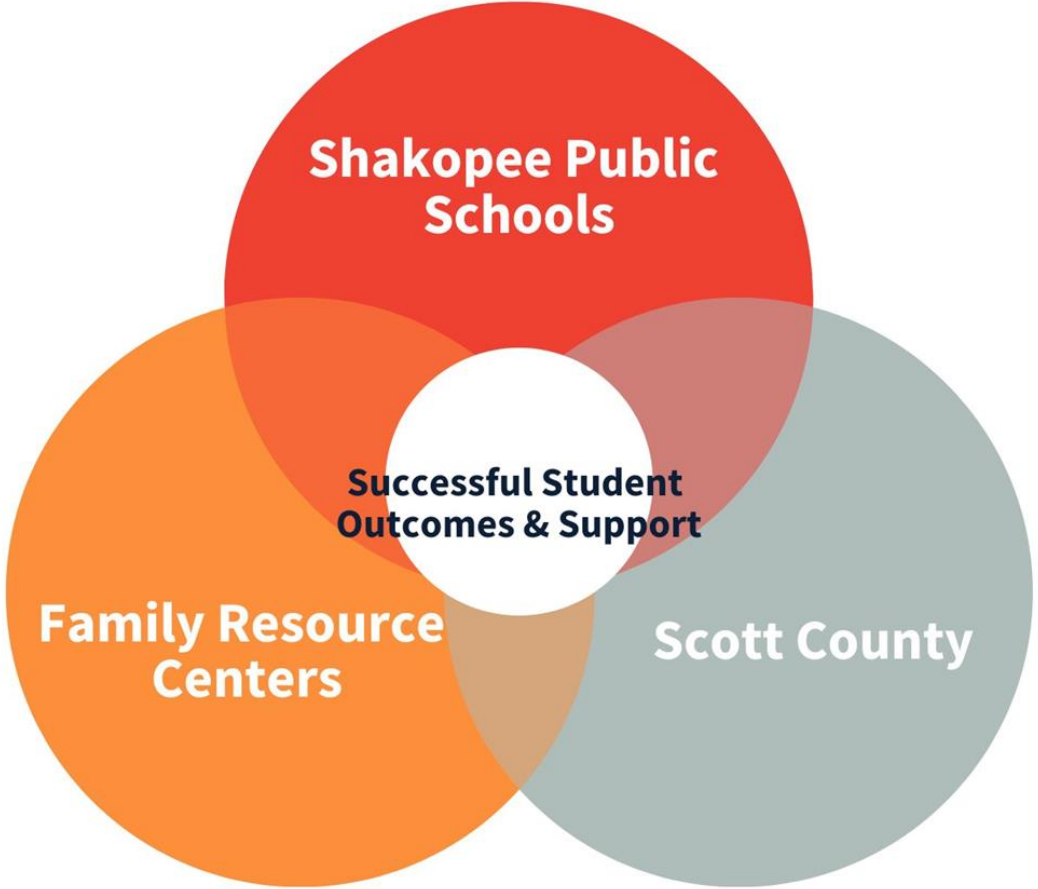
**Programs tailored to the culture and needs of the community they serve.**



**Core services focus on parenting education and skills, early childhood literacy, and access to concrete supports.**



**A place where individuals and organizations come together to help families thrive.**



**Shakopee Public  
Schools**

**Family Resource  
Centers**

**Scott County**

**Successful Student  
Outcomes & Support**

# Opportunities and Recommendations



## **Amend the language**

from statute 260E and MN Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines that identifies educational neglect as a mandatory child protection response and amend language to allow a discretionary child welfare response, with a mandated offer of services or to enable a county to pilot an alternative response in partnership with a community provider to offer services to a family when school attendance concerns emerge.

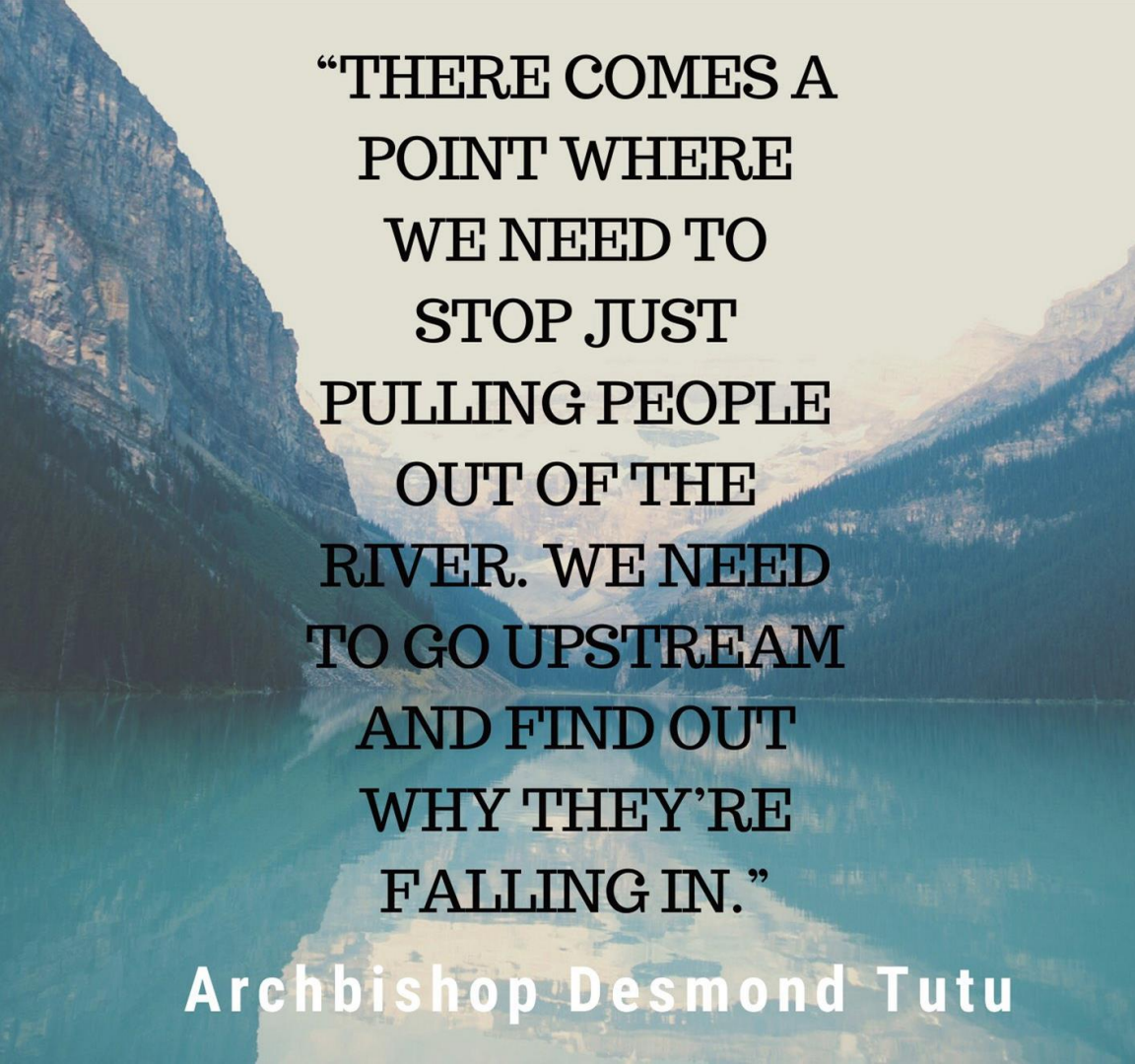


## **Invest in and sustain community-based prevention efforts**

and programming such as Family Resource Centers, full service community schools and other initiatives and programs with the goal of ensuring access to these supports throughout all counties. This aligns with the vision of community and culturally specific agencies taking on work with families in the community.



**Modernize and invest in data systems** that support the work



**“THERE COMES A  
POINT WHERE  
WE NEED TO  
STOP JUST  
PULLING PEOPLE  
OUT OF THE  
RIVER. WE NEED  
TO GO UPSTREAM  
AND FIND OUT  
WHY THEY’RE  
FALLING IN.”**

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

## Why Focus on Prevention?

- Government cannot do it all.
- Less Government intrusion, more community support, and more family choices.
- Try new things. Cannot get different results from the same programs.
- Minimize the deep-end county programs that are more costly and tend to have less positive outcomes for the community, families, and individuals.

Thank you

Subject Student Attendance

Authors Keeler

Analyst Cristina Parra

Date December 13, 2024

## Overview

This bill draft lists provisions in other statutes that relate to student attendance. Some of the provisions referenced are in the education code (Minn. Stat. chs. 120A to 129). Provisions outside the education code are in chapters that relate to data practices, transportation, truancy, maltreatment, and public safety.

A similar statute in the education code, Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.8957, lists sections governing parental rights related to topics in prekindergarten through grade 12 education.

## Summary

| Section | Description |
|---------|-------------|
|---------|-------------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | <b>Attendance provisions coded elsewhere.</b> |
|---|---|

Lists sections related to student attendance codified elsewhere.

**Subd. 1. Scope.** Identifies the scope of statutes identified in section as relating to student attendance.

**Subd. 2. Age of instruction.** Refers to compulsory instruction requirements and limits on admission based on age.

**Subd. 3. District of residence.** Refers to provisions relating to admission in a student's district of residence, and open enrollment into a nonresident district.

**Subd. 4. Nonpublic school student reporting.** Refers to reporting requirements for nonpublic school students.

**Subd. 5. Transportation.** Refers to student transportation requirements and a district's authority to revoke a student's bus riding privileges.

**Subd. 6. Students with disabilities.** Refers to school district requirements relating to students with disabilities under state and federal law.

| Section | Description |
|---------|-------------|
|---------|-------------|

**Subd. 7. Funding.** Refers to sources of funding districts may use to reduce truancy.

**Subd. 8. Absences.** Refers to requirements for a parent applying to have a child be excused from attendance, and for a district to accommodate an absence for religious observance or cultural practice, observance, or ceremony.

**Subd. 9. Removal from attendance roll.** Refers to statutory provision relating to removal from attendance roll after 15 consecutive absences.

**Subd. 10. Truancy.** Refers to truancy program provisions, including provisions relating to notification that a child is a truant, truancy mediation programs, and disclosure of student data to the county attorney for purposes of addressing truancy.

**Subd. 11. Maltreatment.** Refers to maltreatment statutes that relate to truancy.

**Subd. 12. Criminal penalties.** Refers to provisions establishing criminal penalties for failing to provide instruction of a child or causing or contributing to a child being a habitual truant.



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ISSUE BRIEFS | FEBRUARY 2023

# Separating Poverty From Neglect in Child Welfare

Neglect, often defined as the failure to provide a child with needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision, affects millions of children. [Three-quarters](#) of child welfare cases involve reports of neglect, including many thousands that result in family separation each year. Although rates of most types of maltreatment have declined significantly in the past 30 years, rates of neglect have fluctuated only slightly and remain high (Child Trends, 2019). Persistently high rates of neglect, and the potentially serious consequences of both [neglect](#) and [family separation](#) by the child protection system, point to the need for more effective prevention and early intervention strategies.

In the past, prevention strategies have often focused on family-level issues and dynamics, but the role of poverty, and the systemic factors that make escaping poverty

## WHAT'S INSIDE

What is neglect?

Societal factors in poverty and neglect

What works

Conclusion

References





difficult for families, cannot be ignored. Research tells us that families who are experiencing poverty are far more likely to be reported to child protective services (CPS) than families with more resources, but it does not tell us *why* this is the case. What is increasingly clear is that helping families move out of poverty decreases the risk to children (Rostad et al., 2017).

Our country is currently facing a period of widespread and growing economic insecurity. Broad swaths of the U.S. population are experiencing financial hardship without a clear and consistent safety net (Kinder et al., 2021). Financial help in an emergency is available in some situations and jurisdictions, but it is far from guaranteed. Many areas also face a scarcity of quality, affordable housing, and too many jobs still fall short of offering a living wage and benefits (Slack & Berger, 2021).

This issue brief explores what the research shows about the overlap among families experiencing poverty and those reported to the child welfare system for neglect, the societal context within which both poverty and neglect exist, and strategies that have proven effective for preventing and addressing both poverty and neglect, together. It is important to note that none of these strategies are intended to be "quick fixes" implemented in isolation. The issues underlying poverty and neglect require long-term advocacy, assistance, and collaborative community support to resolve. The strategies presented in this brief should be viewed as part of a larger movement within the child welfare system away from a focus on surveilling and separating families experiencing poverty and toward collaborating with a broader social services system to ensure that all families have access to the resources and support they need to care for their children and thrive.

## WHAT IS NEGLECT?

Federal law provides a definition of "child abuse and neglect," but it does not explicitly define "abuse" and "neglect" separately, leaving more nuanced descriptions of specific types of maltreatment to the States. Most States do not make a distinction in statute between a single incident of neglect (such as a momentary lapse in supervision) and a pattern of deprivation (or "chronic neglect"). As a result, a wide variety of child experiences and family needs fall under the global term "neglect." Some States define specific types of neglect in their statutes, such as educational neglect, medical neglect, and abandonment. Some States' definitions include specific exceptions, such as religious exemptions for medical neglect (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Because of these differences from State to State, it is difficult to determine whether all cases of neglect that come to the attention of the child welfare system represent equivalent risk of harm.

Racial, ethnic, and political disparities further complicate the issue. A significant body of research has documented the overrepresentation of certain groups, particularly Black, Brown, and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children and families, in the child welfare system relative to their representation in the general population (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021). AI/AN and Black children are found by CPS agencies to be victims of child maltreatment at rates (per 1,000 children in the population) almost twice that of White children (Chapin Hall, 2022). Explicit and implicit bias affect how families are treated at every CPS decision point: African American and AI/AN families are reported to CPS and subjected to investigations at higher rates than other families, are more likely to be removed from their families, and are less likely to reunify (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021).

## SOCIETAL FACTORS IN POVERTY AND NEGLECT

**“There is a fine line between parental neglect of children and societal neglect of families.”  
—Teresa Rafael, executive director, Children’s Trust Fund Alliance**

Most families who live in poverty do not neglect their children. However, families who are poor are overrepresented in the (much smaller) population of people reported to CPS agencies for neglect. A recent study found that material hardship (poverty) was the only factor that consistently predicted both child welfare system involvement and neglectful behaviors self-reported by families (Slack & Berger, 2021). The Fourth National Incidence Study found that children from families with low socioeconomic status were seven times more likely to be neglected than children in households with more resources.

Some of the connection may be explained by increased surveillance of people living in poverty. For example, families living in poverty are more likely to come into contact with mandated reporters through overpolicing and reliance on social safety net services (e.g., public housing, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]). Specific poverty-related factors are also associated with greater risk of neglect, as in the following examples:

- Difficulty finding child care was found to be a strong predictor of maternal neglect (more so than mental health, severity of drug use, or history of abuse as a child) (Chapin Hall, 2022).
- States in which TANF recipients lost benefits for not working saw increases in both neglect and foster care entries between 2004 and 2015 (Ginther & Johnson-Motoyama, 2017).
- Unemployment rates, self-reported housing instability, and evictions have all been associated with increased risk of neglect (University of Oxford, 2017; Chapin Hall, 2022).

It stands to reason that increased stress from a job loss or other economic shock, housing uncertainty, or the turbulence of falling into and out of poverty can result in strained family dynamics, relationships, and caregiving decisions. However, research has found that family dynamics alone do not fully account for the link between experiencing poverty and being reported or substantiated for neglect (Fong, 2017). Poverty and neglect coexist in a social context. Chronic neglect and poverty are impacted by complex social inequities and public policy decisions that extend back generations.

Historical trauma and structural and systemic racism play significant roles in intergenerational poverty and child welfare system involvement, which are disproportionately experienced by Black, Brown, and AI/AN families in the United States. In 2019, approximately 30 percent of Black and AI/AN children, and only 10 percent of White children, lived in families with incomes below the Federal poverty threshold (Chapin Hall, 2022). This disparity is not improving over time: between 2000 and 2014, AI/AN, Black, and Hispanic and Latino families experienced more downward income mobility than White and Asian families (Akee et al., 2017).

Despite the dangers that family poverty can pose to the health and well-being of children, U.S. public policy has consistently made a clear separation between financial supports to families and resources for child protection (Weiner et al., 2021), often at the expense of Black, Brown, and AI/AN families. The Social Security Act of 1935 first placed the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program (the precursor to TANF) within the Social Security Administration, while social services for families were located within the Federal Children's Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This effectively prevented child welfare agencies from using financial supports as a strategy to keep families safely together.

In response to States removing (primarily Black) families from AFDC rolls because they were deemed "unsuitable," the 1961 Flemming Rule required States to either provide these families with support or place the children into foster care. A year later, the Social Security Act was amended to create an uncapped entitlement for placement into foster care while providing no similar funding stream to support intact families (Chapin Hall, 2022). Meanwhile, up to and including the first half of the 20th century, AI/AN families were routinely separated by the forced placement of their children in assimilationist boarding schools that forbade children to speak their Tribal languages or participate in their culture. The prevalence of these abusive institutions, which only began to decline after the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978, has resulted in generations of trauma, mistrust, and cultural loss.

In 1974, the mandated reporting laws enacted as part of the [Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act](#) further cemented a system that emphasizes surveillance of families over preventive care and support. Most recently, the Family First Prevention Services Act expands the availability of evidence-based prevention strategies but does not include economic supports among the eligible services.

## WHAT WORKS

There are numerous theories about how economic policies and social conditions contribute to higher rates of neglect reports, citing factors such as the effects of surveillance and overpolicing, social norms, and structural and systemic racism. Regardless of the cause, a growing and compelling body of evidence shows that promoting family financial stability is associated with reduced risk of both neglect and involvement with child welfare.

**“Despite the field’s large and almost unanimous embrace of ecological systems theory as a framework for understanding the causes of maltreatment, our interventions are inordinately focused on changing or fixing the parent. We either have to admit that we have the wrong theory, which I don’t think is the case, or get busy trying to understand other aspects of the ecological system that families live within and how changing elements of those other parts of the ecology can also prevent maltreatment.”**

**—Kristen Shook Slack, professor, University of Wisconsin–Madison**

## PREVENTING POVERTY-RELATED NEGLECT AT A POPULATION LEVEL

Attendees at the first-ever White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children in 1909, while acknowledging the overlap of families experiencing poverty and child maltreatment, declared that poverty alone was not a compelling reason to separate children from their families. Today, approximately half of States include exemptions for poverty in their statutory definitions of child abuse and neglect (Williams et al., 2022).

One policy approach to reducing poverty-related neglect is to ensure that every State explicitly excludes poverty-related conditions from its statutory definition of maltreatment. For example, Washington State's 2022 Keeping Families Together Act ensures that children cannot be separated from their families solely on the basis of community or family poverty or inadequate housing. Similar legislation has been passed or proposed in other States (Chapin Hall, 2022).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have long proposed strengthening economic and concrete supports to families as another critical strategy in preventing child maltreatment. These supports improve parents' ability to provide for their children's basic needs, help caregivers secure appropriate child care, and reduce stress and depression. Economic supports may also reduce household crowding and increase housing stability (Fortson et al. 2016).

In 2021, changes to the Child Tax Credit had a significant impact on child poverty. These changes, authorized by the [American Rescue Plan](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily increased benefit levels, expanded access to families with the lowest incomes, and paid the benefit in monthly installments between July and December. According to the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy, the tax credit, while in effect, reduced monthly child poverty by 30 percent and kept more than 3 million children out of poverty (Parolin & Curran, 2022).

Research increasingly shows that policies like this that expand benefits and improve financial security in households with children decrease neglect reports. Jurisdictions often have discretion to improve access to such benefits by simplifying application processes, making applications available online, reducing barriers to eligibility as permitted, and providing prioritized access to families at risk of separation or involvement with the child protection system. Some of the policies that address poverty-related conditions and have shown to reduce neglect rates, specifically, include the following:

- **Earned Income Tax Credit.** One study found that a \$1,000 increase in income through the Earned Income Tax Credit is associated with an 8- to 10-percent reduction in CPS involvement for low-income, single-mother households (Berger et al., 2017). A second study found a 10-percent increase in *refundable* State earned income tax credit benefits was associated with 241 fewer reports of neglect per 100,000 children in the population (Kovski et al., 2021).
- **Medicaid coverage.** In a study comparing States with expanded Medicaid coverage to States that chose not to expand coverage, Medicaid expansion was associated with 422 fewer cases of neglect per 100,000 children younger than the age of 6 (Brown et al., 2019).

- **Minimum wage.** One study found increases in the minimum wage led to fewer child maltreatment reports. For every \$1 increase, neglect reports for young and school-aged children declined 9.6 percent (Raissian & Bullinger, 2017).
- **Child care.** One study found that States with more accommodating policies regarding subsidizing child care for child welfare-involved children had fewer child removals than other States (Meloy et al. 2015). Another observed a 16-percent decrease in the likelihood of a neglect report in the following 12 months associated with each additional month that low-income mothers received a child care subsidy (Yang et al., 2019).
- **Nutrition assistance and food subsidies.** Medicaid-enrolled children whose parents participated in SNAP (i.e., food stamps) and/or Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs were found to be at lower risk of substantiated maltreatment than children whose parents did not participate in either nutrition program (Lee & Mackey-Bilaver, 2007). In rural areas, proximity to stores that accept SNAP benefits has also shown to be associated with fewer neglect reports (Bullinger et al. 2021).

Other important economic supports, including housing assistance and child support, have been found to impact maltreatment rates in general, although studies may not have specifically focused on neglect:

- **Child support.** One study found that mothers who received TANF and were eligible to receive all child support paid on behalf of their children (without a decrease in their benefits) were 10 percent less likely to have a screened-in maltreatment report than mothers who received only part of their children's child support payments. Even an increase in child support payments as small as \$100 per year had a positive impact (Cancian et al., 2013).
- **Housing assistance.** Supportive housing programs have been shown to result in less substantiated maltreatment, fewer removals, and increased reunification among children of child welfare-involved families facing housing instability (Farrell et al., 2018). In another study, homeless families referred for permanent housing subsidies experienced 50 percent fewer foster care placements (Gubits et al., 2015).

The CDC has identified family-friendly work policies as another important strategy to both support families' economic stability and improve the balance of work and parenting time. These policies include increasing wages, providing paid leave, and offering consistent but flexible schedules (Fortson et al., 2016).

## **ASSESSING NEGLECT IN THE CONTEXT OF POVERTY**

It can be difficult for caseworkers to distinguish between maltreatment and the effects of poverty. Thus, it is important to conduct a thorough assessment through observation and by asking questions, recognizing there may not be clear-cut answers. This could include assessing adequate level of care (for example, supervision and basic needs, acknowledging that childrearing practices and standards of care differ from culture to culture), whether the children are experiencing actual harm, and whether the neglect (if present) reflects a parent's choices or a lack of available resources despite the family's best efforts. It is particularly important when working with AI/AN families for caseworkers to assess their knowledge of traditional Tribal childrearing and wellness practices. Cultural awareness is an important practice when interacting with all families.

The family's income, as well as their knowledge of and access to economic resources, are critical considerations when assessing safety and risk. Acknowledging these factors during important decision points may help prevent unwarranted neglect substantiations and unnecessary separation of children from their families. Determining whether the family is eligible for benefit programs that could ease financial strain, and helping to connect families with economic and concrete supports wherever possible, should be a regular part of practice with families who are struggling financially.

Important questions to consider may include the following:

**IF A REPORT ALLEGES ...      CONSIDER ...**

**Physical neglect**

- Can the family afford to provide for children's basic needs, such as appropriate shelter, food, clothing, and hygiene?
- Is affordable housing available where the family wants to live?
- Does the family live in a "food desert" that makes access to healthy, affordable food more difficult?
- Is transportation or neighborhood violence a barrier to accessing basic needs?

**Medical neglect**

- Can the family afford medical insurance, or is there a free or low-cost clinic nearby?
- Are there resources from the Tribe that may assist with medical needs?
- Does the family have unpaid medical bills that are getting in the way of securing care?
- Does the caregiver's employer allow paid time off for medical appointments?
- Is transportation a barrier to timely care?

**Supervisory neglect**

- Is quality safe and affordable child care available in the family's community during the hours worked by caregivers?

**Emotional neglect**

- Are the demands and stressors of living in poverty and/or distressed communities depleting the caregiver's ability to offer children the affection and emotional support they would otherwise provide?

**Educational neglect**

- Do caregivers' work hours prevent them from monitoring the child's school attendance?
- Is reliable transportation available?
- Are older children staying home to care for younger siblings due to lack of affordable child care options?



## ADDRESSING POVERTY-RELATED CONCERNS EXPERIENCED BY FAMILIES INVOLVED WITH CHILD WELFARE

Regardless of the type of maltreatment alleged in a report or found during an investigation, child welfare systems and caseworkers can take steps to acknowledge the many ways that economic disadvantages impact the families on their caseloads and, when poverty is a factor, offer support to help families achieve greater financial stability.

**Assess and address concrete needs first.** So far, a specific combination and amount of economic support has not been identified that eliminates all cases of neglect. Many families have other issues that will need to be addressed to stay together safely. However, it is clear that most parents cannot focus on interventions like parenting classes or substance use treatment when they are facing financial crises. In the early stages of working with a family, caseworkers should ensure that basic needs such as food and [housing](#) are met before expecting parents to fulfill other aspects of their case plan.

**Take a two-generation approach to working with families.** Two-generation approaches (also referred to as whole-family approaches) intentionally integrate services provided to children and their families at the same time to help improve family financial stability and well-being. For more information, see the Child Welfare Information Gateway brief, [Two-Generation Approaches to Supporting Family Well-Being](#).

**Ensure compliance with ICWA.** In addition to setting higher standards to prevent the separation of AI/AN children from their families, ICWA requires child welfare agencies to make active efforts to preserve families. A step beyond the "reasonable efforts" required for all families, active efforts may include helping parents access supportive community resources and all benefits for which they are eligible, including Tribal supports. This work should be done with cultural awareness and humility and in authentic engagement with Tribal leaders.

**Offer or refer to benefit navigator services.** Benefit navigators advocate for families in applying for a complex array of economic safety-net programs. They understand the eligibility requirements and build relationships with people in each program, so families are not left to navigate these complicated systems alone. It is important to be aware that Tribal members, as citizens of sovereign nations, may have access to additional benefits and resources.

**Identify and/or offer flexible funds for families.** In a recent cohort facilitated by Alia, three jurisdictions offered more than \$130,000 over 2 years in direct support to families. These funds were provided when other options had been exhausted. More than half the funds went to housing expenses, in the form of rental payments to maintain housing or help with move-in expenses (first and last month's rent and security deposit). Other funds supported car repairs; utility payments; and basic needs, such as food and clothing, legal fees, and child care. This flexible funding was very effective: 85 percent of families that received the funds were able to remain together (prevent removal) or reunify (Alia, 2021).

**Codesign supports with people with lived experience.** Families who have direct experience with child welfare systems and those living in the most impacted communities are the experts in what families need to thrive. Systems that [engage people with lived experience](#) in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of program services, and pay them fairly for their expertise, benefit from their first-hand experience while creating economic opportunities within the community.

**Engage community partners.** Partnerships often play an important role in effectively serving families, particularly those with complex needs. Community partners, such as community-based organizations, supports (e.g., faith-based entities), and leaders have intimate knowledge of the strengths and needs of their communities. Collaborating with these partners allows child welfare professionals to gain a better understanding of the unique resources and services available in the community, as well as the gaps in these supports. Having this information will prove valuable while working with families to identify and help them access critical services to address their needs, such as housing supports, treatment for substance use disorders, and mental health care.

**Focus on strengths.** Keeping a family together, housed, and fed while facing economic strain, trauma, and structural inequality is a tremendous sign of strength. Child welfare workers can form better relationships with caregivers who are experiencing poverty by approaching them from this strengths-based perspective, assuring them that poverty is not a personal failure and helping them to build on the positive parenting strategies and supports they already have in place. The [protective factors](#) can serve as a framework for assessing families' strengths and helping them identify ways to build on their existing capacity to help their family thrive. [Cultural connectedness and belonging](#) are other important protective factors to consider, particularly within AI/AN families.

**Connect families with [preventive legal advocacy](#).** Addressing unmet legal needs can help prevent families from coming to the attention of child welfare. Preventive legal advocacy is a critical support that helps families address legal issues such as wrongful denial of government benefits; divorce, custody, and protective orders; and housing insecurity/tenancy issues that, when unaddressed, can lead to accusations of neglect.

## Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families Grants

The Children's Bureau issued awards in fiscal years [2018](#) and [2019](#) to develop, implement, and evaluate primary prevention strategies to improve the safety, stability, and well-being of all families through a continuum of community-based services and supports. Several grant recipients are directly addressing poverty through concrete supports and service coordination.

## CONCLUSION

Poverty is a complex, ongoing issue that has significant societal, systemic, organizational, community, and family affects. The effects of poverty can be harmful to children, but it is critical to recognize that poverty alone does not equal neglect. Families may experience and remain in poverty despite efforts



to advance their economic situation. Thus, when families experiencing poverty come to the attention of the child welfare system, it is important to consider the families' knowledge of and capacity to access social supports and help connect them with resources. Economic and concrete support interventions are not a panacea for child neglect and do not eliminate the need for other social work strategies. However, growing evidence indicates that providing such supports can reduce maltreatment rates overall, neglect rates in particular, and the number of families coming to the attention of CPS agencies.

Effectively alleviating family poverty requires a multisystem approach. Child welfare systems cannot continue to treat neglect and poverty as strictly family issues. We must consider the impact of poverty on families and the context within which many families remain in poverty, including the limited availability of economic supports, a benefits system that distinguishes between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, and a long history of systemic racism and inequality. Ultimately, the goal must be to create a new context in which multiple systems work together with communities to equitably provide the support all families need to nurture their children and thrive.

In the meantime, child welfare agencies can focus on ensuring that families experiencing neglect and poverty are viewed with compassion and respect, rather than blame and that they receive prompt access to the supports needed to keep them safely together whenever possible.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau



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New Chronic Absenteeism Data

Matt Shaver - Policy Director

September 9, 2024

## MISSION

EdAllies partners with schools, families, and communities to ensure that every young Minnesotan has access to a rigorous and engaging education. We advance policies that put underserved students first, remove barriers facing successful schools and programs, and foster an inclusive conversation about what's possible for students.

## VISION

We envision a Minnesota where every student succeeds in a rigorous and engaging school.

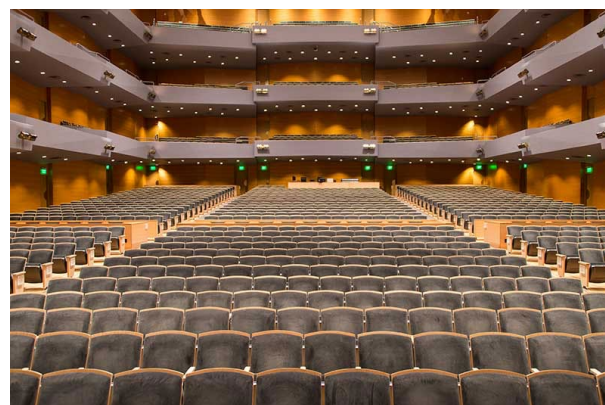
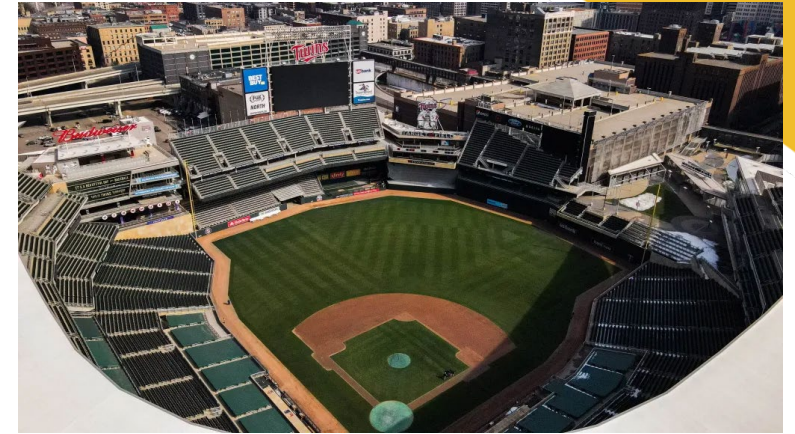
## VALUES

COURAGE | INVENTIVENESS | EQUITY | HONESTY | HUMILITY



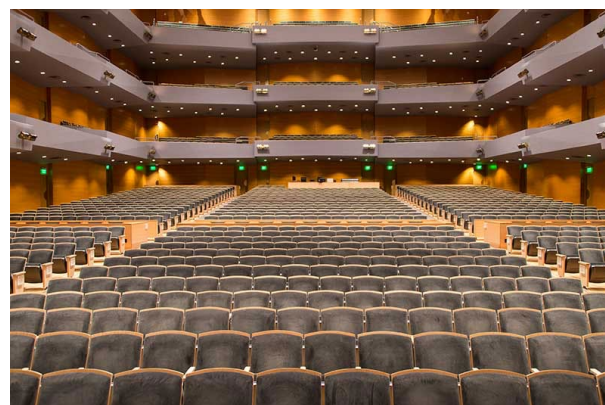
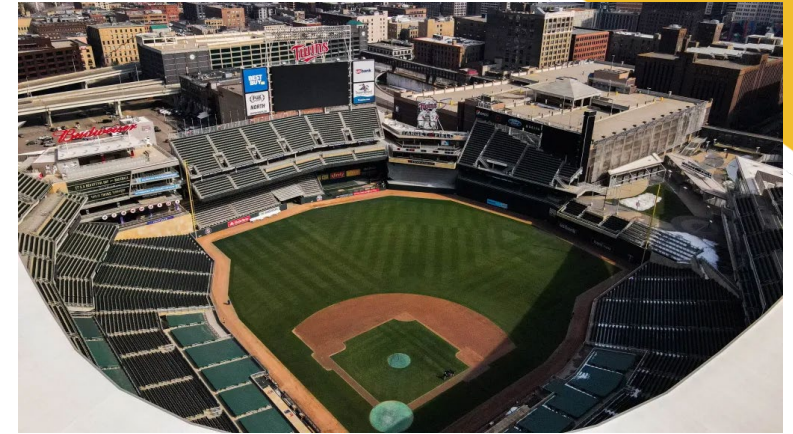


# 2021-2022 Statewide Chronic Absenteeism: 30.2% (236,101 Students)





# 2022-2033 Statewide Chronic Absenteeism: 25.5% (199,185 Students)







## Notes on consistent attendance/chronic absenteeism

-Chronically absent = 10% or more of school days missed due to **excused** or **unexcused** absences, as well as out of school **suspensions**

-Students are considered “in attendance” when on **field trips**, at **sporting events**, or **other extra curricular activities**

-“In general, if a school employee is being paid to supervise or provide services to a student, that student will be counted as in attendance.”

-Only **students enrolled at least half the school year** are counted for this indicator

-From MDE’s “Implementing ESSA: Consistent Attendance FAQ”



# Where can I find this info?

rc.education.mn.gov

The screenshot displays the 'Minnesota Report Card' website interface. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with various categories. The main content area features a search bar for finding schools, with a 'Map Search' button below it and a 'Done' button to the right. The search bar is currently empty.

**MENU** Minnesota Report Card

**My School** *My School: What can I learn about my school and its students?* ?

Using the Report Card

**More About My School**

Are students safe and engaged?

What challenging classes are taken?

Who are the students?

Who works here?

How is money spent?

**How Well are Students Doing?**

Are students mastering standards?

Are English learners progressing?

How many students graduate?

How many students go to college?

**How is Minnesota doing?**

How do we do on national tests?

[Minnesota Department of Education](#)

**Search to find your school**

School or District

Map Search

Done

rc.education.mn.gov

MENU

- My School
- Using the Report Card
- More About My School
- Are students safe and engaged?
- North Star Consistent Attendance**
- Engagement and Safety
- Suspensions
- Expulsions and Exclusions
- Incidents of Violence
- Referrals to Law Enforcement
- What challenging classes are taken?
- Who are the students?
- Who works here?
- How is money spent?
- How Well are Students Doing?

Search to find your school

School or District

Map Search

- My School
- Using the Report Card
- More About My School**
- Are students safe and engaged?
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- Engagement and Safety
- Suspensions
- Expulsions and Exclusions
- Incidents of Violence
- Referrals to Law Enforcement
- What challenging classes are taken?
- Who are the students?
- Who works here?

**North Star Consistent Attendance: Are students attending school regularly?** ?

This report now uses eight state-defined racial and ethnic categories, including the state definition of American Indian.

**Statewide** Year: 2023 Demographics: All Students 🔍

School or District:  ✕

Comparison Line:  ▾

Year:  ▾

Optionally choose a category. (Choose One)

|                    |                                     |                           |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| American Indian    | Asian                               | Black or African American |
| Hispanic or Latino | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | Other Indigenous Peoples  |
| White              | Two or more races                   | English Learner           |
| Special Education  | Free/Reduced-Price Meals            | Average of Groups         |

✔ Done

Consistent attendance: 74.5%

Count consistently attending: 581,195

+ Add another view

My School

Using the Report Card

More About My School

Are students safe and engaged?

North Star Consistent Attendance

Engagement and Safety

Suspensions

Expulsions and Exclusions

Incidents of Violence

Referrals to Law Enforcement

What challenging classes are taken?

Who are the students?

Who works here?

How is money spent?

How Well are Students Doing?

Are students mastering standards?

**North Star Consistent Attendance:** Are students attending school regularly? [?](#)

This report now uses eight state-defined racial and ethnic categories, including the state definition of American Indian.

**South St. Paul Public School District**

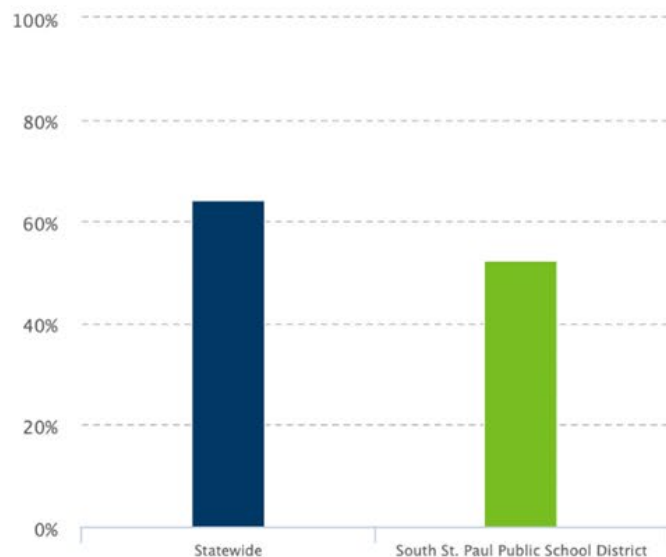
Year: 2023 Demographics: Free/Reduced-Price Meals



Add another view

**Consistent Attendance**

Export to PDF



|                                     | Statewide | South St. Paul Public School District |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Consistent attendance</b>        | 64.3%     | 52.4%                                 |
| <b>Count consistently attending</b> | 220,660   | 827                                   |
| <b>Total</b>                        | 343,111   | 1,577                                 |

A yellow triangle with a white border is located in the bottom-left corner of the slide.

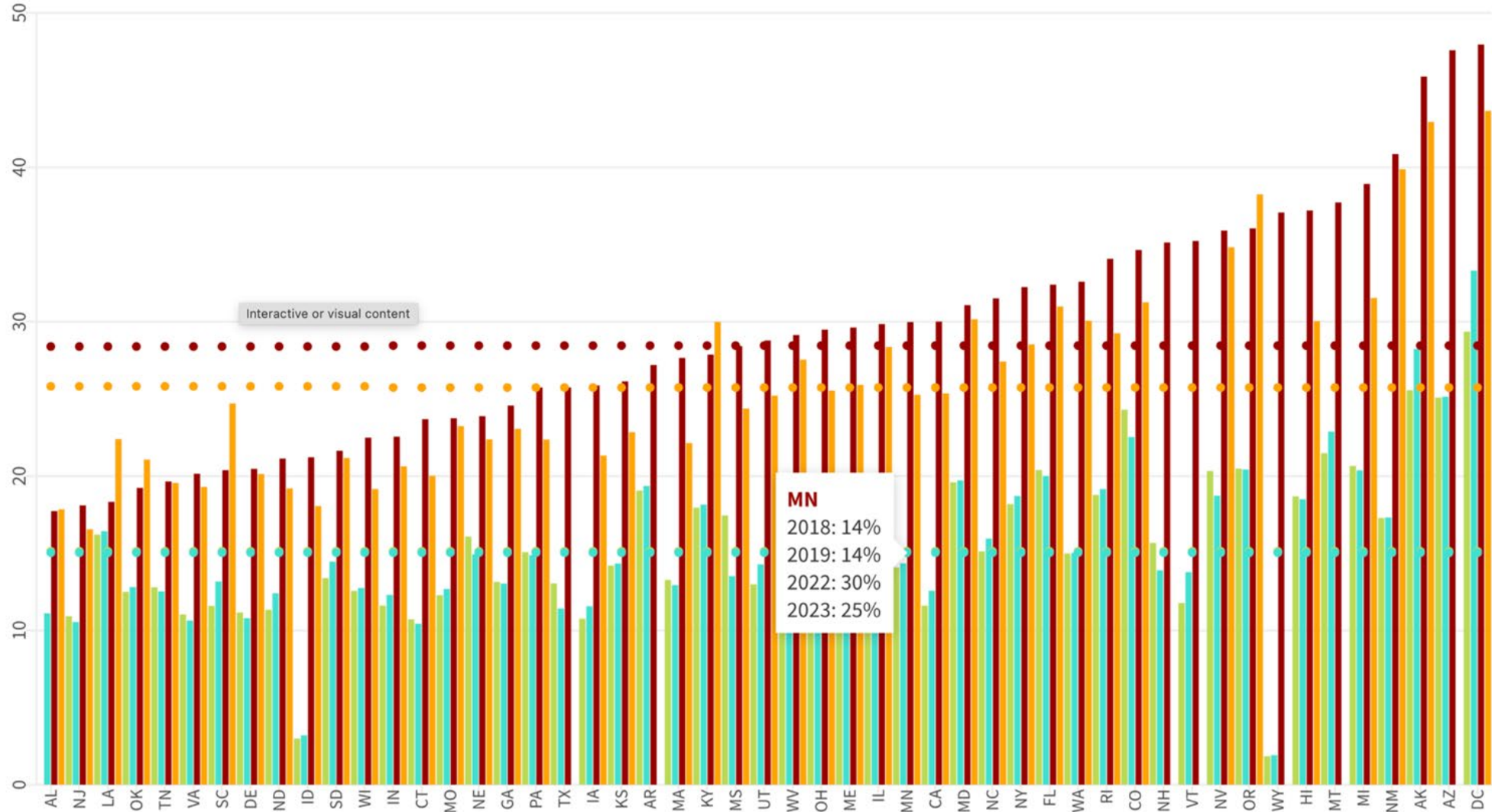
# Statewide and District Highlights



4 of 4

**2023:** Despite falling in 37 of 43 states in **2023**, average **chronic absenteeism** remains 71% above pre-pandemic levels, hindering academic recovery.

2018 2019 2022 2023 2018 avg. 2019 avg. 2022 avg. 2023 avg.



# Chronic Absenteeism Rates

| Statewide              | 2018-2019 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>All Students</b>    | 14.7%     | 30.2%     | 25.5%     |
| <b>FRPL</b>            | 22.7%     | 42.7%     | 35.7%     |
| <b>ELL</b>             | 14%       | 34%       | 30%       |
| <b>SPED</b>            | 23.7%     | 29.1%     | 23.7%     |
| <b>American Indian</b> | 42.4%     | 55.7%     | 49.8%     |
| <b>Black</b>           | 22.1%     | 40%       | 35.5%     |
| <b>Latino</b>          | 21.2%     | 41%       | 36.3%     |
| <b>Asian</b>           | 8.7%      | 23.6%     | 20.4%     |
| <b>White</b>           | 12%       | 25.7%     | 20.6%     |



# 2022-2023

-Every demographic group increased consistent attendance/decreased chronic absenteeism by 3%-10%

-Low income student consistent attendance rose 7%





# 2022-2023 District Exemplars

## 90%+ of all students consistently attending

Aitkin  
Albany  
Belgrade-Brookton-Elrosa  
Cannon Falls  
Caledonia  
Cleveland  
Community School of Excellence (Charter)  
Hawley  
Marshall  
Math and Science Academy (Charter)  
Menasha  
Minneota  
Nova Classical Academy (Charter)  
Parnassus (Charter)  
Prairie Seeds Academy (Charter)  
Rushford-Peterson  
Sebeka  
Spectrum High School (Charter)  
St. Croix Prep (Charter)  
St. Peter  
Stride Academy (Charter)  
Zumbrota-Mazeppa

## 85%+ of low income students consistently attending

Aitkin  
Albany  
Belgrade-Brookton-Elrosa  
Cannon Falls  
Cleveland  
Community School of Excellence (Charter)  
Marshall  
Math and Science Academy (Charter)  
Menasha  
Nova Classical Academy (Charter)  
Parnassus (Charter)  
Prairie Seeds Academy (Charter)  
Rushford-Peterson  
Sebeka  
Spectrum High School (Charter)  
St. Croix Prep (Charter)  
St. Peter  
Stride Academy (Charter)

# Data Questions

Can we get timelier data?

Can we disaggregate chronic absenteeism data by type of absence?  
(Excused, unexcused, suspension)

Can we report attendance data by age? (Elementary, middle, high school)

Can we get a better sense of the severity of absenteeism by reporting the number of days missed?

**Table 3. K–12 Statewide Truancy Totals**

|   | <b>2018–19</b> | <b>2019–20</b> | <b>2020–21</b> | <b>2021–22</b>   |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Enrolled at Any Point during the School Year  | 1,058,200      | 1,185,688      | 1,140,713      | <b>1,144,079</b> |
| Number of Unexcused Absences  | 3,174,111      | 2,297,651      | 7,368,283      | <b>4,736,405</b> |
| Number of Students with 5+ or 7+ Unexcused Absences Within 30 Days                                  | 65,107         | 70,929         | 191,213        | <b>85,564</b>    |
| Percentage of Students with 5+ or 7+ Unexcused Absences Within 30 Days                              | 6.2%           | 6.0%           | 16.8%          | <b>7.5%</b>      |
| Number of Students with 10+ or 15+ Unexcused Absences in a School Year                              | 77,104         | 59,813         | 182,363        | <b>87,419</b>    |
| Percentage of Students with 10+ or 15+ Unexcused Absences in a School Year                          | 7.3%           | 5.0%           | 16.0%          | <b>7.6%</b>      |
| Total Number of Students who met Truancy thresholds (5+ or 7+ in a month or 10+ or 15+ in the year) | 85,769         | 77,450         | 250,990        | <b>101,469</b>   |
| Percentage of Students who met Truancy thresholds (5+ or 7+ in a month or 10+ or 15+ in the year)   | 8.1%           | 6.5%           | 22.0%          | <b>8.9%</b>      |

**Washington State**

**Source:** CEDARS extracted on 10/22/2019 & 11/15/2022

**RIDE** Rhode Island Department of Education

The Pandemic critically impacted student attendance in Rhode Island and across the country. Chronic Absenteeism skyrocketed.

**What is Chronic Absenteeism?** The Rhode Island Department of Education classifies a student as being "chronically absent" when they miss 10 percent of school days (or 18 days per year) for any reason. This is different from truancy, which counts only unexcused absences.

## Historical Absences

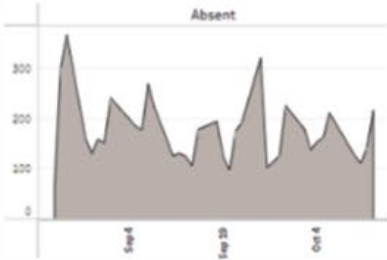
This data story unpacks the recently released 2022-23 chronic absenteeism data. It provides snapshots going back to 2017 so that users can see the impact of the pandemic on student attendance. You can sort by various student groups and look at change over time in schools and districts.

**RICAS ELA**

| Absence Rate Categories    | Exceeding expectations | Meeting expectations | Partially meeting expectations | Not meeting expectations |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Absent less than 5%        | 0.0%                   | 34.0%                | 41.0%                          | 25.0%                    |
| Absent between 5% and 10%  | 3.0%                   | 27.4%                | 48.0%                          | 22.4%                    |
| Absent between 10% and 20% | 1.4%                   | 17.8%                | 48.2%                          | 34.7%                    |
| Absent between 20% and 30% | 0.9%                   | 10.2%                | 42.4%                          | 47.0%                    |
| Absent more than 30%       | 1.2%                   | 11.2%                | 33.0%                          | 54.0%                    |

## Chronic Absenteeism and Achievement

This dashboard details, by varying attendance levels, the impact of chronic absence on state assessments. Leaders can drill into student groups to identify specific populations affected.



## Real-time Attendance Dashboards

This set of dashboards lets you dig deep into real time data. The site refreshes daily. You can examine changes from this year to last, examine attendance by multiple subgroups, look at monthly attendance trends and track early dismissals and tardies.



## Daily Chronic Absenteeism Update

Were they chronically absent last year? On this real time dashboard, you can see, by district and grade span, the percent of students that are already chronically absent as well as the number of these students that were also chronically absent last year.



## Community Dashboard

Users can drill into chronic absenteeism at the census tract and block group levels. Users can filter to see whether certain demographic characteristics, (i.e., home ownership, access to internet), correlate with chronic absenteeism. They can also examine the impact of chronic absenteeism on achievement.



# All Students

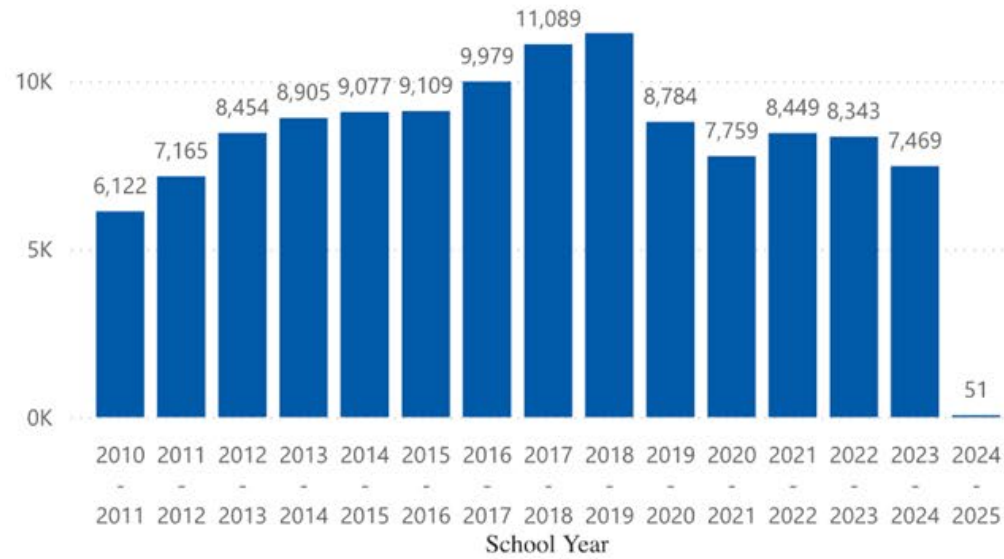
School Year, Month

All

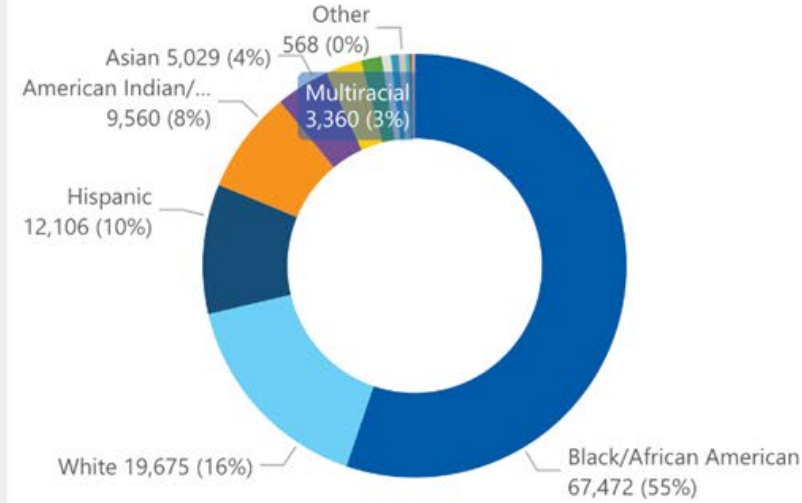
District Name, School Name

All

### Count of Reported Students by School Year

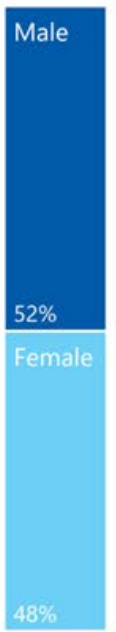


### Count of Reported Students by Race/Ethnicity



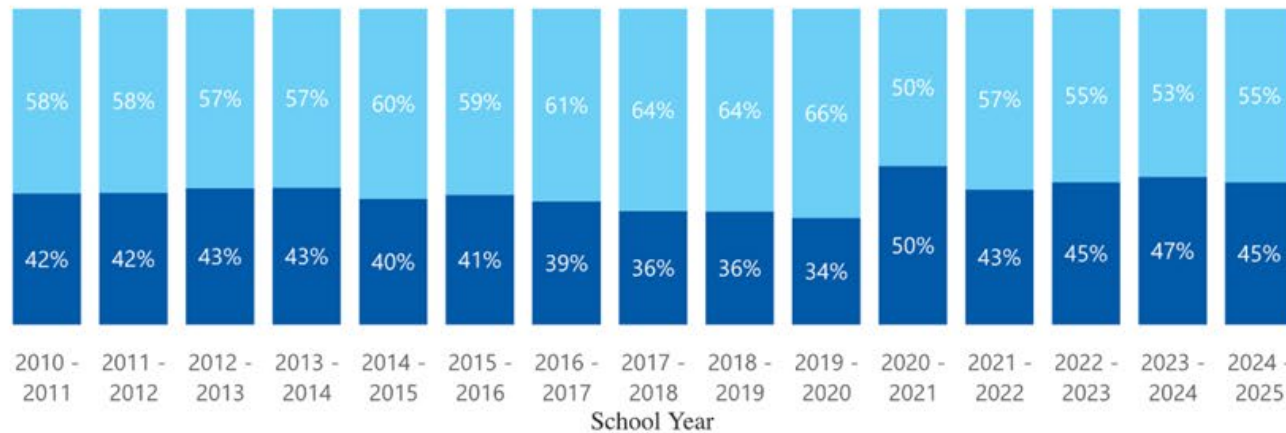
### County Demographics

| Race/Ethnicity                | %   |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| White                         | 69% |
| Black/African American        | 13% |
| Asian                         | 7%  |
| Hispanic                      | 7%  |
| Multiracial                   | 3%  |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 1%  |



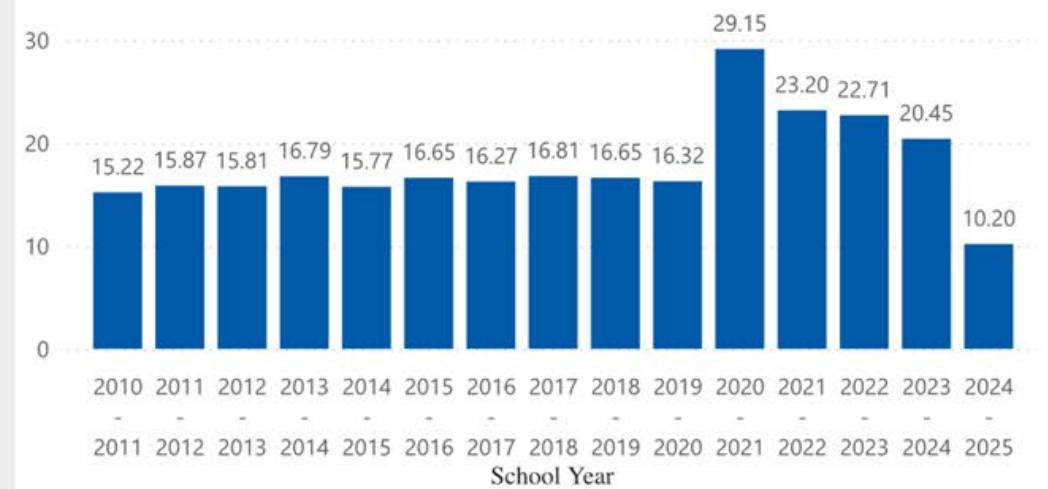
### Count of Reported Students by School Year and Case Type

Age Group ● Ages 5-11 ● Ages 12-17



Be@School Dashboard - Referral overview

### Average of Unexcused Absences at Final Report





Clear Filters



School Year, Month

All

District Name, School Name

All

Agency

All

Barrier Type

All

### Count of Reported Students by School Year and Barrier Type - Top 10 Barrier Types Only



Be@School Dashboard - Referral overview

Go back

Barrier analysis



Questions?





## Summary of Family Survey Results

# A Study of Educational Neglect Diversion Programs in Minnesota

*"[The program] helped a lot. My child has only missed two days this school year."*

The following is a summary of findings from the Educational Neglect Family Survey, administered in March-April 2024. Families in five counties in Minnesota who had participated in an educational neglect diversion program in school years 2022-23 or 2023-24 (first half) were invited to participate in the online survey and received a \$20 incentive for completing it. A total of 97 families completed the survey, which gathered information about child and family challenges, parents' perceptions of attendance, the type and amount of support and services provided to the family, parents' perceptions of the program's impact, and recommendations.

The survey is part of a larger process and outcome evaluation being conducted by Wilder Research, with support from the Sauer Family Foundation and Casey Family Programs, about educational neglect diversion programs in select Minnesota counties (see figure below). Results from additional components of the evaluation will be released in 2025.



In Minnesota, **educational neglect** occurs when a child under the age of 12 has seven or more days of unexcused absences in a school year, prompting a child protection response. But some Minnesota counties are taking a different approach, implementing diversion programs to support families outside of child protection.

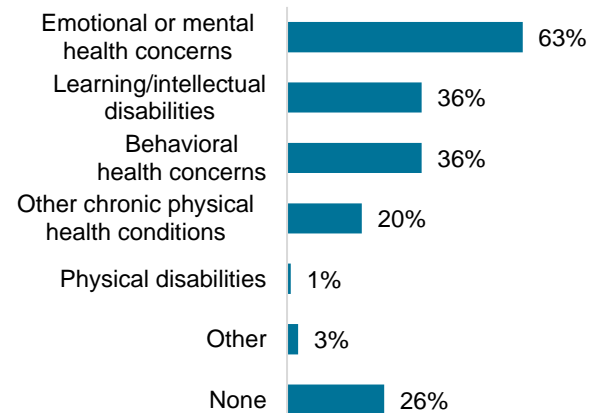
## Key findings

Families report multiple and varied attendance challenges. Support services, therefore, need to be multi-faceted and tailored to families' individual needs.

## Challenges to attendance

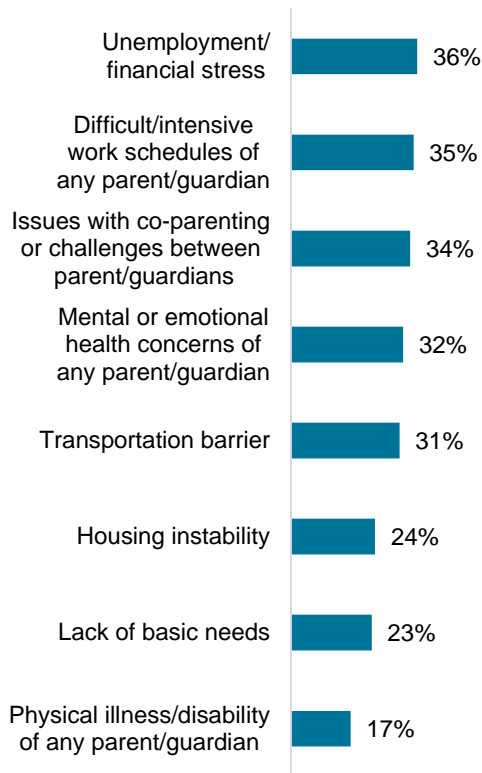
When parents were asked about the experiences of their children when they were having school attendance challenges, parents primarily reported emotional or mental health concerns (63%). Parents could name multiple challenges.

## Children's challenges (n=94)



Parents were also navigating challenges that they felt impacted their children’s ability to attend school, particularly financial stress (36%), difficult work schedules (35%), co-parenting challenges (34%), mental health concerns (32%), and transportation barriers (31%).

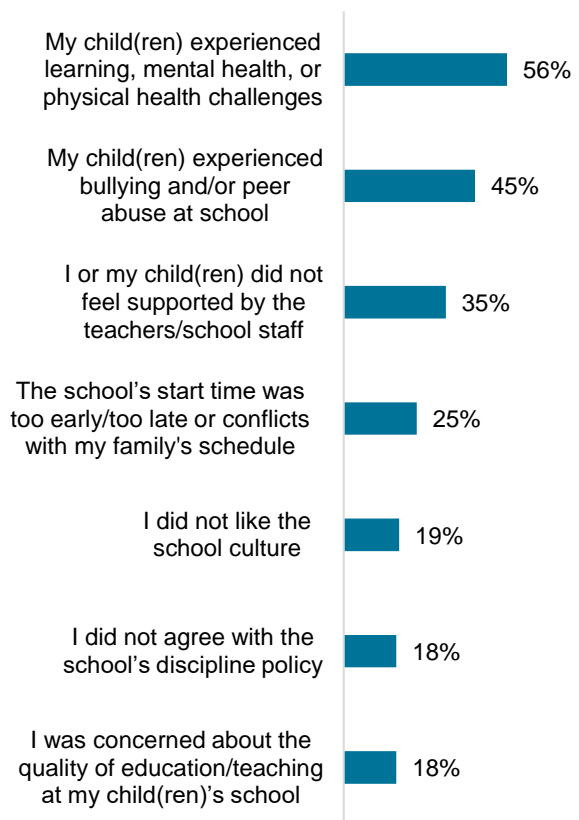
**Family challenges impacting attendance (n=89-96)**



Note. Additional challenges reported include: substance use/chemical health concerns for a parent/guardian (5%), and an intellectual disability of a parent/guardian (4%). Parents could name multiple challenges.

Parents cited their children’s learning, mental health, or physical health challenges (56%), followed by experiences of bullying (45%), as the most common reasons regular school attendance was challenging.

**Reasons school attendance was challenging (n=89-96)**



Note. Additional challenges reported include: child not having clean clothes, enough food, or other basic needs (10%), and child walks to school and there are safety/other issues related to walking (8%). Parents could name multiple challenges.

**Communication with school/county**

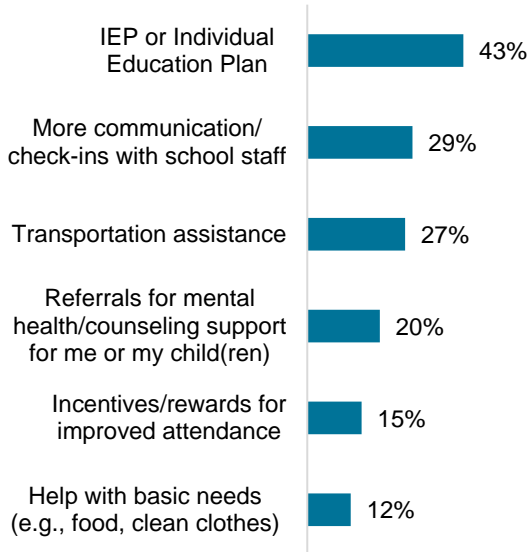
Most parents received emails/mail (76%) or phone calls (68%) from their child’s school or county about their child’s school attendance, although 13% said they did not receive any communication. Sixty-nine percent participated in at least one meeting with school/county staff about their child’s attendance. Those who did not participate in a meeting (n=30) were mostly likely to say it was because they were not invited to participate in a meeting (56%). The most common topics discussed at the meetings focused on information about attendance policies (77%), followed by the family’s barriers and challenges (73%).



## Supports received

The most common supports or services offered by schools and counties to families with attendance challenges were IEPs (43%), increased communication/check-ins with school staff (29%), and transportation assistance (27%).

### Services offered to families (n=91)

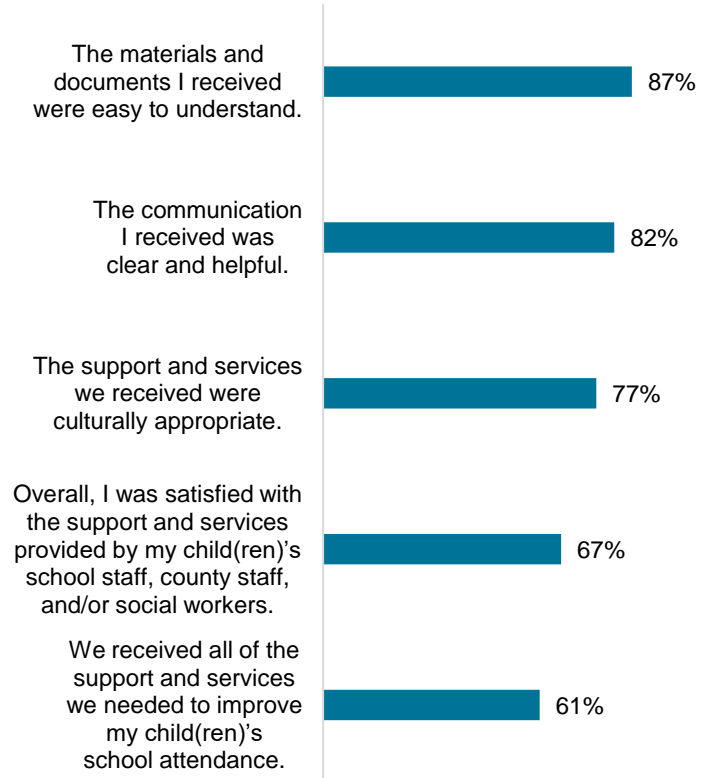


Note. Additional services reported include: changes to adapt to my/my child's schedule (10%), referrals for the Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP; 9%), and needed supports around daily life (e.g., alarm clock, school bus application; 9%).

## Program experience and impact

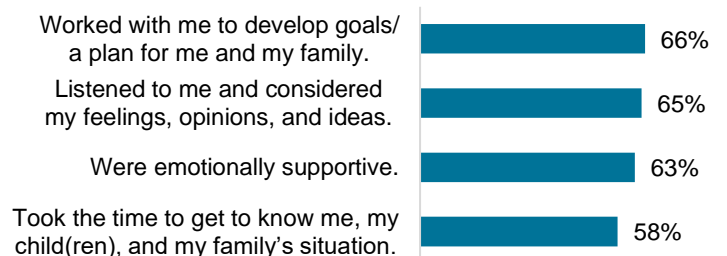
Two-thirds of parents (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the support and services provided by school/county staff, and 61% agreed or strongly agreed that they received all of the support and services they needed to improve their child's attendance.

### Parent perceptions of services (n=76-88)



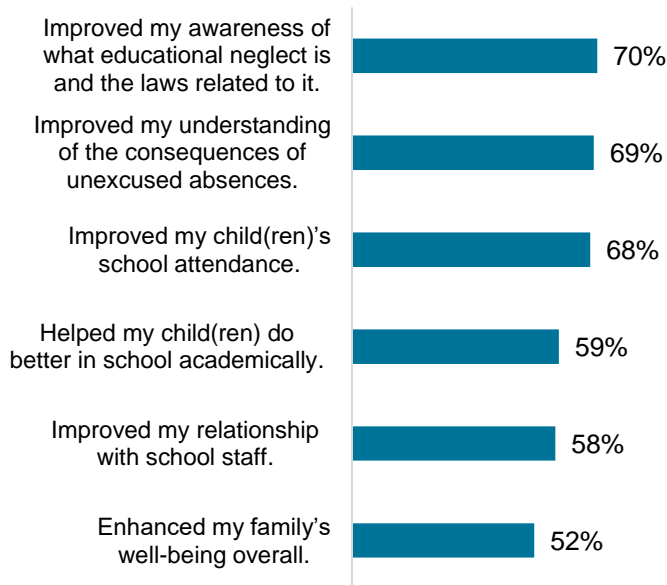
When asked about their experience with school and county staff, two-thirds of parents agreed or strongly agreed that staff worked with them to develop goals/a plan for their family (66%), and listened to them and considered their feelings, opinions, and ideas (65%).

### Parent perceptions of school/county staff (n=86-88)



At least two-thirds of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the support and services they received to help with their child's school attendance improved their awareness of educational neglect and related laws (70%), their understanding of the consequences of unexcused absences (69%), and their children's attendance (68%).

### Parent perception of impact of services (n=86-88)



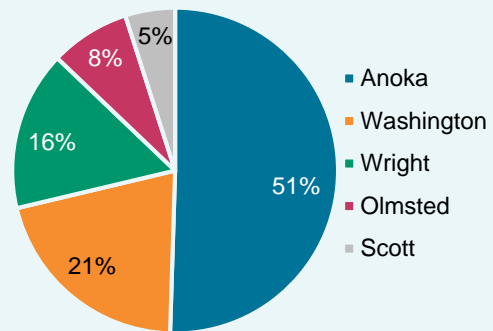
### Participant suggestions

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) about the changes they would make to the support and services they received. A total of 69 parents responded to the question; of those, 24 (35%) did not suggest any changes. Responses were coded into themes. The most common suggestions related to increasing school/county staff's understanding of children's/family's health and other challenges (n=18); improving listening, communication, and collaboration (n=16); and offering additional supports and resources for families (n=15).

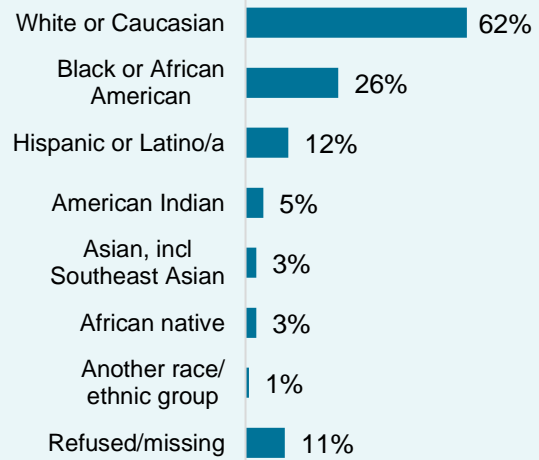
### Participants

- A total of 119 (of 515) parents at least partially completed the survey (23% response rate); 97 parents (19%) completed enough of the survey to be included in the full analysis.
- Half of the parents who completed the survey were from Anoka County (51%), followed by Washington County (21%).
- Most participants identified as White (62%) or Black/African American (26%); 40 of the participants (41%) were BIPOC.

### County (N=97)



### Race/ethnicity (N=97)



# Family Engagement



Northfield Public Schools Attendance Project

# Role

## How is the Family Engagement Navigator Role different from School Staff?

- Go out into communities
  - In their Neighborhood/Home
  - Connecting with Caregivers and kids
- School Applications
  - Show how it works
  - Encourage Staff/Caregivers to use it
  - Mutual between Caregivers and School staff
- Connect to resources
  - Community Action Center, Healthfinders, Public Health, etc.
- We are a trusted resources

# Barriers

## Barriers for Families

- One car per Family or no car at all
- No SSN
- No medical insurance
- New to country families
- Lack of academic performance for students
- Aren't aware of how school can help
- Lack of information about how to help their child (support group)



## FEN Evaluation Data

25%

Reduction in number of students meeting the threshold for Chronic Absenteeism

75%

Of student in the cohort improved their rate of attendance year over year

# Data Gathering - Plan Outcomes

## Data Review

- FEN evaluation data
- Carleton Statistics Research Group
- MnMTSS team data reviews
- Family focus meetings

## Learnings

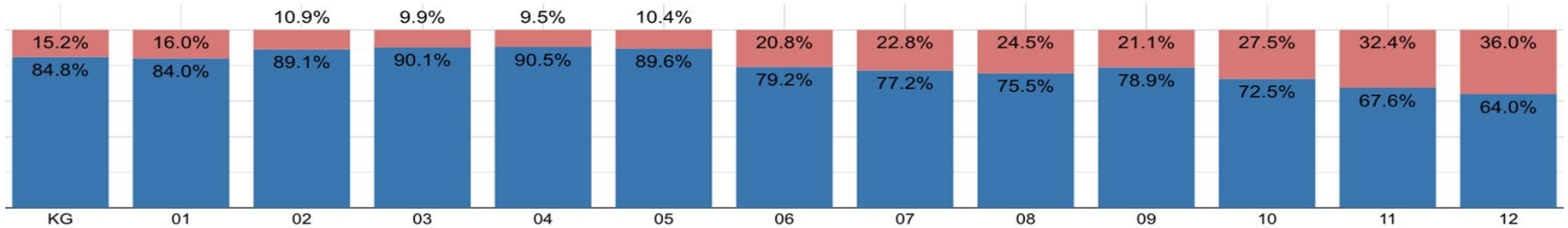
- Families need help
- Families need information
- Our FEN model is effective
- We are lacking in secondary

## Plan

- Secondary Attendance Navigator
  - ◆ Home Visits
  - ◆ Parent Groups
  - ◆ Student Groups
- SPACE: Supporting Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions training for SWs and SBMH
- Cascade and intentional communication push

# 19%

met the definition of a chronically absent student at the end of the 2024 school year



Students who are chronically absent are more likely to be:

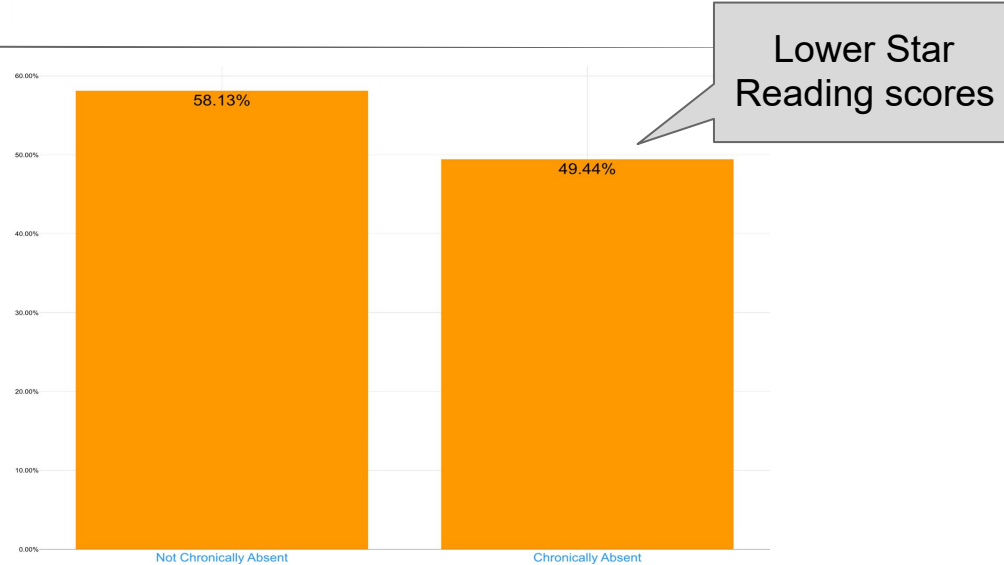
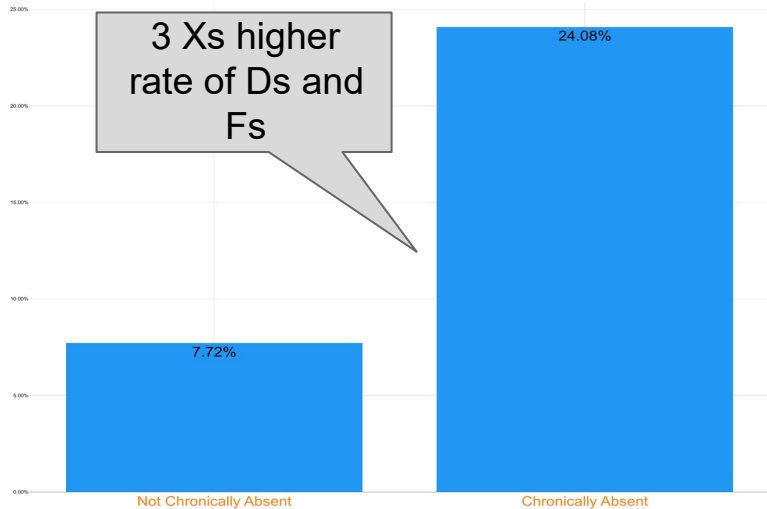
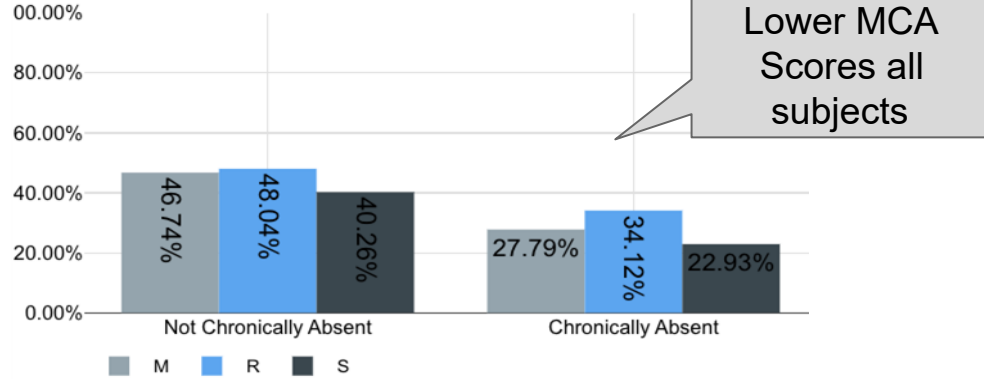
- Students of color
- Multilingual learners
- In Kindergarten or first grade OR post 16+ yrs old
- Low income students (but NOT like we thought!!)

# Attendance - Chronic Absenteeism

- **Chronic Absenteeism** means being absent from school 10% or more of the school days.
- That means that if students miss as few as 2 days of school a month for any reason - (except school field trips), they will be **chronically absent from school** .
- So far this year, we have had 142 days of school - so **students who have missed 14 days of school all year** would be chronically absent.
- Why is just 2 days of school a month a problem? Because a lot of very good research shows that **students have a harder time learning skills like reading and math, and how to be a great student** when they miss school only that much.

# Chronic Absence Impact on Engagement

Secondary students who are chronically absent are 10% less likely to report that teachers care about them





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# Child Abuse & Neglect

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## Homelessness and child protection involvement: Temporal links and risks to student attendance and school mobility<sup>☆</sup>

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Child protection  
Family emergency shelters  
Family transitional housing  
School attendance  
School mobility

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The experience of homelessness and child protection involvement pose risks to children's school success. Elucidating processes by which these interrelated systems affect child well-being is important for guiding policy and practice.

**Objective:** This study examines the temporal relation between emergency shelter or transitional housing use and child protection involvement among school-aged children. We evaluated effects of both risk indicators on school attendance and school mobility.

**Participant and setting:** Using integrated administrative data, we identified 3278 children (ages 4 to 15) whose families used emergency or transitional housing in Hennepin and Ramsey County of Minnesota during the 2014 and 2015 academic years. A propensity-score-matched comparison group of 2613 children who did not use emergency or transitional housing.

**Method:** Through a series of logistic regressions and generalized estimating equations, we tested the temporal associations of emergency/transitional housing and child protection involvement as well as how both experiences affected school attendance and mobility.

**Results:** Experiences of emergency or transitional housing often preceded or occurred concurrently with child protection involvement and increased the likelihood of child protection services. Emergency or transitional housing and child protection involvement posed risks for lower school attendance and greater school mobility.

**Conclusions:** A multisystem approach to assist families across social services may be important for stabilizing children's housing and bolstering their success at school. A two-generation approach focused on residential and school stability and enhancing family resources could boost adaptive success of family members across contexts.

<sup>☆</sup> We thank our community partners and the administrative data owners for all of their assistance in executing this study. We thank the Homework Starts with Home Research Partnership team, and the Minnesota Linking Information for Kids team for providing the structure for making this work possible. This research was financially supported by the University of Minnesota Interdisciplinary Fellowship (ARP), the University of Minnesota Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (ARP), the PEO Award (ARP), the Irving B. Harris Professorship in Child Development (ASM), and the Homework Starts with Home Research Partnership (through awards from the University of Minnesota Grand Challenges Research Initiative and the University Metropolitan Consortium). None of the authors have any conflicts of interest to declare.

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## 1. Introduction

Data from the [National Center for Homeless Education \(2020\)](#) reported that public schools identified 1.5 million children experiencing homelessness in the 2017–2018 school year. This was an 11 % increase from the previous year and the highest number ever recorded nationally. Homelessness can be defined as an individual lacking fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence. Homelessness among school aged children is a well-established risk factors for school difficulties including low achievement, chronic school absence, higher rates of discipline, and lower rates of high school completion ([Manfra, 2019](#); [Masten et al., 2015](#); [Miller, 2011](#)). A national study of 10,362 US school-aged children in the United States found that children who moved three or more times were 1.6 times more likely to be in the top tenth percentile of scores on behavioral problems, compared to peers that never moved ([Simpson & Fowler, 1994](#)).

The experience of homelessness among school aged children is a serious concern in the state of Minnesota. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Minnesota ranks as one of the worst states in the nation for academic achievement gaps across race, income, and housing status ([Grunewald & Nath, 2019](#)). The Minnesota Department of Education reported 8079 students experiencing homelessness during a point in time count on October 1, 2018. They were disproportionately students of color, and often had difficulties with school engagement and achievement. These students missed four-times as many days of school, were 9.5 times more likely to be chronically absent, were 40 % less likely to be proficient in math, and 37 % less likely to be proficient in reading ([Minnesota Department of Education, 2019](#)). Students experiencing homelessness in Minneapolis, Minnesota have also been found to have lower levels of academic achievement and slower growth in academic skills over time ([Cutuli et al., 2013](#)). Another evaluation using state wide administrative data in Minnesota has also found associations between student homelessness with decreased attendance rates, and an increased likelihood of emotional behavioral problems among school aged children ([Larson & Meehan, 2011](#)).

Developmental research and theory suggest that risk factors often pile up, with one risk or adversity leading to others in a cascading sequence of experiences that are harmful to an individual's wellbeing ([Boyce et al., 2021](#); [Masten & Cicchetti, 2016](#)). Experiences of homelessness have been related to an increased likelihood of child protection (CP) involvement, and vice-versa ([Culhane et al., 2003](#); [Foust et al., 2020](#); [Rodriguez & Shinn, 2016](#)). In a 2013 to 2016 study of families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, 63.4 % of parents had been referred to child protective services since 1998. At the time of their most recent homeless episode, 23.2 % of parents were CPS involved ([Foust et al., 2020](#)). According to the [Administration for Children, Youth, and Families \(2016\)](#), approximately 10 % of children in the United States entering foster care in 2015 were removed at least in part due to inadequate housing. Further, an evaluation of children staying specifically in an emergency shelters found that 20 % of child protection referrals occurred before shelter entry, 40 % during a shelter stay, and 40 % after shelter exit ([Cowan et al., 2002](#)). This suggests that shelter stays often occur during or directly before involvement with child protection.

Direct intervention work indicates that providing families with permanent housing subsidies reduces their number of days in shelter and their likelihood of CP involvement ([Shinn et al., 2017](#)). Other intervention studies suggest that providing families with housing-related services reduces repeated maltreatment and facilitates family reunification – even when housing was not the reason for child protection involvement ([Dworsky, 2014](#)). Further, the Keeping Families Together intervention improved family's CP outcomes upon supportive housing placement. This included 61.1 % of CP cases being closed, a significant decrease in the number of days children were placed out of home (680 days before to 124 day after supportive housing placement), and lower rates of repeated maltreatment ([Swann-Jackson et al., 2010](#)).

There are many potential reasons for the association between the experience of homelessness and CP involvement. Some families are referred due to concerns of neglect that are actually the consequences of poverty. Although many states include a poverty exemption in their definitions of neglect, the circumstances under which homelessness should be attributed to neglect versus poverty are not well defined ([Cohen-Schlanger et al., 1995](#); [Dale, 2014](#); [Eamon & Kopels, 2004](#); [Shdaimah, 2009](#)). Beyond concerns of neglect, families using housing services may be more likely to be involved with child protection due to the “fishbowl effect” where they are under a higher degree of scrutiny for their parenting behaviors. Parenting behaviors that would usually go unobserved are then reported to CP services ([Cowan et al., 2002](#); [Park et al., 2004](#)). Although some of these referrals may be warranted, it could also create a culture of suspicion and stigma. These concerns could increase a family's reluctance to use the shelter system and subsequently result in families choosing housing in more dangerous and lower-resourced settings.

Further, there are cyclical interactions among poverty, child protection involvement, and housing. Many low-income families receive cash assistance that is tied to the custody of their children. If families become involved with CP services and children are placed in out of home care, families lose that cash assistance. Often parents are using those funds for housing costs and without this support, they can lose their housing. Once they do not have stable housing, CP is reluctant to reunify parents with their children until they find stable housing.

In other cases, homelessness plays an indirect role. The stress associated with homelessness may exacerbate punitive parenting practices, leading to physical abuse or compromising the parent's ability to meet their child's needs ([Cowan et al., 2002](#); [Park et al., 2004](#); [Tracy and Stoeker, 1993](#)). This includes the worsening parent mental health concerns, which are also common among families involved with CP ([De Bellis et al., 2001](#); [Marsh et al., 2006](#)). However, many states – including Minnesota – have a CP services department that operates with dual “tracks.” After a case is accepted, social workers determine whether that family needs additional supportive services, or if an investigation into the allegations of maltreatment are warranted. Families placed on the investigation track will then have a determination if maltreatment was present. Some studies have found a relationship between CP involvement and experiencing homelessness, but no increased rates of association for being placed on an investigation track or having a child maltreatment confirmed ([Rodriguez & Shinn, 2016](#)). This suggests that the latter hypothesis of why these two services are associated with each other may be less prevalent.

This paper aims to further evaluate the interrelations of a subset of homelessness – specifically children residing in emergency or transitional (E/T) housing – and various levels of child protective service involvement, with the goal of advancing knowledge about the reasons for increased cross system engagement for these families. If families experiencing homelessness do not have an increased rate of maltreatment determinations but are more likely to be involved in the child protections system compared to peers not using E/T housing, this would suggest that there is some form of systematic bias in the system that inaccurately increases the referral rates for families experiencing homelessness.

It is concerning when children are experiencing multiple adverse events because each experience may individually pose a risk to developmental adaptation. Much like the direct relationship of homelessness to child educational challenges, CP involvement has also been related to maladjustment at school. In studies of children from Minnesota, children who experienced maltreatment were more likely to have lower math and reading achievement as well as decreased attendance rates (Kiesel et al., 2016; Piescher et al., 2014; Renner et al., 2018). Data from Michigan also has found that children who have been investigated for maltreatment had poorer math and reading scores in the 3rd grade (Jacob & Ryan, 2018).

Furthermore, experiencing more than one adversity may create a compounded risk for child adjustment. Research and theory on cumulative risk suggest that each additional risk factor a child experiences is related to worse child outcomes, including decreased school engagement (Crouch et al., 2019). Of children that have specifically experienced both homelessness and CP, many report school adjustment difficulties (Bender et al., 2015; Semanchin Jones et al., 2018). Supporting these conclusions, another study also found that multisystem involvement increases the likelihood of school dropout among children in grades 7 through 9 (Garcia et al., 2018). However, despite knowing that children who experience homelessness and thus use E/T housing and CP have many of the same school-based adaptation challenges, very little work to our knowledge has looked at the joint impact and implications for school aged children's involvement across systems.

Further, although involvement in services like E/T housing or CP reflects high exposure to adversity, this situation also represents an opportunity for intervention services. We sought to identify ways to mitigate the probability of children's school adjustment problems by evaluating how children's involvement with child protection and E/T housing services were related, both in time and their effects. By pinpointing how these experiences were temporally related, we aimed to inform targeted strategies for intervention. If providers can identify when families encounter social workers, it may be possible to mitigate the consequences of child adversity exposure more effectively and bolster the probability of positive child adaptation. This knowledge could guide the development of policies that mitigate multiple experiences of risk while simultaneously reducing the financial load on service use from multisystem involved families.

### 1.1. The current study

(1) Our first aim was to test whether school-aged children who use emergency/transitional (E/T) housing are more likely to be involved with the CP systems compared to children who did not use E/T housing but were demographically similar. Given previous literature that has found associations between CP involvement and E/T housing (Culhane et al., 2003; Foust et al., 2020; Rodriguez & Shinn, 2016), we hypothesized that there would be a general positive relationship between the two experiences, holding other key demographic variables constant. (2) Our second aim was to evaluate whether CP involvement and E/T housing use are related to lower child school attendance and higher school mobility. Aligned previous findings finding unique association between each risk and school adjustment (Kiesel et al., 2016; Manfra, 2019; Masten et al., 2015; Miller, 2011; Piescher et al., 2014; Renner et al., 2018), we hypothesized that children who experience both of these services would have lower school attendance and higher school mobility than if they only experienced one of these risks. (3) Our third aim was exploratory. We sought to identify if CP involvement occurred most often concurrently with or after E/T housing (Cowan et al., 2002). We also evaluated if CP investigation track placement more likely and confirmed instances of maltreatment would be less likely among families who used E/T housing compared to children who had not (Rodriguez & Shinn, 2016).

## 2. Methods

Data for this study were made available through the Minnesota Linking Information for Kids (Minn-LInK). The current study compiled its data from Minnesota statewide administrative data across multiple agencies including the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS), Social Service Information System (SSIS), and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). All data sources were linked together through MARSS records, and all children had to have a MARSS identifier to be included in the administrative data build. MARSS records include all children who attended a publicly funded school in Minnesota. Students attending private schools and those being home schooled were not included. Names and birthdates for children from the MARSS system were used to link children's data to other systems using the Link Plus (Registry Plus, 2010). Matches that had below a 10 % probability of being correct based on name and birthdate were dropped. Following the automatic probabilistic matching, first name, middle initial, surname, and birth date were hand matched by hand at Minn-LInK to assure the largest number of true matches. All identifiers were then removed from data files. This study was approved by the BLINDED and by collaborating state departments (i.e., data owners).

To meet inclusion criteria for the current study, children had to attend a school in the Minneapolis or St. Paul, Minnesota metropolitan area during the 2013–2014 or 2014–2015 school year. These years were selected to parallel when a population of families with school aged children took part in a pilot study that provided them with housing subsidies in order to reduce their risk for homelessness. We hoped to gather a population level understanding in the same “historical time” of how homelessness, child



protection, and child achievement were related.

All children had to be at least four years old at the start of the study and under eighteen years old by the end of the study period (i.e., school aged with the possibility of being in all administrative data sets). Children were coded as experiencing homelessness if they stayed in E/T housing between August 1, 2013 and July 31, 2015 (in alignment with the school calendar). Emergency shelters are any facility that families can stay in after experiencing a crisis. These facilities provide short-term stabilization and support services, until families can find appropriate accommodations. Transitional housing has a similar goal of providing a temporary residence. Families stay in these accommodations for six to twenty-four months on average, and there are support services to improve employability and help individuals gain permanent housing as quickly as possible. Data tracked by HMIS are data from the homeless response system that is largely funded by a variety of local, state, or federal services. These data meet the US department for Housing and Urban Development definition of literal homelessness by living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012). These data do contain missing information from privately funded shelters that did not wish to share their data with HMIS as well as domestic violence shelters. Based on reports of total available beds in the area compared to total beds reported to HMIS in the years 2013, 2014, and 2015, we were able to estimate that 75 % of emergency shelter beds for families with children were reported to HMIS, and 83.6 % of transitional housing beds for families with children were reported to HMIS.

Ultimately, we identified 3278 children in the study time frame who were included in all subsequent analyses. We then completed a propensity score match to select a comparison group that adequately accounted for potentially confounding variables that may be related to CP involvement, attendance, and school mobility. We used a nearest neighbor approach with replacement to get a 1 to 1 match of all children who experienced E/T housing. Children were matched on age, sex, race, eligibility to received special education services, free and reduced lunch status, the homeless and highly mobile indicator in education data, CP involvement before the study time frame, and E/T housing use before the start date of the study time frame. Children in the match group also had to attend the same school during the same school year as participants in the E/T housing group. Thus, we were able to adjust for any unobserved confounding associations explained by selection into a specific school. For children who experienced E/T housing, school data were from the first school year in which they experienced homelessness.

The match was successful and there were no large standardized mean differences (e.g., SMD > 0.1) between the E/T and non-E/T groups except for children's experience of E/T housing before the study's start (Table 1). Children with current E/T status had a statistically greater likelihood of experiencing E/T before the study start and thus this unequal variation was controlled for in all subsequent analyses. Notably, this effect size was weak, ( $d = 0.23$ ), indicating minimal imbalance. The school flag for homeless and highly mobile students was also significantly higher (based on  $t$ -test metrics; Table 1), but did not meet our criteria for inclusion as a control variable based on low SMD. This effect was also small ( $d = 0.16$ ). We performed sensitivity analyses where we controlled for school identification of homeless and highly mobile, and saw no substantive differences in outcome and thus was not included in the final analyses. This process resulted in 2615 children in the matched comparison group.

Children in the final total sample were 49 % male (dummy coded as one) and 9.6-years old on average at the start of the study. Children of color were disproportionally represented in the current study sample. Although this is typical of urban students experiencing homelessness, it is markedly different from the general population in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. For example, Black children represent 12 % of Twin Cities children in the general population, but 73.3 % of the current sample. Similarly, Indigenous children represent 3 % of general population, but 7 % of the study population. Additionally, we see higher rates of special education eligibility, free and reduced lunch status, E/T housing before the start of the study, and CP involvement before the start of the study compared to the general population (Table 1). The disproportional rates of risk factors among children from historically marginalized

**Table 1**  
Children's demographic characteristics and propensity score match results.

|  | Emergency or transitional housing |        | Matched comparison group |        | Eligible comparison population |         | SMD  | $t$ -Test | Cohen- $d$ |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|------|-----------|------------|
|  | % (M)                             | n (SD) | % (M)                    | n (SD) | % (M)                          | N (SD)  |      |           |            |
| Age  | (9.54)                            | (3.57) | (9.58)                   | (3.63) | (9.45)                         | (3.66)  | 0.01 | 0.72      | 0.01       |
| Male   | 49 %                              | 1616   | 50 %                     | 1306   | 51 %                           | 363,990 | 0.01 | 0.07      | 0.02       |
| Indigenous   | 8 %                               | 247    | 6 %                      | 157    | 3 %                            | 18,615  | 0.08 | –         | –          |
| Asian  | 1 %                               | 44     | 2 %                      | 52     | 7 %                            | 52,261  |      |           |            |
| Hispanic   | 7 %                               | 240    | 7 %                      | 183    | 9 %                            | 62,183  |      |           |            |
| Black  | 73 %                              | 2401   | 76 %                     | 1987   | 12 %                           | 86,286  |      |           |            |
| White  | 11 %                              | 348    | 9 %                      | 236    | 69 %                           | 493,063 |      |           |            |
| Special education status                             | 26 %                              | 851    | 26 %                     | 679    | 15 %                           | 105,936 | 0.01 | 0.18      | 0.00       |
| Free/reduced lunch                                   | 90 %                              | 2937   | 90 %                     | 2361   | 7 %                            | 226,787 | 0.04 | –         | 0.01       |
| HHM <sup>a</sup>                                     | 73 %                              | 2390   | 65 %                     | 1709   | 2 %                            | 11,478  | 0.03 | 6.21 ***  | 0.16       |
| CW <sup>b</sup> Involvement before AY14 <sup>c</sup> | 38 %                              | 1249   | 39 %                     | 1019   | 9 %                            | 64,080  | 0.02 | 1.56      | 0.04       |
| E/T <sup>d</sup> housing before AY14                 | 18 %                              | 598    | 14 %                     | 365    | 0.2 %                          | 1550    | 0.12 | 8.84***   | 0.23       |
| Total  | 56 %                              | 3278   | 44 %                     | 2615   |                                | 712,363 |      |           |            |

<sup>a</sup> Homeless and highly mobile flag from education data.

<sup>b</sup> Child protection.

<sup>c</sup> Academic Year 2014.

<sup>d</sup> Emergency or transitional.

minority groups is the result of generations of systemic oppression and discrimination (Edwards, 2021; Evangelist & Shaefer, 2020; Shinn & Khadduri, 2020).

## 2.1. Variables

### 2.1.1. Education data

All participant demographic variables (e.g., sex, race, age, grade, school) were ascertained through MARSS. We also gathered information about children's special education eligibility status (coded one if eligible), free and reduced lunch status (coded one if reduced lunch, dummy code two if free lunch), school homeless and highly mobile indicator (coded one), school mobility, and attendance rate. *School mobility* was calculated by evaluating the number of school enrollment moves to any school within Minnesota over the school year. Given the low number of instances of moving schools more than once in a school year, we created a dummy variable of zero for not moved and one for moved. *Attendance* was calculated by dividing the number of days enrolled by the number of days attended.

Given that we were looking at data across two school years, education data was used from the first year that students experienced E/T housing in the study time frame. As a part of the match process, comparison students had to be in the same school during the same school year as when student's first used E/T housing. We also chose to include the school homeless and highly mobile indicators in our matching procedure because it overlaps with the HMIS definition but extends it to include children who are doubled-up, living in motels/hotels (McKinney-Vento Act (42 US Code §§11431-11435), n.d.). Including this variable in the match allowed us to specifically evaluate the experience E/T housing compared to high residential mobility in general.

### 2.1.2. Emergency or transitional housing

Indicators of child E/T housing came from HMIS. These indicators do not capture families who are doubled up with friends/family nor those living in places not meant for habitation (e.g., cars, parks, etc.). Families engaging with E/T housing often have limited resources elsewhere and may be experiencing a higher amount of risk and mobility than families experiencing other forms of homelessness. Further, engagement in these systems allows for more contact and support with local government systems that can provide or augment services.

Most children who used E/T housing only had one unique event of homelessness (i.e., a single instance) in the study time frame ( $n = 2243$ ; 68 %). However, a number of children used these services two ( $n = 649$ ; 20 %), three ( $n = 205$ ; 6 %) and four ( $n = 112$ ; 3 %) times in the two-year study time frame. To address aim three, E/T housing entry and exit dates were used to create a long data file, where children received a one if they were using E/T housing in any given month. We then created a series of lagged variables to denote if children had experienced E/T housing in the month following or after any given month.

The vast majority of children using E/T housing were also documented as homeless and highly mobile (HHM) by their schools ( $n = 2389$ ; 73 %), but 889 (27 %) children who used E/T housing were not marked as HHM. Of children in the comparison group who did not use E/T housing, 1709 (65 %) children were identified as HHM in school data during the same year they experienced E/T housing. Schools use a broader definition of homelessness that includes all individuals who lack fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence. This definition includes doubled-up status. All students included in this study are experiencing a high amount of housing instability, and risk, but only those in the E/T housing group used E/T housing services, to our knowledge. All subsequent analyses are a fairly strict assessment of the specific role of E/T housing on CP involvement controlling for other forms/experiences of homelessness.

### 2.1.3. Child protection involvement

Indicators of CP involvement stem from SSIS data. All cases represent 'accepted cases', which means a report was made and a case was opened. This does not indicate whether families were on the family assessment or investigation track nor does it indicate if maltreatment was determined or not. Cases accepted in the CP system but placed on the family assessment track are getting assessed for additional service needs. Cases on the investigation track are tasked with determining if children are experiencing abuse or not.

Most children were involved with CP once during the study time frame ( $n = 960$ ), with 254 kids experiencing it twice, and 92 kids experiencing it three or more times. The vast majority of CP cases were placed on the family services track ( $n = 1160$ ; 66 %) which means that families staying in shelters most often required access to additional resources to support their family and parenting. Of those investigated ( $n = 592$ ; 33 %), 356 (6 % of the entire sample) were determined to include instances of maltreatment. We also included a variable of CP involvement prior to the start date of the study in the propensity score match. Finally, to address aim three, a long data file was created where children received a one in any month in which a new CP case was opened.

### 2.1.4. Analytic plan

A series of logistic regression models were fitted using the base stats package in R version 3.6.1 (R Core Team, 2020) to address the first and second aims of the study because key dependent variables were binary. CP involvement for aim one was coded as a binary (not involved or involved), school attendance was bounded from 0 to 1, and school mobility also was coded as binary (did not move schools or moved schools). All regression models were weighted to account for the use of a nearest neighbor matching method with replacement. All logistic regression coefficients were transformed to odds-ratios, by taking the exponent of the coefficient. A Robust Sandwich Estimator was used to address the rare instance when siblings were included in the sample, or there were multiple treatment children in one school. HMIS involvement before the start of the study was controlled for across all analyses.

To test the interaction effect between CP involvement and E/T housing using on school outcomes, we created a variable that

indicated different risk experiences of the children. The coding had four levels, where children could experience neither risk, just CP involvement, just E/T housing use, or both risks in the study time period. We initially evaluated the effects of risk, on school attendance and mobility, with neither experience serving as the reference group. We then adjusted the reference group in order to make all relevant comparisons across coded groups.

To address aim three (i.e., the relationship between service timing), we used both children who used E/T housing, as well as a matched comparison group of kids who did not use those services. We controlled for E/T housing status prior to the study start. Further, in order to account for cumulative instances of E/T housing use, we also controlled for cumulative number of unique instances of E/T housing use. We employed a generalized estimating equation (GEE) to address aim three. This method is ideal for modeling longitudinal data that is binary and non-normally distributed. It is a semiparametric method, which imposes some structure on the data (e.g. linearity), but does not specify a distribution. Given that we had no hypotheses about the correlation structure of the data for the generalized estimating equation (GEE) models, we fit a series of baseline models (i.e., time, concurrent CP and E/T housing involvement, E/T total tally, and E/T before study start). We then evaluated model fit using QICC and determined that an exchangeable correlation structure worked best for our analyses.

To run these models, we created a long dataset of children E/T and CP service use. Children received a 1 code if they experienced a service in a given month and 0 if they did not. We then created a series of variables for E/T housing experience that were lagged forward after exiting E/T housing and backwards before entering E/T housing by 1-month increments. We fit a series of GEE models testing the effect of E/T involvement one month prior to CP involvement, concurrent with CP involvement, and CP involvement one month after E/T housing exit. All GEE models were conducted in SPSS, and had CP as the dependent variable and E/T housing use as the independent variable. When testing multiple time lags, we controlled for all nested lags in the same direction. After we determined the number of lags in each direction that were significant and improved model fit, we combined all parameters for a final GEE model (Table 2).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. CP involvement and E/T housing

Based on descriptive analyses, approximately 26 % ( $n = 860$ ) of children who stayed in E/T housing also experienced CP involvement during the two-year time period, compared to 17 % ( $n = 446$ ) of children in the comparison group. A  $\chi^2$  test suggested a significant difference between groups ( $\chi^2 = 70.43, p < .001$ ). Using logistic regression, we found that children who experienced E/T housing at any point in the study time frame were 1.58 times more likely than the comparison group to experience CP, on average ( $OR = 1.58, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.39, 1.79], z = 6.16, p < .001$ ).

#### 3.2. School mobility and attendance

Both CP involvement and E/T housing showed unique relations with lower school attendance. Children who experienced both E/T housing and/or CP attended school less often compared to peers that had neither of those experiences in the same school year (Fig. 1). Children who experienced only E/T housing attended 3 % fewer days of school on average, compared to children with no experiences of E/T housing or CP ( $B = 0.23, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.31, 0.15], z = 5.19, p < .001$ ). Children who were involved with CP but did not use E/T housing attended 5 % fewer days of school on average ( $B = 0.37, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.51, 0.23], z = 5.19, p < .001$ ) compared to those with neither experience. Attendance rates for experiencing only one of the risks (e.g., either E/T housing or CP involvement), was not significantly different from the attendance rate for children who experienced the other risk (with E/T Housing only as reference group;  $B = 0.13, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.01, 0.27], z = 1.88, p = .06$ ).

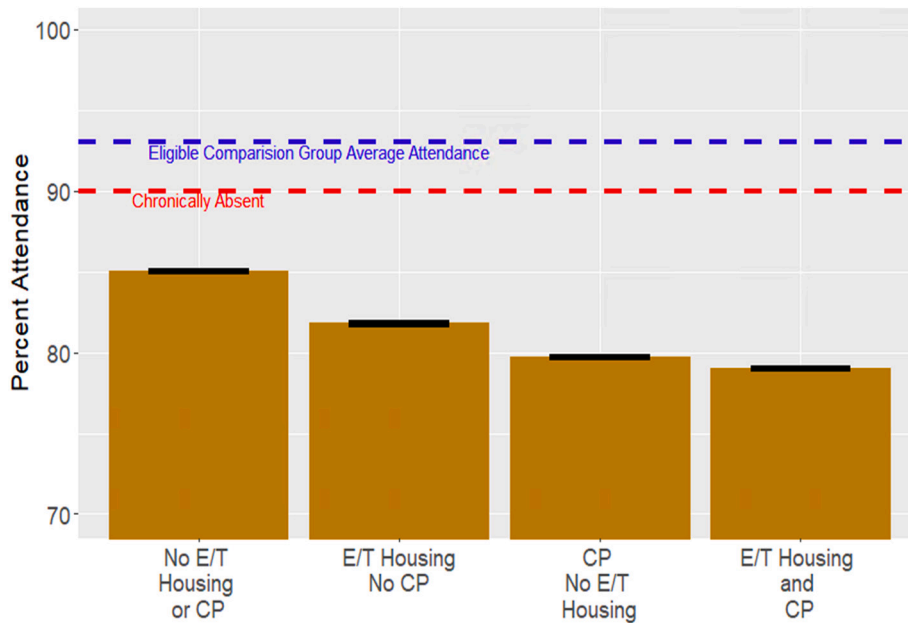
Children who experienced both CP and used E/T housing attended 6 % fewer days on average ( $B = 0.41, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.51, 0.31], z = 7.91, p < .001$ ) compared to those with neither experience. Experiencing both risks had significantly lower attendance rates compared to only experiencing E/T housing (E/T housing and CP as reference group;  $B = 0.17, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.07, 0.27], z = 3.78, p < .001$ ), but it was not significantly different from only experiencing CP (E/T housing and CP as reference group;  $B = 0.04, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.00, 0.08], z = 1.12, p = .26$ ).

**Table 2**

GEE of E/T housing on CP involvement.

|                  | B (SE)       | CI           | Wald    | p-Value | OR   | OR CI      |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|---------|---------|------|------------|
| Intercept        | 4.76 (0.07)  | 4.90 to 4.63 | 5105.46 | <.001   | 0.01 | 0.007–0.01 |
| Time             | 0.02 (0.004) | 0.01–0.02    | 11.75   | .001    | 1.02 | 1.01–1.02  |
| E/T housing      | 0.83 (0.10)  | 0.63–1.03    | 63.02   | <.001   | 2.29 | 1.87–2.81  |
| Concurrent       |              |              |         |         |      |            |
| E/T housing      | 0.34 (0.12)  | 0.59 - -0.10 | 7.78    | .005    | 0.71 | 0.56–0.90  |
| 1 month prior    |              |              |         |         |      |            |
| E/T housing      | 0.49 (0.11)  | 0.27–0.711   | 19.11   | <.001   | 1.63 | 1.31–2.04  |
| Exit lag 1 month |              |              |         |         |      |            |
| E/T total tally  | 0.12 (0.02)  | 0.08–0.16    | 32.30   | <.001   | 1.12 | 1.08–1.17  |
| E/T before 2013  | 0.32 (0.08)  | 0.17–0.48    | 17.03   | <.001   | 1.38 | 1.19–1.61  |

Note: QIC = 18,507.32; QICC = 18,502.20.



**Fig. 1.** Percent attendance based on experiences of emergency/transitional (E/T) housing and child protections (CP). The red dotted line notes the 90 % attendance line. The blue dotted line denotes the average attendance for the eligible comparison group. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

[ 0.19, 0.11],  $z = 0.55$ ,  $p = .58$ ).

The overall attendance rates of the children in this study were quite low compared to national and state averages. The national average is 95 % days attended (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Based on our administrative data, Minnesota students in the 2014 and 2015 school year had an average attendance of 92 % and students in our eligible comparisons group had an average attendance of 93 % compared to our final dataset's average attendance rate of 84 %. Students with attendance rates below 90 % are often considered “chronically absent” and by this criterion the average attendance of the sample was in this range.

Results also support the hypothesis that experiences of E/T housing and CP are risk factors for greater school mobility, controlling for E/T housing use before the start of the study. Children who experience only E/T housing ( $OR = 1.3$ , 95 % CI [1.15, 1.45],  $z = 3.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ) or only CP ( $OR = 1.3$ , 95 % CI [1.10, 1.63],  $z = 2.36$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were 1.3 times more likely to move schools compared to experiencing neither of these risk factors. Children who experience both E/T housing and CP were 1.5 times more likely to move schools ( $OR = 1.5$ , 95 % CI [1.25, 1.71],  $z = 4.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) compared to experiencing neither of these risks. Experiencing both risks did not pose a significant difference in the odds of experiencing school mobility from experiencing either just E/T housing ( $OR = 0.88$ , 95 % CI [0.76, 1.04],  $z = 1.55$ ,  $p = .12$ ) or just CP ( $OR = 0.91$ , 95 % CI [0.74, 1.13],  $z = 0.68$ ,  $p = .50$ ). Further, experiencing one of these risk factors, such as E/T housing, did not significantly affect the odds of experiencing school mobility, compared to experiencing the other risk factor (i.e., CP;  $OR = 1.03$ , CI [0.75, 1.25],  $z = 1.55$ ,  $p = .12$ ).

### 3.3. Timing effect of E/T housing on CP involvement

To evaluate the temporal effects and ordering of services, we examined the date of all E/T housing involvement subtracted from the date of all CP involvement. The average distance from entering E/T housing to the opening of a CP case was 10.86 days with a mode of 1 day. This means that children often entered E/T housing before CP involvement because the number of days was in the positive direction. We then descriptively evaluated the distance from children's first experience of E/T housing in the study time frame to all CP events. The direction of the effect became more pronounced with the mean number of days from the first experience of E/T housing to CP involvement being 46.15 days and the mode being 0 days. This means that of the children involved in both systems, when they entered E/T housing for the first time a CP case was then opened on the same day.

The final GEE model (Table 2) indicated that E/T housing use was related to a within-person increased likelihood that a CP case would be opened within the same month. Further, 1 month after exiting E/T housing, there was also an increased within person likelihood that a CP case would be opened. Holding the experience of pre-study E/T housing use, total E/T housing use, the experience of use of E/T housing use one month prior, as well as E/T housing use one month after constant, the odds of CP involvement were twice as great in a month in which families were in E/T housing compared to months in which they were not in E/T housing. In the month after exiting E/T housing, families had a 1.63 greater odds of CP involvement. Children were also approximately 0.29 times less likely to experience CP if they experienced ET in the month following CP involvement. The effect size of the contemporaneous effect was functionally identical when estimated on its own, suggesting that there is no explained carryover effect when accounting for lagged

relationships. A two- and three-month delay between services were evaluated but results were not significant.

Between-person positive relations were also evident – albeit, weaker. On average the odds of CP involvement were 1.12 times higher for each additional month of E/T housing use across the study time span. Further, E/T housing use prior to the start of the study was associated with a 1.41 greater odds of CP involvement during our study span (Table 2).

Finally, we evaluated the relation between E/T housing on being placed on the CP investigation track. Results suggested no relationship between concurrent E/T housing experiences and an increased chance of being placed on an investigation track. Further, we evaluated the relationship between E/T housing on having a determination of maltreatment. There was also no significant relationship. This result suggests that there is no difference in odds of investigation or maltreatment determinations if children experiencing E/T housing. However, there are increased of involvement in CP in general.

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand how experiences of E/T housing are related to CP involvement. Further, we aimed to evaluate how experiences with both systems may confer risk for school mobility and attendance. Children who experienced both E/T housing and CP had lower school attendance compared to children just experiencing E/T housing. However, it was not significantly different than experiencing only CP involvement. Contrary to cumulative risk theories, experiencing both risks was also not significantly different than experiencing just one of the risk factors on school mobility. However, all combinations of risk were related to decreased school attendance and increased school mobility compared to children who had neither experience. These findings align with previous research in Minnesota (Kiesel et al., 2016; Piescher et al., 2014; Renner et al., 2018) and studies in other populations that suggest both these experiences of adversity have been related to lower school engagement and performance (Eckenrode et al., 1995; Manfra, 2019; Perlman & Fantuzzo, 2010). This study is the only study to our knowledge that directly evaluated the cumulative effects of E/T housing and CP involvement among school aged children. Children's involvement in either of these systems likely captures the same variability in risk to school attendance and mobility. Evidence that both E/T housing and CP involvement are markers for student outcome suggests that more service targeted toward these populations could be important.

We also found that there was an increased risk for experiencing CP during the two-year study time period if someone also used E/T housing. This is in line with theory suggesting that the experience of one adversity (e.g., homelessness) increases the likelihood of experiencing other adversities (e.g., child maltreatment, McEwen & McEwen, 2017). In other words, risk predicts risk, and adverse experiences can accumulate in the lives of children (Evans et al., 2013; Masten & Sesma, 1999). In combination, aim one and aim two findings may reflect an unfolding period of family stress and instability. This supports the need for a multisystem approach to assist families across multiple social services and educational services. There is some research support that programs such as Keeping Families Together (Swann-Jackson et al., 2010), and other housing interventions, including Homework Starts with Home (Menne & Urbanski, 2021), are poised to strengthen the coordination of care and support for multisystem involved families. Incorporating and providing services through school setting could strengthen those services, given the heightened access to children where services can be consolidated and easily delivered.

We also found that E/T housing often occurred concurrently with CP involvement or CP involvement occurred one-month after exiting E/T housing. Longer time lags from E/T housing to CP and after E/T exit were not significant. This may suggest that involvement with these systems were a part of the same crisis event for families. Providing a path to housing stabilization or preventing homelessness to begin with may be a key lever to encourage family adaptation. Currently there are efforts in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota to increase school engagement by providing housing vouchers to families with school aged children experiencing homelessness. Given the relation between E/T housing occurring before or concurrently to CP involvement at the population level, it is possible that interventions that prevent homelessness or that occur at the onset of entering E/T service, may also reduce or improve children's experiences with CP. Assisting families in finding stable housing may help stop a cycle of negative events by enhancing resources and ultimately family and children's adaptive success across contexts. This could result in less time in out of home placement, or even prevent involvement to begin with (e.g., Dworsky, 2014; Shinn et al., 2017; Swann-Jackson et al., 2010).

A two-generation approach for families who do use E/T housing could also boost the adaptive success of family members across contexts. It may be helpful to offer preventative services such as the Parent Support Outreach Program to reduce the number of CP referrals. The Parent Support Outreach Program provides early intervention services and community resources to help meet families short term needs. This includes help with basic needs, health, parenting, transportation, childcare, and budgeting (Parent Support Outreach Program, 2021).

Results also suggested that while there is a strong association between E/T housing service and CP referral, there was no relationship between E/T housing use with experiences of CP investigation nor maltreatment. This is consistent with a study evaluating the relationship between CP involvement and shelter use in San Francisco county. Investigators found no relationship between child shelter involvement with case investigation status nor with child removal (Rodriguez et al., 2020). It is also consistent with findings among school aged children in Alameda County, California, where investigators found a relationship with CP referral but not with investigation, allegation, or child removal (Rodriguez & Shinn, 2016).

This pattern of results could stem from a variety of reasons and warrants further evaluations in order to understand the why these systems are associated. The most optimistic is that the CP systems are doing an adequate job in identifying families in need of additional services, without engaging in punitive investigation practices. Additionally, this could be evidence of the “fishbowl effect” when families enter E/T shelter and are more likely to be flagged for the CP system for less serious offenses because of increased monitoring. This may then point to a need for E/T housing staff to be trained on what constitutes CP referrals. It may also suggest that families using E/T housing need additional services not typically available in E/T housing such as preventative interventions that aim



to decrease parental stress and increase positive parenting behaviors. Anecdotally, parent stress groups, mental health services, day care services, developmental education, and parenting education classes may all be helpful to integrate into wrap-around care for families experiencing homelessness.

A notable strength of this study is that the results represent a reasonably strict test of the relationship between E/T housing and CP involvement. The study sample is drawn from a Minnesota population-wide administrative data set and we utilized a propensity score matching method that afforded a stronger causal assessment of the unique and specific role of E/T housing on our outcomes of interest – holding constant a host of other demographic factors that could have otherwise explained the relationship. As a result, all students included in the current study are racially diverse and likely have a range of adverse experiences, including other forms of homelessness. The process also illuminated the structural and racial disparities that families in Minneapolis and St. Paul Minnesota face. Our comparison group still had substantially lower school attendance compared to the general population and would be considered chronically absent, on average. These system-wide issues, deeply rooted in historical and ongoing racism – need to be addressed via collaborations across community, government, and service sectors.

Further, this study illustrates the importance of cross-system collaborations and data integration in answering questions about systemic risk. Administrative data integration can highlight families involved with multiple systems, illuminating far-reaching effects of systemic racism, as well as identifying potential conditions, timing, or targets for change/intervention. Administrative data integration is growing across the United States (Kitzmilller & Burnett, 2015). Policy, funding, and training for local communities of care informed by integrated administrative data project could help identify what workers need know about other service systems in their area, and how often families are navigating across them. It is important to bolster the coordinated entry system and increase access to affordable housing. Some counties in Minnesota have created resources to assist with cross-sector collaborations, and it could be advantageous to think about how those collaborations are improving services to families.

The administrative data available to this study do not include all the potential risk factors relevant to children nor do they assess many of the key resources or protective factors associated with child positive adaptation in the face of homelessness. Data also likely underrepresent E/T housing use and do not capture all forms of family homelessness. This includes emergency shelter use not including data on domestic violence. Residing in domestic violence shelters is often associated with CP involvement due to concerns for a child's exposure to domestic violence and other forms of maltreatment. Nonetheless, a strength of this study is the likelihood that it did capture the general risk associated with housing crises that often leads to families use of E/T housing services. This risk seems to be above and beyond the risks associated with other indicators and definitions of homelessness, that were captured in this study by the broader school data HHM flag. Further, the use of integrated HMIS data allowed for us to track temporal patterns of homelessness across the year, while the HHM flag is a single indicator for the whole school year. This study also uniquely provides an evaluation of the impact of children's involvement with these services on children's school attendance and mobility.

Additional research is necessary to understand the mechanisms linking homelessness among children and CP involvement, especially in early childhood. Experiencing homelessness in the first five years of life increases the likelihood of attention problems, psychopathology, and cognitive difficulties through adulthood (Fowler et al., 2014; Fowler et al., 2015; Kovan et al., 2014; Ziolk-Guest & McKenna, 2014). Future studies should also evaluate how systemic and cross system interventions can reduce risk for child maladjustment and better stabilize families.

## Data availability

The authors do not have permission to share data.

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# Supporting Attendance Through a Statewide System

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# Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. **Prioritize equity.**
2. Start from within.
3. **Measure what matters.**
4. **Go local.**
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. **Improve conditions for learning.**
10. Give students options.



# MDE's Definition of Educational Equity

Educational equity is the condition of **justice, fairness, and inclusion** in our systems of education so that **all students have access** to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.

The pursuit of educational equity **recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success** in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions.

**Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers** to educational opportunities **requires systemic change** that allows for the distribution of resources, information, and other support depending on the student's situation to **ensure an equitable outcome**.

## **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

- Passed in 2015 by the Federal Government and implemented in the 2018-2019 school year
- ESSA replaced No Child Left Behind and changed many portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- ESSA requires each state to develop and implement a system for holding all districts and schools accountable for the education of students.
- Minnesota uses the North Star system to identify schools and districts for comprehensive and targeted support.

# Key Terms and Legislation

- **Daily attendance:** Defined and documented at the local level.
- **Consistent attendance:** Consistent attendance is the opposite of chronic absenteeism. Students will be consistently attending school if they attend *more than* 90 percent of school days (>90% of school days).
- **Chronic absenteeism:** students who miss at least 10% of school days ( $\geq 10\%$  of school days).

# Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

## North Star system school and district identification process:

### Stage 1

Math Achievement

Reading Achievement

Progress Toward English  
Language Proficiency

### Stage 2

**(Elementary/Middle)**

Math Progress

Reading Progress

### Stage 2

**(High)**

Four-Year Graduation

Seven-Year Graduation

### Stage 3

Consistent Attendance

# Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

## The 5<sup>th</sup> Indicator: Consistent attendance

- State-wide community engagement and input (2015-2017).
- Collected via Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARRS), the school finance data system, to reduce the burden on Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
- Calculated by percentage, not days to account for the different formats of attendance tracking by LEAs.
- Students must be enrolled at a school for ½ year to be included in the calculation.
- Could be used as a beginning point for schools to explore attendance more with local data.

# Consistent Attendance Timeline

- Final Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) data to determine compensatory revenue is due the December and January of the following school year.
  - For example, school year 2023-24 MARSS data is due from LEAs early January 2025 to MDE.
- From February to July, MNIT then does the analysis and 3rd party vendor verification on accountability data including graduation, attendance, and test scores.
- MDE supports with technical specifications, manages timelines, quality checks reports, and provides technical assistance to the 3rd party vendor.



# Key Terms and Legislation

## Average Daily Membership (ADM):

- ADM represents the portion of the school year during which a student is enrolled in the school, district or charter school over a specific time period.
- It is the sum of each student's membership days divided by the student's total school days across all students in a school or district over a specific time period.

Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.05, subdivision 9 defines **habitual truant** as:

(a) Membership for pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 and for prekindergarten pupils with disabilities shall mean the number of pupils on the current roll of the school, counted from the date of entry until withdrawal. The date of withdrawal shall mean the day the pupil permanently leaves the school or the date it is officially known that the pupil has left or has been legally excused. **However, a pupil, regardless of age, who has been absent from school for 15 consecutive school days during the regular school year or for five consecutive school days during summer school or intersession classes of flexible school year programs without receiving instruction in the home or hospital shall be dropped from the roll and classified as withdrawn.**

## 15 Day Withdrawal Provision:

- Withdrawal after 15 consecutive days of absence, without the provision of homebound instruction, triggers the close of the enrollment status record.
- When the student re-enrolls a new enrollment status record is created.

34 available codes within the MARRS system indicate **why a student is withdrawing**.

- Families do not consistently indicate that they are withdrawing or where they are going.
- Some changes in enrollment happen in the summer without communication to schools.
- We can find students if they re-enroll in another public LEA, but not in real-time.

# Key Terms and Legislation

## Habitually truant:

- Collected in the Disciplinary Incident Reporting System
- Collected as a count for each student who meets the definition, only once
- Includes any student who met the definition of habitual truancy prior to transferring away or withdrawing from school

Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.007, subdivision 19 defines **habitual truant** as:

a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on **seven school days per school year** if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under section 120A.22, subdivision 8

# Data Support and Sharing

Data-sharing agreements and requests with researchers, media, policymakers

Published analytics on the MDE Minnesota Report Card and Data Center

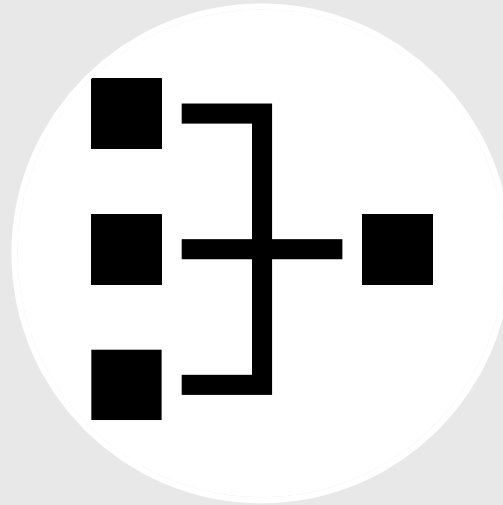
Quarterly data sharing with the Tribal Nations Education Committee

Partnerships with non-profits, collective impact groups, and community

# Future data opportunities



Local attendance  
definitions and  
policies



Student  
Information  
System data  
standards



Usable data  
analysis to inform  
practice and policy

## History of attendance research

“School attendance and school absenteeism were one of the first areas of study for emerging disciplines such as education, psychology, and criminal justice in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With the advent of the labor rights movement, new employment laws, and the needs for an educated workforce and greater social order, children were increasingly moved from industrial and agricultural settings to more formalized school settings.”

(Kearney et al., 2022, p. 1-2)

# Attendance Literature

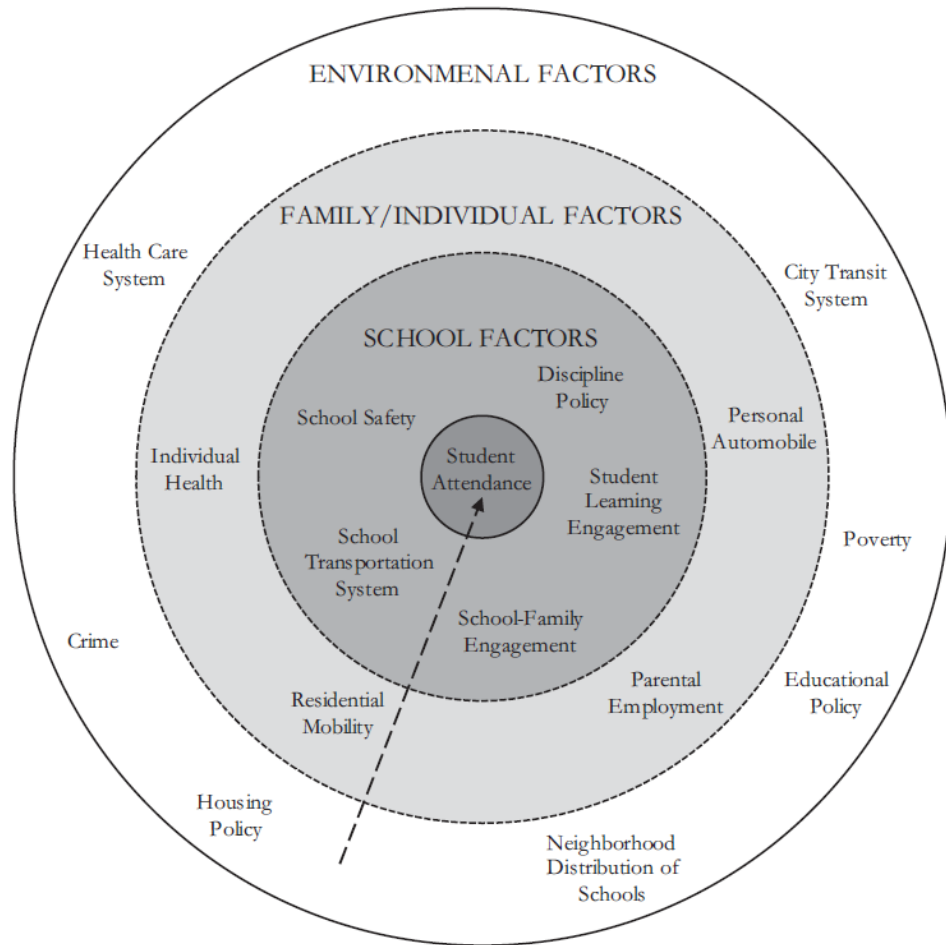


Image from Winchell Lenhoff & Pogodzinski, 2018, p. 155

## Root causes of school attendance issues

- Student well-being
- School environment
- Family dynamics
- Neighborhood conditions
- Poverty

(Childs & Lofton, 2021)

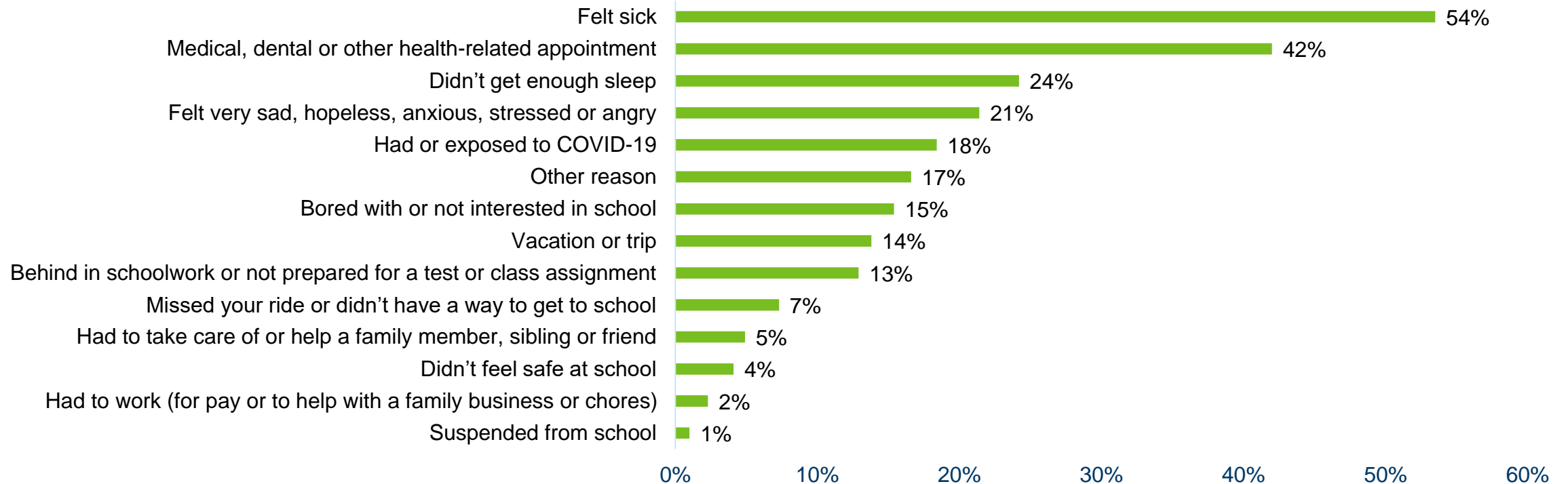
## Reasons for absence

- The complicated nature of the root causes of non-attendance and the data collected by LEAs makes studying the reason(s) for non-attendance difficult
- Most research around reasons for absence focuses on excused and unexcused absences.
- One study found that at 15% non-attendance, students experienced more unique problems and supports required more individualization (Kearney & Childs, 2023).
- However, unexcused does not necessarily mean the student chose to miss school.



# What do the Students Say?

## 2022 Minnesota Student Survey 11st Grade State-Wide Results: What are the reasons you missed a full or part day of school in the last 30 days?



*Note, question was only administered to students who indicated they had missed a full or part of a day of school in the last 30 days.*

# Minnesota Study Survey

- A triennial survey that reports on students' experiences and well-being that is psychometrically evaluated, validity evidence for its continued interpretation, and used widely.
- Interagency coordination with Minnesota's Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Education.
- Administered every three years to students in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades at participating districts.

## Connection to attendance literature:

Family and relationships

Mental and physical health

Risk factors

Perception of schools

Experiences in-and-out of school

# Attendance Literature

5-9%

At-risk attendance

10-20%

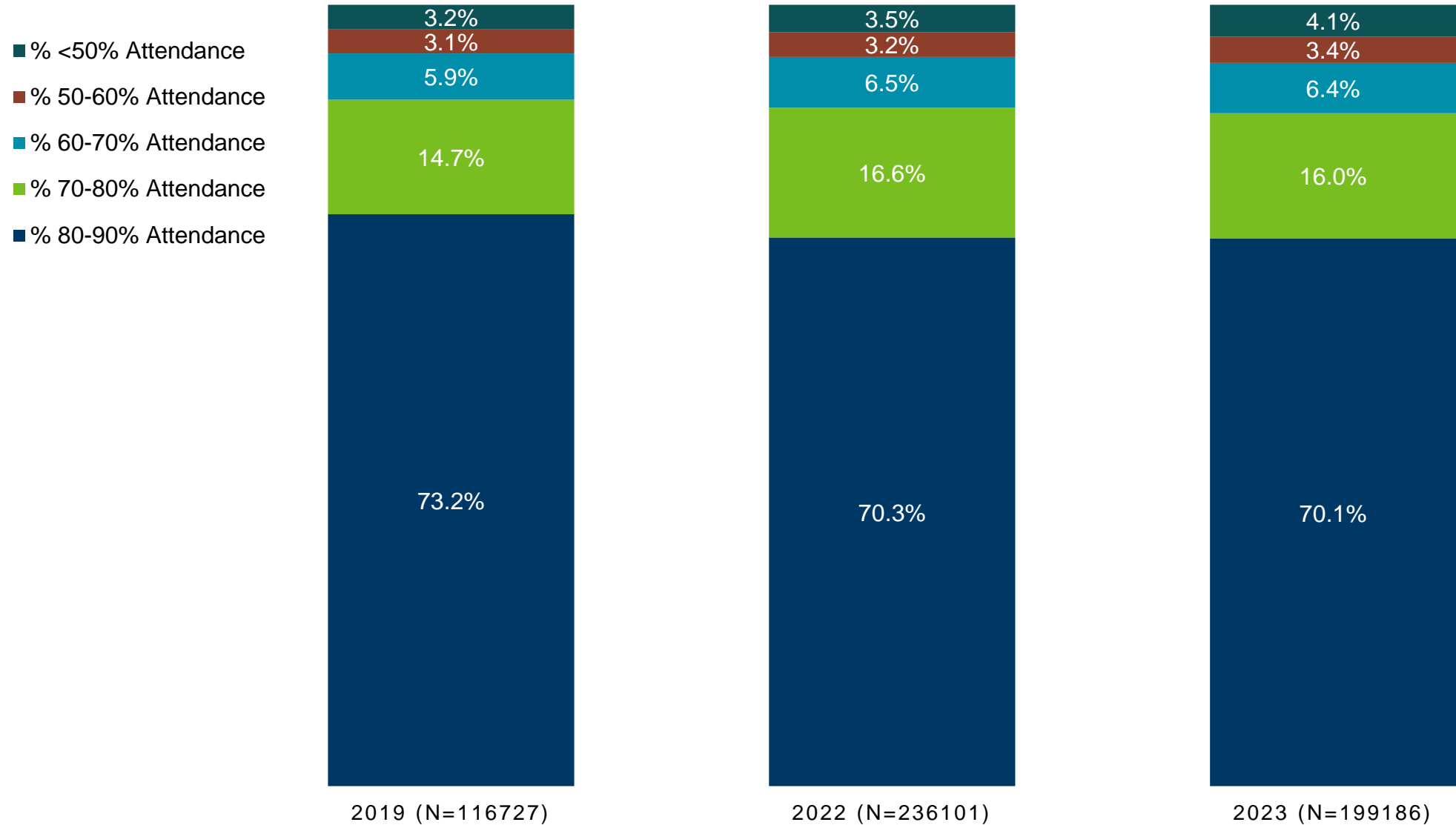
Chronically absent

>20%

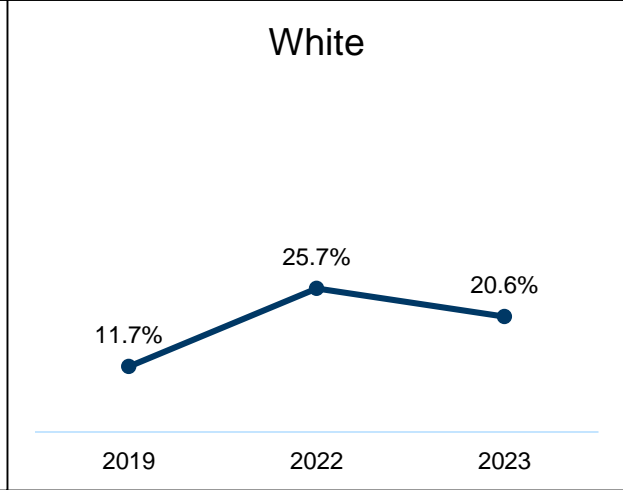
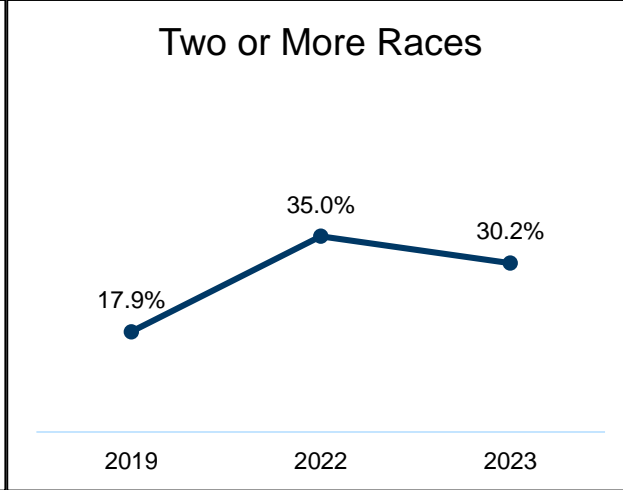
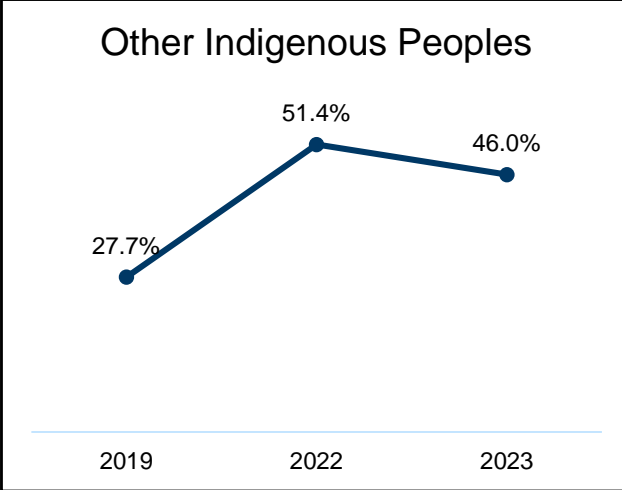
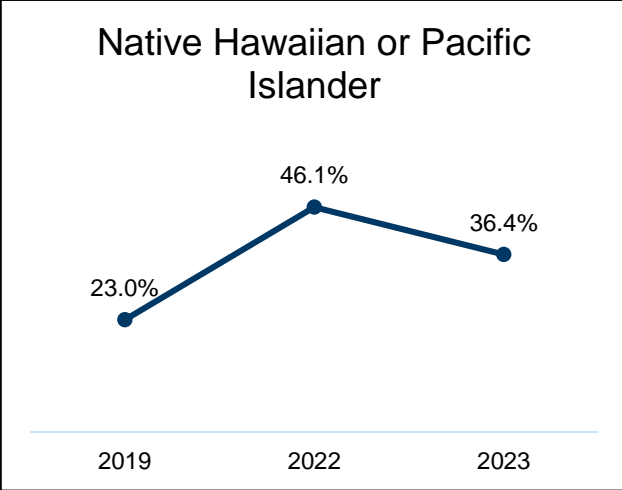
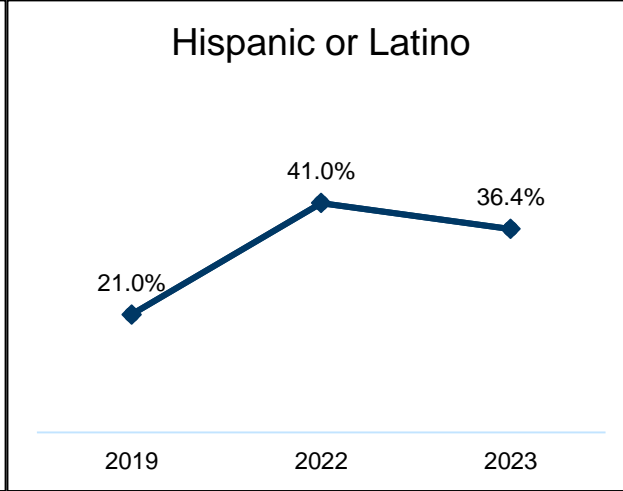
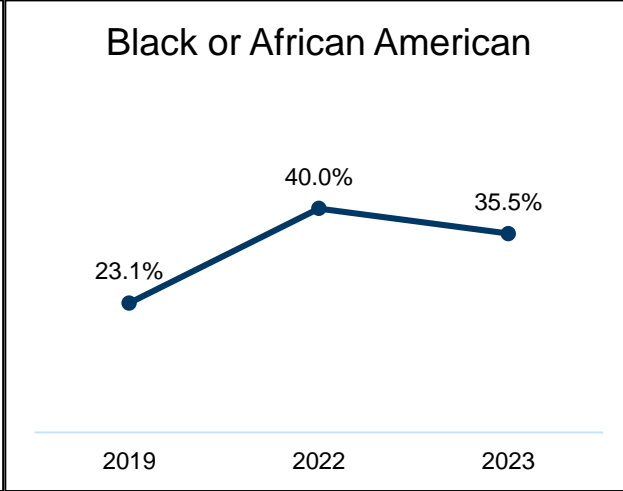
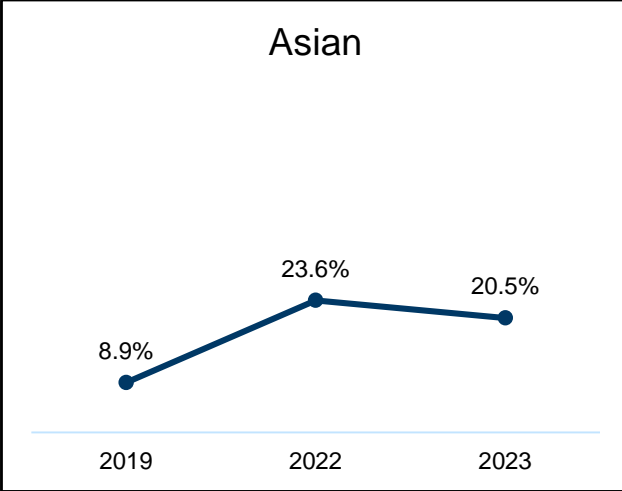
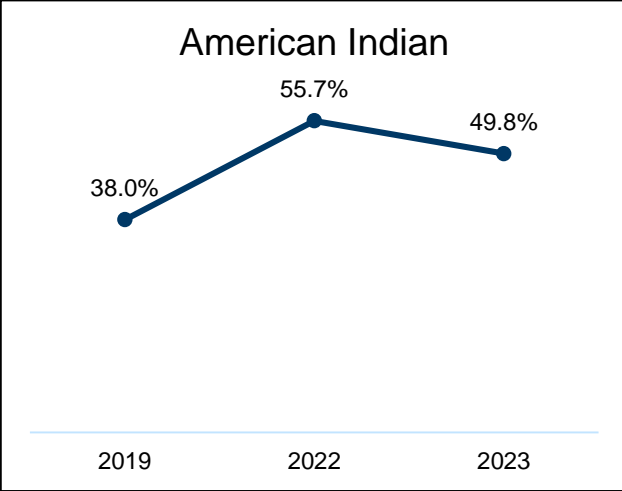
Severe chronic  
absence

(Kearney & Childs, 2022)

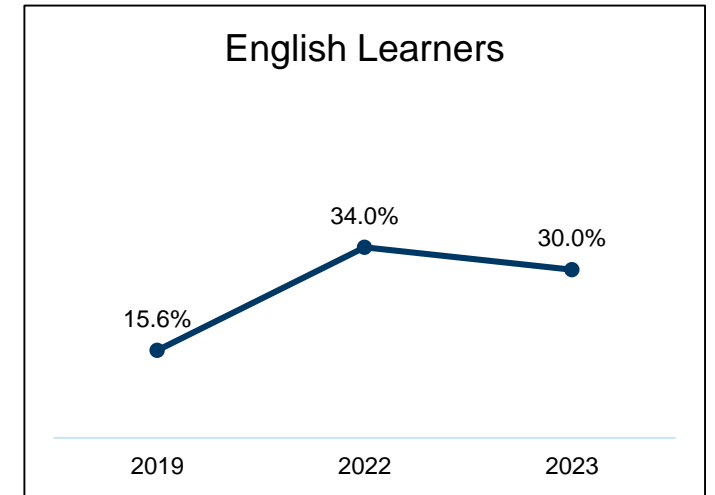
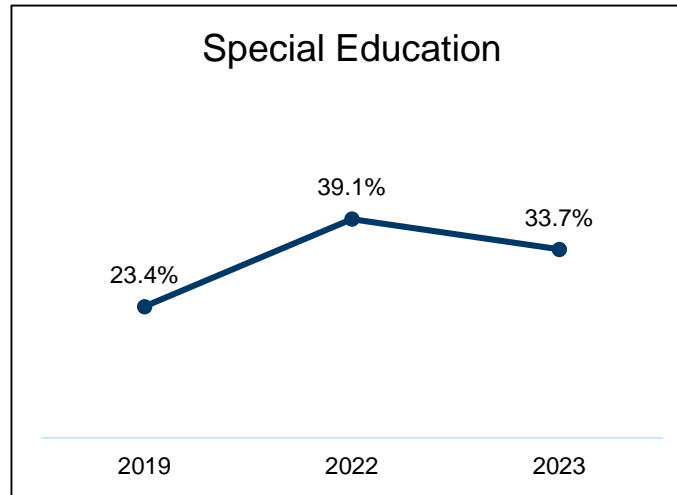
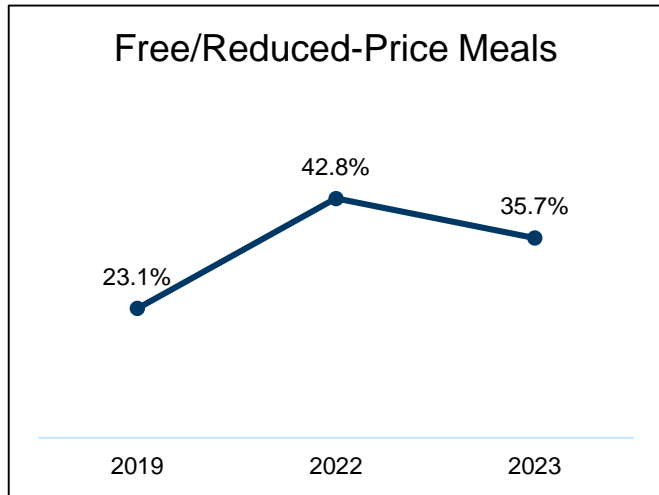
# Minnesota Attendance Percentages for Students that Attend School $\leq$ 90% (2019, 2022, 2023)



# ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGES FOR MINNESOTA STUDENTS THAT ATTEND SCHOOL ≤ 90% DISAGGREGATED BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



# ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGES FOR MINNESOTA STUDENTS THAT ATTEND SCHOOL ≤ 90% DISAGGREGATED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, AND RECEIVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES



## **Complexities of studying student attendance:**

- Despite the breadth of attendance research, most positive interventions only show small to moderate effects (Eklund et al., 2022; Kearney et al., 2022).
- Critiques of data include the quality, utility, and generalizability (Kearney & Childs, 2023).
- MDE and DCYF recently applied for federal research mixed-methods grants to study attendance through systemic and contextual analytics.

## **Punitive measures:**

- Literature overwhelmingly indicates that punitive measures are ineffective in increasing attendance.
  - Examples include arrests, expulsion, suspension, tickets
- Punitive attendance interventions paradoxically exacerbate school attendance problems.
- Punitive attendance measures are disproportionately applied toward students who are American Indian, Hispanic, Black and African American, low-income, and English language learners.

(Kearney et al., 2022; Kearney & Childs, 2023; & Kearney et al., 2023)



## Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):

- MTSS has been a cornerstone recommendation within attendance literature for the last decade because:
  - It provides both preventative (tier 1) and specialized supports (tier 2+) for students.
  - It is a proactive model that emphasizes data-based decision-making.
  - “The comprehensive, empirical, sustainable, and efficient nature of MTSS is designed to optimize limited resources” (Kearney et al., 2019, p. 8).
  - Provides research-based structure with localized design based on the context of the school- including partnerships with non-profits, agencies, and the community.

## **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support:**

- Provides better data that can be disaggregated by students and applied intervention.
- A recent study found that schools that received MTSS training saw a statistically significant increase in student attendance and a decrease in student behavioral issues (Gage et al., 2024).

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# COMPASS

*Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success*



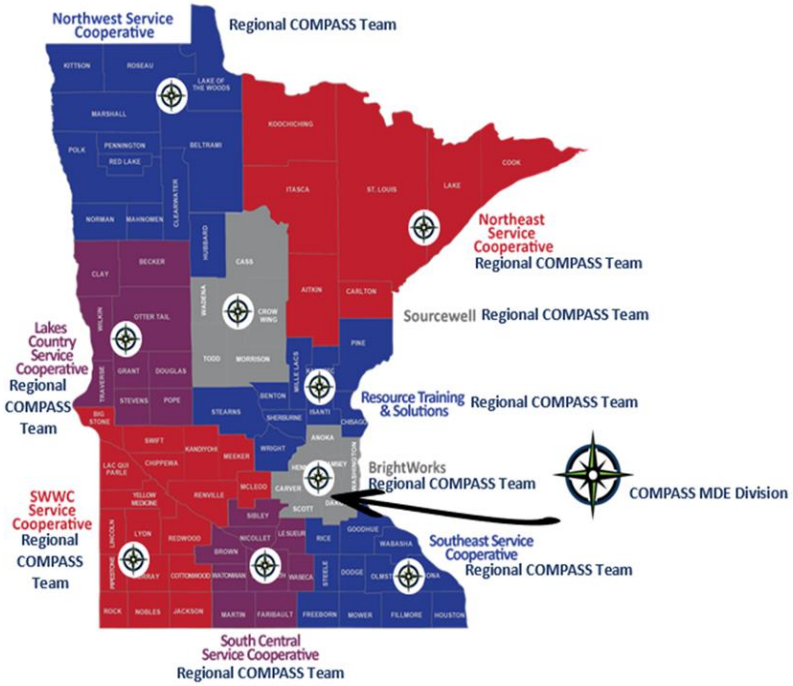
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Statewide System for Continuous Improvement

Statewide Framework for Continuous Improvement

# COMPASS is a Partnership



# Statewide System of Support

Our purpose is to design a **collaborative, supportive system** in Minnesota to ensure **rigorous and equitable outcomes for each student**, without exception. Through integrating COMPASS (Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success), the state continuous improvement system, into each service cooperative, all public, charter, and tribal schools will have regional access to:

- cohesive guidance,
- aligned, evidence-based professional learning,
- flexible, layered, and differentiated support that intensifies as needed.
- expanded continuous improvement support to all districts, charter schools, and tribal schools in Minnesota,
- local regional access to research-based guidance within the local context
- free guidance, professional learning, and flexible support in all areas of continuous improvement

# COMPASS Layers of Support

**Educational equity** is the condition of **justice, fairness, and inclusion** in our systems of education so that **all students have access** to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.

**MnMTSS Continuous Improvement Framework: Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers** to educational opportunities **requires systemic change** that allows for the distribution of resources, information, and other support depending on the student's situation to **ensure an equitable outcome**.

Culturally responsive and high-quality core instruction and foundational school climate so that **all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential**.

Equitable access for historically and persistently marginalized student groups. Identifying and **eliminating barriers** caused by the **system** and building bridges based on the unique strengths of students and communities.

Additional layer of focused continuous improvement support for schools identified for targeted or comprehensive improvement.



# COMPASS Areas of Support

- Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support (MnMTSS)
  - Local implementation support
  - Family and Community Engagement
  - Data and Assessment Literacy
  - Attendance Support
- Culturally Responsive Instructional Leadership
- High quality evidence-based Literacy instruction
- High quality evidence-based Math instruction
- Climate and Culture
- Equitable Access for All Students and Student Groups
  - American Indian/Indigenous Students
  - Multi-Lingual Learners
  - Students receiving special education services
- Additional support for districts and schools identified for support through the state accountability system



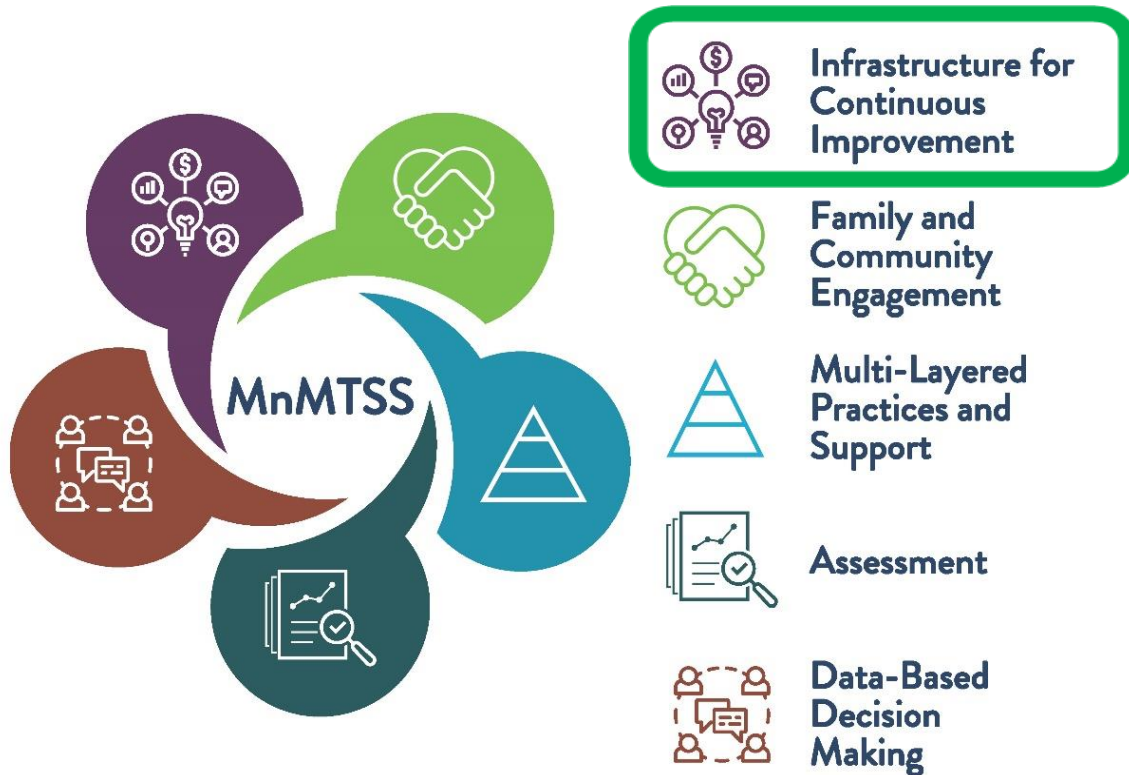
# Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support (MnMTSS)

- Framework for continuous improvement and benchmark for evaluating systems and measuring progress
- Five components
  - Infrastructure for continuous improvement
  - Family and community engagement
  - Multi-layered practices and supports
  - Assessment
  - Data-based decision making
- Multi-layered practices and supports is one component



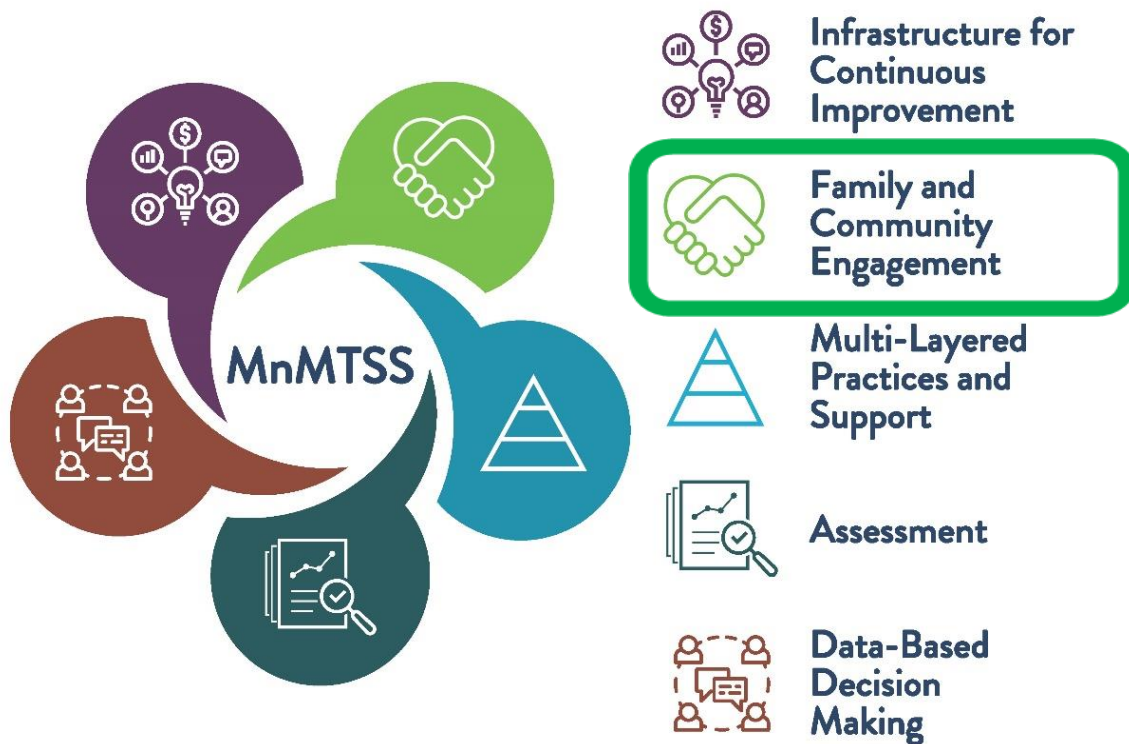
District engagement to date: 160 districts have participated in the 6-session introduction course, 33 are newly engaged this fall and 30 are engaged in ongoing professional development.

# MnMTSS for Attendance



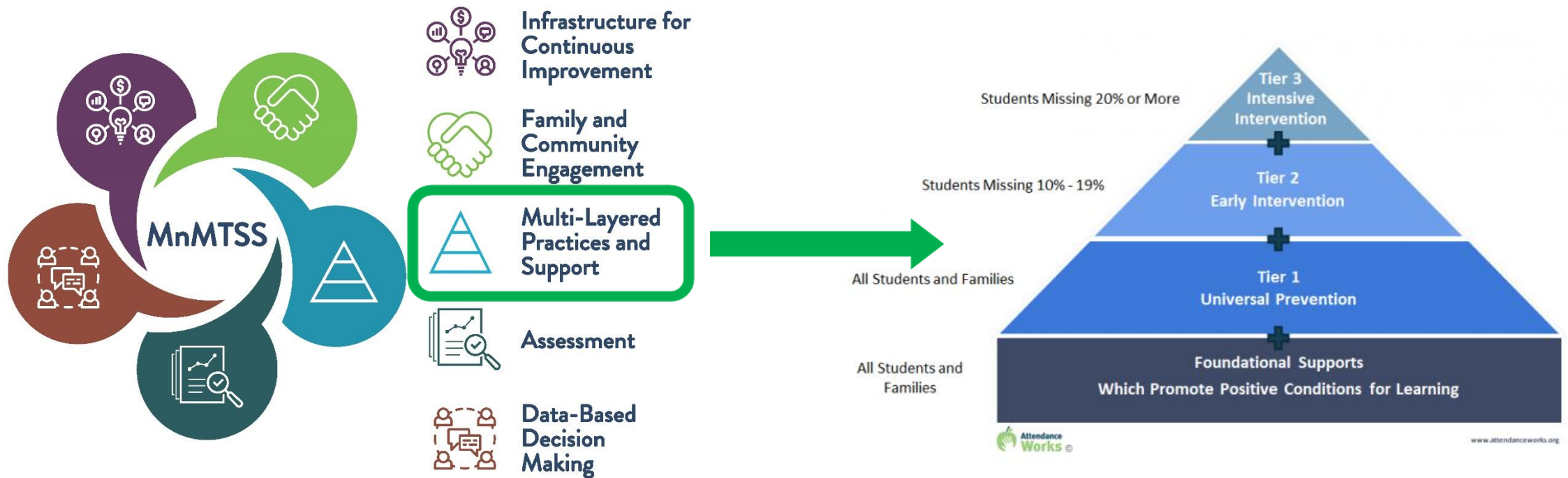
- MnMTSS addresses school factors as causes of root cause of school attendance issues
- Training and self-analysis tool provides opportunity for district/charter school teams to examine and plan for improvement of:
  - Policies and practices (discipline policies)
  - School Climate & Safety
  - Student engagement

# MnMTSS for Attendance



- [The Minnesota Family and Community Engagement model](#) to support schools is designed to help schools look at the systems and educator capacities they need to grow to effectively engage every family and learn together what the assets and needs are in the school community to co-design solutions that will address prioritized needs.
- [Full-Service Community Schools](#) – Minnesota invested in this growing community school movement and is seen as a National Leader in building neighborhood to National nested civic infrastructure intended to address non-academic barriers to attending and engaging in school consistently.

# MnMTSS for Attendance



# Multi-layered Practices Examples

## Foundational Supports

- Physical and Emotional Health and Safety
- Belonging, Connection and Support
- Academic Challenge and Engagement
- Adult and Student Well-Being and Emotional Competence

## Tier 1 Universal Supports

- Clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations
- Routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance and engagement
- Personalized positive communication to families when students are absent
- Recognition of good and improved attendance
- Impact of attendance on whole child widely understood
- Connection to a caring adult in the school

# Multi-layered Practices Examples

## Tier 2 Early Intervention

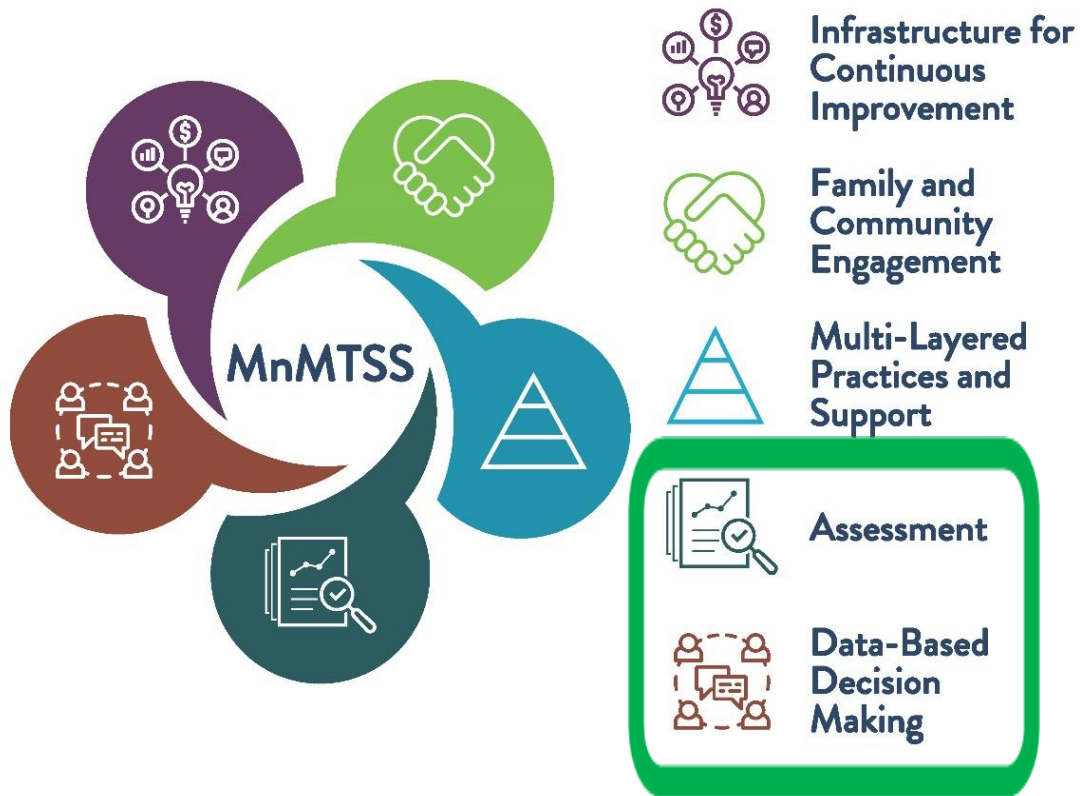
- Common community and school barriers identified and addressed
- Individualized student success plan that includes attention to attendance
- Family visit
- Mentors
- [Check-In/Check-Out \(CICO\)](#)
- Small group interventions and supports for students
- Restorative alternatives to discipline and suspension

## Tier 3 Intensive Intervention

- Educational support champions / advocates
- Interagency case management
- Housing stability supports
- Student attendance review board
- Community-based, non-criminal truancy court
- Individualized learning and success plan leading to graduation



# MnMTSS for Attendance



- [The Minnesota Early Indicator and Response System 2.0 \(MEIRS 2.0\)](#) is an evidence based Early Warning and Intervention Monitoring System. MEIRS 2.0 can be used as a universal screener to identify students at the High School level in need of additional supports and interventions to ensure students are on track to graduate. MDE provides training to districts regularly.

# Statewide System of Support-Attendance

- **Statewide System of Support Attendance Positions:**
  - Temporary Data Practices and Analytics Attendance Data Specialist: provide guidance and support to districts and schools on the use of local and state data. This position will support the work of the pilot districts in the implementation and monitoring of selected interventions. Advanced analytics of attendance data at the state and local level. Develop literature reviews and conduct scans of how SEAs are utilizing and sharing attendance data.
  - Temporary COMPASS Attendance Specialist: support the pilot districts to implement and measure the impact of attendance interventions. Use information from pilot program to inform state attendance framework, guidance, and support, lead the programmatic work of the regional COMPASS attendance positions and align regional and COMPASS attendance work to attendance work across the state and across the agency.
  - Four Temporary Regional Attendance Specialists: work with the MDE COMPASS attendance position to provide research-based guidance within MnMTSS and support implementation at the local level, informed by local data, and selected to meet the unique strengths and barriers for students and families at the local level.



# Minnesota Attendance Support Guide

**COMPASS is developing a statewide attendance guide. This guide will focus on continuous improvement of systems and the implementation of evidence-based practices to remove barriers faced by students, families and communities.**

- **Phase 1: Initial Report and Guidance Development:**
  - Provide a report on the current state of student attendance and/or chronic absenteeism in Minnesota, including current attendance reporting and recording practices across the state
  - Develop guidance designed to leverage MnMTSS as a framework to improve student attendance and address absenteeism, and
  - Authentically engage a diverse group of partners to provide input, feedback, and to gain insight into the systemic issues impacting student attendance and chronic absenteeism in Minnesota.
- **Phase 2: Minnesota Student Attendance Task Force and Attendance Guide Development:**
  - Convene and facilitate monthly meetings of a “Minnesota Student Attendance Task Force” to develop key recommendations for improving student attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism, and
  - Develop “Minnesota’s Attendance Guide,” to provide statewide guidance related to improving attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism.
- **Phase 3: Professional Learning & Support**
  - Develop the capacity of regional COMPASS attendance leads to assist districts address chronic absence and increase student attendance, provide peer support and coaching to districts to modify their attendance policies and practices, and support districts and schools to adopt and implement evidence-based attendance practices within the MnMTSS framework.

# Support for Pilot Districts and the Legislative Study Group

- **Attendance Pilot Program:** COMPASS and Data Practices and Analytics are working in partnership with the pilot districts to provide focused access to the statewide system of support, including supporting the use of data in decision making, professional learning as requested, and additional flexible support as needed. MDE will learn from implementation at the pilot districts to better understand promising practices, and how to support districts across the state to increase consistent attendance.
  - Survey of current attendance recording and reporting
  - Individual support to each district to identify and describe evidence-based interventions
  - Support to develop program evaluation

# Attendance Support for Schools Identified through ESEA

- **ESSA Federal identification for school improvement:**
  - Attendance is the final filter for identification.
  - No schools are identified for attendance alone.
  - Identification attendance data is based on the percent of students consistently attending, those who miss less than 10% of school days in a year.
- **Identified schools receive additional targeted support through COMPASS, our statewide system of support:**
  - School Advocates work alongside school and district leaders to support their capacity to lead through continuous improvement.
  - The school engages in a comprehensive needs assessment.
  - The school team selects an evidence-based practice (EBP).
  - The school is supported to implement the EBP.
  - Number of schools that selected an attendance specific EBP in current round: 4
- **New round of identification: This is the final year of support for the currently identified schools. In the upcoming round of identification MDE COMPASS will utilize current research and results from the Minnesota Attendance Guidance development process to inform our expectations and supports for identified schools, including around improving student attendance.**

# What Are We Hearing?

- MDE currently has the data needed to identify schools for additional support through the state accountability system, identify CACR (Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (previously WBWF)) districts with the highest percent of identified schools, and to identify other tiers of districts and schools for support through the COMPASS statewide system of regional support.
- Districts and partners are also sharing that would be beneficial for MDE to build the capacity of and support district and school leaders to use their local data to track attendance data in real time to identify early warning signs, identify barriers, improve systems, and support the unique strengths of students and families in their communities.

# Promising Practices and Interventions

- Research to Practice
  - Research based guidance from the state agency with aligned professional development, flexible support and capacity building.
  - Support and guidance for districts to use local data in decision making
  - Solutions based on local strengths, context, and needs.
  - Systemic solutions that increase school connectedness and belonging and identify and remove student or student group barriers to attendance.
  - Multi-tiered systems of support such as MnMTSS with multi-layered practices and supports.

# Thank You!

Angela Mansfield – Assistant Commissioner, Office of Educational Opportunity  
Lana Peterson – Director of Data Practices and Analytics  
Ivy Wheeler- Director of COMPASS



# Chronic Absenteeism

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A national perspective







# WHO WE ARE.

The essential, indispensable member of any team addressing education policy.



# WHAT WE DO.

We believe in the power of learning from experience, and we know informed policymakers create better education policy.



# HOW WE DO IT.



**Research**



**Report**



**Convene**



**Counsel**



# Today's Chronic Absenteeism

- Doubled from pre-COVID pandemic levels
- Nearly 14.7 million kids were chronically absent in the 2021-22 school year
- Data from the 2022-23 school year showed improvements
- New and incomplete data from last year is positive



# Effects of Missing School



- Difficulty reading by third grade
- Low achievement
- Falling off the path to graduate



# Chronic Absenteeism is not Uniform

Absences are higher student groups

- Grade level
  - kindergarten
  - high school
- Students from low-income families
- Students from communities of color
- Students with disabilities
- Students who are English language learners



# Definition of Chronic Absenteeism

- Typically defined as any student missing 10% or more of school days.
- Some states use number of days missed.
- Most state definitions include ANY absence:
  - Excused
  - Unexcused
  - Suspensions





# Truancy vs. Chronically Absent

## Truancy

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Stresses compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal and administrative solutions

## Chronic Absence

- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes the impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies



# Beyond the Definition of Chronic Absenteeism



- Definitions of a day of school
- Excused vs unexcused absences



# What is a school day?

- State- or local-level decision.
- Most common state definition of a day of attendance is typically  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a day.
- Almost 15 states allow the attendance policy to be made at the local level.



# Excused vs. Unexcused



State policies vary:

- Excused and unexcused in regulation
- Particular absences counted as present, for example, school events or 4-H



# Tracking Excused Absences

- Data to inform
- Allows students to make up work and provides continued engagement
- The latest legislative sessions saw several bills regarding excused absences:
  - Religious reasons
  - Mental and behavioral health
  - Civic engagement
  - Work-based Learning



# Reporting Chronic Absenteeism

- Required through EdFacts
- Required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- 36 states use Chronic Absenteeism as a measure of School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) for federal school accountability



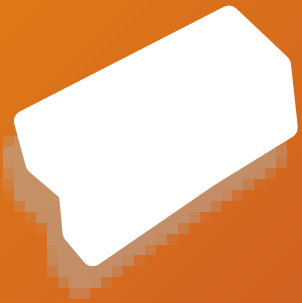
# Shifting Perspectives

State policies are shifting with a focus on:

- Consequences of lost learning time
- Identifying barriers to attendance
- Prevention strategies
- Data collection



# Connecticut



## Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)(2021)

- 15 Districts
- Identify underlying issues
- Home visits to build relationships
- State dashboard
- Early results show attendance improvement





# Connecticut



## Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP)(2021)

- 15 Districts
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- Home visits to build relationships
- State dashboard
- Early results show attendance improvement



# New Mexico



## Attendance for Success Act (2019)

- Purpose is to prevent absences
- Requires local Attendance Improvement Plans
- Requires Early Warning System
- Four-tiered intervention protocol
- Community data dashboard



# Rhode Island



## Attendance Matters RI (2023)

- Data Dashboard
- LEA support
- Public outreach campaign
- Community engagement





# Q & A





**EDUCATION  
COMMISSION**  
OF THE STATES

Your education policy team.

# THANK YOU

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**Lauren Bloomquist**  
**[lbloomquist@ecs.org](mailto:lbloomquist@ecs.org)**

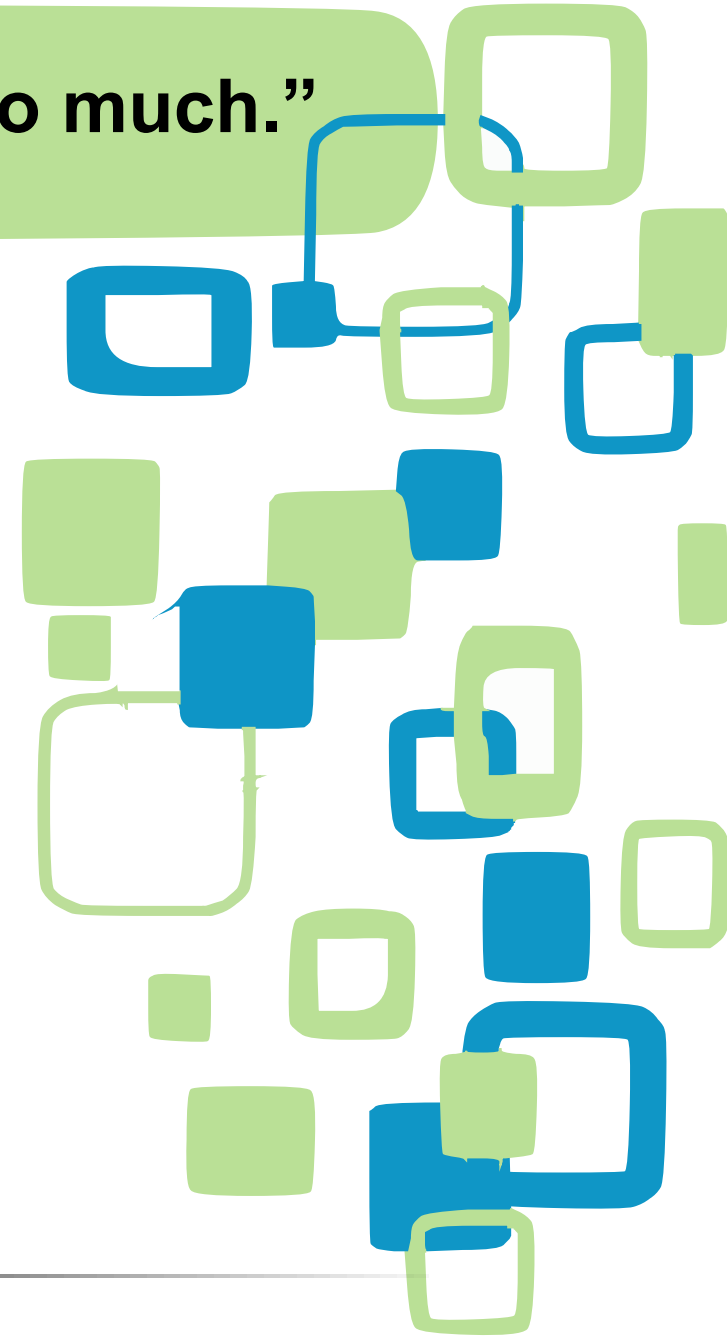
# Family Resource Centers Working with Families in Rural Communities



**“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”**

Helen Keller, author, educator, and disability rights advocate.

This quote highlights the need for collaboration, building relationships, teamwork and maintaining trust. These are some of the values shared by community partners as we implement Family Resource Centers in Polk County.





# Polk County Family Resource Centers

The Polk County Family Resource Centers are proudly co-managed by Polk County Social Services and our community action partner, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council.

Mission Statement: “The Polk County Family Resource Center is a safe and welcoming space for all, providing access to community resources that support family strengths and is parent and caregiver driven.”

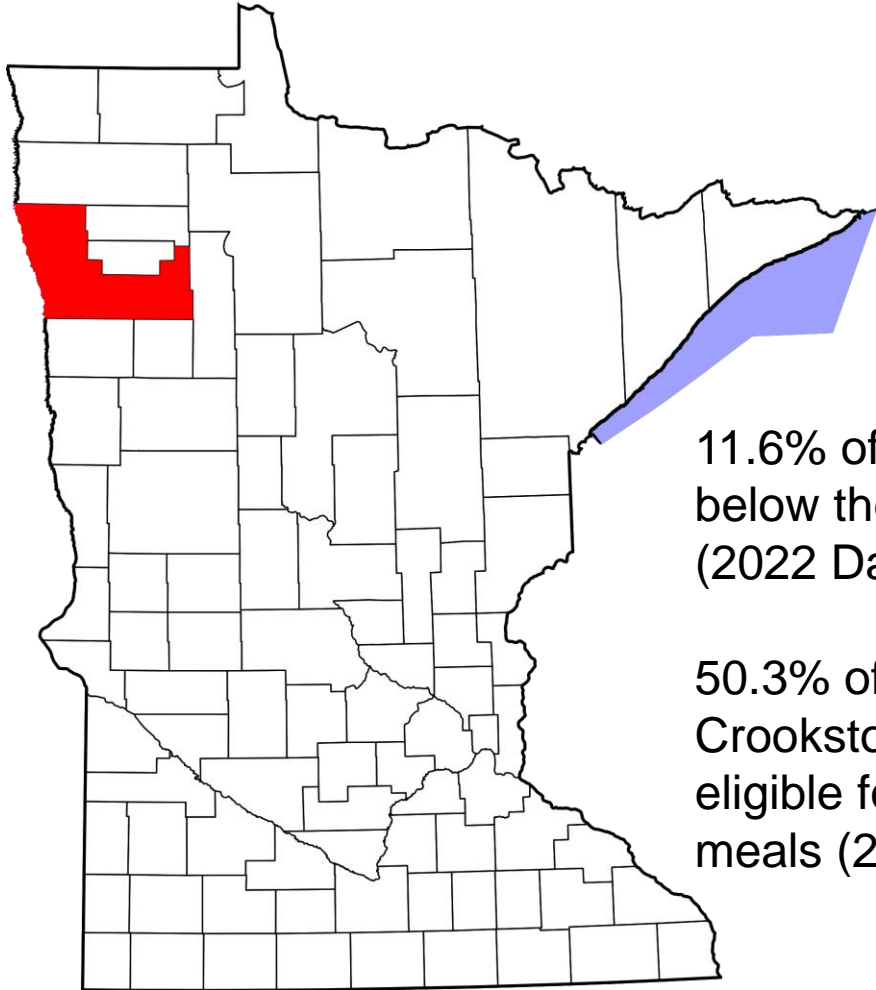


A family participates in a Play & Learn activity at our FRC.





# Polk County, MN



11.6% of the population are below the poverty line (2022 Data USA)

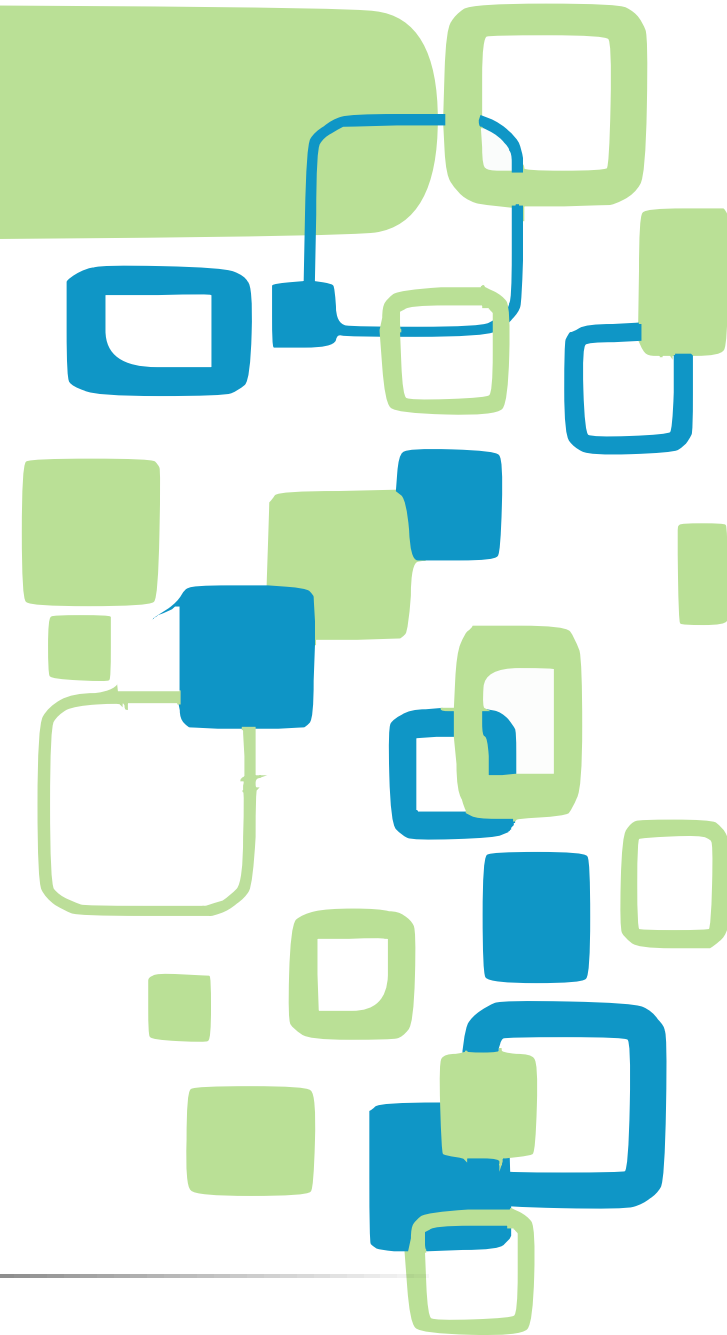
50.3% of students in the Crookston School District are eligible for free and reduced meals (2021 US News)



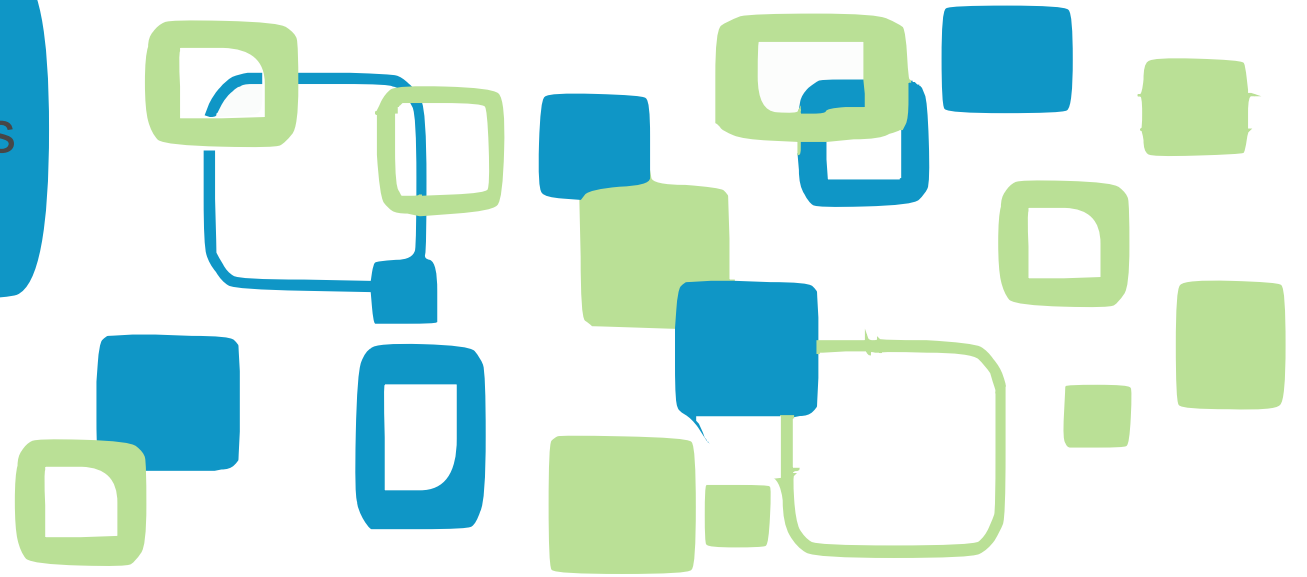
# Polk County, MN

Facts: Its population was 31,192 at the 2020 census.<sup>[1]</sup>

| Race   | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| <a href="#">White</a> (NH)                         | 26,538 | 85.1%   |
| <a href="#">Black or African American</a> (NH)     | 958    | 3.1%    |
| <a href="#">Native American</a> (NH)               | 376    | 1.21%   |
| <a href="#">Asian</a> (NH)                         | 156    | 0.5%    |
| <a href="#">Pacific Islander</a> (NH)              | 4      | 0.01%   |
| <a href="#">Other/mixed</a> (NH)                   | 1,161  | 3.72%   |
| <a href="#">Hispanic</a> or <a href="#">Latino</a> | 1,999  | 6.41%   |



Polk County Resource Centers programming, resources and supports are based on the Five Protective Factors that are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach:



Parental resilience

Social connections

Concrete supports in times of need

Knowledge of parenting and child development

Social and emotional competence of children

# What Services Are Available Through the Center?

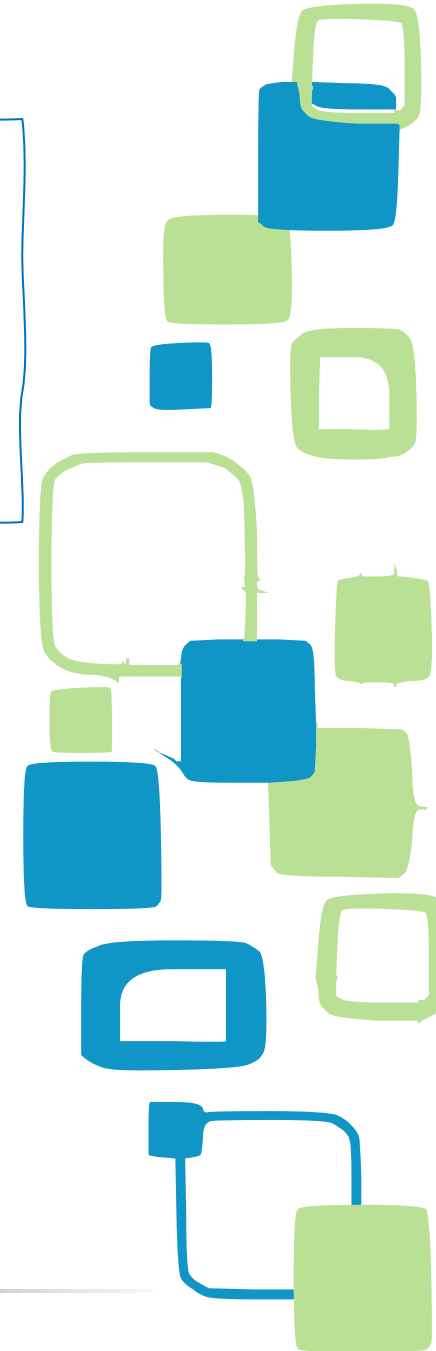
## **Family Well-being:**

Focused on addressing the social and mental well-being of students and families. FRCs offer a variety of services to address the mental health needs of students and families such as case management, and early intervention programs.

## **Family Support:**

Family Resource Centers offer a variety of opportunities that support both students and their families. FRCs serve as an essential partner with the school and family to support consistent school attendance. FRCs provide many services to address or eliminate barriers to consistent attendance including provision of basic needs, referral coordination for social services, mental health, and/or health care, employment assistance, and case management.

FRC are responsive to the specific needs of each community and can include concrete supports. In East Grand Forks, the school has requested we have available student hygiene kits on site.





# Cultural Navigation Services – Summer 2024

Groups are provided at the FRC to help prepare children and adolescents for the upcoming school year.

## **YOUTH EDUCATION GROUP:**

This group is designed for youth in Middle School and High School. Approximately 20-25 youth attend each week over the summer. The group has provided a safe place for youth to have conversation and learn. Benefits seen have been - youth feel like they have a sense of belonging, gain confidence and leadership skills.

## **READ WITH ME PROGRAM:**

This group is designed for elementary age children. Approximately 20-25 youth attend weekly over the summer. The children take turns reading books and listening to each other. Benefits seen have been - increased social skills, vocabulary and reading skills.

## **ADULT EDUCATION (EL) ENGLISH LEARN:**

Approximately 20 women attend weekly for parenting and/or emotional support and to help improve their English communication skills.

## **CASE MANAGEMENT:**

Ongoing support is provided to help families. Assistance is provided to find housing, register the children in school, explain attendance requirements, assist with applications for social services or housing assistance, etc. In one week, 10 new families were provided case management.



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## Monthly youth groups held in Crookston facilitated by our local mental health center.

### Topics include:

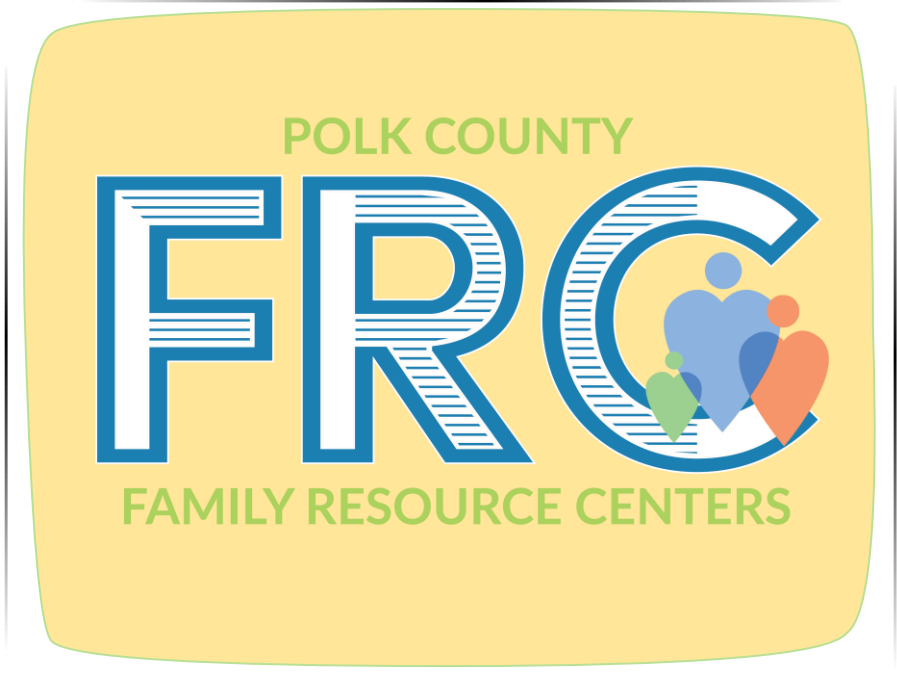
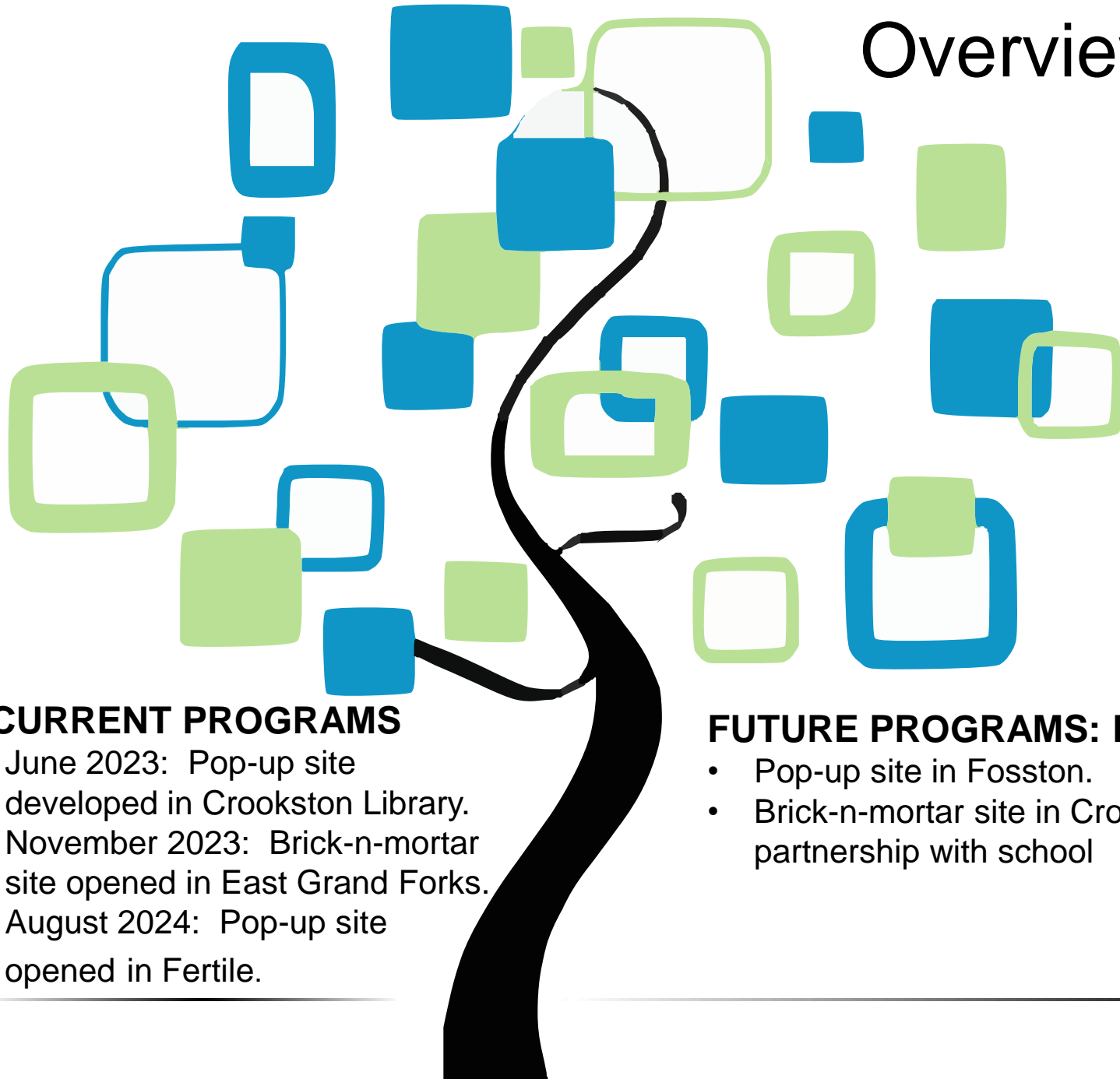
- Encouragement Postcards – each person will get 3 postcards to write and give them to others. Skills practiced: positive affirmation, listening, task completion.
- Worry Stones, Friendship Bracelets – Skills practiced: thought stopping, self acceptance, stress management.
- Positive Affirmation Fortune Teller – Skills practiced: self awareness, positive affirmation, stress management.
- Zentangle Drawings – Skills practiced: self calming, coping skills, turn taking, concentration.
- Sand Art Feeling Jars – Skills practiced: feelings identification, emotional regulation, coping skills.
- My Emotions Wheel, My Safe Place Activity – Skills practiced: feelings identification, coping skills, communication.

## Youth Group

### **Youth Group Impact Story:**

The Family Resource Center in the town of Crookston is a very good thing for us because it helps families get what they need and feel connected. The workshops that have been done are really amazing. I struggled a lot in school. I got bullied. The impact that it's done for me is it has really helped me. ~ From a youth participant.

# Overview of Polk County FRCs



## 3 CURRENT PROGRAMS

- June 2023: Pop-up site developed in Crookston Library.
- November 2023: Brick-n-mortar site opened in East Grand Forks.
- August 2024: Pop-up site opened in Fertile.

## FUTURE PROGRAMS: Fall 2024

- Pop-up site in Fosston.
- Brick-n-mortar site in Crookston - partnership with school

## STAFFING:

- .5 FTE Manager
- .5 FTE Director
- 1.5 FTE FRC coordinator
- .5 FTE Cultural Navigator
- Hiring 1-2 FTE coordinators



## Crookston, MN (pop-up site)



Chris Boike, Crookston Public Library director, and Victoria Ramirez, Family Resource Manager, hold a banner with the Polk County Family Resource Center logo on it in front of the Crookston Public.



FRC Core Stakeholders at Grand Opening event on June 1, 2023



# East Grand Forks

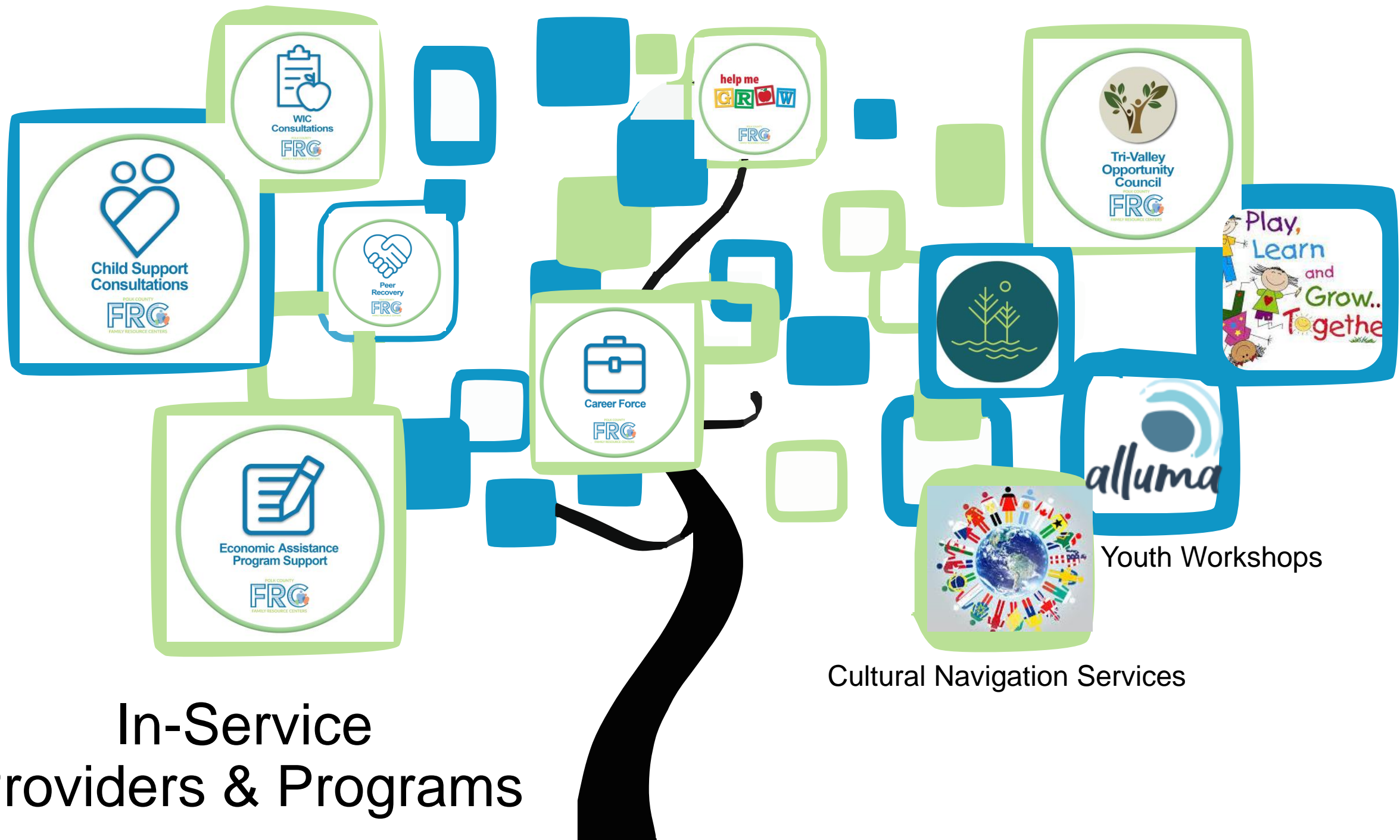


Community partners at our Grand Opening event on Nov 14, 2023.



Balloon twisting activity

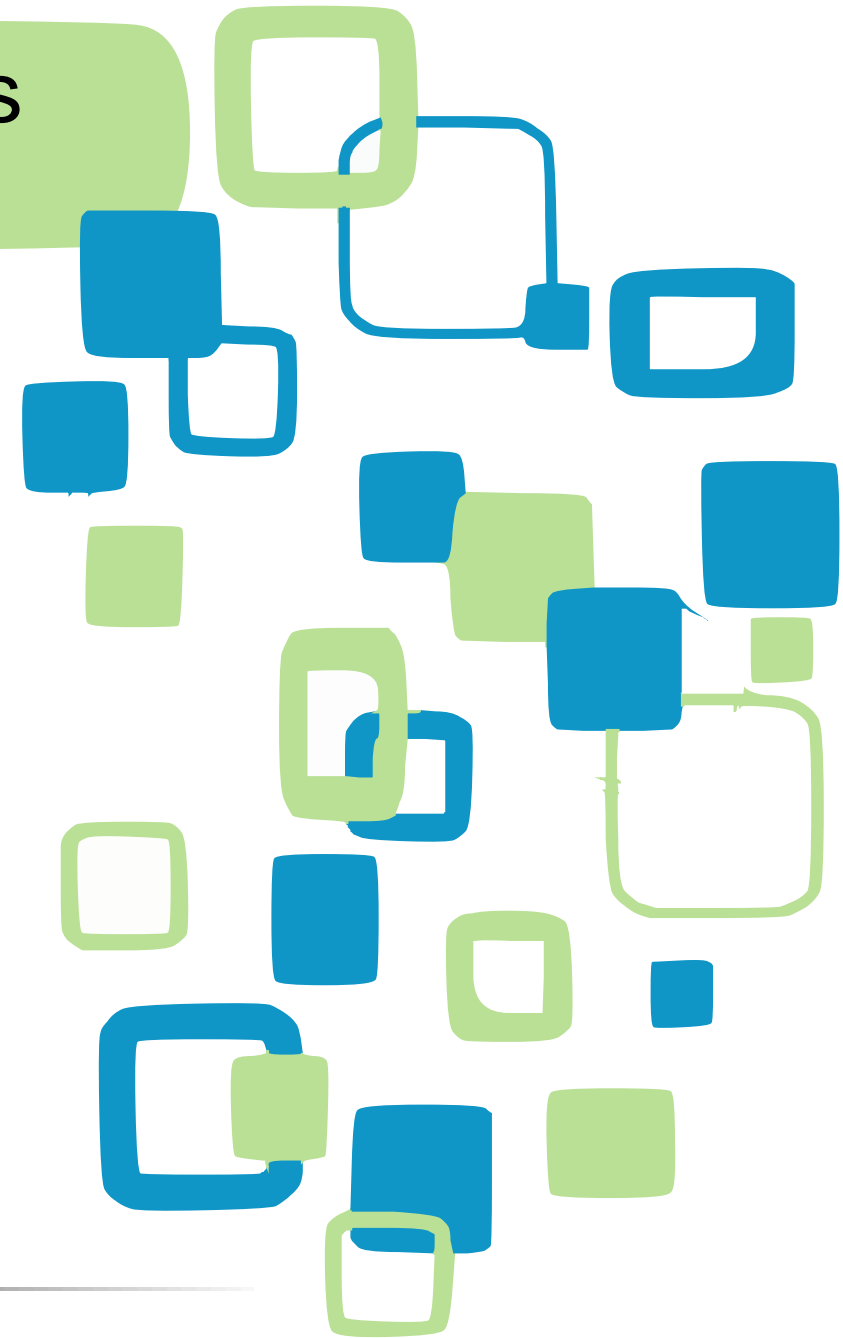
# In-Service Providers & Programs



# When families, school and communities work together children succeed.

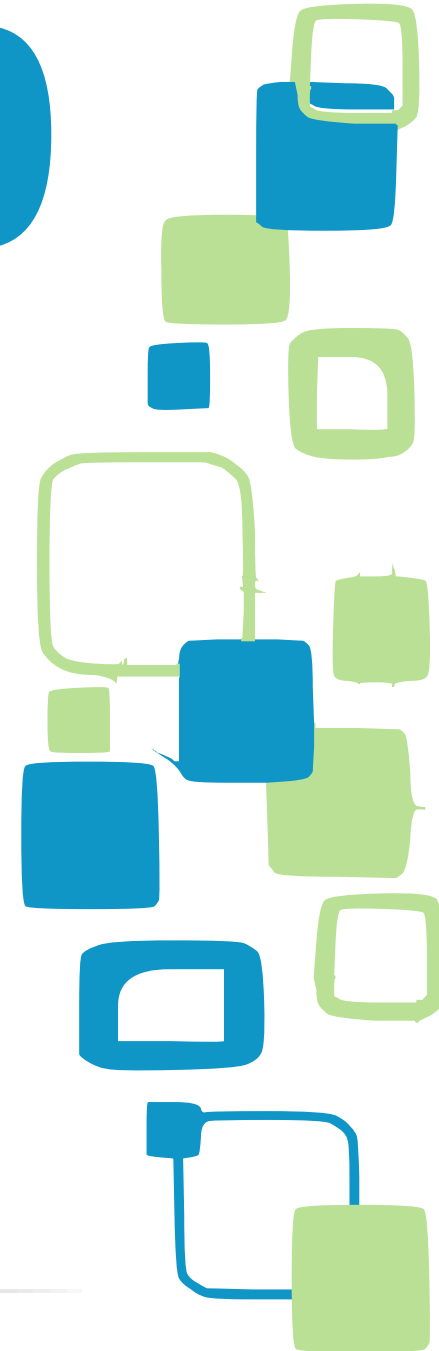
Schools' perspective from Dr. Randal Bergquist, Superintendent  
Crookston School District:

- Family Resource Centers help support families to provide a place where we can all work together to raise and support OUR students.
- Some parents/families do not trust schools, and having Family Resource Centers support could help bridge that trust and lessen the "gap" of school "insecurity."
- Family Resource Centers working with families, helping support them, communicating with parents, and just all around being available shows parents and students that FRC cares about them and wants them to succeed.



# School Homeless Liaison Collaboration

The school homeless liaison connects directly with the FRC around families and youth experiencing homelessness to assist the families and youth to get direct connection to housing assistance and connected to other needed services. The FRC staff work with the Schools to arrange transportation to and from their current location. This prevents students from being absent from school due to experiencing homelessness. Parents get the support they need and are encouraged to continue sending children to school. The continuity is good for the children and allows the parent to take care of other needs while children are in school.





# Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

- The Parents Advisory (PAC) is a group of parents and caregivers from the community. Its purpose is to provide input to the Family Resource Center on designing programs and services that meets the needs of families. Our FRC staff have attended training to learn more about implementation of the advisory committee. We are in the process of recruiting parents right now.
- As parents access the center we learn about the programs and events that are needed in the community. For example, in one community the media reported a suspicious person in a car was following children when they left a park. Parents expressed safety concerns. The FRC put together a presentation where local Law Enforcement could come talk to children and parents about safety and ask questions.



# Family Programs and Events



# One-Year Anniversary

Annual snap-shot: 06/01/23 - 05/31/24:

- 2,209 individuals served
- Over 500 referrals made to community partners
- An average of 25 youth participate in mental health workshops monthly provided by our local mental health center
- An average of 8 to 10 families participate in our Play & Learns monthly
- Provided homeless prevention services to over 70 families at risk of homelessness in six-month span.

## 1ST YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A great time for our community to come together and celebrate!

All are welcome!

THURSDAY  
JUNE 20TH  
3PM - 5PM



Enjoy Popsicles



Play Family Games



Celebrate Community





# Play and Learn Impact Story

Myself and my children, age 5 and 3, had a fantastic time at July's play and Learn hearing from our local police officers about stranger danger. Myself and my husband are both justice impacted individuals and our children have had the experience of officers 'taking us' away from them. My daughter had especially held onto that memory and was developing a strong fear of the police. Being able to experience law enforcement in this positive environment and learn how they help keep us safe has begun to lessen that fear and created a much more positive outlook towards law enforcement. The officer and his family staying with us and participating in the bubble making part of this play and learn also helped myself and my husband humanize our local officers, essentially lessening our fear of them as well.

POLK COUNTY  
**FRC**  
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

POLICE  
CROOKSTON  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
PROTECT & SERVE  
SINCE 1879

CROOKSTON

**KIDS  
SUMMER  
EVENT**

JULY  
29th  
4PM-5PM

COME MAKE YOUR OWN BUBBLES WITH US!  
SNACKS & DRINKS PROVIDED!

HEARING FROM OUR LOCAL OFFICERS  
ABOUT SAFETY!

218-230-2926 | [www.co.polk.mn.us/frc](http://www.co.polk.mn.us/frc) | CROOKSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY-110 N ASH ST. CROOKSTON, MN 56716



# Peer Recovery Services

## Peer Recovery services provided at the Family Resource Center

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialists help people with substance use disorders and mental health conditions. This service is a good fit at the FRC because it helps people connect with resources that can help them succeed in recovery.
- They provide support to parents to help navigate the child welfare system and school systems by attending meetings and also serve as a role model.

An example of the Peer Recovery Specialist work is she is supporting a mother with her recovery who is working towards reunification with her elementary age children. This mother is also interested in being a part of the Parent Advisory Committee at the FRC.

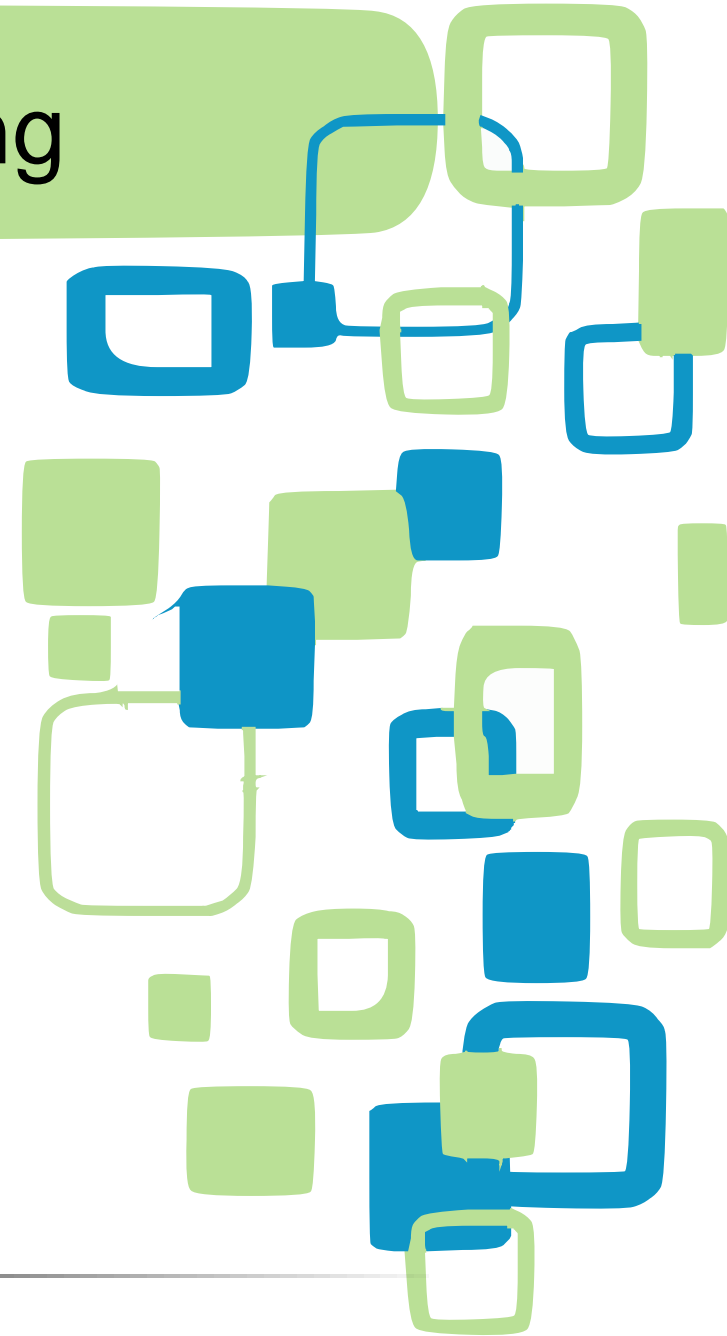


# Family Resource Center Funding

Braided funding has been the strategy used to support Polk County Family Resource Centers. The funding streams have come from the following:

- American Rescue Plan Act funding (ARPA)
- SAUER Foundation
- Opioid Settlement funding
- Homeless Prevention Aid

\*In-kind support from the Crookston Public Library and the East Grand Forks school district by providing the office space.





THANK YOU!

**Contacts:**

Karen Warmack - [karen.warmack@co.polk.mn.us](mailto:karen.warmack@co.polk.mn.us)

Polk County Social Services Director

Deka Ali - [dali@egf.k12.mn.us](mailto:dali@egf.k12.mn.us)

Family Resource Center Cultural Navigator

1.1 Senator ..... moves to amend S.F. No. 4747 as follows:

1.2 Delete everything after the enacting clause and insert:

1.3 "Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 260C.007, subdivision 19, is amended to  
1.4 read:

1.5 Subd. 19. **Habitual truant.** "Habitual truant" means a child under the age of 17 years  
1.6 who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for ~~seven~~ 15 school days  
1.7 per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven  
1.8 school days per school year if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high  
1.9 school or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without  
1.10 lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year and who  
1.11 has not lawfully withdrawn from school under section 120A.22, subdivision 8.

1.12 Sec. 2. [260E.091] REPORTING OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONCERNS.

1.13 Subdivision 1. **Reports required.** (a) A person mandated to report under this chapter  
1.14 must immediately report to the local welfare agency or designated partner if the person  
1.15 knows or has reason to believe that a child required to be enrolled in school under section  
1.16 120A.22 has at least seven but less than 15 unexcused absences in the current school year  
1.17 and is at risk of educational neglect or truancy under section 260C.163, subdivision 11.

1.18 (b) Any person may make a voluntary report if the person knows or has reason to believe  
1.19 that a child required to be enrolled in school under section 120A.22 has at least seven but  
1.20 less than 15 unexcused absences in the current school year and is at risk of educational  
1.21 neglect or truancy under section 260C.163, subdivision 11.

1.22 (c) An oral report must be made immediately by telephone or otherwise. An oral report  
1.23 made by a person required to report under paragraph (a) must be followed within 72 hours,  
1.24 exclusive of weekends and holidays, by a report in writing to the local welfare agency. A  
1.25 report must sufficiently identify the child and the child's parent or guardian, the actual or  
1.26 estimated number of the child's unexcused absences in the current school year, the efforts  
1.27 made by school officials to resolve attendance concerns with the family, and the name and  
1.28 address of the reporter. A voluntary reporter under paragraph (b) may refuse to provide  
1.29 their name or address if the report is otherwise sufficient, and such a report must be accepted  
1.30 by the local welfare agency.

1.31 Subd. 2. **Local welfare agency.** (a) The local welfare agency or designated partner must  
1.32 conduct a child welfare response for a report made under this section. When conducting a

2.1 child welfare response under this section, the local welfare agency must offer services to  
2.2 the child and the child's family to address school attendance concerns and may partner with  
2.3 a county attorney's office, a community-based organization, or other community partner to  
2.4 provide the services. The services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and  
2.5 tailored to the needs of the child and the child's family.

2.6 (b) Notwithstanding section 260C.007, subdivision 19, if the unexcused absences continue  
2.7 and the family has not engaged with services provided under paragraph (a) after multiple  
2.8 varied attempts were made to engage the child's family, a report of educational neglect must  
2.9 be made regardless of the number of unexcused absences the child has accrued. The local  
2.10 welfare agency must determine the response path assignment pursuant to section 260E.17  
2.11 and may proceed with the process outlined in section 260C.141.

2.12 **Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION; EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT AND CHILD WELFARE**  
2.13 **RESPONSE GRANTS.**

2.14 \$..... in fiscal year 2025 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of  
2.15 human services for grants to fund child welfare response efforts under Minnesota Statutes,  
2.16 section 260E.091. The commissioner must make grants to local welfare agencies to support  
2.17 utilization of a community organization for the purpose of improving school attendance  
2.18 after receiving a report under Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.091."

2.19 Amend the title accordingly



# Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families: UPDATE

Bharti Wahni | Interim Assistant Commissioner Child Safety and Permanency

# Focus for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families

- **Principles:**

- Whole family focus
- Focus on a child throughout their life, from intentional prevention to downstream services
- Aligning early childhood programs
- Services are easy to access and navigate (“front door”)
- Cross-agency coordination will still be needed (one agency can’t do everything)
- Improved and more equitable outcomes achieved for all races, incomes, economic statuses and places of being

## **Core programs proposed to move into the new agency:**

- ❖ Child care and early learning programs
- ❖ Child Support, Child Safety and Permanency, and other family-focused community programs
- ❖ Economic support and food assistance programs
- ❖ Youth opportunity and older youth investments

# Programs to Transfer

## **Children and Family Services at the Department of Human Services:**

- Management Operations and Business Integration
- Child Care Services
- Child Safety and Permanency
- Child Support
- Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division
- Office of Economic Opportunity

## **Office of Inspector General & Department of Human Services Operations**

- Licensing functions for family child care, child care centers, certificated child care centers, and child foster care.
- Program integrity units for related Child and Family Service (CFS) programs
- DHS Central Operations functions - Human Resources, Finance, General Counsel, Compliance, and Management Services, etc.

## **Programs from the Office of Teaching and Learning at the Department of Education**

- Early Learning Services division (except Part B 619)
- After-School Community Learning Grant Program

## **Programs from the Department of Public Safety:**

- Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
- Youth Intervention Program grant
- Youth Justice Office
- Office of Restorative Practices

## **Program from the Child and Family Health Division at Minnesota Department of Health:**

- Help Me Connect

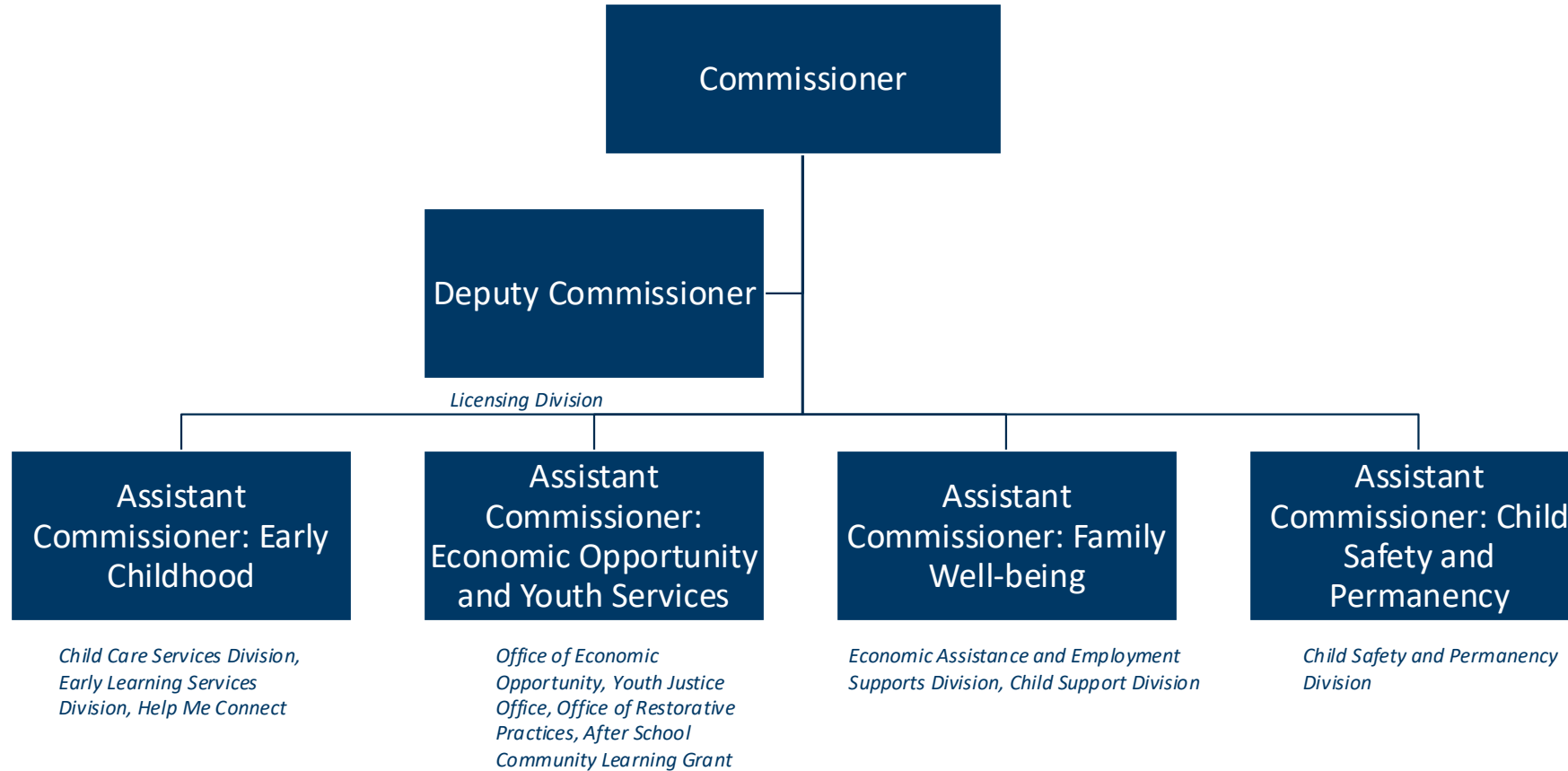


# High-level Planned Org Structure

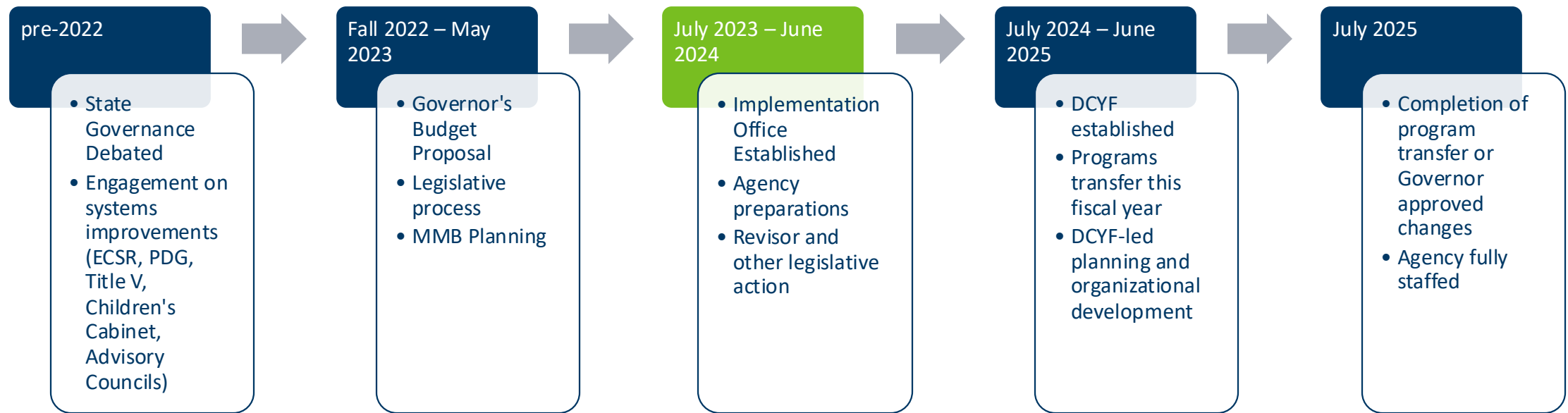
The engagement process and resulting themes led to the development of a high-level org structure for the new Department of Children, Youth, and Families. This high-level structure includes:

- Youth Services and Prevention
  - *Youth Justice Office, Office of Restorative Practices, Office of Economic Opportunity, After School Community Learning Grant*
- Family Well-Being
  - *Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division, Child Support*
- Early Childhood
  - *Child Care Services, Early Learning Services, Help Me Connect*
- Child Safety and Permanency
  - *Child Safety and Permanency*
- Leaders in coordination around mental health, children with disabilities, Black children and youth, and family and community navigation of state programs.
- Equity Office
- Tribal Policy Office
- Office of Innovation
  - *Data, evaluation, research, strategic planning, integration of work, collaboration and coordination across the agency*
- Operations, including, but not limited to:
  - *Budget and Finance, Communications, Compliance, External Relations (including county and community relations), Legislative Relations, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, Licensing, Program Integrity*

# DCYF High Level Org Chart



# DCYF: Phases



System transformation

Interagency partnerships

Engagement and partnership – cross-sector

# Role of DCYF on the Issue of Truancy

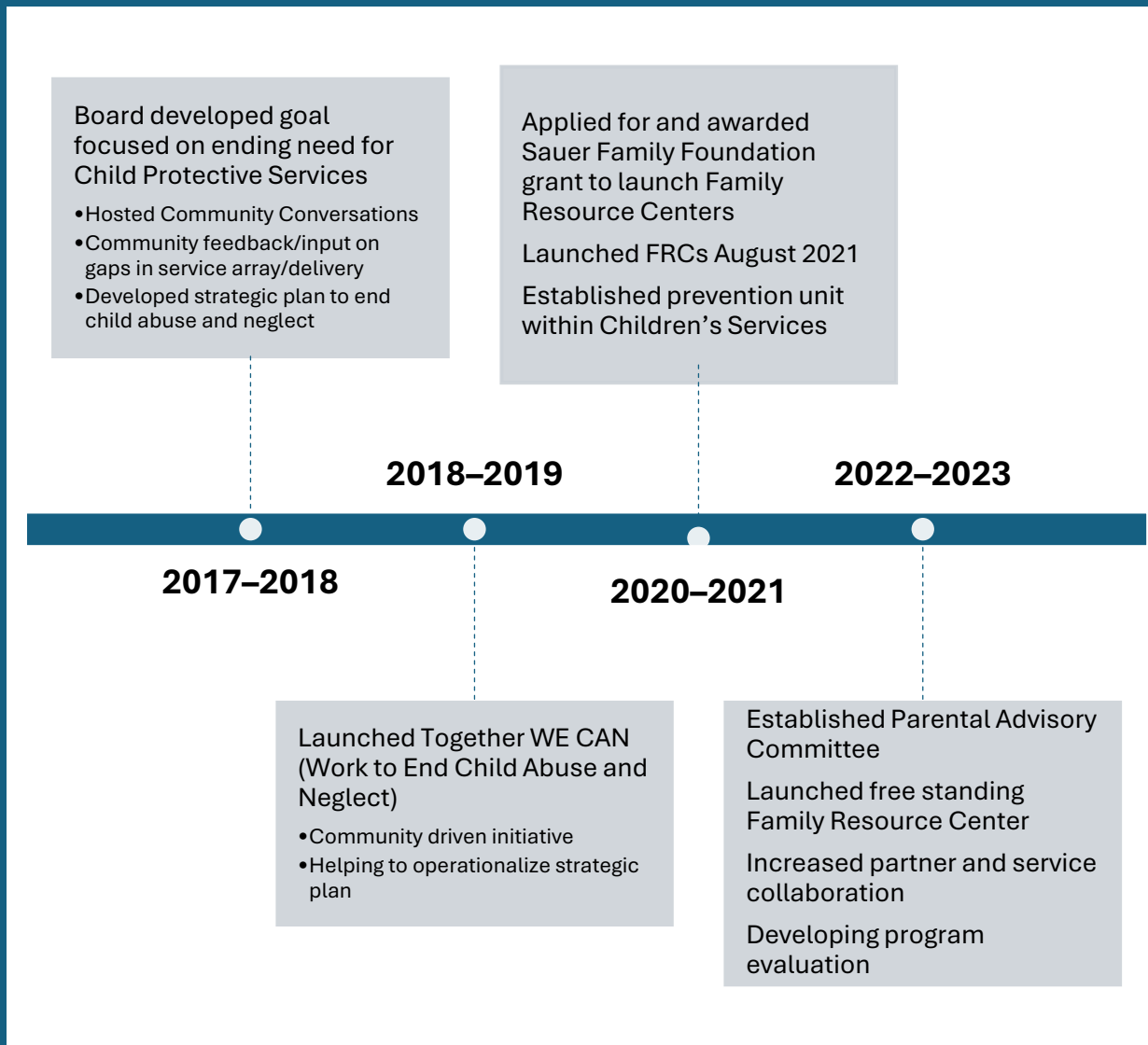
- State law mandates a child protection response to educational neglect which is tied to truancy
- DHS/DCYFDHS/DCYF has engaged with various community partners, including counties and Tribes, on this issue and is a significant concern.
- October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting – DCYF staff will dig deeper on this issue.
  - Statutes related to child protection response to educational neglect
  - DHS/DCYF provided technical assistance on proposed past legislative language on this issue

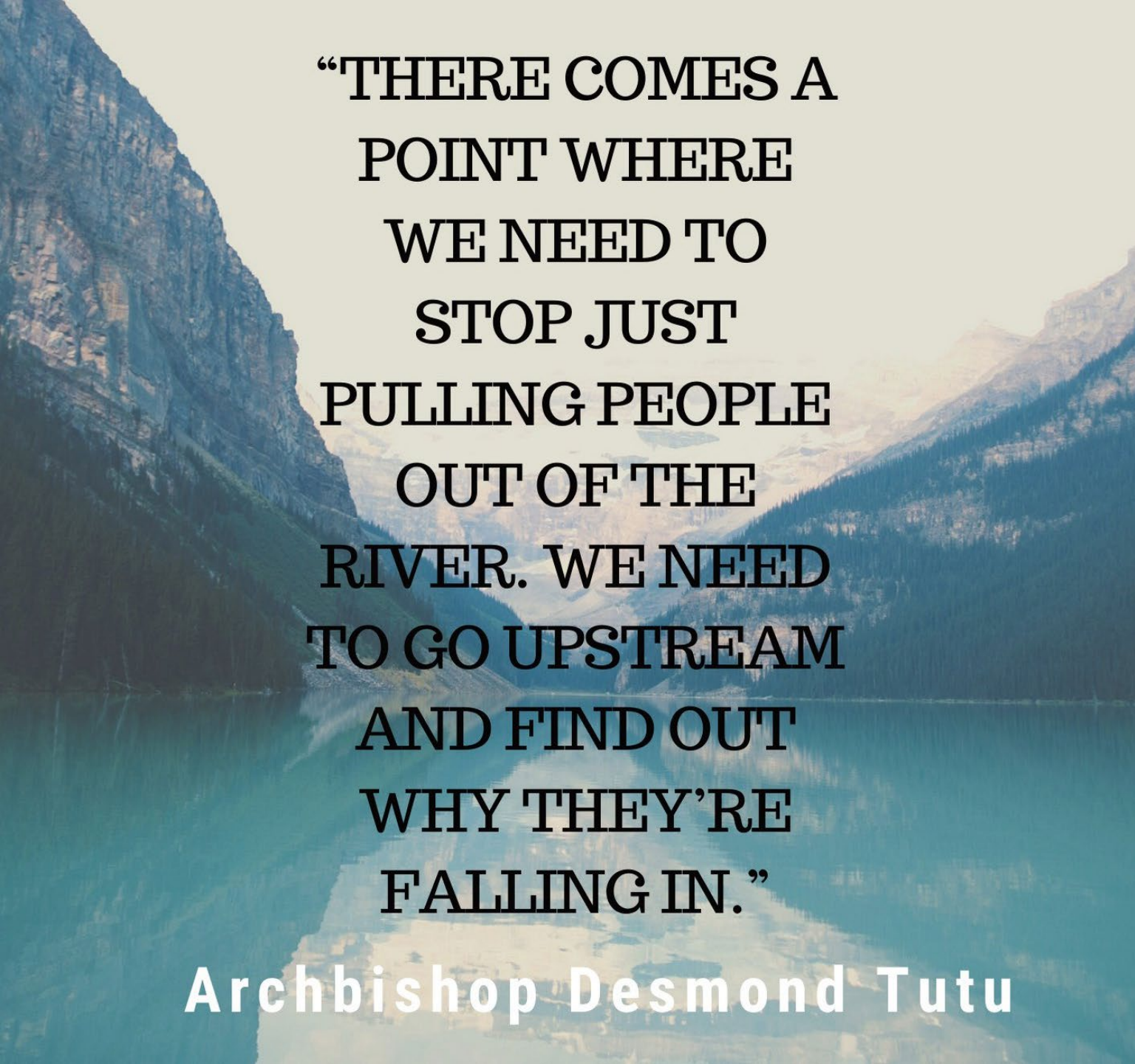
# Questions? Thank You!

Bharti Wahi | [Bharti.wahi@state.mn.us](mailto:Bharti.wahi@state.mn.us)

# Scott County Prevention Initiatives

# Scott County Prevention Timeline





**“THERE COMES A  
POINT WHERE  
WE NEED TO  
STOP JUST  
PULLING PEOPLE  
OUT OF THE  
RIVER. WE NEED  
TO GO UPSTREAM  
AND FIND OUT  
WHY THEY’RE  
FALLING IN.”**

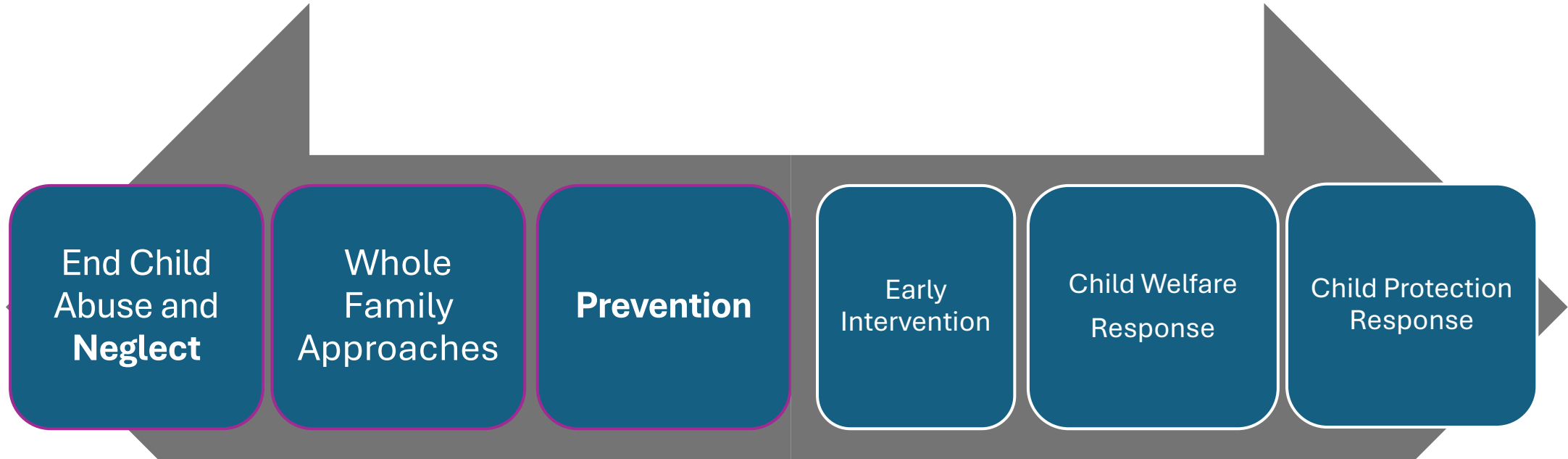
**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

## Why Focus on Prevention?

- Government cannot do it all.
- Less Government intrusion, more community support, and more family choices.
- Try new things. Cannot get different results from the same programs.
- Minimize the deep-end county programs that are more costly and tend to have less positive outcomes for the community, families, and individuals.



# The Child Wellbeing Continuum



Together WE CAN (TWC) is a community driven initiative that acts as a think tank for upstream prevention programming designed to end child abuse and neglect.

TWC launched in 2018 as a community-driven initiative focused on how to end child abuse and neglect



#### Accomplishments:

- Strong community engagement
- Generated ideas for launching Family Resource Centers (FRC)
- Researched and developed peer recovery services, fatherhood programming, and culturally specific community circles

# FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS OF SCOTT COUNTY



## Mission

To promote positive outcomes for all Scott County children, families, and communities by advancing quality family supports through family-centered practices and policies and leveraging partnerships with public, private, non-profit, business and faith communities to promote healthy child development and family resiliency.

## Vision

A community in which community partners, collaborators and individuals come together to help families and children thrive.



# What is a Family Resource Center?

Universal access point for education, supports, services, and community building.



**Safe, accessible place for families to connect with supports and services.**



**Programs tailored to the culture and needs of the community they serve.**



**Core services focus on parenting education and skills, early childhood literacy, and access to concrete supports.**



**A place where individuals and organizations come together to help families thrive.**



# FRC Foundations

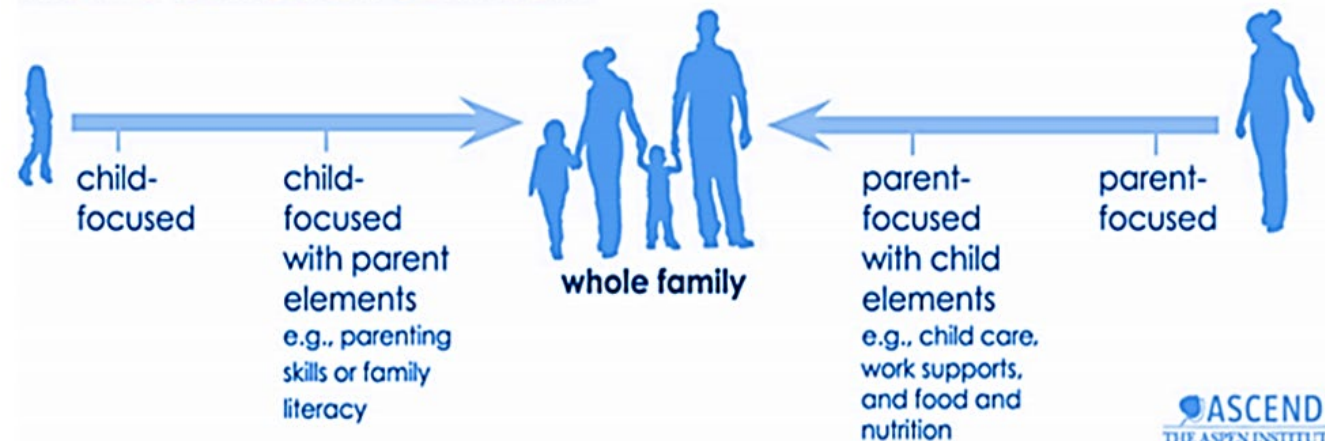


Strengthening Families  
5 Protective Factors

Diversity, Equity,  
Inclusion, and Belonging

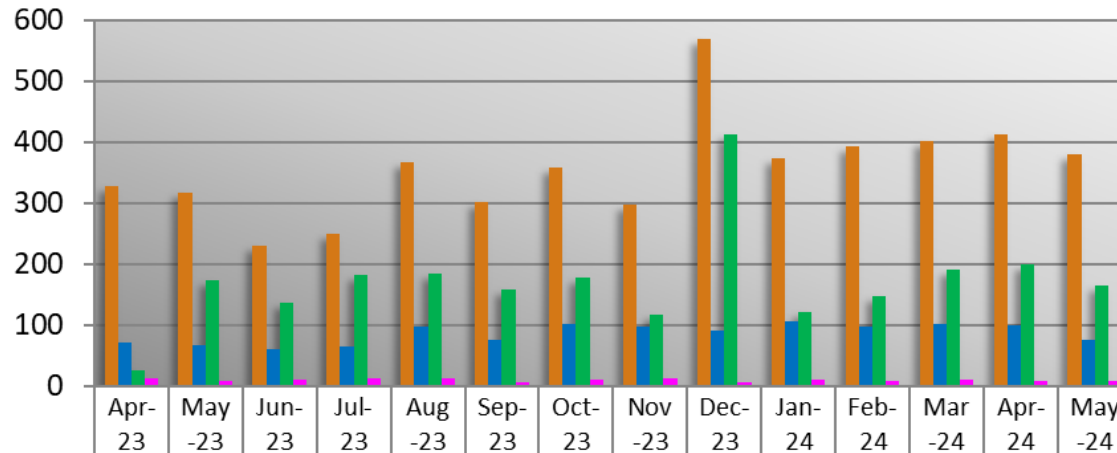


## The Two-Generation Continuum



Two-Generation Continuum

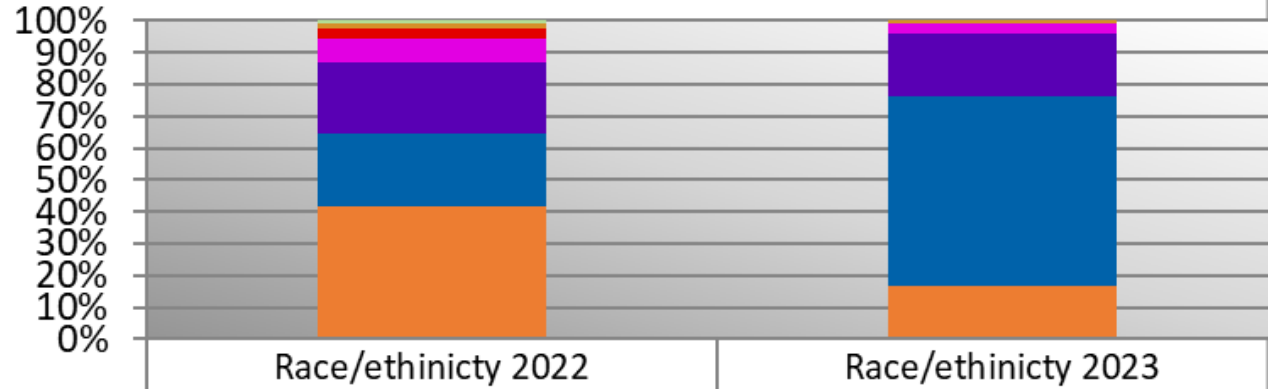
**Family Resource Center Engagement Outcomes**



**TOTAL  
NUMBERS  
SERVED by  
Month  
2023-2024**

|                                  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Children & Adults Engaged        | 327 | 318 | 231 | 250 | 368 | 302 | 358 | 298 | 570 | 374 | 394 | 401 | 412 | 381 |
| Resource Navigation (Families)   | 71  | 68  | 60  | 65  | 97  | 75  | 101 | 97  | 91  | 106 | 97  | 101 | 99  | 76  |
| Programming/Classes (Attendance) | 25  | 173 | 137 | 183 | 185 | 158 | 178 | 118 | 413 | 121 | 148 | 192 | 199 | 164 |
| Family Development               | 12  | 9   | 11  | 12  | 12  | 7   | 11  | 12  | 7   | 10  | 9   | 10  | 9   | 8   |

## Family Resource Center Participants by Race and Ethnicity



|                          | Race/ethnicity 2022 | Race/ethnicity 2023 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Hispanic (any race)      | 17.9%               | 54.9%               |
| American Indian          | 0.8%                | 0.4%                |
| Two or more              | 1.7%                | 1.3%                |
| Self Identify            | 3.0%                | 0.0%                |
| Asian / Pacific Islander | 7.4%                | 3.3%                |
| African American         | 22.3%               | 19.8%               |
| No Response              | 22.9%               | 59.1%               |
| White                    | 41.9%               | 16.9%               |

**WHO DOES THE  
FRC SERVE:  
DEMOGRAPHICS**



# Family Resource Center Impact Story

- Emily-Mom
- My 4 year old sometimes had significant meltdowns that I couldn't manage by myself in large public places while also watching my 1 year old. I didn't feel like I could keep them safe when it happened, but I knew they needed regular socialization with other kids. I went to the Family Resource Center to see if they knew of any safe places for my situation, and it turned out FRC Shakopee was that safe place! When attending play times, I can park right outside the front door only a few feet away to limit the chance of a meltdown becoming dangerous around vehicles. The main area is small enough that if my daughter has a meltdown, I can help her while keeping my toddler contained within my sight. The staff and other parents there are an additional safety net for me - they help and support each other beyond what staff or patrons in most public places normally do. FRC ended up having other services we needed, too - messy sensory play for my sensory-seeking daughter (which I struggled to do at home with the toddler), and formal advice/support in the Balanced Parenting group (I had never been able to attend anything like that because I rarely have someone who can watch my kids). It is a very special place!



**ALTERNATIVE  
PATHWAYS TO  
ADDRESS  
SCHOOL  
ABSENTEEISM**

# Creating New Pathways of Support for Children & Families with School Attendance Concerns

## Background:

- Increased focus on preventing need for involuntary services
- Child protection response to school attendance concerns/educational neglect may be “too big of a response”
  - MN is one of 35 states that include education neglect in the child protection system
  - Chronic absenteeism is a growing concern nationally
  - Growing interest nationally and in MN to create alternative pathways to serve families where school attendance is a concern
- School attendance concerns linked to overrepresentation of BIPOC families in our CW system:
  - 2021 Educational Neglect Data: 82% were children from BIPOC communities

## IS THERE ANOTHER WAY?



# **PASS Program (Promoting Attendance and School Success): School Attendance Concerns for Students Under Age 12**

## **PASS Prevention:**

- Enables school to make referral directly to community provider, St. David's, when a student (under age 12) has 3 unexcused absences
  - St. David's engages the student and family and school to overcome barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services, etc.)
  - Engagement across all Scott County School Districts
-

# PASS Program-Diversion



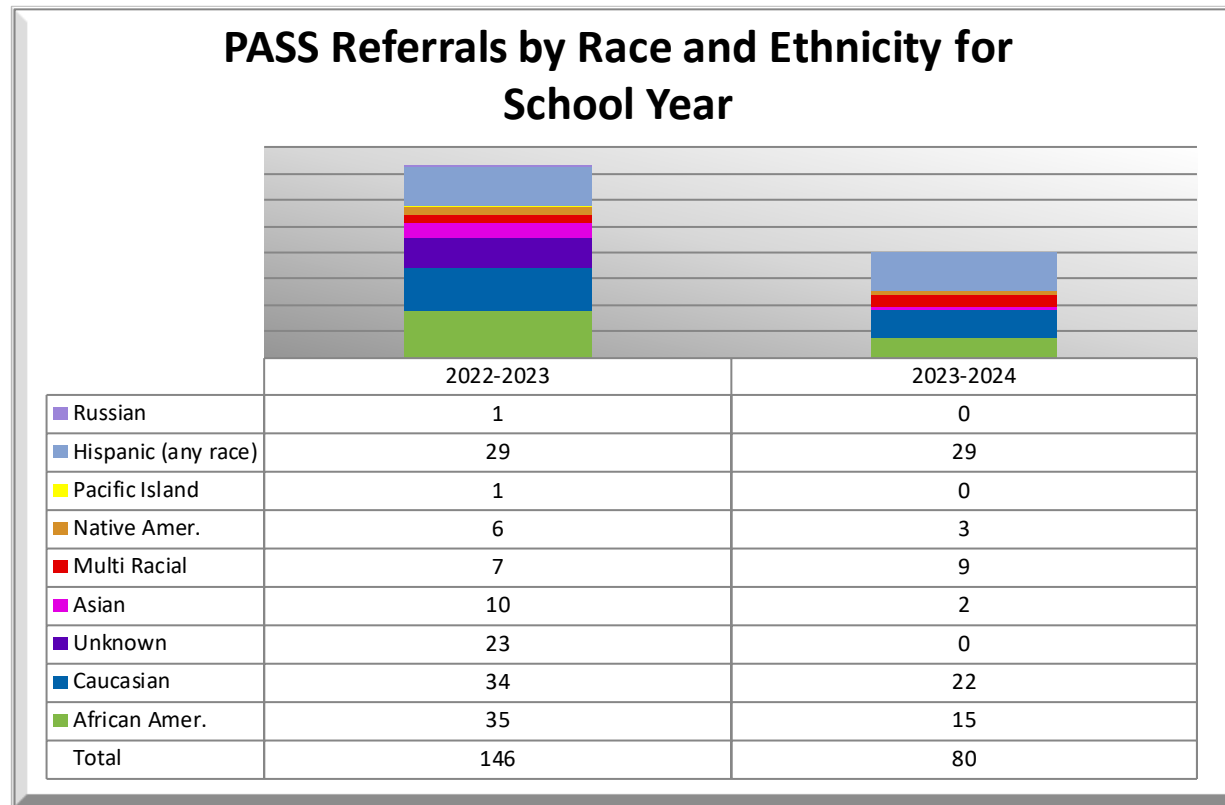
## PASS Diversion

- Schools make mandated report for educational neglect to child protection after student has 7+ unexcused absences and school intervention is not effective
- Scott County CP will screen report and, if appropriate, screen-out and divert it to community provider, St. David's.
- St. David's will engage student, family and school in addressing and overcoming barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services)
- Strong engagement and coordination between St. David's and local school districts
- If student/family refuses to engage in PASS Diversion, the case may be referred back to child protection

# Demographics of Students Served by PASS Program

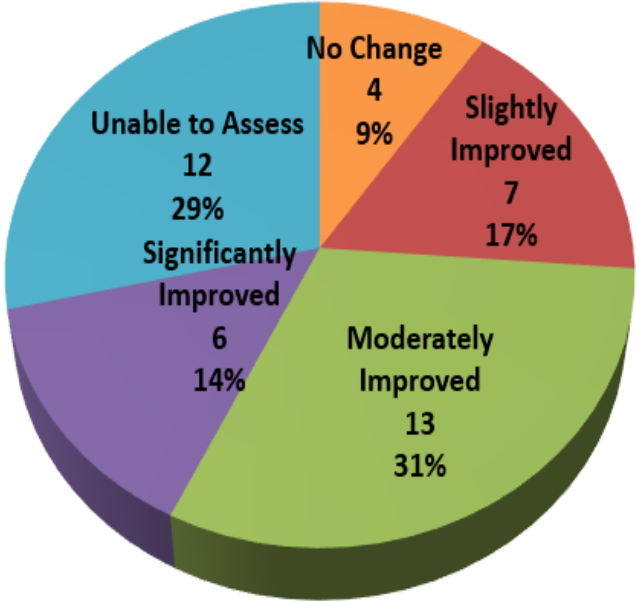
## About this measure:

This snapshot identifies the self-identified race and ethnicity of all referrals made to the PASS program to St. David's Center for Child and Family Development. Please note number will be higher in this measure than number of total referrals as Hispanic is an ethnicity, therefore families will also identify their race.

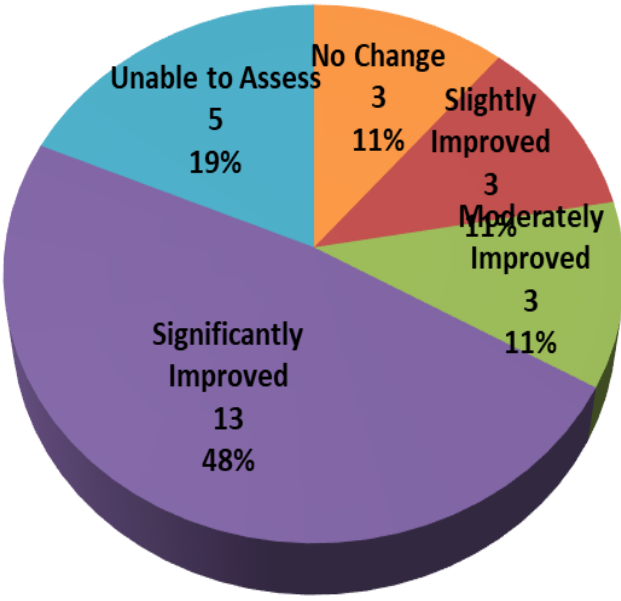


# PASS: Improved School Attendance

PASS Diversion Program: Improved Attendance for School Year 2022-2023



PASS Diversion Program: Improved Attendance for School Year 2023-2024





# PASS: IMPACT STORY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Bently is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader who was referred to the PASS Prevention program by the school district for several unexcused absences and multiple tardies. The school expressed concerns about Bently's attendance, challenging behaviors in the classroom and a lack of communication from the parents. The Family Support Specialist (FSS) worked with the family for a year, meeting with Mom, Bently and Bently's two younger siblings. Visits occurred in the home weekly and sometimes bi-weekly when stressors and challenges were at their peak. The FSS spent time getting to know Bently and the rest of the family and learning about Mom's history and what she identified as stressors for herself and her family, including a conflictual relationship with Bentley's father, financial stressors and a very limited support system.
  - The Family Support Specialist supported parent child interactions by bringing out activities and supporting healthy family interactions through developmental guidance, psychoeducation and modeling. The FSS coached Mom in the moment to set appropriate expectations for her children and increase healthy communication between parent and children.
  - The FSS also provided emotional support and concrete resources to the family. After some time building relationships, the family accepted referrals for longer-term family home visiting for the younger children and counseling for Bently through the school Connect Program. The FSS collaborated with the school staff and advocated for the family to receive continued counseling services when attendance was inconsistent.
  - As a result of programming, we saw a decrease in family stressors and an increase in protective factors. Mom was expecting a new baby and looking forward to continuing support from the home visiting program. Bently was attending school consistently and tardies were significantly reduced.
-





Promoting Attendance  
Through Hope (PATH):  
Students Age 12+\_

# PATH Program

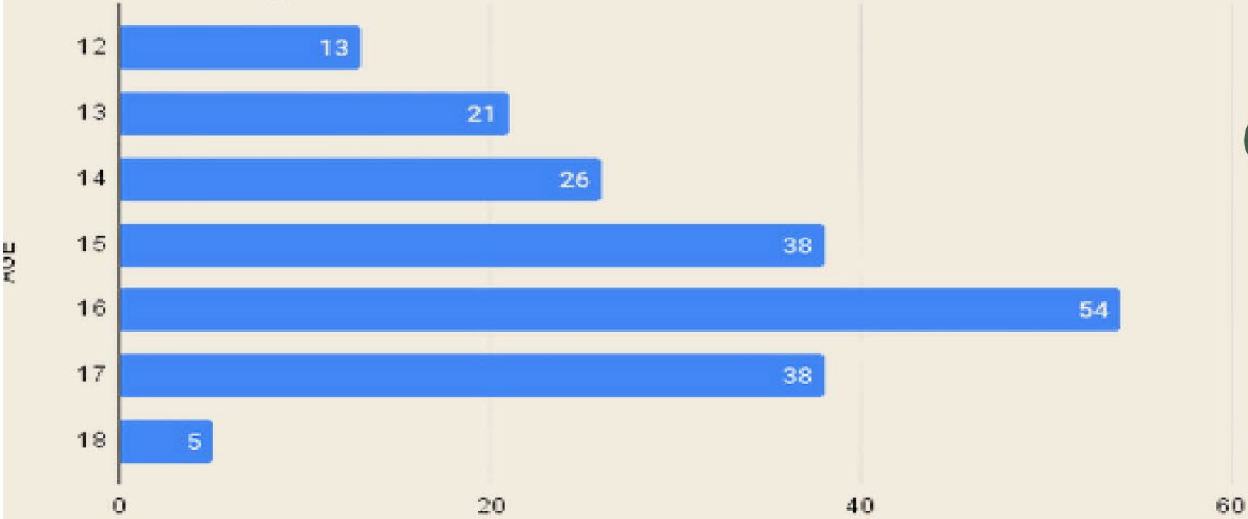
## Partnership with TreeHouse

- TreeHouse Mission: End Teen Hopelessness
- Schools make prevention referrals directly to TreeHouse when they identify a student with unexcused absences
  - Schools can make truancy referrals to CAO after student (age 12+) has 7 or more unexcused absences and school intervention is not effective
- TreeHouse will engage student, family and school in addressing and overcoming barriers to school attendance and assist in linking family with needed supports/services (e.g., Family Resource Centers, Mental/Chemical Health services)
- Strong engagement and coordination between TreeHouse and local school districts
- If student/family refuses to engage in PATH diversion, the case may be referred back to County for formal truancy intervention

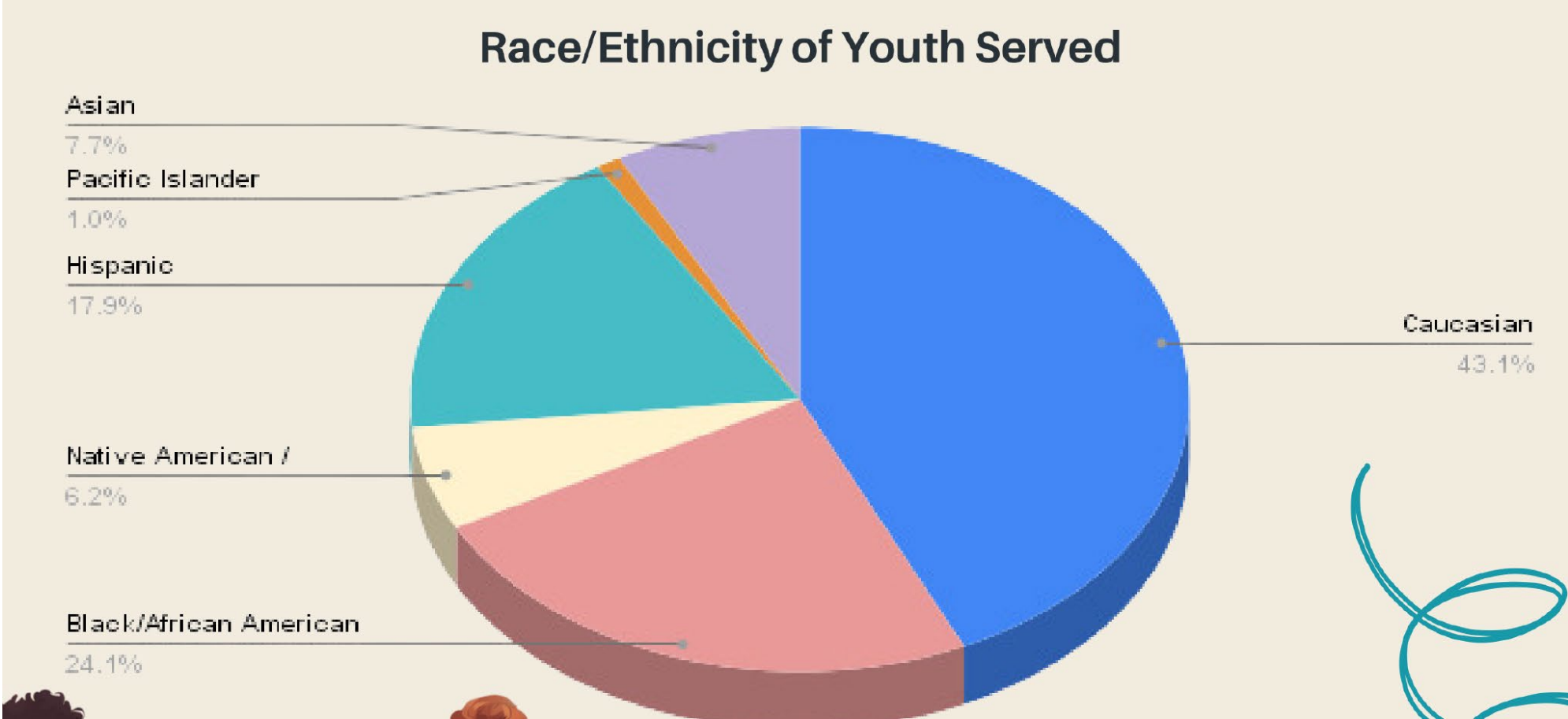
# Youth Served by TreeHouse

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUTH SERVED DURING THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Ages of Youth Served (195 total)



# Youth Served by TreeHouse (cont.)



# Youth Served by TreeHouse (cont.)

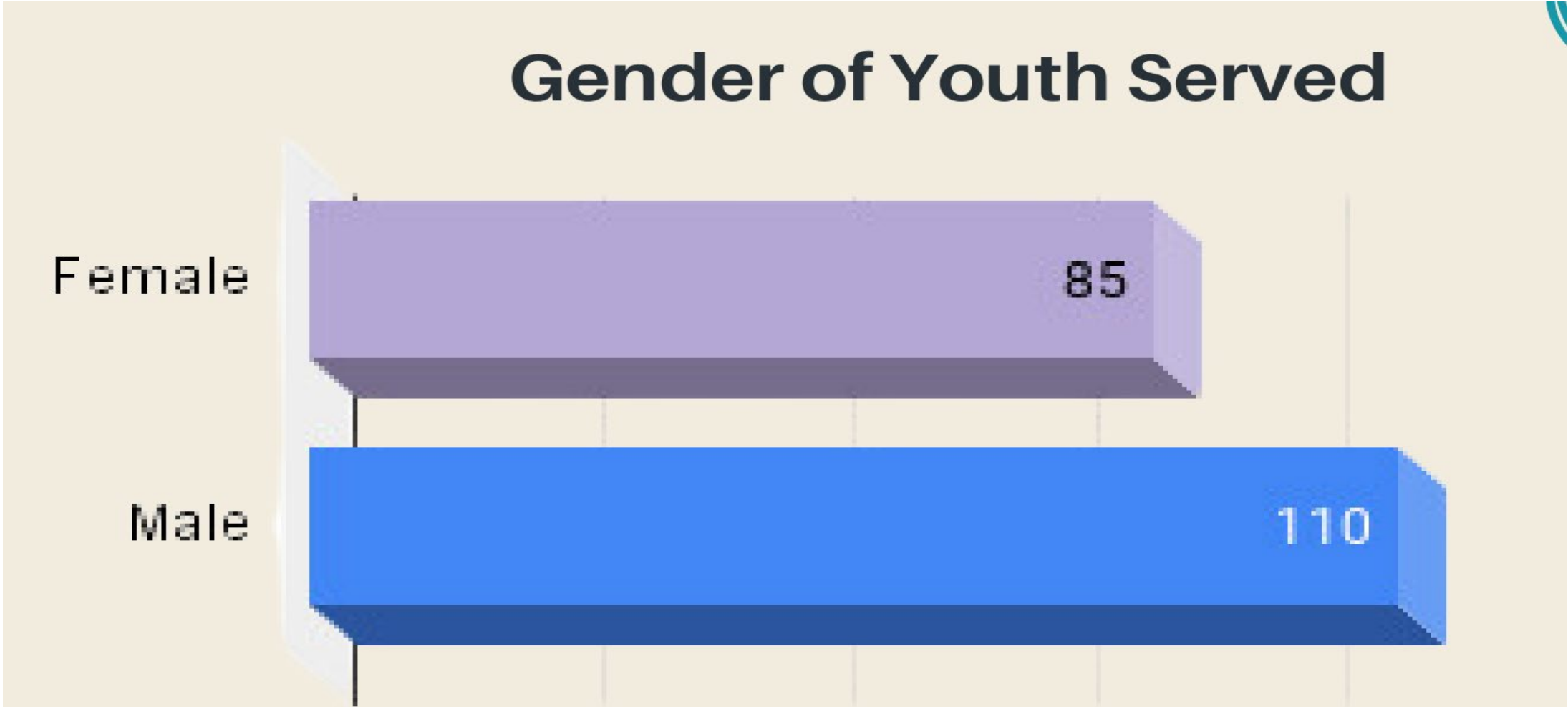
## Gender of Youth Served

Female

85

Male

110



# PATH Impact Stories/Testimonials

## Student Testimonials

- I appreciate your honesty and integrity and communication.
- You guys did amazing, keep it up
- A little more of a private spot, although we were in a separated room the walls didn't connect to the ceiling so I would assume we could still be heard.
- You guys did great, keep it up
- I love you guys♥
- They are amazing I love them

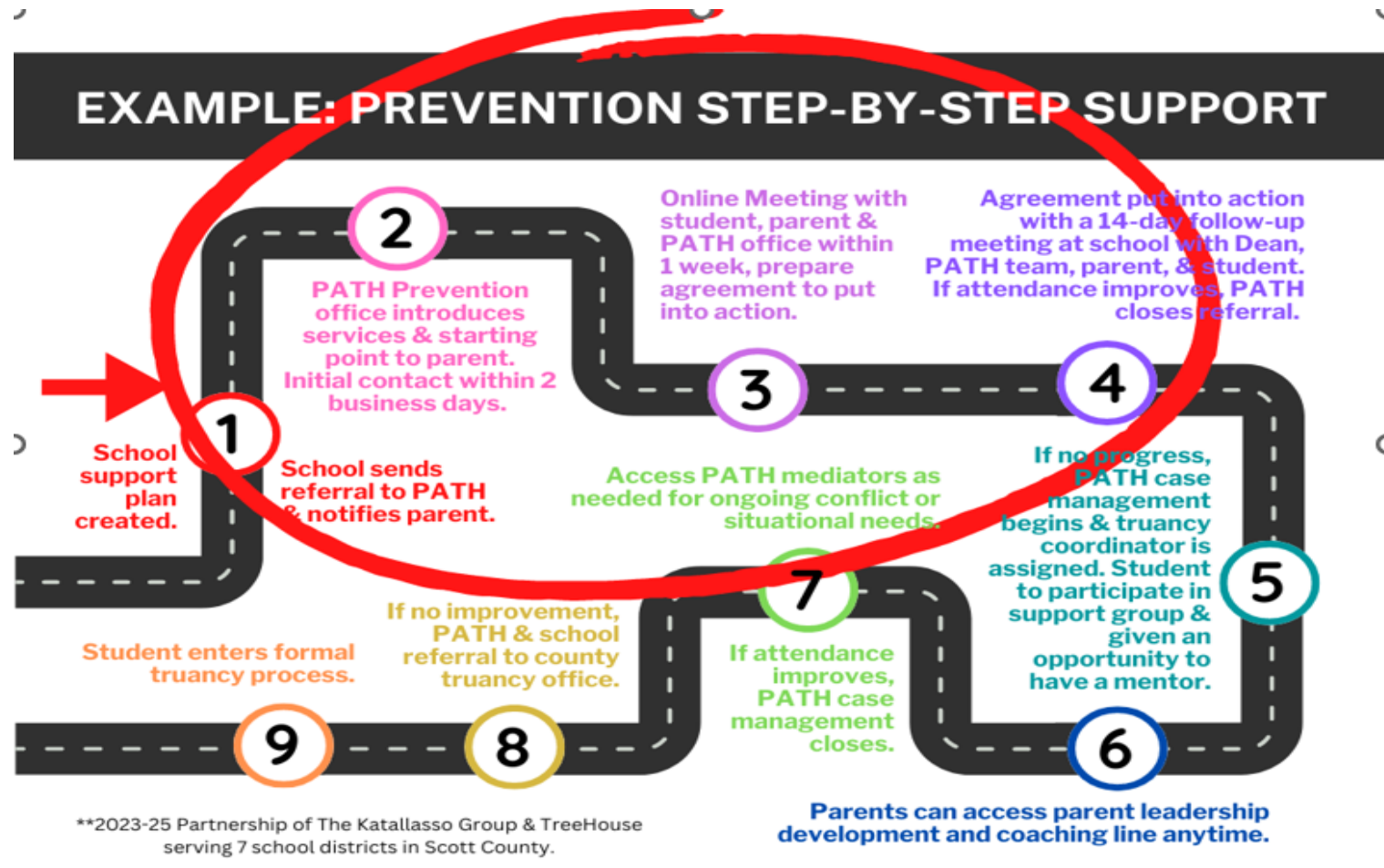
## Parent Testimonials

- I don't know what I would have done if Marie and Courtney and the whole PATH program hadn't come into our lives. Charlie was struggling to get to school. His anxiety and depression were taking over our daily lives. The minute Marie came to our house to meet Charlie, I knew we were in good hands. Both Marie and Courtney took time to build a relationship with Charlie. They were kind and understanding but also firm with him. It's a journey that we are not finished with yet, but without the intervention of this program, I don't even want to think where Charlie would be.
- Courtney, Thank you so much for everything you have done for Megan! We have noticed a huge change in her over the last couple of months. We are excited to see what next year brings!
- Marie was the absolute KEY to moving our son forward. His school dropped the ball quite along time ago with hardly any communication at all. We are beyond grateful for what you have done. You achieved more in that short of a time than they were able to in two years. ♥

# Restorative Circles-The Katallasso Group

- The Katallasso Group and TreeHouse partner together to provide truancy prevention support to students age 12+
  - Restorative Circles is funded via a 2 year grant from a local Family Foundation
  - Katallasso served approximately 194 students

# Roadmap for PATH Prevention Supports (TreeHouse & The Katalasso Group)







# Katallasso Impact Stories

- All school partners expressed its effectiveness, reduction to workload for staff, and the support of outside neutrals stepping in to conduct meetings.
  - 60-65% of referrals from schools closed at step 4 using restorative conversations only and heavy amounts of education on school attendance. (The time frame to close was 4-6 weeks).
    - A notable success story involves a 3-year truant youth (6-8th grade) who was referred to diversion and sent for Restorative Family Mediation. The parents, who had been dealing with a 3-year divorce and homelessness, underwent parent leadership development/coaching and mediation. The result was a transformed family – the student returned to school consistently and entered therapy, and the parents completed their divorce peacefully and out of court, effectively co-parenting.
-

| Race ↑                           | Record Count |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 5            |
| Asian                            | 4            |
| Black or African American        | 8            |
| Hispanic or Latino               | 4            |
| White                            | 20           |
| Unknown                          | 2            |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>43</b>    |

# Scott County Truancy Diversion Services

Total Referrals: 43

Thank you

# Secondary Intervention Update

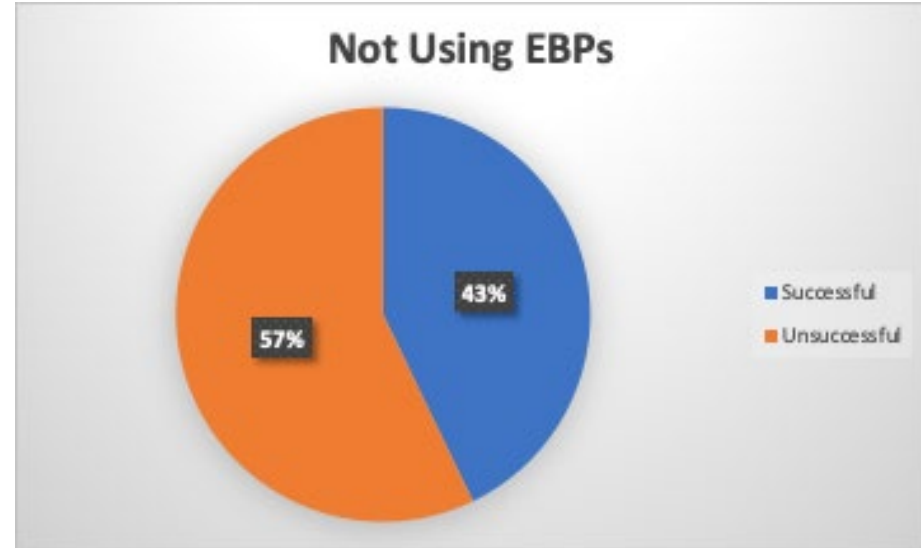
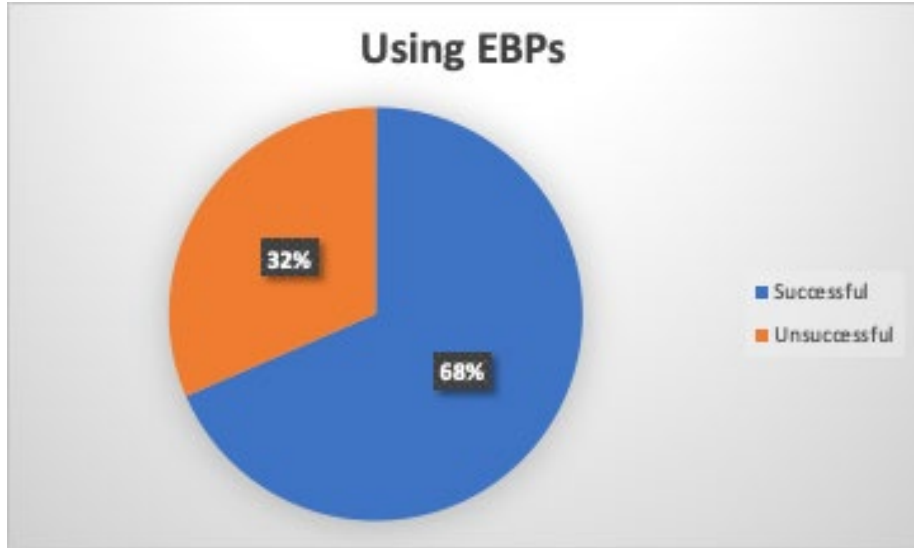
March 2024

Compiled by Megan Lagasse, MSW, LICSW, SSW for Secondary  
Intervention  
And Julia Messenger, Assistant Director of Student Services

# Exclusionary Discipline

# Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions

# Why Evidence-Based Practices Matter



*Example from an Anoka-Hennepin Middle School - Year 1 (2020/2021) of Encouraging EBPs*

*Either we spend time meeting students' needs by removing barriers and teaching skills or we spend time dealing with the behaviors caused from their unmet needs.*

*Either way we spend the time.*

# Why Evidence-Based Practices Matter

Data from all 6 middle schools + Compass trimesters 1 & 2 SY 2023-2024:

181 documented interventions for social-emotional-behavioral reasons

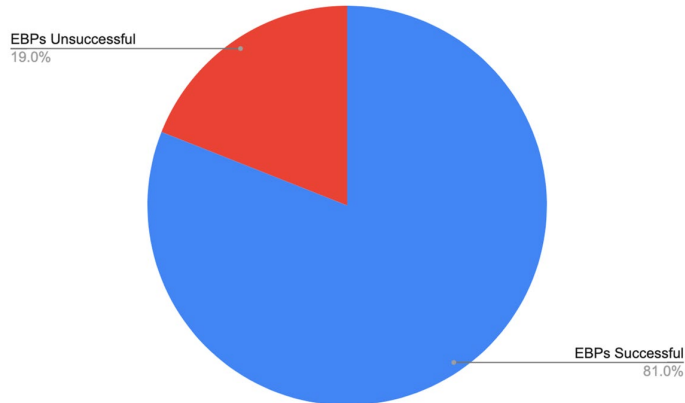
82 interventions complete and with sufficient data

Of the 82, 75 were evidence-based and 7 were not.

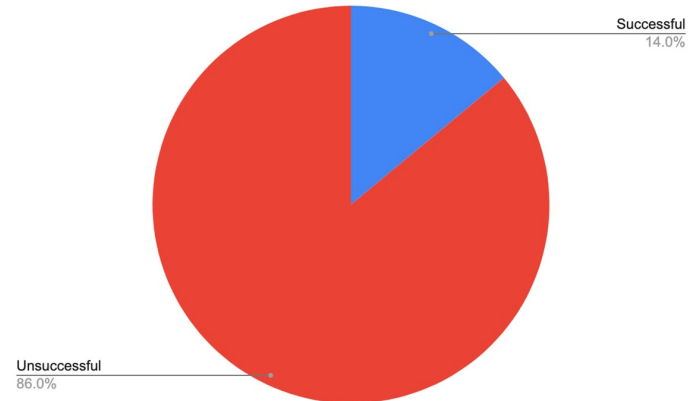
**61 of the 75 (81%) EBP interventions** showed positive progress and/or considered successful.

**1 of the 7 (14%)** other interventions was considered successful.

## Evidence-Based SEB Interventions



## Other SEB Interventions





# Why Fidelity Matters

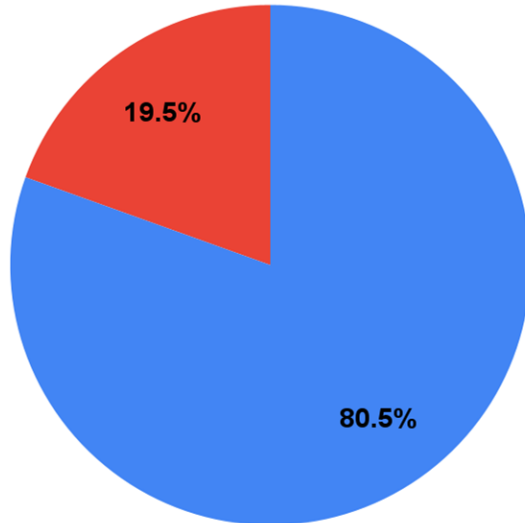
Even using evidence-based practices, fidelity of implementation is important.

Data from our high schools trimester 2 - all "Check and Connect"

Fidelity meaning: interventionist has been trained in Check and Connect, student got a minimum of 10 sessions

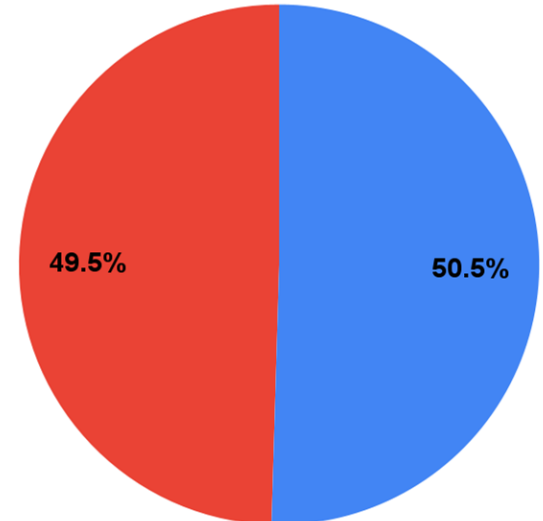
## High Fidelity of Implementation

● Successful/Positive Progress ● No Progress Yet



## Lacking Fidelity

● Successful/Positive Progress ● No Progress Yet



# SEB Interventions Documented by Department

|                              | # Trained /<br># Dept | # Staff who<br>Implemented | HS Intervention<br>Implementation | MS Intervention<br>Implementation | Average per<br>Staff Member |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| School Counselors            | 44/56                 | 13 / 56 = 23%              | 1                                 | 45                                | 0.82                        |
| Student Achievement Advisors | 16/17                 | 6 / 17 = 35%               | 33                                | 19                                | 3.06                        |
| School Social Workers        | 30/16                 | 13 / 16 = 81%              | 10                                | 40                                | 3.13                        |
| Interventionists             | 10                    | 2 / 10 = 20%               | 0                                 | 18                                | 1.8                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>100/99</b>         | <b>34 / 99 = 34%</b>       | <b>44</b>                         | <b>122</b>                        | <b>1.68</b>                 |

34% of staff members in these departments implemented at least one intervention. With approx. 99 staff members in these departments and 166 students receiving intervention, that is an average of less than 2 students per staff member. However only 34 staff implemented, each with a range of 1-15 students, average of almost 5 students per staff member.

# Progress Check

The following slides show analysis of progress data for all students whose data has been shared with me across middle and high schools organized by which intervention the student received.

Site data was also given to school I-Teams for their review.

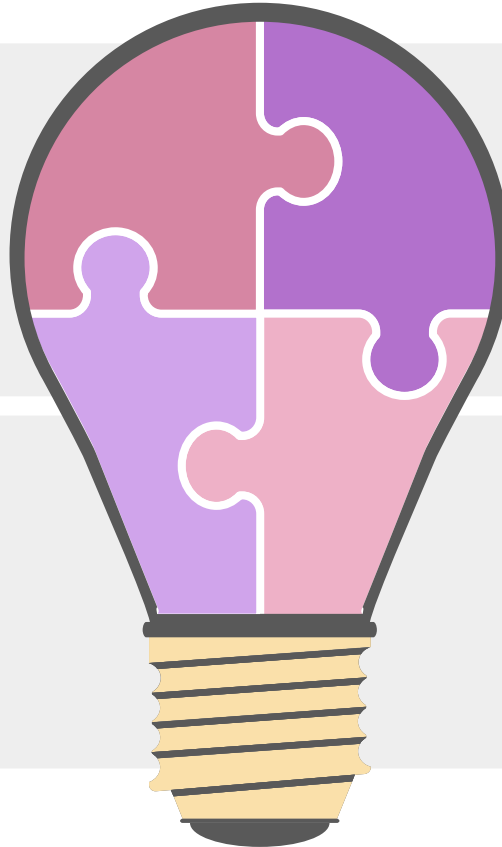


# Middle School Intervention Progress Overall

## Aggression Replacement Training

18 out of 21 students who are or have received ART this school year found success or are showing positive progress =

**86% success rate**



## Check and Connect

40 out of 57 students who are or have received Check & Connect this school year found success or are showing positive progress =

**70% success rate**

## DBT Skills

15 out of 17 students who are or have received DBT this school year found success or are showing positive progress =

**88% success rate**

## Trails to Wellness

13 out of 16 students who are or have received Trails this school year found success or are showing positive progress =

**81% success rate**



# Aggression Replacement Training

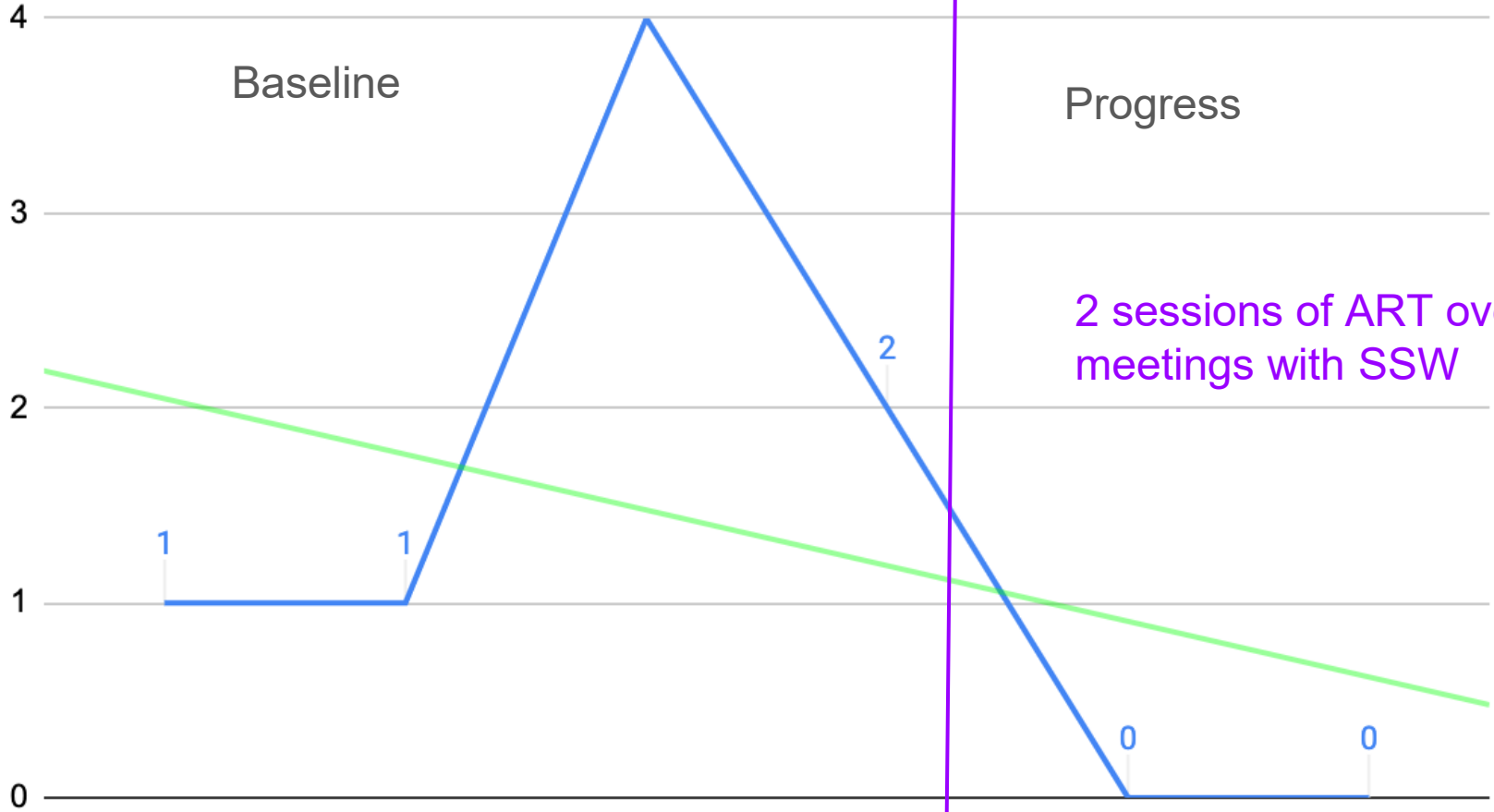
(anger control, social skills)

18/21 MS students successful or positive progress (if not complete) = **86% success rate**

MS

# Referrals - ART Intervention

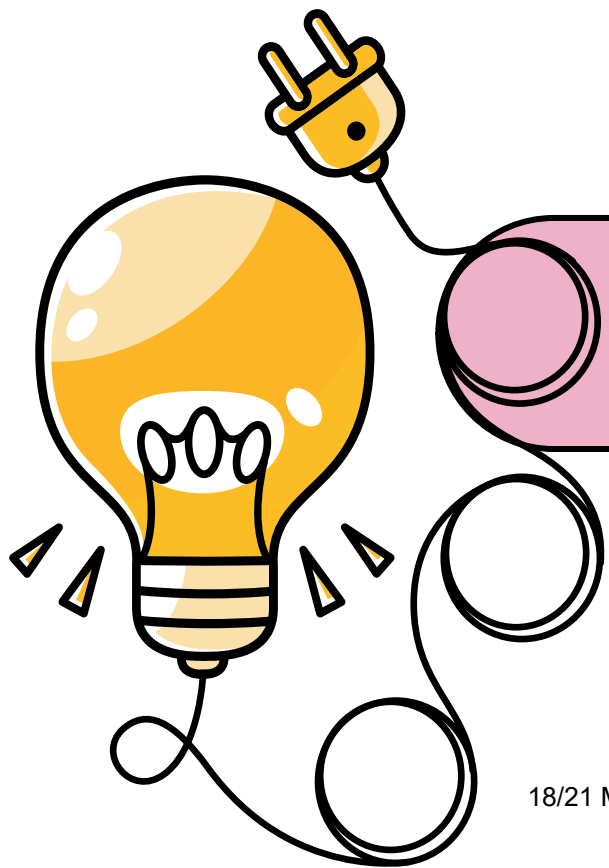
6th grade black MV female



Baseline

Progress

2 sessions of ART over 4 meetings with SSW



## Check and Connect

(school engagement, abcs)

18/21 MS students successful or positive progress (if not complete) = **86% success rate**

26/33 HS students successful or positive progress (if not complete) = **79% success rate**

# Check and Connect

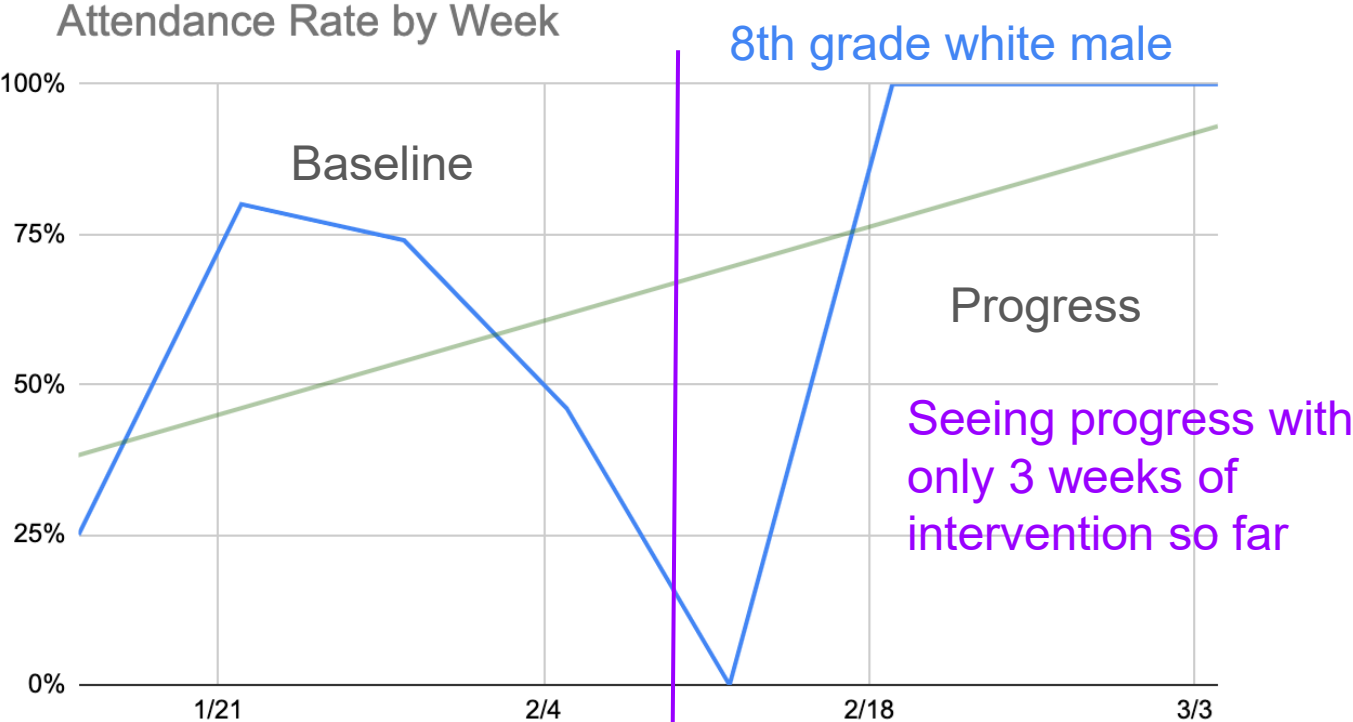
*Check & Connect* is an intervention for K-12 students who show warning signs of disengagement with school. At the core of *Check & Connect* is a trusting relationship between the student and a caring, trained mentor who both advocates for and challenges the student to keep education salient.

Students are referred to *Check & Connect* when they show warning signs of disengaging from school, such as poor attendance, behavioral issues, and/or low grades. In *Check & Connect*, the "Check" component refers to the process where mentors systematically monitor student performance variables (e.g., absences, tardies, behavioral referrals, grades), while the "Connect" component refers to mentors providing personalized, timely interventions to help students solve problems, build skills, and enhance competence. Of the dropout prevention interventions reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, Check & Connect is the only program found to have strong evidence of positive effects on staying in school.

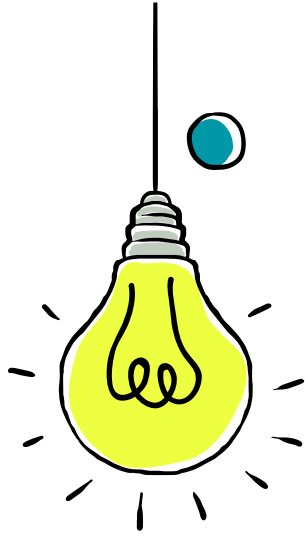
Demonstrated outcomes of Check & Connect include decrease in truancy, tardies, behavior referrals, and dropout rates; increase in attendance, persistence in school, credits accrued, and school completion; and impact on literacy.



# Check and Connect with MS SSW



# HS AIT/BIT Progress Tri

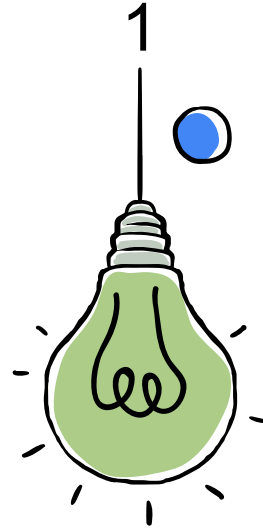


## Attendance

**48%** (158 of 330) of students improved in rate of attendance. 19 more maintained progress.

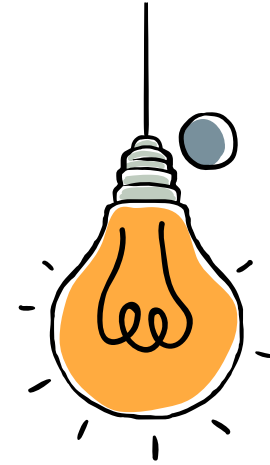
**167** students had 90%+ attendance during tri 1!

**33%** (41 of 123) of students decreased number of tardies. 2 maintained progress.



## Behavior

**70%** (170 of 242) of students improved in discipline referrals. 8 more maintained progress.



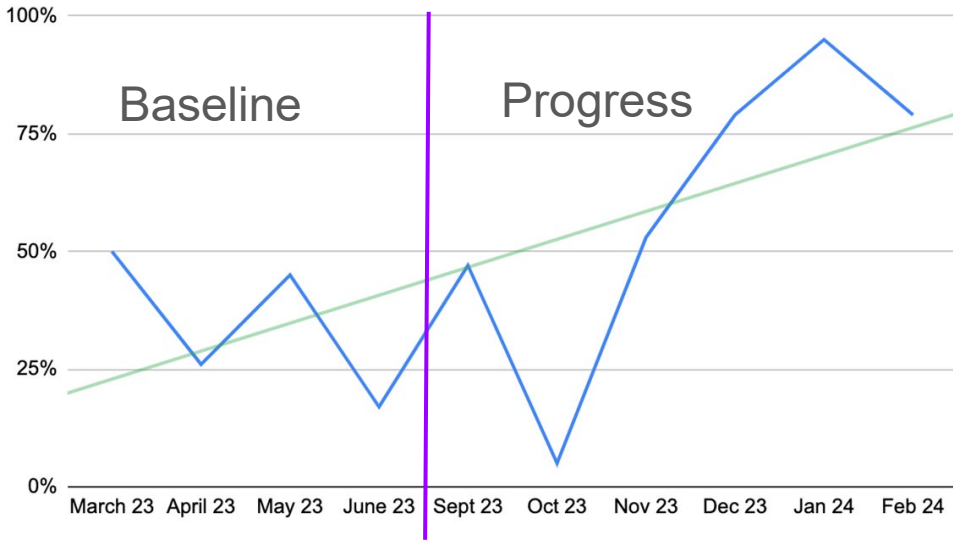
## Courses

**58%** of students improved in their passing rate! 12 more maintained progress

**196** students in traditional high schools passed 100% of their classes!

**16** students in traditional high schools earned **11.33** credits in recovery!

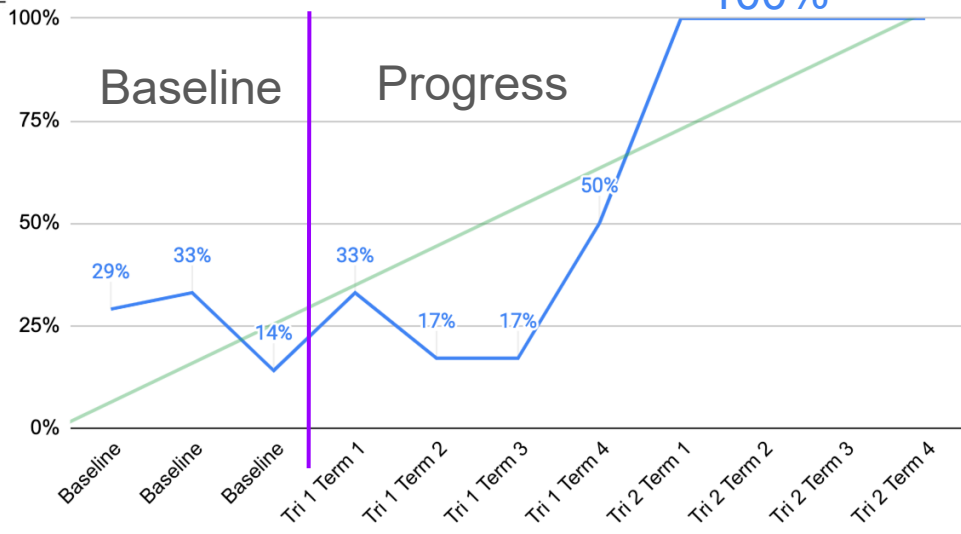
# School Attendance by Month



11th grade white MV male

2 trimesters of Check and Connect with SSW

# Courses Passed





## DBT Skills

(suicidal ideation, self-injury,  
substance use, interpersonal skills)

14/17 MS students successful or positive progress (if not complete) = **82% success rate**

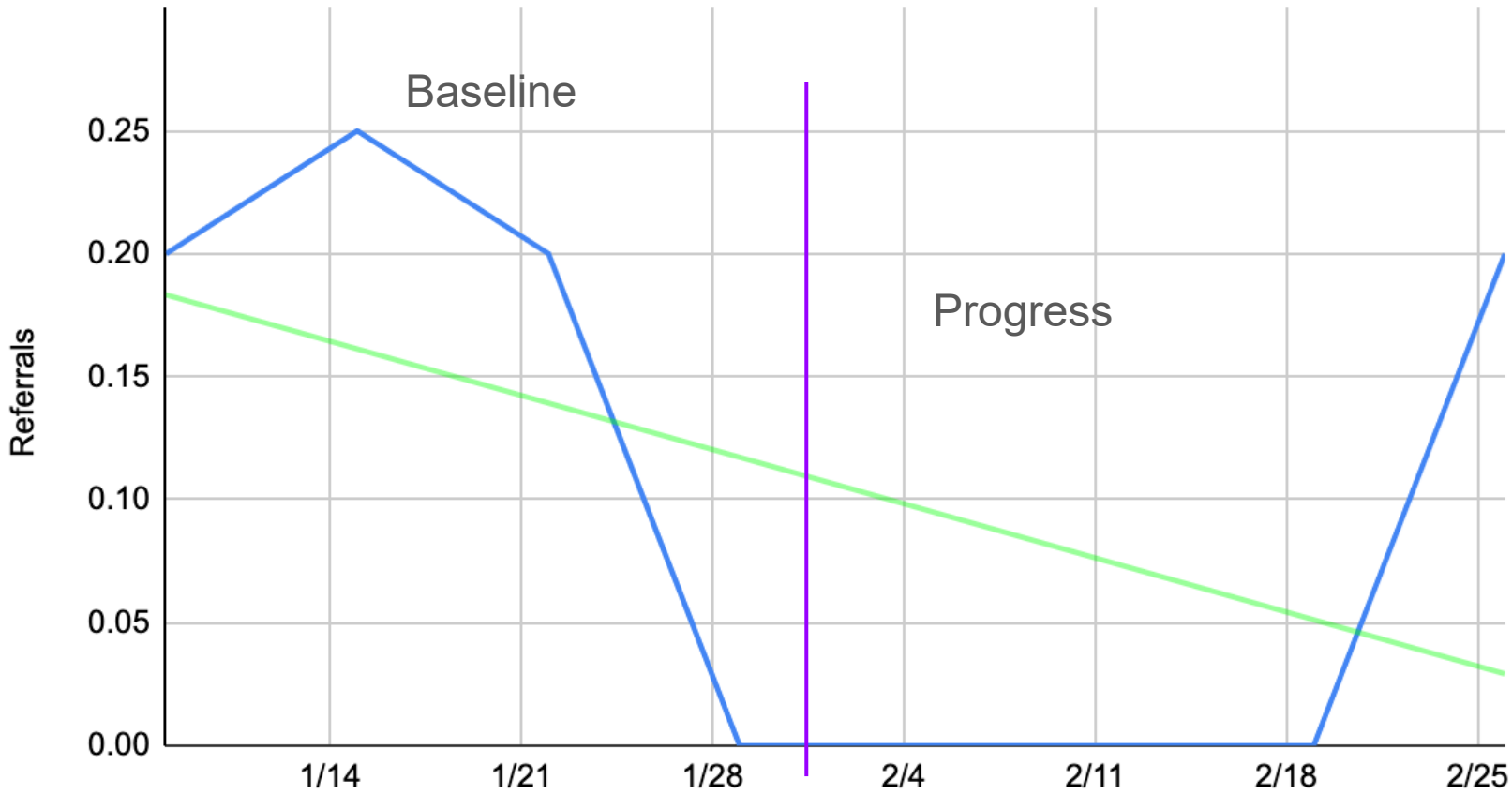
3/3 HS students successful or positive progress (if not complete) = **100% success rate**

RMS

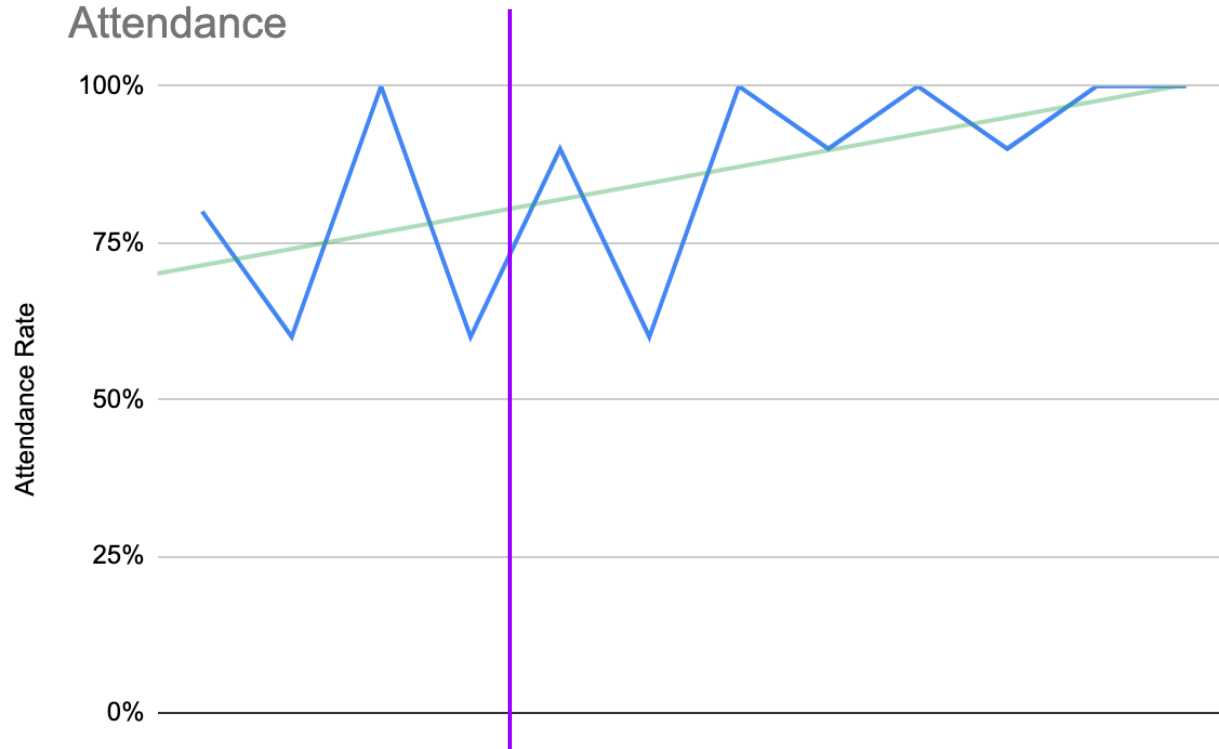
# Referrals per School Day

8th grade black FC male

5 sessions of DBT over 4 weeks with SSW



# 8 weeks DBT at HS: 11th grade white female



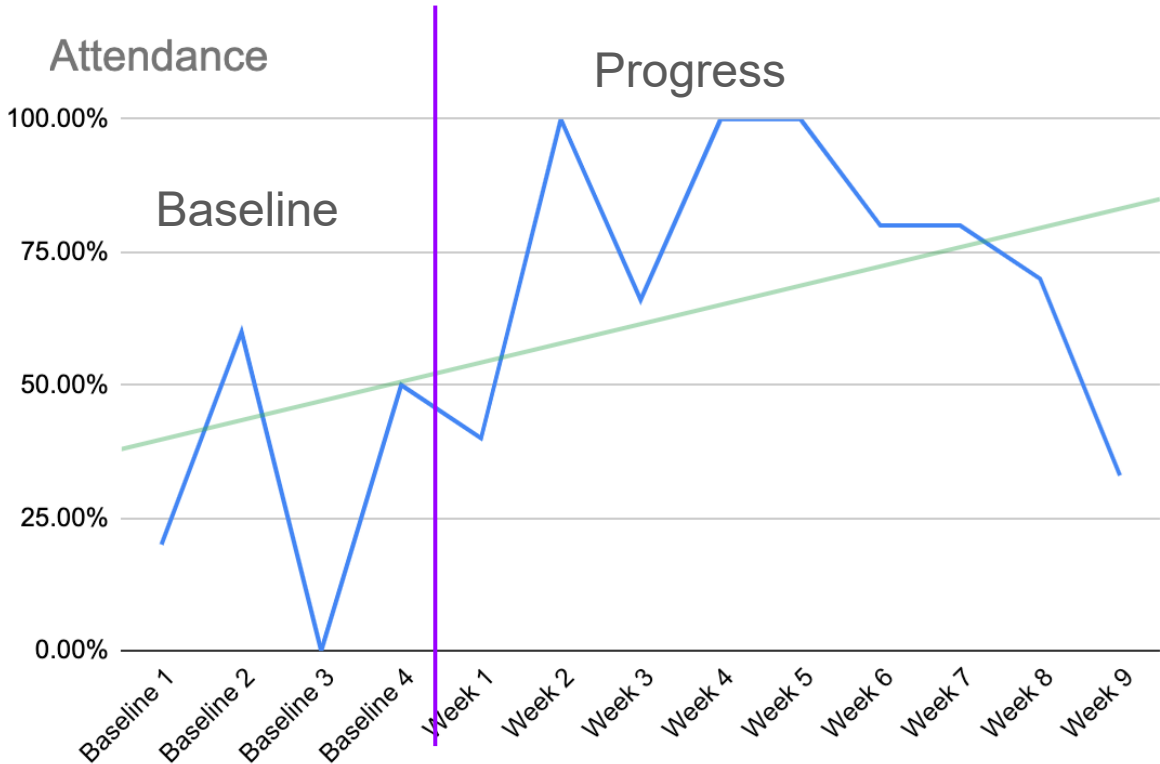


# Trails to Wellness

(stress, anxiety, depression)

# 7th grade Asian ML female @ MS Site

Halfway point - no significant change in reported symptoms of anxiety or depression yet



Ongoing - 8 sessions received



# Attendance Progress @ MS

7th grade Asian ML female student  
with attendance concerns after 7  
sessions over 14 weeks of intervention

## Student Baseline:

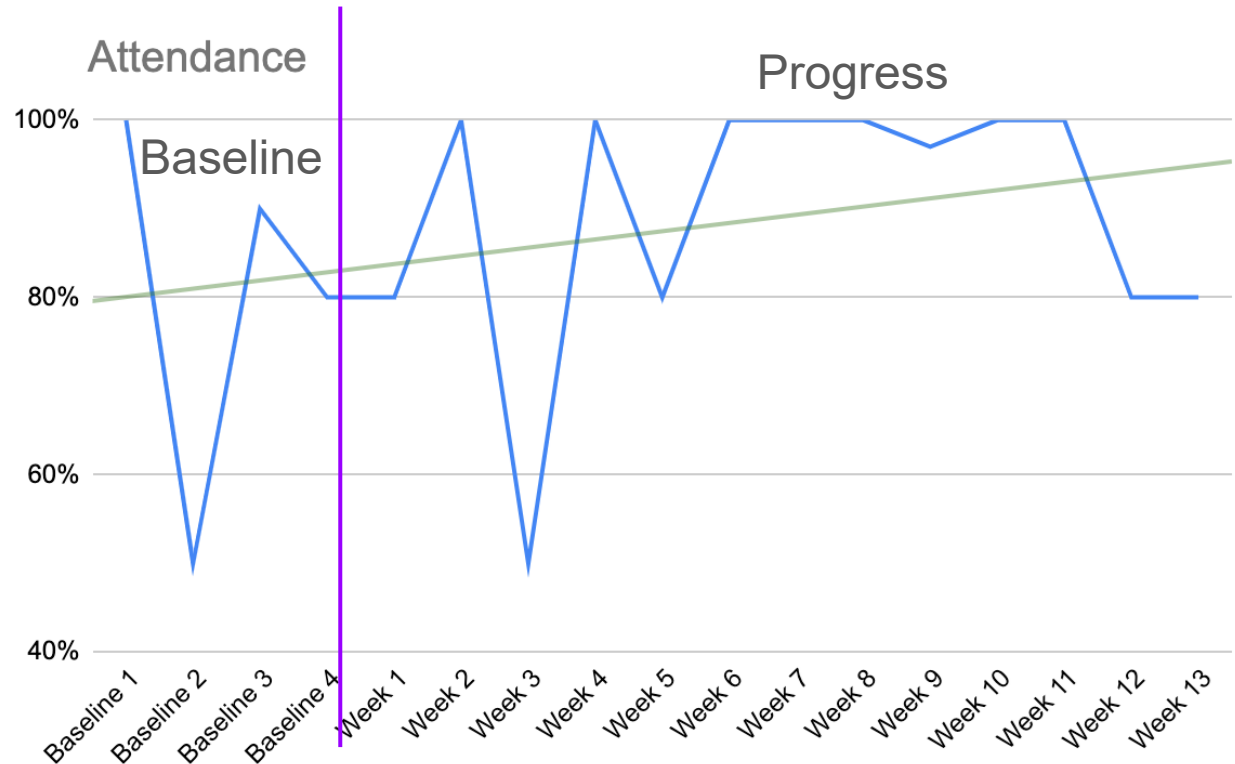
PHQ-9 = moderately  
severe depressed mood  
(19.5)

GAD-7 = severe anxiety  
(17)

## Progress Check halfway:

PHQ-9 = moderately  
depressed mood (12)

GAD-7 = mild anxiety (6)



# Chemical Health Interventions



# REACH

(2 day intervention for chemical violations)

3 sessions to date (December, January, February)

Of the 13 students who have participated, only two have had another chemical violation at school since.

# InDepth

(4 session intervention for tobacco violations)

SRHS, Compass, CRHS, and CRMS

53 students have been referred to date this school year. Students had from 1 to 5 tobacco violations before intervention. Data on 14 students is not yet available.

29 (74%) of those students completed all four sessions of InDepth as an alternative to suspension. Of those 29, 2 students have had another tobacco violation. 5 of these students have had other chemical violations. **76% of students who have completed InDepth have not had another chemical violation.**