Attendance Works

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Accountable *for* Attendance

Addressing Chronic Student Absence In Your Local Control and Accountability Plan

A brief by Attendance Works and Children Now
December 2013

Introduction

With the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in June 2013, school districts throughout California are for the first time required to monitor and address chronic absence. Chronic absence is a key LCFF accountability measure within the *pupil engagement* section of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) required for all districts. State education code 60901 defines a chronic absentee as a student who has missed 10% or more of school days for any reason, including unexcused or excused absences and suspensions, over an academic year.

Good attendance is critical to student achievement. Chronic absence — at any age — is one of the best early warning indicators that a student is at risk academically and, if left unaddressed, will eventually drop out. Beginning in kindergarten and even preschool, students who are chronically absent are more likely to have lower third grade reading scores; this is especially true if they are living in poverty and experience more than one year of chronic absence.[1] By middle and high school, chronic absence is associated with lower graduation rates for all students regardless of their socioeconomic status.[2] If too many students are chronically absent, it can slow down instruction for the entire classroom as teachers repeat material for absentee students.[3]

The Local Control Funding Formula

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) targets funding to districts based upon the extent to which they serve high-needs students — those in lower-income households, English learners and foster youth. It also enables far greater local discretion over the use of funds.

At the center of the LCFF implementation infrastructure is the LCAP, a three-year plan, updated annually, that aligns a district budget with identified priorities. Due by July 1 of each year, the LCAP provides an opportunity to focus on student outcomes as the driving factor for how districts and communities invest scarce resources. These outcomes consist of eight required state priorities (see Appendix A) including *School Climate* and *Pupil Engagement* along with specific indicators for each.

As part of the Pupil Engagement priority, local accountability plans are required to establish *annual goals* and *specific actions* for reducing chronic absence and improving overall student attendance.

The good news is that chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, districts, community agencies and families work together to monitor the data, identify and remove barriers for getting students to class and nurture a habit of regular attendance. When students who had been chronically absent begin attending school regularly again, their grades and chances for graduation improve, the latest research reveals.[4]

1 Hedy N. Chang & Mariajose Romero. Present, Engaged & Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, National Center for Children in Poverty: September 2008.
2 Faith Connolly and Linda Olson. Early Elementary Performance and Attendance in Baltimore City Schools' Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, Baltimore Education Research Consortium, March 2012.
3 Terry Spradlin, Katherine Cierniak, Dingjing Shi and Minge Chen. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism in Indiana: The Impact on Student Achievement, Indiana, University, Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Education Policy Brief, Vol.10, No, 2, Summer 2012.
4 Robert Balfanz and Vaughan Byrnes, Meeting the Challenge of Combating Chronic Absence, Everybody Graduates Center. November 2013.

This brief is intended to support school boards, county offices, districts, parents and communities in the development of those unique local plans, particularly as they relate to improving attendance and reducing chronic absence. Collaboration between schools and the communities they serve is especially important for addressing chronic absence since schools alone often lack sufficient resources to address many of the key barriers to attendance, such as transportation, health problems and housing insecurity. Since fostering such collaboration does not occur overnight, we recommend districts begin taking steps now to lay the foundation for a strong LCAP. After all, a strategic planning and budgeting process that fully engages all stakeholders is a year-round process.

Even as state guidance is being finalized, districts and community partners can take these key steps, detailed in the pages that follow, to put in place the ingredients that will support strong local plans that reduce chronic absence:

1. Gather Data: Determine the extent to which chronic absence is a problem district-wide or for particular schools, grades and student populations.

2. Ask Why: Find out why students are missing school and identify common barriers to attendance.

3. Build Capacity: Use training and professional development to deepen understanding of effective tools and practices for reducing chronic absence and improving attendance.

4. Engage stakeholders: Engage internal and external stakeholders in reviewing the data and identifying solutions that leverage local practices and resources.

5. Set Targets: Develop annual goals, specific actions and budgets for inclusion in the LCAP.

What Works:
Oakland Unified School District

Oakland, Calif., has oriented its entire 37,000+ student school system to reducing chronic absence, making it a key goal in its strategic plan. Over the past several years, the rate of chronic absence has decreased several percentage points to a current level of 10%. Greater reductions occurred in schools most deeply engaged in building a culture of attendance and partnering with community agencies to help chronically absent students come back to class.

Key strategies include:
» **Providing actionable data** through bi-weekly reports
» **Creating an Attendance Manual** with chronic absence intervention protocol
» **Offering professional development** on a regional and district-wide basis
» **Requiring annual** chronic absence goal setting as part of the development of school improvement plans
» **Collaborating with community partners** to craft an Attendance Toolkit
» **Producing** an attendance video
» Offering targeted district support to struggling schools
» **Partnering with public and community agencies** to address student attendance including Oakland Housing Authority, EBAYC and Lincoln Child Center
» **Celebrating improvements** in schools and encouraging peer sharing
» Read more here

1. Gather Data: Determine the extent to which chronic absence is a problem district-wide and for particular schools, grades and student populations

The LCAP requires the inclusion of data on chronic absence rates disaggregated by district, school and subgroup. Run your numbers now to identify schools, subgroups and grades that are most affected by chronic absence. Knowing this information can help districts and community partners determine which schools or particular populations of students are most in need of additional assistance and further examination of their attendance barriers.

Don't be surprised to find much higher levels of chronic absence than anticipated based upon average daily attendance and habitual or chronic truancy figures. Average daily attendance (ADA) and truancy data can easily mask chronic absence levels. ADA refers to the percentage of students who typically show up every day.

Unfortunately, even an ADA rate of 95% can mask chronic absence. Consider a school of 200 students, with 10 students absent a day. That school would have a 95% ADA rate, which certainly sounds good. But that percentage doesn't tell you whether, over the course of a year, those 10 empty seats reflect that most of the students are missing a few days or whether a small but still significant minority of students are missing nearly a month of school.[5]

Keep in mind that truancy and chronic absence do not mean the same thing. Truancy refers to unexcused absences and, under No Child Left Behind, is defined by each state. In California, truancy is defined

Free Technical Assistance Tip!

Attendance Works offers free self-calculating Excel spreadsheets to help schools and districts use local attendance data to calculate levels of chronic absence. Embedded with formulas, tables and charts, these spreadsheets are designed to work with any student information system. School districts can upload attendance data and produce an analysis of chronic absence rates by school, grade and LCFF-identified subgroups, as well as a list of absentee students. While they cannot replace a district's regular data system, the tools are helpful for providing a snapshot of the levels of chronic absenteeism in the school or district. These tools—known as the District Attendance Tracking Tool (DATT) and School Attendance Tracking Tool (SATT) — can be obtained at no cost by registering here on the Tools and TA page of the Attendance Works website. It is important to keep in mind, however, that districts with sophisticated data dashboard systems may not need to use these tools, though they may benefit from seeing how data is presented in a user-friendly manner in the DATT and SATT.

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5 Charles Bruner, Anne Discher and Hedy Chang, Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight, Child and Family Policy Center and Attendance Works, November 2011.

Chronic Absence vs Average Daily Attendance

Consider the following data from Oakland, California. It shows a range in chronic absence across the city's elementary schools, all of which had average daily attendance of 95%. While the percentage of chronically absent students was only 7% in school A, it was more than twice that level in school F.

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with @ 95% ADA in 2012
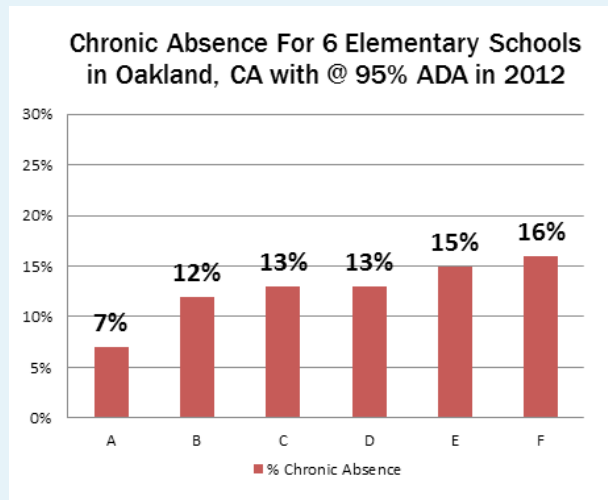
as missing 3 days of school or being more than 30 minutes late to class without a valid excuse three times. Once this occurs, a notice of truancy (NOT) should be sent to a student's family. If the NOT is issued three times, the school is required to hold a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting to work with the child and family to develop an attendance plan. If poor attendance persists, the student is considered a habitual truant and can be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB), probation department, or district attorney mediation program for more intensive intervention.

While these truancy provisions are extremely important, they can still overlook when children miss a lot of school but the absences are excused. Particularly when they are young, students can miss a lot of school due to excused absences or the combination of excused and unexcused absences, and both result in the loss of instructional time and funding through average daily attendance (ADA). In order for districts and communities to fully understand attendance patterns and challenges among their students and schools, they need to calculate chronic absence in addition to the more typically calculated measures of average daily attendance and truancy.

Each measure offers different insights into what is happening around attendance. While ADA paints a picture of how many students show up on any given day, chronic absence reveals whether or not a significant number of students are missing so much school they are at risk. Meanwhile, truancy helps families, schools and communities identify how many students are missing school without permission.
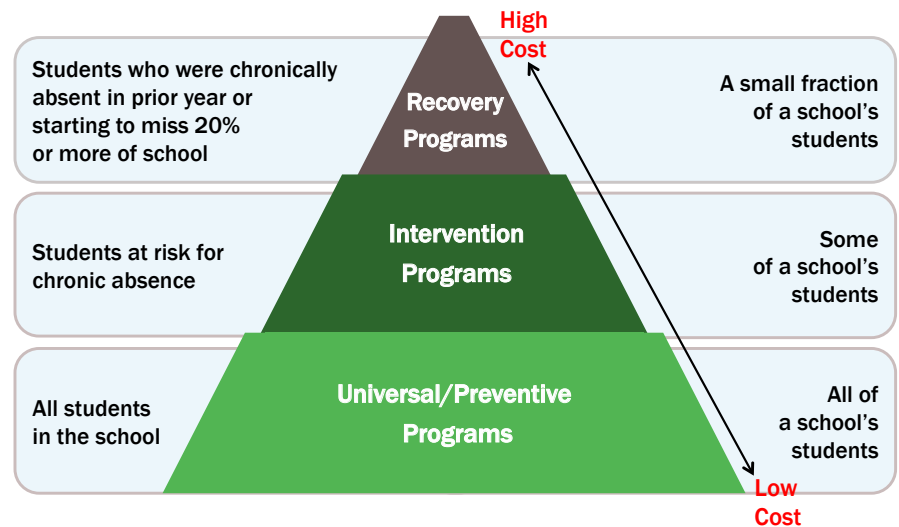
2. Ask Why: Find out why students are missing school and identify common attendance barriers

Understanding why students miss school in the first place is essential to developing effective solutions and specific actions as required by the LCAP. Attendance Works has found it helpful to classify the possible reasons for absences into three broad categories:

Myths: A number of common and pervasive myths about attendance make it less likely to be considered a top priority. Often, parents see good attendance as a matter of complying with rules rather than providing their children with more and better opportunities to learn. Consequently, missing school is only seen as a problem if a child is skipping school or if the child misses several days consecutively. Few realize that too many absences, even if they are excused, can quickly add up and hinder learning. Many principals, parents and teachers do not recognize that missing school as early as preschool and kindergarten can have a detrimental impact on the student's ability to succeed in school.

Barriers: Many students cannot get to school due to chronic health conditions; inadequate access to medical, mental health or dental care; unstable, poor quality and unhealthy housing; unreliable transportation; or a lack of effective family and community supports and service delivery. This is especially true for children living in poverty or involved in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. An analysis by the University of Utah found that students who were homeless were 2.5 times more likely to be chronically absent.[6] Environmental conditions can also exacerbate health challenges to attendance (e.g., asthma) and can make children more susceptible to absenteeism. In some highly challenged communities, exposure to violence and the resulting trauma can cause children to miss school or possibly even engage in disruptive behaviors that result in their being suspended, which also counts as an absence.

Aversion: Sometimes poor attendance occurs when students are avoiding going to school because of bullying, academic difficulty, dangerous routes to and from school, an unhealthy school climate, punitive disciplinary practices or the lack of effective instruction. Analyzing chronic absence data by classroom can help reveal if the problem is school-wide or concentrated

High Cost

Students who were chronically absent in prior year or starting to miss 20% or more of school — **Recovery Programs** — A small fraction of a school's students

Students at risk for chronic absence — **Intervention Programs** — Some of a school's students

All students in the school — **Universal/Preventive Programs** — All of a school's students

Low Cost

6 Chronic Absenteeism: Research Brief, University of Utah, July 2012

in particular classrooms. In some cases, it is not the student alone who is demonstrating aversion. Poor attendance could be a reflection of the parents' negative experiences with school and their lack of confidence that their child's experience will be different.

What keeps a particular student or group of students from getting to school will vary significantly by student, school and community. But keeping these categories in mind can help identify the biggest challenges for the largest numbers of students and can guide interventions and policy solutions. High levels of absence typically are an indication of more systemic challenges existing in the school or the broader community. In addition, the severity of the absences also offers clues about the intensity of the intervention needed to improve student attendance. For students who are missing just about 10 percent of the school year, a lighter touch response such a incentives for improved attendance, assigning a success mentor such as those used in New York City or engaging a student through afterschool programming could be enough to make a difference. But students who miss 20 percent or more of the school year are likely to require something much more significant that also involves coordination across multiple service systems, including child welfare and juvenile justice.

What Works:
Los Angeles Unified School District

Improved attendance is a key metric in Los Angeles Unified School District's performance accountability system. In September 2011, the district launched the Attendance Improvement Program (AIP), targeting the grades with the highest chronic absence rates: kindergarten and ninth grade.

AIP initially launched in 52 elementary schools and 25 senior high schools with high levels of absence in those grades. Attendance Improvement Counselors, along with Vista national service members helped the schools track data, adopt universal and targeted interventions, create incentives for good attendance, reach out to students and parents, and ensure a timely response to poor attendance.

In a single year, the percentage of kindergartners in these schools missing 15 or more days dropped from 31.3 to 17.8 percent. Ninth grade results also were significant. And the capacity building that accompanied the program had a ripple effect, going beyond the targeted grades to improve attendance throughout the participating schools. As a result of the gains in ADA, LAUSD recouped an additional $1.5 million in state funds.

Read more here.

3. Build Capacity: Use training and professional development to deepen understanding of effective practice for reducing chronic absence and improving attendance

A growing body of research and resources now exists to help policymakers and practitioners understand practices and policies that can improve attendance and reduce chronic absence. These resources can be found in the Learning Support resources on the California Department of Education website as well as at www.AttendanceWorks.org. Districts and communities should ensure everyone working on student attendance has an opportunity to learn about effective practice.

Improving attendance requires a comprehensive approach that builds a habit of attendance while identifying and removing barriers to coming to school. It involves putting in place a tiered system of responses that begins with prevention and early outreach before resorting to more costly interventions focused on remediation or legal action. It does not necessarily require creating something new; LCAP specific actions could be accomplished by incorporating an explicit focus on attendance within existing reform efforts such as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Response to Intervention (RTI) and restorative justice (RJ) models, as well as creating opportunities for community partners to support the work. The LCAP can include policy actions and requires strategies adopted for school sites, as well as for the district and community as a whole.

School Site Strategies To Reduce Chronic Absence

First, at the school site level, chronic absence can be decreased substantially when school communities use these five strategies to nurture a culture and a habit of attendance while also identifying and addressing barriers to getting to school.

A. Recognize Good and Improved Attendance: School communities can send a clear message that going to school every day is a priority by providing regular recognition and rewards to students and families who have good and improved attendance. Keep in mind the goal is not to focus on perfect attendance since the children who struggle the most will soon be left out of such awards. This attendance incentive handout offers guidelines and examples of the best ways to recognize good and improved attendance.

B. Engage Students and Parents:
Attendance improves when a school community offers a warm and welcoming environment that engages students and families, and offers enriching learning opportunities. A key component of the engagement is helping students and families learn that even excused absences, if they accumulate, can cause academic challenges. It also involves building awareness that attendance matters as soon as students start school.
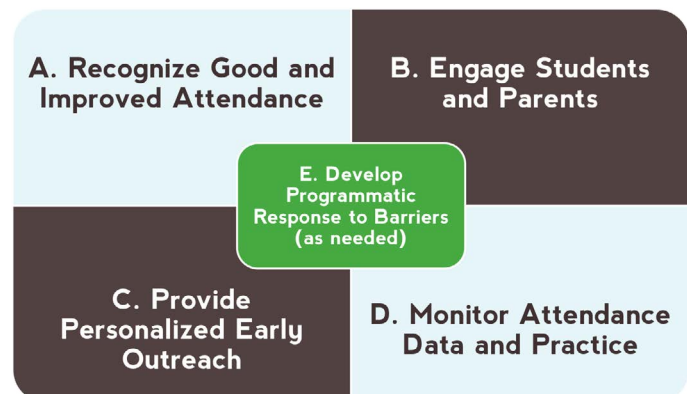
C. Provide Personalized Early Outreach:
Perhaps the most critical strategy is using data to trigger early, caring outreach to families and students who are already missing too many days of school. Such outreach is best carried out by an adult with a strong relationship to the family. This can vary depending on the school or community. Outreach is essential for identifying barriers to attendance — whether that is hunger, health, shelter, transportation or other challenges — and the supports or resources that would help improve attendance.

D. Attendance Data and Practice:
Each school should have a team in place that meets regularly to review the school's attendance data and coordinate efforts to reduce chronic absence. The data should be reviewed regularly to assess how many students have missed 10% of school days so far. Schools will need to determine whether this should be a team devoted exclusively to attendance or an existing team that has attendance added to its broader functions and responsibilities. This school self assessment can help with examining current strengths and gaps.

E. Develop Programmatic Responses to Systemic Barriers:
If large numbers of students are chronically absent, a programmatic solution may be needed to turn the situation around. Depending upon the barrier, the solution might involve establishing uniform closets, serving breakfast in the classroom, improving access to health care, launching walking school buses, tutoring, mentoring, developing morning or afterschool care, or other approaches. (See Appendix B for available research on the impact of such programming.) The California Healthy Kids Survey and the companion staff and parent surveys can be used to identify barriers and monitor school climate, safety and connectedness. See this additional guidance for identifying factors that contribute to chronic absence as well as community resources that might help to address various attendance barriers.

What Works:
Chula Vista Elementary School District

For more than a decade, Chula Vista Elementary School District has been measuring chronic absence and responding quickly when a student misses too much school. As a result, the city just north of the Mexican border has high attendance rates.

The first steps come at the school, where principals receive information quarterly on chronically absent students. Principals will counsel students, meet with parents, conduct School Attendance Review Team (SART) meetings and refer families to community resources including local family resource centers.

Once a school has exhausted its resources, the principal refers the student to the district's School Attendance Review Board (SARB), which includes representatives from community agencies that offer family and student support. Each case is dealt with individually based on student data and family circumstances. Often the family is given a contract outlining expectations.
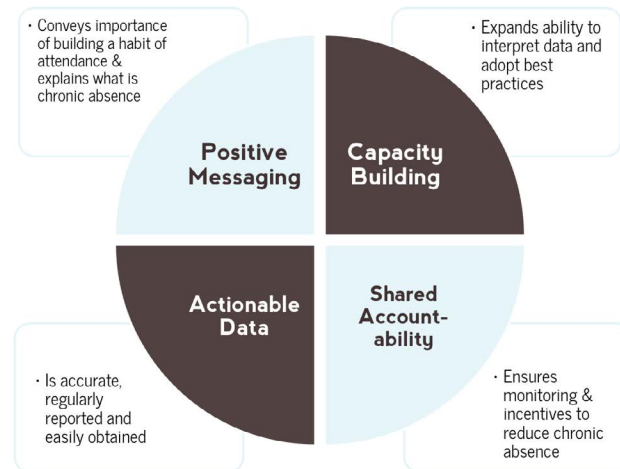
If attendance does not improve, SARB can move forward with legal action, such as a referral to Juvenile Court. Judges provide recommendations and expectations for parents to elicit positive changes in attendance patterns. Read more here.

Chula Vista has consistently been named a model SARB program by the California Department of Education.

Key Ingredients for Systemic Change

School sites are much more likely to adopt and sustain the above practices when districts and their community partners have put in place the following key ingredients. Districts should examine whether their practice reflects these ingredients and, if not, what changes could be made to put them in place. Districts with these practices in place will be better able to engage stakeholders in finding solutions, including the development of *annual goals* and *specific action* required for their Local Control and Accountability Plans.

· Conveys importance of building a habit of attendance & explains what is chronic absence

Positive Messaging

Capacity Building

· Expands ability to interpret data and adopt best practices

Actionable Data

Shared Account-ability

· Is accurate, regularly reported and easily obtained

· Ensures monitoring & incentives to reduce chronic absence

A. Actionable data: Taking action requires having accurate, easily accessible, up-to-date data that shows which and how many students are chronically absent — broken down by school and grade. Such student-level data should be available and reviewed monthly, while data on overall levels of chronic absenteeism — again broken down by school and sub-population as required in the LCAP — might be examined less frequently along with grade level, possibly at the end of each quarter or semester.

B. Positive Messaging: The goal of positive messaging is to help parents and students realize that daily attendance is key to reaching their dreams of a successful future. It emphasizes the benefits of attendance rather than simply attending school as a matter of compliance.

C. Capacity Building: A key element is building the skills and knowledge of school staff and community partners to improve student attendance.

D. Shared Accountability: Chronic absence needs to be built into accountability systems used by districts and states to measure progress and identify where additional support is needed to improve student performance. For example, schools should be required to examine the extent to which chronic absence is a problem and to describe how they will improve student attendance, especially among the most vulnerable populations, in their annual school improvement plans.

4. Engage stakeholders: Engage internal and external stakeholders in reviewing the data and identifying solutions that leverage effective local practice and resources

A key element of developing a strong local plan is drawing upon the knowledge and assets of leaders and organizations within schools and the community who can inform your district's approach to improving student attendance. Consider involving stakeholders who can:

a. Offer insights into barriers to getting children to school.
b. Provide information about effective local practices for improving student attendance to ensure school and district plans build off of what is already working.
c. Identify and bring to bear other community resources that can help to nurture a local culture of attendance or resolve a particular challenge (e.g., related to health, nutrition, transportation, safe routes, discipline, school climate, bullying, trauma, etc.). See Appendix B for research on the positive impact of other community resources on attendance.

Learn from Success

An important strategy for leveraging effective practice in your community is to use data to identify positive outliers. These are schools or groups of children who have low levels of chronic absence even though they are from low-income families or a sub-group that typically has poor attendance. Such positive outliers can offer insights into what works locally to improve student attendance. Click here for guidance on conducting site visits to positive outliers.

LCFF clearly states that stakeholders must be involved in the critical phases of the development of the LCAP, including analyzing the data, setting annual goals and establishing specific actions to improve attendance at the school district level and each individual school site.

The law specifically requires:

» Consultation with a parent advisory committee
» Consultation with an English learner advisory committee
» Opportunities to provide comments and at least one public hearing before adoption by the board

These should be viewed as minimum requirements. Assembling teams that include workgroups with deeper knowledge and expertise in the areas of attendance, school climate and positive discipline could be particularly productive in developing strong plans.

A key starting point is engaging stakeholders in examining the data. Start with school staff who can make sure the data is accurate before it is more broadly shared. Parents and students are especially essential to offering insights into why students might be coming to school or what is helping improve attendance if the data shows unusually low levels of chronic absence. Cultivate stakeholder involvement both at the district and school site level, especially in those schools which the data suggests need to be targeted for extra help as well as at the district level.

Identify community liaisons who can reach out to different groups, such as parents of low-income and English language learners, foster youth and their guardians, students, business and community leaders. Cultivate their engagement at the appropriate times. Keep in mind the importance of leveraging your existing attendance and truancy infrastructure. Include School Attendance Review Teams (SART) and the School Attendance Review Boards (SARB) that lead existing attendance initiatives and look at the extensive SARB handbook that the California Department of Education has developed. Remember to also draw upon the insights of leaders and staff involved in school and community initiatives related to, for example, health, school climate, afterschool and summer programming and mentoring that can help reduce chronic absence even though attendance may not be their central focus. Ensure participation from systems such as child welfare and foster care, juvenile justice and homeless shelters so that those resources can be brought to bear to coordinate services and address the intense and specialized needs of the students with the greatest challenges who are often known to multiple systems.

To help you with providing key stakeholders with basic information about LCFF, see Appendix C for descriptions and links to available online resources and materials ranging from handouts for parents to more extensive background resources.

5. *Set Targets:* Develop annual goals, specific actions and budgets for inclusion in the LCAP

As part of the LCAP, districts will need to include annual goals and a description of specific actions to achieve in terms of reduced chronic absence. Understanding your baseline data district-wide and by school will help you to determine achievable goals, given the supports and strategies that will be in place at your schools.

A school that fully adopts a comprehensive approach to reducing chronic absence for an entire academic year can expect chronic absence to decrease. Based upon our experience, Attendance Works has found it is reasonable to expect a reduction in chronic absence of 20% from the baseline in the first year. For example, if the baseline rate is 30%, the rate could drop to 24%, down 6 percentage points for a 20% reduction. In each school community where a comprehensive approach is maintained, school leaders can expect a continued 10% reduction in each subsequent year, barring some outside factor (for example, an unusually problematic flu epidemic or a significant increase in poverty levels). If a comprehensive approach exists in all schools in a district, this reduction would be expected district-wide. If the work rolls out in phases, schools that have implemented the approach will achieve the reductions first, and reductions should be monitored closely for individual schools.

It is also important to keep in mind that there can be significant overlap in what might be achieved through district efforts aimed at the different LCCF priorities, including Parental Involvement, Pupil Engagement and School Climate. For example, improving overall School Climate by reducing suspensions and expulsions through positive discipline and restorative justice practices will also help to reduce chronic absence since suspensions are one form of absence. In addition, typically school attendance improves when parents are better engaged in their children's education.

Examples of LCAP specific actions might include:
» Increased support for attendance counselors and SART and SARB prevention services
» Implementation of restorative justice and school-wide behavioral intervention and support models
» Interagency collaboration to support special populations like foster youth, parental involvement and attendance campaigns
» Investments in programs such as school-based health centers and breakfast programs that address barriers to getting to school or high quality afterschool and summer programming that engage students and help nurture habits of good attendance.

The Department of Education's SARB Handbook and the Attorney General Kamala Harris' September 2013 report, "In School and On Track," offer other recommendations for reducing chronic absence and truancy.

Ultimately, leaders will want to ensure that particular approaches will have a measurable impact on student outcomes for the required state and identified local priorities under the LCAP and align budgets accordingly.

Conclusion

Reducing chronic absence is critical to improving student achievement and ensuring all students have an opportunity to learn. Investments in classroom instruction have limited impact if students aren't in their seats to benefit from the improved teaching and curriculum! Implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) offers an unprecedented state-wide opportunity to help all districts in California realize the benefits of monitoring and addressing chronic absence, an all too often overlooked but actionable data point. Districts may find this data point is a great way to measure whether other strategies are working to improve student engagement and school climate.

The good news is given the wealth of information and resources available to help districts improve attendance and reduce chronic absence, districts do not need to wait to plan and take action. Rather, by taking action now to analyze chronic absence data, unpack attendance barriers, build capacity, engage stakeholders and set targets, districts and their community partners can lay the foundation needed to create strong Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs) that include attainable but ambitious goals for reducing chronic absence and ensure that the strategies and supports are in place to achieve those goals.

About

Attendance Works

Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes awareness of the important role that school attendance plays in achieving academic success. Based in San Francisco, Attendance Works is supporting several California districts as they track chronic absence data and intervene with students and schools.

CH1LDREN NOW

Children Now is the leading, nonpartisan, umbrella research, policy development, and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children's health and education in California and creating national media policies that support child development. The organization also leads The Children's Movement of California.

Acknowledgements

Appendix A

Overview of Chronic absence and the Local Control Funding Formula

In 2013, Governor Brown's proposed Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) passed with bipartisan support as part of the state budget. It replaced a school funding system burdened by set-asides and outdated formulas with one designed to achieve greater equity and responsiveness to local student needs. The result is a streamlined school funding system that will direct more funds to high-needs students — those in lower-income households, English learners and foster youth — and give educators, parents and community members a greater voice in how resources are invested locally.

Local Control and Accountability Plans

Districts must develop and adopt a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for up to three years, to be updated annually before July 1 of each year. They must be based on the template adopted by the State Board of Education by the end of January. They must include the following for the district and each school within the district:

1. Annual goals for all of the LCFF state priorities (see below) for each numerically significant subgroup (Ethnic, Socioeconomically disadvantaged, English learners, Pupils with disabilities, and Foster youth) and for all pupils;
2. A description of the specific actions the school district will take during each year of the plan to achieve the annual goals identified.

LCFF State Priorities

In addition to changing how schools are funded and who gets to decide, LCFF also ensures that a holistic set of student outcomes are used to hold schools accountable. In the future, the State Board will adopt an evaluation rubric that county offices, districts and the Superintendent of Public Instruction can use in identifying districts that warrant intervention.

The Legislature established eight LCFF priority areas and a variety of indicators on each to ensure that important state priorities are being monitored and addressed. As described above, the LCAP must include the annual goals and specific actions on each of the enumerated state priorities for the district and each school within the district, for each subgroup and for all pupils. A school district may also identify additional local priorities, goals for attaining them and methods for measuring progress.

The state priorities and specific indicators are as follows:

1. **Teachers, Materials, Facilities:** Access to fully credentialed teachers in the subjects and for the pupils assigned; sufficient access to the standards-aligned instructional materials; and school facilities are maintained in good repair.
2. **Academic Standards:** Implementation of the academic content and performance standards adopted by the state board, including how the programs and services will enable English learners to access the common core academic content standards and the English language development standards for purposes of gaining academic content knowledge and English language proficiency.

3. **Parental Involvement:** The involvement of parents including efforts the school district makes to seek parent input in making decisions for the school district and each individual school site, and including how the school district will promote parental participation in programs for unduplicated pupils (English learners, Socioeconomically disadvantaged, Foster youth) and individuals with exceptional needs.
4. **Pupil Achievement:** Measured by all of the following, as applicable: Statewide assessments; The Academic Performance Index; The percentage of pupils who have completed a-g courses or career technical education sequences or programs of study that align with state board-approved career technical educational standards and frameworks; The percentage of English learner pupils who make progress toward English proficiency; The English learner reclassification rate; The percentage of pupils with AP passing score; The percentage of pupils who participate in, and demonstrate college preparedness pursuant to, the Early Assessment Program
5. **Pupil Engagement:** Measured by all of the following, as applicable: School attendance rates; Chronic absenteeism rates; Middle school dropout rates; High school dropout rates; High school graduation rates.
6. **School Climate:** Measured by all of the following, as applicable: Pupil suspension rates; Pupil expulsion rates; Other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness.
7. **Access to Courses:** The extent to which pupils have access to, and are enrolled in, a broad course of study that includes all of the subject areas that prepare them for college and careers.
8. **Other Pupil Outcomes:** If available, for non-state assessed courses of study in grades 1-12 (e.g., other history-social science, visual performing arts, physical education, etc.) and county offices are required to include outcomes specific to pupils in alternative programs.

The data included in the plan must be reported consistent with the School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The development of the plan must also include a consultation with teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, parents and students.

Appendix B

Research on Interventions that can positively impact attendance

The drivers behind chronic absence are varied and often interrelated, ranging from health issues to school climate to lack of student engagement. Consequently, there are a number of interventions that, while not expressly designed to reduce absenteeism, have been shown to have a positive effect on student attendance. Below is a sampling of research examining the impact of such interventions.

Health Interventions and School Based Health Centers

- **Van Cura, Maureen.** *The Relationship Between School-Based Health Centers, Rates of Early Dismissal From School, and Loss of Seat Time, Journal of School Health, Vol. 80, No. 8, August 2010.* This researcher studied two high schools in New York – one with a school-based health center and one without. Controlling for race, gender, age, poverty, and presence of a pre-existing illness, this study shows that school-based health centers have a direct impact on educational outcomes such as attendance.

- **Webber, Mayris P., et al**, *Burden of Asthma in Inner-City Schoolchildren: Do School-Based Health Centers Make a Difference?* Arch Pediatrics Adolescent Medicine Volume 157, February 2003. This study compared information about students at six inner-city elementary schools in the Bronx. Four of the schools had school-based health centers while two did not. Researchers looked at data regarding hospitalization, emergency department visit, and absenteeism among students with asthma. They found that access to school-based health centers reduced the rate of hospitalization and decreased absenteeism for students with asthma.

- **Pourat, Nadereh and Gina Nicholson**, *Unaffordable Dental Care Is Linked to Frequent School Absences.* UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, November 2009. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease of childhood and affects nearly 60% of children in the United States. In 2007, approximately 7% of school-age children in California missed at least one day of school due to a dental problem. The ability to pay for needed care is the key difference between those children who miss school and those who do not. This report examines the link between unaffordable dental care and missed school days, especially among children who are uninsured, lower-income, limited English-proficient, Asian American, and who have poor oral health.

- **Kerr, Jill et al.**, *Does Contact by a Family Nurse Practitioner Decrease Early School Absence?*, The Journal of School Nursing, September 14, 2011. Chronic early school absence is associated with academic failure. The presence of school nurses may lead to fewer absences. Additionally, nurse practitioners in school-based health centers can facilitate a healthier population, resulting in improved attendance. This article describes a nursing intervention to decrease early school absence in two elementary schools and a Head Start program.

- **Nandrup-Bus, Ange**. *Comparative studies of hand disinfection and hand washing procedures as tested by pupils in intervention programs*, American Journal of Infection Control, Vol. 39, Issue 6, August 2011. The objective of this study was to examine the effect of mandatory, scheduled hand disinfection (HD) on absenteeism due to infectious illness among elementary school pupils in Denmark. A three-month experiment compared one school in which students were required to wash their hands three times a day with another where hand washing was not required. Hand washing was shown to significantly decrease absenteeism.

Out-of-School Time Learning: Afterschool and Summer

- **Chang, Hedy N. and Phyllis W. Jordan**. *Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference!*, Expanded Learning and Afterschool: Opportunities for Student Success. (http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/chang_jordan.pdf)

  This article explains why quality afterschool programs can have a profound effect on student attendance and includes descriptions of effective practices among afterschool programs that have been shown to have an impact.

- **Kauh, Tina J. AfterZone**: *Outcomes for Youth Participating in Providence's Citywide After-School System*. Public/Private Ventures, 2011.

  The AfterZone model encompasses a wide variety of after-school programs for middle school youth in Providence, RI. This evaluation, funded by the Wallace Foundation, explores the impact of the model over the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. Using youth surveys and administrative school records, the study examines students' level of engagement with the program, the outcomes associated with participation in the program, and the extent to which more participation is associated with better outcomes. The two-year evaluation found that participation in the AfterZone program yielded strikingly higher school attendance, among a variety of other benefits such as stronger feelings of connection to school.

- **Attendance Works.** *Making the Case: How Good Afterschool Program Improve School-day Attendance*. (http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Making-the-Case-for-AS-2-3-11.pdf)

  This document provides an overview of existing research showing that high quality afterschool programs can have a positive impact on school-day attendance, even when improved attendance is not an explicit goal of the program.

- **Public Profit**. *Summer Matters: How Summer Learning Strengthens Students' Success.* (http://summermatters2you.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Summer-Matters-Evaluation.How-Summer-Learning-Strengthens-Students-Success.pdf)

  This study examines the ways in which high quality, enriching summer programs in Fresno, Sacramento and Los Angeles benefitted children and their families. Funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the evaluation studies the programs' benefits across a range of areas, including ELA proficiency and academic self-efficacy and motivation. The researchers found that in Fresno in particular, summer program participants were one-third less likely to be chronically absent in the fall following their program participation than similar peers who did not attend the program.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Restorative Justice Models

Punitive behavioral intervention approaches such as suspensions and expulsions greatly increase student absenteeism. To help promote positive behavioral interventions, the California Department of Education has gathered a number of resources to help make the case for adopting such approaches in schools, give schools examples of what works, and help them identify funding sources and experts. These resources can be found here: http://www.cde. ca.gov/ls/ss/se/behaviorialintervention.asp.

Although common sense suggests that positive behavioral interventions have the potential to improve student attendance, the United States-based research evaluating the impact of the approach specifically on attendance as an outcome is relatively limited. Multiple multi-year evaluation projects that include attendance as an outcome are in progress.[1] Below is a sampling of existing and preliminary research on attendance and suspensions:

- **Luiselli, James K., Robert F. Putnam and Michael Sunderland**. *Longitudinal Evaluation of Behavior Support Intervention in a Public Middle School*, Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, Vol. 4, No. 3, July 2002. (http://pbi.sagepub.com/content/4/3/184. abstract)

   This report describes a longitudinal (4-year) evaluation of a behavior support program implmented with the entire student population in a public middle school. The number of student detentions issued for disruptive or antisocial behaviors, vandalism, and substance use decreased progressively during each academic year. In addition, student attendance increased each year, as well as the proportion of students earning positive reinforcement.

- **Sumner, Michael D., Carol J. Silverman and Mary Louise Frampton**. *School-Based Restorative Justice as an Alternative to Zero-Tolerance Policies: Lessons from West Oakland*, Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice, University of California, Berkeley School of Law, 2010. (http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/thcsj/10-2010_School-based_ Restorative_Justice_As_an_Alternative_to_Zero-Tolerance_Policies.pdf)

   This report examines a pilot restorative justice program at Cole Middle School in West Oakland, a school that primarily served students of color from low-income families. It documents the implementation of the program and the observations and perceptions of those who participated in it. The authors found that suspensions declined by 87 percent at Cole Middle School during the implementation of restorative justice, though the research cannot prove a causal link between the program and the drop in suspensions.

- **Bradshaw, Catherine P., Mary M. Mitchell and Philip J. Leaf**. *Examining the Effects of Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Student Outcomes: Results from a Randomized Controlled Effectiveness Trial in Elementary Schools*, Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions, vol. 12 no. 3, July 2010. (http://pbi.sagepub.com/ content/12/3/133.short?rss=1&ssource=mfc)

   This study uses data from a 5-year longitudinal randomized controlled effectiveness

1 See Berkeley Law's Evaluation of Restorative Justice at Oakland High School (http://www.law.berkeley.edu/1110.htm); University of Kansas School of Education's Center for Restorative Education Evaluation (http://www2.ku.edu/~ierps/cgi-bin/program/center-for-restorative-education-evaluation)

trial of Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS_ conducted in 37 elementary schools to examine the impact of training in SWPBIS on implementation fidelity as well as student suspensions, office discipline referrals, and academic achievement. School-level longitudinal analyses indicated that the schools trained in SWPBIS implemented the model with high fidelity and experienced significant reductions in student suspensions and office discipline referrals.

- **Simonsen, Brandi et al.** *Illinois Statewide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Evolution and Impact on Student Outcomes Across Years*, Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, vol. 14 no. 5, 2012.

  This paper presents the results of analyses exploring the effects of implementing Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), with and without fidelity across time, on student behavior and academic outcomes for a sample of 428 Illinois schools implementing SWPBS. The academic outcomes examined were office discipline referrals, suspension, and state-wide test scores in reading and math. Results indicate that most schools implemented with fidelity and maintained or improved student performance across time. Additionally, schools implementing SWPBS with fidelity had significantly lower rates of out-of-school suspensions than other schools in the sample (difference in event rate was 17%).

Appendix C

Additional Resources on the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP)

General Resources

- Children Now – LCFF site (http://lcff.childrennow.org/)
  - ◊ This LCFF site includes Children Now's ongoing webinar series on the new funding system which cover LCFF overview, implementation and policy updates, community engagement, and opportunities for early learning programs. Website also includes re-sources and updates on implementation, news links, an interactive timeline, as well as district and community engagement strategies.

- Fair Share 4 Kids (http://www.fairshare4kids.org)
  - ◊ This website, part of a campaign to ensure that LCFF lives up to its promise to pro-vide additional resources to high-need students, offers a wealth of information on LCFF and the latest news on the legislation and its implementation. Website includes FAQ's, a toolkit to educate the community about LCFF, and a data tool showing how much money will be directed to districts under the new legislation.

- State Board of Education and WestEd LCFF Channel (http://lcff.wested.org/lcff-channel/)
  - ◊ The LCFF Channel provides Implementation Insight videos for viewing or download to help facilitate local implementation of LCFF. New videos are posted regularly.

- Public Advocates Local Control Funding Formula Resources (http://www.publicad-vocates.org/local-control-funding-formula-lcff)
  - ◊ Public Advocates' website includes links to overviews of the role of community en-gagement in LCFF implementation.

Resources for Parents and Families

- Parents Matter NOW (http://parentsmatternow.org/about/)
  - ◊ Launched by Families in Schools, Parents Matter NOW is a statewide campaign to strengthen parent engagement practices across the state. The website includes the campaign's vision for authentic parent engagement, updates on LCFF implementa-tion, FAQ's about the legislation, and links to parent fliers. Families in Schools, along with its partners, have also produced a report laying out a set of parent engagement indicators that can be used by the state and school districts to better track parent engagement activities. (http://parentsmatternow.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/FIS_ReimaginedSummaryRpt_101413_WithCover.pdf)

- California State PTA LCFF and LCAP Resources (http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/e-school-finance.cfm)
    - ◊ The California State PTA's resources include parent fliers on the new legislation in multiple languages, guidance on what parents and PTA can do to inform implementation, and links to additional resources through other organizations.

Resources for School Administrators and Community Partners

- Summer Matters: Putting Summer to Work Series (http://summermatters2you.net/putting-summer-to-work/)
    - ◊ This series of reports by the Partnership for Children and Youth link summer learning to Local Control Funding Formula priorities, such as student engagement, school climate, and student achievement.

Resources for School Boards

- CSBA Local Control Funding Formula Governance and Policy Resources (http://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/FairFunding/LCFF.aspx)
    - ◊ CSBA's website includes an LCFF Toolkit for School Boards with overviews of the funding system, implementation frameworks and calendars, and guidance on how to effectively use data. The website also contains links to other CSBA resources and external resources on LCFF.