



Reducing Chronic Absences Through School, Family and Community Collaborations and Increasing Graduation Rates

Florida Organization of Instructional Leaders (FOIL)
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In Collaboration with...



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Welcome

Description: This presentation will address how reducing chronic attendance impacts academic performance and graduation outcomes by targeting early warning indicators.

Attendees will be able to:

- 1) Understand how attendance and engagement impacts academic performance and high school graduation rates.
- 2) Access community resources to address chronic attendance concerns.
- 3) Use data to address chronic absences, thus improving the chance of each student graduating high school.

Agenda

I. Introductions

Beverley Wilks, Bureau of Student Support Services (BoSSS)
Felicia Trumpler, BoSSS

II. Icebreaker

What are your district's greatest strengths and biggest challenges when addressing chronic absenteeism?

III. Presentation

Requirements (Statute or Rule)
Barriers that Affect Optimal Attendance Outcomes –
 Data and Research
Collaborations through an Integrated Approach
Best Practices through Engagement
Resources



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Ice Breaker

What are your district's greatest strengths
and biggest challenges when addressing
chronic absenteeism?

Statutory Guidance

- Florida Law (section [s.] [1003.21](#), Florida Statutes [F.S.]) states that all children who are either six years of age, who will be six years old by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, must attend school regularly during the entire school term.
- A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. Public school students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school board.

[Attendance Recordkeeping Handbook](#)

<https://www.fldoe.org/how-do-i/attendance-enrollment.shtml>

<https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7574/dps-2015-40.pdf>

Enforcing School Attendance

Section 1003.26, F.S.

- Poor academic performance is associated with nonattendance.
- School districts must take an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance.
- Each district school superintendent is responsible for enforcing school attendance.
- Each district school superintendent is responsible for supporting the enforcement of attendance by local law enforcement agencies.
- Early intervention in school attendance is the most effective way of producing good attendance habits.
- Establishing regular school attendance habits supports student learning and achievement.

Powers and Duties of a District School Board

Student Welfare

In accordance with the provisions of chapters 1003 and 1006, district school boards provide for the proper accounting for all students of school age, for the attendance and control of students at school, and for proper attention to health, safety and other matters relating to the welfare of students.

- A school district may identify additional early warning indicators for use in a school's early warning system. The system must include data on the number of students identified by the system as exhibiting two or more early warning indicators, the number of students by grade level who exhibit each early warning indicator, and a description of all intervention strategies employed by the school to improve the academic performance of students identified by the early warning system.
- A school-based team responsible for implementing the requirements of this paragraph shall monitor the data from the early warning system. The team may include a school psychologist. When a student exhibits two or more early warning indicators, the team, in consultation with the student's parent, shall determine appropriate intervention strategies for the student unless the student is already being served by an intervention program at the direction of a school-based multidisciplinary team. Data and information relating to a student's early warning indicators must be used to inform any intervention strategies provided to the student.

PK-12 Database Manuals

The Student Information System houses all available data elements that can be used to support school districts with the proper coding of students who are enrolling, withdrawing or graduating from a school district in Florida.

Updates on all available codes may be accessed at <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/database-manuals-updates>.

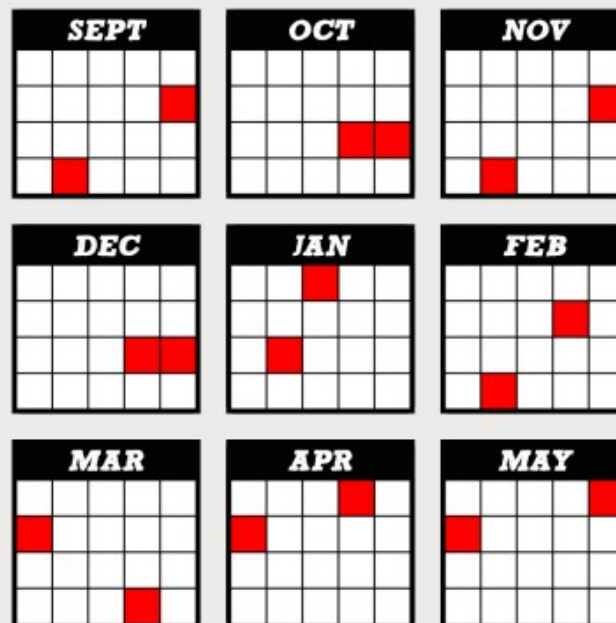
For additional technical support, you may refer the following links: [Additional School Year Reporting Guidelines](#) and [Appendix A: Attendance Recordkeeping Required Codes for Grades PK-12 Students](#).

Daily Attendance Codes

Code	Definition/Example
AD1 Blank	Present
E	Excused absence as defined by district policy
H	Hospital/Homebound student scheduled in a hospital program in another district pursuant to the rule regarding alternately-assigned students, 6A-6.03020(6), FAC. (Code H should not be counted as a day absent, but rather should be considered a day of non-enrollment.)
Q	A pupil shall be deemed to be in attendance if away from school under a “stay-home” directive on a school day and engaged in an educational activity which constitutes a part of the school-approved instructional program as defined in 6AER21-01.
T	Tardy
U	Unexcused absence as defined by district policy
The following codes may optionally replace Code U.:	
AD2 D	Unexcused absence related to discipline as defined by district policy
N	Unexcused absence not related to discipline as defined by district policy

Easy to Overlook Patterns of Chronic Absence in Individual Students

**2 Absences Per Month
x 9 Months of School
= Less Likely to Graduate
from High School**



Truancy Vs. Chronic Absence

TRUANCY

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal & administrative solutions

Vs.

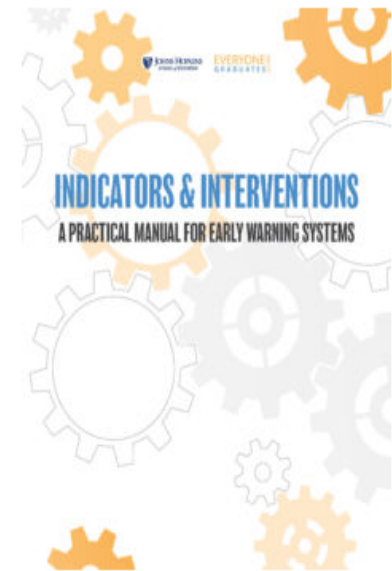
CHRONIC ABSENCE

- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies



Early Warning Systems (EWS) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

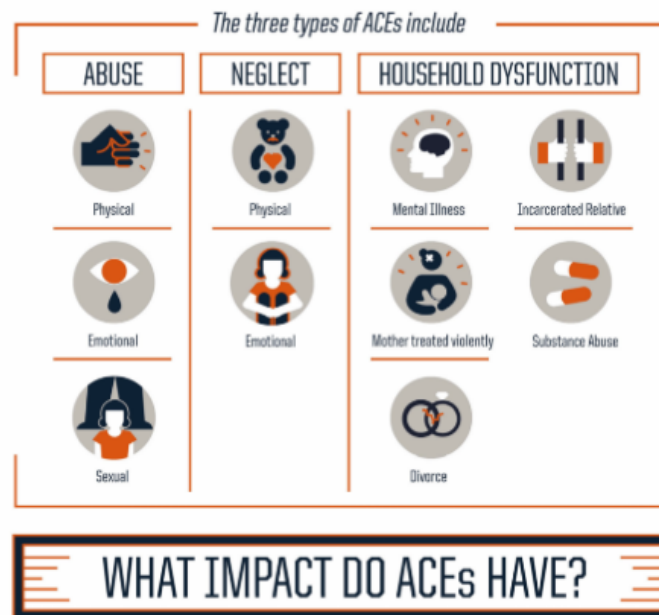
- ❑ Data collection at the school level (attendance records, discipline, graduation rates and other progress monitoring elements)
- ❑ Utilizes data to make informed decisions
- ❑ Assists districts in identifying patterns, trends and school effectiveness at keeping students on-track
- ❑ Identifying ACEs (abuse, neglect and household dysfunction) that may effect the physical, mental or emotional state of the student
- ❑ Direct and indirect support provided by school-based services providers as a tiered system of supports



[Indicators & Interventions: A Practical Manual for Early Warning Systems](#)

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ACEs can have a tremendous impact on future violence, victimization and perpetration, lifelong health and opportunity. Abuse, neglect and exposure to traumatic stressors can be associated with a multitude of health and social problems later in life.



Understanding Childhood Trauma

Elementary School Children	Middle and High School	Impacts of Trauma
Becomes anxious or fearful	Feels depressed or alone	Learning problems, including lower grades and more suspensions and expulsions
Feelings of guilt or shame	Begins abusing alcohol or drugs	Increased use of health and mental health services
Have a hard time concentrating	Become involved in risky sexual behavior	Increased involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
Have difficulty sleeping	Develops eating disorders or self-harming behaviors	Long-term health problems (e.g., diabetes and heart disease)

www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma



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What Are the Benefits of Regular Attendance?

The Benefits of Regular Attendance

Being in school on a regular basis ...
... drives student success

Exposure to Language: Starting in pre-K, attendance equals exposure to language-rich environments.

Time on Task in Class: Student-only benefit from classroom instruction if they are in class.

On Track for Success: Chronic absence is a proven early warning signal that a student is behind in reading by third grade, failing courses in middle and high school and likely to drop out

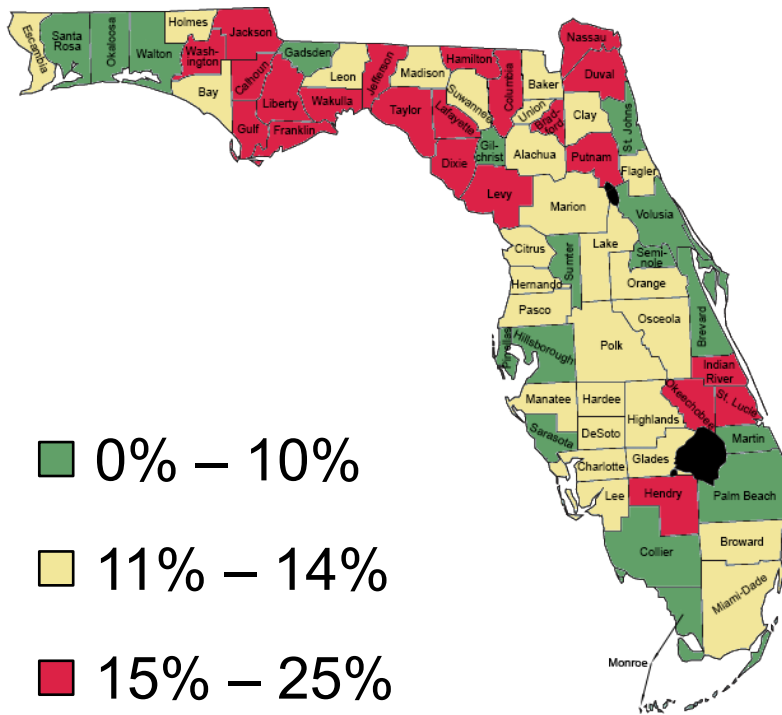
College and Career Ready: Cultivating the habit of regular attendance helps students develop the persistence needed to show up every day for college and work.

Engagement: Attendance reflects engagement in learning.

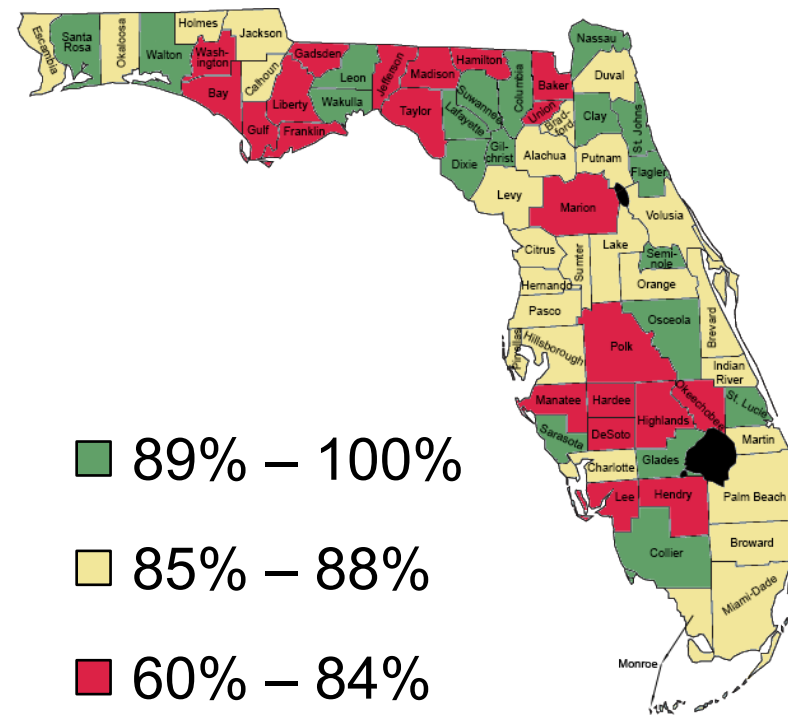
Effective Practice: Schools, communities and families can improve attendance when they work together.

Graduation and Absentee Data 2018-2019

Students Absent 21 or More Days



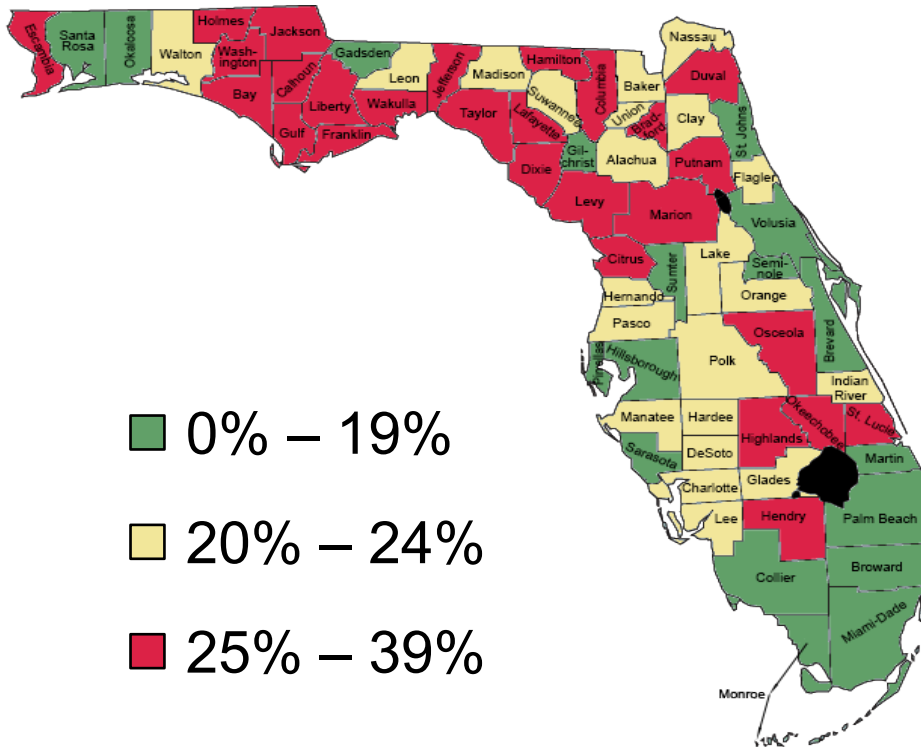
Graduation Rate



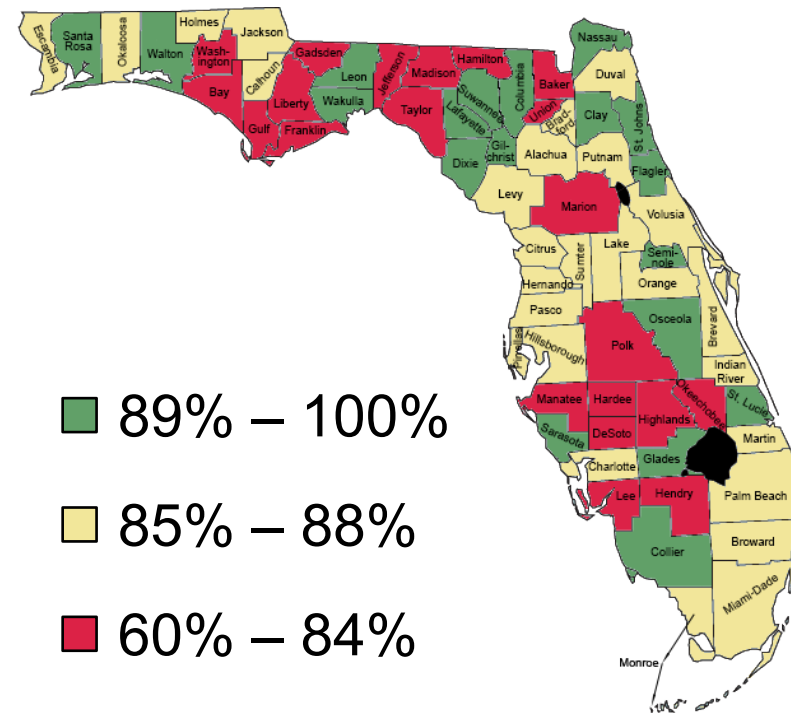
Source: Bureau of PK-20 Education Reporting and Accessibility, Florida Department of Education

Graduation and Absentee Data 2018-2019

Students Absent 10% or More

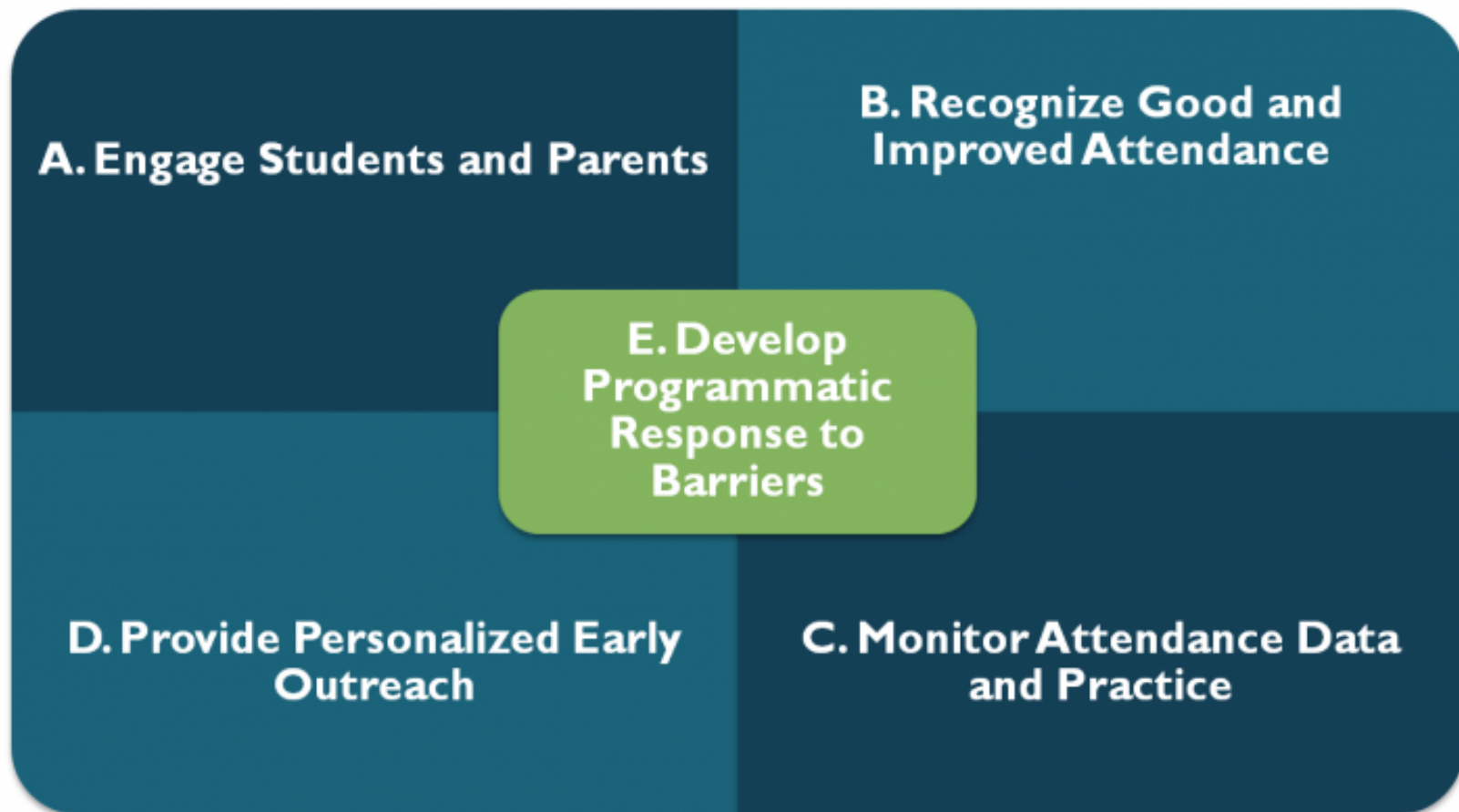


Graduation Rate



Source: Bureau of PK-20 Education Reporting and Accessibility, Florida Department of Education

Collaboration Through an Integrated Approach



Taking an Integrated Approach through Collaboration

What mental health services can school-based mental health professionals provide?

- School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and school nurses can provide group and individual counseling to students using evidenced-based practices to address:
 - School stress and anxiety
 - Family stress (divorce, homelessness)
 - Self-regulation and coping skills
 - Depression
 - Poor self-concept and anger/aggression
 - Grief and loss

What are other ways that school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and school nurses support mental health in schools?

- Serve as a members of district or school teams together and analyze data to determine appropriate mental health supports and services.
- Work collaboratively with SEDNET (Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities) to coordinate community- and school-based mental health services.

Taking an Integrated Approach through Collaboration, continued

- Interventions that strengthen students' social, emotional and decision-making skills also positively impact their academic achievement, both in terms of higher standardized test scores and better grades (Greenberg et al., 2003; Fleming et al., 2005).
- School mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, decreasing discipline referrals and increasing test scores (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003).
- Expanded school mental health services in schools have been found to reduce special education referrals, improve aspects of the school climate (Bruns et al., 2004).
- School-based mental health services are associated with declines in disciplinary referrals, suspension, grade retention and special education referrals and placement (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005b).
- Intensive school-based mental health services for elementary school children experiencing severe emotional and behavioral difficulties have demonstrated reductions in conduct disorder behavior, attention deficit/hyperactivity, and depression (Hussey & Guo, 2003).

Supporting Students with Health-Related Concerns

Why does health matter?

Poor health and undiagnosed conditions can cause too many absences: Even when absences are excused, missing too much school can lead children to fall behind. Challenges related to poor physical, dental and mental health are leading reasons students miss too much school.

Successful learners are healthier adults: Showing up to school is essential to graduating from high school and persisting in college. Higher levels of academic achievement are associated with lower incidence of disease and longer lives for adults.

Health providers are uniquely positioned to address chronic absence: Because of your expertise and respected stature, you are especially crucial allies for conveying the importance of avoiding unnecessary absences. You also can use your knowledge of families and community health conditions to identify and develop solutions when health-related barriers are causing significant absences.

Ways to support....

- ✓ Disseminate information
- ✓ Communicated the value of good attendance habits
- ✓ Identify and address health related causes of student absenteeism

[Attendance Works](#)

[Health Providers-Attendance Works](#)

Florida DHSMV – Motorist Compliance Data

- 10,546 Education Non-Compliance Letters mailed in 2020

1st Time Notice of Non-Compliance (77 Non-Compliance School Attendance)

3,145 suspensions were created

182 suspensions were resolved prior to effective date

2,963 resulted in suspension

2,107 suspensions were cleared after the effective date

856 are still suspended

Florida DHSMV-Motorist Compliance Data (9/13/2021)

Florida DHSMV – Motorist Compliance Data

- 10,546 Education Non-Compliance Letters mailed in 2020

2nd Notice of Non-Compliance/ Subsequent Suspensions (78 Non-Compliance School Attendance)

166 2nd subsequent suspensions were created

17 suspensions were resolved prior to effective date

149 resulted in a 2nd or subsequent suspension

130 suspensions were cleared after the effective date

19 are still suspended

Florida DHSMV-Motorist Compliance Data (9/13/2021)



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Best Practices Through Engagement: School, Parents and Community

School Engagement

Highlights from Volusia County School District

- The truancy process:
 - Prevention,
 - Intervention, and
 - Postvention

Parental/Family Engagement

- Encourage parents to keep track of their student's attendance
- Use your parent groups and/or volunteers to assist other parents in promoting positive relationships to encourage attendance
- Build positive relationships with parents and guardians
- Assist with active engagement of parents and students in planning and problem solving

Resources for Parents (Attendance Works):

[Handouts](#)

[Bringing Attendance Home toolkit](#)

Community Engagement

Business Leaders

Chronic absence is a problem we can solve, especially if business leaders work with schools, parents and communities to improve student attendance. Business leaders should get involved for the following reasons:

- › The workforce challenge: Absenteeism contributes to high school dropout rates, leaving students without the academic credentials and skills needed to compete in a 21st century workforce.
- › The soft skills challenge: Regular attendance is the precursor to the “soft skills” businesses will continue to expect and require. Students who don’t develop the habits associated with good attendance in the early years will find it difficult to develop them as adults.
- › The productivity challenge: Children who are sick miss school. And their parents miss work.



Community Engagement, continued

Volunteers and National Service

Efforts to improve attendance can benefit from an extra shift of adults mentoring at-risk students, knocking on doors and helping families get their children to school on time every day. Here are some resources to help you leverage volunteers and national service organizations, such as City Year, Experience Corps and MENTOR.

- › [Success Mentors](#)
- › [City Year Near Peers](#)
- › [MENTOR's The National Mentoring Resource Center](#)
- › [Corporation for National and Community Service's Superintendent's and Principal's Toolkit](#)

Community volunteers can provide an extra shift of adults to help manage attendance and track down absentee students. Several community-based organizations, such as City Year and Experience Corps, provide mentors. New York City has developed confidentiality forms for volunteers working in public schools.





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<https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/boss/>

<https://sss.usf.edu>



+ Questions



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