

Project 10 Topical Briefs are published on a monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme and also highlights current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the *Topical Brief* is focused on School Attendance.

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 Send to a Colleague

Attendance: The "A" in the ABCs of Early Warning Indicators (EWIs)

EWIs are student background or academic performance factors that have been connected to students who are at risk of dropping out of school. The primary three indicators, often called the ABCs of EWIs, are attendance, behavior and course failure. These factors can be used to track student performance and indicate when a student may be at risk for dropping out of school (Balfanz & Chang, 2013). Because attendance has been correlated with academic achievement, gaps in attendance translate into gaps in achievement and, eventually, gaps in achievement become gaps in graduation (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

Students with disabilities are among the student populations most significantly affected by chronic absence. Students with physical disabilities may incur absences due to health concerns. Another reason for chronic absences may be school aversion, perhaps related to school bullying or other school environment issues (Attendance Works & Healthy Schools Campaign, 2015).

Recognizing student attendance issues and addressing the causes is an essential task for school personnel that requires careful examination of attendance data. According to Balfanz and Chang (2013), "A school can have a 95% average daily attendance rate and still have 25% of

its students chronically absent," (p.1). Students missing 10% of school days are considered to be chronically absent and typically show signs of academic difficulties. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (2011) concludes, "Making the necessary changes to improve and sustain attendance from elementary to the high school years is an important step in increasing graduation rates and preparing students for the future," (p.56).

References

Attendance Works & Healthy School Campaign. (n.d.). *Mapping the early attendance gap: Charting a course for school success*. Retrieved from

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Mapping-the-Early-Attendance-Gap-Final-4.pdf>

Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *Chronic absenteeism: Summarizing what we know from nationally available data*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Retrieved from http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf

Balfanz, R. & Chang, H.N. (2013). Improve attendance: Increase success. *Principal Leadership*, 14(3), 20-24.

Campaign for Fiscal Equity. (2011). *Taking attendance seriously: How school absences undermine student and school performance in New York City*. Retrieved from

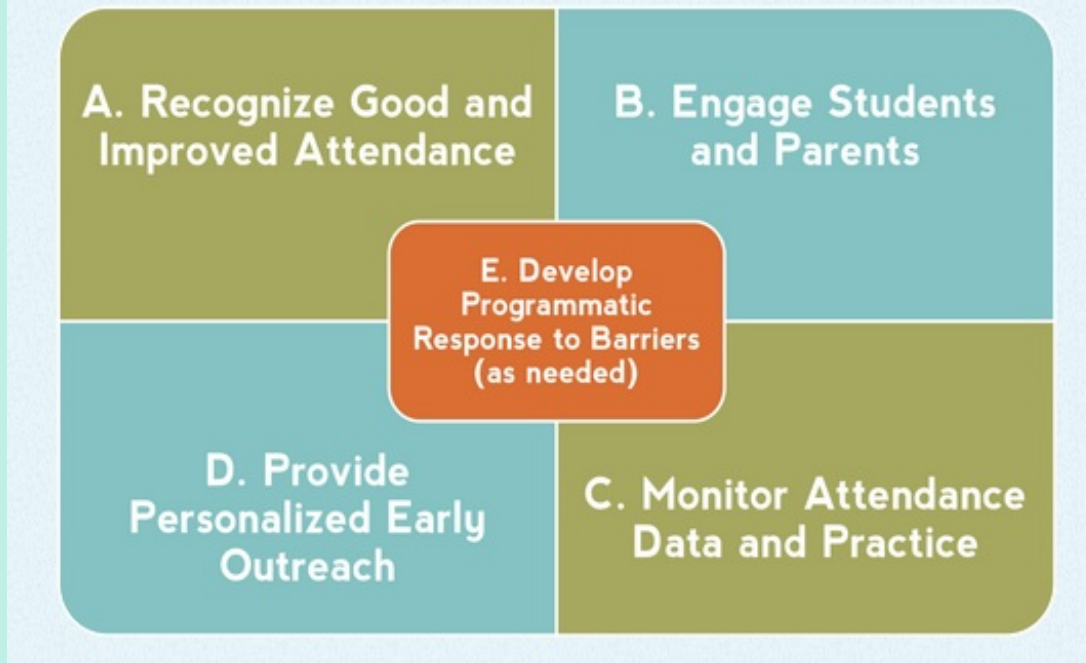
http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/CFE_Attendance_FINAL.pdf

Attendance Works: Strategies to Improve Chronic Absence

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/>

As with most initiatives to improve student and school outcomes, there is no magic wand that can be waved to influence miraculous and sudden perfect attendance. However, there are strategies that can be used in a continuous, consistent manner that can effect real change. **Attendance Works** is a national initiative whose goal is to ensure that all school districts track absence data and partner with families and community agencies to improve student attendance.

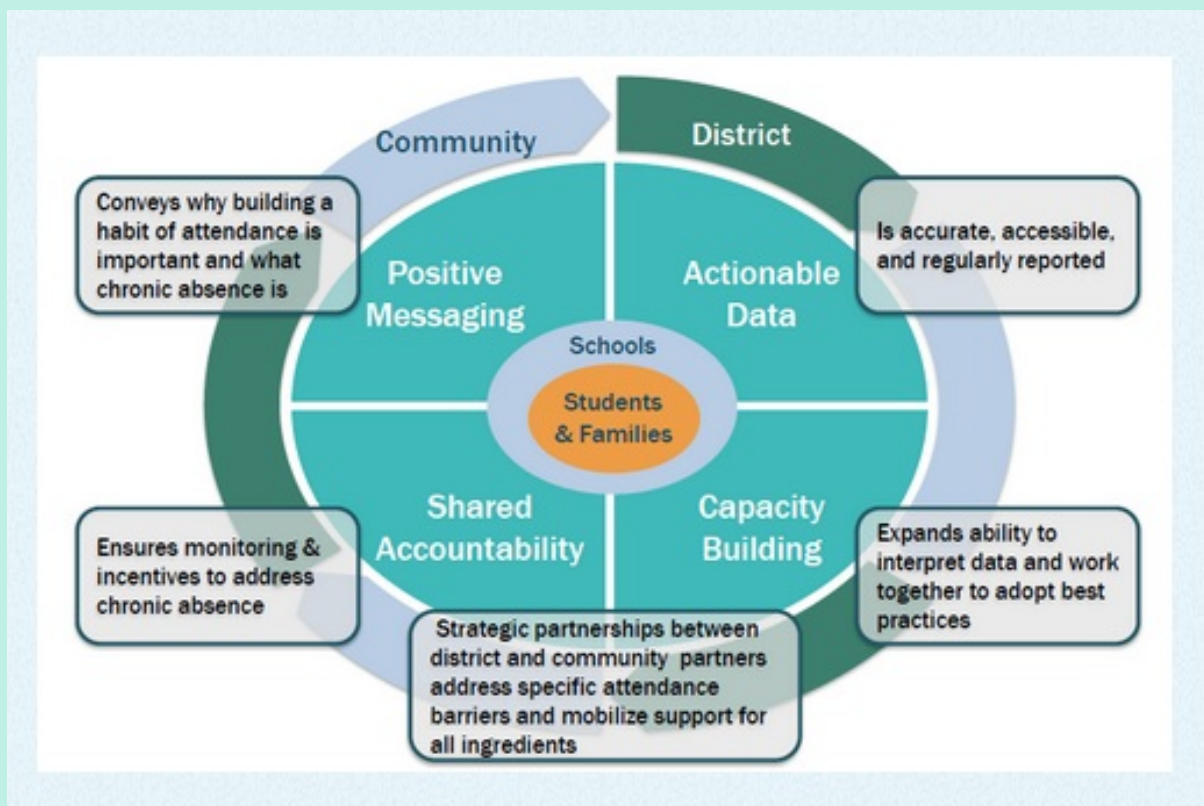
Attendance Works suggests five strategies to address chronic absences and four ingredients for systemic change. The five strategies are displayed in the following Attendance Works chart:



Attendance Works also identifies four key ingredients for systemic change. They are as follows:

- Positive Messaging
- Actionable Data
- Capacity Building
- Shared Accountability

The following Attendance Works chart displays the four ingredients for systemic change paired with explanations about how these ingredients function.



The five key strategies to address chronic absence and the four key ingredients for systemic change are listed on the Attendance Works website and each of these elements is a clickable link that provides additional information, resources, and suggestions for school events.

An Early Warning System (EWS) Fact Sheet: Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Support
<http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/factsheets/ews.pdf>

The following excerpt from the EWS Fact Sheet demonstrates how early warning indicators can be used to create a system that analyzes student data to identify students who may need an intervention to keep them on course for graduation with a standard diploma.



"Recent research on a cohort of over 4,200 students in a Florida district found that a little over one third of the students were off track at three or more time points from sixth through tenth grade, suggesting a multi-year pattern. In the absence of systematically provided interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of off-track indicators, off-track status remains relatively constant and increases the likelihood that students will be off-track for high school," (p.1). As the result of the Florida Senate Bill 850 being passed in June 2014, Florida schools serving students in grades six through eight are required to use an EWS to identify students with the following:

- Attendance below 90% regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused
- Failing English Language Arts or mathematics courses
- One or more suspensions (in or out of school)
- A Level 1 score on state-wide assessments in English Language Arts or mathematics

To access the Florida's Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) Project website at <http://floridarti.usf.edu/index.html>.

School Attendance Information from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE)

The FDOE website provides helpful information that supports Florida school districts and families. Because consistent student attendance is connected to positive academic outcomes for students, it is essential for schools to provide structures that support and motivate students to attend school. The site addresses how schools can provide attendance accountability for its community. Access additional information, including a comprehensive FAQ section, on the Attendance and Enrollment webpage, please click on the screen shot or go to <http://www.fldoe.org/how-do-i/attendance-enrollment.stml>.



HOW DO I

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Frequently Asked Questions

How is compulsory school attendance defined? ▾

Does Florida law specify an age requirement for admission into a public school first grade? ▾

Is a student over age 16 allowed to quit school without parent permission? ▾

How is a truant defined? ▾

How do school districts determine if an absence is excused or unexcused? ▾

Is there an exception made for absence due to illness? ▾

How are schools required to enforce regular school attendance? ▾

What is the minimum attendance requirement for awarding course credit? ▾

Are a significant number of high school students actually losing their drivers' licenses as a result of too many absences from school? ▾

Does compulsory school attendance apply to Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)? ▾

What are the requirements for Florida public school kindergarten admission? ▾

If a child turns five years old after September 1, can a waiver be obtained from the Florida Department of Education to allow him to attend kindergarten? ▾

Attendance Awareness Campaign 2016

Attendance Works provides an attendance toolkit that contains activities for those schools recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month. Link to the 2016 campaign and tool kit



at <http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkit/>.

Student Engagement is at the Heart of Check & Connect

The Check & Connect initiative understands that students (mentees) are affected by many systems in their lives, but specifically school, home and their community. Mentees face a variety of factors and influences that pull a student away from the school system. Check & Connect mentors work to build strong protective factors that will either help reduce those risks or help create stronger 'pull-ins' in each system.



The Institute's research-based intervention model to increase student engagement at school and with learning

When a student has attendance issues, there are commonly two scenarios:

1) Home or community risks - creating a 'pull-out' that is greater than the school protective factor or 'pull-in'.

OR

2) Lack of student engagement - creating a 'push-out' at the school level that outweighs the 'pull-in' factors.

Sometimes, the push-outs at school are greater than the pull-ins. Policies such as suspension or attendance guidelines may not facilitate keeping students in school. Bullying or lack of friends may also be school-level push-outs. Most often, mentees do not engage at school because they don't feel connected.

The commitment of Check & Connect helps mentees know that someone is in their corner. Check & Connect mentors build mutual trust and open communication with their mentee and nurture them by their commitment to and focus on promoting educational success.

A Florida District Check & Connect Success Story

"Edward (name changed) is one of our students who regularly missed a couple days of school every week and barely spoke to anyone. Edward was identified as a participant for the Check & Connect initiative and we had a wonderful mentor who asked to be assigned to him because they already had established good rapport. From day one the mentor spent time with Edward and let him know what he would have to do to walk across that graduation stage. Within the next two to three months Edward completed seven courses that he had previously failed. In addition, Edward was named the September school-wide student-of-the-month and all of his teachers commented about how he now speaks up and participates in class. Edward established a daily routine of visiting his mentor and Edward's parents became more actively involved and communicated with his mentor as well. We are very happy with Edward's progress and hope to see more of this success with other students."

For more information, visit the <http://project10.info/ConLogin.php> on the Project 10 website or the national website at <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/>.

Attendance-Related Trainings & Resources Available through Project 10

<http://project10.info/TrainingOnRequest.php>



Project 10 offers a variety of trainings and resources that are related to attendance and student engagement.

These and other training presentations are available to school district personnel and instructional staff upon request. Please contact the Regional Transition Representative (RTR) for your region to schedule training. RTR contact information is available by clicking on your county or region on the Florida map found at <http://www.project10.info/DistrictFlorida.php>.

Using School-level Data to Increase Graduation Success of Students with Disabilities

This two to three hour training details how schools and districts can use early warning system (EWS) data to promote timely graduation and post-school success. This training will include information on how to access and utilize data to impact graduation rates at the school level and interventions to help students graduate. In addition, effective practices implemented in other districts across the state will be shared.

A Florida District Project 10 Success Story

"My district is most appreciative of the "Using School-Level Data to Increase Graduation" training. My district, schools and School Guidance Counselors use this document to make informed decisions about areas that had not been considered or simply forgotten. This awesome visual has assisted us in improving our graduation rate and, more importantly, has provided support to our students as they work diligently to reach the finish line."

Additional related trainings include:

Dropout Prevention for Students with Disabilities, Part 1: Florida's Current Status

training presents information on Florida dropout and student exit survey data; discusses dropout risk factors, prevention strategies, and state and national promising practices. (2-3 hours)


Dropout Prevention for Students with Disabilities, Part 2: Strategies for Improvement

This training presents information on graduation success and dropout prevention tools, including Check & Connect and Florida's effective practices. (2-3 hours)

Project 10 Technical Assistance and Training Brief: Improving Graduation and Dropout Rates for Secondary Students with Disabilities

http://www.project10.info/files/P10_TA_Tmg_Brief_Grad_DO_Rates_3.9.14.pdf

This brief focuses on Project 10 technical assistance (TA) and training to improving graduation and dropout rates at the school/district level. Three key areas of TA are to assist school and district personnel in working with student data, development of graduation tracking system, and coordination with existing initiatives. Sample activities and recommended training are also listed.



<http://www.project10.info>

Technical Assistance and Training Brief: Improving Graduation and Dropout Rates for Secondary Students with Disabilities

Project 10 provides technical assistance, training, and resources to district and school personnel in the areas of secondary transition, which is designed to improve graduation and dropout rates, secondary transition IEP compliance, and post-school outcomes for secondary students with disabilities.

This brief focuses on Project 10 technical assistance (TA) and training to improving graduation and dropout rates at the school/district level. Three key areas of TA are to assist school and district personnel in working with student data, development of graduation tracking system, and coordination with existing initiatives. Sample activities and recommended training are also listed.

Technical Assistance (TA)

- I. Improve data collection, analysis, and data-driven decision-making**
 - a. Assist school and district personnel to build capacity in analyzing their own data
 - b. Collaborate with school and district MIS/IT personnel to complete a data capacity analysis
 - c. Review withdrawal and dropout codes with school and district personnel
 - d. Assist school and district personnel to identify existing data collection and analysis systems, e.g., Early Warning System (EWS)
 - e. Research and provide information and resources to improve graduation and dropout rates
- II. Develop a color-coded student graduation tracking system**
 - a. Facilitate development of a graduation data tracking system
 - b. Guide school and district personnel in analysis and maintenance of data system to monitor student progress towards graduation
 - c. Assist district personnel with identification and prioritization of schools based on graduation/dropout rates
 - d. Support districts in review of courses and scheduling impacting student success
- III. Coordinate with existing initiatives and systems**
 - a. Participate in school and district action planning processes (e.g., Small Group Planning and Problem-Solving) to provide Tier 2 and 3 support
 - b. Coordinate and collaborate on initiatives with discretionary projects (e.g., Check & Connect, Strategic Instruction Model, Differentiated Accountability, Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention)
 - c. Collaborate with attendance specialists, dropout prevention teams, MIS personnel
 - d. Facilitate coordination of activities with secondary transition integrity councils
 - e. Support connections with high-performing districts to access effective practices

Recommended Training

Using School-Level Data to Increase Graduation Success of Students with Disabilities
This training details how schools and districts can use early warning system (EWS) data to promote timely graduation and post-school success. This training includes information on how to access and utilize data to impact graduation rates at the school level and interventions to help students graduate. In addition, effective practices implemented in other districts across the state will be shared. (2-3 hours)

Dropout Prevention for Students with Disabilities, Part 1: Florida's Current Status
This training presents information on Florida dropout and student exit survey data, discusses dropout risk factors, prevention strategies, and state and national promising practices. (2-3 hours)

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Contact your Project 10 Regional Transition Representative Today!
<http://www.project10.info/Contact.php>

School Attendance Resources

Attendance Awareness Month Map

<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/map-2015/>

This interactive map shows how communities and states celebrated Attendance Awareness Month in 2015.

Attendance Works Website: Advancing Student Success by Reducing Chronic Absence

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes awareness of the important role that school attendance plays in achieving academic success starting with school entry. The goal is to ensure that every district in the country not only tracks chronic absence data beginning in kindergarten or earlier, but also partners with families and community agencies to intervene when attendance is a problem for children or particular schools.

Community Highlights

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/attendancemonth/community-highlights/>

This section of the Attendance Works website features stories and ideas shared by communities promoting Attendance Awareness Month.

Count Us In Toolkit

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/attendance/month/count-us-in-toolkit/>

This toolkit contains ideas, suggestions, advice and materials for promoting school attendance.

Holiday Messaging Toolkit

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-public-messaging/holiday-messaging/>

Talking points, sample messages, letters and other resources in English and Spanish for communicating the importance of keeping students in schools before and after holidays.

The Attendance Imperative: How States Can Advance Achievement by Reducing Chronic Absence

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/policy-advocacy/state/state-policy-brief-the-attendance-imperative/>

This brief describes the steps that districts can take to reduce chronic absence in schools. Resources include an Executive Summary, full policy brief, and State Appendix that highlights state efforts to combat chronic absence.

The Use of Early Warning Systems to Promote Success for All Students

http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/presentations/2014/amm/brundage/amm_presentation.pdf

This presentation by Dr. Amber Brundage provides a framework for developing and implementing an Early Warning System and is tailored for the needs of individual school districts and was originally presented at the Administrators' Management Meeting (AMM) 2014.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Educational Strategies & Student Engagement Institute (ESSEI)

September 19 - 21, 2016

Click on the flyer to access registration.

Save the Date!

2016
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&
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Destination Graduation:
Together Ensuring Every Student Succeeds

September 19 – 21, 2016
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HOT TOPICS

- *Alternative Education *Building Family, School and Community Partnerships
- *Data-Based Decision Making and Management
- *Dropout Recovery *Exceptional Student Education (ESE) *Engaging Instructional Practices
- *Improving Graduation Rates *Legislative Updates
- *Matching Interventions to Student Needs * Positive Behavior Practices/Supports
- *Restorative Justice Initiatives * School Disengagement and Dropout Interventions
- *Social-Emotional Learning/Positive Mental Health
- *Services for At-Risk Student Populations and more....

Presented by:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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UPCOMING WEBINARS

From Attendance Works- Ensuring an Equal Opportunity to Learn: Leveraging Chronic Absence Data for Strategic Action

Thursday, September 8, 2016

2:00pm - 3:30pm

Experts Hedy Chang and Dr. Robert Balfanz will introduce a national study that analyzes the chronic absenteeism data released by the U.S Office for Civil Rights in June 2016. The data revealed that 6.5 million students were chronically absent. Join this webinar to learn about how school districts in other states are addressing absenteeism and ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to learn.

[Click here](#) to register for the webinar.

Tips for Acquiring Competitive Employment Webinar

Monday, August 29, 2016

3:30pm

Join Jessica Moody, Youth Advocate for the Parent Support Network (PSN) program, as she introduces elements of the Mad Job Skills series that aims to help youth develop the soft and hard skill sets needed to be successful with independent living and employment.



The Individual and Emergency Health Care Plan in the IEP and 504 Plan Webinar

Monday, August 29, 2016

10:00am

Join Jim Howard, Parent Training Coordinator for the Family STAR program, for this webinar focusing on the importance of writing an

individual Health Care Plan into a 504 Plan or Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

[Click here](#) to register for the webinar.

Helping Children and Young Adults with ADD/ADHD Succeed and Prosper Webinar

Tuesday, August 30, 2016

2:00pm

The Family STAR program from the Family Network on Disabilities (FND) is sponsoring an informative workshop that will provide strategies to assist children and young adults with ADD/ADHD to succeed and prosper. Join Jim Howard, Parent Training Coordinator for the Family STAR program, for this relevant webinar.

[Click here](#) to register for the webinar.



Join Our Mailing List

About Project 10 Topical Briefs:

Project 10 Topical Briefs provide short informational summaries and resource links related to secondary transition.

Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share?

Send us an email at project10@stpete.usf.edu

For back issues of Project 10 Topical Briefs, visit the newsletter page on the Project 10 website at <http://www.project10.info/Newsletter.php>.

Project 10: Transition Education Network

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.



Project 10: Transition Education Network University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Questions or comments?

Email us at

project10@stpete.usf.edu

www.Project10.info
