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Engaging Data-Based Problem-Solving to Address Chronic Absenteeism Among PreK-12 Students

Amber Brundage

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Engaging in Data-Based Problem-Solving to Address Chronic Absenteeism Among PreK-12 Students

Amber Humm Brundage
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http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/presentations/index.html
Advance Organizer & Objectives

• Chronic Absenteeism Overview
• Problem-Solving for Chronic Absenteeism
• RCA & RCA-P
• Implications for Practice
• Questions

• Participants will:
  – Understand chronic absenteeism
    • How it is measured and contributors
  – Increase knowledge of how to engage in data-based problem-solving for chronic absenteeism among PreK-12 students
  – Increased knowledge of how to use RCA and RCA-P in data-based problem-solving
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
Chronic Absenteeism (CA)

- No standard definition
  - Often based on total number of days missed
    - Does not differentiate reasons for absences
      - Includes: excused, unexcused and suspensions
- Frequently defined as:
  - Missing 10% or more of instructional days
  - Missing 15 or more days of school per year

Important Differences
- 
  - **Truancy** = unexcused absences (s. 1003.26(b), F.S.)
  - **Average Daily Attendance** = how many students show up each day
  - **Chronic Absence** = missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at-risk - *missing 10% or more of school*
Average Daily Attendance and CA

Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism, 2013-14
(Eight Alliance Districts with Network Schools)
Prevalence of Chronic Absenteeism

• Based on national research, conservative estimates:
  – 10% of US students miss 21+ days of school per year
  – 14-15% of US students miss 18+ days of school per year

5-7.5 million students each year!!

• 13/14 OCR data found roughly 7 million students missed 15+ days of school

Easy to Overlook Patterns of Chronic Absence

2 Absences Per Month
\times 9 Months of School
= Less Likely to Graduate from High School

Get Schooled Interactive webpage:
Patterns in Chronic Absence Across Grade Levels

• Rates typically drop after Kindergarten through 4th
• Rise significantly in middle and high school

Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012
Chronic Absenteeism by Demographics

Chart 4 - Chronically Absent Students By Demographic Background

- Male
- Female
- White
- Non-White
- ELL
- ED
- SPED

Legend:
- Oregon
- Georgia
- Maryland
- Nebraska

Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012
National OCR Data from 13/14

[Bar chart showing the percentage of students with disabilities (SWD) and non-disabled students by educational level (Overall, Elementary, Middle, High).]

https://ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html#one
What are the Implications?

Missing 10 percent or more of instructional days has significant impact on student outcomes. Chronic absenteeism is associated with:

- Decreased reading levels and overall academic performance
- Decreased on-time graduation rates and post-secondary enrollment
- Increased dropout rates

(Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Chang & Romero, 2008)
Proposed Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism

Balfanz & Byrnes (2012)

**Barriers/Can’t**

Something prevents them from attending (illness, transportation, child care or family obligations)

**Aversions/ Won’t**

Avoidance of interactions or events at school (affective or perceptions physical/ psychological safety issues, school climate, stress)

**Disengagement / Don’t**

Would rather be somewhere else, do not make the effort to attend school and/or do not see the value in school
PROBLEM SOLVING
Data-Based Problem-Solving

• The use of a structured, process to improve outcomes for ALL students.

• Four-step problem-solving approach:
  1. Defining the goals and objectives to be attained
  2. Identifying possible reasons why the desired goals are not being attained
  3. Developing a plan for and implementing evidence-based strategies to attain the goals
  4. Evaluating the effectiveness of the plan
Problem Solving Chronic Absenteeism

Missing 10% or more of instructional days: (who & how many)

Use attendance data/EWS to monitor effectiveness

Interviews, Surveys, RCAs: (aggregate & individual)

Intervention based on reasons for absences
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION
### Problem Identification Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determine the Goal</th>
<th>Identify Scope and Magnitude</th>
<th>Identify Comparable Subpopulations</th>
<th>Determine the Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Percentage of students with (5%) 9 or fewer absences  
• Percentage with (10%) 18 or more absences | • Percentage and number of students with 9 or fewer absences  
• Percentage and number of students overall missing 10% or more of school  
• Currently  
• Historically | • State  
• District  
• Level  
• Grade level  
• Gender  
• Race/Ethnicity  
• SWD  
• ELL  
• Economically Disadvantaged | • Determine gap between goal and current performance  
• Overall  
• Subgroup |
Guiding Questions

• Use guiding questions to identify patterns and priorities

What is the prevalence of students missing 10% or more days?

What is the prevalence of students with 95% or better attendance?

Where is chronic absenteeism occurring?
   Feeder pattern, region, school, grade-level, class

Who is most likely to be chronically absent?
   Subgroups: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, SWD, ED, ELL

Why are they chronically absent?
MCSD Chronic Absenteeism Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Count</th>
<th>Absenteeism Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/2016</td>
<td>1,233 Students</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/2017</td>
<td>935 Students</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Define the Problem/Goal: MCSD

Goal

- All MCSD schools will achieve an Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rate of 97% or greater in the 2017-2018 school year.
- Reduce Chronic Absenteeism (C.A.) rates to 5% or less district wide.
- At least 85% of a school’s population, will attend 95% of the school days during the 2017-18 school year. (9 or fewer absences)

Current Performance

- ADA: 94.20% - 96.47% in 2016-17
- 95% Attendance: 71% of the students attend school 95% or greater

Comparison Group

- State: 10.10% chronic absenteeism in 2015-2016

GAP

- ADA: 2.8-.53 percentage points
- Chronic Absenteeism: 5.8 percentage points
- 95% Attendance: 14 percentage points
Reflection

• To what extent does MCSD’s goal apply to your setting?

• What questions do you have about defining the problem?
  • Establishing goals
  • Determining current performance
  • Comparison group
  • Gap analysis
PROBLEM ANALYSIS
Problem Analysis

• In order to solve the problem, you have to first understand why it is occurring
  – Interviews*
  – Focus Groups
  – Surveys
    • Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA’s)

“Every problem has in it the seeds of it’s own solution” - Norman Vincent Peale
Problem Analysis Steps

1. Generate Evidence-Based Hypotheses
   (e.g. reasons or root causes for absences)

2. Confirm/Reject Hypotheses
   - Collect data to determine the reasons for absences:
     - Surveys
     - Self-Assessments
     - Interviews
     - Policy/practice analysis
High Probability Root Causes

Student-Based Reasons for Absences
- Barriers (Can’t)
- Aversions (Won’t)
- Disengagement (Don’t)
- Lack of Awareness
- Myths

District/School Policy & Practice-Based Reasons for Absences
- Culture of attendance
  - Expectations
  - Recognitions
- Tardy policies
- Discipline practices related to attendance
  - Suspension
  - Fines
- Culture & climate
- Course performance
  - Make-up work policies
  - Credit refusal
# Tools to Unpack Chronic Absenteeism: RCA & RCA-P

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA)</th>
<th>Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism-Parent (RCA-P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Self-report survey for chronically absent 6\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} students</td>
<td>• Self-report survey for parents* of chronically absent PreK-12 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Completed online</td>
<td>– Completed online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measures the reasons for chronic absenteeism</td>
<td>• Measures reasons for chronic absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Parent &amp; student focused items</td>
<td>– Parent &amp; student focused items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Designed for use:</td>
<td>• Designed for use:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Aggregate or individual level</td>
<td>– Aggregate or individual level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– To inform data-based problem solving and intervention development</td>
<td>– To inform data-based problem solving and intervention development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why These Instruments?

• To develop interventions aimed at reducing absences:
  – Accurate understanding of why students are not coming to school
  – Need comprehensive and efficient tools
    • PreK Parents
    • K-12 Parent
    • 6th-12th Students
Content Domains

**Barriers**
- Health
- Transportation
- Housing/ Material Instability
- Adult Responsibilities
- Suspensions
- Court/DJJ

**Aversions**
- Bullying/ Harassment
- Personal Stress
- School Stress
- School Climate
- Safety/Conflict

**Disengagement**
- Value of School
## Scoring Rubric

For each survey item, students or parents rate the item as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Never**: This is *never* a reason you/your student have/has missed school.
- **Rarely**: This is *not very often* a reason you/your student have/has missed school.
- **Sometimes**: This is a reason you/your student have/has missed school *more than 3 times*.
- **Usually**: This is *often* the reason you/your student have/has missed school.
Student/Parent Response Data

Quantitative Responses
• Within each category (Heath Related, etc.), the percentage of students/parents who endorsed items as “Sometimes” or “Usually” was totaled:
  – Overall
  – By State
  – By District
  – By School

Qualitative Responses
• For each open-ended item, student/parent responses were coded into themes and the instances of a theme were totaled
RCA & RCA-P Samples

**RCA Sample**
- 8 states
- 21 districts
- 91 schools
- 5,790 students

**RCA-P Sample**
- 2 states
- 5 Grantees & 1 district
- 67 schools
- 1,124 Parents
## Reasons by Category: Student and Parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Student Percentage</th>
<th>Parent Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Related</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Activity Outside of School</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Responsibility</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stress</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of School</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Stress</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Conflict</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing/Material Instability</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal System Involvement</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accurately Recalled/Reported Absences

- Students: 43.0%
- Parents: 36.9%

MESSAGING
Perceptions of Absences: Compared to Peers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Students**: 23.9% fewer, 31.3% same, 44.8% more.
- **Parents**: 15.3% fewer, 40.9% same, 43.8% more.

The bar chart shows the percentage of responses from students and parents regarding the perception of absences compared to their peers.
Perception of Typical Numbers of Absences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Absences Per Year</th>
<th>Parent Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 days</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 days</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 days</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 days</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ days</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69% of parents perceived average absence rates to be consistent with “good” attendance.

GOOD NEWS!
Parent Level of Concern Related to Absences

BAD NEWS!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
<th>Not Concerned</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Concern</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BAD NEWS!
# Supports to Improve Attendance - Students 4525 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supports</th>
<th>Instances Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Difficulty/ Strictness (Less homework, more fair rules, lenient dress code)</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness Prevention</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging Environment (More interesting/ fun, more hands-on)</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Climate/Relationships (Nicer peers/adults, less drama, less bullying)</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School schedule (Later start time, shorter classes, more time to pass between classes)</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support (Tutoring, better teachers, help from teachers)</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure (I don’t know, not sure)</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Supports to Improve Attendance - Parents

### 457 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supports</th>
<th>Instances Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness Prevention</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong> (Rides, not having to walk, more reliable transportation in bad weather)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent/Family Support</strong> (Parent persistence in bringing child to school, parent utilizing after-school hours for children’s medical appointments, etc)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School schedule</strong> (Provide before- or after- school care, start school later)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure (I don’t know, not sure)</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MCSD EXAMPLE
MCSD Reasons for Absence Summary

Results

Overall Summary

The data provided are based on 280 student middle and high school student responses. The table below provides an overview of the percentage of all students who responded that rated items in each category as “sometimes” or “usually” the reason(s) they missed school. Health Related reasons were the most commonly reported reasons, followed by Transportation, Personal Stress, and Value of School. On the following pages more detailed information is provided for each of the categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stress</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Conflict</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Stress</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Responsibility</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Related</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing/Material Instability</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal System Involvement</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Activity Outside of School</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of School</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MCSD Student Perception of Absences

Perceptions of Absences

In order to be eligible to participate in the survey, students had to have missed 18 or more (10%) days of school during the 2015/2016 school year. The Absences Last Year table provides a summary of student perceptions of the number of school days they missed during the 2015/2016 school year. A little less than half (46.4%) of students accurately recalled and/or reported absences consistent with chronic absenteeism. This may suggest an intervention opportunity to increase student awareness of absences and implications associated with chronic absenteeism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Number of Absences Last Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 days</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 days</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 days</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 days</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ days</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MCSD Student Perceptions of Absences Compared to Others

Absences Compared to Others

In an attempt to better understand student perceptions about the frequency of their absences, students were asked to report if they perceived they had the same, fewer or greater number of absences relative to other students. A little less than one-half of students (45%) perceived their absence rate to be the same as or less than peers. This rate may indicate a skewed perception of what is considered typical absence rates and indicate an intervention opportunity for correcting misconceptions and building awareness of good attendance patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absence Rate Compared to Peers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence Rate Less than Peers</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence Rate the Same as Peers</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence Rate More than peers</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MCSD Student Ideas for Attendance Supports

**Supports**

Students were asked to provide ideas for what they thought would help them attend school more regularly. The top reported support to improve attendance was Illness Prevention, closely followed by School Schedule (Later start time, shorter classes, more time to pass between classes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5 Responses</th>
<th>Instances Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness Prevention</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Schedule (Later start time, shorter classes, more time to pass between classes)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Difficulty/ Strictness (Less homework, more fair rules, lenient dress code)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Climate/Relationships (Nicer peers/adults, less drama, less bullying)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support (Tutoring, better teachers, help from teachers)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection

• What questions do you have about analyzing the problem?
  – Determining root causes
    • Tools/methods
INTERVENTION DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION
Collaboratively developed internal and external stakeholders/partners

Matched to root cause

Matched to the scope of the problem

Matched to the intensity of the problem

Planned explicitly What, who, when, where

Monitored for effectiveness

Intervention Design and Implementation
Develop Action Plans

• Establish goal
  – E.g. Students will improve attendance to XX% by the end of school year
  – E.g. Students will reduce chronic absenteeism by X% or to X% by _____________
  – E.g. Students will reduce number of absences to X per quarter or X per semester/year

• Determine strategies based on identified reasons. Specify:
  – What will be done,
  – When will it happen
  – Who will be doing the “what”
  – How often will the “what” happen
  – How long will the “what” happen

• Determine any necessary resources
  – Materials, PD, Personnel

• Determine methods to check implementation
  – What are the “look fors” to know if the “what” is happening as intended

• Monitor progress
  – How often will you monitor
  – How will you know if it is working
MCSD EXAMPLE
MCSD: Intervention Design and Implementation

**District Action Plan**
- Build capacity of all administrators related to attendance/chronic absenteeism
- Establish district-wide attendance/chronic absenteeism goal
- Establish consistent messaging/awareness procedures for students and parents
- Use attendance/chronic absenteeism data as accountability metric
- Build community partnerships to support attendance

**School Action Plans**
- Establish teams to monitor and address attendance
- Implement messaging/awareness procedures
- Develop interventions matched to student needs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Action Step</th>
<th>Assigned to:</th>
<th>Starting Date:</th>
<th>Due Date:</th>
<th>Rationale/Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish a District Attendance Team to determine what attendance and absenteeism elements will be tracked and develop <strong>draft goals</strong>.</td>
<td>Director of Alternative Education and District Attendance Team Members</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>May, 2017 – June 2017</td>
<td>Establishing district and school attendance goals and sharing with all stakeholders (staff, students, families, community partners) is a best practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>District and School leadership teams will <strong>examine the data provided in the Chronic Absenteeism (RCA) Report Monroe</strong> to identify common student barriers at both the school and district levels.</td>
<td>Executive Leadership Team, Director of Alternative Education and Principals</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>May, 2017 – June 2017</td>
<td>Using the data provided in the report to <strong>identify common student barriers</strong> is a first step towards improving attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism in your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>District and School leadership teams will <strong>identify and develop interventions to address student needs</strong> based on the Chronic Absenteeism (RCA) Report Monroe and what resources are currently available in schools and the district.</td>
<td>Executive Leadership Team, Director of Alternative Education and Principals, school leadership teams</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>May, 2017 – August 2017</td>
<td>Accurately <strong>matching interventions to student need</strong> is essential to efficiently utilize resources and improve outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MCSD implemented social-emotional curriculum district wide Second Step (K-8) and Project Wisdom (9-12) starting in 2014. All district schools provide this curriculum to all students.</td>
<td>DAPPS committee</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Implement a social-emotional curriculum and supports district and school-wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Share the results of the Needs Assessment conducted in March on <strong>attendance interventions</strong> with district and school leaders and district attendance team.</td>
<td>Director of Alternative Education, Principals, and District Attendance Team</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>Using the data from the NA helps both the district and schools <strong>identify what attendance interventions currently exist to support student needs</strong>. Also, what attendance interventions do not exist at district schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Action Step</td>
<td>Assigned to:</td>
<td>Starting Date:</td>
<td>Due Date:</td>
<td>Status/Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Announce that September is School Attendance Awareness Month. “Be There Attendance Matters!” will be our theme which ties directly with our MCSD “iBelieve” behavior expectations.</td>
<td>School Board, Superintendent, and the Director of Alternative Education</td>
<td>Sept. 2017</td>
<td>Sept. 2017</td>
<td>Based on the MCSD RCA survey results engaging in frequent communication regarding attendance in multiple ways to all stakeholders (school marquees, posters, letters, banners, announcements, etc. was recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public Service Announcements will be sent via radio, Connect Ed calls, parent portal, and letters to all stakeholders <strong>creating an awareness of the importance of school attendance</strong> and implications associated with chronic absenteeism. This will be done in multiple languages.</td>
<td>Superintendent, PIO, Director of Alternative Education, and Principals</td>
<td>Sept. 1, 2017</td>
<td>Sept. 1, 2017</td>
<td>Based on the MCSD RCA survey results engaging in frequent communication regarding attendance in multiple ways to all stakeholders (school marquees, posters, letters, banners, announcements, etc. was recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ensure schools have <strong>established EWS attendance teams</strong> (attendance assistant, counselor, administrator, MTSS personnel, and teachers) to <strong>monitor attendance daily and period by period attendance.</strong> Team sheets will be sent to schools for Principals or designee to complete.</td>
<td>Director of Alternative Education, Principals and Attendance Team Leader</td>
<td>Sept. 2017</td>
<td>Sept. 15, 2017</td>
<td>A critical element in reducing both absenteeism and chronic absenteeism is establishing school and district level EWS teams to monitor attendance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection

• Reactions to MCSD action plans?
  – Buy-in
  – Feasibility

• What questions do you have about developing intervention/action plans?
RESPONSE TO
INSTRUCTION/INTERVENTION
Monitoring for Intervention Effectiveness

Monitoring of aggregate, groups and individuals is essential to determine intervention effectiveness*:

**Individual/group level**
- Reduction in number of absences
- Reduction in severity of absences
  - Fewer days absent at a time
- Presence of protective factors
  - Grades, GPA, credits, affiliations, etc.

**School/district level**
- Numbers and percentage of chronically absent students
  - Overall
  - Feeder pattern
  - Grade level
  - Sub-group
  - Intervention grouping
- Changes from time period to time period in numbers and percentage of chronically absent
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Annually

*Assuming fidelity of intervention implementation
Data Monitoring

Number Chronically Absent
For 2016/17 & 2017/18 School Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>16/17</th>
<th>17/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection

• What reaction do you have to the data?
• What hypotheses do you have (i.e. what questions would you like answered)?
• What might be next steps?
Questions
RESOURCES
Tools for Self-Reflection

School-Level


District-Level

Tools for Analyzing Your Data


Tools for Analyzing Your Data

RCA Survey
http://www.floridartii.usf.edu/resources/topic/chronic_absenteeism/index.html

RCA Report

Reasons for Chronic Absenteeism (RCA)

Chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days per school year, has significant impact on student outcomes. It is associated with decreased reading levels, overall academic performance, on-time graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment as well as increased dropout rates. Fortunately, chronic absenteeism rates are attainable at the student and school level when interventions are appropriately targeted and matched to student needs.

In order to efficiently and effectively match interventions to student needs, there is a need for reliable and valid data that provides sufficient information to understand the various challenges students experience. The reasons for chronic absenteeism (RCA) survey was developed and underwent extensive validation processes including an expert panel review, student reviews, and a national validation study to ensure the technical adequacy of the items and instrument.

The RCA is designed for secondary students (6th-12th grade) who have missed 10% or more instructional days. The survey is comprised of 16 demographic and perception of absentee reasons: 16 items measuring multiple reasons for absences, and three open-ended questions asking about other reasons for missing school, the reasons they do come to school, and what would help them come to school more often. Students respond to each of the items that ask why they missed school using a 5-point scale with response options of never, rarely, sometimes, or usually. Students may take the survey via an online survey platform (e.g., SurveyMonkey®, Qualtrics®, etc.) or hardcopy. Survey administration takes approximately 20 minutes and multiple students may take the survey at one time. Students may be provided the explanation that they are taking the survey so schools can better understand why students miss school. Please allow students privacy to independently answer questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the name of your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old are you? 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your gender? (male, female, other; for example transitioning, transgendered, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What grade are you in? 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you get free or reduced price lunch? (yes/no)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your mother’s level of education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools for Messaging: Attendance Works & Nudge Letters


‘Nudge’ letter example

Once every quarter, Tacoma Public Schools mails parents a copy of their children’s total absences compared with other students. This is one example of a “nudge” letter that school officials hope will improve attendance.

Dear Parent/Guardian of [name]:

In Tacoma Public Schools we strive to improve the attendance of our students. Each minute of the school day provides opportunities for learning, and it’s noticeable when students miss time.

[Name] has missed 13 days — or 11% of school this year, more than the typical student at our school or in the district for the same grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Absent from School as of February 21st, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typical student in our school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are worried that if [name] continues to miss school days, it will be difficult to stay on track in the classroom.

Source: Tacoma Public Schools
Strategies to Support Students- By Reason

**Health**
- Mobile medical/dental
- Collaboration with health department
- School nurses
  - Flu shots
  - Hand-washing
  - Health support plans
- Collaboration with local physicians/dentists
- Parent and student education
- Self Assessments

**Transportation**
- Sweeper buses
- Bus passes
- Car pools
  - If miss bus or car problems
- Umbrellas/rain/cold weather gear
- Partnerships with community supports (Housing Authority, Faith-Based Partners)
- Attendance plans/contracts
Strategies to Support Students - By Reason

Affective/Personal Stress

- Mentors
  - Check & Connect

- Counseling/support groups - Anxiety
  - Coping Cat (ages 7-13)
  - CAT Project (ages 14-17)

- Counseling/support groups - Depression
  - [https://research.kpchr.org/Research/Research-Areas/Mental-Health/Youth-Depression-Programs#Downloads](https://research.kpchr.org/Research/Research-Areas/Mental-Health/Youth-Depression-Programs#Downloads)

- Partnership with community mental health providers

School Climate/School Stress

- Strong PBIS implementation
  - [https://casel.org/guide/](https://casel.org/guide/)

- Social-emotional curriculum

- Anti-bullying curriculums
- Restorative justice

- Club/Sport participation
- Tutoring/academic interventions

Partnership with community mental health providers
Preferred Activity Outside of School: On-Time Wake Up

• Automated/Robo-calls
• Remind App
• Alarm on cell phone/alarm clocks
• Buddy calls
• Bed-time routines/curfew

Value of School

• Family engagement and education around attendance
• Engaging instructional practices
  — ESR’s
Strategies to Support Students- By Reason

**Housing/Material Instability**
- Laundromat vouchers/cards
- Washer/dryers at school
- Clothes closet
- Extra materials
- Connection with outside agencies
  - Boys and Girls Club
  - Food Pantries
  - Communities in Schools
    - [http://www.cisfl.org/](http://www.cisfl.org/)

**Adult Responsibilities**
- Connection with outside agencies
- Family support plans
- District/school child care facilities
- Nurse Family Partnership
  - [http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/locations/Florida/find-a-local-agency](http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/locations/Florida/find-a-local-agency)
Presentation Materials

http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/presentations/index.html

RCA Survey & RCA(s) Reports

• http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/topic/chronic_absenteeism/index.html
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• Jose Castillo
  – jmcastil@usf.edu

• Mike Henriquez
  – Mike.Henriquez@keysschools.com

Facebook: flpsrti
Twitter: @flpsrti
Additional Readings & Resources

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


California Ad Council: https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit


National Student Success Center: http://www.nationalstudentsuccesscenter.org/