



# 2021 School Counselors' Virtual Conference

## ATTENDANCE SUCCESS ACT IMPLEMENTING THE TIERS OF SUPPORT

Session Time: 11:00 a.m.

**JESSICA HARPER**



# Jessica Harper, MSW



**Jessica Harper** has over 24 years of experience as a social worker serving children and families in New Mexico in the areas of child welfare, early childhood home visitation, Medicaid, school behavioral health, youth engagement, teen dating violence, special education and supporting young parents and their families. She currently works with the New Mexico Public Education Department as the project director for New Mexico Pregnancy Assistance Fund grant, focused on increasing support, resources and service access for expectant and parenting youth. She also serves as a state attendance coordinator and provides schools with information and resources related to implementation of the Attendance for Success Act.

# SESSION AGENDA

- Overview of the New Mexico Attendance for Success Act and requirements for districts and schools
- Role of district and school attendance teams
- Root causes of absenteeism and attendance barriers
- Available supports and prevention/intervention strategies for each of the four tiers to address chronic absenteeism
- Sample tier-level strategies from schools

# TRUANCY VS. CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

## Truancy

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Doesn't identify students at risk of academic failure

VS.

## Chronic Absenteeism

- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused, suspension
- Emphasizes missed instructional days
- Focuses on prevention

# Attendance for Success Act

Provides a process for prevention of absences, early intervention, specialized supports, and CYFD referrals for students absent, chronically absent, and excessively absent

1

**Accurate daily attendance for every instructional class or school program**

3

**Reporting for all in-person and remote learning days**

2

**Updated attendance policies that address remote learning**

4

**School attendance policies should address inequities in remote learning**



# Attendance for Success Act

## Attendance for Remote Learning

1

Each district determines what constitutes daily attendance  
Example: 1-4 learning contacts per day, etc), shares that with families and reports attendance as required

2

Daily attendance is recorded and reviewed by the attendance team

3

Tiered interventions, appropriate for remote learning, are provided to address chronic absenteeism

# 2020-2021 Attendance Policies

Focus on	Focus on prevention and intervention
Establish	Establish an early warning system for proactive response
Provide	Provide a process for early identification of chronically absent and excessively absent
Address	Address remote and hybrid learning
Develop	Develop attendance success plans
Use	Use data to guide decision making
Form	Form school-based attendance teams

# Attendance Success Plans

## District Attendance Plans

All school districts are required to have a Attendance Success Plan

## School Attendance Plans

Schools with 5% or greater of students with a chronic absence rate (10% or more absences) from the prior year (2019-2020)

## School Subpopulations

Schools with 5% or greater of a student subgroup with a chronic absence rate from the prior year (2019-2020)





# Key Attendance Terms



1

**Absent**-Not in attendance for a class or school day for any reason, whether excused or not; provided that absence does not apply to participation in interscholastic extracurricular activities (includes suspensions)

2

**Overall Absence Rate**-Percentage of all student absences out of total number of possible days

3

**Chronic Absence Rate:** Percentage of students, in aggregate and disaggregated by subgroups in a public school and school district who have been enrolled for at least 10 days and who have missed ten percent or more of school days since beginning of school year  
Includes data from all snapshots for a school year.

# Attendance Success Act

## Implementation



2020-2021 enrollment data and chronic absence data for each district and school for two preceding school years was auto-populated in plans from STARS data

Districts and schools used 2019-2020 chronic absence data to establish 2020-2021 attendance improvement targets for schools and subpopulations with chronic absence rates of ten percent or greater

Schools and districts are required to classify each student into one of four attendance intervention tiers based on the percentage of class period and school day absences

# District and School Attendance Teams

Group of school-based administrators, teachers, staff and other school personnel and community members who collaborate to implement an attendance improvement plan

May be formed in whole or in part from preexisting groups or teams within school or for sole purpose of improving school attendance

Responsible for school attendance strategy and improving overall attendance

Principal leadership is important for establishing attendance as an important priority

Meets regularly to coordinate efforts to reduce chronic absence

Monitors overall attendance and chronic absence for individual students to ensure that there are adequate resources

[Attendanceworks.org](http://Attendanceworks.org)

# Root Causes Chronic and Excessive Absenteeism

Poor grades, bullying, illness, mental or physical health issues, transportation, or housing or food issues

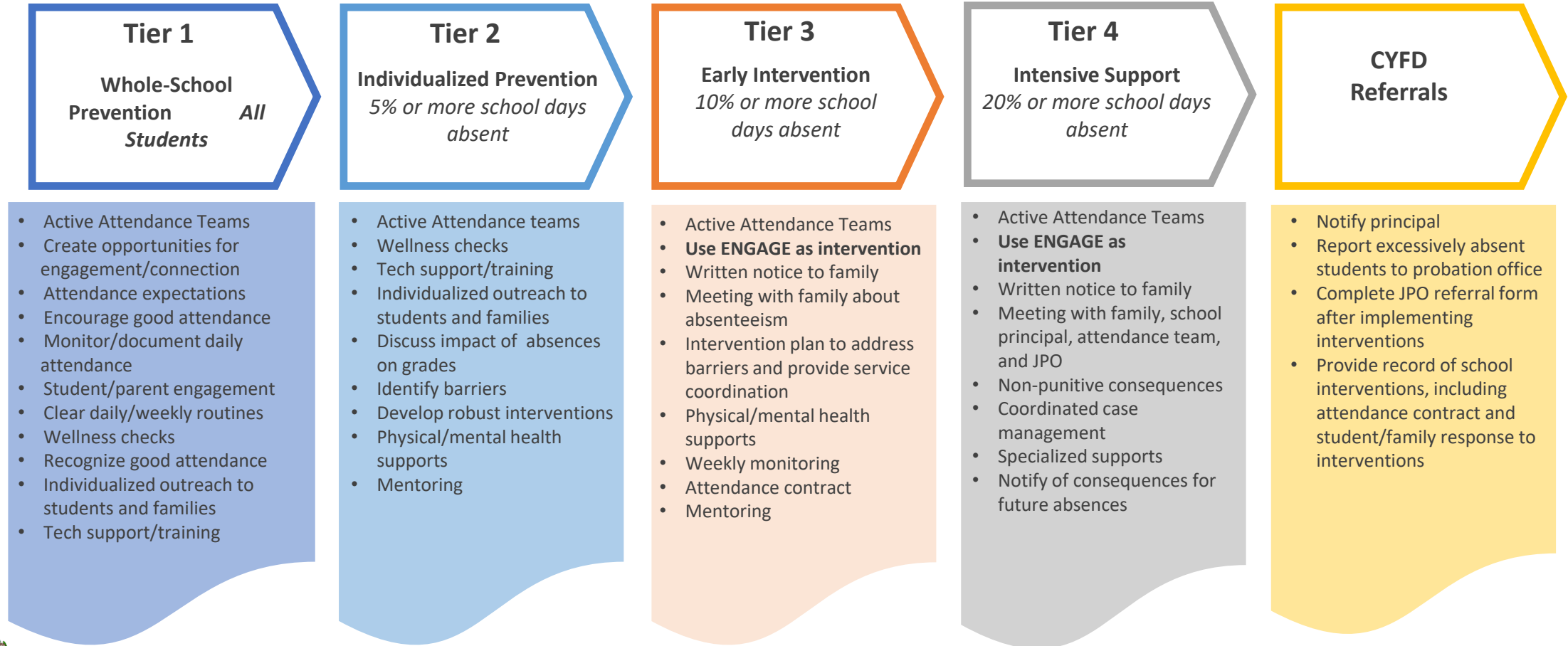
- Increased challenges with mental health issues (e.g., anxiety and depression)
- Fears associated with reopening schools and COVID-19 transmission

- Unsafe situations at home: abuse, neglect, domestic violence, etc)
- Loss of resources and access to services

- Disruption of normal routines, relationships, structures and predictability
- Lack of internet connectivity

# Attendance Success Plan

## Tiers of Support





# Strategies for Schools

Engage students  
and parents

Recognize good  
and improved  
attendance

Monitor  
attendance data  
regularly

Provide early  
individualized  
outreach

Develop  
programmatic  
response to  
barriers

[Attendance works.org](https://attendanceworks.org)  
strategies for school

# Whole School Prevention Strategy

Examples of universal supports provided to all students



Engagement of students and  
parents



Parental notifications of  
student absences through  
robocalls



Whole school attendance  
campaigns



Positive Behavioral  
Interventions and Supports



Class attendance  
competitions and incentives



Social contracts

# Whole School Prevention Strategies

## Atrisco Heritage Academy and Rio Grande HS-Albuquerque Public Schools

### Engage students and parents

- **Online open house** and **online grade level meetings** to inform how attendance and schoolwork lead to graduation and available resources
- **9<sup>th</sup> grade orientation videos** to share information and build enthusiasm/positive climate for new students
- **Create visuals** (bulletin boards, banners, posters) that reflect attendance messaging and modify during the year to sustain impact
- **Explain expectations** for attendance, and how absences can add up, in back-to-school materials and at events
- Ensure that your school has **opportunities for parental engagement** and involvement including organized parent groups, learning at home, and volunteer opportunities
- Call when students miss school to express concern

### Recognize Good Attendance

- Create friendly **competition among classrooms** offering raffles, parties and public recognition for good and improved attendance.
- **Celebrate individual progress** through weekly, monthly and periodic recognition using bulletin boards, certificates, and verbal or written acknowledgement
- **Recognize students and parents** at special assemblies

# Whole School Prevention Strategies

## Atrisco Heritage Academy and Rio Grande HS-Albuquerque Public Schools

<b>Monitor attendance regularly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School team regularly <b>reviews attendance data for all students</b> to identify trends and tiers of needed support</li> <li>• Establish a <b>school plan</b> for reducing chronic absence based on analysis of strengths and challenges around school climate and attendance practice</li> <li>• Use qualitative and quantitative data to identify common barriers to attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Early individualized outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Virtual home visits</b> with every student to assess wellness and explore possible needs/barriers Place <b>calls home</b> each day that a student is absent</li> <li>• Include <b>attendance on report cards</b> and in report card conferences</li> <li>• Integrate information about chronic absence into parent programs and communication</li> <li>• <b>Host a transition meeting</b> with incoming families to help them learn about new school, get to know their teachers, and set expectations about attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Develop programmatic response to barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Counselor sessions</b> during ELA classes on self-care, grief and loss associated with the pandemic, and availability of counseling resources for all students</li> <li>• <b>Advisory class lesson plans</b> on subjects affecting school engagement, including suicide awareness and bullying.</li> </ul>

# Tier 2-Individualized Prevention Strategies

## Kennedy Middle School-Albuquerque Public Schools

### Attendance Success Law requires Attendance Teams to:

- Talk to student and family and inform of student's attendance history
- Discuss impact of student absences on academic outcomes and consequences of further absences
- Identify available interventions and services for student and family
- Create individualized action plan to address chronic absences, barriers to attendance and increase school engagement

- Attendance team meets weekly to review and analyze data for attendance and Early Warning Systems factors
- Attendance team identifies students in need of phone calls home to express attendance concerns and offer support
- Attendance team identifies students in need of home visits to express attendance concerns and offer support



# Tier 2-Individualized Prevention Strategies

Moriarty Elementary		
Strategy	Performance Measure	Data Collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual parent contacts by teacher to check in on reason for absence and direct discussion about solution</li> </ul>	% of Individual student attendance increases. % of direct family contacts increases.	Monthly individual student attendance report. Parent Communication Log tallies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that internet connectivity is not causing attendance issues during remote learning days of instruction. Refer for district hot spots and troubleshoot problems as needed.</li> </ul>	% of Individual student attendance increases.	Monthly individual student attendance report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily utilization of Closegap accounts (or other approved daily check-in method) for daily check-in with individual students</li> </ul>	% of Individual student attendance increases.	Monthly individual student attendance report.

# Tier 3-Early Intervention Strategies

## Truman Middle School-Albuquerque Public Schools

### Attendance Shall:

- Notify family in writing about student's absenteeism, including date, time and place to meet with school officials to develop intervention strategies
- Establish specific intervention plan for student that includes weekly monitoring and contract for attendance
- Provide service coordination with school-based and community health and social service providers to address student and family needs
- Involve student, as appropriate, in development of attendance contract

- Attendance Team meets weekly to review chronic absence data to identify students who are missing 10% or more of school.
- Staff schedules meetings with the student/family to discuss attendance and complete a Student Attendance Success Plan (SASP) and watch video training.
- Attendance team and assigned school staff monitor the attendance of the student.
- Data is used to determine if student has met the attendance goal set in SASP or indicate that the student/family is in need of further support/intervention.

# Tier 3-Early Intervention Strategies

## Bernalillo High School and Cochiti Middle School

<i><b>Strategy</b></i>	<i><b>Performance Measure</b></i>	<i><b>Data Collection</b></i>
Attendance Team will review EWS data and strategically level the data with a Red, Green, Blue, Yellow system to provide wrap around services from initial to intensive.	Analyze EWS data to see decrease in frequent students and decrease in the triad data by a student.	Weekly analysis of EWS data by Attendance Team
Communication with parents about importance of attendance. Contract with student to set up positive rewards for engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone logs, attendance contract.</li> <li>• Student absence will decrease with daily monitoring and encouragement.</li> </ul>	Admin and team use daily attendance report to closely monitor.
Send positive notes home and positive phone calls every day the student attends and is engaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone logs and notes home.</li> <li>• Student attendance and engagement will increase each week.</li> </ul>	Admin and team will meet weekly to monitor using daily attendance reports and analyzing parent communication.

# Tier 4: Intensive Support Strategies

## Rio Grande High School-Albuquerque Public Schools

### Attendance Team shall:

- Give written notice to the family, including data, time and place of meeting with school principal and attendance team
- Establish non-punitive consequences at school level
- Identify appropriate specialized supports needed to address underlying causes of excessive absenteeism
- Inform student and family of consequences of further absences

Identify which and how many students have a history of missing 20% or more of school and or at risk due to other major challenges

Refer students/families to appropriate service agencies e.g. social services, counseling, housing, and health services and collaborate on family plan

Implement intensive support intervention plan and monitor progress

Ensure student is connected to positive supports and programs, e.g. mentoring

Ensure continued positive and regular contact with the family. Check in on agreements at appropriate intervals

Incorporate appropriate positive reinforcements into plans for supporting the student's improved attendance.

Connect students with chronic physical and mental health issues to medical providers.

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**Thank You!**  
Please call me with any  
questions.