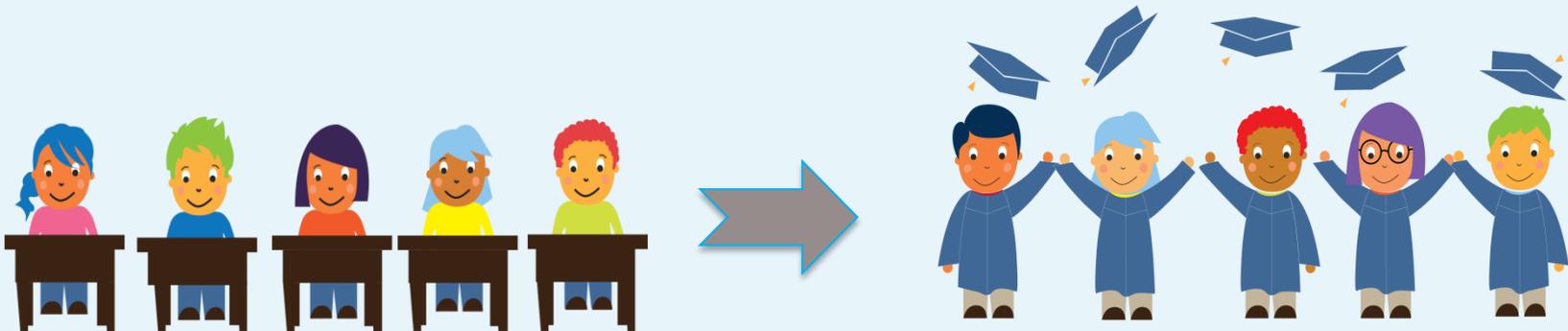


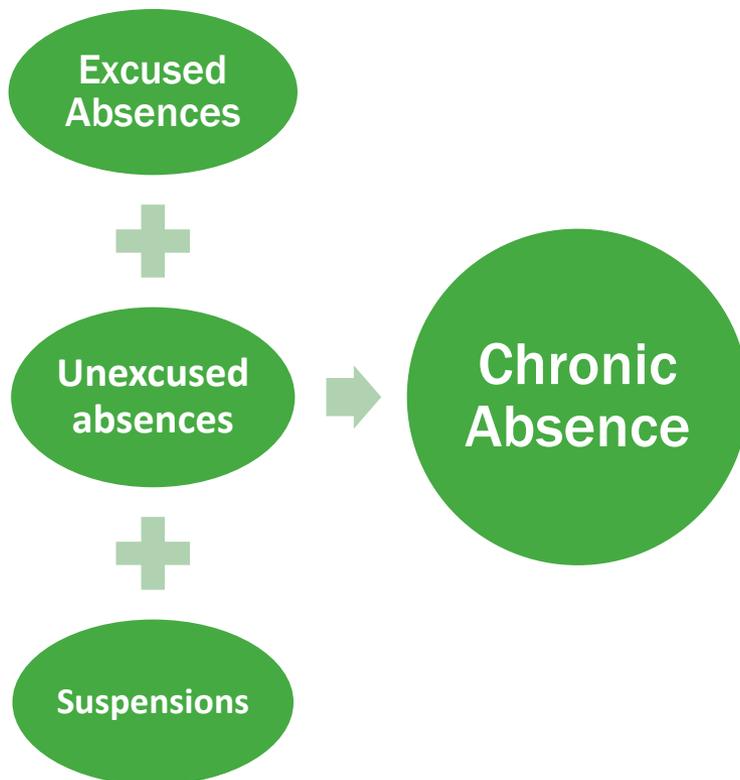
# Chronic Absence:

*A Solvable Problem*



# What is Chronic Absence?

Attendance Works recommends defining chronic absence as missing **10% or more of school for any reason.**



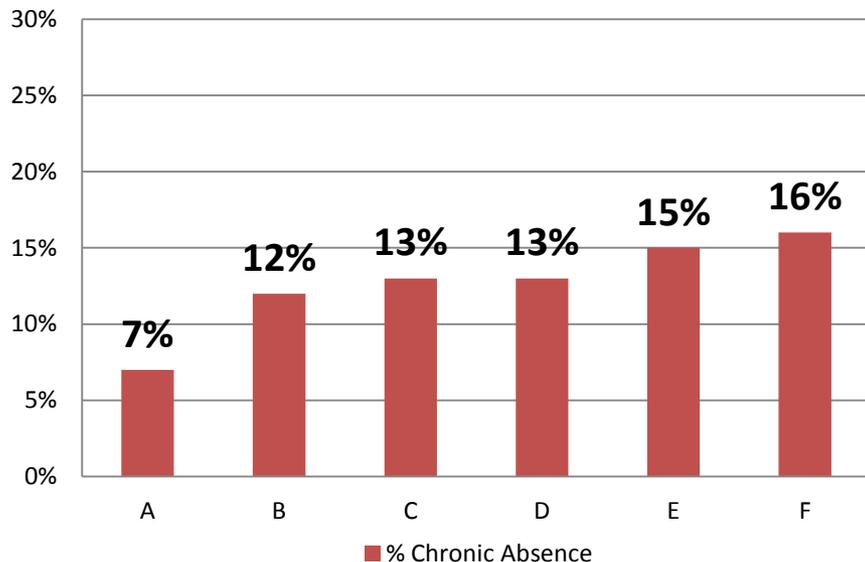
**Chronic absence is different from truancy (3 unexcused absences tardies of 30 minutes or more) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).**



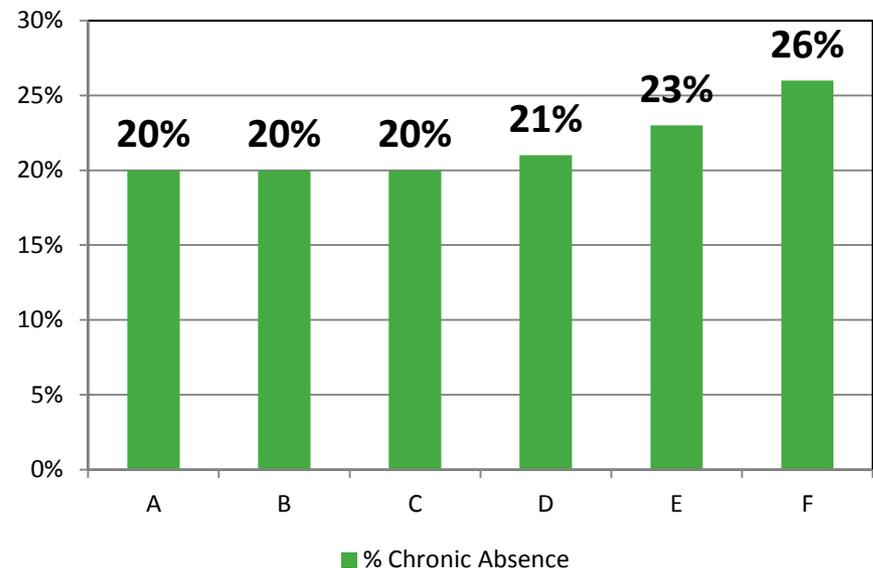
# High Levels of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

**90% and even 95%  $\neq$  A**

Chronic Absence For 6 Elementary Schools in Oakland, CA with 95% ADA in 2012



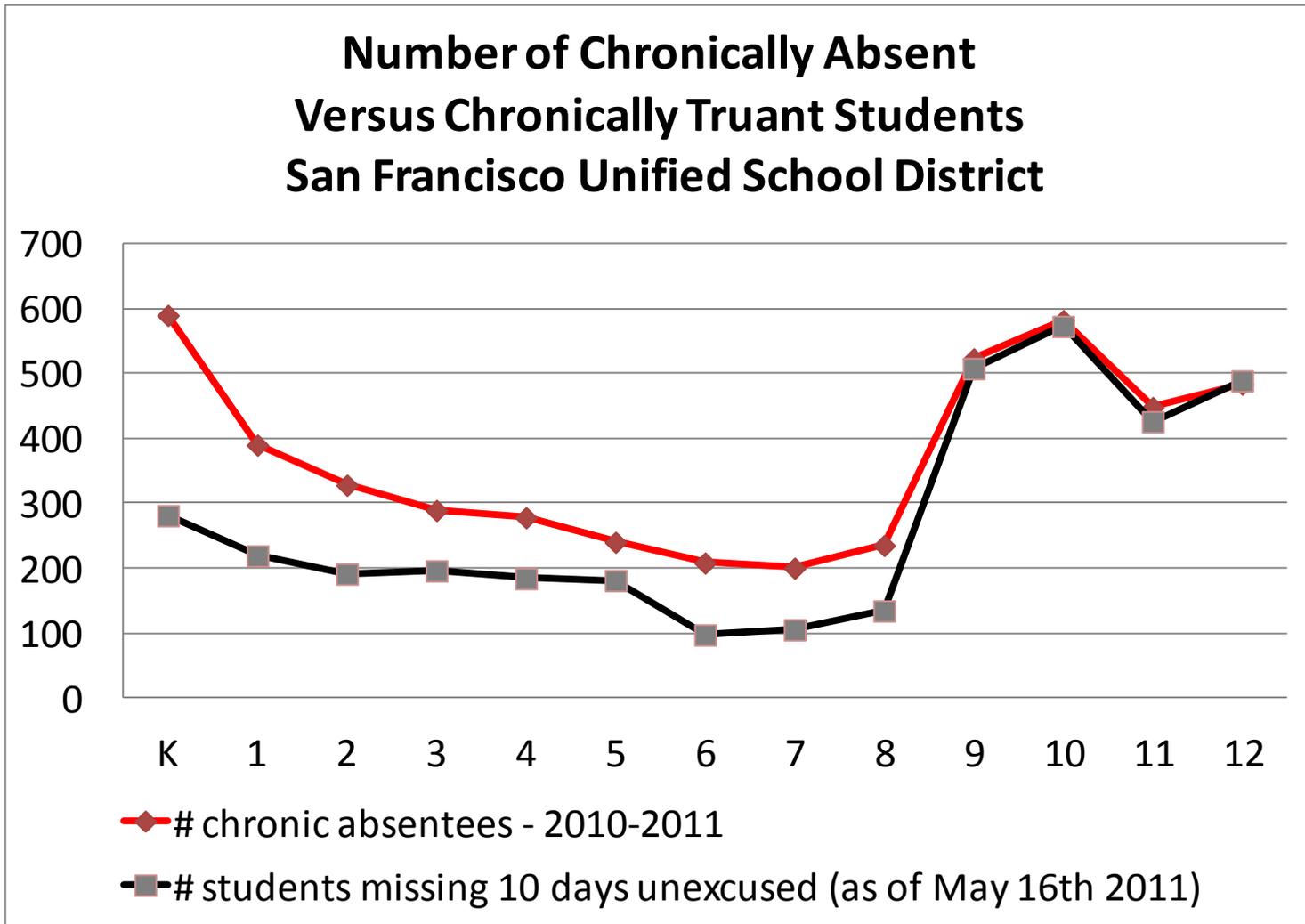
Chronic Absence for 6 Schools in New York City with 90% ADA in 2011-12



**98% ADA = little chronic absence**  
**95% ADA = don't know**  
**93% ADA = significant chronic absence**



# Truancy (unexcused absences) Can Also Mask Chronic Absence



# Improving Attendance Matters Because It Reflects:

**Exposure to language:** Starting in Pre-K, attendance equals exposure to language-rich environments especially for low-income children.

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

**On Track for Success:** Chronic absence is a proven early warning sign that a student is behind in reading by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, failing courses middle and high school, and likely to drop-out.

**College Readiness:** Attendance patterns predicts college enrollment and persistence.

**Engagement :** Attendance reflects engagement in learning.

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

*(For research, see: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/>)*



# Find Out Why Students Are Chronically Absent

## Myths

Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused

Sporadic versus consecutive absences aren't a problem

Attendance only matters in the older grades

## Barriers

Chronic disease

Lack of access to health or dental care

Poor transportation

No safe path to school

## Aversion

Child struggling academically

Lack of engaging instruction

Poor school climate and ineffective school discipline

Parents had negative school experience



# Going to School Every Day Reflects When Families Have ...

**Hope**

for a better future

+

**Faith**

that school will help you or your child succeed

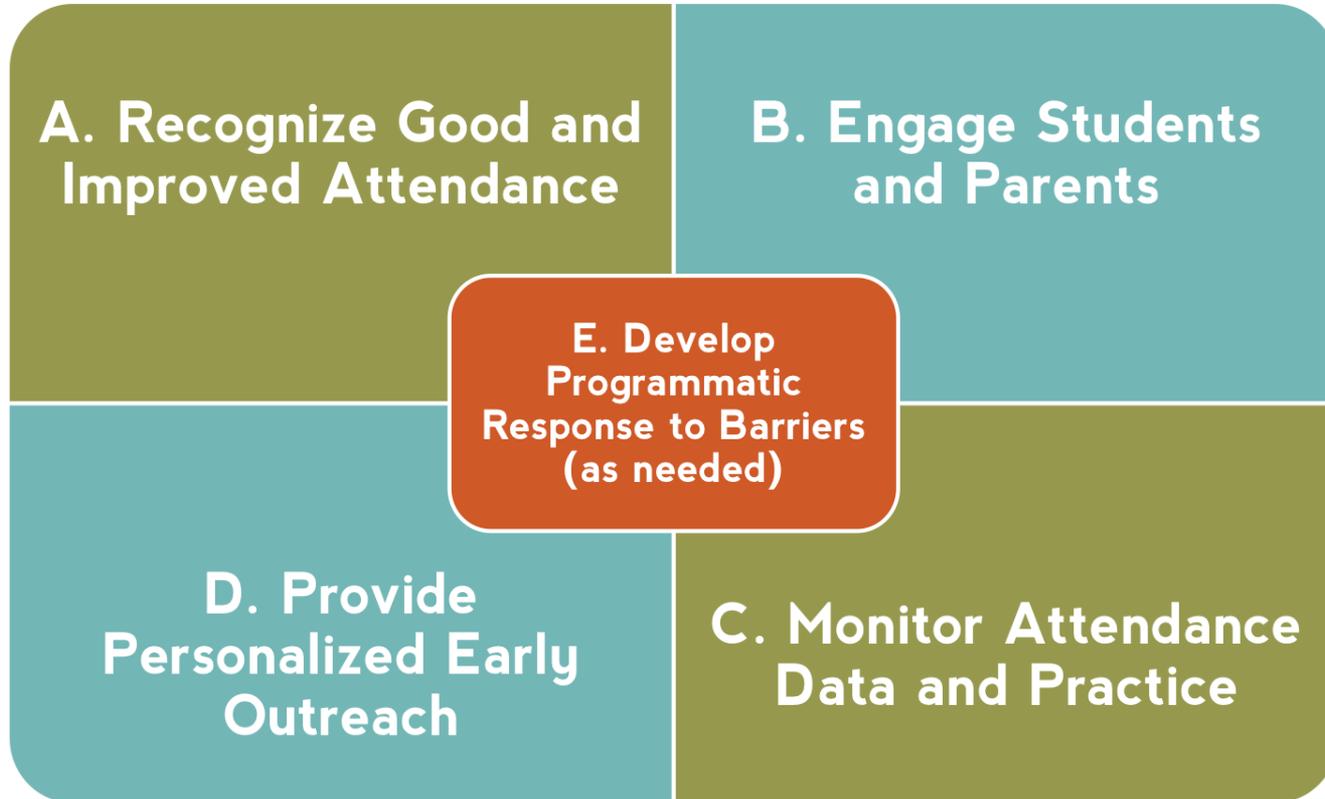
+

**Capacity**

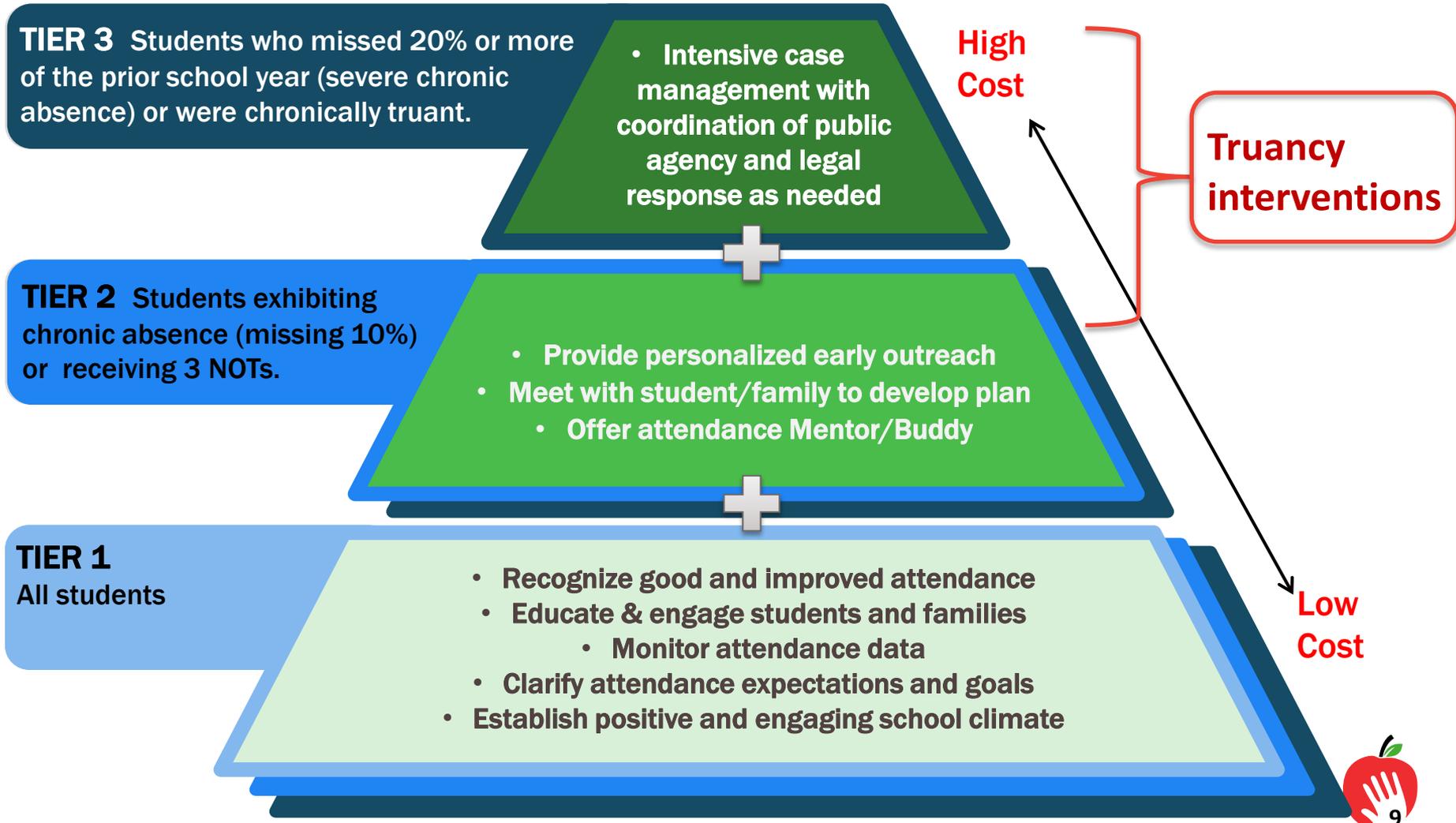
Resources, skills, knowledge needed to get to school



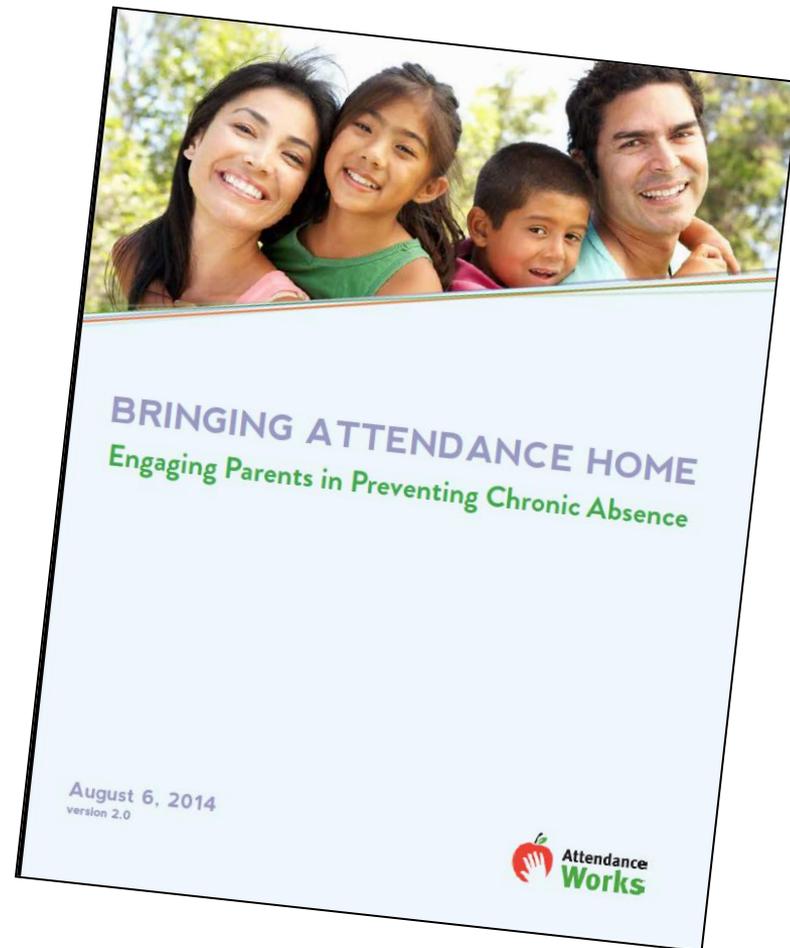
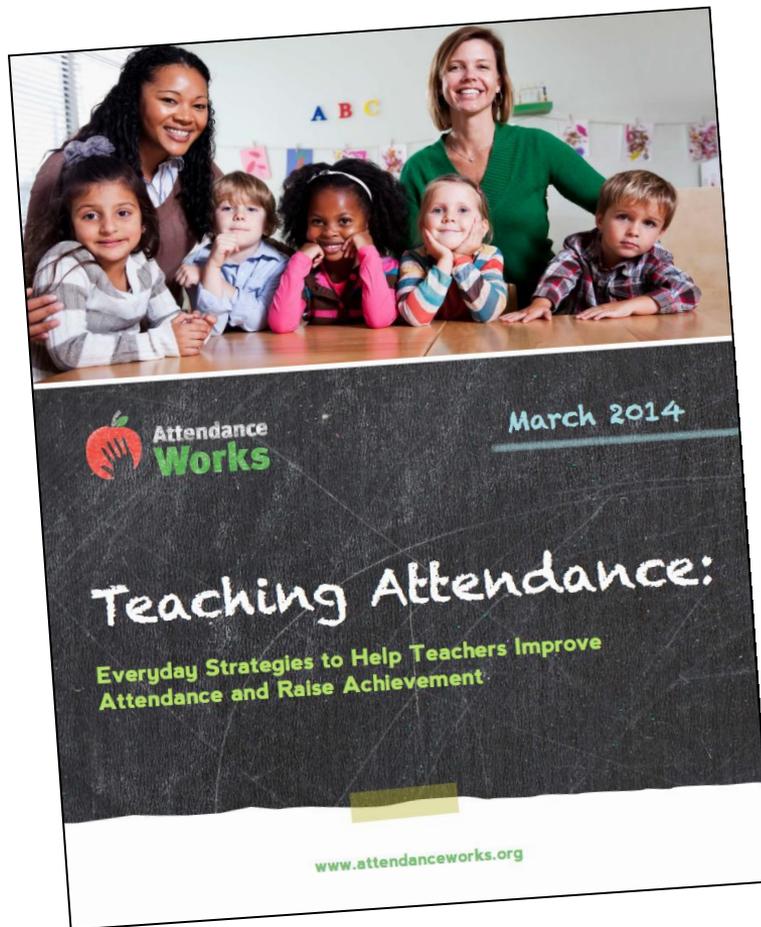
# AW Recommended Site Level Strategies



# Improving Attendance Requires a Multi-Tiered Approach

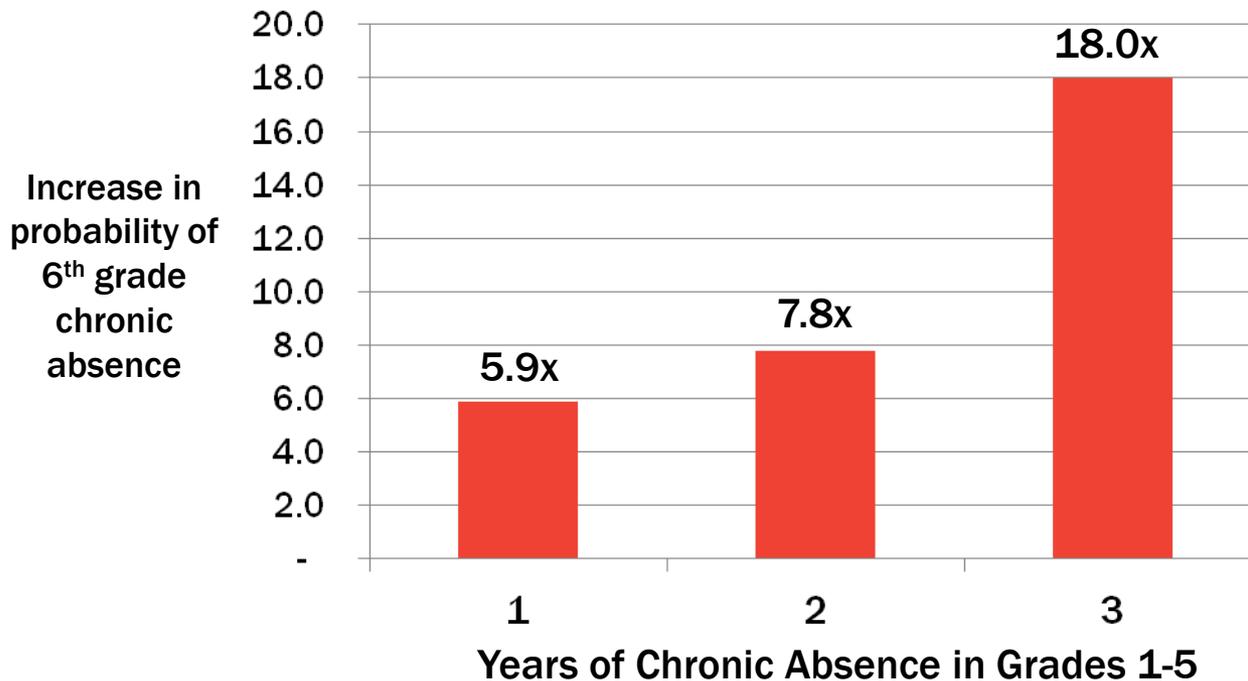


# Tier 1: Communication, Education, and Engagement



# Intervene Starting Early in a Child's School Career

Each year of chronic absence in elementary school is associated with a substantially higher probability of chronic absence in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

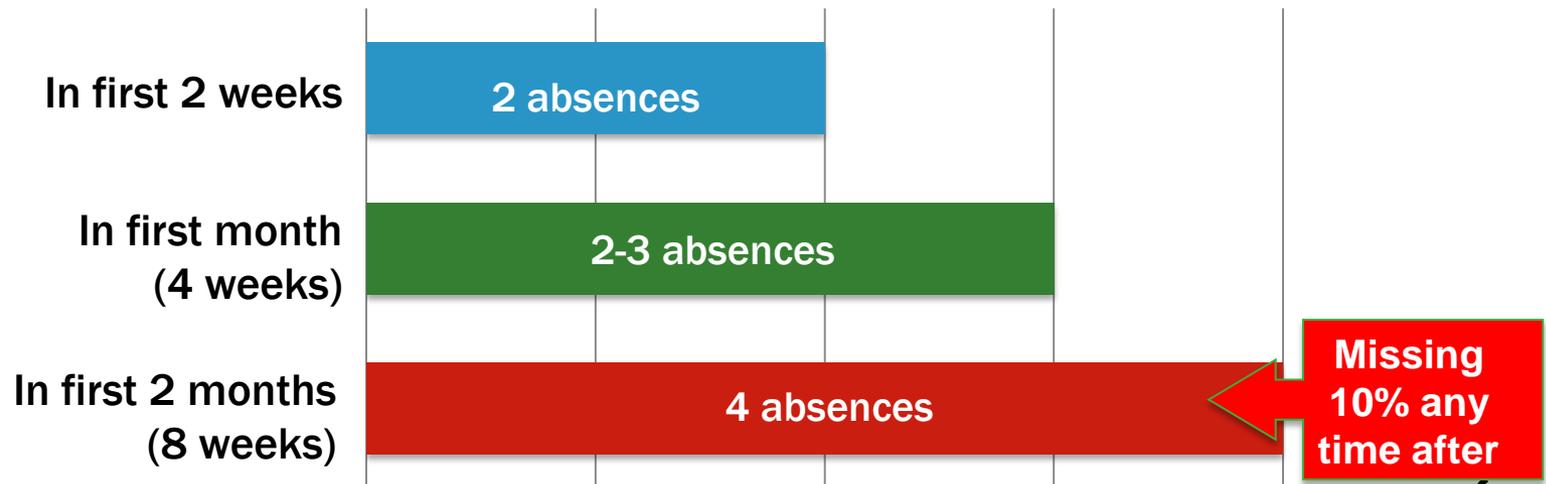


Chronic absence in 1<sup>st</sup> grade is also associated with:

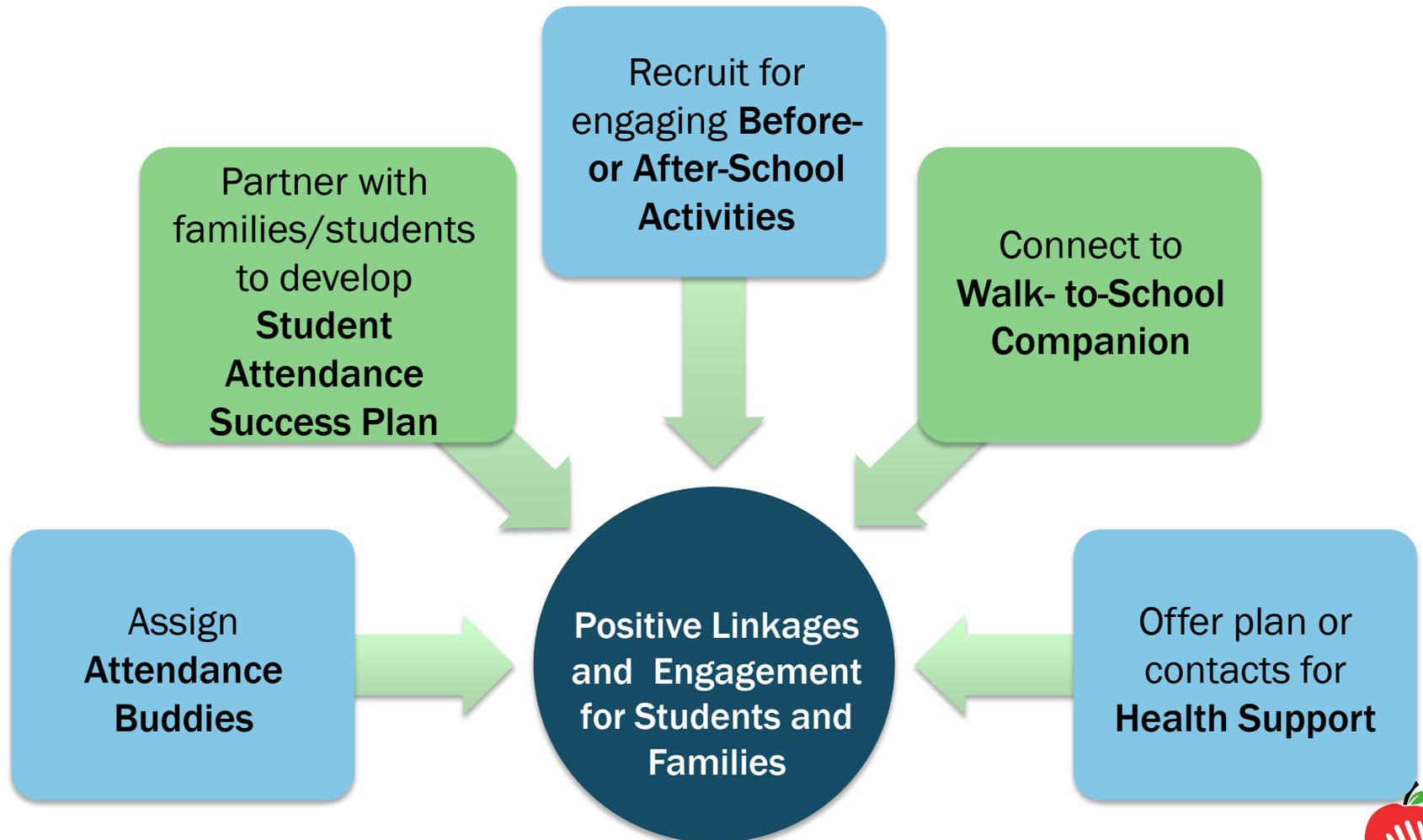
- Lower 6<sup>th</sup> grade test scores
- Higher levels of suspension

# Intervene Starting Early in the Year

- ❑ Chronic absence (missed 10% or more of school) in the prior year, assuming data is available.
- ❑ And/or starting in the beginning of the school year, student has:



# Possible Tier 2 Interventions



# Tools for Tier 2: The Power of Positive Connections



Attendance Works

August 2014



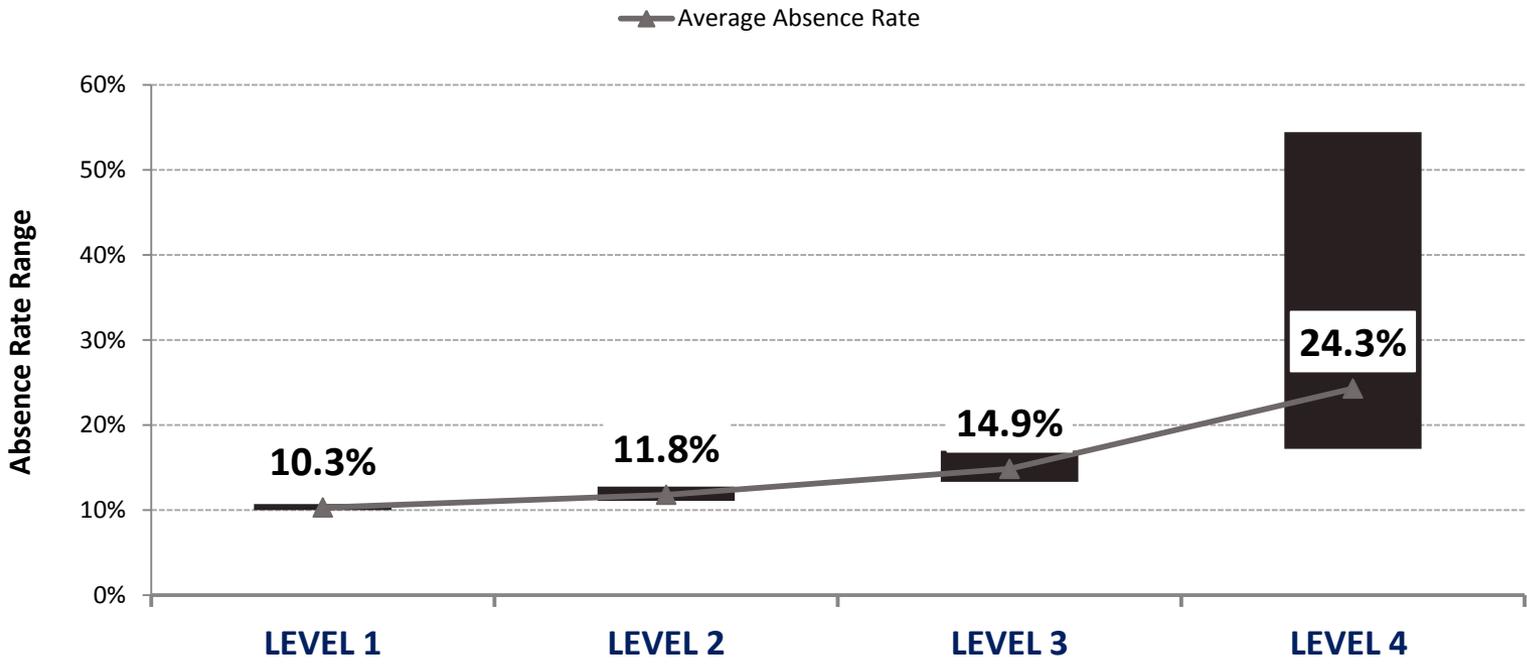
The Power of Positive Connections

Reducing Chronic Absence through PEOPLE:  
Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages  
and Engagement

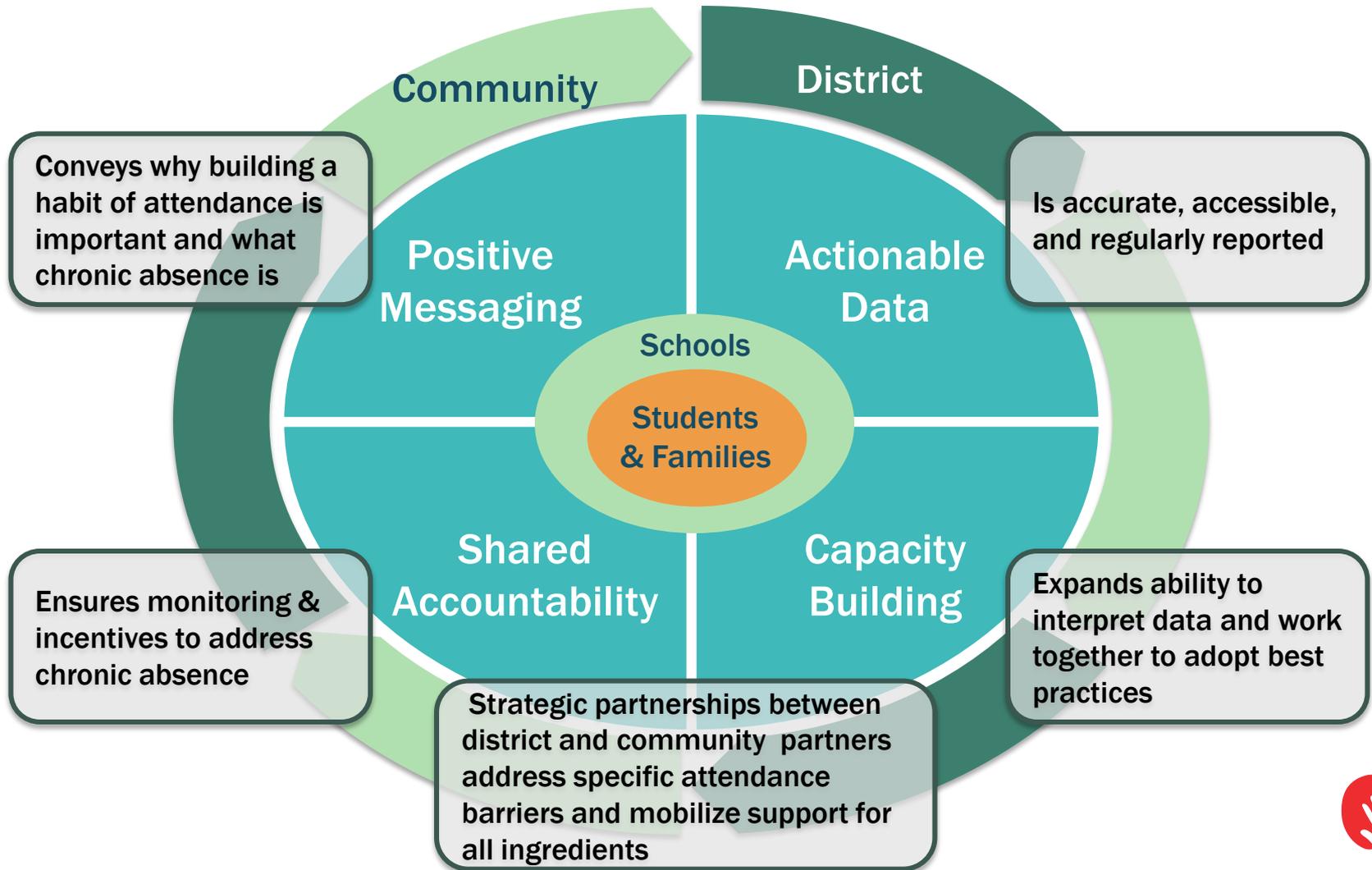
[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# Attendance data can help identify how to target community resources

*This analysis divides all chronically absent 1<sup>st</sup> graders in Oakland Unified district into 4 tiers (almost quartiles) based upon their level of absence*



# Ingredients for System-wide Success & Sustainability



# Variation Across Schools Helps Identify Good Practice and Need for Intervention

## *Chronic Absence Levels Among Oakland Public Schools (2009-10)*

|  | Elementary | Middle | High School |
|--|------------|--------|-------------|
| # Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence     | 9          | 0      | 0           |
| # Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence  | 17         | 4      | 1           |
| # Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence | 25         | 8      | 6           |
| # Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence    | 9          | 4      | 9           |
| Total No. Schools                        | 60         | 16     | 16          |
|  |            |        |             |
| Highest % of Chronic Absence             | 31.5%      | 32.8%  | 42.1%       |
| Lowest % of Chronic Absence              | 0.3%       | 6.9%   | 7.9%        |
| Median                                   | 12.7%      | 14.9%  | 21.0%       |
| Mean                                     | 11.9%      | 15.6%  | 22.4%       |

# The Superintendents Call to Action

**Own the  
Issue**

**Mobilize  
the  
Community**

**Drive With  
Data**

*To sign-up for the Call to Action, or to learn more, please visit:  
[www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action](http://www.attendanceworks.org/superintendents-call-to-action)*



# Chronic Absence =

## The Warning Light On A Car Dashboard

### The Parallels



- Ignore it at your personal peril!
- Address early or potentially pay more (lots more) later.
- The key is to ask why is this blinking? What could this mean?