

Chronic Absence



**Lukas Weinstein,
The Children's Aid Society**

Definitions



Average Daily Attendance: the percentage of enrolled students who attend school each day

Chronic Absence: missing 10% or more of school over the course of an academic year for any reason (excused or unexcused)

Severe Chronic Absence: missing 20% or more of school per year (approximately two months)

Satisfactory Attendance: missing 5% or less over the course of an academic year

Truancy: refers *only* to unexcused absences and is defined by each state

Source: Hedy Chang



Why is Chronic Absence Important?



- ♦ Chronic absence is associated with **negative outcomes** including **low academic achievement, school truancy, dropping out, delinquency and substance abuse.**
- ♦ The **educational experience of regularly attending students can be adversely affected** when teachers must divert their attention to meet the learning and social needs of chronically absent children when they return to school.

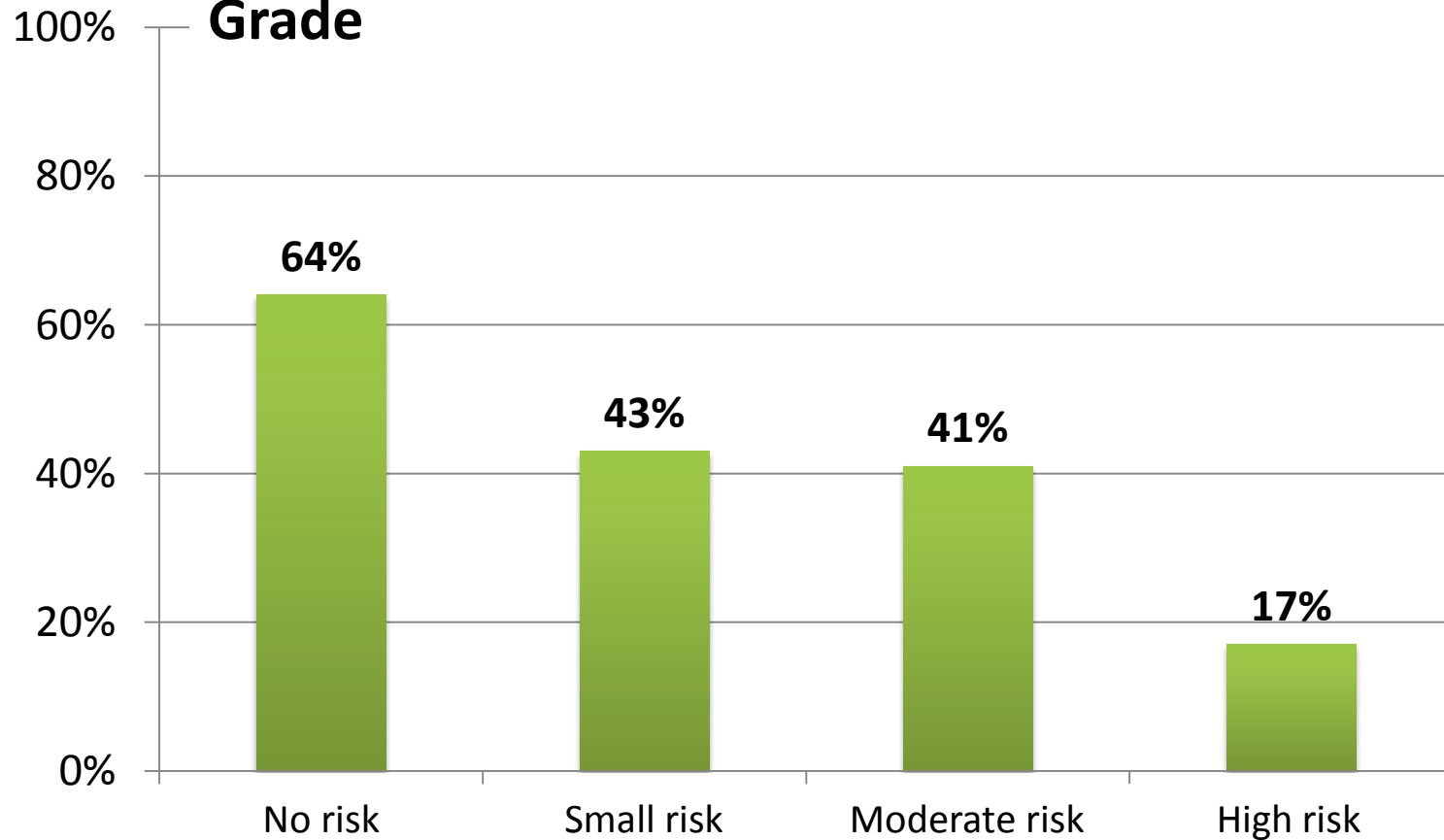
True or False?

**Regular attendance
in Kindergarten
doesn't really matter.**



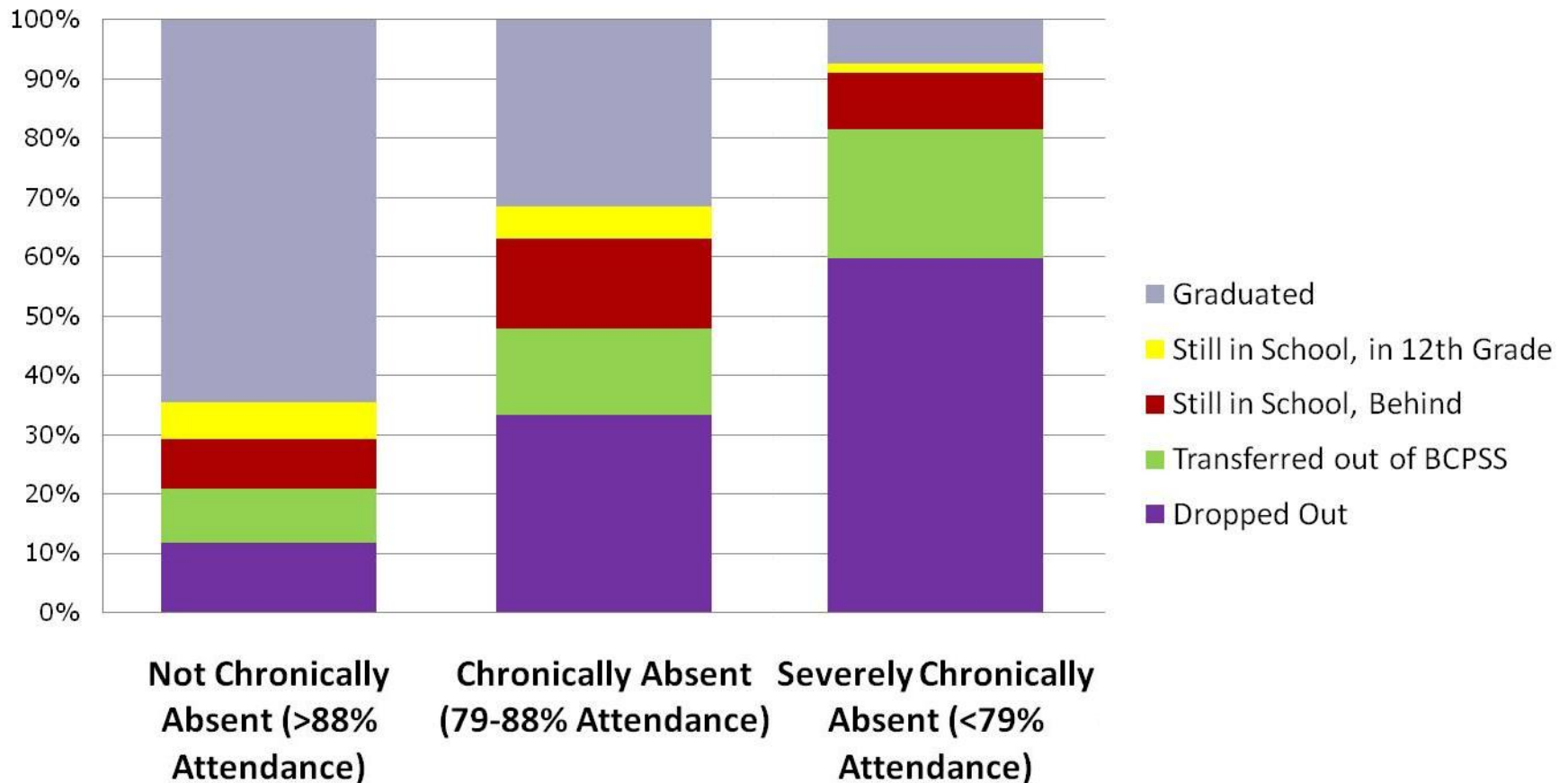
Students Chronically Absent in K & 1st Grade Much Less Likely to Read Proficiently in 3rd Grade

% Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA



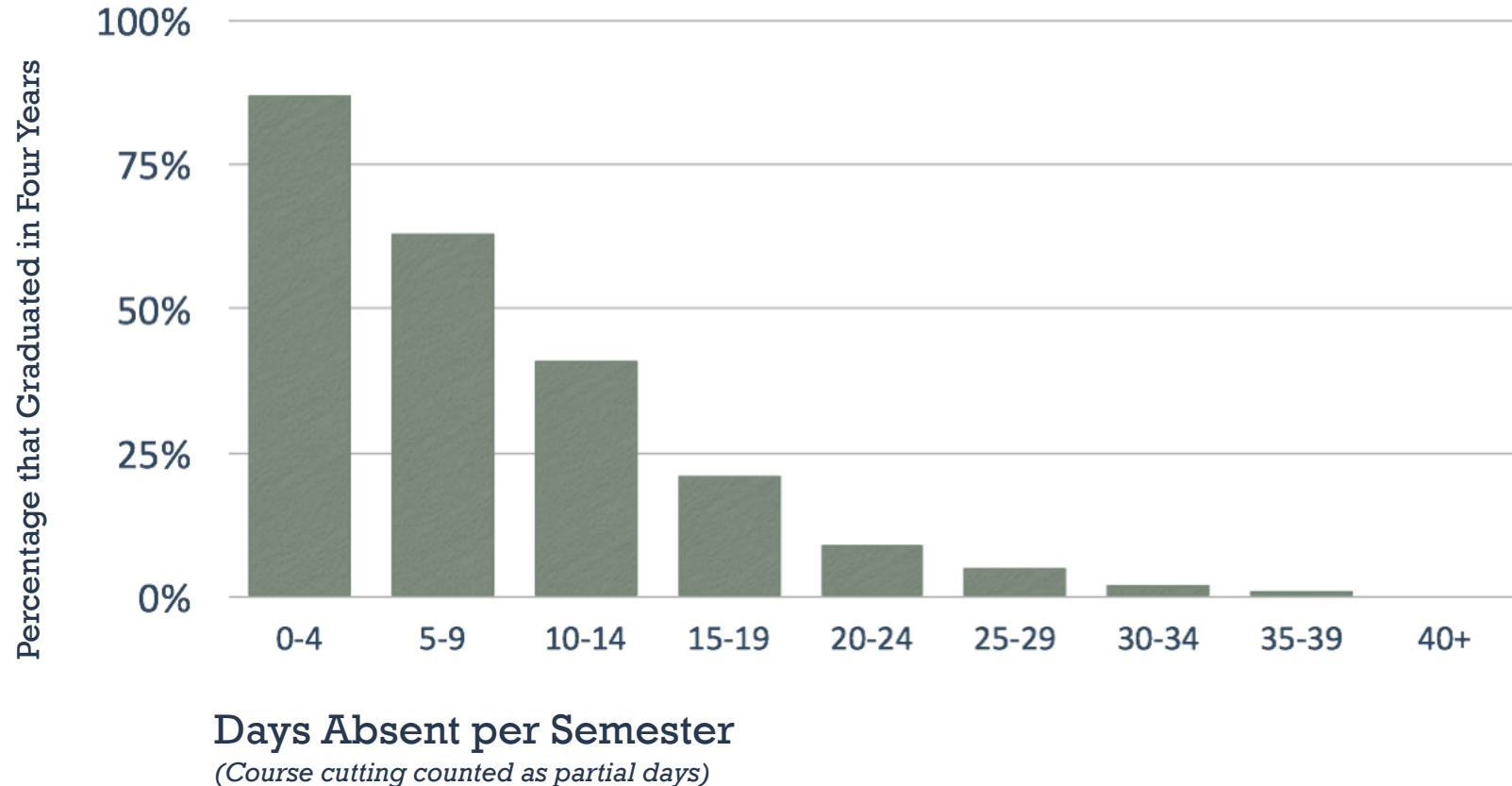
Risk level, according to Kindergarten & 1st Grade absences

Poor 6th Grade Attendance Predicts Dropout Rates



Source: Baltimore Education Research Consortium

9th Grade Attendance is a Better Graduation Predictor than 8th Grade Test Scores



Source: Allensworth & Easton, *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools*, Consortium on Chicago School Research at U of C, July 2007



ABSENCES ADD UP!

Use the slider tool to chart the Impact absences can have on your child. Just one day every so often can add up to months of missed learning time. Missing school can lower math and reading scores and leave your child less likely to graduate.

MIDDLE SCHOOL



HIGH SCHOOL



DAYS MISSED

3



84%

LIKELIHOOD OF
GRADUATING



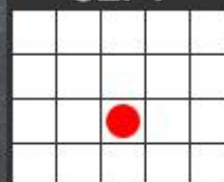
47

MATH
PERCENTILE

43

READING
PERCENTILE

SEPT



OCT



NOV



DEC



JAN



FEB



MAR



APR



MAY

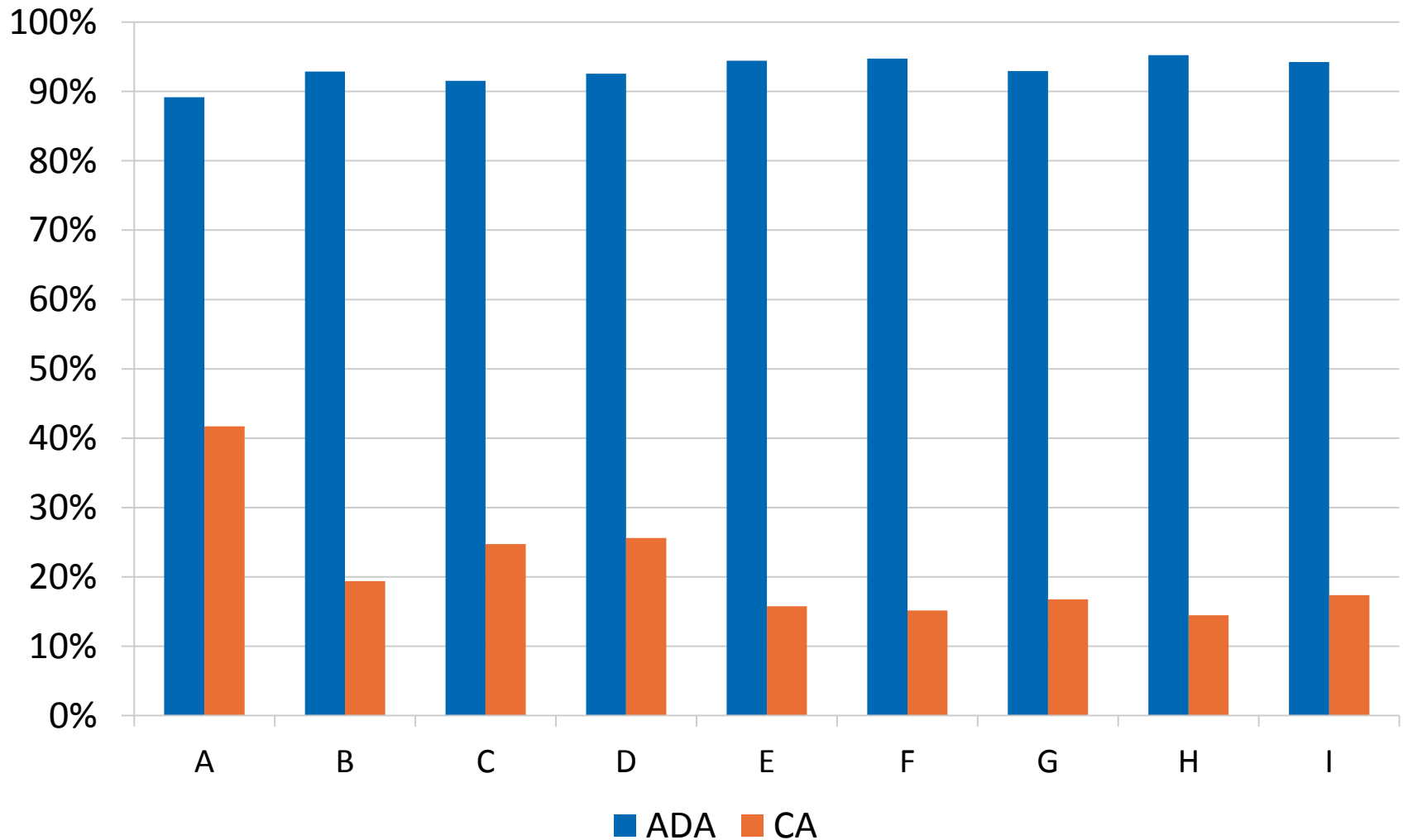


POWERED BY GET SCHOOLED

True or False?

**Tracking Average Daily
Attendance will show you if
you have a Chronic Absence
issue at your school.**

ADA & Chronic Absence in a NYC CFN (6th-8th Grades)



True or False?

**Because kids (and their families)
are ultimately responsible for
getting to school every day,
schools can't do anything to
address chronic absence.**

Schools + Communities Can Make a Difference



Characteristics of Effective Strategies

- ◆ Partner with community agencies to help parents carry out their responsibility to get children to school
- ◆ Make chronic absence a priority, set a target and monitor progress over time
- ◆ Examine factors contributing to chronic absence, esp. from school, home and community perspectives
- ◆ Combine universal and targeted strategies
- ◆ Offer positive supports before punitive action
- ◆ It's all about relationships



**Structures & Supports from the
Every Student, Every Day Pilot
2010-2013**

Every Student, Every Day: 4 Components



- ◆ Success Mentors matched to Target Students
- ◆ School Wide Strategies
- ◆ Weekly Attendance Team Meeting
- ◆ Connecting Families to Community Resources



Success Mentors



- ◆ Matched with students who have history of CA
- ◆ Morning meet and greet
- ◆ Phone call home every time student is absent
- ◆ Meet one-on-one and/or in small groups
- ◆ Track students' attendance and improvements
- ◆ Work as a team to identify appropriate supports and interventions
- ◆ Reach out to and engage students' families



Who can be a Success Mentor?



- ◆ School Aides
- ◆ School Secretaries
- ◆ Parent Coordinators
- ◆ Guidance Counselors
- ◆ Social Workers
- ◆ Classroom Teachers
- ◆ Administrators
- ◆ Custodians
- ◆ Security Guards



Peer Success Mentoring



- ◆ Youth are often most receptive to their peers
- ◆ High School seniors mentor freshman
- ◆ Mentors can be those with good attendance but don't have to be; can also be students who improved their attendance
- ◆ Both mentees and mentors benefit from a peer mentoring approach
- ◆ By using peer mentoring, a school can increase the number of youth who can be matched with a mentor



School-Wide Strategies to Promote Good Attendance



- ◆ Goal is to promote a positive school-wide culture that encourages all students to attend school every day
- ◆ Strategies include:
 - attendance award assemblies for good *and* improved attendance
 - class competitions for best attendance
 - engaging clubs/activities before, during or afterschool

Weekly Attendance Team Meeting



PRINCIPAL



PRINCIPAL'S
LEADERSHIP
TEAM



SUCCESS
MENTORS



CBO
LEADERS



Identify At-Risk & Chronically
Absent Students -- Develop &
Track Interventions

GOAL = STRATEGIC COLLABORATION
FOR IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Connecting Families to Community Resources



- ◆ Phone calls home every time student is absent—goal is to build positive relationship with family, learn the reason for CA
- ◆ Messaging to families about the importance of good attendance and negative impact of CA
- ◆ Attendance Works Parent Toolkit
- ◆ Connecting families to needed resources
 - Parent Summit & Resource Fair
 - Resource Center/Finding Help (www.nyc.gov/everystudent)
 - Working with local community-based organizations



Does it work?

**Evaluation of Every Student, Every Day Pilot
Conducted by Johns Hopkins University
Everyone Graduates Center**

Key Finding: Students who exit chronic absenteeism improve academically

- **Achievement Test Scores and Grades Improve**
- **High School Credits earned and Promotion Rates Increase**
- **Students are Less Likely to Dropout**

Key Finding: Task Force Schools Significantly Reduced Chronic Absenteeism

- All three cohorts of task force schools **consistently outperformed** comparison schools.
- **Positive impacts were consistent** across elementary, middle, high schools, and alternative schools.
- **Impacts greatest for students who benefit most from being in school:** high poverty students & students in temporary housing.

Key Finding: Success Mentors & Supporting Infrastructure Substantially Improved Student Attendance

- Students with prior histories of chronic absenteeism with a Success Mentor **gained nearly two additional weeks of school (9 days)**, which is educationally significant.
- In the top 25% of schools, students with Success Mentors **gained one additional month of school.**
- High School students with Success Mentors (including those overage for their grade) were **52% more likely to remain in school** the following year.
- Mentees reported they liked having a mentor and the mentor helped **improve their attendance, schoolwork, motivation, and confidence.**

NYC DOE Focus on Attendance



- ◆ Students are flagged in ATS if they missed 20 or more days the previous year.
- ◆ Principal Performance Review (PPR) process includes measures of leadership practice. Among the “well developed” practices described in the rubric and observation tool is a measure on whether “structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult who helps to personalize attendance supports”.
- ◆ School Progress Reports include the school’s chronic absenteeism rate (the % of students who missed 20 or more days during the previous school year).
- ◆ Electronic Student Report Card template includes language about the link between attendance and student learning and parents’ role in ensuring their child comes to school regularly.





Resources

- ◆ **NYC Mayor's Taskforce Site**
<http://www.nyc.gov/everystudent>
- ◆ **Principals Portal Attendance Page**
- ◆ **Attendance Works**
<http://www.attendanceworks.org>
- ◆ **Interactive tool showing impact of CA:**
www.boostattendance.org
- ◆ **Strengthening Schools by Strengthening Families**
http://www.newschool.edu/milano/nyc affairs/publications_schools_strengthening_schools.aspx
- ◆ **The Importance of Being in School**
<http://getschooled.com/attendance-counts/report>

