

Chronic Absenteeism Strategic Action Group

**Progress Report to the CT Kids
Report Card Leadership Committee
Tuesday, June 3, 2014**

Indicator

Are Connecticut children growing up in a stable living environment?

Chronic Absenteeism

Presentation Outline

Topic One

- Action Plan Aligned to Report Card

Topic Two

- Subgroup Implementation

Topic Three

- Listening to Partners

Topic Four

- Strategy & Story Behind the Curve

Action Plan Aligned to the Report Card

SUBGROUP IMPLEMENTATION

- Data Issue / Data Development
- Inventory Best Practices (What Works)

MEMBERSHIP

- Partners

REPORT CARD DEVELOPMENT/REVISION

- Strategy
- Story Behind the Curve

Subgroup Implementation



- Data Issues/Data Development
- Best Practices Inventory – “What works”

Data Issues/Data Development Subgroup

Goals:

- Clarify reporting of suspension and expulsion data, closer analysis of suspension data (who, why, district trends)
- Gather data on reasons students are absent
- Research pre-K absenteeism
- GIS Mapping of supports and resources

Data Issues/Data Development Subgroup (continued)

Partners:

- Department of Public Health
- CT Data Collaborative
- Court Supported Services Division (Judicial)
- Graustein Memorial Fund/CT Grade Level Reading Campaign
- Department of Economic and Community Development
- Department of Education

Data Issues/Data Development Subgroup (continued)

Progress made:

- Initial meeting held to discuss definitions of absence, how data is reported and how it follows students as they change districts
- Exploring access to pre-K data
- Discussed goal of mapping data
- Created group to work with invited pilot communities to participate (Vernon, New Britain, Meriden and New Haven)
- Next meeting is on June 3, 2014, at Noon.

Best Practices Inventory

“What works...”

Goals:

- Examine what is being done and working in CT including districts
- Promote best practices
- Expand mentoring opportunities with the Governor’s Prevention Partnership
- Case Study Development

Best Practices Inventory

“What works...” continued

Partners:

- Department of Transportation
- School Based Health Centers
- Court Supported Services Division (Judicial)
- Graustein Memorial Fund/CT Grade Level Reading Campaign
- State Education Resource Center
- Department of Education
- Governor’s Prevention Partnership
- Achievement Gap Task Force
- Office of Policy and Management
- Center for Children’s Advocacy

Best Practices Inventory (continued)

Progress made:

- Discussions about best practices conducted with:
 - DOT/Safe Routes to School
 - School-Based Health Centers
 - Achievement Gap Task Force
 - Court Supported Services Division/Judicial
 - Attendance Works
 - Graustein Memorial Fund

Best Practice Inventory (continued)

Preliminary suggestions are based on research and best practice and include:

- Weekly or bi-weekly school-based attendance teams
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Apply appropriate interventions
- Regular chronic absence reports shared with all staff

Listening to Districts & Community Partners

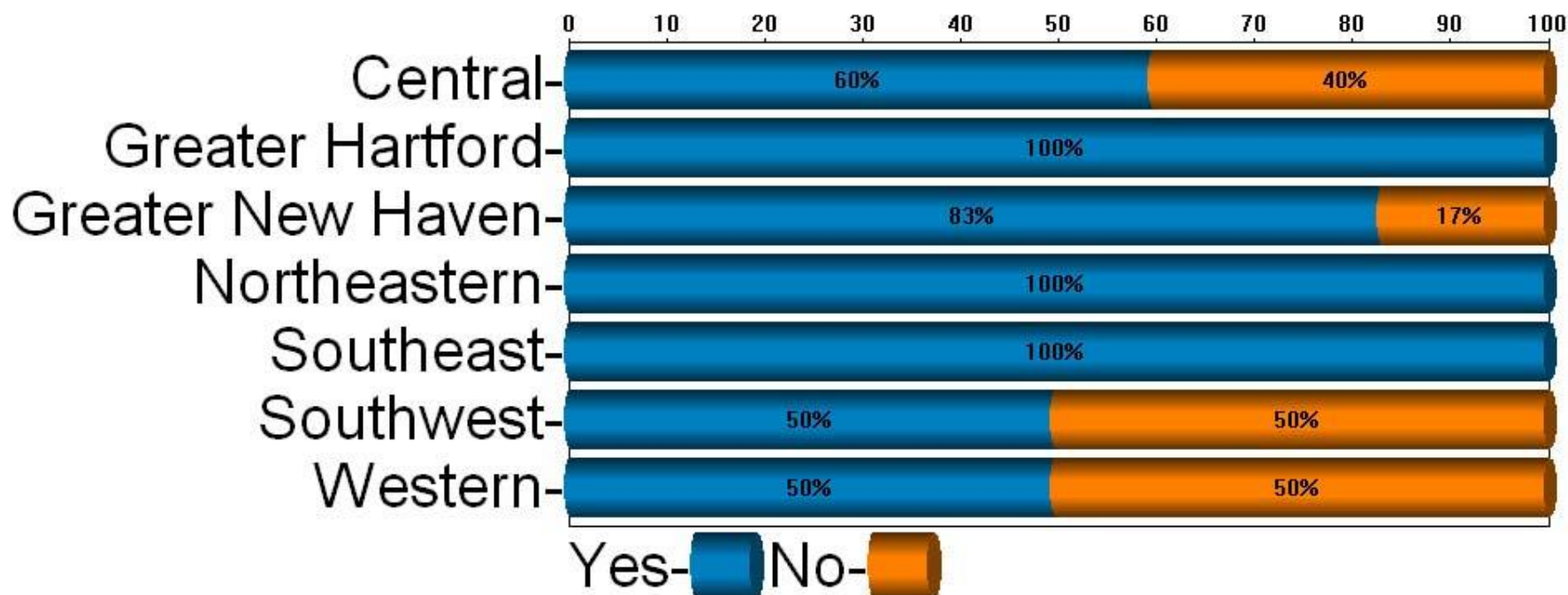


Alliance District Convening with Community Partners on May 1, 2014

- Each of the 30 Alliance Districts attended as teams with lead community partners from their districts & other statewide partners
 - Children's Aid Society facilitated district teams through activities to:
 1. Review their district data to identify service gaps
 2. Conduct a resource inventory and
 3. Identify strategies to implement concrete next steps to address the gaps with their community partners.
- Electronic key pads were used to poll district and community partner teams on where they needed additional supports and resources.



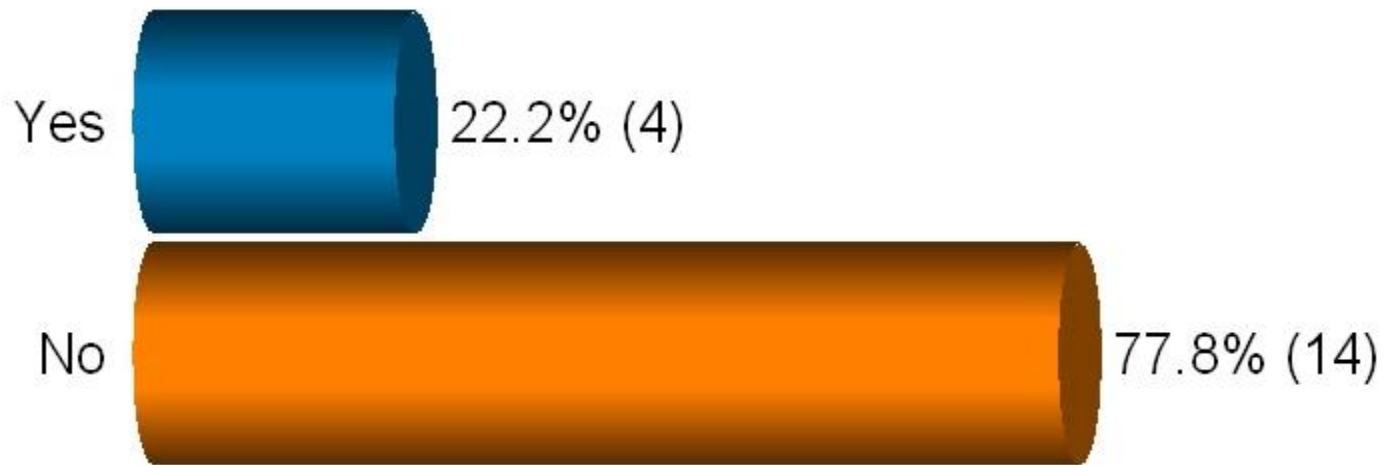
Does your district have a partner that can help students deal with the issues that they come to school with?



In reviewing the data, were any of the following areas different than anticipated, either for one year or longitudinally, or were there any "ah ha" moments?



Student Attendance (Chronic Absenteeism)

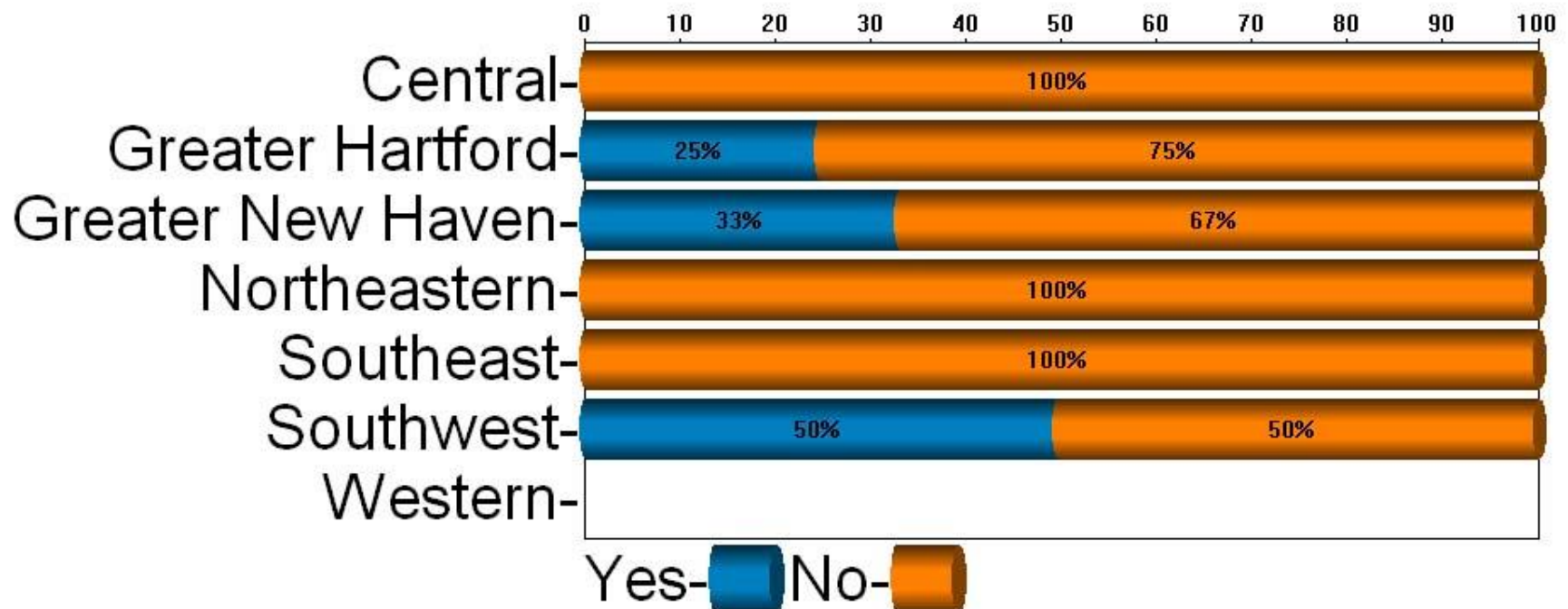


Total: 18

In reviewing the data, were any of the following areas different than anticipated, either for one year or longitudinally, or were there any "ah ha" moments?



Student Attendance (Chronic Absenteeism)



When we prioritized earlier, Health and Mental Health were the top need. Out of the two, which is the top priority?



1. Physical Health
2. Mental Health

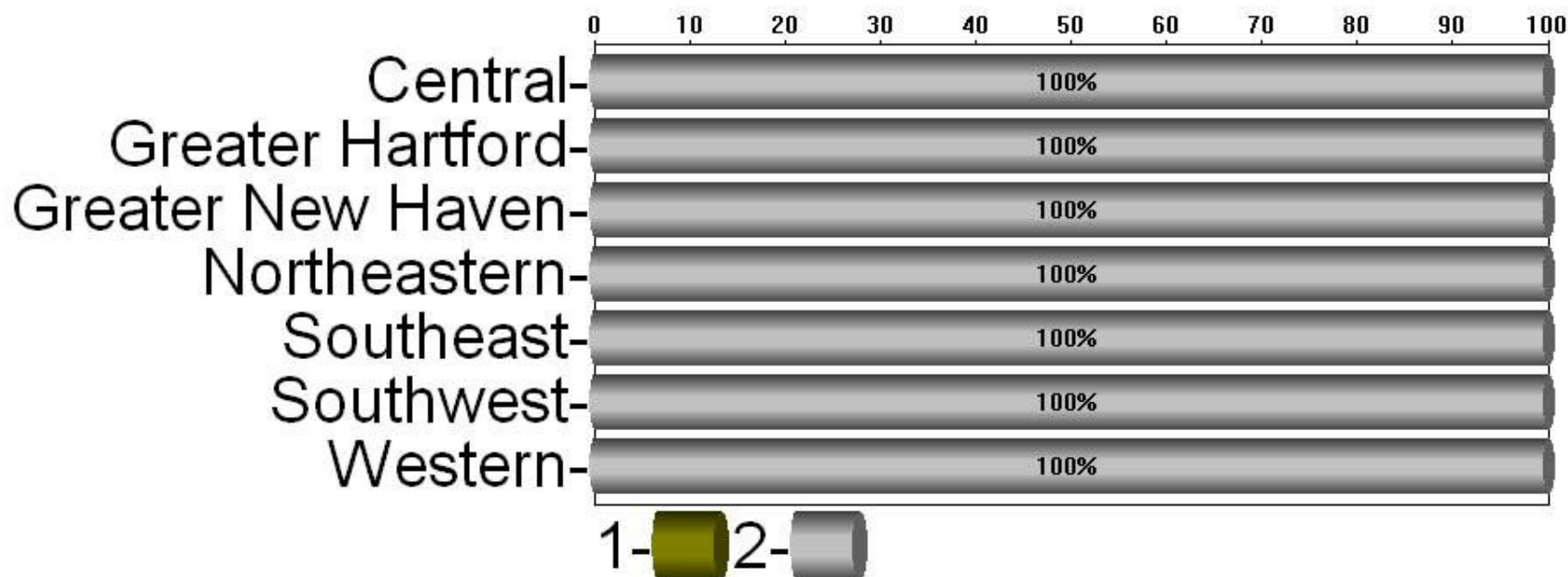


Total: 21



When we prioritized earlier, Health and Mental Health were the top need. Out of the two, which is the top priority?

1. Physical Health
2. Mental Health



Chronic Absenteeism, Suspension and Expulsion Break-Out Session

District/school leaders and community partners participated in a dynamic conversation to explore the:

- challenges of chronic absence and discipline
- solutions for reducing chronic absence and discipline



Challenges Identified

- Relatively high attendance rates masked significant needs of chronically absent students
- Need to look at rates at the early grades to discover causes
- Chronic health issues: sickle cell anemia, depression, asthma
- Misperception of how much is too much school to miss
- Lack of cultural competence – male and minority students are disproportionately suspended/expelled
- Feeling that school is not safe
- Larger family issues can create chronic absence
- Transient housing

Solutions

- Leverage other resources/agencies to assist with chronic absence
- Design wraparound services that can navigate FERPA law
- Refer rather than expel/Refer rather than arrest
- Parent focus vs. student focus
- Hartford – provides data to principals, weekly attendance reports, year-to-year comparison reports, new expulsion policy
- New Haven – Community Canvas on Attendance, raising awareness, culturally relevant approaches
- New Britain – data-driven attendance teams, developing interventions based on data, hiring of attendance staff for Kindergarten, analyze causes and severity

Strategy



What we will , as individuals, communities, agencies, and as a larger group, propose to actually do to turn the curve on the results for Connecticut's children.

What we have done:

- Established two subgroups: 1) Data Issues/Data Development and 2) Inventory Best Practices
- Regular planning team meetings and coordination of subgroups
- **Issued first electronic newsletter to members**
- **Continue to build partners/membership**

CT Kids Report Card

Chronic Absenteeism Strategic Action Group: MAY 2014 E-Bulletin

News

First Two SAG Subgroups Underway

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to serve on one and, in several cases, both of our newly formed Chronic Absenteeism subgroups: **Best Practices Inventory** led by Joe Vaverchak and **Data Issues/Data Development** led by Erica Bromley. Plans for meetings or conference calls to get started on key tasks and discussions are underway. It's not too late to get involved – just contact Joe (vaverchak@csgdnb.org) and/or Erica to volunteer or just share ideas on either topic.

New State Agency Data Website Launched

The Connecticut Open Data Portal created under Governor Malloy's Executive Order No. 39 was launched on March 31, 2014. Data collected across all state government agencies can be placed on this online portal to be shared with the public and used for any number of purposes. The State Education Department is a major contributor to the portal and has provided **available data on chronic absenteeism** by district for the last two school years. The link for the CT Open Data Portal website is: <http://data.ct.gov>

Chronic Absenteeism Legislation Under Consideration in the Current Session

House Bill 5357 (**An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism**) passed the House with an amendment that clarifies the definition of chronically absent children and was transmitted to the Senate for action on April 30, 2014. The bill requires districts with high rates of chronic absenteeism to establish school attendance review teams. (This is the link to HB 5357: http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB05357&which_year=2014)

Events

Alliance District Convening Held on May 1, 2014

Strategy- CSDE's Message (continued)

- **Data Analysis:** Regularly share and review chronic absence data at the district, school and student level in order to target interventions and share this information with school staff, community partners and families.
- **Awareness:** Create a culture in district where staff, families, community members and students understand the definition of chronic absence, the impact chronic absence can have on a student's educational trajectory and the expectation that students be in school every day.
- **Family/Community Engagement:** Work closely with families and community partners to identify and resolve barriers to students attending school on a regular basis. Identify key partners who can play direct roles in working with families as well as local systems outside of the family environment.

Next Steps

Proposed language: Story Behind the Curve

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing **ten percent** or greater of the total number of days enrolled in the school year for any reason. It includes both excused and unexcused absences. In Connecticut, levels of Chronic Absenteeism have been measured at 11.0% in 2011-12 and 11.5% in 2012-13. These numbers translate to approximately sixty-thousand students each year who are missing at least 10% of their total school days enrolled. When the 2012-13 data are disaggregated by subgroups based on race, ethnicity, free/reduced lunch status, special education status, and English language learner status, they indicate that students from these traditionally underperforming subgroups evidence substantially higher rates of absenteeism than their peers who are not in these subgroups.

QUESTIONS?

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