

Connecticut Kids Report Card **Leadership Committee**

Chronic Absence Strategic Action Group Update

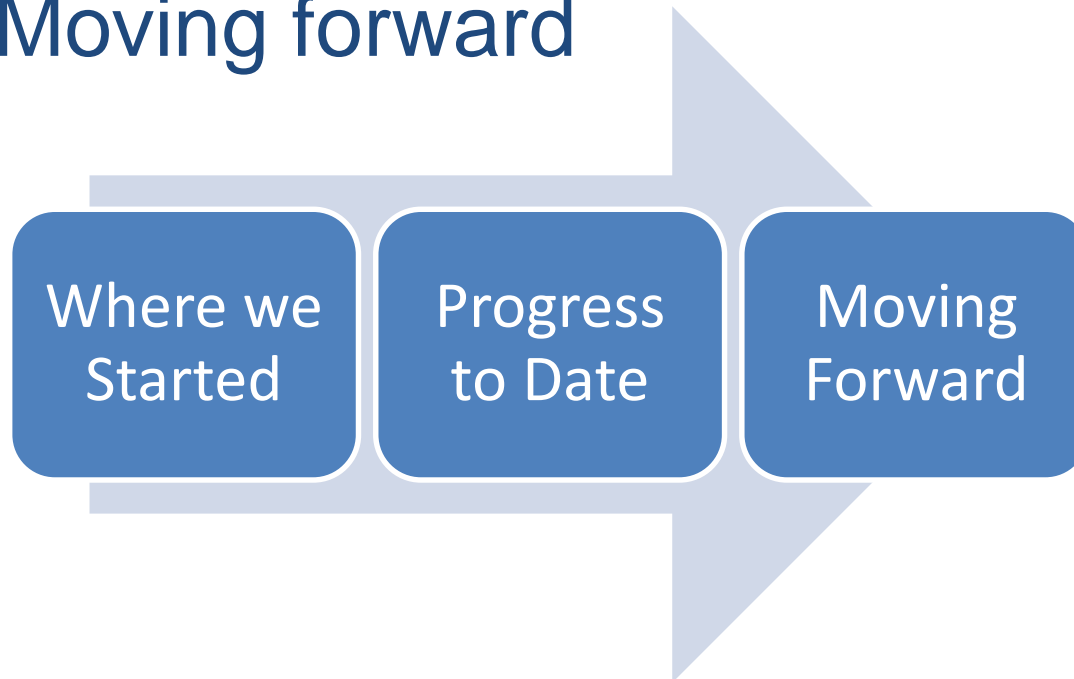
Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer
Connecticut State Department of Education

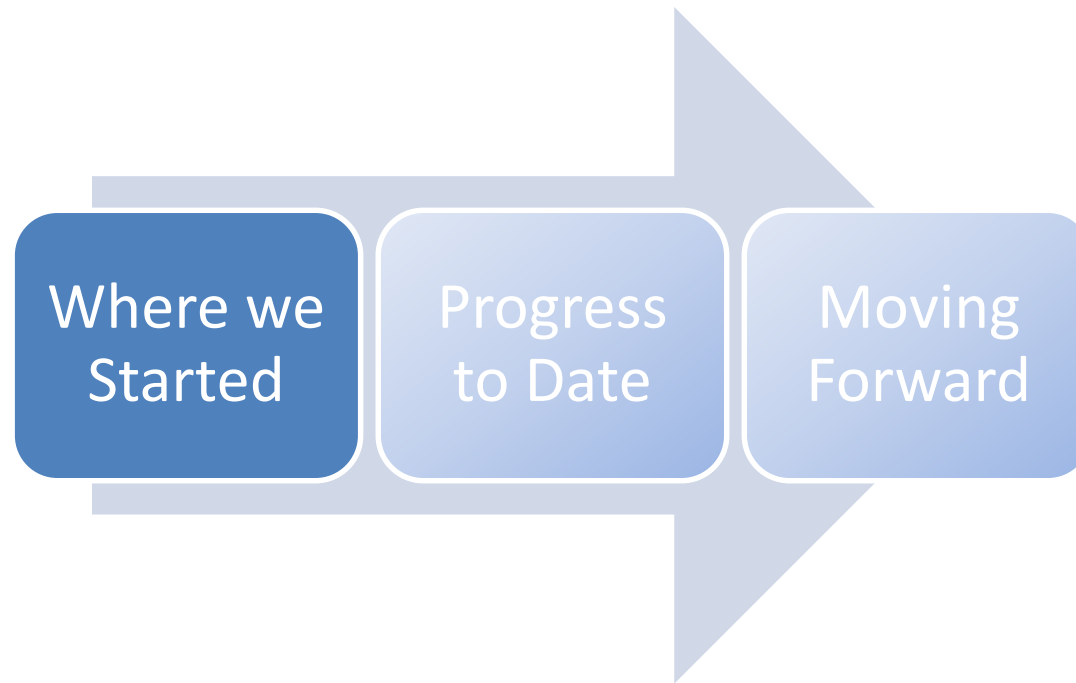
Joseph Vaverchak, Supervisor of Attendance
Consolidated School District of New Britain

October 14, 2015

Looking Back While Moving Forward

- Where we started
- Progress made to date
- Moving forward





Leadership Matters

- CT Kid's Report Card Working Group, September 2011

*All Connecticut children grow up in a **stable** living environment, safe, healthy, and prepared to lead successful lives.*

- Initial meeting of Chronic Absence Strategic Action Group, January 2014

Federal Effort to Combat Chronic Absenteeism at Schools

Every Student, Every Day: Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

United States Departments of:

- Justice
- Health and Human Services
- Housing and Urban Development
- Education

Action Steps:

1. Generate and act on absenteeism data
2. Create and deploy positive messages and measures
3. Focus communities on addressing chronic absenteeism
4. Ensure responsibility across sectors

According to Attendance Works

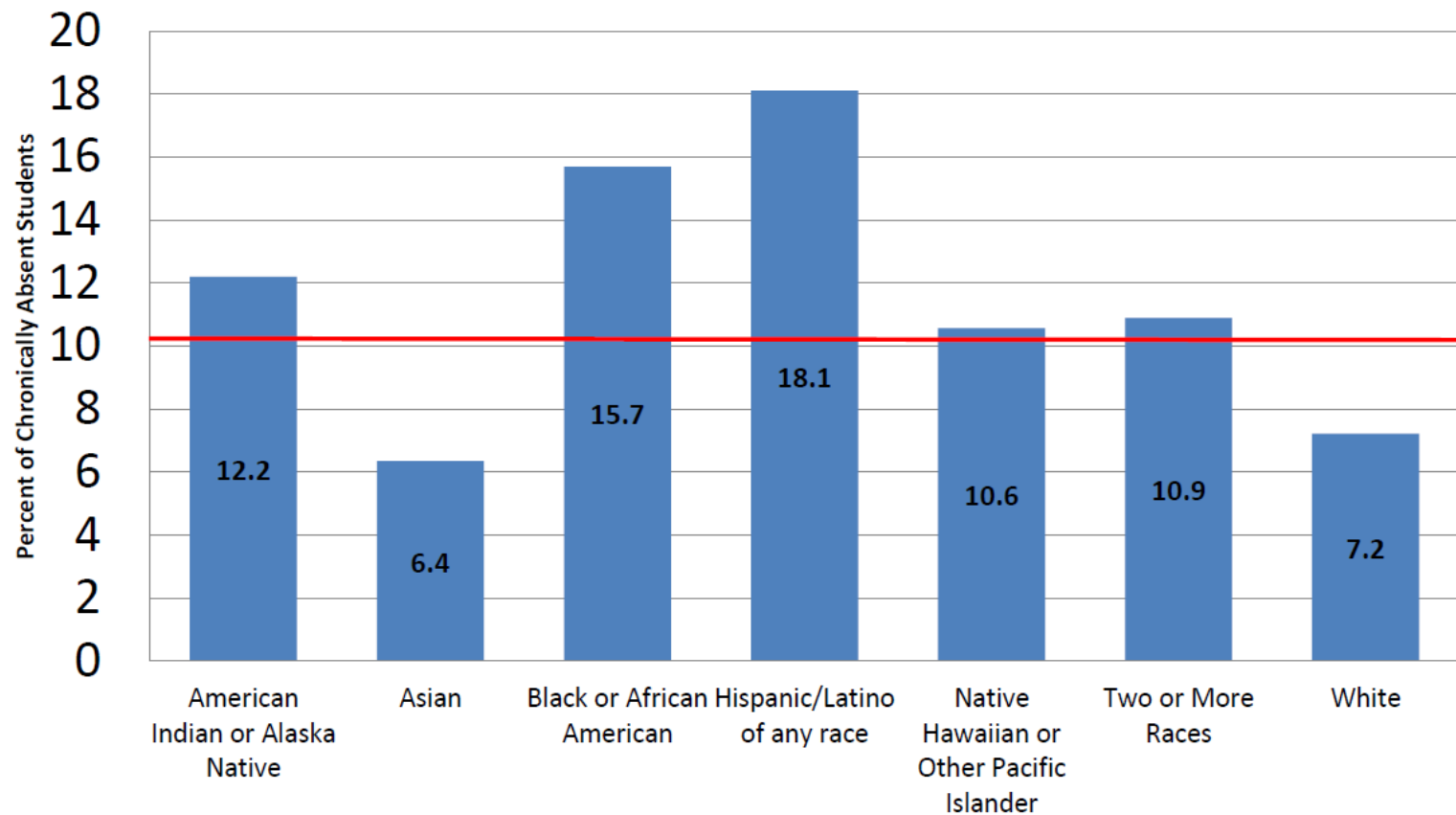
*“Connecticut's work shows how **leadership** makes a difference, both **leadership** at the local level to take the initiative to calculate chronic absence rates and **leadership** at the state level to hold districts accountable for monitoring and addressing this problem.”*

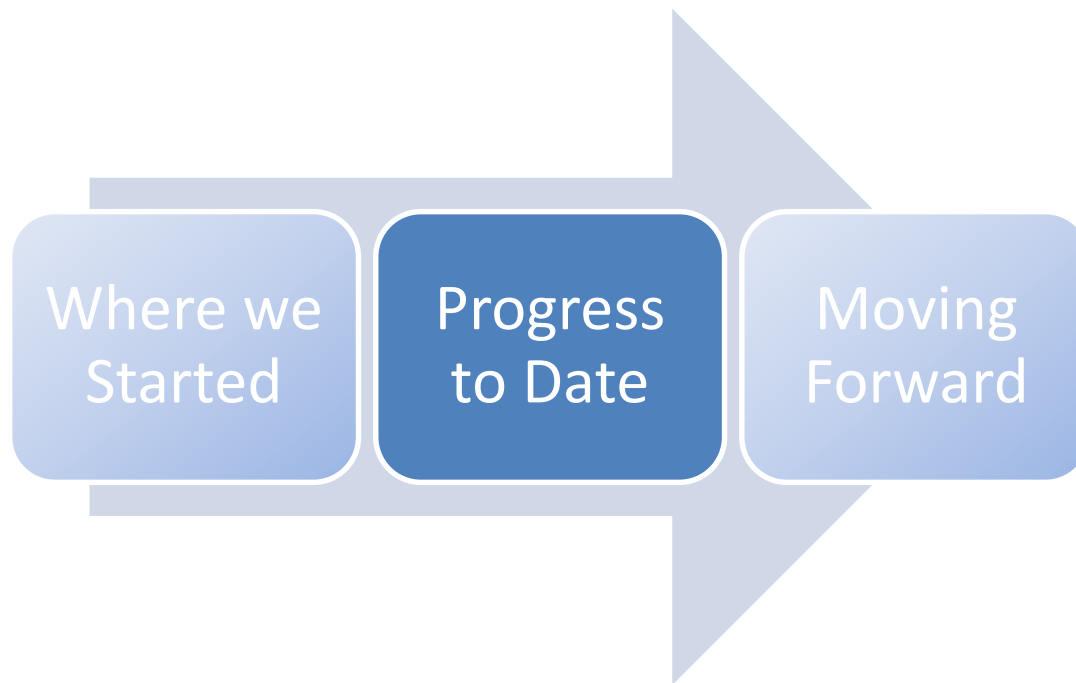
Hedy Chang, Director
October 2015

What the Data Show

- 2012-13
11.5 percent (approximately 60,000 students)
- 2013-14
10.7 percent (approximately 56,000 students)
- 2014-15
(TBD)

Percent of Students Chronically Absent by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14





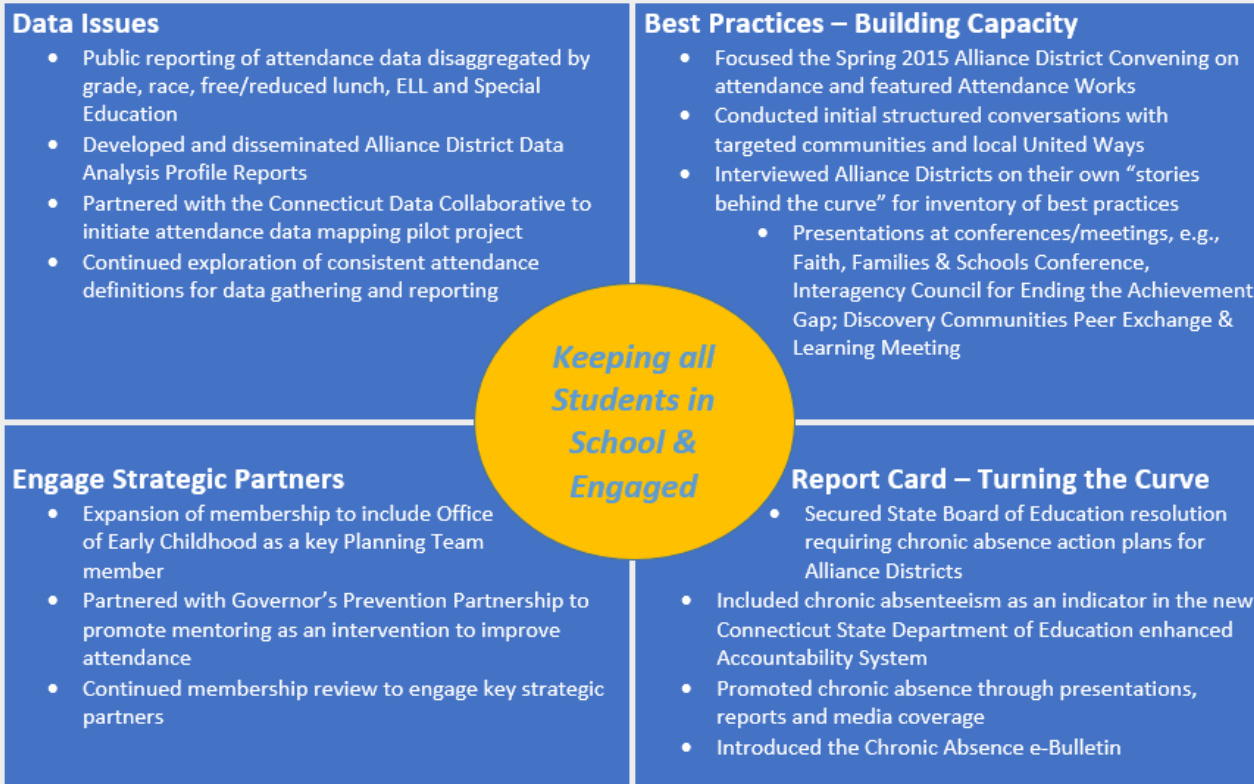
A “Snapshot” of Progress

Connecticut Kids Report Card

Stable, Safe, Healthy and Successful Children

Chronic Absenteeism Strategic Action Group Snapshot of Accomplishments 2014-15

Purpose: To improve attendance in Connecticut schools by: (1) serving as the centralizing force for existing initiatives and promising new approaches to achieve measurable better result; and (2) promoting statewide coordination and communication among critical partners involved in “turning the curve.”



Data Issues/ Data Development

To ensure that data are available and accurately inform policy and practice.

- Public reporting of attendance data disaggregated by grade, race, free/reduced lunch, English learners and Special Education
- Developed and disseminated Alliance District Data Analysis Profile Reports
- Partnered with the Connecticut Data Collaborative to initiate attendance data mapping pilot project
- Continued exploration of consistent attendance definitions for data gathering and reporting

Best Practices – Building Capacity

To ensure that policies and practices with proven results are implemented to improve outcomes.

- Focused the Spring 2015 Alliance District Convening on attendance and featured Attendance Works
- Conducted initial structured conversations with targeted communities and local United Ways
- Interviewed Alliance Districts on their own “stories behind the curve” for inventory of best practices
- Presentations at conferences/meetings, e.g., Faith, Families & Schools Conference, Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap; Discovery Communities Peer Exchange & Learning Meeting

Engage Strategic Partners

SAG membership are identified and represents all strategic partners with a role to play in improving results/“turning the curve.”

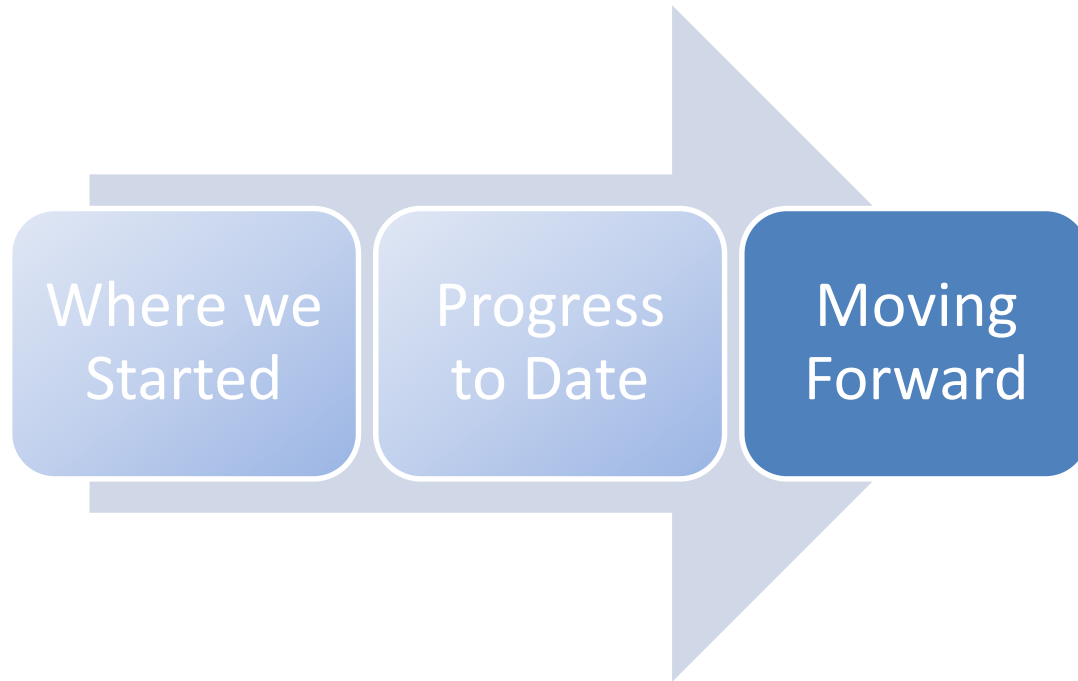
- Expansion of membership to include Office of Early Childhood as a key Planning Team member
- Partnered with Governor’s Prevention Partnership to promote mentoring as an intervention to improve attendance
- Continued membership review to engage all key strategic partners

Report Card Development

Turning the Curve

Report Card is utilized as a communication tool to promote policy decisions.

- Secured State Board of Education resolution requiring chronic absence action plans for Alliance Districts
- Included chronic absenteeism as an indicator in the new Connecticut State Department of Education enhanced Accountability System
- Promoted chronic absence through presentations, reports and media coverage
- Introduced the Chronic Absence e-Bulletin



Moving Forward

- Integration of stakeholder input into the 2015-16 Action Plan
- Expansion of Geographic Information System Mapping
- Expansion of national partnership with Attendance Works
- Membership on the Advisory Committee on Ending Chronic Absence, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Campaign for Grade Level Reading. (California, Maryland, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Utah)
- Implementation guidance on new legislation

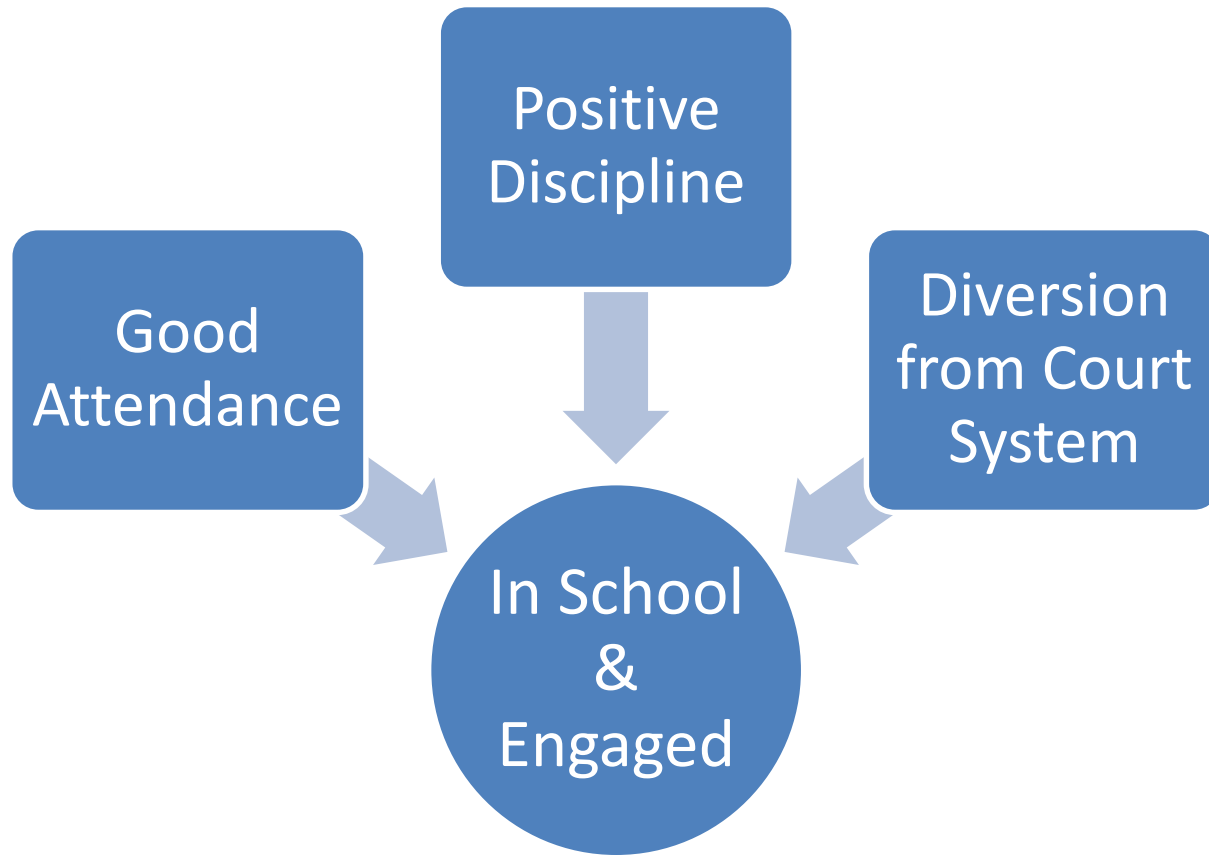
Public Act 15-225

An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism

Responsible Entity	Actions Required
Districts and Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish Attendance Review Teams• Data Reporting• Implement new definitions of absence
State Board of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definition of “disciplinary” absence
Connecticut State Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan• Expand definition of absence to include an in-school suspension that is greater or equal to one-half of a school day

Note: Appropriation for staff position at the Connecticut State Department of Education

Convergence of Efforts



Reflection on progress made...

Connecticut has taken a transformative direction to:

1. Institutionalize chronic absence in the new accountability system.
2. Provide technical assistance and consultancy to districts and schools.
3. Hold schools and districts accountable through the development of plans.

October 7, 2015, Letter on Federal Effort to Combat Chronic Absenteeism at Schools

...we can dramatically improve the academic and life outcomes of millions of young people who have been disengaged from a daily, supportive school experience.

The health and well-being of our nation demands that we do no less.

Final Thought from the Chronic Absence Strategic Action Group...

*...we can dramatically improve the
academic and life outcomes of
56,171 young people who have been
disengaged from a daily, supportive
school experience.*

*The health and well-being of
Connecticut demands that
we do no less.*