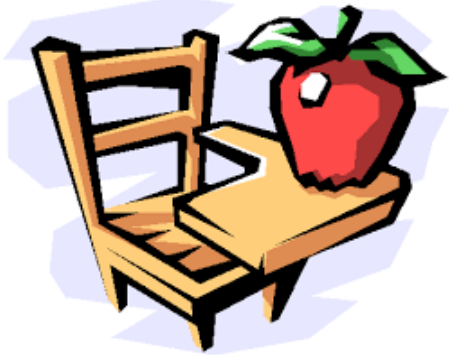


Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon: What We Know and Why It Matters



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Participants will:

- Be able to describe the problem of chronic absenteeism in Oregon.
- Identify 2-3 root causes of chronic absenteeism.
- Identify potential partnerships that can support student attendance.

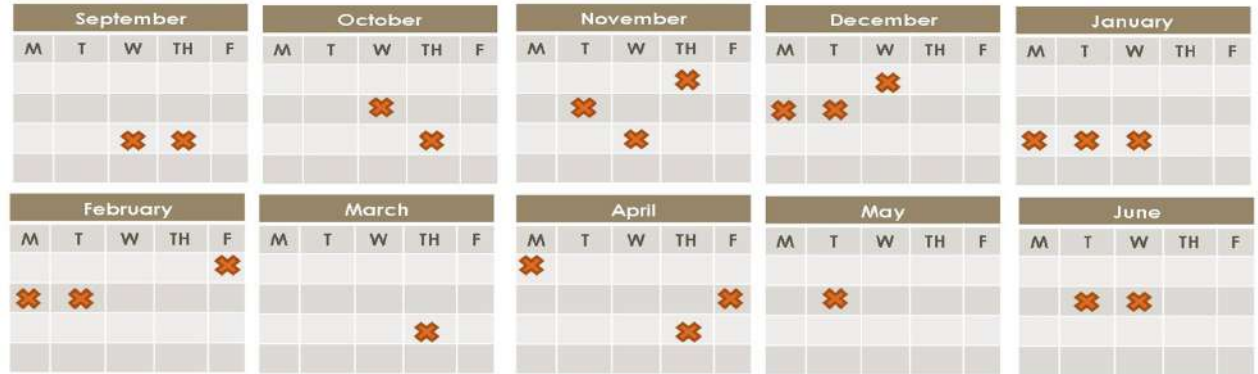
Scenario:

What do you do?

What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Definition: Missing 10% of school for *any* reason.

- Excused
- Unexcused
- Suspension
- Expulsion



Why Does It Matter?

- ❑ Chronic Absenteeism is the **strongest predictor of dropping out of high school** - stronger than other factors such as number of suspensions or student test scores, even when taking into account student demographics (Byrnes & Reyna, 2012).
- ❑ Significant gaps in academic performance are **apparent in third grade and persist all the way through high school for students who are chronically absent**, leading to increased dropout and decreased graduation rates (Buehler, Tapogna & Chang, 2012).

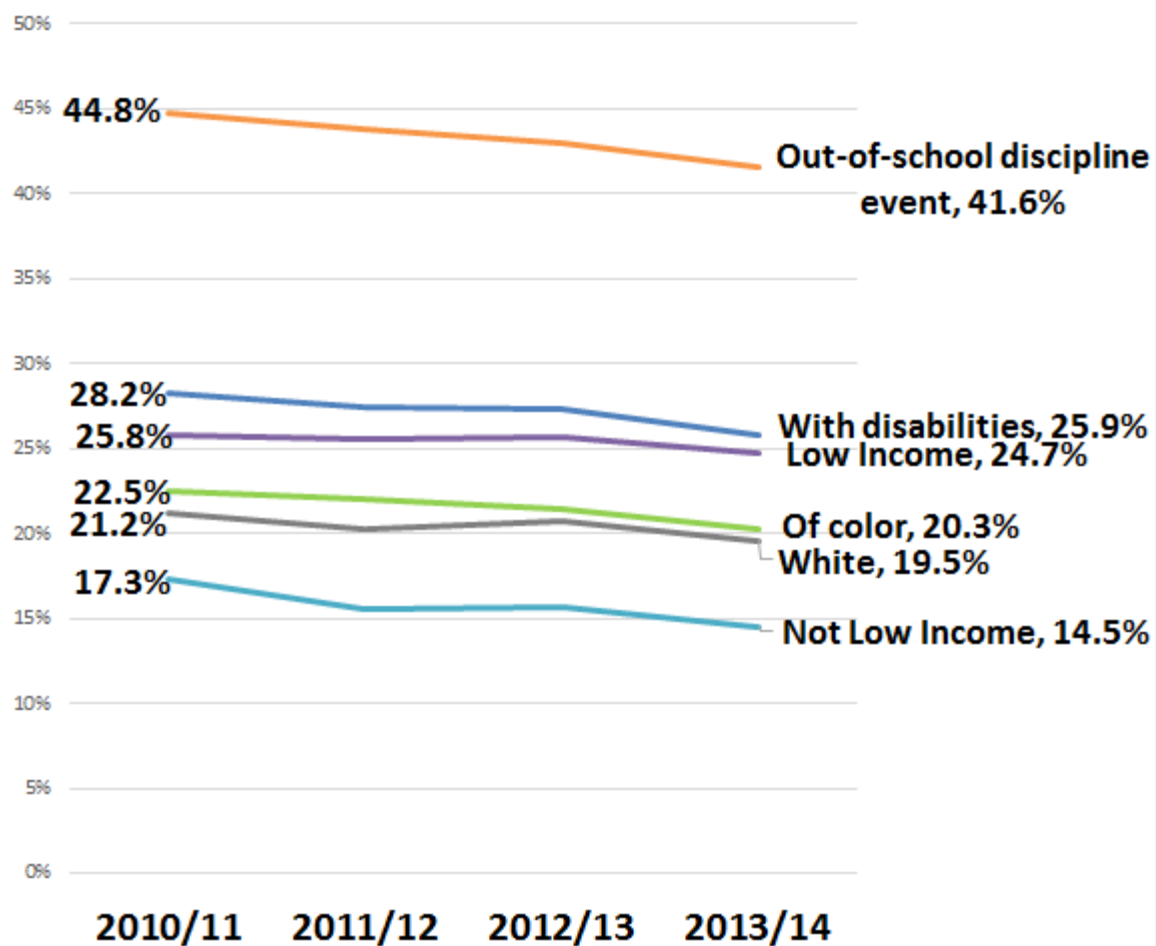
Oregon Statistics

- ❑ **Approximately one-in-five students in Oregon in the 2013/14 school year were chronically absent**
- ❑ **Chronic absenteeism affected schools in every Oregon community**
- ❑ **Problems with chronic absenteeism were apparent at every grade level, starting with 24 percent of kindergarten students and dipping to about 14 percent of third graders before climbing to 38 percent in the 12th-grade.**

Related Resource: Buehler, Taponga & Chang (2012). Why being at school matters: Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon Public Schools. The Chalkboard Project. Retrieved:

<http://chalkboardproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Oregon-Research-Brief-June-20-2012.pdf>

Chronic Absenteeism Rates, Oregon



Populations Most Impacted

- Children with one (or more) out of school suspension
- Children with disabilities
- Children of color
- Children from economically disadvantaged homes
- K-3rd grade children in rural communities

Buehler, Tapanoga, & Chang, (2012). Why being at school matters: Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon Public Schools. The Chalkboard Project. Retrieved: <http://chalkboardproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Oregon-Research-Brief-June-20-2012.pdf>

Education is a Predictor of Health

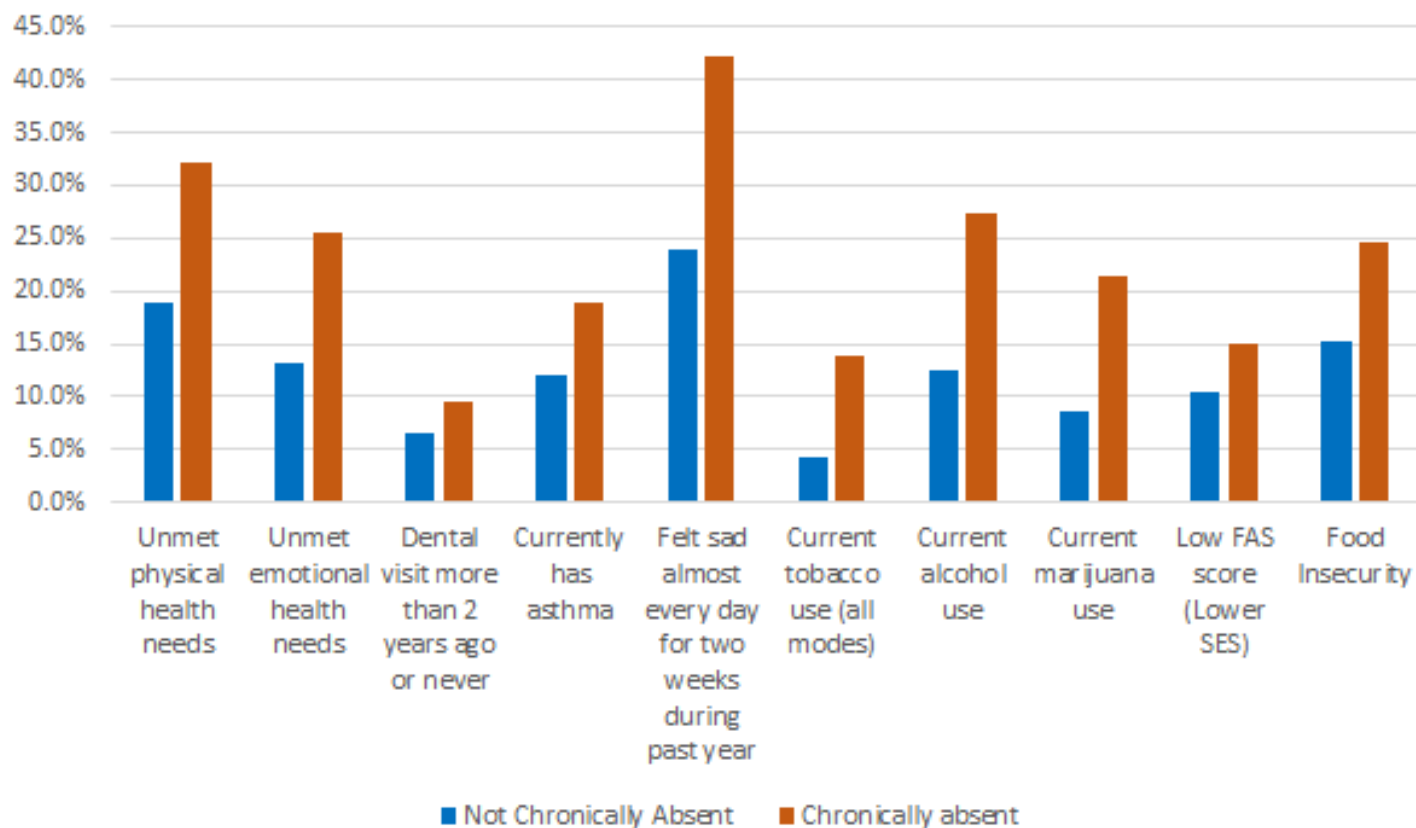
- **Children who do not complete high school** are likely to become adults who have **employment problems, lower health literacy, higher rates of illness, and earlier deaths than those who graduate from high school.**
- Improving high school graduation rates may be more cost-effective than most medical interventions in reducing health disparities.
- Graduation from high school is associated with an **increase in the average lifespan of 6 to 9 years.**
- People that do not complete high school are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.

Health is a Predictor of Education

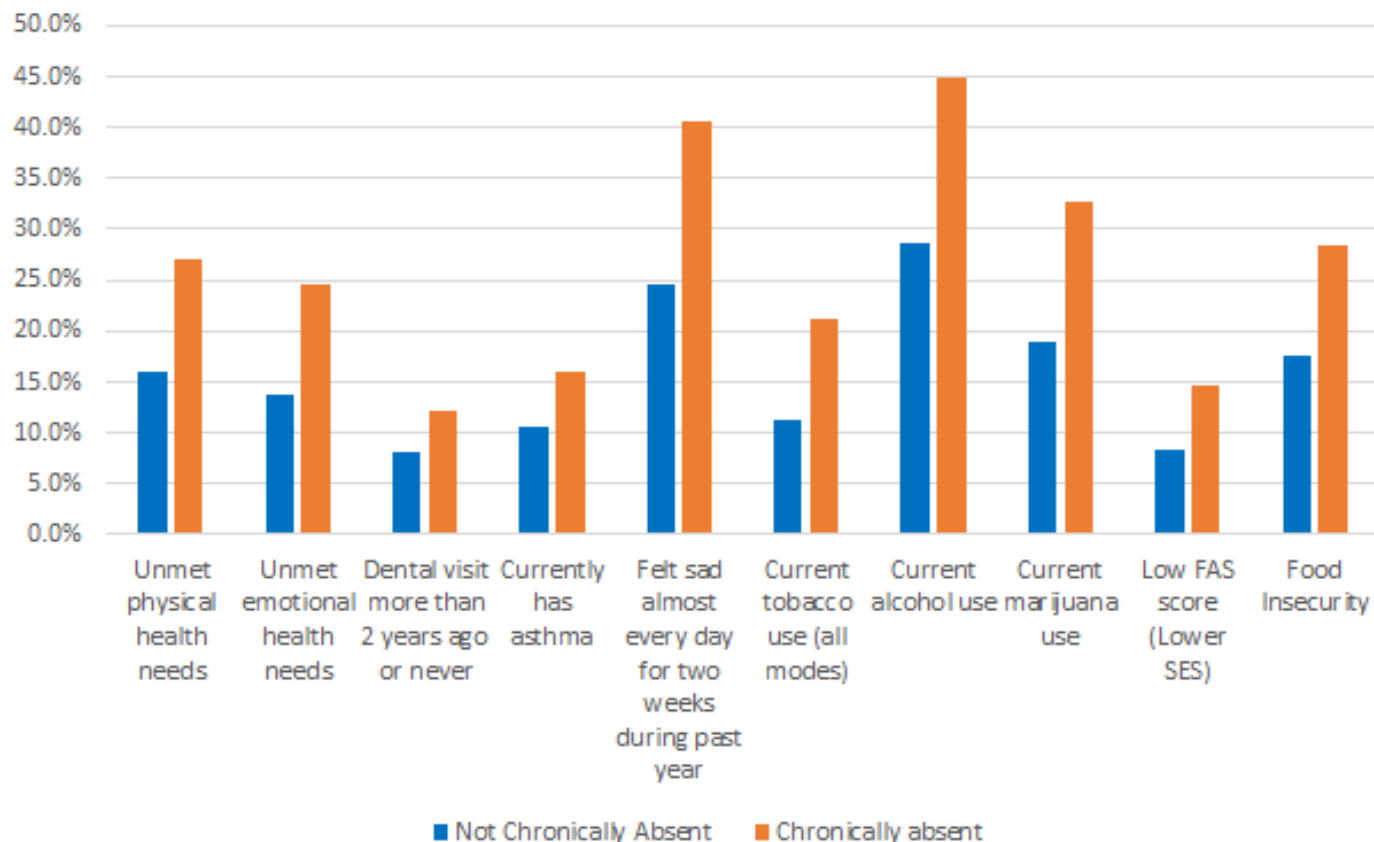
Healthy Kids Learn Better!

- Children who report **greater health challenges** also **report poorer average school grades**.
- Students with **poorer health** report **missing more days** of school.
- **Greater numbers of health challenges** are associated with **poorer educational outcomes**.
- High schools with more complete **health infrastructure** have **higher graduation rates**.

Correlates of Chronic Absenteeism - OHT 2013, 8th Grade (Boys and Girls Combined)



Correlates of Chronic Absenteeism - OHT 2013, 11th Grade (Boys and Girls Combined)



Key Health Issues Associated with Chronic Absenteeism

- Illness or injury
- Pregnancy and parenthood
- Sexual harassment and bullying
- Oral/Dental Pain
- Unmanaged Asthma
- Substance Use
- Mental Health Problems
- Food Insecurity
- Obesity

Student absence is complex

Myths	Barriers (can't)	Aversion
Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused	Lack of access to health care	Child struggling academically
Sporadic versus consecutive absences aren't a problem	Poor transportation	Lack of engaging instruction
Attendance only matters in the older grades	No safe path to school	Poor school climate and ineffective discipline

What can you do to improve attendance at your school?

- Challenge assumptions
- Understand attendance data
- Gather Partners
- Get more information about the problem
- Determine a range of strategies & best practices to support a culture of attendance in your school

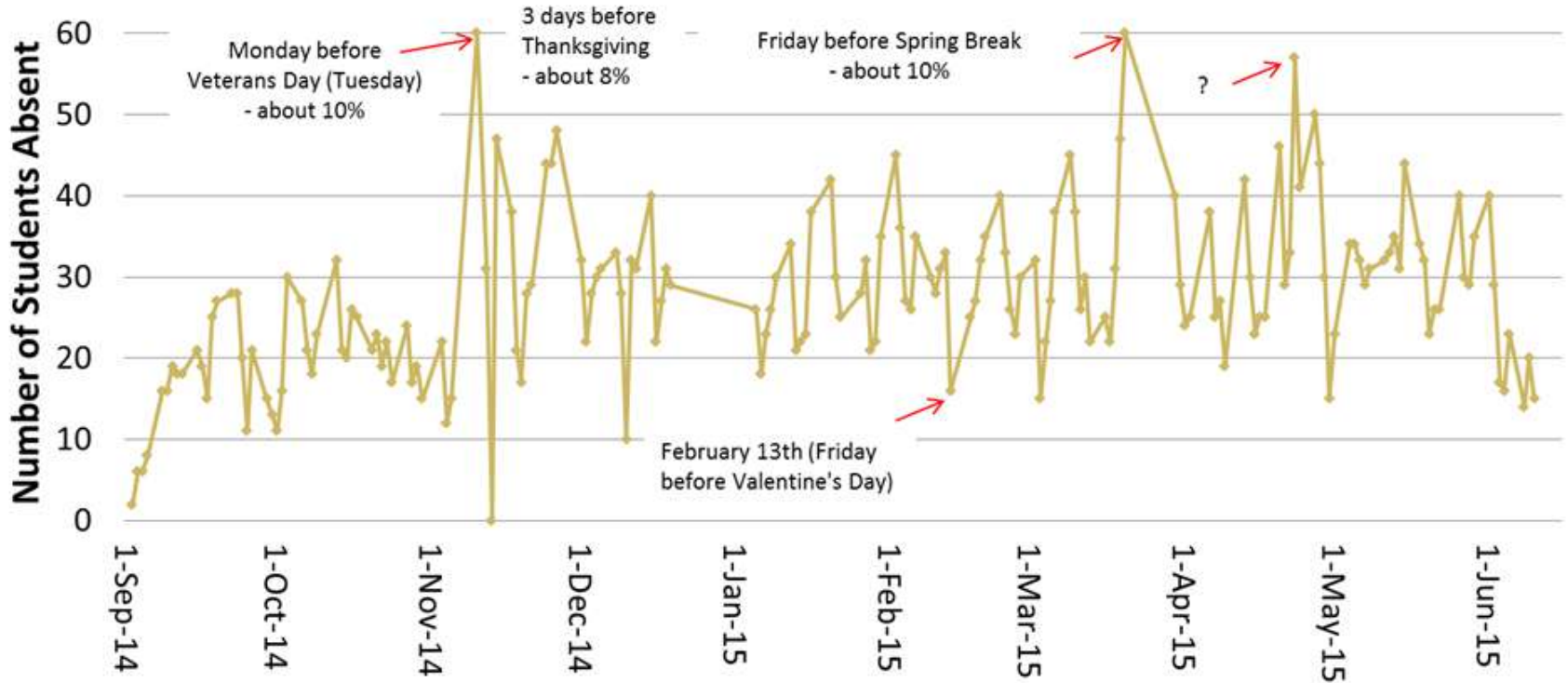
Challenge Assumptions

- Attendance is complex; aversion, myths & barriers
- Students and their families suffer the most when their students do not achieve

Understand Attendance Data

- Average Daily Membership (ADM) can mask the problem of chronic absenteeism.
- School districts that boast 95% ADM can still present with dozens of chronically absent students.
- Attendance in the early grades is just as important as attendance in middle and high school.

Year at a Glance: All Absences



Gather Partners

- Schools may not be able to address the causes of chronic absence alone.
- Engage community partners that can help support the work (eg. engaging parents and bringing in health expertise).

Get more information about the problem

This can include talking with students and parents about this issue, looking at data that can identify chronically absent students and conducting an audit of your school's attendance policies and practices.

- *Ex. Attendance Audit (Scott Perry)*

TIER 3: Students chronically truant and/or missing 20% or more of current or prior year

- Intensive case management with coordination of public agency and legal response as needed

**TIER 2 :
Students missing 10-19%**

- Provide personalized early outreach
- Meet with student/family to develop plan
 - Offer attendance Mentor/Buddy

**TIER 1:
All students**

- Recognize good and Improved attendance
- Educate & engage students and families
 - Monitor attendance data
- Clarify attendance expectations and goals
- Establish positive and engaging school climate

Determine a range of strategies to support a culture of attendance in your school

Best practices

- Welcoming students by name
- Providing breakfast after the bell
- Celebrating good (not great!) attendance
- Calling home when a student does not make it to school
- Every child has at least one adult they are connected to in the school
- Build a safety net under students who struggle the most

Resources

- Attendance Works
<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/>
Mapping the Early Attendance Gap <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Mapping-the-Early-Attendance-Gap-Final-4.pdf>
- Upstream Public Health: <https://www.upstreampublichealth.org/news/upstream-releases-chronic-absenteeism-review-paper>

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