

# School Improvement Conference

## Chronic Absenteeism

June 12-13, 2019

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Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement

## VISION

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To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

## MISSION

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To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
**STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

1

All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas



2

Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career



3

Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program



4

Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders



5

Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes



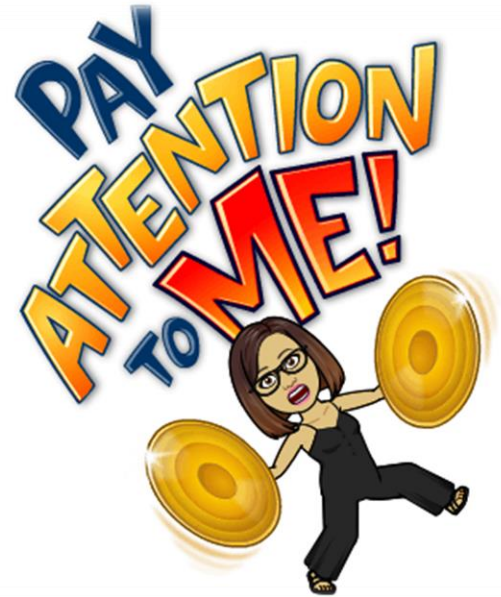
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Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher



# Session Norms

- Silence your cell phones
- Please check and/or reply to emails during the scheduled breaks
- Be an active participant
- Do not hesitate to ask questions



# Learning Objectives

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What is **Chronic Absenteeism**

How to **Address Chronic Absenteeism**

What are the **Root Causes**

Why are **Relationships Important**

How can school district personnel **Impact Student Behavior**

How to differentiate **Consequences vs Interventions**

# Our Role as Educators

“

Teachers have three loves:  
love of learning, love  
of learners, and the love  
of bringing the first two  
loves together.

SCOTT HAYDEN

# Fixed vs Growth Mindset

**Mindsets are determined by existing structures...which stands in the way of change**

## Growth mindset

Embraces challenges

Accepts criticism and negative feedback as constructive

Equates reward with effort

Persists in the face of setbacks

Never gives up

Learns from failure

"Talent is developed"

"What more can I do?"



## Fixed mindset

Avoids challenges

Rejects criticism and is hurt by negative feedback

Expects reward without effort

Lets setbacks derail them

Gives up easily

To fail once is to fail completely

"I'm no good at this"

"Why should I bother?"



*"The pessimist sees  
difficulty in every  
opportunity. The  
optimist sees  
opportunity in every  
difficulty."*

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WINSTON CHURCHILL

[thegoalchaser.com](http://thegoalchaser.com)



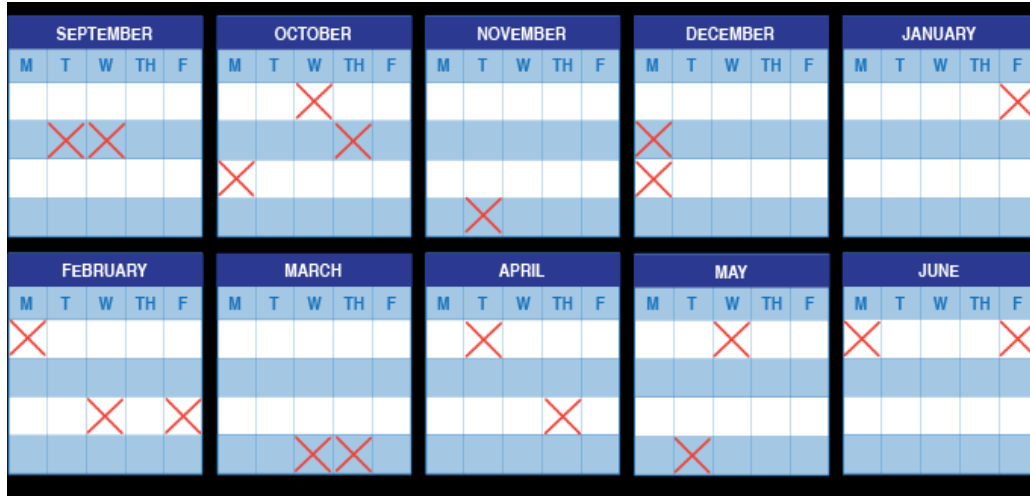




# CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

# Chronic Absenteeism Defined

**Chronic absenteeism** is typically defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year - approximately 18 days a year, or just two days every month



# Average Daily Attendance vs Chronic Absenteeism



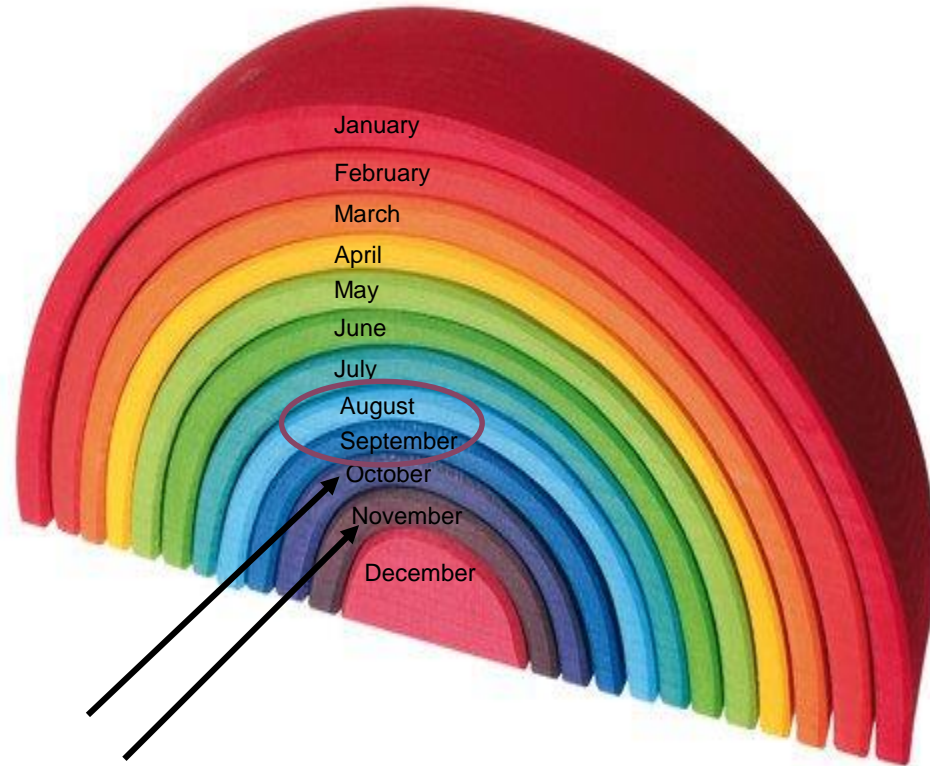
# Average Daily Attendance

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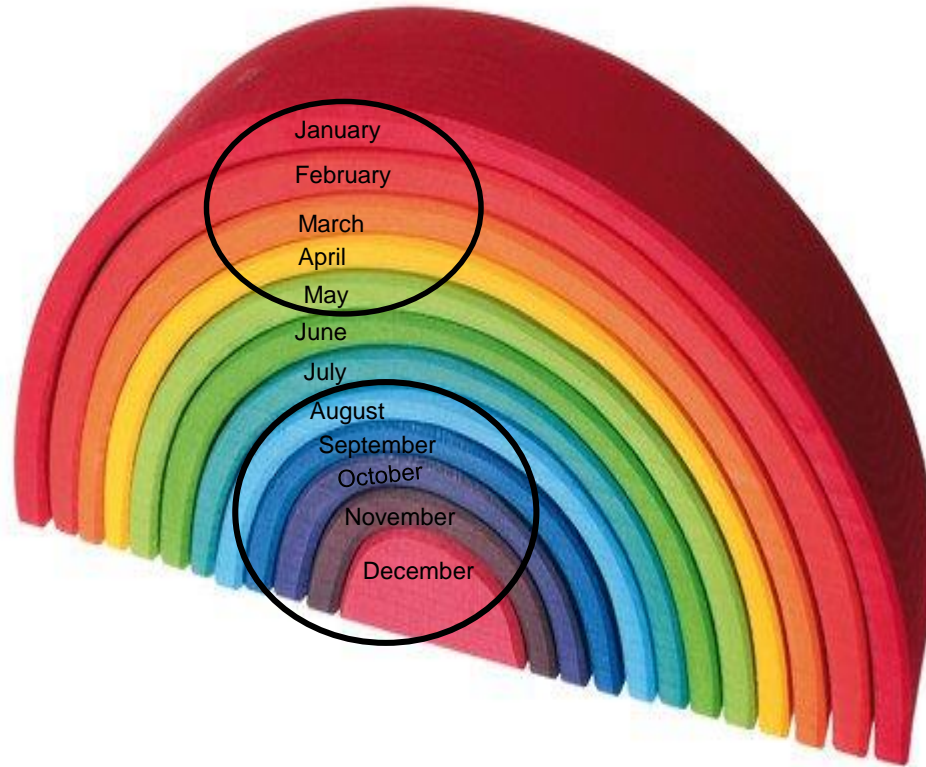
The percent of enrolled students who attend school each day. While the average daily attendance rate has been used for reporting purposes for many years, the use of a single average measure tends to mask significant attendance problems.

# Mississippi's ADA-Snapshot in Time

Effective with fiscal year 2011, the State Department of Education shall determine the percentage change from the prior year of each year of each school district's average of months two (2) and three (3) ADA.

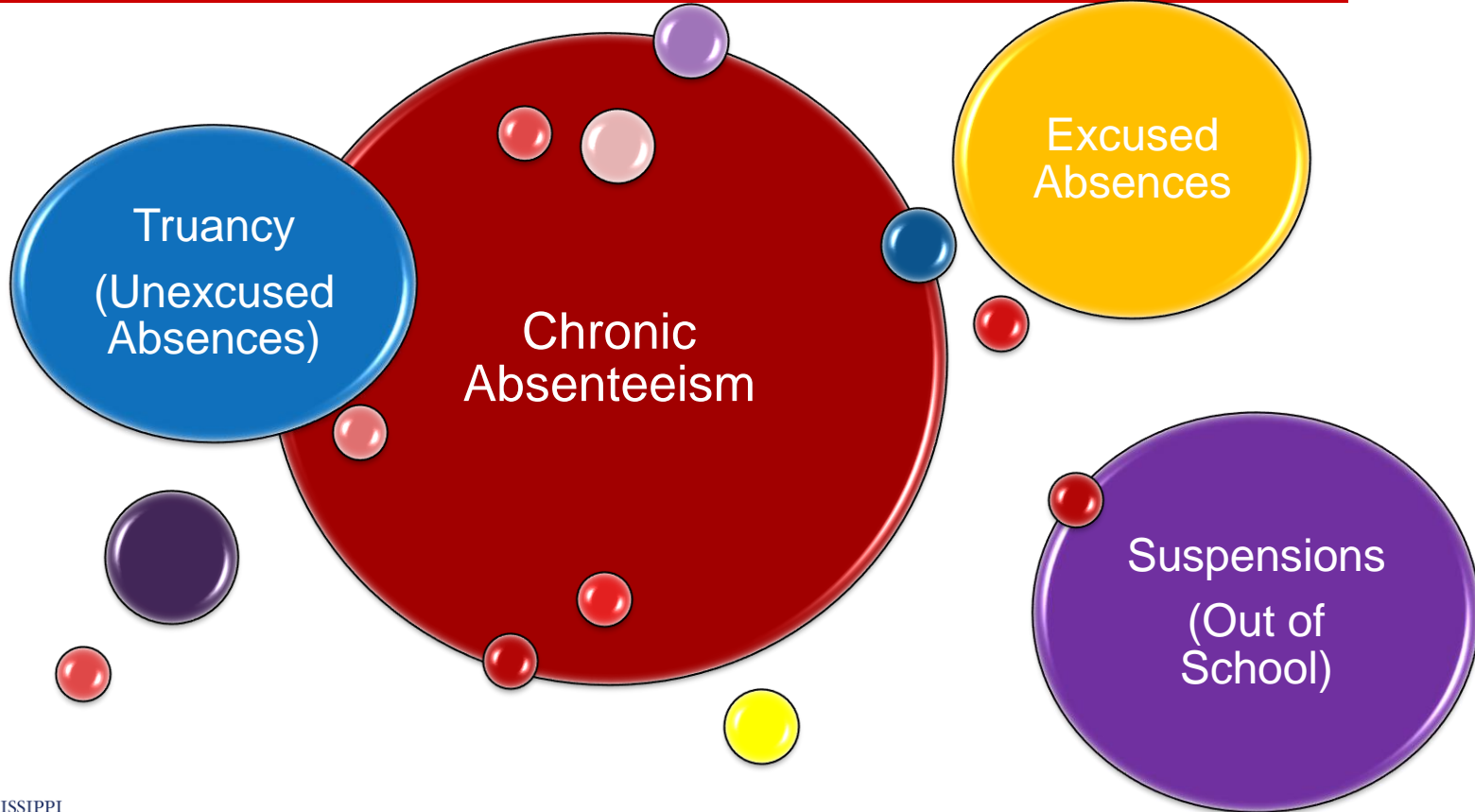


# Chronic Absenteeism-Whole Year





# Chronic Absenteeism



# Federal Calculations Include:

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- ✓ Students enrolled in more than one school will be included in the report.
- ✓ Any student enrolled in a school for at least 10 days must be included in the calculation.
- ✓ Any student absent 10% or more of the time that he/she was enrolled in any school will be included in the report.
- ✓ Any student who misses 50% or more of a school day will be counted as absent starting with the 2018-2019 school year.

# Compulsory School Attendance-Mississippi Code 37-13-91

Mississippi law requires children from ages 6-17 years old to attend a public school, private school, or to receive home-based instruction.



# Three (3) Tardy Rule



No Way



Certainly Not

By No  
Means

nee  
não  
niet  
nein  
nahi  
voch  
non

# Truant Defined

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Truant – a student that has accumulated five (5) or more unlawful absences in a school year, excluding suspension and expulsion days.

Habitually Truant – a student who has accumulated twelve (12) or more unlawful absences, excluding suspension and expulsion days, in a school year, which shall result in the filing of a petition in a court of competent jurisdiction by the school attendance officer.

# Unlawful Absence

- ✓ An "unlawful absence" is an absence during a school day by a compulsory-school-age child, which absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance.
- ✓ An unlawful absence is any compulsory school-age child who is absent thirty-seven percent (37%) or more of a school day, which the absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance.

# Non-Compulsory

- ✓ If a compulsory-school-age student turns seventeen by December 31st they are no longer compulsory on January 1st.
- ✓ If a compulsory-school-age student turns seventeen by Sept 1 they are no longer compulsory.





# Chronic Absenteeism vs Compulsory School Attendance

## Chronic Absenteeism

- Incorporates all absences: excused, unexcused and suspensions of **ALL** enrolled students regardless of age.

## Compulsory Attendance

- The law that mandates any ***minor between the ages of 6 -17 (age 5 if enrolled in a full-day kindergarten program)*** to be enrolled in a private, public or home school.

# Truancy vs Chronic Absenteeism

TRUANCY

Counts only  
**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

**EMPHASIZES COMPLIANCE**  
with school rules and compulsory  
attendance law

Relies on **LEGAL AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE** solutions

VS

Counts **ALL ABSENCES**:  
excused, unexcused, and  
suspensions

**EMPHASIZES ACADEMIC  
IMPACT** of missed days

Uses **INTERVENTIONS** and  
positive strategies

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

# Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

**Evidence is Clear:** Chronic Absenteeism Undercuts School Improvement Efforts for the Students Who Need Them the Most



# Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

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Decreases Impact of Pre-k and K on School Readiness

Decreases Third Grade Reading Performance

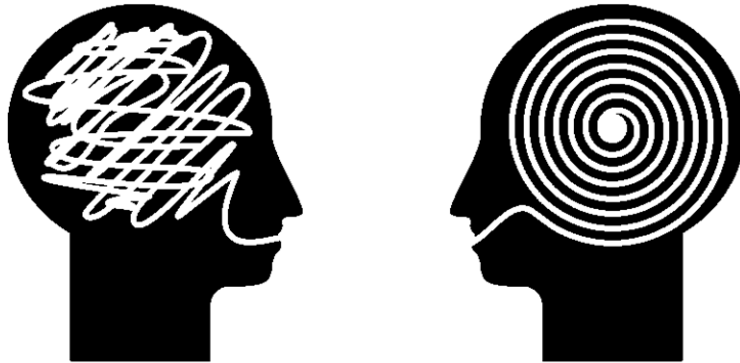
Decreases Eight Grade Math Performance

Decreases High School Graduation Rates

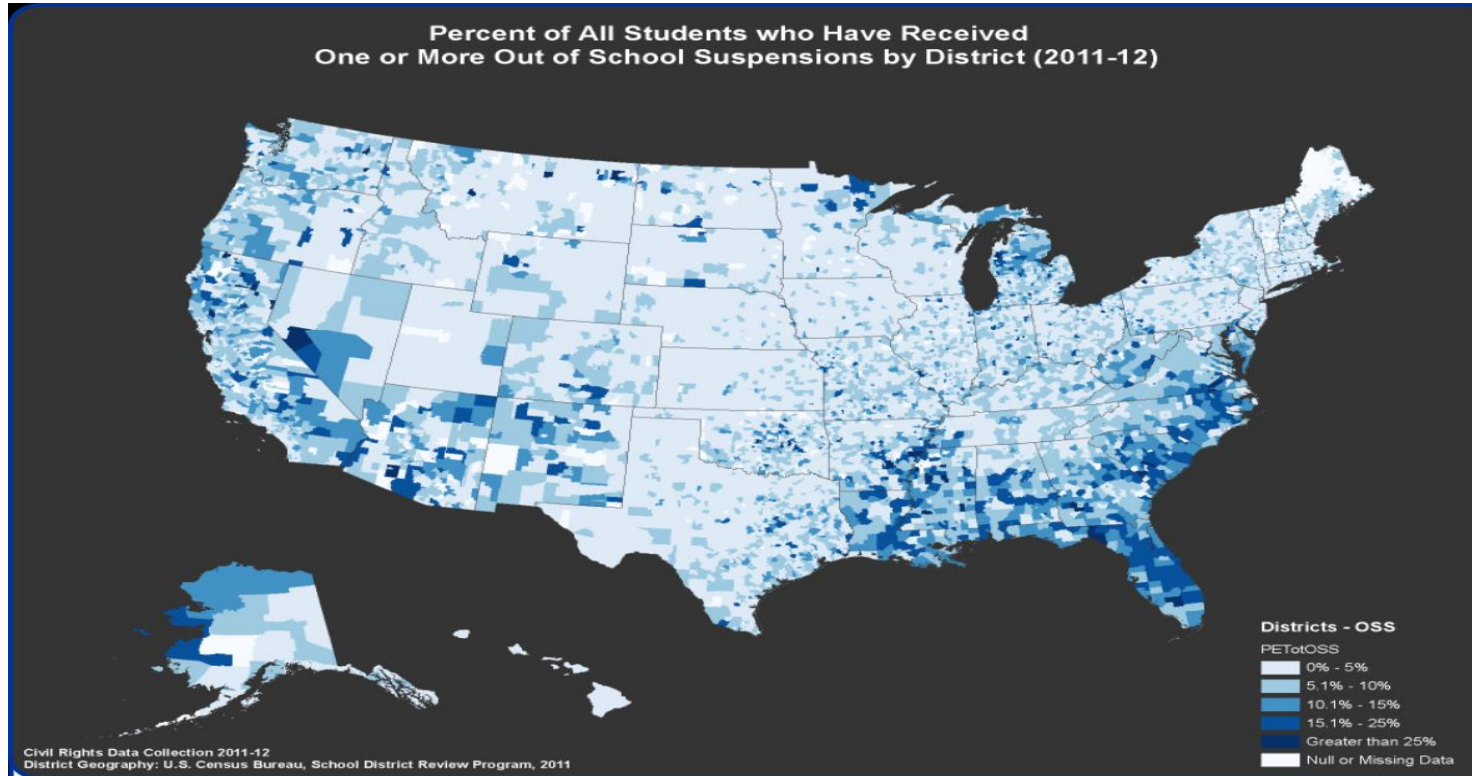
Decreases College and Career Readiness

# First Step

## Understand the Scale and Scope of the Chronic Absenteeism Challenge in Your School/Class

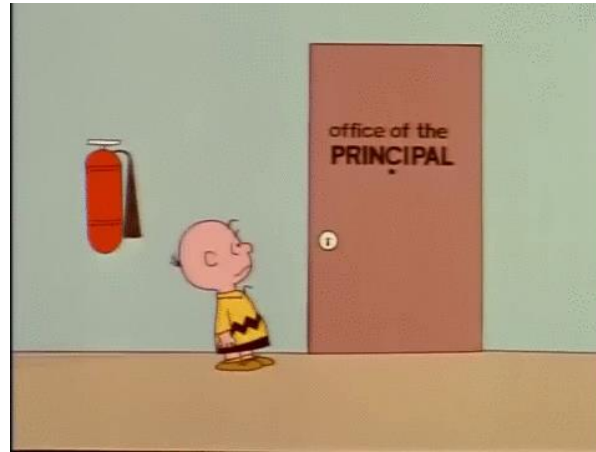


# Suspensions



# Suspension

Suspension (also known as temporary exclusion) is a mandatory leave assigned to a student as a form of punishment that can last anywhere from one day to ten days, during which time the student is not allowed to attend regular school lessons.



# Alternative Education Placement

Any compulsory-school-age child who has been suspended for more than ten (10) days or expelled from school, except for any student expelled for possession of a weapon or other felonious conduct.





If a child doesn't know how to read.....We **TEACH**

If a child doesn't know how to swim.....We **TEACH**

If a child doesn't know how to multiply....We **TEACH**

If a child doesn't know how to behave....We **PUNISH**

*John Herner*



The practices of suspensions and expulsions are not effective.

*(If such practices worked wouldn't we be doing less of them?)*



# In-School Suspension

A temporary change in placement from the regular classroom setting to a special classroom monitored by a district employee.



# Discipline Pitfalls

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- Zero Tolerance Policies
- Abundance Number of Other Punitive Measures
- Inability or Time to Unpack Root Cause of Discipline
- Inappropriate skills in developing interventions that are SMART

# School to Prison Pipeline



# SMART Goals

GOAL:

S

**Specific**

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why do I want to accomplish this?
- What are the requirements?
- What are the constraints?

M

**Measurable**

- How will I measure my progress?
- How will I know when the goal is accomplished?

A

**Achievable**

- How can the goal be accomplished?
- What are the logical steps I should take?

R

**Relevant**

- Is this a worthwhile goal?
- Is this the right time?
- Do I have the necessary resources to accomplish this goal?
- Is this goal in line with my long term objectives?

T

**Time-Bound**

- How long will it take to accomplish this goal?
- When is the completion of this goal due?
- When am I going to work on this goal?

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study examines the health and social effects of ACEs throughout the lifespan among 17,421 members of the Kaiser Health Plan in San Diego County.





**NADINE BURKE HARRIS:  
HOW CHILDHOOD TRAUMA  
AFFECTS HEALTH  
ACROSS A LIFETIME**

*SwanWaters.com*



# Trauma Informed Decisions

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- The staff understands the prevalence and impact of trauma on their students and themselves.
- The district and/or school strives for physical, emotional, and social well-being of all students.
- The school is inclusive and connects students to the community instead of excluding them.

# Trauma Informed Decisions

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- The staff works collaboratively to support students.
- The district leaders adapt services and supports based on needs of students.



# Opening Strong

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- What can you do the first 20 days of school to encourage students to attend regularly?
- What can you do to express the importance of school to students and parents?
- What incentives can be provided?
- What weekly recognition can occur during the first 20 days?

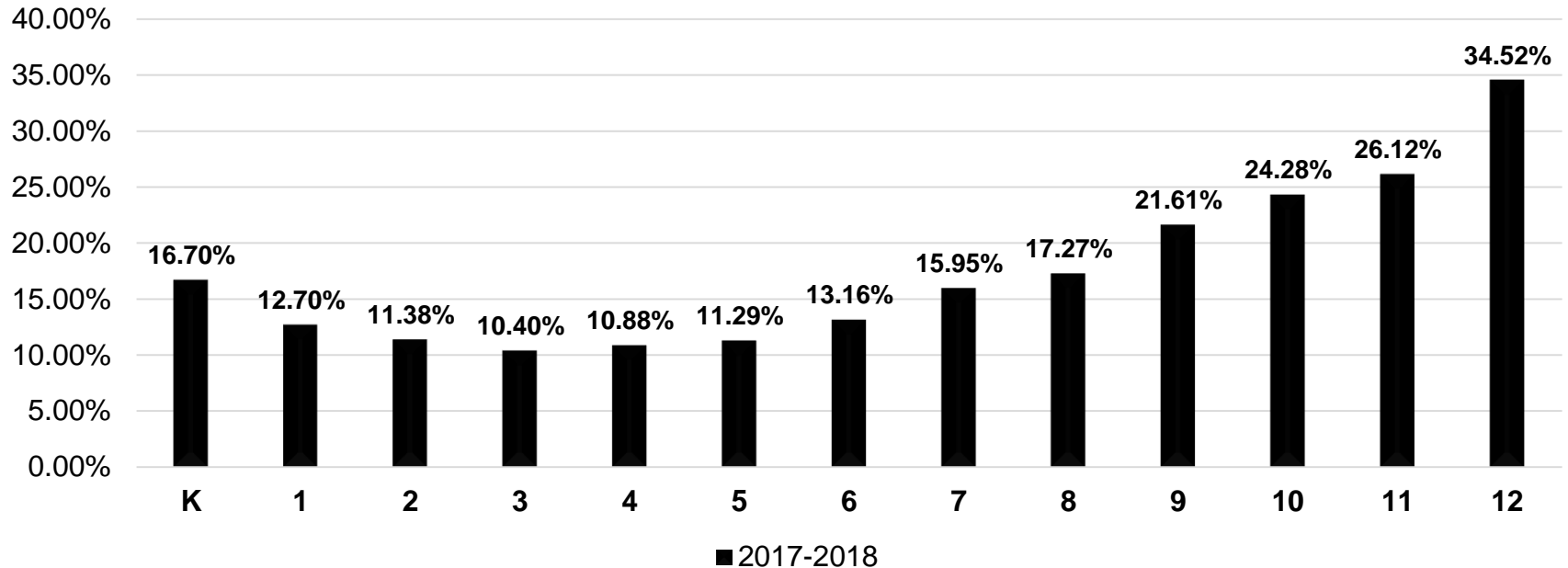
# Chronic Absenteeism Rate-Mississippi

**2017-2018**



# Mississippi Rates by Grade 2017-2018

## Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Grade 2017-2018



# Student Engagement

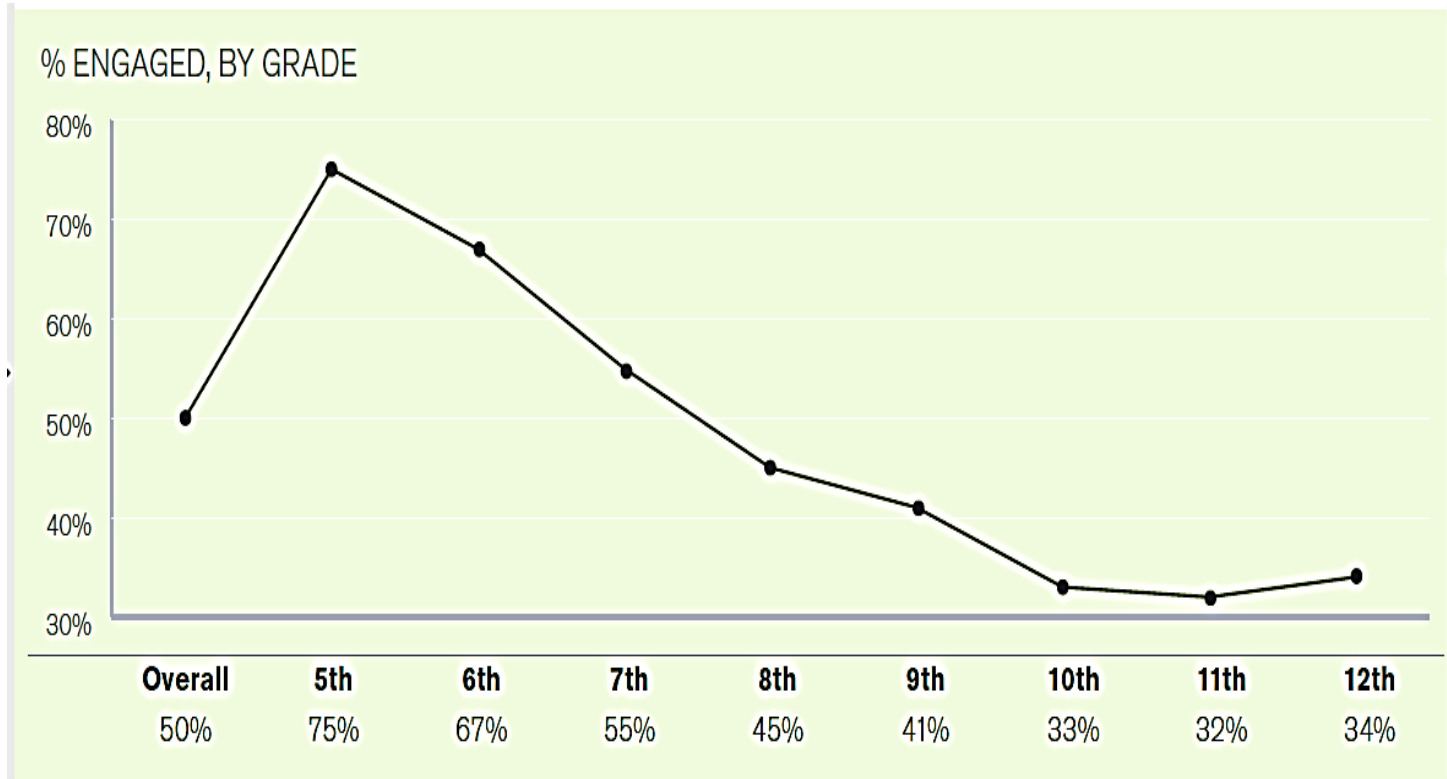
Engagement varies by grade. It is high in elementary school and declines through the middle grades and early high school years.

Decline directly linked to student's perceptions about the value placed on good schoolwork. 74% of 5th graders said “In the last 7 days I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.” Compared to only 31% of 9th graders.

Also, sharp decline between 5th and 8th grade in “My teachers make me feel that my schoolwork is important.”

Students also report significant decline in how frequently teachers make them feel excited about the future.

# Decrease in Student Engagement



Source: <http://www.gallup.com/services/189926/student-poll-2015-results.aspx> (accessed September 26, 2016)

# Teacher Absences/Student Absences

**3,300 Minutes**

**of Direct Instruction**

**X**

**2**

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**6,600 Minutes**

**55 Hours**

**of Direct Instruction**

**X**

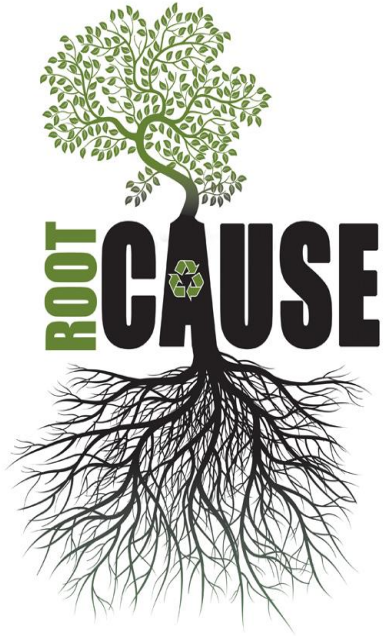
**2**

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**110 Hours**



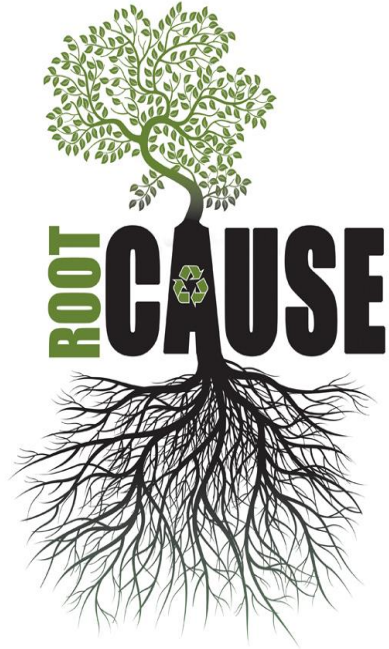
# Getting to the Root Cause



IF you do the same thing  
over and over, and  
expect to get different  
results, . . .

**It might be time to try  
another approach.**

*Let's get to the Root  
Cause.*



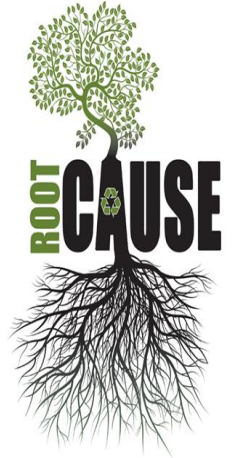
# Digging Deeper

Root Cause – Deepest underlying cause(s) of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if resolved, would eliminate or substantially reduce the symptom.

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) – a tool used both reactively, to investigate an adverse event that already has occurred, and proactively, to analyze and improve processes and systems before they break down (Preuss, 2003).

Data Analysis – the process of gathering, reviewing, and evaluating data.

Symptoms – the noticeable gap between expectations and reality; the “red flag” that draws attention to the issue.



# Root Cause Analysis

Problem: Ran through a red light.

Why?

Late for work.

Why?

Woke up late.

Why?

Alarm clock broke.

Why?

Didn't check if it worked.

Why?

Forgot to do it last night.

# System Planning Process

*Problem solving approach asks 4 questions:*

- ***Where are we now?***
- ***Where are we going?***
- ***How will we get there?***
- ***What is holding us back?***



# Moving in the Right Direction



# What's the Root Cause



# Chronic Absenteeism Scenario

Principal-Elementary School



Chronic Absenteeism Rate-15.40%



Excused Absences-Illness



Respiratory Related

Environmental

Field Rats/Snakes/Dusty Blinds



# Obtaining Necessary Data Points

District administrators could assist with understanding the chronic absenteeism issues in schools and/or district.

- ✓ How does the administrator perceive the importance of attendance in elementary, middle or high school?
  - a. Excused Absences
  - b. Unexcused
  - c. Suspensions



# Data Needed to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

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- ✓ How do chronic absenteeism rates differ across schools, grades and subgroups within the district?
- ✓ How many of the absences can be attributed to excused, unexcused or disciplinary reasons?
- ✓ Are there periods within the school calendar that are particularly problematic?

# Data Needed to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

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- ✓ How are absences addressed? Does office staff or the teacher contact the family?
- ✓ Are there any issues district or school specific?
- ✓ What are the effective or ineffective methods utilized by the school and/or district?

# Reducing Chronic Absenteeism

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- ✓ Realistic goals and timelines
- ✓ Annual targets-target the most challenging areas
- ✓ Attendance must be part of the School Improvement Plan
- ✓ Communication that provides definitions of excused and unexcused absences
- ✓ Daily reminders of expectations (i.e. morning announcements)

# Interventions

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- ✓ Create an Early Warning Process
- ✓ Utilize Counselors
- ✓ Classroom Management
- ✓ Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- ✓ Restorative Justice
- ✓ Wrap Around Services

# MISSISSIPPI

LET'S

# STRIVE

FOR LESS THAN

# FIVE

GOOD ATTENDANCE LEADS TO...

Reading well by the  
end of 3rd grade

Passing important  
courses

Staying on track  
for graduation

Earning  
college degrees

Succeeding in  
the workplace

# Strive For Less Than Five Campaign

- ✓ Purpose for Awareness Campaign
- ✓ Increase knowledge of chronic absenteeism
- ✓ Emphasize the impact of chronic absenteeism on student success



# Strive For Less Than Five Campaign

- ✓ Decrease the chronic absenteeism rates in districts/schools
- ✓ Emphasize the importance of school attendance
- ✓ Provide resources for the various stakeholders



# YOU ARE A MANDATED REPORTER



As school employee, you are a mandated reporter of child abuse. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, it is your legal obligation to report it. Reporting to a principal, superintendent, counselor or other teachers does NOT meet your mandated responsibilities and is punishable by law.

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-353(7): Any attorney, physician, dentist, intern, resident, nurse, psychologist, social worker, family protection worker, family protection specialist, child caregiver, minister, law enforcement officer, public or private school employee or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child, shall cause an oral report to be made immediately to the Department of Child Protection Services.

## CALL NOW

Mississippi Centralized Intake  
**1-800-222-8000**

OR SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT TO:  
[www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov](http://www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov)



Call your local law enforcement agency or 911  
if the situation is a life-threatening emergency.







# Questions & Closing Thoughts



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