

Reducing Drop-Out:

The Imperative for California To Address Chronic Absence Starting in the Early Grades

Presentation to California State Board of Education

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The Chronic Absence and
Attendance Partnership

Defining Key Terms

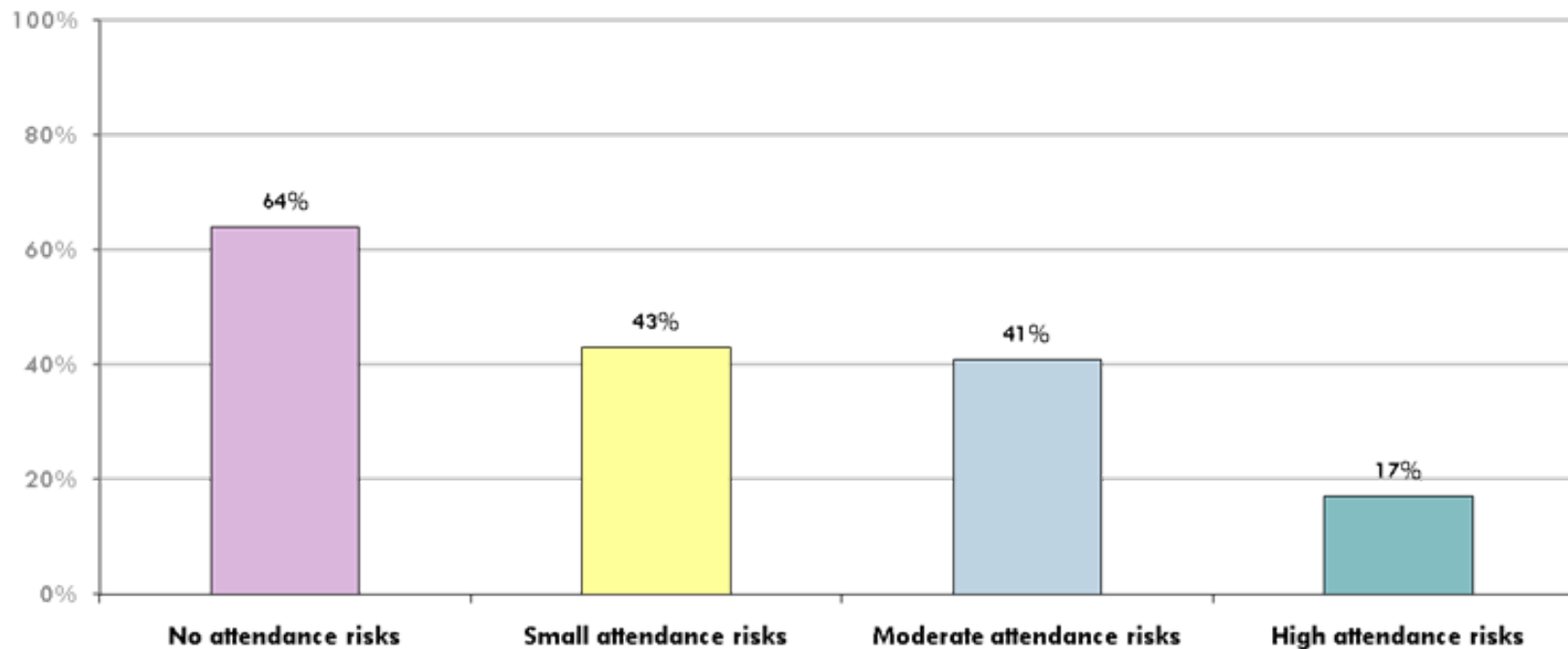
- ❑ **Average Daily Attendance:** The percentage of enrolled students who attend school each day.
- ❑ **Satisfactory Attendance:** Missing 5% or less of school in an academic year.
- ❑ **Chronic Absence:** Missing 10% or more of school in an academic year for any reason—excused or unexcused.
- ❑ **Severe Chronic Absence:** Missing 20% or more days of school per year – approximately two months of school.
- ❑ **Truancy:** Typically refers *only* to unexcused absences and is defined by each state. In CA, it is missing 3 days of school without a valid excuse, or being late to class 3 times without a valid excuse.
- ❑ **Chronic Truancy:** As of last year, chronic truancy is defined as missing 10% or more of school due to **only** unexcused absences.

Myths to Dispel



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

Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and 1st Grade

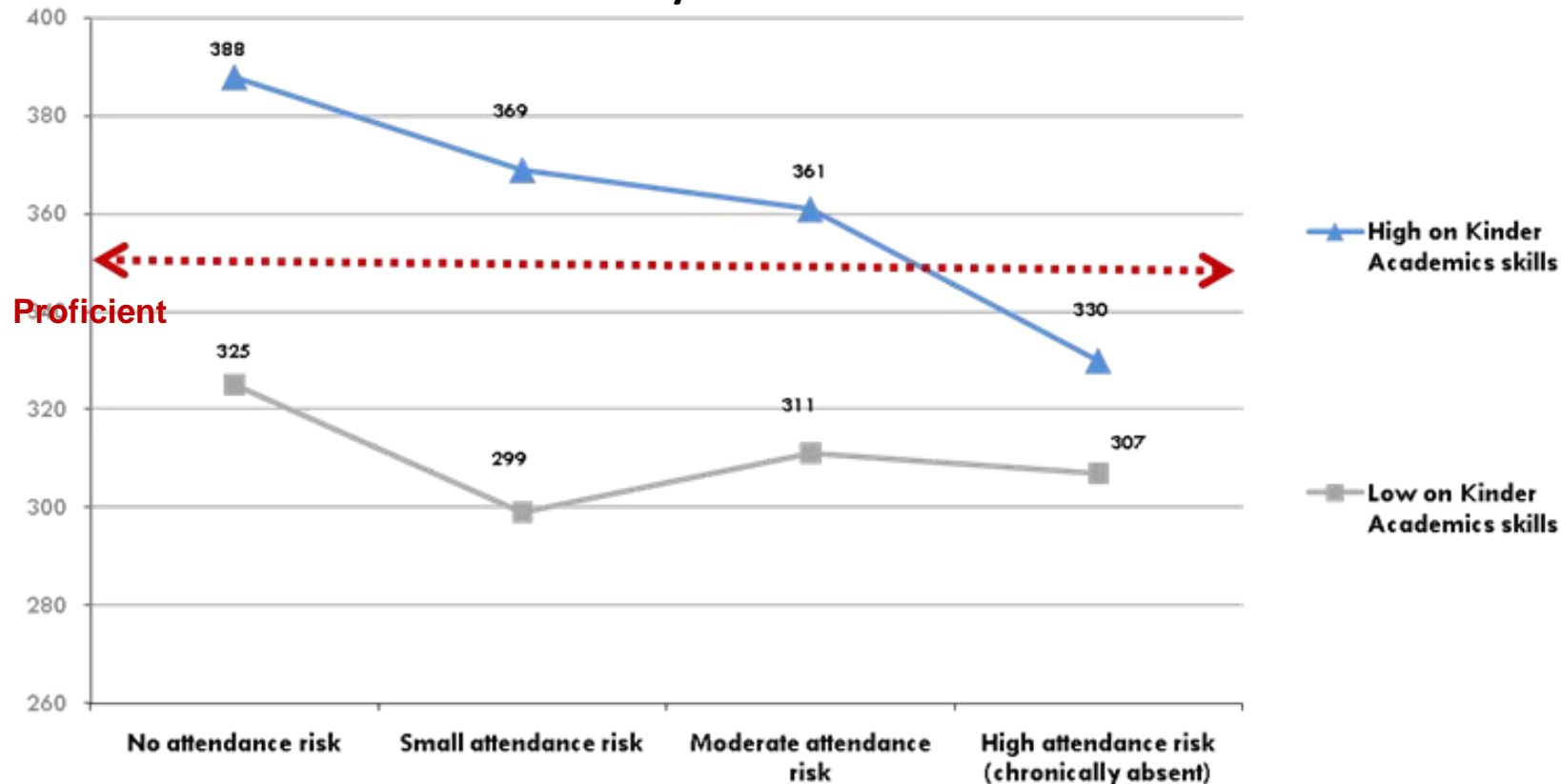


No risk	Missed less than 5% of school in K & 1 st t
Small risk	Missed 5-9% of days in both K & 1 st
Moderate risk	5-9% of days absent in 1 year & 10 % in 1 year
High risk	Missed 10% or more in K & 1 st

Source: Applied Survey Research & Attendance Works (April 2011)

School Readiness & Early Attendance Are Critical to Early School Success

3rd Grade ELA Test Scores By Attendance and School Readiness Level

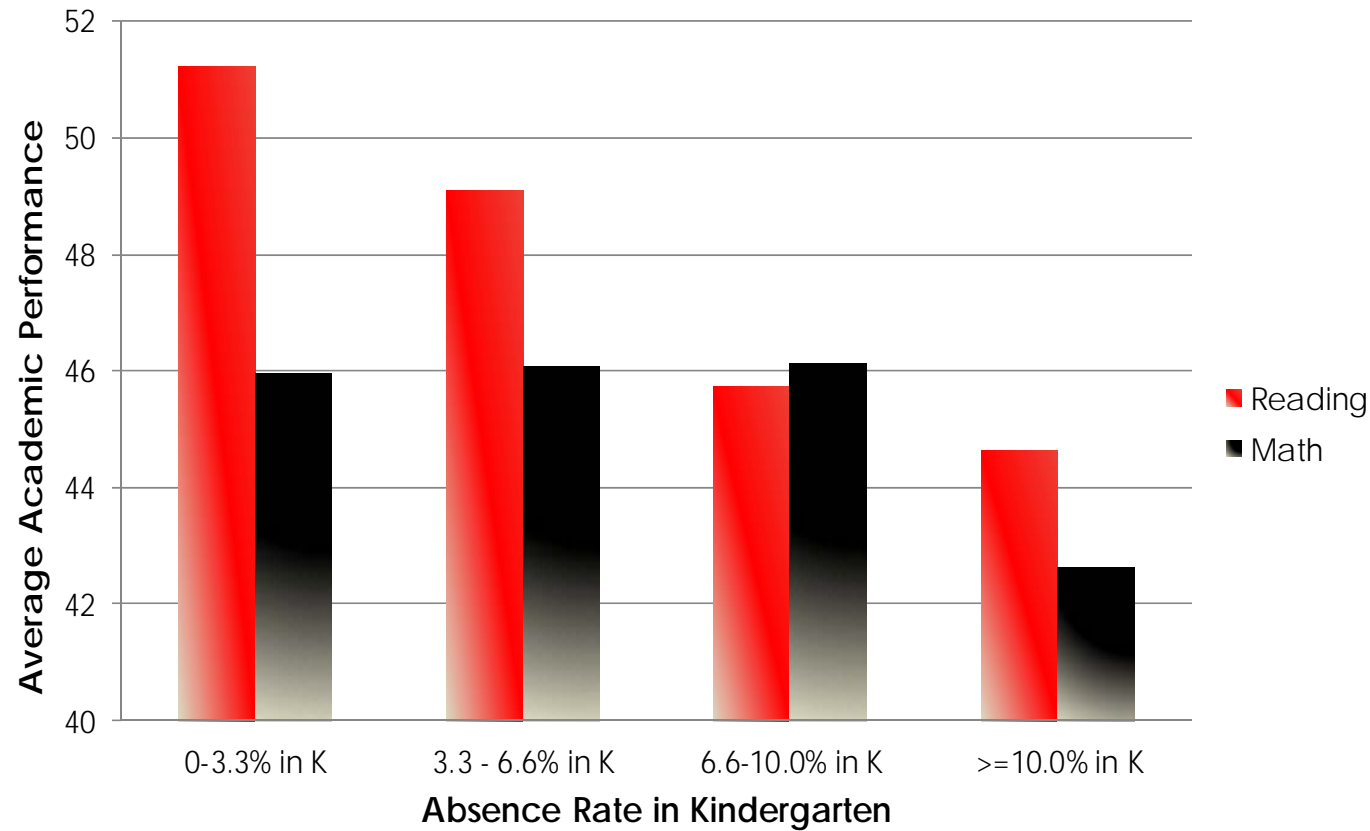


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The Long-term impact of Chronic Kindergarten Absence Is Most Troubling for Poor Children

5th Grade Math and Reading Performance By K Attendance



Source: ECLS-K data analyzed by National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)
Note: Average academic performance reflects results of direct cognitive assessments conducted for ECLS-K.

Chronic Absence is Especially Challenging for Low-Income Children

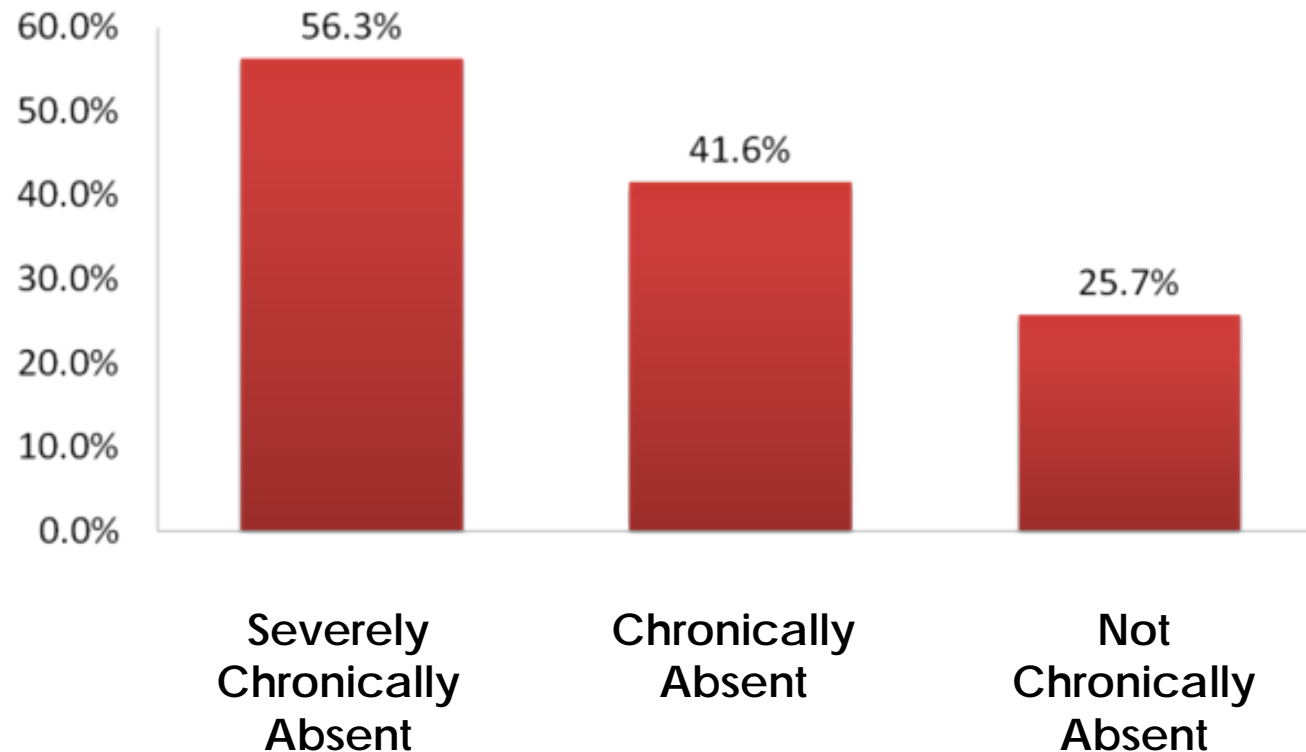
- ❑ Kindergarten and 1st grade can reduce the achievement gap for low-income vs. middle class students, but only if they attend school regularly. (Ready 2010)
- ❑ The negative impact of absences on literacy is **75% larger** for low-income children whose families often lack resources to make up lost time on task. (Ready 2010)
- ❑ Only **17% of low-income children** in the United States read proficiently by 4th grade. (NAEP 2009)

Chronic Absence is Especially Challenging for Low-Income Children

- ❑ Poor children are **4x** more likely to be chronically absent in K than their highest income peers. (Romero & Lee 2007)
- ❑ Children in poverty are more likely to lack basic health and safety supports that ensure a child is more likely to get to school. They often face:
 - **Unstable Housing**
 - **Limited Access to Health Care**
 - **Poor Transportation**
 - **Inadequate Food and Clothing**
 - **Lack of Safe Paths to School Due to Neighborhood Violence**
 - **Chaotic Schools with Poor Quality Programs, etc.**

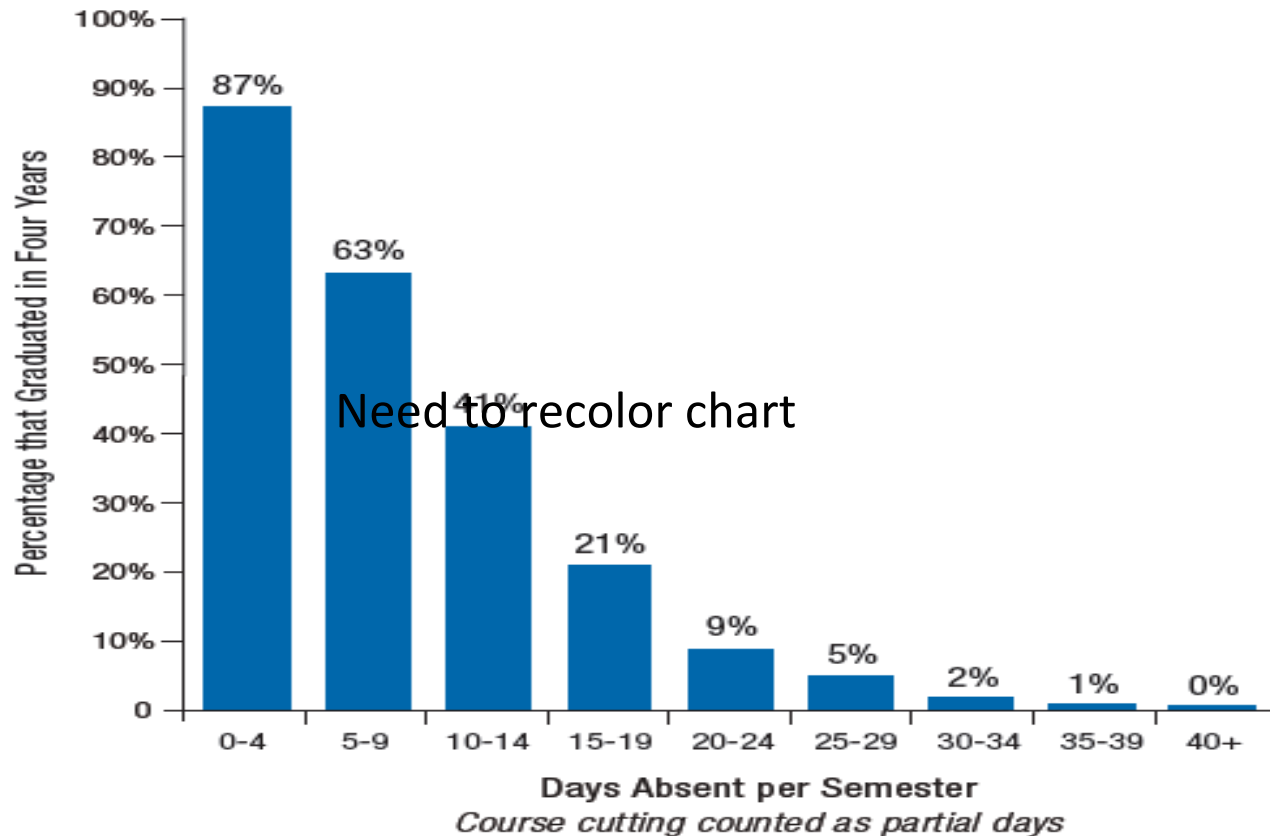
Chronically Absent 6th Graders Have Lower Graduation Rates

Dropout Rates by Sixth Grade Attendance
(Baltimore City Public Schools, 1990-2000 Sixth Grade Cohort)



Source: Baltimore Education Research Consortium SY 2009-2010

9th Grade Attendance Predicts Graduation for Students of All Economic Backgrounds

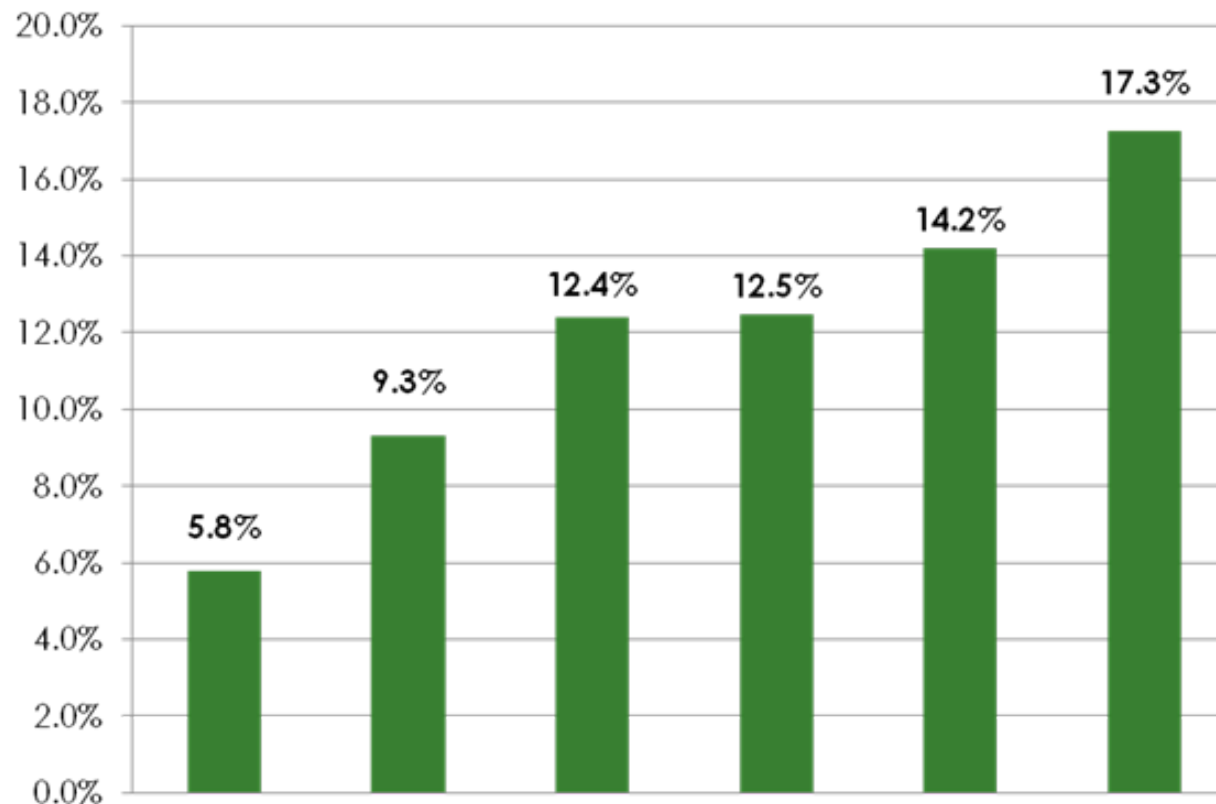


Note: This Chicago study found attendance was a stronger graduation predictor than 8th grade test scores.

Moving into Action Requires Knowing If Chronic Absence is a Problem

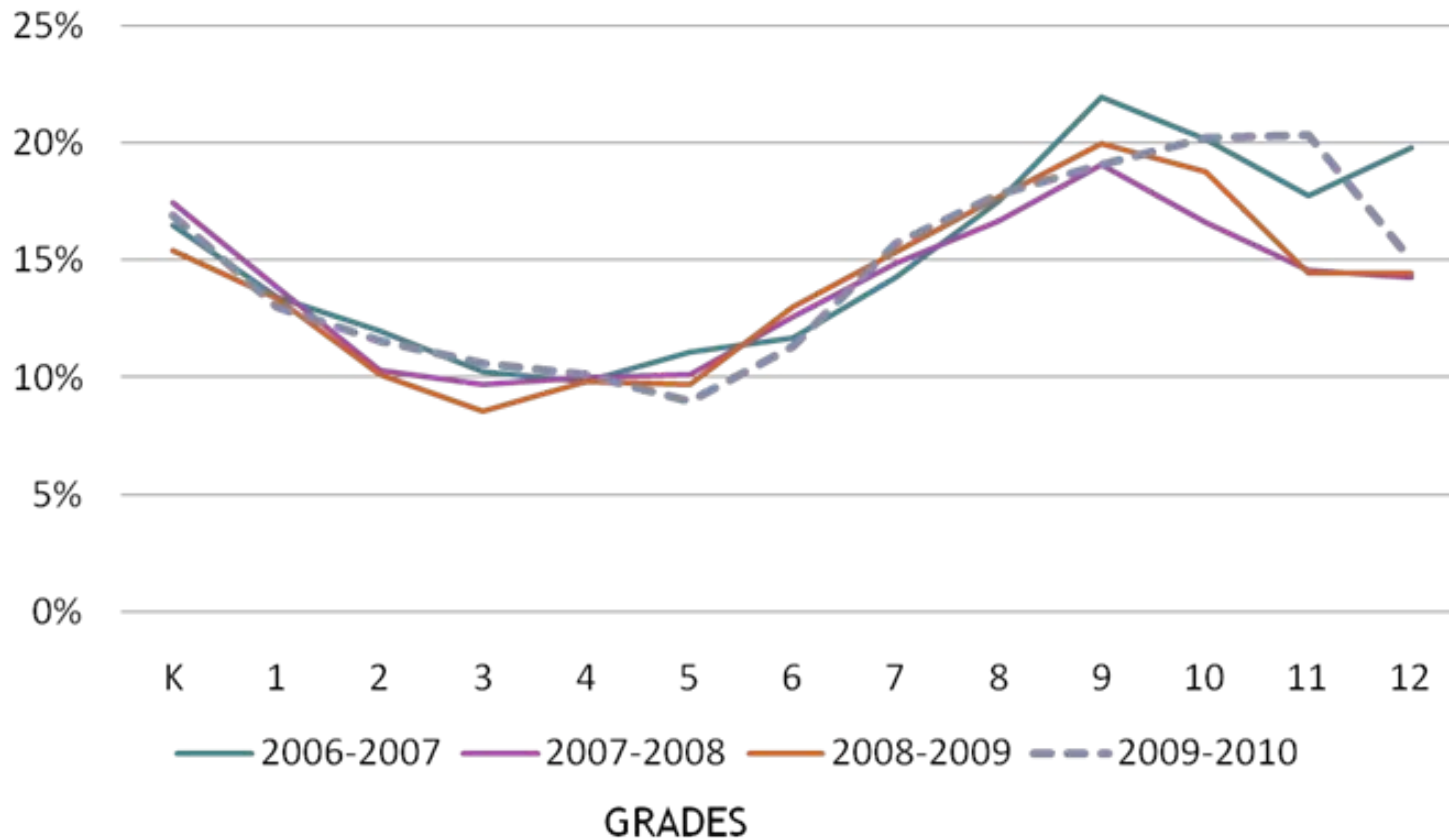
***Most Schools Only Track Average Daily Attendance and
Truancy. Both Can Mask Chronic Absence.***

Variation in Chronic Absence for Six Schools with 95% ADA in Oakland, CA



Emerging Data Shows High Levels

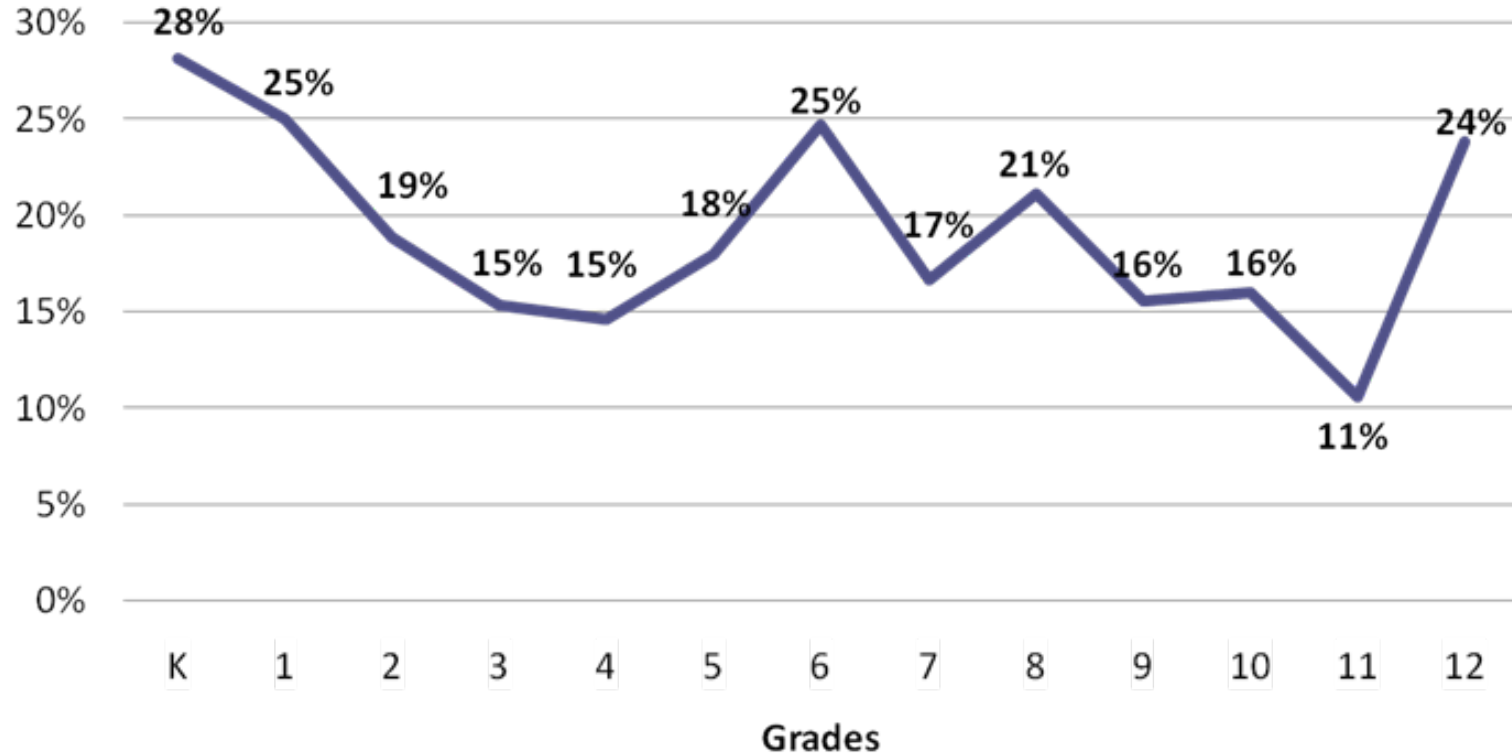
Over 14% (nearly 1 out of 7) are chronically absent
in Oakland Unified School District



If the 5,421 students chronically absent in 09/10 had each attended 6 more days, OUSD would have received more than \$1,147,000 in additional ADA.

Chronic Absence Found In Rural Not Just Urban Communities

Percent of Students Who Are Chronically Absent
Del Norte County Unified School District
(SY 09-10)



1 out of 6 (16%) students were chronically absent.

Data is Needed for Identifying Programmatic Solutions

- ❑ Chronic absence data (as well as other attendance measures) should be examined by classroom, grade, school, neighborhood or sub-population.
- ❑ If chronic absence is unusually high for a particular group of students, explore what might be common issues (unreliable transportation, community violence, asthma and other chronic diseases, poor access to health care, unnecessary suspension for non-violent offenses, lack of engaging curriculum, child care or afterschool programming, foreclosures, etc.)
- ❑ If chronic absence is unusually low for a high risk population, find out what they are doing that works.

Variation Helps Identify Good Practice and Need for Intervention

Chronic Absence Levels Among Oakland Public Schools

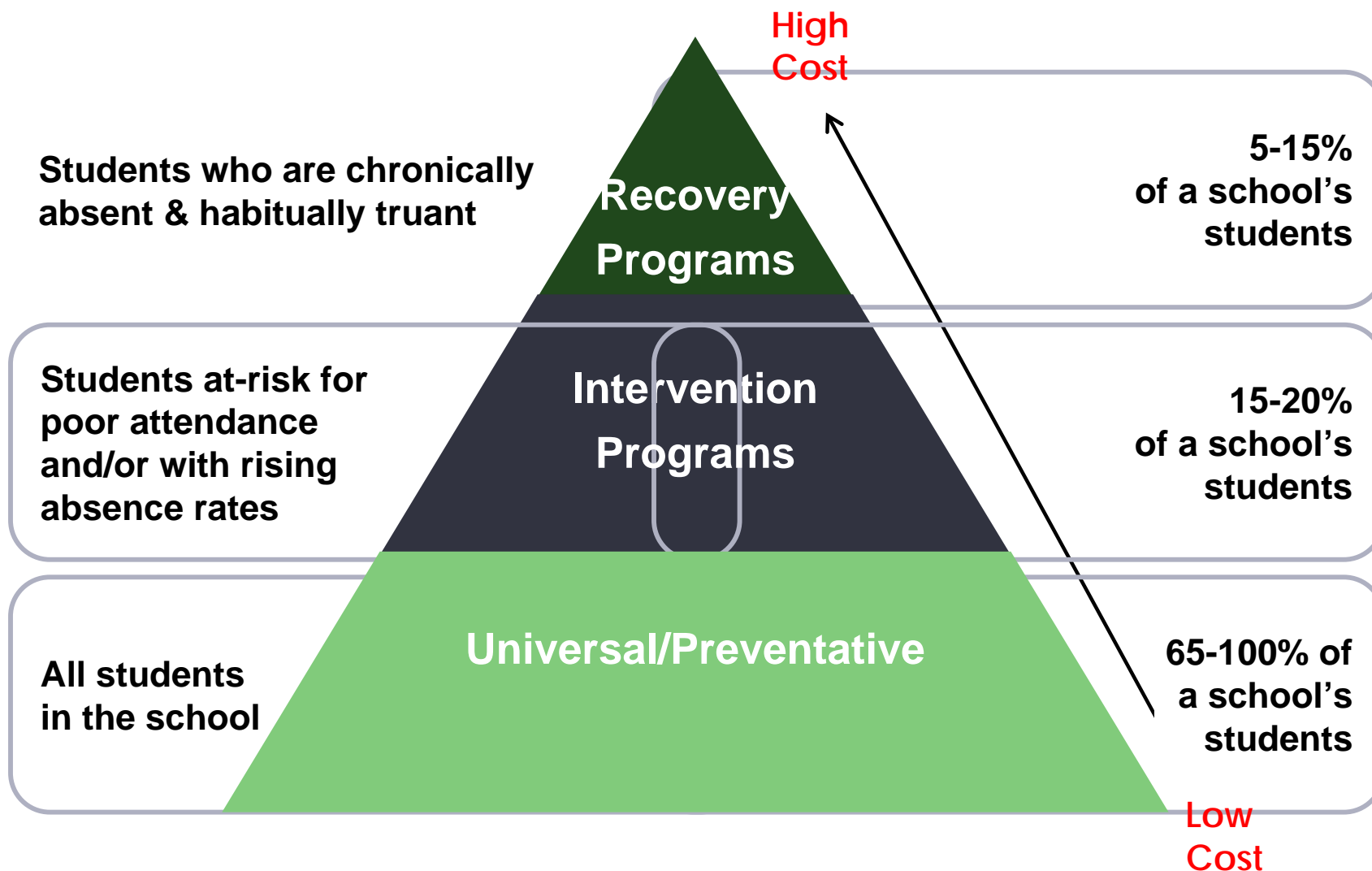
	Elementary	Middle	High School
# Schools with 0%-5% Chronic Absence	9	0	0
# Schools with 5.1%-10% Chronic Absence	17	4	1
# Schools with 10.1%-20% Chronic Absence	25	8	6
# Schools with >20.1% Chronic Absence	9	4	9
Total No. Schools	60	16	16
Highest % of Chronic Absence	31.5%	32.8%	42.1%
Lowest % of Chronic Absence	0.3%	6.9%	7.9%
Median	12.7%	14.9%	21.0%
Mean	11.9%	15.6%	22.4%

Schools + Communities CAN Make a Difference

Characteristics of Successful Attendance Initiatives

- ❑ Partner with community agencies to help families carry out their responsibility to get children to school.
- ❑ Make attendance a priority, set targets & monitor progress over time.
- ❑ Engage parents and students in identifying and addressing school, family, and community issues that contribute to chronic absence.
- ❑ Clearly communicate expectations for attendance to students and families.
- ❑ Begin early, ideally in Pre-K.
- ❑ Combine targeted interventions with universal strategies that nurture an engaged learning environment, build a culture of attendance and ensure physical health and safety at school.
- ❑ Offer positive supports before punitive action.

Increased Attendance Involves a 3-Tiered Approach that Fits with Most Reform Efforts



Districts Can Provide:

1. **Leadership.** Set attendance goals and district policy. (Note: CSBA has sample attendance policy.)
2. **Data.** Ensure attendance data is accurately entered and reports on attendance including chronic absence are widely available & regularly reviewed.
3. **Attendance Incentives.** Promote effective school wide approaches to recognizing good and improved attendance.
4. **Parent Education & Mutual Support.** Invest in educating parents about the importance of attendance.
5. **Individual and Programmatic Intervention.** Ensure individual intervention & outreach combined with systemic problem solving.
6. **Community Partnerships.** Help schools identify & forge partnerships with community agencies that can help address barriers to attendance.
7. **Peer Learning & Professional Development:** Create opportunities for school staff to learn about the importance of attendance and share effective strategies for improving student attendance.

CDE Can Assist Through:

1. **Data Collection.** Add attendance to the state longitudinal student data base. CA is one of only 5 state without attendance in its longitudinal student database.
2. **Technical Support.** Strengthen capacity of districts to track and calculate chronic absence and use poor attendance , combined with other early warning signs to trigger individual and programmatic intervention.
3. **Peer Learning & Recognition:** Identify and create opportunities to share promising and effective strategies across districts.
4. **Accountability.** Encourage county offices of education and districts to include chronic absence in data reports and help schools address chronic absence in their annual improvement plans
5. **Reporting.** Publish reports that feature multiple attendance measures and show rates by district, school, grade and student sub-populations.

Why Attendance, Starting Early Matters

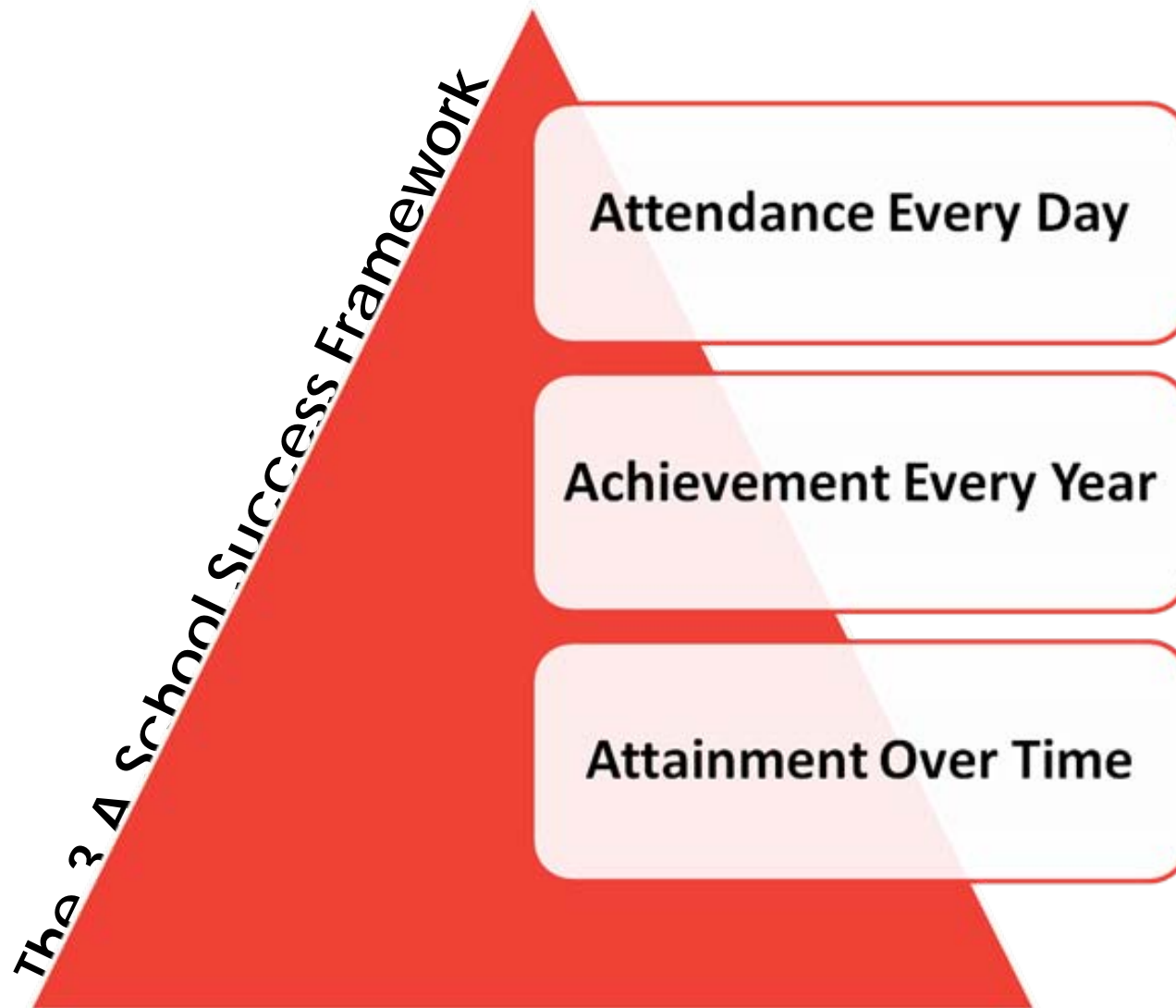
Increased Student Absences are:

- An early warning sign of potential drop-outs
- Predictive of academic failure
- A flag for student disengagement and struggling schools
- Costly for each school, district and surrounding community

Measures of Attendance are:

- Available
- Easily understood
- Predictors of failure in school
- Indicators of effective engagement strategies by educators
- Shared outcomes that facilitate collaboration

An Antidote to Drop-Out



Developed by Annie E. Casey Foundation & America's Promise Alliance
For more info go to www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement