

# LCPS Attendance Success Initiative 2018-2019

## Program Purpose

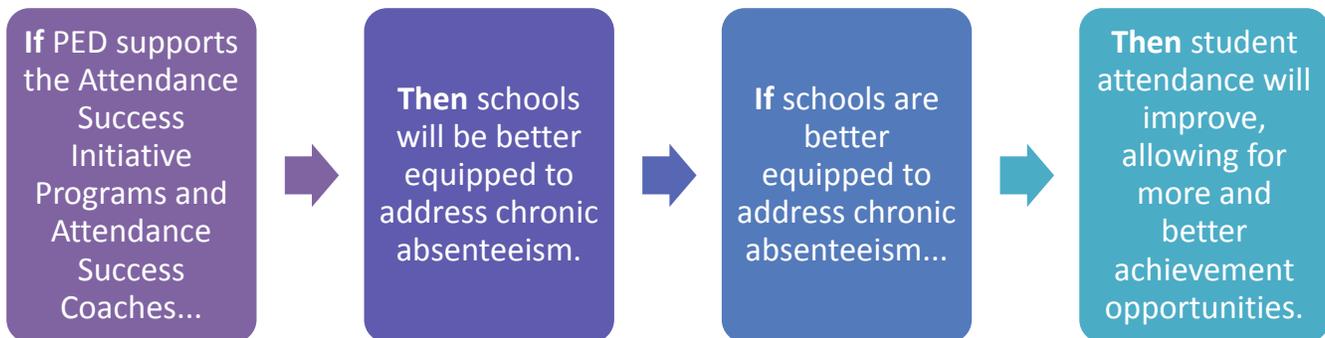
Chronic absence from school often leads to low academic achievement and is a strong predictor of which students will eventually drop out of school.<sup>1</sup> Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason—excused absences, unexcused absences, or suspensions.

The purpose of the ASI is to establish a cohort of Attendance Success Coaches in elementary, middle, and high schools across the state whose role is to work with students, families, communities, schools, and districts to eliminate chronic absenteeism. Comprehensive community and school-based strategies and supports are critical to overcoming the barriers to school attendance faced by students of all ages and in all communities.

The ASI aligns with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by focusing on the implementation of chronic absenteeism interventions before turning to punitive measures.

The ASI emphasizes early identification, parent notification, intervention, and community partnerships and is consistent with the best practices outlined in *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*, published by four federal agencies.

Additionally, the ASI outlines a tiered system of support that allows for local flexibility and



ensures that preventative measures and interventions are exhausted prior to taking punitive action with chronically absent students.

## Theory of Action

### Creating a Systematized Program

Eliminating barriers that keep students from attending school requires a systematic approach. The ASI outlines a triggered intervention system for chronic absenteeism prevention plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Therriault, S., Heppen, J., O’Cummings, M., Fryer, L., & Johnson, A. (2010). *Early Warning System Implementation Guide: For Use with the National High School Center’s Early Warning System Tool v2.0*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, National High School Center.

## Getting off to a Good Start

Each day is critical in the fight against chronic absenteeism. Starting the school year with best practices in place is essential. Early strategies may include:

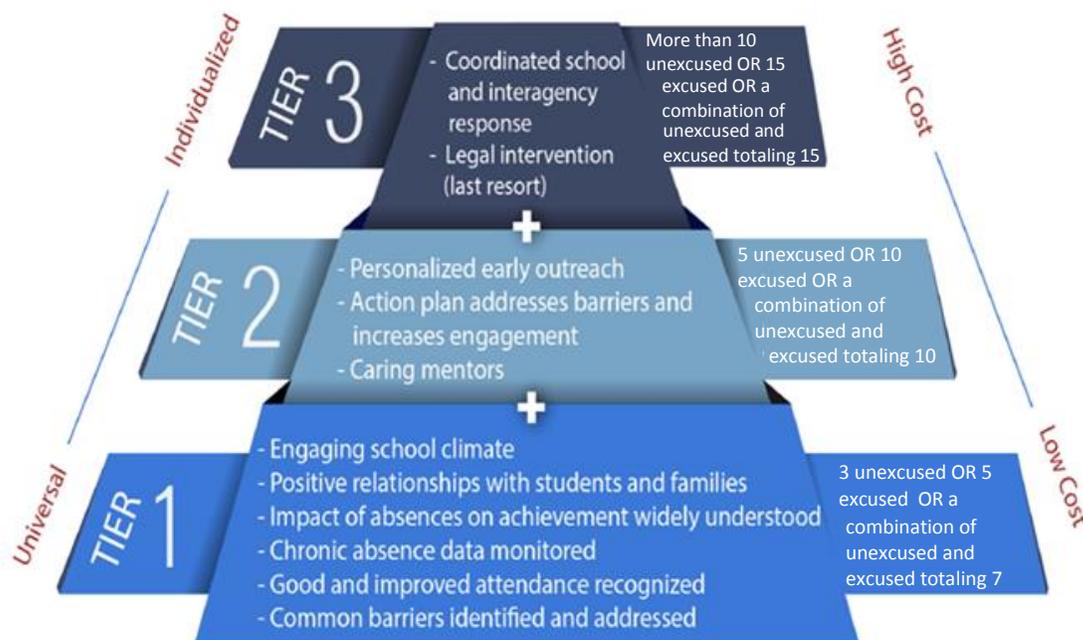
- Providing time for Attendance Success Coaches to lead professional development programming for school staff as they prepare for the school year
- Kicking off attendance success campaigns and incentive programs as soon as the school year begins
- Hosting a family night where Attendance Success Coaches and school administrators can engage families around the importance of good attendance
- Sending fliers, pamphlets, and other informational materials home to families
- Updating the school website to reflect attendance information and initiatives
- Posting positive messaging throughout the school
- Adding “attendance matters” messaging to daily announcements

## Tiered Interventions<sup>2</sup>

The 3-Tier Intervention system is a tool to help reduce chronic absenteeism in schools and districts.

- **Tier I** incorporates universal strategies to encourage good attendance for all students.
- **Tier II** provides early intervention for students who need additional attendance support.
- **Tier III** offers individualized support for students missing more than 10 school days.

## **Tiered System of Supports For Improving Attendance**



<sup>2</sup> Attendance Works (2015) *Tiered System of Supports for Improving Attendance*, <http://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

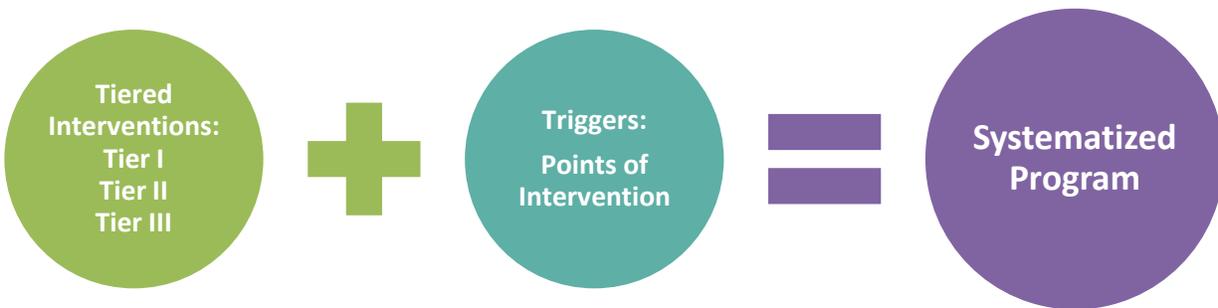
Figure 1: Adapted from Attendance Works (2015) *Tiered System of Supports for Improving Attendance*, <http://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/>

**Using Triggers to Determine Interventions**

When creating a systematized program, districts and charter schools must use triggers. Triggers are the points at which districts or charter schools intervene when a student is missing school.

Triggers may include:

- the number of absences a student has accrued
- the number of days the student is tardy
- referrals from teachers regarding student attendance



**Minimum Requirements for ASI Programs**

Every district or charter school participating in the ASI must develop a detailed plan that outlines specific interventions and implementation strategies for handling chronic absenteeism at all levels. A systematized program that relies on specific triggers allows Attendance Success Coaches to strategically and consistently implement attendance interventions that best fit the needs of students in a given school or district.

The following interventions outline the **minimum requirements** for every systematized program. The responsibilities associated with implementing these minimum requirements may be distributed among Attendance Success Coaches, school administrators, district staff, or other school staff. Districts should build upon these minimum requirements in order to meet community and student needs.

Tier I	
Trigger	Minimum Requirements
3 unexcused absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parent or legal guardian shall be notified by phone or in person of the student’s absenteeism.</li> <li>• Teachers are expected to make this initial phone call.</li> <li>• If necessary, a Student Attendance Intervention Plan (SAIP) meeting may be held with the parent or legal guardian.</li> <li>• For either notification, the parent or legal guardian shall be informed of the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the student’s attendance history;</li> <li>○ the district’s school’s attendance policy;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>OR</b>	
5 excused absences	
<b>OR</b>	
a combination of unexcused and excused	

<p>absences totaling 7 absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>or referrals from various sources both inside and outside of the district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the impact of student absences on student academic outcomes (can be directly related to their child via test scores, grades, classroom performance, etc.);</li> <li>○ the interventions available to the student and family; and</li> <li>○ the consequences of further absences, including referral to the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) and or Juvenile Justice Services for excessive absenteeism.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information at the SAIP meeting will be provided to the parent/guardian by a member or members of that school’s Student Attendance Team which could include the student’s parent, teacher, counselor, case manager, school administrator and any other member deemed necessary in addressing the concerns of the student’s attendance.</li> <li>● A home visit may also be conducted should the Student Attendance Team feel one is necessary.</li> <li>● The notice to meet and the SAIP documentation paperwork is located at: <a href="http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/instruction/attendance-student-support-services/">http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/instruction/attendance-student-support-services/</a>.</li> </ul>
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<b>Tier II</b>	
<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Minimum Requirements</b>
<p>5 unexcused absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>10 excused absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The parent or legal guardian shall be notified by phone, in-person or written notification to meet. The notice to meet shall include a date, place, and time for the parent to convene with their student’s school to develop intervention strategies that focus on keeping the student in an educational setting. This notification can be found at <a href="http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/instruction/attendance-student-support-services/">http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/instruction/attendance-student-support-services/</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>a combination of unexcused and excused absences totaling 10 absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Referrals from various sources both inside and outside of the district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents may also be notified by a school generated letter that goes home for their student’s 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> unexcused absences. This letter is generated twice a month and indicates how many absences a student has and what a parent’s next steps should be to address the issue.</li> <li>● Phone calls and notification letters are initiated by a member of the Student Attendance Team in the school. This person will be identified upon the Attendance Success Coach’s initial meeting with the school’s administrator.</li> <li>● Finally, a Student Attendance Team meeting shall be convened to perform a needs assessment and establish a specific intervention plan for the student that includes establishing weekly progress monitoring and a contract, or SAIP, for attendance. This shall be conducted by the Student Attendance Team at the school and be managed by a member of this team.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A home visit may also be conducted should the Student Attendance Team feel one is necessary.</li> </ul>
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<b>Tier III</b>	
<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Minimum Requirements</b>
<p>More than 10 unexcused absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>15 excused absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>a combination of excused and unexcused absences totaling 15 absences</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>a referral from various sources both inside and outside of the district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parent or legal guardian shall be notified by phone of the student’s absenteeism and or in writing- by mail or personal service-of the student’s absenteeism. The notice shall include a date, place, and time for the parent to meet with the school principal or head administrator and the Student Attendance Team.</li> <li>• The Student Attendance Team shall review and update the previously established Student Attendance Intervention Plan (SAIPs). This may include having parent sign a Ten-Day Letter acknowledging the NM Compulsory School Law and the fact that they will be in violation of the law if unexcused absences continue.</li> <li>• The Student Attendance Team shall connect the student and family to appropriate mutually agreed upon resources, as necessary.</li> <li>• The Student Attendance Team shall establish non-punitive consequences at the school level (i.e. referral to CYFD-Child Protective Services to provide assistance to families for educational neglect issues, reverse suspension or in certain circumstances, retention).</li> <li>• If all other interventions have been implemented, students who have accumulated the equivalent of 10 days or more of unexcused absences within a school year shall be reported to the Juvenile Probation Office of the judicial district in which the student resides for legal intervention. Pursuant to provisions of the Children’s Code [Chapter 32A NMSA 1978], the district attorney may initiate an investigation into whether or not the student shall be considered to be a neglected child or a child in a family in need of services because of habitual truancy and thus subject to the provisions of the Children’s Code {Chapter 32A NMSA 1978}.</li> <li>• The Student Attendance Team shall be responsible for the execution of these responsibilities.</li> <li>• The district paper work required for this intervention is located at:  <a href="http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/instruction/attendance-student-support-services/">http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/instruction/attendance-student-support-services/</a>.</li> </ul>