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Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) 2015-2016:

Attendance Monitoring and Promotion Across Five School Sites

Nancy Erbstein, Ph.D.
Stacy Shwartz Olagundoye, M.S.

Center for Regional Change
University of California, Davis
One Shields Avenue, Wickson Hall 2019
Davis, CA 95616
(530) 752-3007
http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu

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Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District

Executive Summary

Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) schools, students, and the community as a whole are paying a high price for chronic absence. District-wide, chronic absence is a substantial challenge, as more than 1 in 10 students are chronically absent; more specifically, a study of 191 chronically absent SCUSD students found that children and families experienced on average 10 different barriers to regular school attendance.[i] In 2010-11, SCUSD lost over 4 million dollars due to absenteeism beyond what was regularly expected, and 73% of the cost was associated with approximately 10% of students.[ii] In sum, district trends from 2010-2014 revealed that chronic absence is associated with millions of dollars of lost funding each year, compromised student learning, and broader social costs.

In response, SCUSD staff and UC Davis researchers partnered with 4 schools in 2014-15 to explore and address chronic absenteeism at the school site level across grades K-8 as a Chronic Absence Learning Collaborative (CALC), with support from The California Endowment's South Sacramento Building Healthy Communities collaborative. In 2015-16, the CALC added a high school, and all schools generously allowed in depth observation of their chronic absence intervention and monitoring systems to enable their own and others' learning; this observation focused on an anonymous student cohort that reflected 10% of each school's chronically absent student population.

Analyses of school-wide chronic absence interventions, monitoring practices, and student cohort data revealed that while there were key similarities across school sites and grade levels, patterns were not exactly the same, highlighting the importance of assessing and building upon school, neighborhood, and community level patterns, needs, and resources (reported in Sections 2.0 thru 4.0). These data, along with school site interviews and observations, provide emerging lessons about promising practices to address chronic absenteeism (reported in Section 5.0).

Recommendations

Overall 2015-2016 findings suggest multiple recommendations for the SCUSD board and district office, as well as for school sites and community partners. Abbreviated recommendations are as follows (see Section 6.0 for full recommendations).

SCUSD Board and District

I. Lead on Attendance

A. Communicate regularly with schools, students, caretakers, and the community in compelling, culturally responsive ways about attendance, and the resources available to support it.

B. Engage cabinet-level leadership to build on district efforts to coordinate attendance support activity across relevant departments and initiatives.

C. Build interagency, community, and business partnerships to promote awareness that every day counts, align systems, recruit mentors, and ensure student safety.

D. Pursue policy/practice changes to:

- Clarify guidelines for ensuring the safety of missing students,
- Monitor/intervene in kindergarten chronic absence regardless of age,
- Ensure adequate staffing to flag and address inter- and intra-district transferee attendance problems during (re)enrollment,
- Ensure adequate staffing to monitor attendance and build school awareness of district attendance promotion expectations and resources,
- Enable community partnerships that help children and families feel connected to their schools and access attendance resources,
- Require all schools to create and assess a Multi-tiered Attendance Support System strategy (MASS) as part of their annual site improvement plans, and
- Return to schools a percentage of ADA funds generated via improved attendance.

II. Support Data Use

A. Resolve Student Information System (SIS) challenges regarding tracking and reporting on attendance and intervention data.

B. Integrate an algorithm to flag student attendance patterns that raise safety concerns.

C. Provide adequate and multiple training and refresher opportunities on using the SIS to monitor and report attendance-relevant data.

D. Ensure data/analyses are available with appropriate confidentiality to multiple constituencies.

E. Ensure disaggregated district and school level chronic absence and intervention data are available to inform LCAP development and school planning.

Schools

I. Implement key "nuts and bolts" strategies to address chronic absenteeism

A. Use data to develop, implement, and assess attendance plans.

B. Build a committed attendance leadership system that consistently works on attendance promotion strategies, and can weather staff turnover, staff leave, etc.

C. Include parent/community liaisons on the attendance leadership team who are knowledgeable about the local community and culture(s).

D. Ensure attendance leadership team and all school stakeholders have appropriate training on attendance systems, resources, and why attendance matters.

II. Pursue approaches that reflect these guiding principles:

A. Monitor the impact of attendance promotion strategies and creatively adjust practices.

B. Work with communities to identify and address systemic attendance barriers.

C. Build a school-wide understanding of attendance as everyone's responsibility.

D. Make sure every child matters, and knows that they matter.

Community

I. Community and regional stakeholders should partner with young people, families, and schools to support school attendance.

A. Encourage, inform, and enable district, school, city, and county investment in attendance promotion.

B. Help schools and the district implement culturally responsive approaches to attendance promotion and support.

C. Spread the word that every day counts.

D. Align agency activities to ensure the safety of students who are chronically absent.

E. Implement policies and practices that help students (and help parents/caretakers help students) get to/from school and stay there throughout the school day.

School systems themselves are absolutely critical to improving attendance, but alone, they are inadequate. All of us with a stake in young people's well-being need to step up to ensure that SCUSD students reap the full benefits of public education, which starts with them being at school.

Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District

1.0 Overview

This report documents efforts to reduce chronic absence among five Chronic Absence Learning Collaborative (CALC) school sites within the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) during the 2015-16 school year. Chronically absent students are those who miss 10% or more of school for any reason, meaning they've attended school less than 90% of the time. Chronic absence rates reflect all absenteeism, regardless of whether absences are excused, unexcused, or due to suspension. Chronic absence is concerning because missing 10% of missed school has been identified as a tipping point associated with poor academic performance. Additionally, chronic absence is associated with negative outcomes for children, youth, families, and communities, including: compromised connections to peers, teachers, and schools; poor health; high school non-completion; unemployment; and incarceration. When used as an early warning system, chronic absence is an opportunity to identify young people and families that might need additional support.

In this context, SCUSD launched the CALC two years ago with 4 schools that spanned grades EK-8, and last year added a high school. The collaborative aimed to begin addressing chronic absence and provide the district with feedback on what it would take to scale up efforts. This past year, the research team monitored interventions and attendance at each CALC school site for 10% of the student population that was chronically absent as of November 2015, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

In this report, we briefly describe the five participating CALC sites and their intervention and monitoring protocols. We then describe the CALC's overall site level chronic absenteeism patterns and student cohort patterns throughout the 2015-16 school year. Finally, we provide lessons learned from the Chronic Absence Learning Collaborative through their efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism, and conclude with recommendations for the District Office, schools, and community.

1.1 Chronic Absence Learning Collaborative (CALC) Background

The CALC was launched during the 2014-2015 school year through the Attendance and Student Support Services Divisions of SCUSD. The aim of this collaborative was to begin learning about district and school practices that could address chronic absenteeism and be scaled up district-wide. This report reflects year two of the CALC's efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism at the school site level and to document the process.

SCUSD is one of the oldest K-12 districts in the western United States. It serves approximately 43,175 students on 75 campuses, spans 76 square miles and employs 4,213 people, with an operating budget of $383 million. SCUSD's students reflect the rich diversity that is a hallmark of Sacramento. The student population is 37.1% Hispanic or Latino; 18.8% White; 17.7% African American; 17.4% Asian; and 0.7% Native American/Alaskan Native. Approximately 5.3% of students identify with two or more races or ethnicities. Residents within SCUSD speak more than 40 languages; 38% of students do not speak English at home. Approximately 75% of students qualify for free/reduced price meals.

The five collaborating schools included two elementary schools, one K-8 school*, one middle school, and one high school. Three of the five schools are part of the Priority Schools program, which was launched in the spring of 2010 to accelerate the rate of student learning in low-performing, high-poverty schools. Priority School teachers have received additional professional development and are protected from seniority-based layoffs; these sites have an extra administrator and a full-time curriculum coordinator/teacher trainer on staff.

Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District

Table 1.1.1 CALC Schools Background[1]

Learning Collaborative School	Neighborhood	Priority School	Racial/Ethnic Groups >10%	% Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	% English Learners	Suspension Rates 2013-14/ 2014-15
ES1	Oak Park	Yes	Latino (55.0) Asian (18.5.0) Black (16.4)	97.4%	32.7%	1.3% / 0.5%
ES2	Parkway -- South Sacramento	No	Latino (52.2) Asian (24.9) Black (12.1)	81.0%	46.0%	5.3% / 6.7%
ES3/MS3*	Meadowview	Yes	Latino (40.0) Black (28.4) Asian (19.1)	86.1%	29.6%	5.1% / 13.8%
MS4	Southeast Lemon Hill	Yes	Latino (44.5) Asian (33.2) Black (12.4)	90.1%	32.2%	15.0% / 8.8%
HS5	Parkway	No	Latino (36.6) Black (21.9) Asian (28.5)	81.7%	25.2%	8.8% / 9.7%

*ES3/MS3 is a K-8 school. In this report, its chronic absence data is sometimes combined, and sometimes broken down by ES grades and MS grades.

Chronic absenteeism was a new focus for all CALC schools when they got involved in this effort; while one high school joined the project in September 2015, two elementary schools, one K-8 school, and one middle school began in fall 2014. Each had to clarify action steps to monitor and follow-up with chronically absent students, identify existing attendance support resources, and attempt to address attendance support gaps.

In fall 2015, returning school sites continued to hone their existing attendance promotion plans, while the newly-added high school, and returning schools who experienced key staff transitions, learned about chronic absenteeism and identified preliminary attendance promotion resources. Anonymous chronically absent student cohorts were randomly selected. In winter, sites established Attendance Teams to meet regularly to discuss chronic absence interventions and monitoring, while honing or developing attendance promotion systems. Student cohorts were tracked by UC Davis researchers during these Attendance Team meetings throughout winter and spring. By spring, sites had implemented their emerging attendance promotion systems, and identified areas for added growth to prepare for Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), school improvement plans, and the fall rollout of the next school year. The district initiated departmental coordination to improve relevant data tracking and program coordination. UC Davis analyzed the CALC site level and student cohort attendance data and prepared findings, while collaborating with the district to improve data access and prepare for fall 2016.

CALC schools have generously shared their evolving attendance intervention and monitoring practices, as well as student attendance data, in order to inform their own and others' practices.

2.0 CALC Site Attendance Promotion Approaches

We monitored 10% of CALC site students who were chronically absent as of November 1, 2015, for two reasons. First, student data challenges made it impossible to monitor interventions and attendance for all students. Second, we saw in the 2014-15 school year that many learning collaborative sites were not reaching a substantial percentage of their chronic absentees at all; moreover, 2 in 3 chronically absent students remained chronically absent all year.[2] These were issues that 2014-15 participating sites hoped to rectify in the new year.

CALC responded by beginning to build and implement the Multi-tiered Attendance Support System (MASS, see figure 2.0.1). This template highlights the centrality of monitoring attendance and intervention impacts, as well as the need for a variety of types of support to address attendance obstacles. Also, it recognizes that while some attendance promotion strategies should be pursued for all students, those who remain chronically absent may benefit from additional types of interventions. The chart hypothesizes that if effective population-wide supports are in place, the numbers of students needing more intensive supports should decrease. The MASS protocol is a living document that can help schools: 1) document existing efforts explicitly focused on attendance monitoring and promotion; 2) identify existing resources that could be marshaled to support attendance that had not been previously considered in that manner; and 3) identify gaps in practices and assess how to fill them. This documentation and gap analysis enables participants to inform school site planning, budgeting, community partnership development, and district office feedback. Finally, the emerging attendance support documentation offers a basis for ongoing system implementation, reflection, and modification. Please see Appendix A to view CALC site MASS protocols.

Figure 2.0.1 Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: (filled in as an example only)

Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: example

Family & Student Engagement	Social-Emotional Learning/Relationships	Mental/Physical Health	Attendance/Intervention Monitoring	Positive Behavorial Supports/Restor. Justice	Academic Support	Basic Needs
• SART/SARB • Case management support • Connect with community leaders to support family engagement (e.g., non-profits, faith based orgs) • Connect with Health Services, CPS, foster care, etc. as appropriate • Request police welfare check if unable to locate child	• Connect with counseling if needed • Connect with skilled mentor, OST activity	• Student/family assisted to contact community resources; community resources asked to reach out • Individual support teams/plans for student referrals	**Tier 3: Intensive** • Student Support Team (SST) meeting review • Support Centers/counselors and/or VP provide case management, reach out to other relevant programs as appropriate (e.g. foster, homeless, probation, etc.), document in SIS • Monitor SARB if needed • Contact CPS, law enforcement for welfare check if needed	• Connect with counseling if needed; assess for connection with mentor and/or OST activity… reach out and request attendance promotion support if these exist, if not facilitate connection • Attendance recognition	• Student connected with tutor, other academic support needed; tutor monitors, checks in	• Ensure safety • Provision of Targeted Resources: ◦ Bus passes ◦ Food gift cards ◦ Alarm clocks
• Teachers call guardians to follow up on students approaching CA • Admin meets with CA student to problem-solve attendance • Positive, trust-building SST or SART to id attendance barriers and motivators • School attendance letters with attendance summary • District attendance letters to truant students and their guardians (letters 1, 2, and 3) • Home visit if missing 3 consecutive days with no contact • Early PTHV for all students CA previous year	• Continuous monitoring of CA students in person (check/connect, City Year) • Restorative justice to focus on repair of social/emotional relationships harmed • SSTs/IEPs include SEL focus • Explore classroom change if teacher fit is an issue • Use of mentors, special time with staff to support socially isolated CA students during lunch/recess	• Group counseling/support groups • Individual check-in program • Coordinated student referral process/progress monitoring	**Tier 2: Strategic** • Attendance clerk alerts designated staff of students with frequent absences, tardies, and/or re-admits • In prep for support team meetings, generate CA list highlighting students CA in previous month(s) as well • At monthly Student Support Team meeting: 1) review current list of CA/approaching CA and compare to previous month; 2) triage each student for intervention/prevention, 3) document intervention plan, and 4) monitor intervention efficacy • Use SST or other forms of check in to gather additional information on attendance barriers/motivators • Identify in summer incoming and rising students with poor attendance to inform special outreach prior to/early in school year	• Restorative practices (healing circles and peer conflict mediation) are held to address root causes of behavior problems • Recognition for meeting attendance goals (e.g., "$" for use at school store)	• CA student academics assessed- SST/IEP scheduled if needed. All SST or IEP meetings include attendance goal in their plans • Travel packets prepped for student independent study if traveling to Mexico for winter break	• Assessment of Resources: ◦ Social worker and/or SSC Coordinator inquire about housing, food, transportation needs
• Welcoming school environment reflecting family/child school audit • Staff cultural humility training • Positive feedback to caretakers • Attendance clerk/family liaison calls for unexcused abs, >2day abs • Public attendance recognition • Attendance policy and tips in Parent Handbook, Newsletters in key languages • PTHV priority for incoming K, 1st, 7th, 9th, 12th graders and incoming transfers • Transfer family welcome basket (attendance promotion resources) • School-wide "Every Day Counts" video/art contest & exhibit	• SEL curriculum & assemblies • School climate assessment • Student leadership in climate review/planning • Student ombudsperson that students can meet with for support in dealing with challenging adult relationships at school • Organized recess/lunch time activities for those who want to participate	• School-based basic health services • Community-building/anti-bullying focus with all • All staff trained to id signs of mental health issues, mental health first aid • Parents get multilingual info on when ill students should stay home • Health insurance sign up fair • Hand-washing program • Healthy food options	**Tier 1: Universal** • School regularly reviews attendance promotion strategy, all school staff trained in roles/use of SIS, held accountable for accurate use • School staff welcome/connect with kids/families each day • Daily attendance monitoring & strategy for school outreach to absentees • Check attendance of incoming transfer students to id support needs • Designated staff generates monthly CA list • Designated staff share CA data with Admin, teachers and Student Support Team monthly • Use data system to track attendance rates and assigned interventions and assess for sub-population patterns	• PBIS efforts to create positive environments to learn, play, and communicate: ◦ Cafeteria and playground rules, activities foster welcoming environment ◦ Friendship days, incentives for caring behavior	• Volunteer tutors • Parent-teacher conferences to review student strengths and areas for improvement • Clear instructions to students/family on how to make up work if absent	• General provision of basic resources: ◦ Pencils, erasers, etc. ◦ Clothes closet ◦ Free and reduced price meals ◦ Walking school bus

Over the 2015-16 school year, schools pursued a variety of intervention strategies. Table 2.0.1 displays examples of their strategies, organized by the seven categories employed in the MASS template. The "x" indicates that one or more strategies were observed in use with cohort students by our research team (see individual school site forms in Appendix B for detailed examples of site interventions implemented, including those reported but not observed.) All sites received a $200 allocation from the district to purchase items that would be meaningful to their student and family population as attendance awards/incentives, as well as a popcorn machine later in the year. (See Appendix C for a list of chosen interventions, by school site).

Table 2.0.1 Observed Interventions Received by Cohort Students, Jan-May 2016

School*					Intervention	Definition
ES1	ES2	ES3/ MS3	MS4	HS5		
X	X	X	X	X	Family and student engagement	Grade-level presentations; school attendance letter update; revising/publicizing attendance information in student/family handbooks; phone call home; home visit; case management; connect families with needed foster care or homeless services; Student Study Teams (SST) including attendance focus; SART/SARB letters/hearings.
X	X	X	X	X	SEL/Relationships	Student Support Center referral; City Year services or alternative check-in program; individual and group counseling.
		X	X	X	Mental/Physical Health	Physical health referrals or services; occupational therapy; foodbank provisions; individual and group counseling; school-based mental health services; outside referral to counseling.
X	X	X	X		Attendance/ Intervention Monitoring	Attendance team meetings to identify chronically absent students and triage or refer to Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) or Coordination of Service Team (COST) meetings; MDT or COST meetings to discuss students' needs and plan to provide follow up services; use of SST to address attendance; SSC treats chronic absence as a referral.
X	X	X			Positive Behavioral Supports/ Restorative Justice	Attendance incentives/awards; City Year or alternative check in program providing student recognition for meeting attendance goals; counseling for students and/or families; restorative healing circles.
X	X	X	X	X	Academic Support	Online affiliated schools to support enrichment; credit recovery; Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); MDTs; and/or SSTs.
		X	X		Basic Needs	Provide school supplies, food, clothing, transportation, information on housing resources, medical/mental health care, and legal services.

* X = school observed implementing at least one strategy for the intervention

2.1 MASS Protocol Commonalities and Differences

While all CALC sites implemented a form of student and family engagement, they undertook varying approaches reflecting differing orientations to families.
CALC sites' protocols reflected two different orientations to student and family engagement. One included a view of caregivers as partners in helping their children succeed, emphasizing the importance of relationship-building—given many families' disconnection from their schools—while recognizing families' potential need for support. Alternately, the other approach more heavily emphasized punishment and efficiency. While each school incorporated activities reflecting each orientation, attendance teams tended to lean more heavily in one direction or the other.

Sites struggled to develop effective interventions for persistently chronically absent students.
All schools struggled to effect change for students and families facing multiple, interlocking attendance barriers. However, while some were inclined to give up on students they deemed "unsaveable," others persisted in connecting families to resources, scaling up the intensity of interventions, working with students even when they could not reach caretakers, and maintaining their focus on tracking and monitoring every student.

Across most sites, MASS protocol areas that received more limited emphases included mental/physical health support, positive behavioral support/restorative justice, and supporting basic needs.
While all CALC sites are already providing some of these resources, intentionally linking these resources with a focus on attendance promotion and monitoring is a growing edge for many.

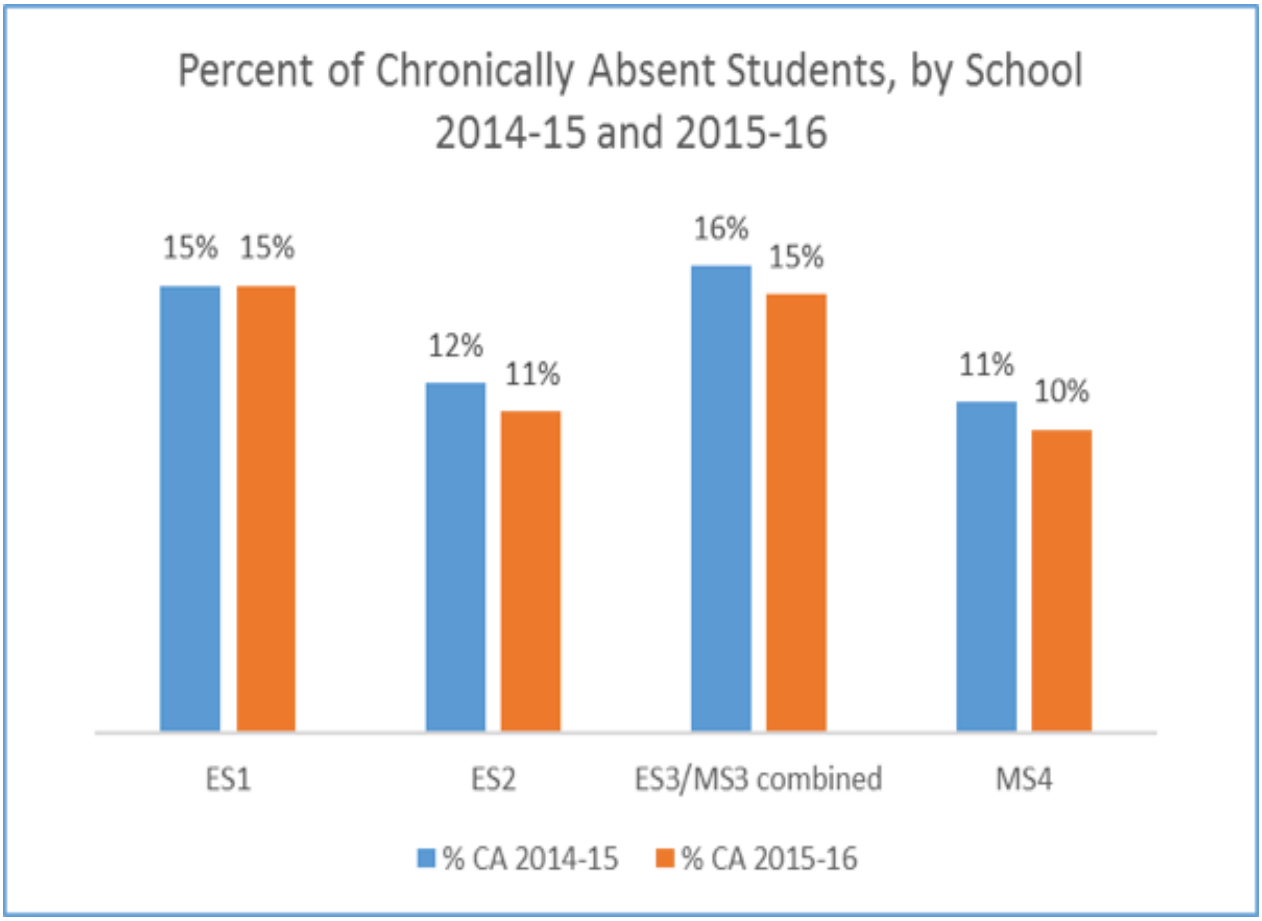
3.0 Chronic Absenteeism Patterns

UC Davis researchers identified chronic absenteeism patterns across all five CALC school sites, which are presented below.

3.1 Patterns of chronic absenteeism varied across the four school sites in 2015-16, but improved overall from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

Figure 3.1.1 illustrates that 3 out of 4 school sites (elementary and middle schools) that participated in the last two years of this project had a 1% reduction in chronic absenteeism from 2014-15 to 2015-16. MS4 had the lowest percentage of chronic absentees from 2014-15 to 2015-16, followed by ES2. ES1's rate remained the same from one year to the next.

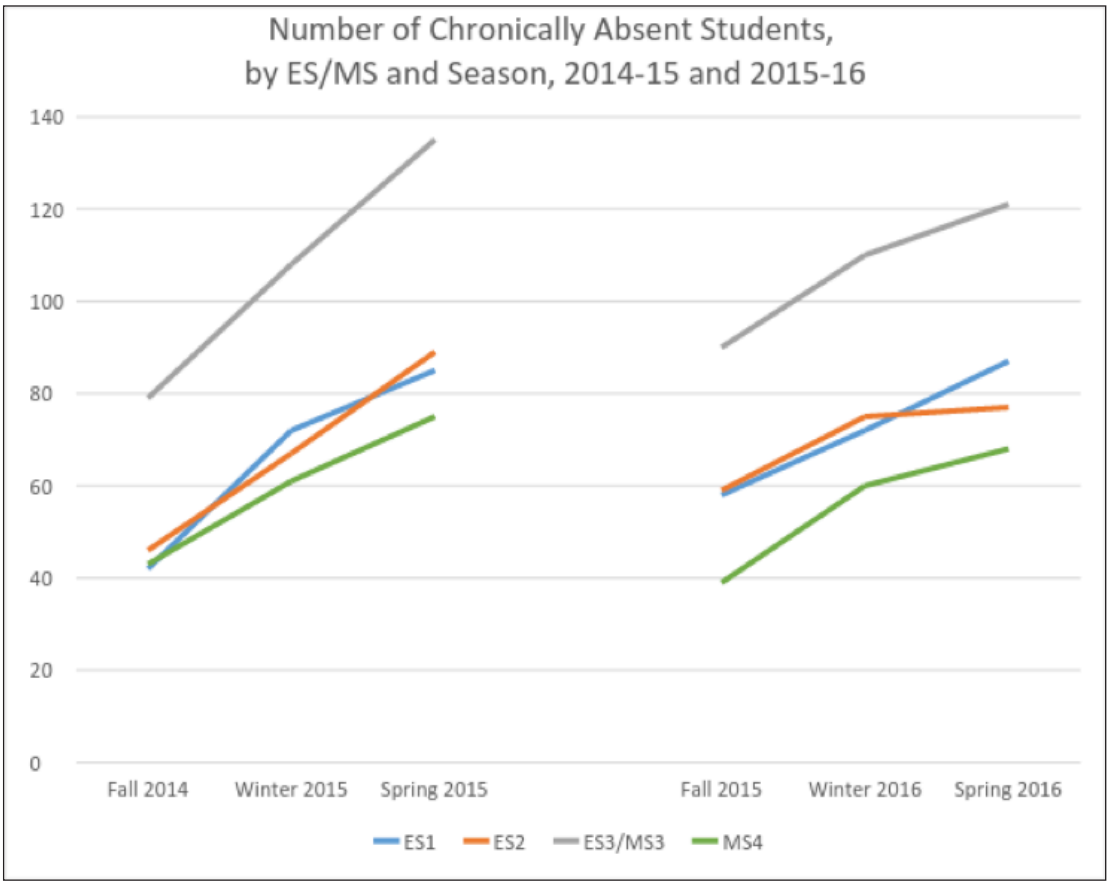
Figure 3.1.1 Percent of Chronically Absent Students, by School



The rate of increase in absenteeism slowed down between winter and spring in 2016 for nearly all elementary and middle schools.

Figure 3.1.2 compares the numerical pattern of chronic absence from one year to the next within sites. It shows the numbers of chronically absent students at three points in the school year during 2014-15 and 2015-16, for all collaborative sites except the high school. The analysis shows two promising patterns. First, there is a slight overall year-end decrease in the number of chronically absent students at 3 of the 4 schools from one year to the next, while overall enrollment was similar; alternately, the school where the numbers remained similar was a site at which key lead staff were on leave. Second, we see elementary and middle school students becoming chronically absent at a decreased rate in Year 2 compared with Year 1 (i.e., in year 2 the lines begin to flatten from winter to spring). This pattern might be associated with the refinement (winter 2016) and implementation (spring 2016) of each school site's protocols on attendance promotion and monitoring. However, we are unable to confirm this in light of available data. This analysis seems to be bolstered by the fact that the one site where we don't see this pattern (i.e., ES1's blue line) is the one which had key staff on leave; however, that site had demonstrated the slowing pattern the previous year when it was very proactive in its attendance focus.

Figure 3.1.2 Number of Chronically Absent Students, by ES/MS and Season

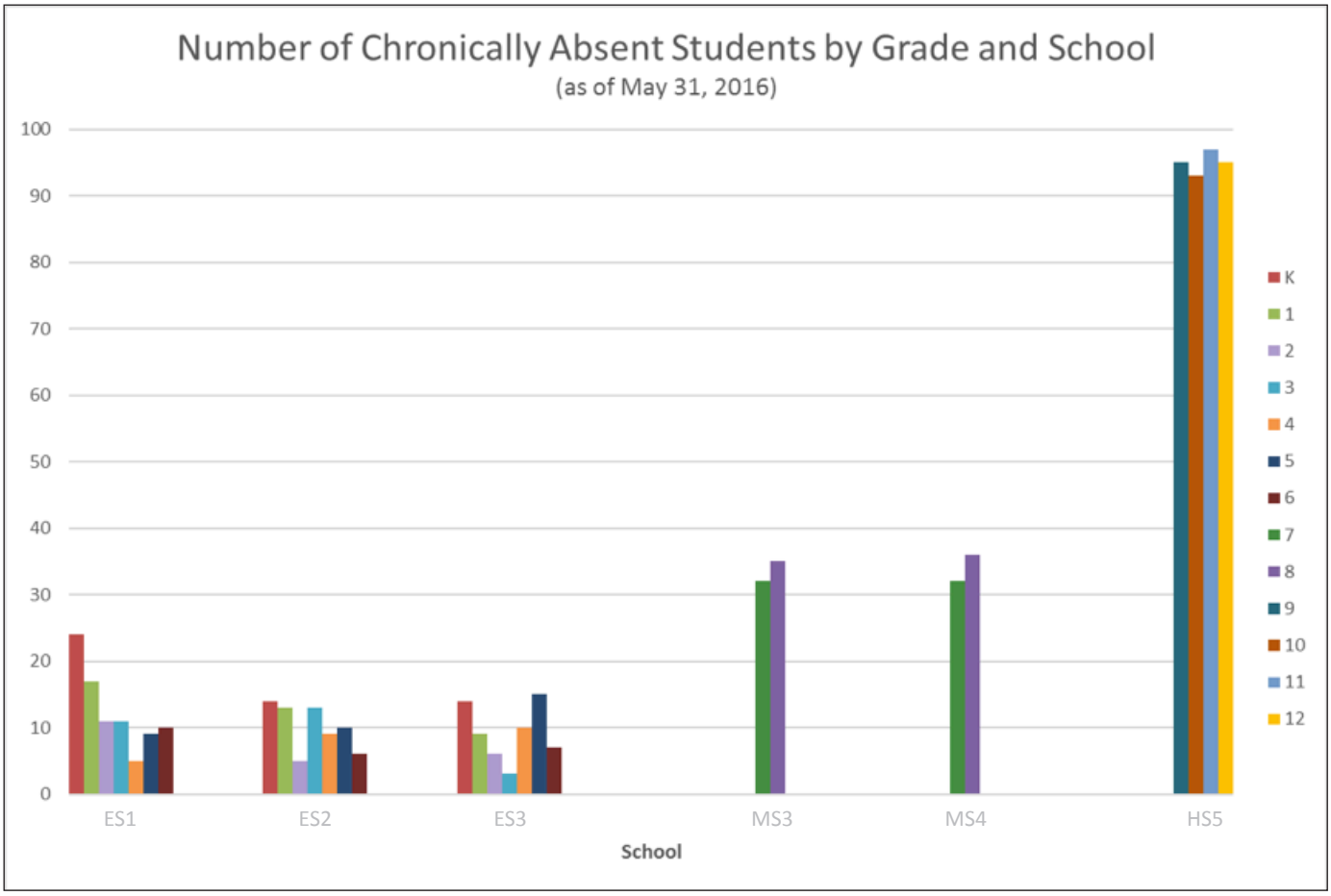


We could not include HS5 in this analysis due to a lack of Year 1 data (since HS5 joined the CALC this year). HS5 started fall 2015 with almost 250 chronically absent students and ended spring 2016 with approximately 400 students. Given that this was HS5's first year of attendance promotion and monitoring work, this pattern provides a baseline against which to measure chronic absence rates in the upcoming year.

3.2 The greatest numbers of chronically absent students were in kindergarten in elementary schools, in 8th grade in middle schools, and in 11th grade in high school. While numbers of chronically absent students differed across schools, patterns across grade levels were fairly similar.

These patterns reflect data from only one academic year, so we cannot assume they are consistent from year to year; however, they do roughly mirror district-wide patterns assessed over a 3-year period.

Figure 3.2.1 Number of Chronically Absent Students by Grade and School



4.0 Chronically Absent Student Cohort Outcomes

From November 1, 2015 thru May 31, 2016, UC Davis researchers observed CALC site attendance team meetings, conducted staff focus groups, and reviewed school site chronic absence reports generated from SCUSD data. Throughout, we paid special attention to whether, when, and how students in our 10% cohort were identified, the types of interventions provided to them, and their attendance rates. These qualitative and quantitative data are the basis for the following findings.

4.1 Attendance promotion was easily disrupted by key school staff changes

Schools launched their efforts to address chronic absenteeism with different starting points in terms of resources (e.g., priority school funding), infrastructure/staffing, and community relationships; implications of these differences were discussed in last year's report.[3] Staffing changes emerged as another important factor in attendance promotion efforts, as described in Table 4.1.1. While some sites found ways to foster continuity and build upon the previous year's activity, others were less resilient in these transitions.

Table 4.1.1 2015-2016 Staffing Challenges at CALC Schools

Site	Challenge	Timeframe	Staff transition Supports
ES1	Key Attendance Team member out on leave	Aug-Oct; Mar	
ES2	New principal and assistant principal hired	Aug	Continuity of SSC Coordinator
ES3/MS3	Vacant key Attendance Team member position	Aug	Training provided to a new hire by former staff
MS4	No major staffing challenges	n/a	n/a
HS5	New principal and assistant principal hired; Assistant Principal left position	Aug; May	

4.2. Attendance Team composition varied

Each school convened teams to regularly monitor and assess chronic absence rates and the necessary student and school site interventions needed. Table 4.2.1 depicts the staffing models of each school site's Attendance Team.

Table 4.2.1 Attendance Team Members, 5 School Sites

Site	Title of Attendance Team Member
ES1	Principal SSC City Year Program Manager Attendance Tech
ES2	Principal AP SSC Attendance Tech
ES3/MS3	Principal AP SSC Social Worker Parent Advisor, SART/SARB Parent Advisor Attendance Tech City Year Attendance Coordinator
MS4	AP, Attendance SSC Social Worker Counselor AP of Attendance's Attendance Tech Truancy Probation Officer 2 Social Work Interns
HS5	AP 5 Counselors

The schools began the year with varying chronic absence rates and varying levels of experience pursuing coordinated student intervention strategies. For example, MS4, a priority school, had already allocated resources for an assistant principal to focus on truancy, and their pre-existing student support team was able to pivot to also address chronic school absenteeism; this site came to the project with the lowest school-wide chronic absence rate. At other sites, beginning the school year with staff and/or leadership changes provided a slower start to intervention implementation, as was the case at ES2 and HS5. ES3/MS3, while experiencing staff turnover at the start of the year, successfully trained their new hire by their predecessor, which accounted for a quicker transfer of organizational knowledge and strategies.

4.3 Improved reach compared to 2014-2015

At every CALC school in 2014-2015, a substantial percentage of chronically absent students received no intervention. In 2015-2016, all elementary schools and the K-8 school reached their entire student cohort with at least one intervention.

Table 4.3.1 Percentage of Student Cohort That Experienced at Least One Intervention

School	% Cohort that experienced at least 1 intervention (Jan-May)
ES1	100%
ES2	100%
ES3	100%
MS3	100%
MS4	50%
HS5	45%

Secondary schools still did not reach their entire chronically absent student population. There are several possible explanations for this pattern at the middle school, which was a second year CALC participant.[4] The high school, which just joined that year, was still focused on developing systems to ensure student reach; other challenges included a mismatch between creating a schoolwide attendance team when data collection and interventions were primarily pursued within small learning communities, leadership turnover, and very large numbers of chronically absent students.

4.4 Chronically absent cohort outcomes were associated with specific intervention patterns

Each school cohort of chronically absent students presented somewhat different characteristics (for more information on each cohort, see Appendix D). The following table examines the attendance patterns of students in each school's 10% cohort, in terms of student improved attendance, and movement out of chronic absenteeism.

Table 4.4.1 Chronic Absence Cohort Patterns, Jan-May 2016*

School	% Cohort With Improved Attendance	% Cohort No Longer Chronically Absent	% Cohort Transferred/ Status Unknown
ES1	29%	14%	0%
ES2	89%	33%	11%
ES3	80%	60%	20%
MS3	50%	17%	17%
MS4	67%	0%	17%
HS5	33%	6%**	9%

* Percentages based on full site cohort N

** 3% moved out of chronic absence and then back in

Elementary school students were most likely to move out of chronic absenteeism.
Across all five pilot school sites, there were varying patterns in chronic absence rates among the five student cohorts, although the greatest movement out of chronic absence occurred in elementary schools. As Table 4.4.1 shows, Elementary School 3 had the most significant movement of students, with nearly 2 out of 3 students moving out of chronic absence. Across all five pilot school sites, it was rare to have student cohorts move out of, and then back into, chronic absence.

Staffing changes and varying intervention approaches at each CALC site affected the impact on their student cohorts.
ES1 had key coordinating and social support staff go on leave, which affected their attendance intervention practices. ES2 started the year with new administration, but eventually got underway with some successes. ES3/MS3 had the most consistent practice and reach due to their outgoing key staff member staying on to train the new incoming staff member; however, while MS3 used similar approaches to ES3, it appeared to be more difficult to move upper grade students. This might reflect the need for: 1) differentiated interventions in response to school site differences, 2) students being on their own and having to travel longer distances to school, and/or 3) students contending with more challenging or entrenched attendance obstacles.

MS4 did not move students in their cohort out of chronic absence; however, it is important to note that they are the school with the smallest numbers of chronically absent students, having had in place one of the most developed systems for monitoring attendance, and they especially focused interventions on the students with the worst attendance.[5] It is likely that MS4 is therefore working with students contending with the greatest attendance obstacles. Staff at MS4 shared that their students with the lowest attendance rates often have illnesses, or their parents' illness is an issue—a challenge that requires school staff continual monitoring, family/student engagement, and resource assistance. Staff at MS4 also commented that their highly transient student population (attributed by staff to poverty, crime, housing, and, in some cases, desire to evade truancy sanctions) makes it difficult to not just track, but also intervene. HS5 engaged in this work for the first time, and struggled to get a school-wide monitoring and intervention system in place, but also commented on the difficulty of contending with highly transient student and family populations.

At 3 of 5 schools, cohort student attendance records raised concerns about student safety.
While monitoring student cohort attendance records from January thru May 2016, two concerns arose regarding student safety. First, when we tracked down students who were no longer listed as chronically absent, in some cases we found not that their attendance had improved, but that their enrollment or transfer status was unclear, raising safety concerns. Once a student becomes chronically absent, their attendance should be monitored to ensure that their attendance actually improves. *In addition, enrollment policy currently allows a principal to dis-enroll a student when they have at least 10 consecutive unexcused absences and parents/guardians cannot be reached. However, there are no clear mechanisms in place for passing along information about student disenrollment to an entity that can ensure student safety.*

While student cohort attendance patterns varied somewhat across CALC sites, and among primary and secondary schools, student safety issues arose across all grade levels.

5.0 Promising Practices and Challenges

During spring 2016, CALC sites (including core school site attendance team members, school administrators, and district staff) participated in questionnaires and focus groups to share their thoughts on effective approaches to reducing chronic absenteeism. They also identified barriers to moving ahead. These data, along with chronically absent student cohort data and site observations, suggest both promising practices and challenges.

5.1 Promising Practices

Ten emerging practices appeared to support efforts to promote attendance and reduce chronic absence.

1. Intentional focus

Schools that were most successful had leadership support and fostered broad school engagement in attendance promotion efforts. They also made sure the basics—attendance information getting to parents in languages they can understand, phone systems work when parents call, etc.—were in place.

CALC participation also supported this intentional focus. School staff-members benefitted from sharing challenges and solutions with each other, and adopted new practices as a result. District leaders and staff-members benefitted by hearing directly from school sites about the types of support needed to promote attendance. In addition, CALC provided a forum for increasing communication and coordination across relevant district programs; for example, this led to joint professional development on chronic absence and attendance promotion for Student Support Center and Afterschool Program staff.

2. Developing and revising a MASS Protocol

Year 2 participants improved their protocols based upon year 1 data, including emphases on identifying student safety concerns and untouched youth, as well as experimenting with new intervention models.[6] Sites also further developed protocol steps to scale up intensive intervention strategies (MASS tier 3) for students who don't respond to strategic (MASS tier 2) or universal (MASS tier 1) interventions.[7] Developing a MASS protocol enabled sites to identify and coordinate use of existing resources and note resource gaps. Sites suggested that the district provide model protocols that include promising strategies and reflect expected conceptual foundations (e.g., strengths-based, equity-oriented, etc.).

In response to 2014-2015 recommendations and CALC site requests, SCUSD initiated several district actions in 2015-2016 to support and promote attendance, including: inviting more district departments to attend attendance discussions at CALC meetings; developing systems to strengthen attendance and intervention data and facilitate school access to it; revising the SART letter template to include a more strengths-based tone; and began revising board policies on attendance.

3. COST/triage of services for chronically absent student population

COST, or Coordination of Services Team, is a strategy for holding regular meetings with designated staff and administration to assess and respond to referred students' needs. COST practices at 2 out of 5 CALC sites were especially effective this year at identifying chronically absent students in need of interventions. MS4 has successfully utilized the COST model of intervention monitoring for nearly a decade. When asked why it works, one Attendance Team member explained that they incorporate attendance into one COST meeting per month:

> Our COST team tackles attendance with students and families, and one team member runs COST. We refer and receive student referrals to COST and assign students interventions as a team, and we always assign a member of COST to each referred student to provide follow up… Our Principal and Social Worker head these efforts and have buy-in. Our Social Worker has a personal history with attendance and really is devoted to this and drives the agenda. We have been lucky to have really good principals over the years, COST is great, there's ownership and investment to support our kids.

This anecdote illustrates that an effective COST model requires not only an efficient coordination system, but also a committed team of staff with assigned roles and expectations that include student follow-up.

ES3/MS3 built an additional step into their COST meetings this year to identify and reach out to chronically absent students who had not received any interventions. One Attendance Team member at ES/MS3 explained that "for these kids [with no interventions], I will email their teachers and suggest a Home Visitation or that parent contact be made." This dedication of service coverage is illustrated by ES3/MS3's 100% rate of intervention services provided to their student cohort (see Table 4.3.1). In addition, an Attendance Team member from ES3/MS3 developed a spreadsheet approach to track how/whether the students' attendance rates changed post-intervention. This highlights needed SIS functionality to enable easy documentation and retrieval of both intervention and attendance rate data. When asked what they thought of their COST system this year, a member of the ES3/MS3 Attendance Team explained that the "COST structure helps to review the lists of kids and cross check services, with everyone involved."

4. Intervening early and often

We noted how often cohort students were discussed in attendance monitoring meetings at each school site.[8] Teams that discussed a higher percentage of cohort students also had a greater percentage of students improve their attendance; conversely, teams that discussed a lower percentage of students saw a lower percentage of students with improved attendance (see Appendix E and Table 4.4.1 for data analysis).

Elementary schools implemented more interventions per cohort student and had the greatest movement out of chronic absence. Students reached earlier (on or before February) were also more likely to move out of chronic absence.

5. Improving family engagement

"It's really important to send out a message that is friendly, positive, and coming from a strengths-based approach to working *with* families, not working *for* families," stated one elementary principal. To that end, several middle school staff shared that "relationship building goes a long way," and that their "team knows all of their kids by name" to humanize and personalize the process of supporting large numbers of students and families.

Several schools pursued specific strategies early on in the school year. At one site, teachers and administrators have a "pizza and phone calls night" to contact families in the first 30 days of school. The Family Teacher Academic Team (FTAT), which would involve teachers meeting with all families to provide coaching support on an academic topic, and also integrate an emphasis on attendance, was another new planned approach. The high school pursued Parent Teacher Home Visitations (PTHV) to all incoming freshman and senior students the summer before school began to promote attendance and positive relationship building early on.

6. Supporting culturally-grounded engagement

Oftentimes school staff-members do not share the ethnic and cultural background of the students and families they aim to support in this highly diverse district, or those that do are spread thin. One site augmented its Attendance Team by including paid Parent Liaisons, who were local parents that shared dominant language and cultural backgrounds of students. This school had the most improved outreach and attendance over the past two years.

7. Restorative practices

Middle and K-8 school staff reported that their investment in restorative justice models appeared to help reduce suspensions, detentions, and truancy. An Attendance Team member at MS4 explained that "our new restorative practices model this year—the learning circles—help keep kids in school longer through the relationship building that takes place. We have 80% less suspensions in the 3rd quarter than last year." The school's administration then explained that the lower suspension rate for this school year means that fewer interventions were needed for the kids who would typically be suspended, thereby freeing up staff time and resources to allocate toward other students' attendance challenges, while still serving the student population that would have faced suspension.

ES3/MS3 supported their school counselor to hold weekly lunch circles for 7th and 8th grade students. The lunch circles focused on relationship building and group discussions about attendance barriers and solutions. If a student's unexcused tardy rate increased, lunch circles were coupled with layered repercussions, such as community service and an in-person meeting with Administration. While ES3/MS3's assistant principal shared that a restorative justice model of lunch circles has not worked at their site in past years, they were hopeful that restorative practices, held in combination with Parent Teacher Home Visitations and asking teachers to engage and support families, would reduce truancy rates.[9]

8. Incentives to support, motivate, and reward students' attendance

All CALC sites provided incentives to students and/or their families to motivate their attendance (see Appendix C on Incentives), ranging from monthly attendance awards with certificates and a moment of fame on stage, to classroom parties for the class with the highest attendance rate, to restaurant or movie theater gift cards for families. ES2 enticed students with large (donated) toys by showing them to students with both attendance and behavior issues, and allowing these students to pick out a toy to recognize improved attendance. Site staff noted that incentives motivated behavior and created a positive buzz in school culture in a way that traditional interventions did not. While building positive relationships with students often motivated a positive change in attendance behavior (see City Year section below), coupling this effort with tangible incentives for students and families seemed to be especially effective, according to staff from all 5 CALC sites.[10]

9. Partnerships to provide mentor check-ins

Two out of five CALC sites (ES1 and ES3/MS3) invested priority school site funds in City Year, a nonprofit that engages students in school through mentors and daily check-ins that build positive relationships and promote and reward attendance. City Year typically targets services for students with Average Daily Attendance rates (ADAs) ranging from 87.0-89.9%, meaning the students who have just become chronically absent (i.e., attendance at or below 90%), as well as students with 92% ADA who are on the cusp of approaching chronic absence. One City Year staff member explained that "nationally, City Year focuses on 6th grade; sometimes 6-8th. ES1 is unique because their Administrator made a special request for City Year services to be available to the entire school population."

At ES1, City Year extended the reach of qualifying students to include more students with 92% ADA in the fall as other City Year students improved their attendance and moved out of chronic absence. In the spring, as the number of chronic absentees generally increases over time, ES1's City Year moved more students with poor attendance onto their service list as others improved and moved out of chronic absence. This pattern of early intervention in fall and greater intervention capacity in spring, when more students have become chronically absent, strategically served the most students throughout the academic year with City Year services. Similarly, ES3/MS3 reported that students moved off of the City Year list due to improved attendance throughout the course of the year. ES1's Administrator commented, "we are lucky to have City Year with us to provide their excellent, personal student connections."

10. Home Visitations (HV)
Four out of five of our CALC sites indicated that Home Visitations conducted by staff, Administration, and/or Probation Officers (POs) were highly effective in encouraging attendance.[11] At ES/MS3, HV are built into their attendance protocol as a clear next step in reaching out to students and families that have been disengaged over time. One ES3/MS3 Attendance Team member explained that "our principal is really good about doing initial Home Visitations, but our PO helps do HV for ones that are really hard to track down, as a second attempt at connection."

5.2 Challenges

CALC schools also experienced numerous constraints or challenges to their efforts.

1. Late start on attendance focus
Schools got a relatively late start to intensively monitoring and addressing attendance, getting underway in late November. Multiple contributing factors included limited district emphasis on these practices in the context of many site demands, data system challenges, and the tendency for sites to wait for enrollment to "settle" at the beginning of the year as students are transferred due to over-enrollment.

Sites expressed ongoing frustration about data constraints, which contributed to both the delayed start and ongoing challenges throughout the year. The Student Information System (SIS) did not enable schools to: accurately and efficiently monitor chronic absence for a specific period of time (or month to month), easily link interventions and attendance, or extract student data in different ways (e.g., by classroom, grade level, learning community, etc.). One CALC site member explained, "We need more support from the district to improve the accuracy of student data, make the process more user-friendly, and inform us how to analyze the data and come to an actionable step—we need help with that." This past fall, the district unveiled a new Data Integrity Project, run by an Area Assistant Superintendent, to "develop clear practices and procedures in SIS usage to maximize the capabilities of the program[12]." In the meantime, while the district further develops its SIS and reporting programs, sites must generate their own work-around solutions to access and analyze attendance data.

2. Dependence upon individuals (resulting in difficulty when core staff leave)
At most CALC schools, this work was highly dependent upon the leadership and action of an individual, which meant that when key people were unavailable to lead, processes broke down. The annual realities of staff turn-over and occasional staff leave require developing systems that enable schools to maintain attendance monitoring, promotion, and intervention activities in the context of inevitable instability.

3. Dependence upon "light touch" strategies and limited relationship-building capacity
Throughout the year, to engage families around attendance challenges, many schools relied heavily upon letters, automated robo-calls and administrative calls, and pursued meetings/visits at the point when attendance challenges were severe. Elementary schools tend to not act upon excessive kindergartener absenteeism until students are 6 years old (when schooling becomes compulsory). While these strategies are efficient in a context of limited resources, they also offer limited opportunity to get to know students and families and learn about attendance barriers.

Schools would benefit from additional opportunities to build capacity with respect to family engagement. Family engagement challenges were often described as one-way "parent issues," without reflection upon the role schools can play to build positive relationships and eliminate barriers to family engagement. While there was evidence of sincere staff and leadership efforts to connect with parents and caretakers, there was also evidence of missed opportunities to build caring, respectful relationships.

All sites grappled with identifying alternative approaches to reaching families when faced with non-responsive or challenging family communication. When describing school attempts to reach non-responsive families by sending school-related officials and police officers to their house, several staff-members characterized families as often "not nice." However, only one site raised concern about the use of police as potentially straining school-family relationships in light of negative associations with law enforcement. In general, sites struggled to establish constructive communication with families that are most disconnected from schools.

4. Constraints on providing trauma-informed, healing-focused and strengths-based responses

All school staff identified student challenges such as neighborhood violence, family mental health, family substance abuse, and/or personal mental health as factors in chronic absence for many students. However, schools were not widely able to offer trauma-informed, healing, strength-based responses to attendance. Although some sites reported having restorative healing circles or practices, these tended to be stand-alone experiments more focused on alternative approaches to discipline. While most sites reported connecting students who had experienced traumatic/violent circumstances with healing-focused mental health services, some did not. The number of students served was limited due to site capacity. Refusal of services is another potential barrier to support, although this phenomenon was not observed through the cohort analysis.

5. Cultural responsiveness

There was little observed discussion of cultural factors that might either contribute to absenteeism and truancy, or be a basis for attendance promotion strategies. We did not see widespread evidence of presentations and materials in languages other than English, strategies for engaging caretakers with low levels of literacy, or inquiry into whether cultural practices conflict with school policies and how to resolve those tensions. Language and cultural barriers presented challenges to staff across all CALC sites, and when challenges arose, individuals at some sites were observed to blame parents ("they don't know how to approach us because of language") and miss genuine opportunities to connect with families in person. Capacity to support culturally grounded attendance promotion strategies tended to be concentrated in a few individuals who could make a big difference, but were stretched thin. Extending staff capacity and building deep partnerships with community networks that might offer this type of support are important areas for growth.

6. Institutional obstacles (e.g., data, inadequate family mental health resources, staffing to build/leverage community partnerships and student engagement, silo-ed approach, transit)

Finally, a number of institutional obstacles constrained schools' efforts to promote attendance. For example, as noted earlier, accessing and monitoring student attendance and intervention data remained a major challenge after multiple years of highlighting this problem. Additionally, schools, and the community more broadly, have inadequate resources to address student and family mental health challenges that affect attendance. Schools also have limited staff capacity to build and leverage the kinds of community partnerships and student leadership that could support school attendance. And finally, the silo-ed approach to attendance in the district and community results in existing internal district resources not being aligned with attendance promotion, and inadequate cross-agency collaboration to address attendance barriers that require such coordination, such as school transit, housing instability, safety, and health. As one Attendance Team member from MS4 stated: "The issues are greater than just school attendance. How can we help kids and families navigate through these intractable social problems?... While we can ameliorate some aspects of the issues at hand, some issues are too big for us to address at school..."

The district's recent response to this long-standing concern resulted in the inclusion of the district's Safe Schools Department—which is in charge of coordinating the Student Resource Officers—at CALC meetings, along with a draft revision of attendance policies that have been recently brought to the School Board. As one district representative stated in a CALC meeting where this issue was again raised, "there is a greater systemic issue at play here and we need to coordinate systems."

This sentiment echoes the need for greater district and community leadership and visioning around providing comprehensive services to families, as well as coordination with external agencies and community organizations to support this effort. Sacramento has multiple opportunities to further this coordination through local initiatives such as Promise Zone, Promise Neighborhood, My Brother's Keeper, Reducing African American Child Deaths, and South Sacramento Building Healthy Communities, amongst others.

6.0 Recommendations

Overall 2015-2016 findings suggest multiple recommendations for the SCUSD board and district office, as well as for school sites and community partners.

SCUSD Board and District Office Recommendations:

I. Lead on Attendance

A. Communicate regularly with schools, students, caretakers, and the community in compelling, culturally responsive ways about attendance, and the resources available to support it.

- Raise attendance awareness through attendance promotion campaigns throughout the community.
- Pursue approaches to attendance promotion that account for the needs of culturally-diverse families and communities. For example, make pre-designed PowerPoint slides, posters, and/or other materials with basic chronic absence and attendance facts in English, Spanish, and Hmong available in the Enrollment Center and for teachers/principals to upload as part of their family engagement and attendance promotion efforts; provide attendance promotion/support information via regional ethnic media outlets.
- Invest in extending culturally responsive wraparound services to families facing multiple, interlocking barriers to school attendance.

B. Engage cabinet-level leadership to build on district efforts to coordinate attendance support activity across relevant departments and initiatives.

- Maintain and build emerging cross-department and initiative-sharing systems for supporting and communicating about attendance issues to ensure it does not become a "silent issue."
- Ensure that all administration and student support leaders are aware of district expectations and resources regarding attendance promotion.

C. Build interagency, community, and business partnerships to promote awareness that every day counts, align systems, identify mentors, and ensure student safety.

- Partner with agencies such as Social Services, Welfare, Sheriff's Office, Police Department, Transportation, Courts, faith-based organizations, ethnic networks, media, employers, healthcare providers, etc.
- Engage actively in organized local community building initiatives to encourage and help guide efforts to eliminate attendance barriers.
- Develop an interagency protocol between the Superintendent, Sheriff's Office, Police Department, and Welfare on tracking down disconnected children and families.

D. Pursue policy/practice changes to:

- Clarify guidelines for ensuring the safety of missing students,
- Monitor/intervene in kindergarten for chronic absence, regardless of age,
- Ensure adequate staffing to flag and address inter- and intra-district transferee attendance problems during (re)enrollment,
- Ensure adequate staffing to monitor attendance and build school awareness of district attendance promotion expectations and resources,
- Enable community partnerships that help children and families feel connected to their schools and access attendance resources,
- Require all schools to create and assess a Multi-tiered Attendance Support System strategy (MASS) as part of their annual site improvement plans, and
- Return to schools a percentage of ADA funds generated via improved attendance.

II. Support Data Use

A. Resolve Student Information System (SIS) challenges regarding tracking and reporting on attendance and intervention data.

B. Integrate an algorithm to flag student attendance patterns that raise safety concerns.

C. Provide adequate and multiple training and refresher opportunities on using the SIS to monitor and report attendance-relevant data, including, but not limited to, these topics:

- How and where in the SIS to consistently enter student attendance information;
- How different types of staff positions (e.g., teachers, attendance clerks, social workers, etc.) should enter intervention information;
- How to run an accurate report of chronically absent students;
- How to consistently use a chronically absent student report to identify, address, and monitor student needs; and
- How to use attendance data to inform policies, partnerships, and practices.

D. Ensure data/analyses are available with appropriate confidentiality to multiple constituencies.

E. Ensure disaggregated district and school level chronic absence and intervention data are available to inform LCAP development and school planning.

School Site Recommendations:

The following guiding principles are based upon the data and insights gathered over the course of the 2015-2016 school year, and offer school sites a framework for addressing chronic absence.

I. Implement key "nuts and bolts" strategies to address chronic absenteeism

A. Use data to develop, implement, and assess attendance plans.
School sites should implement attendance promotion, intervention, and monitoring systems into their school site improvement plans using their MASS protocol to strengthen attendance efforts.

- Create a school-wide culture of attendance with clear expectations of staff, student, and parent involvement.
- Build upon existing programs/resources, and identify gaps in services.
- Determine the tipping point of when to jump to the next tiered level of interventions, either categorically, or on a case by case basis.

B. Build a committed attendance leadership system that consistently works on attendance promotion strategies, and can weather staff turnover, staff leave, etc.
School sites should establish an Attendance Team comprised of, at a minimum, administration, an attendance technician, those involved in case management (i.e., Student Support Coordinator, Social Worker, and/or Counselor), Parent Liaisons, and/or parent volunteers to drive the following efforts:

- Hold monthly COST Attendance Meeting to review the month's list of chronic absentees and triage services, with assigned follow up; and
- Work independently and collaboratively as an Attendance Team to:
  - Communicate with one another at key points in the month to update the list of chronic absentees and support one another's efforts;

- Investigate and act upon student, family, and SIS problems in a timely manner; and
- Assign coverage for key staff on leave and train new in-coming staff to ensure that attendance promotion and monitoring efforts do not fall to the wayside, or just upon one talented staff person.

C. Include parent/community liaisons on the attendance leadership team who are knowledgeable about the local community and culture(s).

- Ensure staff gets to know students, families, and their circumstances to tailor appropriate support services to their unique needs and resources.
- Further invest in staff training on family engagement, with emphases on cultural humility, and intercultural, strengths-based practices.

D. Ensure attendance leadership team and all school stakeholders have appropriate training on attendance systems, resources, and why attendance matters.
Training on attendance monitoring and promotion should include, but not be limited to:

- SIS functionalities, such as: data entry; running the monthly list of chronic absentees; updating and interpreting the meaning of the list of chronic absentees;
- Triaging services through the COST model, with related forms and methods for tracking student data over time (see list of training topics in district recommendations, under point "C" in "Support Data Use"); and
- Investing in staff training to ensure full knowledge of attendance promotion resources within and beyond the school and district.

II. Pursue approaches that reflect these guiding principles:

A. Monitor strategies and creatively adjust attendance promotion practices.

- Sites need to not only implement attendance promotion strategies, but also monitor whether they're having an impact, both for individual students and the school as a whole.
- Sites should experiment with new ideas and monitor their impact on student attendance, making adjustments, modifications, or new plans as they go.

B. Work with communities to identify and address systemic attendance barriers.

- Examples include bus route problems, requiring a doctor's note for absences when some families use traditional healers, court hearings scheduled during the school day, etc.

C. Build a school-wide understanding of attendance as everyone's responsibility.

- Personal relationships are a key attendance motivator. The attendance leadership team is key, but everyone, from yard duty to teachers, from coaches to counselors, and from custodians to administrators, holds potential to establish meaningful relationships with children and/or caretakers, and needs to see supporting attendance as part of their job.

D. Make sure every child matters, and knows that they matter.
Ensure that every student and parent/caretaker feels confident that school site adults will notice if a student misses school, and will follow up, not only to request a note, but also to ensure they are okay, help them catch up, and assist them with attendance procedures.

- Implement practices to ensure that school sites recognize all student absences, and offer appropriate supports.

Community recommendations to support attendance:

District and school leadership are key to promoting attendance, but alone are inadequate.

I. Community and regional stakeholders should partner with young people, families, and schools to support school attendance.

A. Encourage, inform, and enable district, school, city, and county investment in attendance promotion.

- We need the public—including parents and students—to encourage investment in this area. Key district-sponsored opportunities include Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) development, English Learner Advisory Committees (ELACs), Site Council school site plan development, and student leadership venues. Other important venues include transit and housing planning efforts, initiatives such as Promise Neighborhood, and city and county budgeting.

B. Help schools and the district implement culturally responsive approaches to attendance promotion and support.

- Schools do not always have the networks, cultural capacity, or authority to effectively identify and address attendance barriers and generate attendance promotion strategies that are meaningful to the community served; they would benefit from local support.

C. Spread the word that every day counts.

- Schools need assistance from CBOs, faith organizations, healthcare providers, unions, employers, the media, etc. to let parents/caretakers and students know how important it is to avoid missing school, support parents to get their kids to school, and help parents/caretakers follow-up with schools when absence is unavoidable.

D. Align agency activities to ensure the safety of students who are chronically absent.

- Schools, law enforcement, and child welfare agencies need coordinated, well-communicated strategies for ensuring the safety of students who are absent and whose caretakers are unreachable, perhaps with assistance from community-based organizations and networks.

E. Implement policies and practices that help students (and help parents/caretakers help students) get to/from school and stay there throughout the school day.

- All agencies, governing bodies, service providers, and employers need to consider the effects of their policies and practices on young people's ability to make every school day count. This includes agencies that might not typically think of themselves as child-focused, such as: employers whose policies affect parents' ability to get their kids to school, transportation, and housing.
- Incorporate an active focus on eliminating chronic absenteeism and promoting attendance in local and regional community building initiatives.

School systems themselves are absolutely critical to improving attendance, but alone they are inadequate. All of us with a stake in young people's well-being need to step up to ensure that SCUSD students reap the full benefits of public education, which starts with them being at school.

7.0 Appendices

Appendix A: CALC Site Multi-tiered Attendance Support System (MASS) Protocols

Following are the 2015-2016 MASS Protocols designed by each CALC site. Some reflect school-wide planning efforts, while others reflect more preliminary documentation by a few key staff members.

Figure A.0.1 Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: ES1

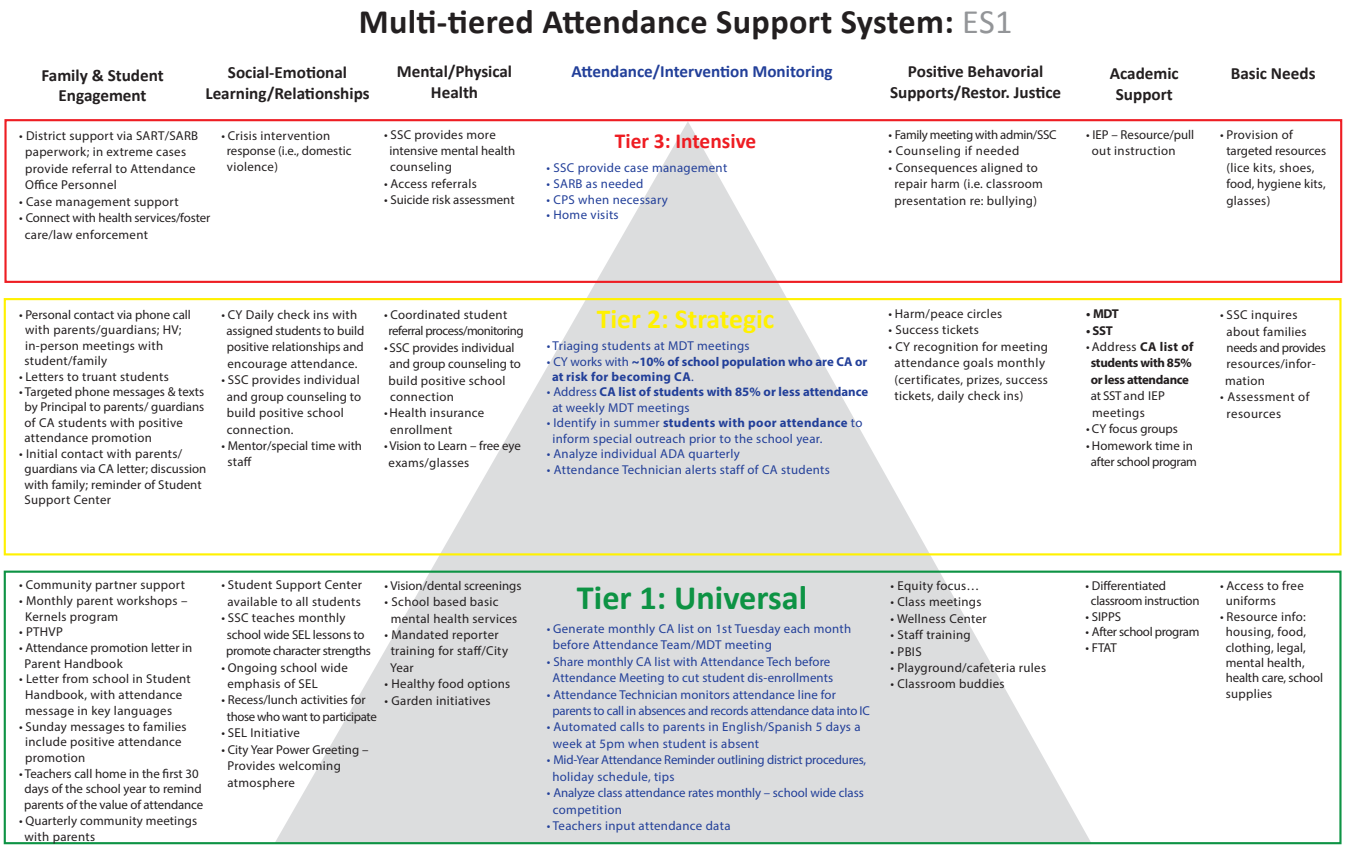


Figure A.0.2 Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: ES2

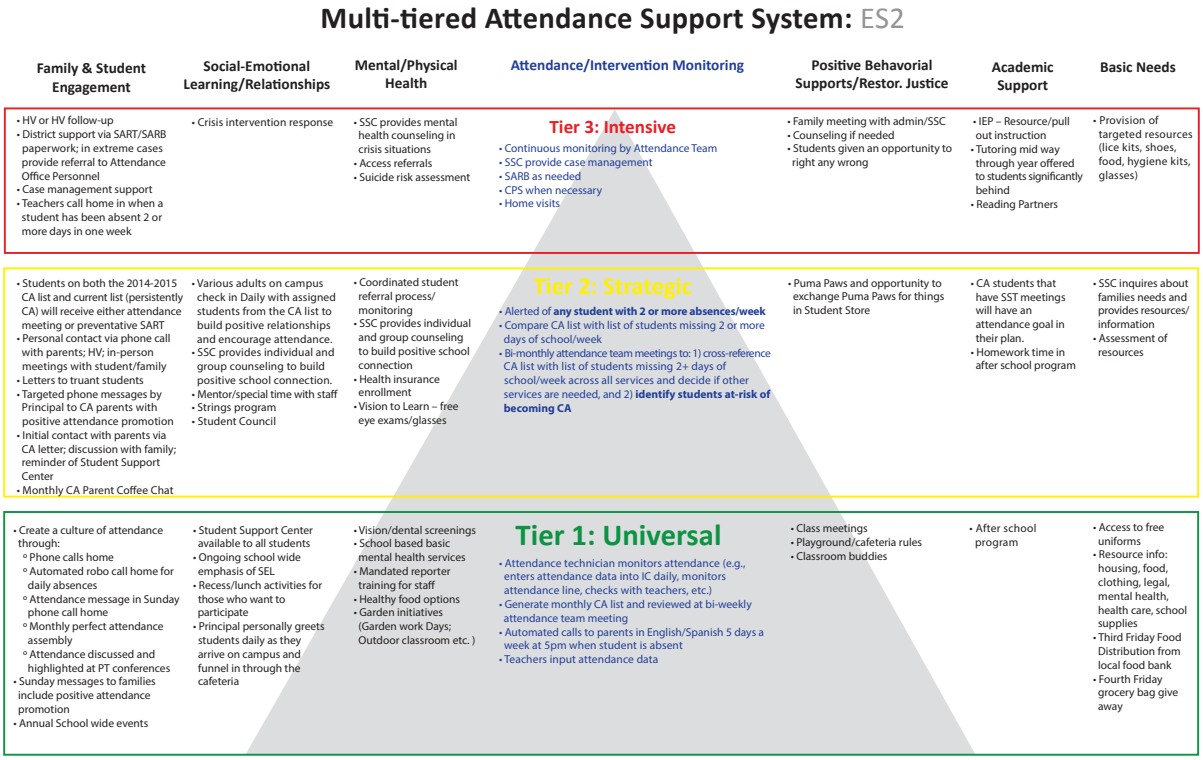


Figure A.0.3 Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: ES3/MS3

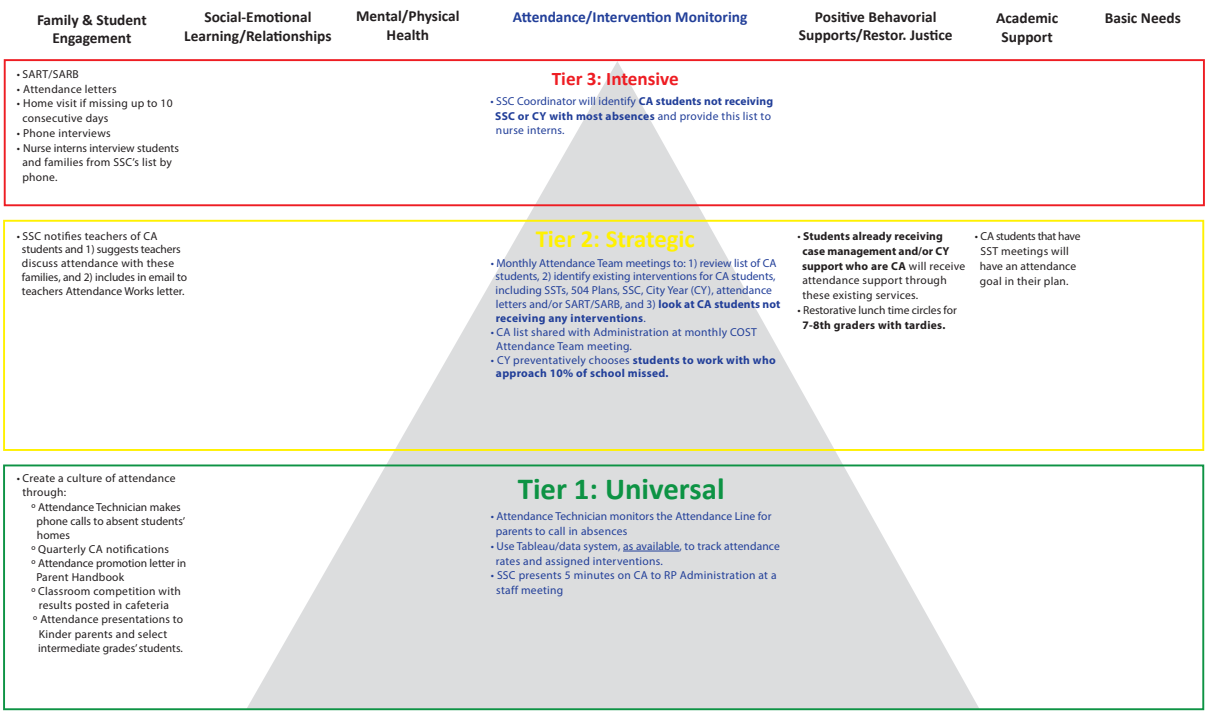


Figure A.0.4 Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: MS4

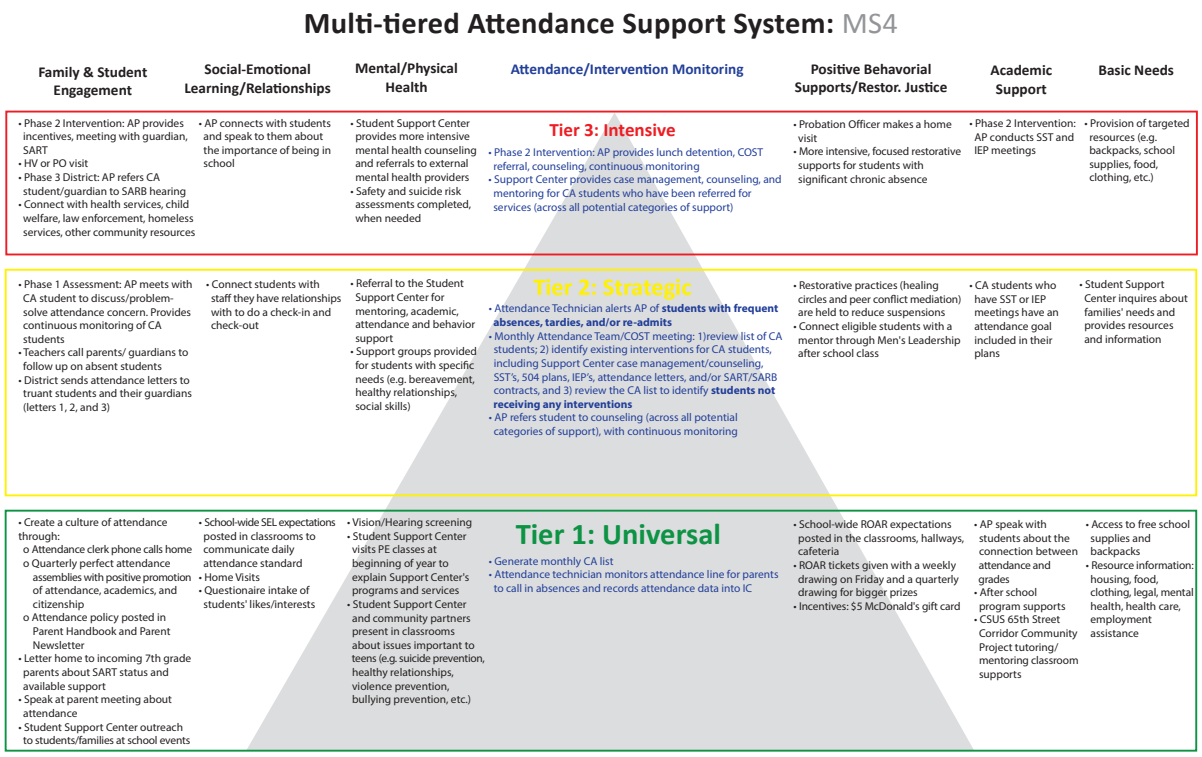
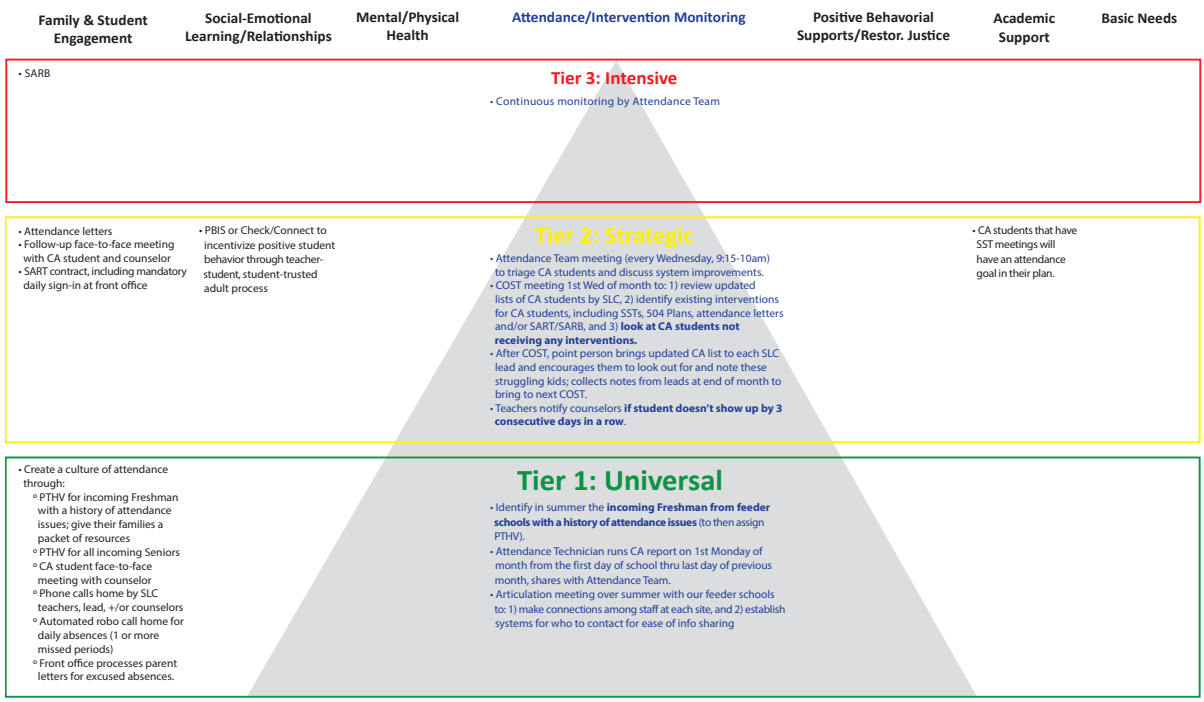


Figure A.0.5 Multi-tiered Attendance Support System: HS5



Appendix B: Cohort Student Interventions

While the interventions represented in Table 2.0.1 as check marks reflect observed interventions provided to the cohort students, CALC sites also reported the implementation of many of the interventions to their greater student body; these interventions are labeled in Table B.0.1 as Reported, Not Observed (RNO).

Table B.0.1 Observed and Reported Interventions Received by Cohort Students, Jan-May 2016

School*					Intervention	Definition
ES1	ES2	ES3/ MS3	MS4	HS5		
X	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**Family and student engagement**	Grade-level presentations; school attendance letter update; revising/publicizing attendance information in student/family handbooks; phone call home; home visit; case management; connect families with needed foster care or homeless services; SST including attendance focus; SART/SARB letters/hearings.
RNO		X			Grade-level presentations	
RNO	X	RNO			School attendance letter update	
X	X	X	X		Phone call home	
RNO	RNO	X	X	X	Home visit	
X	X	X	X	X	Case management	
RNO		X	RNO		Foster Care	
RNO		X	X	X	Homeless	
X	X	RNO	RNO		SST	
RNO	RNO	X	RNO	X	District SART Attendance Letters (1, 2, 3)	
		X	RNO	X	SART meeting	
				X	SART-o-Rama	Day-long drop-in event hosted by school site staff to serve qualifying families with SART paperwork
	X	X	X	X	SARB letter	
	X	X	X		SARB hearing	
	RNO		RNO	RNO	preventative SARTs/SARBs or preventative warnings	Includes: Early SART/SARB interventions in fall, based upon previous spring's chronic absence rates (ES2); preventative school-initiated SARTs (MS4); preventatively posteing May's SART list in the hallway to warn 12th graders that if they become tardy or absent like those on the list, a SART will prevent them from walking in their graduation ceremony (HS5).
X	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**SEL/Relationships**	Student Support Center referral; City Year services or alternative check-in program; individual and group counseling.
X	X	X	X		SSC referral	
X		X			CY	
	X				Alternative Check in program	
RNO	RNO	X	X	X	Individual/group counseling	
RNO					504 crisis intervention	
RNO					School-wide SEL efforts	
		X	**X**	**X**	**Mental/Physical Health**	Physical health referrals or services; occupational therapy; foodbank provisions; individual and group counseling; school-based mental health services; outside referral to counseling.
RNO		RNO	X	X	Physical health referrals or services	
				X	Occupational therapy	
RNO	RNO	X			Foodbank provisions	
RNO	RNO	X	X	X	Individual and group counseling	
RNO	RNO	X	X	RNO	School-based mental health services	
RNO	RNO	X	X	X	Outside referral to counseling	
X	**X**	**X**	**X**		**Attendance/Intervention Monitoring**	Attendance team meetings to identify chronically absent students and triage or refer to MDT or COST meetings; MDT or COST meetings to discuss students' needs and plan to provide follow up services; use of SST to address attendance; SSC treats chronic absence as a referral.
	X				Attendance Team Meetings	Meetings used specifically as a preliminary step toward MDT or COST models of monitoring attendance and related concerns.
X					MDT	
		X	X		COST	
X	X	RNO	RNO		Use of SST to address attendance	
X	X	X	X		SSC treats chronic absence as a referral	Note: HS5 does not have an SSC.
X	**X**	**X**			**Positive Behavioral Supports/Restorative Justice**	Attendance incentives/awards; City Year or alternative check in program providing student recognition for meeting attendance goals; counseling for students and/or families; restorative healing circles.
X	X	X	X		Attendance incentives/awards	
X		X			CY	Providing student recognition for meeting attendance goals
	X				Alternative Check in program	Providing student recognition for meeting attendance goals
RNO			RNO		Counseling for students and/or families	
RNO		RNO	RNO	RNO	Restorative healing circles	
X	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**Academic Support**	Online affiliated schools to support enrichment; credit recovery; Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs); and/or Student Study Teams (SSTs).
				X	Online affiliated school	Sacramento Accelerated Academy
					Credit recovery	ES3/MS3 in discussion with district for 2016-17
RNO	RNO	X	X		IEP	
X					MDT	
X	X	RNO	RNO		SST	
				RNO	Alternative learning/ special education services	
			RNO		Shortened day	
		X	**X**		**Basic Needs**	Provide school supplies, food, clothing, transportation, information on housing resources, medical/mental health care, and legal services.
RNO	RNO	RNO	X		School supplies	
RNO	RNO	X			Foodbank provisions	
			X		Clothing	
			RNO		Transportation	Note: ES1 petitioned the district to create a site-based Walking School Bus, but their proposal was declined.
RNO			X		Resource information	Information provided on housing resources, medical/mental health care, and legal services.

* X = school observed implementing at least one strategy for the intervention

Appendix C: Incentives Selected by School Sites and Funded by SCUSD

Table C.0.1 Incentives Selected by School Sites and Funded by SCUSD

School	Incentives
ES1	Popcorn machine, with popcorn kernels and bags
ES2	Movie theater tickets, McDonald's gift cards
ES3/MS3	Movie theater gift cards
MS4	McDonald's gift cards, 5 alarm clocks
HS5	Movie theater tickets

In May, SCUSD also provided to all school sites a popcorn machine with popcorn kernels and bags, inspired by ES1's selection of an item that could be used to encourage and reward numerous students and classrooms over time.

Appendix D: CALC School 10% Cohort Descriptions (2015-16)

Table D.0.1 CALC School 10% Cohorts (2015-16)

School	N (Cohort)	Gender (M/F)	Grade*	Avg. % Absent (as of 5/16)
ES1	7	M=6 F=1	K=2 1st=1 2nd=1 5th=2 Unknown=1	15.5%
ES2	9	M=3 F=6	EK=1 3rd=2 K=2 4th=1 6th=1 Unknown=2	15.1%
ES3	5	M=2 F=3	K=1 2nd=1 6th=1 Unknown=2	16.1%
MS3	6	M=3 F=3	7th=2 8th=3 Unknown=1	15.6%
MS4	6	M=4 F=2	7th=3 8th=3	16.0%
HS5	33	M=14 F=19	9th=6 10th=8 11th=7 12th=11 13th=1	18.5%

*Unknown reflects an unlisted grade level provided in the SIS.

Appendix E: Percentage of Student Cohort Discussed in Attendance Monitoring Meetings

Table E.0.1 Average Percentage of Student Cohort Discussed in Monthly Attendance Team Meetings

School	Average % cohort discussed (Jan-May)
ES1	21%
ES2	37%
ES3	40%
MS3	53%
MS4	25%
HS5	11%

References and Notes

[i] Lange, Alan and Erbstein, Nancy (2014). Chronic Absenteeism Issue Brief Series. Factors Influencing School Attendance for Chronically Absent Students in the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD). Davis, CA: UC Davis Center for Regional Change.
[ii] Erbstein, Nancy (2013). Chronic Absence in the Sacramento City Unified School District Brief Series: The Cost of Chronic Absence in SCUSD. Davis, CA: UC Davis Center for Regional Change.
[1] School data from 2014-15 SARC reports
[2] Erbstein, N., Olagundoye, S., Hartzog, C. (2015). Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD): Emerging Lessons From Four Learning Collaborative Sites. Davis, CA: UC Davis Center for Regional Change.
[3] Erbstein, N., Olagundoye, S., Hartzog, C. (2015). Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD): Emerging Lessons From Four Learning Collaborative Sites. Davis, CA: UC Davis Center for Regional Change.
[4] First, MS4's Assistant Principal of Attendance focused COST meetings on students with the lowest attendance, so every chronically absent student was not referred to COST; because MS4 staff had large caseloads outside of COST to provide "light touch" interventions and/or arrange student/family meetings with administration, some or all cohort students might have been served in this manner. Second, due to widespread staff illness, there was no COST meeting for attendance in February.
[5] MS4's Assistant Principal of Attendance chose to focus the list of students referred to Attendance Team meetings to specifically represent the 5% of students with the lowest attendance rates.
[6] Several sites this year explored existing campus resources as attendance intervention alternatives. ES1's Principal developed new messaging systems promoting attendance through texts and phone messages that went out to the targeted list of chronically absent students' households. ES1, ES2, and ES3/MS3 began utilizing SSTs as a way to build attendance goals into academic plans. ES3/MS3's afterschool program also requires school attendance to maintain enrollment status in their popular afterschool program, thereby boosting school day attendance. MS4 utilized their Assistant Principal of Attendance to build relationships and develop attendance plans with chronically absent students through their existing SEL model. Similarly, half of the CALC sites experimented with new student outreach efforts this year. ES2 created a new, highly successful morning check-in program to pilot for a small cross-section of chronically absent students, based off of the City Year program model, which utilized yard duty, interested staff, and administrators as the student mentors. Approximately 75% of students enrolled in this check-in program demonstrated improved attendance at ES2. The program was so successful that Administration decided to make it a school-wide chronic absence intervention, expanding the program to serve all 90 kids on their chronic absence list, also expanding to include 18 adult mentors. ES3/MS3 and MS4 also explored involving existing site staff in student outreach by utilizing their counselors to implement restorative justice efforts that built positive relationships and encouraged attendance. These new efforts reflect beginning attempts by CALC sites to creatively discover new ways to approach chronic absence with existing resources.
[7] While many CALC sites are still experimenting with what this scaling up would look like, MS4 accomplished this by providing interventions to newly or moderately chronic absentees through support services like case management, phone calls/letters home, and meetings with Administration, thereby focusing their COST attendance model to triage services for the 5% of students with the highest rates of absenteeism. This method of addressing daily the "easiest to fix" cases is rounded out by addressing the toughest cases on a monthly basis, with triaged team attention and long-term monitoring.
[8] The number of attendance monitoring meetings held varied per school site. Percentages are based upon averages across all meetings held January thru May 2016.
[9] ES3/MS3 was unable to generate data that would enable an impact analysis of these practices.
[10] We are unable to independently confirm the relationship between incentives and improved attendance with available school data.
[11] HS5 was not able to provide Home Visitations during the year due to staff capacity, but were the leading site in conducting Parent Teacher Home Visitations (PTHV) in the summer for all incoming freshman and seniors.
[12] Quote taken from meeting minutes of the October 27, 2016 meeting of the Data Integrity Project (DIP).