

Overview of Chronic Absenteeism Brief

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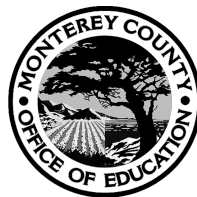


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SALINAS
CITY ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Why Did We Take On This Work?

SUPPORTING LEAs FOR CONTINUED LEARNING

- More than 12% of California's K-12 public school students were chronically absent in 2018-19 (EdData). These numbers more than doubled since the pandemic.
- Chronic absenteeism disproportionately affects youth of color and other vulnerable student groups.
- Low attendance is an early warning system for dropping out risk.
- Poor attendance is an indicator of low achievement in transitional grades.
- Chronic absenteeism impacts reading proficiency, social and emotional development, academic confidence, test scores, early literacy and math development, and high school completion.

Selection of schools

Initial selection based on:

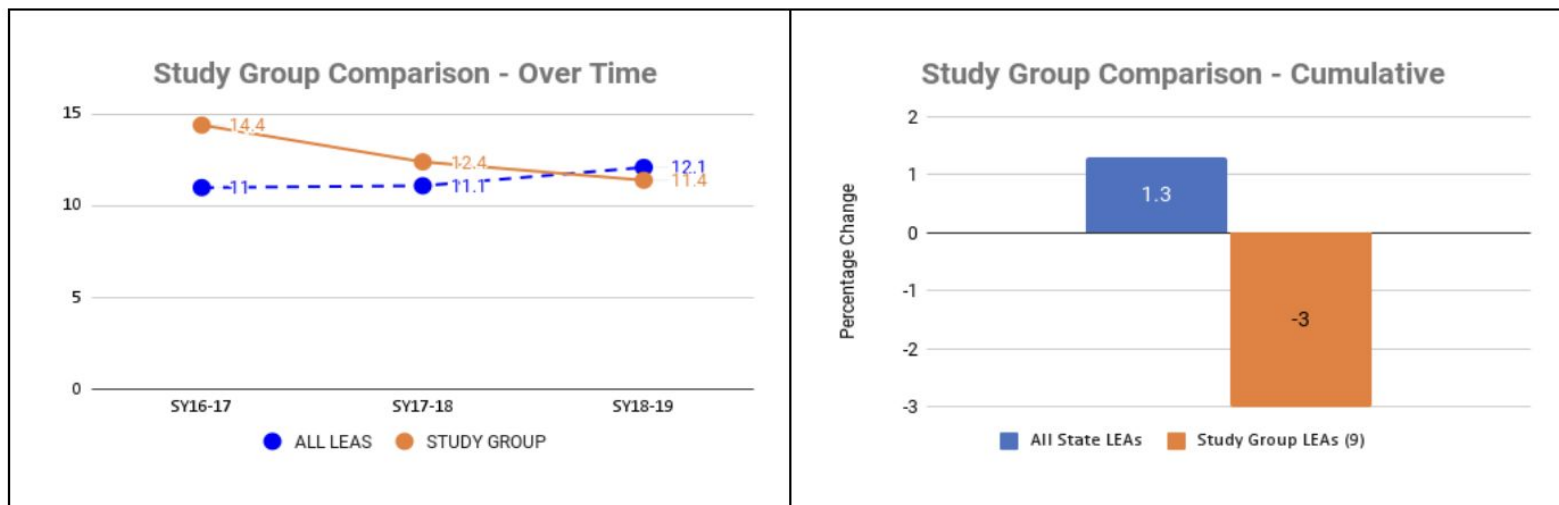
- Successfully reduced chronic absenteeism rates
- Enrollment of at least 1,500
- At least 60% unduplicated pupils

This yielded a list of 80 school districts

Final selection based on availability yielded *9 districts*

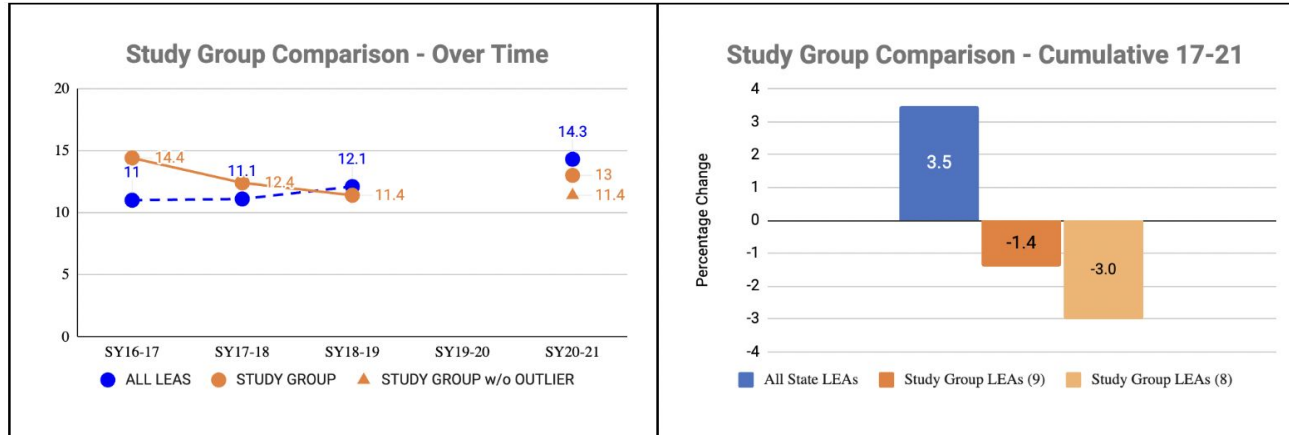
- Located across the state
- Ranging in size from 4,000 - 23,000
- Variance of grade spans (4 unified, 2 high schools, 3 K-8)
- Representing a combined enrollment of 142,000 students.

FINDINGS FOR 9 LEAs pre-pandemic



- 9 districts **lowered chronic absenteeism by 3%** between 2017-2019
- During the same time period California LEAs experienced a 1.3% increase in absenteeism rates
- The true rate of improvement of 9 LEAs in the study was 4.8% (1.3% CA increase + 3% decrease)
- Approx. **6,800 students were no longer chronically absent** based on the efforts of the 9 LEAs

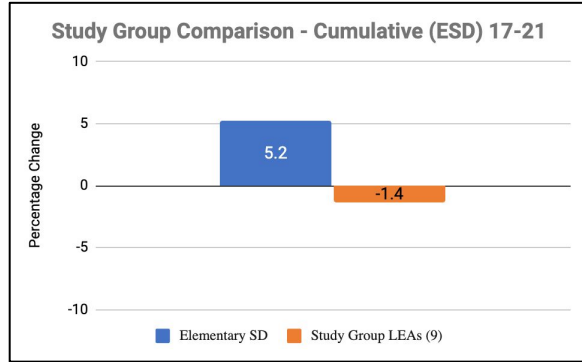
FINDINGS FOR 9 LEAs pre and post pandemic



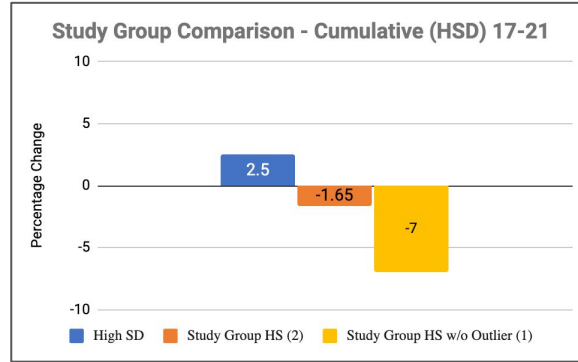
- 9 districts **lowered chronic absenteeism by 1.4%** between 2017-2021
- During the same time period California LEAs experienced a 3.5% increase in absenteeism rates
- The true rate of improvement of 9 LEAs was 4.9% (3.5% CA increase + 1.45% decrease)
- Outlier: If you remove 1 LEA from the study that saw rates spike beyond the 25% mark during the pandemic, the collective rate of the remaining 8 LEAs improves from 1.4 to 3.0% – a 6.5% total

Improvement by Type of District (2017-2021)

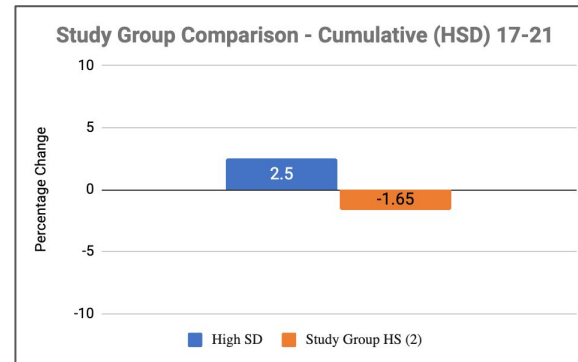
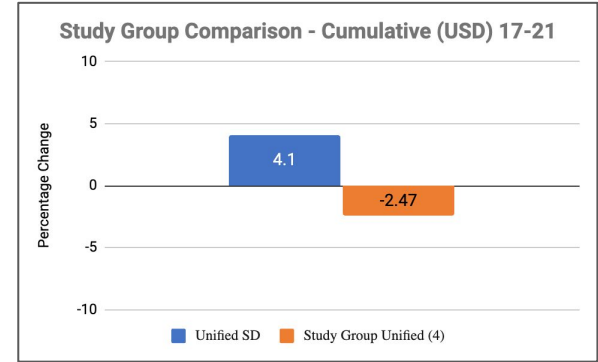
Elementary Districts



High School District



Unified District



COMMON PRACTICES AMONG DISTRICTS

- Attendance work was systemic
- Relationship building and connection were essential
- Data was timely, informative, and led to action
- Resources and attention were committed over time



What has been your most successful strategy to address chronic absenteeism?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Specific Strategies shared by LEAs

1. Shift mindset and build understanding: Understand impact, shift from fault to responsibility, and commit to school as a fun and joyful place
2. Integrate practices across the district: Part of PBIS, MTSS, and parent engagement
3. Leverage strong data practices: Compliance reviews and adjust calendar to trends
4. Utilize early intervention: Early warning system, relationship building beyond classroom
5. Provide consistent, focused wraparound communication: District-wide campaigns for communication, timely notification of absences, and public attendance goals
6. Ensure strong support and staffing: Dedicated staff, specialized PD and vendor support
7. Maximize community partnerships: Expand support network for referrals and support
8. Develop flexible paths for students: Extended school hours and independent study

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a consistent and clear **statewide communication** campaign.
2. Allow for **flexibilities** around how or when learning takes place.
3. **Update SART and SARB** requirements to align with latest research and initiatives.
4. Provide **statewide training and tools** to support attendance.
5. Forge a path for a more “connected system” and **inter-agency collaboration.**
6. Support the development of even more usable and implementable **statewide data.**

Next steps and ways to stay engaged

- [Share the memo](#) to continue the focus on reducing chronic absenteeism
- Share district updates in a follow-up interview in Spring 2023
- Work with a coach to dive deeper into data and reducing chronic absenteeism through SY 2022-23 as part of a Research Learning Network
- Contact: dkong@ccee-ca.org for more information

Thank You!