Renewing Our Minds: Transforming How We Approach Attendance

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Shifting Mindsets on Chronic Absenteeism - Session 2
Welcome

- Slides have been posted to CCEE's [website](#). The recording will be posted following the webinar. (Link in chat)

- **Questions/Comments**: Please use the chat or Q&A feature

- Sign-up for **Special Interest Interest Group** ("SIG") session in post-session survey
Quick Review

Session 1: A Tale of Two Systems: Responding to Unexcused and Excused Absences
Effective approaches to improving attendance are urgently needed in CA.

Chronic absenteeism has skyrocketed

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**Chronic Absence in California**
*(SY 2018-19 vs SY 2021-22)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Span</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2021-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In California, accountability requirements to monitor and reduce chronic absence exist on top of longstanding truancy related practices and policies.
Chronic Absence vs. Truancy

Truancy

- Counts ONLY unexcused absences
- Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

Chronic Absence

- Counts ALL absences (excused, unexcused & suspensions)
- Emphasizes impact of missed days and benefits of being present
- Uses preventative, problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement

# How Unexcused Label Affects School Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response To Excused</th>
<th>Response to To Unexcused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help with homework</td>
<td>Denial of help or no credit for homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make-up exams</td>
<td>No make-up exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home tutoring provided</td>
<td>Denial of class credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal from extra-curricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Send notices of truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If unexcused absences accumulate</strong></td>
<td><strong>if unexcused absences accumulate despite earlier outreach from schools and districts, courts can</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine student and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Require community service program or parenting program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charge parents with misdemeanor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Unexcused Label Affects Families

If families perceive an unexcused label is unfairly applied, it can undermine trust and make it more difficult to partner with students and families to understand and address underlying attendance barriers.

This can undermine other student and family engagement strategies.
Disparities in whose absences are labeled unexcused reflect socio-economics and ethnicity.

Large disparities in unexcused absenteeism persisted within each socioeconomic strata in SY 2021-22 for Black, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Hispanic students compared to White students.
Bright spots exist and we can learn from them.

Criteria: (a) above-average levels of attendance (defined as fewer than 11.7 days absent); (b) below-average levels of unexcused absenteeism (below 33.8 percent); and (c) a disparity between the racial or ethnic comparison group and White students that is smaller than two-tenths of a standard deviation.
Recommendations for Action

1. Use data to learn about disparities and identify bright spots.
2. Invest in better practices and data systems for monitoring and understanding reasons for both excused and unexcused absences.
3. Review and update local and state policies related to unexcused absences.
4. Assess and improve how attendance practices and policies are communicated to students and families.
5. Invest in professional development to improve attendance and truancy practices.
What do you make of the DataQuest data on excused vs unexcused absences for your district?

How do you explain it?
## SCESD Absences by Reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Eligible Cumulative Enrollment</th>
<th>Count of Students with One or More Absences</th>
<th>Average Days Absent</th>
<th>Excused Absences</th>
<th>Unexcused Absences</th>
<th>Out-of-School Suspension Absences</th>
<th>Incomplete Independent Study Absences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salinas City Elementary</td>
<td>8,589</td>
<td>8,340</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey</td>
<td>74,345</td>
<td>70,169</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>5,315,972</td>
<td>5,018,237</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Race / Ethnicity Absences by Reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race / Ethnicity</th>
<th>Eligible Cumulative Enrollment</th>
<th>Count of Students with One or More Absences</th>
<th>Average Days Absent</th>
<th>Excused Absences</th>
<th>Unexcused Absences</th>
<th>Out-of-School Suspension Absences</th>
<th>Incomplete Independent Study Absences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>7,815</td>
<td>7,584</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beyond ensuring we do not overuse the label of unexcused absence, how do we need to transform practice given chronic absence has quadrupled?
SCESD Chronic Absenteeism
2018-2019

LEARN MORE
Chronic Absenteeism

Yellow

9.5% chronically absent
Maintained -0.3%

EQUITY REPORT
Number of Student Groups in Each Color

1 Blue
2 Green
7 Yellow
1 Orange
0 Red

View More Details ➔

2021-2022

LEARN MORE
Chronic Absenteeism

Very High

37.9% chronically absent

EQUITY REPORT
Number of Student Groups in Each Level

11 Very High
1 High
0 Medium
0 Low
0 Very Low

View More Details ➔
How are you using data in real-time to inform action?
SCESD Real Time Data
2022-2023

SCESD Chronic Absenteeism by Site 2022-2023

- 2021-2022
- Low Dashboard
- Overall
- BM
- DIAS
- EG
- K
- LW
- LIN
- LV
- LP
- MIP
- MoP
- N
- R
- SCVA
- SHR
How have you been able to work with other districts to transform our approach to attendance?
Research-Practice Partnership

Chronic Absenteeism
Questions or Comments?
Thank You

Contact

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Next Steps

Interested in connecting further? Join us for the Special Interest Group (SIG) Session by providing your contact information in the feedback survey!