



UC DAVIS
SPARC
School Policy, Action,
and Research Center

ccee
California Collaborative
for Educational Excellence

The Trust Approach: Elevating School Attendance Through Meaningful Engagement

Session One of the Chronic Absenteeism Bright Spots Series

October 1, 2024

Welcome



Sujie Shin

Deputy Executive Director,
CCEE

- Recording & slides will be posted on [CCEE's website](#)
- Slides will be linked in the chat
- **Questions/Comments:** Please use the Q&A feature in the Zoom toolbar

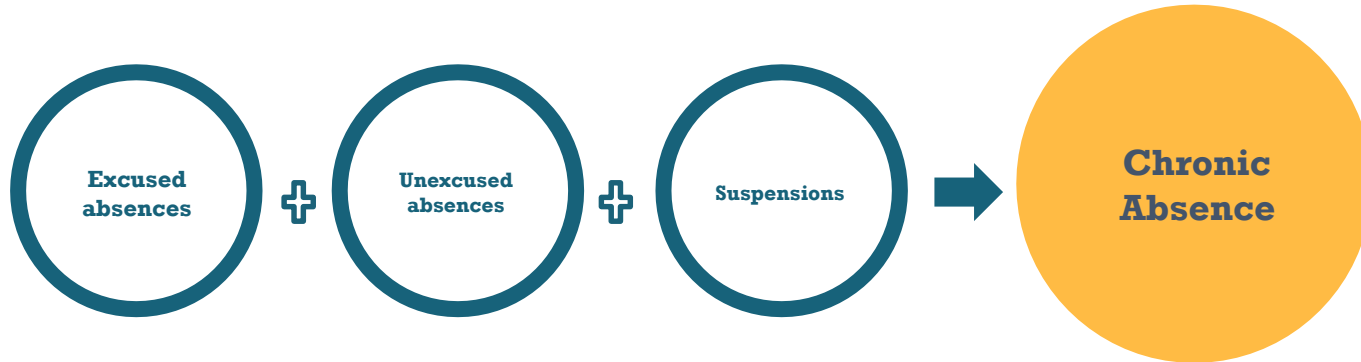
Agenda

- **Introduction & Background**
 - What is chronic absence and why does it matter?
- **Defining Trust & Engagement**
 - What does this mean and how does it impact attendance?
- **Panel Discussion with Cypress School District**
 - Hear from Clara King Elementary staff
 - Practical Tools
- **Q&A**
- **Closing**

What is Chronic Absence?

And why does it matter?

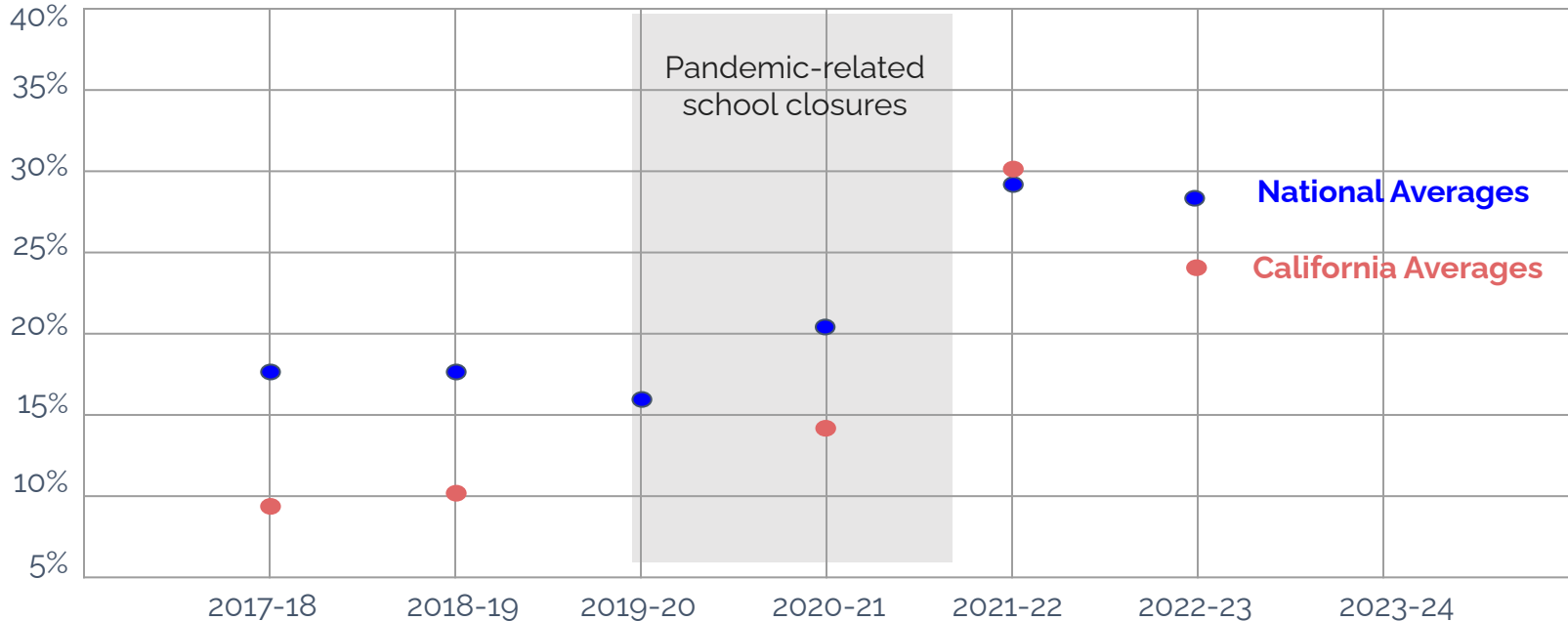
Chronic absence is defined as **missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason**. Chronic absence can put student academically at risk as well as hurt their socioemotional well-being. .



Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).

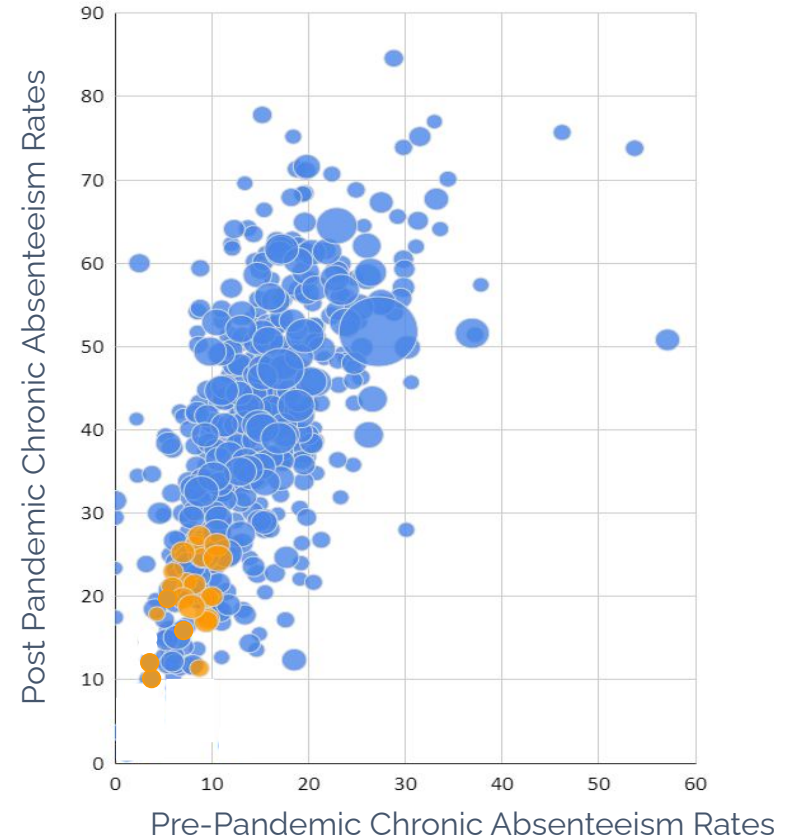
What does the data show?

National and State Data



About Our Bright Spots

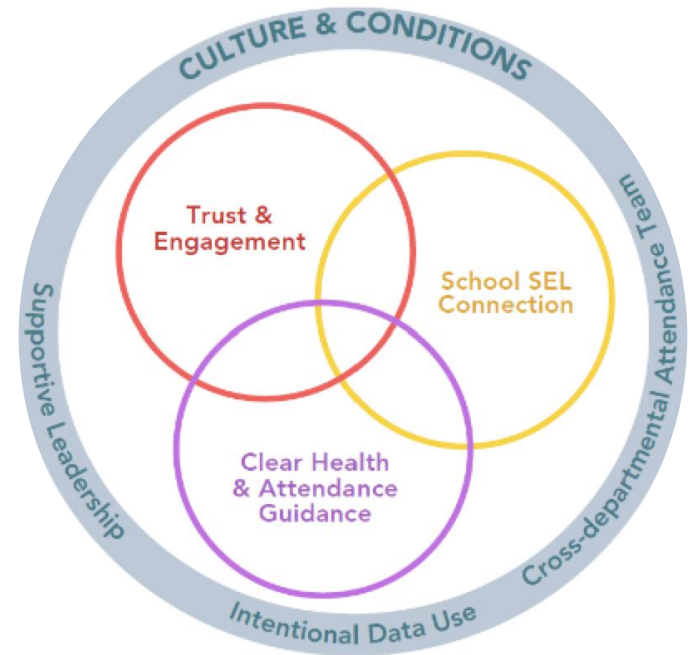
- Focused on **Kinder**—with implications for foundational learning, socioemotional well-being, and community-building
- Ran analyses to identify districts who had chronic absenteeism rates that were below State average and further narrowed to:
 - Include districts who reflect State's diversity
 - Exclude “super-smalls”
 - Ensure identified districts did not have wide variations in chronic absenteeism rates across grade levels or schools



What We Learned From Our Bright Spots

3 Key Approaches

- Intentional focus on **building trust and engagement between schools and families** that everybody “owns”
- **Embedded** strategies to help **students connect emotionally** to their schools and peers
- **Clear guidance** for parents, children, and staff on policies for absences while supporting health & well-being



Chronic Absenteeism Resource Hub

CCEE Chronic Absenteeism Hub Home Bright Spot Districts Strategies and Tools Additional Resources



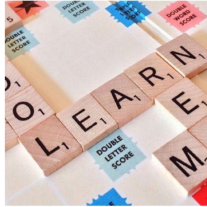
The Chronic Absenteeism Resource Hub serves as a collection of **best practices, exemplars, resources, tools, and webinars** to support local education agencies (LEAs) in promoting a culture of attendance.



Bright Spot Districts



Strategies and Tools



Additional Resources



Link:
https://bit.ly/ccee_carh



Bright Spots Factsheet

Attendance Achievers: Effective Strategies that Set Bright Spot Districts Apart

Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten continues to be a pressing challenge across California. Chronic absenteeism rates (missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason) in kindergarten increased dramatically from 15.6% in 2020-21 to over 40% in 2021-22.

Despite these alarming increases, we identified 20 districts with significantly lower chronic absenteeism rates.

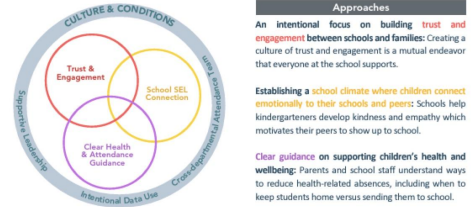
Our Bright Spots research aimed to discover why rates were lower in three such districts: Livingston Union, Cypress School District and Kings Canyon Unified. Through in-depth site visits, we documented approaches and conditions that collectively help inform ways to get more kindergartners back into the classroom and ready to learn.

Kindergarten Chronic Absenteeism Rates in Bright Spot Districts Compared to the State

	State	Livingston	Cypress	Kings Canyon
2019	15.6%	6%	5.9%	9.6%
2022	36.3%	28.1%	22.8%	26.7%

Missing too much school during a child's formative years is particularly worrisome given the longer term consequences it can have on their educational development.

Across all three districts, we found a set of common conditions that supported successful approaches to reducing absenteeism:



Culture & Conditions

A cross-departmental attendance team led by a principal who is an accountable leader who takes full responsibility for results and actions, irrespective of the outcome: Each district and school employs an attendance team model that has "synergy" and open lines of communication about which students and families are in need of support to overcome barriers to attendance. School leaders set the tone, advocating for and enacting conditions for success.

Intentional and strategic use of data in real time to drive decision making: Attendance data is shared openly and used in real-time to proactively diagnose and target outreach to students and families needing additional support.



Link: bit.ly/3Zvu6Rx

Meet the Presenters

Attendance Works and UD Davis SPARC Teams



Helen Duffy
Senior Fellow,
AttendanceWorks



Tina Ochoa
Senior Fellow,
AttendanceWorks



Kevin Gee
Professor & Faculty
Research Affiliate,
UC Davis

What is Trust & Engagement?

- The [National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement](#) defines **engagement** as:
 - A **mutual responsibility** undertaken by schools and other community organizations alongside families who commit to supporting children's educational well-being
 - A **continual process** spanning from pre-K to secondary education
 - A **cross-cutting practice** occurring across multiple settings and learning environments

Trust, Engagement and Attendance

What the Evidence Says

- Past [research](#) shows a strong link between involvement and attendance
 - Building awareness about attendance policies and expectations
 - Connecting students with community mentors
- In [Illinois](#), schools with **stronger family engagement** pre-pandemic had **lower chronic absence** rates post-pandemic.
 - Engagement included parent input into decision making, teacher-parent trust and overall parental involvement

Panel Discussion

Cypress School District



Jacki Teschke

Principal,
Clara King Elementary



Tanya Alvarez

Teacher,
Clara King Elementary



Vickie Ohlman

Administrative Assistant,
Clara King Elementary

School and District Overview


Cypress Elementary School District Demographics:

- Total Enrollment: 3,319
 - English Learners - 14.0%
 - Foster Youth - 0.4%
 - Homeless Youth - 4.5%
 - Students with Disabilities - 15.1%
 - Socioeconomically Disadvantaged - 44.7%

Clara King Elementary Demographics:

- Total Enrollment: 451
 - English Learners - 18.2%
 - Foster Youth - 0%
 - Homeless Youth - 9.5%
 - Students with Disabilities - 14.9%
 - Socioeconomically Disadvantaged - 73.6%

Kindergarten Chronic Absenteeism Rates



	State	Cypress	Clara King
2019	15.6%	5.9%	10.9%
2023	36.3%	22.8%	25.0%

*Kindergarten chronic absenteeism rates in Cypress Elementary School District and Clara King Elementary compared to the State.



Question 1:

In your role, what are some of the strategies you use to encourage **meaningful family engagement**?



Question 2:

In your role, what are some of the strategies you use to encourage **student engagement**?



Question 3:

How do these strategies or other things you do help **build trust?**

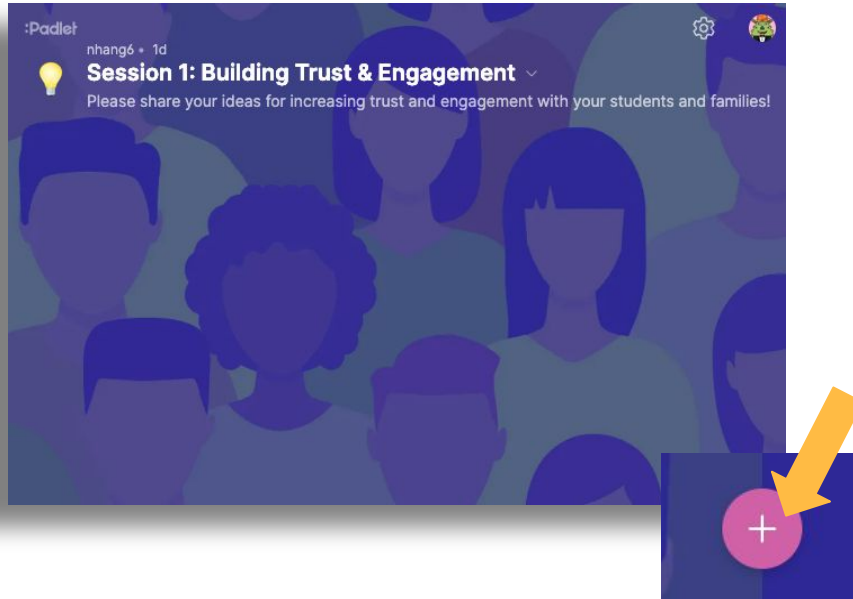


Question 4:

Learning the names of every child in school (or other strategies mentioned) may feel like a steep mountain to climb for some. **Where would you advise people to begin?**

How else could you increase trust and engagement?

Engage parents on the Padlet!



bit.ly/CAPadlet

Resources to Support Engagement

- [Caring conversations](#)
- [Attendance Cafe](#)
- Parent-student lunch/picnic and reading time
- [Engagement microlearning video resources](#)

A young girl with dark curly hair, wearing a blue and white striped tank top, is sitting at a desk in a classroom. She is smiling and has her right hand raised high in the air. In her left hand, she holds a blue pen over an open notebook. Other students are visible in the background, some with their hands raised. The image has a blue overlay and decorative yellow and teal bars at the top and bottom.

Questions?

Thank You

Contact



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Feedback Survey

