Data in Action, Teams in Motion:

Partnering With Families to Combat Chronic Absenteeism and Boost Learning

2026 California Educational Research Association Conference

SCAN FOR SLIDES

Agenda

- **Welcome** and Who's In The Room
- **Overview** of Attendance as a Priority in California
- **What We Can Learn from Bright Spots**
- **District Deep Dive** with the San Jacinto Unified School District
- **Questions**

Representing our Cross-Collaborative Team



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Vice President of District Impact
Attendance Works



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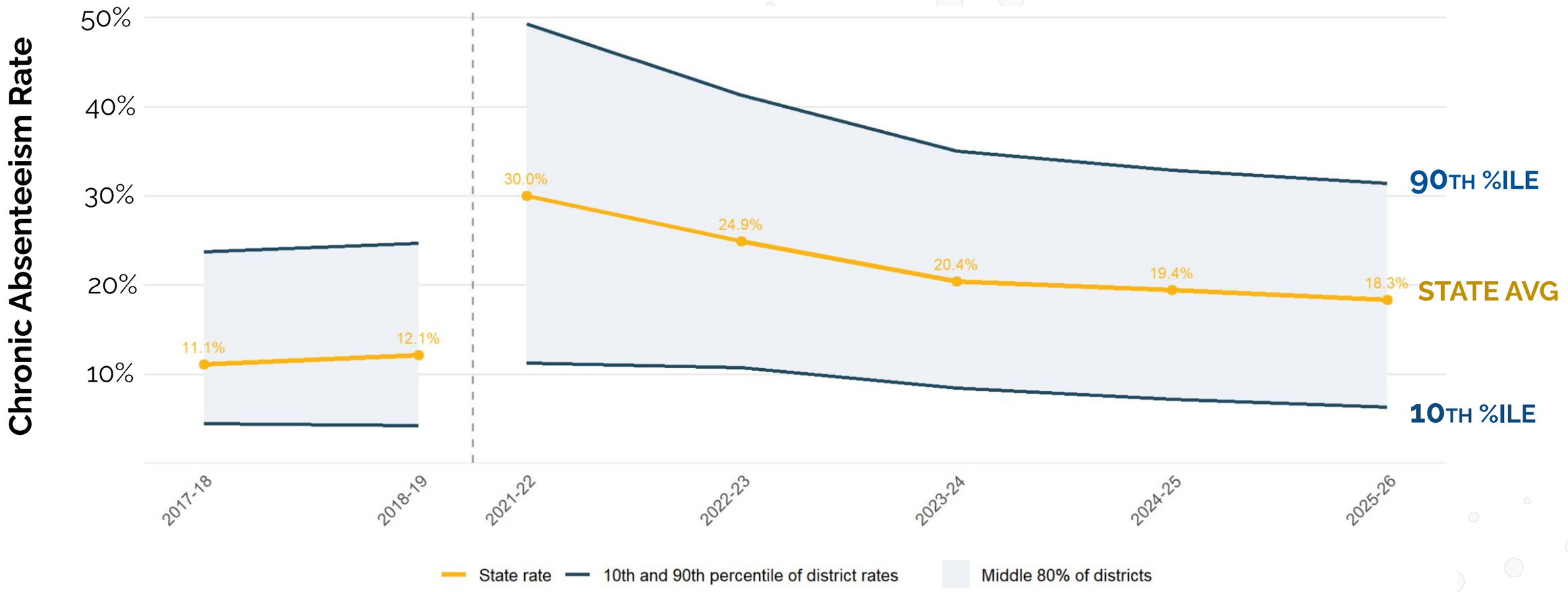
Senior Researcher
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Sujie Shin

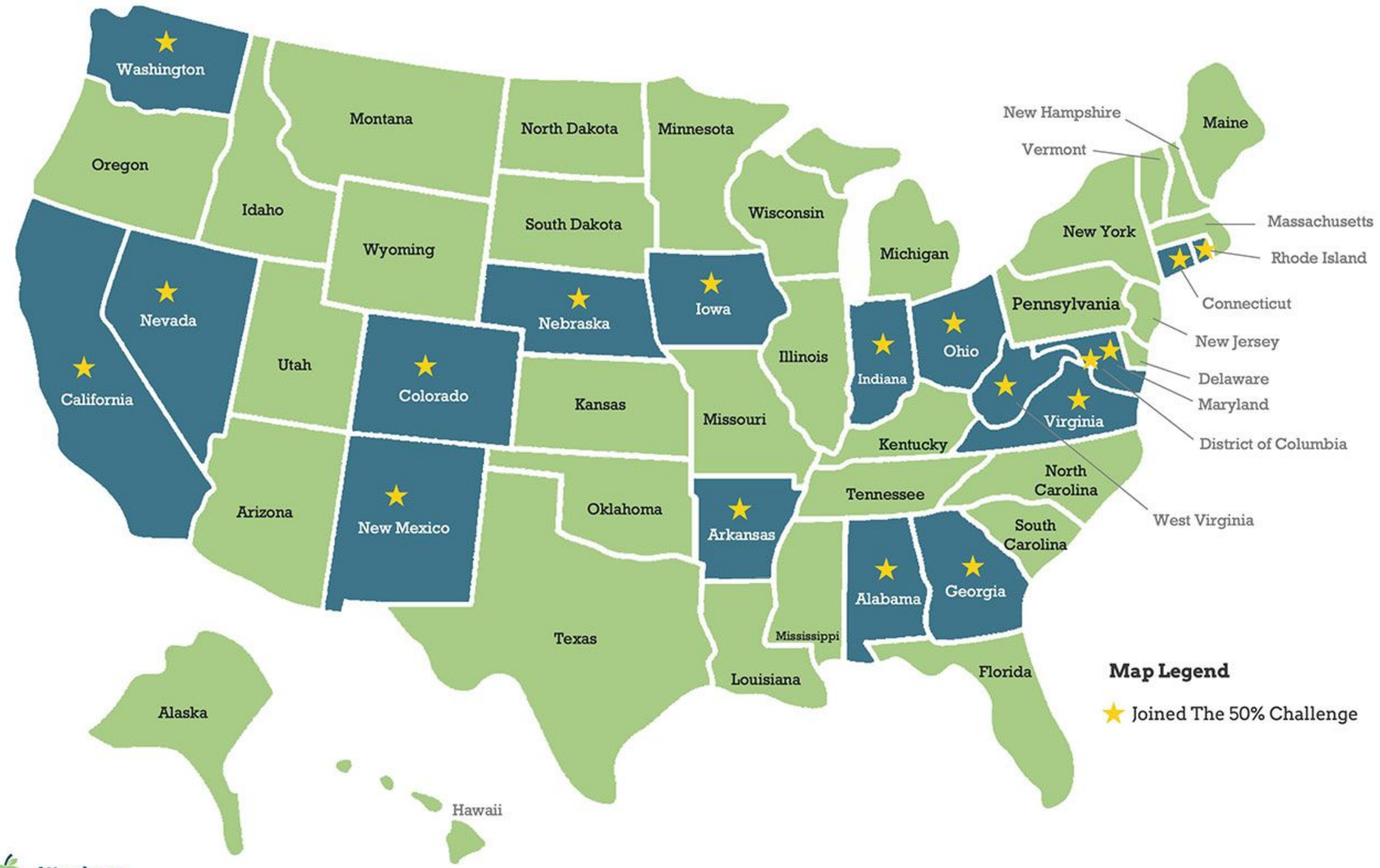
Deputy Executive Director
California Collaborative for Educational Excellence

Overview of Chronic Absenteeism Data



THE 50% CHALLENGE
TO REDUCE CHRONIC ABSENCE

Participating States



THE 50% CHALLENGE TO REDUCE CHRONIC ABSENCE — Priority Routes

Family Engagement	Building strong, collaborative partnerships between families, educators and the community to jointly support attendance
Student Connectedness	Ensuring every student feels valued, heard and cared for by adults and peers
Relevant and Engaged Learning	Developing and deploying curriculum that is rigorous, engaging, and connected to student's lives and the world around them.
Health, Wellbeing, Safety	Creating environments that foster physical, mental and emotional safety
Access to Learning	Removing external barriers like transportation, broadband access and resources

CDE Attendance Guidance



- **Chronic absence:** Rates doubled during the pandemic and remain well above pre-pandemic levels, affecting over half of CA schools.
- **Student impact:** Chronic absence harms literacy, graduation,engagement, and disproportionately impacts vulnerable student groups.
- **Statewide goal:** Reduce chronic absence to 12.5% by 2030, focusing on transition grades and highest-need schools.
- **Key priorities:** Promote student health/safety, strengthen family engagement, and improve student connectedness and belonging.
- **Best practices:** Use data-driven, multi-tiered strategies; integrate resources and supports; shift from punishment to partnership with families

Introduction and Overview | School Guidance | District Guidance | COE Guidance

Using Attendance Data | Resources Available

What We Can Learn From Bright Spots



CCNETWORK Regional Comprehensive Center » West

Calipatria Unified School District

A Home-Grown Approach to Attendance Improvement

Calipatria Unified School District is a small, tight-knit, rural school district in southern Califo
near the border with Mexicali, Mexico. The district includes four schools (two elementary, o
serving close to a thousand students, many of whom face econo
rs.

ified has experienced shifts in both school and community
nt staff turnover at the middle school and declining enrollment
d concerns about safety and trust in schools as well as
ss protocols following COVID-19, which district leaders believe
sengagement and lower attendance across the district.

approaches and foundational staff training in attendance policie
s. Rather than relying on compliance-based approaches, Calipa
llaborative, districtwide strategy that treats attendance as a
ng effort.

Unified students were chronically absent (missing at least 10%
number had dropped to 19%, representing a major improveme
overall attendance in the district.

Key Lessons Learned

1. *Solutions come from relationships.* Build strong connections between educators and staff and families, students, and school. When those relationships are in place, solutions are more responsive to community needs and more likely to succeed

2. *Sustainable success comes from shared ownership.* By empowering staff across the district to lead and contribute, schools can sustain the work and adapt as needs change

3. *Complex challenges often have simple solutions.* Rather than overcomplicating efforts, focus on a few high-impact strategies that can be implemented consistently and drive meaningful change

lies

positive, proactive communication with families. The district i
nitive responses to family and student engagement and suppor
approach strengthens family partnerships, improves school climate, and supports better attendance over time.

Messaging to families emphasizes the importance of attending school consistently and stayin
the full day. Staff build on existing relationships and cultural connections to address attenda

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Attendance Improvement Approaches by CA Bright Spots 2026

- **Understand the "why."** Use attendance data alongside conversations with students and families to identify what is getting in the way.
- **Lead with relationships.** Make outreach an opportunity for problem solving and partnership rather than simply communicating consequences.
- **Match supports to needs.** Responses range from transportation and health supports to adult connection, engaging programming, and more intensive family outreach.
- **Keep learning and adapting.** Strategies differ across schools and communities. The common thread is intentional adaptation rather than a single prescribed program.

CCNETWORK Regional Comprehensive Center West

Key School Strategies

1. Ask before you assume

- Talk individually with students about what is making attendance difficult.
- Use student voice, check-ins, or support-team reviews to identify root causes.

2. Remove barriers quickly

- Connect students and families to transportation, food, housing, health, mental-health, or other supports.
- Make family meetings accessible around families' schedules.

3. Make connection part of the attendance strategy

- Ensure students have trusted adults who routinely check in.
- Use counselors, front-office staff, teachers, registrars, nurses, and others who already interact with students rather than locating attendance work in one office.

4. Give students reasons to come back

- Build belonging through clubs, wellness activities, engaging instruction, extracurricular opportunities, positive recognition, and welcoming routines.

Key District Strategies

1. Make attendance a shared priority

- Set clear expectations and goals
- Keep attendance visible in leadership conversations and strategic plans.
- Treat attendance as everyone's responsibility, not just the attendance office.

2. Create usable data routines

- Review data early and often.
- Identify students before patterns become entrenched.
- Use data to trigger support, not just accountability

3. Establish consistency while allowing local adaptation

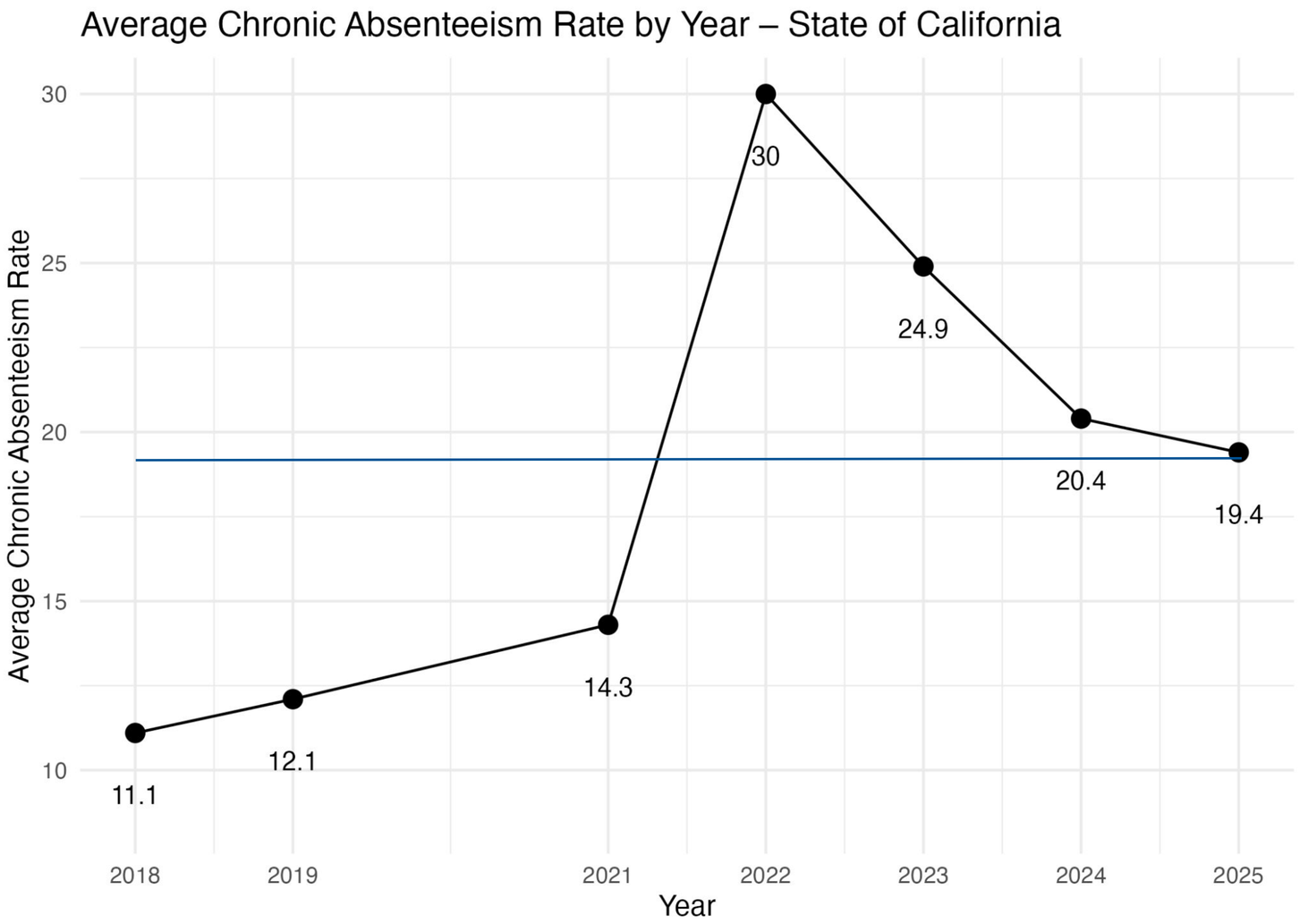
- Be clear about the process and expectations.
- Give schools flexibility in *how* they engage students and families.

4. Build the infrastructure for connection

- Train staff.
- Coordinate across departments.
- Invest in people and systems that free staff to solve problems with families.

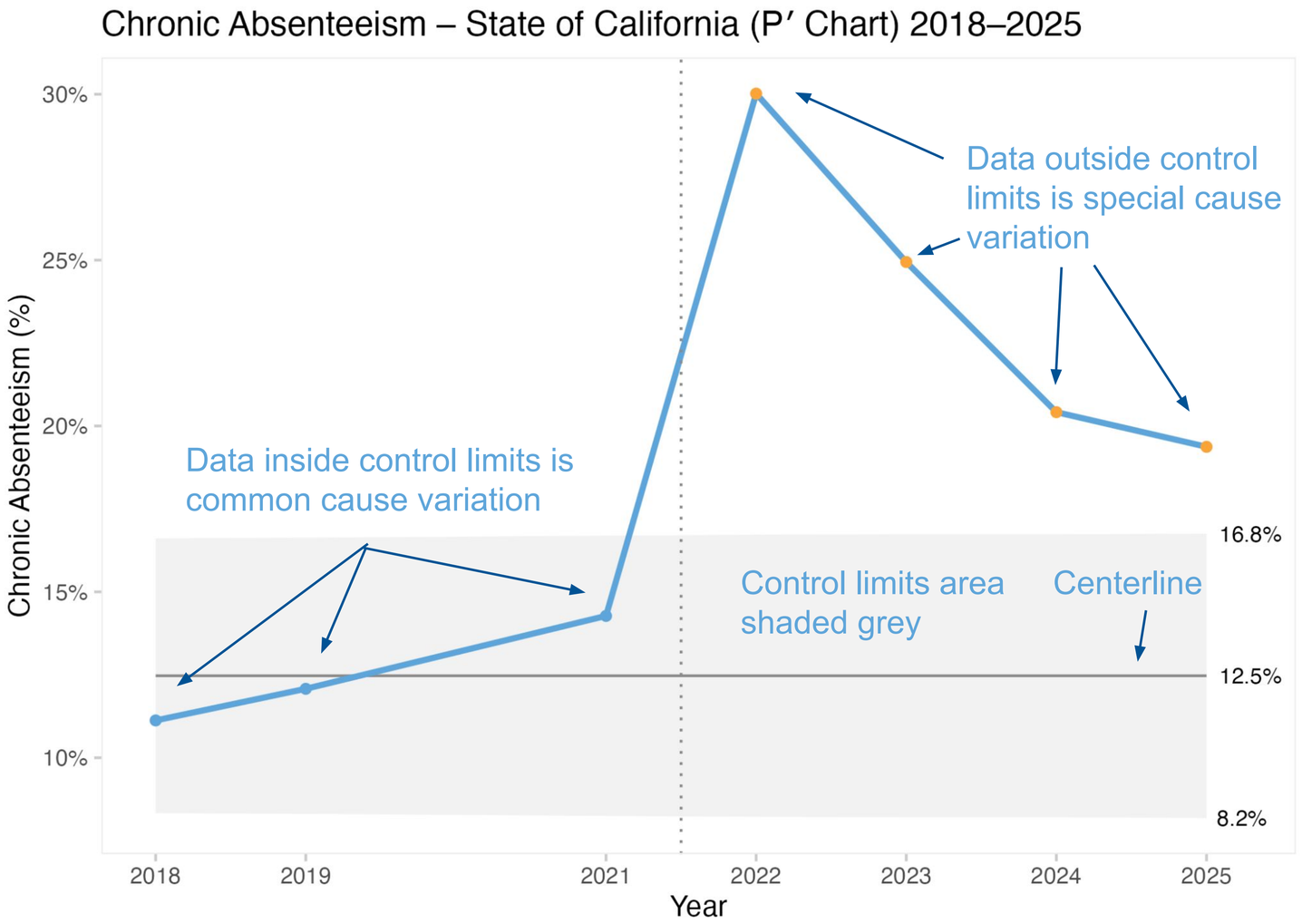
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Chronic Absenteeism in California Has Doubled Since the Pandemic



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Figure 1: The changing rates of chronic absenteeism in California as a result of the global pandemic over time.



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Figure 2: The changing rates of chronic absenteeism in California displaying common and special cause variation.

Chronic Absenteeism Adjusted for Income by County in California 2023-2024 Year

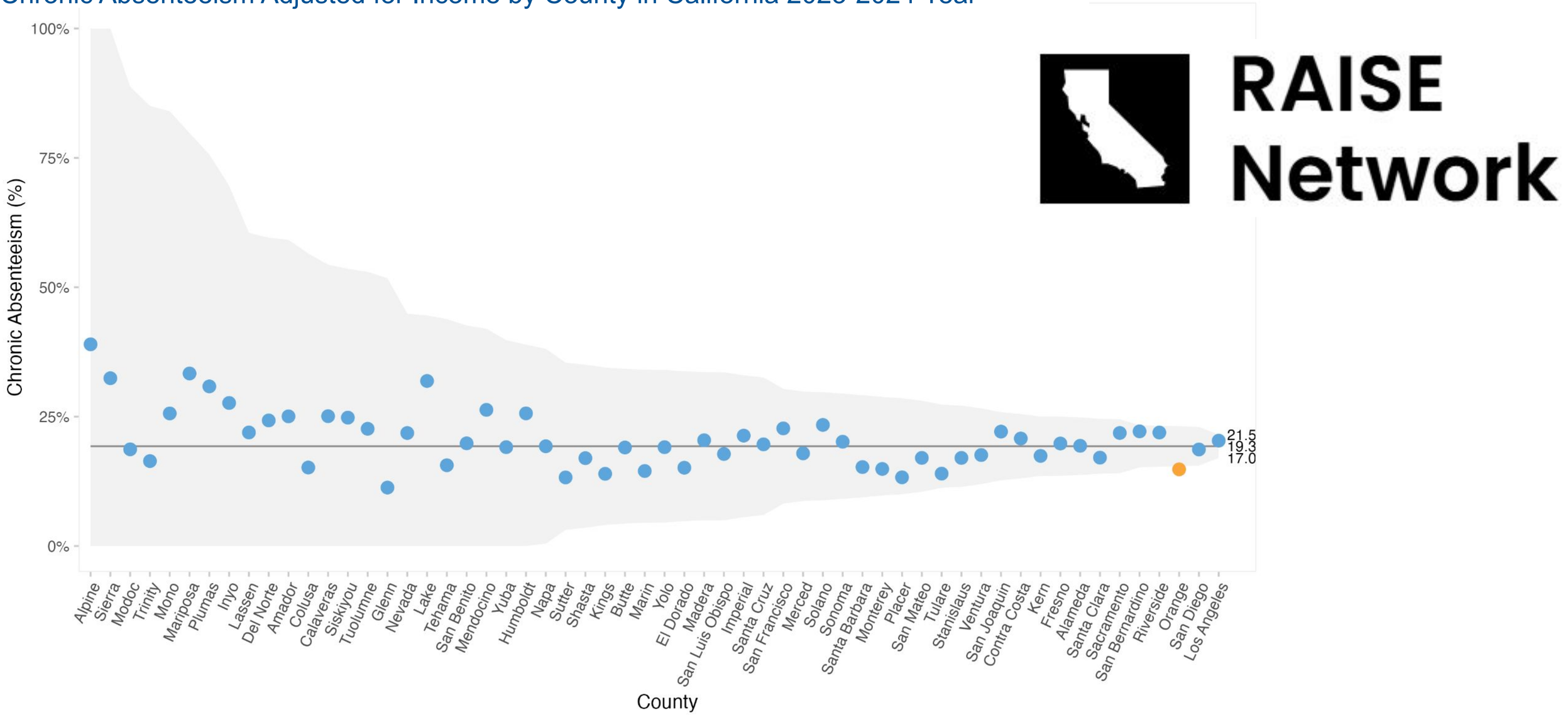
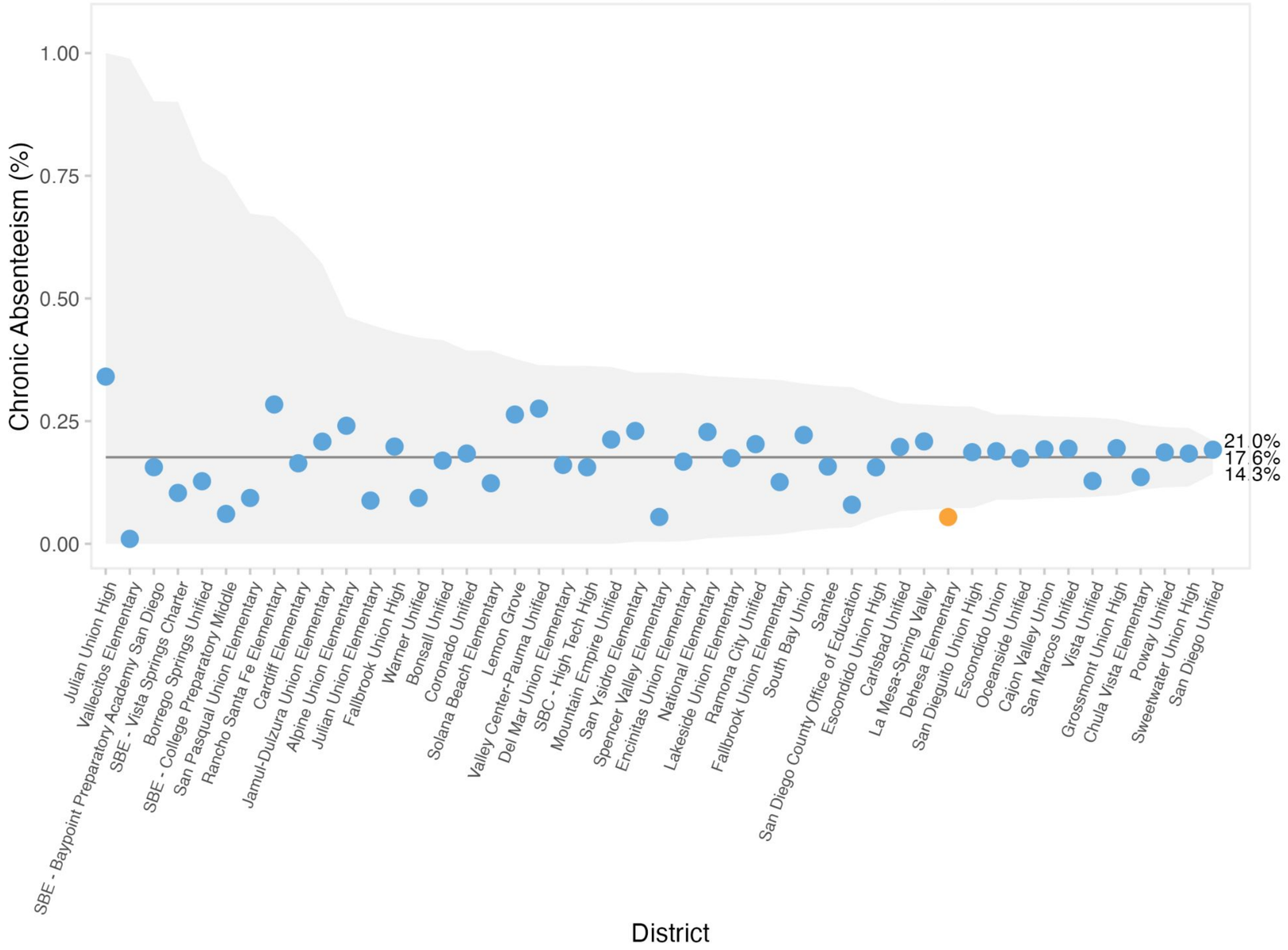


Figure 4: P Prime Shewhart chart for income adjusted rates of chronic absenteeism by county in California for 2023-2024 school year

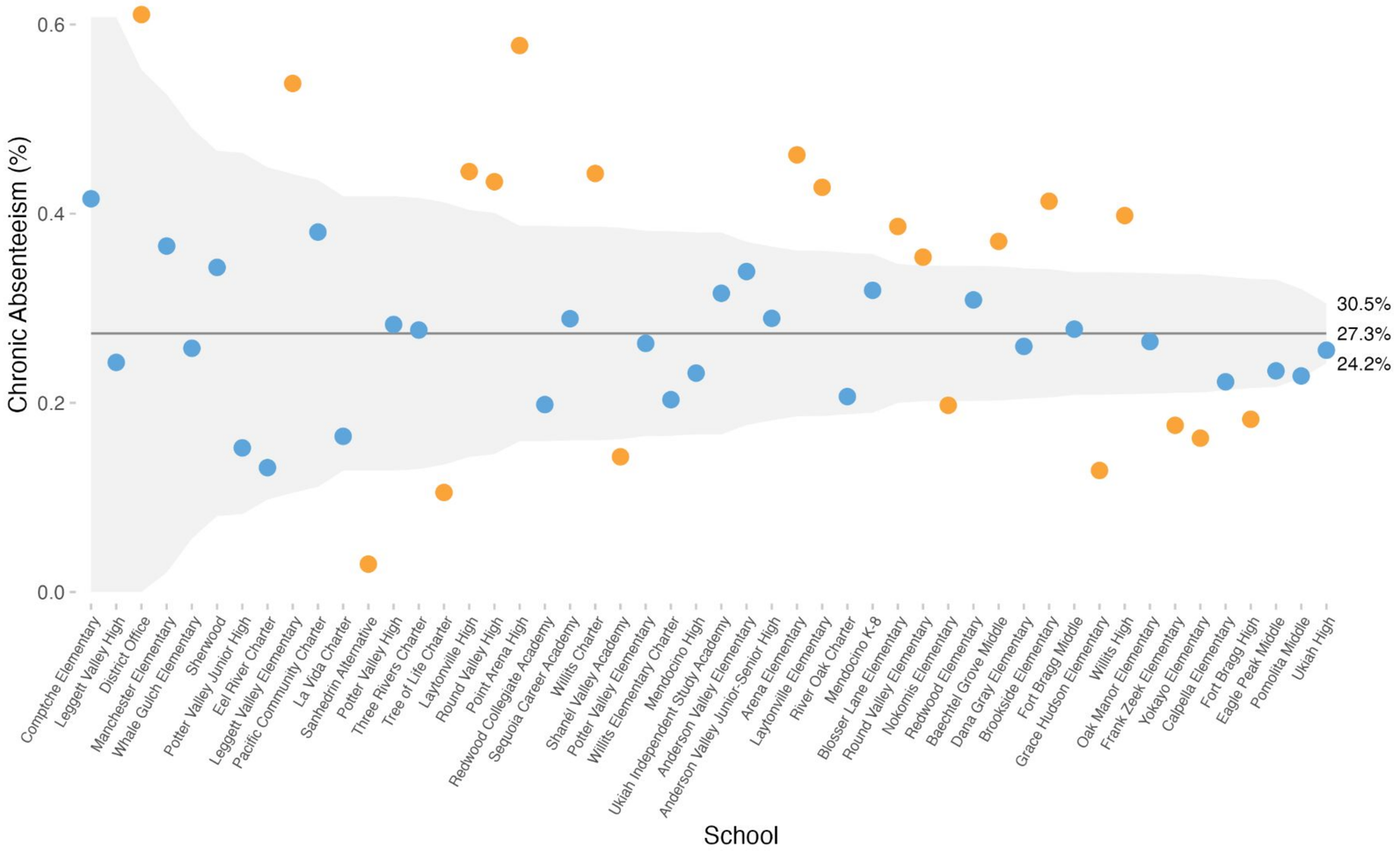
Chronic Absenteeism Adjusted for Income by District in San Diego County 2023-2024 Year



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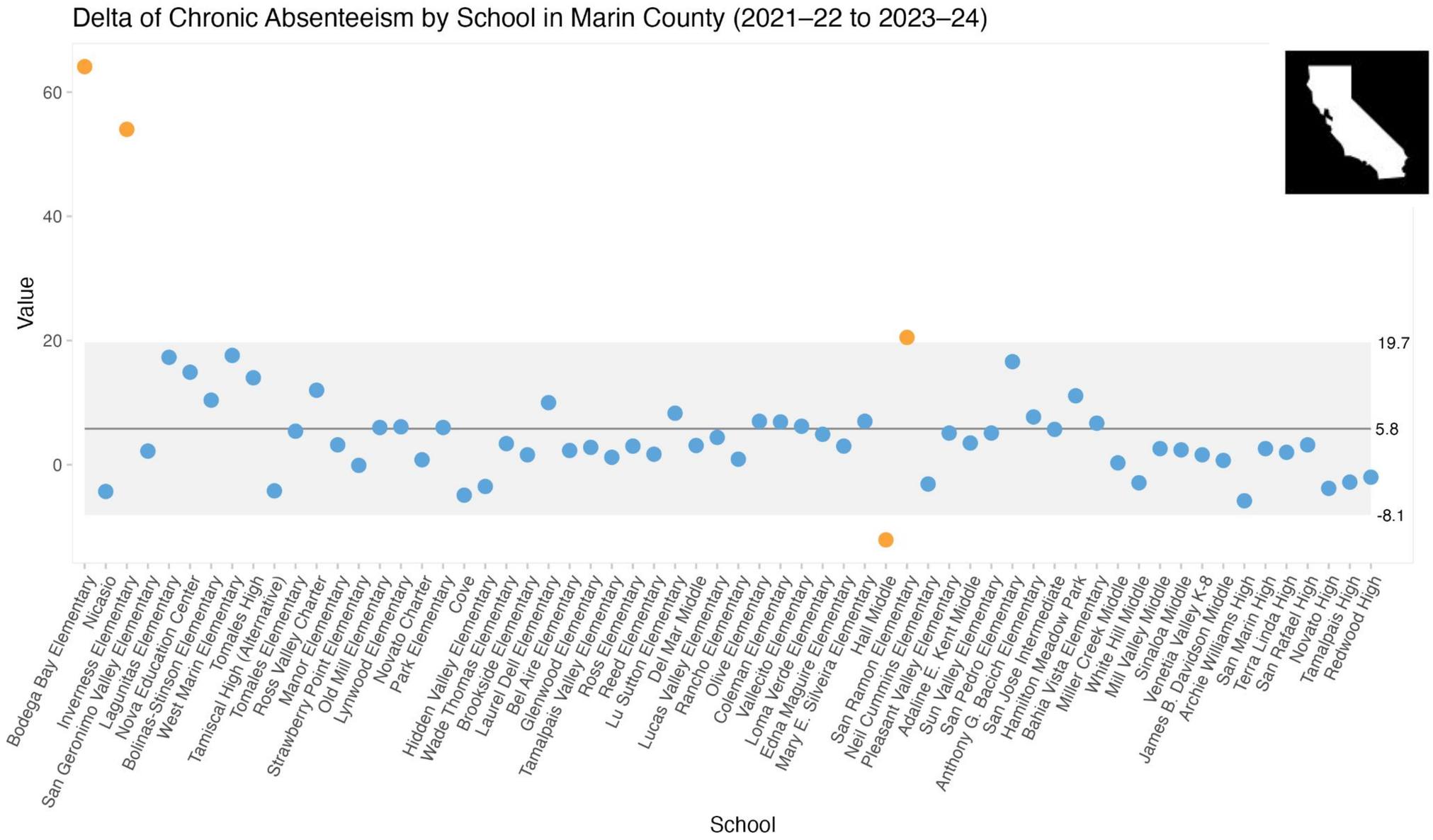
Figure 5: P Prime Shewhart chart for income adjusted rates of chronic absenteeism by districts in San Diego County for 2023-2024 school year

Chronic Absenteeism Adjusted for Income by School in Mendocino County 2023-2024 Year



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Figure 7: P Chart of income adjusted chronic absenteeism in Mendocino County in 2023-2024 as an example of special cause variation.



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Figure 3: Marin County as an example of special causes identified using an Individuals chart of differences in rates of chronic absenteeism from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 school years.

Table of 37 “Super” Bright Spot Schools

	County_Name.x	School_Name.x	pandemic_minus24	lcl.x	ucl.x	sigma.signal.x	adjusted_absenteeism	lcl.y	ucl.y	sigma.signal.y
1	Contra Costa	Rocketship Futuro Academy	32.2	-15.506083	30.71889	TRUE	0.0195713376	0.16360949	0.2585568	TRUE
2	Contra Costa	Making Waves Academy	38.5	-15.506083	30.71889	TRUE	0.0644311128	0.17420469	0.2479616	TRUE
3	Fresno	Terry Elementary	43.9	-11.005902	42.74726	TRUE	0.0993598285	0.14015692	0.2980755	TRUE
4	Fresno	Central Online Home	50.2	-11.005902	42.74726	TRUE	0.1338981604	0.14359485	0.2946376	TRUE
5	Fresno	Woodrow Wilson Elementary	48.6	-11.005902	42.74726	TRUE	0.1281691507	0.15343856	0.2847939	TRUE
6	Fresno	Edison Computech	68.6	-11.005902	42.74726	TRUE	0.1356866885	0.17572767	0.2625048	TRUE
7	Los Angeles	Primary Academy for Success	40.5	-15.264232	35.80022	TRUE	0.1345141576	0.13728554	0.3047544	TRUE
8	Los Angeles	Figueroa Street Elementary	52.5	-15.264232	35.80022	TRUE	0.0271196912	0.16220861	0.2798313	TRUE
9	Los Angeles	Harry Wirtz Elementary	37.8	-15.264232	35.80022	TRUE	0.1147740777	0.16227414	0.2797658	TRUE
10	Marin	San Ramon Elementary	20.5	-8.095110	19.69511	TRUE	0.0402363738	0.08136349	0.1758374	TRUE
11	Mendocino	Sanhedrin Alternative	80.5	-20.423197	37.24820	TRUE	0.0294876151	0.12834583	0.4183970	TRUE
12	Merced	Winfield Elementary	48.8	-10.186245	46.41321	TRUE	0.1160664694	0.14265498	0.2496309	TRUE
13	Orange	Edward Russell Elementary	27.5	-8.498401	23.64615	TRUE	0.0813737230	0.10140176	0.1986977	TRUE
14	Orange	Willmore Elementary	24.2	-8.498401	23.64615	TRUE	0.0627311851	0.10256252	0.1975370	TRUE
15	Orange	Andrew Jackson Elementary	27.4	-8.498401	23.64615	TRUE	0.0840702323	0.10360037	0.1964991	TRUE
16	Orange	Jim Thorpe Fundamental	23.8	-8.498401	23.64615	TRUE	0.0684595058	0.11221868	0.1878808	TRUE
17	Riverside	Summit View Independent Study	48.7	-10.302743	30.85691	TRUE	0.0040719166	0.10402848	0.3682747	TRUE
18	Riverside	Keith McCarthy Academy	42.7	-10.302743	30.85691	TRUE	0.1523009106	0.18940760	0.2828956	TRUE
19	Sacramento	River Delta High/Elementary (Alternative)	49.7	-9.980602	32.74362	TRUE	0.0100772146	0.04740182	0.4224530	TRUE
20	Sacramento	Walnutwood High (Independent Study)	39.1	-9.980602	32.74362	TRUE	0.1459853775	0.16186093	0.3079939	TRUE
21	Sacramento	Lake Canyon Elementary	35.0	-9.980602	32.74362	TRUE	0.1625172438	0.17663177	0.2932230	TRUE
22	Sacramento	Marengo Ranch Elementary	37.6	-9.980602	32.74362	TRUE	0.1576652975	0.17770369	0.2921511	TRUE
23	Sacramento	Valley Oaks Elementary	33.4	-9.980602	32.74362	TRUE	0.0844387241	0.18044689	0.2894079	TRUE
24	Sacramento	Vernon E. Greer Elementary	42.6	-9.980602	32.74362	TRUE	0.1396823000	0.18108525	0.2887695	TRUE
25	San Bernardino	Crestmore Elementary	37.0	-12.089737	34.54632	TRUE	0.1599967821	0.19032188	0.2918492	TRUE
26	San Diego	Maryland Elementary	39.3	-16.773507	38.20273	TRUE	0.1046296009	0.13599254	0.2485931	TRUE
27	San Diego	Mission Meadows Elementary	39.3	-16.773507	38.20273	TRUE	0.1262521110	0.13936554	0.2452201	TRUE
28	San Diego	Bobier Elementary	45.1	-16.773507	38.20273	TRUE	0.0714271445	0.14079077	0.2437949	TRUE
29	San Mateo	McKinley Institute of Technology	30.5	-15.140686	27.89801	TRUE	0.0000000000	0.11158666	0.2149909	TRUE
30	San Mateo	KIPP Valiant Community Prep	29.3	-15.140686	27.89801	TRUE	0.0772324567	0.11748109	0.2090965	TRUE
31	San Mateo	KIPP Excelencia Community Preparatory	38.8	-15.140686	27.89801	TRUE	0.1022817705	0.12193428	0.2046433	TRUE
32	Santa Barbara	Mary Buren Elementary	38.6	-11.244370	33.34616	TRUE	0.1010088637	0.11601538	0.1947580	TRUE
33	Solano	Fairfield High	31.2	-6.195166	31.10707	TRUE	0.1538658006	0.21623045	0.2797893	TRUE
34	Stanislaus	Shackelford Elementary	43.0	-9.987994	42.69165	TRUE	0.0484838126	0.12885866	0.2321645	TRUE
35	Stanislaus	Caswell Elementary	43.0	-9.987994	42.69165	TRUE	0.0819431203	0.13610031	0.2249229	TRUE
36	Stanislaus	Fairview Elementary	44.1	-9.987994	42.69165	TRUE	0.0453995829	0.13938167	0.2216415	TRUE
37	Stanislaus	Franklin Elementary	49.2	-9.987994	42.69165	TRUE	0.0001677762	0.14121168	0.2198115	TRUE

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Figure 8: List of 37 super bright spot schools across the state of California that are both difference bright spots from 2022 to 2024 and 2023-2024 bright spots.

The Four Foundational Practices



1

District Focus

1A. Set the tone

1B. Resource the work

1C. Connect schools to each other

1D. Standing agenda item

district

2

Warm Communication

2A. Align BOY messaging

2B. Audit and warm up family comms

2C. Communicate # of absences quarterly

2D. Welcome back messaging

school

3

First Faces

3A. Prepare staff that greet students and families

3B. Involve students and families in the work

district & school

4

Supportive Outreach

4A. By-student list

4B. Outreach **team**

4C. Meet bi-weekly

4D. Check-in with curiosity

4E. Document reasons

district & school

District Deep Dive: San Jacinto Unified SD





Dr. Vanessa Gomez

San Jacinto Unified School District

Director of Student Wellness & Community Engagement



Dr. Shannyn Cahoon

San Jacinto Unified School District

Executive Director of Student, Community, & Personal Support

Our Why and Who We Are

SAN JACINTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mission

Your future is our mission.

Vision

To inspire and empower all learners to reach their potential; ready to lead, serve, and make a meaningful impact in an ever changing world.

56,000+
Community Residents

10,000+
Students Pk-12

14
School Sites

San Jacinto Unified School District serves a diverse community in the Southwestern Region of Riverside County, California. Through strong instruction, supportive learning environments, and meaningful family and community partnerships, SJUSD helps students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally while preparing for college, careers, and life.

OUR SCHOOLS & ACADEMIES

Turn & Talk: A Reason to Show Up

1. REFLECT



Think about a time when you felt connected to either school or work.

What person, experience, or activity made you WANT to be there?

2. SHARE & DISCUSS



Take a few minutes to share with a partner and then let's discuss:

"How might we create that same connection for our students today?"

What We are Learning from our Data

2022/2023

LEARN MORE

Chronic Absenteeism

All Students | State



Yellow

32.4% chronically absent

Declined 9.7%

EQUITY REPORT

Number of Student Groups in Each Level

2	3	8	0	0
Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue

View More Details →

2023/2024

LEARN MORE

Chronic Absenteeism

All Students | State



Yellow

24.1% chronically absent

Declined 8.3%

EQUITY REPORT

Number of Student Groups in Each Color

1	3	10	0	0
Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue

View More Details →

2024/2025

LEARN MORE

Chronic Absenteeism

All Students | State



Red

25.1% chronically absent

Increased 1%

EQUITY REPORT

Number of Student Groups in Each Color

8	5	1	0	0
Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue

View More Details →

2025/2026

LEARN MORE

Chronic Absenteeism

All Students | State



Orange

22.7% chronically absent

Declined 2.4%

EQUITY REPORT

Number of Student Groups in Each Color

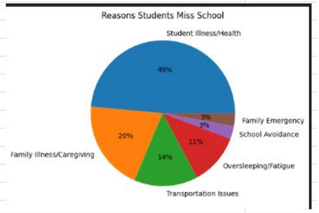
4	5	4	0	1
Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue

View More Details →

What We are Learning from Street Data

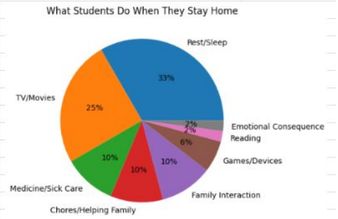
Big Picture Patterns

Category	# Students	% of Group
Student illness/health	17	81%
Family illness/caregiving	7	33%
Transportation barriers	5	24%
Oversleeping/fatigue	4	19%
School avoidance	1	5%
Family emergency (funeral)	1	5%



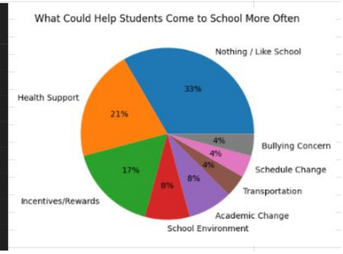
Overall Patterns

Activity Type	# Students	%
Rest/Sleep	16	76%
TV/Movies	12	57%
Medicine/Sick care	5	24%
Chores/Helping	5	24%
Family interaction	5	24%
Games/devices	3	14%
Reading	1	5%
Getting in trouble	1	5%



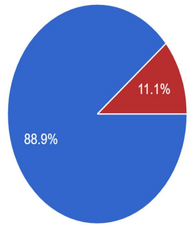
Summary Table

Category	# Students	%
Nothing / Already like school	8	38%
Health support	5	24%
Incentives/rewards	4	19%
School environment	2	10%
Academic change	2	10%
Transportation	1	5%
Schedule change	1	5%
Bullying concern	1	5%



Please indicate the main reason for absences: Indique el motivo principal de las ausencias:

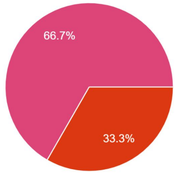
9 responses



- Short Term Illness (Ex. cold, flu, etc.) /…
- Long Term Illness (Ex. asthma, seizur…
- Mental Health / Salud Mental
- Transportation/ Transporte
- Incomplete homework / Tareas incom…
- Caring for another family member / Cu…
- Overslept / Por haberse quedado dor…
- Bereavement / Duelo
- Did not feel like attending / No tenía ganas de asistir
- Did not feel safe / No se sentía seguro
- Bullying / Acoso escolar
- Did not have access to necessary items (Ex. clean clothes, shoes, school supp…
- Community safety / seguridad comunitaria
- Sense of belonging / sentido de perte…

Please indicate the main reason for absences: Indique el motivo principal de las ausencias:

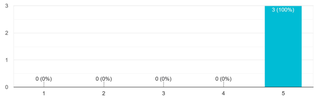
3 responses



- Short Term Illness (Ex. cold, flu, etc.) /…
- Long Term Illness (Ex. asthma, seizur…
- Mental Health / Salud Mental
- Transportation/ Transporte
- Incor
- Carir
- Over
- Bere
- 1/2
- Did not feel like attending / No tenía ganas de asistir
- Did not feel safe / No se sentía seguro
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- Did not have access to necessary items (Ex. clean clothes, shoes, school supp…
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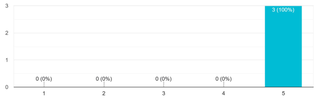
During this process, I felt heard and understood by the staff, Durante este proceso, me sentí escuchado(a) y comprendido(a) por el personal.

3 responses



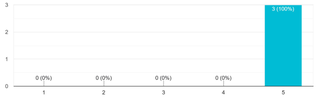
District staff communicated clearly and compassionately throughout the process. El personal del distrito se comunicó con claridad y compasión durante todo el proceso.

3 responses



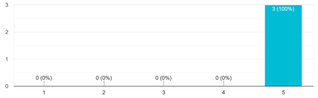
District staff understood the needs of my family's specific situation. El personal del distrito comprendió las necesidades de la situación específica de mi familia.

3 responses



I was provided the appropriate resources and supports to address my family's specific situation. Se me proporcionaron los recursos y ap...para abordar la situación específica de mi familia.

3 responses



Feedback / *Retroalimentación*

What could we have done differently to better understand the pressures your family was facing?

What is one thing our organization could do to better support families going through challenging situations like yours?

What We've Learned About Why Students Miss School

Understanding attendance barriers helps us respond with support.

SHORT-TERM & CHRONIC ILLNESS



Colds, recurring medical needs, and ongoing health conditions can interrupt attendance.

FEAR OF TARDY CONSEQUENCES



Some students worry that arriving late will lead to consequences, so they miss the entire day.

MENTAL HEALTH



Anxiety, stress, depression, and emotional challenges can make coming to school difficult.

DIDN'T FEEL LIKE GOING



Low motivation, disconnection, or not feeling engaged can contribute to absences.

OUR RESPONSE

LISTEN | CONNECT | REMOVE BARRIERS | WELCOME BACK

Every day matters. Every student belongs.

Implementation of the Four Foundational Practices

DISTRICT FOCUS

- District Priority
- Started year sharing shift in attendance to supportive rather than punitive.
- Adjusted focus to site level SART. Shift away from punitive SARB and citation.
- Monthly attendance meetings along with training for best practices.
- District support at elementary SARTs.
- RUHS TOPPS support at Secondary SARTs and SARBs.
- Attendance Specialist assigned to sites.

WARM COMMUNICATION

- All letters and messages rewritten in a supportive, caring tone.
- Focus on providing resources and removing barriers.
- Superintendent Welcome Letter & Video
- Personal outreach starts before the school year begins. Attendance teams provides outreach the first few weeks of school for students that are no-shows.

FIRST FACES

- All staff at sites trained in First Faces. Refresher provided at semester two for front office staff. Under the Surface Video
- All district office trained in First Faces.
- Empathy Interviews with students at sites.

SUPPORTIVE OUTREACH ROUTINE

- Streamlined lists:
  - 10+ consecutive absences
  - Tracker (data pulled from Panorama)
- Anonymous surveys to students and families (reasons for absences and feedback on SART/SARB)
- Site text via ParentSquare, phone calls, elementary P/T conference script
- **Attendance Plan Template** focused on the Foundational Practices.

THINGS TO AVOID

Lessons learned in strengthening school attendance



Unfocused data collection

Trial and error with data points can lead to too many reports and unmanageable information.

Choose a few actionable indicators.



Unmanageable student caseloads

Trying to support too many students at once can dilute follow-through.

Prioritize students and set realistic caseloads.



Reactive attendance interventions

Waiting for SARB referrals can delay opportunities for earlier support.

Use intentional SARTs to reduce the need for SARBs.



Competing priorities

Without protected time, proactive SART work can become reactive.

Protect time for preparation, meetings, and follow-up.

SART: School Attendance Review Team | SARB: School Attendance Review Board

A SYSTEM FOR ATTENDANCE TEAMS

Support new teams. Coordinate early. Respond to family needs.

1. Adjust for new teams



- Orient new members to roles and attendance procedures.
- Review data together and identify priority students.
- Set regular meetings and clear follow-up responsibilities.

2. Assign dedicated support



- Connect each team with an attendance specialist.
- Provide coaching on data, outreach, and interventions.
- Help teams coordinate resources and monitor progress.

3. Coordinate family support



- Partner with health staff to understand illness-related absences.
- Connect with families when multiple siblings are affected.
- Explore independent study when appropriate and permitted.



IN PRACTICE: HAND, FOOT, AND MOUTH DISEASE

Arrange a family conference when siblings are affected. Coordinate with the school nurse attendance specialist, and school team to clarify return-to-school guidance, discuss learning needs, and determine whether independent study is appropriate.

Document the plan • Identify who will follow up • Support a smooth return

Attendance Team: Composition & Roles

ELEMENTARY TIER 2
Team Composition & Interventions

Administrator	• Home Visits • SARB Referrals • Notify case carrier if student has IEP
Attendance Clerk	• Feedback from Attendance • Interactions with Families • Assist in Scheduling SART Meetings
Liaison	• Feedback from Interactions with Families • Resources needed for Families
Counselor	• SART Meeting & Contract • Coordinate CICO • Skills Group
Other Roles (MTSS, Supervisor, etc.)	• Assist with CICO
School Psych **Optional*	• School Psych support (SST & Tier 3)

SECONDARY TIER 2
Team Composition & Interventions

Administrator	• Home Visits • SARB Referrals • Notify case carrier if student has IEP
Attendance Clerk	• Feedback from Attendance • Interactions with Families • Assist in Scheduling SART Meetings
Liaison	• Feedback from Interactions with Families • Resources needed for Families
Counselor	• SART Meeting & Contract • Coordinate CICO • Skills Group
Other Support (MTSS, Security, Psych)	• School Psych (SST & Tier 3) • CICO Support • Assist with tracking data

EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

Connection • Early Support • Shared Responsibility



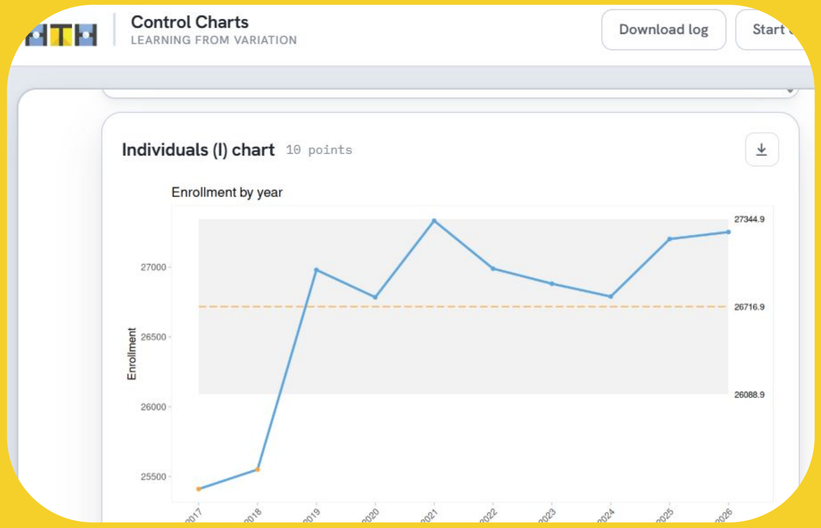
QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

What is one step your team can take to strengthen attendance?

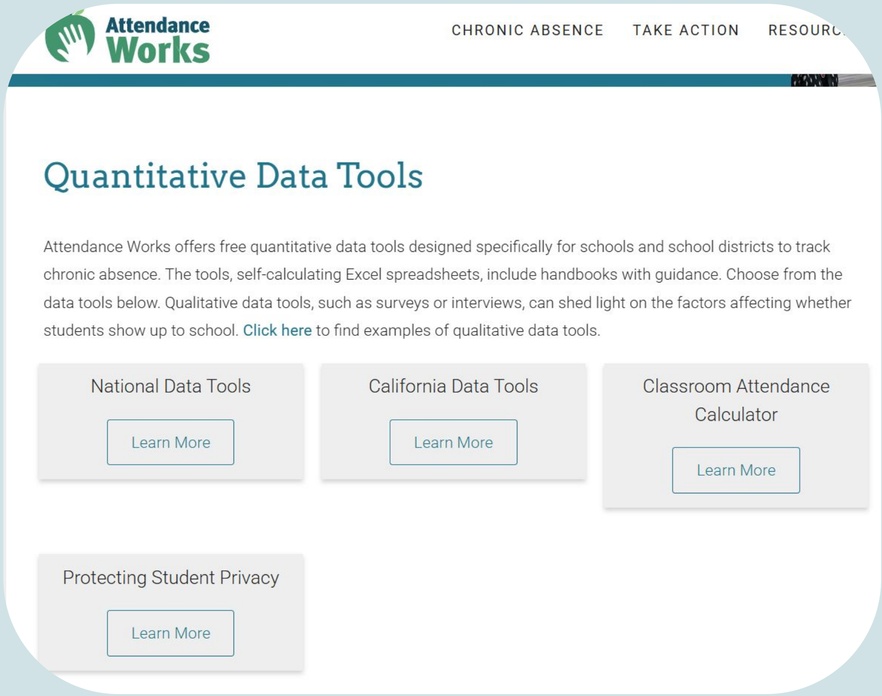
Strong attendance starts with relationships and grows through consistent, coordinated support.

Thank you for supporting students and families.

Resources: Data Tools



HTH's Chart generator tool to help district and school teams explore possible data visualizations



Attendance Work's Tools to Support School and District Attendance Tracking

Resources: Protocols


KEY DATA ROUTINE: Go-And-See Protocol

Go-And-See Protocol

Contributed by the High Tech High Graduate School of Education and adapted from the Improvement Collective

GOAL
- Student Voice
- On Track
- Engaging Curriculum
- Data Use
- College Enrollment
- Belonging
- Academic Outcomes
- Attendance

TIME OF YEAR
- New School Year
- Anytime
- Fall
- Winter
- Spring
- Summer

GRADE
- Elementary
- Middle
- High

TEAM
- Classroom
- School
- District

IMPACT
- Transformative
- Significant

LIFT
- High
- Medium
- Low

Overview

Purpose & Description

Seeing bright spot schools/teachers on a control chart is only the beginning of the process. In order to gain actionable data the hub needs to "get on their horse" and go and see what is leading to success in that context. By conducting an empathy interview with the bright spot school/teacher, improvement teams can gain additional information about specific practices that might be contributing to success and can use this information and data to encourage others to test the idea(s) in their context.

Expected Time

30-60 minutes

This resource was accessed through the HTH GSE Resource Hub

HTH's [Go & See](#) empathy interview protocol for exploring bright spots


CCNETWORK West

California Bright Spot Listening Conversation Protocol (60 min)

Opening & Framing (5 minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. We're having a series of listening conversations with districts and schools that have been navigating attendance challenges in thoughtful ways and have demonstrated success in comparison to other districts in the state.

This is not a formal interview or research study. Our goal is to listen, learn from your experience, and understand your attendance journey in your own words. Specifically, what you've tried, what's worked, what's been hard, and what you've learned along the way. The bright spots are designed to show how attendance improvement strategies work in practice. We will use details from our conversation today to write short briefs that will provide examples and implementation details that other schools and districts can learn from and adapt.

As we listen, we're especially interested in how your attendance work connects to student health, well-being, and safety, family engagement, and student connectedness, since those are priority areas in California's attendance guidance. There's no expectation that all of these show up, we just want to understand what this looks like in your context.

Please note:
- This conversation will last about 45–60 minutes.
- We're interested in practices, policies, and decision-making rather than evaluation.
- We may take notes (and record, if permitted) so we can accurately reflect your story.
- The briefs will be public-facing, but we will remove names and identifying details, using roles or positions instead so others can focus on the practices rather than individuals.

Section A. Context & Attendance Vision (10 minutes)

1. Setting the scene
   - Tell me a little about your role and how you're involved with attendance work here.
   - How would you describe your [school/district] community to someone unfamiliar with it?
2. Attendance in the bigger picture
   - Is attendance part of your overall vision or priorities? How does it show up?
   - Who is responsible for attendance here? Would you describe it as shared ownership?

CA Attendance Bright Spots Listening Protocol 2026

hink about attendance here, how does it connect, if at all, to:

nts' well-being or sense of safety,

s' relationships with the school, or

s feeling connected to adults and peers?

ew years, what were the main attendance challenges you were seeing? Were atterns that stood out (i.e., student groups or grade levels)?

ndance Journey: What Changed and Why (10 minutes)

nt, or series of moments, when attendance became a stronger focus? hift? (examples could include data, staff concerns, family feedback, policy ic realities)

ocus on first, and why?

anything you intentionally chose *not* to focus on?

attendance data that helped you identify your focus areas? Data oards, student and family voice, etc.

data informed decisions, conversations, or supports?

icies in Action (20 minutes)

ore practices, I may pause you to ask how a practice connects , or student connectedness so that I can make sure we're with the state's attendance guidance.

ou're doing now to support regular attendance.

rograms where possible.

d what are their roles?

, if at all?

West Comp Center @ AIR [60-minute listening conversation protocol](#) focused on CA Attendance Guidance

Chronic Absenteeism Statewide Resource Hub



The Chronic Absenteeism Statewide Resources Hub provides administrators, teachers, and staff with resources to help implement practices that improve student attendance.

In addition to the resources on this hub, please see the California Attendance Guide.

Bright Spots

Real-world examples highlighting district strategies, practices, and lessons learned for improving attendance

Best Practices & Strategies

Guidance on what to do and how to do it well, based on promising approaches or practices from experience in the field.

Tools & Templates

Resources designed to be filled out, used directly, or adapted to be used for a variety of purposes related to attendance.

Information & Research

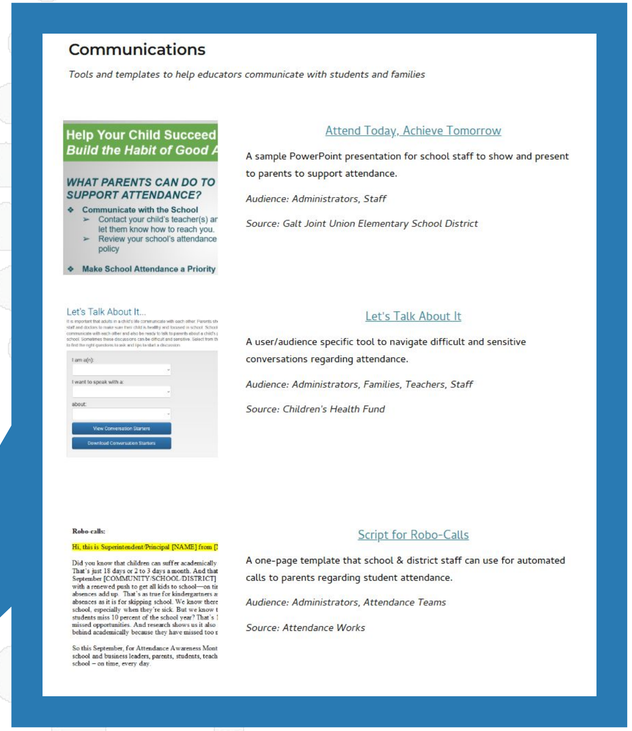
Information and findings grounded in data or studies around the importance of attendance and ways of addressing absenteeism.

Planning & Implementation

Resources to help schools and districts design, organize, or carry out actions over time to improve attendance.

Communications

Resources that help educators message around attendance, to help inform parents and build relationships with families.



Communications

Tools and templates to help educators communicate with students and families

Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow

A sample PowerPoint presentation for school staff to show and present to parents to support attendance.

Audience: Administrators, Staff

Source: Galt Joint Union Elementary School District

Let's Talk About It

A user/audience specific tool to navigate difficult and sensitive conversations regarding attendance.

Audience: Administrators, Families, Teachers, Staff

Source: Children's Health Fund

Script for Robo-Calls

A one-page template that school & district staff can use for automated calls to parents regarding student attendance.

Audience: Administrators, Attendance Teams

Source: Attendance Works



Curtis A. Taylor, Ed.D.

Director,
National Attendance & Engagement Meta Network

Curtis leads a national network of educators and school systems using improvement science to reduce chronic absence and build student belonging. A former K–12 teacher, he also serves an an improvement advisor for HTHGSE's Educational Leadership Master's program.

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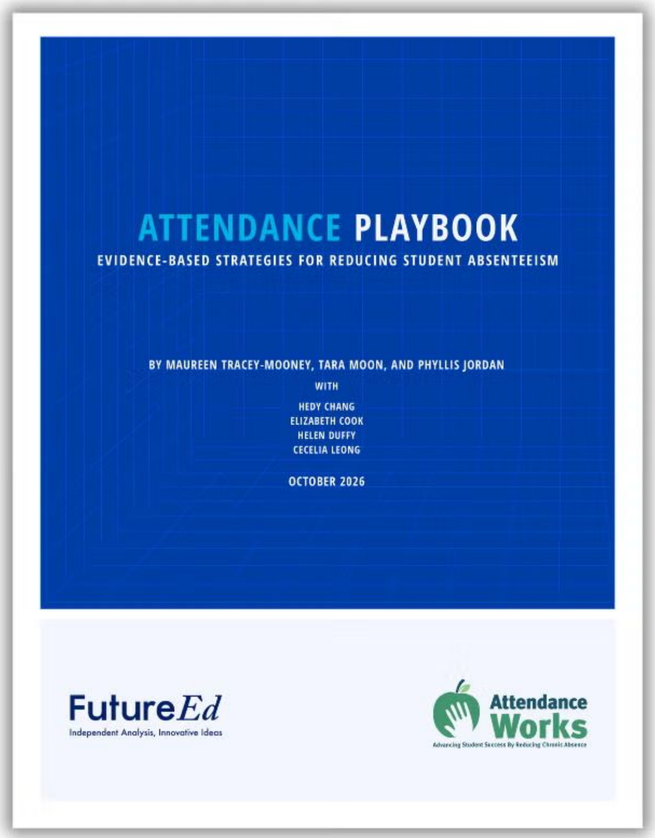
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The 2026 Attendance Playbook: What's New



Identifies how drivers of absenteeism have shifted:

- Parents more likely **to keep students home now in case of illness**
- Increased relationship between **school climate** and attendance
- **Feelings of disconnection** by students and parents
- Rising rates of **anxiety and depression**
- Heightened **immigration enforcement**
- **Misconceptions** about ability to catch up online

Attendance Playbook: https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/

Implementation Guide: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/

Essential Features of Successful Absenteeism Responses



Actionable Data

Timely data that informs interventions and decision-making



Team Approach

A cross-functional group that uses attendance data to identify barriers, coordinate support, and improve students' access to school.



Positive School Climate

A school environment where students feel safe, connected, respected, and supported.



Balancing Enforcement & Engagement

Establish clear expectations and consequences for improvement.



Community Partnerships

Encourage collaboration among schools, families, and communities.

30+ Evidence-Based Interventions for Improving Attendance

Tier I Strategies: Schoolwide Engagement & Prevention

- Engaging with Families
- Early Childhood Education
- Student-Teacher relationships
- Positive Greetings at the Door
- School Wide Social & Emotional Supports
- Rigorous and Relevant Instruction
- Restorative Discipline Practices
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Incentives
- Out of School Time Strategies
- Rethinking Recess
- Transportation
- A Safer Walk to School
- School based Health Care
- Healthy School Facilities
- Free Meals for All
- Laundry At school

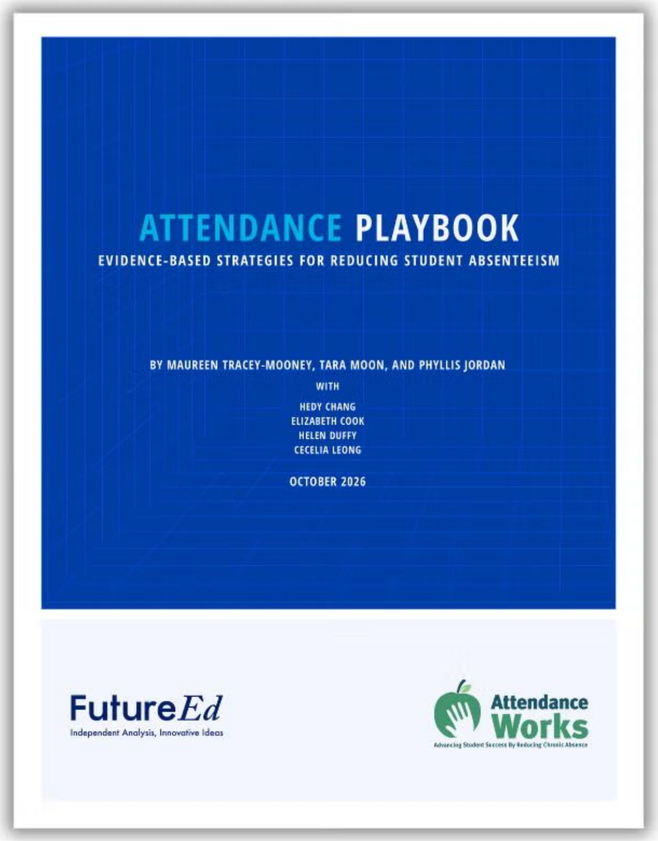
Tier II Strategies: Targeted Support

- Early Warning and Student Success Systems
- Home Visits for Chronically Absent Students
- Mentors & Tutors
- Addressing Asthma
- Mental Health Interventions
- Students with Disabilities
- Students from Immigrant Families

Tier III Strategies: Intensive Support

- Case Management and Coordinated Supports
- Housing Insecurity
- Intensive Mental Health Needs and School Refusal

Updated Attendance 2026 Playbook: What's New



Essential features that support successful absenteeism responses:

- Actionable attendance data
- School and district teams
- Positive school climate
- Balancing enforcement with engagement, early intervention
- Community partnerships

30+ Evidence-Based Interventions

- Tier I Strategies: Schoolwide Engagement and Prevention
- Tier II Strategies: Targeted Support
- Tier III Strategies: Intensive Support

Icon flags interventions that strengthen relationships across all three tiers

Attendance Playbook: https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/

Implementation Guide: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/

How to Use the Attendance Playbook

The Guide to the Attendance Playbook offers practical tips for:

- Forming a team
- Using actionable attendance data
- Matching interventions to address root causes of absenteeism
- Realistically assessing your team's capacity to implement each intervention
- Selecting interventions that are likely to have the greatest impact for the lowest effort
- Making an implementation plan
- Assessing how well the interventions worked

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/

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RAISE Network

Thank you for everything you are doing to make school a safe and inviting space for students and families!

Slides and linked resources:

