

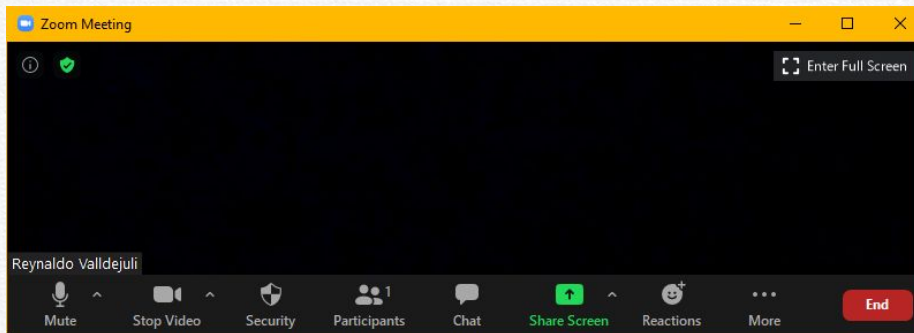
# VISION for SUCCESS

Supporting Attendance for Students with Disabilities  
January 17, 2022  
1:00PM



# Zoom Meeting Preparation

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# Meet the Presenters

Shelneka Adams  
Education Program Consultant  
Child Welfare and Attendance Liaison



Dr. Shanae Herron  
Education Program Consultant  
Division of Diverse Learners





# Agenda

- I. Defining Types of Absenteeism
- II. Engaging Students
- III. Engaging Parents
- IV. Engaging a School Team
- V. Strategies to Avoid Behavior Related Absenteeism
- VI. Closing

If you are experiencing audio difficulties, please make sure that your speakers are on and that your volume is at a suitable level.

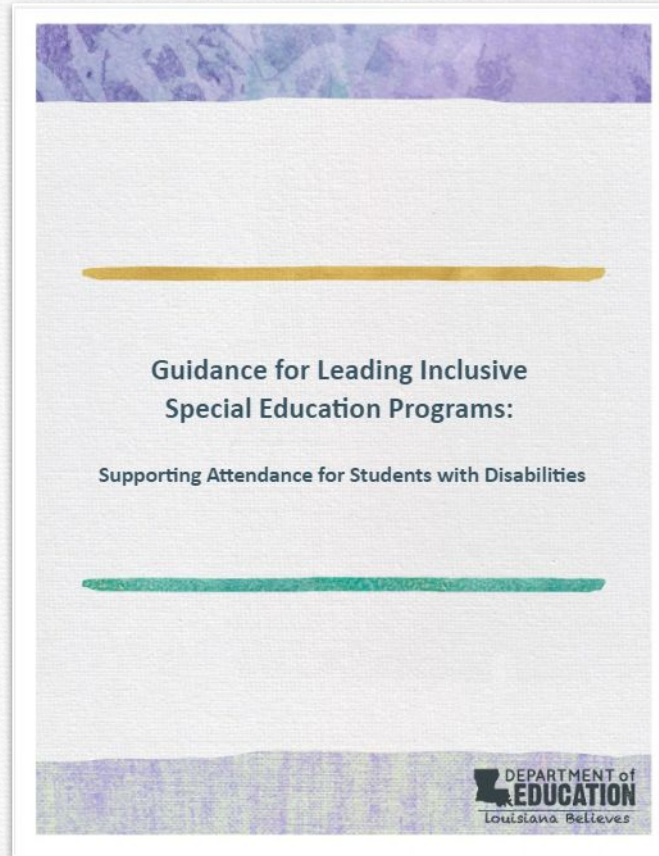
Please type questions into the chat box as we go along.

**Dial in by phone:** 470 250 9358

**Meeting ID#:** 967 9198 8170



# Latest Guidance Document





# Defining Types of Absenteeism

Current	Proposed
Non-exempt, Excused Absences - student is allowed to make up missed work; absence is counted against attendance requirement	Excused Absences - student is allowed to make up missed work; absence is not counted against attendance requirement
Exempted, Excused Absences - student is allowed to make up missed work; absence is not counted against attendance requirement	
Unexcused Absences - student is not allowed to make up missed work; absence is counted against attendance requirement	Unexcused Absences - student is allowed to make up missed work; absence is counted against attendance requirement
Suspensions - student is allowed to make up work; absence is counted against attendance requirement	Suspensions - student is allowed to make up missed work; absence is counted against attendance requirement if the student does not report to alternative setting



# Attendance Definitions for Louisiana

*Truancy - when a student has 5 unexcused tardies or 5 unexcused absences in a semester.*

*Chronic Absence - when a student has 15 or more absences for any reason, excused, unexcused or suspensions.*

*\*Recommended definition of chronic absence - when a student misses 10% or more of the academic school year for any reason.*





# Truancy vs. Chronic Absence

## Truancy

- counts only excused absences
- emphasizes compliance with school rules
- relies on legal and administrative solutions

vs.

## Chronic Absence

- counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- uses community-based, positive strategies



# Current Data

Students who are chronically absent for any school year between the eighth and twelfth grades are seven times more likely to dropout of high school. National data reflect students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are 1.4 to 1.5 times more likely to be chronically absent as their peers without disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

*Chronic absenteeism in Louisiana for the 2021-2022 school year shows that Students With Disabilities have a chronic absenteeism rate of 23.4% and the Louisiana rate is 19.4%.*

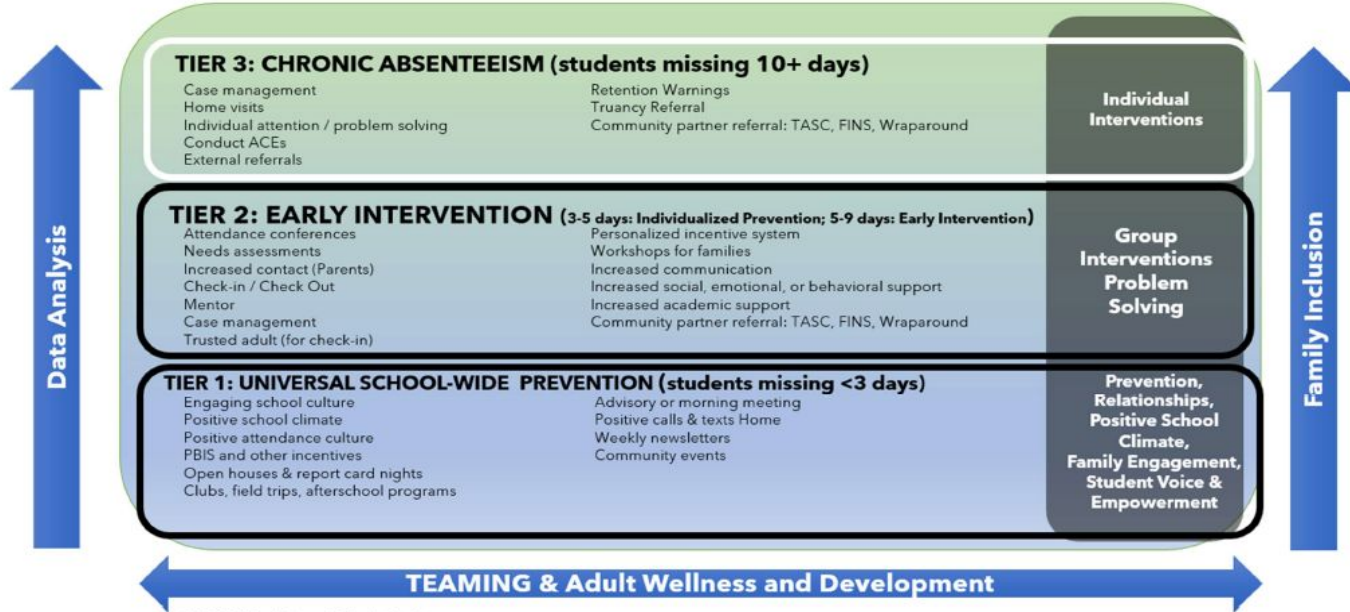


# Engaging Students





**MTSS** Screening and Progress Monitoring; Evidence-based Instruction & Intervention; Data-based Decision Making; Tiered Interventions; Teaming



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# Student Strategies

- Rigorous, Tier 1 curriculum; differentiated for diverse learners as needed
- Normed expectations for attendance, behavior, course performance
- Culturally competent instruction that connects learning to lived experience
- Variety of clubs, field trips, extracurriculars
- Restorative approaches to challenging behavior





# PBIS Considerations

Misconception: PBIS means...	True PBIS means...
...handing out rewards and having parties.	...changing your focus from being reactive and punitive (by responding to what students do wrong), to being proactive and positive (by teaching skills and recognizing students when they engage in appropriate behavior).
...not addressing inappropriate or disruptive behaviors.	...implementing related consequences (not “punishment”) <i>while also focusing on <a href="#">development of skills</a> and appropriate replacement behaviors.</i>
...just another initiative for us to implement.	...maximizing efficacy by <a href="#">aligning with initiatives and frameworks</a> that are already in place.
...less time spent on academics.	...decreasing problem behaviors that interrupt instructional time. Teachers can embed <a href="#">proactive, evidence-based strategies</a> in everyday academic lessons.
...all students’ behavioral needs are being addressed.	...different students will need different things, and not all necessary supports can be provided through a PBIS framework. Some students will still need access to <a href="#">trauma-informed strategies and supports</a> that address the specific impacts of trauma on the body and brain.



# Breakout Session

Let's

Chat

Tier	Strategy	Person Responsible (Who will do the intervention)	Monitoring (Who will measure the intervention)
School wide/ Universal  TIER 1			
Early Intervention  TIER 2			
Chronic Absenteeism  TIER 3			







## Engaging Parents

# Family Supports

- Family education on relevant topics (e.g., how to support attendance)
- Family support programs to assist with nutrition, health, and other services related to barriers to attendance
- Home visits at transition points in schooling





# Provisions

- Providing information on how to monitor and encourage homework completion
- Providing information about skills needed for each subject at each grade
- Providing opportunities for families to be involved in system and school decision-making, for example using your local Special Education Advisory Council to brainstorm solutions
- Making caregivers feel like valued stakeholders in what happens at school



# Family-related Risk Factors

- Parent mental health challenges
- Parental history of school refusal
- Poor relationship between family and school
- Differing parental responses to the child's school reluctance or school refusal
- Family challenges (e.g., conflict, parental separation or death in the family)
- Low parental involvement and low supervision of their child
- Past or current trauma affecting child, parents or both
- Violence in the family





# Breakout Session

As a beginning teacher, you recognize the need to partner with families to improve learning. You are attending evening activities and almost no parents are attending. Also, you have five parents who have not scheduled mandatory meetings for this year and are not responding to your notes home. With your group members, role play this scenario and discuss its implications for the student, for the teacher, and for the family member.



# Breakout Session

Let's

Chat

Epstein Type	How does your school already support this type?	What could your school do better to support this type?	How would supporting this type promote attendance at your school?
Parenting			
Communicating			
Volunteering			
Learning at Home			
Decision-Making			
Collaborating with the Community			





# Engaging a System and School Leadership Team



# System and School Team Look Fors

- System and school leadership teams examine data and determine strategies to improve attendance
- School systems [Comeback Plans](#) were required to include how they would address attendance
- Seek other support from administration, attendance counselors, guidance counselors, child and youth workers, social workers, psychology staff, etc.
- Consider contacting the child's special education teacher for support.
- Consider and collaboratively solve problems involving lack of food, transportation, inadequate clothing for the weather, lack of clean clothes, bullying, etc.
- Include information on the importance of school attendance for parents and students on newsletters, school websites, etc.





# School Team Tasks

- Explore additional alternative education options: coop, summer school, tutoring, etc.
- School teams can mobilize individualized, intensive supports and interventions to help remove barriers and improve attendance for students with disabilities. Intensive supports and interventions will be customized, dependent upon data, to address the root cause of the chronic absenteeism.
- Review the student's school record and talk to previous teachers about successes and strategies with respect to attendance.
- Special education teachers and related service providers, such as speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists, working with the student can provide valuable information to help inform potential approaches and interventions to address chronic absenteeism.



# Considerations for School Teams

Specialized programs designed for the most at-risk youth have been found to be effective in improving attendance and academic performance through structured mentoring, monitoring, or facilitation of engagement approaches. Essentially, the job of a mentor is to help ensure connection between the student, their school, and home contexts that enhance the students' engagement with school.





# Attendance Action Plan Review



## 2022-2023 ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN



### IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE: 2022-2023 ACTION PLAN

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Read "Designing & Implementing an Effective Plan to Improve Student Attendance" (pages 2-3)
2. Complete the exercises
  - a. Section 1: Building the Team & Defining the Need (pages 3-7)
  - b. Section 2: Fostering Community & Nurturing Collaboration (pages 8-12)
  - c. Section 3: Developing & Monitoring Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (pages 13-17)
3. Complete the Action Plan (pages 18-23)
4. Share the Action Plan

#### LOUISIANA ATTENDANCE ALLIANCE BIG GOAL

**TO CHANGE THE THINKING** around attendance by understanding barriers and critically examining how to better support students and families **SO THAT FAMILIES RECEIVE SUPPORT** to keep their students at school, and **STUDENT NEEDS ARE ADDRESSED** so they can learn.

#### ATTENDANCE MTSS FRAMEWORK GOAL

**To encourage the use of resources and data** that support good student attendance practices, and to adopt a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) **that will ensure every student's needs are met** to improve attendance and address underlying issues that cause chronic absence (excused, unexcused, and suspensions).



# Consult the team & Define the need



<b>Smart Goal</b> (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound) What will you do to build your team and create a sustainable system to improve student attendance?	
<b>Supporting Data</b> What data supports the prioritization of this goal?	
<b>Needs</b> What do you need to achieve this goal (personnel, time, software, professional development, technical assistance, etc.)?	
<b>Anticipated Barriers</b> What factors may get in the way of achieving this goal?	
<b>Measuring Success</b> How will you know when your goal has been achieved (data point, trend, observable behavior, etc.)?	







## Strategies to Avoid Behavior Related Absenteeism

January 2023

# Withdrawal

Before withdrawing or exiting a non-attending student who may still be living in the district, the child welfare and attendance director, supervisor, or other person designated by the board of education, should investigate the situation of the student and family to determine if the student still lives in the district and if the student is in possible violation of the compulsory attendance/education law.





# How Psychosocial Issues Affect Attendance

Safety

School Avoidance/ Refusal



Fear/Stress

Chronic Absence



Bullying

Truancy

Anger

Aggression



Dropout

Self-Esteem



# Discipline Matrix

Why is a Discipline Matrix Important?

- Kids don't feel targeted
- Decreases penalties related to the mood of the student
- Decreases the "feelings" of the disciplinarian
- Decreases school avoidance and refusal

A Tip:

*Review Student offenses and meet with an internal team to determine Tier I- Tier III identification*

Guided Questions:

How are students with disabilities addressed in the discipline matrix?

What behavior modifications are in place to meet the needs of SWD?

How do discipline practices add to chronic absenteeism?



# Re-Entry Plan

Let's

Chat

What is the plan to re-engage the student back into the school after a school suspension?

Create a re-entry plan that helps the:

- student reconnect to the school system
- teacher and student capture lost learning
- teacher feel supported with the loss of a student
- principal and teacher create a strategy implementing restorative practices







**Closing**

# Educator Development

## Guidance for Leading Inclusive Special Education Programs

*To support the increased effectiveness of special education programming through effective and inclusive systemwide planning, the department will release five guidance documents to school systems in 2022-2023.*

### 2022-2023 Guidance Documents:

[Special Education Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism](#)

OSEP: Discipline and seclusion and restraint

April Dunn/ Updated Compliance

Equity and Inclusion: Literacy Strategies for Students with Disabilities

SPED Playbook Three Instructional Best Practices

**Guidance for Leading  
Inclusive Special Education  
Programs:**

**Supporting Attendance for  
Students with Disabilities**

# Presenter Contact Information

Questions regarding:	Contact information:
Special Education Leader Development	<a href="mailto:Shanae.Herron@la.gov">Shanae.Herron@la.gov</a>
Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism	<a href="mailto:Shelneka.Adams@la.gov">Shelneka.Adams@la.gov</a>
General Special Education Questions	<a href="mailto:diverselearnersupport@la.gov">diverselearnersupport@la.gov</a>







There is **ABILITY**  
in every  
**DisABILITY.**

“Know me for my **ABILITIES**, not my disability.”  
(Robert M. Hensel)