BE ATTENTIVE TO ATTENDANCE: HOW CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AFFECTS STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019
1:00 – 2:15PM ET
HAVE A QUESTION?
This webinar is for you. Enter your questions in the questions pane and click ‘Send’. We will save time at the end of the webinar to answer them.

RECORDING & HANDOUTS
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If you’ve signed up for this webinar, you will receive a link to the recording in an email after the webinar is over.
To get CEUs for this webinar, you must:

1. Complete a post-test upon completion of the webinar
2. Score at least 80%.

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Education Leads Home: A National Campaign Building Stronger Futures for Homeless Students

- Young children will participate in quality early childhood programs at the same rate as their housed peers by 2026.
- High school students will reach a 90 percent graduation rate by 2030.
- Post-secondary students will reach a 60 percent post-secondary attainment rate by 2034.

www.educationleadshome.org
ICPH
ICPH is a New York City-based policy research organization focused on family homelessness in New York City and throughout the United States. www.icphusa.org

SCHOOLHOUSE CONNECTION
SchoolHouse Connection is a national organization working to overcome homelessness through education. www.schoolhouseconnection.org

CIVIC
Civic is a public policy and strategy firm that helps corporations, nonprofits, foundations, universities, and governments develop and spearhead innovative public policies to strengthen our communities and country. www.civicenterprises.net

AMERICA’S PROMISE ALLIANCE
APA is the nation’s largest partnership of its kind, bringing together hundreds of national nonprofits, businesses, communities, educators, and ordinary citizens behind the idea of making the promise of America accessible to all young people. www.americaspromise.org

EDUCATIONCOUNSEL
EducationCounsel is a mission-based education consulting firm that combines significant experience in policy, strategy, law and advocacy to drive improvements in the U.S. education system at the local, state, and national levels from early childhood through postsecondary education. http://educationcounsel.com/
Our Presenters

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Program Manager, Education Leads Home - SchoolHouse Connection
Today’s Agenda

- Overview of Chronic Absenteeism and its Effects on Students
- National Chronic Absenteeism Data
- MI Data Case Study
- Best Practices from Big Rapids, MI
- Check & Connect: A Model Evidence-Based Intervention
- Q&A
Overview of Chronic Absenteeism

What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Students who miss 10 percent or more of days enrolled are defined as chronically absent—including both excused and unexcused absences.

Why Does Chronic Absenteeism Matter?

- Less likely to meet grade level proficiency standards
- More likely to drop out of school
- Absences in early grades have lasting impact

How is Chronic Absenteeism a Warning Sign?

When students consistently miss school, it is often a sign of underlying challenges and may signal a student is experiencing homelessness.
The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released student absenteeism rates from all 50 states for the 2015-16 school year. This data from all public schools and school districts shows that almost 8 million students were chronically absent from schools in 2015-16.
How do we get people to care?
MI has sixth highest chronic absenteeism rate in the country. Approximately 1 out of every 6 children in SY 2016-17.

Half of all students in MI are either low-income or homeless. They account for 75% of all students chronically absent.

Homeless students have the highest chronic absenteeism rate. Over 2.5 times the rate of housed peers and over 4 times the rate of higher income peers.
Even without attendance data linked to graduation outcome, a strong case for meeting the needs of homeless students can be made.

**Importance of Local Focus**

- **Chronic absenteeism is not inevitable for homeless students**
  - By school district, chronic absenteeism ranged from a low of 13% to a high of 86%.

- **Critical to disaggregate the data**
  - School districts where homeless students struggled with attendance were not always the same districts where all students struggled.
Best Practices from Big Rapids, MI
Common Causes of Chronic Absences in Big Rapids

- Generational poverty
- Lack of in-home role models of the “hidden rules of success”
- Parents underestimate the importance of attendance
- Lack of resources to stay organized and on-track
- Lack of (safe) transportation
- Health and hygiene factors
- Familial and/or work responsibilities
- Feeling and reality of being disconnected
  - From current/new school
  - From current/new community
Relationships are Critical

- The job is huge! No one person can do it alone
- Nurture collegial relationships: work as a support team
- Talk to others who are involved with the student or who provide services
- Keep an open heart to the circumstances and the need for assistance
- Assume positive intent!
Strategies for Enabling Consistent Attendance

Create a sense of community:
- For example, periodically invite students to eat somewhere other than the school cafeteria as part of a “lunch bunch” with the counselor or someone who can run a small group. This helps students:
  - Feel a sense of belonging
  - Practice table and conversation manners
  - Talk about successes and challenges
  - Link thoughts to future career possibilities

Adopt a “whatever it takes” approach:
- Remove barriers: get students in school!
- Whenever possible, satisfy basic needs
- Provide private transportation from shelters
Check & Connect: A Model Intervention
Check & Connect Overview

- Structured mentoring intervention
- Promotes student engagement
  - At school
  - With learning
- Focus on school completion
Evidence-Based Intervention


» C&C is the only dropout prevention intervention to show positive effects for staying in school
Fit With Existing Initiatives

Universal 80%
Targeted 15%
Intensive 5%
Lessons Learned

- The power and the value of personalized interventions
- Relationships are essential
- Coordinator for mentor support and fidelity of implementation
- Multiple dimensions of engagement, in particular how students think (cognitive) and feel (affective) about school
Check & Connect Core Components

- Check
- Connect
- Mentor
- Family Engagement

Fidelity of Implementation
Predictors of Dropout

**Status Risk Factors**
- Age
- Metro status and region
- Disability
- Socioeconomic status
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Family structure
- Homelessness

**Alterable Risk Factors**
- Attendance
- Attitude toward school
- Extracurricular participation
- Behavior
- Homework
- Grades, credit accrual
Mentor

- Demonstrates caring, consistency, and genuine concern
- Reduces and buffers against risk factors, such as mobility and homelessness, by focusing on protective factors in school, family, student
- Helps students navigate school and home
Multidimensional Engagement in C&C

Observable Engagement
- Academic
- Behavioral

Internal Engagement
- Cognitive
- Affective
Preparing for Implementation

• **Readiness Tool for Implementing Check & Connect**
  » Addresses need, fit, capacity to implement

• **Indicators of disengagement/criteria for selecting students**
  » Attendance, behavior, course performance
  » Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)
    ▪ Assesses students’ cognitive and affective engagement

• **Selection of mentors/implementation options**
  » [http://www.checkandconnect.umn.edu/docs/C&ConnectImplementationOptions&Funding.pdf](http://www.checkandconnect.umn.edu/docs/C&ConnectImplementationOptions&Funding.pdf)
Implementation

- **Mentor** who makes a long-term commitment
- Systematic data collection: **Check**
  - Access to data, use of C&C App or monitoring form
- Personalizing the intervention: **Connect**
  - Basic and intensive interventions
- **Family** engagement
  - Core strategies for partnering with families
Mentor Tasks and Time

Mentors, on average, spend 1 hour per week on C&C related tasks per student. However, time required can vary based on student need.
C&C App: Attendance data

Attendance

Severity: Less to More

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Enter attendance data
Levels of “Connect” Interventions

Intensive Intervention (Tier 3)
Supplemental for Check & Connect students showing high risk

Basic Intervention (Tier 2)
Weekly for all Check & Connect students
Basic Intervention

Deliberate Conversation

• Sharing check data
• Providing feedback
• Discussing school
• Facilitating problem solving
Intensive Interventions

Supplemental for Specific High Risk Areas

• Customized, individualized
• Person-environment fit
• Direct service or referral
Strategies to Engage with Families

- Enhancing home-school communication
- Conducting home visits
- Responding to parents’ questions or concerns
- Encouraging home support for learning
Importance of Monitoring Implementation

• Monitoring and ensuring fidelity of implementation
• Providing information for program improvement
  » Identifying areas for additional professional development
  » Determining what adaptations, if any, are needed for local contexts
• Demonstrating program impact
Tools for Monitoring Implementation

- **Core Components and Elements Self-Assessment**
  - Periodically monitors implementation of the core components

- **Mentor Practice Profile**
  - Describes the mentor practice and levels of performance
  - Supports mentor practice and program improvement

- **Monthly Mentor Fidelity Survey**
  - Periodically checks mentor fidelity
Implementation Considerations

• Administrator support
• Data collection
• Time (initial training, weekly meetings, mentor professional development, etc.)
• Changes in school personnel
• Competing initiatives, interventions, other mentoring programs
• Engaging families
Resource for Implementation
Training Options

Preparation & Implementation Training
Provides ADMINISTRATORS with the C&C framework and guides participants through the steps for implementing with fidelity.

Length: 6 hours in 1 day
Location: In person

OR

Comprehensive Implementation Training
Provides ADMINISTRATORS and MENTORS with the C&C framework and guides participants through the steps for implementing with fidelity and effective tools and strategies for the mentor role.

Length: 12 hours over 2 days
Location: In person

Mentor Training
Provides new or existing MENTORS with in-depth training on C&C.

Length: 12 hours over 2 days
Location: In person
Questions?
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Link to post-test: 
https://forms.gle/N1L4j3LtKGkkmwkwM9
Resources

SchoolHouse Connection:  
http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/

Education Leads Home:  
http://www.educationleadshome.org

National Center on Homeless Education:  
https://nche.ed.gov

Poverty Solutions:  
https://poverty.umich.edu/

Check & Connect:  
http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/

Attendance Works:  
https://www.attendanceworks.org/

Everyone Graduates Center:  
http://every1graduates.org/
Contact Information

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