Connecting Health and Learning through ESSA: Opportunities for School Nurses

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Welcome and Logistics

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Today's Speakers

- Donna Mazyck, Executive Director, National Association of School Nurses, Moderator
- Annessa Bontrager, Project Manager, Alliance for a Healthier Generation
- Alex Mays, National Program Director, Healthy Schools Campaign
- Eva Stone, District Health Coordinator, Jefferson County Public Schools

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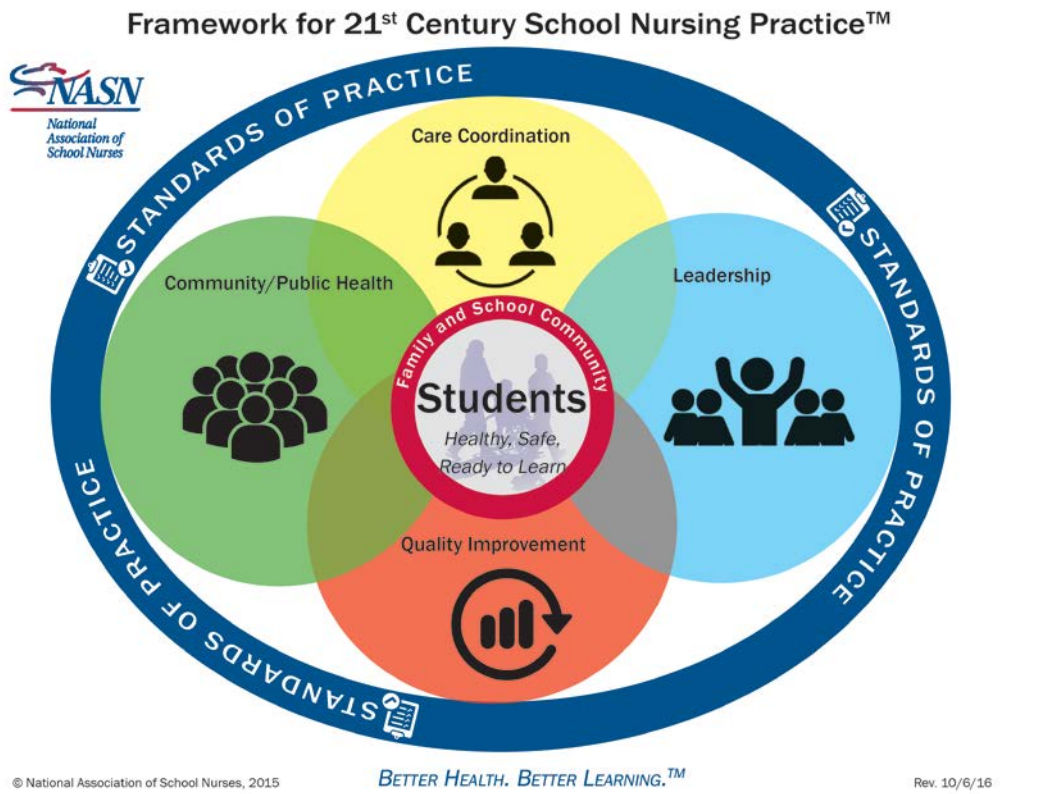
Donna Mazyck

National Association of School Nurses



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Annessa Bontrager

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Signed into law December 2015 with bipartisan support
- Reauthorized the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's education law that governs K-12 public education
- Main purpose is to make ensure every public school provides a quality education for all students
- States have more authority and flexibility in establishing their plans and strategies than under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- All state ESSA plans have been submitted and approved by US Dept. of Education (ED)
- Provides new opportunities for states to support student health and wellness

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Opportunities for Health and Wellness Under ESSA

- Accountability Systems
- State Report Cards
- Professional Development
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG)
- Needs Assessments and School Improvement Plans

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Accountability Systems

- A set of indicators that are used to determine school performance
- Overall school and individual subgroups of students must meet benchmarks
- Schools/student groups not meeting benchmarks designated as needing improvement
- LEAs must designate resources to improving outcomes for these schools/student groups
- Indicator of school quality or student success

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Accountability Metrics

Chronic Absenteeism
-36 states and DC

Access to PE
-KY, MD, GA, MI and LA

Physical Fitness
-CT, VT, ND

School Climate
-IA, ID, IL, MD, NM and NV

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What is Chronic Absenteeism?

- Often defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason: excused, unexcused, or suspension (Attendance Works, OCR)
- Definitions vary by state
- Chronic absenteeism is a proven early warning sign of academic risk and school dropout
- Research shows that student health and a school's health and wellness environment are key factors that can contribute to a student being chronically absent

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State Report Cards

- Must be widely disseminated to the public in a format and language that parents can understand.
- States can choose to provide measures such as health and wellness measures as a form of public accountability (in addition to required measures)

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Professional Development

- SEAs may use these funds to provide high-quality professional development for all school staff, including health and physical education teachers, and specialized instructional support personnel (school nurses, school psychologists, etc.)
- This funding can be used to provide training to all teachers and school staff on supporting student health and wellness.

SSAEGs

- Formula grant
- Any school district receiving more than $30,000 from this grant program must conduct a needs assessment
- At least 20% of this funding must be appropriated to improving the safety and health of students and at least 20% must be allocated to providing a well-rounded education

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Needs Assessments and the Whole Child

- Understand root causes of poor academic performance
- Need to consider physical and mental health, hunger, housing stability, safety, and many other factors
- Schools can utilize their HSP assessment data as part of the process

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School Improvement Plans

- Strategic plan
- Addresses the deficiencies identified by the needs assessment
- Incorporates evidence-based practices
- Should align with Local Wellness Policy (see handout)
- Opportunity to address all of the factors that are impeding academic performance (Ex. school breakfast program)

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ESSA Timeline

Though each state will create their own process, a typical timeline might look like:

- 2017-18 school year: collect data used for initial accountability system ratings
- Fall 2018: publish a graded or ranked list of schools, based on their accountability system performance
- Winter 2019: work with schools to conduct needs assessments and develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- 2019-20 school year: work with schools to implement the SIP
- Fall 2021: publish the next graded or ranked list of schools, based on their accountability system performance

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Opportunities to Engage

- ESSA Implementation in Your State
- Discuss ESSA timeline with ED staff, SBOE members, district staff
- Partners
- Local Wellness Committee
  - Role in needs assessments
  - Keeper of health and wellness data

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Alex Mays

Healthy Schools Campaign

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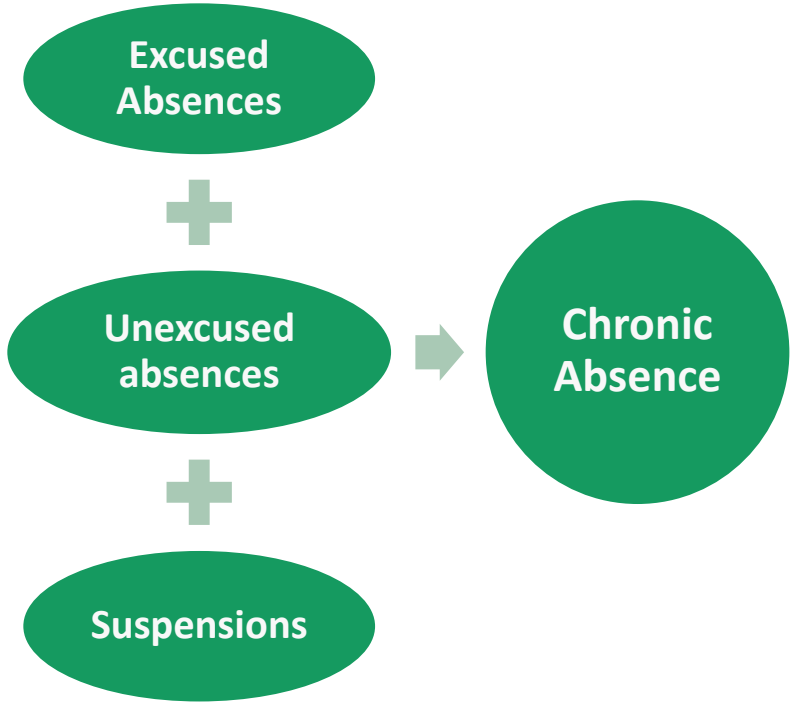
What is chronic absenteeism?

Chronic absence = missing so much school for any reason a student is academically at risk. Attendance Works defines it as missing 10% or more of school to promote early identification and better comparisons.



Who is most affected?

- **Low-income students** have higher rates of absenteeism in every state
- **American Indians** have the highest rates of all racial/ethnic groups
- **Black children** have higher rates than white students, particularly in some states
- **Hispanic students** have higher rates that white students particularly in some states
- **Students with disabilities** have significantly higher rates than others.

Why are students chronically absent?

Myths

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Sporadic versus consecutive absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

Barriers

- Chronic disease
- Lack of access to health or dental care
- Poor Transportation
- Trauma
- No safe path to school

Aversion

- Child struggling academically
- Lack of engaging instruction
- Poor school climate and ineffective school discipline
- Parents had negative school experience

Attendance Works

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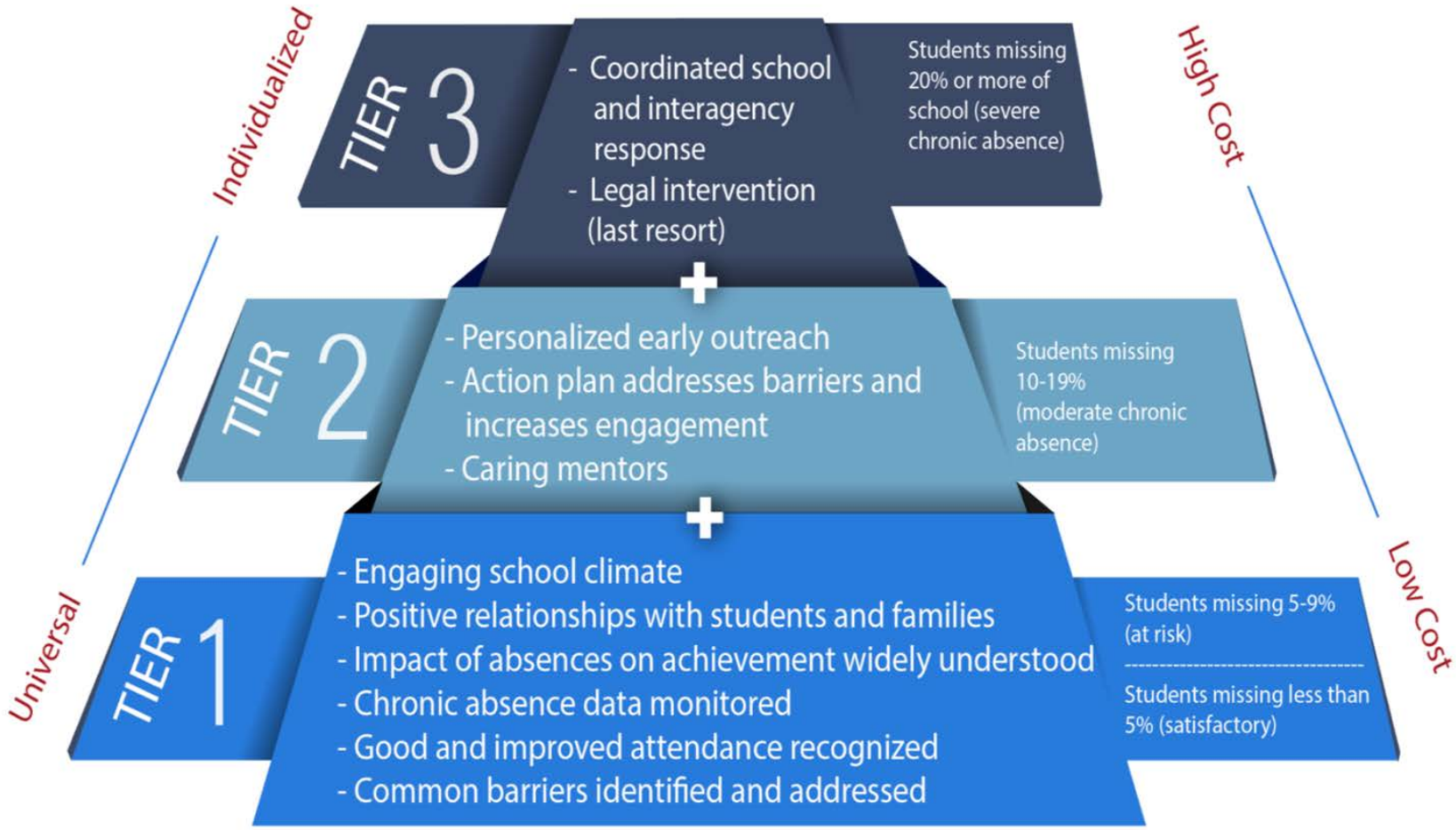
Tiered System of Supports For Improving Attendance



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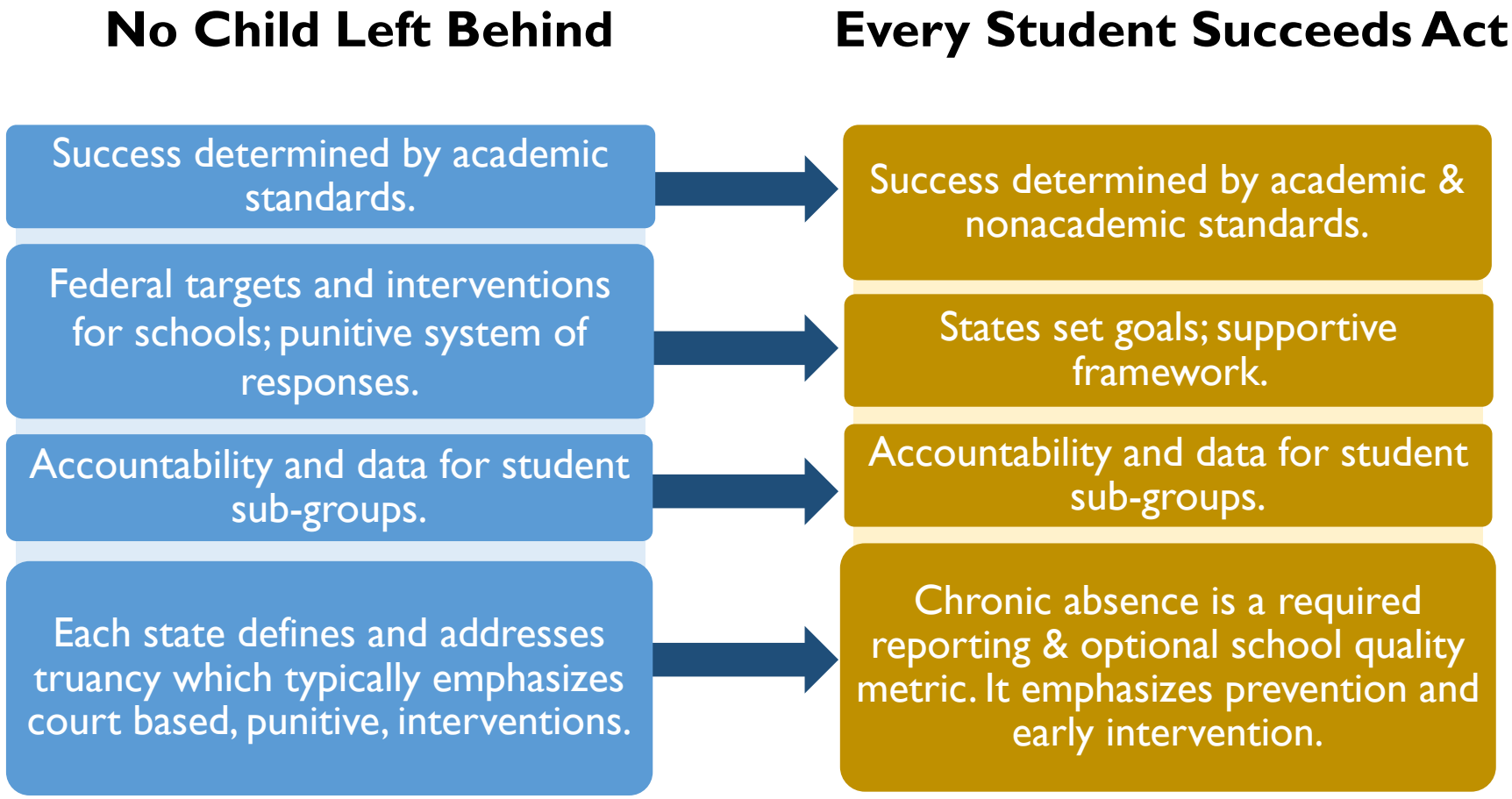
This Is a Watershed Moment



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Chronic Absence Checks As a Measure of School Quality and Student Success

ESSA: States must establish a measure of school quality or student success	Chronic Absence
Valid	✓
Reliable	✓
Calculated the same for all schools and school districts across the state	✓
Can be disaggregated by student sub-population	✓
Is a proven indicator of school quality	✓
Is a proven indicator of student success	✓

Validity: the degree to which an indicator actually measures what you are trying to measure.

Reliability: the degree to which you will get the same answer when you ask a question/compute a measure multiple times.

Additional benefit: chronic absence can serve as a proxy for school climate and student engagement.

Attendance Works

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Opportunities for School Nurses

- Connect your work to new state accountability system and report card measures
- Bring your expertise to the table: needs assessments, school improvement efforts
- Raise your voice for resources and support for school health services and programs: Title I, Title II, Title IV, Part A

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Helpful Resources

- ESSA FAQ/ESSA Blog
- Addressing the Health Related Causes of Chronic Absenteeism: A Toolkit for Action
- Using Needs Assessments to Connect Learning + Health: Opportunities in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Webinar
- State ESSA Plans to Support Student Health and Wellness: A Framework for Action
- Framework for Action: Addressing Chronic Absenteeism through ESSA Implementation
- Keep up on the progress states are making in integrating health and wellness during ESSA implementation by signing up to receive monthly ESSA updates.

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Eva Stone

Jefferson County Public Schools

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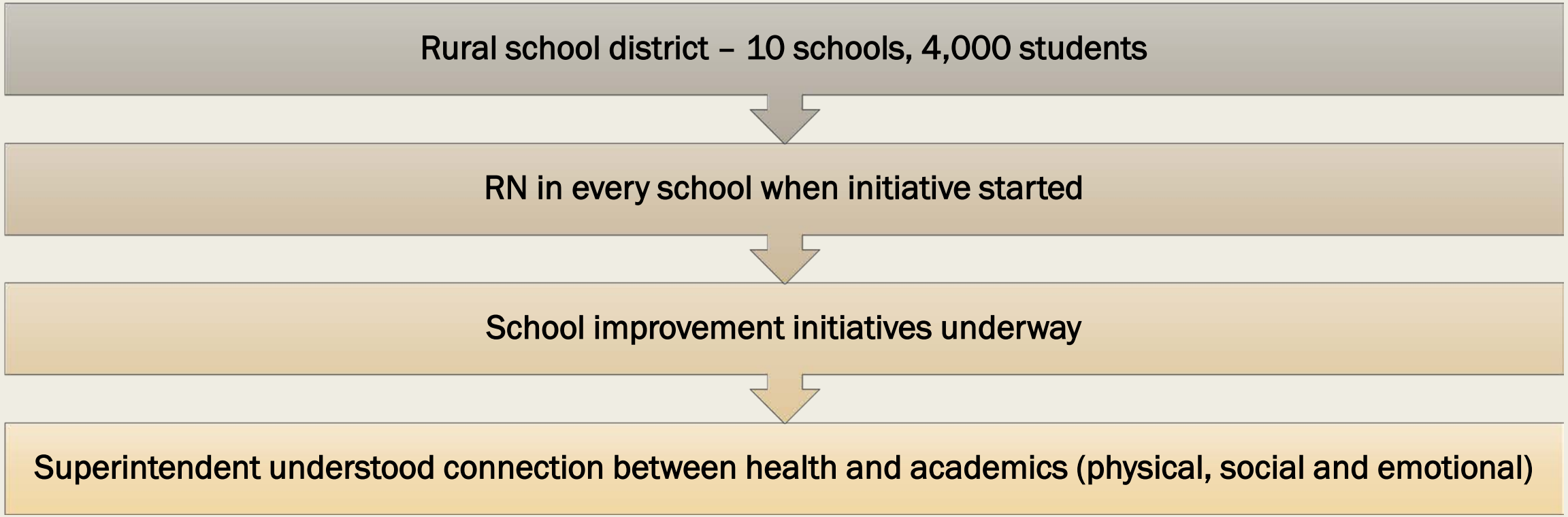
SCHOOL/DISTRICT NURSE INVOLVEMENT IN CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM REDUCTION

Eva Stone, APRN
District Health Coordinator, Jefferson County Public Schools


Rural school district – 10 schools, 4,000 students
RN in every school when initiative started
School improvement initiatives underway
Superintendent understood connection between health and academics (physical, social and emotional)

Background

Health Coordinator Involvement

Began looking at data on chronic absenteeism from a district level and reporting to schools

Developed a process for intervention as a central office team

Discussed with principals and garnered support

Standing orders- including albuterol for asthma

Health plans

Care coordination

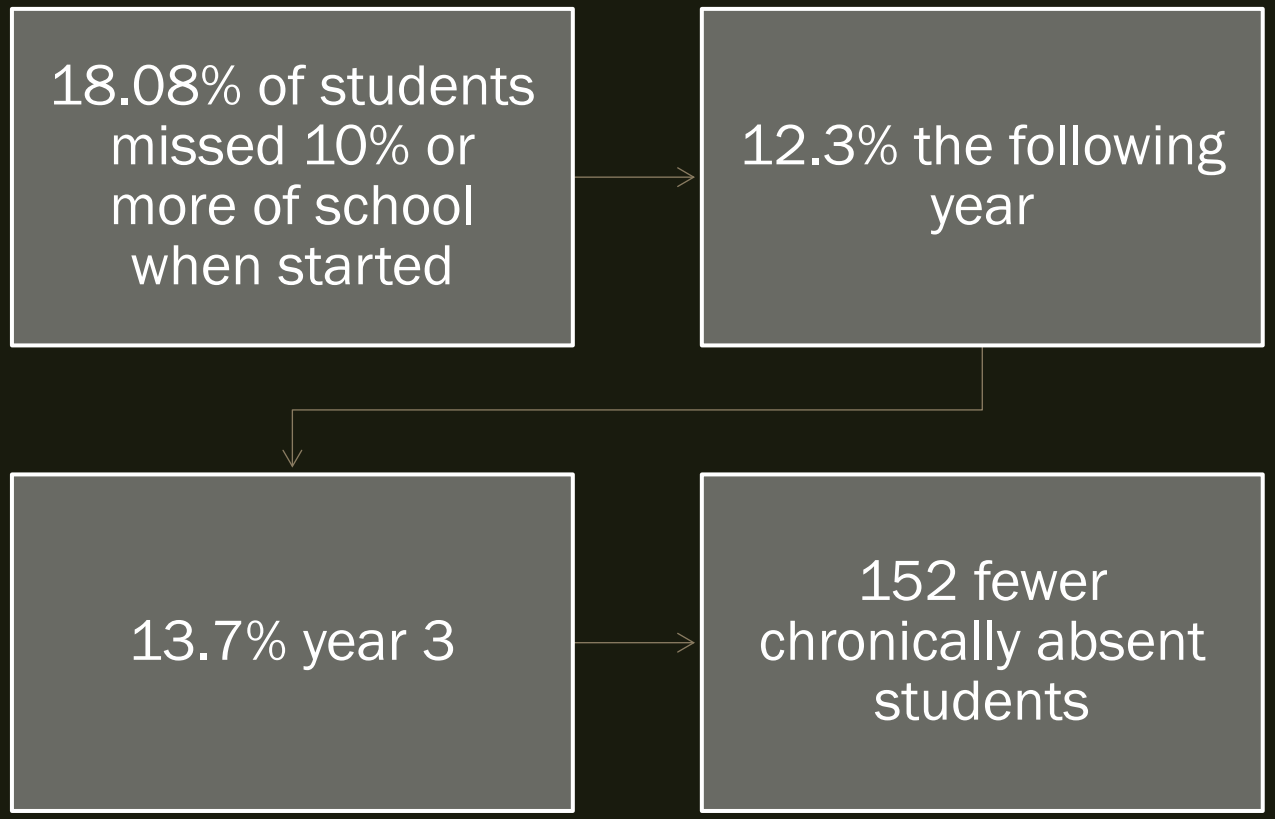
School teams

School Nurse Involvement

Interventions

- At risk teams established at each school
  Nurse, principal, counselor, family resource/youth service center coordinator, attendance clerk, district health coordinator, director of pupil personnel
- Elementary teams met monthly
- Middle school team met twice per month
- High school team met weekly
- Reviewed list of chronically absent student, assigned follow up depending on identified needs

Outcomes


18.08% of students missed 10% or more of school when started
12.3% the following year
13.7% year 3
152 fewer chronically absent students

ESSA AND 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL NURSING FRAMEWORK

Source: NASN

School Nurses Influence Student Attendance

- Identify students missing required immunizations
- Assess students for health concerns that require care coordination
- Identify undetected health concerns
- Participate on teams that collaborate to support students at risk for chronic absenteeism
- Promote healthy habits
- Identify social factors that adversely impact student attendance and well-being

Source: NASN

District and School Levels

- Participate on Attendance Committee
- Ask students coming to the health room about their attendance
- Consult with the school team when students have health barriers or social determinants that impact attendance
- Connect students and families to community resources to address social factors
- Coordinate care with community care-providers, students, families, and other agencies
- Collect, analyze, and monitor student health data that may affect attendance
- Source: NASN

Program Administrators

Look at policies that may impact student attendance and send a message that students are not welcomed at school

Consider that when students do not have required physicals, immunizations etc. that there may be a lack of access to care

Share data about the impact on chronically absent students with administration. When schools are not making academic progress as expected, improved attendance for those children who are close to meeting benchmarks is significant

Rural versus Urban

Now in a district with 105,000 students and 155 schools

Student issues are the same

Chronic absenteeism ranges from 3% to 44% among schools

What can you do?

Know your numbers

Be intentional with nursing interventions

Collect data

Communicate

Opportunities

- Population Health
- Increasing emphasis on social determinants of health
- Payment reform- increased emphasis on quality measures
- Increased emphasis on safety in schools
- Opioid-impacted children, families, schools & communities

Questions

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