

# Chronically Absent Students: An Opportunity to Expand Public Health Partnerships with Educators

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# Unpacking Attendance Terms

## Average Daily Attendance

- The % of enrolled students who attend school each day. It is used in some states for allocating funding.

## Truancy

- Typically refers only to unexcused absences and is defined by each state under No Child Left Behind. It signals the potential need for legal intervention under state compulsory education laws.

## Chronic Absence

- Missing 10% or more of school for any reason – excused, unexcused, etc. It is an indication that a student is academically at risk due to missing too much school starting in Kindergarten.

# Chronic Absenteeism: Excused and Unexcused Absences Add Up to Too Much Missed School

AMENDED

## 2013-2014 SCHOOL CALENDAR

AMENDED

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER					
NT1/2	I	I	I		
26	27	28	29	30	
H	ESD1	KDRA	KDRA	KDRA	
2	3	4	5	6	
KDRA					
9	10	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	
23	24	25	26	27	
30					

Sept. 3 – First Day for Grades 6 & 9  
 Sept. 4 – First Day for Grades 1-5, 7-8 & 10-12  
 Sept. 10 – First Day for Kindergartners

OCTOBER					
	1	2	3	4	
			F		
7	8	9	10	11	
SG½ SSD½					
14	15	16	17	18	
21	22	23	24	25	
28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER					
				EG	
					1
4	5	6	7	8	
H					
11	12	13	14	15	
18	19	20	21	22	
SG½ SSD½ K-12 C	K-12 C	NS	H	PH	
25	26	27	28	29	

DECEMBER					
2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	F
DH	H				
23	24	25	26	27	
30	31				

JANUARY					
		H	1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10	
13	14	15	16	17	
DSSH	HSP	HSP	HSP	HSP	
20	21	22	23	24	
ESD1 SG1					
27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY					
3	4	5	6	7	
10	11	12	13	14	
SH					
17	18	19	20	21	
24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH					
3	4	5	6	EG SG½ SSD½	7
10	11	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
	K-8 EC	K-8 C	K-8 NS		
24	25	26	27	28	
F					
31					

APRIL					
	1	2	3	4	
7	8	9	10	11	
14	15	16	17	18	
21	22	23	24	25	
SG½ SSD½ ESD1					
28	29	30			

MAY					
			1	2	
5	6	7	8	9	
12	13	14	15	16	
			F		
19	20	21	22	23	
F					
26	27	28	29	30	

JUNE					
2	3	4	5	6	
HSF	HSF	HSF	EG EG EG	M	
9	10	11	12	13	
M	M				
16	17				

Elementary Last Day – June 10

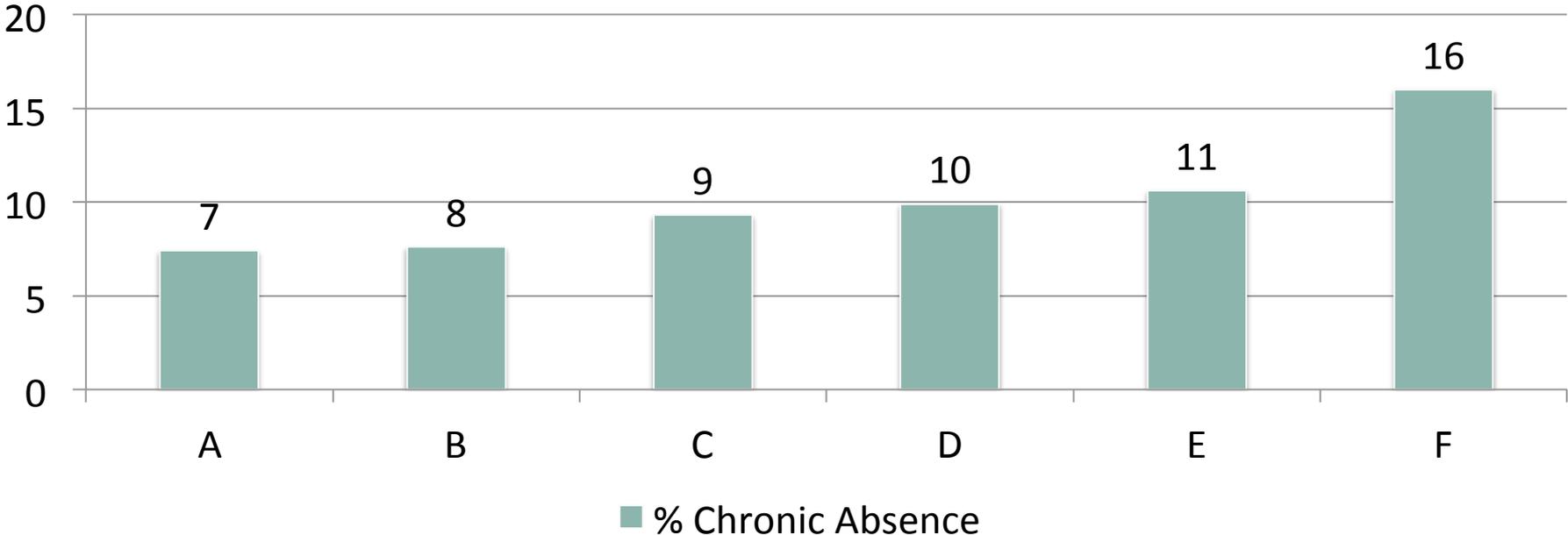
LEGEND	
NT ½	– New Teacher Half-day Inservice
I	– All Teachers Inservice Day (No Students)
ESD1	– First Day of School for Grades 6, and 9
EG	– First Day of School for Grades 1-5, 7, 8, 10-12
EG	– First Day of School for Kindergarten
K	– Kindergarten Conferences (No Kindergarten)
K-8 C	– Kindergarten to 8th Grade Conferences/ HS Optional Conferences (No K - 8th grade students/Staff Extended Schedule)
K-8 EC	– Kindergarten to 8th Grade Evening Conferences/ HS Optional Conferences (No Kindergarten/Reg. school day grades 1 - 8/Staff Extended Schedule)
K-8 NS	– No Kindergarten to 8th Grade Students

**Definition:**  
 Missing 10%  
 or More of  
 School Days  
 in a School Year,  
 Includes Excused and  
 Unexcused Absences

# High Levels of ADA Can Mask Chronic Absence

**95% ADA ≠ A**

**Chronic Absence for 6 Elementary Schools (K-5) in an Urban School District in Oregon, 2009-2010 @ 95% ADA**

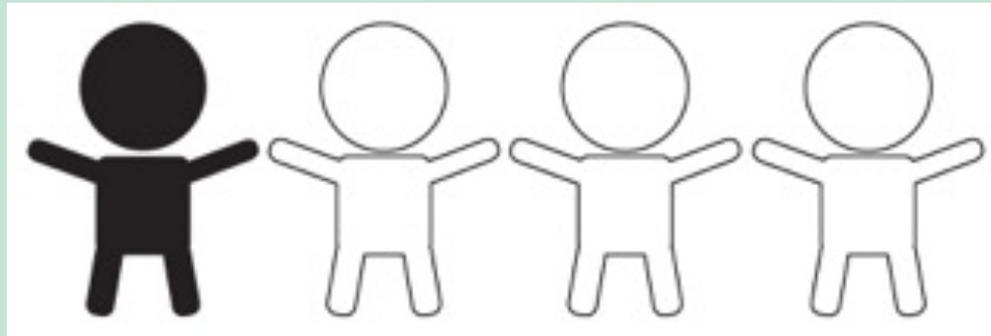


98% ADA = little chronic absence  
95% ADA = don't know  
93% ADA = significant chronic absence

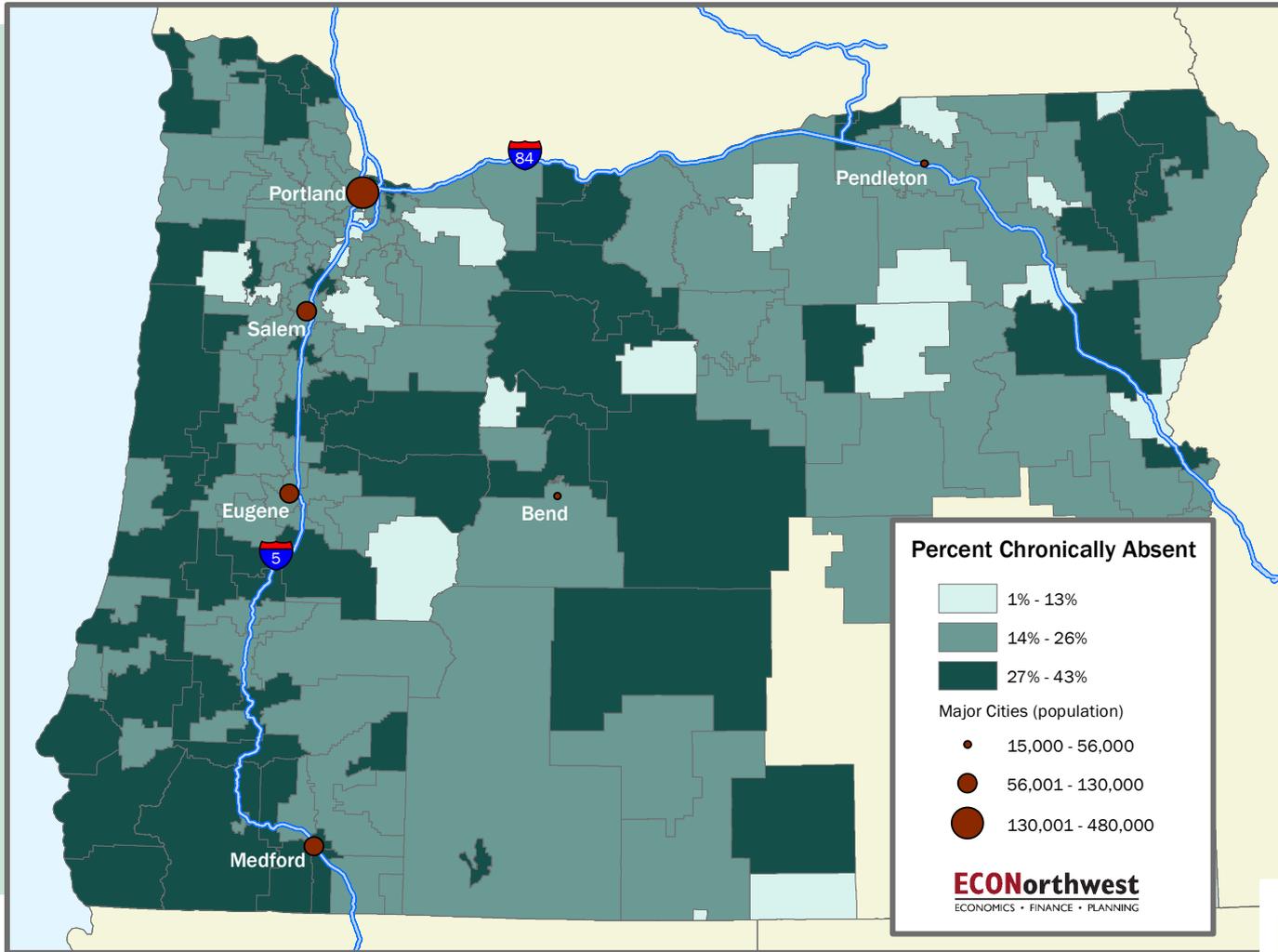


# Oregon Has a Chronic Absence Problem

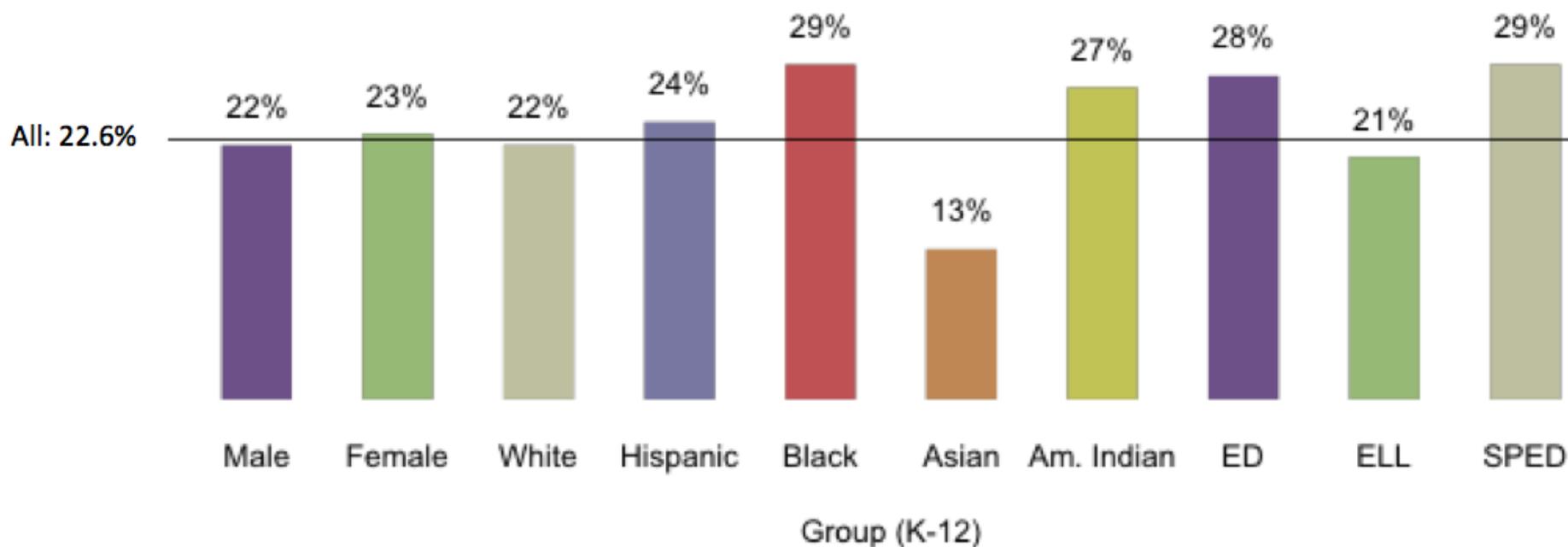
1 in 4 in Oregon children across K-12 chronically absent



# Who in Oregon is Affected? All Children Potentially At Risk

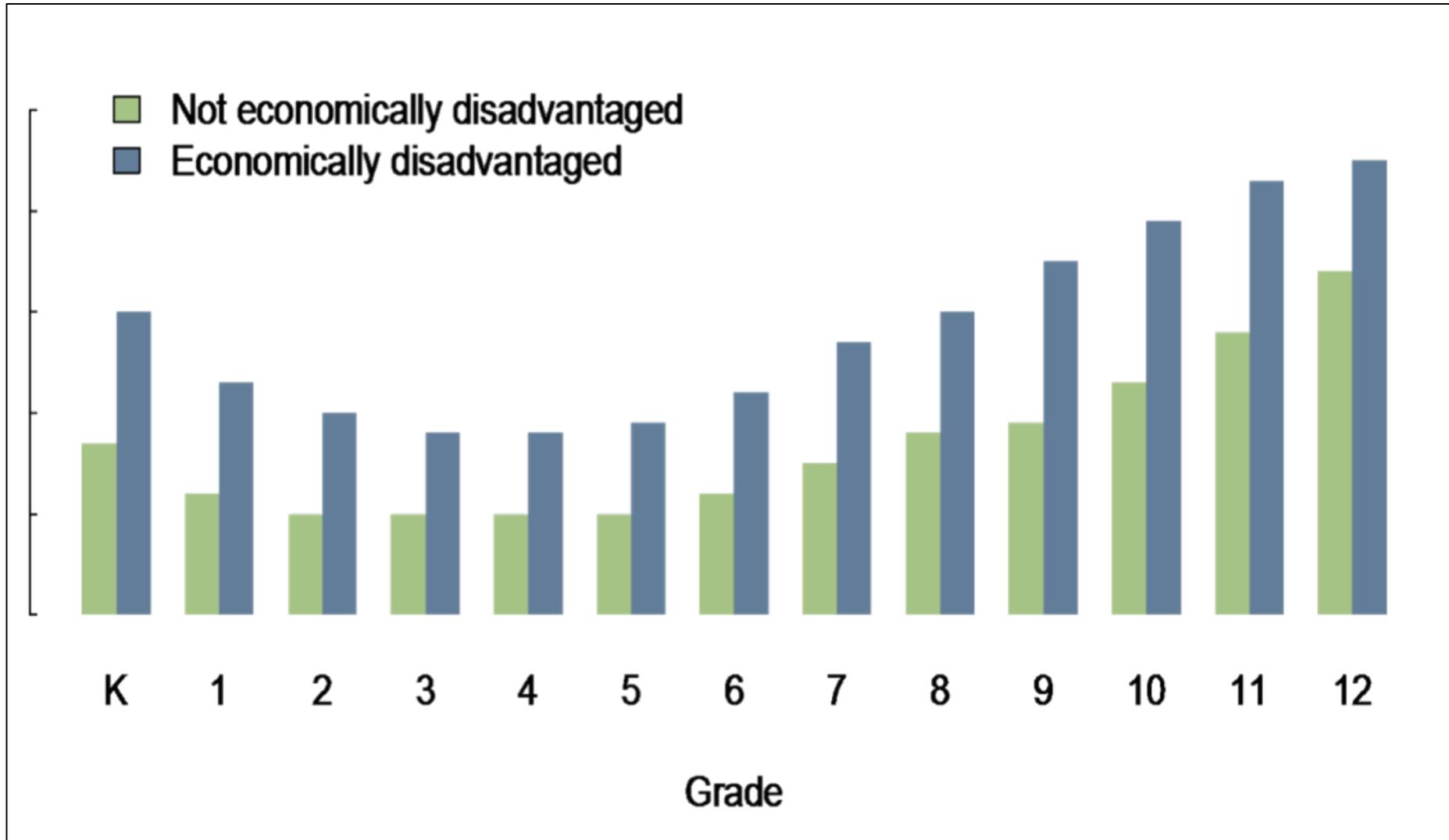


# Oregon Average is High: All Children Affected, Some Groups of Children Worse Off



Percentage of Oregon students who are chronically absent, by subgroup ED = economically disadvantaged; ELL = English language learner; SPED = special education. Source: ECONorthwest analysis of ODE data, 2009-10.

# Economically Disadvantaged Children at Higher Risk



# Schools serving similar students can have very different chronic absence outcomes

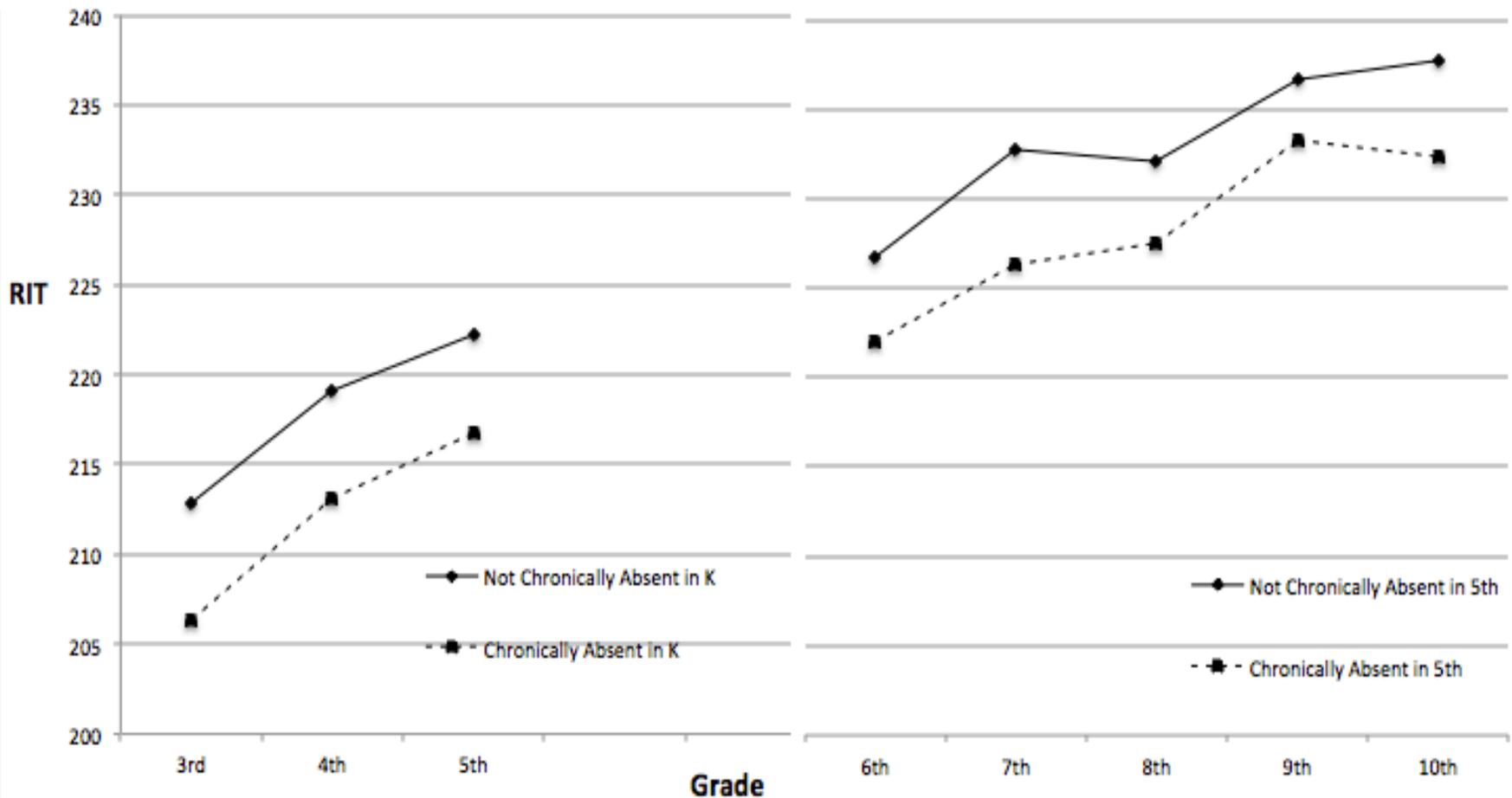
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>10% of Schools with Best Model Performance</b>	<b>10% of Schools with Worst Model Performance</b>	<b>All Schools</b>
% ED	67%	48%	54%
% ELL	16%	10%	18%
% SPED	14%	14%	13%
% Non-White	34%	27%	22%
<b>Chronic Absence</b>			
Average Predicted Rate	22%	18%	19%
Average Actual Rate	8%	35%	19%
Average Difference	-14%	17%	0%

# Chronic Absenteeism Is a Warning Signal

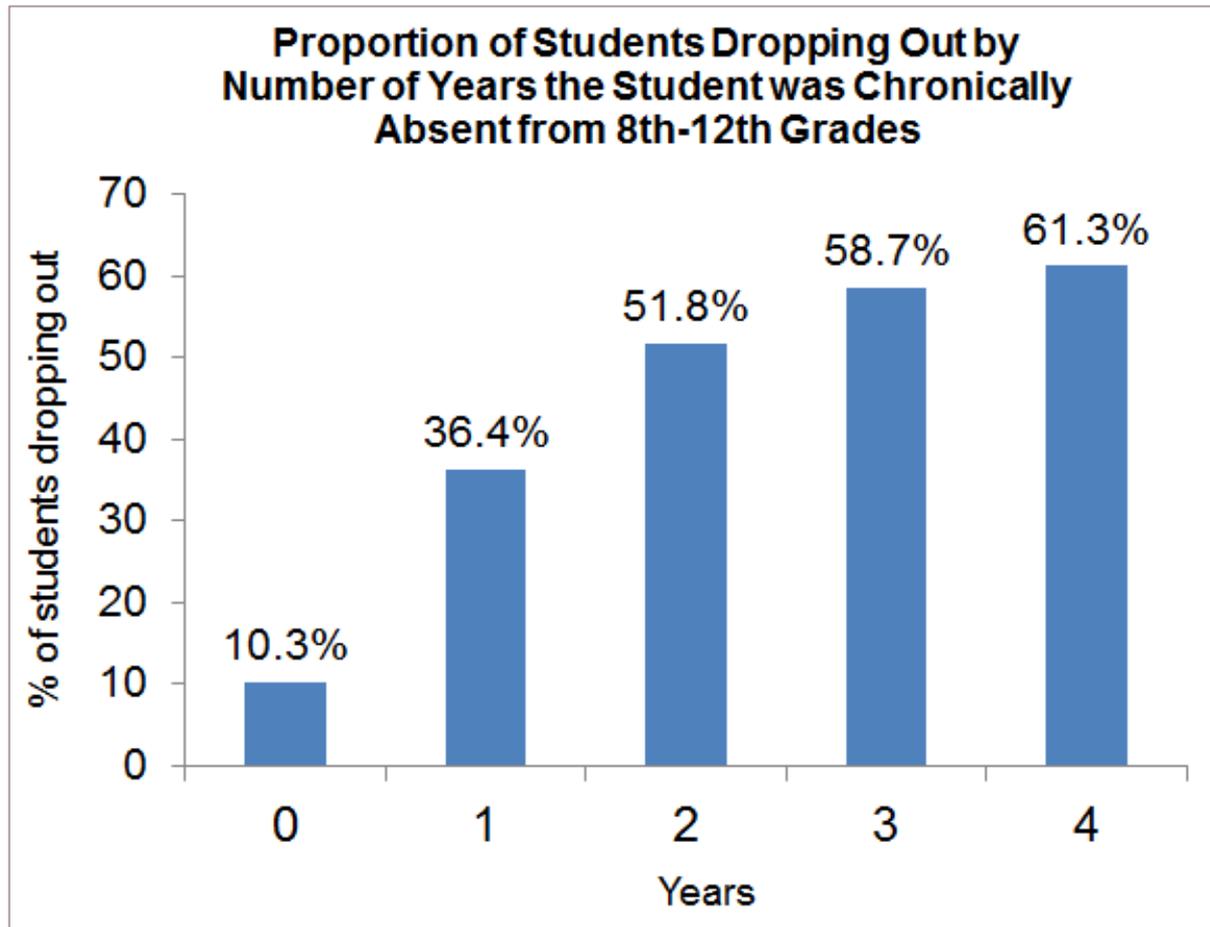


Source: Debivort  
on wikimedia

# Chronic Absences Contributes to Academic Struggles



# The Effects of Chronic Absence on Dropout Rates Are Cumulative

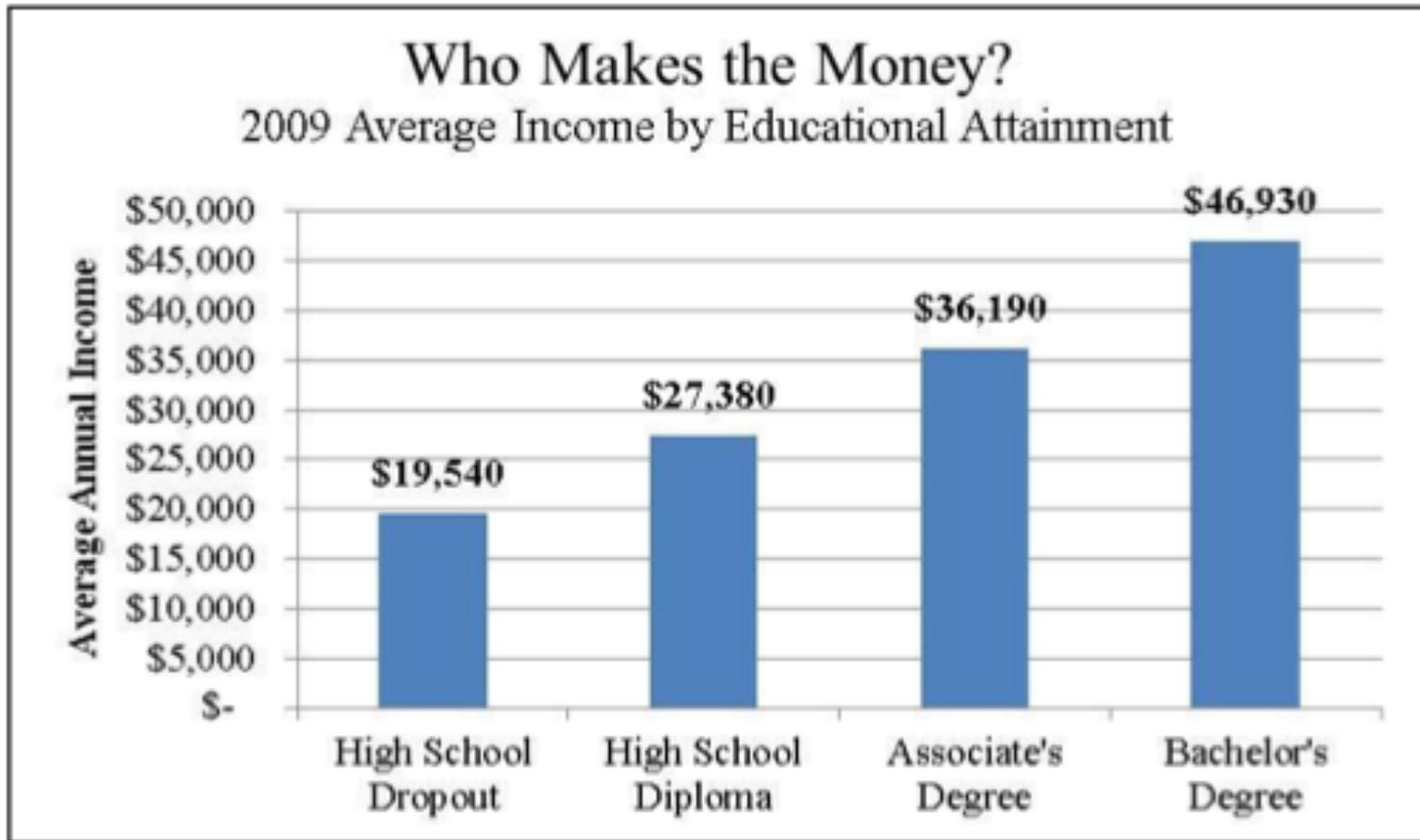


With every year of chronic absenteeism, a higher percentage of students dropped out of school.

chronic absenteeism is a stronger predictor of subsequent dropout, than suspensions and test scores



# Graduation is Important to Job Opportunities & Life Long Health



Sources: The High Cost of High School Dropouts, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011  
U.S. Department of Education 2011

# Variation Across Schools Helps Identify Good Practice and Need for Intervention

## *Chronic Absence Levels Among Schools in an Oregon Metropolitan Statistical Area (2009-10)*

	Elementary	Middle	High School
# of Schools with 0% - 5% Chronic Absence	0	1	1
# of Schools with 5% - 10% Chronic Absence	3	0	0
# of Schools with 10% - 20% Chronic Absence	47	9	4
# of Schools with >20% Chronic Absence	19	11	25
<b>Total # of Schools</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>30</b>

# Factors Contributing to Chronic Absence

## 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

Lack of access to health care,  
Lack of use of care

Poor transportation

No safe path to school, Bullying

## Aversion

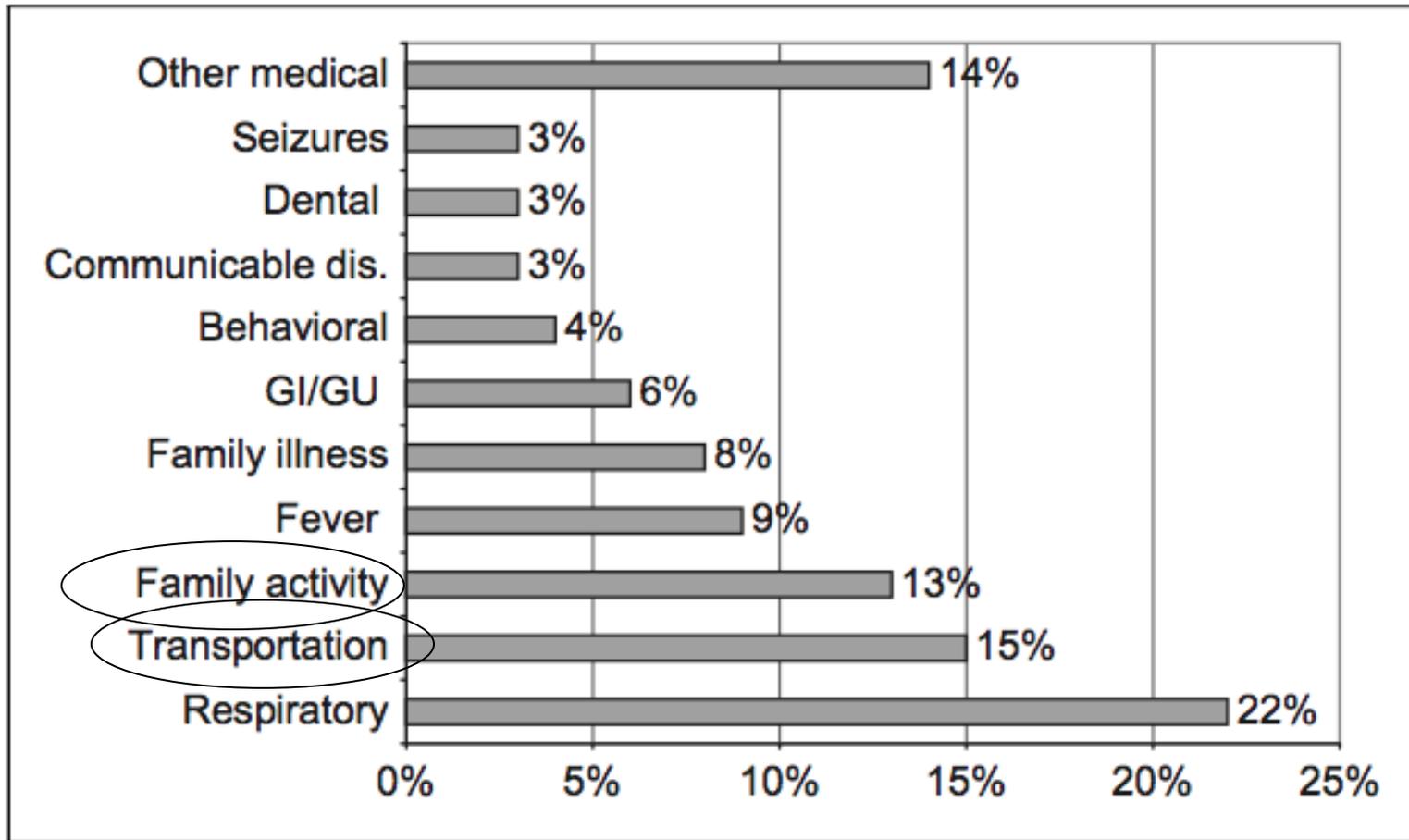
Child struggling academically

Lack of engaging instruction

Poor school climate and ineffective school discipline

Parents had negative school experience

# Example Parent Reasons for K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Student Absences



# Suggested Strategies from Literature

Build culture of attendance

Identify barriers and build capacity to address barriers

Interagency resource allocation and coordination

School health capacity

School wide attendance support

- Real time data for attendance tracking
- Chronic absence reporting
- Family and youth engagement

Sources: Balfanz, R & Byrnes, V. (2012) The Importance of Being There: A Report on Absenteeism In the Nation's Public Schools, Johns Hopkins University 1-46.

Railsback, J. (2004) Increasing Student Attendance: Strategies from Research and Practice, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

# Opportunities to Support Schools

**More Individual  
Attention**

Students who were chronically absent in prior year or starting to miss 20% or more of school

**Counseling & Education**

Work with frequently chronically absent youth and families:  
Access basic resources (i.e. food, housing)  
Connect to services

Students at risk for chronic absence

**Prevention & Intervention Programs**

Primary care services,  
School Based Health,  
School nursing, Mental health,  
Mentoring,  
Restorative Justice

All students

**Universal/Preventive Programs, Awareness**

Data-driven planning,  
Coordinated School Health,  
Health care access,  
Family engagement

**Lower Individual  
Attention**



# Opportunities to Partner to Address “Health” Reasons

## Myths

Health educators inform family and schools of appropriate absences

Use of attendance data with schools

## Barriers

School Based Health Center Wellness Visits

Voluntary dental, nursing care services

Connect families to transportation

Anti bullying policies, programs

## Aversion

Mentoring

Teacher wellness supports

Support School Health Capacity, Restorative Justice

Parent engagement

# Example: Key Health Messages + Attendance

Symptoms or Illnesses	Should My Child Go to School?
Parent sick, stressed, hospitalized	<b>YES</b> – Get a neighbor, relative or spouse to take your child to school and pick him or her up.
Chronic disease (Asthma, Diabetes, etc.)	<b>YES</b> – Your child should attend school. School personnel are trained to assist your school with his or her chronic disease and associated needs.
Head Lice	<b>YES</b> – Your child can be in school if he or she has had an initial treatment with a product for lice.
Fever	<b>NO</b> - If your child has a fever of 101 or higher, keep them at home.
Coughing	<b>NO</b> - Keep child at home
Diarrhea	<b>NO</b> – If, in addition to diarrhea, your child acts ill, has a fever or is vomiting, keep him or her at home.

Source: A Health Flyer for Parents, The Office of the District Attorney, Alameda County, Alameda County Public Health Department, interagency Children's Policy Council, Center for Healthy Schools and Communities, 2012

# Oregon Example: All Hands Raise Partnership, Communities Supporting Youth Collaborative

...a cross-sector collaborative

- Align and increase school and community supports
- Contribute to academic and life success
- Focus on eliminating disparities

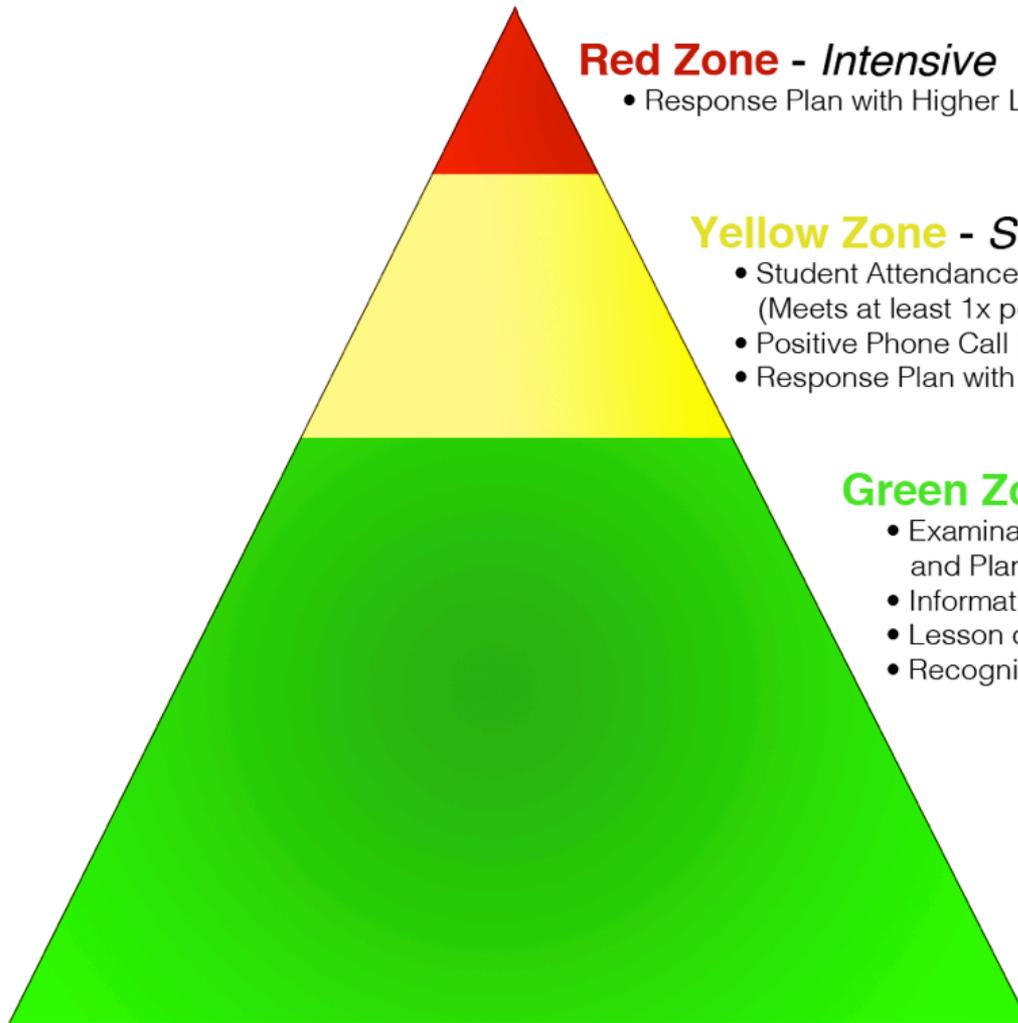
Co-Conveners:

Sun Service System Coordinating Council (Multnomah County Health Department)

Portland State University's Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services

<http://www.pdx.edu/ccf/c2c>

# CSY's Chronic Absence Strategy



## **Red Zone - Intensive**

- Response Plan with Higher Level Interventions

## **Yellow Zone - Strategic**

- Student Attendance Response Team (Meets at least 1x per month)
- Positive Phone Call Home or Administrator/Student Meeting
- Response Plan with In-School Interventions

## **Green Zone - Universal**

- Examination of School-wide Attendance and Planning (at least 3x per year)
- Information Provided to Students and Families
- Lesson on Attendance Early in Year
- Recognition of Good or Improved Attendance

# Questions?