**Guide to Using Data to Support Student Attendance**

The Chronically Out of School Indicator is based on what is commonly referred to in research as “chronic absenteeism.” The measure is the percentage of students who have missed 10 percent or more of instructional days for any reason, including excused absences and out-of-school suspensions. Because school absences are frequently an indication of barriers such as health, transportation, or disengagement and because schools and districts have access to rich and timely attendance data, addressing chronic absenteeism is a particularly powerful school improvement strategy.

Challenges related to student attendance are best addressed through a problem solving model. The four key steps in problem solving include 1) Problem Identification 2) Problem Analysis
3) Plan Implementation and 4) Plan Evaluation.

The following are suggestions for using existing data sources and key personnel at the district level to work through a problem-solving process. A similar process is recommended at the school level.

1. **PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION - *Retrieve and sort available data. Identify schools, subgroups, and individual students most in need of attention.***

**DATA SOURCE:** Absent Student Research and Student Discipline Action search queries *Working with your attendance supervisor, use the Absent Student Research query to retrieve your district or school attendance data from EIS to generate a report based on 2016-17 school year. Use the Student Discipline Action query to generate a similar discipline report.*

* Sort district attendance data by schools and identify elementary schools with 8% or more of the student body who were chronically absent and middle or secondary schools with 10% or more of the student body who were chronically absent.
* Sort school-level attendance data by 1) Grade level, 2) Disability Type,
3) Race/Ethnicity, and 4) Reason (i.e., excused, unexcused). Identify potential areas of concern and share with school leadership team.
* Identify individual students with absence rates between 1) 10 and 19% (Tier 2) and
2) Students with absence rates at 20% or above (Tier 3). Share with school leadership team.
* Sort discipline data by school and identify reasons/behaviors for out-of-school suspensions. Summarize the total number of lost instructional days and share with school leadership.

**DATA SOURCE:** Annual School Health Survey and District Coordinated School Health Application

*Request a copy of your district’s most recent School Health Survey and District Coordinated School Health Application to identify chronic health conditions as well as other barriers or opportunities which may be present.*

* Identify chronic health conditions of students.
* Where possible, sort by school.

**DATA SOURCE:** Other available and relevant data *Gather other data that should be considered, such as:*

* School climate surveys
* Reports/Input from student and family support providers such as family resource centers, Communities In Schools, public health department
* Discipline office referrals
* Available tardy data
1. **PROBLEM ANALYSIS – *Involve the right people in a review of the data and identify the primary factors impacting student attendance.***
	* Involve key district leadership in reviewing available data. Key personnel to involve include director of schools, instructional leadership, attendance personnel, student/family support including school counseling, coordinated school health/nursing, and nutrition.
	* Take out the worksheet located in the attendance toolkit called ***Guiding Questions for Exploring the Data***.
	* Use the worksheet to identify the root causes or barriers which may be driving student absences. Summarize your findings and identify areas of greatest concern.
2. **PLANNING AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT – *Create a plan that addresses identified areas of concern by building a multi-tiered system of supports.***
	* Using the Make Your Own Pyramid worksheet available from [Attendance Works](http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/3-tiers-of-intervention/), identify tiered supports currently in place within your district or individual schools.
	* Compare your areas of greatest concern with your current pyramid of supports.
	Do current activities/supports adequately address these areas? Is each tier of the pyramid adequately supported? Select priority areas for development. Review [Attendance Works](http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/schools/3-tiers-of-intervention/)’ Tiers of Intervention worksheet for suggested strategies in each tier.
	* Consider ways in which community resources might be used to help fill out your school or district’s pyramid.
	* Review the resources identified in the toolkit, including TDOE’s “Student Supports Overview” [webpage](http://tn.gov/education/topic/student-supports-in-tn). Are we using available resources wisely and efficiently?
	* Create an action plan for increasing opportunities to learn for all students. Utilize the ***Planning Worksheet***located in the attendance toolkit to develop your plan.
3. **PLAN EVALUATION - *Revisit action plan to reduce lost instruction time one month into school year.***
* Review first four weeks of attendance data to identify students who may have already missed two days of school (10% of instructional days).
* Establish mechanisms for periodically reviewing attendance data throughout the school year.