Chronic Absenteeism and Its Impact on Student Learning

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Angelo J. Gonzales, Ph.D.
Chief Strategy Officer
United Way of Central New Mexico
Presentation Overview

About Mission: Graduate

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**About Mission: Graduate**

*Mission: Graduate* is a **cradle-to-career education partnership** serving Central New Mexico.
Our Leadership: Vision Council

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- **Kent Walz**, Senior Editor, Albuquerque Journal
- **Kathie Winograd**, President, Central New Mexico Community College
- **Stephen Younger**, Laboratories Director, Sandia National Laboratories
Our Big Goal

60,000 New Central NM Graduates with College Degrees and Certificates by 2020
Our Work

College & Career Readiness

School Attendance & Engagement

Teacher Support

Adult Transitions to College

Prepared for College, Career, & Life
Community voices informed the development of the Graduate Profile and Launchpad. Mission: Graduate, an education partnership, facilitated 45 focus groups with principals and teachers, postsecondary faculty, employees from different sectors, young people, parents, and community members. More information is available in the Graduate Profile User Guide.
Why Attendance?
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Why Attendance?

Attendance is one of three key predictors of falling off track to graduation.

• Attendance: <85-90% school attendance

• Behavior: “unsatisfactory” behavior mark in at least one class

• Course Performance: A final grade of “F” in Math and/or English or Credit-Bearing HS Course

Truancy and Chronic Absence

**Habitual truancy**: 10 or more unexcused absences in a given school year.

**Chronic absence**: missing 10% or more of school days for any reason.


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**Truancy Vs. Chronic Absence**

**TRUANCY**
- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal & administrative solutions

**CHRONIC ABSENCE**
- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies

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Chronic Absence Means Missing School For Any Reason

- Excused Absences
- Unexcused Absences
- Suspensions

→ Chronic Absence
Research Shows that Chronic Absence is Associated with Lower Academic Outcomes

Chronic Absence

Less likely to:

• Build good attendance habits
• Read by third grade
• Stay in school
• Graduate from high school

See summary of key research at Attendance Works, https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/the-problem/
Chronic Absence Snapshot: 15-Day Threshold

Chronic Absence Snapshot: 15-Day Threshold

State Average = 17.5%

Ten Largest School Districts:
- APS = 22.4%
- Las Cruces = 24.7%
- Rio Rancho = 19.1%
- Gadsden = 6.7%
- Santa Fe = 20.2%
- Gallup-McKinley = 1.0%
- Farmington = 8.4%
- Roswell = 3.1%
- Hobbs = 27.2%
- Los Lunas = 19.9%

What Can We Do About It?
The Causes Of Poor Attendance Are Complex

- Low Academic Performance
- Low Educational Aspirations
- Boredom with School
- Drug Use
- Pregnancy
- Health-related problems

Individual Challenges
- Weak Policies on Truancy
- Institutional Racism and Discrimination
- Class Size and School Size
- Transportation Issues
- Family Economics

Relational Challenges
- Lack of Caring Adults
- Bullying
- Lack of Participation in School Sports & Activities

Structural Challenges

Mission: Graduate’s Approach

1. Awareness

2. School-Based Partnerships & Continuous Improvement

3. Policy Change
Every Day Matters Awareness Campaign

- Participation in Attendance Awareness Month.
- Free toolkits for school leaders, parents, & others.
- TV and radio PSAs and social media.
- Billboards, posters, and other marketing materials.

http://missiongraduatenm.org/attendance
Awareness: Parent Attendance Guides

Intended as a discussion tool for school staff.

Every Day Matters

Together my family can...

Ways to keep my child healthy

What is chronic absence and truancy?

Missing more than one day a month can knock students off track.

Get Help With Homework:
Dial-A-Teacher
Statewide: 1-800-94STUDY

Ask For Advice From A Nurse:
1-877-725-2552

For Help Finding Resources:
2-1-1 (This is a free call)

Call Your School For Attendance Assistance Or If Your Child Is Sick
My School’s Important Phone Numbers:
School-Based Approaches

• Use data to identify root causes and create targeted solutions.

• Adopt a three-tiered intervention approach.
  • Universal prevention
  • Early intervention
  • Specialized support

• Engage students, families, school teachers & staff, and community partners to jointly determine causes and implement solutions.

Read more at http://www.attendanceworks.org
Identifying Root Causes

Symptom (obvious)  Cause (not so obvious)
Attendance Teams

• Should be *action-oriented*

• **Use data** to understand which sub-populations of students are most affected and what are trends over time

• **Identify and mobilize** school and community resources to address identified needs

*Source: Attendance Works*
Using Data to Identify Students in Need

Tiered System of Supports For Improving Attendance

Tier 1
- Engaging school climate
- Positive relationships with students and families
- Impact of absences on achievement widely understood
- Chronic absence data monitored
- Good and improved attendance recognized
- Common barriers identified and addressed

Tier 2
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

Tier 3
- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

SEVERELY CA
- Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)

CHRONICALLY ABSENT
- Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)

AT RISK
- Students missing 5-9% (at risk)

SATISFACTORY
- Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
Implementing Tier 2 Practices Starts with Understanding WHO is absent

**Chronic Absence by Gender**

- **BOYS** (592 STUDENTS)
  - 57% % SATISFACTORY Attendance (missing less than 5% of school days)
  - 13% % AT-RISK Attendance (missing 5-9.99% of school days)
  - 17% % MODERATE Chronic Absence (missing 10-19.99% of school days)
  - 13% % SEVERE Chronic Absence (missing 20% or more of school days)

- **GIRLS** (645 STUDENTS)
  - 68% % SATISFACTORY Attendance (missing less than 5% of school days)
  - 12% % AT-RISK Attendance (missing 5-9.99% of school days)
  - 12% % MODERATE Chronic Absence (missing 10-19.99% of school days)
  - 8% % SEVERE Chronic Absence (missing 20% or more of school days)
Understanding **WHO** is absent

### Chronic Absence by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Attendance Status</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>Satisfactory (≤ 5%)</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At-Risk (5-9.99%)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate (10-19.99%)</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe (≥ 20%)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Satisfactory (≤ 5%)</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At-Risk (5-9.99%)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate (10-19.99%)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe (≥ 20%)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>Satisfactory (≤ 5%)</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At-Risk (5-9.99%)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate (10-19.99%)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe (≥ 20%)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>Satisfactory (≤ 5%)</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At-Risk (5-9.99%)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate (10-19.99%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe (≥ 20%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mission: Graduate
Every Day Matters
Attendance Conference
Highlights

- **Largest number of participants** to date with 375 attendees, representing 59 schools and 11 school districts from across the state.

- **82%** of participants reported that they left the conference with *useful tools or resources, new information, and a clear action plan*.

- **76%** of participants *demonstrated knowledge of the research-based definition of chronic absenteeism*.

- **89%** of participants had *concrete ideas of next steps with their attendance team*.
Recommendations
Recommendations from the Mission: Graduate High School Graduation Network

• **Update Compulsory School Attendance Law**
  • Focus on prevention
  • Adopt the research-informed definition of chronic absence
  • Provide resources for data system improvement
  • Promote data-informed interventions utilizing a tiered improvement system

• **Champion Promising School-Level Strategies**
  • Help schools collect actionable data
  • Support positive messaging and family engagement
  • Expand engaging educational programs (in school and out of school)
  • Expand support services that address student needs
  • Promote effective & consistent discipline practices

• **Demonstrate a Commitment to Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion**
For More Information

Angelo J. Gonzales, Ph.D.
angelo.gonzales@uwcnm.org
505-245-1729

MissionGraduateNM.org
@MissionGraduate
MissionGraduateNM
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