



# FREE GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



KEEP LEARNING. EVERY DAY



COMPANY

DATE

## RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

As teachers and school leaders, you have a profound understanding of your students. You know their personal stories and backgrounds. You know their learning styles and preferences, and you modify and personalize instruction to meet their learning needs. No doubt your heart leaps when you see their faces light up after they've successfully mastered a challenging concept.

You also know the impact attendance has on student success. You've seen firsthand how some students struggle to get back in the groove after missing just one day of instruction. Consider when those absences slowly and stealthily build up over the course of a semester or school year. Five absences over three months: the flow of instruction might be significantly interrupted, and a student might struggle to merge back into the rhythm of learning. Ten absences over five months: the learning sequence is totally interrupted, and a student backslides—often unable to regain sound academic footing.

The quiet accumulation of absences or lack of engagement in remote education opportunities can be harmful to student success.

### CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

**MORE THAN 260,000 STUDENTS IN OHIO WERE CHRONICALLY ABSENT LAST YEAR.**

Chronically absent students in Ohio are 65% less likely to meet the third grade reading



guarantee. They also are 89% less likely to graduate on time from high school.

Here's the good news—you know your students and you know how to motivate them. You also know your team's strengths and your school's broader continuous improvement plan. Armed with that knowledge and a few targeted tools, you are poised to build awareness of the problem, crunch your numbers to clearly understand the problem, take targeted action to tackle the problem and step back to see if you've improved student attendance.

The Stay in the Game! Network is committed to helping you and your team promote the importance of attendance and tackle chronic absenteeism.

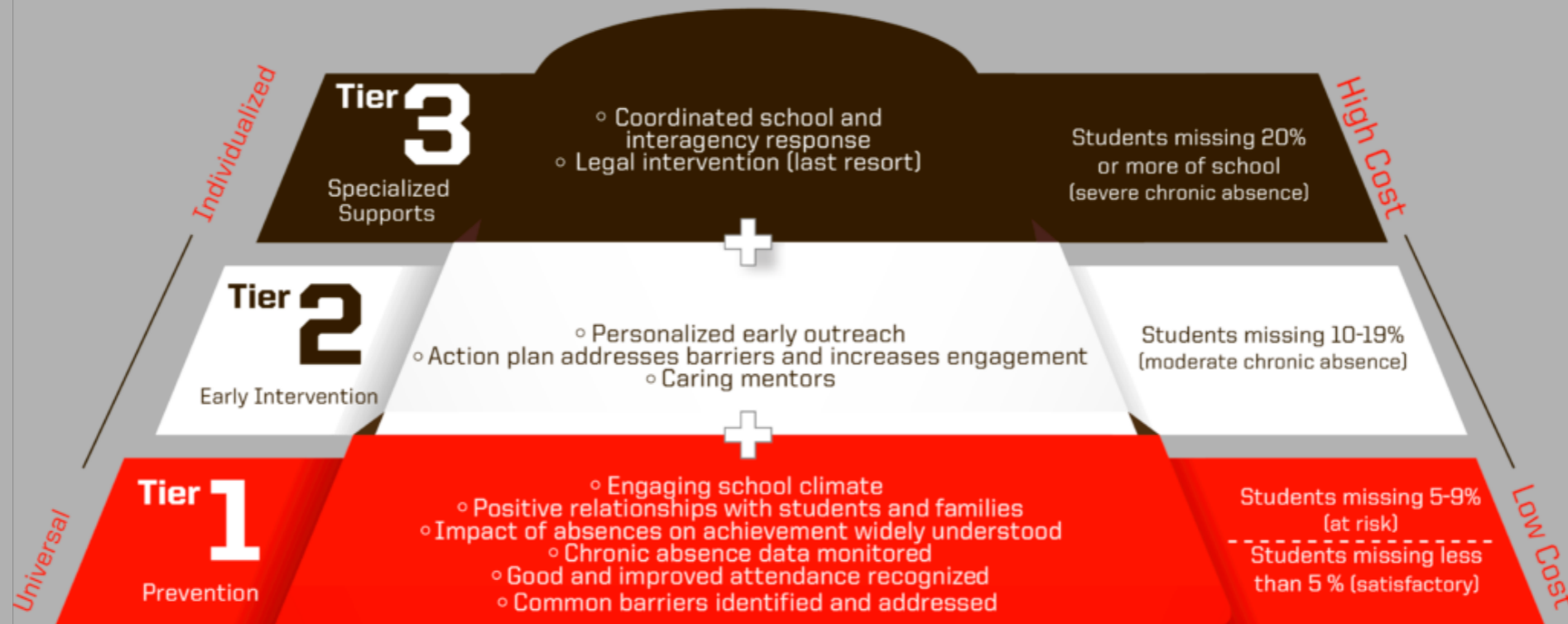
We continuously scan the state and national landscape to identify innovative and evidence-based strategies and practices that can help amplify your local efforts.

### NOTE

We will be developing more tools you can use in the future, so please continue to check back to see what's new. Be the first to know when new resources, information and Cleveland Browns Foundation attendance opportunities are available!

## TACKLING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

### 3 Tiers of Intervention



Used with permission from Attendance Works.

Over the last decade, educators, parents, community leaders and other key players have come to recognize the importance of shining light on what was once a hidden issue: chronic absenteeism, which is defined by a student who misses 10 percent or more of school days in an academic year due to an absence for any reason—excused or unexcused.

As you consider which actions to take, it is important to understand the bigger picture. Our friends at Attendance Works have identified an organizational framework for improving attendance. The Tiered System of Supports for Improving Attendance provides a general understanding for how to target your efforts based on the severity of a student's absence patterns. The higher the frequency of absence, the greater the level of supports needed.



## TACKLING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

To help Ohioans address this issue, the Stay in the Game! Network prioritizes four action steps local teams can take (preferably as part of a partnership that includes educators, parents, community partners and others and in the context of a broader school or district continuous improvement plan).

These action steps can span the three tiers identified in the Tiered System of Supports for Improving Attendance. That said, most of the time, the action steps live in Tiers 1 and 2. It depends on how targeted the action step is. For example, a Tier 1 play could be a general campaign to increase awareness of the impact of school absence. Using data to target messages to specific students can elevate the play to Tier 2. Coordinating across community partners and agencies to offer students, families, parents and caregivers specific supports is a Tier 3 play.

It is important to note these action steps are not necessarily listed in sequential order. On one hand, your local team might want to take immediate action to broadly build awareness of the importance of school attendance. No harm can come from increasing public awareness of the effects of chronic absenteeism. On the other hand, your local team might find it essential to first crunch your numbers to inform your awareness-building efforts. Or, your team might choose to do both at the same time. Regardless of the approach, you will need to crunch your numbers before you can identify students and target supports and check to see if your actions work.

### The Steps Are:

- **STEP #1: Build awareness of the importance of school attendance**
- **STEP #2: Crunch your numbers**
- **STEP #3: Identify students and target supports**
- **STEP #4: Check to see if your actions work**

# STEP #1: BUILD AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



Jarvis Landry Poster



Odell Beckham Poster

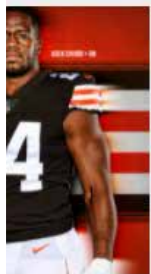


Denzel Ward Poster

At its core, the Stay in the Game! Network believes in building trust among students, parents, families, caregivers and community leaders and raising their awareness about the importance of attendance.

The Network seeks to make student attendance and engagement a high-profile, statewide issue. This starts at the ground level—in local schools and communities. That’s why the Network’s partners and collaborators are united behind the Stay in Game! Keep Learning Every Day campaign. The campaign will include simple aligned messages and tools you can use locally to spread the word about the importance of attendance.

Building awareness can be as easy as embedding attendance messages into the school day or classroom routines. It can be as substantial as a full-blown attendance campaign that includes posters, yard signs, community billboards and media blitzes. You and your local team are best positioned to determine your approach. One simple way to show your commitment is by taking the attendance pledge.



Myles Garrett Poster



Kareem Hunt Poster



Jarvis Landry Poster

**DOWNLOAD AWARENESS RESOURCES HERE.**

## STEP #2: CRUNCH YOUR NUMBERS

Examining student attendance data is essential for understanding absence trends in your school or district.

Student attendance data can be helpful for targeting messages to build awareness and identifying actions to address attendance issues. For example, Cleveland Metropolitan School District crunched its student absence numbers and found that 34% of its chronically absent students were less likely to graduate. The district called attention to that number in its awareness campaign and parents, families, caregivers and community members took notice and responded.

Chronic absenteeism can be sneaky, but there are signs you and your local team can look for to spot and squelch its early emergence.

Examining your school attendance data can illuminate important patterns. For instance, if a student exhibited patterns of chronic absenteeism in the previous school year, then that student might be on the same chronically absent path in the current school year. Such students should be observed closely. Another important early warning sign: a student who misses two or three days in the first month of school.

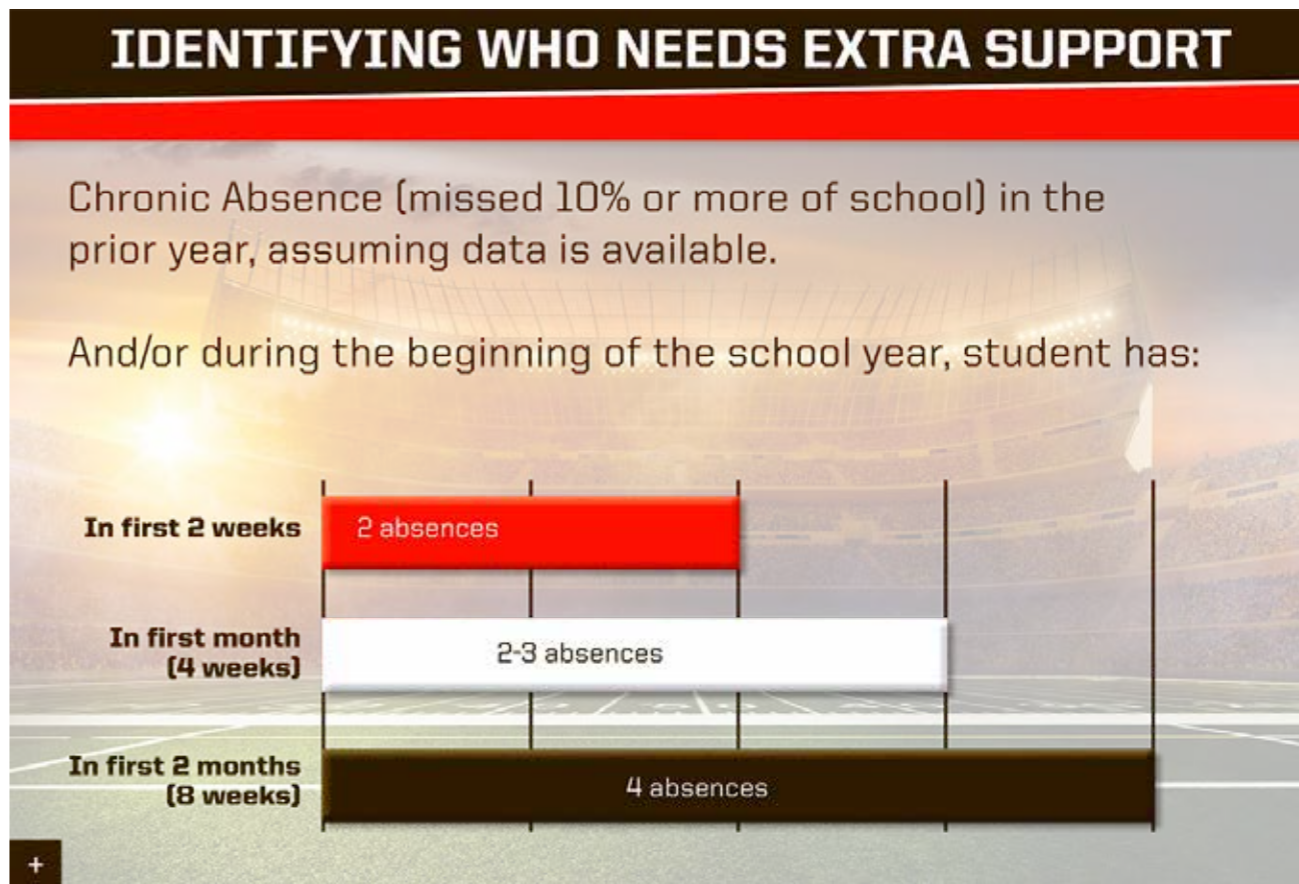
Your data holds the keys to unlocking these early warning signs and helping your team maintain a watchful eye on student absence over the entire school year.

The data universe can be overwhelming. To help break it down, we've created the following guide:



**DOWNLOAD NOW**

**CRUNCH YOUR NUMBERS:  
USE DATA TO UNDERSTAND  
ATTENDANCE**



### INSTANT REPLAY

#### EXEMPLAR CHECK TO SEE

## EAST CLEVELAND CITY SCHOOLS

East Cleveland City School District carefully reviewed its attendance data, including the number of instructional days students missed and changes in absenteeism rates across its schools and grade levels. The data revealed that 49 percent of kindergarten students missed about a month or more of school in the 2017-2018 school year. As a result, the district focused its efforts on improving kindergarten attendance.

Recognizing that absences in the early grades can impact future attendance and learning, East Cleveland City Schools plans to use postcards to inform parents and caregivers about their students' absences and missed instructional content. The district will work with Proving Ground to determine the impact of the postcard strategy.



# STEP #3: IDENTIFY TRENDS, ROOT CAUSES AND TARGETED SUPPORTS

Once you have a handle on your data, you and your local team are poised to detect potential root causes, identify and prioritize potential solutions and take targeted action.

For example, based on what your data reveals about when student absences occur, you can focus your messages and your modes for delivering those messages. Data also can help you identify and use the right tools. To learn more, check out the following:

You also can use data to help identify possible incentives for motivating students to stay in the game and keep learning every day, determine the right intensive interventions for certain students and hone family engagement strategies. Some approaches might be lower cost and lower effort but lead to important gains. Others might be higher cost and higher effort and achieve significant results. As you consider possible incentives, check out the following:



**DOWNLOAD NOW**  
**COMMUNICATING:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF  
ATTENDANCE**



**DOWNLOAD NOW**  
**IDEAS:  
FOR ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES**



## INSTANT REPLAY

EXEMPLAR CHECK TO SEE

# MAPLE HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOLS

Maple Heights City School District determined it had a problem with high absence rates in its middle and high schools.

To determine its root causes, Maple Heights reviewed its own data, along with information provided by its students (student-created profiles that included information about student interests and routines). Two root causes surfaced:

- 1** Students are less likely to attend school if they do not have positive adult relationships in the school building.
- 2** Students need additional supports to overcome non-academic challenges.

To address these root causes, the district plans to introduce a small group mentorship program (comprised of approximately five students) during weekly pull-out sessions. It also will implement an “Overcoming Obstacles” curriculum.

This school year, Maple Heights will work closely with Proving Ground to evaluate the impact of its strategies.

## STEP #4: CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR ACTIONS WORK

### INSTANT REPLAY

#### EXEMPLAR CHECK TO SEE

### CANTON CITY SCHOOLS

Upon reviewing its own data, Canton City Schools learned its absence rates in kindergarten were higher than the rest of the elementary grades.

Working with its school building teams, the district identified two root causes:

- 1** Parents, families and caregivers have misconceptions about the value of attendance in kindergarten.
- 2** Many were simply unaware of how many absences their child had accumulated over the school year.

To address these root causes, Canton City Schools developed and implemented a communication strategy using postcards. Each postcard included a personalized, handwritten note from the student's teacher. Each note detailed specific lessons the student missed as a result of being absent, the date of the absence and number of absences accumulated throughout the year.

To determine the impact of the postcard strategy, Canton City Schools randomly assigned some classrooms to implement it while others did not participate. Within 10 weeks, Proving Ground helped the district determine that there was a greater than 80 percent chance the strategy decreased student absences. By the end of the 2018-2019 school year, the strategy decreased absences by about 6 percent. The district plans to implement this strategy in all its K-1 classrooms during the 2019-2020 school year.

Every worthwhile initiative needs to include an intentional stocktake to see how things are going. After local teams understand the challenge, identify potential solutions and test those solutions, they need to examine their findings to see if their solutions work. Specifically, teams should compare the results of those students, teachers and/or families who may have benefitted from the initiative to those who did not have access to the initiative. The difference between these groups represents the impact of the initiative.

If, after an identified period, the initiatives are not improving student attendance or are making a small impact, teams should consider tweaking their initiatives or implementing new approaches. For initiatives that are improving student attendance, teams might consider making them available to additional students, teachers or families.



