

Ainsworth Community Schools
Board of Education
Work Session
District Office
January 5, 2026 - 7:00 PM

AGENDA

The Mission Slogan of Ainsworth Community Schools is "ACS CARES: We are Committed to Achieving Results for Everyone's Success"

In accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act 84-1407-14 the Open Meetings Act is posted on the south wall of the District Office Board Meeting Room.

1. Opening Procedure, Work Session of the Board
2. Announce Open Meetings Act Posting and Location
3. Work Session and Related Documents or Materials
 - 3.1. Attendance Policy and Procedures
 - 3.2. Professional Development Scholarships
 - 3.3. School Dances and Guests
4. Public Comment Regarding Work Session Topics
5. Final Comments/Advisement by the Board
6. Adjourn

The Board reserves the right to move into closed session to protect the public interest or needless injury to the reputation of an individual for any action item listed on the agenda. The Board may, at its discretion, change the order of the agenda to accommodate unforeseen issues related to an agenda item.

NEBRASKA EVERY DAY COUNTS!



During the 2024-2025 school year, nearly 65,000 students were chronically absent.

This absenteeism disproportionately affects students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students. There are many steps educators can take to address chronic absence within their schools.

How does Nebraska define chronic absenteeism?

A student is chronically absent when they miss 10% of their time in membership.

Examples:

- 1) Blake is enrolled in his school for 50 days, and misses 5. He is chronically absent.
- 2) Mona misses 18 days of school out of her district's 175. She is chronically absent.
- 3) Cora misses 3 days of her 130 enrolled days. She is not chronically absent.

How is chronic absence different from truancy?

Truancy

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal and administrative solutions

Vs.

Chronic Absence

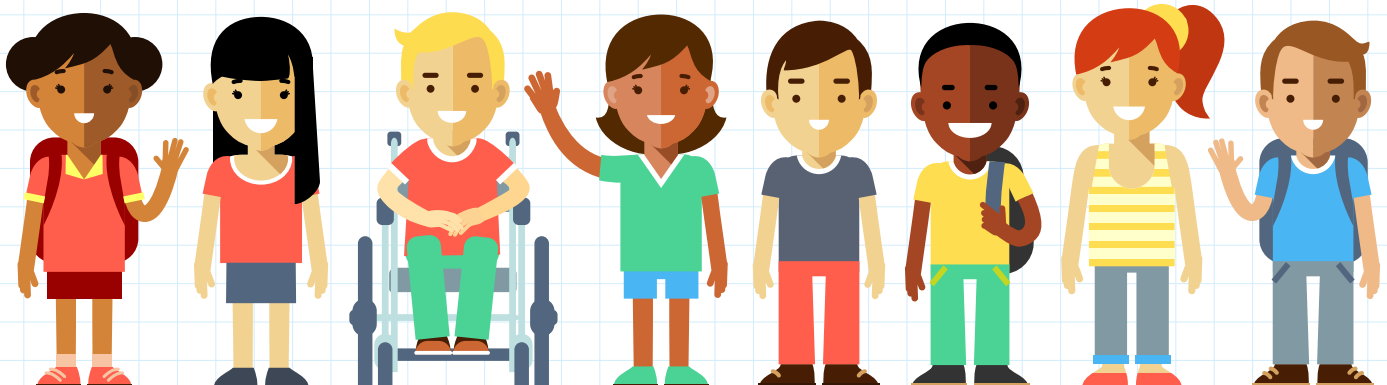
- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused, and suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies

What resources are available to help me accurately record and report students who are chronically absent?

We know each student situation is unique. The NDE provides guidance around this topic. Search the NDE website at education.ne.gov for:

- Rule 2: Uniform System of Accounting
- ADVISER: Who Reports What
- ADVISER: Data Elements

When in doubt, contact the Nebraska Department of Education Help Desk for guidance. They can be reached at ADVISERHelp@Nebraskacloud.org or 888.285.0556.



How is chronic absenteeism included in the accountability system?

AQuESTT, Nebraska’s accountability system, uses a reduction in chronic absenteeism approach. Prior to 2020, the NDE analyzed three years of chronic absence data to determine a baseline for each school. Using 2021-2022 chronic absence data, targets will be set for each school to reduce chronic absenteeism by half in 10 years. Schools meeting and exceeding the yearly reduction benchmarks may be eligible for a classification adjustment. For more information, see the AQuESTT Classification Rules on the AQuESTT Resources webpage: aquestt.com/resources.

Why was chronic absenteeism chosen as an indicator in the AQuESTT system?

Chronic absenteeism is a measure of disproportionate access to educational opportunities. Research shows that students who miss 10% or more of their school days perform worse academically, and have worsened life outcomes (jail time, unemployment, etc). In Nebraska, like most other places, students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students are more likely to be chronically absent. As such, the NDE selected reduction in chronic absenteeism as an indicator.

What can we do about chronic absence? Isn’t student attendance out of our control?

There are a number of factors contributing to chronic absence within the direct control of schools. The first step to addressing the problem is understanding it better.

Factors Contributing to Chronic Absence (Attendance Works, 2019)

Barriers	Negative School Experiences	Lack of Engagement	Misconceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness, both chronic and acute • Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care • Trauma • Unsafe path to/from school • Poor transportation • Frequent moves or school changes • Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling academically or socially • Bullying • Suspensions and expulsions • Negative attitudes of parents due to their own school experience • Undiagnosed disability • Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction • No meaningful relationships with adults in school • Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school • Unwelcoming school climate • Failure to earn credits/no future plans • Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused • Missing two days per month doesn’t affect learning • Sporadic absences aren’t a problem • Attendance only matters in the older grades

Strategies for School Sites (Attendance Works, 2019)

- Engage students and parents
- Recognize good and improved attendance
- Monitor attendance data and practices
- Provide personalized, early outreach
- Develop programmatic response to barriers



For more information, visit attendanceworks.org.

NEBRASKA EVERY DAY COUNTS!



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Why absenteeism matters:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2 to 4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- Absenteeism and its ill effects start early. One in 10 kindergarten and first grade students are chronically absent.
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or are held back.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and that's known as chronic absence.
- Students who live in communities with high levels of poverty are four times more likely to be chronically absent than others, often for reasons beyond their control, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation, and a lack of access to healthcare.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.
- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.



Strategies for Parents:

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

For more information, visit [attendanceworks.org](https://www.attendanceworks.org)



Source: Attendance Works



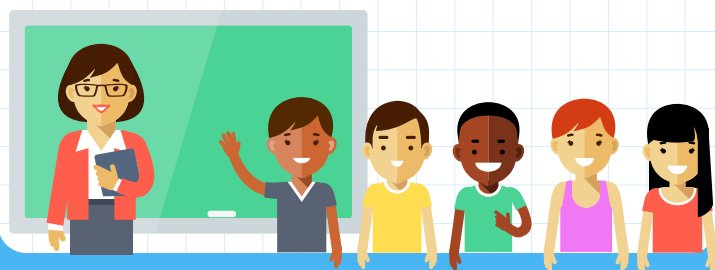
NEBRASKA EVERY DAY COUNTS!



INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Why absenteeism matters:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2 to 4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
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- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.



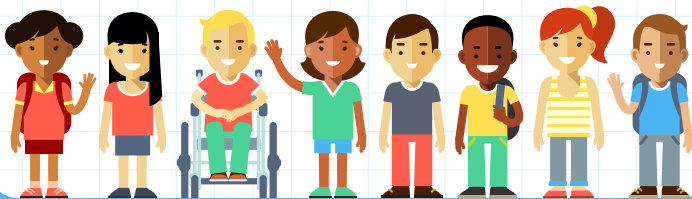
Strategies for Teachers:

- Take roll regularly showing students that you care when they miss school.
- Reach out to frequently absent students to find out in a supportive manner why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly.
- Work with parents to stress the importance of early education and to learn about any barriers to good attendance.
- Create a nurturing, engaging classroom that will encourage children to come to school. Work with colleagues to develop and implement a school-wide system of incentives and rewards for good attendance.
- Encourage families to partner with other school staff, such as social workers or nurses, as well as community agencies, to get needed supports to help children and families solve a significant barrier to getting to school.

For more information, visit attendanceworks.org



Source: Attendance Works



ACS 7-12 Handbook

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The relevant portion of the copyright statute provides that the "fair use" of a copyrighted work, including reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright. The law lists the following factors as the ones to be evaluated in determining whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a permitted "fair use," rather than an infringement of the copyright:

- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Although all of these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is "fair." Students should seek assistance from a faculty member if there are any questions regarding what may be copied.

Article 4 – Attendance

Section 1 Attendance Policy

It is the philosophy of Ainsworth Community Schools to educate the total student and not merely to provide the academic or skills portion of the individual's education. Active attendance in class is a valuable and integral part of the student's formal education. Absence from class, for whatever reason, causes the student to miss a truly necessary part of learning, which can be only partially regained through make-up work. Attendance in school is the combined responsibility of the student and parents/guardians. The responsibility of the school is to provide instruction and to inform parents of absences from class.

Section 2 Attendance and Absences

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Families should make certain accurate contact information (phone numbers, email addresses, etc.) are available in PowerSchool
- Depending on the type of absence, Parents should contact the school before the student is absent.
- Families should schedule vacations and appointments for students when school is not in session.
- Parents/guardians should, whenever possible, submit to the office all court and medical documentation for verification of absence.

Release of Student During School Day

Students may be released upon request from the lawful parent or custodian and whose identification is verified to the satisfaction of the principal or upon written request of a parent or lawful custodian.

Before releasing a student during the school day, the building principal or the Attendance Secretary shall be responsible for the verification of the identity of any parent or lawful custodian or anyone seeking release of a student. If the principal is not satisfied with the identification of the person seeking release of a student, he/she may refuse to grant the release.

Students leaving during the school day ***MUST SIGN OUT AT THE OFFICE*** before leaving the building and sign in at the office upon their return or when arriving at school after 8:00 a.m.

Notification of Absences:

- Absences, Not Planned or Due to Illness

A written note or telephone call from the parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence will be required for all student absences. Prior to returning to school, students who have been absent due to a communicable disease may be required to bring written permission from a doctor upon returning to school. Students who become ill during school will not be sent home until the school has determined that there will be someone there. It is your responsibility, if both parents work, to let the school know where you can be reached on these occasions.

- **Absences, Planned or Requested**

There will be the rare instance where emergencies occur or a student must attend a professional appointment. In these rare instances, parent-approved activities may be requested and approved by the Principal. A note or telephone call from a parent or legal guardian concerning the expected absence must be presented prior to the requested absence and documentation from any professional appointments may be requested upon return to excuse the absence.

- Requests should be submitted to the attendance secretary at least three school days prior to the absence if possible.
- Approval may be denied if the student has excessive absenteeism or poor academic progress.
- ***Work-related absences will not be excused.***
- Any student of any religion shall be excused if his/her absence is for the purpose of observing a religious holiday consistent with his/her creed or belief.

Types of Absences: School officials reserve the right to determine if an absence is School Excused, Self-Excused or Unexcused. Students whose absences are approved shall make up the work missed and receive full credit for the missed school work, within guidelines of the student handbook. It shall be the responsibility of the student to initiate a procedure with the student's teacher to complete the work missed.

Students who wish to participate in or attend school-sponsored activities or practices must attend school for the full day on the day of the activity/practice unless permission has been given by the principal or his designee for the student to be absent **prior to the absence**.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the principal, to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

School Approved Absences

- Absences for school activities and school functions
- Shall count as days/hours in attendance for purposes of addressing excessive absenteeism.

Documented Excused Absences

- **Documented** (by professional appointment) illness or professional appointment to include time and date of the professional appointment
- Shall count as days/hours of parental self-excused absence for purposes of addressing excessive absenteeism but extenuating circumstances may be taken into account when determining loss of credit or other remedial measures if appropriate, timely documentation is provided. However, these days will NOT be included when determining reporting truancy to the legal system.
- The student should provide professional documentation upon return to school for the time requested as documented absence including time and duration of appointment
- Administration may request further documentation or written verification of the student's reason for absence.
- **Professional appointment documentation must be submitted within three (3) days from the date of return from the absence if the absence is to be excused.** Absence for professional appointments may be broken down into partial days at the discretion of the administration. In cases where documentation is required to excuse the absence, after three days, the absence will be determined to be parental self-excused. for the sake of reporting for truancy.

Parental Self-Excused Absence

- Will be counted as days/hours of absence for purposes of addressing excessive absenteeism and truancy.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school as soon as possible prior to the absence.
- **Failure to report the absence upon return may result in an absence as being classified as unexcused.**

Unexcused Absences.

- Will be counted as days/hours of absence for purposes of addressing excessive absenteeism and truancy.
- All other absences or failure to follow procedures for absence may be considered unexcused unless previously approved by the building principal.
- Detention time or other remediation time may be assigned to make up time for unexcused absence.
- 7-12 students will be counted absent from the class if he/she misses over five (5) minutes of the class period.

Excessive Absences (Parental Excused, Documented Excused or Unexcused)

Any administrator, teacher, or member of the board of education who knows of any failure on the part of any child of mandatory school attendance age to attend school regularly without lawful reason, shall within three days report such violation to the superintendent or such person(s) who the superintendent designates to be the attendance officer (hereafter, "attendance officer"). The attendance officer shall immediately cause an investigation into any such report to be made. The attendance officer shall also investigate any case when of his or her personal knowledge, or by report or complaint from any resident of the district, the attendance officer believes there is a violation of the compulsory attendance laws. The school shall render all services in its power to compel such child to attend some public, private, denominational, or parochial school, which the person having control of the child shall designate, in an attempt to address the problem of excessive absenteeism.

Students who accumulate eight (8) self-excused and/or documented-excused absences or three (3) unexcused absences in a semester shall be deemed to have "excessive absences." Such absences shall be determined per class basis for middle and high school students. When a student has excessive absences, the following procedures shall be implemented:

- After four (4) accumulated days of self-excused, documented-excused and unexcused absences in a semester, verbal, written or digital communication by school officials will be given to the person or persons who have legal or actual charge or control of any child.
- After seven (7) accumulated days of self-excused, documented absences and/or three (3) unexcused absences in a semester, one or more in-person meeting(s) between the school (a school attendance officer, a school administrator or his or her designee, and/or a school counselor), the child's parent or guardian, and the child, when appropriate, to address the barriers to attendance. The result of the meeting or meetings shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance. The plan shall consider, but not be limited to:
 - Illness related to physical or behavioral health of the child.
 - Educational counseling;
 - Educational evaluation;

- Referral to community agencies for economic services;
- Family or individual counseling; and
- Assisting the family in working with other community services.
- Students with a 504 Plan or Individual Health Plan

From this meeting, a Student Attendance Plan will be developed and monitored by the principal or his designee to address any barriers determined to exist for the student to be in attendance.

- After eight (8) accumulated days of self-excused absence or three (3) unexcused absences, an in-person meeting will be held including the school (a school attendance officer, a school administrator or his or her designee, and/or a school counselor), staff members selected by administration, the child's parent or guardian, and the child, when appropriate. The purpose of this meeting is to review the Student Attendance Plan to address any new barriers to attendance.

If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meetings and process, the principal shall place documentation of such refusal in the child's attendance records and may result in loss of credit or possible legal action as allowed by state statute.

Attendance and Credit

Self-excused, documented and unexcused absences of eight (8) accumulated days and/or three (3) unexcused absences in a semester will result in the automatic review of credit for the class by the principal, regardless of the student's grade in class. The absence count will begin with the student's first day of the semester in the class and will be combined with previous attendance for any transfer student.

Restorative Time Recovery (RTR)

Students exceeding eight (8) absences may be assigned to recover missed time to maintain credit. Recovery expectations include:

- After-school or other "in-service" recovery session as determined by the Attendance Review Committee
- Recovery time will be calculated at a rate of 4 hours = 1 day of instruction
- Each Recovery Plan will include completion of restorative work
- Attendance mentoring or contracts may be used as proactive tools to deter future absence
- Plans are created and communicated with families and staff to support re-engagement.

- Upon completion of restorative time, excused absence time will be converted to an R code and will be counted as a period of attendance.

At the end of the semester, the principal and guidance counselor will serve as the Attendance Review committee for the purpose of reviewing the cases of all students who have been placed on review status due to an excess of eight (8) absences in a class(es).

The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following in determining if the student will require remediation due to absence:

1. Reason for prolonged absence and appropriate documentation
2. Whether the student is passing or did pass the class.
3. Whether the student's attendance improved and the reasons for the student's absences.
4. Whether all make up work and make up tests for which the student was eligible have been completed.

The Attendance Review Committee may reach one of the following decisions after considering a student's case:

1. Restore the student's credit for the semester, either outright or subject to specified conditions.
2. Not restore the student's loss of credit for the semester.

Tardies

Tardy to School. Students will be considered tardy to school if they are not seated in their assigned class or ready and attentive in their assigned area when the bell for their first class rings.

Tardy to Class. Students have a sufficient time period between classes to make it to their next assigned class on time. Students will be considered tardy to class if they are not in their assigned classroom when the tardy bell rings, unless they have a pass from the teacher who detained them. Specific tardy guidelines once students are in the classroom doorway are at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

A student shall be marked tardy if they are not in the classroom unexcused when the bell to begin class rings or needs to leave immediately at the beginning of the class. The first offense in each semester in a class results in a warning for the teacher; 2nd offense – a teacher assigned detention; 3rd and subsequent offenses will be referred to the principal for disciplinary action.

Students will be counted absent from the class if he/she misses over five (5) minutes of any class period.

College Visits

Seniors (2 days) and juniors (1 day) in good standing may have an excused absence for an on-

campus visit if the following criteria are met:

- Request must be made at least 3 days in advance of the visit
- All required paperwork be completed and turned into the guidance office **before** the scheduled visit day.
- If a student is not in good standing (ie. passing all classes and/or classified as excessively absent), the request for approval may be denied until the student has addressed the deficiencies.

Section 3 Absence Procedures

A student will not be allowed to enter class after an absence until an admit slip, based upon a written or verbal parental excuse, or a conditional admit slip, is issued by the Principal's office. A conditional admit slip, good for two (2) days, may be issued to allow time to bring an excuse, in case no excuse has been provided upon returning to school. Work must be made up within the time allowed on the admit slip.

Section 4 Make-up Work

Written make-up work may be assigned for each day missed regardless of the type of absence. If make-up work is not completed, students will receive no credit for the work required. The time each student is allowed will coincide with two days for the first day of absence and one day for each day thereafter.

The student has the responsibility to contact teachers, initially, regarding make-up assignments. If the parents or students have concerns prior to the three (3) days, they are encouraged to contact the office to aid in communication.

Section 5 Attendance is Required to Participate in Activities

Students must attend school all day the day of any scheduled school activity in order to participate in the activity. This includes athletic contests, practices and dances. Failure to attend will result in a student being withheld from participation in the activity. The Principal retains the right to grant participation should exceptional circumstances prevail.

Section 6 Truancy

A student who engages in unexcused absences may be considered truant as per state law. Truancy is a violation of school rules. The consequence of trancies may include disciplinary action up to expulsion and referral to the county attorney for compulsory attendance violations. Illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable as determined by the Principal shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney.

Reporting and Responding to Truant Behavior. Any administrator, teacher, or member of the board of education who knows of any failure on the part of any child age six (6) to eighteen (18) to attend school regularly without lawful reason, shall within three days report such violation to

the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall immediately cause an investigation into any such report to be made. The Superintendent shall also investigate any case when, based on the Superintendent's personal knowledge or based on a report or complaint from any resident of the district, the Superintendent believes that any child is unlawfully absent from school. The school shall render all services in its power to compel such child to attend some public, private, denominational, or parochial school, which the person having control of the child shall designate, in an attempt to remediate the child's truant behavior.

Reporting Habitual Truancy. Students who accumulate twenty (20) unexcused absences or the hourly equivalent per year shall be deemed to be habitually truant. If the student continues to be or becomes habitually truant, the principal shall serve a written notice to the person violating the Nebraska truancy laws (i.e., the person who has legal or active charge or control of the student) warning him or her to comply with the provisions of that law. If within one (1) week after the time the notice is given such person is still violating the school attendance laws or policies, the Principal shall file a report with the county attorney of the county in which such person resides.

Section 7 Non-Public Students and Part-Time Enrollment

Ainsworth Community Schools, in alignment with state statute and Policy 605.07, allows for the part-time attendance of home-school or private-school students under the following guiding principles:

1. The primary school for a non-public school student is the student's private, denominational, parochial or home school.
2. Enrollment of a non-public school student in Ainsworth Community Schools is allowed for the purpose of providing enhanced educational opportunities not otherwise available to the non-public school student. It is not to supplant programming of the student's primary school.
3. Non-public school students are not to be given priority over full-time students.
4. Non-public school students are to be enrolled only in programs or courses that are educationally appropriate for the student.
5. Enrollment of non-public school students is not to negatively affect the educational services to be provided to full-time students.

Part-time students will be subject to all applicable handbooks and policies while in attendance and may be subject to any disciplinary practices as other enrolled students. Part-time students and may be subject to limitations of opportunity and access of materials including, but not limited to:

- Part-time students may enroll in no more than four (4) hours of instruction / day
- Application should be received no later than August 1.
- Acceptance may be limited by class capacity
- Master schedules will not be changed to accommodate part-time students and families

- Placement and pre-requisite eligibility will be determined by administration or their designee
- Upon enrollment, students are not exempt from compulsory attendance laws and attendance procedures outlined in this handbook
- Part-time students will be provided access to computers while in class if determined necessary by the instructor and administration but a computer will not be “checked-out” to students to take home.
- Part-time students may participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular programming. However, the following limitations will apply:
 - will not be eligible to hold office or elected positions for clubs, classes or organizations,
 - will not be included in class rank or honor roll,
 - will not be allowed to attend school activities or dances as a member of the school (but may attend as the guest of an ACS student)
 - may not be selected as a member to the ACS Chapter of National Honor Society,
 - may not participate in graduation ceremonies or receive a diploma from ACS.

The above list is not all-inclusive. For further clarification, please review policy 605.07 on the district website or contact the ACS District Office for a hard copy of the formal policy.

Article 5 – Scholastic Achievement

Section 1 Grading System

Students will receive letter grades on report cards and transcripts. The following scale will be used to assign letter grades and a grade point average from a percent:

A+ 99-100	B+ 91-92	C+ 84-85	D+ 76-77	F
<69				
A 95-98	B 88-90	C 80-83	D 72-75	
A- 93-94	B- 86-87	C- 78-79	D- 70-71	

Each teacher will define the grading procedures to be used in their classes.

Section 2 High School Yearly Course Requirements

High school students in all grade levels are required to register in the following courses: Math, Social Studies, Science, Health and Physical Education, and Language-Arts Core.

High school students are required to register in the following exploratory courses:

9th Grade	0-49 Credits
10th Grade	50-99 Credits
11th Grade	100-159 Credits
12th Grade	160 + Credits

STUDENT REGULATIONS AND RIGHTS

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND STUDENT ABSENCES

Nebraska School law requires attendance at school for all students each day that school is in session. The responsibility for seeing that a child is in school is placed, by law, upon parents or guardians. Excessive absences are probably the most common reason for failing grades. No student can expect to make passing marks if he/she has been absent an unreasonable number of days or he/she is tardy excessively.

The Board of Education believes it is the shared responsibility of the parent or guardian, the student and the school to establish and maintain desirable habits of punctuality and attendance. Parents cannot excuse students from school. They can only give the reason for the absence.

When a student is absent from school for a day or any part of a day, the parent should notify the school by phone or email by 8:15 a.m. This procedure will help ensure that your child reaches school safely and will be sufficient notification for school's absence records.

Upon returning to school, those students whose parents have not called regarding their absence should present a written excuse to the office. Any student returning to school without a written excuse or previous phone contact from the parents/guardian will be asked to call their parent/guardian for verification of their absences.

Students must get an admit slip upon returning to school or they will be considered absent. The admit slip, filled out and signed by teachers, must be returned to the office within the specified time and with all appropriate signatures. Failure to return the admit slip to the office will result in detention time being assigned.

All students must check in at the office upon returning to school.

Student Attendance

Regular and punctual student attendance is required. The administration is responsible for developing further attendance rules and regulations, and all staff are expected to implement this policy and administrative rules and regulations to encourage regular and punctual student attendance. The Principal and teachers are required to maintain an accurate record of student attendance.

A. Attendance and Absences.

1. Absences from School - Definitions. An absence from school will be reported as: (a) an excused absence or (b) an unexcused absence.

a. Excused Absence. Absences should be cleared through the Principal's office in advance whenever possible. All absences, except for illness and/or death in the family, require advance approval.

An absence for any of the following reasons may be excused, provided the required procedures have been followed:

- (1) Attendance at a funeral for a member of the immediate family (parents, siblings, and grandparents),
- (2) Illness which causes a student to be absent from school,
- (3) Doctor or dental appointment which require student to be absent from school,
- (4) Court appearances that are required by a court order,
- (5) School sponsored activities which require students to be absent from school,
- (6) Family trips in which student accompanies parent(s)/legal guardian(s), and
- (7) Other absences which have received prior approval from the Principal.

The Principal shall have the discretion to deny approval for any of the foregoing reasons, depending on circumstances such as the student's number of other absences, the student's academic status, the tests or other projects which may be missed, and in the case of a family trip, whether the trip could be taken during non-school time and the educational nature of the trip.

b. Unexcused Absence. An absence which is not excused is unexcused. A student who engages in unexcused absences may be considered truant as per state law Neb. Rev. Stat. ' 79-201. Truancy is a violation of school rules. Students are subject to disciplinary consequences for trancies.

2. Absence Procedure. A student will not be allowed to enter class after an absence until an admit slip, based upon a written or verbal parental excuse, is issued by the Principal's office.

Two school days will be allowed to make up work for each day missed, with a maximum of 10 days allowed to make up work.

3. Mandatory Ages of Attendance. A child is of mandatory age if the child will reach age 6 prior to January 1 of the then-current school year and has not reached 18 years of age.

Exceptions for Younger Students. Attendance is not mandatory for a child who has reached the age of 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year, but will not reach age 7 prior to January 1 of such school year, if the child's parent or guardian has signed and filed with the school district in which the child resides an affidavit stating either: (1) that the child is: participating in an education program that the parent or guardian believes will prepare the child to enter grade one for the following school year; or (2) that the parent or guardian intends for the child to participate in a school which has elected or will elect pursuant to law not to meet accreditation or approval requirements and the parent or guardian intends to provide the Commissioner of Education with a statement pursuant to section 79-1601(3) on or before the child's seventh birthday.

Exceptions for Older Students. Attendance is also not mandatory for a child who: (1) has obtained a high school diploma by meeting statutory graduation requirements; (2) has completed the program of instruction offered by a school which elects pursuant to law not to meet accreditation or approval requirements; or (3) has reached the age of 16 years and has been withdrawn from school in the manner prescribed by law.

Early Withdrawal for Students Enrolled in Accredited or Approved Schools. A person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least 16 but less than 18 years of age may withdraw such child from school before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements if an exit interview is conducted and a withdrawal form is signed.

Exit Interview. The process is initiated by a person who has legal or actual charge or control of the child submitting a withdrawal form. The form is to be as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Upon submission of the form, the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall set a time and place for an exit interview if the child is enrolled in Rock County Public Schools or resides in Rock County Public Schools and is enrolled in a private, denominational, or parochial school.

The exit interview shall be personally attended by:

- The child, unless the withdrawal is being requested due to an illness of the child making attendance at the exit interview impossible or impracticable;
- the person who has legal or actual charge or control of the child who requested the exit interview;
- the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee;
- the child's principal or the principal's designee if the child at the time of the exit interview is enrolled in a school operated by the school district; and

- any other person requested by any of the required parties who agrees to attend the exit interview and is available at the time designated for the exit interview which may include, for example, other school personnel or the child's principal if the child is enrolled in a private school.

At the exit interview, the person making the written request must present evidence that (a) the person has legal or actual charge or control of the child and (b) the child would be withdrawing due to either:

- financial hardships requiring the child to be employed to support the child's family or one or more dependents of the child, or
- an illness of the child making attendance impossible or impracticable.

The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall identify all known alternative educational opportunities, including vocational courses of study, that are available to the child in the school district and how withdrawing from school is likely to reduce potential future earnings for the child and increase the likelihood of the child being unemployed in the future. Any other relevant information may be presented and discussed by any of the parties in attendance.

At the conclusion of the exit interview, the person making the written request may sign a withdrawal form provided by the school district agreeing to the withdrawal of the child OR may rescind the written request for the withdrawal.

Withdrawal Form. Any withdrawal form signed by the person making the written request shall be valid only if:

- the child also signs the form, unless the withdrawal is being requested due to an illness of the child making attendance at the exit interview impossible or impracticable, and
- the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee signs the form acknowledging that the interview was held, the required information was provided and discussed at the interview, and, in the opinion of the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, the person making the written request does in fact have legal or actual charge or control of the child and the child is experiencing either (i) financial hardship, or (ii) an illness making attendance impossible or impracticable.

Early Withdrawal for Students Enrolled in an Exempt School (Home Schools). A person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least 16 but less than 18 years of age may withdraw such child from school before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements if such child has been enrolled in a school that elects not to meet the accreditation or approval requirements by filing with the State Department of Education a signed notarized release on a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

4. Reporting and Responding to Truant Behavior. Any administrator, teacher, or member of the board of education who knows of any failure on the part of any child of mandatory school attendance age to attend school regularly without lawful reason, shall within three days report such violation to the superintendent or such person(s) who the superintendent designates to be the attendance officer (hereafter, "attendance officer"). The attendance officer shall immediately cause an investigation into any such report to be made. The attendance officer shall also investigate any case when of his or her personal knowledge, or by report or complaint from any resident of the district, the attendance officer believes that any child is unlawfully absent from school. The school shall render all services in its power to compel such child to attend some public, private, denominational, or parochial school,

which the person having control of the child shall designate, in an attempt to address the problem of excessive absenteeism. Such services shall include, as appropriate, the services listed below under “Excessive Absenteeism” and “Reporting Excessive Absenteeism.”

5. Excessive Absenteeism. Students who accumulate five (5) unexcused absences in a quarter shall be deemed to have “excessive absences.” Such absences shall be determined on a per day basis for elementary students and on a per class basis for secondary students. When a student has excessive absences, the following procedures shall be implemented:

- a. One or more meetings shall be held between a school attendance officer, school social worker, or the school principal or a member of the school administrative staff designated by the school administration, if the school does not have a school social worker, the child’s parent or guardian and the child, if necessary, to report and to attempt to solve the excessive absenteeism problem. If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meeting, the principal shall place documentation of such refusal in the child’s attendance records.
- b. Educational counseling to determine whether curriculum changes, including but not limited to, enrolling the child in an alternative education program that meets the specific educational and behavioral needs of the child, would help solve the problem of excessive absenteeism.
- c. Educational evaluation, which may include a psychological evaluation, to assist in determining the specific condition, if any, contributing to the problem of excessive absenteeism, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed.
- d. Investigation of the problem of excessive absenteeism by the school social worker, or if such school does not have a school social worker, the school principal or a member of the school administrative staff designated by the school administration, to identify conditions which may be contributing to the truancy problem. If services for the child and his or her family are determined to be needed, the person performing the investigation shall meet with the parent/guardian and the child to discuss any referral to appropriate community agencies for economic services, family or individual counseling, or other services required to remedy the conditions that are contributing to the problem of excessive absenteeism.

6. Reporting Excessive Absenteeism to the County Attorney.

- a. Twenty Excused Absences. If a student accumulates more than twenty (20) absences per year and all of the absences are due to documented illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable or are otherwise excused by school authorities, the attendance officer may report such information to the county attorney of the county in which the person having control of the student resides.
- b. Twenty Unexcused Absences. If a student accumulates more than twenty (20) absences per year, and any of the absences are not excused, the attendance officer shall file a report with the county attorney of the county in which the person having control of the student resides. The report shall be made on a form which includes the following two statements, one of which must be designated by the school representative signing the report: (a) The school representative requests additional time to work with the student prior to intervention by the county attorney; and (b) the school representative believes that the school has used all reasonable efforts to resolve the student’s excessive absenteeism without success and recommends county attorney intervention. If further action is necessary to address the child’s attendance, the initial meeting between the parent or guardian of the child, the school, and the county attorney or his or her designee shall be at a location determined by the school.
- c. Other. A report to the county attorney may also be made when a student otherwise accrues excessive absences as herein defined.

7. Reporting to the Commissioner. The Superintendent or designee shall report on a monthly basis to the Commissioner of Education as directed by the Commissioner regarding the number of and reason for any long-term suspension, expulsion, or excessive absenteeism of a student; referral of a student to the office of the county attorney for excessive absenteeism; or contacting of law enforcement officials (other than law enforcement officials employed by or contracted with by the District as school resource officers) by the District relative to a student enrolled in the District.

SECTION ONE

BASIC SCHOOL RULES AND GENERAL PRACTICES

Attendance- Attendance Policy 5001

Required Attendance

Every person residing in the school district who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age shall cause that child to attend a public or private school regularly unless the child has graduated from high school or has been allowed to disenroll pursuant to this policy.

Mandatory Attendance Age

All children who are or will turn six years old before January 1 of the current school year are of mandatory attendance age. Children who have not turned eighteen years of age are of mandatory attendance age.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply when attendance is made impossible or impracticable by severe weather conditions or by the mental or physical illness of the student or a child whom the student is parenting.

A child who will not reach age 7 before January 1 of the current school year may be excused from mandatory attendance if the child's parent or guardian completes an affidavit affirming that alternative educational arrangements have been made for the child. A copy of the required affidavit is attached to this policy.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 5 Year Old Students

The person seeking to discontinue the enrollment of a student who will not reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the current school year shall submit a signed, written request to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The school district may request written verification or documentation that the person signing the form has legal or actual charge or control of the student. The school district shall discontinue the enrollment of any student who satisfies these requirements. Any student whose enrollment is discontinued under this subsection shall not be eligible to reenroll in this school district until the beginning of the following school year unless otherwise required by law.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 16 and 17-Year-Old Students

Only children who are at least 16 years of age may be disenrolled from the district. The person seeking to discontinue the child's enrollment shall submit a signed, written request that demonstrates that the student meets

the district's legal criteria allowing for disenrollment to the superintendent using the applicable district form. The district will follow the procedures outlined on the attached form in considering requests to disenroll.

Only children disenrolling to attend a non-accredited school may be exempt from this policy. The person with legal or actual charge or control of the child must provide the superintendent with a copy of the signed request submitted to the State Department of Education for attending non-accredited schools. The superintendent may confirm the validity of the submission with the State Department of Education.

Attendance Officer

Each building principal is designated as an attendance officer for the district. Each building principal, at his or her discretion, may delegate these responsibilities to any other qualified individual. The attendance officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of state law relating to compulsory attendance. This responsibility includes but is not limited to filing a report with the county attorney of the county in which a student resides. Compensation for the duties of attendance officer is included in the salary for the superintendent or designee.

Excused Absences

The following absences will be considered excused if they are confirmed by communication to the school from the student's parent/guardian:

1. Physical or mental illness of the student or of a child whom the student is parenting (a physician's verification is required after four (4) consecutive days of absence for illness)
2. Severe weather
3. Medical appointments for the student or for a child whom the student is parenting
4. Death or serious illness of the student's family member
5. Attending a funeral, wedding or graduation
6. Appearance at court or for other legal matters
7. Observance of religious holidays of the student's own faith
8. College planning visits

9. Personal or family vacations

10. Whenever the principal considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the student.

Excessive Absenteeism

When a student receives 5 unexcused absences or the hourly equivalent in any semester, the Attendance Officer may send written notification of the student's total absences to the student's parent or guardian. When a student receives 10 unexcused absences or the hourly equivalent in any school year, the Attendance Officer will send written notification of the student's total absences to the student's parent or guardian and offer to meet with the student's parent or guardians to discuss any barriers to the student's attendance. When a student receives 15 unexcused absences or the hourly equivalent in any school year, the attendance officer will send written notification of the student's total absences to the student's parent or guardian and shall schedule a meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss and address any barriers to the student's attendance, unless the attendance officer determines that such meeting would not be productive in facilitating the student's regular attendance.

A student may have no more than 10 absences in any one class in any one semester. If a student should accumulate more than 10 absences in any one class in any one semester, regardless if they are excused or unexcused, and without extenuating circumstances as determined by the Administration, the student will have a deduction of credit as follows: 11 absences the student loses 2 credits per class, 12 absences the student will lose 4 credits per class, 13 or more absences, student will not be given any credit toward graduation. If in the event the student accumulates 11 or 12 absences and finishes the semester with a passing grade they will be given the opportunity to make up the deducted credits via Alternative Education during the summer or at a time determined by the Administration.

When a student is absent more than 20 days per year or the hourly equivalent and any portion of the absences is unexcused, the Attendance Officer may file a report with the county attorney of the county in which the student resides. For example, if the student accumulates 23 days of excused absences due to documented illness and is tardy one time, the Attendance Officer may file a report with the appropriate county attorney.

Absences due to illness

The school district will contact parents if a student becomes ill at school. A student who is absent due to illness has one day for every day of absence to complete missed assignments.

Planned absences

Parents who know in advance that a student will be absent must call the school or send a written note at the earliest possible date. Students who will be absent for reasons that can be anticipated, such as routine medical appointments and school activities, must complete any work required by the teacher before the absence. Parents should make every attempt to schedule medical and other appointments after school hours or during study hall when possible.

Students will not be allowed to leave the building during the day without going through the office and obtaining a permit slip. Students may get this permit slip at the Principal's Office when a request from home is presented. This will be kept track of through e-hallpass. Leaving the school grounds for any reason, without proper procedure, will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Students are obligated to:

- 1) Complete all class work in advance for any absence that can be anticipated.
- 2) Attend school a full day before attending practice or participating in a scheduled student activity except in cases of family emergencies or pre-arranged absences.
- 3) Check out of school at the office if leaving school during the school day.
- 4) Make up any and all work that is assigned by teachers as make-up work for the instructional time that has been missed.

Parents are obligated to:

- 1) Call the appropriate building office to inform the school of the reason for each absence.
- 2) Submit a doctor's statement, if requested, for each period of absence due to illness that exceeds five days.

College Visit Days

Valentine High School allows juniors and seniors up to 2 days per year for college visits. These visits need to be lined up through the counselor's office and proper paperwork filled out to be considered a school activity.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

The District will not discriminate in its education program or activity against any student based on the student's current, potential, or past pregnancy. Students who are pregnant or parenting are encouraged to continue participating in the district's educational and extracurricular programs. Students who anticipate deviations from their regular school experience or accrue absences due to pregnancy or parenting should notify their building principal as early as possible to discuss their educational programming in collaboration with the Title IX Coordinator.

Attendance of School Events

Any student who has been absent during the school day should not attend any school activity that same day, unless prior approval has been given by the administration.

- No head cover (hats, hoods, etc.) allowed.
- Students will sit in the Middle School assigned section, with the band, with their parents or guardian or with their coach and team if waiting to compete.
- No running or loitering in the halls or concession area.
- Belittling game officials or opponents and/or the throwing of any object will not be tolerated and may result in the person responsible being removed from the activity.

Band

Students may participate in band and begin taking band lessons in the 5th grade. Students in grades 6-8 may participate in the middle school band; grades 9-12 may participate in the high school band. Instruments will be provided by students or the school as provided by school policy. Fees may be charged as allowed or provided in the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act and the school's student fee policy or other applicable policy.

Bills

Students should pay bills for supplies, fines, shop materials, clothing orders, etc. in the school secretary's office. Any check for these payments should be made out to Valentine Community Schools unless otherwise instructed.

SECTION ONE

BASIC SCHOOL RULES AND GENERAL PRACTICES

ATTENDANCE

Required Attendance

Every person residing in the school district who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age shall cause that child to attend a public or private school regularly unless the child has graduated from high school or has been allowed to disenroll pursuant to this policy.

Mandatory Attendance Age

All children who are or will turn six years old before January 1 of the current school year are of mandatory attendance age. Children who have not turned eighteen years of age are of mandatory attendance age.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply when attendance is made impossible or impracticable by severe weather conditions or by the mental or physical illness of the student or a child whom the student is parenting.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 16- and 17- Year- Old Students

Only children who are at least 16 years of age may be disenrolled from the district. The person seeking to discontinue the child's enrollment shall submit a signed, written request that demonstrates that the student meets the district's legal criteria allowing for disenrollment to the superintendent using the applicable district form. The district will follow the procedures outlined on the attached form in considering requests to disenroll.

Only children disenrolling to attend a non-accredited school may be exempt from this policy. The person with legal or actual charge or control of the child must provide the superintendent with a copy of the signed request submitted to the State Department of Education for attending non-accredited schools. The superintendent may confirm the validity of the submission with the State Department of Education.

Attendance Officer

Each building principal is designated as an attendance officer for the district. Each building principal, at his or her discretion, may delegate these responsibilities to any other qualified individual. The attendance officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of state law relating to compulsory attendance. This responsibility includes but is not limited to filing a report with the county attorney of the county in which a student resides. Compensation for the duties of attendance officer is included in the salary for the superintendent or designee.

Excused Absences

The following absences will be considered excused if they are confirmed by communication to the school from the student's parent/guardian:

1. Physical or mental illness of the student or of a child whom the student is parenting (a physician's verification is required.) ~~after four (4) consecutive days of absence for illness)~~
2. Medical appointments for the student or for a child whom the student is parenting. (a physician's verification is required.)
3. Death or serious illness of the student's family member
4. Attending a funeral, wedding, or graduation
5. College planning visits (Juniors/Seniors, 2 per year)

Absences due to illness

The school district will contact parents if a student becomes ill at school. A student who is absent due to illness has one day for every day of absence to complete missed assignments.

Planned absences

Parents who know in advance that a student will be absent must call the school or send a written note at the earliest possible date. Students who will be absent for reasons that can be anticipated, such as routine medical appointments and school activities, must complete any work required by the teacher before the absence. Parents should make every attempt to schedule medical and other appointments after school hours when possible.

Students are obligated to:

- 1) Complete all class work in advance for any absence that can be anticipated.
- 2) Attend school a half day before attending practice or participating in a scheduled student activity except in cases of family emergencies or prearranged absences.
- 3) Check out of school at the office if leaving school during the school day.
- 4) Make up any and all work that is assigned by teachers as make-up work for the instructional time that has been missed.

Parents are obligated to:

- 1) Call the appropriate building office to inform the school of the reason for each absence.
- 2) Submit a doctor's statement

Excessive Absenteeism

West Holt Public Schools works with the Holt County Truancy Diversion Program on excessive absenteeism. Students may meet with Holt County Truancy Diversion Parents/Guardians will receive notification when students are absent from school at 5, 10, 15, and 20 days.

When a student is absent more than 20 days per year or the hourly equivalent and any portion of the absences is unexcused, the Attendance Officer may file a report with the county attorney of the county in which the student resides. For example, if the student accumulates 20 days of excused absences due to documented illness and is tardy one time, the Attendance Officer may file a report with the appropriate county attorney.

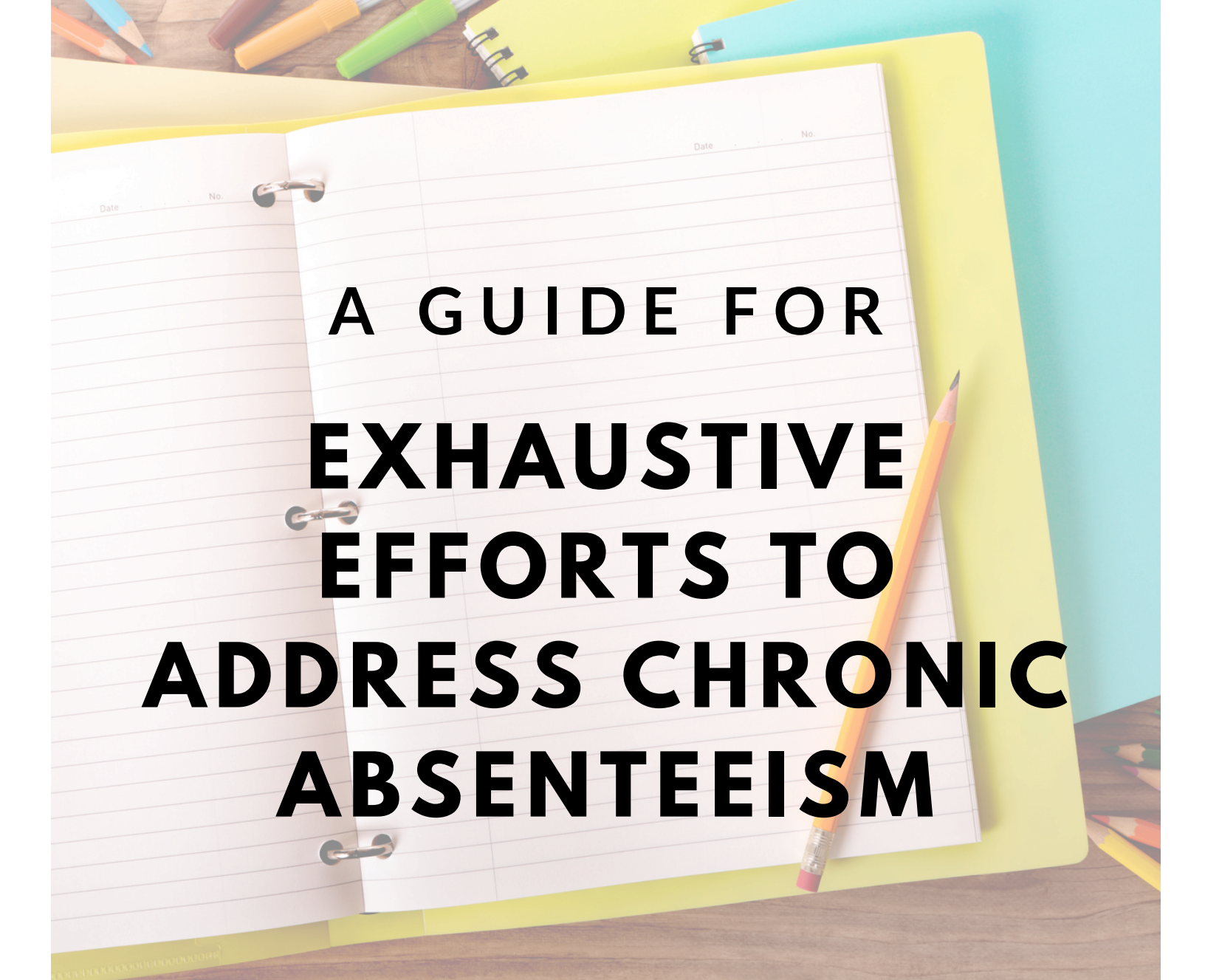
Making Up Absences

When a student receives 10 unexcused absences or the hourly equivalent in any semester, the student shall be required to make up those absences through attendance to school outside of the regular school day. This can include Saturday school, before school, after school, or other days where students are not in attendance. Absences shall be made up at a rate of four hours equating to one full school day.

BAND

Students may participate in the elementary band and begin taking band lessons in the 5th grade. Students in grades 7-8 may participate in the middle school band; grades 9-12 may participate in the high school band. Instruments will be provided by students or the school as provided by school policy. Fees may be charged as allowed or provided in the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act and the school's student fee policy or other applicable policy.

BILLS



**A GUIDE FOR
EXHAUSTIVE
EFFORTS TO
ADDRESS CHRONIC
ABSENTEEISM**



STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

2025



PURPOSE & BELIEFS

The purpose of this guide is to provide clear processes and forms for Nebraska Public Schools to utilize when supporting students in reducing chronic absenteeism. The guide will support schools in exhaustive efforts prior to court involvement by utilizing best practice supervision, programs, and services, to ensure students and families receive programming focused directly on the reason for the chronic absenteeism.

Core Beliefs for Supporting Students with Chronic Absenteeism

We believe in meeting the family and youth where they are comfortable, and providing them voice and choice.

We believe in the importance of the collaborative team having a ‘win’ mentality to achieve the goals, objectives, and outcomes to reduce chronic absenteeism through community-based services and programs.

We believe a “warm handoff” is a priority to ensure consistent sharing of relevant and necessary information that informs effective identification of services and programs while protecting confidentiality and privacy rights of youth and families.

We believe consistent documentation of policies and practices is critical to ensure accurate account of referrals, ongoing data collection, fidelity to procedural performance, and impact of practices and reflection.

We believe specialized school staff personnel and/or a community navigator prioritizing focus on chronic absenteeism and supporting the family and student is a necessary priority to achieve success.

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Acknowledgments:


In accordance with the Nebraska Supreme Court Probation Services committee, the *Rethinking Status Youth* workgroup was formed to address truancy youth in the Nebraska courtrooms. After consulting with Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center (hereinafter RFK), the group decided to provide a guide to support schools in their efforts to address chronic absenteeism. This guide is created to comply with federal and Nebraska state laws regarding juveniles and truancy. The guide is influenced by the NDE’s belief in Attendance Works. The purpose of the guide is very simple - to address chronic absenteeism in Nebraska Schools by engaging communities to respond to the needs of our children.

Rethinking Status Youth Workgroup Members: Honorable Elise White, Honorable Sarah Moore, Honorable Kale Burdick, Chief Probation Officer Mary Visek, Deputy Administrator Kari Rumbaugh and Case Management Specialist Jeremy Behrends.

Current Chair: Honorable Edward Matney

Past Chair: Honorable Chad Brown

Consultant: John Tuell, Executive Director, Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice



BEST PRACTICE RESOURCES CONSULTED

1. “Rethinking the Role of the Juvenile Justice System: Improving Youth’s School Attendance and Educational Outcomes” CSG, Justice Center, The Council of State Governments. September 2020. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/rethinking-the-role-of-the-juvenile-justice-system-improving-youths-school-attendance-and-educational-outcomes/>
2. “Truancy and Its Impacts – Complex Root Causes” Vera Institute of Justice. 2016. <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/Truancy-Infographic.pdf>
3. “School Absenteeism and Academic Achievement: Does the Reason for Absence Matter?” Klein et. al. 2022. January-December 2022, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 1–14. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/23328584211071115>
4. Attendance Playbook Smart Strategies for reducing student absenteeism post-pandemic” Jordan. 2023 <https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Attendance-Playbook.5.23.pdf>

PROCESS



I. Federal and State Law Consulted

A) Title I, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)

The goals of Title I, Part D, are to:

- 1) Improve educational services for these children so they have the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content and achievement standards.
- 2) Provide them with services to successfully transition from institutionalization to further schooling or employment; and
- 3) Prevent youth who are at-risk from dropping out of school, and to provide dropouts and children and youth returning from correctional facilities with a support system to ensure their continued education.

B) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-245 – Terms, defined

C) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-246 – How the juvenile code is construed

D) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-246.01- Juvenile court, original and concurrent jurisdiction

E) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-247- Juvenile court, jurisdiction

F) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-248.02- Juvenile offender civil citation pilot program

G) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-250- Custody requirements

H) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-260- Juvenile detention screening instrument

I) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-260.01 thru 43-260.06- Pretrial diversion program

J) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-286- Dispositions, motions to revoke, graduated responses

K) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-286.01- Probation officer duties

L) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-290- Cost of care and treatment, payment

M) Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-297.01- Office of Probation Administration, duties

N) Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-209 - Failure by the school to document the efforts required by subsection (2) of this section is a defense to prosecution under section 79-201 and adjudication for educational neglect under subdivision (3)(a) of section 43-247 and habitual truancy under subdivision (3)(b) of section 43-247. Illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney.

II. Best Practice Approach to Address Chronic Absenteeism

In an effort to support families and students with chronic absenteeism this best practice approach shall be implemented with fidelity and measured for impact. This will allow Nebraska public schools to take all necessary steps to ensure all community-based resources have been exhausted prior to court involvement. Research continues to suggest that providing students with immediate support and services in the community provides for significantly more positive results than court involvement, which may result in increased risk of justice involvement and attendance concerns continuing. This is also supported by Nebraska Revised Statute § 79-209 (Compulsory attendance; nonattendance; school district; duties; collaborative plan; considerations; referral to county attorney; notice), which articulates a list of recommended steps and actions (at a minimum) school districts should take before requesting action by the county attorney (§79-209 1-4). The statute states that all school districts shall define the circumstances and number of absences or the hourly equivalent upon which the school shall render services to address barriers to attendance.

- **Necessary Partners:**

- Nebraska Department of Education
- School District Administrators
- County Attorneys
- Probation
- Children and Family Services
- Courts
- Legislature
- Community Partners

- **School District Engagement:**

- Create process including the following:
 - Identification of youth and assessment

1. Youth identified in school (our pilot process can occur during any of the following times)

- Parent/Caretaker indicates a concern
- Academic partner identifies a concern
- 5/10/20 letters sent
- Corrective meeting held

2. Initial Assessment

- Participants – priority and preferred persons in the meeting
 - Youth
 - Parents/Caretaker
 - Probation
 - Children and Family Services
 - Diversion
 - Educational counsel
 - Community partners – aka service providers
 - Other partners/supports -family identified to make it more successful

II. Best Practice Approach to Address Chronic Absenteeism, continued

• School District Engagement (continued):

3. Initial assessment form is filled out - Steps to ensure initial assessment occurs – what efforts did we take to get the family there?
 - Community Team initiates Notice
 - Location/Date/Time considerations
 - Any other variables to consider (religious/medical/therapeutic/etc.)
 - Ensure availability of relevant, authorized, and necessary information (i.e. academic status, disciplinary, behavioral health assessments, IEP, 504 Plan) about the youth and family is shared and reviewed, prior to the meeting
4. Assess what supports the minor and the family have
 - The initial engagement meeting.
 - Discuss reason for meeting and all potential services or program interventions
 - Identify goals and timeframe
 - Utilize the standard form (Collaborative Plan)
 - includes youth, their family, school representatives and community providers
 - Identify youth and family needs and create a shared plan of improvement
 - Plan set - Nebraska Revised Statute § 79-209 (2.b.), requires that the result of the meeting(s) shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance. The plan shall consider, but not limited to a) the physical, mental, or behavioral health of the child; b) educational counseling; c) educational evaluation; d) referral to community agencies for economic services; e) family or individual counseling; f) assisting the family in working with other community services; and g) referral to restorative justice practices or services.
- Sign agreement
- The plan shall include how the school will partner with the family and connect them to community supports which will address the identified need(s) to improve attendance. Additionally, it is essential that a key focus is on time sensitivity. The school shall identify a specified date to ensure the family has time to successfully implement the agreed upon collaborative plan.
- The plan must include a designated staff person or navigator, who will:
 - Intensively engage youth including, seeing the family home. Understand the family dynamics. Collect relevant and necessary collateral information before and during the process to help this family.
 - To ensure “warm handoffs” to services in the community. “Warm handoffs” include the navigator making connections at the meeting, setting appointments for the family and making introductions to the proposed service. The “warm handoff” ensures a continuous pathway moving forward and eliminates some of the work on the family members to obtain these services.
- The family will continue to meet with the navigator on agreed upon/regular schedule to update both the academic performance, and the community services being utilized.

II. Best Practice Approach to Address Chronic Absenteeism, continued

- **School District Engagement (continued):**

5. The Community Team will communicate with the legal guardian using verbal or written communication by school officials and one or more meetings with the family to discuss community based options to support the youth and the family. The meeting is designed to work through the Exhaustive Efforts categories list to determine the necessary supports and make referrals for the youth and family. Active family engagement recognizes that the family or caregiver is the primary emotional, social, cultural and spiritual resource for the child or youth. Strategies and actions by the Community Team will be in accordance with family empowerment research acknowledging family and caregiver strengths and actively encourages consistent opportunities to have meaningful, informed and authentic input in their child's treatment and service plan. The Community Team actions to engage families must exceed singular instances of correspondence (e.g. letter or e-mail) and telephone outreach and reflect flexible and authentic opportunities for families or caregivers to inform and support family focused, school or community-based, and culturally appropriate services.

The Community Team's core responsibilities include:

- The Community Team shall make contact with the family within 24 hours.
- The Community Team's role is to ensure that the school adopts and implements a comprehensive, actionable, tiered approach to improving attendance and ensure exhausted efforts.
- Ideally, the Community Team should be composed of key school staff including the school attendance officer, school social worker, or a school administrator or his/her designee, school counselor, school social worker, as well as community partners including providers, Guardian Ad Litem or Defense Counsel (as necessary), health centers, diversion or state agency staff (as necessary) and the Educational Right Counsel and most importantly legal guardian, family/caregiver, pro-social personnel (mentor, coach, teacher), and the youth to attempt to address the barriers to attendance.

II. Best Practice Approach to Address Chronic Absenteeism, continued

- **School District Engagement (continued):**

6. On-Going monitoring and meetings. Continuous monitoring shall include routine check-ins to ensure the services are matching the needs of the youth and family. The Community Team shall document all meetings, referrals and progress. In the event improvement in attendance is not achieved, the Community Team shall continue to explore other service needs on the Exhaustive Efforts list. Only upon a determination that the youth has exhausted reasonable efforts, and no improvement has been made, shall a referral for a court filing be submitted to the County Attorney. All documentation included in the collaborative plan surrounding the interventions must be included in the filing to the County Attorney's Office.

- Discuss interventions
 - Identify members present
 - Update from service providers regarding interventions
 - Update from academic partners
- Make changes
 - Update goals or maintain
 - Sign updated agreement

III. Exhaustive Efforts (Categories):

- Family and Youth Meeting with Community Team
 - Initial Meeting with Family and Youth
 - Weekly Meetings to determine if further interventions are necessary
- Consider Educational Neglect as the leading factor
- Behavioral Services
 - Behavioral Intervention
 - Corrective Action Plan
 - Aggression Replacement Training
 - Aggression Assessment
- Substance Use Services
 - Chemical Dependency Evaluation
 - CD Treatment
- Mental Health Services
 - Psychological Evaluation
 - Individual/Family Therapy
- Psychiatric or Medication Management Services
 - Psychiatric Evaluation
 - Medication checks
- Financial Assistance/Economic Services
 - Community based interventions to assist in finances
 - Food Pantry
 - Furniture donations
 - Clothing donations
- Transportation Services
 - School Bussing adjustments
 - City Bussing considerations
 - After School Care considerations
 - Alternative Community Support to assist in transportation

III. Exhaustive Efforts (Categories) continued:

- Educational Neglect Interventions (Parental Supports/Voluntary services)
 - Partnering with HHS to assess Parental involvement
 - Family Support Services
 - IFP/In-homes services/Ecological Services/MST
- Child Welfare Services (Voluntary services)
 - Partnering with HHS to assess Child Welfare and Neglect considerations
 - Family Support Services
 - IFP/In-home services/Ecological Services/MST
 - Temporary placement with suitable relative or kinship
- Mentor/Role Model Supportive Services
 - 100 Black Men
 - Big Brothers/Big Sisters
 - Teammates
 - Urban League
- Educational Evaluation and Counseling: 504/MDT/IEP considerations
 - Child Find requirements
 - Updated FBA/504/IEP
 - Staff with MDT
 - Utilize Educational Rights Counsel
- Physical Health Considerations
- Whether or not the efforts can be made without excluding the student from formal education
 - Alternatives to removal to regular instruction

IV. Referral for Filing Petition in Court:


The process continues until either improvement is clearly noted in attendance by the youth, or the process has exhausted all community efforts, in which case, a referral to the County Attorney may be made.

- Upon the determination that all relevant community-based services from the Exhaustive Efforts list have been utilized, the Community Team shall forward a referral to the County Attorney for consideration of a filing with the Court.
- The documentation collected during the meetings with the family and the youth shall be included to reflect exhaustive efforts.
- Referral shall contain documentation in the Collaborative Plan regarding all meetings, attendees, dates, times, notes and services implemented. Summary documentation shall also be collected from the service providers to reflect intervention efforts (i.e. start and end date, participation level, progress).
- Upon the filing of a petition, and ultimately an adjudication in the Courts, Probation shall utilize Specialized Supervision for Status youth in the Court system.

FORMS

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a silver and gold pen, writing on a form. The form has various fields and checkboxes, some of which are already filled in. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the form and the desk it's on.

1. Initial Assessment
2. Collaborative Plan
 - a. Identify Family members/caretakers
 - b. Living situation
 - c. Community Team Members are identified
 - d. Goal(s) is identified
 - i. Strengths (yes/no youth and partner perspectives included)
 - ii. Barriers (yes/no youth and partner perspectives included)
 - e. Educational feedback
 - f. Community Team feedback
 - i. Counseling input
 - ii. Academic input
 - iii. IEP/MDT/504 input
 - iv. Other (coaches, admin, clubs, activities)
 - g. All Exhaustive Efforts have been considered
 - h. Signed by all parties



ESSENTIAL DATA GATHERING

Key performance indicator includes collecting and measuring data points along the way.

1. Essential Data Elements

- a. General demographic data
- b. Collaborative Plan – Filled out completely and evidence of updates (minimum monthly)
 - i. Documentation of Youth and Family inclusion
 - ii. Timeframes are set and followed
 1. Initial assessment
 2. Documentation of recommended services applied
 3. Plan Developed and signed
 4. Evidence of services provided
 - iii. Team is clearly established including all supports essential to success

2. Performance Outcomes

- a. Family voice and choice
- b. Attendance improvement is documented
- c. Academic performance improvement is documented
- d. Community based resources are exhausted prior to filing with County Attorney
 - i. Exhaustive Efforts documented
 1. Note, County Attorney and Court can see what has been offered previously
 - ii. Amount of time school collaborative plan is in place
- e. Reduce court filings for truancy
 - i. Closure reason
 1. Successful
 2. Withdrew from school
 3. Family Moves
 4. Medical Exemption
 5. Other reasons for closure

APPENDIX - MODEL COLLABORATIVE PLAN

Collaborative Plan

Meeting Location:		Meeting Date/Time:	
-------------------	--	--------------------	--

Meeting Reason and History	
----------------------------	--

Youth Name:
Parent/Caretaker:
Living Situation / Address:
Phone # and email:

List all family members & others living in the home. +Denotes Parent/Guardian	DOB/AGE:	Relationship to Child(ren)	School/Grade

Community Team Members:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Caretaker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family identified partners/supports
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community partners
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Providers
<input type="checkbox"/>	School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance Focused School personnel or community navigator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational counsel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children and Family Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Probation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Collaborative Plan

Goal(s) to for Collaborative Plan to reduce barriers and improve attendance	
---	--

Ability to accomplish the Goal(s)

Strengths	Youth Perspective	
	Parent/Caretaker Perspective	
Barriers	Youth Perspective	
	Parent/Caretaker Perspective	

Education Feedback	
Community Team Feedback	

Exhausted Efforts Considerations:

1. Support from School Attendance Personnel or Community Navigator

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

2. Behavioral Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

Collaborative Plan

3. Substance Use Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

4. Mental Health Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

5. Psychiatric or Medication Management Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

6. Financial Assistance/Economic Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

Collaborative Plan

7. Transportation Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

8. Parental Support or Voluntary Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

9. Child Welfare Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

10. Mentor/Role Model Supportive Services

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

11. Educational Evaluation and Counseling (504/MDT/IEP considerations)

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community	

Collaborative Plan

Team Member to refer/support	
------------------------------	--

12. Physical Health Considerations

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

13. Efforts to ensure student is not excluded from formal education.

Service Needed	
Timeframe to Referral	
Expectations	
Community Team Member to refer/support	

I agree to the above Collaborative Plan to accomplish the shared goal and improve the attendance of _____ (student name) by the agreed upon date _____. I understand there will be regular meetings with the Community Team to continue to discuss progress.

School Official Name	Signature	Date
Parent/Caretaker Name	Signature	Date
Student Name	Signature	Date

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STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH



Every Day Counts!

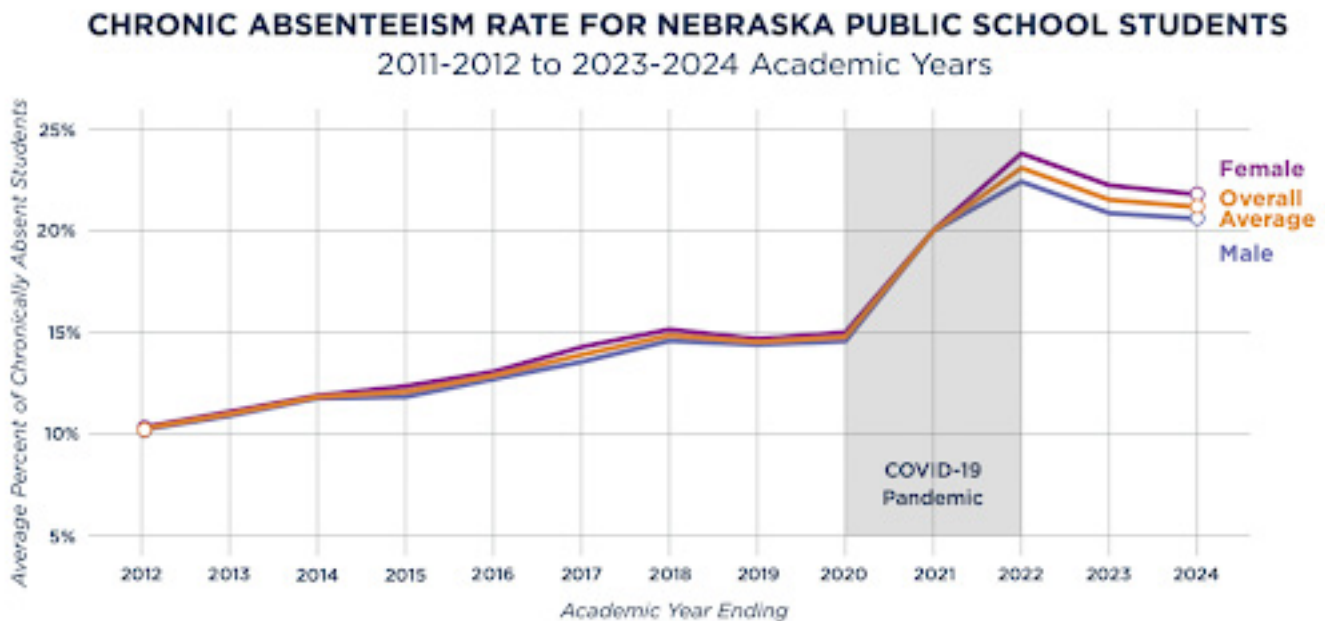
Nebraska's Attendance Playbook

PURPOSE

The purpose of this playbook is to provide an organized, coherent set of resources for school and district leaders designed to help them drive reductions in chronic absenteeism. Rather than reinventing the wheel, we've assembled the best strategies, tactics, messages, and guidance from other states and from Attendance Works. We've also integrated Nebraska-specific data, our state's model policy, and the NeMTSS framework so that schools and districts can access and utilize existing tools and processes more effectively. There are effective strategies that are already in place in districts across the state. Our hope is that the playbook will help you assess what is working, identify gaps, and make more progress on reducing chronic absenteeism.

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

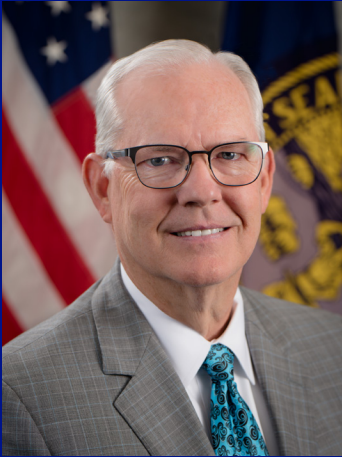
During the pandemic, chronic absenteeism soared throughout the United States. As shown in the chart below, chronic absence has been increasing in Nebraska since the 2011-2012 school year, but increased dramatically during the pandemic, from 14.78% to 23.10%. For some student groups, chronic absence was even higher.



[NSWERS Brief on the Impact of Chronic Absenteeism on Academic Outcomes in Nebraska](#), Jay Jeffries, Ph.D., p. 2

Students who are chronically absent *significantly under perform on state assessments* compared to their peers, and a [recent analysis from NSWERS](#) highlights the longer lasting impact of chronic absence including *reduced high school graduation and college going*. To address the issue, Nebraska has joined 17 other states in an effort led by Attendance Works, American Enterprise Institute, and Education Trust called the [50% Challenge](#). The purpose is to learn and share with other states that face similar challenges. We are already beginning to see bright spots and signs of progress across the state. For example, seven counties have achieved substantial double-digit reductions in the past four years. Using proven strategies and with concentrated focus, it is possible to make a big difference.

MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, DR. BRIAN MAHER



Addressing chronic absenteeism takes a whole village. From school and district staff, to parents, caregivers and community support, to the students themselves, our state must focus its collective attention to solving this complex problem. Unlike other educational issues, the reasons a student misses school are myriad and not as clear. That's why we're putting together this guide, which offers a variety of ways a variety of partners can help address chronic absenteeism, and help us reach our goal of cutting chronic absenteeism in half by 2030. If you're reading this, that means you're here to help, and we appreciate you for that.

WHY ARE SO MANY OF OUR KIDS CHRONICALLY ABSENT?

In a state where one in five youth are chronically absent, we should all be asking this question. We need to approach the problem with curiosity about root causes and a genuine desire to understand how we can best support more students and their families in making everyday attendance – wherever they chose to attend school - a major priority.

Schools and districts using a proactive, preventative, and partnership-driven process to get students to school have experienced some great results. Schools, families, and communities share the responsibility of ensuring that all kids show up for school every day. By working together and playing each of our respective roles well, we can help more kids succeed.

We can start by getting curious.

- Do we know the root causes of chronic absence?
- What barriers exist to regular attendance?
- Are there simple first steps we can take to help improve attendance?
- Do we see trends of lower attendance at certain schools? At certain grade levels?
- How do we quickly address trends so that we can deepen support for our students struggling the most?

Outlined on the subsequent pages are steps school and district leaders, parents, and community members can take to improve student attendance. There are series of resources, links, and vignettes from local school districts describing their approaches.

TOP TEN LIST What Can Schools and Districts Do?

1. Make attendance a big priority – establish school teams and district support

Make attendance a big priority by [“Cultivating a Schoolwide Culture of Attendance”](#). This toolkit from Attendance Works outlines four simple ideas to achieve this including:

- Start Outreach Before School Begins
- Leverage Existing Activities to Communicate the Importance of Good Attendance
- Nurture a Schoolwide System of Attendance Incentives
- Participate in the Attendance Awareness Campaign every September. Here are resources from the [2025 Attendance Awareness Campaign](#).



At Bancroft-Rosalie Community Schools, chronic absence is part of their Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) system, and the school team meets regularly **to identify root causes of chronic absence**. The district also offers **flexible opportunities** for students who miss more than seven (7) days of school to make up the lost instructional time and complete work after being absent. **To remove transportation barriers and support higher attendance among Native American students**, the district partnered with Tribal Transit to provide rides to and from schools for those who live on the Omaha Reservation.

2. Take a comprehensive, all-hands on deck, preventative approach

Schools that are successful in addressing chronic absence take an all-hands-on-deck approach and work to address attendance issues before they become more severe and unmanageable. Every adult in the school building can be a part of encouraging children to attend school every day, noticing when students’ attendance is slipping or improving, etc. Make sure all staff, not just a child’s classroom teacher, know how they can play a part and are able to support children and families they have relationships with.

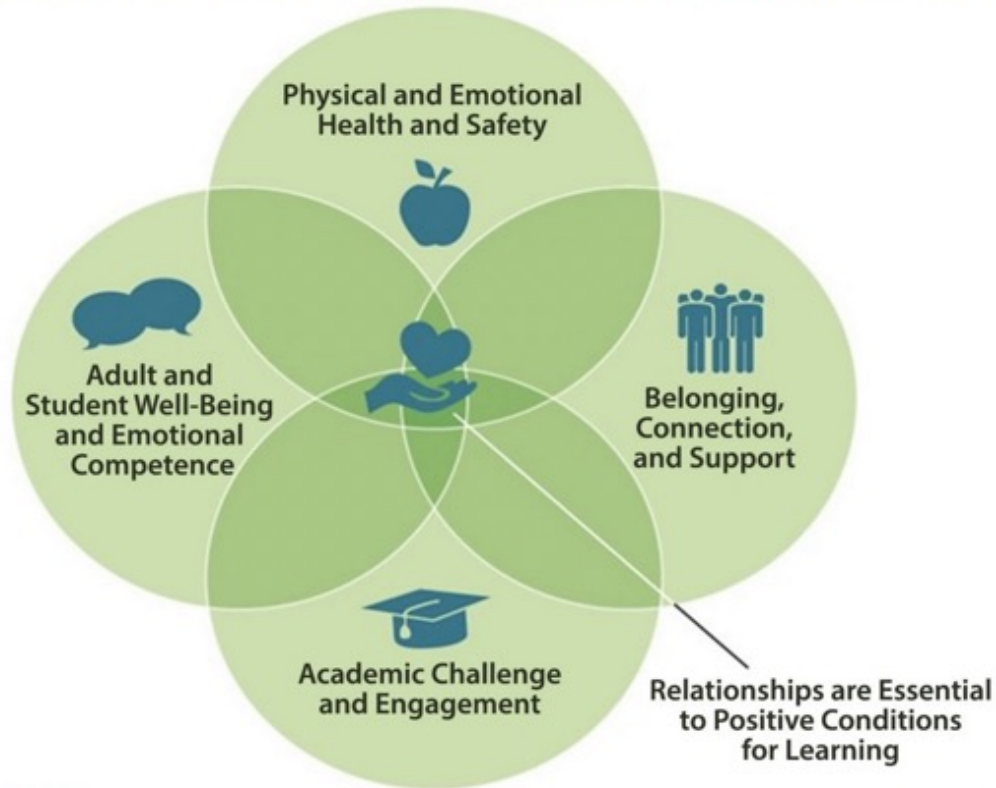
3. Focus on positive conditions for learning

When schools are a place where students feel they “get to go” instead of “have to go” they have a sense of belonging and ownership which makes them more likely to want to attend. Consider the [positive conditions for learning](#) graphic below to address underlying factors that may be preventing kids from coming to school.

At Millard Public Schools, school teams **review data and participate in building-level MTSS meetings** for the purpose **of developing positive, personalized solutions to chronic absenteeism**. The district also has a dedicated group of 13 **social workers** that focus on helping schools drive improvement in chronic absenteeism using systemic practices. District staff participate in a School Attendance Task Force convened by the Metro Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC). The Taskforce leads a **community-wide Attendance Awareness Campaign** providing consistent, informative messaging and **engages local businesses and health care providers** in efforts to improve attendance.



Absenteeism is a Sign that Positive Conditions for Learning are Missing, Whether Classes are In Person, Distance or Blended



www.attendanceworks.org



At Alliance Public Schools, three years ago, the district's high school had a chronic absenteeism rate of 59%. The assistant principal recognized that there was a problem and made it her **personal responsibility to improve positive relationships** between students and faculty and create a greater sense of belonging. As a result, the rate of chronic absence declined to 25% in the last school year. In addition, the high school created a program **where every student would have at least one trusted adult** in the building who met with them in small groups once a week. They also launched a positive messaging initiative to build awareness about the importance of attendance.

4. Utilize data and a tiered response system

Attendance Works has developed a tiered approach to chronic absence. The tiered approach helps to target the right strategies to the right students and families based on how much school a child is missing. When we can catch issues early on, they are less likely to worsen. See **Appendix A** for a Nebraska-adapted version of a tiered approach. Learn more about the three tiers of intervention [here](#).

5. Strengthen communication and awareness. Use regular reminders to families about what they can do to support good attendance.

Whether families' lives are busy or turbulent, they can benefit from multiple reminders about the school schedule, activities and important events as well as strategies for getting their children to school. See **Appendix B** for a [one-pager from Attendance Works](#) that outlines the importance of the family' role. [This one-pager from Philadelphia](#) is another great example of a simple way to communicate with families about what they can do.

At Arapahoe-Holbrook Public Schools, district leadership identified reducing chronic absenteeism as a top priority and began an effort to more **consistently and clearly communicate expectations** for everyday attendance. School staff made a commitment to having more frequent, personal conversations with students, parents, and guardians about attendance and how much they wanted to see students every day.



6. Invest in student relationships

Developing relationships with students and helping them have successful relationships with their peers is at the core of ensuring that they want to come to school every day. To learn more about helping students feel connected, see [Step 3 of Attendance Works' 50% Challenge focuses on Student Connectedness](#) and the additional resources section.

7. Engage partners who can help with messaging and removing barriers

Schools don't have to do this work alone. Many communities have rallied behind their schools to help with solving the issue of chronic absence. Libraries, business partners, community organizations, etc. can all contribute to spreading the word about the importance of every day attendance and support families who have barriers to attendance such as transportation, health issues or basic needs such as clean clothes for school.

One example is Learn to Earn Dayton's [Every Day in School Matters Campaign](#), which included [visits and PSAs](#) from local college sports figures who spoke about the importance of everyday school attendance.

8. Engage partners who can help with messaging and removing barriers

Connecting with families can help them better understand why school attendance is important. Once they understand, there are often simple steps they can take to help their children improve their attendance. Read by 4th in Philadelphia has created a [Family Attendance Toolkit](#) that includes an overview of the district's attendance policy, handouts focused on morning routines, links to resources, etc.



At Sidney Public Schools, school leaders focus on strengthening parent engagement and partnership. Guidance counselors and teachers communicate regularly with parents and look for ways to **make connections between the learning that takes place at home and at school**. At Sidney Public Schools, the district takes a student-centered and solutions-based approach to reducing chronic absenteeism that begins with creating a positive, welcoming school culture. There are **pep rallies, spirit clubs, and small group advisory sessions** designed to build personalized relationships and provide care and support.

9. Engage partners who can help with messaging and removing barriers

Although they don't take the place of investing in relationships with students and families, incentives and recognition can be an important way to motivate students to improve their attendance. Similarly, some districts have found success with incentives for families too. It is important to recognize and reward the right behaviors. For example, perfect attendance awards often recognize students who are already doing well rather than those who have improved and can demotivate students when they miss a day or two of school. Plan to offer incentives and provide recognition for good attendance with these [strategies and ideas curated by Attendance Works](#).

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, provides a fun opportunity for students to participate in an [Attendance Awareness Poster Contest](#) with prizes for the winners.

10. Engage partners who can help with messaging and removing barriers

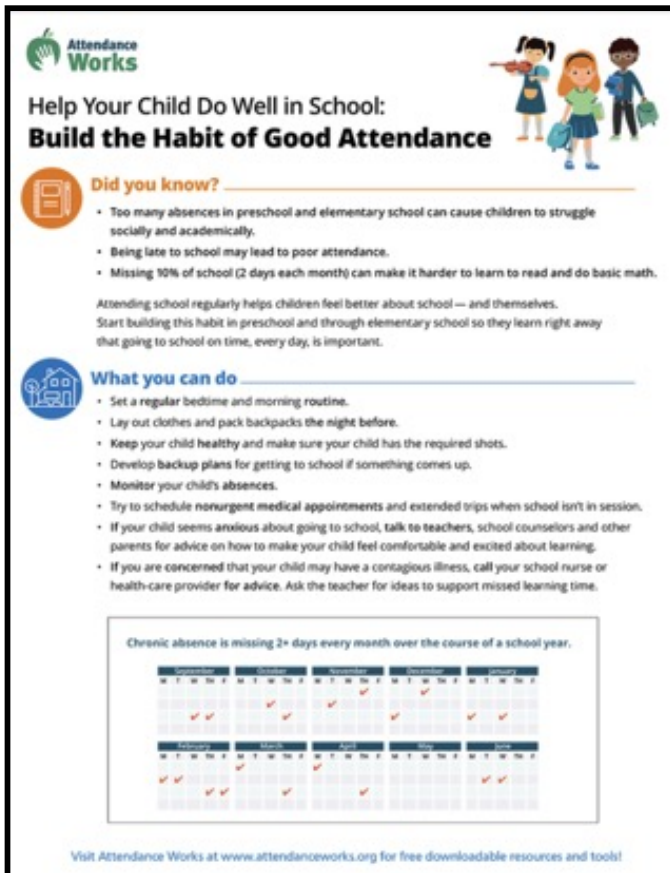
Look for opportunities to connect with others who are also doing this work. For example, Attendance Works hosts a six-month [Professional Leadership Attendance Network](#) for administrators. They also host [regular webinars](#) highlighting the work in states, districts and schools. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading also hosts a variety of webinars focused on chronic absence such as [“Chronic Absence: Promising Signals From Colorado and Virginia”](#). Search their [archives](#) for others.

TOP TEN LIST What Can Parents and Families Do?

It's important to ensure that parents understand how attendance impacts their children's school success and how they can help support their children in getting to school on time every day. Here are ten ways to encourage parents:

1. Make everyday school attendance a priority.

These [Attendance Works handouts](#) (in English and Spanish) have tips and strategies such as building everyday routines that can help you help your children get to school every day.



Attendance Works

Help Your Child Do Well in School:
Build the Habit of Good Attendance

Did you know?

- Too many absences in preschool and elementary school can cause children to struggle socially and academically.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Missing 10% of school (2 days each month) can make it harder to learn to read and do basic math.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school — and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool and through elementary school so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day, is important.

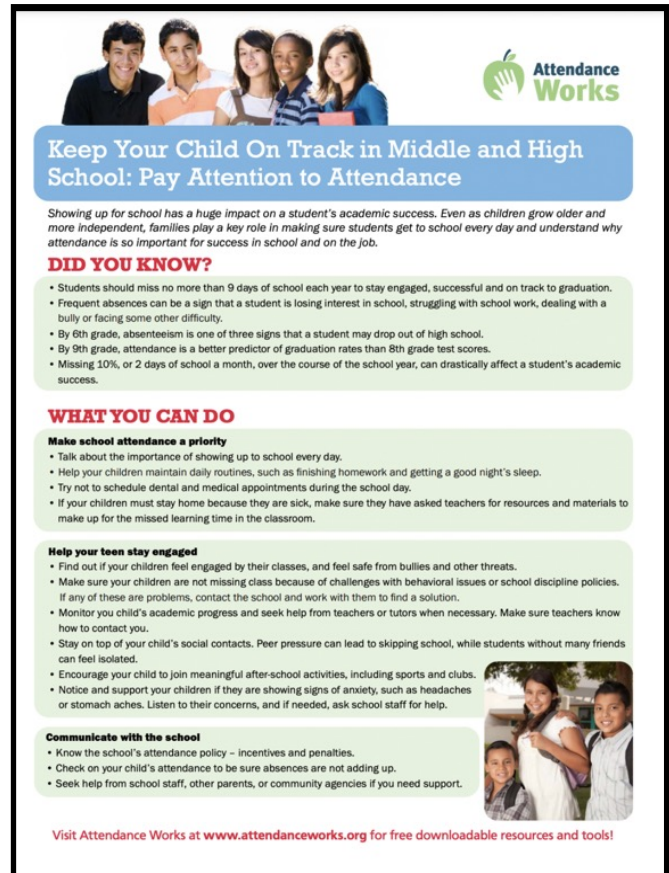
What you can do

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Keep your child healthy and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up.
- Monitor your child's absences.
- Try to schedule nonurgent medical appointments and extended trips when school isn't in session.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- If you are concerned that your child may have a contagious illness, call your school nurse or health-care provider for advice. Ask the teacher for ideas to support missed learning time.

Chronic absence is missing 2+ days every month over the course of a school year.

September	October	November	December	January
M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S
February <th>March</th> <th>April</th> <th>May</th> <th>June</th>	March	April	May	June
M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S	M T W Th F S S

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!



Attendance Works

Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School: Pay Attention to Attendance

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- Frequent absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other difficulty.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10%, or 2 days of school a month, over the course of the school year, can drastically affect a student's academic success.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day.
- Help your children maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- If your children must stay home because they are sick, make sure they have asked teachers for resources and materials to make up for the missed learning time in the classroom.

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your children feel engaged by their classes, and feel safe from bullies and other threats.
- Make sure your children are not missing class because of challenges with behavioral issues or school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, contact the school and work with them to find a solution.
- Monitor your child's academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors when necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage your child to join meaningful after-school activities, including sports and clubs.
- Notice and support your children if they are showing signs of anxiety, such as headaches or stomach aches. Listen to their concerns, and if needed, ask school staff for help.

Communicate with the school

- Know the school's attendance policy – incentives and penalties.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not adding up.
- Seek help from school staff, other parents, or community agencies if you need support.

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!

2. Use medical guidance on when to send children to school if they are sick.

Parents sometimes struggle with the decision about when they should send their children to school. The [Health Handouts](#) from Attendance Works provide clear and specific guidance to help parents make the decision about when to send children to school and when to keep them home.

3. Work in partnership with the school and teachers.

Start the school year by introducing yourself to your child's teacher or other school staff. Try to prioritize parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings and other ways to learn about how you can be involved with the school. Make sure you are receiving emails, newsletters, etc. If your child is having issues with attendance, approach the school about what is going on so they can help you problem-solve.

4. Reinforce the value of showing up in other contexts and places.

When you emphasize showing up for other activities, appointments, family events, etc., on time, children better understand the importance of good attendance whether in school or other events and activities. Similarly, modeling this behavior as an adult (“Let’s hurry, I have to get to work on time too!”), helps children see that good attendance reflects responsibility and accountability and is an important lifelong skill.

5. Communicate with your child about how they are doing in school.

Communicating with your child is an important part of supporting success and understanding the best ways to help your child look forward to school every day. What are they enjoying? What worries them. How can they prepare to have a good day with their teachers and other students? The more you know, the more you can help them problem-solve if they have concerns.

6. Engage in learning with your child at home and in the community.

Planning for and participating in fun learning activities with your child at home and in the community is another way to send a message to your child that learning is important. This time can also build confidence and provide background knowledge that will help your child in school.

7. Build your network and relationships with other families.

Every family benefits from having an extended network of people they can rely on for support. Whether it’s a ride when plans fall through, help with childcare, or other kinds of assistance, connecting with other families, neighbors, and community members can make a big difference. Building these relationships helps families manage their busy lives, and it’s okay to reach out for help—strong connections make everyone stronger.

8. Support extracurricular activities and other connections to the school.

When students are excited about extracurricular activities, etc., it gives them one more positive reason to look forward to school. Activities such as sports, music, theater, clubs, or volunteer work give them something meaningful and enjoyable to anticipate each day, beyond just academic classes. As a result, they often feel more motivated to attend school, maintain better attitudes toward learning, and build friendships through shared interests.

9. Offer incentives and encouragement for regular attendance.

Families can support students by using simple, consistent recognition and incentives to reinforce that showing up to school every day matters. Use regular praise in the mornings or before bed to encourage children and teens. Notice improvement (“You made it on time to school every day this week!”) and celebrate streaks with fun activities, special attention, etc. Share success with other family members so they can support the student too.

10. Help others in your community who might be struggling with school attendance.

Think about ways you can support others in your neighborhood. Some communities have found success with implementing a [Walking School Bus program](#), a fun, supportive way for communities to help all children get to school safely and on time. In areas where families depend on transportation to get to school, consider creating car pools and networks with central drop-off/pick-up points. In some places, parents have even gotten commercial driver’s licenses (CDLs) to help with getting groups of children to school.

WHAT CAN MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY DO?

Everyone can play a role in ensuring students get to school. Reaching out to different constituencies in your communities with compelling reasons for them to be a part of the solution and concrete ideas about how they can help will encourage communities and partners to take action.

- When convening a group or task force on student attendance, bring together leaders from across a range of organizations such as, social services, public safety, faith-based, etc. This will ensure addressing attendance needs is a priority across the community.
- Use attendance data to create a common understanding of needs and engage multiple stakeholders to help determine root causes, and possible solutions, collaboratively.
- City and county resources, from social service agencies to transit authorities, can help break down barriers that are keeping children from coming to school ([Attendance Works](#)).
- [The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#) identified a need to double down on career-connected learning for all students. When students feel like their learning is relevant to their future, they are more likely to attend. Business and industry leaders can support attendance efforts by creating or expanding opportunities for students to make connections between learning and their postsecondary goals.

The Attendance Works one-pagers below outline successful, actionable information and ideas that a range of community partners can use to support the work of schools and families.

- [Business Leaders](#)
- [City and County Officials](#)
- [Faith Communities](#)
- [Family and Family Organizations](#)
- [Housing Organizations](#)
- [Volunteers and National Service](#)
- [Health Care Providers](#)
- [Philanthropists and Foundations](#)

WHAT STEPS CAN SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS TAKE TO REDUCE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM?

School and district leaders can leverage the Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) framework, resources, and tools to assess current practices and identify possible next steps.

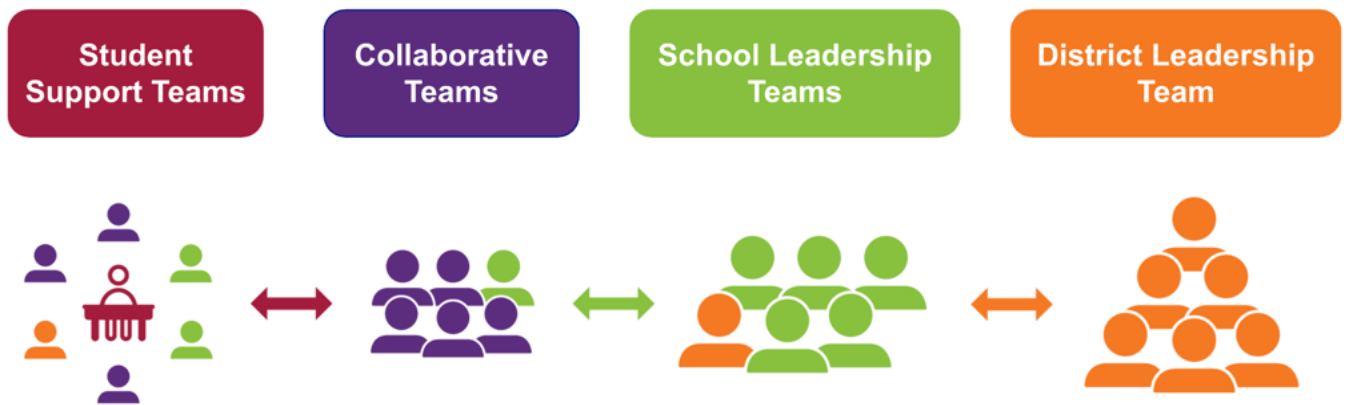
NEMTSS FRAMEWORK

Rather than siloing attendance work, schools and districts can maximize efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging existing systems to deliver social, emotional, behavioral, mental health, and academic supports. NeMTSS provides a coherent framework to systemize these efforts and reduce redundancy. For more information about the NeMTSS essential elements and related tools, visit the [NeMTSS website](#) and [Framework document](#). Regional Support Teams are available to provide free, collaborative support to all Nebraska public school systems in implementing these essential elements and considerations. Find your team contact information [here](#).



INFRASTRUCTURE & SHARED LEADERSHIP

- Confirm that the existing teams (District Leadership Team, School Leadership Teams) have the right representation to address attendance (i.e., academics, SEBL, SPED, family engagement, transportation, health, counseling, community partners). Add representation as needed.



- Clarify roles and responsibilities for attendance-related tasks within existing teams (e.g., data pulls, contacting families, progress monitoring, intervention follow-up, etc.).
- Align core beliefs, values, norms, school-wide expectations, and district policy to foster a positive attendance culture. Engage stakeholders (e.g., students, caregivers, staff, community members, etc.) in adopting and revising these.
- How will this be communicated to new staff members? Families moving into the district? New students? Multilingual learners?
- Embed attendance functions into existing district and school leadership team agendas (e.g., DLT, SLTs, SSTs) so attendance is examined alongside academics, behavior, and SEBL.

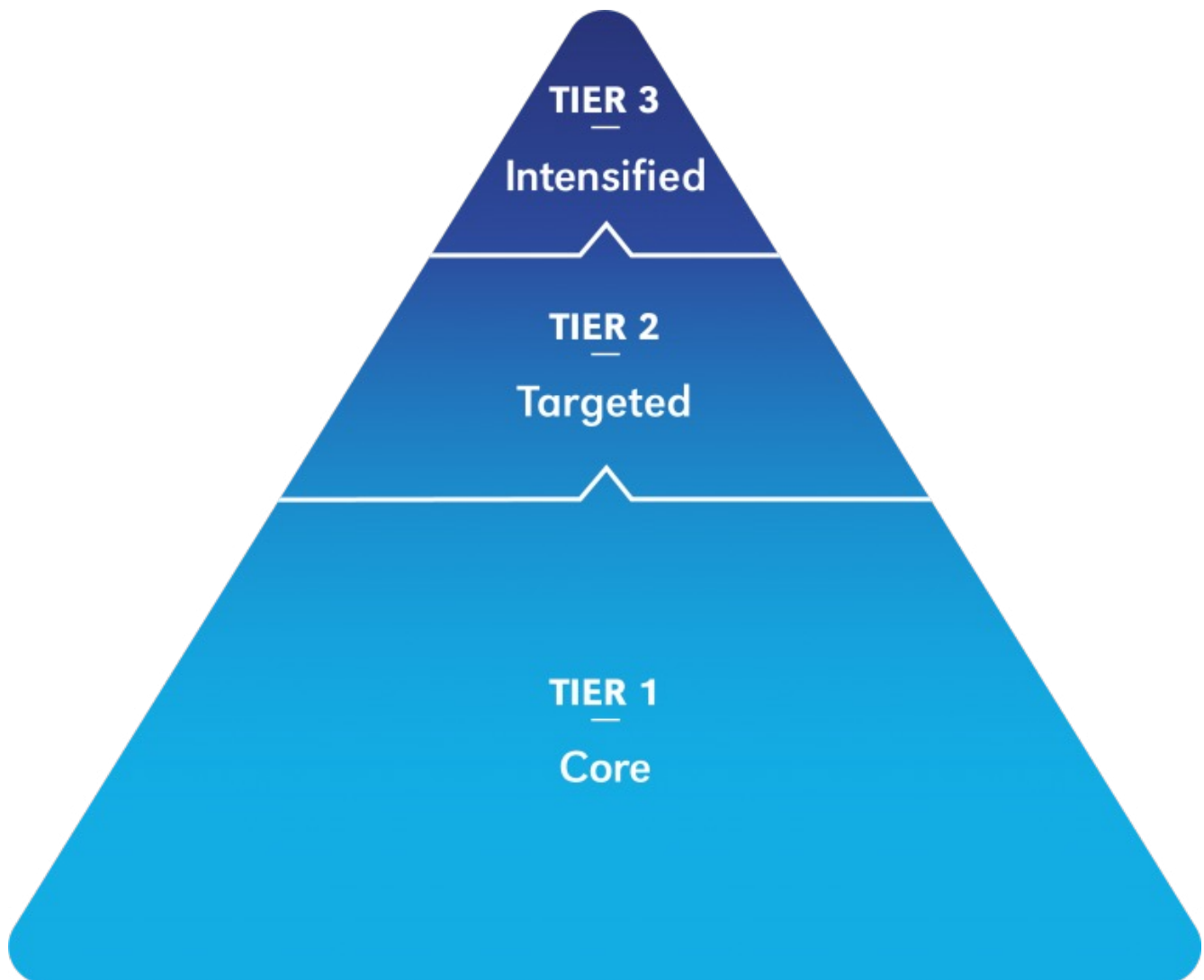
TEAMS	FUNCTIONS	ROUTINES
Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve students, their families, and caregivers in problem-solving. Analyze individual student attendance on a case-by-case basis alongside academic, social, emotional, and behavioral data. Connect with outside community agencies or supports for individual students. Provide recommendations and monitor students' response to Tier 3 Intensified interventions on a weekly basis. 	Weekly
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze Tier 1 Core supports from the classroom, grade, and grade-band attendance data to adjust teaching and learning. Use attendance data to identify students in need of Tier 2 Targeted interventions and determine support plans. Provide recommendations and monitor students' response to Tier 2 Targeted interventions on at least a biweekly basis. 	Biweekly (weekly is optimal)
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually set and revise goals and plans for the year. Ensure fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices across the layered continuum of support. Monitor school-level attendance data and continuously improve school-level implementation. Share data related to attendance with stakeholders in an understandable format, at minimum, biannually. Ensure resource allocation (i.e., monies, staff, scheduling) is considered and decided based on data. 	Monthly

District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually set and revise goals and plans for the year. • Develop a unified attendance message aligned with school-wide expectations, values, and/or core beliefs. • Connect with community partners to address systemic attendance barriers. • Ensure fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices across the layered continuum of support. • Monitor district-level attendance data and continuously improve district-level implementation. • Share data related to attendance with stakeholders in an understandable format, at minimum, annually. • Ensure resource allocation (i.e., monies, staff, scheduling) is considered and decided based on data. 	1-3 times per quarter
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- Integrate attendance priorities into existing improvement plans, rather than creating a separate attendance plan.
 - » *Examples:*
 - ◇ By spring 2028, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade-level benchmarks on NSCAS math will increase from 47% to 55% as a result of increased engagement practices and a reduction in chronic absenteeism.
 - ◇ By the end of the 2025–26 school year, at least 65% of students will meet their projected MAP Reading growth targets, increasing from 54% last year. To achieve this, the school will reduce the number of students missing 10 or more days from 18% to 12% and monitor attendance as part of monthly school leadership team data reviews.
 - ◇ By spring 2030, the percentage of multilingual learners meeting or exceeding NSCAS ELA proficiency will increase from 22% to 35%. To support this, the school will decrease chronic absenteeism among ML students from 21% to 12% through targeted Tier 2 Targeted supports related to relationships, connections, and family engagement routines.
 - » *Guiding Questions:*
 - ◇ How does improving attendance directly support the priority goal(s) or outcome(s) we’ve already identified?
 - ◇ What attendance pattern (e.g., chronic absence, risk group) most impacts our academic data?
 - ◇ Which grade levels or student demographic groups show the greatest overlap between low attendance and low performance?
 - ◇ What is a realistic, yet meaningful, attendance improvement target that aligns with our existing priority goal(s) and outcome(s)?
- Provide professional development directly related to attendance priorities and improvement plans, including how to address the root causes identified leading to concerns.

LAYERED CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

- Take inventory of Tier 1 Core, Tier 2 Targeted, and Tier 3 Intensified academic and non-academic supports that are available to increase student engagement and attendance.
- Identify evidence-based strategies that can be implemented to improve attendance across the tiers of support.
- Confirm that Tier 1 core includes intentional, relationship-centered practices that build a positive culture of belonging, using restorative approaches with both adults and students to support engagement and attendance.
- Ensure evidence-based, Tier 1 Core academic instruction is occurring. Collect data on levels of engagement and effectiveness of instruction.
 - » Instructional webinars and resources available:
 - ◇ [Foundational Literacy Instructional Routines Webinars](#)
 - ◇ [Academic Language](#)
 - ◇ [Evidence-Based Strategies Series: Guiding the Targeted Improvement Plan Process](#)
 - ◇ [Program Comparison Tool](#)



DATA-BASED DECISION-MAKING

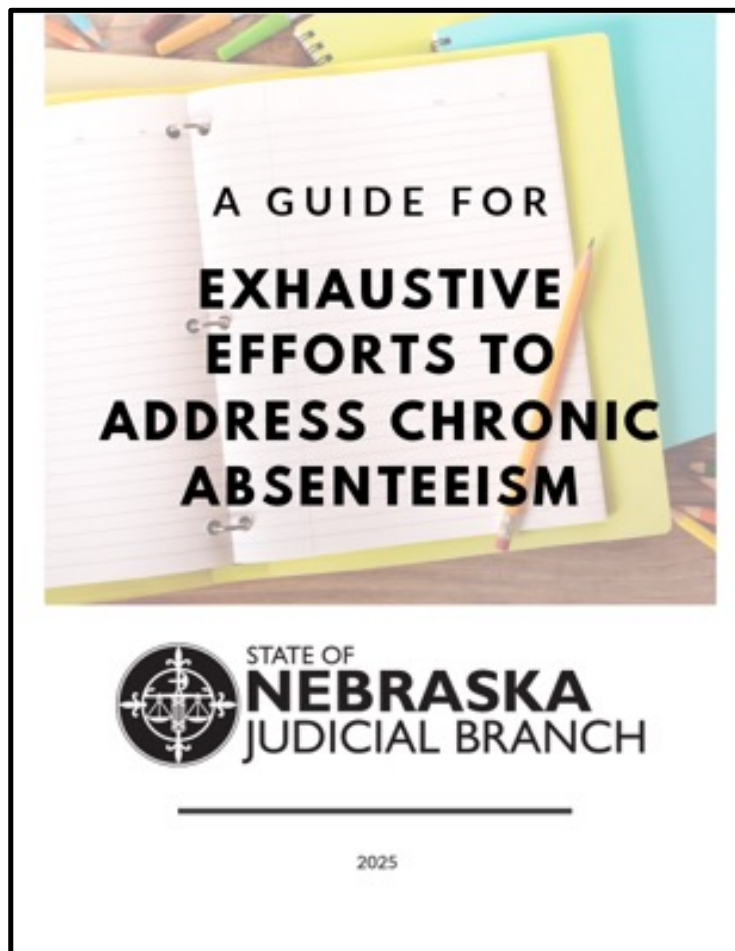
- Revisit your data within a balanced assessment system and identify what data you have available to address attendance concerns (e.g. student learning and wellbeing data, demographic data, perceptual data, etc.). It's important to recognize that attendance issues go deeper than students not coming to school and are often the result of a systems problem.
 - » Ensure you are eliciting student voice and perspectives on barriers to attendance.
 - » Consider using the [School Refusal Assessment Scale](#).
 - ◇ [Administering the Assessment](#) resource.
- Engage in a self-assessment to identify needs related to attendance.
 - » [School Leadership Team](#) (*Attendance Works*)
- Establish agreed upon attendance thresholds that initiate data decision-making rules.
 - » *Note:* These thresholds should be based on your unique local-context and your district's data.
 - » *How to Find Local Thresholds:* Run an attendance report from last year for all students in the district and sort by their number of days missed. Identify the 75-80% mark (e.g., 800 of 1,000 students have 4 or less days missed in one year). This becomes your Tier 1 Core threshold. Use the guiding questions below to further build your data decision-making rules.
 - ◇ *Tier 1 Core:* For 75–80% of our students, how many days are typically missed, and does this reflect a level of attendance that would not require additional support?
 - ◇ *Tier 2 Targeted:* For roughly 10–25% of our students, at what number of days missed does attendance begin to signal a need for Tier 2 Targeted support?
 - ◇ *Tier 3 Intensified:* For the 1–10% of students with the highest absences, what threshold of days missed indicates a need for intensive, Tier 3 Individualized support?
 - » Utilize the NeMSS Problem-Solving Model or other district-adopted model when analyzing attendance data. See **Appendix C** for the enlarged model from the [NeMTSS Framework Document](#).
- Engage in root cause analysis for groups of students, as well as on an individual basis, to surface underlying barriers (e.g., transportation, health, climate/belonging, family circumstances).
 - » [Identify the Root Causes of Absence](#) (*Attendance Works*)
 - » [Understanding the Root Causes of Student Absence](#) (*Attendance Works*)
 - » [Student Absenteeism Worksheet](#) (*Attendance Works*)
 - » See **Appendix D** for an Attendance Works graphic depicting four categories related to root causes: barriers, aversion, disengagement and misconceptions.
- Review process data (i.e., implementation data, fidelity data) not just attendance outcomes, to determine which supports were delivered with fidelity and monitor their impact.

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

- Develop a unified attendance message aligned with school-wide expectations, values, and/or core beliefs.
- Elevate student voice and engagement, as they are the primary stakeholder in their education. Consider adding student representation to existing teaming structures where appropriate.
 - » Check for recent Coffee Connects in the [NeMTSS Media Library](#) related to student voice, engagement, etc.
- Coordinate with community partners (e.g., transportation, public health, mental-health providers, after-school programs) to address systemic barriers that cause absences.
- Celebrate improvements within recognition systems (e.g., positive postcards home, classroom celebrations, staff shout-outs), emphasizing progress, not perfect attendance.
- Gather student testimonials about attendance supports that worked for them and what made a difference.

EXHAUSTIVE EFFORTS

After exhaustive efforts to address chronic absenteeism through a tiered approach have been made, school districts may need court involvement. The Juvenile Probation Services Division of the Nebraska Judicial Branch created a [Guide for Exhaustive Efforts to Address Chronic Absenteeism](#), which includes necessary partners, engagement activities, forms, and draft collaborative planning requirements prior to court involvement.



WHAT TERMINOLOGY DO WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND USE?

Nebraska absenteeism data is collected via K-12 attendance records, which classifies absences into one of nine categories: tardy, early departure, disciplinary action, illness or medical leave, a recognized noninstructional activity, unavailable transportation, any other excused absence, skipping school, and any other unexcused absence. Chronic absence, defined as missing 10% of in-class time per academic year (including all absences; excused, unexcused, and suspensions), equates to missing 17.5 of 175 learning days in Nebraska, in a typical school year. Differently, truancy only accounts for unexcused absences (Attendance Works, 2016).

Attendance Expectations: Students must be counted in attendance when they are present or participating in remote learning on days when school is in session. A student must be counted present only when he or she is at the school, is present at a school-sponsored activity, or is participating in remote learning, which is supervised or coordinated by a member or members of the school staff. This may include authorized independent study, work-study programs, field trips, athletic contests, music festivals, student conventions, instruction for homebound students, summer school instructional programs, or similar activities when officially authorized under policies of the local school board. It does not include “making up” schoolwork at home or activities supervised or sponsored by private individuals or groups. [NDE Rule 2](#)

Attendance Data: Records maintained by the school to monitor and analyze attendance patterns, used to guide decision-making and interventions.

Chronic Absenteeism: A student is chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of the school year for any reason, **excused and unexcused**. [AQuESTT Business Rules](#)

Early Intervention: Proactive actions taken to identify and support students at risk of attendance problems before patterns become severe.

Educational Neglect: The failure of the parent or caregiver to access an appropriate educational program and assure regular attendance for a child age 6 or older, but younger than age 13, unless the parent or caregiver has complied with one of the exceptions listed in [Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-201](#).

Excessive Absence: A student is excessively absent if they miss 20% or more of the school year for any reason, excused or unexcused. [Nebraska Revised Statute 79-209](#) and [79-2121](#)

Excused Absence: An absence documented for legitimate reasons such as illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, religious observances, or school-approved activities.

Unexcused Absence: An absence without a valid reason or appropriate documentation. This includes absences acknowledged by a parent/guardian that do not meet excused criteria. See more [here](#).

Tardy: A student is considered tardy when arriving late to school or class beyond the designated start time without an approved excuse.

Tiered Support: A framework that provides increasing levels of intervention based on individual student needs.

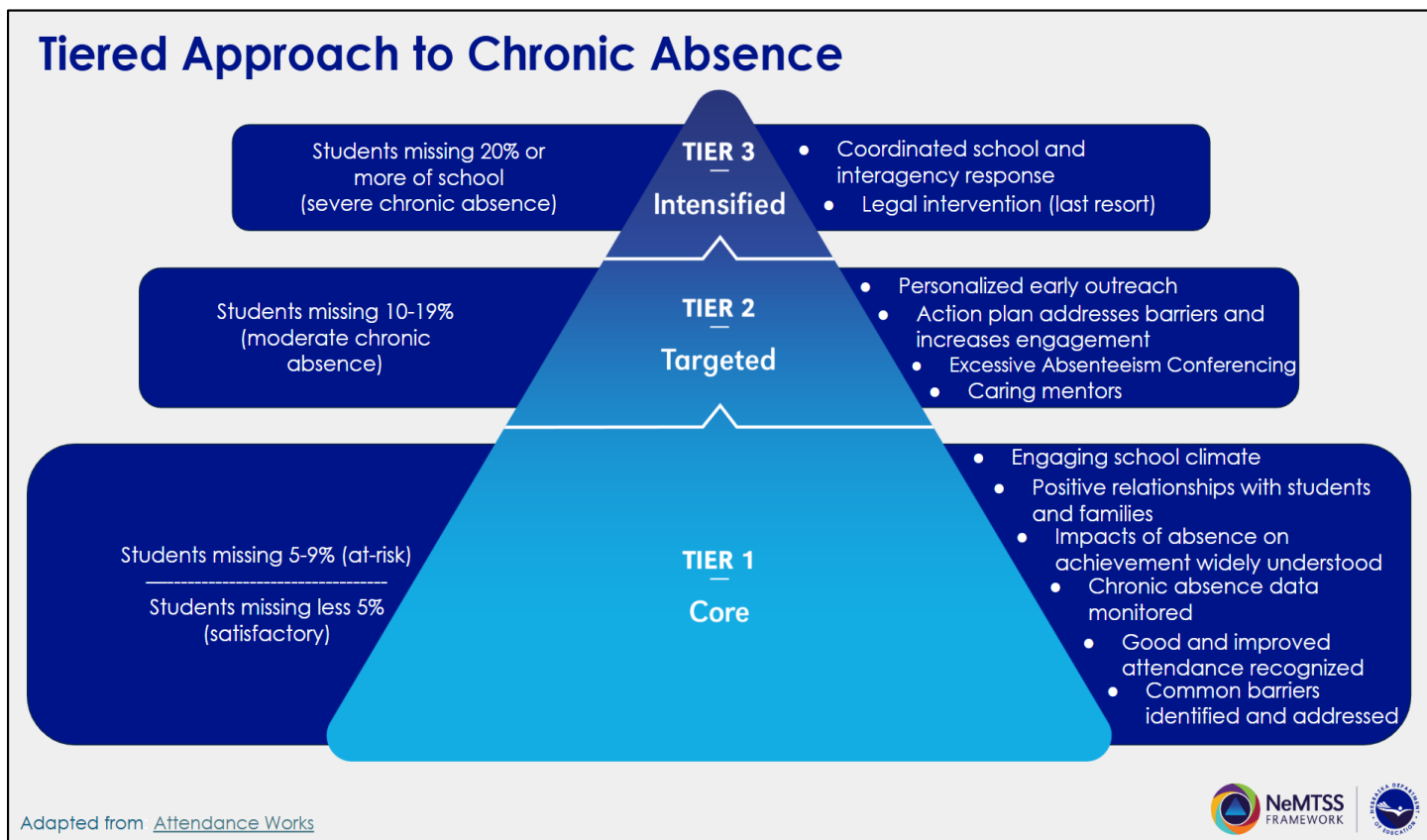
Truancy: A student is truant when a student is absent from school without a valid excuse as defined by law and district policy.

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES

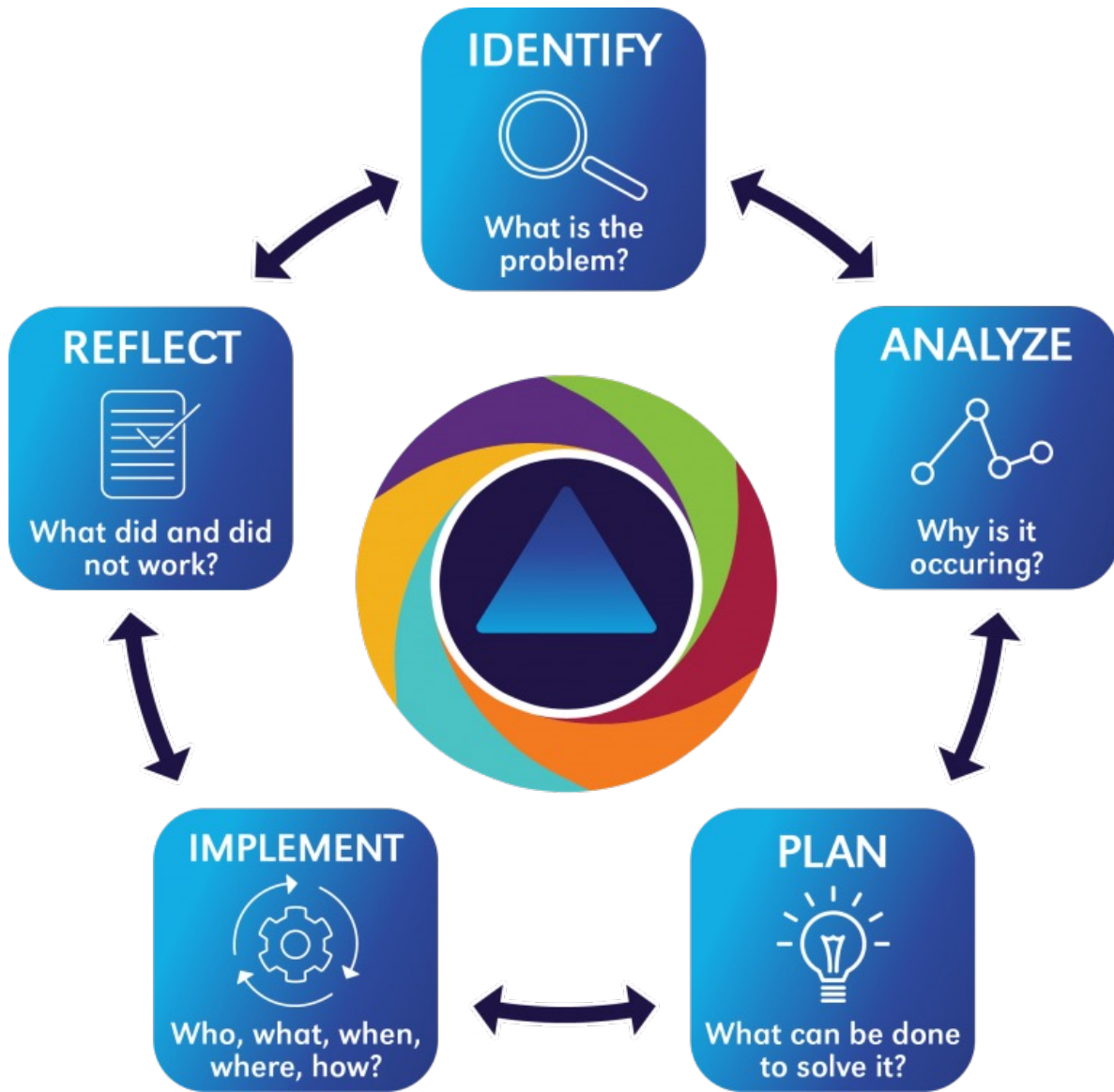
- [Nebraska Legislature](#), Compulsory Attendance Statutes: N.R.S. §79-201 through §79-210
- NDE, [Family And Community Engagement Framework](#)
- NDE, [Chronic Absenteeism Resources](#)
- Future Ed, [Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism Post-Pandemic](#)
- [Nebraska Resource and Referral System](#)
- [Find Help Resources](#) and [Community Collaboratives](#)
- Check and Connect: [Readiness Tool for Exploring Check & Connect](#)
- Institute of Education Sciences, [Evidence-Based Practices to Address Chronic Absenteeism](#)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Tiered Approach to Chronic Absence



Appendix C: NeMTSS Problem Solving Model



For more information, see [the NeMTSS Framework Document, Appendix C.](#)

Appendix D: Root Causes to Attendance

Barriers

- Chronic and acute illness
- Family responsibilities or home situation
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Lack of access to needed services
- System involvement
- Unpredictable schedules for learning
- Lack of access to tech
- Impact of trauma
- Violence in the community

Aversion

- Struggling academically and/or behaviorally
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Social and peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Unfair disciplinary and suspension practices
- Undiagnosed disability and/or disability accommodations
- Caregivers had negative educational experiences

Disengagement

- Lack of challenging, engaging instruction
- Bored
- No meaningful relationships to adults or peers in school
- Lack of enrichment opportunities
- Lack of academic and behavioral support
- Failure to earn credits
- Need to work conflicts with being in high school

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing two days per month doesn't affect learning
- Lose track and underestimate TOTAL absences
- Assume students must stay home for any symptom of illness
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions don't count as absence



www.attendanceworks.org September 8, 2025

Understanding Your 2025 Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score v.10.10.25



What is the Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score?

- Definition: The difference between the percentage of school/district's eligible, chronically absent students and the current year's target percentage based on the 2021-2022 baseline rate.
- Goal: Reduce chronic absenteeism rates by half over 10 years, or a 5% improvement on the baseline rate each year.
- 2024-2025 will be year three for most schools and districts.

Who is Chronically Absent?

- Students are chronically absent when they are absent for 10% or more of their days in membership at a school/district.
- Eligibility: A student is not eligible for this indicator until they are enrolled at a school/district for at least 10 days. Prekindergarten students are not considered in this indicator.
- For more student attendance information, visit [Title 92, Chapter 2: Uniform System of Accounting](#).

$$\text{Chronic Absenteeism Rate} = \frac{\text{Chronically Absent Students}}{\text{Eligible Students}}$$

How are the Baseline and Target Rates Established?

- Baseline Rate: Calculated by dividing the number of chronically absent students in a school/district during the 2021-2022 school year by that year's eligible students.

$$\text{Baseline Rate} = \frac{\text{2021-2022 Chronically Absent Students}}{\text{2021-2022 Eligible Students}}$$

- Target Rate: The long-term goal is to reduce chronic absenteeism 50% over 10 years. The target rate for the current year will be based on a 15% reduction of the baseline rate.

$$\text{Target Rate} = \text{Baseline} - (\text{Baseline} \times 0.05 \times \text{Number of Years Since Baseline})$$

How is the 2025 Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score calculated?

- Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score: The difference between the current year's chronic absenteeism rate and the target rate.
- Positive Score: The current year's rate is less than the target rate.
- Negative Scores: The current year's rate is greater than the target rate.

$$\text{Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score} = \text{Target Rate} - \text{Current Year's Chronic Absenteeism Rate}$$

- Indicator Scoring Examples: Below are examples showing the calculation of two school/district's target rate and chronic absenteeism reduction score.

	2021-2022 Baseline Rate	15% of Baseline Rate	2024-2025 Target Rate	2024-2025 Actual Rate	Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score
Example 1	17.10%	2.57%	14.53%	19.20%	-4.67
Example 2	39.30%	5.90%	33.40%	32.60%	+0.80

What are the reduction numbers for each of the 10 years?

- Below are the yearly reduction goals and target rates for those same two schools/districts over the course of the long-term goal.
- In the last two columns of the table below, there is space for you to add your school/district data. You can find your baseline year rate, and each of the most recent year's rates in your AQuESTT Reports in the Legacy Portal.

Year	Percent Reduction	Example 1		Example 2		Your Data	
		Reduction Goal	Target Rate	Reduction Goal	Target Rate	Reduction Goal	Target Rate
Baseline Year (21-22)		17.10%		39.30%			
Year 1 (22-23)	5%	0.86%	16.26%	1.97%	37.34%		
Year 2 (23-24)	10%	1.71%	15.39%	3.95%	35.37%		
Year 3 (24-25)	15%	2.57%	14.53%	5.90%	33.40%		
Year 4 (25-26)	20%	3.42%	13.68%	7.86%	31.44%		
Year 5 (26-27)	25%	4.28%	12.82%	9.83%	29.47%		
Year 6 (27-28)	30%	5.13%	11.97%	11.79%	27.51%		
Year 7 (28-29)	35%	5.99%	11.11%	13.76%	25.54%		
Year 8 (29-30)	40%	8.84%	10.26%	15.72%	23.58%		
Year 9 (30-31)	45%	7.70%	9.40%	17.69%	21.61%		
Year 10 (31-32)	50%	8.55%	8.55%	19.65%	19.65%		

How is the Tenet Adjustment Score calculated?

- The chronic absenteeism reduction score is then translated into a standardized score. To calculate a school/district's standardized score, use the formula and figures from below.

$$\text{Standardized Score} = \frac{(\text{Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score} - \text{Grade-Band Mean Score})}{\text{Grade-Band Standard Deviation}}$$

Grade-Band	Chronic Absenteeism Reduction	
	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Districts	0.68	7.02
Elementary Schools	1.21	5.38
Middle Schools	0.15	8.48
High Schools	-0.13	12.62

Section 8 Equipment

All equipment will be checked out to individuals at the beginning of the season by the head coach in charge. The student will be responsible for this equipment and should be prepared to pay for the cost of replacement if it is not checked in at the end of the season in reasonable condition.

It is the responsibility of the student to check in the equipment at the end of the season or immediately, should he or she quit a sport/activity. If a student fails to check in his or her equipment, he or she will pay for the cost of replacement.

At no time should a student wear equipment checked out to him or her except for practice or contests. Any student found to be wearing school equipment can expect to be treated as possessing property not belonging to him or her.

Section 9 Team Travel

Ainsworth athletic teams, activities groups, and staff members travel to and from athletic events and activities by the school bus or school vehicles. All members of a team or group will return from a contest or activity by the same school transportation provided for taking them to the contest or activity. EXCEPTION: A student may continue on a trip with his or her parents or return home with them by using an Activities Travel Release Form. This form must be completed and personally handed to the Coach/Sponsor after the event is completed and upon departure with the student. Failure to do so will result in the student riding school-provided transportation from the activity. This does not in any way permit a friend of the student to ride home with parents.

Coaches/Sponsors will file this release with the Activities Director upon return to Ainsworth. These forms will be provided to students/parents at each competition and also in the main secondary office. The respective coaches and sponsors will determine traveling squads.

Section 10 School Dances

A school sponsored dance is a school activity subject to all provisions of the Student Activity Code, and is a privilege available to students meeting all requirements for participation.

General Rules of Student Conduct at Dances. In addition to all rules of student conduct in the Student handbook, students attending dances shall adhere to the following rules of conduct:

1. Who Can Attend: Only students of Ainsworth Community Schools and their approved dates may attend. The purpose of these activities is to allow students to attend with a date and ACS students in a formal setting, not to invite friends or family relatives from other schools.
 - a. Students currently attending Ainsworth High School or another Nebraska high school who have not been restricted from attending extracurricular

activities at Ainsworth High School or their own school are generally considered appropriate dates or invited guests.

- b. Persons who are older than 20 years of age and not attending high school are generally considered to not be appropriate dates or invited guests for our school dances.
 - c. Some school dances may be restricted to students attending specified grades levels at Ainsworth Community Schools. For any dances at the middle school level, only students attending Ainsworth Community Schools in the grade(s) for which the dance is being held may attend.
 - d. Students who are currently suspended from school or from extracurricular activities may not attend.
 - e. The school reserves the right to exclude persons who may or do cause a disruption or detract from the event. Dates or invited guests not attending our school are expected to follow the same rules of conduct which apply to our students.
 - f. Rules for dances may restrict students and their guests from leaving the dance until the dance ends without written parental permission on a form provided.
 - g. Students or their guests who engage in inappropriate behavior, whether on or off of the dance floor, may be asked to leave.
 - h. Guest Permission Forms for non-Ainsworth Community Schools students may be required for dances.
2. Prohibited Substances: Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and tobacco are prohibited. Anyone using prohibited substances or showing the affects of use will not be allowed admission or, if discovered after admission, be removed from the dance and law enforcement will be contacted.

Students and their dates may be required to submit to a breathalyzer prior to gaining entrance. Those who choose not to submit to a breathalyzer will not gain entrance. Law enforcement will be contacted if there is reasonable suspicion that the student or a student's date is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

3. Appropriate Attire: Students and their guests must meet the dress code requirements established for each dance. Teachers or administrators will make the final decision as to whether or not a student's attire is appropriate. Students will be asked to change unacceptable items, which may mean that the student may have to return home to change the inappropriate clothing. It is advisable to check in advance of the dance with the Principal or staff sponsor for the event if you are uncertain about your attire.

Eligibility for Selection as Royalty. Nomination and selection as royalty for school sponsored dances is an honor awarded by students to those of their peers that exemplify the highest standards of integrity and achievement. Students nominated for dance royalty must have

demonstrated through their conduct, academic achievement and activities that they have represented, and will represent, themselves, their classmates, and their school in a manner which reflects outstanding effort, commitment to their school and fellow students, and integrity and good citizenship in the school and in the community. The students selected to be the “royalty” for the Homecoming and Prom or any other school sponsored dance or activity shall meet that general standard as determined by the administration and, in addition, meet the following specific academic, activity and conduct standards:

1. Achievement, Citizenship and Conduct Qualifications:
 - a. The student may not, starting with their first day of school their junior year, including summer/vacation time for Homecoming and Prom Royalty Candidates, first day of school their sophomore year for prom servers, have violated the Substance Abuse/Activity Suspension Policy 5555.
 - b. Students who have received more than one out of school suspension during the school year in which they are eligible to be a Homecoming and Prom Candidate or Prom Server will not be eligible to be a Homecoming or Prom Candidate or Prom Server.
 - c. Students who move into the district will be held to the requirements beginning their first day of school at Ainsworth Community Schools in which the Qualifications would apply to them.
 - d. The student must be enrolled as a full time student at Ainsworth Community Schools.

2. Pre-Qualification of and Acceptance by Student: All students nominated for dance royalty shall meet with the Principal. At the meeting the Principal will review the eligibility requirements for the honor of dance royalty. The student will be required to confirm that the student meets all eligibility requirements. The student will be required to confirm his or her acceptance of the nomination for dance royalty and the responsibilities of such an all school honor. The Principal or designee may contact local, county and/or state law enforcement and judicial authorities to confirm a student’s eligibility for the honor of being nominated for or awarded dance royalty.

3. Specific Dance Eligibility and Selection Requirements:
 - a. Homecoming Royalty (Queen, King, Princess, Prince):
 - Only a senior girl shall be eligible to be Queen/Princess and only a Senior boy shall be eligible to be King/Prince.
 - To be eligible, a candidate must agree to attend the entire Homecoming Dance and represent the school properly.
 - The royalty will be chosen from the qualified nominees by secret vote of the student body during Homecoming week. Crowning will be held at the fall sports event deemed to have the largest attendance.

- b. Prom Royalty (Queen, King, Princess, Prince):
- Only a Senior girl shall be eligible to be Queen/Princess and a Senior boy shall be eligible to be King/Prince. The candidates may not have been previously selected as royalty at another school sponsored dance.
 - To be eligible, a candidate must agree to attend the entire Prom Dance and represent the school properly.
 - The royalty will be chosen from the qualified nominees by secret vote of the student body.
 - Only sophomore students will be chosen to be Prom Servers.

Section 11 Relationships Between Parents and Coaches/Sponsors

Both parenting and coaching are very difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding between coaches and parents, both are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a more positive experience for everyone.

Parents have the right to know the expectations placed on them and their children. Coaches and sponsors have the right to know that if parents have a concern, they will discuss it with the coach at the appropriate time and place.

Parents' Role in Interscholastic Athletics and Other Extracurricular Activities

Communicating with your children

- Make sure that your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
- Be helpful but don't coach them. It's tough not to, but it is a lot tougher for the child to be flooded with advice and critical instruction.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them develop the feeling for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
- Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. If they are comfortable with you win or lose, then they are on their way to maximum enjoyment.
- Don't compete with the coach. If your child is receiving mixed messages from two (2) different authority figures, he or she will likely become disenchanting.
- Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitude of your child with other members of the team.
- Get to know the coach(es). Then you can be assured that his or her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his or her leadership.