ACE-Attendance, Culture and Engagement

What is ACE?
*Attendance, Culture and Engagement Defined
*Who are the Team Members

ACE Strategies and Supports
*Weekly school-based team meetings
*Outreach and Engagement

What is my role in the ACE model?

Q&A
1. Take an inquiry stance
2. Ground statements in evidence
3. Assume positive intentions
4. Stick to protocol
5. Start and end on time
6. Be here now (in person or remote)
7. Keep Equity in mind
3. The Chronic Absenteeism Rate will decrease from 43.9% in 2020-21 to 12.9% in 2023-24, an annual reduction of 10.3 percentage points.
**Chronic absence** is defined as missing 10 percent or greater of the total number of days enrolled during the school year for any reason. It includes excused and unexcused absences as well as suspensions. Chronic absence operates as an early warning metric. Identifying students who miss 10% of the school year at any point in the school year is an effective early indicator that a student is headed off track.

**Average Daily Attendance (ADA)** is the average rate of the number of students who are in attendance for a specific date.
1. Hartford Public School students in grades PreK-12 will be present in school daily in order to attain **90% average daily attendance by the end of September 2021**

2. To reduce the percentage of students that are chronically absent within PreK-12 in the Hartford Public Schools from 42% in June 2021 to 27% in September 2021.
Defining Key Terms

What is Attendance?

BEING PRESENT and ACCOUNTED FOR

Regular school attendance is critical for ALL students and is a leading indicator in educational equity.

Attendance is students voting with their feet. It reflects what is happening at school: how safe they feel, how welcoming the school is, whether the learning is exciting and relevant.
Two Core Strategies for Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention

**UNIVERSAL SYSTEMS**

Using the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) lens, establish universal systems that strengthen the attendance culture in our schools.

**TARGETED INTERVENTIONS**

Establish and target resources and partnerships to provide interventions that meet the unique needs of students who are chronically absent/truant or at risk.
School Culture
refers to the way teachers and other staff members work together and the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions they share.

How we function in our schools.

School Climate
refers to the school's effects on students, including teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students.

The way our schools make us feel.
Think of a time when you had a positive experience in school as a student or as a parent?

What did you see?

What did you hear?

How did it make you feel?
Whole School Supports

Foundational "Whole School" Supports

- Physically healthy learning environment
- Enrichment activities and clubs (with virtual options)
- Positive relationships between school staff, students and families
- Support for all families to facilitate learning at home
- Access to tech equipment and connectivity
- Access to Learning Supports
- Predictable daily/weekly routines, rituals and celebrations
- A culture of continuous improvement
- Welcoming, socially-emotionally safe, trauma-informed school climate
- Home rooms and/or Advisory (with virtual options)
- A schedule of classes and where/how they are held
- Active engagement of parents and students in planning and problem solving

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Tiered School Supports

**Tier 3: Intensive Intervention**
Supports for students facing the greatest challenges to getting to school and engaging with the school community. Tier 3 strategies include: case management with other systems, mental health services, and referral to community agencies such as the JRB, DCF or alternative educational providers.

**Tier 2: Early Intervention**
Strategies that layer in support, strengthen relationships, and take a problem-solving approach for students who are at-risk of chronic absence and/or moderately chronically absent and who have behavioral or academic challenges. Tier 2 strategies include: attendance improvement plans, mentors, prioritized participation in expanded learning, personalized outreach and home visits when absences start to add up, peer support or small group skill-based opportunities such as advisory or seminar, Check-In/Check/Out, and customized curriculum supports.

**Tier 1: Universal Prevention**
Specifically promote and encourage good attendance and social emotional health for all students. Tier 1 strategies include: positive communication about attendance and behavioral expectations, taking attendance in a caring manner, recognition of good and improved attendance, positive relationships, trauma-informed restorative practices, differentiated instruction, social emotional curriculum and regular monitoring of attendance, behavior and academic data.
Engagement refers to strong relationships between students, teachers, families, and schools, and strong connections between schools and the broader community.

Student engagement is a key element of a positive school climate and research makes correlation to academic achievement.

Involvement and connection to schools.
## Defining Key Terms

### What is ACE for Staff?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Culture and Climate</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Activity Monitoring</td>
<td>• Identifying current state</td>
<td>• Building Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Case Management</td>
<td>• Assessment of needs</td>
<td>• Maintaining Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving Practices</td>
<td>• Implementation of supports</td>
<td>• Providing a variety of relevant and meaning activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Codifying Procedures</td>
<td>• SEL strategies</td>
<td>• Create structures for student voice and choice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explanation of expectations</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Modeling behavioral norms</td>
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**ACE District Attendance Team:**

Focus on Attendance, Culture and Engagement

Support School Teams

Implement District ACE calendar

Utilize Normed agenda

Review data and identify barriers in order to provide school-based supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Directors of School Leadership</th>
<th>Coach and supervise Principals to: promote a schoolwide culture of attendance, ensure attendance teams are functioning effectively, utilize PowerSchool data for decision making, implement a tiered approach and set realistic attendance goals and targets.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data and Accountability</td>
<td>Ensure district and school teams have access to timely real live student data (attendance, academics, behavior) for problem-solving and strategy development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Make explicit the connections on how instruction and engaging curriculum impacts attendance and reinforce the role teachers play in promoting a positive culture of attendance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Ed and Pupil Services</td>
<td>Ensure that Social Workers, ELL specialists and special education staff are actively participating in school teams and proactively connecting with chronically absent students and their families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family and Community Partnership</td>
<td>Establish partnerships with community partners on behalf of individual schools and on the needs of their chronically absent and disengaged students and demographics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications and Marketing</td>
<td>Develop the districtwide message re: attendance, implement marketing campaign, develop materials and resources for schools and community partners, promote district quarterly attendance challenges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>Ensure that school nurses and community health partners support school teams.</td>
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## Everyone Has a Role

### ACE School Based Teams:

Organize and facilitate School Wide strategies to promote:

- **Attendance**
- **Social and Emotional Health**
- **Positive School Climate**
- **Engagement**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principals</strong></td>
<td>Ensure their school adopts and implements a comprehensive, supportive, tiered approach to improving engagement and attendance in all grades. They lead the ACE team, cultivate a school-wide culture of attendance, systematically use chronic absence, attendance and engagement data, develop staff capacity to adopt best practices, and advocate for resources and policies to improve attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td>Are the first line of prevention and intervention and viewed as the most trusted resource by parents. They make attendance a normal topic in all interactions with students and parents, build awareness about how many absences are too many, encourage students to come to school every day, and create engaging classroom opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Counselor &amp; Social Worker</strong></td>
<td>Support a positive collaborative relationship between the school, students and families. They provide counseling, case management and are a resource person for students and families in need of services.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Engagement Specialist (SES)</strong></td>
<td>Outreach and engagement partners that conduct outreach and home visits, assist students and their families in resolving issues that impede attendance and engagement in school; work with the school team to improve the climate and culture and provide support and training on Trauma-Informed Restorative Approaches, Practices and Environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and Community Support Service Provider (FCSSP)</strong></td>
<td>Student and family engagement partners that monitor student attendance, conduct home visits, coordinate parent access to internal and external resources and information; create a welcoming environment; facilitate the exchange of information between families and community and build collaborative community relationships in support of a tiered system of support for students and families.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral Technicians (BT)</strong></td>
<td>Behavior management system partners that analyze discipline/behavioral data to guide intervention and identify students in need of services; supports the implementation of educational and social-emotional curriculum, behavior plans and positive programming to increase students’ behavioral skills.</td>
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</table>
Everyone Has a Role

Families PreK-5:

• Try not to schedule appointments during the school day.

• Notice if your child is showing signs of anxiety such as head aches or stomach aches. Listen to their concerns and ask school staff for help as needed.

• Know the school attendance policy-incentives and supports.

• Check your child’s attendance to be sure absences are not adding up.

• Seek help and support when needed.
Everyone Has a Role

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Set a regular bedtime 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 children to their teachers and classmates before school starts.
• Develop backup 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.
• Keep in mind that 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 and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
• If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teacher for resources and ideas to continue learning at home.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?

- **CHRONIC ABSENCE**
  - 18 or more days
- **WARNING SIGNS**
  - 10 to 17 days
- **SATISFACTORY**
  - 9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.
Everyone Has a Role

Families 8-12:

• Talk about the importance of showing up everyday.

• Help your students maintain daily routines.

• Find out if they feel engaged in class and safe at school.

• Monitor their academic progress and seek help from the school when needed.

• Encourage joining meaningful after school activities and clubs.

DID YOU KNOW?

• Students should not miss more than 9 days each year to stay engaged, successful and on track for graduation.

• Frequent absences can be a sign that student is losing interest in school, struggling with schoolwork, 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 scores.

• Missing 10%, or 2 days of school per month, over the course of a school year, can drastically affect a student’s academic success.
Outreach and Engagement Protocol
Moving to Early Intervention/Prevention

And

Utilizing Outreach and Engagement

To

Develop positive, problem-solving relationships with students and families
## Chronic Absence Outreach and Engagement Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absence 2</th>
<th>Classroom teacher calls parent/guardian to inquire as to the reason for the absence(s) and offers support and encouragement through positive messaging.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence 3</td>
<td>If teacher connects with parent/guardian at absence 2, letter sent and the teacher makes a second personalized phone call. If teacher is unable to connect with parent/guardian a home visit is conducted by an ACE Team member (teams will assign individuals to do the home visit based on their personnel resources) to positively connect, offer support and encouragement, inquire as to the reasons for absences, and discuss school-based and community supports to address absences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence 4</td>
<td>If teacher connected with parent/guardian and/or personal contact was made through a home visit, a third personalized phone call is made to celebrate attendance improvement. If no personalized contact, send letter to parent/guardian.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence 5 - 7</td>
<td>Continue attempts to locate student and contact the family. Offer supports to parents and identify barriers to attendance if contact is made. If no personalized contact, conduct second home visit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence 8</td>
<td>Send letter to parent/guardian to schedule SST/PPT/SAT meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence 9 - 10</td>
<td>If no response by parent/guardian, conduct a home visit, contact the District Residency Investigator for an investigation and/or consider filing a DCF 136 for Educational Neglect.</td>
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Questions?