



# Chronic Absenteeism

## TARGETED INDICATORS

REAL TIME ATTENDANCE DATA AT THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT LEVEL  
GRADUATION RATES  
DROPOUT RATES  
HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES



### OREGON EXAMPLE

The Tribal Attendance Pilot Project (TAPP) was developed and funded for the 2016-2017 academic year to reduce chronic absenteeism among Native American/American Indian students. The nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon selected area schools for collaboration. Districts hired Family Advocates with deep community roots to support students, families and schools in reducing chronic absenteeism. Working directly with families, tribal leaders, school district administrators and educators, Family Advocates take on a number of tasks aimed at increasing school attendance rates. These include arranging school events, creating promotional materials, attending tribal activities, transporting students and working directly with classroom teachers, students and parents.

### FUNDING OF THE STRATEGY

TAPP is funded by the Oregon Legislature, administered by Oregon Department of Education. Funding levels of \$150,000 per district in 2016-17 were continued to the 2017-19 biennium.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGY

Published studies find a strong relationship between missing school for any reason and devastating outcomes such as academic failure, students dropping-out, low graduation rates and contact with the juvenile justice system. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent of school days in a year, including excused, unexcused, and discipline-related absences. Severe chronic absenteeism is when students miss 20 percent or more of school days (Ehrlich, Gwynne, Pareja, Allensworth, Moore, Jagesic, & Sorice, 2014; Buehler, Tapogna & Chang, 2012; Connolly & Olson, 2004). Chronic absenteeism can be hidden in attendance figures. For example, a school with a 92 percent Average Daily Attendance rate can have dozens of chronically absent students.

Best practice requires that schools use an attendance team to analyze real-time individual attendance data at least bi-monthly to identify and respond early to student absences for any reason. It is also recommended that schools build Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to both prevent and respond to student absences. Many schools in Oregon have experience with building and implementing MTSS if they have adopted Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports or Response to Intervention systems. Some schools are able to leverage existing MTSS teams to also function as attendance teams.

Access to and consistent analysis of real-time attendance data is necessary for schools to intervene early and effectively to reduce chronic absenteeism for individual students. But schools must also address absences that are the result of systemic issues students face. These include: transportation, food insecurity, health related barriers, institutional racism, lack of support for newcomer families, large class size and lack of relevant coursework.



## EVIDENCE THE STRATEGY IS EFFECTIVE

Using attendance data to identify students for targeted interventions by school and community teams has been linked to early, modest improvements in chronic absenteeism. The following strategies have been shown to reduce chronic absenteeism even further:

- Building access to real time accurate attendance data
- Quick intervention by attendance teams
- Routine analysis and response to data, at least twice monthly
- Multi-tiered System of Support to prevent and respond early to student absences
- Root cause analysis of causes for chronic absenteeism using local information
- School policies to promote student and family engagement

## WHY WAS THE STRATEGY CHOSEN?

Chronic absenteeism is highly correlated with delays and or failure to graduate. Real-time attendance data helps attendance teams identify the students at risk for chronic absences and aids in early and effective intervention. Population trend data can be analyzed by teams to identify and address the root causes of chronic absenteeism within each school and for each student and family. The 2013 report, [Condition of Education for Oregon's Tribal Students](#) revealed that 33% Native American students were chronically absent (missing 10% or more of school days) compared to only 19% of all other students who were chronically absent. This resulted in the funding of the Tribal Attendance Pilot Project (TAPP).

## THE STRATEGY IS WORKING IN OREGON

TAPP works collaboratively with tribes and districts to create a school environment where staff is knowledgeable about the local tribal history and culture, incorporates culturally responsive pedagogies into their classrooms and provides opportunities for both tribal students to share their experiences and non-tribal students to be receptive to these.

TAPP Advocates are striving to improve and match the attendance rates of American Indian/Alaska Native students to non-tribal students in the schools and possibly increase the overall school rates simultaneously.

The pilot project completed its first year of funding in 2016-17 and preliminary data show the attendance rates are making modest gains at some, large gains at other schools targeted by the project. To learn more visit the Tribal Attendance Pilot Projects on the Oregon Department of Education's website.

For more information, visit [www.oregon.gov/ode](http://www.oregon.gov/ode).

## LINKS TO RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

### Oregon Statewide Chronic Absenteeism Plan

[http://www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/2016---december---chronic-absenteeism-report-\(hb-4002\).pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/2016---december---chronic-absenteeism-report-(hb-4002).pdf)

### Tribal Attendance Pilot Project

<http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Pages/Tribal-Attendance-Pilot-Projects.aspx>

### Oregon Not Chronically Absent Data

<http://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Attendance-and-Absenteeism.aspx>

### Attendance Works

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

### Every Student, Every Day: A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/index.html>

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

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