

Tribal Attendance Pilot Project (TAPP)

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SILETZ VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL & TOLEDO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Tribal Attendance Pilot Project



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TAPP Objective:

We believe that student attendance is impacted by many factors. Elementary students are more dependent on their families to support them with productive school attendance behavior. Because of this we are hoping to build sustainable system that will support families, reduce barriers, help develop connections to community partners and foster an eventual independence to continue productive attendance patterns.

Through this grant, our two schools along with the district and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians have committed to partner in such a way that we will look at data together to determine if the program is working. We believe that our partnerships will need to continue to be strengthened and that we will need to include new partners as we move forward. We believe these new partners will become more evident as we begin the journey.

Lincoln County School District funded two positions to serve as Family Advocates in two of our schools with higher populations of tribal students. We envision these positions as a support to students and their families as we work together to increase attendance rates and decrease the amount of tardies.

We acknowledge that a great part of the beginning work will be to provide information to families regarding the importance of education, what impact attendance has on kids learning and progress, and what constitutes a chronic attendance pattern.

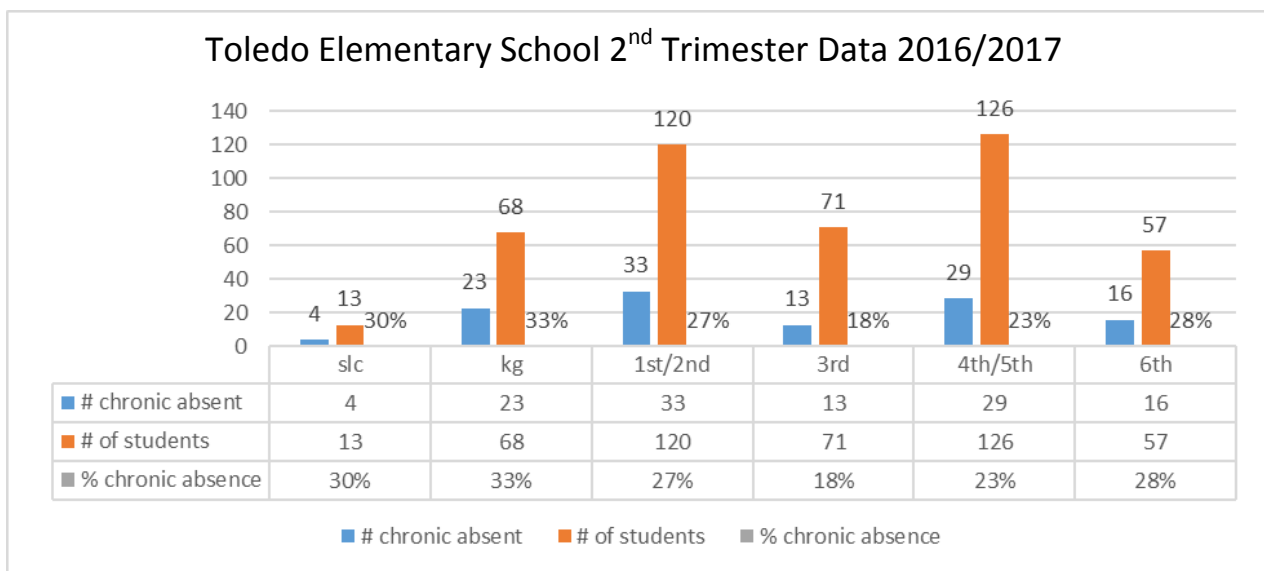
We are seeing that the impact to some students' attendance is not demonstrated purely by absentee data. Some of our students are seeing an impact to their education because of their tardiness to school. Both tardiness and chronic absenteeism impact students and their ability to progress academically because both create time away from instruction. It is our intent that the Family Advocate positions have flexible hours so that the employees can attend events that are happening after school day and have an ability to meet with kids and families at times that might be more convenient for them. The Family Advocate will need to be present at events that our families are involved in so that they have the ability to build relationship and trust which will foster their ability to come alongside and help support the

family. The Family Advocate position may also organize specific activities to bring families and students together.

TAPP Goal:

Ensure that all American Indian/Alaska Native students and families receive school, district and community supports that improve student attendance and school participation through culturally responsive activities and support programs that are designed to effectively reduce and/or eliminate chronic absenteeism, excessive tardiness and truancy of American Indian/Alaska Native students within the two identified schools.

Profile of School



(Data provided per student information system at school.)

Second trimester data was a demonstration of the effects of freezing weather conditions, Noro virus 1 and 2 and a very active flu season. Though we did not continue to grow our attendance rate, we held steady never falling below 93% for the entire school. Outreach provided many opportunities to connect with parents and engage in productive conversations about attendance. 2015-2016 of the 481 students at ToES 19 students or 25.31% were identified with chronic absenteeism patterns. 2016-2017 of the 477 students at ToES 21 students or 22.71% were identified as having chronic absenteeism patterns.

Communication Plan:

Siletz Valley Fire District supported TAPP with outreach activities and attendance highlights on the community reader board and BOSS radio provided radio broadcast supporting TAPP initiatives. Our first letters home just remind parents/guardians of what is required for students regarding attendance and explain attendance expectations. Second letter home was more direct and a letter of agreement was included; Students with less than 85% attendance received letters advising them they had been referred to truancy office.

TAPP Efforts:

- Support students with activities that build interest in school
- Outreach for families that present with chronic absences
- Work with staff to better understand history of family issues
- Celebrate attendance successes
- Encourage teachers to talk about attendance in the classrooms
- Analyze data using the school system and assess patterns
- Letters home
- Greeting students as they arrive daily.
- Personal calls home
- Meet with parents
- Supervise refocus room
- Attend parent coffees and parent nights
- Acknowledge students with good, great and improved attendance
- Staff afterschool clubs; drama and fantasy football
- Referral to community partners, mental health, i.e. wellness providers
- Support cultural events, like Native American storyteller and Native dancers
- Outreach activities
- Assist teachers with attendance reports and follow up

TAPP Success

We had a second grade student who has increased his attendance from 21 absences first quarter to one in the third quarter. His tardies have decreased from an hour late to around five minutes. Most importantly, he went from being so far behind that he was being considered to be held back and he received multiple daily refocused to going days without one. He is on track and happy. I have worked hard with this family to create a culture and safe place for him in our school. There were custody problems as well as resource issues. We provided many services incentive plans and support to his family. He is what this grant stands for.

Lessons Learned as a Family Advocate

- Normalize the school experience for each student
- Feed the children even though they have been fed
- Listen to the children even though they have been listened to
- Draw on personal experience to guide you through difficult relationship activities
- Listen to everything and everyone but save only the pertinent facts
- Being flexible might be different than what being flexible was before
- Make a personal connection with each student

TAPP Barriers/Challenges

- School cultures are very different from each other
- Challenges in developing in depth collaborative relationships with all partners
- Schools worked independently of each other on chronic attendance activities and issues
- Many minds with many strategies, for example about how to fix attendance issues
- Hiring TAPP staff
- Internal organizational structures

Role Partners Played:

- District office administrative assistant was the purchasing agent and also provided information
- School district provided training
- Sodexo Food Services provided family night food at no cost
- District provided tracking and oversight of TAPP expenditures and planning
- Siletz Valley Fire District supported TAPP with outreach activities and attendance highlights on the community reader board
- BOSS radio provided radio broadcast supporting TAPP initiatives
- JC Thriftway Markets donated food for school activities
- Mrs. Santa Claus provided gifts to students that otherwise would have none
- Toledo Elks provided Lincoln County Food Pantry food boxes
- Newport Altrusa provided money for new shoes
- 21st Century helped coordinate transportation and afterschool care
- H.E.L.P provided clothing and paid fees for sports registration

Other participating partners included:

- Health Advisory Council
- Toledo Police and Fire
- Lincoln County Sheriffs
- Title 1
- Title 6
- Lincoln County Health and Human Services
- Olalla Center

Sustainability Plan:

As the district anticipates budget cuts, there is no assumption at Toledo Elementary for funding of a Family Advocate position to carry on TAPP activities and supports. There is a plan to add some of the more successful activities to the duties of current staff. Sodexo, LCSD food service, was willing to provide food for most of the dinners and that would be sustainable. We plan to continue attendance celebrations for 2017-2018 school year. We also hope to share strategies which were instrumental in increasing student attendance at our TAPP sites.