The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools

May 2012
What is Chronic Absenteeism?

- Definition 1)
  - Missing 10% of School

- Definition 2)
  - Missing a Month or more of School
    - (20/21 Days)
### How Prevalent is Chronic Absenteeism?

#### Chronic Absenteeism Rates in Five States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent Chronically Absent</th>
<th>Number Chronically Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>23% (2009-10)*</td>
<td>129,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>18% (2010-11)**</td>
<td>30,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>11% (2010-11)**</td>
<td>85,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>10% (2009-10)**</td>
<td>302,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>6% (2010-11)**</td>
<td>18,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Missing 10% or more of enrolled school days

** Missing 10% of enrolled school days, for those who attended at least 90 days

*** Students absent 21 or more days-of those enrolled all year
What is the Magnitude at the Most Impacted Schools?

Maryland 2010-2011
Number of Schools with Large Numbers of Students Chronically Absent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronically Absent Students</th>
<th>50 or more</th>
<th>100 or more</th>
<th>500 or more</th>
<th>Greatest Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronically Absent Students</th>
<th>100 or more</th>
<th>250 or more</th>
<th>500 or more</th>
<th>Greatest Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the Cumulative Impact of Chronic Absenteeism?

Florida 6th Grade Cohort
Cumulative Days Absent Over Seven Years of Middle and High School by Quintile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quintile</th>
<th>Mean Number of Days Absent</th>
<th>Means Days Absent Per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 20%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle 20%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 20%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle 20%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 20%</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Does Chronic Absenteeism Vary by Grade?

Chart 3 - Chronically Absent Students By Grade
Chronic Absenteeism is Concentrated in a Sub-Set of Schools

Chart 6 - Percent of All Chronically Absent Students (Florida 2009-10)
Chronic Absenteeism widens the achievement, graduation and post-secondary enrollment gaps.
Impact on Achievement

Chart 7 - Impact of Days Absent on Achievement Scores
Florida 1st Time 9th Graders, 2000-01
Impact on High School Graduation and Post-Secondary Enrollment

Chart 9 - Final High School Outcomes by 10th Grade Absenteeism

Graduated: 86% All Students, 88% <=9 Absences, 64% >=10 Absences
GED or Certificate: 4% All Students, 3% <=9 Absences, 11% >=10 Absences
Active: 1% All Students, 1% <=9 Absences, 2% >=10 Absences
Dropout: 10% All Students, 8% <=9 Absences, 23% >=10 Absences
Ever Enrolled in PS: 73% All Students, 74% <=9 Absences, 53% >=10 Absences
Why Don't Students Go to School?

- **Can't-**
  - something prevents them from going to school

- **Won't-**
  - avoiding something at school or on the way to/from school

- **Don't-**
  - decide they would rather be elsewhere
Solution Step 1-Measure

- Add to US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights Survey
- Include as required data reporting element in re-authorization of ESEA
- Require as state action in Race to the Top applications
Solution Step 2-Monitor

- Facilitate the spread of early warning systems at state and school district level

- Make early warning systems a key component of school improvement grants
Solution Step 3 - Act

- Inter-agency efforts at state and local level led by Governors and Mayors

- Infuse second shift of adults into highest need schools as success mentors (Americorps, United Way, etc.)

- Make implementing a comprehensive plan combating absenteeism a part of required activities in school improvement grants
Where Can I Get a Report?

- www.every1graduates.org
- www.getschooled.com