Unveiling the Consequences of Chronic Absenteeism in High School

Gabby Goddard, Kristian Noden, and Liisa Moilanen Potts

Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

LLO Capstone

Dr. Eve Rifkin, Capstone Advisor

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Dedication

This capstone project is dedicated to our families, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been our foundation throughout this journey. To Cohort 13: thank you for countless moments of laughing and learning together that kept us grounded. We extend our deepest gratitude to our professors, especially Dr. Eve Rifkin and Dr. Matthew Campbell, whose guidance, feedback, and collaborative spirit have been invaluable. Your insights and expertise have profoundly shaped this research on chronic absenteeism, and we are immensely grateful for the intellectual and personal growth we have experienced under your mentorship. Finally, thank you to all the educators working today in American high schools. We admire and appreciate your dedication to championing educational opportunities for all students even when it gets difficult.

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Executive Summary

Student attendance in American high schools has been falling over the past decade, signaling a national crisis: if students aren't in schools, they aren't learning, and if they're not learning, they aren't going to be able to achieve the level of success promised them by the schools in which they're enrolled. Kentlake High School is no exception, having been recently challenged by increasing chronic absenteeism that threatens the achievement of students across all grade levels.

Our research team investigated support structures, school culture, and attendance trends utilizing the "Framework for Incentive Selection, Implementation and Evaluation" by Balu and Ehrlich (2018). Through mixed-methods research including qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis of attendance data, we found that while the school prioritized attendance compliance, it lacked effective school-based systems to incentivize attendance and cultivate a positive school culture. To address these findings, recommendations include implementing comprehensive attendance incentive programs, fostering a more supportive school culture, and implementing targeted interventions tailored to identified trends. By leveraging evidence-based strategies, Kentlake High School can mitigate chronic absenteeism, creating a more conducive learning environment for all students.

Introduction

` Kentlake is a large, comprehensive high school located in Covington, Washington. The school serves almost two thousand students in grades 9-12, drawing from four local communities. The school provides a full complement of courses from academics to arts to Career and Technical Education (CTE). Kentlake has a strong athletic program, and many club opportunities for students focused on the arts, academics, social events, and philanthropy.

For the past few years, Kentlake's administration and staff have been challenged by declining attendance issues as student absenteeism has increased. Fewer and fewer students across all grades (9-12) have been attending school regularly, exacerbating Kentlake's overall attendance concerns. The school and district leadership teams have put much capacity into reversing this issue to get more students to attend regularly, but these efforts have consistently yielded far less impact than anticipated. The school administration team continues to research and implement new protocols and seek solutions to get students in the building so they can provide the high-quality educational opportunities their students and families (and the staff) expect.

This project started out with a request from the administration to support their upcoming reading intervention goals. However, after talking through school needs, the Kentlake team and the research time realized that the reading work could only be useful if children were *in school* to receive that instruction. The purpose of this capstone project pivoted to support Kentlake to develop a stronger plan for improving attendance by utilizing a broad scope of research and unpacking and studying past efforts. Additionally, we hope this capstone project will contribute to the larger body of research regarding the increase in absenteeism in the current American K-12 education landscape.

Background

Kentlake High School was built in 1997 to accommodate the quickly growing Kent School District (KSD). Kent, Washington is a midsized town in northwest Washington about thirty minutes south of Seattle, with a population of nearly 150,000. Over the past three decades, the area has seen considerable growth in population, with many moving into the region to work for large, high-paying tech companies such as Amazon, Boeing, Microsoft, and Google (Kent

Washington Government, 2022). Seattle and its immediate neighboring cities are notorious for having incredibly high rents-- so much so that lawmakers have attempted to stem increases (Demkovich, 2024). The high rents in the Seattle area have pushed lower-paid workers seeking cost effective housing into cities further south, such as Kent (Kim, 2023).

The economic profile of Kent is a patchwork of different socioeconomic groups, with neighborhoods made up of multimillion dollar single-family homes sitting adjacent to neighborhoods of densely packed lower-rent apartment buildings and Section 8 housing for economically struggling families. The city (and school district) limits encompass urban, suburban, and rural areas that are poorly connected by public transportation. Kent School District's low-income population for the 2023-2024 school year is 56.5% (OSPI Report Card), underscoring the deep need for extra services (such as free and reduced lunch) some students might not be able to receive should they not attend school regularly.

The area is known for having a population that is diverse in many ways, from economic diversity to a broad diversity of culture and language. 2020 census data reveals the city to be 37.44% white, 12.49% black/African American, 23.44% Asian, 16.44% Hispanic/Latino, and 10.52% Mixed race/Pacific Islander/ or "other," mimicking the heterogeneity of the area at large. Adding to the heterogeneity of the area, with more than 30% of the population foreign born (double the rate of the state), Kent houses one of the immigration hubs for refugees and immigrants coming to Seattle and the Pacific Northwest (United States Census Bureau, 2023). Because of this structured support, children from all over the world come to Kent continually during each year, entering schools in the district at different times throughout the school year. During the 2023-24 school year, over 130 languages were spoken in the homes of Kent School District students (KSD Fast Facts). The school district does not have any mechanism to

anticipate exactly how many students will matriculate into the schools in this manner, so their advance enrollment predictions are often not accurate, making projected staffing (and funding) a challenge. New students to the district come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences; for some students, entering KSD is their first time being in a formal school setting. Teachers in the district know that to build classroom and school community, they must think differently than they would in a district with a more stable population. Students are coming and going from a myriad of cultures very often, changing the makeup of classrooms and schools continuously throughout each school year.

Kent School District covers 72 square miles of King County (about twice the area of Manhattan), and includes seven municipalities, both urban and rural (City of Kent Homepage, 2024). The fifth-largest school district in the state of Washington with over 25,000 students, Kent School District is composed of 28 elementary and six middle schools which feed into four comprehensive high schools and four alternative schools, which are referred to as "academy schools," (one online school, two alternative schools, and one school catering to homeschool/alternative students) (KSD Fast Facts, 2024). Kent School District students are ethnically diverse, representing the overall demographics of the area: in the 2022-2023 school year, 72.1% of Kent School District students were identified as non-white, as shown in Figure 1.

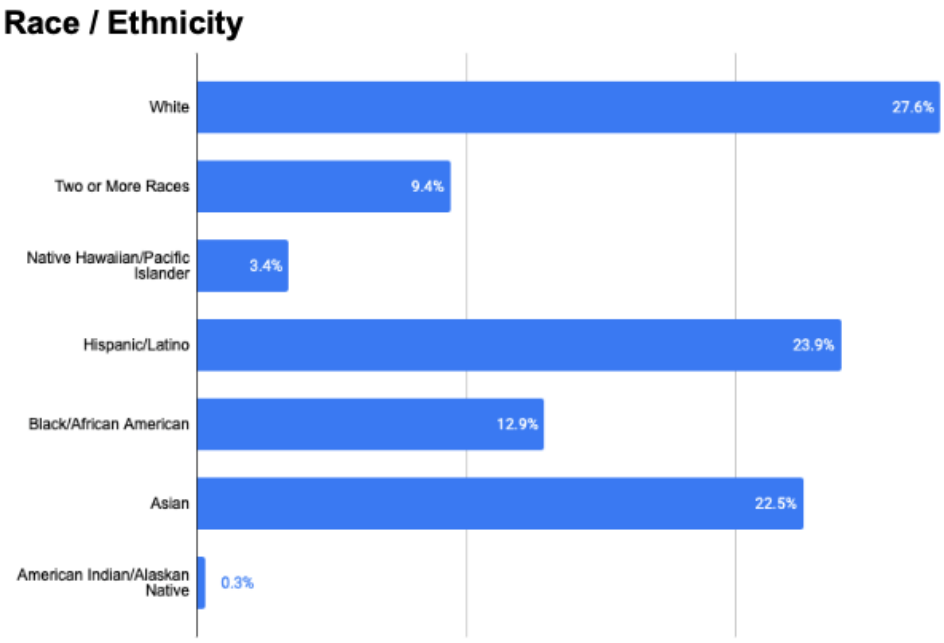

Figure 1. Race and Ethnicity of students enrolled in the Kent School District for the 2022-2023 school year (OSPI Report Card).

Kentlake's vibrant and diverse student population is a representation of the larger school district community, as shown in Figure 2.

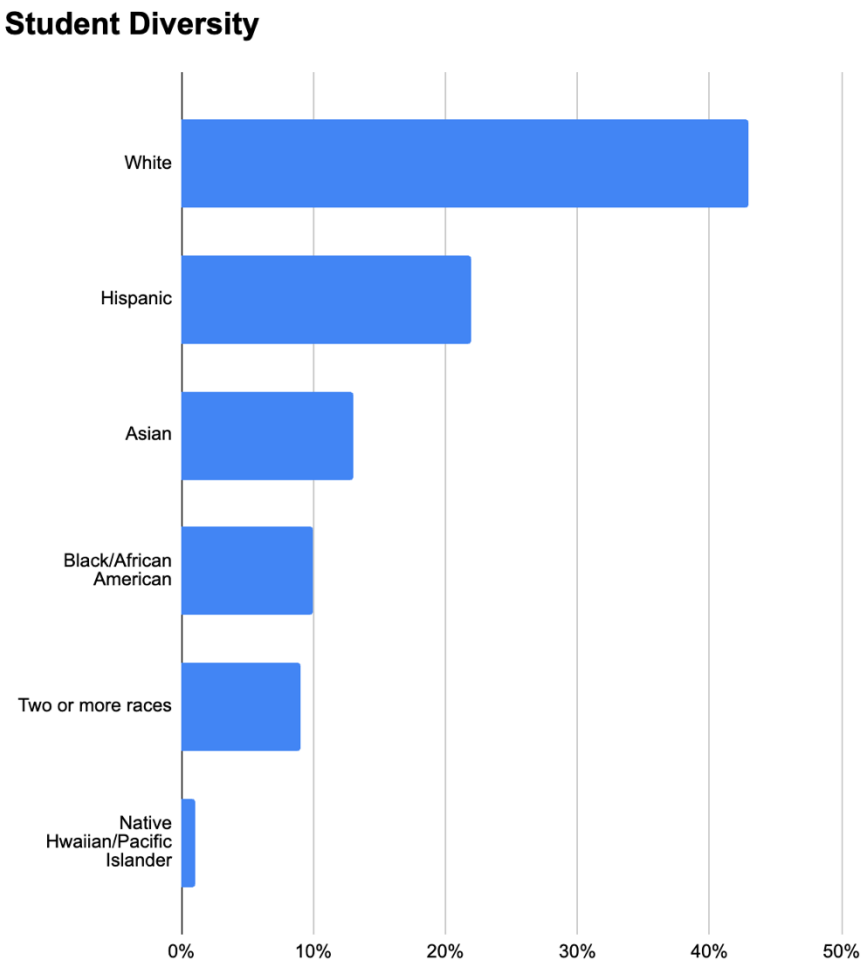

Figure 2: Racial demographics Kentlake students during the 2023-2024 school year.

In terms of program inclusion, about 12.7% of students across KSD receive Inclusive Education supports (IEP and 504 support), 25.6% of students are multilingual, and 8.2% qualify for the Highly Capable programming (KSD Fast Facts, 2024). Kentlake's student community is also varied in terms of programmatic needs (see Figure 3). Over fifty percent of students are low income, 16% are English language learners, and 16% receive Inclusive services (i.e., 504 plans and/or Special Education services). This composition of needs is not unusual for schools and

districts in the area and does showcase the diverse needs that create tension as administrators and teachers work to serve each student.

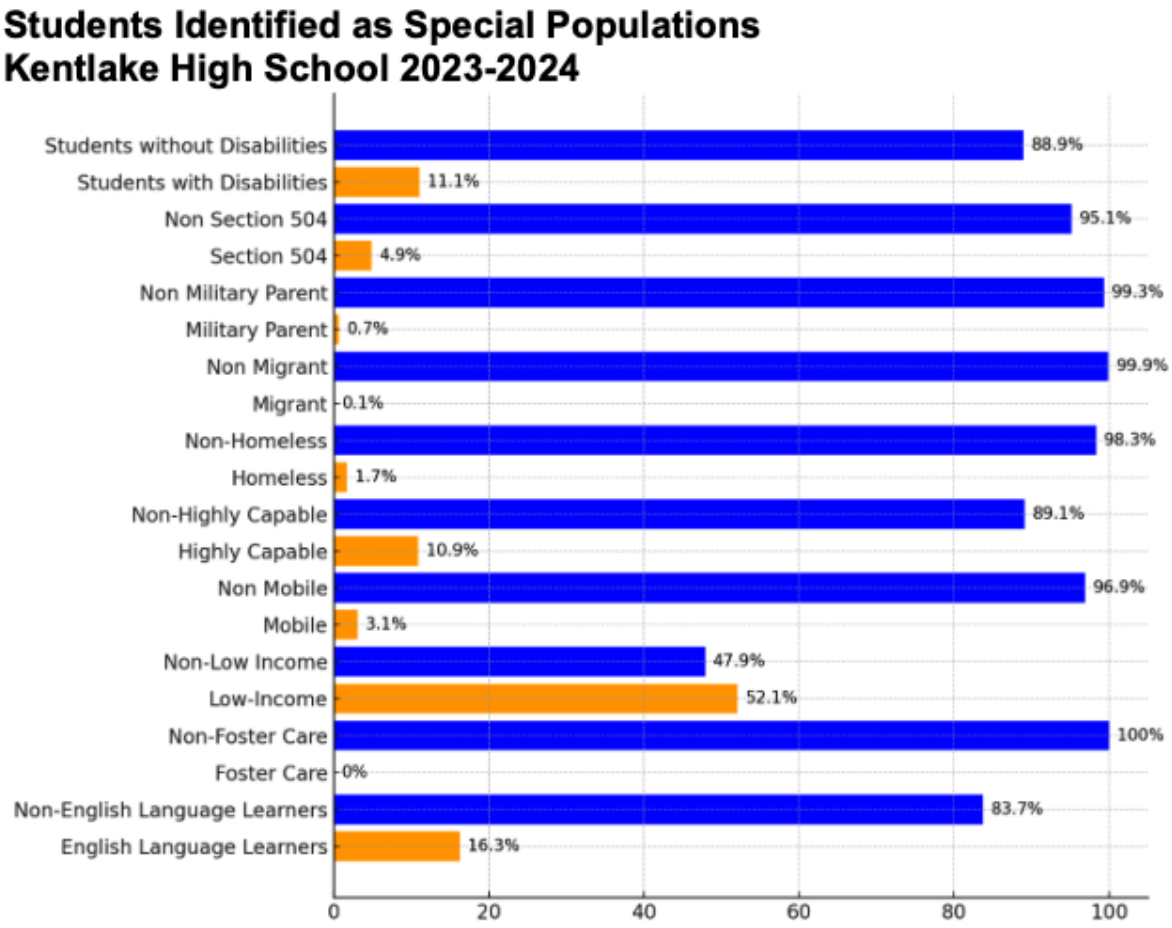

Figure 3. Percentages of the Kentlake student body identified by programmatic identifications. Each bar represents the percentage of students identified on the label on the left-hand side, with brown bars representing the positive identifier and the black bars representing the balance of students without the identifier. For the 2023-24 school year, Kentlake had 28.3% English language learners, and over half of Kentlake's student population is identified as low-income (56.6%) (OSPI Report Card).

The school offers many Advanced Placement classes and "college in the high school" (CHS) courses (partnering with the University of Washington and Central Washington University), a comprehensive CTE suite, and a large special education staff (Kentlake home

page). The inclusion of these courses is part of what distinguishes Kentlake from some of the other high schools in the district: some students opt-in to Kentlake to participate in these specific Advanced Placement and College in the High School Courses (discussion with school administrator, October 2023).

There are about 80 classroom teachers at Kentlake; the average class size is 18.5, and the student-to-teacher ratio is 36.7 students to 1 teacher (OSPI Report Card). The demographic makeup of teachers in the school does not represent the demographics of the student body (see figure 4).

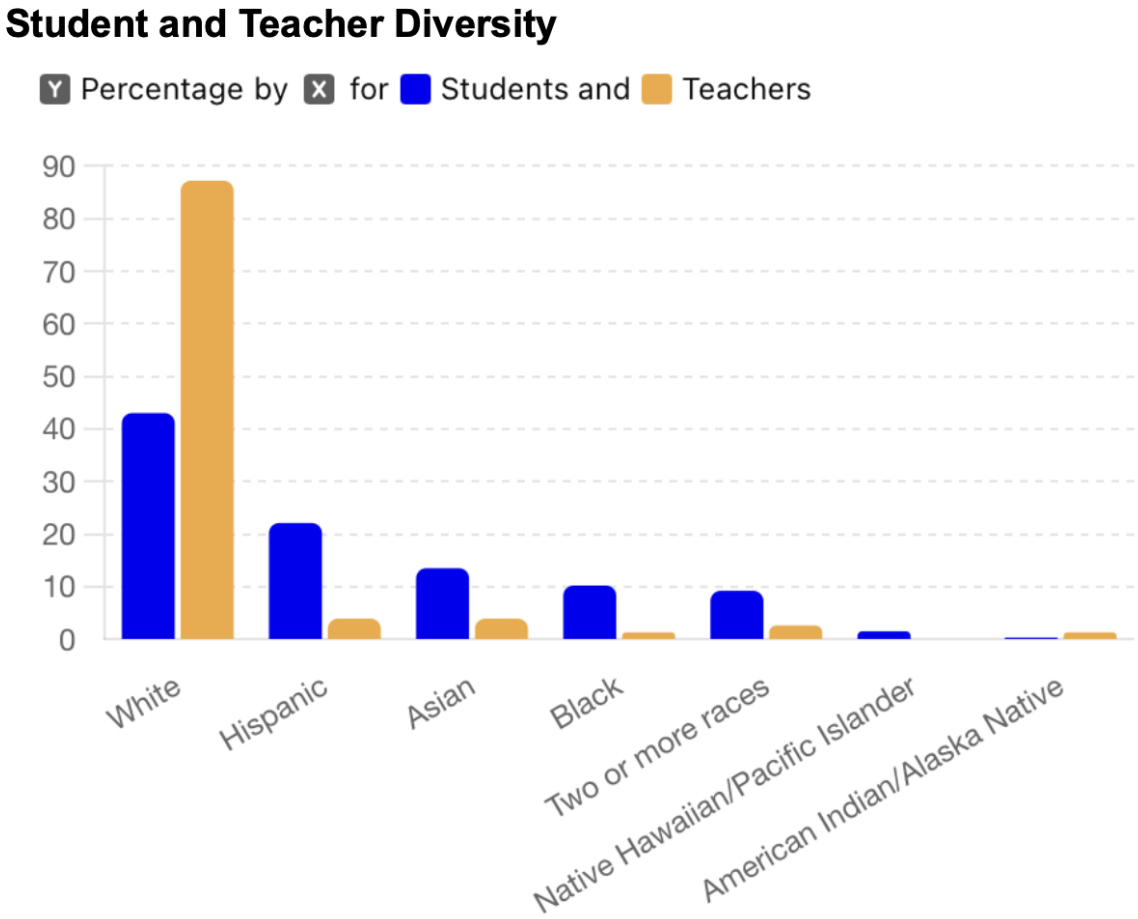

Figure 4: Demographics for Classroom Teachers compared with Students at Kentlake for the 2022-2023 school year. The blue bars represent students, and the orange bars represent staff (OSPI Report Card).

Kentlake's profile on the state report card is an exercise in contrasts: for 2022-2023, 87.4% of students graduated in four years, and KL students demonstrated "high math growth" and "high English Language Arts growth" for the school year (OSPI Report Card). But this is contrast with the rest of the information for that year: only 25.1% met math standards on the state math exam, 60.8% of students met ELA standards based on the state exam, and only 56.1% of students attended school for 90% or more of days in the year (OSPI Report card). The high graduation rate seems to conflict with the attendance rate and the academic performance based on the state exam.

The Problem:

Kentlake High School has chronic absenteeism (i.e., students not attending school without an appropriate reason) that mirrors what many high schools across the nation are facing. Nationally those students who are deemed “chronically absent” have missed more than fifteen school days, whether the reasons were excused, unexcused, or suspended (Attendance Works, 2016). Other schools have experienced similar declines in attendance since 2015; however, Kentlake’s attendance rate is notable because it is markedly worse than neighboring schools with similar demographics. To illustrate, note the following charts showing the decline in regular attendance at Kentlake since the 2018-2019 school year followed by the illustration of attendance decline at a nearby school we’re calling "Orange High School.” Located in a neighboring school district, Orange has slightly different demographics, but is of similar size and economic makeup. While the downward trajectories are similar, the overall percentage of student attendance is lower at Kentlake than at Orange. Their data shows a decline in attendance for the same period. However, Orange’s attendance rates are almost ten percent higher than Kentlake’s, as shown in the comparative chart in Figure 5.

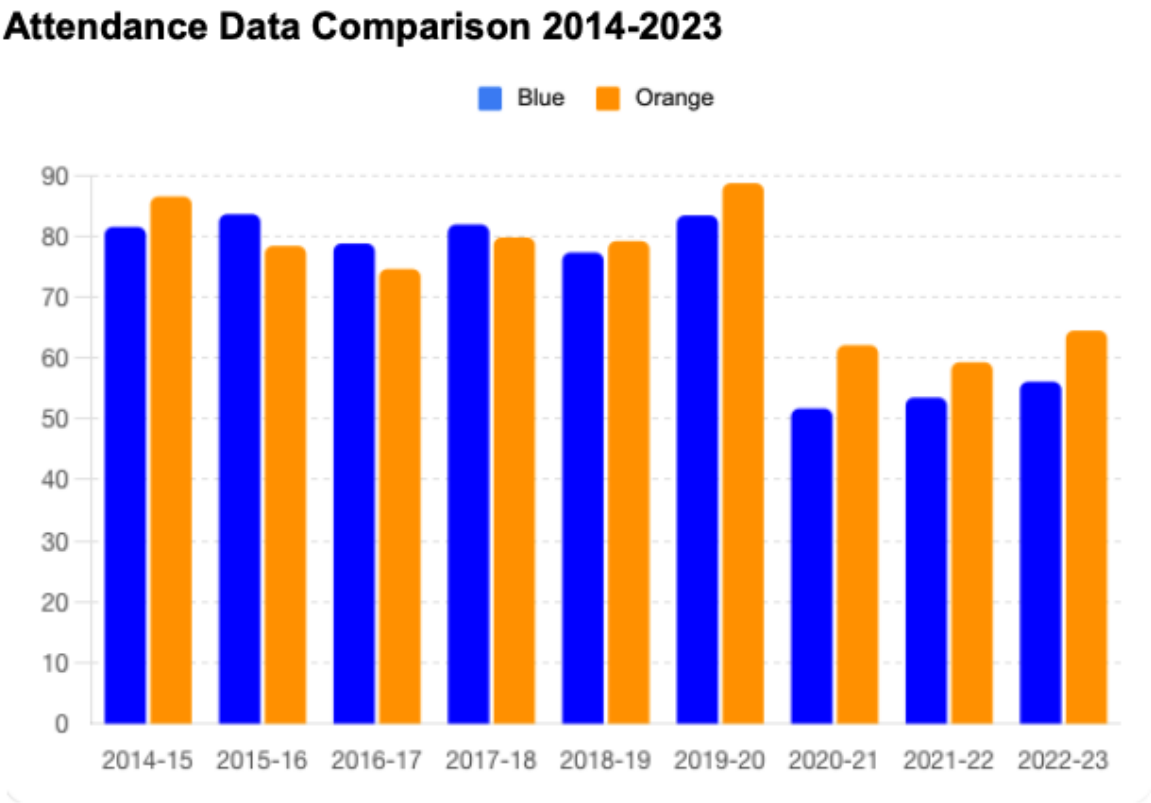

Figure 5 shows a comparison of attendance trends for all students enrolled at Kentlake High School (identified by the blue bars) since 2014 compared to attendance trends for all students enrolled at Orange High School (identified by the orange bars) (OSPI Report Card).

The Impact

According to the administrative staff, poor attendance coupled with underperforming academics has plagued the school for many years. In addition to the attendance issue, students are seeing a decline in literacy and math in both school-based testing and in state assessments. The picture reported on the state report card shows promise for Kentlake's community, as students taking the state exams outperform their district peers and the overall state peers. For the 2022-2023 school year, 60% of students demonstrated proficiency in ELA, compared to 46.4% at the district and 50.7% at the state; only 25.1% demonstrated proficiency in mathematics, compared to 34.2% at the district and 39.1% at the state (OSPI Report Card). But these scores

have been in decline over time, and the staff is determined to identify how to turn that decline around and bring it back to an upwards trajectory.

The staff at Kentlake High School recognizes that students' academic performance is inextricably linked to their attendance and continue to identify interventions that will get more students into class (Potts citing Mauer, meeting, 2023). Despite past interventions, for the 2023-2024 school year, the daily attendance rate hovers around 40% at Kentlake High School, which represents a decline from 53% attendance in 2021 (Kentlake Report Card, 2021).

Kentlake High School is attempting to address the attendance issues through district-based protocols but has yet to see significant growth. If attendance does not improve, they will not be able to implement with fidelity the academic nor social-emotional interventions they have designed. Without consistent attendance, Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions will not be effective, and state English Language Arts, mathematics, and science scores are predicted to continue downward, since students can't reap the rewards of programmatic instruction if they are not present for it. The administration recognizes that attendance is the foundation needed to fulfill the basic promise of grade-level education and specific needs of their students.

For years, the district and school have been working on implementing and revising programs and protocols to address chronic absenteeism and attendance issues. From automated phone calls and text messages to parents, to student meetings and legal consequences in court, the school and district have attempted to improve their attendance crisis. Washington State's attendance law (colloquially referred to as the "Becca law" or "Becca bill" by the staff) requires that students are in school full-time every day unless they produce a "valid excuse" which is represented in the narrative of the bill. Students who do not attend regularly are considered

truant, and there is an escalating set of consequences (including legal action) for students with excessive unexcused absences (Washington Education Ombudsman site).

Per this law, when students demonstrate unexcused absences, schools are required to:

- notify parents of the attendance rules and get a signature to show they received the notice
- notify parents every time a student is absent,
- meet with parents and students to find out why,
- try different strategies to improve attendance, and in some cases,
- refer a student and/or parent to a Community Engagement Board or to court

(Washington Education Ombudsman site, 2024).

It is clear from interviews and school data that Kentlake is mostly in technical compliance with the Becca Law. That compliance stops at consistently recording attendance: not all staff consistently trigger communication requests to parents when students are absent, and even fewer follow up with families when students demonstrate a pattern of absenteeism (Survey data, 2024). As shown in planning documents and interviews, Kentlake does continue to try different strategies to improve students' attendance, even when the number of families engaging with said strategies and interventions is very low. For example, the evening "family attendance night," which includes targeted invitations to families whose children seem at risk for absenteeism only has about ten families attend each year (Counselor Interview, 2024). While these systems address the compliance side of absenteeism, they don't have a substantial impact, and they do not include systems of rewards and consequences.

Previous attempts to improve attendance have also proven to be ineffective; in fact, the administrative team commented that the 2023-24 school year has started out with "the worst attendance patterns in history" (Kentlake Admin, October 2023). That said, according to the administration, previous efforts have garnered the support of the staff, and new initiatives to help students are generally welcomed by both the certified and classified staff. The continued concern

is that the attendance rate will continue to decline in tandem with a decline in academic achievement, which will prove devastating to the students and community.

School administrators have expressed an urgent need to work through this attendance and absenteeism problem. The consequences of the continuing decline in attendance are far-ranging and impact not only on each student but also on the community as a whole. Kentlake's students cannot take advantage of instruction if they are not in class receiving it, and if students' attendance is too low, they won't receive enough credit to receive a diploma. Most importantly, if students miss too many hours of classes, they won't gain the knowledge and skills they need to matriculate into credit-bearing coursework or engage in the workforce. At a community level, the declining attendance rates may affect the school itself, as more intervention courses may displace core classes. Furthermore, schools that do not have an appropriate level of student attendance over time run the risk of becoming economically unviable for the school district, which may result in the closing of the building and moving the remaining students to other schools.

Research Synthesis

Chronic absenteeism, as outlined in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), denotes the persistent and significant absence of students from school, encompassing missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason (Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools, n.d.). The term "absenteeism" is a measure of attendance at school; as such, school personnel and those researching this issue frequently use both, identifying "attendance" as the positive goal, and measuring the problems at hand by calculating "absenteeism" to signify a problem to be solved. The ESSA Act was pivotal in elevating awareness and comprehension of

the issue of children missing (being absent) from school, prompting numerous states to generate annual reports on chronic absenteeism data. The 2015–16 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) revealed that over seven million students experienced chronic absenteeism during that academic year, signaling a nationwide surge in this alarming trend. Notably, chronic absenteeism disproportionately affects already marginalized populations, including students of color, English Learners, students with disabilities, and those from low-income backgrounds (Demir & Karabeyoğlu, 2016).

Kentlake's attendance problem partially bucks this trend. While the downward *trends* of attendance are similar, there are some notable differences in overall percentages of consistent attendance based on race and ethnicity, as shown in Figure 6. In general, Asian, white, and students identified as two or more races have more consistent attendance, while Hispanic, Black, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian students have lower percentages.

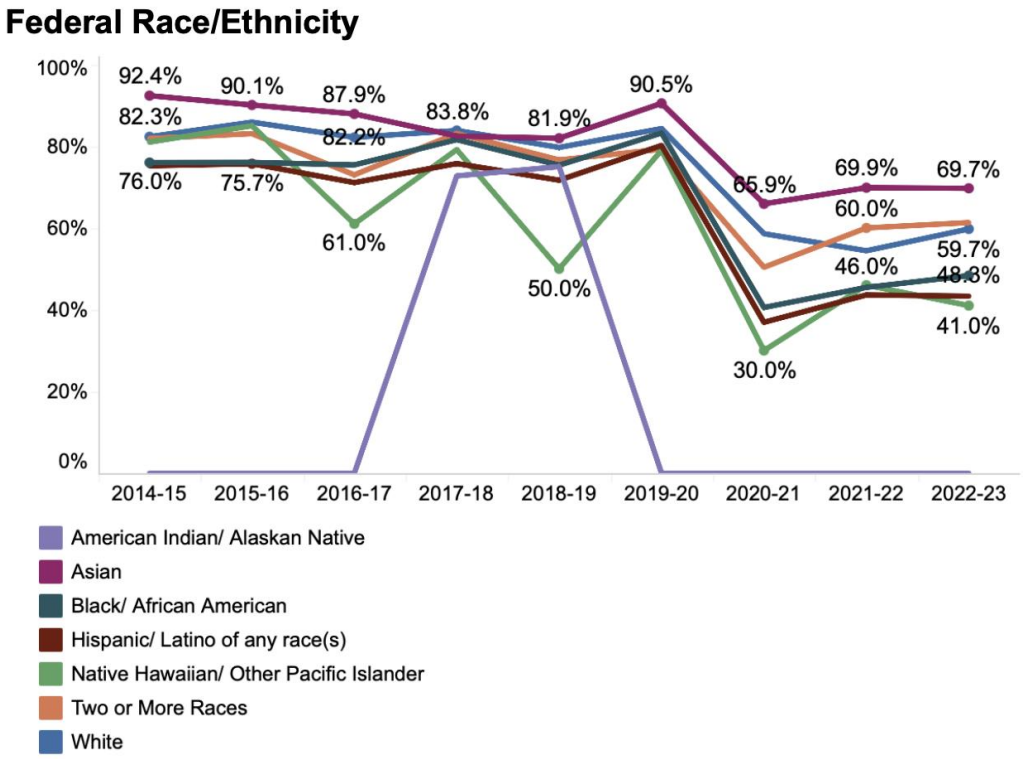

Figure 6 shows Kentlake's student attendance trends by racial demographics from 2014-2023, with each race/ethnicity represented by a different colored line. Note that American Indian/Alaskan Native data is redacted from 2014-2016 and 2019-2023 due to low enrollment numbers for privacy (OSPI Report Card, 2024).

In attempting to understand how students with different experiences attend school, the research team dug into the data and found the rates of absenteeism hold mostly steady across special programs, native- and non-native English speakers, and students with disabilities. The following charts (Figures 7a, 7b, and 7c) show absenteeism rates of children who are identified as needing different programmatic supports compared to their peers without those programmatic needs. Note that in each chart, both the rates and trends of students' absenteeism are similar, perhaps indicating that the fact a student is receiving specific programmatic support may not impact whether a student is absent from school.

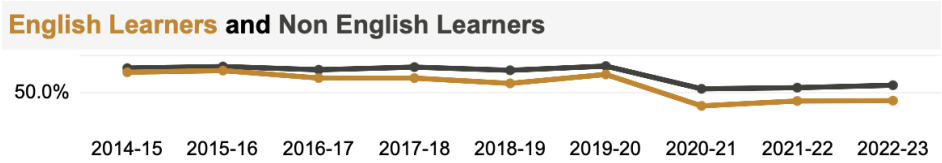

Figure 7a This line chart compares attendance trends at Kentlake from 2014-2023 between English learners (orange) and non-English learners (black) (Washington State Report Card).

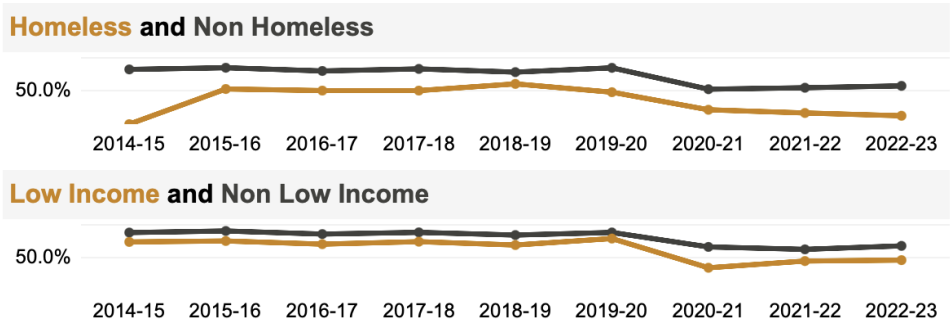

Figure 7b The charts compare attendance trends at Kentlake from 2014-2023: the top chart contrasts homeless and non-homeless students, while the bottom chart compares low-income and non-low-income students (Washington State Report Card).

The pattern of attendance continues with students who receive Inclusive Services:

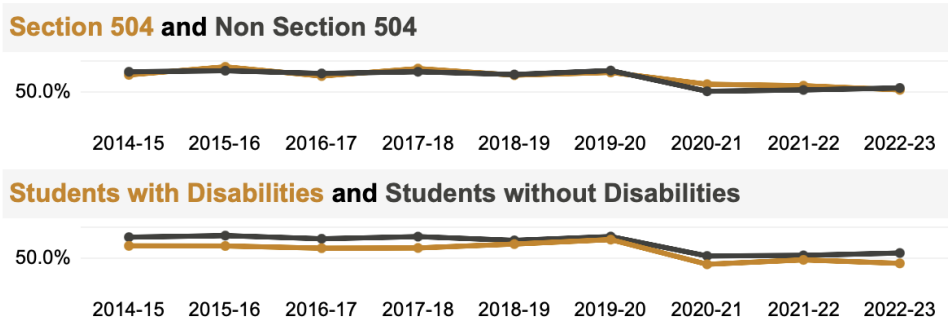

Figure 7c The charts compare attendance trends at Kentlake between 2014-2023: the top chart contrasts students with and without Section 504 support, while the bottom chart compares students with and without disabilities (Washington State Report Card, 2024).

Stepping back to evaluate the broadest picture of student attendance issues, it was clear this downward trend in attendance was impacting Kentlake students across programmatic and

racial differences. This project sought to identify strong practices that the staff could implement to support getting all students, regardless of program affiliation or economic status, back to school consistently.

What are the impacts of chronic absenteeism?

The repercussions of chronic absenteeism are extensive, contributing to diminished academic achievement, heightened high school dropout rates, and enduring consequences such as poverty and involvement in the criminal justice system (Bundshuh et al., 2021). In response to these challenges, 36 states and Washington, D.C. have integrated chronic absenteeism as a key indicator of school quality and student success under the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).

Chronic Absenteeism disproportionately impacts students living in poverty (Balfanz, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education, while there are racial and economic disparities in chronically absent students in lower grades, the rates of disproportionality increase for all groups by the time they reach high school, differentiating attendance trends by economic and racial categories. Additionally, while English Language Learners achieved a higher attendance rate than their non-English Language Learning peers in lower grades, in high school they had higher rates of absenteeism than their non-English language learning classmates (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This is not the case at Kentlake. Student attendance and absenteeism rates are similar among students in different recognized categories. This indicates a wider overall issue of attendance that appears to affect all students.

Chronic absenteeism exerts wide-ranging and lasting negative effects on academic performance, social interactions, graduation rates, adult income, overall health, and life expectancy (*Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools*, n.d.). Previously, research focused on distinguishing between truancy and anxiety-driven school refusal, but current policy aims to

reduce absenteeism for any reason (Ocak et al., 2017). The intricate interplay of medical, individual, family, and social factors contributes to chronic absenteeism, encompassing chronic illness, mental health conditions, bullying, perceived lack of safety, family members' health issues, inconsistent parenting, unfavorable school environment, economic disadvantages, and transportation challenges (Allen et al., 2018). While it is important to get to know students on a personal level and build community through deeply understanding their lives, when thinking about engaging in improvement strategies for absenteeism, an approach that will meet the needs of all students is likely to have stronger and more far-reaching results than something highly specific.

Possible Causes

Student absenteeism is rooted in many complexities, including how students feel about school. In high schools, students have more autonomy than when they were in younger grades, therefore making the attendance issue even more complicated (Ocak et al., 2017). Parent guidance of high school students has less of an impact since high schoolers can generally get themselves to school—or not—regardless of parent support. As children get older, the methods of getting students back into school become more complex, and the impact of students missing school becomes exacerbated in terms of meaningful academic achievement.

While external factors certainly influence attendance, some researchers have found that student performance at school can be an indicator of chronic absenteeism (Balfanz, 2016). At the University of Chicago, researchers Allensworth and Evans (2016) looked at several demographic factors but found the biggest indicator for chronic absenteeism throughout high school was ninth grade course performance. There appears to be a correlative relationship between attendance and

grades: students who miss more school have lower grades. The stakes of low grades in high school are high, since graduation is a key to matriculating into credit bearing coursework in college and in entering the world of work. Numerous studies point to the critical importance of attendance for students to achieve a diploma; one study shows how each week of absence per semester in 9th grade was associated with a more than 20% decline in the probability of graduating from high school (Allensworth & Evans, 2016).

Another factor that may contribute to chronic absenteeism is the school building itself, which should provide a safe and stable environment. David Branham (2004) analyzed data from 226 schools in Houston, Texas to understand the relationship between school attendance and the quality of the facility. Branham found that when a school was run down and in need of janitorial staff and repairs, it significantly affected school attendance (Branham, 2004). Students are less likely to attend school when the building needs repair.

Brundage, Castillo and Batsche (2017) looked at data from 5,790 chronically absent Middle and High School students, most of whom were eligible for free and reduced lunch, to find causes of absenteeism. They found that health, transportation, personal stress, preferred activity outside of school and school value were the main reasons. Additionally, students surveyed expressed perceptions that school was boring, and that they did not feel they had positive reasons to come to school and attendance lacked importance in their lives (deJung & Duckworth, 1986). Schools battling an absenteeism problem must make careful choices about implementing strategies when attempting to address different possible causes since most schools can't close the gap of every possible root cause. Additionally, schools can't put all their resources into attendance alone, since they need to focus on their core mission of education and

on the basic mechanics of running school buildings (e.g., safety, nutrition, and district- and school- based initiatives). Having myriad structural needs necessarily dilute a school's capacity and resources to apply to each, and attendance issues can fall through the cracks. But if students don't attend school at all, the other needs of a school system are rendered moot.

Possible Solutions

To effectively combat chronic absenteeism, it is imperative to adopt a multifaceted approach that acknowledges the various factors influencing students' attendance patterns (Duckworth, 1988). Considering the previously mentioned multiple needs, schools need to choose which concerns to put the most energy and resources into to get students in the building. High school administrators should prioritize building relationships with teachers and parents, creating and promoting intervention programs, and applying intervention programs with fidelity (Demir & Karabeyoğlu, 2016). Preparing for these initiatives requires strategic learning and planning at the administrative level and strong communication across all audiences to set the initiatives up for best success.

Epstein & Sheldon (2002) highlight the effectiveness of cost-efficient interventions, such as automated notifications to parents regarding absences, emphasizing the potential for improvement through collaboration between schools and stakeholders. Strategies should involve regular communication with students and families, addressing barriers to attendance such as health and transportation, and fostering a positive school climate through relevant instruction and restorative discipline. Furthermore, interventions should acknowledge and reinforce even small improvements in attendance, especially for students with a history of poor attendance. Examples of how to recognize small improvements in attendance include:

- Establishing a positive reinforcement system.
- Offering attendance incentives like small rewards.
- Presenting certificates for substantial improvements.
- Organizing celebrations for those who achieve attendance milestones
- Assigning mentors for individual support
- Conducting regular check-ins for encouragement

(Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

High schools must have access to effective interventions to support students' recovery from the negative effects of absenteeism and recognize that even incremental changes in attendance can lead to improved academic and social outcomes. Included in research about the "what" of interventions is a consistent thread of transparent communication with students and teachers in naming the improvements over time; even small improvements can motivate in enhancing their attendance patterns (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). This was one of Kentlake's initiatives between 2022-2024: the administrative staff placed large banners in the cafeteria/open space in the school celebrating attendance in service of motivating students to improve their numbers.

Integrating behavioral insights into administrative communications can enhance efforts to combat chronic absenteeism (Lasky-Fink et al., 2021). By fostering collaboration, ensuring consistent enforcement, implementing targeted interventions, and enhancing communication strategies, educational institutions can develop a comprehensive approach to address chronic absenteeism and foster a culture of regular school attendance.

To build positive relationships, school leaders need to create structures and systems that support positive behavior. The adoption of schoolwide positive behavior support, including the implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS), can promote

appropriate behavior and mitigate disruptive conduct in schools (Epstein et al., 2008). This approach relies on a multi-tiered framework emphasizing prevention through effective classroom management and explicit teaching of desirable behaviors.

Incorporating incentives into attendance-supporting efforts has emerging positive impact. While researchers have yet to systematically examine why certain incentives succeed while others fail (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018), there are positive trends in schools that implement this manner of support. Balu & Ehrlich (2018) note the prevalent utilization of incentives across all grade levels, from Pre-K to grade 12, and the efficacy of these interventions and practices when it comes to attendance and performance. The practice of applying incentives continues to grow momentum across schools and has promising results, making it a strong option to add to the repertoire of strategies for encouraging students to come to school consistently.

Another important reason school administrators and practitioners should choose to integrate incentives into their improvement strategies is their relatively low implementation intensity. Since research shows that the causes of student absenteeism are so varied that work to understand them will require a lot of capacity, building a comprehensive system to improve attendance will need to assure time is left for that relationship building. The lift to incorporate incentives is not entirely negligible, but it can be used in tandem with strong community building and is worth the effort. Utilizing incentives has the propensity to support schools in experiencing an increase in attendance, which grows course credits, grade advancement, and standardized test results for students (Maier et al., 2017).

Conceptual Framework

It is common knowledge that student attendance significantly impacts educational outcomes; even with remote (online) learning, students do not reap the benefits of instruction if they are not in the classroom with their teachers (Gottfried, 2014). The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015) states:

> "Schools are now more accountable than ever for student attendance. ESSA mandates a focus on attendance as a key metric for school success and academic achievement. Schools must track and report attendance data, and interventions to improve attendance are prioritized under ESSA guidelines. This legislation underscores the critical role of attendance in student outcomes and places greater emphasis on strategies to address absenteeism and promote regular school attendance" (*Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Implementation*, n.d.).

Therefore, it is important to understand how schools can effectively improve attendance, particularly today, when there is a national decline in consistent attendance in schools. Researchers studying interventions and practices across grade levels have noted that in some instances, the widespread use of incentives at all grade levels (Gottfried, 2014) can positively impact attendance rates, even when other initiatives falter. However, the *practical* guidelines on designing and implementing attendance incentives can be difficult to find to match a school's specific needs. The types of incentives and the mechanisms for communicating them with students, parents, and community should be tailored to the specific contexts in which they are being implemented. Setting up an incentive system requires study, communication, and a strong implementation strategy to succeed.

Schools having success with this approach are shown to use different types of incentives targeted to their school communities to boost student attendance (Kearney, 2008). For example, elementary schools employ recognition incentives, such as hallway boards and stars on lockers for high attendance and offer prizes like breakfast with the principal or pizza parties. Some schools even use after-school activities like dance programs to encourage attendance (Epstein &

Sheldon, 2002). In Tennessee and Missouri, costly incentives like cash rewards and sports tickets have been used (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). Additionally, some schools integrate attendance incentives with broader programs. While comprehensive research evidence on effectiveness remains limited, except for specific cases like those of Dobbie & Fryer (2011), the previously noted low implementation lift makes it worth it for schools to try along with other approaches.

Overall, the effectiveness of attendance incentives in schools and service providers has produced mixed results, making it necessary to reevaluate incentive strategies (Gottfried, 2014). It is important to understand the specific problem each incentive is trying to solve, its alignment with the issue, implementation details, and target behavior change. There is a need for more guidance in the literature on intentional incentive design and implementation testing, especially when dealing with financial constraints.

Skipping the problem diagnosis before implementing an incentive can lead to inefficiencies and misalignment across the school (Balfanz et al., 2015). One possible reason for the failure of previous attendance interventions may be due to the school and district not completely diagnosing the reasons behind this issue and not giving the intervention enough time to take hold and become a part of the school culture. Although *attending* to each discrete cause may not be best practice for intervention design, *understanding* each cause is important in the planning phase. Our project included researching the possible causes of student absenteeism in the area to create a more complete problem diagnosis to inform our recommendations to Kentlake.

We centered our inquiry around the "Framework for Incentive Selection, Implementation and Evaluation" developed by researchers Rekha Balu and Stacy Ehrlich (2018). The framework

is intended to bridge the gap from research to implementation through intentional use of incentives in hopes of improving attendance outcomes in schools. The framework (shown in Figure 8) outlines the steps of problem diagnosis, incentive selection, implementation planning, and evaluation for effective implementation tailored to specific absenteeism issues and student populations. We used this framework to develop data collection tools and to evaluate our data through this specific incentive-based lens.

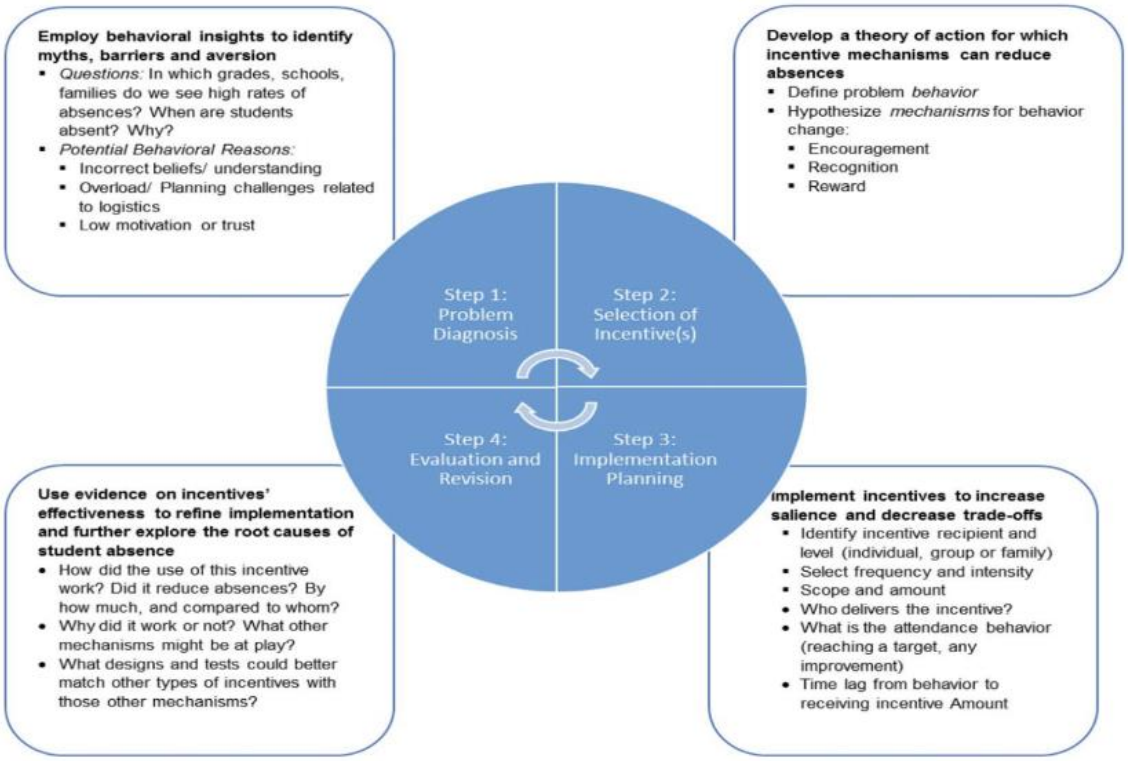

Figure 8: Framework for Incentive Selection, Implementation and Evaluation (Rekha, B. and Ehrlich, S., 2018).

Step One: Problem Diagnosis

Understanding the causes of the specific attendance/absenteeism problems at a school is key to making decisions intended to close the gap. This conceptual framework provides guidance to consider the underlying reasons absenteeism occurs in a school building. Using a behavioral diagnosis approach coupled with a more practical data analysis of school-level information that is more easily accessible can provide a good insight into the problem. Once the problem is understood and accepted, the rest of the cycle can be more effective. Understanding the causes of absenteeism is essential in finding the right diagnosis and treatment plan to improve attendance for these subsections of students. Furthermore, understanding the specific causes of absenteeism can also help understand the relationship between causes of absenteeism and the educational impact (Gubbels et al., 2019).

Step Two: Selecting the Incentives

After finding the causes of absenteeism, it is critical to select an aligned incentive to improve attendance is critical. Selecting Incentives is found in the upper right corner of Figure 8. Balu and Elrich's (2018) framework focuses on three types of incentives: encouragement, recognition, and reward. Encouragement refers to positive feedback and support, recognition involves acknowledging and celebrating students' achievements, and rewards are tangible or intangible items or privileges given to students as positive consequences of achieving goals. These incentives are all meant to be positive and support relationship building, especially for chronically absent students who often feel alienated from their peers and teachers or have negative feelings overall towards the school. This relationship building attends to multiple possible causes of absenteeism, making it an efficient approach.

Different incentive structures have been attempted in schools, with mixed results. Some have been more behavior-based, like focusing on encouragement and recognition, and other examples are more reward-based. Financial rewards for performance and attendance have been attempted with varying degrees of success. In New York City, a privately funded cash reward program was funded and studied for three years (Riccio et al., 2010). While there was no significant change in educational outcomes, student attendance did increase due to the financial incentives program (Riccio et al., 2010). Over time, the hope is that this increased attendance will turn the tide on student achievement.

Through the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institute (2011), rewards were given to primarily Black and Latino students who qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch across two hundred and fifty schools in five cities. 9.4 million dollars was distributed to the students across these cities as incentives for different behaviors. In Dallas, students earned $2 per book they completed. In Washington, DC students were given up to $100 every two weeks for meeting different behavioral and attendance goals. The incentives used in these cities proved effective. For students paid to increase the number of books read, reading comprehension improved. When students were given money for attendance and behavior, there was also growth in these areas (Allan & Fryer, 2011).

Ultimately, the researchers found that incentives should be provided for student input, not output. These inputs were effectively behavioral changes, such as reading more or improving attendance, that in turn led to positive outputs. Incentivizing the output alone proved to be less effective, with the theory that students were unable to effectively match the appropriate behavior and the desired outcome (Allan and Fryer, 2011). Promoting behavior to build positive habits

(inputs) is useful in changing outcomes even when the students aren't fully invested in the outcomes at the time.

Step Three: Implementation Planning

While our work focused more on the diagnosis and incentives phases, the implementation phase is necessary to determine the operational realities that determine whether these interventions and incentives can genuinely be implemented with consistency. Who delivers the incentive, the appropriate scope of the incentive and amount, timing of the incentive and the ease of implementation are all crucial factors that can significantly impact the effectiveness of the incentive (Balu and Stacy Ehrlich, 2018).

Beyond selecting an incentive that motivates students and aligns with the cause(s) of their absenteeism, the implementation and timing are also essential. When rewards are given too long after the event, they are less effective than rewards given immediately: with attendance incentives, giving a short timeline for students to receive the incentive will most likely lead to more positive results (Levitt et al., 2011). The selection phase of this cycle is a critical component, and what works for one student may not work for another. Tailoring the incentives gives schools a better chance of effectively reaching their students, which underscores the importance of relationship building between adults and students in schools.

Step Four: Evaluation and Revision

This final stage of the framework is the evaluation and revision step. Evaluating the incentive effectiveness allows for revision and refinement of the incentives program; without this reflection, the school can't determine gaps in implementation and can't identify what revisions need to take place to reach their goals. As part of the system of evaluating, schools need clear

benchmarks they are tracking and systems for tracking this information (Katz et al, 2016). Clear benchmarks, coupled with concrete outcomes targets, will assist all stakeholders in pushing forward the initiative with fidelity to the initial design.

While we found each component of the framework critical to the ultimate success of the model, we chose to focus on the first two areas (Problem Diagnosis and Selecting Incentives) because of the time constraints of this project. Ideally, we would have been able to start this process at the end of the prior school year, so we would have had adequate time to go through each part of the cycle: implement the interventions, collect data, and revise the incentives. Due to scheduling constraints with the project timeline and school district process, we did not have adequate time to appropriately implement an intervention and analyze it thoroughly for this project.

Balu & Ehrlich's (2018) framework closely resembles the structure of a "plan, do, study (evaluate), act (PDSA)" cycle. For this research, each component is reflected in the data collection process. To clarify terms used, we have defined how they are used for this study in Table 1:

Key Terms:

Problem Diagnosis	Identifies specific attendance challenges and barriers for students and their families (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018)
Selection	Aligns the specific incentives to the diagnosed problems (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018)

Implementation Planning:	Increases salience and reduces tradeoffs for implementation. Determines who is responsible for specific pieces of implementation (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018)
Evaluation	Uses data to improve specific incentive approaches (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018)
Chronic Absenteeism	Missing at least 15 days of school in a school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2016)
Truancy	Includes only unexcused absences (AttendanceWorks, 2016)

Table 1: Key Terms chart.

Project Questions

The primary research question we investigated was:

What trends exist, if any, in attendance data, at Kentlake High School?

In addition to our primary research question, we also had two supporting questions to guide our work:

1. What is the culture around student attendance at Kentlake High School?
2. What support structures exist at Kentlake High School to improve attendance?

Project Design and Methods

The primary goal of our quality improvement project was to deeply understand the absenteeism crisis at Kentlake High School from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The administration at Kentlake High School sought insight into how their staff felt about the

attendance crisis at their school generally and about how the implementation of their policies had been perceived by staff. Furthermore, the administrative team wanted concrete, strategic, and research-based recommendations to help improve their daily attendance.

Our team used multiple instruments to collect data, including a survey of all staff about the culture of how adults and children think about attendance, individual interviews, and reviewed district and school-level attendance materials. We also reviewed attendance data and analyzed attendance improvement initiative documents from both the school and district. Through survey and interview data, we were able to identify the overall picture of the problem, possible causes, and what had been previously attempted. We engaged in all areas of data collection at the same time, because our research questions were timeframe-agnostic: our surveys and interviews were not intended to measure change over the course of the study nor affect another aspect of our study. The different data collection approaches were used to identify differences in stakeholders' understandings of the issue at hand and to attempt to find how the implementation of improvement plans was being acted upon.

The only difference in timing of data collection and analysis regarded the surveys and interviews. These were delayed at the beginning of the data collection process due to the school district's requirements regarding research and questions for its staff. Our process and project had to be reviewed by the school administrative team, and then approved by the Kent School District Research Committee through their formal research approval process.

Data Collection

Data Collection Overview

Data type	Number of Participants	Brief Description
Survey	91	Survey offered to all staff at KLHS
Interviews	5	Administration pre-selected a group of people to interview via Zoom
Document Analysis	**n/a**	Reviews of state, district, and school-level documents regarding attendance rules, guidance, and data.

Table 2: Data Collection Overview.

Data Collection Tools

Approaching data analysis from three different angles, we hoped to gain a greater insight into what had been happening at Kentlake. Document analysis from the state, district, and school provided comprehensive context and insight into the "what" of the problem at hand, as well as information about attendance trends of students disaggregated by demographics and programmatic designations. The survey gave us a better background about Kentlake High School's previous interventions. Interviews provided further narrative to support analysis and build a comprehensive picture of the day-to-day context.

The conceptual framework informed our collection tools. To get a strong diagnosis of the context, need, and impact, we knew we needed to understand the information around the issue (document analysis), gauge staff knowledge about school efforts (closed survey questions), and then add a qualitative understanding of how the staff feels about the initiatives at hand (interviews).

Attendance Data Analysis

Quantitative Data was collected from both the Kent School District, Kentlake High School, and the Washington State public school data repository. We reviewed daily attendance and academic data over a five-year period to understand the arc of the attendance concern at Kentlake High School. Additionally, we reviewed district and state-level data to get more contextual information about possible root causes of absenteeism at the school level. **Survey**

We used surveys as a method of gathering valuable insights and information from the school faculty. We sought a survey that would be easy to execute and customizable to our needs. By structuring our survey questions in a format that respondents were familiar with, we were able to get more accurate and detailed responses. This method allowed us to create a consistent measure of data collection which helped mitigate any potential biases. Administering surveys also helped us obtain a sample that better reflected the broader group under study, improving the accuracy of our findings.

We administered a closed-ended survey to all Kentlake High School Staff members during a staff meeting to assure we would have the best chance at a high completion rate. The survey took between five and ten minutes to complete and was comprised of eleven questions that used a Likert scale. The survey we administered was created by Attendance Works, a large non-profit that supports policies and practices intended to improve attendance and has published several surveys intended for different school community members. We selected the staff member survey that we felt was most aligned with our conceptual framework. Survey Monkey was the tool used to collect the data, and while it was an anonymous survey, we were required by the school district to retain written consent from all participants.

The Attendance Works survey aligned to several components of our framework, noted here in Table 3:

Conceptual Framework Component	Sample Survey Questions
Problem Diagnosis	Q3: Teachers and school staff take attendance accurately and it is entered daily into the district data systems
Evaluate and Revise	Q4: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least two weeks to: (A) Monitor attendance data and trends (B)Coordinate the schools multi-tiered attendance strategy (C)Examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data and (D)Ensure chronically absent students receive the support they need
Implementation Planning	Q7: Our school promotes a culture of attendance in year-round communication to families and students (back-to-school events, letters, flyers, personal phone calls) and regularly recognizes good and improved attendance

Table 3: This chart shows a sample of how the survey questions were designed to attend to the targeted sections of the conceptual framework.

Interviews

We incorporated interviews as another means of gathering data intended to elicit nuanced insights into people's experiences and perspectives. By following up with tailored questions, we gained a more comprehensive understanding of their thoughts and reasoning. The natural flow of an interview also allowed our participants to fully express themselves, providing us with a wealth of rich and in-depth information.

For interviews, the school administrative team chose staff they deemed representative of the staff at large; we requested people in different roles and tenures at the school to support a

broader generalization back to the rest of the staff population. After receiving this list from the Administrative Team, we reached out to the teachers via email. For staff members who did not respond to our requests, we sent two additional requests for an interview before we stopped contacting them. Of the nine staff members we were allowed to contact, we were able to interview five people by May 2, 2024.

The interviews were conducted online via video using the Zoom platform, with two research team members present alongside the staff members. One team member served as the interviewer while the other took notes. The interviews were not recorded to respect the anonymity of the interviewees and make the staff members feel comfortable that they could speak openly.

Research Challenges

The most challenging initial hurdle around data collection was at the district level. The Kent School District requires all research and studies occurring within the school district to be approved by a district Research Committee. We planned to launch surveys to staff in February of 2024, but due to the repeated feedback (and subsequent revisions) from the research committee, we had to wait until mid-April to begin our process. The timing of the survey may have changed perceptions of educators in the building as it was disseminated the week after spring break, which coincided with the beginning of the state testing window.

We hoped to access student survey information, but that proved to be much more difficult at the district level due to privacy policy concerns. The inability to use student surveys took a dimension of study away from this project. Ideally, we would connect student perception to adult

perception to draw richer conclusions about the causes of absenteeism. Without that direct information, we can only speculate on the student experience.

Scheduling interviews was also a challenge. Teachers have very little free time, and we were met with reticence to do the interviews on teachers' personal time outside the school day, so we had to schedule them during the school day during teachers' breaks. This limited the time we had to conduct interviews and meant teachers were answering these questions and giving feedback while probably considering the next class coming up. Also, since the administrative staff curated the list of staff we could interview, we recognize there may be bias in the information we received.

Data Analysis Process

To ensure we had validity in our research, we triangulated the interview and survey data with document analysis that included data reporting at the school, district, and state levels and district policy documents. Since these methods both include a high risk of subjectivity, we intended to compare surveys and interview answers to documents to capture either alignment or inconsistencies among staff and leadership perspectives.

We compared the survey responses to the more in-depth interviews, which provided respondents with more time to answer questions and share more illustrative information and examples to support their answers. The questions that we posed in both instruments were reviewed by the Kent School District Research Committee as well as the school administrative team and were chosen for inclusion because they were broad enough to allow respondents to

surface misconceptions about the issues. The number of respondents (>90) provided enough volume of response to validate the trends within the data.

In terms of reliability, we were again leaning on the *n* of the gathered information in both surveys, interviews, publicly available data on attendance, and document analysis. Questions across both instruments (interviews and survey) were aligned to provide tighter reliability as we examined trends. For reliability in the document analysis, we looked for documents that utilized the same measures and had been created and/or routed to stakeholders in the same year (or as close as possible to the same year). For instance, all recorded student data of one year was compared to the narrative data provided in meetings, in interviews, and in survey information from the same year.

To take the data collected and turn it into data findings, each team member individually coded the information and identified trends. The team then convened to share and examine independent understandings and come to consensus on findings and what should be prioritized. For each trend/finding, we returned to document analysis and sought to validate those findings (or invalidate them) based on other available data. Survey and interview results were utilized to inform the second step of document collection and round out the larger picture of the issue.

After conducting the interviews, we coded the responses based on our shared understanding of the various elements of the conceptual framework. A sample of the codebook can be found below in Table 4, with the remaining portion in Appendix 1.

Data Code Tag	Definition	Conceptual Framework Alignment

Compliance	School compliance and accountability measures to ensure data is captured	Problem Diagnosis: Gathering information about how compliance looks at Kentlake gave us insight into a major problem area for the school as well as an area that we needed to evaluate and revise practices that were already being implemented.
Student Culture	Locus of control for student absenteeism is held at the student level	Problem Diagnosis and Selection of Incentives: Understanding what the student culture looks like at Kentlake gave us insight into the attendance problem.

Table 4: Codebook sample. The codebook (found in Appendix A) shows how survey and interview results were categorized to make meaning of participant feedback and information.

We intended to utilize thematic considerations to build possible recommendations. In the research about absenteeism (and in our conceptual framework), we knew that to engage in any improvement strategy, the staff must recognize and understand the problem at hand and be prepared—and *willing*—to implement the strategy with fidelity (Bundshuh et al., 2021). Trust that exists between the teaching staff and administrators is key to providing any recommendations; if the staff does not currently have a strong relationship with the administrative team, a step must be included to build that prior to engaging in this improvement initiative (Freeman et al., 2018). Similarly, an understanding of whom and what the staff places any causal blame for the absenteeism problem is necessary to determine what training is needed prior to selecting and implementing said initiative (*Looking Forward to High School and College | UChicago Consortium on School Research*, n.d.).

The documents that include factual data (e.g., attendance data as recorded by staff, community engagement opportunities that exist for Kentlake students and parents, and any

outcomes information from prior initiatives) were compared to the survey and interview questions asking, “what has been implemented in the past?” Understanding what the staff knows and comparing it to what exists was key to learning about *how* prior strategies have been launched, which in turn would inform any recommendations for the team.

To triangulate multiple data collection points, we anchored our analysis in document analysis first, since it revealed quantitative information such as actual attendance numbers and descriptions of the attendance initiatives implemented at the school. We utilized state data alongside district and school data to understand the full picture of the school. We compared these factual explanations (how many students are absent, what initiatives have been tried, etc.) to the surveys (in which we asked these same questions) and the interviews.

What we were concerned about regarding the document analysis was ensuring we could find a comprehensive spread of what had occurred in the past few years. In each meeting with the administrative staff, we learned about different initiatives and their respective levels of success. While there were some initiatives that took place each year (such as the parent-teacher welcome night, which included information about attendance) many initiatives changed after each year, seemingly abandoned as they didn’t seem to yield improvements. Part of the concern with document analysis was asking the right questions so we could make the right requests. We mitigated this concern by asking follow-up questions of the administrative team to ensure we weren’t missing anything.

Additionally, we incorporated interviews as another means of gathering data. We chose this method because interviews have the unparalleled ability to elicit nuanced insights into people's experiences and perspectives. By following up with tailored questions, we gained a

more comprehensive understanding of their thoughts and reasoning. The natural flow of an interview also allowed our participants to fully express themselves, providing us with a wealth of rich and in-depth information. With this approach, we anticipate gaining valuable insights into the true motivations and decision-making processes that underlie people's experiences and opinions, enabling us to better understand their needs and preferences.

Data Findings and Recommendations

After conducting our interviews, surveys and document analysis we arrived at three findings based on our project questions. Table 5 shows our findings and a sample of supportive evidence found from our survey questions.

RQ	Finding	Sample of evidence
What support structures exist at Kentlake High School to improve attendance?	**Finding #1:** Kentlake High School follows the legal structures put in place by the school district but does not have any consistent internal structures designed to improve attendance. **Finding #2:** Kentlake High School does not have an incentive system in place at the school or individual classroom level.	**Survey Response:** 25% of respondents didn't know if an attendance team met **Survey Written Response Example:** "I'm not sure what goes on behind the scenes. I know that a team meets, but I don't necessarily see evidence of coordinated efforts to improve attendance." "This isn't happening" **Interview Survey Response example:** "Because there are so many kids that are gone for so many days, it's just a long list. Nobody at school is specifically responsible for

		this. Kids will be gone for months, and teachers wait for them to be 'Beccabilled'*).”- Teacher
What trends exist, if any, in attendance data, at Kentlake High School?	**Finding #2 and Emergent Finding:** Lack of Compliance Poor Community Engagement No student driven incentives Poor teacher competency in implementing incentives	Teacher-recorded attendance data does not align with data around subsequence “trigger rules” (e.g., 2 absences require a teacher to call home) Pre- and post- data from school initiatives since 2020: Number of participants attending community attendance events is lower than 20 people when 300 have been invited No evidence of student incentives in any attendance improvement plan
What is the culture around student attendance at Kentlake High School?	**Emergent Finding:** Staff believed that students were not motivated to attend school, whether because of mental health or COVID era policies that made passing classes easy and attendance less mandatory	**Survey Response:** 41% of respondents felt the school had a welcoming and engaging climate **Survey Written Response Example:** “Students have expressed that they don't feel they are part of the school community.” **Interview Example:** “We don’t have the bandwidth to hold students accountable”- School Administrator

*Table 5: Sample of evidence found from research survey questions. “Becca Bill” refers to the Washington State truancy law (*The Becca Law--RCW 13.32A*) that has a series of reporting requirements and steps for truant students that escalate to legal ramifications.*

Finding #1: Lack of Consistent Structures

Our first finding in response to our question "What support structures exist at Kentlake High School to improve attendance?" was that Kentlake High School follows the legal structures put in place by the school district but does not have any consistent internal structures designed to improve attendance. School characteristics and practices can impact student absenteeism and truancy rates (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002), and a strong first step to improve is to assure that the compliance structures are being followed. 100% of interviewees indicated that the school did follow the district protocols to make parents aware of their children's attendance issues, such as automated calls and form letters. This was also supported by staff survey responses, when 60% of staff agreed that the school was taking attendance properly. Comments like an anonymous teacher left also supported this, "Teachers are required to input attendance daily for each period. If we fail to do so, we are contacted by the attendance office to complete this task," with the attendance office being cited several times as a structure in place to support the input of attendance data.

While this seems positive, the steps *after* this recordkeeping seem less clear and the respondents had far less confidence in the follow-through. The need for the school to have a team to address the actual attendance gaps wasn't something the teaching staff could consistently see nor trust as seen in the example provided in Table 6.

Q5. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to: (a) monitor attendance data and trends; (b) coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy; (c) examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data; and (d) ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports.					
Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	23	4	15	31	18
Points Score	23	8	45	124	90
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.19*				
STDEV	*1.47*				

Table 6: Sample results from Question 5 regarding staff perception of schoolwide administrative team attention to attendance data (complete Data Table can be found in Appendix 3).

According to survey data, 25% of respondents indicated uncertainty about the existence or effectiveness of an attendance team, reflecting a lack of transparency or communication regarding attendance improvement efforts. This is supported in our data table where, based on the 5-point Likert scale survey scores for question 5, we found a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 1.47 which demonstrated not only that most faculty and staff see the system in place as needing to be better, but also that there were varied levels of confidence (higher rate of dispersion) surrounding the effectiveness of the ”Attendance Team.” One respondent expressed uncertainty, stating, "I'm not sure what goes on behind the scenes. I know that a team meets, but I don't necessarily see evidence of coordinated efforts to improve attendance." Additionally, an interview with a teacher yielded concern about systemic challenges as the teacher noted, "Because there are so many kids that are gone for so many days, it's just a long list. Nobody at school is specifically responsible for this. Kids will be gone for months, and teachers wait for them to be [given the consequences of the state attendance law and taken to court].” This feedback suggests a disconnect between policy and practice, indicating a need for more consistent and coordinated efforts to address absenteeism effectively within the school.

Finding #2: Lack of Positive Incentives

The absence of a student-driven incentive structure and perceived poor competency among teachers in implementing incentives also surfaced as trends in the attendance data. 100% of staff interviewed were not able to speak of any positive incentive systems in place to encourage attendance. In survey responses, one respondent wrote “I haven't seen any methods for rewarding good and improved attendance. The communication feels more intimidating/threatening. Clearly, what we are doing (tardy sweeps, intercom announcements, emails) is not working.” This suggests that current strategies may not effectively motivate students to prioritize attendance, highlighting a potential gap in understanding student motivations and aligning incentives with their needs (Freeman et al., 2018).

When faculty and staff were asked about the culture of attendance at Kentlake, including whether the school recognized good and improved attendance, the majority of faculty and staff felt that what they were currently doing was ok for now, and that it could be better. The results from question 7 of the survey highlight this where, according to our data, the mean was 3.97 and the standard deviation was calculated as 1.02 (Table 7):

Q7. Culture of Attendance: Our school promotes a culture of attendance in year-round communication to families and students (back-to school events, letters, flyers, personal phone calls, etc.) and regularly recognizes good and improved attendance.					
Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	3	3	21	30	33
Points Score	3	6	63	120	165
n	*90*				
Mean	*3.97*				
STDEV	*1.02*				

Table 7: Data from Question 7 from the staff survey.

In our document analysis of both student-facing documents and school policies, we found zero evidence of incentive systems at Kentlake High School. While letters to the community and policies addressed attendance policies, none mentioned any reward nor incentive program to engage students to attend school. The message of the importance of attendance was reiterated repeatedly verbally and in writing to parents and students, but there was no focus on the causes of the attendance issues and nor any programs that rewarded improved attendance extrinsically.

From the perspective of the adults working in the building, the focus on attendance as importance was very clear. The significance of attendance was underscored by its frequent mention in every staff meeting as evidenced by the staff meeting agendas (Appendix). By consistently highlighting attendance, Kentlake High School demonstrated its commitment to fostering a supportive environment where regular attendance was recognized as a fundamental component of student achievement and school culture; however, there were no follow-up items besides legal procedures for teachers to follow that were mentioned in an of the staff meeting

materials. In almost every meeting over the 2023-2024 school year, absenteeism was part of the agenda, but the discussion stayed focused on the data and not on developing methods to incentivize school attendance.

Poor community engagement emerged as another notable trend from the survey data and interview responses. This trend indicates a disconnect between the school community and its stakeholders, including students, parents, and staff. A consequence of this lack of engagement is between teachers' understanding of what will motivate students to come to school and their actual motivations (Aspen Institute, 2021).

Emergent Finding: Student Culture and Motivation are contributing to absenteeism at Kentlake High School

The Kentlake School District did not grant us permission to interview students. Consequently, our findings are based on staff comments from interviews and surveys, as well as survey data, which indicate that aspects of the student culture may be contributing to the absenteeism crisis at Kentlake. Without input from students themselves, we found several findings around student culture in need of more investigation.

Student Motivation

One theme threaded throughout informal discussions, formal interviews, and surveys was that a core reason for the school's absenteeism problem was that students did not have the motivation to attend. This belief that students *could* attend more regularly if *they* wanted to place the responsibility for attendance squarely on the students' shoulders. However, while this sentiment was noted repeatedly in anecdotes, it was rarely highlighted in any of the documents or attendance intervention materials reviewed. In meeting notes and power points at the school

leadership level, the attendance numbers were frequently referenced, but ways to support students to attend were not. In the student-facing "back to school" PowerPoint students were presented with a 42-slide deck full of important procedures and norms for being a student at Kentlake. In that presentation, only two slides were committed to attendance.

For comparison, four were committed to the cellphone and headphones policy, four were dedicated to assembly processes and behavior, and eight slides outlined hall pass procedures. The dress code policy section included an invitation for a student committee to work on that issue, inviting students to engage in an important issue. This is notable because it makes clear that how the school communicates the importance of attendance isn't creating a sense of urgency for students; rather, the attendance issue blends in with other rules and regulations, and is actually less important than dress code (which requires a student committee) and other processes (such as assemblies, which have more time spent in the presentation).

The culture surrounding student attendance at Kentlake High School appears to be influenced by several key factors, as evidenced by staff perspectives, survey responses, and interviews. According to staff members, there is a prevailing belief that students lack motivation to attend school. In one interview a teacher noted, "Kids are timid to go back to school. [Whether it is] physically being in school and not feeling safe or being in the building with people you don't feel comfortable with." This sentiment was also seen in the survey, with respondents writing "I see students struggle with apathy and feeling as if they need to engage with their learning, "Students have expressed that they don't feel they are part of the school community" and "It is a constant struggle. I know that many of our students feel detached."

Mental Health

In addition to student motivation, there appears to be a component of student mental health that still needs to be addressed. A variety of reasons, including challenges related to mental health issues and the impact of COVID-era policies that might have inadvertently reduced the urgency of attendance by making passing classes easier and attendance less strictly enforced. This perspective suggests a nuanced understanding among staff members regarding the complexities students face in maintaining regular attendance and engagement. Table 8 shows that most faculty and staff at Kentlake feel that the school has, at best, an "ok" engaging climate or one that could be better. This is supported by the data from our survey results where we found a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.73.

Q6. Engaging Climate: Our school has a welcoming and engaging climate that promotes safety, belonging, great teaching and learning, and interpersonal relationships with students, families, and staff.					
Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	1	3	26	33	28
Points Score	1	6	78	132	140
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.92*				
STDEV	*0.90*				

Table 8: Sample of the self-assessment data from the Kentlake staff survey for question six.

School Culture

Survey responses further illuminate aspects of the school culture related to attendance. A notable finding was that only 30.77% of respondents felt the school maintains a welcoming and engaging climate. Yet respondents in interviews and survey responses said students expressed feelings of detachment from the school community, highlighting potential disconnects that could impact their motivation to attend regularly. Such insights underscore the importance of fostering

a sense of belonging and engagement within the school environment to potentially improve student attendance rates. Respondents expressed frustration with students' lack motivation, with one survey respondent writing “The mindset of the majority of students is to not engage no matter what” and another “Students aren't held accountable for their actions. With this, kids continue to bully, openly hate, and skip over the ‘consequences.’"

Accountability

In an interview with a school administrator, another dimension of the attendance culture emerged. The administrator expressed a concern about the school's capacity to hold students accountable effectively. This reflects administrative challenges in enforcing attendance policies and suggests a need for strategies that balance accountability with support, aiming to cultivate a positive attendance culture that encourages student participation and engagement in academic activities. Several teachers interviewed expressed similar frustrations with the COVID-era attendance policies. These findings collectively paint a picture that the efforts to enhance student attendance could benefit from addressing motivational factors, improving community cohesion, and refining accountability measures.

Limitations

The contextual specificity of Kentlake High School plays a role in understanding the limitations of the findings regarding attendance trends. Factors such as Kent and Kentlake’s unique community demographics and specific state and local attendance policies shape the attendance behaviors and attitudes of teachers and staff. These contextual factors may not align with those of other schools, limiting the generalizability of the findings beyond Kentlake.

Additionally, the small sample size for interviewing staff, which was pre-selected by the administration, poses another limitation. This approach could potentially bias the perspectives gathered, as it may not encompass a diverse range of viewpoints. A broader, more representative sampling of staff that was not approved specifically by an admin team could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing attendance trends and offer insights into potential solutions that resonate with the entire school community.

Recommendations

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation #	Recommendation	Alignment to Findings	Conceptual Framework
Recommendation 1	Using a Multi-Tiered System of Support, Kentlake High School should create an attendance team that monitors attendance data and interventions as well as communicates with staff	Aligned to Finding #1	Steps 1-4
Recommendation 2	Kentlake High School should offer professional development to staff to create positive classroom environments and improve attendance	Aligned to Finding #2	Step 3
Recommendation 3	With student input, KLHS should create school-wide incentive structures that encourage attendance	Aligned to Finding #1, Finding #2, Finding #3	Step 2

Recommendation 4	Revise COVID-Era Grading and Attendance Policies to reflect a more rigorous program	Aligned to Finding #1	Step 4

Table 9: Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Using a Multi-Tiered System of Support, Kentlake High School should create an attendance team that monitors attendance data and interventions and communicates with staff

Kentlake High School should implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to improve data-based attendance monitoring and intervention. Each section of the MTSS would offer a strategy to help with a specific problem and suggest whether the intervention should be available to all students or just those missing the most school. Instead of using punishment to reduce truancy, which research shows doesn't work well, these strategies focus on making school a better place for everyone. This includes providing engaging and relevant lessons, creating a safe and welcoming environment, and building strong connections between students and teachers (Jordan, 2023). Establishing a dedicated attendance team as part of the MTSS team would create the space for the school to systematically monitor attendance data, identify trends, and develop targeted interventions for students at risk of chronic absenteeism.

According to Balu & Ehrlich (2018), it is crucial for school leadership to explicitly identify and communicate who the individuals or teams responsible for analyzing attendance data patterns and leading the effort to identify the underlying causes of student absences are. This team could work collaboratively with teachers, counselors, and administrators to address underlying issues affecting attendance, such as mental health concerns, family challenges, or academic difficulties.

Additionally, Kentlake Administration should make sure that the student voice is loudly heard and involved in all parts of the MTSS cycle. Through focus groups, surveys, and student interviews, the administration must understand and collect data about what motivates students to create desirable incentives for attendance. Keeping students involved in the process will not only increase buy-in and give leadership opportunities for students, but it will help the team more accurately understand the student experience at Kentlake (Jordan, 2023).

Regular communication between the attendance team and staff would ensure that all stakeholders are informed and engaged in supporting student attendance, fostering a cohesive approach to improving student outcomes. By proactively addressing attendance issues through a structured and data-driven framework, Kentlake High School can create a more supportive and responsive educational environment that promotes consistent attendance and academic achievement.

Kentlake's administrative team must ensure that the attendance team is adequately resourced with both time and personnel to effectively monitor and analyze attendance data and to develop and implement targeted interventions. There is a need for ongoing professional development to equip the team with the necessary skills and knowledge to connect the data to the implementation and see the practice through. It is also essential to ensure that the interventions are equitable and do not inadvertently stigmatize students with chronic absenteeism, which may set them back again in a cycle of not attending school because they feel disconnected from their peers and community.

While Kentlake has attempted MTSS teams in the past, survey responses indicated a major breakdown in communication about the actions of the admin team focused on attendance.

Effective communication between the attendance team and staff is crucial, as is communication with students and their families. Finally, there should be a clear plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the MTSS framework to ensure it is meeting its goals of improving attendance and student outcomes without unintended negative consequences.

Recommendation #2: Kentlake High School should offer professional development to staff to create positive classroom environments and improve attendance

Kentlake High School should invest in professional development for staff to create positive classroom environments, which are crucial for enhancing student attendance and engagement. Professional development can equip teachers with strategies to recognize and address barriers to attendance, such as disengagement or personal challenges faced by students. By fostering a positive and supportive classroom culture, Kentlake High School can motivate students to attend regularly, thereby improving overall academic performance and creating a positive school culture (Roorda et al., 2011; Hamre et al., 2013).

The professional development programs need to be both relevant and practical, providing teachers with actionable strategies that can be effectively implemented in their unique classroom settings (Pianta et al., 2020). Kentlake needs to prioritize this learning in their budget, both in terms of money and time, for meaningful professional development without disrupting the academic calendar or overburdening teachers. Additionally, the school should consider the varying levels of experience and expertise among staff, tailoring training sessions to meet different needs and ensure inclusivity.

Another important concern is the *sustainability* of the professional development initiatives; ongoing support and follow-up are crucial to ensure lasting changes in classroom

dynamics. The key is to braid these initiatives together by aligning them with the long-term goals of the school team (Casanova et al., 2023). The impact of these initiatives on student attendance and engagement should be regularly assessed, as encouraged by our Conceptual Framework, to ensure that the professional development efforts are translating into real improvements.

Recommendation #3: With student input, KLHS should create school-wide incentive structures that encourage attendance

To effectively create a school-wide incentive system aimed at improving attendance at Kentlake High School, administrators should prioritize collaboration with both students and staff. Engaging students in the design process through surveys, focus groups, and student leadership committees can provide valuable insights into their motivations and preferences. Prior to developing any intervention, especially before choosing incentives as the preferred approach, it is essential to first identify the specific needs of students or parents and understand the barriers that hinder more consistent attendance (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018). This involvement ensures that the incentives are aligned to the needs of the students while also fostering ownership and buy-in from the student body.

Simultaneously, collaborating with teachers and staff is critical to ensuring the feasibility and alignment of incentives with classroom practices. Teachers can offer valuable input on how incentives can complement classroom activities and support educational outcomes, while also improving student attendance. Furthermore, establishing clear and transparent criteria for earning incentives can help create a sustainable and replicable system. As our conceptual framework argues, regular cycles of evaluation and adjustments based on feedback and attendance data will be essential to maintaining the effectiveness of the incentive system over time (Balu & Ehrlich,

2018). By fostering a collaborative approach among students, staff, and administrators, Kentlake High School can create a dynamic incentive system that motivates students to prioritize attendance and actively engage in their educational journey.

The equity of incentives must be ensured so that all students, regardless of their background, have an equal opportunity to benefit (Balu & Ehrlich, 2018). Additionally, the effectiveness and sustainability of the incentive systems need thorough evaluation to ensure they genuinely address the root causes of absenteeism rather than providing temporary solutions that will not turn the tide of the attendance issue. It is also crucial to balance positive reinforcement with support systems that address barriers to attendance, such as transportation issues, health concerns, or cultural barriers. By thoughtfully considering these factors, Kentlake High School can develop an incentive structure that not only boosts attendance but also fosters a supportive and equitable educational environment (Bundshuh et al., 2021).

Recommendation #4: Revise COVID-Era Grading and Attendance Policies to reflect a more ambitious program

Kentlake High School administration should advocate for the district to revise the COVID-era attendance and grading policies, as these measures have inadvertently fostered a culture of complacency and reduced student engagement. As schools recover from challenges faced during the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020-2021, focusing on nurturing a positive school climate is crucial to help students succeed (Aspen Institute, 2021). The current policies, initially designed to accommodate the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, have led to lower expectations and diminished accountability among students. Attendance rates have not improved since the pandemic, with many students exploiting the lenient grading and attendance policies.

Furthermore, the grading policies have often been overly forgiving, allowing students to figure out how to fail classes without impacting their ability to graduate.

By reassessing and updating these policies, Kentlake High School can promote a more academically ambitious program while also encouraging consistent attendance. It is essential to create an environment that promotes accountability and attendance. By making school climate a top priority in disciplinary policies, we focus on creating safe and supportive learning spaces, building stronger relationships among students and staff, and encouraging positive behaviors. Research shows that these efforts boost students' satisfaction with their school experience and help prevent common issues like misconduct or skipping class (Aspen Institute, 2021).

The transition back to stricter policies may pose challenges for students who have become accustomed to the flexibility and leniency of pandemic-era rules, potentially leading to increased stress and adjustment difficulties. It is crucial to ensure that the revised policies do not disproportionately impact students who are still dealing with pandemic-related issues, such as mental health challenges or family responsibilities. There also must be a balance between maintaining high academic standards and providing adequate support systems to help students meet these expectations. Transparent communication with students, parents, and staff is essential to prepare the school community for the changes and to foster a collective commitment to academic excellence.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Evaluation Tools

Survey (Administered via SurveyMonkey)

Does Attendance Really Count in Our School? A self- assessment

1. How many years have you worked in a school setting?

- ◯ 0-5 Years
- ◯ 6-10 Years
- ◯ 11+ Years

2. Do you consider yourself fluent in a language besides English?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes (please specify below)

3. Accurate Data: Teachers and school staff take attendance accurately and it's entered daily into the district data system

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How do you know?

4. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to:

- ☐ Monitor attendance data and trends
- ☐ Coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy
- ☐ Examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data
- ☐ Ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports
- ☐ None of the Above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to: (a) monitor attendance data and trends; (b) coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy; (c) examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data; and (d) ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
○	○	○	○	○

How do you know?

6. Engaging Climate: Our school has a welcoming and engaging climate that promotes safety, belonging, great teaching and learning, and interpersonal relationships with students, families, and staff.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
○	○	○	○	○

How do you know?

7. Culture of Attendance: Our school promotes a culture of attendance in year-round communication to families and students (back-to school events, letters, flyers, personal phone calls, etc.) and regularly recognizes good and improved attendance.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
○	○	○	○	○

How do you know?

8. Outreach: We reach out to chronically absent students and families and engage them as partners in improving attendance

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
○	○	○	○	○

How do you know?

9. Community Partners: Our school partners with community agencies that offer resources (e.g. expanded learning, health services, mentors) that help engage students and remove attendance barriers.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How do you know?

10. Staff Capacity: Our school ensures staff knows what is chronic absence, why it matters, and what are effective attendance practices

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How do you know?

11. Continuous Improvement: We use data to assess the effectiveness of practices in order to expand what works and modify what does not.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How do you know?

12. Improvement Plan: Our strategies for supporting student attendance are reflected in our school improvement plan.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How do you know?

13. District Policy: Our district policy promotes a positive problem-solving approach to improving attendance with legal action only used as a last resort.

12. Improvement Plan: Our strategies for supporting student attendance are reflected in our school improvement plan.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
○	○	○	○	○

How do you know?

13. District Policy: Our district policy promotes a positive problem-solving approach to improving attendance with legal action only used as a last resort.

Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
○	○	○	○	○

How do you know?

Interview Questions:

Background Information

1. How many years have you been at KLHS?
2. Have you seen a shift in student attendance in your classroom/setting since you started?
    a. If yes, what was the shift?
3. What, if any, relationship do you have with parents of students in your class?
4. How often do you communicate with the parents of students in your class?
5. What is the nature of that communication? (when student is failing, positive communication, information sharing, other?)

Attendance Factors

6. What factors do you think have contributed to this change in student attendance?
7. Do your students (or their families) share with you why they are absent? If yes, what do they report?
8. Have you noticed any trends (ie- closer relationship with parents, less attendance issues)

School Initiatives

9. What school or district initiatives have been implemented at KL to impact attendance?
10. Do you feel supported by your administration in trying to improve attendance?
11. What incentives or punishments have you implemented in your own classroom? What have you seen across other classrooms?

Next Steps/Supports

12. What supports would be helpful in your classroom to increase attendance?
13. If you had a magic wand and could implement policies or practices in your school to improve attendance, what would they be?

Full Codebook

Data Code Tag	Definition	# of Tags	Conceptual Framework Alignment
Compliance	School compliance and accountability measures to ensure data is captured	272	**Problem Diagnosis:** Gathering information about how compliance looks at Kentlake gave us insight into a major problem area for the school as well as an area that we needed to evaluate and revise practices that were already being implemented.
Student Culture	Locus of control for student absenteeism is held at the student level	194	**Problem Diagnosis and Selection of Incentives:** Understanding what the student culture looks like at Kentlake gave us insight into the attendance problem.
School and District Culture	School promotes a culture of attendance	941	**Problem Diagnosis:** To understand the problem, we had to get background information as to how the school promotes a culture of attendance
Family/Parent Culture	Locus of control for student absenteeism is held at the family level	240	**Problem Diagnosis:** Gathering the boundaries of what school could control and what family involvement entailed
Incentives	Incentive or reward systems used inside the classroom or school to improve attendance	23	**Selection of Incentives:** Information about what, if any, incentives were used to promote attendance in the classrooms at KLHS.
Teacher Outreach	Teachers reaching out to students, families or administration to improve attendance	263	**Problem Diagnosis and Evaluation and Revision:** Gathering data from the teachers and staff to understand how often they formally or informally reached out to students or their families

School Level Attendance Initiatives	School based programs with the main goal of improving attendance	223	**Problem Diagnosis and Evaluation and Revision:** What, if any, school-based programs exist at KLHS to improve attendance
Admin Support	Administration supporting attendance initiatives at the school level	407	**Problem Diagnosis and Evaluation and Revision:** Teacher's perception of administration support around attendance in their classroom and at a school level
Resources	Resources targeted at improving attendance	36	**Selection of Incentives:** What resources are needed to improve attendance
Teacher Training	Teacher training from school or district to improve their content knowledge.	178	**Problem Diagnosis and Evaluation and Revision:** What steps the district or school took to train teachers on issues surrounding attendance.
Community Partnership	Community Organizations or members who can support students and school in areas that impact attendance	119	**Selection of Incentives:** Investigate whether the school used any community-based organizations to incentivize students or support attendance initiatives
Additional Language	Any additional language spoken by staff or mention of language and its impact on communication at school	8	**Problem Diagnosis:** With the diversity of the school, what role is language playing a role in the communication challenges with absentee students

Appendix 2: School Artifacts

Planning Documents and Internal School Communication

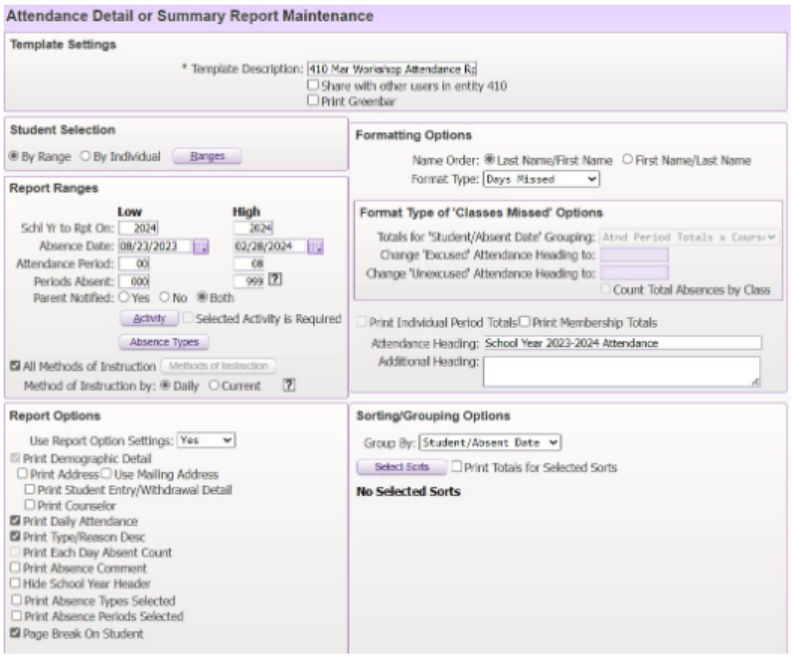
Kentlake Attendance Workshops

Focus:

- The purpose of KL Attendance Workshops is to meet with larger groups of families to discuss:
  - Attendance
  - Grades
  - Skyward access / family access and information available
  - Absence reporting
  - data regarding attendance & graduation rates
  - data informed steps KL is taking
  - the BECCA process
  - partner with family to create attendance contract / plan to improve student's attendance
- The KL team has put together a powerpoint presentation to cover all of this (in English and Spanish)
  - Admin / Deans / support staff present the information, encouraging two-way communication, questions, discussion, etc.
- Individual attendance and grade data is provided to each family
- One of the final pieces of the KL Attendance Workshop is going through an attendance agreement – with families filling out the questions regarding reasons for absences, things they have tried, supports they need, and goals going forward.

Plan / communication:

- Make a plan for who to invite (based on attendance threshold, age, etc. – whatever the focus is)
- Create processing list of those students
- Run family info report to include home languages, grad year, email addresses, mailing address(es)
  - Excel spreadsheet
- At least a couple weeks before:
  - Create invitation letters for all (mail merge from family info Excel spreadsheet)
  - Create invitation letters in home languages
  - Mail to homes
- Within a week of paper invites going out:
  - Email to families with invitation (via School Messenger)
  - Text to families to check email and mail for invitation
- Additional communication:
  - Email / Text / Robocall reminder regarding attendance workshop sometime during the week before, also day-of
- Attendance notes: "Invited to Kentlake Attendance workshop on {date}. Invitation mailed and emailed. Reminders sent by email, text, robocall in. Communication in English {and home language, if applicable}."
- Attempt to get students through Truancy Screener before workshop
  - dependent on Counseling team schedule



- Labels for folders (to organize materials for workshop)
    - Last Name, First Name on left top
    - GY and year on top right
    - Use mail merge
- Check-in sheet
    - Student Name, Student Signature, Parent Signature, Also want individual meeting? Yes/No

Night of workshop:

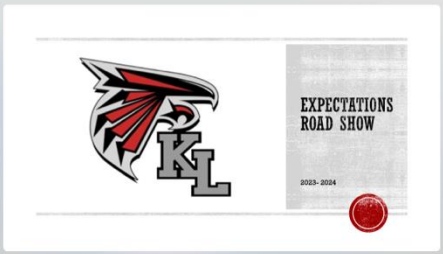
- Families check in, are given materials from their folder (attendance report, grade report)
- Admin Assistant staff create attendance contracts as families arrive, for use toward end of workshop
- Presentation led by Admins / Counselors / Deans, Q&A, create attendance contract

Follow-up:

- Scan in completed attendance contracts
- Attendance notes:
    - Workshop attendance, attendance contract attached (upload / attach)
- Reminder to follow up / check attendance a few weeks after workshop, schedule appointment with Dean if not improving.
- Scanned attendance contracts sent to Deans, Admins, Counselors so that they have the information and can check in with the students.
- Attendance notes:
    - Workshop invite sent by mail, electronically in English {and Home Language} on _____ including reminders and request for individual attendance meeting if they are unable to join for workshop
    - {Date of Workshop} – Not present for KL Attendance Workshop

Student Expectations “Roadshow” 2023-2024 School Year

KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf



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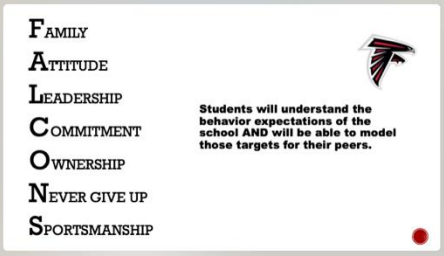

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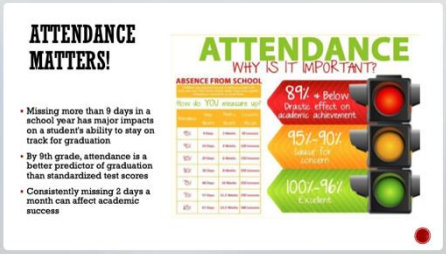

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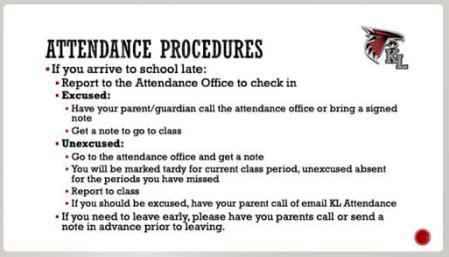

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KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf

TARDIES (ONCE WE GET GOING!)

What will happen when I'm tardy to class?

Teacher will let you in and mark you tardy

- First Tardy – Verbal Warning
- Second Tardy – Your teacher will contact your parents/guardians
- Third Tardy – An office referral will be written by the teacher and you will have a conference with the Dean of Students (or an Administrator)
- Fourth Tardy – Will be treated as "Repeat Defiance" and additional interventions will be given
- Random Tardy Sweeps will be done regularly. If you are found to be tardy during a Tardy Sweep, you will be given a lunch detention.

7

WHAT DO OUR FALCON VALUES LOOK LIKE IN THE HALLWAYS?

- Respect teacher and classmates academic time by getting to class on time.
- Respect others' personal space.
- Follow the directions of the adults in the hallways.
- Have a pass when you leave class.
- Keep the flow of traffic. (6 minute passing periods)
- When an adult says "hi" to you- say "hi" back! It is the polite thing to do!

8

RESTROOM EXPECTATIONS

- Before school and during passing, all bathrooms are open and available to use.
- During lunch, the1800 bathrooms are open to students.
- During class periods, the 1800 bathrooms will be open to students.
- Loitering or congregating in the restrooms will not be permitted. Environmental sensors have been installed in bathrooms to detect substance use.
- Honor the community space by respecting others' privacy, using the bathroom for what it is intended for, washing appropriately, and immediately leaving.

9

KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf

VAPING

Kentlake is a Tobacco-Free campus. Vape sensors and alarms have been added to bathrooms to help ensure that they are being used appropriately.

If you refuse to give security or administration your VAPE

- It will be treated as an illegal substance
- Disciplinary action will follow based on Kentlake's Discipline Matrix

10

WHY??!?!

e-hallpass

- Absenteeism! Students cannot learn if they are not in class. We want all KL students to be safe and academically focused while on campus!
- Digitizes a paper system and provides loads of DATA! Using this platform allows for more detailed conversations with students and families when absenteeism becomes a problem
- Allows us to put limits on the number of students in the hallways at once, or per location (i.e. bathrooms!)

11

E-HALLPASS LINK FOR STUDENTS

https://e-hallpass.com/login

Students: Click on Clever

12

KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf

E-HALLPASS PROCEDURE 2023-2024

- If you need a hallpass, you may choose one of the following options:

1) On your device, log into e-Hallpass and generate a student created pass

OR

2) You may ask your teacher for a pass and they can generate one for you on their device (called a "teacher proxy pass")

13

14

STAFF APPROVING STUDENT CREATED PASS

From Dashboard on Staff Device

From Student Device

Video for approving from dashboard

Video for approving from student device

15

KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf

ONCE YOUR PASS HAS BEEN APPROVED...

- Once your pass has been approved (GREEN) and the timer has started, place your computer in your teacher's designated "safe zone" until you return
- When you return, check-in with your teacher.

16

- e-Hallpass Restrictions:
  - No passes first and last 10 minutes of each period
  - No pass list students
  - Location might be at max capacity
  - A student who has been identified as a "polarity partner" is already in the hallway.

Pass Limits and/or Restrictions

Your pass may be restricted because there are already too many students with passes, you are out of passes, or you have had other restrictions assigned. You will get a notification when this happens.

17

HOW TO END A PASS

- It is important to "end" your pass as soon as you return to class (accurate data!). There are two options for how this can be completed.

1) Upon returning to class, the teacher can check you back in using their device.
2) On your device, the teacher can input their pin to end your pass.

18

KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf

LUNCHTIME/COMMONS

- **If you are buying lunch, line up in one of the two lunch lines or salad line and line up single file.**
- **Have your Student ID number ready to go when buying lunch – NOTE: lunches are free for all students)**
- **Clean up after yourself.**
- **Stay in the Commons, outdoor patio, and downstairs Main Hallway. (No one on the 2nd floor)**
- **Keep the noise level down.**
- **The 1800 bathrooms are open for student use.**
- **When the passing bell rings, please begin to proceed to your class.**

19

STUDENT STORE EXPECTATIONS

- The Kentlake Student Store – Falcon Nest – is our very own retail store operated by students for students. The store is a CLASS where students are learning how to apply business and marketing skills in a real-life setting. Here are some things to know about the store:
  - ONLY STORE STUDENTS MAY BE BEHIND THE COUNTER. You are our customer and like any business, you can't go behind the counter and pretend you work there too.
  - NO LOITERING. Once you make your purchase you must return to the Commons.
  - There is a marked entrance and exit for the store, use the correct door.
- **The store is closed Wednesdays.**

Look for announcements about when the store will open for this school year.

20

CELLPHONE/HEADPHONES POLICY

- The Falcon Family recognizes that cell phones are an important tool for learning and communication.
- Students need to understand when it is appropriate to use a cellphone and under which conditions.
- Cellphones can, however, provide unintentional barriers to creating a learning-focused environment when not used appropriately or at the right time.
- By providing clear expectations on cell phone use, our Falcon Family believes we can focus students on learning, decrease incidences of cyber/social media bullying, and create a stronger culture of safety and learning for our students.

21

CELLPHONE/HEADPHONE POLICY

- **Students at Kentlake will comply with the following expectations for cellphone/headphone use:**
  - During the class period, cellphones and headphones must be **out of sight** unless they are being used for instructional purposes.
  - Instructional **staff will explicitly state whether cellphones will or will not be used** for instructional purposes during the class period by posting a sign at the front of the classroom indicating whether cellphones are or are not permitted at any given time.
  - **Cellphones are to be put** away unless the instructor explicitly states they may be out and visible.
  - Students who need **translation support may always use their phones** for this educational purpose.
  - There are **no cellphones out in the locker room and the bathroom** as that is a violation of privacy and creates an unsafe environment for our students.

22

CELLPHONE/HEADPHONES: INTERVENTION STEPS

- **Step One**: **Warning** from staff member and reminder that it is not the time to have cellphones/headphones out.
- **Step Two**: Classroom teacher will **contact parents/ guardians and refer student to administration** for Cellphone Violation.
- **Step Three**: Teacher will **refer student to administration** for Repeat Defiance, following the standard referral process.
- **Step Four**: Teacher, Dean/Assistant Principal will **meet with parent/guardian** and student to **develop a plan** to encourage appropriate cellphone/headphones use.

23

HOW TO USE A CELLPHONE FOR LEARNING

Acceptable Use of Cellphones/Headphones	Unacceptable Use of Cell phones/Headphones
• Pictures of power points and lecture information • Instructional apps like Kahoot • When given permission by the teacher • Diabetic monitoring • Calendaring applications • Recording homework assignments • Translation tools • Collecting lab data	• Social Media interactions that prevent focus on instruction • Using phone in the bathroom or locker room creating a vulnerable environment • Phone calls/texts during class which disrupt instruction • Direct Messages (DMs) between students • Playing games or gaming • Pictures of other student's work

As a reminder, if students are logged into the KSD wi-fi on their personal devices, they are subject to the KSD acceptable use Policy 2022P.

24

KL Expectations Roadshow Fall 2023.pdf

DRESS CODE

- Due to feedback from students and the community at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, a committee (students, teachers, community members) will be formed to discuss and create an updated Kentlake Dress Code.
- The committee will aim to support students' right to express themselves while acknowledging that we, as a Falcon Family, are a professional, academic community.

25

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A PART OF THE DRESS CODE COMMITTEE?

Scan the code and complete the survey to join the Dress Code Committee. Let your voice be heard!

Dress Code Committee

26

RESPONDING TO A FIGHT OR ALTERCATION

What TO do

- Put your phone away.
- Get an adult.
- Keep walking AWAY.
- Report to an adult if you receive a text, dm, or video footage of a fight.

DO NOT

- Stop and watch.
- Record on your phone and share.
- Prevent adults from accessing the fight.

27

REMEMBER:

Students involved in fights/physical altercations will be suspended.

Students participating in "play fighting" will receive fighting consequences, as BOTH cause a major disruption to the learning environment.

Recording a fight and/or sharing videos of incidents will be considered "fight instigation" and disciplinary action will be taken.

28

PARKING LOTS AND OUT OF BOUND AREAS

- Students must purchase a parking lot pass from the ASB/ Cashier ($40 for the year, $20 for the semester) and display the pass in the rearview mirror or face up in an easily visible locating on the dashboard of the vehicle. Students will be ticketed for non-display.
- Students must park in front of the school in the lower main lot. Parking behind the school, in staff lots, or in any of the upper lots is strictly prohibited. Students parking in any unauthorized areas will be ticketed.
- Parking lots are closed to students during class hours.

29

OUT OF BOUNDS AREAS

Students are not to go to these areas without staff permission:

- Baseball and Softball Diamonds
- Tennis Courts
- Dugouts
- Football Field
- Ticket Booth and Track Shed
- Forested Areas
- Hiking Trails
- YOUR CAR!

31

TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSEMBLIES

- ***Pop Assemblies***
  - Respect the speaker.
  - Enthusiastic participation is expected and encouraged. *Show your Falcon spirit!*
- ***Formal Assemblies***
  - Be a respectful audience.
  - Listen quietly when appropriate.
  - Applaud when appropriate.

32

ENTERING THE ASSEMBLY

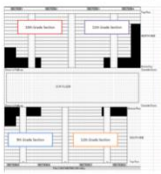
- Leave your backpack in your classroom.
- Walk to the assembly with your classroom teacher.
- You will be allowed to enter the gym if you are with your teacher.

33

WHERE DO I SIT?

It depends on the type of assembly!

- ***Pep Assemblies***
  - Sit with your grade level
  - (eg. Frosh, Soph, Jr, Sr)
- ***Formal Assemblies*** (Performances, Presentations)
  - Sit with your class/teacher in assigned rows



34

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR DURING ALL ASSEMBLIES

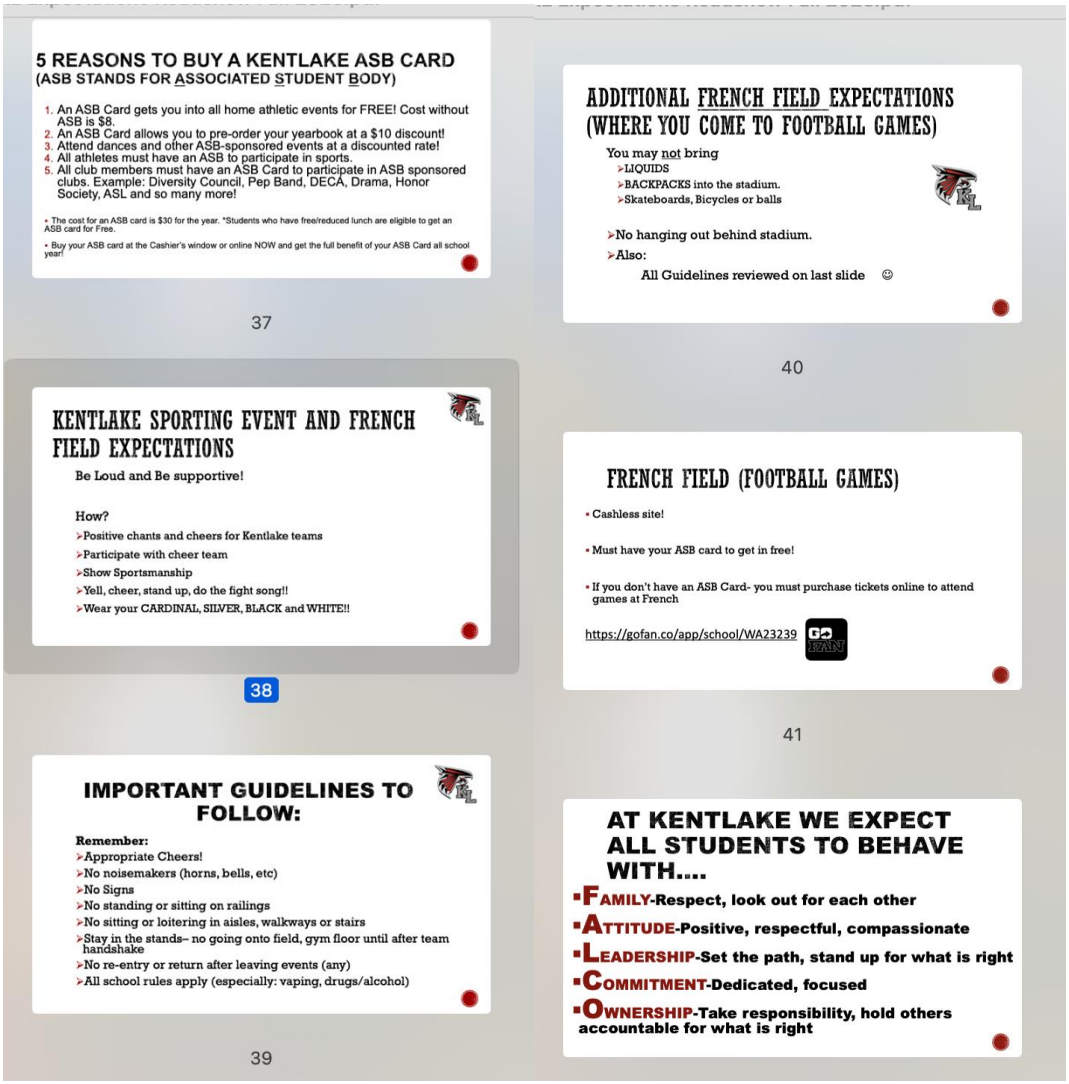
FAMILY-ATTITUDE-LEADERSHIP

- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Listen to the speaker
- Keep electronics put away at all times
- Respond appropriately

35

GET INVOLVED! GO TO EVENTS!

- Every week there are events to attend that support your Falcon Family!
- Home sporting events:
  - Free with ASB CARD
  - $8 without ASB



5 REASONS TO BUY A KENTLAKE ASB CARD
(ASB STANDS FOR ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY)

1. An ASB Card gets you into all home athletic events for FREE! Cost without ASB is $8.
2. An ASB Card allows you to pre-order your yearbook at a $10 discount!
3. Attend dances and other ASB-sponsored events at a discounted rate!
4. All athletes must have an ASB to participate in sports.
5. All club members must have an ASB Card to participate in ASB sponsored clubs. Example: Diversity Council, Pep Band, DECA, Drama, Honor Society, ASL and so many more!

- The cost for an ASB card is $30 for the year. *Students who have free/reduced lunch are eligible to get an ASB card for Free.
- Buy your ASB card at the Cashier's window or online NOW and get the full benefit of your ASB Card all school year!

37

KENTLAKE SPORTING EVENT AND FRENCH FIELD EXPECTATIONS

Be Loud and Be supportive!

How?

- Positive chants and cheers for Kentlake teams
- Participate with cheer team
- Show Sportsmanship
- Yell, cheer, stand up, do the fight song!!
- Wear your CARDINAL, SILVER, BLACK and WHITE!!

38

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW:

Remember:

- Appropriate Cheers!
- No noisemakers (horns, bells, etc)
- No Signs
- No standing or sitting on railings
- No sitting or loitering in aisles, walkways or stairs
- Stay in the stands– no going onto field, gym floor until after team handshake
- No re-entry or return after leaving events (any)
- All school rules apply (especially: vaping, drugs/alcohol)

39

ADDITIONAL FRENCH FIELD EXPECTATIONS (WHERE YOU COME TO FOOTBALL GAMES)

You may not bring

- LIQUIDS
- BACKPACKS into the stadium.
- Skateboards, Bicycles or balls

- No hanging out behind stadium.
- Also:

All Guidelines reviewed on last slide ☺

40

FRENCH FIELD (FOOTBALL GAMES)

- Cashless site!
- Must have your ASB card to get in free!
- If you don't have an ASB Card- you must purchase tickets online to attend games at French

https://gofan.co/app/school/WA23239

41

AT KENTLAKE WE EXPECT ALL STUDENTS TO BEHAVE WITH....

- **FAMILY-Respect, look out for each other**
- **ATTITUDE-Positive, respectful, compassionate**
- **LEADERSHIP-Set the path, stand up for what is right**
- **COMMITMENT-Dedicated, focused**
- **OWNERSHIP-Take responsibility, hold others accountable for what is right**

Letters to Family and Community

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Israel Vela
Superintendent

Heidi Maurer
Principal
Kentlake High School

MISSION
Successfully Preparing All Students For Their Futures

Kentlake High School
21401 SE Falcon Way
Kent, WA 98042
Phone: (253) 373-4900
Fax: (253) 373-4918
https://www.kent.k12.wa.us/KL

EQUITY EXCELLENCE COMMUNITY

January, 2024

Dear Falcon Family-

As we begin the New Year, this is a great time to share with our community the progress we are making with our school improvement goals- specifically around attendance. Regular attendance is the most important factor in determining whether a student will cross the graduation stage. Missing just two days a month substantially decreases the likelihood that a student will graduate from high school. And, the ramifications for not earning a diploma are substantial.

Chronically absent students are 4 times more likely to not complete high school.

Missing just two days a month substantially decreases the likelihood that a student will graduate from the high school.

As I shared earlier this year, 62.7% of our Kentlake students were chronically absent last year and our Falcon Family is looking to decrease this by at least 10%. To date, 55.3% of our students are chronically absent this year representing a 7.4% decrease. However, we have not yet met our goal, and we need your assistance in ensuring that all of our students are coming to school every day!

Here are some steps that we can take to support student attendance:

- Check to make sure that Kentlake phone numbers have not been "accidently" blocked. Go into your "blocked contacts" and look for numbers that begin 253-373. These are KSD numbers. If these are blocked not only are you not getting messages from the school, but we cannot get a hold of you if there is an emergency with your student. **Please unblock these numbers.**
- Check your student's attendance daily using the Skyward app on your phone. If you do not have a phone, ask your student to log into Skyward on their school computer and check their attendance and grades at least once a week.
- Pay attention to the auto-dialer attendance messages that go home when your student is absent. And, if your student says that it is an error, contact the teacher to confirm.
- Create opportunities to talk with your student on the importance of attending every class every day. Attendance matters!

We are only going to impact our students' attendance if we work together as a team. Here are just a few of the things we are doing at Kentlake to support increased student attendance:

- Mandatory attendance workshops for students and their parents when students have more than 7 absences for the year.

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Israel Vela
Superintendent

Heidi Maurer
Principal
Kentlake High School

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- Lessons for students in classes and in Homeroom on the importance of attendance and the impact of not earning a high school diploma on post-high school options.
- Home visits for chronically absent students.
- Discussions with students in Principal Advisory Council on increasing school-wide attendance.
- Connecting students with counselors when mental health is a barrier to attending school.
- Texting parents on Mondays informing them their student had 5 or more tardies the previous week.

Our students need to know that the adults in their world value regular attendance at school. Students need to know that absenteeism is a barrier to graduation and graduation matters. Our students need to know that the instruction they miss when they are absent isn't something that can just be "fixed" by skimming through canvas.

Our students will value what we put time towards. In the New Year, our students need our community to spend time talking with them about attendance. Take a moment to encourage your student to attend class every day, every class period so they can be on track to graduate!

Respectfully-

Heidi Maurer
Kentlake HS Principal

EQUITY
EXCELLENCE
COMMUNITY

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Israel Vela
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EQUITY
EXCELLENCE
COMMUNITY

February 7, 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian of <<Student Name>>,

Since August 23rd your student has accumulated more than 7 unexused absences.

Washington State law requires that students under the age of 18 attend school regularly. Schools are required to file a truancy petition with the King County Court after the 7th unexcused absence within a month or the 15th unexcused absence in a year. We do not want to file a truancy petition for your student and would like to work together with you to improve your student's attendance so that this is not necessary.

Due to your student's unexcused absences, **you and your student are required to come to a mandatory attendance workshop at Kentlake on Monday, March 4th at 7:00 PM.**

The purpose of this workshop is to discuss the importance of regular attendance, review attendance and grade data, educate families on how to check attendance and grade data in Skyward, and come up with a plan to help your student attend more regularly.

Because an attendance conference is a mandatory part of the truancy process, if you do not attend the attendance workshop you may expect a home visit from Kentlake staff to follow up about your student's attendance. **If you are unable to attend, please reach out to Kim Wells to set up an attendance meeting as soon as possible.**

Both you and your student's attendance is required on the evening of March 4th. Please have your student bring their laptop with them to the workshop.

If you have any questions, or need to schedule an attendance meeting, please contact Kim Wells at Kim.Wells@kent.k12.wa.us or 253-373-1616.

Thank you,

The Kentlake Administrative Staff

Heidi Maurer	*Andrew Mackend*	*Nicole Kieffer*	*Kirsten Roberts-Hunkovic*
Principal	*Assistant Principal*	*Assistant Principal*	*Assistant Principal*

Amy Curtis	*Jared Detamore*
Dean of Students	*Dean of Students*

OBJ

April 14, 2024

Dear Falcon Family!

It will be nice to have everyone back in the building tomorrow! It has been a bit lonely around here! As we jump into the last quarter of the year, I have a few reminders:

Parent Drop Off and Pick Up Area:
Parents need to drop of their students in the upper circle. Parents will not be allowed in the main lot and will be turned around if they try to drop students off in the main lot. Please, please, please follow our parking lot expectations so that we can keep things moving smoothly and safe for students. Please see the attached map for a visual on where you will be expected to drop off your student.

Attendance Expectations:
As the weather gets nicer, we typically see a decline in student attendance. It is important students attend regularly. We are seeing a very clear correlation between students who are frequently absent and poor grades. Parents should monitor their student's attendance on Skyward regularly. And, if your student is skipping, please call them out on it!

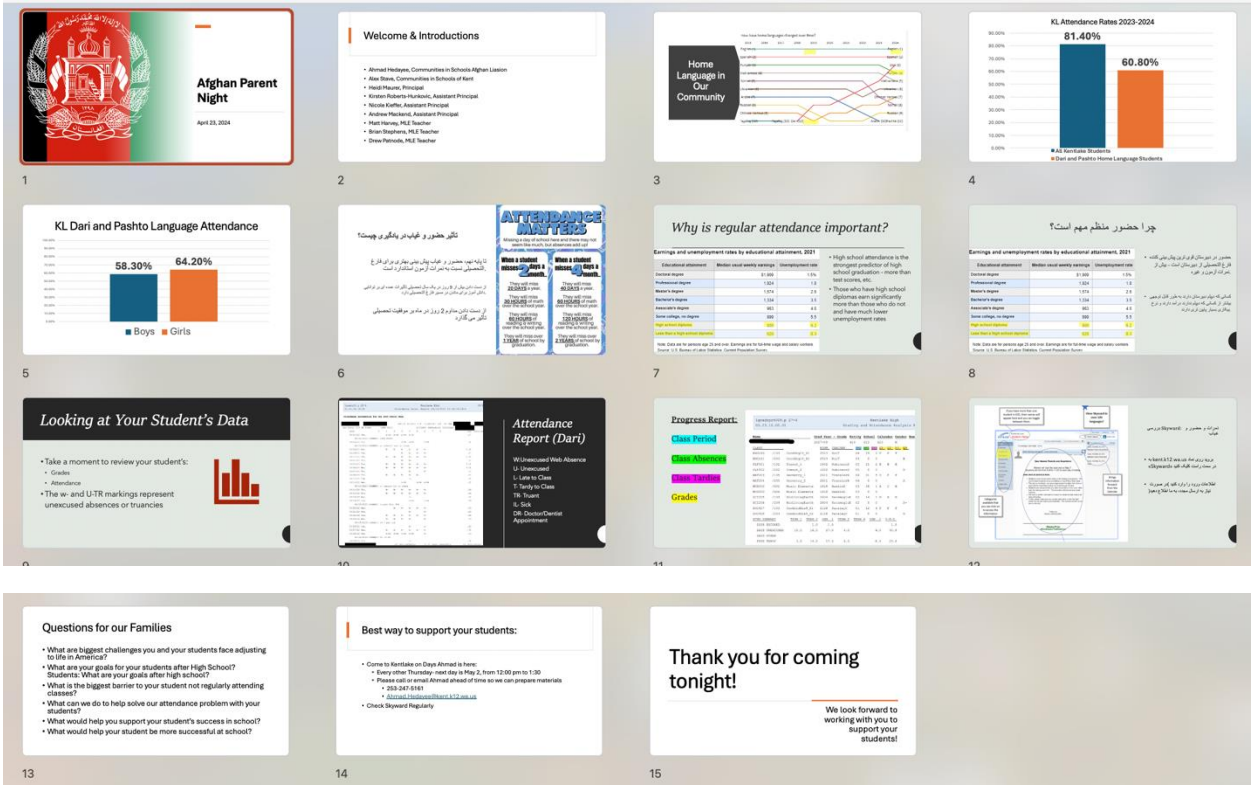
If you are not getting attendance or school calls, please check you blocked phone numbers. Our students have amazing tech skills, and we are seeing a trend where they are blocking phone numbers on parents phones that begin with 253-373. Thus, parents do not get calls from the school!

Let's work with our students to finish the year strong!

Respectfully-

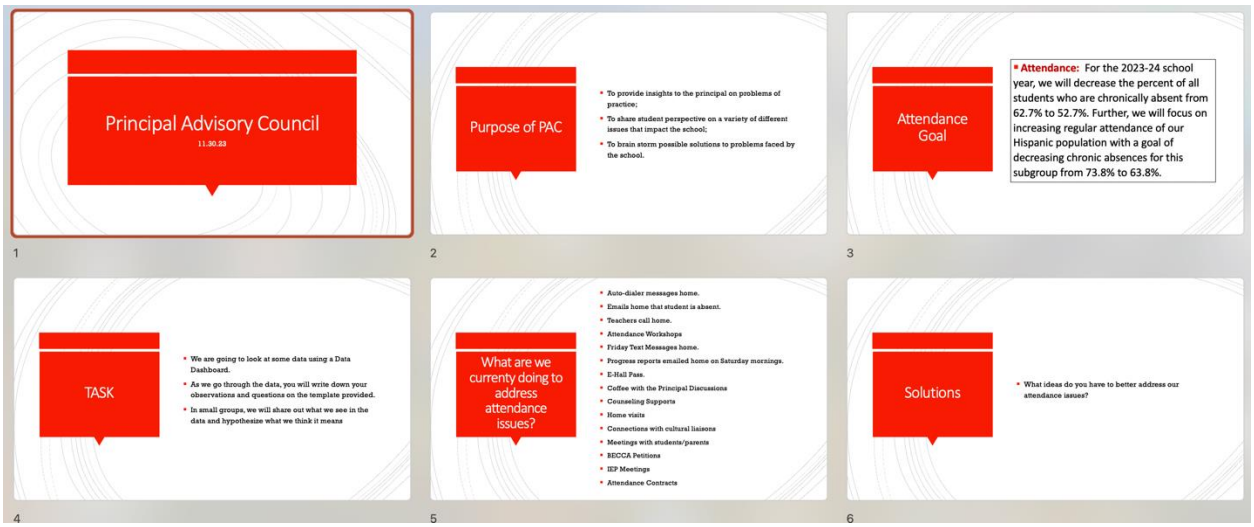
Heidi Maurer
Kentlake HS Principal

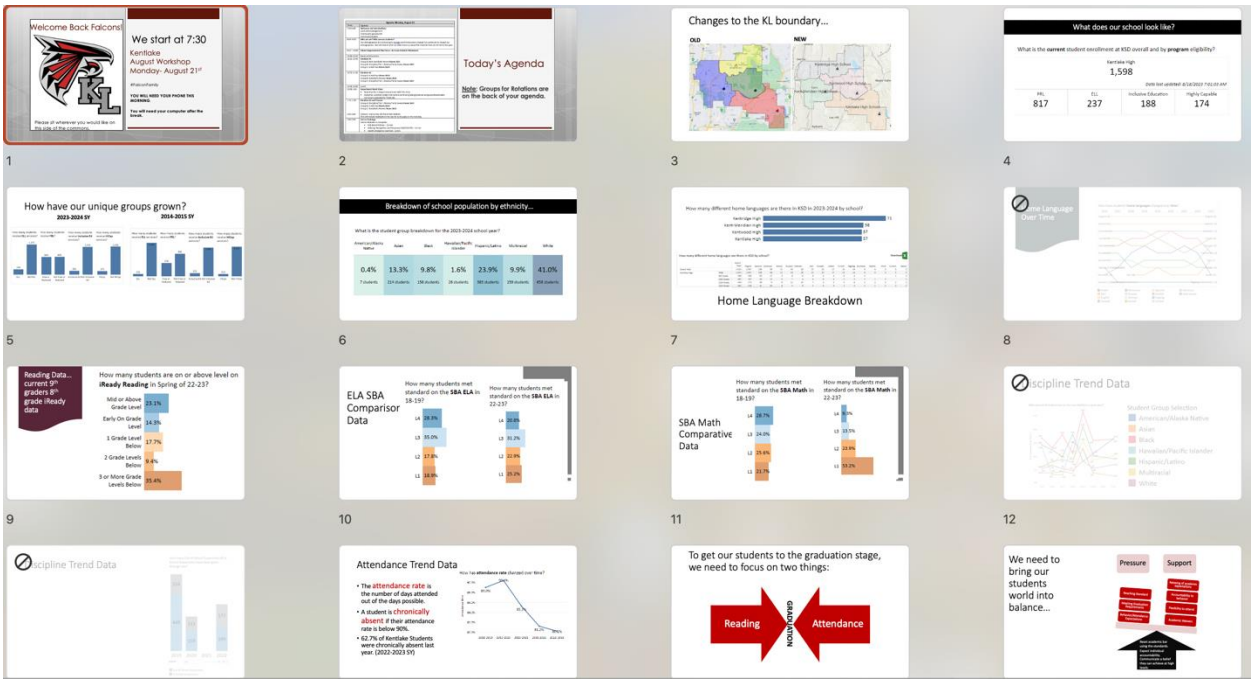
Afghan Parent Night, April 2024

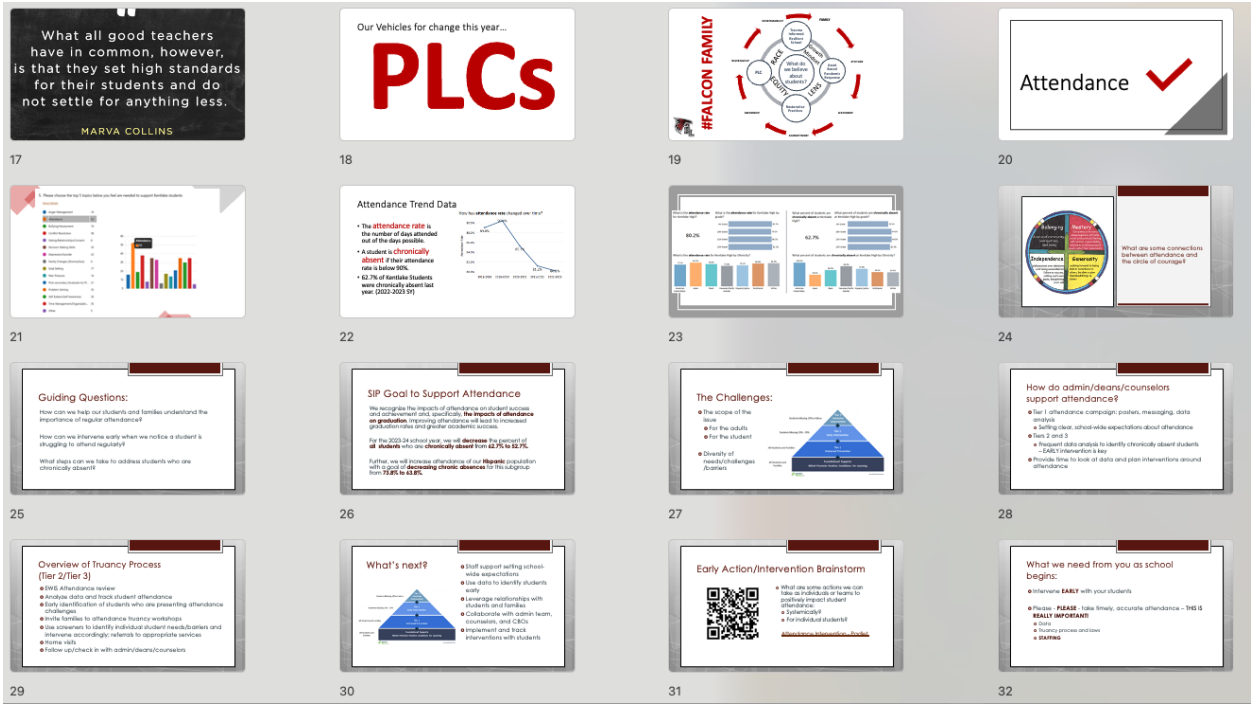


Meeting Agendas and PowerPoints

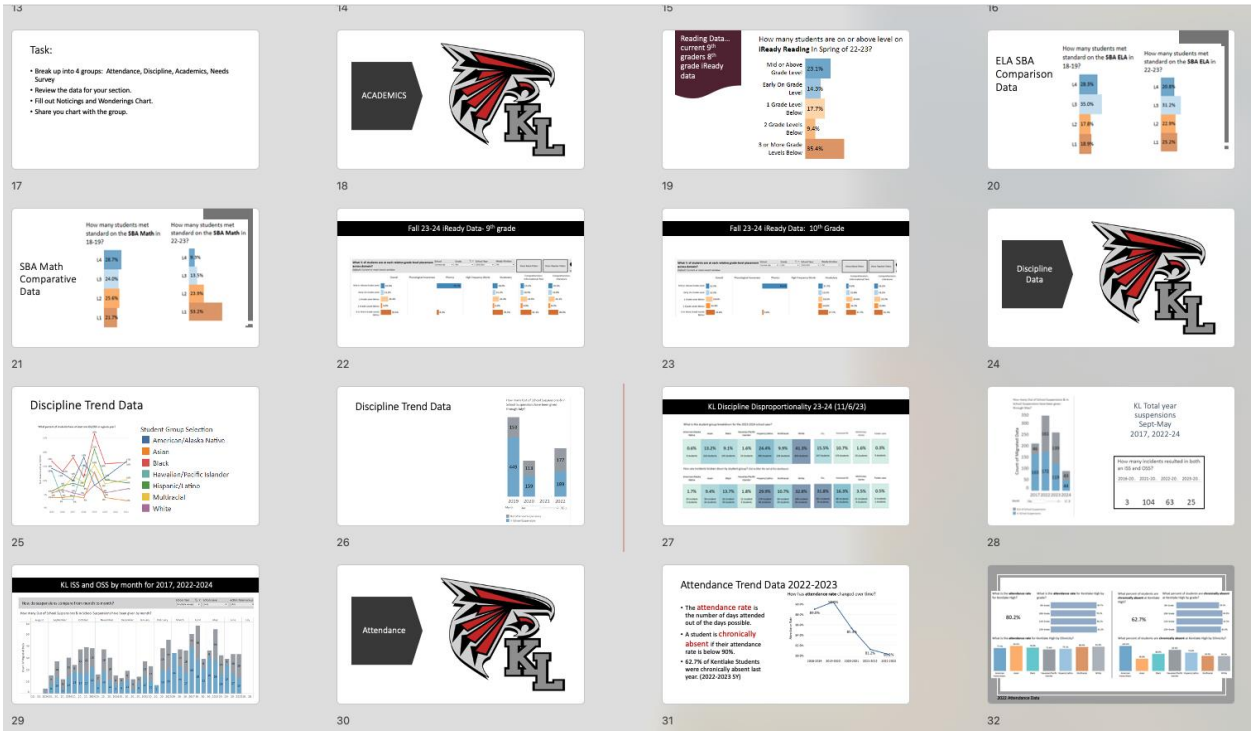
Introduction/ Start of school information



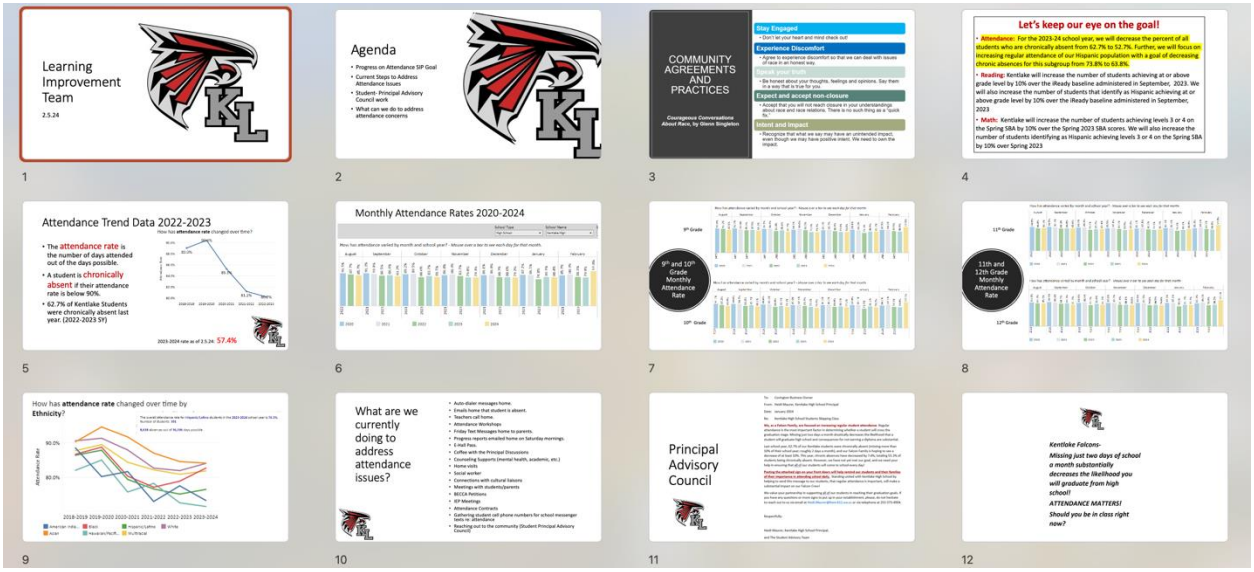




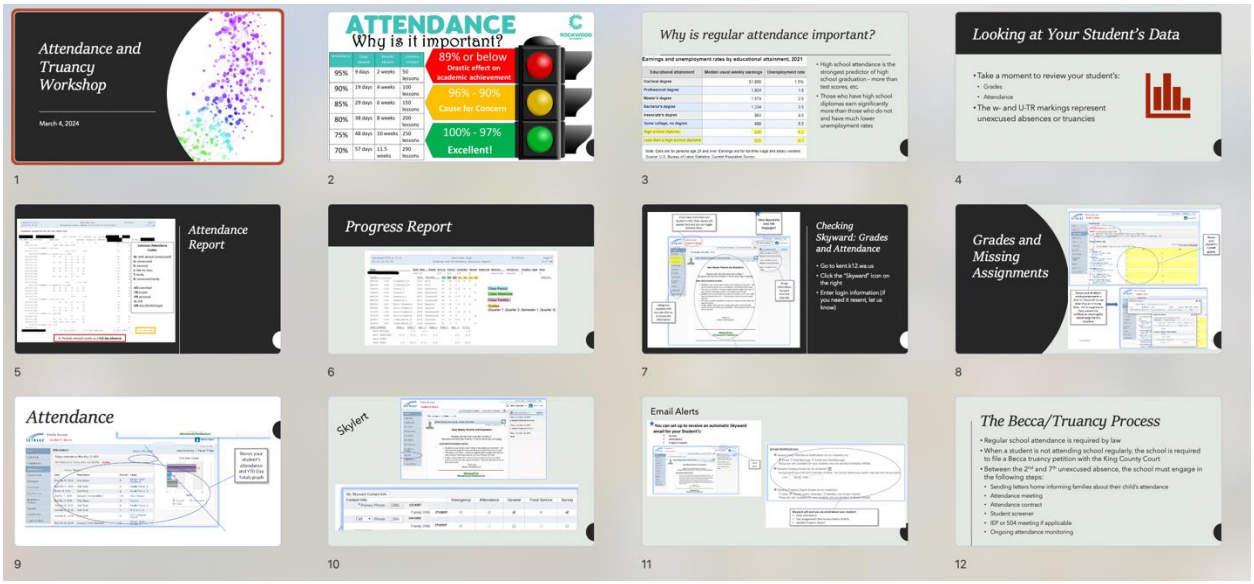
Selected slides from Learning Improvement Team (LIT) November 2023

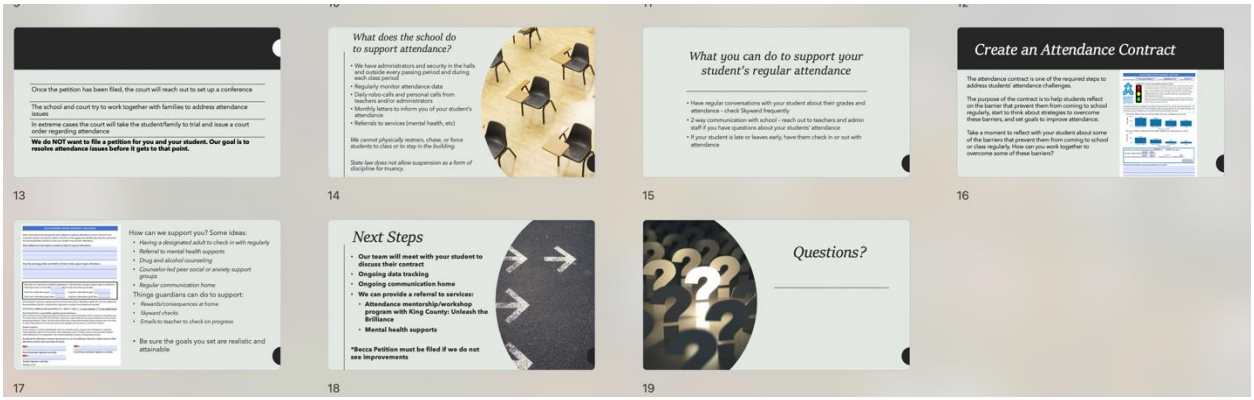

13
Task:
• Break up into 4 groups: Attendance, Discipline, Academics, Needs Survey
• Review the data for your section.
• Fill out Noticings and Wonderings Chart.
• Share you chart with the group.
14
ACADEMICS
15
Reading Data... current 9th graders 8th grade iReady data
How many students are on or above level on iReady Reading in Spring of 22-23?
Mid or Above Grade Level
Early On Grade Level
1 Grade Level Below
2 Grade Levels Below
3 or More Grade Levels Below
16
ELA SBA Comparison Data
How many students met standard on the SBA ELA in 18-19?
How many students met standard on the SBA ELA in 22-23?
17
SBA Math Comparative Data
How many students met standard on the SBA Math in 18-19?
How many students met standard on the SBA Math in 22-23?
18
Fall 23-24 iReady Data- 9th grade
19
Fall 23-24 iReady Data: 10th Grade
20
Discipline Data
21
Discipline Trend Data
Student Group Selection
American/Alaska Native
Asian
Black
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic/Latino
Multiracial
White
22
Discipline Trend Data
23
KL Discipline Disproportionality 23-24 (11/6/23)
24
KL Total year suspensions Sept-May 2017, 2022-24
How many incidents resulted in both an ISS and OSS?
3
104
63
25
KL ISS and OSS by month for 2017, 2022-2024
26
Attendance
27
Attendance Trend Data 2022-2023
• The attendance rate is the number of days attended out of the days possible.
• A student is chronically absent if their attendance rate is below 90%.
• 62.7% of Kentlake Students were chronically absent last year. (2022-2023 SY)
28
80.2%
62.7%
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
Attendance Rates Over Time
38
Attendance Rates: 10/17 to 11/16
9th graders
10th graders
39
Screener Data
40
41
2023 Needs Assessment
2022 Need Assessment
42
2023 Needs Assessment
2022 Needs Assessment
43
2023 Needs Assessment
2022 Needs Assessment
44
2023 Needs Assessment
2022 Needs Assessment
45
2023 Needs Assessment
2022 Needs Assessment
46
2023 Needs Assessment
2022 Needs Assessment
47
Would you be interested in participating in a counseling group for any of these issues?
Anxiety
Depression
Friendship
Grief
Study Skills
Other
48
157 responses submitted
We are trying to understand why students are typically absent from school. What is the reason you are most often absent?
29%
27%
15%
14%

Learning Improvement Team (LIT) February 2024



Attendance and Truancy Workshop, March 2024





Building Leadership Team (BLT), February 2024

Appendix 3: Data Table – Survey Results

Does Attendance Really Count in Our School? A self- assessment

Q1. How many years have you worked in a school setting?

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
0-5 Years	30.77%	28
6-10 Years	19.78%	18
11+ Years	49.45%	45

Q2. Do you consider yourself fluent in a language besides English?

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
No	81.32%	74
Yes (please specify below)	18.68%	17

Q3. Accurate Data: Teachers and school staff take attendance accurately and it's entered daily into the district data system

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	15	0	21	34	21
Points Score	15	0	63	136	105
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.51*				
STDEV	*1.30*				

Q4. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to:

Answer Choices	**Response Percent**	**Responses**
Monitor attendance data and trends	64.84%	59

Coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy	65.93%	60
Examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data	54.95%	50
Ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports	54.95%	50
None of the Above	4.40%	4
Other (please specify)	20.88%	19
n	*91.00*	

Q5. Team to Address Attendance: Our team, led by an administrator, meets at least every two weeks to: (a) monitor attendance data and trends; (b) coordinate the school's multi-tiered attendance strategy; (c) examine the reasons for absences using quantitative and qualitative data; and (d) ensure chronically absent students receive needed supports.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	23	4	15	31	18
Points Score	23	8	45	124	90
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.19*				
STDEV	*1.47*				

Q6. Engaging Climate: Our school has a welcoming and engaging climate that promotes safety, belonging, great teaching and learning, and interpersonal relationships with students, families, and staff.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	1	3	26	33	28
Points Score	1	6	78	132	140
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.92*				
STDEV	*0.90*				

Q7. Culture of Attendance: Our school promotes a culture of attendance in year-round communication to families and students (back-to school events, letters, flyers, personal phone calls, etc.) and regularly recognizes good and improved attendance.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5

Number of Responses	3	3	21	30	33
Points Score	3	6	63	120	165
n	*90*				
Mean	*3.97*				
STDEV	*1.02*				

Q8. Outreach: We reach out to chronically absent students and families and engage them as partners in improving attendance

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	16	5	20	28	22
Points Score	16	10	60	112	110
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.38*				
STDEV	*1.37*				

Q9. Community Partners: Our school partners with community agencies that offer resources (e.g. expanded learning, health services, mentors) that help engage students and remove attendance barriers.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	30	2	14	24	21
Points Score	30	4	42	96	105
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.04*				
STDEV	*1.59*				

Q10. Staff Capacity: Our school ensures staff knows what is chronic absence, why it matters, and what are effective attendance practices

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	3	2	16	27	42
Points Score	3	4	48	108	210
n	*90*				
Mean	*4.14*				
STDEV	*1.01*				

Q11. Continuous Improvement: We use data to assess the effectiveness of practices in order to expand what works and modify what does not.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	22	2	25	26	16
Points Score	22	4	75	104	80
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.13*				
STDEV	*1.40*				

Q12. Improvement Plan: Our strategies for supporting student attendance are reflected in our school improvement plan.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	21	1	8	28	33
Points Score	21	2	24	112	165
n	*91*				
Mean	*3.56*				
STDEV	*1.54*				

Q13. District Policy: Our district policy promotes a positive problem-solving approach to improving attendance with legal action only used as a last resort.

Answer Choices	Don't Know	Urgent Gap	Could Be Better	OK for Now	Strength
	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Responses	29	7	27	18	10
Points Score	29	14	81	72	50
n	*91*				
Mean	*2.70*				
STDEV	*1.38*				