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# Jefferson Twp Schools

— Parent Engagement Meeting —  
Why Attendance Matters

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# Introduction

Kris Ketron - Montgomery County School Attendance Officer

- Attendance Officer for 4 Local School Districts in Montgomery County
- 4th Year Working in Jefferson Twp Schools
- I know these are trying times. I also know you have big dreams for your kids. We can do this!
  - “A brick at a time builds the wall” ~Mike Kelly

## Definition of Terms

**Chronic Absentee** - Student who misses 10% of the school year for any reason. (2 absences per month x 9 months of school = 18 absences = Chronic Absentee)

- Cost: Missed instructional time and a decrease in student achievement

Vs.

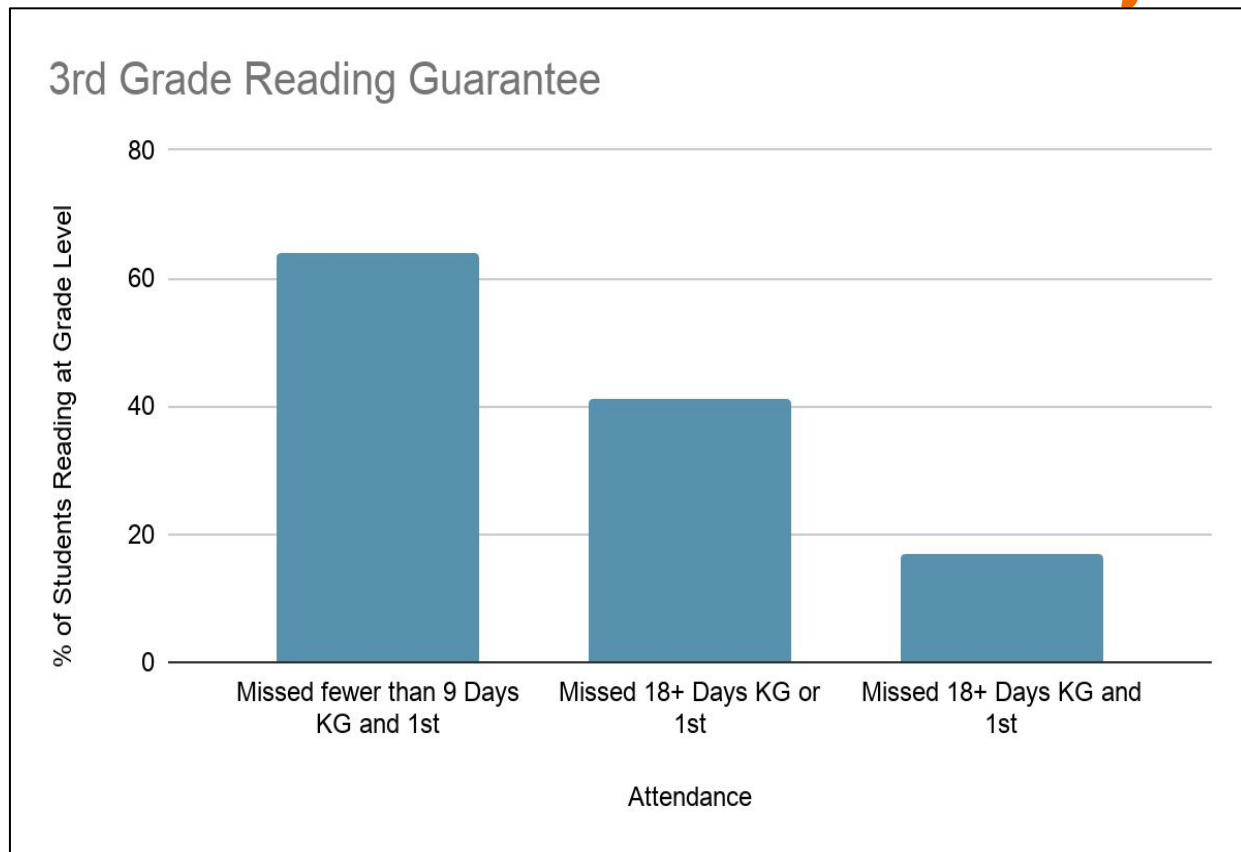
**Truant** - Student who misses school without a valid / legal excuse

- Cost: Legal charges against student and parent as well as potential involvement with Children's Services.



# Why Good Attendance Matters: What the Data Says

- ❑ Attendance is strongest predictor of early grade level reading proficiency.
  - ❑ See Chart
- ❑ Chronic absenteeism is one of three early warning signs that a student in 6th grade will likely drop out before graduating.
- ❑ Chronic absenteeism in 9th grade is a better predictor of a student not graduating than his or her 8th grade test scores



## Why Attendance Matters: Beyond the Data



Work Ethic

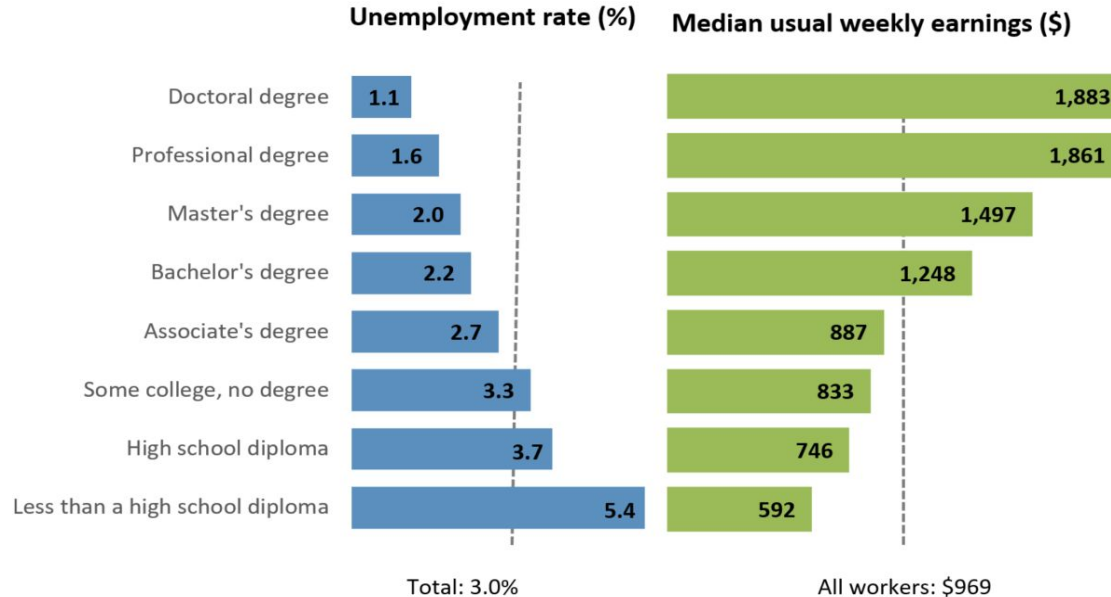
Positive Domino Effect  
(Grades, Self Esteem, Habits)

Reliability

Employability

# The Value of Education

## Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2019



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

# What We Can Do As a Community to Help

Make good attendance an expectation.  
Averaging two missed days per month is too much.

Talk with your children or the children of friends and family and explain why good attendance matters.

Help the child in your life maintain regular routines: Bedtime, Homework, Hygiene, etc.

As a caregiver know the school's attendance policies in the student handbook.

Encourage safe and meaningful school activities when those opportunities resume.  
(clubs or sports)

Communicate with the school and your child's teacher(s)

# What We Can Do As a Community to Help

Talk with your kids about their dreams and teach them how education plays a role in achieving those dreams.

Try to not project your school experience on your child.

Discuss any barriers to attendance with the school staff before they become a problem. Someone may be able to help



# Excellent Source For More Information

Attendance Works

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


Ohio Department of Education: Get to School Stay in the Game

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Research-Evaluation-and-Advanced-Analytics/Proving-Ground/Stay-in-the-Game>

## ATTENDANCE

in the early grades

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten and even preK, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?




[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

### Who Is Affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.


1 in 10 kids in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.<sup>1</sup>



2 in 10 low-income kids miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.<sup>2</sup>

2.5 in 10 homeless kids are chronically absent.<sup>3</sup>

4 in 10 transient kids miss too much school when families move.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Chang, Hedy; Romero, Marijose, Present, *Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, National Center for Children in Poverty, NY, NY, September 2008.

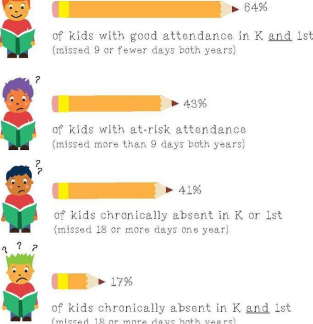
<sup>2</sup> *Chronic Absence in Utah*, Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah, 2012.

### Why It Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

Preliminary data from a California study found that children who were chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.<sup>5</sup>

### Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?<sup>5</sup>



Attendance Group	Percentage
Kids with good attendance in K and 1st (missed 9 or fewer days both years)	64%
Kids with at-risk attendance (missed more than 9 days both years)	43%
Kids chronically absent in K or 1st (missed 18 or more days one year)	41%
Kids chronically absent in K and 1st (missed 18 or more days both years)	17%

<sup>5</sup> *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes*, Applied Survey Research, May 2011.

### What We Can Do

#### Engage Families

Many parents and students don't realize how quickly early absences can add up to academic trouble. Community members and teachers can educate families and build a culture of attendance through early outreach, incentives and attention to data.

#### Fix Transportation

The lack of a reliable car, or simply missing the school bus, can mean some students don't make it to class. Schools, transit agencies and community partners can organize car pools, supply bus passes or find other ways to get kids to school.

#### Address Health Needs

Health concerns, particularly asthma and dental problems, are among the leading reasons students miss school in the early grades. Schools and medical professionals can work together to give children and families health care and advice.

#### Track the Right Data

Schools too often overlook chronic absence because they track average attendance or unexcused absences, not how many kids miss too many days for any reason. Attendance Works has free data-tracking tools.

These are a few steps that communities and schools can take. How do you think you can help?