

Chronic Absenteeism

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What is Chronic Absenteeism?

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) defines chronic absenteeism as students who are absent 10% or more of their enrolled school days.

A student is absent if they miss 50% or more of a school day.

$$\text{Student Attendance Rate} = \frac{\text{Student's Total Days of Attendance}}{\text{Student's Total Days of Membership*}}$$

Chronic Absenteeism vs. Truancy

TRUANCY

Counts only unexcused absences.
Emphasizes compliance with school rules.
Relies on legal and administrative solutions.

VS.

CHRONIC ABSENCE

Counts all absences: excused,
unexcused, and suspensions.
Emphasizes academic impact of missed days.
Uses community-based, positive strategies.

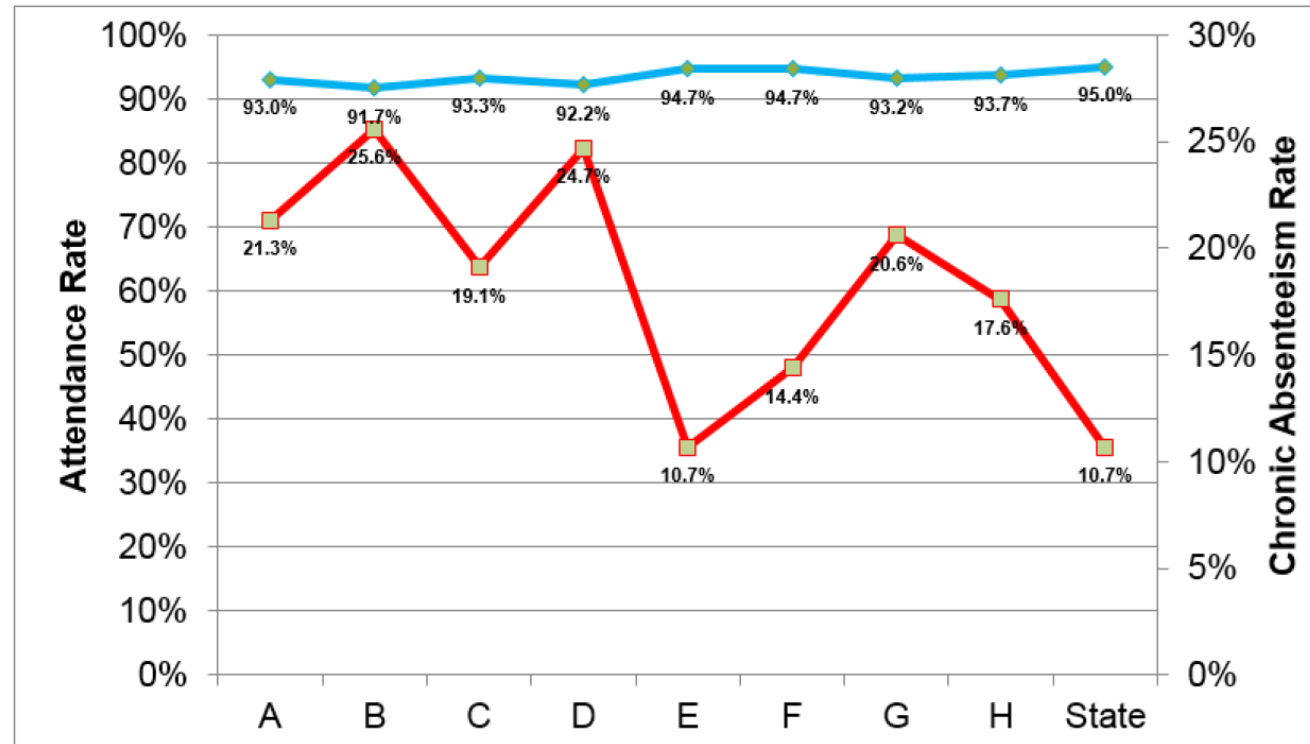
Chronic Absenteeism vs. Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

ADA

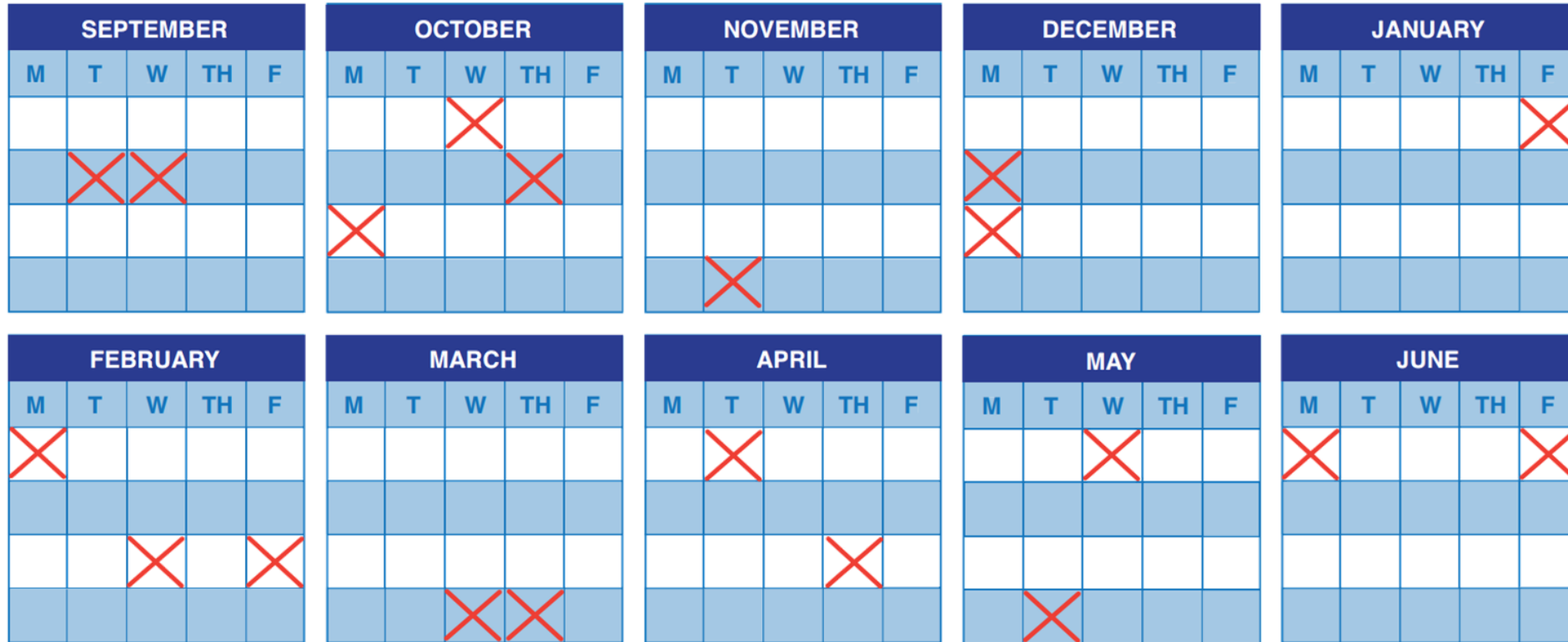
- ADA is a school-level measure that tells you how many students showed up, not a student-level indicator that tells you which students are at risk due to poor attendance
- Analogy: An average 3rd grade reading score does not identify which individual students need support

ADA Can Mask Chronic Absence

Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism, 2013-14
(Eight Alliance Districts with Network Schools)



Why We May Not Notice Chronic Absenteeism



Absences Add up

Chronic Absence = 18 days of absence = 2 days a month



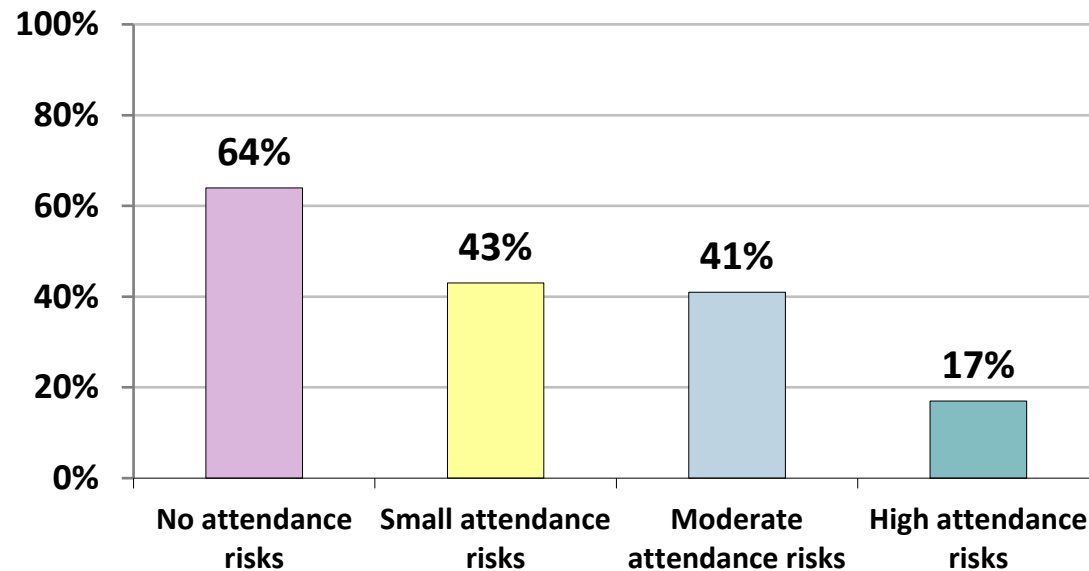
Why Chronic Absenteeism?



- Chronic Absence = Warning Light on a Car Dashboard
- Ignore at your own peril
- Address early or potentially pay much more later
- **Key is to ask why its blinking and what it means**

Students Chronically Absent in Kindergarten and 1st Grade are Much Less Likely to Read Proficiently in 3rd Grade

Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA

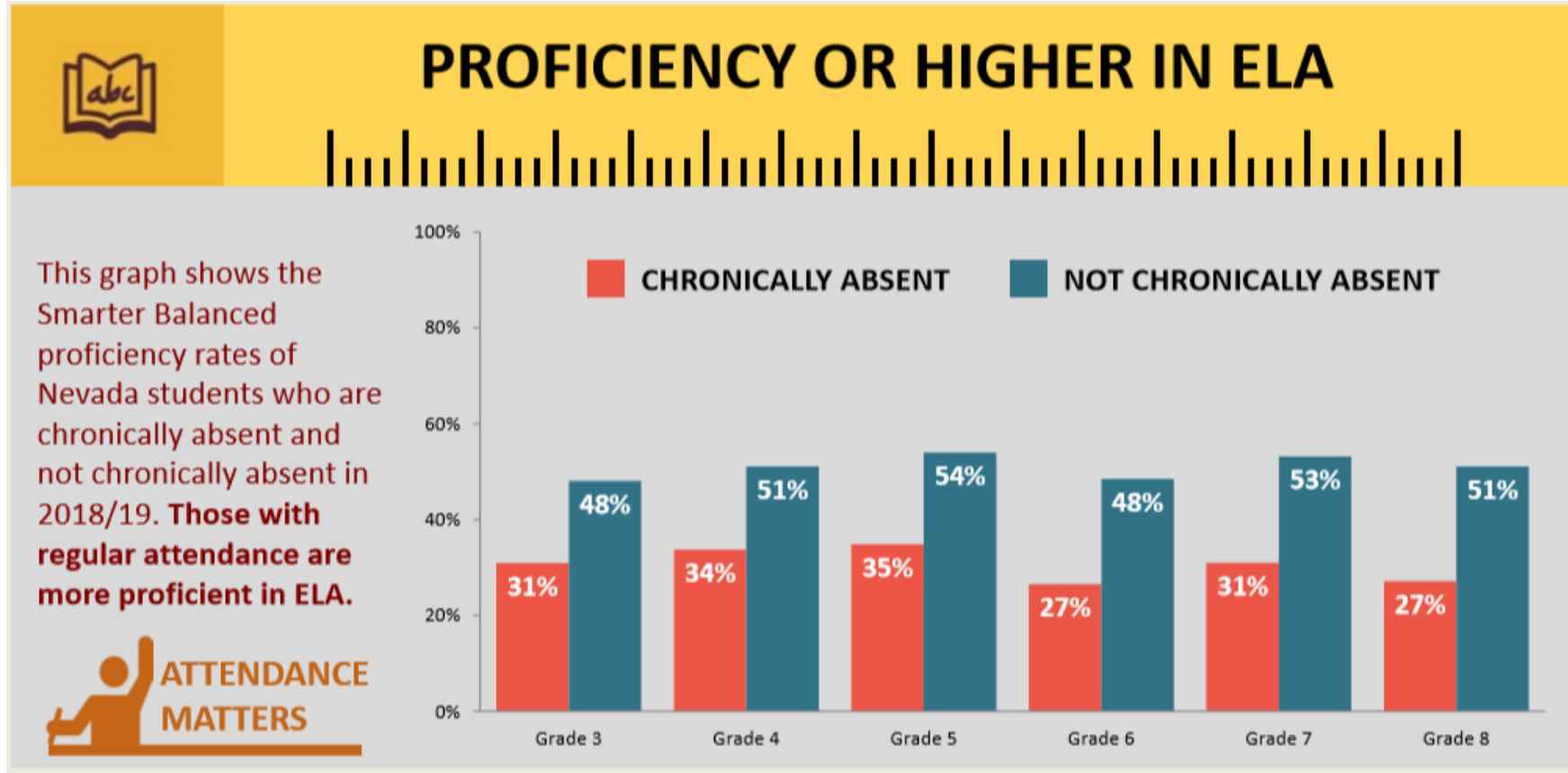


No risk	Missed less than 5% of school in K & 1 st
Small risk	Missed 5-9% of days in both K & 1 st
Moderate risk	Missed 5-9% of days in 1 year & 10% in 1 year
High risk	Missed 10% or more in K & 1 st

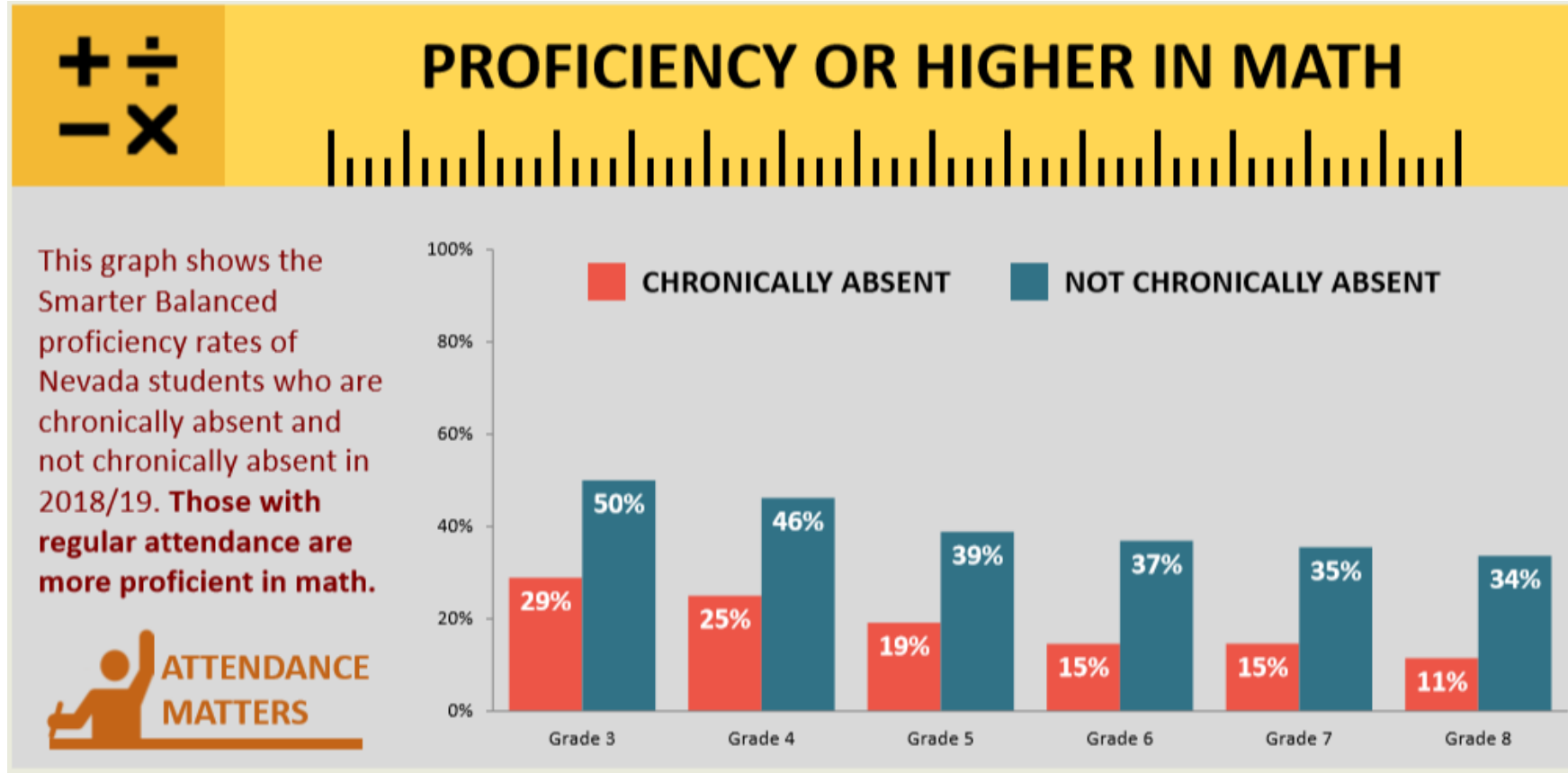
The Research Behind It and Its Impact on Student Outcomes

- On average, schools with higher chronic absenteeism rates have lower proficiency rates, and vice versa. This holds for students overall and for each group of students.¹
- By 6th grade, it is a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.²
- By 9th grade it becomes a better predictor of dropout rates than 8th grade test scores.³
- Classroom churn from too many absences affects all students, even those who attend regularly.⁴

Impact on Student Proficiency: ELA



Impact on Student Proficiency: Math



Why Are Students Chronically Absent?

Factors Contributing to Chronic Absence

Barriers

- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Poor Transportation
- Frequent moves or school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems

Negative School Experiences

- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Negative attitudes of parents due to their own school experience
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

Lack of Engagement

- Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Failure to earn credits/no future plans
- Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

A Need for a Collective Impact Approach

