

Accelerating Student Outcomes Across Nevada: Attendance Equals Success!

A State-wide Proposal to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism



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Instruction
August 28, 2025



Celebrate Growth and Identify Opportunity!

What we are doing well:

- Significant increases in graduation rates, significant decreases in drop-out rates among students with IEPs!
- Increases in CTE graduation rates!
- Commitment to Mental Health (AB & SBs).
- Continuous Growth
 - Portrait of a Learner
 - Pupil-Centered Funding
 - Zoom & Victory Schools



What we can improve upon:

- Teacher recruitment and retention
- ELA and Math proficiency
- Graduation rates
- Pre-K programs
- Declining enrollment
- Attendance



Why Attendance Matters:

2023-24 Chronic Absentee Rate State-wide: 29.3% (National Average: 23.5%)

English Language

Arts: Highest

Performing Districts:

Elementary, Middle,

High School

Honorable mention: Douglas*
(17%), Washoe (28%), Clark
(31.3%)

District	Des.	Schools	Pop.	Elem.	MS	HS	Grad	Rem.	CAR%
Eureka	F	3	325	64	50	48	>95	N/D	24.1%
Storey	R	4	400	56	39	51	>95	N/D	29.2%
Lincoln	F	11	959	49	48	30	>95	N/D	22%

English Language

Arts: Lowest

Performing

Districts:

Elementary, Middle,

High School

District	Des,	Schools	Pop.	Elem.	MS	HS	Grad	Rem.	CAR%
Esmeralda	F*	4	89	<5	20	33	N/D	N/D	42.9%
Pershing	F	7	657	20	28	33	>95	N/D	19.5%
Mineral	F	5	594	23	21	37	74.2	N/D	36.3%
White Pine	F	11	1282	27	32	24	87.7	N/D	28.3%

Why Attendance Matters:

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**Math: Highest
Performing Districts:
Elementary, Middle,
High School**

District	Des.	Schools	Pop.	Elem.	MS	HS	Grad	Rem	CAR%
Eureka	F	3	325	47	32	32	>95	N/D	24.1%
Lincoln	F	11	959	49	48	30	>95	N/D	22%
Storey	R	4	400	47	25	25	>95	N/D	29.2%
Douglas	R	17	5032	40	27	25	86.1	7%	20.5%
Washoe	U	121	63777	40	28	23	81.4	40%	28%

**Math: Lowest
Performing
Districts:
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Lander	F	5	1077	21	11	23	90.9	59.1%	36.5%

Root Cause Analysis: What are the Causes of Chronic Absenteeism?

Policies:

- The Chronically Absent Student: Punitive vs. Supportive
- Disciplinary Action: Pejorative vs. Restorative
- Equity-Based Rule-making: NRS 392.070 regarding students of federally-recognized Tribes and Nations
- Bullying/School Violence Prevention

Systems:

- Transportation Adequacy Audit
- Board/Superintendent Relationship/Administrative Turn-over
- Customer Service Oriented
- Trauma-Informed Teacher Training, Conflict Mediation and Resolution

Environments:

- School Climate and Culture
- Engagement Opportunities
- Before and After School Care and Support
- Extra-Curricular and Activities
- Intergenerational Partnerships



Strategies to Improve Attendance in all Nevada Public Schools!

Internal

Elementary and Secondary Initiatives

- 2, 20-minute recesses daily (playground audits)
- 3 Physical Education classes per week
- Cafeteria Nutrition Initiative
- PBIS/RJ
- Multi-generational partnerships

Secondary

- PBIS/RJ
- Intergenerational opportunities
- Multigenerational partnerships
- Cafeteria Nutrition Initiative
- Cafeteria Renovations

External

Social Marketing Framework: 5 P's

- #NVKidsinClass
- Incentives
- Celebrity Endorsements

Community partnerships (PoL)

Legislation:

- NRS 392.140,
- NRS 392.144
- NRS 62E.270
- NRS 62E.430



Year 1: Initiation, Communication, Research, Buy-in

Introduction
Hire Project Manager
Build focus groups
Form SLAC
Create survey teams

9/25

Analyze FG data, report results
Obtain quotes (facilities/training)
Pitch to law-makers
Alert families
Pursue grants/locate funding streams

3/26

1/26

Conduct FG research
Distribute surveys
Investigate costs (facilities/trainings)
Introduce proposed edits to NRS
Begin grant-finding

6/26

Prepare budget requests
Implement teacher training
Launch SM campaign
Expand partnerships
Explore multi-generational opportunities
Create incentives



Year 2: Launch, Expansion, Data-Gathering, Reporting

Create schedules for increased recess/P.E.
Begin playground and cafeteria renovations
Implement new menus
Communicate progress to community

8/26

Survey & report to community on progress
Host town halls for feedback/concerns
Gather data on bullying/attendance & analyze; report

4/27

1/27

6/27

Meet w/ administrators and educators to solicit feedback
Implement suggestions from “boots-on-the-ground” staff
Apply for additional grant funding (if necessary)

Deliver EOY report on Initiative to all stakeholders
Meet w/ team leads state-wide to determine tweaks.
Publish revised state-wide attendance codes w/ Indigenous student amendment



Year 3: Report, Refine, Model

Schedules aligned to enriched physical activity opportunities
Incentivization for improvement
New menus, physical spaces con't.
SM campaign expanded

7/27

Distribute Initiative Assessment Tool; Analyze, report.
Town Hall w/ families, stakeholders.
Prepare budget and forecast costs

4/28

1/28

State-wide check-in w/ district administrators/teachers; Report
Prepare Initiative Assessment Tool

6/28

Document, report, publish
Achieve **Best Attendance Rate in the Nation** designation!



Metrics and Accountability

Increased Attendance = Increased Student Outcomes

- Higher graduation Rates
- Improved School Climate and Culture
- Decreased School Violence/Bullying
- Increased Emotional Regulation
- Healthier, Happier Students

Summary

Personal Competency-Based Education cannot occur if a student is chronically absent!

“No amount of teacher training, resource materials, or focused interventions can improve student outcomes if a student doesn’t come to school regularly.”

Amy Suman, 2022,

https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SHSB_Afsa-PPT-final.Suman_.pdf



The State-Wide Attendance Initiative presents an evidence-based solution to a persistent and pervasive problem.

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“Education must not simply teach work- it must teach life”

-W.E.B. DuBois, 1903

“Education should be recognized as an essential requirement for the disruption of the cycle of poverty and inequities in health.”

-International Journal of Health Services, 2015

Thank you!

Amy Suman

Amy Suman began her career in education in the Albuquerque Public Schools and served for 18 years as a teacher of all grade levels and abilities in mostly Title-One schools. Ms. Suman has held leadership positions at the University of New Mexico's Prevention Research Center, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the Public Education Department. Ms. Suman most recently served as Superintendent of the Pojoaque Valley School District in Santa Fe and at the Laguna Department of Education on the Pueblo of Laguna. Passionate about the intersection of health and educational equity, Ms. Suman continues to work to improve educational outcomes, particularly for under-served students and their families. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Post-Bachelor of Science, a Master of Science, and is completing her Doctorate. She has been a Certified Personal Trainer and Youth Sports Coach for many years and is a licensed school administrator in the state of Nevada. In her free time, Ms. Suman is an avid hiker, paddler, gardener, and lover of all things outdoors. She is the proud parent of two grown sons.

