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MAYOR'S INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE
ON TRUANCY, CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

The Challenge

Students can be *chronically absent*, meaning they miss **20 DAYS OR MORE** of school and still have an 89% attendance rate. Being *severely chronically absent* - **missing 38 days or more** of school - still results in a 79% attendance rate.

3 OUT OF 4 students who are chronically absent in the **sixth grade** never graduate from high school.



More than 200,000 NYC public school students - **roughly 1 out of 5** - were chronically absent last year.

Nationally, **5 to 7.5 million** students are chronically absent annually.

79% of NYC children in the juvenile justice system have records of chronic absenteeism; and half, approximately 40 percent, were severely chronically absent.

15% of NYC elementary school students



missed one month of school or more last year.

34% of NYC high school students



66% of NYC students with ACS cases are chronically absent or severely chronically absent.

The Response: Interagency Task Force

Established in 2010 by Mayor Bloomberg and comprised of the Mayor's Office, Department of Education, and various other city agencies

- **Key Aspects:**
 - Using **Data** to Measure, Monitor, and Act
 - Success **Mentors**
 - Principal **Leadership**
 - New Models for **Connecting Community Resources** to Schools
 - Promoting **Awareness**
 - Incentives, **Recognition**, and Response
 - **Accountability** Strategies to Sustain Efforts

Agenda

- Key Findings
- Mayoral Leadership/Mobilizing Interagency Partners
- School-Wide Systems for Success/Data
- Success Mentors
- Raising Awareness
- Resources
- Q&A

Scale and Scope of Study

- Examined three cohorts of Task Force schools: 25 from Year 1; 25 from Year 2; and 50 from Year 3. Totaling **100 schools with above average chronic absenteeism rates**
- Compared to 46 matched comparison schools
- Examined **impacts of entering and exiting chronic absenteeism** on academic outcomes (first study to do so)
- Examined **impact of Task Force efforts** on reducing chronic absenteeism and improving attendance
- **Mixed Methods:** Statistical Analysis, Interviews, and Document Review
- **The report is available at www.every1graduates.org**

Key Finding: Students who exit chronic absenteeism improve academically

- **Achievement Test Scores and Grades Improve**
- **High School Credits earned and Promotion Rates Increase**
- **Students are Less Likely to Dropout**

Key Finding: Task Force Schools Significantly Reduced Chronic Absenteeism

- All three cohorts of task force schools **consistently outperformed** comparison schools.
- **Positive impacts were consistent** across elementary, middle, high schools, and alternative schools.
- **Impacts greatest for students who benefit most from being in school:** high poverty students & students in temporary housing.

Key Finding: Success Mentors & Supporting Infrastructure Substantially Improved Student Attendance

- Students with prior histories of chronic absenteeism with a Success Mentor **gained nearly two additional weeks of school (9 days)**, which is educationally significant.
- In the top 25% of schools, students with Success Mentors **gained one additional month of school.**
- High School students with Success Mentors (including those overage for their grade) were **52% more likely to remain in school** the following year.
- Mentees reported they liked having a mentor and the mentor helped **improve their attendance, schoolwork, motivation, and confidence.**

Key Finding: Scale and Implementation

- NYC Task Force was able to **scale program from 25 schools in year 1, to 50 schools in year 2, and 100 schools in year 3** while maintaining effective levels of implementation.
- Most of the Task Force's efforts were accomplished by **using existing assets more strategically**, including the allocation of existing resources, school staff, and non-profit partners.
- **Additional investments targeted at technical assistance**, including training principals, Success Mentors and their organizations, site visits, and real-time consultations.

Additional Key Findings

- **Chronic Absenteeism preceded Behavioral Incidents 86% of the time, suggesting new “early warning” flags.**
- **Task Force Schools saw increases in the number of students with strong attendance (95% or above).**
- **Chronically absent students who were overage for grade particularly benefitted from having a Success Mentor.**
- **School climate, leadership, and quality affected chronic absenteeism but are not substitutes for direct action, including using Success Mentors.**

Lessons Learned

- **Consider targeting students who missed 20 to 30 days of school the prior year with Success Mentors.**
- **Organize school-level response so few students without prior history of chronic absenteeism miss 30 or more days of school in a year.**
- **Intensity, infrastructure, principal leadership, and data access matter.**

Additional Information

To read the report in full,
please visit
www.every1graduates.org

Meeting the Challenge of Combating Chronic Absenteeism

Impact of the NYC Mayor's Interagency
Task Force on Chronic Absenteeism
and School Attendance and Its
Implications for Other Cities



Robert Balfanz
Vaughan Byrnes

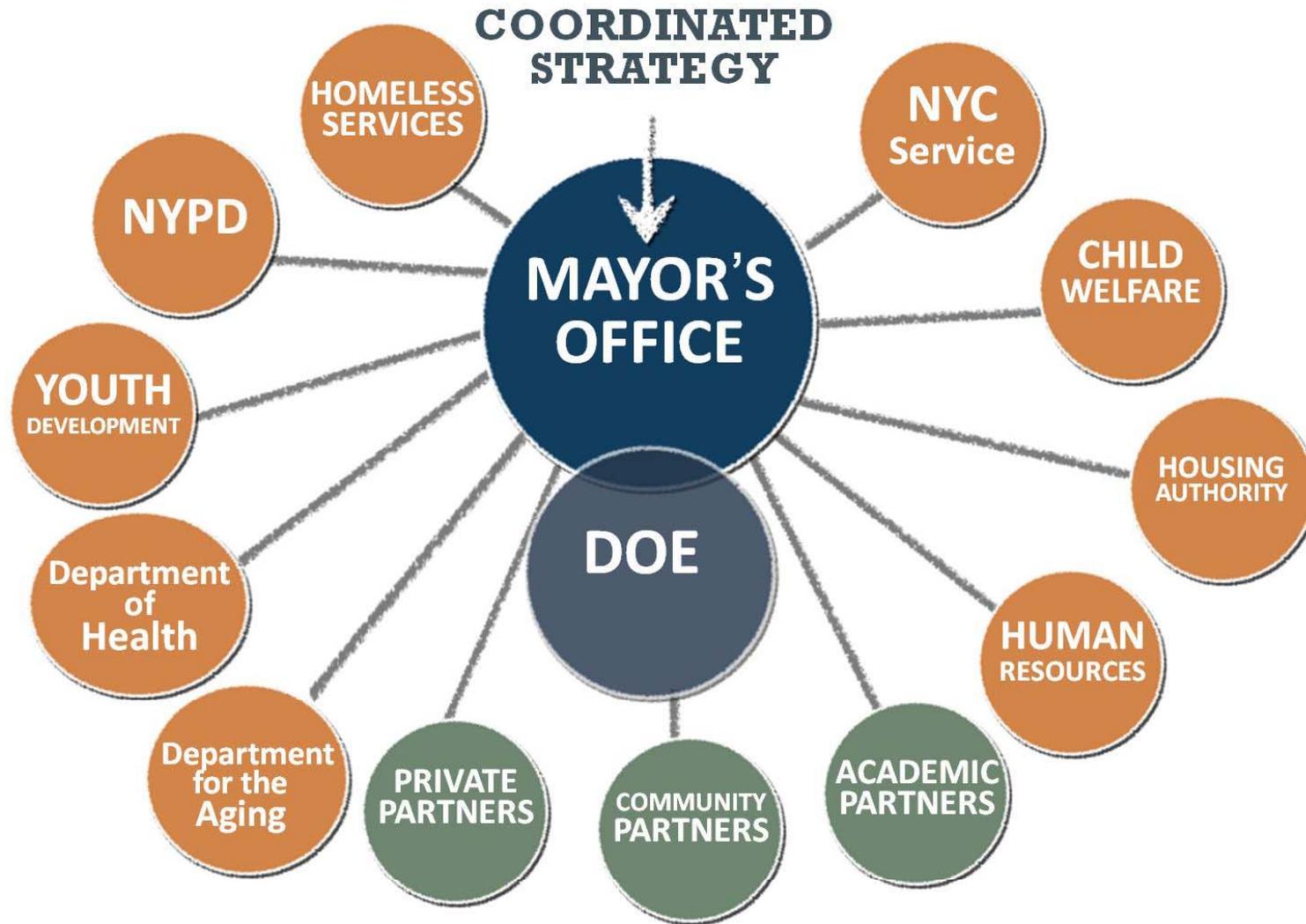


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Mayoral Leadership/Mobilizing Interagency Partners



Examples

- **Department of Homeless Services (DHS):**
 - Increased shelter accountability by making attendance rates for students publicly available on the DHS website and part of DHS reports.
 - Created homework centers at family shelters to ensure that students have a place to do their work after school hours.
- **NYC Service:**
 - Mobilized mentoring networks and sponsored programs.
- **Department for the Aging (DFTA):**
 - Recruited mentors for the Task Force.

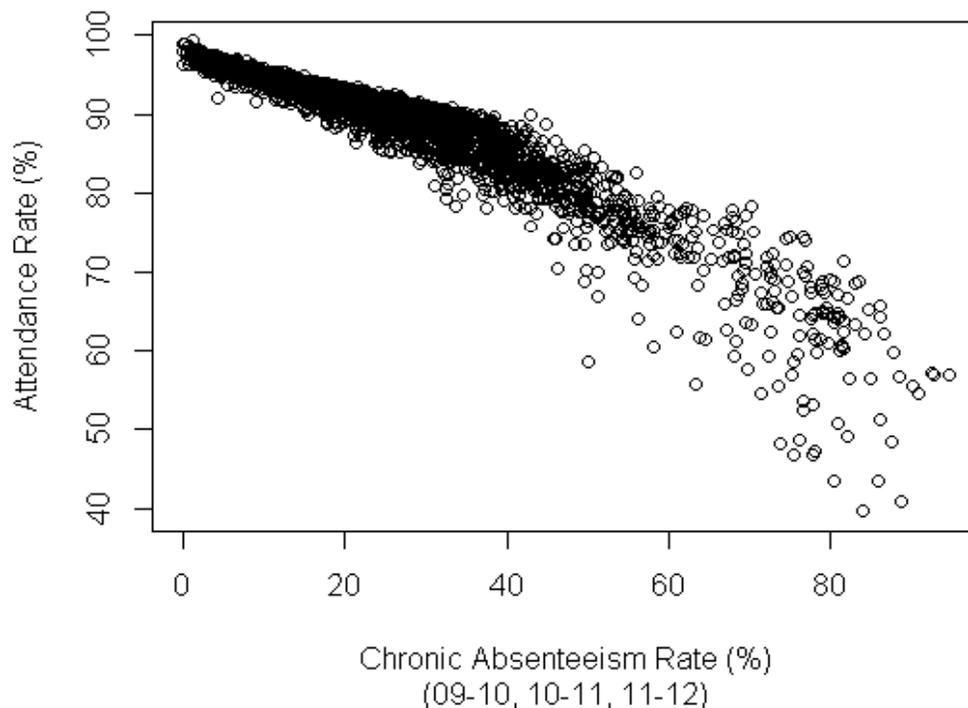
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Changing a Mindset

**By Focusing on Chronic Absenteeism, Attendance is Seen as Increasing Instructional Time;
No Longer Just Administrative Task**

Chronic Absenteeism Rates vs Attendance Rates



With chronic absenteeism at...

- 30% or more, school attendance rates have not exceeded 91.1%
- 20% or more, school attendance rates have not exceeded 93.5%
- 10% or more, school attendance rates have not exceeded 95.8%

Infrastructure to Support Schools Addressing the Problem

Accountability & Data Tools

- Added chronic absenteeism to city-wide school accountability tools.
- Incorporated chronic absenteeism as an indicator in the system-wide student information system (also called “flagging” students who are chronically absent).
- Created an online Data Dashboard with attendance, behavioral, and academic data for community-based partners serving as mentors to students with a history of chronic absenteeism to use.

Policy

- Implemented system-wide mandated policy for addressing chronic absenteeism.
- Applied funding in strategic ways to support schools in their efforts to collaborate with community partners, use mentors, raise awareness, increase incentives to address the issue.

Communicate the Message through Multiple Channels

Trainings

- Led city-wide and school-based trainings for Network Leaders, School Staff, and new Principals about practical ways to support schools in reducing chronic absenteeism.

Communications

- **Website:** Overhauled internal and public facing website (nyc.gov/everystudent) to feature the critical steps for principals, networks, parents and community leaders and organizations
- **Report Cards:** Included new language on reports cards about attending school every day.
- **Parent Communications:** In parent information pamphlets, talked about the importance of attending school in the context of better understanding the common core standards.
- **Principal and School Communications:** Share via city-wide communications newsletter the importance of addressing chronic absenteeism and tools available to use to address the problem.

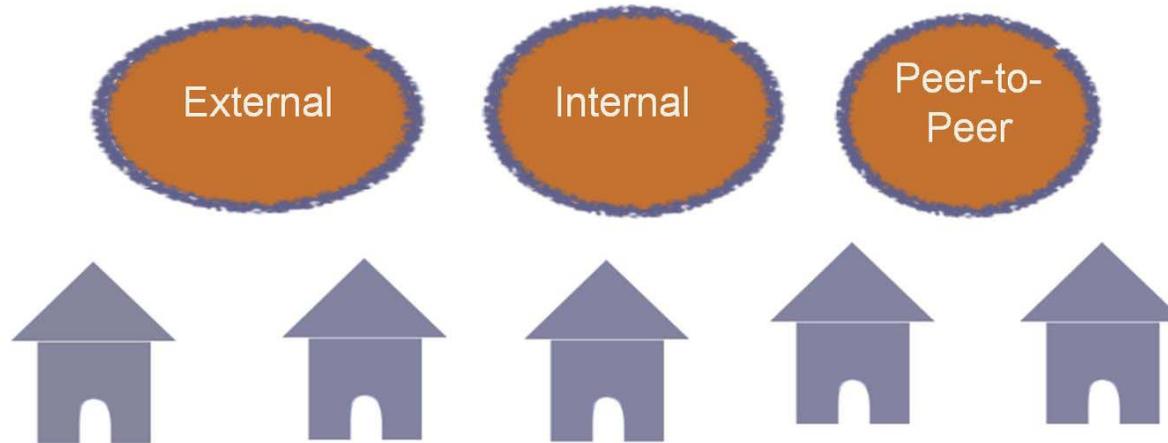
Model Schools Serve as Ambassadors to the Broader School Community



- Principals, school staff, and students at model schools showcase the best practices of the Task Force's pilot including:
 - Principal-led Weekly Student Success Meetings*
 - Success Mentor Programs
 - Parent Summits
 - Community Resources/Partnerships

*The Principal-led Weekly Student Success Meeting is a key piece of the program's infrastructure.

Provide Technical Assistance to Support the Work



- Conducted **feedback sessions with students** on what they want and need (e.g. surveys, roundtables, summits).
- Conducted **school site visits** and attended Weekly Student Success Meetings to help maximize its impact.
- **Supported schools implementing Success Mentors** programs (external, internal, peer-to-peer).
- Used **data to drive high-impact**.
- To ensure sustainability, **provided schools with ongoing technical assistance** from a community-based organization.

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Success Mentor Models

- **Three Models: Developed with Nationally Recognized Leaders and All Share Core Components**
 - **External: Community-based Organizations**
 - E.g. City Year, Social Work Students, Retired Professionals
 - **Internal: School Staff**
 - E.g. Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Social Workers, Classroom Teachers, Administrators
 - **Peer-to-Peer: Students**
 - E.g. High School Seniors/Juniors Mentoring Freshmen

Success Mentors' Responsibilities

- **Target Students**
 - Success mentors are assigned “target” students, who were chronically absent the year prior, and are matched with these students early in year, for the full year.
- **School-Wide Strategies**
 - Promote a positive school-wide culture that encourages all students to attend and achieve.
- **Principal's Weekly Student Success Meeting**
 - Attend the weekly meeting and collaborate with school partners to support mentees.
- **Parental Engagement**
 - Work with families to share importance of attendance and call home for every absence.
 - Interact with parents to celebrate students' success whether big or small.

Agenda

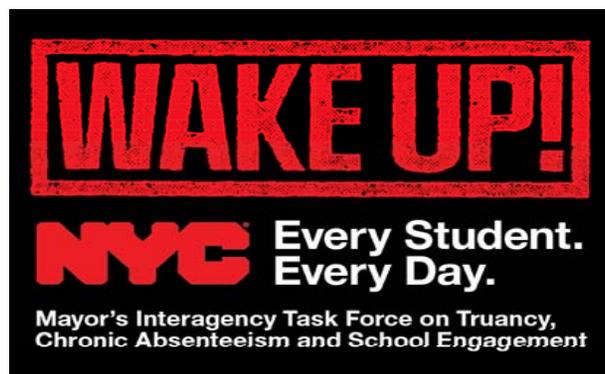
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Key Messages

- Good **attendance helps children do well in school** and eventually in the work place.
- **Absences add up.** Excused and unexcused absences result in too much time lost in the classroom.
- **Chronic absence, missing 10% of the school year or more, affects the whole classroom,** not just the students who miss school.
- We need to **monitor how many days each student misses school for any reason**— excused, unexcused or suspensions— so we can intervene early.
- **Chronic absence is a problem we can solve** when the whole community, including parents and schools, gets involved.
- **Relationship building is fundamental** to any strategy for improving student attendance.
- **Reducing chronic absence can help close achievement gaps.**

Spreading the Word

- **Attendance Awareness Month**, sponsored by Attendance Works, the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprise and Points of Light.
- **WakeUp! NYC** to bring the message into homes every morning for students and parents.



- **Get Schooled's** new Attendance Calculator.
- Ad Council's **BoostUp** campaign, and collaboration with the Task Force on the "It's 9:00am, Do You Know Where Your Kids Are?" PSA.



IT'S 09 00 AM DO YOU KNOW WHERE
YOUR KIDS ARE?

If your kids miss 20 days or more in a school year, there's a good chance they won't graduate.

Get the help you need and find out how many days your child missed.

TEXT "SCHOOL" to 30364
or call 311.

NYC

Ad
Council

ABSENCES ADD UP!

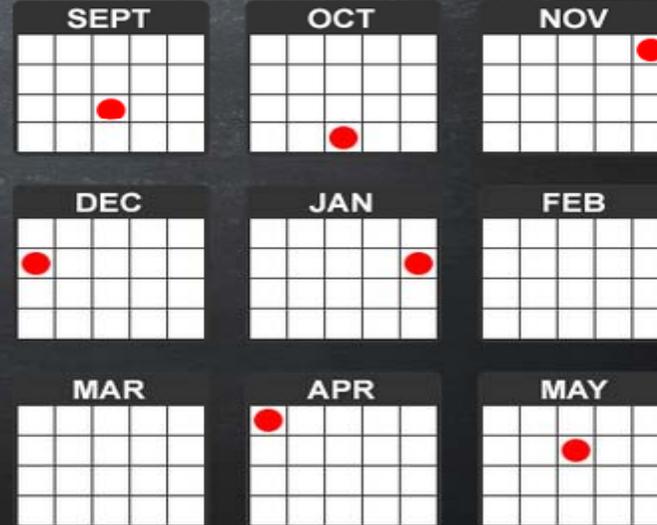
Use the slider tool to chart the impact absences can have on your child. Just one day every so often can add up to months of missed learning time. Missing school can lower math and reading scores and leave your child less likely to graduate.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL

DAYS MISSED

7



80%

LIKELIHOOD OF GRADUATING



44

MATH PERCENTILE

41

READING PERCENTILE

MISSING MATTERS

Up to 7.5 million students miss a month of school each year

A 2012 report from Johns Hopkins researcher Robert Balfanz (and supported by Get Schooled) details the severity of the absenteeism problem plaguing America's schools, showing both the impact of missed days on students' educational outcomes and the implications for policymakers at all levels.

[Read the full report](#)



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Resources

- [Truancy Task Force Toolkit](#)
- [DOE's Attendance Initiatives](#)
- [Everyone Graduates Center at John's Hopkins](#)
- [Attendance Works](#)
- [Get Schooled](#)
- [Attendance Calculator](#)
- [BoostUp](#)
- [Watch an Example of the Principal-led Weekly Student Success Meeting](#)



MAYOR'S INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON TRUANCY,
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM & SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Every Student. Every Day.

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A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Bloomberg discusses the importance of school attendance.

[WATCH THE VIDEO NOW](#)

The CHALLENGE



1 OUT OF 5
NYC public school students - more than 200,000 - were chronically absent last year

next fact ▶

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TASK FORCE INITIATIVES

NYC SUCCESS MENTOR CORPS

RESOURCE CENTER/ FINDING HELP

TASK FORCE TOOLKIT

NEWS AND MEDIA

CONTACT THE TRUANCY TASK FORCE

ABOUT THE ISSUE

The CHALLENGE



ONE out of FIVE NYC public school students - **MORE THAN 200,000** - missed a month or more of school last year

THREE out of FOUR students who are severely chronically absent in the sixth grade never graduate from high school

Students with good attendance were more than **TWICE as LIKELY** to score proficient on NYS exams than those who were chronically absent

The IMPACT

Chronically absent students who benefitted from the program gained over **11,800 DAYS** of attendance in the 2011-2012 school year

Pilot schools with full-year Success Mentors **OUTPERFORMED** comparison schools and schools citywide

In pilot elementary schools, chronic absenteeism was **REDUCED BY OVER 28%**, nearly twice the reduction shown in comparison schools

WAKE UP!

NYC Every Student. Every Day.

Learn more about this new initiative.



TOOLKIT

The Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic

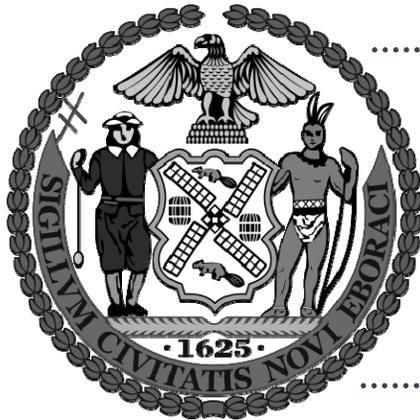
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Q&A

It's time for our Q&A!
We want to hear from you!

Please send in any questions you may have via the **Q&A box** on the lower right side of the screen.



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