



# Every Student, Every Day: Building a Districtwide Framework for Attendance Excellence

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# Desired Outcomes



- **Analyze** Attendance Works diagnostic findings
- **Review** diagnostic recommendations
- **Explore** work in progress
- **Outline and Discuss** plans for next steps

PRIORITY 2

STUDENT DISPOSITIONS AND WELL-BEING

Behavioral Health

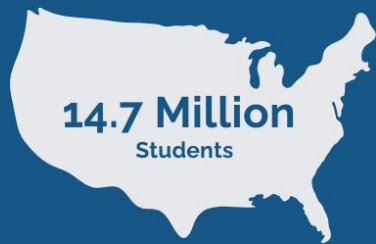
## GOAL #4: Attendance

By 2028, WCPSS will ensure **95%** of all students are in attendance **at least 95% of their days in membership** and will **eliminate disparities** by race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status.

# Strategic Plan Alignment



**WAKE COUNTY**  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



United States

Pre-Pandemic 2018-2019

16% of Students  
Chronically Absent

Post-Pandemic 2021-2022

30% of Students  
Chronically Absent

Chang, H., Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2023). Rising Tide of Chronic Absence Challenges Schools. Attendance Works



North Carolina

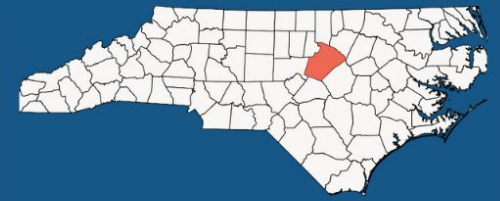
Pre-Pandemic 2018-2019

15% of Students  
Chronically Absent

Post-Pandemic 2022-2023

31% of Students  
Chronically Absent

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2024).  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.



Wake County Public Schools

Pre-Pandemic 2018-2019

15% of Students  
Chronically Absent

Post-Pandemic 2022-2023

22.51% of Students  
Chronically Absent



**Truancy** in NC is **10 or more unexcused absences.**

**Chronic Absences** is being absent (*excused or unexcused*) **10% or more of enrolled days.**



# Attendance Rates

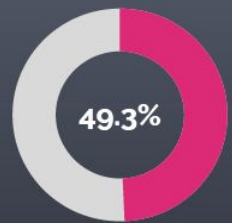
**95%**

of days  
(goal)

**>90%**

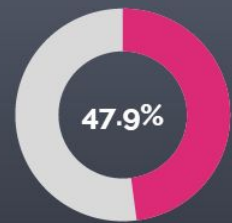
of days  
(chronic absenteeism)

**22-23**



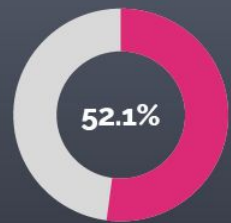
of students

**23-24**



of students

**24-25**



of students



of students



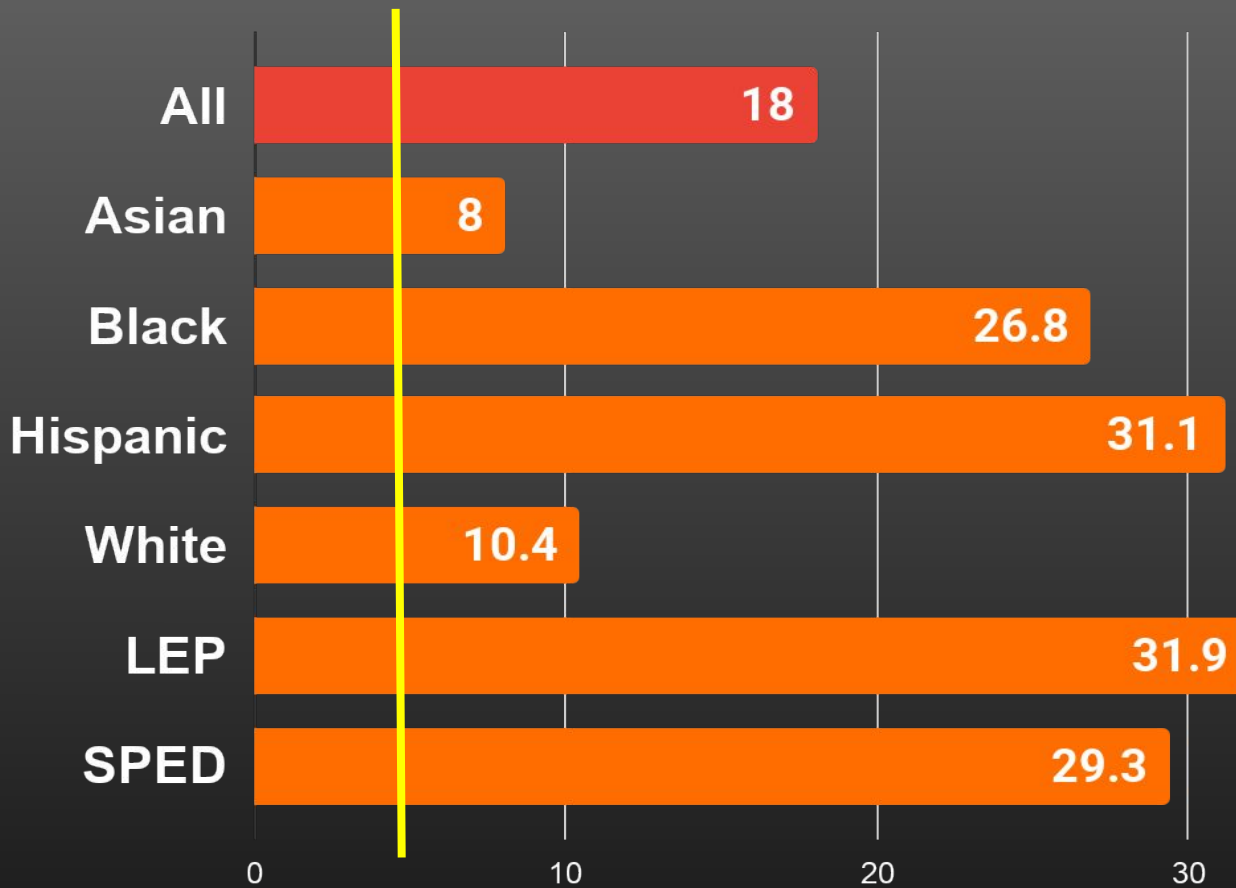
of students



of students



# Current Chronic Absence Rates (April 2026)



and Pre-assessment  
Assignments:

7:20-8:40

Flex 8:40-9:10



# Attendance Diagnostic: Results and Recommendations

# Why Attendance Works?

A proven, system-level approach aligned to district priorities

- **Leads the field** in defining and addressing chronic absence
- Focuses on **root causes**, not compliance (relationships, barriers, belonging)
- Advances **equity** by targeting the students most impacted
- Turns **data into action** with practical, scalable strategies
- Aligns with a **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**



**Attendance  
Works**

*If students aren't in school, nothing else matters—and Attendance Works is built entirely around solving that problem systemically.*



# District Diagnostic Methodology



- **Quantitative Data Analysis:** Deep-dive review of chronic absence data, multi-year attendance patterns, and WCPSS Board policies.
- **Stakeholder Surveys:** Captured insights from 1,394 educators, including 744 district/school staff and 650 Classroom Teachers.
- **Leadership Interviews:** 56 individual sessions with 33 Principals, 23 Central Office leaders, and all 9 Area Superintendents.
- **Regional Focus Groups:** 10 sessions with specialized support staff (Social Workers, Counselors, and Psychologists) across every region.

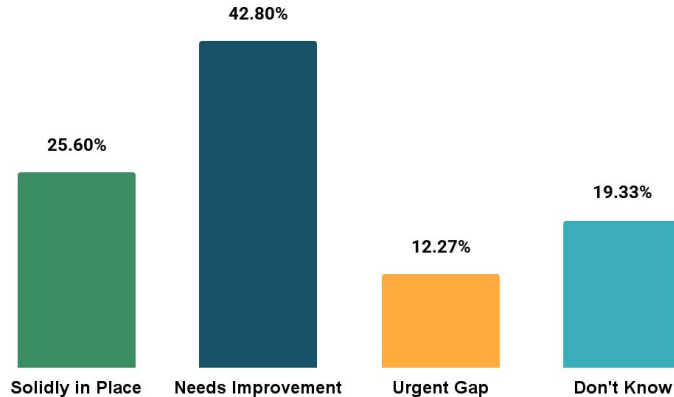
## Rigor and Scale

The diagnostic utilized a mixed-methods approach and combined quantitative data with qualitative insights.

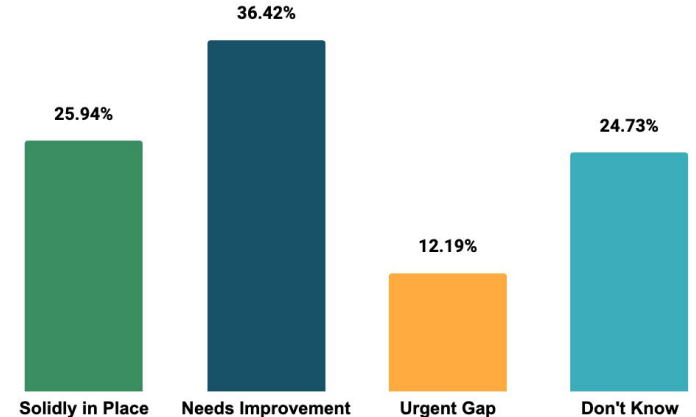
# Findings: Staff Survey Results



**Figure 1: Our district aligns and integrates attendance into existing systems and structures**



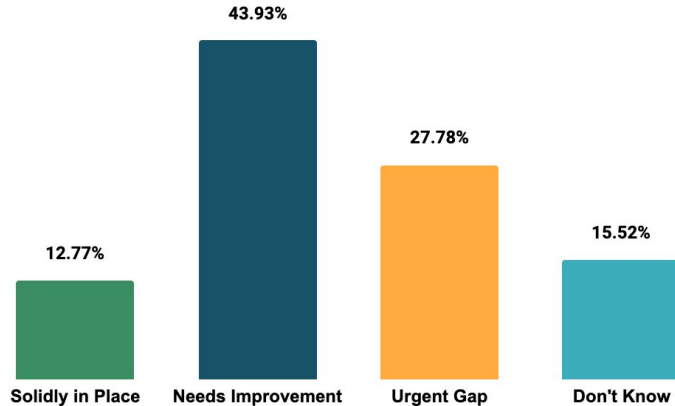
**Figure 2: Our district ensures that all school leaders have a data-driven plan to improve attendance and reduce chronic absence.**



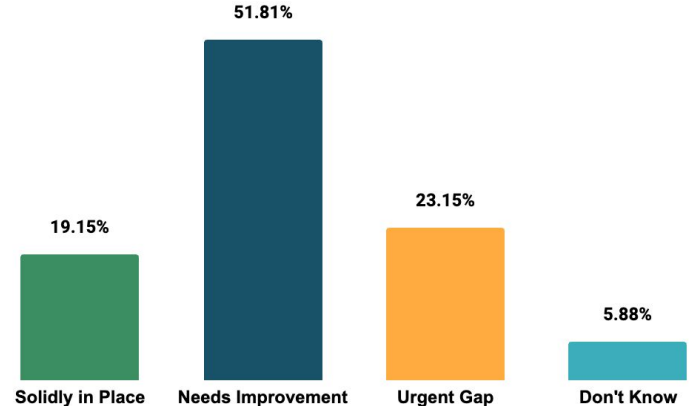
# Findings: Staff Survey Results



**Figure 3: Our district team builds school level capacity to implement a multi-tiered approach to address chronic absence.**



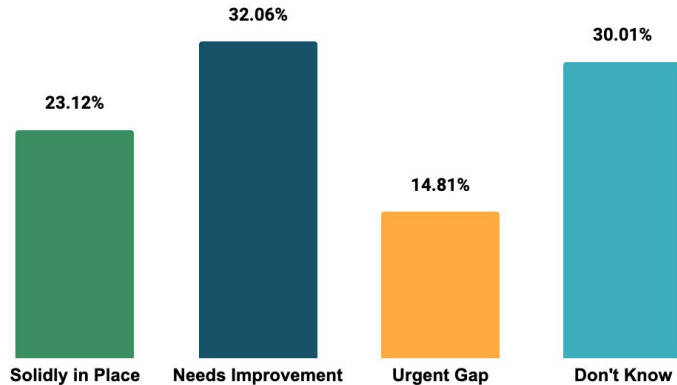
**Figure 4: Our district has clear attendance guidance that outlines consistent procedures and practices to improve attendance.**



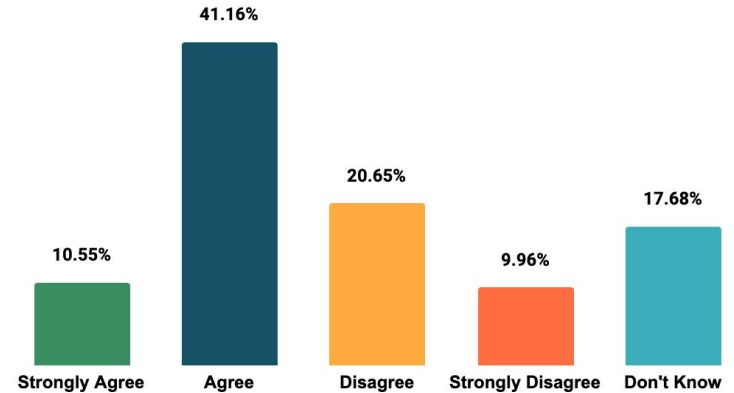
# Findings: Staff Survey Results



**Figure 5: Our district team ensures that school principals and building-level teams review disaggregated attendance/chronic absence data every two weeks.**



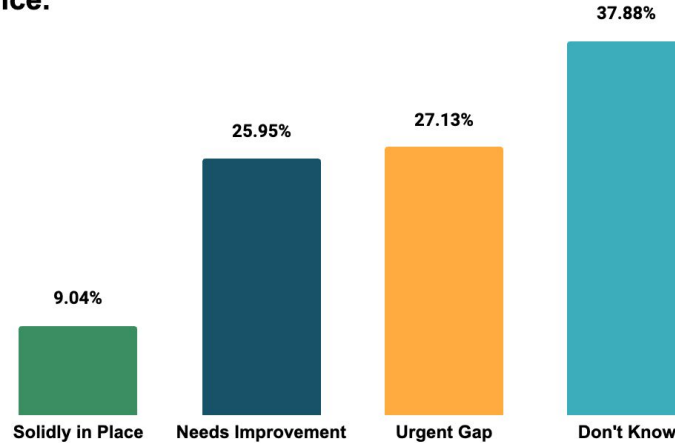
**Figure 6: WCPSS has a clear protocol outlining a teacher's responsibility to support student attendance.**



# Findings: Staff Survey Results



**Figure 7 : Our district has a community-wide communications campaign to promote the importance of attendance.**



# Findings: Strengths and Strategic Opportunities



## Strengths

- **Strategic Foundation:** The Strategic Plan and Board policies establish a clear mandate for attendance goals.
- **Regional Infrastructure:** Area Superintendents and the Regional Support Team (RST) provide a model ready for mobilization.
- **Specialized Talent:** Skilled Student Support Services staff are already actively engaged with students and families.
- **Operational Baselines:** Established MTSS flowcharts and updated attendance procedures provide a starting point for consistency.
- **Community Partnerships:** Existing agency partners provide essential health, mental health, and extended learning supports.

## Opportunities

- **Data Insight:** Using disaggregated data to identify and address student needs.
- **Unified Support:** Integrating academic, behavior, and attendance into one cohesive system.
- **Proactive Intervention:** Prioritizing prevention and early response models.
- **Leadership Expertise:** Utilizing district leadership expertise to grow school capacity.
- **Integrated School Improvement:** Embedding attendance as a core priority in all school plans.
- **Systemic Guidance:** Aligning school efforts through unified messaging and staff guidance.

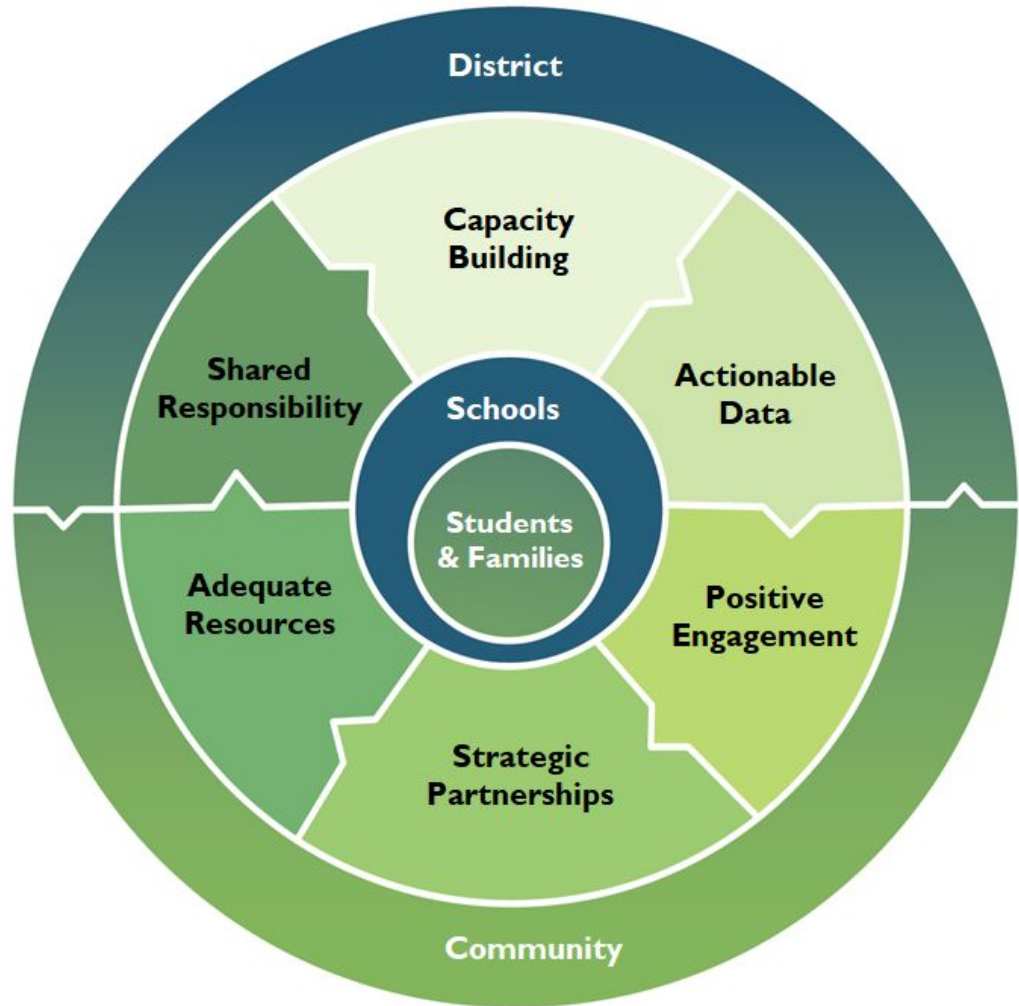
# Roadmap for Change:

## A Data-Driven Systemic Approach

Improving attendance ultimately requires a systemic approach.

While attendance improvements can begin in a single classroom or school, the most effective and sustainable approaches are data-driven and are supported by strong district, school and community leadership.

These key ingredients of change support taking a systems approach.



# Building the Infrastructure (Recommendations 1-3) Systemic Alignment & Capacity Building



## 1. Shared Accountability through MTSS

Establishing a cross-departmental leadership team to ensure integration into the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

## 2. Centralized Professional Learning

Collaborate closely with OPL to develop and implement centralized professional learning to ensure consistency across all schools

## 3. Regional Support Team (RST) Alignment

Empowering district and school leaders with explicit expectations and accountability metrics through specialized training

# Engaging the Community (Recommendations 4-6)

## Resources, Engagement & Partnerships



### 4. Strategic Resource Allocation

Prioritizing funding and personnel based on data-driven needs and addressing existing systemic barriers

### 5. Proactive Family Engagement

Shifting from punitive truancy messaging to trust-based, year-round outreach

### 6. Community-Wide Call to Action

Continue mapping and expanding external partnerships to create a coordinated, county-wide approach to student engagement



# Transforming Attendance: From Fragmented to Coordinated

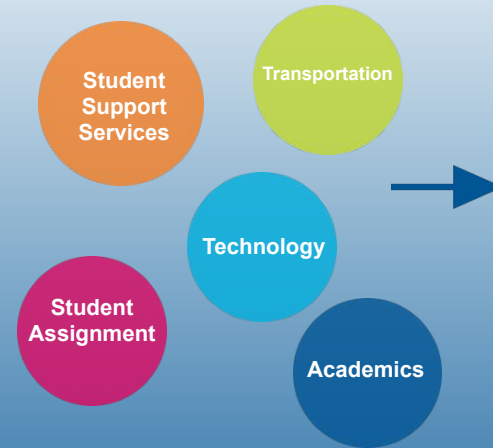
## The Roadmap: From Compliance to Connection

- **A Cultural Shift:** Moving from reactive, truancy-based management to a proactive culture of belonging.
- **Systemic Alignment:** Removing silos to provide a unified playbook for district-wide engagement.

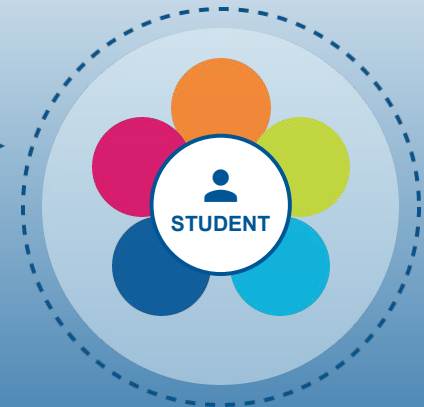
## The Outcome: Attendance as the Strategic Foundation

- **Strategic Integration:** Aligning attendance goals within the Strategic Plan and MTSS framework.
- **Equity in Action:** Deploying resources and support based on student need to drive achievement for all.

### Current State: Siloed



### Future: Integrated and Effective



# Suggested Implementation Phases



- Form district team
- Launch data dashboards
- Set district accountability metrics
- Train district and school leaders
- Centralize PL

## Phase 1

**Organizational  
Alignment**

- RST Model integration
- Develop attendance manual
- Build school capacity
- Continue mapping of partnerships

## Phase 2

**District Infrastructure  
Build-Out**

- Launch messaging
- Implement RST Model
- Train school staff
- Expand partnerships

## Phase 3

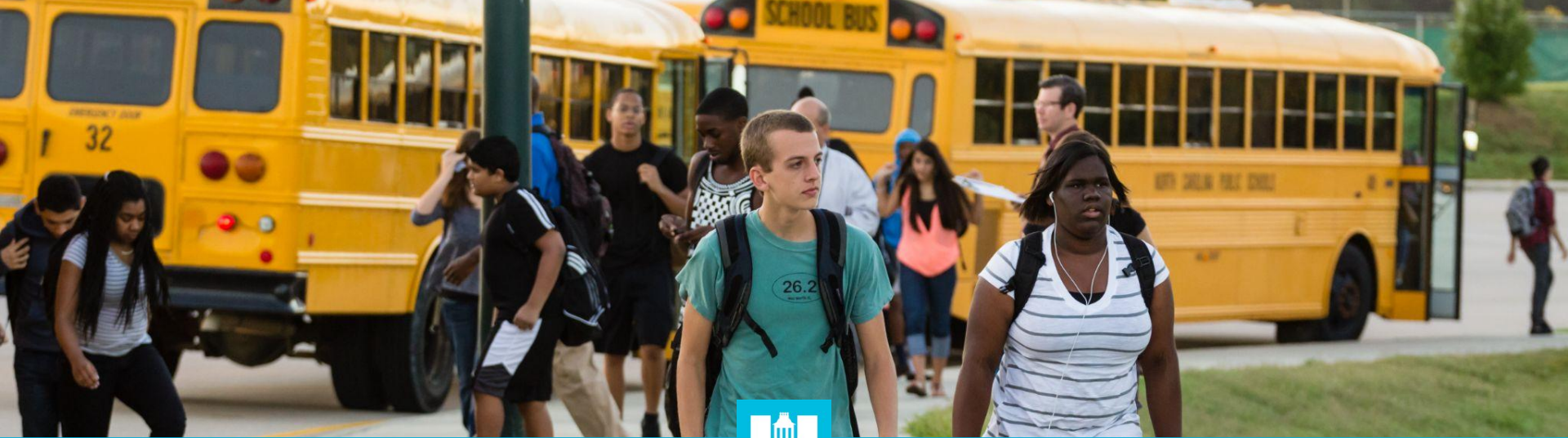
**Implementation  
Support**

# Benefits of Implementation Support



- **Primary Objective:** Shared responsibility across departments for student attendance and engagement
- **Leadership Support:** Specialized content expertise and support
- **Professional Learning:** Capacity building for district and schools leaders
- **Strategic Messaging:** Consultation on the design of a year-round attendance and engagement campaign

**Potential funding and implementation partners are being explored**



# Current Efforts and the Transition to Alignment

# Current Attendance Support in WCPSS



## School-Based Attendance Teams

- Intensive Cases
- Strategy Development



## Family Engagement

- Notifications
- Home Visits
- Parent Conferences



## Data Tracking

- Infinite Campus
- OASIS
- Support High-Risk Students



## Interventions

- Staff Mentor Programs
- Student Incentives
- Court & Court Alternative Program
- Child Protective Services



## Evidenced-Based Resources

- Attendance Works



# Organizational Progress



## Attendance Task Force

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Charter finalized with multidisciplinary representation

## Infinite Campus Dashboards

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Currently in development

## MTSS Standard Treatment Protocols

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Revisions currently in development

## Messaging and Media

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Messaging currently in development to spotlight success stories and deepen engagement

# Summer 2026



## June 2026

- **Launch first official working session of Attendance Task Force**
  - Establish team agreements using Collaborative Operating System (or potential third party implementation partner)

## July 2026

- **Launch of revised Standard Treatment Protocols for MTSS**
- **Finalize Infinite Campus Dashboards**

\*July 1-Foundational Reset for 26-27 SY

## August 2026

- **District-wide rollout of community messaging toolkit**

# Questions