



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IN NEVADA:

PART III – SCHOOL DISTRICT INNOVATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Chronic absenteeism is a complex, layered issue impacting a quarter of Nevada students ([Nevada Department of Education \[NDE\], 2024](#)). Each chronically absent student experiences a unique combination of barriers and challenges contributing to missed instructional time. Yet, districts across Nevada are striving to “create conditions where students can thrive ... [and] make a choice to be at school because that’s where they truly want to be” (White Pine).¹

This is the third and final brief in a three-part series examining chronic absenteeism in Nevada. The first brief explores chronic absenteeism’s national and state-level landscapes, examines contributing factors, and outlines key policy considerations. The second brief focuses on one of the most significant underlying factors—student mental health—and discusses how cognitive and behavioral health challenges intersect with attendance barriers.

In this final brief, we turn our attention to local action. To better understand how Nevada’s school districts and public charter schools are responding to chronic absenteeism, we contacted superintendents and school leaders across the state and asked them to share the strategies their schools are implementing. This brief presents a curated collection of those district-level practices. Each practice is followed by the name(s) of the district(s) or charter school implementing it, offering recognition of their efforts and a potential model for other schools and districts looking to strengthen their approaches.

The goals of this brief are twofold: (1) to highlight promising and innovative strategies being used in Nevada to reduce chronic absenteeism; and (2) to encourage collaboration, inspiration, and cross-district learning to ensure all students are supported in showing up, staying engaged, and succeeding in school.



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¹ Throughout the brief, there are county-specific practices, quotes, and approaches noted. Each one is followed by the names of the districts implementing the practice.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) provides a tiered framework that enables schools to deliver interventions based on student need. When applied to chronic absenteeism, MTSS helps schools organize strategies across three tiers ([Pendharkar, 2023](#)). The following section outlines chronic absenteeism strategies in each tier, along with implementation examples from Nevada school districts.

Tier 1

Tier 1 interventions are directed toward all students. These school-wide supports serve as the foundation for the framework and aim to address the general needs of all students in hopes of preventing chronic absences ([PBIS Rewards, n.d.](#)). Within Tier 1, we include nine strategies with district examples that follow. The categories are:

1. Promote positive school climate;
2. Establish clear attendance policies and increase awareness;
3. Recognize good and improved attendance;
4. Develop positive communication with caregivers;
5. Collect meaningful data;
6. Establish attendance teams;
7. Promote professional development and family education;
8. Engage in early identification and intervention; and
9. Foster community partnerships.

Tier 2

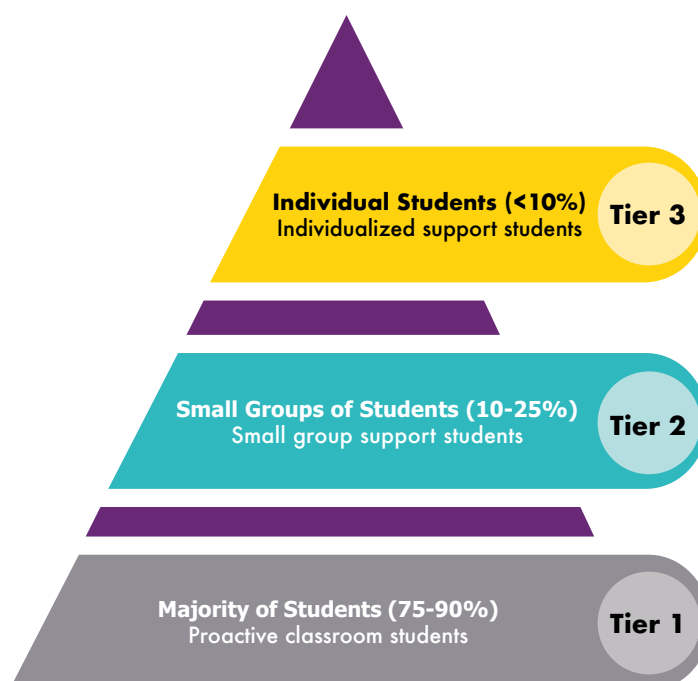
Tier 2 interventions are targeted toward small groups of students. Schools can group students to supplement the Tier 1 strategies and provide more personalized support or develop other strategies that involve a smaller percentage of the student body ([PBIS Rewards, n.d.](#); [American Institutes for Research, n.d.](#)).

Within Tier 2, we include five categories: (1) student support team meetings; (2) check-in/check-out initiatives; (3) individualized attendance plans and evaluations; (4) targeted communication; and (5) transportation support.

Tier 3

Tier 3 interventions are applied to individual students. Tier 3 is the most intensive level of support, with interventions based on evaluating the student's unique needs ([American Institutes for Research, n.d.](#); [Pendharkar, 2023](#)).

Within Tier 3, we include three categories: (1) inter-agency case management; (2) home visits; and (3) monitoring periods.



TIER 1: APPLIED TO ALL STUDENTS

STRATEGY 1: Promote Positive School Climate

- Maintain a positive and safe learning environment that makes school a place students want to be (Pershing and some Public Charter Schools).
- Expand co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that fit within students' areas of interest and help students connect with the school community (Washoe and White Pine):
 - David E Norman STEAM Academy, which provides additional co-curricular offerings to its elementary school students (White Pine).
 - Increase pay for teachers and staff to host clubs and activities (Washoe).
- Partner with local colleges and hire additional staff to expand dual and concurrent enrollment options; elective options including choral and instrumental music; career planning courses; and career and technical education programs such as culinary, law enforcement, agriculture, welding, auto technology, computer science, health science, and future teachers (White Pine and Public Charter Schools).
- Use evidence-based frameworks (e.g., the [Leader-in-Me](#)) to promote leadership development and foster student engagement (White Pine and some Public Charter Schools).
- Integrate trauma-informed strategies to promote a school culture of healing and connection (White Pine and some public charter schools).

STRATEGY 2: Establish Clear Attendance Policies and Increase Awareness

- Share average daily attendance data and chronic absenteeism data with the entire school community (Washoe and some Public Charter Schools).
- Clearly communicate attendance expectations and policies to families (Clark and Public Charter Schools).
- Keep the topic current and relevant when discussing student achievement and success, as well as when looking at school-level data, State Performance Plan planning, et cetera (Pershing).
- Support teachers who are pivotal in encouraging students to be at school (Pershing and some Public Charter Schools).
- Use technology and other resources such as street banners, news articles, parent square, and school websites to increase attendance awareness (Carson City and some Public Charter Schools).
- Apply regulations, such as educational neglect and denial of credit, to address excessive absences (Clark).



STRATEGY 3: Recognize Good and Improved Attendance

- Offer resources and incentives to encourage student attendance and recognize perfect quarterly attendance (Pershing, Storey, Washoe, and Clark, and some Public Charter Schools):
 - End-of-Year Prize Raffle: Students with perfect attendance for at least two quarters are entered into a drawing for several large prizes (Storey).
- Incentivize grade-level attendance:
- Announce monthly attendance rates by grade level and give small rewards/treats to grade levels with 95 percent or higher attendance rates each month, and a pizza lunch for any grade level at 97 percent or higher. Each grade level's monthly attendance rates are posted in the hallway (Pershing).
- Create a multi-grade level House System that competes to achieve the highest average daily attendance for the quarter. At the end of each quarter, the winning classes are rewarded with a field trip (Washoe).
- Partner with the city mayor and local businesses to increase attendance at incentive events (Carson City).
- The State Public Charter School Authority, the largest charter school authorizer in the state, updated its Performance Framework so that schools earn points for improvement in this area.



STRATEGY 4: Develop Positive Communication with Caregivers

- Use technology to help parents excuse absences and improve home-to-school communication (Nye and Some Public Charter Schools).
- Have teachers, administration, and other staff members make phone calls home each week to share positive information about their students and what is happening at the school (Washoe).
- Conduct parent-teacher home visits that meet families at their convenience and are chosen randomly, not as a result of a perceived problem, but to build positive relationships (Washoe).
- Hold family resource nights, which are evening events at schools to connect families with vital resources such as healthcare, educational services, youth programs, food assistance, medical and dental screenings, literacy programs, sports teams, vocational training programs, and more (Washoe and Some Public Charter Schools).
- Hold family information nights focusing on student anxiety and why attendance matters (Carson City).



STRATEGY 5: Collect Meaningful Data

- Increase office support to ensure absences are marked accurately and regularly (Pershing).
- Ensure accurate attendance reporting by reviewing code usage (Clark).
- Provide attendance data summaries every ten days for all schools (Carson City). Summaries may include the following data:
 - State and federal chronic absenteeism rates from Infinite Campus;
 - Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) measurements;
 - Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) student survey data;
 - Student participation in sports, clubs, Career and Technical Education, JumpStart, and extracurricular activities; and
 - Graduation rates.

STRATEGY 6: Establish Attendance Teams

- Create an Office of Chronic Absenteeism to lead and coordinate the efforts of multiple departments addressing absenteeism (such as Attendance Enforcement, Communications, Family Engagement, Guidance and Counseling, and Government Relations), track student outcomes, and communicate with stakeholders (Clark).
- Utilize an attendance specialist to provide weekly support for all schools (Carson City and Some Public Charter Schools).
- Enhance the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force with school employees and community members (Carson City).
- Reinstate the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) process for truancy citations (Carson City).
- Collaborate with MTSS, a District Intervention Assistance Team, and the Student Engagement and Support department (Carson City).



STRATEGY 7: Promote Professional Development and Family Education

- Provide training opportunities for staff and families to build capacity around attendance efforts and better understand the importance of education in students' lives (Washoe).
- Hold consistent professional learning sessions for staff and administrators that cover attendance policies, intervention best practices, and effective communication strategies (Clark).
- Create and enhance a website addressing school attendance (Clark– [Every Day Matters](#)). The Clark County School District website includes:
 - A comprehensive FAQ section for parents/guardians;
 - Resources from municipalities and nonprofit organizations;
 - Links to key programs such as the Truancy Prevention Outreach Program and Go to Grow; and
 - A direct contact form for the Office of Chronic Absenteeism and Attendance Enforcement.

STRATEGY 8: Engage in Early Identification and Intervention

- Engage in staff activities aimed at identifying students who may lack trusted adults within the school setting and then use that information to build meaningful relationships (Washoe).

STRATEGY 9: Foster Community Partnerships

- Utilize guidance from the University of Nevada, Reno's MTSS/Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports framework, resources available through the Nevada Department of Education's Chronic Absenteeism webpage, and support from the National Parent Teacher Association (Mineral and some Public Charter Schools).
- Develop community partnerships to offer cost-free internships and externships, such as working with hardware stores, recreation associations and clubs, and local humane societies (Washoe).
- Build community and family engagement by hosting quarterly Wednesday Exploratory classes, which feature hands-on STEM-related learning experiences largely led by community leaders and partners (Washoe).
- Partner with local businesses to join attendance campaigns: Participating businesses receive a welcome letter and window decal, signaling their commitment to student attendance. Companies can report truant students to Attendance Enforcement, triggering an immediate response from an officer to transport the students back to school (Clark– [Every Day Matters](#) campaign).
- Partner with local organizations to address the root causes of chronic absenteeism, including: The Public Education Foundation, The Truancy Outreach Prevention Program, Workforce Connections' Disconnected Youth Coalition, and local municipalities (Clark).
- Bring together community partners (including the hospital, the courts, juvenile probation, mental health providers, and the sheriff's office) that plan community-wide events focused on supporting each other (White Pine—See "You Are Not Alone; Together We Belong" committee).

TIER 2: APPLIED TO SMALL GROUPS OF STUDENTS

STRATEGY 1: Student Support Team Meetings

- Hold bi-weekly meetings with school staff and district attendance teams to use data to identify students who require support, and to monitor the progress of students already receiving support. The team reviews academic, behavioral, social, and family stressors that might prompt a need for outside referrals (Washoe).

STRATEGY 2: Check-In/Check-Out Policies

- Hold bi-weekly meetings with school staff and district attendance teams to use data to identify students who require support, and to monitor the progress of students already receiving support. The team reviews academic, behavioral, social, and family stressors that might prompt a need for outside referrals (Washoe).

STRATEGY 3: Individualized Attendance Plans and Evaluations

- Use the School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised to identify the root cause of absenteeism (Washoe).
- Conduct individual student case reviews and coordinate additional support as needed (Clark and Some Public Charter Schools).



STRATEGY 4: Targeted Communication

- Notify parents when a student has 5 and 10 absences and require a meeting when the student reaches 15 (Pershing).
- Have school staff call the families of absent students to discuss the reason for the absence and reinforce the importance of consistent attendance (Storey and Washoe).

STRATEGY 5: Transportation

- Find creative approaches to transportation, such as a walking school bus and/or matching families together to support the transportation needs of students whose parents may be working (Washoe).
- Public charter schools began offering transportation including using passenger vehicles to pick up chronically absent students or students facing short term circumstances impacting attendance.



TIER 3: APPLIED TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

STRATEGY 1: Inter-agency Case Management

- Create a cross-departmental and cross-agency team that reviews a case to identify needs, gaps, and redundancies and ensures that a student or a student's family is receiving proper support (Washoe—[District Intervention Assistance Team](#)).
- Refer students to the Student Attendance Review Board, which conducts more formal hearings in collaboration with the county's Human Services Agency and Juvenile Services and can ultimately cite a student for failure to attend (Washoe).

STRATEGY 2: Home Visits

- Increase home visits by attendance officers and reengagement specialists to build student and family relationships, understand the root cause of absenteeism, and provide resources (which may include temporary transportation). Findings from these visits are shared with the schools for appropriate follow-up (Washoe, Clark, and Carson City).
- Use a formal assignment of a mentor and/or a more prescribed check-in and check-out process (Washoe).

STRATEGY 3: Monitoring Periods

- Use 20-day and 45-day attendance monitoring periods with intensive student attention to support improved attendance (Washoe).



CONCLUSION

Nevada has made measurable progress in reducing chronic absenteeism, with rates falling from 36 percent post-COVID to 25.6 percent in the 2023–24 school year ([NDE, 2024](#)). This progress reflects the collective efforts of school districts implementing various strategies, as described in this brief, across the MTSS framework. Continued success depends on sustained investment, cross-sector collaboration, and a deeper understanding of the specific barriers students face. It is important to note that although this brief exemplifies great work being done in Nevada districts and public charter schools, it also illuminates the fact that there are a lot of efforts happening statewide, and we did not receive strong feedback that there are uniform tracking mechanisms. Even if a district or public charter school is tracking data to determine the ‘success’

of an initiative, it would be advantageous to think about these metrics from a statewide perspective and track the impact of the changes over time.

This is the final brief in a three-part series examining chronic absenteeism in Nevada, which highlights district-level strategies currently used across the State to reduce chronic absenteeism. Drawing on input from district superintendents, it presents real-world practices that aim to re-engage students and support consistent attendance. The brief is designed to showcase local innovation and offer practical models that can inspire collaboration and inform efforts across the state.



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