

Update and Next Steps for Chronic Absenteeism in New Mexico

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Outline

1. Attendance Report Recap

2. Classroom-Level Impacts of Chronic Absenteeism



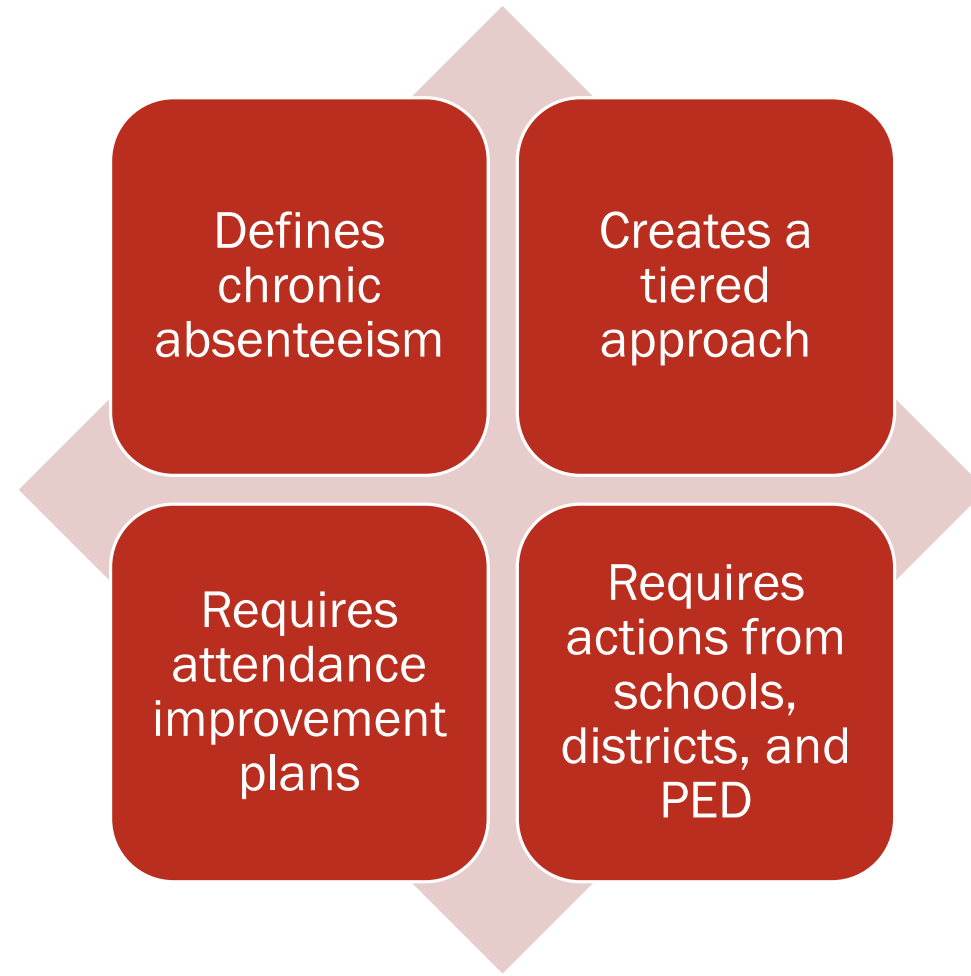
The Attendance for Success Act

Enacted in 2019 (replaced the Compulsory School Attendance law).

Established a data-driven, tiered framework to support students.

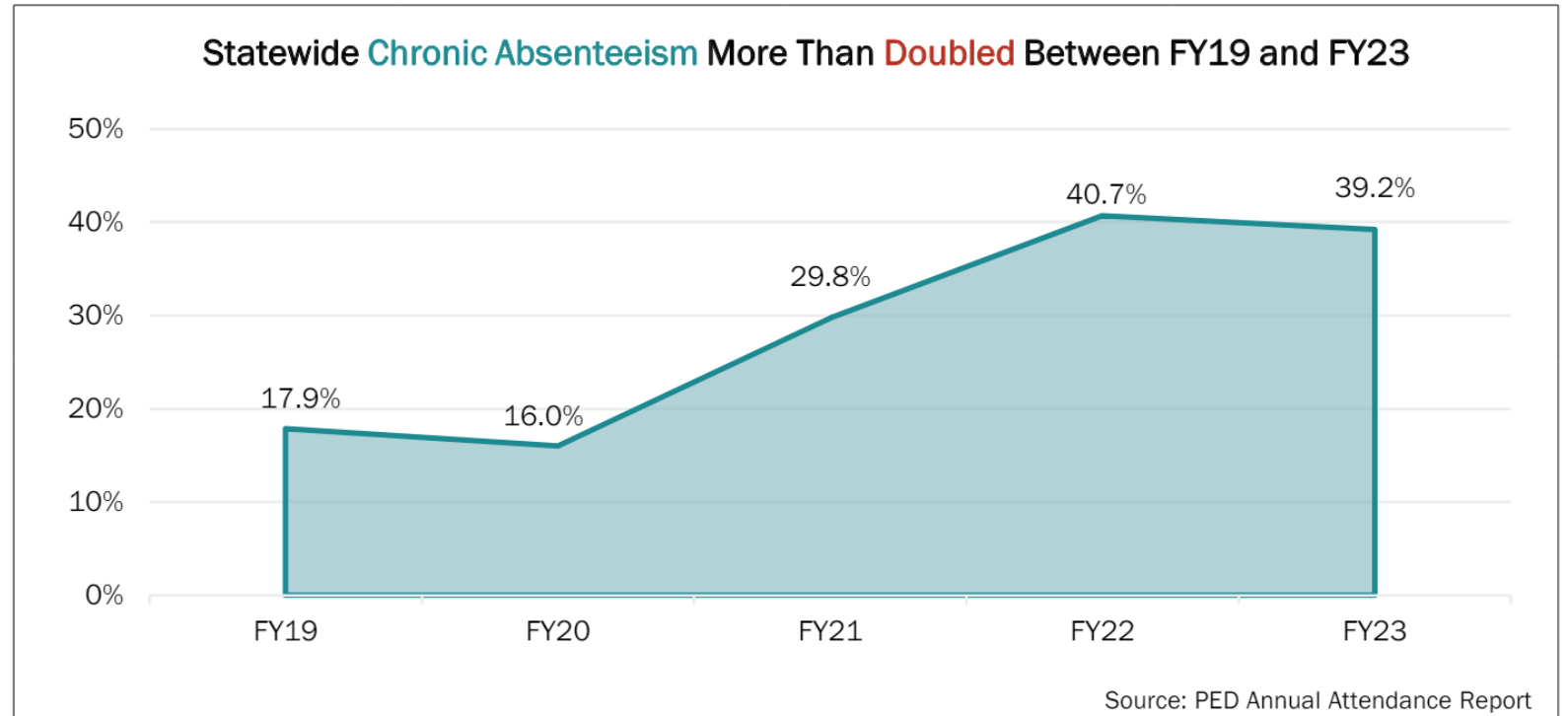
Delineates specific responsibilities for schools, local education agencies, and PED to create a comprehensive framework of shared responsibility.

Policy Pillars of Attendance for Success Act



Chronic absenteeism is pervasive statewide but impacts some student groups more, particularly those named in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit.

- Nearly 40 percent statewide in the 2022-2023 school year.
- Higher rates for...
 - Students experiencing housing insecurity (60.8 percent)
 - Native American students (48.3 percent)
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students (45.7 percent)
 - Students with disabilities (44.2 percent)
 - English learners (43.1 percent),
 - Economically disadvantaged students (42.5 percent).



November 2023: Report Recap

- Statutory review of the Attendance for Success Act (AFSA) compared with current research and evidence-based practices.
- Data review of statewide attendance plans and analysis of strategies being used in practice, and compared with the AFSA.
- Site visits statewide to produce case studies examining attendance practices in select school districts and charter schools.



Report

Date: November 16, 2023

Written and Prepared By: Hathaway

Research Assistance From: Sarai Ortiz; Tim Bedeaux

Witness: Greg Frostad, Assistant Secretary of Policy, Research, and Technology, PED; Nichole Burgin, Superintendent, Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools; Steve Carlson, Superintendent, Central Consolidated School District; Lynette Deuel, Manager of Strategy, Innovation, and Performance Outcomes, Bernalillo Public Schools.

School Attendance and Chronic Absence: A Review of Statute, School Experiences, and Considerations

School attendance is a vital component in ensuring the promise of New Mexico's public education system. Research has long established that consistent school attendance is essential for the academic success of individual students and in turn, building the capacity of our schools to positively influence broader societal and economic wellbeing. As a fundamental building block in academic success and the development of college, career, and civic readiness for all students, it is crucial the state finds ways to support students being at school.

This report seeks to: summarize the imperative of school attendance—including a discussion of how changes in learning expectations and environments impact attendance, describe the current state of attendance and chronic absence data statewide, and provide policy and research considerations for New Mexico policymakers. This report also provides a comprehensive summary of the Legislative Education Study Committee's (LESC's) three-part study of school attendance during the 2023 interim. To these ends, this report includes three sections and an appendix of resources:

Section 1: Why Attendance Matters and the Current State of Attendance and Chronic Absence Data (pages 1-5)

The Imperative of School Attendance (page 2)

A Review of New Mexico's Data (pages 3-4)

National Comparison and Context (page 5)

Section 2: Overview of Research Design and Summary of Research Findings (pages 6-15)

Study Design (page 6)

Review of the Attendance for Success Act (pages 6-11)

Data Review of Attendance Plans (pages 12-14)

Case Study Overview and Findings (pages 14-15)

Section 3: Ecological and Contextual Considerations, Current Initiatives, and Recommendations (pages 16-20)

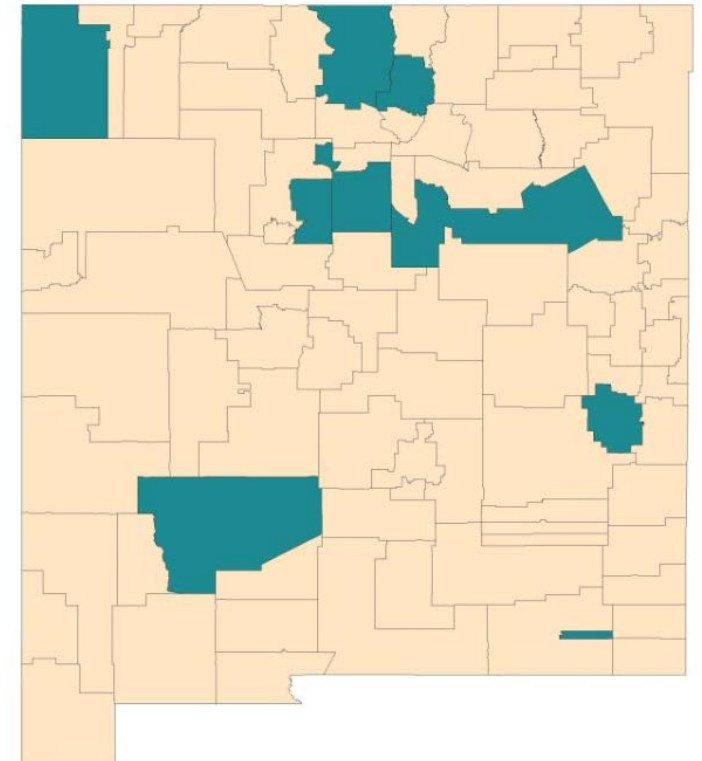
Ecological Considerations (pages 16-17)

Federal Policy and Changing Trends (pages 17)

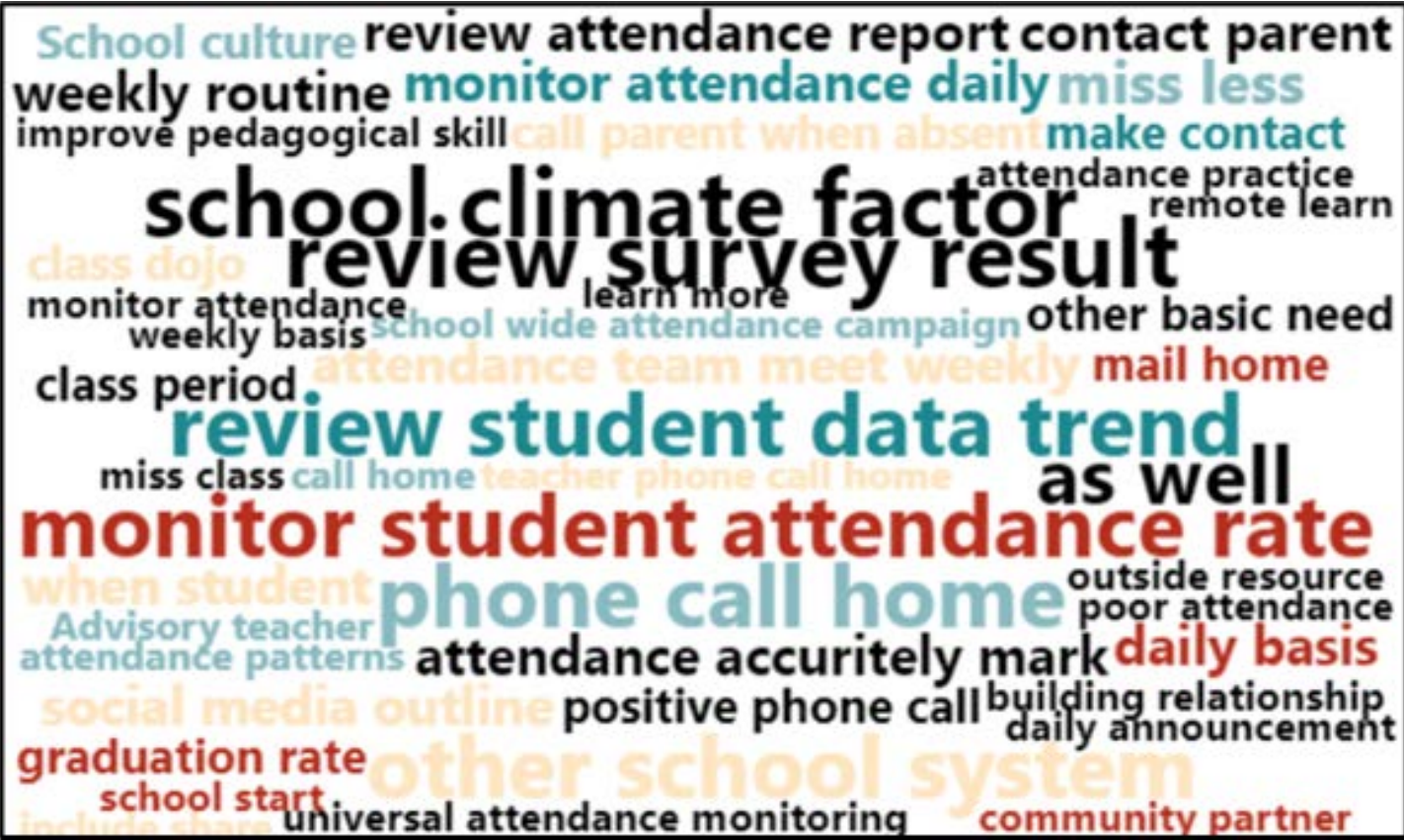
Current Initiatives (pages 17-18)

Recommendations (pages 19-20)

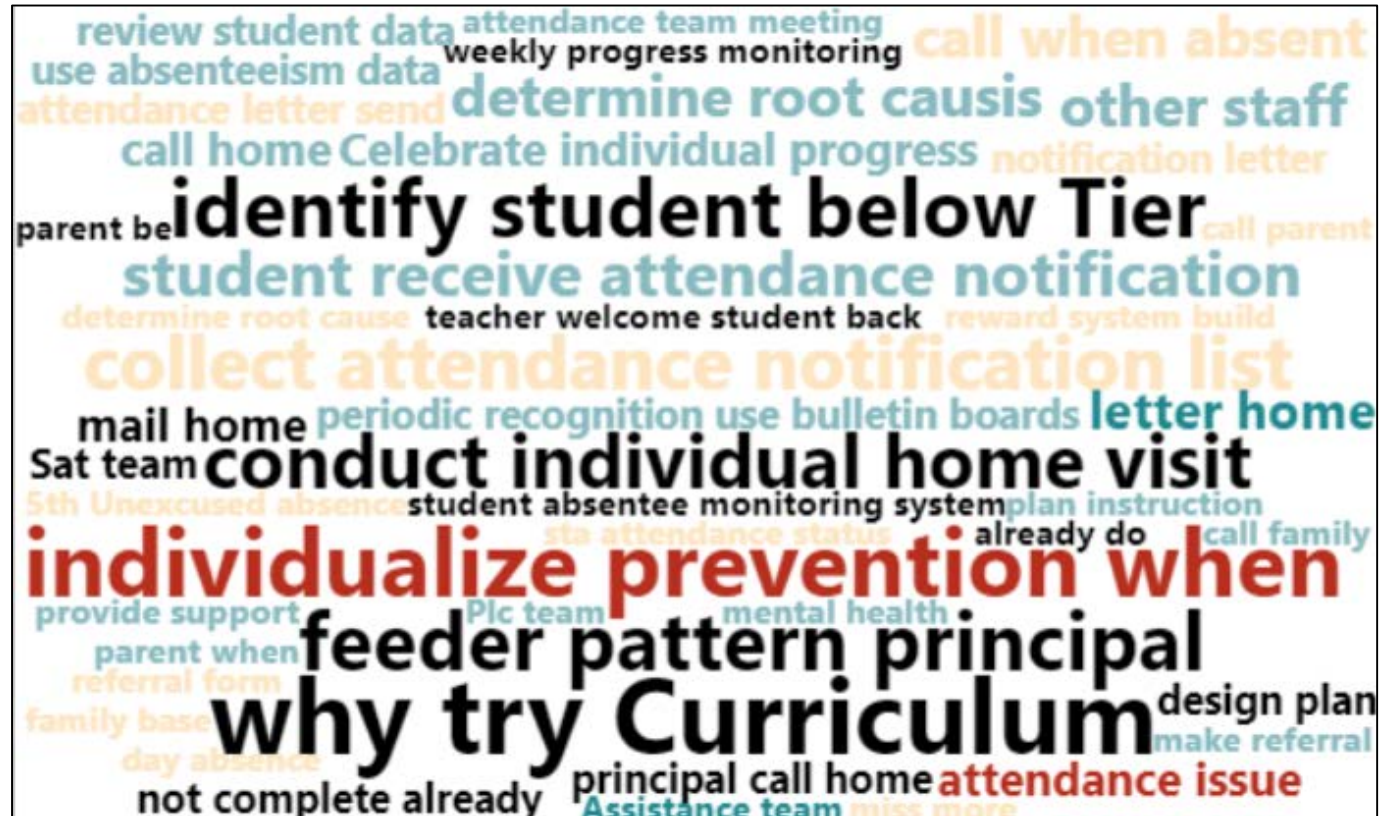
Appendix and Case Studies (pages 21-63)



Analysis of Tier 1 Whole-School Prevention Strategies



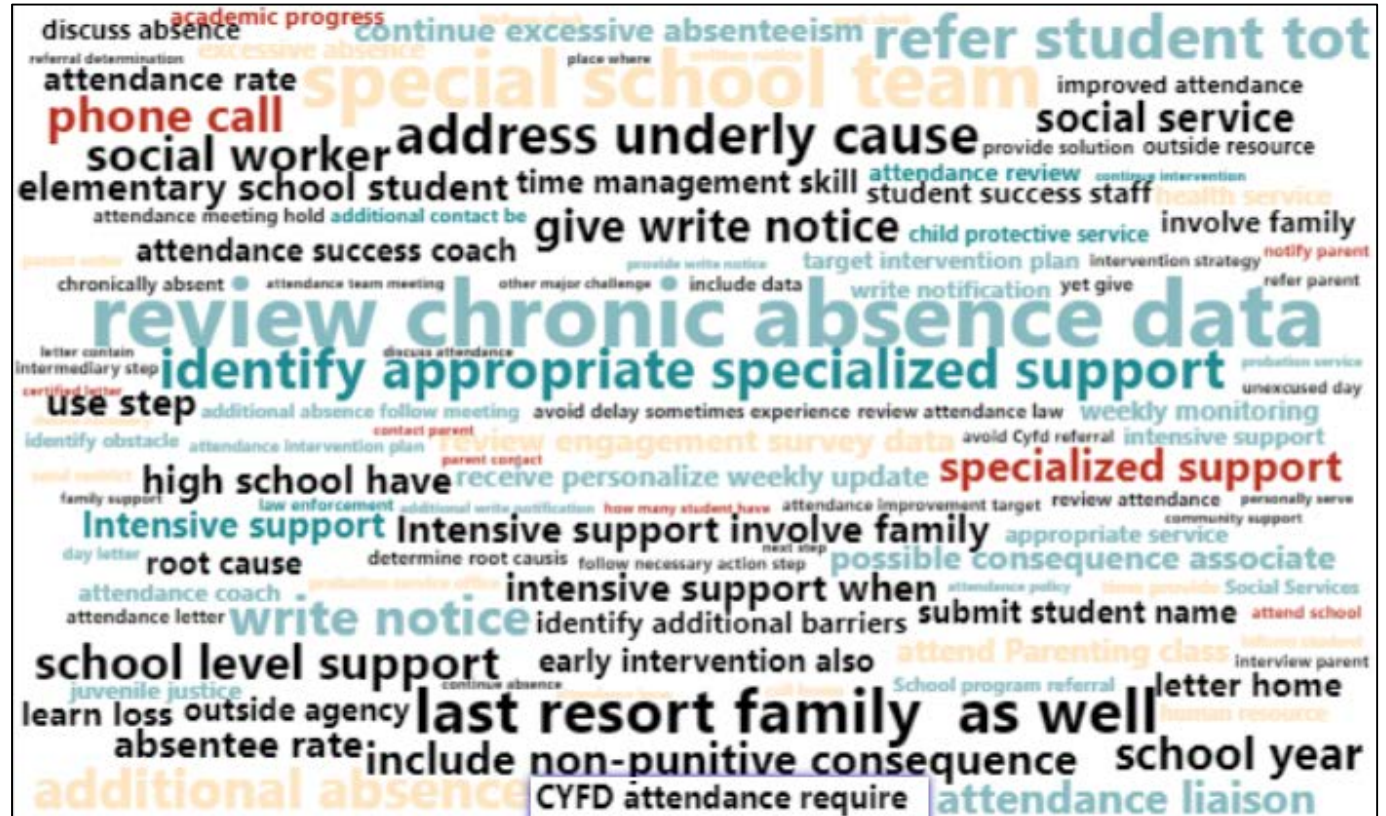
Analysis of Tier 2 Individualized Prevention Strategies



Analysis of Tier 3 Early Intervention Strategies



Analysis of Tier 4 Intensive Support Strategies














Key Findings

New Mexico’s attendance law is generally strong and follows national recommendations.

What may be missing, however, is a more cohesive data strategy and high impact interventions to increase connections to school and adequately and appropriately address root causes.

Table 1: Attendance Works Recommended State Policy Action

State Action	Staff Analysis on Status of Progress?
Adopt a standard definition of chronic absence (missing 10% or more of school), whether the school is in person, virtual or a blend, support daily attendance taking.	
Ensure the state has a longitudinal student database—ideally beginning in preschool—that tracks attendance for each student using a unique identifier.	
Make chronic absence a policy priority and direct districts and schools to identify contributing factors to student absenteeism.	
Promote the adoption of learning opportunity metrics (contact, connectivity, attendance, participation and relationships) in addition to chronic absence.	
Require that school improvement plans include prevention-oriented strategies to reduce chronic absence and improve attendance.	
Sponsor legislation that sets a common definition for chronic absence, promotes monitoring and public reporting of data, and requires schools and districts to address high levels of chronic absence.	
Support data sharing between education, health and social service agencies and other community-based youth and family organizations to target intervention efforts.	
Ensure adequate and equitable resources so that all students have a substantially similar opportunity to meet performance standards regardless of geographic location, and that state and local funding are sufficient to reasonably expect that all students can meet academic performance standards.	
Coordinate and secure resources to eliminate the digital divide.	
Use chronic absence data to identify districts, schools, student populations and communities that need additional resources to remove barriers to attendance and ensure positive conditions of learning.	
Build public awareness and consensus about addressing chronic absence.	

Source: Attendance Works; LESC Staff Review

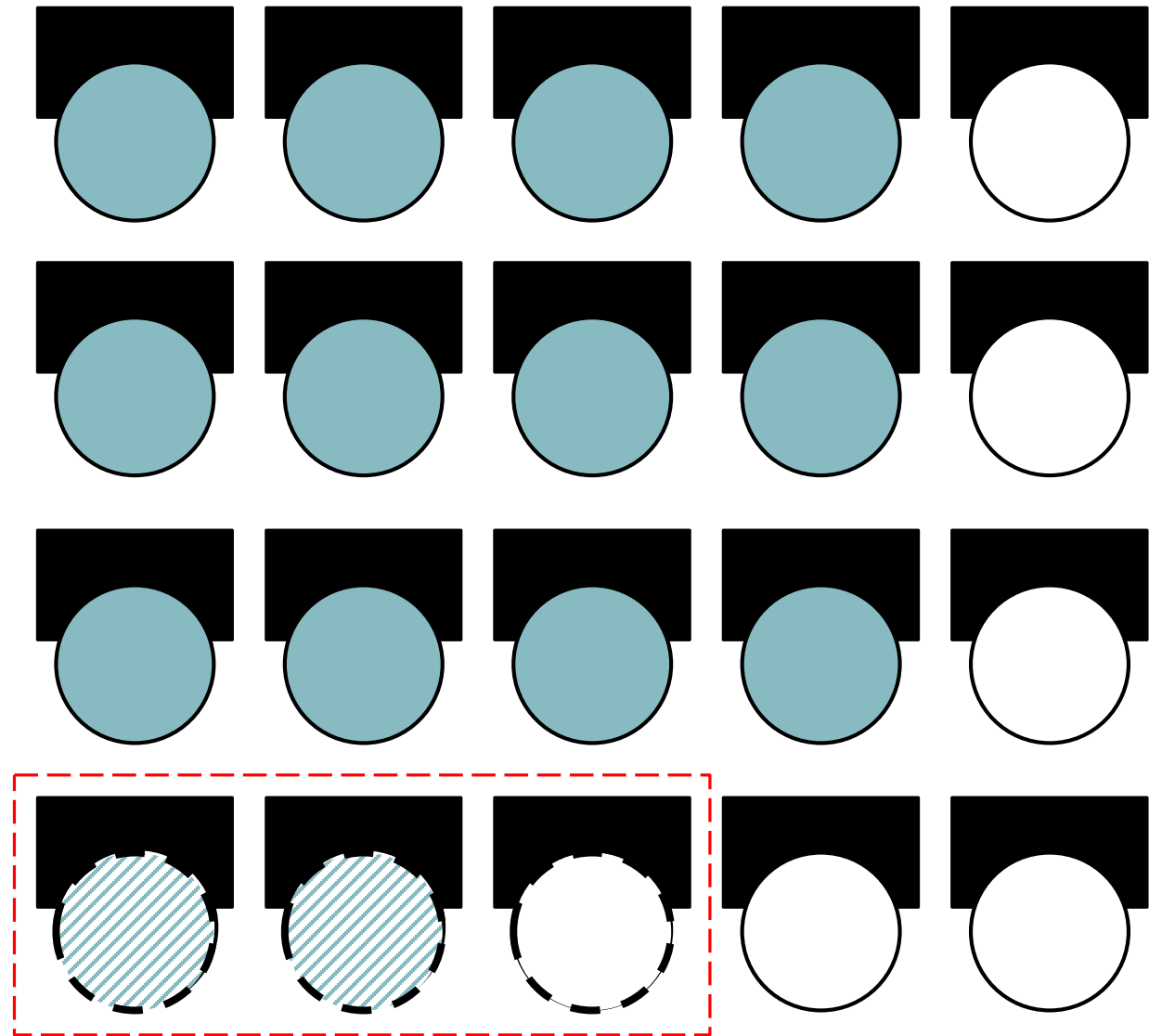
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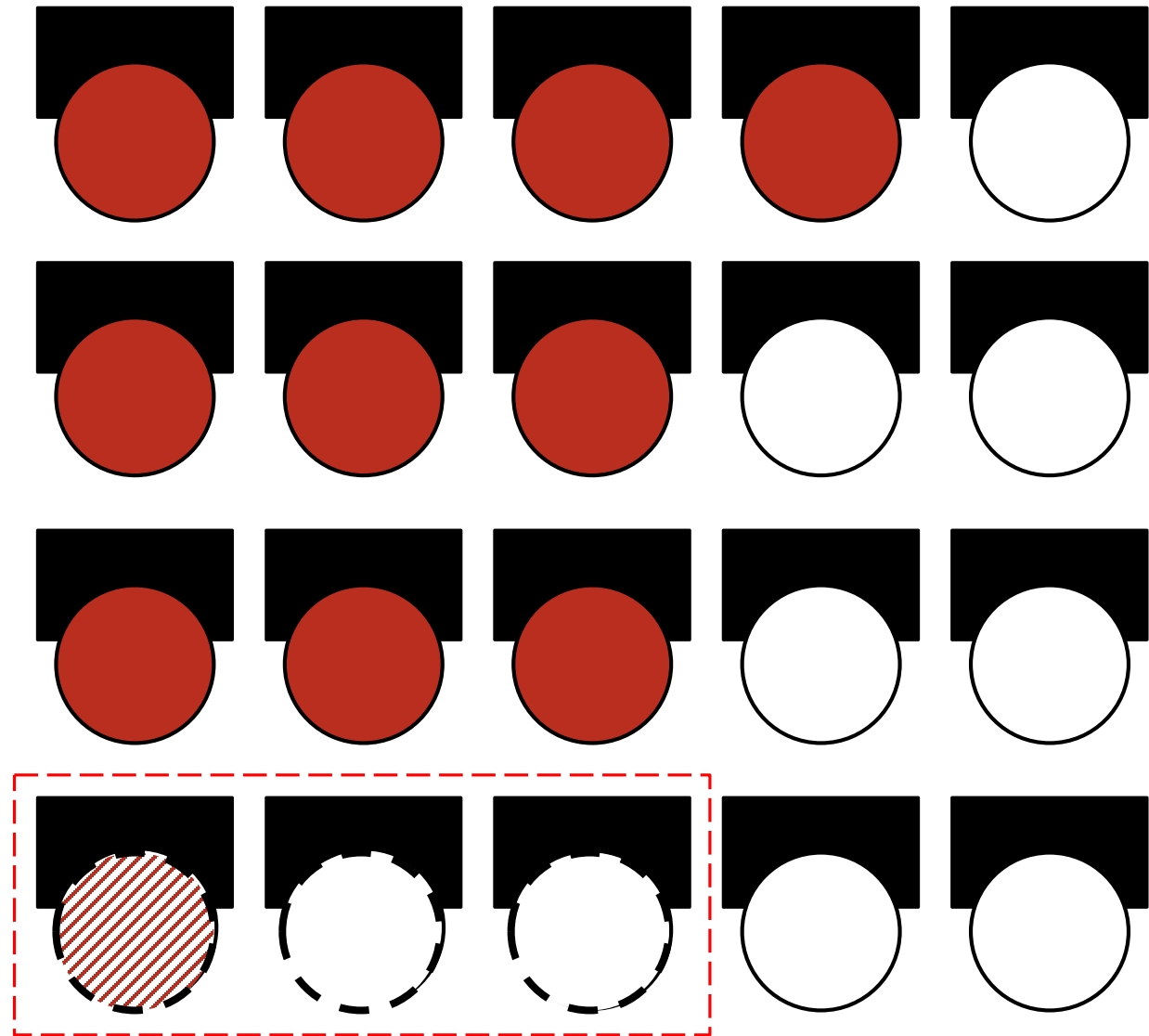
In an average low-poverty classroom with 20 students...

- About 14 students (70 percent) are proficient in reading
- About 3 students (16 percent) are chronically absent
- 2 of those chronically absent students are proficient in reading



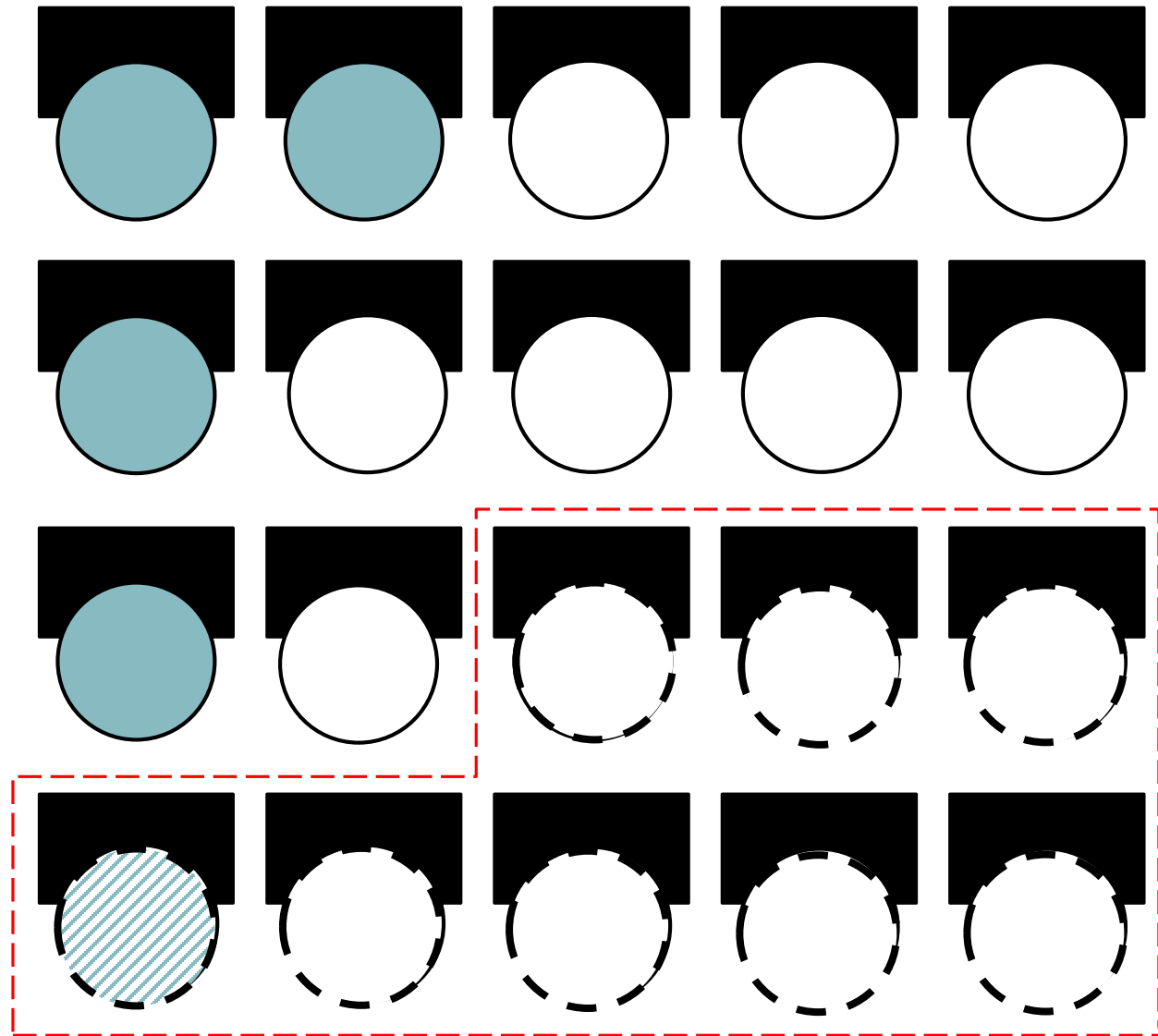
In an average low-poverty classroom with 20 students...

- About 11 students (56 percent) are proficient in math
- About 3 students (16 percent) are chronically absent
- 1 of those chronically absent students are proficient in math



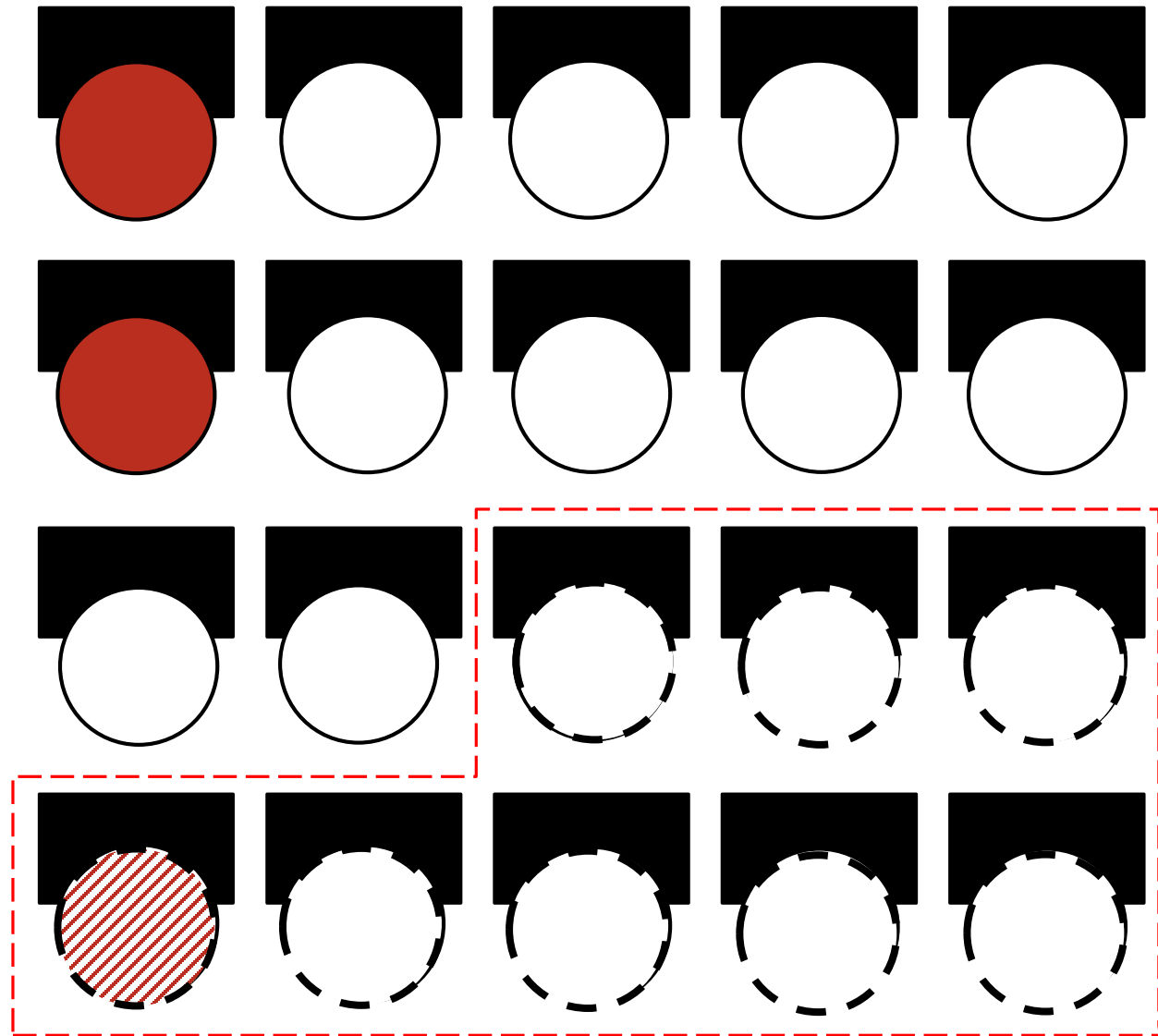
In an average high-poverty classroom with 20 students...

- About 5 students (23 percent) are proficient in reading
- About 8 students (39 percent) are chronically absent
- Only 1 of those chronically absent students are proficient in reading

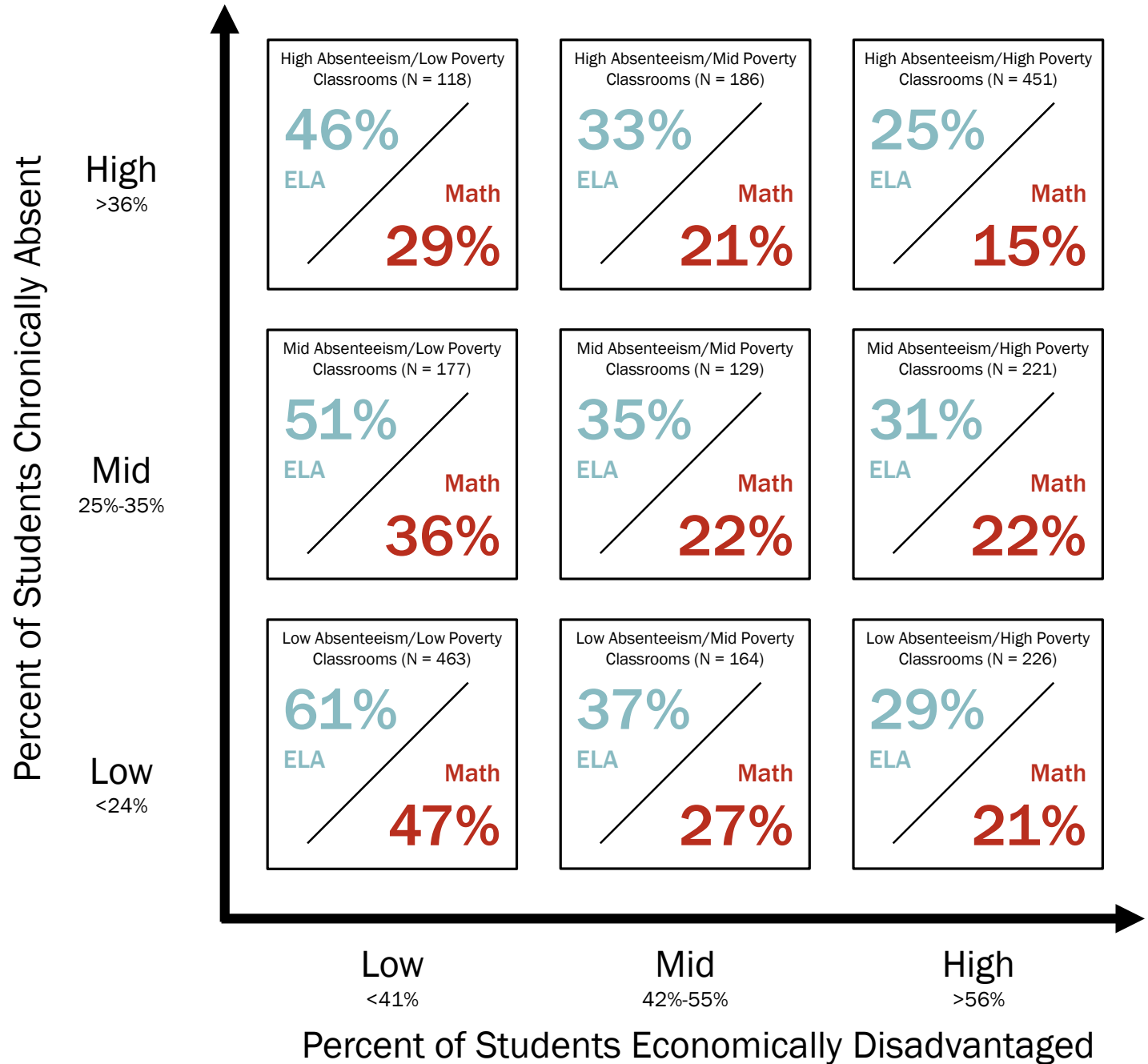


In an average high-poverty classroom with 20 students...

- About 3 students (16 percent) are proficient in math
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- Only 1 of those chronically absent students are proficient in math



- There are compounding relationships between student poverty, chronic absenteeism, and academic achievement.
- Increasing levels of poverty decrease student achievement.
- Increasing levels of absenteeism also decrease achievement.
- Poverty has a stronger effect on student achievement than absenteeism.
- At the extremes, high poverty and high absenteeism result in the lowest proficiency rates in the state.



Thank you!

Q & A



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