

*Presentation for the Legislative Education Study Committee*

# Attendance Improvement

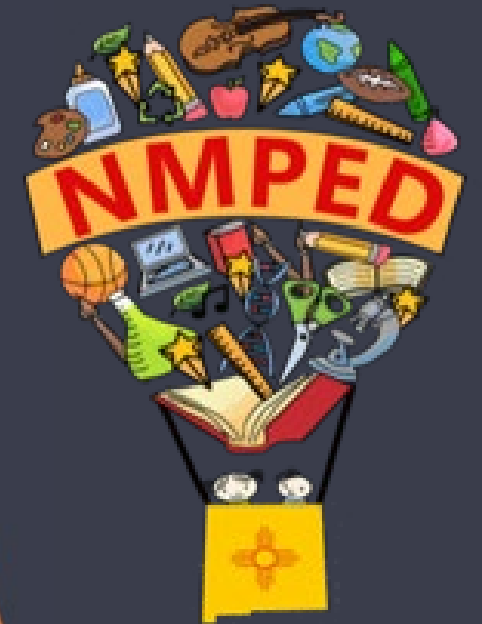
Dr. Candice Castillo

Deputy Secretary

Identity, Equity, and Transformation Division

*September 18, 2024*

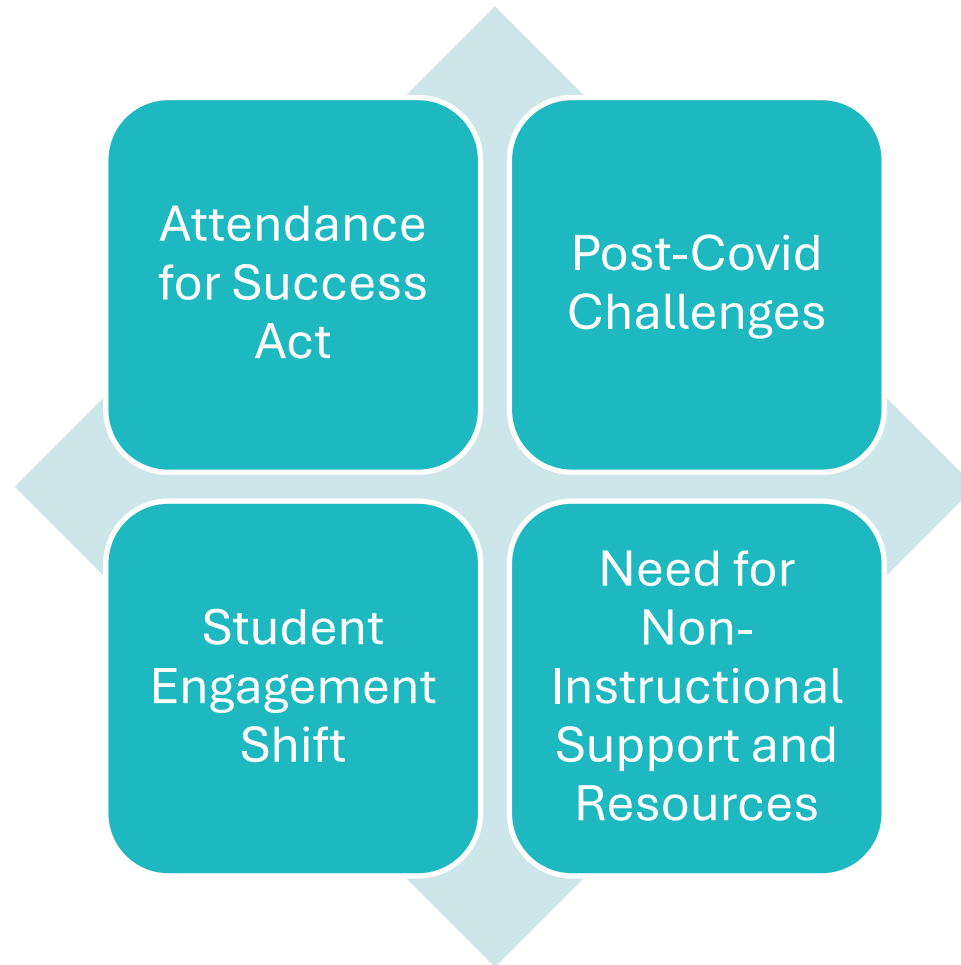
*Investing for tomorrow, delivering today.*



*A Presentation by the  
New Mexico Public  
Education Department*

# Attendance Improvement

A top priority that requires an intensive, multifaceted approach and support



# Barriers to School Attendance

Illness

Household challenges (housing or food insecurity, lacking other basic needs)

Disengagement (feeling disconnected, lack of motivation, lack of interest)

Mental health

Transportation

Other (exhaustion from staying up late playing social media/video games/etc.)

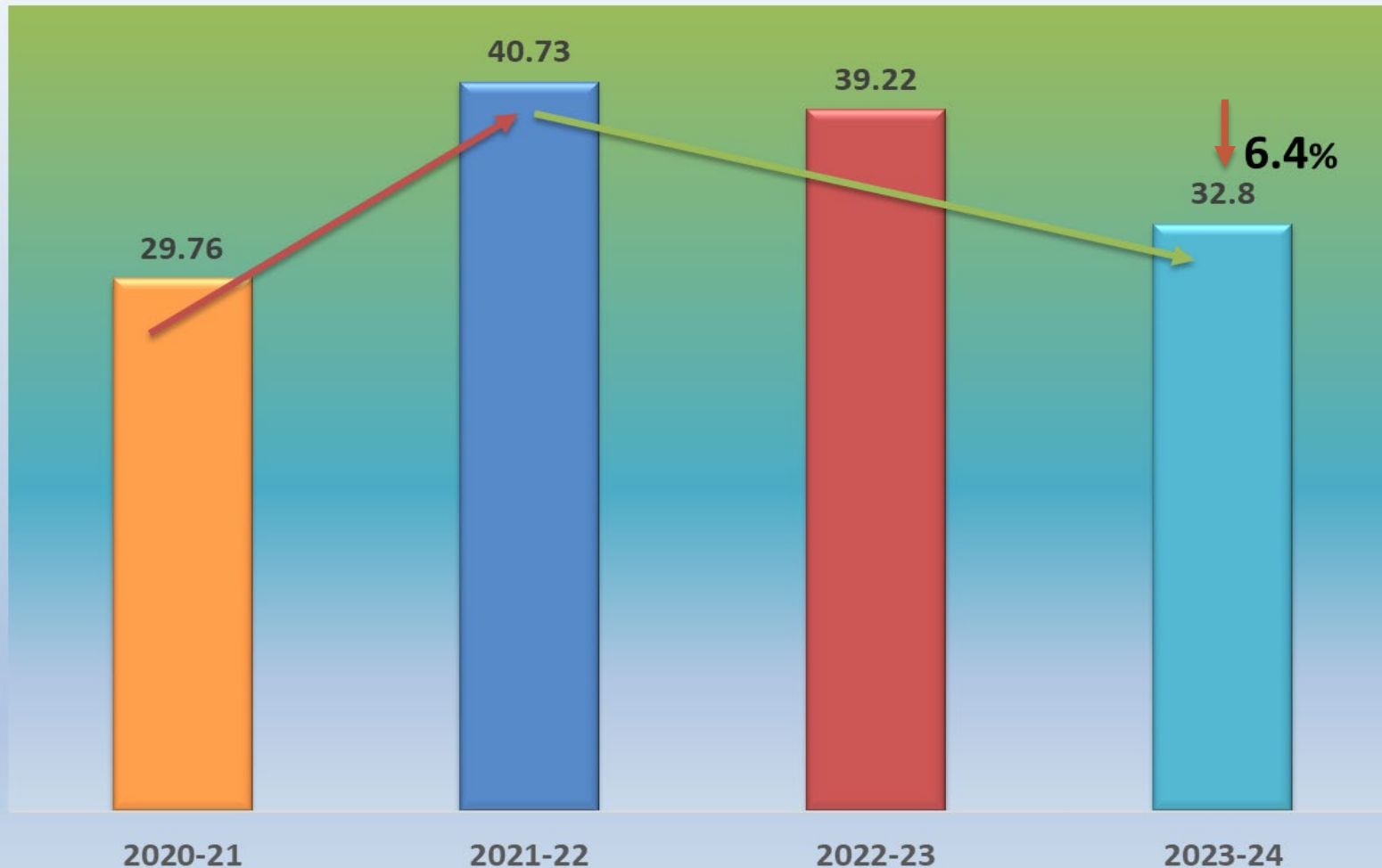
# \$5M Attendance Improvement Appropriation

## Provided the following support:

- ✓ Attendance improvement grants—7 largest districts
- ✓ Student re-engagement services
- ✓ Attendance awareness campaign
- ✓ Increased technical assistance
- ✓ Two annual attendance conferences

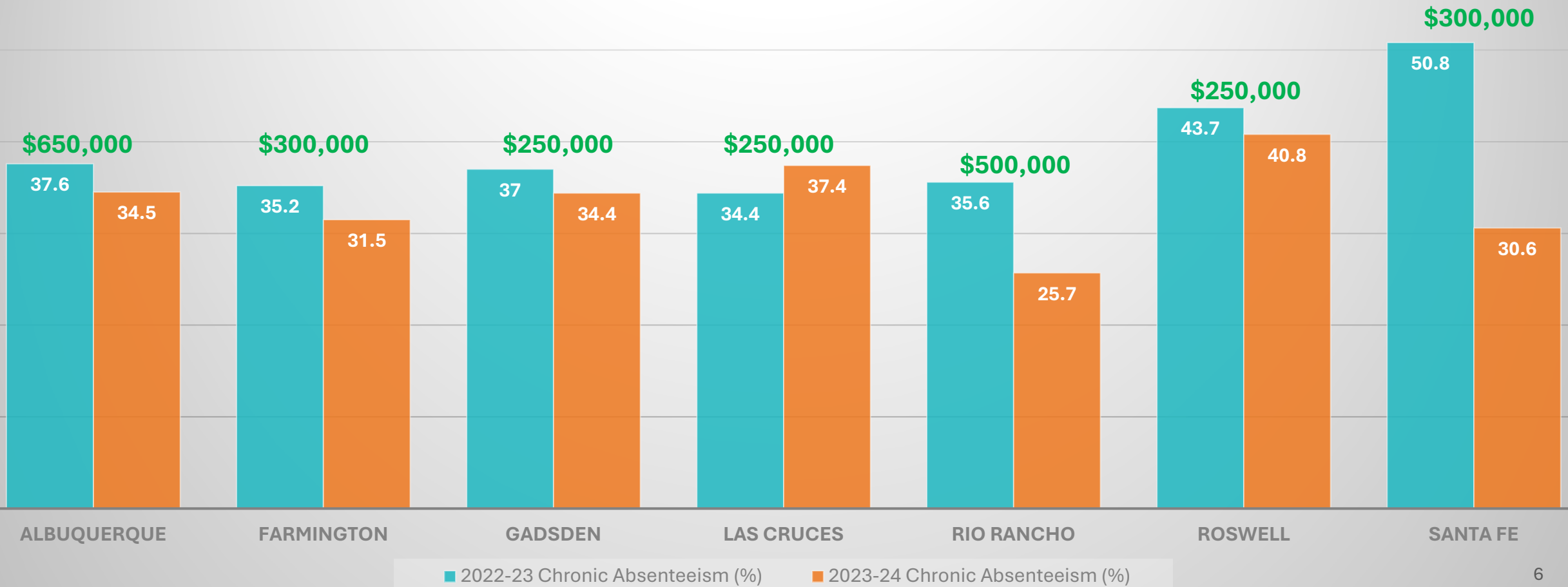
# 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates Decreased 6.4%

Percent of Chronically Absent Students By Year



# \$2.5M in Attendance Improvement Grants

## Chronic Absenteeism Decrease



# Successful Strategies by Grant Recipients

Albuquerque

Student Success System coaches trained by Johns Hopkins University

Farmington

Student Support Teams focusing on connectedness and family engagement

Gadsden

Hiring of Attendance Advocate to assist with home visits

Roswell

Implementation of digital attendance platform

Las Cruces

Leveraging social work interns from NMSU to support students

Rio Rancho

Attendance support staff

Santa Fe

Additional attendance coaches and out-of-school-time support staff

# \$2.5M Attendance Grant 2024-25 Awards

## Returning LEAs

- Albuquerque - \$600,000
- Farmington - \$150,000
- Gadsden - \$165,000
- Las Cruces - \$320,000
- Rio Rancho - \$225,000
- Roswell - \$130,000
- Santa Fe - \$155,000

## Added LEAs

- Bernalillo - \$50,000
- Carlsbad - \$130,000
- Deming - \$95,000
- Española - \$55,000
- Gallup-McKinley - \$170,000
- Hobbs - \$130,000
- Truth or Consequences - \$30,000



# Student Re-engagement Support

**FY 2024**

## **Support for:**

- » Student outreach
- » Attendance barrier identification
- » Ongoing academic and social/emotional coaching



**FY 2025**

## **Supporting high school students:**

- » Student engagement through work-based learning opportunities
- » Support with on-time graduation
- » Attendance coaching and support

# Manzano HS Impact Stories

“ We might not have saved the grade...but we saved a life.”  
- MHS Principal

“This is my safe place..” -MHS Student

“You believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. “  
- MHS Student

## Successes and Testimonials

“I tell all my friends if they need help, to come talk to you guys. This process really helped me and made me feel more supported by my teachers.”  
- MHS Student

“ Thank you for everything and this process. I was not in the right mindset first semester and you helped me get on track and now I am graduating on time. Thank you”  
- MHS Student

“Thank you for being positive and getting excited when I just make a little gain. Thank you for making me feel smart.” --  
MHS Student

“This process changed the way I think about sports and grades. Sometimes keeping students in a sport, even when they are failing classes, is the answer to the root cause.” -MHS AD

“I have been a part of programs like this at other schools, but it was always me sitting outside while people talked to my parents. When I was brought in they would tell me I was failing and all of these things I needed to do. Here I was included in the conversation and it made me want to try harder.” - MHS Student

“These meetings helped me get on track after losing my dad. I liked that someone else talked to my teachers about what happened. It was hard for me to ask for help or talk about what was happening.” -  
MHS Student

Thank You. Manzano has really helped my family. I didn’t want to ask for help, but when I did you were there. I never expected to get this much help.  
-MHS Parent

“I liked having a teacher look at my grades with me and give me guidance on what to do next. You just didn't say you are failing figure it out.”- MHS Student

“Thank you for helping my son get back on track and believing in himself. He really is smart and he can do this”  
MHS Parent

Thank you for this. I think every school should have a program like this. I am a junior and this is the first time someone has taken the time to talk to me about my grades and helped me”  
- MHS Student



# Promoting Attendance Awareness

- **School Engagement**  
Attendance kits to every school, including large vinyl banners, incentive items, and customizable digital resources and templates
- **Fall Engagement**  
Branded billboards and social media ads
- **Spring Engagement**  
Increase digital ads, including movie theater and radio ads



# Increased Support and Guidance

Monthly  
professional  
development  
to school  
districts

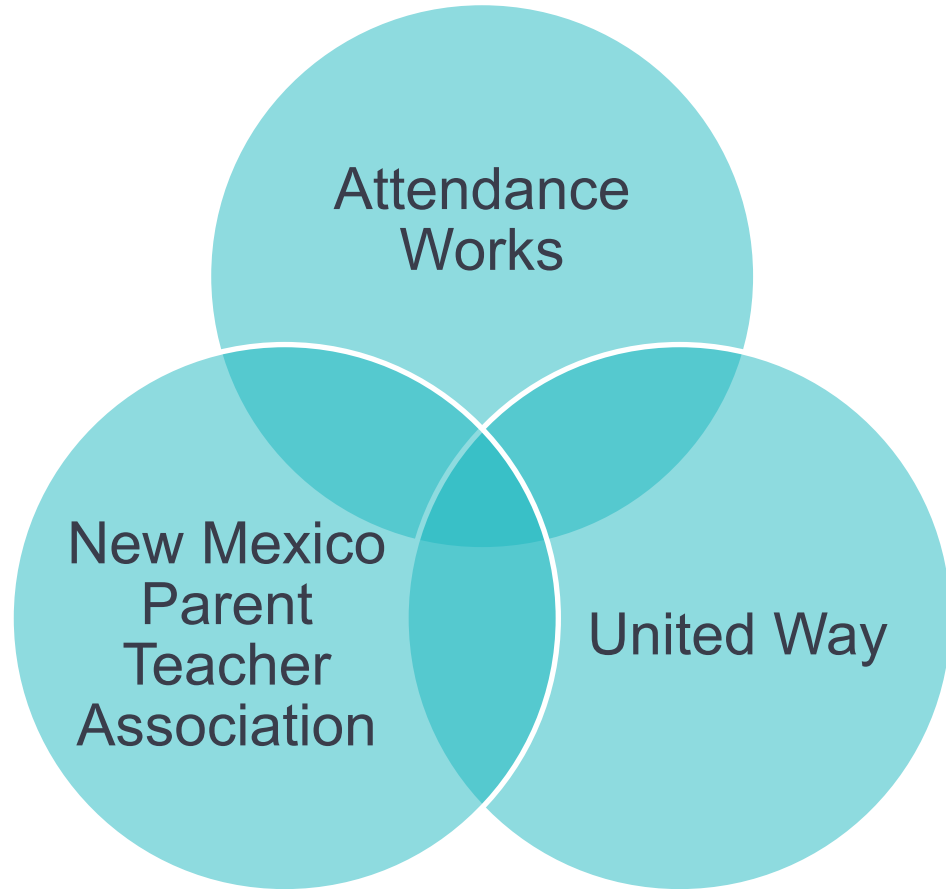
Kindergarten  
cohort

Mini-  
workshops for  
attendance  
improvement  
plans

Public-facing  
attendance  
dashboard

## Office Hours

# Strong Partnerships



NM was an early adopter of the Attendance Works Five Years Challenge to ***cut chronic absenteeism in half!***

# Attendance Conference

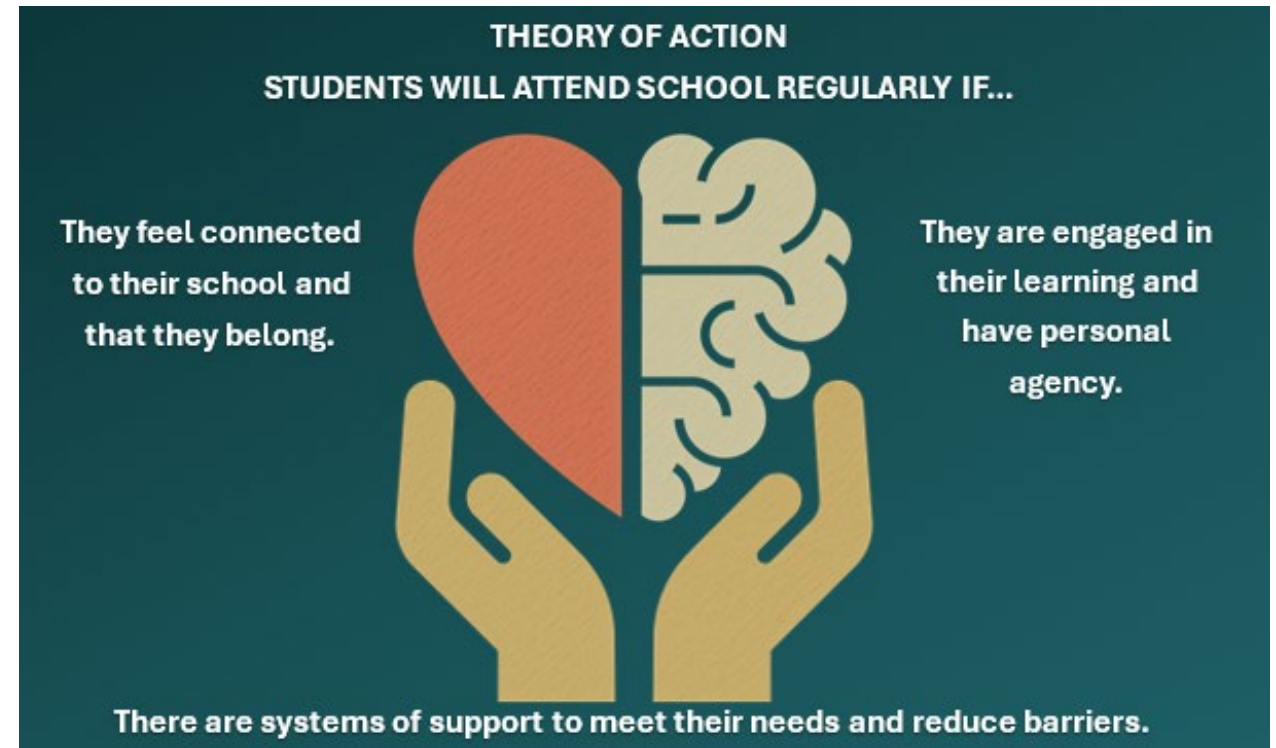


- Two annual attendance conferences
- Evidence-based practices
- Root-cause identification
- Attendance plan implementation
- Collaboration and resources

# Path Forward: To Do More We Need More

## More funding allows for:

- Expanding support for focused interventions and evidence-based practices.
- Increasing support for vulnerable student populations.
- Improving behavioral health and social-emotional learning (SEL) supports.
- Enhancing connectedness and belonging efforts.
- Increasing family engagement and awareness.
- Improving data-sharing capabilities.

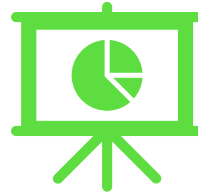


# Recommendations



## **Create a dedicated statewide team of five attendance coordinators**

This would allow for more hands-on support by region (Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southwest, Southeast).



## **Enhanced school and district-level information systems to move towards real-time data access**



## **Support the creation and funding of Campus Attendance Interventionist positions**



Thank You!

