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Beating Poverty's Impact on School Performance

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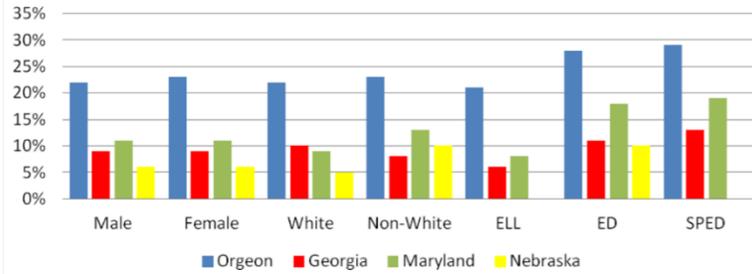


It Starts With Showing Up!

Rachel Brooks

Chronic Absenteeism is having missed 10 percent or more of the school year or missed a month (21 days) or more of school in the past year.

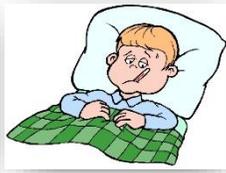
Chronically Absent Students By Demographic Background



Do Not Go

Cannot Go

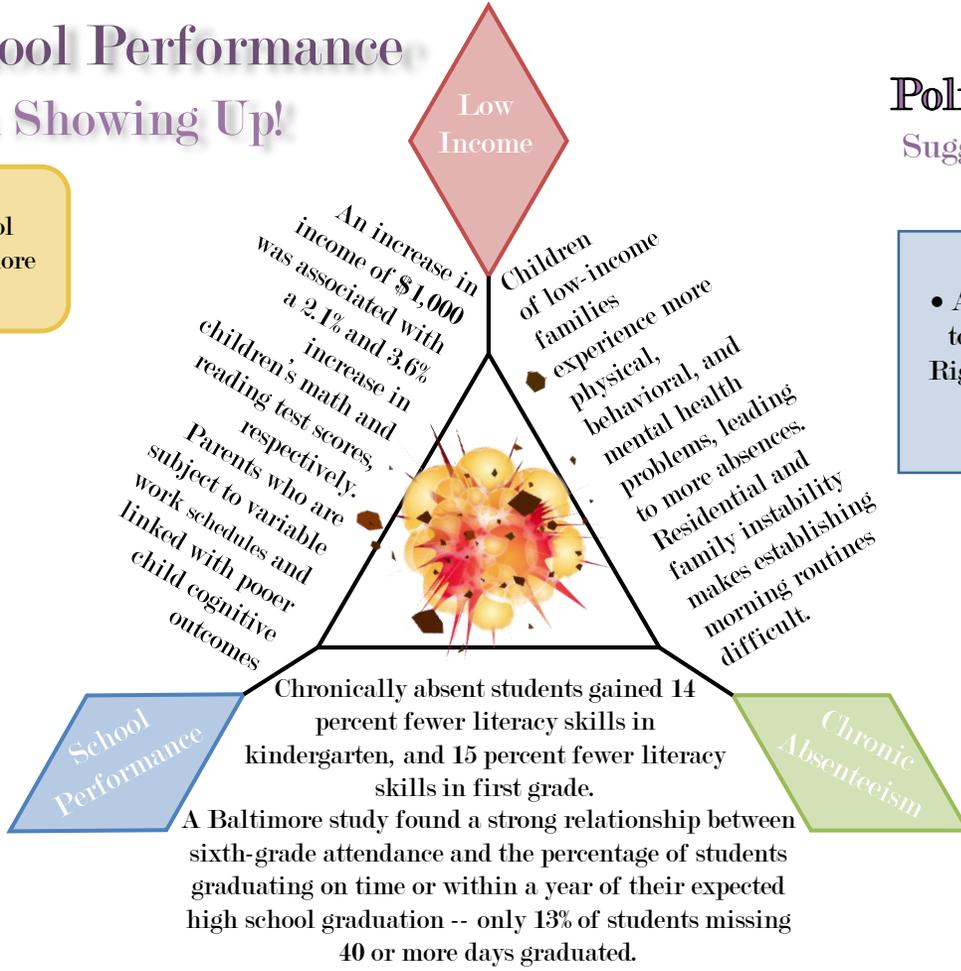
Will Not Go



- Do not see the value in being there
- No one to stop them from skipping

- Illness
- Family responsibilities
- Involved with juvenile justice system

- Bullying/Harassment
- Uncertainty of new environments



Policy Changes Needed

Suggestions for Every Level

Federal

- Add questions about the extent of chronic absenteeism to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights annual school survey and use this information to target support efforts to the most impacted schools.

- When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is reauthorized, include the measuring, monitoring, and responding to absenteeism as a required school improvement activity for states, districts and schools receiving Title 1 funds.

State

- Join the growing number of states that are implementing early warning systems that provide schools, teachers, and parents with ongoing real time data on absenteeism and flag students in need of intervention and support.

- Include measures of chronic absenteeism and regular attendance on state, district, and school reports. Students who meet the chronic absenteeism threshold are automatically referred to Child Protective Services.

Local

- Create web-based parental access to student attendance data and an "ask for help getting my child to school" feature.

- Conduct a school policy audit to make sure school policies support and encourage regular school attendance. For example, lateness policies and penalties are not so onerous that they encourage students who will be late, to skip the whole day of school.

- Make real-time data on student absenteeism available to schools, teachers, and parents. Once a month, publically report on school-level chronic and regular attendance rates.

- Organize coordinated efforts to help every student attend every day through an inter-agency task force created by mayors and governors.