

ADDRESSING BEHAVIORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

THE TIME IS NOW!!!!

D. JOE OLMI, PH.D.

DIRECTOR, THE USM SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

JUST A BIT ABOUT ME...

- B.S. in Educational Psychology/Social Studies
- M.S. in Educational Psychology (School Psychology emphasis)
- Ed.S. in Educational Administration (Secondary Principalship)
- Ph.D. in Educational Psychology (School Psychology Specialty)
- Pre-doctoral Internship at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE
- Beginning my 27th year in the Program/Department
- 10th year as Department Chair/School Director
- 2.5 years as a middle school classroom teacher (Social Studies)
- 7 years as a School Psychologist in south Louisiana
- First K-12 teaching position was in Tehran, Iran way back when...

CONSULTATION EXPERIENCES

- Alternative school systems redesign
- Juvenile justice systems redesign
- General and special education instructional settings system design
- Classroom systems and individual behavior support plan design
- Parent behavioral training with families
- Individual child behavior therapy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF SOURCES

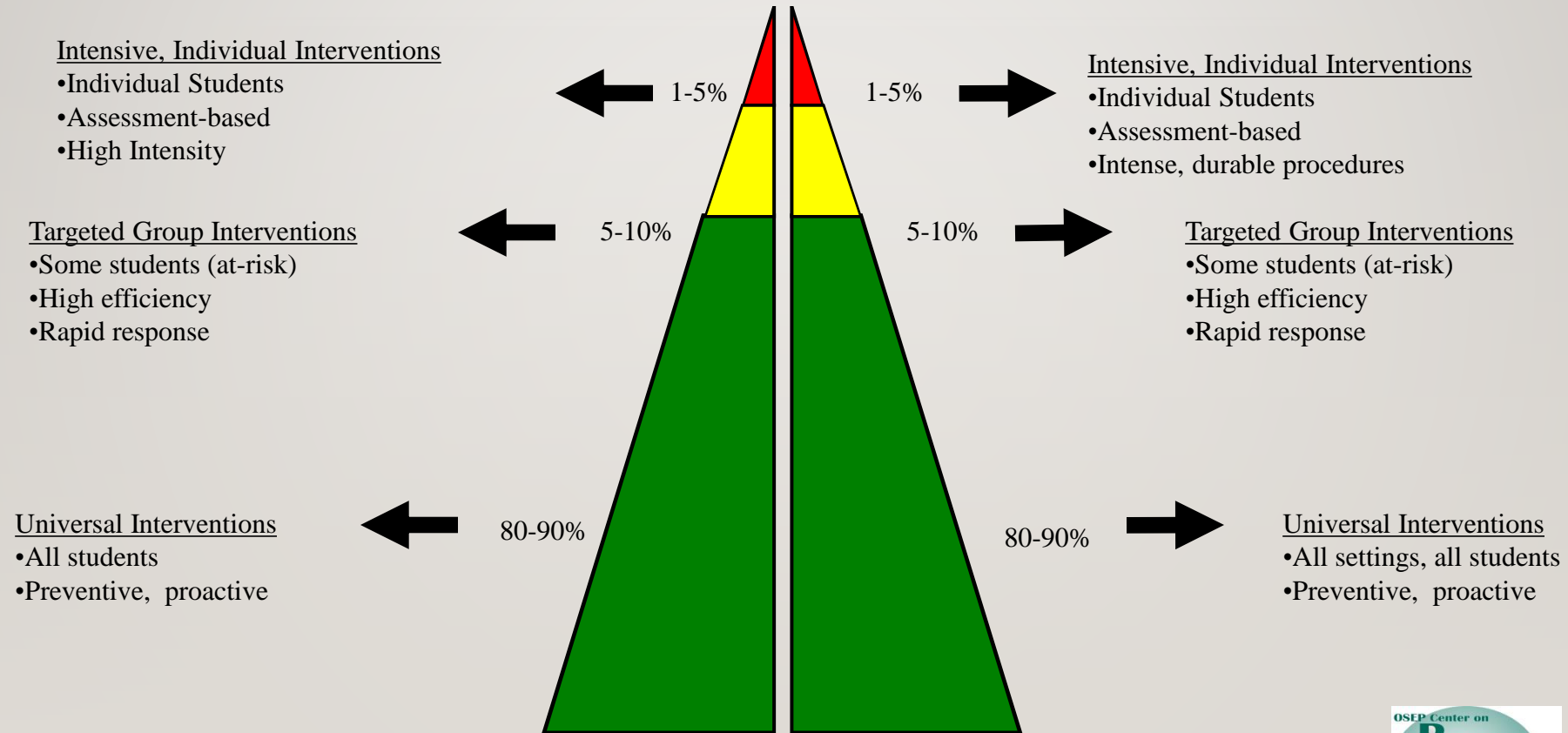
- Attendance Works 2014 slide presentation*
- Work of my previous graduate students
- Work done with school districts across Mississippi and Louisiana
- A thousand conversations had with professional colleagues, fellow professionals in the field, and countless presentations attended over the years related to juvenile justice, PBIS, effective consultation in the schools, systems interventions, etc.

SCHOOL-WIDE/INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

MS POLICY 4300

Academic Systems

Behavioral Systems



REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR

- 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection
 - 13% of all students were chronically absent in 2013-14
 - 2.8 million K-12 students received one or more OSS (20% decrease for 2011-12)
 - Black preschool children 3.6 times as likely to be suspended in comparison to white kids.
 - K-12, black students nearly four times as likely to be suspended. Twice as likely to be expelled.
 - Kids with disabilities more than twice as likely to be suspended; two thirds of total number of students who are secluded from classmates or restrained
 - More than 20% of high schools lack any school counselor!
 - 1.6 million attend a school with a SRO, but no school counselor.
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2013-14.html>

**IN SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL
SUSPENSIONS: THE SILENT AND NOT SO SILENT
KILLER**



The practices of suspensions
and expulsions are not
effective *(if such practices
worked wouldn't we be doing less
of them?)*



MORE...FROM IES INDICATORS OF SCHOOL CRIME AND SAFETY: 2017

- During 2015-16
 - 37% of public schools (31,100) took at least one serious disciplinary action
 - OSS of 5 days or more (72% of total events)
 - Expulsion (4% of total events)
 - Transfer to specialized school (24% of total events)
- On a related note, rates of preschoolers being suspended is higher than K-12 students.



MORE...CHARTER SCHOOLS, CIVIL RIGHTS AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

- In 2011-12, charter schools and OSS
 - Higher than public for all students, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities.
 - Higher for SWD than SWOD by as much as 33 percentage points at some sites.
 - The suspensions were for behaviors deemed a manifestation of their disability.



WHY THE NEED FOR A CHANGE IN APPROACHES?

- The failure of “zero tolerance” policies
- The practices of suspensions and expulsions are not effective *(if such practices worked wouldn't we be doing less of them?)*
- School discipline/student behavior continues to rank in top three concerns among educators
- These exclusion approaches do not contribute to academic progress, dropout prevention, inclusion, student retention, attendance, or faculty job satisfaction.

**School-to-Prison
Pipeline**



THE FOLLOWING ARE MORE THAN OFTEN CONSEQUENCES, NOT INTERVENTIONS...

- Grade Retention
- Suspension (ISS or OSS)
- Expulsion
- Alternative Education Programming that is poorly designed...

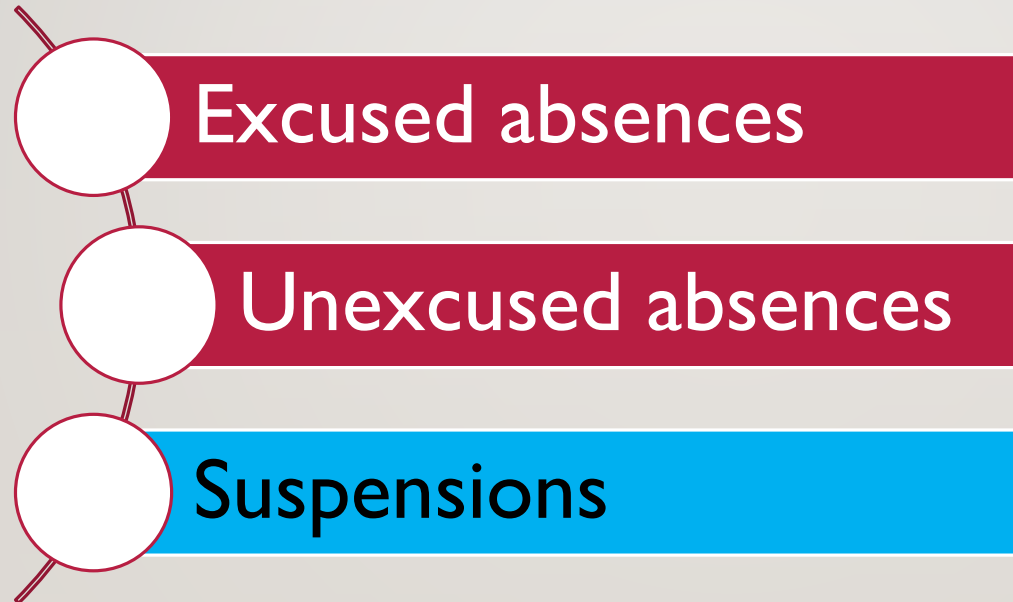


MARYLAND DEFINITIONS RELATED TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE*

- Truancy: 20 days unexcused absence and on roll for at least 90 days
- Severely chronically absent: missing 20% or more days of school year/10+ days missed per quarter on average
- Chronic absence: missing 10% or more/5-9 days missed per quarter on average
- Unsatisfactory attendance: missing 6-9% of days/3-4 days missed on average per quarter
- Satisfactory attendance: Missing 5% or less/no more than 2 days missed per quarter
- High attendance: 5 or fewer days missed per academic year

ATTENDANCE WORKS RECOMMENDS...

- Chronic absence defined: missing 10% or more of school days for any reason



DATA SUGGEST...

- Higher absences among economically disadvantaged
- Higher absences in larger school districts/larger schools fueled by anonymity
- Higher absences in schools where students do not feel they are supported by teachers
- Relationships with teachers impact student absences
- Higher absences in systems that have a poor MTSS (Multi-tiered Systems of Support) for behavior and academic
- Higher absences in systems that engage punishment as the primary tool for student management



***If a child doesn't know how to read.....we teach.
If a child doesn't know how to swim.....we teach.
If a child doesn't know how to multiply...we teach.
If a child doesn't know how to behave... we punish?***

John Herner



DO YOU KNOW YOUR DATA?



YOUR DATA

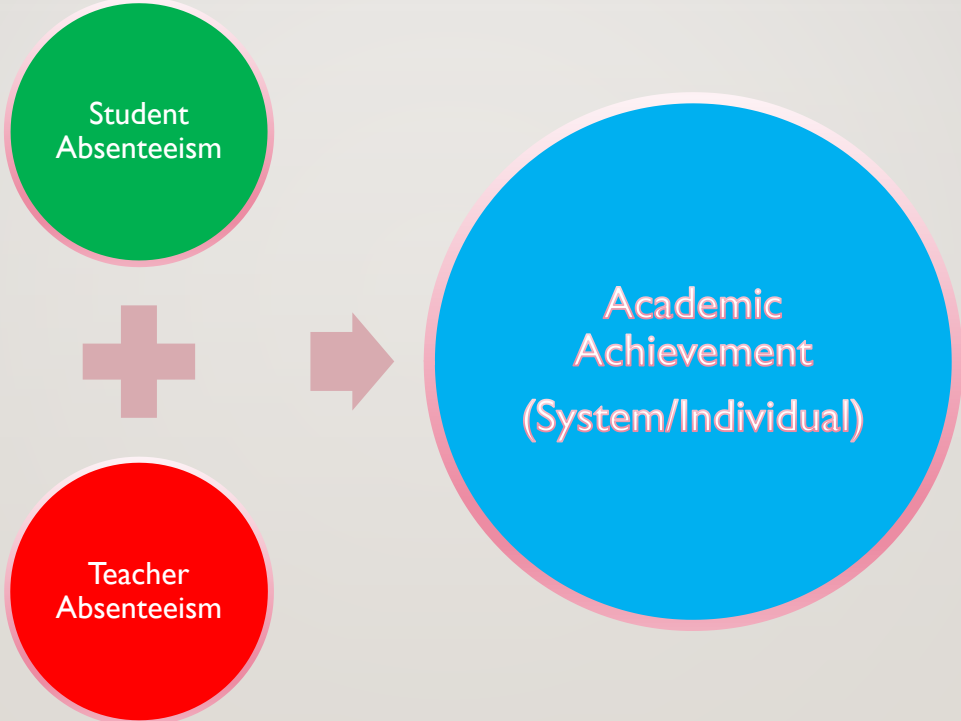
- Lost days of instruction:
 - Teacher absences
 - Excused absences
 - Unexcused absences
 - In school suspension
 - Out of school suspension
 - Expulsion
- Absences/lost days of instruction by school
- Students who fall in the absentee categories previously mentioned
- Academic levels of those students by categories
- Categories by male/female
- Days of week/student absences/teacher absences
- Month by teacher/student absences

YOUR DATA

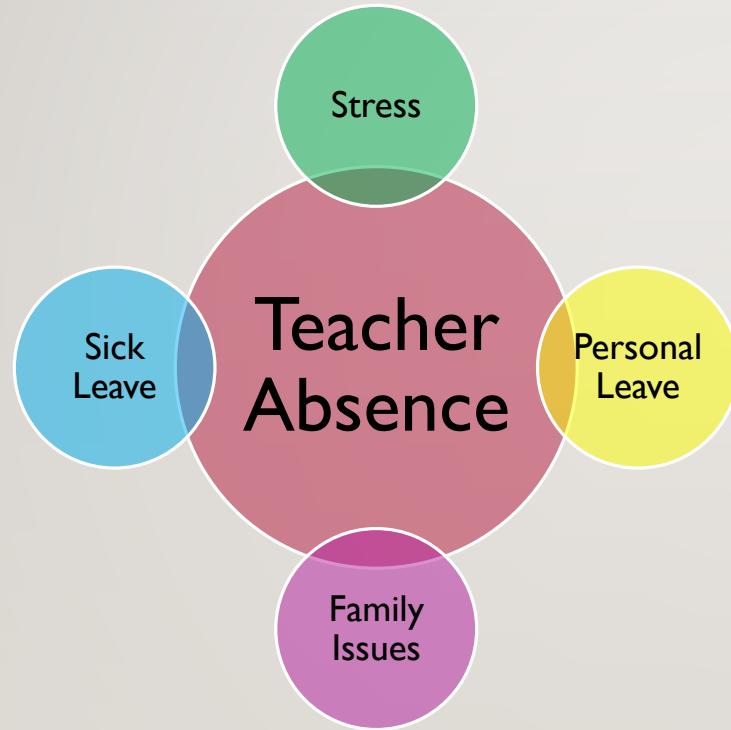
- Graduation rate X Days absent X Grade?
- 0 days
- 1-5 days
- 6-10 days
- 11-14 days
- 15 or more days

Different Interventions for Different Targets?

AND YET, ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHILDREN...



REASONS FOR TEACHER ABSENCES



SOME INTERESTING POINTS TO PONDER...

- 2018 Article from the Center for American Progress
 - 3%: National rate of absence for full-time wage/salaried American worker
 - 5.3%: Rate of absence for teachers
 - Teachers are **the** most important factor in student academic success.



ADDITIONAL POINTS...

- OCR (Civil Rights Data Collection) dataset released in 2012 of 2009-10 school year
 - 36% of teachers nationally were absent more than 10 days
 - 15.2% higher than in charter schools
 - 33.3% of high school teachers absent more than 10 days
 - 33.7% of elementary school teachers absent more than 10 days
 - 37.8% of middle school teachers absent more than 10 days
 - Rates are even higher for schools with high percentages of students of color
 - Nationally, the financial cost is at least **\$4 billion** annually

OF NOTE REGARDING TEACHER ABSENCES

- Females absent more than males
- Teachers with longer commutes absent more
- Lax leave policies result in more teacher absences
- The more paid leave, the higher teacher absenteeism
- The more absent the teacher's colleagues, the more absent the teacher
- New teachers absent less often than more experienced peers (the more job security, the more absences)
- Fewer absences if the teacher had to report directly to the principal
- More frequent absences on Mondays/Fridays
- Teacher absenteeism contributes to student absenteeism

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF TEACHER ABSENTEEISM

- Substitute teacher expenditures
- Personnel costs (larger districts have a department devoted solely to hiring subs)
- Management of software devoted to finding subs
- Processing costs for subs (fingerprinting, background checks)
- High turnover rate among substitutes
- The costs of academic supports to those students who falter academically due to teacher absenteeism
- The related costs of academic retention
- The costs to special education for IDEA assessment for students who falter academically, but who are still referred for assessment

LET THIS SINK IN...

- Student with unsatisfactory attendance:
 - 4 days/quarter or 12/180 days per year
- Teacher absences range from 8-10%/year or 14.4-18 days/year
- Over the course of the child's 13-year academic career:
 - 12 days lost instruction + 9 teacher absent days (5% of 180 days) = 21 lost days/year
 - 13 years = 273 days; total days in 13-year career = 2,340 (273/2,340 = 11.3%)
 - **1.521 of 13 years lost to absenteeism**

TIME SPENT IN DISCIPLINE...IS IT SINKING IN?

- **Discipline Referral:**
 - Administrator: 10 minutes
 - Student: 20 minutes X Total Students in Class
 - *Example: 24 students X 20 min = 480 lost min of instruction for the class*
- **Suspension:**
 - Administrator: 45 minutes
 - Student: up to 6 hours
- Scott, T. M., & Barrett, S. B. (2004). Using staff and student time engaged in disciplinary procedures to evaluate the impact of school-wide PBS. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 6, 21-27.

AN EXAMPLE

- Olmi Elementary
 - 500 kids
 - 1000 write ups/ODRs
 - 100 suspensions
- 10,000 Administrator minutes (write ups)
 - 25.6 days
- 20000 student minutes**
 - 51.2 days
- 4500 Administrator minutes (suspensions)
 - 10.71 days (7 hour day)
- 300 student hours
 - 92 days



- **36.31 Total Administrator Days**
- **143.2 Total Student Instructional Days Lost**

EFFECT OF ABSENTEEISM

Elementary Absences

- Lower academic achievement
- Grade retention
- Special education referral
- More suspensions

Secondary Grade Absences

- Course failure
- Drop out
- Fewer career opportunities
- Lower college persistence (11% persist to Y2 college as opposed to 51%)

- Loss of instruction to capable learners because teacher has to focus on academic/social needs of chronically absent

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

“The probability of remaining a poor reader at the end of fourth grade, given a child was a poor reader at the end of first grade, was .88 the probability of remaining an average reader in fourth grade, given an average reading ability in first grade, was .87.” (Juel, 1988)

ADDITIONAL RATIONALE, SHOULD YOU NEED MORE...THE ODDS

- Baltimore Longitudinal Data on Top 25% Aggressive First-Grade Boys: Risk of Being Highly Aggressive in Middle School (Kellam, Ling, Merisca, Brown, & Ialongo, 1998)



Missing the Mark



*Alternative Schools
in the State of Mississippi*

A REPORT OF
THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
AND THE ACLU OF MISSISSIPPI

FEBRUARY 2009



ESSENTIAL FINDINGS RELATED TO OUR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- 1. Our system is punitive and exclusionary**
 - Failure to focus on remediation and direct instruction
- 2. Not transparent or accountable**
 - Not data-based (a more accurate depiction)
- 3. The system is small, but growing**

ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

- 4. Our system disparately impacts African American students, students with disabilities, and males.**
- 5. Our systems are deficient in key program areas (general lack of empirical support)**
 - Academic programming, social and behavioral services, counseling and mental health services; programming is punitive and staffing is inadequate.

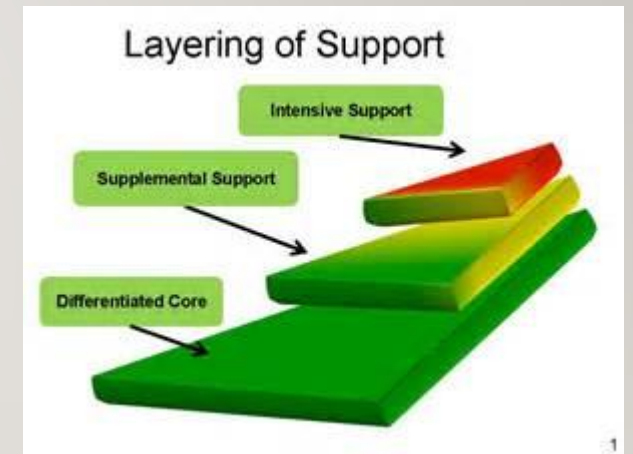
ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

6. Lack of adequate outcomes; general absence of data; “warehousing”
7. Our programs contribute to dropping out
8. Inadequately trained staff



ELEMENTS OF SOUND PROGRAMMING

- Evidence-based Tier I
- Any admission process ***must*** be preceded by a sound response-to-intervention (MTSS) program that begins in general education/special education at the inception of problems (Tier II/III).
 - For general education, the FBA/BIP/BSP process must be documented and data-based with integrity checks.
 - For SPED, the very same process is imbedded in the IEP process.



ELEMENTS OF SOUND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

- Documentation of Tier II/III efforts from the school of origin that include data must be part of the admission portfolio, otherwise the admission process stops and does not move forward. The data must be related to the referral concern.
- The admission process must be codified.

Alternative Education

ELEMENTS OF SOUND PROGRAMMING

- The Admissions Committee should include:
 - ✓ School of Origin Personnel
 - ✓ SPED Director (any child placed who is not identified as EmD is suspected of such and falls under IDEA)
 - ✓ District Support Personnel
 - ✓ Parents
 - ✓ Student (when appropriate)



ELEMENTS OF SOUND PROGRAMMING

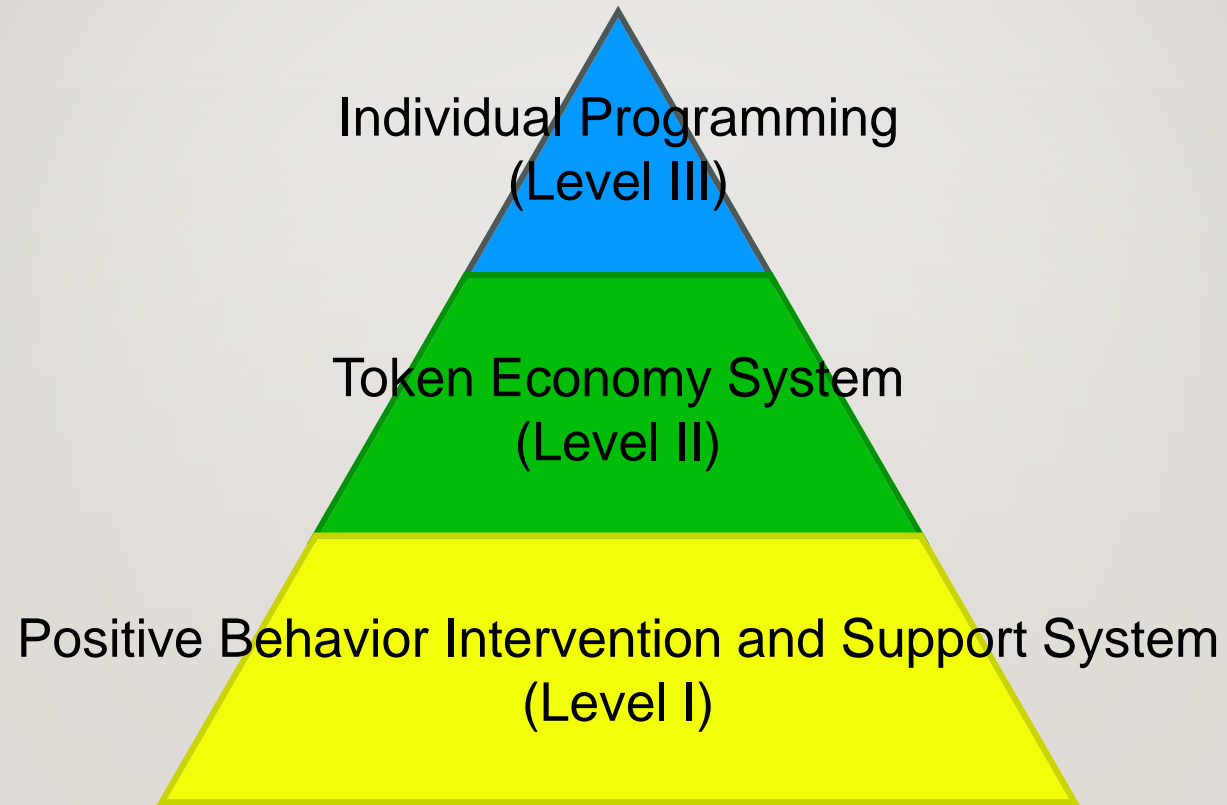
- Programming should be codified and involve **systems level** programming and **individualized** programming delivered and managed by qualified personnel.
- There should be a program manual that fully explains all.



ELEMENTS OF SOUND PROGRAMMING

- The Manual should include the following:
 - Key components and day-to-day operation
 - Expectations for the student/staff
 - If a level system, how one moves across levels
 - Roles of personnel
 - Full explanation of any procedures used
 - Transition procedures back to the school of origin

KEY FEATURES OF A SUCCESSFUL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEM



AN ALTERNATIVE...

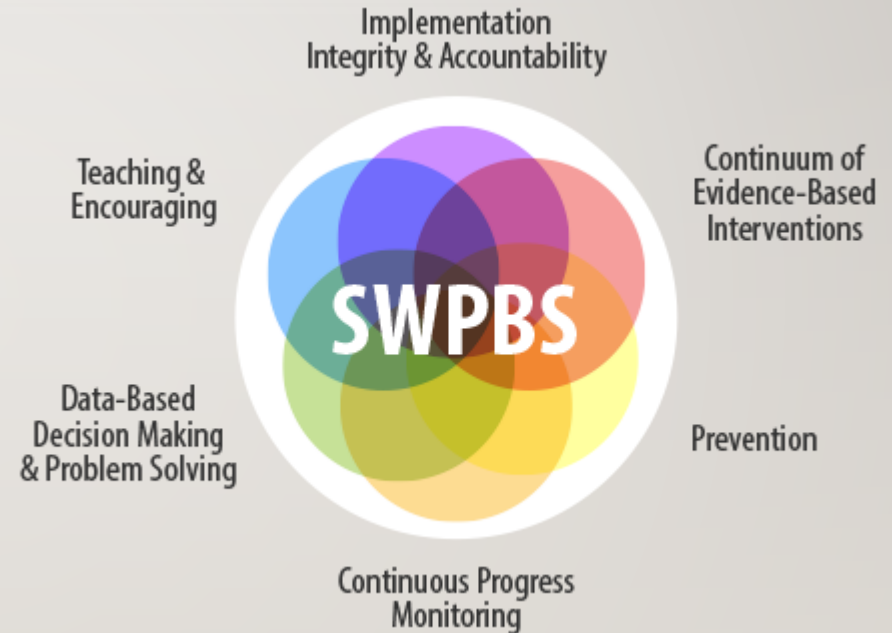
Positive Behavior
Intervention and
Supports
(PBIS)

WHY THE NEED FOR A CHANGE IN APPROACHES?

- The effects of punitive approaches have been less than stellar
- Takes far more energy for educators to implement systems that have as their foundations punitive responses
- Burnout of staff is higher under such systems (*just ask our assistant principals!*)

PBIS/SWPBIS IS NOT...

- Just a token...
- Is not a class party...
- Is not a Friday store...



PBIS FOCUSES ON ...

- Teaching desired behaviors
- Modeling desired behaviors
- Practicing desired behaviors
- Acknowledging desired behaviors

3-5 year effort

Whereas,

- Traditional child management procedures focus on the elimination of undesired behaviors with punishment.

PBIS IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

- Establish PBIS teams
 - Construct PBIS Manuals
 - Purpose Statement/Mission Statement
 - School-Wide Behavior Expectations
 - Behavioral Expectation Teaching Strategies
 - Establish Incentive/Acknowledgement Programs
 - Standardized Discipline Ladder
 - Strategies for Utilizing Data
 - Plan for Sustaining PBIS (training of new staff; new student orientation; educating parents, etc.)
- Establish support from administration, principals, teachers, faculty, and staff
- Create new Office Referral Form (if applicable)

AN EXAMPLE OF SUPPORTS...

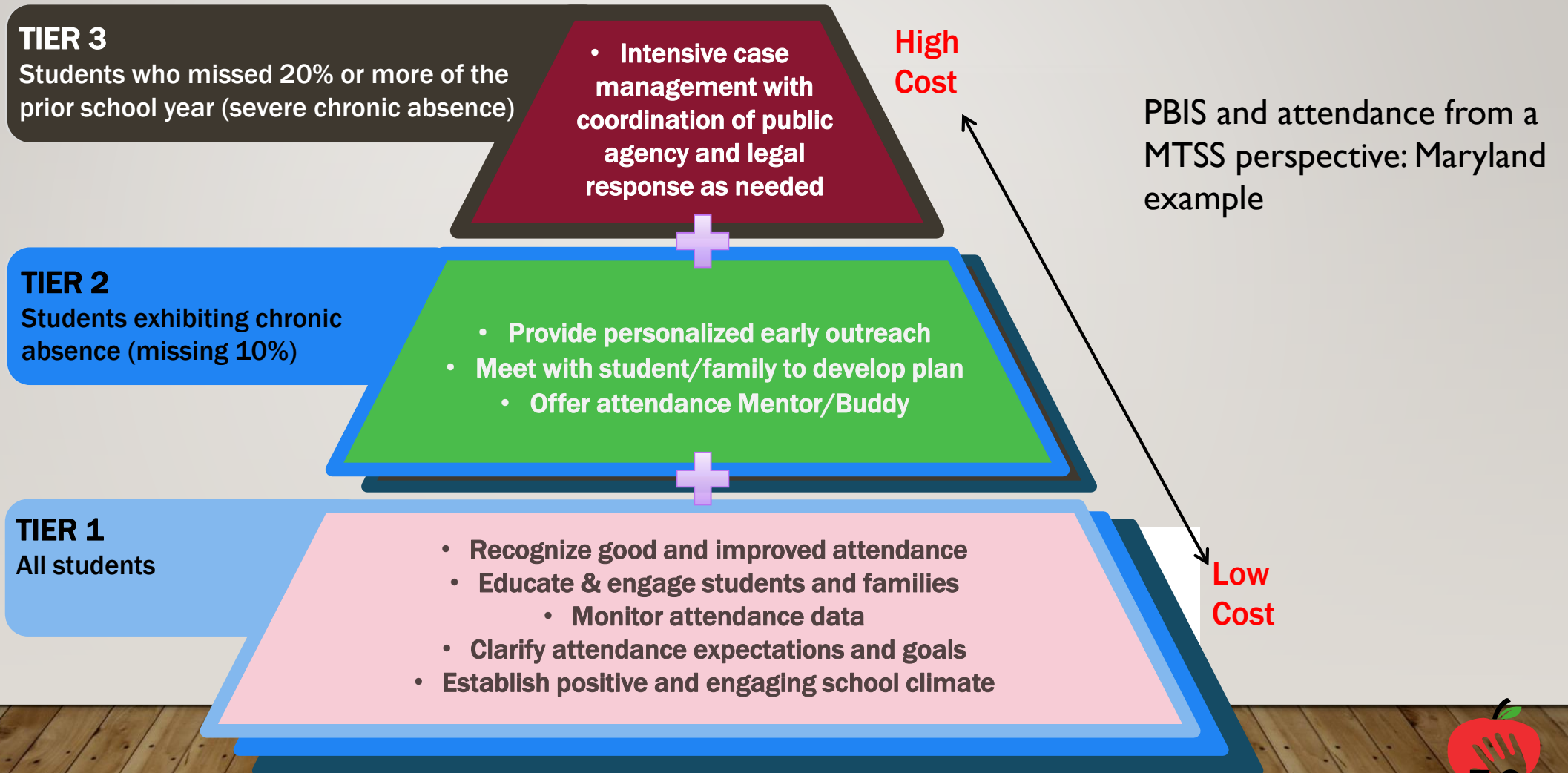
- 1 R = Planning appointment scheduled by staff with referring officer/staff person (**mediation**)
- 2 Rs = Above + Attend 1 group meeting with appropriate personnel (given weekly) for all juveniles with 2+ Rs regarding behavioral expectations (**re-instruction**)
- 3 Rs = Above + “Check-in/Check-out” Am/Pm daily meetings with student-chosen staff member (**pre-correction**)
- *Slide content courtesy of Lisa Hammel*

SUPPORTS...

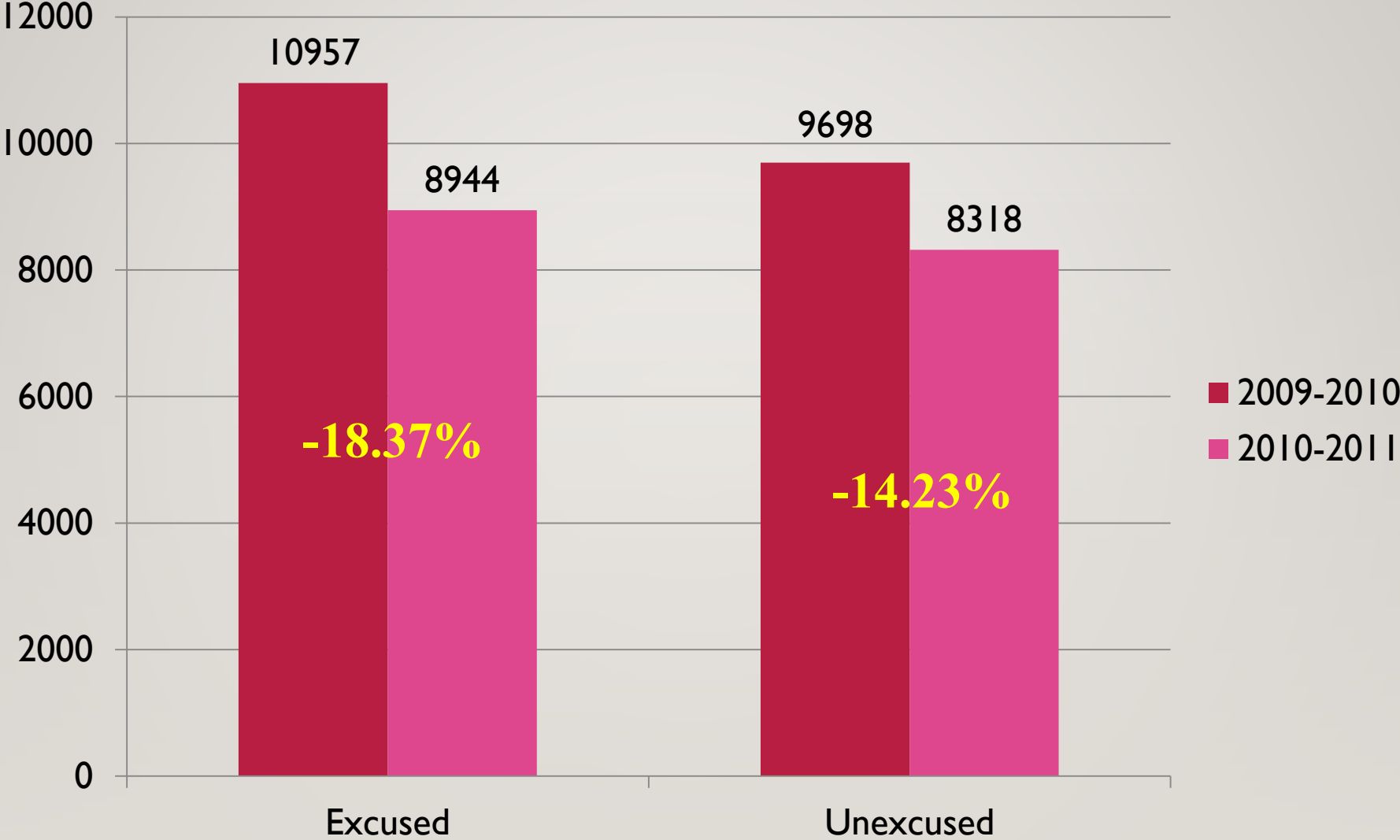
- 4 Rs = Above + “Check & Connect” weekly 1-hour mentoring with assigned staff member
- 5 Rs = Above + “Yellow Zone” group remedial behavior class - 4x weekly during student’s lunch/supervisory period. Must attend 8 sessions with 0 Rs to exit. No privileges until exit.



Improving attendance requires adoption of a tiered approach that begins with prevention



Excused and Unexcused Absences



FIRST HALF YEAR OUTCOMES

- 6.99% reduction in ODRs compared to 2009-2010 school year
- *18.37% reduction in excused absences*
- *14.23% reduction in unexcused absences*
- *16.43% reduction in total absences*
- **43.37% reduction in out of school suspensions**



SCOTT AND BARRETT, 2004

	Baseline Year	Year 1	Year 2
Discipline Referrals	608	108	46
Student Suspensions	77	32	22
Administrator Time Saved (Days)		10.4	11.7
Student Instructional Time Saved (Days)		72.7	86.2
Monetary Savings		\$9,106.92	\$10,667.74

ADVANTAGES OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT MODELS

- *Proactive, preventive*
- Enhances academic performance of individuals and groups of individuals
- Applicable to individual students, classrooms, whole schools
- Applicable to preschool, elementary, middle, high schools, and alternative schools

WHAT MUST WE DO AND STOP DOING?

- We as universities must do a better job of training our pre-service teachers in the areas of academic instruction and classroom management. WE HAVE TO DO BETTER BY YOU!
- We have to implement Policy 4300 with integrity.
- We have to become aware of our implicit biases!
- We have to **stop** using the phrase “best practice.” Everything that we do should be “appropriate practice.”
- We have to have qualified support personnel in place; it has to be a priority of our policy makers.

Doing Less With Less:
Mental Health in
Mississippi

JACKSON COUNTY

Those with disabilities
waiting for help will
wait longer

BY KAREN NELSON
kinelson@sunhera.com
May 06, 2017 05:00
Updated

Jeff Amy/The Associated Press
May 3, 2017 11:53:16 AM

Mississippi to cut mental health
services, lay off employees

HEALTH

Budget cuts may swell county jails
with mentally ill

Analysis: Tax Cuts and Economy Weigh on Miss...

Mental Health to cut 650
30, 2018
BY LARRISON CAMPBELL APRIL 20

Mississippi to cut mental health services, lay off
employees

line

d.olmi@usm.edu