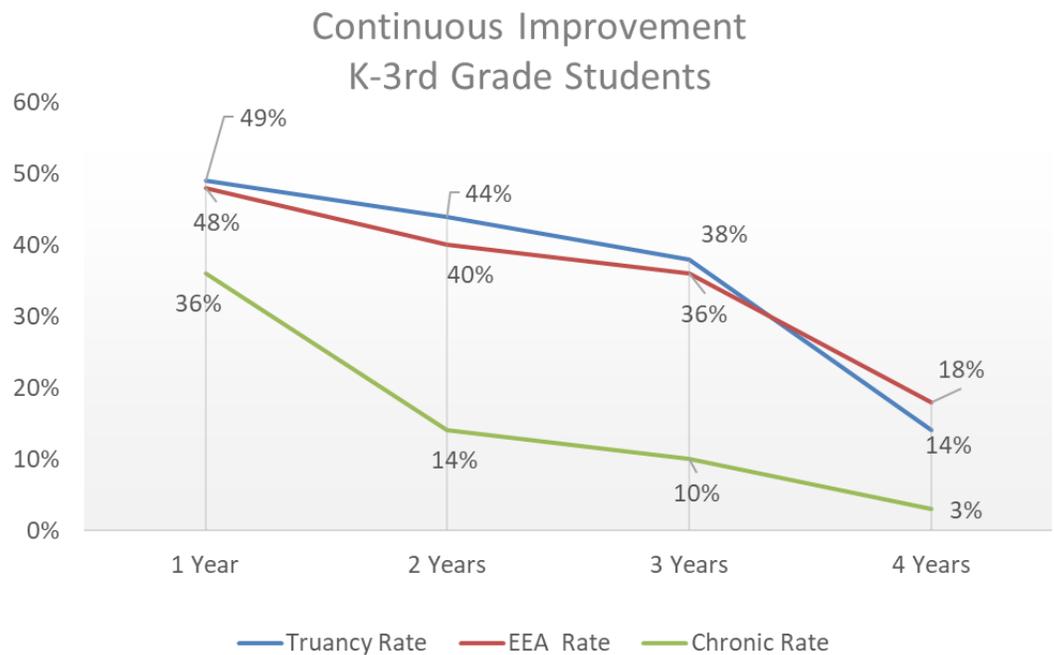


Why I Believe We Need to Invest in Proactive Attendance Management

By Tony Wold, Ed.D.

We need to maintain focus on Attendance. In multiple studies it was shown that **67% of students who drop out or are failing were chronically absent or worse**. Another campaign tracked over 57,000 K-3 students over a 4-year period **proving that we could reduce chronic absenteeism and truant rates from the 30% level down to the teens or lower with a campaign of positive proactive messaging**.



I believe in the need to rebuild and nurture good attendance habits as an ongoing obligation and responsibility of school districts.

Currently, most districts only send attendance notices to students that have already missed multiple days (that's if they have the time to do it). Unfortunately, most districts aren't able to do this well and leave it up to the individual schools. This creates a disjointed system of support that differs across the district. Almost none of these districts recognize the need to provide ongoing positive messaging to sustain good attendance which leads to higher achievement.

This need was why I am now part of The Achievement Initiative from School Innovations & Achievement (SI&A). For the **cost of less than 1/2 day of ADA** or apportionment per student we support districts with managing all required notifications. In addition, we implement targeted **proactive campaigns that is differentiated by grade** span, done regularly, providing up to 11 touchpoint each year to all students. These campaigns reinforce the building of essential habits around good attendance that will carry the student forward.

This is not a one-shot deal – it requires consistent messaging and even increasing the quantity of touchpoints even if attendance has already increased in order to ensure good habits are sustained.

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Prior to the pandemic, 67% of all students had good or excellent attendance. Today that number has **dropped below half (48%)**. What's required is an investment to educate students, and yet we do not invest enough in the most important aspect which is to ensure students come to school.



Ask yourself one question: How much would we budget for these outcomes?

- Reduce dropout rate
- Increase graduation rate (especially for students of color),
- Increase reclassification rates
- Increase # students reaching early literacy targets
- Increase learning time for students
- Reduce discipline cases due to student frustration
- Increase or sustain ongoing revenue

When I was a CBO, I championed and advocated for investments that have lifetime benefits and **SI&A's Achievement Initiative is, without a doubt, the most cost-effective investment I ever made.**

Not only did we improve our attendance rate and funding, but over a couple of years of sustained implementation we saw **fewer dropouts**, **less discipline** as fewer students fell behind and acted out in frustration, and **higher parental engagement** and **community morale** for our schools. SI&A is ready to help all school districts to have these same results and can implement before we start the next school year.

Tony is an Educational Leader with over 30 years of experience as a CBO, in HR & Labor Negotiations, Student Assessment & Curriculum, and Technology Innovations, especially in the EdTech SaaS arena in particular the creation of agnostic software that links multiple data systems together that sit in silos across LEAs. He currently is serving as the CBO in Residence with School Innovations & Achievement focusing in the Achievement Initiative to support districts on the critical issue of attendance, ADA, and enrollment.