



United Way of Southwest Virginia

2018-19 Attendance Initiative

Supporting Southwest Virginia Public Schools:

Improving attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism



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About United Way of Southwest Virginia

United Way of Southwest Virginia fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in Southwest Virginia because they are the building blocks for a good quality of life. Through an initiative-based cradle-to-career approach, United Way of Southwest Virginia is creating sustainable solutions to address the challenges facing tomorrow's workforce. United Way convenes cross-sector partners to make an impact on the most complex problems in our region. Through collaboration with government, business, nonprofit and individuals, United Way innovates for positive, lasting social change. With a footprint that covers nearly 20% of the state of Virginia, United Way of Southwest Virginia programs and initiatives serve the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe, and the cities of Bristol, Galax, Norton, and Radford.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the second release of national data on chronic absence (https://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/chronic_absence_across_the_united_states) from the Office for Civil Rights, we now know that over 8 million students across the country are chronically absent. This puts an unacceptable number of tomorrow's workforce off-track to read proficiently by third grade, the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success. United Way of Southwest Virginia is committed to helping our region's children meet this important milestone.

If schools, school districts, and states are to improve educational achievement and, in particular, the defining measure of third grade reading proficiency, they will need to address chronic absenteeism. To do so effectively, schools will need more and better data. They will need to know how many, and which, students are chronically absent. The good news is that **chronic absence can be addressed and even reversed when school districts, communities, and policymakers work together to collect this data and address the underlying causes.** Ultimately, these positive measures **strengthen the foundational habit of good attendance and cultivate the essential "soft skills" of tomorrow's workforce.**

During the 2018-19 academic school year the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) included Virginia schools' chronic absence rate in their state school accreditation standards. This is the first time these rates have impacted accreditation.

In Southwest Virginia, chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent of the school year for any reason, about 18 days in most school districts, or approximately 2 days a month, excused or unexcused. Over the 2018-19 school year, United Way of Southwest Virginia (UWSWVA) supported 17 school districts (See Appendix 1) by offering two tools to help implement and encourage each district's schools' attendance efforts.

The first: UWSWVA offered \$2,500 mini-grants for each Southwest Virginia school district to engage the entire school system around the initiative of reducing chronic absence. The second: An online attendance resource compass (<http://unitedwayswva.org/attendance-resource-compass/>)

Curated for nationwide best practices, which schools can choose to implement, and organized by school staff level, the Toolkit created by UWSWVA provides easy access to local, regional, and state information, data, messaging, and tools in support of the new accreditation chronic absence rating standards enforced by the VDOE. Year-long communication calendars, sample customizable messaging, and tutorials on implementing culture change are available for download and distribution for all schools through the UWSWVA website (www.unitedwayswva.org).

UWSWVA provided technical assistance through face-to-face meetings with the point of contact, attendance task forces, or in a few cases, through phone calls. UWSWVA met with district-wide attendance teams, student services coordinators, and top school administrators in order to get a sense of current and changing attendance policies, plans, and initiatives for each individual district.

Each school system tabulated and submitted monthly chronic absence data updates to UWSWVA electronically. In response, schools received customized articles, resources, and conversations to help troubleshoot issues. When data collection was a barrier, Smyth County's Director of Technology, Terry Hawthorne, stepped in and offered to help other districts verify their data.

At the end of the 2018-19 school year, each district submitted a final year-end data report, and completed a robust online survey to share the narrative of their progress and how the funds were used. For some schools, participation in the UWSWVA mini-grant was also the first time they had begun to define and translate into data the term "chronic absence." All the schools focused on different aspects of shifting attendance culture, such as increased message distribution, school attendance celebrations and incentives, learning how to compute their data, or the goal of building chronic absence awareness with the entire school community, year over year.

Some schools went farther, taking steps to make their messaging visible in the community, reaching out to businesses for incentive partnerships, or creating school-wide video contests and posters created by the students for prizes. Other creative responses included name drawings for high-end headphones, a giveaway for a new (donated) car, or increasing public awareness by placing attendance flyers in every shopping cart at a local Food City. Some school incentives cost little to nothing –

spontaneous dance parties for 100% attendance, ice cream parties, movies with popcorn, colorful door banners, best attendance flags awarded to schools with the best monthly attendance percentage, and friendly competitions between homerooms. While certain incentives did work in some schools, **incentives alone have not proved to be motivating factors to increase attendance. However, if braided within a culture of relationships and schools supporting families, incentives can be effective, as demonstrated in the regional data.**

Other schools promoted or deepened an already positive school-wide or division-wide culture, helping parents and students understand the shift from Average Daily Attendance (ADA) to Chronic Absence (CA), and away from punitive or impersonal messaging. Schools already working towards becoming trauma-sensitive or trauma-informed, paired “watch lists” of chronically absent students with weekly community mentoring at lunchtimes, taking great lengths to provide wrap-around services and follow-up home visiting. Assigning mentors, older students, or other vetted community adults for those at-risk children, or creating transportation teams to support families with unreliable transportation so the children could be picked up by school staff, are a few examples of those above-and-beyond steps that made a difference in the relationships between the school and the parents. Using trauma-informed policies such as shifting the language and incentives away from “Never Been Absent” attendance (often rewarding those students who have all the necessary supports, health care, and resources to attend school every day), to “outstanding” or “improved” attendance helped create a message of inclusion for those children, even if they had simply attended 5 days in a row.

As school districts recognized attendance barriers, successful administrations chose to be proactive in their solutions. One school district aligned health resources and agencies before the school year started, and held a community event. This same system also reached out to pediatricians’ offices and staff to talk about the new expectations placed on the schools, how the physicians could support attendance, and empowered the doctors’ offices in getting children to return to school after an appointment. This school system even provided an optimal template for language to be used on the doctor’s note, to help the school welcome the child back to school rather than leaving the return date open-ended or blank.



Here's the good news:

At the end of the 2018-19 school year,

- **Eleven of seventeen school districts** measured in the top level, **Level 1**, with 15% or less Chronic Absence for the year.
- **Six of seventeen school districts** measured in **Level 2**, with greater than 15% but less than 25% CA for the year.
- There are **zero school districts** measured in the lowest level, **Level 3**, with 25% or greater for the year.
- **Approximately 35% of school districts reduced their chronic absenteeism rates from the end of first semester/90 days marker to the last day of school.** Initially, this number may seem low; however, this year in SWVA many schools were hard hit by extreme weather (snow and flooding) and high cases of students with flu in the second half of the year. Additionally, schools struggled with end of year absences as standardized tests were completed. Many school systems cited these on their surveys as factors that contributed to higher chronic absenteeism, especially after the first semester.



All SWVA schools are to be commended for choosing to make chronic absenteeism a priority. It is complex but important work. School administrators have seen how the indicator of chronic absence is linked to student achievement, engagement, and success at graduation and beyond. Focusing a school district's assets on relationship building with students and their families, strong messaging and recognition centered on students' presence at school, reviewing data, and frequently bringing together staff and administration to respond with supports, all combine to help the region's chronically absent and at-risk students improve their education, their future employment, and ultimately, the economic potential of Southwest Virginia.

Report Findings

UWSWVA created visualizations using the submitted verified data from the seventeen school systems* and the Chronic Absence measurements set by the VDOE for accreditation standards. (See Appendix 2). **These visualizations are created from the verified data submitted at the end of the year. District bar graphs were created from these same data points, reported by the school systems themselves.**

Report findings are centered on four areas of focus: **Policy, Messaging, Barriers, and Impact**. Highlights are quotes from each school system's point of contact. Best practices are concluded from the survey responses and direct communications with participating schools, but what works for one school system may not work for another. Examples given are reported by the participating schools and edited only for clarity, protection of privacy, or to prevent duplication.







Policy

Chronic Absence Outreach

100% of SWVA participating schools reported that when chronically absent students were identified, the parents were notified of the absences by letter, called by the school staff, and called in to meet with staff. Additionally, 93.75% of schools created an attendance plan and shared that plan with parents and student.

Schools that brought together attendance teams that included representatives from community agencies cast wide nets to help those at-risk children succeed, increased communication across the school system (and sometimes the entire county), and often had to collaborate in order to address the specific challenges of a student coming to school. This level of team intervention may not be needed for all tiers of CA students, most likely it will be for the top 5-10% of severely chronically absent students.

“The activity that seemed to have the greatest impact was: **establishing and maintaining a close working multi-agency relationship with juvenile court judge (truancy) and community agencies**, including Mt. Rogers, Family Preservation, DSS, Sheriff’s Department, Police Department, and other agencies servicing children and families in need.”

-Carroll County

“As a district, we **implemented systematic early outreach to our parents/guardians** though the implementation of Attendance Success Plans. This involved teachers and administrators reaching out to parents at four absences (of any type) during each 9 weeks. These conversations were meant to be **positive and preventative.**”

-Pulaski County

“The one activity that improved CA in our division was the **tracking and sharing of data with building administrators.** We did monthly reports and shared with all building principals. This allowed them to know exactly where they were at.”

-Russell County

Reported examples of existing team structures:

- Buchanan County Public School formed an attendance committee made up of businesses, parents, school personnel and community members.
- All of our schools have attendance committees established that must meet on a monthly basis. Members are made up of school personnel.
- Assistant Superintendent/Leadership Team - reviewed monthly monitoring reports.
- At Principals/Administrator monthly meetings – on a monthly basis reviewed Chronic Attendance Reports and ADM Reports by school; Principals were lead contact in their schools and monitored student attendance along with staff assigned to attendance monitoring and contact.
- Principals and school counselors worked to monitor attendance and organize rewards and incentives.
- As Administrator of Student Services, I met with the schools to try to implement strategies to improve our Chronic Absenteeism.
- Each Principal chose a Task Force member to meet at the division. We met about four times. We developed the slogan/logo. Each participant received examples of student pledge, parent, and community information.
- Smyth County has had for several years a truancy team made up of community agency members. This team meets with students who continue to be absent following a school attendance meeting to discuss and address issues related to not attending school.

“ The schools in our district with the greatest improvements are schools where the administration weave chronic absenteeism awareness in to everything that the school does whether it is conference night, back to school nights, academic conferences or athletics.”

-Smyth County

BEST PRACTICE

Build a cross-agency team to focus on systematic monitoring of CA data. Use data to inform policy changes, supports, and tiering of family outreach.

Excused Absences

There is quite a large discrepancy across the region in the school systems on allowances of excused/unexcused absences. Some schools reported having unlimited excused absences, some said no more than 17 excused absences (18 is chronic), and another reported no more than 3 excused absences. CA rates count any absence as an absence, excused or unexcused.

Officially, all Virginia schools follow Code of VA policy in that students may be charged with truancy on the 7th unexcused absence.



There is no limit on excused absences; however, after eight home notes, a doctor's excuse may be required in order for the absence to be considered excused at the high school level.

-Dickenson County

BEST PRACTICE

Review, define, and support the school's excused/unexcused policy. Counting excused absences may provide an opportunity to bring awareness early to students and parents. However, the shift may be slow. Encouraging half-day or sign-in/sign-out policies with the parents increases the communication and students' attendance.

School Calendar

A few schools realized their school calendars were not helping their rates of attendance, and actually reduced the number of half days or early dismissals included in the year. Half days pose a special obstacle for working parents, who either need to leave work to pick up children at lunchtime, or find someone else to transport and watch children for the remainder of the day. Those challenging situations can be opportunities for school support staff to learn more about the families' needs, and help to inform their policies. For example, one county's system changed their schedule before the 2018-19 year began, reducing the number of half days and closing for all of Thanksgiving week, as historically there was poor attendance the first few days of that week.



BEST PRACTICE

Review school calendar for 2018-2019 to compare attendance data on those half days and any days surrounding holidays and shorter breaks. Consider increased messaging and/or planning school activities to increase attendance (such as holding club meetings, classroom parties, incentive giveaways) on those surrounding days.

“ Kim Frye at Max Meadows Elementary centered their CA efforts around a campaign called “Half day HEROS” (Here Everyday Ready and On Time). They involved the community (fire, rescue, law enforcement, etc.) for a special HERO celebration on each of our 1/2 day early dismissals. ”

-Wythe County





Messaging

Shifting Away From “Perfect” Attendance

Thirteen of seventeen schools addressed using the phrase “perfect attendance,” shifting the focus from 100% attendance every day of the school year with no exceptions, to including more frequent or broader attendance recognition. Recognition of those students who may have attended school despite significant obstacles or home situations can strengthen a student’s sense of accomplishment and belonging, possibly providing some of the first recognition that child has received.

BEST PRACTICE

Shorten the span that a student can achieve recognition for attendance such as every 9 weeks or even every month. It renews a student’s hopes for inclusion in the incentives and may help them set new habits, while giving the school a chance to reach out with supports.

“ We began to measure attendance in shorter intervals. We also no longer focused on checking in and checking out; it became a **positive instead of a negative.**”

-Tazewell County

Reported examples of broadening school attendance recognition:

- As a school division, we shifted our focus away from perfect attendance and moved toward recognizing regular and improved attendance.
- We decreased our perfect attendance recognition and increased our recognition of meeting the 2nd-semester goal, attending 5 days in a week, grade levels having the best attendance on certain days, etc.
- Perfect still exists but we implemented more attendance awards, including an Attendance Improvement Award.
- Avoided term “Perfect” and focused on “Excellent” and “Improved”
- We realized that we need to focus on CA and not emphasize perfect attendance as much.
- Schools who changed their reward system and/or prizes up each month and provided variety saw the most success.

Students

Schools reported distributing the message of chronic absence to the students in the following ways:

- Flyers, brochures, handouts, posters (93.75% of schools)
- (tie) Student low-cost rewards/experiences (extra recess, homework pass, movies, dances, etc.), (87.5%), and student low-cost incentives (items such as pencils, bracelets, badges, keychains, bookmarks) (87.5%)
- In-school competition between grades, teachers or classes (81.25%)

The majority of schools, fourteen of seventeen, established a new logo/slogan or theme in their school district during the 2018-19 school year.

Top four ways districts made CA efforts visible to parents, students, and community:

- social media posts
- automated calls from school to parents and/or community
- partnering with community agencies
- parent night/back to school night

BEST PRACTICE

Increase frequency, variety, and depth of message to help inform students and their families on the impact of chronic absence. Starting early in the year may improve rates at the end of the year.

“We held a slogan contest for students to submit suggestions for a slogan that focused on improved attendance. The winning slogan was selected and the student received a gift card bouquet, containing donated gift cards from many community businesses. Our Ad Design class at the technical center created a logo surrounding the slogan. Finally, each school selected a student to be part of a video created in partnership with Charter Media. Our slogan is “Learn More, Be More, Attend More: School Attendance Matters.”

-Washington County

“Tabitha Long decorated her school with Attendance. She did weekly classroom attendance winners with sign that was placed on the classroom door. The students became involved with this and were engaged with this effort. It was so simple, just having everyone in her school knowing that attendance mattered. She had the best attendance in our division.

-Russell County

Automated Calls and Information Sent Home

Many schools reported low engagement with automated calls, and calls from the schools to the parents. Yet, twelve of seventeen schools continue to make these types of calls. Calls made to parents were not returned, team meetings that involved parents were not well-attended by families, and sending home information concerning CA by students to parents did not seem to be effective.

Common barrier: getting parents to come in to school was challenging, especially if the messaging or tone was more punitive, or had been in the past. School cultures that focused on supporting those families who were at risk with chronically absent students needed more flexibility of message, seeking out those initial conversations informally to build trust, arranging a home visit before the student's absences increase, and sharing information on school parent nights had some degree of success. Parents who had challenges with transportation or taking time off work had the most issues with coming to the school to address attendance issues.

One school had success with volunteers, student aides, and/or assistant principals calling home after every student's absence, which does require a lot of capacity; however, strengthening those family-school relationships can be a positive result from those frequent phone calls, and schools can be more prepared to proactively provide the supports a family may need in order to be more successful in getting their student to school.

Additional effective ways to engage parents with attendance:

- monthly school board meetings
- presentations to board with press present
- district website posting
- attendance at each school recognized at monthly school board meetings and posted on board docs
- kick off campaign
- planning early for new school year

Top four ways that parent/school relationships changed over the past year:

- increased messaging to families about attendance (94.12% of schools)
- staff working with families to provide supports in getting children to school (76%)
- increased awareness of family barriers around attendance (76%)
- increased parents communicating with the school (70%)

“Our percentages dropped at almost every school. This is attributed to the hard work of our staff at each school.”

-Scott County

Barriers to Improving Chronic Absence Rates

Health

Sixteen of seventeen schools reported having significant issues with the flu season affecting student attendance. In one county, two schools at different times had to close, and the entire division was closed for a period as well. Most schools reported being hit very hard. One county sent out a letter from the Superintendent to area health care providers.

“ We had illness that impacted percentages for students already with high absence rates. ”

-Grayson County

“ Some school nurses are speaking directly with area physicians and area physicians’ front staff about notes that send them back to school or do not have end dates. ”

-Russell County

Weather

Due to extreme weather in 2018-19, seven of seventeen schools reported weather such as snow and flooding as a barrier to improving CA rates. CA rates only count when school is in session, so even though schools choose to open or open after a snow delay, parents may have felt the roads were not safe enough to travel, especially in mountainous areas.

“ Numerous sporadic school closings due to weather created a lack of consistency in terms of attendance and academic focus. The weather fluctuations also created various cycles of flu which impacted our attendance. ”

-Scott County



Technology

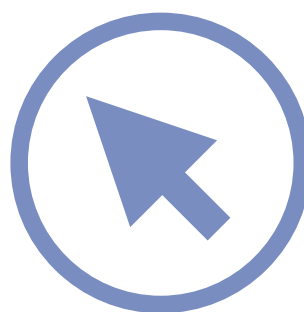
Technology was not as large a barrier as anticipated with 11 school systems reporting technology was not a barrier. Barriers some schools did report: having no staff with the tech skills needed to create a verified data spreadsheet, outdated software, low staff capacity to track chronic absence efforts digitally or staffing issues. Issues with PowerSchool or staff transitions were also recorded.

BEST PRACTICE

Focus on student wellness by increasing the health communications to the school community via the school nurse. Also, vary types of communications: reasons to keep students home for health concerns, promote influenza vaccines, promote handwashing techniques, or provide guidance for when students are healthy enough to return. Consider having the school nurse reach out by phone to see how absent students are doing.

Top three barriers to implementing attendance improvement:

1. Parent engagement or push back
2. Health of students
3. Students not attending after their 18th birthday





Impact

Attendance Incentives

UWSWVA and additional school/division funds were spent in the following ways to support attendance initiatives over the 2018-19 year: awards, division banners, bilingual banners and brochures, printing and advertising costs, movie night costs, medals, certificates, videos, field trips, window clings, bracelets, stamps to mail attendance letters and incentives, ads at Food City on shopping carts, and more.

Reported examples of high-impact activities:

- early engagement messaging to parents (flyers, videos, school-wide awareness) and before child reaches chronic absence levels
- linking attendance to club or after school activities
- met on a regular basis to discuss children/families in crisis and how we could coordinate our efforts
- awarding the elementary homeroom with best percentage of attendance with movie and popcorn
- individual student plans, forming teams to monitor the student's absences
- the tracking and sharing of student data with building administrators
- giveaways at the end of school for big ticket prizes- earphones, TV screens, and a car
- tying student attendance to attending prom, parking passes, graduation invitations or other privileges

“ We purchased incentive prizes for individual students for monthly rewards. We purchased supplies and popcorn for movie rewards once a month. We purchased materials and supplies for bulletin boards, posters and flyers that were displayed in the building and/or sent out to parents and the community. We purchased medals and certificates that were given out on awards day for perfect and faithful attendance.”

-Bland County

“ We have many students who, after becoming aware of just what it means to become “chronically absent”, put forth much effort to stay below the number. The students agree with our slogan, ‘Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow.’ The students’ grades improved and self-esteem as well. Overcoming challenges to get to school all day every day was a priority. The incentives were certainly an encouraging factor in improving our attendance.”

-Lee County

Positive School Culture

Fourteen of seventeen school districts reported specific instances of impact directly related to one person going above and beyond in the attendance initiative. In providing a general summary of these highlights, these examples may serve or inspire others to take similar actions: set high expectations, establish strong positive relationships, and braid attendance into everything they do in their school setting, no matter where they are. Where given, the roles were included.

“Tammy Hahn is the principal at Rich Valley Elementary School. **At RVES this year, CA data indicated a decrease in the number of students who were chronically absent this year by almost 7%.** The school wide CA percentage of students for the 2018-19 school year was 5.04%. Tammy implemented a plan where students were **made to feel welcome to school every day even if they were arrived late.** Instead of a tardy slip to class they were given a welcome to school pass. She worked with her staff to make improving attendance part of everything that they did at the school and based it around building relationships with their students.”

-Smyth County

“Scott Addison, Principal Norton Elementary Middle School. He really wanted to **reward our students who had perfect attendance. He gave away a big screen TV, Playstation 4, and Beats headphones.** It was a great day and 3 very deserving children received these prizes.”

-Norton City

“We implemented “Galax Goals” across the division: **Be Here, Be Involved, Be Successful.** This campaign included, not only our attendance goal of missing no more than 3 days second semester, but also a goal to be involved in two or more club, sports, and activities, and a goal to earn no failing grades and no discipline referrals.”

-Galax City

Reported examples of high-impact results:

- Principal established high expectations.
- Principal who builds a positive school culture with her administrative team, faculty/staff, students, and parents. She is the consummate professional who excels at establishing and maintaining relationships. She monitors students’ behavior, academic progress, and attendance closely—student by student.
- School counselor coordinated movie days and worked with parents to improve attendance.
- Family Engagement Specialist with Principal embraced campaign and their results were outstanding. After 90 days, their chronic absenteeism percentage was only 2.63%.
- Principal implemented a new Club Day for their HERO campaign. They centered a lot of their club day activities around STEM and Careers.
- Asst. Principal worked to have a car donated to give away as the end of the year attendance incentive. This was creative and impactful.
- Middle School has had the largest improvement in attendance this school year. Their strategies to reduce CA included linking with PBIS incentives and embedding Attendance Matters into their school culture.
- Close monitoring by administration and staff; continuous team meetings; substantial student awards; close positive relationships with students and parents.
- One particular high school used the Remind app to send a daily message to students at 7:00 am. 103 students signed up to receive the reminder.

District and Community Collaboration/Partnerships

Thirteen of seventeen schools reported district networking increased around chronic absence. Several schools were asked to present best practices at the Region 7 Leadership Conference to discuss strategies at these meetings.

Reported examples of impactful partnerships with the schools in attendance initiative:

- VTSS, Department of Social Services, Court Services Unit, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
- Our business partner, Lifetouch, made our banners and posters for each school.
- New Peoples Bank supported our slogan competition and made a \$100 donation to the student who designed the winning slogan.
- United Way, thank you!
- Juvenile/Truancy Judge and regular multi-agency meetings with judge, and school division.
- Representatives- Sheriff's Dept., Police Dept., Mt. Rogers, Family Preservation, DSS... to discuss families/students in crisis and ways to coordinate our service efforts and communication links.
- Our homeroom parents' organization helped with providing volunteers to assist with incentives.
- Our relationship with United Way was the most significant.
- Jeff Fritz from Spectrum Reach (Charter Media) partnered with Washington County Schools to create a very well done video of students spreading the message of our attendance slogan.
- Communities in Schools partner with community stakeholders to set up a mentoring program that focused on students with a history of chronic

absenteeism. They also reached out to community stakeholders to donate small incentives like movie tickets, food passes, etc...

- Parental involvement with students at each school.
- Our local radio station owned by Three Rivers Media partnered with us to allow PSAs on our Strive for Five campaign.
- Local businesses helped provide incentive prizes.
- We partnered with community agencies to connect families with services that are needed to help reduce CA. Individual schools in our county partner with businesses to provide incentives to students.
- Many local businesses such as our local Walmart helped.
- We worked with Food City to put attendance flyers on every shopping cart within the store.
- The VDOE's Training and Technical Assistance Center as a part of the VTSS efforts from VDOE.

"I spoke with several divisions that had already implemented an attendance initiative. This conversation provided many different ideas and opinions as to their success."

-Bristol City

"(UWSWVA) helped us by providing funding for incentives and postage--probably a 2% or 3% decrease in chronic absenteeism."

-Wise County

Student Success

UWSWVA learned of many student successes that were a direct result of increased attendance awareness, above-and-beyond actions, and the decisions of these outstanding students to create a new path for themselves in school. Responses are edited to protect student privacy and are shared for inspiration only.

Reported examples of Student Success:

- Student being raised by elderly grandmother and suffered from poor attendance her entire academic career made great gains this year in attendance. She would call the school frequently if her ride did not show up. We frequently sent staff to pick her up. She became responsible for attending for the first time in nine years of public schooling.
- At the high school level, administrators implemented Chronic Absenteeism Contracts (Not in Good Standing) and tied students' attendance to prom. Administrators found that attendance greatly improved.
- We had two siblings who were in sixth grade. I was told by their elementary school principal they were always significantly late, missing a quarter of the day or more in prior years. We connected with the girls and found out what reward would be worth them riding the bus instead of having their parents take them to school. They began riding the bus and made it to school on time most days. This significantly impacted their math improvement, as they had math first period during the school day.
- One high school young lady who was in danger of being chronically absent attended an Attendance Team Meeting with her mother. Several supports were put into place to make her more comfortable attending school and as a result she only missed four more days for the remainder of the school year.
- We have a student with diabetes. He is very bright, but struggles with his health issues. The school nurse, who is also our Division Head Nurse, is a part of our Division Leadership Team and is aware of the importance of attendance and our initiatives in trying to keep students in school. She has formed a close relationship with the student, monitors him daily, serves as his special "safe adult" contact, and has built a relationship with the parent who now trusts that he will be well cared for at school.
- We had one elementary student who started missing a lot of school at the beginning of the year. This child had a history of CA in years past. We held meetings with mom and involved outside agencies to assist in our efforts. The child's attendance improved significantly and she actually had perfect attendance for a few months of school.
- We had a family that included three female students. This family was designated homeless. Our family engagement/attendance personnel picked up these young ladies almost every day from different locations around the city to ensure they were able to come to school.
- Our middle school was very proud of two brothers who each missed 18 days last year and had perfect attendance this year.
- We have many students who, after becoming aware of just what it means to become "chronically absent", put forth much effort to stay below the number. The students agree with our slogan "Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow." The students grades improved and self-esteem as well. Overcoming challenges to get to school all day every day was a priority. The incentives were certainly an encouraging factor in improving our attendance.
- Several of our schools held their "fun" attendance activities on the half-day early dismissals.
- (Half day/early dismissals) are historically our worst attendance days. But this year, the Strive for Five activities were a big draw to entice kids to

come on our half-days. One of our schools paired their older students with the younger students to be able to experience their fun activity with a buddy.

- One particular parent shared a story with the principal of how her younger students insisted on coming to school on the half day before Christmas Break, so he could see his older buddy one last time before Christmas Break. The insistence was based on the relationship and connection he had with his buddy and not necessarily the activity going on at school that day.
- In one of the high schools there was a special needs student who did not have a good home support system in place. He had already started to miss school. Once the school announced the attendance initiative, he did not miss another day. The school offered a prize of Beats Headphones. He talked to the Principal and Assistant Principal every day about winning these headphones. He did win.
- We had an elementary school student who during her Kindergarten year was absent 23 total days of school. During her 2nd grade this year her attendance improved to only 6 absences. Her mother credits the relationship between her daughter and teacher which helped to build the child's confidence. Together with academic accommodations this child's attendance improved dramatically. Her mother reported that when she was sick and unable to attend school, she cried wanting to attend.
- This student suffered some personal tragedy during the school year. She lost her mother and during a time when she could have really missed school she didn't. She won the big screen television.
- We had a student whose mother passed away at the beginning of this school year. He was absent for several days, and his attendance got progressively worse. There is a teacher who took an interest in the student and is unofficially

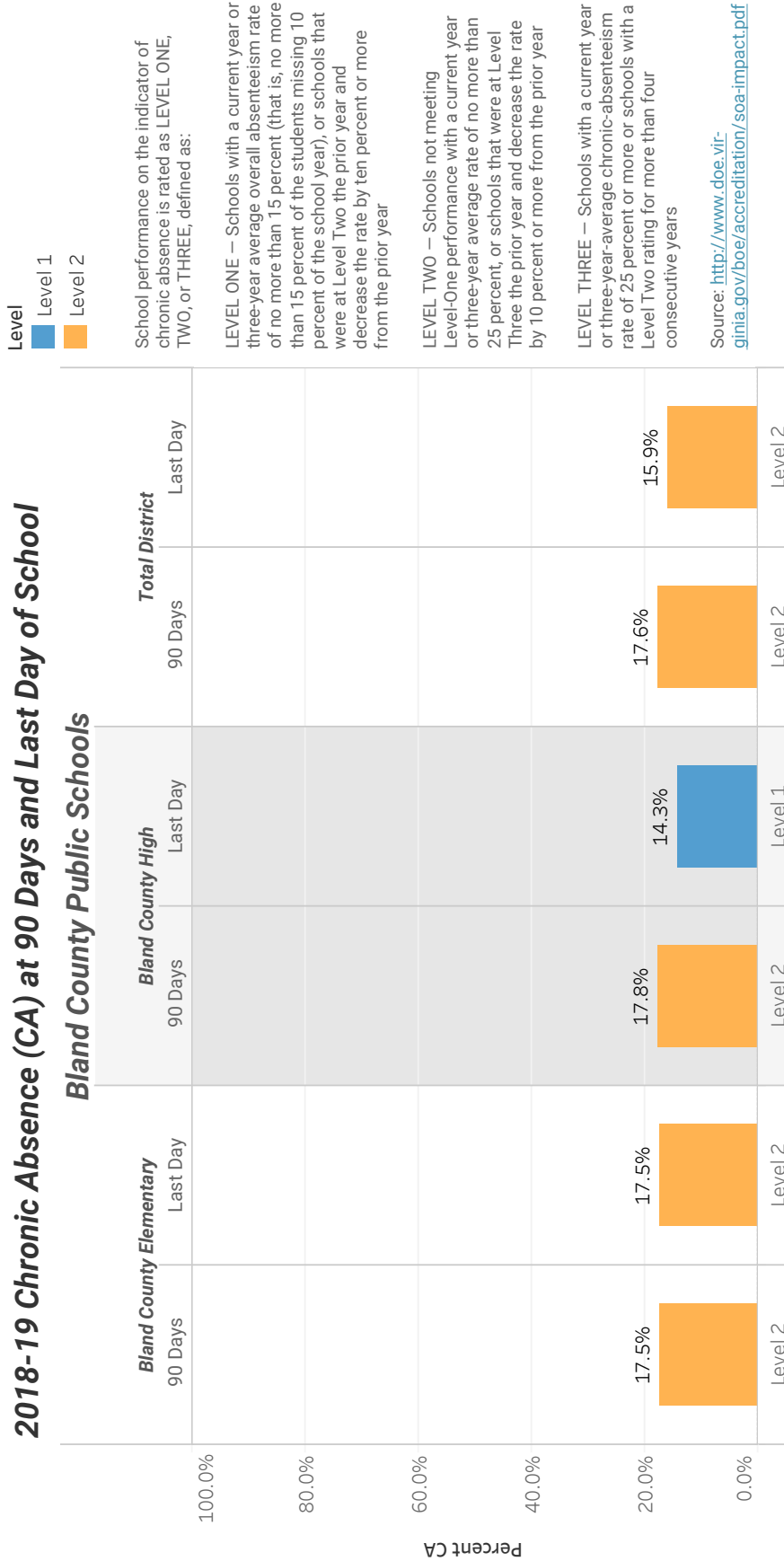
mentoring him. He was also referred to the Court Service Unit for Diversion, where his attendance is monitored, he has a curfew and he is involved in mental health counseling. He has shown progression in attendance and therefore in grades. He is 17 ½ years old and is a junior. His goal was to drop out of school as soon as possible. Now, he plans to return to school for the 2019-2020 school year and graduate.

Two school systems reported working with The Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS) (<https://vtss-ric.org/>), a data-informed decision making framework for establishing the academic, behavioral and social-emotional supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students. (See Appendix 3)

For definitions and VDOE Administrative Code and trainings, visit <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/prevention/attendance-truancy/attendance-truancy-vastudents/index.shtml> (See Appendix 4)

For more excellent resources, research, and tutorials on chronic absence, visit <https://www.attendanceworks.org/>. (See Appendix 5)

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School Bland County Public Schools



The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School

Bristol City Schools

Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2

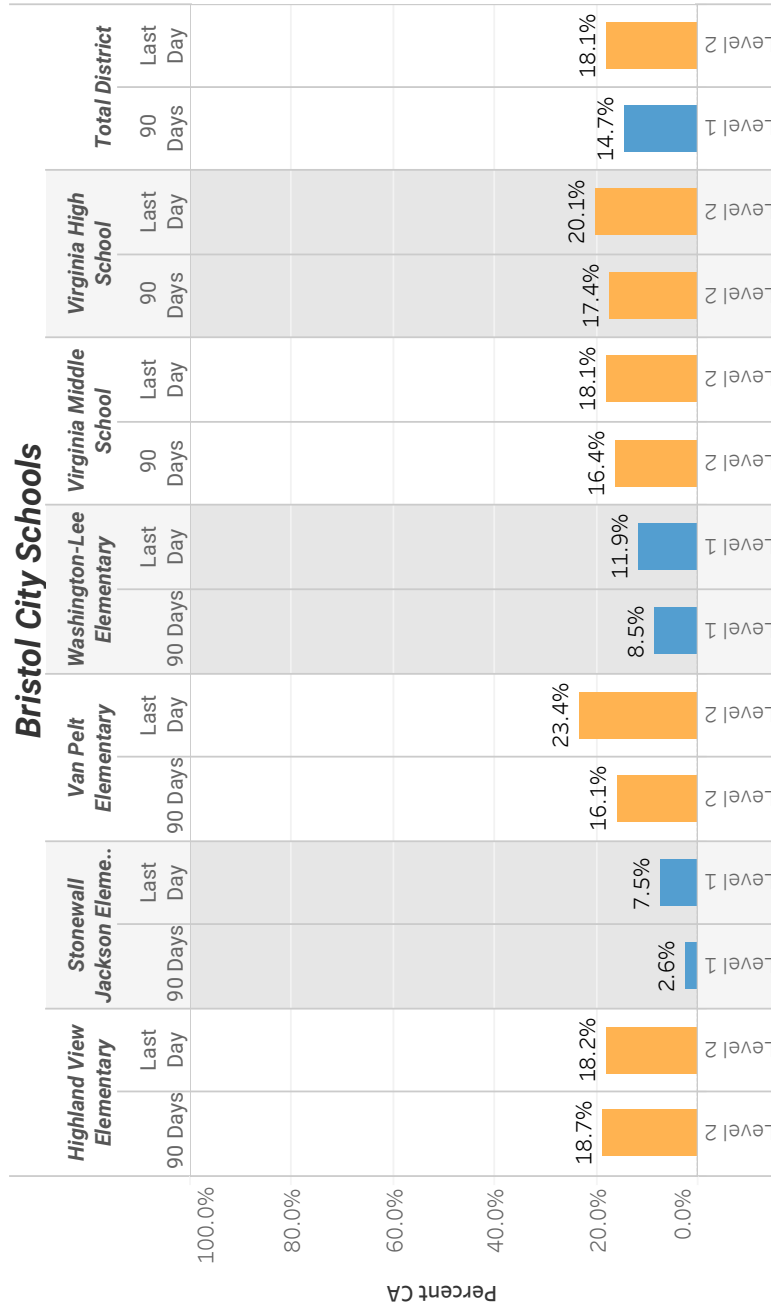
School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/ac-creditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

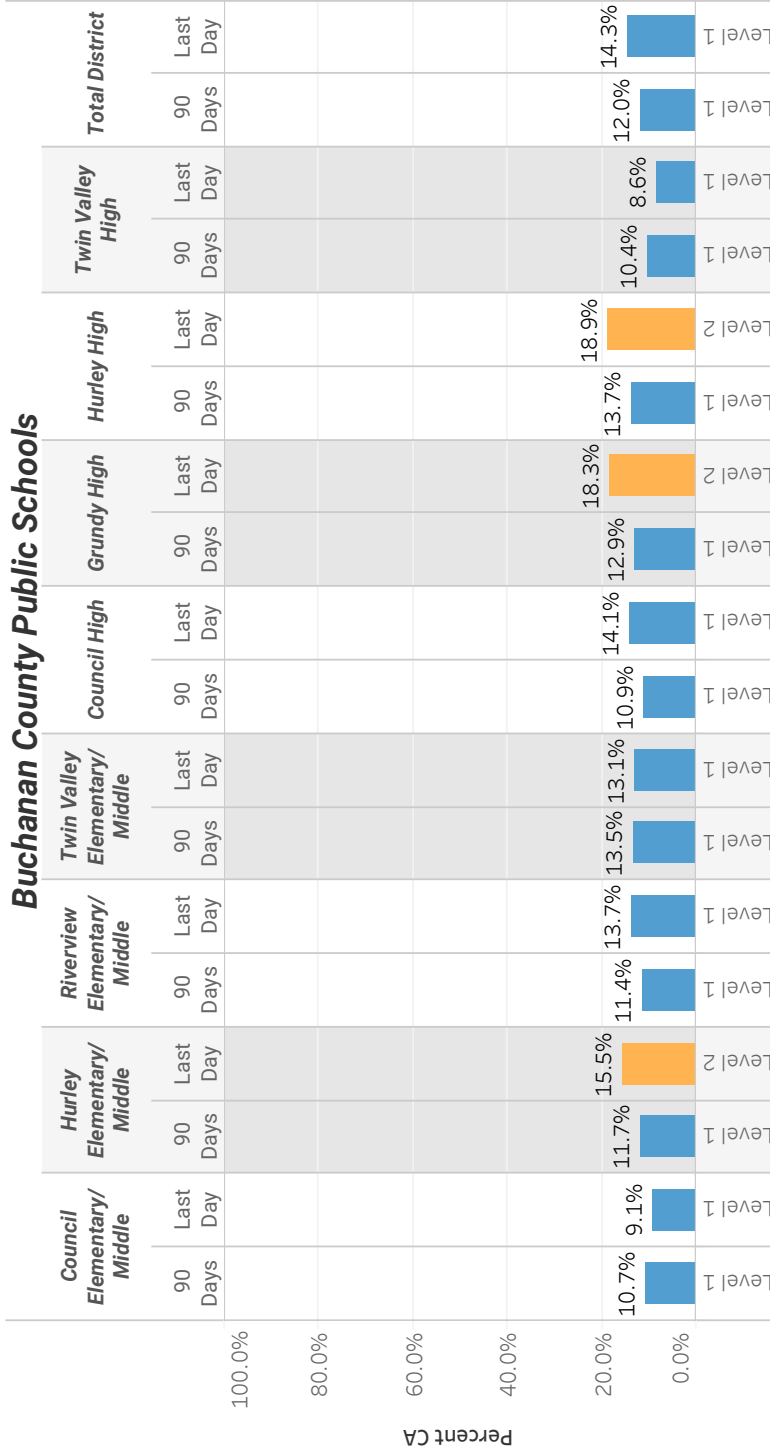
90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.



2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School

Buchanan County Public Schools



Level
 Level 1
 Level 2

School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

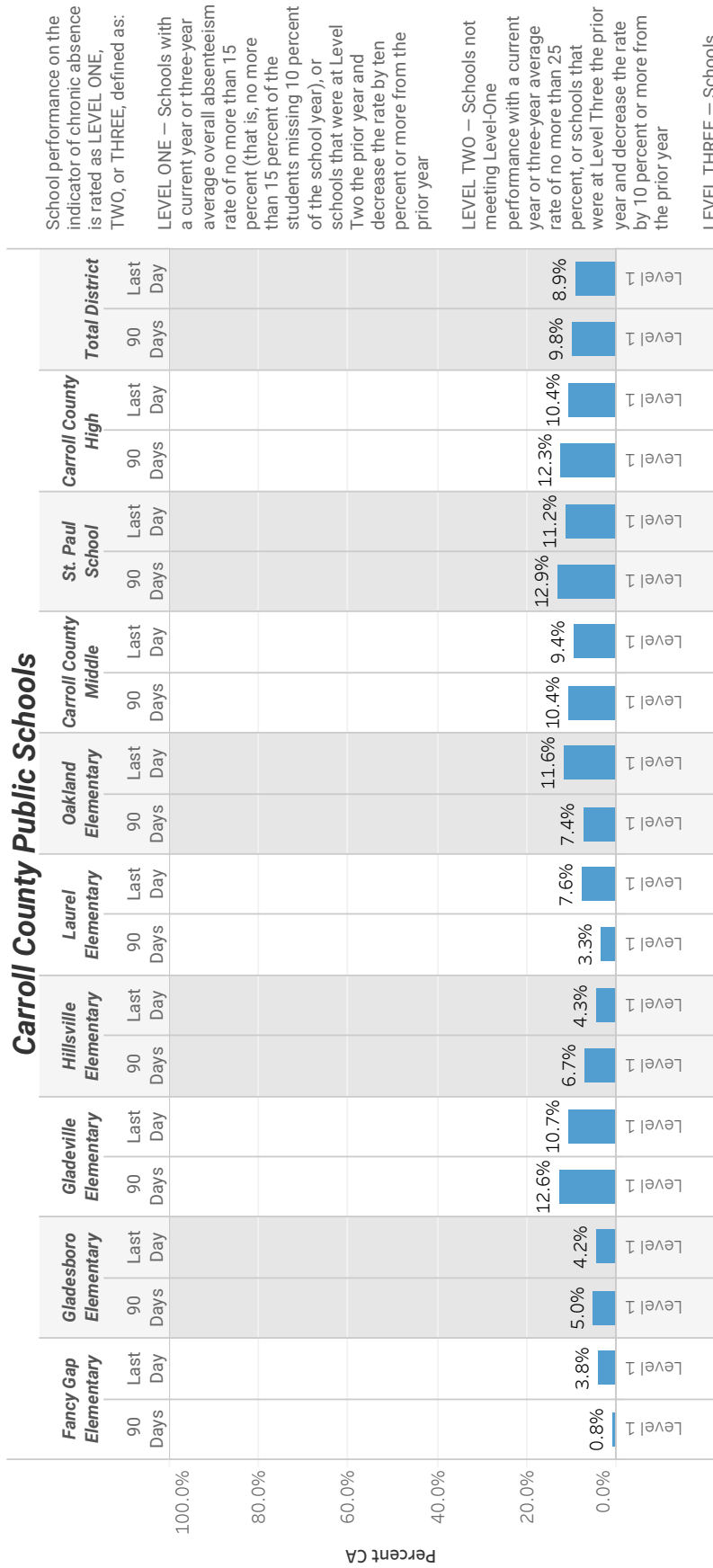
District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School Carroll County Public Schools

Level ■ Level 1



School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates. The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

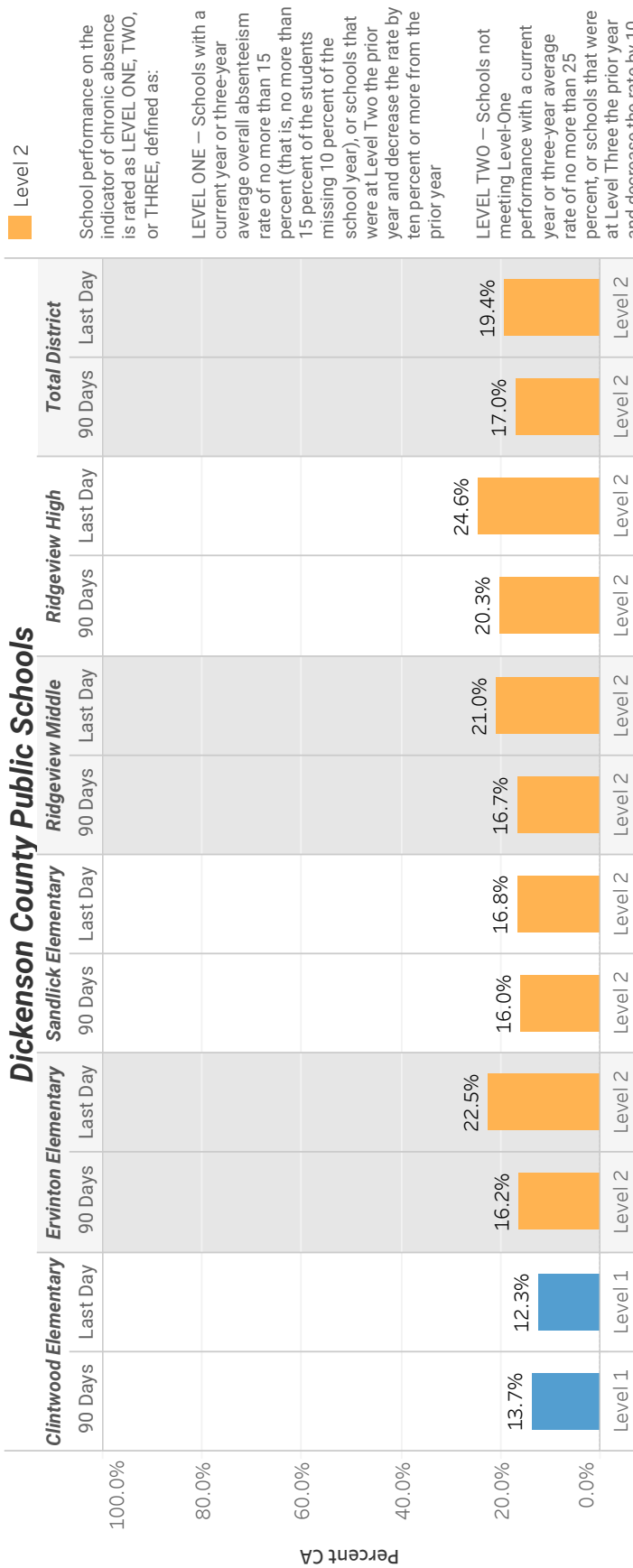
This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School *



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

* Total district percentages and levels shown here indicate a Level 2; however, all DCPS individual schools received a Level 1 accreditation from the Virginia Department of Education as they decreased their CA rate by 10% from the prior school year (deemed a transition year ahead of the SOA rollout).

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2

School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE – Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

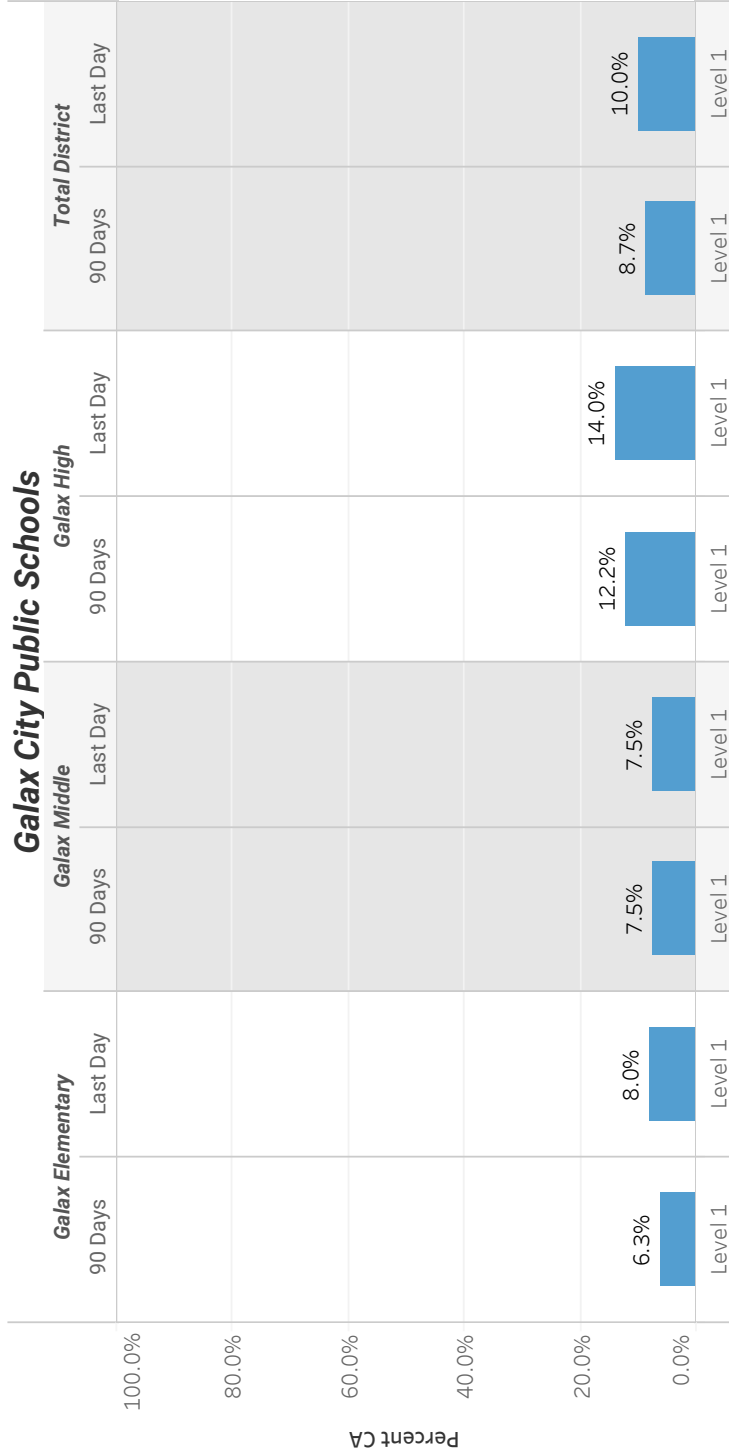
LEVEL TWO – Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE – Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School



Level 1

School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accrreditat-tion/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

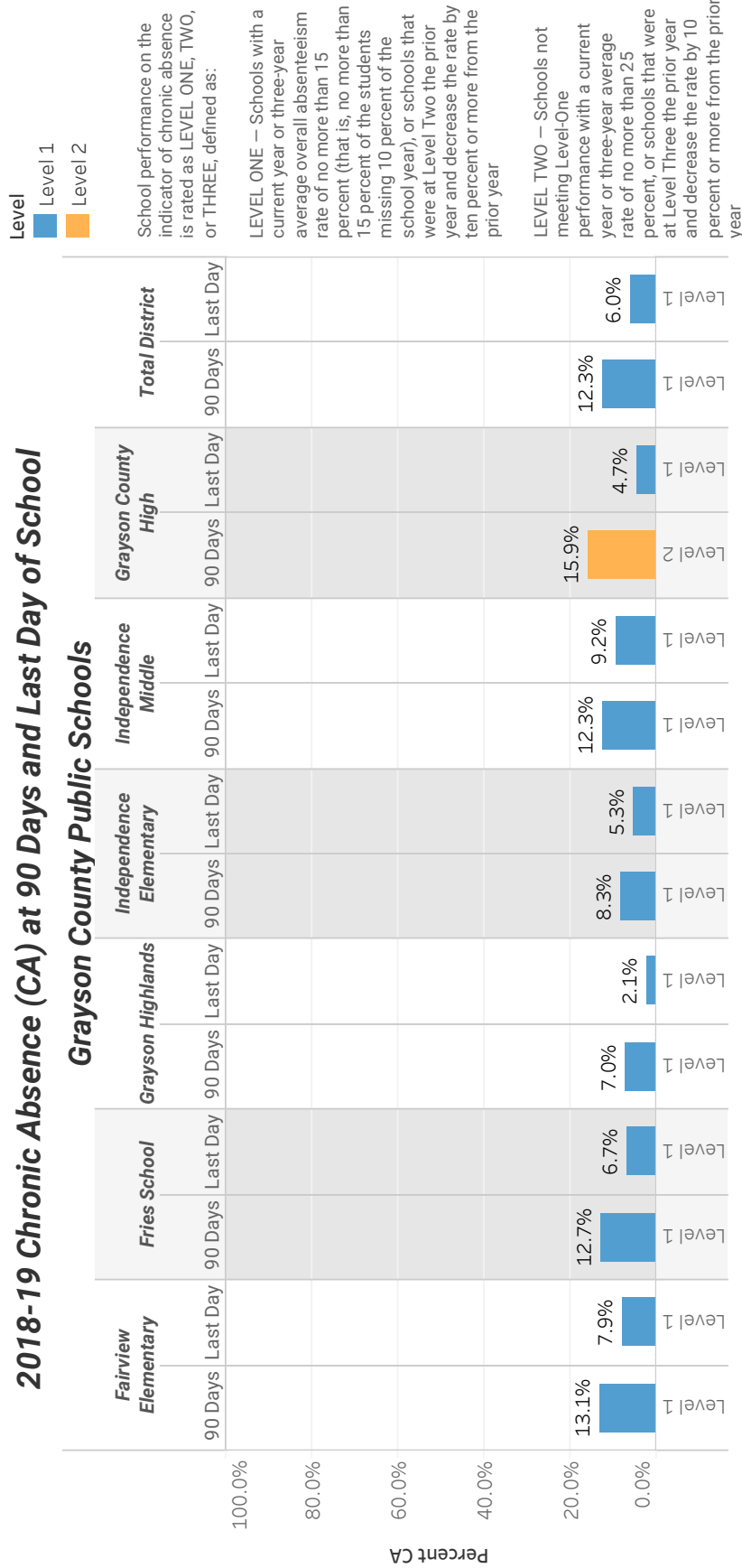
This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

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2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School Grayson County Public Schools



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

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2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School

Lee County Public Schools

Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2

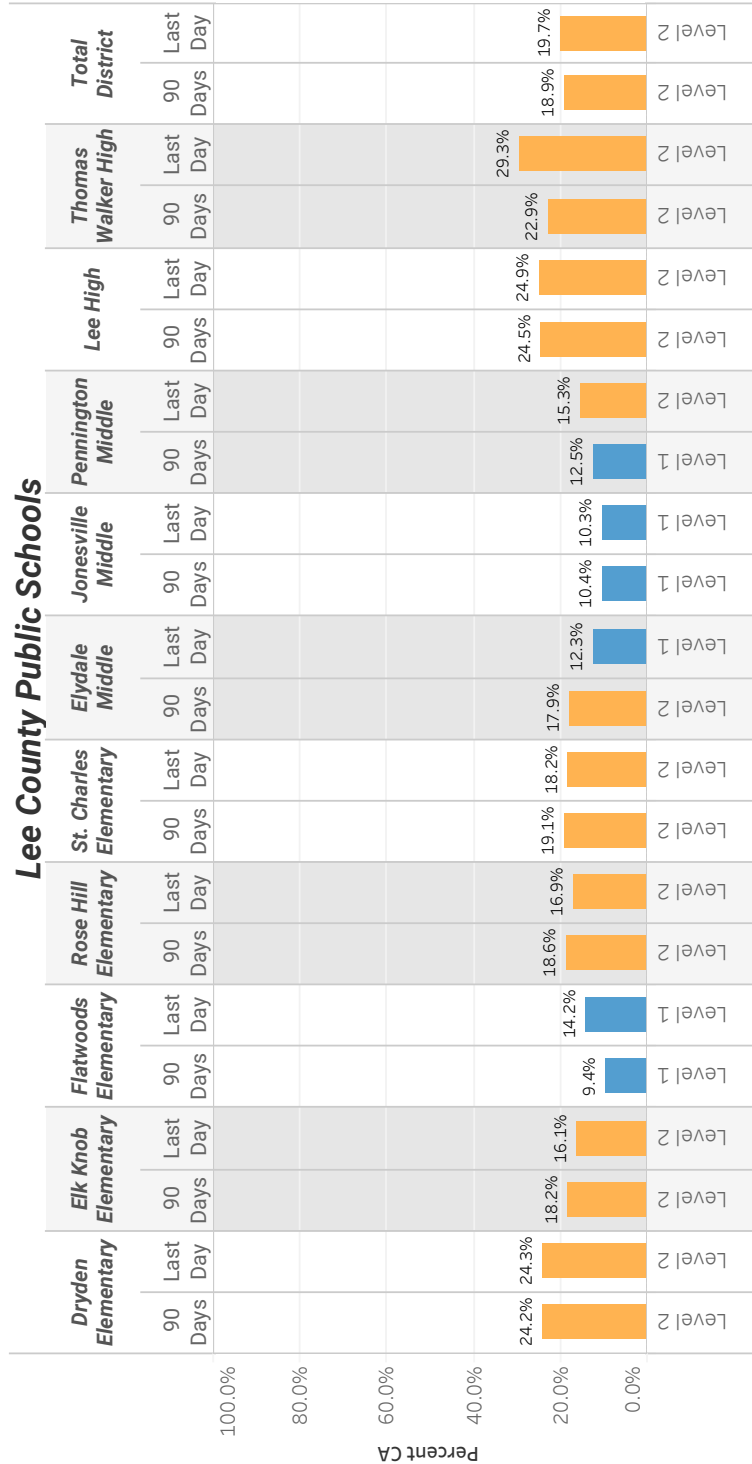
School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

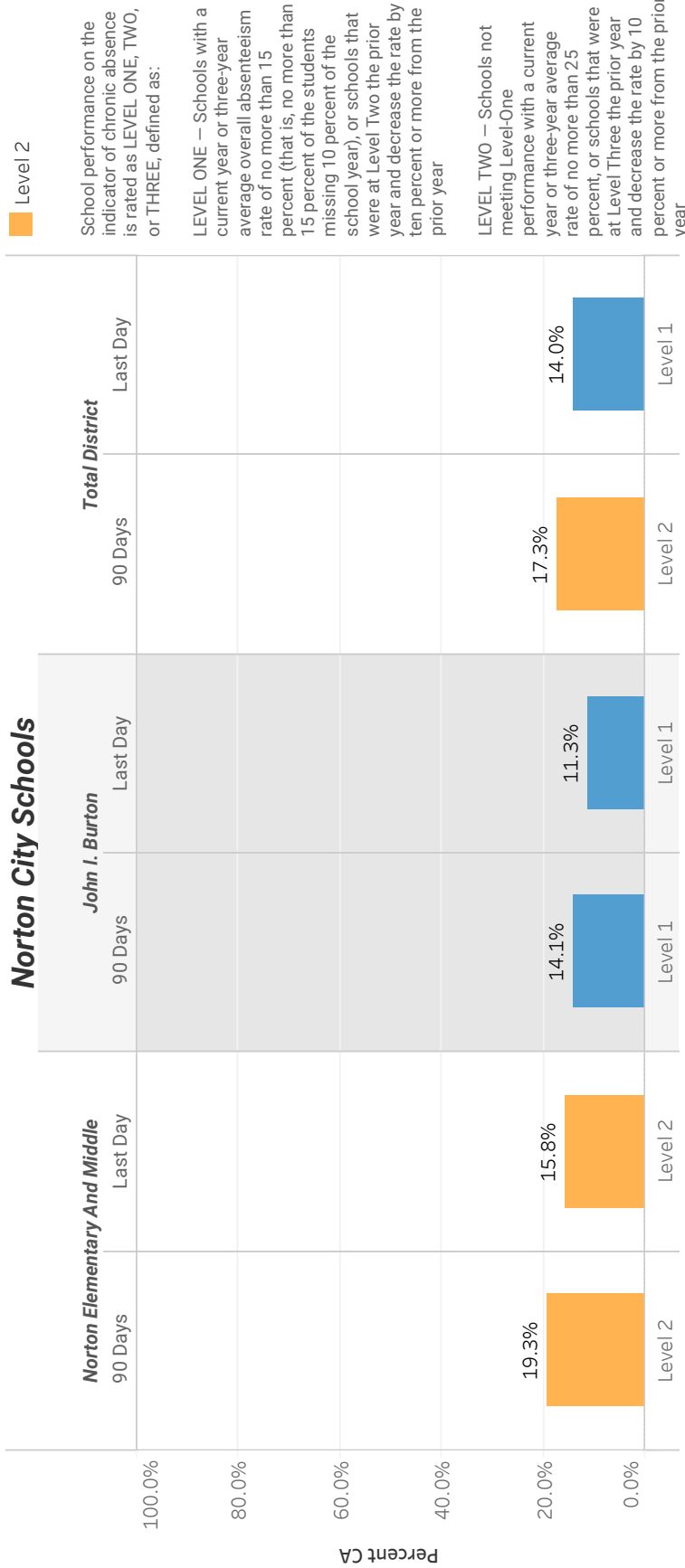
This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

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2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.



2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School *

Pulaski County Public Schools

Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2

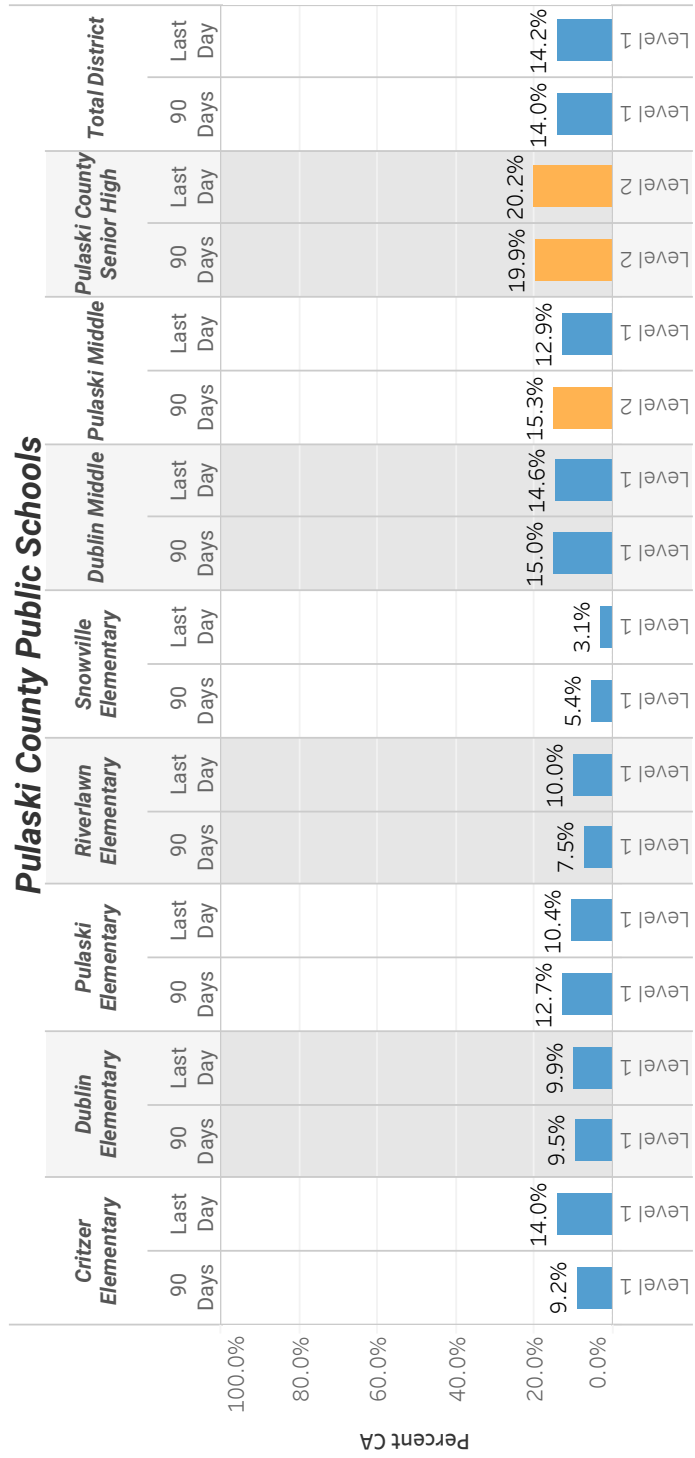
School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE – Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO – Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE – Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

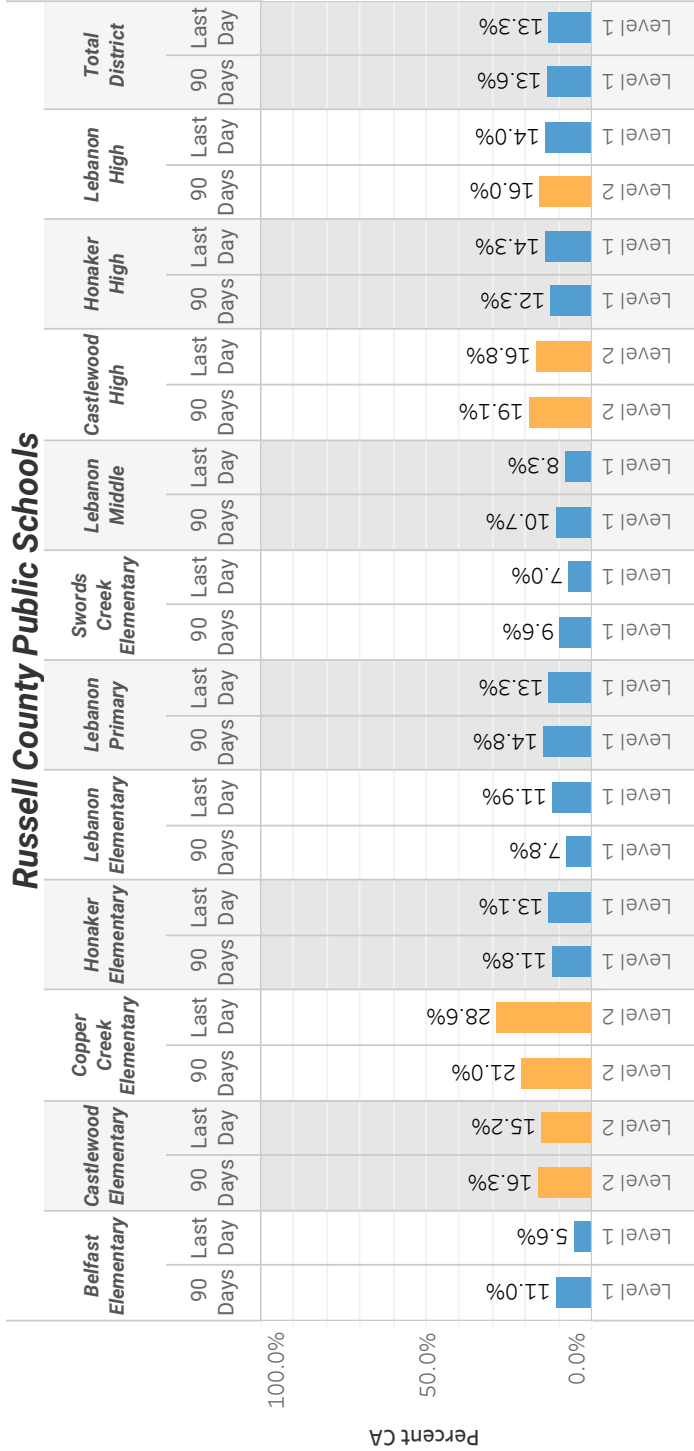
* Pulaski County could not verify their data according to the same standards as the other 16 districts, due to PowerSchool/IT issues. Percentages shown here reflect the most accurate data available to PCPS at the end of the school year.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School *

Russell County Public Schools

Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2



School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE – Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO – Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE – Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

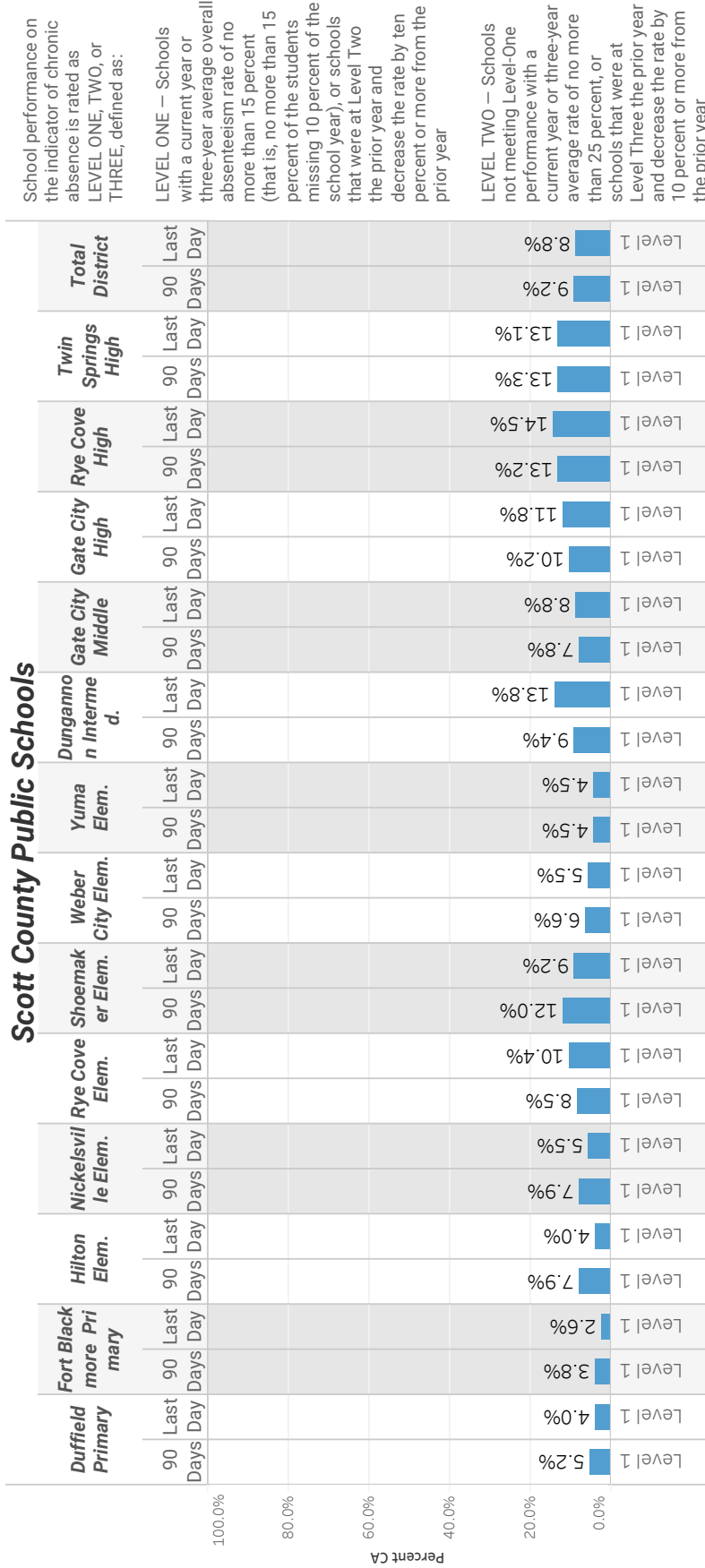
90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

* Russell County could not verify their data according to the same standards as the other 16 districts, due to PowerSchool/IT issues. Percentages shown here reflect the most accurate data available to RCPS at the end of the school year.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School

Scott County Public Schools



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

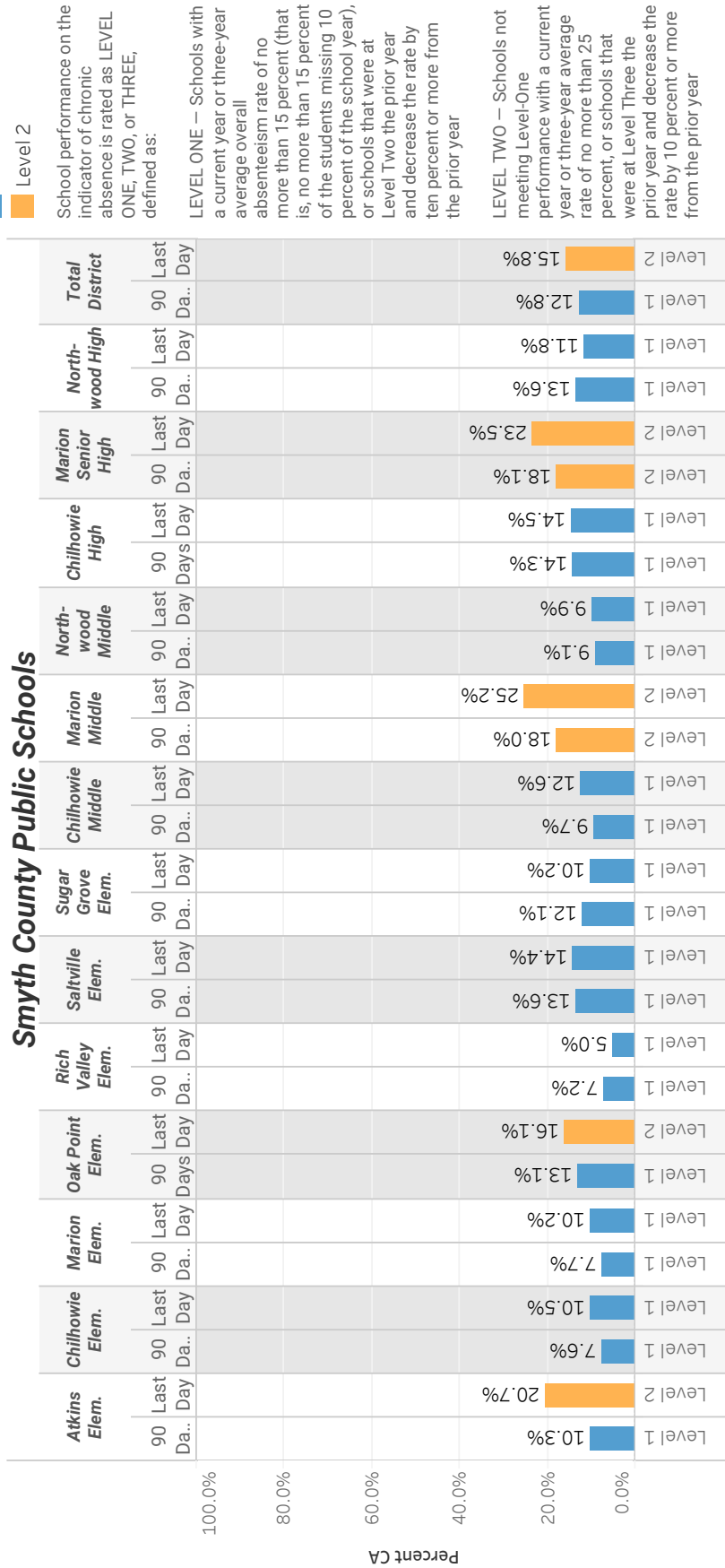
Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

Source:
<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School

Smyth County Public Schools



Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2

School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accr/education/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

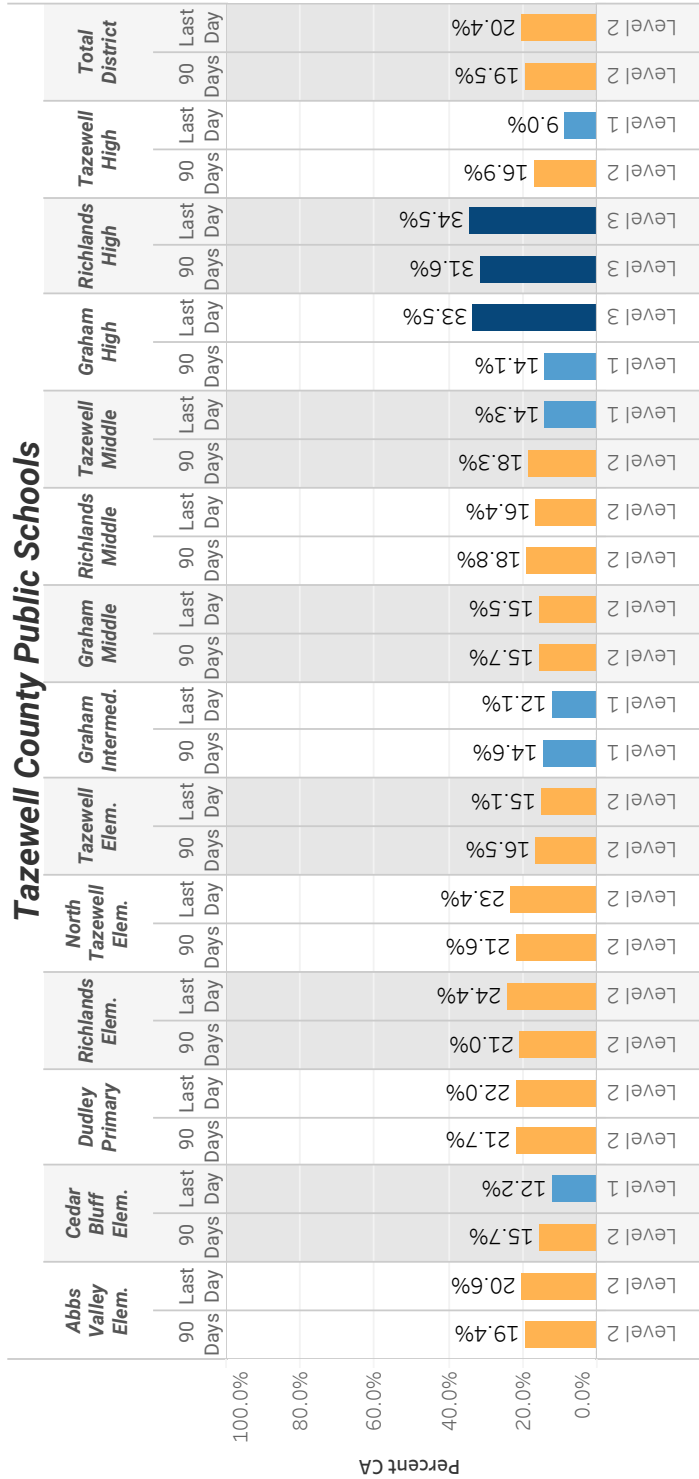
90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School *

Tazewell County Public Schools

Level
■ Level 1
■ Level 2
■ Level 3



School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE – Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO – Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE – Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation (SOA), schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

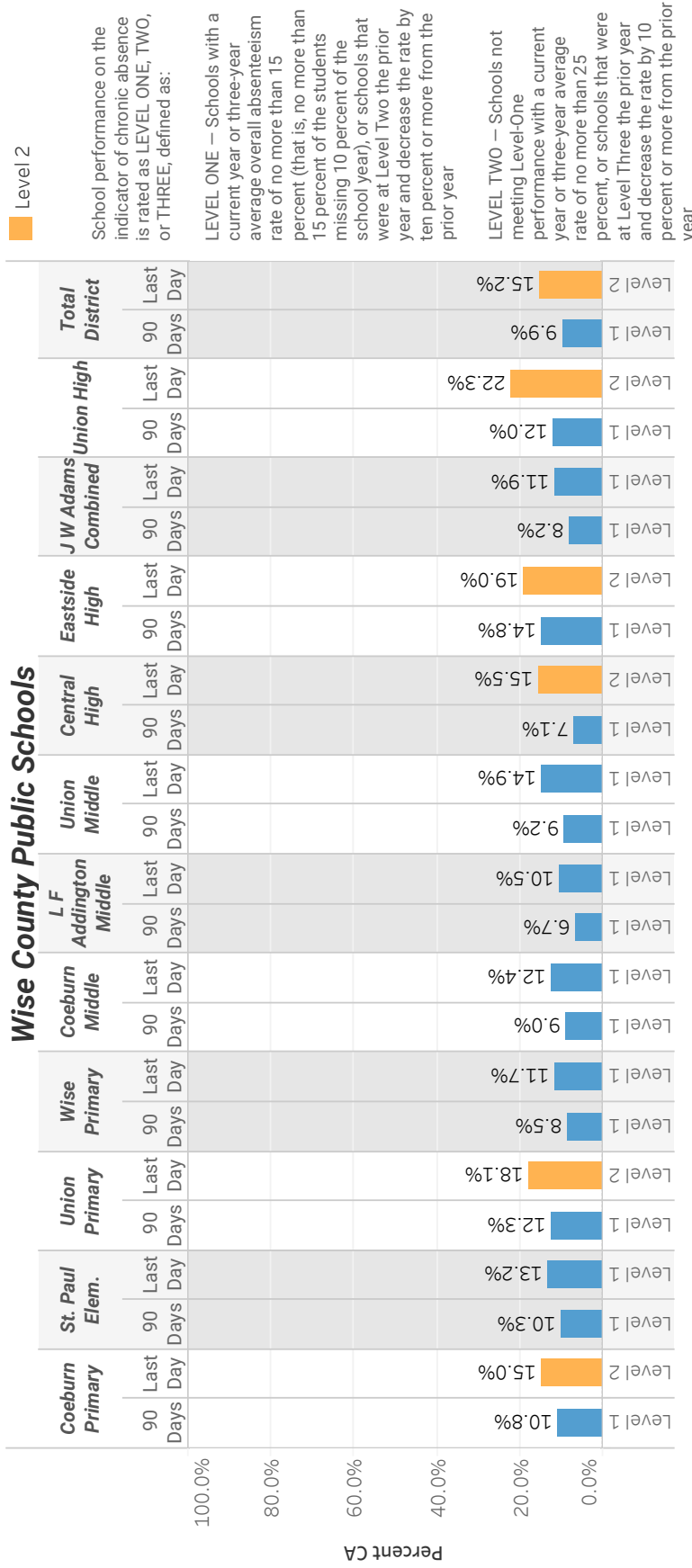
District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

* Total district percentages and levels shown here indicate a Level 2; however, some individual TCPS schools received a Level 1 accreditation from the Virginia Department of Education as they reduced their CA rate by 10% from the prior school year (deemed a transition year ahead of the SOA rollout).

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School



Level
 Level 1
 Level 2

School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as LEVEL ONE, TWO, or THREE, defined as:

LEVEL ONE — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL TWO — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

LEVEL THREE — Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

Source: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school color coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

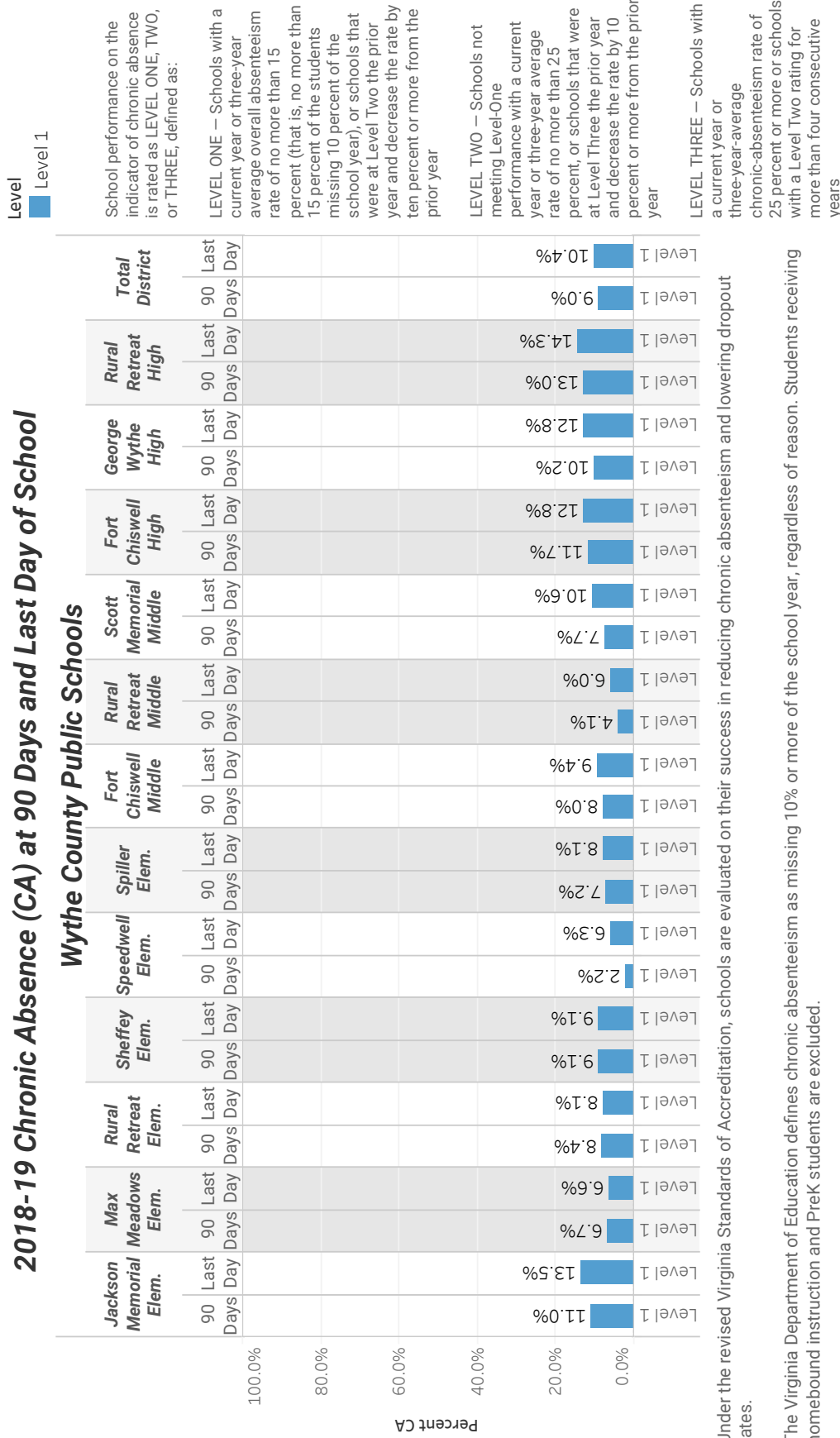
District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) at 90 Days and Last Day of School

Wythe County Public Schools



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation, schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and PreK students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

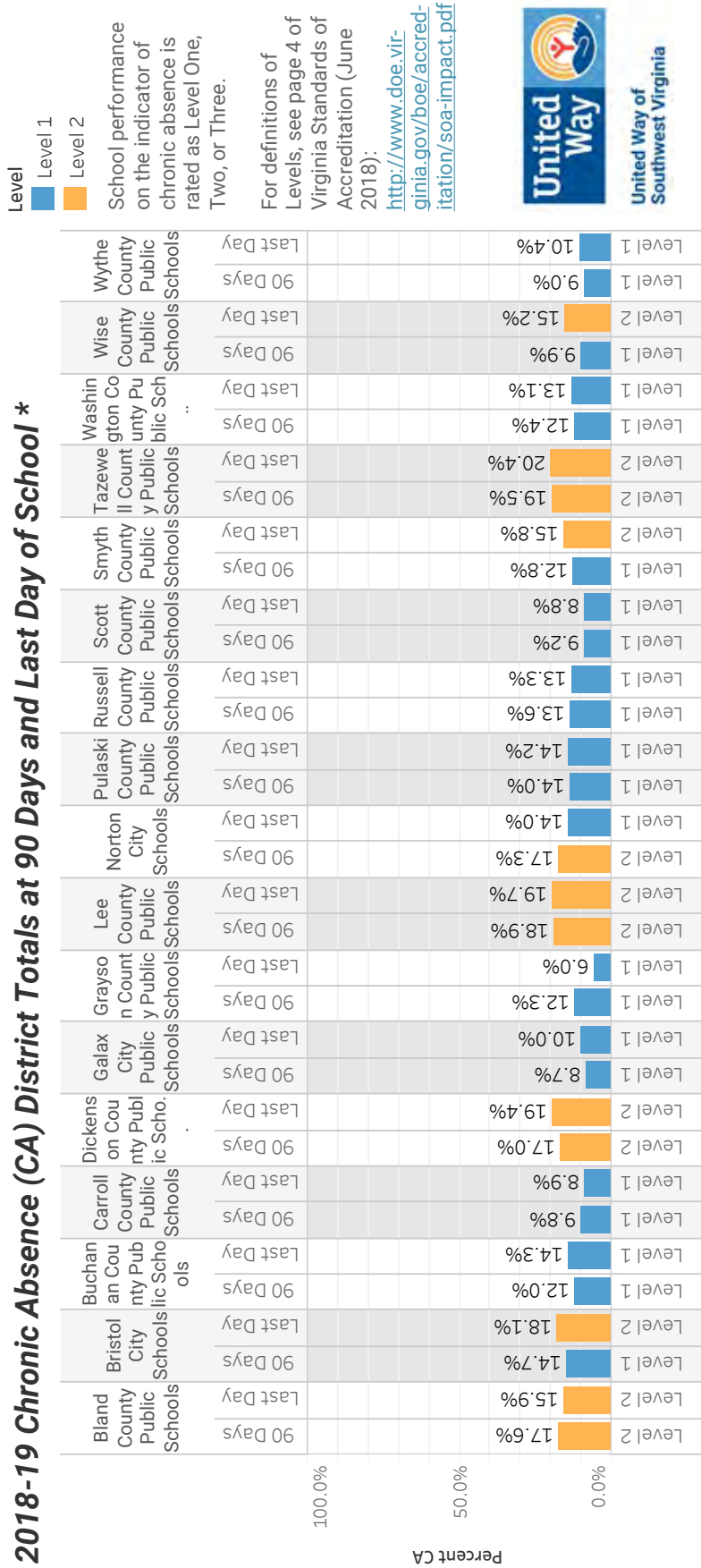
90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.



United Way of Southwest Virginia

2018-19 Chronic Absence (CA) District Totals at 90 Days and Last Day of School *



Level 1
Level 2

School performance on the indicator of chronic absence is rated as Level One, Two, or Three.

For definitions of Levels, see page 4 of Virginia Standards of Accreditation (June 2018): <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-impact.pdf>



Under the revised Virginia Standards of Accreditation (SOA), schools are evaluated on their success in reducing chronic absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.

The Virginia Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction and Prek students are excluded.

This dashboard shows the percentage of enrolled students who were chronically absent after 90 days of school and on the last day of school coded by Level 1, 2, or 3. Schools had a goal of decreasing the number of students who were chronically absent, so seeing a decrease in percentages from 90 days to the last day is a positive indicator. At 90 days, a student must have missed 10% or more days (approx. 9 days) to be considered chronically absent. If a student keeps their absences under a total of 10% by the last day of the school year, approximately 18 days, that child would no longer be considered chronically absent.

* District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by the total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

90 Days is an approximation. CA rates were submitted at the end of the first semester, and may be slightly more or less than exactly 90 days of school.

For Dickenson County Public Schools, total district percentages and levels shown here indicate a Level 2 at 90 days and Last Day; however, all DCPS individual schools received a Level 1 accreditation from the Virginia Department of Education as they decreased their CA rate by 10% from the prior school year (deemed a transition year ahead of the SOA rollout). For Russell County Public Schools and Pulaski County Public Schools, percentages shown here are based on the most accurate data those districts could provide. They could not verify their data according to the same standards as the other districts due to PowerSchool/IT issues.

Created August 2019. All data submitted to United Way of Southwest Virginia by participating SWVA public school districts for Chronic Absence Initiative 2018-19.

Best Practices

- Incentives alone have not proved to be motivating factors to increase attendance. However, if braided within a culture of relationships and schools supporting families, incentives can be effective, as demonstrated in the regional data.
- Build a cross-agency team to focus on systematic monitoring of CA data. Use data to inform policy changes, supports, and tiering of family outreach.
- Review, define, and support the school's excused/unexcused policy. Placing a limit on excused absences provides an opportunity to bring awareness early to students and parents; however, the shift may be slow. Encouraging half-day or sign-in/sign-out policies with the parents increases the communication and student's attendance.
- Review school calendar for 2018-2019 to compare attendance data on those half days and any days surrounding holidays and shorter breaks. Consider increased messaging and/or planning school activities to increase attendance (such as holding club meetings, classroom parties, incentive giveaways) on those surrounding days.
- Shorten the span that a student can achieve recognition for attendance such as every 9 weeks or even every month. It renews a student's hopes for inclusion in the incentives and may help them set new habits, while giving the school a chance to reach out with supports.
- Increase frequency, variety, and depth of message to help inform students and their families on the impact of chronic absence. Starting early in the year may improve rates at the end of the year.
- Focus on student wellness by increasing the health communications to the school community via the school nurse. Also, vary types of communications: reasons to keep students home for health concerns, promote influenza vaccines, promote handwashing techniques, or provide guidance for when students are healthy enough to return. Consider having the school nurse reach out by phone to see how absent students are doing.
- Focusing a school district's assets on relationship building with students and their families, strong messaging and recognition centered on students' presence at school, reviewing data, and frequently bringing together staff and administration to respond with supports all combine to help the region's chronically absent and at-risk students improve their education, their future employment, and ultimately, the economic potential of Southwest Virginia.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Seventeen Southwest Virginia school systems participated in the 2018-2019 Attendance Initiative: Bland, Bristol (VA), Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Galax, Grayson, Lee, Norton City, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe.

Appendix 2

District levels are based on the total number of students who were chronically absent at 90 days and the last day of school, divided by total student membership, to calculate the district-wide CA level.

*Two school systems, Russell County and Pulaski County, could not verify their data according to the same guidelines as the other 15 districts, due to PowerSchool/IT issues. They submitted the most accurate data they had at the end of the school year. In addition, Dickenson County's total district rate was 19.4%, which would normally measure in Level 2. However, they measure in Level 1 because each school in the district reduced their CA rate by 10% from the prior year (deemed a transition year ahead of the SOA rollout). Each school had the choice of using the previous standards of accreditation or the new ones, whichever benefited that school the most.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of the school year, regardless of reason, excused or unexcused. Students receiving homebound instruction, as well as Pre-K students are excluded. In the revised Standards of Accreditation (SOA), performance on this indicator is rated as follows:

LEVEL ONE – Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

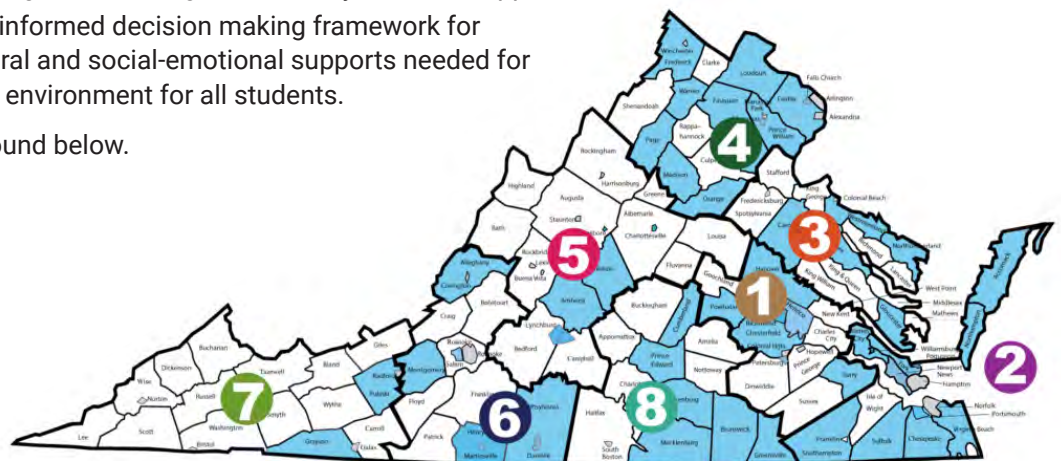
LEVEL TWO – Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year. A school shall not receive a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

LEVEL THREE – Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

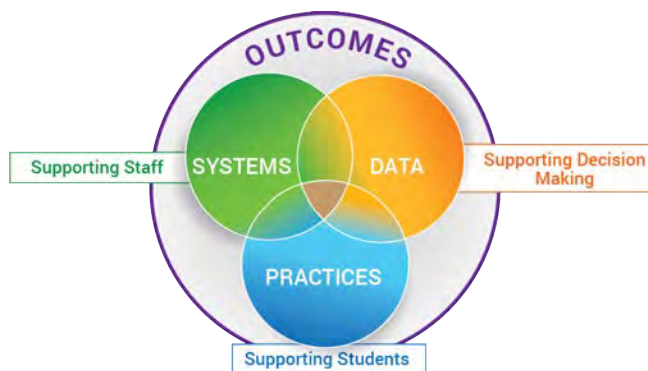
Appendix 3

Two school systems reported working with The Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS)(<https://vtss-ric.org/>), a data-informed decision making framework for establishing the academic, behavioral and social-emotional supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students.

Participating regions are found below.



The VTSS systemic approach allows divisions, schools and communities to provide multiple levels of supports to students in a more effective and efficient, clearly defined process. Implementing the VTSS requires the use of evidence-based, system-wide practices with fidelity to provide a quick response to academic, behavioral, social and emotional needs. The practices are progress-monitored frequently to enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students.



VTSS functions under the anchor process of integrating data, practices and systems to affect outcomes.

Appendix 4

Definitions

VDOE Virginia Administrative Code: 8VAC20-131-150. Standard School Year and School Day.

A. The standard school year shall be 180 instructional days or 990 instructional hours. The standard school day for students in grades 1 through 12 shall average at least 5-1/2 instructional hours, including passing time for class changes and excluding breaks for meals and recess, and a minimum of three hours for kindergarten.

B. All students in grades 1 through 12 shall maintain a full day schedule of classes (5-1/2 hours), unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies defined by the local school board.

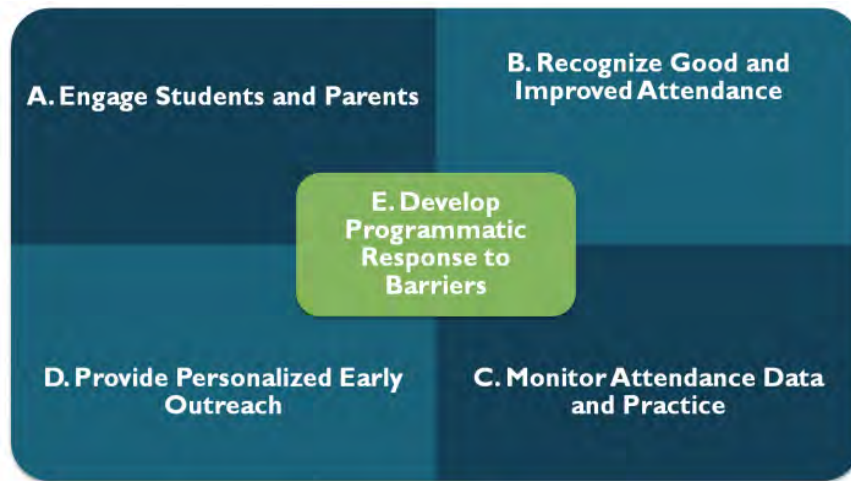
Additionally, the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with Attendance Works, has created a 12 module series entitled Attendance and Truancy Among Virginia Students. This training, which also includes a Participant/Facilitator Guide, can be viewed individually or in a group and will assist schools and divisions in looking at current practice and in looking at ways to improve future practice with the goal of addressing and eliminating chronic absenteeism, and ultimately boost student outcomes and success.

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/prevention/attendance-truancy/attendance-truancy-va-students/index.shtml>

Appendix 5

One of the best national resources available on chronic absence is <https://www.attendanceworks.org/>. The website has year-long planning calendars, tutorials, videos, worksheets, sample handouts and messaging, anything a school needs to learn and grow in attendance.

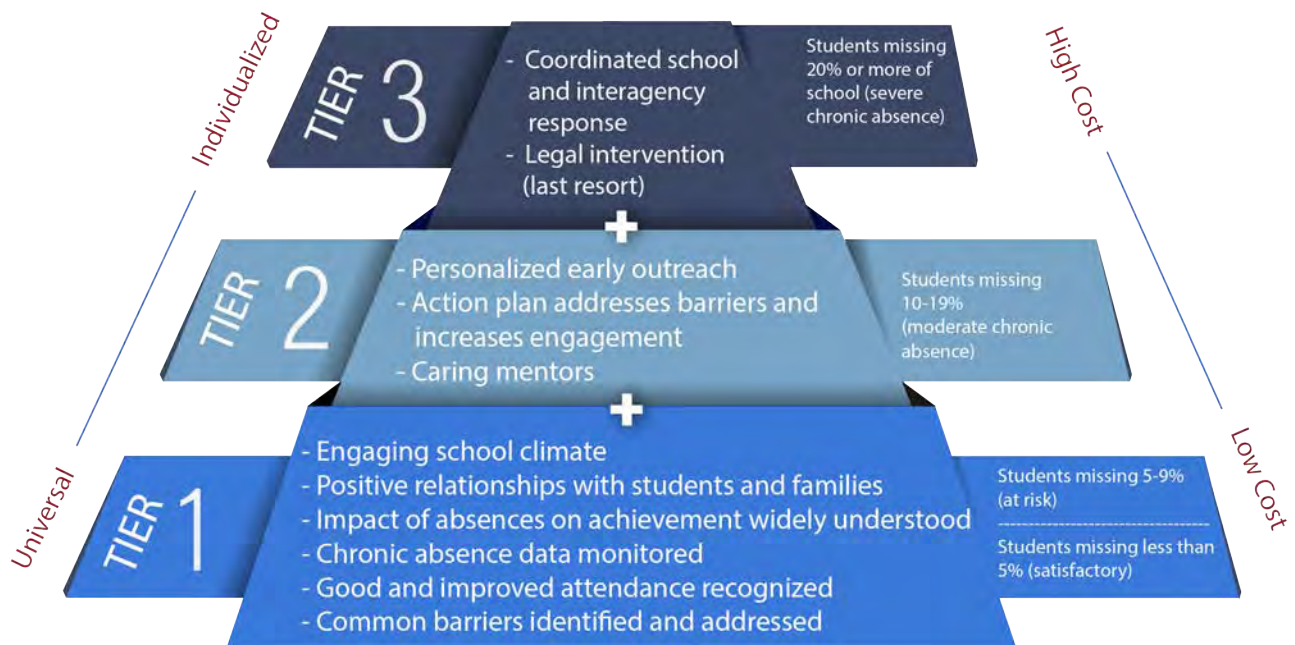
Overall, as this Attendance Works infographic shows, the first step of successful culture change is to engage students and parents, and create relationships.



Below is Attendance Works’ tiered supports, increasing in supports as a school individualizes coordination for their most chronic absent students.

Reducing chronic absence fits nicely into the three-tiered reform systems being successfully implemented to reduce chronic absenteeism in schools and districts across the United States. Tier 1 represents universal strategies to encourage good attendance for all students. Tier 2 provides early intervention for students who need more support to avoid chronic absence. Tier 3 offers intensive support for students facing the greatest challenges to getting to school.

The pyramid graphics (below) show examples of interventions that schools and districts should try at each tier.





United Way of Southwest Virginia

2018-19 Attendance Initiative

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