

Why students
are chronically
absent varies.

How to get them
back does, too.



**A chronically
absent child
is missing out
on more than
learning.**

1 in 10
schools experience
extreme chronic
absenteeism.¹



Missing 10% of school days or more has a significant and cumulative impact on a child's life and has been linked to not only reduced academic achievement,² but also:

- Social disengagement and feelings of alienation²
- Increased frequency of disruptive behavior³
- Strained relationships with teachers⁴
- Adverse health outcomes and poverty in adulthood⁵

1. Jordan, P., & Miller, R. (2017). Who's in: Chronic absenteeism under the Every Student Succeeds Act. 2. Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). The importance of being in school: A report on absenteeism in the nation's public schools. *The Education Digest*. 3. Gottfried, M. (2014). Chronic Absenteeism and Its Effects on Students' Academic and Socioemotional Outcomes. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. 4. Gottfried, M., Kim, P., & Fletcher, T. L. (2024). Do Teachers Perceive Absent Students Differently? *AERA*. 5. Schoeneberger, J. (2012). Longitudinal Attendance Patterns: Developing High School Dropouts. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies*.

In some districts, as little as a 1% shift in student attendance can equate to millions of dollars of operating funding.¹

In all districts, its impact is significant. The loss of funding can result in:

- Larger class sizes
- Fewer advanced classes
- Loss of resources, including teachers

But the impact goes far beyond funding. When students are chronically absent, everyone in the classroom is affected.²

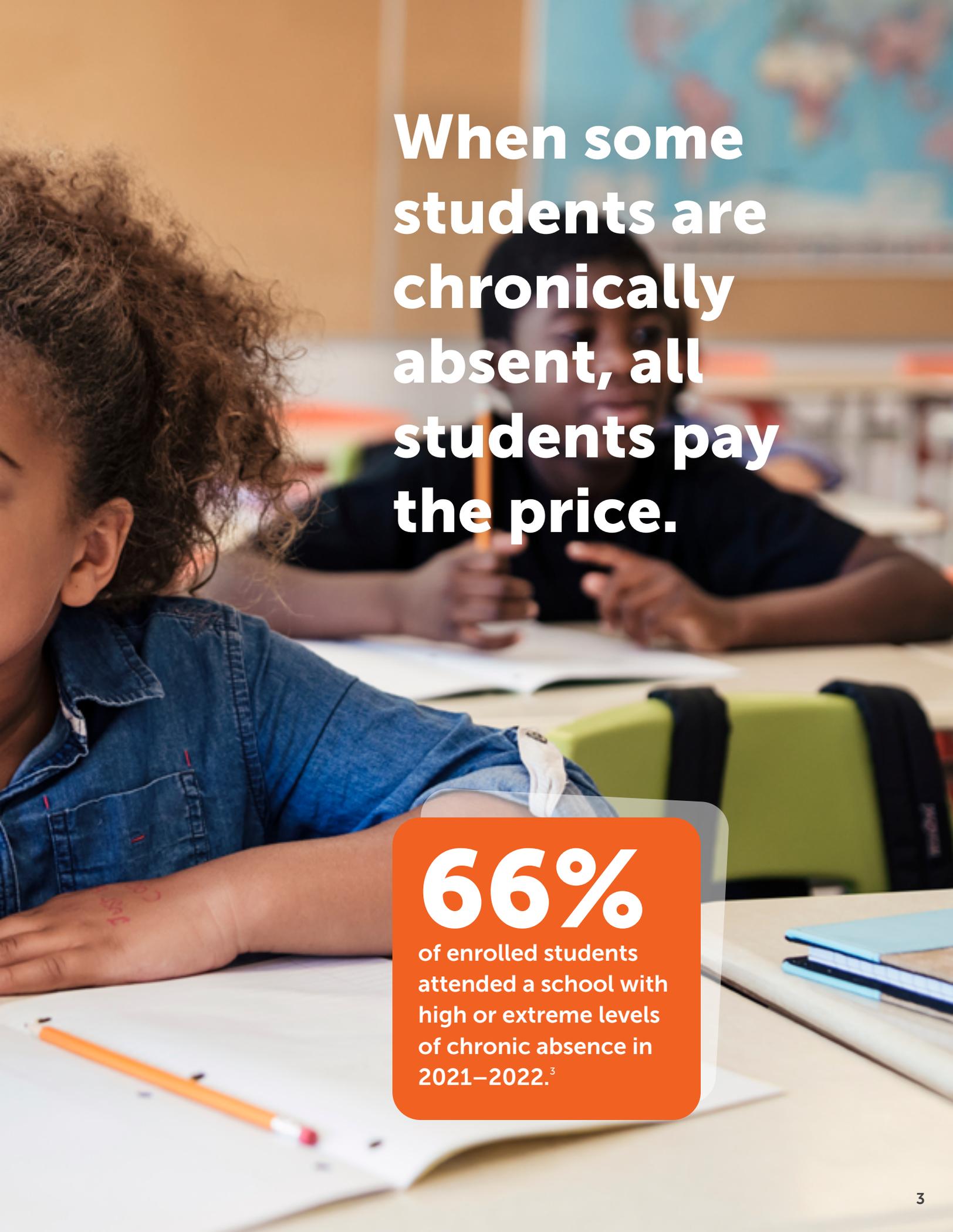
- Extra resources are often required to support students who missed lessons.
- Additional support services must be identified for students who fall behind.
- Teachers take on increased workloads trying to catch up absent students.
- Other students experience disruptions and delays to the learning environment.

1. Lieberman, M. (2024). Why chronic absenteeism is a budget problem, too. *Education Week*.

2. Institute of Education Sciences (2021). Evidence-Based Practices Related to Chronic Absenteeism.

3. Chang, H. (2024). Rising tide of chronic absence challenges schools. *Attendance Works*.





**When some
students are
chronically
absent, all
students pay
the price.**

66%

of enrolled students
attended a school with
high or extreme levels
of chronic absence in
2021–2022.³

We help districts understand why students are missing school, and plan for how to get them back.

Schools that value and prioritize family engagement, equity and belonging, student well-being, and creating engaging learning experiences are better poised to curb absenteeism and garner participation from both their students and families.

Family Engagement



Chronic Absenteeism



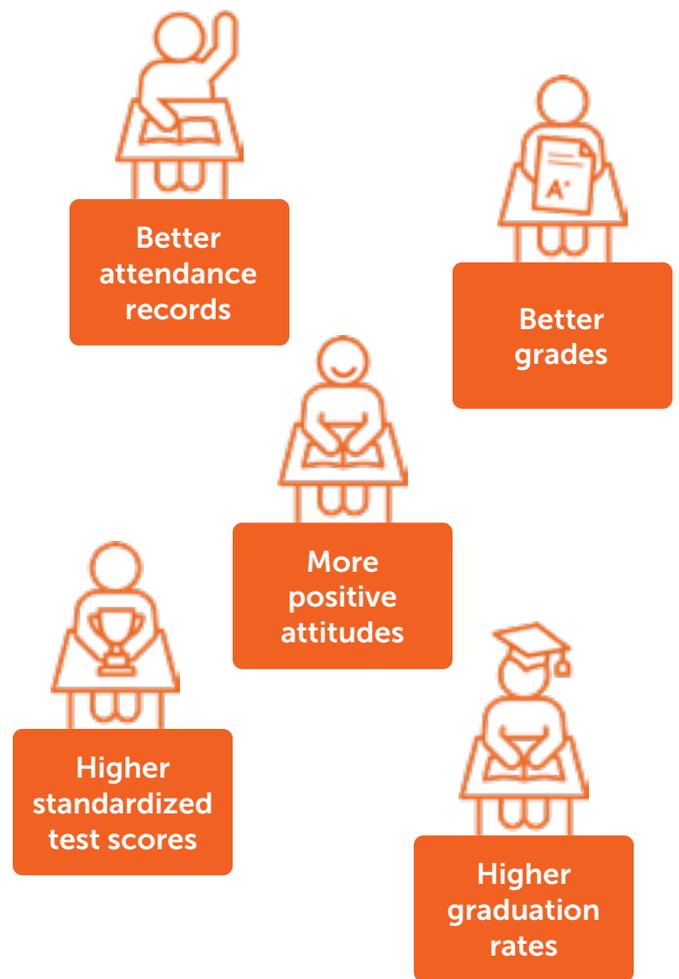
39%

Schools with strong pre-existing family engagement experienced a 39% lower rate of chronic absenteeism in 2021–22 than similar schools with weaker family engagement.¹



To re-engage all students, we must collaborate across school, community, and family lines. The positive impact of effective family and community engagement has been proven by decades of research, recent case studies, and every educator's firsthand experience.^{2, 3}

Students with involved families and communities have:



1. Peetz, C. (2023). New Research Finds a Crucial Factor in Reducing Chronic Absenteeism. *Education Week*. 2. Epstein, J. and Sheldon, S. (2002). Present and Accounted for: Improving Student Attendance through Family and Community Involvement. *Journal of Educational Research*. 3. Henderson, A. and Mapp, K. (2002). A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement.

Barriers

Illness

Trauma

Transportation issues

Housing insecurities

Aversion

Struggling academically

Unwelcoming school climates

Anxiety

Negative educational experiences

Reducing
chronic absenteeism
requires understanding
and addressing the
underlying root cause.¹

Misconceptions

Underestimate total absences

Attendance only matters
in older grades

Absences are only a problem
if unexcused

Disengagement

Lack of challenging,
culturally responsive instruction

No meaningful relationships
with adults in school

Lack of enrichment opportunities

We can't solve for every cause of chronic absenteeism, but...

There are certain areas where we can really help.

A welcoming school climate

Positive educational experiences

Culturally responsive instruction

Meaningful relationships with adults at school

Enrichment opportunities

Engaging materials

Emphasis on the value of attendance

1. Chang, H. (2023). All Hands on Deck: Today's Chronic Absenteeism Requires a Comprehensive District Response and Strategy. Attendance Works.

Family, school, and community engagement is an instructional strategy.

This thinking is shared by some of the most successful districts, and Scholastic has proudly partnered with many of them.

Our shared approach to this work centers on four research-backed practices:



**Elevate
Staff**



**Empower
Families**



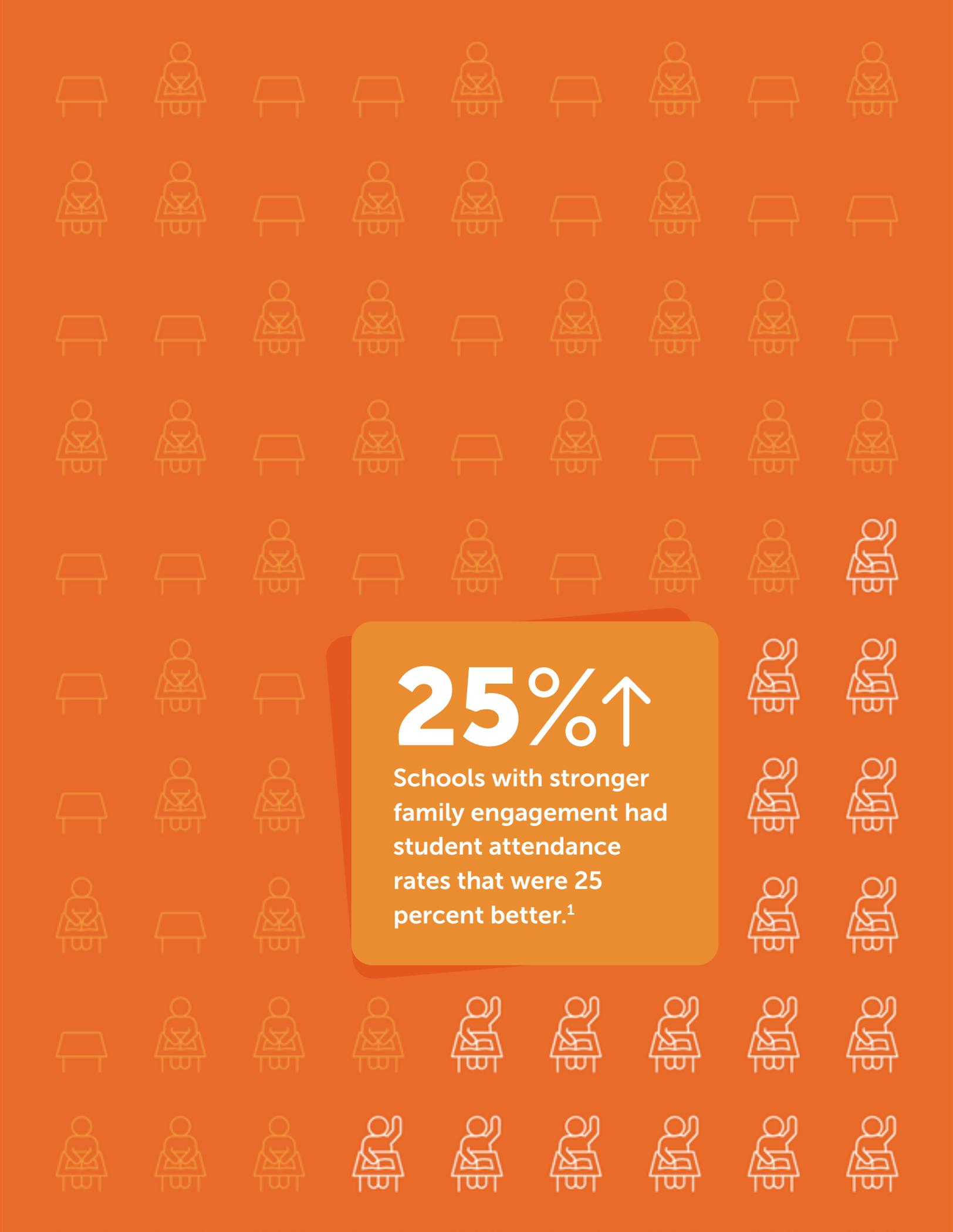
**Welcome and
Engage All**



**Partner with
Community**

By connecting the classroom, family, and community, we can create literacy ecosystems in which every child feels seen and valued. This comprehensive design drives increased attendance and improved academic outcomes for all learners.

1. Learning Heroes and The New Teacher Project (2023). Investigating the relationship between pre-pandemic family engagement and student and school outcomes.

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of two types of white line-art icons on an orange background. The first icon shows a person sitting at a desk with their hands on the desk. The second icon shows a person sitting at a desk with one hand raised. These icons are arranged in a grid that covers the entire page, with a central yellow callout box overlapping the middle.

25%↑

Schools with stronger family engagement had student attendance rates that were 25 percent better.¹



Elevating staff

capacity to build strong, trusting partnerships with families has a huge return.



“

Scholastic provided customized professional development, laying the foundation that parent and family engagement is an instructional strategy. In addition, they provided an ongoing support system **fostering reflection of practice** as well as implementation of new learning by providing individualized coaching.

— Margo Vogelpohl, Director, Title I and Prekindergarten Programs, Round Rock Independent School District

OUTCOMES

- 1 Misconceptions about the importance of attending school are mitigated.
- 2 Negative perceptions a caregiver may have about education from their own experiences are replaced with positive ones.
- 3 Trusting, productive relationships are established and grown.
- 4 Communication becomes two-way, with a focus on academic outcomes.



Empowering families

with the knowledge, resources, and confidence to advocate for their child's learning can significantly increase academic outcomes.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Families build a deeper understanding of the critical role they play in driving academic outcomes and the importance of attending school regularly.
- 2 Families learn specifically how to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom and incorporate reading into their daily lives.
- 3 Families are provided the resources to extend learning outside the classroom.
- 4 Families understand the value that reading, conversations, and storytelling play in building their child's knowledge and language skills.
- 5 Families develop strong and sustained relationships within their school.

A photograph of a woman, a young girl with braids, and another woman sitting at a table in a classroom. They are looking at a drawing on a piece of paper. The woman on the right is smiling and looking at the girl. The girl is looking at the drawing. The woman on the left is holding the paper. The background shows a classroom with shelves and a window.

“

Families are learning and having critical conversations about things that they can do to not only supplement what their children are learning in school, but **how to be a part of the academic process with their child.**

— Jessica V. Dreher, Ed.D., Director of Student Services, Thomasville City Schools



Welcoming and engaging all

students and their families begins with creating inviting and responsive learning environments.



“

The protagonist in every story [in the Rising Voices: Empowering Girls in STEAM Library] is a girl or a woman. I think that’s great, because it gives the girls a **feeling of pride** and it also encourages them in knowing that **they can do any and everything**.

— Dr. Emma Epps, NABSEF Chair, retired Superintendent, Ecorse Public Schools, Ecorse, MI

OUTCOMES

- 1 Students perceive their classrooms as more inviting, relatable, and engaging.
- 2 Educators are supported with the resources that make the classroom more welcoming and instruction more culturally relevant.
- 3 Classrooms become more positive, empathetic, and productive environments.
- 4 Students improve as readers when given the opportunity to choose from books that include a range of diverse storylines, characters, or settings.
- 5 Students improve attitudes, behavior, and relationships with peers and teachers.

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and blue patterned tie is sitting and reading a book to a group of children. He is wearing glasses and has a mustache. The book he is holding has colorful illustrations of children and a teacher. The background shows a classroom setting with bookshelves.

“

The R.E.A.L. program has shifted the culture in the classroom. **The volunteers bring fresh energy, patience, and enthusiasm to our school.** Our students enjoy the read-alouds and the teachers enjoy a break, which helps manage burnout.

— Phyllis McKissack, Family Resource Coordinator,
Harrison Elementary School, Lexington, KY



Partnering with the community and organizations

expands your literacy and
responsive instruction capacity.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Students are provided with more opportunities to make meaningful connections with adults in the community at school as literacy partners.
- 2 Through embedded dialogic strategies, volunteers help students improve their relationship with reading through interactive read-alouds, modeling by adults, and literacy-focused mentoring.
- 3 Students display improved cognitive, social, emotional, and academic skills.
- 4 Students become more deeply engaged in reading—in and out of the classroom.

How we know this approach works.

We collaborated with Camden City Schools to create a comprehensive approach to connecting the classroom, families, and community to create a literacy ecosystem in which all feel seen, heard, and valued.

CASE STUDY AT A GLANCE

DISTRICT: Camden City Schools

DISTRICT GOAL:
Increase student enrollment and decrease chronic absenteeism



17 Schools



6,956 Students

54% Latino
43% Black
1% White
2% Other

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- Professional learning for educators and family operations coordinators
- Ongoing support for district and school leaders and family operations coordinators
- Asynchronous grade-specific professional development for teachers
- In-person and virtual learning sessions for families and community members

Read the full case study at [scholastic.com/research](https://www.scholastic.com/research)

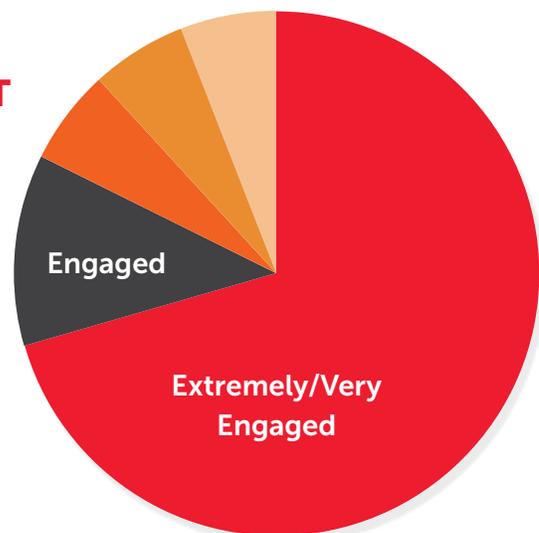
OUTCOMES

1. Volunteer community mentors forged strong, trusting relationships with students centered around literacy.
2. Students grew more engaged in and excited about their learning.
3. Students reported a stronger sense of belonging at school.
4. School staff saw increased engagement and cross-divisional collaboration among their peers.
5. Students and families expanded their access to books and learning resources.

READ-ALOUDS DRIVE ENGAGEMENT

How engaged were your students during the mentor read-alouds?

- Extremely/Very Engaged (70.6%)
- Engaged (11.8%)
- Somewhat Engaged (5.9%)
- I'm Not Sure (5.9%)
- Not Engaged (5.9%)



Studies consistently demonstrate a strong positive relationship between engagement and performance across diverse populations.¹ Schools in the top quartile of student engagement had a **170% higher rate** of students exceeding progress in reading than students in the bottom quartile.²

SCHOLASTIC SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES USED IN CAMDEN

ELEVATE STAFF

- Professional Learning Family and Community Engagement Best Practices
- Professional Learning Product Implementation

EMPOWER FAMILIES

- My Books Every Day
- School Success and School Readiness Kits

WELCOME AND ENGAGE ALL

- Scholastic Literacy Pro
- Rising Voices

PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY

- Scholastic R.E.A.L.
- Scholastic Literacy Events

1. Marks, H. M. (2000). Student engagement in instructional activity: Patterns in the elementary, middle, and high school years. *American Educational Research Journal*. 2. Gallup (2019). Engagement and Hope Positively Influence Student Outcomes, key findings from Gallup's Student Poll.

Solutions and Services

ELEVATE STAFF		pp. 10–11	
SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES	DESCRIPTION		
Consultative Planning and Coaching	We partner with district leaders to create a shared vision and strategic plan that integrates family engagement as a core strategy for improving student achievement.		
Family Engagement Assessment	Through this collaborative process, we measure your school's capacity to foster effective home-school partnerships. We provide insights and tailored recommendations to strengthen and prioritize family engagement practices.		
Dr. Karen L. Mapp's Family Engagement Series	Explore family engagement core beliefs, review current practices, and develop a plan to build relational trust, create a welcoming environment, and engage families as valued learning partners.		
Family and Community Engagement Professional Learning Courses	Our professional development offerings are designed to meet you at your current stage, whether you're starting to build strong home-school connections or looking to deepen and enhance your existing efforts. We have a range of topics including, but not limited to: building foundational practices of family engagement, implementing capacity-building literacy events, and even increasing student attendance through fostering effective home-school partnerships.		

EMPOWER FAMILIES		pp. 12–13	
SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES	DESCRIPTION		
Read and Rise	An event-based program that teaches families how to draw on their culture and strengths to support their child's literacy growth.		
My Books Every Day	A books-to-home literacy program that encourages a personal connection to reading, supports the Dual Capacity-Building Framework, and nurtures the relationship between families and schools.		
School Readiness Kit	Bilingual English/Spanish kit with more than 80 activities and resources to help families prepare their children for kindergarten—both academically and socially.		
School Success Kit	Bilingual English/Spanish kit encourages families to make learning a part of their daily routine. Books and activities support early reading instruction and home-to-school connection.		
Grab and Go Take-Home Packs	Take-home book packs with literacy activities to build home libraries and keep students reading year-round.		
Scholastic BookFlix	A unique paired fiction and nonfiction ebook library for PreK–3 kids.		
Scholastic Teachables	An online hub of 30,000 ready-to-use printable learning resources for every subject and skill.		

WELCOME AND ENGAGE ALL

pp. 14–15



SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES	DESCRIPTION
Rising Voices	Classroom libraries and instructional resources comprised of authentic fiction and nonfiction texts that give context to today's world while celebrating the stories of the historically underrepresented.
Our Stories Decodables	Culturally relevant decodable texts that celebrate diverse voices and elevate foundational skills through targeted phonics practice.
Scholastic Magazines+	Print and digital classroom magazines for every grade and subject engage students and build literacy skills.
Byron V. Garrett Life and Literacy Skills Library	Grade-level libraries for PreK–5 designed to integrate life and literacy skills lessons into whole-class, paired, and independent reading.
Culturally Responsive Collections	Each collection offers an authentic representation of diverse cultures and abilities—so every student gets to see themselves in the books they read while learning to understand and empathize with the experiences of others. A Teacher's Guide accompanies each collection.
Scholastic Literacy Pro	A blended reading management tool and ebook library to motivate students, track reading gains, and inform instruction.
Our Community: Haitian Heritage	A collection of culturally affirming books in Haitian Creole/English and English that offers a wide range of stories celebrating Haitian experiences in Haiti and the United States. Also available as take-home book packs.

PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY

pp. 16–17



SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES	DESCRIPTION
Scholastic R.E.A.L.	A literacy-based, interactive read-aloud mentoring program that gives you everything you need to recruit and equip members of your community to support students' academic success and build their home libraries.
Read and Rise	An event-based program that teaches families how to draw on their culture and strengths to support their child's literacy growth.
Scholastic Literacy Events	Developed with Dr. Karen Mapp, these 90-minute activity event kits help educators empower families to extend learning at home with innovative reading and writing activities.
Getting Started with R.E.A.L.	Participants learn how to develop and maintain a year-long implementation plan for R.E.A.L., preparing them to support mentors, teachers, and families across the community.
Getting Started with Read and Rise	Participants learn how to use Read and Rise to raise awareness of the specific literacy needs of children from diverse backgrounds and celebrate the valuable assets that all families bring to educational spaces.



Together,
we can get every
student **“here.”**

Connect with us to learn more at [scholastic.com/engage](https://www.scholastic.com/engage)

 **SCHOLASTIC**

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