

Using Evidence-Based Practices to Address Chronic Absenteeism for Underserved Populations



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Chronic absenteeism is a challenge that cuts across all populations of students. However, research consistently shows that students from traditionally underserved populations experience higher rates of chronic absenteeism compared with their peers ([Learning Policy Institute, 2022](#)). To help address this issue, the Student Engagement and Attendance Center (SEAC) held a Learning Series to highlight how state and local education agencies can use evidence-based practices to boost attendance among underserved students.

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The series focused on underserved student populations, including English language and multilingual learners, highly mobile students, indigenous students and communities, students with disabilities, and unhoused students. Among other topics, participants learned how Washington’s Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides attendance supports for American Indian/Alaska Native students, where to find resources on evidence-based practices shown to improve attendance, and considerations for implementing these practices at the state and district levels.

OSPI provides a variety of attendance supports to native students in Washington State, working closely with the [Office of Native Education](#) (ONE) and [State Tribal Education Compact Schools](#) (STECs). OSPI collaborated with ONE and the schools and districts that comprise STECs to deepen collective knowledge about attendance challenges that native students and communities face. An important part of this work included improving the representation of native students in data collected on attendance and other indicators.

OSPI also worked closely with ONE and STECs to develop a range of culturally sensitive attendance and engagement supports. These include home visits and outreach by staff who have cultural credibility with native students and their families, creation of affinity groups and afterschool clubs for native students, project-based learning such as a youth film project on attendance, and curriculum co-design with Tribal elders and members.

Learning Series participants also received suggestions on where to find evidence-based practices to strengthen attendance and how to adapt them for underserved students. SEAC staff highlighted resources available through the [What Works Clearinghouse](#) and examples of specific evidence-based practices. The latter included approaches such as “nudge” communications to encourage attendance, school-based health centers to reduce health-related absences, the [Check and Connect](#) dropout prevention program, and early warning indicators to target preventive interventions. Also featured was Connecticut’s [Learner Engagement and Attendance Program](#) (LEAP), an effort that uses home visits to reduce chronic absenteeism in 15 school districts.

SEAC provides numerous tools and resources for state education agencies, local education agencies, school districts, and school teams to address chronic absenteeism. Explore [our website](#) for other SEAC resources on chronic absenteeism, and visit this blog for updates on our work.

Disclaimer

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Federal resources	Nonfederal resources
What Works Clearinghouse (published by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance)	Check and Connect dropout prevention program Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) Learning Policy Institute. (2022, September 28). Attendance Is An Essential Ingredient for Educational Equity . Office of Native Education (ONE) State Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs)
