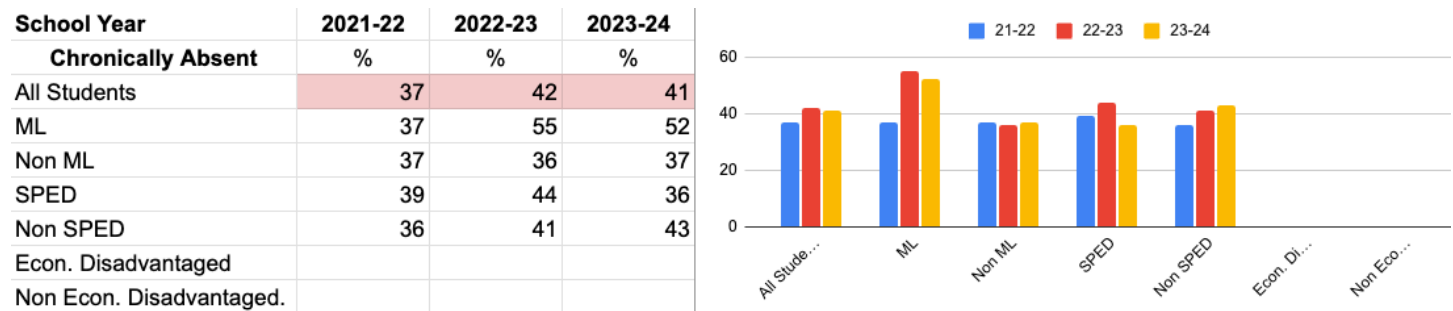# Heartland Elementary Attendance Plan
2024-25

At Heartland Elementary, we believe that a **sense of belonging** is the cornerstone of both academic success and personal growth. Historically, about 41% of our students miss 10 or more school days each year, a statistic that research shows significantly impacts their academic achievement. Our 2024-25 attendance plan focuses on increasing daily attendance from 90% to 95% by fostering a supportive, inclusive environment where every student feels valued and connected. By addressing barriers such as illness, childcare responsibilities, and transportation issues, and implementing initiatives like attendance buddies and monthly class incentives, we aim to create a school culture that prioritizes student well-being and engagement. This holistic approach ensures that all students have the opportunity to thrive academically and socially, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for our entire school community.

Current Barriers

The following were barriers identified through our CARES committee based on outreach to families over the years.

- Illness
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Discomfort at school
- Transportation issues
- Family vacations

Baseline Data

School Year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Chronically Absent	%	%	%
All Students	37	42	41
ML	37	55	52
Non ML	37	36	37
SPED	39	44	36
Non SPED	36	41	43
Econ. Disadvantaged			
Non Econ. Disadvantaged.			

Chronic Absenteeism by Grade Level	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025 Goals
Kindergarten	41	38	40	35
First Grade	47	42	38	35
Second Grade	40	40	46	33
Third Grade	47	43	48	35
Fourth Grade	22	61	37	35
Fifth Grade	37	36	52	32
Sixth Grade	31	42	41	35

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
K	41	38	40
1	47	42	38
2	40	40	46
3	47	43	48
4	22	61	37
5	37	36	52
6	31	42	31

Celebrations!

Last year Heartland reduced the number of students who are receiving special education services who were chronically absent from 44% in 2022-23 to 36% in 2023-24!

Attendance Goals

- Reduce Chronic absenteeism to 35%
- Achieve a 90% average daily attendance rate by the end of the school year.

Engage Stakeholders

- Students:
    - Increase a sense of belonging by:
    - Attendance Buddies: Pair students with attendance buddies (both adult and peer) to foster connections and support.
    - Monthly Class Incentives: Offer class incentives for the highest attendance each month (e.g., pizza parties, extra recess) to build a sense of community and team spirit.
- Parents:
    - Host workshops on the importance of regular attendance and strategies to manage common barriers.
    - Maintain regular communication through newsletters, texts, and meetings to emphasize the theme of belonging.
- Staff:
    - Provide training on recognizing and addressing signs of discomfort among students.
    - Encourage teachers to create a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment.
    - Focused committee meetings focusing on attendance and Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS).

Step 4: Implement Strategies Addressing Barriers

- Positive Reinforcement:

- Reward systems for perfect or improved attendance (e.g., certificates, small prizes).
  - Publicly recognize students with good attendance in assemblies or newsletters, reinforcing the idea that every student is valued.
- Support for Illness:
  - Educate parents and students on hygiene practices to reduce sickness.
  - Collaborate with local health services to provide flu vaccinations at school.
- Babysitting Issues:
  - Partner with local community organizations to offer support for families in need of childcare.
- Comfort at School:
  - Implement social-emotional learning programs to help students feel more comfortable and valued.
  - Increase availability of counselors and create safe spaces within the school to foster a sense of belonging.
- Transportation:
  - Work with local transportation services to ensure reliable access to school.
  - Consider providing school transportation for students in need.
- Vacations:
  - Educate parents on the impact of vacations on their child's learning.
  - Offer make-up work plans for families planning vacations during the school year.

Step 5: Monitor and Evaluate

- Data Tracking:
  - Use attendance software to monitor daily attendance and identify trends.
  - Set up alerts for students with frequent absences.
- Communication:
  - Regularly update families and the school community on progress towards short-term and long-term goals.
  - Use newsletters, social media, and school meetings to share updates, emphasizing the theme of belonging.
- Regular Reviews:
  - Hold monthly meetings with staff to review attendance data and discuss progress.
  - Adjust strategies based on feedback and data.

Next Steps:

Use a Diamond Tiered Model to ensure we are addressing the needs of *all* students.

Tier 1: Universal Strategies- ALL kids ALL Families

1. Create a Positive Attendance Culture where everyone feels that they belong:
   - Launch a school-wide attendance awareness campaign starting in September.
   - Set up attendance rewards and recognitions (e.g., certificates, announcements, small prizes).

- Involve students in setting personal attendance goals.
  2. Parent Engagement:
     - Regularly communicate the importance of attendance through newsletters, social media, and parent-teacher meetings.
     - Provide parents with resources and tips to ensure their children attend school regularly.
  3. Classroom Strategies:
     - Implement engaging classroom activities to make students excited about coming to school.
     - Use morning meetings to emphasize the importance of being present and on time.

Tier 2: Targeted Interventions- SOME (Student with 10+ absences)

1. Early Identification:
   - Monitor attendance data weekly to identify students with 10 absences.
   - Send personalized letters or make phone calls to parents of these students.
2. Mentorship Programs:
   - Pair students with emerging attendance issues with a staff mentor who can check in regularly.
   - Create small attendance support groups or clubs.
3. Incentive Programs:
   - Offer additional incentives for students who improve their attendance over a specific period.
   - Organize attendance challenges within classes or grades to foster healthy competition.

Tier 3: Intensive Support- FEW (Students with 20+ absences)

1. Individualized Plans:
   - Develop personalized attendance improvement plans for students with 20 or more absences.
   - Involve parents, students, and staff in creating these plans.
2. Community Resources:
   - Connect families with community resources that address barriers to attendance (e.g., transportation, healthcare, counseling).
   - Partner with local organizations to provide additional support services.
3. Intensive Monitoring and Follow-Up:
   - Assign a dedicated attendance officer or counselor to track and support chronically absent students.
   - Conduct regular home visits or virtual meetings to discuss progress and challenges.