

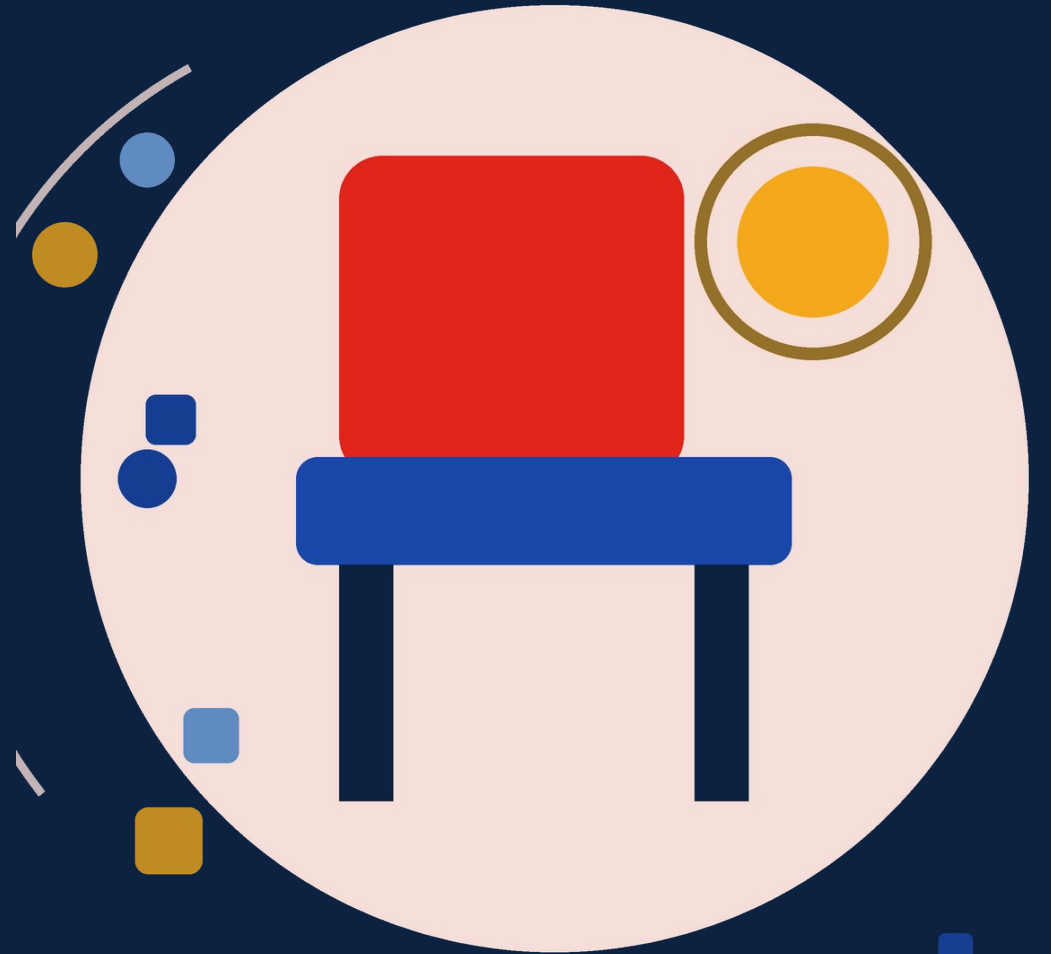


Administrators • K-12

No Empty Seats: Four Commitments for Leaders

What standard should our district hold itself to on attendance?

10 slides • 2 handouts • evidence from Schools Spared, Children Punished and the Attendance Science™ research base



A public standard on one page

“

No Empty Seats distills a decade of research into four commitments districts, states and policymakers can be measured against. It fits on a single page precisely because the evidence behind it is deep.

Source: Attendance USA, No Empty Seats National Position Statement



Every story in this series is a composite or a published case. Names are invented.



What school leaders are asking

What standard should our district hold itself to on attendance?

1

Initiatives pile up without changing enforcement-first policy.

2

Staff learn new language while old protocols stay in force.

3

Boards want outcomes, not activity.



Shared words before shared work



Commitment 1 and 2

Classify before you
consequence. Measure the
bond, not just the seat.



Commitment 3

Respond strengths-first with
SALT, before any enforcement
escalation.



Commitment 4

Coordinate across every system,
with an owner for every seam.



The numbers behind the moment

36+

state ESSA plans include chronic absenteeism as an accountability indicator

*Attendance USA Attendance Intelligence Briefs, Aug to Oct 2026
(primary-source checked)*

18 states

adopted the goal to cut 2022 chronic absence in half by 2027

*Attendance USA Attendance Intelligence Briefs, Aug to Oct 2026
(primary-source checked)*

~22-24%

national chronic absence, still well above the pre-pandemic 13-15%

*RAND ASDP (2025); AEI Return to Learn Tracker (Malkus, 2026);
FutureEd (2026)*



Match the response to the reason

Classify

Policy requires a conversation before any formal step.

Measure

Adopt PSSB alongside attendance codes.

Respond

SALT plans before escalation.

Coordinate

Named owners for every seam.



Three moves you can make this week

01

Cost: \$0

Replace, do not add

Revise policy so the four commitments replace enforcement-first steps.

02

Cost: \$0

Sequence the rollout

Classification first, then PSSB, then SALT once staff trust the classification step.

03

Cost: \$0

Track local evidence

Record category, intervention and 90-day outcome for each case.



A PRESENCE™ prompt for your building



Problem definition



Research evidence



Environmental context



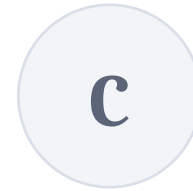
Statistical analysis



Equity assessment



Network and partnership



Compliance and legal



Evidence-based
recommendations

YOUR PROMPT

Score your current policy against each commitment: present, partial or absent. That scorecard is your board's starting point.



Common missteps, and how you will know it works



Layering training onto unchanged policy



Rushing past resistance; it is where durable change happens



Reporting activity counts instead of outcomes

LEADING INDICATOR • Moves first

Policy alignment with the four commitments

LAGGING INDICATOR • Confirms it worked

Chronic absence and referrals avoided



Join 1,000 Seats at the national table

Scan to take your seat: free membership in Attendance USA and the weekly Attendance Intelligence Brief, with new research, policy across the states, and tools from the field of Attendance Science™.

QUESTIONS info@attendanceusa.org

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HANDOUTS Seat Card (A) and Find Your Data worksheet (B)

KEEP GOING IN THIS SERIES

Seat 21: Policy That Classifies

Seat 22: Climate Is an Attendance Strategy

Seat 23: Discipline That Keeps Students Present



Take Your Seat

1,000 Seats campaign

Every seat filled is one more person working to make showing up possible.

