TEACH +PLUS **Addressing the Issue of Chronic Absenteeism**
from Teach Plus CO 2023-2024 Policy Fellows

The Issue: Chronic Absenteeism in CO

- In Colorado in 2022-2023, 31.1% of students were considered chronically absent.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- Chronic Absenteeism affects every student demographic. Some students may be absent far more often regardless of race or socioeconomic status. There is no statistically significant correlation between district chronic absenteeism rates and Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) Percentage in a district or BOCES.

"Chronically absent" is defined by the CDE as "a student absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled during the school year. All absences are included – unexcused, excused and suspensions. The rate is the percentage of students enrolled who are chronically absent." (2)
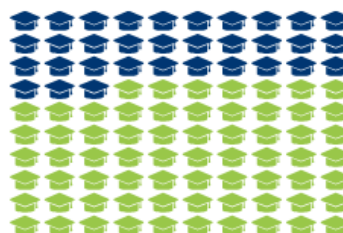
each graduation cap in blue represents a student absent 10% or more of the school year across the state of CO

FACT:

41% of students chronically absent in Kindergarten **OR** 1st grade were unable to read at grade level after 3rd grade.
17% of students chronically absent in Kindergarten **AND** 1st grade were unable to read at grade level after 3rd grade.
Reading level is **HIGHLY** correlated with drop-out rates and post-secondary options. (3)

The Problem: No Normed Data on Absence Reasons

Attendance rates differ across Colorado districts due to the lack of standardized codes and consistent methods for collecting excused absence data. There are about 40 different codes in attendance monitoring systems (i.e. Infinite Campus) that are not normed throughout districts. Norming attendance codes would provide consistency across all districts. In addition, we recommend a statewide standard for reporting Excused Absence reasons, disaggregated data by reason, and percentage categories. It is likely that different issues impact different districts and BOCES. Knowing core issues and factors can and should influence response options.

The Solution: Research Backed Actions

- Include absentee rates into the existing integrated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (iMTSS)
- Stipend teachers for home visits for >25% absentee rate
- Educate families and school personnel on the impact of chronic absenteeism (Postcards, letters/emails, and statewide ad campaign)
- Coordinate with District and Regional Transportation Departments for reliable bus schedules, staffing, and bonuses
- Facilitate community and school mentoring partnerships to provide additional guidance and resources for students.
- Incorporate relevant and culturally appropriate curriculum
- CDE adds Chronic Attendance % in UIP Template