

Alright, and just to make sure everybody is in the right Learning Series, this is the Student Engagement and Attendance Centers Co-Creating Solutions Addressing Engagement and Attendance Challenges with Historically Underserved Populations. This is our third session of three, Working At The Community and School Level to Co-Create Engagement Strategies with Historically Underserved Populations.

Thanks again to everyone to everyone for for joining us this afternoon or late morning, depending on where you're calling in from. Next slide. We also like to thank all of the our colleagues who make our Learning Series possible, starting, of course, with our colleagues from the Department of Education who fund SEAC.

So to thank Dr. Tracey Scott, Bryan Keohane, and Liz Lembo. These are our project officers and other key department staff who work with us and make all of SEAC's work possible. I'm Jarle Crocker. I'm the project director. We're also joined by Sarah Frazelle, who's my counterpart, co-project director from the American Institutes for Research, and a big thank you to all the Westat and AIR staff who are going to facilitate our breakouts and who are also running the series behind the scenes and make sure that everything goes smoothly and that we can make these Learning Series go.

Thank you again for all your help and support. Next slide. So again, this is our third session out of three. You'll be receiving all of the slides and other materials that are presented as a part of this session in a thank you follow up email that goes out a few days after our series, and you should have also, if you registered for the other sessions, received those emails along with the slides and the materials from session one and session two.

Alright just to review the overall Learning Series objectives, we have three overarching purposes for this particular learning series. The first is to understand the historical context and systemic barriers to engagement with school systems that are faced by underserved populations. One of the themes that we've been pulling through this series is the helping the audience gain an understanding of the Dual Capacity Framework and how it can be applied to enhance collaboration with underserved populations and empower families and schools.

And third, we're focusing on helping all of the attendees develop strategies to foster authentic and equitable partnerships between families and schools within underserved communities. Next slide. So our three specific objectives for this session today are first of all to identify strategies to co-create engagement with

historically underserved populations at the school in ways that are authentic and collaborative.

Second, explore ways that state and local education agencies may support community and school level strategies. And third, connect practitioners with peers to discuss strategies and share resources. So we want to make sure all of you share with each other. So we want to hear in the breakouts about your examples of work that's going on in your state, your district, and your school.

Next slide. We are just wrapping up our introduction right on time, then I'm going to turn it over to my colleague from AIR, David Blumenthal, to introduce our panel who are going to talk about co-creating engagement strategies at the school level. We'll have about 25 minutes in breakout groups to discuss the presentation and also the work that you're doing in your states and districts and schools, and then we'll have about five minutes to wrap up at the end.

So with that, I want to pass the mic to my colleague, David Blumenthal. David, take it away. Thank you very much, Jarle, and thank you all for attending on. It's a very hot day for us around the country. So I really appreciate all of you taking the time to attend the session. This is, as Jarle mentioned, the 3rd in our Learning Series, a three part learning series on co-creating engagement strategies with historically underserved populations. We use the term historically underserved populations throughout the series to refer to groups or individuals that have historically not been served well by public educational systems.

It's not our intent to list and offer guidance on all such populations. They are listed here on the screen, as you can see, as examples. The populations often differ from one context to another. It's often the local context that really is key in determining which community or population may be underserved.

And so, as a consequence, these populations cannot necessarily be generalized to all areas. We are drawing this definition from the 2021 Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, Section 2B.

The term underserved communities refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

This is exemplified by the list as well as the definition that appears in the Executive Order for equity.

There's been a lot of extensive research and data collected by both the U. S. Department of Education and by many of you that are on this call, your state departments of education and local area, local educational agencies that have shown that there are persistent gaps in access to opportunities and programs.

There's also gaps in academic achievement and disproportionate use of disciplinary and exclusionary practices that are faced by underserved populations, such as the ones we're seeing here. These systemic inequities over time contribute to disengagement from and often distrust of public educational systems.

Our whole Learning Series is designed to address various ways in which public educational systems can engage with and co-create strategies to improve educational outcomes for students from historically underserved populations. And that includes a lot of focus on student attendance. Today, in our third session, will be featuring a bit of a hybrid approach to our panel.

We reached out to Dr. Jessica Dace and Mr. Colin Jones, assistant principal and principal, respectively, at the Rena B. Wright Primary School in Chesapeake, Virginia, and we're joined today by Ms. Yvette Lagares, who is the coordinator of student enrollment and attendance at Chesapeake Public Schools. In our first session, we heard from Dr.

Karen Mapp and Dr. Shadae Thomas Harris talking about the Dual Capacity Framework, and how that framework helps understand ways in which you can co-create strategies for improving educational outcomes, including student attendance with underserved populations. In our second session, we were joined by Statewide Family Engagement Center from the U.S. Department of Education from throughout the country.

I saw that Kayla Benson, I saw her jump in as one of those grantees that we featured in a panel in our second session. So we had a theoretical understanding of how this work can be accomplished. We've had practical examples of how statewide approaches can be taken in collaboration with states and local educational agencies.

Today, we're going to take a more intentional focus on how these strategies play out in a school setting and a district setting. And so we're joined today by these

three panelists to help present their experience with addressing attendance issues and co-creating engagement strategies. Dr.

Jessica Dace earned her bachelor's in marketing and her master's in elementary education from Hampton University. In May 2021, she earned her doctorate in K–12 leadership from Regent University. She's worked for Chesapeake Public Schools for 16 years and has experience in teaching primary and intermediate grades.

She was also awarded the Teacher of the Year in 2015. She served as an assistant principal at Chittim Elementary School for three years and was part of the administration team that helped the school to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. Well, this is the end.

Actually, just last week was the end of her first year serving as the principal of the Rena B. Wright Primary School. Mr. Colin Jones brings 24 years of experience in the field of education. His roles have included serving as a teacher in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade, has been a Title One instructional coach and technology integration specialist. In 2007,

Mr. Jones was recognized as Chesapeake's Elementary Teacher of the Year. Over the past five years, Mr. Jones has held the position of school administrator, sorry, school administrator with three years at the middle school and two, the last two years at Rena B. Wright Primary School. We're also joined today by Ms. Yvette Lagares, who served as the City of Chesapeake for over 20 years.

In 2013, she obtained her master's in education from Old Dominion University and transitioned to Chesapeake Public Schools in 2014. Her previous roles in the community and judicial system have helped her develop a broad perspective on student absenteeism and the struggles that some families face.

Currently, she helps coordinate Chesapeake Public Schools Division's attendance efforts and truancy process. She's dedicated to helping provide equity in education by helping to remove obstacles to school attendance. During our panel presentation today, our panelists are going to provide a story on the experience that they're having addressing attendance challenges and co-creating engagement strategies.

I have a few questions I'm also going to ask of them, so it's going to be a little bit different than a typical panel. And so to get us started, what I'd like to do is turn things over to Ms. Lagares, who's going to tell us a little bit about Chesapeake Public Schools. Ms. Lagares.

I'm always that person. Hi, everyone. I'm Yvette Lagares. I work for Chesapeake Public Schools, as was already stated, and it is a pleasure to be here with you today. I'm going to give you a brief introduction to Chesapeake Public Schools. We are located in the state of Virginia in the southeastern corner. I always have to do my little compass rose southeastern region of Virginia.

Our city is very unique demographically in that it borders urban centers, suburban areas and rural areas. We border the cities of Virginia Beach, always a great place to visit, Norfolk, Virginia, Portsmouth, and Suffolk. And we are also bordered by the state of North Carolina to our south. I literally can throw a stone and I'd be in North Carolina right now. We are a military town and a hundred percent of our schools are Purple Star Schools. They're accredited in that regard. We serve a culturally and social economically diverse population. Geographically speaking, here's a little fun fact, we are the large, 11th largest city in the United States, geographically speaking, but population wise, we're substantially smaller than a lot of big urban centers. We have a lot of urban issues. And we also have a lot of suburban and rural issues. Rena B. Wright is unique because it is in a more urbanly developed area of the city, a more historic area of the city.

We can go on to the next slide. Our division, we serve over 40,000 students and employ approximately 5,700 people. We are the eighth largest school division in the state. And congratulations to us. I actually fact checked today. We're actually the seventh largest, so we just grew today. Our schools, we operate seven high schools, 10 middle schools and 28 elementary schools.

We divide our city up into what we call boroughs. Our elementary and middle school, we have a feeder pattern and they go into the seven different high schools. And we like to address some of the issues by our boroughs. Our elementary schools, I'm a northern girl myself, and this wasn't the model for us in New York, but our elementary schools here consist of primary schools, intermediate, and elementary schools.

So it's unique to look at some of our primary schools, such as Rena B. Wright, because they serve Pre-K through second grade, our intermediate tend to be third, fourth, and fifth. Again, that's a model in this city, and it isn't even consistent throughout the state of Virginia. We're one of the few cities that does that here.

Title I, we have 14 Title I schools, 13 elementary, Rena B. Wright happens to be one of them, and one middle school. We can go to the next slide. And I'm

going to hand this off to Mr. Jones, who can speak about Rena B. Wright's makeup.

Mr. Jones, my dear friend, I believe you're muted.

I'm going to be having a few I think which is getting Mr. Jones on the call. I'm wondering if Mr. Harris, could you tell us a little bit about that until we can get a little bit more about green to be white primary school until we get Mr. Jones connected with his audio again. I certainly can. We hear you.

Mr. Jones.

Oh, boy. That's a bummer. Would you like me to? Yeah, go ahead. Mr. Gary. Sorry about that. Our fall membership by race and ethnicity for we're going to be right for the 23 school year 59.4 percent african american black 16.2 percent white 12.9 percent hispanic which is a growing sector in our city and it's doubled, if not tripled, over the last couple years and 10.7 percent multiple races in 2023. Our fall membership by free and reduced meal eligibility Rena B. Wright had 90.9 percent So let's just say 91 percent of our student body at Rena B. Wright qualified for free and reduced meal eligibility.

I'm back. Can you hear me yet? No. Okay. Yeah, there you are. That's great. Wonderful. Thank you. All right. My little box isn't lighting up, so I got a little worried there. But thank you, Ms. Lagares for stepping in there. Rena B. Wright, as you can see the numbers up there, we're actually a very diverse population.

One footnote is that we are maybe the smallest school in Chesapeake. If not the second smallest school of Chesapeake, it is like maybe like two or three kids difference there. Our enrollment, as you can see on the next slide here, has generally stayed the same over the past three years. It has kind of ticked down a little bit now.

In the attendance world, that definitely plays a huge part because now each one of our students carry such a large percentage of their attendance. So in another school, two students may not make that much of a difference, but in ours it makes a ton, it makes the world. But like I said, our enrollment right now is 271 students.

That's both from pre-K all the way to second grade. But our chronically absentee numbers also have kind of ticked up a little bit since COVID, as everybody can see, and I'm sure everybody has experienced that as well. What

we're going to share today are the strides that we've taken to try to combat our chronically absent students.

What we really start to see is that we need to have that grassroots, and we need to get to our families while they're in pre-K and kindergarten. Next slide. You know, there's so many different challenges that you could take on when, you know, there's a new school administration and so I think one of the questions we had when we first started talking about your experience at Rena B.

Wright and talking with Dr. Dace and you, Mr. Jones, was why attendance was the main priority that appeared for you. So this year, attendance was such a large priority because as you saw on the previous slide, our chronic 29.6 percent give or take. So rounding that up to 30 percent of our students being chronically absent. Being a first year principal and understanding the importance of primary education and education in general, but especially those foundational skills, we decided that it was really important to target that so that we could hopefully get more bodies in the seats, build our family engagement.

As well as our student engagement. And the way we did that was by targeting actually focusing on our climate and creating a warm and inviting environment for our families. After COVID, families weren't really, or during COVID, families weren't really allowed to come in the schools. They were discouraged from entering the building.

And so we wanted to shift that narrative. And unfortunately, historically, Title I schools typically perpetuate the stereotype of a lower number of parental, I guess, parental involvement and engagement. So we wanted to create a warm, inviting atmosphere where they were welcome to come in and we did that by trying to revive our PTA this year, hosting events allowing them to volunteer in a variety of capacities so that they would be reintroduced to the school and to the school community as a whole.

The second goal when we looked at our attendance and why we chose, could you go back one slide for me, please? Why we chose to focus that is we really decided to harp on the students who were chronically absent the year before. Obviously, we only go to second grade, so our matriculation isn't as extended as a full elementary school, but we looked at the data from the previous year, and we said, "okay, what can we do?"

To prevent that from reoccurring" since those students already had been chronically absent previously next slide.

So we took a look at our action steps, and we tried to come up with ways to strategically attack the problem. And, like I mentioned before, as we disaggregated the data from the 2022-2023 school year, and we tried to look at how many absences were excused versus unexcused, how many went to truancy court, and just tried to be strategic with our messaging with our families informing them about the process, and the policies regarding attendance, and then targeting those families specifically. We solicited a variety of ideas from our stakeholders. We had a brainstorming session, if you will, and we talked about ways that we could leverage the community resources that were available to us and strategically implement some interventions to help reduce chronic absenteeism this year.

We talked to our colleagues during, we have principal PLC's and planning meetings, and we talked and said, "okay, well, what strategies have you all used? What worked for you, what didn't work for you?", and then utilized a lot of online resources, the Attendance Works website, and tailored those things to meet the needs of our population so that we could see if we could have some of the success with some of those research based interventions.

And lastly we coordinated with our Title I Family Support Specialists and we targeted 10 students. We picked some that had siblings that were chronically absent. We picked some that were chronically absent last year and we had her to target those 10 by touching bases with their parents and their families putting them in touch with resources that they may need, as well as checking in with each student each week, just to prioritize their attendance.

We utilize our school social worker with students who seem to be disengaged or shows signs of school aversion and not wanting to really be there, whether that was the result of prior experiences in school, or sometimes we know that students become disengaged if they're behind academically because they feel like they can't catch up.

And so we really tried to get to the root of the problem so that we could tackle that and hopefully impact our numbers in a positive way. Next slide, please. This led us to a few questions about the specific strategies that you're taking to address chronic absentees and Rena B. Wright Primary and one thing we really love to hear about is how you're collaborating with the local community and those families as you're engaging every student so that they're receiving consistent attendance supports.

Well, as you can see from our panel, we we utilize all resources if possible. And one of the big things we did is as I talked to Ms. Lagares and I said, okay, this is a problem we're having. It's pretty well known across the district because I'm almost positive we have the worst attendance, but how can we target our students and put some successful interventions into place?

And so after collaborating with other administrators other schools, we came up with some ideas that we wanted to institute this year. The first being our AttenDANCE. And so the AttenDANCE which Mr. Jones will elaborate on further was a way to incentivize students to attend school regularly with the hopes of attending a thematic party at the conclusion of of reaching their goal for that semester.

Short amount of time. And that was a short term goal that we felt that we would see a lot of success with because it was so brief and that would help to build that momentum. Another thing we did was Attendance Chat & Chews, which Ms. Lagares would speak on. And that was where we basically ran the report at the mid year, and we said, “okay, who is on track to unfortunately be chronically absent if they continue that pattern?” And we invited all of those parents to Attendance Chat & Chews. And so what that was is we gave them an invitation and in that invitation, we didn't give them an offer a chance to decline coming. We gave them forced choice and gave them three options and they had to pick one.

And so we gave them the evening, we gave them the morning, and we gave them virtual. And we collaborated with Ms. Lagares, our guidance counselor, and others to, to get that off of the ground. And she'll speak more to that when we get there. Another thing that we found that research showed was helpful with improving attendance with our Attendance Squad, which was a mentorship program that we instituted this year partnering with our military servicemen, since we are such a heavy military area, to help build that, I guess, that attendance and set those goals for our students because a lot of them need some strong influences, whether that's male or female in their lives to help build that consistency and build that rapport and relationship with coming to school.

I'll share more about that later. We utilize our platform, which is Thrillshare, which is a P. A. S. System that we have a third party app that Chesapeake Public Schools use. And we utilize that. I sent weekly text messages. And basically I would say we had this many students miss one or more days this week.

Parents don't forget to send in a note if your student was absent so that would hopefully cut down with a number of truancy cases that we had if students were out for legitimate reasons. And I also felt that it would keep attendance at the forefront of our parents brain, even if they were tired of getting the text messages, they knew where we were and they knew the importance of it.

And we always tried to end it, it was a very short limitation of number of characters only allowed, I think 120, and we always tried to end it with saying that we miss your students when they're not here so that they know that we're not just doing it to to be annoying, but we're doing it because we really care about their children as well.

Another thing that we implemented was the Roar Roll Call. And this one was from social media. I saw it and I was like, this is something that our kids will respond to. And with the Roar Roll Call is randomly throughout the day in the morning, either myself or Mr. Jones, we will play a roar over the announcement.

And we unfortunately did not get everybody in the pool. We targeted those kids who were at risk of being chronically absent. So Jimmy, who has perfect attendance, for example, he wasn't in that pool. I was trying to get my tardy kids and my chronically absent kids. And I played that roar and we picked their name out of a

bucket, essentially, and if they were here when their name was called, they got to get an ice cream from the cafeteria. And if they weren't, then we had a silhouette that was on the announcement and it was saying, Jimmy, we missed you yesterday. Your name was called on the announcements. Hopefully you'll be here the next time you're called. And for the students who were here, we took their picture with their ice cream and their "popsicle pass" is what we called it. You just have a little tiger on it with their name and they got to be featured on the announcements the next day. And lastly and unfortunately, this is not even the full comprehensive list of all the things that we've thrown at attendance this year.

The last one we did was Wake-Up Calls and this actually came from a teacher and I'll speak more on this later. But she came up with the idea after I shared our CSIP with the school And talked about some of the things that we wanted to focus on with attendance. She said well, why don't we do like hotels?

And give parents a wake-up call. And I said, tell me more. And she said, we can maybe call them every day. And it almost be like an alarm clock. And we can even sell it to the students who, for some reason, even in primary school has cell phones and say, you can have your number put in for the wake-up call.

And and from there we created a call list of families who'd opted in for wake-up calls. And I'll share a little bit more about that when we get to that slide as well. Next slide.

All right. So like Dr. Dace had said, we really started our attack on chronic absenteeism with this AttenDANCE. And actually it all stemmed from taking ideas from other schools that were kind of doing something similar. But we also paired it with a bike donation that we received from Horace Mann. Horace Mann is one of our financial institutions here that come and help teachers with retirement and things, and they like to get in and build relationships with the school.

So they had talked about donating a bicycle for a semester goal. And with our kids short term memory, that really wouldn't work. So we kind of took that idea, Dr. Dace and myself, and went out and kind of hit up some community partners or even found some use, some gently used bikes, on Facebook marketplace, let's say and, you know, made sure that we turned our lobby into what looked like a Walmart.

We had, we ended up, I think at one point having probably eight or nine bikes out there and the students would see it and the incentive kind of grew from there. The students really wanted to know how they can earn or win one of those bikes. So what we did is we started this AttenDANCE. So the AttenDANCE really just kind of encapsulates small goals.

So we. You only want it to look at maybe four weeks, okay? And every time a student came to school they had a little card with their name on it. And they would take a small sticker given to them by the teacher and they'd fill up that little sticker chart. Every time they've got five days, and it doesn't have to be consecutive.

If they get five days, five stickers, they were able to take a raffle ticket with their name on it and bring it down to the box right near the bikes. So essentially, if they were there for the 20 days, because we did within 20 days increments they had four opportunities to win a bicycle. And we would do the drawing at the AttenDANCE.

So really, we opened it up for anybody who was absent you know, no times in those 20 days or maybe one, the first time we did, I believe we said the goal was 18 days, and we must have had probably 190 kids in there. Our, I guess our attendance to the AttenDANCE was so high that we actually had to split it up into two areas by the time we did the second.

And it kind of worked, you know, you look at it, you say, okay, we want to make sure that it's structured. So we had one section where they danced, we had one, they had popsicles, another one, they played games. We even tried it outside. So we were always trying to keep the kids engaged and that, that was really what, our goal was to make sure they were interested.

That barrier of getting kids to school is our hardest one because it's almost out of our control. So what we have to do is make those kids want to be in school and they knew what was at stake. And we basically had a bike every single 20 days. We were able to wrap, raffle off to a child who was at the AttenDANCE or they didn't have to be at the AttenDANCE to win.

They just needed to make sure that they had those five days, but it really was a great jumpstart into our initiatives to tackle chronic absenteeism. Okay, next slide.

All right, so we're going to talk about the Attendance Chat & Chews. This was the brainchild of Dr. Dace in talking to other schools. Mr. Jones and Dr. Dace did a great job of collaborating with other schools and seeing what worked and what didn't work and how it could be adapted to the Rena B. Wright environment.

And she came up with a list of families that their students were either chronically absent or well on their way to be chronically absent. So, and brilliantly, we invited families and it was that forced choice, as Dr. Day said, it wasn't a, "Hey, will you join us?" It was, "What time can I sign you up for?" So it kind of pressed upon parents that, yeah, I really got to be there.

So we did two nights, I'm sorry. We did one night and one morning. So one evening pizza was provided and one morning coffee and some, you know, nice little donuts to get your day started, and if you couldn't attend either one, the option was, "Hey, when can I set up a private meeting then?" I think it's very important to note this.

Our first night was an evening and we had no parents show up. And it was a blow. It really was. But I think it's important for us all to remember we're gonna

fail. We're gonna fall. We need to pick ourselves back up. And yes, we every staff member that was there that night got to walk away with a whole pizza to themselves.

However, that didn't stop us, though. We didn't have parent participation that night. We learned a lesson. Okay, five o'clock, five thirty in the evening, our schools, our primary schools started approximately 7:30 in the morning, a 5:30 event for them, that's late. So we learned from it. And we went to our phones. We went to our emails.

We called these families and said, "Hey, I see that you couldn't make it tonight. Don't worry. We have a session tomorrow." So we didn't give up. We still had that continuous contact with them. And I am so happy to say that the next day for breakfast, we had families show. Several of which were actually on time.

And yes, it wasn't a crowd of 50 or 40, but we had a nice intimate conversation with approximately 10 to 12 families. And we had a variety of caregivers, biological parents, obviously, but we had grandparents that were raising their grandkids. We had parents that had, you know, this was a fifth kid in our school division.

We had one mom even share with us that. You know, I can't remember the child's name or when I share the child's name, but literally about, let's say literally that's mom shared, you know, "Hey, it's tough for me sometimes to get myself together. And because it's difficult for me to get myself together, to be in that right head space, it's difficult for me to get my child together."

And one of the best moments was when another parent turned to her and said, "You live on my court. If you want, I can walk your child to school." But it was that intimate conversation that we had with those families that we could actually see what their barriers were. Tell you that the reason why kids miss school is because there're barriers in the community, or there's misconceptions about the importance of school. Right there in that conversation, we could see those myths of, "It's just pre-K", or "It's just kindergarten."

We can see that play out in the conversation. Or when the families were talking about, "Hey, the bus is always late", or, "Hey, there was an incident over near the tracks yesterday. I'm not gonna have my kid wait by that bus stop." So, with them actually articulating to us what the problems were, we know what we can assist them with.

So it was a great event. And it really helped connect our families to us. And the other thing I feel is important to note about the Attendance Chat & Chew is that we were giving them information, we were telling them about why attendance matters and the resources that Chesapeake Public Schools has for them.

Because nine outta 10 times, if I have a kid that's newly enrolled or I need to enroll, I'm not gonna go to the website. I'm not going to call for information. I'm going to talk to my neighbor, Sally, and ask her, "Hey, you enrolled your kids. What do I have to do?" So by getting the correct information out there, we have now 10 to 15 parents that will disseminate that information for us.

So they're now acting as agents of the school.

Dr. Dace, if you can give us just a really brief overview of some of the other strategies that you've presented, I want to make sure that we give opportunities to our participants to ask a question or two before we move to breakout discussions. Sure. And just to kind of just to circle back to I guess, underline or define our population a little bit more.

We do have a large population of McKinney Vento students and a lot of our students reside in for-kids shelter. And so when Mr when Ms. Lagares spoke about, you know, we had 12 kids, that's 4 percent of our population, which can make a difference between being red and being yellow. So we were really pleased with the outcome of that.

And like I mentioned before, we had the attendance squad where we partner with a local church's military ministry. We trained the squad leaders and I will put the slides that we use for that training in the chat. And we did almost like a check in, check out with the students. And so once we had a meet and greet the church provided the donuts.

As far as community resources, I know a lot of schools are like, "well, where do you get the money?" We hit the ground running. Like, For our chat and chew, we gave out umbrellas and alarm clocks because I called Home Depot and said, "Hey, we're doing this for chronic absenteeism. What can you donate?" There are a lot of community businesses that want to help with schools and they don't know how, and they donated a 50 gift card that we went around, or Mr.

Jones went around Home Depot and got a whole bunch of umbrellas and alarm clocks for families as giveaways. So when we worked with this church, they hosted the, or they provided the food for the meet and greet, for the Chat

&Chew, Dunkin Donuts donated, Panera donated. Our squad leaders was what we called them.

The mentors, they came and they met with their mentees once a week during their lunchtime. They worked with their mentees to complete an interest survey. They also completed one that I'll share in the chat as well. And it's almost like a small little contract at the bottom where they agreed to serve for the rest of the year with their mentee.

If you go to the next slide, it shows an example of what our data tracking form looks like. And so I used our data quality or attendance secretary to complete a Google Sheet. And then I had our long term substitute who is often in the office and provides clerical support to quantify and write the points in.

So each week when the mentor met with their mentee, they saw how many points their student earned or their mentee earned. And so they earned five points for being on time and being at school. They earned three points for being late. And then obviously unless they had a note and it was excused, they got zero points for being absent.

We didn't penalize them if it was excused, and that was notated on the form as well. They had a folder, each student had a folder with their calendars in it that they decorated and they set a goal for the coming week. One of the success stories with this is we had a student who refused to get out of the car, who had a truancy order, and his, because of his mentor, he set a goal with his mentor.

He said he wanted pizza for lunch as his prize as part of his interest survey and his mentor said, "can I do pizza for the class?" And I said, "well, they have to get school lunch, but you can still do pizza for the class." And he earned perfect attendance the entire time that he was in this program because his.

His classmates were cheering him on because they wanted pizza, and then they wanted ice cream subsequently as the reward. So we found a lot of success with this program and look forward to extending it to support some of our behavior and social emotional goals of our students as well. If you go to the next slide, it's just some memos from the mentors where they just kind of provided some quotes.

At the end of the year, we sent out a feedback survey to our cooperating teachers, as well as our mentors to get some feedback on ways that we can improve the program. As you can see, they said that it allows them to stay

focused, coming every week and support some of their goals with their mentee if they get it right.

One of the, I guess, pastors who help facilitate the program, “If we get this thing right, we can save the lives of our service members and our future generations”, because a lot of times service members come back and they have a hard time finding purpose. And so, this program, it was a glowing success and something that, like I said before, that we look forward to continuing in the future.

If you go to the next slide, that talks about our Wake-Up Call. And I spoke briefly about that and we incentivize teachers. And we said, if you'd like to participate, you can earn a jeans pass. And I don't know about you guys, but our teachers love jeans. And so they recorded their online recording and I just.

Pick one and they had a wake-up word of the week at the end of it. And if the student came to the office who'd opted into the wake-up calls and shared that wake-up word of the week, once that week, they got to go into treasure chest and pick a prize. And they were super excited to share the word. And if that call didn't come or I forgot to send it, they reminded me and it came on Tuesday.

So, we look forward to continuing that as well. I don't know that we have time, but if, when you share the link out, If you click on the red phone, it is a sample of a wake-up call that we sent out on the last week of school, which is pretty hilarious as well. Yeah, we do share out those slides at the end of all of this, and so I encourage everyone to follow the link on the phone on that slide.

I really appreciate everything that you've been sharing Dr. Dace, Ms. Lagares, and Mr. Jones. I'm wondering if we could briefly discuss the next steps for what you're thinking about now that you've finished your first year and then we'll have further opportunities for participants to engage in a breakout discussion after that.

Just really quickly, we are looking at really disaggregating the data to see what worked and what didn't and how we can shift it tweak it to make it a little better, or what we need to phase out completely. We're also looking at ways to proactively address the needs of the whole student.

As Mr. Jones shared, there is a trend with our pre-K students and our kindergarten students having a larger number of chronically absent or absenteeism and so we're just trying to work on being proactive in that regard and then working with our community and building that family engagement.

We've started off with involvement because we had to kind of get them in the door. And so now we want to increase parent voice and allow them to have a stake in their students education and in the voice when coming into the building to make decisions and share their opinion and just continue to increase that.

All right, thank you so much Dr. Dace and Ms. Lagares and Mr. Jones. Really appreciate your perspective and all this. I know you have so many great resources to share as well and examples of how you've worked to engage and co-create strategies with your community, meeting them where they're at through Attendance Chat & Chew and the other approaches, the mentoring program and all of that.

What I'd like to do is move us to a breakout discussion. I'm looking at the clock and making sure that we get enough time to get all of you to be able to connect with each other. And I believe some of our panels will be able to join some of the breakout rooms as part of this opportunity. We'll also follow up with our panelists to ensure that any questions that are submitted are addressed and sent out as part of the follow up for this session.

We have a few breakout discussion questions we'd like all of you to use to facilitate conversations. What we're going to do now is move into those breakout rooms and then we'll get back together at 1:57 and wrap up our learning series. Well, thank you everyone for participating in the breakout discussions.

I know I had a really wonderful opportunity to meet with a few folks from around the country in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico in my breakout room, and I see a lot of people coming back into the main room. I'm looking at the time. We have just a few more minutes. So I want to go over our end of our breakout discussion items here. First of all, we'd love your feedback. You can take the QR code and follow the link or go into, I believe my colleague Latrelle has dropped into the chat box. Thanks Latrelle. The way to get to the feedback form for this session. We really value that feedback part of our data to understand how we're doing serving all of you who are attending these sessions. Next up, we have our next Learning Series in July. So after Independence Day, July 18th, 25th, and August 1st, we're going to discuss student and family engagement. So another opportunity to discuss ways in which education systems can address family engagement.

We'd love to hear from you. Please contact us. Taneco Reid is a part of our discussion today. Sorry, SEACenter@westat.com and my colleague

SarahFrazelle@air.org. If you're interested in working one-on-one with our subject matter experts, please get in touch with us. This is another way to get in contact with us with this QR code or by following the email address.

I'd like to once again thank our panelists today. Dr. Jessica Dace, Ms. Yvette Lagares, and Mr. Colin Jones of the Chesapeake Public Schools and Rena B. White Primary School. Really appreciated the opportunity to hear more about their work in co-creating engagement strategies and really all of our panelists and presenters throughout this entire Learning Series.

And finally, thank you for attending this session and making it what it is. We appreciate your participation and wish you all the best and all the luck as you work with families and encourage more regular attendance and engagement with communities around the country.