EDC! Taskforce

DEPUTY MAYOR FOR EDUCATION

MAYOR BOWSER PRESENTS

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March 21, 2023

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR EDUCATION

WE ARE
GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Agenda

- **Staffing Updates**

- **Citywide Programming**

- **OSSE SY 22-23 Interim Reporting**

- **Attendance Initiatives**

- **Next Steps & Closing**

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Staffing Updates

OSSE ReEngagement Center

Director, Veronica Simmons
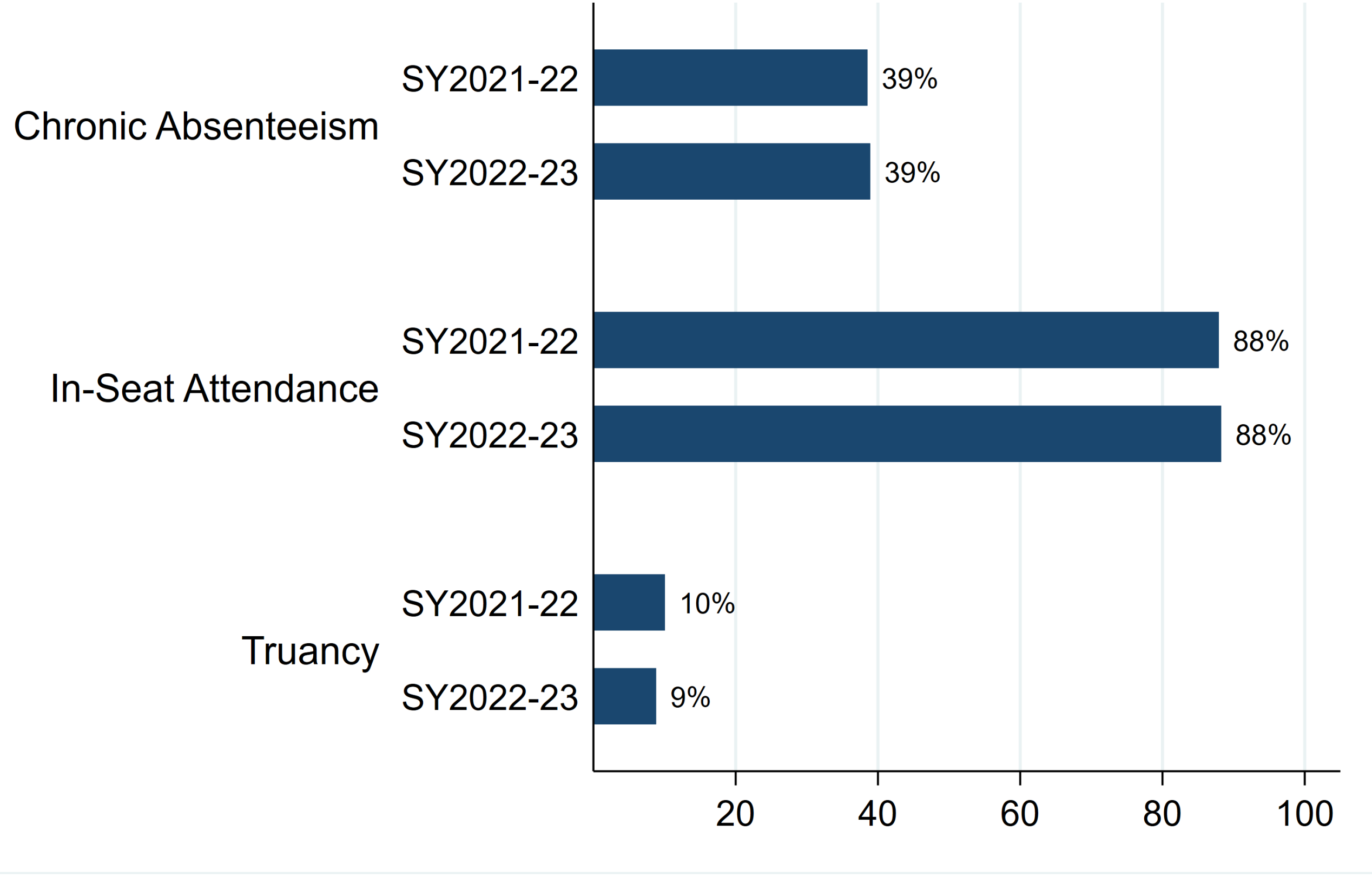
OAG ATTEND Program

Case Manager, Dante' Daniel

OSSE School Year 2022-2023

Interim Reporting

Education & Research Analyst, Allison Young

Attendance Metrics Jul. 1 - Nov. 23
SY2021-22 and SY2022-23

3/27/2023

Shifting from "At Risk" to "Economically Disadvantaged"

- Per the District's ESSA State Plan Amendment (pending USED approval), the District will no longer report on an At-Risk student group, but will instead report on an Economically Disadvantaged student group.
- Economically Disadvantaged includes any student who for whom one or more of the following occurs during the year:
  - Receives TANF or SNAP benefits
  - Experiences homelessness
  - Is a ward of the state (CFSA)
- This change impacts high schools, because students who are overage and in high school are considered "at-risk", but not "economically disadvantaged".
- The "at-risk" definition is not changing and will continue to be used for enrollment/ funding purposes
- OSSE will consider ways to report data that allow for users to compare data year-over-year.

Attendance Initiatives

Policy & Data Analyst, Carlo Castillo

Chronic Absenteeism in Washington, D.C.

Attendance outcomes in Washington, D.C. in SY-22-23 have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

By end of December 2022, chronic absenteeism had reached 41.1%, which was where it was at the same time last year, but much higher than it was in December 2019, before the onset of the pandemic. In late 2022, schools reported an increase in illness other than covid. Since then, absenteeism stabilized.

Attendance outcomes from SY 20-21 are not comparable to others as nearly all instructional days occurred remotely in that school year, and there was a different threshold for being present in that learning posture.
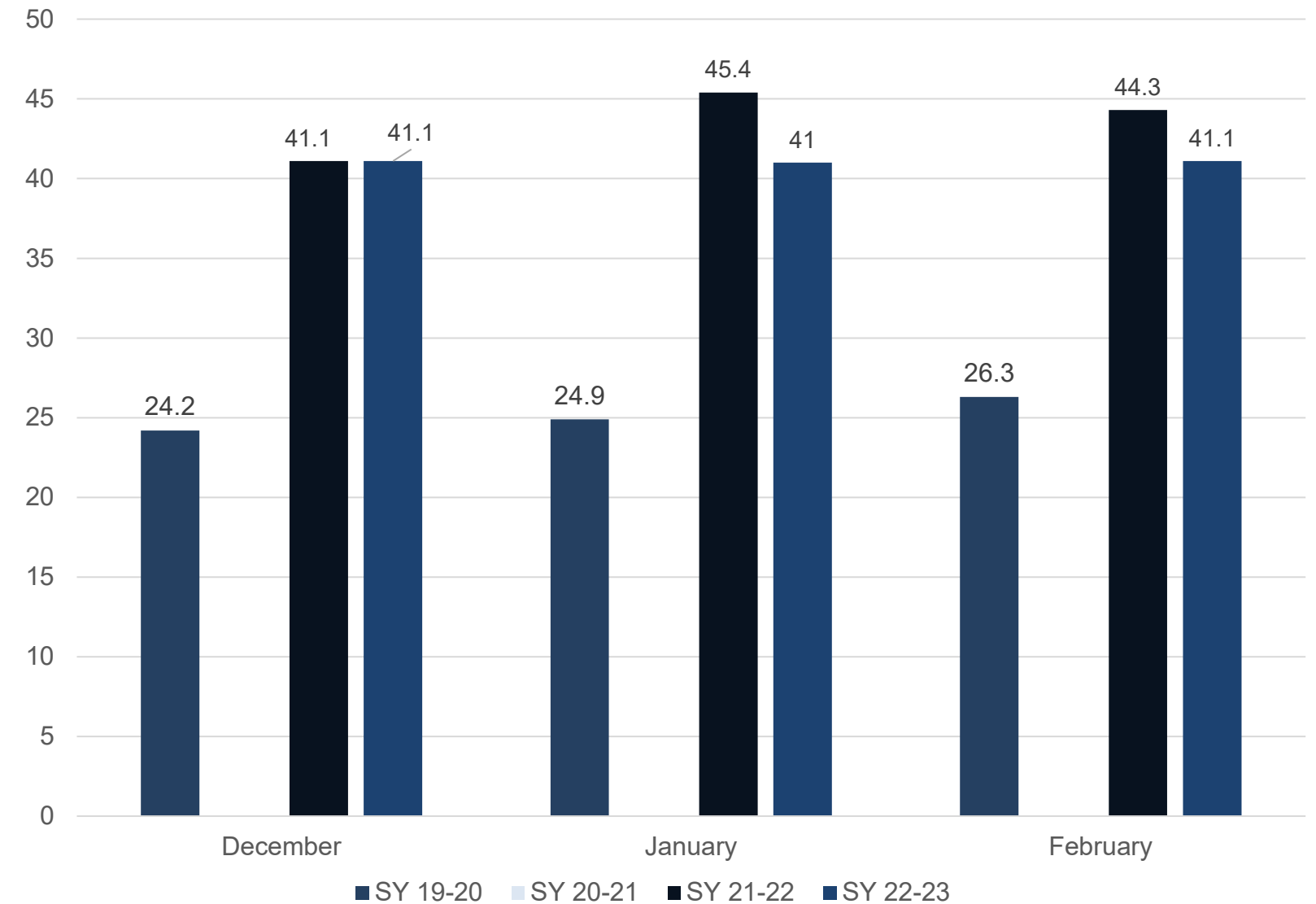
Chronic Absenteeism Across School Years, by Month

Understanding Student Support Teams (SSTs)

School-based "student support teams" are a team formed to support the individual students by developing and implementing action plans and strategies that are school-based or community-based, depending on the availability, to enhance the student's success with services, incentives, intervention strategies, and consequences for dealing with absenteeism.

Attendance POCs at 11 DC schools were interviewed in late 2022 and early 2023 to better understand Student Support Teams role in improving attendance outcomes and what additional resources might be needed.

- Schools included elementary, middle, and high schools of varying severities of absenteeism.

- Both DCPS and Charter LEAs participated

Understanding SSTs: Findings

Many school-based attendance point of contacts are deeply invested in student success. Many mentioned knowing all or most of the families in their schools and being familiar with the specific circumstances of that student's absenteeism. One had been in the role for 35 years, one for nearly a decade, and indicated that student success was their motivation for staying in the role. A few contributed to incentives from their own pockets.

Understanding SSTs: Findings

- Interviewees shared that support from leadership (principal, assistant principal, etc.), and a commitment to regularly review attendance data are critical to success.

- Interviewees shared that support from community partners (Communities in Schools, SUSO, OAG ATTEND, etc.) are crucial for improving attendance outcomes.

- Attendance committees at schools meet weekly. At a minimum, these meetings serve the purpose of dividing the list of students that need to be contacted. No schools interviewed shared that these meetings are used to discuss broader attendance trends and early interventions. Meetings are reactive to absenteeism.

Understanding SSTs: Findings

- Not every attendance lead is an attendance counselor. Some are business managers, social workers, and in other roles, meaning that managing the SST process is only part of their role. Depending on the severity of absenteeism at school, managing this process is an estimated 20 to 40 percent of their role. Some interviewees expressed a need for a staff person whose role was solely dedicated to documenting and improving attendance.

- Depending on the severity of absenteeism at the school, managing the SST process (calling families, documenting call, and mitigating absenteeism) can require more hours than are available in a work week. One interviewee at a school with high absenteeism indicated that she worked 50 hours per week, nearly every week.

Understanding SSTs: Findings

- Incentives are used to motivate attendance. Examples include attendance to pep rallies, field trips, cell phone use during lunch (at the middle and high schools), gift cards, and celebratory meals (special breakfasts or lunches). Incentives are sometimes provided in partnership with community partners, and sometimes school-based staff dig into their own pockets to provide incentives. Anecdotally, incentives are effective at motivating students to attend school.

- Attendance POCs emphasized the importance of creating a culture that celebrates students when they're showing up to school, that instills the intrinsic value of education, and that makes students want to attend school.

Understanding SSTs: Findings

- A few interviewees indicated that communicating with parents whose first language is not English was challenging, even with translators.

- Interviewees indicated that punitive measures, such as after school or lunch time detention for tardiness, and threats ("Do this or else") were not effective in improving attendance.

- A couple of interviewees questioned the efficacy of the SST meetings. In their view, parents were not deterred by the prospect of having to meet with them to address absenteeism.

Understanding SSTs: Next Steps

- Interview select students and parents about experience with SST process and barriers to attendance

- Publish findings on EDC! Website.

Strategic Roadmap

Citywide Attendance Strategy Roadmap

Strategies	Description	Citywide Initiative
1. Provide actionable data and root cause analyses throughout the system	OSSE, LEAs and schools provide actionable data on attendance. These reports flag relevant sub-populations and highlight hot spots. Actionable data is used when making decisions about resource allocation in schools	• OSSE annual attendance report • DC School Report Cards • DME root cause analyses*
2. Drive attendance best practices into all public schools	a) Build the right school cultures, recognizing that schools must create welcoming, engaging, and affirming environments for students and families.	• OSSE communities of practice • LEA training for school staff • DME school leader convenings* • Social-emotional learning in most schools • Re-imagining high school portfolio*
	b) Provide wrap-around supports as attendance work is highly individualized and must meet the needs of each specific student.	• Student Support Teams (SST) • School-based Behavioral Health program • Alternative to Court Experience (ACE) program. • Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) Intensive Case Management (ICM) • Show Up, Stand Out (SUSO) • Child & Family Services Agency (CFSA) referrals • OAG ATTEND and I BELONG HERE programs • DC ReEngagement Center (OSSE). • Attendance counselors • High-Impact Tutoring • District- and LEA- funded home visiting and mentorship programs.
	c) Know and engage families as they are partners in ensuring students attend school every day.	• EveryDay Labs partnership to nudge families with text message and mail 30 charter LEA and DCPS participate. Roughly 75,000 students impacted. * • Kinvolved at DCPS and 10 Charter LEAs in SY 22-23. Roughly 30,000 students enrolled.* • OSSE Truancy Letters
3. Remove system-level barriers	Acknowledging that some attendance-strengthening supports live across schools and LEAs, we work to identify and implement system-wide policies and practices that remove common barriers to attendance.	• DC School Connect • Safe Passage, Safe Blocks* • ONSE Leadership Academies • WMATA Kids Ride Free

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Next Steps & Closing

- Next meeting will occur on June 20, 2023 @ 3:30 pm