

2019 ACSA Every Child Counts Symposium

# The Achievement Initiative



**Going beyond the MTSS model of intervention to reduce disproportionality and close the achievement gap.**

# Let's get to know each other

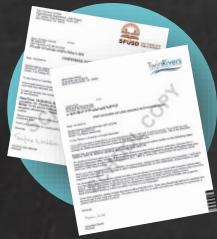


- **Dr. Dennis Wiechmann**  
Supervisor of Child Welfare & Attendance, Sanger Unified School District  
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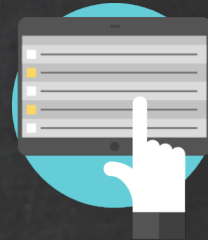
- **Erica Peterson**  
National Education Manager  
School Innovations & Achievement

# This is how **A2A** works



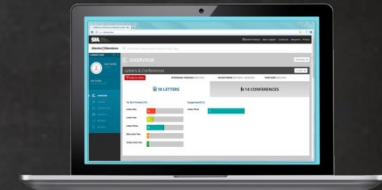
## ATTENDANCE TRACKING AND LETTER MANAGEMENT

- System automatically queues-up eligible truant students
- **A2A mails out 6 different attendance intervention letters:**
  - Letters look like they come from principals, their signature, their school logo
  - **3 unexcused, 2 excused and 1 conference notice**
  - In English and the students home language (up to 30 languages)



## MANAGE STUDENT CONFERENCING

- System automatically queues-up eligible truant students
- **A2A mails out 1 conference notification**
- 1 place to monitor and track progress
- Auto scheduler
- Bulk or single-student actions
- No Kids slip through our net!



## DISTRICT OVERSIGHT WITH LOCAL CONTROL

- District staff can see what's going on in all schools in real time
- Can flag chronically absent students
- Advanced report features
- If the school site doesn't want a letter to go out, they simply click a box

# Our Demographics

- **11,702** Enrollment and growing
  - 70% Hispanic or Latino
  - 15% White
  - 10% Asian
- **82% High Needs** (Low Income, ELL, or Foster Youth)
- **96.2% Average Daily Attendance, 6.1% Chronic Absence**
  - EL = 95.91%, CA 5.2%
  - SPED = 94.07%, CA 12.9%
  - Foster% 96.7, CA 7.2%
  - Homeless= 92.3%, CA 20%
- **94.3% Graduation Rate** (Increased by 2.1%, 96% for all)
  - 91.7% Hispanic
  - 90.9% African American
  - 96.5% Low income
- **0.9% Cohort dropout rate**



We are always charged with  
improving *something*, what are  
some things that come to mind?



# We are always charged with improving *something*

- Increase graduation rates
- Reduce dropouts
- Increase ADA
- Improve test scores
- Increase learning time
- Lower truancy
- Decrease chronic absenteeism
- Increase parental involvement
- Improve student achievement
- Decrease tardies
- Increase revenue

# What do all of these things have in common?

- They are measureable
- Someone is suppose to oversee them
- There are personnel assigned to work on them
- There's a process of some kind in place
- We hear about them at some frequency
- The objective is to get better





# Sanger USD's Story



# Sanger USD – What we were up against

- High Poverty / Low Performing
- Growing/Changing Demographics
- Effective Board of Trustees
- Questionable Culture of Expectation
- Focus On Learning?
- Achievement Gap- YUP!
- Facing Economic Challenges
- Looking for Relief – Increased ADA



# The Sanger Story

- We knew what attendance was but it was not a focus
- Everything was manually generated
- Part time attendance clerks placed at each school site
- Each school was provided with attendance incentive budgets
- Looked at it as a district effort
- Reported on at every leadership meeting
- Business department came up with visual representation
- All schools were included



# The Sanger Story

- Budget Reduction Plan
  - Revenue Enhancement
  - Target increase ADA by .5% = \$160,000
- Investment in Student Learning
  - Increase instructional time by .5% 27,000,000 min over the school year.
- Supportive Learning Environment: Being a program improvement district was looked at as an opportunity.
- Attention2Attendance Board Report and Online Monitoring:
  - Services Available
  - Benefits
- Investment in A2A Services



The degree to which we  
**pay attention and are deliberate**  
about those things is directly related to  
how successful we will be  
in improving performance.

# In business, the facts of life can be brutal...

- Grow revenue or die
- While costs go up every year - prices cannot
- Continuous improvement is the only way to stay in business

As a result, one of our  
core competencies  
must be  
**improving performance**



# A Business-Education Partnership

## —Producing Incredible Results—

- Nine years ago, we formed this partnership with Attention2Attendance (A2A) to create a culture of achievement starting with “showing up”
- Our objective is to increase learning time and build connections between students, families and their school
- With our partnership, Attention2Attendance takes on the administrative work so our schools can focus on the **real work** – engaging students and increasing parental involvement
- With our strategic plan, we are ahead of the game when it comes to **pupil engagement and school climate**
- **Staff is engaged and united in a consistent process**, which is the reason why more students are coming to school



So, today we are going to let you  
in on some of our 'secrets'

**5 + 1**

# **Principles for Improving Performance**

1. *Process*
2. *People*
3. *Measurement*
4. *Oversight*
5. *Communication*

*Plus 1 Leadership*

# Process, People, Measurement, Oversight, Communication + Leadership

- Why would this be one of the principles needed for continuous improvement?
- What would be the considerations (need to include) when thinking about (fill in principle)

**Let me share our  
thoughts on each of  
our principles**

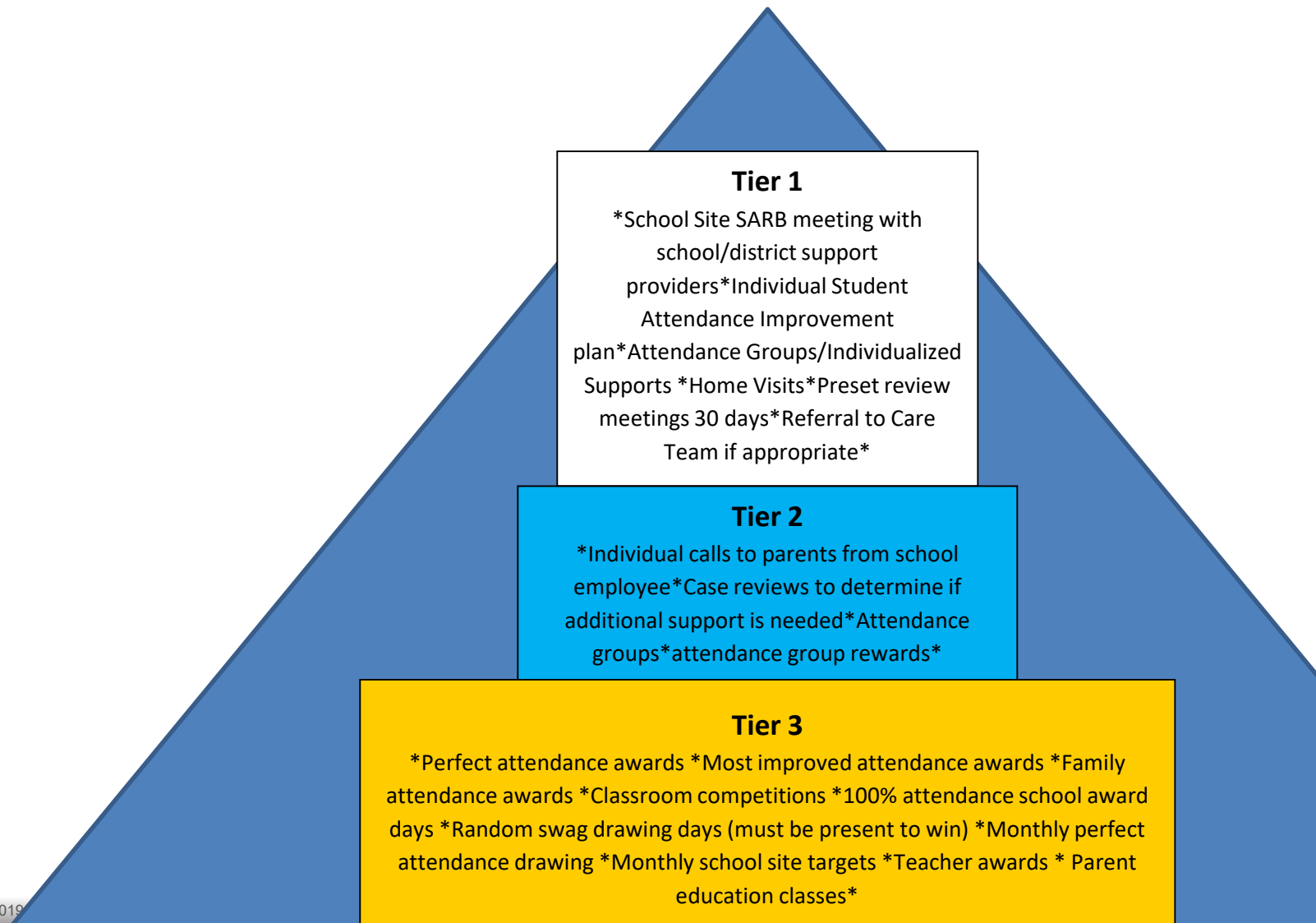


# Process

- Systemic problems require enterprise solutions/processes.
- Enterprise solutions are designed to improve proficiency and productivity while providing employees with a satisfying user experience.
- Enterprise solutions are able to provide data and comparative analysis in order to inform appropriate decision and action.
- Effectively changing processes can lead the way to behavioral/cultural change
- Training is not going to solve all problems
  - Train, Job Aids, Ongoing support



# Sanger Attendance Supports & Interventions



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“Ideas are easy. It is the execution  
of ideas that separates  
the sheep from the goats.”

— Sue Grafton

# People

- What we know about people:
  - People have choices on what to work on
  - People move toward pleasure and away from pain
- Make what you want done easy to do, meaningful and appreciate and recognize those that are doing the work
- What do employees want:
  - Appreciation and to be part of the process
  - The people doing the work know the problems and solutions – ask them
- Use their feedback to perfect your product and processes
- Recognize performance
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

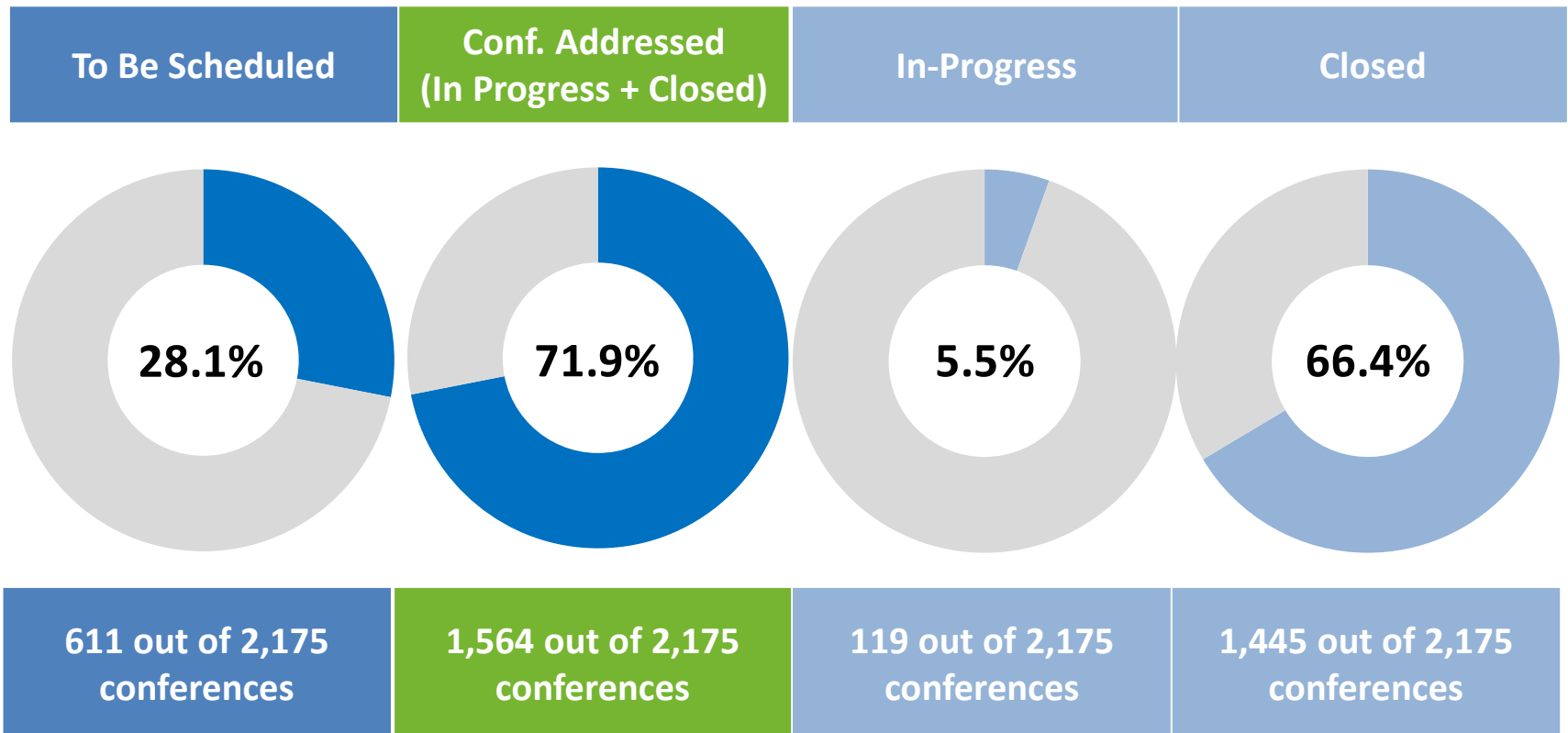
# School Attendance Review Team Conferences

- Conferencing is crucial to successfully changing your culture to one of “showing up.” We schedule a parent conference after the 2<sup>nd</sup> truancy notification.
- Districts who actively engage their parents in meetings and conversations about attendance see better results.
- At Sanger, 72% of all school attendance meetings with families have been addressed (i.e., scheduled or closed).
- **Take back to your team:**
  - What is our conferencing process?
  - Who is involved at the school level?
  - How many attempts do we make to hold the meeting?
  - How is the conversation structured?



# 2017-18 Conferencing Summary

Conferencing is crucial to successfully changing your culture to one of “showing up.”



Data as of 6/14/2018

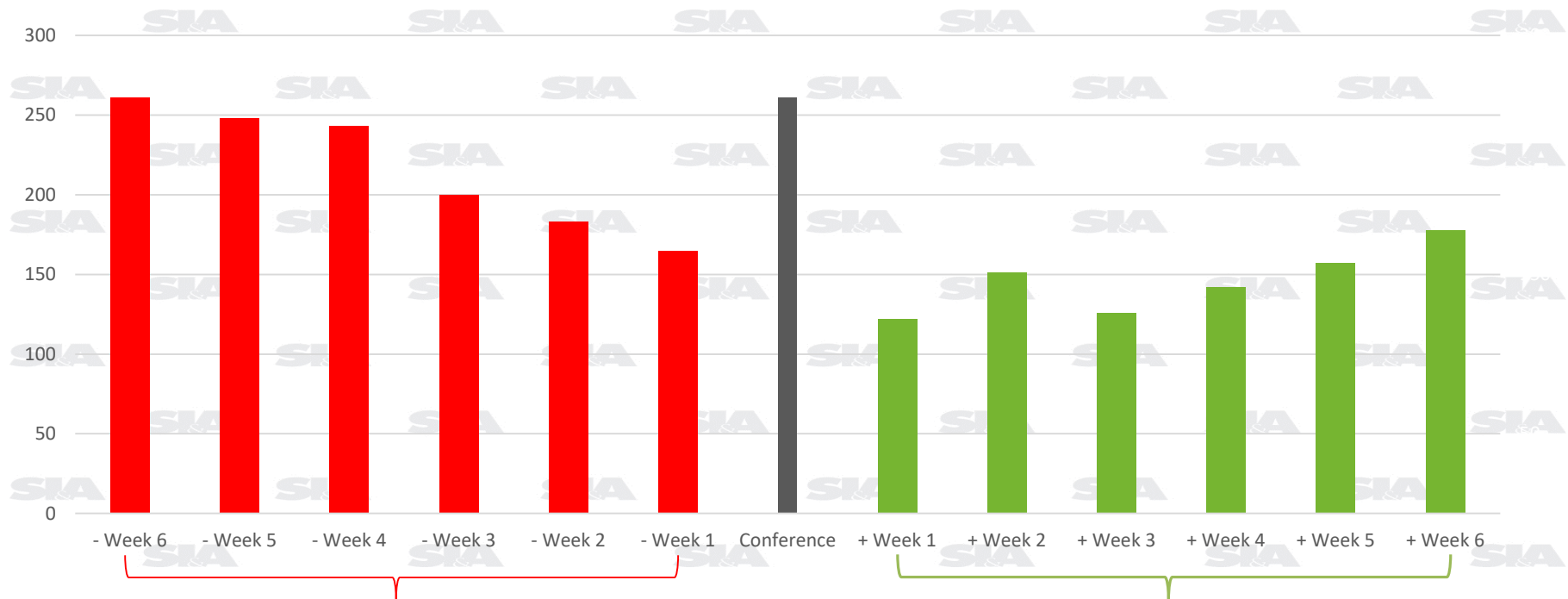
# 2017-18 Conferencing Summary, by Site Type

School Site Type	To Be Scheduled	Conferences Addressed	In-Progress	Closed
Elementary (979 conferences)	8%	92%	8%	85%
Middle School (365 conferences)	0%	100%	0%	100%
High School (753 conferences)	70%	30%	5%	24%
<b>Districtwide</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>66%</b>

Data as of 6/14/2018



# Conference Effectiveness: L2 Conferences



**Absences 6 weeks prior to conference**

**Absences 6 weeks after conference**

\* Each week represents 5 instructional days. Data does not always represent calendar weeks.

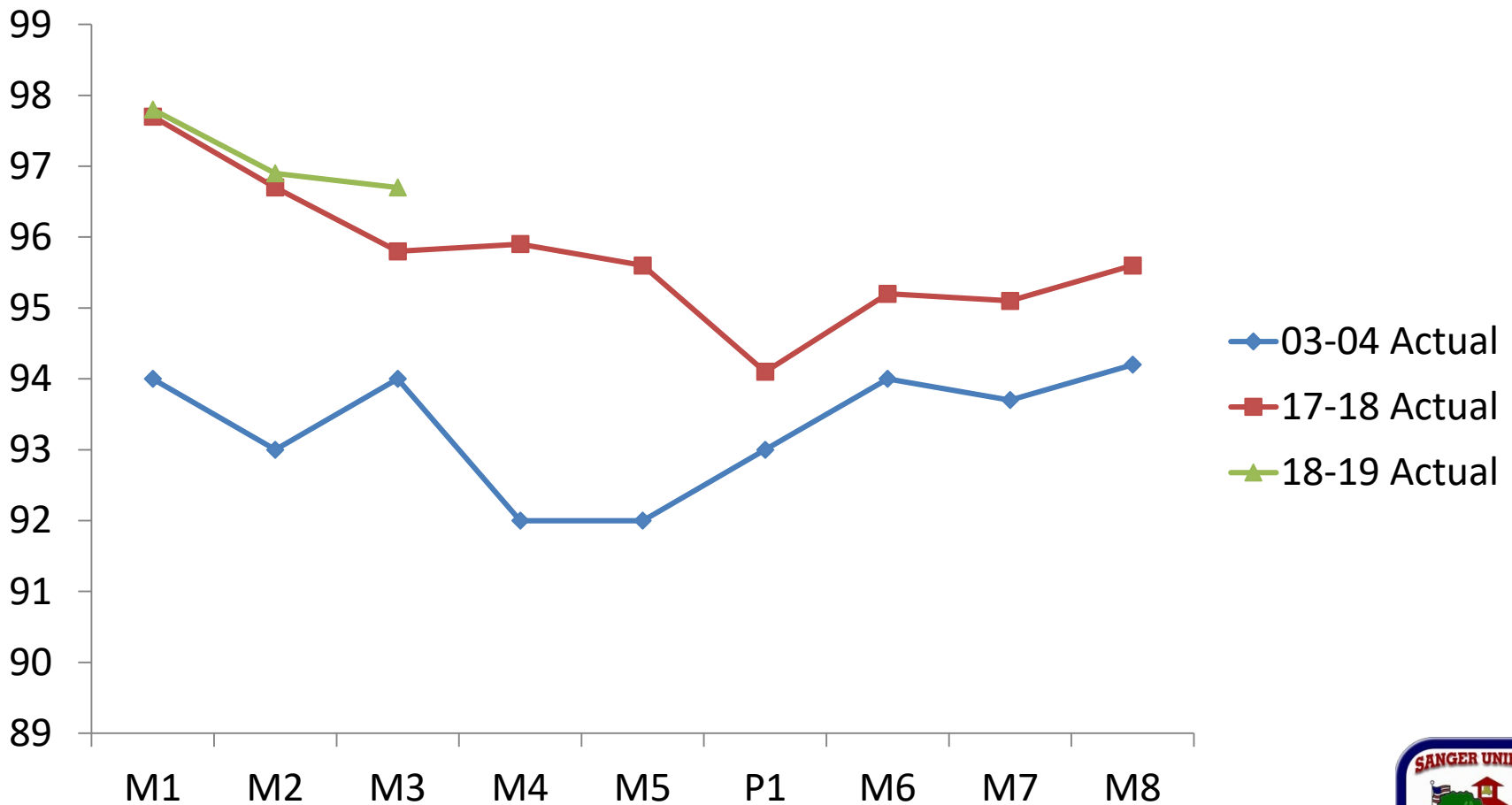
	Before	After	Improvement Rate	Total Conferences (Closed & Conducted)
Days Missed	1,301	876	32.7%	537
Avg. Days Missed per Student	2.42	1.63		

Attendance Through: 6/8/2018

# Measurement

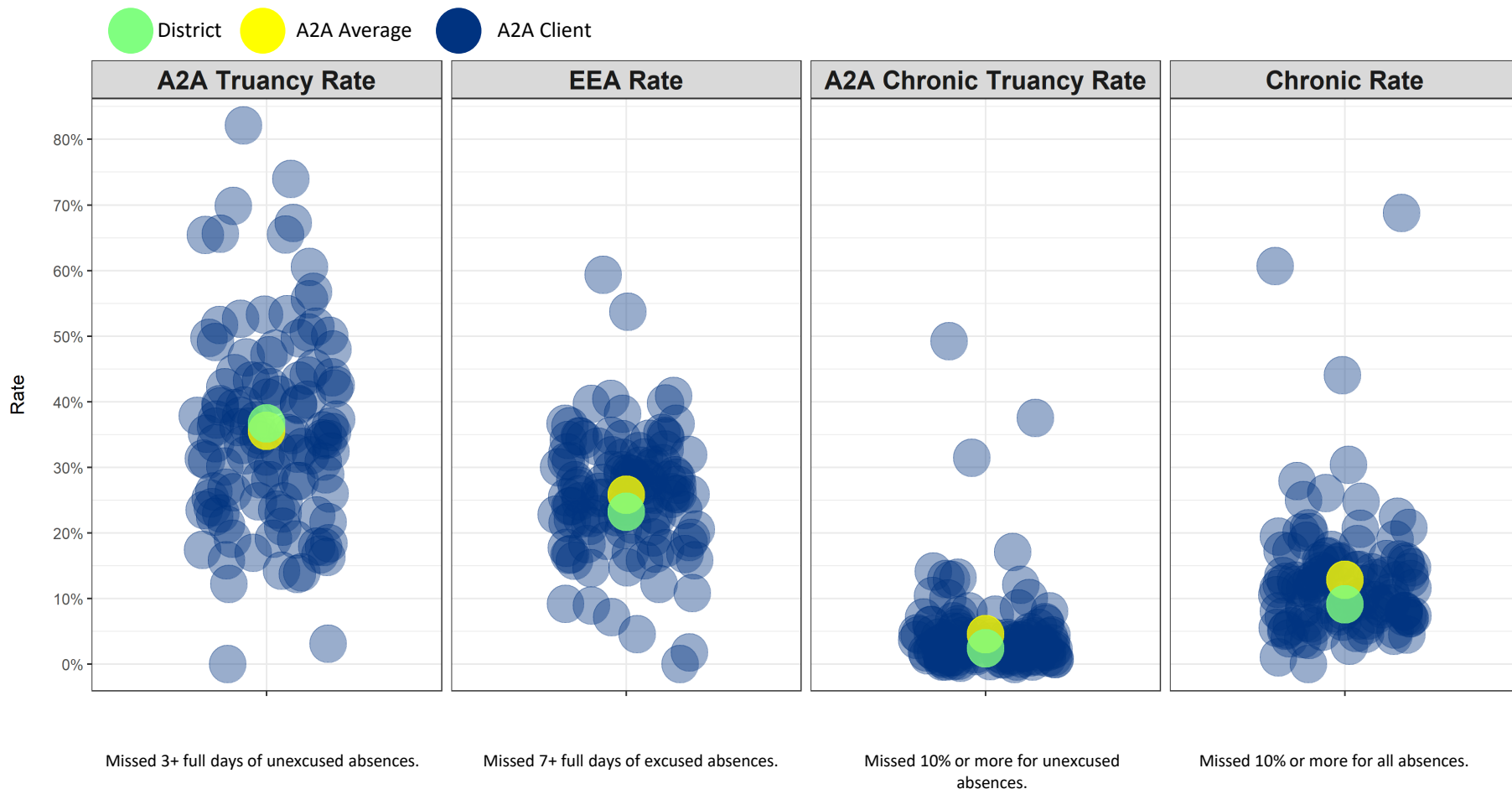
- Consistent/Understandable
  - Decide what you are measuring and keep measuring it the same way
  - If everyone doesn't understand how numbers are being used or what they mean – here's a guarantee - nothing will happen
- Timely
  - Old data makes us focus on the past rather than the future
- Comparative
  - Absolute numbers mean absolutely nothing
  - Compare to something – last year/goal/similar groups/different groups
- Actionable
  - Aggregated data hides all kinds of inequities
  - If numbers do not speak to you, what are you looking at?
  - Must cause you to act – to do something

# Attendance Comparison



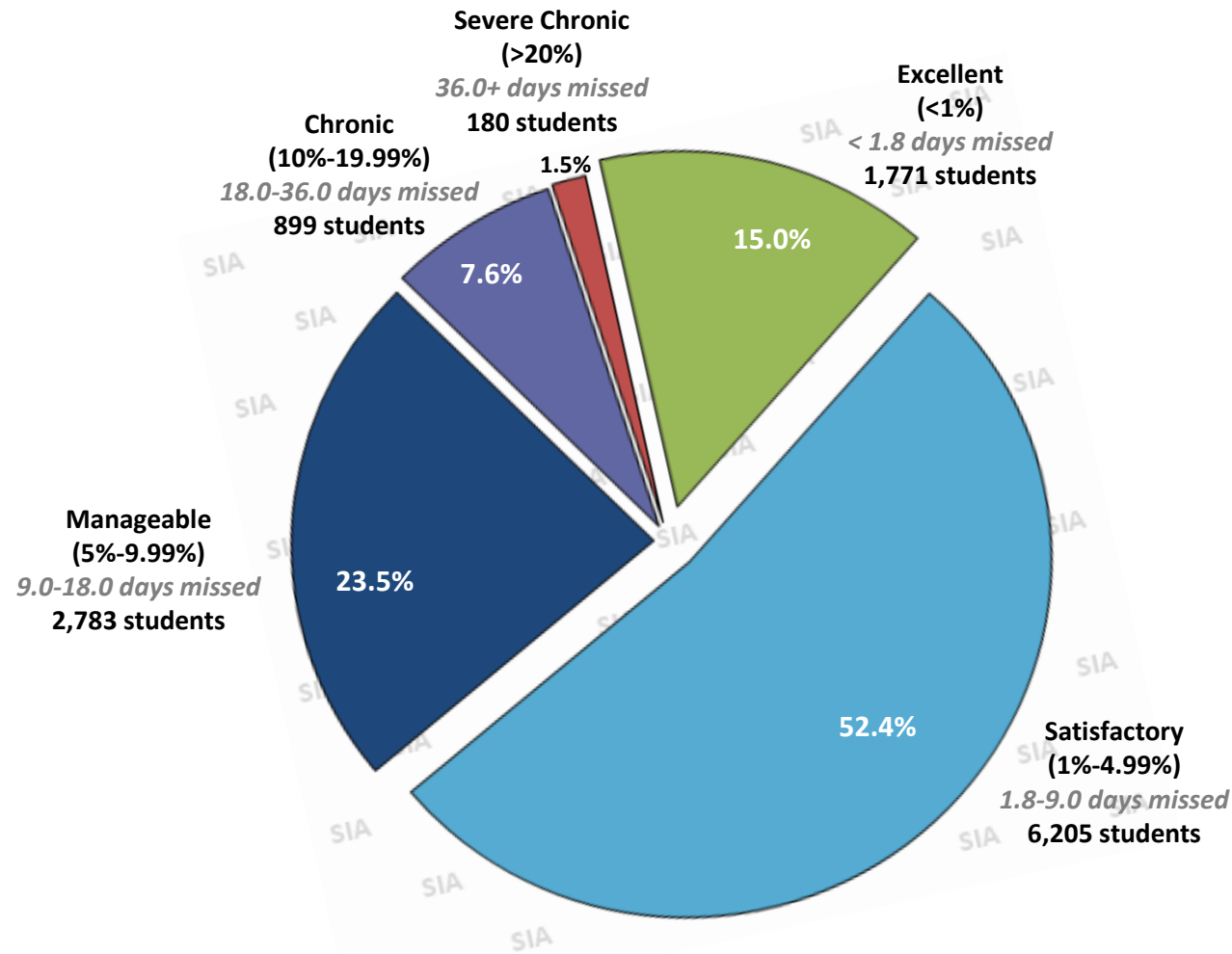
# 2017-18 District Absence Rates Compared to Other A2A Clients

The lower, the better.



Data as of 6/8/2018

# 2017-18 Total Absence Summary

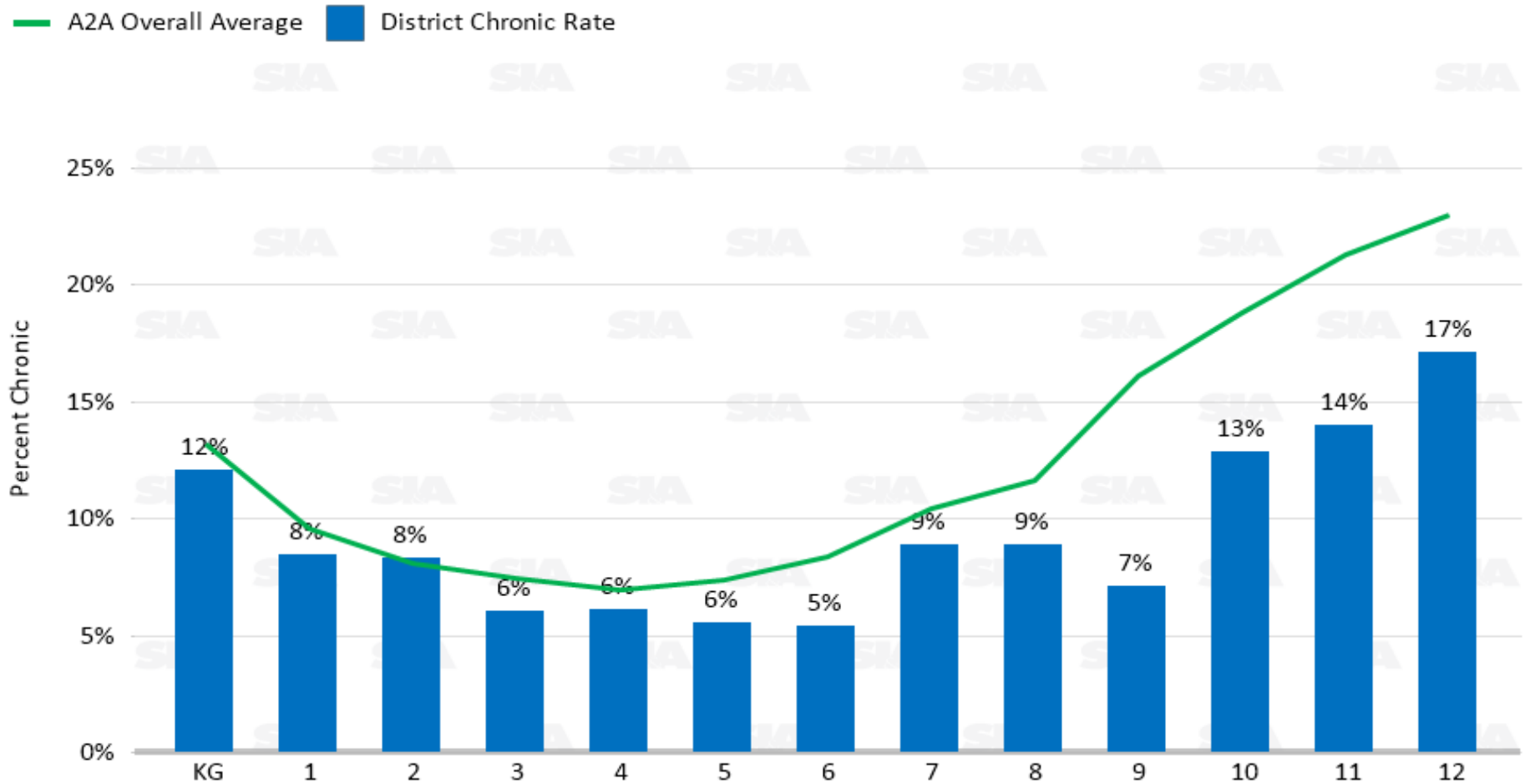


- 67.38% (7,976) of your students fall in the Excellent and Satisfactory groups.
- 32.62% (3,862) of your students have missed more than 9.0 days of school.

Data as of 6/8/2018

# 2017-18 District Chronic Rate vs. A2A Average

The lower, the better.



*Chronically Absent - A student who is absent for 10% or more of the school year due to **all** absences.*

Data as of 6/8/2018

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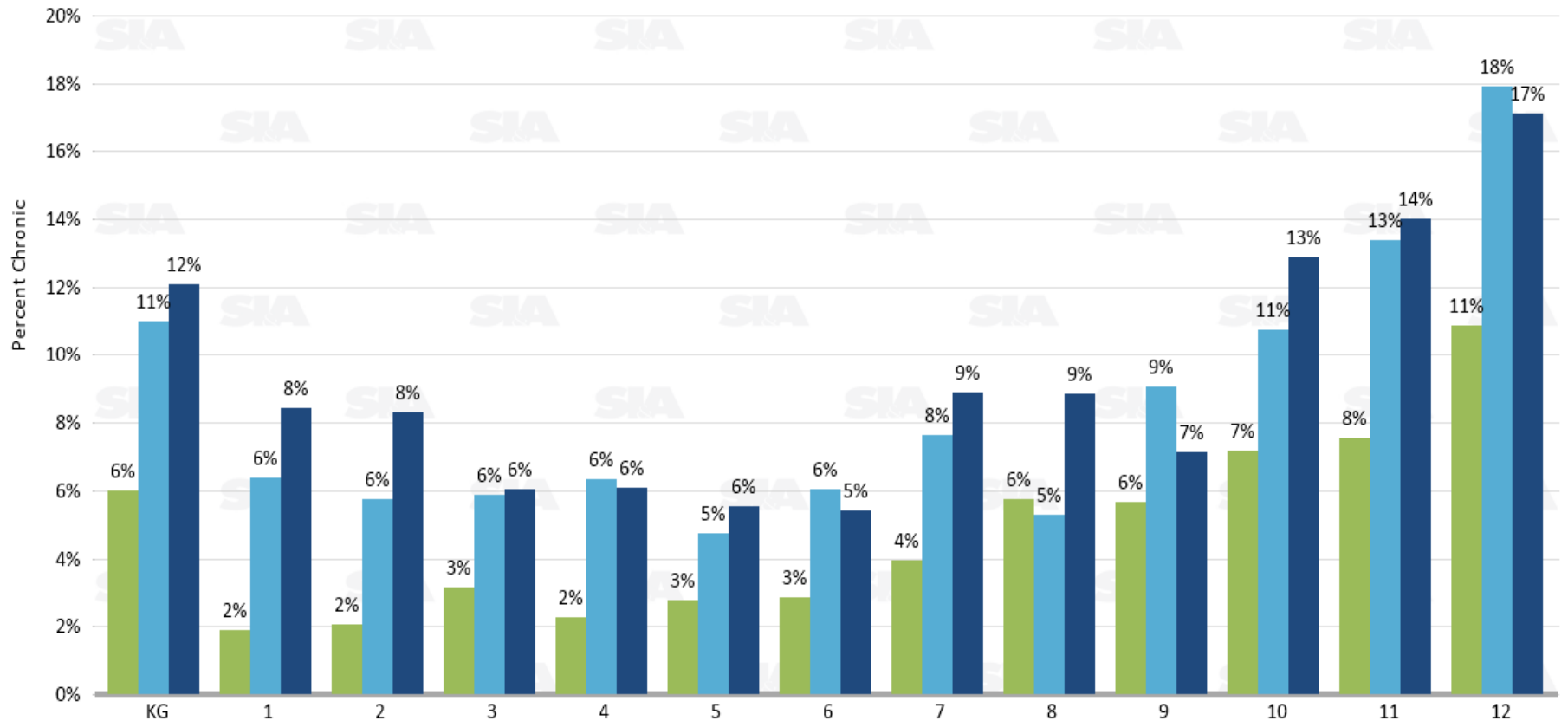


# Chronic Rates By Grade: Year-over-Year

The lower, the better.

2015-16 2016-17 2017-18

2015-16 Districtwide Average: 4.6%  
2016-17 Districtwide Average: 8.2%  
2017-18 Districtwide Average: 9.1%



*Chronically Absent - A student who is absent for 10% or more of the school year due to **all** absences.*

Data as of 6/8/2018

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# Oversight

- If I am working on something that no one ever looks at but me – it must not be that important
- “Expect what you inspect”
  - People do what you inspect, not what you expect
- How do you know? (*ask yourself*)
  - How do you know what is being done?
  - How do you know it’s being done on a consistent & timely manner?
  - How do you know when something is working?
  - How do you know when something isn’t working?
  - How can you identify or fix problems?
- Analyze patterns, trends – improving performance means changing trend lines

# Total Absence Calendar

## 2017-18 District-wide

District: Sanger Unified (Fresno)

Fiscal Year: 2017-18

NOTE: All numbers are based on the Equivalent Day.

Report Run Date: 06/25/2018

Attendance Codes Used: , CUT, EXC, ILL, ISI, PBI, RSE, RSU, SUS, UNV, UNX, WAI

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**District Total--** Average Daily Absence - **532** [ ] **Well Below Avg < 458** [ ] **Well Above Avg > 606**

July 2017				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

August 2017				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

September 2017				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

4	Holiday	5	6	7
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

October 2017				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

November 2017				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

December 2017				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

January 2018				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

1	Holiday	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

February 2018				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28		

March 2018				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

April 2018				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

May 2018				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

June 2018				
M	Tu	W	Th	F

4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

“Without execution, ‘vision’  
is just another word for  
hallucination.”

— Mark V. Hurd

# Communication

- Design a specific well-crafted message
  - Make it clear, relevant and memorable - short sentences, use bullets
- Be consistent, be consistent, be consistent. People will argue that it's boring- nonsense!
  - Use the same design look and the same message every time and people will start to identify with you immediately
  - It takes 4 times of seeing or hearing a message before someone begins to recall, "I may have seen this before."
  - 4 times just to recall – not "I've seen this before and maybe I should pay attention to it."
- Branding – there is a reason companies spend so much money on their brand – shortcut to long messages
- Always communicate the outcomes
  - No one wants to be asked and then never receive any feedback on what happened

# What appropriate communication numbers look like

- **On average you should send:**
  - Elementary SD about 20% of enrollment get a 1<sup>st</sup> truancy letter
  - K-12 SD about 40% of enrollment get a 1<sup>st</sup> truancy letter
    - 10,000 students = 4,000 notifications to families
  - High SD about 60% of enrollment get a 1<sup>st</sup> truancy letter
- **Take back to your team:**
  - How many truancy notices did vs. should you send?
  - How many *total* communications did vs. should you send?
  - What happens to the families we don't communicate with?

# Increased Parent Communication & Engagement

Series of Truancy, Excessive Excused Absences and Conference Notifications informing parents of the importance of regular school attendance.

**17,921** parent communication pieces sent in 2018

**4,117** First Truancy Notification Letters

**847** Chronic Letters

**3,489** Email Notifications

**2,175** Second Truancy Notification Letters

**3,963** Excessive Excused Absence I Letters

**1,179** Conference Notifications

**561** Third Truancy Notification Letters

**1,590** Excessive Excused Absence II Letters

**1,280** average letters per run (or every two weeks): 14 total letter runs to date



# Leadership

**Continuous improvement does not happen without *someone caring deeply* about the desired outcome**

**One definition of Leadership:**

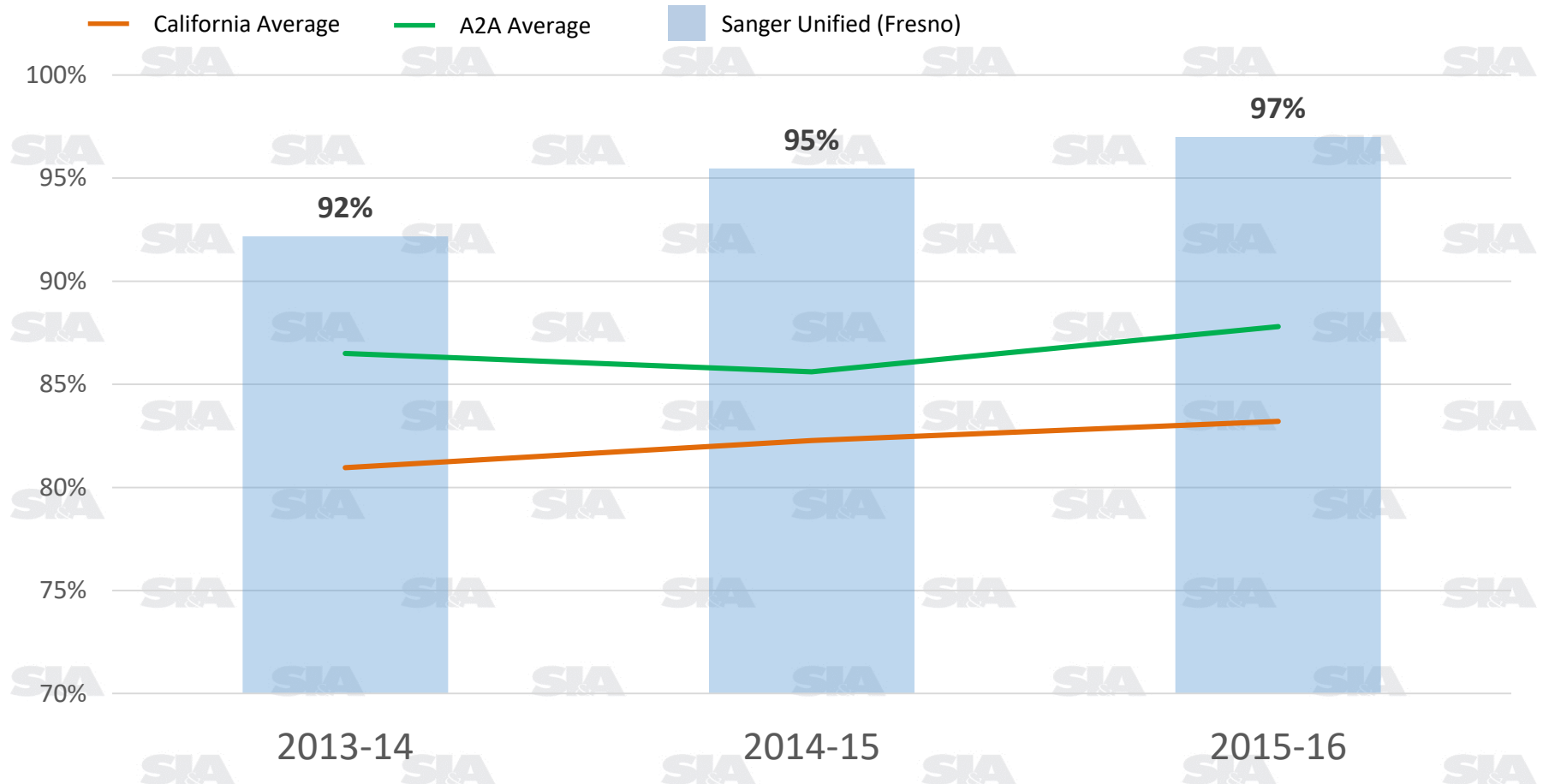
***“The art of accomplishing more than the science of management thinks is possible”***

# Leadership

- What's required
  - Being relentless about the other 5 principles we've discussed
  - Demonstrating passion about why what the leader is trying to improve
  - Inspiring others to believe
  - Listening
  - Sharing credit for successes
- But sometimes it's true that the leader's *will to succeed is the most important thing.*

# Sanger USD Graduation Data

The higher, the better.



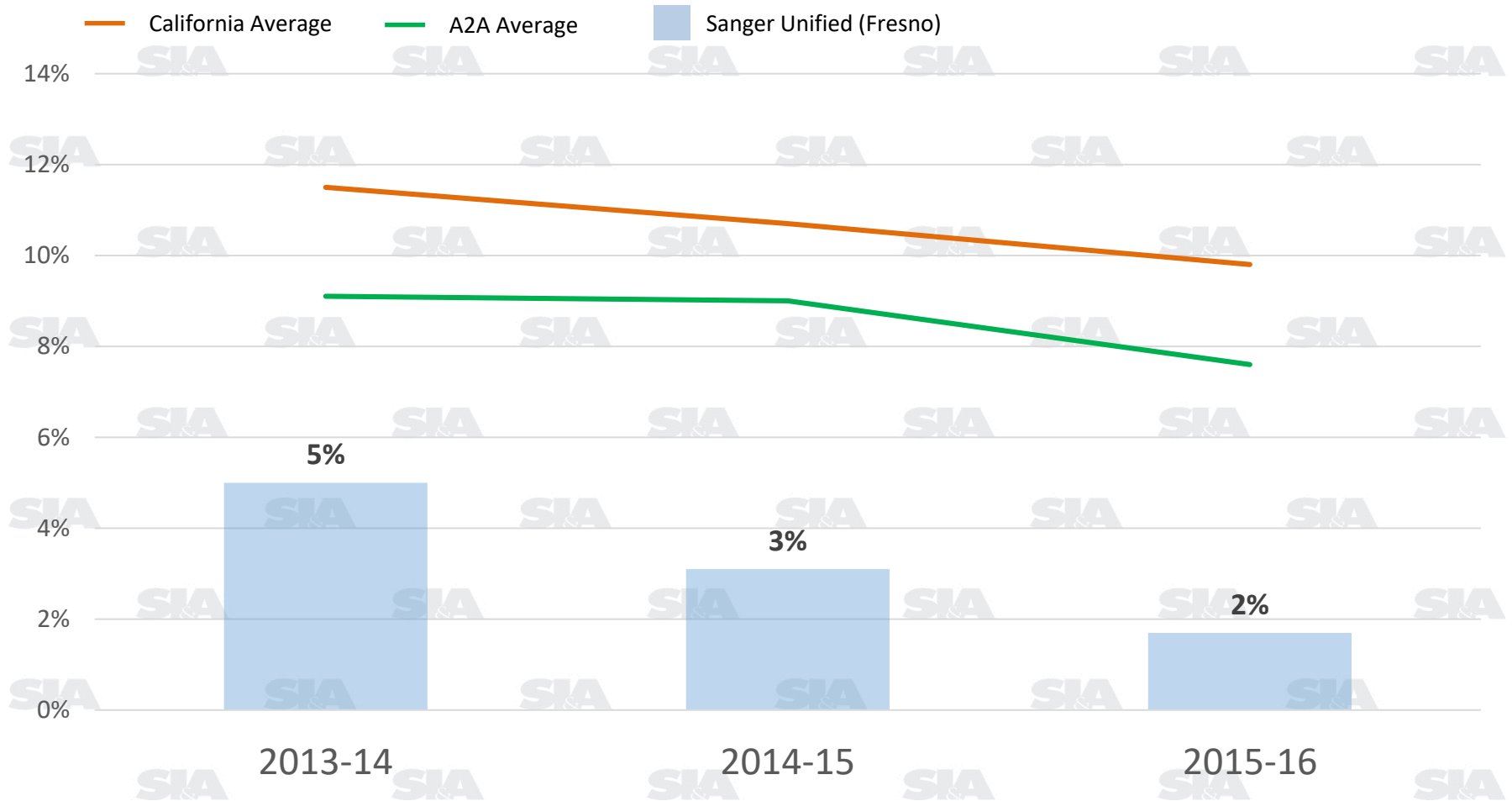
California Department of Education (CDE). (2018). 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 Graduates by Race and Gender [cohort14.txt, cohort15.txt, cohort16.txt].

Available from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filescohort.asp>

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# Sanger USD Dropout Data

The lower, the better.



California Department of Education (CDE). (2018). 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 Dropouts by Race and Gender [cohort14.txt, cohort15.txt, cohort16.txt]. Available from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filescohort.asp>

**5 + 1**

# **Principles for Improving Performance**

1. *Process*
2. *People*
3. *Measurement*
4. *Oversight*
5. *Communication*

*Plus 1 Leadership*

# Thank You

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