

# **TAKING STUDENT ATTENDANCE: IT'S NOT JUST TAKING STUDENT ATTENDANCE!**

**9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SAFETY IN OUR SCHOOLS CONFERENCE**

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y Us?

Different



We think  
outside the box.

WHY ARE YOU HERE TODAY?

- Knowledge is Power!
- Breaking down silos! Connected!!!
- Working together to achieve each other's goals
- Most importantly, to promote student health, safety and well-being!

# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL?



# THE SCOPE OF ABSENTEEISM



- Just plain old absent
- Skipping
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Expulsion
- Tardiness
- Dropout
- Bus Suspension
- Arrests
- Denial of Enrollment



# THE SCOPE OF ABSENTEEISM

## 2015-2016 GA Info:

- 8 million students chronically absent.
- 13% of GA students missed three weeks of school (among the lowest).
- 2.7 million students suspended in 2015-2016.
- Greatest number of expulsions occur in PreK/Daycare.
- GaDOE Study – Increase a student's attendance by 3% (5 days) significantly improves his/her test scores.



# IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT WHETHER A STUDENT IS IN CLASS!

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE AFFECTS:

- Student Achievement
- Student Well-Being
- School Culture and Climate
- Local School and District Safety
- Community Safety



# **SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

- **CULTURE – The school's personality. It's how one feels about the school.**
- **Climate – How the school behaves. It's how the school feels.**
- **You change the culture by strategically, systematically and systemically addressing the climate.**
- **Student attendance issues significantly affect school culture and climate.**
- **Negative cultures and climates are significant school safety concerns.**

# BULLYING

- Being absent is a symptom and/or result of bullying.
- Illness (real or fake)
- Avoidance
- Self Medication (Alcohol/Drugs)
- Sexual Activity
- Criminal Activity
- Dropping Out





# HOW DOES STUDENT ATTENDANCE IMPACT THE COMMUNITY?



- Daytime Burglaries
- Break-Ins
- Robberies
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Drug Activity
- Stakeholder Perceptions of Local School
- Community Morale

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING



- **Commercial Sex Exploitation of Children (CSEC)**
- **Forced Labor/Involuntary Servitude**
- **Debt Bondage**

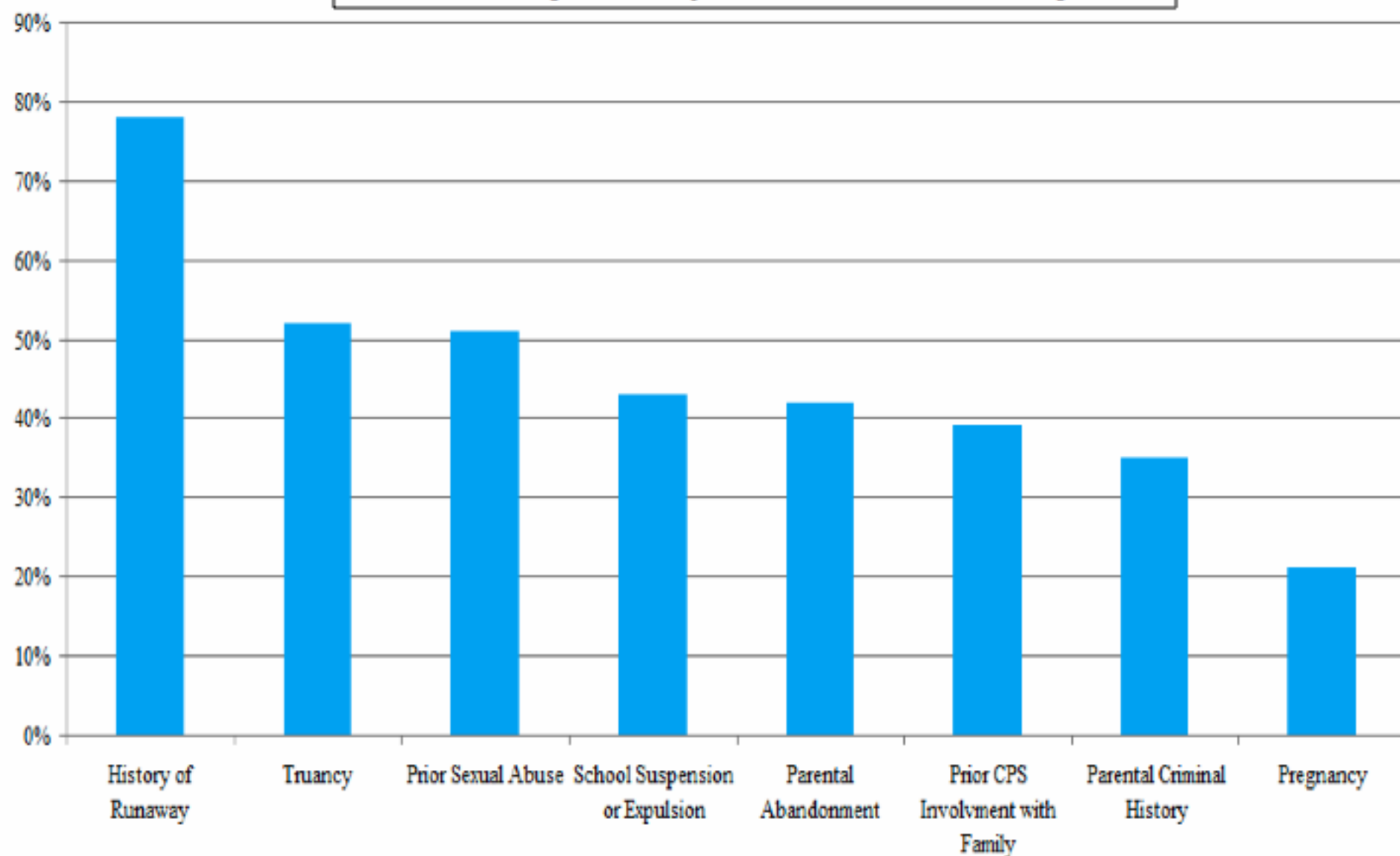
# RED FLAGS

- Runaway
- Violation of probation
- School Problems (truancy, suspension)
- Criminal Trespassing
- Shoplifting
- Giving a false name
- Branding
- Hotel Receipts
- Numerous phones
- Substance Abuse
- Open DFCS case
- High Value Material possessions
- Prepaid cards
- Picked up in car by older man w/ other girls
- “Boyfriend” is an older man – “Daddy”

**Figure 1**

**Entry Into Prostitution Risk Factors**

*Dallas Police Dept. Victims of Prostitution Case Review/Comparison*



# The Truth About CSEC:

1. Victims do not “choose” prostitution.

2. Victims are young & vulnerable kids.

- Average age of entry is 12-14 years old
- Overwhelming number are runaways
- **70-90% have been sexually abused**
- Most come from troubled homes
  - Abuse, neglect, parental crime & addiction
- Truancy and school problems are common





# **CRIMINAL ACTIVITY/INTELLIGENCE**

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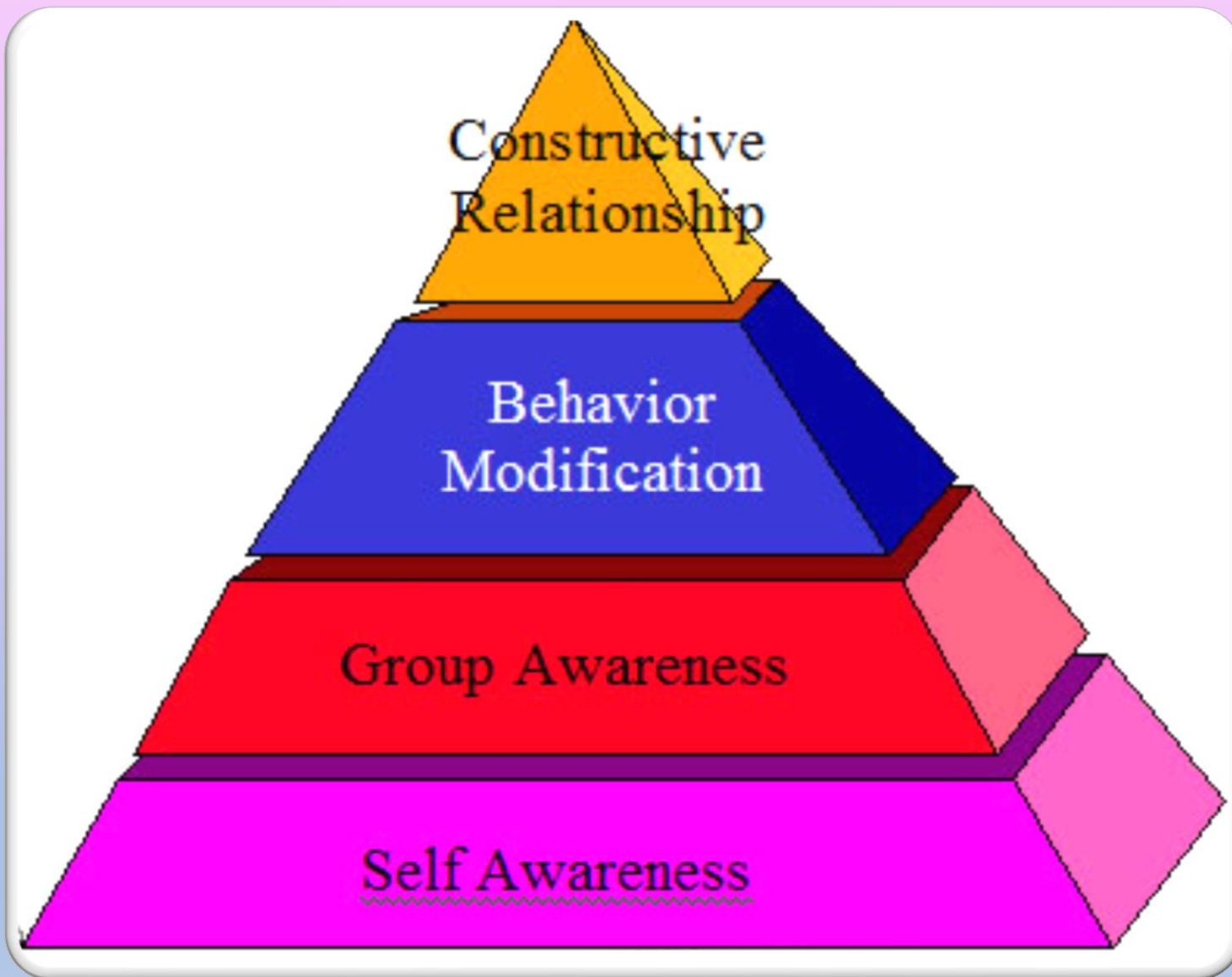
- **Student absence/truancy can be either a symptom of or a consequence.**
- **Information on attendance may provide intel on possible criminal activity.**





## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRONIC ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY (GA)?

- **Chronic Absenteeism – 15+ days of absences (20% HS, 12% MS and 11% ES).**
- **2013-2014: 6 million students chronically absent.**
- **Truancy – 5+ days of unexcused absences.**
- **Long-Term Suspension – More than 10 days.**
- **Expulsion – Suspension beyond the current semester/quarter.**
- **Greatest number of expulsions is in PreK.**



**As safety professionals, why is it important to have a working understanding and an awareness of student attendance???**

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE LAWS AND PROTOCOLS

- GA State Law - O.C.G.A § 20-2-690.1 et seq.
- GA Board of Education Rules – Code JB (160-5-1-.10)
- District's Student Attendance Protocol
- District Student Attendance Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Local Student Attendance Rules



# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

## ATTENDANCE CAN IMPROVE! HOW???

- Find out who handles student attendance and build a relationship.
- Request to participate on the Student Attendance Protocol Committee.
- Data Review and Record Sharing (follow FERPA).
- Have conversations with school social work (visiting teachers).
- Urge school officials to *attend to attendance*. Discourage them from “brushing it off”
- Be cognizant of your roles and goals relative to student attendance.

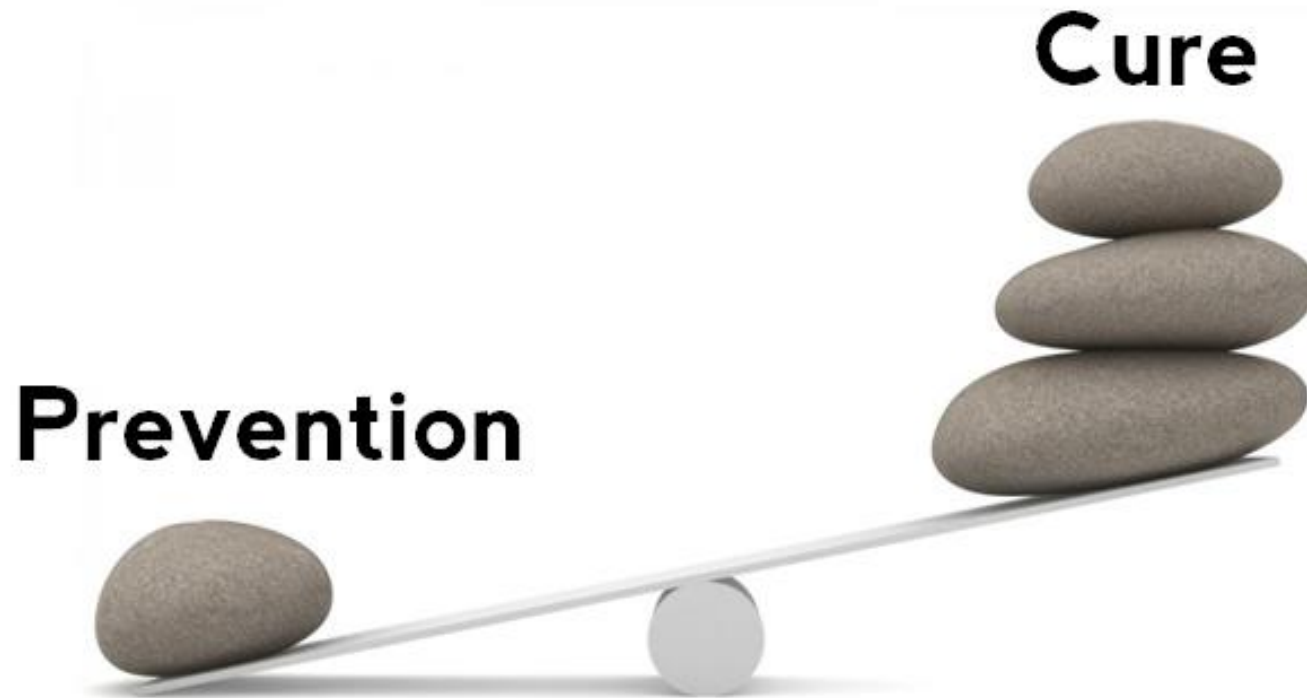


# BEST PRACTICES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE!!!



# **BEST PRACTICES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE!!!**

- **Comprehensive approach (awareness including parents/community).**
- **Someone has to have ownership and oversight (local school and district). Consider requesting the principal appoint an attendance protocol manager (APM).**
- **By law, every school/district must have a student attendance protocol/policy (do you know it?).**
- **Monitoring, reports (at least monthly, first semester and yearly), positive recognition, etc.**
- **Real-time data review and when appropriate, systematic referrals to the authorities, based on data and protocols.**



- Training
- Communication
- Follow the procedures
- Swift action
- Focus on elementary attendance (culture)
- Consider initiating a “Campaign”

# PREVENTION

**At the end of the day, whether excused or unexcused, an absence is an absence!**

- **Attribution Theory – What is causing the absence (epidemiological).**
- **Illness and poverty can drive poor attendance.**
- **You can impact excused absences.**
- **Truancy can be a predictor of dropping out.**
- **Chronic absenteeism can negatively affect students in adulthood.**



# **FINAL THOUGHTS!!!**

- **School officials must focus on keeping students in the classroom.**
- **There is a direct correlation of attendance to safety.**
- **We are all in this together relative to helping students reach their full potential.**
- **You can make a difference!!!**
- **Even in your safety role, you are a partner in this effort.**







**SOME ADULT HELPED YOU, NOW WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

# QUESTIONS?



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