REPORT TO:	Program and School Services Advisory Committee
	Public or In-Camera (for Board Meetings only): Public
TITLE OF REPORT:	Student Attendance Presentation
PRESENTERS: *(list ONLY those attending the meeting)*	Jeff Bruce, Superintendent of Student Achievement Kathryn Lambert, Manager of Professional Student Services
REPORT AUTHORS:	Kathryn Lambert
PRESENTED FOR:	Input/Advice
Recommendations: *(only required when presented for approval)*	n/a
Purpose: *(include context)*	As part of the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, we are required to share attendance indicators with the Ministry as part of the Student Achievement Plan. Of those indicators is the % of grade 1-8 students who attend school at least 90% of the time. The purpose of this presentation is to provide PASSA with an update on system initiatives that have been implemented to support improved student attendance.
Content:	Improving student attendance is a Ministry and TVDSB priority and every school Board is responsible for implementing initiatives to support students in school attendance. As part of the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, every Board will be sharing some indicators with the Ministry as part of the Student Achievement Plan. Of those indicators is the % of grade 1-8 students who attend school at least 90% of the time. During the 2022-2023 school year (which is the most recent data released by the Ministry), 66.4% of students in grades 1-8 attended school 90% of the time, which is above the province and region, and getting closer to the pre-pandemic attendance pattern. As a system, we have established an attendance task force to develop resources to support school teams in implementing best practices.
Financial Implications:	None
Timeline:	Ongoing

Communications:	n/a
Appendices:	[PASSA Presentation PowerPoint](#)

Connection to Strategic Directions:

We value students' individual educational paths and provide the tools and resources necessary for student achievement including students with special education needs: Yes

To support student achievement, our schools and workplaces must be safe spaces for all: Yes

Our goal is to become Ontario's leader in education by fostering a culture of innovation and excellence: Yes

To inform our decision-making, we will build positive, trusting relationships across our district by increasing community engagement that is accessible, accountable, and transparent: Yes

Revised October 2024

Student Achievement Plan:
Student Engagement & Well-Being Indicator

% of students who attended at least 90 % of instructional days

	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23
TVDSB	67.1	45.3	66.4
Region	63.9	47.9	56.8
Province	66.8	52.6	55

■ TVDSB   ■ Region   ■ Province

Thames Valley
District School Board

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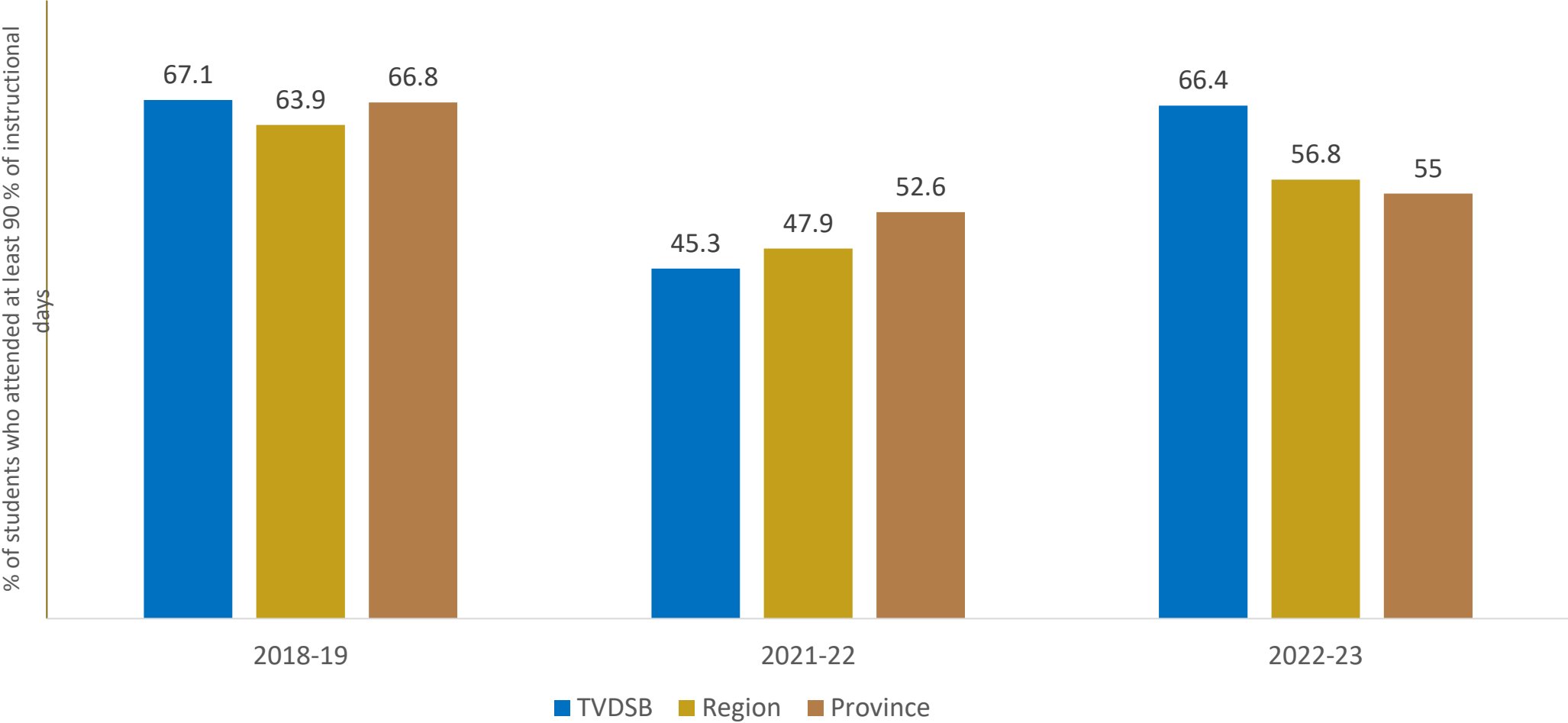
TVDSB's Plan to Improve Student Attendance

Essential Conditions for Learning

LEARN
GET REGULATED
BE CONNECTED
FEEL SAFE
RELATIONSHIPS

Implement **School-Based Best Practices** across the system with an emphasis of establishing the Essential Conditions for Learning and early intervention (Tier 1 & 2)

Provide Administrators with real-time attendance data to support engagement and early intervention

Improved Student Attendance

Awareness campaigns and dissemination of resources related to the benefits of student attendance to students and caregivers

Expand access to universal nutrition and after-school programs in schools

EVERY DAY COUNTS
#AttendanceMatters

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
tvdsb.ca

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Research & Assessment Brief

What Does the Research Say?

Supporting Attendance at Thames Valley

Purpose: To help board and school staff understand attendance issues and address them using evidence-based strategies. Evidence-based strategies are supported by peer-reviewed research.

Why is it important to improve attendance?

Frequent absences are associated with **negative effects** on:

- Interpersonal skills
- Motivation
- School belonging
- School stress
- End-of-year math and literacy assessments

- Absent students miss out on the **benefits of school.**
- Attendance issues can **negatively Impact opportunity gaps.**
- There are **cumulative effects** of school absences.
- Attendance is an indicator for **school dropout risk.**
- Widespread attendance issues can **Impact entire classrooms.**

Attendance Explained

- Attendance means a student is **present at school**. In Ontario, absences where a student is not present are recorded as either General Absence Days ("G") or Regular Absence Days ("A").
- Definitions for "A" and "G" absences can be found in the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools*: https://files.ontario.ca/edu-enrolment-register-instructions-elementary-secondary-schools-en-2023-12-18.pdf
- **The Ontario Ministry of Education** classifies students as "persistently absent" if they miss 10 percent or more school days in a given school year. **This rate includes both "A" and "G" absences.**

Why is attendance a particular concern now?

A key indicator in the TVDSB Student Achievement Plan is the percentage of Grade 1-8 students whose individual attendance rate is at least 90 percent.

School attendance in many areas declined following the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2021-22 school year, only 44% of TVDSB students in Grades 1 to 8 met the 90 percent attendance rate, compared to 52% in the province.

% of Grade 1-8 Students with an Attendance Rate At or Above 90 Percent in 2021-22

- 44%
- 52%

■ TVDSB ■ Province
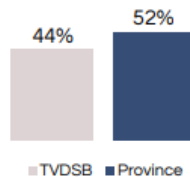
How can we improve attendance?

TIER 1: FOR ALL STUDENTS
Address Common Barriers, Communicate

- Create a positive and supportive **school climate.**
- Offer safe and reliable **transportation** to and from school.
- Offer **breakfast** programs and **after-school** programs.
- **Promote good health** through information, screenings, and a school nurse.
- Use **positive framing:** improving attendance rather than reducing absenteeism.
- **Communicate** with families and older students about the importance of attendance.
- Focus on the **Essential Conditions for Learning** for a safe and caring learning environment.
- Keep the indoor environment **clear of common triggers** for allergies or asthma.

TIER 2: FOR STUDENTS WITH A HISTORY OF OR BEGINNING TO SHOW ATTENDANCE ISSUES
Early Intervention

- **Meet regularly** to review attendance records.
- **Intervene early** before small issues become large issues.
- Provide **personalized, early outreach** to identify barriers and potential supports.
- Assign a staff member to **greet students** by name each day. Call home when students are absent.
- **Recognize Improved** attendance.
- **Work collaboratively** to understand gaps and challenges for improving attendance.

TIER 3: FOR STUDENTS WITH SEVERE ATTENDANCE ISSUES
Personalized Intervention

- More severe circumstances, e.g., missing 20% of school days, may require substantial **individualized supports.**
- Work with school counsellors, social workers, psychologists, or other service agencies to **address individual student and family barriers.**
- When attendance issues are expected to continue, e.g., in cases of severe or chronic health issues, work with students, families, and teachers to **prevent students from falling behind** as much as possible.
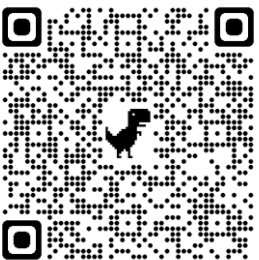
References: https://bit.ly/3SuqtqZ

RESEARCH and ASSESSMENT

Thames Valley District School Board

School Attendance: Best Practices

Establishing the Essential Conditions for Learning in your school will result in improved student attendance. Staff resources to enhance their capacity are available on the Safe Schools and Well-Being SharePoint page,

Resources related to attendance documentation and reports are available on theSIS SharePoint page

School Leadership

- Promote the mindset that attendance concerns can be a symptom of other needs and the importance of being supportive.

- Communicate with teachers about their responsibility of taking and documenting accurate attendance, and the impact on students and families when there are errors.

- Promote educator practices that support developing supportive relationships, positive connections, and open communication with caregivers.

- Seek to understand what is contributing to a student's attendance concern, including reflecting on school climate and cultural safety issues.

School Office Practices

- Promote and model engaging and welcoming office greetings towards students and caregivers when they arrive and return to school.

- Ensure that Secretarial staff review attendance data and inform Administrators when a student is absent for several consecutive days and other attendance concerns.

- Check-in with your Secretarial staff about communications they have had with caregivers as to why students are absent.

- Receive attendance data reports from your Secretarial staff as needed.

School Attendance Team Practices

- Ensure that ongoing attendance review meetings with your team (LST, SW/AC, and Administrators) are occurring. Establish a regular schedule.

- As a team, review student attendance data as needed.

- Discuss emerging concerns about attendance patterns for specific students and develop plans, including consideration for non-consecutive referrals to SW/AC and sending families attendance related correspondents.

- Monitor and plan for students with concerning attendance.

- Ensure that information is tracked in a shared school tracking document that is securely saved.

Family Engagement

- Ensure that supportive and informative attendance related communication is occurring with caregivers through newsletters and direct interactions.

- Sample key messages: We value students being at school. We are here to support you. Reach out if you or your child need support or have a concern.

- Promote the practice of educators checking-in with caregivers if they are concerned about a student's well-being.

Attendance Matters Social Media Campaign

March 27 - April 18, 2024

- 21 Different Social Media posts highlighting the benefits of student attendance

- Campaign Data:
  - Impressions: 155,073
  - Engagements: 6354
  - Shares: 242

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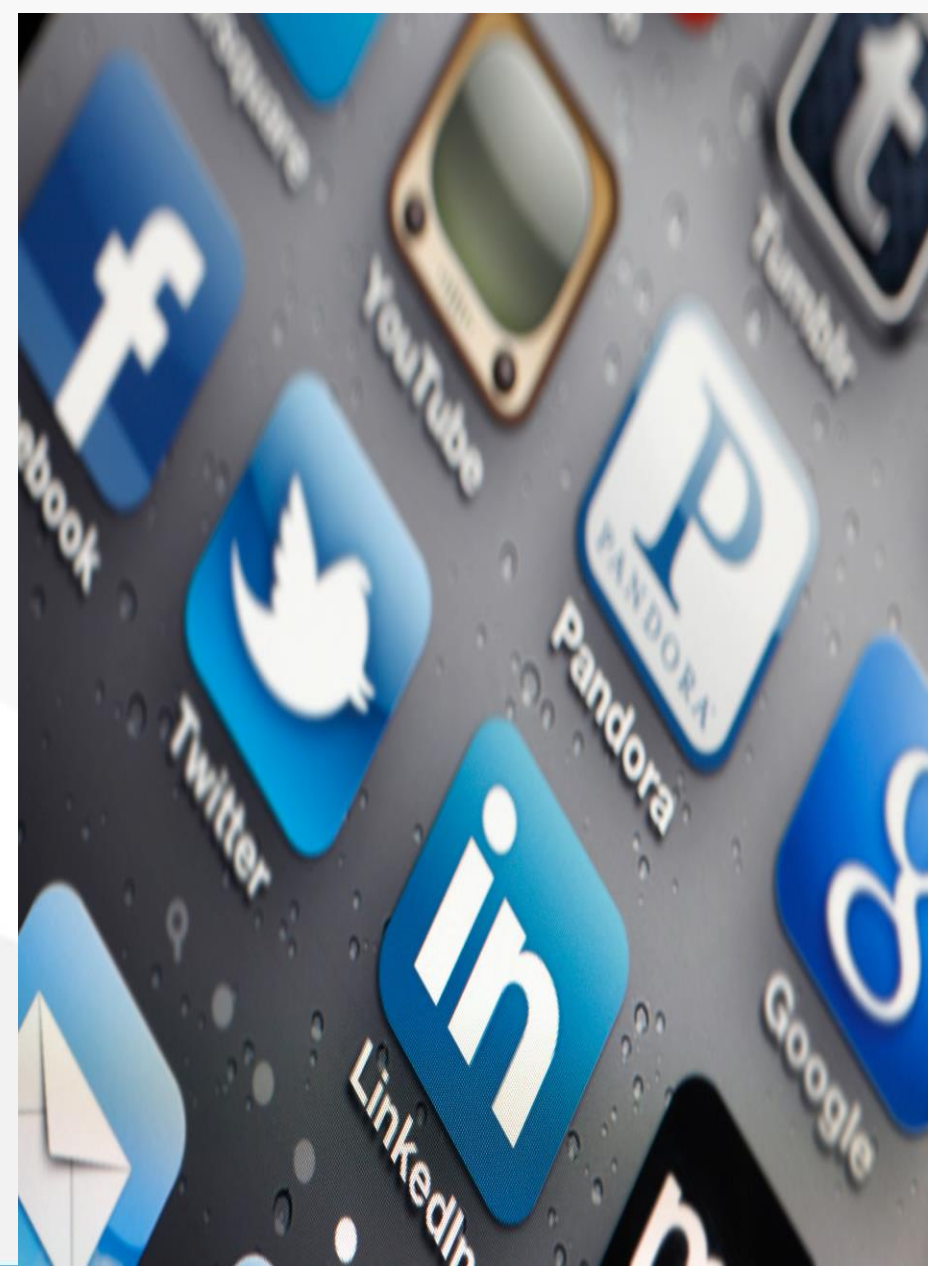
Next Steps

- Enhance data reports for administrators to have access to real-time data in a user-friendly format.

- Balancing attendance matters messaging with health & safety messaging.

- Increased family resources (example: Attendance Matters landing page on TVDSB website)

- Development and implementation of a Food Security Toolkit across the system.

- Data is trending positively - continue promoting existing resources.