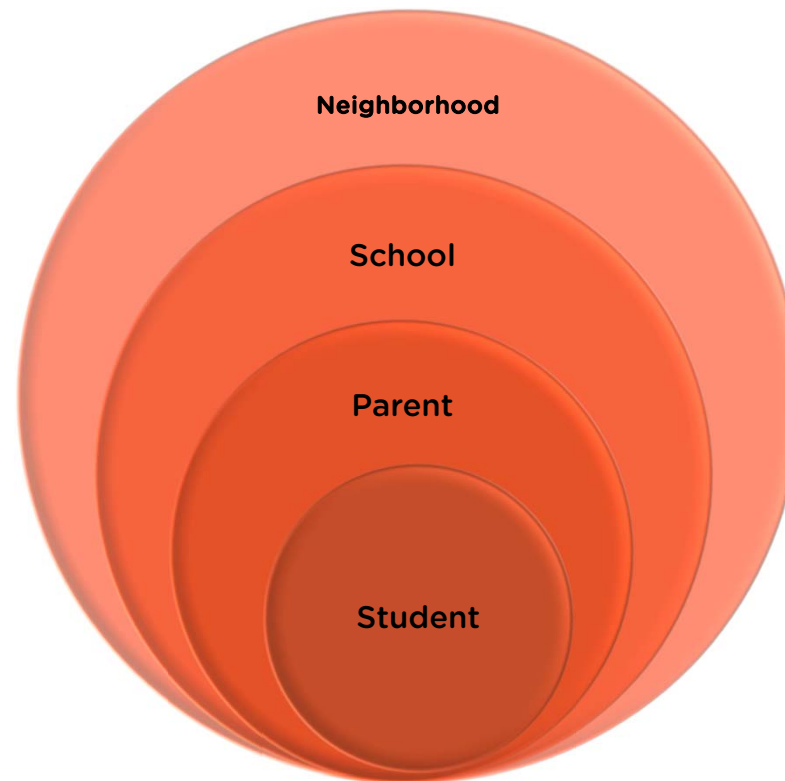


A Conversation with You...

How can we as a community reduce school absenteeism?





Juvenile Welfare Board

Investing in children. Strengthening our community.

A Study of Student Absenteeism in Pinellas County

- Attending school *every day* matters.
- School systems built on assumption: children attend— and *learn*—every single day. Classes held 180 days a year.
- Chronically absent students:
 - Perform worse on standardized tests of reading and math
 - More likely to drop out of school
 - Less likely to graduate on time

Current Situation in Pinellas County

Florida Department of Education Statistics
Percent Absent 21 Days or More
All Students (Kindergarten – Grade 12)

School Year 2013-2014:

Florida 9.5%

Pinellas County: 12.8% (15,545 students)

Pinellas County higher rate than Florida for at least the last five years (since 2009-2010 School Year).



Current efforts to Improve School Attendance Include:

Pinellas County School District

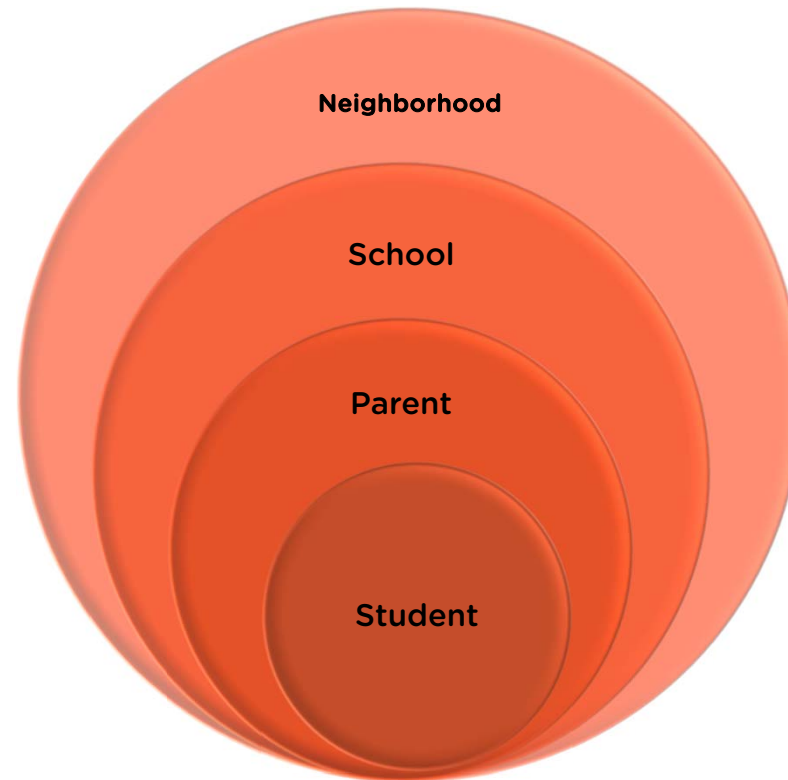
- Child Study Teams
- Teen Court, Truancy Court, Magistrate Grant
- Walking School Bus
- Truancy Intervention Program, Teen Parent Programs

Juvenile Welfare Board

- PEMHS System Navigators + Scale Up for Success
- Truancy Intervention Program (Sanderlin)
- Safe Place 2B
- Behavioral Evaluation
- School engagement integrated into other JWB-funded School Success and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) programs



Children: Individual, Parent, School, and Neighborhood Influences



Children in this Study

They are a *cohort*:

Followed from kindergarten to end of 8th grade.

All of the children in this study were enrolled in a Pinellas County school continuously from kindergarten through 8th grade (6,169 children)

Race:

White 60.0%

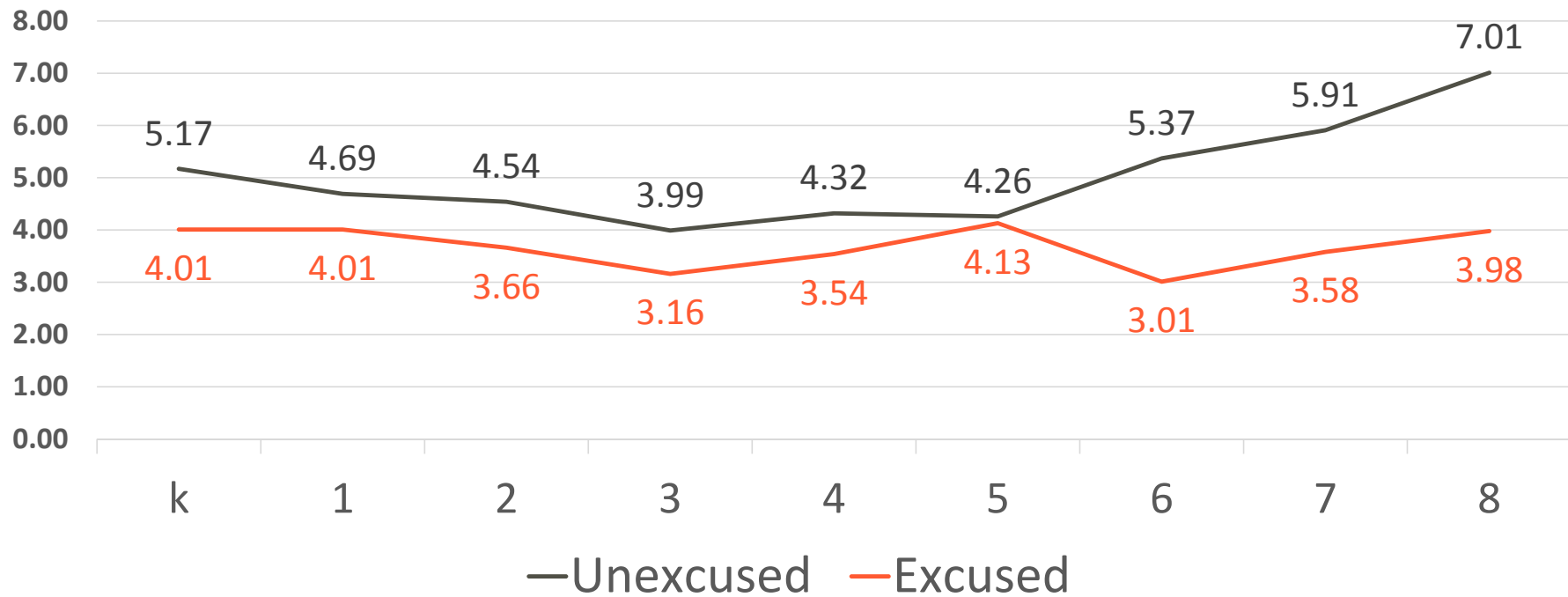
Black 20.0%

Other Race 19.5%

Ethnicity:

Hispanic 9.6%

Average Number of Days Absent each School Year Kindergarten Through 8th Grade



Does being absent affect students' school achievement?

Yes (at least as measured by the FCAT).

Regardless of the type of absence—excused or unexcused—more absences decreased the likelihood that students would pass their FCAT in Math.

More *unexcused* absences decreased the likelihood that students would pass their FCAT in Reading.

We saw this trend consistently—beginning in *third grade*.

Characteristics Related to Unexcused Absences

Students:

- Mental health (Baker Act)
- African-American
- Medicaid medical history
- Emergency medical services
- JWB-funded service/program
- # of child maltreatment reports
- Free/reduced lunch eligible
- Older for grade
- Hispanic ethnicity

Parents:

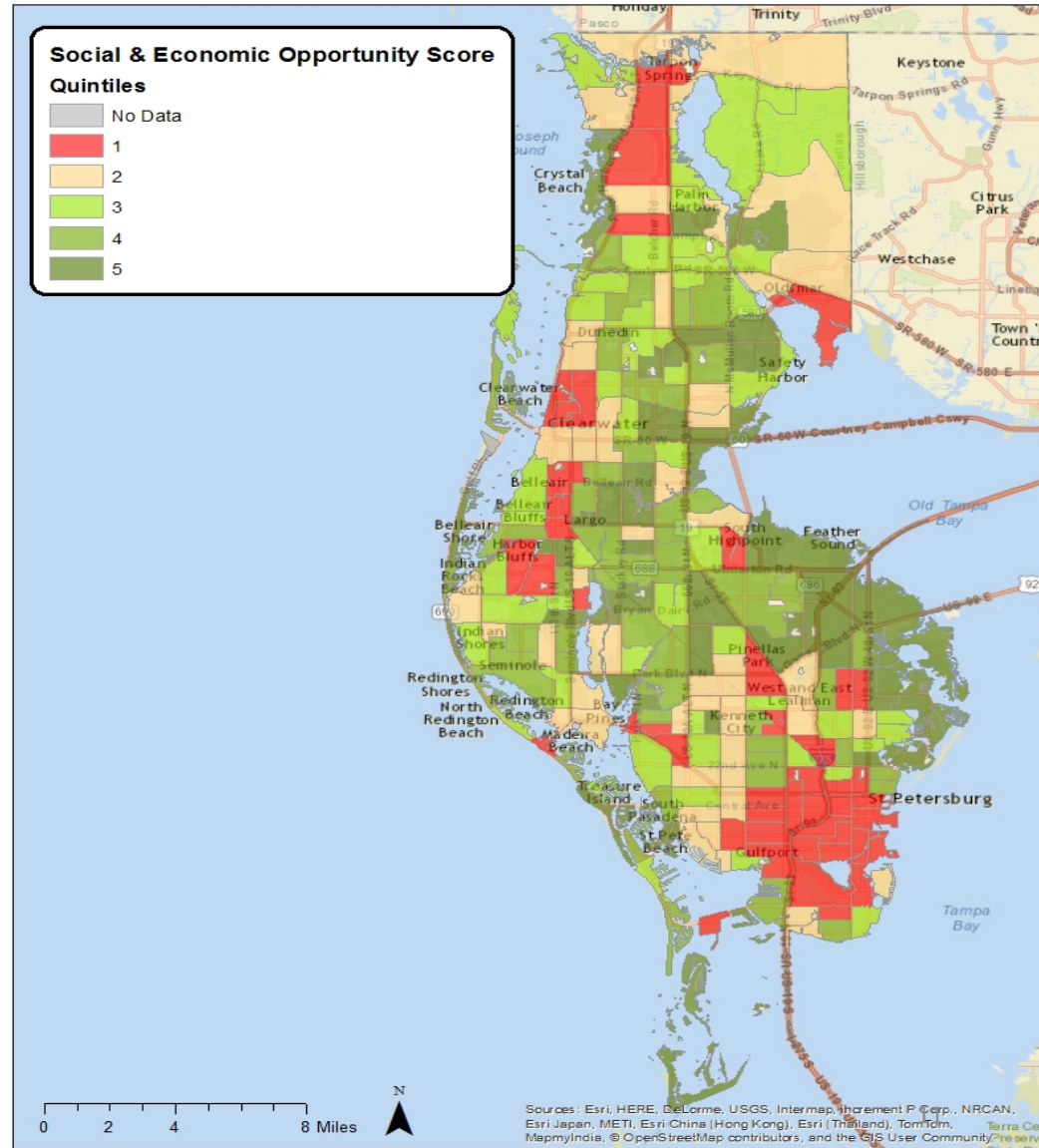
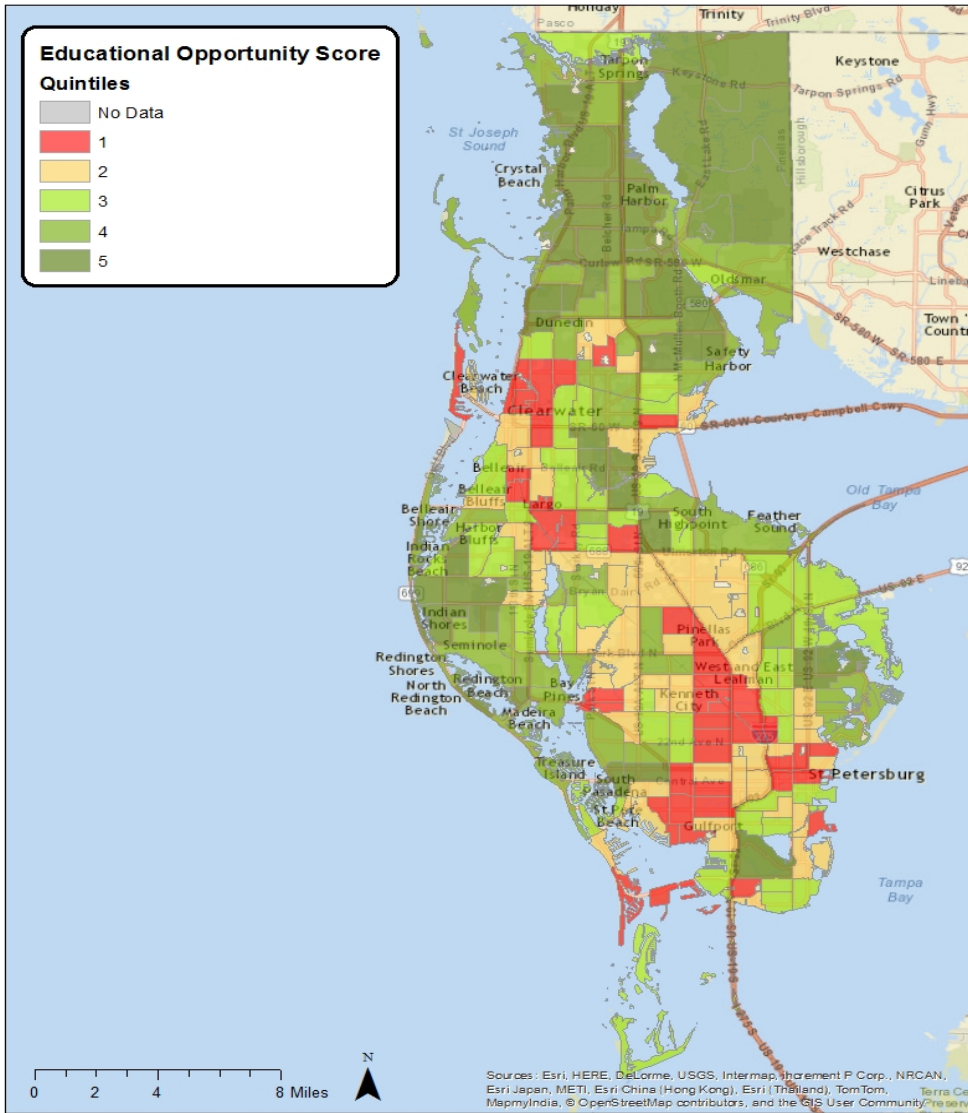
- Severe mental illness
- Doctor visits (physical health)

School Characteristics:

- Number of students with out-of-school suspensions (elementary)
- No middle school factors

Neighborhood Characteristics:

- Level of educational opportunity
- Social & economic characteristics



Policy Development



Preliminary Recommendations:

- Maintain an IDS with timely and regularly updated data that has the capacity to answer critical policy questions
- Develop multifaceted approach to reducing absenteeism that includes a place-based perspective
- Engage the community in the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, with a focus on school attendance
- Include an Equity Assessment in policy and program reviews

Policy Development

Preliminary Recommendations:

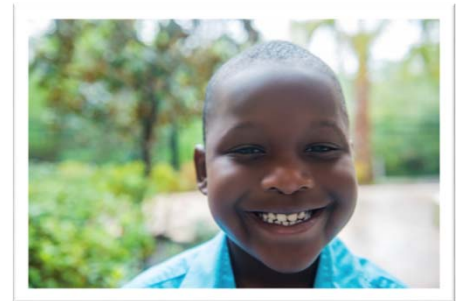
- Increase the number of children who attend preschool/nursery
- Increase the number of quality early learning environments in areas of greatest need
- Monitor absence closely on an individual child basis for days absent and class absence
- Target attendance efforts beginning in PreSchool and/or Kindergarten focused on the parent
- Target attendance efforts focused on the child beginning in fifth grade



Policy Development

Preliminary Recommendations:

- Emphasize the importance of school attendance across all of JWB's programs
- Develop mechanisms to identify children with mental health and/substance abuse problems as early as possible
- Provide help to minority parents to navigate the school system's attendance rules
- Take a community collaborative approach to ensuring that all children and youth benefit from being in school



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