

Improving School Attendance in Fairfax County: A Multi-Sector Action Plan

Update to the
Board of Supervisors Human Services Committee
June 28, 2016

By the Attendance Task Force Steering Committee:
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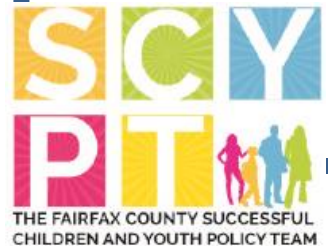
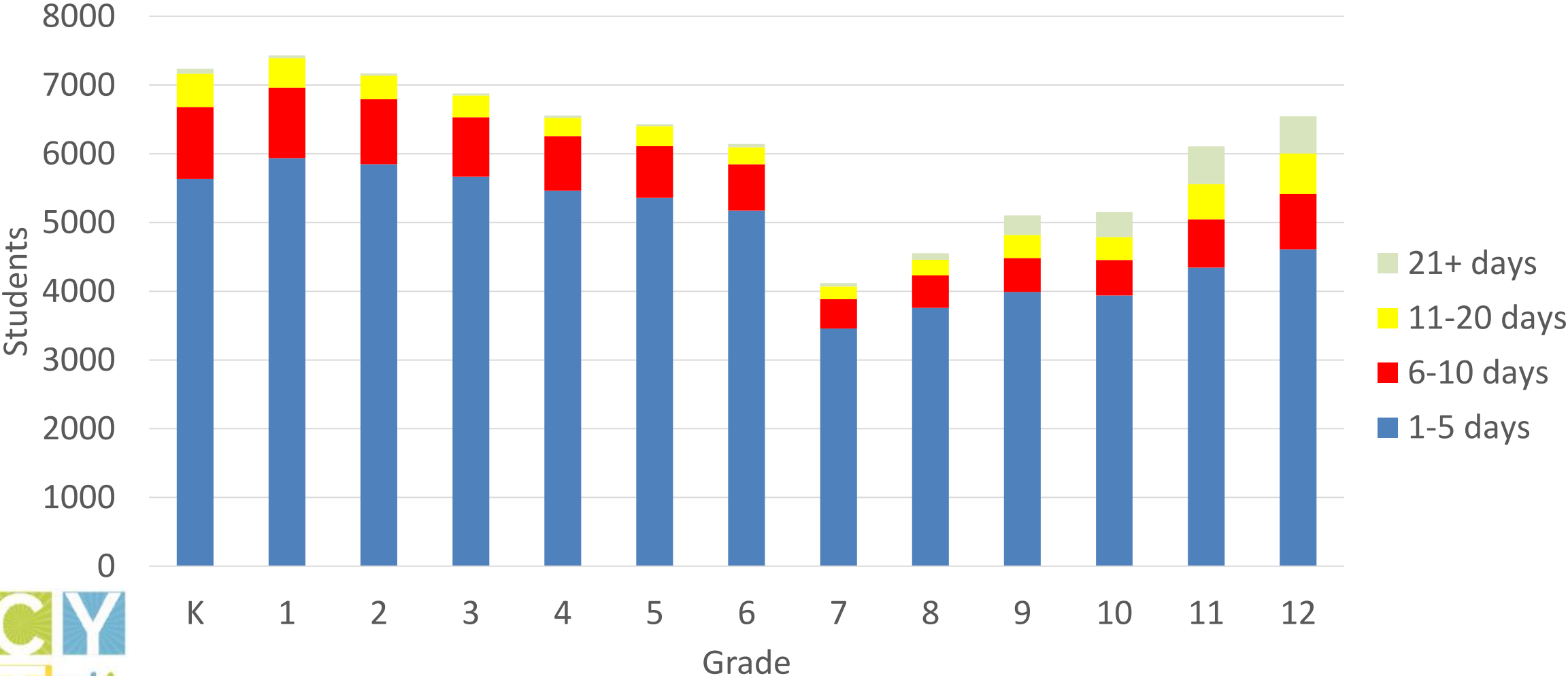
Kristen Brennan, Chrissy Cunningham, Jesse Ellis, Victoria
Kairys, and Jonathan Melendez, NCS

Plan Development

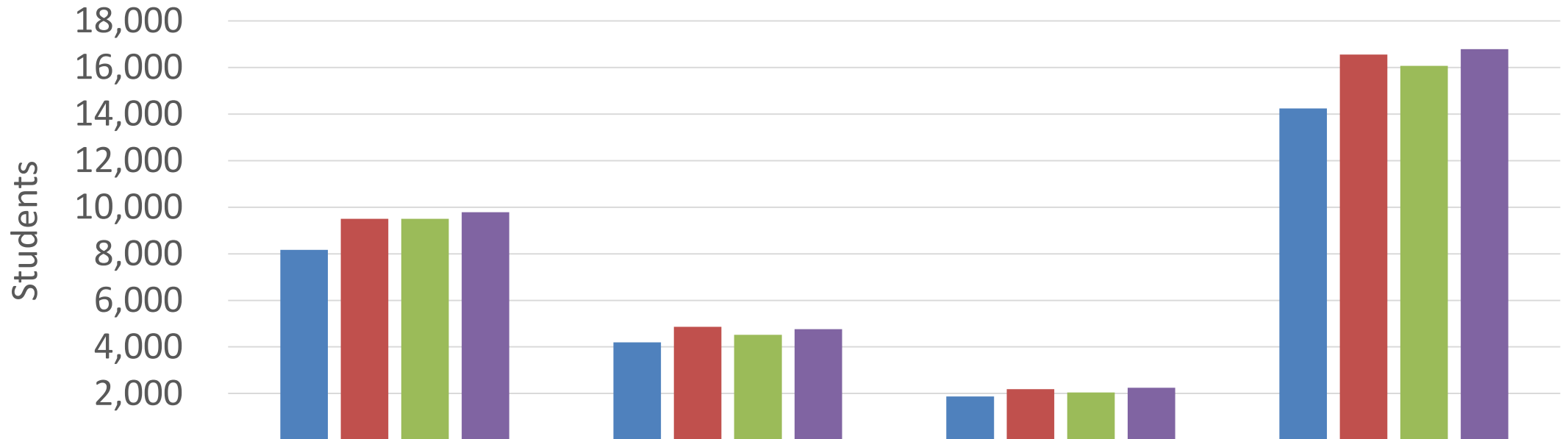


- SCYPT endorsed an approach in December 2014
- Community Dialogue in September 2015: 200+ attendees
- Attendance Task Force met over the winter and spring
- SCYPT endorsed Goals 1, 2, and 3 of plan in June 2016

Number of Students with Unexcused Absences by Grade, 2014-2015



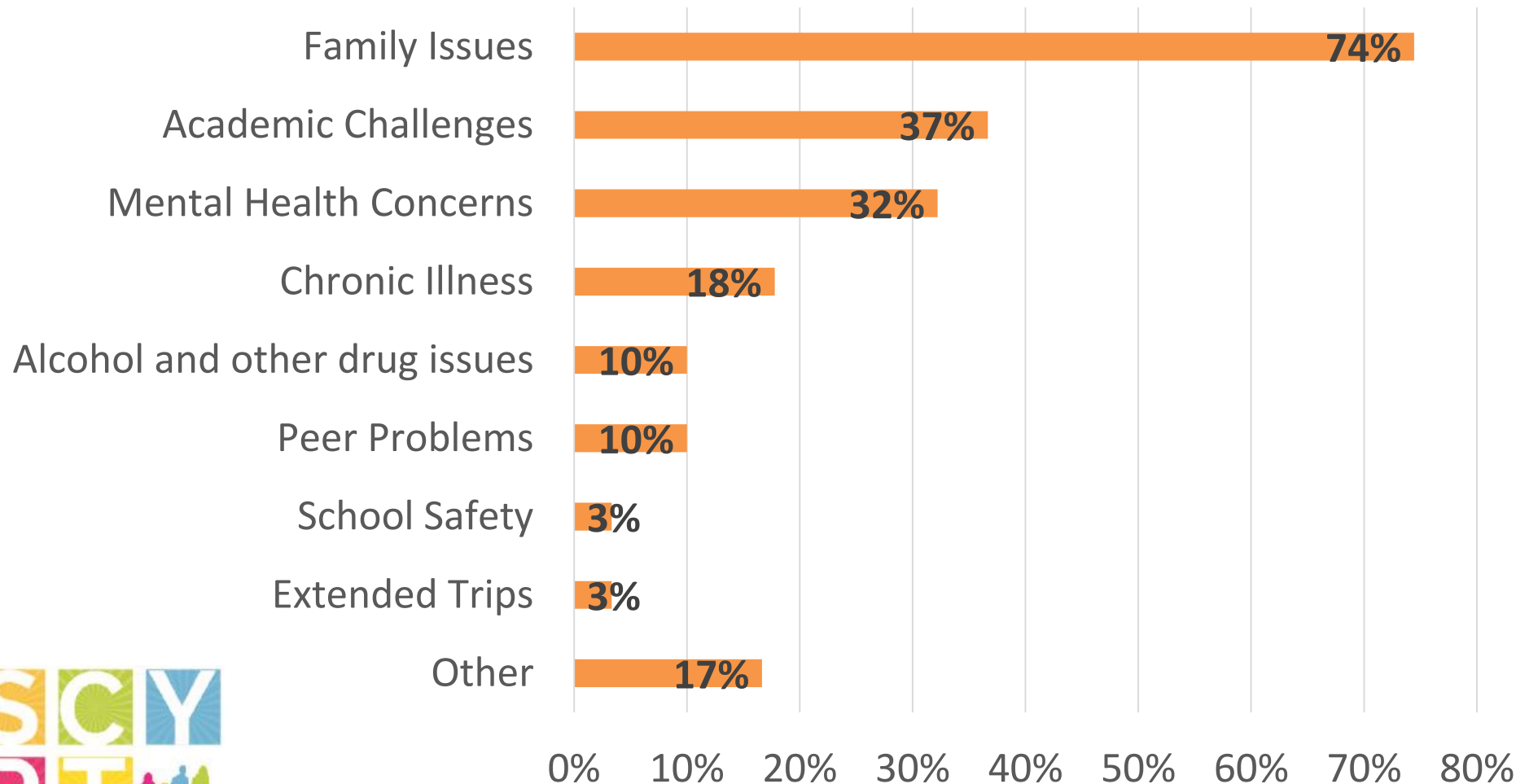
“Legal” Truancy: Absent more than 5 days



	6-10 days	11-20 days	21+ days	Total
2011-2012	8,168	4,198	1,874	14,240
2012-2013	9,500	4,862	2,188	16,550
2013-2014	9,505	4,521	2,046	16,072
2014-2015	9,782	4,767	2,243	16,792

Common Underlying Issues

Reason for Absence (Total)



Based on a sample of 90 student cases being handled by Student Attendance Officers during School Year 2015-2016. Cases are evenly divided among elementary, middle, and high school students.

The Action Plan

Three key principles of the plan:

- The focus is on serving individuals, not on addressing root causes broadly.
- A community-wide multi-sector approach is necessary. This requires a consistent approach across schools.
- All strategies must be planned and implemented through an equity lens.

The Attendance Action Plan

Goal 1: Ensure a positive school climate, flexible instructional approaches, and supportive services to encourage school attendance and engagement.

- Awareness campaigns and messaging to parents
- Responsive and welcoming school environments and opportunities
- Student engagement through personalized instruction practices
- Connections to the community, especially through out-of-school time opportunities and the business sector

The Attendance Action Plan

Goal 2. Closely monitor absenteeism and student behavior to enable early detection and intervention.

- Standard attendance monitoring at the school and division levels
- Revised position descriptions for School Probation Officers and School Attendance Officers

The Attendance Action Plan

Goal 3. Involve families, school staff, community service providers, and other key stakeholders in service planning and monitoring.

- Cross-agency collaboration, information sharing, and data sharing
- Family organization engagement

The Attendance Action Plan

Goal 4. Develop tiered school- and community-based responses that prioritize comprehensive supportive services and reduce punishments.

- Resource guides
- Tiered system of interventions that are triggered by absenteeism
 - Tier 1 - school attendance plan: school climate, attendance promotion, data monitoring
 - Tier 2 - student attendance plan: attendance-based intervention, identification of services and alternative educational supports, information sharing
 - Tier 3 - wraparound services

SCYPT Action and Next Steps

- SCYPT endorsed Goals 1, 2, and 3
- Wording for new Strategy 1.8 (personalized school-day instruction)
- Implementation teams (where needed)
 - Maintain and increase multi-sectoral participation
 - Develop resource lists, implementation guides, and templates to support implementation
 - Return to SCYPT in fall with specific resource needs
- Goal 4/interventions workgroup
 - Fully develop the wraparound and case management approaches
 - Return to SCYPT in fall for endorsement of strategies and specific resource needs

Contact Information

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