

Every Day Counts: Building Partnerships to Boost Attendance and Health

November 17, 2025

Killington Grand Resort Hotel and Conference Center



SUMMIT GOALS:

- Elevate the issue of chronic absence as an educational and public health priority
- Highlight the power of partnerships to improve attendance, decrease chronic absence and address root causes, with a focus on health
- Share best practice to build strong foundations for future work to support school attendance in Vermont
- Seek feedback from key stakeholders to inform the state's strategic plan around chronic absence

AGENDA:

8:30 – 9am	Registration, light breakfast
9 – 9:15am	Welcome
9:15 – 10am	Keynote Address, Dr. Christina Grant "It Takes a Village: Leadership Lessons in Building Partnerships for Attendance"
10 – 10:15am	Chronic Absenteeism: What, Who, and Why?
10:15 – 11:15am	Panel of Leadership Perspectives on Chronic Absenteeism "Breaking Siloes, Building Solutions"
11:15 – 11:25am	Break
11:25am – 12pm	A Conversation with Families: How can schools help or hinder student attendance?
12 – 1pm	Networking lunch
1 – 3:15pm	Break-out sessions

Room	Session 1 (1 – 2pm)	Session 2 (2:10 – 3:10pm)
Oscar Wilde III	Tackling Chronic Absence: Data and Team Strategies	Tackling Chronic Absence: Data and Team Strategies
Gateway I & II	Aligning Statute, Policy and Practice: Building a Culture of Attendance in Vermont Schools	Aligning Statute, Policy and Practice: Building a Culture of Attendance in Vermont Schools
Northstar I	Building Bridges for Student Success	Building Belonging: How the Community Schools Approach Reduces Chronic Absenteeism
Northstar II	From Clinic to Classroom: School & Primary Care Partnerships to Improve Attendance	Leveraging School Health Services to Improve Attendance

3:15 – 3:45pm	A Conversation with Youth: What motivates or hinders regular attendance? What solutions do youth recommend for education and health leaders?
---------------	---

3:45 – 4pm	Closing, Call to Action
------------	--------------------------------

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS AND SPEAKERS

Keynote Address: "It Takes a Village: Leadership Lessons in Building Partnerships for Attendance"

Speaker: Christina Grant, Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University

In this keynote address, Dr. Christina Grant will describe why she has come to value and emphasize the importance of regular school attendance, including through her roles as a local and state education leader. She will describe how she's elevated mindset shifts – and the concepts of “all hands on deck” within her buildings and with partners when addressing attendance.

Presentation: “Chronic Absenteeism: What, Who, Why?”

Speaker: Heidi Schumacher, Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, University of Vermont

Heidi Schumacher reviews the current state of chronic absenteeism in Vermont and the United States. What is the definition of chronic absence? Who is affected? And why are students missing school?

Panel Presentation: “Breaking Siloes, Building Solutions”:

Panel of Leadership Perspectives on Chronic Absenteeism

Moderator: Heidi Schumacher, Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, University of Vermont

Panelists: Jamie Kinnarney, Superintendent, White River Valley Supervisory Union

Kathleen Bryant, Nurse Practitioner, Gifford Health Care

Josie Lang, School Nurse, Colchester School District

Cara Gleason Krebs, School Services Director, Howard Center

Mark Scott, Director of Youth Programs, Lamoille Restorative Center

Leaders from school districts, health care and community organizations across Vermont will share their perspectives on why school attendance matters, as well as strategies to engage teams, partner organizations, and families to improve attendance and youth wellbeing.

A Conversation with Families

Moderator: Nick Conner, Director of Student Engagement and Data, Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools; Senior Fellow, Attendance Works

This panel is dedicated to lifting the voices of the first and most consistent educators of our students: their families. We'll begin by framing the importance of authentic family voice in solving attendance challenges. The core of the session will be a 20-minute discussion with parents speaking via Zoom. They will share honest accounts of their experience, detailing the hurdles they've faced and providing direct feedback on how school actions have helped, or unintentionally hindered, their student's consistent attendance.

A Conversation with Youth

Moderators: Lindsey Halman, Olivia Scharnberg, Jacoby Soter

Olivia Scharnberg and Jacoby Soter, youth facilitators with UP for Learning, moderate a panel of their peers to discuss what motivates or hinders regular school attendance, as well as recommendations for educational and health leaders on strategies that may leverage to support school attendance and wellbeing.

BREAK-OUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS AND SPEAKERS

Icons indicate the strand most aligned to the session:



Data



Partnerships



**Strengths-based
policies and procedures**

Tackling Chronic Absence: Data and Team Strategies

Presenter: Nick Conner, Director of Student Engagement and Data, Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools and Senior Fellow, Attendance Works

Room and Time: Oscar Wilde III, Session 1 (1 – 2pm) AND Session 2 (2:10 – 3:10pm)

This session provides school leaders and educators with the immediate, practical steps needed to reduce chronic absenteeism. Learn how to effectively leverage school-wide data to identify students early and discover best practices for building collaborative school teams that can implement targeted, supportive interventions. Walk away with clear, actionable strategies to improve student attendance and engagement through effective use of data and teams.



Aligning Statute, Policy and Practice: Building a Culture of Attendance in Vermont Schools

Presenters: Tia Marie Brumsted, LCSW-C, LICSW, NCSSW and Sheri Koller, LCSW, LCSW-C, PPSC, NCSSW, AOE Consultants

Room and Time: Gateway I & II, Session 1 (1 – 2pm) AND Session 2 (2:10 – 3:10pm)

Explore the Agency of Education's (AOE) commitment to reducing absenteeism. As AOE seeks improvements in attendance-related statutes, this session will unpack implications for supervisory unions and partners for student success. Participants will collaborate on identifying needs, resources, and best practices to ensure smooth implementation and sustainable outcomes in SY26–27 and beyond.



Building Bridges for Student Success

Presenters: Susan Lieberman, Senior Fellow, Attendance Works; Chelsea Lareau, School Engagement Clinician, Colchester School District; Andrew Conforti Ed.D, Principal, Colchester High School

Room and Time: Northstar I, Session 1 (1 – 2pm)

Chronic absenteeism, missing 18 days or 10% of the school year, can be a critical warning sign that students are academically at-risk. This interactive session will focus on strategies to increase student attendance and engagement, as well as how to strengthen partnerships among staff, students, and families. We will highlight effective strategies and how to create positive learning experiences for students including the Colchester School District's trusted adult program.

(Break-out session descriptions continued on next page)



Building Belonging: How the Community Schools Approach Reduces Chronic Absenteeism

Presenters: Bernice Garnett, Associate Professor, UVM College of Education and Social Services with panelists:
 Maria Davies, Community Schools Coordinator, Burlington School District
 Samantha Stevens, Community Schools Coordinator, North Country Supervisory Union
 Lisa Daigle-Farney, Community Homeschool Liaison, North Country Supervisory Union
 Elaine Collins, Superintendent, North Country Supervisory Union

Room and Time: Northstar I, Session 2 (2:10 – 3:10pm)

This workshop explores Community Schools in Vermont, highlighting the ways in which Community Schools implementation partnerships support improved school attendance. Community Schools are public schools that serve as a hub for students, families, and the broader community - integrating academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and family engagement to support student success and strengthen communities. As an evidence-based model, this approach promotes equity, reduces chronic absenteeism, and fosters belonging and positive school culture. Community School Leadership from the Burlington School District and North Country Supervisory Union will share how implementing Community Schools has improved attendance and engagement in their districts.



From Clinic to Classroom: School & Primary Care Partnerships to Improve Attendance

Presenters: Heidi Schumacher, Vermont Child Health Improvement Program
 Michaela Martin, Multi-Tiered System of Supports Coordinator, White River Valley Supervisory Union
 Sara Palmer, Home to School Coordinator, White River Valley Supervisory Union
 Danielle Isham, Nurse Care Coordinator, South Royalton Health Center

Room and Time: Northstar II, Session 1 (1 – 2pm)

This workshop will highlight policies, resources and rationale for how and why community-based health care can be engaged as partners with schools to promote, identify and respond to challenges with school attendance among shared youth and families. The team from White River Valley Supervisory Union and South Royalton Health Center will discuss their experience expanding an existing partnership to layer an explicit focus on school attendance as a shared outcome measure through the Every Day Counts project.



Leveraging School Health Services to Improve Attendance

Presenters: Jess LaClair, Public Health Specialist and School Liaison, Vermont Department of Health
 Kathleen Bryant, Nurse Practitioner, Gifford Health Care's School Based Health Centers
 Kelly Marcus, School Nurse, Champlain Valley School District
 Adria Ciampaglia, Coordinator of Behavioral Supports, Clara Martin Center

Room and Time: Northstar II, Session 2 (2:10 – 3:10pm)

Moderator Jess LaClair will facilitate a discussion with school health leaders from across Vermont regarding the role school health services can play in addressing absenteeism. Participants will learn about the most common health-related reasons for chronic absenteeism, misconceptions that contribute to chronic absence, and strategies to optimize school health services to address these challenges for individual students and at the population level.

Killington Grand Resort Hotel & Conference Center Meeting Space Layout

1 = Gateway I

4 = Northstar II

2 = Gateway II

5 = Escapade I

3 = Northstar I

6 = Escapade II

