

### Thinking About

Back to School sales, Back to School tax-free shopping, and mountains of Back to School supplies stacked in the entrances of most stores. These days it is hard to miss the fact that summer vacation is almost over and school is set to begin. Remember the excitement of new notebooks, brand new crayons, and picking out what you would wear on the first day? Teachers are excited too. Facebook is flooded with photos of newly decorated bulletin boards, neatly arranged classrooms, and shelves overflowing with books to be shared. The anticipation is palpable, and hopes are high for the success of every student and teacher.

Teachers and administrators will be paying close attention in the early days of the new school year because some students will indicate they are headed toward academic trouble by missing too many days of school. Across the country, as many as 7.5 million students miss nearly a month of school every year—these chronic absences correlate with poor performance at every grade level.

This trend starts as early as kindergarten and continues through high school, contributing to achievement gaps and ultimately to dropout rates. These early absences correlate with reading difficulties and poor attendance patterns in later years.

The effects of poor attendance are particularly pronounced among children from low-income families, who need more time in the classroom to master reading and are less likely to have access to resources outside of school to help them catch up. Unfortunately, children from low-income families are four times more likely to be chronically absent.

The good news is students can begin to reverse their academic difficulties if they improve their attendance. This is why [Sarasota County Schools](#) and the [School District of Manatee County](#) have partnered with the [Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading \(CGLR\)](#) on an [Attendance Awareness Campaign](#) designed to reach all students and their families, which will drive home the idea that Every Day Counts.

~ [Beth Duda](#), The Patterson Foundation CGLR Lead Consultant

### Moving The Needle

Efforts this year for the [Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading \(CGLR\)](#) are focused on moving the needle by improving school attendance. Chronic absenteeism—or missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason—is a proven early warning sign of academic risk and school dropout.

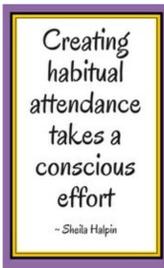
Starting in the early grades, the percentage of students missing 10 percent of the school year can reach remarkably high levels, and these early absences can rob students of the time they need to develop literacy skills.

[Chronic absence](#) in the early grades and beyond can affect all students when teachers must spend time reviewing concepts for children who missed the lessons in the first place.

Chronic absenteeism is a concern for every school. For the 2013-2014 school year, nearly 10,000 students in our region were considered chronically absent, missing 10% or more of the school year.

Nationally, one in 10 kindergarten and 1st grade students missed a month of school every year. It's important to address the problem in the early grades before a student heads off track academically and poor attendance habits become entrenched.

The Suncoast CGLR is working closely with [Sarasota County Schools](#) and the [School District of Manatee County](#) to bring home the message, Every Day Counts. To learn more, click [here](#).



### Learning & Sharing

#### Special September Announcement to Come

For Attendance Awareness month, the school districts for both Manatee and Sarasota counties will be participating in an exciting program to promote attendance awareness throughout our region. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter - [@SuncoastCGLR](#) and [#GLReading](#), for details.



#### Ron Fairchild Visits Our Community

Ron Fairchild, president and CEO of the Smarter Learning Group and senior consultant for the nationwide [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#), visited Manatee and Sarasota

counties last month.

Ron's visit included site visits to two summer learning programs supported by [The Community Foundation of Sarasota County](#), providing the keynote address for "Why Attendance Matters", a day long event in Manatee County supported by the [United Way of Manatee County](#) and [The School District of Manatee County](#), and engaging with community members and education leaders to discuss the region's collaborative approach to tackle reading proficiency by the end of third grade in a Hot Topics Forum presented by [Tom Tryon](#) of the [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#).

Thanks to [Manatee Educational Television \(METV\)](#), two of the events, [Why Attendance Matters](#) and the [Grade-Level Reading Hot Topics Forum](#), were recorded and posted online for viewing.

Why Attendance Matters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3BxRVt65AM>  
Hot Topics: <http://youtu.be/nwV5SZKSILU>

### Doing The Work



#### MANATEE COUNTY

Congratulations to [The School District of Manatee County](#) for its commitment to success for all of our students with the recent decision to hire 25 graduation enhancement technicians (GETs). Click [here](#) to read more.

### Did You Know?

We have speakers available for your meetings!



In response to questions and curiosity about the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and its vision, leaders from the [Community Foundation of Sarasota County](#), the [United Way of Manatee County](#) and [The Patterson Foundation](#) are available to speak to your group or organization to share the key elements of the campaign so everyone in the community can find space to support and participate.

Meet the five speakers for the Suncoast CGLR Speakers Bureau. Click below for speakers' bios.

#### Alicia Chalmers

Suncoast CGLR Consultant  
The Patterson Foundation

#### Beth Duda

Suncoast CGLR Lead Consultant  
The Patterson Foundation

#### Bronwyn Beightol

Senior Vice President  
United Way of Manatee County

#### John Annis

Senior Vice President of  
Community Investment  
Foundation of Sarasota County

#### Pierrette Kelly

Community Engagement  
Executive  
Suncoast CGLR Manatee County

To learn more or request a speaker for your upcoming event/meeting, click [here](#).

### Share the Newsletter

Do you have friends, family, colleagues or neighbors who you think would be interested in receiving the monthly Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading newsletter? If so, please share with them and encourage them to sign up to receive the newsletter. To sign up to receive the newsletter, visit the [Suncoast CGLR website](#) and go to 'Take Action' under the the 'Get Involved' tab or click [here](#).

### Connect

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### Founding Network Weavers



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