

AUGUST 2016



Updates from Beth - Students Heading Back to School

The signs are everywhere. Crowded stores for Florida no-tax weekend, crayons on sale two-for-one, children with brand new haircuts and clean shoes right out of the box. It's back-to-school time.

Manatee County students headed back on August 10 and Sarasota County students head back on August 22. Even though it's been decades since I had to plan my "outfit" for the first day of school, I still find this time of the year full of hope for fresh beginnings and increased achievements. The start of the school year begins with a clean slate, especially when we talk about school attendance.

As you may know, School Attendance is one of the five focus areas in the work of the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR). Studies have proven time and time again that chronically absent students, missing 10% or more of the school year, experience negative effects in their academic progress. The academic impact of missing that much school is the same whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

Low-income students are **four times** more likely to be chronically absent than others, often for reasons beyond their control, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation and a lack of access to dental and health care. The 2015 report on chronic absenteeism prepared by the National Collaborative on Education and Health gives many startling statistics. Among them, Children between 5 and 17 years miss nearly two million school days in a single year nationwide due to dental health-related problems, and children with poor oral health status are **nearly three times** more likely than their counterparts to miss school as a result of dental pain.

At the current time, the dental health picture for children in Florida is grim. Two out of three Medicaid enrolled kids who need dental care do not receive it. In 2015, 1.5 million kids, or one-third of the state's total population 19 years and under, did not see a dentist that year. Florida ranked 50 out of 51 states and the District of Columbia in the percentage of Medicaid-enrolled kids getting preventive dental care.*

Luckily for the students in Manatee and Sarasota counties, attention is being paid to the unacceptable state of pediatric dental health. SCGLR is working with Sarasota County's Department of Health, Manatee Rural Health Services, School Health Specialists, Rotary Club of Sarasota County Foundation, The Community Foundation of Sarasota County and The Patterson Foundation to put in place sustainable solutions for the children of our region. Some of this work will begin to impact students in September and we will keep you updated on our progress. Indeed, this time of the year is full of hope for fresh beginnings and increased achievements.

*Sarasota Herald Tribune article, Shattered smiles: Florida kids face dental crisis. By Maggie Clark.

~ Beth Duda, The Patterson Foundation, Director, SCGLR

Moving the Needle

2015-2016 Absenteeism for the Suncoast

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) encompasses two counties in Florida. Both counties have large school districts, Sarasota has enrollment of approx. 41,000 and Manatee has an enrollment of approx. 48,000.

We are fortunate to have both school districts as founding partners in SCGLR. Both districts also participated in the inaugural [2015 SCGLR Attendance Awareness Poster Contest](#).



Over the last year, both counties have experienced a reduction in the number of school absences!

Manatee County:

Through the work of Graduation Enhancement Technicians (GET), Manatee County experienced a 50% reduction in chronic absent students at all Title 1 schools compared to the previous year.

The GETs worked closely and collaboratively with their Social Workers and school teams to implement effective positive interventions to address absenteeism and to break down barriers for students and their families.

To read the full Manatee County 2015-2016 Absenteeism Data Report, click [here](#).

Sarasota County:

At this time, we have data from Sarasota County comparing the 2nd Quarter and 3rd Quarters of 2015 to the 2nd and 3rd Quarters of 2016.

Sarasota County's data shows an overall reduction in absences (both excused and unexcused) at the elementary school level for both quarters.

- Quarter 2 showed a reduction of 11.4%
- Quarter 3 showed a reduction of 6.9%

Several schools reduced the number of absences by more than 20%!

Learning & Sharing



Doing The Work



Day of Hope

New books, clothing, health checkups and more are all part of getting ready to go back to school and start a new, productive year of learning. But for some children in need in our region, none of these things are guaranteed.

[Hope Kids Community](#) is changing that one child at a time.

In its eighth year, the back-to-school readiness program partnered with 19 churches to host 12 events serving more than 2,100 children in our region.

Click [here](#) to read more.



Did You Know?

September is Attendance Awareness Month

- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and that's known as chronic absence.
- Absenteeism and its ill effects start early. One in 10 kindergarten and first grade students are chronically absent.
- Low-income students are **four times** more likely to be chronically absent than others often for reasons beyond their control, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation and a lack of access to dental and health care.
- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.

Click [here](#) to learn more.



Share the Newsletter

Do you have friends, family, colleagues or neighbors who you think would be interested in receiving the monthly SCGLR newsletter? If so, please share the following:

To sign up to receive the newsletter, visit the [SCGLR website](#) and go to 'Newsletter' under the 'Take Action' tab or click [here](#).

Connect (English)

#GLReading
@SuncoastCGLR
[Suncoast CGLR website Newsletter Sign Up](#)



Connect (Spanish)

The Poster Contest is Back!

Last year 38,000 students in Manatee and Sarasota counties participated in the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) Poster Contest which took place during September - Attendance Awareness Month.

The contest consisted of students creating a poster with the theme "Every Day Counts." Schools selected grade-level winners for their school, and submitted them to the regional competition where one winner was selected for each grade-level in the both counties.

SCGLR is bringing the Attendance Awareness Poster Contest back again this year, thanks to the financial support of The Patterson Foundation. For more information regarding the 2016 poster contest, contact:

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Founding Network Weavers



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