



### 1. Own the issue by using the first month of school to make public that attendance is a priority through your communications to key stakeholders, the media, students and their families.

- Sign your school district up for Attendance Awareness Month in September. [Use the Count Us In!](#) toolkit to find ideas, templates and messaging points.
- Share that you are signing on to this Call to Action with your staff, school board and key community stakeholders.
- Send an op-ed piece and possibly hold a media event. Attendance Works has template products available at the bottom of [this web page](#) to help publicize your commitment to attendance.
- Designate, if you haven't already a lead staff person to oversee the work and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders. Let us know who the contact is so we can provide online resources.
- Get the word out to parents by adopting attendance messaging strategies that help build a culture of attendance. Possibilities include:
  - » Sending a [letter to all parents](#) letting them know that attendance is important.
  - » Encouraging all schools to send this message to parents. Use or adapt these [parent flyers](#).
  - » Asking all schools to put in place attendance incentive programs that recognize good and improved attendance and adhere to these [guidelines](#).
  - » Encourage schools to show the Bringing Attendance Home [video](#) at back-to-school events or parent gatherings.
  - » Encourage schools to use the [Student Attendance Success plan](#) as a tool for talking to parents about attendance.

If needed, use your data to prioritize the populations that most need messaging and support. Typically chronic absence levels are higher in the transition grades: kindergarten and 1st as well as 6th and 9th. These grades are also a critical time to build a habit of regular attendance before students miss so many days they are off track for succeeding in school. More ideas for attendance messaging are included in this [online toolkit](#).

### 2. Mobilize your community by letting key stakeholders know about the attendance initiative and that you would like to involve them in developing, strengthening and/or implementing your plan of action.

- If you already have a plan for addressing chronic absence, use this as an opportunity to engage community groups in strengthening it and deepening their support.
- If your community is participating in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, tap the coalition in place to engage the community in improving attendance.
- If you don't have a plan or a coalition in place, compile a list and convene community partners who can help you develop one. Natural partners include:
  - » Mayor or county leader
  - » Government agencies, including social services, health and transportation departments
  - » PTA or parent advocacy groups
  - » Teachers union or leadership
  - » United Way and community-based nonprofits
  - » Chamber of Commerce and business leaders
  - » Juvenile judges or prosecutors who deal with truancy cases
  - » Faith leaders
  - » Afterschool providers
  - » Local foundations

- Use the Attendance Works [video](#) and [PowerPoint deck](#) to reinforce the connection between attendance and achievement, as well as to launch a discussion about solutions.
- For more detail, see our [Developing a Community Action Plan](#) handout.

### **3. Drive with data by moving beyond average daily attendance and truancy to monitoring chronic absence. Consider using the District and School Attendance Tracking Tools offered for free by Attendance Works and available [here](#).**

- Determine if your district has calculated how many students are chronically absent, or missing 10 percent of school days. If not, ask for an analysis.
- Examine whether chronically absent students are concentrated in particular grades, schools, neighborhoods or student populations.
- Urge principals to develop attendance teams to track chronically absent students and plan interventions. Use these [tips for attendance teams](#).
- Use data to identify positive outliers, schools that have high rates of attendance despite challenging circumstances. Use our Positive Outliers [toolkit](#) to determine what practices and policies are working and how they can be replicated districtwide.
- Use the data to identify where you most need support from community partners to improve attendance.
- Use the data to set goals for principals and schools and to measure progress in school improvement efforts.

For more information, visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) or contact:

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