LEVERAGING SPORTS TEAMS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Sports stars — whether professional athletes or college standouts — can be great role models for promoting better attendance. Athletes can deliver a powerful message about attendance and persistence. If your community doesn’t have a professional sports team, think about minor league teams or even high school athletes. They can deliver the message:

- Success takes hard work. Players show up for practice every day to be the best they can be. Students need to show up for school every day.
- It’s tempting to take a day off here or there, but the best players know that persistence is key to performance.

**Strategies for using sports stars:**

1. **Broad messaging**
   - Public Service Announcements: Work with local TV or radio stations to tape a PSA with a star athlete emphasizing the importance of going to school every day.
   - Wake up-calls: Tape a wake-up call with a sports star and share it on student cell phones.
   - Billboards: Create a billboard featuring a sports star and conveying your district’s attendance message.

2. **School visits**
   - Invite players to a back-to-school assembly promoting good attendance.
   - Arrange for a player to be “Principal for the Day” at a school with improved attendance. Consider a contest among schools with the winning school receiving the visit from a sports star.
   - Ask teams to provide jerseys or tickets as incentives for good attendance.

3. **Game time**
   - Broadcast your school district’s attendance message on the Jumbo-tron
   - Ask the team to provide game tickets as raffle prizes for students with improved attendance
   - Ask the team to invite students with the most improved attendance to a half-time passing or shooting contest.
   - Ask the team to announce the names of students with perfect attendance for the month at a game.

*Get Schooled* runs attendance contests for middle and high schools every fall and spring. Tie a sports team into your contest.