**Attendance Buddies**

Attendance Buddies reduce chronic absence by creating a special sense of belonging, addressing attendance barriers by connecting students and their families to available resources, and assisting the school leadership in creating an engaging and positive school climate.

Attendance Buddies are partnered with chronically absent students, who are at elevated risk of poor school outcomes, and ultimately of dropping out. They serve as advisors, motivators, connectors, and confidence-builders for student and their families. Attendance buddies can be drawn from school staff, staff or volunteers working at partner community organizations with an on-going presence at the school, or trained peers (e.g. high school seniors supporting freshman.). Each attendance buddy works with a select number of students. The exact number varies depending upon availability of potential attendance buddies and the number of students in need of this support.

For the course of an entire school year, an attendance buddy is responsible for engaging in the following activities with their assigned students:

1. Meet and greet matched students each day at school.
2. Call home if they are absent.
3. Track attendance and celebrate improvements.
4. Meet with matched students - one-on-one and/or in small groups, to check in on how school is going and listen to students’ needs.
5. Introduce yourself to the assigned student’s family and let them know you are their child’s attendance buddy.
6. Connect students and families, as needed, to helpful resources available from school and community-based school partners.
7. Keep notes about student attendance patterns, needs and interventions.
8. Participate as a member of the Attendance Buddy meetings to share any best practices or get help to address challenges that are beyond their capacity, as an individual, to resolve.

Attendance Buddies should be coordinated through a committee that leads the strategy with support from school leadership and has access to data about students in need of this intervention.

*(Note: This concept and these ideas are adopted from New York City’s Success Mentor program)*