1. **Getting Started**
2. **Program Implementation**
3. **Assess Impact on Attendance**

**1. Getting Started**

1. Select your Success Mentor point person

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| *Who is the best fit for this role at your school? This person (or persons if more than one is needed) should be a member of the attendance team. The person(s) will be responsible for supporting the Success Mentor strategy at your school. They will also ensure that the attendance team is aware of pertinent issues with the implementation of the strategy and any crosscutting issues that may have been identified as contributing to student absences. This person should be prepared to take a positive, strengths-based view of every family and to put aside personal biases. They should be responsible for developing plans to support and train Success Mentors, and should reach out for technical assistance to national partners as they develop these plans to ensure the effective use of resources and partnerships.* |

1. Obtain and review your data

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| *The data should include the list of chronically absent students from the prior year as well as the students who are showing signs of risk based upon their attendance in the first weeks of school (two absences in the first two weeks or month of school; four absences in first two months). Ideally, the data should also reveal chronic absence broken down by grades, student sub- group (ethnicity, ELL, special education) and if possible by zip code. Attendance Works data tools to assist with this analysis can be found here:* [*http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-calculating-chronic-absence/) *and a case study is here:* [*http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SATT-Case-Studies.pdf*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SATT-Case-Studies.pdf) |

1. Determine which students you would want to target first for the Success Mentor strategy

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| *This would be based upon a combination of student factors including need (or high levels of chronic absence); potential for impact (during a transition period when reducing chronic absence could ensure students don’t get off track in the first place); likely potential support from school staff or community partners who can serve as Success Mentors; or grade levels with higher rates of chronic absence. It’s important to consider that students who are not in school at all will not benefit from mentoring, because minimal attendance is needed to build a trusting relationship. Students who attend school so infrequently that they cannot engage in a mentoring relationship may need a different type of intervention, including school social work/administrative outreach.* |

1. Identify who might be willing to serve as a Success Mentor

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| *Who will be asked to serve as volunteer Success Mentors? Will you use internal school staff or might there be a partner organization that could provide support to the Success Mentor strategy? Do you have an existing youth service program that can include a focus on attendance? Given the group of students you have identified as most in need of this strategy, which staff or school partners have the best relationships with this group of students? (Insert link to Mentor’s checklist)* |

**2. Program Implementation**

1. Share the plan with your school community

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| *How will you introduce this program to families? How will you create buy-in among school staff for this project? Attendance Works has created a Success Mentor Q&A to help you. (Insert link to Q&A) A well-publicized program is more likely to secure support from school staff, enlist participation from families and receive approval from district decision makers. Consider using these* [*tips for publicizing the program.*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-school-districts/elemsuccessmentortoolkit/ii-get-started/e-publicize-program/) *Acknowledge that school staff are doing this work every day, and that participating in the Success Mentor program provides an opportunity to be recognized for these efforts, as well as to receive additional support and training. (Insert link to Mentor’s checklist.)* |

1. **Recruit Success Mentors**

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| *How will you match targeted students with Success Mentors? (Consider which staff members have a good relationship with the student and/or their family.) How many at-risk students will you match to each Mentor? How will you recruit the Success Mentors? You might try a school staff meeting, one-on-one recruitment, or a letter of invitation. It’s important to take into account that school staff often have a full workload already, so asking them to mentor one or two students may be most manageable – and most effective.*  *Who are you thinking of recruiting?* |

1. Identify school and community-based resources for addressing barriers to attendance

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| *Where are opportunities for strategic partnerships? Who might have resources that the Success Mentor should be aware of so that they can help provide meaningful support to students and families? The goal of the Success Mentor is to change the absenteeism behavior, which may mean helping to connect students with others who can help solve problems that are barriers to being in school. This resource can help you to understand barriers to attendance:* [*http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BreakingBarrierstoattendance.pdf*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BreakingBarrierstoattendance.pdf) *Find tips for understanding contributing factors to chronic absence in this resource:* [*http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/ID-Cont-Factors-DEC-2010-.pdf*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/ID-Cont-Factors-DEC-2010-.pdf)  *If you have an afterschool program or other programs/services at your school run by partner organizations, how can you engage them in helping you support the Success Mentor strategy? Could they help you spread the message about good attendance and how absences can add up to the students and families that they serve?* |

1. Provide professional development

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| *Professional development could include an orientation about the role and responsibilities of being a Success Mentor (link to the job description), respecting confidentiality, referral processes, and available resources to address common attendance barriers in your school/community. It may also include periodic check-ins every month or additional opportunities to learn about new resources. Part of this role is helping mentors to reframe issues they are noticing with their mentees, and provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences, which will help them become more effective mentors. For example, a mentor who is distressed that her fourteen-year-old mentee doesn’t have a career chosen yet may need help reframing this issue to see that it is great that her mentee is even thinking about careers, and that the mentee – and their relationship – are on the right track.* |

1. Assign students to their mentors

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| *Work with the team implementing the Success Mentor strategy to finalize the group of students who will be part of the Success Mentor strategy and their Success Mentor assignments. Distribute student information to Success Mentors including contact information for the student’s family, rate of absenteeism, and any information that is known about contributing factors to absenteeism. Recognize that contact information for families can change frequently and be prepared to help mentors search for updated contact information as needed.*  *(Link to the Attendance Works student information sheet)* |

1. Create check-in and support meetings for Success Mentors

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| *Include checking in with the Success Mentor lead as a regular agenda item for the attendance team. The team should be reviewing quantitative and qualitative data to determine the success of the Success Mentor strategy.* |

**3. Assess Impact on Attendance**

1. Review your data

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| *Review attendance data at least monthly to determine whether the strategy is having an impact and to problem-solve if reductions are not occurring. Use your data, as well as insights from teachers, students, families and partners, to identify what seems to be working well, what is not so effective, and what could be done to improve its effectiveness. Look for patterns, including asthma/health issues, child care issues, transportation issues, or other family challenges that may contribute to attendance challenges.* |

1. Revise implementation plans based upon lessons learned from quantitative and qualitative assessment

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| *Based upon analysis of Success Mentor data, determine whether certain students and families need a different set of interventions and what, if any, changes need to be made to the Success Mentor strategy. If gains are not being achieved, what will you do differently?* |

1. Celebrate success!

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| *Date, location, & time:*  *How will you recognize everyone involved (the students, parents, partners, Success Mentors, the whole school community, and anyone who helped implement the strategy)?*  *How will you use this celebratory event to further the campaign to make attendance a shared school community priority? How will you leverage this event to plan for the following school year, and what else can be done to improve chronic absence?*  *Be sure to recognize good and improved attendance for students. Here are resources with tips for attendance incentives:* [*http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/incentives.pdf*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/incentives.pdf) *and more ideas for attendance incentives:* [*http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PerfectAttendanceProgram\_v4-4.pdf*](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PerfectAttendanceProgram_v4-4.pdf) |

**NOTE: Attendance Works welcomes your feedback about how you have used this tool and how it might be improved. Please email Sue Fothergill, sue@attendanceworks.org with any reactions or suggestions. We are always interested in improving the resources we make available.**