[District] Superintendent Launches Elementary Success Mentors Program

*Strategy leverages data and relationships to improve student attendance*

[District ] Superintendent [Name] has launched an Elementary Success Mentors program designed to support strong attendance in the early grades. The program will use caring adults as mentors to reach and support high-risk students with a cost-effective intervention that helps get students to school every day possible, so they can benefit from the teaching being offered.

The Elementary Success Mentors program builds on the momentum created by the groundbreaking My Brother’s Keeper Success Mentor Initiative established by the White House and the US Department of Education in early 2016. Thirty cities across the country have launched Success Mentors Initiative programs in the local schools.

INSERT QUOTE FROM SUPERINTENDENT HERE.

More than 6 million students nationwide are missing too many school days each year. This poor attendance is a surprisingly prevalent but often overlooked factor in why students and schools are struggling academically. Although absenteeism is often considered a high school problem, national research shows that one in 10 kindergarten and first-grade students miss nearly a month of school every year in excused and unexcused absences.

Regardless of the reason for the absence, these missed days can leave children falling behind in reading and math. By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a warning sign that a student might drop out of high school.

The Elementary Success Mentors program is effective because once a student is missing too much school, improving attendance requires changing a behavior or addressing a challenge. A positive, supportive, and on-going relationship with a caring adult at the school can help motivate attendance. Students and families are more likely to share the barriers they face to getting to school to an adult who meets with them regularly.

Success Mentors is based on a trailblazing initiative in New York City that matched students with a history of chronic absence with caring adults. Those students attended nearly two more weeks of school each year and had better academic outcomes when compared to peers who did not receive support from a caring adult.

By launching the Elementary Success Mentors program, [Superintendent’s name] is making a commitment to ensure that every student in [name of district] has an equal opportunity to reach for academic achievement and an improved future. [Insert anything you want to add about your locality.]

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