Using the Science of Behavior Change to Help Families Help Kids
Productive Parent/Teacher Partnerships Webinar
April 21, 2020
Helen Westmoreland

*Moderator*

Director of Family Engagement

National PTA
Urgency for effective home-school communication systems

When Schools Close, Vulnerable Families Are Left in the Dark

Missing digital contact info for parents is suddenly an urgent problem

BY TODD ROGERS & JESSICA LENKEY-FINK
MARCH 25, 2020

While some well-off and well-connected families fret about being inundated with information from their schools during the unfolding coronavirus pandemic, the most vulnerable families are hearing nothing. Last week, the mother of an elementary school student called us EveryDay Labs, an organization that one of us (Todd

School Counselors Try To Keep Students Connected To Mental Health Services

March 24, 2020 - Updated Mar 25, 2020 10:06 AM

By Dori Banat

School districts in North Georgia, Chattanooga area get creative to feed students during COVID-19 crisis

March 25th, 2020 | By Jon Bivens, Meghan Mangrum, and Patrick Felten

EDUCATION

YWCA Minneapolis generously supports MinnPost's Education coverage. Learn why.

How Minnesota schools are preparing for distance learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic

BY ERIN HINRICH'S | 03/16/2020
Behavior science strengthens home-school communication systems

What does it take for these systems to change behavior?

Families

Online portals  Phone calls
Websites

Schools

E-mails & letters  Texts  Report cards  Etc.
What *behaviors* are needed for your home-school communications to work?
Todd Rogers
Co-Presenter
Professor of Public Policy
Harvard Kennedy School
Director, Student Social Support R&D Lab

Hedy Chang
Co-Presenter
Executive Director
Attendance Works

Angela Madigan
Commentator
Principal
Waterboro Elementary School
7000 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DROP OUT EVERY SCHOOL DAY.
THEIR EMPTY DESKS FORM A LINE FOUR MILES LONG.

Visit boostup.org/NewEngland and help keep students in school.
+50% impact on absences with improved targeting, timing, format/messaging
Welcome NYC Parent or Guardian!

Email

Password

☐ I have read and agree to the Terms of Use.

SIGN IN

Forgot your password? Create account!

Sign in to see your child’s recent test scores, attendance records, and grades.

To set up an account you will need your child's Student ID number, which you can find on his or her report card, as well as an Account Creation Code, which your school will supply. You can also open an account by visiting your school—you will need a photo ID such as a driver's license or passport.

Kristen Morris
Grade: Kindergarten

©2017 The New York City Department of Education
11% of parents enrolled

95% of parents remained enrolled

-1% of parents enrolled

Bergman, Lasky-Fink & Rogers (2020)
Dear Parent/legal Guardian,

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. California Education Code section 48365 provides that a pupil (s) who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or less or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, shall be classified as a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

School records indicate that the pupil named above was absent from school without a valid excuse on 5 occasions, beginning with the following dates:
9/25/2015, 10/20/2015, 10/25/2015

For a complete report of your pupil’s attendance, contact the school.

Your goal is to partner with teachers to ensure that students attend school everyday. While the following consequences may appear harsh, based upon your pupil’s initial classification as a truant, we are mandated by Education Code section 48365 to inform you that:

- The parent or legal guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- Pupils or legal guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Vehicle Code Section 48269, of proclamation pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with section 12015) of Chapter 1 of Part 21 of the Education Code.
- Alternative education programs are available in the district.
- The parent or legal guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil’s truancy.
- The pupil may be subject to suspension under Education Code section 48264.
- The pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction or denial of the pupil’s driving privilege pursuant to Section 12027.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- It is recommended that the parent or legal guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

This report is being issued under Education Code section 48264.5(b). As the parent/legal guardian you may be requested to attend a meeting with a school counselor or other school designee to discuss the root cause of the attendance issue and to develop a joint plan to improve the pupil’s attendance.

Please recognize that we are required to monitor attendance and notify parents/legal guardians of potential problems with student attendance. If you have concerns about your pupil’s attendance, or if you believe there is an error in this report, contact the school at (555) 123-4567. The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

John Smith
Principal

Lasky-Fink, Robinson, Chang, and Rogers 2020
People have limited attention/time/reading

So write:

1. Few words
2. Accessible reading-level
3. Skimmably
4. Formatting reinforces the message
5. Chunk messages: It’s a communications program
6. Modality serves message purpose
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

Family Engagement and Behavioral Science Can Inform Actions Taken At All Three Tiers

- Engaging school climate
- Positive relationships with students and families
- Impact of absences on achievement widely understood
- Chronic absence data monitored
- Good and improved attendance recognized
- Common barriers identified and addressed

Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)

Students missing 5-9% (at risk)

- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)

- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

Students missing 20% or more of school (severe chronic absence)
## CHART 5
What Does High-Impact Family Engagement Look Like in Reducing Chronic Absence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Impact on Student Learning and Development</th>
<th>Moderate Impact</th>
<th>Lower Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Transition:</strong> Teachers and school staff meet with families in community spaces before the start of school to talk about what students will be learning, the connection between too many absences and poor achievement, and they co-construct solutions for regular attendance.</td>
<td>A letter is mailed before school starts to families of kindergarten and elementary students who had poor attendance in the previous year, letting them know attendance in early grades affects student learning.</td>
<td>The importance of attendance is communicated through posters in school and flyers in backpacks at the beginning of the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing Outreach:</strong> Teachers make personal phone calls to families when students miss school to discuss the importance of attendance and what students are learning in class. Teachers follow up regularly with personal text messages regarding the student’s progress.</td>
<td>School staff call a student’s parent when the student misses three days in a row to determine the reason for absence.</td>
<td>When a student is absent, the school’s computer calls home with a recorded message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Communications:</strong> Each family of a student who is chronically absent receives a monthly letter in the mail, in language that is friendly and accessible, letting them know how many days their child has missed. School staff make follow-up calls to families to discuss challenges to attending school, co-construct solutions for regular attendance and make connections to community resources.</td>
<td>Monthly e-mail reminders are sent to parents about how many absences constitute chronic absence at this point in the year.</td>
<td>Flyers are sent home through students’ backpacks letting parents know that they should track their child’s attendance online in the parent portal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt from State Guidance

www.attendanceworks.org
Behavioral Science Informs Implementation of Key Ingredients

Positive Engagement:
Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

Actionable Data:
Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.

Shared Accountability:
Ensures chronic absence is monitored & reinforced by policy.

Capacity Building
Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

Strategic partnerships
between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.
### Phases of COVID-19 Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Involve the public health department</td>
<td>• Develop and implement coordinated outreach approach</td>
<td>• Use cross-departmental district and school teams to orchestrate a whole child/family approach to learning.</td>
<td>• Take team approach organize and implement cross-departmental school and district plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitor <strong>absenteeism</strong> to detect potential health challenges</td>
<td>• Confirm contact info</td>
<td>• Emphasize engagement and school connectedness for students and families</td>
<td>• Partner with families to develop plans reflecting student’s situation (health, academic, <strong>attendance &amp; engagement</strong> during and prior to remote learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate clearly and frequently with families and students</td>
<td>• Reach out in trauma-informed, relationship building manner</td>
<td>• Monitor <strong>attendance</strong> and <strong>participation</strong> in remote learning activities</td>
<td>• Use <strong>chronic absence</strong> and other participation data to provide additional support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Address needs for food, shelter, and other supports</td>
<td>• Use data on lack of <strong>participation</strong> for real-time problem-solving</td>
<td>• Promote trauma-informed, welcoming school climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Connect to learning supports and determine access to technology</td>
<td>• Document challenges and interventions to inform current and future support</td>
<td>• Support seamless transitions between virtual and in-person settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Link to needed virtual behavioral, emotional and physical health supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leverage data (including <strong>absences</strong>, special ed status, and other demographic info) to triage and tailor supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reducing the Adverse Impact of Covid 19 Requires Ensuring Positive Conditions of Learning with Students and Their Families

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and Student Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

Academic Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning
Questions & Discussion
Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars

PRODUCTIVE PARENT/TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS WEBINAR
State-Level Approaches to Supporting Parent/Teacher Partnerships: State Consortium on Family Engagement
Tuesday, April 28, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

EMERGING MODELS WEBINAR
Following the Science Upstream: Using the Early Literacy Screening App to Identify Reading Challenges
Tuesday, May 5, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

EMERGING MODELS WEBINAR
Early Childhood Innovation for Impact in a Crisis: A Show+Tell Pop Up with Promise
Tuesday, May 12, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

GLR Week 2020
Stay tuned – GLR Week 2020 is going virtual!

gradelevelreading.net  @readingby3rd  #GLReading  #LearningTuesdays