

Using the Science of Behavior Change to Help Families Help Kids

Productive Parent/Teacher Partnerships Webinar

April 21, 2020

gradelevelreading.net @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays

The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**



Helen Westmoreland

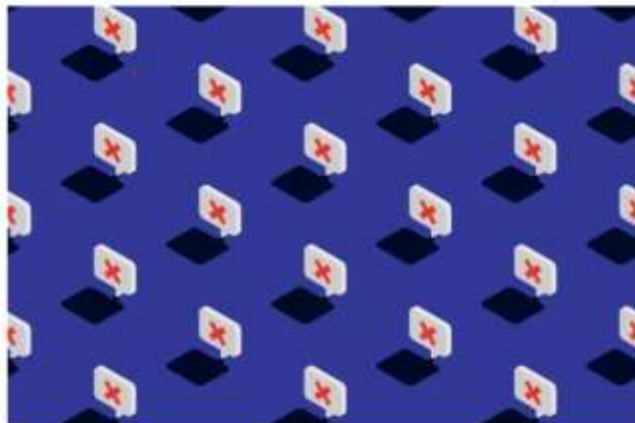
Moderator

Director of Family Engagement
National PTA

Urgency for effective home-school communication systems

OPINION

When Schools Close, Vulnerable Families Are Left in the Dark



—iStock/Oakly

Missing digital contact info for parents is suddenly an urgent problem

By Todd Rogers & Jessica Lenky-Fink

March 23, 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 up EvervDay Labs, an organization that one of us (Todd

ARTICLE TOOLS

- Printer-Friendly
- Email Article
- Reprints
- Comments



School Counselors Try To Keep Students Connected To Mental Health Services

March 24, 2020 Updated Mar 25, 2020 10:06 AM By [Caitie Lutz](#)



Local Regional News

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

March 23rd, 2020 | by [Ara Barkan](#), [Meghan Margrison](#) and [Patrick Fisher](#)

EDUCATION

YWCA Minneapolis generously supports *MinPost's* Education coverage. [Learn why.](#)

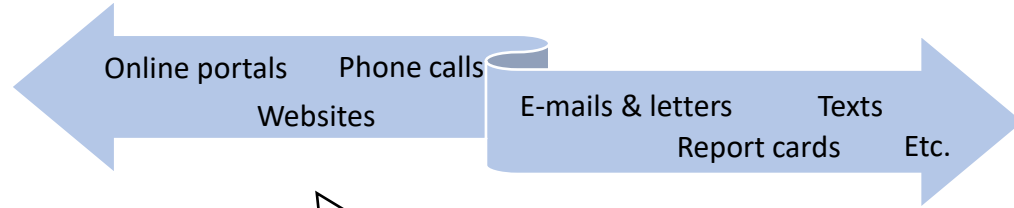
How Minnesota schools are preparing for distance learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic

By Erin Hinrichs | 03/16/2020



Behavior science strengthens home-school communication systems

Families



Schools

What does it take for these systems to change behavior?

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.



boostup.org/NewEngland

Todd has missed 18 days this school year.*

Dear Guardian of Todd Rogers,

Attending school every day in 11th Grade will help Todd learn, stay on track, and graduate on time.

Both excused and unexcused absences can cause Todd to fall behind.

Absences can decrease the chance that students will graduate from high school.

Thank you for being a strong supporter of Todd's education.

Sincerely,
Barbara M. Justice
Superintendent
Orange County Public Schools

Todd Rogers has missed more school than many classmates this school year.

Todd Rogers: 18 absences

Todd's average classmates: 9 absences

Todd has missed more school than many classmates this school year.

Todd Rogers: 18 absences

Todd has missed more school than many classmates this school year.

Todd Rogers: 18 absences

APRIL UPDATE

FEBRUARY UPDATE

APRIL UPDATE

APRIL UPDATE

+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

[School Name] is testing a service that texts you if your child has a low grade, missed assignment or missed class.

Standard (Opt-in)

You may enroll by logging in at xyz.com; call school for account info.

<1% of parents enrolled

Simplified (Opt-in)

You may enroll by texting "Start" to opt in.

11% of parents enrolled

Opt-out

You are automatically enrolled. text "Stop" to opt out.

95% of parents remained enrolled

Control



Senior High School
1234 Main Street
Town, CA 55555

October 20, 2015

John & Mary Rogers
124 1st Street
Town, CA 55555

RE: Todd
Student ID#: 12345

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian:

Good attendance is required for academic excellence. California Education Code section 48260 provides that a pupil (child) subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy 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:
9/23/2015, 10/2/2015, 10/5/2015

**For a complete report of your pupil's absences, contact the school*

Our goal is to partner with families to ensure that students attend school every day. While the following consequences may appear harsh, based upon your pupil's initial classification as a truant, we are mandated by Education Code section 48260.5 to inform you that:

- The parent or legal guardian is obligated to the attendance of the pupil at school
- Parents or legal guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27 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 prosecution under Education Code section 48264.
- The pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 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(a). 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 causes 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) 555-5555. The designated attendance personnel will work with you to resolve this issue. We look forward to assisting you.

Sincerely,
John Smith
Principal

[REDACTED] SCHOOL DISTRICT
Student Health and Human Services

~40%
October 20, 2015

John & Mary Rogers
123 Main Street
Town, CA 55555

We need your help. Todd's absences from school are concerning, and your partnership is critical. Students who miss just one or two days of school each month can fall seriously behind.

Todd is now "truant" because he missed school (or was more than 30 minutes late) without a valid excuse 5 days, beginning with:

- September 23, 2015
- October 2, 2015
- October 5, 2015

Being absent can lead to doing poorly in school. Students who miss many days of school are more likely to:

- Fail their classes
- Drop out from high school
- Have poor relationships with parents and teachers

We are required by California law to send you this letter and to warn you about the consequences of additional unexcused absences (see bottom bar).

Please remember that every absence matters and just a couple days each month adds up. You are key to improving Todd's attendance.

Sincerely,
John Smith, Principal

Notice: California Education Code. School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school another body of excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.
Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligations may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.
- That alternative education programs are available in the district
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance or if you believe our records are inaccurate, contact the school at (555) 555-5555
English #117

Why no one is reading your coronavirus emails

Opinion by Todd Rogers

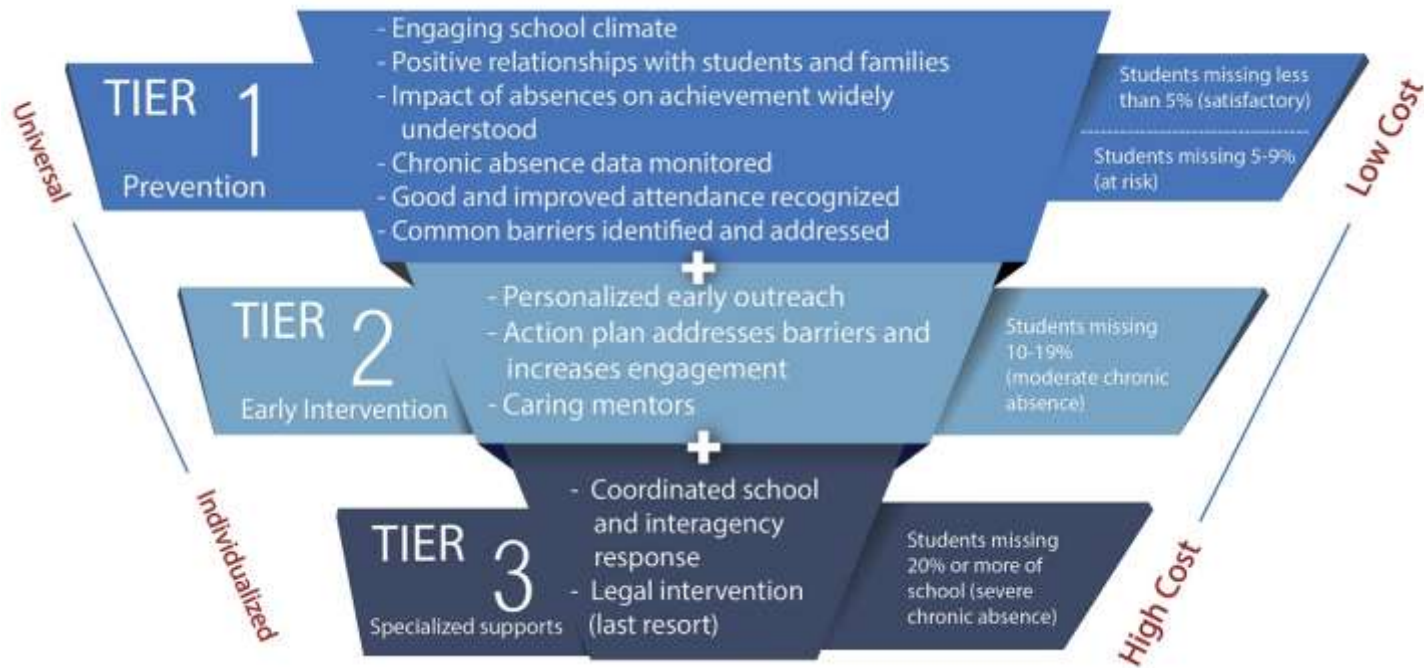
🕒 Updated 12:58 PM ET, Fri March 13, 2020

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

CHART 5

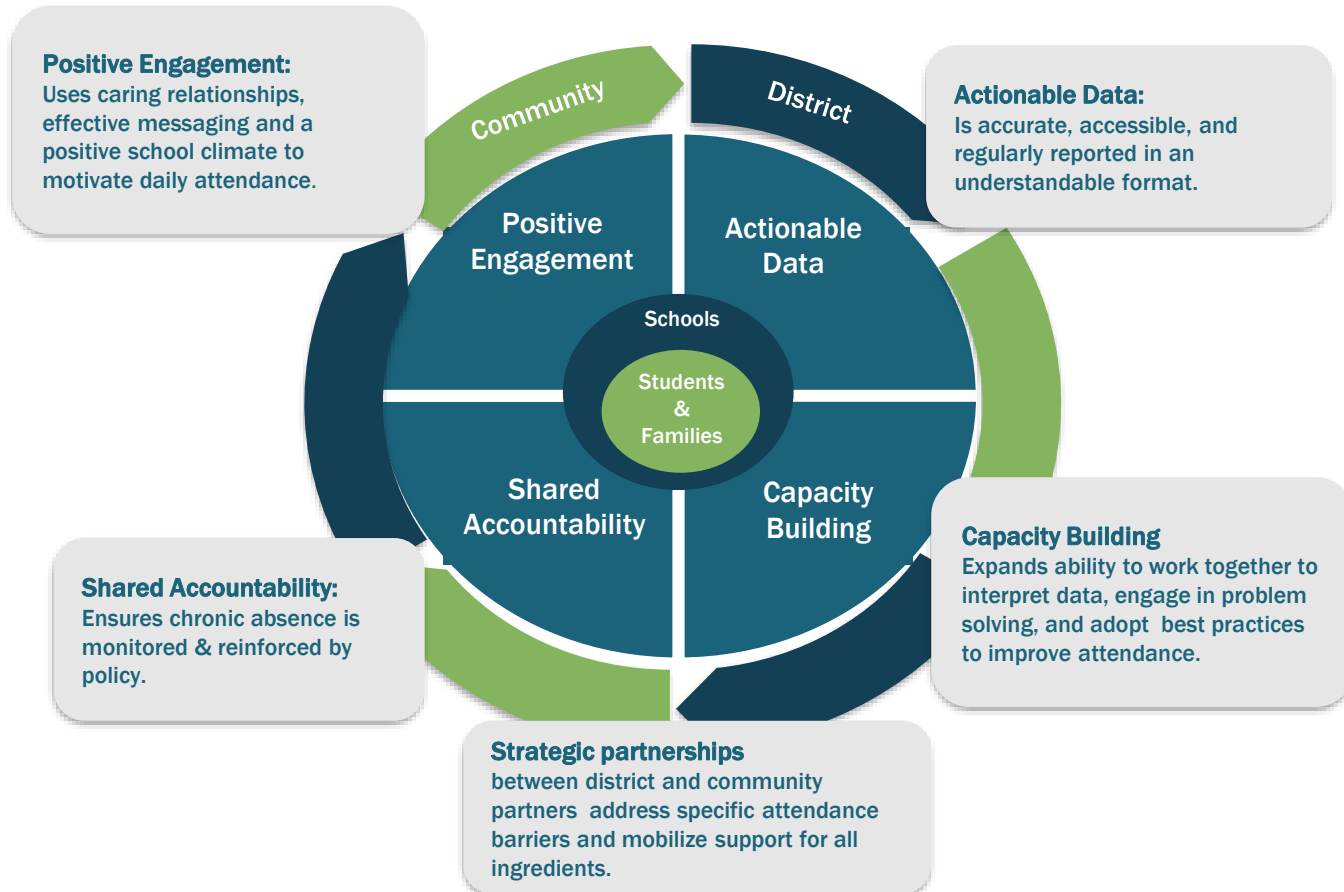
What Does High-Impact Family Engagement
 Look Like in Reducing Chronic Absence?

Higher Impact on Student Learning and Development	Moderate Impact	Lower Impact
<p>Summer Transition: 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The importance of attendance is communicated through posters in school and flyers in backpacks at the beginning of the year.</p>
<p>Ongoing Outreach: 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.</p>	<p>School staff call a student's parent when the student misses three days in a row to determine the reason for absence.</p>	<p>When a student is absent, the school's computer calls home with a recorded message.</p>
<p>Personal Communications: 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.</p>	<p>Monthly e-mail reminders are sent to parents about how many absences constitute chronic absence at this point in the year.</p>	<p>Flyers are sent home through students' backpacks letting parents know that they should track their child's attendance online in the parent portal.</p>

Excerpt from State Guidance

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Full-Equal-and-Equitable-Partnerships-with-Families/Chart-5>

Behavioral Science Informs Implementation of Key Ingredients





Phases of COVID 19 Response

1. Decide To Close Schools

- Involve the public health department
- Monitor **absenteeism** to detect potential health challenges
- Communicate clearly and frequently with families and students

2. Outreach After School Closure

- Develop and implement coordinated outreach approach
- Confirm contact info
- Reach out in trauma-informed, relationship building manner
- Address needs for food, shelter, and other supports
- Connect to learning supports and determine access to technology
- Link to needed virtual behavioral, emotional and physical health supports
- Leverage data (including **absences**, special ed status, and other demographic info) to triage and tailor supports

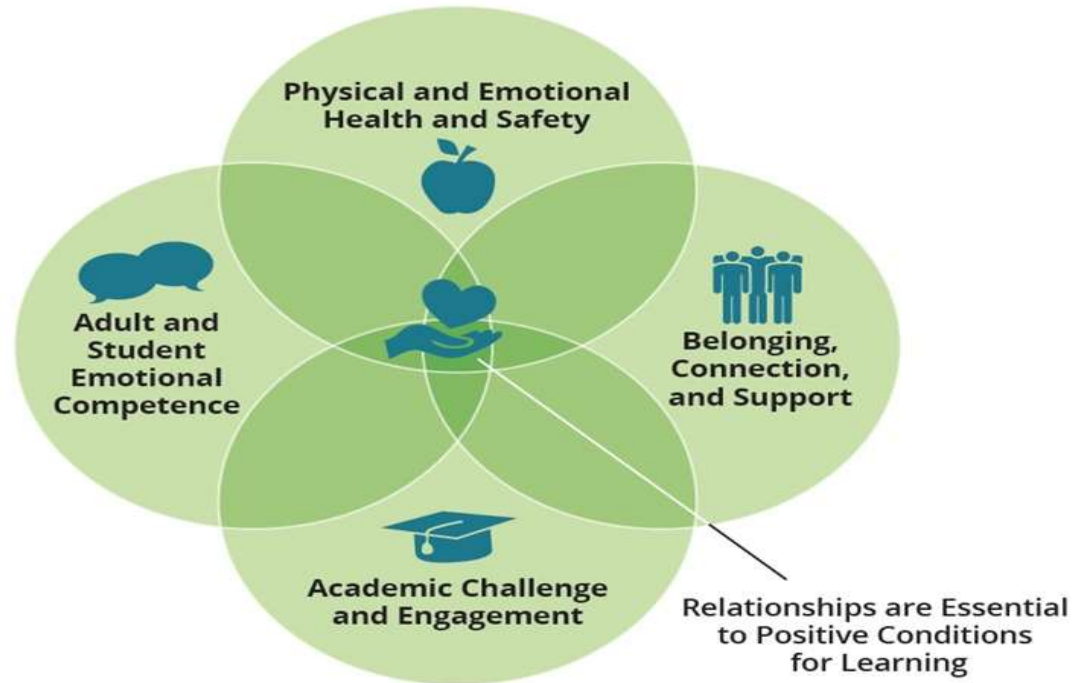
3. Support and Engagement During Remote Learning

- Use cross-departmental district and school teams to orchestrate a whole child/family approach to learning.
- Emphasize engagement and school connectedness for students and families
- Monitor **attendance** and **participation** in remote learning activities
- Use **data on lack of participation** for real-time problem-solving
- Document challenges and interventions to inform current and future support

4. Transition Back to School

- Take team approach organize and implement cross-departmental school and district plans
- Partner with families to develop plans reflecting student's situation (health, academic, **attendance & engagement** during and prior to remote learning.
- Use **chronic absence** and other participation data to provide additional support
- Promote trauma-informed, welcoming school climate
- Support seamless transitions between virtual and in-person settings.

Reducing the Adverse Impact of Covid 19 Requires Ensuring Positive Conditions of Learning with Students and Their Families



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!

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