

Session 3:

Partnering to Make a Difference



Professional Learning Series

October 19, 2021





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Vice President of Programs



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Getting Started: Introductions

Use the Chat and share:

- ✓ Your name, role, community, and state
- ✓ A key community partner for engaging students in school



Three E-Learning Sessions

During these sessions, participants will learn how to work as a team to take a multi-tiered approach to improve attendance in their schools:

- ❖ Session I Whole School Engagement Strategies for Reducing Student Absenteeism
- Session 2 Early Intervention Strategies: Using Teams to Monitor and Identify Students in Need of Support
- ❖ Session 3 Partnering to Make a Difference





Participants will:

- Learn strategies to mobilize school staff,
 community and agency partners to provide support
- Determine if their efforts are making a difference



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Review of Sessions 1 & 2



Absenteeism is a Sign that Positive Conditions for Learning are Missing, Whether Classes are In Person, Distance or Blended









Absenteeism is a *leading* indicator and a *cause* of educational inequity

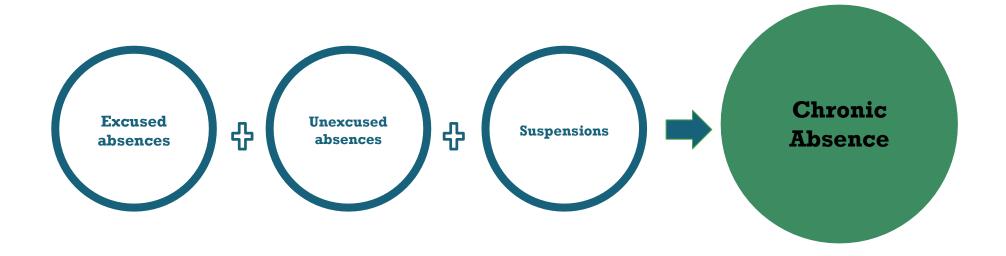


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Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk.

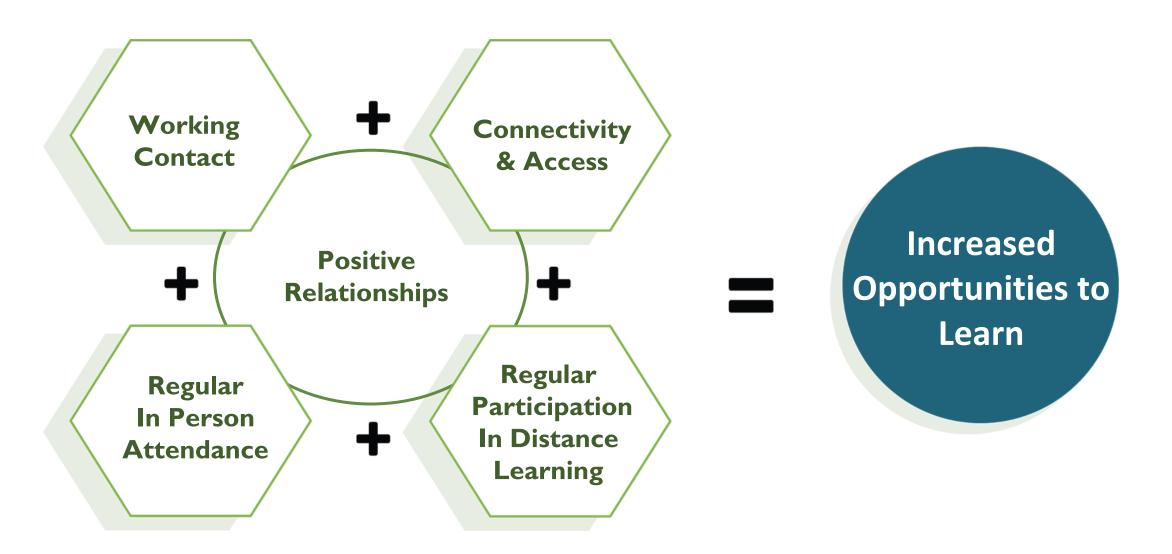
Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.



Chronic absence is different from truancy (unexcused absences only) or average daily attendance (how many students show up to school each day).



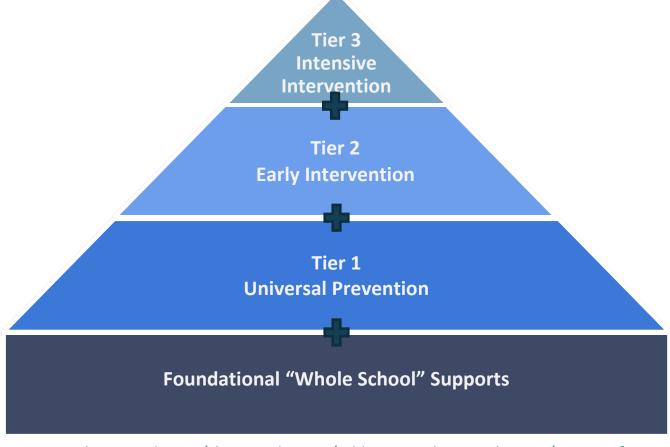
Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn







When Tackling Absenteeism, Take a Multi-Tiered Approach Beginning with Prevention

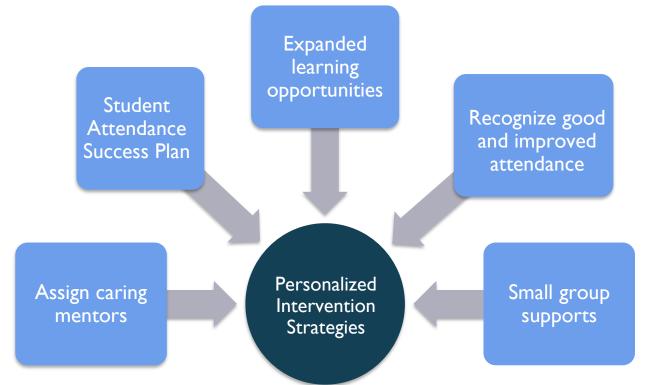


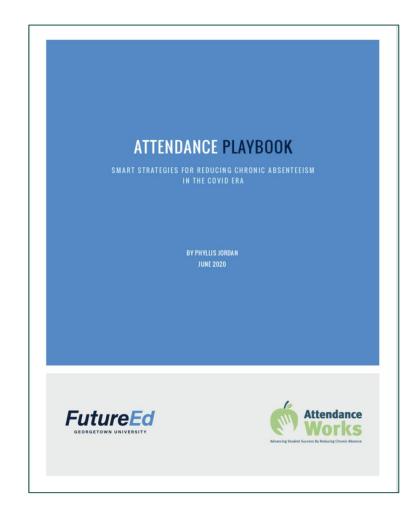


https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/addressing-chronic-absence/3-tiers-of-intervention/



Tier 2: Strategies Layer in Support, Strengthen Relationships and Take a Problem-Solving Approach



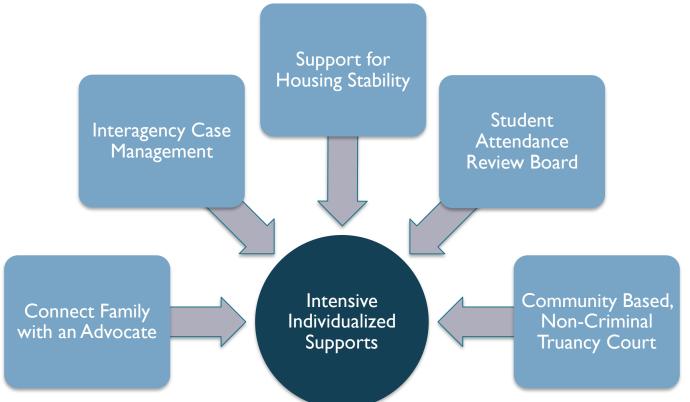


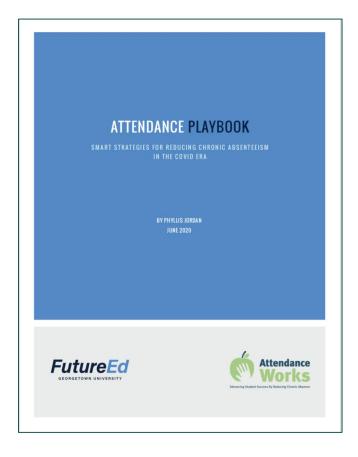
Attendance Playbook: https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/

Implementation Guide: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/



Tier 3: Strategies Involve Public and Community Partners and Integrated Case Management





Attendance Playbook: https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/

Implementation Guide: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/attendance-playbook/





Reducing Chronic Absence Requires a Team Approach

Primary Purpose of a Team Approach

Organize and facilitate a schoolwide attendance strategy and ensure it is an integral component of the school's plan to improve outcomes for all students.



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Ensuring Attendance Requires A Team



The Attendance Strategy should be led by the school principal and the leadership team.

Teams working on improving student attendance could include the school's:

- * Nurse
- * Counselor
- * Social Worker
- * Administrative support staff
- * Special education staff
- * Teachers
- * Early education staff
- * Community School Directors and Coordinators
- * Expanded Learning program staff
- * Family Resource Center Directors and Coordinators
- * Pupil Personnel Workers
- * Child Welfare and Attendance Officers

Members should be able to bring the perspectives of the student demographics. Teams should incorporate input from families and students along with the community.





Attendance Functions of a School



Session 2 Session 3

I. Organize a multi-tiered attendance strategy that begins with prevention and early intervention.

- 2. Examine attendance and absenteeism data to assess which groups of students have higher or lower levels of absence.
- 3. Identify barriers and inequities that prevent students from attending school.
- 4. Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance.
- 5. Determine if you are making a difference.

Attendance Works ©



Poll

What has been most valuable to you from the first 2 classes? (check all that apply)

- ☐ The key functions of an attendance team
- Taking a multi-tiered approach to reducing absenteeism beginning with prevention
- ☐ Effective communication strategies
- Expanded measures of attendance
- School climate and culture and attendance
- ☐ Matching strategies to root causes of absenteeism
- ☐ Other (type in chat)

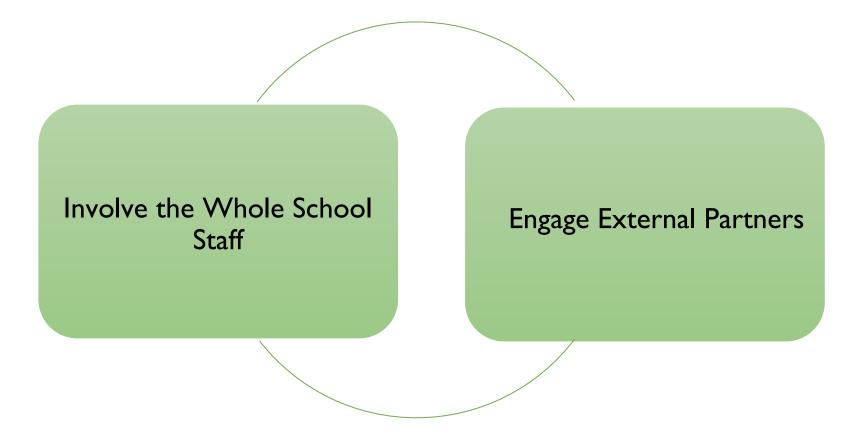


Team Function #4: Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance





Mobilize the School Community to Address Attendance





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We All Have a Role





https://vimeo.com/230451908



Our entire school staff has bought into an "all hands on deck" approach to attendance.

- ☐ Strongly in Place
- ☐ Measurable Progress
- ☐ Needs Improvement
- ☐ Urgent Gap





Share what you did (or plan to do) to get all hands on deck.







School Self-AssessmentSample Question #2

We have professional development opportunities that equip the members of our school staff and partners to address attendance.

- ☐ Strongly in Place
- ☐ Measurable Progress
- ☐ Needs Improvement
- ☐ Urgent Gap



School Team Self-Assessment tool: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/



Add Professional Development to the Year-Round Calendar

Identify points in the year for professional development.

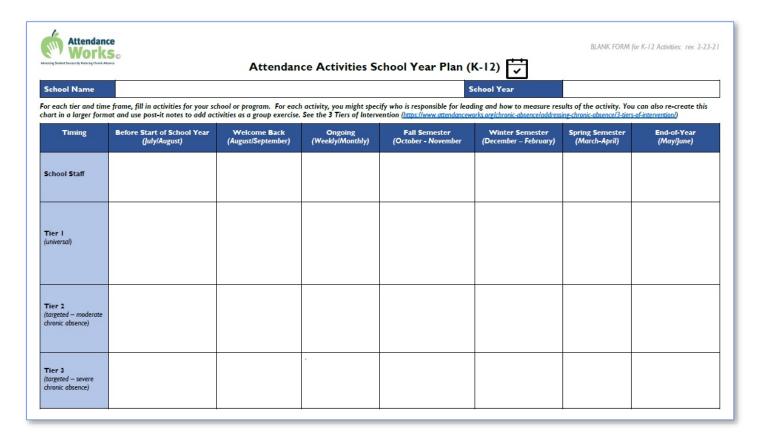
- Before the start of the school year (regular PD or summer bridge)
- Prior to fall or spring parent-teacher conferences
- "Bite-size" PD during staff meetings



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Year-Round Planning





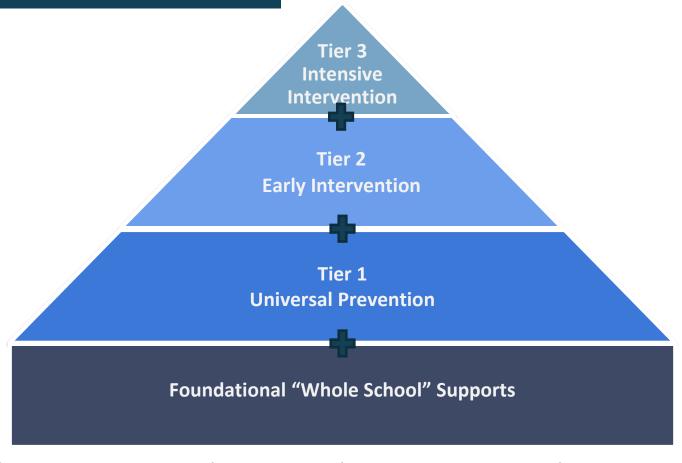
https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/year-long-planning/

Involve the Whole School Staff in Caring Conversations





Caring Conversations are a Key Component of Every Tier





Tailor Conversations to Students' Attendance and Participation Level

Satisfactory Attendance

At-Risk

Chronic Absence

Consider involving support staff in the family meeting.

Congratulate them on their child's good attendance.

Ask them what they're doing that's enabling them to be so successful!

Let them know that you are concerned about attendance because the student is beginning to head off track, and it is easy for absences to add up.

If student is right around 10% or a little above

Let them know student may be academically at risk because they have missed so much school.

Discuss underlying causes and how you can help.

If student is severely chronically absent

(e.g. >20%)

The types of challenges these families face may differ from those with more moderate absence problems. Be prepared to touch on difficult topics, be supportive, and be ready to connect to community resources.





How to Determine Level of Absenteeism

DAYS MISSED IN SCHOOL YEAR

Satisfactory Attendance

Missed less than 5% (fewer than 9 days in a 180-day year)

At-risk

Missed 5-9% (9-17 days in a 180-day year)

Moderate Chronic Absence

Missed 10-19% (18-35 days in a 180-day year)

Severe Chronic Absence

Missed 20% or more (36 or more days in a 180-day year)





- Charlotte Brown is a 6th grader who performs on an average level. She struggles to keep up with some of her more challenging classes.
- Since the first of the year, Charlotte has been unusually quiet and distracted in class. She
 has been sitting alone during recess. In the first twelve weeks of school, she has missed 8
 days.
- Charlotte's mother is divorced, and Charlotte's father is not present in her life. Charlotte is very fond of her older cousins that live in a neighboring town. They invited her to stay for a long weekend before school started back this summer.
- Unfortunately, Charlotte was witness to a violent altercation at a party with a lot of alcohol and someone pulled a gun when Charlotte's cousin told him to leave. No one was hurt, but Charlotte was scared for herself and her cousin. Charlotte was asked questions by the police about what she saw. She is having night terrors and often up most of the night. She does not want to leave home in the morning.

Attendance Works ©

The "Caring Conversations for Attendance" Process

| 01 | Learn | Learn about the student's family. What are their hopes and dreams for their child? What does the student enjoy about school this year? What has been interesting or challenging about learning? |
|----|------------------|--|
| 02 | Share | Share positive things you've observed about the student. Share your own vision for student learning & development. |
| 03 | Inform | Review attendance report with parents. Tailor conversation to student's level of absenteeism & inform parents of possible impacts of missing school. Connect attendance to parents' hopes and dreams for their child. |
| 04 | Discuss | Discuss the challenges parents face in getting their children to school, as well as strengths they can build upon. For chronically absent students, explore attendance barriers and options for making up for lost learning time in the classroom. |
| 05 | Arrive at a Plan | Think through strategies with parents for addressing absences. Help them develop an attendance and learning plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you can help. |

Adapted with permission from materials created by © High Expectations Parental Service, 2011



Step Lea

Steps 1 & 2: Learn and Share

Share in Chat:

- I. What excellent questions can you ask to learn about a student's family?
- 2. What are some positive observations about a student you might share with the student or family?







Step 3: Inform

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Inform

Review attendance and participation report with parents. Tailor conversation to student's level of absenteeism & inform parents of possible impacts of missing school. Connect attendance to parents' hopes and dreams for their child.

- I. Show absences marked on a school calendar
- 2. Identify patterns
- 3. Share what key concepts a student missed relating back to the hopes and dreams that the student or parents shared

2021-2022 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

| September 2021 | | | | | | | | C |)cto | ber | 202 | 1 | | November 2021 | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-----|------|------|----|----|----------|----|------|-------|-----|----|-----|---------------|-------------|------|------|-----|----|----|--|
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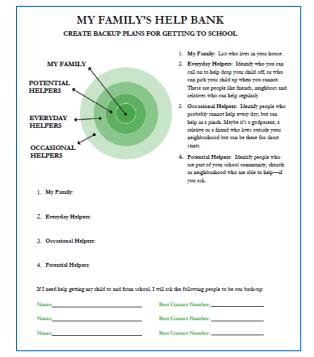
Step 4: Discuss

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Discuss

Discuss the challenges parents face in getting their children to participate at school or from home, as well as strengths they can build upon. For chronically absent students, explore attendance barriers and options for making up for lost learning time in the classroom.

- I. Learn about student motivations.
- 2. Discuss reasons for absenteeism.
- 3. Explore what would help reduce absences and increase engagement.
- 4. Identify opportunities to make up for lost learning in the classroom.
- 5. Use help bank to identify support systems.



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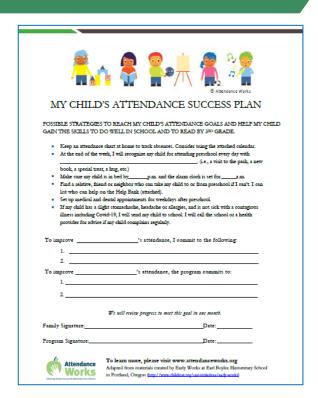
Step 5: Arrive at a Plan

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Arrive at a Plan

Think through strategies with parents for addressing absences including difficulties in participating online or completing schoolwork. Work with them to develop a plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you or others can help.

- I. Work with the family to identify specific steps that will help to prevent absenteeism in the future.
- 2. Develop and complete a plan for attendance and learning
- 3. Ensure that the plan includes any support that the school will offer as well
- 4. Provide a copy of the plan to the student/parent
- 5. Agree on a timeline to check in and see how things are progressing



Breakout Groups: Discuss Caring Conversations

- I. How might Caring Conversations be helpful for your school?
- 2. Who could be involved with Caring Conversations?
- 3. What would it take to increase capacity at your school to have Caring Conversations?



Ground Rules

Turn on your video camera

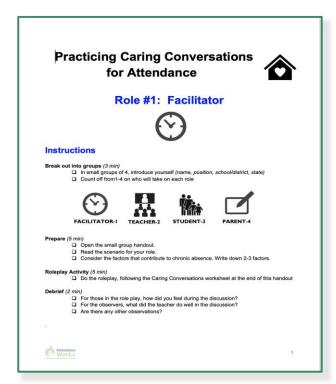


- Briefly introduce yourself
- Raise your hand to speak
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore differences of opinion
- Create space for everyone to speak (and use the chat to express ideas)
- The person whose first name is closest to the letter "A" should facilitate.

Small group handout: https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caring-Conversation-Worksheet-v3.docx



Caring Conversations Worksheet (example)

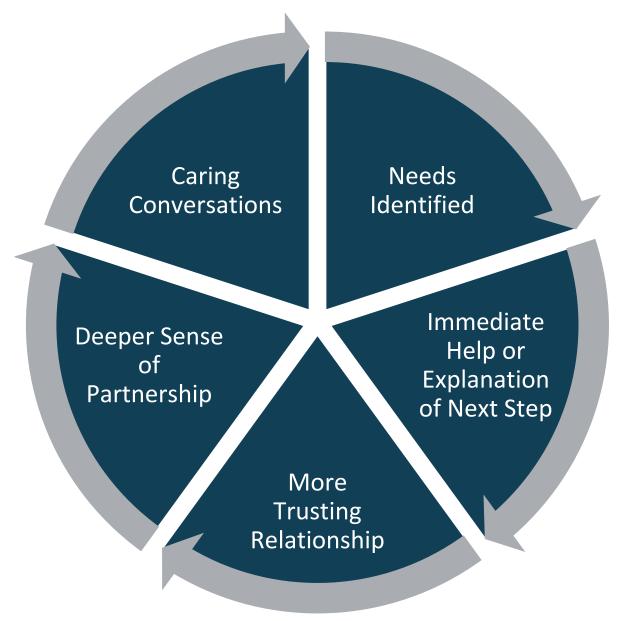


| | Key Points | Questions and Messages |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Learn | Gather informationAsk open-ended, supportive questions | What is your vision for <u>student's</u> future? (ask parent and student) |
| 2. Share | Positive observations about student so far What you want students to accomplish this year One goal is helping students acquire good habit of attendance | is such a good listener. We love having her (you) in our class. |
| 3. Inform | Progress you've seen (start positive) Areas where child is struggling Review report card & update parents on child's attendance Deliver appropriate attendance messages | is excelling at math! and is making progress with reading. Reading remains the area that needs work. has been late five times and has missed two days during this first month of school. Absences impede reading and overall learning progress. |
| 4. Discuss | Challenges, attendance barriers Learning at home activities How to stay connected | What makes it hard for to get to school? What helps catch up on learning given their absences? |
| 5. Ask & Arrive at a Plan | Are there any questions? Is there anything you can do to support a partnership between home and school? Make referrals to community resources | What questions do you have? How can I help you? Would it help you to work with? |



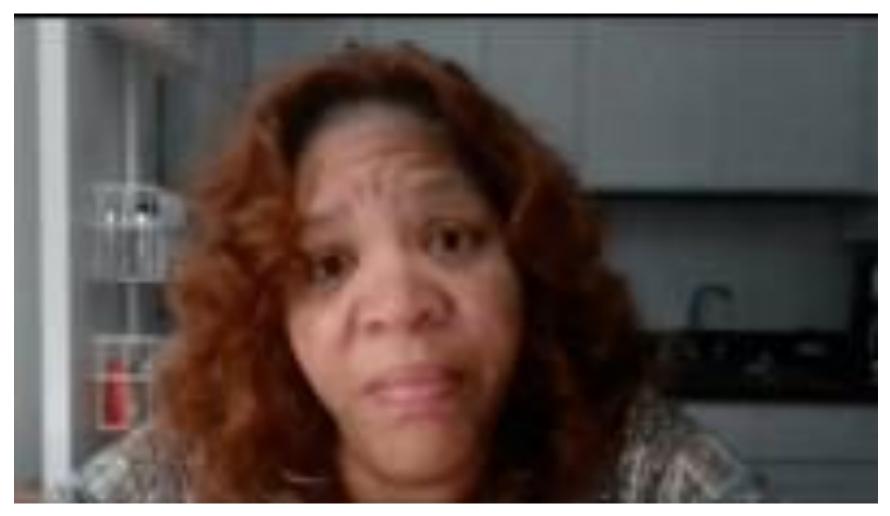
https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caring-Conversation-Worksheet-v3.docx

The Cycle of Effective Relationship Building





Listening to Parents

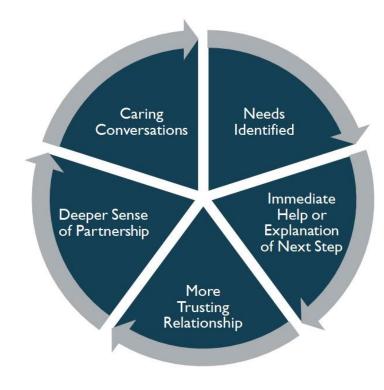


Lorri Hobson, Director of Attendance Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) in Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance Works ©

https://youtu.be/f93RjyYvHb0





Type in chat:

- What might cause the cycle to break down?
- What can school teams do to keep it going?



Engage External Partners





School Self-AssessmentSample Question #3

Community partners and public agencies are partners in providing support to students and families in my school.

- ☐ Strongly in Place
- ☐ Measurable Progress
- □ Needs Improvement
- ☐ Urgent Gap



School Team Self-Assessment tool: https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/self-assessment/

Partners for Change

The greater the size of the challenge, the more partners are needed. Many different types of partners can be enlisted, but local government and public agencies are especially important. Tap into existing initiatives and coalitions to engage potential partners.

- Businesses
- · Community Schools Initiatives
- · Family Support Organizations
- · Early Childhood Providers
- · Faith-Based Organizations
- · Health / Mental Health Providers
- Housing Agencies
- · Hunger Relief Organizations
- · Institutes of Higher Education
- · Local / Tribal Governments

- · National Service / Volunteers / Mentors
- Out of School Time providers
- · Social Emotional Learning Providers
- Social Services
- Population-Specific Service or Civic Organizations
- Philanthropy (including foundations and United Ways)



Align Interventions to Reasons for Absences

Reason for Absence

Possible Interventions

Potential Partner

Anxiety About In-Person School

- Enlist trusted messengers (e.g. doctors) to talk with families
- Review health and safety protocols
- Hold a virtual open house to answer questions and address concerns
- Make school counselors available for consultation

Local pediatricians
Promotoras (community health workers)
Public health clinic

Not understanding the impact of absences

- Create an education campaign that connects academic achievement with attendance
- When working with individual families, explore their hopes for their child and help connect them to school and attendance

Mayor's Office
United Way
Family Resource Center

Schedules
Out-of-Sync

- Offer before or after school programming
- Organize a walking school bus
- Provide a modified schedule that aligns school and family schedules

Parks & Rec program Boys & Girls Club

Transportation Barriers

Share ideas in the chat...



Let's Chat

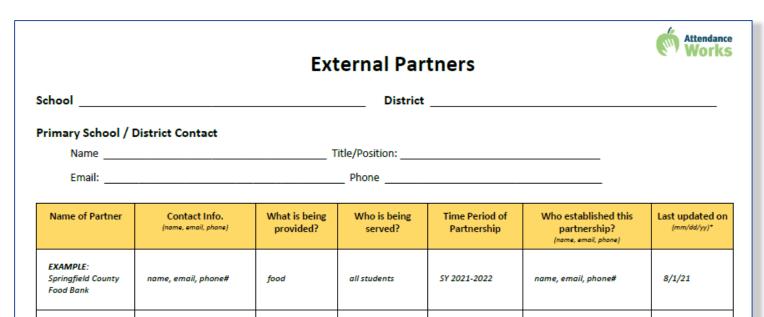
- I. In your community, what barriers could be addressed with help from external partners?
- 2. What external partners would you like to recruit?



List of External Partners

- Use this worksheet to help keep track of your external partners
- Be sure to update the list on a regular basis

<u>https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/List-of-External-Partners.docx</u>



*Update the information for each partner at least annually.



Team Function #5:

Determine if you are making a difference





Measuring Progress

Answer these four key questions:

- I. How much did we do? (quantity)
- 2. How well did we do it? (quality)
- 3. What difference did we make for the students who received support?
- 4. What was the impact on the school as a whole?









Questions from the Audience



Additional Resources



Sample Letters



Reach out to families throughout the school year!

- Tailor the content for your school community
- Add links to district-wide guidance and resources
- Sample templates include a principal letter and one for families of early ed students

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/welcome-students-to-school/

www.attendanceworks.org

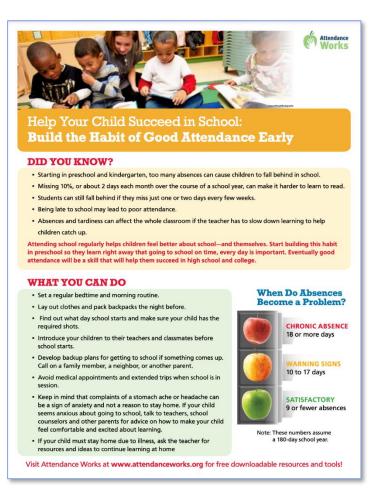




Handouts for Families

- ✓ Pre-K
- ✓ Elementary & Secondary Grades
- ✓ English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Creole versions

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/handouts-for-families/



Sign up for the 2021 Attendance Awareness Campaign

https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/contact/aam-updates/



Tips for Finding and Re-Engaging Students

| Update contact information multiple times a year |
|---|
| Use multiple modes of outreach (text, US mail, calls) |
| ☐ Try various media (social, radio, multiple languages, trusted messengers) |
| ☐ Leverage personal and social networks |
| ☐ School marquees and sign boards |
| ☐ Engage public and private partners |
| ☐ Home visits |

Strategies for Connecting with Students & Families:

https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Strategies-for-Connecting-with-Students-and-Families-rev-8-27-20.pdf





Participants will:

- Learn strategies to mobilize school staff,
 community and agency partners to provide support
- Determine if their efforts are making a difference





Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

https://app.upmetrics.com/data_collector/ckf2oltbqlt8k0759tfdbfybj

Thank you!





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Angela Duran, Senior Fellow

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About Us

Attendance Works advances student success and closes equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Operating at the local, state, and national level, Attendance Works:

- ✓ Advances better policy
- ✓ Nurtures proven and promising practice
- ✓ Promotes meaningful and effective communication
- ✓ Catalyzes needed research

Since our launch in 2010, we have become the nation's "go-to" resource for improving student attendance. To learn more, visit our website: www.attendanceworks.org

