

Session 3:

Partnerships that Make a Difference:

Coordinated Systems Strategies



Professional Learning Series

February 24, 2021





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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, Wednesday, January 13
- Session 2 Early Intervention Strategies: Monitoring and Identifying Students in Need of Support during Distance Learning, Wednesday, February 3
- Session 3 Partnerships that Make a Difference: Coordinated Systems Strategies, Wednesday, February 24





Participants will:

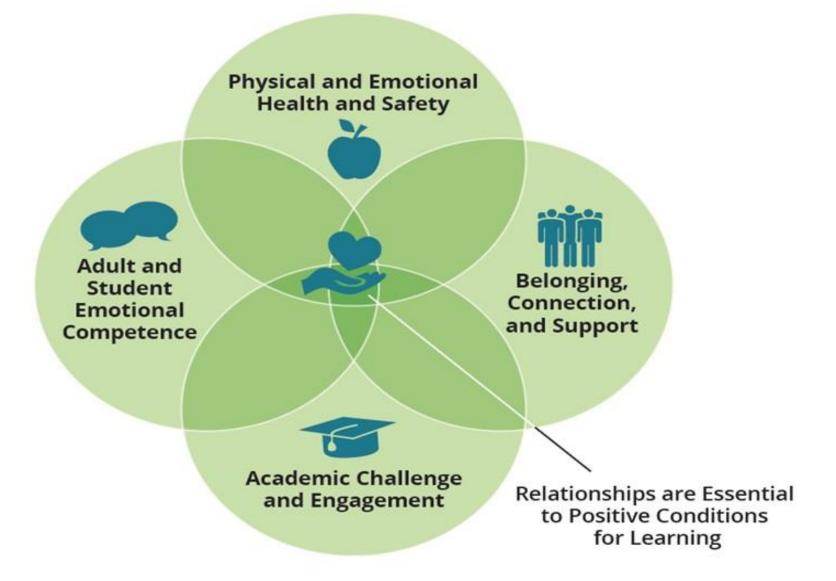
- Identify the key functions of a school team that addresses attendance.
- Know how to use data to identify students who need intensive support in order to attend and re-engage in learning.
- Identify and draw on community and agency partners to provide intensive supports.



Review of Sessions 1 & 2



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









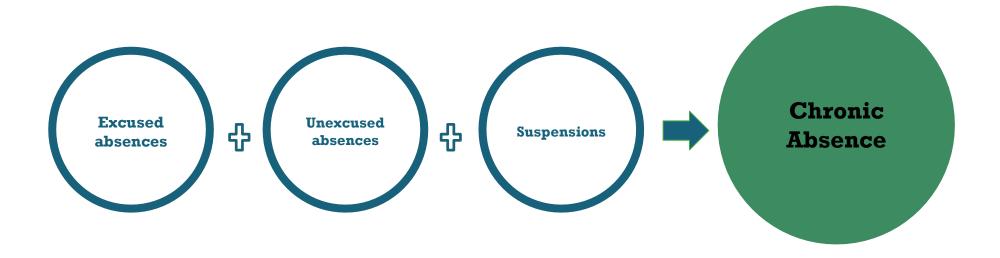
Absenteeism is a leading indicator and a cause of educational inequity





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

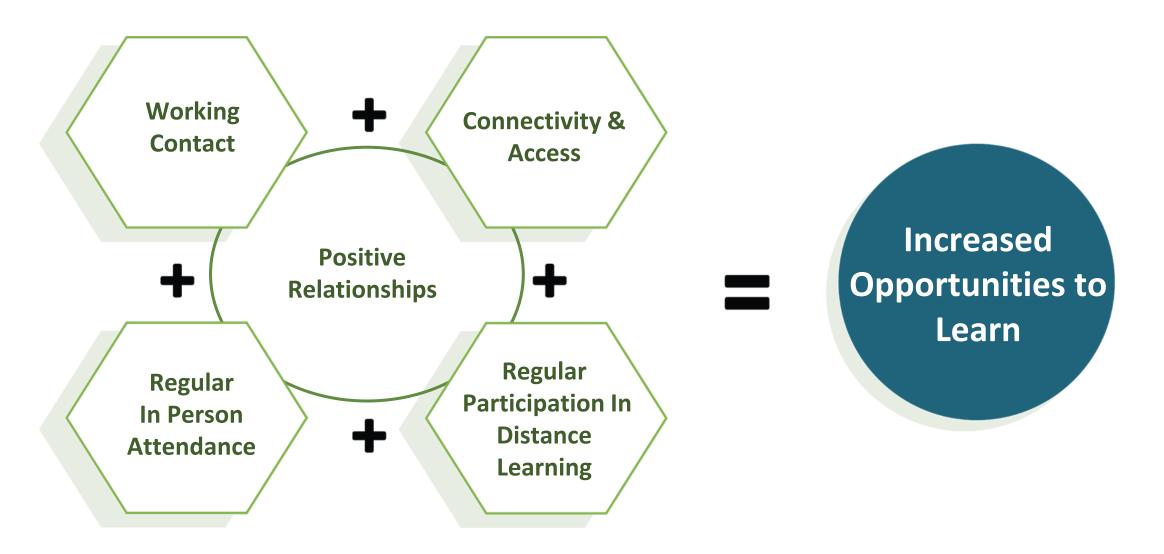
Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason.



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



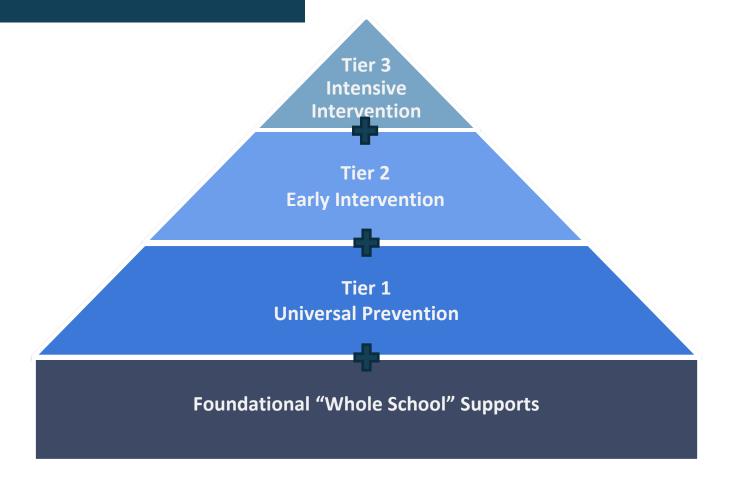
Expanding How to Measure the Opportunity to Learn







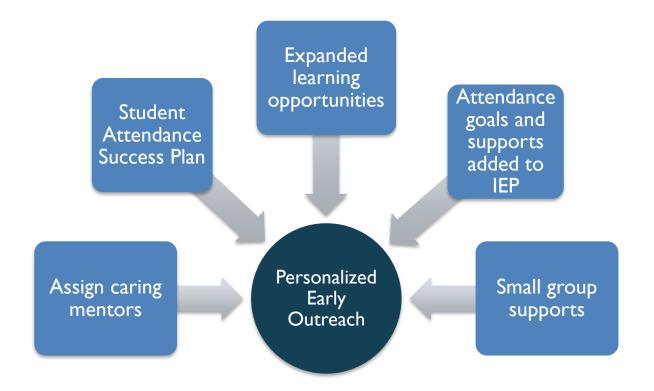
When Tackling Absenteeism, Take a Multi-Tiered Approach Beginning with Prevention

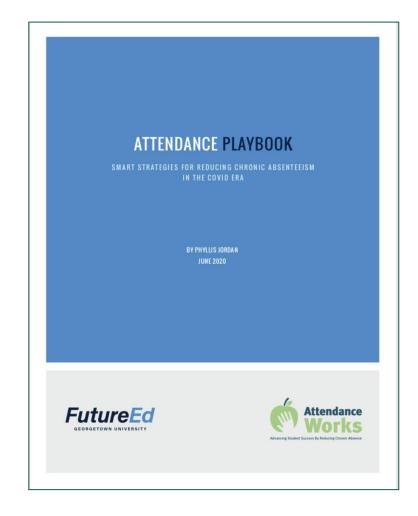






Connect Students Who are Chronically Absent to High Leverage and Evidence-Based Strategies





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

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





Poll

What has been most valuable to you from the first 2 classes?

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





Key Functions of an Attendance Team

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.



Ensure Team Composition is Reflective of the School Community



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
- * Expanded Learning program staff

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 Team



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.

Session 3

Session 2

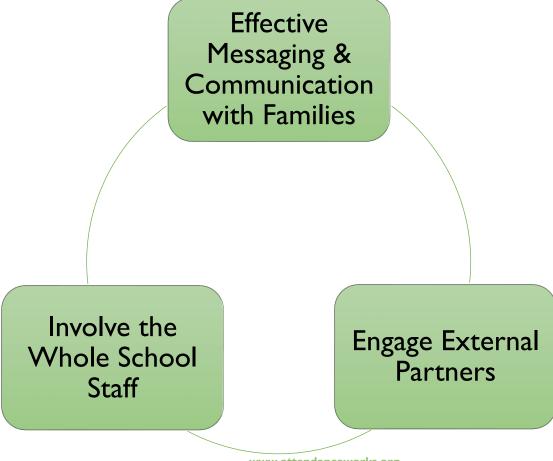


Team Function #4: Mobilize everyone in the school community to address attendance





Mobilize the School **Community to Address** Attendance







Poll

- I. Our entire school staff has bought into an "all hands on deck" approach to attendance.
 - ☐ Strongly in Place
 - Measurable Progress
 - Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Urgent Gap
- 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





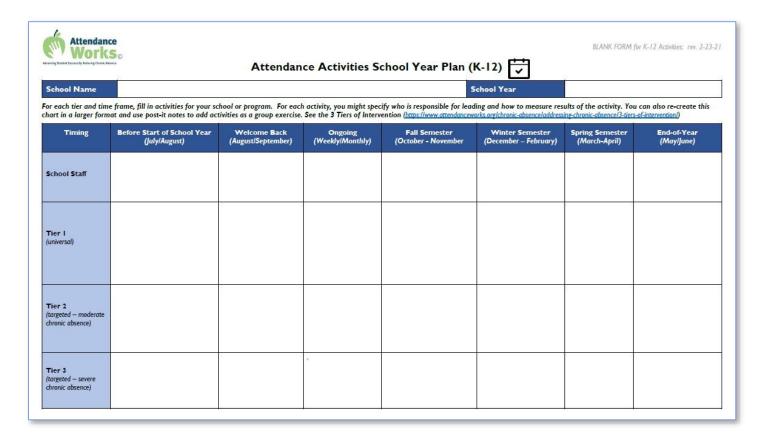
Share what you did (or plan to do) to get all hands on deck.







Year-Round Planning





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



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

What skills & knowledge do staff need in order to have caring conversations for attendance or to link families to attendance supports?



Effective Messaging & Communication with Families





Parents Underestimate the Number of Year-End Absences

Ad Council research commissioned by the CA Attorney General asked parents with students with a history of absence about their children's absences in two ways:

- I. Was your child absent an average of 2 or more days a month?
- 2. Was your child absent more than 10 days over the year?

60% of parents said their child was absent an average of 2+ days a month, but not 10+ days a year



The math: If a child is absent an average of 2+ days a month, then he or she is absent far more than 10+ days a year





Schools Inadvertently Reinforce Some Absence-Causing Beliefs



Reinforces Parents' Existing Beliefs and Behaviors

- Impersonal letters
- Teachers send work home in response to absences
- Teachers do not address absenteeism issue with the parent
- Parents do not feel their child is safe in school
- High levels of absenteeism in the class

https://oag.ca.gov/truancy/toolkit



Impersonal Letters:

- Easy to disregard
- Many parents felt the school miscounted—but parents couldn't verify because they weren't tracking absences
- Many parents felt that the school didn't understand them

Sending Work Home:

 Parents thought that completing a makeup packet caught their child up for the missed day's work

Teachers Not Addressing Absenteeism:

 Most parents reported that they regularly communicate with their children's teacher, but never about absences



Using Science to Improve Communication



I. Readable

- √ Fewer words
- ✓ Accessibility: <u>Flesch-Kincaid</u> readability test
- ✓ Skimmability: bullets, format reinforces message

2. Programmatic

- ✓ Planned (connected to current events, personalized to audience)
- ✓ Chunked
- ✓ Timely
- √ Routinized

3. Purposeful

- ✓ Match mode (how you communicate to the purpose)
- ✓ What's the point?
 - I. Navigating?
 - 2. Motivating specific action?

Behavioral science strategies:

- i. Make it easy, reduce friction (e.g., updating contact info, etc.)
- ii. Provide opportunity for commitment





Type in chat:

What other misconceptions have you heard families express about virtual or distance learning?



Involve the Whole School Staff



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

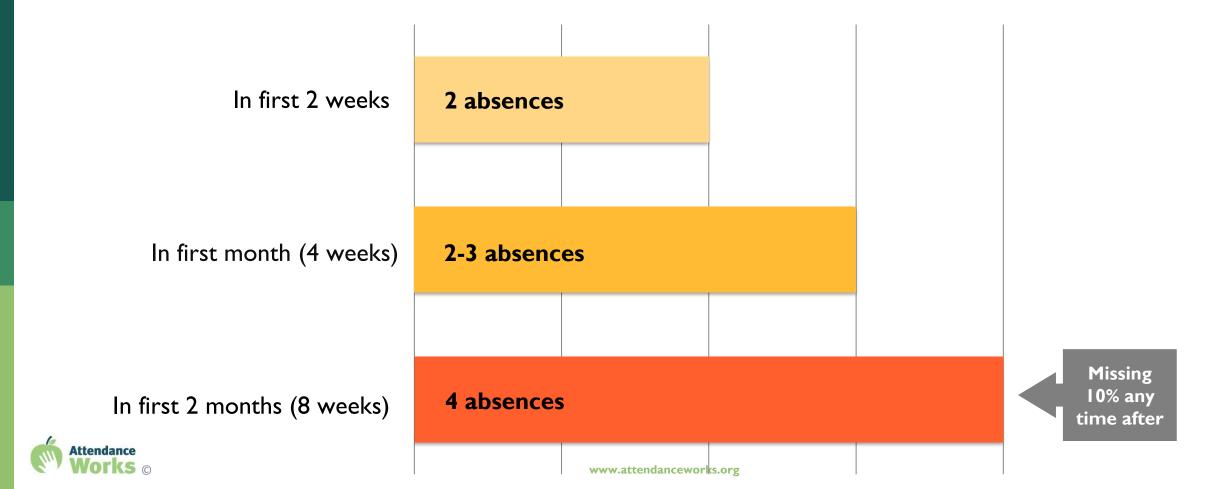
(e.g. >20%)

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.





Use 10% of Days Absent to Identify Which Students are Missing too Much School





Use Caring Conversations for Attendance

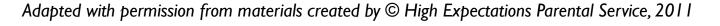
The purpose of this caring conversation with the family and student is to take a problem-solving, positive approach and make a plan for the student's improved attendance.

- ✓ <u>Ask</u> open-ended, supportive questions.
- ✓ <u>Listen</u> to the student/family member and respond to them in an empathetic way.
- ✓ <u>Discuss</u> the obstacles to attendance and plan effective solutions.



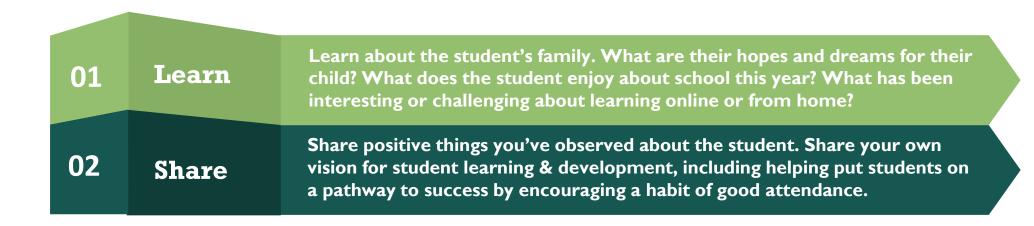
The "Caring Conversations for Attendance" Process

01	Learn	Learn about the student's family. Ask what their vision is for their child's future. What are their hopes and dreams for them?	
02	Share	Share positive things you've observed about the student. Share your own vision for student learning & development, including helping put students on a pathway to success by encouraging a habit of good attendance.	
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, try to understand the barriers that are keeping their children from school.	
05	Arrive at a Plan	Think through strategies with parents for addressing absences and help them develop an attendance improvement plan. Offer referrals to services as needed and ask if there are other ways you can help.	





Steps 1 & 2: Learn and Share







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

2020-2021 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Check the days when your child showed up to school (whether it was in person, online or involved completing an assignment). Mark absences with an X.

August 2020										
Su	М	Tu	W	Th	F	5				
						1				
2	3	4	5	6.	7	8				
9	10	11	12	13	14	15				
16	17	18	19	20	21	22				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29				
30	31									

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
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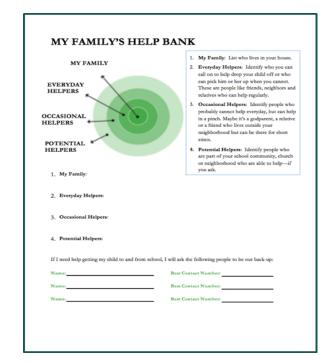
Step 4: Discuss

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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, try to understand the barriers that are keeping their children from participating.

- I. Learn about student motivations
- 2. Discuss reasons for absenteeism
- 3. Explore what would help given possible causes
- 4. Offer Help Bank to find out about support systems
- 5. Identify opportunities for strengthening engagement





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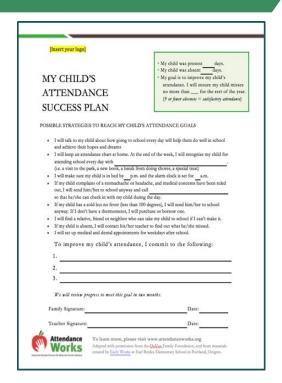
Step 5: Arrive at a Plan

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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. Consider students or parents to develop and complete a plan
- 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: Practicing Caring Conversations

Break out into groups (3 min)

- ☐ In small groups of 4, introduce yourself (name, position, school/district, state)
- ☐ Count off from I-4 on who will take on each role:











FACILITATOR-I

TEACHER-2

STUDENT-3

PARENT-4

Prepare (5 min)

- ☐ Open the small group handout (https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caring-Conversation-Worksheet-v2.pdf)
- ☐ Read the scenario for your role.
- ☐ Consider the factors that contribute to chronic absence. Write down 2-3 factors.

Roleplay Activity (5 min)

☐ Do the roleplay, following the Caring Conversations worksheet in the handout.

Debrief (2 min)

☐ Use the questions on the handout.



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Caring Conversations Worksheet (example)

	Key Points	Questions and Messages
I. 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?
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?





Benefits of the Caring Conversation Approach

Type in chat:

Who would benefit from practicing talking about attendance by using this framework?

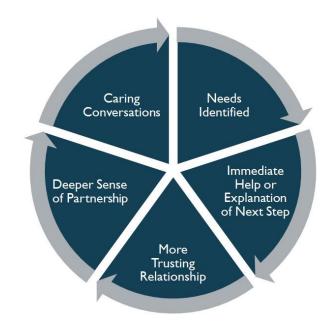


The Cycle of Effective Personalized Communication









Type in chat:

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



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Engage External Partners





Poll

To what extent are community partners and public agencies partners in providing support to students and families in your school?

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



https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Team-Self-Assessment-rev-1-31-21.pdf

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 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)



Who are the partners that can help with implementing interventions?

Reason for Absence

Possible Interventions

Potential Partner

Lack of Connectivity

- Provide one device per student in each household
- Install hot spots in areas with low or no internet
- Provide a helpline for students and families having difficulty connecting

State and Local
Government

Parent Work
Schedules
Out-of-Sync

- Offer before or after school programming
- Provide a modified schedule that aligns teaching and parent availability

Program Providers

Food Insecurity

- Food banks
- School-based food pantries
- Expanding eligibility and access for food programs

Local Institutions (Religious, Cultural, Public Agencies)



Identifying Students in Need of Intensive Supports



Identify Partners to Assist with Re-Engagement Strategies for Students Who Have Dropped off the Rolls or are Severely Chronically Absent

Intensive Intervention Warning Indicators

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention

What activates intensive intervention? Suggested criteria:

- Missing 20% or more of school in prior school year before closure (severely chronically absent)
- Missing 20% or more of distance learning opportunities during closure in spring 2020 (this is assuming the school district took attendance)
- Missing 20% or more of learning opportunities in a month during current year
- Students who already qualify for McKinney-Vento services, who are in foster care, or involved in juvenile justice
- Non-responsive to Tier 2 interventions and efforts of re-engagement

Consider who should respond: Social Workers? Staff of public agencies, etc.?





Tips for Finding and Re-Engaging Students

Type in chat: What have you done that's worked?

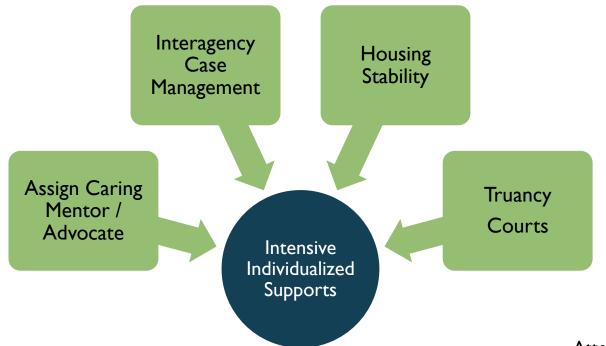
- ☐ Update contact information multiple times a year
- ☐ Use multiple modes of outreach (text, US mail, calls)
- Try various media (social, radio, multiple languages, trusted messengers)
- Leverage personal and social networks
- ☐ School marquees and sign boards
- ☐ Engage public and private partners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

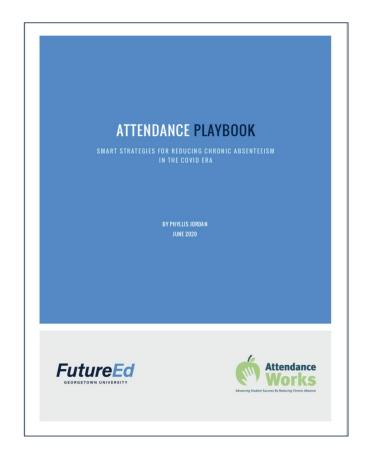
Strategies for Connecting with Students & Families:

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



Tier 3: Evidence Based Strategies





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

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



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? (population-level indicators)
- 4. Who was better off? (impact on the population)



5 I





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Monitoring Progress with Performance Measures

Reason for Chronic Absence

What asset or barrier are you addressing?

Intervention

What is your proposed solution or intervention?

Partner Contribution

What contribution(s) or support(s) will stakeholders or partner organizations provide?

Intervention	Quantity: How Much?	Quality: How Well?	Intervention Level Impact: Difference Made?	Population Impact: Who/What is Better Off?
What is your proposed solution or intervention? Who is the intended population being reached?	What is the scope and scale of your intervention?	How will you know the intervention is going the way you intended?	What changes in behavior, attitudes or practice do you expect?	What improvements in the well-being of stakeholders do you expect?

Source: Trying Hard is Not Good Enough, Mark Friedman





Performance Measures Example: Tier 2 Advisory Program

Reason for Chronic Absence

Students express lack of connection to school; low motivation to join virtual classes

Intervention

Small group advisory to link school staff and AmeriCorps members with a targeted number of students in Tier Two

Partner Contribution

AmeriCorps volunteers will assist with management of advisory groups and documentation of engagement.

Intervention	Quantity: How Much?	Quality: How Well?	Intervention Level Impact: Difference Made?	Population Impact: Who is better off?
Small group advisory to link school staff and AmeriCorps members with a targeted number of students who missed 10% or more of class and needing Tier Two supports	 50 students divided into small groups of five One staff member and one AmeriCorps member assigned to each group Advisors will contact students in their group at least once a week 	 Advisors will document interactions with students in shared document on Google Drive Attendance Team will analyze documentation to surface areas of need and factors influence student engagement 	X# of students in advisory demonstrate improved attendance over a 30-day period	 Comparative decrease in the % of Tier Two students missing 10-19% from January 2021 to April 2021 Improved academic engagement for X% of Tier Two students from January 2021 to April 2021





Attendance Awareness Campaign 2021 Webinar Series



All webinars 11:00 am - 12:30 pm PT / 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm ET

Webinar I: Wednesday, April 14, 2021

- Motivating participation and engagement through the spring
- Launching Attendance Works' Attendance Awareness Campaign, including engagement & recovery planning toolkit

Webinar 2: Wednesday, May 26, 2021

- Intensifying engagement over the summer
- Use your local data to create a differentiated re-engagement strategy and organize summer supports

Webinar 3: Wednesday, August 4, 2021

- Welcome families and staff back to school in the fall
- Promote routine of attendance; Leverage and amplify existing rituals

Webinar 4: Wednesday, September 29, 2021

- Leveraging attendance to ensure on-going success
- Success Stories and Maintaining your AAC throughout the school year



Sign-Up for Updates: https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/contact/aam-updates/

www.attendanceworks.org

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Evaluation Survey

Please let us know how we can improve:

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

Thank you!





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Sue Fothergill, Director of Strategic Programming sue@attendanceworks.org



Appendix



Attendance Works Resources Updated for Covid-19

Parent Flyers

- ✓ English and Spanish
- ✓ Elementary or Secondary

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

Student Attendance Success Plans

https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/ student-attendance-success-plans/



Help Your Child Succeed in Elementary School: *Build the Habit of Good Attendance*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Participation in early education programs, like preschool and Head Start, lead to better attendance in kindergarten.
- Starting in kindergarten, missing 10% of school (or just 2 days every month) can make it harder to learn to read and cause children to fall behind in school.
- Good attendance, whether class is held in person or remotely, can help children do
 well in school, and eventually in the workplace and in college.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Communicate with the School

- . Contact your child's teacher(s) and let them know how to reach you.
- . Get and post your child's class schedule and log in information on the refrigerator or your child's desk.
- Practice logging in to virtual classes and make a plan for supporting learning for children. Contact the school if you
 need help logging in.
- · Ask about the school's attendance policy.

Make School Attendance a Priority

- . Establish routines for bedtime, waking up and showing up for class.
- Identify a quiet place for your child to do school work. If you have multiple children, make a schedule. Or ask your school or community agencies if they have created places for distance learning, or if noise-canceling headsets are available for students.
- Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school or logging in to the computer if you can't be there
 to help. Find a family member, neighbor or older child who can help over the phone or who can help while wearing a
 mask and maintaining physical distance. Community-based organizations might also be able to help.
- When school is in session, avoid extended family trips and non-urgent medical appointments.
- . Ask your child's teacher about attendance and tell the teacher any concerns you have.

Help Your Child Stay Healthy and Engaged

- · Monitor your child's attendance and participation; and contact the teacher to address any concerns.
- . Make sure your child gets the flu vaccine and other required shots.
- Find out if your child feels safe from bullies. Make sure that school discipline policies don't lead to your child becoming disengaged or pushed out of school. If these are problems, work with your school to find a solution.
- If your child seems bored or anxious about school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make them feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Ask for help when you need it. School staff, after-school program providers, and other parents or community agencies
 are available to help families access online learning, obtain food or housing and address other experiences that make it
 difficult to attend and participate.

Developed in partnership with ConnectEd, Families in Schools, and Parent Institute for Quality Education.

Visit www.attendanceworks.org for more downloadable resources.



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

