Network for School Improvement

Change Package for School Improvement

Attendance

Key Evidence-Based Changes for Attendance

Data	Relationships	Motivation	Problem Solving
To improve attendance, you need to know who is absent, in what amount, at different levels i.e. infrequent, near chronic, chronic, extreme etc., when, and why and this information needs to be readily accessible to school leaders, teachers, student support staff, parents and students.	*Positive, supportive relationships between students and adults and student to student are central to establishing root causes, encouraging regular school attendance, and problem solving. Once a student is chronically absent typically you need to solve a problem or change a behavior to improve attendance, and this is very difficult to do without having a good relationship with the students and parents.*	*Examine and intervening for students who are not attending because of avoidance issues or disengagement due to their motivation to attend school can have positive effects on attendance.*	*Barriers, obstacles, and mindsets preventing regular attendance need to be removed when possible and their impacts mediated and moderated when it is not. Both require practical problem solving actions and capacity.*
Establish **consistent attendance taking** and recording procedures with common definitions	Conduct a **relationship audit** for chronically absent students. Identify adults who have existing positive relationships with these students have them work with the students to identify barriers to good attendance. Also identify extent of any relationship gaps i.e. chronically absent students without any positive relationships with adults in school.	Make the **school environment** an inviting place to be, have students be welcomed by name by someone who they know when they enter school and classrooms.	Make sure chronically absent students have a **means to complete missing school work and access tutoring**. Teach succeeding in school and social-emotional skills i.e. self-management, note taking, relationship skills. agency
Establish **data systems** that enable all key parties to access attendance data on the students they interact with (including parents) in as close to real time as possible. Enable them to flag students with strong attendance, chronic absenteeism and those trending towards it	Use **interest surveys** to foster and strengthen relationships by linking students and adults based on shared interests and hobbies.	**Show students and parents the connection between regular attendance and success** at school and how it's easier than they might think to become chronically absent i.e. just missing two days a month	**Reduce bullying** −create inclusivity clubs-to insure all students feel safe and welcome in school
Use **student surveys, focus groups, interviews, and attendance audits** to understand why students are not attending and the distribution across key categories i.e. out of school factors, avoidance of things in school and to and from school, disengagement etc.	Conduct **peer interaction surveys** to establish which subset of students interconnect with the majority of students, train them to be peer leaders and advocates for good attendance.	Use **social recognition** (photo on wall, intercom shout-out, recognition event) to publicly recognize good and improved attendance at classroom, grade, and individual level	**Identify and change policies** that discourage students, often inadvertently, from attending school on a regular basis i.e. what are viewed as harsh consequences for being late, missing a set amount of school results in automatic failure etc.

Updated January 2020

Partnering with

EVERYONE
GRADUATES CENTER

Data	Relationships	Motivation	Problem Solving
Analyze school level attendance patterns at regular levels to identify trends as classroom, grade, and school level, as well trends by time of year	Train older students serve as **home room captains** for younger students and encourage all members of their "team" to be there everyday	Make the adults in the building aware how sensitive chronically absent students can be to the **language used** to acknowledge their return to school i.e. avoid sarcasm and greet them warmly	Work with **community partners** to provide health and other services for issues that have been linked with high rates of absenteeism i.e. asthma
Use the data to create **attendance nudge messaging** i.e. postcards and texts to students and parents give them updated information on cumulative absences and their consequences	**Establish a Success Mentor program**- where chronically absent students are matched with a caring adult who interacts with them at least 3x per week in school and signals that students are missed when they are not there	**Link chronically absent students** and those trending towards it with extra-curricular, service learning, and leadership activities that engage them	Work to **solve any transportation issues** preventing students from having a safe, secure, and consistent means to get to and from school each day, including in inclement weather (i.e. umbrellas, and winter wear).

Change Idea Considerations

1) Data and Relationships are positioned in the first two columns because they are foundational to most evidence based actions to improve attendance
2) The Data and Motivation columns are organized sequentially listed evidence based actions which are foundational for other actions first.
3) The Relationship column is organized by level of intensity i.e. the depth and scale of relationship supports needed for all students to have good attendance.
4) The Problem Solving column is organized to begin with universal actions – actions that are supportive of good attendance in nearly all schools, and then end with tailored actions whose utility will depend on the needs of a given schools.
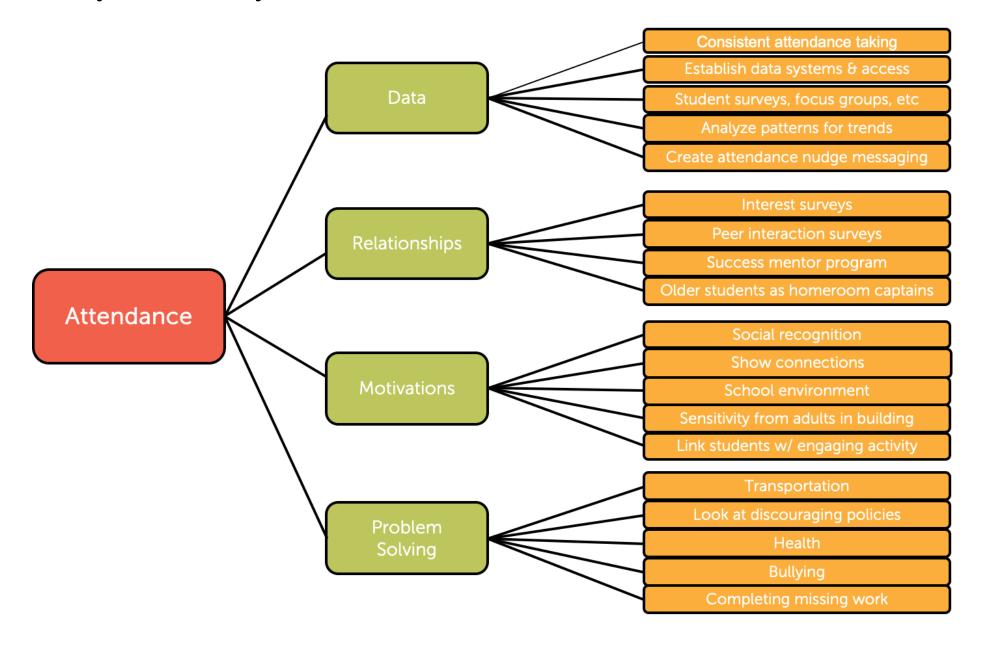
Attendance Sources:

What Work's Clearinghouse Preventing Dropouts in Secondary School. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/24

What the evidence says about Putting Students at the Center, Organizing Adults, and Teaching and Learning Everyone Graduates Center. High School Redesign Website. http://www.hsredesign.org/evidence-based-design/what-the-evidence-says/#CENTER

Attendance Works website. Research Section. https://www.attendanceworks.org/research/

Primary and Secondary Drivers for Attendance

Attendance

Data
- Consistent attendance taking
- Establish data systems & access
- Student surveys, focus groups, etc
- Analyze patterns for trends
- Create attendance nudge messaging

Relationships
- Interest surveys
- Peer interaction surveys
- Success mentor program
- Older students as homeroom captains

Motivations
- Social recognition
- Show connections
- School environment
- Sensitivity from adults in building
- Link students w/ engaging activity

Problem Solving
- Transportation
- Look at discouraging policies
- Health
- Bullying
- Completing missing work

Partnering with

EVERYONE GRADUATES CENTER

Attendance Improvement Inventory

Data

- ☐ Have you established a **consistent attendance taking** and recording procedure with common definitions?
- ☐ Have you established **data systems** that enable all key parties to access attendance data on the students they interact with (including parents) in as close to real-time as possible? Can you flag students with strong attendance, chronic absenteeism and those trending towards it
- ☐ Have you used **student surveys, focus groups, interviews, and attendance audits** to understand why students are not attending and the distribution across key categories i.e. out of school factors, avoidance of things in school and to and from school, disengagement etc?
- ☐ Have you **analyzed school-level attendance patterns** at regular levels to identify trends in the classroom, grade, and school level, as well as trends by time of year?
- ☐ Have you used the data to create **attendance nudge messaging** i.e. postcards and texts to students and parents give them updated information on cumulative absences and their consequences?

Relationships

- ☐ Have you conducted a **relationship audit** for chronically absent students? Identify adults who have existing positive relationships with these students have them work with the students to identify barriers to good attendance? Have you identified the extent of any relationship gaps i.e. chronically absent students without any positive relationships with adults in school.
- ☐ Have you conducted **interest surveys** to foster and strengthen relationships by linking students and adults based on shared interests and hobbies?
- ☐ Have you conducted **peer interaction surveys** to establish which subset of students interconnect with the majority of students, train them to be peer leaders and advocate for good attendance?
- ☐ Have you trained older students to serve as **homeroom captains** for younger students and encourage all members of their "team' to be there every day?
- ☐ Have you **established a success Mentor program**-where chronically absent students are matched with a caring adult who interacts with them at least 3x per week in school and signals that students are missed when they are not there?

Motivation

- ☐ Have you made the **school environment** an inviting place to be, have students be welcomed by name by someone who they know when they enter school and classrooms?
- ☐ Have you **shown students and parents the connection between regular attendance and success** at school and how it's easier than they might think to become chronically absent i.e. just missing two days a month?
- ☐ Have you used **social recognition** (photo on wall, intercom shout-out, recognition event) to publicly recognize good and improved attendance at classroom, grade, and individual level?
- ☐ Have you made the adults in the building aware how sensitive chronically absent students can be to the **language used** to acknowledge their return to school i.e. avoid sarcasm and greet them warmly?
- ☐ Have you **linked chronically absent students** and those trending towards it with extra-curricular, service learning, and leadership activities that engage them?

Problem Solving

- ☐ Have you made sure chronically absent students have a **means to complete missing school work and access tutoring**? Teach succeeding in school and social-emotional skills i.e. self-management, note taking, relationship skills, agency?
- ☐ Have you **reduced bullying** –created inclusivity clubs-to ensure all students feel safe and welcome in school
- ☐ **Identified and changed policies** that discourage students, often inadvertently, from attending school on a regular basis i.e. what are viewed as harsh consequences for being late, missing a set amount of school results in automatic failure etc.
- ☐ Have you worked with **community partners** to provide health and other services for issues that have been linked with high rates of absenteeism i.e. asthma?
- ☐ Have you worked to **solve any transportation issues** preventing students from having a safe, secure, and consistent means to get to and from school each day, including in inclement weather (i.e. umbrellas, and winter wear)?