

MODULE 11: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE



FutureED and Attendance Works provide strategy interventions to help reduce absenteeism. The interventions fall into three different categories:

1. Family and Student Engagements

Creating incentives for students and sharing positive communication and classroom competition regarding good attendance seems to work. Communicating with families with students that have an absenteeism issue in teacher's classes is critical. Parents need to be made aware and reminded of how absenteeism affects students' ability to learn. Teachers who are comfortable visiting parents in their home will create a stronger bond between the parent and student.

2. Making Students Feel Welcome

Research has shown that classrooms and schools with unwelcome environments have a more significant student attendance issue. When teachers make their classroom a welcoming place, students feel belonging, which can significantly improve attendance. Meeting and greeting students at the door with a warm smile go a long way. Allowing students in a group to discuss any issues or concerns they may have in class, on campus, or at home goes a long way.

Students who connect with their teacher in the class emotionally have a better attendance rate than other students. Students who have a history of absenteeism should be linked with an adult on that campus to help monitor any issues they may have. Connecting students who account for absenteeism positively affects their attendance when checking on them regularly (FutureED, 2019).



3. Conquering Obstacles to Attendance

Many students live in unsafe neighborhoods in poor conditions, have a family with domestic violence history, miss meals, lack adequate clothing, have no transportation, etc. These are some of the issues that many teachers are not prepared to deal with and feel their hands are tied. But teachers can play a very vital role in identifying the students and referring them to someone on that campus who could help them or lead them to the resources. Teachers who have relationships with students and families can better identify the students who are suffering or need. In addition, teachers are often the first person to notice any issues. Students will often share their problems.

LESSON 01: CONDUCTING STUDENT SURVEYS

Conducting surveys allows schools to focus on problems regarding attendance and plan interventions that could affect positive changes in their school. If schools can collect data about students' attendance issues, it would help them provide intervention and focus limited resources on the most relevant areas. In addition, asking parents and students questions about attendance can help each campus create and solve specific student issues relating to attendance.

It is known that students miss school for a variety of reasons. A survey can tell the school what their student population is dealing with and how they can best help. Listed below are some questions that schools can ask their students concerning their attendance. The multiple-choice survey is recommended to increase student and parent participation.



PARENT SURVEY

It is essential to survey parents and students to help open communication between the school and the home. This also helps increase students' chances of improving their attendance if we get the parent's point of view. Below are some sample questions we can ask parents, again recommending the multiple-choice to help increase participation and get results quickly.

- Are you aware of the school district policy and laws regarding attendance?
- Is information related to school policies policy regarding attendance available to you and written or explain, so you clearly understand?
- Has it been explained to you how being tardy for class affects your student in the class?

IMPLEMENTING A DROPOUT PREVENTION GROUP

Starting a dropout prevention group on campus can be a good way of building a relationship with the most high-risk kids. One objective of the group is to emphasize that long-term and short-term goals for school are essential. It also creates accountability for the kids who are most at risk of dropping out. Hopefully, it will make them a little more conscious of their decision to miss school if they know that a staff member is responsible for providing support. In addition, they know the staff is constantly monitoring their attendance and will meet with them weekly to discuss dropout prevention.

An attendance officer, outreach worker, social worker, or staff member whose primary responsibility is to monitor and work with a student's attendance would be a great candidate for the dropout prevention group leader. The school administrator must help develop the dropout prevention group, carving a set time during school hours to have their dropout prevention section weekly and over an agreed time frame. It is understood that removing students from their class time can be detrimental to their academic progress.



WORKBOOK SECTION

1. What are the interventions to help reduce absenteeism?

2. What is the purpose of conducting surveys?

3. How will implementing a dropout prevention group help student?
