

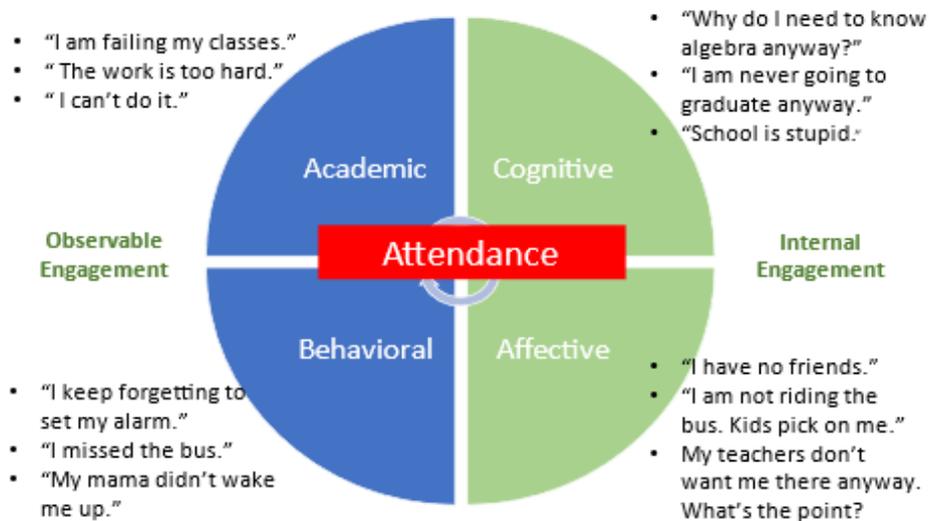
Multidimensional Student Engagement for Improving Attendance

It is important for us to understand the underlying causes of disengagement to correctly determine an appropriate intervention. When we have a student who has chronic absences, we need to understand the underlying reason(s) for disengagement. The intervention provided will depend on the reason that the student is unengaged. It is important to complete a root cause analysis of why the student is experiencing chronic absences.

There are 4 dimensions of student engagement.

- **Academic engagement** is the amount of time a student spends doing schoolwork or related projects in school or at home, time on task, number of credits accrued, amount of homework completed with accuracy, and course grades.
- **Behavioral engagement** relates to a student’s attendance, effort and active participation in class, involvement in extracurricular activities, and behavioral incidents such as office referrals, detentions, and suspensions.
- **Cognitive engagement** refers to a student’s self-regulated learning strategy, goal setting, interest in learning, motivation to learn, and student perception of the relevance of school to personal aspirations, the value of learning, and control of and competence in schoolwork.
- **Affective engagement** refers to a student’s sense of belonging and connection to school and availability of quality support from parents, teachers, and peers.

Multidimensional Student Engagement



<http://www.checkandconnect.umn.edu/>



Multidimensional Student Engagement for Improving Attendance

Interventions

- **Academic Engagement**
 - Establish relationships.
 - Tutoring
 - Summer credit recovery
 - Family Engagement
 - Explicit Instruction
 - Scaffolding
 - Use of previewing and graphic organizers.

- **Behavioral Engagement**
 - Establish relationships.
 - Incentives of If and Then
 - Set phones for reminders.
 - Personalized approach to attendance
 - Establish a supportive school climate.
 - Mentoring
 - Behavior Contracts

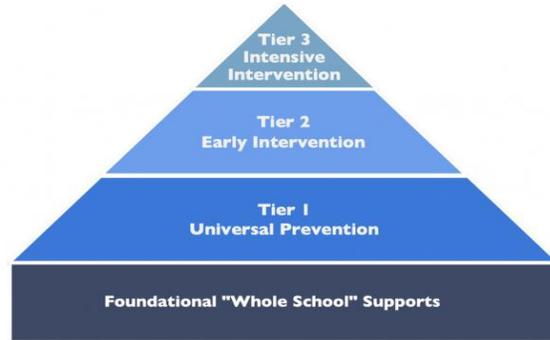
- **Cognitive Engagement**
 - Mentoring
 - Goal setting
 - Relevance
 - Problem-Solving Goals
 - Active learning

- **Affective Engagement**
 - Increase support from family and school.
 - Encouragement and praise
 - Build strong relationships.
 - Caring Adult in the Building
 - Mentoring- Know your WHO.
 - Wrap Around Supports
 - Mental Health



Multi-tiered System for Improving Attendance

Reducing chronic absence fits nicely into a multi-tiered system of supports for students to improve student attendance and school climate.



www.attendanceworks.org

Foundational "Whole School Supports"			
Physically healthy environment	Enrichment activities and clubs (with virtual options)	Positive relationships between school staff, students, and families	Support for all families to facilitate learning at home
Access to tech equipment and connectivity	Access to Learning Supports	Predictable daily/weekly routines, rituals, and celebrations	A culture of continuous improvement
Welcoming socially-emotionally safe, trauma-informed school climate	Homerooms and/or Advisory (with virtual options)	A schedule of classes and where/how they are held	Active engagement of parents and students in planning and problem solving

Tier 1 represents universal strategies to encourage good attendance for all students.

- Establish positive relationships with families
- Predictable daily/weekly routines, schedules, rituals, and celebrations
- Community building to create belonging and connection
- Personalized outreach and communication to families when students are absent
- Recognize good and improved attendance
- Individual wellness check and connectivity assessments
- Regular monitoring of attendance data to activate supports and identify trends

Tier 2 provides early intervention for students who need more support to avoid chronic absence.

- Using absenteeism data to activate targeted supports
- Individual attendance plan addressing barriers developed with families and students
- Connect to a caring adult or mentor (in-person and virtual)

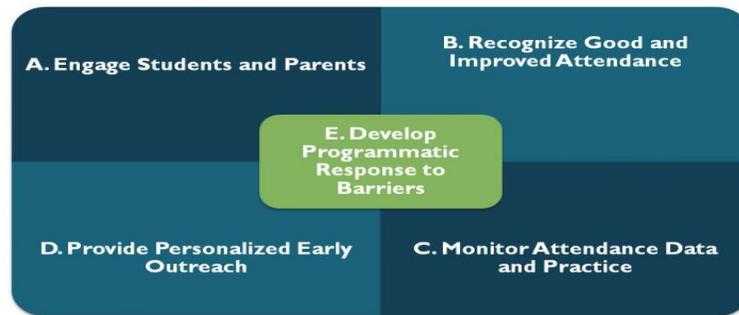
Tier 3 offers intensive support for students facing the greatest challenges to getting to school.

- Intensive case management/outreach to locate student and family to assess situation
- Coordinated case management with cross agency
- Interventions depend on students' personal circumstances and grade level



Recommended Strategies for Schools

<https://www.attendanceworks.org>



ENGAGE STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Attendance improves when a school community offers a warm and welcoming environment that emphasizes building relationships with families and stresses the importance of going to class every day. The key is developing a school-wide school culture that promotes a sense of safety, respect, and personal responsibility, where students feel connected and know that someone notices, in a caring manner, when they missed school. A key component of the engagement is helping families understand what their children are learning when they are in school and the negative effects of chronic absenteeism on realizing their hopes and dreams for their children. Too many parents and students do not realize that just missing two days each month can be a problem, and often leads to falling behind in the classroom. Even fewer families realize that absenteeism is a problem as early as kindergarten and preschool and building the habit of attendance in the early grades can influence their children's chances of graduating from high school.

RECOGNIZE GOOD AND IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

School communities can send a clear message that going to school every day is a priority by providing regular recognition and incentives to students and families who have good and improved attendance. Keep in mind that the goal is not to focus on perfect attendance since the children who struggle the most will soon be left out of such activities. Incentives and contests take advantage of the fact that students often respond better to positive recognition and peer pressure than they do to lectures from parents and teachers. Incentives do not need to be costly. Simple rewards—recognition from peers and the school through certificates or assemblies, extra recess time, homework passes or even dancing in the hallways—go a long way toward motivating students.

MONITOR ATTENDANCE DATA AND PRACTICE

Ideally every school has a team to monitor their data, use it to organize their attendance improvement strategy and ensure chronically absent students receive support. The best way to identify students with chronic absences, is to use the attendance data already collected by schools to examine which and how many students are missing 10% or more of the school year. Ideally, data is also to monitor trends over time by grade and subgroup. Schools can also use data prior to the beginning of the school year to assess how many students are likely to need additional supports and then determine how to put in place sufficient resources. Attendance Works has created free data tools—the DATT and the SATT—to examine patterns and identify which students are at risk due to poor attendance. The best approach is for district data staff to use these tools (or adopt existing data dashboards to produce similar reports) and then provide data on a regular basis to school administrators.

PROVIDE EARLY OUTREACH

Perhaps the most critical strategy is using data to trigger early caring outreach to families and students who are already missing too many days of school. Such outreach is essential for identifying barriers to attendance — hunger, access to health care, homelessness, transportation, or other challenges — and the supports or resources that would help improve attendance.

DEVELOP PROBLEMATIC RESPONSE TO BARRIERS

If large numbers of students are affected by chronic absence, that suggests some type of systemic barrier or barriers are at play. Once it is clear that chronic absence is a problem in your school and for which groups of children, use qualitative and quantitative information to examine what factors might be affecting attendance. If possible, engage other agencies and families in the process so they can use their insights to shed light on the challenges and get engaged in coming up with realistic solutions that draw upon the assets they can bring to bear. Identifying the barriers to attendance can indicate the appropriate solutions, whether that involves, for example, establishing uniform closets, improving access to health care, launching walking school buses, providing tutoring, offering mentoring, developing morning or afterschool care and other approaches.