

RESEARCH BRIEF

Improving Attendance In Our Schools: A National Review Of The Issues And A Look At Some Interventions From Communities In Schools And Their Partners



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This Brief was Prepared by:

Sheila R. Drummond, MS
Associate Director Diplomas Now
Communities In Schools
2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 801
Arlington, Virginia 22202
www.communitiesinschools.org

For more information, contact:

Sheila R. Drummond, MS
DrummondS@cisnet.org

Introduction

Communities In Schools' mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. One of the key ways to ensure that students stay in school and graduate from high school is to ensure that students are consistently in the classroom. Although the concept of consistent school attendance seems like a simple and obvious solution to school success and graduation, its importance is often questioned by parents and students and misinterpreted by schools. Research shows that an alarmingly high number of students, approximately 5 to 7.5 million, are missing nearly a month of school every year (Baltimore Education Research Consortium, 2011).

This brief will discuss the importance of school attendance, and will show the connections between attendance and truancy, chronic absence, and poverty. The brief will also discuss how commonly reported school data can mask chronic absenteeism, provide information on how to better communicate with and engage parents in understanding the importance of attending school, and highlight some of the whole-school and individual student attendance-focused interventions implemented by CIS in schools across the country.

Communities In Schools, a federation of 187 Affiliates, is the nation's largest and most effective organization dedicated to keeping kids in school and helping them succeed in life. The unique model of integrated student supports (ISS), positions site coordinators inside schools to assess students' needs and provide resources to help them succeed in the classroom and in life. Communities In Schools partners with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers and volunteers to help deliver needed services to schools and students.

www.communitiesinschools.org

Why is school attendance important?

Students are required to spend, on average, between 175 and 180 days in school a year (Center for Public Education, 2011) for the 13 years from kindergarten through 12th grade. This means that students spend approximately 2,340 days in school, or about 19,000 hours during their primary and secondary education experience (Answers.com, 2014).

If a child misses one day every two weeks, that is 18 days out of school. If that student misses 18 days a year for 13 years, they will have missed 234 days out of their entire time in school. When students miss school, it not only impacts their learning but also the school climate and the effectiveness of the teachers with other students. The student misses out on presented material, the chance

to engage in rich dialogue with adults and peers (which may not be possible in the student’s home environment), and social interactions with other students. Teachers may have to spend time catching students up, while the students who were there may become bored, disengaged, and even disruptive (Attendance Works, 2014).

Research indicates that attendance is a key predictor in determining student success in school. Teachers cannot work to build students’ skills and monitor progress if a large number of students are frequently absent (GreatSchools, 2014). Moreover, students cannot progress and ultimately graduate if they are not in school. Missing 10 percent or more of the school year – just two to three days per month – is a proven early warning indicator of academic failure and, eventually, high school dropout (Balfanz, 2012). A study conducted by the Georgia state department of education of students in grades 6-10 showed that missing more than five days of school each year, regardless of the cause, begins to impact student academic performance and starts shaping attitudes about school, indicating attendance as a better predictor of dropping out of school than test scores (Georgia State Department of Education, 2011). When examining the relationship

Improving Attendance Matters Because It Reflects:

Exposure to Language: Starting in Pre-K, attendance equals exposure to language-rich environments especially for low-income children.

Time on Task in Class: Students only benefit from classroom instruction if they are in class.

On Track for Success: Chronic absence is a proven early sign of academic trouble and dropping out of school.

College Readiness: Attendance patterns predict college enrollment and persistence.

Engagement: Attendance reflects engagement in learning.

Effective Practice: Schools, communities, families can improve attendance when they work together.

For research, see:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/>

Source: Chang, H. (2014, July 30). Power Point Presentation: Reducing Chronic Absence: Why does it matter? What can we do? Atlanta, GA, USA.

between attendance and test scores, Dr. Robert Balfanz from Johns Hopkins University reported an essentially linear relationship between each missed day and lower test performance. Essentially, for each day absent, a student will score at least one point lower on standardized test scores (Balfanz, 2012). The Georgia study supports findings that this is true for both excused and unexcused absences.

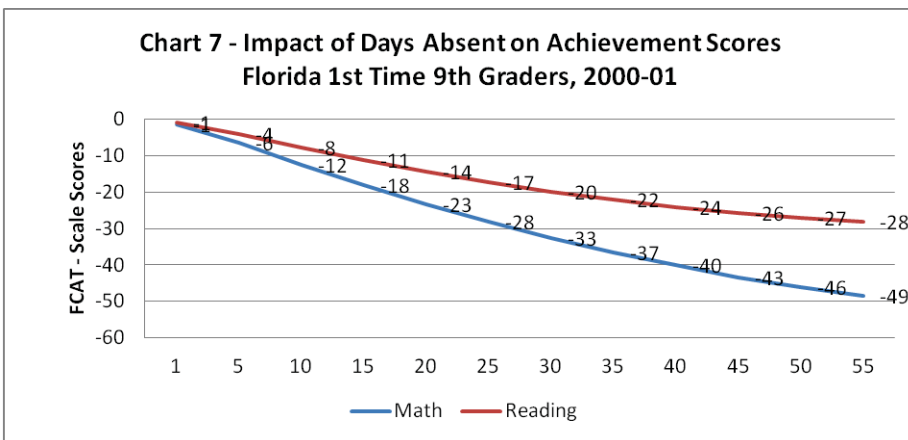
Why do students not attend school?

Students miss school for many reasons. According to Dr. Balfanz, in a report on absenteeism in the nation’s public schools, the reasons can be divided into three broad categories:

1. Students who **cannot** attend school due to illness, family responsibilities, housing instability, the need to work, or involvement with the juvenile justice system.
2. Students who **will not** attend school to avoid bullying, unsafe conditions, harassment and embarrassment.
3. Students who **do not** attend school because they, or their parents, do not see the value in being there, they have something else they would rather do, or nothing stops them from skipping school (Balfanz, 2012).

A January 3, 2011 posting to Youth Booth-Youth Services, an Insider’s View to Youth Services in Salt Lake County Utah, indicated that parents might think that because their child is early on in their education (i.e., in kindergarten), their overall education will not be affected if they miss a day or a week of school. Additionally, parents of older children may not want to fight with a student to get them out of bed and on their way to school (Schmidt, 2011).

The importance of attending school regularly begins in kindergarten and continues throughout a child’s education until high school graduation. Researchers and practitioners have traditionally focused efforts to address absenteeism, especially truancy or unexcused absence, on secondary schools. Yet research published in 2008 by the National Center for Children in Poverty showed that the ill effects of chronic absence extend to kindergarten and elementary school students. That study



Balfanz, R. a. (2012, May 16). The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools. Retrieved from http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf.

demonstrated that chronic absence in kindergarten was associated with lower academic performance in first grade for any student, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. For low-income children, the connection to poor performance extended through fifth grade (Chang H. &, 2008).

Attendance Works, indicates that one of the key myths about attendance is that “attendance in kindergarten does not really count as an indicator of academic performance” in a child’s school career (Attendance Works, 2014).

Attendance Works is a national initiative aimed at advancing student success by ensuring educators, community partners, and families work together to monitor and intervene when students or schools are struggling with high levels of chronic absence.

For more information, visit <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics as quoted by Douglas Ready, “children living in poverty are 25 percent more likely to miss three or more days of school per month. There is a direct and complicated link between family income and children’s school attendance” (Ready, 2010). School absences affect children living in poverty disproportionately. Children living in poverty are far more likely to be chronically absent from school. One of the most effective strategies for providing pathways out of poverty is to create opportunities and interventions to get students who live in high-poverty neighborhoods to attend school every day. According to Dr. Balfanz, these interventions – even without any additional qualitative improvements in the American education system – will increase achievement, high school graduation, and college attainment rates (Balfanz, 2012).

What is chronic absence?

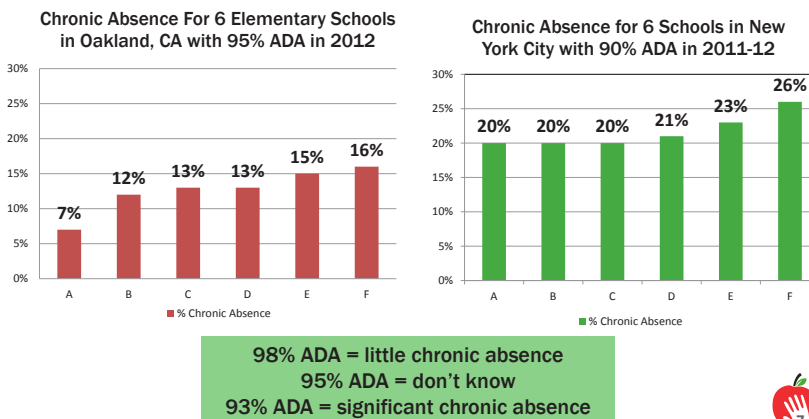
All schools track data on attendance. In many states, school funding is attached to reported average daily attendance (ADA). Average daily attendance is the aggregate number of days of attendance of all students during a school year divided by the number of days school is in session during that year (USLegal, 2014). When looking at trends, ADA shows who is there each day and which days of the week have the worst attendance. Schools also track truancy, which is defined as an unexcused absence from school. If a student is absent without an excuse by the parent/guardian or if the student leaves school or a class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, it will be considered an unexcused absence and the student will be considered truant (National Center for School Engagement, 2006). Collecting truancy data lets you know how many students are missing days without adult permission – in other words, how many students have unexcused absences.

What most states and Districts do not track is chronic absence. Chronic absence is most commonly defined as missing an extended amount of school for any reason, and includes both excused and unexcused absences. Although no standard definition exists, Attendance Works recommends defining chronic absence as “missing 10 percent or more of school in an academic year” (Attendance Works, 2014).

Another myth about attendance as defined by Hedy Chang, the director of Attendance Works, is that most schools monitor and track chronic absences. Most schools use the aforementioned school-wide, or ADA, statistic instead. They do not document daily attendance in a way that would allow them to monitor trends. According to Chang, when schools do analyze the data that show high ADA rates, they may be surprised by the high numbers of individual students missing 10% or more of the school year. In other words, schools may report high levels of ADA, but this statistic can

High Levels of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Can Mask Chronic Absence

90% and even 95% ≠ A



Source: Chang, H. (2014, July 30). Power Point Presentation: Reducing Chronic Absence: Why does it matter? What can we do? Atlanta, GA, USA.

mask chronic absence that specific students exhibit (Chang, Power Point Presentation: Reducing Chronic Absence: Why does it matter? What can we do?, 2014).

What schools should be tracking in addition to ADA and truancy is how many and which students miss too much school. The data provide school administrators a picture of the chronically absent students at their school. In other words, data on chronic absenteeism will show specific students in need of intervention. At the district level, the data will show which schools have the highest concentration of chronic absence. In a 2013 article in USA Today, Hedy Chang identified at least eight states that now use student data to examine chronic absence statewide: Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Oregon, Rhode Island and Utah (Adrienne Lu, 2013). This is up from the six states originally cited by Dr. Balfanz in his report on absenteeism in 2012 (Balfanz, 2012). However, all three statistics – ADA, truancy, and chronic absence – are important to helping understand the attendance issues and to determine appropriate attendance interventions that are needed at both the school and district level (Chang H. , Conversation with Hedy Chang, 2014).

What are some promising attendance interventions?

According to Monika Sanchez, effective attendance intervention strategies must include prevention and intervention activities at four levels, including: (1) the student; (2) parents and family; (3) school or community; and, (4) the courts (Sanchez, 2012). This section includes general examples of strategies that can be employed to address absenteeism and truancy, as well as specific examples of interventions being implemented across the country by Communities In Schools site

coordinators and their community and school partners.

A site coordinator is a professional staff member positioned inside a Communities In Schools' partner school. Site coordinators know that students dealing with illness, bullying, or a lack of family support will struggle to come to school. Communities In Schools site coordinators develop whole school and individual student plans to ensure the students in the schools in which they work are connected to the right resources and adults to make sure they are in school every day. Local affiliates work with their local communities and school districts to help review and design policies and initiatives that address absenteeism.

For more information, visit:
www.communitiesinschools.org.

The Student

Many schools offer rewards and prizes, such as gift certificates, pizza parties and recognition assemblies, for regular and consistent or improved attendance. Research appears to be mixed as to whether these incentives or rewards may increase attendance. Some findings have shown that implementing a reward system has a meaningful correlation for reducing chronic absenteeism and increasing attendance rates for elementary students. The suggestion from most is that using rewards and other incentives in combination with other strategies is the most effective approach to improving attendance (Railsback, 2004).

Some additional suggested strategies for working with students to address attendance issues include:

1. Addressing individual student needs; asking the student why they are absent
2. Identifying root causes
3. Developing an individual student attendance plan or contract
4. Creating student support groups
5. Finding out what interests the student and connect to that resource/Developing a personal relationship with the student

6. Being culturally responsive
7. Explaining attendance policies and consequences
8. Conducting home visits and meeting with parents/guardians
9. Connecting students to a mentor (community/business/school/peer-based)
10. Providing tutoring to help with academics/developing an academic improvement plan
11. Referring students to community agencies to address a root cause or presenting problem
12. Offering incentives and prizes for perfect and improved attendance in combination with other strategies
13. Providing needs assessment-based after-school programs
14. Providing opportunities for service learning

Many of these and other strategies are used by Communities In Schools site coordinators to help students improve attendance. The key for most is to begin to understand the root causes for the absences and then try to address those causes. One of the most frequent strategies employed by site coordinators when working with individual students is to conduct home visits. In Miami FL, the site coordinators often go out in teams as soon as they know a student is absent and get them in school that very same day.

Additionally, site coordinators work with individual students to provide coaching/goal setting, phone calls home to students and parents, conferences with individual students and focus groups of students to find out why they are absent.

Site coordinators are also making an effort to help students understand the importance of attendance, the impact on their academic outcomes and how just a few days absent a month can make a difference in their inability to

make up the work they have missed.

Some site coordinators implement a plan to have students check in when they arrive at school and check out when they leave. That personal one-on-one contact may be just be what a child needs to get them to come to school each day.

The site coordinator at Highland Springs Elementary School in Richmond VA, noticed that quite a few students had a tremendous problem with unexcused tardiness, which caused students to miss instructional time but unfortunately often fall through the gap of the school's official attendance policies, since these are not considered full absences. The site coordinator developed an intervention plan in which students simply checked in with the site coordinator in the morning before reporting to class. If they were on time, they received a checkmark; if they were tardy, they had to go straight to class and not receive acknowledgement (no check mark). On Fridays, they would recap their progress together, and the student could receive a small incentive based on how many checkmarks they had accumulated that week.

This simple intervention has shown notable impact. In the first month of intervention, the participants were on time an average of 61% of school days. By the fourth month of intervention, their average had increased to 92%. The Highland Springs site coordinator stated, "this reinforces what CIS has said all along: the key is RELATIONSHIPS." Knowing that even just one person is looking for them to show up at school on time each day can sometimes make all the difference for students struggling with attendance.

Parents and Family

Parent and family engagement is crucial to any comprehensive

approach to addressing issues related to school attendance (Attendance Works, 2014). Attendance works has created a toolkit for parents, *Bringing Attendance Home: Engaging Parents in Preventing Chronic Absence*, which is a good resource when helping to educate parents to understand the importance of attendance and how they can support their child and their school by ensuring their children attend school regularly (Attendance Works, 2014).

Some general strategies for engaging parents in addressing attendance are:

1. Educating families as to why school attendance is important, beginning in kindergarten
2. Educating families as to what the attendance policies are in their district
3. Educating parents on the definition of chronic absenteeism
4. Being culturally sensitive
5. Conducting home visits
6. Reaching out early to find out what is happening to keep student from attending
7. Connecting parents to community resources to address root causes and challenges as appropriate
8. Including/informing parents in attendance and academic plans
9. Recognizing parents when rewarding students for good or improved attendance
10. Helping families to connect with one another to find out how they can support each other (through transportation, or babysitting when family members have to make an appointment)

Many Communities In Schools affiliates are focusing on parents to improve student attendance. This includes providing information to parents on the importance of attending school, either one-on-one through home visits or during

parent meetings. They are also educating parents on local attendance policies and interpreting the data on attendance percentages.

At Denny Middle School in Seattle Washington, The Diplomas Now Team holds a potluck supper once a month that is attended by parents and students. They use this time to not only celebrate those students who have perfect or nearly perfect attendance, but also those students who are struggling but showing improvement. The students who are showing improvement are students who have been identified as chronically absent and are receiving support to address the root causes for their absences. During the event, parents are also provided information on district and state policies related to attendance.

Diplomas Now is a public private partnership that helps some of America's toughest middle and high school ensure that their students graduate ready for college and career. With three major national nonprofits, local school districts and funders, Diplomas Now is the first fully integrated approach that improves school's curriculum and instruction as it provides the right support to the right student at the right time. This support is provided through a national partnership between City Year, Talent Development Secondary at Johns Hopkins University and Communities In Schools.

For more information, please visit: www.diplomasnow.org.

Similarly, at Rogers High School in Tulsa, the site coordinator knows that current research says that if adults commit to their children's education, the children will most likely come to school. At Rogers, CIS and school staff members try to work with the parents, guardians and other adults in the home.

School or Community

Schools should promote regular and consistent attendance through the creation and promotion of whole school strategies (Victoria

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2014). In their resource guide called *Improving School Attendance*, the Virginia Department of Education stated, “[how] students feel about their relationships at school is represented by the concept of ‘school attachment’.

A school’s learning atmosphere or climate and discipline policies have an effect on school attachment among students.” Ensuring that students feel supported by peers, school staff members, or another caring adult will increase a child’s attachment to school. Schools can overcome truancy by fostering school attachment in students (Virginia Department of Education, 2005).

Examples of attendance strategies employed by schools and school districts across the country include:

1. Publicizing and explaining school and district policies on attendance
2. Creating, adopting, and publicizing clear and consistent policies on attendance with consistent consequences
3. Including ALL school staff and students in understanding and promoting school attendance policies and initiatives
4. Developing strategies to increase engagement and personalization with students
5. Creating a caring and safe school environment
6. Finding out how students feel about the school
7. Reviewing data and tracking it to address trends
8. Posting information about attendance in hallways
9. Providing awards and incentives for good and improved attendance
10. Providing needed, wanted, and relevant activities before and after school
11. Greeting students by name as they

- enter the classroom and building
12. Creating opportunities to partner with local merchants to educate them about the importance of school attendance so that they encourage students to get to school and not be in local stores during school hours
13. Getting local businesses to sponsor work sessions, provide incentives, and put up billboards to advertise the importance of regular school attendance
14. Establishing community-based workgroups to review data and provide support to schools and families on the importance of school attendance, thus establishing a community norm for good attendance

Communities In Schools is working closely with the school districts and schools that they serve in order to help inform school policy and shape the school environment. The P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County, a lead partner in education in San Antonio Texas, created a collaborative called SA Kids Attend To Win to communicate the importance of attendance in Pre-K through 12th grade and work with schools and nonprofit organizations to focus on chronic non-attending students.

With the help of Communities in Schools of San Antonio, which provided training and support, school staff reached out to families of chronically absent children by asking them “What are your hopes and dreams for your child?” This was a softer, non-accusatory approach which allowed parents to share barriers. Parents cited three major reasons for the lack of school attendance: **transportation, health, and lack of awareness of the importance of attendance.**

After discussing barriers, Communities In Schools worked in partnership with other organizations

in the San Antonio School district to help implement individual interventions for each family. In other words, the intervention was tailored to address the specific barrier that caused each child to struggle with attendance.¹

During the 2013-14 school year, 21 schools participated in the Diplomas Now/Get Schooled challenge. Led by Communities In Schools site coordinators, each of the schools worked together with their school and the resources provided by Get Schooled to develop creative ways to encourage students to regularly attend school. One of the most important aspects of this challenge is the incorporation of student voices. Each of the schools identified a group voice of at least six student ambassadors. These 6-10 students helped the adult leaders of the challenge plan creative ways to get more students to attend school more regularly. The collaborative efforts of all the ambassadors, students, and school staff positively impacted attendance for the whole school. The student ambassadors held rallies in the school cafeterias, welcomed their fellow students into the buildings, made announcements to encourage regular school attendance, and helped hand out prizes to individual students and homerooms who won daily and weekly challenges conducted by the participating schools.

At Rhodes Middle School in San Antonio TX, the principal decided that some of the ambassadors should be those students who were showing the most absences. When these students came to school, he recruited them to serve as the leaders who would design some of the interventions to get more students to come to school. This attention served as a huge incentive and provided motivation to get those students who had the most absences to attend school on a regular basis.

¹For more information about attendance resources available through P16 in San Antonio, visit: <http://www.p16plus.org/resources/sa-kids-attend-to-win/>

The efforts of the participating schools resulted in a 2.27% increase in attendance rates across all the schools, with a couple of schools seeing increases between 8% and 13%.

The Courts/Legal System

Although truancy and chronic absences should not be treated as a criminal matter, the legal system and juvenile justice system must often get involved in issues of absenteeism. Under civil truancy laws, courts could order children and their parents to comply with the state's compulsory school attendance laws (Turner, 2002). According to ehow.com, which has an extensive page on truancy court, "[any] student who breaches the attendance conditions outlined by each particular state is considered truant, and severe cases may be referred to a judge to assess the problem in truancy court. States differ in the methods they employ to enforce truancy laws, but it is usually a matter for the school board, with truancy court being a measure of last resort." In 1944, the Supreme Court ruled that each state had authority to overrule parents requiring children to attend school whether the parents supported education or not. This was in direct relationship to the child labor laws (Nicholas, 2014).

The courts can support school attendance by:

1. Holding truancy court in the schools and including parent and student education as part of the process
2. Working with law enforcement to bring students back to school and not detention centers
3. Creating day time curfews, so the community helps to ensure students are in school

One school district served by Communities In Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), has been very proactive in moving away from a punitive/legal approach

to behavior as well as attendance. For example, ticketing students for truancy has gone down dramatically. LAUSD also recently passed the *School Climate Bill of Rights* that essentially prohibits police officers from being involved in any non-violent situations, such as with students skipping school or being truant. The Site Coordinators in Los Angeles are supporting each of their schools by implementing restorative practices to ensure that students are not being pushed out of school, in particular, for attendance-related issues.

At Aki Kurose Middle School in Seattle Washington, the Diplomas Now team, which includes the Communities In Schools site coordinator, conducts home visits, parent meetings and court mandates for students once they return to school after engagement with the juvenile justice system. Until the 2013-14 school year, the team conducted all of the court-related student follow-up, but currently they work in partnership with a school truancy officer.

Restorative practices, which evolved from restorative justice, is a field of study that has the potential to positively influence human behavior and strengthen civil society around the world.

The fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them (Wachtel, 2013).

Attendance Interventions Used at Denny Middle School in Seattle, Washington:

Attendance Funnel

The purpose of the attendance funnel is get kids excited about starting their school day and connecting with students who come in tardy. The funnel is really the tunnel kids go through as they start their day at Denny. The funnel consists, but is not limited to, the following:

- City Year (CY) Power Greeting,
- Music at the door entrance
- For students entering after the tardy bell, the school will check in through our tardy intervention tables for a quick check-in and adult walking them to class. During the walk to class, adults connect with the student and help them come up with a plan to get to school on time. If students continue to come to school late, they will continue to receive more intensive intervention during lunch and after school.

Attendance Cup

The purpose of the attendance cup is to raise the morale of the student population and create an atmosphere of healthy competition to incentivize good attendance.

Weekly attendance averages are taken for each grade. These averages are then displayed on a board, each grade being represented by a dolphin and placed higher or lower on the board depending on their average attendance for the week. The board ends up being a bar graph of sorts showing where all of the grades lie. The grade with the highest weekly average is the winner for that week. They are represented on the board by a small ribbon being placed by their dolphin.

Swim Strong Attendance Program

The school-wide goal for attendance is 95% average daily attendance (ADA). The students selected for this program have between 90-93% ADA. Swim Strong lunchtime meetings will be held once a month at each grade level lunch. During these meetings, all the students in Swim Strong will gather together with CY Corps Members and school staff to have conversations about attendance, to build community, and to celebrate gains they have made in attendance for the month. Between these meetings, CY Corps Members will have each met with four students, setting weekly goals for the students' attendance.

Attendance Gladiators

The goal with Attendance Gladiators is to increase the attendance of students on CIS, CY, and Bridgestart (a community partner) case loads. Every person in CY, CIS, and Bridge Start has an attendance focus list that becomes their team of gladiators. The object of the competition is to see who can get their gladiators to have the highest ADA over the course of two weeks. The competition is conducted twice in a row in order to give students a second chance to apply what they have been learning through the attendance coaching they receive. The winning prize is a whole team private pizza party. Additionally, the team leader gets to have all the bragging rights and glory.

Conclusion

The month of September is National Attendance Awareness Month. The initiative, which was spearheaded by Attendance Works, started off the new school year to mobilize schools and communities not only to promote the value of good attendance but also to take concrete steps toward reducing chronic absence.

In many schools across the country served by Communities In Schools, the site coordinators have developed attendance plans which include goals to address attendance for the first 5, 10, 15 and 20 days of school. Included in these plans are steps to identify those students who are chronically absent. Site coordinators will work with their schools to create opportunities to educate parents and students about why it is important to come to school. They will review and use data to identify and reward good attendance and become immediately aware of those students who are sliding off track. They will look for trends and root causes. They will deliver whole school prevention and individual student interventions. Site coordinators, along with their local affiliates, will become familiar with local school, community, district and statewide policies around attendance.

Communities In Schools will continue to work with organizations like Attendance Works to stay abreast and apply current research and interventions around chronic absenteeism. Attendance awareness will not end in September. It's not enough to get students to school – they need to have the support to stay in school and be engaged in learning (National Center for School Engagement). Through the implementation of the Communities In Schools model of integrated student supports, site coordinators, in partnership with schools and other partners, will ensure students at all grade levels are in school every day with the academic and social emotional support they need to be ready to learn and move toward high school graduation.

Other Resources:

1. The State of America's Children 2014 from Children's Defense Fund

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/state-of-americas-children/>

Children who live in poverty are far more likely to be absent from school. This report highlights the fact that child poverty has reached record levels, and children of color are disproportionately poor. The report provides key data showing that alarming numbers of children are at risk. Of particular note is the section "Each Day in America".

2. How to Get Kids to Class: To Keep Poor Students in School, Provide Social Services

By Daniel J. Cardinali

AUG. 25, 2014: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/26/opinion/to-keep-poor-kids-in-school-provide-social-services.html>

Daniel J. Cardinali, President of Communities In Schools, in an OP ED piece in the New York Times proposed a solution to ensuring that children of poverty are provided the right supports so they can access the same opportunities that their more affluent classmates have and eliminate the negative impact of poverty on attendance and school success. Cardinali suggests that dedicated social-service specialists be put in every low-performing, high-poverty school.

3. Check and Connect: <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/>

Check & Connect is an intervention used with K-12 students who shows warning signs of disengagement with school and who are at risk of dropping out. A key element of the Check & Connect process is the establishment of a trusting relationship between the student and a caring, trained mentor who both advocates for and challenges the student to prioritize their education. Students are referred to Check & Connect when they show warning signs of disengaging from school, such as poor attendance, behavioral issues, and/or low grades. One of the demonstrated outcomes of Check & Connect is increased attendance of the identified students. The Check & Connect website contains several online resources that could be useful in addressing parent engagement and attendance interventions.

4. Get Schooled: <https://getschooled.com/dashboard>

According to their website, "Get Schooled is a national non-profit founded on the belief that students themselves have the power to improve their future if given the right information and motivation. We leverage the key influences in teens' lives to directly motivate them to stay committed to graduating from high school and going on to college" (Get Schooled, 2014).

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