

# IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

An action planning workbook to address chronic absenteeism and the needs of students and families through multi-tiered systems of support

The logo for Louisiana State University, consisting of the letters 'LSU' in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.

---

**Social Research &  
Evaluation Center**

**The Social Research & Evaluation Center**

College of Human Sciences and Education  
Louisiana State University



## **AUTHORS**

Gwendolyn Murray, PhD

Rochelle Picardo, M.A.

Jada Thomas-Smith, MPA, MSW

Judith Rhodes, PhD, LMSW

**The Social Research and Evaluation Center advances social initiatives to improve the lives of individuals, families, and their communities through our research, evaluation, professional services, and partnerships.**

Funding for this project was provided through the Louisiana Department of Education.

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU), as a land, sea, and space-grant institution, built on lands of Indigenous people acknowledges, honor, and affirm Indigenous culture, history, and experiences.

At the heart of LSU's campus are two earthen mounds - LSU Campus Mounds - architectural remnants created by Native Americans. By preserving these mounds, LSU pays respect to the past, and recognizes the First Peoples. As a University, we thank them for their strength and resilience as stewards of this land and are committed to creating and maintaining a living and learning environment that embraces individual difference, including the Indigenous peoples of our region.

## **RECOMMENDED CITATION**

Murray, G., Picardo, R., Thomas-Smith, J., and Rhodes, J. (2022). *Improving Student Attendance: An action planning workbook to address chronic absenteeism and the needs of students and families through multi-tiered systems of support*. Social Research and Evaluation Center at the Louisiana State University College of Human Sciences and Education.



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

An action planning workbook to address chronic absenteeism and the needs of students and families through multi-tiered systems of support

### DIRECTIONS

1. Read "Designing & Implementing an Effective Plan to Improve Student Attendance" (pages 2-3)
2. Complete the exercises
  - a. Section 1: Building the Team & Defining the Need (pages 3-7)
  - b. Section 2: Fostering Community & Nurturing Collaboration (pages 8-12)
  - c. Section 3: Developing & Monitoring Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (pages 13-17)
3. Complete the Action Plan (pages 18-23)
4. Share the Action Plan

### LOUISIANA ATTENDANCE ALLIANCE BIG GOAL

**TO CHANGE THE THINKING** around attendance by understanding barriers and critically examining how to better support students and families **SO THAT FAMILIES RECEIVE SUPPORT** to keep their students at school, and **STUDENT NEEDS ARE ADDRESSED** so they can learn.

### ATTENDANCE MTSS FRAMEWORK GOAL

**To encourage the use of resources and data** that support good student attendance practices, and to adopt a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) **that will ensure every student's needs are met** to improve attendance and address underlying issues that cause chronic absence (excused, unexcused, and suspensions).



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# DESIGNING & IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE

**Path to improvement.** Carefully read through the objectives, questions, and suggested activities in the table below. What objectives have you already accomplished? Which activities require the most urgent attention?

PATH TO IMPROVEMENT	SECTION 1: BUILD THE TEAM & DEFINE THE NEED	SECTION 2: FOSTER COMMUNITY, NURTURE COLLABORATION	SECTION 3: DEVELOP AND MONITOR MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <p><i>Critical components of the path to improving student attendance</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish roles and responsibilities through an Attendance Leadership Team</li> <li>To unite the Attendance Leadership Team around a shared Why, Vision, and common Values</li> <li>To review necessary data to establish a baseline</li> <li>To understand root causes of chronic absenteeism at your school/district</li> <li>To assess current attendance intervention system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish positive attendance culture</li> <li>To systemically recognize and reinforce positive attendance behaviors</li> <li>To communicate to all stakeholders the importance of attendance</li> <li>To improve communication between home and school</li> <li>To norm attendance expectations classroom to classroom, school to school</li> <li>To support family involvement</li> <li>To support needs and strengthen community partnerships through asset mapping and gap analysis</li> <li>To collaborate with families to address needs (barriers, aversions, disengagement) that make it hard for students to be at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To put in place strategies and interventions that make students excited to be at school</li> <li>To intervene early based on patterns of attendance behavior</li> <li>To monitor the efficacy of tiered interventions and to adjust systems accordingly</li> <li>To ensure the timeliness of intervention</li> <li>To engage preventative strategies first and rely on punitive measures as a last resort</li> <li>To engage a case management structure for students who have established a pattern of chronic absenteeism</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <p><i>Considerations to frame action planning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we prevent and intervene in chronic absenteeism?</li> <li>Who is responsible for leading the change in attendance culture?</li> <li>How can we systematize our approach to attendance?</li> <li>What are the root causes of students' absences at our school or in our district?</li> <li>What are our needs as a district to be able to promote and sustain positive attendance culture?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What makes attendance culture positive?</li> <li>How do we reward students and families for meeting or exceeding positive attendance habits?</li> <li>How can we improve and monitor communication systems to be two-directional, proactive, and collaborative?</li> <li>Who are our stakeholders and what do they bring to the table?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why aren't students at school and how do we get them back?</li> <li>What is our menu of interventions and is it SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound)?</li> <li>Who provides interventions?</li> <li>Who ensures that interventions have taken place?</li> </ul>



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

<p><b>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p><i>Resources to plan and implement change</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Form</b> your dream Attendance Leadership Team</li> <li>2. <b>Find</b> your why, vision, values</li> <li>3. <b>Analyze</b> your data</li> <li>4. <b>Unpack</b> needs</li> <li>5. <b>Assess</b> current interventions</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Communicate</b> the importance of attendance</li> <li>2. <b>Partner</b> with the community</li> <li>3. <b>Engage</b> families</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Develop</b> pattern response protocol</li> <li>2. <b>Develop</b> tracking system</li> <li>3. <b>Develop</b> MTSS framework             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Identify:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tier 1 school-wide / universal strategies (<b>Prevention</b>)</li> <li>• Tier 2 strategies (<b>Early Intervention</b>)</li> <li>• Tier 3 strategies (<b>Chronic Absenteeism</b>)</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>
---	--	---	---

## SECTION 1: BUILD THE TEAM, CREATE THE SYSTEM

### 1. Form your dream Attendance Leadership Team

**Attendance Leadership Team.** Before you can build systems to prevent and respond to absenteeism, you must form a team. This team can include diverse stakeholders but should include at least one district or school-level administrator, a social worker or counselor, and data manager or other person who has access to student data. It is also recommended to add a family member, and possibly a student to the team. This team is responsible for:

- (1) developing MTSS systems and strategy,
- (2) collecting and analyzing different types of data (attendance rates, observation, etc.) to determine needs and respond to attendance patterns,
- (3) training staff on providing interventions,
- (4) monitoring interventions,
- (5) connecting families with resources to meet their needs, and
- (6) developing resources and/or additional interventions if needed.

<p><b>Local Leadership</b> Who leads attendance initiatives at your school or district? Who is your CWA?</p>	
<p><b>Attendance Improvement Team</b> Who should be on the team to ensure that delegated tasks are completed, and systems sustained?</p>	



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### 2. (re)Find your WHY

Purpose & Alignment	Success Criteria	Your Answers
<p><b>Compelling Why</b> A Compelling Why precedes attendance improvement planning aligning all systems, messaging, and interventions. This is like a mission statement.</p>	<p><b>A Compelling Why</b> is a unique, emotionally charged message to drive change within school buildings and communities in a way that promotes collaboration and compromise and drives action and purpose <b>FORMULA</b> → <b>TO ___ SO THAT ___</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Attendance Vision Statement</b> What do you want to achieve in the long run?</p>	<p><b>A vision statement should be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succinct &amp; Clear</li> <li>• Motivating &amp; Memorable</li> <li>• Achievement-driven</li> <li>• Future Focused</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Value Statements</b> What are the principles and beliefs that you will rely on to ensure that you are on track to achieve your goals?</p>	<p><b>Value statements should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Express</b> district/school's core beliefs</li> <li>• <b>Cultivate</b> culture and guide behavior</li> <li>• <b>Drive</b> action and decision-making</li> </ul>	

### 3. Analyze your data

**Data Analysis.** Before you can design systems and define interventions, you need to analyze attendance data to identify patterns. The following are recommended steps to begin the analysis. A detailed protocol for ongoing data analysis can be found in section 3.2 on page 14.

Step	Data Sources	Your Data
<p><b>1. Look at Annual Rates</b> What were your attendance rates for the previous school year? How does this compare to the previous year? What about pre-COVID? What about by grade level grouping?</p>	<p>1. Your school/district student content management system (JCampus; eScholar; PowerSchool; SchoolRunner, etc.)</p>	
<p><b>2. Look at Vulnerable Groups, Students</b> De-aggregate your data to identify student groups who need more targeted interventions. Use these data to identify individual students or families who have been at high risk over time.</p>	<p>1. Your school/district student content management system 2. LDOE Data Center, School &amp; School System Attributes, <b>2021-2022 Chronic Absenteeism Report Overall &amp; by Subgroup</b></p>	



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

<p><b>3. Compare Rates</b> Look up attendance rates for other schools in your district, your district, neighboring districts, and the state.</p>	<p>1. LDOE Data Center, School &amp; School System Attributes (The annual reports show state rates, and by district and site)</p>	
--	---	--

### 4. Unpack needs

**Sample Needs Assessment.** The following is a basic assessment to understand needs, strengths, and challenges related to school attendance in the districts and schools that you serve. You can use this assessment or amend to collect more relevant data for your school or district.

1. Name & Role
2. In your words describe hurdle(s) that your district(s) face to get kids to and keep them at school?
3. Which of the following factors are most impactful on student attendance? Think pre- and post-pandemic. Check the TOP 5.
  - a. Lack of basic necessities
  - b. Illness
  - c. Family responsibilities
  - d. Housing instability
  - e. Involvement with Juvenile Justice System
  - f. Poor transportation
  - g. Behavioral health
  - h. Avoidance of bullying
  - i. Avoidance of difficult subject matter
  - j. Avoidance of unsafe conditions
  - k. Avoidance of embarrassment
  - l. Do not see the value in attending school
  - m. There are no barriers to skipping school
  - n. Would rather do something else besides attend school
  - o. Other:
4. How would you rate family response to outreach attempts?
  - a. 0: Families are always unresponsive to contact / attempts to get students back at school are ineffective.
  - b. 1: Families sometimes respond, but we are often not kept in the loop about phone and address changes. Some students return to school, but outreach impact is unclear.
  - c. 2: Families often respond. Some students return to school. Outreach success is inconsistent - some tactics work sometimes but not always.
  - d. 3: Families mostly respond and come in person to solve attendance issues. Students return to school. We collect data from families about outreach.
  - e. Other:
5. Which is currently the most effective method of communication to relay critical information to families?
  - a. Email
  - b. Phone
  - c. Text
  - d. Newsletter
  - e. Mail
  - f. Other:





## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

6. Select attendance interventions that you currently use. Select all that apply.
  - a. Attendance conference or home visit
  - b. Weekly newsletter
  - c. Open houses or family nights
  - d. PTO
  - e. Robocalls / attendance calls
  - f. Notification letters
  - g. Daily check-in with student
  - h. Warning letters
  - i. Truancy referral
  - j. Classroom-based interventions
  - k. Attendance incentives
  - l. Community-building
  - m. Other:
7. Which of your current interventions are most successful and why?
8. Which of your current interventions are least successful and why?
9. Does your district rely more on positive or punitive attendance intervention?
  - a. Positive
  - b. Punitive
  - c. Both equally
10. Your district's biggest strength to support effective attendance practices is...
11. Your districts biggest challenge to support effective attendance practices is...



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### 5. Assess current interventions & structures

	<b>SYSTEMS: DATA &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<b>INTERVENTIONS</b>
<b>CONSIDER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Data collection (frequency, consistency)</li> <li>Attendance rates overall, by subgroup</li> <li>Attendance recording, reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequency of communication with families</li> <li>Methods of communication</li> <li>Family involvement</li> <li>Community partners</li> <li>Services in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on preventative strategies</li> <li>Positive school climate</li> <li>Punitive strategies as last resort</li> <li>Continuum of interventions (responsive, data-driven, tiered)</li> <li>Effectiveness of interventions</li> <li>Qualified staff provide interventions</li> <li>Classroom teachers know how to provide interventions</li> <li>Systems for tracking interventions exist and are efficient</li> </ul>
<b>STRENGTHS</b> <i>Where does your school excel?</i>			
<b>CHALLENGES</b> <i>Where does your school fall short?</i>			



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# SECTION 2: FOSTER COMMUNITY, NURTURE COLLABORATION

### 1. Partner with the community

#### GAP ANALYSIS

Use this document when analyzing and organizing needs assessment data. Highlighting and addressing current needs / resource gaps supports the manageability of plan implementation.

1. Identified Need	2. Need Met by Existing School- or Community-Based Resources? (Y/N)	3. Priority (Low, Medium, High)	4. Available or Potential Resources	5. Plan to Address Need



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### EXTERNAL RESOURCE MAPPING

Take the needs identified in your gap analysis (the “No” items in column 2) and use this document to expand upon potential resources in your community (identified in column 4).

<b>Area of Need</b>	<b>Agency, Institution, Individual or Other Resources that can Support</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Team Member who will Facilitate Relationship</b>



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### 2. Engage families

This Epstein’s Framework for Six Types of Parent Involvement, developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University, defines different ways in which families are involved with schools. Each of the following types of involvement is bidirectional between the school and the home; that is, each type is a partnership that is co-developed by educators and families working together. Each type is important for family-school relationships.

EPSTEIN TYPE	EXPLANATION	FAMILY ACTIONS	ALIGNED SCHOOL SUPPORTS
<b>Parenting</b>	Family practices and home environments that support children as students.  Schools that understand the families of their students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing nutritious meals</li> <li>• Scaffolding daily routines (e.g., providing bedtimes, helping with self-care)</li> <li>• Establishing academic expectations for children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family education on relevant topics (e.g., how to support attendance)</li> <li>• Family support programs to assist with nutrition, health, and other services related to barriers to attendance</li> <li>• Home visits at transition points in schooling</li> </ul>
<b>Communicating</b>	The ways in which families communicate with schools about their children’s school programs and progress.  Effective systems for school-home communication promote this type of involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending caregiver-teacher conferences</li> <li>• Texting/ calling teachers</li> <li>• Checking in with teachers during drop-off or pick-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification about conferences/open houses well in advance, and accommodate difficult work schedules</li> <li>• Language translation services as needed</li> <li>• Establishing regular communication</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteering</b>	The ways in which families directly support initiatives/ events in the classroom/school.  Schools recruit and organize this support and consider families to be an audience for student activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaperoning a field trip</li> <li>• Volunteering at school events</li> <li>• Serving as classroom volunteer / representative</li> <li>• Serving as liaison</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating opportunities for caregivers to volunteer</li> <li>• Surveying caregivers for their availability, expertise, and talents</li> <li>• Providing a resource room for caregiver volunteers to meet and work on projects</li> </ul>
<b>Learning at Home</b>	The ways in which families help their children learn at home through activities related to school curriculum.  Schools provide information and ideas about how families can best support learning at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping with homework</li> <li>• Collaborating on education placement</li> <li>• Helping with deadline management/planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing information on how to monitor and encourage homework completion</li> <li>• Providing information about skills needed for each subject at each grade</li> </ul>
<b>Decision-Making</b>	The ways in which families take leadership in schools and are involved in school-based decisions.  Schools include families in decisions and support the development of caregivers as school leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being active on PTA/ PTO or other family organizations</li> <li>• Being involved with district-level advisory committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing opportunities for families to be involved in school decision-making</li> <li>• Making caregivers feel like valued stakeholders in what happens at school</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborating with the Community</b>	When community services, resources and partners are integrated into schools to strengthen their programs, families, and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using professional or personal networks to help schools establish community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing information about community programs or services (e.g., cultural, recreational, health-related)</li> <li>• Providing information about community activities related to learning skills or talents</li> </ul>



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Use this table to **reflect on Epstein types of involvement at your school**. How might supporting different types of family involvement have an impact on school attendance for students?

<b>EPSTEIN TYPE</b>	<b>HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOL ALREADY SUPPORT THIS TYPE?</b>	<b>WHAT COULD YOUR SCHOOL DO BETTER TO SUPPORT THIS TYPE?</b>	<b>HOW WOULD SUPPORTING THIS TYPE PROMOTE ATTENDANCE AT YOUR SCHOOL?</b>
<b>Parenting</b>			
<b>Communicating</b>			
<b>Volunteering</b>			
<b>Learning at Home</b>			
<b>Decision-Making</b>			
<b>Collaborating with the Community</b>			



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

**Family engagement action plan.** From your reflection on Epstein Types, choose one area you think would be most impactful for supporting family engagement (and consequently, attendance). Then, use the table below to create a specific plan for increasing family engagement.

<b>WHAT (Strategy, Intervention)</b> <i>How will you address the concern you identified?</i>	
<b>WHO (Personnel)</b> <i>Who will own the process from planning through implementation?</i>	
<b>WHEN (Calendaring)</b> <i>What is the timeline to implement new strategies?</i>	
<b>HOW (Systems, Supplies)</b> <i>What supplies, resources, people do you need to make new strategies happen?</i>	
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b> <i>Who will hold the project owner accountable?</i>	



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# SECTION 3: DEVELOP AND MONITOR MTSS

### 1. Develop pattern response protocol

Use the template below to plan how you will respond to student absences. You should determine whether you would like to plan for 9-weeks, semester, or annually. Attendance Works defines chronic absence as missing 15 or more days of school for any reason—meaning an excused or unexcused absence. You should consider whether your protocol will include all absence types. LDOE MTSS guidance indicates that students missing 10 or more days require intensive support.

<b>Attendance #</b>	<b>Actions / Interventions</b> What is the preventative action/intervention? What is the punitive action or intervention?	<b>Owner / Participants</b> Who is the primary person in charge of ensuring the action occurs? Who supports?	<b>Timeframe</b> When does this need to happen? Who is responsible for holding action owner(s) accountable?	<b>Paperwork / Logging</b> How will you monitor the intervention or action? Where will you record it? Where will you track data?
<b>3 Absences</b>				
<b>5 Absences</b>				
<b>7 Absences</b>				
<b>10 Absences</b>				





## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### 2. Develop tracking system

**Data systems.** Data systems are essential to the success of identifying concerning attendance patterns and responding with appropriate interventions. A successful data system does not hinge solely on data collection, rather it should also address data analysis and response protocol (like the example above). The following may be useful to you as you determine procedures for collecting and analyzing data.

#### BEST PRACTICES

- **Data collection.** Teachers need to know when and how to record attendance. One point person needs to monitor teacher behavior to encourage and correct practices as needed.
- **Ownership.** There must be clear managers for every action, i.e., ensuring that homeroom teachers have entered data, tracking interventions, completing letters home, etc. Is there a designated individual who will support teachers with universal strategies or other attendance interventions? Consider designating an Attendance Advocate from the attendance leadership team.
- **Analysis.** Pre-determine when data will be analyzed. Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? Can you look at historic data to anticipate where support will continue to be needed?
- **Understand the need.** Once you have identified students who may need interventions, take steps to understand the root causes preventing good attendance habits. (See the table: Barriers, Aversions, Disengagement)
- **Consider the policies.** Are policies clear to families and students? Does the data indicate the need to clarify types of absence? Are suspensions considered excused or unexcused in your attendance counts? What about early check-outs? When is check-out considered “early?” How do tardy policies impact attendance?

#### SUGGESTED STEPS FOR DATA AT EACH TIER

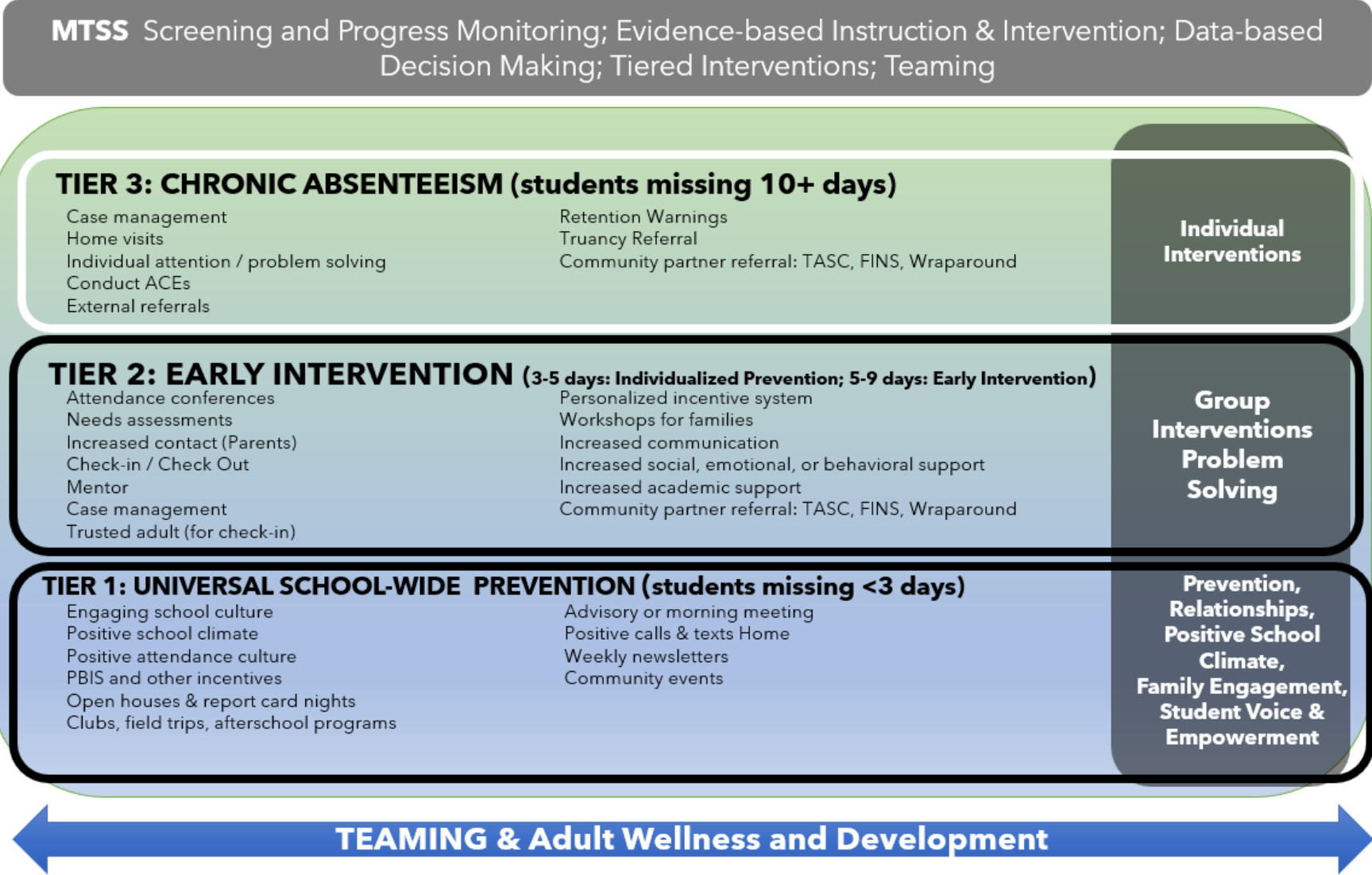
<b>TIER 1: SCHOOLWIDE PREVENTION</b> (Students missing less than 3 days)	<b>TIER 2: INTERVENTION &amp; SUPPORT</b> (Students missing 3-5 days, Individualized Prevention; 5-9 days: Early Intervention)	<b>TIER 3: CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM</b> (Students missing 10+ days)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clear ownership &amp; leadership.</b> Create your Attendance Leadership Team (Section 1.1).</li> <li>• <b>Routinize data analysis.</b> Establish when data will be reviewed and who will review it.</li> <li>• <b>Strategic plan.</b> Develop a schoolwide plan (this document) to improve attendance leaning on preventative and positive supports. In the plan, we also address student needs and strengths and challenges to implementing interventions with fidelity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased monitoring.</b> Establish frequency to review data for students who are chronically absent or at risk of chronic absence.</li> <li>• <b>Analyze data for patterns.</b> Are there persistent needs keeping students from school (health challenges; ongoing housing instability, etc.).</li> <li>• <b>Determine appropriate interventions.</b> Based on data and student need, determine interventions, who will provide them, and how they will be monitored (i.e., start date, stop data, efficacy, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Determine the need for more intense intervention.</b> If data show that students are not responding to Tier 2 interventions, what steps are needed to move them to Tier 3?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Determine eligibility.</b> Identify students missing 10+ days and determine if they are chronically absent or at risk based on barriers, strengths, disengagement.</li> <li>• <b>Review daily.</b> Consider a case management approach to students with Tier 3 interventions. The ability to measure the efficacy of the intervention and to make next steps is contingent on close and accurate monitoring.</li> <li>• <b>Acknowledge improvement.</b> Send positive encouragement to families. Incentivize students.</li> </ul>



# IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

## 3. Develop MTSS menu

**Intervention review.** Looking at the MTSS framework below, take stock of the evidence-based interventions that you currently use. Have they been effective? What interventions do you want to add to your school or districts system of support?



© 2022 LSU, Social Research & Evaluation Center



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### 4. Defining strategies and interventions at each tier Example strategies & interventions - not an exhaustive list. See Appendix C, D.

Intervention or Strategy	Tier	What & How
<b>Positive school climate</b>	Schoolwide / Universal TIER 1	<b>Schools that are trauma-informed and promote safety, connectedness, and resilience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Rigorous, Tier 1 curriculum; differentiated for diverse learners as needed</li> <li>o Normed expectations for attendance, behavior, course performance</li> <li>o Culturally competent instruction that connects learning to lived experience</li> <li>o Variety of clubs, field trips, extracurriculars</li> <li>o Restorative approaches to challenging behavior</li> </ul>
<b>PBIS</b>	Schoolwide / Universal TIER 1	<b>Systems that identify and reward attendance excellence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Points are rewarded for normed behaviors</li> <li>o Focus on acknowledging excellence and not deducting poor attendance habits</li> <li>o Attendance Leadership Team monitors points and coach teachers accordingly</li> <li>o Rewards follow a clear and predictable calendar (i.e., end of semester or weekly events)</li> <li>o Menu or rewards or reinforcers (if the rewards are not stuff students will work for, they will be ineffective)</li> </ul>
<b>Advisory or morning meeting routine</b>	Schoolwide / Universal TIER 1	<b>Routines that ground students, create community, promote reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Occur consistently, i.e., Mood Meter Mondays, daily morning meeting, etc.</li> <li>o Discuss nonacademic topics → affirm student excellence and belonging</li> <li>o Offer safe spaces to express emotions or perspectives</li> <li>o Are rooted in acknowledgement and gratitude</li> </ul>
<b>Positive communication</b>	Schoolwide / Universal TIER 1	<b>Proactive bidirectional communication between school and home</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Utilizes a variety of communication methods</li> <li>o Translates communication as necessary</li> <li>o Feedback to families is more positive than corrective (i.e., calling out student excellence over misbehavior)</li> <li>o Notifies families of community events, school-based events, and other opportunities to build community</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance action plans</b>	Early Intervention TIER 2	<b>Collaborative individualized improvement plans between school, student, and family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Age-appropriate improvement plan that creates a reasonable goal and examines barriers, aversions, and disengagement factors</li> <li>o Contract between school, student, home</li> </ul>
<b>Check-in / Check-out</b>	Early Intervention TIER 2	<b>Routines that ground students, create community, promote reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Individual tracker to monitor attendance</li> <li>o Short-term benchmarks that supplement schoolwide attendance goals</li> <li>o Short-term rewards separate from PBIS</li> <li>o Consistent adult managing the intervention</li> </ul>
<b>Home visits</b>	Chronic Absenteeism TIER 3	<b>Off-campus trips to the homes of chronically absent students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No one goes alone → Avoids homes with known unsafe factors</li> <li>o Pre-planned objectives and talking points</li> <li>o Referral to school mental health professional</li> </ul>
<b>Case management</b>	Chronic Absenteeism TIER 3	<b>Targeted activities to support individual students and their needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Student wake up calls</li> <li>o Short-term incentives</li> <li>o Student participation in identifying trusted adults</li> <li>o Make-up work plans</li> <li>o Credit recovery plans</li> <li>o Referral to school mental health professional</li> </ul>



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### 5. Our strategies & interventions

**Intervention and strategy menu.** Provide the interventions and/or strategies that you will utilize at each tier. To select your interventions, you may utilize the MTSS framework or the intervention table above, but feel free to identify other evidence-based practices.

<b>TIER</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b> (Who will do the intervention)	<b>Monitoring</b> (Who will measure the intervention)
<b>Schoolwide / Universal TIER 1</b>			
<b>Early Intervention TIER 2</b>			
<b>Chronic Absenteeism TIER 3</b>			



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# ACTION PLAN

<b>School / District Name</b>	
<b>Attendance Leadership Team Members</b>	

Create an action plan based on the exercises you completed for the three sections on the path to improvement.

## DOMAIN 1: BUILD THE TEAM & DEFINE THE NEED

<p><b>SMART Goal</b> (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound)</p> <p>What will you do to build your team and create a sustainable system to improve student attendance?</p>	
<p><b>Supporting Data</b></p> <p>What data supports the prioritization of this goal?</p>	
<p><b>Needs</b></p> <p>What do you need to achieve this goal (personnel, time, software, professional development, technical assistance, etc.)?</p>	
<p><b>Anticipated Barriers</b></p> <p>What factors may get in the way of achieving this goal?</p>	
<p><b>Measuring Success</b></p> <p>How will you know when your goal has been achieved (data point, trend, observable behavior, etc.)</p>	



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### BUILD THE TEAM & DEFINE THE NEED

ACTION STEP	WHO	WHEN	PROOF POINT / DATA



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# DOMAIN 2: FOSTER COMMUNITY, NURTURE COLLABORATION

<p><b>SMART Goal</b> (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound)</p> <p>What will you do to build your team and create a sustainable system to improve student attendance?</p>	
<p><b>Supporting Data</b></p> <p>What data supports the prioritization of this goal?</p>	
<p><b>Needs</b></p> <p>What do you need to achieve this goal (personnel, time, software, professional development, technical assistance, etc.)?</p>	
<p><b>Anticipated Barriers</b></p> <p>What factors may get in the way of achieving this goal?</p>	
<p><b>Measuring Success</b></p> <p>How will you know when your goal has been achieved (data point, trend, observable behavior, etc.)</p>	



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# FOSTER COMMUNITY, NURTURE COLLABORATION

ACTION STEP	WHO	WHEN	PROOF POINT / DATA





## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# DOMAIN 3: DEVELOP AND MONITOR MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

<p><b>SMART Goal</b> (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound)</p> <p>What will you do to build your team and create a sustainable system to improve student attendance?</p>	
<p><b>Supporting Data</b></p> <p>What data supports the prioritization of this goal?</p>	
<p><b>Needs</b></p> <p>What do you need to achieve this goal (personnel, time, software, professional development, technical assistance, etc.)?</p>	
<p><b>Anticipated Barriers</b></p> <p>What factors may get in the way of achieving this goal?</p>	
<p><b>Measuring Success</b></p> <p>How will you know when your goal has been achieved (data point, trend, observable behavior, etc.)</p>	



### IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE


## DEVELOP AND MONITOR MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

ACTION STEP	WHO	WHEN	PROOF POINT / DATA



**IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

**APPENDIX A: Risk Factors for Chronic Absenteeism**

<b>BARRIERS</b>	<b>AVERSION</b>	<b>DISENGAGEMENT</b>
<b>Students <u>CANNOT</u> attend school for these reasons</b>	<b>Students <u>WILL NOT</u> attend schools as an avoidance strategy</b>	<b>Students <u>DO NOT</u> attend school due to disinterest, lack of connection, or parent mindset</b>
<p><b>Illness / Chronic Disease</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical</li> <li>behavioral</li> </ul> <p><b>Family Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>childcare/caring for siblings or other family members</li> <li>difficulty supporting learning)</li> <li>Parent incarcerated</li> </ul> <p><b>Unmet Basic Needs (Maslow's)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>housing instability</li> <li>poor transportation</li> <li>no safe path to school</li> <li>natural disasters/ property loss</li> </ul> <p><b>Involvement with Juvenile Justice System</b></p> 	<p><b>Academic Struggles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoidance of challenging work (**student may be academically behind)</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Struggles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoidance of embarrassment</li> <li>fear of stigma or being teased</li> <li>language barriers</li> </ul> <p><b>Mental Health Struggles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PTSD</li> <li>acute anxiety</li> <li>depressive or manic episode</li> <li>trauma</li> </ul> <p><b>School Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoidance of bullying</li> <li>avoidance of unsafe conditions</li> </ul> <p><b>Parent Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fear of COVID</li> <li>parents' poor experiences with school</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lack in Cultural Competence (Academic)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>irrelevant curriculum</li> <li>unengaging curriculum</li> </ul> <p><b>Poor Relationships and Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no trusted adults</li> <li>lack a sense of safety, belonging, and support in school</li> <li>poor peer relationships</li> </ul> <p><b>Discipline Patterns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>school discipline rates</li> <li>frequent discipline referrals</li> <li>personal experience with suspension</li> </ul> <p><b>Questioning Value of Attending School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no perceived consequences for skipping</li> <li>peer pressure to skip</li> <li>interest in entering workforce/trade</li> </ul> <p><b>Student is Overage</b></p> <p>© 2022 LSU, Social Research &amp; Evaluation Center</p>

Inspired by Attendance Works



**IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

**APPENDIX B: Strategies to Tackle Disengagement**

CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY	STRATEGIES	INTERVENTIONS
<p>Unresponsive Parents/Caregivers</p> <p>Negative Parental Mindsets</p>	<p><b>Build relationships and community through affinity groups, skill-building, face-to-face contact.</b></p>	<p><b>TIER 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create Positive School Climate</li> <li>2. Positive Attendance Culture</li> <li>3. Activities &amp; Events</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge-Building</li> <li>2. Needs Assessment</li> <li>3. Increased Contact</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Needs Assessment: Agency Involvement</li> <li>2. Courts (last resort)</li> </ol>	<p><b>TIER 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open Houses &amp; Report Card Nights (Quarterly)</li> <li>2. Weekly Newsletter</li> <li>3. Positive Calls &amp; Texts</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance Conference → Develop Attendance Improvement Plan</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Case Management</li> <li>2. Truancy Referral</li> </ol>
<p>Student Disinterest</p>	<p><b>Make school a place where students want to be through school-based supports &amp; cultural competence</b></p>	<p><b>TIER 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer Clubs, Field Trips, Afterschool Programming</li> <li>2. Beginning of Year Screening</li> <li>3. Connect with Students in/out of School</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess Student Academic Needs</li> <li>2. Develop Catch-Up Plan</li> <li>3. Set Individual Attendance Goals</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect Student to Mentoring, Other Programs</li> <li>2. Increase Positive Supports</li> <li>3. Develop Intervention Plan</li> </ol>	<p><b>TIER 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advisory / Morning Meeting Structure</li> <li>2. Check-ins Following Absence</li> <li>3. Attendance Incentives</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance Conference → Develop Attendance Improvement Plan</li> <li>2. Needs Assessment</li> <li>3. Check-in / Check-out</li> </ol> <p><b>TIER 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. External Referral</li> <li>2. Retention Warning</li> </ol>



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# APPENDIX C: REENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### Incentives, Implementation Example

Incentive	Criteria	Reward	Frequency
Strong BOY	Perfect attendance first 2 weeks	Free Ticket to Homecoming, Dance, etc.	BOY
Perfect Week	100% Attendance, No Tardies for 1 Week	Positive Call or Text Home	Weekly
5 Weeks	95% Attendance	Free Dress	Every 5 <sup>th</sup> Week
Quarterly Excellence	90% Attendance	Award Ceremony, Lunch Party	Quarterly



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### Student-specific planning

<https://tinyurl.com/LATier2Attendance>

#### WHEN TO USE AN ATTENDANCE PLAN

- **Tier 2 Intervention → Implement before student has missed 10% of days**  
*Includes excused, unexcused absences*
  - Sets individual attendance goals
  - Precedes punitive measures, referrals to court, etc.
  - If student does not respond to Tier 1 Interventions
    - Advisory / Morning Meeting Structure
    - Check-ins Following Absence
    - Attendance Incentives
  - If student does not respond to Tier 2 Strategies
    - Assess & Support Student Academic Needs
    - Develop Catch-Up Plan

#### HOW TO USE AN ATTENDANCE PLAN

For student specific planning, seek to answer:

- *Why* is the student chronically absent (barriers; aversion; disengagement)?
  - Cannot work to solve the problem until it is fully understood
- *Who* does this student trust?
  - Trusted adults at school are critical for student reengagement, and for accountability with students and their families/caregivers
- *Where* does this family/caregiver feel most supported? Why?
  - Families/caregivers are critical stakeholders in student attendance; empowering their participation is important to improve absenteeism

#### ATTENDANCE PLAN ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Who	What		
	Early Childhood	Elementary	Upper Grades
<b>Student</b>	Attend meeting	Identify patterns, needs <b>Set goals</b>	<b>Set goals</b>
<b>Parent/Caregiver</b>	<b>Set goals</b>	<b>Set goals</b> Attend meeting	Attend meeting
<b>Teacher / School</b>	Facilitate meeting <b>Set goals</b>	<b>Set goals</b> Attend meeting	Hold meeting
<b>Other</b>			



## IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### APPENDIX D: INCENTIVES & ACTIVITIES

#### PBIS

PBIS implementation in schools supports student attendance. PBIS is most effective when: (1) goals and expectations are well defined and consistently reinforced across classrooms, (2) data is monitored consistently and informs decision-making, (3) incentives are relevant and activities or rewards students want to work for, and (4) interventions happen early.

#### Incentives & activities menu

This menu of incentives and activities can be used to help shape what a positive behavior intervention and supports system could look like for student attendance. This is not an exhaustive list. You can always poll students—even families. For a PBIS system to be effective, students have to want the incentives. If they want the incentives, they are more likely to engage in the desired behaviors.

Incentive	Details
<b>Extra Time: Choice Activity</b>	Students earn extra computer time, extra recess for hitting attendance goals.
<b>First-in-line Privileges</b>	Students can cut the lunch line.
<b>School Store</b>	Students can use points / "money" to purchase items from a classroom or schoolwide store.
<b>Public Celebration</b>	Using bulletin boards or morning meetings to celebrate growth and excellence in attendance.
<b>Class Competitions</b>	Competitions between grades or classes within a designated timeframe.
<b>Homework Pass</b>	Students can earn a homework pass for meeting an attendance benchmark (best for short-term).
<b>Free Dress</b>	Students can earn a dress down / free dress pass for meeting attendance benchmarks in given period.
<b>Field Trips</b>	Participation in special field trips can include an attendance goal—look for excellence and growth.
<b>Newsletters</b>	Messaging to teachers, families acknowledging attendance rates, goals, and improvement.
<b>Award Ceremonies</b>	End of 9-weeks awards for perfect, good, and improved attendance.
<b>Teacher Awards</b>	Celebrating teachers who consistently enter attendance on time (gift card; free coffee / smoothie, etc.).
<b>Pep Rallies / Assemblies</b>	Shout-outs for individual or group attendance excellence.
<b>Sponsored Events</b>	Engage the community to sponsor family events for meeting attendance goals.
<b>Swag</b>	T-shirts, buttons, other "wearables" that students can display at school.
<b>Special Acknowledgement</b>	Offer a special treat for students with improved attendance—something that rewards habit change.