CSDE

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Talk Tuesdays
Student Attendance, Engagement, and Support Series

Please **sign-in** using the chat - include your name, title, district/school or agency.

Developed by the CSDE in collaboration with SERC

IIISERC

STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | EDUCATION

Notice: This meeting is being recorded.

Agenda

1. Welcome

   Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE

2. What's New at CSDE and Partners

3. ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK: *Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs* and
   AccelerateCT: *Connecticut's Framework for Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access*

   Stephen Proffitt, Director for Special Education Programs and Instructional Design, SERC

4. Smart Strategies to Improve Attendance

   Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE

5. Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

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WHAT'S NEW AT CSDE AND PARTNERS

What's New at CSDE

May 27, 2021
- Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan
- Newly Released! AccelerateCT: Connecticut's Framework for Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access
  - Guidance Regarding Special Education Recovery for Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 2021 Governor's Summer Reading Challenge

May 25, 2021
- Public Act 21-6, An Act Concerning Immunizations

May 24, 2021
- 2019-20 Cohort Graduation Rates on EdSight
- Transition to Kindergarten Fall 2021

May 21, 2021
- Operation of Summer School and Other Enrichment Programs
- School District Outdoor Events and End-of-Year Activities
- Updated Mask Order from DPH
- Universal Mask Policies in School Buildings
- Update to CSBE's Culturally Responsive Position Statement

Visit the Superintendent's Digest to stay current on new guidance from CSDE.

Connecticut State Department of Education | AccelerateCT EDUCATION TASKFORCE

AccelerateCT Summer Program Grants

05/26/2021

State Department of Education Announces Recipients of 2021 Summer Enrichment Grants

Grants Awarded To Expand High-Quality Summer Enrichment Programs for Connecticut Children

(Hartford) - The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) today announced the recipients of the Department's summer grant programs–Enrichment and Innovation Grants–which will deploy a portion of CSDE's $11,000,000 ARP ESSER 🔧 state set-aside to organizations delivering high-quality and accessible enrichment opportunities 🔧 to children across Connecticut this summer. After launching the program last month, CSDE received over 300 applications and, after a rigorous review process, selected 235 grantees 🔧 that will receive a total of $8,652,870 in funding, which will serve over 96,000 students statewide.

"These grants will go a long way toward achieving our administration's goal of ensuring that all students in Connecticut have access to summer enrichment experiences that supplement their school activities, especially for those over the last year who have lost out on in-person classroom experience during the COVID-19 pandemic," **Governor Ned Lamont said.**

"We are making these investments to expand free and affordable access to summer enrichment and recreational opportunities with an emphasis on children and communities most impacted by the pandemic," **Acting Commissioner of Education Charlene Russell-Tucker said.** "Thank you to our grantees for their commitment to ensuring Connecticut children will benefit from access to high-quality, engaging, and hands-on experiences to continue learning every day, everywhere."

CSDE summer grant programs: Enrichment and Innovation Grants

- $11,000,000 **ARP ESSER** state set-aside

- Awarded to organizations delivering high-quality and accessible **enrichment opportunities**

- Over 300 applications received

- **235 grantees** will receive a total of **$8,652,870** in funding, which will serve over **96,000** students statewide.

Do you work at the intersection of families and learning?
Would you like to network and learn from others in the field?

Friday CAFÉ

Professional Network for Community and Family Engagement

New Session Added! Register Now for June 4

Social Emotional Wellbeing for Students:
A Priority for Families and Schools

As the pandemic lingers, students' wellbeing is a concern for families and schools alike. Together, families and schools can use a new strength-based approach to help students recognize and build social emotional skills. Join us to learn how to create meaningful partnerships and reciprocal communication that invite families to understand, inform and support their children's social and emotional development.

Conversation Catalysts: Lisa-Anne Williams & Ashley Kurth, Aperture Education; Kimberly Traverso, CSDE

Date June 4, 10-11:30

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Register here!

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

About:

Friday CAFÉ is a morning discussion and networking series for people who work at the intersection of families and learning. Monthly gatherings feature a short talk

Network members go by many different titles. Some work in schools, some in communities and include parent liaisons, partnership coordinators, home-school facilitators, family resource specialists, parent center directs, parent leaders and many others.

2021-22 Friday CAFE Morning Sessions will resume in October
All sessions are from 10:00-11:30 a.m. online

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Helping Households Connect During the Pandemic

Helping Households Connect During the Pandemic

New ⭐
Financial Help for Families

www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit
or call 833-511-0311

The Federal Communications Commission has launched a temporary program to help families and households struggling to afford Internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit provides:

- Up to $50 per month toward broadband service for eligible households;
- Up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands; and
- A one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers.

Are You Eligible? A household is eligible if a member of the household meets one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or participates in certain government assistance programs;
- Receives benefits under the free or reduced-price school breakfast or lunch programs;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
- Experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since February 29, 2020 or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

You can learn more and enroll by visiting
www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit or by calling 833-511-0311

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Upcoming Mentoring Training

Contact Information:
Aristede Hill, Program Manager, M

All sessions are free of charge!

Visit The Partnership's calendar of trainings & events to learn more!

- Trauma-Informed Youth Mentoring, Wednesday, June 2, 2021

- Designing and Building a Successful Mentoring Program, Wednesday, June 9, 2021

- Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ Standard 1: *Recruitment*, Wednesday, June 23, 2021

- Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ Standard 2: *Screening*, Wednesday, June 30, 2021

- Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ Standard 4: *Matching*, Wednesday, July 14, 2021

- Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ Standard 5: *Monitoring and Support* & Standard 6: *Closure*, Wednesday, July 28, 2021
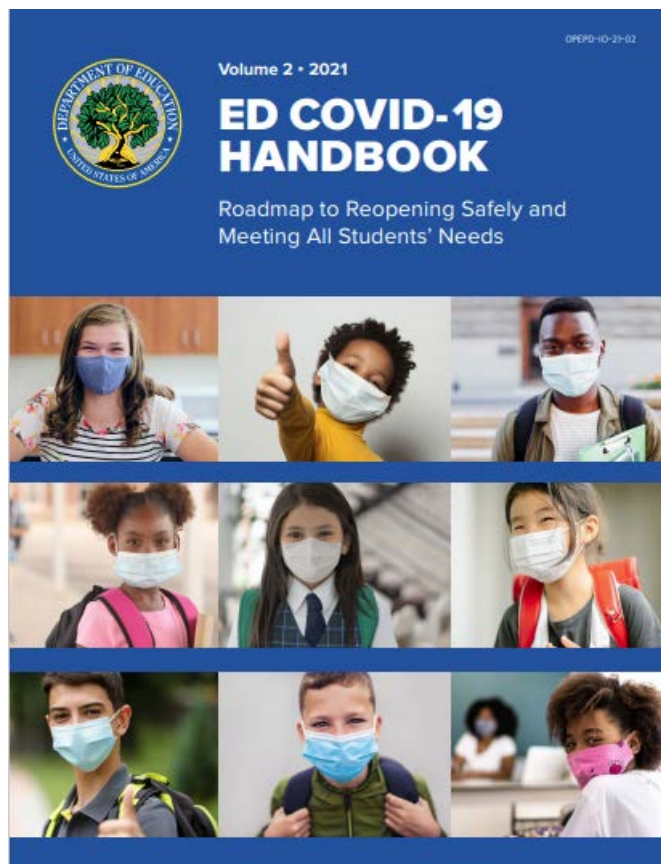
ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK
Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs

ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK

ROADMAP TO REOPENING SAFELY AND MEETING ALL STUDENTS' NEEDS

Locating Absent Students and Reengaging Disconnected Youth

Some researchers estimate 3 million students have either been absent from or have not been actively participating in remote learning since the beginning of the pandemic.[7] These students were more likely to be English learners, students with disabilities, students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, students from low-income backgrounds, Native American youth, and migratory students. LGBTQ+ students, especially those who are Black or Native American, are more likely than others to be homeless. The reasons for their absences or lack of access to instruction or support are varied. Native American, Black, and Latinx youth in particular were least likely to have consistent connections to high-speed broadband to participate in remote learning.[8]

Access to integrated student support has also been a challenge. A recent federally funded study that examined a nationally representative sample of websites from 3,511 traditional public schools, charter schools, and private schools found that the most extensive academic instruction and resources were aimed at the general population, with English learners and students with disabilities receiving less support.[9] Because of the difficulty of implementing services remotely, English learners lost opportunities to practice language skills with others, and many students with disabilities lost opportunities to receive required academic instruction or related services; such as orientation and mobility training; speech, physical, or occupational therapy services; and other individualized supports while at home that they would have received while attending school in person.[10]

AccelerateCT

Connecticut's Framework for Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access

AccelerateCT

Connecticut's Framework for **Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access**

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Contents

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The AccelerateCT framework provides a step-by-step process for preK-12 school system leaders to guide the local strategic analysis of work to create equitable inclusive environments. This process is an opportunity to align to the district strategic improvement or operating plan's identified short- and long-term goals. By doing so, districts will build coherence and confidence in the plan.

The AccelerateCT framework requires intentional implementation of high-quality instruction, engaging and rigorous curricula, and connections to social-emotional learning to support all learners. Strategic acceleration actions can empower students to build knowledge, skills, and behaviors that promote academic and social success.

It is imperative that special education teams are included in planning for the acceleration of learning within the school district to ensure that students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) have access to such opportunities and that IEPs continue to align with the curriculum and content standards being addressed. Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) may need to consider whether the student requires additional accommodations and/or modifications to access and make progress in the acceleration programming. Additional information can be found in the May 24 Special Education Recovery Memorandum.

Accelerating learning provides opportunities for students to learn at grade level rather than through tracking or remediation, which can narrow educational opportunities for students and might lead them to become disengaged. Acceleration builds on what students already know as a way to access new learning. Studies have shown that when students tie background knowledge to new information, they are better at making inferences and retaining the new information more effectively.[21] Collaboration between any partners providing additional support to students and classroom educators is critical. Schools and districts should organize programming in a way that allows time for ongoing two-way communication. Learning acceleration focuses on quickly diagnosing gaps in critical skills and concepts that may impede students from accessing grade-level coursework. Acceleration provides instruction in prior knowledge and teaching prerequisite skills that students need to learn at a pace that allows students to stay engaged in grade-level content and lays a foundation for new academic vocabulary.

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/CT-Learning-Hub/CSDE-Priority-Standards-for-Essential-Learning-Handbook-October-2020.pdf

THE CSDE ACCELERATION CYCLE

Smart Strategies to Improve Attendance

Attendance Playbook
Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era

ATTENDANCE **PLAYBOOK**

SMART STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
IN THE COVID ERA

BY PHYLLIS JORDAN
JUNE 2020

FutureEd
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Attendance Works
Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

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Tier I Example: *Home Visits*

Home Visits

What if you could improve a student's attendance and achievement by getting to know his family a little better? Research suggests that is precisely what happens when teachers visit student homes on a regular basis.

An evaluation of the Parent Teacher Home Visits program found that students whose families received at least one visit from teachers a year were 21 percent less likely to be chronically absent than other students. What's more, the impact extended to the entire school when 10 percent or more of students had home visits. In some districts, chronic absenteeism fell by at least 5 percent in these schools, and students were more likely to score better on English language arts assessments than those at other schools. The study, conducted by researcher Steven Sheldon of Johns Hopkins University, looked at 2016-17 school year results for more than 100,000 students in kindergarten through 8th grade in four large, urban school districts. The results suggest that home visiting could be a valuable strategy for schools trying to reduce absenteeism rates.

In this type of home visit, teachers meet with the family at home, with the goal of engaging parents and caregivers around their child's education. The first visit is focused on building a relationship. Teachers ask about the family's "hopes and dreams" for the child. They learn about the challenges the family faces. And they provide a connection to the school for parents who might not otherwise reach out to teachers. Relationship-building home visits are not designed to deliver explicit messages on absenteeism or to target students with problematic attendance. The Parent Teacher Home Visits program began in the Sacramento area two decades ago and now operates in more than 700 places in 25 states. The model relies on some basic practices: voluntary visits arranged in advance with teachers in pairs, teachers trained and compensated, and a focus on relationship building rather than targeting attendance.

An earlier study of 12 Washington, D.C. public schools by Johns Hopkins University found students whose families received home visits were less likely to be chronically absent and more likely to read on grade level in the 2013-14 school year. In North Carolina, a pilot program combining home visiting with dedicated cell phones for reaching parents, enhanced attendance tracking, and other interventions reduced the prevalence of frequent absences by about 10 percent and improved communication between parents and teachers, according to a 2017 Duke University study.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Home visits entail some costs since teachers should be trained and compensated for visits that typically occur outside of school hours. The efforts seem to work best with families of elementary school children and when teachers and parents continue to interact after the initial visit. They also work better when teachers don't deliver

COVID RESPONSE

School districts should consult with local health departments to ensure that home visits can be conducted safely (e.g. with social distancing and protective wear) given the local health situation. If safe, bring along a copy of local resources that families can reach out to directly. If not, consider virtual home visits, which have been successful in connecting teachers and families, Parents as Teachers found. Parent-Teacher Home Visit Partnership has developed resources for connecting with families during the pandemic, including tips for teachers and recommendations for apps.

RESEARCH

- Student Outcomes and Parent Teacher Home Visits: PROMISING

- The Family Engagement Partnership Student Outcome Evaluation: PROMISING

- A New Program to Prevent Primary School Absenteeism: PROMISING

RESOURCES

- Relational Parent Teacher Home Visits Boost Attendance

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Tier II Example: *Mentors*

Mentors

A caring relationship at school—whether it's with a teacher, a counselor, or another student—can enhance a student's sense of belonging and reduce absenteeism. Once a school identifies a student with problematic attendance, mentoring can improve not only attendance but also student achievement. MENTOR, a national nonprofit dedicated to the practice, cites research by Public/Private Ventures showing that students who meet regularly with mentors are 52 percent less likely to skip a day of school than similar students without such support.

Check & Connect, a student engagement intervention developed in the 1990s, trains and deploys mentors to monitor early warning signs for at-risk students. The program is listed in the U.S. Institute of Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse as an evidence-based approach for dropout prevention. A University of Minnesota study of elementary students with problematic attendance found that 40 percent of those receiving Check & Connect services were engaged and regularly attending school.

Another model for improving attendance is known as success mentoring, which was a key component of the Obama administration's My Brother's Keeper project aimed at improving achievement among African-American boys and men. The success mentors model was developed during a three-year pilot in New York City that reached about 10,000 students with mentors drawn from the community, the school staff or from older students within the school. All three approaches worked as long as the mentors met certain characteristics: They were in the school at least three days a week, worked with a defined and manageable caseload, had access to attendance data and had a voice in weekly principal-led student success meetings. Researchers Robert Balfanz and Vaughan Byrnes at Johns Hopkins University found that students who had been chronically absent gained almost two additional weeks (nine days) of school a year after working with mentors—and experiencing other attendance interventions—when compared to similar students. High school students who improved their attendance also saw a slight increase in their grades and were less likely to leave school in the following years.

Several of the New York City schools turned to City Year, which uses AmeriCorps members as "near-peers" for students who need extra support. As they develop these relationships, absenteeism rates have dropped. In 2016-17, students with City Year mentors improved their attendance by at least 2 percent points, or about three and a half more days in school. In a study by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Chicago students in schools served by City Year attended about a week more of school (nearly six days) than peers at similar public schools.

Full Service Community Schools also use mentoring as a key strategy for improving attendance. The approach effectively turns schools into community hubs. A coordinator brings together local organizations to support students and families with health, social services and other needs. A 2020 RAND Corporation study found that New York City schools using the model saw reductions in chronic absenteeism in all grades and across all years of the study.

Another successful approach taps older students to serve as mentors. The Center for Supportive Schools has developed the Peer Connection Group program, in which "peer leaders" participate in a yearlong leadership course. They meet weekly with small groups of 9th graders to develop relationships and work on skills needed to succeed in high school. A Westat Inc. evaluation of programs in Baltimore, New York City and a rural North Carolina county showed that the students involved attended about six additional school days a year, compared to those who didn't participate. The gains in attendance continued in the year after participating.

Tutoring can improve attendance in the early grades. In Milwaukee's SPARK Literacy Program, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students with tutors not only saw significant gains in reading achievement and literacy when compared to similar students not chosen for the program, they had six fewer absences, according to a University of Wisconsin study. The program also had a strong parent engagement component. Attendance Works has created a toolkit for implementing Success Mentor programs in elementary schools.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Depending on the model that schools choose, mentoring can cost additional dollars and create administrative challenges. Programs like City Year or Check & Connect charge for their work, costs that many communities tap local philanthropy to support. Using external volunteers requires training, developing privacy rules and policies for background checks, as well as data sharing agreements with other governmental or nonprofit agencies working with schools. Even mentoring program internal to the school require time for training and supervision, especially with peer mentors. These hurdles should not prevent schools and districts from pursuing a very promising approach.

RESEARCH

- Check & Connect: **STRONG**
- Using Data and the Human Touch: **PROMISING FOR ENTIRE CAMPAIGN**
- Impact of City Year Within the Chicago Context: **PROMISING**
- In School and On Track to Graduate: **PROMISING**
- SPARK Literacy Program Evaluation: **STRONG**
- Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: **STRONG**

RESOURCES

- The Mentoring Effect
- Relationships Matter Toolkit

COVID RESPONSE

Schools should add virtual options for mentoring and expand the ranks of mentors to support more students returning to school after the pandemic. Virtual mentoring portals have been keeping students and their mentors connected while schools are shuttered. MENTOR offers an e-mentoring guide.

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Tier III Example:
Interagency Case Management

Interagency Case Management

Students facing more complex problems—such as homelessness, pregnancy and mental illness—require coordination and case management with agencies beyond the school yard. Often the solutions require extended support tailored to the unique situations of the most severely chronically absent students. That may mean tapping the local housing authority to help children facing eviction or working with social service agencies to help those in foster care.

Many communities use the Full-Service Community Schools approach that can operate at all three tiers of intervention. A 2020 RAND Corporation study found that New York City schools using the model saw reductions in chronic absenteeism in all grades and across all years of the study.

Communities in Schools (CIS) offers another model for encouraging interagency collaboration. Like Community Schools, the nonprofit provides a school-based coordinator, and works at all three tiers: starting with analyzing student data to determine the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism and what the school and its students need. It also involves a school support team that can marshal resources and partners. A 2017 MDRC evaluation of two years of case management by CIS found significant improvement in attendance rates for elementary school students involved in the program, when compared to similar students, but not for middle and high school students.

Another intervention that has shown promise in reducing absenteeism is FosterEd, which currently operates in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Indiana. FosterEd works with children in the child welfare and justice systems to coordinate work with schools and families. Program organizers identify an "education champion" for each child, often a caregiver who can advocate and support the student. They set up education teams for all the adults involved in the child's life to work collaboratively, conscious of the trauma these students have endured. And they allow students to set their own goals for improvement. In Pima County, Ariz., three quarters of foster students were either chronically absent or close to it when they started with FosterEd, according to a 2016 report by RTI International. In the first two months of the program, 81 percent of those students improved their attendance rates. A 2015 report by RTI found that in Santa Cruz County, Calif, half the students arrived with weak attendance records, and three quarters showed improvement.

Key to any coordinated approach is data sharing. Community-based projects such as mentoring or afterschool programs need access to attendance records, grades, disciplinary records and other information. This naturally raises privacy concerns that may require memoranda of understanding between districts and outside agencies.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Full-service community schools can be funded with federal grants available under Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Collaboration with agencies and nonprofit organizations necessarily involves sharing data, something that raises privacy concerns under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The federal government provides guidance on navigating these issues. Developing the needed data systems and coordinating services can add costs but pay dividends for the most vulnerable students.

RESEARCH
- Two Years of Case Management: PROMISING
- FosterEd Evaluations: EMERGING
- Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: STRONG

RESOURCES
- FERPA Guidance for Sharing Information with Community Based Organizations

COVID RESPONSE

The coronavirus adds another wrinkle to interagency case management, both creating more challenges for students and complicating the response. Virtual options will be important and will need to pay close attention to privacy and confidentiality concerns.

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So… Now what?

A Guide to Using, "Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the Covid Era"

As schools and communities devise strategies to address chronic absence, it is imperative that they draw from evidence-based strategies. It is even more imperative that they build on and adapt what works in the era of Covid-19 in which students and families face even greater challenges to education and may need a higher level of support. As protests over systemic racism and its impact on Black Americans demonstrates, our public schools have not adequately addressed the systemic barriers that limit access and equitable opportunities.

Over the past decade, a growing body of knowledge of what works to improve attendance for groups of students with disproportionately high rates of chronic absence has emerged due to the hard work of a practitioners and researchers across the country. With nearly eight million students chronically absent nationwide, we can't afford to waste time and resources doing business as usual. Our students and families deserve better.

Why this guide?

In 2019, Attendance Works and FutureEd partnered to release the first edition of the Attendance Playbook. It was a much-needed resource that was immediately downloaded by thousands of users. The Attendance Playbook has a range of tiered strategies with levels of evidence from strong to emerging. (Tier I attendance strategies encourage better attendance for all students. Tier II interventions add targeted support for students at greater risk of chronic absenteeism. Tier III intensifies support to the students who experience multiple barriers to daily school attendance, which often require collaboration between schools and community and/or government agency partners.) This guide will help you determine what interventions to try with students and their families whether in person or at a distance. The Covid-19 considerations included with the strategies show ways to adapt evidence-based practices when you cannot meet face-to-face. If you are familiar with the improvement science approach, you know that testing and adapting what is likely to work makes more sense than taking a "best guess" approach to improving attendance.

Who is this for?

This guide is for school leaders and their teams, district teams and leaders, and their community and agency partners. As readers of the Attendance Playbook will note, many strategies require community and agency partners to execute the strategy.

1
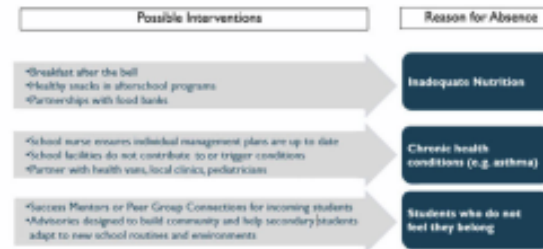
What steps should you take?

Here are some general ideas and tools to help you select and apply the strategies described in the Playbook and tailor them for your school or community. This guidance is meant to assist you and your team in thinking through key questions for selecting, prioritizing and implementing strategies.

1) **Start with a team.** At the school level, it may be an attendance team, an MTSS team or a PBIS team. At the district, it may be a Student Support Services team or an interdepartmental planning group such as a district attendance team. At the community level, it may be an interagency workgroup. Make sure you get the right people with the right skills, resources and authority to implement the strategies. Read Attendance Work's tips for building effective school teams. Teams can meet in person or virtually.

2) **Analyze your data before selecting strategies.** How extensive and intensive your Tier I school-wide strategies need to be should be determined by your prior year's rate of chronic absence. As a general rule of thumb, the higher the rate of chronic absence, the more you should invest in Tier I strategies, as this will lessen the need for more costly, intensive Tier II and Tier III strategies. Also use your data to assess and track the number of students that require early intervention support and how many need intensive supports.

Also consider the time of year. Mid-year, schools and districts should be looking at Tier II supports for students to prevent additional absences in order to have an impact on their end-of-year data. In addition to chronic absence data, schools and districts will need to find new ways to monitor which students are missing too much school, regardless of whether schools are in person, virtual or a hybrid. Whether it's a list of students that had no contact during school closure, or those who had little or no participation in distance learning, these new data are essential to detecting equity gaps that need to be addressed and for identifying schools or student groups that might need more support.

3) **Consider the reasons for absences.** What are the reasons for absences in your school and community that you need to address for individual students and groups of students? Make sure you check with families and students so that you understand their perspectives about what makes it challenging for them to attend school every day. Assess what supports you already have in place, how well they are working and where the gaps are. Then go through the Attendance Playbook and select the strategies or interventions that may address the reasons your students are absent. (see Figure 1 below for examples.)

Figure 1. Match Interventions to Reasons for Absences

2

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What steps should you take?

1. **Start with a team.**

   - At the school level, it may be an attendance team, an MTSS team or a PBIS team.

   - At the district, it may be a Student Support Services team or an interdepartmental planning group such as a district attendance team.

   - Make sure you get the right people with the right skills, resources and authority to implement the strategies.

   - Read Attendance Work's [tips for building effective school teams](). Teams can meet in person or virtually.

2. **Analyze your data before selecting strategies.**

   - How extensive and intensive your Tier I schoolwide strategies need to be should be determined by your prior year's rate of chronic absence.

   - As a general rule of thumb, **the higher the rate of chronic absence, the more you should invest in Tier I strategies**, as this will lessen the need for more costly, intensive Tier II and Tier III strategies.

   - Also use your data to assess and track the number of students that require early intervention support and how many need intensive supports.

Consider the Reasons for the Absences

3. **Consider the reasons for absences.**

    - What are the reasons for absences in your school and community that you need to address for individual students and groups of students?

    - Make sure you check with families and students so that you understand their perspectives about what makes it challenging for them to attend school every day.

    - Assess what supports you already have in place, how well they are working and where the gaps are.

    - Then go through the Attendance Playbook and select the strategies or interventions that may address the reasons your students are absent.

Explore Possible Interventions

Attendance Works

Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence
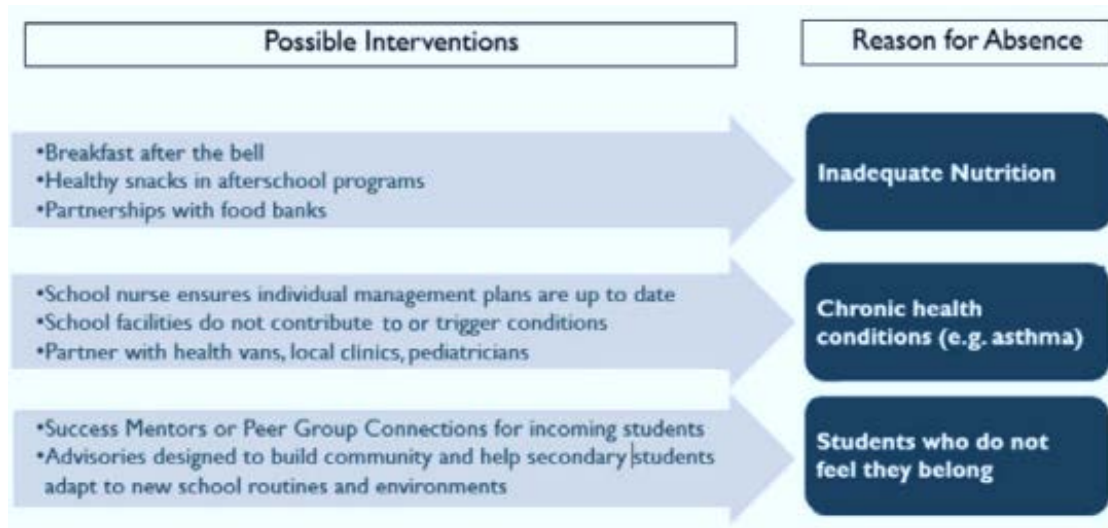
4. **Explore possible interventions with your team.**

   - Use the questions on this tool to assess how well specific interventions suit your students and determine your capacity to implement each strategy.
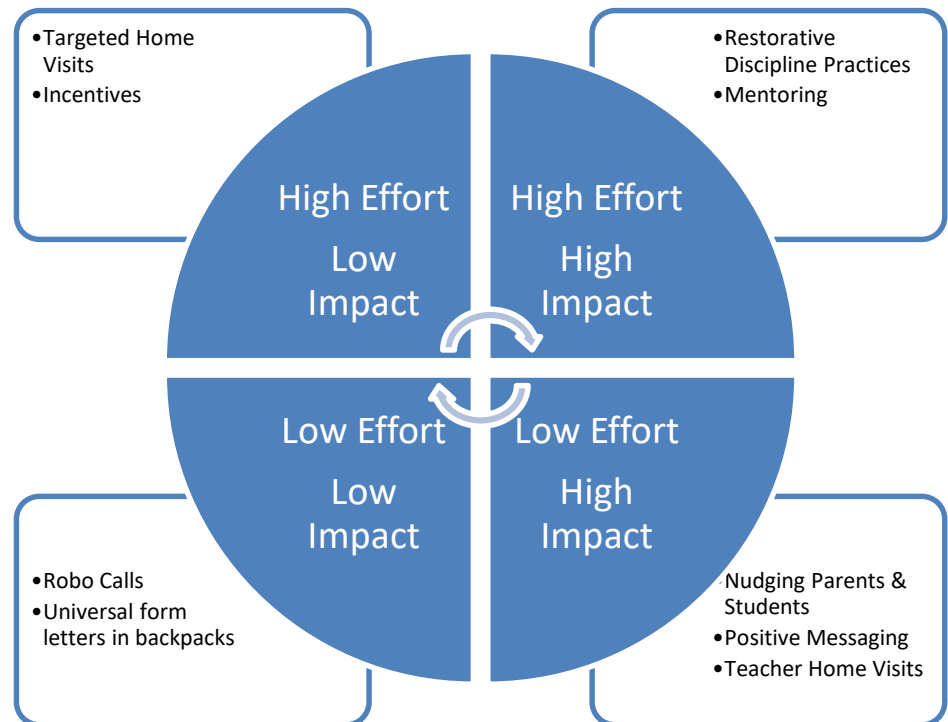
Questions About Your Capacity to Implement

- Can we implement this strategy during distance learning? Yes ___ No ___

- Do we have the capacity – budget, staff, time – to execute this strategy for every student who needs the support? Yes ___ No ___

- Do we have the capacity to train staff in new strategies? Are there upcoming staff training and/ or professional development opportunities that can be utilized for training? Yes ___ No ___

- Whose buy-in do we need to implement this strategy? Principals? Teachers? Families? Yes ___ No ___

- Can we implement the strategy consistently? Yes ___ No ___

- Do we need help to select and implement strategies? Yes ___ No ___

- How well does the strategy align with other initiatives? Yes ___ No ___

- Does it compete with other initiatives? Yes ___ No ___

- Do we have the capacity (e.g., weekly team meetings and data review) to track and monitor the impact and efficacy of the strategy? Yes ___ No ___

- What other considerations do we need to take into account before moving forward? Yes ___ No ___

Questions About the Strategy

- Can this strategy be accessed by all students virtually? Yes ___ No ___

- How well does the strategy address the reasons for absence for the students you have identified? Yes ___ No ___

- What evidence is there that this strategy works? Yes ___ No ___

- Is this strategy suited for our students? Has it worked for students from the same grade spans, ethnicity, life circumstances? Yes ___ No ___

- Do we have interventions for our most vulnerable student groups? Yes ___ No ___

- How can we ensure it works universally for all students whether they are differently abled or speak languages other than English? Yes ___ No ___

- Is the strategy culturally responsive to the student groups you want to reach? Yes ___ No ___

- How might the strategy change over the course of a school year? Yes ___ No ___

- What role should each partner play in executing the strategy? Yes ___ No ___

Select Strategies and Implement

5. **Select the strategies you will implement first based on your ability and capacity.** You may have chosen more strategies than you can implement immediately.

How do you determine what to do first?

- Sort your strategies into four quadrants:

- Are strategies high impact (affect many students) or low impact (affect a few students)?

- Are they high effort (requiring a lot of coordination, people power, resources, time) or low effort?

- Here's a tip: When choosing which strategies to implement first, pick strategies that are likely to have high impact for low effort.

- Next, consider strategies that might take more effort but have high impact.

- Targeted Home Visits
- Incentives

High Effort Low Impact

- Restorative Discipline Practices
- Mentoring

High Effort High Impact

Low Effort Low Impact

- Robo Calls
- Universal form letters in backpacks

Low Effort High Impact

- Nudging Parents & Students
- Positive Messaging
- Teacher Home Visits

Note: For discussion purposes only. Results will vary by district.

Organize Your Work

6. **Determine the steps you need to take to implement each strategy.**

    - Once you've decided on which strategies to add, lay out a plan for how you will implement the interventions over the course of the year.

    - You can incorporate your ideas into your school improvement plan or use Attendance Works' yearly calendars, if appropriate.

    - You can also use a simple chart like the one provided in the guide to organize your work. See the chart on the next slide.

    The result of your work will be a written plan for implementation that all stakeholders in your school's community and beyond can refer to and understand the approach you are taking to address the issue

Goal:		
Expected outcomes:		
How to measure results?		
Task	Person(s) Responsible	By When

Assess Success of Strategies

Figure 2. The Hexagon: An Exploration Tool
The Hexagon can be used as a planning tool to guide selection and evaluate potential innovations for use.
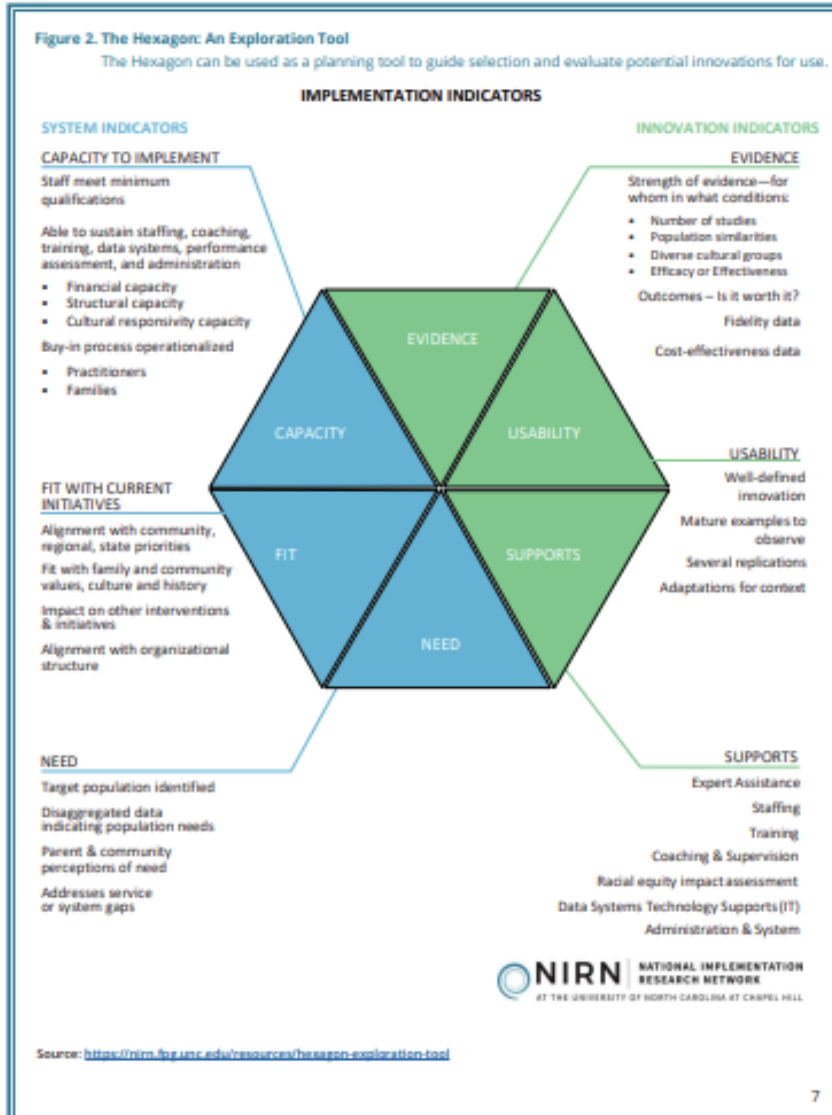
7. **Determine when and how you will assess whether the strategy is successful**.

- What data will you collect and review to ensure it works for every student group as well as overall?

- How will you decide if you want to adopt and expand it?

- Adapt it so that it works better?

- Or abandon it because it did not work?

- This last step is critical as you use your own experience to determine if there is sufficient evidence that a strategy works to improve attendance

Throwback Talk Tuesday!

School Climate and Attendance

January 26, 2021

[Amanda Pickett](#), Associate Education Consultant

Connecticut State Department of Education

[Watch Now!](#)

Learn more about:

- School Climate and Attendance

- [Initiative Inventory](#)

- Hexagon Model

Throwback Talk Tuesday!

High-Impact Family Engagement Strategies Promoting Equity and Student Success

April 6, 2021

Betsy LeBorious
CREC

Christina Morales
Windsor Public Schools

Learn more about:

- [Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families](#)
  - [Guiding Principles](#)
  - Chart 5: [What Does High-Impact Family Engagement Look Like in Reducing Chronic Absence?](#)

CHART 5
What Does High-Impact Family Engagement Look Like in Reducing Chronic Absence?

Higher Impact on Student Learning and Development	Moderate Impact	Lower Impact
Ongoing Outreach: Teachers make personal phone calls to families when students miss school to discuss the importance of attendance and what students are learning in class. Teachers follow up regularly with personal text messages regarding the student's progress.	School staff call a student's parent when the student misses three days in a row to determine the reason for absence.	When a student is absent, the school's computer calls home with a recorded message.
Personal Communications: Each family of a student who is chronically absent receives a monthly letter in the mail, in language that is friendly and accessible, letting them know how many days their child has missed. School staff make follow-up calls to families to discuss challenges to attending school, co-construct solutions for regular attendance and make connections to community resources.	Monthly e-mail reminders are sent to parents about how many absences constitute chronic absence at this point in the year.	Flyers are sent home through students' backpacks letting parents know that they should track their child's attendance online in the parent portal.
Relational Home Visits: Teachers conduct relational home visits focused on building a relationship and discussing the family's and teacher's hopes and dreams for the student's education and future.	Home visits are made by an attendance officer to students who are chronically absent to determine reasons for the absence.	Parents are notified of the number of days students are absent through report cards, which indicate if the number of absences are problematic.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Breakout Sessions

Identify one or two high impact, low effort strategies that you would consider for your district/school.

Can you think of any high effort, low impact strategies currently in your district/school?

Resources

- AccelerateCT, Connecticut's Framework for Accelerating Educational Opportunity and Access, CSDE, May 2021

- Guidance Regarding Special Education Recovery for Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, CSDE, May 2021

- Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism During the COVID Era, FutureEd, Attendance Works, 2020

- Guide to Using the Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era, Attendance Works, 2020

- U.S. Department of Education Roadmap to reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs
  - Volume 1, Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools, Feb. 2021
  - Volume 2, Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs, April 2021

- Learning Acceleration Toolkit, TNTP

- Strengthening Student Attendance and Assignment Completion During the COVID-19 Pandemic, TNTP

Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Next Talk Tuesday

Tuesday, **June 15,** 2021
10 to 11 a.m.

Upcoming Attendance Works research brief: *Chronic Absence and Prediction During COVID-19: **Insights from Connecticut***
(Anticipated release date: 6/10/21)

Have a **promising practice or success** you want to share?

Concerns you want to share through peer discussion?

Send ideas for topics for discussion to
Kari.Sullivan@ct.gov.

Community of Practice
District Attendance Leads

Wednesday**, June 9th**, 2021
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Dive deeper into Smart Solutions and Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absence, and how supporting good attendance is critical to learning acceleration.

Wednesday, **June 9th**, 2021
10 to 11:30 a.m.
Registration is now open!

Save the dates!

Thursday, **July 29**, 2021, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Thursday, **August 19**, 2021, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

CSDE

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Keep in touch!

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Sullivan Custer

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Connect with CSDE for more information on student attendance and engagement:

Facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation

http://www.ct.gov/sde

@EducateCT