


Tier One Intervention Curriculum
Attendance Strategy Middle Schools
Incentives for Promoting Good Attendance

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Communities In Schools of North Carolina
222 North Person Street, Suite 203 | Raleigh, NC 27601
Phone: (919) 832-2700 | Toll Free: (800) 849-8881 | Fax: (919) 832-5436
<http://www.cisnc.org/>



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Overview

CISNC Introduction

In the 2014-2015 school year, Communities In Schools of North Carolina (CISNC) introduced a framework that aligns site and student metrics and interventions and supports to four areas that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student success: attendance, behavior, coursework, and parent involvement, or ABC+P. Both combined and individually, attendance, behavior, and coursework are among the best predictors of a student's academic success and on-time graduation. While collecting data around ABC+P is critically important to understanding the school and student, it is even more important to use the data to drive high impact intervention and support delivery to empower each student to reach their full potential. To this end, Communities In Schools of North Carolina has partnered with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to design curricula specifically for CIS within the ABC+P framework to enhance student outcomes in school and success in life. This document is one of more than 50 modules developed to support local CIS staff and most importantly the students that are served. We encourage you to explore all of the modules available online at www.cisnc.org.

Using Evidenced-Based Strategies


There are a multitude of strategies that claim to address attendance, but there are few that actually do so for all students. We suggest that schools use an evidence-based, decision-making model to ensure that high quality information informs the decisions made.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education defines evidence-based decision making as routinely seeking out the best available information on prior research and recent evaluation findings before adopting programs or practices that will demand extensive material or human resources (including both funding and teacher time) and/or affect significant numbers of students (Whitehurst, 2004).

Evidence-based practice means delivering interventions and supports to students (clients) in ways that integrate the best available evidence from data, research, and evaluation; professional wisdom gained from experience; and contextual knowledge of the particular classroom, school, district, or state that might impact the design or implementation.

This document is written to provide schools with attendance-related strategies based on the best evidence from prior research and recent evaluations in middle schools. In the context of our review, we propose six strategies designed to help improve middle school attendance:

- Monitoring Data strategy
- School-Family-Community Partnerships strategy
- Health Related strategy



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- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) strategies (2)
- School Climate strategy

This document will focus on one easy to implement positive behavior incentive activity that can be implemented school-wide

Problem/Rationale

Improving test scores as a means for raising educational gains receives greater local and national focus than does attendance; however, studies indicate that middle school attendance is more predictive of passing high school than middle school test scores and is as predictive of high school grades as is high school test scores (Allensworth, 2014).


When students miss too many school days, it can negatively impact their academic achievement, be disruptive to classroom instruction as teachers have to shift attention to students who need to catch up with the rest of the class, as well as have a negative effect on the overall school climate. Students who do not attend school or will not attend school may be positively influenced by a stronger sense of engagement and belonging at school. Students who feel that adults in school care about them and value them may be more likely to attend school (Chang & Romero, 2008).

Promoting a school-wide culture and climate that encourages positive behaviors while reinforcing the school's expectations, including regular, on-time attendance, is one of the strategies that schools can use to influence student outcomes (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009). By offering multiple opportunities for students to learn about, discuss, and enact positive social behaviors, schools have a unique opportunity to explain and reinforce the core values upon which academic success is based (U.S. Department of Education).

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to highlight strategies middle schools can use to encourage positive behavior. The Student Support Specialist can use this guide to share with school staff:

- One easy to implement positive behavior incentive school-wide activity
- Additional incentives to promote regular, on-time attendance
- Strategies for communicating expectations about attendance to students
- Incentive, tools and resources to share with parents



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Implementation Plan

Uses

Student Support Specialists can use the information provided in this guide to help teachers understand the importance of communicating with students that they care about them, as well as the school's (and teacher's) expectations for on-time, regular attendance and commitment to the student's academic success.


Audiences

Information provided in this guide is designed for teachers and school staff to use school-wide incentives and recognition to encourage, reinforce and reward positive attendance among middle school students. Information as it pertains to discussion of school-wide expectations of student behaviors may be introduced to administrators with possible follow-up during a staff meeting if school-wide expectations are not currently, routinely, and consistently communicated.

Activities


Below are several activities schools can implement to motivate and reinforce regular, on-time attendance. In this guide, a sample activity will be described in the Lesson Plan of Activity section for the activity highlighted.

- Use evidence-based decision making.
 - Refer to the curriculum guide on monitoring data.
- Develop school-wide expectations for regular, on-time attendance.
 - Refer to the curriculum guide on positive behavior reinforcements.
 - Develop and post attendance expectations in school hallways and classrooms.
- **Establish incentives for individual students who have regular, on-time attendance publicly in the classroom and school-wide.**
 - Publish names of students with perfect attendance in the monthly parent e-newsletter or on school's website, place the student's picture on the school's bulletin board or recognize them school-wide over the PA system or during an assembly.
 - Hold monthly attendance competitions for a chance to win a variety of prizes. Drawings can be done at the end of each month. Could increase to two per month (or weekly) if attendance rates dip/fluctuate. (See sample list of inexpensive prizes in the sample activity section.)
 - Publicly recognize students with marked improvement from the prior month(s) in front of the class and/or with a note from the principal encouraging them to keep up the good work and to continue working toward perfect attendance.



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- Develop an encouraging classroom (i.e., homeroom) climate for regular, on-time attendance.
 - Set a homeroom goal for perfect, on-time attendance and communicate daily progress in morning announcements.
 - Establish incentives such as use of headphones during homeroom for a week or making the morning announcements.
- Establish a positive school-wide atmosphere for regular, on-time attendance.
 - Post of cardboard cut-out of the school's mascot, principal, sports figure, etc. at the main entrance(s) with attendance slogans such as "Every day counts on the road to graduation" or "Today counts". Homerooms, teams, or clubs can also compete to develop or choose the monthly slogan.
 - Designate one of the first few weeks of the school year as "Attendance Awareness Week" and kick off with a school-wide rally or assembly. Put banners and posters throughout the school.
 - Have homerooms compete for perfect attendance each month. Partner with local businesses to obtain gift certificates and/or discount coupons (e.g., movie tickets, free pizza, etc.) to be used as student and teacher incentives or hold a year-long competition to duck the principal to the wall on the last day of school.
- Involve students.
 - Establish a student attendance task force to survey students about regular, on-time attendance.
- Involve parents.
 - Send home a letter at the beginning of the school year that outlines the positive benefits and importance of regular on-time attendance and the school's commitment to helping families achieve regular, on-time attendance. (See resource list for sample one-to-one communication tips.)
 - Include school contact information in the letter and details about how the school will keep families informed of student's attendance (e.g., morning wake-up calls, calls when student is absent, teacher follow-up after certain number of missed school days, attendance tracking on progress reports and report card, etc.)
 - Send a postcard home when a student receives perfect attendance for the month.
 - If the student had perfect attendance, the postcard should be upbeat and praise the student (and parent/guardian/family) for recognizing the importance of attendance for their child's academic success.
 - If the student has marked improvement over prior month(s), the postcard should praise the student (and parent/guardian/family) and encourage them to keep up the good work and continue to work toward perfect attendance.



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- Announce an attendance-related family incentive during parent orientation, PTO meetings, or other parent night early in the school year. For example, students with perfect attendance the previous month can be entered into a drawing for prizes. Collaborate with the PTO and local businesses to obtain gift certificates and/or discount coupons to be used as family prizes.

Materials/Equipment/Space

Teachers will need:

- Class roster
- Monthly class attendance record
- bag/hat for pulling names
- Scissors

Note: For presentations, check for access to computer, Smart board or data projector and screen, relevant power cords, and remote slide advancer.

Time

- Teacher explanation of activity – 5 mins/month

Lesson Plan of Activity

This sample activity will encourage and motivate students to strive for regular, on-time attendance by linking positive behaviors with incentives. This activity is appropriate for all 6-8 grade students.

Review the resources listed in the Resource section.

Teachers and school staff should begin by sharing school-wide behavioral expectations based upon school policies. Additional classroom expectations can also be incorporated, but beginning with school-wide expectations establishes a consistent message for all students. (See curriculum guide for Positive Behavior Reinforcement for Promoting Good Attendance.)

- Establish a positive tone and check for understanding.
- Provide strategies for maintaining regular, on-time attendance throughout the school year.

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Sample Lesson – Choose the Class Homework Assignment

Activity	Process Notes
Begin by reminding students of the school's expectations for regular, on-time attendance.	<i>This activity is appropriate for all subjects/teachers, not just homeroom. The more positive reinforcement and reward for class attendance, the better.</i>
Tell students that at the beginning of each month the names of students with perfect class attendance in the previous month will be placed in a bag and one name will be drawn to decide who will pick the homework assignment for that night.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Teachers will need to keep track of student attendance.</i> - <i>Supplies for setting up drawing.</i>
Review monthly class attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify students who had perfect attendance. - Place names on a sheet of paper and cut out each individual name. - Place names in hat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Publicly acknowledge all the students who are being entered into the drawing.</i> - <i>Acknowledge students who have improved attendance; allow one of them to draw the winner.</i>
Allow student to choose from 3 homework assignments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Make the choices fun and engaging, possibly motivating others to want to be involved the following months.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Examples:</i> - <i>Math – Use paper money to show how interest is earned.</i> - <i>Science – Research 10 uses for super glue.</i> - <i>History – list 5 funniest moments in the 1990s.</i>

Sample Incentives/Competition Prizes*

- Snacks, drinks, candy
- Free breakfast or lunch ticket
- Chance to display artwork/graphic designs throughout school
- Choose the class homework assignment
- Dress as the school mascot during a game
- Make morning announcements for a week
- Office aid for a period
- Sit at the score table during a basketball game / football game
- Free tutoring for a week
- Free movie tickets, popcorn or soda (donated by local theatres)
- Free lunch with your favorite teacher in the school cafeteria
- Free ticket to the upcoming school dance, football or basketball game
- Assistant coach for a game
- Principal for a day

*Partner with community groups/business to donate items (e.g., discount coupons, movie tickets, etc.) for the incentive store.



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Tier 2 Intervention and Support Examples

Some students struggle to attend school because of the school itself. They may perceive the school to be unwelcoming, or have teachers who are unable to connect/ form meaningful relationships with them.

Example #2: Coaching for Teachers


Coaches collaborate with teachers and school staff to provide effective classroom and school-wide behavior management.

Hershfeldt, P. A., Pell, K., Sechrest, R., Pas, E. T., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2012). Lessons learned coaching teachers in behavior management: The PBIS*plus* coaching model. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 22(4), 280-299.

Example 2: Teachers Mentor Students

Teachers can be invited to serve as one-on-one mentors for students with attendance issues. In their role as mentors, they could establish daily times for student check-ins and make special efforts during their interactions to encourage and develop the student's special interests and personal aspirations.

DeSocio, J., VanCura, M., Nelson, L. A., Hewitt, G., Kitzman, H., & Cole, R. (2007). Engaging truant adolescents: Results from a multifaceted Intervention pilot. *Preventing School Failure*, 51(3), 3-11.



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Resources

The following resources will provide additional information and suggestions for enhancing attendance incentive and recognition activities, attendance monitoring and using data for decision-making. Read through the resources carefully to become familiar with any concepts and instructions as they may pertain to the content and the extension of activities.

Attendance Works – <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

- Establishing School-wide Attendance Incentives. Retrieve from: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/AW-Incentives-two-pager-1-4-11.pdf>

NYC Mayor’s Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism & School Engagement – <http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/html/home/home.shtml>

- How To... Be Creative with Attendance Incentives for High School. Retrieve from: http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/downloads/pdf/how_to_get_incentives_high_2011-2012.pdf


Free printable certificates. Retrieve from: <http://www.123certificates.com/>

National School Climate Center – <http://www.schoolclimate.org/>

OSEP - Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports – <https://www.pbis.org/>

U.S. Department of Education – National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>

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Measuring Success


Identifying outcomes and collecting data to measure the success of PBIS strategies can help the school track quality of implementation as well as the effectiveness of these strategies. Following are some suggestions that schools may find useful to begin measuring success.

How many students were recorded as having perfect attendance each month?

- Chart data at the classroom level, grade level and school-wide.
 - Establish a baseline and compare during future years.

How many classroom or school-wide incentives were earned?

- Chart data at the classroom, grade and school-wide level
 - Establish a baseline and compare during future years.
- Length of time to earn incentives?
 - Did the amount of time to earn incentives decrease over the course of the school year?
- Types of incentives used by classrooms and school-wide?
- Do some incentives achieve better results than others?



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Appendix A: Glossary

Following are some key terms used in the Attendance Curriculum Guides.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) – is the presence of a student on days when school is in session. A student is counted as present only when he/she is actually at school, present at another activity sponsored by the school as part of the school’s program, or personally supervised by a member of the staff. ADA is based on the sum of the number of days in attendance for all students divided by the number of days in the school month. No state allotments are based on ADA (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Average Daily Membership (ADM) – is the total number of school days within a given term – usually a school month or school year – that a student’s name is on the current roll of a class, regardless of his/her being present or absent, is the “number of days of membership” for that student. Average Daily membership is a calculation using data from the Principal’s Monthly Report. The calculation uses the number of days in the school month and the number of Non-violation (NVIO) Membership Days (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Chronic Absenteeism – “is typically based on the total number of days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences” (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Excessively Absent – defined in some locales as missing 20 days or more of school (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Expulsions – Students who are expelled are to be withdrawn from school (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).


Germs (pathogens): types of microbes that can cause disease.

Hand hygiene - a general term that applies to routine hand washing, antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub, or surgical hand antisepsis.

Hand sanitizer – alcohol-based: for alcohol- based hand sanitizers, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (5) recommends a concentration of 60% to 95% ethanol or isopropanol, the concentration range of greatest germicidal efficacy

Hand washing: the vigorous, brief rubbing together of all surfaces of lathered hands, followed by rinsing under a stream of water. Hand washing suspends microorganisms and mechanically removes them by rinsing with water. The fundamental principle of hand washing is removal, not killing.

Influenza: a viral infection that attacks your respiratory system — your nose, throat and lungs.



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Lawful Absence – When satisfactory evidence of a lawful absence is provided to the appropriate school official, the absence should be coded as lawful (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Medically Fragile and Teacher-In-Treatment - The 1H absence code should only be used for students who have been identified as medically fragile or for students who are enrolled at one of the six Teacher-In-Treatment sites (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Microbes: tiny living organisms that may or may not cause disease.

School Refusal – refers to student absenteeism because of (short-term or long-term) emotional stressors related to school attendance (most common occurrence is in students aged 5, 6, 10, and 11) (American Family Physician).


Suspensions – The absence of a student which results from the suspension or expulsion of that student for misconduct may not be used for a compulsory attendance violation action (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Truancy – “typically defined as a certain number of or certain frequency of unexcused absences” (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Unlawful Absences – Students who are willfully absent from school without a lawful excuse are to be considered unlawfully absent (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014).

Vaccine: A product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Vaccination: the act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease



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Appendix B: References

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Appendix C: Research Alignment

Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness
<p>Horner, R. H., Todd, A. W., Lewis-Palmer, T., Irvin, L. K., Sugai, G., & Boland, J. B. (2004). The School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET): A research instrument for assessing school-wide positive behavior support. <i>Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions</i>, 6(1), 3-12.</p>	<p>This study examined the psychometric properties of an assessment tool to be used to measure implementation and effects of school-wide positive behavior support (PBIS) procedures. The instrument is called the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET). It consists of 28-items organized into seven subscales based on the key features of school-wide PBIS.</p> <p>The seven key features of SWPBIS are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School-wide behavioral expectations are defined; 2. These expectations are taught to all children in the school; 3. Rewards are provided for following the expectations; 4. A consistently implemented continuum of consequences for problem behavior is put in place; 5. Problem behavior patterns are monitored and the information is used for ongoing decision-making; 6. An administrator actively supports and is involved in the effort; and 7. The school district provides support to the school in the form of functional policies, staff training opportunities, and data collection options. 	<p>N= 45 elementary and middle schools</p> <p>N=8 elementary schools used for test-retest reliability</p> <p>N=17 elementary schools used for inter-observer agreement</p> <p>N=31 schools used to determine construct validity (5 middle schools, 26 elementary schools)</p> <p>N=13 schools participated in the pre-posttest for sensitivity (3 middle schools and 10</p>	<p>The instrument was found to be very reliable ($r=0.96$). The test-retest's reliability averaged 97.3% and the average inter-observer agreement was 99%.</p> <p>To test construct validity, SET score were compared to EBSSAS scores (another measure of school-wide behavior support systems with 15-items) completed during the same time period. The SET is conducted by an external observer whereas the EBSSAS is completed by the faculty and staff members of the school and includes questions about parental participation and "booster training". The total scores were found to be correlated with a Pearson $r=0.75$.</p> <p>To test for sensitivity, 25 schools implemented a school-wide PBIS procedures. Thirteen (13) of the schools participated in a SET evaluation prior to implementing the procedures and again 6-24 months after completing the training. A paired t-test comparing pre-SET and post-SET mean scores showed that the SET is sensitive to implementation changes</p>

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Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness
		elementary schools)	meaning scores do change over time once school-wide PBIS is implemented.
<p>Nelson, L. P., McMahan, S. K., & Torres, T. (2012). The Impact of a Junior High School Community Intervention Project: Moving beyond the Testing Juggernaut and into a Community of Creative Learners. <i>School Community Journal</i>, 22(1), 125-144.</p>	<p>This was a 2-year mixed-methods study of a community partnership initiative influence on attendance at an urban junior high school using a quasi-experimental design.</p> <p>The researchers wanted to demonstrate how attendance, dropout rates and students attitudes could be changed by a school-community intervention project, what type of project programs were most successful in changing the school climate and what factors should be considered when implementing and sustaining a new community-school partnership.</p> <p>The school's administration changed in the second year. The new administrator focused on test scores and the community-school partnership suffered. The momentum achieved in the first year was stalled or decreased in the second year.</p> <p>General findings of the study showed that 58% of the students stated that they did not attend school because they disapproved of existing school rules and routines, followed by dislike of teachers 12% and dislike of peers 8%.</p>	<p>The intervention school consisted of N=758 7th and 8th grade students from a school who's population was economically disadvantages and mainly ethnic minorities with a school attendance rate of 94.6%. The comparison school was demographically similar and consists of N=428 7th and 8th graders with a 95% attendance rate.</p> <p>During the two-year intervention cycle the qualitative portion of the study included individual interviews, student focus groups and individual student reflections. The third-year follow up</p>	<p>A three factor ANCOVA (gender x ethnicity x time) was applied to this mixed model repeated measures design in order to increase the ratio of variance explained by the other independent factors. The between-subjects factors were gender and ethnicity, while the within-subject factors were the three independent time measures. There was a significantly positive change in climate during year one ($p < 0.001$) and a significantly strong negative change in student attitude/climate in year 2 ($p < 0.001$).</p> <p>The attendance rates increased at the intervention site during year one from 94.6% to 96.6% and then decreased to 93.9% in year two. There was little variability in the attendance rates at the control site.</p>



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Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness
<p>Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2004). Getting students to school: Using family and community involvement to reduce chronic absenteeism. <i>School Community Journal</i>, 14(2), 39-56.</p>	<p>As part of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University, thirty-nine schools provided information on their rates of chronic absenteeism and the activities they've implemented to combat it. Respondents were asked if they had implemented various strategies from a list provided (caregiver practices, communication practices, collaborating with the community, encouraging activities). They were then asked to rate the effectiveness of the strategy on a four-point scale.</p>	<p>included interviews with key students (N=2), staff (N=4) and faculty (N=3).</p> <p>N=39 schools (10 middle schools and 29 elementary schools)</p>	<p>Providing awards and incentives was reported to be one of the most frequently implemented practices and the most effective ($\bar{X} = 2.45$). Celebrating excellent attendance was found to have a strong effect on lowering the rate of chronic absenteeism ($\beta = -0.209, p \leq 0.05$). Also, celebrating good attendance continued to reduce students' chronic absenteeism after its effects on the previous year's rates were accounted for.</p>



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Best/Promising Practices

Promising Practice	Source(s)	Comments/Limitations
Incentives are an effective tool in encouraging positive behavioral change in students	Balfanz, R. & Byrnes, V. (2013). <i>Meeting the challenge of combating chronic absenteeism: Impact of the NYC Mayor’s Interagency Task Force on Chronic Absenteeism and School Attendance and its implications for other cities</i> . Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins School of Education. http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NYC-Chronic-Absenteeism-Impact-Report.pdf	The evaluation discussed this initiative but it did not partition out its effectiveness on students’ or school outcomes. Survey results from principals and mentors showed that they believed the incentives were an effective tool in encouraging positive behavioral change in students. The task force’s website offers a toolkit with information on how to implement an incentive program in a middle school. http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/html/resources/incentives.shtml No specifics on sample size, impact/effectiveness or implementation.