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The Nonprofit Evaluation Support Program (NESP) is a collaborative effort between two University of North Carolina Greensboro organizations – The SERVE Center and The Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Services (OAERS). NESP's mission is to provide program evaluation services and program evaluation capacity building support to nonprofit and community-based organizations while providing authentic learning experiences for future leaders in the field of program evaluation.



The SERVE Center at The University of North Carolina Greensboro is a university-based research, development, dissemination, evaluation, and technical assistance center. For more than 24 years, SERVE Center has worked to improve K-12 education by providing evidence-based resources and customized technical assistance to policymakers and practitioners.



The University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) is one of the sixteen university campuses of The University of North Carolina. UNCG holds two classifications from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as a "research university with high research activity" and for "community engagement" in curriculum, outreach, and partnerships.

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Communities In Schools of North Carolina

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Table of Contents

Overview	1
CISNC Introduction	1
Using Evidenced-Based Strategies	1
Problem/Rationale	
Purpose	3
Implementation Plan	
Uses	3
Audiences	
Materials/Equipment/Space	3
Time	
Sample Intervention – <i>Breakfast Club</i>	4
Suggested Supplemental Activities	
Resources	
Measuring Success	
Appendices	
A. References	A-11
B. Research Alignment	



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).

CISNC uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework as the basis for its practices. RTI is a multitiered framework of academic and behavioral interventions that require school staff to make instructional decisions based on data. This document focuses on a Tier Two strategy. Tier Two strategies typically focus on students who have not responded to Tier One supports and include supplemental instruction and interventions that are periodically monitored to ensure students are responding to the supports. Tier Two supports are targeted, structured, explicit, and can take place in small groups or general education classrooms.

CISNC calls for the use of evidence-based interventions versus generally researched practices. The National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) defines evidence-based interventions as:



... an intervention for which data from scientific, rigorous research studies have demonstrated (or empirically validated) the efficacy of the intervention. Applying findings from experimental studies, single-case studies, or strong quasi-experimental studies, an evidence-based intervention improves student learning beyond what is expected without that intervention (Center on Response to Intervention [Center on RTI] at American Institutes for Research and the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII), 2014, p. 4).

A research based curricula "may" incorporate strategies that have been generally researched, but not studied using a rigorous research design. The following suggestion is based on interventions that have been studied using a scientific, rigorous research design. When incorporated with fidelity and as part of a systematic process, students should positively respond to these strategies.

This document is written to provide schools with strategies to be used with Tier Two targeted students who are chronically absent or are at risk of chronic absenteeism. In the context of our review, we propose two strategies designed to reduce student absenteeism:

- Breakfast Club
- Attendance Monitoring

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, Gwynne, Moore, & de la Torre, 2014).

Chronic absenteeism is one of the major problems faced by teachers and administrators. 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).

Monitoring attendance daily is the first step schools can take to identify students who may experience chronic absenteeism. Schools will then need to explore reasons students are absent from schools in order to find solutions to reduce absenteeism.

Student absenteeism may fall into three categories:

1. those who cannot attend school,



- 2. those who will not attend school, and
- 3. those who do not attend school (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

Students' academic achievement is most strongly associated with high family expectations for success as well as constant communication with students about their school activities (Castro et al., 2015). Structured school-family partnership programs that equip families to help their child academically, encourage greater participation in their child's academic journey, and connect with families at all income and education levels will attract families who are unlikely to become involved on their own (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Similarly, 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).

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a process for planning, implementing, and evaluating a Breakfast Club program in high schools to provide students with support, academic behaviors, and incentives for attending school regularly and on time.

Implementation Plan

Uses

Student Support Specialists can use the information provided in this guide to develop a "Breakfast Club" targeted for students who are chronically absent or have attendance patterns that indicate the risk of becoming chronically absent.

Audiences

The primary audience is the Student Support Specialist to share with the School Attendance Team and school staff who may be interested in initiating and/or leading a "Breakfast Club".

Materials/Equipment/Space

- Staff willing to lead "Breakfast Club"
- Dedicated space to hold "Breakfast Club"
- Resources to pay for breakfast for all students (including those who may not qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals)
- Various mini lessons related to Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
- Incentives
- · Community Volunteers to participate in monthly agenda



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

Time

The "Breakfast Club" can be initiated at any time during the school year.

The Student Support Specialist will need to dedicate time to recruit "Breakfast Club" leaders, assist with the planning of the club, assist with scheduling community volunteers, attend club meetings periodically, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the "Breakfast Club".

Sample Intervention - Breakfast Club

Activity	Lead Responsibility	Process Notes
Set Goals for a	Student Support	Student Support Specialist should work with the School
"Breakfast Club"	Specialist with School	Attendance Team plan a "Breakfast Club" as a strategy
program	Attendance Team	to be used to increase attendance levels.
program	Attenuance ream	to be used to increase attenuance levels.
Identify the intended outcomes for the "Breakfast Club" program.		"Breakfast Clubs" are often associated as before school meals for students who qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. As students age and become more concerned with socioeconomic status, they become increasingly fearful of being associated with the need to take advantage of Free and Reduced-Price Meal plans, and thus may opt to skip meals. However, a "Breakfast Club" that is implemented as a club that provides more than a morning meal can serve as a successful strategy to: - Incentivize students to increase attendance Provide all students identified to participate in the club with a healthy breakfast (regardless of Free and Reduced-Price Meal eligibility), thus giving adolescents the nutrition they need to start the day right.
		 Give students the opportunity to engage with other students and develop social skills and potentially form social bonds. Give students the opportunity to connect with
		caring adult(s).
		- Provide students with additional opportunities and supports to engage in activities that promote the development of needed academic and life skills.
		During your goal-setting phase, consider the commitment of staff time, community support, and the resources available to support the breadth of activities that will be needed to meet the outcomes you are attempting to achieve. "Breakfast Club" meetings should take place at least twice per week or more at a



Activity	Lead Responsibility	Process Notes
		set time before school starts.
		Consider how much time is needed for student to have their breakfast and to engage in some purposeful discussion or activity.
		When setting the time, consider transportation. - How can the school ensure that students who most need to be in a "Breakfast Club" are not penalized because of lack of transportation? O If transportation is becomes a barrier, consider setting up a "Lunch Club" for those who cannot make the "Breakfast Club"
		Note: the caveat for being in the club is that students must be on time for school in the morning (whether for the breakfast or the lunch club).
Identify Students	Student Support Specialist with School Attendance Team	Use data to identify students who may benefit from participation in a "Breakfast Club" program. Consider: - Chronic absence (students who missed 10% or more of school in the prior year). - Students who missed 2 days in the first two weeks of school, 2-3 days in the first month, or four days in the first 8 weeks of school. - Students in transitional grades (e.g., 6th grade). - Discipline referrals.
		Note: The Student Support Specialist will need to sign a confidentiality agreement with the school to view individual student data. See sample confidentiality form at http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Confi-Agreement-CBO-5-4-11.pdf
Identify the Structure for the Club	Student Support Specialist with School Attendance Team and "Breakfast Club"	As noted previously, "Breakfast Club" meetings should take place at least twice per week at a set time before school starts.
	Leader(s)	Consider how much time is needed for students to have their breakfast and to engage in <u>purposeful</u> discussion or activity.
		When setting the time, consider transportation. - How can the school ensure that students who most need to be in a "Breakfast Club" are not penalized because of lack of transportation? O If transportation becomes a barrier, consider setting up a "Lunch Club" for those who cannot make the "Breakfast Club".



Activity	Lead Responsibility	Process Notes
		Note: the caveat for being in either club is that students must be on time for school the morning of the club
		(whether for the breakfast or the lunch club).
		Note: Some schools set guidelines requiring students to be in attendance and on time two or three consecutive
		days prior to club day to be able to participate. The
		planning team will want to set and communicate any
		policies regarding club attendance. Keep in mind the needs of the students when setting policies. For
		example, if demographic data and other student
		records indicate there is a strong chance that poor
		morning routines or lack of adequate meals could be a
		contributor to student's absenteeism (e.g., those in
		extremely low income families or homeless students)
		will policies cause more harm to the student and
		potentially unravel the intended outcomes of the
Identify and Provide	Student Support	program? - Coordinate adequate space for the "Breakfast Club"
Resources to Connect	Specialist and	to be held.
and Engage with	"Breakfast Club"	- Coordinate with school and community to provide
Students	Leader(s)	breakfast.
		- Coordinate with "Breakfast Club" Leader(s) to
		provide mini lessons over breakfast.
		Plan topics in advance.
		 Lessons may be start with a prompt to get students to talk about reasons they are
		frequently absent or late.
		These prompts are intended to
		find out why students do not or
		will not attend school (e.g.,
		anxieties related to school
		performance, bullying, or family issues).
		Leader(s) should be prepared to
		allow students to speak without
		being judgmental.
		Leader(s) may need to explore issues with some students
		individually, if there are
		indications of issues the student
		may not want to discuss within
		the group.
		Leader(s) will need to balance
		discretion with the need to share
		student issues with other school
		staff.
		 Developing a trusting relationship with students will be
		important to the success of the
		program.
	1	1



Activity	Lead Responsibility	Process Notes
		 Embed teachable moments into discussions (e.g., some strategies for developing evening and morning routines in order to get ready for school on time, how to resolve conflict, how to address bullying, time management skills, study skills, etc.) Teachable moments should be purposeful, but not forced, rather easily integrated into the discussion of the day. Allow students to provide input into the topics. Have students make a list of a dozen topics and synthesize to come up with the top topics, or do a whole group activity by brainstorming a list then having students vote on the top 10 or so topics. Develop comradery and club goals for school attendance. Have students brainstorm ways in which they can support each other to develop good habits for getting to school regularly and on time. Have students brainstorm how they can support each other or motivate each other when school seems overwhelming. Invite someone from the community to meetings (perhaps once a month) to speak on a topic (e.g., could invite business leaders in to talk about career opportunities or nonprofits to talk about service learning opportunities). Encourage community speakers to bring giveaways for students or to plan a field trip for students to
Setting Student Goals	Student Support Specialist	visit onsite. In the early weeks of the "Breakfast Club" meet with each student individually to set personal attendance/behavioral goals. - Work with students individually to develop personal strategies for meeting goals. - Meet with student and parents together to share student's personal goals.



Activity	Lead Responsibility	Process Notes
		necessary in conjunction with participation in the "Breakfast Club" (e.g., Attendance Buddy, Attendance Contract, etc.) - Track daily student attendance. Follow-up immediately with absent students and families in a positive way. For example, check in to make sure that everything is alright with student rather than to reprimand for missed school day.
Monitor Progress	Student Support Specialist	 Work with "Breakfast Club" Leader(s) to understand students' issues related to attendance. Work with leader to continue to revise mini lessons and resources needed. Plan to attend and observe a club meeting at least monthly. Work with the School Attendance Team to track student progress. Assess student data quarterly. Award quarterly certificates to students with perfect attendance or who have shown significant improvement. Organize an end of semester celebration for meeting attendance goals. Idenitfy which students may need to continue with the "Breakfast Club" and which students can transition out of the club.

Adapted from Count Me In! www.countmeinmaine.org

Suggested Supplemental Activities

Some additional Tier Two strategies to foster regular attendance include:

- Initiate an Attendance Buddy program.
- Initiate additional before school activities such as athletics (early morning basketball) and clubs to motivate students to come to school early.
- Help families and students connect with other students to travel to school together.
- Initiate student morning meet and greet program.
- Conduct daily morning attendance monitoring and follow up with families when students are absent.
- Engage families in setting student attendance goals and developing family strategies to help students get to school.



Resources

The following optional resources will provide additional information and suggestions for enhancing or extending activities. 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/

The Power of Positive Connections

http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/assessments/power-positive-connections-toolkit/

Sending the Right Message about Attendance to Parents and Students

http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-

<u>content/uploads/2013/04/Sending-the-Right-Message-about-Attendance-students.pdf</u>

Key Attendance Messages

http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/wp-

content/uploads/2014/03/AAMMessages 2014.pdf

Engage Students and Families with Personalized Outreach

http://www.attendanceworks.org/engage-students-and-families-with-

personalized-outreach/

Handouts for Parents

http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/parent-handouts/

National PTA

Tips for Teachers on Family Engagement http://www.pta.org/

National Mentoring Partnership

Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring: A Checklist for Mentoring Programs. http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring 1225.pdf

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Measuring Success

Identifying outcomes and collecting data to measure the success of the intervention can help track the quality of implementation as well as the effectiveness of the intervention.

Students

Track individual student attendance data and chart (e.g., baseline data; monthly attendance monthly; interventions/supports provided).

• Track individual student attendance data on days of Breakfast Club days versus non club days.

Assess students' attitudes and knowledge about the importance of school attendance. Ask:

- Why they think coming to school every day will help them to do better in school.
- What they might miss out on when not at school.
- To name some responsibilities that comes with being a student.
- To identify things they can do to prepare for school and to arrive on time.

Assess impact of learning activities (e.g., Career camp, service learning projects, etc.) on:

- Attitudes about going to school.
- Feelings of connectedness/belongingness at school.
- Importance of setting and meeting personal goals.
- Academic progress.

Collect student survey data on their impressions of the "Breakfast Club".

Club Leaders

Ask Club Leaders:

• About their experiences and perceived benefits for students and staff, as well as, challenges in implementing the program.



Appendices

- A. References
- **B.** Research Alignment



Appendix A: References

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Appendix B: Research Alignment

Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
	0.5	100 1 00		m1 .
DeSocio, J., VanCura, M.,	This article assessed the	103 students; 29	For analysis, unable to	The intervention was
Nelson, L. A., Hewitt, G., Kitzman, H., & Cole, R.	effectiveness of a	in the intervention	enroll group and intervention were	delivered from January through June.
(2007). Engaging truant	truancy intervention, using mentored	group, 37 in the "unable to enroll"	combined and called	diffougii juffe.
adolescents: results from a	relationships with	group, and 37 in	"intent to treat".	Mentors participated in
multifaceted intervention	teachers and school-	the control group.	Students in the intent	an orientation in
pilot. <i>Preventing School</i>	based health services,	the control group.	to treat group were	preparation for the
Failure: Alternative	on youth problems of		significantly more	intervention. Mentors
Education for Children and	high absenteeism and		likely to remain in	facilitated two after-
Youth, 51(3), 3-11.	school engagement.		school than were	school tutoring sessions
			students in the control	weekly to assist students
	Student selection was		group, p = .027.	with homework and
	determined by a history			encourage positive peer
	of 15 or more unexcused		After the third grading	relationships.
	absences.		period, (one period	
			after intervention),	
	Teachers were selected		students who received	
	as mentors based on		the intervention had	
	their enthusiasm for		significantly fewer	
	working with students		absences from least-	
	and their positive beliefs		missed classes than	
	and ideas about helping		students in unable to	
	students. Their primary role was to build		enroll or control	
	relationships with		groups, p = .004; and significantly fewer	
	students to promote		absences from most-	
	students to promote		absences if our most-	



Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
	self-development and school engagement.		missed classes than students in the other groups, p = .047.	
	The mission of the school-based health center (SBHC) was to provide comprehensive health services to students.			
	Students in the intervention group received access to the SBHC and had teachers as mentors.			
Fantuzzo, J., Grim, S., & Hazan, H. (2005). Project START: An evaluation of a community-wide school-based intervention to reduce truancy. <i>Psychology in the Schools</i> , 42(6), 657-	The purpose of the present study was to conduct an evaluation of a citywide implementation of Project START. Project START (Stop	567 truant students from elementary, middle and high school, in one school district.	Unexcused absences were measured at four time periods: baseline, 0-30 days, 30-60 days, and 1 yr post court. Truants referred to	Common to both community-based family court and traditional family court interventions are the following basic steps: (a) referred truants and
667.	Truancy And Recommend Treatment) is a collaborative interagency effort including the city school		both types of court demonstrated significant reductions in absence rates between baseline and	their legal guardians are summoned to family court, (b) each case is reviewed by a court master, who may require



Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
	district, judicial system,		30 days post	multiple court visits, (c)
	Department of Human		disposition and	the court master
	Services, and		evidenced significantly	determines the
	community social		lower absence rates	disposition of the case
	service organizations to		during this period	and orders the next
	reduce truancy through		compared to	steps, and (d) court
	community-based		nonreferred truants.	sanctions are in place if
	interventions.		During the third period, truants	parents do not comply, including involvement of
	The students were		referred to community-	children's protective
	chosen for the		based court continued	services.
	intervention if they had		to demonstrate an	Services.
	a history of 25 or more		absence rate	The community based
	unexcused absences and			court plan also involved
	a pattern of attendance		baseline. At 1 year post	two major elements: the
	problems.		court, the community-	location of court
	P		based court students	proceedings and the
	Students were placed in		returned to baseline	involvement of
	three groups:		while traditional and	community-based service
	multidimensional,		nonreferred students	providers. Courtrooms
	community-based		had an increase in	were created within
	family court (Project		unexcused absences.	designated school
	START), traditional, one			buildings so barriers to
	dimensional family			court participation were
	court, and nonreferred			reduced. Also,
	truants. Each group			caseworkers from
	contained 189 students.			service organizations were present in the



Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
				community-based court to promote family utilization of community services. Traditional family court required truants and families to attend the central city municipal family court and no community-based service providers participated in
Marvul, J. N. (2012). If you build it, they will come: A successful truancy intervention program in a small high school. <i>Urban Education</i> , 47(1), 144-169.	To assess whether a 5 month program involving attendance monitoring, sports participation and a moral character class would reduce absenteeism. Students were randomly assigned to intervention and control groups.	40 students.	The intervention group had less absences than control students, 7.35 vs. 21.85, p < .01; showed more positive attitudes toward education, 4.2 vs. 3.47, p < .01; had higher educational expectations, 6 vs 4.65, p < .05; and had higher emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, p < .01.	the court proceedings. The intervention included three major components: monitoring of attendance and parent notification when a student was absent, tardy or truant, participation in a moral character class, and participation in club sports. A flag football club and a basketball team were formed for intervention students.



Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
				An attendance outreach program began and every school day calls were made to the homes of intervention students to discuss absences, tardies, class cutting and unacceptable behaviors. Parents were also told about triumphs and positives in the students' lives. Intervention students learned the six pillars of moral character, wrote journal that responded to everyday moral dilemmas, prepared oral presentations on moral issues and discussed situations that raised ethical and moral concerns.



Best/Promising Practices

Promising Practice	Source(s)	Comments/Limitations
Attendance Buddies,	Count Me In!	The purpose of these strategies is to foster a caring relationship
Invisible Mentors or	Examples of	between students and staff. School staff check-in daily with students,
"Follow the kid	attendance strategies	call home at each absence, and connect when necessary, with staff
Program"	and interventions: A	members who can assist with referring students and families to needed
	comprehensive data-	resources. Another option for older students is to give them a list of
	driven approach.	names and let them choose the staff they will check-in with every day.
	<u>www.countmeinmain</u>	
	<u>e.org</u>	Activities:
		Analyze and identify at-risk students.
		Identify staff to oversee the program.
		Recruit attendance buddies or invisible mentors (consider those
		with natural connections, common interests or ease of access to the
		student).
		Mentor small groups of students.
		Results showed increased student engagement, increased attendance
D. I.C. (Cl. I	C . M I I	and decreased discipline referrals.
Breakfast Club	Count Me In!	Small groups of students meet with school staff over breakfast every
	Examples of	day or multiple times a week before class begins. Community
	attendance strategies	volunteers can join the group once a week.
	and interventions: A	A
	comprehensive data-	Activities:
	driven approach. www.countmeinmain	Staff and community volunteers analyze data and identify at risk students.
	e.org	Adults check-in/check-out with students.
		Work with students to have them design both fun as well as formal
		activities.



Promising Practice	Source(s)	Comments/Limitations
High School student mentors for the Elementary School students	Count Me In! Examples of attendance strategies and interventions: A comprehensive data- driven approach. www.countmeinmain. org	Results showed increased attendance and on-time arrival for targeted students. Children also developed relationships with staff members/volunteers who led the breakfast club group. The program was modeled after Big Brothers Big Sisters. High school "Bigs" meet with their respective "Littles" one-on-one once a week for 50-60 minutes during the regular school day. Activities: Analyze data, identify at-risk students. Speak to elementary students and their families. Recruit high school students who have good attendance. High school students complete application and are interviewed by school counselors. Provide 1 hour training for high school students. Match students based on interest. Arrange transportation between high school and elementary school. Counselors check-in with high school students and provide support as needed. Results showed increased attendance and engagement for both elementary and high school students, a decrease in discipline referrals, and most of the high school students continue with their "Little" until graduation.

