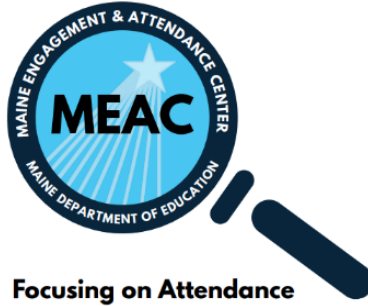




## Maine Engagement and Attendance Center (MEAC)

### Office Hour #9 Follow-up Notes

- Session #9; May 21 – Reflect, Recognize, and Reset
  - With: *Count ME In!* Jess Anderson
    - May 21, 2026, 3:30-4:30

Please take 5 minutes to complete the MEAC year-end survey  
<https://forms.office.com/g/MaThsP70rb>

**Recording:** To see the MEAC Office Hour Recording, please visit the MEAC webpage:  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/meac>

Video will be posted shortly.

#### Summary of Session:

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Our final MEAC Office Hour session for the 2025-2026 school year focused on **reflecting on attendance practices and planning for next year**. Jessica Anderson from *Count Me In* facilitated the session, reviewing key strategies discussed throughout the year's MEAC OH series, including **relationship building, early intervention, data tracking, and family engagement**. Participants shared successful practices they had implemented, such as **welcoming committees, quarterly parent Zoom meetings, party bus visits to families, and creative recognition systems using supplies or trophies**. The group discussed the **importance of early identification of attendance issues**, with research showing impacts from missing as little as 3-7% of school time, and emphasized the **need for multi-layered approaches involving staff from**

various roles, including bus drivers and custodians. Participants reflected on what had "rocked" or been successful, what practices they wanted to "stick with," and what they should "leaf (leave) behind" from the current year, with particular attention to **making warm handoffs for students transitioning between grades or schools.**

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### MEAC Year-End Reflection Meeting

This was the final MEAC office hour session for the '25-'26 school year, focused on reflecting on the year's work and planning for next year. Sarah announced that **next year's series would be renamed to "MEAC Attendance Support Series"** based on feedback that "office hours" implied drop-in consultations rather than the structured practical approach taken.

### Student-Staff Relationship Building Practices

Earlier in the year, Jess Anderson led a session reviewing Tier 1 practices focused on building student-staff relationships and creating safe school environments. She discussed strategies including **threshold greetings, relationship mapping, and school climate surveys**, noting that post-pandemic school climate is more strongly associated with attendance than before. The group shared examples of relationship-building practices, with Valerie mentioning Washburn's **welcoming committee that greets students at multiple entry points in the morning.**

### Student Attendance Intervention Strategies

Jessica discussed the **importance of early intervention** for student attendance, noting that academic impacts can be seen when students miss between 3-7% of school time. She highlighted the **need for collaboration across staff members, including support staff like nurses, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, and custodians**, to address attendance challenges. The group discussed **using data tools to track attendance, behavior, and academics**, with Jessica mentioning a new *Count Me In* data tool for Infinite Campus and a risk screening tool developed by Augusta School District. Participants shared their experiences monitoring attendance data, with Amy and Sue describing how they **incorporate attendance tracking into regular meetings and focus on building parent engagement.**

### Building Bridges Family Engagement Framework

Julie announced that the **Maine Department of Education will publish a new *Building Bridges framework* for family engagement**, which will be celebrated at the **Educator Summit on July 29th**. Several participants shared family engagement initiatives they had implemented, including Jennifer's **outreach work with kindergarten classrooms**, Sarah's description of Zippel Elementary's **partnership with the Elks Club for a barbecue event**, and Sue's story about a

successful **party bus visit to families before school started**. Michelle described their **quarterly parent Zoom meetings**, which are *strategically timed around lunch and recorded for parents who miss them*, **covering topics like attendance, guidance, and mental health resources**.

### **Attendance and Family Engagement Strategies**

The meeting focused on discussing attendance strategies and family engagement approaches. Michelle shared details about her school's **parent engagement meetings**, which involve **sending mass emails to stakeholders requesting short presentations and using Google Slides to share information during Zoom meetings**. The group reviewed a slide deck on attendance recognition and acknowledgment strategies (SEE Courtney Angelosante's PBIS slide deck- in shared resources), with participants identifying successful practices including **tiered attendance support systems** and **creative recognition methods** like **using repurposed trophies and 'prizes' from the supply closet**. The discussion concluded with participants **reflecting** on what had worked well ("**rocked**"), what to continue doing ("**stick** with"), and what to "leave (**leaf**) behind", while also emphasizing the importance of warm handoffs for students transitioning between grade levels or schools.

### **Next steps over the summer / Ideas for starting the fall STRONG:**

- \* Consider **implementing or continuing creative family engagement activities** (e.g., party bus, community dinners, resource fairs, Regulated Classroom events) to boost attendance and family-school connections.
- \* Review and **utilize the new Count Me In data tool** (when available) for tracking attendance, especially for schools using Infinite Campus.
- \* Review the **Building Bridges Family Engagement Framework** (to be published by the Maine Department of Education and released at the 2026 Maine Ed Summit, July 29<sup>th</sup>) and consider integrating its recommendations into attendance and engagement strategies.
- \* Plan and execute **warm handoffs for students/families at risk of chronic absence or in transition between grades/levels before the end of the school year**.
- \* **Review current attendance protocols** and **clarify expectations and routines**, especially for students and families in transition (e.g., between elementary and middle school, or other key transitions).
- \* Identify and **stop practices that are ineffective or not yielding results** in improving attendance for the next school year.
- \* **Send positive messages** or have **positive contact** with students/families **on the cusp** of chronic absence to encourage continued attendance through the end of the year.

Please take less than 5 minutes to complete the year-end survey

<https://forms.office.com/g/MaThsP70rb>

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**RESOURCE SHARED:**

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**Year in Review Slide deck from *Count ME In*** (Jess Anderson):

Will be added to the MEAC web page ASAP.

**PBIS Slide deck- attendance recognition and acknowledgment strategies** (Courtney Angelosante):

[Attendance - Google Slides](#)

**Family/ Caregiver Communications** from Maine Connections Academy (MCA):

[Parent LL March 2026 - Google Slides](#)

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## Calendar of Attendance Strategies for Maine

students, families, educators, administrators, & community partners

| Month | Strategy                                                      | Student Attendance Actions                                | Family Attendance Actions          | Educator Attendance Actions                                                      | Administrator Attendance Actions                                          | Community Partner Attendance Actions |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| May   | Create emotionally and physically safe environments (REFOCUS) | Reflect on this year's climate and suggest improvements   | Attend end-of-year family meetings | Gather student feedback on safety and belonging. Adjust strategies for next year | Review attendance data. Set goals for next year. Plan for summer supports | Help organize transition supports    |
| June  | Reflect, Recognize, and Reset                                 | Celebrate attendance progress and set goals for next year | Attend summer planning meetings    | Reflect on attendance strategies                                                 | Gather family feedback related to attendance efforts. <b>CELEBRATE!</b>   | Prepare summer supports and outreach |

- The next MEAC meeting will be determined based on survey results

### Contact Information for 2025-2026 Content Experts

- Connect – with [Leslie Monroy of \*Mano en Mano\*](#) to discuss Engaging families through proactive, supportive outreach. [Mano en Mano's website](#)

- [Imonroy@manomaine.org](mailto:Imonroy@manomaine.org)
- Connect with **Courtney Angelosante (PBIS)** for support with implementing positive recognition and motivation strategies
  - [courtney.angelosante@maine.edu](mailto:courtney.angelosante@maine.edu)
- Connect with **Rita Pello, Office of Fed. Programming Title 1- Family Engagement** for support in **improving attendance through family and community partnerships**
  - [Rita.Pello@maine.gov](mailto:Rita.Pello@maine.gov)
- Connect with **Rebecca Honig, of Parent Powered** for support in **developing and implementing consistent growth-focused attendance messaging**
  - [rebecca.honig@parentpowered.com](mailto:rebecca.honig@parentpowered.com)
- Connect with **Jess Anderson of Count ME In!** for support in **establishing early warning systems and team-based responses**
  - [janderson@countmeinmaine.org](mailto:janderson@countmeinmaine.org)
- Connect with **Jim Boothby** for support in **building routine, relationships, and relevance**
  - [Jaboot6280@gmail.com](mailto:Jaboot6280@gmail.com)
- Connect with **Stacy Barlow** to explore Creating a Culture of Care in Schools using Restorative Practices: [Creating a Culture of Care: Training Sequence](#)
  - [Stacy.barlow@maine.gov](mailto:Stacy.barlow@maine.gov)
- Connect with **Aubrie Howard** for **school climate supports**
  - [Aubrie.howard@maine.gov](mailto:Aubrie.howard@maine.gov)
- Connect with **Signe Lynch** for student / McKinney-Vento supports
  - [signe.lynch@maine.gov](mailto:signe.lynch@maine.gov)

➤ **Sign up for the CMI (Count ME In!) Newsletter**

[Sign up for e-Newsletters HERE](#)

***Tips from PREVIOUS MEAC Office Hours:***

- **Greet students daily at the door, by name, in an engaged and unbusy manner:**

- Develop your own 'Greeting at the Door' Routine and visual [Brain-based Benefits of Greeting Students at the Door](#)
- **Establish morning meetings** or advisory periods
  - Consistency throughout the school, with everyone agreeing to participate
  - Classroom Routines: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/beh1/cresource/q2/p06/>
- Ask students in focus groups how **relevant and connected** they feel to **instruction**
  - Link lessons to locally relevant issues
  - [Relevant, Engaging Learning - Attendance Works](#)
- Create a system to **assist students** in **setting their own attendance goals**. Provide their personal attendance **data** to help guide this conversation.
- Use **project-based learning** with **student input**
  - [Research Briefs - Lucas Education Research](#)
- Foster TIER 1 practices through **community partnerships**
- Learn more about BARR
  - [www.barrcenter.org](http://www.barrcenter.org)
- **Connect with Jim Boothby** for support in **building routine, relationships, and relevance** OR to **visit a BARR school**
  - [jaboot6280@gmail.com](mailto:jaboot6280@gmail.com)
- **Connect with Aubrie Howard** for **school climate supports**
  - [Aubrie.Howard@maine.gov](mailto:Aubrie.Howard@maine.gov)
- **Connect with Signe Lynch** for **student / McKinney-Vento supports**
  - [Signe.Lynch@maine.gov](mailto:Signe.Lynch@maine.gov)
- **Connect with Stacy Barlow** to explore **Creating a Culture of Care in Schools using Restorative Practices**: [Creating a Culture of Care: Training Sequence](#)
  - [Stacey.Barlow@maine.gov](mailto:Stacey.Barlow@maine.gov)

The Maine Engagement and Attendance Team is part of the Maine DOE Office of School and Student Supports (O3S). For further assistance, please contact Maine DOE O3S Specialist Sarah Nelson at [Sarah.Nelson@maine.gov](mailto:Sarah.Nelson@maine.gov).



**Remember... we each hold a vital role in increasing attendance.**

**What can YOU focus on today to support increased attendance in Maine's schools tomorrow?**



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