

Maine Engagement and Attendance Center (MEAC) Office Hour #6 Follow-up Notes



- Session #6: Feb. 26 – Implementing positive recognition and motivation strategies w/
Courtney Angelosante, PBIS
 - Feb. 26, 2026, 3:30-4:30

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

Video recording will be posted as soon as possible.

Summary of Session:

During our sixth MEAC office hours session, we learned from **Courtney Angelosante**, who discussed **student attendance, positive recognition, and motivation using the PBIS framework** as a foundation. The importance of sharing diverse perspectives and resources was emphasized, encouraging participants to focus on what would impact their local communities.

Addressing Absenteeism: Universal Strategies:

Courtney discussed the complexity of addressing absenteeism, emphasizing the need for a dynamic and nuanced approach. She highlighted the importance of having a variety of tools and skills for data analysis, understanding evidence-based practices, and providing support for students with barriers to attendance. Courtney outlined her goal of discussing universal strategies to encourage regular school attendance.

Enhancing Student Attendance Strategies:

Courtney discussed strategies for improving student attendance and explained various definitions related to attendance issues. She introduced the PBIS framework as a helpful tool for organizing and implementing evidence-based practices to address attendance challenges. Courtney shared resources, including guidance documents and newsletters, that could assist schools in enhancing attendance and creating a welcoming classroom environment. She also highlighted the importance of addressing barriers to attendance, such as transportation issues,

and emphasized the need for intentional strategies to promote student connection and belonging. **(These are found in her slide deck)**

Systemic Barriers to Student Attendance:

Sarah emphasized the importance of addressing systemic barriers to improve student attendance, highlighting the need for comprehensive changes rather than focusing on individual students. She discussed the concept of "being there" and the significance of acknowledging students' efforts and presence, which contributes to their sense of belonging and connectedness. Sarah also touched on the importance of recognizing staff efforts to maintain a positive school environment, encouraging attendees to share effective strategies for staff acknowledgment.

Staff Recognition and Appreciation Initiatives:

The meeting focused on recognition and appreciation in schools. One participant shared her experience working in child protective services and the impact of consistent positive interactions with students. Another presented the RSU22 district initiative "Leaders Among Us," which includes monthly staff nominations, prizes donated by community partners, and annual leader awards. The group discussed the importance of formal and informal acknowledgment systems for staff, emphasizing the value of peer-to-peer recognition and addressing staff needs beyond work-related challenges.

Student Attendance Improvement Strategies:

Sarah and Courtney discussed **strategies for improving student attendance, emphasizing the importance of community involvement and supportive measures rather than punitive approaches**. Courtney shared various attendance recognition systems, such as classroom banners, attendance bracelets, and acknowledgment ceremonies, and highlighted the need for clear communication about attendance goals. She also introduced a logic model for implementing positive behavior interventions and suggested creating supportive routines for families to facilitate better attendance. Sarah encouraged participants to reach out to other schools for ideas. The following schools were suggested as opportunities for networking to share positive impact with attendance challenges:

- Ella P Burr School: **Address:** 23 Ella P Burr St, Lincoln, ME 04457
- **District:** [Msad 67 Lincoln School District](#)
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 794-3014](tel:(207)794-3014)
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- Leroy Smith School: **Address:** Winterport, ME 04496
- **District:** [Regional School Unit 22](#)
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 223-4282](tel:(207)223-4282)
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- Miller School: **Address:** 145 Kalers Cr St, Waldoboro, ME 04572
- **District:** RSU 40
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 832-2103](tel:(207)832-2103)
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- Guy E Rowe: **Address:** 219 Main St, Norway, ME 04268
- **District:** [Msad 17 Oxford School District](#)
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 743-5183](tel:(207)743-5183)
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- Oxford Hills High School: **Address:** 256 Main St, South Paris, ME 04281
- **District:** [Msad 17 Oxford School District](#)
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 743-8914](tel:(207)743-8914)
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- Ellsworth High School: **Address:** 24 Lejok St, Ellsworth, ME 04605
- **District:** [Ellsworth School District](#)
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 667-4722](tel:(207)667-4722)
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- Williams Elementary School: **Address:** 55 Pleasant St, Oakland, ME 04963
- **District:** RSU 18
- **Phone:** [\(207\) 465-2965](tel:(207)465-2965)

Month	Strategy	Student Attendance Actions	Family Attendance Actions	Educator Attendance Actions	Administrator Attendance Actions
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February	Implement positive recognition and motivation strategies	Earn recognition for attendance improvements	Celebrate student progress at home	Create classroom rewards/incentives. Use visual trackers to highlight growth	Coordinate recognition focused on growth
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This month, our TIER 1 Evidence-based practice focus: **Positive recognition and motivation** reinforce expected behaviors.

FEBRUARY – *Celebrate Progress, Not Just Perfection*

Research: ([Balu & Ehrlich, 2018](#); [Fryer, 2010](#))

Check: *Are all students being recognized fairly? Are incentives aligned with growth, not just perfection?*

Try This: Use non-material incentives. Highlight most improved. Work with students to create weekly class-wide goals and visuals.

- Daily/weekly recognitions: Celebrate progress, not just perfection.
- Incentives for improvement: Focus on students showing attendance growth.
- Campaigns and competitions: Use advisory or grade-level teams to drive engagement.

Slide deck from MEAC Office Hours #6, Feb. 2026:

The slide deck is attached to your follow-up email and is available on the MEAC webpage:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/meac>

Implementing positive recognition and motivation strategies w/ Courtney Angelosante, PBIS

- **Wrap-up and reminder:** Join the next MEAC Office Hour, **March 19, 3:30 – 4:30:**
 - **Engaging families through proactive, supportive outreach w/ Leslie Monroy of Mano en Mano** [Mano en Mano's website](#)

➤ Practices to consider implementing in the next month:

- **Things to consider implementing before we meet on March 19th – w/Leslie Monroy of *Mano en Mano* to discuss Engaging families through proactive, supportive outreach.**
 - review [Mano en Mano's website](#)
 - **Connect with Courtney Angelosante (PBIS) for support with implementing positive recognition and motivation strategies**
 - courtney.angelosante@maine.edu
 - **Connect with Rita Pello for support with strengthening school-home partnerships**
 - rita.pello@maine.gov
 - **Connect with Rebecca Honig for support in developing and implementing consistent growth-focused attendance messaging**
 - rebecca.honig@parentpowered.com
 - **Review growth-focused attendance messaging templates from Count ME In!, Oct. e-newsletter:** [October Communication Toolkit](#)
- **Connect with Jess Anderson for support in establishing early warning systems and team-based responses**
 - janderson@countmeinmaine.org
- **Connect with Jim Boothby for support in building routine, relationships, and relevance**

- 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
- Connect with Aubrie Howard for school climate supports
 - Aubrie.howard@maine.gov
- Connect with Signe Lynch for student / McKinney-Vento supports
 - signe.lynch@maine.gov
- Sign up for the CMI (Count ME In!) Newsletter
 - <https://countmeinmaine.org/about-count-me-in/>
- Attend future MEAC Office Hours

Attend future MEAC Office Hours, the 3rd Thursday of each month, 3:30-4:30. [Register HERE for MEAC Office Hours](#)

Positive recognition and reinforcement motivate students, families, and staff

What are schools doing well to make this happen already?

Educator feedback from the Ed Summit, Thomas College, August 2025

Student

- earn recognition for attendance improvement

Family

- celebrate students' progress at home

Educator

- more everyday celebrations
- positive tone and message to struggling students
- student of the month
- assemblies to share great achievements/upcoming events
- create classroom rewards/incentives
- use visual trackers to highlight growth

- send a 'welcome from the teacher' postcard over the summer

Administrator

- When students' attendance has improved, celebrate them
- bulletin board that tracks and highlights positive attendance
- assemblies that highlight positive attendance
- positive postcards and calls home
- coordinate school-wide recognition programs that focus on attendance growth

Community

- donate prizes to sponsor events supporting programs for attendance improvement

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**
- Connect with BARR
 - www.barrcenter.org
- **Sign up for the CMI (Count ME In!) Newsletter** <http://eepurl.com/h6FSZT>
(CMI e-news)
 - <https://countmeinmaine.org/about-count-me-in/>
- **Connect with Jim Boothby** for support in **building routine, relationships, and relevance** OR to **visit a BARR school**
 - jaboot6280@gmail.com
- **Connect with Aubrie Howard** for **school climate supports**
 - Aubrie.Howard@maine.gov
- **Connect with Signe Lynch** for **student / McKinney-Vento supports**
 - 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

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.



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?