



## TIER 1 EVIDENCE BASED ATTENDANCE STRATEGIES

### PHASE 1: BUILD THE FOUNDATION

These practices establish conditions promoting regular attendance to flourish. They should be in place for all students at the start of the school year and reviewed throughout.

#### 1. Remove logistical and emotional barriers so students can access learning. *(Future Ed, 20; Communities in Schools, 2021)*

- Breakfast & afterschool programs: Reducing hunger increases motivation to attend.
- Transportation, clothing closets, hygiene items: Remove barriers for basic needs.
- Mental wellness supports (SEL): Help students self-regulate and build attendance-friendly habits.

##### Try This:

- 🧠 Incorporate mindfulness and self-regulation breaks into your daily schedule.
- 🗑️ Create a discreet, student-accessible "care closet" stocked with hygiene and clothing essentials.

#### 2. Students thrive when they feel emotionally and physically safe. *(AIR, 2021; Gregory et al., 2016; Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012)*

- Welcoming environments: Clean, inclusive, culturally responsive spaces.
- Strong relationships with staff: One trusted adult improves engagement.
- Restorative and trauma-informed approaches: Replace punitive practices with connection-based discipline.

##### Try This:

- 👋 Start the day with staff greeting students at the door.
- 🌍 Use classroom visuals, texts, and routines that reflect students' cultures and communities.

#### 3. Predictable Routines and Engaging Instruction *(Attendance Works, 2023; CASEL, 2020)*

- Consistency and relevance reduce anxiety and increase attendance.
  - Daily routines and consistent bell schedules: Increase student security and trust.
  - Morning meetings or advisory periods: Build connection and readiness for learning.
  - Engaging, culturally relevant instruction: Students show up when learning is meaningful.

##### Try This:


- 👤 Begin each class with a quick check-in where all students are seen or heard.
- 👨 Integrate student interests and real-world problems into lesson design through strategies like project-based learning and student-led inquiry to increase relevance and motivation to attend


#### 4. Universal, Real-Time Monitoring of Attendance *(Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004)*

Systems should flag concerns early, not react after chronic absence has set in.

- Early Warning Systems: SIS or dashboards that track trends in real time.
- Use data to identify school-wide attendance patterns and areas where positive conditions for learning can be improved.
- Cross-functional MTSS/Attendance Teams: Weekly reviews of data and next steps.
- Attendance thresholds: Personalized outreach after 2–3 absences in a month.

##### Try This:

 Create a classroom-level visual that celebrates consistent attendance.


 Facilitate student-led initiatives (e.g., through student government or advisory groups) to promote positive attendance and gather student perspectives on barriers and motivators.

#### 5. Strong partnerships between school and home are essential for student success.

- Culturally Responsive, Trauma-Informed Communication: Train staff to engage students and families with empathy, respecting cultural norms and avoiding stigma.
- Attendance Metrics & Early Warning Signs: Educate staff and families on attendance tracking, distinguishing excused from unexcused absences, and identifying patterns requiring support.
- Problem-Solving Tools: Provide staff and caregivers with strategies to collaboratively address attendance barriers and establish routines for student success.

##### Try This:

 Host beginning-of-year PD on culturally responsive attendance messaging and trauma-informed outreach.

 Offer short family orientations (virtual or in-person) about how absences are tracked and what support is available.


### PHASE 2: PROMOTE AND MOTIVATE

Once foundational conditions are in place, schools should celebrate and reinforce attendance using motivation strategies that are growth-focused and equitable.

#### 6. Clear, Consistent Attendance Messaging *(Robinson et al., 2018; Ad Council, 2024)*

- Growth-oriented language: Emphasize effort and improvement.
- Unified schoolwide expectations: Consistent across staff and programs.
- Encouraging, non-punitive tone: Avoid fear- or shame-based messaging.

##### Try This:

 Send personalized nudges to students with 2+ absences: “We missed you!” with a next step.

 Display student-created posters about the value of showing up.

#### 7. Positive Recognition and Motivation *(Balu & Ehrlich, 2018; Fryer, 2010)*

- 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.

**Try This:**

- 🎯 Set a weekly classroom attendance goal and track group progress with a visual.
- 🎁 Offer non-material incentives (e.g., choice time, lunch with a staff member) for progress.

**PHASE 3: IDENTIFY AND RESPOND EARLY**

Even with strong Tier 1 systems, some students will begin to disengage. Early, warm outreach prevents escalation into Tier 2.

**8. Proactive Family Communication and Outreach** (*Sheldon, 2007; CCERC, 2022*)

- Warm, non-punitive outreach: Focus on listening and support.
- Home visits or personal calls: Build relational trust.
- Accessible calendars and tips: In families' home languages and through preferred platforms.

**Try This:**

- ☎ Use the 2x10 strategy: connect with a student 2 minutes a day for 10 days.
- 🏠 If a student was chronically absent last year, work with the family in the summer to develop a student success plan for the upcoming school year.