PANORAMA EDUCATION

19 Evidence-Based Attendance Interventions

Introduction

Understanding the causes of chronic absenteeism and improving attendance present huge challenges for building and district leaders.

Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of school days, has notably increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, annual chronic absenteeism rates—reflected in Panorama's own data—nearly doubled from 2018-19 to 2023-24. Attendance matters because chronic absenteeism correlates with negative outcomes such as lower test scores or dropping out.

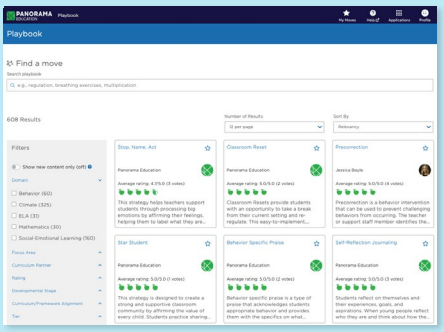
Understanding the root cause of chronic absenteeism is challenging but necessary for matching the correct support strategy to the student in need of support. Gathering feedback from students and families can help with understanding what's keeping students from attending school regularly and what supports they need to improve their attendance

In this toolkit, you'll find evidence-based strategies with proven effectiveness when it comes to authentically engaging families and their students to improve attendance. The attendance interventions included span four themes:

- Mentor-Based Interventions (e.g. Check and Connect; Success Mentors)
- Notification-Based Interventions (e.g. Nudge Letters; Attendance Contract)
- Peer-Based Interventions (e.g. Peer Attendance Mentor; Student Attendance Taker)
- Incentive-Based Interventions (e.g. Activity Pass; Attendance Board)

How to use these guides:

- **District Leaders:** Incorporate these strategies into your district-wide intervention menu. Share these resources with your school teams and consider ways to consistently implement interventions districtwide.
- **School Leaders:** Bring these strategies to PLCs, staff meetings, or MTSS and Student Support team meetings to share with staff and support students at every tier.
- **Classroom Teachers and Support Staff:** Try these activities in class, small group, or individual settings to support the engagement and academic growth of every student.



About Panorama Playbook

Panorama provides the most comprehensive and informative library of evidence-based learning supports of any K-12 learning platform. The interventions in this toolkit have been selected from Playbook, Panorama's professional learning library for K-12 educators. Districts and schools that partner with Panorama have full access to the collection of 1,000 lesson plans, instructional resources, and MTSS interventions across life skills, attendance, academics, and behavior. In addition to facilitation guides like the ones found in this toolkit, Playbook users can access in-depth implementation tips and differentiation ideas.

Panorama works with many evidence-based support programs to extend free access to their interventions, lesson plans, and activities to our partner districts and schools, including Attendance Works and Digital Promise. District and school partners can fully customize Playbook to align with state and local terminology and control which supports, partners, and topics are visible in the library.

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Nudge Letters

Focus Area: Attendance **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Nudge Letters is an intervention focused on communicating about a student's absenteeism with parents or guardians. Information about the child's attendance is provided to family members through brief postcards, letters, text messages, phone calls, or email. Nudging is an inexpensive and effective means of reducing chronic absenteeism.

The goals of this intervention include:

- Engaging parents or guardians in their child's school attendance.
- Reducing student absenteeism by providing actionable insights and encouragement through letters.

Preparation:

- Confirm that current attendance data is accurate.
- Determine family members' preferred means of contact.

Instructions:

1. Identify Target Students
    - Review attendance records to identify students who have missed more than the acceptable number of days according to your school's policy.
    - Different states and districts have different thresholds for what constitutes "chronic absence" but most define it as missing 10% or greater of the total number of days enrolled during the school year for any reason.

2. Determine a Communication Cadence
    - Decide when and how frequently parents will receive information about their student's absences. Follow this policy consistently.

Nudge Letters

Focus Area: Attendance **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

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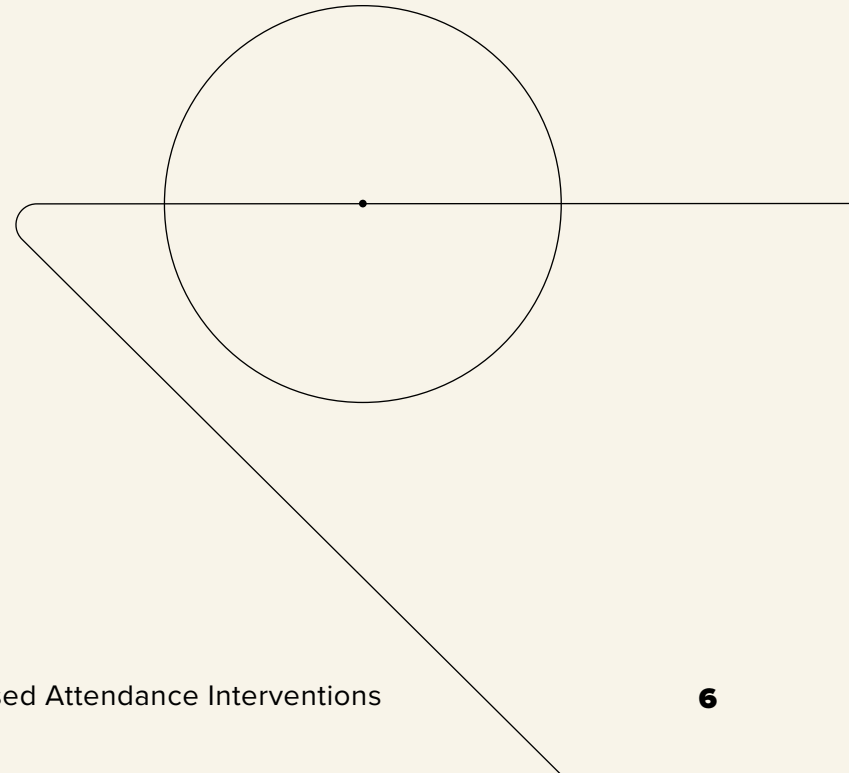
3. Create a customized nudge letter for a specific student
    - Using this pre-designed Nudge Letter template as a starting point, create a customized letter for a specific student.
    - Insert the student's specific attendance data in the designated areas of the template.
    - Add any additional resources available to students and families at your school that might be supportive for attendance purposes (e.g., home visits, afterschool programming, etc.).
    - Ensure that a brief message about the importance of regular school attendance is included. Provide one way that parents can contact the school in response to the message (for example, a phone number or an email address).

4. Send Letters
    - Nudge Letters can be sent home with a student, mailed to their family as a postcard, shared via email, or messaged via text.

5. Follow-Up
    - After the letters have been sent, mark a follow-up date on your calendar for two to three weeks later.
    - On the follow-up date, review the attendance records of the students who received the Nudge Letters.
    - If improvement is noted, consider sending a positive reinforcement note. If no improvement is noted, prepare for further intervention, such as a follow-up letter or phone call.



Attendance Postcard

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2
Developmental Stage: High School, Lower Elementary, Middle School, Upper Elementary

About This Strategy:

This intervention focuses on sending Attendance Postcards to parents or guardians to increase their awareness of their child's absences and encourage proactive involvement.

Preparation:

Download or create an Attendance Postcard template that includes fields for the student's name, number of absences, and resources/suggestions for improvement.

Prepare a list of students who have been absent more than a certain number of days (e.g., 5 days in a semester).

Instructions:

1. Identify Target Students
    - Use attendance data to identify students who have been absent more than the predetermined number of days.

2. Personalize Attendance Postcard
    - Use the template to complete the Attendance Postcard for each identified student, filling in the specific details.
    - The message should be framed positively and include a gentle reminder about the importance of attendance, the number of days the student has missed, and additional resources to support the family.

Implementation Tips:

- Consider following up the postcards with a phone call or email to ensure that the message has been received and understood.
- Use positive language in the postcards to encourage rather than discourage parents and guardians.

Attendance Groups

Focus Area: Sense of Belonging, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Middle School, Upper Elementary, Lower Elementary, High School

About This Strategy:

This intervention aims to use Attendance Groups as a means of positively reinforcing students to increase their engagement and attendance in school. Attendance Groups operate on the idea that students who feel involved and inspired are more inclined to attend school regularly. These groups serve as a form of positive encouragement to boost students' active participation in school.

Preparation:

Identify students who are struggling to attend school consistently. Prepare a Reward Chart to track attendance and participation in the Attendance Groups.

Instructions:

1. Form Attendance Groups
    - Divide the identified students into small groups of 4-6. These groups should meet weekly for at least four consecutive months.
    - *Educator Script: "Think of these groups as your 'Attendance Squad.' You'll be supporting each other to improve attendance and engagement."*

2. Introduce the Reward Chart
    - Discuss and set achievable goals for attendance and participation, along with corresponding rewards. Co-create these goals with students.
    - Show students the Reward Chart and explain how it will be used to track attendance and participation.
    - *Educator Script: "This Reward Chart is like your scoreboard. The more you attend and participate, the more points your Attendance Squad earns."*

3. Set Goals and Rewards
    - Discuss and set achievable goals for attendance and participation, along with corresponding rewards. Co-create these goals with students.
    - *Educator Script: "Goals are your game plan, and rewards are your trophies. Let's set some achievable goals and exciting rewards to keep everyone motivated."*

Attendance Groups

Focus Area: Sense of Belonging, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Middle School, Upper Elementary, Lower Elementary, High School

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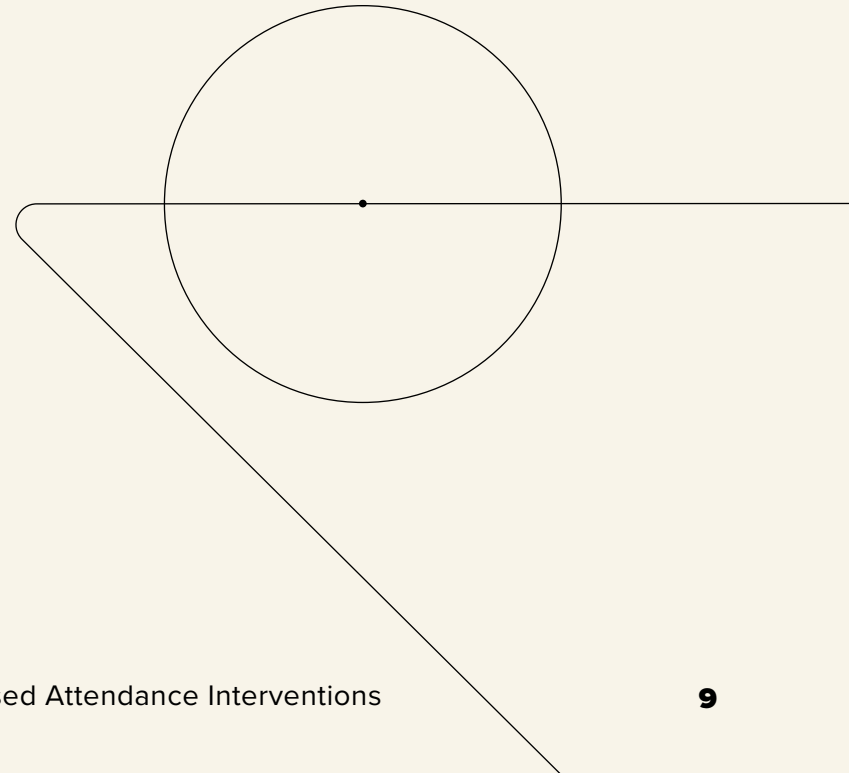
4. Weekly Group Check-ins
    - Conduct weekly check-ins to discuss progress, challenges, and strategies for improvement.
    - In the group sessions, students establish attendance objectives for the week and interact with their peers. The group takes part in diverse activities aimed at boosting both self-esteem and active involvement in school.
    - Activities can range from filling out worksheets centered on goals, engaging in games, activities that build self-confidence, earning rewards, filling out attendance records, self-monitoring of attendance, and exercises that focus on problem-solving.

5. Distribute Rewards
    - Give out rewards based on the Reward Chart during the weekly check-ins.
    - *Educator Script: "It's trophy time! Let's celebrate your achievements and keep the momentum going."*



Check and Connect

Focus Area: Teacher-Student Relationships, Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Check and Connect is an intervention focused on building a trusting, supportive relationship with a mentor to help K-12 students who show signs of disengagement with school (such as poor attendance, behavioral issues, and/or low grades).

Instructions:

1. The Mentor
    - This is an individual assigned to a specific student for the purpose of building a strong relationship with them. This relationship is developed over time, with a focus on long-term success at school and with learning.

2. The "Check"
    - The process where a mentor monitors student performance across attendance, behavior, and academics.

3. The "Connect"
    - This refers to mentors providing personalized and timely interventions for the student that are designed to support skill-building in specific areas. These interventions should be informed by "check" data that is readily available to school personnel.

4. Family Engagement
    - Mentors deliberately partner with the student's family and function as liaisons between home and school, striving to build authentic family-school partnerships and develop a two-way communication system.
    - Each week, the mentor spends approximately one hour performing the "Check" and "Connect" components of the intervention, along with other activities (engaging with family members, collaborating with school staff, or referring to resources) when appropriate.

Check and Connect

Focus Area: Teacher-Student Relationships, Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

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In addition, there are three main principles to keep in mind when implementing the Check and Connect intervention:

1. Relationships
    - The relationships (between both the student and mentor as well as the mentor and family members) must be based in mutual trust and open communication. This is nurtured through the long-term commitment of the intervention and focus on promoting the student's success over the course of two years.

2. Problem-Solving and Capacity-Building
    - In their work with the student, the mentor should strive to take a cognitive-behavioral approach to promote skill-building around resolving conflict constructively, proactively searching for solutions (vs. blaming others), developing coping skills, and – eventually – reducing dependency on the mentor.

3. Persistence Plus
    - This refers to persistence, continuity, and consistency. The mentor serves as a persistent source of motivation, grows to be familiar with the student and their family, and continually underscores the importance of education.

Washing the Elephant

Focus Area: Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This interactive exercise from Attendance Works helps educators communicate to families the importance of daily attendance to student achievement. The goal of this activity is to increase family members' understanding of the effects of absenteeism on their student (and other students and the school).

Preparation:

Click here to download the Washing the Elephant facilitator guide.

Instructions:

1. Ask for a volunteer to leave the room. Explain to the rest of the room that you are going to wash the elephant.

2. Using an imaginary pail of water and cloth, and informing the audience about the meaning of each move... wash the sides, the legs and the trunk; lift the ears and tail and so on.

3. Ask for another volunteer to demonstrate what they have seen you do without using words. The first volunteer (who is outside the room) is brought back and silently observes the mimed demonstration, then demonstrates what they observed.

4. Popcorn-style, ask the following questions:
   - What made a difference between the first and second volunteers?
   - When do you think absences seriously affect a student's ability to do well in school?

5. End by underscoring the key point: that being present when information is delivered is critical
   - *Say: When your child misses one day or one lesson, that means when they return, they may have missed something critical to their understanding of the next several days of instruction.*

Back-to-School Attendance Letter

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This letter from Attendance Works is designed for principals to send to families and students at the beginning of the school year to underscore the importance of attendance.

Preparation:

Click here to access Attendance Work's Back-to-School letter template for principals.
Click here for the Word Doc version.

Instructions:

1. Make a copy of the back-to-school attendance letter.

2. Work with your team to customize the messaging to:
   - Reflect language that is consistent with your community's mission and vision.
   - Include your school's logo.
   - List options for additional supports to ensure students attend school.

3. Send the letter (via email, physical mail, or another method) to all families at the beginning of the school year.

Attendance Contract

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This intervention uses formalized attendance contracts to create a shared commitment among students, parents, and educators to improve attendance.

Preparation:

Download and customize our attendance contract template (Google Doc | Word Doc).

Instructions:

1. Identify Target Students
   - Use attendance data to identify students who would benefit most from this intervention.

2. Parent-Teacher Conference
   - Schedule a meeting with the parents of the identified students to discuss the attendance issue and introduce the concept of an attendance contract.

3. Contract Signing
   - During the meeting, review the attendance contract with the parents and the student. All parties should sign the contract.

4. Monitoring
   - Establish a schedule for regular check-ins to review the student's attendance record.

5. Rewards and Consequences
   - Implement a system of rewards for meeting attendance goals and consequences for not meeting them, as outlined in the contract.

6. Contract Review
   - At the end of each grading period, review the effectiveness of the contract and make necessary adjustments.

Personalized Attendance Plan

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Addressing chronic absenteeism requires a proactive approach that includes personalized interventions to support students who struggle with attendance. This intervention strategy focuses on creating individualized attendance plans that cater to the unique needs of each student, fostering a collaborative effort among educators, parents/guardians, and support staff.

Preparation:

- Identify students at risk of chronic absenteeism based on attendance data, early warning indicators, or referrals from teachers and staff.

Instructions:

PART 1: Collaborative Goal Setting:

1. Schedule a meeting involving the student, parents/guardians, teachers, and relevant support staff to develop the personalized attendance plan.

2. Discuss the student's attendance history, challenges, and aspirations.
    - Set specific and measurable attendance goals for the student, considering their individual circumstances and aiming for steady progress.

3. Contract Review
    - At the end of each grading period, review the effectiveness of the contract and make necessary adjustments.

Personalized Attendance Plan

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

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PART 2: Barrier Analysis:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the barriers affecting the student's attendance.

2. Engage in open and empathetic communication to understand the underlying reasons for their absences.

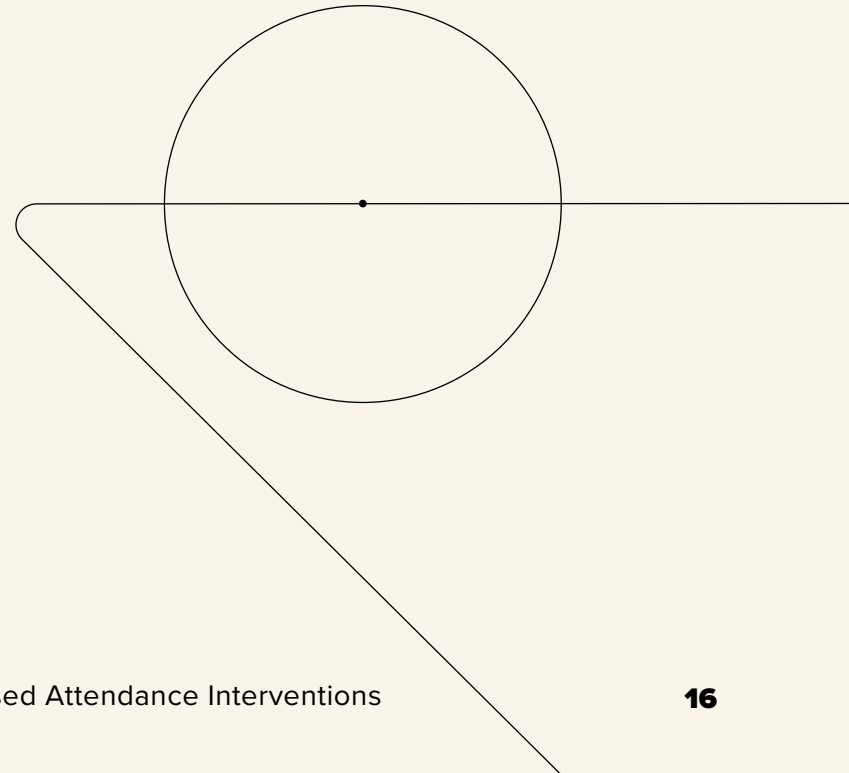
3. Identify practical solutions and resources to address each barrier, involving the student, parents/guardians, and relevant school personnel.

PART 3: Intervention Planning:

1. Design and implement support strategies tailored to the student's unique needs and circumstances.

2. Provide academic support, counseling, mentoring, or tutoring services to enhance student engagement and motivation.

3. Collaborate with community organizations or agencies to offer additional resources, such as transportation assistance, healthcare access, or social services, if needed.



Attendance Lunch Bunch

Focus Area: School and Classroom Climate, Sense of Belonging
MTSS Tier(s): Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

This intervention provides a structured yet relaxed environment for building social connections, which can significantly improve a student's sense of belonging and motivation to attend school regularly.

Instructions:

1. Identify participants for an attendance lunch bunch.
    - Select the chronically absent student
    - Choose 4-5 other students with good attendance and positive social skills
    - Ensure a mix of students with varied interests

2. Schedule weekly lunch meetings in a comfortable, quiet space (e.g., classroom, library corner).
    - Arrange for 30-45 minute sessions during lunch period

3. Hold a kick-off lunch bunch to introduce the concept to selected students.
    - Explain the purpose: to build friendships and create a supportive community. Emphasize voluntary participation and confidentiality

4. Explain ground rules (respect, listening, etc.)
    - Facilitate ice-breaker activities or guide a group discussion on shared interests and experiences

5. For subsequent sessions, with a quick check-in round (for instance, rose, bud, thorn) and introduce a theme or activity (e.g., board game day, art project, book discussion).
    - Allow time for free conversation and relationship-building

6. Encourage peer support by assigning lunch buddies within the group to check in with each other between sessions.
    - Teach and model supportive behaviors (active listening, empathy, encouragement)

Attendance Buddy

Focus Area: School and Classroom Climate, Engagement
MTSS Tier(s): Tier 1, Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

A peer-based intervention strategy that pairs students with high attendance rates with those who are chronically absent to encourage consistent school attendance.

Preparation:

- Create a list of students with high attendance rates and another list of students who are chronically absent. You can use Panorama Student Success or your Student Information System (SIS) to pull this information.
- Prepare Attendance Buddy Cards that include the names and contact information of the paired students.
    - These are small cards that contain the names and contact information of the paired students. To create these, you can use index cards and write down the information, or print them out using a simple template.

Instructions:

1. Pairing Students
    - Match students who are struggling with attendance to those who have a higher attendance rate.
    - *Educator Script: We're going to try something new to help everyone make the most out of their time here at school. We're introducing an 'Attendance Buddy System.' Each of you will receive a card with your 'Attendance Buddy's' name and contact info. Your Attendance Buddy is your partner in making sure you both come to school; you'll check in with each other weekly to encourage consistent attendance.*

Attendance Buddy

Focus Area: School and Classroom Climate, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1, Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

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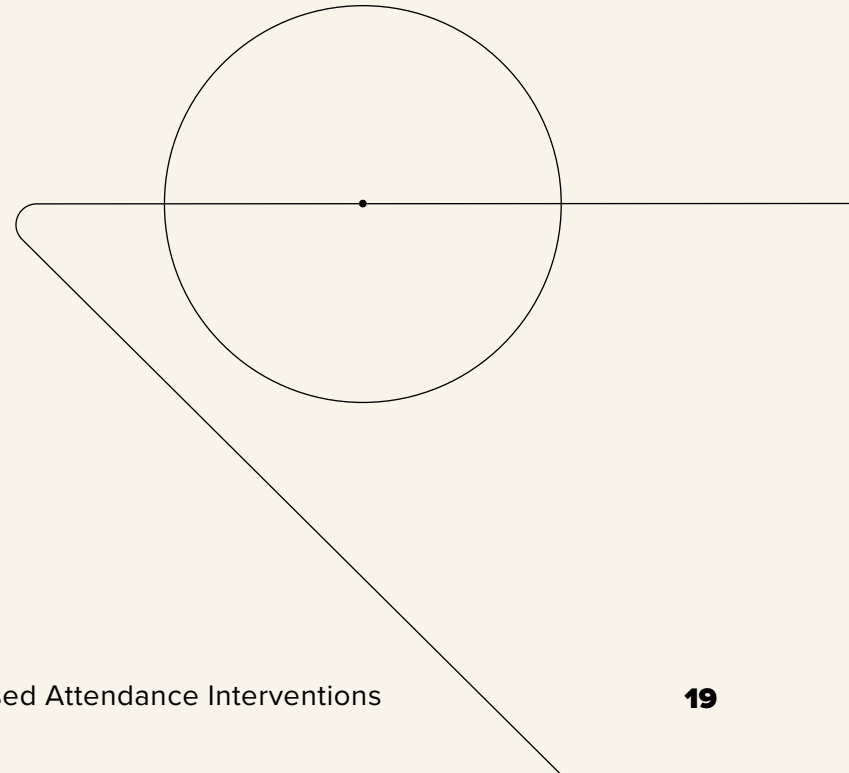
2. Distributing Attendance Buddy Cards
    - Hand out the Attendance Buddy Cards to each student.
    - *Educator Script: These cards have the name and contact information of your Attendance Buddy. Your job is to check in with each other and encourage attendance.*

3. Weekly Check-ins
    - Instruct students to have a brief check-in with their Attendance Buddy at least once a week.
    - *Educator Script: During your weekly check-ins, discuss any challenges you might be facing in coming to school and how you can support each other.*

4. Monthly Review
    - Review attendance data monthly to assess the effectiveness of the buddy system.
    - *Educator Script: At the end of each month, we'll see how we're doing as a class with our attendance rates and make adjustments as needed.*



Improved Attendance Certificate

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

This tool from Attendance Works helps schools reward and encourage strong (and/or improved) attendance.

Instructions:

1. Click here to make a copy of Attendance Work's attendance certificate template.
2. Customize the template to reflect your school's logo, colors, etc.
3. Share this certificate with educators and work to create a system that classrooms can adopt for awarding these certificates to students.

Arrival Check-In

Focus Area: School and Classroom Climate, Sense of Belonging, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1, Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

A daily morning check-in where a designated staff member greets all students as they arrive at school to make them feel welcomed and valued.

Preparation:

- Designate a staff member who will be responsible for the morning check-ins.
- Prepare a Morning Check-In Log to keep track of student arrivals. This can be a simple sheet or digital document where the designated staff member can quickly log the names of the students who arrive each morning.

Instructions:

1. Setting Up the Check-In Station
    - *Educator Script: Good morning, everyone! We're starting a new routine to make our mornings brighter. As you come in, I'll be here to greet you!*

2. Greeting Students
    - As students arrive, greet them warmly by name and make brief, positive small talk.
    - *Educator Script: Good morning! Great to see you today. Ready for an awesome day of learning?*

3. Logging Attendance
    - Mark each student's arrival in the Morning Check-In Log.
    - *Educator Script: I'm just making a quick note that you're here. It's important for us to know you made it safely.*

4. Acknowledging Consistent Attendance
    - For students who have been consistently present, offer a word of encouragement.
    - *Educator Script: You've been doing great with your attendance, keep it up!*

Success Mentor

Focus Area: School and Classroom Climate, Sense of Belonging, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1, Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

This intervention utilizes staff Success Mentors to provide targeted support for students who are struggling with attendance, aiming to improve their attendance rates and overall school engagement.

Preparation:

- Identify and train staff members, older students, or volunteers to serve as Success Mentors.
- Create a list of students who are struggling with attendance.
- Prepare a Success Mentor Guidebook that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and guidelines for mentors.
- Create a list of students who are struggling with Attendance. You can use Panorama Student Success or your Student Information System (SIS) to pull this information.

Instructions:

1. Select Success Mentors
    - Choose mentors from a pool of trained staff, older students, or volunteers.

2. Pairing
    - Pair each Success Mentor with one or more students who have been identified as struggling with attendance.

3. Initial Meeting
    - Organize an initial meeting between mentors and mentees to establish rapport and set attendance goals.

4. Daily Check-Ins
    - Success Mentors should check in with their mentees each morning, either in person or via a quick phone call or text.

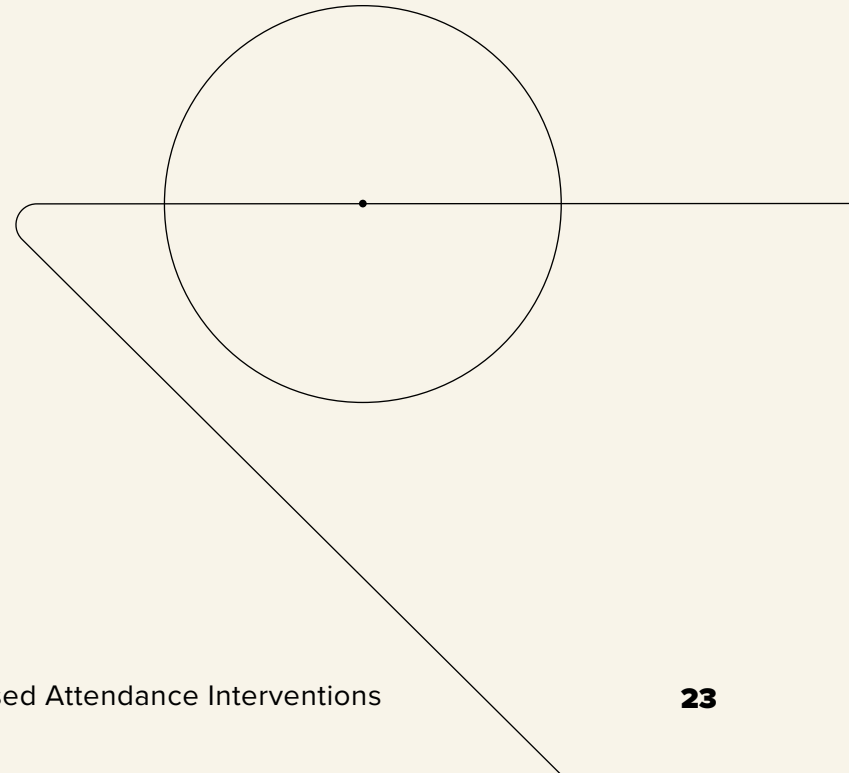
Success Mentor

Focus Area: School and Classroom Climate, Sense of Belonging, Engagement
MTSS Tier(s): Tier 1, Tier 2
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

5. Weekly Conversations
    - Schedule a longer, more in-depth conversation at least once a week to discuss challenges and strategies for improving attendance.

6. Monitor and Report
    - Use attendance data to monitor the progress of each mentee. Share this data with mentors, mentees, and parents.

7. Celebrate Success
    - Acknowledge and celebrate improvements in attendance, no matter how small, to keep students motivated.



Attendance Cafe

Focus Area: Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This interactive exercise from Attendance Works helps educators communicate to families the importance of daily attendance to student achievement.

Preparation:

- Click here to download the Attendance Cafe facilitator guide.
- Work with your school or district team to schedule and host Attendance Cafe events for families, in which caregivers are invited to join (in-person or virtually).

Instructions:

1. Welcome families and cover any shared agreements or norms.

2. Think-Pair-Share: Discuss as partners:
   - How was school attendance for you when you were a student?

3. Discuss the following question for 15 minutes: Did you know that children who miss 18 or more days of the school year (2 days a month) starting in kindergarten are less likely to learn to read by third grade and graduate from high school?

4. Discuss this question for 15 minutes: What are some of the obstacles that parents face in getting their children to attend school every day?

5. Discuss these final questions for 15 minutes: What are some ways that parents can overcome these obstacles? How can you help other parents overcome these obstacles?

Activity Pass

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

As an incentive for good attendance, students are provided with "activity passes" that give them exclusive access to special activities. These activities can be within the classroom or larger-scale, school-wide activities that motivate students to attend school regularly.

Preparation:

- Identify activities that matter to students and that are manageable in the context of the classroom (or a colleague's classroom) without creating undue disruption to those without special activity access. Consider the activities students most enjoy doing in or out of school. What interests students and keeps their attention? Ideas include:
  - Technology and gaming
  - Board games
  - Physical education–related activities/helping to lead P.E. class
  - Art activities
  - Free time
  - "First" privileges, such as being first in line for lunch or dismissal
  - A special chair or area of the classroom
  - Lunch with the teacher (for younger children)
  - Opportunity to be the teacher's assistant
  - Opportunity to shadow the principal ("principal for the day")
- Determine what constitutes "attendance." Decide if you will count tardy students. If so, decide how many minutes late they can be for their attendance to count.
- Decide if special activity passes will be available throughout the school year or only during a specified period.
- To keep the goal in front of the students, create a bulletin board that promotes attendance and advertises the privileges for those who earn the special activity pass.
- Prepare paper passes that will provide access to the special activity.

Activity Pass

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

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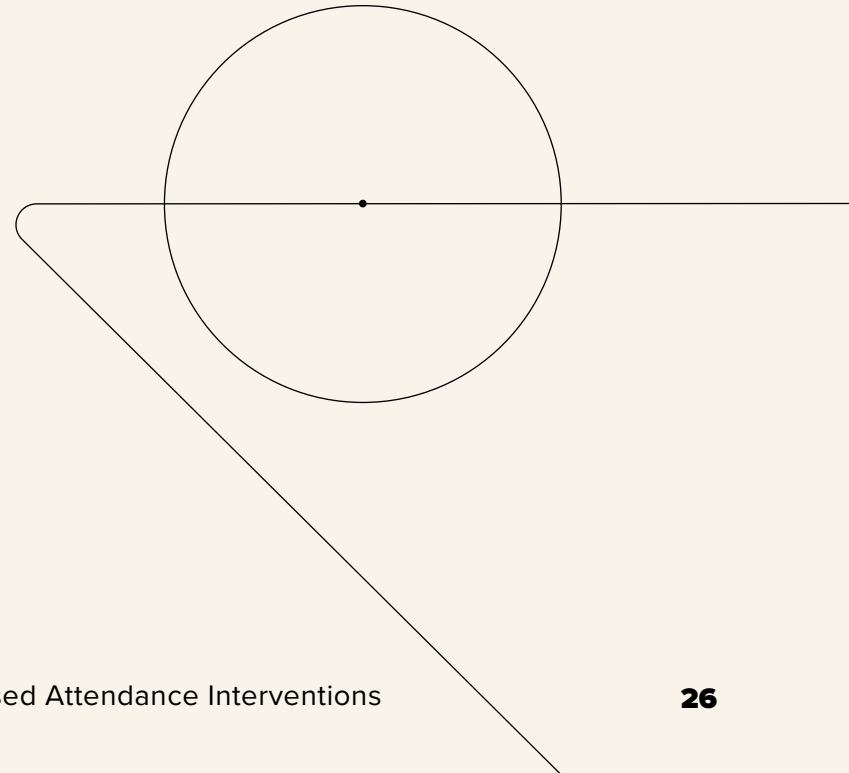
Instructions:

1. Explain the special activity pass program to students, including its rules and duration. Allow time for student questions.

2. Take attendance each day at a consistent time.

3. Provide students with data on their attendance.

4. Celebrate students with regular (or improved) attendance by publicizing their achievements and the privileges earned. Distribute passes for the special activity during the celebration.



Attendance Analysis

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This strategy from CharacterStrong delves into the root causes behind the identified attendance challenges, moving beyond surface-level symptoms to understand underlying factors.

Preparation:

- Review collected attendance data.
- Prepare tools for qualitative analysis, including surveys and focus groups.

Instructions:

1. *Root Cause Identification:* Utilize surveys, focus group discussions, and individual interviews to explore factors contributing to absenteeism (e.g., sense of safety, belonging, mental health).

2. *Categorization:* Classify identified causes into thematic areas such as:
    - Sense of Safety
    - Belonging
    - Purpose/Motivation
    - Mental Health
    - Peer Influence
    - Family
    - Health/Medical

3. *Prioritization:* Determine which causes are most prevalent or impactful, guiding intervention focus.

Attendance Solution Menu

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Based on the insights gained from the attendance analysis, this strategy from CharacterStrong involves creating a menu of solutions tailored to address the identified root causes of absenteeism.

Preparation:

- Building an attendance solution menu is the third step of CharacterStrong's attendance problem-solving blueprint.
- Synthesize findings from the Attendance Analysis phase strategy (Page 27).
- Brainstorm potential interventions with stakeholders.

Instructions:

1. *Solution Development:* For each identified root cause, develop specific, actionable solutions (e.g., establish safety protocols, mental health support programs).
    - Click here to access a list of interventions and solutions aligned to common root causes.

2. *Plan Creation:* Outline the implementation plan for each solution, specifying who, when, and how.

3. *Flexibility and Choice: O*ffer a range of solutions to accommodate different needs and preferences, allowing for a tailored approach to intervention.

School Attendance Mediation

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This truancy intervention aims to address and resolve attendance issues through a formal mediation process involving multiple stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, and sometimes legal authorities.

Preparation:

- Prepare a list of talking points and data related to the student's attendance.

Instructions:

Instructions for Educators

- *Identify the Students:* Use attendance tracking to identify students who are frequently absent or tardy.
- *Initial Contact:* Reach out to the parents or guardians of the identified students to inform them about the attendance issue and the need for mediation.
- *Schedule Mediation:* Coordinate with all stakeholders to schedule a convenient time for the mediation session.
- *Prepare for Mediation:* Collect all relevant data and talking points to discuss during the mediation.
- *Conduct Mediation:* Facilitate the mediation session, ensuring that all parties have a chance to speak.
- *Develop an Action Plan:* Collaboratively develop an action plan with clear steps and responsibilities.
- *Follow-Up:* Schedule follow-up meetings to track the progress of the action plan.

School Attendance Mediation

Focus Area: Engagement, Family Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 2, Tier 3
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

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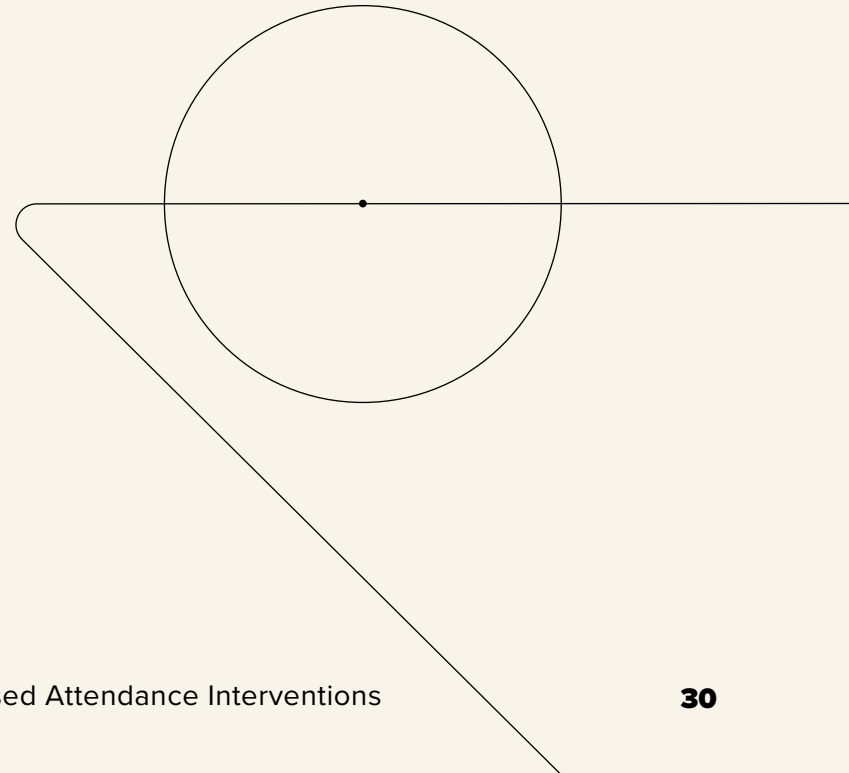
Communicating with Family Members

- *Initial Contact:* Make the first contact with the family to discuss the attendance issue and the need for mediation.
- *Explain the Process:* Clearly explain what mediation is, why it's necessary, and what they can expect from the process.
- *Schedule the Session:* Work with the family to find a convenient time for the mediation session.
- *Preparation:* Encourage the family to think about any issues or concerns they would like to bring up during the mediation.



Attendance Board

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

A classroom attendance board conveys the importance of regular school attendance and gives students a sense of personal responsibility within the classroom.

Action:

Create a classroom attendance board for students to log themselves into class each day. Students can sign in in a variety of ways, such as by signing a whiteboard, marking an attendance chart, or moving a card in a pocket chart.

You might consider preparing an attendance board in one of the following ways:

- Designate a section of the whiteboard as the attendance board. Provide dry-erase markers for marking attendance.
- Post an attendance chart on the wall. Provide writing utensils.
- Create an attendance card for each student, along with a two-pocket chart. The first pocket should be labeled “Absent”; the second pocket should be “Present.” As students arrive in the classroom, have them move the cards from “Absent” to “Present.”

Instructions:

1. Discuss the importance of regular school attendance, as well as the importance of keeping accurate school attendance records. Explain to students how the office keeps track of attendance, and show students that daily attendance becomes part of each students’ permanent file. Depending on the age group, you may wish to take students on a “field trip” to the school office and have an administrative assistant show students how attendance is tracked.

2. Introduce students to the space where they will record their attendance each day. Remind them that the responsibility for recording their attendance is an important one because they will be marked absent if they don’t complete the task.

Attendance Board

Focus Area: Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

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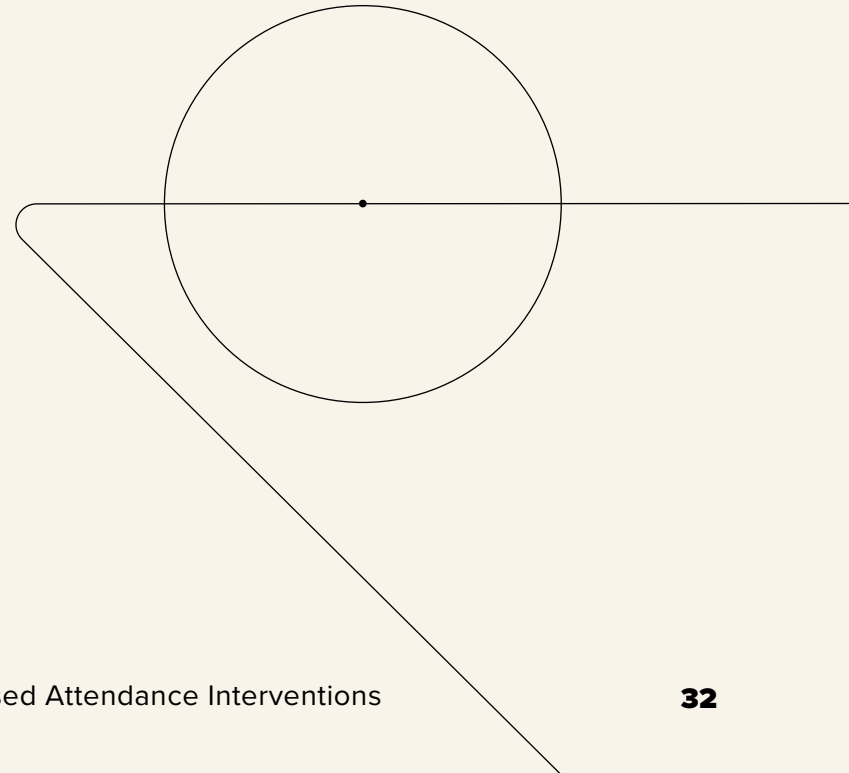
3. When students arrive in the classroom, their first task should be to log their attendance.

4. Transfer the information from the Attendance Board to your own attendance list, and submit it to the office, according to school policy.



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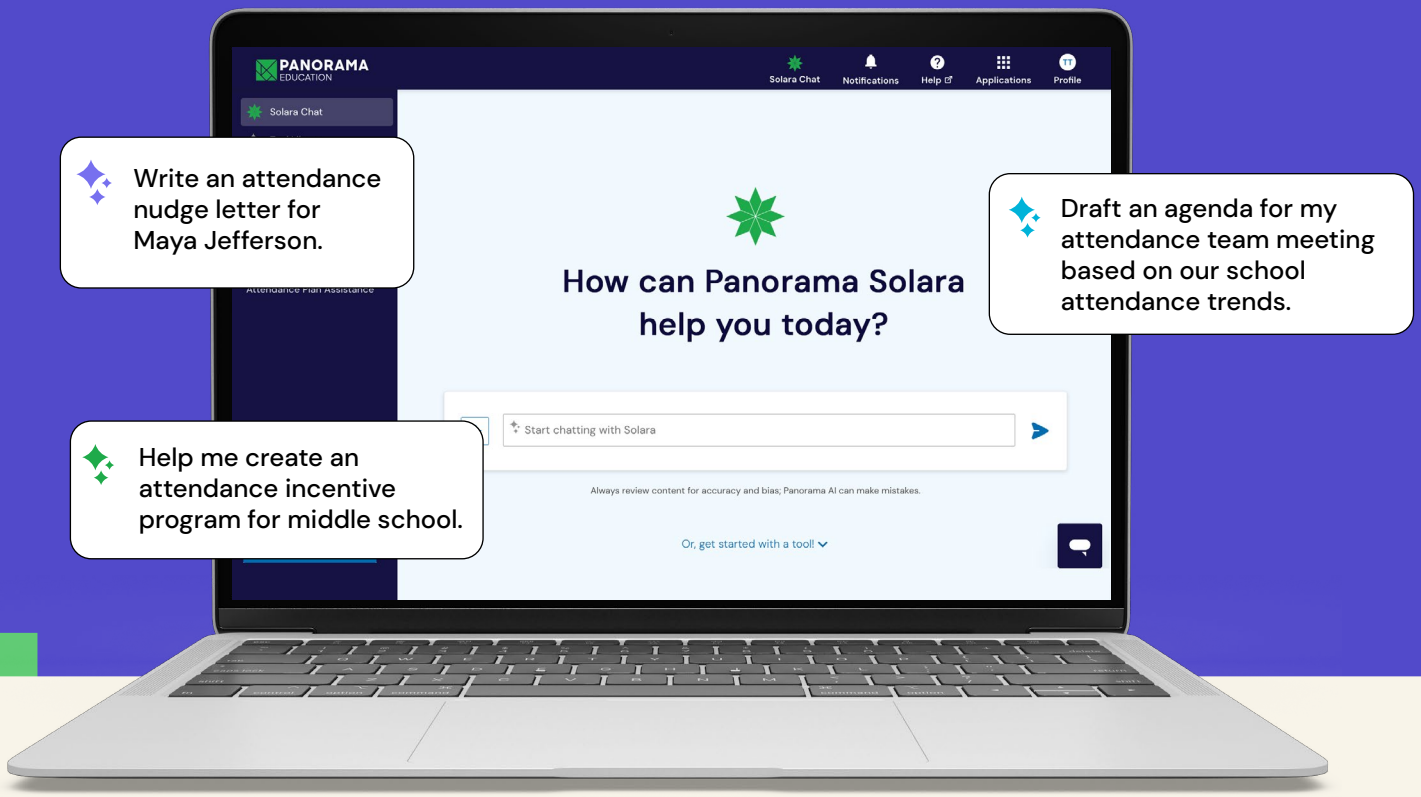

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– Sarah Jay, Executive Director of Equitable MTSS, Boston Public Schools (MA)

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PANORAMA EDUCATION

About Panorama Education

Panorama Education is the leading platform for student support and learning in K-12 education. Panorama partners with districts and states to serve more than 15 million students across 25,000 schools and 2,000 districts nationwide. By connecting academics, attendance, behavior, and engagement in a unified solution, Panorama gives educators the full picture of every student. With AI grounded in district context, educators can quickly understand what's happening, why it matters, and what to do next—so they can take faster, more effective action across instruction, student support, special education, and graduation pathways. This leads to higher student achievement and better preparation for life beyond the classroom. Backed by secure, research-based technology and hands-on professional development, Panorama is how the modern school system drives student success.

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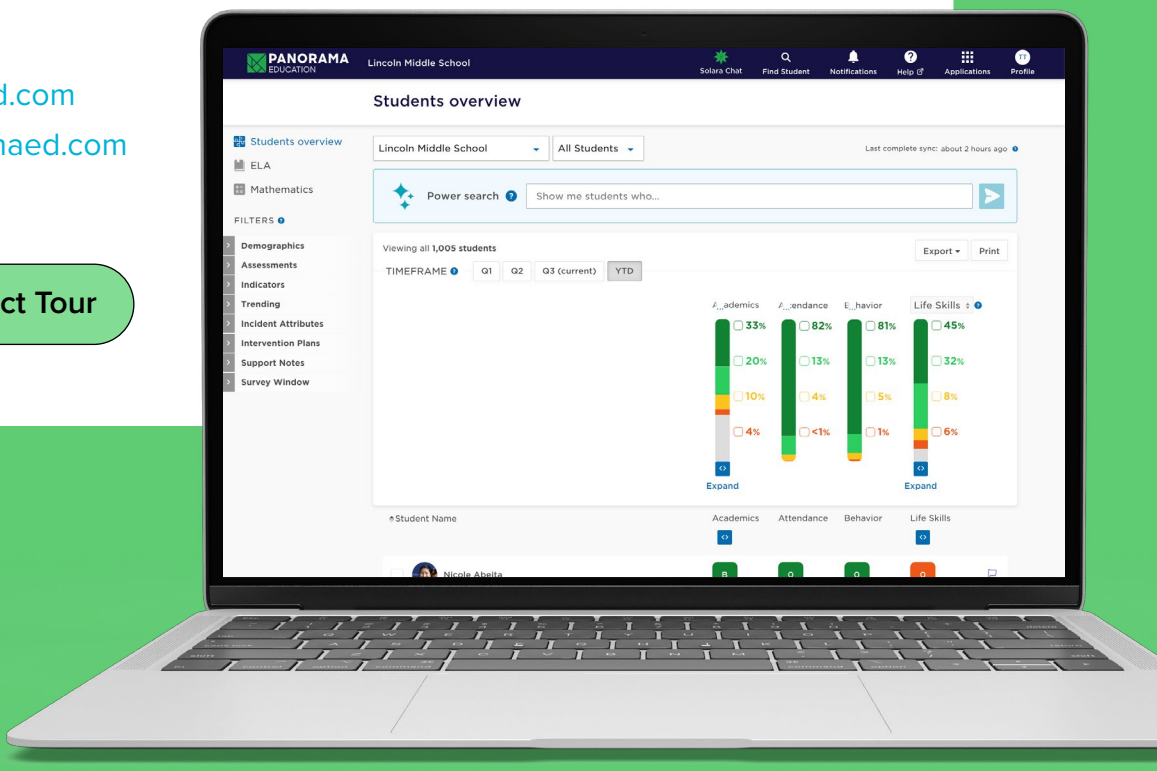
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