

Supporting Student Attendance

Students who attend school are more likely to succeed academically!

LAE Board Meeting December 13, 2023

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Role of District Attendance Officers and Liaisons:

- Maintain open communication with schools regarding chronic absenteeism
- Manage or support cases; which include but not limited to collaborating with local agencies to develop target interventions that address specific barriers
- Locating and outreaching families to facilitate attendance meetings with schools and families to develop attendance success plans
- Investigating cases, conducting home visits, and/or initiating attendance panels or other appropriate court action.
- Ensuring Residency Compliance
- Support schools in hosting Attendance forums and or Information Sessions for families
- Document interactions with families, students, schools, courts and any other agencies in PowerSchool
- Follow up with CRA (Child requesting assistance) referrals. *Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 369E requires children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) to attend school regularly. This means that any child in this age range, who is absent for (8) days in a quarter without a proper excuse, is a truant. Moreover, if the child repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of the school, he/she is a habitual school offender. Truancy and being a habitual offender is a violation of the law this means that the child in question is subjective to civil proceedings in the Juvenile Court.*



Policies, Research and Data

- LPS goals for attendance are 95% attendance (missing no more than 9 days); chronic absenteeism is missing 18 days, or just two a month
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read **proficiently** by the end of third grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- A student who consistently misses 10 days or more during a school year is 20% less likely to graduate high school and 25% less likely to ever enroll in college.
- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- Learning begins on day one of the school year - and continues all year long, including on half days.
- 2023 District wide attendance rate 91.4%



District Attendance Numbers

Attendance Metrics

Elementary	Attendance %
PreK - 5	92%

Middle	Attendance %
6 -7	92.2%

HS	Attendance %
9 -12	88%

**SY 23-24 attendance as of
December 1st is 91.4%**



Root Causes: What we are hearing

Barriers:

- Chronic or acute illness * significant anxiety and mental health * Family responsibility or situation * Poverty and consequences such as lack of health care or fixed, adequate housing * Transportation challenges

Aversion:

- Struggling academically and or behaviorally * Undiagnosed disability or a disability

Disengagement:

- Bored * Students don't feel encouraged to attend (respect/connection to staff) * lack of engagement

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if there are not excused * Suspension do not count as absences

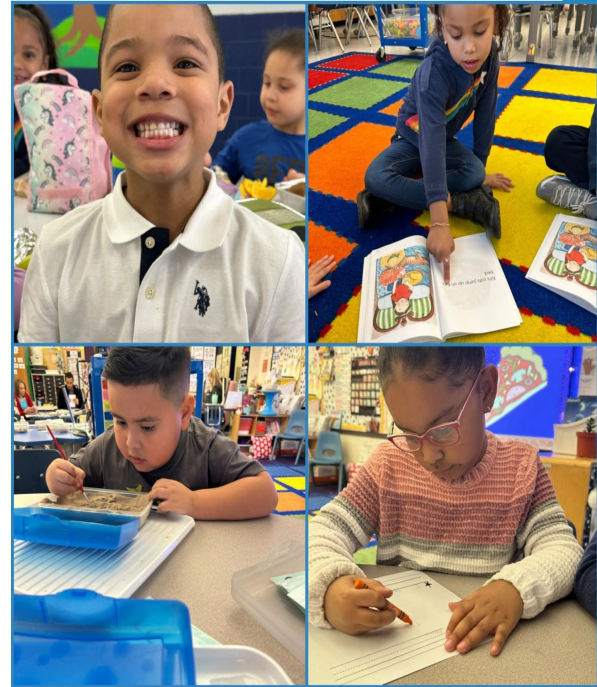
Others:

- In some home countries, school isn't mandatory *Lack of supervision means that students don't always get themselves to school * Disconnect between missing a few days here and there and the impact on overall outcomes, especially in the early grades



What is being Conveyed to Families:

- Attendance from the first day of school matters
- Missing a few days before or after a scheduled school vacation has a big impact on learning, and the school community, at every grade
- Extended vacations are not excused absences
- Schools do not have capacity to help students make up work for unexcused absences
- We don't want you to miss out or fall behind; even when you can make up work, you miss experiences (science labs, guest speakers, discussions)
- It's best to schedule doctor appointments outside school hours, but when that's not possible, it's better to come to school/return to school for even part of the day than miss completely
- Cold weather is typical in this area and not a reason to be out of school



What are our Schools doing to ensure Attendance Gains?

Our schools are using a broad range of strategies to *engage* their students

- Family Engagement in our schools continue to be the cornerstones to our student success.
- Meeting with their school attendance teams regularly to discuss attendance trends (teams include: Principal, counselors, liaisons and safety officers)
- Schools have adopted the comprehensive, tiered approach to improving attendance
- Schools have attempted to strengthen accountability among parents, students and teachers
- Implementation of Pre K Attendance Agreement for families
- Implemented positive strategies to increase engagement and personalization with students and families
- Schools have managed to intervene early, after 2 to 3 absences, communication is sent out followed up with home visits: every absence counts and gets a response
- Schools have developed strategies to improve school climate, which reduces negative peer interaction issues
- Schools review student discipline policies, procedures, and discipline data and subsequently implement a universal school climate improvement strategy.
- Collaborative Efforts: Schools and the district officers are connecting families to community resources/ organizations to help address attendance barriers.

