Every Student, Every Day.

PRINCIPALS' GUIDE

2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR
NEWLY UPDATED

NYC

Mayor's Interagency Task Force
on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism
& School Engagement

This guide is dedicated to the thousands of educators who come up with new ways of helping every student attend school every day.

And a thank you to the following city agencies for their work on the Mayor's Interagency Task Force:

Department of Education
Administration for Children's Services
Department of Homeless Services
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
New York City Police Department

Department of Youth & Community Development
NYC Service
Human Resources Administration
NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation

National Center for COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Special appreciation and recognition is extended to the National Center for Community Schools of the Children's Aid Society for their steadfast support to the schools in this pilot and for their good work in capturing the stories and lessons learned from this extraordinary experience.

nationalcenterforcommunityschools.org

> *"Last year, I was absent 41 days because I didn't like school. Then I started receiving wake up calls every morning, which made me feel very special knowing that people cared enough to encourage me to get my education. So wake up and go to school because I care about you!"*
>
> WakeUp!NYC Student

Overview

In the summer of 2010, Mayor Bloomberg launched the **Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism and School Engagement** – the first-ever interagency effort to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism in public schools in NYC. In the fall of 2010, the Task Force initiated the *Every Student, Every Day* campaign as the nation's most comprehensive effort to tackle chronic absenteeism. Over a dozen city agencies and private partners are mobilized to combat this complex problem.

Now in its third year, *Every Student, Every Day* calls on all schools to take strategic actions to reduce the rates of chronic absenteeism. Fifty pilot schools have contributed both insights and evidence about what works:

1. Use weekly meetings and data to monitor chronic absenteeism.

The Principal leads weekly **Student Success Summit** meetings with school staff, Success Mentors and community-based organizations to review school-wide attendance data and track chronically absent students, diagnose absences, and direct the appropriate support to the student or family.

2. Organize resources school wide to end chronic absenteeism.

The Principal's focus on attendance makes the biggest difference for a school in combating chronic absenteeism, by building a welcoming climate, a supportive culture, and a system for recognizing and rewarding good and improved attendance.

3. Personalize student interventions—The Success Mentor Corps.

A caring adult or peer mentor provides one-on-one support and encouragement for chronically absent students, and schools offer programs that address the students' needs and interests.

4. Draw on community partners to better connect with families.

Schools host Parent Success Summits and use the support of local community-based organizations to get the message out and connect families to vital services that help students get back on track.

Overall, citywide attendance in New York City has increased from 88% in 2005-06 to 91% today. Still, one in five students is still chronically absent – meaning he or she misses over a month of school each year.

Surprisingly, missing a full month of school equals an attendance rate of about 90%. One of the key messages of the Task Force is that 90% attendance is not good enough.

The students who miss 20 days or more are a diverse group – some miss 21 days, some miss much more. These students miss school for a host of reasons that may include health problems like asthma, family issues, mobility, lack of interest in school, bullying, or mental health issues. Many students are absent simply because they don't think anyone notices. Since the causes of absenteeism vary, interagency collaboration is the best way to address the problem.

Chronic Absenteeism is a multi-facetted problem that requires a multiplied effort.

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"The power and scale of these Task Force initiatives are profound. It is the first time any city has attempted to reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy in such a comprehensive, strategic, and collaborative manner. What is striking is that the Task Force is addressing the problem on so many fronts simultaneously in its initiatives, recognizing the complexity and multiple causes of truancy and chronic absenteeism… [It] should serve as a model for all cities attempting to address this problem."

Dr. Robert Balfanz, Johns Hopkins University

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This first ever multi-agency effort to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism in public schools includes:

- NYC Success Mentor Corps of caring adults personalizing school for small groups of students.
- Interagency collaborations to support schools, students and their families.
- New data tools that give teachers, Principals and community partners needed information to improve student attendance.
- Pilot schools that introduce, test and report on promising practices.
- An Ad Council campaign that builds awareness in the most impacted neighborhoods, and other public announcements.
- WakeUp!NYC calls with celebrity messages.

This guide describes how these aspects of the initiative can be applied in your school.

1 Use weekly meetings and data to monitor chronic absenteeism.

A core component of *Every Student, Every Day* is data review and weekly Student Success Summit meetings. The Principal-led meetings convene stakeholders to review chronic absenteeism data, identify students, and develop and monitor interventions.

Action: Host weekly Principal's Student Success Summit Meetings.

Every Student, Every Day schools reported that a focus on data reviewed regularly, as a team, helped the school understand chronic absenteeism patterns and take action.

The meeting, led by the Principal, brings a range of resources and perspectives to the table and includes: (1) selected school staff, typically guidance counselors, parent coordinator, school nurse, attendance teacher, and administrators; (2) community-based organizations working in the school; (3) Success Mentors; and (4) and the Community Partnership Program (CPP) Liaison matched with the school who represents other community resources. Together this team looks at data and plans action. Success stories by Success Mentors about their work with individual students are an important part of the weekly Summit. (See suggested agenda on page 5.)

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *The team looked at "chronic chronics," those missing six consecutive days or more, and began to notice siblings. They compared attendance from previous years and noted similarities. Outreach strategies were raised: contacting Mom, providing a service, finding out who drops kids off, who else is a resource in the family. And the team looked at early warning signs like the pattern of days that students miss.*

✓ *The school secretary was very helpful prepping for the meetings. She printed daily attendance, and specific absences and personal information for target students.*

Action Plan for Student Success Summit Meetings

What is the best day/time for your team to meet?

Who are the key stakeholders from your school to be included on this team? [Remember to include a representative from your school's CBO partners, and consider the skills you will need on your team to be effective at analyzing data and identifying interventions.]

Action: Use attendance data for action plans and assessing interventions.

It is good practice to look at school-level data daily so that big dips in attendance are recognized right away. School wide data can also be viewed in the aggregate for groups like grade levels or boys/girls, either weekly or monthly.

Student-level data is the most accurate way to track attendance in a school. Knowing who is at risk for being chronically absent spurs specific actions: outreach to parents, plans for re-entry with guidance staff (if consecutive days have been missed), consultation with classroom teachers to have a plan for re-connecting the student to current lesson plans, and daily greetings and informal check-ins to be sure attendance does not slip again when the student returns.

The Student Success Summit team members can use data to see if incentives or other programs have impacted attendance.

Find supports for making the best use of ATS on the Principals' Portal Task Force page at http://intranet.nycboe.net/DOEPortal/Principals/FamSvcs/News/Mayoral+Initiative.htm

PROMISING PRACTICES
- ✓ *ATS attendance reports were discussed at faculty team meetings to provide the staff with data for parent conferences and to set an attendance plan of action for identified students.*

- ✓ *The school used ATS to flag students by advisory and runs RRSA report routinely, sorted by advisors. Advisors had a lot more access to attendance data for their students. Ongoing access to data increased faculty involvement in addressing attendance concerns.*

- ✓ *Trips in June that data showed had compromised attendance were cancelled.*

Action: Measure outcomes.

To reduce chronic ansenteeism, it is recommended that everyone knows the goal: What is your attendance rate and where do you want it to be? Use data to track and report on your outcomes. Look at the students who missed 20+ days last year, your "Target List." Are they missing fewer days this year? Will they end the year missing 0-19 days? Look at your school's chronic absenteeism rate last year, the percentage of students in school last year who missed 20+ days. Will you decrease that rate this year? Share these data checks with Success Mentors, students and families and celebrate successes.

PROMISING PRACTICES
- ✓ *There was an attendance chart, posted and color coded, for all the "targeted" students to follow their progress at a glance. Success Mentors developed a binder for each mentee, tracking their interactions and student responses.*

- ✓ *Data helped engage families. Parents seemed to be shocked to see their child's attendance numbers as it appeared on the ATS RISA or RISP reports.*

The Weekly Student Success Summit Agenda

1. **Principal's Aggregate Data Presentation (5-10 minutes)**
   Purpose: to identify school wide attendance and absence patterns in order to better design school wide interventions and catch any errors in data collection.
   - Use the RSAL for daily and year-to-date attendance. Select any date range. Useful to identify dates with particularly low or high attendance rates.
   - Use the RYIS for number and percent of students in each "attendance interval" (perfect Attendance, 90-99%, 80-89%, etc.)

2. **Success Mentor Report (20-30 minutes)**
   Purpose: to get an understanding of how mentored students are doing overall as well as how individual mentored students are doing, and to design/evaluate interventions for these students.
   - Use *new* ATS report **RAMO** and select students with mentor to compare how they are doing this year with last year.
   - Have Success Mentors report in on any successes or students with particular challenges, with whom they need support connecting students/families to resources.
   - Focus on Interventions: Select one student for deeper case study for the group. What's going on for this student? What interventions have been tried already? What new interventions can be tried?

3. **Early Warning Action-Needed Report (10-20 minutes)**
   Purpose: to identify any students who are chronically absent, severely chronically absent or at-risk (optional) to date so that the team can come up with interventions for these students to get them back on track.
   - To identify students in each category, use the **RRSA** report in ATS. Download the report and filter in Excel as follows:
     i. 81-90% for Chronically Absent students
     ii. 0-80% for Severely Chronically Absent students
     iii. 91-95% for At-Risk students

4. **Review School-Wide Interventions (5-10 minutes)**
   Purpose: to review what the school is doing to create a school wide atmosphere that promotes good attendance for all students.
   - What is the school doing to engage all students in school?
   - How are students, families, classroom teachers and Success Mentors being recognized for their efforts around improving attendance?
   - What strategies have been tried? What's working, what isn't and what else could be done?
   - Acknowledge the team's hard work.

1 Use weekly meetings and data to monitor chronic absenteeism.

Planning & Check-in Tool *Optional:* Recommended as a self-assessment. Over the year, the Task Force will use this tool as a way to assess what schools are trying and to learn from schools about what works best.

Weekly Student Success Summit Meetings	YES	SOME	NO	NA
1. Student Success Summit Meetings meet every week.				
a. Meetings are led by the Principal.				
b. Success Mentors, CPP Liaison, CBO partners attend.				
c. School nurse or health provider attends at least 4 times a year.				
d. The proposed agenda (see page 5) is used.				
e. Chronic Absenteeism data is reviewed, including early warning.				
f. Programs/interventions and successes are reviewed; action plans discussed.				
Use Attendance Data for Action Plans	**YES**	**SOME**	**NO**	**NA**
2. The school has a routine of **school-level** attendance data reports to track daily attendance and see chronic absenteeism rates.				
3. The school uses **student-level** data to monitor students who are chronically absent and identify patterns of absence.				
4. Data is used at weekly meetings to show if specific interventions or programs impact chronic absenteeism.				
Measure outcomes	**YES**	**SOME**	**NO**	**NA**
5. The school knows, monitors and shares outcome data to measure reduction in chronic absenteeism.				

Resources and "How to . . ." Guides for the Weekly Student Success Meetings
Attendance data reports used to measure and monitor attendance depend on the quality of data collection practices. For high schools, reports of period attendance and cuts are used in addition to reports of daily attendance.

Please see the *Every Student, Every Day* "**How To…**" available on the Principals' Portal Task Force page
How to. . . Get Started with Weekly Student Success Summits
How to. . . Re-Focus the Weekly Student Success Summits (Agenda Options)
How to. . . Learn More about What ATS Offers to Track Attendance
How to. . . Evaluate the Success of the Mayor's Initiative at your School
How to. . . Prepare Data to Measure the Success of the Mayor's Initiative

Also recommended are issues of "**Present & Accounted for**" newsletters available on Principals' Portal
Issue 5: Monitoring Daily Attendance
Issue 6: Favorite ATS Reports
Issue 10: Attendance Committee Best Practices
Issue 16: Sustain Daily Attendance Practices

Tool on the Portal: Link to the **ATS Wiki** to search for available reports and get tips from other ATS users.

2 Organize resources school wide to end chronic absenteeism.

The Principal is at the forefront of the school's efforts to build and maintain systems that recognize and reward good and improved attendance. But the whole school must resound with the message and carry those systems forward.

Action: Create a school culture that promotes good attendance.

In a school that promotes good attendance, everyone knows the goal: what is your attendance rate and where do you want it to be? The Principal leads with a clear attendance policy, a commitment to accurate and timely attendance taking, and by sharing attendance rates daily.

Addressing safety is another key place to start. Not only can clear and consistent discipline policies help prevent disruptions that take time away from class, but can ensure that students feel safe and welcomed. The Principal leads with new systems such as redesigned arrival procedures, adding a dean to the staff, or introducing peer mediation programs.

Academically, schools promote good attendance by offering rich and engaging learning activities and meeting students' needs in class. Students who are not successful in school may find it easier to be absent than to try to catch up. Schools consider programs like homework help, credit-recovery for overage students, or flexible scheduling to help students arrive on time.

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *A school changed lunch schedules to have family advisory groups eat together. The atmosphere became more peaceful and brought about a huge drop in the number of incidents in the school and an increase in attendance.*

✓ *The school put resources behind ensuring that students who arrived late were marked present as part of a commitment to improved data systems. A Family Worker kept a log of late arrivals and made sure the attendance was corrected.*

Action: Recognize and reward good attendance.

Even with a safe and welcoming environment, some students still need a nudge, a special reason to attend. Principals can plan a range of possible actions, rewards and programs to keep students in school, including morning greetings to encourage good attendance, positive calls home for every absence, and other small incentives.

✓ *All teachers posted "100% attendance for the month" placards outside their doors so everyone could see when they walk by and say "great job!"*

✓ *Students were excited to receive raffle tickets for arriving to school early. Students exchanged the raffle tickets for prizes or for admission to a special school event. Certificates were handed out to students at ceremonies for improved attendance.*

Action: Identify key personnel to lead new efforts throughout the school.

Everyone in the school can acknowledge students with good attendance, take on a few students to track when they begin to miss school, or begin to build relationships with students who are chronically absent.

One person is designated as the Point Person for the school, to maximize the school's connection to Task Force resources and to continue to contribute to the school's promising practices. Also, there are the people who make up the school's updated attendance committee, called the Weekly Student Success Summit (described in section 1). They will help plan and direct the initiative.

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *The school security agent, as the first person people see, was a great help. She greeted each child and parent by name, and was supportive. It was a great way to start the day.*

✓ *The parent coordinator called every absent and late student's family every day (the school is small enough for this). The school saw results: parents began to call the school BEFORE the school called when children were out.*

✓ *Target students formed a kind of club, "Attendance Achievers," who met once a week at lunch period with the dean. Other school staff, like SAPIS and guidance counselors, rotated in to be part of these lunches and lead workshops for the students.*

Action: Set up new systems and structures.

What system will the school have for holding the meetings? What data reports will be needed and who will prepare them? Before a school can deal with the most entrenched absences, there must be an attendance plan in place that both supports students who come every day and monitors those who start to fall behind.

One school might focus on prevention by targeting strategies for early and transitional grades – Kindergarten and first grade, sixth and ninth grades. Another school will respond to data-identified needs, like students with a history of poor attendance, those who are over-age or holdovers. Aside from the Success Mentor Corps (described in section 3), appropriate interventions might be connections to extracurricular activities, after-school programming, school-based health services, morning clubs, counseling, or other programs.

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *One high school created a "Student lounge" for students with a 95% attendance for a month and no tardiness. Students gained access for one week, and could use the space before school, during lunch, and after school.*

✓ *For kindergarten, one of the lowest attending grades, the targeted students went daily to the parent coordinator's room and moved popsicle sticks into a pocket chart to say they were "here." The charts were encouraging, as the students had a visual representation of their attendance. Kindergarten attendance last year was barely 91%, and had been in the 80s most years—this school year it was almost 94%.*

✓ *Older students worked with the younger students in the breakfast program as well as in peer tutoring program, motivating buddies to get to school early each morning and improve their attendance.*

Action Plan for School Wide Strategies
Identify school wide strategies that will promote good attendance for all students.

How will you create a culture in which all students are motivated and informed about the importance of good attendance? What types of incentives/award, or new systems/programs could you offer to students or, their families?

Select your Task Force (or attendance initiative) point person.

This person will be responsible for supporting the Success Mentors (see section 3), running the weekly Student Success Summit meeting when the Principal can't be there and ensuring the data gets compiled each week for the meeting. Who is central to making this happen? Who is the best fit for this role?

Plan to introduce your attendance initiative (priorities and new systems) to your school staff.

When will this introduction take place? How will you create buy-in among your school staff?

2 Organize resources school wide to end chronic absenteeism.

Planning & Check-in Tool *Optional:* Recommended as a self-assessment. Over the year, the Task Force will use this tool as a way to assess what schools are trying and to learn from schools about what works best.

Culture that Promotes Good Attendance	YES	SOME	NO	NA
1. The school's attendance policy that defines good attendance is widely distributed.				
2. The school has at least one new practice that promotes a welcoming environment.				
3. Emphasis on acknowledging and celebrating attendance is evident (banners, bulletin boards, etc.).				

Recognize and Reward	YES	SOME	NO	NA
4. The school has a system for recognizing and rewarding good and improved attendance.				

Personnel	YES	SOME	NO	NA
5. A Point Person is selected to coordinate all efforts for *Every Student, Every Day*.				
6. All staff & CBOs in the school have received information about chronic absenteeism and how they can help improve attendance.				

Systems and Structures	YES	SOME	NO	NA
7. The School Attendance Plan (OSYD Consolidated Plan) describes the school's new actions to reduce chronic absenteeism.				
8. Different activities exist to target early-warning and chronically absent students.				
a. Calls home for every absence.				
b. Students enrolled in WakeUp!NYC calls.				
c. Before-school activities (breakfast, homework help, sports)				
d. Academic interventions (credit recovery, homework help)				
e. After-school activities – CBO, clubs, sports				
f. Other:				

Resources and "How to . . ." Guides for School Wide Actions

Schools are advised to re-visit their Attendance Plans (part of the OSYD Consolidated Plan). The Plan is organized the way schools are expected to structure their initiatives: school wide, preventing absences, responded to "early warning," and interventions for chronically absent students.

Please see the *Every Student, Every Day* "**How To…**" available on the Principals' Portal Task Force page
How to. . . Rethink Student Engagement
How to. . . Adapt Attendance Initiatives to Addressing Lateness
How to. . . Be Creative with Attendance Incentives for K-5
How to. . . Be Creative with Attendance Incentives for Middle School
How to. . . Be Creative with Attendance Incentives for High School

Also recommended are issues of "**Present & Accounted for**" newsletters available on Principals' Portal
Issue 11: Attendance Incentives
Issue 12: Travel and Pupil Transportation
Issue 15: Asthma Overview
Issue 16: Sustain Daily Attendance Data Practices

3 Personalize student interventions—The Success Mentor Corps.

The interest and encouragement of a Success Mentor can bring chronically absent students back to school. The approach is supported by fifty years of research documenting that children who have consistent access to caring adults have better outcomes, including higher education and lower incidents of at-risk behaviors.

Key Action: Identify your "Target Students."

Use the student indicator or RPYA report to know who missed 20 or more days last year. Prioritize other students for interventions, for example, incoming ninth graders.

Key Action: Identify "Success Mentors."

All *Every Student, Every Day* schools are expected to start an Internal Success Mentor program. **Internal (Staff) Success Mentors** are teachers, cluster teachers, guidance counselors, parent coordinators, and other school staff who become a special go-to person for a few students. These Mentors "adopt" 3-5 students, depending on their other role(s) in the school. They use lunch or advisory to connect with mentees.

External Success Mentors come from city interagency partners, youth development organizations like after school providers or youth counseling programs, and from colleges that provide Social Work or Guidance interns.   External Success Mentors are expected to have 15-20 mentees. Many *Every Student, Every Day* schools are connected to Success Mentor partnerships by the Task Force. Some schools develop their own new partnerships, or ask existing partners, like United Way GPS, to act as Success Mentors.

Peer-to-Peer Success Mentors are older students who receive training and support from organizations with experience in service learning or youth counseling. Peer Success Mentors generally have about 5 mentees.

Action: Be Clear about the Role of the Success Mentor in the School

No matter what "kind" of Success Mentor, it is their responsibility to link students to school, and students and parents to services that address the causes of the absences:

☐ Mentors greet students in the morning and call their homes if they are absent.

☐ In one-on-one or group meetings weekly throughout the school year, Mentors identify, and in some cases create, activities that appeal to their mentees' needs and interests to increase their engagement with school.

☐ Mentors diagnose the root causes of mentees' absences and collaborate with others in the school to intervene with services and resources as necessary.

In addition, the Success Mentor role includes:

- ☐ Keeping notes about their students' attendance patterns, needs and interventions and acting strategically on the data they keep.
- ☐ Celebrating attendance improvements.
- ☐ Attending (or being represented at) Weekly Student Success Summit meetings (see section 1) and sharing what works and new challenges.
- ☐ Communicating regularly with mentees' families, connecting them to services as needed and reinforcing positive messages about school attendance and academic performance.

PROMISING PRACTICES

- ✓ *With Success Mentors, the students knew someone else was checking in on them. The students loved the meetings and the attention. Now, students come to the Mentors and tell them why they have been absent. The students really want the Mentors to know they are trying.*

- ✓ *Teachers, initially somewhat hesitant to take on the Success Mentor role, have become the program's biggest cheerleaders. Teachers were in the cafeteria early in the morning so as not to miss meeting and greeting mentees.*

- ✓ *Because of the Success Mentors, students want to get to school. Parents shared that when a child is eager to go to school "It makes it easier for me in the morning when it's so stressful just trying to get everyone dressed and out of the house on time."*

Action: Have Systems to Support your "Success Mentors."

Success Mentors cannot make the difference on their own. Where the programs worked best, Success Mentors were introduced to the entire school staff and had a key staff member as a liaison. Success Mentors knew where to go for space to meet with students, and had access to computers and a phone, and to data about their students.

It is best to match external Success Mentors to students with attendance of at least 70%, in other words, not with the most entrenched attendance problems. It is best to plan to sustain the mentor-mentee relationship over the course of the school year.

PROMISING PRACTICES

- ✓ *Information gathered by Success Mentors was tremendously helpful to the Guidance Counselor and the Advisors. Parents were often more responsive to Success Mentors than to school staff. Some teachers and security staff approached Success Mentors about referring additional students.*

- ✓ *To support Success Mentor, the Attendance Teachers provided data, the secretary helped with procurement for incentives, and teachers communicated during family group time/advisories, or other periods when they didn't have a class.*

Action: Use the Chronic Absenteeism Data Dashboard.

Every Student, Every Day introduced the Data Dashboard that external Success Mentors and CBO partners (after signing confidentiality agreements) can use to view student data on any web-accessed computer without direct access to ATS or ARIS.

Success Mentors can use its log to record interventions and track reasons for students' absences. These log entries upload to ATS and become part of the student record.

See directions for accessing the Data Dashboard on the Principals' Portal Task Force page http://intranet.nycboe.net/DOEPortal/Principals/FamSvcs/News/Mayoral+Initiative.htm

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Action Plan for the Success Mentor Corps

Identify your Target Students.

Which students will you target from your list of students with a history of chronic absence? Will you focus on certain key grades or groups based on what your data tells you and where you feel you can make the most impact?

Identify your Success Mentors.

Who will serve as your Success Mentors? Will you use internal school staff or might there be a partner organization that could provide the Mentors? Do you have an existing mentoring program that can include a focus on attendance?

What are your expectations for your Success Mentors in terms of their responsibilities?

Select and assign target students to your Success Mentors so they are ready to go when the school year starts.

How will you match target students to Success Mentors (if you are using school staff, you want to match staff with students they would normally see in the course of their day)? How many target students will you match to each Mentor?

Select your point person (see page 9)

This person will be responsible for supporting the Success Mentors.

Plan to introduce your team of Success Mentors to your school staff.

When will this introduction take place? How will you create buy-in among your school staff for the Initiative?

3 Personalize student interventions—The Success Mentor Corps.

Planning & Check-in Tool *Optional:* Recommended as a self-assessment. Over the year, the Task Force will use this tool as a way to assess what schools are trying and to learn from schools about what works best.

Target Students

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
1. Students who missed 20+ days last year are identified and matched to Success Mentors.				
2. During the year, new, early-warning students are identified and added to Mentor caseloads, as appropriate.				
3. Once matched, the mentor-student match is entered in ATS using the INTV student indicator.				

Success Mentors

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
4. The school has recruited and supports staff members to serve as Internal Success Mentors.				
5. The school has an additional Success Mentor model in place.				
a. External model. Partner(s) are:				
b. Peer-to-Peer model.				
6. The Success Mentors each have a "code" that is used to match them to their student in ATS (INTV student indicator).				
7. Success Mentors acknowledge their mentees each day and meet at least once a week for the whole school year.				

Success Mentor Supports

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
8. The Success Mentors know the school's Point Person and are introduced within school during the first 3 weeks.				
9. Success Mentors are introduced to their mentees through a special event or activity.				
10. Success Mentors have space and resources (phones, computers, etc.) and know all staff roles and responsibilities.				
11. Success Mentors are included in Parent Summits, Weekly Student Success Summit meetings, and other school-wide events.				

Data Dashboard

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
12. External Success Mentors have signed Confidentiality Agreements.				
13. Success Mentors have and use Data Dashboard log-in accounts.				

Resources and "How to . . ." Guides for The Success Mentor Corps

It is important to define a "code" for each Success Mentor (or other activity) and use that code to match individual students to their Mentors in ATS. For schools, it means easier access to mentor-specific data reports. For *Every Student, Every Day* it means the ability to identify data-driven best practices.

Please see the *Every Student, Every Day* "**How To…**" available on the Principals' Portal Task Force page
How to. . . Review your Target List
How to. . . Define Interventions for the Target List
How to. . . Flag Target Students in ATS Using Student Indicator INTV
How to. . . Use the Data Dashboards

Tools on the Portal: Confidentiality Agreements, **NYC Success Mentor Guide**, and the Data Dashboard.

Also see: How to. . . Plan a Success Mentor Session . . . Know what to Expect of Success Mentors from Partner Organizations . . . Have School Staff Serve as (Internal) Success Mentors . . .

4 Draw on community partners to better connect with families.

Communicating with families about attendance is critical – 90% attendance isn't good enough and attending school regularly boosts achievement.

Schools can engage existing community-based organizations (like after school programs) and partner with other community centers (like New York City Housing Authority) to reach families and share the message about student attendance. These partners can be asked to make specific outreach to chronically absent students and talk about good attendance with the families they see.

Action: Host the Parent Success Summit & Resource Fair.

The Parent Success Summit and Resource Fair, a key part of the *Every Student, Every Day*, takes place during the first eight weeks of school. The first part engages and informs families about the importance of good attendance (including laws and the link between attendance and school performance) and the school's attendance programs.

For a successful summit:

- ☐ Have a performance by students or an awards ceremony.
- ☐ Make it part of the first Parents Association meeting, Open School Night, or another school function that parents traditionally attend.
- ☐ Have computer(s) set up so parents can log into ARIS ParentLink and see their student's profile—including attendance last year and this year.
- ☐ Include activities geared toward grandparents who are raising grandchildren.
- ☐ Create a personalized folder for each parent, with their child's attendance data and a resource list of community resources.

Principals use the second part, the Resource Fair, where organizations provide information about services such as housing, health care, and other resources, as an opportunity to connect with local community providers.

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *The Parent Summit featured meaningful discussions about student support and best practices. The parents were excited to know that the Mayor's Office was so involved in helping support their efforts with their children.*

✓ *The summits helped to get parents to be more aware of their children's attendance/lateness record. The school recognized parents by presenting them with certificates as well.*

Action: Communicate with families regularly—and include the positive.

Schools or Success Mentors call home when students are absent everyday. They set aside enough time to discuss why the child was absent and explore solutions.

Tips for successful morning calls to families of absent students:
- ☐ Mention the school is part of the Mayor's *Every Student, Every Day* campaign.
- ☐ Try to find the "hook" – focusing on the child's strength or a positive action.
- ☐ Connect the family to any needed services and invite them to school activities,

When personal calls are not possible, make the most of "autodial" systems. A message to inform parents of absences, lateness, or to offer congratulations for attendance improvement can be recorded by the Principal, guidance counselor, or Success Mentor. Parents/guardians pay more attention to a message delivered by a person they know.

Every student can receive celebrity wake-up calls through WakeUp!NYC. Instructions and flyers for students and families are on the [Principals' Portal Task Force page](#).

How can the attendance message move beyond the phone call, intercom and bulletin boards? Partners in your school, whether after school providers, School-Based Health Center, or youth counselors become part of the outreach, addressing attendance issues with the families they already serve. Other community centers, like New York City Housing Authority, can be asked to share the message about student attendance. NYC Libraries are already part of the effort with librarians trained to ask about their student's attendance and to assist parents to get onto ARIS ParentLink.

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *The Mentor called to make sure the student was getting ready 40 minutes before school started and greeted him when he arrived. Twice a month, the Mentor sent the mother a postcard with his weekly attendance. He missed just two days this year.*

✓ *Through their special relationship, Success Mentors were good at getting updated telephone and home address information from the students.*

✓ *The holiday party with the PTA was held in the neighborhood with the highest concentration of parents of chronically absent students. These parents were not coming to the school so the school brought the event to the families' community.*

✓ *Mentors developed a "walking school bus" program. Data showed that students who missed school had younger siblings. The school called the parents/guardians, and asked if it would help to have folks walk their kids to school. They arranged for a meeting place. Parents got kids to that spot, rather than all the way to school.*

Action: Learn ways to address the causes of absenteeism.

NEW New York City now has a Truancy and Absenteeism Help Center to connect families with the resources they need to get all children to school every day. It is an interactive web site available at [nyc.gov/everystudent](#) (or text "SCHOOL" to 30364).

Community Partnership Program (CPP) liaisons are connected to *Every Student, Every Day* schools as a partnership with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

CPPs host meetings in targeted neighborhoods with local agencies to coordinate supports to families. Schools can send a staff person to attend one of these meetings. The CPP liaison can also meet periodically with the Principal and:

☐ Attend Parent Success Summits and resource fairs.
☐ Assist with family needs and help schools refer families to preventive services.

In many other ways, schools can connect chronically absent students and their families to CBOs that offer critical services. Of course, they can be part of the Parent Success Summit and are invited to the Weekly Student Success Summits (see section 1). They bring information for immigrant families, about day care and other services, and about supports for foster care families. Schools reported that the *Every Student, Every Day* message made it easier to outreach; a focus on attendance was a good way to start the conversation with CBOs in their neighborhoods and to local businesses, too.

Because asthma is one of the top reasons for student absenteeism, through the Asthma Ambassadors project, schools invite a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) representative to their Parent Summit and Resource Fairs and also to train staff on how to support students with asthma and their families.

PROMISING PRACTICES

✓ *Schools that worked closely with their CPP liaisons found that they had more options and support from the community in reducing chronic absenteeism.*

✓ *A Success Mentor created a Resources Guide of local services, including recreational and health care, that was distributed to families at the Parent Summit.*

Action Plan for Family and Community Engagement

Select date and time for the Parent Success Summit & Resource Fair (in first 8 weeks)

Date & Time

Who are the community partners you want to invite to your Parent Summit? Who from your staff will be the point person for the Summit, taking responsibility for inviting community resources and organizing the event?

Identify resources in your community (CBOs, ACS, CPP, etc) with potential for collaboration.

Where are there opportunities for strategic partnerships? If you have an afterschool program or other programs/services at your school run by partner organizations, how can you engage them in the fight against chronic absences? Could they target chronically absent students for their programs? Help spread the message about good attendance?

4 Draw on community partners to better connect with families.

Planning & Check-in Tool *Optional:* Recommended as a self-assessment. Over the year, the Task Force will use this tool as a way to assess what schools are trying and to learn from schools about what works best.

Parent Success Summit

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
1. At least one Parent Summit & Resource Fair was held (with one held during the first 8 weeks of school).				
2. The Summit was planned with CBO partners, CPP Liaison, city agencies and Success Mentors.				

Communication with families

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
3. Parents/families of absent students are called every day.				
a. Positive news is shared in every call.				
b. Autodial messages are personalized.				
c. Reasons for absences are solicited for action planning.				
4. At least one neighborhood organization is a partner with the school in promoting good attendance to families.				

Learn ways to address the causes of absenteeism

	YES	SOME	NO	NA
5. The Community Partnership Program (CPP) Liaison is identified and is invited/attends the weekly Student Success Summit meetings.				
6. A school staff person has attended at least one neighborhood CPP meeting to connect local resources to the school.				
7. CBO partners in the school contribute to weekly Student Success Summit meetings.				
8. School has at least one new practice to better connect families to resources (health, social, etc.).				
9. School promotes ARIS ParentLink and the web-based "Absenteeism Help Center" (see page 17).				
10. School has selected an Asthma Ambassador.				

Resources and "How to . . ." Guides for Connecting to Families and Communities

Schools will be notified with contact information for their ACS CPP Liaison.

NYC Student Success Map (nyc.gov/studentsuccessmap) is an interactive directory tailored for *Every Student, Every Day* pilot schools pinpointing vital local resources, including public libraries and recreation centers and, where available, CPP Liaisons.

Please see the *Every Student, Every Day* "**How To…**" available on the Principals' Portal Task Force page
How to. . . Host a Parent Success Summit & Resource Fair
How to. . . Make the Most of Morning Calls to Families
How to. . . Personalize Auto-Dial Attendance Outreach Phone Calls

Tools on the Portal: **WakeUp!NYC** sign up flyers, Ad Council "**School Every Day**" Public Service Announcements, and a special message schools can use for outreach in the community "**A Call to Action**."

Also recommended are issues of "**Present & Accounted for**" newsletters available on Principals' Portal
Issue 15: Asthma Overview
Issue 18: ACS and Attendance
Issue 19: Supporting the Attendance of Students in Temporary Housing
Issue 22: Current Contact Info in ATS: Phone Numbers (Parts I & II)

Resources

Our Websites

Mayor's Website on *Every Student, Every Day*: nyc.gov/everystudent
Every Student, Every Day Email: everystudent@cityhall.nyc.gov

NYCDOE Principals' Portal Mayor's Task Force page:
http://intranet.nycboe.net/DOEPortal/Principals/FamSvcs/News/Mayoral+Initiative.htm

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Attendance Works: attendanceworks.org

A national and state initiative that promotes awareness of the important role that school attendance plays in achieving academic success. The website gives users access to tools for monitoring, understanding and addressing chronic absence, starting in the early grades, including a Tool Kit for engaging parents. Sign up for AttendanceWorks email updates.

Special thanks to Hedy Chang and AttendanceWorks for contributions to this guide, especially the Planning and Check-in Tool.

Selected Interagency Supports

nyc.gov/studentsuccessmap is an interactive directory tailored for *Every Student, Every Day* pilot schools pinpointing vital local resources, including public libraries and recreation centers.

ACS Family Resources: nyc.gov/html/acs/html/staff/resources_preventive.shtml "Resources for Provider Agencies" can help front-line staff locate services.

DYDC (Department of Youth & Community Development) has a "Find a Program" service at:
http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/search.shtml

Community Center Directory from New York Public Housing Authority (NYCHA):
nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/ccschtml/communitycenters.shtml

Listing of Family Mental Health Resource Centers: nyc.gov/html/doh/html/dmh/cas.shtml

DOE Student in Temporary Housing (STH) Content Experts connect schools to STH resources. See list of Content Experts and other important information:
schools.nyc.gov/StudentSupport/NonAcademicSupport/StudentsinTemporaryHousing

DOE Office of School Health: schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Health

Key Reports

Strengthening Schools by Strengthening Families: Community Strategies to Reverse Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades and Improve Supports for Children and Families by Kim Nauer, Andrew White and Rajeev Yerneni, October 2008
(nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20081021_ATTEND.pdf)

Chang, H., & Romero, M. (2008, September). Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, p.8. Retrieved from:
http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf

Sheldon, S. & Epstein, J. (2004). Getting students to school: Using family and community involvement to reduce chronic absenteeism. *School and Community Journal, 4*(2), 39-56. Retrieved from: http://www.adi.org/journal/fw04/Sheldon%20&%20Epstein.pdf

Planning & Check-in Tool Overview *Optional:* Recommended as a self-assessment. Over the year, the Task Force will use this tool as a way to assess what schools are trying and to learn from schools about what works best.

		YES	SOME	NO	NA
1 Weekly Meetings	Student Success Summits meet every week.				
	The school has a routine of **school-level** attendance data reports to track daily attendance and see chronic absenteeism rates.				
	The school uses **student-level** data to monitor students who are chronically absent and identify patterns of absence.				
	Data is used to show if programs impact chronic absenteeism.				
	The school knows, monitors and shares outcome data to measure reduction in chronic absenteeism.				
2 School wide	School's attendance policy is widely distributed.				
	School has one new practice to promote a welcoming environment.				
	Emphasis on celebrating attendance is evident.				
	School has a system to reward good and improved attendance.				
	A Point Person is selected to coordinate all efforts.				
	All staff & CBOs have received information about chronic absenteeism and how they can help improve attendance.				
	The School Attendance Plan (OSYD Consolidated Plan) describes the school's new actions to reduce chronic absenteeism.				
	Different activities target early-warning /chronically absent students.				
	Students who missed 20+ days last year are identified and matched to Success Mentors.				
3 Success Mentors	During the year, new, early-warning students are identified and added to Mentor caseloads, as appropriate.				
	The mentor-student match is entered in ATS using INTV.				
	The school has an Internal Success Mentor program.				
	The school has another Success Mentor program.				
	The Success Mentors know the school's Point Person and are introduced within school and to their mentees.				
	Success Mentors acknowledge their mentees each day and meet at least once a week for the whole school year.				
	Success Mentors have space and resources (phones, computers, etc.) and know all staff roles and responsibilities.				
	Success Mentors are included in Parent Summits, Student Success Summits, and other school wide events.				
	External Success Mentors have signed Confidentiality Agreements.				
	Success Mentors have and use Data Dashboard log-in accounts.				
4 Families and Community	At least one Parent Summit and Resource Fair was held.				
	The Summit was planned with CBO partners, CPP Liaison, city agencies and Success Mentors.				
	Parent(s)/families of absent students are called every day.				
	At least one neighborhood organization is a partner with the school in promoting good attendance to families.				
	The Community Partnership Program (CPP) Liaison is invited/attends the weekly Student Success Summit meetings..				
	A school staff person has attended at least one CPP meeting.				
	School CBO partners contribute to weekly Summit meetings.				
	School has at least one new practice to better connect families to resources (health, social, etc.).				
	School promotes ARIS ParentLink / "Absenteeism Help Center.".				
	School has selected an Asthma Ambassador.				

Starting Strong: The First 8 Weeks
Key Objectives for the Start of the School Year

Before School Begins
_ Review school attendance policies and the Attendance Plan (OSYD Consolidated Plan).
_ Set school wide goals.
_ Identify the Point Person for the Task Force initiatives. Email that information to your
  Task Force buddy or attendance@schools.nyc.gov.
_ Know the "Target List" students and plan for Success Mentor matches (and other
  targeted interventions).
_ Schedule your Parent Success Summit.

Week 1 or 2
_ Meet with your Success Mentors to explain the program and their roles.
_ Introduce Success Mentors and other attendance initiatives to the school staff.
_ Match Success Mentors to students (mentees), and facilitate a special activity for
  introductions.
_ Contact the CPP (ACS Community Partnership liaison) and introduce yourself. Invite
  him/her to your weekly Student Success Summit meeting or other event.
_ Promote your Parent Success Summit to families and local service providers.

Week 2 or 3
_ Start your weekly Student Success Summit (Attendance Team) meetings.
_ Reach out to your after-school programs or other community partners in the school,
  and suggest ways they can be part of attendance initiatives.
_ Enter student-Success Mentor matches in ATS using the student indicator INTV.

Weeks 3-8
_ Parent Success Summit and Resource Fair held.
_ Principal leads weekly Student Success Summit meetings (at set time each week) with
  a regular review of school-level and student-level data.
_ Success Mentors acknowledge the attendance of their students daily, call home when
  students are absent and meet individually or as a group at least once a week.
_ School wide strategies have begun (celebrations, incentives, new systems).

Ongoing
_ Use the "Planning & Check-in Tool" (page 20) every few weeks to review progress and
  re-assess Task Force initiatives in your school.
_ Share what you are learning (stories, questions, sample handouts, plans or agendas)
  with your Task Force buddy or to attendance@schools.nyc.gov.
_ Measure outcomes and celebrate successes.

Every Student, Every Day.

Mayor's Interagency Task Force
on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism
& School Engagement

www.nyc.gov/EveryStudent