

## Overview

### Attendance and Truancy and the CIWP

Attendance impacts all facets of a student’s school experience. Students must be present in order for them to benefit from instruction and school culture. Schools with clear attendance systems and procedures in place provide the essential structure that expresses the importance of daily attendance to the school and the home. In developing an effective CIWP, identifying priorities and creating milestones for improving attendance, reducing truancy, and ensuring a strong attendance culture is important. The guidance that follows is designed to support schools to better understand their data, to identify action steps that are critical levers in strengthening attendance, and to recognize how a clear system will enable a school to support attendance efforts.

**Schools below a 95% Average Daily Attendance rate are required to develop a plan to increase attendance to 95%; schools above a 95% attendance rate are encouraged to develop a plan to maintain their standing. In addition, schools with chronic absence or chronic truancy rates of 10% or higher are required to develop a plan to reduce their chronic absence and/or chronic truancy rates.**

Definitions:

- Chronic absentee = student who has missed 10% or more of days enrolled, excused or unexcused (18 or more days annually)
- Chronic truant = 9 or more unexcused absences per year (5% or more of days enrolled)
- Chronic absence rate = % of students enrolled who are chronically absent
- Chronic truancy rate = % of students enrolled who are chronically truant

#### School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) – Attendance Performance Indicators:

	5 points	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Average Daily Attendance Rate (Grades K-8)	96% or higher	Between 95% and 95.9%	Between 94% and 94.9%	Between 92% and 93.9%	Less than 92%
Average Daily Attendance Rate (Grades 9-12)	95% or higher	Between 90% and 94.9%	Between 85% and 89.9%	Between 80% and 84.9%	Less than 80%

## 1. Developing a Strategic Priority

There are two options for including ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY in your school’s CIWP:

- Select a single and separate strategic priority using Attendance and Truancy in the title; and/or
- Embed Attendance into another strategic priority and detail how it will be addressed in that priority’s Action Plan.

Attendance is a pre-requisite for instruction. Whether it is a stand-alone or embedded priority, attendance touches management, instruction, culture, and familial components of a school.

**ATTENDANCE AS A PRIORITY:** Attendance as a priority calls upon the school to look deeply at the culture and systems of their institution. Schools that do not meet the 95% goal should make

attendance one of their priorities. Low or decreasing attendance is symptomatic of other issues, most of which can be positively influenced by proactive efforts of the school team.

**ATTENDANCE EMBEDDED WITHIN ANOTHER PRIORITY:** Attendance as an embedded priority responds to the identification of a specific area that needs growth, with attendance as part of that effort. For example, if increasing the graduation rate is a priority, attendance could be an embedded priority. Students who are not on-track to graduate are likely disengaging from the school and often not attending. Addressing why a student is disengaging provokes questions around college and career planning, instructional support, parental involvement, health and wellness, and even social aspects that are acculturated in a school’s environment.

When establishing Attendance and Truancy as a priority, it is important to use quantitative and qualitative data to inform the development of actionable steps.

Consider the following questions:

- What is your attendance rate over the last three years?
- Has it remained the same or have there been changes?
- If there have been changes, can you isolate what has driven the change (e.g., grade level, period)?
- If you have maintained higher attendance (95% and higher), where can you still identify areas to improve your attendance culture?
- If you have had declining or steadily low attendance (below 95%), is it a school-wide issue, a grade level issue, specific classrooms, a truancy issue, or other targeted area needing support?
- Review your chronic truancy and chronic absenteeism data – are there large numbers of students needing targeted, individualized supports to encourage their attendance?
- What are the most common concerns you hear regarding attendance and truancy at your school?

Depending on your school’s data, consider the following to determine where you might direct attention:

Elementary School	High School	Consider
Attendance >=95% Meeting CPS goal	Attendance >=90% Meeting CPS goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you maintain enthusiasm and a positive attendance culture?</li> </ul>
92% <= Attendance <95% Nearing the CPS goal	85% <= Attendance <90% Nearing the CPS goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is preventing your school from reaching the goal?</li> <li>• Is it a grade level issue? A time of day issue? A behavioral issue?</li> <li>• What structures are in place to encourage students to come every day?</li> </ul>
Attendance <92% Struggling to meet the goal	Attendance <85% Struggling to meet the goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What concrete structures are in place to support good attendance practices?</li> <li>• How are attendance concerns addressed?</li> <li>• How is positive attendance behavior rewarded? Are incentives part of the routine or unique events?</li> <li>• How are the importance of attendance and specific student challenges messaged to the home?</li> <li>• What else does your data say? What specific areas of your data can you influence?</li> </ul>

## 2. Milestone Categories

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Whether your school decides to make Attendance and Truancy a priority or embed it within another priority, the Milestones need to be deliberate in that you expect to see it impact your data. The following suggested sample items can be useful for those schools that select **Attendance and Truancy** as a priority, or for those that embed **Attendance and Truancy** within another priority:

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SAMPLE MILESTONES:**

#### **A. Instruction, suggested Milestones:**

- Include Pre-K in attendance signage around the building
- Ensure that Pre-K, K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade have attendance highlight stations in their classrooms
- Evaluate middle school classroom location. 6<sup>th</sup> grade infractions are highest during change of teachers. Locate 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in one section of floor. Start the year and continue with structured period changes.

#### **B. Professional Development, suggested Milestones:**

- Utilize designated PD time to review attendance metrics and progress; gather feedback on best practices within classrooms; compile and share out with all teachers each quarter

#### **C. School Culture, suggested Milestones:**

- Summer: Review incentive plan in correlation with grade level data
- Summer and start of Q1: Strengthen incentives for Pre-K, K and 1; include grade level teachers on planning efforts; come to consensus and announce plan
- Q2, 3, and 4: Review data and efforts; adjust as needed

#### **D. After School/ Extended Day Activities, suggested Milestones:**

- Allocate funds for K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade after school activities. These grades are usually excluded; so a joint K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade activity with parent involvement will be a useful way to build culture as well

#### **E. Parental Involvement, suggested Milestones:**

- Q1 and Q3: At the start of school, provide Pre-K, K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade a family orientation focusing on the need for students to be present for progressive learning and the development of good habits
- Q1: Share monthly family events calendar for Semester 1, highlighting positive behaviors of students and families
- Q3: Share monthly family events calendar for Semester 2, highlighting positive behaviors of students and families

The following is an example of an **elementary school** that has determined **Attendance and Truancy** will be the focus in the next year.

School's Current Level	Sample Focus Areas for SY15	Milestone Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary school has maintained at or above 95% average daily attendance rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kindergarten and first grade attendance is the focus as it is much lower than other grades</li> <li>6<sup>th</sup> grade has the largest number of infractions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide family orientation including attendance information</li> <li>Work with the Pre-K to communicate around attendance and timeliness to start building attendance habits</li> <li>Include the Pre-K in all attendance discussions and initiatives</li> <li>Review incentive program for students and classes to continuously maintain the encouragement around being present</li> <li>Provide monthly opportunity for parent engagement at different times to be inclusive of all schedules</li> <li>Evaluate 6<sup>th</sup> grade movement schedule; relocate 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms to closer proximity to</li> </ul>

**HIGH SCHOOL SAMPLE MILESTONES:**

**A. Instruction, suggested Milestones:**

- Require school attendance goals to be posted in all classrooms
- Meet weekly with the Attendance Team to review student data, and identify students who need extra support; review procedures and hurdles that are emerging
- Provide data updates to all school staff in an effort to make it a priority for all

**B. Professional Development, suggested Milestones:**

- Partner with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning to provide Restorative Justice training in order to decrease the # of incidents that result in out of school suspensions
- Partner with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning to provide CHAMPS training in order to provide better support around behavior management

**C. School Culture, suggested Milestones:**

- Install year-long incentive program tailored for each grade level; prepare in the summer with identified Attendance Team
- Display regular and updated signage around attendance expectations and growth in hallways, lunchroom, and classrooms
- Identify classrooms/departments with positive attendance growth, and recognize

teachers for their efforts

**D. After School/ Extended Day Activities, suggested Milestones:**

- a. Provide 9<sup>th</sup> period accelerated online credit recovery to target demoted 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Goal to stop the 8<sup>th</sup> period cutting, and to put the 10<sup>th</sup> graders back on track to their junior year
- b. Contract with community-based organization to reach out to students and their families who are identified by the Attendance Team

**E. Parental Involvement, suggested Milestones:**

- a. Q1 and Q3: Host an Open House to talk about school level data, goals and expectations
- b. Sign up parents/guardians for Parent Portal during registration, Report Card Pick Up, and any opportunity where home communication is being had
- c. Provide quarterly family nights hosted by the LSC

The following is an example of a **high school** that has determined **Attendance and Truancy** will be the focus in the next year.

School's Current Level	Sample Focus Areas	Milestone Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school has consistently been at an 87% attendance rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grade attendance hovers around 88%</li> <li>• 10<sup>th</sup> grade attendance has consistently been =&lt;85%</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> period attendance and 8<sup>th</sup> period attendance has highest percentage of absences</li> <li>• Chronic truancy is at 30% YTD and 45% at EOY</li> <li>• Chronic absenteeism is at 20% YTD and 28% EOY</li> <li>• OSS rate is 20 per 100 YTD and 35 per 100 EOY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide attendance communication to enrolling freshmen, and their families</li> <li>• Provide attendance communication to all grade levels and their families at the start of the school year</li> <li>• Utilize lunch periods in Semester 1 and Semester 2 to review attendance expectations quarterly</li> <li>• Survey students around interest for out of school time program options to encourage student engagement</li> <li>• Display regular and updated signage around attendance expectations and growth in hallways, lunchroom, and classrooms</li> <li>• Allocate funds for weekly attendance team meeting to establish target lists, and timely interventions to address truancy and absenteeism early</li> <li>• Install tiered incentive program for each grade level</li> <li>• Establish 9<sup>th</sup> period credit recovery for off-track sophomores</li> <li>• Utilize support from LSC to garner stronger parent support; provide necessary workshops through PAC funds</li> <li>• Enroll 90% of parents/ guardians with Parent Portal</li> <li>• Acquire Restorative Justice training, and CHAMPS training</li> <li>• Contract with a community-based organization for home outreach to identified students</li> </ul>