Every Day – On Time

Encouraging Student Attendance:
The Systemic Attendance Improvement Process (Attendance Audit)

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Medford, Oregon
Why the focus on attendance?

“A school that does not attend to this factor risks undermining all other efforts at school improvement.”

Robert Marzano
What Works In Schools
“One of every six Oregon students was chronically absent from school last year, virtually the same high rate as two years earlier.... Nearly 94,000 children and teens missed more than 10 percent of the school year.”
“research has shown that missing too much school – moreso than low test scores, low family income or any other factor – is most strongly connected with failing to earn a diploma.”
Systemic Attendance Improvement (SAI)

Modeled after Positive Behavior and Instructional Supports (PBIS) processes, the SAI Process can help schools significantly strengthen their student attendance encouragement systems.
The SAI Process uses a set of tools to assess school attendance encouragement systems. *It is not a direct intervention but points at, and clarifies areas in need of intervention.*
Systemic Attendance Improvement
Process Origin

Developed at Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District - Albany, Oregon
Attendance Support Systems

- Universal Attendance Supports
  - Effective Instruction
  - Schoolwide Staff Agreements
  - Systems of Reinforcement: School & Classroom

- Parent communication systems
  - Same Day Response
  - Person-to-Person Contact

- Consequence Systems
  - Clear
  - Consistent

- Individual assessment & support
  - Barriers & Needed Supports
  - Mentoring
  - Alternative Education Options

- Community supports & legal consequences
  - Interagency Staffing
  - Wraparound/Case Management
  - Attendance Officer Support
Attendance Support Systems
Elementary Level
Continuums of Capacity for Improvement

Effective Strategies:
- Improvement
- Sustained Improvement

Ineffective Strategies:
- Improvement Flare-Ups
- Systemic Misery
- High Readiness/Low Performance

Low System Readiness:
- Low Leadership Trust
- Staff Discord
- Low Commitment
- No Team Oversight
- No Coaching Available
- No Systematic Data Review
- Low Accountability
- Poor Communication Systems
- “We’re Doing Fine”
- Habits of Political Appeasement

High System Readiness:
- High Leadership Trust
- Staff Cohesion
- Sustained Commitment
- Empowered Team Oversight
- Credible Coaching
- Data Focus
- High Accountability
- Strong Communication
- Felt Need for Change
- Savvy Political Courage
Administrator Conversation

- Shift resource allocation
- Get the right people in the right seats on the bus - and the wrong people off the bus
- Change school policies and procedures
- Take heat from some staff, parents, etc.
Attendance Improvement Process

• Identify Team
• Half-day: Team trained, develops process for data collection, collect data
• Half-day: Team reviews data, develops action plan based on data
• Half-day: Review strategies and progress to date and next steps
SAI Process Data Collection Tools

- Staff Surveys
- Parent Surveys
- Teacher Interviews
- Student Interviews
- Policy & Process Review
- Hallway Observation/Counts

- Data Review
  - Chronic Absences by grade and subgroup
  - Attendance-Related Discipline Data
  - Excused vs. Unexcused Data
  - “High Flyer” List Review
Activity - SAI Sampler

• Is there a clearly identifiable person or team with oversight responsibility for attendance communication systems within the school?
• How is data collected, analyzed, communicated and used related to attendance and tardies?
• Are there “holes” in the system... Ways students can skip or be tardy without getting in any trouble?
• What does the school do that strengthens the parent/school partnership and helps build communication? What more could they do?
• We know that relationships with caring adults at school are associated with strong attendance. What systems are in place here to help all students develop and maintain those relationships?
• Do classroom teachers have responsibility to contact parents about excessive tardies or missed classes? If so, at what point are teachers expected to make those contacts?
• In your opinion, are there parts of the school’s attendance and tardiness policy or practice that should be changed? Improved? What might those things be?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In place</td>
<td>The school systematically works to ensure that classrooms are inviting, instructionally sound, and lessons are presented in a positive and engaging manner.</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partial in place</td>
<td>The school environment is generally perceived by students and staff as safe from verbal and physical threat.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not in place</td>
<td>Positive interventions (not just punitive consequences) are systematically used for students with attendance problems (e.g. verbal reinforcement, talking with student to problem solve, phone call home, development of attendance contract, etc.)</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>Policies and procedures are in place and in practice which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for student relative to attendance.</td>
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<td>Policies and practices deliniate the attendance-related responsibilities of parents, school staff and administrators.</td>
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<td>90% or more of the students can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>90% or more of the staff can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.</td>
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<td>Students are taught skills related to attendance and punctuality at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the school year.</td>
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<td>Over the past 12 months there have been several significant staff discussions or training opportunities re: both attendance and tardies.</td>
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<td>Systems are in place whereby a responsible adult is aware of each student’s whereabouts at all times during the school day.</td>
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<td>Adults, including teachers and administrators, are regularly in the hallways during passing periods and as classes begin; reminding and encouraging students to be to class on time.</td>
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<td>All adults in the school share and act upon the responsibility to approach a student and inquire if that student is potentially skipping a class.</td>
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<td>If the school has “open” or “unassigned” class periods for some students, there is an area designated for those students coupled with the expectation that they remain in that area.</td>
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### Parent Communication Systems

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<tr>
<td>Not in Place</td>
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1. Parents are informed of policies at the beginning of the year and at appropriate times throughout the year. The school has a mechanism in place to assure that parents have reviewed policies and procedures.

2. Parents are contacted via person-to-person contact within two class periods of a report that a student is absent without substantiated explanation (parent note, parent phone call, pre-authorization, etc.).

3. Parents of chronically truant students receive occasional positive phone calls when their student is beginning to show a pattern of improved attendance.

### Consequence Systems

1. Policies and procedures are in place and in practice which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for student relative to attendance.

2. Policies and procedures are in place and in practice which clearly spell out expectations and consequences for students relative to tardiness.

3. 90% or more of the staff can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.

4. 90% or more of the students can clearly state the expectations and consequences for unexcused absences and tardies.

5. Consequences for truancy and tardiness occur within 24 hours of the student behavior.

6. Consequences for truancy and tardiness are coupled with problem-solving/instruction relative to attendance expectations.
XYZ High – Universal Systems

- Inviting Practices
- Safe Environment
- Positive Interventions
- Attendance Policy - cons
- Tardiness Policies - cons
- Policy - respons
- Students know exp/cons
- Staff training
- Student taught skills
- Staff know exp/cons
- Adults aware
- Adults in halls
- All adults resp.
- Open period areas
- Exits monitored
- Accurate Data Entry

Current Status
84 Responses

- Not In Plc
- Partial
- In Place
Sample Parent Survey Questions

• What does the school do that strengthens the parent/school partnership and helps build communication? What more could they do?
• Can you describe the school’s expectations for attendance and tardiness?
• What are the things about the school that motivate your child to attend? Are there other things the school could do to motivate your child to attend?
• In your opinion, are there parts of the school’s attendance and tardiness policy or practice that should be changed? Improved? What might those things be?
Sample Student Interview Questions

• Please describe the first 3 or 4 minutes of a few of your classes. What does the teacher do and what are the students doing during that time?
• What happens at this school if you skip class?
• Are there “holes” in the system... Ways students can skip or be tardy without getting in any trouble?
• What are the things about this school that make students want to come?
• Some students miss a lot of school. What do you think are the top three reasons for this at this school?
• What makes you personally want to come to school each day?
Sample Teacher Interview Questions

• What positive strategies do you see the school using to encourage attendance?
• What systematic processes are in place to teach students school expectations about regular, punctual attendance?
• We know that relationships with caring adults at school are associated with strong attendance. What systems are in place here to help all students develop and maintain those relationships?
• Do classroom teachers have responsibility to contact parents about excessive tardies or missed classes? If so, at what point are teachers expected to make those contacts?
• What does the school have in place to support chronically absent students? Are those supports effective?
• If you could change one thing about the school’s attendance system, what would it be?
Sample Policy/Process Review Items

- Is there a clear policy and procedure about how the school will respond to unexcused absences? What is the procedure?
- Is there a clearly identifiable person or team with oversight responsibility for attendance communication systems within the school?
- How is data collected, analyzed, communicated and used related to attendance and tardies?
- How is the distinction made between excused and unexcused absences? Who is charged with making that distinction on a day-to-day basis? How consistent is the interpretation?
- How are parents notified of absences? What is the typical lag time between a student’s absence and parent awareness of that absence?
- How does the school access outside resources (mental health, drug/alcohol treatment, law enforcement, etc.)?
For More Information

• For information about the Systemic Attendance Improvement model, contact Scott Perry at scott_perry@soesd.k12.or.us.

• All Attendance Audit materials are available at www.soesd.k12.or.us (select “Power of Description” from list on left side)