

Family and Community Collaboration Spotlight: Working Together to Improve Student Attendance

Key Strategies

Districts can collaborate with families and communities to support student attendance by:

- **Collaborating with families** to identify barriers to attendance.
- **Building partnerships with community groups** to address barriers to school attendance, like students' transportation and housing.
- Using student attendance interventions as opportunities for **wholistic assessments and service referrals**.

Being present most days that school is in session is critical to positive student outcomes and academic success, yet chronic absenteeism is a challenge in many schools. Districts across the country have attendance intervention processes in place to address this challenge. Districts can use these interventions as opportunities for increased family and community collaboration (FCC) and address the root causes of absenteeism. Asking families what they need, incorporating their perspectives, and providing additional resources allows for schools, districts, families, and communities to work together to create and support an attendance plan for each student.



Strategies in Action

East Side Union High School District's Student Attendance Review Board

An example of a supportive attendance process can be seen in East Side Union High School District (East Side), a district in San Jose, CA, with a population of over 20,000 students. This district has a holistic, family-focused Student Attendance Review Board made up of faculty, caregivers, and community partners. The goal of East Side's Student Attendance Review Board is to support students and families struggling with chronic absenteeism and truancy.

One strategy the SARB uses is to host a ***district-wide, all-day partner fair***, where students who are chronically absent, truant or at risk for truancy, their caregivers, and district staff have the chance to connect with community-based partners that can directly meet their needs. For example, community partners may help families find appropriate ***after-school programs, housing, or transportation*** to support their student’s attendance and academic success.

East Side’s intervention serves as a fantastic model for other districts to replicate and expound on. By recognizing that there are many root causes behind poor attendance, and by striving to implement a proactive, assets-based collaborative strategy, districts can effectively remove barriers to attending school and help ensure that every student can reach their full potential.



About the Connected & Engaged Initiative

This initiative investigates common barriers to achieving authentic partnerships between school districts and families and offers research-based strategies to address those challenges. This initiative aims to support school districts, community-based organizations and caregivers as they consider their own challenges and work to nurture and promote a connected and engaged school community.

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