

## Parent Engagement / CBO Partnerships

- At the Parent Summit organize multiple school-family services: SES providers, ARIS Parent Link log in, PTA elections, highlight school programs for students. . . "Attendance links these all together."
- Have a computer(s) set up so parents can log into ARIS ParentLink and see their student's profile—including last year and this year attendance. Or —if parents sign in as they arrive, have them include their child's name and OSIS—have someone print up RISP for each student and pass out before the end of the evening.
- Alumni of the school (local man with successful career) shared inspirational story; former student who struggled with attendance shared his story.
- CBO performed a skit of parent-child morning get-to-school conflicts.
- Parent survey about attendance barriers and student interests submitted for the door prize drawing.
- Extra important to work with families in the early grades, when habits of bad attendance are established.
- Give awards to parents of students who have improved their attendance, in addition to student awards.
- Bring in folks who match career aspirations of the youth to speak with them.
- Community service activities for students, to make them connected and engaged, created in partnership with CPP Liaison.
- High school kids to mentor younger kids from a neighboring school.
- Provide early morning engaging parent activities (such as a breakfast workshop or a series to provide resources on job hunting or a fitness/exercise class, etc.) to encourage parents to come to school in the a.m. and to bring child to school. **Other Ideas...**



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# SUCCESS MENTOR WINTER RETREAT December 3, 2010

*Matching a caring adult with students—to be a positive role model, to encourage regular attendance, and to identify and begin to address underlying causes of chronic absenteeism in a personalized way—is a key aspect of the Mayor's Task Force initiative.*

"Success Mentors" can be people who come into the school through external partnerships, either as part of the organization's broader work in a school (Citizen Schools, City Year) or as a specific Success Mentor partner (ReServe). People already in the school (teachers, deans, family workers) can be Success Mentors, too. The mentoring relationship can be intensive and involve counseling and prolonged interaction but it can also be a casual connection for the student.

The Success Mentor's two main roles are 1) to personalize attendance by acknowledging each day the student is in school and 2) to take time to understand the underlying causes of absenteeism and begin to address them.

### Success Mentor Basics

- Have caseload of 15-20, matched for a full year.
- Meet and greet matched students each morning when they arrive to school; make early morning phone calls home to absent students.
- Track attendance and celebrate improved attendance.
- Meet regularly, both one-on-one and in small groups, to check in on how school is going, listen to student needs.
- Seek advice and identify targeted sources of student or family supports from other Success Mentors, appropriate school staff and contacts in the local community.
- Keep notes about student attendance patterns, needs and interventions—be strategic!
- Attend (or be represented at) weekly Principals' Student Success Summit meetings to share any best practices or challenges and to present summary of students are doing.

## Success Mentors

### What we talk about when we talk about mentors

- Creating a special sense of belonging
- Climate, tone, engagement
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### Sample Success Mentor Activities

#### What Works for You. . . ?

- Breakfast with mentors, students **and** parents. Lunch clubs for students who are improving attendance.
- Kids in older grades (starting with grades 4 or 5) "check-in" each morning with their mentor to say hi, let them know they're here. Can even sign-in with mentor each morning.
- Postcards sent home saying we miss you. . . or congratulations on improved attendance.
- Gender-based groups for high school students during lunch to build students' connectedness to school and feelings of belonging.
- Little, win-able challenges. (real story: Mentor said "I'm expecting you to get here at 7:55" and student arrived at 7:54 "because he didn't want to let me down.")
- Weekly themes to promote school involvement.
- Meet with older siblings who attend the same school to strategize about how to get the child to school each day—getting the older siblings' support with getting their younger siblings to school on time.
- When students have been at school, call home thanking the parent for having their child at school. Send letters home to parents or certificates saying, "Good job, you came all week."
- For elementary students, make arriving to school fun (as part of the Meet and Greet). Example: blow bubbles and kids who arrive on time get to run through bubbles. Give out stickers on Wednesdays to kids who come on time.

## Main Student Data Sources

**ATS** (Automate the Schools) is the primary place to input and retrieve student data. Requires special log-in and training.

**STARS** (HSST) is used by middle and high schools to program classes and maintain transcripts.

**OORS** (Online Occurrence Reporting System) and **SOHO** (Suspension and Office of Hearing Online) are used to log and track incidents and disciplinary actions.

**ARIS** is a system designed for schools and teachers to easily view data from multiple systems and to group students for "inquiry teams." **ARIS ParentLink** is a way for families to log on and see student profile.

**Mayor's Task Force "Data Dashboards"** are a special, trial way of viewing a student profile, specifically to be shared with Success Mentors and others who have been cleared and have signed confidentiality agreements. They are generated for students known to be chronically absent last school year.

### My sources of data about my students

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### Data may inform strategic intervention:

<u>Data</u>	<u>Suggested approach/action</u>
Multiple suspensions?	<i>Engage in peer mediation, service learning or other positive school activity.</i>
Special pattern of days missed?	<i>Look for special family circumstances, for example babysitting responsibilities.</i>
High exam scores but low attendance rate this year?	<i>Check programming: Is student fully engaged in class work? Is there a "hook?"</i>
How old? What grade?	...
...	...

### Using Data & Weekly Student Summits Strategic Intervention

- Start with the **ABCs** to form a complete picture of student strengths and needs.

- A. Attendance: Compare to last year, trends year-to-date.
- B. Behavior: Suspensions, acting out, engagement in school.
- C. Classroom (Coursework): Previous year's exam scores, report card grades, feedback from the teachers.

- Use "target list" to monitor attendance for most at-risk students.
- Name a "lead teacher" to be in charge of data and interventions. (Adjust the teacher's program to devote time to attendance data and coordinating attendance outreach.)
- Plan to make morning attendance data collection accurate and fast. Do teachers take attendance consistently? Don't wait for all scan sheets to be brought down; scan as received.
- Keep all school staff informed about attendance. . . daily and monthly rates, by grade, by class. . .
- Use the School Defined "C" indicator in ATS to "flag" students ("target list" or "Chronic Absenteeism Indicator").
- Use the Student Discipline Code: record "unexcused absence" in OORS.

#### **Specifically for Success Mentors. . .**

- Prepare for morning attendance calls: have data about attendance trends, know what you want to say to parents, be persuasive.
- Collect evidence of intervention work done so it can be studied, shared and replicated: copies of outreach information to students and families, agendas and handouts, sample attendance reports. . .
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- "Open door policy:" students drop in to the Success Mentor office before school at 7 a.m. to just chat or get help with academics or a home issue.
- Lunchtime advisement sessions and other activities: run events in classrooms (games, computer time, movies. . . )
- Through programming, match students and mentors in advisory classes.
- M & M meetings ("mentor and mentee") every Friday for a dessert party.
- For high schools: Success Mentors being very knowledgeable of students' academic standing (how many credits they have, what they need to graduate), and helping to create individual academic plans with students (coordinated with school guidance counselor) to get them back on track.

#### **New Ideas. . .**

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#### **Remember. . .**

Success mentors meet with each other to share and plan; have binders for each mentor with key school, community and student information. Have a computer to view and print out the Dashboards. Success Mentors help change school climate; communicate with teachers about the students

### School-Wide Attendance Interventions

#### About 20% of the Success Mentor's Time

- Share clear guidelines. Be sure students and parents know the rules and consequences for lateness and absences.
- Perfect attendance assembly. Hold improved attendance awards ceremonies for parents and students.
- All** communications to parents and students always stress the importance of good attendance: school website, monthly parent newsletters, grade newsletters, and teacher newsletters.
- Weekly "Student Success Summits" with students: weekly 15 minute lunchtime rally for attendance.
- School Town Hall meeting: add attendance, share results of improved attendance, publicly acknowledge students with increased attendance.
- Share attendance data with students: TVs in hallways displaying attendance by grade; class competitions to get the best attendance; announcements each morning of class over 92% attendance.
- Incorporate attendance, in addition to behavior, into the school wide PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports).
- Connect students to existing programs/offerings in school (arts, band, after school, sports. . .). Does every student have a "hook" in school?
- Consider how programming affects attendance: with split sessions do students come late to hang out with friends who start later? Lunch time tutoring program? Do students have a say in what classes they take?
- Morning basketball program on neighborhood court (success mentors noticed kids were hanging out there in the a.m., so joined them and are now being asked by kids to come back and do some coaching).
- Welcoming Committee greets students at arrival. Especially at a scanning school, makes students feel like they are wanted.

- Put up photos of kids and their parents who have improved attendance, or photos of students and/or their parents showing them involved in fun incentives for improved attendance (i.e. breakfast clubs, pizza parties, trips, etc.).

#### New Ideas . . .

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#### Any new ideas about incentives? . . .

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#### Involve students in planning for incentives they appreciate!