

HOW TO...

Make the Most of Morning Calls to Families

THIS SHOWS HOW TO:

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|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1: Create positive school climate. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.1: Support "Success Mentors." | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.1: Communicate with families. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4.1: Host the weekly Student Success Summit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.2: Implement a tiered attendance plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.2: Offer incentives. | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.2: Partner with community. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4.2: Use attendance data. |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.3: Connect to Task Force initiatives. | |

THE BASICS

- Let parents know to expect calls home regarding their child's attendance.
- Develop data and procedures to ensure that every absent student gets a call that day. The plan should include how to log calls and who parents can contact for more information.
- Prepare for morning attendance calls: have data about attendance trends for the student.
- Set a positive tone, at the beginning of the call, by saying something positive about the child (does not have to be attendance-related; could be a school project they did a good job on, improved behavior, etc.).
- Mention the Mayor's Initiative.
- Thank the parent for their (expected) effort in helping the child to come to school, on time, every day.
- Schedule calls for positive reasons, too. ("Your child has 100% attendance for the month!")

HERE'S WHAT HAS BEEN TRIED

City Year Success Mentors make the calls home for all absent students, every day. The school gives them phones to use. A team of 3-4 Success Mentors rotate, and call various students' home on different days, but they all get to know and be "known" by the families they are calling. This works better for them and for the school (more efficient) than if each mentor was only calling their own mentees.

One pedagogue is assigned to make calls. When the parent answers, he mentions the Mayor's attendance initiative, and tells the parent, "I noticed [name] was out from school on [these dates]. Is everything OK?"

Schools and Success Mentors set up free voice message service with Google Voice. That way if they leave a message in the morning call, parents have a way to get directly back to someone.

Some schools used Success Mentors to make positive calls home to parents, because these calls are easier and also it helps them to build and maintain a positive relationship with families. At one school, Success Mentors make "Good News" calls and send "Good News" letters to parents of target students to let them know of their children's successes. "The parents really like this and so do the students. One of the mentees requested that we let her grandmother know that she really was in school every day for the past two months. For another child with severe behavioral issues there was a good news call for the eight consecutive days of being in school and not getting suspended."