



Mayor's Interagency Task Force
on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism and School Engagement

the **CHALLENGE**

Over **200,000 NYC public school students – 1 out of 5** – were chronically absent last year, meaning they missed a month or more of school.

3 out of 4 students who are chronically absent in the sixth grade never graduate from high school.

Students with good attendance were more than twice as likely to score proficient on NYS examinations than those who missed more than 20 days of school.

Ninth grade attendance is a better predictor of graduation than eighth grade test scores.

79% of NYC children in the juvenile justice system have records of chronic absenteeism; nearly half of them were severely chronically absent, meaning they missed more than 38 days of school in a year.

the **TASK FORCE**

In the summer of 2010, Mayor Bloomberg launched the Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism and School Engagement – the first-ever interagency effort to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism in public schools in NYC. In the fall of 2010, the Task Force initiated the *Every Student, Every Day* campaign – the nation's most comprehensive effort to tackle chronic absenteeism, with multi-sector strategies mobilizing over a dozen city agencies and private partners to combat this complex problem.

The causes of absenteeism are varied, making interagency collaboration the best way to address the problem. The agencies primarily responsible for implementing the Task Force's initiatives, along with the Department of Education, include: NYC Service, the Department of Homeless Services, the Department for the Aging, the Administration for Children's Services, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Police Department, the Department of Youth and Community Development, the New York City Housing Authority, the Human Resources Administration, and the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation.

the **IMPACT**

CHRONICALLY ABSENT STUDENTS WHO BENEFITTED FROM THE PROGRAM GAINED OVER **11,800 DAYS** OF ATTENDANCE. (2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR)

MENTORS ARE HELPING STUDENTS GET BACK ON TRACK:
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, 49% OF STUDENTS WITH FULL-YEAR MENTORS EXITED CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM STATUS VS. 42% OF STUDENTS WITHOUT MENTORS. **17% MORE**
IN HIGH SCHOOLS, 23% OF STUDENTS WITH FULL-YEAR MENTORS EXITED CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM STATUS VS. 18% OF STUDENTS WITHOUT MENTORS. **27% MORE**

PILOT SCHOOLS WITH FULL-YEAR SUCCESS MENTORS **OUTPERFORMED** COMPARISON SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS CITYWIDE.

Learn more at:
WWW.NYC.GOV/EVERYSTUDENT



the **KEY INITIATIVES**

NYC SUCCESS MENTOR CORPS

Approximately 9,000 chronically absent children at risk of school failure and dropout were matched with Success Mentors as part of the largest and most comprehensive in-school mentoring program in the nation. Mentoring models are driven by data and rigorously analyzed throughout the year.

AD COUNCIL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

In the spring of 2012, the Task Force launched the nation's largest public ad campaign about the dangers of chronic absenteeism in partnership with the Ad Council and AT&T. The campaign also connects families with an innovative web-based Help Center and shows them how to track their children's attendance and school performance through DOE's ARIS Parent Link.

OPERATION START STRONG

Coordinated strategic outreach effort during the first critical months of school, creating positive early attendance patterns.

WAKE UP! NYC

Created a multi-media celebrity wake-up call campaign with inspirational morning messages from celebrities like Magic Johnson, John Legend, Whoopi Goldberg, Trey Songz, NY Yankees, Mayor Bloomberg, and others. Worked with media partners to amplify the message.

NEW MODELS FOR CONNECTING SCHOOLS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Created interagency infrastructure to help schools identify and access existing services in the community for students and families facing challenges contributing to chronic absenteeism.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Developed new strategies for engaging parents, including Chancellor's "Alert" letters, positive calls home, and Parent Summits in schools and family homeless shelters.

ASTHMA-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

Launched an innovative new campaign to reduce asthma-related absences by heightening awareness about asthma prevention and management, creating new 311 student asthma information, and connecting existing asthma resources at schools and in the community to families in need.

NEW DATA AND EARLY WARNING TOOLS

Developed new Electronic Data Dashboard to provide ABC data (attendance, behavior, and coursework). Created first-ever data sharing confidentiality agreements, giving Success Mentors and partner community-based organizations access to student data in real time.

FAMILY HOMELESS SHELTERS

Implemented new policies and programs to create a "culture of school attendance and success," created first-ever homework centers at all NYC family shelters, and doubled the percent of families placed at shelters in the school district of their youngest child.

INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Created strategic incentive programs with corporate partners to improve attendance and school performance, including shopping sprees, thousands of free backpacks, tickets, and the launch of the Attendance Hall of Fame in partnership with the NY Yankees.

"Truancy is often a child's first step in the wrong direction. Chronic absenteeism leads to higher rates of school failure, delinquency, and dropping out. From there, it is often hard to recover. We are going to focus on truant children because keeping them in school is an investment in their health, future success, and everyone's safety."

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

"The power and scale of these Task Force initiatives are profound. It is the first time any city has attempted to reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy in such a comprehensive, strategic, and collaborative manner. What is striking is that the Task Force is addressing the problem on so many fronts simultaneously in its initiatives, recognizing the complexity and multiple causes of truancy and chronic absenteeism... [It] should serve as a model for all cities attempting to address this problem."

Dr. Robert Balfanz, Johns Hopkins University

