



Multi-Tiered System of Supports Addressing Attendance

Intervention Services
Office of Elementary Education and Reading



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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE

Through Tiered Interventions



“View student absenteeism as an opportunity for support, not a punishment!”

Chronic absence may be a signal that a student needs intervention and supports. School districts that are experiencing high student absenteeism should follow a Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) framework. MTSS guides districts to use interventions, just like resources used for academics and behavior, which correspond to the intensity of the students’ needs. Building social-emotional learning (SEL) with students and families is crucial for creating a supportive educational environment and fostering reasons for students to attend school.

The MS Department of Education’s commitment to provide comprehensive support to all students has developed this guidance document to outline the MTSS framework for addressing chronic absenteeism. MTSS provides a structured approach to identifying, intervening, and supporting students at various levels of need, ensuring that every student receives the appropriate assistance to overcome attendance barriers and thrive academically and behaviorally. The MTSS framework for attendance is structured around three tiers, each with specific interventions and support mechanisms tailored to meet the diverse needs of our student population.



Underlying Factors

Underlying factors that contribute to absences normally fall into four distinct groups:

- barriers to attendance
- aversion to school
- disengagement from school
- misconceptions about the impact of absences.

BARRIERS	AVERSION	DISENGAGEMENT	MISCONCEPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic and acute illness • Family responsibilities or home situation • Trauma • Unreliable transportation • Housing and food insecurities • Inequitable access to needed services • Lack of predictable schedule for learning • Community violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling academically and / or behaviorally • Unwelcoming school climate • Social and peer challenges • Anxiety • Biased disciplinary and suspension practices • Undiagnosed disability • Caregiver experienced negative educational experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of challenging, culturally responsive instruction • Boredom • No meaningful relationships to adults in the school • Lack of enrichment opportunities • Lack of academic and behavior support • Failure to earn credits • Lack of conflict resolution skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused • Missing 2 days a month does not affect learning • Inaccurate record keeping which cause an underestimate of TOTAL absences • Parent or school personnel assumptions that the student must stay home for any symptom of illness • Attendance only matters in older grades • Suspensions do not count as absences

[Root Causes - Attendance Works](#)

Attendance Works provides a free worksheet to help districts identify the likely causes of absenteeism for a students who are chronically absent.

[teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf \(attendanceworks.org\)](#)



Tiered Intervention

Tier I: Quality Classroom Instruction

At Tier I, the focus is on universal strategies that promote positive attendance habits for all students.

1. Establishing clear attendance expectations and communicating them to students, parents/guardians, and staff.
2. Identifying at-risk students early through data analysis and attendance monitoring.
3. Implementing a school-wide attendance tracking system to monitor student attendance patterns and identify trends. [early_warning_system_benton_final2.pdf \(mdek12.org\)](#)
4. Providing incentives and recognition for students with exemplary attendance records.
5. Conducting regular attendance reviews to identify students who may need additional support.

Tier II: Supplemental Instruction

Students who demonstrate inconsistent attendance or are at risk of chronic absenteeism receive targeted interventions at Tier II. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more for any reason including excused, unexcused, and/or suspensions. These interventions may include but are not limited to:

1. Developing individualized attendance plans in collaboration with students, parents/guardians, teachers, and support staff.
2. Providing access to support services such as counseling, mentoring, and tutoring to address underlying factors that contribute to attendance issues.
3. Implementing attendance contracts or agreements to establish clear expectations and consequences for continued absences.
4. Collecting progress monitoring data daily and examining on a bi-weekly basis at minimum.
5. Following five weeks of monitored implementation (including one week of baseline data), the plan will be reviewed by the TST team to determine the need to continue or modify. Document outcomes using the Meeting Summary Sheet. ([MTSS Documentation Packet](#))

Tier III: Intensive Intervention

Students with chronic absenteeism, implementations of Tier II interventions are unsuccessful, and/or students immediately moved to TIII will receive intensive intervention support.

1. Notify the parent/guardian.
2. Conduct the Hearing/Vision screening.
3. Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify root causes of chronic absenteeism and develop targeted intervention strategies. ([Center on PBIS | Resource: Tier 3 Brief Functional Behavior Assessment \(FBA\) Guide](#))
4. Complete student anxiety assessments for root cause of avoidance. [sras-child-version.pdf \(schoolavoidance.org\)](#)
5. Complete Appendix A from the MTSS Documentation Packet: Social/Emotional Worksheet
6. Engage community resources and partnerships to address complex social, emotional, and environmental factors impacting attendance.



7. Provide ongoing monitoring and support through a designated attendance team consisting of school staff, counselors, social workers, and community agencies.
8. Collaborate with relevant agencies and organizations to ensure continuity of support beyond the school setting.
9. Collect data daily, and progress monitor weekly.

Collaboration and Monitoring:

Effective implementation of MTSS for attendance requires collaboration among all stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, teachers, nurses, administrators, and community partners. Regular monitoring and evaluation of interventions are essential to gauge effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to support student success. The Early Warning System (EWS) is an MDE resource for school districts to use for collaboration and monitoring attendance.

[early_warning_system_benton_final2.pdf \(mdek12.org\)](https://mdek12.org/early_warning_system_benton_final2.pdf)

Attendance Strategies by Tiers		
TIER I	TIER II	TIER III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Clear Attendance Policies: Ensure that there are clear and consistent attendance policies in place that outline expectations for attendance, consequences for absenteeism, and procedures for reporting absences. • Promote a Positive School Climate: Foster a positive and supportive school environment where students feel valued, engaged, and connected to their peers and staff. • Build Relationships: Develop positive relationships with students by getting to know them individually, showing empathy, and providing encouragement and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-In/ Check-Out System: Implement a daily check-in/check-out system where students start and end their day by meeting with a designated staff member. This provides an opportunity for brief monitoring and encouragement. • Attendance Contracts: Develop personalized contracts with students and their families outlining attendance goals, expectations, and consequences. Review and/or revise bi-weekly. • Attendance Mentoring: Assign a mentor or trusted staff member to check in with the student regularly to discuss attendance challenges, identify barriers, and provide support and encouragement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Behavior Assessment: Develop to identify root causes of chronic absenteeism. • Individualized Behavior Plan for Attendance: Develop personalized plans for students with chronic absenteeism, outlining specific attendance goals, strategies to overcome barriers, and support services needed. These plans are created collaboratively with the student, family, and school personnel. • Mentoring and Counseling Programs: Assign students with chronic absenteeism a mentor or counselor who provides one-on-one support and guidance. The mentor or counselor can help identify underlying issues contributing to absenteeism, provide resources, and offer



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance Awareness Campaigns: Conduct regular attendance awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of attendance and educate students about the consequences of chronic absenteeism. (<i>Organize Attendance and Engagement Campaigns That Reach Families With Young Children - Attendance Works</i>) ● Early Identification and Intervention: Implement systems for early identification of attendance problems and intervene promptly to address issues before they escalate. This may involve monitoring attendance data regularly and reaching out to students who show signs of chronic absenteeism. ● Provide Supportive Services: Offer support services to address the underlying reasons for attendance problems, such as transportation assistance, access to counseling or mental health services, and academic support. ● Engage Families and Communities: Involve families and communities in promoting regular attendance by communicating with parents/guardians about the importance of attendance, providing resources and support for families facing barriers to attendance, and collaborating with community organizations to address attendance issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive Reinforcement: Implement a system of positive reinforcement to recognize and reward students who demonstrate improved attendance. This could include incentives such as certificates, privileges, or small rewards. ● Family Engagement: Work closely with families to address underlying issues contributing to attendance problems. This may involve home visits, parent meetings, or connecting families with community resources for additional support. ● Academic Support: Offer additional academic supports during or after school hours to help address the students' deficits; catch up on missed work and stay engaged in their learning. ● Behavioral Interventions: Address any behavioral issues that may be contributing to attendance problems through targeted interventions such as behavior contracts, counseling, or social skills training. ● Peer Support/Mentoring Groups: Facilitate peer support groups where students can discuss attendance challenges, share strategies for improving attendance, and provide encouragement to one another. 	<p>encouragement to improve attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home Visits: Conduct home visits to better understand the root causes of a student's absenteeism and to establish rapport with the student and their family. Home visits can also be used to connect families with community resources and support services. ● Family Engagement and Support: Involve parents and guardians in developing strategies to improve their child's attendance. Offer workshops, training sessions, and resources to help families address challenges related to attendance, such as transportation issues, health concerns, or family stressors. ● Attendance Contracts: Create formal agreements between the student, family, and school outlining attendance expectations, consequences for continued absences, and support services available. Attendance contracts often include rewards for improved attendance and consequences for non-compliance. ● Incentive Programs: Implement incentive programs to motivate students to improve their attendance. Rewards can include recognition, privileges, or tangible rewards such as gift cards or school supplies.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Incentives and Recognition: Implement incentive programs or recognition initiatives to reward students or employees for good attendance and punctuality. This can include incentives such as certificates, prizes, or special privileges. • Monitor and Analyze Data: Regularly monitor attendance data to identify trends, patterns, and areas for improvement. Use data analysis to inform decision-making and tailor interventions to meet the specific needs of students. • Professional Development: Provide training and professional development opportunities for staff on strategies for promoting attendance, building relationships with students, and effectively addressing attendance issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Improvement Plans: Develop individualized attendance improvement plans for students, setting specific goals and outlining strategies for improvement in collaboration with students, families, and relevant school staff. • Data Monitoring and Analysis: Continuously monitor attendance data to identify trends, patterns, and areas for intervention. Use this information to adjust and refine Tier II interventions bi-weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Support and Catch-Up Programs: Provide additional academic support and resources to help students catch up on missed work due to absences. Offer tutoring, extended learning opportunities, and flexible scheduling to accommodate students' needs. • Health and Wellness Services: Ensure students have access to necessary health and wellness services, including medical care, mental health support, and resources for managing chronic health conditions that may impact attendance. • Legal and Truancy Interventions: In cases where chronic absenteeism persists despite other interventions, involve legal and truancy interventions, such as court involvement or referrals to social services, to address underlying issues and ensure compliance with attendance requirements.
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It is important to remember that interventions must be tailored to meet the unique needs of each student and require ongoing evaluation and adjustment to be effective. Additionally, collaboration between school staff, families, and community partners is essential for successful implementation of Tier II and Tier III attendance interventions.

****Child Find is the ongoing obligation to identify, locate, and evaluate all children suspected of disabilities who need special education and related services as a result of those disabilities.**

Note: A district should not violate its Child Find duty by repeatedly referring a student for interventions rather than evaluating the student’s need for special education and related services.



Resource Links

- Access for All Guide: https://issuu.com/rcumedia/docs/afa_2.0
- American School Counselor Association: www.schoolcounselor.org
- Attendance Works: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/>
- Attendance Works Root Cause Worksheet: [teacher-attendance-strategy-worksheet-rev-10-16-19.pdf \(attendanceworks.org\)](#)
- Center on PBIS | Behavior Matrix: <https://pbis.org/search?query=behavior+matrix>
- Center on Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports: <https://www.pbis.org>
- Early Warning System:
www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/early_warning_system_benton_final2.pdf
- Florida Department of Education: <https://flpbis.cbcs.usf.edu/>
- MDE Counseling and Support Services: www.mdek12.org/ESE/Counseling-and-Support-Services
- MDE Chronic Absenteeism: <https://mdek12.org/attend>
- MDE How Chronic Absenteeism is Calculated: <https://mdek12.org/chronicabsenteeism/calculation>
- MDE Social and Emotional Standards:
https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/Secondary%20Ed/sel_standards_final_updated.pdf
- National Association of School Nurses:
<https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/Advocacy/whitepaperabsenteeism.pdf>
- School Avoidance Alliance:
<https://schoolavoidance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/sras-child-version.pdf>

