

ATTENDANCE ACTION TEAM PLAN

2020-2021

Need/Challenge – Student Attendance

In the SY 2017-18 the average daily attendance for students was 92.1%. Attendance rates during the winter months were lower than average for the school (between 90.0% and 91.7% from January through March). 24.1% of students were chronically absent by year's end having missed at least 10% of their instructional days.

In the SY 2018-19 the average daily attendance for students 92.9%, up a little less than 1 percentage point from the previous school year. 19.1% of students were chronically absent by year's end having missed at least 10% of their instructional days. This was a 5% reduction and a marked improvement from the previous school year.

In SY 2019-20, the ending average daily attendance stood at 93.1% in mid-March (at the point of the COVID-19 closure), with the corresponding Chronic Absence rate at 21.9%. We use these percentages because during the pandemic closure student attendance was assumed present based off of the direction of the DOE.

These latest attendance trends represent progress, however ACCS' goal remains to get the attendance rate up to 95% and reduce chronic absenteeism to a rate approaching the statewide rate of 10%.

Primary School-Related Factors

Relatively low levels of parental involvement in the day-to-day activities of the school, as well as low attendance levels in PTO, Title 1, and Special Ed. meetings. Parent meetings averaged about 13 attendees during the abridged 2019-2020 school year. During the SY 2018-19 ACCS average 9 attendees at such meetings. Excluded were our meetings held prior to "Back to School Night" (over 100 attendees) and our "Black History Month Celebration" (over 350 attendees).

Residential distance and related busing challenges: no ACCS students can walk to school. Most live in Atlantic City and Pleasantville and take buses daily. Missing a bus often means missing school, since many students do not have an alternative means of transport to school.

Inconsistent history of holding parents/guardians accountable for their children's school attendance. In SY 2017-18, no parents/guardians of truant students were taken to truancy court. In SY 2018-19 and the abridged SY 2019-20, attendance expectations and truancy regulations were explicitly communicated to families via letters, phone calls, conferences, and truancy officer visits. During this time the Action Attendance Team substantially improved follow-up communication with parents of absent and truant students regarding expectations around student attendance, absence notes, truancy status, and chronic absentee status. Families were referred to court and D.C. P. & P. for truancy. These actions have provided for consistent expectations for attendance.

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Goal: Increase student attendance and decrease chronic absenteeism and truancy.

Measures and Targets:

Measure	Target-Setting Logic	2017-18 Baseline	2018-19 Actual (Year 0)	2019-20 Target (Year 1)	2020-21 Target (Year 2)
Avg. Daily Attendance / Avg. Daily Membership (ADA/ADM = Daily Attendance Rate)	1% per year increase in the average daily attendance until reaching a minimum of 95%.	92.1%	93.0%	94.0%	94.9%
Percent of students who are chronically absent (absences and OSS summing to 10% or more of membership days)	10% per year reduction in the chronic absence rate (includes all active students with 20 or more membership days - business rules differ slightly from NJDOE's).	24.1%	19.1%	19.6%	17.6%
Percent of students with disabilities (Spec. Ed.) who are chronically absent (absences and OSS summing to 10% or more of membership days)	10% per year reduction in the chronic absence rate for Special Ed. students (includes all active students with 20 or more membership days - business rules differ slightly from NJDOE's).	32.0%	28.8%	25.9%	23.3%
Percent of student absences that are unexcused.	15% per year reduction in the percentage of student absences that remain unexcused (no parent notes).	83.6%	71.1%	60.4%	51.3%

Goal Strategies

1. Develop and implement attendance improvement plan.

Actions	Timeline
a. Develop and implement a system of monthly attendance incentives for students.	By 8/24/20
b. Establish an Attendance Action Team (AAT) specifically focused on family outreach and interventions targeted at students who have a history of chronic absenteeism.	By 8/24/20
c. Continue with present criteria for holding attendance/retention conferences with parents/guardians to address poor academic growth associated with chronic attendance challenges.	By 8/24/20
d. Monitor individual level student attendance weekly and monthly in AAT meetings.	9/8/20 – 6/24/21
e. Institute a targeted summer growth/improvement program for students with chronic absenteeism coupled with below-average academic growth.	Summer 2021

2. Develop an Attendance Action Team (AAT) to monitor attendance data and enact policies and strategies towards improving student attendance.

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Actions	Timeline
a. Identify staff members to serve on the AAT.	By 8/24/20
b. Provide initial training to AAT members on NJ state attendance regulations, truancy and chronic absence definitions, and understanding attendance data.	By 8/24/20
c. Schedule AAT meetings and individual responsibilities for the year.	By 8/24/20

3. Continue to refine and expand current attendance incentive program to encourage competition among classes and individuals (in conjunction with the AAT).

Actions	Timeline
a. Identify the incentives/awards, the schedule of awards, and the criteria for receiving the awards.	By 8/24/20
b. Develop a communication plan to parents, staff, and students to explain the incentive system and schedule.	By 8/24/20
c. Develop schedule of awards ceremonies and other like recognition programs.	By 8/24/20
d. Plan engaging trips/activities as incentives for strong attendance.	After marking periods 1, 2, & 3.

4. Expand the frequency and modalities of communication to families about the relationship between attendance and academic growth.

Actions	Timeline
a. Incorporate positive attendance messages at all parent meetings, PTO, and school events.	9/8/20 – 6/24/21
b. Schedule regular calls weekly (through the AAT) to parent/guardians of students with poor attendance and high rates truancy (unexcused absences).	9/8/20 – 6/24/21

5. Expand the reach and improve the functionality of the school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

Actions	Timeline
a. Recruit and hire a Parent Coordinator/Community Outreach Coordinator.	7/1/20
b. Schedule all PTO meeting dates on the publicly-accessible annual school calendar.	9/8/20 – 6/24/21
c. Establish incentives for parent participation in PTO meetings, including food and door prizes.	9/8/20 – 6/24/21
d. Recruit committed and reliable community members to hold positions of leadership.	9/8/20 – 6/24/21

1. AAT has been created with the following members:

Edmund F. Cetrullo, Jr. – Lead Person/Principal

Steve DiMatteo – Director of Special Education

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Sharon Mauriello – Supervisor of Elementary Education

Linda O'Donnell – Assistant Principal/Curriculum Supervisor

Patricia O'Connell – Curriculum Supervisor

Pamela Luke – Social Worker

Christopher Landzert – School Psychologist

Lonniyell Sykes - PTO/Community Outreach Coordinator

Jasmine Gant – Attendance Secretary

2. The school community will receive a letter within the first few weeks of school from the principal encouraging strong attendance.

3. Members will be assigned grade levels to monitor for excessive attendance (see Attendance Action Team Monitoring document). Team members are encouraged to review absenteeism history and be proactive with students/families who have been delinquent in the past.

4. Due to COVID, the AAT will concentrate on getting all students/families participating.

5. The Lead Person/Principal will monitor “No Show” students to identify their status; registered, transferred, current student. If found to be registered, he will employ the following plan to get them to attend school.

- **Parents called**
- **Child Services Called 1-877-652-2873**
- **Police called for welfare check/PTO-Community Outreach Coordinator will visit home**
- **Child Services called**

6. AAT will begin monitoring grade levels – Ms. Gant will print grade level attendance offenders for team members. Students who display high absenteeism or have the potential to be truant by the end of the year will be called by the monitoring team member. Team member will utilize script (see Attendance Action Team Script document). Letters will be generated and mailed by Ms. Gant after 3, 5, 10, 15 days of absenteeism. At 18 days of absenteeism, charges of truancy will be filed with the Galloway Township Municipal Court.

- **Parents called**
- **Child Services Called 1-877-652-2873**
- **Police called for welfare check/ Community Outreach Coordinator will visit home**

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- **Child Services called**
- **Court**