Strategies to promote attendance improvement and strength family engagement

Back to School Nights and Family Events:

Back to school Nights and family events are great opportunities to engage families in attendance awareness and to highlight the benefits of every student attending school every day. Schools can use the resources linked here to plan and promote their events, share resources and important data, and celebrate students and families!

Plan

• Select a date and time for your event(s).

• Plan and launch an Attendance Awareness Campaign at your event.

o Plan your campaign with this toolkit.

• Schedule a partnership fair to take place at "Back-to-School" family nights. Use the support of local community-based organizations to get the message out and connect families to vital services that help students get back on track.

- Please review the following information on the walking school bus program. Students in grades K–8 are absent from school for many reasons, one being that their parent or guardian cannot walk their child to school. In these instances, school staff have found that if students can be picked up and brought to school by another adult, then the child will attend school and not miss out on valuable instruction. This program is called a "walking school bus," and is one option to reduce absenteeism for schools that have students who are unable to attend school due to these circumstances. In a walking school bus model, school staff members (volunteers) meet students at a designated location near their home (15-minute radius) and walk with them to school on days that families need extra support.

*Note that schools are not required to implement a "walking school bus" program, however, schools that choose to implement this program should follow this Walking School Bus guidance.

Promote

• Create invitations and flyers for your event with families and share them widely within your school community.

• Promote Attendance Awareness by using materials from Attendance Works and post using their social media toolkit.

• Distribute resources promoting attendance awareness before and during your event.

- Handouts for Families
- Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

Share

• Review data in the DOE tool Insight to identify chronically absent students and print Student Profiles to engage in positive conversations with families whose children have **missed 2 or more days of school**.

• **1:1 Parent conversations** should remain positive and focus on getting students back into the classroom so that they can learn, have fun, and thrive. Work with families to eliminate barriers to attendance.

• **Text Messages for Attendance Awareness:** We know that text messages to families about attendance help to improve student attendance. Feel free to send these text messages to families using your school's attendance systems:

- **Universal Message:**
  - Good morning and welcome back to the school building! We're so excited to have you with us this year. Please reach out and let us

know how we can support your students' regular attendance this year. As always, 311 is available and offers city-wide resources to support you and your family.

- **Message for 2+ absences:**
  - We miss you! Our school is a better place when all our students regularly attend. Please reach out and let us know how we can support your family as we kick off this school year! As always, 311 is available and offers city-wide resources to support you and your family.

- **Message for teacher nudges**:
  - Welcome back to the classroom! We are here to support your family through this transition, so please let us know how we can support your students' regular attendance this year. As always, 311 is available and offers city-wide resources to support you and your family.

Celebrate!

Use these events to celebrate students and families.

o Hold a student performance or awards ceremony to celebrate all improvements from students, no matter how small!