



Creating an Internal Success Mentor Corps

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

Chronic absenteeism and truancy are serious issues that prevent far too many young New Yorkers from performing well in school and graduating college-ready. Here in New York City, more than 200,000 NYC public school students—roughly 1 out of 5—were chronically absent last year. We realize this is not an easy issue to tackle. That's why we are sharing this strategy that's proved successful in our pilot schools.

The NYC Success Mentor Corps is a research-based, data-driven mentoring model that seeks to improve attendance, behavior, and educational outcomes for at-risk students. In the 2012-2013 school year, more than 4,500 students had Internal Success Mentors—teachers, administrators, and support staff who were selected by their principals in elementary, middle, and high schools. Most of their work as Success Mentors consisted of things they were already doing—saying “hello” to students as they arrived at school, providing extra encouragement to those in need, and connecting with parents when they noticed a problem.

You Can Create Your Own Internal Success Mentor Team in Four Simple Steps:

1. Determine who your chronically absent students are

Start with last year's chronically absent students if you're starting at the beginning of the school year. For help downloading your match list from ATS click [here](#).

3. Match your chronically absent students with mentors

Plan on 2-5 students per mentor, depending on each mentor's capability.

2. Select your mentors

Think of staff who are already engaging with students—teachers, coaches, secretaries, etc. To download a sample Success Mentor training, visit www.nyc.gov/everystudent.

4. Hold weekly Student Success Meetings

Bring school staff together once a week to share data on mentees and the school's overall attendance. Energize your staff to combat this issue together for the betterment of your school's community.

MAIN GOAL : Help improve the mentee's attendance—and school performance—by making the student feel more noticed, celebrated, and supported at school.

IT WORKS : Pilot schools at all levels outperformed comparison schools in reducing chronic absenteeism. In addition, 84% of mentees surveyed said that a mentor helped motivate them to do well in school.

Learn more at:

WWW.NYC.GOV/EVERYSTUDENT



TIPS ON MENTORING STUDENTS

School staff serving as mentors can meet with students before and after school, during lunch or advisory periods, and/or in the classroom. By spending just a couple minutes a day connecting with their mentees, staff can have a strong impact on attendance.

The following tips form the basis for Internal Success Mentors' relationships with mentees:

- 1. Give positive encouragement** (even for small improvements): Warmly greet students who have been absent and have returned to school. Call or mail a letter home to congratulate students and families on their child's attendance. Make sure that they are given positive encouragement even for small improvements. Click here to visit our website for more ideas of incentives.
- 2. Reach out to families:** Help parents see that combating absenteeism is important for future success and brainstorm solutions with parents.
- 3. Make sure students know that you are there for support:** Most students want a caring adult to listen to them as well as to guide them.
- 4. Listen to your mentee's goals and help them reach those goals:** Support your student's goals through positive encouragement and re-enforcement. Point your mentee to resources that can help them achieve their goals.

the IMPACT

CHRONICALLY ABSENT STUDENTS WITH MENTORS GAINED OVER **81,000 DAYS** OF ATTENDANCE. (2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR)

MENTORS ARE HELPING STUDENTS GET BACK ON TRACK: PREVIOUSLY CHRONICALLY ABSENT STUDENT WITH SUCCESS MENTORS GAINED ON AVERAGE **NINE DAYS OF SCHOOL** PER STUDENT PER YEAR. STUDENTS WHO EXITED CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IN THE 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR WERE **20% MORE LIKELY** TO BE IN SCHOOL THREE YEARS LATER.

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

"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

