PHILADELPHIA
IS SHOWING UP FOR ATTENDANCE
Educator Resources to Improve School Attendance
July 2018

Dear School Leaders:

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year. Everyone is showing up for attendance!

This toolkit brings together some of the best thinking from Philadelphia public school educators, families and partners for improving school attendance. Many of our own principals contributed valuable insight and we want to thank them. We are excited to share the results to support your own school’s efforts to promote attendance.

Coming to school every day, on time, is key to reading success. As school attendance improves, the research shows, so does reading proficiency. Our students’ reading test scores districtwide are outpacing state gains, but with only a third of our students reading at proficient levels by the time they get to fourth grade, that’s not enough.

Our shared goal is nothing short of 100% of our children becoming strong readers by 4th grade, when schooling changes from learning how to read, to reading to learn new subjects. Helping them meet this critical mark will set them up for school success and a lifetime of limitless possibilities. We must do more—and quickly. With your help, we can. As we plan to update and improve this toolkit each year, we’d love to hear your feedback and ideas.

Sincerely,

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia

Jenny Bogoni
Executive Director, Read by 4th
Free Library of Philadelphia
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TIPS FOR USING THIS TOOLKIT

The toolkit is designed for educators of elementary school students in Philadelphia. As many of us are fellow principals, teachers, support staff, and parents of young children, we know how hectic things can get. With this in mind, we designed the toolkit to be useful and easy-to-use.

• **Understand how the toolkit is organized.** The first section, PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES, focuses on how to reach, inform and motivate our most important partners: the families and other loving grownups supporting our students. Included in this section is a Family Packet, a series of handouts and information you can feel free to hand out as is or modify to best meet your families’ needs.

The second section of this toolkit, BUILDING AN ATTENDANCE CULTURE AT SCHOOL, consists of information and ideas for educators from fellow educators and parents on changes that can affect an entire school, classroom, or even just one student.

• **Make the toolkit work for your school.** Feel free to customize materials, where possible, for your school.

• **Get and distribute copies of the toolkit.** An online version is available at [readby4th.org/attendance](http://readby4th.org/attendance) and on the Office of Attendance & Truancy and Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) pages at [philasd.org](http://philasd.org).

• **Don’t wait to request pre-printed tools.** A limited number of Daily Attendance Tracker posters and fridge magnets are available. Request both at [readby4th.org/attendance](http://readby4th.org/attendance) or call 215-814-4111.

• **Help us make the toolkit better.** Email your feedback and ideas to Terah Stivers: [stiverst@freelibrary.org](mailto:stiverst@freelibrary.org)

• **Share what’s working on social media.** Use #ShowingUp #PHLed @Readby4th.

Terah Stivers, Special Projects Coordinator, Read by 4th, Free Library of Philadelphia
stiverst@freelibrary.org | 215-814-4111
We hope you use what’s inside the Family Packet as an integral part of a comprehensive plan to help build an attendance culture at your school. We developed this packet of resources with a clear focus: to strengthen every school’s most vital partnership with our families.

Feel free to distribute the entire family packet after you customize it for your school’s use, or just use individual handouts if that works better. Great times for sharing information in the family packet are during registration days, back-to-school nights or parent-teacher conferences throughout the year.

They also provide great conversation starters and talking points about attendance for educators. We hope you agree.

Everything is downloadable in various formats at readby4th.org/attendance and on the Office of Attendance & Truancy and Office of Attendance & Truancy and Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) pages at philasd.org.
ATTENDANCE HEROES

The Family Checklist on this handout is a great way for families to think through attendance ideas and strategies. Encourage families to post this where everyone at home can see it: on the fridge, their child’s room, etc. Schools running an Attendance Hero program can distribute this at their launch assembly or event. See page 21 for more information on how to start an Attendance Heroes Program.

PLEDGE OF ATTENDANCE

With this pledge, parents can work together on their family efforts around striving for perfect attendance.

FRIDGE MAGNETS

A limited number of fridge magnets are available for ordering at readby4th.org/attendance or 215-814-4111.

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE TRACKER

Young students learn by doing, and they’re motivated by actual signs of progress. This tracker gives the whole family a fun, easy way to track their weekly attendance. Encourage parents to put them in a highly visible spot. Remind them about rewarding the whole family with a treat or dance party when they reach their goal.
WHEN SICK IS TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL

We all struggle with knowing when we should keep our children at home or send them to school. This handout was designed to help parents decide and is also good to post in classrooms.

SEND TO SCHOOL

- No fever higher than 100.5 degrees for more than two days
- Vomiting or diarrhea for more than three days
- Fever higher than 100.5 degrees for one day
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Sniffles for more than a week
- Fever higher than 100.5 degrees even after taking medicine
- No fever in the past 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine
- Child is feeling very tired
- Child is not eating
- Temperature above 100.5 degrees at any time

KEEP AT HOME

- Vomiting or diarrhea for more than two days
- Fever higher than 100.5 degrees for more than two days
- Temperature above 100.5 degrees at any time
- Child is too sick to attend school
- Child is completing a course of antibiotic treatment
- Child has or has had symptoms of flu-like illness

CALL THE DOCTOR

- Fever higher than 100.5 degrees for more than one day
- Tiredness
- Asthma symptoms after using asthma medicine
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Swelling of the lymph nodes
- Skin rash
- Redness of the eye

WE MISSED YOU!

Use the we-missed-you note to make our youngest students who have missed school feel welcomed back and supported while catching up.

ABSENCE EXCUSE NOTE

Make it easier for parents with this excuse note template to get their notes in on time following every absence.

FAQS: DISTRICT ATTENDANCE POLICIES

We created one document answering the questions most frequently asked by parents about attendance. Feel free to refer to this during parent-teacher conferences and back-to-school night.

HELPFUL RESOURCES TO OVERCOME ATTENDANCE BARRIERS

All students can experience issues around attendance and tardiness. When they do, their families may need extra support. Use this starter list of key resources to help them.
Educators districtwide are making great strides in building a school culture that promotes on-time daily attendance. This attendance toolkit brings together some of the best ideas developed and implemented with positive results by fellow principals, teachers and staff.

In this section, we present resources designed for in-school use. Find downloadable versions of this toolkit at readby4th.org/attendance or on the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) pages at philasd.org.
Building an attendance culture in elementary schools requires knowing our audience. Like their K-3 peers everywhere, our youngest students enjoy being a part of a team effort and counting their progress—over the short term.

A full school year is too long for a goal for students at these ages. This is why we divide the school calendar and various attendance activities into daily, weekly and monthly chunks in promoting school attendance.

The Daily Attendance Tracker is designed as a large poster to be hung in a school’s main hallway.

The laminate covering to this tracker makes it easy to refresh numbers every day.

A limited number of the Daily Attendance Tracker posters and fridge magnets (see page 6) are available. Request both at readby4th.org/attendance or call 215-814-4111.
The Monthly Attendance Target flyer can be placed in each classroom. Let your kids know exactly how many days of school there are for each month to set goals for the entire school, grade, or class. Keep it at the total number of days per month, reprint blank sheets, or laminate the countdown number to countdown each day.
1. Work with your attendance team or School Advisory Council to determine what’s best for your school.

2. Set monthly attendance goals rather than yearly ones. This gives students (and their families) a fresh start each month to strive for perfect attendance. Younger students also find shorter-term goals more manageable.

3. Specify your school’s monthly attendance goal. Reviewing how your school did the same month the previous year would help determine this goal.

4. Create a theme around your school’s attendance goal for every month. See suggestions on the monthly attendance target flyers.

5. Get the word out. Promotional ideas include: attendance cheers in the morning yard or during assemblies; flyers given out during arrival/dismissal along with quick huddles with parents on how they can help and reminders through school messenger, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and Class Dojo.

6. Integrate campaigns into school community life. Think through:
   - How can students, families, teachers and other school community members experience this campaign?
   - How can students become promoters? Brainstorm with them. Motivate them to motivate our families.
   - What incentives would motivate students, whole classes, the entire school (e.g., grade-level dance party on Friday, trip at the end of the month, etc.)?
   - How will you will celebrate students who are making progress (e.g., attendance heroes, dojo dollars, etc.)?
   - How can we ensure all we do to promote attendance is trauma-informed?

7. Create an Attendance Recovery Plan for student re-engagement.
   - How will students who are not in attendance the first day be contacted?
   - Who will do visits to students’ homes who are not in school? Mobilize your “Boots on the Ground” team. Ask for volunteers or offer EC for teachers to go in pairs to students’ homes who have three or more unexcused absences.

8. Schedule weekly Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) meetings with the Attendance Team to identify at-risk students. Monitor progress to see whether interventions are working and what needs to be adjusted.
   - Implement system for monitoring daily attendance.
   - Ensure classroom teachers are taking daily attendance on SIS. Identify point person to pull daily reports and provide data on gaps in attendance taking.
   - Support teachers who are struggling with SIS.

9. Debrief and plan for next month. Reconvene your attendance team to review what went well and areas for improvement, and to develop a plan for next month. Follow up with parents who have students with three or more unexcused absences.
Be a Winter Warrior. Over the winter months when attendance usually drops, commit to weekly surprise incentives for students (e.g., hot chocolate or pretzels) to be given out at the school entrance. Show your appreciation for students and their families coming to school every day on time.

Finish Strong. As schools come to an end, attendance can also take a dip. Here are several ideas to ensure good attendance to the end of the school year:

- **Special activities and celebrations.** Encourage student attendance through walking trips, field day and spirit week.
- **A big attendance push to wrap up the year.** These include special incentives for classes who reach 95%+ and individuals who reach 100% in May and June.
- **Shifts in reward cycles.** Make reward cycles shorter. Move monthly or twice-weekly events to weekly, even daily, events. Rather than just Fun Fridays also hold Momentum Mondays.
- **Family recognition.** Continue recognizing everyone who’s helped students strive for perfect attendance.

More Advice from Fellow Educators and Parents

**Kindergarten Orientation**
“Ensure leadership highlights the importance of Kindergarten attendance for school success during orientation.”

—Tamara Edwards, Principal  
*Thomas K. Finletter Academics Plus School*

**Good Habits Start Early**
“We all wish we could find the magic formula that would help parents and students know that attending school is an investment towards a successful future. At our school, we begin at kindergarten, letting parents know that good habits start at an early age.”

—Rosa Lopez, School Improvement  
*Support Liaison Potter Thomas*

**Back-to-School Night**
“Use Back-to-School Night as an opportunity to emphasize the data on the relationship between student attendance and student reading levels.”

—Jason Harris, Principal  
*Joseph Pennell School*
Building an attendance culture starts with making students and families feel welcome. There are countless ways to be welcoming, from daily routines and regular events to something never tried.

A familiar face who greets. Have school community members (e.g., popular teachers, parents, faith leaders, shopkeepers, barbers, etc.) serve as greeters on different days, welcoming students with an enthusiastic hello, handshake or high-five.

Special handshakes. Come up with a signature school handshake to greet one another in the morning.

Fun, front-loaded. Play music at the school entrance to energize mornings. Have homeroom start with something the kids won’t want to miss. No better way to motivate parents than their own children wanting to get to school on time every day.

A non-traditional take on first-day traditions. The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice organizes African-American men to “suit up and show up” at their neighborhood school to welcome back students and wish them a great year. To learn more, contact The Fellowship at 1000x2025@gmail.com.
When children want to go to school, it is easier to get everyone out the door and to school on time. What they think of their teachers and classmates, how much they like what they're learning, fun after-school programs—all help children want to come to school every day so they don't miss out.

**Friendships build attendance.** Students who have good school friends are more likely to come to school. Research shows positive friendships are vital to school-age children's healthy development and academic performance, including attendance.

To encourage these:

• Offer students ample unstructured, but supervised, time with one another.

• Create more team-building games and recreational sports.

• Set clear rules for expected behavior: handling different social situations, addressing negative comments, and considering things from other points-of-view.

**Checkin' in.** A child's willingness to come to and stay in school also depends on their feeling someone at school cares enough to ask them how they are. This is often difficult to do. Ask students to describe their feelings and support peer efforts to change moods into positive ones.

"I believe in you" video. As a way to promote attendance and address the trauma and traumatic stress experienced by students at his school, Principal John Piniat and his team created this video just to show how much students mean to them.

You can watch the video on the Feltonville Arts & Sciences YouTube channel: [https://bit.ly/2IXrC2Q](https://bit.ly/2IXrC2Q)
**PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES**

**CREATIVE WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED**

**Family-focused events.** Hold a dad-and-daughter dance in the fall, then a mom-and-son dance in the spring. Try out “throwback” movie nights or parties themed with TV shows or music from the parents’ generation.

At each event, announce your school’s attendance heroes and distribute books to younger students.

**Good calls home.** Develop a schoolwide strategy for every student to receive at least one good call home, for example, congratulating them on improved attendance, jumps in reading levels, good grades, great behavior, class leadership, etc.

Don't wait: the earlier in the year, the better. And no need to stop at just one good call.

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**FAMILY BREATFAST**

**OLNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**ALL WELCOME**

September 10, 2018
7:30-8:15 AM
Cafeteria | FREE

“Parents, thanks for making perfect attendance a weekly family goal. Let us know how we can help.”

– Principal Michael Roth

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**Family breakfasts from around the world.**

Ask parents to organize a monthly family breakfast on a school day that showcases different cultures and foods. Be sure to get the word out about the delicious way to start the school day, on-time and ready to learn.

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**Fridge Magnets for Weekly Home Trackers.**

To show your appreciation, send each family a magnet along with their attendance packet.

*A limited number of fridge magnets are available. Make your request at: readby4th.org/attendance or call 215-814-4111.*
Parents,
Thank you for making perfect attendance a weekly family goal. Let us know how we can help.
– Principal Michael Roth
PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES
SLIDES FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

PHILADELPHIA
IS SHOWING UP FOR ATTENDANCE
Educator Resources to Improve School Attendance

Attendance Heroes
Everyone can be an attendance hero. Strive for perfect attendance.

Family Checklist
Good habits build confidence that lasts a lifetime.

- Map the best way to school.
- Get clothes and backpack ready the night before.
- Get there on time because reading is taught first.

SDP study shows kindergarteners who missed fewer days of school were more likely to become stronger readers by the end of the year.

Kindergarten Attendance Matters
Of the students who missed 0 days, 7 out of 10 were reading at grade level at the end of the year.

Of the students who missed 20-24 days, 4 out of 10 were reading at grade level at the end of the year.

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Of the students who missed 20-24 days, 4 out of 10 were reading at grade level at the end of the year.
**Attendance Pledge & Weekly Tracker**

- **Pledge of Attendance**
  - Coming to school every day helps young students become strong readers.

**Parent & Teacher Resources**

- **Our class is just not the same without you.**
- **We can help you catch up!**

**Attendance Policies & Resources**

- **Unexcused Absences**
  - Absences are unexcused if (1) they do not have an excused reason,
    - illness, quarantine, recovery from accident, or on the Office of Attendance & Truancy and FACE office pages at school.dps.edu for more.
- **Excused Absences**
  - Includes:
    - Three (3) days, including day of funeral:
      - for a death in the immediate family.
    - Four (4) days in a row:
      - for a death in the extended family.
    - Ten (10) days in a row:
      - a change of residence.
    - Two (2) days in a row:
      - treatment for a chronic illness.
    - One (1) day in a row:
      -  *Contact the school for further information.* 

**We Are Here to Help**

- **For students experiencing a crisis,**
  - **Experiencing Homelessness** can help with uniforms, coats, books, and more.
  - **Insecurity** can help with clothes, books, and more.
  - **For students experiencing a crisis,**
  - **Experiencing Homelessness** can help with uniforms, coats, books, and more.
  - **Insecurity** can help with clothes, books, and more.

**Read by 4th**

- **2525-25 Hamilton Street, Suite 207**
- **Philadelphia, PA 19130**
- **215-584-4111**
- **readby4th.org**

**School District of Philadelphia**

- **440 N. Broad Street**
- **Philadelphia, PA 19130**
- **215-400-4000**
- **philadelphia.org**

**Attendance Works**

- **attendanceworks.org**
1 **Definition and Selection.** Determine who the attendance heroes are. Who’s eligible to be one? What’s the attendance period (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, multiple years)? We recommend shorter periods allowing students to continually strive for attendance. Shorter periods are also more manageable for younger students. Examples: Students who consecutively remain at 95% during the month. Class who maintains the longest streak of 95% present.

2 **Student Awards.** What’s the best way to award your attendance heroes? Feel free to use the award certificates on the following pages. Also review the list of free/low-cost incentives.

3 **Family Recognition.** Will attendance heroes be announced at a school event? If so, how will parents/guardians also be recognized? How can they celebrate along with their child? After the event, how will you continue highlighting their family achievement?

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### More Advice from Fellow Educators and Parents

**Rewarding Progress, Not Just Perfection**
“Students should be rewarded for improved attendance, not just perfect records. Offering weekly perfect attendance awards can allow students to still have a chance to succeed the next week if they are absent this week.”

—Shanté Leneir Quartlebaum  
Education Coordinator, *Families Forward*

**Striving for Good Attendance**
“Set quarterly perfect attendance challenges and recognize parents at the attendance awards assemblies. Striving for 95% allows a student to be recognized even if he doesn’t have perfect attendance.”

—Deanna Bredell  
Assistant Principal, *Kenderton Elementary*
ATTENDANCE HEROES
FAQs: THE ATTENDANCE SCOREBOARD

From John Piniat, Principal, Feltonville Arts & Sciences School

1 WHAT IS AN ATTENDANCE SCOREBOARD?

Just because attendance is serious business doesn’t mean it can’t be fun.

The Attendance Scoreboard is designed to gamify attendance among students and families, using the power of competition and our innate desire to reach goals to encourage showing up on-time, everyday, ready to learn.

The Attendance Scoreboard, pioneered by John Piniat, principal at Feltonville Arts & Sciences use Microsoft Excel and Word to generate regular attendance “scoreboards” formatted to look like a sports scoreboard. All to inform and fire up the competitive spirit of students and their families.

Individual scores are also used to create classroom scores, motivating the entire class to strive for prizes tied to set attendance goals. It all works to create positive peer pressure among students who don’t want to let down the “team.”

It also offers a great way to identify, recognize and celebrate Attendance Heroes.

2 DOES IT WORK?

It’s a simple idea, but it seems to be really effective. Seven early-adopter schools report substantial gains in attendance.

3 WHY DOES IT WORK?

It’s all about leveraging the power of competition. Attendance Scoreboard translates attendance into terms students can understand. Then this understanding is used to “gamify” attendance. As Principal Piniat says, “Students now own their attendance score and talk about it with their parents.”

4 HOW DO I USE ATTENDANCE SCOREBOARDS AT MY SCHOOL?

Send stiverst@freelibrary.org an email to let us know you’re interested so we can organize a workshop on how to implement Attendance Scoreboards.
THE BASICS

1 Be sure to make attendance incentives a part of your school's comprehensive plan to build an attendance culture.

2 Incentives work. They encourage positive behavior, including improved attendance.

3 Accurate tracking is essential. You can't reward what you don't record.

4 Incentives don't need to be costly to be effective. Find out what motivates students. Ask them.

5 Offer incentives to families, too! They appreciate being recognized for their attendance efforts.

6 Inter-class competition is a powerful motivator.

FREE/LOW-COST IDEAS

For individual students:
• Award certificates
• Name on attendance or honor roll, school papers, community newspaper, etc.
• Lunch with principal, mascot, etc.
• Good calls home and thank you letters to parents
• School gear and supplies
• Prizes provided by local businesses or organizations (e.g., store vouchers for snacks)

For classrooms:
• Trophy that travels between classrooms
• Class breakfast with principal and families
• A picnic in a nearby park
• Field trip
• Disco ball party
• Dress-down day
• Extra recess
• Spirit week

For help sponsoring incentives:
Contact your local partners and businesses to see what in-kind or financial donations they can provide.
You may also consider posting your project to Philly FUNDamentals: thefundsdp.org/get-involved/philly-fundamentals
ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES
SAMPLE PROGRAMS

ATTENDANCE ASSEMBLY
For Kindergartners
To improve their weekly attendance, particularly on Mondays

Program Description:
Every Monday the names of kindergarteners who were present in school from Monday through Friday the prior week have the chance of being recognized and awarded as one of two Attendance Heroes.

Step 1: On the Friday prior to the Monday drawing, all teachers place tickets of those students who were present all week in the bowl.
Step 2: Before the drawing begins, an attendance mantra is said or sung.
Step 3: Two students’ names are selected from the bowl, and they are awarded a prize. The following week, their families are invited to come to the assembly and be recognized along with their child.

Supplies/Materials:
Bowl
Raffle tickets
Award certificates
Two prizes each week ($0.99 each)

Estimated Cost:
$2.00/week

HIGH-FIVE CLUB
For Kindergarteners
To improve their daily and weekly attendance

Program Description:
Weekly badges are awarded every Friday for kindergarteners with perfect attendance all week.

Step 1: Design and print badges.
Step 2: Keep track of perfect attendance for the kindergarteners.
Step 3: Every Friday, hand out badges to the students with perfect attendance that week.
Step 4: Give high fives to those students wearing the badges as a way of congratulating them on their attendance success.

Supplies/Materials:
High-Five Club Badges
Safety pin or yarn to hold badges

Estimated Cost:
Cost of badges and pins based on quantity.

KING/QUEEN FRIDAYS
For K-5
To improve their weekly attendance, particularly on Fridays

Program Description:
Students who are present each Friday get a crown in the form of a necklace. Each Friday that they are present in school, they earn a sticker to be placed on their crown.

Step 1: Hand out crown necklaces to all students who are present on the first and subsequent Fridays. One crown necklace per student.
Step 2: Reward each student with a sticker to place on their crown each Friday.
Step 3: Recognize the Kings and Queens for their good attendance every Friday.

Supplies/Materials:
Foam Sheet Crowns
Stickers
Yarn

Estimated Cost:
$1.00/24 Crowns
$1.00/Book of Stickers
When parents are given accurate information about their children’s absences, new research shows they can become valuable players in making sure their kids show up at school.

**We communicate with families all the time, but are we communicating the right things?**
Most families drastically underestimate how often their children miss school. When researchers asked parents whose children were absent nearly 18 days in one school year how many days they thought their child had missed, they thought it was more like 10.

(Source: Nature Human Behaviour)

Instead of blaming kids and their families, focus on treating them with respect in trying to support their school attendance. For starters, show them respect by giving them the information they need to make informed decisions.

- **Few simple letters sent home with the right information.** The most effective letter in the research was the one that simply reported the total absences over time against school expectations. Parents could more accurately guess their kids’ attendance at the end of the year if they had received letters with this kind of tracking information, suggesting that this information influenced their perception. With this kind of right information, chronic absenteeism decreased by 10 percent.

- **Daily personal calls home to absent students.** In addition to the robo-call from the School District, personal phone calls, let parents and students know they are missed and encourage them to come back, or even the same day if they, can so they don’t miss the another whole day. For large schools, focus first on students who have missed more than 10% of school days to date (considered chronically absent), those who have missed more than 5% of school days to date (the SDP 95%+ metric), or those on the cusp of the 95% threshold.

  Decide in advance each month who will make these daily calls and ensure they have adequate time allotted on their schedule. On every call, as with “good calls,” be sure to share something positive about the student. Great sample scripts can be found on readyfreddy.org.

- **We-missed-you note.** Use the we-missed-you note to make our youngest students who have missed school (for reasons generally out of their control) feel welcomed back and supported in their catching up.

- **Absence excuse note.** Make it easier for parents with this excuse note template to get their notes in on time for every absence.
Action plans to ease attendance barriers. Students who face significant barriers to attendance, such as illness, transportation, and a lack of clean clothes, need a plan to help their families, many of whom are experiencing challenges tied to poverty. To help, here are some ideas and resources:

- **Clothes Swap.** Organize a clothing swap where families can bring in uniforms, coats, boots, or rain gear that their children have outgrown while picking up “new” items that they need.

- **Clean Clothes.** Purchase a washer-dryer for the school building and allow families to wash school clothing. See if community partners can help with this expense or promote the request on Philly FUNDamentals. thefundsdp.org/get-involved/philly-fundamentals

- **Safe Passage.** Consider starting a walking school bus route to help children walk in groups. The Office of Transportation Services website also describes how to request transportation changes for students. philasd.org/transportation

- **Housing instability, doubling up, evictions, homelessness.** Students experiencing homelessness have the right to remain in their school of origin even if they are no longer in-catchment, or to immediately enroll in their new neighborhood school without proof of address documentation. Build relationships with local homeless service providers to discuss potential ways to collaborate to support families and increase attendance.

- **Translation services.** Clearly communicate with limited English proficient speaking families in their home language the importance of attendance. Schools can partner with their Bilingual Counseling Assistants (BCAs) to provide interpretation and translation services for limited English-speaking ability families, and to send out school attendance notification letters in the language appropriate to the family. Schools can use their access code to contact LanguageLine for telephonic interpretation services. philasd.org/face/multilingual/interpretation-services/

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More Advice from Fellow Educators and Parents

**Not a Robot, but a Person Who Cares**

“When we see a pattern of absences, we contact families to offer support. Parents respond to being able to talk with a live person who cares and shows concern, rather than a robocall or just another letter sent home.”

—Eva Sanchez, SAC Member, Parent, Student Climate Staff, McClure Elementary School
CONTRIBUTORS

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AARP Foundation Experience Corps
Philadelphia
Achieve Now
AIM Institute for Learning & Research
AlulA
American Reading Company
Arcadia University
Archdiocese of Philadelphia Schools
Art Sphere, Inc.
After School Activities Partnerships (ASAP)
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Belmont Charter School
Bethanna
Better Tomorrows
Book Trust
Books in Homes
Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia
Center for the Collaborative Classroom
Center for Literacy, Inc.
The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia
Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Children’s Literacy Initiative
Children’s Scholarship Fund
City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services
City of Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation
City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health
City of Philadelphia Mayor’s Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity
City of Philadelphia Mayor’s Office of Education
City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services
City of Philadelphia Office of the Deputy Managing Director for Health and Human Services
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City of Philadelphia Office of the Mayor
City Year Philadelphia
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Diversified Community Services
Drexel University
Drexel University Action for Early Learning
Eagles Charitable Foundation
Eastern University
Educating Communities for Parenting
The Educational Advocates Reaching Today’s Hardworking Students, Inc. (The EARTHS)
Educational Opportunities for Families
Education Law Center-PA
EducationWorks
Everyone Love Someone-The Social Entrepreneur Brand
Families Forward Philadelphia
FathersLead365
First Up: Champions for Early Education
Free Library of Philadelphia
The Fund for the School District of Philadelphia
Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania
Global Citizen
GreatPhillySchools
HACE CDC
Historic Fairhill
Horizons at Greene Street Friends School
iHeartMedia
Independence Mission Schools
Inspire Philadelphia Youth Program
Jane Addams Place, Lutheran Settlement House
Jounce Partners
KIPP Philadelphia Schools
Learning Ally
Legacy Youth Tennis and Education Lenfest Center
Let’s Read Math
Literacy How
Mastery Charter Schools
Maternity Care Coalition
Mighty Writers
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The Parent-Child Home Program
Parent Leadership Advisory Network (PLAN)
PARENT POWER (What Will You Do With Yours?)
Pennsylvania Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND)
People’s Emergency Center (PEC)
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA
Philadelphia Out of School Time Literacy Initiative (POSTLI)
The Philadelphia Public School Notebook
Philadelphia READS
Philadelphia School Partnership
The Philadelphia Writing Project
Philadelphia Youth Commission-Fun Safe Philly Summer Initiative
Philadelphia Youth Network
Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia
Please Touch Museum
Prodigy Learning Center
Project HOME
Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY)
Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC)
Puentes de Salud
Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia
Reading Recycled
Regenerating Our Offspring Through Stories, Inc.
Russell Byers Charter School
The Salvation Army
The Salvation Army, Philadelphia Citadel Corps
School District of Philadelphia
SchoolKit Group
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Southeast Regional Key at PHMC
Springboard Collaborative
St Christopher’s Hospital for Children, Center for the Urban Child
St. Joseph’s University
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Sunrise of Philadelphia, Inc.
Teach for America Greater Philadelphia
Teach Plus
Team First Book Philadelphia
Temple University
Tree House Books
Turning Points for Children
United Communities Southeast Philadelphia
United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey
University of the Arts
Urban Affairs Coalition
Vantage Learning
West Philadelphia Alliance for Children (WePAC)
WHYY
Wills Eye Hospital
The World Was Made For You Inc.
Zion Baptist Church
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