

OUSD Parents Raising the B.A.R.

Session 5: Understanding Chronic Absenteeism as a Symptom

Purpose

This module will be focused on developing participants' understanding on Chronic Absenteeism, and how it is a symptom of a deeper problem or issue that families or students may be facing. This session will include sharing attendance data on the current state of the district, and how to read individual student attendance reports. We will also be identifying ways parent leaders can help struggling students and other parents combat chronic absenteeism.

Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will

- Understand what is the definition of Chronic Absenteeism
- Know how to monitor student attendance
- Know how to hold World Café-style conversations about Chronic Absenteeism
- Know what the District policy is around Chronic Absenteeism

Room Set Up

15-30 minutes before meeting

- Create space for snacks/refreshments
- Arrange tables and chairs in the room
- Set up and check that technology works

Materials

- Name Tags
- Sign In Sheets
- Handout: Four different scenarios
- Handout: Chronic Illnesses
- Handout: Everyday Counts
- SART Handout
- SARB Handout
- PowerPoint Slides
- Table Cloths for World Café
- Butcher papers & marker boxes for World Cafe
- Attendance Report
- ABI Portal Instructions
- Secondary Contract

Welcome

(20 minutes)

Purpose

The purpose of this segment of the agenda is to bring order to the meeting and create the sense of community by having participants get to know each other.

Materials

- Directions and materials for community building activity: Candy Confessions
- Participant Agenda Handout

Talking Points

- Welcome parents and review agreements (7)
- Introduce short community building activity: Candy Confessions (10)
- Briefly review meeting agenda so participants know what is going to happen (3)

Candy Confessions Community Builder

(10 minutes)

Purpose

You have just taken a job as a candy tester in the Candy Confessions factory. What makes this candy different from other candy is that each flavor is associated with a fact about your work with parents. Your job is to select and “test” different candies from a bowl/box that will circulate among all testers.

Outcome

- Participants will build rapport with the rest of the group
- Participant will be grounded on the purpose of the meeting

Materials

- Bag of with a variety of small candies (enough for all participants)
- Key Code (Choose questions that are related to families and the topic of the meeting)

Activity:

1. Set up the activity: Make sure that every participant is given a small candy
2. If the group is large, break up into smaller groups no bigger than 10 people.
3. Explain that once every one receives a candy, there will be a question for their candy
4. Once the question has been revealed you may begin your confession (by answering the question matching their candy).

Sample Questions:

- Milk Chocolate = Why is it important to have good attendance in school?
- Krackle = How many days does a student need to miss before he is categorized as having Chronic Absenteeism? (or how many “sick” days are ok, and how do you know your child is really “sick”)
- Mr. Goodbar = What do you share with your child around the importance of being on time to school?
- Special Dark = How do you monitor your child’s attendance?

When should you keep your student at home?

(20 minutes)

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to help parents understand the importance of attendance and how absences are tied to missed opportunities in the classroom. Parents will also start to be trained on dealing with chronic illnesses and working with the school to ensure that their children do not fall behind. Parents will also start discovering ways to help the school community and other parents around Chronic Absenteeism.

Materials

- Four different scenarios
- Chronic Illnesses Handout
- Everyday Counts Attendance Handout

Input: Review Handouts

Talking Points:

(5 Minutes)

- Highlight the importance of working with school personnel when you're dealing with a situation where your student will be out of school for an extended period of time.
- Students miss school for a lot of different reasons and every case is unique.
- Help them think about what their role is when reinforcing their student's positive attendance.
- Help them understand that great attendance is a soft skill that will help their children be successful in life.

Activity: Problem solving on chronic Absenteeism

(15 Minutes)

1. **Divide the group:** Have participants count off from one to four to create four random groups.
2. **Pass out scenarios.** Give each group a different scenario around attendance to discuss.
3. **Work in groups.** Groups will work with each other to discuss ways to improve the student's attendance with the scenario that was given to them. Advise them to set the four groups in four different corners of the room.
4. **Share out.** Each group will have an opportunity to present their findings.

Monitoring your student's attendance

(20 minutes)

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to help parents understand the importance of monitoring their student's attendance. We will also highlight the importance of students developing habits of good attendance from the earlier years.

Materials

- Review Attendance Report
- ABI Portal Instructions
- Secondary Contract
- Chart Paper

Activity: Review the instructions on how to use the tools

(10 minutes)

Review Attendance Report

Start by asking parents to name all the people or places they can get access to an attendance report.

Talking Points

- It's important that your student knows that you will be reviewing their attendance regularly.
- Make sure to have a calendar readily available that accounts for all the times students missed school.
- Set up a time with your child to review their attendance on a regular basis.
- Create a system with positive reinforcements that promotes academic and attendance accomplishments.
- Create methods to communicate with teachers or school personnel when there's a discrepancy with the attendance report and what your student is reporting.
- They will receive a translated key to explain all the attendance categories.

ABI Portal

Talking Points

- It's important that your student knows that you will be reviewing their attendance regularly.
- Make sure to have a calendar readily available that accounts for all the times students missed school.
- Set up a time with your child to review their attendance on a regular basis.
- Create a system with positive reinforcements that promotes academic and attendance accomplishments.
- Parents can access the internet portal any time of the day.

Secondary Contract

Talking Points

- A great tool to keep abreast of how your child is doing overall in a daily basis.
- A practical way to keep in communication with your student's teachers.
- Helps in creating positive and consistent habits around attendance.
- It has a reminder of what information you need to access the ABI portal.
- Parents can access the internet portal any time of the day.

World Café: Community Forum for Conversation

(20 minutes)

Purpose:

A World Café is an engaging format for conversation that can be utilized with many different topics within the school community.

Materials

- Café Guidelines
- Tablecloths for the café tables
- Four Discussion Themes
- Writing utensils for the table host
- Chart Paper

SART/SARB: The District's process in dealing with Chronic Absenteeism (20 minutes)

Purpose:

We will highlight how the district is making a difference in working with families whose students suffer from Chronic Absenteeism. Participants will learn about an attendance intervention process that is currently used at the individual schools. Participants will become familiar with the District's level intervention around Chronic Absenteeism.

Materials

- SART Hand out
- SARB Hand out

SART (Student Attendance Review Team)

Talking Points

- A strength based meeting between the family, student and school personal.
- The meeting should involve key personnel that support a student in school and at home.
- The meeting should be solutions based and all participants should leave with responsibilities when it comes to supporting the student.
- Remember that a student or family may not open up in the initial problem about why they are missing school; the student's negative attendance may be a symptom of a deeper issue.
- A follow-up meeting needs to be set. The laps of time between the initial meeting and the follow-up meeting would depend on the severity of the problem.

SARB (Student Attendance Review Board)

Talking Points

- Families have an opportunity to advocate for themselves or their students around resources.
- Once a student goes through the SARB process, they will be monitored through by the SARB Office until that student is 18 years of age and with any OUSD school.
- The SARB hearing is the last attempt administered by the District before the student or family is referred to the District Attorney.

- Families will be asked to come to the SARB Office for follow-up meeting throughout the year.

Appreciations

(20 minutes)

Purpose

Give participants some time to acknowledge each other for participating and being thought partners in the process. This activity will continue to strengthen your group by allowing participants to build rapport with one and other.

Materials

- Soft plush ball or toy

Activity: Ball toss

(15 Minutes)

1. **Ask the group to form a big circle:** Have participants remove furniture if needed or simply move to an empty space in the room to create a large circle.
2. **Toss the ball to participants:** Instruct participants to share an acknowledgement of the day, the material, another participant or the facilitator then toss the ball to another person.
3. **Make sure everyone gets an opportunity to share:** Explain that everyone needs to share. As the group progresses through the exercise ask participants to raise their hands if they haven't had an opportunity to share.
4. **Closing:** End the activity by acknowledging everyone's commitment to being present and their participation in the activity.