

HOW TO...

Customize Success Mentors for Middle and High Schools

THIS SHOWS HOW TO:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1: Create positive school climate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.1: Support "Success Mentors." | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.1: Communicate with families. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4.1: Host the weekly Student Success Summit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.2: Implement a tiered attendance plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.2: Offer incentives. | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.2: Partner with community. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4.2: Use attendance data. |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.3: Connect to Task Force initiatives. | |

THE BASICS

Success Mentors in elementary school may need to spend more time engaging students' families. Absences in the early grades are likely related to challenges parents face. . . or even setting the priority on attendance everyday.

For older students, reminding students to come to school is not enough. It's about getting to issues. Success Mentors need to name the reasons why students do not come to school, that may include: academic needs and not understanding what it takes to graduate, communication with teachers, parents who feel like they can't help, or social-emotional needs.

In middle and high schools, Success Mentors:

- Help students identify their big goals, why they are in school.
- Keep consistency in meetings. Set boundaries and stick to them.
- Share data. Report back to students how often they have come to school.

HERE'S WHAT HAS BEEN TRIED

A Success Mentor says, "Middle school kids try to get into the high school they want, but they don't always know what they need to be ready. They may not know how important good attendance is. You have to get them to believe that they have something that they can look forward to. Many kids don't have long term vision, so you have to fill those blanks in for them."

A Success Mentor had morning meet and greets and would say something affirming about her mentees' appearance, such as telling them their hair looked nice.

Success Mentors organized "Peer-to-Peer" tutoring/mentoring groups for students to support one another. Others created gender-based groups for high school students during lunch.

In high schools, Success Mentors need to be knowledgeable about academic standing (how many credits, what they need to graduate). At some schools, success mentors helped create individual academic plans (coordinated with school guidance counselor) to get students back on track.

Other ideas:

- Breakfast with the teachers as an informal gathering, to build connections.
- Special appeals to parents for their input: "what are your child's strengths?"
- Art club that meets during lunch (in one case, due to turnout and enthusiasm club is now a credit-bearing course!)
- Getting To Know You Survey -Mentors in one school created a brief survey of about 10 questions to get to know students quickly. Surveys ask about students' likes and dislikes.
- Lunch Time Chats- Relaxed time for mentors to get to know students.