



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Maximizing Attendance in Expanded Learning Time Schools and Out-of-School Programs

April 2010

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day
Practice: Maximize Attendance

Highlights

- In many programs across the nation, inconsistent attendance remains a major challenge.
- A minimum number of academic intervention hours is needed for observable improvements in student outcomes.
- Programs that maintain high attendance rates constantly look for ways to meet the needs of families.
- Designing a program that makes kids want to come, by providing clubs and activities that interest students, can help maximize attendance.
- Collaboration with school staff is an effective way to identify strategies for maximizing student attendance.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Maximizing Attendance in Expanded Learning Time Schools and Out-of-School Programs.

Slide 2: The first challenge

Increasing learning time can benefit all students, and can significantly help those who are struggling—but only if they maintain regular attendance. In many sites across the nation, absenteeism rates remain a major challenge.

Slide 3: Time in program

Research shows that a significant increase in instructional time leads to better academic performance. For example, at least 45 hours of after-school intervention are needed for a student to show substantial academic improvement that is aligned with the intervention goals. To maximize attendance, schools and program providers need to continuously monitor attendance and explore how to help students who are chronically absent.

Slide 4: Monitor attendance

An important first step is setting annual and monthly goals for attendance. There are a number of data tools and systems available that schools and out-of-school programs can use to monitor attendance and identify students with chronic attendance issues. Additionally, after-school programs will need to keep the school informed of unexcused absences, especially with students who were referred to the program due to poor academic achievement.

Slide 5: Causes for Absenteeism

Using comprehensive data systems can reveal trends that might suggest factors associated with absenteeism of a particular student, such as how far the student lives from the school or program, and how that student's attendance the previous year compares to the current year. In many cases, absenteeism is a symptom of a difficulty that a student is experiencing at school or at home. Interventions should align with the cause for the student's attendance issues. For example, students who avoid coming to school due to bullying or social isolation may need a different kind of intervention than students who miss school due to academic difficulties.

Slide 6: Attending Out-of-School Programs

For Out-of-School programs, a common barrier to attendance is accessibility. Students either can't get to the program location, or get distracted en route. It is highly desirable to use school grounds for out-of-school programs to reduce transportation concerns. For after-school programs, staff should verify that students have a way to get home, especially after dark.

Subsidized or free transportation may be an incentive to enroll in off-site programs.

Slide 7: Enrichment activities

After-school, weekend, and summer programs often have to compete with other recreational activities. A program that incorporates clubs and activities that interest students is more likely to have high enrollment and regular attendance.

Out-of-school programs may offer enrichment classes in subjects such as art, fitness, martial arts, chess club, theater, and cooking. Such classes can incorporate academic instruction in unexpected ways. For example, theater classes can broaden vocabulary, computer classes can promote reading comprehension, and sports and cooking classes can explore math concepts such as problem solving, estimation, measurement, and mixed operations such as addition and subtraction.

Slide 8: Nutritional needs

With students engaged in instruction for extended periods after school hours, it will be necessary for healthy snacks and beverages to be provided. For summer and weekend intervention programs, a full meal option should be considered.

Slide 9: Incentives for attendance

Out-of-school programs can offer incentives to students such as certificates or small prizes for perfect attendance.

Districts can provide similar incentives to the program itself by recognizing strong attendance rates.

When programs do not meet their attendance goals, districts can provide technical assistance that support program activities and maximize attendance.

Slide 10: Parents

Parents are important partners in the process of maximizing attendance.

Collecting information from parents through annual surveys or other methods can help identify factors that may affect attendance. For example, if data show that an after-school program's operating hours are a major impediment for regular attendance, program providers may look for resources to extend those hours.

In addition, teachers or attendance monitors can talk to parents about their child's attendance patterns and ask for their support in ensuring that their child attends regularly. School day or after-school bilingual staff members can facilitate communication with families that have limited English proficiency.

Websites, flyers, newsletters, and stories through local media can all help to raise parents' awareness of the program's benefits, as can events and services such as volunteering opportunities, family nights, and parent workshops.

Slide 11: Teacher Collaboration

Collaborating with teachers and program instructors is an important part of the process. In expanded learning time schools, teachers, counselors, and specialists can work together to identify ways to promote student attendance. Out-of-school site managers and instructors can meet with school administrators to discuss what role the program may fill in the school's improvement plan and how they can collaborate with school staff to reach the school's daily attendance goals. They can also discuss how school staff can support enrollment and attendance of students in out-of-school programs.

Slide 12: Conclusion

As long as schools and programs continually monitor attendance and work to promote regular attendance rates, students are likely to benefit from increased time for academic support and enrichment.

Slide 14: Learn more

To learn more about Maximizing Attendance in Expanded Learning Time Schools and Out-of-School Programs, please see the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.