**Important Dates to Remember:**

- **March 3rd:** ACT Testing. Juniors attend. 
  Choppy Attendance Waters Ahead!!
- **April 2nd:** End of the 3rd Quarter
- **April 6th-10th:** Spring Break
- **April 15 and/or 16:** Report Card Pick Up Days

Plan ahead for 3/30, 3/31, and 4/1 so students do not leave for break early. Plan ahead for 3/13 and/or 3/14 so students do not feel like they should extend their Spring Break. Strategically placing events on these days will motivate students to stay school-focused.

**Celebrating our Wins!**

- Entering into Week 23, **320** schools have held on to a 95% attendance rate.
- Entering into Week 23, **193** schools have 93.0% attendance to 94.9% attendance—demonstrating that 95% is within arms reach.

**Best Practice Sharing from Network 5**

Network 5 has adopted the traveling trophy strategy. Their schools award the class with the best attendance for the week the school trophy. They take a class photo and post the achievement. It is important to note that the featured grades below are those that often are the most difficult to motivate—our middle school and early age students.

**Best Practice Sharing from Network 1’s Beard Elementary**

Beard ES hosted a parent engagement event in February focusing on Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. At the event, there was a dramatic reading, art stations for the students and their families to use their creative juices, and opportunities to connect with the school. The original event was cancelled because of the weather, but the school rallied, and had a great turnout. The school is hosting parent events to underscore the importance of family engagement in relation to student attendance. Pictured is the awesome Beard staff and families.

**Resources:**

- Did schools review their monthly attendance report and priority group deep dive report?
- Did your school review the webinar on how to maximize the benefits of the new Attendance Dashboard Page [https://sites.google.com/a/cps.edu/1357924465/home](https://sites.google.com/a/cps.edu/1357924465/home)?
Best Practice Sharing from Network 6

We all know that parent support is imperative to improving attendance on our respective campuses. To that end, Network 6 created Attendance Improvement Kits for each of its schools. These kits include:

- Bulletin board materials (boarders, letters, markers, awards, etc.) to make certain attendance is “front and center” at all of their schools.
- Awards—lots of them—for students with strong attendance, improving attendance, etc. These awards are expected to be used as part of quarterly celebrations that include VIPs—the students’ families.
- Non-perishables such as napkins and plates, utensils, cups, etc., for hosting celebration receptions after the award ceremonies.
- Traveling trophies—three for each school—that will create a healthy competitive environment among grade bands (K-2, 3-5 and 6-8). These trophies will move from classroom to classroom based on the highest weekly or monthly attendance.
- Welcome signs for our priority schools—these erasable signs will highlight parent meetings, attendance, etc.
- $25 Barnes and Noble gift cards (4 per school) to be used to promote the April report card pick up and My Voice, My School survey. These gift cards will be used for a raffle for those parents who meet with a certain number of teachers, pay off any outstanding debt, turn in missing absence notes, medical forms, etc.
- And more!

The toolkits will allow schools to focus on student achievement, small incentives to "nudge" students and families to improve attendance one student at a time, and celebrations for students and parents.

Network 6 administrators, teachers, students and parents will have (1) daily visuals on their respective campuses; (2) regular support for student attendance celebrations; (3) incentives for the scheduled report card pick up; and (4) constant reminders about the importance of being in school each and every day.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 9’s Mollison Elementary

Principal Henderson and staff at Mollison Elementary School reintroduced their Attendance Angels Program this year for the Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Through this program, school staff adopt a group of students in efforts to reduce truancy and absenteeism by building relationships and positively enforcing school policies. Principal Henderson and the team have noticed a reduction in the number of students enrolled in the program from the 2013-2014 school year and this current school year. The team truly attributes that decrease to the powerful relationship building between staff and students and providing care on a more personal level through the Attendance Angels Program.

City Wide Attendance Message Campaign

Attendance and Truancy is partnering with the City of Chicago and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to emphasize the “Every Day and On Time” attendance message. The goal is to reinforce the efforts of the schools and Networks in making sure students are coming to school and starting their day on time.

The importance of daily and on time attendance will be featured on the Red, Green and Pink train lines, as well as on the Kedzie, 74th, 77th, and 103rd bus routes. Public awareness around attendance and truancy will be visible to our elementary and high school students as well as their parents/guardians.

Internal signage and bus tails on the CTA, as well as digitals billboards throughout the city, will communicate the message, which is particularly important to reinforce as we enter the warmer months. Pictured to the right and throughout the newsletter are samples of the signage.

Please reach out with questions, suggestions, and items to share; ZAMohammed@cps.edu. Thank you for being such great collaborative partners!
Best Practice Sharing from Network 13

Network 13’s January 5th Attendance Challenge was won by Poe Elementary Classical School, Go Ravens! The school’s student attendance percentage was 99.50%; one student was absent! Students, parents and staff received a commemorative ink pen from Chief Saffold, inscribed “CPS NETWORK 13 Poe Elementary Classical School 2015 Attendance Challenge Winner!”

Poe’s students and 10 other Network 13 schools—Addams, Bennett, Brooks HS, Brown, Burnham, Coleman, Grissom, Mt. Vernon, and Washington Elementary—whose student attendance percentages were above 90.0% on January 5th were invited to attend the “Spellbinder’s Magic Event” on Friday, January 29, 2015 in the Corliss HS Auditorium. The event’s Master of Ceremony was Mr. Derrick Young of CBS Channel 2 Chicago. The event was phenomenal and enjoyed by all. The “Selfie” pictures with Mr. Young were a big hit with students and adults.

Pictured to the right are students participating in the Attendance Challenge event, as well as Chief Saffold, Principal Harris, Mr. Derrick Young, and Ms. Sarah Barber.

When January 30th moved from a non-instructional day to an instructional day due to the snow day make-up, Network 13 aided their schools in re-messaging the change of plans.

Good afternoon Principals,

As you know, Friday, January 30, 2015 is no longer a staff development day, but now an attendance day for students. With that being said, in an effort to encourage students to come to school on Friday, please have an Attendance Challenge at your individual schools on that day.

I am suggesting an incentive be given to the classroom, per Grade Band, Primary, Immediate and Upper, with the highest attendance percentage on Friday, January 30th.

Incentives per school may vary from a day out of uniform, which will cost nothing, or just let your Attendance Team be creative and choose the incentive you give the winning classrooms, one per Grade Band. I am requesting a picture of the winning classrooms with the principal and assistant principal be posted on your February’s Attendance Bulletin Board.

Network 13

110 students from Phoenix Military Academy were presented with certificates of perfect attendance for the first semester.

Look for the new attendance messaging that is being posted throughout the city! We want the “Every Day and On Time” message to be a city-wide effort!

110 students from Phoenix Military Academy were presented with certificates of perfect attendance for the first semester.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 13

Let’s run the “Every Day and On Time” play. That always gets us where we need to be.

Share your school and Network-based attendance messages! We would love to post them in the next newsletter!

Spot us on trains, busses, digital and static billboards!
Best Practice Sharing from Network 2

Starting the restorative process at Tier 1 - for all students - is the best place to start. Training teachers to use some restorative strategies in their own classroom as a part of their overall classroom management has really helped schools use these practices to correct behaviors at all levels as opposed to only using it for more egregious infractions. This practice allows restorative strategies to become a part of a shift in the entire school culture.

Pictured: Network 2 Deans and Disciplinarians engaging in their monthly PLC

February’s topic: Increasing the use of restorative practices and determining effective structures and curriculum for in-school suspension

---

Best Practice Sharing from Network 2’s Ogden International

Maintaining attendance momentum for 8th and 12ths graders is a challenge, but it is one that can be combatted proactively. Schools like Ogden International put in place a contract for their 8th graders and their 8th grade families. The contract outlines what grades, attendance, and behaviors have to be maintained in order to participate in graduation activities. Both the student and the student’s family sign off on this as an understanding of expectations.

Graduation activities are earned. Luncheons, BBQs, dances, pinning ceremonies, ticket allotments, autograph book sessions, t-shirt signings: these are all events that 8th graders and 12th graders enjoy. They are also events that are earned by meeting attendance, achievement, and behavioral expectations. A school can put a similar contract in place for other grade levels if resources are available. Specifically for 12th graders, including college applications, FAFSA and Choose Your Future completion are important to include as “requirements” for graduation.

Ideally, schools establish contracts with students at the start of the year. However, starting at another point is fine, as long as it does not unfairly punish students who were not given the expectations from the start. Data shows that schools with contracts in place have a stronger attendance rate for their 8th and 12th grade.