**Important to Remember:**
We are closing in on 6 weeks left of school. This is where momentum slips. Work Attendance Challenge Days into your schedule. Keep the Universal Systems in place for students to stay motivated around the attendance culture of your school. Do not start to collect books or take signage down; it sends the wrong message. Set up “can’t miss” events so students stay until the very last day! Every day counts!

**Celebrating Our Wins!**
- Entering into Week 32, 55 schools have demonstrated three consecutive years of attendance growth
- Entering into Week 32, 309 schools have 95+% attendance
- Entering into Week 34, every high school grade (9, 10, 11, and 12) is trending above where they ended last year

**Best Practice Sharing from Network 13’s Corliss High School**
Bloomingdale’s hosted Corliss High School students who were part of the Polished Pebbles program. The program is sponsored by the Attendance Grant. The Bloomingdale’s Brown Bag Apprenticeship Program has girls tour the stores and learn about the inner workings of the retail industry, develop personal relationships with Bloomingdale’s employee mentors, and put their communication skills to practice in the workplace. Girls complete two job shadows in different departments, and participate in a mock group interview. Ms. Kelly Fair is the coordinator of the Polished Pebbles program, and continues to work with Network 13 on such important programs.

**Best Practice Sharing from Network 6’s Armour Elementary**
Armour School students enjoyed a wonderful day at the Chicago White Sox game on May 7, 2015 to cap a year of mentoring. Every student at Armour School chooses a staff member to serve as their mentor for the year. Each staff member has a group of students that they do frequent check ins with, set goals, monitor grades and attendance, and is an adult that they know they can go to anytime to talk. Students bond with staff members throughout the year by having special events, having lunch, and going to the White Sox game. These types of special bonds have helped students feel more comfortable at school and helped make Armour a place where students want to be. In addition, we have seen an increase in student attendance as a result of this mentor program. We are so proud of the accomplishments of the staff and our wonderful students. The tickets were very generously donated by the Chicago White Sox through Communities in Schools Chicago. It seemed like even the weather was congratulating our efforts! We had an incredible afternoon posing with Southpaw and taking in the ballgame.

**Resources:**
- Did you review the monthly attendance report and priority group deep dive report?
- Did you 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 Options
The Options Network has focused on providing opportunities for their students to motivate attendance. In partnership with a local business, two of their students interned at Sororotique, a Greek sorority/fraternity store in the South Loop. The internship program provides experience in the work place for about 80 students at 10 different locations. The students pictured to the right are Tameika Thurman and Sherell Lee.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 6’s Healy Elementary
Thirteen Healy students participated in a six week after school program entitled "Core Character Etiquette for Everyday Students." The students learned proper etiquette and social skills that will help build character and confidence and will allow them to successfully navigate their interactions with classmates, parents, teachers; and the general public at large. The sessions were led by Sonya Chapman, founder of Chicago Protocol & Etiquette Consulting, Inc. At the end of the program the students demonstrated what they learned and dined at the Grand Lux Cafe in downtown Chicago. As a result of implementing this program there was a 1.9% increase in these students’ attendance. Congratulations to our STAR students! (Studious, Thoughtful, Accountable, Respectful)

Best Practice Sharing from Network 5
The play “Beat the Streets” based on the novel “The Pact” was presented at five of the attendance grant schools during the month of March. The play covered issues currently impacting our schools such as: bullying, gang violence, post high school woes, peer relationships, drugs, and the lack of value placed on academic achievement. Middle and high school students were the targeted demographic. The play had an astounding impact on the students, and they have reached out to the actors via social media.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 4’s Kelvyn Park High School
Kelvyn Park HS has gone the route of Broadway by staging “The Wiz”. Students were selected through the Attendance Grant effort to engage in the performing arts as an untapped outlet for school engagement. Mr. Tuggle, the moderator, along with 23 students, will be performing “The Wiz” on May 21st and 22nd. It is open to the public and tickets are $5. We know it will be something to remember. Break a leg Team Kelvyn Park! Pictured below are the students in rehearsals.

A big thank you to all those eagle eyed attendance partners who have been spotting and taking pictures of the “Every Day and On Time” signs on the busses and trains throughout the city!
At the Network 9 PLC, school-based attendance personnel review data, ask questions, and review strategies to bring back to their buildings in order to build their attendance.

Let's Meet: Ms. Marian Mitchell, Attendance Coordinator; Reinberg Elementary Network 1

A&T met Ms. Mitchell when she was inquiring about extra support for a couple of students who were just not coming to school. She had taken all the right steps, but wanted a thought partner on what else could be done. We chatted, and she pursued the options to continuously try to re-engage the students. A&T heard from Ms. Mitchell on and off--once in a while to give an update--once in a while to troubleshoot next steps. A&T appreciated that she let us know how the students were, and we appreciated that she did not give up.

We know people wish there was a clear path for dealing with non-responsive families, but truancy is a symptom of larger issues, so trying different avenues is the best solution--it is not the easiest but it is the one that has the longest lasting impact. Ms. Mitchell shared that attendance is a priority at Reinberg. They insist on students being present, and her stubbornness to see that through is part of that formula. She said, "Getting families to understand the importance of school is what attendance is about. Even on the most frustrating days, you keep trying. You get back up and do it again. The kids come out of here and the world they live in is very different than the one I grew up in. They can't look to go into an entry level job; they need to keep going on so they reach for the stars. Between the families and me, we both want their children to succeed. We all want the same outcome, so even when we have to have difficult conversations around attendance, families know it's coming from a place of concern."

She stated that, "Everybody at the school has a hand in attendance--the principal, the teachers--all of us. I have a seat at a table to discuss the issues of our kids, like who needs to be motivated. We all interact with the kids in a different way, so we all need to weigh in on what we can do to help them. Teachers regularly talk to me, and I regularly talk to them. We make sure the school is covered with signs that celebrate attendance.

Even when students are running late, they are running, because they know this is where they are supposed to be. Attendance is everyone's work, not a single person's job--it's everybody's. There are hundreds of people working behind the scenes, on the scenes, in the scenes to get the children in. I think there is truth to the saying that it takes a village to raise a child. You can't do it alone."

We thank Ms. Mitchell for sharing, and we send waves of respect to the attendance people working with our students every day.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 11’s Hope High School

At Hope HS, every adult in the building has a team of students. They created their teams by drafting (choosing) students. Students were chosen based on their current ADA, improvement rates, etc. Once teams were formed, the teams compete for the remainder of the year around attendance for incentives and recognition. The Attendance Coordinator announced each adult and each choice per round, and each student chosen took a picture with their "Team Owner" (Staff) and "Commissioner" (Principal or AP). Students were dressed for the occasion, cheered for draftees, and had a lot of fun. It was in the spirit of the NFL Draft held in Chicago this year, and allows Hope HS to maintain momentum on attendance until the end of the year.

Celebrating You!

A&T has started the design process for the SY15 Attendance Recognition Banners for those schools who end the year with 95% or higher for their attendance, or have demonstrated 3 consecutive years of attendance growth. We hope to be honoring even more schools this year!

Please reach out to Zakieh Mohammed with questions, suggestions, and items to share; ZAMohammed@cps.edu. Thank you for being such great collaborative partners!
A DAY IN THE LIFE: OS4’S BOWEN HIGH SCHOOL
DEAN OF ATTENDANCE, BRIANNA NKEMEH

On Friday, March 20th Bowen HS hosted Central Office A&T Specialist Alexandra Usher for a visit. Alexandra shadowed Dean of Attendance Brianna Nkemeh to see “a day in the life” of an Attendance Dean, and witnessed some excellent attendance work going on. It was noticeable how invested the staff was in the lives of their students; students had an obvious bond with staff members including Brianna, counselors, the Dean of Students, and others. Students clearly felt like the adults in the building were there to help and advocate for them. Not only have Bowen staff cultivated these critical relationships, they have also established a system of tiered attendance strategies and supports. Students with perfect attendance for the previous week are able to take part in rewards on Fridays like one-period access to a fun room, t-shirts, or other treats. On the day Alexandra visited, the whole school was talking about the attendance incentive for that day.

Targeted strategies for struggling students are also in place. Seniors with attendance below 89% are required to meet with Brianna and sign a graduation contract acknowledging they cannot attend Prom or Senior Lunch if they do not improve their attendance. Brianna and her colleagues also facilitate a Check-In Check-Out program: students check in with their assigned mentor and receive a daily punch card where they earn points for good behavior and completed work. Besides running these programs, Brianna conducts home visits and student/parent conferences multiple days per week and maintains spreadsheets monitoring all struggling student’s attendance; this spreadsheet includes what types of interventions they have received (student meeting, phone call home, parents conference, home visit, etc.). This lets her see which students are improving and what can still be done for others. It was great to see so many efforts in action and supported by a team of staff members. Kudos to Brianna and the whole staff at Bowen!!

Best Practice Sharing from Network 9’s Hyde Park Academy
Hyde Park Academy identified tardiness to 1st period as an attendance challenge. They created a kickback for students that accepted the 1st Period Challenge and reported on time for 5 consecutive days. 500+ students accepted the challenge to attend school on time for 5 consecutive days in an effort to boost the school’s weekly attendance, which improves the YTD attendance rate.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 13’s Johnnie Coleman Elementary
As an incentive, these t-shirts were purchased and given to the students in JCA enrolled in the Engage Attendance Program. The students in the program are allowed to come out of uniform and wear the t-shirt on the day the group meets, once a week. Network 13’s Ms. Barber calls this “JCA Engage Attendance Pride”.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 1
Pictured to the right is Network 1’s peer conference training. Student representatives from Foreman, Roosevelt, Bateman, Dever, Peterson, Henry learned how to run and facilitate peer conferences as an alternative to suspensions for low level infractions.

A&T partnered with the City of Chicago to display the Every Day and On Time message on city digitals—this was spotted over the Eisenhower Expressway!