Important to Remember:

- Keep the momentum and planning up—not only for students but for staff.
- There is quite a long stretch in the third quarter, so be intentional around maintaining a positive attendance culture.
- Have a plan for pre-spring break attendance motivators.

Celebrating Our Wins!

- Entering into February 2016—we were above 94%
- The district is more than 1/3 of a percent above attendance this time last year, and 3/4 of a percent above where we ended last year
- All but one network is above their YTD SY15 attendance,
- All elementary grade levels are above their YTD SY15 attendance

Best Practice Sharing from Network 13’s Coleman ES

Colemon has a two-pronged approach towards attendance; they build a strong attendance culture and intervene when students need added support. Three ESP staff members ensure students are recognized for attendance on a weekly and monthly basis by posting rosters and pictures in the hallway. If a student is absent for too many days, friends are encouraged to call and check on him/her, and the Principal and teachers also make calls. Coleman’s attendance culture is always front and center. Mondays are celebrated every week—students have to attend the week before to find out what the theme for the next Monday will be. Examples include; days to wear funny socks, dress up like nerds, a “three of a kind” day where students dress like triplets, and an “all aboard” day where everyone plays board games for 30 minutes. The Principal stresses that these are fun and motivating ideas that do not cost money. Most importantly, Coleman asks the students for input—students are polled to ask “what would make you want to come to school on Monday?” The same strategy is used around breaks; students are asked, “What would make you excited to return on the day after break?”

Colemon ES was the proud winner of Network 13’s Winter Break Attendance Challenge: the first day back from Winter Break, Coleman boasted a 97.01% ADA! Principal Williams stresses that the school has an “awesome attendance team” — by which she means all staff members. Teachers are required to set a goal, and they up with an attendance goal of 98%. If a class has poor attendance for two months in a row, teachers must write a brief attendance plan. For example, one class is currently on a 14-day attendance challenge: if students in the class attend school for 14 days in a row, they are recognized by the teacher. Students are very excited! Teachers also encourage healthy competition between classrooms and get the students involved in recognizing each other’s attendance.

Colemon was able to win the Winter Attendance Challenge by involving parents; a similar strategy will be used around spring break. In the weeks leading up to the break, the school called parents and sent home notes stressing how important it was for students to return on the first day back. They also told parents about the Attendance Challenge and got them excited and involved in trying to win by appealing to their competitive spirit! They are encouraging parents to attend the celebratory event to show them how much their support matters for attendance. These strategies are all part of a shift in Coleman over the past two years as they have decided to put their focus on attendance, because they know that once kids are in the building, they can learn! Now, students are understanding the importance of attendance and want to be in school—even asking parents to bring them back after doctor’s appointments—because they don’t want to miss the excitement going on in the building. Congratulations! Pictured are Attendance Superstars—starting with their AM Pre-K!
Courtenay has established a new attendance focus and intensity over the past few years. This has resulted in a steady increase in attendance. One of their strategies is to closely monitor the attendance rate for each grade, so they can put strategies in place when they see any grade’s ADA falling. Different strategies are used for each grade. Examples include:

- 5th graders with attendance between 95-100% for the month are invited to participate in a monthly “sock hop” party. The party is held at the end of the school day and students enjoy punch, music, and dancing.
- Second graders who have perfect attendance for the week are visited by the Assistant Principal, who walks around with a box of small prizes and trinkets, and the students can go on a “pirate treasure hunt” and choose a reward.
- Teachers who have perfect attendance each month are recognized with a reward like a school sweatshirt or gift card.

Courtenay also focuses on parent education, especially for its younger students. At the end of February, students in grades K-1 are invited to a “Mommy and Me Day” where students and parents can do art projects together, and parents are informed about the importance of attendance. Courtenay partners with A Knock At Midnight (AKAM) to provide door-to-door outreach to families. AKAM staff visits the school three times per week and are told which students are struggling and need a home visit. Les Kniskern, the Network FACE manager, provides outstanding support and works hand-in-hand with Courtenay staff in reaching out to families. Courtenay is always aware of when a student becomes part of the STLS program, and checks to make sure there is no barrier to transportation, especially if their location has changed or may change in the future. If possible, the school provides bus cards, and does everything possible to make sure students are able to continue attending the school. Everyone at Courtenay is invested in making sure the school has a strong attendance culture, absent students know they are missed, and students are welcomed to a warm environment every day!

In Week 23 of SY2015, Columbia Explorers had an attendance rate of 95.78%; this year, at the 23rd week, the school had an attendance rate of 96.70%. This notable growth made Attendance and Truancy want to take a closer look. Assistant Principal Considine shared that Columbia Explorers has a hands-on approach to attendance. Her teachers email her daily regarding attendance; it is important for everyone to know which students are exhibiting attendance challenges, and which students need extra support. Columbia Explorers knows that early intervention reduces the need to remediate students. Additionally, at the weekly staff meeting, the attendance percentage is shared with all her teachers. Sharing the data consistently and frequently keeps attendance as a priority, and underscores that attendance is a whole school concern.

Ms. Luna, the attendance clerk is in contact with Ms. Considine everyday regarding student attendance. The assistant principal, counselor, dean, security, and the principal herself all make home visits to help parents who need assistance with getting their children to school. Ms. Considine went on to say, “Ms. Luna and I have been working together on attendance for the past seven years or so. We both care and are invested in Columbia. Every morning, my top concern is attendance. I work on attendance first thing, communicate with Ms. Luna, make phone calls, make home visits, etc.”

Following up with students is one prong of the effort, the other is building a strong attendance culture. Ms. Considine shared, “We have increased our incentives this year. We give out monthly incentives, and have started giving out biweekly incentives. Every quarter, students receive perfect attendance t-shirts. These shirts can also be worn on PE days, so this helps out parents with uniforms. Attendance is a team effort. Students are reminded on a daily basis about how important attendance is, and this is the culture of Columbia Explorers.
This school year, Manierre Elementary received an attendance grant to offer a before school program aimed to address truancy among identified families. The program, "Mind, Body, Soul" has been successful in increasing punctuality among students. Recently the program has been open to any Manierre student, and it has increased positive school culture as a result. "Mind, Body, Soul" offers students daily activities and interventions beginning at 7:30am each morning, such as: Social Emotional Learning Advisory, games to build teamwork and peer relationships, homework assistance and computers access, basketball and yoga/dance/mindfulness.

Each morning, Yoga/Dance/Mindfulness is led by Bridget Montgomery, the Manierre Case Manager & School Counselor. As many as 30 students attend on any given day. Social Emotional Learning and movement are synchronous, as students receive the physical benefits of stretching, breathing, and coordination while learning SEL skills such as self-awareness (through attention to body and mind), self management (through calming techniques), and social awareness (by working with others). In addition, each instructor in the program is facilitating the Check In/Check Out Intervention with specific students. The "Mind, Body, Soul" program collects data each month to monitor the goals of the program: increasing attendance, providing a welcoming environment that builds on the strengths of students, and offering students motivation for the school day.
Best Practice Sharing from Network 9’s Kozminski ES

Kozminski students and staff were celebrated during their first Attendance Pep Rally of the school year. Students and staff who have 100% attendance were awarded with prizes. Principal Bernadette Glover also issued a challenge to all students to help get the school to 95% attendance for the remainder of the year. Taking time to recognize students who are coming every day, and those who are showing strong attendance, is a practice that encourages Every Day and On Time behavior.

Best Practice Sharing from Network 1

Network 1 looked at attendance through an academic lens. Forty teachers who serve ninth and tenth grade students at Foreman, Roosevelt, and Schurz HS attended Reading Apprenticeship, a professional development which supports teachers in using researched-based strategies and philosophies as part of a comprehensive strategy for reading and academic language development in all content areas for all students, particularly English Language Learners and Diverse Learners.

MAJOR MILESTONE

THANK YOU FOR BEING PIONEERS!

General knowledge around attendance procedures and leave codes is essential for all schools. With that, the Office of Accountability and the Office of College and Career Success collaborated and created the Attendance/Leave Code Training Modules. The online professional development course, accessed through the Learning Hub, consisted of four modules covering the following themes:

- Module 1: Attendance General Knowledge
- Module 2: Attendance Technical Knowledge
- Module 3: Leave Codes
- Module 4: Attendance Communication and Data Reporting

At the end of January, every traditional CPS school, all Option schools, a portion of the charter schools and Network and District personnel had participated. 1,436 individuals successfully completed the attendance essentials coursework. That is an army of people working to better serve our students, and better respond to properly navigate the district.

STOP AND SHARE!

How are you keeping attendance exciting?
Send in your ideas or photos to ZAMohammed@cps.edu
Best Practice Sharing from Network 13’s Clay ES

Clay ES has approached attendance from a tiered view, similar to MTSS. Students are given clear instructions on how to be recognized, as well as how to be proactive about their attendance habits. Their plan is not cost heavy, nor management heavy. They utilize a Never Been Absent Bulletin Board. With 609 students, they are trending positively. The same system can be applied for students who need to improve their attendance. Bravo!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Who earns this?</th>
<th>Incentive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 Perfect Attendance</td>
<td>Students who are in school each and every day for a quarter; they cannot have any excused or unexcused absences.</td>
<td>Each quarter of the school year, Tier 1 Perfect Attendance Students will have their name added to the Never Been Absent Board, will receive a special treat and a Perfect Attendance Certificate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tier 2 Perfect Attendance   | Students who are in school each and every day, on time, with no early dismissals for a quarter; they cannot have any excused or unexcused absences. | Each quarter of the school year, Tier 2 Perfect Attendance Students will have their name added to the Never Been Absent Board, will receive a special treat, a Perfect Attendance Certificate and an hour of Free Time with the iPads/Mobile Devices/Games. |*
| Tier 3 Perfect Attendance   | Students who are in school each and every day, on time, with no early dismissals for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Quarters; they cannot have any excused or unexcused absences. | *Beginning, with the 2nd Quarter students earning Tier 2 Perfect Attendance will also receive a Movie Day. |

Best Practice Sharing from Network 11s’ Wentworth ES

Mr. Kevin Smith is the Student Special Services Advocate at Wentworth Elementary. He wears many hats: social worker, athletic director, and attendance coordinator. Coming into the 2015-2016 school year, Mr. Smith wanted to create a cohesive idea for the entire school to rally around in order to ground the importance of attendance for the building as a whole and for each classroom. The program is called Charged Up! It takes the concept of a battery and visualizes the status of attendance on a scale. The classrooms receive an attendance report card and daily battery postings. Below is an example of a report card and the scale by which they communicate attendance to everyone in the building. Nice Job Wentworth!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Report Card As of February 22nd</th>
<th>On Track Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room ---</td>
<td>Attendance Percent- Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Rate</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>95-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Average</td>
<td>99.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd-5th Grade Average</td>
<td>95.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Membership</td>
<td>95.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DSW IS CHARGED UP!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students needed per day to reach 95%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Battery Level

- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school, or about 18 days, negatively affects a student’s academic performance.
- The academic impact of missing that much school is the same whether the absences are excused or not

Monthly Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance % Goal</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100%</td>
<td>Field Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-96%</td>
<td>Invitation to Attendance Turn Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra Gym Time/Recess Time/Computer Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amundsen HS is trending above their ADA compared to the same time last year. Attendance and Truancy wanted to know why that was. We posed the question to Principal Pavichevich.

“We have worked hard to develop a culture for students that is accepting and fun but that holds high standards. We have a dedicated Attendance Coordinator, who develops strong relationships with students and their families. When a student's attendance starts to wane, he contacts the family and conducts personal meetings, giving the parents time and personal attention. The Attendance Coordinator follows CPS protocol to send letters. Additionally, teachers are required to make phone calls to the homes of students who are absent.

We have created an academic environment, so when students are absent, they feel that they have "missed" important instruction. We have a goal of ensuring that every student is connected to an adult so that it is immediately "noticed" when attendance or other life challenges become an issue. Attendance is usually the first clue that something bigger is happening in a student's life, especially one that hasn't had a history of absenteeism. Our CARE team meets weekly to discuss students "at risk." We create a variety of interventions for students whose attendance and grades are lagging. We do NOT do attendance recovery. We reward students for good attendance.

For the first three years, we worked on creating a culture that developed the values, called the Viking Way, i.e., Accountability, Honor, and Scholarship. Our students have enjoyed our rise from 11 years of probation to Level 1 status and would like to maintain that status. They understand their role in our significant data improvements. We share Viking Snapshots with students every three weeks that alert them to their current attendance, grades, and behavioral records. At any given time, if you ask an Amundsen student what his/her attendance is, they know to the exact tenth of a percentage. We have widely shared goals of 95% school-wide attendance. We have class competitions for attendance. After this semester, the freshman class has the highest attendance and will get to participate in a special celebration. Students receive individual attendance awards. As a part of holding students to high expectation, seniors have a contract; attendance at Senior activities is tied to attendance at school.

In summary, Amundsen staff is really intentional about developing strong adult/student relationships. Student response to this strategy has been positive. We conducted a "Focus Group" with students, and they reported that the #1 reason they come to school is because of their teachers. Friends were the #2 reason. Needless to say, that answer was refreshing.”

Network 13 has had a busy winter season. In collaboration with Rainbow Push Coalition, Sarah Barber—Network 13 Project Manager—coordinated a voting drive for qualified Juniors and Seniors. Engaging young men and women in the civic process of voting cultivates engagement in the neighborhood as well as a feeling of community. Voter Registration drives were held at Julian, Corliss, Fenger and Washington HS. Rev. Jesse Jackson joined students at Fenger HS to speak to the importance of exercising one’s voice and being an active participant in the democratic process. Network 13 makes the connection between student engagement and attendance—fantastic! Pictured below: Fenger students, led by 11th grader and student leader, Zachary Love.