# Attendance and Credit Recovery at The Webb Schools, a part of <u>The Center for School</u> <u>Engagement</u>:

School Interventions

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Thursday January 19, 2023

#### Quiz!!!

•How many students are enrolled in public schools in the US?

Connecticut?

## Not a competition and we all need some mercy!

- The 2022 / 2023 school year marks the fourth year where home and school habits, routines, and practices have been disrupted by COVID.
- Parents and school staff have had to provide several different learning environments with "on the fly" training – Remote, Hybrid, In-person, etc.
- All while caring for the physical and emotional wellbeing of their children and students.

#### Begins with Mindset!

"Sometimes we need to hold onto the hope for our students and their families until they're able to." -Barry Michelson

"Believe it before you see it!"
-Charlie Applestein

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure."

-Marianne Williamson

#### Mindset continued

- •We operate from the mindset that kids want to be successful students, feel smart, and be in school!
- Kids want to feel safe and free from judgement and shame.
  - •We believe that parents are doing the best that they can.

## Moving from Mindset to Engagement

#### Moving from Mindset to Engagement

- We attempt to become experts on our students and their families (respectfully).
- We seek to understand what is at the root of their behavior and school avoidance.
- We join with students and families in the obstacles but support focus and energy on solutions.
  - Joe's 90 / 10 Rule

#### Engagement continued

ullet We have fun! We remind students that school is supposed to be FUN ullet



#### Engagement continued



GOOD MORNING AMY!

School's not nearly as scary as me!

mematic.ne

#### Engagement continued

- A large part of the process is opening the lines of communication in the manner they feel most comfortable (Students and their parents)
  - Text
  - Email
  - Phone conversation
  - Virtual (explore what they can access Zoom, Google Meets, Microsoft Teams, etc.)
  - Face to face (following all COVID protocols and being respectful that some families are still fearful of contracting COVID)

#### Engagement Special Note

- BOUNDARIES!!!! Set and follow agreed upon protocols.
- \* Communication should be done within school/business hours.
- Initial communication to develop rapport, but also set appropriate expectations and boundaries.
- Help them remember a time when they were successful!!!
  - · And then work from there.

#### Best Practices:

3 Strategies we focus on when working with students and collaborating with school districts and other helping professionals.

#### Strategy 1: Document

- Accurately record absences, reasons, and attempts taken by school personnel.
- Use plain, common language.
- Consider filing appropriate petitions early YSB, Ed.
   Neglect, Attendance Task Force Team, etc..
- Be transparent, share all with the student and their family.
- Use documentation as a means to build the relationship and diffuse difficult conversations – facts tend to decrease emotion.

#### \*\*\*Special Note\*\*\*

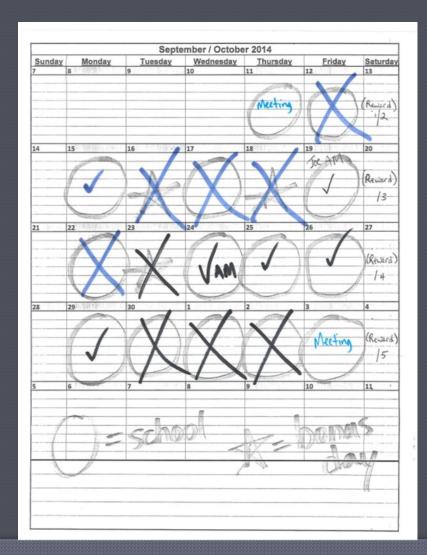
- School districts should be giving/reviewing attendance laws with parents at the beginning of each school year.
  - Absences 1-9 (parent/guardian reasons allowed but we still classify as "excused" or "unexcused")
  - Absences 10 and beyond
  - Mental Health Days

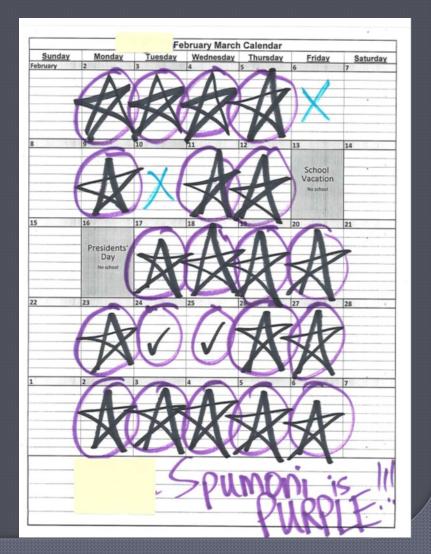
#### From the trenches...

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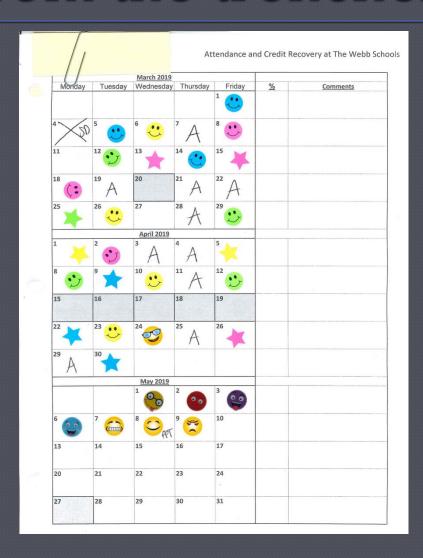
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#### From the trenches...





#### From the trenches...



### Strategy 2: Set Objectives & Rewards

- Establish small goals with a high probability of success.
  - ASK What are you willing and able to do?
- Celebrate accomplishments with rewards.
  - Be specific and appropriate with praise and rewards (many meaningful rewards are inexpensive or don't cost any money at all)
- Look at percentages would you invest?
  - If they were a company...

#### Rewards

- Hot chocolate or coffee with a friend or preferred staff member
- Surprise students with a "We've Noticed" sticky note
- •Leave a lollipop or Jolly Rancher on their desk for making it to school after a long weekend or vacation.
- Watch their favorite YouTube video together – share with the class
- •Let them be a mentor

### Strategy 3: Identify 3 Safe Staff and 3 Safe Spaces

- Ask the student, "Who has your back? Help them identify the staff they feel comfortable with and trust.
- Include those people in daily routines as much as possible.
- Involve those people in the decisionmaking and planning.
- Make sure all adults are aware of and follow the support plan.

#### Quick Tips

- Yes / No questions are your friend.
   Especially in the morning, that's no time for deep emotional conversations and thinking
   ©
- Form alliances without taking sides.
- Say "Hi", use their name (find a nickname CBK, Jmoney, etc.), when reaching out.
- Look for situations where credit can be legitimately awarded – build momentum
- Offer compacted curriculum mode with mastery of core content.

#### Additional thought – Be patient

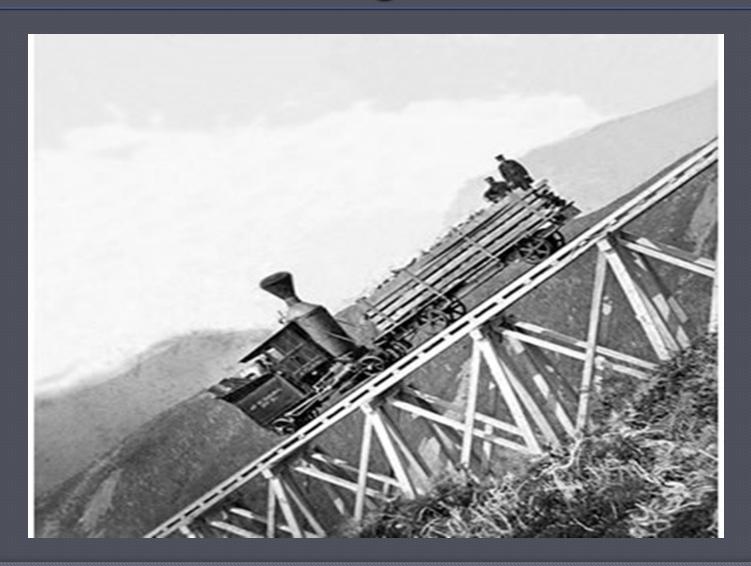
- Many students with school avoidance are struggling with additional issues below the surface.
- Students and families need time to accept their situation.
- Our patience and positive attitude helps students feel hopeful, connected and motivated.

## Additional thought - Trust the process and your role

 Continue to be the emotionally regulated, confident adult that your students are counting on you to be.



#### Like Moving a Train...



#### **Contact Information**

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# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS