



IDEAS FOR ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

Incentives, when used as part of a broader school or district attendance strategy, can be a helpful tactic to encourage attendance. But incentives are just one piece of the puzzle. For maximum impact, they should:



Be complemented by safe, engaging and challenging learning environments.



Fully engage families and community and business partners.



Help drive a student's internal motivation to aim higher.

If your school or district has [crunched its attendance numbers](#), you can focus on your attendance patterns. For instance, research shows that students miss school more frequently before and after holidays, long weekends or on half days. Once you have a handle on your absence trends, you can target incentives to encourage attendance.

Following are some example incentives you and your local attendance team might consider, depending on your school or district attendance strategy and continuous improvement plan. Here are a few overarching tips for implementing incentives.

Provide students and families with positive, supportive and actionable information on individual attendance patterns. Start early in the school year and keep the drumbeat going throughout the year.

Competitions, rewards and recognitions can be helpful ways to motivate students.

Offer incentives for families—not just students.

Incentives can be simple and do not have to be costly.

Don't just recognize perfect attendance. Celebrate good and improved attendance. Illness happens, especially in younger children.





IDEAS FOR ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

Lower-Cost Incentives. Lower Level of Partnership.

- Send upbeat letters, emails and texts prior to commonly missed days, such as holiday breaks, half days, Mondays and Fridays.
- Use certificates to honor good and improved attendance.
- Celebrate students who have the most improved attendance.
- Launch an interclass competition that recognizes the winning class.
- Create attendance teams and have friendly competitions in the classroom.
- Use extra recess or dance breaks to celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Assign special roles (teacher assistant or line leader) to students who meet attendance goals.
- Develop a prize box that might include pencils, books and stickers.
- Invite your local animal shelter to bring some pets to visit during the lunch hour.
- Plan well-deserved field days to reward students who meet attendance goals.
- Feature students on an attendance wall inside or outside the classroom.
- Show a popular, age-appropriate movie after school for students who meet attendance goals.
- Have a non-uniform dress day or a fun theme day for students who meet attendance goals.
- Spotlight students who meet attendance goals at sports events and school assemblies.

Higher-Cost Incentives. Higher Level of Partnership.

- Invite local celebrities to make guest appearances, phone calls and shoutouts to students who have good attendance. *(This may depend on why your school or district faces high levels of chronic absenteeism.)*
- Partner to offer students and families transportation passes, child care services, food baskets, etc.
- Partner to offer an on-site food pantry, school supplies, laundry services, etc.
- Partner to offer students who meet attendance goals appealing swag, such as hoodies, beanies, iPods or other desirable and appropriate incentives.