



## Equity Impact Statement: Chronic Absenteeism and District Improvement Strategies

**Title:** Chronic Absenteeism & District Intervention Strategies

**Date:** March 1, 2023

Was the [Racial Equity Planning Tool](#) used?  Yes  No

If yes, insert date(s) of REPT meetings and link to completed REPT here: \_\_\_\_\_

Did a member of the Division of Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps review this statement?  Yes  No

BPS Racial Equity Planning Tool Sections	Summary/Rationale
<p><b>1. Proposal/Presentation &amp; Impact</b>  <i>What are the proposal's/effort's desired outcomes, including in eliminating disparities? Who led this work/planning, and do they reflect BPS students' and families' group identities (key groups include individuals who are Black, Latinx, Asian, indigenous, immigrant, multilingual, and have Special Education experience)?</i></p>	<p>The district's strategies to address chronic absenteeism are centered on establishing an equitable and supportive framework to ensure every student is able to consistently engage in their education and social-emotional development, providing a path for all students to learn, grow, and thrive. Using practices that are culturally and linguistically affirming, attendance improvement initiatives emphasize the importance of developing deep relationships with students and families, while removing barriers to consistent attendance and providing avenues to increase each student's sense of belonging and connection to their community.</p> <p>Specific strategies aimed at eliminating disparities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Tiered Attendance System (TAS):</b> Using a framework based on the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), this process assesses the strengths and gaps in a school's attendance intervention strategies across a range of factors, and then provides recommended approaches to implement improvements. Factors integrate culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, such as steps to ensure a welcoming and culturally affirming school climate.</li> <li>● <b>Nudge Attendance Letters:</b> Based in behavioral science theory, these letters incorporate student- and family-centered messaging translated across major BPS languages, while presenting student attendance data in a transparent and easy to interpret manner.</li> <li>● <b>Regional Liaison Model:</b> By establishing coordination across key central office work groups to support schools, we are more effective in implementing strategies that connect district priorities for Culture and Climate and Attendance in each school's Quality School Plan (QSP).</li> </ul> <p>This work has been led by the District Attendance Advisory Committee, which is representative of the group identities of BPS students and families.</p>
<p><b>2. Alignment with the Strategic Plan</b>  <i>How does the proposal/effort align with the district's strategic plan?</i></p>	<p>Attendance initiatives are aligned with these commitments in the Strategic Plan:</p> <p>2.6 Reduce chronic absenteeism by ensuring that students are welcomed into joyful and engaging classrooms and where their unique needs can be met.</p> <p>2.7 Make every school a safe space for every BPS student, offering the support and protection needed to learn, grow, and thrive.</p>
<p><b>3. Analysis of Data</b>  <i>What data was analyzed? Was it disaggregated by race and other key groups? What did it show regarding disparities?</i></p>	<p>Historical chronic absenteeism data was disaggregated by race and other key groups. The data revealed disparities in chronic absenteeism rates for students from historically marginalized groups. Black and Latinx students have higher rates of chronic absenteeism when compared to White and Asian students. In addition, the data shows higher rates of chronic absenteeism among students with an Individualized Education Plan, and those who are economically disadvantaged. Among current English learners, we did not see a significant disparity in chronic absenteeism, although there is higher chronic absenteeism among former English learners.</p>

<p><b>4. Stakeholder Engagement</b>  <i>Who was engaged (quantity, key groups, and roles) and how, and what did that yield? What did students/families most impacted by this proposal/effort say?</i></p>	<p>Continuous and ongoing engagement efforts leverage input from a variety of stakeholders, including the District Attendance Advisory Committee (AAC), Boston Student Advisory Council, Citywide Parent Council, Youth Transitions Task Force, as well as school leaders, school-based staff, and cross-functional Central Office departmental leadership.</p> <p>From our stakeholder engagement, important themes have emerged as we look to reduce chronic absenteeism while recovering from pandemic impacts. These include the need to reestablish our students' connections to school, particularly a sense of belonging, as well as revitalizing school communities as a whole to enable students' social-emotional well-being. Across the district, we have many new school-based staff who need additional coaching and support to build their competencies in student and family engagement. As a result, we have ramped up onsite support to work directly with school attendance teams, elevating best practices to identify students who may be disconnected and deepen relationships.</p> <p>For example, our work with stakeholder groups, including the AAC, facilitated the revision of the BPS attendance policy in SY20-21. Through this process, the punitive elements of the former policy were eliminated, which disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx students, as well as multilingual learners and those in Special Education.</p>
<p><b>5. Racial Equity Strategies</b>  <i>How does this proposal/effort mitigate disparities and increase racial and other equity? What are possible unintended consequences? What complementary strategies will further advance equity?</i></p>	<p>As a central guiding principle, the district's attendance improvement strategies eliminate historical practices that have perpetuated racial and other inequities, while using a more culturally and linguistically affirming lens to absenteeism prevention and intervention activities. To ensure effective attendance and engagement practices are implemented with fidelity, there must be clear and consistent messaging to students, families, and staff, as well as widespread adoption of multi-tiered prevention and intervention practices by all schools. Relationship mapping, consistent outreach, and supportive services that remove barriers are all essential to developing the deep student and family relationships necessary to promote consistent attendance.</p> <p>Without schools' intentional focus on outreach to and engagement of all students, particularly those with high absenteeism, some students and families may not feel they "need" to be in school or may lack a sense of belonging to the school community. Our strategies align with the district's expectations around attendance outreach, prevention, and intervention, as well as the shift to more contemporary accountability systems, such as the Panorama student success platform, the TAS, and the use of the QSP as an integral guiding document for school implementation.</p> <p>A key part of the vision for improved student attendance and engagement is supporting schools to understand the connection between school culture and climate, and attendance. Through the Regional Liaison Model, cross-functional teams are supporting schools to further advance equity by implementing attendance strategies that are interwoven with culture and climate initiatives.</p>
<p><b>6 Budget &amp; Implementation</b>  <i>What are the budget impacts? How will implementation ensure all objectives, particularly equity-related objectives, are met? What are the group identities of the implementation team, and will they bring an equity lens?</i></p>	<p>The district's evolving absenteeism intervention strategies have minimal budgetary impact at this time. The planned expansion of the number of Supervisors of Attendance (SOAs) will increase capacity to support schools, while providing a 1:1 structure for SOAs to align with the Regional Liaison Team Model. SOAs focus on direct school, student, and family support, in collaboration with the Regional Model, which enables consistent implementation and consultative support to schools. The SOAs comprise a linguistically and culturally diverse team that is representative of the students and communities served by BPS, and consistently bring an equity lens to their efforts.</p>



<p>7. <b>Accountability &amp; Communication</b> <i>How will impacts be assessed, documented and communicated to stakeholders? Who will be responsible?</i></p>	<p>Ongoing updates and monitoring of progress using quantitative and qualitative data are presented to a number of key external stakeholder groups, including the Attendance Advisory Committee, Youth Transitions Task Force, and Boston Opportunity Agenda. The Opportunity Youth team is accountable for these results, for communicating them to stakeholders, and for incorporating their feedback as we continually strive to eliminate absenteeism.</p>
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