
Chronic Absenteeism Task Force Meeting 1 (Originally 10.24.23)

General Public to view: <https://www.youtube.com/@virginiadepartmentofeducat1340/streams>

Resources Needed: Student Transportation

- ✓ [Chronic Absenteeism Task Force October 24 Powerpoint](#)
- ✓ [Chronic Absenteeism Task Force Video](#)
- ✓ [Session 1 Collateral Handouts](#)

Overview

This discussion guide is based on the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force kick-off meeting from Tuesday, October 24. This guide [builds on the video](#), [PowerPoint](#), and [additional resources](#) to help school division teams best eliminate transit barriers most contributing to student chronic absenteeism and to better support your local #AttendanceMatters efforts.

Below are a set of questions to guide your discussion as you explore the materials on transportation and the connection to attendance (PP slides 2-6) as well as promising practices.

Section 1: Tracking Mode of Transportation and Improving Dismissal Management

- PP Slides: 7-11
- Handout 1: [4Mativ Understand Transportation](#)

Grounding Discussion Questions:

- Does the school division's transportation offerings meeting all student and family needs?
- If not, where is the gap?
- What other ways are families "making it work"?

What "other" transit modes are being utilizing that could be scalable for others whether individual families or whole school sites?

Section 2: Understanding Actual Ridership

- PP Slides: 12-17
- Handout 1: [Tracking Actual Use](#)
- Handout 2: [Bus Dismissal Tracker Sample](#)

Grounding Discussion Questions:

- Does the school division attendance, transportation, and family outreach teams meet regularly to understand transportation barriers and address family challenges?
- Does the school division share and evaluate data about attendance and bus ridership to identify the transportation barriers are playing in student attendance?
- How can the team better build collaborative relationships across all team members?
- Review the sample bus dismissal tracker.
 - Is the team evaluating differences in individual students' arrivals and departures to locate the exact cause of absenteeism or tardiness? How can the team use tools like this or Slide 16 to better monitor and unpack these trends?
 - What is the value of using a tracker like this and how might it help the school team or help the central office team?

- Do the team have an accurate understanding of families' and students' transportation needs and how well current options are meeting those needs?
- Which students are not consistently getting to school or where they need to be after school (e.g., expanded learning opportunities, jobs, internships)?

Take Action: Begin to track mode usage over the next two weeks. What's working? Where are the gaps? What themes are emerging? This data will help inform the next part of the discussion on strategically differentiating services.

Section 3: Methods to Strategically Differentiate Service

- PP Slides: 18-25
- Handout 1: [Strategic Differentiation](#)

Grounding Discussion Questions:

- How is the team personalizing transportation to meet every learner's needs and to ensure transportation is not a barrier to accessing learning and enrichment?
- Does the school division have multiple modes and varied design approaches to ensure access to after school and weekend learning opportunities?
- In small groups, review the examples on slides 21 and 22 as well as the data the team has captured on ridership and transportation trends at school or across your school division. What resonates?
 - Which options excite the team the most?
 - What are the top 2 options that seem most feasible to begin to implement this school year? Why?
- Come back together whole group. What are the top options small groups identified and why? Was there overlap?
 - If so, what are the immediate next steps?
 - Who will take the lead on developing plan of action?
 - How will the team measure change from baseline to see what works?
- Regarding *parent support* - Are there viable tools or supports that the team can leverage with parents that have stepped up to eliminate transportation barriers? For example, can the team utilize carpool apps and/or an lieu of a transportation stipend? Can the team change the way the school does pick-up and drop-off?
- Regarding *community partnerships* - How can the team better collaborate with community partners (e.g. faith community partners, nonprofits like Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, etc.) and utilize smaller fleet vehicles? Can the team share resources such as available vehicles and drivers during the school day or weekends? Can the team cross-collaborate with other school divisions or public transit on circuit loops or other methods to cut down on costs, route times, and staffing needs?

Next Steps

We want to hear from you! What methods or tools are you trying? What changes have you seen in student attendance? Have you run into any barriers while implementing new modes or solutions?

Share your stories thru Deputy Secretary Emily Anne Gullickson at emilyanne.gullickson@governor.virginia.gov.