

OSPI/ESD Regional Attendance Improvement Networks

Pilot Project 2024-25

Overview

In the 2024-25 school year, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) partnered with Educational Service Districts (ESDs) 101 (Spokane), 113 (Capital Region), and 123 (Pasco) to pilot Attendance Improvement Networks with 24 schools across Washington state. These Networks used the [National Institute for Health Improvement's Science Model](#) to guide implementation, focusing on continuous improvement through the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle and focusing on evidence-based practices to increase attendance and engagement.

Improving attendance is key to student success. Research shows that when students miss 10% or more of their school days in a year—defined as chronically absent—they are less likely to be reading at grade level by the third grade, be on track to graduate in the ninth grade and graduate from high school.

Through the [OSPI ESSER Attendance & Reengagement Project](#), Educational Service Districts and OSPI learned that in order to improve attendance, schools and districts have to start by strengthening their Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) systems of teaming and data along with their Tier 1 & Tier 2 supports. The Attendance Improvement Networks narrowed in on these systems and practices. Specifically, schools implemented the following:

- **Teaming routines** (scheduling & protecting team time, strategic agendas)
- **Data access and literacy** (preparing data in advance of meetings, understanding which attendance data to review, engaging in tier 1 data analysis)
- **Empathy interviews** (talking to students and families about what brings them to school and what stands in their way to attending)
- **Tier 1 schoolwide communications about attendance** (communicating with students and families all year long about prioritizing attendance)
- **2 x 10 relationship building** (intentional relationship building check-ins for 2 minutes each for 10 days)

Impacts

Attendance Outcomes

Data from the 2024-25 school year indicates notable progress among participating schools.

- **11 of 24** pilot schools reduced their chronic absence rates compared to the prior year
- 5 schools demonstrated gains of more than **ten percentage points** in regular attendance



- 2 schools achieved increases exceeding **twenty percentage points**

The Power of Personalized Coaching

Schools emphasized the value of embedded, relationship-based coaching from ESD Coordinators. Rather than one-size-fits-all training, the support was tailored and timely. This hands-on support helped teams build trust, stay focused on improvement, and adapt strategies in real time.

- 82% of survey respondents strongly agreed that ESD Coordinators were instrumental in improving their attendance efforts.
- One participant from schools in the network shared, *"The coaching helped us track and use our data more effectively."*

Collaboration Drives Progress

Being a part of a network created a sense of shared purpose and accountability. Schools appreciated learning from peers, sharing strategies, and problem-solving together.

- Survey respondents rated that "collaboration and networking" as the highest benefit in end-of-year surveys.
- As one network participant noted, *"Being a part of a network gave us ideas and accountability."*

Shifts in Practice and Mindset

Participation in the network led to meaningful changes in how schools approach attendance:

- **Stronger Data Use:** 92% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their team strengthened data access, collection, and analysis. *"We now review attendance data regularly and use it to guide action."*- Network participant.
- **Improved Teaming:** 97% strengthened their attendance team structures and routines. *"We didn't have a team or a process before. Now we do."*- Network participant.
- **Empathetic Engagement:** 73% of survey respondents agreed that the network supported schools in focusing on outreach and supportive conversations. *"We shifted from asking 'where are they?' to 'How are they?'"*- Network participant.

Sustainable Systems for the Future

Schools reported building clear, lasting systems to ensure continued progress:

- Teams established standardized processes, such as pre-planned communication protocols and meeting agendas.
- Roles were clarified and expanded to include nurses, teachers, and support staff, ensuring a whole-school approach.
- Regular data reviews and structured routines have become part of school culture.

A Scalable Model

The Attendance Improvement Networks helped schools address chronic absenteeism more intentionally and effectively than traditional one-time training offerings.

Schools that participated in the network:

- Built stronger systems for data and teamwork
- Increased staff capacity and confidence
- Adopted student-centered, supportive practices
- Found peer accountability and encouragement
- Created infrastructure to sustain progress

"We shifted our mindset from punitive to understanding — and built the team and tools to do something about it."

78% of survey respondents rated the network's impact as "a lot of impact" — the highest possible rated. None reported "little" or "no impact".

"We shifted our mindset from punitive to understanding — and built the team and tools to do something about it."- Network participant.

Building on What Works

The Attendance Improvement Networks have shown that when schools are supported with coaching, collaboration, and data-informed strategies, meaningful progress in student attendance is possible. Using the PDSA framework, evidence-based practices and MTSS, schools developed thoughtful plans, tested strategies, studied outcomes, and adjusted to improve results.

Early data confirms the impact: most participating schools saw reductions in chronic absenteeism, and educators reported increased confidence and capacity to sustain the work. These outcomes reflect a shift from reactive approaches to proactive, student-centered systems. This model is scalable. With investment and expansion across all nine regional ESDs, every district in Washington could benefit from proven strategies and structures that support student attendance.

Work in Action

The resources below were developed in collaboration between OSPI, ESDs and school districts as part of the Attendance Improvement Networks.

Highlights from Participating Schools

Learn from the participating schools directly in the following videos.

- [MTSS Journey: Kamiakin High School Attendance Improvement Showcase](#)

- [Strong Teaming and Data: College Place Public Schools Attendance Improvement Showcase](#)
- [2x10 Relationship Bilder: Lumen High School Attendance Improvement Showcase](#)
- [Teacher Calls Home: Washtucna School District \(K-12\) Attendance Improvement Showcase](#)

Key Resources & Templates

- [Tier 1 Attendance Team Meeting Agenda Template](#)
- [PDSA Template](#)
- [2x10 Data Tracker](#)
- [Attendance Messaging Planning Tool](#)

Article

- ["What You Can Gain From Empathy Interviews And How To Avoid Common Traps"](#) by Allyson Fritz (ESD 101 Attendance Coordinator), Unboxed

For More Information

You can find additional attendance resources on the [OSPI website](#). Please contact OSPI Attendance team with additional questions at attendance@k12.wa.us.