Swimming Upstream: Using the HERO Team to support families and students with improving attendance




We need to stop just pulling people out of the river. Some of us need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.
(Desmond Tutu)
Social systems
EDUCATION SYSTEMS
Poverty
OPPRESSION
HOUSING
ABUSE & TRAUMA
THERAPY
MEDICATION
©Juliet Young
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underlying barriers

- No alarm clock
- Taking care of younger siblings
- Food insecurity
- Access to laundry
- No job
- Substance abuse
- Access to technology
- Missed bus
- Long walk to school/no bus
- Chronic illness
- Lack of parent awareness
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Language barriers
- Academic issues
- Behavior issues
- Social/peer challenges
- Anxiety
- Avoidance
- Fear or discomfort around school
- Military Families- specific needs
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The HERO Team

HERE. EVERY DAY. READY. ON TIME.

Edgewood Elementary School's Attendance Initiative, targeting specific students and families. The goal for the HERO Team is to decrease the number of absences with our chronic and at-risk students through positive interaction, multiple layers of support, family engagement, and the removal of barriers.

Three Tiered Approach

Tier 1: What are we doing to encourage ALL students to come to school?

- Positive school conditions that motivate students to show up
- Link with PBIS (Gold Cards, assemblies, etc.)
- Class of the month
- Family Winners
- School Wide Incentives

Tier 2: What are we doing to support students who are at risk?

- HERO Team
  - Individual Counseling
  - Focused data collection
  - Incentives and celebrations for growth
  - Family Supports

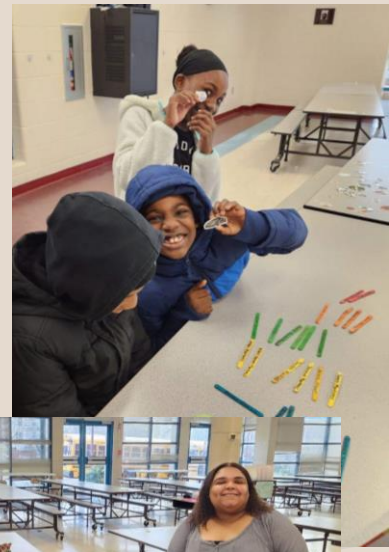
Tier 3: What are we doing to support our families with the most needs?

- Removing barriers to attendance
- Connecting families to supports
- Working with PPW

for students

- Morning Check Ins/greetings
- Individual Attendance monitoring
- prizes/incentives are earned and awarded at specific milestones
- unscheduled pop-up prizes (especially on specific days of low attendance)
- Counseling sessions with school counselor
- full “HERO Team” meetings
- larger scale incentives











for families





- Consistent interaction with families
- Hero Team Kick Off Dinner
- Personalized invites to school activities (family engagement boosts attendance!)
- follow up on supports with barriers
  - pair families with necessary resources in the community
  - regular access to pantry/care closet
  - consistent check-ins regarding barriers
- systemic changes in the school and community to support families
  - before and after school care
  - access to transportation
  - mentors
  - out of school time





school wide implementation



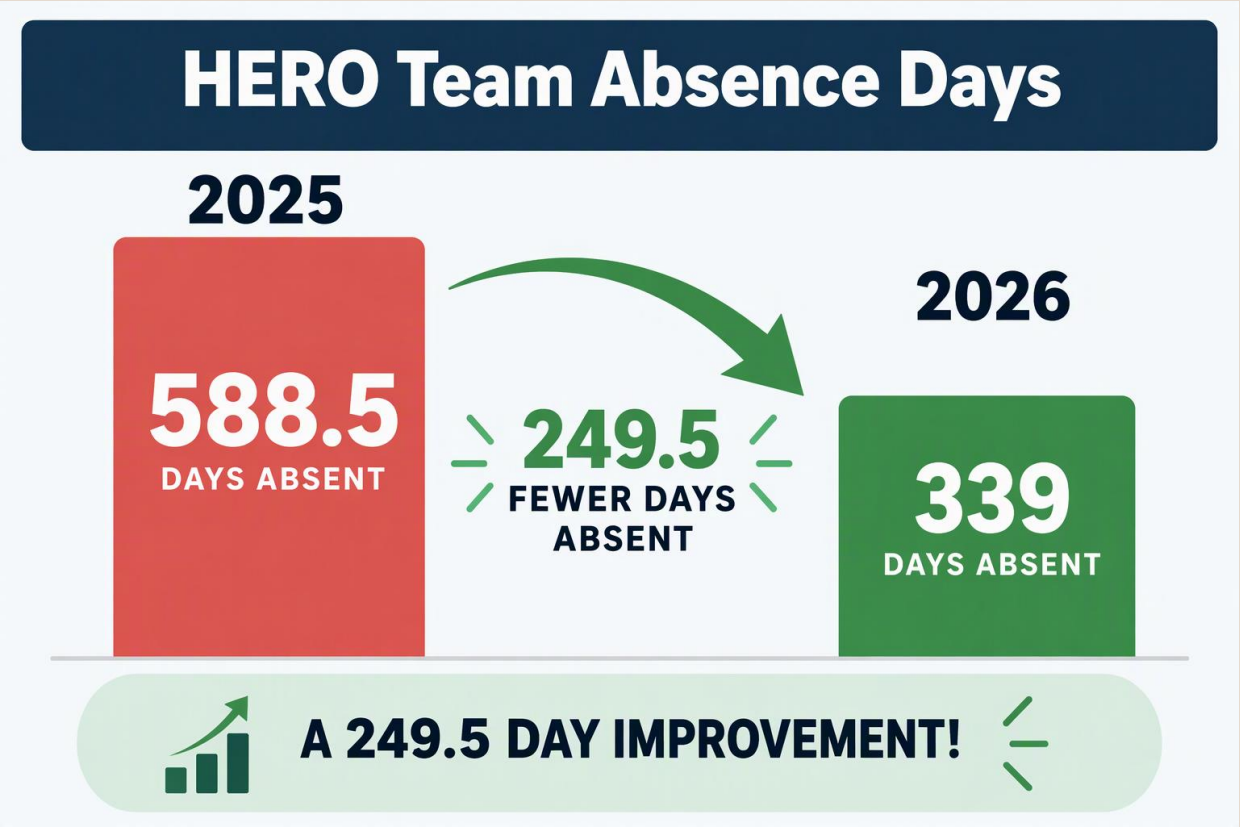
- work with attendance/care team to look at data
  - who is popping up that isn't targeted?
  - who can "graduate" from HERO? Checking in with "graduates"
  - The school administration and PPW are supportive and necessary members of the team. They provide increased accountability for families who do not fulfil their responsibilities of having students attend school.

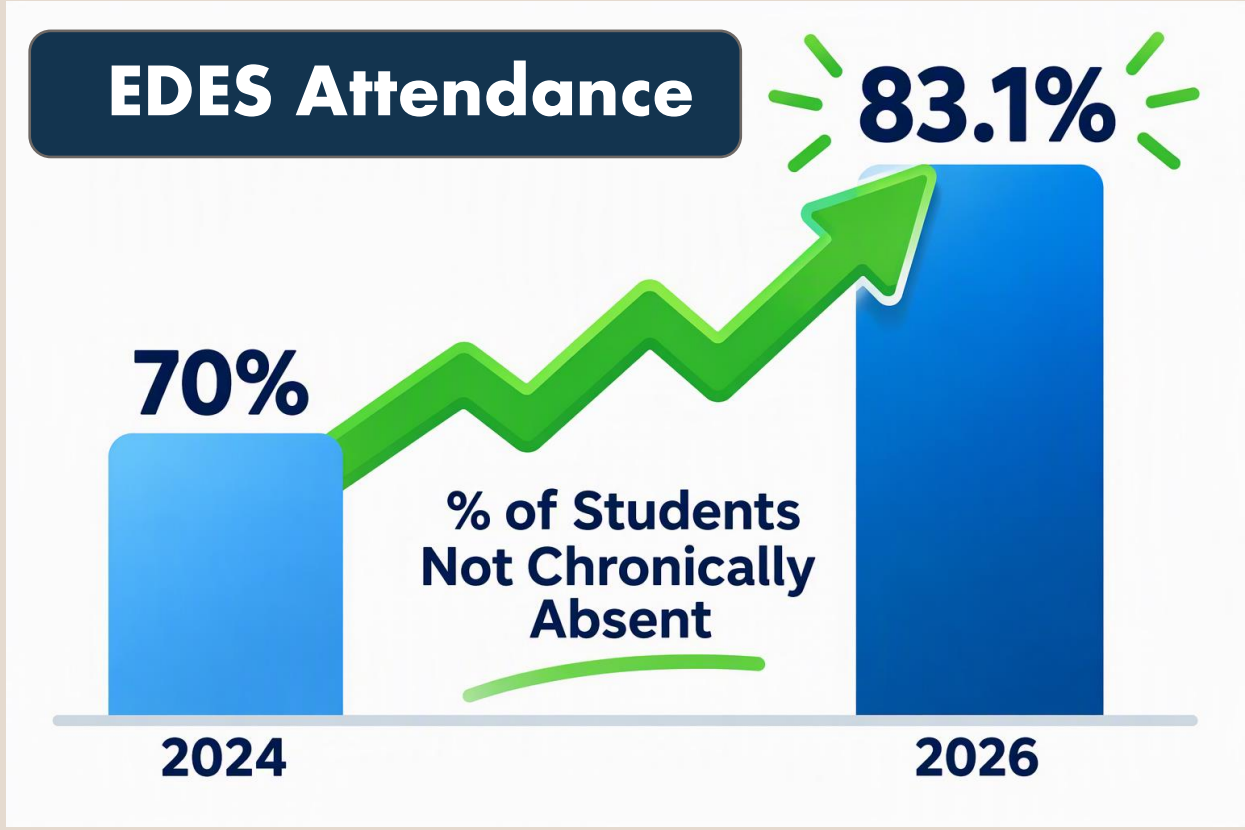


- work with PBIS team to infuse school wide strategies
  - attendance pop up prizes
  - morning announcements
  - positive referrals
- work with staff to encourage consistent messaging and communication
  - clear messaging about when to call/when to notify Care Team/Attendance Team
  - regular lists of chronic students sent
  - scripts they can use to communicate with families



data and growth







“it matters to that one.”