

# 5 Ways to Encourage Family Engagement

AND INCREASE STUDENT OUTCOMES

## Student Outcomes Start at Home

Most educators will agree that family involvement and engagement is a positive driver of student achievement. Building relationships and establishing school staff as partners with families will set the foundation to quality engagement throughout the school year. But how can one school engage with so many families? Finding the proper channel and message will help you scale these efforts and reach your community.

Below we break down some of the who, what, when, how, and why to help strengthen your family engagement plans.

### 1 Engage while school is in session AND out.

Summertime is seen as a time to pause from typical school happenings, but family engagement should not be one of those. In fact, the summer months are perfect for setting up healthy family engagement that you can continue all year round.

**TIP:** Help keep your families in-the-know about fun summer happenings in your community. Send out SMS community event text alerts or utilize social media to repost information from local organizations holding summer events that promote family fun! Farmers markets, local fairs, outdoor concerts—the list goes on.



### 2 Create community partnerships for back to school prep.

Back to school can be tough for families in need. By showing district and school support for struggling families, and allowing all community members to get involved, you can create partnership and have some fun doing it!

**TIP:** Plan a back-to-school drive to engage with families before school starts. Get families and local businesses involved to donate and gather donations. Have tables onsite for new family registration and promotions of available services like before-care and after-care for K-8 students, after-school tutoring, free or reduced price for field trips, and mentoring for qualified students.

#### Donations Checklist:

- ✓ Haircuts from local barbers
- ✓ Backpacks and school supplies
- ✓ Sneaker giveaways
- ✓ Transportation passes for city bus
- ✓ Mental health provider information
- ✓ Local hospital or health care services

### 3 Reach parents how they prefer to be reached.

Research has been conducted and the results are in: SMS texts have the highest open rate of the typical channels to reach parents, coming in at 98% as opposed to 44% seen from snail mail and 23% seen from email.

**TIP:** Partner with an SMS Text school engagement provider like AllHere to scale communication and connect with parents fast and in the mode they use most.

### 4 Set up opportunities for families to get involved in ongoing AND one-off projects/committees.

Most schools have PTAs/PTOs or other organizations set up to drive ongoing family involvement in school happenings. But what about the parents and student guardians that might not have the time to dedicate to an ongoing commitment, but would still like to get involved? Create opportunities that do not require ongoing commitment so that you can engage with all families.

**TIP:** Special school and community beautification projects are a great way to engage with members of the school community and bring them together for one-day opportunities or flexible ongoing commitments. Ideas for projects:

- Establish a community garden and allow for parents to sign up for shifts at their leisure
- Invite a local artist to come lead a group in painting a school mural
- Plan community cleanup days for roads, beaches, or walking routes

### 5 Bridge the divide through increased family engagement for at-risk students.

Create a predictive Care List for school counselors, teachers, and administrators for at-risk groups. Establish a plan together to increase family engagement and support for this group before the school year starts to help establish attendance and engagement for the rest of the year.

**TIP:** Analyze last year's data to form your Care List. Students to consider including on this list are those who experienced any of the following during the previous school year:

- Chronic absenteeism
- More than one suspension
- Two or more failed classes
- Unhoused at any point
- Three or more unexcused absences

## Two-Way, Smart Mobile Messaging

Invest in effective, research-based technology to improve student outcomes.

AllHere 24/7 Support partners with schools and districts to improve engagement at scale through easy-to-use technology, ensuring the right student and family gets the right support at the right time by offering:

- Intelligent, evidence-based student participation and attendance intervention strategies
- Robust reporting and analytics with actionable insights
- Research-backed, proactive communication at scale to encourage families to get on track and remain on track for optimal school attendance and engagement
- 24/7/365 access to our friendly team, a hybrid of our AI powered chatbot and our trained Family Success Team, to assist your families and students