
Overton High School

— Chronic Absenteeism —

The Problem

- According to attendance data trends, of the 21 focus students (classified as chronically absent) reported absences of at least **46.50% for the 21-22 school year.**
- According to student empathy interview data, students attributed a lack of a sense of belonging to their rates of absenteeism.



The Goal

- Students with 80% or more absences will increase their attendance percentage after implementing attendance interventions.



The Plan

- **Using Mail Merge to create 15 attendance letters**, students with chronic absenteeism status were mailed with personalized, detailed information, including **attendance statistics and attendance trends** to each family with students that are classified as chronically absent.
- In total, students with high absenteeism rates of **20% or greater** were notified via calls home and robo-calls about incoming attendance letters, along with instructions to sign and return the forms.



The Outcome

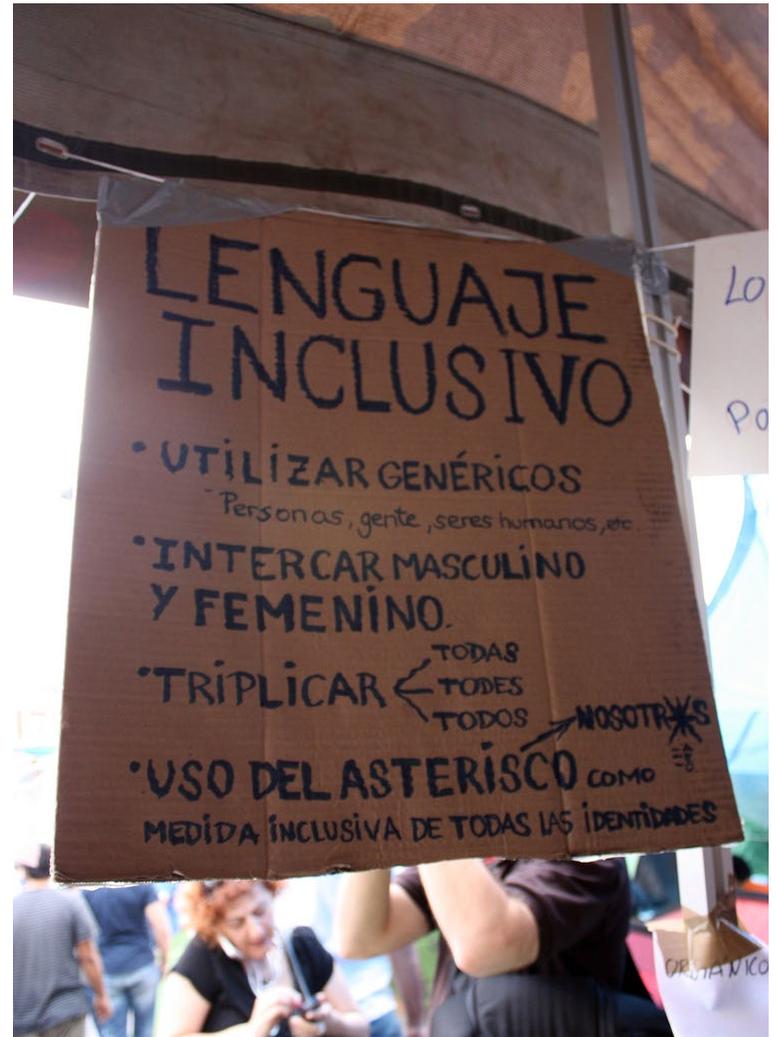
- Of the 15 mailed letters, **we did not receive any returned letters.**
- The trends did not go as we expected (**below graph**). We did not get the response we hoped for from parents, despite directly contacting parents via calls and the attendance letters sent through USPS.
- Of the monitored students, only **19%** increased their attendance rates.

Number of students who increased/decreased attendance rates



Student Insights

- Student interviews concluded that students would feel a deeper sense of belonging if they were better represented at our school.
- Of all the responses, the most common reply was that **students wanted more Spanish-language support and scaffolding.**
- Students also requested that the school includes more opportunities to build Latinx culture.



What Did We Learn?

- We identified the following gaps that may have influenced low participation.
 - **Income:** Many students that we serve rely on income from every member of the family, which has necessitated employment for students while in school.
 - **Parental Motivation:** Despite offering a \$25 gift card incentive for parents of chronically absent students, we did not receive any return data from MSCS attendance meetings.
- These gaps unfortunately highlight a continued need for schools to meet parents where they are.
- These gaps unfortunately fall into a larger socio-economic argument that is far above the school's sphere of influence.
- Student empathy interviews cited work obligations as the biggest barrier to student engagement.

Looking towards the Future

- To set the stage for student success, Overton is producing a video catalogue of CTE classes to be translated into Spanish and shown to incoming freshmen during the 2022-23 school year to create early interest for freshmen.
- We will compare attendance trends of chronically absent students that are registered to a CTE class vs. chronically absent students that are NOT registered to a CTE class.
- We will collaborate with Overton's Arts department to create dual-language signage.



- ELL-focused CTE recruitment video (currently in production) will be screened for incoming freshmen during the 22-23 school year.

- Used PowerBI to collect attendance data to determine ELL attendance trends
- Conducted student empathy interviews regarding students' sense of belonging and academic motivations.



- Implemented attendance letter intervention in which parents and guardians with students that have 20% or more absences throughout the school year were contacted via a letter mailed to parents via USPS, along with return instructions to include the parent/guardian signature. These parents were also notified of the incoming letter via a call home.
- Student empathy data revealed that students were more work-focused and felt like they did not have a sense of belonging at school.

- If we expand our CTE course recruitment to incoming 9th graders and allow them to select their top 2 CTE course choices, we'll increase our CTE course enrollment for 9th grade English Learners in the upcoming year which puts those students on track to achieving graduation requirements.
- Determined that developing videos about each CTE course and using QR codes to share them with students would be the most effective strategy for recruiting students

- No return data was received.
- Comparing this outcome with student empathy data, we concluded that the most effective course of action to increase student buy-in is to increase enrollment in career-focused CTE programs to offer students skills-based certifications that satisfies students' work-focused goals.