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.
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.
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.

Used PowerBI to collect attendance data to determine ELL attendance trends

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.

Determining 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.

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.

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