



Minimum Standards & Guidelines for Student Absence Intervention

Student attendance is extremely important for academic performance. Simply put, if students aren't in class, they can't learn. Consequently, many – if not all – of the GEAR UP strategies and interventions are intended to reduce absenteeism among GEAR UP students. Specific interventions are made by the GEAR UP Staff when absenteeism appears to be a problem for a student. These efforts assume that without knowledge of an absentee problem, interventions cannot occur. Absence intervention efforts are intended to:

- Improve academic and test performance
- Increase student promotion rates
- Reduce student dropout rates
- Increase graduation rates

I. ENLISTING SUPPORT AND OBTAINING DATA & REFERRALS

Each GEAR UP Staff will ensure that district or school personnel responsible for dealing with attendance problems (i.e. attendance clerks or truancy officer), as well as teachers of GEAR UP students, know of the Specialist's role and duty with regard to absence intervention and will communicate with these staff about their ability to help with attendance issues for GEAR UP students in at least each of the following:

1. By explaining the Specialist's role in relationship to GEAR UP students with attendance problems and the opportunity to refer students to supplemental GEAR UP interventions when they know of a GEAR UP student having attendance problems.
2. By developing a **system of referral** by Attendance Clerks/Truancy Officers to GEAR UP Staff for supplemental absence intervention, which assures that **no GEAR UP student is withdrawn due to excessive absences, without documented GEAR UP Staff intervention (phone calls, home visits, etc.).¹**
3. By explaining the GEAR UP Specialist's role in regard to attendance issues for GEAR UP students, as articulated in the approved Implementation Plan, to teachers and administrators during the *All Staff Orientation to GEAR UP* at the beginning of each year, and encouraging teacher referral of students with excessive absences from their classes.
4. By developing a system for Teacher referral to GEAR UP Staff for supplemental absence intervention, which assures that **no GEAR UP student is withdrawn due to excessive absences without documented GEAR UP Staff intervention (phone calls, home visits, etc.).¹**
5. By, in February of each school year, running a TRACKS report, found in the GEARS Database – to identify students "At Risk" due to excessive absences; and by contacting those students/parents in person or by phone follow-up on the issue.

¹ This may include establishing a regular reporting system by which the GU Staff is provided the names of GEAR UP students who have hit an agreed-upon number of absences, thus requiring intervention

6. By periodically sharing success stories related to absence intervention, and reminding teachers (at Faculty meetings and elsewhere throughout the year), about the referral process.

II. INTERVENTION / FOLLOW-UP

Within 1-3 days of learning about a student who has poor attendance (via contact from the Attendance Clerk, Truancy Officer, Teacher, TRACKS Report, etc.), the GEAR UP Staff:

1. Will talk to the student (in person or over the phone) to learn and document the reason(s) for the absences.
2. May talk to the student's parent(s) (in person or over the phone) to discuss ways to remedy the situation.
3. Will, when applicable, provide referrals and resources to address the reason(s) for the absences.
4. May take action to address the reason(s) for the absences.
5. Will, in collaboration with the student (and parent(s), if applicable) develop a plan to improve the student's attendance.
6. Will follow up with the referring Attendance Clerk, Truancy Officer, Teacher, providing information about the intervention and any attendance plan that was developed.

III. DOCUMENTING / REPORTING THE INTERVENTION

Every time an absence intervention is provided by the GEAR UP Staff:

1. It must be entered in the GEARS Database as a Service (Student and/or Parent).
2. The "Comments" section of the Service Entry must indicate:
 - a) The reason for the student's absences
 - b) The plan to improve the student's attendance
 - c) Any referrals provided or actions taken by the GU Staff to address the reasons for the absences