

# 7 Steps to Improving Student Attendance

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## STEP 1

### Remove Barriers to Attendance

Understanding the root cause of attendance issues and creating an action plan to resolving them should be your first step towards improving school attendance.

#### Actions to take:

- [Survey](#) staff, students, and families about student attendance
- Identify root causes, whether they be [physical](#) or [social-emotional](#)
- Create an [action plan](#) for removing as many of the barriers as possible

## STEP 2

### Redesign learning environments and spaces

Creating learning environments that are welcoming to students and providing them with the resources and inspiration to be engaged and productive learners.

#### Actions to take:

- Visit other schools you've heard have [redesigned learning environments](#)
- Set up a tour of [startup](#) and innovation labs to see the environments of the jobs of the future
- Host a [classroom redesign challenge](#) where winners in your district receive funds to revamp their learning spaces
- Purchase or DIY [flexible learning spaces](#)

## STEP 3

### Shift the mindset of school as a brick-and-mortar building

Consider ways to make it easier for students to engage in learning at home or in other locations.

#### Actions to take:

- Rethink [where school can be held](#)
- Purchase [flexible content and tools](#) that allow for students to work at their own path and pace
- Create [screencasts and flipped lessons](#) for students to review if they miss a lesson or need to review a concept again
- House your lessons in a [learning management system](#) so students can see them [even at home](#) (and eliminate the "dog ate my homework" excuse)

## STEP 4

### Make Learning Authentic and Engaging

Rethink your lessons and activities so that students actively desire to come to school.

#### Actions to take:

- Introduce [project-, problem-, or inquiry-based learning](#) experiences for students
- Start a [genius hour](#) or WIN (What I Need) time
- Connect students with real-world experiences and experts through [virtual field trips](#)
- Give students choice in demonstrating mastery. Instead of a five-paragraph essay, why not create a [movie, podcast, blog, or stop-motion animation](#)?



## STEP 5

### Get Personalized

Tailor each student's learning experience to his or her unique needs, interests, and skills.

#### Actions to take:

- Employ the [Core Four of Personalized Learning](#):
  - Target instruction so that each student learns what he or she needs, when he or she needs it
  - Employ adaptive digital content to give students immediate feedback
  - Collect [frequent, formative assessment data](#) and share that data with students
  - Engage students in [reflection on and ownership](#) of their learning journey



## STEP 6

### Consider a mastery-based approach

Allow students to access content based on their mastery, not their grade level.

#### Actions to take:

- Review this [Competency-based Education toolkit](#) to understand the ins and outs of CBE
- Prioritize standards, skills, and assessment practices that will help you determine mastery
- Involve stakeholders early on to ensure they understand the "what" and "why"?

## STEP 7

### Improve Teacher Attendance to Improve Student Attendance

One of the biggest hidden factors behind poor student attendance is poor teacher attendance.

#### Actions to take:

- Rethink the way you are hiring and retaining your teachers as well as the ["shape" of your organization](#)
- Give teachers [increased flexibility](#) in their work day.
- Incorporate elements of personalized learning [in adult learning too](#).



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