



FY 2015 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Communities Supporting Youth (CSY) Year-End Evaluation of the Impact of Four Interventions on Student Attendance

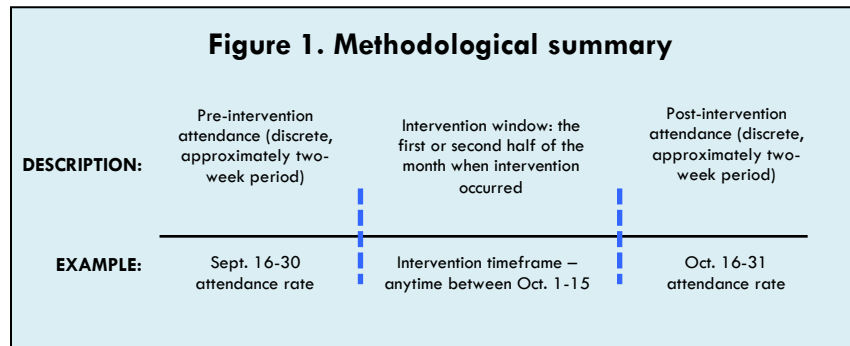


PURPOSE

To determine whether school day attendance improved after students received CSY interventions compared to beforehand at three CSY demonstration sites (one high school, two elementary schools). The four interventions of focus were phone calls home, student meetings, letters home, and postcard mailings.

METHOD

Determined two-week time period wherein each type of intervention took place and then compared students' attendance during the two weeks immediately following that intervention window to their attendance during the two weeks immediately preceding that window. Since many students received more than one type of intervention, statistical analyses took into account whether students had received any previous or concurrent interventions so as to isolate the unique impact of each intervention on attendance.



RESULTS

3,267 youth across the 3 CSY sites received at least one of the four attendance interventions during the 2014-2015 school year. Postcard mailings were sent home to 2,499 households and were the most frequently utilized intervention. Positive phone calls home were the next most common intervention, as parents of 560 students received this call. Four hundred forty-two students participated in student meetings, and lastly, 64 letters were sent out (at elementary schools only).

Results demonstrated that phone calls had the largest impact on student attendance, followed by student meetings, letters, and postcards, respectively.

- **Positive phone calls home.** Phone calls were very effective, especially at elementary school sites and among students who had yet to receive any other interventions. Notably, attendance increased by 11 percentage points among elementary students up to an average daily attendance rate of over 90% - the cutoff for consistent attendance.
- **Student meetings.** Student meetings were very effective, but only at elementary schools. Attendance increased 8 percentage points from pre- to post- intervention.

- **Letters.** Letters were effective among students who had yet to receive previous interventions. However, the sample size for this intervention was small relative to the other interventions. Because of this, the size of the impact of this intervention (i.e., the 15 percentage point gain in attendance) – despite its statistical significance - should be interpreted cautiously.
- **Postcard mailings.** This intervention was minimally effective. Although a statistically significant increase in attendance from pre- to post- intervention emerged, this difference was very small and took place primarily at the high school level. In part, this may be due to the fact that pre-intervention attendance was already high (over 90%), so there was not much room for improvement in the first place.

Summary of Statistically Significant Changes in Attendance Before and After Each Type of Intervention, Controlling for Other Previous or Concurrent Interventions

Intervention Type	Population	Pre-intervention average daily attendance	Post-intervention average daily attendance
Postcards (n = 2,499)	ALL sites (although impact was primarily at high school level)	90.5%	92.1%
Positive phone calls (n = 560)	ALL sites	72.2%	78.3%
	Elementary schools only	80.5%	91.1%
	Among students w/o previous interventions	78.0%	89.4%
Student meetings (n = 442)	Elementary schools only	75.7%	83.7%
Letters (n = 64)	Among elementary students w/o previous interventions	71.3%	86.2%

CONCLUSIONS

Across sites, phone calls were particularly effective interventions. At elementary schools, student meetings, and to some extent letters, effectively and meaningfully impacted attendance. Although postcards were by no means detrimental to students, attendance workers had relatively less to gain with this approach compared to the other interventions included in analyses. One potential reason why phone calls and student meetings were effective may be that they involved direct and personal relationship-building.

Additionally, results demonstrated that the first intervention counts – in many instances, interventions were more effective when no other previous interventions had taken place. Thus, attendance workers should be intentional about the first intervention they roll out to students.

Overall, CSY interventions during FY 15 were associated with systematic improvements in student attendance, and hence, the CSY collaborative is making progress towards its ultimate goal of promoting consistent attendance for all students.