

Sample letter from Afterschool Programs to School Leadership



[Date]

[Name of superintendent/principal]

[Name of school district/school]

[School district/school Address]

[City], New York [zip code]

Dear [Superintendent or Principal's name]:

We know from common sense and research that attendance matters. Reducing chronic absence—defined as missing 10% or more of school days— can help significantly improve outcomes, especially for our most vulnerable children, and increase students' readiness for college and careers. We also know from research that afterschool programs can be a successful means of increasing school attendance so we would like to meet with you to discuss ways we could partner with your staff to improve attendance and outcomes for students.

Research on chronic absence has consistently found that regular attendance at a high-quality afterschool program improves students' school day attendance—by several days a year, on average. Afterschool programs help engage and motivate students and they provide an opportunity to explore underlying familial or social-emotional factors that prevent students from attending school regularly.

A highly successful strategy that school districts and afterschool programs have used to improve student attendance is through two-way sharing of attendance data. This information exchange has allowed afterschool programs to recruit students who are chronically absent, provide them with the additional supports they need, and foster school engagement.

We fully support the efforts underway in your [district/school] to increase the number of our students who are graduating college and career ready and we also recognize the role that good attendance plays in this work. We look forward to a conversation with you on how we might best partner with staff to reduce chronic absence as one of the major risk factors that influences academic achievement and graduation.

Sincerely,

Executive Director

[Name of afterschool program]