



Beyond the Empty Desk

Addressing the Root Causes of
School Absenteeism






Chronic absenteeism /
attendance **is behavior** .

Root Cause: Lack of Connection

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A student who feels invisible, disconnected, or unsafe at school has no incentive to show up.

Connection is a foundational human need. When it's unmet, disengagement is the logical next step. We must first build a culture of connection where students feel welcomed and connected to.

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Root Cause: Gaps in Support Systems



Tier 1: All Students

A failure to build a proactive, school-wide culture of belonging and safety for *all students*.



Tier 2: Some Students

Inability to identify and provide targeted interventions (e.g., mentorship) for at-risk groups.



Tier 3: Few Students

Lack of intensive, individualized support systems for students with the highest level of need.



Our Approach:




You cannot solve a multi-faceted problem with a single-point solution. You need a systemic, evidence-based approach that addresses multiple root causes simultaneously.

CharacterStrong provides evidence based, comprehensive curricula and frameworks to build supportive, engaging, and resilient school communities from Tier 1 to Tier 3.

Root Cause: Low Engagement

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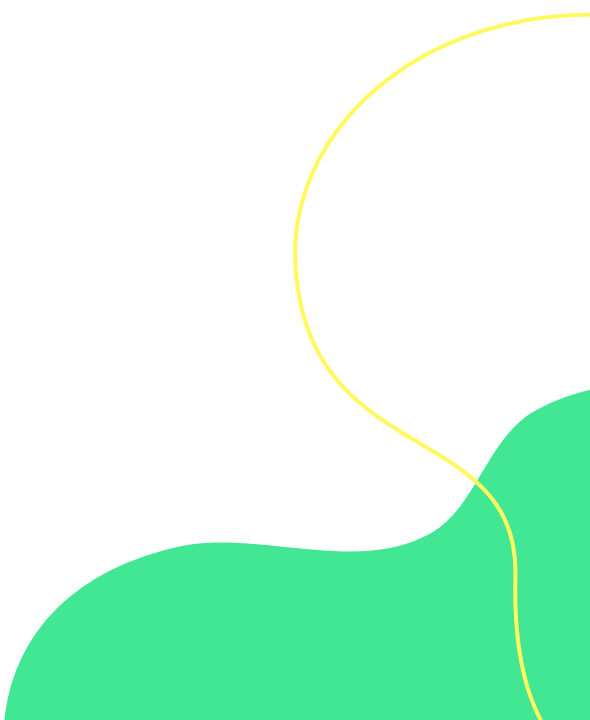
When academics feel irrelevant, unachievable, or disconnected from a student's future, disengagement becomes a habit.

- Are students connecting what they learn to their personal goals?
 - Do they see the value in the work?
 - Are they relationally engaged with their peers and teachers?
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- Decorative green and yellow shapes are located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Root Cause: Unmet Family Needs

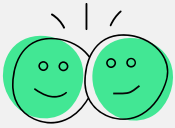
A yellow brushstroke underline is located directly beneath the title "Root Cause: Unmet Family Needs". It consists of two thick, wavy, horizontal strokes that give it a hand-drawn appearance.

School does not happen in a vacuum. Issues like transportation, health, housing instability, unemployment or family challenges are real, external barriers to attendance.

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How CharacterStrong Solves the Root Causes



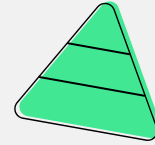
Builds Belonging

Character, connection, and competencies to create a consistent, school-wide culture of connection.



Boost Engagement

The SERVE Model (Start, Engage, Respond, Value, Exit) gives teachers a relational and instruction framework to cultivate engagement in learning.



Multi -Tiered Systems

A continuum of supports that can be matched to the intensity of student & family need (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3)



Partners with Families

Equips schools with resources to build positive, proactive school-home-community partnerships.

Beyond Attendance: A Whole-School Win

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Academic & Life Success

When you solve for belonging and engagement, you also get higher academic success, resilience, and competence in key life skills.



Positive School Climate

This approach creates a positive feedback loop: improved well-being, a greater sense of safety, and better student-teacher relationships.



Thank You

Let's build schools where every
student *wants* to be.



@characterstrong