



# Beyond the Empty Desk

Addressing the Root Causes of  
School Absenteeism





“Chronic absenteeism /  
attendance **is behavior** .”

# Root Cause: Lack of Connection



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.

# 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



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?

# Root Cause: Unmet Family Needs



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

# How CharacterStrong Solves the Root Causes



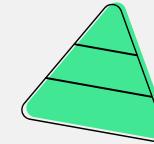
## Builds Belonging

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 instructional 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



## 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