

Attendance Tracking Guidance

This document is intended to provide guidance to Proving Ground and NCRERN partners as they finalize plans to measure attendance in the 20-21 school year. If you have not already finalized plans, we strongly recommend engaging key stakeholders, including any staff who will be responsible for tracking attendance, before doing so.

Recommended Attendance Construct: Track Exposure to Instructional Content

Proving Ground strongly recommends measuring attendance through exposure to content. This is the closest analogue to the traditional in-person attendance measure, which primarily captures whether a student was exposed to instructional content (for example, we generally do not mark a student who shows up but does not participate as absent). Exposure to content can be measured fairly simply and can be captured every day. The following table provides guidance and considerations for measuring exposure in various learning environments.

Attendance Construct: Exposure to Instructional Content			
Learning Environment	Definition	Capture Options	Considerations
In-Person	Student is present	Student Information System (SIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will in-person students be able to log in for remote learning if they are not able to come to school? For example, a student must miss school for an extended period/needs to quarantine.
Virtual Synchronous	Student is present for virtual class	Student Information System (SIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you avoid concurrent classes for students in the same family? If a student loses internet, do you have an asynchronous backup option for course content?
Virtual Asynchronous with Internet Access	Student affirmatively accessed content	LMS log-in with a minimum time threshold OR Daily form completion (form asks students what content they worked)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How/when will teachers log results in the SIS? How do you count daily attendance for different class periods? If using LMS log-in, what is the minimum amount of time a student needs to be logged in? If using a daily form, what question(s) will you ask? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recommend a low threshold equivalent to something a student who was present could answer regardless of their level of engagement.
Virtual Asynchronous without Internet Access	Student affirmatively accessed content	Contact each student for whom the above guidance does not or cannot apply. Student is absent <i>only</i> if they have not worked on any instructional content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you count daily attendance for different class periods in MS/HS? If students have multiple content teachers, who will reach out to students? How will you know when a student does not have internet access (and you therefore need to call)? How do you contact the students who may not have consistent cell service or a landline? What time of the day will you contact students? How many attempts does a teacher or staff member need to per a day before a student is marked absent? How will you address unresponsive parents/caregivers?

Alternative Attendance Construct: Track Assignment Submission

Proving Ground suggests using assignment submission as a backup if either tracking exposure is not feasible or you are willing to trade extra work and complexity for a richer metric. We recommend assignment submission as a backup because capturing attendance via assignment submission is more difficult to operationalize than tracking exposure to instructional content. Given the operational changes you already face, it is important to be sure all stakeholders are on board for the added burden. If they are on board, however, shifting from tracking inputs (exposure) to outputs (assignment submission) could yield richer information and lay the groundwork for future high-value uses, such as attendance tracking for competency-based education. Note, however, that to ensure equity, we recommend that all students, regardless of learning environment, should be held to the same standard of submitting assignments. In the short run, this is likely to present significant challenges, including addressing how assignment submission would work in an in-person environment. The following table provides guidance and considerations for operationalizing assignment submission as an attendance measure.

Attendance Construct: Track Assignment Submission			
Learning Environment	Definition	Capture Options	Considerations
All	Student submits an assignment	<p>Teacher logs submission of a defined assignment as a present day in the SIS</p> <p>SIS direct links to a gradebook, allowing auto-population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be okay marking a student who was present but didn't submit an assignment as absent? • How do asynchronous non-internet students submit an assignment? Is there a way to retroactively log this? • What is the minimum threshold for an assignment? • Would you require daily assignments? • How do multi-day assignments count? • Do you have consistent expectations for teachers? • Should you care about quality? We would recommend not to.