



# An Introduction to the NCRERN Replication Network

## What is the NCRERN Replication Network?

After testing several attendance interventions in NCRERN's continuous improvement network in the 2020-21 school year, NCRERN assembled a national cohort of rural districts in 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years to test out an attendance intervention

that was found to [reduce absenteeism rates by 2.4%](#) in pilot districts in New York and Ohio: **personalized messaging**. This national replication network scaled up the pilot, bringing it to rural districts across the country to assess its efficacy on a national level. Participating districts received the program at no additional cost, alongside ongoing training, supports, and resources from the NCRERN team.

47  
DISTRICTS

16  
STATES

40,000+  
STUDENTS

## Why create a replication network?

NCRERN is committed to contributing to the body of rigorous research and proven solutions in rural education. We know not all settings are the same. Our replication network helps us determine if interventions we have found successful in our pilot studies hold up in different contexts. By replicating strategies found to be effective in our initial research in more diverse settings and testing their efficacy, we ensure we have the evidence we need to recommend the strategy on a grander scale.



# Personalized Messaging

## Core Components

Personalized messages are intended to make caregivers aware of how many days of school their student has missed, highlighting patterns of absenteeism and helping caregivers support their student to get back on track for the coming month.



### Personalization

Some personalization, including the student's name, in the message to set the message apart from generic communications.



### Attendance Status

A summary of the total number of days absent during a four-to-six-week period.



### Importance of Attendance

A reminder about the importance and value of the student being present in school.



### Invitation to Connect

Encouragement for caregivers to connect with staff at your school to strategize about how to best support student needs.



### Goal Setting

A realistic attendance goal for students to work toward in the month ahead.

(1) PERSONALIZATION

(2) ATTENDANCE STATUS

(5) GOAL SETTING

(3) IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

(4) INVITATION TO CONNECT

Hello Daniel, this is Principal Brown from Valley Middle School. Since the beginning of the school year, your student, Sofia, has missed 3 days of school. Set a goal for your student to miss no more than 1 day in the next month. Consistently staying engaged in school is important for your student's learning and future success. Please contact us at 555-423-6720 if you would like to discuss your student's attendance.

EXAMPLE OF PERSONALIZED MESSAGING

In addition to highlighting areas for students to improve their attendance, personalized messaging also includes messages intended to celebrate and encourage positive attendance patterns. If a student has missed 1 or fewer days during a given period, for example, their caregiver will receive a message such as:

*Hello Daniel, this is Principal Brown from Valley Middle School. I want to personally thank Sofia for attending school every day! We are so proud of Sofia for working so hard and participating in learning. Staying engaged in school is important for your child's learning and future success. Thank you for supporting and encouraging Sofia.*

# Why Personalized Messaging?

The personalized messaging intervention draws on [prior research](#) that suggests that informing families and caregivers about their students' attendance patterns can help reduce absenteeism.

## Every day counts.

[Research](#) has found that each day in school matters for student academic outcomes.

Increasing student attendance has long been a priority for educators, one that has taken on additional urgency following the COVID-19 pandemic. The good news is that we know absenteeism is a solvable problem and that even low-effort interventions can improve outcomes for students.

## Engage & connect with families.

The personalized messaging system at the heart of the replication network is a user-friendly messaging program that integrates with a student information system (SIS) used by many districts to inform caregivers about their student's total number of absences each month. Caregivers receive information on how to contact the school if they need support addressing barriers to their student's attendance. The goal is to engage and empower families and caregivers as partners in their students' education by providing transparent, real-time information about attendance patterns.

## Proven to increase attendance in rural districts.

The program was developed by researchers and piloted in 8 rural districts in New York and Ohio during the 2020-21 academic year. Even amidst the uncertainty and disruption of the pandemic, NCRERN's initial pilot study found that the personalized messages saved instructional days and reduced absences for rural students by over 2%.

The program was designed to address two common root causes identified by rural districts for why students frequently miss school: (1) caregivers may be unaware of how much school their student is missing, and (2) caregivers may lack knowledge about the value of daily attendance.