CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The Spartanburg Academic Movement and school district partners are coordinating a positive attendance awareness campaign to improve preschool attendance rates across Spartanburg County. The campaign, Strive For Five, will officially kickoff in January 2017 with exciting activities for preschool students.

The Strive For Five campaign will encourage parents to focus on having students at school on time all five days of the week! Students will be able to track their attendance at school and parents and caregivers will be able to track attendance at home. Schools will monitor attendance patterns and celebrate achievements.

There is a role for everyone to play. In this toolkit, you will find ready to go messages, social media posts, newsletter/bulletin inserts, and other resources that can be used by schools, parents, and other groups within the community to promote the Strive for Five message – arrive at school on time all five days of the week! Consider your role as a nonprofit, church, moms' group, business, or other group within the community willing to participate in this campaign.

If you have any questions, please reach out to info@learnwithsam.org
**WHY ATTENDANCE**

Did you know that in the past, nearly 19% of preschool students across Spartanburg County were chronically absent, meaning they missed over 18 school days (that’s almost a month of school at a minimum)? Missing just 2 days a month can quickly add up and negatively impact a student's academic growth. Help us interrupt this pattern and cultivate a habit of good attendance starting in pre-kindergarten so children have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school.

**Why is attendance so important?**

Studies of absenteeism show links to lower achievement levels. Students who begin missing many days of school in preschool and early elementary grades later show continued patterns of excessive absenteeism. When students aren't in school, no matter the reason, they miss valuable instruction time. Although many absences are able to be "excused" due to health concerns or other reasons, students are still at risk of negative outcomes when they are unable to be present in the classroom.

**Studies show:**

- Students suffer academically if they miss 10% or more school days.
- Children who miss too many days in kindergarten and 1st grade often have trouble reading by the end of 3rd grade.
- Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school – and themselves.
- Students who are chronically absent in early grades are more likely to maintain this negative pattern throughout their school career.

*Attendance matters in EVERY grade. For now, our campaign is focusing on preschool attendance outcomes because of the community wide emphasis on improving kindergarten readiness outcomes. However, every student can strive to be at school on time all five days of the week!*
WHAT YOU CAN DO

SCHOOLS AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS:

• Inform parents of importance of attendance, especially during the earliest preschool years.
• Encourage students and parents to track their attendance outcomes.
• Incentivize and celebrate students and parents that are achieving positive attendance outcomes.
• Display student attendance in classrooms and hallways.
• Track attendance rates daily to uncover patterns and look for early warning signs.
• Share success stories.

BUSINESSES & THE COMMUNITY:

• Support daily school attendance in out-of-school programs.
• Reach out to a local school to offer incentives.
• Encourage employees to Strive for Five with their children.
• Spread the message about the importance of good attendance to your own audiences and through local media channels.
• Look for opportunities to address barriers and health related reasons for absenteeism by partnering with schools.

Check out attendanceworks.org for more information on absenteeism and many ways you can play a part!
TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO SPREAD THE WORD!

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

**TWITTER**

We are gearing up for Spartanburg's 1st attendance awareness campaign, #StriveFor5Spartanburg. Can we count you in?

7.5 million students miss 10% of the school year nationwide. That’s 135 million days. [http://bit.ly/1rvm8y1](http://bit.ly/1rvm8y1) #StriveFor5Spartanburg

Attendance habits start early. [http://tinyurl.com/hmezlet](http://tinyurl.com/hmezlet) #StriveFor5Spartanburg

Preschoolers who miss too much school don’t develop reading, math, & social skills as quickly. [http://bit.ly/1rvm8y1](http://bit.ly/1rvm8y1) #StriveFor5Spartanburg

By 6th grade chronic absence is a clear predictor that students may drop out. Read more here: [http://bit.ly/1rvm8y1](http://bit.ly/1rvm8y1) #StriveFor5Spartanburg

What’s your plan to be at school on time all five days? #StriveFor5Spartanburg

How can we help each other? #StriveFor5Spartanburg

What’s your biggest barrier to attendance? #StriveFor5Spartanburg

**FACEBOOK**

During the campaign, incorporate the following sample posts, or your own about attendance, into your organization’s social media outlets. Please remember to use the hashtag #StriveFor5Spartanburg

Attendance Awareness Month is in September, but the campaign to end chronic absence starts now! It’s a bigger problem than you can probably think. Learn more about chronic absence, especially in preschool, and join Spartanburg’s Strive For Five Attendance Awareness Campaign today! [#StriveFor5Spartanburg learnwithsam.org](http://learnwithsam.org)

Too often, we think of reducing absences as the job of parents or school clerks in the front office. But communities across the country have started helping schools address chronic absence by building public awareness and leveraging resources. Take a look at Spartanburg’s [#StriveFor5Spartanburg](#) Attendance Toolkit for ideas on how you can share the message too!

When we reduce chronic absence we improve graduation rates, increase academic achievement and give young people the best chance at success in their adult life. Learn about [#StriveForFiveSpartanburg](#) and make a difference in our community. [learnwithsam.org](http://learnwithsam.org)

Improving attendance is not rocket science, but it does take commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to the particular strengths and challenges of each school or community. Let’s do it! [#StriveForFiveSpartanburg](#)

A growing body of research reveals the prevalence of chronic absence and its critical role in student achievement. This research also shows that chronic absence can be addressed when school districts, communities, and policymakers work together to monitor the problem and implement solutions that target the underlying causes. [#StriveFor5Spartanburg](#)
TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO SPREAD THE WORD!

NEWSLETTER/CHURCH/EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE:

This year Spartanburg County School Districts, Spartanburg Academic Movement, and Community Partners are mobilizing for the first countywide program to improve preschool attendance called "Strive for Five." Poor attendance in school negatively affects students and schools, but it also affects the broader community. In the past, over 19% of 4K students in Spartanburg missed over a month of school!

But there is good news. **Everyone has a role to play in helping students and families arrive at school on time all five days of the week!**

To find out more or how you can get involved visit: [www.learnwithsam.org](http://www.learnwithsam.org)
TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO SPREAD THE WORD!

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES #STRIVEFOR5SPARTANBURG

For the community:
• Business specific coupons/giveaways
• Sponsor a most improved school/classroom party
• Donate family gift packages - movie outings, cultural events, museum admissions (after all, good attendance habits involve the whole family)
• Ask schools for incentive ideas that may mean the most to their students

For schools and preschool programs:
• Have a classroom contest for best attendance
• Principal silly stunt if goals are reached
• Reach out to community partners and let them know how they can best support #StriveFor5Spartanburg
• Create a system or point of contact to follow up with students that may be at-risk of missing too many school days

EVERYONE CAN HELP
SHARE YOUR STORIES!

Share your stories of how your business, church, community group, or organization is supporting #StriveFor5Spartanburg.

Send your stories to info@learnwithsam.org

For schools:
Share your success stories about students and families that are meeting the #Strivefor5Spartanburg challenge and how you're celebrating successes! Be sure to include pictures and details that can be included in social media shout outs, newsletters, and other outlets throughout the campaign.

Send your stories to info@learnwithsam.org

CONCLUSION

Attendance is an issue that affects the entire community, but particularly the success of our students. We hope you will find a way to support improved attendance during the Strive for Five campaign and beyond. There is a role for each of us to play. To learn more about attendance, access attendance resources, and to learn how other communities across the country have worked to improve attendance visit attendanceworks.org.

For any additional information visit learnwithsam.org or please contact Spartanburg Academic Movement at info@learnwithsam.org. Join the movement!