

# Using Nudge Letters to Engage Parents and Increase Attendance of English Language Learner 9-12th Graders

## What brought you to this work?

When parents get involved in a child's attendance and grades, we have seen more success because they are being pushed at home and at school. However, our English language learners have had such low attendance during online learning that it has led to low performance. These students are failing at higher rates than their peers. My school data indicates that students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) disproportionately are failing core classes. When we consider our 9th graders, 42% failed a core course in the first grading period, compared to 54% of 9th grade ELLs who failed a core course in the first grading period also. This pattern continues with our 10th graders as 42% failed compared to 46% ELLs.

A meta-analysis (Freeman et. al., 2018) of research-supported practices for improving attendance in high schools identified the most common components of successful attendance interventions: skills training, family support, and incentive-based strategies. Examining family support strategies more closely, we were excited to learn about the emerging practice of "nudge" letters.

## Research questions

Do nudge letters sent to families successfully increase student attendance? Is there a differential impact of nudge letters for students in particular attendance categories (i.e., low risk (attendance>90%), at risk (80-90%), and extreme risk (<80%)?

## Research plan

We're proposing a quasi-experimental approach (meaning everyone who meets our criteria for inclusion will receive the letter(s)) and assessing outcomes using an interrupted time series design (compare measures of weekly attendance before and after the intervention). This is a small population which might ultimately include between 50 and 100 students and their families. Ongoing measurement will focus on attendance in Geometry (we are focusing on attendance during their math class period over daily school attendance).



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