THE SEAT SERIES · FREE ATTENDANCE SCIENCE™ RESOURCE

SEAT 04

Teachers · Grades 6-8

The Hallway Test



How can I tell whether my middle school feels worth showing up for?

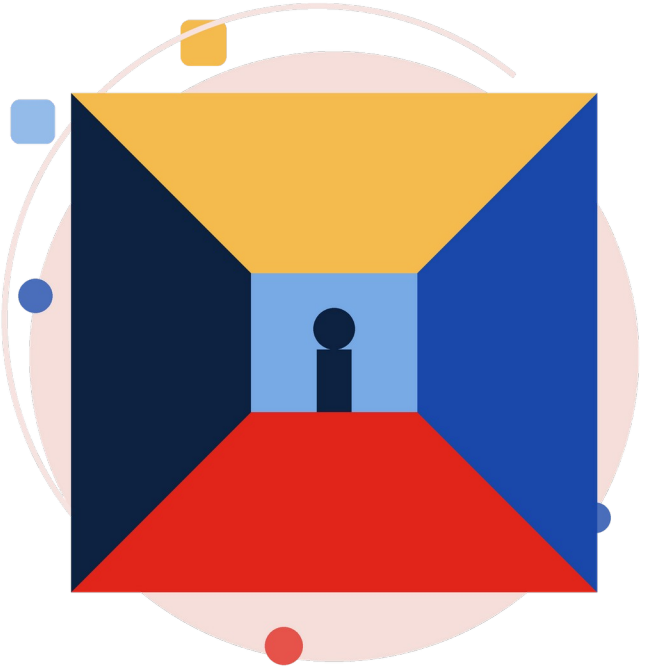
10 slides · 2 handouts · evidence from Schools Spared, Children Punished and the Attendance Science™ research base

Principal Renwick and the silent hallway

“

Renwick took over a middle school with high suspensions and constant turnover. Between classes the hallways were silent from fear, students moving fast with eyes down. She rebuilt advisory around real relationships. Within 18 months, chronic absence fell by nearly a third. Poverty, demographics and funding stayed the same.

Source: Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 2 (Renwick, composite case)



Every story in this series is a composite or a published case. Names are invented.

What teachers are asking

How can I tell whether my middle school feels worth showing up for?

1

Students move through the day unknown by adults.

2

Avoidance hides inside 'good' attendance numbers.

3

Climate work feels too big for one teacher.

Shared words before shared work

E

Effective climate

Smaller groups, individual attention, adults students believe are invested in them.

I

Ineffective climate

Unclear discipline, turnover, overcrowding, pushing students out.

A

Avoidance

Absence driven by the student's experience of the building.

The numbers behind the moment

~1/3

drop in chronic absence in Renwick's building in 18 months

Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 2 (Renwick, composite case)

154

principals named participatory decisions and visionary leadership as keys to success

Morocco, Brigham & Aguilar (2006), via Schools Spared, Ch. 2

50%

of Indiana middle school principals named relationship building as their top need

Gentle-Genitty (2009), dissertation, Indiana University: middle school principals' perceptions

Classify before you consequence

Avoidance

The hallway, the bus line, one class. Change the window and the adult presence.

Withdrawal

Babysitting siblings and work. Check family logistics.

Refusal

Anxiety peaks in transitions. Plan re-entry with the counselor.

Truancy

Friends and choice. Still ask first; belonging is often the lever.

Three moves you can make this week

01

Cost: $0

Walk two passing periods

Ten minutes. Watch for eye contact between students and adults.

02

Cost: $0

Stand at your door

Greet students by name at every transition.

03

Cost: $0

Name the quiet three

Each advisory names three students no adult has talked with this week.

A PRESENCE™ prompt for your building

P	R	**E**	S	E	N	C	E
Problem definition	Research evidence	**Environmental context**	Statistical analysis	Equity assessment	Network and partnership	Compliance and legal	Evidence-based recommendations

YOUR PROMPT

Cross-tab chronic absence by team or grade against teacher turnover. Higher turnover tends to travel with avoidance absence.



Common missteps, and how you will know it works

- ✕ Treating climate as a one-day training; Renwick took 18 months
- ✕ Measuring climate only once a year
- ✕ Assuming a high-poverty school is destined for an ineffective climate

LEADING INDICATOR · Moves first

Students with a named adult

LAGGING INDICATOR · Confirms it worked

Avoidance-pattern absence by team

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HANDOUTS Seat Card (A) and Find Your Data worksheet (B)

KEEP GOING IN THIS SERIES

Seat 01: Classify Before You Consequence
Seat 02: Early Absence Is a Logistics Signal
Seat 03: Building the Habit of Showing Up

Take Your Seat

1,000 Seats campaign

Every seat filled is one more person working to make showing up possible.