THE SEAT SERIES · FREE ATTENDANCE SCIENCE™ RESOURCE

SEAT 08

Teachers · All grades

Present but Absent



How can I spot disengagement before it shows up in the attendance data?

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

Devon's fifteen minutes

“

Devon never missed a day. But for three weeks he went quiet. After four conversations with Mr. Alvarez, he admitted older students waited for him near the buses, so he timed every exit to avoid them. By every attendance metric he was a success story. He was disengaging in real time.

Source: Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 6 (Devon and Simone, composite cases)



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

What teachers are asking

How can I spot disengagement before it shows up in the attendance data?

1

Perfect attendance can mask a broken bond.

2

Dashboards see seats, not belonging.

3

Students like Simone plan to leave without a single absence.

Shared words before shared work

D

Disengagement

Behavioral, cognitive or emotional withdrawal, regardless of attendance.

A

Avoidance-pattern presence

Physical attendance that masks active disengagement.

P

PSSB

Perceptions of School Social Bonding: a validated measure of attachment, involvement and belief.

The numbers behind the moment

3,507

students in the peer-reviewed PSSB validation study

Gentle-Genitty, Keppens & Kearney (2025), Contemporary School Psychology 29(1), 213-220

10 items

on a 5-point scale; free for schools seeking an early read on bonding

Educator Wellness Podcast, Scanlan Center, University of Iowa, S3E3 (Dec 2024)

Low + clean

low bond scores with clean attendance form your early-warning list

Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 6 (Devon and Simone, composite cases)

Classify before you consequence

Avoidance

A time or place the student dodges while still attending.

Refusal

Rising anxiety before absences begin. Connect to counseling.

Withdrawal

Home stress showing up as exhaustion in class.

Truancy

Quiet planning to leave, as with Simone. Measure the bond.

Three moves you can make this week

01

Cost: $0

Ask three students

Is there a time or place in the building where you feel unsafe or unwanted?

02

Cost: $0

Notice the quiet

When a lively student goes quiet, ask them to stay two minutes after class.

03

Cost: $0

Try PSSB

Give the PSSB to one class or grade and compare with attendance.

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

Give PSSB to one grade. List students with low bond scores and clean attendance. That list is who every enforcement policy loses first.



Common missteps, and how you will know it works

- ✕ Treating perfect attendance as proof of engagement
- ✕ Giving PSSB and taking no action on results
- ✕ Assuming strong grades rule out a weak bond

LEADING INDICATOR · Moves first

Students with low bond scores who received a matched support

LAGGING INDICATOR · Confirms it worked

Later absence for that group

Join 1,000 Seats at the national table

Scan to take your seat: free membership in Attendance USA and the weekly Attendance Intelligence Brief, with new research, policy across the states, and tools from the field of Attendance Science™.

QUESTIONS info@attendanceusa.org

LEARN MORE attendanceusa.org

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.