TalkingPoints

Executive Summary: Evidence for TalkingPoints' Impact on Student Attendance and Learning

The Challenge

Schools nationwide are grappling with persistent challenges related to attendance, learning, behavior, and student well-being. Chronic absenteeism has risen sharply in recent years: in many districts, more than one in four students now miss 10% or more of school days, placing them at heightened academic and social risk and increasing strain on classrooms.[1,2,3]

At the same time, students continue to lag academically. The average U.S. student remains nearly half a grade level behind in math and reading compared to 2019, with recovery - particularly in reading - expected to take several more years.[4] Educators report that learning loss, disengagement, and classroom disruption often reinforce one another, making it harder to re-engage students once problems emerge.

Decades of research show that strong, trusting family-school relationships are a powerful lever for improving attendance, academic progress, behavior, and overall engagement.[5,6,7,8] Yet these relationships are often not built equitably. Underserved, immigrant, and multilingual families frequently face barriers such as language differences, limited access to information, and time constraints. As a result, family engagement occurs at roughly half the rate for lower-income, non-English-speaking, and minority families - compared to higher-income, English-speaking families, and these gaps widened during the pandemic.[9]

For districts - especially large and multilingual ones - enabling consistent, inclusive, and relationship-centered communication remains a significant challenge. One-way or problem-focused messages often fall short of building the trust and connection needed to address issues early and support student success.

The TalkingPoints Approach

TalkingPoints is a family engagement platform designed to strengthen student outcomes by making it easier for schools to build strong, trust-based family–school partnerships. The platform removes language and access barriers that have historically limited engagement, enabling two-way communication in more than 150 languages through text messaging and mobile apps.

By supporting consistent, positive, and inclusive communication between educators and families, TalkingPoints helps schools move beyond one-way or problem-driven outreach toward relationship-centered engagement. Embedded guidance and educator-friendly workflows encourage proactive communication that builds trust, strengthens school culture, and helps address student needs before challenges escalate.

Rigorous quasi-experimental studies conducted across three large urban school districts demonstrate that this approach leads to meaningful improvements in attendance, academic outcomes, and student

well-being. The evidence shows that when schools use TalkingPoints to strengthen family–school relationships through consistent, two-way communication, student outcomes improve—particularly for students from historically underserved communities.

Overall Impact

TalkingPoints reduces absenteeism by **12-24%**, equating to **1-3 additional weeks of learning time per year**. Students also experience **academic gains equivalent to seven months of learning in math**, and **early and middle-grade suspensions drop by 43%**.

Midwest District (Tulsa Public Schools)

In Tulsa, TalkingPoints helped schools address pandemic-era attendance challenges. Students in grades K-5 and 7 experienced a **24% reduction in absenteeism**, the equivalent of **six additional instructional days per year**. Gains were greatest for **Spanish-speaking families**, demonstrating the effectiveness of multilingual communication in improving attendance and engagement.[10]

West Coast District

A multi-year study found that schools using TalkingPoints achieved a **15% reduction in absence rates** and **7 percent increases in English and math course proficiency**—translating to **about seven months of learning growth**.[11]

Northeast District

In a large, diverse district, TalkingPoints was associated with a **12% increase in high school attendance** and **43% fewer suspensions** in early and middle grades. The study also revealed that students who received more **positive, supportive messages** had better attendance and fewer behavioral issues, confirming that the tone and frequency of communication can support measurable improvements in student outcomes.[12]

Conclusion

Together, these studies provide robust, multi-district evidence that TalkingPoints strengthens family-school partnerships, improves attendance, reduces suspensions, and boosts learning—especially for students who have been historically underserved. By making family engagement equitable, accessible, and continuous, TalkingPoints helps districts build the foundation for lasting student success.

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