

disagreed with suspension. Dougherty states, “that suspending a student is giving them what he wants, a vacation” (1999, p. 9). As most of the authors conclude, there is some form of punishment given to a student that misses excessive days.

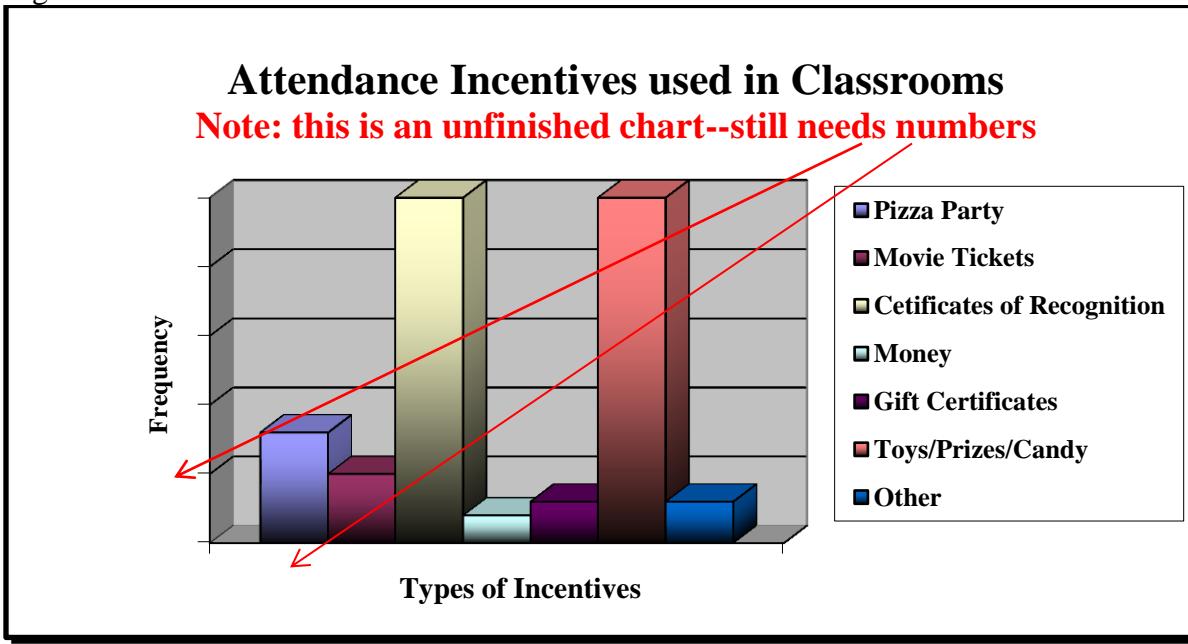
Implications (Third level subheading)

The above research findings all agree that attendance is a very important issue for students. The literature indicated that the following topics are important factors in increasing attendance: effective policies, parental contact, community involvement, teacher/student relationships, rewards and incentives, and punishments/consequences.

Research Findings (Second level section heading)

A survey of local teachers was conducted in order to learn of specific programs that are being used to increase attendance. Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers were surveyed as part of the study. The majority of those surveyed have been teaching for more than 10 years. The average attendance rate of the schools surveyed is 96 percent. Even though all schools surveyed have an attendance policy, not all teachers are informed of the details of the policy. For example, in one school 4 of the 9 respondents did not know whether their school provided a mentoring program for chronically absent students.

Figure 1

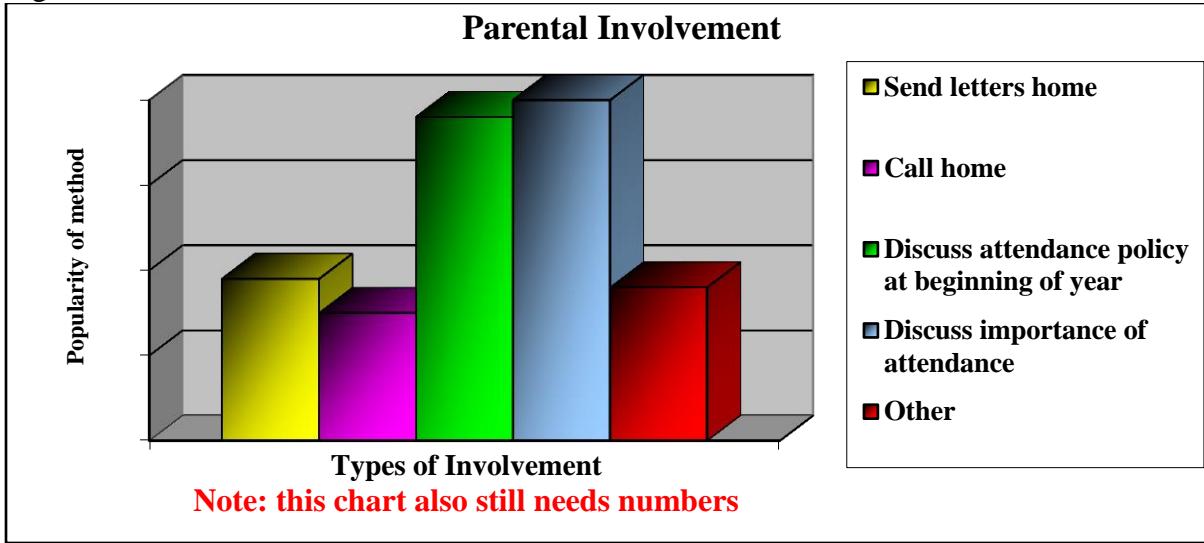


Source: Primary

Ninety-eight percent of teachers surveyed said their school had an incentive program that encourages good attendance. Figure 1 shows that certificates of recognition and toys/prizes/candy both are used most often in classrooms as incentives to come to school.

Eighty-six percent of teachers who implement an incentive program in their specific classroom say their program is successful in raising attendance.

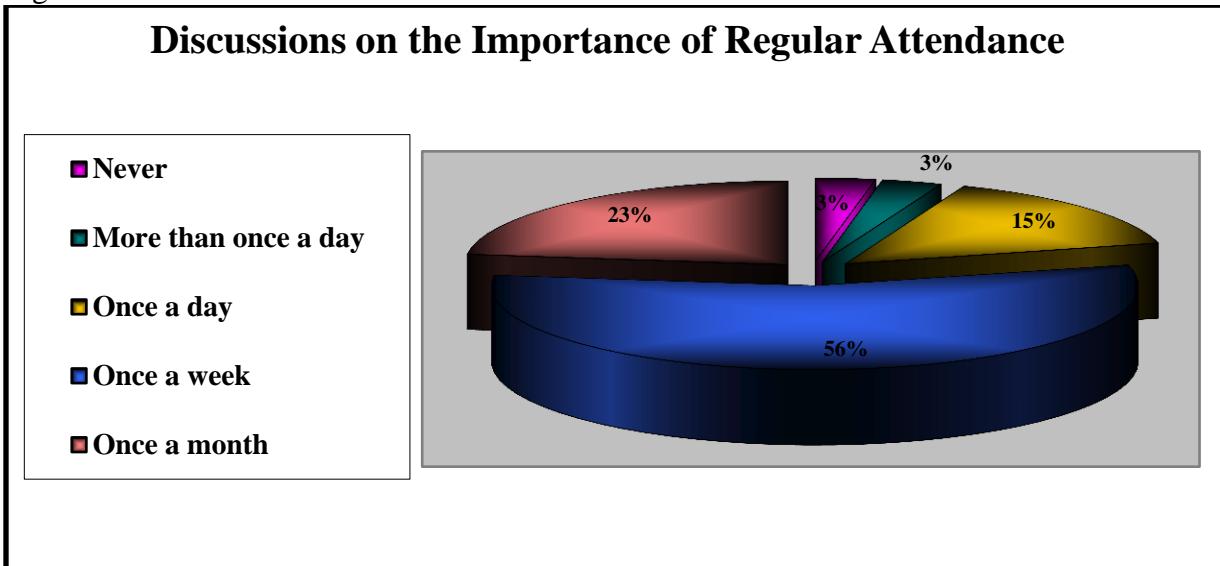
Figure 2



Source: Smith (2013)

According to our survey group, 68 percent of schools actively attempt to involve parents in their attendance programs. Seventy percent of respondents attempt to include parents when dealing with attendance problems. The two most widely used methods of parent involvement are discussing the attendance policy at the beginning of the year and the importance of attendance.

Figure 3



Source: Primary

An overwhelming 88 percent of teachers surveyed said they spend one-on-one time with students who are chronically absent. More than half of teachers surveyed discussed the importance of regular attendance with their students once a week. When asked if they make an effort to verbally acknowledge students when they return from an absence, 98 percent of the survey pool said yes.

The survey indicates that even though most schools have an attendance policy some teachers are not necessarily aware of it. This presents a problem when enforcing the attendance policy. However, several that are aware of the attendance policy implement specific incentives in their classrooms. This practice is shown to increase attendance within the classroom. Based on survey responses, teachers feel that communication with parents and students is also a key factor in increasing attendance. Through this survey we have developed some recommendations for increasing attendance.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Provide someone for families to talk to about the attendance policy. Increase communication with parents by sending letters home and involving them in the student's education. Discuss the importance of attendance at conferences or through written messages, encouraging them to discuss it with their children.

Recommendation #2

After more than 3 absences in a month there should be a one-on-one student teacher meeting. Chronically absent students should be placed with a teacher-mentor and meet one-on-one at least twice a week. At the same time, classroom incentive programs should be implemented particularly certificates of recognition for good attendance.

In closing, absenteeism is not only a problem for Beech Grove Intermediate but the problem is growing for schools all across the country. It is important to do what we can to prevent America's future from becoming a complacent element in society. Based on our research we have made these recommendations and we feel sure that they will go a long way in helping to increase attendance at Beech Grove Intermediate school or, in fact any elementary school who is willing to implement these simple procedures within their school system.