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School as haven: Transforming school environments into welcoming learning communities

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Abstract

This study investigated school factors that impact attendance. Interviews and focus groups with over 60 key stakeholders from five Maryland counties were conducted. Respondents indicated that despite individual, family, and community factors that contribute to non-attendance, students will attend a school that is intentional about creating a welcoming climate that is supportive and academically stimulating. Attendance can be improved when schools evaluated policies that may unintentionally deter student attendance, when students feel heard by school personnel, and when students are given opportunities to establish supportive relationships with caring adults in and out of the classroom.

Highlights

â–° Student nonattendance is an indicator of multiple systemic fractures. â–° Schools can attract troubled students by offering a supportive, safe environment. â–° School factors increasing attendance are school policies and communication.



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Keywords

School attendance; School social work; School environment; Strength based perspective; Person-in-environment

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