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Subject: J. Lewis Perfect Attendance Luncheon
Date: Wednesday, November 2, 2022 1:05:38 PM

Good morning~

Yesterday, there was a post on John R. Lewis Facebook page showing a perfect attendance luncheon/reward of fried chicken, mashed potatoes and rolls for students.

Was this luncheon/reward vetted through a Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) lens?

This Perfect attendance luncheon/reward unfairly excluded many J. Lewis students for something that they have absolutely no control over.

There are many different factors that can contribute to the “why” factor of an absence:

- Many families in JPS have real barriers including, illness, transportation issues, poverty/homelessness, trauma, violence in the household, mental illness, etc. that can make everyday school attendance a challenge.
- Students with disabilities are also more likely to miss school, data has shown absence rates can range from 10% to 30% more.
- Students who are religious minorities, who aren't lucky enough to have their religious holidays respected by the school calendar may have absences due to their religious holidays.
- Families and family culture also play a role, particularly if the parents do not place an importance on education.
- It is also important to note, Black students are way more likely to be punished in school than white students according to data from numerous studies.

Hosting a luncheon/reward for perfect attendance while excluding the majority of J. Lewis student population, again due to no fault of their own, was erroneous & discriminatory. Perfect attendance luncheons/rewards make the assumption that the reasons for the absence(s) are frivolous and can be easily overcome. This can further deflate or demotivate a student, particularly when the reasons for the absences are beyond their control.

Perfect attendance rewards/luncheons do not get into the “why” of absence(s) or make any attempts to fix it. Perfect attendance luncheons/rewards offer the solution of “suck it up and get to school” instead of getting to the “why” & offering support to help struggling families/students.

You can't always know or control the factors that cause poor school attendance, but addressing those aspects where you have influence is a great first step.

Let's replace attendance awards with something more beneficial to **each and every** student:
[5 Awards for Kids That Matter More Than Perfect Attendance](#)

I have linked many additional articles below that can be of educational benefit regarding this situation.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Respectfully



~"In a recent study, attendance awards backfired, giving students a "license to miss more school" and actually driving absentee rates up." - [Extrinsic Motivation: It Might Be Even Worse Than You Thought](#)

~"*We cannot continue to package education in a box and assume it will work for every student. Research and best practice have been used to micromanage what schools teach students of color, policing schools to ensure they consistently fail the most marginalized populations. We cannot in one breath condemn the school-to-prison pipeline and then create systems and structures that funnel to failure.*" [When Best Practices Fail Black and Brown Students, We Must Challenge Our Moral Contradictions | EdSurge News](#)

~"Here are some strategies to improve school attendance:

Make school a welcoming and engaging place

Connect with at-risk students

Involve parents

Award PBIS points for attendance achievements

Focus on attendance schoolwide, not individual

Track your attendance and discipline stats and you will find parallels between the two. PBIS Rewards offers a wealth of data for school administrators to examine. Office discipline referrals, staff fidelity, and student earning patterns give you an accurate picture of how PBIS is working for your school." -[Using PBIS to Improve School Attendance](#)

~"Black students spend less time in the classroom due to discipline, which further hinders their access to a quality education. Black students are nearly two times as likely to be suspended without educational services as white students. Black students are also 3.8 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white students. In addition, black children represent 19 percent of the nation's pre-school population, yet 47 percent of those receiving more than one out-of-school suspension. In comparison, white students represent 41 percent of pre-school enrollment but only 28 percent of those receiving more than one out-of-school suspension. Even more troubling, black students are 2.3 times as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest as white students." -[K-12 Disparity Facts and Statistics - UNCF](#)

~"Students with disabilities face systemic and structural barriers that can disrupt school attendance" -[ESSA Implementation: Keeping Students with Disabilities In School](#)

~"I want the children whose lives are not as privileged as hers to feel like they are bright, capable and amazing children even when they miss days because their lives are incredibly sad, frustrating and challenging in ways that many of us never even try to understand." -[Stop Rewarding Perfect Attendance in School, PLEASE](#)