



## Reignite: Engagement Strategies

**About:** *These strategies are things that program leaders and staff can do to not only be highly effective in engaging students, but to address challenges with students who disengage from programs. There are brief descriptions of each strategy. For more on specific strategies, check out companion resources on the NTAC website.*

<b>Build and Improve Developmental Relationships</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the time to get to know your students.</li> <li>• Withhold judgement on them and remain open to what they share.</li> <li>• Representation and allyship within your program will help students of diverse backgrounds feel seen, heard, and supported.</li> <li>• Be empathetic to each unique situation.</li> <li>• Provide resources and support based on their unique needs.</li> <li>• Mentoring relationships can help deepen a student's connection to the program and support them in their academic, social, personal, and career development.</li> </ul>	
<b>Assess and Support Student Interests and Needs</b>	
Survey	Survey students about what they are interested in and what they need.
Focus group	Hold a focus group where you can use guiding questions to gather information about what students feel about the program and what they want to change or see from the program.
Flexible scheduling	Create flexible scheduling opportunities where students can still participate in things outside the program.
Feedback	Provide frequent opportunities for students to give feedback.
<b>Hands-on, Authentic, Relevant Learning Opportunities</b>	
Project-based learning	Project-based learning provides hands-on learning opportunities over an extended period of time that connects to real-life.
Career pathways	Career pathways, particularly for high school students, can provide students with opportunities to get authentic experiences, learning about career options and even gain hands-on experience in fields of interest.
College prep	College is just one of the options for post-secondary students, but knowing what to do to prepare for college is a key factor to



	both successful college applications as well as the decision-making process that goes into it.
Training programs	Training programs are also a great opportunity for students to develop skills in a field and exposing students in programs to this option allows them to explore further the diverse options of post-secondary life. We know that college is not the only option for students and training and trade programs are another option for students to pursue a career field.
Life skills	Create learning opportunities where students can build on life skills that will be relevant throughout their lives.
<b>Diverse Program Offerings</b>	
Academic support	Academic support can include tutoring and homework help.
STEM	STEM is at the forefront of our culture. Consider including activities in science, technology, engineering, and math.
Sports	Many times, we have students who leave the program because of a sports team that they've joined. Think of ways to include sports in your program to connect to student interests and support physical activities.
Arts	Arts are sometimes unavailable during the school day for various reasons. For students interested in the arts, incorporating arts content into your program offers them the opportunity they may not have in the school day. Artistic expression is also proven to support student social-emotional development and mental health.
<b>Leadership Opportunities</b>	
Get students involved in leadership roles in your program. Perhaps create a student council to represent the interests of the larger student body. Let them know that their opinions and ideas matter by including them in the decision-making process.	
<b>Family Engagement</b>	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out personally to the disengaged students' families to inquire about their involvement in the program and how you can help support them.</li> <li>• Communicate frequently (but not too much) and always follow-up.</li> <li>• Communicate with them through their preferred method: email, phone call, text, etc.</li> <li>• Be clear in your communication. Assure that the family understands all aspects and requirements of the program.</li> </ul>



<p>Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep events relevant for families. Survey families about things they are interested in and need, and develop engagement events that will connect them with those interests and needs.</li> <li>• Make events participatory giving families something to do and engage with at the event. (Only to the extent which they are comfortable).</li> <li>• Events should feature and showcase what students have been working on in the program. This gives families a picture of the impact of the learning students do in your program.</li> </ul>
<p>Advisory board/Parent-teacher advisory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get families involved in the decision-making process either through advisory boards or Parent-teacher advisory.</li> <li>• Ask families for help in planning and running events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Engagement</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with school day staff and discuss similar engagement challenges and insight.</li> <li>• Align lessons and activities within your program to the content of the school day.</li> <li>• Joint planning with the school day teachers is one way to further work together and align content.</li> <li>• Data sharing is only allowable to a certain extent, but if this option is available to you, it can be an insightful way to track student needs.</li> <li>• Consider engaging school day staff as employees or volunteers within your program.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p>	
<p>Local partnerships</p>	<p>Working with local organizations and business can help you bring in activities and experts to support your program. They can provide everything from volunteers to programmatic offerings and more.</p>
<p>Service projects</p>	<p>Service projects are a great way to connect to the community. It not only is a great project-based learning opportunity, but for students needing service hours for high school graduation or resume building, this provides a way for that to happen within your program.</p>
<p>Guest presenters</p>	<p>Especially when it comes to exposing students to career pathways and specialized activities, bringing in guests to either present or run workshops provides students with unique learning opportunities.</p>



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