vision of improved attendance. Summits offer safe spaces for communities to gather, identify the factors underpinning chronic absence, learn about available resources and best practices, and create an action plan for realizing positive change.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS SOFTWARE
KiNVO is a powerful, user-friendly technology tool that equips educators, parents, and students with data that highlights attendance patterns, all in service of motivating change. The software builds bridges for parents who are hard to reach due to irregular schedules, work commitments, or language barriers.

TEACHER & LEADER COACHING
Through our expert Teacher and Leader Coaching, we help districts manage the implementation of new attendance policies, thoughtfully launch the KiNVO software, and expand educator capacity. Authentic, sustainable change doesn’t come from a piece of software or a one-day seminar; it is the result of a community’s continued efforts to support its children and young adults. Inspired by these collective efforts, Kinvolved has developed a suite of services that inform decision-making, promote early intervention, strengthen relationships inside and outside school walls, and catalyze more communities get more kids to school.

Regards,
MIRIAM ALTMAN & ALEXANDRA MEIS
Co-founders, Kinvolved

A NOTE FROM OUR CO-FOUNDERS
Research shows that a student’s most critical step on the path to success, including graduation from high school, is showing up; in fact, student attendance is the leading indicator of high school graduation. But showing up is not as simple as it sounds.

At Kinvolved, we believe that if we want our students to show up for school—and subsequently find a path out of poverty and toward lifelong success—we have to show up for our students.

Kinvolved takes a holistic approach to fighting chronic absenteeism, combining technology tools and human interventions to change the deeply ingrained behaviors and external factors affecting student attendance, including poverty, racism, and socio-economic exclusion.

COMMUNITY SUMMITS
Our Community Summits convene local stakeholders from schools, districts, civic offices, and organizations, as well as students and families, around a shared
This report focuses on Kinvolved’s engagement with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) during the 2016–2017 school year, though the findings are representative of our work outside NYC—from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to Atlanta, Georgia, and beyond—as well as our work with afterschool and summer programs.

We surveyed 328 teachers and leaders across our 100 partner schools. Compared to district-wide averages, these schools have above-average percentages of black/Hispanic students and students in poverty, as well as higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Each school year, we conduct a study to gauge the impact of Kinvolved’s tools and services on average daily attendance (ADA), chronic absenteeism, family engagement, teacher capacity, and mindset shifts. We:

- Interview KiNVO users and Kinvolved community members;
- Analyze attendance data and School Quality Reports, and
- Incorporate internal KiNVO metrics.

Review the Appendix for more about our methodology.
WHY FOCUS ON CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM?

Each year, 6.5 million students miss a month or more of school, and 43% of high school dropouts say they did not graduate because they missed too many school days. Early detection is key: by sixth grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator of a student’s likelihood to drop out of high school.

ABSENTEEISM & INCLUSION

Average daily attendance (ADA) reflects the number of students in school, on average, by day. This is a critical statistic, particularly in states where ADA directly impacts district funding. Our focus extends beyond ADA to include chronic absenteeism: missing 10% or more school days each year. Research shows that the rate of chronic absenteeism triples in low-income, urban districts.

There will always be circumstances outside a child’s control that determine whether they will make it to school each day. For children in poverty, the circumstances are more complex, more varied, and harder to overcome.

Children in poverty are more likely to lack basic health and safety supports that ensure a child is more likely to get to school, and exposure to violence and environmental pollutants makes regular school attendance more difficult. In addition, barriers around literacy, immigration, and employment may prohibit a parent from being as engaged as parents not facing the same challenges.

Our vision is educational equity. We work toward this vision by ensuring that every parent and guardian in a Kinvolved school is included in a dialogue about their child’s education.

Kinvolved’s technology and services are designed with disadvantaged communities in mind. We have extensive on-the-ground experience working in Title I schools and communities of poverty. Our resource development process focuses on breaking down common barriers to parent involvement as it relates to ensuring students attend school.

Up to one-third of student populations in high-poverty urban areas are chronically absent.
Hi Mrs Collins.

Virgie has improved her attendance this week. Congratulations and thank you for all the work you are doing at home! Let’s work to improve getting to school on time this week.

5 characters remaining

Message Template

Recipients Message

To: Architectural Technology (1 Contacts)

Show details

Positive

No template

Inbox Message Record

Students

Settings

Send

AT&T LTE

12:03 PM 100%

Messages (1)

Miss Smith

Details

KiNVO can translate messages into more than 60 languages, ensuring that parents, regardless of their preferred language, are able to communicate with their child’s school. When parents respond to a message in their language, KiNVO translates the message back to English.

With KiNVO, teachers report they are able to communicate with parents that would have been excluded from critical information because of the parent’s spoken language and the educator’s lack of real-time translation resources. In just a few clicks, parents are fully informed about their child’s latest homework assignment, the bake sale next month, or an accomplishment in gym class. Borders, defined by language, dissolve over the course of a few text exchanges.

KiNVO transmits messages via text message, email, and phone call, better accommodating parents’ preferred method of communication and making it easier for parents to engage in a real-time, two-way dialog with educators. To help bridge the digital divide between school and home, KiNVO does not require a parent to log into an app to send or receive messages.

Information about attendance, behavior, and course performance is more accessible to parents than ever before. Educators can finally meet parents where they are comfortable.
KiNVO determines whether or not messages reach parents, and if a message does not get through, we help the educator understand why: a phone turned off, a wrong number, a parent who opted out. Awareness of deliverability presents opportunities to improve success rates, and faster access to the “why” means a quicker resolution and more reliable information.

Kinvolved Teacher and Leader Coaching supports our educators and administrators in developing protocols and practices for reviewing parent engagement rates and message deliverability. We equip coaching participants with the language to have meaningful conversations with parents, and to explain why updated information is so important. Changing our collective outlook, attitude, and behavior toward the ever-changing nature of parent contact information goes a long way toward positive parent-inclusion experiences.

Working in partnership with the regions we serve, Kinvolved hosts Community Summits on increasing attendance. These events are free for families to attend and organized to accommodate work and activity schedules, encouraging all to participate.

We recognize and appreciate the diversity in the schools and communities we serve, working hand-in-hand with varied stakeholders—from mayors to superintendents to classroom teachers to community members—to identify problems and work toward solutions. If it truly takes a village to raise a child, the simple act of listening to a community’s voices helps the Kinvolved team customize its solutions to strengthen the bonds of that village so each stakeholder/member knows where they fit into the attendance solution.

In the future we plan to provide virtual access to our Community Summits to better serve families who have difficulty attending in-person events.
THE RESULTS

Our learnings this year build on the results of our 2015–2016 Impact Report.⁸

ATTENDANCE RATES JUMP

CHANGE IN ATTENDANCE RATES 2015–2016

KINVOLVED PARTNER HIGH SCHOOLS SAW A 13X, OR 2.6%, INCREASE IN AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE COMPARED TO THEIR PEERS.

CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES DROP

CHANGE IN CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES 2016–2017

SCHOOLS THAT USED KINVO WITH FIDELITY SAW A –3% CHANGE IN CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES, COMPARED TO +11% CHANGE IN NON-PARTNER SCHOOLS.

PARTNER SCHOOLS

NON-PARTNER SCHOOLS

Chronic absence rates decreased by 2% in schools that sent an average of 16 or more parent messages over the school year.

MESSAGES EXCHANGED

4,250,000
OUR 2016–2017 COMMUNITY

- **100** School Partners
- **3,937** Teachers
- **905** Admins
- **57,434** Parents
- **50,478** Students

OUR STUDENTS

- % Black or Hispanic Students: **79** (2015-16), **78** (2016-17)
- % Students with Disabilities: **19** (2015-16), **19** (2016-17)
- % English Language Learners: **14** (2015-16), **15** (2016-17)
- % Students in Poverty: **83** (2015-16), **82** (2016-17)
We conducted 328 surveys and 50 interviews with Kinvolved users to explore the factors that brought about this positive shift toward eliminating chronic absenteeism. In our discussions, we uncovered three major components working in tandem to affect change.

**CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS**

- **94%** of educators found it easier to inform parents of attendance patterns.
- **86%** of educators say KiNVO makes parents easier to reach.
- **90%** of educators formed tighter bonds with parents.
- **83%** of educators communicated with parents more frequently, and more efficiently.
- **76%** of educators say KiNVO has improved parent communication.
- **63%** of educators use the automatic two-way translation feature to connect with parents who speak languages other than English.

Research shows that many families fail to connect the dots between attendance and achievement: nearly half of parents underestimate the importance of attendance, believing children can miss three or more days of school each month without affecting student outcomes. It is critical to share and explain attendance patterns and the consequences of chronic absence in a language that a parent can understand.

**CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN TEACHERS, LEADERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS**

Using KiNVO data to inform personalized conversations is much better than having the same scripted conversations.

—Ms. D, elementary teacher
School-parent communication about the importance of attendance is critical for reducing chronic absenteeism, and KiNVO facilitates these important connections and meaningful conversations. Districts equipped with KiNVO communicate simply, securely, and in real time with parents, shedding light on the issue of their child’s attendance and providing an easy way to interact and develop strategies together that will disrupt children’s path to disengagement.

Detailed attendance data is especially useful in helping families interpret average daily attendance numbers. Pulling up personalized student profiles gives parents context around their child’s performance, and data visualization tools like KiNVO’s pie charts break down absence percentages to help parents grasp attendance impact.

Parents didn’t realize their child’s absence was such a big problem before getting daily texts through KiNVO.

−Mr. B, elementary teacher

You can’t just say, “Your kid was absent 27 times”—that doesn’t really stick. Parents need something visual.

−Mrs. D, elementary teacher

The app builds bridges for parents that are hard to reach due to irregular schedules, work commitments, and language barriers—teachers remarked that translated messages sparked massive improvements in attendance. In addition, the convenience of text messages makes educators more accessible.

I’m never at my desk. But through text, I’ll get the parent’s message and text back.

−Mr. W, teacher
KiNVO helps educators maximize the outputs of their efforts, making their communication more productive and purposeful. Many teachers are frustrated they spend hours leaving voicemails with no guarantee that parents receive them. With KiNVO, teachers report feeling more confident that the time they invest in communications will yield results.

KiNVO takes so much less time than looking up a phone number, finding a phone number that works, and hoping I get through to someone. I never have to worry about leaving a message a parent may not receive—I can send a quick message to anyone, anytime.

–Ms. B, middle school teacher

Digital records also solve another typically tedious process—thanks to centralized, always-up-to-date contact information, teachers can quickly and confidently reach parents. Three out of four teachers say KiNVO saves time compared to previous outreach methods, streamlining previously time-consuming tasks.

KiNVO does 80% of the job for you.

–Ms. A, high school assistant principal

While schools and districts may at times feel siloed, when educators come together they learn that they encounter a lot of the same problems. Kinvolved’s Community Summits develop educator capacity by facilitating idea-sharing opportunities like Affinity Groups—small groups based on school district or grade level—that promote collective problem-solving.

Kinvolved has helped us build an attendance culture. At parent-teacher conferences, it’s not just “Your student performed poorly.” It’s “He missed five days this month, so missed a lot of material.”

–Ms. D, elementary teacher

In addition, KiNVO itself is seen as a professional learning tool. Teachers point to issues they had not noticed without KiNVO. For example, in analyzing classroom attendance data, one high school teacher realized an error in the student’s schedule that made her frequently late to class and found that another student had a chronic health issue.
Behavioral change takes time, and sustaining that change requires an authentic, firsthand understanding of a district’s culture and community. Kiinolved supports districts in adapting to change through a strategic sequence of activities. Teacher and Leader Coaching supports schools and districts with shifts in how to review attendance data internally, communicate it with parents, and use the data to inform decisions that eliminate chronic absenteeism. We help districts cultivate mindset shifts with more stakeholders thinking and talking about attendance.

I don’t want to know on Friday that a child hasn’t been in school all week. KiNVO informs me right away.

–Ms. S, elementary principal

KiNVO delivers real-time attendance alerts to guardians, including multiple alerts if a student misses more than one period. This is almost always a shift in the way districts record and share attendance data, so we coach school systems to gradually roll out such new communications. Through coaching and summits, educators can review data and uncover patterns they may not have noticed before.

Parents have been conditioned to expect a generic robocall at the end of the day informing them of their child’s attendance, but for a variety of reasons, often the robocall never reaches the parent. KiNVO upends the traditional system, and our Teacher and Leader Coaching offers a roadmap for school systems as they help caregivers adjust to this change.

“First, we coach educators to send structured, positive, engaging messages to families. After four weeks of these structured communications, we scale up to communications about a student’s year-to-date attendance record, followed by real-time attendance alerts.”

I feel like I’m making a difference. It gives me the hope that I could go far, thinking “What else can I do?”

–Ms. B, middle school teacher
Students pull their friends into the classroom from the hallway, saying “Come on, class is starting.”

–Ms. B, middle school teacher

Real-time data helps students pay attention, too. When student’s review their own KiNVO profile with their teacher, those students are often surprised to see the trends in their behavior. In many instances, when teachers explain to students the connection between attendance and success, the result is that students commit to showing up on time, every day.

Changes in behavior don’t happen overnight; through Teacher and Leader Coaching, schools learn to be patient with the process of shifting student, family, and educator mindsets.

I push students every day about getting their diploma and what is backing my preaching is the text messages. They’re not just hearing it from me—their parents are hearing it from KiNVO. They get it from both angles.

–Mr. W, dean and attendance coordinator

Parents learn to trust the communications and expect consistent messages. This ongoing, transparent communications lifeline ultimately affects student behavior, as their support systems in school and at home align around the common goal of high attendance.
CONCLUSION

Kinolved’s technology and services are designed to break down communications and accessibility barriers so that parents, students, educators, and communities can forge healthy and engaged relationships built around a shared goal of student achievement. Reflecting on our learnings from this year’s impact study, three guiding principles emerged:

01 The first step to realizing change is shining a spotlight on absenteeism.

02 Technology alone will not improve student outcomes.

03 Change takes time, but it is possible.

With an eye toward the finish line—graduating high school prepared for success in school, work, and life—we’re here to support each student’s first step: showing up.

When it comes to attendance, every minute matters.
RESEARCH TEAM

FELICIA YANG GORMAN
Dr. Felicia Yang Gorman, who led our external evaluation efforts, is a research and analytics consultant with extensive experience in data analysis in the education sector. She holds a Ph.D. in Policy Analysis and Management from Cornell University, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in demography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

ALEXANDRA MEIS
Alexandra Meis, Kinvolved Co-founder and Chief Product Officer, manages Kinvolved’s Impact Report operations and development. Ms. Meis holds a master’s in public administration from New York University’s Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service and a bachelor’s in psychology from Lafayette College.

JESSICA RIEGEL
Jessica Riegel, who guided surveying and interviewing, is a graduate student at New York University’s Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service. A Teach For America alum, she previously taught first grade in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Newark, New Jersey. She holds a bachelor’s in urban studies and political economy from the University of Pennsylvania.

RESEARCH METHODS

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM, COMMUNICATIONS, AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

To understand our impact on chronic absenteeism rates we analyzed School Quality Reports and publicly available data from the NYCDOE.

We also analyzed internal KiNVO metrics to monitor growth in volume of messages sent across parents, teachers, and administrators. Finally, we surveyed 328 users on their experience with KiNVO and the impact it had on attendance, lateness, and parent relationships, and we conducted 50 half-hour phone interviews with teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and support staff.


