

Alongside Earns ESSA Level II Certification for Improving K12 School Attendance

Independent third-party research proves Alongside is the leading student-facing solution for improving student attendance

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Alongside, the clinician-designed AI wellbeing platform used by more than 200 schools nationwide, today announced it has earned Evidence for ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Level II evidence demonstrating a statistically significant improvement in student attendance. The designation is based on an independent third-party study conducted by Instructure.

The study, conducted during the 2024–25 school year across multiple Texas schools and including students in grades 5–12, found that students using Alongside had 20% fewer absences compared to non-users. These gains translated into a [2% increase in Average Daily Attendance \(ADA\)](#) — a critical academic and financial metric for school systems.

“Attendance is one of the most urgent challenges school leaders are working to solve,” said Jay Goyal, CEO and Co-Founder of Alongside. “Earning ESSA Level II evidence is a major milestone for Alongside and, more importantly, validates what educators are seeing on the ground: when students have the tools to navigate school stress, peer relationships, and big emotions, they are more likely to show up and stay engaged.”

Attendance: The Hidden Lever for Student Success and District Funding

A graphic with a blue background. At the top left, the word "alongside" is written in a lowercase, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the text "Alongside Earns ESSA Level II Certification for Improving K12 School Attendance" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. In the center, "20%" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below that, "fewer absences for students using Alongside" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. On the right side, there are two cartoon llamas, one purple and one pink, with white faces and black outlines. At the bottom, the text "Alongside Earns ESSA Level II Certification for Improving K12 School Attendance" is repeated in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

Attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic success. Students who attend school consistently are more likely to stay on track academically, graduate on time, and fully participate in learning. Conversely, chronic absenteeism undermines achievement, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes.

Attendance can also have a direct financial impact on school systems. In Texas for example, districts receive approximately \$36 per student per day based on the state's basic annual student allotment. Even modest improvements can have a meaningful effect: increasing average daily attendance by just one percentage point can translate into hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional funding for a mid-size district — funding that can be reinvested into classrooms, staffing, and student supports.

“As a district, we always want to adopt resources that meaningfully support student wellbeing and mental health — and that’s something we know Alongside does,” said Sean Kays, Executive Director of Finance at Corsicana ISD. “When those same supports also improve attendance, that’s a double benefit. In our Spring 2025 study, students using Alongside had 2% higher attendance than those not, and because Texas funding is tied directly to ADA, that improvement extended over the school year can translate into hundreds of thousands of dollars in incremental funding — funding we otherwise would have missed.”

Key Findings & District Funding Relevance

The ESSA Level II designation indicates reliable evidence that Alongside is effective, based on a carefully designed study. The research compared similar groups of students who started at the same level, helping ensure the results reflect the program's impact rather than pre-existing differences.

Key Finding #1: Statistically significant attendance gains for students using Alongside

Among 474 students included in the evaluation, students who used Alongside showed a statistically significant improvement in attendance compared to similar students who did not use Alongside. The analysis controlled for prior attendance, student demographics, and selection bias, ensuring a fair comparison between groups.

Key Finding #2: 20% fewer absences among Alongside users

Students using Alongside had 20% fewer absences. This drop in absences was calculated by comparing the average number of absences for Alongside users vs non-users in the study.

Study Quality & Funding Relevance

The study design and analysis was designed to meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Version 5.0 standards, one of the highest benchmarks for education research quality, and

satisfied federal ESSA evidence requirements. This enables districts to confidently leverage local, state, and federal funding sources to support the adoption of Alongside.

About Alongside

Alongside is a clinician-designed AI platform that helps students take the right steps to tackle school stress, friend drama, and big emotions, whenever they need it. Trusted by more than 200 schools nationwide, Alongside's evidence-based approach provides support for everyday challenges while ensuring severe issues are flagged for human intervention, ensuring safety for young people and peace of mind for the adults who care about them.

To read the full ESSA Level II report or learn more about Alongside, visit www.alongside.care.

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