

OnMat Launches AI-Powered Student Retention System for Martial Arts Schools

OnMat Honor uses Claude AI to identify at-risk students months early, inspired by founder's near-quit at 16 and a master's two-minute phone call.

AKRON, OHIO, OH, UNITED STATES, May 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- OnMat, the AI-powered [martial arts school management platform](#), today

“

Those essays brought me to tears. A student remembers something you said in their first week, years later, at their most important moment. That relationship is what Honor protects.”

*Eric Pansegrau, Founder,
OnMat*

announced the launch of [OnMat Honor](#), an AI-driven student retention and engagement system built directly into [OnMat Command](#), the platform's school intelligence dashboard.

OnMat Honor identifies students who are beginning to drift from their training — softening attendance, reduced engagement after promotion, subtle pattern shifts — and surfaces them to the school owner with specific recommended actions, often months before traditional at-risk alerts would trigger.

The feature is powered by Anthropic's Claude AI and draws on attendance, belt progression, and engagement data that OnMat has collected across its school network since 2015.

The Story Behind the Feature

OnMat founder Eric Pansegrau began training in taekwondo in the early 1980s. At 16, he stopped coming to class. He didn't quit dramatically — he simply drifted away, the way many students do.

His master called him. A two-minute phone call. "Hey — haven't seen you in a few weeks. Everything okay?"

Pansegrau is a black belt today. Decades later, he returned to the mat around 2010 — first as a student, then as an instructor at a school in California, where he taught until March 2020 when COVID-19 shut the world down. He never took a paycheck. He instructed because he loved it.

During those years he became known for his work with trial students and their parents, earning a high conversion rate by building genuine relationships from a student's very first class. He was old school — strict with young children in the way instructors from the 1980s tended to be. When he once asked the school owner whether his style was too demanding, the owner's answer was simple: "The parents love you."

He enrolled his own children in taekwondo at ages four and five. His daughter earned her Kukkiwon black belt at 12. His son reached brown belt before the pandemic ended their training.

The moments Pansegrau remembers most from those years are the essays — required at his school when students tested for black belt — where they wrote about their journey and often recalled something an instructor had said to them as a white belt, years earlier, that stayed with them all the way to black belt.

"Those essays brought me to tears every time," said Pansegrau. "A student remembers something you said in their first week of class, years later, at the most important moment of their martial arts journey. That is the relationship this community is built on. Honor exists to protect it."

For years, the question that shaped OnMat's development was the same one that had followed Pansegrau since the 1980s: what if his master hadn't called?

"Every school owner has lost students they could have saved," said Pansegrau. "Not because they stopped caring — but because they have 100 or 200 students and one person cannot personally track every signal from every student every week. Honor makes sure the right student gets the right attention at the right moment. Every time."

How OnMat Honor Works

When a student's behavioral patterns shift — attendance softening after a promotion, a teen reducing class frequency, an adult missing two consecutive weeks — OnMat Honor surfaces the student in the school owner's daily OnMatAI briefing with specific context and a recommended



action.

A typical briefing might read: "Rocky Bell, 14, orange belt. Pattern: teen drift after elevated-risk promotion. Attendance softened 30% over the last month. Call him directly — not the parents."

The system draws on known attrition patterns specific to martial arts: orange belt is a documented attrition peak, red and brown belt represent a second peak, and teen students drift differently than children or adults. Honor knows these patterns because OnMat has observed them across hundreds of students over nearly a decade.

Students earn honor points for attendance streaks, skill mastery, belt promotions, and positive contributions to the school community. Points are redeemed at the school store — physical merchandise or experiential rewards such as leading the class bow, choosing the warmup song, or a free private lesson with their instructor.

There are no public leaderboards in OnMat Honor. Public rankings reward already-engaged students and demotivate the marginal student — exactly the population Honor exists to retain.

School Voice: AI That Sounds Like Your School

Every school has its own philosophy and language. OnMat Honor includes a School Voice setting allowing school owners to write two to four sentences describing their school's culture and values. OnMatAI uses that voice to personalize every Honor communication so it sounds like it came from that specific school — not a software platform.

"A school that trains students to be strong, gentle, and humble peacemakers speaks very differently than a school built around warrior spirit," said Pansegrau. "Honor adapts to the school. Not the other way around."

Availability and Pricing

OnMat Honor is available now as part of the OnMat Academy tier, priced at \$179 per month with a 30-day free trial, no credit card required, and no setup fee.

OnMat serves martial arts schools across all disciplines including taekwondo, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, karate, Muay Thai, and mixed martial arts. The platform includes AI-powered school briefings, end-to-end belt testing with automated report cards, attendance tracking connected to test readiness, trial conversion tools, automated billing with pass-along processing fee capability, and self-registration via QR code.

About OnMat

OnMat is a martial arts school management platform built by martial artists, for martial artists.

Founded in 2015 by Eric Pansegrau — a black belt with over 40 years of experience, a former instructor, and a martial arts parent — OnMat serves schools across the United States with AI-powered tools for member management, billing, attendance, belt testing, trial conversion, and student retention. OnMat is the only martial arts school management platform with built-in Claude AI integration across its full feature set.

For more information visit <https://onmat.app> or contact the OnMat team at <https://onmat.app/connect>.

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