In order for things to work, the whole system has to be working in concert, McFarland explains. And in a perfect world, as long as everyone is playing their role and everybody is doing their part, then it works.

Breakdowns are bound to happen, however, and when they do it’s important to seek out help to get things back on track. When McFarland found that too many children were falling behind in their classes, it was determined that part of the problem stemmed from a lack of regular and expedited communication with absent students’ families.

To help mitigate the issue, McFarland says the district is implementing The Achievement Initiative featuring Attention2Attendance (A2A). The program, developed by School Innovations & Achievement (SI&A), is an early warning and intervention system which tracks student attendance and sends letters home to families in a timely manner when their child is trending toward becoming chronically absent.

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“Dr. McFarland is already ahead of the curve because he understands the importance of tapping into individual talents and passions,” says Susan Cook, COO and Leadership Coach at School Innovations & Achievement. “When individual talents are combined with others’ unique talents, they become unstoppable. Attendance has a direct connection to student achievement, and it takes a team with many different talents to ensure student success.”

Indeed, collaboration is the cornerstone to decision-making in Crowley ISD, McFarland says.

“The power of leadership calls for collaboration and motivation.”

Dr. Michael McFarland, Superintendent