



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Alabama
State Board
of Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Governor Kay Ivey
President

Alabama Focuses on Connectedness through School Attendance

September Officially Designated as School Attendance Awareness Month 2022

Jackie Zeigler
District I

As K-12 schools throughout the nation and across our great state begin the new school year, educators are focusing their full efforts on increasing school attendance.

Tracie West
District II
President Pro Tem

Local school systems statewide are working to enhance the role of parents, and regional community outreach in ensuring all children make it to class every day and attend school consistently. There is a real focus on building and supporting regular school attendance.

Stephanie Bell
District III

September has officially been designated as *School Attendance Awareness Month 2022* throughout our nation and in the Great State of Alabama. This year's event theme is "*Stay Connected, Keep Learning!*"

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV

Special emphasis is being placed on building greater student engagement, public awareness, and long-term family support for school attendance efforts.

Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D.
District V

Barriers in transportation, health issues, poor nutrition, and mental health concerns are leading factors that often impact student attendance. A recent national survey revealed that chronic absenteeism has more than doubled from pre-pandemic levels, with an estimated eight million students missing too many school days!

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

Truancy Vs. Chronic Absence

<div style="background-color: #4a90e2; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; padding: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>TRUANCY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counts only unexcused absences • Emphasizes compliance with school rules • Relies on legal & administrative solutions </div> </div>	Vs.	<div style="background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; padding: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>CHRONIC ABSENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions • Emphasizes academic impact of missed days • Uses community-based, positive strategies </div> </div>
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Chronic absences in elementary schools can often lead to lower reading scores. By middle school, they can be a warning sign if a student is on track to fail key classes or eventually drop out of high school.

Throughout this entire month, local school systems statewide will focus their efforts on helping all Alabama

students, families, and communities take more impactful action. The goal is to ensure that every student is at school each day and fully achieving academically.

—more—

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII
Vice President

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer

September is School Attendance Awareness Month - Stay Connected, Keep Learning!

“Addressing student attendance is truly not a solo effort,” said Dr. Kay Atchison Warfield, Alabama State Department of Education Prevention and Support Services Administrator.

“Working together, each of us – teachers, local schools, parents, and supportive residents of Alabama’s local communities – must ensure a greater focus is placed on school attendance. Every day that a student is not in school, is a day this child misses important opportunities to gain experience, achieve, and grow.”



Chronic absenteeism -18 days or more a year (excused and unexcused) places students at greater academic risk. Schools have the potential to support students’ positive mental health development by helping students engage in school activities, develop caring connections with teachers and other young people, and use appropriate critical thinking skills.

*See the informative *Bringing Attendance Home*, parent video at <https://vimeo.com/240840053>

Well-respected organizations like *Attendance Works* are providing valuable information and data for local school system administrators to use in combatting truancy and chronic school absences. This organization recently released:

- [The NEW Toolkit: Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L. - Attendance Awareness Campaign 2022 \(attendanceworks.org\)](https://attendanceworks.org)

This resource provides valuable information for schools, families, and community organizations to support student attendance.

A recent study also found that students who are chronically absent in any year between eighth and 12th grade, are more than seven times more likely to drop out, compared to a student with better overall attendance.

To learn more about Alabama school attendance and awareness, contact Alabama State Department of Education Administrator Kay Atchison Warfield or ALSDE Prevention and Support Specialists Shenitra Dees and Tracy Goreed at 334-694-4717.

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