MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

RE: September Attendance Awareness Month

Every day at school counts in a student’s life. While research substantiates the importance of teacher effectiveness on student academic success, even the best teacher cannot be effective unless students are present in class. Recent data indicates that in the 2012-2013 school year there were 12 million unexcused absences in the state of Alabama. Research also supports that poor attendance is a major indicator for students eventually dropping out of school. Sometimes it’s hard to acknowledge, but these non-compliant behaviors of habitual absenteeism begin in kindergarten.

Therefore, September has been proclaimed Alabama Attendance Awareness Month in support of a national campaign to enhance the understanding of educators, parents, students, and community partners of the major impact school attendance has on the success, both academically and behaviorally, of our students. It is also our intent to support school systems as everyone focuses on the new accountability measures that now include students’ attendance for the year. Resources located at everyschooldaycounts.org, attendanceworks.org, and the community guidebook with graduation.org may serve as a springboard for incorporating effective attendance improvement/enhancing activities into your school processes.

As special events, articles, activities, and/or programs are planned, we strongly encourage you to review your current school system attendance policies as referenced in Student Code of Conduct documents. Policies should reflect restorative justice and not solely punitive measures. We also ask that you share exciting ideas with the Prevention and Support Services Section by completing the attached “Best Practice” template. Together we will coordinate learning support services and innovative pathways to address attendance as the major indicator for enabling poor academic and behavioral success of our students.

TRB/KAW/KM
Attachment

FY13-2100
**BEST PRACTICE TEMPLATE**

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<th>Local Education Agency:</th>
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**Category:** Check all that apply.

- [ ] Attendance
- [ ] Discipline
- [ ] Safety
- [ ] Academics
- [ ] Community Partnership
- [ ] Other

**Target Audience:**

- [ ]

**Title/Program:**

- [ ]

**Description:**

- [ ]

**Parental Involvement:**

- [ ]

**Community Involvement and Resources:**

- [ ]

**State Department of Education Initiatives:**

- [ ]

**Evaluation:**

- [ ]

Permission is granted for this information to be shared on the ALSDE Web site.

Superintendent Signature __________________________ Date __________

Please e-mail this template to Ms. Karen Matthews at karenm@alsde.edu