July 28, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Philip C. Cleveland
Interim State Superintendent of Education

RE: School Attendance Awareness Month

Educators know the importance of attendance in schools and the negative impact that absenteeism has on learning, and we need your help to spread the word! To combat the problem of chronic absenteeism, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is once again showcasing the need to be at school every day with School Attendance Awareness Month. We ask that you participate and encourage your students to be on time and at school every day.

By promoting School Attendance Awareness Month, students and parents can become more aware of the crucial need for students to be in school when the bell rings. The ALSDE will be distributing tips and tactics, resourced sample social media posts, along with links to materials and toolkits to use in your system.

Resources located at http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/ offer great materials to assist your local education agency (LEA). These free materials may be used in newsletters, Web sites, social media graphics, and other external communications in order to spread the word and achieve perfect attendance for the month of September and the rest of the year! Posters, videos, and other materials are found on the site pages. Spanish versions are available as well.

Please share ALSDE-related social media posts located on Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. Also, www.gradnation.org may serve as a springboard for incorporating effective attendance improvement/enhancing activities into your school processes. Tag the department on Twitter using @aldeptofed and use #schooleveryday to share your success!

As special events, campaigns, articles, activities, and/or programs are planned, we strongly encourage you to review your current LEA attendance policies as referenced in the Student Code of Conduct documents. Policies should reflect restorative justice and not punitive measures.

We also ask that you share exciting ideas with the Prevention and Support Services Section by e-mailing Dr. Kay Atchison Warfield at kaw@alsde.edu or 334-242-8165 or Mrs. Malissa Valdes-Hubert with the Communications Section at mvaldes@alsde.edu or 334-242-9950. You can also contact Dr. Warfield to learn more about the Graduation Tracking System, a tool designed to identify early students with at-risk indicators.

Together, we will coordinate learning support services and innovative pathways to address attendance as the major contributor for facilitating academic and behavioral success of our students.

PCC/KAW/CT

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