FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 5, 2019

ALABAMA BUILDING EXCELLENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
“State Celebrating School Attendance and Awareness During Special Celebration”

The new school-year has just begun! It is a wonderful time for Alabamians to learn more about the importance of K-12 students having reliable and solid school attendance.

Join us in celebrating Alabama School Attendance Awareness Month 2019! This exciting two-month awareness event is being held August 1 until September 30.

Each year, millions of hours of valuable classroom instruction time are missed because of excessive school absences. Chronic absenteeism places students at greater academic risk, and leads some to fail, or even drop out of school altogether.

To combat this devastating trend, many communities across our state have developed innovative resources, programs, and methods to reduce school absences.

See a copy of the new Alabama School Attendance Manual at the following web link: https://www.alsde.edu/sec/pss/Attendance/Absolute%20Final%202019%20Attendance%20Manual%20Revised1.pdf

Several Alabama schools have developed fun activities to increase student attendance.

Nationally, suspensions and excessive absences have been shown to lower classroom proficiency. Our school attendance celebration is focused on increasing school attendance.

Interesting Facts About School Attendance

Did you know that poor school attendance can start as early as kindergarten and can affect a student’s achievement through high school? Consistent school attendance is very important. It allows students to build strong foundational skills in reading, math, and language.

Barriers in transportation, health issues, poor nutrition, and mental health matters are some leading factors, which can impact a student’s attendance.

See the informative video from AttendanceWorks.org: https://vimeo.com/63614396

There is a Difference Between Truancy and Chronic Absence

- Truancy only counts “unexcused” absences.
  - Chronic Absence counts all absences – excused, unexcused, and suspensions.
- Truancy only emphasizes compliance with school rules.
  - Chronic Absence emphasizes the academic impact of missed school days.
- Truancy relies on legal administrative solutions.
  - Chronic Absence uses community-based strategies to attain positive outcomes.

--more--
2019 Alabama School Attendance Awareness Celebration – August 1-September 30

Three local Alabama school systems with best practice-level school attendance efforts are Birmingham City Schools, Huntsville City Schools, and Montgomery County Schools.

Some of our state’s most innovative attendance initiatives can be found in these districts:

- **Alabaster City Schools** – School Social Workers and Report Card Conferencing
- **Hoover City Schools** – Truancy Prevention Program
- **Madison County Schools** – Code of Conduct Strategies and School Social Workers
- **Dallas County Schools** – Attendance Manual – Fair and Equitable Procedures
- **Jackson County Schools** – Attendance and Student Mentoring Program

To promote good attendance each year, some schools are using creative and fun messages to highlight the importance of regular school attendance. These inspirational messages and information are shared on local social media resources and school websites.

To learn more about the 2019 Alabama School Attendance Awareness Month celebration, contact Alabama State Department of Education Administrator Kay Warfield at 334-694-4724, or ALSDE Education Specialist Kanetra Germany at kgermany@ALSDE.edu.

###