



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 1, 2020

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Governor Kay Ivey
President

ALABAMA IS BUILDING EXCELLENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

“State Agencies Partner to Promote Importance of School Attendance and Awareness”

Join us in celebrating *Alabama School Attendance Awareness Month 2020!* This exciting awareness event is **being held until September 30.**

Jackie Zeigler
District I
Vice President



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

Tracie West
District II

To combat this devastating trend, several top state agencies and many local communities statewide have created innovative resources and methods to reduce school absences.

Stephanie Bell
District III

Even during the national COVID-19 outbreak, several Alabama schools have developed highly effective methods and programs to increase student attendance. Excellent attendance programs can be

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV
President Pro Tem

found throughout our state, including these wonderful and innovative local initiatives:

Tommie T. Stewart, Ph.D.
District V

- **Mobile County Schools** – Partnership created with regional Social Workers to support students and families in need during the pandemic, and during the reopening of school.
- **Elmore County Schools** – Special Wi-Fi Partnership created with local professionals to establish *more opportunities for every student* to participate in remote and distance learning.
- **Tuscaloosa City Schools** – Recognized for implementing highly effective school attendance procedures and policies.
- **Trussville City Schools** – Created *Making Each Day Count* initiative, to successful increase local student attendance and community awareness about the importance of regular attendance.
- **Hoover City Schools** – Creation of an innovative Attendance Officers’ Partnership, to identify and ultimately resolve any student and family needs, which could impact school attendance.
- **Madison City Schools** – Implementation of highly effective School Reopening Plan (best practice).
- **Alabaster City Schools** – Recognized as being highly effective in supporting student and family needs, to ensure all students have a chance to consistently attend school.

–more–

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

Jeff Newman
District VII

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII

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

ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH 2020

When asked about their well-received school attendance efforts, the Elmore County Schools responded, “Elmore County Public Schools has multiple attendance options...Our blended attendance model allows students to attend traditional school and utilize a virtual instruction platform along with traditional instruction from the teacher. Due to COVID-19, each campus is offering a full virtual option for students in grades K-12, on their respective campuses. This option allows students to easily transition back into the regular classroom, should they choose to do so.”

Nationally, excessive absences have been shown to lower classroom proficiency.

Attendance often improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.

Alabama’s school attendance celebration is focused on increasing school attendance – in the *traditional* and *online-remote learning* classroom!

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.**

Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade.

By sixth grade, chronic absences become a leading indicator if a student will drop out of high school.

Attendance is expanded in virtual learning. It includes important indicators and evidence of attendance, such as student engagement and participation.

To learn more about the *2020 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.