



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Alabama
State Board
of Education

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Governor Kay Ivey
President

ALABAMA COMMITTED TO HAVING TOP SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

“Local School Systems Promote Importance of Classroom Attendance and Awareness”

Jackie Zeigler
District I

Montgomery, Ala. – Over the past five years, Alabama has solidified its commitment to increasing school attendance, both in *traditional* and *online-remote learning* classrooms.

Throughout the month of September, both our nation and the Great State of Alabama have celebrated *School Attendance Awareness Month 2021*.

Tracie West
District II

Local school systems statewide have focused their efforts on helping students to earn excellent daily school attendance. Each year, millions of hours of valuable class instruction time are missed nationally, because of excessive student absences.

Stephanie Bell
District III

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, our state and many of our local communities have created innovative resources and methods to reduce school absences.

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV
Vice President

Even during the recent national COVID-19 outbreak, Alabama schools developed effective methods and programs to increase student attendance.

Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D.
District V

Alabama educators also created many innovative programs and resources to boost school attendance while also working to support the safe return of students to in-person learning.

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

The *2021-2022 Alabama Attendance Manual* shares important information on this subject, including *PowerSchool* screenshot resources, reports, and key term definitions. This insightful document also provides descriptions on virtual, remote, and hybrid learning as it relates to overall attendance.

Belinda McRae
District VII

Alabama educators have also been placing emphasis on helping parents understand the importance of school attendance by using creative methods, such as *Report Card Conferencing* and in-school *Early Warning Systems* to quickly identify at-risk barriers to student social, emotional, and academic success.

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII
President Pro Tem

To build excitement among students, many local schools have been holding special competitions to allow recognition for *Best Attendance*. Parents have also been encouraged to allow students to participate in fun school-related activities, like music classes, sports teams, and school clubs.

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

Alabama School Attendance Officers are also focused on creating more partnerships with their local School Counselors, Mental Health Coordinators, and Social Workers to provide an even higher level of wrap-around support for students. They want to encourage greater levels of school attendance, especially among those students at greater risk of dropping out.

–more–

Many top attendance programs can be found throughout Alabama, including these dynamic initiatives:

- **Mobile County Schools** – Created special partnership with regional Social Workers to support students and families in need during the pandemic and during the reopening of school.
- **Trussville City Schools** – Created *Making Each Day Count* initiative to successfully increase local student attendance and community awareness about the importance of regular attendance.
- **Hoover City Schools** – Created of an innovative Attendance Officers’ Partnership to identify and ultimately resolve any student and family needs, which could impact school attendance.
- **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.

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

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

Well-respected organizations like *Attendance Works* are also providing great information and data for local school system administrators to use in combatting truancy and chronic school absences.

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.

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 also influence reading proficiency by the end of third grade. **By sixth grade, chronic absences can be a leading indicator for the potential of dropping out.**

Attendance is expanded even more in virtual learning. It includes important indicators, such as student engagement and participation.

To learn more about *Alabama school attendance and awareness*, contact Alabama State Department of Education Administrator Kay Warfield at 334-694-4724 or ALSDE Education Specialist Shenitra Dees at shenitra.dees@ALSDE.edu

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