

RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF SEPTEMBER 2024 AS ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH IN ALABAMA SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education are committed to dedicating resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates, starting as early as kindergarten, recognizing that good attendance is essential to student achievement and graduation; and

WHEREAS, chronic absence is now a required reporting metric under the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Department of Education has developed guidelines found in the *Alabama Attendance Manual* to assist school systems in supporting consistency for school attendance; and

WHEREAS, chronic absence is defined as missing 18 or more days of school for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences, or just two or three days a month, which is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates; and

WHEREAS, the definition of attendance has expanded “beyond the classroom” to include virtual and remote learning; and

WHEREAS, local school systems are effectively working to advance student success by reducing chronic absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, improving student attendance and reducing chronic absences takes commitment, collaboration, and tailored approaches to challenges and strengths in each community; and

WHEREAS, the impact of chronic absence hits vulnerable populations particularly hard if they do not have the resources to recoup for lost time in the classroom, aligning with situations more likely to face systemic barriers for attending school; and

WHEREAS, chronic absenteeism exacerbates the achievement gap often associated with struggling students from peers; and

WHEREAS, student absenteeism undermines efforts to improve struggling schools since it is hard to measure improvement in classroom instruction if students are not engaged to benefit from instruction; and

WHEREAS, schools and communities must do more to identify, analyze, project, and share data on how many students are chronically absent so that appropriate interventions are matched with the needs of the students; and

WHEREAS, *Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523* concentrates on systematic efforts to improve the reading skills of all public-school students in early literacy so that every student is reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Department of Education works collaboratively with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and other state agencies and organizations to provide support services for increasing attendance for all students; and

WHEREAS, chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, parents, and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep students from attending school:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Alabama State Board of Education encourages all local communities, school systems, and civic organizations to join in this laudable effort to reduce chronic student absenteeism and designates September 1-30, 2024, as Attendance Awareness Month in Alabama public schools.

Done this 8th day of August 2024