[DISTRICT] School Board Announces September is Attendance Awareness Month in NAME OF COMMUNITY

*[NAME] pledges to engage community, parents, students
 in concerted effort to reduce chronic absenteeism*

[DISTRICT] Board of Education has joined a nationwide effort to celebrate [Attendance Awareness Month](http://www.attendanceworks.org/attendancemonth) in September and has pledged to raise awareness about the value of regular school attendance and focus on reducing chronic absenteeism in the new school year.

The board recognizes that good attendance is essential to academic success. But far too many students are at risk academically because they are chronically absent. Chronic absence is described as missing 10 percent of the school year—or about 18 days – for any reason, excused or unexcused. That’s the point at which absenteeism begins to affect student performance, research shows.

Nationally, as many as one out of 10 students miss 10 percent of the school year in excused and unexcused absences every year.

Yet, too often chronic absence remains a hidden problem because schools track only average daily attendance and truancy (unexcused absences.) The research shows that chronic absence predicts lower 3rd grade reading proficiency, course failure and eventual dropout. The impact hits low-income students particularly hard, especially if they don’t have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom and are more likely to face barriers to getting to school, such as unreliable transportation and chronic health issues

SAMPLE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER QUOTE “We know that we will never narrow the achievement gap or reduce our dropout rate until we bring this problem under control, and that means starting early,” [MEMBER] said. “All our efforts to improve curriculum and instruction won’t matter much if kids aren’t in school.”

This September, schools, city agencies, community nonprofits, faith-based groups, businesses and others around the nation are coming together to deliver the message that every school day counts. They are committing time and resources to raise public awareness, dig deeper into attendance data and work with community partners to improve school attendance starting as soon as children enter school. SHARE ANY LOCAL DETAILS IF AVAILABLE

[If you’d like a quote from one of our national partners, please contact Phyllis Jordan at pjordan@thehatchergroup.com]

During Attendance Awareness Month, we are asking school leaders, community advocates, parents and students to act upon these critical first steps to help stem chronic absenteeism in their schools:

* Build a habit and a culture of regular attendance
* Use data to monitor when chronic absence is a problem, and
* Identify and solve barriers to getting children to school.

Study after study shows that chronic absence is an early warning indicator that a student will drop out of a high school. A [recent study from Utah](http://www.attendanceworks.org/utah-study-chronically-absent-students-7-4-times-more-likely-to-drop-out/) found that a student who was chronically absent in any year between eighth and 12th grade was 7.4 times more likely to drop out than students with better attendance.

“We can turn the tide on chronic absenteeism by making it a priority, driving with data and using positive supports to engage families and students in showing up to school every day.” ANOTHER LOCAL QUOTE

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