Name of City/District Mayor/Superintendent/School Board Announces Local Efforts to Celebrate the Attendance Awareness Campaign

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

[NAME OF CITY] Mayor/Superintendent/School Board has joined a nationwide effort to celebrate the [Attendance Awareness Campaign](https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/) in September and has pledged focus on reducing chronic absenteeism in the new school year.

[NAME or CITY of DISTRICT] 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% of the school year—or about 18 days— for any reason.

Our country faces a school attendance crisis. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 8 million students were chronically absent. Early data from states indicates that it has likely doubled, potentially affecting nearly 16 million students nationwide by the end of the 2021–22 school year.

 SHARE ANY LOCAL DATA IF AVAILABLE.

Starting as early as kindergarten or even preschool, chronic absence predicts lower 3rd grade reading scores. By middle school, it’s a warning sign that students will fail key classes and drop out of high school, research shows.

Chronic absence disproportionately affects children from low-income families and communities of color, creating attendance gaps that exacerbate achievement gaps in local schools. This is not just a matter of truancy. Many children, especially in the early grades, miss too much school because of chronic health problems, unreliable transportation or housing moves—barriers that city agencies and community partners can help families address.

SAMPLE MAYOR’S QUOTE “Improving student attendance matters to all of us, not just those with school-age children,” [MAYOR] said. “When more students graduate, on time, our communities and our economy are stronger. We have more people who are prepared for the workplace and more engaged in our community’s civic life.”

[SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD CHAIR SAMPLE QUOTE] “All our efforts to help students recover from the pandemic won’t matter much if kids aren’t in school.”

In September, schools, city agencies, community nonprofits, faith-based groups, businesses and others around the nation are committing time and resources to raise public awareness, map local attendance gaps and work with community partners to improve school attendance and student engagement starting as soon as children enter school. SHARE ANY LOCAL DETAILS IF AVAILABLE

“September is a particularly good time to focus on attendance,” said Hedy Chang, executive director of Attendance Works, a national nonprofit initiative dedicated to improving school attendance. “Research shows that students who miss two to four days in the first month of school are more likely to become chronically absent during the school year. By paying attention to absences early in the school year and early in a child’s academic career, we can turn around attendance and achievement.”

[If you’d like another quote from one of our national partners, please contact Catherine Cooney, Communications Director, at catherine@attendanceworks.org]

For the Attendance Awareness Campaign, we are asking school leaders, community advocates, parents and students to act upon these critical first steps to help stem chronic absenteeism:

* Build a habit and a culture of regular attendance
* Use data to determine when and with whom chronic absence is a problem, and
* Identify and address barriers to getting children to school

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