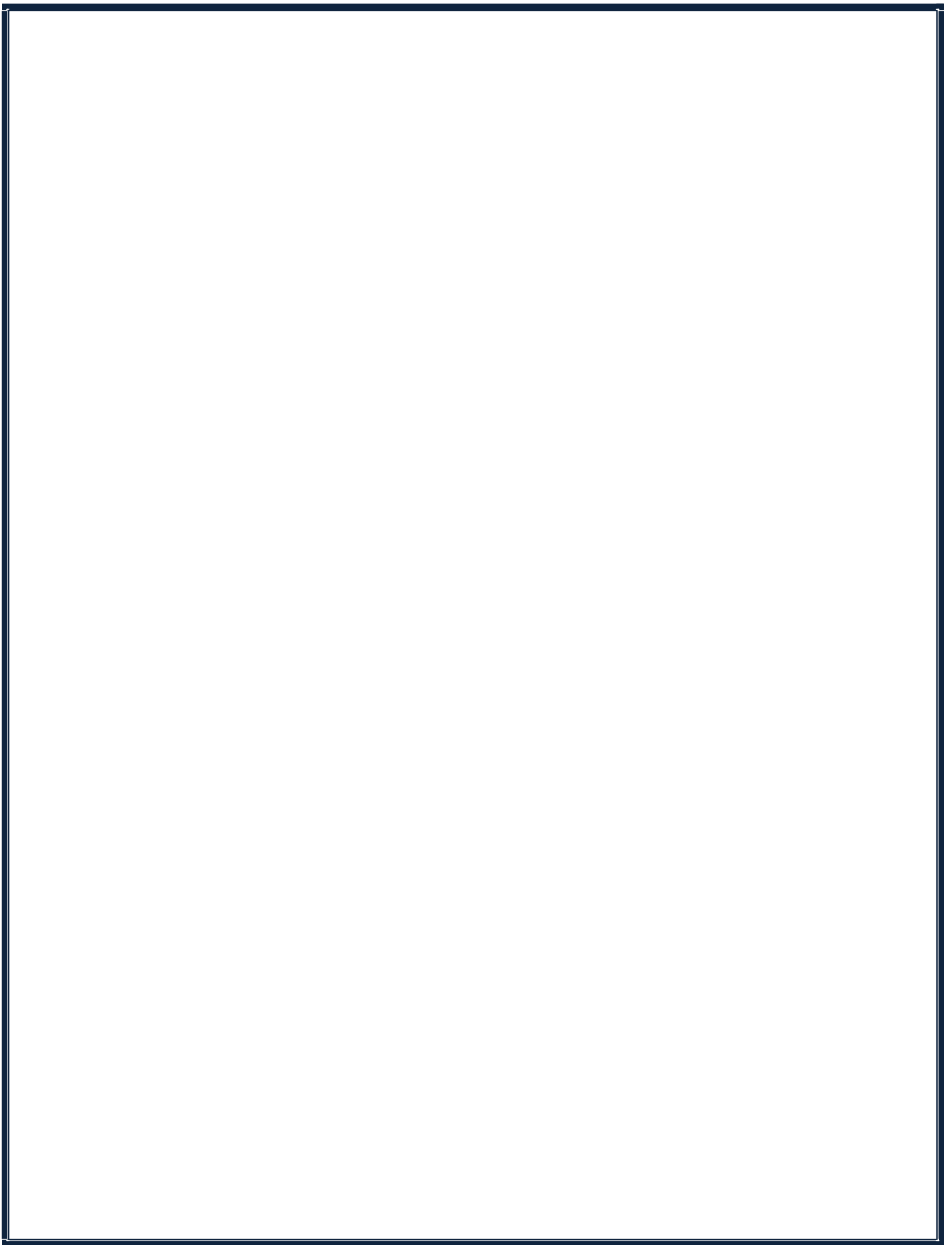


U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Education

Every Student, Every Day:
*A Community Toolkit to Address and
Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*





Every Student, Every Day:

A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Including information and resources for:

Youth

Parents and Families

Mentors and Volunteers

School District Superintendents and Staff, and School Personnel

Early Learning Providers

Health Care, Public Health & Human Service Agencies & Providers

Public Housing Authorities

Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement

Homeless Services Providers

Mayors and Local Government

Community, Faith-Based, and Philanthropic Organizations

U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Education

October 2015

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October 2015

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This report is available on the Department's website at www.ed.gov/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit.

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There are consequences to inaction. There are consequences to indifference. And they reverberate far beyond the walls of the projects, or the borders of the barrio, or the roads of the reservation. They sap us of our strength as a nation. It means we're not as good as we could be. And over time, it wears us out. Over time, it weakens our nation as a whole.

The good news is, it doesn't have to be this way. We can have the courage to change. We can make a difference. We can remember that these kids are our kids. "For these are all our children," James Baldwin once wrote. "We will all profit by, or pay for, whatever they become."

Remarks by **President Barack Obama** at Launch of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, May 4, 2015, Lehman College, West Bronx, New York



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

October 7, 2015

Dear Colleague:

A growing and compelling body of research demonstrates that chronic absence from school—typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused¹—is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of which students will eventually drop out of school.² With an estimated five to seven and a half million students chronically absent each year,³ chronic absenteeism is a national problem that seriously undermines our collective efforts to improve education and life outcomes among our youth.

Today, we, the leaders of the U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Justice (DOJ), announce our long-term commitment to building capacity across the Federal government to support States and local communities in the work of addressing and eliminating chronic absenteeism. We also call upon States and local education, health, housing, and justice agencies and organizations, in partnership with community stakeholders, to join forces and commit to creating or enhancing coordinated, cross-sector systems for identifying and supporting students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent, with the goal of reducing chronic absenteeism by at least 10 percent each year, beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

¹ Therriault, S., Heppen, J., O’Cummings, M., Fryer, L., & Johnson, A. (2010). *Early Warning System Implementation Guide: For Use with the National High School Center’s Early Warning System Tool v2.0*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, National High School Center. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED521686>.

² Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Available at http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf.

³ Ibid.

In order to support communities in addressing and eliminating barriers to students' daily attendance at, and meaningful engagement with, school—particularly for students who are low-income, of color, homeless, highly mobile, juvenile justice-involved, and/or who are students with disabilities—we are pleased to announce the release of *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism*, which is available at <http://www.ed.gov/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit>. This Toolkit will provide community stakeholders with information and resources to help ensure that all young people are in school every day and benefitting from coordinated systems of support. Further, to achieve our ambitious but attainable goal of reducing chronic absenteeism by at least 10 percent per year, we ask that leaders of State and local education, health, housing, and justice systems work immediately and collaboratively to take the following action steps:

Action Step 1: Generate and act on absenteeism data. Prioritize the development of early warning prevention and intervention systems that identify students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent before they miss enough school that it is nearly impossible for them to catch up. Data from such systems should be shared—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—between school districts and other key public and private organizations to ensure coordinated systems of support for students who are chronically absent.⁴

Action Step 2: Create and deploy positive messages and measures. Focus on developing positive messages for youth and families as well as implementing supportive engagement strategies. For instance, these strategies may include mentoring, counseling, and creating safe and supportive school climates through approaches such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports⁵ to improve students' attendance at, connection to, and success in school. Punitive messages and measures are often ineffective and can lead to disproportionate suspensions and expulsions from school and inappropriate referrals of students and families to law enforcement.⁶

Action Step 3: Focus communities on addressing chronic absenteeism. Launch local initiatives to raise public awareness about the causes and effects of chronic absenteeism, including awareness among families and youth. Prioritize training within communities and across sectors to conduct root-cause analyses of

⁴ For information on data-sharing consistent with FERPA, please refer to guidance provided by ED's Family Policy Compliance Office at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

⁵ For more information on implementing positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), please visit ED's PBIS Technical Assistance Center at www.pbis.org.

⁶ Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., Cohen, R. (2014). *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center. Available at <http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report/>.

local absenteeism trends. Implement research and evidence-based strategies and programs—such as *Check & Connect*⁷—that effectively engage and support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent.

Action Step 4: Ensure responsibility across sectors. Regularly communicate that chronic absenteeism is a problem that affects the whole community, not just those students who are chronically absent and their families. Drive and evaluate cross-sector performance, at least in part, based on that principle. Education, health, housing, and justice system leaders should work together to ensure shared accountability within and across sectors to successfully address the local, underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.

As a nation, we must acknowledge that frequent absences from school can be devastating to a child’s future. For example, children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade.⁸ Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.⁹ By high school, irregular attendance is a better predictor of school dropout than test scores. A study of public school students in Utah found that a student who is chronically absent in even a single school year between the eighth and twelfth grades is over seven times more likely to drop out of school than a student who is not chronically absent.¹⁰ Students who are homeless and those who reside in public housing are also particularly at risk of being chronically absent from school.¹¹

Research further demonstrates that completing high school is not only a strong predictor of adult success but also of adult physical and mental health outcomes and involvement with the criminal justice system. Students who do not graduate from high school have

⁷ For more information on research findings of *Check & Connect* implementation, please see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=78>.

⁸ Ehrlich, S., Gwynne, J. A., Pareja, A. S., and Allensworth, E. M. (2013). *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Reform. Available at <https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/preschool-attendance-chicago-public-schools-relationships-learning-outcomes-and-reasons>.

⁹ Hernandez, D. (2011). *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, p. 6. Available at www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf.

¹⁰ Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah. (2012). *Research Brief: Chronic Absenteeism*. Available at <http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>.

¹¹ Nauer, K. et al. (2014). *A Better Picture of Poverty: What Chronic Absenteeism and Risk Load Reveal About NYC’s Lowest-Income Elementary Schools*. New York: Center for New York City Affairs, The Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. Available at www.centernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/.

worse health and greater health risks as adults than their peers who graduate.¹² They also have more frequent, negative contact with law enforcement,¹³ contributing to a cycle of poverty, poor health, homelessness, and incarceration. These data strongly suggest that the long-term consequence of chronic absenteeism is a population that is less educated, less healthy, underemployed, less financially stable, and more disenfranchised.

We recognize that attendance tracking systems in many school districts across the country are not required or designed to measure chronic absenteeism among local youth. In fact, efforts to improve average daily attendance often mask the extent of a school's chronic absenteeism problem and fail to address its underlying causes.¹⁴ Adding to the challenge, educators, families, and youth are not sufficiently aware of the frequency and negative impact of chronic absence from school.¹⁵ In many school districts and communities, the focus is on "unexcused" absences or truancy at the middle and high school level, even though research shows that chronic absence in the early grades is also a major problem, whether excused or unexcused.¹⁶ Common interventions are often punitive in nature and blame is frequently placed on students and their families. Ultimately, such responses have the deleterious, if unintended, effect of making school less, not more, engaging for students and families, and these practices undermine efforts to assist our most struggling schools and students.¹⁷

In spring 2016, ED will release the 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), including the first-ever school-level data on all students across the nation who missed at least 15 days of school for any reason, which translates into approximately 8.5 percent of a typical school year. We anticipate that the CRDC will shed new light on the scope of the chronic absenteeism problem, including where it is most prevalent and whom it most

¹² Cutler, D. M., Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). *Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence*. National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper No. 12352. Retrieved at www.econ.ucla.edu/alleras/research/books/Education_and_Health_July_2006.pdf.

¹³ Page, A., Petteruti, A., Walsh, N., Ziedenberg, J. (2007). *Education and Public Safety*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Center. Retrieved at www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-08_rep_educationandpublicsafety_ps-ac.pdf.

¹⁴ Bruner, C., Discher, A., Chang, H. (2011). *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight*. Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center. Available at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf>.

¹⁵ Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012), p. 6.

¹⁶ Applied Survey Research. (2011). *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Associations with Student Characteristics, School Readiness, and Third Grade Outcomes*. Report prepared for Attendance Works. Available at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ASR-Mini-Report-Attendance-Readiness-and-Third-Grade-Outcomes-7-8-11.pdf>.

¹⁷ Black, A. T., Seder, R. C., & Kekahio, W. (2014). *Review of research on student nonenrollment and chronic absenteeism: A report for the Pacific Region* (REL 2015-054). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

affects, and further catalyze efforts to engage students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent.

However, we can and must do more now to address the negative and disparate outcomes experienced by students who are chronically absent. By acting early and effectively in a coordinated, cross-sector manner—from the Federal government to every school and community in the country—we can dramatically improve the academic and life outcomes of millions of young people who have been disengaged from a daily, supportive school experience. The health and well-being of our nation demands that we do no less.

Sincerely,

Loretta Lynch
Attorney General
of the United States

Sylvia Burwell
Secretary of Health
and Human Services

Julián Castro
Secretary of Housing
and Urban Development

Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education

Every Student, Every Day:

A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism—or missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year for any reason, excused or unexcused—is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school. An estimated five to seven and a half million students miss 18 or more days of school each year, or nearly an entire month or more of school, which puts them at significant risk of falling behind academically and failing to graduate from high school. Because they miss so much school, millions of young people miss out on opportunities in post-secondary education and good careers.

But we can change that.

Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as **two days** of school a month.

**2 DAYS PER MONTH x 9 MONTHS =
CHRONIC ABSENCE**

The U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Justice (DOJ) have developed this toolkit to support coordinated community action that addresses the underlying causes of local chronic absenteeism affecting millions of children in our Nation's public schools each year. We believe—and research and best practices confirm—that when a diverse coalition of local stakeholders work together to engage students who are chronically absent, youth and family outcomes of entire communities can be dramatically improved. In short, we believe chronic absenteeism in communities is a solvable problem.

Models of coordinated community action to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism exist across the country, and each model is different; different communities make different choices about how to use time and resources. But one element of promising efforts to reengage chronically absent students tends to stand out: *coordination and collaboration among a diverse collection of local stakeholders is central to the work.* Representatives of education, health, housing, and justice-

related agencies and organizations are at the table, alongside youth, families, local government, and community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations. This collaborative approach can enable whole communities to acquire the resources and develop the networks they need to provide well-informed and effective guidance, motivation, and support to students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school and their families.

It is time to encourage coordinated community action across our country in order to ensure that we support every student, every day to attend and be successful in school and, ultimately, in life.

Purpose of this Toolkit

Many of the education, health, housing, and justice-related challenges some of our young people face can be effectively addressed when people and organizations within a community join forces, set aggressive yet achievable goals, and work together to provide all children, particularly our most disadvantaged, with the encouragement and support they need when they need it.

This Toolkit offers information, suggested action steps, and lists of existing tools and resources—including evidence-based resources—for individuals, leaders, and systems to begin or enhance the work of effective, coordinated community action to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism, including actions steps for:

- Youth
- Parents and Families
- Mentors and Volunteers
- School District Superintendents and Staff, and School Personnel
- Early Learning Providers
- Health Care, Public Health & Human Service Agencies & Providers
- Public Housing Authorities
- Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement
- Homeless Services Providers
- Mayors and Local Government
- Community, Faith-Based, and Philanthropic Organizations

Know the Facts about Chronic Absenteeism

It is important to know the facts about chronic absenteeism in order to effectively address and eliminate it. Everyone should understand what chronic absenteeism is, whom it affects, and why we must work in a deeply coordinated and collaborative fashion to support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school.

When engaging with someone on this issue, we suggest sharing the following important statistics about chronic absenteeism in the United States.

Did You Know?

An estimated **5 to 7.5 million students** are chronically absent from school each year.

Chronic absenteeism:

- Is a primary cause of lower academic achievement, even when the absences are “excused” or understandable.¹⁸
- Is a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school.¹⁹ A study of public school students in Utah found that a student who is chronically absent in any year between the eighth and twelfth grades is over seven times more likely to drop out of school than a student who was not chronically absent.²⁰
- Affects an estimated five to seven and a half million students each year.²¹
- Can even affect students in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade, who are then much less likely to read at grade level by the end of third grade.²²
- Is caused by a variety of issues, including chronic health conditions, housing instability, involvement with the juvenile justice system, and unsafe conditions in school, among many others.²³
- Is particularly prevalent among students who are low-income, students of color, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or

¹⁸ Gottfried, M. A. (2009). Excused Versus Unexcused: How Student Absences in Elementary School Affect Academic Achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 215–229.

¹⁹ Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Available at http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf. and Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., & Kabbani, N. (2001). The dropout process in life course perspective: Early risk factors at home and school. *The Teachers College Record*, 103(5), 760-822.

²⁰ Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah. (2012). *Research Brief: Chronic Absenteeism*. Available at www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf. <http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>

²¹ Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012), p. 17.

²² Ehrlich, S., Gwynne, J. A., Pareja, A. S., and Allensworth, E. M. (2013). *Preschool Attendance in Chicago Public Schools: Relationships with Learning Outcomes and Reasons for Absences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Reform. Available at <https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/preschool-attendance-chicago-public-schools-relationships-learning-outcomes-and-reasons>.

²³ Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012), p. 30.

- juvenile justice-involved youth—in other words, those who already tend to face significant challenges and for whom school is particularly beneficial.²⁴
- Is particularly prevalent among those students who are homeless or reside in public housing.²⁵
 - May lead to substance abuse. When students are skipping school, many of them become engaged in risky behavior such as substance abuse and delinquency.²⁶
 - Affects other students, too. Not only are frequent absences harmful to the absentee, but they also have a negative effect on the achievement of other students in the classroom.²⁷
 - Can negatively influence future adult health outcomes. Indeed, the mortality rate of high school dropouts is over two times greater than that for adults with some college education.²⁸
 - Can increase likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system.²⁹
 - Is not measured by most states or school districts in this country, which leaves many educators and communities without information they need to identify students who could use additional support to maintain regular attendance.³⁰

Community-Wide Action Steps to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

²⁴ Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Available at http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16.pdf.

²⁵ Nauer, K. et al. (2014). *A Better Picture of Poverty: What Chronic Absenteeism and Risk Load Reveal About NYC's Lowest-Income Elementary Schools*. New York: Center for New York City Affairs, The Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. Available at www.centernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/. Available at <http://www.centernyc.org/betterpictureofpoverty/>

²⁶ Henry, K. L., & Thornberry, T. P. (2010). Truancy and Escalation of Substance Use During Adolescence. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 71(1): 115–124, and Henry, K.L. & Huizinga, D. H. (2007). Truancy's Effect on the Onset of Drug Use among Urban Adolescents Placed at Risk. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 40 (4), 358.e9–358.e17.4.

²⁷ Gottfried, M. A. (2011). Absent peers in elementary years: The negative classroom effects of unexcused absences on standardized testing outcomes. *Teachers College Record*, 113(8).

²⁸ Cutler, D. M., Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). *Education and Health: Evaluating Theories and Evidence*. National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper No. 12352. Retrieved at www.econ.ucla.edu/alleras/research/books/Education_and_Health_July_2006.pdf.

²⁹ Page, A., , Petteruti, A., Walsh, N., Ziedenberg, J. (2007). *Education and Public Safety*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Center. Retrieved at www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-08_rep_educationandpublicsafety_ps-ac.pdf.

³⁰ Bruner, C., Discher, A., Chang, H. (2011). *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight*. Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center. Available at www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf. Available at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ChronicAbsence.pdf>

Research and experience demonstrate that several actions can help mobilize the kind of awareness, commitment to action, and community-based coalitions that are necessary to ensure that every student who is, or is at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school receives the necessary support to maintain regular school attendance. The following suggested **community-wide actions** can help lay the foundation for progress within and across schools and communities. Education, health, housing, and justice-system leaders, including school, community, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders, should work together to make meaningful progress on each action step.

Action Step 1: Generate and act on absenteeism data.

- ✓ **Prioritize** the development of early warning prevention and intervention systems.
- ✓ **Identify** both the students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school as well as the underlying causes of absenteeism.
- ✓ **Increase** every student’s access to support services to address absenteeism *before* any student misses so much school that it is nearly impossible to catch up.
- ✓ **Explore** and enter into partnerships—consistent with applicable Federal and State laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—between school districts and other important public and private organizations, such as public housing authorities and public health agencies, to increase and improve coordinated supports and interventions to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

Action Step 2: Create and deploy positive messages and measures.

- ✓ **Implement** positive and supportive engagement strategies—like mentoring, counseling, and positive behavioral interventions and supports³¹—to improve students’ attendance at, connection to, and success in, school.
- ✓ **Refrain** from punitive messages and measures—for example, blaming or threatening students and families with punishment—which are often ineffective and can lead to disproportionate suspensions and expulsions

³¹ For more information on implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), please visit ED’s PBIS Technical Assistance Center at www.pbis.org.

from school and inappropriate referrals of students and families to law enforcement.³²

Action Step 3: Focus communities on addressing chronic absenteeism.

- ✓ **Raise** awareness about the causes and effects of and potential solutions to chronic absenteeism, especially among youth and families.
- ✓ **Prioritize** trainings for school staff and affiliated community partners to conduct root cause analyses of absenteeism trends among students.
- ✓ **Support** the development of effective strategies to eliminate chronic absenteeism and use research and evidence-based tools and programs that work to engage and support student success.

Action Step 4: Ensure responsibility across sectors.

- ✓ **Communicate** that chronic absenteeism is a problem that affects the entire community.
- ✓ **Drive** and **evaluate** cross-sector system performance, at least in part, on progress toward eliminating chronic absenteeism.
- ✓ **Work together** as a community so that everyone feels responsible for successfully addressing underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.

In every community in America, there are young people with incredible drive and talent, and they just don't have the same kinds of chances that somebody like me had. They're just as talented as me, just as smart. They don't get a chance. And because everyone has a part to play in this process, we brought everybody together. We brought business leaders and faith leaders, mayors, philanthropists, educators, entrepreneurs, athletes, musicians, actors—all united around the simple idea of giving all our young people the tools they need to achieve their full potential.

Remarks by President Barack Obama at Launch of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, May 04, Lehman College, West Bronx, New York

³² Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., Cohen, R. (2014). *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center. Available at <http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report/>.

Implementing Coordinated Supports for Students at Risk for Chronic Absenteeism

It is important to generate the necessary enthusiasm and support to implement solutions that can successfully support students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent. Engaging a diverse collection of stakeholders—including the education, health, housing, and justice sectors, as well as youth, families, community organizations, child welfare agencies, and local government—could be a particularly useful strategy to promote and sustain community action. Because community needs differ from place to place, decisions about which approaches and programs to adopt should be informed by multiple stakeholders following an analysis of local data on chronic absenteeism. Once local needs are known, communities can deploy the right supports to the right students at the right time.³³

Across the country, community stakeholders have joined forces to implement comprehensive systems of support that work to support students' regular school attendance and thereby improve critical academic and youth life outcomes. Educators, system leaders, and concerned citizens everywhere can learn from the results of these approaches. They are demonstrating the power of coordinated community action in building a stronger future for all our kids. The task now is for every community to begin or continue the work of understanding the extent of any chronic absenteeism problem it may have and then work in a collaborative, coordinated fashion to provide students with necessary supports so they stay on-track for success in school and in life.

For more information on community-based efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism across the country, visit:

- **Attendance Works** at <http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/>
- **Everyone Graduates Center** at Johns Hopkins University at: <http://new.every1graduates.org/tools-and-models/>
- **School Turnaround AmeriCorps Program** at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/task-force-expanding-national-service/school-turnaround-ameri-corps>
- **The Campaign for Grade-level Reading** at <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/chronic-absence>.

³³ Maynard, B. R., McCrea, K., T., Pigott, T. D., & Kelly, M. S. (2013). Indicated truancy interventions for chronic truant students: A Campbell Systematic Review. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(1), 5-21. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535217.pdf>.

Developing Meaningful Partnerships to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Many schools and school districts across the country regularly partner and collaborate with outside organizations to provide supports and services that can help address the underlying causes of students' chronic absenteeism, in addition to other challenges. Students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent may benefit from supports and services best provided by third-party providers or agencies (e.g. public health agencies, homeless service providers, nonprofit youth-serving organizations) in collaboration with their local school or school district.

Such partnerships between schools and third-party organizations could entail the sharing of students' personal information and related data. It should be noted that student-level data sharing between schools and community partners must be consistent with applicable Federal and State laws concerning privacy and the sharing of student-level data, especially including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). ED's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO), the office that administers FERPA, can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcoc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>

Community Action Guides: Taking Coordinated Action to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

The following **Community Actions Guides** are designed to support coordinated, community-wide action on behalf of students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. Each Guide includes important information about chronic absenteeism, suggested actions steps, and a list of resources that stakeholders may be able to use when working with youth in their communities.

Let's get started.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for **YOUTH**

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Youth

As a young person, you are in a unique position to help your friends, classmates, and family understand a simple but important fact: *every day absent from school matters*.

Even though it may seem okay to miss a day of school every once in a while, these absences can add up and can take a toll on your future success. Missing too many days of school can make it hard for you to stay on track in your classes, which could put your high school graduation at risk. You may also miss out on all of the exciting opportunities to learn and pursue your interests that you might only be able to get at school.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school every day increases your chances of success in school and in life.

The good news is that it is possible to change things for the better and have the greatest chance of success. Even if you are not chronically absent from school, as a young person, you have the power to take action and help eliminate chronic absenteeism in your community. You can help your friends, classmates, and family become informed and motivated to do something about it.

Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as **two days** of school a month.

2 DAYS PER MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

You Should:

1. Help your friends and classmates understand what *chronic absenteeism* is—missing more than 10 percent (18 days) of school days in a year.
2. Attend school every day, encourage your friends to attend school every day and remind them that every absence from school matters.
3. Talk with your school principal and teachers about the kind of support that you and/or students in your school need to attend and be successful at school every day.
4. Be active in your community to support projects to help eliminate chronic absenteeism and support other young people in schools.

Resources to Support Youth to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

- Brought to you by [USA.gov](http://www.usa.gov), **Kids.gov** is the official kids' portal for the U.S. government. We link kids, parents and teachers to U.S. government information and services on the web from government agencies, schools, and educational organizations, all geared to the learning level and interest of kids. See more at: www.kids.usa.gov/index.shtml.
- Learn more about President Obama's **My Brother's Keeper Initiative**, which works to provide supports to students who are at risk of falling off-track and not being successful in school so that they think more broadly about their future. See more at: www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper
- **Youth.gov**. Learn more about the strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools, youth-serving organizations, and community partnerships related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth. See more at: <http://youth.gov> and <http://engage.youth.gov/>.
- **StopBullying.gov** provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying. See more at: www.StopBullying.gov.
- **Resources for Homeless Youth**: This page is a one-stop spot for helping youth find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat homelessness. See more at: www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/
- For more information on **preventing youth violence**, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention for more information and resources to support youth violence prevention activities in your community. See more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.
- **Additional Resources from the Family and Youth Services Bureau can be found here:** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Parents and Families

Your child's daily, on-time attendance in school is critical to his or her success in school and in life. It's understandable that some challenges to your child's school attendance are unavoidable, such as an illness or a family emergency. However, it's important to understand the impact of absences from school, especially if they become frequent. *Chronic absenteeism*, typically defined as missing 10 percent (18 days) or more of a school year – as few as a couple of days per month – can cause your child to fall behind in school. Absences can add up and impact your child's reading, writing, and math skills, which will have a negative effect on his or her future.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school everyday increases a child's chances of success in school and in life.

While chronic absenteeism can be especially harmful to children in preschool and kindergarten, you also should know that any student who is chronically absent at any grade level is less likely to graduate high school or go on to succeed in college.

Families are their children's first, most important, and longest lasting teachers, advocates, and nurturers. Take the following action steps so that your children can develop a more positive attitude toward school, stay in school longer, have better attendance, and an overall rewarding school experience.

Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Parents and Families Should:

1. Make getting to school on time everyday a high priority in your family.
2. Talk with your child about the important of school attendance from an early age and the negative effects of too many absences.
3. When necessary, create a safe space for your child to share what's keeping them from participating in school on a regular basis.
4. Have a back-up plan for getting your child to school when there are difficulties with transportation, family illness, or other challenges.
5. Schedule doctor and other appointments for after-school hours whenever possible.
6. Monitor students' school attendance to make sure your child is in class every day.
7. Contact your child's school to discuss supports and services that can help your child maintain regular school attendance.

Resources to Support Parents and Families to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

- **Attendance Works** is a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for parents and families. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-parents/>.
- Raising the next generation is a shared responsibility. When families, communities and schools work together, students are more successful and the entire community benefits. Visit the **U.S. Department of Education's Family & Community Engagement Webpage** for more information at: <http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement>.
- The **US Department of Education** provides links and resources to support parents and families to encourage their children to attend and succeed in school every day. See more at: <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml>.
- **Youth.gov**. Learn more about the information, strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools, youth-serving organizations, and community partnerships related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth. See more at: <http://youth.gov> and <http://engage.youth.gov/>.
- **StopBullying.gov** provides information from various government agencies on [what bullying is](#), [what cyberbullying is](#), [who is at risk](#), and how you can [prevent](#) and [respond to bullying](#). See more at: www.StopBullying.gov.

- **Resources for Homeless Youth:** This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat homelessness. See more at: www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/
- For more information on **preventing youth violence**, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention for more information and resources to support youth violence prevention activities in your community. See more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.
- Visit the Centers for Disease control and Prevention's **Division of Adolescent and School Health** for more information and resources for parents and families, teachers and other school staff, and school districts and administrators to implement to increase the extent to which students feel connected to school at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/health_and_academics/index.htm.
- **Additional Resources from the Family and Youth Services Bureau can be found here:** <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Mentors and Volunteers

As a mentor, you know that high-quality, sustained mentoring can support young people in their efforts to stay on track in school, engage in positive behaviors, and avoid participating in negative activities that could put opportunities for academic or life success at risk. As a mentor or youth-serving volunteer, you are in a unique position to positively influence the life of a young person, especially if that young person is, or is at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. In short, what you do as a mentor or volunteer is life-changing and can be life-saving for a young person.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Attending school everyday increases a child's chances of success in school and in life.

When students are in school every day, they are much more likely to engage in positive behaviors, stay on track academically, and graduate from high school. By helping your mentee or the young people you work with know how important daily attendance is—and that every absence from school matters—you can help eliminate chronic absenteeism in your community.

Below are actions steps that you can take to support young people and eliminate chronic absenteeism. Thank you for your service.

Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Mentors and Volunteers Should:

1. Learn the facts about chronic absenteeism, its causes and effects, and why every absence from school matters in the life of a young person.
2. Check every day, or as much as possible, to see if the young people you work with are in school, and talk about the importance of being in school every day and what it means for their future.
3. As necessary, create a safe space for mentees to share what's keeping them from participating in school on a regular basis.
4. Help inform the places where you volunteer to understand what chronic absenteeism is and explore the role they can play in eliminating chronic absenteeism within their community.

Resources to Support Mentors and Volunteers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

National Mentoring Resource Center

The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), US Department of Justice

OJJDP provides access to free resources for mentors, families, and communities to support high-quality mentoring for all youth. This comprehensive online resource provides mentoring tools and information, program and training materials, and technical assistance to help local programs and practitioners improve the quality and effectiveness of their mentoring efforts. See more at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>.

Institute for Youth Success at Education Northwest

With a mission to empower youth organizations to improve outcomes and reduce social costs, the Institute for Youth Success provides relevant, evidence-based information on topics ranging from recruitment to program management and offers services that create efficiencies and make youth-development programs stronger. For more information, please visit <http://educationnorthwest.org/institute-for-youth-success>.

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit: <http://www.mentoring.org/>.

Attendance Works

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including for mentors. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/for-leveraging-volunteers/>.

AARP Foundation Experience Corps

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for Americans who are 50 years of age and older. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS AND STAFF, AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for School District Superintendents and School Personnel

The research on chronic absenteeism is clear: Chronic absenteeism is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school. An estimated five to seven and a half million students are chronically absent each year. But too often, sole reliance on average daily attendance figures masks the high numbers of students who may be chronically absent and in danger of falling behind. Much of the work you do to improve public education and student outcomes each year can be seriously undermined by chronic absenteeism among your students, which makes it imperative that we work urgently to ensure that every student is supported so that they can be in school every day.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

As superintendents, administrators, classroom educators, and school-based personnel, you are in a unique position to identify struggling students and then mobilize systems of support for students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. In addition, you can review and revise discipline policies to ensure that chronically absent students are supported and reengaged in school, rather than further excluded from class through punitive disciplinary policies. By providing engaging and relevant instruction, opportunities for enrichment and extra support, and safe, supportive learning

environments, you can help ensure not only all students' daily attendance, but also regular engagement and communication with families that can build trusting relationships that can help ensure students are in school every day.

To eliminate chronic absenteeism, schools must first track daily attendance figures for students, and then enable district staff, classroom educators, school administrators, and other school-based staff to work in a coordinated and collaborative fashion to support students who are missing too many days of school. Every member of a school's staff should be encouraged to play an active role in engaging students and ensuring that they are supported to attend and succeed in school every day. The action steps below are crafted for different groups of professionals in schools—who will play different roles in this work, but who also should work collaboratively to achieve maximum impact

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

School District Superintendents and District Staff Should:

1. Understand the research about chronic absenteeism, which students are most often affected and how it affects them. Ensure awareness of these facts among district personnel.
2. Invest in sustainable early warning prevention and intervention systems and procedures that support schools in tracking daily attendance and identifying students who are, or are at-risk of becoming, chronically absent, and intervene *before* they miss too much school.
3. Direct your student support team to work with schools to provide necessary services that address the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism to ensure students' daily attendance in school.
4. Mobilize efforts at the district and school levels to partner with third-party providers and agencies—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—that can provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and to their families (for more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>).
5. Engage in and lead community-wide, cross-sector efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism among students within the community by addressing its underlying causes.
6. Regularly communicate with your staff, students, and their families about the importance of daily attendance and the availability of any support services that can help keep students in school and on track to success.

Did You Know?

A student is chronically absent if he or she misses as few as two days of school a month.

2 DAYS A MONTH x 9 MONTHS = CHRONIC ABSENCE

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Preschool-12th Grade Educators and School Staff Should:

1. Understand the research about chronic absenteeism, which students are most often affected and how it affects them. Ensure awareness among school personnel.
2. Use data from early warning prevention and intervention systems to track daily attendance and identify students who are, or are at-risk of becoming, chronically absent and intervene *before* they miss too much school.
3. Revise discipline policies to remove punitive consequences such as suspension and expulsion for chronically absent students, and implement supports for such students.
4. Engage third-party providers and agencies—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—that can provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and to their families (for more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>).
5. Support and engage in community-wide, cross-sector efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism among students within the community by addressing its underlying causes.
6. Regularly communicate to all staff, students, and their families about the importance of daily attendance and the availability of any support services that can help keep students in school and on track to success.
7. Acknowledge students and families that demonstrate improved attendance, and use that occasion as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of daily school attendance.

Resources to Support Educators to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Information and Resources

Attendance Works

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for school districts and educators. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org>.

ED and DOJ School Discipline Guidance Package

This package of resources explains how schools can administer school discipline free of race discrimination, offers guiding principles for improving school climate and discipline practices, provides a directory of federal school climate and discipline resources, and includes a compendium of school discipline laws and regulations. See more at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/fedefforts.html#guidance>.

ED and HHS Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings

Includes recommendations from federal agencies to support families, early childhood programs, and states in preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings. See more at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/reducing-suspension-and-expulsion-practices>

Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University

The Everyone Graduates Center seeks to identify the barriers that stand in the way of all students graduating from high school prepared for adult success, to develop strategic solutions to overcome the barriers, and to build local capacity to implement and sustain them. See more at: <http://www.every1graduates.org/>.

Family & Youth Services Bureau: Resources for Runaway and Homeless Youth

For information and resources from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the success and health of runaway and homeless youth, please visit

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

HUD Resources for Homeless Youth

This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat this problem. See more at:

www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/

National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)

NCSSLE is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students to help address issues related to the implementation and sustainability of safe and supportive learning environments for all students. NCSSLE's website includes information

about the Center's training and technical assistance, products and tools, and latest research findings. We welcome you to explore and discover, ask questions, and share your perspective. For more information, please visit: <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>.

National Center on School Engagement

NCSE collaborates with school districts, law enforcement agencies, courts, and state and federal agencies to support youth and their families to be engaged at school. We pay special attention to truancy, dropout, and bullying prevention. See more at: <http://schoolengagement.org/>.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

Since inception, the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network has worked to improve opportunities for all young people to fully develop the academic, social, work, and healthy life skills needed to graduate from high school and lead productive lives. By promoting awareness of successful programs and policies related to dropout prevention, the work of the Network and its members has made an impact on education from the local to the national level. See more at: <http://dropoutprevention.org/>.

U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcoc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

Programs to Help Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

AARP Foundation Experience Corps

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for Americans who are 50 years of age and older. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

Check & Connect

Check & Connect is an evidence-based, comprehensive intervention designed to enhance student engagement at school and with learning for marginalized, disengaged students in grades K-12, through relationship building, problem solving and capacity building, and persistence. A goal of *Check & Connect* is to foster school completion with academic and social competence. See more at: <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/>.

Institute for Youth Success at Education Northwest

With a mission to empower youth organizations to improve outcomes and reduce social costs, the Institute for Youth Success provides relevant, evidence-based information on topics ranging from recruitment to program management and offers services that create efficiencies and make youth-development programs stronger. For more information, please visit <http://educationnorthwest.org/institute-for-youth-success>.

School Turnaround AmeriCorps

The School Turnaround AmeriCorps program supports the placement of a dedicated cadre of AmeriCorps members from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) in persistently underachieving schools across the country. These AmeriCorps members will be serving in schools implementing school turnaround interventions as required by Department of Education's (ED) School Improvement Grant (SIG) program or as required through Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility. AmeriCorps members will help keep students on track to graduate by working to increase student academic achievement, attendance and high school graduation rates; improve college and career readiness; and provide college enrollment assistance and advisement. For more information, please visit: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/task-force-expanding-national-service/school-turnaround-amicorps>.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade—as well as addressing chronic absenteeism among youth. For more information, please visit: <http://gradelevelreading.net/about-us>.

Early Warning System Implementation Resources

A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing Early Warning Systems

Developed by ED's Northwest Regional Education Lab and the Institute for Education Sciences, this guide summarizes what is known about early warning system implementation and describes how states, districts, and schools can draw on the research to inform their work locally. To download this guide free of charge, please see: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/rel_2015056.pdf.

National High School Center Early Warning System Tools and Resources

The National High School Center was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that ended March 31st, 2013. However, the website and its free resources remain available. This includes resources to support local school districts and schools in understanding more about the purpose and use of early warning systems to identify and better support students at risk of dropping out of school. For more information, please visit: <http://www.betterhighschools.org/>.

Mentoring Resources

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide, and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit: <http://www.mentoring.org/>.

National Mentoring Resource Center

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is proud to partner with *MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership* to bring this resource to the youth mentoring field. The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), US Department of Justice

OJJDP provides access to free resources for mentors, families, and communities to support high-quality mentoring for all youth. This comprehensive online resource provides mentoring tools and information, program and training materials, and technical assistance to help local programs and practitioners improve the quality and effectiveness of their mentoring efforts. See more at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Early Learning

Advances in neuroscience and cognitive science research demonstrate that the early years are a critical period in children's learning and development, and set the foundation for higher level thinking skills later in life. The benefits of high-quality early education for young children are wide-ranging and can contribute to academic achievement and stronger social-emotional and health outcomes for young children. Children who attend high-quality preschool programs are more likely to enter school healthy and ready to learn, and are less likely to be retained in their grade or to become involved with the criminal justice system. Chronic absenteeism—or missing at least 10 percent or more of school days in a year—negatively affects all students, particularly young children. Whether because of poor child and/or parent health, lack of transportation or child-care support, family-related issues, or suspensions or expulsions—chronic absenteeism can have a devastating effect on a child's education and future. Children with lower preschool attendance are less ready for kindergarten, and those who are chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to be reading at grade-level by the end third grade. If not reading on grade-level by the end of third grade, a child is four times more likely to drop out of high school.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Meaningful, supportive conversations about attendance between families and program staff are critical. Schools should work with families to identify the root causes of frequent absences from school (i.e., health, transportation, or employment issues) and then connect families to social supports and services in the community that can help address those

issues. Moreover, early learning educators and program staff can help to reduce or eliminate a pattern of absenteeism by acknowledging and promoting the importance of consistent attendance and forming community partnerships to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism. You can help eliminate chronic absenteeism among young children by taking the following action steps.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Early Learning Providers should:

1. Communicate with parents and students that attendance matters and that good preschool through third grade attendance contributes to later school success.
2. Monitor the attendance patterns of individual students to identify children and families who may need support.
3. Acknowledge children and families who demonstrate good or improved attendance.
4. Create partnerships with community organizations to ensure that families have the supports they need to ensure good attendance, such as healthcare, reliable transportation, child care, and stable housing.

Resources to Support Communities and Early Learning Providers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

- [*Health Services to Promote Attendance*](#) This tip sheet from the National Center on Health (NCH) discusses the impact of health on chronic absenteeism.
- [*September is Attendance Awareness Month*](#) is a web page promoting the nationwide recognition of the importance of attendance on development, learning, and academic achievement.
- [*Civil Rights Data Collection: Early Childhood Education Snapshot*](#) provides data on preschool access and discipline, as well as kindergarten retention.
- [*ED and HHS Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings*](#) includes recommendations from federal agencies to support families, early childhood programs, and states in preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings.
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/reducing-suspension-and-expulsion-practices>
- [*ED and DOJ School Discipline Guidance Package*](#) (Jan. 2014), which explains how schools can administer school discipline free of race discrimination, offers guiding principles for improving school climate and discipline practices, provides a directory of federal school climate and discipline resources, and includes a compendium of school discipline laws and regulations.
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/fedefforts.html#guidance>
- **Resources from the Administration for Children and Families**
[\(https://www.acf.hhs.gov/\)](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/)
 - **Action Plan for Attendance**

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/docs/sample-action-plan.pdf>

- **Interactive Homelessness Lessons- Enrollment and Attendance**
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/family/Homelessness/hmls/enrollment/attendance.html>
- **Asthma Resource Starter Kit**
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/enviro-protect-efforts/asthma-toolkit.html>
- **Well Child Health Care and Importance for Young Children**
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_lea_00215_070605.html
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_lea_00757_110905.html
- **Health Services to Promote Attendance**
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness/strategies/promoting-attendance.html>

- ***AARP Foundation Experience Corps***

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for Americans who are 50 years of age and over. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

HEALTH CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES AND PROVIDERS

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Health Care, Public Health, and Human Service Agencies and Providers

Chronic absenteeism can lead to poor educational and life outcomes for children, and it can also be an indicator of underlying social, health, or economic challenges facing children, youth, and their families and communities.

Research indicates that among the many common causes of chronic absenteeism include respiratory illness (e.g. asthma), dental pain, hunger, abuse and neglect, unstable housing and family economic insecurity, punitive school discipline practices, fear of bullying, and mental health needs of children, youth, and their families, such as depression.

Did You Know?

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- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

School-based health centers and school-based health services, such as those provided by school nurses, can have a positive influence on school attendance. Moreover, all schools can improve student health and health outcomes by promoting hand washing; supporting asthma and dental interventions; better addressing child and family behavioral and mental health needs; engaging parents and families to assist with housing and other family financial needs; and connecting children and families to other necessary health and social service interventions.

Health care, public health, and human service agencies and providers play a critical role in the well-being of children and can help improve school attendance, especially among the most at-risk children, by establishing effective partnerships with school districts and schools so that children get the support they need when they need it. The following action steps can help such health agencies and providers support community-wide efforts to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Health Care and Public Health Agencies and Providers Should:

1. Understand the relationship between chronic absenteeism and unmet health and behavioral health needs of children and youth in the local community that affect students' daily school attendance.
2. Ask about school and school attendance in a positive way at every health care visit. Encourage families to develop strategies that allow children to attend school on a regular basis. Work in partnership with school staff to support attendance of your patient-students.
3. Partner with local school districts and schools to support school health improvement plans to improve access to necessary and preventative health and behavioral health services for children and youth.
4. Promote school-based mental health and behavioral health services that support children's unique social emotional needs.
5. Ensure that physical and mental health needs of children and youth are reflected in local nonprofit hospital community needs assessments as per the Affordable Care Act community benefit provision (for more information, visit https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/community_benefit.html).
6. Learn from successful public health and health provider collaborations with school districts to inform local partnerships and action plans.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Human Service Agencies and Providers Should:

1. Invest in infant and early childhood mental health services that can identify early young children who are at high risk of chronic absenteeism in preschool and school settings.
2. Promote school-based mental health and behavioral health services that support children’s unique social emotional needs.
3. Partner with schools to engage parents and support parents in their children’s education and connect parents with family resources to promote family economic stability, housing stability, and positive social emotional development of children.
4. Homeless-serving agencies can partner with McKinney-Vento liaisons at schools to identify homeless youth and support their continued engagement in school.

Federal Resources to Support Health Care, Public Health & Human Service Agencies and Providers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Operating Division/Staff Division Key

- ACF – Administration for Children and Families
- CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- HRSA – Health Resources and Services Administration
- OASH – Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health
 - OAH – Office of Adolescent Health
 - ODPHP – Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
ACF	<i>Health Services to Promote Attendance Tip Sheet</i>	This tip sheet from the National Center on Health (NCH) discusses the impact of health on chronic absenteeism.	http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness/strategies/promoting-attendance.html
ED	<i>ED OCR Civil Rights Data Collection: Early</i>	ED OCR Civil Rights Data Collection: Early Childhood Education Snapshot provides data on preschool access	http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
	Childhood Education Snapshot	and discipline, as well as kindergarten retention.	Early-Childhood-Education-Snapshot.pdf
ACF	ED and HHS Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings	Includes recommendations from federal agencies to support families, early childhood programs, and states in preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings.	http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf
ACF	Asthma Resource Starter Kit	The contents may be used to raise awareness about asthma and environmental triggers, to help families manage or eliminate environmental triggers in their homes, and to reduce children's exposure to indoor asthma triggers in Head Start and child care facilities.	http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/environmental-protection-efforts/asthma-toolkit.html
ACF	Well Child Health Care and Importance for Young Children	This learning tool for health and other program staff presents key concepts related to well-child health care in Head Start programs.	http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/ongoing-source/health_lea_002_15_070605.html
CDC	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth	Protective factors include personal characteristics such as a positive view of one's future; life conditions such as frequent parental presence in the home at key times (e.g., after school, at dinner time); and behaviors such as active participation in school activities. This publication defines and describes the components of school connectedness and identifies specific actions that schools can take to increase school connectedness.	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth - http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness.pdf Fostering school connectedness :

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
			<p>improving student health and academic achievement : information for school districts and school administrators - http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21067</p> <p>Fostering school connectedness : improving student health and academic achievement : information for teachers and other school staff - http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21066</p> <p>Helping your child feel connected to school : information for parents and families - http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/21065</p> <p>Promoting parent engagement in schools to prevent HIV and other STDs among teens : information for state and local education agencies - http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/32925</p>
CDC	Whole School, Whole Community, Whole	The WSCC is a unified and collaborative approach designed to improve learning and health in our nation's	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc/index

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
	<i>Child Model (WSCC)</i>	schools. This model serves as the foundation for the health and education sectors along with families and communities to improve each child’s cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.	x.htm
CDC	<i>School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide (SHI)</i>	The SHI is an online self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs by identifying their strengths and weaknesses and developing an action plan for improvement.	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/shi/index.htm
CDC	<i>Health and Academic Achievement</i>	Public health and education professionals can use the tools on this page to communicate the link between healthy eating, physical activity, and improved academic achievement to engage stakeholders in supporting healthy school environments.	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf
CDC	<i>Putting Local School Wellness Policies into Action: Stories from School Districts and Schools</i>	A local school wellness policy is a written document that guides a local educational agency or school district’s efforts to create supportive school nutrition and physical activity environments. This compilation of 11 stories provides examples of steps and strategies used to implement wellness policies.	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/pdf/SchoolWellnessInAction.pdf
CDC	<i>Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)</i>	A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) is a multi-component approach by which school districts and schools use all opportunities for students to be physically active, meet the nationally-recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day, and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime. This page contains an implementation guide for school districts and schools as well as supporting materials.	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/cspap.htm
CDC	<i>School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and</i>	CDC synthesized research and best practices related to promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools, culminating in nine guidelines accompanied by a set of implementation strategies developed to help	http://www.cdc.gov/mwr/pdf/rr/rr6005.pdf

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
	<i>Physical Activity</i>	schools work towards achieving each recommendation.	
CDC	<i>Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health</i>	This strategy guide can help schools evaluate their efforts to increase parent engagement in school health to learn which actions have the greatest impact.	http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf
HRSA	<i>Bullying Prevention Initiative</i>	Children who are bullied are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school. In 2012, HRSA released a Bullying Prevention Training Module and Community Action Toolkit designed to help local community leaders understand best practices in stopping bullying and supporting youth, as well as empowering them to facilitate multidisciplinary action planning in prevention on the local level.	www.StopBullying.gov/training
HRSA	<i>Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents</i>	Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents emphasizes the importance of school for children and adolescents starting at the age 5 preventive services visit.	https://brightfutures.ap.org/Pages/default.aspx
	<i>Healthy People 2020's Adolescent Health</i>	Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. The adolescent health topic area contains several objectives addressing academic achievement, including on-time high school graduation (a Leading Health Indicator), reading and math proficiency, and reducing school absenteeism due to illness and injury.	http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Adolescent-Health
OASH/OAH	<i>OAH website</i>	The OAH website provides a wealth of information on adolescent health topics, evidence-based programs, and resources and publications, including data resources and national and state facts.	http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/
OASH/OAH	<i>Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow (TAG)</i>	Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow (TAG) is a national call to action to improve adolescent health in the United States. The TAG section of the OAH website provides current information about American adolescents, a Playbook that outlines five essentials for adolescent	http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/tag/

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
		health and identifies specific action steps and resources for youth-serving individuals and organizations, families and teens.	
OASH/OAH	<i>Teen Pregnancy Prevention Resource Center</i>	The TPP Resource Center serves as a repository of resources for professionals working to prevent teen pregnancy. The Resource Center includes “training areas” focused on choosing an evidence-based program; recruitment, retention, and engagement; implementation; engaging vulnerable populations; strategic communication; sustainability; and evaluation as well as “resources by topic” including resources on the link between teen pregnancy and mental health, violence, and substance abuse; adolescent development; staff development; and healthy relationships.	http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/
OASH/OAH	<i>OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Resource and Training Center Website</i>	To facilitate easy access to targeted information including webinars, e-learning modules, current teen pregnancy information, and other resources to support expectant and parenting teens. (Note: In addition to preventing teen pregnancy, providing critical supports to students who are expectant or parenting, is also a key strategy to help reduce chronic absenteeism. The PAF program is the only grant program specifically focused on supporting expectant and parenting teens with the services they need to help them stay in high school and continue with further education.)	http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/paf
OASH/OAH	<i>The National Resource Center for HIV/AIDS Prevention among Adolescents</i>	The Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) supports The National Resource Center for HIV/AIDS Prevention among Adolescents (Center). The Center supports adolescent service providers by providing web-based resources, evidence-based program information, and links to training and technical assistance to help prevent HIV/AIDS among adolescents, in particular adolescents	http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/national-resource-center.html

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
		from minority and high-risk populations.	
OASH/ODPHP	<i>Reframing school dropout as a public health issue</i>	This article summarizes knowledge on the health benefits of high school graduation and discuss the pathways by which graduating from high school contributes to good health. Strategies for reducing school dropout rates are examined, and in addition, the article provides recommended actions health professionals can take to reframe the school dropout rate as a public health issue.	http://www.cdc.gov/pd/issues/2007/oct/pdf/07_0063.pdf
OASH/ODPHP	<i>Prolonged school non-attendance in adolescence: a practical approach</i>	This research finds that by using a specific framework, an understanding of the factors contributing to a young person's school non-attendance can be developed. Interventions leading to a successful return to school have the potential to lower the risk of associated long-term adverse health outcomes.	http://adc.bmj.com/content/early/2014/06/09/archdischild-2013-304595
OASH/ODPHP	<i>The school environment and adolescent well-being: Beyond academics</i>	This brief is designed to be of particular interest to school principals, district staff, and others who are responsible for all aspects of school functioning. It is also useful to those focusing on a narrower range of school functions (e.g., academics, health and safety, civic development) who want a better sense of how their concerns fit into the larger environment.	http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resource/s/school-environment-and-adolescent-well-being-beyond-academics
SAMHS A	<i>KnowBullying: Put the power to prevent bullying in your hand</i>	Empowers parents, caregivers, and educators with the tools they need to start the conversation with their children about bullying. KnowBullying, a 2014 recipient of the Bronze Award in the Mobile category from the Web Health Awards, describes strategies to prevent bullying and explains how to recognize warning signs that a child is bullying, witnessing bullying, or being bullied. Includes a section for educators.	http://store.samhsa.gov/product/KnowBullying-Put-the-power-to-prevent-bullying-in-your-hand/PEP14-KNOWBULLYAPP
SAMHS A	<i>Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools</i>	Assists high schools and school districts in designing and implementing strategies to prevent suicide and promote behavioral health. Includes tools to implement a multi-faceted suicide prevention program that responds to the	http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-

Operating Division / Staff Division	Resource	Description	Website
		needs and cultures of students.	4669
SAMHS A	<i>Talk. They Hear You</i>	The <i>Talk. They Hear You</i> campaign includes easy ways to incorporate support for teachers and staff to address underage drinking into an already busy school day, including Help Students Get a Good Start (PDF 622 KB) .	http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/partner-resources/materials-school
SAMHS A	<i>Talk. They Hear You. Underage Drinking Prevention Campaign DVD – Shopping</i>	Provides parents of children ages 9 to 15 with the tools and information they need to start talking with their children early about the dangers of alcohol. Includes a suite of materials that helps reinforce the underage drinking prevention campaign's messages.	http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA13-4755-SHOPPING
SAMHS A	<i>Talk. They Hear You. Mobile App</i>	Helps parents and caregivers learn the do's and don'ts about talking to their children about the dangers of underage drinking. Allows parents to practice bringing up the topic of alcohol, learn questions to ask, and adjust their approach with help from coaches.	http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-Talk-They-Hear-You-Mobile-App/PEP15-TALKAPP
SAMHS A	<i>The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative: A Legacy of Success</i>	By focusing on five key areas, Safe Schools/Healthy Students communities use data to decide what their students and families need and then develop initiatives and programs to satisfy those needs.	http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4798/SMA13-4798.pdf

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for **PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES**

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters to Public Housing Authorities (PHAs)

Chronic absenteeism is closely correlated with both students' poverty and their neighborhoods, including available housing options. A 2014 study of absenteeism in New York City elementary schools demonstrates this relationship: according to the study, schools with public housing in their attendance zones and more students in temporary housing experienced higher rates of chronic absenteeism (see more at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/547ccfe4b03f842b275001/1417465839022/Better+Picture+of+Poverty+PA+FINAL.pdf>).

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

We know that housing challenges are a major cause of chronic absenteeism. Addressing the challenges outlined below is often at the core of PHAs' missions:

- ***Substandard housing conditions.*** Poor housing conditions such as moisture, mold, lack of heat, lead paint, overcrowding, or pest infestations can affect children's physical and psychological health. In turn, these health consequences keep students home from school. Asthma, for example, is a leading cause of absenteeism and often results from substandard housing conditions.
- ***Homelessness.*** Some evidence indicates that homeless students are more likely to be absent from school than children with stable housing.
- ***Frequent moves.*** Low-income families are more likely to move than the average family. When students move frequently, they can struggle to integrate into their

new schools and receive the services they need. As a result, students who move frequently tend to experience worse outcomes in school, particularly when the move is in reaction to turbulence within their family. Student mobility can lead to absenteeism, which in turn affects student achievement.

PHAs can play a critical role in ensuring that all children are supported to be in school every day. In partnership with school districts and schools, PHAs can help educators and communities provide support and services to students who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. Consider taking the following actions steps.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Public Housing Authorities are encouraged to:

1. Partner with local school districts and schools to track attendance of PHA residents.*
2. Create access for children and families to supports and resources they need to mitigate issues causing absenteeism.
3. Seek resources and funding to create incentives to encourage school attendance.
4. Promote attendance through back-to-school events, outreach programs, and informational materials such as flyers and posters throughout the year.

*NOTE: Tenant consent may be required for certain data.

Resources to Support Public Housing Authorities to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Attendance Works

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for housing authorities. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/housing-authorities/>

Tacoma Housing Authority

An innovative partnership between the Tacoma Housing Authority, the Tacoma Public School District and McCarver Elementary School, and parents to stabilize the school's population. Learn more at: <http://www.tacomahousing.net/content/mccarver-elementary-school-housing-program>

Housing and School Partnerships to Address Student Mobility

The Urban Institute has compiled recommendations on how housing and school organizations can work together to reduce the negative effects of student mobility, including absenteeism.

Learn more at: <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/housing-and-schools-working-together-reduce-negative-effects-student-mobility/view/full-report>

National Center for Safe Routes to School--Walking School Bus Online Training Program

Many parents cite safety as a primary concern as children walk to and from school. Public Housing Authorities like San Francisco have begun Walking Bus Programs to help ensure students arrive safely. The National Center for Safe Routes to School has launched an online training that provides strategies and tips for planning a Walking School Bus program. Learn more at:

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/about-us/newsroom/national-center-launches-walking-school-bus-online-training>

HUD Office of Housing Counseling/HUD Approved Housing Counseling Agencies

HUD sponsors housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues. This page allows you to select a list of agencies for each state below. You may search more specifically for a reverse mortgage counselor or if you are facing foreclosure, search for a foreclosure avoidance counselor. Find this useful tool at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm>

U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement

Chronic school absenteeism arises from complex and diverse causes, including student struggles with anxiety and depression, poor performance in school and schools' failure to meet students' educational needs, poverty-based family difficulties and obligations, concern and fear from victimization and harassment, and transitions to new schools. In addition, students who are suspended or subject to other school disciplinary interventions—a disproportionately large percentage of whom are youth of color, students with disabilities, and youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender—are at a significantly higher risk of falling behind academically and becoming chronically absent from school.

Did You Know?

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- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Policymakers should carefully weigh the costs and benefits of invoking the power of the judiciary to enforce school attendance laws. Research has shown that court-based truancy interventions are no better at improving truancy outcomes than interventions based in schools and community organizations (for more information, visit: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/news/Truancy_programs_improve_attendance.php). Indeed, school and community-based positive reengagement strategies for chronically absent youth can often effectively improve student attendance and achievement. On the other hand, court intervention can inflict on youth the trauma of incarceration, further stigmatization, a police and court record that provides an entryway into the school-to-prison pipeline, and court attendance obligations that further prevent the child from attending school. Parents and families can also be negatively impacted by the burden of court fees, costs, fines, and penalties that they are unable to pay.

Courts, law enforcement agencies, and schools should work closely with families and other community partners to develop strategies that address the root causes of chronic absenteeism without resorting to expulsion, suspension and court referral. School completion and diversion away from juvenile justice system involvement must be the primary goals of school and community programs designed to address chronic absenteeism, truancy and school safety and discipline challenges.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement Should:

1. Understand the relationship between chronic absenteeism and youth involvement in the juvenile justice system.
2. Reform truancy court systems to avoid, where possible, court-based truancy interventions, and instead rely on school and community-based interventions for struggling students.
3. Partner with local school districts to understand the local, underlying causes of chronic absenteeism.
4. Implement positive reengagement strategies for chronically absent youth in collaboration with courts and local school districts.
5. Learn from juvenile justice and law enforcement collaborations with school districts to inform local partnerships and action plans.

Juvenile justice and law enforcement system leaders and personnel should consider taking the following action steps to help address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

***When Kids Go to Court:
The Requirements of Due Process***

Courts must follow fundamentally fair procedures that may include some or all of the following due process protection:

- The right to appointed counsel if the child cannot afford to hire one;
- The right to notice of the specific allegations delivered in language and a manner that is appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child;
- The right to have sufficient time to investigate, gather evidence, and prepare a defense;
- The right to cross examine witnesses;
- The right to remain silent and to consult with an attorney before being questioned;
- The right to harness the power of the court to require that individuals appear as witnesses on the child's behalf;
- The right to a trial and, if the trial is to be waived, the right for that waiver to be knowing, intelligent, and voluntary with an understanding of the available options and their consequences, carried out in a manner that is appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child.

Federal Constitutional and Statutory Requirements for Court-Based Chronic Absenteeism Interventions

Should a jurisdiction include court-based interventions as a strategy to combat truancy and chronic absenteeism, court actions at every stage – intake, fact-finding, adjudication, disposition, probation and other forms of supervision – must be consistent with the requirements of the United States Constitution and federal law. At each decision point along a case's progress through the court system, judges and other court personnel must take care to ensure fundamental fairness and to base judgments and orders on objective, verifiable criteria so as to avoid biased decision making, whether subconscious or overt. The two primary constitutional sources for court procedural requirements are the Due Process Clause's requirement that courts provide procedures necessary to ensure fundamental fairness and the Equal Protection Clause's prohibition against biased processes and decision making.

When Kids Go to Court: Federal Law

- Americans with Disabilities Act

Courts must provide meaningful access to children with disabilities by making reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures so as to avoid discrimination, unless the modifications would result in a fundamental alteration of the court's services, programs or activities. Meaningful access includes the right to be heard, to observe, and to participate meaningfully in judicial proceedings.

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Recipients of federal funds may not have policies and practices that impose an unjustified discriminatory effect on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and they must provide meaningful language access to limited English proficient children and families/guardians.

Due Process

In defining the procedures necessary for due process, courts balance the severity of the state intrusion, the risks to the child of an erroneous court decision, and the costs to the state of additional procedural safeguards. A court's disposition of truancy cases can create risks to children and their families that include imposition of fines, required community service, and court-ordered mental health, family, or substance abuse counseling. To ensure fairness in the face of these risks, courts will often need to provide children with a wide range of due process protections. When the potential state intrusion is most severe – threatening a child with the risk of incarceration – the child's interest in full and fair procedures is at its strongest and courts must provide the full panoply of due process protections.

Equal Protection

The Equal Protection Clause prohibits a state from conduct that would “deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws” and therefore prohibits courts from treating similarly situated children differently, including on the basis of the child's race or sex. Although proof of discriminatory intent or purpose is required to show a violation of the Equal Protection Clause, this intent or purpose can be inferred when court actions show a clear pattern, unexplainable on grounds other than the child's constitutionally protected status. Equal Protection concerns can arise in any number of the decision points common to the juvenile justice system, including decisions about diversion, pretrial detention, filing of formal charges, adjudication, disposition and disposition modification or revocation proceedings.

Federal Law

Federal law prohibits race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age discrimination by entities that receive federal financial assistance. The prohibition against national origin discrimination requires that courts covered by the law ensure that language minority youth with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to proceedings and court processes. Federal law also requires that courts provide meaningful access to all children with disabilities, including those children with learning, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, or physical disabilities.

Federal Resources to Support Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

To stem the school-to-prison pipeline and advance the use of positive discipline and learning policies and practices in schools nationwide, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education launched the [Supportive School Discipline Initiative](#) (SSDI). One of the central focuses of the SSDI is on partnerships between education, police, and court officials that is dedicated to preventing youth arrests or referrals to the juvenile justice system for minor school-based offenses. For example, this [Supportive School Discipline Webinar Series](#) event explored how schools and police agencies can work collaboratively to improve school safety, while minimizing the use of arrest and ensuring that law enforcement officials are not responsible for enforcing minor school discipline offenses. Additionally, the webinar highlighted a decision-making tool, included in the School Discipline Consensus Report. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) has created a National Resource Center for School Justice Partnership. This online resource is designed to support school discipline reform and disseminates information on evidence-based programming, school referrals to the justice system, the collateral consequences of school push-out and zero tolerance policies, and innovative tools and strategies to support positive school discipline practices. The resource center functions as a portal for juvenile courts, schools & educators, law enforcement agencies, and behavioral health providers and supports school discipline reform efforts at the local level. It can be assessed at: www.schooljusticepartnership.org.

Additional Resources:

Legal Resources

- *In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1, 36 (1967)
- *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)
- *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974)
- *Tennessee v. Lane*, 541 U.S. 509, 528 (2004)
- U.S. Constitution, amendment XIV § 1 (Due Process Clause, Equal Protection Clause)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d.

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Part A, 42 U.S.C. 12131 – 12134 and implementing regulations at 38 C.F.R. Part 35 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability by entities of state and local government).
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (“JJDP Act”), 42 U.S.C. § 5601 *et seq.*

Federal Agency Resources

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section work protecting the rights of juveniles <http://www.justice.gov/crt/rights-juveniles>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention <http://www.ojjdp.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division’s website containing information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act www.ada.gov
- Federal interagency clearinghouse website regarding limited English proficiency and language services www.lep.gov
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section <http://www.justice.gov/crt/federal-coordination-and-compliance-section>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section <http://www.justice.gov/crt/educational-opportunities-section>
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Title VI Legal Manual, available at <http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-vi-legal-manual-0#2>.
- Language Access Guidance Letter to State Courts from Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez (August 16, 2010), available at http://www.lep.gov/final_courts_ltr_081610.pdf
- Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 67 Fed. Reg. 41455 (June 18, 2002), available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2002-06-18/pdf/02-15207.pdf>
- **U.S. Department of Education’s Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)**
FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcoc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

Other Resources

- National Juvenile Defender Center, National Juvenile Defense Standards, available at <http://njdc.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/NationalJuvenileDefenseStandards2013.pdf>
- Sydney McKinney, Truancy: A Research Brief, available at <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/status%20offense%20reform%20center%20research%20brief%202013%20Truancy%20Final.pdf>

- Tool Kit for Creating Your Own Truancy Reduction, prepared by National Center for School Engagement, available at <http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/truancytoolkit.pdf>
- [The Council of State Governments \(CSG\) The School Discipline Consensus Report](#)
- [School Justice Collaborative Program: Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court OJJDP FY14](#)
- [IACP National Summit Report, Law Enforcement's Leadership Role in Juvenile Justice Reform: Actionable Recommendations for Practice & Policy](#)
- [IACP's Youth Focused Policing Agency Self-Assessment Tool](#)
[IACP Youth Focused Policing Resource Center](#)
<http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report>

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Homeless Service Providers

The correlation between school attendance and academic achievement is strong; simply put, students need to attend school every day to succeed. By contrast, chronic absenteeism, commonly defined as a student missing 10 percent or more of a school year, is associated with lower academic achievement, standardized test scores, and graduation rates. Of particular concern for educators and service providers working with homeless children and youth, students living in poverty benefit the most from being in school and yet are more likely than their higher-income peers to be chronically absent. Add to this the many challenges specific to homelessness—residential instability, poor living conditions, and loss of community and sense of security, to name a few—and the need for homeless students to attend school every day becomes even more pressing. Schools and communities must work together to develop policies and practices that support daily school attendance for all students, but particularly for those most at risk of chronic absenteeism and school failure. Homeless service providers can help eliminate chronic absenteeism among homeless youth by taking the following action steps.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Homeless service providers should:

1. Learn about chronic absenteeism and how it affects the education and life outcomes of homeless children and youth.
2. Determine who the local liaison for homeless children and youth is in your community by contacting the local school district or the State Coordinator for Homeless Education in your State. Please visit the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) for State coordinator contact information at www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf
3. Establish contact with the local liaison for the school district in their area, who can help identify homeless students who are chronically absent from school.
4. Discuss and act on possibilities for school district/service provider collaboration to support school attendance for homeless children and youth.

Resources to Support Homeless Service Providers to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) administers the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program, authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento), and most recently reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. As outlined in the statute's statement of policy [42 U.S.C. § 11431], one of the goals of the EHCY Program is to assist State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) in implementing policies and practices that remove barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The following rights and services required under McKinney-Vento may be particularly effective in supporting regular school attendance for homeless students:

- ***Immediate enrollment:*** McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documentation normally required for enrollment [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C)]. For more information regarding the school enrollment requirements under McKinney-Vento, consult the following resources available through the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE):
 - Issue briefs, available at www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php:
 - *Enrolling Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School*
 - *Immediate Enrollment Under McKinney-Vento: How Local Liaisons Can Keep Homeless Students Safe*
 - *Immediate Enrollment Under McKinney-Vento: How Schools Can Keep Homeless Students Safe*
 - *Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students without Records*
 - *When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own*
 - *Enrollment: Ready Reference for School* enrollment foldout, available at www.serve.org/nche/pr/enroll_foldout.php

- **School placement and transportation:** Under McKinney-Vento, LEAs must make school placement determinations on the basis of the “best interest” of the homeless student. Using this standard, an LEA must (1) continue the homeless student’s education in the school of origin (i.e., the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled) or (2) enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(A)]. In determining a student’s best interest, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless student in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student’s parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)(i)]. If a student continues to attend the school of origin, the LEA must provide or arrange for the student’s transportation to and from school, if requested [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)]. For more information on school placement and transportation under McKinney-Vento, consult the following NCHE briefs, available at www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php:
 - *School Selection*
 - *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*
 - *Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness*

In addition to statutory requirements under McKinney-Vento, school districts receive funding that may be targeted specifically to support school attendance for homeless children and youth, including:

- **McKinney-Vento subgrant funding:** SEAs award McKinney-Vento subgrants to LEAs competitively on the basis of an LEA’s needs with respect to their homeless youth and the quality of their applications. For a complete list of authorized uses of McKinney-Vento subgrant funds, visit <http://center.serve.org/nche/legis/mv-auth-act.php>
- **Title I, Part A funding:** Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, provides financial assistance to LEAs and schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. For more information on supporting homeless children and youth under Title I, see question G-11 of ED’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Non-Regulatory Guidance (September 2009) at www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf and ED’s August 15, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/homelesscoord0815.pdf.

In addition to its own agency efforts, ED collaborates with other federal agencies to support school attendance for homeless students. Under the leadership of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), ED partners with 18 other federal agencies to work to prevent and end homelessness within the United States. For more information, consult the following NCHE briefs, available at www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php:

- *Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students*
- *Housing and Education Collaborations to Serve Homeless Children, Youth, and Families*
- *Supporting School Success for Homeless Children of Veterans and Active Duty Military Members*
- *Youth Homelessness and Juvenile Justice*

HUD Resources for Homeless Youth: This page is a one-stop spot for youth, and those who help youth, to find housing. This page lists all HUD homeless programs and initiatives that can be used by youth and youth serving providers to help prevent and end youth homelessness, as well as resources, publications, and relevant links to other agencies and organizations. Additionally, this page provides an explanation of how HUD programs currently serve homeless youth and how HUD works together with other agencies to combat this problem. See more at: www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/

Family & Youth Services Bureau: Resources for Runaway and Homeless Youth

For information and resources from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the success and health of runaway and homeless youth, please visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about>.

HUD Office of Housing Counseling/HUD Approved Housing Counseling Agencies

HUD sponsors housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues. This page allows you to select a list of agencies for each state below. You may search more specifically for a reverse mortgage counselor or if you are facing foreclosure, search for a foreclosure avoidance counselor. Find this useful tool at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm>

U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for **MAYORS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Mayors and Local Government

Mayors and local government officials are uniquely positioned to help eliminate chronic absenteeism in their communities by using their convening power to bring groups of people and organizations together to engage youth who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically absent from school. As the leaders and decision-makers who control and influence important programs and large initiatives, what you do to provide access to resources for youth can have a significant impact on the ability of many young people to engage in their educations and attend school every day. Further, you can help the public not only understand what chronic absenteeism is but also how it affects the local quality of life, especially among youth and their families, and the responsibility that all people have to identify young people who are disengaged from school and provide them with the love, motivation, and support to help them get back on track.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

The best solutions to chronic absenteeism will be identified, implemented, and sustained locally. Your leadership in building a constituency to eliminate chronic absenteeism in your community is essential to the work of local schools as well as health, public housing, and justice agencies and other youth-serving organizations, including child welfare agencies.

The action steps suggested below can help support your office's efforts to engage the local community to support youth and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Mayors and Local Government Should:

1. Learn about what chronic absenteeism is and invest in the systems and structures (e.g. early warning prevention and intervention systems) that can identify youth who are chronically absent from school.
2. Convene and sustain a local taskforce with representatives from different constituencies and organizations—including education, health, public housing, and justice agencies as well as youth, families, faith and community representatives, and child welfare agencies—that can research the root causes of chronic absenteeism among local youth and recommend research and evidence-based solutions for those youth.
3. Support efforts by school district and schools to partner with a broad range of third-party providers and agencies—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—that can provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and their families.
4. Explore opportunities to provide mentoring and other important support services for local youth to promote daily school attendance and to help deal with personal or family challenges that become barriers to daily attendance and school success.

Resources to Support Mayors and Local Governments to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Attendance Works

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for city leaders. See more at: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-city-leaders/>.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade—as well as addressing chronic absenteeism among youth. For more information, please visit: <http://gradelevelreading.net/about-us>.

National Mentoring Resource Center

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is proud to partner with *MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership* to bring this resource to the youth mentoring field. The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools,

program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), US Department of Justice
OJJDP provides access to free resources for mentors, families, and communities to support high-quality mentoring for all youth. This comprehensive online resource provides mentoring tools and information, program and training materials, and technical assistance to help local programs and practitioners improve the quality and effectiveness of their mentoring efforts. See more at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>.

Institute for Youth Success at Education Northwest

With a mission to empower youth organizations to improve outcomes and reduce social costs, the Institute for Youth Success (IYS) supports more than 190 youth programs, including camps, sports, STEM, leadership, afterschool, independent living, and mentoring programs. In addition to providing professional development to volunteers and staff of youth programs, IYS provides relevant, evidence-based information on topics ranging from recruitment to program management and offers services that create efficiencies and make youth-development programs stronger. For more information, please visit <http://educationnorthwest.org/institute-for-youth-success>.

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools. For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit: <http://www.mentoring.org/>.

AARP Foundation Experience Corps

AARP Foundation Experience Corps, a national leader in engaging older adult tutors to improve K-3 student literacy in disadvantaged schools, has joined forces with AARP, the nation's largest organization for 50+ Americans. As part of AARP Foundation, Experience Corps will have the opportunity to vastly increase its potential to tap into the experience and passion of older Americans to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed in school and in life. For more information, please visit <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>.

U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

FPCO administers FERPA and can provide support and information on how schools and school districts can engage in such activities with third-party providers and other agencies in compliance with Federal law. For more information and practical resource guides, please visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

Every Student, Every Day:

A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community Action Guide to Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism for

COMMUNITY, FAITH-BASED, AND PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

Why Chronic Absenteeism Matters for Community, Faith-based, and Philanthropic Organizations

As a member of a community, faith-based, or philanthropic organization working with schools, you can be a strong and helpful voice to raise awareness about and support the implementation of solutions to chronic absenteeism in local communities. Community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations have a long history of supporting and working with schools and school districts to provide supports and services to students that are better provided by those organizations inside or outside of school. It is critical to leverage that long history of collaboration with schools to help address the underlying causes of and eliminate the chronic absenteeism experienced by an estimated five to seven and a half million young people across the country.

Did You Know?

- Chronic absenteeism means missing 10% or more of school days in a year.
- 5 to 7.5 million students are chronically absent each year.
- Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically and more likely to drop out of school.
- Chronic absenteeism affects students who benefit from school the most, especially students who are low-income, students of color, homeless children, students with disabilities, students who are highly mobile, and/or juvenile justice-involved youth.

Depending on the mission and goals of your organization, there are many roles you can play in supporting schools and school districts in eliminating chronic absenteeism. Your organization can offer services directly to schools or even support another outside organization that works directly with students. While there are many ways to help eliminate chronic absenteeism, it is most important that there is broad understanding about the impact of chronic absenteeism, its underlying causes, and then to align organizational goals and services with effective, research and evidence-based approaches to eliminating chronic absenteeism within a community.

In order to support schools and school districts in eliminating chronic absenteeism, community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations can take the following action steps:

Take Action to Help Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Community, Faith-based, and Philanthropic Organizations Should:

1. Learn about what chronic absenteeism is and promote efforts to raise awareness among local stakeholders, especially youth and families.
2. Organize your congregation or community to take action within your own community to support students and families in achieving 100% daily attendance.
3. Encourage the local community to convene a taskforce with representatives from different constituencies and organizations—including education, health, public housing, and justice agencies as well as youth, families, faith, community, and child welfare agency representatives—that can research the root causes of chronic absenteeism among local youth and recommend research and evidence-based solutions for those youth.
4. Partner with schools and school districts and your organizations—in a manner consistent with applicable State law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—in order to provide additional support services to students who are chronically absent and their families.

Resources to Support Community and Philanthropic Organizations to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism

Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships

The Center is part of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which works to form partnerships between government at all levels and nonprofit organizations, both secular and faith-based, to more effectively serve Americans in need. The office advances this work through Centers and staff at 13 federal agencies across the administration. Our primary goals are to:

- Engage community-based organizations, both secular and faith-based, in building a culture of high expectations and support for education.
- Develop and support initiatives within the federal government to help maximize the education contributions of community-based organizations, including faith and interfaith organizations.
- Strengthen partnerships between community-based organizations and schools to help improve the nation’s lowest-achieving schools.

See more at: <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/fbnp/>.

U.S. Department of Education’s Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)

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visit: <http://familypolicy.ed.gov/> and
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-and-community-based-orgs.pdf>.

Attendance Works

Attendance Works, a national nonprofit organization that works to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism, provides resources and handouts for a cross-section of stakeholders to understand and take action to eliminate chronic absenteeism, including resources for faith-based and community organizations. See more at:

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/>.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade—as well as addressing chronic absenteeism among youth. For more information, please visit:

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