



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 20, 2025
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Prioritizing Regular Student Attendance from Day One

The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) is pleased to join other states in recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month. For students to learn and achieve their fullest potential, it is critical that they are in school and engaged in the learning process. Chronic absenteeism – defined as missing 10 percent or more days of school for any reason, including both excused and unexcused absences – can occur when a student misses as few as two days of school per month over the course of a school year. Chronic absenteeism negatively affects academic performance, increasing the risk of lower grades and dropping out. For example, research from [Attendance Works](#) shows that chronically absent students are more likely to earn lower grades and standardized test scores compared to their peers with regular attendance.

Thanks to the collective efforts of educators, families, and communities, New Jersey reduced its chronic absenteeism rate from 16.6 percent in the 2022–2023 school year to 14.9 percent in 2023–2024. Building on this progress, the Department is continuing the statewide campaign this year with the goal of reducing chronic absenteeism even further so that more students are present and engaged.

To highlight the important link between regular school attendance and academic success, the Department has planned a series of activities for the 2025–2026 school year aimed at reducing student absenteeism and encouraging consistent school attendance:

- The Department is continuing its Attendance Awareness Social Media Campaign in September. Please engage with the Department’s various social media accounts to amplify the importance of regular school attendance; and
- The [Conditions for Learning webpage](#) is now available and contains supporting materials to assist local educational agencies (LEA) to launch their own Attendance Awareness campaigns, including:
 - Guidance
 - One-pagers
 - Posters and Flyers
 - Letter Templates

Key Steps/Actions

Join the Department in recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month by initiating a year-long local Attendance Awareness campaign at the district level.

Additional Information

- Visit the [Conditions for Learning](#) webpage to access Attendance Awareness Campaign Materials;
- Review [Data-based Decision Making for Addressing Chronic Absenteeism](#), which demonstrates how the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports framework can aid districts in efforts to understand and address barriers to regular attendance;
- Review [Chronic Absenteeism: Frequently Asked Questions and Compliance Guidance](#); and
- Utilize [Engaging Families and Supporting School Attendance](#), a guidance document aimed at assisting LEAs in effectively engaging with families to support and improve school attendance.

Contact Information

Should you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Student Support Services via Attendance@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group