Elevate Teacher’s Conference

July 2019

Toni Y. Kersh
Bureau Director
Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement
To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens.

MISSION
To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community.
MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher
Session Norms

• Silence your cell phones

• Please check and/or reply to emails during the scheduled breaks

• Be an active participant

• Do not hesitate to ask questions
Our Role as Educators

“Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together.”

SCOTT HAYDEN
Mindsets are determined by existing structures... which stands in the way of change.
"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty."

Winston Churchill
How many days are in an academic school year for Mississippi students?

How many minutes constitute a school day?

Can district personnel change a student’s grade from A, B, C, or D to F for non-attendance?
The school year is 180 days for all students including seniors. Seniors are allowed to be absent for graduation purposes, not to exceed three (3) days. In preparation for the upcoming year, districts should prepare graduation ceremonies in such a manner that graduating seniors are absent from classes for no more than three (3) days prior to the end of the school year.

See MS. Code Ann. § 37-13-63
Graduating from high school with a regular high school diploma is an important indicator of school success and one of the most significant indicators of student college and career readiness. In addition, there are substantial economic benefits to high school completion.
According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES-2015)

- Employment rate for young adults with a high school diploma (67%)
- Employment rate for those who had not finished high school (51%)
Data for 2014 show that the median annual earnings of young adult high school completers ($30,000) was 20% higher than the median annual earnings of those without a high school credential ($25,000).
To promote high school graduation for all students, SEAs and LEAs are encouraged to identify and implement supports and interventions for dropout prevention.

Related intervention reports, practice guides, and reviews of individual studies are available at the Department’s What Works Clearinghouse.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
Information about the implementation of specific dropout prevention strategies for at-risk students is available through a series of issue briefs based on the Department’s *National Survey on High School Strategies Designed to Help At-Risk Students Graduate.*

[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/PPSS/reports-high-school.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/PPSS/reports-high-school.html)
Why focus on:

- College
- Career Readiness
Importance of Academic Preparation

✓ 42% of new 4-year college students

✓ 49% of students at 2-year institutions

✓ Remedial courses due to inadequate high school preparation

✓ 46% of recent high school graduates with no further education are inadequately prepared for the work habits they will need on the job.
✓ Being “college ready” means being prepared for any postsecondary education or training experience, including study at two- and four-year institutions leading to postsecondary credential (i.e. a certificate, license, Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree).

✓ Being ready for college means that a high school graduate has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills necessary to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses without the need for remedial coursework.
A “career” is not just a job. A career provides:

✓ family-sustaining wage
✓ pathways to advancement
✓ requires postsecondary training or education.

A job may be obtained with only a high school diploma, but offers no guarantee of advancement or mobility.
✓ A high school graduate has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills needed to qualify for and succeed in post secondary job training

and/or

✓ Education necessary for their chosen career (i.e. technical/vocational program, community college, apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training).

Thirty-five years ago, only 12% of the U.S. jobs required some postsecondary training or an Associate’s degree and only 16% required a Bachelor’s degree or higher.
What is the one of the major factors utilized in determining educational outcomes?
**Chronic Absenteeism Defined**

Chronic absenteeism is typically defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year - approximately 18 days a year, or just two days every month.

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<thead>
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<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
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<th>February</th>
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Mississippi Department of Education

Ensuring a bright future for every child

27
Average Daily Attendance vs Chronic Absenteeism
The percent of enrolled students who attend school each day. While the average daily attendance rate has been used for reporting purposes for many years, the use of a single average measure tends to mask significant attendance problems.
Effective with fiscal year 2011, the State Department of Education shall determine the percentage change from the prior year of each year of each school district’s average of months two (2) and three (3) ADA.
Chronic Absenteeism-Whole Year
Chronic Absenteeism

Truancy (Unexcused Absences)

Excused Absences

Suspensions (Out of School)
Federal Calculations Include:

✓ Students enrolled in more than one school will be included in the report.

✓ Any student enrolled in a school for at least 10 days must be included in the calculation.

✓ Any student absent 10% or more of the time that he/she was enrolled in any school will be included in the report.

✓ Any student who misses 50% or more of a school day will be counted as absent starting with the 2018-2019 school year.
Mississippi law requires children from ages 6-17 years old to attend a public school, private school, or to receive home-based instruction.
Three (3) Tardy Rule

NO SUCH THING
No Way

Certainly Not

By No Means

nee
não
niet
nein
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voch
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Truant Defined

Truant – a student that has accumulated five (5) or more unlawful absences in a school year, excluding suspension and expulsion days.

Habitually Truant – a student who has accumulated twelve (12) or more unlawful absences, excluding suspension and expulsion days, in a school year, which shall result in the filing of a petition in a court of competent jurisdiction by the school attendance officer.
Unlawful Absence

✓ An "unlawful absence" is an absence during a school day by a compulsory-school-age child, which absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance.

✓ An unlawful absence is any compulsory school-age child who is absent thirty-seven percent (37%) or more of a school day, which the absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance.
✓ If a compulsory-school-age student turns seventeen by December 31st they are no longer compulsory on January 1st.

✓ If a compulsory-school-age student turns seventeen by Sept 1 they are no longer compulsory.
Chronic Absenteeism vs Compulsory School Attendance

**Chronic Absenteeism**

- Incorporates all absences: excused, unexcused and suspensions of **ALL** enrolled students regardless of age.

**Compulsory Attendance**

- The law that mandates any **minor between the ages of 6 - 17 (age 5 if enrolled in a full-day kindergarten program)** to be enrolled in a private, public or home school.
### Truancy vs Chronic Absenteeism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Truancy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Chronic Absenteeism</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts only <strong>UNEXCUSED ABSENCES</strong></td>
<td>Counts <strong>ALL ABSENCES</strong>: excused, unexcused, and suspensions</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMPHASIZES COMPLIANCE with school rules and compulsory attendance law</td>
<td>EMPHASIZES ACADEMIC IMPACT of missed days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relies on <strong>LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE</strong> solutions</td>
<td>Uses <strong>INTERVENTIONS</strong> and positive strategies</td>
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</table>
Evidence is Clear: Chronic Absenteeism Undercuts School Improvement Efforts for the Students Who Need Them the Most
Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

- Decreases Impact of Pre-k and K on School Readiness
- Decreases Third Grade Reading Performance
- Decreases Eight Grade Math Performance
- Decreases High School Graduation Rates
- Decreases College and Career Readiness
First Step

Understand the Scale and Scope of the Chronic Absenteeism Challenge in Your School/Class
Suspensions
Suspension (also known as temporary exclusion) is a mandatory leave assigned to a student as a form of punishment that can last anywhere from one day to ten days, during which time the student is not allowed to attend regular school lessons.
Any compulsory-school-age child who has been suspended for more than ten (10) days or expelled from school, except for any student expelled for possession of a weapon or other felonious conduct.
If a child doesn’t know how to read ….. We TEACH

If a child doesn’t know how to swim ….. We TEACH

If a child doesn’t know how to multiply ….. We TEACH

If a child doesn’t know how to behave ….. We PUNISH

John Herner
The practices of suspensions and expulsions are not effective. *(If such practices worked wouldn’t we be doing less of them?)*
In-School Suspension

A temporary change in placement from the regular classroom setting to a special classroom monitored by a district employee.
Discipline Pitfalls

• Zero Tolerance Policies
• Abundance Number of Other Punitive Measures
• Inability or Time to Unpack Root Cause of Discipline
• Inappropriate skills in developing interventions that are SMART
School to Prison Pipeline
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Achievable</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Time-Bound</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What do I want to accomplish?</td>
<td>• How will I measure my progress?</td>
<td>• How can the goal be accomplished?</td>
<td>• Is this a worthwhile goal?</td>
<td>• How long will it take to accomplish this goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why do I want to accomplish that?</td>
<td>• How will I know when the goal is accomplished?</td>
<td>• What are the logical steps I should take?</td>
<td>• Is this the right time?</td>
<td>• When is the completion of this goal due?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the requirements?</td>
<td>• Do I have the necessary resources to accomplish the goal?</td>
<td>• What are the logical steps I should take?</td>
<td>• Is this goal in line with my long-term objectives?</td>
<td>• When am I going to work on this goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the constraints?</td>
<td>• What are the logical steps I should take?</td>
<td>• Is this goal in line with my long-term objectives?</td>
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The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study examines the health and social effects of ACEs throughout the lifespan among 17,421 members of the Kaiser Health Plan in San Diego County.
Nadine Burke Harris: How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime

SwanWaters.com
Trauma Informed Decisions

• The staff understands the prevalence and impact of trauma on their students and themselves.

• The district and/or school strives for physical, emotional, and social well-being of all students.

• The school is inclusive and connects students to the community instead of excluding them.
Trauma Informed Decisions

• The staff works collaboratively to support students.

• The district leaders adapt services and supports based on needs of students.
Opening Strong

• What can you do the first 20 days of school to encourage students to attend regularly?

• What can you do to express the importance of school to students and parents?

• What incentives can be provided?

• What weekly recognition can occur during the first 20 days?
Chronic Absenteeism Rate-Mississippi

2017-2018

16.86%
Engagement varies by grade. It is high in elementary school and declines through the middle grades and early high school years.

Decline directly linked to student’s perceptions about the value placed on good schoolwork. 74% of 5th graders said “In the last 7 days I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.” Compared to only 31% of 9th graders.

Also, sharp decline between 5th and 8th grade in “My teachers make me feel that my schoolwork is important.”

Students also report significant decline in how frequently teachers make them feel excited about the future.
Decrease in Student Engagement

% ENGAGED, BY GRADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>80%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>6th</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<td>7th</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<td>8th</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<td>9th</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<td>10th</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>11th</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td>12th</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<th>Teacher Absences/Student Absences</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3,300 Minutes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>of Direct Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6,600 Minutes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>55 Hours</strong></td>
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<td>of Direct Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>110 Hours</strong></td>
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IF you do the same thing over and over, and expect to get different results, . . .

It might be time to try another approach.

*Let’s get to the Root Cause.*
Root Cause – Deepest underlying cause(s) of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if resolved, would eliminate or substantially reduce the symptom.

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) – a tool used both reactively, to investigate an adverse event that already has occurred, and proactively, to analyze and improve processes and systems before they break down (Preuss, 2003).

Data Analysis – the process of gathering, reviewing, and evaluating data.

Symptoms – the noticeable gap between expectations and reality; the “red flag” that draws attention to the issue.
Root Cause Analysis

Problem: Ran through a red light.

- Why? Late for work.
- Why? Woke up late.
- Why? Didn’t check if it worked.
- Why? Forgot to do it last night.
Problem solving approach asks 4 questions:

➢ Where are we now?
➢ Where are we going?
➢ How will we get there?
➢ What is holding us back?
Moving in the Right Direction
What’s the Root Cause
Chronic Absenteeism Scenario

Principal-Elementary School

Chronic Absenteeism Rate-15.40%

Excused Absences-Illness

Respiratory Related

Environmental

Field Rats/Snakes/Dusty Blinds
District administrators could assist with understanding the chronic absenteeism issues in schools and/or district.

✓ How does the administrator perceive the importance of attendance in elementary, middle or high school?

a. Excused Absences  
b. Unexcused  
c. Suspensions
Data Needed to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

✓ How do chronic absenteeism rates differ across schools, grades and subgroups within the district?

✓ How many of the absences can be attributed to excused, unexcused or disciplinary reasons?

✓ Are there periods within the school calendar that are particularly problematic?
✓ How are absences addressed? Does office staff or the teacher contact the family?

✓ Are there any issues district or school specific?

✓ What are the effective or infective methods utilized by the school and/or district?
Reducing Chronic Absenteeism

✓ Realistic goals and timelines
✓ Annual targets - target the most challenging areas
✓ Attendance must be part of the School Improvement Plan
✓ Communication that provides definitions of excused and unexcused absences
✓ Daily reminders of expectations (i.e. morning announcements)
Interventions

✓ Create an Early Warning Process

✓ Utilize Counselors

✓ Classroom Management

✓ Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

✓ Restorative Justice

✓ Wrap Around Services
MISSISSIPPI LET'S STRIVE FOR LESS THAN FIVE GOOD ATTENDANCE LEADS TO...

- Reading well by the end of 3rd grade
- Passing important courses
- Staying on track for graduation
- Earning college degrees
- Succeeding in the workplace
YOU ARE A
MANDATED
REPORTER

As a school employee, you are a mandated reporter of child abuse. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, it is your legal obligation to report it. Reporting to a principal, superintendent, counselor or other teachers does NOT meet your mandated responsibilities and is punishable by law.

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-353(7): Any attorney, physician, dentist, intern, resident, nurse, psychologist, social worker, family protection worker, family protection specialist, child caregiver, minister, law enforcement officer, public or private school employee or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child, shall cause an oral report to be made immediately to the Department of Child Protection Services.

CALL NOW
Mississippi Centralized Intake
1-800-222-8000
OR SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT TO:
www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov

Call your local law enforcement agency or 911 if the situation is a life-threatening emergency.
We must move beyond the ideal of a comfortable, self-focused life and answer the call to be an advocate for those who don’t have one.
Questions & Closing Thoughts

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