



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 11, 2024  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## Recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) 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 is defined as having missed 10 percent or more days of school for any reason—this includes excused and/or unexcused absences. This means a student can be considered chronically absent if they miss as few as two days of school a month over the school year. Chronic absenteeism negatively affects academic performance, increasing the risk of lower grades and dropping out. For example, [Attendance Works](#) reports that students who are chronically absent are more likely to have lower standardized test scores and grades than students who regularly attend school.

To highlight the important link between regular school attendance and academic success, the NJDOE has planned a series of activities for the 2024-25 school year aimed at reducing student absenteeism and encouraging consistent school attendance.

- The NJDOE has launched its Attendance Awareness Social Media Campaign. Please engage with the NJDOE'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.
  - Guidance.
  - One-pagers.
  - Posters and Flyers.
  - Letter Templates.

### Key steps/actions

Join the NJDOE in recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month by initiating a yearlong local Attendance Awareness campaign at the LEA 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; and
- Review updated guidance, [Reporting Student Attendance and Determining Chronic Absenteeism Rates](#).

### Contact Information

For any additional questions, please contact the Office of Student Support Services via [Attendance@doe.nj.gov](mailto:Attendance@doe.nj.gov).

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