

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL APPENDIX MATERIAL

SUBMITTED TO THE

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

for the

Jan. 30, 2025 Meeting

Submitted by Nelida Valentin

Sonia Delgado and Nelida Valentin, "Op-Ed: More Funding Needed to Expand Summer Learning Programs," *NJ Spotlight News*, May 31, 2024, ©2024 NJ Spotlight News

Submitted by NJ School Boards Association

Alan Guenther, "Strategies for Getting Students Back to School," *School Leader*, Winter 2024, ©2024 New Jersey School Boards Association



Giving Every Child A Chance

To: Members of the Senate education committee

From: Isaiah Fudge, Director of Positive Youth Development Policy and Advocacy, Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Date: January 30, 2025

RE: Chronic Absenteeism

Good morning, members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on chronic absenteeism.

I am Isaiah Fudge, Director of Positive Youth Development Policy and Advocacy with Advocates for Children of New Jersey. I am a former High School English Teacher; and a former Resource Specialist for people returning from incarceration. Before graduating from a poverty stricken public school system in NJ, I dropped out of one. And, I am now a father to a middle school student attending a New Jersey public school in a more affluent community than I grew up in. I understand, first hand, the complexities surrounding chronic absenteeism.

In 2014 the Department of Education suggested ACNJ review the chronic absenteeism numbers throughout the state and bring some attention to the issue. In the 2013-14 school year, there were 125,000 K-12 students or 10% of the state's total student population, who were identified as chronically absent using the definition of missing 10% or more of excused or unexcused school days. Twenty-three percent of kindergarteners and 27% of 12th graders were missing 10% or more days of school. There were 177 districts in NJ having 10% or more of their students chronically absent. Their average was 16%, or 76,000 students. Many of these districts measured the issue by looking at their daily attendance numbers which they reported to the state Department of Education. The report got a lot of attention and really brought the issue to the forefront at the state and local levels. ACNJ published three state reports, as well as two Newark chronic absenteeism reports: one focused on the early learning years and one on the high school years. By the third statewide report, we saw 8000 fewer NJ students who were chronically absent, with fewer districts making the list.

At the same time, ACNJ pushed for legislation to define chronic absenteeism, require districts to publish their chronic absenteeism numbers in their school report cards and require some kind of corrective action plan involving feedback from parents for districts with 10% or more chronic absenteeism rates. Governor Murphy signed the bill into law in 2018.

Chronic absenteeism has surged since the pandemic. As we wrestle with this issue nationally, New Jersey's current 16.6% chronic absenteeism rate is often represented as impressive in comparison to other states. But, as of 2022-23, there were 1,371,921 students enrolled in our schools. That means 219,507 students missed 18 or more days of school that year. I haven't done the math yet, but this equates to a lot of missed time for education, for our youth, for various reasons.

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Causes

One of the biggest causes of chronic absenteeism relates to poverty, socioeconomic factors. Lack of childcare, transportation, food, and other essentials often disrupt daily life for families who don't consistently have access to the resources they need. When juxtaposing 52 school districts in the state—the 26 wealthiest and 26 of the poorest—we see that the wealthiest districts always have a chronic absenteeism rate lower than the state average (often much lower), and the 26 poor districts usually have a rate that's higher. For example, Haddonfield schools, one of the wealthiest districts in the state, has a 4.7% chronic absenteeism rate. Camden schools, one of the poorest districts, has a rate of 40.7%. The poverty surrounding the schools in the poorest districts create barriers to youth attendance.

And, once students get to school they are often met with a climate that pushes them out. For youth in poverty, those that don't have clean clothes, or food, or soap and water, avoiding school becomes a real option, especially when harassment or bullying might await them. According to 2022-23 NJ Department of Education data, there were over 9,000 reported incidents of harassment, bullying, or intimidation. This often leads to violence, and other issues. There were over 14,000 reports of violence, and 61,000 total suspensions, with over 44,000 of those being out of school suspensions. School personnel also reported incidents to police over 10,000 times. For perspective, pre-pandemic, in 2019-20, we were at just under 5,000 times where incidents were reported to police, and just under 40,000 total suspensions. We also know that teachers are also leaving the profession at high rates for several reasons, but especially because of the climate within many of our schools. When we look at the role of socio economics in the lives of our students and combine that with the impact COVID has had on everyone's mental health, we see that our schools have become environments that many people avoiding

Another cause for the high rate is lack of awareness about chronic absenteeism. Many students and families just don't know enough about this issue to even recognize it as an issue. I have not examined the policies of all 593 school districts, but I would venture to say that many, if not all of them have information available to student and families on chronic absenteeism. However, we have to ask ourselves how is that information being made available to them? When is it made available to them? If it's online, how do we know that families without internet are able to access it? Basically, we have to question whether or not we are doing enough to ensure students and families are well-informed about this issue.

Solutions

One solution lies in increasing districts' capacity to address the whole-child, to turn their schools into resource hubs. The families in the schools in the wealthiest districts tend to consistently be able to meet the foundational needs of their kids. Meeting those needs consistently creates conditions for them to attend school regularly. S2243 and S2528 would create similar opportunities for families of lower socio economic statuses. The full-service community school model presents a way for poorer districts to meet their students' needs. The model involves integrating student supports and engaging students and families, among other best practices. What is great about this approach is that, when implemented appropriately, students and families become involved in their own advocacy, and essentially help select the resources needed for their particular circumstances. Unfortunately, to this point, only 4 districts have formal full-service community school arrangements. But, there are schools and districts incorporating components of the model and they are making progress around chronic absenteeism. In Orange Public

Schools, Rosa Parks Community Schools reported a 7.4% chronic absenteeism rate. The district itself is at 13.8%. Dover Public Schools is at 13.2% district-wide. Bringing resources into schools brings kids back to school. You can't control the poverty around the schools, but you can control the poverty within them. We must invest in schools' capacity to address the needs of their students.

We must also commit to bringing more socio-emotional character development resources into our schools. This can occur through training staff to incorporate best practices, through building schools' capacity to address safety issues by leveraging the community; through situating more mental health resources in schools; or through a combination of all 3. Clayton Public Schools is a district that isn't part of the poorest group of districts, but sits close to that group. Yet, they have been intentional about incorporating socio-emotional development work and report an 8.9% rate as a result. In Elizabeth Public Schools, where the rate has gone from 19.4% to 16.9% in the past two years, there is focus on creating and sustaining mental health partnerships with the community. And, in Newark, the district has leveraged Violence Intervention professionals to ensure students are able to get to school safely. I have not seen any proposed Senate legislation that unites all three, but on the Assembly side, there's A622, which establishes the Safe Schools and Communities Violence Prevention and Response Act. A Senate version of this legislation would set the foundation for ultimately enabling districts to onboard staff that can holistically address school climate for students, and everyone else in the buildings.

Or, we can repurpose Attendance Counselors across districts. I saw a job description that required the Counselor "Serve on [a] Truancy Task Force. . . patrolling neighborhoods. . . with the . . . Police Department in order to transport truant students to the Task Force location; transport students from Truancy Task Force location to the school where the student is registered" This approach only entrenches the work done in schools to create poor climates. Instead, Attendance Counselors should be taking a proactive, upstream approach to preventing chronic absenteeism. Newark Public Schools recognizes this. In several of their schools, Attendance Counselors facilitate wrap-around support to ensure students and families' needs are met, rather than acting as an extension of law enforcement. As a result, Newark reported a reduction in district-wide chronic absenteeism last year, and is at 12.7%, below the state average.

If there were more information about chronic absenteeism, students and families would be able to make better decisions about attending school. A simple solution to this would be to monitor how and when schools are sharing this information. We must outline to schools the need for students and families to receive this information upfront and ongoingly, and in a variety of ways. And, we must require schools update all electronic and print policies, rulebooks and guidelines to obviously reflect 1. the definition of chronic absenteeism; 2. the pathway for potential chronic absenteeism remediation; 3. the consequences of chronic absenteeism, both personally and related to school.

Again, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony here, today. I am looking forward to working with everyone to continue to combat this issue. Should you have any questions feel free to contact me at jfudge@acnj.org or 862-436-9108.



Giving Every Child A Chance

TO: Members of the Senate Education Committee
FROM: Nina C. Peckman, Staff Attorney, Advocates for Children of New Jersey
DATE: January 30, 2025
Re: Chronic Absenteeism

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the issue of chronic absenteeism in New Jersey schools.

ACNJ is a nonpartisan child advocacy organization that engages members of the public, policy makers, and other stakeholders to advance policies and programs that benefit children. I am the education attorney at Advocates for Children of New Jersey. ACNJ's Kid Law Center has been in existence since 1996 and has secured the education rights of over 10,000 children. On an annual basis, I provide education advocacy assistance to about 350 poor and low income parents and their children residing throughout the State of New Jersey as well as to professionals who work with children and families.

Although attendance barriers and chronic absenteeism has always been an issue, since the pandemic the percentage of my cases with these issues have greatly increased. According to my cases, the common reasons for absences are due to unaddressed chronic health issues including mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, fear of bullying or violence in the school, inability to get to school because of transportation issues and loss of interest due in part to unaddressed academic problems or when the student's social emotional and/or behavioral issues aren't being addressed effectively.

Other factors also seem to be driving the chronic absenteeism problem. First, some districts don't have enough school staff to support the education and behavioral health needs of students or may not have the requisite experience to identify the reasons for the absences and how best to help the student. Second, many students remain home because parents are not getting the information they need to support their child's attendance through basic information about attendance laws and what are the school based services available to help their child. Even when parents do know the laws, they don't know how to advocate or appeal school actions or inactions when their child is not going to school because of one of the issues mentioned above. Third, too often, some districts use truancy charges or simply blame parents for the problem and don't acknowledge the parents' efforts to help their child, while ignoring all the steps that school staff should have taken as soon as the child first started to miss too many school days.

One thing is clear, the time to address attendance issues effectively is as soon as they become an issue. Both the attendance and intervention and referral regulations require the school to

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directly engage the parent and child when there are too many unexcused absences which the attendance regulations deem to be up to four unexcused absences. Schools must also have a process to identify and address the attendance issues of students with excessive excused absences for chronic health issues as schools have a responsibility to ensure that those children are receiving an appropriate education. Once a child is chronically absent, it is much more difficult to address the underlying reasons in a way that will help the child stay in school and thrive academically. In my experience of advocating for children who have serious attendance issues, the best approach and the one that leads to the best outcome is when school staff, parents and relevant community providers collaborate in creating a plan to help the student. Schools who simply try to address the issues with a cookie cutter, fill in the box approach are going to have a very difficult time trying to fulfill their responsibilities to educate children in these circumstances. Chronic absenteeism is a complex problem and is very difficult to address. To try to solve this issue, we must start with a focus on the individual needs and circumstances of the child who is missing school to understand why that child is not attending school and to engage the child's parents in a meaningful way to ensure the child receives an appropriate education.

Here are descriptions of two recent cases involving parents who sought advocacy assistance from ACNJ regarding attendance issues. They illustrate both the impact of school absences and how the relevant laws and policies can be implemented to reduce the chronic absenteeism numbers. A parent contacted us regarding a classified student with severe depression and school phobia due to a history of bullying. The student had been absent for more than fifty school days for each of three consecutive years. The parent sought a therapeutic school placement with home instruction pending placement based upon the medical opinions of the student's treating physicians. The school district insisted that the student should be able to attend the public school. After ACNJ became involved, we facilitated communications between school staff and several community providers working with the student. We also advocated for additional mental health evaluations. Through several collaborative meetings, the district agreed to place this student in a therapeutic school and make up instructional hours for the student through tutoring.

Another example is a case involving a classified child with cognitive delays and complex health issues including being medically fragile. Because of these disabilities, the student's only placement option is in the home setting with an in person instructor. The school had been providing home instruction up until a year ago when the parent started to refuse the home instruction because the parent was not seeing any progress. The district responded by filing truancy charges. Prior to contacting ACNJ, the parent did not understand the compulsory education laws and rather than refusing home instruction, that parent could have challenged the education program that the district was providing through special education laws. Once we explained the laws and the parent's rights, the parent agreed to the home instruction services and we put in motion a process to secure additional services for the student while in the home setting. This resolved the attendance issue.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to: npeckman@acnj.org.

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NJ Senate Education Committee

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Committee Room 4, 1st Floor

State House Annex, Trenton, NJ

10AM

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CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL WHICH SEEKS TO ADDRESS IT

WHAT IS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Some states define chronic absenteeism as missing more than 10 percent of the school year. In some states, missing 18 or more days means a child is chronically absent. In other states, it's 15 or more days.

Chronic absenteeism includes excused absences (like for being sick). It also includes unexcused absences and disciplinary actions, like getting suspended.

Missing a certain number of days — for any reason — triggers schools to start a truancy process. This involves documenting attendance and filing a report with a state agency, local school district, and law enforcement.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

- Lower levels of school readiness upon entering kindergarten
- Less likely to read at grade level by the third grade
- Lower levels of social engagement
- Higher risk of dropping out of school
- Less likely to graduate from high school or attend college
- Reduced student achievement
- Social disengagement
- Feelings of alienation
- Disproportionately affects low-income students, students with disabilities, students of color, and English language learners.

It is important to note that Chronic Absenteeism is a symptom of a greater problem.

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CHRONIC ABSENTEEISMS - A NATIONAL PROBLEM

In 2022, nearly 13.8 million students in the United States were classified as chronically absent, a number roughly equivalent to the populations of Massachusetts and Indiana combined. This isn't a blip; rather, it's part of a pandemic-related trend: Nationally, the number of chronically absent students jumped from 15% in 2018 to 28% in 2022. And, although schools saw a small decline in absenteeism in 2022–23, preliminary data collected from states as part of the Return to Learn Tracker indicate that more than 26% of students were still chronically absent last year.

This ongoing crisis is garnering bipartisan attention, with both policymakers and educators worried about the long-term impacts. Students who miss school frequently are more likely to fall behind academically, disengage socially, and, ultimately, drop out of school altogether. The equity implications are clear, as rates of chronic absenteeism have increased the most in districts and schools with high proportions of students from low-income families.

In addition to increased illnesses, students miss school for a wide range of reasons, including family and transportation challenges, an unwelcoming school environment, mental health challenges, disengagement and boredom, and lack of access to adequate supports and resources. Addressing these challenges piecemeal won't bring students back to the classroom. Instead, schools need to adopt a comprehensive, nonpunitive approach to addressing these underlying issues. Research suggests that community schools are often able to do this particularly well. A recent report from the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) elevates how community schools are positioned to tackle chronic absenteeism, drawing examples from four California schools that significantly reduced their rates post pandemic. (Bringing Students Back: How Community Schools Are Addressing Chronic Absenteeism | Learning Policy Institute)

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS - ONE STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

What can we do? The first step is to change the way we think about absenteeism. Our truancy system is too often focused on blame, rather than causes and solutions. It most often makes assumptions that families and students are acting in bad faith, which are then used to justify punishment as a way to combat school absences. A growing number of researchers have found that punishment is not effective at supporting students in reaching their potential to learn and succeed in school and in life.

Punitive approaches can create a spiral, where a simple absence creates negative assumptions about a student and their family that can eventually lead to fines and jail time. This approach can backfire by pushing families and students further away from engaging with school systems and getting the help they need. Addressing this crisis requires an approach based on positive engagement, in which we treat absenteeism as an early warning sign, rather than an offense to be punished.

Next, we must take a clear-eyed look at the factors driving this crisis. Many students face barriers, such as a lack of transportation, unstable housing, having to provide childcare for younger siblings or needing to go to work to support their families. Mental health issues have also risen sharply among young people, to the point that the U.S. Surgeon General has declared a youth mental health crisis. And as students fall further behind, school becomes an even bigger source of anxiety making them more likely to want to avoid it.

Community Schools work to both remove barriers to attendance and create positive conditions for our students to learn. For our kids to succeed in the classroom, they need integrated support that wraps around every part of their lives and addresses the specific challenges they face.

Schools and states can't do this alone. Tackling today's very high levels of absenteeism requires an all-hands-on-deck approach that includes state-level planning and tapping into community resources, and bringing educators, families, and neighbors together to help our kids succeed.

HOW DO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OPERATE?

A Community School can be described as a "local engagement strategy that creates and coordinates opportunities with its public schools to accelerate student success." It serves as a vehicle for hyper-local decision making that responds to the unique needs of each community.

In community schools, as in all schools, teachers teach and students learn—but with a focus on the whole child: an integrated focus.

This integrated approach encompasses many features:

- Out of School Time (OST) (before, after and weekend school programs) beyond the traditional extracurricular and athletic programs;
- Learning opportunities for family and community members
- Health and wellness support.

Partnerships with community organizations and businesses broaden the educational and experiential scope of learning making the school a hub of community activity.

These schools are often based on the Full-Service Community School (FSCS) model, which considers:

- the needs of students and their families;
- services that are currently provided at the school;
- the availability and capabilities of local provider agencies; and
- the willingness of school personnel to change course and accept a new way of operating.

MERCER STREET FRIENDS AND TRENTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS-COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARTNERS

Full-Service Community Schools in Trenton, NJ, play a pivotal role in supporting the academic and personal development of students and their families, particularly providing supports such as, afterschool programs, social-emotional learning (SEL), chronic absenteeism, youth development, academic interventions and support for parents and families. These schools are designed not just as centers of academic learning but as hubs of holistic support, connecting students and families with services that help them thrive.

Mercer Street Friends began the Community School partnership in 2015 at Rivera Middle School, with a thorough needs and assets assessment of the school and community that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data to understand the specific needs. This included surveys, interviews, focus groups, and public records.

MSF is currently partnered with three Trenton Public Schools; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School, B.C. Gregory Elementary School and Luis Munoz Rivera Elementary School, we employ a Site Coordinator and an Assistant at each school, who work in partnership with School Leadership to oversee social-emotional learning (SEL) supports, enrichment programs, youth development and support the school in their efforts to address Chronic Absenteeism. Additionally, we employ a Social Worker who conducts counseling services, and 6 retired teachers who provide Reading Intervention for 18-22 hours a week from October to May at the 2 Elementary Schools. Finally, MSF has developed a Choice Food Pantry at each school, where our Family Resource Specialists work with families to connect them to resources that address needs such as; housing, health, job training, and legal support.

Chronic absenteeism is a persistent issue in Trenton, where students may miss school due to family responsibilities, health problems, or disengagement from the educational process. As a Full-service community school partner, we address this issue through our work with school leadership, we reach out to families and offer supports, trying to understand the root causes. Our schools often collaborate with local agencies to provide connections to, health services, counseling and other resources that help families overcome barriers to consistent school attendance. Additionally, by building stronger connections with families and offering supportive interventions, full-service community schools create a more inclusive and welcoming environment that encourages regular attendance. September of 2022 saw the district restructuring school grades spans, (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9, 10-12) we have compiled data showing growth over the last 2 years, we acknowledge that more work is needed and that Chronic Absenteeism is a symptom of a greater problem, but we are committed to continuing the work in our schools.

22-23	EOY		23-24	EOY	
	ADA	CA		ADA	CA
Rivera	86.00%	45.00%	Rivera	88.69%	41.83%
Gregory	86.00%	55.00%	Gregory	87.70%	47.67%
King	80.00%	60.00%	King	81.94%	58.42%
TPS	87.00%	42.20%	TPS	88.00%	42.72%

In conclusion, Full-Service Community Schools in Trenton offer a powerful model for addressing the complex needs of students. By combining afterschool programs, social-emotional learning, strategies to combat chronic absenteeism, youth development initiatives, academic interventions and family support resources these schools create an environment that supports the whole child, fostering not only academic success but also personal growth and resilience in the face of adversity.



*Testimony for the Senate Education Committee
January 30, 2025*

Good morning, Senators Gopal, Turner, McKnight, Corrado, and Henry.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA). My name is Jennifer Marinello, and I am the principal of Lalor Elementary School in the Hamilton Township School District. I am honored to share the perspective of a school principal and discuss the proactive strategies we've implemented in our district to address the growing challenge of chronic absenteeism, highlighting the practices that have shown the most tangible results.

Chronic absenteeism affects more than just academic outcomes—it impacts the social-emotional well-being and long-term success of our students. At Lalor Elementary, a diverse Pre-K–5 Title I school serving 350 students, including multilingual learners and students with exceptional needs, we've seen the significant hurdles posed by absenteeism. However, through a combination of data-driven approaches, community partnerships, and proactive supports, we've begun to see positive change.

To address absenteeism, we closely monitor attendance data on a daily basis to identify patterns and intervene early. This includes outreach to families to understand barriers, whether they stem from transportation challenges, health concerns, or other factors. By working collaboratively, we connect families to resources that address these underlying issues. We also prioritize fostering a sense of belonging within our school community. Relationships are at the core of our efforts—between students, families, and staff. Students are more likely to attend school when they feel supported, valued, and connected. We've worked to strengthen these relationships through initiatives such as teacher check-ins, before and after school clubs, family engagement events, and professional development for staff to identify and address attendance concerns early.

In addition, our partnerships with community organizations have been transformative. For example, we've collaborated with the Hamilton Area YMCA, Rutgers University, and The Child Wellness Institute, to name a few, to support students who struggle with anxiety, depression, or trauma, which are often root causes of absenteeism. Providing on-site support and resources has been critical in helping these students and their families navigate challenges.

Recognizing and celebrating attendance is another key strategy. Positive reinforcement, such as certificates, incentives, and recognition for improved attendance, emphasizes the importance of

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attendance and fosters a culture where students feel their contributions to the school community matter.

Through these combined efforts, our school has achieved a 15% decrease in chronic absenteeism over the past year. While this progress is encouraging, it's clear that sustained support is essential to building on this success. As a principal, I strongly advocate for state-level support to expand funding for mental health services in the community and resources that empower schools to address absenteeism holistically.

Chronic absenteeism is a complex issue, but it is not insurmountable. By working together—schools, families, communities, and state leaders—we can ensure every student feels valued, supported, and ready to attend school every day.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to the students of New Jersey. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Ms. Jennifer Marinello, Principal
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Hello everyone.

NJEA is seeking amendments on

- * S1659 (O'Scanlon/Corrado) - Requires school districts to incorporate age-appropriate instruction on menstrual toxic shock syndrome and requires installation of signage in certain women's rooms to enhance public awareness of menstrual toxic shock syndrome.
- * S1783/S2712- Requires instruction on cursive handwriting in public school curriculum.

NJEA supports

- * S2844 - Establishes Jersey Strong Public Service Scholarship Program.
- * S3917 - Makes various changes to school funding law; modifies method of determining tax levy growth limitation for school districts; revises components of Educational Adequacy Report.
- * SJR93 - Designates first full week of May of each year as "Teacher Appreciation Week."

NJEA is taking no position on

- * S315 - Permits school bus driver to administer epinephrine to student in emergency under certain circumstances.
- * S3961 - Requires boards of education to offer no-fee option to parents for making school lunch and other payments; requires payment processing platforms used by school districts to provide users with information on user fees.

NJEA has concerns on this bill, which we will share in committee

- * S3141 - Establishes Public Education Innovation Fund; provides corporation business tax and gross income tax credits to businesses for making qualified education donations.

Our statements are attached.

Francine Pfeffer
Associate Director
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January 30, 2025

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Testimony in Support of Increased Access to Mental Health Services for New Jersey Students

To the Honorable Chairman Gopal, Vice Chair Turner, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am pleased to offer this written testimony on behalf of Hazel Health and to advocate for the critical need to expand access to mental health services for New Jersey students. As you are aptly aware, the youth mental health crisis is a serious concern, and while New Jersey has taken many strides toward addressing the crisis, we believe integrating Hazel Health into the New Jersey ecosystem will benefit children greatly.

Hazel Health is the nation's largest and most trusted provider of telehealth to the preK-12 population. Throughout the last ten years, Hazel has demonstrated the positive impact of providing virtual healthcare for students—addressing both physical and mental health challenges in real-time and removing many barriers to care such as lack of access to care. Nationwide, Hazel is available to about six (6) million students in seventeen (17) states.

Hazel's school-centered telehealth model directly connects students with licensed mental health professionals through virtual therapy sessions—right at school or at home, and at no out of pocket cost for the family. Our model eliminates the barriers traditionally faced by families, such as transportation challenges, long wait times, and out-of-pocket costs.

Key Features of the Program:

Hazel Health's programs have demonstrated significant improvements in both student mental health and academic performance. Here are some key outcomes:

- 75% reduction in anxiety and depression after an average of only six sessions, with 70% of students scoring below the clinical threshold for anxiety and depression after the program.
- 60% reduction in absenteeism post-therapy, meaning students are attending school more regularly and receiving the education they deserve.

- **50% reduction in disciplinary action post-therapy, indicating that improved mental health can directly contribute to a decrease in behavioral issues.**

This program offers a significant opportunity to:

- **Improve the mental health and well-being of New Jersey students by providing evidence-based care.** Hazel Health delivers clinically proven teletherapy programs with a focus on positive outcomes for students.
- **Reduce the impact of the youth mental health crisis by providing care that is accessible to all - with no cost being passed down to the family.** The program removes financial barriers for families, regardless of insurance coverage.
- **Enhance academic performance and overall student success and significantly reduce chronic absenteeism with Hazel's school-based approach.** Our program seamlessly integrates with existing school systems, complementing existing mental health initiatives.
- **Strengthen the state's commitment to the mental health of its young people.**

By investing in the mental health of our children, we are investing in the future of New Jersey.

Thank you for your time.

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Testimony Submitted to the New Jersey Senate Education Committee
Chronic Absenteeism
Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner of Education
January 30, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Gopal, Vice-Chairwoman Turner, and members of the Senate Education Committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony on the New Jersey Department of Education's (Department's) efforts to identify and address chronic absenteeism in New Jersey's schools. As learning acceleration and addressing opportunity gaps remain a priority in the post-pandemic education landscape, it is essential to underscore that student success begins with ensuring that students are in school and ready to learn.

Chronic absenteeism is a barrier that significantly hinders students' academic achievement and social development; addressing it is critical to maximizing the impact of any instructional or intervention efforts. Specifically, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason, including often "excused" absences such as illness or scheduled medical appointments. Regardless of the reason for a student's absence, missing school has been shown to blunt students' learning potential. Based on these and other identified concerns related to missing instructional time, the Department has made addressing chronic absenteeism a priority focus of its efforts to ensure students have equitable access to high-quality education.

New Jersey leads the nation in student attendance. However, it was not spared from the nationwide adverse effects on student attendance as a result of the pandemic, underscoring the urgency of this issue. In the 2021-2022 school year, the chronic absenteeism rate in New Jersey was 7.5 percent higher than pre-pandemic levels; a rate of 18.1 percent compared to 10.6 percent in the 2018-2019 school year. In the most recent data available, gains were made with a state average chronic absenteeism rate of 16.6%. New Jersey's data, although the lowest nationally in each of the two most recent years, still highlighted that certain student populations are disproportionately

affected. Rates are highest among students who are homeless (46 percent) or in foster care (36 percent), as well as students who are Black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, English learners, students with disabilities, and nonbinary students. With potential changes coming to federal programs designed to assist these students, the Department and other education leaders across the state will need renewed focus in addressing the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism for vulnerable populations.

Chronic absenteeism has far-reaching consequences both in the classroom, and well beyond the classroom. Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are significantly less likely to read on grade level by third grade (Attendance Works, 2014, Attendance in Early Grades: Why Reading Matters). Between 8th and 12th grade, a student who is chronically absent is 7.4 times more likely to drop out (Attendance Works, 2014, The Attendance Imperative). Research also suggests that high school graduates earn more over their lifetime compared to individuals who drop out (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, "The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts"), undermining the economic prospects of students and, by extension, the state's economy. Chronic absenteeism is linked to higher rates of suspension, teen substance use, and poor long-term health outcomes.

Addressing chronic absenteeism requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach, which is why the Department is committed to continuously expanding resources and support for educators and staff designed to increase student attendance. Additionally, the Department is actively implementing state and federal policies designed to monitor chronic absenteeism across all schools and districts, identify those with high absentee rates, and ensure schools have the necessary tools to help students attend school prepared and ready to learn. While this work is ongoing and continuously re-evaluated, below is a snapshot of various programs and strategies the Department

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is currently undertaking that directly impact student attendance in New Jersey.

As a result of extensive stakeholder engagement throughout 2024, the Department updated the state's plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which included a continued commitment to highlighting chronic absenteeism as an indicator of school quality for federal accountability. By maintaining chronic absenteeism as a key indicator in ESSA's required system for identifying and supporting a State's lowest performing schools, the Department emphasizes our ongoing commitment to providing resources to the schools that need the most support in the area of student attendance.

New Jersey has a longstanding commitment to student attendance that can be found in our statutory and regulatory requirements for our schools. State regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.6) provide that if a student's absentee rate is equal to or greater than 10 percent, they are identified as chronically absent. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25.1, schools where 10 percent or more of enrolled students are identified as chronically absent must develop a corrective action plan to address absenteeism. These plans must be reviewed and revised annually by the district board of education until the chronic absenteeism rate falls below 10 percent. At a minimum these plans must address the following areas:

1. Identify problems and barriers to school attendance;
2. Develop recommendations to address the problems and barriers to school attendance that have been identified;
3. Outline communication strategies to educate and inform parents on the importance of school attendance;

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4. Establish protocols on informing and engaging parents when a child begins to show a pattern of absences; and
5. Review school policies to ensure that they support school attendance.

Further, districts are required to include significant parental input in building out this plan to ensure that the most relevant reasons for school absences are addressed. This year, the Department provided training through county roundtable meetings to the superintendents in all 21 counties, building districts' capacity around the State to implement these requirements and are actively addressing chronic absenteeism in their schools.

As part of the Department's role in ongoing monitoring of school district performance, chronic absenteeism is a key indicator under the Instruction and Program section of the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) that is completed, typically, on a three-year cycle. Through this process, districts are evaluated on their chronic absenteeism rates districtwide and for student subgroups as part of their overall performance metrics to help the Department better understand attendance in the district. The NJQSAC process is a significant tool for both the Department and school districts to understand how they are performing in key areas and can highlight for a district how high absenteeism rates are impacting student achievement.

Annually, the Department releases School Performance Reports that are designed to provide parents, students, and school communities with a wide variety of information about each school and district. These annual reports offer valuable insights to help communities assess whether all students have equitable access to high-quality education. Crucial for today's discussion, these reports contain detailed information regarding school-, district-, and state-level attendance data, including chronic absenteeism rates by student subgroup, percentage of students that fall within

certain ranges of number of absences, and chronic absenteeism rates by grade level.

To help improve rates of chronic absenteeism and support school districts to comply with state and federal policies, the Department provides guidance and technical assistance that highlight best practices. Key activities include providing detailed support to districts on identifying, monitoring, and addressing chronic absenteeism while promoting regular school attendance. Resources developed by the Department include a dedicated webpage launched in April 2024. The Conditions for Learning webpage includes a host of resources developed to aid school districts in reducing chronic absenteeism. Guidance currently available on that webpage includes, for example, suggestions for conducting root cause analyses of absenteeism, strategies specific to early childhood grades, data-based decision-making recommendations, and methods for leveraging federal funding to promote regular attendance. The Department continues to update this webpage to provide districts with up-to-date resources, tools, and data-driven strategies to combat chronic absenteeism effectively.

To highlight just one of many examples, the Department's guidance document Data-Based Decision Making to Address Chronic Absenteeism was developed and released in 2024 to provide districts with a comprehensive framework to identify and address chronic absenteeism effectively. It emphasizes a multi-tiered approach, integrating schoolwide, targeted, and intensive support tailored to the school community's unique needs. The resource outlines essential steps for data collection, analysis, and developing evidence-based strategies, including family engagement, restorative practices, and collaborative problem-solving. By equipping schools with tools like early warning systems, corrective action plans, and professional development, the guidance document aims to foster consistent student attendance, improve educational outcomes, and strengthen community partnerships to ensure students thrive academically and socially.

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The Department remains dedicated to collaborating with districts, stakeholders, and the legislature to foster safe, supportive school climates that encourage regular student attendance. Together, New Jersey can ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important topic.

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Dear Members of the New Jersey Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concern about chronic absenteeism in New Jersey schools, particularly how policies fail to address the needs of students with complex medical conditions. The way chronic absenteeism is currently defined and handled actually exacerbates the problem for many students. Rather than recognizing the unique challenges faced by children with health issues—such as rare diseases, immunocompromised conditions, sensory issues, and special education needs—the policies create an environment where these students are unfairly penalized. These children are often labeled as “truant” or “disengaged,” when in reality they deeply want to be in school but are unable to attend due to health barriers. This failure in policy design leads to harmful consequences for the students and their families, who are often unjustly blamed for circumstances beyond their control.

Far too often, these students are labeled as “chronic absentees” or accused of being disengaged due to “parental neglect” or “school aversion.” The truth is, many of these students desperately want to be in school but are hindered by medical conditions beyond their control. Unfortunately, our state is not adequately equipped to understand or address these challenges. If we were, parents of children with complex medical conditions would not be unfairly labeled as allowing their children to be truant. Instead, they would be supported and given the resources they need to ensure their children can continue learning, despite their health challenges.

It’s also important to note that doctors’ notes, while useful, cannot fully capture the nuances and complexities of these health challenges. They fail to provide a clear understanding of the ongoing, unpredictable nature of these conditions and the significant impact they have on a student's ability to attend school. As a result, the current policies often lead to unnecessary punitive measures that do not reflect the reality of these families’ struggles.

It is critical that our attendance policies be updated to reflect the unique situations of students who are absent not by choice, but by necessity. These students and their families need an education system that is flexible, compassionate, and understands the diverse needs they face.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the current system:

Distinguish Health-Related Absenteeism from Other Causes: Attendance policies should make clear distinctions between students who are absent due to medical reasons and those with other causes for absence. This would help prevent the unfair penalization of students and allow for appropriate support to be provided.

Develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for Absenteeism: Just as we create specialized plans for academic needs, schools should create individualized plans that account for the health-related absences of students. These plans can outline specific measures for keeping students engaged, even when they are unable to attend school in person.

Offer Flexible, Accessible Educational Support: Schools should provide alternative learning options that allow students to continue their education while managing their health. This could

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include in-home tutoring, recorded lessons, virtual learning, or other personalized learning resources that can accommodate their unique needs.

Increase Awareness and Training for Educators and Administrators: School staff must be properly trained to recognize and understand how health conditions affect attendance and learning. This knowledge can help prevent students from being unfairly labeled or penalized for circumstances beyond their control.

Promote a Holistic, Compassionate Approach to Attendance: Rather than focusing on punitive measures, we need a system that prioritizes understanding, compassion, and support for students who face significant health challenges. This approach would ensure that these students are not penalized for things outside their control.

Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed in their education, regardless of the challenges they face. By reforming attendance policies to account for health-related absenteeism, we can ensure a more inclusive, supportive, and compassionate educational environment for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.

Deanna Kertesz Nye

*Founder & Advocate
New Jersey Parents for Virtual Choice*



The NJ Association of School Administrators supports S-2844 No need to testify. Melanie Schulz Director of Government Relations NJASA

Sent from: mschulz@njasa.net

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Written Testimony about Chronic Absenteeism in NJ Schools

Submitted to the New Jersey Senate Education Committee

January 30, 2025

Dear Senator Vin Gopal, Chairperson,
Senator Shirley K. Turner, Vice Chairperson, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony on the pressing issue of **chronic absenteeism** and the importance of **collaboration between schools, districts, and community organizations** in addressing it.

Chronic absenteeism -- missing *10% or more of the school year* -- has risen significantly in New Jersey, particularly in **Mercer County's urban and suburban districts, including Trenton, Hamilton, Lawrence, and Princeton**. Many students face barriers beyond their control, such as:

- Housing and food insecurity
- Transportation challenges
- Mental health and social-emotional struggles
- Limited access to healthcare
- Responsibilities at home, such as caring for younger siblings or helping with household needs

These challenges do not disappear at the end of the school day or during summer break. To be effective, solutions must ensure that students and families receive consistent support throughout the year.

Mercer County's Multi-District, Multi-Nonprofit Approach

Since 2018, the All Kids Thrive initiative, led by the Princeton Area Community Foundation, has supported attendance-focused interventions through partnerships with **school districts, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders**. This collaborative model has highlighted several key strategies that help address chronic absenteeism:

1. **Cross-District Collaboration Strengthens Responses**—By working together, districts can share resources, strategies, and data to better understand and address attendance barriers.
2. **Community Organizations Extend School Capacity** – Schools alone cannot address all the underlying issues contributing to absenteeism. Partnerships with **housing agencies, mental health providers, and family support organizations** have played a crucial role in ensuring students receive the help they need.
3. **Holistic Interventions Yield Better Outcomes** – When efforts focus on **addressing root causes**, such as family instability or lack of transportation, students are more likely to **re-engage with school** and develop consistent attendance habits.
4. **Engaging Families is Essential** – Strengthening relationships between schools and families helps build trust and create a support system that encourages student attendance.

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Community Schools: An Opportunity to Build on These Lessons

The community schools model aligns well with the lessons learned from Mercer County's efforts by providing schools with integrated student and family support, including:

- ✓ On-site healthcare and mental health counseling
- ✓ Expanded learning opportunities and tutoring
- ✓ Family engagement and social services
- ✓ Stronger partnerships with local organizations

These supports help students not only during school hours but also by ensuring that families have access to essential resources beyond the classroom and throughout the year. Expanding access to community school strategies in districts facing high absenteeism rates could help ensure students and families receive the support they need to stay engaged in school.

Policy Recommendations

Based on these experiences, we encourage the committee to:

1. **Support Funding for Community-Based Attendance Initiatives** – Invest in programs that strengthen school-nonprofit partnerships to address the barriers that prevent students from attending school.
2. **Encourage Regional Collaboration** – Provide opportunities for districts to work together in tackling chronic absenteeism, recognizing that student challenges often extend beyond individual schools.
3. **Expand Access to Wraparound Services**—Ensure schools in high-need areas have access to family engagement specialists, mental health services, and community partnerships to help students overcome attendance challenges.
4. **Foster Data Sharing and Best Practice Exchanges** – Support efforts that allow districts and community organizations to share insights, evaluate interventions, and refine strategies for reducing absenteeism.

Mercer County's experience highlights how cross-district and community partnerships can support student attendance and engagement. While challenges remain, investing in collaborative, community-based approaches -- including expanding access to community school resources -- could help ensure that more students across New Jersey receive the support they need to attend school and succeed.

Thank you for your time and commitment to addressing this critical issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Nelida Valentin, Vice President
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About the Princeton Area Community Foundation

Since its founding in 1991, the Community Foundation has made grants of more than \$241 million and provided an additional \$48 million in support to our nonprofit fundholders. With over 450 charitable funds, in 2024, the Community Foundation awarded more than \$32 million in grants to support the critical work of nonprofits in making the communities they serve more responsive to the needs of their residents. Learn more at www.pacf.org.

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A Celebration of All Kids Thrive

Annie was a kindergarten student in Trenton who was absent often: three days one week, five the next.*

School staff had trouble reaching her mother, so they called Luis, the All Kids Thrive navigator at Arm in Arm and asked for help. Luis' work with the school was funded through the Princeton Area Community Foundation's All Kids Thrive initiative and his goal was to help kids attend class.

Luis learned that Annie's mom was struggling with mental health issues, suffering from previous trauma, and having a tough time holding down a job, so the family did not have a steady home. He connected her with WomanSpace, a local nonprofit that helps victims of domestic and sexual violence. He introduced her to other local families who could help her daughter get to school. Arm In Arm also helped the family with food, clothing, housing, and other resources.

The story of Annie (a pseudonym) and her mom was among those recounted when the Community Foundation celebrated the work of our ten All Kids Thrive grantee partners during the Foundation for Education Administration's (FEA) statewide Chronic Absenteeism Summit.

The FEA, another AKT grantee partner, is the professional learning division of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. Educators from across the state attended the July 26 event, which featured keynote speaker Dr. Michael Gottfried, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, who edited the book, "Absent from School: Understanding and Addressing Student Absenteeism." Each attendee received a gift copy of the book from the Community Foundation.

The Community Foundation was also featured during the event: Board Chair Sonia Delgado offered closing remarks, while Trustee Emeritus Eleanor Horne, Grants & Programs Vice President Nelida Valentin and All Kids Thrive Project Management Consultant Luke Thompson shared background about AKT and some of our key findings about children and adolescents living in poverty and increasing student engagement.



25x



School Superintendents Scott Rocco of Hamilton, and James Earle of Trenton, offered their reflections about the AKT initiative. Staff from our school and nonprofit grantee partners also participated, with each sharing their strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism, pivotal moments highlighting the importance of their work, and successes achieved as a result.

Annie and her mom are one of those success stories. They now live in a studio apartment. The little girl is doing well in school and attending classes regularly.

"The pivotal moment though, really came for me at the end of the third semester," according to Luis of Arm In Arm.

While reviewing attendance data with the vice-principal, they saw that Annie had perfect attendance.

"That was when it really hit me and I thought, 'this is real, we are really making a difference here,'" he said.

"This mom is dealing with so many issues, but we were able to get her stable enough that her daughter was now thriving. It's a really beautiful thing."

The Community Foundation plans to release an evaluation of the initiative in the coming months. Sign up for our newsletter at www.pacf.org to receive a copy.

"Even though this is a celebration of our five-year effort, it is only the beginning of our efforts to set up youth in our region for success," said Jeffrey M. Vega, President & CEO of the Community Foundation. "We're now translating our work into recommendations that we look forward to sharing with policymakers in the educational field. Our goal is to share the results from this experience to assist policymakers in their efforts to continually improve the system so that all kids can thrive."

The Community Foundation would like to thank all our grantee partners for their work over the last five years:

**Robbins Familias Juntas/
Robbins Familles Together**

- Arm In Arm
- Robbins Elementary School

**Every Child Valued: Every Student,
Every Day Initiative**

- Every Child Valued
- Lawrence Township School District
- ETS Research & Development Division

**Building a Culture Where All Kids Thrive
in School and Beyond: BE THERE!**

- Foundation for Educational Administration
- Hamilton Township School District

**Positive Improvement
(and Engagement) Through the Arts**

- Hedgepeth-Williams Intermediate School
- Foundation for Educational Administration

Connect Trenton

- Isles
- The College of New Jersey
- Trenton Ninth Grade Academy

The Rivera Chronic Absenteeism Program

- Mercer Street Friends
- Rivera Elementary School

Princeton YMCA ACE Program

- Princeton YMCA
- Princeton Public School District
- Princeton High School

Education and Health:

Linking Data for Student Success

- Trenton Health Team
- Trenton Public Schools, Department of Health Services

TPS Every Day Matters Project

- Trenton Public School District
- Parent Connect

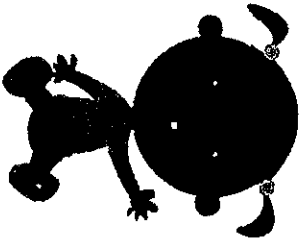
Arts Lab

- Young Audiences of New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania
- Hamilton Township School District
- Wilson Elementary School
- Linchpin Solutions

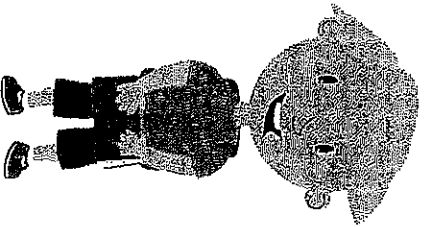
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What Happens When Kids Miss School?

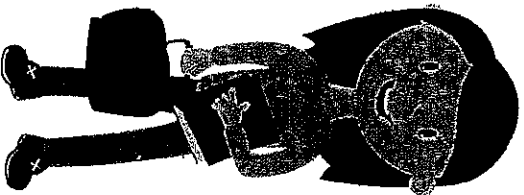
Kids need to be in school. Research shows students who are chronically absent - missing just **2** days per month, or **10%** of the school year - lose opportunities to succeed throughout their lives.



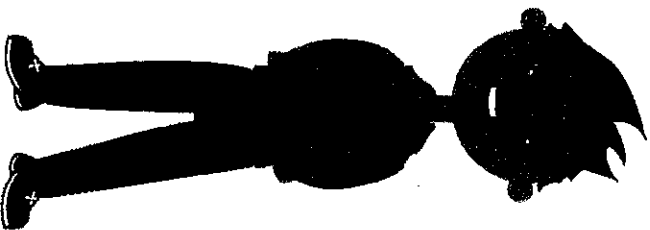
EARLY CHILDHOOD
ages 0-4



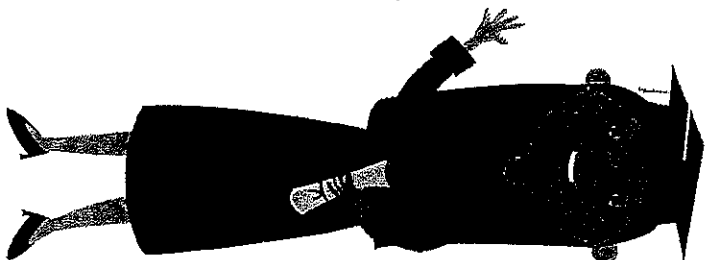
ELEMENTARY
ages 5-10



MIDDLE SCHOOL
ages 11-13



HIGH SCHOOL
ages 14-18



POST-SECONDARY
ages 19-25

Results of Chronic Absenteeism

Benefits of Attendance

Erodes Pre-K benefits	Poor reading skills	Lower math test scores	Higher dropout rates	Lower earnings for life
Shapes the architecture of the brain	Reading enables all future learning	Master core skills, including math	More likely to graduate	College grads have strong job prospects

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ALL KIDS THRIVE
Princeton Area Community Foundation

Scan the QR Code below to explore the All Kids Thrive YouTube playlist with videos featuring our nonprofit partners.



**ALL KIDS
THRIVE**

Princeton Area
Community Foundation



https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3KuQSieSI_hD1Xm1xmzrUCD06LgyMsRp&feature=shared

www.pacf.org

28x

POSITION STATEMENT

BILL: S3917 (Gopal) Makes various changes to school funding law; modifies method of determining tax levy growth limitation for school districts; revises components of Educational Adequacy Report.

NJEA POSITION: SUPPORT

COMMENTS

School funding has been problematic for the past few years, as districts have been surprised by their school aid numbers and have found themselves scrambling to create budgets. While many districts need cap relief, this bill should help districts ensure they do not see significant aid losses and is a beginning to the conversation around state aid for schools.

POSITION STATEMENT

BILL: S1659 (O'Scanlon, Corrado) Requires school districts to incorporate age-appropriate instruction on menstrual toxic shock syndrome and requires installation of signage in certain women's rooms to enhance public awareness of menstrual toxic shock syndrome.

NJEA POSITION: SEEK AMENDMENTS

COMMENTS

NJEA appreciates the intent of S1659. However, curriculum mandates are the purview of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. The NJDOE follows a thorough process to review and update standards, convenes groups of experts and educators to review and update learning standards, and then takes public feedback on proposed standards before they are finalized. NJEA suggests that posting fact sheets about menstrual toxic shock syndrome in places such as restrooms and school nurses' offices would probably be more effective a means of promoting this information. Consider the signs that are in every women's bathroom about drinking while pregnant.

POSITION STATEMENT

BILL: S1783 (McKnight) Requires instruction on cursive handwriting in public school curriculum.

NJEA POSITION: SEEK AMENDMENTS

COMMENTS

Learning to write in cursive can be beneficial for students. It can help their fine motor skills and their cognition. However, many districts have other methods of ensuring these same goals are met. Additionally, curriculum mandates are the purview of the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and a local board of education, all of which follow a thorough process involving stakeholders and experts. **NJEA asks that this bill be made permissive to highlight the benefits of cursive.**

POSITION STATEMENT

BILL: S2844 (McKeon) Establishes Jersey Strong Public Service Scholarship Program.

NJEA POSITION: SUPPORT

COMMENTS

NJEA supports this bill, which would establish a scholarship program that includes public education employees as potential recipients. Many support staff in schools would love to become certified teachers but do not have the means to pay for the cost of a college education. The program under this bill would help them do so.

POSITION STATEMENT

BILL: SJR 93 (Greenstein) Designates first full week of May of each year as "Teacher Appreciation Week."

NJEA POSITION: SUPPORT

COMMENTS

NJEA supports this resolution. An appreciation week promotes the value educators bring to our schools and our society. This is especially important at this time, when the profession is struggling to find enough educators to fill our classrooms.

Senate Education Testimony: Chronic Absenteeism

State Chronic Absenteeism Rate : 16.6%

District Factor Group J (Highest socioeconomic group)	Chronic Absenteeism Rate	District Factor Group A (lowest socioeconomic group)	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
Bernards Township School District (Somerset)	8.1%	Asbury Park School District (Monmouth)	30.9%
Chester School District (Morris)	10.8%	Atlantic City School District (Atlantic)	31.3%
Cranbury School District (Middlesex)	5.5 %	Bridgeton Public Schools (Cumberland)	26.1%
Essex Fells School District (Essex)	8.4%	Buena Regional School District (Atlantic)	23.5%
Glen Rock Public Schools (Bergen)	5.0%	Camden City School District (Camden)	40.7%
Haddonfield School District (Camden)	4.7%	Commercial Township Schools (Cumberland)	24.2%
Harding Township Schools (Morris)	4.6%	Dover School District (Morris)	13.2%
Ho-Ho-Kus School District (Bergen)	9.1%	Downe Township School District (Cumberland)	16.7%
Little Silver School District (Monmouth)	7.1%	East Newark Public Schools (Hudson)	14.9%
Mendham Boro School District (Morris)	3.1%	East Orange Public Schools (Essex)	32%
Mendham Township Schools (morris)	6.1%	Egg Harbor City Schools (Atlantic)	23%
Millburn Township Schools District (Essex)	8.8%	Elizabeth Public Schools (Union)	16.9%
Montgomery Township Public Schools (Somerset)	9.6%	Fairfield Township Public Schools (Cumberland)	21.9%
Mountain Lakes Schools (Morris)	5.8%	Fairview Public School District (Bergen)	21.9%
North Caldwell Public Schools (Essex)	11.5%	Irvington Public Schools (Essex)	21.9%
Northern Highlands Regional High School District (Bergen)	8.6%	Keansburg School District (Monmouth)	33.1%
Ridgewood Public Schools (Bergen)	6.2%	Millville School District (Cumberland)	30.4%
Rumson School District (Monmouth)	6.7%	New Brunswick Public Schools (Middlesex)	21.7%

Rumso-Fair Haven Regional High School (Monmouth)	6.5%	Newark Public Schools (Essex)	12.7%
Saddle River School District (Bergen)	10.1%	North Wildwood School District (Cape May)	22.4%
School District of the Chathams (Morris)	5.7%	Orange Public Schools	13.8%
Tewksbury Township Schools (Hunterdon)	8.7%	Paterson Public Schools (Passaic)	41.6%
Upper Saddle River School District (Bergen)	6.1%	Salem City Schools District (Salem)	32.5%
West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District (Mercer)	11.8%	Trenton Public Schools (Mercer)	42.2%
Woodcliff Lakes Public Schools (Bergen)	1.9%	Vineland Public Schools (Cumberland)	30.2%

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