



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 3, 2024

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Attendance Office Personnel, Child Welfare Liaisons, Directors of Student Achievement, Directors of Student Personnel Services, Directors of Student Services, Educational Stability Liaisons, Intervention and Referral Services Coordinators, Principals, Pupil Personnel Services

From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## Reducing Chronic Absenteeism and Promoting Regular Attendance in Schools

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) recognizes the importance of regular attendance as a crucial step towards bolstering student achievement. To support schools and districts in their efforts to prevent and address chronic absenteeism, the NJDOE developed the [Conditions for Learning: Promoting Regular Student Attendance and Addressing Chronic Absenteeism](#) webpage containing a collection of resources and guidance that can be utilized to decrease absenteeism and promote regular attendance.

### New Jersey's Approach

The NJDOE operates with the researched-based understanding that positive school climate and culture can help prevent chronic absenteeism and foster regular student attendance. When students feel safe, supported, and engaged, they are more likely to attend school consistently. The NJDOE's many resources designed to address chronic absenteeism are closely linked to resources designed to foster safe and inclusive learning environments that encourage consistent attendance.

### Announcing New "Conditions for Learning" Webpage

The [Conditions for Learning](#) webpage includes the following collections of resources:

- **Addressing Chronic Absenteeism Guidance:** See [Data-Based Decision Making for Addressing Chronic Absenteeism](#), which offers a roadmap for developing data driven action plans ([PDF/Word](#)) to combat the unique challenges contributing to absenteeism within local communities.
- **School Climate and Culture:** Access tools to cultivate an environment where every student feels safe, supported, and engaged, thus encouraging regular attendance.
- **New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS):** Leverage this framework to efficiently allocate resources and provide targeted interventions for students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.
- **Maximizing Federal Funds:** Discover how to effectively use federal funds to establish comprehensive support systems that address the root causes of absenteeism.

### Moving Forward Together

New Jersey's ongoing work to decrease absenteeism connects to the Biden-Harris Administration's recent release of the [Improving Student Achievement Agenda](#), a resource that focuses on deploying effective strategies to enhance performance across all student demographics. New Jersey is ahead of the curve in implementing guidance from this resource – the NJDOE already integrates a uniform metric of chronic absenteeism into its ESSA accountability framework and applies this metric across elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, under [P.L. 2018, c.23](#), schools are required to devise a corrective action plan for improving attendance rates if 10% or more of students are identified as chronically absent. This plan must incorporate feedback from parents and

caregivers of enrolled students. This aligns to the recently released Federal guidance as it serves as a checkpoint to ensure targeted supports are provided to all groups of students affected by chronic absenteeism and it enhances parent engagement in strategies to improve attendance.

The unwavering commitment to enhancing student achievement and well-being across New Jersey is greatly appreciated. When compared to other states, New Jersey leads the nation in its efforts to combat chronic absenteeism, however there is still work to do. Together, let's take meaningful steps towards understanding and mitigating chronic absenteeism, ensuring that every student in New Jersey can achieve academic and personal success.

**Contact Information**

For additional questions, please contact the Office of Student Support Services at [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