



Superintendent's Message September 2018

On behalf of the Bayonne Board of Education and the entire Bayonne Public School Family, I welcome you to what should be an exciting and productive school year. I trust everyone had a relaxing and restful summer vacation, and that everyone is eager and ready to continue our journey from good to great. This month I am making a proclamation regarding attendance.

Good attendance is essential to student achievement and graduation, and the Bayonne Public Schools are committed to dedicating our resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates, with a focus starting as early as pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. **Chronic absence** – missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason including excused and unexcused absences, or just two or three days a month – is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates.

Chronic absence is now a required reporting metric under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and improving attendance and reducing chronic absence takes commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to particular challenges and strengths in each community. Chronic absence predicts lower third-grade reading proficiency, course failure and eventual dropouts, and it weakens our community and our local economy.

Absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling schools, since it's hard to measure improvement in classroom instruction if students are not in class to benefit from them.

As a district, our schools will reach out more frequently to absent students to determine what barriers they face to attending school and what would help them attend more regularly. As a district we will do more to track, calculate and share the data on how many students are chronically absent so that we can see the attendance gaps and can deliver the right interventions to the right students.

All students – even those who show up regularly – are affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time reviewing for students who missed lessons.

Chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, families and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to school.

As the Superintendent of the Bayonne Public Schools, I proclaim our school district will stand with the nation in recognizing September as **“Attendance Awareness Month.”** We hereby commit to focusing on reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children an equitable opportunity to learn, grow and thrive academically, emotional and socially.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael A. Wanko