



BAYONNE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope that you had a relaxing summer vacation and an opportunity to spend quality time with friends and family. I know that the teachers have planned an engaging instructional program and the principals are ready to meet the challenges and successes that the new year will bring. As parents, you have worked with your children on the Summer Bridges; as well as, purchased supplies and uniforms so that your child is well prepared for a successful year. As Superintendent, I know of one other factor that you could assist us with that will surely help your child maximize his or her education. That factor is good **ATTENDANCE**.

As we embark on a new school year, I believe that it's important to address the issue of student attendance, a little known piece of education that has a serious impact on your child's college and career readiness. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent of a school year as a result of unexcused and excused absences. **Research has shown that student attendance affects standardized test scores, academic achievement, graduation, and dropout rates.** According to educational researchers, Balfanz & Byrnes, chronic absenteeism has been identified as the single most important indicator of dropping out of school before graduation.

In the early grades, our youngest learners are building their foundation of reading and math skills. This is a crucial stage in their literacy development. They are learning the rhythm of school, as it becomes a part of their daily routine. Beginning as early as Pre-K and Kindergarten, children who continually miss school are more likely to struggle as they go on, often falling behind in their academic development. In addition, they miss the experience of making new friends and learning to navigate social situations, which is essential to their emotional development.

In the middle grades, our adolescent learners continue to strengthen their foundation in language arts and math. However, at this stage in their education, they are learning to read, comprehend, and analyze increasingly complex texts. Developing these higher-level, critical thinking skills is key to future academic success as we prepare them **to be college and career ready**. Those students with poor attendance often experience difficulty catching up and have fewer opportunities to learn the material they missed because of not being in class. Excessive absences at any grade level, whether they are excused or unexcused, can significantly affect a child's achievement and puts them academically at-risk.

A child does need to stay home when they are truly sick. However, avoid scheduling routine medical appointments during the school day or extended trips while school is in session. I ask that you take the time to familiarize yourself with our district's attendance policy (Board Policy 5200-Attendance).

School is a place for learning, but it is also a place for making new friendships, discovering new interests, and an environment where children are encouraged to reach their full academic potential, building their confidence and self-esteem. These positive experiences play an integral role not only in a child's long-term academic success in school but also in their chosen career. Whether your child is in Pre-K or grade eight, making sure they attend school regularly lets them know the value you place on education and reinforces their understanding that school is important. I ask that you make sure your children are able to attend school every day... ***to prepare them to be college and career ready.***

Sincerely,

Michael A. Wanko, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent