

## Message to Parents

School attendance is mandatory in the state of Florida and has become a National Initiative called: Every Student, Every Day. The launch of this initiative is an effort to eliminate chronic absenteeism.

Research has estimated that there are 5 to 7.5 million students who are chronically absent each year; which is approximately 18 days in a school year.

When students are consistently absent from school, they run the risk of falling behind their peers academically, they may exhibit poor self-esteem, they may drop-out or may become involved with the justice system.

Brevard Public School students are our most precious resource, so it is imperative that we work together for the success of the students.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following community agencies are resources available for further assistance if you or a family member is having trouble.

Crosswinds Youth Services  
(321) 452-0800

Outward Bound  
(321) 268-5666 Ext: 2178

Children's Home Society  
(321) 752-3170

English for Speakers of Other Languages  
(321) 633-1000, ext. 11325

B.A.M. Program  
(321) 264-7755

Eckerd  
(855) 450-4673

GAP Ministry  
(321) 727-3290

NextGEN (Career Resource Center)  
(321) 504-7600

Home Education  
(321) 633-1000, ext. 11528

Families in Transition  
(321) 633-1000, ext. 11366

Adult Education  
(321) 633-3575

Job Corp  
(800) 733-5627

Community Resources  
**211** or (321) 632-6688

**Pat Gaines-Jackson and Nelida Lopez-Martinez developed this brochure in conjunction with the Department of Student Services.**



Department of Student Services

## Closing the Gap on Chronic Absenteeism



### Attendance Resource Team

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## The Law

Florida State Statute (1003.21) All children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years old by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, except as otherwise provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term.

Also, FL. State Statute (1003.26) indicates if the school determines that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had 15 or more unexcused absences in a 90-calendar-day period, the superintendent of schools or his or her designee may file a truancy petition against you with Circuit Court-Juvenile Division or a complaint filed against you in the State Attorney's Office.

**From the first day your child attends kindergarten until the day he or she graduates from high school, daily attendance is critical. Chronic absences, or missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason (excused absences, unexcused absences and suspensions), can result in 3<sup>rd</sup> graders unable to master reading, 6<sup>th</sup> graders failing subjects and 9<sup>th</sup> graders dropping out of school. In fact, chronic absenteeism is one of the strongest predictors for dropping out of school. Thank you for keeping your child on track in school.**

**Dr. Jayna Jenkins  
Director of Student Support Services**

## Frequently Asked Questions

Will my child be excused from school for family or social occasions?

**No – You should make arrangements for social activities after school.**

May I keep my child out of school if I am dealing with custody issues with my former spouse?

**No - Your child should not be held out of school for custody reasons. Talk with your lawyer or go to court to determine the next course of action.**

What can I do if my child refuses to attend school?

**You should ask for assistance from your child's school as soon as possible for support.**

Do I need a doctor's note for my child to be excused for an illness?

**Yes – Students are only excused for absences with doctor's notes, court date, religious holidays and chronic and extended illnesses.**

What can I do to help my child succeed in school?

**You should visit your child's school and monitor your child's attendance; stay in touch with your child...know what's going on. Also, provide a quiet place for them to study and do homework.**

May I keep my child home if my family is in transition?

**No – Please contact your school and let the school counselor know that you are in transition, so that transportation can be arranged for your child.**

If my child is failing, can he/she stay home for the rest of the semester?

**No - your child will need to continue to attend school.**

If my child has a medical condition that interferes with him/her attending school, may they stay home?

**No – you should speak with the school counselor or administration at your child's school to determine the best course of action for your child.**