

Keep At-Risk Students in School and On the Road to Graduation

Cosponsor H.R. XXXX: The Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Act

Endorsed by: [The Coalition for Juvenile Justice](#), [AASA: School Superintendents Association](#), [National Council for Behavioral Health](#), [MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership](#), [CASEL: Committee for Children](#), [Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning](#), [NNSTOY: National Network of State Teachers of the Year](#), [Afterschool Alliance](#), [ASCA: American School Counselor Association](#), [Campaign for Youth Justice](#), [Healthy Schools Campaign](#), [NAESP: National Association of Elementary School Principals](#), [Alliance for Excellent Education](#), [the Ounce of Prevention Fund](#), [NSBA: National School Boards Association](#), [Center for Supportive Schools](#), [Communities in Schools](#), [Spark](#), and the [National PTA](#).

Dear Colleague:

Chronic absenteeism is defined as students missing 10 percent or more of the school year. According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and Data Collection, this continues to be widespread issue across the nation. Over 7 million students in the 2015-2016 school year were chronically absent. This makes up 16% of the student population. Chronically absent students impact school performance, high school graduation rates, and overall student success in adulthood. Studies demonstrate a direct connection between chronic absenteeism, low academic achievement, and high dropout rates. Students who are chronically absent are 68% less likely to graduate from high school.

Our legislation would allow schools to use existing federal funds to develop and implement effective strategies to combat chronic absence in schools. The bill includes the following provisions:

(1) Installing Attendance Data Collection and Analysis Systems

- Implementing real time data collection and analysis tools allows educators to track and identify attendance issues and monitor if progress is being made. Simple interventions such as alerting parents about their child's missed assignments have been shown to [increase attendance by 17%](#). The Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Act allows school districts to improve their attendance tracking systems. As a result, this data can be shared at the individual level with students, families, teachers, and principals to encourage immediate interventions, and at the aggregate level with district leadership, policymakers, community partners, and the general public to raise awareness and increase accountability.

(2) Partnering with Local Health, Transportation and Social Service Providers

- There is no single cause of chronic absenteeism. The Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Act allows for schools to tailor solutions based on why individual or groups of students continue to be absent. By focusing on specific groups such as students in temporary shelters, local task forces were able to create conditions that made students [31% less likely to be chronically absent](#). Other interventions may include partnering with local health providers for districts with high rates of asthma or social service providers for schools experiencing high rates of violence. Some students may also benefit from community-based solutions such as providing more reliable access to transportation.

(3) Implementing School-Based Mentoring Programs

- The presence of a consistent caring adult can be the key to instilling a regular attendance routine, and studies show that students who regularly meet with mentors are [52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school](#). The Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Act provides states the ability to combat chronic absence in schools by training and implementing school-based mentoring programs. Schools will be able to utilize school personnel, partner with community

organizations, or set up peer to peer mentoring models depending on what local school districts determine to be most impactful.

Join us in cosponsoring this important piece of legislation to empower schools to cut back on chronic absenteeism. For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Rachel Jenkins (rachel.jenkins@mail.house.gov) in Congressman Ryan's office or Jordan Evich (jordan.evich@mail.house.gov) with Congresswoman Herrera Beutler's office.

Sincerely,

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler
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