

**Meria Joel Carstarphen, Ed.D.**

Superintendent

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September 4, 2018

Greetings APS Parents and Guardians,

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) is on a mission to ensure that with a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career. APS recognizes that by focusing on the whole child, significant gains can be achieved in student performance and the likelihood of students graduating from high school will be increased. Chronic absenteeism, truancy, and habitual tardiness create a barrier for students striving to reach their full academic potential.

As part of a nationwide movement to address chronic absenteeism, September has been designated as Attendance Awareness Month. We are highlighting this month with the theme, "First Day Every Day." Students who are chronically absent miss 10 percent or more of enrolled school days. Please note that chronic absenteeism includes all absences; excused, unexcused and out of school suspensions. Research indicates that by third grade, chronically absent students, especially those who have experienced multiple years of poor attendance are less likely to read on grade level. By sixth grade, chronic absenteeism becomes a warning sign that a student will drop out of high school. This is why daily, and on-time attendance is critical to help ensure student success.

In an effort to bring awareness to the importance of attending school every day, APS will be using **#SCHOOLMATTERS** in social media postings. Staff and schools will use this hashtag to highlight what they are doing to promote daily and on-time attendance. You can help us with this initiative by watching, following and using the hashtag **#SCHOOLMATTERS**.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when your child is unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. APS is committed to supporting your family during these times. If your child happens to miss the bus or walks to school late, please contact the APS Truancy Center at 404-802-3648 or 404-802-3541 and arrangements will be made to pick up your child and take him or her to school. The APS Truancy Center can also be contacted for any concerns with truancy in your community during the school day.

Thank you for your support in ensuring your child attends school daily and on-time so that they can continue to participate in high quality teaching and learning!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meria J. Carstarphen'.

Meria J. Carstarphen

{name}

Re:

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