

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 108

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

SYNOPSIS

Urges DOE and school districts to develop creative solutions to address chronic absenteeism.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the Department of Education to
2 work with school districts to develop creative solutions to
3 address chronic absenteeism.
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5 **WHEREAS**, Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10 percent or
6 more of school days in a school year, is a nationwide issue with
7 lasting consequences for a child’s academic future; and
8 **WHEREAS**, According to an Advocates for Children of New Jersey
9 report released in September 2015, more than 125,000 or
10 approximately 10 percent of New Jersey students in grades K-12
11 were chronically absent during the 2013-2014 school year; and
12 **WHEREAS**, The problem is exacerbated in the State’s 177 “high-
13 absenteeism” districts, in which the average rate of chronic
14 absenteeism in the 2013-2014 school year was 16 percent; and
15 **WHEREAS**, Chronic absenteeism is most prevalent at the beginning
16 and end of students’ formal education, with the highest percentages
17 occurring in kindergarten and high school; and
18 **WHEREAS**, The long-term negative impacts of chronic absenteeism
19 include reading difficulties, lower gains in math skills and general
20 knowledge, lower test scores, poor attendance in future school
21 years, and weaker social-emotional skills; and
22 **WHEREAS**, Chronic absenteeism affects not only the individual
23 student but also the entire classroom, as teachers must utilize
24 valuable instruction time to review lessons for students who missed
25 school; and
26 **WHEREAS**, Students who continue a pattern of chronic absenteeism
27 are at higher risk of eventually dropping out of school; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Students from low-income families and students of color
29 are more likely to become chronically absent, and poor attendance
30 is a contributing factor to the achievement gap of these student
31 populations; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Effectively addressing the issue of chronic absenteeism
33 requires an understanding of the underlying barriers to student
34 attendance, which can include unstable housing, unreliable
35 transportation, and health-related issues; and
36 **WHEREAS**, Creative school strategies, such as positive parent
37 engagement and the implementation of preventive, supportive
38 measures, have been shown to significantly improve student
39 attendance and help reverse the problems caused by chronic
40 absenteeism; and
41 **WHEREAS**, Recommendations for schools to reduce chronic
42 absenteeism include: helping students and parents understand the
43 importance of coming to school every day; identifying attendance
44 problems as early as possible; notifying parents immediately when
45 a pattern of absenteeism develops; creating positive reinforcements
46 for excellent or improved attendance; providing mentors for at-risk
47 students; and fostering positive relationships between schools and
48 families; and

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37 STATEMENT

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39 This resolution urges the Department of Education and local
40 school districts to work collaboratively to develop and implement
41 creative solutions to address the issue of chronic absenteeism in
42 New Jersey's public schools. Chronic absenteeism, defined as
43 missing 10 percent or more of school days in a school year, is a
44 nationwide problem that impacts a child's chances of long-term
45 academic success. A report issued by Advocates for Children of
46 New Jersey in September 2015 reveals that more than 125,000 or
47 approximately 10 percent of New Jersey students in grades K-12
48 were chronically absent during the 2013-2014 school year. The

1 long-term negative impacts of chronic absenteeism include reading
2 difficulties, lower gains in math skills and general knowledge,
3 lower test scores, poor attendance in future school years, and
4 weaker social-emotional skills. In addition, students with a
5 continued pattern of chronic absenteeism are at higher risk of
6 eventually dropping out of school.

7 In order to effectively address the issue of chronic absenteeism,
8 an understanding of the underlying barriers to student attendance,
9 which may include unstable housing, unreliable transportation, and
10 health-related issues, is necessary. Creative school strategies, such
11 as positive parent engagement and the implementation of
12 preventive, supportive measures, have been shown to significantly
13 improve student attendance and help reverse the problems caused
14 by chronic absenteeism. The Paterson and Woodbine School
15 Districts in New Jersey are exemplary success stories of how
16 implementing best practices to combat poor student attendance can
17 dramatically reduce the number of chronically absent children. By
18 utilizing these examples and other proven strategies, the
19 Department of Education and school districts can work
20 collaboratively to develop creative solutions to reduce chronic
21 absenteeism and increase the chances of academic success for the
22 State's children.