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TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dale Ellis

DATE: September 9, 2019

SUBJ: Attendance Proclamation (ACTION ITEM)

I have enclosed a proclamation that officially declares September as Attendance Awareness month. As you are aware, attendance at school is a large determinant of the success of the student over the course of a school year. The push to approve such a proclamation is a national effort, and many NC school districts are on board in support of this initiative. I approved a Superintendent proclamation saying the same, but it does not carry the same weight as a proclamation approved by the Board. I recommend its approval by the Board.

I am available to answer any questions you might have.



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**FROM THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Proclamation of September as Attendance Awareness Month**

**WHEREAS**, regular attendance is essential to grade-level reading, academic achievement and graduation; and

**WHEREAS**, early chronic absence – missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason including excused and unexcused absences, or just two or three days a month – is associated with lower academic achievement, truancy in middle school, and school dropout; and

**WHEREAS**, regular attendance puts children on track for becoming proficient readers by the end of third grade, decreases their likelihood of being retained, and supports the development of social-emotional skills needed to persist in school; and

**WHEREAS**, all students – even those who attend regularly – are affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time reviewing for students who missed lessons; and

**WHEREAS**, chronic absence is an early warning indicator that can reveal that a student needs help long before test scores or grades do; and

**WHEREAS**, chronic absence exacerbates the achievement gap between students in low-income communities, many of whom are students of color, and their peers. Students from low-income communities are more likely face systemic barriers to getting to school and more likely to be impacted academically by missing school; and

**WHEREAS**, attendance is actionable and districts across the country are increasing attendance by recognizing good and improved attendance, engaging students and families, monitoring attendance data and practice, providing personalized early outreach as needed, and developing systemic responses to attendance barriers; and

**WHEREAS**, attendance is now a required reporting metric under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act and an area of focus for both the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the North Carolina Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative; and

**WHEREAS**, improving attendance takes commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to the challenges and strengths in each community; and

**WHEREAS**, regular attendance can be significantly increased when schools, families and communities work together to monitor and promote regular attendance and address barriers that keep children from getting to school;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Montgomery County Schools Board of Education proclaims our school district will stand with the nation in recognizing September as “Attendance Awareness Month.” We hereby commit to focusing on reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children an equitable opportunity to learn, grow and thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Signed, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2019.

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Steve DeBerry, Chairman

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Dr. Dale Ellis, Secretary