

National Collaborative on Education + Health

October 5, 2015

VIA E-MAIL AND FAX

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

We the undersigned organizations are writing to express our support of the U.S. Department of Education's national effort to address chronic absenteeism. We commend you for your leadership in increasing awareness of chronic absenteeism as a national problem and we are committed to working with you to support efforts to eliminate chronic absenteeism in our nation's schools.

We recognize that millions of students are missing too many school days, placing them at academic risk. This is not simply a matter of truancy: excused absences often related to illness and lack of access to needed health supports cost valuable instructional time, as do days lost to suspension.

We recognize that in order to turn this national problem around, cross-sector efforts are needed to make sure schools, families and communities have the tools, resources and support necessary to make sure students are in school and ready to learn. We believe that the U.S. Department of Education's new effort is a critical step towards catalyzing efforts to address chronic absenteeism and ensuring cross-sector support for efforts to address this issue.

The undersigned organizations are committed to working with you and the U.S. Department of Education and others to ensure the success of this important effort and look forward to working with you to extend the message of this work. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Rochelle Davis, President and CEO of Healthy Schools Campaign, at 312-419-1810 or Rochelle@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

Sincerely,

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Advocate Children's Hospital
Afterschool Alliance
Alliance for a Healthier Generation
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Federation of Teachers
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association

Attendance Works
Building Healthy Futures
Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation
The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
The Center for Health Affairs
Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, The George Washington University
ChangeLab Solutions
The Children's Aid Society
Children Now
Children's Health Fund
Coalition for Community Schools
E3 Alliance: Education Equals Economics
Everyone Graduates Center
Futures Without Violence
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Resources in Action
Healthy Schools Campaign
Henry Ford Health System
Kaiser Permanente
Mental Health America
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Education Association
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)
National PTA
NEA Healthy Futures
Nemours Children's Health System
School Social Work Association of America
School-Based Health Alliance
SHAPE America
Share Our Strength
Society for Public Health Education
Texas Action for Healthy Kids
Trust for America's Health
Transforming Youth Recovery
U.S. Green Building Council
United Way Worldwide
Valley Interfaith Project

cc: Leslie Cornfeld, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Special Advisor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
Ronn Nozoe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Education
Joaquin Tamayo, Special Assistant, U.S. Department of Education

The National Collaborative on Education and Health was launched in February 2014 to identify opportunities for the health and education sectors, individually and together with others, to ensure that all children have the opportunity to be healthy and academically successful, allowing them to reach their full potential as productive members of our communities and our nation. The National Collaborative on Education and Health is co-convened by [Healthy Schools Campaign](#) and [Trust for America's Health](#) and overseen by a steering committee of 20 health and education leaders from across the country.