



Essex County Public Schools
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Department of Special Education and Student Services

August 22, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The standard for the accreditation of public schools in Virginia are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. The Standards of Accreditation provide the foundation for the provision of a high quality public education within a system of accountability and continuous improvement. In November of 2017, the state Board of Education adopted new Standards of Accreditation that will go into effect this school year.

Along with academic indicators, schools will be measured by the number of enrolled students who are determined to be chronically absent. Specifically, a student will be considered "chronically absent" if he/she misses 10 percent or more of the school year regardless of the reason. An academic school year is 180 days, therefore a student is "chronically absent" if he/she misses 18 or more school days in an academic year. The only exclusions to this new indicator are students who are receiving approved homebound instruction.

Your child's daily, on-time attendance is critical to his/her success in school. While some challenges to your child's school attendance are unavoidable, it is important to understand the impact of absences. If your child is chronically absent, we ask that you identify the reasons for the absences and that you help your child overcome these challenges.

If you and your child need additional support with overcoming these challenges, please contact your child's teacher, school counselor, or principal. If you have questions about the new Standards of Accreditation as it relates to attendance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Tara Roane

Tara Roane, Ed.D
Director of Special Education and Student Services