



Scoop from the Supt

by Bryan Girbach

Does attendance affect achievement?

What does research say?

National research is clear, attendance does matter. Every day missed is a lost opportunity for a child to learn. The National Center for Educational Research states, “Teacher effectiveness is the strongest school-related determinant of student success, but chronic student absence reduces even the best teacher’s ability to provide learning opportunities.”

Research also shows that attendance matters regardless of the child’s grade level. Research conducted by The National Center for Children of Poverty concluded, “Absenteeism in kindergarten was associated with negative first grade outcomes such as greater absenteeism in subsequent years and lower achievement in reading, math, and general knowledge.” At the opposite end of the school career, researchers from Arizona State University found that, “High school dropouts have been found to exhibit a history of negative behaviors, including high levels of absenteeism throughout their childhood, at higher rates than high school graduates.”

Is the research supported in Milan?

While Milan Area Schools has an average daily attendance rate of approximately 95%, attendance is still a concern to the district. Keep in mind that a 5% absence rate means that over 100 students miss school every day. When you multiply that figure by the 180 days we have school each year, **in Milan - over 18,000 days of education are missed each school year.**

Early childhood literacy is a District Priority and a major initiative in the district. By reviewing our student data, we know that student attendance problems do affect our youngest learners’ ability to read. Students with more than 10 days of absence are more likely to be below their grade-level benchmark for reading than their peers who have better attendance.

But the absence is excused?

The negative impact of an absence is not changed when an absence is excused by a parent. A lost day of education is a lost day of education, whether the absence is excused or unexcused. The effects of lost educational days build one day at a time for individual learners. It is easy to think that missing one day won't matter for your child, but before you know it, that one day becomes five days and the impact is multiplied.

While partial-day absences are better than missing an entire day, students do still miss important instructional time. In many cases, the first few minutes of the day or the last few minutes of the day can be very important to the educational process. Information for the day is presented or the material for the day is summarized during these times. Therefore, tardies and early departures do affect the educational process of your student.

When should I keep my child home?

While we do encourage daily attendance in school, below is the recommendation from our school nurse regarding when to keep a sick child at home:

When to Keep a Sick Child Home / When Your Child Will Be Sent Home From School

Children are most successful in school when they are present for as many days as possible. However, children who are sick need to stay home if they will not be able to concentrate sufficiently on learning or if they may cause others to become sick.

If your child develops any of these issues during the school day – you will be contacted to pick them up. To help reduce the spread of illness to students and staff, please keep your child home/your child will be sent home for the following reasons:

1. Fever: 100 F is considered a fever. If your child has a temperature of 100F or over – they should not attend school. Your child should be fever free (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to school.
2. Rash: Check with a doctor before bringing a child to school with a rash.
3. Vomiting: A child may return to school after s/he has not thrown up for 24 hours and is back on a regular diet. Most children who vomit during the school day will be sent home.
4. Diarrhea: A child who has a loose stool more than two times in 24 hours, should stay home. S/he may return to school after being diarrhea free for 24 hours.
5. Cough/Cold: A child with a severe or frequent cough and a runny nose is likely not to feel well enough to concentrate sufficiently on learning. S/he would benefit from more rest and fluids at home.
6. Doctor Recommendation: If a child has been prescribed an antibiotic, check with the doctor to see if the child needs to be on medication 24 hours prior to returning to school.

What can you do?

We understand that the lives of parents and the lives of our students are very busy. We simply ask that you make school attendance a priority. Make every effort to make appointments outside of the school day or during school breaks. Talk to your children about school attendance. Encourage your students to strive for perfect attendance. Talk to a teacher or administrator if you need help supporting your child's school attendance. We want to help you with your efforts of improved school attendance.