

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017

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### **Gov. Daugaard proclaims September Attendance Awareness Month**

PIERRE, S.D. – With the 2017-18 school year underway, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed September [Attendance Awareness Month](#).

“Don’t underestimate the importance of showing up,” said Gov. Daugaard. “Some absences cannot be avoided, and that is understandable. Sometimes, though, absences add up without students and families noticing. Research tells us that missing just 10 percent of a school year negatively impacts student achievement. That breaks down to missing only two or three days of school a month. So it’s easy to see how those absences can accumulate, yet escape families’ attention.”

The South Dakota Department of Education is working to raise awareness about the importance of regular attendance through outreach to schools and other stakeholders.

“This is the second school year in which we have really been honing in on raising awareness about the importance of consistent attendance,” said Secretary of Education Dr. Melody Schopp. “School districts and communities have just taken this message and run with it. I’ve seen everything from billboards to videos to newspaper columns and incentive programs for students.”

Students who are chronically absent are at risk of dropping out of school, according to the state Department of Education. By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absenteeism is a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out, and by 9<sup>th</sup> grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores, added Secretary Schopp.

More information about the importance of consistent school attendance is available at <http://attendanceworks.org>.