



Students who regularly miss school can turn into employees who regularly miss work, educators say.

Educators believe school attendance crucial to success

BY **LACY GARRISON**
Reporter for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Every school day counts. According to Attendance Works, a national and state initiative, “Chronic absence — missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason— can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects, and ninth-graders dropping out of high school.”

In a recent School Board meeting, Director of Schools Bobby Cox reiterated how missing that much school is strongly linked to course failure and other problems. According to his presentation, Warren County students classified as chronically absent, missing more than 10 days a school year, are as follows:

- **K-8:** 430 students out of 4,332 students, a chronically absent rate of 9.9 percent
- **9-12:** 474 students out of 1,960 students, a chronically absent rate of 24.2 percent
- **DISTRICTWIDE:** 904 students out of 6,292 students, a chronically absent rate of 14.4 percent

Hickory Creek principal Mike Mansfield said he’s seen firsthand how chronic absenteeism affects students.

“The obvious thing is they are missing that instruction that can’t be replaced and poor attendance habits do continue to be a pattern as the student gets older,” said Mansfield.

Due to high-schoolers skipping days during testing as well as college visits, the high school chronic

absentee rate is almost double the district average.

“The state wants to know how many actual days students miss in a school year that are excused or unexcused,” said Cox. “Recently, the law just changed about college visits, where a college visit counts as an excused absence, which goes on our chronic absentee list.”

Senior WCHS school student Valeria Lopez described what it’s like for her when she misses a day of school.

“When I miss school, it stresses me out,” said Valeria. “I have eight classes so it makes it very difficult to go to each teacher and work on what I missed. Most of the time, I have to figure things out on my own. However, I always catch up. If I don’t have to miss school, I’d rather be here.”

School system federal programs director Vickie Dodd points out bad habits in school translate to bad habits later in life.

“When these students go out into the workforce, employers don’t want them to miss work time,” said Dodd. “They want them there on the job.”

Dodd says missing school regularly can really add up. She says missing just one day a month translates to nine days by the end of the year. Missing two days a month results in missing 18 days for the year, which is 10 percent of all school days.

September is Attendance Awareness Month. Students and parents are asked for their best efforts in making school attendance a top priority.

Tullahoma teen found in possession of firearm with altered serial number

A 17-year-old juvenile has been charged with possession of a firearm with an altered serial number after an investigation into threatening social media posts.

Tullahoma Police Department, in conjunction with Tullahoma City Schools, began investigating social media posts which were being passed

by students and parents. Although the initial post did not make any reference to the school or any student, the department began efforts to identify those involved to ensure the safety of the students, school and the community.

At approximately 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, police officers took the male into custody.

As a result of the investigation, Tullahoma Police Department does not believe there are any other people involved.

“The department would like to thank the Tullahoma City Schools for their assistance and providing valuable information leading to this resolution,” said Tullahoma Police Chief Paul Blackwell. “The

department also wants to thank the many students and parents who provided information. At this time the juvenile has been charged with possession of a firearm with an altered serial number and will be appearing in the juvenile court of Coffee County. The department is thankful for all the assistance provided in this matter.”



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Trump issues warning to Canada about NAFTA

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump warned Canada on Saturday that it “will be out” of a revised North American trade agreement unless it’s “fair” to the United States, and he threatened to scrap the current deal should Congress “interfere” with the negotiations.

“There is no political necessity to keep Canada in the new NAFTA deal,” Trump said in one of a series of tweets as he visited his Virginia golf club while three former presidents and a range of political dignitaries attended a Washington memorial for John McCain. Trump wasn’t invited.

It’s not clear whether the Trump administration has the authority to strike a deal with just Mexico, as it announced Monday, and exclude Canada. Also, Congress must approve any rewrite of the North American Free Trade Agreement, signed under President Bill Clinton, and might refuse to endorse a deal that leaves longtime ally Canada on the sidelines.

Talks to keep Canada in the trade bloc are to resume this week as Washington and Ottawa try to break a deadlock over issues such as Canada’s dairy market and U.S. efforts to shield drug companies from generic competition.

Trump notified Congress on Friday he plans to sign an agreement in 90 days with Mexico to replace

NAFTA and hopes Canada can brought on board, too. Congress would have to approve any agreement.

“There is no political necessity to keep Canada in the new NAFTA deal. If we don’t make a fair deal for the U.S. after decades of abuse, Canada will be out,” Trump tweeted. “Congress should not interfere w/ these negotiations or I will simply terminate NAFTA entirely & we will be far better off...”

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