

## School Attendance Awareness Month

The month of September is identified as “School Attendance Awareness Month,” with a focus on decreasing chronic student absences. According to the recent press release by the Utah State Board of Education, 1 in 7 students in Utah are chronically absent, which is defined as missing at least 10% of school for any reason. Students who are chronically absent on average have lower test scores, lower grades, and lower graduation rates. Those who are chronically absent in grades 8-12 are seven times more likely to drop out of high school. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson said, “Chronic absenteeism is one of the most urgent problems, but we see encouraging strategies and solutions in schools throughout Utah. Creating a school-wide culture of good attendance, using data, and personalizing outreach and support will help increase attendance rates and improve individual student outcomes.” Additionally, Gov. Gary Herbert issued a declaration calling for an increase in public awareness on the importance of regular school attendance. According to the Utah PACE (Prepare Access Complete Economic Success) report, the following table lists the percentage of students who are chronically absent students in Kane School District. Please note, Lake Powell School and Big Water had less than 10 students in each grade and were not included in the calculations by the Utah State Office.

School	% Chronically Absent 2014-2015	% Chronically Absent 2015-2016
KHS	14%	17%
KMS	19%	14%
KES	12%	15%
VHS	21%	23%
VES	19%	20%

As a district we are continually focusing on those students who fall into the chronically absent category and take steps to contact parents, and provide interventions to address these issues. Also, as a district we are continually tracking time out of school for activities and lost instructional time. As parents, please do everything you can to ensure your students attend school on a regular basis, and help students avoid the chronically absent classification. The greatest chance of success comes when the schools and parents can work collaboratively to ensure students are in school. If you have concerns or difficulties with getting your students to school, please visit with your local building administrator to create a plan to help facilitate an increase in student attendance.

Ben Dalton  
Superintendent  
Kane County School District