

the WHITE HOUSE

HOMEL



Absences Add Up: New Chronic Absenteeism Campaign Works to Get Kids to Class, and to Graduation

FEBRUARY 24, 2016 AT 4:22 PM ET BY LISA SHERMAN, AD COUNCIL PRESIDENT & CEO

Summary: In partnership with the MBK Task Force, the Ad Council is excited to announce the launch of a new campaign to empower parents with information about chronic absenteeism.

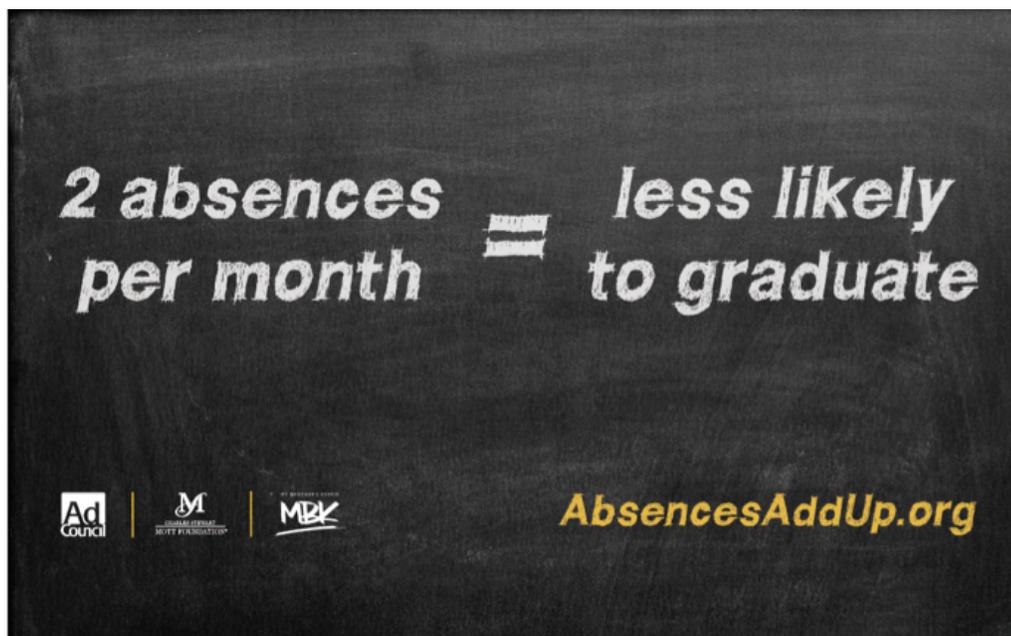
Ensuring your child goes to school every day is one of the most important steps for their academic success. Chronic absenteeism, or missing at least ten percent of school days in the academic year, excused or unexcused, is a proven cause of low achievement and a powerful predictor of which students eventually drop out of high school.

That's why today, the Ad Council is excited to announce the launch of a new public service advertising (PSA) campaign in partnership with the U. S. Department of Education, My Brother's Keeper Task Force and the Mott Foundation tackling the issue of chronic absenteeism. The campaign—which will distribute web banners and outdoor ads to thousands of outlets nationwide—will empower parents with information and resources about the importance of consistent school attendance.

We know from our research in this space that parents want what's best for their children and, in general, parents understand that attendance is important. However, we've also found that many parents

don't keep track of absences. As a parent, I know that there are a lot of reasons that it can be difficult to get kids to school every day: kids get sick, they don't want to go to school because of bullies, and a lot of kids miss school to help out their families or because of problems at home.

As a result of reasons like these, five to seven and a half million children miss 18 or more days of school each year—nearly an entire month. Many parents don't realize that even when they are sporadic, absences add up. As early as elementary school, students who miss just 2 days per month are more likely to fall behind in reading, writing and math, making them less likely to graduate high school.



The new PSA campaign is the latest outcome of Every Student, Every Day: A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism, launched by the White House last year in support of President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative, which aims to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color and ensure all youth can reach their full potential.

The Ad Council campaign will also work in parallel with a second Every Student, Every Day initiative: MBK Success Mentors—a brand new, research-based mentor program that matches students who are frequently absent with trained adults who can help keep them on the path to graduation and success. By focusing our campaign in the same cities that MBK Success Mentors is working in, we can make a

meaningful change in curbing the devastating chronic absenteeism problem.

Families are their children's first, most important and longest-lasting teachers, advocates and nurturers. They're also the support system and vehicle many kids need to ensure that they get to class every day. Some absences are unavoidable, but any absence makes it harder for children to keep up with the everyday learning that is needed to grow and succeed.

The Ad Council has a long history of tackling the most critical issues facing our country. For over forty years we've been reminding Americans that "A Mind is A Terrible Thing to Waste" and Smokey Bear has instilled personal responsibility with "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires." With this campaign, we will give families the resources they need to make sure their children are in school every day, and to help keep America's kids on a path toward high school graduation and future success.