

New Bedford Public Schools announce attendance campaign, 'Every Day Counts'

New Bedford Public Schools launched its attendance campaign, Every Day Counts, at Sgt. William H. Carney Academy today, focused on improving attendance for students throughout the city.

New Bedford's attendance rate is 92.8%, while the state's average is 94.9%; the district aims to match the state average by partnering with local organizations and businesses to reinforce this important message to students and parents. The state's 2015-2016 average for days absent is 8.8%, while New Bedford's is 12.3%. Massachusetts' rate of students absent 10 or more days is 30.5%, while New Bedford's is 43.5%.

"A student who is absent eight days in a school term will miss a year of education by the end of elementary school, just as a student who is just 10 minutes late each day will miss 30 hours of teaching and learning through the school year," Superintendent Pia Durkin said at the announcement, which featured Carney students and recognized those with perfect attendance through the school year.

Chief Joseph Cordeiro of the New Bedford Police Department also spoke to students to underscore the importance of attendance. The Chief will be the first community leader to be featured in new automated attendance calls that will go to all students' homes when absent.

"Every day counts for every child, not only for your parents, and for your teachers, but most importantly for yourselves," was Chief Cordeiro's message to students. "When you miss school, you miss the learning that goes on in each of your

classrooms from your teachers, and you don't get to share the laughs or fun with your friends at school."

Every Day Counts will include support from local partners in reinforcing the New Bedford Public Schools attendance policy, automated phone calls, and visibility and outreach materials for parents that provide important information and tips for families about school attendance.