The Chronic Absenteeism Reduction in Every School Act
Sponsored by

Background and Issue
According to research, approximately 10-15 percent of all students in the U.S. K-12 school system are chronically absent each school year, with students of color disproportionately affected (Latino students are 17 percent more likely; Black students are 40 percent more likely; and American Indian and Pacific Islander students are over 50 percent more likely). This critical issue has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and transition into and out of virtual learning. By sixth grade, chronic absenteeism becomes the leading indicator of whether a student will drop out, and students who are chronically absent are 68% less likely to graduate from high school. Studies have found that school-based mentoring programs can be an effective intervention to impact a wide range of educational success factors. For example, the Success Mentors program in New York City found that in the 25% of schools with the greatest impacts, chronically absent students gained, on average, more than a month of school, and were 52% more likely to remain in school the following year than equivalent comparison students who did not receive mentors. A meta-analysis of studies across the country affirmed this finding, determining that school-based mentoring can be an effective strategy to improve absenteeism and truancy. Mentorship is an evidence-based innovative practice with proven outcomes that can result in a meaningful improvement in educational functioning and attainment of students.

Bill Summary
The Chronic Absenteeism Reduction in Every School Act seeks to support partnerships between local education agencies (LEAs) and community-based mentorship programs, create relationship-centered school climates, and provide LEAs with the tools to identify, track, and provide services to students who are chronically absent. The bill does not create a new grant program, nor provide new funding; rather, the bill adds language into Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to urge LEAs to utilize their formula funding for the following uses:

- Implementing real-time data collection and analysis systems and tools that assist schools in tracking and identifying attendance issues.
- Partnering with local health, transportation, and other service providers to target intervention efforts.
- Carrying out structured school-based mentoring programs, or partner with community organizations that offer mentoring services, to connect students who are chronically absent with trained mentors for group and/or one-on-one mentoring relationships.
- Training faculty and administrative staff for mentoring and social-emotional learning in order to create a more positive school climate and relationship-centered schools.
- Creating cross-age peer mentoring programs, under which an older student serves as a mentor for a younger student.

Become a Co-Sponsor
This bill is supported by the Youth Mentoring Caucus. For questions or to become a lead sponsor or co-sponsor, please contact Caden Fabbi at cfabbi@mentoring.org.