



Lyman School District 42-1

Serving the Communities of Kennebec, Lower Brule, Presho, Reliance and Vivian
P.O. Box 1000, Presho, South Dakota 57568-1000

Chris Long, Superintendent
Derris Buus, HS/MS Principal/AD
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Presho - 605-895-2579
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January 5, 2024

Welcome back to the second half of the 2023-2024 school year here at Lyman School District. We're excited to welcome back our students after a much-deserved break. We hope they are recharged and rejuvenated for what is always the stretch-drive of the school year, January through March.

In addition to welcoming everyone back, we wanted to take this opportunity to address an area that the Lyman School District has identified as a high concern as we move into the second half of this school year and beyond – ***School Attendance***.

Attendance has always been a main indicator of success in school and it's one that we, as a district, need to improve upon. The key is frequent and on-time school attendance. Here's just a quick glance at statistics related to our district's attendance that show we need to find ways to promote and make school attendance a top priority.

Lyman Attendance Rates

	<u>2020-2021:</u>	<u>2021-2022:</u>	<u>2022-2023:</u>
Lyman Elementary:	93%/14% Chronic	91%/17% Chronic	83%/23% Chronic
Lyman Middle School:	82%/25% Chronic	68%/34% Chronic	81%/27% Chronic
Lyman High School:	25% Chronic	33% Chronic	29% Chronic
Lyman School District:	90%/88% State Avg.	85%/86% State Avg.	82%/86% State Avg.

Key:

Attendance Rate: Calculated by the percentage of students that attend at least 90% of the school days that are in session.

Chronic (Absenteeism): The percentage of students that miss at least 10% of days school is in session (Approx. 17 days)

As you can see above...we can do better. Attendance rates across the state and nation have fallen since the pandemic, but in most cases are starting to rebound to previous levels. That is not the case here in our district. We have many families that emphasize the importance of school attendance, and we thank them for that but, as the statistics above show, we need to improve.

So, why does attendance matter? To put it into perspective. A child who is chronically absent from school yearly, meaning they miss approximately 17 days per year minimum, will have missed **1 year of school** by the time they reach late 8th or early 9th grade.



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Attendance rates are directly related to student performance and growth evident by a nearby school that outperforms our district in both attendance; 97% to our 82% and student performance; 61% to our 41%. It's not a coincidence.

Here's how you as a parent can help us at the school. Emphasize the importance of attendance that is frequent, on-time and consistent. If your child does not absolutely need to be gone, make sure they are in school! Have an active role in establishing expectations for attendance. If school is made a priority at home, attendance has been proven to be high. Remember, what are enforced as priorities now will most likely be passed on to future generations.

Take an active interest. Talk to your student(s) about their schoolwork. How was class today? Is your homework done? Ask them about potential issues at school. If there is something at school that is potentially impacting their attendance in a negative way, please reach out and let the school know. If you're a parent or guardian who's struggling with getting your child to school, reach out to staff, and together we can help your child succeed.

Some other tips: Schedule doctor appointments, haircuts, or other events on days there is no school or early in the morning or later in the afternoon to minimize loss of school time; schedule vacations over breaks or connected to extended weekends; celebrate successes in school whether its grades, attendance, or a positive note from a teacher. Those become motivators for your children to attend. And, when your child must be absent, please contact the school directly.

As a district, we plan continual proactivity. The school will strive to keep you informed on your child's attendance habits and collaborate on finding ways to help improve attendance. The district will also be mailing letters home to all students who are currently on pace to be chronically absent for the current school year so parents, students and the school can strategize on how to improve their attendance.

The district realizes there are many necessary and appropriate reasons why students are absent from school, it's our goal to simply reinforce that "Attendance Matters" and bring its importance to the forefront of everyone's focus as we enter the second half of the school year.

Thank you for taking a moment to familiarize yourself with our goals moving forward in relation to school attendance. If we can be of any assistance, please reach out to your respective school and we look forward to a successful remainder of the school year here in the Lyman School District.

Respectfully,

Chris Long, Superintendent