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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND NEW YORK YANKEES ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP
TO COMBAT TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM FOR NYC PUBLIC
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

*Yankees Join Mayor's "Every Student, Every Day" Campaign; More Than 100 Students with
Most Improved Attendance Records Honored at Pre-Game Ceremony at Yankee Stadium
Tonight*

Three Schools with Most Success Reducing Chronic Truancy Honored

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced a partnership with the New York Yankees to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism in City schools. The partnership is an initiative of the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism & School Engagement, which launched a comprehensive set of initiatives last year called "Every Student, Every Day" to reduce chronic absenteeism at City schools. The program selected 25 schools for a pilot program this year. At Yankee Stadium tonight, the Yankees will host the 2010-2011 Yankees Attendance All-Star Ceremony, where more than 100 students from the 25 pilot schools with the best and most improved attendance records will be honored at a pre-game ceremony with Schools Chancellor Dennis W. Walcott; John Feinblatt, the Mayor's Chief Policy Advisor; and members of the Yankees. As part of a yearlong attendance incentive challenge, the Yankees provided 300 tickets for the students who were honored for substantially improving their attendance.

"We are using every tool available to drive home the point that every student needs to be in school every day," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The Yankees have really stepped up to the plate to help our efforts to reduce absenteeism and ensure more students have the opportunity to succeed in school and later in life."

"Students need to be in school to reach their full potential and gain the skills they need to succeed in life," said Chancellor Walcott. "We continue to work hard to reduce chronic absenteeism with the Mayor's Interagency Task Force. I want to thank the New York Yankees for their involvement and for recognizing students who have made improvements in their attendance."

(more)

“Absenteeism is a signal that something is wrong in a student’s life, and it is predictive of poor academic outcomes, including poor performance and likelihood of dropping out, said John Feinblatt, the Mayor’s Chief Advisor for Policy and Strategic Planning, who oversees the Task Force. “Today we have an opportunity to celebrate these students who have been chronically absent in the past, and have decided to turn themselves around – and put themselves on a path to success.”

“The student successes being celebrated tonight demonstrate the educational outcomes of strategic, interagency collaboration – and the impressive leadership at these schools,” said Leslie Cornfeld, chair of the Mayor’s Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism & School Engagement. “Tonight also demonstrates the power of public-private partnerships; the NY Yankees are a model for others in supporting NYC’s students.”

“The New York Yankees are honored to partner with the Mayor and the Chancellor to enhance the educational experience for public school students throughout the five boroughs of New York City,” said Brian Smith, Yankees Senior Vice President of Corporate/Community Relations. “We are proud supporters of the Every Student Every Day and Wake Up NYC campaigns and are excited to participate in the efforts associated with putting local youth in a position to excel in the classroom. We look forward to recognizing these students for their 2010-11 school year achievements during tonight’s pregame on-field ceremony at Yankee Stadium.”

“Old Navy is proud to have supported the Mayor’s ‘Every Student, Every Day’ campaign,” said Amy Curtis-McIntyre, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Old Navy. “The incentive programs we created for students and financial support we provided to schools have positively impacted thousands of young people across the five boroughs. We are pleased to have been a part of boosting attendance and academic achievement, and ensuring that New York City schools remain a springboard for success.”

The Yankees are also core partners in Mayor Bloomberg’s WakeUp! NYC multimedia campaign, where celebrities and influential voices like Magic Johnson and Trey Songz record inspirational WakeUp! messages sent to tens of thousands of city public school students through an automated call system. The Yankees will continue to support this program next year by providing additional WakeUp! calls and public service announcements for public school students. Joba Chamberlain, Mark Teixeira and Phil Hughes have already recorded WakeUp! NYC messages.

The Yankees also will broadcast the Mayor’s Call-to-Action video on attendance to thousands on the JumboTron at home games, urging all New Yorkers to spread the word about the importance of school attendance every day.

About 20 percent of all City school students – 250,000 students – missed one month of school or more in the 2009-2010 school year. Research shows that three out of four students who are severely chronically absent in the sixth grade never graduate from high school. In New York City, more than 80 percent of children in the juvenile justice system had missed a month or more of school; 40 percent had missed two or more months. Absenteeism rates are highest in low-income communities, where school offers students the best opportunity for future success.

Top Performing Schools that Reduced Chronic Truancy

At the pre-game ceremony, Old Navy, a corporate partner of the Task Force on Truancy, Chronic Absenteeism & School Engagement, announced the results of its year-long attendance challenge where the elementary, middle and high school with the most improved attendance would be celebrated, and receive cash prizes. All three schools were part of the City’s pilot program in 25 schools, and all had above average chronic absenteeism rates during the last school year, and strong school leadership with a desire for innovative programs to enhance attendance and school engagement.

The winning elementary school was PS 181 Brookfield in the Bronx, where chronic absenteeism was reduced by 38 percent, from 30 percent last year to 19 percent this year to date.

“We were delighted to be one of the Mayor’s Task Force pilot schools this year,” said Andrea Belcher, Brookfield principal. “It helped us change the culture and understanding of attendance at our school, helped us collaborate with others more effectively, and even helped with parent engagement by making our students want to come to school every day. In the end, however, it is the students who earned this award, and who we are so proud of today.”

The winning middle school, Isaac Newton in East Harlem, reduced chronic absenteeism by 41 percent, from 26 percent last year to 15 percent this year to date.

“I am proud of the students and parents of Isaac Newton middle school,” said principal Lisa Nelson. “We are committed to continuing to engage our students at school every day, and to make sure that every student has the opportunity to succeed at school – and being here every day is the first important step in that process of success.”

The winning high school, the High School for Teaching and the Professions, in the South Bronx, reduced chronic absenteeism by 21 percent, from 52 percent last year to 41 percent this year to date.

“High schools are historically the hardest schools to impact attendance rates because student performance and patterns are so engrained,” said principal Gary Prince. “I am proud that through the hard work of our school staff, and students, we have been able to reduce chronic absenteeism for so many students, and to put them closer to the path to graduation and success. We are proud to have been part of the Mayor’s Task Force this year, and look forward to continuing our success going forward.”

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