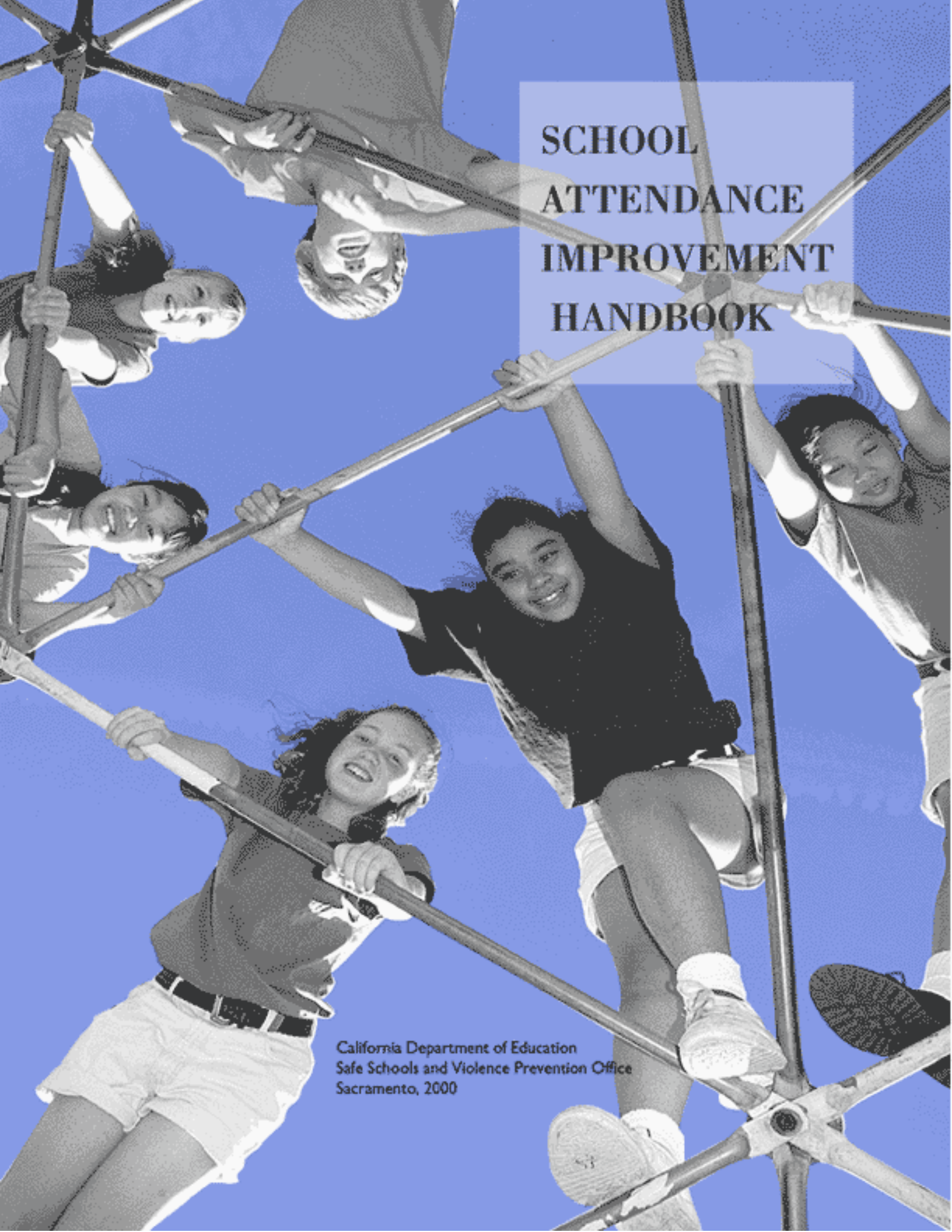

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT HANDBOOK

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A partial list of educational resources available from the Department appears on pages 85-86. In addition, an illustrated *Educational Resources Catalog* describing publications, videos, and other instructional media available from the Department can be obtained without charge by writing to the address given above or by calling the Sales Office at (916) 445-1260.

Notice

The guidance in the *School Attendance Improvement Handbook* is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, the document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)

Contents

Acknowledgments v

Chapter One: The Importance of School Attendance 1

A Framework for Understanding and Preventing Truancy 2

Prevention and Intervention Funding Sources 8

Chapter Two: Truancy Prevention Programs 9

Keeping Students in School Makes Sense—SB 727 9

Components of a Comprehensive Truancy Prevention Strategy 10

Board Policies 10

School Norms 11

Signs 12

Community Norms 13

Community Partners 14

Parental Involvement—Level 1 15

Extended Learning Opportunities 17

Preschool and Early Childhood Education 18

Staff Development and Classroom Management 18

Service Learning 19

After-School Programs 20

Independent Study 22

Rewards, Incentives, and Recognition 22

Safe Schools, Safe Passages, and Positive School Climates 23

Conflict Resolution 24

Counseling and Guidance 24

Pupil Empowerment 25

Closed Campuses 25

Integrated Services Initiatives 26

Comprehensive School Health System 27

Health Framework 27

California Healthy Start 27
Family Resource Centers 28
Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programs 28
Key Considerations for an Effective Attendance Program 28

Chapter Three: Early Intervention Programs and the Value of Partnerships 31

Student Study Teams and Student Success Teams 32
Parental Involvement—Level 2 33
Outreach Programs and Home Visits 33
Truancy Sweeps 35
School Resource Officers 35
Mentoring and Tutoring Programs 37
Peer Helping and Conflict Management 38
The Alternative Education Option 39
School Attendance Review Boards 41

Chapter Four: Legal Intervention Tools 45

CalWORKS Program 46

Suspension and Expulsion Options 47
Parental Involvement—Level 3 48
Community Service 49
Citation 50
Vehicle Code 51
Daytime Curfew 51
Juvenile Court 52
Operation Stay in School 52
Work Experience 53
District Attorney Mediation 53
Alternative Education Placements 54

Conclusion 56

Appendixes

A. Resources on School Attendance 57
B. California Code Sections Relating to School Attendance 64
C. Sample First, Second, and Third Truancy Letters Prior to SARB 68
D. Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance and Sacramento City Unified School District 71
E. Sample Agreement for Deputy Probation Officer Services at District Schools 74
F. Truancy Ordinance (No. 862) of the City of Folsom 79

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Chapter One

The Importance of School Attendance

It is further the policy of the State Board of Education that the substantial benefit students will derive from regular attendance in a safe and orderly school environment justifies a high priority and commitment of personnel and fiscal resources by the Department of Education and by local educational agencies.

California State Board of Education, Policy on School Safety, Discipline, and Attendance

Regular school attendance is a necessary part of the learning process and the means to graduation with a good education. Students who are frequently absent may be putting their futures in jeopardy. Chronic absenteeism, especially truancy, is a behavior that is highly associated with dropping out of school. Regular attendance is essential for success in school.

Efforts to improve school attendance cannot be separated from the larger school reform picture. Safe and healthy schools—ones that employ a challenging curriculum and reinforce high expectations for academics, behavior, and social responsibility—are schools that give students the motivation to attend.

The purpose of this book is to showcase strategies that have worked to break the cycle of failure that undermines some students' self-esteem and causes them to avoid school, and to highlight strategies that encourage students to bond with their schools. While it is not feasible to address all school reform strategies in this document, many strategies are summarized in order to emphasize the vital link between effective educational strategies and student attendance rates. Where there are students who are not "bonded" to school, there will be a loss to society of those students' future productivity, and to a school's average daily attendance (a.d.a.) credits.

School absence is a student missing from school or class with or without the prior knowledge and consent of either parents, guardians, or school personnel. A student not in class but on a school-approved activity is not considered truant.

A truant is any student who is absent from school three times in the same school year without good reason or without permission from home or school (*Education Code* Section 48260). Truancy becomes a serious problem at middle school and high school levels but can become a problem as early as elementary school.

Absenteeism hurts the student. Students who are frequently absent fall behind in academics and miss important socialization concepts that enhance their ability to understand and follow directions or, ultimately, plan for the future.

- High school dropouts are two-and-a-half times more likely to be on welfare than high school graduates and are almost twice as likely to be unemployed, according to a U.S. Department of Education 1996 finding.
- Studies show that truancy frequently leads to criminal activity, drug use, and incarceration.
- Research has found a clear link between academic failure in the early grades and delinquent behavior in adolescence (Howell 1995).
- According to recent statistics, about 50 percent of prison inmates are high school dropouts and cost society well over $240 billion in lost wages and taxes over their lifetimes.

Absenteeism hurts other students. Students who are frequently absent require more individual attention from the teacher.

Absenteeism hurts the school and district. State financial support for schools is directly linked to student attendance. When students are absent, the school loses money.

Absenteeism hurts the community. Students who are truant are more likely to be involved in criminal activity. For example, San Diego reported that 44 percent of violent juvenile crime occurred between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. In addition to the cost of the crime itself, add the costs to the community when juvenile dropouts fail to become productive members in the community, are added to the welfare roles, or become a part of the working poor and need a disproportionate number of social services.

Absenteeism hurts businesses. Businesses must use resources to train uneducated workers.

Truancy is not the problem—it's an indicator of other problems. When students aren't in school, we need to understand why they stay away before we can effect solutions.

A Framework for Understanding and Preventing Truancy

Truancy is not the problem—it's an indicator of other problems. When students aren't in school, we need to understand why they stay away before we can effect solutions. Several factors are known to be barriers to student attendance:

1. Associating with the wrong kinds of friends
2. Feeling resentment toward authority
3. Putting time into a job to earn money for themselves or for their families
4. Using drugs or alcohol
5. Having problems relating to people

> What I hated most was the pressure to be socially correct. It's not something you can fight either, it's inbred in the

> kids, in the school . The only power I had was to remove myself.
>
> 17-year-old dropout

6. Being the victim of bullying
7. Feeling little support or experiencing conflict at home

> The teacher asked me why I was late and where was my homework. What was I supposed to say? That I'd been up all night 'cause my father was freaking out on a bad trip, in front of the whole class? I told her I'd overslept and walked out.
>
> 15-year-old dropout

8. Believing the school doesn't offer interesting, challenging, or rewarding classes or activities
9. Falling behind others in math or reading skills and skipping classes when not doing well, thereby perpetuating a lack of skills and a tendency to avoid school
10. Experiencing personal barriers, e.g., language problems, racial or cultural conflicts, and embarrassment because of a lack of suitable or clean clothing; or teen pregnancy
11. Being held back a grade or more
12. Being suspended or expelled

> Getting expelled or suspended often gives the final push to a youth's decision to leave. Six percent of our nation's youth are expelled, and most find it difficult to return after being barred from school for a period of time. They feel rejected, kicked out, and labeled. Both students and teachers feel hostility and distrust. Moreover, the students fall behind, often too far to catch up.
>
> From *Push Out, Step Out: A Report on California's Public School Dropouts,* 1982

13. Having transportation problems
14. Fearing community violence

> One truant officer described a student whose parents kept him home so that he would not have to walk past the neighborhood crack house. Immigrant students reported staying home because they fear students in their schools.
>
> From "Truancy: First Step to a Lifetime of Problems," 1996

Resiliency

Longitudinal studies on human development and research on healthy families and effective schools document that successful youth development is dependent on promoting and strengthening resilience—the ability to rise above adversity. For example, why do some children raised in poverty or by negligent parents succeed in life when others fail? More to the point: why do some children with academic or familial challenges attend school and succeed when others do not?

The primary findings that emerge from the research about resiliency are:

1. *Children need quality relationships.* They need adults who care about them, spend time with them, and help them to develop values and a standard for behavior as well as model problem-solving techniques, social competency, autonomy, a sense of purpose, and self-respect.
2. *Children need high expectations.* They need to live in a community of adults who support them, believe in their ability to achieve high standards, and recognize their potential to be contributing members in the community.

The hard edge of resiliency is that children must be held accountable when they do not meet the standards. When accountability is missing, the standards become meaningless. At the same time, accountability must be taught by providing youth with alternatives and teaching them what they should be doing rather than punishing them for what they should not be doing. The protective effect of holding students to high standards is that once they

Joyce Arredondo, Executive Director of the North Area Teen Center in Carmichael, California, was once herself a teenage runaway. “I had a chip on my shoulder the size of Texas,” Arredondo recalled. “I was very angry. Anybody that tried to help me, I would just push them away and bite the hand that was feeding me.”

Arredondo was the oldest of seven children living in El Dorado County with her mother and alcoholic stepfather. When she was 11, her mother ran away, leaving the children with the stepfather. Overnight, Arredondo became like a mother to her siblings, preparing food, dressing toddlers, and reading bedtime stories. With her stepfather’s drinking continuing, it wasn’t long before Arredondo was forced to make an adult decision to save the lives of her siblings—she called the sheriff’s department. “I felt really guilty when they took one sister out of the house without shoes, another out the door without a coat,” she said. “I’ll never forget that night. It was so cold, and the kids were crying.” Four of the seven were adopted into really good homes and given opportunities they would never have had if they had remained. Arredondo was shuffled among various foster homes. She ran away several times as she struggled with the loss of her family. “When they took my siblings from me, I was left with no one that loved me or cared about me,” she said. “I didn’t belong to a family. There was no way a stranger was going to come in and tell me they cared.”

At 15, Arredondo became pregnant. At 16, she married. In her late teens Arredondo somehow dusted herself off and earned a high school diploma. She graduated from St. Mary’s College in Moraga with honors. She had a second daughter and has raised them both. Arredondo yearned to help teenagers who might be fighting battles similar to hers, so she has dedicated her career to Carmichael’s teen center. Arredondo has become known as a surrogate mother, a mentor, and a living testament to the strength of the human spirit. She believes that life’s task is to find a way to overcome the demons that can destroy you. When she heard about the idea of opening a teen center, she raised more than $11,000 for the effort. Arredondo plays pool with the teens, helps them apply for jobs, summer camps, and scholarships. She reads over their homework and helps them unravel word problems. She watches with joy as an isolated teen begins to come out of his or her shell.

Adapted from the *Sacramento Bee*, People Column, by Duffy Kelly, “Neighbors,” Northeast Edition, February 11, 1999.

experience success, they believe they can master future situations and challenges.

3. *Finally, children must be involved in meaningful work.* Perceiving school as boring and having nothing to do with real life can negate a student's incentive to achieve. In one study of institutionalized girls, those who led successful adult lives attributed their success to involvement in meaningful activities such as sports, music, student government, or service as a teacher's aide. These data reinforce the importance of offering a broad curriculum that includes a variety of opportunities for students to develop skills and leadership.

In spite of the often daunting challenges facing youth, there are strategies schools and communities can employ—strategies that have demonstrated protective factors and a positive effect on students who are at high risk for delinquency. Howell, 1995, suggests the following strategies:

- Reductions in class sizes for kindergarten and first grade
- Cooperative learning
- Tutoring
- Computer-assisted instruction
- Diagnostic and prescriptive pull-out programs
- Grouping of students by ability within classes in elementary school
- Nongraded elementary schools
- Classroom behavior-management techniques
- Monitoring and reinforcing the requirements of school attendance, academic progress, and school behavior

Successful youth development is dependent on promoting and strengthening resilience—the ability to rise above adversity.

- Parent training
- Marital and family counseling
- Youth employment and vocational training programs that include intensive education components.

Effective prevention programs must be based on these known protective strategies. However, it is also important to know what does *not* work. Again, research into existing programs can help us eliminate strategies that have not proven effective in preventing truancy and other delinquent behaviors.

The strategies evaluated and reported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, as having no or negative effects on risk protective factors include:

- Use of teacher aides
- Tracking or between-class ability grouping
- Nonpromotion of students to the next grade
- Special educational placements for disruptive, emotionally disturbed, learning-disabled, and/or educable students in elementary schools who are developmentally disabled
- Peer counseling

- Youth employment and vocational training programs that do not include an intensive educational component

Schools officials facing truancy issues and mandatory attendance laws can collect and compare truancy program data to analyze and select when developing effective programs. It is clear that to make a difference, we must select strategies that have been shown to be effective, and research shows that schools experience higher attendance rates when they incorporate (1) incentive programs; (2) pupil empowerment measures; (3) mentor/tutor programs; (4) comprehensive support systems; (5) home visits and parental involvement programs; and (6) interventions by law enforcement and/or truant officers.

For the purposes of this document, possible approaches are in the three following categories:

- *Prevention Strategies.* A supportive school culture and climate will provide all students with academic challenge and success. Prevention strategies are designed to help students bond to the school—to make school a place they want to be, even if other parts of their lives are stressful.
- *Intervention Strategies.* Educational options should provide the best learning environment for students who are at risk of becoming truant. Intervention strategies are employed when students have demonstrated attendance problems. They are designed to help the student and parents or guardians remedy problems that are contributing to the student's failure to succeed in the educational system.
- *Legal Tools.* These tools are used when intervention programs have not worked. They are designed to reinforce the mandatory attendance laws.

Three Categories of Antitruancy Strategies

Prevention	Early Intervention	Legal Intervention Tools
A supportive school culture and climate that provides all students with academic challenge and success	Educational options to provide the best learning environment for students who are at risk of becoming truant	Strategies to help habitual truants find academic and social success
Board policies School norms Signs Safe and healthful school environment	**Partnerships**	**Laws** CalWORKS Suspension/expulsion options
Community norms Community partners	**Student study teams** Student success teams School attendance review boards (SARBs)	**Parental involvement**

Three Categories of Antitruancy Strategies *(Continued)*

Prevention	*Early Intervention*	*Legal Intervention Tools*
Parental involvement Parents on campus Parent education programs Parent-teacher association (PTA)	**Parental involvement** Outreach programs and home visits Truancy sweeps	**Community service** Peer court
Extended learning opportunities Preschool and early childhood education staff development Classroom management Effective teachers Service-learning Extra- and cocurricular activities After-school programs Alternative education	**School resource officers** Counselors Peer helpers/advisers Adult mentors Tutors and study groups	**Citation** *Vehicle Code*—traffic court, daytime curfew, juvenile court, Operation Stay in School, work experience, district attorney mediation
Rewards, incentives, and recognition	**Mentoring/tutoring** Educational options Independent study Work-study	**Alternative educational placements** Court community schools Community service
Safe schools, safe passages, and positive school climates Conflict resolution, counseling and guidance, pupil empowerment Closed campus	**Peer helping** Conflict management, counseling	
Integrated services initiatives California Healthy Start Schools as family resource centers After-school learning and safe neighborhoods partnerships program 21st century learning centers	**Alternative educational options** Work-study In-house suspensions Compulsory Saturday school Continuation education Magnet schools Public home study (independent study)	
Comprehensive school health programs Tobacco, drug, and alcohol use prevention programs Health education Psychological and counseling services Physical education Nutrition services and education Teen pregnancy prevention	**School attendance review boards (SARBs)**	

Prevention and Intervention Funding Sources

Many communities have developed innovative programs that draw from existing funding sources:

- A.d.a. monies saved through truancy reduction
- Healthy Start grants
- Title I funds—Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)—for community liaisons, parent advisers, and outreach workers
- Title IV funds—Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of IASA
- Tobacco use prevention education (TUPE)
- Categorical program grants
- CalSERVE grants
- Grants for drug and alcohol prevention
- County family service funds
- Community partnership funds (pooling business, government, and private resources)
- Title II formula grants program funds from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- Title V delinquency prevention funds from OJJDP

Chapter Two

Truancy Prevention Programs

Our task is to provide an education for the kinds of kids we have, not for the kinds of kids we used to have, or want to have, or the kids that exist in our dreams.

Anonymous

Keeping Students in School Makes Sense—SB 727

Historically, many absences were excused (illness, quarantine, medical appointments, funerals, and required immunizations) and did not cause schools to lose revenue. With the passage of Senate Bill 727 in 1997, schools now receive their per-pupil funding for actual attendance—time the student is in class or at school—without taking into account excused absences.

Under SB 727, schools will have a one-time adjustment of their revenue limit per unit of average daily attendance (a.d.a.). The purpose of the adjustment—and of the bill—is to recalculate a.d.a. revenue limits so that schools will continue to receive funding at the same levels as in the past. The difference is the incentive for schools to improve actual attendance.

This legislation dramatically affects school finance because each unit of a.d.a., or each student who attends school, will now be worth more based on the adjusted revenue limit. Schools stand to gain additional revenues for every student who is actually in school. The following example will show the changes:

Previous Attendance Accounting	*New "Actual Attendance" Accounting—Senate Bill 727*
A.d.a. funds are given to schools for actual attendance plus excused absences.	A.d.a. funds are given to schools for actual attendance only.
Hypothetical attendance: 4 students attend regularly + 1 student is habitually "excused" = 5 units of a.d.a.	4 students actually attend = 4 units of a.d.a.
Hypothetical revenue limit: A.d.a. revenue limit: $1 per unit of a.d.a.	New revenue limit calculated based on previous revenue limit ($1 × 5 students) ÷ actual attendance (4) = new revenue limit: $1.25 per unit of a.d.a.
Total funding: 5 students × $1 = $5	Total funding = 4 students × $1.25 = $5

The above example, for purposes of simplicity, deals only with excused absences, but it is immediately obvious that schools stand to gain significant revenues when they "capture"—or attract—truant students through a variety of programs that bond students to them. The intent of the legislation, therefore, is to encourage schools, health professionals, and social service agencies to work with families so that students attend school unless they are actually sick. (For more information about attendance accounting, contact the California Department of Education, Education Finance Division, (916) 323-8478.)

Prevention programs are essential in the early grades, and then again at times of high stress for many students; e.g., during transitions from elementary school to junior high, and from junior high to high school.

Prevention programs are essential in the early grades, and then again at times of high stress for many students; e.g., during transitions from elementary school to junior high, and from junior high to high school. Research published by the Crime Prevention Coalition (1996) indicates that the most effective programs address the underlying causes of truancy and are based on partnerships between law enforcement, schools, and social service agencies.

Schools throughout the state and nation have worked to implement a comprehensive approach to truancy reduction. The strategies developed by the Sacramento City Unified School District exemplify how a multipronged strategy has great potential for reaching students who are failing to realize their educational potential.

To reduce the district's dropout and truancy rates by 10 percent each, the district has implemented the following measures:

- Established a School Attendance Review Board (see page 41 for more details)
- Begun a dropout prevention program (see page 34 for more details)
- Set up truancy receiving centers (see page 24 for more details)
- Posted attendance workers at all sites (see page 24 for more details)
- Begun a student buddy program (see page 20 for more details)
- Issued student bus passes (see page 21 for more details)
- Set up partnerships with law enforcement and community entities (see page 20 for more details)

Components of a Comprehensive Truancy Prevention Strategy

Although the following components are described separately, a successful truancy prevention program requires many or all of these components. None of the following will improve attendance on its own.

Board Policies

A first step in creating a community norm for school attendance is to establish and widely disseminate a school board policy on attendance. *Education Code* Section 48340 calls for all school districts and county offices of education

that maintain classes in kindergarten and grades one to twelve, inclusive, to adopt pupil attendance policies based on the active involvement of parents, pupils, teachers, administrators, other personnel, and community members. Notices about the attendance policy should go home with students at the beginning of each school year, and could additionally be printed on school lunch flyers, announced at open house events, and discussed at parent conferences.

As noted in the California School Boards Association's (CSBA's) *How to Keep Students in School* (1981), attendance policies should go beyond a mere restatement of the law. CSBA recommends that policies encourage:

- Ongoing curriculum review "to ensure that courses are relevant to all youth"
- Alternative methods of earning academic credits, such as independent study
- Increased emphasis on elementary grades
- Total school staff involvement
- Staff development
- Prompt parental notification and involvement policies
- Wide use of School Attendance Review Boards as intervention tools
- Joint efforts with law enforcement agencies
- Provisions for follow-up when students have attendance problems

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) adds a further suggestion: Develop discipline policies that do not unnecessarily remove students from class.

In addition, boards are required by *Education Code* Section 48240 to appoint a supervisor of attendance and such assistant supervisors of attendance as may be necessary to supervise the attendance of pupils in the district or county. The board shall prescribe the duties of the supervisor and assistant supervisors of attendance, not inconsistent with law, to include, among other duties that may be required by the board, those specific duties related to compulsory full-time education, truancy, work permits, compulsory continuation education, and opportunity schools, classes, and programs.

A well-coordinated and supported guidance program led by a credentialed school counselor, psychologist, and social worker will help to remove barriers to learning that confront individual students and will enable students to make informed decisions, manage emotions, cope with crises, set short-term and long-term goals, and fully access the educational program.

School Norms

School attendance affects the whole school—not just the attendance clerk. Schools that share the responsibility for good attendance with staff, students, and parents will be schools in which students enjoy more resources, a more

California ranks last of 50 states and the District of Columbia in its ratio of students to guidance counselors. The American School Counselors Association recommends a ratio of 300 students to one counselor. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends at least one full-time school psychologist for each 1,000 students.

positive school climate, and higher academic achievement.

School nurses are often in a key position to coordinate services, including those that relate to school health programs and alcohol or drug use. Gone are the days when school nurses only administered first aid and measured height and weight. Today, school nurses provide health education in the classroom, refer students for medical care and counseling, act as liaisons for health care in the community, administer medication and medical procedures, and provide linkage between health care providers, the school, the family, and the student.

In 1997, on average, each California school nurse was responsible for 2,144 students. The American School Health Association recommends that there be one school nurse for every 750 students, or one school nurse for every 100 severely handicapped students.

Using the board policy developed with the involvement of student support professionals as a starting point, schools can develop standards for attendance and timeliness that will help students to value their education. The standards can be communicated in many ways (see "Rewards, Incentives, and Recognition," page 22 in this document) that give students a positive message about how much they are valued as a part of the educational community. This message can be communicated by:

- Parents and school staff who expect students to attend school
- School staff members who notify parents or guardians immediately when a student is absent without notice or consent
- School staff members, parents, and community members who ensure students know and clearly understand the consequences of good and poor attendance
- Students and their parents who understand their responsibility to maintain good school attendance

Tardies must be addressed in the school policy, and clear expectations must be communicated. For example, the parent-teacher organization can help the school to provide supervised makeup periods during lunch or after school for students who have had a certain number of tardies in one quarter. Another way to discourage excessive tardiness is to institute social suspensions—times such as field trips or dances when students with excessive tardies are not allowed to participate. On a more positive side, recognition or a way to acknowledge students' on-time records could be instituted.

In the West Contra Costa Unified School District, each school was required to develop and submit a written plan for attendance improvement. Each site plan was required to include goals, procedures, and plans for improving student attendance. (Contact Alan Del Simone, Administrator, Child Welfare and Attendance, West Contra Costa Unified School District, at 510-235-4948.)

Signs

The school billboard is another place to reinforce attendance expectations for the entire school community. Each day (or week) attendance milestones can be posted on the school billboard along

with game times and PTA meetings. For example, schools can post an ongoing message:

> (*x*)% attendance today!
> Was your child in school?

Community Norms

Businesses, neighbors, and local media can become partners in sharing the expectation that school is important and that children will succeed only when they have a good education. When clear expectations for youth behavior are shared throughout a community, students are reinforced in making sound choices.

In the Sacramento City Unified School District, the Child Welfare and Attendance Office made communication about the attendance laws a high priority. The district serves families from many different ethnic and language groups, and schools had no standardized method for attendance accounting. The district launched a media campaign containing a full report on the district's a.d.a. and the amount of funding being lost each year in attendance revenue. The goal was to have every school in the district use the same attendance policies and to have every family in the district understand attendance laws. In addition, the district agreed to return a portion of the earned a.d.a. funds to each of the schools for the contracting of outreach workers and the purchasing of computers to track attendance. A year later, the district attendance rate was the highest it had been in ten years. (Contact Rob Gerig, Director of Pupil Services, Sacramento City Unified School District, 916-264-3290.)

Suggested strategies for community involvement and support include an agreement or a compact between businesses and local schools whereby businesses agree not to serve or employ students during school hours except under approved circumstances. They can go further by agreeing to ask for a diploma and school recommendation before approving candidates for employment. In the Sacramento City Unified District, student outreach workers contact all businesses located near the district's three truancy centers and provide them with information about the centers' hours of operation, purpose, and phone numbers. They encourage the businesses to call the centers if students loiter near their establishments during school hours.

Local television and radio stations can reinforce attendance expectations by airing public service announcements about the importance of school. The following sample radio announcement was taken from *The Prevention of Truancy*, a handbook developed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

Sample

Community Service Radio Announcements

FACT: Every child has a right to an education.

FACT: California law requires that children from six to eighteen years of age attend school regularly.

FACT: One out of ten grade school children is absent on any given day. Is your child in school today?

FACT: Daylight juvenile crime is decreased by 50 percent when a concerted community effort keeps children in school.

FACT: Children who are absent two or more days each school month achieve 25 percent less than their fellow students.

FACT: Truancy causes school revenue loss that weakens your child's school program.

FACT: Ninety percent of serious juvenile offenders begin as truants. Aren't you glad your child is in school today?

Schools can enlist hosts and disc jockeys of popular children's programs as spokespeople for schools and speakers at school assemblies.

Community Partners

Community members with whom students can bond can play an invaluable role in supporting student behaviors and modeling the positive behaviors students need to be successful in school and in life. Studies of successful changes in school climate reflect that the presence of community-based organizations in schools provides enriching opportunities for students and a consistently improved school environment. Teachers cite more positive student interactions, less fighting, and reduced suspensions. Along with acknowledging students and modeling positive behavior, community members can encourage attendance by participating in an attendance hotline—a publicized number they can call anonymously to report suspected truants.

In Contra Costa County, the Senior Tutors for Youth program offers students in detention facilities and group homes the chance to work with tutors from a nearby retirement community. The senior citizens tutor the young people for two hours twice a week. The focus is on developing written and verbal skills and practicing mock job interviews. The senior citizens reinforce ethics and morality through stories written for adolescents. The program is supported with funds from foundations, businesses, and private individuals. (For a step-by-step guide on setting up a Senior Tutors for Youth intergenerational program, contact Sondra Napell, Executive Director, (510) 839-1039.)

The community includes local law enforcement personnel and agencies. Their participation is essential because of their involvement and interest in youth and their representation on safe school teams and school attendance review boards. Furthermore, the law officers' relationships with students on their beats alert them as to whether a student seen during school hours may be truant. Law enforcement partners include city police, county sheriffs, juvenile probation officers, and district attorneys.

In Sacramento, the Regional Transit Authority formed a partnership with the Sacramento City Unified School District to provide the district with over 1,000 single-use bus passes. The district provides the passes to students who are not attending school due to transportation problems. In exchange, the Regional Transit police officers perform random truancy checks at Light Rail

Research indicates that one of the most effective ways to protect young people from risk exposure is to strengthen their bonds with positive, prosocial family members, adults outside the family, including teachers, coaches, youth leaders, and friends. Young people with strong, supportive relationships with families, friends, school, and community are invested in or committed to achieving the goals held by these groups. . . . Healthy beliefs and clear standards, communicated consistently by the significant individuals and social groups to whom the child is bonded, build a web of protection for young people exposed to risk.

Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy, pp. 22, 23. OJJDP, 1995

A Comprehensive Community Partnership

In the Bakersfield City Elementary School District (Kern County), the Stella Hills Elementary School serves a population in which 57 percent of families receive some form of subsidy. The school actively participates in the neighborhood partnership, which also includes representatives from mental health agencies, local businesses, apartment managers, the city council, and the county supervisor's office.

Along with neighborhood and crime prevention projects, the partnership provides services to families who are struggling to cope; e.g., access to a clothes closet (a source of donated clothing), counseling by a network of service providers, and on-site classes for parents and students. The Kern County SARB provides referral services, and the neighborhood partnership provides immediate support for families—help that often is the key to whether children come to school.

To reinforce student bonding to the school, students are referred to as friends, and at least one Stella Hills teacher arrives at school early to place calls to families to make sure the students get up and get ready for school. (Contact Ruth Holton, Principal, Stella Hills Elementary School, (805) 631-5320.)

stations and will detain and transport identified truant students to one of the district's truancy centers. Other community agencies that have signed on as partners with the district include the Urban League, the Department of Human Services, and La Familia, which provides a counselor for every SARB meeting.

Parental Involvement—Level 1

Parents play the fundamental role in the education of their children. No one else has a greater influence in getting a young person to go to school every day and to recognize the importance of a good education and how it defines his or her future. Truancy often indicates bigger problems in a child's life, so comprehensive truancy reduction programs must include a wide variety of community services and resources to help schools address underlying family causes for truancy.

The California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education and the State Board of Education's policy on parent involvement describe six types of family involvement strategies that schools employ to build effective partnerships with parents. The strategies include:

1. Helping parents develop parenting skills to create a home environment that supports children's learning
2. Providing parents with knowledge of techniques designed to help children to learn at home
3. Providing access to and coordinating community and support services for children and families
4. Promoting clear, two-way communication between school and home about school programs and children's progress
5. Involving parents, after appropriate training, in instructional and support roles at school
6. Supporting parents as decision makers and developing their leadership skills in school governance, advisory roles, and advocacy roles

In the best of circumstances, parental involvement can be an excellent prevention tool. When parents are involved as partners in their child's education in the early years—preferably in preschool or kindergarten—they are empowered by helping their child succeed and take pride in their child's achievement.

As soon as students begin school, parents can be enlisted as partners to reinforce the benefits of regular school attendance. Schools can help parents believe and share the following messages:

1. The more you are in school, the more you will learn.
2. The more you learn, the higher your grades will be.
3. The better your grades, the more you'll enjoy school.
4. The longer you stay in the school, the more likely you are to succeed in careers and life.

Parents or guardians should be notified immediately when their child is absent for even part of a day, and schools must stress that school attendance is the parents' responsibility. Other ways to keep parents aware and involved include telephone calls, parent conferences, newsletters, letters, home visits, hiring of a parent liaison, and parents' voices in school decisions.

Parent Handbook Contents

Parenting is a difficult job. A parent handbook might be an invaluable tool in helping parents become effective partners in their children's education. Consider including the following:

1. A calendar listing of parenting classes (and locations) that are available at district sites throughout the school year
2. A list of other classes, e.g., literacy, job preparation, job skill training, that are available for adult members of the student's household
3. A list of critical telephone numbers, including those of hot lines, social services, law enforcement, and school attendance lines
4. Tips on helping students with homework
5. School policies (summarized); e.g., dress codes, attendance policies, and discipline policies

Be sure the handbooks or handouts are available in the languages spoken by parents within the school district.

Illustration. In Sacramento, a broad-based community alliance that includes area school districts, Mercy Healthcare, television station KXTV, and various medical groups banded together recently to present a series of free parenting workshops called For Moms and Dads. Participants prepared a colorful brochure and distributed it at local schools, in SARB hearings, and in medical offices.

Celebrate. Parents, like students, need positive reinforcement. Schools need to find ways to recognize parents for being involved in school and for helping their children to succeed. Family festivals, notes from the principal and teachers, and parent-teacher luncheons can serve to strengthen the bond between parents and their children's schools and help them feel like valued partners in the educational enterprise.

Extended Learning Opportunities

Two of the best prevention strategies are a challenging curriculum and a school climate that fosters bonding. Guidelines for a challenging curriculum are included in the California curriculum frameworks and the grade-span reform initiatives.

> Characteristics of the classroom or school social organization such as strong academic mission and administrative leadership and a climate of emotional support are areas in the school that can influence the later academic and attendance success of students.
> (Gottfredson, 1997, p. 5-1)

As part of a comprehensive program to keep students in school, social competence skills (communication, self-respect, and character building) should be woven throughout the school curriculum and activities. In addition, schools should find ways to engage students in learning through alternative options such as career academies, school-to-work opportunities, and community service.

The Jefferson Center for Character Education has published results from a pilot project conducted in 25 elementary and middle schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District during the 1990-91 school year. Participating schools reported a 25 percent decrease in major discipline problems, a 39 percent decrease in minor discipline problems, a 16 percent decline in suspensions, and a 40 percent drop in tardiness. Unexcused absences declined by 18 percent. Additionally, teachers who participated in the pilot survey believed that students did learn to take greater responsibility for their behavior and schoolwork, and principals reported a noticeable increase in the number of students on their honor rolls. (Contact Robert Jamieson, Jefferson Center for Character Education, (626) 792-8130.)

A study conducted by the Search Institute in Minneapolis during the 1996-97 school year sought to determine whether students are equipped with the 40 identified developmental

Quality Program Equals 99 Percent Attendance Rate

An exciting example of how a challenging curriculum can keep students in school is found in the Hoover Middle School in San Francisco, which boasts a 99 percent attendance rate in classes. The 1,300 students, grades six through eight, are provided enrollment options for classes in choir, orchestra, and band. They are supported by active booster clubs that raise money for trips for the 14 musical groups to compete and give concerts. Additionally, the school offers a wide range of sports programs and a language academy that includes language immersion programs in Cantonese, Spanish, and Japanese.

In 1996-97, students could choose two electives from among courses such as Heroes in History, Great Books, Books on Film, Chinese Culture, Fun with Shakespeare, Sports Sciences, Youth and Law, Strategic Games in Math, and Art and Archery. Students are not automatically enrolled in courses based on their grade levels, but are placed in the course of study that is best for their skills and interests. Students with a B average or better can also volunteer to help in the classrooms as tutors or teachers' assistants.

The upbeat atmosphere also attracts parents, with at least 100 volunteering each week. Teachers, recognized by the PTA for their willingness to teach their "dream course" over and above the required courses in English, science, math, and social studies, acknowledge the parents who volunteer to help prepare exciting and creative lessons for students. The PTA also raised $68,000 in 1996-97 to help support these school programs.

(Contact Glenn Wold, Assistant Principal at (415) 759-2783.)

assets or building blocks needed in order to develop into healthy, caring, and responsible citizens. The study determined that 20 percent of students possessed 0 to 10 assets, 42 percent possessed 11 to 20 assets, 30 percent possessed 21 to 30 assets, and 8 percent possessed 31 to 40 assets. (For further elaboration on developmental assets and the capacity of communities to promote these assets, see Peter Benson, *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997; or call the Search Institute, (800) 888-7828.)

Preschool and Early Childhood Education

In a report by the California School Readiness Task Force, *Here They Come, Ready or Not!* (1988), it was pointed out that while students at every educational level need maximum services, the greatest opportunity for success begins with our youngest children. The report encourages parents, legislators, leaders of industry, and the community to partner in making the child's first school experience the initial important step toward excellence.

The Perry Preschool program, a highly structured and carefully evaluated program, is aimed at reducing risk factors for children. A study begun in the early 1980s followed the progress of African-American children in a program that focused on cognitive, language, social, and behavioral development. Program teachers conducted weekly home visits and encouraged parents to be involved as volunteers in the classroom.

The children who participated were evaluated in comparison to a control group when they reached the age of nineteen. Those who participated in the program showed significant reductions in risk factors, higher academic achievement, and greater high school completion rates and literacy levels than students in a control group. These students also had increased postsecondary enrollments and employment rates. Overall, the program's benefits exceeded costs sevenfold. (Berrueta-Clement et al. 1984).

Staff Development and Classroom Management

Students are coming to school with increasingly defiant behaviors that challenge social and conventional expectations and beliefs. Teachers need support, research, and skills to deal with the widely diverse needs, talents, and behaviors within the student population. Knowledge of curriculum alone will not ensure success in the classroom. Behavior management techniques as well as presentation skills are all essential parts of teacher training. To be effective, the training should be frequent and should cover a wide range of topics that relate to assessed student needs—including information on identifying students at risk and knowing where they can be referred for assistance.

Slavin and Madden (1989) studied classroom management techniques and concluded that "consistently effective classroom programs accommodate instruction to individual needs while maximizing direct instruction, and they frequently assess student progress through a structured hierarchy of skills." They also found some evidence that proactive classroom management combined with interactive teaching and cooperative learning was effective in preventing delinquent behaviors.

A strategy for providing staff with visual reminders of the effect of poor attendance would be to post an interactive chart in the faculty room to show on a week-to-week basis the unearned a.d.a. from absences side by side with the cost of the staff's wish-list items. Another strategy might be a weekly e-mail message showing the total a.d.a. loss for the week in dollars.

Another strategy would be to include reminders about the links between student attendance and achievement and to make teachers aware of the most obvious ways students avoid school, for example:

- Coming to school late, picking up late card, then not reporting to class
- Stating that teachers, administrators, or office staff detained them on the way to class
- Saying that they have band, counseling, music lessons, or stage crew assignments
- Asking peers to mark them present when they won't be—especially in classes with substitute teachers
- Getting a referral to the office but failing to show up (and teacher doesn't follow up)

Given the tools and having the information, teachers will be in a better position to document and work with the attendance review teams to identify strategies to get kids back in school.

Service Learning

Research shows that students who form bonds with individuals who model healthy beliefs and clear standards do not want to behave in ways that would threaten those bonds (Howell 1995). By creating partnerships in the community, schools can provide opportunities for students to form and sustain relationships with venerable members of the community and, at the same time, make

Staff Incentives. The superintendent of the West Contra Costa Unified School District tied a.d.a. increases to staff salaries as a way of reinforcing the importance of attendance and attendance accounting. In the 1996-97 school year, employees earned a 4 percent salary increase that was directly linked to a.d.a. improvements. The superintendent also set an incentive of an 0.8 percent raise retroactive to the beginning of the school year if a further improvement of 280 a.d.a. units was reached. To help schools meet the attendance improvement goals, the district attendance team meets with staff at individual school sites to help them develop plans for improving student attendance. (Contact Alan Del Simone at (510) 235-4948.)

In the Sacramento City Unified School District, the director of finance engineered a similar incentive by providing one-half of the mandated cost recovery funds to school sites for each first truancy warning letter submitted to the district. In addition, the district attendance office was provided $600,000 in 1996-97 to implement a comprehensive Truancy Prevention Program. In that year, a.d.a. revenues doubled that figure—to $1.2 million—more than enough to fund the four SARB facilitators, 25 outreach workers, and staff at the truancy centers.

(Contact Rob Gerig at (916) 264-3290.)

their own education more relevant and meaningful. Service learning helps students make the connection between what they are learning in school and real-world experiences and situations.

Effective service learning opportunities allow students to direct their efforts into the areas of their talents and interests. To understand individual student interests, have them complete a verbal or written interest survey before being placed in service learning situations. (For more information, contact The National Service-Learning Clearing-house e-mail: serve@maroon.tc.umn.edu. Or call the CalServe K–12 Service Learning Initiative Office at (916) 657-4969.

After-School Programs

Partnerships between schools and community agencies or recreation departments can have a positive influence on students and help to minimize at-risk factors. After-school programs maintain students' interest; provide structured, healthy activities and relation-

The Self-Esteem Side Dish

A culinary arts program for teens is serving up healthy portions of self-esteem and ample side dishes of real-life skills as students learn to dice, slice, and spice up meals to serve at the Leo Palmiter High School in Sacramento. The program teaches food handling, meal preparation, inventory, recipe conversion, cost analysis, and food-serving techniques such as "raising from the right, lowering from the left."

A number of the 200 students who attend Palmiter were truant at their neighborhood schools or had disciplinary problems. Others have physical or learning disabilities. But, while they may have had difficulty at other schools, as one student put it, "Here I go to school a lot more. I don't feel like this is school. Every day is different. The problems are different, and we have to find new solutions. Instead of the competitive environment of a classroom, we are learning how to work with people that we might not get along with, and I'm learning how to help other people instead of only helping myself. It feels good to me to help others."

Another student came to Palmiter after having had an altercation with a teacher at his regular high school. He reports: "I used to have a bad temper. It's a lot better because this job shows us how to change. Instead of going out and doing drugs, we have someplace to be and we have some skills that somebody needs. I can get a job and buy clothes for myself. These guys are helping us learn to do something in life."

The culinary arts program began in the fall of 1998 as students began learning food-service skills in a classroom equipped with three kitchens, meat grinders, industrial blenders, and every spice in the cabinet. After several months of book study, cooking lessons, and work to build a restaurant in the school's cafeteria, students unveiled their restaurant in January 1999.

The teacher, Steven Moe, describes the program's beginnings: "When I first got these kids, they were rowdy, rough, quiet, and withdrawn. They never used to smile—only argue and fight. Attendance was low, but now they are anxious to get here and are thriving. Now they have a purpose." Moe said that many of the students have lived through difficult family situations and the program will help some of them "be the first kids in their families who will be off welfare." (Excerpted from "Neighbors," the Northeast section of the Sacramento *Bee,* February 11, 1999, under the headline, "Alternative High School's Culinary Arts Program Is a Recipe for Success."

ships; help to minimize alienation; and reduce students' association with delinquent peers.

Examples of successful after-school activity programs for elementary and middle school students are those of the Saddleback Valley Unified School District's Recreation and Community Services Unit. The programs are sponsored by the cities of Mission Viejo and Lake Forest. The cities contract with the school district to run the Kid's Factory Playgrounds program at the elementary schools. They also sponsor Neighborhood Park Youth programs at city parks for elementary-aged students and offer homework assistance and sports programs. For middle school students, the partnership offers Teen Open Gym Nights, a Junior Leader Program, teen dances, and programs for developmentally disabled students. (Contact Jeanette Murphey, recreation coordinator, (949) 460-2713.)

The City of Healdsburg's community service and police departments have partnered with schools and the Boys and Girls Club of America in more than 14 interagency agreements to provide after-hours events in their joint facilities. The school district reports that this joint school-park master plan involves all stakeholders and also has improved the maintenance and care of the community facilities, schools, parks, centers, and playing fields. (Contact Neil Smart, Community Services Director, City of Healdsburg, (707) 431-3302; nsmart@ci.healdsburg.ca.us).

Boys and Girls Clubs of America provide neighborhood centers for youth-oriented programs and train youth development professionals. Its goals include personal and educational development, citizenship and leadership development, health and physical fitness, cultural enrichment, social recreation, and outdoor activities. They emphasize the importance of staying in school, developing self-esteem, and striving for individual achievement. The organization has more than 30 clubs in California (for additional information on the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, log onto its Web site at http://www.bgca.org/).

In 1999 the California Department of Education began administering the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (Senate Bill 1756—Lockyer), which provides grant funds for after-school educational and enrichment programs for students in kindergarten through ninth grade. Each local program is required to include an education and literacy component that will provide tutoring or homework assistance and an educational enrichment component, which may include recreation and other activities. Each local program was developed collaboratively with parents, youth, school-site representatives, city and county parks and recreation department representatives, law enforcement personnel, social and mental health service agency representatives, and community members. The programs were required to evaluate the impact of after-school programs on school attendance and academic achievement. (For more information access the After School Web site at www.cde.ca.gov/cybranch/lsp/asp/asphome.htm. Or contact Marjorie McConnell, Consultant, California Department of Education at (916) 657-5130.)

Information about other after-school programs, projects, and activities used to help students bond to the

school and to their peers and explore their potential is offered by the California Association of Directors of Activities. (Contact J. Peter Cahn, (530) 662-0251, extension 4127.)

Independent Study

School districts have been able to cut their "unexcused" absences in half by implementing teacher-supervised independent studies for students who are absent due to short-term vacations. When parents and students are required by the school to sign a contract and complete class assignments while gone, the students are able to keep up with the class and the school district can collect a.d.a. revenues that otherwise would have been lost. Also known as home study programs, these educational options offer educational support as well as compliance with California's mandatory attendance policies.

Rewards, Incentives, and Recognition

Another strategy for effectively connecting students to their schools and developing positive attitudes and behavior in students is to set up student teams to survey all students regarding programs they would like to see in their school. Having students involved in decision making for their school creates an alliance with the school and a sense of ownership in the school's activities.

Studies that analyze the effectiveness of awards programs for attendance for high school students have found that students in the experimental group had significantly improved attendance rates (Brooks 1979). In the program, truant students sign contracts pledging not to have unexcused absences and agreeing to have all their teachers sign a daily attendance card which they turn in to their counselor at the end of each day. Participants earn one ticket for each teacher's signature and for each written positive comment from a teacher. Tickets are exchanged for prizes that include money, movie tickets, record albums, and gift certificates.

In another study (Bry 1982), youth in an experimental group earned points for positive ratings from teachers' interviews, regular attendance, and lack of disciplinary referrals and had significantly better grades and attendance than their control-group counterparts. In that two-year study, disruptive seventh graders who had low bonding with their families met with program staff weekly to review their school behavior. Participants could use the points they earned for an extra trip of their own choosing. Program staff contacted participants' parents periodically to give them progress reports.

Findings in the Wanza study (1996) found that inner-city, black high school males who had low expectations for school success improved their attendance by 40 percent when they received counseling and incentives. A lottery for perfect attendance provided the students with free meals and gift certificates.

Incentives and rewards can provide positive reinforcement for a variety of student accomplishments and activities. An illustration of their use to improve student attendance is provided by the Student Welfare and Attendance Team of the West Contra Costa Unified School District, which coordinates some incentive programs with businesses and service organizations. One such agreement is with the Red Lobster

Restaurant, which provides free dinner certificates. The certificates provide incentives and rewards for all students with a history of attendance problems who have achieved a perfect attendance record. (Contact SWAT at (510) 235-4948.)

Safe Schools, Safe Passages, and Positive School Climates

Attendance is closely tied to the students' perceptions about school safety. For example, students who feel bullied are more likely to find excuses to stay away from school. The U.S. Department of Justice and the National Association of School Psychologists estimate that 160,000 students miss school each day because they fear being bullied (Garrity 1994). A study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals found that even in the best-administered schools, 25 percent of students surveyed reported that one of their most serious concerns was fear of bullies (Batsche 1984). Schools that employ conflict resolution and other safe school measures will help to ensure that students do not fear school.

> Other students in the school often become the secondary victims in a hate-motivated incident. They may feel as threatened as the victim and require the same support. Administrators and staff must assure students that their school is a safe, friendly place where they can learn.
>
> *Hate-Motivated Behavior in Schools.* Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1997.

One school-based bullying-prevention program that showed reductions in reported incidents of bullying after 20 months (Olweus 1994) contains the following four program components:

1. Increase general awareness about threats and bullying through an information campaign.
2. Implement a school-level program that includes student surveys, a school bully conference, increased recess supervision, and PTA awareness.
3. Establish class-level activities that set rules against bullying and hold class meetings to discuss incidents.
4. Follow up with bullies and their victims when incidents occur. Use parent conferences and home-school problem-solving collaboration.

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Many strategies for achieving a safe and nurturing school climate are included in another Department of Education document, *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action* (1995). It outlines a planning process for schools to use when setting up a safe school plan. A first step in the planning process is to assess the school climate using a variety of surveys and data. The safe schools guide recommends that when school staff evaluate their school climate to determine if it is one that will encourage student bonding, or attachment to the

school, they should consider the following questions:

- Do the teachers use a supportive yet challenging approach?
- Do students sense that staff cares about them? Is there a sense of trust between students and teachers? Between students and administrators?
- Are students friendly? Do they respect diverse groups and relate well to each other?
- Does the school have an orderly, clean, and pleasant atmosphere?
- Are decisions made and conflicts resolved in a fair and democratic manner among students and staff?
- Are students actively involved in planning and decision making?
- Are the school's policies and expectations fair and clear to all?
- What is the level of parental involvement? How can it be increased?
- Do students feel they are in a safe learning environment?

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution programs help to create a healthful school climate by teaching youth how to manage conflict in productive ways. Bullying, fighting, and other behaviors that detract from the friendliness and bonding ability of schools can often be addressed in conflict resolution programs.

Conflict resolution education helps to promote problem solving by teaching students how to express their points of view and find mutually acceptable solutions. The programs that appear to be the most effective are comprehensive and include the following elements: problem solving processes, principles of conflict resolution, the basics of effective communication and listening, critical and creative thinking skill development, and an emphasis on personal responsibility and self-discipline.

Empirical research on the effectiveness of conflict resolution is lacking. However, anecdotal evidence and short-term outcome data are encouraging. For example, a school in one of Oakland's high-crime neighborhoods has the city's lowest suspension rates. The dean of students at that school calls conflict resolution "a way of life for my kids and for the staff." (*Getting Results*, page 63. Contact Healthy Kids Program Office, California Department of Education, (916) 657-2810.)

Counseling and Guidance

A 1997 survey showed that only 413 out of 999 school districts employed counselors. Of those, 398 are elementary and 15 are unified school districts. Most districts indicated they used most of their counselors in high schools. It is estimated that in high school, there are 530 students per counselor, in junior high school there are 625 students per counselor, in middle school, 863 students per counselor, and in elementary school there are 2,381 students per counselor. The aggregate totals show a *1,576-to-1 statewide pupil-to-counselor ratio for all districts in 1996-97.* (Contact Student Support Services and Program Unit, California Department of Education, (916) 323-2183.)

Research indicates that counseling can have a definite positive impact on student attendance. For example, a 1992 study by Patrick Monahan showed that a comprehensive program for "at risk" incoming ninth graders—a program that employed upper-class "buddies" and group guidance sessions—helped

students to succeed in high school. (See the section on "peer helping" for more information on peer "buddies.") The program also included study and examination skill-building classes, career exploration, tutoring, and social activities—emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach.

In another study (Page and Chandler 1994), group counseling helped to improve the self-esteem of ninth grade "at risk" students. Counseling, paired with incentives, helped improve attendance by 40 percent for a target group of inner-city black high school students (Wanza 1996). Atlantic County, New Jersey, experienced an 83 percent success rate in keeping students from repeat truancy thanks to Project Helping Hand. The project makes use of extensive student and family counseling sessions for up to eight weeks to help the families become a team in working for school success. Counselors use signed agreements, referrals to other services, student study teams, tutoring, and parent-teacher conferences to achieve their success rate.

Although many districts do not hire counselors, 50 percent of California's school districts have a comprehensive school health system, and 86 percent of the comprehensive health systems provide a counseling component (CDE 1996). The sections below that deal with comprehensive health and the Healthy Start program provide more details on these components.

Pupil Empowerment

Empowering students is an effective way for instilling a sense of ownership in the school and responsibility for one's behavior in and out of school. Using empowerment techniques, teachers work with students to share in designing school policy, or in the selection of new teachers. This participation gives students a chance to be active partners in decision making, gives them an investment in significant school events, and expands their ability to make more complex life decisions.

Empowering students is an effective way for instilling a sense of ownership in the school and responsibility for one's own behavior in and out of school.

Closed Campuses

Requiring students to stay on the school campus during the entire school day is one strategy that deserves consideration when planning a comprehensive school attendance initiative. Many school planners favor closed campus policies to ensure the safety of students and to reinforce the importance of school attendance. Although some logistical challenges may arise with closed campuses, many schools have addressed those issues effectively. *Education Code* Sections 35290 et seq. outline the provisions for closed campuses. These provisions are reflected in the school's disciplinary rules and procedures.

When considering closing a campus, planners must address the following key issues: acceptance by the community, facilities (such as fencing or parking barriers), availibility of food service for all students (may require

additional covered seating areas and contracts with outside vendors), students' lunchtime activities (including clubs, tournaments, and contests), supervision, and plans for rainy days.

Those who have been successful in implementing closed campuses have found four factors to be crucial:

- Helping students, staff, and the community to understand the safety reasons behind closed campuses
- Involving students in developing the implementation strategies
- Creating an advisory team that represents all stakeholders
- Planning to allow enough time between announcement of the program and its actual implementation

Many school planners favor closed campus policies to ensure the safety of students and to reinforce the importance of school attendance.

In some cases, additional funding may be needed to close a campus. For example, if additional fencing is required, there will be a one-time cost. However, districts having closed campuses report that fencing may be needed only in strategic areas rather than around the entire campus. Increased supervision will, on the other hand, require ongoing funding, although parent and community volunteers can, in some cases, help to defray the costs of additional supervision. In addition, there may be additional costs related to two-way radios or cameras for supervision. In most cases, these costs will be offset by increases in a.d.a. as a result of closing the campus.

Special badges or identification cards can be issued to students in regional occupational programs or to others who have legitimate reasons to leave campus during school hours. All identification cards should include the student's photo, the school name, and the time period during which the pass is valid.

Schools with closed campuses sometimes report an initial increase in smoking and student conflicts. They have found that students, staff, and parents benefit from receiving training in conflict-resolution skills. Programs are available for such training; e.g., the School/Law Enforcement Partnership's Conflict Resolution/Youth Mediation Grant Program.

An extensive discussion of closed campuses is available on the California Department of Education's Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office Web site (http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/safetyhome.html) or by contacting the Safe Schools office at (916) 323-2183. Districts and schools that have developed policies and procedures to implement closed campuses include the New Haven School District, the San Jose Unified School District, Centennial High School in the Kern Unified School District, the San Leandro Unified School District, and the Modesto City School District.

Integrated Services Initiatives

An integrated school-linked services approach that incorporates social, economic, and health services can help

reduce dropout rates, improve academic achievement, and promote long-term self-sufficiency. Those students who usually end up on the SARB list are those in need of social services relating to transportation; health care; child care for their own child, younger siblings, or parents; substance abuse; and housing. An integrated service system that is school-linked and delivers these types of services to families has proved to be helpful in improving attendance.

> A study of a clinic located in an alternative school . . . (showed that) students who used the clinic were twice as likely to stay in school and nearly twice as likely to graduate or be promoted than were nonregistered students. The more visits that the students made to the clinic, the higher the graduation or promotion rate. The researchers found this relationship "particularly striking" among black males and attributed these successful outcomes to the trust and support provided by the clinic staff in helping students bond with schoolmates and function better in school.
>
> Dryfoos, J. *Full Service Schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994, p. 130

Comprehensive School Health System

A coordinated approach to school health improves student's health and their capacity to learn, and is accomplished through support from families, schools, and communities working together. The approach is intended to support students' capacity to learn by empowering them with the knowledge, skills, and judgment to help them make appropriate life choices and succeed in school.

Health Framework

The *Health Framework for California Public Schools,* Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1994, calls for an integrated approach to health education that includes physical education, health services, nutrition services, psychological and counseling services, health promotion for school staff, a safe and healthy environment, and parent and community involvement. When planned and implemented in a supportive and consistent manner, these components achieve far more than is possible without a coherent, integrated system. Recommended programs are designed to address a wide array of health-related issues that also contribute to absenteeism and truancy; e.g., gang-involvement, substance abuse, emotional health, and grief and anger management.

California Healthy Start

The California Healthy Start Initiative provides schools staff with a comprehensive strategy for meeting the health needs of children and their families. The local initiatives use planning and operational grants to develop and sustain a community development process for implementing strategies; e.g., education and employment preparation, health and mental health services, family support, and recreation.

The California Healthy Start Initiative calls for schools to work with community agencies to improve the well-being of students and their families. Local healthy start initiatives are governed collaboratively by a team of

educators, parents, community agencies, and organizations. These collaborative entities are excellent sources for data and information about existing programs that can be tied to attendance improvement efforts.

The California Healthy Start Initiative has demonstrated measurable improvements in standardized test scores in grades one through three and in such other areas as reducing family mobility rates, decreasing suspensions and unexcused absences, improving students' behavior in elementary school classrooms, and increasing participation by parents.

The California Healthy Start Initiative calls for schools to work with community agencies to improve the well-being of students and their families.

Family Resource Centers

Funding provided by Healthy Start local initiatives has led to the establishment of family resource centers at local school sites. The centers can provide any all of the following: family counseling; after-school activities; family literacy, citizenship, job training, and parenting classes; dental screening; nutrition education; and medical and mental health services for students. The centers often become a focus for community pride by including murals, cultural assemblies, college and career exploration programs, and other forums that support the family and community.

Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programs

The California School Boards Association's Task Force on Attendance conducted a survey of students that showed that drug and alcohol use are underlying causes for student nonattendance. Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) is titled "Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities." The legislation requires schools to convene a broad school-community team to develop a drug and violence prevention plan whenever they apply for federal dollars. Title IV gives schools flexibility to prevent drug and alcohol use through a wide range of activities such as comprehensive health education, service learning projects, mentoring, and integrated service delivery for students and their families. (Contact the Healthy Kids Program Office, (916) 657-2810.)

Key Considerations for an Effective Attendance Program

Schools have developed many strategies for dealing with attendance problems. The following checklist was developed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education and provides a framework for school attendance planning.

Key Considerations for an Effective Attendance Program

1. Does our school have an effective attendance policy? Yes____ No ____
2. Is our attendance policy clear to everyone? Yes____ No ____
3. Is the local law enforcement agency a member of our attendance team? Yes____ No ____
4. Does our school have a wide variety of extracurricular activities? Yes____ No ____
5. Is good attendance positively reinforced among the staff? Yes____ No ____
6. Are students involved in the decisions that affect them? Yes____ No ____
7. Does a dropout identification and prevention program exist? Yes____ No ____
8. Are our attendance-taking procedures student-proof? Yes____ No ____
9. Is our attendance communicated regularly to staff, students, and parents? Yes____ No ____
10. Does our school have an effective counseling program with an attendance component? Yes____ No ____
11. Do opportunities exist for the nontraditional pursuit of a high school diploma? Yes____ No ____
12. Are social skills and responsibility training offered as a part of the school's curriculum? Yes____ No ____
13. Is there consistent enforcement of all policies for students and staff? Yes____ No ____
14. Does a school newsletter exist that publicizes the school's activities as well as attendance and disciplinary patterns? Yes____ No ____
15. Do our staff members have opportunities for inservice activities addressing such issues as teaching styles, cultural awareness, classroom management, and skills in community relations? Yes____ No ____
16. Attendance is taken each period. Yes____ No ____
17. Parents are contacted on each absence. Yes____ No ____
18. Are absences monitored weekly? Yes____ No ____
19. Is attendance improvement part of the districtwide goals and objectives? Yes____ No ____
20. Do all personnel know our current percentages of attendance? Yes____ No ____

From: *Do You Have a Leak in Your ADA?* Los Angeles County Office of Education, 1990

Chapter Three

Early Intervention Programs and the Value of Partnerships

Intervention programs are designed to provide support services to at-risk youth and their families and educational alternatives to help students achieve academic success.

Despite the presence of good prevention programs, some students continue to miss school. According to *Education Code* Section 48264.5(a), on a first truancy, a pupil may be given a written warning by a peace officer. A record may be kept by the school and the peace officer for a period of not less than two years. It is at this point—before the problem escalates—that the school can implement intervention programs to provide educational options offering the best learning environment for students who are at risk of being truant.

Research comparing the cost of intervention and incarceration shows that parent training, graduation incentives, and delinquent supervision all compare favorably in cost-effectiveness to incarceration. (*Diverting Children from a Life of Crime: What Are the Costs and Benefits?* Rand Corporation, 1996.)

Intervention programs are designed to provide support services to at-risk youth and their families and educational alternatives to help students achieve academic success. Some promising practices are listed below.

The local healthy start initiatives (discussed in Chapter Two) are foremost examples of collaboration and partnership. Each local initiative is governed by a team that includes educators, health and mental health representatives, and community and private organization representatives who are sources of information and strategies for attendance improvement. (For more information, contact the CDE Healthy Start Office at 916-657-3558.)

The Burbank Outreach Center provides an excellent glimpse of program effectiveness and cost effectiveness in a multiagency team. The center—located in a building purchased with city redevelopment funds—houses the school district's child welfare and attendance offices, a police detective, a probation officer, and staff from the county department of human services. The team meets regularly to deal with all the "presenting" problems that plague families shared by their agencies: abuse, gangs, drugs, and incorrigibility.

The team considers their service to be "triage" for families struggling with a wide variety of problems.

The advantage of having all team members at the same location is the speed with which they can attack problems. For example, when the team is meeting with a family on one issue—drug abuse, for example—the school district representative can say, "Now, we want to discuss a SARB hearing to deal with your child's truancy." The long process of sending letters and waiting until the next hearing date is bypassed for the families who are facing the greatest need. District records show that they have increased SARB referrals by more than 38 percent as a result of the decreased waiting time for meetings.

Similarly, if the team is meeting with a family regarding truancy, the probation officer can discuss violations at the same time—particularly in light of how those behaviors might negatively affect the children in the family.

The center does not offer counseling services; however, by looking at the whole array of family problems at one time, the team is better able to refer family members to needed services and remediation. In addition, thanks to the ease of sharing records, the multi-agency team is better able to follow up on families to ensure that they have participated in the remediation activities.

Regular SARB hearings are held once a month for students whose families do not have outstanding warrants or probation violations. In addition, the center houses all job development and placement services for youth in the city, so students who need creative alternatives can be referred immediately for job screening and training.

The center's team approach has reduced the need for truancy sweeps in the city. Instead, the police staff serve truancy citations during the course of their regular business every day. Last year, they served 170 truancy citations—in part a result of their familiarity with students.

According to center staff, the partnership does not require additional funding or grants. Instead, it functions by making more efficient use of existing resources within each of the agencies. (Contact Marissa Rosoff, (818) 558-5544.)

Student Study Teams and Student Success Teams

Established by Senate Bill 65 in 1985, student study teams (often referred to as student success teams to reinforce a positive approach) have been valuable tools in helping students develop successful behaviors. Student study teams are based on a "whole-child, whole- family" approach and seek to teach students self-control and ways to respect boundaries as opposed to merely punishing bad behavior. An SST is a school-site organization that includes the parent and the student in a positive, problem-solving process. It meets at school to explore possibilities and strategies that will best meet the educational needs of the students and support teachers and parents. An SST includes the student, parent, teacher, counselor, the school administrator, and other school personnel and community members who can provide support. Meetings are held to develop written plans of action. The entire process for establishing SSTs is described in the *Student Success Team Booklet.* (Contact: Andy Stetkevich, Senate Bill 65

field colleague, Riverside Unified School District, (909) 788-7142.)

Although funding has not been available for a detailed evaluation of the strategy, program managers who have used it are enthusiastic about the results. (Contact Marco Orlando, Consultant, California Department of Education, (916) 323-2212.)

Parental Involvement—Level 2

Intervention measures should have the support of parents as willing partners in their children's education. For families and schools to work together to solve problems like truancy, there must be mutual trust and communication. Many truancy programs include components that provide intensive monitoring, counseling, and other family-strengthening services to help parents understand the importance of maintaining regular, consistent attendance. Schools can help by being "family-friendly" and encouraging teachers and parents to make regular contact before problems arise. Schools may want to consider arranging convenient times and neutral settings for parent meetings, starting homework hotlines, training teachers to work with parents, hiring or appointing a parent liaison, and giving parents a voice in school decisions. Funding for these staff positions can come from increases in a.d.a.

It is critical that parents of truant children assume responsibility for truant behavior. Each community must determine the best way to create meaningful incentives for such parents to ensure that their children go to school. Working together, local officials, educators, and parents can make a shared commitment to assume responsibility for reducing truancy. They can choose the incentives that make the most sense for their community.

Many truancy programs include components that provide intensive monitoring, counseling, and other family-strengthening services to help parents understand the importance of maintaining regular, consistent attendance.

Studies have found that, to be effective, truancy prevention strategies should include the whole family. Sheverbush and Sadowski (1994) found that school attendance improved "markedly" when counseling and intervention programs included not only the child and parent(s), but also other siblings. The program required families to sign a "diversion agreement" and to meet with family therapists. In another study (Nweze 1993), elementary school absences were reduced by 62 percent when parents were required to sign a volunteer agreement. The targeted students were considered "at risk" and resided in an impoverished rural area. Additional components of the program included a parent support group, a student support group, a peer leader training program, and a designated parent room in the school.

Outreach Programs and Home Visits

Formal outreach programs that train parent-liaisons to visit homes can be an effective intervention strategy to reduce truancy. Some schools have contracted with probation officers to do home visits with families of truant students. In

other cases schools have hired an additional staff member to make home visits. Often called school social workers or community outreach coordinators, these home-school liaison people work with parents or guardians to involve them in their children's education and invite them to participate in school functions. The coordinators discuss laws and regulations regarding excessive absences and inform parents of the problems their children's absences present.

For the intervention to be effective, schools must keep track of daily attendance and identify students with attendance problems.

The coordinator should be a case manager with knowledge of available community resources so he or she can make the appropriate referrals to support the family. For the intervention to be effective, schools must keep track of daily attendance and identify students with attendance problems. After a student has had three unexcused absences, the coordinator makes a home visit.

In Bakersfield, the part-time "family advocate" at Stella Hills Elementary School works out of a temporary building where parents are encouraged to volunteer sorting donated clothes, doing projects to help teachers prepare for lessons (such as stapling writing booklets), or taking cooking classes offered by the local college. Due to substance abuse or other problems, some of the parents cannot work in the classrooms, but the family advocate encourages their participation at the outreach center to help them bond with the school.

In Sacramento, an aggressive truancy reduction and dropout prevention program includes three truancy receiving centers that operate from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The centers are staffed by two student outreach workers and a Sacramento Police Department officer. One deputy probation officer serves all three centers, where truant students are detained after being picked up by officers. Staff at the center perform an intake assessment, contact the parents, and notify the student's school. The parent is asked to come in to pick up the student and meet with staff to determine the cause of the truancy, review compulsory education laws, and receive a referral for agency assistance, if needed.

In addition to the outreach workers at the truancy centers, Sacramento City Unified School District also funds a student outreach worker for four hours per day at each high school site. There are also five student outreach workers assigned for six hours per day to middle school and elementary clusters. For example, a community liaison and parent adviser for the Elder Creek Elementary School not only tracks attendance and initiates School Attendance Review Team and School Attendance Review Board hearings but also makes unannounced visits to homes of students with attendance problems. The position is funded by the district and has helped the school to maintain a 96 percent attendance rate (including excused absences) and a 94 percent rate overall. (Contact Rob Gerig, (916) 264-3290.)

Schools can receive funding for a community outreach consultant through

the SB 65 grant process administered by the California Department of Education. The Olivehurst Elementary School has implemented successful programs using these funds. (Contact Herschel Todd, Principal, (530) 741-6191, extension 152.)

Truancy Sweeps

The North Sacramento Elementary School District has worked with the police department, probation officers, and the district attorney to intervene early with the families of students who have attendance problems. The Truancy Visit Program has been in place for three years and is being replicated in other districts.

Three times a year, ten teams (one for each school in the district) convene for an 8 a.m. briefing on their role in the truancy sweep. Each team consists of representatives from police, school district, probation, district attorney, and a local agency such as child protective services. Each team is given eight to ten cases—families whose children have attendance problems and who have received warning letters. In most cases, the families are visited before the child's attendance requires SARB mediation.

Prior to the sweeps, the district's director of child welfare and attendance works with the district's law enforcement partners to determine whether family members will be arrested for any outstanding warrants. Those families are all called on unannounced by the team, including the district's director of child welfare and attendance.

While in the home, the police make any necessary arrests, look for drugs, and discuss the importance of attendance and the consequences for truancy.

In the three years since the program began, attendance has improved by 80 percent of the targeted students immediately after the visits. A $67,000 increase in apportionment revenues was realized in the first year of the program. District records show an overall increase in actual attendance. The improvements were most dramatic in the first months after the sweeps, but maintained a steady increase over the next year as well. (Contact Debbie Morris, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance, North Sacramento Elementary School District, (916) 263-8307.)

In the three years since the Truancy Visit Program began, attendance has improved by 80 percent of the targeted students immediately after the visits.

School Resource Officers

Police and sheriff's offices throughout the state are becoming more and more involved in community-oriented policing. One aspect of that approach is to place either full- or part-time officers on school campuses. The advantages of having school-based officers include:

1. The officers get to know students and develop a trust relationship with them.
2. The officers teach classes in DARE (drug abuse awareness for elementary students) and gang or weapon awareness at middle and high schools. These classes help students

understand the value of making healthy choices and the legal consequences of unhealthy ones.

3. The officers work closely with school attendance clerks and are available to go into the community to bring truants back to school.

When students are truant, the officers visit their homes to discover the root cause of the absence; e.g., drug-addicted parents; parents who need their child to earn money for the family; or homes that are so chaotic that the officers recommend that Child Protective Services place the child outside the home.

In South Lake Tahoe, the police chief and school superintendent have developed a vigorous partnership that includes the assignment of three full-time officers to school campuses: one at the high school, one at the middle school, and one to serve the district's five elementary schools. When students are truant, the officers visit their homes to discover the root cause of the absence; e.g., drug-addicted parents; parents who need their child to earn money for the family; or homes that are so chaotic that the officers recommend that child protective services (CPS) place the child outside the home. The officers refer families to other social services as per the officers' perceived needs.

As part of its partnership agreement with the police department, the South Lake Tahoe School District provides partial funding for the three officers. The police department covers about three-quarters of the personnel costs and provides all the equipment the officers use. The police force is committed to assigning school resource officers because of several perceived benefits:

1. Reduced crime through keeping students in school.
2. Reduced delinquency in the future through home visits, which can be an invaluable prevention tool for identifying problem behaviors early enough to get help for the families.
3. Increased effectiveness in working with truants. If officers were not assigned to the schools, beat officers would have to deal with delinquents, and they would not be nearly as familiar with the students' problems.

(Contact: Paul Huard, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, (530) 542-6110.)

The Stop and Cite program is part of comprehensive truancy intervention and crime reduction efforts in Rohnert Park. The program stresses positive contact between police and students. The police issue courtesy citations to suspected truants they contact during school hours. Two citations are issued without penalty, and the police return the students to school to meet with their parents and a vice principal. If a student receives a third citation, he or she is referred to the appropriate support service. The program also supports a school resource officer on nine campuses. The officer provides information and counseling on drug abuse, runaways, and other topics of student interest. Resource officers serve as formal classroom teachers and informal friends on campus.

During the program's first year, daytime burglaries in Rohnert Park decreased 48 percent; during the second

year, there was an additional 16 percent decrease. During those two years, vandalism decreased 35 percent, thefts decreased 12 percent, and the resulting savings to the community amounted to $262,000. The program's resource officers believe that being on the street, being in contact with the kids, makes students aware that someone cares and wants them to get their education. (Contact the Director of Youth and Family Services, Department of Public Safety, Rohnert Park, (707) 584-2699.)

Mentoring and Tutoring Programs

Truancy research shows positive results from two related strategies: mentoring and tutoring, and from an approach that shows students how their studies relate to real life, to the future, and to their personal goals. Research indicates that building positive adult-student or student-student relationships through planned mentoring and tutoring programs is an effective way of ensuring students' success, showing them the connection between school and their future, and, ultimately, decreasing truancy.

McPartland and Nettles (1991) evaluated Project RAISE (Raising Academics in Inglewood or Student Excellence), a program to prevent students from dropping out of school. The program placed at-risk students in one-on-one mentoring relationships starting in the sixth grade and continuing through high school. Evaluation of the program found that students who received mentoring had significantly higher seventh grade attendance rates and English grades than students in a comparison group.

Mentoring of young people by adults has been shown to be effective if the mentoring relationship is sustained and nonprescriptive and if the mentors and youths are carefully matched. Training and support of mentors is a critical element to the success of a mentoring program (Tierney, Grossman, and Resch 1995). However, research shows that mentoring relationships are not effective when they are noncontingent and/or are uncritically supportive (see chapter 6 of *Getting Results* (1998) for a summary of a major mentoring study and the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* [Howell 1995], for more details about mentoring studies).

Truancy research shows positive results from two related strategies: mentoring and tutoring, and from an approach that shows students how their studies relate to real life, to the future, and to their personal goals.

Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Don Northcross started an innovative program some four years ago and is now working full-time to operate it. Called OK (Our Kids), the program pairs volunteer mentors with young African-American males. The mentors, who are trained by Northcross, agree to work one-on-one with several youth, offering counseling, encouragement, and immediate action when they see negative behavior.

Students join the program voluntarily, but are expected to maintain regular school attendance, good grades, and

exemplary behavior. The program accommodates students on Saturday with a place to study and network and provides them with opportunities for participation in community projects and events. If they achieve the tough standards expected of them, they can expect big rewards, such as trips to Disneyland or Great America, outings to sporting events, and free use of a nearby sports complex on Saturday afternoons following completion of study hall and lunch. Northcross has never had a dropout, in spite of the high expectations he has set. (Contact Don Northcross, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, (916) 499-2287–pager.)

Unfortunately, the issue of background checks for mentors, including fingerprinting, is a requirement that may make the administration of mentoring programs more burdensome. However, when schools have an active partnership with law enforcement, there may be creative ways in which the sheriff or the district attorney can help speed the process of obtaining background checks on prospective mentors.

Peer Helping and Conflict Management

Counselors and teachers are experiencing success intervening in at-risk behaviors using peer helping and conflict management programs. While both types of programs are effective for prevention as well as for intervention, they are more often used to intervene when students demonstrate risk factors such as truancy, poor grades, or poor socialization skills.

Safe school planners will note that peer mediation programs are useful strategies for all four components of the safe school planning process: the personal characteristics of students and staff, school's physical environment, school's social environment, and school culture.

Students who become peer helpers are first trained by their school counselors or teachers. They are then paired with students—such as incoming freshmen who are identified as being at risk. The peer helpers act as a big brother or big sister and help the younger students deal with problems or find adult help as needed.

Help from peers can take many different forms. It includes activities such as peer tutoring, peer support, peer facilitation, peer mediation, peer counseling, peer education, peer ambassadorship, and peer leadership. An important aspect of this type of intervention strategy is to link students to trained adults who can assist when problems go beyond the experience of peer helpers.

In one program, students are trained as "guardian angels" to mediate and provide intervention. Guardian angels are leaders of sessions in which students discuss unacceptable behavior and how it affects them. For example, students might discuss how they are affected by a student's chronic absenteeism. The group is then responsible

Help from peers can take many different forms. It includes activities such as peer tutoring, peer support, peer facilitation, peer mediation, peer counseling, peer education, peer ambassadorship, and peer leadership.

for encouraging the student to choose more constructive behavior. Parents are also invited to participate when their child's behavior is being discussed.

The Absence Addict program has been developed as a peer support group for truants. Students who are excessively absent are invited to join a support group modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous. Students receive guidance and are given a chance to hear how others have overcome the problems that have contributed to their truancy. (For more information on programs listed in this section, contact the California Association of Peer Programs, (626) 564-0099.)

The Alternative Education Option

Alternative education is an optional, need-based program authorized in general by *Education Code* Sections 35160, 51225.3(a), 51228(d), and specifically by *Education Code* sections 58500–58512. Alternative programs place an emphasis on the development of close interpersonal relationships and a strong sense of bonding. Student learning is typically focused on participation and observation, and includes self-evaluation. Many alternative programs—thanks to their smaller size—stress collective decision making and problem solving rather than relying on a system of rules for behavior.

Alternative education options vary from "open" to "structured" programs. They can be offered at separate schools or as schools within a school. Funding is based on regular average daily attendance. Alternative programs have been used successfully by districts to provide students—particularly those who are considered to be at-risk—with options that fit their needs and provide them with academic success. As of October 1996, there were 2,557 alternative public schools or schools with one or more alternative programs in California. A few examples of alternative programs follow:

Work study provides a "4 to 4" plan for students who are highly motivated by having a job. Students attend school for four hours and then work for an additional four hours. In that sense, it can be seen as an effective prevention or early intervention strategy, one that offers an educational option that meets their needs while providing them with educational skills needed for adulthood.

Work experience can also be used as a proactive, targeted intervention approach. Research shows that by late adolescence, employment is a crucial factor in youth development and one of the most important predictors of later adjustment. (Sampson and Laub 1993).

> Preparation for stable employment and placement in real jobs should have a prominent place in programming for older adolescents (Howell 1995, page 159).

One caution should be mentioned, however. Researchers agree that students who work 12 hours or more each week tend to suffer academically. Schools must take care to ensure that academic preparation does not suffer in the pursuit of quick money.

In-house suspension is a next-day disciplinary measure for teacher-initiated suspensions from class and is an alternative to "at-home" administrative suspensions, under which no a.d.a. may be claimed. Implementing in-house suspensions keeps the students in a supervised setting

where they can get help in keeping up with class assignments. In the time between the infraction and the next-day discipline, parents can be informed about the reasons for the suspensions.

In the West Contra Costa Unified School District, "suspension alternative classes" were successful in improving a.d.a. and, as a result, moved from pilot status to implementation at all middle, junior, and high school sites. In these classes, students receive counseling and curriculum designed to help them deal with their behavior. (Contact Alan Del Simone, Administrator, Student Welfare and Attendance, West Contra Costa Unified School District, (510) 235-4948.)

Compulsory Saturday school is allowed under *Education Code* Sections 48264.5(b) and 37223 for a second truancy (fourth unexcused absence) in the same school year. Pupils can be required to make up missed school days by completing class assignments under teacher supervision (for example, in a study hall). For a school to receive funding reimbursement, the student must attend for enough hours to complete his or her minimum day. In addition to Saturday sessions, students may be assigned by the school to an after-school study program. If the pupil fails to complete the assigned study program, or is truant for a third time (fifth unexcused absence) within the same school year, he or she may be referred to and required to participate in a truancy mediation program. If the district does not have a truancy mediation program, the pupil may be required to attend a comparable program elsewhere, provided such an expedient is approved by the district's attendance supervisor.

Continuation education is a mandated program designed to meet special needs of sixteen- to eighteen-year-old students who are subject to compulsory school attendance but may need individualized attention and schedule flexibility. Continuation education is described in *Education Code* Sections 48400–48454 and is supplemented by the *California Administrative Code, Title 5*, Sections 11000–11010.

Continuation schools provide an alternative for many students who have failed to succeed in a regular school setting. The continuation school's small classes and campus helps students who were lost on a big campus to feel bonded to both students and staff—all of whom know the students and notice when they are absent. Due to their size, continuation schools have the advantage of being more flexible and inherently more individualized. There were 511 continuation schools enrolling a total of 59,730 students in October 1996; nearly half of those continuation schools also classified themselves as alternative schools.

Magnet schools are authorized by *Education Code* Section 35160 and typically offer an attractive program or feature that draws attendance from all parts of the district (or region within a large district). Magnet schools often focus on a specific field, such as technology or health, and can provide a student with a positive environment and way to express a natural interest or talent. A formal transfer to a magnet school can be a way to intervene in a negative cycle and provide a student with a new beginning. A performance contract of some type between the student and the transfer school could outline expected behaviors that are required if the student is to remain as

part of the magnet program. By 1996, magnet programs were offered in 490 schools to 151,790 elementary students and to 56,103 high school students.

Public home study—or independent study—is a legal way to provide public education to children in the home and in other nontraditional settings. However, in the case of students with attendance problems, caution is advised. Truants often have difficulty with self-direction and self-motivation—traits that are essential for success in an independent-study program. (See *Education Code* Sections 46300(3), 51745–51749.5; and *California Code of Regulations, Title 5,* Sections 11700–11703.)

School Attendance Review Boards

School attendance review boards—or SARBs—were established by the Legislature in l975 to divert students with school attendance or behavioral problems from the juvenile justice system (*Education Code* Section 48263). SARBs join the forces of school, community, and home to intervene in school attendance problems before students have missed enough school to cause failure (*Education Code* Section 48320 et seq.).

SARBs are composed of parents, representatives from various youth-serving agencies, school district representatives, and the community. They include representatives from law enforcement; welfare, probation, and mental health agencies; and the district attorney's office (SARB membership is identified in *Education Code* Section 48321). If the parents or guardian of the minor fail to respond to directives of the SARB, or to use services offered on behalf of the minor, the SARB files a complaint against the parents or guardian with the district attorney's office (*Education Code* Section 48291). The *School Attendance Review Boards Handbook* (1995) provides detailed information about the operation of an effective SARB.

School attendance review boards—or SARBs—were established by the Legislature in l975 to divert students with school attendance or behavioral problems from the juvenile justice system.

The SARB process as outlined in the handbook includes the following steps:

1. After three unexcused absences or tardies of more than 30 minutes, the school or district sends the parent or guardian Truancy Letter #1.
2. This initiates the SARB referral process; all parental contacts should be documented.
3. After four unexcused absences, Truancy Letter #2 is sent.
4. After five unexcused absences, Truancy Letter #3 is sent. The completed SARB Referral Form and pertinent documents are sent to the district child welfare and attendance office.

   At this point, some districts or schools choose to initiate an intermediate step. A school attendance review team (SART) meeting is held, or a student study team (SST) is activated. If the problem can be resolved through SART action, the student is not referred to the SARB.

5. SARB formalizes a contract with the student and parent to resolve the problem(s). The contract is signed by the student, parents, or guardians. Often the contract includes provisions such as child bedtimes, an agreement to set out clothes for the next day, limits on television viewing, agreements about homework, and agreement by the parents to improve the child's attendance or face legal consequences.
6. If the child maintains positive attendance for three months, the file is closed. If, after that, poor attendance resumes, a district attorney's warning letter is sent to the parent or guardian (*Penal Code* Section 272—contributing to the delinquency of a minor).
7. If the poor attendance does not improve after the hearing, a district attorney's warning letter is sent.
8. If poor attendance continues after the warning letter is sent, a complaint is filed with the district attorney. She or he will then serve the parent with a warrant, which will require a court appearance and probation.

Cost savings from SARB actions can save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. For every student who "gets back on track" as a result of a SARB hearing, local governments save the following costs:

- District attorney processing time for warning letters
- District attorney staff time to prepare a warrant for the parent's arrest after noncompliance
- Judicial review of warrants
- Court administrative time in entering warrants into the system
- Police or sheriff staff time in serving warrants and arresting parents or guardians
- Child protective services time in going with the arresting officer to determine if child placement outside the home is warranted
- Court time for the deputy district attorney, public defender, judge, and court clerk to hear the case
- Jail time (if parents are detained)
- Probation costs for probation officer and paperwork
- Additional court hearings if there is a probation violation

Long-term cost-savings result when students attend school regularly: crime is reduced and savings are realized by police, sheriffs, courts, and juvenile halls, and through reductions in costs for insurance and home owner losses.

Additionally, future welfare costs are lowered when students stay in school, gain skills, and avoid welfare dependency.

Cost benefits accrue to schools when truants are returned to regular attendance as a result of SARB mediation. For example, in a large district it is possible to return 225 students to school—an a.d.a. increase of $250,000. While that figure may be only a small portion of a district's overall budget, it could fund several of the additional classrooms required under the class-size reduction program, or it could provide for several outreach coordinators to work with families to improve attendance.

In the San Juan Unified School District, the SARB hears more than 600 cases each year. But according to Patty Wills, San Juan's director of welfare

and attendance, this represents only the tip of the iceberg, since there are more than 288,000 unexcused absences in the district each year. Additionally, there is no adequate system statewide for tracking the numbers of students who drop out during the transition to middle school and again to high school. Since dropouts are only counted based on those who begin ninth grade, there are potentially hundreds of young dropouts who are missed each year.

In spite of those daunting statistics, the district SARB has a 90–95 percent success rate in helping families to improve attendance and avoid prosecution. Ms. Wills asks the school principal to attend each hearing for a child in his or her school. The principal plays an important role in the hearing by emphasizing that the school cares; that they miss the student; that they are willing to help the student make up missed work; and that without improvement in attendance the child's future success is in jeopardy. (Contact Patty Wills, (916) 971-7037.)

Community referral experts such as SARB officers (often the welfare and attendance officers of the school districts) are familiar with community agencies to which students or parents can be referred. They preside over the 20- to 30-minute hearings that parents are required to attend after their child's third truancy. The SARB officer begins a hearing by explaining the importance of school attendance and the fact that the next step is the parent's arrest for failure to comply with the law. They then ask children and their parents to explain the reasons for excessive absences. When parents explain their difficulties, SARB officers begin giving

Eighty percent of all California Youth Authority inmates admit that they began their delinquency by cutting school. "We don't consider truancy a status offense anymore. It is a 'gateway offense' that leads to future criminal behaviors."

Sacramento County Deputy District Attorney

referrals. Among the many resources they keep information on are:

- School personnel and services such as conflict management, psychologists, counselors, school nurses, tutors, health clinics, parenting classes, and outreach workers for the homeless
- Community service agencies and their specific areas of service, such as grief counseling, charitable interventions (utilities, donations of food and clothes), parenting classes such as ToughLove (there are more than 45 ToughLove groups throughout California), Medi-Cal, Social Security, busing, food stamps, single-parent groups, and counseling
- Health referrals to agencies that offer techniques for dealing with head lice and clinics that offer low-income services
- Legal services by lawyers and consumer credit counselors
- Crisis intervention by child protective services for victims of crime and sexual or physical abuse; agencies that offer shelter, counseling, mental health services, and suicide or other hot lines
- Big Brother or Big Sister–type youth organizations, including mentoring

referrals, boys and girls clubs, youth centers, and after-school programs

In Modesto City Schools, SARB hearings for secondary students have been held at the probation office. The strategy has been effective in giving more weight to the process. In addition, participation in driver education has been delayed as a result of truancy, and work permits have not been issued—or they have been revoked—for students with truancy problems. The district makes use of Saturday School for students with attendance problems. These combined strategies have resulted in revenue savings for the year. (Contact the Director, Child Welfare and Attendance, (209) 576-4003.)

In the Sacramento City Unified School District, some SARB hearings are held at local police stations. There, community service agencies such as La Familia join school officials and police and probation staff to reinforce the importance of school attendance. (Contact Rob Gerig, (916) 264-3290.)

SARB's difficulties include operating for approximately ten years on a voluntary, nonfunded basis. Due to a lack of funding, SARBs are no longer available in every school district. However, many counties will now use the SARB mediation as the determination of truancy for the purposes of penalties under the CalWORKS (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) program. In the event that SARBs become the key to welfare reforms related to truancy, they will need additional funding.

Another stumbling block in some communities is the reluctance of the district attorneys' offices to deal with truancy. In some cases, they claim that they are overworked dealing with hard crime and don't have time for status offenses. A closer look at the cost savings to taxpayers (as detailed above) and a discussion of truancy as a gateway to crime might help to gain their participation.

Finally, there is no statewide consistency in truancy enforcement. In some districts, SARBs deal only with elementary students, assuming that high school students make their own choices not to attend and that mediation with parents will not be effective. Some districts actively pursue large numbers of truants; other districts hear only the most extreme cases. One consistent comment from SARB officials is that they do not have the staff or time to intervene in all of the district's attendance problems.

Chapter Four

Legal Intervention Tools

Law enforcement and truant officers play an integral role in truancy prevention—both in picking up truants and in returning them to school. They are also important partners in helping parents to assume responsibility for their children's education.

In 1995, Senator Teresa Hughes sponsored Senate Bill 102 to amend *Education Code* Section 48260 and redefine truancy. The law declares that pupils be considered truant if they are absent without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent on three occasions in one school year for more than any 30-minute period during the school day, or any combination of these, without a valid excuse.

According to *Education Code* Section 48262, a student is deemed to be a habitual truant if he or she has been reported truant three or more times in a school year. However, no student may be deemed a habitual truant unless "an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the pupil and a parent or guardian of the pupil, and has offered to convene a student attendance review board conference or a truancy mediation conference. . . ."

Truancy is also defined by Section 601 of the *Welfare and Institutions Code*. This section describes a truant as a minor who has four or more truancies within one school year. It allows any peace officer or school administrator to issue a notice to appear in juvenile court to any minor who fits this description.

Once students have been deemed to be habitual truants, legal strategies are needed to assist them and their families in addressing attendance problems so they can achieve academic and social success. When a district or school has formed a vital partnership with local law enforcement, the transition from intervention steps to legal tools will be relatively smooth.

Law enforcement and truant officers play an integral role in truancy prevention—both in picking up truants and in returning them to school. They are also important partners in helping parents to assume responsibility for their children's education.

CalWORKS Program

The 1996 welfare reform bill, AB 1542, Chapter 270, Statutes of 1997, requires all recipients of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families grant to make sure their children are in school.

According to provisions in CalWORKS, families will lose the adult portion of their grants if their children under the age of sixteen fail to attend school regularly. Likewise, if sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds drop out of school, families lose the teen portions of their grants. They can regain their grants if teens reenroll in school or enter a vocational program. The attendance requirement was opposed by many educators who argued that it is unfair for children from families on welfare to face more stringent penalties for truancy than children from other families. Those who support CalWORKS believe the new law provides the teeth to show parents the importance of school attendance.

CalWORKS is being implemented on a county-by-county basis— and is often used in a case-by-case approach as well. Although counties have the authority to determine how CalWORKS will be implemented, they will need to work closely with local schools to track attendance patterns and develop procedures that complement existing school efforts. In the past, schools typically worked with the child welfare services division within counties; they will now need to work with each county's eligibility division—which might also be called CalWORKS, or the Welfare to Work Division.

As local schools and counties work together to implement CalWORKS, many outstanding issues need to be resolved (see Appendix D for a sample county-district agreement). To resolve these issues, each county must:

- Define what the law means by regular school attendance.
- Determine what constitutes acceptable verification and determination of good cause for lack of school attendance.
- Determine whether or not suspensions and expulsions affect benefits.
- Determine how long after aid is granted that verification will be required.
- Determine how long the penalty will last.
- Determine what the caregiver and student must do to prove that regular school attendance requirements have been met and benefits can be reinstated. For example, is filing an affidavit of home schooling an appropriate return to schooling?

Even though SARB mediation determines that certain children are truant, many other students will "slip through the cracks" because (a) many school districts do not maintain a fully-functioning SARB; (b) SARB hearings are generally held after the sixth truancy—by the time a student's hearing date arrives, many more truancies may have occurred, thus seriously interfering with the student's learning; and (c) most districts have only the time and resources to hear the worst cases; the situations of many other truants may not be addressed because of system overloads.

Even if SARB mediation is the standard, when will sanctions begin? After the SARB contract is signed? Only if the caregiver fails to comply with the contract? After a warning and still no compliance?

Many counties have decided to use SARB mediation as the standard for determining how benefits will be affected. However, some counties bypass SARB and use a set number of unexcused absences to trigger welfare penalties. Each month the schools provide the county welfare agency with an electronic tape containing all attendance data. It is then up to the welfare department to see attendance problem patterns (such as chronic Monday and Friday absences), send warning letters, and follow up with benefit reductions.

Some school administrators notice a slight improvement in attendance when notices have been received by welfare families. However, the Welfare-to-Work section of the legislation will be a priority in terms of implementation for most counties, putting the attendance issues in second place for time and energies expended. It may be several years before all of the procedures are in place.

Suspension and Expulsion Options

In 1995, the Legislature enacted a change in the length of expulsion orders, readmission requirements, and placements. The expanded requirements respond to federal requirements, address student needs, and/or satisfy safety factors (AB 922, Chapter 974, Statutes of 1995; and SB 966, Chapter 972, Statutes of 1995).

Current law authorizes governing boards to expel students for three categories of offenses: (1) less serious offenses for which the governing board may expel a student; (2) more serious offenses for which the principal or superintendent must recommend expulsion unless mitigating circumstances exist and the governing board chooses not to expel the student; and (3) mandatory offenses for which the principal or superintendent must immediately suspend and recommend expulsion and the governing board must expel the student if the offense has occurred. Pursuant to 20 *USC* 8921, the Gun-Free Schools Act, school districts, upon ordering an expulsion, shall set a date for consideration of readmission one year from the date the expulsion occurred, except that the board may set an earlier date on a case-by-case basis.

Some of the mandatory expulsion requirements, such as the Gun-Free Schools Act, would result in students missing school altogether if it were not for other provisions in the *Education Code* that require and authorize alternative educational placements. These provisions include:

***Education Code* Section 48926** requires county superintendents of schools, in cooperation with school districts in the county, to develop a plan for providing educational services to all expelled students in the county.

***Education Code* Section 48900.6** allows governing boards to require students to perform community service in lieu of suspension or expulsion, except in cases where expulsion is required by law.

***Education Code* Section 48917** permits governing boards to adopt policies that must be uniformly applicable to all their expelled students. Under the policies, boards may suspend their order to expel a student, and, as a condition of the suspension, they may assign the student to "a school, class, or program that is deemed appropriate for the rehabilitation of the student." Students whose expulsion orders have been suspended are deemed to be on probationary status.

***Education Code* Sections 48660–48664** allow districts to establish community day schools for expelled students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The schools can also serve students who are probation-referred.

An excellent resource for information on suspensions and expulsions is available from the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools: *Guidelines on Discipline, Due Process, Suspension and Expulsion* (1996).

Parental Involvement—Level 3

Education Code Section 48260.5 states that once the district designates a pupil as truant, it must notify the parents or guardian by first-class mail (or other reasonable means) that the pupil is truant. The notice must advise the parents or guardians:

- That they are obligated to compel the child to attend school
- That they may be found guilty of an infraction and be subject to criminal prosecution if they fail to fulfill that obligation
- That there are alternate educational programs available in the district
- That they have a right to meet with the appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to their student's attendance problems
- That their child may also be subject to prosecution
- That their child's driving privileges may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay under *Vehicle Code* Section 13202.7

The district may also request that the parents or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day. (If the attendance letter involves a special education student, an IEP (individualized education plan) must be developed to rule out the disability as being a reason for the attendance problem prior to a SARB hearing.)

In the City of San Diego, when parents fail to comply with a SARB contract, the parents are prosecuted under *Education Code* Section 48293. Although prosecution is viewed as a last resort, school attendance has improved as a result of its use. Another parenting program, called the San Diego Parenting Project, is designed to require reluctant parents who are in violation of *Penal Code* Section 272 (contributing to the delinquency of a minor) to participate in a parent education program. The focus of the program is to provide education about how parents can control their children and avoid involvement in gangs, drugs, tagging, and other delinquent behaviors. (Contact San Diego city attorney's office, (619) 236-6220.)

The Truancy Abatement Burglary Suppression program (TABS) is a joint effort of police, school districts, and the district attorney's office in San Jose. The program assigns police officers to work directly with the elementary districts. Each school is asked to submit the names and attendance records of each habitual truant to the TABS coordinator. The program focuses on parents of the truants in the first through sixth grades and requires them to meet with the TABS coordinator. Meetings occur in the police department to emphasize the seriousness of truancy. Parents are asked to identify the causes of the problems and to help define solutions. The coordinator informs them about the law and the consequences of noncompliance. If necessary, families

in crisis are referred to other agencies for assistance. (Contact Lt. Christopher Moore, San Jose Police Department, (408) 277-4631.)

The Truancy Reduction Program (TRP) is funded through the Kern County Office of Education by a consortium of independent school districts. Two deputy probation officers from the Kern County Probation Department are assigned as the primary service providers. The officers intervene after all other intervention steps have been completed and a TRP form has been submitted. Every student referred to the program is tracked for daily attendance by the school making the referral. As a part of the officer's caseload, the student receives regularly scheduled home and/or school-site visits from the assigned probation officer. In each case, the officer meets one-on-one with the student and parent. If after four contacts the student is still not attending school regularly, the TRP officer documents the contacts and refers the student back to the school for possible referral to the district attorney's office. In addition, a complaint is filed with the district attorney's office, charging parents with violation of *Penal Code* Section 272 (willful child neglect) when they have failed to send their children to school. (Contact Daryl Thiesen, Coordinator, (805) 636-4757.)

Community Service

Research released in 1995 by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention shows that youth who have bonded with peers and adults who have healthy beliefs and high standards relinquish behavior that would threaten that bond. To provide that opportunity, *Education Code* Section 48900.6 states that students may be assigned to community service in lieu of suspension or expulsion (except when expulsion is required by law). Section 601 of the *Welfare and Institutions Code* stipulates that habitual truants who have failed to comply with conditions of SARB fall under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, which may adjudge such a pupil to be a ward of the court. Once the pupil is adjudged to be a ward of the court, he or she can be required to "perform court-approved community service for a public or private nonprofit agency for at least 20 hours but not more that 40 hours within a 90-day period, during a time other than school hours or hours of employment." If a student fails to complete the assigned community service, the probation officer must report that failure to the court.

The Peer Court process trains students to work with judges, attorneys, and the district attorney to try their truant peers and come up with punishments for suspendable offenses.

The Peer Court staff in Placer County has developed an effective system for referring students to community service as a condition of their court sentencing. The peer court process trains students to work with judges, attorneys, and the district attorney to try their truant peers and come up with punishments for suspendable offenses. Peer Court helps students learn about the juvenile justice system and personal responsibility. Offenders who are tried in Peer

Court are sentenced by a jury of their peers, and sentencing often involves community service.

The philosophy of the Placer County Peer Court staff is that community service allows the school and juvenile court systems to provide students with something positive—a turnaround point in their lives. To achieve this goal, the staff follows a process they have refined over a period of years.

To create the program, Placer County Office of Education staff enlisted the participation of a variety of community agencies and individuals. They then categorized them by location and type of service. An agency binder is maintained and updated with new sources of community service placements as they are identified. Currently, two Americorps Ambassadors are assigned to assist in finding service opportunity partners.

Students required to perform community service are interviewed by telephone and asked about the types of services that most appeal to them and whether there are problems that would keep them from performing the service, e.g., lack of transportation.

Before being assigned, students attend an orientation meeting. One meeting is held each week for one to seven students. During the orientation, students actively participate in designing their own community service assignment. For example, it was discovered that a student loved to fish. She was invited to work with a local fish hatchery, which created a position for her. Similarly, students who report that they love animals are paired with veterinarians or animal shelters.

Because this program is part of a larger intervention that includes probation, it is difficult to single out the actual effect of community service alone. However, the Placer County Office of Education and court staff report that this strategy has been very effective in steering students toward successful behaviors, and that many of them report that they believe they were meant to end up at the community service agency because it changed their lives.

The Placer County Peer Court is funded through a CalServe grant, with additional funding from the following sources: categorical program funds from schools that use their services; small grants for specific projects; and money from the county bar association. The Peer Court is a cooperative venture of the Placer County Office of Education, the Placer County Superior Court, the district attorney, the public defender, the probation department, and local high school districts. (Contact Placer County Peer Court, (530) 663-9227. Other student court programs operate at Atascadero High School, Banning High School, Franklin High School, Oxnard High School, and Pinon Mesa Middle School.)

Citation

As a result of 1995 amendments to the *Welfare and Institutions Code*, the *Education Code*, and the *Vehicle Code*, cities and counties can enact antitruancy laws and daytime loitering ordinances.

The new curfew law adds Section 625.5 to the *Welfare and Institutions Code*. It authorizes cities that have enacted an ordinance regarding curfews for minors to collect a fee for the actual costs of detention and transportation. The bill requires a warning citation to be issued that explains the consequences of a second violation.

Vehicle Code

Section 13202.7 of the *Vehicle Code* states that a pupil who has attended a SARB program, a probation department program, or a truancy mediation and is again truant is subject to suspension or revocation of all his or her driving privileges and must surrender her or his license. If the minor is not yet driving, his or her right to do so may be postponed for one year. For additional time the minor is found to be truant, the court can add another year of waiting time for driving privileges. The suspension shall be in addition to any other penalty imposed on the minor. Other penalties can include a fine of not more than $100, for which the parents or guardian are jointly liable, and/or a summons to attend a court-approved truancy program.

Daytime Curfew

The city of Millbrae has established a daytime curfew similar to those in other cities, including Los Angeles, Fontana, Folsom, Rialto, and Adelanto. The daytime curfew/loitering ordinances allow police to cite truants and refer them to traffic court, where they may also face revocation of driving privileges. In cases of students with excessive citations, parents are fined from $250 to $1,000 and mandated to perform 20 to 120 hours of community service. Due to year-round school scheduling, districts have created identification cards for all students to identify the different track dates. (Contact Millbrae Police Department, (650) 259-2300.)

Cities that have enacted the curfew ordinance have seen dramatic improvement in attendance when they have used a "carrot and stick" approach to the fines. Using the results of drug addiction studies and other behavioral studies that show the effectiveness of negative consequences, many cities are using a small stick and promising a carrot. They demand only a small percentage of the fine to be paid at the time of the citation. The hearing officer warns the student that the full amount will be due if her or his attendance does not improve within a three- or six-month period. The hearing officer sets a return date, at which time the student is accountable for either the attendance or the fine.

Cities that have enacted the curfew ordinance have seen dramatic improvement in attendance when they have used a "carrot and stick" approach to the fines.

For example, the city of Monrovia created an ordinance that allowed for the arrest of truants and streamlined the time-consuming process by allowing police officers to issue citations to violators to appear in the juvenile traffic court. This ordinance also provided for financial relief to the city for the detention and supervision of juvenile violators. In the first 15 months of the program, Monrovia documented a 57 percent decline in the high school dropout rate while increasing attendance to 97.7 percent. This improvement produced approximately $10,000 more revenue for 1995 than for the same period in 1994. (Contact Monrovia Police Department, (626) 359-1152.)

The City of Folsom has assigned one officer to issue citations. This assignment, the officer says, allows him to get to know the repeat truants and also to be aware of how many times truants have been picked up by other officers. Whenever his fellow officers pick up a truant, they call him to complete the citation process. Based on the circumstances of the case, this officer determines which of three consequences to impose: a fine (if he determines that the parents are responsible), community service (if he determines that the student is responsible), or referral to juvenile court for loss of driver's license (if neither student nor parent seems concerned about the truancy). According to Officer Dustin Laswell, "The word seems to be spreading among teens. They don't want to risk the consequences of truancy." (Contact Det. Dustin Laswell, (916) 355-8380. See Appendix F for a copy of the Folsom city ordinance.)

In Kern County, the Healthy Start Collaborative helped pass a curfew for minors ordinance that is similar to a daytime curfew ordinance, but only reinforces truancy laws already on the books. Enforced by the Kern County Sheriff's Department, truants are apprehended and can receive one of three penalties:

- A $250 fine (if officials determine that the parent is responsible)
- Twenty hours of community service
- Removal of the minor's driver's license (if officials determine the juvenile is responsible for the truancy) (Contact the Office of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, prevention programs coordinator, (805) 636-4757.)

The daylight curfew ordinance helps truants to feel the immediate effects of their behavior and its consequence—having to improve attendance or pay a heavier fine.

Juvenile Court

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 601 states that a minor who has "four or more truancies within one school year as defined in Section 48260 of the *Education Code*, or if a school attendance review board or probation officer determines that the available public and private services are insufficient or inappropriate to correct the habitual truancy of the minor . . . the minor is then within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, which may adjudge the minor to be a ward of the court." The process is often slow, and the legal consequences are unclear. In contrast, the daytime curfew ordinances and traffic court hearings have several advantages over juvenile court. The daylight curfew ordinance helps truants to feel the immediate effects of their behavior and its consequence—having to improve attendance or pay a heavier fine. The close connection between behavior and consequence provides more noticeable results.

Operation Stay in School

Now a statewide program, Operation Stay in School started in Fresno and is

a truancy-reduction program operated under the cooperative sponsorship of a school district and local law enforcement agency. Its main goal is to enforce compulsory school attendance laws. On stipulated days, law enforcement officers locate unsupervised school-age students without valid reasons for being out of school. When law enforcement officers apprehend a truant student, the student is taken to a reception center. Patrol officers issue citations to students, who are then returned to school to meet with their parents and vice principal. Two citation are issued without penalty; the third citation results in referral to appropriate support services.

It is important for the school and the law enforcement team to jointly plan the following when implementing Operation Stay in School:

- Location and staffing of reception center
- Parent awareness campaign (newsletters, PTA announcements, newspaper articles)
- Procedures for returning students quickly to the regular program
- Methods (passes, ID badges, etc.) to authorize students to be off campus for legitimate reasons (Contact Bob Pankratz, Student Services Office, Fresno Unified School District, (559) 457-2540.)

Work Experience

The Alternatives to Expulsion Program targets students who have been arrested at a school in the Long Beach Unified School District. Instead of being sent to a California Youth Authority (CYA) camp, juvenile offenders have a new alternative: jobs and mandatory continuation high school classes. The program has the full cooperation of juvenile court judges, the police and probation departments, the school district and county office of education, and the city. Both the student and parents must agree to the alternative to incarceration and the terms of the agreement. Students are then enrolled in alternative education classes and assigned to work four hours per day in a job funded by the Job Training Partnership Act. Failure to show up for school and work results in the student's being remanded to CYA. (Contact Rick Tebbano, Administrative Assistant, (562) 997-8000.)

If you go back far enough, a failed school experience is the single, most shared factor for more than 80 percent of adult offenders and delinquent minors.

Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Tom Higgins

District Attorney Mediation

"If you go back far enough, a failed school experience is the single, most shared factor for more than 80 percent of adult offenders and delinquent minors," according to Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Tom Higgins. As a result, the DA's office has made a commitment to fighting truancy at the earliest possible stage rather than later, when the situation has worsened. ACT (Abolish Chronic Truancy) is a program that targets students, and their parents, in kindergarten through sixth grade. Schools refer students with attendance problems to the DA's office, which sends the parents a letter requesting a

special meeting. The letter gets people's attention and they come to the meeting. After the meeting, the DA's office works with the school staff to track the attendance records of the students in the program. If attendance problems continue, the at-risk students and their parents will be given special attention by a school attendance review team (SART). This team will analyze the student's problems and offer suggestions for help. The central message is the parents' obligation to send their children to school. If the referral to a SART does not produce satisfactory school attendance, it is then forwarded to the SARB. If attendance problems continue, SARB will refer the case to the district attorney for an in-office hearing. The office hearing represents a final attempt to resolve the attendance problem informally and without prosecution. If the hearing does not result in regular school attendance, the district attorney will prosecute the student, the parents, or both.

In 1995, there were 9,769 families in Los Angeles County who received letters from the district attorney. Students in 8,918 of these families improved their attendance after the initial letter, students in 837 improved after SART action, and students in 39 improved after involvement by SARB. Only two cases were filed. The program's funding comes from a grant from the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the DA's budget, the county supervisors' discretionary fund, and the school district. (Contact Tom Higgins, (909) 620-3330.)

The City of Los Angeles also adopted a truancy loitering ordinance that allows for fines, community service, or possible revocation of driving privileges. School identification cards were issued to all students in the year-round schools to identify the different track dates. (Contact Attendance and Administrative Services, Los Angeles County Office of Education, (562) 922-6301.)

Alternative Education Placements

Traditional schools don't work for all students. Their large size, many students' anonymity, and lack of a single teacher who serves as a surrogate parent—and other factors—spell failure for many students.

The Mather Youth Academy, developed and operated by the Folsom-Cordova Unified School District, is a unique blend of traditional educational goals and a military-style disciplinary structure. Student cadets are placed in the program under the criteria established by *Education Code* Section 48664 for students who are expelled or placed there by the school attendance review board. Student cadets, both male and female, are required to wear uniforms, be free of facial adornments, be in the seventh grade or above, and attend a minimum six-hour-day direct instructional program.

The intense disciplinary structure reinforced by the military personnel has greatly increased the personal focus of each student cadet. The long-term goal of the program, however, is to return the student cadets to a traditional, opportunity, or alternative program and eventually graduation.

Incoming student cadets are evaluated and assigned a prescribed educational and disciplinary plan. The plans are designed to encourage academic growth and provide a strong sense of personal self-worth and focus. Each

class platoon of 25 student cadets is staffed by a teacher and a military instructor. Student cadets whose academic profiles indicate that they will not be eligible for graduation are provided assistance and computerized programming to pass the General Education Development Test (GED).

The student cadets are responsible for being on time and for preparing themselves for all activities assigned for the day. To reinforce the concept of self-direction, the academy operates without a bell schedule. Additional responsibilities for students include, but are not limited to, completing academic class assignments, ironing their uniforms, polishing their shoes or boots, cleaning their premises and restrooms, raising and lowering the flag each morning and at the end of the day, and resolving personal dilemmas for themselves and others. New cadets are provided a student cadet trainer who has earned Mather Youth Academy rank by demonstrated achievement of the program's goals.

Parents of the students are expected to attend open Mather Youth Academy forums every six weeks to help guide and complete the mission of the program. Although parents are responsible for providing their student's uniform, military personnel often donate uniforms for families who are unable to afford them.

More than 500 guests visited the program in its first four months, including officers from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff command in Washington, D.C. Accolades from these observers confirm the tremendous growth of the student cadets and success of the staff in implementing the pilot program.

"We make this a positive place where kids can start fresh," says the site director. "This is a place where kids earn their education credits and regain self-respect. They learn to be leaders and to have self-control." The academy program is structured to teach "self-solving" skills for troubles that plague students in traditional classes. As one cadet who was referred there for assault said, "Here I'm learning to deal with my anger, not to just let it out." Because of its success, the Mather Youth Academy has generated hundreds of requests for enrollment from parents and students, both in and out of the district's boundaries.

The academy program is structured to teach "self-solving" skills for troubles that plague students in traditional classes.

Although *Education Code* Section 48664 has provided some incentive monies, the costs for transportation, base-staffing, clerical assistance, supplies, and facilities needed to run a six-hour program for students who by law may not be served on a comprehensive campus (*Education Code* Section 48660 et seq.) far exceed available funds. Community partnerships help to make up some of the shortfall. Businesses have donated computers, and districts that send students to Mather on interdistrict transfers have helped with more than just a.d.a. credits. For example, Washington Unified School District sends six students to the academy and in exchange provides computers, a classroom aide, and a bus driver.

The academy contracts with the National Guard for military instructors who guide students through disciplinary and leadership skill-building classes.

Most students can expect to spend at least two-thirds of a year in the program—the semester in which they are expelled from their regular schools and the semester following. The academy began in November 1997 and intends to track cadets' progress for three years after they have returned to regular school settings to ensure that they are able to transfer their new skills. (Contact Jim Thompson, Director, Mather Youth Academy, (916) 228-1320.)

A different type of alternative program is available to students in Inglewood. The goal of Project HOPE (Helping Others Pursue Education) is to educate high-risk students in a small, success-oriented, academic atmosphere. Approximately 290 fifth-to-twelfth-grade students are served at the project's facilities. They receive daily schooling after being picked up in truancy sweeps or after being suspended or expelled. A collaborative team from county offices of education, social services providers, probation departments, and juvenile courts provide resources to the project. Since its inception, police records show reduced burglary rates in the city of Inglewood. (Contact Joseph Steele, (310) 419-2653.)

Conclusion

The success of the strategies, programs, and initiatives listed in this document depends on the close collaboration of school districts, parents, the communities, probation departments, police departments, district attorneys' offices, and county social service agencies. Although prevention has been the emphasis for improving school attendance in communities, legal sanctions are, unfortunately, sometimes necessary and have added to the success of attendance improvement programs. When a comprehensive program is in place, school attendance improves, daytime burglaries decline, and dropout rates decrease.

Students, parents, and communities all benefit when students stay in school. According to statistics, about 50 percent of prison inmates are high school dropouts. High school dropouts cost society well over $240 billion in lost wages and taxes over their lifetimes. Many more billions of dollars are spent each year on crime investigation and control, insurance claims for burglaries and vandalism, welfare and social services, health care, job training, jails, and prisons. Actions taken to reduce truancy are inexpensive by comparison, and the return on the investment for keeping students in school is well worth the effort.

Appendix A

Resources on School Attendance

Publications

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Web Site Listings

Boys and Girls Clubs of America **http://www.bgca.org/**

California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance
http://www.cascwa.org/

California Department of Education **http://www.cde.ca.gov**

California School Counselor Association **http://www.serve.com/CSCA/**

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services **http://www.uncg.edu/~ericcas2/**

Family and Community Partnerships
http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/lsp/famhome.htm

Healthy Start **http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/lsp/hshome.htm**

Peer Helping Programs

- California Association of Peer Programs **http://www.pomona.K12.ca.us/~capp/**
- Conflict Research Consortium **http://www.Colorado.EDU/conflict/**
- More on Peer Helping **http://www.islandnet.com/~rcarr/helping.html**

Safe Schools and Violence Prevention

- California Attorney General's Office, Crime and Violence Prevention Center **http:// caag.state.ca.us/cvpc**

California Department of Education, Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office
http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/safetyhome.html

Fontana Unified School District (School and Law Enforcement Resources)
http://www.fontana.k12.ca.us/burton/

Office of Juvenile Justice Department Planning **http://www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm**

Office of Juvenile Justice (Statistics) **http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/fs-9529.txt**

PAVNET (Partnerships Against Violence Network) Online (A "virtual library" of information about violence and youth-at-risk from seven different federal agencies)
http://www.pavnet.org

ToughLove Parent Support Groups

ToughLove International Office, telephone (800) 333-1069
http://www.toughlove.org

U.S. Department of Education **http://www.ed.gov/index.html**

Organizations

Boys and Girls Clubs of America
National Headquarters
1230 W. Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
(404) 815-5700, email:
swilder@bgca.org

California Association of Directors of Activities
J. Peter Cahn, Coordinator of Special Projects
1015 Eunice Court
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 662-0251, Ext. 4127; FAX: (530) 668-9236; email: **Jca9@aol.com**

California Association of Peer Programs
Kathy Grant, Executive Director
Box 50725
Pasadena, CA 91115-0678
(626) 564-0099

California Consortium for Independent Study (CCIS)
Dave Bishop, President
1685 David E. Cook Way
Clovis, CA 93611
(559) 297-4000, Ext. 2236

California Continuation Education Association (CCEA)
Robert Werner, President
P.O. Box 1029
Pollock Pines, CA 95726
(530) 644-1895

Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
Academy for Educational Development
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 884-8267

Community Matters (Peer helper training for faculty, staff, and students)
P.O. Box 14816
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
(707) 823-6159

Healthy Kids Resource Center
313 W. Winton Avenue, Room 180
Hayward, CA 94544
(510) 670-4588 or FAX: (510) 670-4582

Learning Alternatives Resource Network (LeARN)
Susan Condrey, President
c/o Orange County Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive, P.O. Box 9050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628
(714) 966-4325

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth
P.O. Box 13505
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505
(301) 608-8098; FAX: (301) 608-8721

National Dropout Prevention Center
Clemson University
209 Martin Street
Clemson, SC 29634
(864) 656-2599

National Peer Helpers Association
P.O. Box 2684
Greenville, NC 27836
(252) 522-3959

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard
Suite 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362
(805) 373-9977

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Clearinghouse
(800) 638-8736

Pacific Service Center
4201 Long Beach Boulevard
Suite 101
Long Beach, CA 90807
(562) 981-8855

Peer Assisted Learning in Orange County Schools
Vicki Walker, PAL Coordinator
Orange County Department of Education
vicki walker@ ocde.k12.ca.us
(714) 966-4458

Statewide Victims Resource Center
(800) VICTIMS (842-8467)

California Victims of Crime Program
(800) 777-9229

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination
Programs for the Improvement of Practice
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208
(202) 219-2164

Contacts for Effective Programs

Abolish Chronic Truancy (A.C.T.)
Contact: Thomas P. Higgins
Head Deputy District Attorney
Juvenile Division
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office
300 South Park Avenue, Suite 620
Pomona, CA 91766
(909) 620-3330, FAX: (909) 629-3684

Communtywide Partnerships for After-School Programs
(Gang awareness, boys and girls clubs, joint use agreements)
Neil Smart, Director of Community Services
Healdsburg, CA 95448
nsmart@ci.healdsburg.ca.us
(707) 431-3302

Dropout Prevention/Recovery Program
Los Angeles Unified School District
Pupil Services and Attendance
2151 North Soto Street
Los Angeles, CA 90032
(213) 625-4170 or (213) 625- 6000

Project HOPE
Hillcrest School
441 West Hillcrest Boulevard
Inglewood, CA 90301
Joseph Steele
(310) 419-2653

Resiliency Associates
Bonnie Benard
1238 Josephine
Berkeley, CA
(510) 528-4344

Sacramento City Truancy Reduction and Dropout Prevention Program
(Student Outreach Worker Manual)
Sacramento City Unified School District
520 Capitol Mall, 6th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: Rob Gerig, (916) 264-3290

Stop, Cite, and Return Program
Contact: Hays Hunter, Truancy Specialist, or Kathy VanderVennet, Diversion Counselor
Dept. of Public Safety, Youth and Family Services Division
500 City Hall Drive
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
(707) 584-2699

TESA—Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement
Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 922-6665

The San Diego Parenting Project
San Diego City Attorney's Office

Truancy Abatement Burglary Suppression
Crime Prevention Unit
San Jose Police Department
San Jose, CA 95110
(408) 277-5263

Truancy and Curfew Study
Detective James Pappas, Millbrae Police Department
Information collected and analyzed about curfew/truancy programs throughout California
Millbrae Police Department
621 Magnolia Avenue
Millbrae, CA 94030
(650) 259-2300

Truancy Reduction Program
Contact: Daryl Thiesen
Prevention Programs Coordinator
Kern County Superintendent of Schools
1300 17th St.-City Centre
Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533
(805) 636-4757; FAX: (805) 636-4135
email: dathiesen@fc.kern.org

Research Centers

Reductions in class size; continuous progress instructional strategies; cooperative learning; tutoring; computer-assisted instruction; diagnostic and prescriptive pullout programs; and ability grouping

Robert Slavin
Johns Hopkins University
Center of Social Organization of Schools
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Classroom behavior management techniques

Sheppard G. Kellam
Prevention Research Center
Department of Mental Hygiene
School of Hygiene and Public Health
Johns Hopkins University
Mason F. Lord Building, Suite 500
4940 Eastern Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21224

Cooperative learning, classroom behavior management techniques, and parent training

J. David Hawkins
Social Development Research Group
School of Social Work
University of Washington
146 North Canal Street, Suite 211
Seattle, WA 98103

Behavioral monitoring and reinforcement of attendance, academic progress, and school behavior

Brenna Bry
Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology
Rutgers University
Piscataway, NJ 08855-0819

Parent training

Gerald Patterson
Oregon Social Learning Center
207 East 5th Ave., Suite 202
Eugene, OR 97401

Appendix B

California Code Sections Relating to School Attendance

Education Code	
1981 et seq.	County community schools (for students in grades K–6)
35291	School discipline/rules
48200 et seq.	Compulsory education
48209 et seq.	Pupil attendance alternatives
4 8210 et seq.	Persons excluded
48220 et seq.	Pupils exempt
48240 et seq.	Supervisors of attendance
48260 et seq.	Truants
48260.5	Notification of parent or guardian regarding truancy
48260.5(h)	Recommendation that parent accompany the pupil to school and attend classes for one day
48262	Definition of habitual truancy
48263	Referral to SARB
48264.5	Penalties for truant minors
48268	Order to parent to deliver child to school for remainder of school term
48290 et seq.	School board complaints against parents for violations
48291	Criminal complaint against parent
48292	Filing and prosecuting complaint by attendance supervisor
48293	Penalties for parent violations regarding attendance
48320 et seq.	School attendance review boards (SARBs)
48340 et seq.	Improvement of pupil attendance (including school board policies)
48400 et seq.	Compulsory continuation education
48410 et seq.	Pupils exempt (from continuation classes)
48430 et seq.	Continuation classes

48450 et seq.	Violations (duties of parent re continuation classes)
48600 et seq.	Attendance at adjustment schools
48630 et seq.	Opportunity schools
48660 et seq.	District community day schools
48661	If county superintendent certifies that no alternative sites are available to serve students who are expelled for serious or mandatory offenses, students can be served by a community day school program at a comprehensive school site.
48662	Board to adopt policies that provide procedures for the *involuntary transfer* of students to a community day school.
48663(a)	Minimum day for community day school: six hours
48664	Additional funding of $1,500 per unit of community day school a.d.a.
48800 et seq.	Attendance at community colleges
48900 et seq.	Suspensions and expulsions—causes for and exceptions
48900.1(a)	Policy for parents to attend class of suspended student
48900.2	Suspension or expulsion for sexual harassment
48900.3	Suspension or expulsion (grades 4–12) for hate violence
48900.4	Suspension or expulsion (grades 4–12) for disruptive harassment, threats, and intimidation
48900.5	Suspension
48900.6	Community service in lieu of suspension or expulsion (except when expulsion is required by law)
48900.7	Suspension or expulsion for terroristic threats
48902	Reporting crime to law enforcement
48903	Limit of suspensions—total number of days
48904	Liability of parent
48904.3	Withholding of grades
48906	Notification for parents; release of child to peace officer
48910	Suspension from class by teacher
48911	Suspension by principal
48911.1	Supervised suspension classrooms
48912	Suspension by school board
48914	Policy for meeting with parents of suspended students
48915 et seq.	Serious or mandatory suspensions
48915(b) & (d)	Students expelled for serious or mandatory expulsion offenses cannot be served in programs held on a comprehensive school site.

48916 et seq.	Expulsion orders, length of expulsions, readmission hearings, and rehabilitation plans
48916(d)	Readmission (or alternative placement) of expelled student
48916.1	Educational program required during expulsion
48916.1(d)	Programs for expelled K–6 students to be separate from programs for expelled students in grades 7–12
48916.1(f)	School district and county office reporting requirements relating to expelled students
48917	Attendance at rehabilitation class in lieu of suspension
48918	Expulsion hearings and procedures
48919 et seq.	Expulsion appeals
48925	Definitions
48926 et seq.	County superintendent's plan for providing educational services to all expelled students in the county
48934	Fines to be collected by city or county and used to support SARB
48980	Notifications to parents
48987	Notifications to parents
49079	Informing teacher of pupil behavior
49602	Confidential personal information
Penal Code	
243	Notifications to parents
245	Assault with a deadly weapon
272	Contributing to the delinquency of a minor
422.6, 7	Hate crime
626.9	Gun-Free Zone Act
Welfare and Institutions Code	
256	Authorization for traffic hearing officer to hear and dispose of any violation of the *Vehicle Code*, any provision of an ordinance of a city, county, or local agency of nontraffic offenses regarding loitering, curfew, and so forth
601(a)	Children who become wards of the court
601(b)	Definition of truancy as a condition for becoming a ward of the juvenile court
601.1	Out of control, truancy

601.2	Referral to SARB
602	Minors under age 18, when convicted of violating the law, may become wards of the court.
625.5	Authorization for cities and counties to enact curfew ordinances and collect a fee for costs of transportation and detention of minors; requirement for a warning citation
828.3	Release of information from police
Vehicle Code	
12507(b)1	Documentation of school attendance for persons age 16–18 prior to being awarded driver's license
13202.7	Suspension or delay of licenses for one year for habitual truants; or via court order DMV to delay issuing the privilege to drive for one year after the person becomes legally eligible to drive

Appendix C

Sample First, Second, and Third Truancy Letters Prior to SARB

Elder Creek Elementary School
7934 Lemon Hill Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824
(916) 382-5970

Date:_____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that your child, _____, in the _____ grade is/may be considered a truant:

❑ **Dates of Truancies:**

Unexcused/Unverified/Truant: _____

_____

Tardies (30+ mins.): _____

Education Code Section 48260—Any pupil subject to full time education who is absent from school without valid excuse more than three days or *tardy in excess of 30 minutes* on each of more than three days in one school year is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor of the superintendent of the school district.

Education Code Section 48260.5—(A) Upon a pupil's initial classification as a truant, the school district shall notify the pupil's parent/guardian, by first-class mail or other reasonable means, of the following: (1) That the pupil is truant. (2) That the parent/guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school. (3) That parents/guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chap. 2 of Part 27. (B) The District also shall inform parents/guardians of the following: (1) Alternative educational programs available in the district. (2) The right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy. (Added Stats. 1983, Ch 498). (3) The student may be subject to arrest under *Education Code* Section 48264. And (4) the student may be subject to suspension, restriction or delay of his/her driving privilege pursuant to *Vehicle Code* 13202.7.

❑ **Dates of Excessive Excused Absences:** _____

_____

Truant, unverified, unexcused, excessive excused absences, or tardies affect the student's education and increase the chances for failure. Tardies interrupt the classroom and interfere with the learning environment for all students.

Please discuss this issue with your child. Failure to improve his/her attendance will result in a conference with a designee at your school. ***Our goal is to educate your child. We cannot be successful if your child is not in school.***

_____ _____

Administrator Signature Date

cc: Student file, ***Student Outreach Worker (Box 56),*** Juvenile Court (if required).

* * * * * TO BE SIGNED AND RETURNED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN* * * * *

I have discussed this issue with my child _____, and we have resolved the problem concerning his/her attendance in order to insure a successful educational experience.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

1st notification Elementary form

Elder Creek Elementary School
7934 Lemon Hill Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824
(916) 382-5970

Date:_____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child was/may have been reported as a truant on, _____. This is the second letter being sent to you to inform you that your child, _____ in the _____ grade continues to have an attendance problem.

❏ **Additional Dates of Truancies:**

Unexcused/Unverified/Truant: _____

_____

Tardies (30+ mins.): _____

Education Code Section 48261—Subsequent Report of Truancy: Any pupil who has been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without a valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be reported as a truant to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the district. Per *Education Code* Section 48264.5, a truant student may be assigned to an after school or weekend study program. If student fails to successfully complete this study program, he/she may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board or a truancy mediation program.

❏ **Additional Dates of Excessive Excused Absences:** _____

_____

Truant, unverified, unexcused, excessive excused absences, or tardies affect the student's education and increase the chances for failure. Tardies interrupt the classroom and interfere with the learning environment for all students.

Please contact the school within the next five school days in order to schedule a conference to discuss the problem and attempt to find a solution. Please call _____ at _____ to schedule the conference.

_____ _____

Administrator Signature Date

cc: Student file, Juvenile Court (if required by terms of probation).

* * * * * TO BE SIGNED AND RETURNED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN * * * * *

I have discussed this issue with my child _____. I will be calling the school to arrange a conference. The morning/afternoon is the most convenient time for me.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Elder Creek Elementary School
7934 Lemon Hill Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824
(916) 382-5970

Date:_____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child was/may have been reported as a truant on, _____. This third letter is to inform you that your child, _____ in the _____ grade is/may be considered a habitual truant.

❏ **Additional Dates of Truancies:**

Unexcused/Unverified/Truant: _____

_____

Tardies (30+ mins.): _____

Education Code Section 48262—Habitual Truant: Any pupil deemed a habitual truant and has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year, provided that no pupil shall be deemed a habitual truant unless an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil himself after filing of either of the reports required of *Education Code* sections 48260 or 48261. *Education Code* Section 48264.5—a truant student may be assigned to an afterschool or weekend study program. If student fails to successfully complete this study program, he/she may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board or a truancy mediation program.

❏ **Additional Dates of Excessive Excused Absences:** _____

_____

The school has attempted to work with you to solve your child's attendance problems. These attempts have not been successful. It will be ***imperative*** for you and your child to attend a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting or a Student Study Team (SST) meeting. Your scheduled appointment is:

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time; _____

If you need to reschedule this meeting please call the school immediately. **Without your cooperation the only other alternative will be to refer this matter to the Sacramento City Unified School District's School Attendance Review Board (SARB) who may refer this matter to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution pursuant to *Penal Code* Section 272 and/or *Education Code* Section 48290.**

_____ _____

Administrator Signature Date

cc: Student file, Juvenile Court (if required by terms of probation).

* * * * * TO BE SIGNED AND RETURNED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN * * * * *

I have discussed this issue with my child _____. We will attend the SART/SST hearing scheduled for us.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Appendix D

Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance and Sacramento City Unified School District

AGREEMENT NO. M-52-97

This is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance, hereinafter referred to as DHA, and the Sacramento City Unified School District, hereinafter referred to as DISTRICT.

It is expressly understood and agreed by both DHA and DISTRICT as follows:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish the formal working relationship between the parties to this agreement and to set forth the operative conditions which will govern this partnership. DHA and DISTRICT will form a partnership in providing and coordinating services as part of a project to improve school attendance of children in families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. DHA agrees to the following. DHA staff shall:

1. Serve as a permanent member of the School Attendance Review Board (SARB).
2. As a SARB member, receive student truancy lists from DISTRICT.
3. Search central records to determine if truant student is currently on AFDC case.
4. If family is receiving AFDC DHA staff shall do the following:
   a. Send a letter to parent or caretaker advising of the expectation that the child attend school and refer parent/caretaker to school for resolution of truancy problem.
   b. Send a list of those families receiving truancy letter to DISTRICT.
   c. Make a referral to Healthy Start Program if school is in Healthy Start.
   d. Make a referral to model project area if school is in a model project area.
   e. Notify Cal-Learn case manager if student is Cal-Learn participant.
5. Provide supervision of DHA staff employed under this agreement. All terms of employment of said staff shall be made by DHA. DISTRICT shall have no right or authority over such persons or the terms of such employment:
   a. hours
   b. wages
   c. working conditions
   d. discipline
   e. hiring
   f. firing
   g. any other terms of employment or requirements of law

6. Develop common confidentiality guidelines to share information between DHA and DISTRICT in accordance with the California Education Code and the Welfare and Institutions Code governing client confidentiality.

B. District agrees to the following:

1. Provide to SARB a contact person for attendance information at the district office.
2. Assist in identifying students identified by DISTRICT in accordance with Section II. A. above.
3. Provide to SARB a list of students identified as truant. The list shall contain the following:
   a. name
   b. address
   c. social security number
   d. parent/caretaker's name
4. Use common confidentiality guidelines as developed by DHA to share information between DISTRICT and in accordance with the California Education Code and the Welfare and Institutions Code governing client confidentiality.
5. Provide baseline data on truancy rates per student by school and district.
6. Provide end of year statistical reports on truancy by student/school/district.

C. MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

DHA and DISTRICT agree:

1. To develop and implement orientation for newly hired and current AFDC staff on School Attendance Project vision, goals and procedures.
2. To develop and present reports to DHA and DISTRICT on School Attendance outcomes.
3. To develop security procedures or devices by which unauthorized personnel cannot access data contained in the system.
4. To develop procedures or devices to secure privileged or confidential data from unauthorized disclosure.
5. That the right of access granted shall not include the right to add, delete, or alter data without written permission of the district holding the information.
6. That neither DHA or DISTRICT may make public or otherwise release information on any individual contained in the data base where the information is protected from disclosure or release to the requesting agency by state or federal law or regulation.

III. DEFENSE AND INDEMNIFICATION

A. DHA shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the DISTRICT, its officers, agents and employees from any and all loss, including attorneys' fees, sustained by DISTRICT by virtue of any damage(s) to any person(s), firm or corporation that may be injured by or to any property that may be damaged by the sole fault or negligence of DHA, its officers, agents or employees.

B. DISTRICT shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the DHA, its officers, agents and employees from any and all loss, including attorneys' fees, sustained by DHA by virtue of any damage(s) to any person(s), firm or corporation that may be injured by or to any property that may be damaged by the sole fault or negligence of DISTRICT, its officers, agents or employees.

C. The indemnification provisions contained in this Agreement include any violation of applicable law, ordinance, regulation, or rule, including where the claim, loss, damage, charge or expense was caused by deliberate, willful, or criminal acts of any party to this Agreement, or any of their agents, officers or employees or their performance under the terms of this Agreement.

D. It is the intent of the parties that where negligence is determined to have been shared, principles of comparative negligence will be followed and each party shall bear the proportionate cost of any loss, damage, expense and liability attributable to that party's negligence.

IV. NOTICE

Notice or other communications to the parties as provided by this Agreement shall be given by United States mail postage prepaid as follows:

TO COUNTY	**TO DISTRICT**
DIRECTOR Department of Human Assistance 2433 Marconi Avenue Sacramento, CA 95821-4807	SUPERINTENDENT Sacramento City Unified School District 520 Capitol Mall Sacramento, CA 95814

Notice shall be served by deposit in the United States mail, postage prepaid, and addressed as above prescribed. The parties by written notice may designate different addresses to which subsequent notices or other communications will be sent.

V. TERM

The term of this Memorandum of Understanding shall commence January 1, 1997 and extend through August 31, 1997 and is renewable thereafter from year to year unless either party gives written notice of termination.

This agreement or any renewal thereof may be terminated or revised by either party upon the giving of sixty (60) days prior written notice to the other party.

VI. PRIOR AGREEMENTS

This Memorandum of Understanding contains all the terms agreed upon by both parties and supersedes all prior oral or written agreements between the parties.

Director *(Date)* Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance	*Superintendent* *(Date)* Sacramento City Unified School District

Appendix E

Sample Agreement for Deputy Probation Officer Services at District Schools

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this _____day of _ _____, 1997 by and between the Sacramento City Unified School District, a school district within he County of Sacramento (hereinafter "District"), and the County of Sacramento, a political subdivision of the State of California (hereinafter "County").

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the District operates Hiram W. Johnson High School, Sacramento High School, and Luther Burbank High School within the boundaries of the Sacramento City Unified School District for enrollment of certain pupils, including pupils who are on probation or who are probation-referred pursuant to law; and

WHEREAS, the Chief probation Officer of County, by and through his duly appointed deputies and assistants, is required, inter alia, to supervise such pupils on probation on behalf of the juvenile court; and

WHEREAS, the District and County desire to provide all such supervising and counseling and other related services on site at Hiram w. Johnson High School, Sacramento High School, and Luther Burbank High School for purposes of deterring juvenile delinquency; and

WHEREAS, the District and County desire to provide all such services by and through a deputy probation officer of County hereby agree as follows:

Section 1. TERM The term of this agreement shall commence on October 15, 1997 and shall terminate on October 14, 1998.

Section 2. RENEWAL This agreement may be renewed by mutual written agreement of the parties hereto, upon the same or other mutually agreeable terms, conditions, and covenants.

Section 3. DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICERS The Chief Probation Officer of County, following consultation with the Deputy Superintendent, Operations, Sacramento City Unified School District, shall assign and staff two deputy probation officer positions (one 1.0 FTE, hereinafter "High School Deputy Probation Officer" and on e.50 FTE hereinafter "Truancy Center Deputy Probation Officer"). Both Deputy Probation Officers shall be paid at the "E" salary step of County to perform the duties specified by Section 6 hereof. The Deputy Probation Officers shall be assigned to a juvenile supervision unit of the County's Probation Department and shall be supervised by, and responsible to, the supervising probation officer of such unit.

Section 4. AUTHORITY OF THE SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER the supervising probation officer shall determine the Deputy Probation Officer's specific workload, hours of work, recording keeping requirements, and all other aspects of performance of duties as specified by Section 6 hereof.

Section 5. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY the Sergeant, Police Services for the Sacramento City Unified School District shall meet or confer with the Deputy Probation Officers at a minimum of once per quarter to monitor the provisions of this agreement.

Section 6. DUTIES OF THE DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICERS The Deputy Probation Officers shall perform duties as follows.

a) The High School Deputy Probation Officer will supervise wards of the juvenile court who are pupils enrolled at Hiram W. Johnson High School. The Truancy Center Deputy Probation Officer will supervise wards of the juvenile court who are delivered to the truancy centers at Hiram W. Johnson High School, Sacramento High School and Luther Burbank High School. The nature and extent of such supervision shall in each case be determined by the supervising probation officer in accordance with the specific orders of probation issued by the juvenile court, applicable laws of the State of California, and the policies and procedures of the Chief Probation Officer of County. The duties specified in this agreement for the Deputy Probation Officers shall:

b) Upon and in accordance with the directives of the supervising probation officer, the high school deputy probation shall:

(i) supervise a caseload of probationers enrolled at Hiram Johnson High School;
(ii) serve as a liaison between the district and the county's probation department respecting the pupils supervised by the deputy probation officer;
(iii) provide information and training to district staff regarding gangs, drugs, current trends in juvenile delinquency, and the juvenile court process;
(iv) counsel district pupils and their parents or other caretakers;
(v) attend district secondary education staff meetings regarding pupil discipline and control;
(vi) provide information and referral services to pupils and their parents or other caretakers relating to the needs of the pupil and his or her family;
(vii) consult with district staff regarding pupil behavior and/or academic progress;
(viii) assist district staff with the placement of referred pupils for the district's continuation, opportunity schools and, independent high school programs;
(ix) monitor district school attendance and provide services for the purpose of curbing school truancy by district pupils;
(x) certify as appropriate the status of district students under sections 601 and 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code;

(xi) provide support to the Sacramento City Police and District school police officers in the performance of their duties;
(xii) participate in district's School Attendance Review Boards (SARB);
(xiii) refer to probation, through a citation process, students who have violated SARB contracts regarding school attendance;
(xiv) assist district staff in accessing county information about truant students who are on probation

c) Upon and in accordance with the directives of the supervising probation officer, the Truancy Deputy Probation Officer shall, on a half time basis,

(i) counsel district pupils and their parents or other caretakers;
(ii) attend district secondary education staff meetings regarding pupil discipline and control;
(iii) provide information and referral services to pupils and their parents or other caretakers relating to the needs of the pupil and his or her family;
(iv) consult with district staff regarding pupil behavioral and/or academic progress;
(v) monitor district school attendance and provide services for the purpose of curbing school truancy by district pupils;
(vi) certify as appropriate the status of district students under sections;
(vii) provide support to the Sacramento City Police and school district police officers in the performance of their duties;
(viii) assist district's Child Welfare and Attendance Office in securing needed services from the various subdivisions of the probation department. Participate in district's School Attendance Review Board (SARB) meetings;
(ix) coordinate and link district and county with respect to truant students and parents under section 601 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (SARB cases);
(x) refer to probation, through a citation process, students who have violated SARB contracts regarding school attendance;
(xi) transport students as necessary;
(xii) assist district staff in accessing county information about truant students who are on probation.

Section 7. SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATIONS. The deputy probation officers shall be based, and perform the duties specified by Section 6 hereof, at the district's Hiram W. Johnson High School, Sacramento High School, and Luther Burbank High School as determined by the district. The deputy probation officers may also perform other related duties in the field to accomplish the purpose of this agreement.

Section 8. WORK SPACE. The district shall provide work space for the use of the deputy probation officers at assigned school sites. Upon request by the county, the district shall provide space at a school site for the purpose of conducting classes or group meetings pursuant to Section 6 hereof.

Section 9. DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICER SALARY AND BENEFITS. County shall compensate the deputy probation officers at the appropriate salary step for such position, together with the benefits applicable thereto.

For illustrative purpose, the total cost of salary and benefits at the "E" county salary step for fiscal year 1997-98 for one (1) FTE deputy probation officer is estimated as:

Gross Salary	$39,357.00
Benefits	17,119.00
Total	$56,476.00

The district shall reimburse the county for

a) The cost of the actual gross salary and benefits of one (1) FTE Deputy Probation Officer for 9.5 months during the period of this agreement, and

b) One half (.5) of the actual gross salary and benefits of (1) FTE Deputy Probation for the entire period of this agreement.

The county will bill the district monthly. In the event the term of this agreement is less than twelve (12) months, the district will only be obligated to pay county for months the county actually provides contracted services. The one-half time (.5) Deputy Probation Officer position will be operative 9.5 months and will not be operative during the 1998 summer school schedule.

The district shall make such payments not later than the 15th day of the month immediately following the month to which such reimbursement payments apply.

Payment hereunder shall be made by check payable to the County of Sacramento, at the following address:

Probation Department
Accounting Office
Attn. Carolyn Salamone
3201 Florin Perkins Road
Sacramento, CA 95826

Section 10. INDEMNIFICATION. County shall defend, indemnify and hold district, its officers, employees, trustees, students and agents harmless from and against any and all liability, loss, expense(including reasonable attorney's fees), or claims for injury or damages arising out of the performance of this agreement but only in proportion to and to the extent such liability, loss, expense, attorney's fees, or claims for injury or damages are caused by or result from the negligent or intentional acts or omissions of county, its officers, employees, or agents.

District shall defend, indemnify and hold county, its officers, employees, and agents harmless from and against any and all liability, loss, expense (including reasonable attorney's fees), or claims for injury or damages arising out of the performance of this agreement but only in proportion to and to the extent such liability, loss, expense, attorney's fees, or claims for injury or damages are caused by or result from the negligent or intentional acts or omissions of the district, its officers, employees, trainees, students, or agents

Section 11. NOTICES. Any notice, demand, request, consent or approval that either party may or is required to give the other shall be in writing and shall be either personally delivered, or sent by prepaid first class mail, addressed as follows:

TO THE DISTRICT

Sacramento City Unified School District
Attn: Rob Gerig, Director Pupil Services
Pupil Services
520 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 264-3290

TO THE COUNTY

Probation Department
Attn. Mary C. Shook, Chief Deputy
Field Supervision Division
3201 Florin-Perkins Road
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 875-0318

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have duly executed this agreement as of the date and year first above written.

SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

By: _____
Laura A. Bruno
Chief Financial Officer
"The District"

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
A political subdivision of California

By: _____
Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors
"The County"

_____
Verne L. Speirs
Chief Probation Officer

Appendix F

Truancy Ordinance (No. 862) of the City of Folsom

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FOLSOM ADDING CHAPTER 9.85 TO THE *FOLSOM MUNICIPAL CODE* PERTAINING TO TRUANCY

The City Council of the City of Folsom hereby does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS

The City Council hereby declares and finds that:

A. The California Legislature has enacted statutes that subject persons between the ages of 6 and 18, who are not otherwise exempt from public education pursuant to state law, to compulsory full-time education for a minimum school day as established by the governing board of the school district;

B. Regular attendance at school provides important benefits to the health, safety and welfare of all residents within the City of Folsom, and the community as a whole suffers when a student is not attending school;

C. Truancy or unexcused absenteeism from school results in a loss of educational opportunities to the student and a loss of revenue to the school. Truancy also often leads to vandalism, petty theft, daytime burglaries, and other criminal activity;

D. A cooperative effort between a city and a school district has been shown to assist in the reduction of truancy rates, and to enhance student and parental accountability for regular school attendance;

E. The Folsom Cordova Unified School District supports the enactment of an ordinance pertaining to truancy as a complement to its own anti-truancy efforts;

F. This Chapter is not intended to abridge or interfere with the rights of parents or other legal guardians to arrange for home schooling of their children as allowed for in the California Education Code; and

G. In enforcing the provisions of this Chapter, City law enforcement shall work in cooperation with the School Attendance Review Board established by the Folsom Cordova Unified School District.

SECTION 2, CHAPTER 9.85. TRUANCY

Chapter 9.85 is hereby added to the *Folsom Municipal Code* to read as follows:

Section 9.85.010. Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this Chapter is to promote and protect the public safety, health and welfare by reducing the incidence of juvenile criminal activity during the daytime hours by providing local law enforcement with remedies to decrease unexcused absenteeism in schools within the City of Folsom. This ordinance is intended to encourage juveniles to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, and to improve the accountability of parents and other legal guardians for the attendance of their children in school. The anti-truancy provisions of this Chapter are intended to complement rules established through the

Folsom Cordova Unified School District, and the enforcement procedures established in this Chapter are intended to be used in cooperation with the School Attendance Review Board (or any successor thereto) established by the Folsom Cordova Unified School District. Nothing in this Chapter is intended to repeal, reduce, or abridge any enforcement authority granted to a school district or a School Attendance Review Board by California law, including but not limited to those remedies provided for in the *California Education Code* and the *California Welfare and Institutions Code.*

Section 9.85.020. Definitions

A. *Absent from school* shall mean physical presence away from a public school facility during school attendance hours.

B. *Compulsory Education or Compulsory Continuing Education* shall have the meaning set forth in *California Education Code* Section 48200.

C. *School Attendance Hours* shall mean and include the hours designated as the length of the school day by the governing board of the School District.

D. *School Attendance Review Board* shall mean and include any administrative panel established by the School District pursuant to the authority established in *California Education Code* Section 48321.

E. *School District* shall mean and include the Folsom Cordova Unified School District, or any successor school district that governs the operation of elementary and secondary schools within the City of Folsom.

F. *Student* shall mean and include any person who is subject to compulsory education or to compulsory continuing education pursuant to requirements imposed by state law.

Section 9.85.030. Truancy Prohibited

It is unlawful for any student who is subject to compulsory education or to compulsory continuation education to be absent from school during school attendance hours unless such student has a valid excuse as specified in Section 9.85.040 of this Chapter.

Section 9.85.040. Valid Excuses for Absence From School

The prohibition set forth in Section 9.85.030 shall not apply if a student has one of the following excuses:

A. The student has in his/her possession a written excuse from the student's parent or legal guardian or other adult person having the legal care or custody of said minor which provides a reasonable explanation for the student's absence from school;

B. The student is in the company of his/her parent, legal guardian or other adult person having the legal care or custody of said student;

C. The student is on an emergency errand directed by said student's parent, legal guardian or other adult person having the legal care or custody of said student;

D. The student is going to or returning directly from a medical appointment and can provide written verification of the medical appointment;

E. The student has permission from the school or the School District to be absent from a school campus, and has in his/her possession a valid, school-issued, off campus permit;

F. The student is going to or returning directly from a public meeting or place of public entertainment, such as a movie, play, sporting event, dance or school activity, provided such meeting, event or activity is a school approved activity for the student or the student is otherwise under the supervision of school personnel;

G. The presence of the student away from school is connected with or required by a school-approved or school-related business, trade, profession or occupation in which the student is lawfully engaged; or

H. The student is receiving instruction by a qualified tutor pursuant to California Education Code Section 48224, or is otherwise exempt from attendance at a public or private full-time day school as set forth in the *California Education Code.*

Section 9.85.050. Enforcement

A. This Title shall be enforced pursuant to the provisions of Chapters 1.08–1.10, inclusive, of Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code.*

B. The Police Chief or his/her designee shall enforce the provisions of this Chapter.

Section 9.85.060. Penalties

A. A violation of this Chapter shall be an administrative violation as defined in Section 1.08.020 of Chapter 1.08, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code.* In addition to enforcement by any procedure set forth in Chapters 1.08–1.10, inclusive, any violation of this Chapter shall be punishable as an infraction, which shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed two hundred and fifty dollars ($250.00).

B. Each of the sanctions for administrative violations identified in Section 1.09.013 of Chapter 1.09, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code* shall be available for enforcement of the provisions of this Chapter. If the matter proceeds to a hearing, the administrative hearing officer may request findings and recommendations from the School Attendance Review Board for the imposition of any penalty or remedial action that the School Attendance Review Board may deem appropriate in addition to the remedies set forth herein. The administrative hearing officer shall make the final determination of the penalty after a hearing and, to the extent the administrative hearing officer relies upon the findings and recommendations of the School Attendance Review Board, those findings and recommendations shall be incorporated in the written decision of the administrative hearing officer that is required by Section 1.09.048 of the Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code.*

C. In addition to the criminal penalty set forth in Section 9.85.060(A) of this Chapter, based upon the criteria for the imposition of administrative sanctions set forth in Section 1.09.014 of Chapter 1.09, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code,* a violation of a provision of this Chapter shall be deemed a Level A violation, as that term is described in Section 1.09.012 of Chapter 1.09, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code,* with the administrative sanction set at $250.00.

D. If the matter proceeds to a hearing, the hearing officer may impose ten hours of community service to be performed under the supervision of the Chief of Police or his/her designee in lieu of any other penalty. Such community service shall be performed during times other than regular school hours. In deciding whether to allow community service, the hearing officer shall consider whether the student has any prior violations of this Chapter.

Section 9.85.070. Enforcement Against Habitual Truants

Upon recommendation by the Chief of Police, the School Board, the School Attendance Review Board, or a probation officer, the City will cease enforcement action against a minor who is deemed eligible to be adjudged a ward of the court pursuant to the procedures established in *California Welfare and Institutions Code* Section 601, *et seq.*

Section 9.85.080. Enforcement Procedures: Notice to Correct

A. Prior to the commencement of any enforcement action pursuant to this Chapter, the Enforcement Authority shall issue a Warning Notice to the student and his/her parent, legal guardian or other person having the legal care or custody of the student. The Warning Notice shall be in substantially the form set forth in Section 9.85.100 of this Chapter. The Warning Notice shall be served in person or pursuant to the procedures established in Chapter 1.09, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code.* The Warning Notice shall be in place of any Notice to Correct that is otherwise required by Chapter 1.09 of Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code.*

B. If a subsequent violation of this Chapter occurs after the service of a Warning Notice, pursuant to Section 1.09.024(A) of Chapter 1.09, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code,* a Notice of Administrative Violation shall be served in accordance with the provisions of Section 1.09.027 of Chapter 1.09, Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code* unless the Police Chief or his designee has determined to issue an infraction as provided for in Section 9.85.060(A) of this Chapter.

C. The Enforcement Authority shall make a good faith effort to issue a Warning Notice prior to the issuance of a Notice of Administrative Violation or citation for an infraction. However, the failure to serve a Warning Notice prior to the issuance of a Notice of Administrative Violation or citation for an infraction shall not invalidate further enforcement proceedings under this Chapter.

D. The rights to judicial review set forth in Sections 1.09.050–1.09.059, inclusive, of Chapter 1.09 of the Title 1 of the *Folsom Municipal Code* shall apply.

Section 9.85.090. Responsibility of Parent or Other Legal Guardian

A. No parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal custody or control of a student shall cause, permit, or allow a student to violate the provisions of this Chapter.

B. If a parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal custody or control of a student violates subsection A of this Section, such person shall be subject to the penalties set forth in Section 9.85.060 of this Chapter. In addition to the penalties set forth therein, the parent, legal guardian, or other person having custody or control of the student may be required to attend parenting classes approved by the School Attendance Review Board.

Section 9.85.100. Contents of Warning Notice

The Warning Notice required by Section 9.85.080 shall be substantially as in the attached hereto as Exhibit A, subject to revision by the Chief of Police as necessary.

Section 9.85.110. Cost Recovery

A. *Determination by Court.* In addition to the other penalties imposed in this Chapter, if a court determines that a minor under eighteen years of age is subject to civil or criminal liability based on violation of this Chapter, it may provide that the parent(s) or legal

guardian(s) of the minor shall be jointly and severally liable for the cost of providing law enforcement personnel to supervise the minor during his or her detention, over and above the cost of services normally provided by the City's law enforcement agency.

B. *Determination by Chief of Police.* When the Chief of Police or designee thereof determines that the City's law enforcement agency incurred costs over and above the cost of service normally provided by the agency in providing law enforcement personnel to supervise a minor during his or her detention for violation of this Chapter, and when it has been determined by a court that the minor was civilly or criminally liable for such misconduct, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the minor may be assessed, and billed for, such additional costs.

C. *Appeal.* Any person receiving a bill for law enforcement services pursuant to this chapter may, within fifteen (15) days after the billing date, file a written request appealing the imposition of said charges. Any billing sent pursuant to this section shall inform the billed party of the right to appeal said billing. Any appeal regarding such billing shall be heard by the City Manager, or designee thereof, as the hearing officer. Within ten (10) days after the hearing, the hearing officer shall give written notice of the decision to the appellant. Upon the filing of a request for an appeal, payment of the bill for the law enforcement services shall be suspended until notice of the decision of the hearing officer is issued. If the appeal is denied in part or in full, all amounts due to the City shall be paid within thirty (30) days after notice of the decision of the hearing officer.

SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this ordinance and each section, subsection, clause, phrase or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, clauses, phrases or portions be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall become effective thirty days from and after its final passage and adoption, provided it is published in full within twenty days after its adoption in the *Folsom Telegraph*, the official newspaper of the City of Folsom.

This ordinance was introduced and the title thereof read at the regular meeting of the Folsom City Council on August 12, 1997.

On a motion by Council Member Aceituno, seconded by Council Member Drew, the foregoing ordinance was passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Folsom, State of California, this 26th day of August, 1997, by the following vote, to wit:

Ayes:	Council Members:	Aceituno, Drew, Holdernes, Fait
Noes:	Council Members:	None
Absent:	Council Members:	Miklos
Abstain:	Council Members:	None

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

Warning Notice

This Warning Notice is issued to:

Name _____

Address _____

Date of birth _____ Phone_____

School _____

who was detained for investigation of a violation of Chapter 9.85 of the *Folsom Municipal Code* and *California Welfare and Institutions Code* Section 601—Status Offense of the Curfew or Truancy law.

at _____ [location]

on _____ [date]

A repeat violation will result in issuance of (1) a Notice of Administrative Violation with a fine of $250.00, (2) a citation for an infraction with a maximum fine of $250.00 and/or (3) a Notice To Appear in Juvenile Traffic Court, and a Service Fee Charge for all City personnel and equipment costs associated with the repeat violation.

(Title 9, Chapter 9.85, *Folsom Municipal Code*).

I acknowledge this warning and the consequences of a repeat violation.

_____

Offender's Signature

Proof of a lawfully justified reason for the violation and a signature from the school Principal, Vice Principal, Parent or Legal Guardian is encouraged, and should be mailed: Attention Juvenile Officer, City of Folsom Police Department, 46 Natoma Street, Folsom, CA 95630.

Please return Proof and Signature Right Thumb Print to the Juvenile Officer for identification and Department of Motor Vehicle records.

Parent/Guardian Notice: Delivered _____ Mailed _____

Phone contact prior to field release: Yes _____ No _____

Publications Available from the Department of Education

This publication is one of over 600 that are available from the California Department of Education. Some of the more recent publications or those most widely used are the following:

Item no.	Title (Date of publication)	Price
1372	Arts Work: A Call for Arts Education for All California Students: The Report of the Superintendent's Task Force on the Visual and Performing Arts (1997)	$11.25
1379	Assessing and Fostering the Development of a First and a Second Language in Early Childhood—Training Manual (1998)	19.00
1377	Assessing the Development of a First and a Second Language in Early Childhood: Resource Guide (1998)	10.75
1356	Best Practices for Designing and Delivering Effective Programs for Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (1997)	10.00
1450	C.A.F.E.—Cafeteria Access for Everyone (video and guide) (1998)	14.00
1436	California Department of Education Early Start Program Guide (1998)	10.00
1449	California Private School Directory, 1998-99 (1999)	17.50
1461	California Public School Directory, 1999	19.50
1498	California Safe Schools Assessment: 1998-99 Results (2000)	20.00
1492	California School Accounting Manual, 1999 Edition	25.00
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1373	Challenge Standards for Student Success: Health Education (1998)	10.00
1409	Challenge Standards for Student Success: Language Arts Student Work Addendum (1998)	12.75
1435	Challenge Standards for Student Success: Physical Education (1998)	8.50
1429	Challenge Standards for Student Success: Visual and Performing Arts (1998)	12.50
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* Other titles in the *Challenge Toolkit* series are *Outline for Assessment and Accountability Plans* (item no. 1300), *Safe and Healthy Schools* (item no. 1299), *School Facilities* (item no. 1294), *Site-Based Decision Making* (item no. 1295), *Service-Learning* (item no. 1291), *Student Activities* (item no. 1292), and *Student Learning Plans* (item no. 1296). Call 1-800-995-4099 for prices and shipping charges.

Prices and availability are subject to change without notice. Please call 1-800-995-4099 for current prices and shipping charges.

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