



Santa Barbara SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Section 1
12/18/09 Board Brief

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TO: J. Brian Sarvis
Superintendent

DATE: December 16, 2009

FROM: Bud Andrews
Administrator, Safety, Welfare & Attendance

SUBJECT: Updated Documents for Attendance Support Program (Board Brief)

To contribute to a sense of being supportive and as an intervention, the name of the district's truancy program has been changed to the "Attendance Support Program" or ASP. None of the content as previously approved by the Board has changed.

Attached to this memorandum is a copy of the ASP guidelines, a flowchart, and each of the three letters. Spanish versions of the letter have also been prepared. All the letters, in both languages, will be uploaded to Aeries during the holiday recess and available for sites to begin using in January 2010.

Also, the stipend for a certificated staff member to assist with attendance issues, previously approved by the Board, has been approved by the SBTA and SBSD Personnel Office. Santa Barbara High School Teacher/Administrative Intern Ann Fisher has accepted those duties. Ann has worked closely with the SBHS attendance office for the past few years.

Once uploaded to Aeries, these template letters will be "locked" so as to prevent unauthorized modifications by individual school sites. Though all sites will have access to these letters, the first phase of implementing the ASP is to ensure the secondary sites are trained on using these letters and conducting requisite site meetings. Phase two will see the same implementation at the elementary sites. All sites should be fully operational by Spring 2010.

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Santa Barbara School Districts
Attendance Support Program

The Santa Barbara School Districts believe and recognize that student attendance is a key factor in enabling students to achieve their educational goals

The SBSBD Attendance Support Program (ASP) is an extensive intervention designed to enhance student attendance, reduce truancy, and divert students from future involvement in the juvenile justice system

Attendance Support Program Goals:

- Improve school attendance through parental and student accountability
- Monitor attendance of students referred for truancy-related absences
- Provide support to the School Attendance Review Board (District level)
- Create/improve a standardized reporting mechanism for unexcused absences
- Provide support to parents and students to improve regular attendance
- Provide tools (bus scheduling, tips, routes, etc) to parents and students to improve attendance

Procedures:

1. Attendance policy letter sent to all parents and students in beginning of the year packets. This letter requests parents to review the attendance policies with their children, requires parent signature and return to school. Also distributed to new students coming into SBSBD after school year begins.
2. The signed attendance policy letter is placed in students school file. Used as reference when discussing truancy issues with students and parents.
3. School sites send ASP Letter #1 when a student has been absent from school without a valid reason for more than three days (or equivalent of 18 periods) in a school year. Students tardy to class by more than 30 minutes are considered truant to that class for reporting purposes.
4. School sites send ASP Letter #2 when a student has been truant for four (equivalent to 24 periods) or more days. ASP Letter #2 "triggers" an After-School-Meeting (ASM). An ASM is a group meeting with all parents and students who have received ASP Letter #2. The ASM is intended to review policies and consequences for continued truancy.
5. School sites send ASP Letter #3 when a student has been truant for six (equivalent to 36 periods) or more days. ASP Letter #3 requires a private meeting with the student, parent, and site administrator. The objective to this meeting is to review, again, the attendance policies,

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possible consequences, and provide a private opportunity to discuss matters that might be affecting school attendance. An attendance contract is also signed at this third attendance intervention.

6. The District Office sends SARB Letter when a student has been truant for ten (equivalent to 60 periods) or more days. The District Office sends a subpoena (SARB Letter) to the parent requesting attendance at the District School Attendance Review Board (SARB). The SARB will review in detail the attendance history of the student, parental involvement in the process, and make one or more of the following recommendations: Additional community interventions (for example, counseling, teen court, etc.), referral to the SB County Probation Department, and recommendation for parental citation by SBPD or SBSO for violating Education Code 48293.



ATTENDANCE SUPPORT INTERVENTION AND PARENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Applicable to grades K-12

STUDENT BEHAVIOR	INTERVENTION STEPS	COLLABORATIVES
Attendance Violations Regular schedule (block schedule)	EARLY EDUCATION: Warnings and Trainings PTA, Teachers, Student Assemblies, Media	
<i>Elementary:</i> 3 unexcused days <i>Secondary:</i> 18 (12) unexcused period absences	Notification to parents of truancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electronic ▪ Written letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School administration ▪ District Attorney (D.A.)
<i>Elementary:</i> 4 unexcused days <i>Secondary:</i> 24 (16) unexcused period absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandatory attendance at group after-school presentation to student and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School administration ▪ D.A. ▪ Probation ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Youth Service Specialists (YSS)
<i>Elementary:</i> 6 unexcused days <i>Secondary:</i> 36 (24) unexcused period absences Habitual Truancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandatory meeting with school administrator; referral to communities services and agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School administration
<i>Elementary:</i> 10 unexcused days <i>Secondary:</i> 60 (40) unexcused period absences Unimproved Truancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District School Attendance Review Board (SARB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District ▪ Probation ▪ D.A. ▪ SARB

Court: Formal probation and/or prosecution of parents



ATTENDANCE SUPPORT LETTER #1

DATE

PARENT
ADDRESS
CITY, ST ZIP

Dear Parent /Guardian of **STUDENT:**

In accordance with Section 48260 of the California Education Code, your child has been reported as truant from school for at least three full days (or 18 periods). **Please refer to the attached attendance report.**

The law of California requires that all children between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school on a full-time and regular basis. When any child is absent from school without a valid excuse for three full days in a school year, the law describes that situation as truancy. Students who need assistance with their attendance will be referred to the Santa Barbara School District School Attendance Review Board.

In accordance with Section 48260.5 of the California Education Code, you are hereby notified:

- a. Your child is truant.
- b. You are obligated to compel your child to attend school.
- c. Alternative education programs are available in the district.
- d. You have the right to meet with school personnel to discuss solutions to this attendance problem.
- e. Your child may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264 of the Education Code.
- f. You may be required to accompany your child to school for one day.
- g. The law provides for other conditions and interventions.

If applicable, regular school attendance is a requirement for public assistance through the CalWorks program and benefits may be reduced or stopped. Parents should see their school administration or counselor for tips, ideas, and assistance for help in getting their student(s) to school on-time and on a regular basis.

If you have any questions regarding this notification, please contact your school administration.

Sincerely,

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DATE:

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT LETTER #2

DEAR PARENT/GUARDIAN OF: _____

In order to provide as much assistance as possible and avoid possible adverse actions, you are requested to appear for a meeting with representatives of the _____ School Administration.

Both you, and your student that is having the attendance problems, must attend this meeting.

PARENT AND STUDENT AFTER SCHOOL MEETING

Location: (Name of School and location of meeting)

Date and time of meeting: English_____ Spanish_____

(Meetings are held in Spanish and English: Parent may choose which meeting to attend)

The school Administration is required by Section 48260 of the California Education Code to notify you that your child was absent a minimum of 24 class periods from school without a valid excuse. In order to assure that your son/daughter acquires all the necessary skills and education necessary to be successful at his/her school your child must attend classes daily and **arrive on time**.

Under Sections 46010-46014 of the Education Code, the only valid excuses for an absence or tardy from school are: illness, quarantine, medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic services, religious observances, attendance at a funeral service of an immediate family member, jury duty, or exclusion from school because the child was not fully immunized. Your child's attendance in all classes is both a school mandate and legal obligation in the State of California.

We fully appreciate and understand that students miss school for a variety of reasons. Truancy is the single greatest contributor for students performing poorly in their classes. We want to give you all the assistance and support necessary for helping your child correct their truancy problem. You may contact the school Attendance Office at _____ ext _____ to review your son/daughter's attendance and to report student's absences.

There is a support system in place at _____ School that is committed toward improving your child's attendance. Over the previous several years, your school and school district have worked closely with the Santa Barbara Office of Education, SB County Probation Department,

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local law enforcement agencies, the District Attorney's Office, and community-based agencies in developing a supportive and effective school based truancy prevention program.

At this scheduled meeting you may also, if needed, bring any other school aged children of yours. The meeting will last about one hour and will be conducted in English and Spanish. There will be time allowed for questions. Your child's regular attendance for the remainder of the school year will result in no further actions taken by the school or the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office.

Thank you for your support of your child's education. We look forward to seeing you at this very important meeting.

Sincerely,

Principal, _____ School



ATTENDANCE SUPPORT LETTER #3

Date: _____

RE: _____

(student's name)

(school)

Your son/daughter has missed more than 6 days (or the equivalent) of school without a valid excuse or has received more than 6 tardies of 30 minutes or more without a valid excuse, and is therefore declared a habitual truant under the Education Code definition. See attached attendance report for specific dates of absences and tardies.

Despite continued efforts to improve your child's attendance, there continues to be difficulties in arriving to school and to class on time. This situation of irregular or no attendance is seriously affecting your child's education. Because your child's attendance needs improvement, you are requested to meet with your school site administrator to discuss possible solutions to improve your child's attendance. Please contact your school site within a week to schedule an appointment.

It is your duty as a parent to provide for your child's education in the same manner as you have a duty to feed, clothe and provide shelter for your child. Failure to attend this meeting will be an indication that you are neglecting your parental duties.

If you do not attend this meeting and your child receives another unexcused absence or tardy, we will refer your case to the District Attendance Support Team or refer it directly to the District Attorney's office for prosecution. Again, we remind you that as a parent you could be prosecuted for your child's truancy under the Education Code and the Penal Code with a penalty of up to 1 year in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine. Additionally, your child could be subject to prosecution for truancy. With your help and cooperation, we hope and plan to avoid these actions.

Attachment: attendance report

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