



School Attendance: The Path To The Future

Presented By

Dr. Gary Roughton

Director Child Welfare and Attendance/Student Services

Val Verde Unified School District

The California
Constitution provides
every child with the
fundamental right to an
elementary, middle and
high school education.
It is our law.



California is facing an attendance crisis, with dire consequences for our economy, our safety and our children.



Clearly, school attendance has real economic costs for school districts throughout California. The cost of chronic absences, especially elementary school students is much larger and widespread. It is felt in the loss of future opportunities for students who absences cause disengagement from school eventually leading to dropping out of school.



The Attendance Crisis

- Nationwide, approximately **1 in 10 kindergarten** and **first grade** students **miss a month of school** each year due to absences.
- More than **250,000** elementary school students in California are **estimated to miss 10% or more** of the school year.
- Almost **83,000** California elementary school students have **more than 3 weeks** of unexcused absences.
- **20,000** California elementary school students **miss 36 days or more** of school in a year.
- **29.6%** of California elementary students were **truant** in the 2011-2012 school year- which is equal to **982,352 truant students**.

Importance of School Attendance

It's a fact that students who attend school regularly learn more, are more successful in school and are more likely to graduate than students who do not.

EC Section 48263.6: Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school with or without a valid excuse for ten percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date, is chronically absent, Thus in a 175 or 180 day school year, a student who misses 18 days is a chronic truant and subject to the School Attendance Review Board process (SARB).

What is an excused absence?

- Illness (Notify school by 9 a.m.)
- Doctor's appointment
- Bereavement (1 days in state/3 out of state)
- 3 days a year for religious observances
- If **student** has to appear in court

All other absences are unexcused

What's The Cost?

- The fiscal and economic impacts of truancy are equally distressing. According to “In School and On Track” The Attorney General’s report on California’s elementary school truancy and absenteeism crisis, school districts lose \$1.4 billion per year by failing to get students to school because school funding is based on student attendance rates. The cost to the state is far greater. Factoring in the cost of incarceration and lost economic productivity and tax revenues, dropouts cost California an estimated \$46.4 billion per year.
- Truancy is against the law. California’s Compulsory Education Law requires every child from age 6 to 18 to be in school- on time, every day.

The Good News!

- The law also requires that schools and districts track student's attendance, notify parents when their students miss school, and attempt to work with families to improve attendance. The high rate of truancy in California is an issue of accountability that the Department of Justice will prioritize, and must be prioritized at every level of education and law enforcement. Our laws and our state's future demand no less.
- According to published statistics, Val Verde USD has the most productive SARB(School Attendance Review Board) process in Riverside County.
- Last year Val Verde had the lowest truancy rate in Riverside County at 10%. Far below the state average.
- Val Verde also had the highest graduation rate in Riverside County.
- “Achievement begins with attendance”. Improved test scores and increased graduation results all begin when students are in class, on task and ready to learn. By improving our attendance rates we have seen many by-products such as: happy and socially confident students, increased self-esteem, a decrease in discipline incidents and increased ADA revenue.