



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 10.2

Meeting Date: February 6, 2014

Subject: Attendance Improvement and Chronic Absence

- Information Item Only
- Approval on Consent Agenda
- Conference (for discussion only)
- Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- Conference/Action
- Action
- Public Hearing

Department:

- Student Hearing and Placement Department/Attendance Office
- Integrated Support Services Department

Recommendation:

Information only

Background/Rationale:

The district's Attendance Office and Integrated Support Services Department have been working in a variety of ways to improve student attendance and reduce chronic student absence. The presentation provides an overview the work these two departments are doing to support these goals.

Financial Considerations:

None at this time.

Documents Attached:

1. Executive Summary
2. Chronic absenteeism three-year trend overview

<p>Estimated Time of Presentation: (30 minute presentation) Submitted by: Teresa Cummings, Chief Accountability Officer Approved by: Sara Noguchi, Ed. D, Interim Superintendent</p>

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I. Overview/History of Department or Program

The presentation is focused on the issue of attendance and covers two main areas:

- 1) An overview of the district's Attendance Office
- 2) An update on the district's project to address chronic student absence

Attendance Office

Housed within the Student Hearing and Placement Department, SCUSD's Attendance Office is in its 2nd year with Kenneth McPeters as its coordinator. During this brief tenure the Attendance Office has:

- Improved and increased the level of customer service to school sites/principals and parents.
- Established a monthly attendance Quick Tips and Newsletter sent to all Attendance Technicians to support and encourage the work they do at their sites.
- Increased the availability of the SHPD/Attendance Office to personally support school sites in administering SART contracts on their school site.
- Improved the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB), from 4 member board in 2011 to a 14 member board currently.
- Renewed the partnership with the Department of Human Assistance, (DHA).
- Renewed the partnership with Child Protective Services, (CPS).
- Formed a new partnership with the California Department of Corrections, (CDC)
- Increased the Partners Against Chronic Truancy (PACT) meeting participation (avg. of 400+ per meeting) with fewer complaints from parents and school sites.
- Increased SCUSD participation in the Sacramento County Truancy Courts.
- Changed the language on the SCUSD truancy letters; encouraging parents to work with their schools, increasing communication to improve student attendance.
- Greatly reduced the number of complaints the SHPD/Attendance Office received in comparison to the 2011/2012 school year.
- Personally visited 55 schools/principals since 2012 to support positive attendance practices and provide assistance from this department. Our goal is to have visited all schools this year.
- Created a spreadsheet with the names and phone numbers of all school site personnel responsible for attendance; creating an avenue where Attendance Technicians could support one another.

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- Revamped SCUSD's attendance letter distribution process with fewer complaints compared to 2011-2012 school year.

Chronic Absence Project

Since 2010, SCUSD has been working to address the issue of chronic absence and test models for intervening effectively with chronically absent students. Launched three years ago, SCUSD's project on chronic absence is being led by the Integrated Support Services Department in collaboration with the UC Davis Center for Regional Change, Community Link, Attendance Works, Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, City Year and the district's attendance office. Chronic absenteeism—missing at least 10% of school days for any reason—is associated with a variety of poor learning, health and life outcomes. Chronic absence is increasingly used as an early warning for student risk nationwide, and was recently included as a measure of Pupil Engagement in the LCFF State Priorities. New research demonstrates that districtwide across three school years from 2010-2013, more than 1 in 10 SCUSD students were chronically absent. Rates were significantly higher in K-1 and throughout middle and high school. Staff will share this data, and present an overview of the project. Staff will also share information about a pilot study, funded by The California Endowment, which is currently underway within the district to assess factors that most contribute to absenteeism, as well as supports that best promote attendance.

II. Driving Governance:

Pillar I: Career and College Ready

- Promoting that "Every Day Counts"
- Positive attendance increases student success
- Reducing absences within the populations most at risk

Pillar II: Family and Community Engagement

- Bringing community members to the school sites to promote education and attendance.
- Increasing direct personal contact to schools and families via home and school visits.

Pillar III: Organizational Transformation

- Working with school sites to create new ways to attack old problems
- Increasing outreach efforts to involve community members/businesses willing to help make a difference
- Utilizing chronic absence to provide early identification and outreach to at-risk students

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III. Budget:

For the 2013-2014 school year the SHPD/Attendance Office budget is \$11,000 which goes toward incentive programs and supplies to promote attendance. The SHPD/Attendance Office has leveraged over \$14,000 of in-kind funds from the Sacramento community for one of our district wide incentive programs. The community partners include:

- Walmart (Natomas)
- KSFM 102.5 FM radio station
- Natomas Rotary Club
- Hironaka Promotions (T-shirt vendor)

The chronic absence project receives \$17,000 per year to support involvement of SCUSD staff to coordinate the project. In addition, we receive substantial In-kind support from community partners including the UC Davis Center for Regional Change, Community Link, Attendance Works, Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project and City Year.

IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures:

1. To increase overall attendance district wide striving for 98%.
2. To reduce the overall truancy rate of SCUSD students yearly.
3. To reduce chronic student absence across all grade levels.

V. Major Initiatives:

1. "Every Day Counts" attendance campaign.
2. Updating of policies and procedures regarding attendance.
3. Changing school culture around attendance to be less punitive and more supportive.
4. Research on causes of chronic absence, trends and effectiveness of interventions.

VI. Results:

<u>SCUSD Truancy Rate **</u>	<u>SCUSD Average Cumulative Actual Attendance Through Month 4</u>
2011-2012 = 33.9%	2011-2012 = 96.00%
2012-2013 = 29.9%	2012-2013 = 95.98%
Decrease of 4%	2013-2014 = 96.06%

A student missing more than 30 minutes of instruction without an excuse three times during the school year must be classified as a **truant**.

*(** The **truancy rate** of a school is determined by the number of students in a school who are classified as truants pursuant to EC Section 48260 during the school year compared to the enrollment of the school as reported to the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) in*

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October of that school year. For example, if the school has an enrollment of 600 students, it will have a 50 percent truancy rate if it has 300 students classified as truants during the year.)

Additional information on chronic student absence is available through the Chronic absenteeism three-year trend overview attached. As more data analysis is available, it will be shared with the Board.

VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps:

1. Continue to work directly with schools to support parents with attendance interventions.
2. Continue to increase the level of customer service to School Administrators, Attendance Technicians, Office Managers and school support staff.
3. Set up a meeting/training with Office Managers and Attendance Technicians to review the new Student Information System as it relates to attendance.
4. Find funding for the 2014-2015 school year for attendance incentives and programs.
5. Learn more about why SCUSD students are chronically absent and what interventions work best.

Chronic Absenteeism in Sacramento City Unified School District: 3-Year Trend Overview

Chronic absenteeism—missing at least 10% of school days for any reason—is associated with a variety of poor learning, health and life outcomes. This brief follows up on earlier analyses¹ of 2010-2011 student attendance data to examine chronic absenteeism prevalence and trends in Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD).

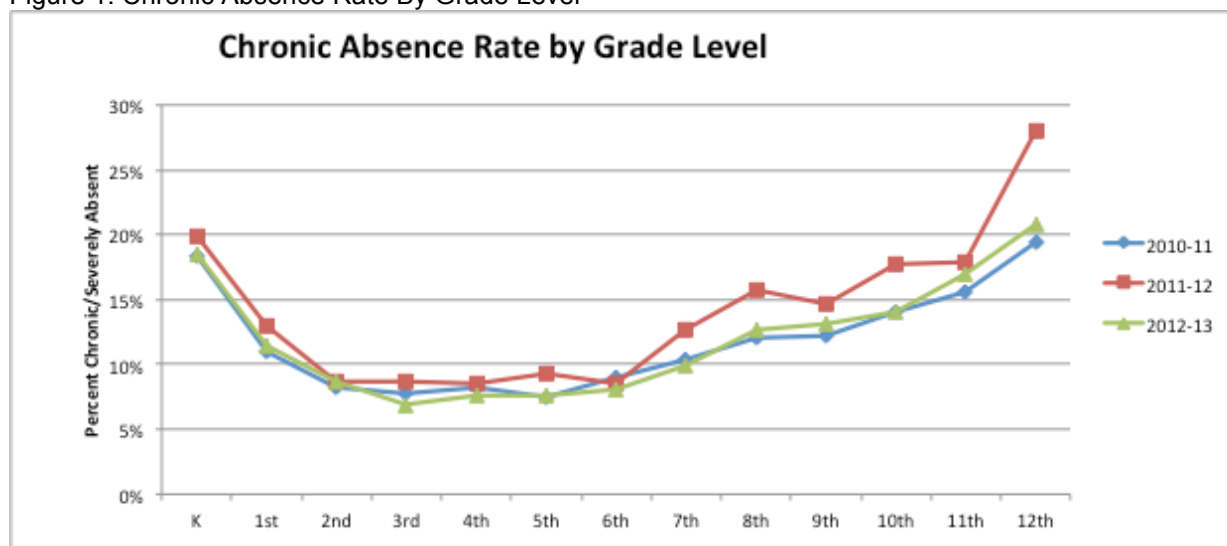
More than 1 in 10 students are chronically absent.

Across SCUSD², overall chronic absence rates for the past three years have been 11.7% (2010-2011), 13.8% (2011-2012), and 11.8% (2012-2013). Therefore, chronic absenteeism appears to be a persistent challenge.

Grade level patterns of chronic absenteeism are fairly stable over time.

The overall pattern of chronic absenteeism across grade levels and chronic absence rates by grade level have remained fairly stable over this three-year period.

Figure 1. Chronic Absence Rate By Grade Level



In general, approximately one in five kindergarteners are chronically absent. Chronic absence rates decrease until third grade, and then increase again from sixth through twelfth grade. In 2011-2012, chronic absence rates were slightly elevated across grade levels, and especially high amongst high school seniors.

Severe chronic absenteeism (missing at least 15% of school) increases substantially through middle and high school, and increases more than lower levels of chronic absenteeism (missing 10-14.9% of school).

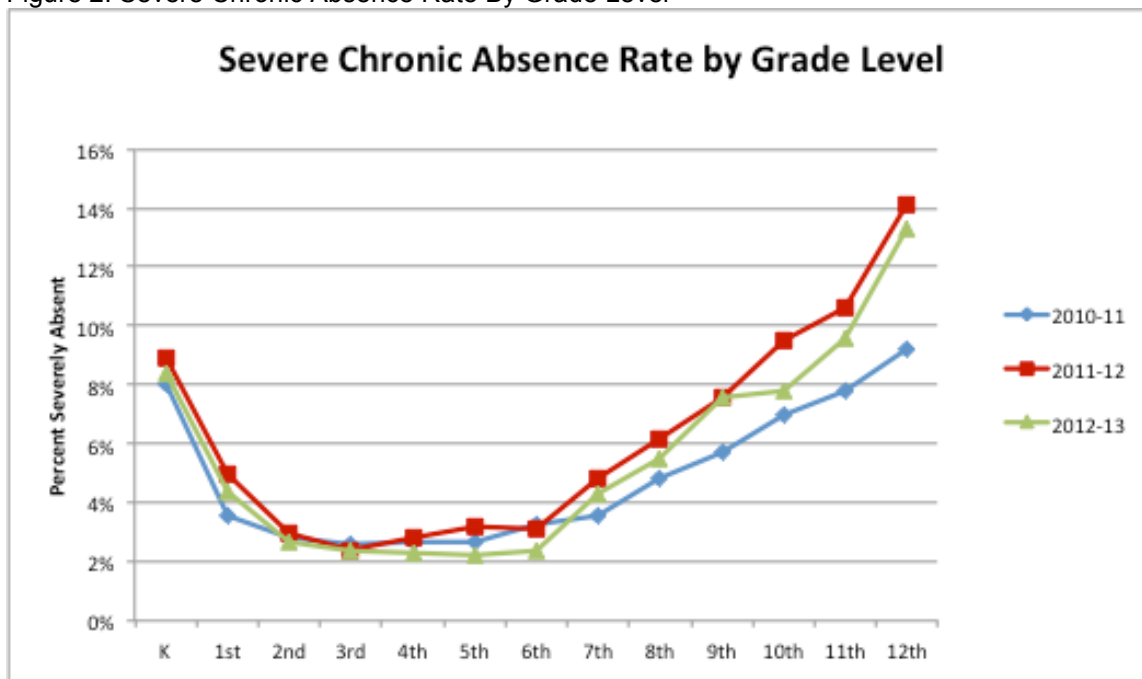
The proportion of chronically absent students missing more than 15% of school is relatively high in kindergarten compared with the other elementary and early middle grades, when it decreases to approximately 3%. However, through middle school and high school, not only does overall chronic

¹ Available at <http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/publications/pub-keywords/chronic-absence>

² For the purpose of this calculation we excluded attendance data for students in Grade 13 and with School code = "Home/Hospital." We were unable to include data for students attending John Morse Therapeutic Center and Yav Pem Suab Academy in any of the three years; in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 we were also unable to include data from Success Academy, Language Academy, The Academy, Capital City, and sites coded "Non-public school," and "Special Education Independent."

absenteeism increase, but the proportion of these students that is severely chronically absent also increases.

Figure 2. Severe Chronic Absence Rate By Grade Level



Although district satisfactory attendance rates increased from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013, chronic absence rates did not decrease.

Overall, the percentage of SCUSD students with “satisfactory” attendance (missing less than 5% of school) increased from 62.8% in 2011-2012 to 69.3% in 2012-2013. However, chronic absence rates did not decrease, and rates of severe chronic absenteeism remained similar (see Figure 2 above). This pattern raises questions about whether intervention strategies fostered the improved satisfactory attendance, and if so, whether alternative strategies might be required to reach students missing school at dangerously high rates.

In sum, preliminary analyses of student attendance data over three years suggest chronic absenteeism is an ongoing challenge. Grade level patterns were fairly consistent during this time period, with the highest chronic absence rates in kindergarten and twelfth grades; rates generally decrease through third grade, stabilize until sixth, and then begin increasing through middle and high school. Severely chronically absent students—those missing at least 15% of school—make up an increasingly greater proportion of chronic absentees throughout middle and high school. They also comprise a growing proportion of the chronically absent student population over the three year period. Additional data analyses will be released throughout the upcoming Spring and Summer of 2014.

SCUSD staff, families and community members are working hard to improve young people’s learning opportunities and outcomes. Ensuring that every student is able to regularly attend school should be a core element of these efforts.

Author: Dr. Nancy Erbstein (UC Davis Department of Human Ecology) with Ms. Teri Greenfield (UC Davis Center for Regional Change). For more information please contact Dr. Erbstein at nerbstein@ucdavis.edu. This brief and others are available at regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/chronic-absence-in-the-sacramento-unified-school-district. This brief was created through collaboration with SCUSD and Community Link, with the generous support of The California Endowment.