

Contra Costa County Board of Education

Proclamation of September as the Month to Launch the 2018 Attendance Awareness Campaign

WHEREAS good attendance is essential to student achievement and graduation, and we are committed to dedicating our resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates, with a focus starting as early as kindergarten,

WHEREAS chronic absence – missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason including excused and unexcused absences, or just two or three days a month – is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates,

WHEREAS improving attendance and reducing chronic absence takes commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to particular challenges and strengths in each community,

WHEREAS chronic absence predicts lower third-grade reading proficiency, course failure and eventual dropout, it weakens our communities and our local economy,

WHEREAS the impact of chronic absence hits low-income students and children of color particularly hard if they don't have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom and are more likely to face systemic barriers to getting to school – such as unreliable transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable or unaffordable housing,

WHEREAS, chronic absence exacerbates the achievement gap that separates low-income students from their peers, since students from low-income families are both more likely to be chronically absent and more likely to be affected academically by missing school. Absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling schools, since it's hard to measure improvement in classroom instruction if students are not in class to benefit from them,

WHEREAS schools and community partners can reach out more frequently to absent students to determine why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly,

WHEREAS schools and districts must do more to track, calculate and share the data on how many students are chronically absent so that we can deliver the right interventions to the right students,

WHEREAS all students – even those who show up regularly – are affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time reviewing for students who missed lessons,

WHEREAS chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, parents and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to school,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that as the Board of Education of Contra Costa County, we proclaim that our schools will stand with the nation in recognizing September as “Attendance Awareness Month.” We hereby commit to our continued focus on reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children an equitable opportunity to learn, grow and thrive academically, emotionally and socially.

Specifically the Contra Costa County Office of Education will:

- ❖ Build upon our work with district administrators to raise awareness that chronic absence is a proven early warning indicator of academic trouble and dropping out of school.
- ❖ Provide a variety of resources to every principal in each of the school sites in Contra Costa County, including but not limited to district customized Principal Attendance Toolkits and Posters and other valuable tools that can be used to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- ❖ Encourage each Principal of the school sites in Contra Costa County to prominently display the School Banner provided to them to promote attendance awareness with our attendance slogan “Every School Day Counts, Attend today, achieve for a lifetime!”
- ❖ Encourage principals and other key partners to use social media using our hashtag (#cocoschooleveryday) to share their activities and strategies that they are implementing to raise awareness regarding student attendance.
- ❖ Encourage principals and assistant principals to participate in key attendance awareness activities and to implement tiered intervention strategies for improving attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism.
- ❖ Encourage teacher and student involvement in promoting attendance awareness by sponsoring a PSA contest for elementary, middle and high school students and recognize winners courtesy of the donation provided by Phillips 66.
- ❖ Showcase the winning PSAs and Attendance Works videos on our website and on the Contra Costa County Education Channel Ed TV.
- ❖ Redesign the Attendance pages on our website, and in partnership with Attendance Works, provide links to their resources, such as toolkits, webinars, videos, and other appropriate materials.
- ❖ Promote and prominently feature on our website the new Attendance Learning Modules for use by teachers, principals and district leaders, which Superintendent Torlakson recently endorsed as new training to address chronic absenteeism in his letter to Superintendents announcing September as Attendance Awareness month.
- ❖ Continue to participate in the county-wide multi-agency attendance initiative “Keeping Our Kids in School”, facilitated by Judge Rebecca Hardie.
- ❖ Expand our work with the Principals in the CCCOE student programs to raise awareness regarding chronic absenteeism and to develop strategies to address this issue with school staff, parents and students.
- ❖ Engage parents, schools, community partners, and the media to help spread the message that good attendance matters and help develop solutions to ensure that all children are in school as much as possible.