A MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS FROM THE VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

The Youth of Ventura County are our most precious resource. One of the earliest indicators that something may be wrong in a young person’s life is chronic truancy. It is imperative that we, as a community, collaborate and share our resources to do all that we can to help these children become outstanding young adults. My office is pleased to join with the Ventura County SARB, school district SARBS countywide, and the Ventura County Probation Agency in a partnership that seeks to reduce the problem of truancy in our community. I strongly support early intervention because it prevents juvenile crime and encourages the learning that is so critical to succeeding in life.

Greg Totten
Ventura County District Attorney

VENTURA COUNTY TRUANCY REFERRAL AND PROSECUTION PROGRAM

The objectives of the Truancy Referral and Prosecution Program:

- To stress the importance of regular school attendance
- To resolve student school attendance problems

VENTURA COUNTY TRUANCY REFERRAL AND PROSECUTION PROGRAM

TRUANCY REFERRAL AND PROSECUTION PROGRAM

SARB SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CONTACT NUMBERS

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Briggs Elementary SD.......................... 525-7540
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Hueneme Elementary SD....................... 488-3588 ext. 9400
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Oak Park Unified SD............................. (818) 735-3217
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Ocean View Elementary SD.................... 488-4441
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Ojai Unified SD.................................... 640-4343 ext.1761
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Oxnard Elementary SD.......................... 385-1501 ext. 2161
Kathy Greaves
Oxnard Union High SD......................... 385-5227
Joe Herzog / Darci Knight
Pleasant Valley SD................................ 482-2763
Juan Garcia / Robin Gillette
Renaissance High School........................ 525-4407 ext. 3003/3002
Rebecca Rocha
Rio SD.................................................. 485-1442
Kari Skidmore
Santa Clara Elementary SD.................... 525-4573
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Santa Paula High School....................... 525-4406 ext.2015
Andrea Genchi / Adam Wohlstatter
Simi Valley Unified SD......................... 306-4500 ext. 4304
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A 3-MEMBER PARTNERSHIP

Vista Real Charter High School

VENTURA COUNTY
TRUANCY REFERRAL & PROSECUTION PROGRAM

VENTURA COUNTY
Probation Agency

Ventura County
District Attorney’s Office

May 2013
LEGAL DEFINITIONS FOR ABSENTEEISM

Chronic Absentee:
- A student who is absent for any reason, whether excused or unexcused, on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year (Education Code 60901).

Truant:
- A student who is absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date (Education Code 48263.6).

Habitual Truant:
- A student who has been reported as a truant three or more times within the same school year (Education Code 48264.5).

Chronic Truant:
- A student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one year, from the date of enrollment to the current date (Education Code 48263.6).

ABSENTEEISM AND THE LINK TO LEARNING

It is important to address chronic absenteeism because research studies link it to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, disengagement from school and behavior problems. Early absenteeism negatively impacts academic achievement in reading, math, and general knowledge in the early school years. An average of one in 10 students younger than grade 3 nationwide is considered chronically absent, defined as missing 10 percent or more of school. The greater the number of absences in kindergarten, the greater the number of absences in first grade. Over one-half of chronic absences in kindergarten also were chronic absences in first grade.

Low-income and Latino children are especially at a disadvantage in first grade, particularly when they were chronic absentees in kindergarten; they score, on average, 10 points less in first grade reading achievement than white children with the best kindergarten attendance.

A common pattern is for chronic absence to be high in kindergarten, decrease by grade 3, but then start to increase substantially, especially during the transition to middle and high school. By grade 6, chronic absence can be associated with dropping out of school. By grade 9, missing 20 percent of school can be a better predictor of dropping out than grade 8 test scores.

A MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS FROM THE VENTURA COUNTY SARB

More than ever before, consistent school attendance is critical to school success. With increasingly difficult academic standards to meet for graduation, every minute of class instructional time is essential for students to reach their goals and achieve their dreams. Nothing can sabotage a student’s school success quicker than poor attendance. Truancies result in enormous costs to students, parents, schools and the community. When students are not in school, they are more likely to become victims of crime, to use drugs, and alcohol, and to drop out of school. Today our prisons are filled with people whose first contact with the law was for truancy. The school districts in Ventura County are committed to ensuring that students attend school every day on time. By forging a vital partnership with the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office, we assist students and their families to attain that most treasured goal — a good education.

Linda Calvin
Ventura County SARB President

This brochure was developed by the Ventura County Office of Education in conjunction with the Ventura County SARB and the Office of the District Attorney.