

School Attendance Month

Campaign Toolkit for Pupil Services Counselors



September 2012

APSAC

Developed by the Pupil Services Attendance Improvement Program in collaboration with the Association of Pupil Services and Attendance Counselors (APSAC)



Links to Additional Tools and Materials

School Attendance Month Resolutions

[Board of Education](#)

[City of Los Angeles](#)

[County Board of Supervisors](#)

Information and Messaging Tools

[Attendance Works](#)

Attendance Works: [Make Every Day Count Toolkit](#)

[Other tools and teaching aides](#)

[Education Coordinating Council](#)

County-wide School Attendance Task Force

[Get Schooled](#)

[Attendance Improvement Program Toolkit](#)

[Attendance Tracking Calendar for Parents](#) (MS Publisher)

Current Research

[The Importance of Being in School \(Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University, May 2012\)](#)

[Present, Engaged, and Accounted For \(National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, September 2008\)](#)

[Other Articles](#)

News Stories/Articles

[USA Today – Chronic School Absenteeism \(5/17/12\)](#)



School Attendance Month Information Sheet for PSA Counselors September 2012

Purpose

Student Attendance Month is a county-wide campaign to increase community involvement and dialogue about the critical importance of daily school attendance and to engage all stakeholders toward the goal of graduation for all students.

Goal

Students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders will learn about:

- The critical importance of daily school attendance
- The Superintendent's student attendance goals
- Your school's attendance trends and goals
- Programs and incentives in place to acknowledge and encourage daily school attendance
- Laws related to school attendance

As Pupil Services staff, our mission is to ensure that all LAUSD students are enrolled, attending, engaged, and on-track to graduate.

Data Analysis and Sharing

Sharing student attendance data and communicating clear improvement goals are an important part of our work and a great opportunity to engage stakeholders. Identify a bulletin board, marquee, newsletter or other method to share attendance data every month throughout the school year!

[Click here for some data tracking tools and ideas.](#) (use your LAUSD Single Sign-On)

Please customize any of these sample tools and templates to support your efforts!

Tools and Templates Click on the title to be taken to the customizable template!
Data sharing Memo
Newsletter template
Information Sheet for School Staff (handout)
Talking Points for Teachers (handout)
School Attendance Month Letter to Parents (English and Spanish)
School Attendance Month Flier (English and Spanish)



School Attendance Month Campaign Ideas

- Create a theme for each week during Student Attendance Month.
- Select a color and a day of the week and ask students, staff and parent to wear that color to promote Attendance Awareness. (i.e., wear green on Thursdays).
- Play trivia games during lunch and recess. Questions should be geared toward attendance and answers should be displayed throughout school giving everyone an opportunity to participate.
- Have a friendly competition with a local school to see who has the best attendance for the month of September. The school that loses has to wear the other school's colors.
- Attendance and punctuality lesson plans for 9th graders and Kinder parents.
- Scavenger hunt. Each day, place a picture of the school mascot in various places around campus (visible to all students). Students can get points for each day they can indicate where the mascot was placed.
- Essay or Poster contest
- Classroom competition for the best door decoration
- Attendance logo competition
- Weekly Pep-Rallies. Students can earn prizes by attending school early and on-time.
- Invite the Grad-Van
- In-N-Out truck
- Invite Jamba Juice to come on campus and sell drinks.
- Grade level competitions (K vs. 1st, 9th grade vs. 10th grade, etc.) Winning grade can win 15 extra minutes of recess/nutrition or lunch.
- Traveling Banner. Each week, SLCs or classrooms have a chance at winning the banner if their class has the best attendance.
- "A Day without an Absence"
- 9th grade school Dance. Can be earned by attending school every day throughout the month of September.
- Bubble party
- Kinder - popcorn and a movie. Students can earn by attending school every day throughout the month of September.
- Teacher for a day!! / Principal for a day!!



School Attendance Month

Campaign Ideas (continued)

- Weekly classroom competitions during recess or lunch. Kinder: tug-of-war, kick ball, relay races, flag football, etc. 9th graders: students vs. teachers, basketball, baseball, tug-of-war, relay races, etc. At the end of the month, a “Field day celebration” can be held to give certificates and acknowledge students with PA.
- Invite guest speakers to weekly 9th grade assemblies. Individuals invited can be “success stories”, they can discuss where having poor attendance lead them and changes they made.
- Student panel. Invite students to speak to 9th graders (former drop-outs, students with prior bad attendance that have now improved)
- Balloon release. Student can write positive messages on the balloons and release them.
- Attendance bingo (K). Each day a student can earn a symbol (star, heart, happy face, etc.). A master template can be used by the teacher to play bingo in the classroom.
- Neighborhood/community walk – have all staff join in and hand out fliers about attendance month! (consider green fliers or your campaign color)
- Be creative and have fun!



School Attendance Month Information Sheet for School Staff September 2012

[SAMPLE - CLICK HERE TO BE TAKEN TO THIS TEMPLATE TO CUSTOMIZE](#)

Purpose

Student Attendance Month is a county-wide campaign to increase community involvement and dialogue about the critical importance of daily school attendance and to engage all stakeholders toward the goal of graduation for all students. Within LAUSD, this effort is being spearheaded by our Pupil Services Unit.

Goal

Students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders will learn about:

- The critical importance of daily school attendance
- The Superintendent's student attendance goals
- Your school's attendance trends and goals
- Programs and incentives in place to acknowledge and encourage daily school attendance
- Laws related to school attendance

Strategies and Activities

Throughout the month of September, all staff will communicate with students, parents, and all stakeholders about the critical importance of daily school attendance.

During the first day of our campaign, staff will be provided with tips and strategies for talking with students and parents about daily attendance.

Staff will quiz students about attendance laws and policies during nutrition and lunch and offer prizes for those who answer correctly. A letter is being sent to all parents/guardians and a Blackboard Connect message to all households about Attendance Awareness Month and our school's attendance goals.

Parents/guardians and students should be strongly discouraged from taking extended vacations and made aware of legally excused absences vs. unexcused absences. The school will offer rewards and incentives for students and classrooms with outstanding attendance during the month of September and throughout the school year.

We will also be asking students and staff to wear green on **Thursdays**. Classrooms with the most students wearing green will be announced over the P.A. system and earn prizes. Classrooms with perfect attendance will also be tracked and announced.

Thank you for your support and participation!

If you have any questions, please contact our PSA Counselor:

[CLICK HERE TO BE TAKEN TO THIS TEMPLATE](#)



School Attendance Month Talking Points for Teachers

[SAMPLE - CLICK HERE TO BE TAKEN TO THIS TEMPLATE TO CUSTOMIZE](#)

Throughout the month, encourage students to **wear green on Thursdays**.

Here are some ideas for discussing attendance with students:

- Spend a minute each day throughout the month talking to students about why their attendance in school is so important to their academic success
- Make personal phone calls to students and parents of students who are absent and remind them that they are missed when they are not in school
- Facilitate a discussion about why students think attendance in school is important for their success; ask them to identify some ways that students, parents, and teachers can help students to be at school, on-time, every day
 - Encourage students to:
 - Make appointments during vacations and after school hours
 - Come to school before or after essential appointments (doctor, etc.) if they are not truly sick
 - Get to bed early on school nights and prepare everything the night before
- Discuss the limited number of reasons students can be excused from school according to the law
- Explain the school's goal of increasing student attendance and improving the number of students who miss fewer than 7 days in a school year (Superintendent's Performance Meter)
- For younger children, have them draw a picture about coming to school and their favorite parts of the day
- Sing songs and develop chants or mantras about daily school attendance

Here are some ideas for talking with parents:

- Share and discuss information with parents about Attendance Awareness month and the reasons for the school's Attendance Awareness campaign
- If a parent reports that their child will be taken out of school for any unexcusable reason, advise them that you are concerned about their absence and that it will be considered unexcused.
- Share with parents some of the materials or subjects that are being covered during the month. When children miss critical instructional time, they are at far greater risk of falling behind academically.

Advise students and parents that our school has a goal of increasing student attendance rates and in order to meet that goal, we need everyone to commit to attendance improvement.

Urge parents and students to eliminate any unnecessary absences from school, not only during School Attendance Month, but throughout the year!

[SAMPLE ATTENDANCE AWARENESS PARENT LETTER – CUSTOMIZE AND PUT ON SCHOOL LEADERHEAD]

[CLICK HERE TO BE TAKEN TO THIS LETTER TEMPLATE in English and Spanish \(MS Word\).](#)

[INSERT DATE]

Dear Parent/Guardian,



September is School Attendance Month throughout Los Angeles!

Student attendance directly impacts student achievement and graduation from Preschool through Grade 12. We want all students to maintain Proficient/Advanced attendance (96% or higher) by missing no more than one day for every 25 days of instruction, and having no more than 7 TOTAL absences in the school year.

Far Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
less than 87%	87–91%	92–95%	96–99%	100%
25 or more absences	15–24 absences	8–14 absences	1–7 absences	0 absences


 More likely to achieve at grade level and graduate

As a school community, we expect at least 71% of students to maintain 96% or higher attendance this school year.

Last school year, XX% of our students achieved this attendance goal.

We encourage you to closely monitor your child’s attendance and work with us to raise awareness about the importance of attending school every day and on-time.

In recognition of Student Attendance Month, we are planning the following activities in September:

- On September 20, we will celebrate the 25th day of instruction by recognizing students with no more than 1 absence so far this school year (Proficient/Advanced Attendance).

Your participation and support throughout the school year will be critical to improving attendance at our school. For more information or to get involved, please contact _____ at _____.

**WE WANT ALL STUDENTS TO SUCCEED, BUT WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!!
THANK YOU!**

Sincerely,

PSA Counselor

Approved by: _____, Principal

SAMPLE FLYER

[CLICK HERE TO GET THE WORD TEMPLATE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH...](#)

September is **School Attendance Month!**

EARN COOL
PRIZES!



SUPPORT YOUR
SCHOOL!

Wear **GREEN** on Thursdays!

Be Proud, Be Present, and Don't Miss Out!

Ask your Teacher or PSA Counselor _____ how you can be involved!

XXXXXX SCHOOL