

SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM/DROPOUTS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1986

Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2009

- WHEREAS, PTA believes that all children and youth should have the opportunity to develop their capacities to the maximum; and
- WHEREAS, California has a serious school absenteeism and dropout problem, crossing all ethnic and geographic barriers; and
- WHEREAS, Students cannot participate fully in the educational program unless they attend school regularly; and
- WHEREAS, Studies show dropouts have statistically higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than other workers, and that dropouts often require public assistance and often engage in criminal activities; and
- WHEREAS, School districts should have in place a comprehensive program of monitoring and early intervention strategies, beginning in the primary grades, to reduce absenteeism and potential dropouts; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to promote public awareness of the magnitude of the absenteeism/dropout problem and the negative impact on student progress and community well-being; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to support their school districts' implementation of the State Department of Education's program entitled, *School Attendance Improvement: A Blueprint for Action*, as well as support and participate on local School Attendance Review Teams and Boards; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That PTAs at all levels participate in coalitions of educators, law enforcement officials, students, parents, community organizations and others working to reduce absenteeism and to develop programs encouraging students to stay in school; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to help implement education programs for parents which will help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for primary prevention of school absenteeism/dropouts; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with their school boards to ensure that parents or guardians be the first to be notified in the case of an unexcused absence.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Many students are not staying in school because they have problems at home, want to work, are failing classes, are not motivated, or are pregnant. Poor school attendance is the most frequently identified symptom of the potential dropout student. Absenteeism has a direct negative effect on the academic achievement, promotion, graduation, sense of worth, employment potential, personal and social responsibilities of our students.

A report from the Assembly Office of Research states that: “In the class of 1983 three out of ten white students did not graduate, four out of ten black and Hispanic students did not graduate, five out of ten American Indian students did not graduate. While Hispanic, black and American Indian students drop out at a greater rate, white students drop out of school in much larger numbers than do minority students. In the class of 1983, 56.4% of dropouts were white.

“Of the roughly 98,000 students who dropped out of the class of 1983 in California, 38,000 youth furthered their education in the subsequent year by either receiving a diploma equivalent or be entering trade school or a community college. The remaining 60,000 entered adult life without a diploma, diploma equivalent or further education.”

The California Education Code (Section 48412) specifies that students must attend regular or alternative education programs until the age of 18 or until graduation, which may include passing the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE). As responsible parents and citizens we must become involved with our local school districts in solving this problem.