

California Department of Education
News Release

Release: #17-24
March 30, 2017
Contact: Cynthia Butler
E-mail: communications@cde.ca.gov
Phone: 916-319-0818

State Schools Chief Tom Torlakson Announces 2017 Model School Attendance Program Winners

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson announced today that 27 school attendance programs were recognized as Model School Attendance Review Boards (SARBs) for innovative and effective practices to reduce suspensions, expulsions, and chronic absenteeism.

“Students need to be in school to learn. The terrific work of the review boards is a testament to the collaboration between the school, parents, and community so that all students have the opportunity to succeed on their way to 21st century careers and college,” Torlakson said.

The number of districts that applied to the Model SARB Recognition Program tripled since 2016. The State SARB, an expert panel appointed by Torlakson, reviewed the applications.

All school programs chosen use a three-tiered approach to keep students in school. The first tier rewards improved attendance and creates an engaging school climate with low suspension rates. The second tier identifies attendance problems early and provides personalized outreach to students and parents. The third tier refers the most persistent attendance or behavior problems to a SARB and combines resources to solve the underlying attendance problems.

Poor attendance increases the likelihood that certain groups of students will drop out, including children living in poverty, African Americans, Native Americans, foster youth, and others. Chronic absenteeism and truancy also costs California school districts millions of dollars each year.

The California Department of Education is collecting chronic absenteeism rates for the first time during the 2016-2017 school year. The definition of chronic absenteeism is missing 10 percent or more of the total days enrolled for any reason. Data so far shows improvement in several districts, including:

- Pittsburg Unified School District decreased its chronic absenteeism rate by 21 percent over the past three years.
- Fontana Unified School District’s chronic absentee rate dropped from 10.5 percent to 9.2 percent, from the 2015–16 school year to 2016–17.
- Jurupa Unified School District reported a truancy rate of 23.5 percent, below both the Riverside County rate of 34 percent and the state average rate of 31 percent.

Next year districts will be able to compare their chronic absenteeism rates for different student groups to state averages for the first time and incorporate findings into their Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

The Model SARBs will serve as mentors to other school districts, and help them to develop their own strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism. AB 2815 by Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell, D-Long Beach, passed in 2016 and expanded the role of attendance supervisors with up-to-date strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism and truancy.

The Model SARB awards will be presented at the California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance State Conference on April 19, 2017, in Tahoe City, CA. For more information, visit the California Department of Education [School Attendance Review Boards](#) Web page.

A list of the 27 Model SARBs and their chairpersons, who can act as mentors for other SARBs in the state, is listed below.

Alhambra Unified School District, Lindsey K. Ma, Lynne Sheffield, SARB Chairpersons, 626-943-3440, Ma_lindsey@uasd.us, Sheffield_lynne@aud.us

Alvord Unified School District, Charles Cummins, SARB Chairperson, 951-509-5143, Charles.cummins@alvordschools.org

Banning Unified School District, Janet A. Gray, SARB Chairperson, 951-922-0200, jgray@banning.k12.ca.us

Capistrano Unified School District, Chad Smith, SARB Chairperson, 714-966-4000, cjsmith@capousd.org

Centinela Valley Union High School District, Blain L. Watson, SARB Chairperson, 310-263-3200, watsonb@centinela.k12.ca.us

Chino Valley Unified School District, Ofelia Marques Verdugo, SARB Chairperson, 909-628-1201, extension 7763, Ofelia_Verdugo@chino.k12.ca.us

Colton Joint Unified School District, Christy Padilla, SARB Chairperson, 909-580-6518, Christy_padilla@cjUSD.net

Corona-Norco Unified School District, Felicia Cruz-Delgado, SARB Chairperson, 951-736-5000, fcruz@cnusd.k12.ca.us

Desert Sands Unified School District, Cathy Bennett, SARB Chairperson, 760-238-9708, Catherine.bennett@desertsands.us

Escondido Union School District, Maria Osborn, SARB Chairperson, 760-432-2369, mosborn@eusd.org

Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District, Antonio Gipson, SARB Chairperson, 707-399-4325, AntonioG@fsusd.org

Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District, Terry R. Anderson, SARB Chairperson, 559-659-3899, extension 6512, tanderson@fldusd.org

Fontana Unified School District, Craig Baker, SARB Chairperson, 909-357-7600, Craig.Baker@fusd.net

Fremont Unified School District, Dennie Marengo, Fremont Unified School District, 510-657-2350, extension 12367, dmarengo@fremont.k12.ca.us

Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, Cynthia Cabello, SARB Chairperson, 626-933-4307, cgomez@hlpusd.k12.ca.us

Hemet Unified School District, Dennis G. Massey, SARB Chairperson, 951-765-5100, Dmassey@Hemetusd.org

John Swett Unified School District, Ken Nelson, SARB Chairperson, 925-768-3724, knelson@jsusd.k12.ca.us

Jurupa Unified School District, Sandra Amatriain, SARB Chairperson, 951-360-4137, Sandra_amatriain@jusd.k12.ca.us

Long Beach Unified School District, Erin M. Simon, SARB Chairperson, 562-986-6870, extension 241, Esimon@lbschools.net
Pittsburg Unified School District, ReJois Frazier-Myers, SARB Chairperson, 925-473-2346, rfraziermyers@pittsburg.k12.ca.us
Rialto Unified School District, Leonard Buckner, SARB Chairperson, 909-820-7700, extension 2352, lbuckner@rialto.k12.ca.us
Riverside Unified School District, Gary McGuire, SARB Chairperson, 951-352-1200, extension 83030, gmcguire@rusd.k12.ca.us
Romoland School District, Ricky Alyassi, SARB Chairperson, 951-926-9244, ralyassi@romoland.net
Sanger Unified School District, Dennis Wiechmann, SARB Chairperson, 559-351-1408, dwiechmann@sbcglobal.net
Santa Ana Unifies School District, Patrick D. Yrarrazaval-Correa, SARB Chairperson, 714-433-3458, Patrick.yrarrazaval@sausd.us
Twin Rivers Unified School District, Jane Claar, Tracy Wiltshire, SARB Chairpersons, 916-566-1600, extensions 50852 and 50854, Jane.Claar@twinriversusd.org and Tracy.Wiltshire@twinriversusd.org
Westminster School District, Patricia Urbaniec, SARB Chairperson, 714-894-7311, extension 1100, turbaniec@wstk8.us

###

**[Tom Torlakson](#) — State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Communications Division, Room 5602, 916-319-0818, Fax 916-319-0100**

Last Reviewed: Thursday, March 30, 2017