



Student Attendance Review Team (SART)



SAN MATEO
COUNTY
OFFICE OF
EDUCATION

Good Attendance is Key to Success	1
Definitions	2
Implementing a Tiered Approach	4
Tier 1: Universal Prevention Strategies	5
Tier 2 and Tier 3: Intervention Methods	5
San Mateo County Office of Education Tier I Supports	6
Role of Principals	6
Avoiding Common Pitfalls	6
SART Meetings and Members	7
Referring Students for a SART Meeting	8
When to Hold A SART Meeting	9
SART Meeting Agenda	9
SART Meeting Strategies and Best Practices	10
Identifying and Addressing Root Causes	10
Securing Participation at SART Meetings	10
Tone and Relationship Building at SART Meetings	10
Providing Supports and Interventions	11
Effective Use of SART Contracts	11
SART/SARB Notification Letters	11
SAMPLE STUDENT ATTENDANCE REVIEW TEAM (SART) MEETING	14
Preparation: SART Team Members Pre-Meeting Briefing	14
Conduct the SART Meeting	15
Student Attendance Review Team Meeting Notice	28
Student Attendance Review Board Meeting Notice	29
Root Cause Analysis	30

Good Attendance is Key to Success

To foster a culture that values regular and timely attendance, school and district staff must partner with students and families to support student success and well-being. Students who feel safe and connected at school have higher attendance rates and are better prepared to learn. As a result, these students tend to have better academic outcomes.

Many reasons and unique challenges may cause a student to miss school. Through mutual cooperation and collaborative problem-solving, the Student Attendance Review Team (SART) process can be a tremendous tool in helping students attend school regularly and on time. The main goal of the SART process is to understand why a student is not attending school and to connect the student and their family to school and community resources that could address the underlying cause of their absences.

Did You Know?

- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of the third grade or be held back
- By sixth grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school
- Ninth-grade attendance can be a better predictor of a student dropping out of school than eighth-grade test scores
- 10 percent of the school year is 18 days in most school districts. That's just two days a month

Definitions

The following are definitions for common terms related to attendance.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	• This is commonly understood as the percentage of pupils who typically attend class each day. ADA is calculated by dividing the number of pupils present by the total number of enrolled pupils. • In California, ADA also refers to the formula used to determine how much funding a school district should receive from the state. • Total ADA is defined as the total days of student attendance divided by the total days of instruction during which the student is enrolled.
Chronic Absentee	A student is considered chronically absent if: • They are absent 10% or more of the days. • This is calculated by dividing total absences by the total number of school days the student is enrolled during the school year. • This measure includes all absences, both excused and unexcused. • Excessive absence is assumed to impede learning. (EC Section 60901[c][1])
Truant	Any student subject to compulsory education who: • is absent from school without a valid excuse for three full days, • is tardy or absent for more than 30 minutes during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, OR • is any combination of the above Any student who is considered truant must be reported to the attendance supervisor or school district superintendent. (EC Section 48260[a])
Habitually Truant	A student is deemed habitually truant if: • they have been reported as truant three or more times in a school year, • an appropriate district employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the parent/guardian and the student, AND this effort follows the sending of required notices (Section 48260.5 or 48261).

	A "conscientious effort" includes: • Attempting to communicate with the parents at least once. • Using the most cost-effective method, such as an email or phone call. (EC Section 48262)
Chronically Truant	A student is considered chronically truant if: • they are subject to compulsory education and • they are absent without a valid excuse for 10% or more of the school days in one school year (from enrollment date to current date). The appropriate school district officer or employee must comply with: • EC Sections 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 48263, 48291, and 48263.6
School Attendance Review Board (SARB)	• School Attendance Review Boards (SARBs) are composed of representatives from various youth-serving agencies. • SARBs assist truant or recalcitrant students and their parents/guardians with school attendance and behavior problems. • SARBs utilize available school and community resources. • County SARBs are convened by the county superintendent at the start of each school year. • If no county SARB exists, a school district governing board can establish a local SARB. • Local SARBs operate in the same manner and have the same authority as county SARBs.



Factors That Contribute to Chronic Absence

Barriers

- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Family responsibilities
- Poor transportation
- Frequent moves or school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems

Negative School Experiences

- Struggling academically or socially
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Negative attitudes of parents due to their past and current school experiences
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

Lack of Engagement

- Lack of culturally relevant, engaging instruction
- No meaningful relationships with adults in school
- Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Failure to earn credits/ no future plans
- Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes

Misconceptions

- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn't affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren't a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades

Implementing a Tiered Approach

Early intervention is crucial when addressing absenteeism. Schools should track all absences and design a system that alerts school staff when a pattern of absenteeism emerges. Initial conversations with the student and their parent/guardian should be informal, showing care and respect. If needed, formal approaches like conferences, home visits, or Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meetings can be used to identify underlying issues and offer supportive solutions.

School staff should check with the parent/guardian and other key adults to offer support and address barriers. When appropriate, SART meetings may involve relevant personnel and community partners to expand the menu of resources available to a student.

A tiered approach, consistent with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) frameworks, can be an effective method for addressing school-wide attendance as well as targeted interventions for those in need of intense supports.

A tiered approach includes the following:

Tier 1: Universal Prevention Strategies

Tier 1 universal strategies help create a welcoming and supportive school environment for all students. They include prevention strategies that can significantly reduce the need for interventions. Examples include:

- Establishing a positive school climate
- Creating engaging classroom environments
- Communicating high expectations for daily attendance
- Celebrating Attendance Awareness Month
- Sharing key messages with parents about the importance of attendance
- Monitoring daily attendance regularly
- Recognizing good and improved attendance
- Providing school-based health supports
- Ensuring students have safe transportation options to and from school
- Ensuring parents/families understand school safety protocols and safety measures to keep students safe at school

Tier 2 and Tier 3: Intervention Methods

Tier 2 and Tier 3 targeted and intensive interventions can help students with higher levels of absenteeism. For example, when attendance challenges are flagged, schools can:

- Hold parent conferences
- Conduct home visits
- Use Student Study Team (SST) or SART meetings to identify barriers and determine supports

These meetings may lead to appropriate interventions, including the following:

- Create support plans during SART meetings
- Offer Success Mentors or Check-in, Check-out
- Refer to outside resources or community partners for barriers for attendance
- Create attendance/behavior contracts
- Include attendance goals in the student's Individualized Education Plan
- Monitor progress and providing additional supports as needed

If chronic absenteeism persists, more intensive interventions like referrals to a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) may be necessary, but only after exhausting other interventions.

San Mateo County Office of Education Tier I Supports

The San Mateo County Office of Education's (County Office of Education's) Safe and Supportive Schools Department guides districts in providing students and families with behavioral and mental health services. Examples include:

- Foster youth services coordination
- McKinney-Vento support for youth/families experiencing homelessness
- Mental health and wellness
- School climate support and training-related tools, including restorative practices, trauma-informed strategies, and crisis response
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- School safety resources and training, including The Big Five, protocols for student threat assessments, suicide prevention, Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), and student sexual assault
- Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE)

Role of Principals

The site principal plays a crucial role in developing, adopting, and supporting a comprehensive, tiered approach to improve attendance. They decide whether to create a separate attendance team or integrate it with existing teams like PBIS or MTSS, based on factors like school size, team functionality, absenteeism levels, and district guidance.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

To reduce chronic absenteeism, schools should avoid

- Focusing only on students with the most absences
- Relying solely on case management
- Assigning the responsibility to too small a team
- Failing to engage the entire school in prevention and early intervention strategies

Tiered System of Supports For Improving Attendance



SART Meetings and Members

A SART meeting is a problem-solving meeting that includes the SART team, the parent/guardian, and the student. It may be necessary to hold a meeting with the parent/guardian without the student, depending on the sensitive nature around the absences. The primary function of the team is to work with students and families to improve attendance through problem solving and active interventions.

The SART utilizes school professionals of differing backgrounds to understand and address inconsistent attendance patterns. Essential roles include a team leader (traditionally the site principal), meeting facilitator, and note taker, with all members having access to a common system for monitoring student outcomes and tracking progress. Typically, the SART may also include the following individuals:

- School counselor
- Data coordinator
- Teacher
- School nurse
- Mental health/school-based wellness staff, including school-based community partners
- Child welfare and attendance specialist
- After school program partners
- Other school staff, as dictated by the unique situation of the student or family

If a school site already utilizes a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) structure, it may be advantageous to have that team serve as the SART if the team's makeup is appropriate, given the specific needs of the student. A SART meeting should not be utilized as a punitive forum or seen as an adversarial encounter. The goal is meaningful collaboration with the student and family with the goal of improved attendance.

SARTs should do the following:

- address the needs of specific students
- evaluate schoolwide data to identify areas of need
- discuss strategies or programs that may be beneficial for the entire campus community or on a targeted basis
- engage in other attendance-related activities or conversations.

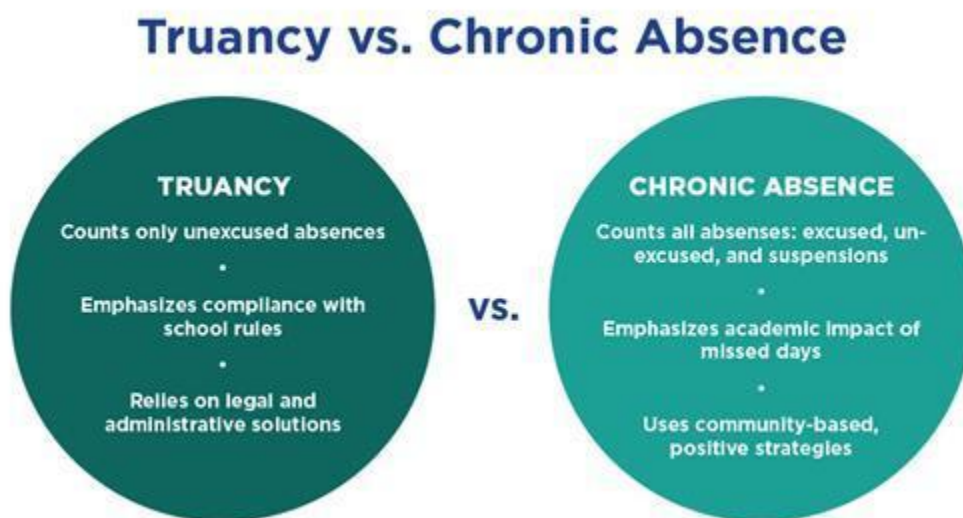
In addition to addressing the needs of specific students at a SART meeting, the team may also evaluate schoolwide data to identify areas of need and discuss strategies or programs that may be beneficial for the entire campus community or on a targeted basis. Additionally, the team may engage in other attendance-related activities or conversations.

The primary goal of a SART is to enhance attendance for all students by coordinating, assessing, and prioritizing strategies. Key functions of the team include:

- Monitoring data trends: Assess chronic absence and truancy data to set goals for improvement
- Examining causes: Use qualitative and quantitative data to understand the reasons behind absenteeism
- Coordinating implementation: Develop a comprehensive strategy involving prevention and early intervention
- Providing support: Ensure students with chronic absences and truancy receive necessary support from both the school and the community

Referring Students for a SART Meeting

The SART process can be utilized for any student who is experiencing attendance challenges either by meeting the legal requirements for habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism.



When to Hold a SART Meeting

It is a best practice to intervene as early as possible when a student begins to display a poor pattern of attendance (either through truancy events or excessive excused absences). If it is reasonably feasible to do so, hold a meeting in conjunction with the first notification letter. If that is not possible, it should be held in conjunction with the second notification letter.

SART Meeting Agenda

SART meetings typically include the following:

- A review of the current state of attendance.
- The opportunity for the student and/or parent/guardian to discuss the circumstances that are resulting in the student's attendance pattern.
- A problem-solving discussion focused on addressing the issues raised by the student and parent/guardian and offering supports.
- The development of an attendance agreement. Attendance agreements generally address commitments made by the student, parent/guardian and school staff.
- The establishment of a timetable for monitoring the effectiveness of the SART contract. It is strongly recommended that a follow-up date is set and calendared at the initial SART meeting. It is common to have a follow-up meeting 6 to 8 weeks later.

[Sample SART Meeting](#)

SART Meeting Strategies and Best Practices

If feasible, schedule the SART meeting promptly after the first notification of truancy or excessive absences. If a second notification is sent, a SART should be scheduled in conjunction with that notice.

Effective SART meetings:

- Include a variety of staff members, such as attendance clerks, school nurses, counselors, and PBIS specialists.

- Require personal and meaningful interactions with families to understand and address the root causes of absenteeism and behavioral issues.
- Should employ a positive, restorative tone to build rapport and trust with families.
- Must identify the root causes of absenteeism and behavior challenges through open and supportive dialogue.
- Provide appropriate interventions and services to address identified issues, such as tutoring, counseling, health plans, and transportation support.
- Should result in a well-documented SART contract that clearly states the responsibilities and support services provided.

Identifying and Addressing Root Causes

Identifying the root causes of absenteeism and behavioral challenges is crucial. Schools should explore all potential reasons for absences and should consider physical barriers, emotional trauma, academic struggles, and other factors. There are a variety of tools to help in the identification of root causes. One such tool is a root cause analysis located in the appendix.

[Root Cause Analysis](#)

Securing Participation at SART Meetings

To ensure attendance at SART meetings, schools can use multiple notification methods like letters (ordinary and registered mail), phone calls, and home visits. If necessary, home visits can serve as SART meetings to accommodate families unable to attend on campus. If possible, confirm participation by the family 48 to 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Tone and Relationship Building at SART Meetings

Maintaining a positive, restorative tone is essential to foster open communication and collaboration. Questions should focus on understanding and addressing the issues rather than

blaming students and parents. Building strong relationships with students and parents is critical for successful outcomes.

Providing Supports and Interventions

Effective SART meetings offer a range of supports and interventions tailored to the specific needs of each student. General interventions like tutoring and counseling are beneficial for all, while specific resources address unique challenges like transportation issues or health concerns. If capacity permits, having school staff support a warm hand off with support services is highly recommended. Assisting a family with scheduling appointments and follow-ups increase the likelihood of families utilizing these resources.

[Attendance Improvement Strategies](#)

Effective Use of SART Contracts

SART contracts should clearly outline the responsibilities and support services agreed upon during the meeting. A detailed contract, reviewed and understood by all parties, ensures clarity and accountability.

[Sample Contract](#)

SART/SARB Notification Letters

Notification Schedule

Number of Instances of Absences	Notification
3 instances* of absences	1 st Notification Letter
3 additional instances* of absences (6 total)	2 nd Notification Letter
3 additional instances* of absences (9 total)	3 rd Notification Letter Either Chronic Absentee or SARB depending on the attendance circumstances

*An instance is any absence between one period through a full school day or being late to school (tardy) by 30 minutes or more.

Having accurate and timely information about student attendance is critical to early intervention. It is important to run attendance reports on a regular basis. It is recommended that reports be run on a monthly basis at a minimum and twice a month if possible.

It is highly recommended that a flier or brochure that outlines the support services and programs available to the student and family accompany the notification letters. Additionally, including information regarding how to access those services will assist families in utilizing the services offered.

[Sample Notification Letters](#)

We would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the Sequoia Union High School District, Attendance Works, and the Ravenswood City School District to the development of this document. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX

Sample Student Attendance Review Team (SART) Meeting

Preparation: SART Team Members Pre-Meeting Briefing

Prior to the meeting, the SART facilitator should brief team members regarding the meeting process, member roles, and expectations

- The team will use questions to guide the conversation
- The team members will focus on a strengths-based approach and will discuss positives prior to addressing areas for growth
- The team will conduct the meeting in a compassionate and supportive manner that treats all members with dignity and respect
- The team will assume the best intentions and focus on improving attendance

The SART should be prepared to have a discussion about the student's situation. This information should be shared in a non-judgmental manner and include, but not be limited to, the following:

- What is going well for the student
- What are areas of strengths
- Current activities or areas of involvement
- Health-related information (if applicable)
- Current school performance data (grades, etc.)
- Attendance data
- Previous interventions
- Active community partners if any

Agenda and Script: SART Meeting with Student and Parent/Guardian

Welcome Student and Parent/Guardian

- The facilitator goes out to greet the family
- Thank the family members for attending and provide a brief overview of the plan for the meeting

Sample Script

“Thank you for coming. I am happy you were able to make it to this meeting. Before we enter the meeting, I want to review the meeting format, so you know exactly what is going to happen. We have invited [insert the names of the members of the team]. All participants in the meeting are here to offer help and support. When we begin, we will review your child’s current attendance situation, we will ask some clarifying questions, and then we will discuss what we can all do to support you and your student. Do you have any questions about this? Let’s step into the meeting.”

Family steps into the room and the facilitator invites them to sit down at the table...

Conduct the SART Meeting

Introduce the family to the SART members and have the members introduce themselves to the family.

Sample Script

“Good morning everyone. We are happy to welcome [parent/guardian name] and [student name] to our meeting. [Student name] is in the [insert grade level] grade. Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your name and how you know [student name] or what services you provide.”

Facilitator engages in conversation with the family using a series of questions to begin exploration of challenges that impact positive attendance. This is done to begin to uncover where SART can offer support. The questions are:

- What is currently happening?
- What were some of the things you were thinking about when you first began to have difficulty with school attendance?
- What are you thinking about now when you consider your current pattern of attendance?
- How do you feel your attendance pattern has impacted you?

- What do you think you could do and/or need to do to improve your attendance pattern and make things better?

Adjust these questions to fit the specific context for a student and family.

Give the student and/or family time to answer the questions with as little interruption as possible. After the student and/or family have shared, the team can provide positive feedback on the ideas shared and contribute additional ideas and potential solutions. Facilitator reviews the key challenges the student and family identified as well as proposed solutions.

Sample Script

“[Student name], you mentioned that you don’t really like school and you believe you’re not a good student. One idea that the group mentioned is that you start attending after-school tutoring. College tutors are available to help you in all your subjects. Coming to school every day will also help you stay on track. You also mentioned that you like video games and stay up late playing. One idea that the group mentioned is to practice a regular routine such as showering by 9:00 p.m. to help you wind down. Setting a timer to limit your video game playing time is another idea that was mentioned. You also mentioned that when you think about school you feel very anxious and stressed. Are you open to meeting with someone to talk about this? There are healthy ways to cope with stress and talking with someone might be helpful in coming up with different ways to handle these situations. Are you comfortable moving forward with the ideas discussed that can help?”

Documentation and Monitoring

Document the solutions, strategies, and referrals agreed to in the meeting. The agreement should have clear timelines for completing actions and include the names of those who are responsible for action items or follow-up.

The agreement should also include a review date when the team will reconvene to monitor progress.

Sample Script

“We are going to write these ideas and commitments down in an agreement so we can help you keep track of your progress. [Restate the plan that was captured]. Is there anything that I said that was not agreed to or anything that I may have missed?”

We will meet again in six weeks on [insert specific date] to check in and see how you are doing and if you need any additional support. This follow-up meeting will take place at 9:00 am here in this same room so please be sure to mark your calendars.”

The facilitator should be sure to be optimistic about the student’s ability to utilize the resources and make progress, but it is also important to ensure that the student and family are aware that the school is required to comply with laws and regulations and take additional action if the pattern of attendance does not improve.

Sample Script

“This contract and the members of this team are here to help you improve your attendance pattern. We all believe that you can improve and attend school regularly. That being said, I also must let you know that if our agreements are not met and your attendance does not improve, we will move forward with a more formal hearing known as a Student Attendance Review Board (SARB). The SARB is handled by the district and failure to comply with the outcome of the SARB process could have serious legal consequences. I am confident that we can turn this around with the plan we have in place and hope we can all work together to help [Student Name].”

Close the meeting by giving the family, student, and SART members with assigned tasks a copy of the agreement.

Sample Script

“This contract and the members of this team are here to help you improve your attendance pattern. We all believe that you can improve and attend school regularly. That being said, I also must let you know that if our agreements are not met and your attendance does not improve, we will move forward with a more formal hearing known as a Student Attendance Review Board (SARB). The SARB is handled by the district and failure to comply with the outcome of the SARB process could have serious legal consequences. I am confident that we can turn this around with the plan we have in place and hope we can all work together to help [Student Name].”

Sample Script

“As we close the meeting, does anyone have any questions or comments? If you think of anything after today's meeting, feel free to give me a call. Here is my card and it has my contact information on it. Thank you to [Student Name] and [the family] for taking this important step today. We are here to support you and wish you the best as you move forward.”

Attendance Improvement Strategies

The following practices have been identified as strategies and activities that are effective at improving a student's attendance.

- Raise awareness of the effects of chronic absence and truancy with school personnel, parents, guardians, caregivers, community partners, and local businesses. Attendance Awareness Month in September is a good time to do this.
- Identify and respond to patterns of chronic absence and truancy in specific grades and student groups.
- Identify and address factors contributing to chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy, including suspension and expulsion.
- Ensure that pupils with attendance problems are identified as early as possible to provide appropriate support services and interventions.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented to reduce chronic absenteeism rates.
- Monitor unexcused absences of more than 30 minutes in middle schools and high schools, and ensure parents, guardians, or caregivers are notified when their children become classified as “truant” (California Education Code [EC] Section 48260).
- After parents or guardians have been notified that their children are classified as truant and a conscientious effort has been made to hold a conference with the parents and pupils, make sure the parents, guardians, or caregivers are notified that their children are now deemed habitually truant (EC Section 48262).
- When the typical avenues of intervention for students who are habitually truant or chronically absent are exhausted at the school site, refer the case to a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) or a district attorney or probation officer mediation program (EC sections 48263 and 48263.5).
- Inform parents, guardians, and caregivers of the school district's method of verification of absences due to illness.
- Phone or email parents, guardians, and caregivers in the evening to verify absences.
- Use bilingual aides to contact parents, guardians, or caregivers with limited English-speaking ability and send out school attendance notification emails or letters in the language appropriate to the family.
- Make home visits concerning student absences if parents, guardians, and caregivers cannot be reached by email, text, or phone.

- Refer students with frequent absences to a school nurse, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or other pupil support personnel for case management and counseling.
- Hold a drawing for special prizes for individual students or classes that show improved attendance.
- Send commendation letters to students and parents, guardians, or caregivers for improved school attendance and perfect attendance.
- Seek small or large financial incentives from the parent association to be awarded to the classroom with the best attendance record; allow teachers to spend financial rewards for any purpose selected by the class members of the teacher.
- Initiate make-up classes on one day of a weekend for pupils who miss classes during the regular school year.
- Initiate a “cross-age helper” or “buddy” system in which older students with good attendance are permitted to assist younger students on a weekly basis.
- Personalize relationships between children and attendance office personnel; ask office aides, clerks, or secretaries to make individual daily contact with students who are chronically absent.
- Establish homeroom periods in secondary schools, with students remaining with the same teacher all four years of high school; request that homeroom teachers monitor their students’ attendance and discuss truancy or chronic absenteeism with parents, guardians, or caregivers.
- Emphasize the importance of regular school attendance to students with long-term, non-contagious diseases that tend to keep students at home (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and sickle-cell anemia); encourage and support these students at school. Ensure that these students are allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during excused absences pursuant to EC Section 48205.
- If a student has a temporary disability which makes attendance impossible or inadvisable, inform parents, guardians, or caregivers about the option of individual instruction provided by the school district pursuant to EC Section 48206.3.
- Display attendance graphs in prominent locations to show current attendance goals and comparisons between past and present school year attendance.
- Provide schools with a pro-rata share of the increased Average Daily Attendance funds generated by their attendance improvement efforts.
- Set high goals in the Local Control Accountability Plan for reducing the chronic absenteeism rates of student populations or grade levels with a history of high chronic absenteeism.

- Assess chronic absenteeism rates during the transitions from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school.
- Request that the local SARB evaluate school-level and district-level attendance interventions for effectiveness.
- Identify the specific school attendance barriers faced by children in poverty, foster youth, homeless youth, and any other significant student population with high chronic absenteeism rates.
- Address the problem of chronic absenteeism, even when the absences have been excused.

SAMPLE Attendance Agreement

LEA Name Here

School Attendance Review Team (SART)

ATTENDANCE GOALS AND AGREEMENT

The School Attendance Review Team (SART), student, and parent/guardian believe that [Student Name] would benefit from the agreements and resources contained within this contract. It is agreed that [Student Name], parent/guardian, and the SART will do the following:

[Student Name] Agrees To

- Attend school daily and arrive on time
- Attend each class on time
- Remain at school for the full time assigned
- Abide by all school rules and regulations and maintain appropriate behavior at school
- Participate in school Check-in/Check-out process
- Attend counseling
- _____

[Parent/Guardian] Agrees To

- Escort the student to school each day
- Attend all meetings and conferences concerning their child at school
- Contact appropriate school personnel to discuss academic concerns
- Contact school regarding absences
- Maintain home routine that supports consistent bedtime
- _____

The SART Agrees To

- Have attendance clerk report absences to the counselor and/or wellness coordinator
- Have school provide counseling services for the student
- Have school make referral for assessment for a 504/IEP
- Make a referral to SARB
- Make a referral to the following community-based agency _____
- _____

TO THE STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN

Many services are available to assist you in this matter. It is our desire to be of help in improving attendance at school. In signing this agreement, we expect that you will be willing to do your very best to improve [student's name] attendance. If attendance does not improve, the SART may make a referral to the district's School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

Student's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

SART Chair Signature

Date

Review Date

(A copy of this agreement is to be included in a SARB referral)

DATE

To the parents or guardians of
Student Name
123 First Ave.
City, State Zip

FIRST NOTIFICATION

Total Days Enrolled: _____
Unexcused Absences: _____
Excused Absences: _____
Unexcused Tardies (30+ min): _____
Tardies: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are reaching out to let you know that Student has missed important classroom time because of [pronoun] absences. When Student misses school, [pronoun] miss/es learning opportunities that cannot be replaced by homework or makeup assignments.

In many cases, absences from school are unavoidable as a result of health problems or other circumstances. In other cases, missing school is not excused. In either case, we want to make you aware and offer support. It's our job to help!

Did you know?

- Children who are truant or chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to learn to read by the end of 3rd grade.
- By sixth grade, excessive absences are a proven early-warning sign of drop-out.
- By ninth grade, good attendance can predict graduation even better than eighth-grade test scores.

This notification is a first step, to alert you and to offer support in assisting you and your child. Should absences continue after this first notification, we will follow up with you to schedule a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) conference in which we can work together to develop an appropriate support plan for Student.

We are here to help!

If you have questions about this letter, or if you need help regarding Student's attendance or performance in school, please contact me, or one of the people listed below.

(Insert 1 st Contact Name)	(Insert 2 nd Contact Name)
(1 st Contact Phone)	(2 nd Contact Phone)

We know this news may be unsettling, but there are various supports we can provide to get Student back on track. We hope this letter is the first step in working together to help your child. The backside of this letter contains information we are required by law to provide you. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Principal
(School)

For Backside of Letter

Legal Information on UNEXCUSED Absences

Attendance Law

California law (Education Code 48260) classifies a student as “truant” when the student has missed school on three occasions involving any combination of the following:

- Being absent from school without a valid excuse for a full day.
- Being more than 30 minutes late to school.
- Being absent from school without a valid excuse for more than 30 minutes.

Legal Consequences

We are required to notify you of the following information related to your student's unexcused absences, as stated in Education Code 48260.5. This law states that upon a pupil's initial classification as truant, the school district shall notify the pupil's parent or guardian the following information by using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include electronic mail or a phone call:

- That the pupil is truant.
- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 of Part 27.
- That alternative educational programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Legal Information on EXCUSED Absences

State law also focuses on excessive absences from school regardless of whether they are excused or not. Specifically, Education Code 60901(c)(1) instructs schools to consider a student as chronically absent whenever they have missed more than 10 percent of the school year, for any reason, from the date the student enrolled to the present.

DATE

To the parents or guardians of
Student Name
123 First Ave.
City, St. Zip

SECOND NOTIFICATION

Total Days Enrolled: _____
Unexcused Absences: _____
Excused Absences: _____
Unexcused Tardies (30+ min): _____
Tardies: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are reaching out to let you know that Student has continued to miss important classroom time due to [pronoun] absences. We are very concerned as missing school can impact your student's educational success.

Since we have not seen improvement in Student's attendance, we would like to schedule a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) conference to explore options for support.

What we will talk about

- What is happening that is contributing to Student missing school?
- What are some things you have tried to improve Student's attendance since you were first notified?
- Who has been affected by Student's absences?
- What do you think we can do to make things better?

We will be following up with you within one week to schedule this conference at a convenient time. Your child will also be asked to attend.

We are here to help!

If you have questions about this second letter, please contact me or one of the people listed below.

(Insert 1 st Contact Name) (1 st Contact Phone)	(Insert 2 nd Contact Name) (2 nd Contact Phone)
--	--

We hope that by having a structured support plan we can all play a part in helping Student get back on track. The backside of this letter contains information that we are required by law to provide you. Should you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Principal
(School)

For Backside of Letter

Information on UNEXCUSED Absences

Attendance Law

California law (Education Code 48260) classifies a student as truant when the student has missed school on three occasions involving any combination of the following:

- Being absent from school without a valid excuse for a full day.
- Being more than 30 minutes late to school.
- Being absent from school without a valid excuse for more than 30 minutes.

Legal Consequences

We are required to notify you of the following information related to your student's unexcused absences, as stated in Education Code 48260.5. This law states that upon a pupil's initial classification as truant, the school district shall notify the pupil's parent or guardian of the following information by using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include electronic mail or a phone call:

- That the pupil is truant.
- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 of Part 27.
- That alternative educational programs are available in the district.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264.
- That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- That it is recommended the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Information That Pertains to EXCUSED Absences

State law also focuses on excessive absences from school, regardless of whether they are excused or not. Specifically, Education Code 60901(c)(1) instructs schools to consider a student as chronically absent whenever they have missed more than 10 percent of the school year, for any reason, from the date the student enrolled to the present.

Student Attendance Review Team Meeting Notice

DATE

To the parents/guardians of
[student name]
123 First Ave.
City, St. Zip

THIRD NOTIFICATION

Total Days Enrolled: _____
Unexcused Absences: _____
Excused Absences: _____
Unexcused Tardies (30+ min): _____
Tardies: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you well. We have provided two previous notifications regarding Student's absences. Unfortunately, Student's chronic absences have not improved. Although Student's absences have been excused, we are concerned about the potential impact on [pronoun] education. We are notifying you to let you know that Student is considered chronically absent, which is defined in California Education Code Section 601901 (c)(1) as a pupil who is absent for 10 percent or more of the school days for which they have been enrolled.

As a follow up to the Student Attendance Review Team (SART) conference we had, we are requesting your attendance at a district-level meeting to discuss barriers to Student's attendance as well as options for support.

Your scheduled appointment is as follows:

Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

If you are unable to attend the meeting at the proposed time, please contact one of the people below as soon as possible.

(Insert 1 st Contact Name) (1 st Contact Phone)	(Insert 2 nd Contact Name) (2 nd Contact Phone)
--	--

Sincerely,

Principal
(School)

Student Attendance Review Board Meeting Notice

DATE

To the parents or guardians of

Student Name

123 First Ave.

City, St. Zip

THIRD NOTIFICATION

Total Days Enrolled: _____

Unexcused Absences: _____

Excused Absences: _____

Unexcused Tardies (30+ min): _____

Tardies: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you well. We have provided two previous notifications regarding Student's attendance. We also held a conference with you and the Student Attendance Review Team (SART) to develop a support plan. Unfortunately, Student's absences have not improved, and we are concerned about the potential impact.

We are now required to notify you that Student is considered habitually truant as defined by California Education Code Section 48262: Any pupil deemed a habitual truant and has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year, provided that no pupil shall be deemed a habitual truant unless an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil themselves after filing of either of the reports required of Education Code Section 48260 or 48261.

It is now mandatory for you and your Student to attend a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) hearing. Your scheduled appointment is as follows:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Due to the number of Student's absences, you are required to attend this conference (Education Code Section 48321.5). Failure to attend or reschedule may result in a referral to the District Attorney's Office. If you need to reschedule this meeting, please call the SARB Office at

_____.

If you have questions about this third letter, please contact me, or one of the people listed below.

(Insert 1 st Contact Name) (1 st Contact Phone)	(Insert 2 nd Contact Name) (2 nd Contact Phone)
--	--

Sincerely,

Principal

(School)

Root Cause Analysis

The following document serves as a guide to help school staff understand the cause(s) of a student's absenteeism. Some or all of these guiding questions may be relevant to a student's and/or family's specific context. The answers to these questions will drive the interventions and supports offered.

Academic Inquiry

What is the student's current academic situation?

Is the student currently receiving accommodations?

Is language a concern?

Is the student organized?

Is the student completing homework?

Does the student have a 504 or IEP? If so, has the 504/IEP team met to discuss and address the student's attendance?

Safety Inquiry

Is the student being bullied?

Is the student at a greater risk of bias based on their race, disability status, sexual orientation, or gender expression?

Social Inquiry

Is the student avoiding school because of difficulty adjusting socially?

Is the student struggling with transitions?

Home Inquiry

Are the parent(s)/guardian(s) supportive of creating a positive attendance pattern?

Are there specific challenges in the home that are impacting attendance (child care, joblessness, mental health, housing instability)?

Health Inquiry

Are there conditions at the school impacting the student's safety?

Is the student experiencing mental health concerns that are impacting attendance (anxiety, depression, separation)?

School Culture Inquiry

Does the student have a positive relationship with a trusted adult on campus?

Can the campus support the student in engaging with an area of interest (school clubs, activities or athletics)?

Student Agency

Has the student offered a reason for their absences?

Parent/Guardian Agency

Has school staff engaged with the parent to identify why the student may be absent from school?

Has the parent stated that there are language, cultural, or logistical factors that may keep the parent/guardian from supporting the student's attendance?