

Truancy & Dropout in San Luis Obispo County

A Strategic Plan

Children's Services Network Task Force to Combat Truancy & Dropout

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OUR MISSION

**To reduce the level,
magnitude, and frequency of
truancy & dropout in the 10
school districts within
San Luis Obispo County.**

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A good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity. It is a prerequisite... we know that countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

President Barack Obama's message to Congress, February 24, 2009.

INTRODUCTION

In January 2009, the Children Services Network convened a task force to explore the underlying cause of truancy and dropout in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County with the primary purpose of developing action-oriented objectives to address the cause. The Task Force was also charged with developing a comprehensive set of recommendations which school districts/agencies countywide may adopt to prevent or intervene with youth who are truant or at risk of dropping out of school. Additionally, the Task Force has (1) collected and analyzed countywide data on truancy and dropout, (2) conducted an analysis of programs and protocol regarding truancy and dropout with existing gaps, and, (3) developed a comprehensive strategic plan to be presented to the Council and local Superintendents.

TRUANCY AND DROPOUT IN SLO COUNTY

Current Data

In March 2009, the Truancy and Dropout Task Force gathered current data on absences and trancies in SLO County schools (Appendix 1). The data reflect the first reporting period (P1) of the 2008/2009 school year—approximately 70 days. The purpose was to examine the full scope of attendance and establish baseline numbers from which to determine trends in attendance and the impact of interventions. The total number of absences is a summary of both excused and unexcused absences, affording a broad look at the number of empty seats in SLO County, regardless of reason. The data reveal over 93,000 empty seats for the first reporting period. Projecting this information into the second half of the school year

Definition of Truancy

The Education Code (EC) Section that defines a truant reads as follows:

EC Section 48260 (a): Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days or tardy or absent more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the school district.

results in almost 200,000 empty seats for the year. This amounts to slightly less than five and a half days of absence for every student in the county. The data are broken down by grades K-8 and 9-12.

There is a higher percentage of absence in grades 9-12 as compared to K-8, indicating that absences increase with age. For the purposes of this data collection, truancy was defined as three full-day unexcused absences. According to this definition there were over 5,400 truant students in SLO County for the P1 period. This would project to over 10,000 truant students for the school year, almost one-third of the entire county's student population.

Data Collection Challenges

While truancy and dropout have been clearly defined in Education Code, accurate data have been difficult to generate. Current national statistics from the Center for Labor Market Studies show that in 2007, 16% of persons between the ages of 16 and 24 (6.2 million people) are high school dropouts. California is home to more dropouts than any other state. On the surface it may seem an easy process to measure graduation rates in California high schools. In the absence of a data system for tracking students and a student population that is highly mobile, precise numbers have been difficult to compute (CDRP Brief 4). Accordingly, there is no longitudinal data from which to analyze the impact of intervention efforts. Dropout rates are generally higher for males, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and those with low English language proficiency. See Appendix 2 for the current dropout rates as cited by the California Department of Education. These dropout rates compare the counts of dropouts over the entire school year with a single day enrollment count on California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) Information Day (first Wednesday of October). Calculating dropout rates for schools with a high volume of short term students is problematic. The official data for SLO County for the 2007-2008 school year is a dropout rate of 11.1%, or 376 students. These data do not include schools that are operated by SLO County Office of Education because of constraints in interpreting these calculations with high mobility schools. However, since these schools target students with the highest truancy rates, the actual number of dropouts could approach 15%. Even at the much lower estimate, a more than 10% dropout rate is cause for concern.

Definition of Dropout

The California Department of Education defines a dropout for the October 2008 CBEDS data collection as a person who meets the following criteria:

- Was enrolled in grades seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, or twelve at some time during the 2007-08 school year AND left school prior to completing the 2007-08 school year

OR

- Successfully completed the 2006-07 school year but did not begin attending the next grade (seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, or twelve) in the school to which he or she was assigned or in which he or she had preregistered or was expected to attend during the 2007-08 school year

AND

- Is not enrolled and attending school as of Information Day, 2008

Exclusionary Conditions

The student is not a dropout if he or she meets any of the conditions noted below:

- The student has transferred to and is attending another public or private educational institution leading toward a high school diploma or its equivalent. This definition does not include adult education programs.
- The student has received a high school diploma or its equivalent (General Educational Development [GED] exam, California High School Proficiency Examination [CHSPE], or adult education high school diploma program).
- The student has transferred to and is attending a college offering a baccalaureate or associate's program.
- The student has moved out of the United States.
- The student has a temporary school-recognized absence due to suspension or illness.
- The school has verified that the student is planning to enroll late (e.g., extended family vacation, seasonal work).
- The student has died.

Ethnic Disparity

As with the rest of California, SLO County reveals ethnic disparities in the number of students dropping out (See Appendix 2). While African Americans account for 1.7% of the total student population, they account for a disproportionate percentage of the total dropout population. The smaller numbers of African Americans in the overall enrollment is augmented by the number of African American youth from other counties placed in local group homes who then fail to graduate. Conversely, whites make up 61.2% of the student enrollment but only 7.3% of the dropout population. Latinos make up 29.8% of student enrollment and 18.9% of overall dropout population. A similar disparity exists in foster care. While African Americans represent 1% of the county population, they accounted for 5.2% of children in foster care in 2008. It should be noted that these percentages fluctuate. Since African Americans represent small percentages of the total county population and student population, the shift in even a small number of youth results in extreme fluctuation.

COSTS OF DROPPING OUT

According to the Silent Epidemic (2006), high school dropouts are much more likely than their diploma-earning peers to be unemployed, live in poverty, and access public assistance. High school dropouts, on average, earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about \$1 million less than college graduates over a lifetime. Even if a student drops out and then later earns a diploma, he or she tends to earn less in a lifetime. While the current economy finds many without employment, high school dropouts are unemployed at a much higher rate. In general, dropouts are more likely to become users of government assistance rather than those who contribute to the general welfare. The loss of revenue has a significant impact on state and local economies (CDRP Brief 1). The immediate cost to the nation for each dropout is approximately \$260,000, according to a study from Princeton University cited in *The High Cost of High School Dropouts*.

While the cost of dropping out can be measured in dollars, there are other less quantifiable costs to communities. Dropouts are more likely to end up in prison and to be on death row. They have increased levels of health issues, are more likely to be divorced, become single parents, and ultimately repeat the cycle by raising children who also drop out of school.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The factors that contribute to a student dropping out of school are complex and multi-faceted making it impossible to point to any single cause. Truancy and dropout are influenced by a complex interaction of social, community, economic, familial, and ethnic factors, combined with the emotional and behavioral issues of the individual. Dropping out is generally a process rather than the result of a single event. The foundation for positive school attendance is a successful and meaningful school experience. The significant factors that protect against dropout are confirmed by research. They include an attachment to a school with a positive, safe, and drug-free climate, positive relationships with teachers and other school staff, and an experience of academic success.

In the past decade, schools in SLO County have made great strides toward ensuring the academic success of all students and closing the achievement gap. The focus of this Strategic Plan is not to address school instruction directly since that is being addressed in a variety of

educational venues but to acknowledge that all efforts to make school instruction more effective will have an impact on school attachment, truancy rates, and ultimately the dropout rate. The risk and protective factors addressed here are designed to assist in the early identification of students at risk of school failure so that educational and community resources can be utilized to make appropriate interventions.

Academic Achievement and Attachment

The process of dropping out begins in early elementary school for some students. Poor academic achievement in these early years is one of the strongest predictors of dropping out. Preschool improves school readiness and early school success, positively affecting high school completion. Grades appear to be a more consistent predictor of a student dropping out than test scores. Failing grades in the ninth grade is an accurate predictor of 80% of dropouts, making academic success a better predictor of dropping out than race, gender, and economic status (Protheroe, 2009).

Students' active involvement in academic work and the social aspects of school such as sports and clubs are protective factors that mitigate other predictors of dropping out of school. Targeted programs serving the needs of high-risk students and efforts to reform comprehensive schools have proven to increase graduation rates (CDRP Brief 5). A stable home environment and access to social and financial resources strongly influence the likelihood that a student will graduate (CDPR Brief 15). Other influences include parents who monitor their child's school progress, have high expectations, communicate with the school, and know the parents of their children's friends. Additional risk factors include teenage parenting, having friends who engage in criminal behavior, and students who work more than 20 hours a week.

In a nationwide study of student perspectives called *The Silent Epidemic*, students cited the following as the top five reasons for dropping out of school:

1. Classes were not interesting
2. Missed too many days of school
3. Spent time with people not interested in school
4. Too much freedom/not enough rules in life
5. Was failing school

A recent report by the US Department of Education on the characteristics of late high school dropouts found that 48% of all dropouts in 2004 came from families in the lowest quarter of the

socioeconomic distribution, and 77% came from the lowest half of the socioeconomic distribution. The connection between poverty and dropout is one that warrants serious attention in light of recent economic downturns. In January of 2009, 988 school age children in SLO County were identified as homeless according to the federal McKinney Vento definition. That number is expected to increase significantly over the next couple of years. A higher percentage of youth in poverty could have a significant impact on both truancy and dropout rates.

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting

The above-mentioned report also notes that 83% of dropouts listed school-related reasons for leaving school as opposed to family or employment reasons. The one exception was that 28% of females who dropped out cited pregnancy as the reason. This fact highlights pregnancy during high school as a potential risk factor for dropout. Nationwide, teen pregnancy rates are currently on the rise. When the graduating senior class of 2009 in SLO County entered high school in 2005, they had high hopes of receiving a diploma. Four years later, 844 females in SLO County between the ages of 12 and 19 had given birth. Four hundred ninety-five of those females were 18 years or younger, making them high school age when pregnant or parenting. (See Appendix 8)

Teen pregnancy clearly has an impact on the ability to earn a high school diploma. The Public Health Institute's 2008 report on teen births in California, lists SLO County as 40th out of 58 Counties in rate of teen birth. The estimated annual cost to taxpayers for these teen births in SLO County is listed at \$7,800,000. The report notes that, compared to their demographic peers, teens who become mothers have lower levels of educational achievement, exhibit poorer psychological functioning, and have less stable employment.

Many, though not all, of those infants born to teens were fathered by high school students. Schools are required to teach prevention for sexually transmitted diseases in middle school and high school. Comprehensive sex education that includes pregnancy prevention methods remains optional and many schools in SLO County choose not to teach methods for reducing the risk of pregnancy.

A study by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found that teen girls in foster care are two and a half times more likely than their peers not in foster care to get pregnant by age 19. A Spring 2009 Report by the Public Health Institute on the sexual health needs of California's foster and transitioning youth highlights reproductive health needs in three

California counties. The study documents the substantial sexual and reproductive health challenges that face foster youth in California. The study notes that because of frequent changes of placement and the comfort level of foster parents, foster and transitioning youth may not receive sex education either in school or at home. Regular access to reproductive health care may also be an issue. Additionally, the report notes that 64% of social workers felt that they did not receive sufficient training in comprehensive sex education. Efforts to reduce risk factors for teen pregnancy countywide and in particular for foster youth could make a significant impact on the incidence of dropping out of high school.

Alcohol and Drug Use

The Task Force noted that a significant risk factor for truancy and dropout is alcohol and other drug use by parents, guardians, or other family members. More than 69% of youth in the foster care system in SLO County have alcohol or drug use as a contributing factor in their involvement in the child welfare system. Substance use in the family contributes to parental deficits in parenting, monitoring their children's behavior, lack of communication with the school, and avoidance of community resources. The Task Force also recognizes that addressing substance abuse as a risk factor requires a well-coordinated community effort.

In addition to substance use in the family, a student's own use of alcohol and other drugs is a significant risk factor that contributes to poor school attendance as well as academic success. The National Dropout Prevention Center highlights drug and alcohol abuse and delinquent behavior as major risk factors for dropping out of school. The most reliable data on student substance use in SLO County come from the California Health Kids Survey. In the 2007-2008 school year, this self-report survey was completed by 7th grade students (82%), 9th grade students (77%) and 11th grade students (65%) in SLO County. All school districts participated in the survey. The data summarized in **Appendix 3** reveal that the use of alcohol in the previous 30 days was 12% of 7th graders, 27% of 9th graders, 42% of 11th graders, and 67% of students in continuation or community school. Marijuana use for the previous 30 days was 4% of 7th graders, 14% of 9th graders, 25% of 11th graders, and 54% of students in continuation or community schools. Finally, 10% of students in continuation or community schools are daily users of alcohol and 24% are daily users of marijuana. While there is not a verified causal relationship between substance use and truancy, there is a strong correlation. Students in

continuation and community school have the highest rates of truancy and higher rates of substance use than their counterparts in traditional high schools. Addressing student use of drugs and alcohol through school-site based Student Assistance Programs and treatment programs such as the SLO Sober Community School can have an impact on reducing truancy and dropout within the highest at risk population.

School Safety and Violence

Research from the California Dropout Research Project suggests that a poor disciplinary climate at a school site contributes to dropout rates. When students do not feel safe at school they are less likely to show up. The California Healthy Kids Survey includes questions regarding resilience, violence, and safety (See Appendix 4). While the majority of students feel safe on school campuses in SLO County, between 10 and 20% of students admit to having rumors spread about them, sexual jokes or comments made to them, or having been made fun of because of looks more than four times during the past 12 months. Efforts to make school campuses a welcoming and safe place for all can increase school attendance.

Another notable item on the California Healthy Kids Survey is the awareness and use of weapons on school campuses (See Appendix 5). Twenty-two percent of continuation and community school students admit to seeing someone with a weapon on campus within the past year. Of those, 8% admit to being threatened or injured by a weapon two or more times. Efforts to reduce the level of harassment and violence on school campuses could have a notable effect on student perception of safety.

Current literature on youth asset development asserts that high numbers of assets in youth promote resilience and serve as protective factors against delinquent behavior. Youth in SLO County score moderate to high in their personal assessment of assets (See Appendix 6). Interestingly, the category receiving the lowest number is the category of “Meaningful Participation” in both the school and the community environment. Fostering opportunities for meaningful participation in our schools and local communities could increase resilience in youth.

WHAT WORKS

Positively impacting truancy and dropout rates is not simple, and requires a dedicated community-wide collaborative effort. While unilateral efforts on the part of all agencies that

address youth are important to reducing dropout rates, a coordinated community effort is also needed. Schools are the primary setting for prevention and intervention efforts. However, since multiple social and economic issues impact truancy and dropout rates, schools cannot bear the full responsibility for addressing the problem of truancy. The Task Force believes that such interventions are important to the health and welfare of youth in SLO County.

California’s *School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Handbook* (2009) encourages schools to develop strong prevention and early identification programs as both effective and cost-saving measures. The Handbook describes the relationship between prevention and intervention as follows:

- Prevention costs the least and reaches the largest number of students
- Early identification costs more than prevention and serves fewer students
- Intervention costs the most while it serves the smallest number of students

Prevention	Early Identification	Intervention
Fewest Dollars \$	More Dollars Spent \$\$\$\$	Most Dollars Spent \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Most Students Served	Fewer Students Served	Smallest Number Served

Attachment to school and academic success surfaces as a risk factor in many studies. Feeling safe on a school campus, being involved in extra-curricular activities, and making adequate academic progress is a powerful formula for predicting high school graduation. Identifying school failure at an early age can be an appropriate intervention. Failing algebra is a significant predictor of dropping out of school. In Atascadero Unified School District, programs to help all students be successful in algebra have helped reduce truancy.

A recent report by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy notes the limited number of rigorous studies evaluating the effects of targeted truancy and dropout programs.

Overall, programs that target older student populations make limited positive impacts on attendance, achievement, and dropping out. This fact underscores the importance of prevention and early intervention efforts to address truancy at the elementary level. A primary recommendation of the *Dropout Prevention* report by the U.S. Department of Education is the implementation of adult advisor/mentor programs for students at risk of dropping out. An example of a promising mentoring program is described in **Appendix 9**.

The National Dropout Prevention Center conducted a review of national programs that reduce the dropout rate. Based on this analysis, the Center has created the *15 Strategies for Improving Student Attendance and Truancy Prevention* (See **Appendix 7**). The strategies are organized according to School and Community Perspective, Early Interventions, Basic Core Strategies, and those that address Classroom Instruction. This list is reflective of the recommendations being made by the Task Force. Efforts have been made to identify recommendations in each of the categories.

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OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overarching goal for addressing issues of Truancy and Dropout is: **To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.** The recommendations identified by the Task Force for achieving this goal have been written as measurable objectives. The objectives are organized into the following domains: *Prevention (Risk and Protective Factors), School Interventions, and Community Interventions.* Under each objective, in the main body of this Strategic Plan, are individual action steps, target deadlines, and individuals/organizations responsible for each goal. Below is a synopsis of the objectives.

Prevention (Risk and Protective Factors):

Objective 1: Ensure that every school site plan in the county contains a goal for improving attendance and sets measureable benchmarks of annual progress regarding improving overall attendance and reducing unexcused absence/truancy.

Objective 2: Reduce truancy among identified homeless youth.

Objective 3: Reduce the number of pregnant teens who drop out of high school.

School Interventions:

Objective 4: Build the capacity for schools to increase outreach efforts to parents whose substance abuse or suspected substance abuse is impacting their child's attendance.

Objective 5: Reinforce the appropriateness of filing Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCAR) on parents who are abusing alcohol and other drugs.

Objective 6: Ensure minors whose truancy is due to substance abuse issues are referred for prevention/intervention services.

Objective 7: Develop the capacity for adult mentoring programs for students who have been habitually truant or deemed at-risk to dropout in local middle and high schools.

Objective 8: Develop the capacity for local school districts to establish and implement school based peer mentoring programs and have school sites provide peer mentoring programs for truant youth.

Community Interventions:

Objective 9: Reduce the frequency and number of youth out of school and unsupervised during daytime hours by implementing a countywide daytime curfew in SLO County.

Objective 10: Ensure all school personnel receive adequate training regarding multi-disciplinary interventions and how to refer/access those services.

Objective 11: All local School Attendance Review Boards (SARB) utilize effective well rounded interventions and have consistent multi-disciplinary representation.

Objective 12: All school Districts within the County conduct timely and thorough SARB, Pre-SARB, and County Truancy Board referrals (EC 48262).

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

<p>Objective 1: Ensure that every school site plan in the county contains a goal for improving attendance and sets measureable benchmarks of annual progress regarding improving overall attendance and reducing unexcused absence/truancy.</p>	
<p>Measures: By 2013 all schools within the County have incorporated attendance goals into school site plans.</p>	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
<p>Superintendents require all schools to include attendance goals in the school site plan.</p>	<p>District Superintendents</p>
<p>Superintendents/designee track and record number of district schools with attendance as part of school site plan and track data regarding improvement/deficits from year to year.</p>	<p>School principal and school site council</p>
<p>Each school plan includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data used to determine level of attendance needed to meet school goal, • Sub-groups represented in the data, • Gaps in performance are measured, • Priority needs to reach school attendance goals are identified, • Barriers to reaching school attendance goals, • Identification of resources needed to support improved attendance goal. 	
<p>Districts report progress toward attendance goals to SLOCOE annually.</p>	<p>District Superintendents</p>

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 2: Reduce truancy among identified homeless youth.	
Measures: By 2012 all school districts have procedures in place to identify youth experiencing homelessness according to the federal McKinney Vento definition. Students are supported in maintaining a consistent educational experience.	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
School staffs are able to identify homeless youth and understand the impact of homelessness on academic success.	School districts, SLOCOE
Schools track attendance and academic progress of homeless youth and intervene as needed.	School districts, SLOCOE
Identified homeless youth have access to additional services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate enrollment • Support for transportation to school of origin • Automatic qualification for free lunch 	School districts, SLOCOE
Identified homeless youth are targeted for academic interventions when necessary.	School districts, SLOCOE

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 3: Reduce the number of pregnant teens who drop out of high school.	
Measures: By 2013, all adolescents in SLO county receive comprehensive sex education and reproductive health services. Pregnant teens receive support to remain in school and complete a diploma.	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
All teens receive comprehensive sex education during middle school and high school. Sex education is in compliance with California Education code.	Community Action Partnership, Public Health, School districts, SLOCOE
Teens have access to reproductive health care. Teens know how to access reproductive health care in the community.	Community Action Partnership Community Health Centers, Public Health
Pregnant school-age youth receive academic and psycho-social support to remain in school.	School districts, SLOCOE, Community Action Partnership Community Health Centers, Public Health
DSS Staff and Foster Parents are trained in the importance of sexuality education for foster youth and recommendations for insuring that youth receive education.	DSS, Foster Parent Association, Foster Family Agencies, and Independent Living Programs
All foster youth are allowed to attend school-based family life and sexuality education.	DSS, Foster Parent Association, Foster Family Agencies, and Independent Living Programs

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 4: Build the capacity for schools to increase outreach efforts to parents whose substance abuse or suspected substance abuse is impacting their child's attendance.

All schools within the County maintain current resource and referral information for parents who are abusing or suspected of abusing drugs and alcohol. Build referral and tracking systems within school and community providers.

Measures: By 2013 all schools within the County will incorporate a method to disseminate information regarding alcohol and drug abuse for parents. By 2013 County youth services agencies will have an established method to track and record referrals on adult and youth clients from local schools.

Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
Schools receive or provide training in substance use and abuse issues, including problem identification and referral, with parents.	Local School Districts and Behavioral Health
Schools have protocol in place for referring parents to community based organizations.	Local School Districts
Schools are provided with information regarding referral options for adults and youth in need of substance abuse education and interventions.	Local School Districts, Behavioral Health Department and Various Providers
Referral literature is maintained at each school site.	CSN
Track and record referrals from local school on adult and juvenile clients.	Various Providers
Schools sponsor annual forums to disseminate information on substance abuse, train in parenting strategies, and make local resources available.	Behavioral Health
Schools build capacity to engage and empower youth who present parental substance abuse as a factor in truancy with on-campus supports including counseling and skill building activities.	Local School Districts

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 5: Reinforce the appropriateness of filing Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCAR) on parents who are abusing alcohol and other drugs.	
Measures: Increase in SCAR referrals to DSS resulting in greater collaboration between DSS & Education to facilitate services so children attend school.	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
Include in Mandated reporter training.	DSS & SLO-CAP
Incorporate education of community, individuals and partners at Public Forums.	DSS & SLO-CAP

Objective 6: Ensure that minors whose truancy is due to substance abuse issues are referred for prevention/intervention services. All schools have identification and referral procedures in place for students with substance abuse issues to receive community-based or school-based intervention and treatment services. Build the capacity to track the number of students served by the aforementioned programs.	
Measures: By 2013 all secondary schools in the County will have established protocol to assess student risk and behavior outcomes related to alcohol or other drug use, and provide a timely and appropriate intervention. Establish the base line number of students referred by schools to community-based or school-based drug and alcohol prevention/intervention programs. Increase the rate of youth identified as at-risk (and then referred) to a percentage consistent with that of the California Healthy Kids survey data following a <u>gap analysis</u> of current service levels.	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
Schools establish protocol for identifying chronically truant students with co-occurring substance abuse.	School Districts
Schools build capacity to engage and empower youth who present substance abuse as a factor in truancy with on campus supports including counseling and skill building activities.	School Districts in partnership with Behavioral Health Department
Build capacity for streamline/uniform data collection and record keeping on substance using students throughout the county.	Behavioral Health Department
Ensure treatment and other intervention services are available to qualifying students at low or no-cost.	Schools, Community Based Organizations, Behavioral Health Department

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 7: Develop the capacity for adult mentoring programs for students who have been habitually truant or deemed at-risk to dropout in local middle and high schools.	
Measures: Establish the capacity for community based organizations to develop and administer evidence based or promising program(s) by 2013.	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
Create a request for proposal and send out to existing community based organizations.	CSN
Evaluate the viability of implementing evidence based canned programming within local schools.	Community Based Organizations
Conduct assessment of school-based adult-youth mentoring programs to identify capacity needs, outcome design, and availability.	Schools, along with community-based mentoring programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, etc.
Conduct assessment of community-based adult-youth mentoring programs to identify capacity needs, training and fidelity components, outcome design, and availability.	Community Based Organization
School commits to two year trial of selected program and with partner organization creates referral and tracking system for placing appropriate youth with adult mentors.	Schools, Community Based Organization

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 8: Develop the capacity for local school districts to establish and implement school based peer mentoring programs and have school sites provide peer mentoring programs for truant youth.

Measures: By 2013 have at least four school sites establish campus-based peer mentoring programs which match older (or same-age) youth with truant youth to increase internal assets. Student mentors may assist mentees and demonstrate increased success in attendance, school work and study skills, behavior, and typical family problems while decreasing peer pressure (such as pressure to use drugs or have sex) and delinquency.

Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
Conduct assessment of school-based peer mentoring programs to identify capacity needs, outcome design, and availability.	Schools, along with peer-based mentoring programs such as Friday Night Live Mentoring.
School sites design mentoring strategic plan to identify service needs, capacity, and sustainability.	Schools
Schools partner with or create peer mentoring program to engage truant youth in positive peer relationships and improved school bonding.	Schools
Schools and partner counseling services conduct asset assessment to determine if truancy is related to lack of positive peer influences, connectivity to school, and reduced social skills.	Schools, Community Based Organizations, Behavioral Health Department
Schools and partner counseling services create referral and tracking system for placing youth with peer mentors.	Schools, Community Based Organizations, Behavioral Health Department
Schools identify, train, and place adult faculty in direction of peer mentoring program to manage placements, group activities, and track outcomes.	Schools, along with selected peer mentoring program.

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 9: Reduce the frequency and number of youth out of school and unsupervised during daytime hours by implementing a countywide daytime curfew in SLO County.	
Measures: By 2013 at least 25% of the municipalities will have adopted the proposed or a modified version of the proposed daytime curfew ordinance.	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
Draft proposed daytime ordinance based upon adjacent county examples and consistent with existing nighttime ordinance.	County Counsel
Have proposed ordinance reviewed by county counsel and city attorneys to address legal ramifications and possible barriers to implementation.	District Attorney/Chiefs of Police/City Counsels/Board of Supervisors/County Counsel
Have the proposed ordinance reviewed and presented to local Sheriff, Chiefs of Police, District Attorney, Chief Probation Officer, District Superintendents by CSN.	CSN Executive Board
Have proposed ordinance reviewed and presented to all local school boards and Superintendents.	CSN Executive Board
Collect letters of support from all school districts, law enforcement agencies, etc.	CSN Executive Board
Have proposed ordinance reviewed and presented to County Board of Supervisors, City counsels for sponsorship.	CSN Executive Board

See Appendix 10 for Sample Ordinances

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

Objective 10: Ensure all school personnel receive adequate training regarding multi-disciplinary interventions and how to refer/access those services. School personnel receive annual training from stakeholder agencies regarding current community based programs and services and the means to refer or access those services for students. Build the capacity to track training hours provided by community based organizations and public service agencies.

Measures: Increase training for school personnel by community based organizations and public service agencies by 25% once baseline is established.

Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
<p>Schools designate a point of contact for each school for the purposes of receiving information on services available from community based organizations.</p> <p>School personnel participate in annual information sharing sessions organized around the services available to support children and families.</p> <p>Schools within districts with SAFE sites receive literature and information regarding SAFE services.</p>	<p>School districts</p> <p>CSN /SAFE Management Support Team, community based organizations, family resource centers</p> <p>SAFE Site Coordinators</p>

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

<p>Objective 11: All local School Attendance Review Boards (SARB) are utilizing effective well rounded interventions and have consistent multi-disciplinary representation.</p>	
<p>Measures: By the 2010-2011 school year have 100% attendance by identified multi-disciplinary members in each district.</p>	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
<p>Develop teams of multidisciplinary partners with agencies to support students and families with attendance issues based on the resources available in each community.</p>	<p>District personnel and agency personnel, including non-profits that support students and families in crisis</p>
<p>Set a SARB calendar and notify all partners of the dates and times of the meetings.</p>	<p>SARB Chairperson</p>
<p>Develop a system of consistent attendance reporting so data from each school in the district follows Ed Code 48260 and defines excused absences in the same manner from school to school.</p>	<p>School principals/attendance personnel</p>
<p>Send first SARB letters to all students with 3 unexcused or unverified absences or 8 excused absences.</p>	<p>School principals/attendance personnel</p>
<p>Send second SARB letter to all students with 5 unexcused or unverified absences or 15 excused absences and consider interventions such as PreSARB conferences or attendance contracts to improve attendance.</p>	<p>School principals/attendance personnel</p>
<p>Send third SARB letter to all students with 7 unexcused or unverified absences or 21 excused absences and consider sending student/parent to the School Attendance Review Board to seek further interventions to support better attendance.</p>	<p>School principals/attendance personnel</p>
<p>Create and implement a referral system for District SARB that includes notification to parents, counselors, district and site personnel as well as to the community partners regarding meeting times and meeting place for the District SARB meeting. District SARB should have a district staffing 20 minutes prior to the SARB meeting with the student and/or parents.</p>	<p>SARB Chairperson</p>

Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

<p>(continued from pg. 25)</p> <p>Identify interventions to use prior and after SARB to support students and families that include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Family advocates▪ Schedule flexibility▪ Independent study▪ Minimum day▪ Tutoring▪ Drug and alcohol support▪ Continuation high school▪ Community school▪ Assessment▪ Small group/class size▪ Peer mediation	<p>Agencies and school personnel</p>
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Goal: To increase overall school attendance and high school graduation rates in SLO County.

<p>Objective 12: All school Districts within the County conduct timely and thorough SARB, Pre-SARB, and County Truancy Board referrals (EC 48262).</p>	
<p>Measures: A 25% increase in requests for SARB and Pre-SARBs for elementary students. A 100% increase in the number of referrals made to County Truancy Board.</p>	
Action Steps	Individuals/Organizations Responsible
<p>Conduct Truancy Board meetings during each month of the regular school year.</p>	<p>SLOCOE/District Attorney/Department of Social Services/Probation Department</p>
<p>District Attorney’s Office, Department of Social Services, Probation Department commit to (1) Deputy District Attorney, (1) Social Worker and (1) Deputy Probation Officer to attend one (1) Truancy Board meeting each month during the regular school year.</p>	<p>District Attorney/Department of Social Services/Probation Department</p>
<p>Districts establish protocol for requesting pre-SARBS at predetermined days of absence.</p>	<p>Individual School Districts/SLOCOE</p>
<p>Districts and Truancy Board requests for Education Code violation filings are completed on standardized forms with checklist of required documents.</p>	<p>Individual School Districts/District Attorney</p>
<p>Individual school districts and Truancy Board refer complaints to District Attorney’s Office for review. Cases submitted for review, after the SARB process has been completed, will consist of violations of Education Code § 48293.</p>	<p>District Attorney</p>
<p>District Attorney’s Office compiles statistics and reports to school districts dispositions of Education Code violation filings for the periods</p>	<p>District Attorney</p>
<p>January 1 through June 30 and July 1 through December 31 and reports back to school districts on an annual basis.</p>	<p>District Attorney/SLOCOE</p>
<p>Traffic Court Commissioner will be advised regarding the importance and impact of effective intervention strategies along with the re-filing procedure of Education Code Violation cases.</p>	

EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Though individual measures have been developed to for each objective within this report broader universal benchmarks must be established in order to gauge effectiveness of this Strategic Plan. In particular, the following indicators must decrease in our community as increased elements of the Strategic Plan are adopted and implemented:

- Number of Truant Students per reporting period- currently 5,401 for P1 in 2008-2009
- Number of Total Days of Absence per reporting period- currently 93,726 for P1 in 2008-2009
- Percentage of Dropouts in SLO County- 11.1% or 376 students 2007-2008

Only through diligent attention to these benchmarks, joined with an increased awareness of the underlying causes that lead to truancy and dropout, will SLO County begin to make and sustain significant strides in reducing the youth in our community who are habitually truant and drop out of school.

BUDGETARY DISCUSSION

The commitments detailed within this report entail permanent annual budget earmarks specifically for the purpose of addressing truancy and dropout in SLO County. The significant increases in truancy and dropouts have not happened overnight and, as such, will not be instantly resolved by the addition of a single program or policy change.

The allocation of financial resources and a strong system of accountability by the various school districts in SLO County are integral to the successful implementation of this Strategic Plan. Traditionally, punitive and “magic bullet” efforts in SLO County have received the majority of resources, relative to a sustained effort to improve the process. The scope of our work will require equitable time and effort to improve existing processes and developing new resources and strategies if we are to sustain a measurable and lasting impact on our at-risk youth.

To this end, it is important to solicit and pursue grant opportunities from state and federal sources. It is unreasonable for county and district entities to wholly subsidize this endeavor, though they are the primary financial stakeholders and must set the stage for partners to follow.

Particular costs are not itemized by action item in this Strategic Plan. The Task Force members felt that it would be somewhat premature to attach specific dollar amounts to these action items prior to school districts, county agencies and community based organizations having

an opportunity to internally review this information. In the future, as these individual action items near implementation, CSN will need to conduct specific study to determine exact costs to the particular jurisdiction for final implementation.

CONCLUSION

The impact of chronic truancy goes beyond the obvious relationship between attendance and learning and that of student and teacher. While it is true that success in school requires that a student show up and similarly true that a teacher cannot teach a student who is not in attendance. These truths are only part of the story. What is equally significant is that, as previously noted, a high school diploma is an indicator of future positive participation in society. Therefore, school attendance should be of concern to all.

The Task Force recommends a set of objectives that require further exploration. The next step calls for input, analysis, and feedback from a broader and more diverse group. It is at this next step where community based organizations, parents, students, and identified school and public agency staff keep the momentum moving by establishing a concrete agenda for implementation and service delivery. The CSN is encouraged to consider any new recommendations that result from greater stakeholder involvement. Only with thoughtful consideration by all stakeholders will these recommendations be implemented and benefit SLO County youth, families, schools, and community.

Some of the obstacles that the SLO County community will contend with in the task of reducing truancy/dropout rates include:

- Declining financial resources among school districts and public service agencies
- Reduced staffing levels among school districts and public service agencies
- Increasingly disengaged families
- Lack of Evidence Based programs
- Lack of local service providers
- Transient student population
- No uniform system for tracking students

These barriers may grow without prompt and sustainable action. It is inevitable that the students we fail today will engage stakeholder agencies and organizations at a significantly higher rate and with greater financial impact on limited resources.

The Task Force's work is only a pre-amble to the sustained focus needed to effectively address the issue. The CSN through its stakeholder agencies will need continued direct involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation efforts. It is also recommended that the CSN commit to researching funding for evidence based programs which are applicable to our local needs and address gaps in service.

“Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson that ought to be learned; and however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that he learns thoroughly.”

Thomas H. Huxley (1825 - 1895)

Appendix 1
SLO Attendance Data
2008/2009 School Year
1st Reporting Period (August – January)

District	Grades	District Enrollment 2008/2009	Total # Days Absent	Total # of students Truant	Number of Days P-1
Paso	K-8	6,875	9,642	337	64
	9-12		7,196	455	
Shandon	K-8	322	405	39	70
	9-12		325		
Lucia Mar	K-8	10,772	17,519	1,191	76
	9-12		11,068	911	
Atascadero	K-8	4,945	7,195	195	76
	9-12		3,779	83	
SLCUSD	K-8	7,135	11,976	553	72
	9-12		7,600	777	
Templeton	K-8	2,371	3,382	227	71
	9-12		2,369	80	
Coast USD	K-8	760	1,122	31	75
	9-12		1,186	158	
SLOCOE Special Ed	K-8	184	832	19	76
	9-12		559	20	
SLOCOE Court/Community School	7-12	258	6,738	202	76
Pleasant Valley	K-8	134	347	9	75
San Miguel	K-8	554	220	108	74
Cayucos	K-8	187	266	6	54
Totals		34,497	93,726 (K-8) 52,906 (9-12) 40,820	5,401	Average: 66

Attendance = 2.7 days absent for each student (34,497)

Truancy for the first period = 15.6% of the total student population

**Appendix 2
Dropout Rates**

**Adjusted Grade 9-12 / 4-year Derived Dropout Rate
2007/2008**

California Total Derived Dropout Rate
Dropouts 18.9%

SLO County Total Derived Dropout Rate
11.1% (376 students)

(Does not include GED, 5th year seniors, special education completers and deceased)

The 4-year derived dropout rate is an estimate of the percent of students who would drop out in a four year period based on data collected for a single year. This data does not include schools that are operated by SLO County Office of Education because of constraints in interpreting these calculations with high mobility schools.

**Adjusted Grade 9-12 / 4-year Derived Dropout Rate
By Ethnicity
2007/2008**

California Dropout Ethnicity (% of Total Dropouts)		SLO Dropout Ethnicity (% of Total Dropouts)		% of Enrollment in SLO Co.
African American	34.7%	African American	33.3%	1.7%
Asian	8.4%	Asian	5.8%	1.8%
Latino	25.5%	Latino	18.9%	29.8%
White	12.2%	White	7.3%	61.2%

This data does not include students from Community Schools or Grizzly Youth Academy.

Appendix 3 Alcohol and Drug Use

Table A4.3

Current AOD use, Past 30 Days

	Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	Cont/Com %
Alcohol (at least one drink)	12	27	42	67
Marijuana	4	14	25	54
Inhalants	5	6	4	11
Cocaine	<i>na</i>	6	4	15
Methamphetamine or any amphetamines	<i>na</i>	5	3	7
Ecstasy, LSD or other psychedelics	<i>na</i>	5	5	14
Other illegal drug or pill	3	5	5	18
Any of the above AOD Use	13	33	46	72
Two or more drugs at the same time	<i>na</i>	6	11	34

Questions HS A.62, 64-70/MS A.51, 53-55: During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use....?

na = not asked of middle school students

Table A4.4

Frequency of Current Alcohol and Marijuana Use, Past 30 days

	Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	Cont/Com %
Alcohol				
None	88	73	58	33
1 to 2 days	8	15	19	22
3 to 9 days	2	6	14	25
10 to 19 days	1	3	5	9
20 or more days (daily)	1	4	4	10
Marijuana				
None	96	86	75	46
1 to 2 days	2	5	10	12
3 to 9 days	0	3	7	12
10 to 19 days	0	1	3	6
20 or more days (daily)	1	4	6	24

Questions HS A.62, 64/MS A.51, 53: During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use....?

**Appendix 4
Violence and Safety**

Table A6.1

Verbal Harassment on School Property, Past 12 Months

	Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	Cont/Comm %
Had mean rumors/lies spread about you				
0 times	52	55	60	59
1 time	20	19	17	17
2 to 3 times	12	14	12	11
4 or more times	15	11	11	13
Had sexual jokes/comments/gestures made to you				
0 times	58	51	54	59
1 time	15	14	11	10
2 to 3 times	11	13	12	11
4 or more times	17	22	23	20
Been made fun of because of your looks/way you talk				
0 times	59	60	70	68
1 time	17	16	11	11
2 to 3 times	10	10	8	11
4 or more times	15	14	11	10

Questions HS A.102-104/MS A.84-86: During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you.....?

Appendix 5 Weapons on School Property

Table A6.5

Awareness and Use of Weapons on School Property, Past 12 Months

	Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	Cont/Comm %
Seen someone with a weapon				
0 times	74	72	75	67
1 time	12	14	16	22
2 or more times	12	14	16	22
Been threatened/injured with a weapon				
0 times	91	91	93	86
1 time	55	5	3	7
2 or more times	4	4	4	8

Questions HS A.111, 110/MS A.93, 92: During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you.....?

Table A6.6

Personal Disapproval of Weapon Possession

	Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	Cont/Comm %
Neither approve or disapprove	14	19	14	26
Somewhat disapprove	8	12	11	13
Strongly disapprove	78	69	76	61

Questions HS A.94/MS A.78: How do you feel about someone your age doing the following.....carry a weapon to school?

Appendix 6
Resilience and Youth Development

Table A3.1
Summary of External Assets

Percent of students scoring High, Moderate, and Low in Assets (%)	Grade 7			Grade 9			Grade 11			Cont/Comm		
	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
<i>School Environment</i>												
Total Assets	42	50	8	32	56	13	39	48	13	33	52	15
Caring Relationships: Adult in School	43	48	8	33	56	11	42	49	9	40	50	11
High Expectations: Adult in School	62	32	6	49	44	7	51	42	7	48	44	8
Meaningful Participation	18	58	24	15	54	30	18	49	33	10	49	41
<i>Community Environment</i>												
Total Assets	77	19	4	71	23	6	72	22	6	50	39	11
Caring Relationships: Adult in Community	74	21	6	69	24	7	69	24	7	62	32	7
High Expectations: Adult in Community	74	21	5	69	24	6	70	24	6	56	35	9
Meaningful Participation	62	31	7	55	33	12	54	35	11	20	47	33
<i>School Connectedness Scale</i>	65	30	5	49	41	10	47	41	12	50	41	9

Appendix 7

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

15 Effective Strategies for Reducing the Dropout Rate

School and Community Perspective

1. **Systemic Renewal:**
A continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies, practices, and organizational structures as they impact a diverse group of learners.
2. **School-Community Collaborations:**
When all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, a strong infrastructure sustains a caring supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve.
3. **Safe Learning Environments:**
A comprehensive violence prevention plan, including conflict resolution, must deal with potential violence as well as crisis management. A safe learning environment provides daily experiences, at all grade levels that enhance positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills in all students.

Early Interventions

4. **Family Engagement:**
Research consistently finds that family engagement has a direct, positive effect on children's achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student's success in schools.
5. **Early Childhood Education:**
Birth-to five interventions demonstrate that providing a child additional enrichments can enhance brain development. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately dropout is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience through the primary grades.
6. **Early Literacy Development:**
Early interventions to help low-achieving students improve their reading and writing skills establish the necessary foundation for effective learning in all other subjects.

Basic Core Strategies

7. **Mentoring/Tutoring:**
Mentoring is a one-on-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring, also a one-on-one activity focuses on academics and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies.

8. **Service-Learning:**
Service-Learning connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. This teaching/learning method promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.
9. **Alternative Schooling:**
Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the student's individual social needs and academic requirement so for a high school diploma.
10. **After-School Opportunities:**
Many schools are providing after-school and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of area. Such experiences are especially important for students at risk of school failure because they fill the afternoon "gap time" with constructive and engaging activities.

Making the Most of Instruction

11. **Professional Development:**
Teachers who work with youth at high risk of academic failure need to feel supported and have an avenue by which they can continue to develop skills, techniques, and learn about innovative strategies.
12. **Active Learning:**
Active Learning embraces teaching and learning strategies that engage and involve students in the learning process. Students find new and creative ways to solve problems, achieve success, and become lifelong learners when educators show them that there are different ways to learn.
13. **Educational Technology:**
Technology offers some of the best opportunities for delivering instruction to engage students in authentic learning, addressing multiple intelligences, and adapting to students' learning styles.
14. **Individual Instructions:**
Each student has unique interests and past learning experiences. An individualized instructional program for each student allows for flexibility in teaching methods and motivational strategies to consider these individual differences.
15. **Career and Technical Education (CTE):**
A quality CTE program and a related guidance program are essential for all students. School-to-work programs recognize that youth need specific skills to prepare them to measure up to the larger demands of today's workplace.

Appendix 8
San Luis Obispo County Births to Teens

12-19 year olds
2008

By Age	< 15	15	16	17	18	19	Total
2005	2	7	19	35	49	80	192
2006	1	6	19	39	50	83	198
2007	3	11	22	39	72	90	237
2008	3	7	14	28	68	96	217
							844

Total < 15 to 18 = 495

Thanks to Ann McDowell, SLOPHD Epidemiologist

Source: San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department Vital Statistics and State Department of Health Services

Appendix 9 Promising Program

Example of Promising Program:

The “Check and Connect” Mentoring Program

This “off-the-shelf” program, developed at the University of Minnesota, is well-known and serves as the basis for intervention by two Building Bridges grantees in Washington. Check and Connect is a program in which mentors seek to engage students in school through attendance monitoring, problem-solving, advocacy, family outreach, and occasionally counseling. It is designed to be implemented for at least two years. Researchers found one rigorous evaluation (Sinclair, Christenson, & Throw, 2005) of Check and Connect. There were moderate positive effects of the program on student dropout and presence at school, but no significant impact on attainment of a high school diploma. Three (3) more studies are needed in order to conclude that Check and Connect is an effective, evidence based program for dropout prevention.

For more details about the Check and Connect program, see <http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/>

Following are the adjusted effect sizes calculated by the Institute based on reported outcomes: rate of dropout = .348 (p=.02), presence at school = .337 (p=.01), rate of high school graduation = -.053 (p=.77).

**Appendix 10
Sample Ordinances**

Chapter 9.28

YOUTH PROTECTION

Sections:

Article I. Nighttime Curfew

<u>9.28.010</u>	Purpose and intent.
<u>9.28.020</u>	Definitions.
<u>9.28.030</u>	Offenses.
<u>9.28.040</u>	Defenses.
<u>9.28.050</u>	Enforcement.
<u>9.28.060</u>	Penalties.

Article II. Daytime Curfew

<u>9.28.070</u>	Purpose and intent.
<u>9.28.080</u>	Definitions.
<u>9.28.090</u>	Offenses.
<u>9.28.100</u>	Lawful defenses for absence from school.
<u>9.28.110</u>	Enforcement – Penalties.
<u>9.28.120</u>	Penalties.

Article I. Nighttime Curfew

9.28.010 Purpose and intent.

The city council finds that a juvenile curfew ordinance is necessary and desirable because the protection of minors warrants a higher degree of governmental regulation. This higher degree of regulation is premised upon the peculiar vulnerability of children and minors' inability to make critical decisions in an informed and mature manner. The city recognizes a compelling interest in preserving the safety of the community generally and providing a higher degree of protection for its minors specifically during nighttime hours. (Ord. 98-4).

9.28.020 Definitions.

For the purpose of this article, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- A. "Curfew hours" shall mean the period from 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights and from 12:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights until 5:00 a.m. the following morning.
- B. "Emergency" shall mean any unforeseen combination of circumstances or a situation that calls for immediate action. The term includes, but is not limited to,

a fire, natural disaster, an automobile accident, explosion, or any condition requiring immediate action to prevent serious bodily injury or loss of life.

- C. "Establishment" shall mean any privately owned place of business operated for profit to which the public is invited including, but not limited to, any place of amusement or entertainment.
- D. "Guardian" shall mean (1) a person who, under court order, is the guardian of a minor; or (2) a public or private agency with whom a minor has been placed by a court.
- E. "Loiter" shall mean to delay an activity, errand, or journey with aimless idle stops and purposeless distractions, to remain in a place in an idle manner, to hang around aimlessly or without real necessity.
- F. "Minor" shall mean any person under 18 years of age.
- G. "Operator" shall mean any individual, firm, association, partnership or corporation operating, managing or conducting any establishment.
- H. "Parent" shall mean a person who is a natural parent, adoptive parent or step-parent of a minor.
- I. "Public place" shall mean any place to which the public or a substantial group of the public has access and includes, but is not limited to, streets, highways, and the common areas of schools, hospitals, apartment houses, office buildings, transport facilities and shops.
- J. "Remain" shall mean (1) to stay behind while others withdraw, to tarry, to stay, or (2) to fail to leave the premises when requested to do so by a peace officer, the owner, operator or other person in control of the premises.
- K. "Responsible adult" shall mean a person at least 18 years of age and authorized by a parent or guardian to have the care and custody of a minor.
- L. "Serious bodily injury" shall mean bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes death, serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ. (Ord. 98-4).

9.28.030 Offenses.

It is unlawful for:

- A. Any minor to remain or loiter in any public place or on the premises of any establishment within the city during curfew hours; or
- B. Any parent or guardian of a minor to knowingly permit or, by insufficient control, allow the minor to remain or loiter in any public place or on the premises of any establishment within the city during curfew hours. (Ord. 98-4).

9.28.040 Defenses.

It is a defense to prosecution of the above offenses that the minor was:

- A. Accompanied by the minor's parent or guardian or by a responsible adult; or
- B. On an errand at the direction of the minor's parent or guardian or responsible adult without detour or delay; or
- C. In a motor vehicle involved in intrastate or interstate travel, and such driving during curfew hours does not constitute loitering; or
- D. Engaged in employment, or going to or returning home from employment without detour or delay; or
- E. Involved in an emergency; or
- F. On the sidewalk adjacent to the minor's residence, providing the minor is not otherwise violating the law; or
- G. Attending an official school, religious or other adult-supervised recreational activity sponsored by the city, a civic organization or other similar entity that takes responsibility for the safety of the minor; or going to or returning home from an official school, religious or other adult-supervised recreational activity sponsored by the city, a civic organization or other similar entity, without detour or delay; or
- H. Emancipated pursuant to law; or
- I. Exercising First Amendment rights protected by the United States Constitution, such as the free exercise of religion, freedom of speech and the right of assembly. (Ord. 98-4).

9.28.050 Enforcement.

Before taking any enforcement action under this section, a police officer shall ask the apparent offender's age and reason for being in a public place or on the premises of an establishment during curfew hours. The officer shall not issue a citation or detain a minor under this article unless the officer reasonably believes that an offense has occurred and based upon the minor's response(s) and other circumstances, no defense under BMC [9.28.040](#) appears present or applicable. (Ord. 98-4).

9.28.060 Penalties.

Any person who violates a provision of this article is guilty of a separate offense for each day or part of a day during which the violation is committed, continued or permitted. Any person who violates the offenses described in this article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Minors shall be dealt with in accordance with juvenile court law and procedure. (Ord. 98-4).

Article II. Daytime Curfew

9.28.070 Purpose and intent.

State law requires all persons between the ages of six and 18 to attend school. Regular school attendance provides important benefits not only to the students themselves but also to the health, safety, and welfare of all residents within the city. Regular school attendance promotes employability upon graduation and reduces delinquency as well as the potential for future dependence upon public assistance.

The community as a whole suffers when a minor student is not attending school. Truancy or unexcused absenteeism from school results in a loss of educational opportunities to the student and a loss of revenue to the school. Truancy also often leads to vandalism, petty theft, daytime burglaries, and other criminal activity. Truants often tend to loiter in and about public places; frequently, persons going about their lawful business as well as public property become targets of the delinquent behaviors of truants when they should be in school. This is not intended to abridge or interfere with the lawful rights of parents or legal guardians or to contravene or supersede the laws of the state of California dealing with such matters.

This article is intended to assist with the policing of public places in the city during specified daytime hours and the prevention of crimes by and against minors during those hours. It is not intended to interfere with the enforcement of state laws regulating truancy or with the school district's truancy programs. This article is intended to provide the city with an additional proactive intervention tool to protect youth. (Ord. 08-17 § 1).

9.28.080 Definitions.

For the purpose of this article, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- A. "Curfew hours" shall mean the period of the minor's regular scheduled school time on school days.
- B. "Emergency" shall mean any unforeseen combination of circumstances or a situation that calls for immediate action. The term includes, but is not limited to, a fire, natural disaster, an automobile accident, explosion, or any condition requiring immediate action to prevent serious bodily injury or loss of life.
- C. "Establishment" shall mean any privately owned place of business operated for profit to which the public is invited including, but not limited to, any place of amusement or entertainment.
- D. "Guardian" shall mean:
 - 1. A person who, under court order, is the guardian of a minor; or
 - 2. A public or private agency with whom a minor has been placed by a court.
- E. "Loiter" shall mean to delay an activity, errand, or journey with aimless idle stops and purposeless distractions, to remain in a place in an idle manner, to hang around aimlessly or without real necessity.

- F. “Minor” shall mean any person under 18 years of age.
- G. “Operator” shall mean any individual, firm, association, partnership or corporation operating, managing or conducting any establishment.
- H. “Parent” shall mean a person who is a natural parent, adoptive parent or step-parent of a minor.
- I. “Public place” shall mean any place to which the public or a substantial group of the public has access and includes, but is not limited to, streets, highways, and the common areas of schools, hospitals, apartment houses, office buildings, transport facilities and shops.
- J. “Remain” shall mean:
 - 1. To stay behind while others withdraw, to tarry, to stay; or
 - 2. To fail to leave the premises when requested to do so by a peace officer, the owner, operator or other person in control of the premises.
- K. “Responsible adult” shall mean a person at least 18 years of age and authorized by a parent or guardian to have the care and custody of a minor.
- L. “Serious bodily injury” shall mean bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes death, serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ. (Ord. 08-17 § 1).

9.28.090 Offenses.

It is unlawful for any minor subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education to be found away from his or her home during the minor’s regular scheduled school time when absent from school within the city without lawful defense as defined herein in BMC [9.28.100](#). (Ord. 08-17 § 1).

9.28.100 Lawful defenses for absence from school.

- A. When the minor is accompanied by his or her parent, guardian, or other adult person having care or custody of the minor.
- B. When the minor is on an emergency errand directed by his or her parent or guardian, or other adult person having care or custody of the minor.
- C. When the minor is going or coming directly to or from his or her place of gainful employment or to or from a medical, dental or other health care appointment.
- D. When the minor has permission to leave for lunch or school-related activity.
- E. When the minor is going or coming directly to or from a school-approved or school-related business, trade, profession, occupation or program in which the minor is lawfully engaged, such as a work study or work experience program, subject to verification by a proper school authority.

- F. When the minor is exempt by law from compulsory education or compulsory continued education.
- G. When the minor is authorized to be absent from his or her school under the provisions of California Education Code Section 48205, or any applicable state or federal law.
- H. When the minor is going directly to or from an event or activity that is directly related to any medical condition of a parent or other adult person having the care and custody of the minor. (Ord. 08-17 § 1).

9.28.110 Enforcement – Penalties.

Before taking any enforcement action under this section, a police officer shall ask the apparent offender's age and reason for being in a public place or on the premises of an establishment during curfew hours. The officer shall not issue a citation or detain a minor under this article unless the officer reasonably believes that an offense has occurred and, based upon the minor's response(s) and other circumstances, no defense under BMC [9.28.100](#) appears present or applicable. (Ord. 08-17 § 1).

9.28.120 Penalties.

Any person who violates a provision of this article is guilty of a separate offense for each day or part of a day during which the violation is committed or continued. Any person who violates the offenses described in this article shall be guilty of an infraction.

The fine for this violation shall be \$50.00 for the first offense, \$100.00 for the second offense within one calendar year of the first offense, and \$200.00 for the third and consecutive offense(s) within one year from the second offense. In lieu of paying the fine, first-time offenders who are eligible for the city's diversion program may provide community service through the diversion program. (Ord. 08-17 § 1).

Chapter 9.04 CURFEW

Sections:

9.04.010 Curfew.

9.04.020 Responsibility of Parent or Guardian.

9.04.030 Definitions.

9.04.010 Curfew.

A. **NIGHTTIME CURFEW.** It is unlawful for any minor under the age of eighteen (18) years to be present in or upon the public streets, avenues, highways, roads, alleys, sidewalks, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds, public places, public buildings, places of amusement or eating places, parking lots or vacant lots in the City between the hours of 10:00 p.m. on any day and sunrise of the immediately following day. This Section does not apply when:

1. The minor is accompanied by his or her parent, guardian or other adult person having the care or custody of the minor, or by his or her spouse eighteen (18) years of age or older;
2. The minor is on an errand directed by his or her parent or guardian or other adult person having the care or custody of the minor, or by his or her spouse eighteen (18) years of age or older, without any detour or stop;
3. The minor is attending or returning directly home from a public meeting, or a place of public entertainment, such as a movie, play, sporting event or school activity, without any detour or stop;
4. The presence of such minor in said place or places is connected with or required with respect to a business, trade, profession or occupation in which the minor is lawfully engaged;
5. The minor is attending school, religious, recreational or civic functions;
6. The minor is in a motor vehicle involved in interstate travel;
7. The minor is married, has been previously married or has been declared emancipated pursuant to law;
8. The minor is on the property or sidewalk abutting the minor's residence;
9. The minor is involved in an emergency; or
10. The minor is exercising First Amendment rights protected by the United States Constitution, such as the free exercise of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

B. **DAYTIME CURFEW.** It is unlawful for any minor under the age of eighteen (18) years, who is subject to compulsory education or to compulsory continuation education to be present in or upon the public streets, avenues, highways, roads, alleys, sidewalks, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds, public places, public buildings, places of amusement or eating places, parking lots or vacant lots in the City during the minor's school hours. This Section does not apply when:

1. The minor is accompanied by his or her parent, guardian, or other adult person having the care or custody of the minor;
2. The minor is involved in an emergency;
3. The minor is going to or coming directly from his or her place of employment or a medical appointment;
4. The minor has permission to leave school campus for lunch or for a school related activity and has in his or her possession a valid off-campus permit issued by the school;
5. The minor is exempt from compulsory education as enumerated in Education Code section 48410;
6. The minor is exempt from compulsory education as enumerated in Education Code sections 48220 et seq.; including, but not limited to, a minor receiving instruction at home pursuant to Education Code sections 48222, 48224, 51745 or other applicable provisions of state law, or is otherwise exempt from attendance at a public or private full-time day school as set forth in the Education Code;

7. The minor is conducting activities which are "excused" for justifiable personal reasons within the meaning of Education Code section 48205;
8. The minor is going directly to or from an event or activity sponsored, sanctioned, or arranged by the school;
9. The minor is exercising First Amendment rights protected by the United States Constitution, such as the free exercise of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly; or
10. The minor is not a student attending school within the County of Santa Barbara or possesses a valid passport, visitors visa or other form of identification to establish the minor is temporarily visiting within the City, or the minor is in a motor vehicle involved in interstate travel.

C. **VIOLATION.** Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Code, when a person under the age of eighteen (18) years is charged with a violation of this Section, and a peace officer issues a notice to appear in Juvenile Court to that minor, the charge shall be deemed an infraction unless the minor requests that a petition be filed under Section 601 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

D. **PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION.** Any person convicted of willfully violating this Section is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$80.00 and/or eight (8) hours of community service. Community service shall be served during a time other than the minor's hours of school attendance or employment.

E. **ENFORCEMENT.** Before taking any action to enforce the provisions of this Section, police officers shall ask the apparent offender's age and reason for being out in a public place during curfew hours. The officer shall not issue a citation or make an arrest for a violation of this Ordinance unless the officer reasonably believes that an offense has occurred and that, based on any response and other circumstances, no exceptions to this Section apply.

9.04.020 Responsibility of Parent or Guardian.

No parent, guardian or other person having the legal care, custody or control of any person under the age of eighteen (18) years shall knowingly permit or allow such person to violate the provisions of Section 9.04.010.

9.04.030 Definitions.

For the purposes of this Chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the meaning respectively ascribed to them by this section.

- A. **EMERGENCY.** An unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action. The term includes but is not limited to the following: a fire, a natural disaster, an automobile accident, or any situation requiring immediate action to prevent serious bodily injury or loss of life.
- B. **GUARDIAN.** (1) A person who under court order is the guardian of minor, or (2) a public or private agency with whom the minor has been placed by a court order, or (3) a person at least eighteen (18) years of age exercising care and custody of a minor.
- C. **MINOR.** Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years of age.
- D. **PARENT.** A person who is a natural parent, adoptive parent, or a stepparent of another person.
- E. **PUBLIC PLACE.** Any place to which the public or any substantial group of the public has access including, but not limited to, paseos, sidewalks, streets, highways, beaches, parks, playgrounds, and common areas of schools, hospitals, apartments, houses, office buildings, transport facilities, theaters, game rooms, shops, shopping malls, or any other public place of business.

- F. **STREET.** A way or place, of whatever nature, open to the use of the public as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicular travel or in the case of a sidewalk thereof for pedestrian travel. The term "street" includes the legal right of way, including, but not limited to, the traffic lanes, curbs, sidewalk whether paved or unpaved, and any grass plots or other grounds found within the legal right of way of a street. The term "street" applies irrespective of what the legal right of way is formally called, whether alley, avenue, court, road, or otherwise. (Ord. 5019, 1997; Ord. 4973, 1996; Ord. 4949, 1996; Prior Code §32.8. and 32.9.)

Chapter 9.05 CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IN PUBLIC PLACES

Sections:

9.05.010 Alcoholic Beverages - Public Consumption and Possession of Open Container.

9.05.020 Possession of Alcohol Adjacent to a Licensed Retail Establishment.

9.05.010 Alcoholic Beverages - Public Consumption and Possession of Open Container.

A. No person shall consume an alcoholic beverage, or have in his or her possession any bottle, can or other receptacle containing any alcoholic beverage which has been opened, or which has a seal broken, or the contents of which have been partially removed, upon any public street, alley, sidewalk, parking lot, park, recreation facility or beach, in or immediately adjacent to a public restroom, or other public place within the City except:

1. Within those public parks, beaches or recreational facilities designated by resolution of the City Council as permitting the consumption of alcoholic beverages; or
2. In or on the property of an establishment, business place, or other location properly licensed for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act of the State of California; or
3. During a community special event, provided the Parks and Recreation Director, after consultation with the Chief of Police, has permitted the consumption of alcoholic beverages in connection with the special event use of any park, recreational facility or beach (or any portion thereof) and the event has been issued a Special Event Permit pursuant to Chapter 9.12 of the Municipal Code. The consumption of alcoholic beverages shall only be permitted within those areas of the park, recreation facility or beach so designated by the Director and subject to any additional constraints imposed by the Director and the Chief of Police in connection with the issuance of the Special Events Permit. Nothing in this Section shall be deemed to relieve any applicant or event organizer from full compliance with all alcohol beverage control laws and regulations of the State of California.
4. In or on a park or other recreational facility owned by the City but operated by a private operator or non-profit agency pursuant to an agreement with the City, provided that the operator may establish and enforce its own rules or regulations regarding the consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages.

B. Warning Signs. The City Parks and Recreation Department shall post appropriate signs advising the public that the consumption of alcohol or the possession of open containers of alcohol is not permitted in certain parks, recreation facilities and beaches. (Ord. 5131, 1999; Ord. 4284, 1984; Ord. 4224, 1983.)

9.05.020 Possession of Alcohol Adjacent to a Licensed Retail Establishment.

a) No person who has in his or her possession any bottle, can or other receptacle containing any alcoholic beverage which has been opened, or a seal broken, or the contents of which have been partially removed, shall enter, be, or remain on the posted premises, of, including the posted parking lot immediately adjacent to, any retail package off-sale alcoholic beverage licensee licensed pursuant to Division 9 (commencing with Section 23000) of the California Business and Professions Code.

b) As used in subdivision (a), "posted premises" means those premises which are subject to licensure under any retail package off-sale alcoholic beverage license and the parking lot immediately adjacent to the licensed premises.

c) Every retail establishment licensed pursuant to Division 9 (commencing with Section 23000) of the California Business and Professions Code shall post its premises within 90 days of the effective date of this ordinance with clearly visible notices, in a form and manner approved by the City, indicating to the patrons of the licensee and parking lot that the provisions of this section are applicable. (Ord. 4224, 1983.)

Chapter 9.08 UNATTENDED MINORS IN VEHICLES

Section:

9.08.010 Minors - Leaving Unattended Unlawful.

9.08.010 Minors - Leaving Unattended Unlawful.

It shall be unlawful for any parent, legal guardian or adult having custody or control of any minor child to leave any minor child under the age of five (5) years unattended by a person at least ten (10) years of age, in any automobile or truck standing in any public street, alley or public or private parking place or lot in the City. (Ord. 3766 §6, 1975; prior Code §32.27.)

Chapter 9.10 KNIVES OR DAGGERS IN PUBLIC PLACES

Section:

9.10.010 Knives or Daggers in Plain View.

9.10.010 Knives or Daggers in Plain View.

- A. No person shall wear or carry in plain view any knife or dagger upon any public street or other public place or in any place open to the public.
- B. As used in this Chapter the term "knife" or "dagger" shall be defined to mean a knife or dagger having a blade of 3 inches or more in length, an ice pick or other sharp or pointed tool similar to an ice pick, or a straight edge razor (which shall include a tool or handle fitted to hold a razor blade).
- C. The prohibitions of this Section shall not apply while a person is wearing or carrying a knife or dagger for use in a lawful occupation, for lawful recreational purposes or while the person is traveling to or returning from participation in such activity. (Ord. 4524, 1988.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2005-08

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 17 OF THE ESCONDIDO MUNICIPAL CODE PERTAINING TO OFF- CAMPUS MINORS IN PUBLIC PLACES DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The City Council of the City of Escondido, California, DOES HEREBY ORDAIN as follows:

SECTION 1. That Escondido Municipal Code Sections 17-57 through 17-60 are added to read as follows:

Sec. 17-57. Minors in Public Places During School Hours

(a) It is unlawful for any minor of age twelve to seventeen who is subject to compulsory education or to compulsory continuation education to loiter, idle, wander, or be in or upon the public streets, highways, roads, alleys, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds, public places, public buildings, or the premises of any establishment, vacant lots or any unsupervised public place on days and at times when said minor's school is in session.

(b) A minor's presence in such location is not unlawful, however:

- (1) When the minor is accompanied by his or her parent or other adult having the care or custody of the minor;
- (2) When the minor is on an emergency errand directed by his or her parent or other adult having care or custody of the minor;
- (3) When the minor is going to, or coming directly from, his or her place of school-approved employment;
- (4) When the minor is going to, or coming directly from, a medical appointment;

- (5) When the minor has permission to leave the school campus for lunch and has in his or her possession, a valid, school-issued, off-campus permit;
- (6) When the minor is going to, or coming from a compulsory alternative education program activity;
- (7) When the minor is attending or, without detour or stop, going to or returning from a school, religious, government-sponsored activity, or other recreational activity supervised by adults;
- (8) When the minor is attending or, without detour or stop, going to or returning from an event or activity directly related to the medical condition of a sibling or parent;
- (9) When the minor is enrolled in a private school or “home school” qualified under California Education Code Section 48222; or
- (10) When the minor has passed a general educational development test and received a California high school equivalency certificate.

Sec. 17-58. Responsibility

It is unlawful for the parent of any minor to knowingly permit or, by insufficient control to allow the minor to be in violation of section 17-57(a).

Sec. 17-59. Enforcement Procedure

(a) Upon any violation of section 17-57(a), a peace officer may detain the minor until he or she can be placed in the care and custody of his or her parent, may transport the minor to his or her home or to the school from which the minor is absent, and may issue a citation to the minor. If cited, the minor and a parent or legal guardian shall appear in court as directed on the citation. The parent or legal guardian shall be advised that the minor was cited for a violation of Escondido Municipal Code Section 17-57(a). The parents shall be warned of their responsibility and liability as the minor’s parents.

(b) After a parent has been previously warned as set forth in section 17-59(a), upon a parent's violation of section 17-58 anytime thereafter, a peace officer may issue the parent a citation to appear in court.

(c) When a parent has previously been issued a citation for an infraction pursuant to section 17-59(b), upon any subsequent violation by a parent of section 17-58 a peace officer may issue a citation for a misdemeanor to the same parent of the minor to appear in court.

Sec. 17-60. Penalties

(a) Any person convicted of an infraction for a violation of sections 17-57(a) or 17-58 may be punished by a fine not exceeding two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) plus court fees, or by a requirement to perform county, city, or school-approved work projects or community service, or both. If required to perform a work project, the total time for performance shall not exceed twenty (20) hours over a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, at such times other than a minor's hours of school attendance or a minor or parent's hours of employment.

(b) Any parent convicted of a misdemeanor violation of Section 17-58 may be punished by imprisonment in the County Jail for a period of time not exceeding six (6) months, or by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both.

SECTION 2. SEPARABILITY. That if any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.

SECTION 3. That all ordinances, or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. That the City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and prepare a summary in accordance with Government Code section 36933, to be published one time within 15 days of its passage in the North County Times, a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in the City of Escondido.