

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION 20-005 IN RECOGNITION OF SEPTEMBER 2019 AS ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS good attendance is essential to student achievement and graduation, and we are committed to dedicating our resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates early as kindergarten as there is a direct correlation between preschool and k-12 attendance and how well children do in school; and

WHEREAS chronic absence – missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason including excused and unexcused absences, or just two or three days a month – is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates; and

WHEREAS improving attendance and reducing chronic absence takes commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to particular challenges and strengths in each community; and

WHEREAS chronic absence predicts lower third-grade reading proficiency, course failure and eventual dropout, it weakens our communities and local economy;

WHEREAS the impact of chronic absence hits low-income students and children of color particularly hard if they don't have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom, and are more likely to face systemic barriers to getting to school – such as unreliable transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable or unaffordable housing; and

WHEREAS chronic absence exacerbates the achievement gap that separates low-income students from their peers, since students from low-income families are both more likely to be chronically absent and more likely to be affected academically by missing school. Absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling schools, since it is hard to measure improvement in classroom instruction if students are not in class to benefit from them; and

WHEREAS schools and community partners can reach out more frequently to absent students to determine why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly; and

WHEREAS schools and districts must do more to track, calculate and share the data on how many students are chronically absent so that we can deliver the right interventions to the right students; and

WHEREAS all students – even those who show up regularly – are affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time reviewing for students who missed lessons; and

WHEREAS chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, parents and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to school; and

WHEREAS BUSD, BAHIA Inc. and the YMCA Early Childhood Education programs will be partnering with Attendance Works to identify and intervene families/children who are chronically absent; and

WHEREAS we aim to improve family engagement in school readiness and better prepare children for k-12 by providing supports and intervention when children are in pre-school; and

WHEREAS State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond appointed Board Member Beatriz Leyva-Cutler to the State School Attendance Review Board (SARB) for the 2019-20 school year to provide statewide policy coordination and technical assistance to county offices of education and school district for the reduction of absenteeism, truancy and dropout rate.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that as the Board of Education of Berkeley Unified School District we proclaim that our schools will stand with the nation in recognizing September as “Attendance Awareness Month.” We hereby commit to focusing on reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children an equitable opportunity to learn, grow and thrive academically, emotionally and socially. Specifically we will make clear that improved student attendance is one of our school district’s top priorities among all of our teachers and school leaders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Berkeley Unified School recognizes September 2019 as Attendance Awareness Month.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Governing Board of the Berkeley Unified School District on this **21st day of August 2019**, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

Ty Alper, Clerk