

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES SOLUTIONS, INC.

WWW.S4EDCONSULTANTS.ORG

## IT'S NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH!

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION DOING TO IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY AND SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE?

It has been over three years since the Safe Place to Learn Act (Assembly Bill 9, Ch. 723) went into effect, requiring local education agencies (LEA) to adopt policies to prohibit and appropriately address discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on specified actual or perceived characteristics. In 2012, there was a flurry of activities as LEAs quickly moved, whether motivated by internal or external forces, to establish policies and procedures to meet compliance. The question now is, in light of it being bullying prevention month: Have you done anything since then? Meaning, has your LEA revisited the policy, assuming there is one, on a yearly basis, checking to ensure that everything established in policy is still applicable and consistent with all the other related policies and administrative regulations? Are staff still being trained to identify bullying and to intervene when safe to do so? Or are you on to the next big thing, such as, addressing chronic absenteeism, trauma informed care, human trafficking, etc.? Of course, the issue is, there are just simply too many things to cover! Start by searching the bullying resources available on the California Department of Education website at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), or by conducting a spot check of the following:

### Components of a bullying policy:

- Definitions
- Reporting procedures
- Investigation and response to incidents
- Maintenance of documents and records
- Consequences and sanctions for bullying
- Referrals to counseling or mental/other health services
- Notification of policy
- Training and preventive education
- Data collection and monitoring

### Documents to cross reference:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Annual Notification
- Comprehensive Safety Plan
- District Technology Plan
- Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- Student Handbook
- Teacher/Staff Handbook
- Uniform Complaint Procedures
- Other local board policies and administrative regulations



*Student Support Services Solutions, Inc. (S4) is committed to ensuring that children and youth attend school in a safe, secure and nurturing environment. We specifically focus on the "Engagement" priorities of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) -- Student Engagement, School Climate, and Parent Involvement. We build the capacity of adults to help children and youth through technical support, training, identification of appropriate resources, and dissemination of timely information.*

## ALSO IN THIS EDITION...

### SPRIGEO

3 Steps to Reducing Bullying Incidents and Changing School Culture.

### IMPORTANT DATES

Other awareness month information for October and November.

### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attorney General's report findings and highlight of best practices.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

List of upcoming events that address areas under student services.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES SOLUTIONS, INC.



## 3 STEPS TO REDUCING BULLYING INCIDENTS AND CHANGING SCHOOL CULTURE

Bullying is a challenging puzzle to solve. Students possess one of the most vital pieces required for a solution. Vastly outnumbering adults on any campus, students define and sustain the culture of a school. Walk on to any middle or high school campus and you are certain to notice numerous groups, each with a leader, who maintains the group norms and is quick to call out anyone that doesn't uphold the group standard. Harnessing the leadership potential present in student groups can provide a critical piece of the bullying puzzle. The key to unlocking student leadership potential resides with teachers and administrators.

### Step 1: Identify

Identifying student leaders takes time and a broader vision of what constitutes a leader. If we expand the definition of leader to include anyone that has influence over a group, then the potential pool of student leaders will also expand. Looking for leaders will take help from the teachers and administrators at your site. Send out a short survey asking them to identify students that are perceived to be leaders among their peers. Define leader as any student that has demonstrated an ability to influence a group of his or her peers. Consider limiting the initial group of leaders to the oldest grade level at your school site (8th graders at a middle school and 12th graders at a high school).

### Step 2: Engage

Schedule a meeting and invite the group of student leaders that were identified in the survey. Your initial pool of student leaders might number 30 or more.

Acknowledge the role that each student has as a leader at the school as well as how they were selected. Break students into working groups of 4, and ask them to brainstorm answers to the following questions: Is bullying a problem at our school? What can we do as student leaders to change the way people treat each other? Ask each group to record their ideas and then share their list with the whole group.

### Step 3: Empower

In the week following the initial meeting, ask the student leaders to look for places where bullying happens at school. Host a second meeting and record their observations from the prior week. Working in groups of 4, ask each group to choose one of the observations that was shared, brainstorm a list of ideas that could help spark a positive change, and then share their ideas with the whole group. Have everyone commit to implementing one idea over the next month. Allow the student leaders to take ownership of their ideas and drive the decision to commit to an idea. Continue meeting with the student leadership group on a monthly basis. Each meeting should follow a similar format, driven by the student leader observations and a brainstorming session for potential solutions.

Culture takes time to change. Students hold the pieces to creating and sustaining a culture that doesn't accept bullying. Identifying, engaging and empowering student leaders will set the wheels of change in motion. As teachers and administrators continue to show their commitment to working with the student leadership group, school culture will begin to change.

Sprigeo's student leadership programs, staff development training sessions and anonymous online reporting app and documentation system provide three of the critical pieces for creating and maintaining a safe and bully-free school culture. Now in its fifth year, Sprigeo supports over 1,000 schools in 30 states that are committed to sustaining safer school communities. Visit [Sprigeo.com](http://Sprigeo.com).

## NATIONAL & STATE EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH AWARENESS DATES

### OCTOBER 2015

- Crime Prevention Month
- Health Literacy Month
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- National Communicate with Your Kids Month
- National Depression & Mental Health Screening Month
- America's Safe Schools Week (10/18-10/24)
- National School Bus Safety Week (10/18-10/24)
- National Character Counts Week (10/19-10/25)
- Red Ribbon Week (10/23-10/31)

### NOVEMBER 2015

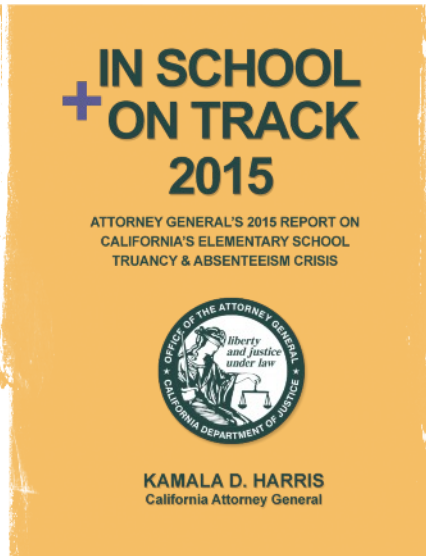
- National Runaway Prevention Month
- National Child Safety and Protection Month
- Good Nutrition Month
- School Psychology Awareness Week (11/9-11/13)
- World Kindness Day (11/13)
- America Recycles Day (11/15)
- International Day for Tolerance (11/16)
- American Education Week (11/16-11/20)
- National Parental Involvement Day (11/19)
- Great American Smokeout (11/20)

Modernize CA's student attendance records collection system	Include chronic absence as a metric in the accountability system and LCAP Evaluation Rubric	Intervene early to help students and families resolve attendance issues	Promote early elementary school attendance
Use Prop 47 savings to fund effective attendance efforts	Track and monitor attendance goals through LCFF and District LCAPs	Invest in discipline policies that reduce time away from the classroom	Design/implement programs to communicate to parents/community the importance of school attendance

### Eight Policy Recommendations

According to the report:

- **230,000** CA elementary students are chronically absent; nearly **15%** of kindergartners are chronically absent
- More than **1 in 5** CA elementary students are truant; kindergarten truancy rate is nearly **30%**
- Racial disparities are alarming: chronic absence rates for Native American and African American kindergarten students were almost **30%**
- Over **75%** of elementary school students who are chronically absent are low-income
- Elementary school students missed an estimated **110,000** days of school due to suspension
- CA loses over **\$46 billion** per year due to high school dropouts

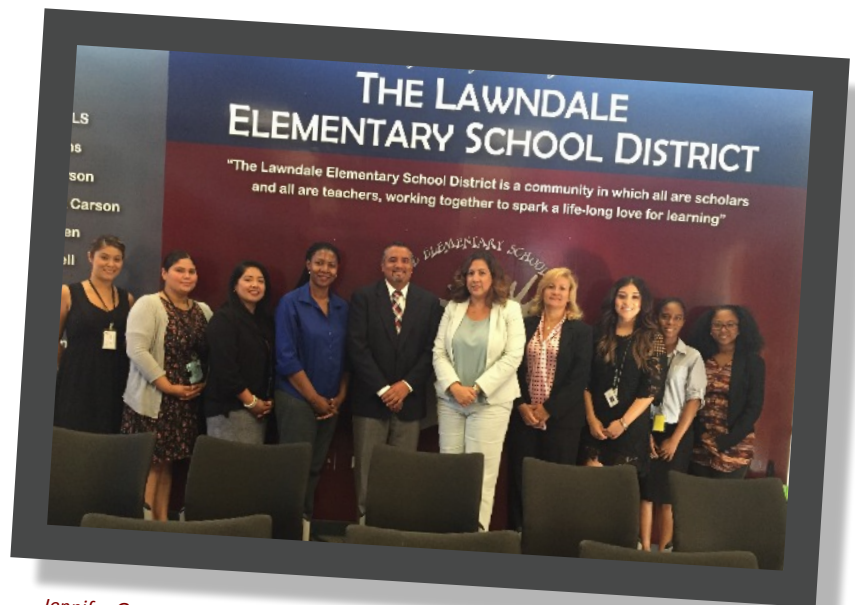


California Attorney General Kamala Harris issued her third annual statewide report on elementary school truancy and chronic absence in mid-September. While the report outlines significant progress in increasing awareness of the importance of attendance as evidenced by changes in attendance and discipline policies, increased data collection and analysis and the dedication of more resources to attendance via LCFF, it finds that California still faces an attendance crisis.

## LAWDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### IMPROVING ATTENDANCE THROUGH UNIVERSITY INTERNS

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, the Lawndale Elementary School District (LESD) celebrated Attendance Awareness Month by recognizing students and families who have been through the SARB process and significantly reduced their absences by building positive relationships between home and school. Jorge Arroyo, Director of Student Support Services for the LESD, credits much of the success for these students to the work of the District's social workers and their interns. The school site social workers and their interns collaborate with students in the areas of the LCAP that pertain to student support services – pupil engagement, school climate and parent involvement. Maria Ruelas, District Social Worker who coordinates the intern program, sees the positive impact that the program has had on student outcomes and hopes that other districts will follow LESD's lead. Ms. Ruelas points out that partnerships with



*Jennifer Gomeztrejo with Jorge Arroyo and LESD social workers, social work interns, and SARB members.*

local universities are mutually beneficial; schools have additional resources for students and the interns gain invaluable experience working in school settings. Over the years, the LESD has developed strong working relationships with the University of Southern California (USC), Loyola Marymount University (LMU), California State University (CSU) Fullerton,

CSU Long Beach and CSU Dominguez Hills. This year, the LESD has become more than just a field placement provider for universities; they have become a Teaching Institute supervising more than 50 interns, approximately 6-8 interns per school site. Through collaboration, both interns and LESD students are provided with an enriching learning experience at LESD.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES SOLUTIONS, INC.

We're presenting!

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING In the South Bay

Sponsored by the South Bay Administrators Association,  
a charter of ACSA Region XIV

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER OR EMAIL  
ABENTON@RBSUD.ORG

**October 22, 2015**  
**4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Parras Middle School  
200 N. Lucia Avenue  
Redondo Beach, California

We're presenting!

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**NOVEMBER 16, 2015**  
**9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.**

San Diego County of Education  
6401 Linda Vista Road – Comm. Labs 1-4  
San Diego, California

\$65 Registration Fee  
(Includes breakfast & Legislative Guide)

Register at – <http://sdcoe.k12oms.org/918-106026>

## UPCOMING EVENTS RELATED TO STUDENT SERVICES

### Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Leadership Summit

*Courageous Leaders Ignite the Dreams of All*  
November 5-7, 2015 – Sacramento, CA

[www.acsa.org](http://www.acsa.org)

We're presenting!

### International Bullying Prevention Association (IBPA)

*Reaching New Heights in Bullying Prevention through Empathy  
and Kindness*

November 8-10, 2015 – Denver, CO

[www.ibpaworld.org](http://www.ibpaworld.org)

### National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

*Raising to a Brighter Future: Educating All Our Children and Youth*  
November 15-17, 2015 – Phoenix, AZ

[www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)

### ACSA Every Child Counts Symposium

*Connecting Hearts and Minds*

January 13-15, 2016 – Monterey, CA

[www.acsa.org](http://www.acsa.org)

### California School Nurses Organization (CSNO)

*Mission Impossible: Focus on the Future*

February 4-7, 2016 – Fresno, CA

[www.csno.org](http://www.csno.org)

### CUE National Conference

March 17-19, 2016 – Palm Springs, CA

[www.cue.org/national](http://www.cue.org/national)

### California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance (CASCWA) State Conference

*Celebrating 80 Years of Advocating for Children*

April 20-22, 2016 – Garden Grove, CA

[www.cascwa.org](http://www.cascwa.org)

Visit and learn about us at... [www.s4edconsultants.org](http://www.s4edconsultants.org)

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# 5th Annual Central California Truancy Summit

## Using *LCAP* to Address the Root Causes of Truancy

Save the Date:  
May 4th- 6th, 2016  
Visalia, CA

Neglect  
Language      Gangs  
Poverty      Bullying      Abuse  
Substance Abuse      Homelessness      Mental Illness  
Cultural Barriers

Registration opens 11/2/15 - Go to <http://kings.k12oms.org/89-103355>



Tulare County  
Office of Education  
Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools



Kings County  
Office of Education  
Tim Bowers  
County Superintendent of Schools