

**BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

**PROCLAMATION NO. 15-013**

Recognition of September 2015 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, with a focus starting as early as kindergarten; 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; and

**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

**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 2014 as Attendance Awareness Month.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Governing Board of the Berkeley Unified School District on this **9<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2015**, by the following vote:

**AYES:**

**NOES:**

**ABSENT:**

**ABSTENTIONS:**

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Karen Hemphill, Clerk  
Board of Education