

August 23, 2018

Dear United Parents

As the 2018-2019 school year begins, I want to take this opportunity to share with you a new program coming out of the Regional Office of Education regarding student attendance. Research says that no matter what skill you wish to enhance or what topic you wish to learn, being present for instruction and feedback will improve anyone's ability to be successful. With that in mind, the ROE is implementing a program called "Strive for less than 5" - imploring students to miss less than 5 days of school during any year. It is at the 6th absence where data shows a measurable loss in cognitive and social improvement.

As part of this aggressive, but necessary program, a new system of tracking absences will be implemented. Starting this year, a student will receive a warning letter from the building principal following their 3rd UNEXCUSED absence. A copy of that letter is forwarded to the ROE truancy division and the documentation toward truancy has begun.

A second letter will be sent following the 6th unexcused absence of any student. Again, this letter will be generated by the school, but on behalf of and in copy to the Regional Office. After receiving this 2nd letter, the ROE will have truancy staff conduct a school and home visit, meet with the parent and complete an Intervention assessment. Finally, the truancy staff will give a warning that the next step in this process is a citation/ticket.

Upon the 9th unexcused absence, the student is considered a chronic truant and a ticket can be issued to the student and/or parent/guardian. Nine absences represents 5% of the entire school year. Beyond the ticket, intervention with truancy staff will continue in a more immediate manner.

If a 12th unexcused absence takes place, a third letter will be sent by the ROE truancy staff itself. Interventions will escalate and further legal issues can be implemented.

In all, a student spends under 15% of their entire year at school, so to miss more than 5% of that time seems very unnecessary and extremely invasive of what time kids have to learn. Work hard to instill in your children the idea that "showing up" is the first step in being successful.

If you have questions regarding the ROE policy or implementation, please contact your building principal or the ROE truancy division.

Sincerely

Jeffrey T Whitsitt
Superintendent
United CUSD 304