



Empowering Underserved Voices: Building Engagement and Attendance through CARE Team Innovations

**A Non-Punitive, Relationship-Based Approach to Supporting
McKinney-Vento and Foster Youth**

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California Statewide Homeless Education Conference 2025

Ice Breaker

Why this work matters?

What are your biggest barriers around family engagement and attendance?



Overview/Objectives

01

Who we are

What is CARE?

02

Why This Matters

The “why” Behind our work

03

Key innovations

From home visits to 90-day Truancy
pausesm, home visit plans, data
templates.

04

Outcome and impact:

Building Trust, increasing
engagement



What is the CARE Team?

C.A.R.E. = Coordinated Advocacy and Resources for Education



Our Team

We currently have 10
Student Support Specialist
including 1 Lead



**Placement is based on
equity and caseload needs**

Serve as advocates, liaisons,
and case managers



**Currently, the CARE
program has 851 students**

2024-2025

- CARE has facilitated over 180 home visits
- CARE supported at 18 food community food distributions
- Provided over 300 Families with housing resources
- Provided over 60 students with Public Transportation passes

Timeline of CARE...the work doesn't happen overnight.

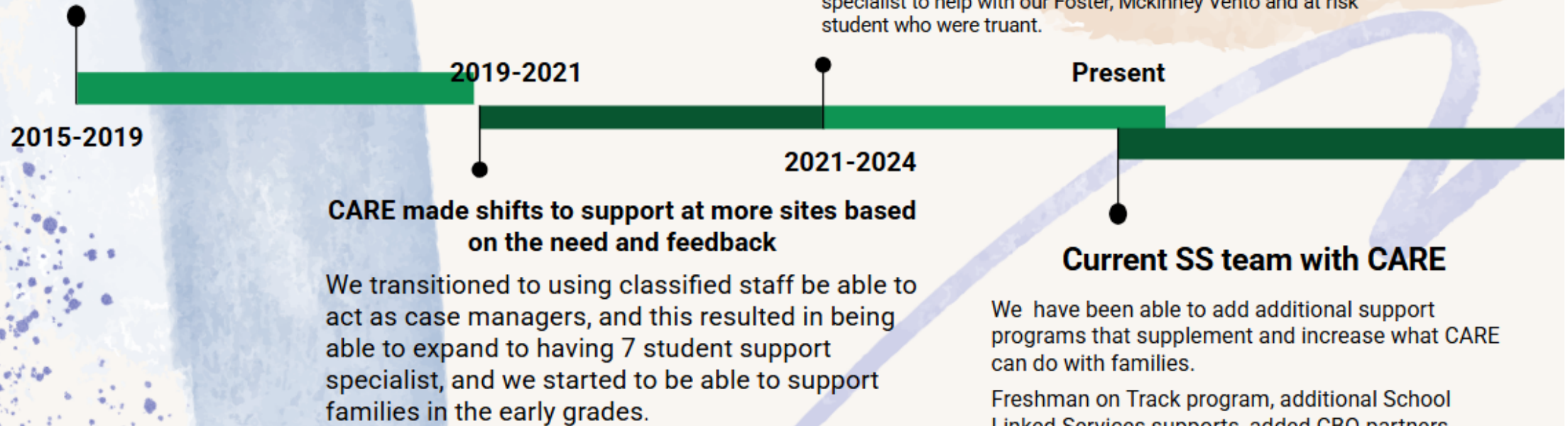
CARE started

Started out with 2 student support specialist and 2 academic counselors that were specifically assigned to support Foster, McKinney Vento and at risk populations of students at the secondary sites.

CARE continued to grow

Through the support of grants, and the need we were able to expand our team to include 10 CARE team members and a CARE lead.

As part of this group we were able to start to identify specific roles such as a LEAD, a district student support specialist to help with our Foster, McKinney Vento and at risk student who were truant.



Strategic Placement for equity

School Site	MV/ Foster #
Nordstrom	24
Barrett	68
El Toro	37
Los Paseos	58
Paradise Valley	24
P.A. Walsh	90
San Martin Gwinn	135
JAMM	45
Britton	65
Murphy	56
Live Oak	116
Sobrato	114
Central	19

One Full-Time CARE member

At Secondary sites or Sites
with high needs

**Smaller sites or sites with
low needs;
Placement is adjusted yearly
based on need**

Caseloads are triaged monthly
for most effective support

- Grades
- Attendance
- Behavioral
- Family needs

Caseload image

B	C	D		T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Stu ID	Grade	NOTES			January		February		March	
163842	K			Attendance	63.51% (1/7) Emailed par	Attendance	69.52% (2/4)Emailed Pa	Attendance	70% (3/13) Attempt	Attendance
164101	3				78.95% (1/7) Emailed par		82.22% (2/4)Emailed Pa		70% (3/13)Parent g	Attendance
163830	4				94.44% (1/7) Emailed pa		92.68% (2/4)Emailed Pa		90% (3/13)Parent p	
162671	2				96.67% (1/7) Emailed par		97.66% (2/4)Emailed Pa		95% (3/13)Parent p	
164044	2				100% (1/7) Emailed pare		96.83% (2/4)Emailed Pa		100% (3/14)Parent	
164043	K				100% (1/7) Emailed pare		96.83% (2/4)Emailed Pa		100% (3/14)Parent	
161049	1	Don't Call			100% (1/7) Emailed pare		96.75% (2/4)Emailed Pa		90% (3/14)Parent p	
155469	5	Britton/ introduc			97.22% (1/7) Emailed par		95.12% (2/4)Emailed Pa		85% (3/20)Attempt	
163755	3				78.79% (1/7) Emailed par		79.67% (2/4)Emailed Pa		80% (3/14)Parent p	
163502	TK				90.28% (1/7) Emailed par		82.93% (2/4)Emailed Pa		95% (3/14)Parent p	
161243	3				93.98 (1/7) Emailed pare		94.31% (2/4)Emailed Pa		95% (3/13/) Attempt	
159879	4				100% (1/7) Emailed pare		99.19% (2/4)Emailed Par		90% (3/20)Attempt	
161652	1				94.12% (1/7) Emailed par		92.68% (2/4)Emailed Pa		90% (3/14)Parent p	
162744	5	JAAM			86.54% (1/7) Emailed pa		86.18% (2/4)Emailed Pa		85% (3/20)Parent g	Transportat
156993	5	Britton			90.28% (1/7) Emailed par		90.24% (2/4)Emailed Pa		100% (3/20)parent	
160854	2			Attendance	59.62% (1/7) Emailed par		53.23% (2/3) Parent pho		50% (3/13)Parent g	All of the
157501	4			Attendance	66.35% (1/7) Emailed pa		59.68% (2/3) Parent pho		50% (3/13)Parent g	All of the

Relationship-Based Support

- Monthly Resources communication to families
- Consistent Check-ins with students CICO resource
- Personalized connections with community resources
- Advocate for student needs in school (example Asset map)
- Lunch/Brunch groups and activities
- Meeting families where they are at



CARE Team Role

Student

- Student Check-ins
- Groups
- Prosocial Activities
- Advocate

Family

- Communication
- Home visits
- Case Management
- Bridge between school and community

Community

- Table at community events
- Participate in local food distributions
- network
- sit on community committees

School

- Facilitate communication
- Participate
 - Culture and climate team
 - SSTs
 - Attendance meetings
- Organize events
- Find gaps and bring in resources or run groups



CARE

COORDINATED ADVOCACY & RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION (CARE)

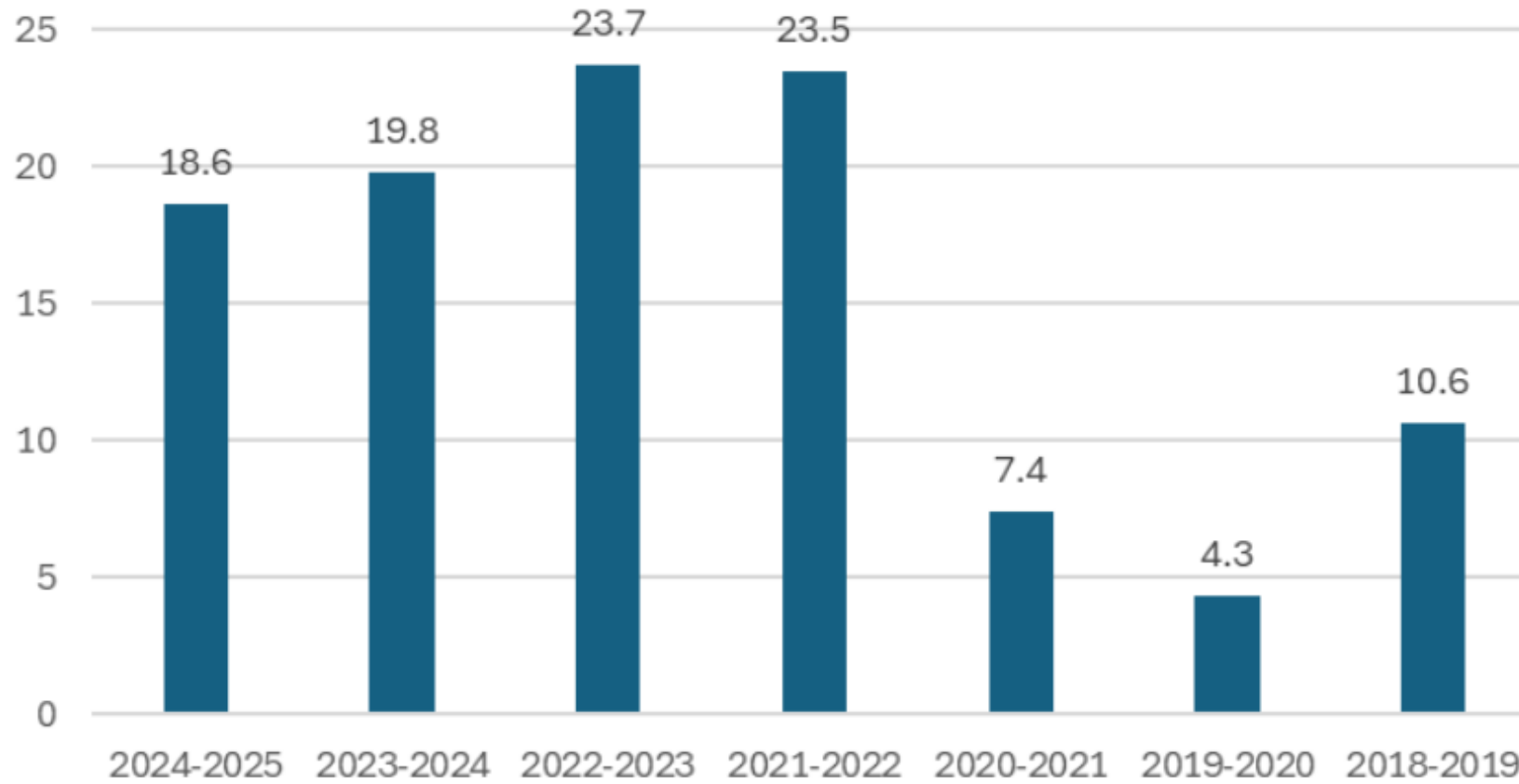
Morgan Hill Unified School District



What happens when you don't have the staff, and you are not going to add staff?

- Champion Student Success
- Serve as a Student Advocate
- Keep the Pulse with Data
- Create Meaningful Connections
- Build a Web of Support
- Link Students to Resources
- Guide Academic Journeys
- Be a Voice at the Table
- Celebrate Growth and Milestones
- Lead with Integrity and Compassion

Chronic Absenteeism Rates (%)



Timeline of Attendance ...the work doesn't happen overnight.

Attendance work started

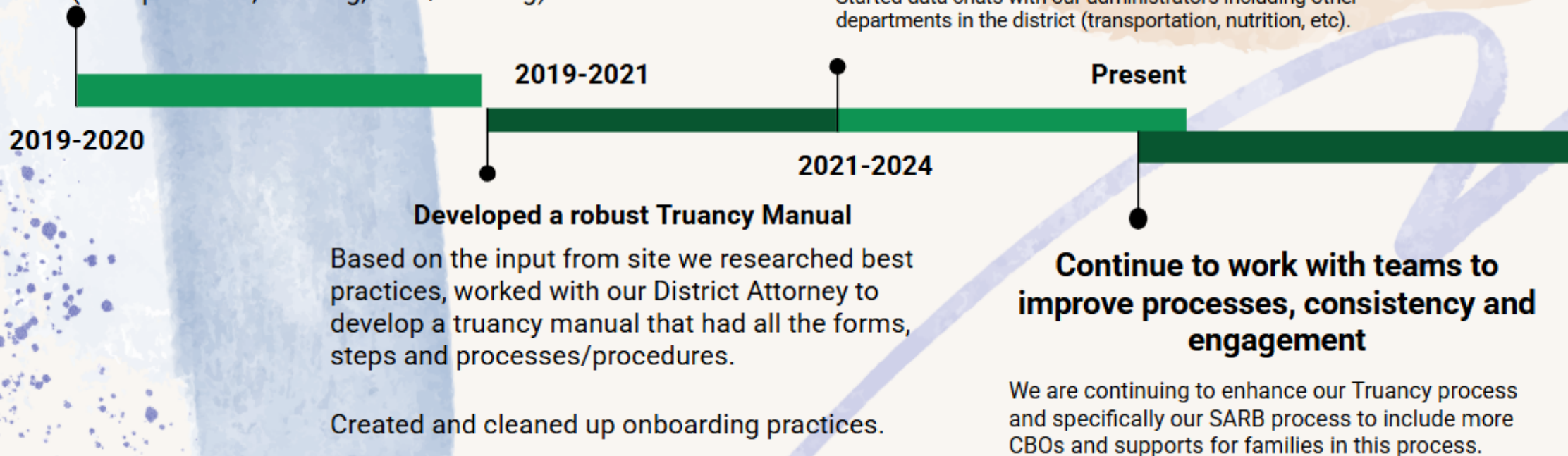
We did a deep dive without data, attendance clerks, administrators and found the root causes of why our data was what it was.

Main findings: inconsistent processes, training, lack of truancy process, lack of basic resources (transportation, housing, food/clothing)

Increased attendance activities and data talks.

We ramped up our Attendance activities such as attendance month, attendance interventions and supports, resource fairs etc.

Started data chats with our administrators including other departments in the district (transportation, nutrition, etc).



Non-Punitive Truancy Support

- Strong SARB Model
- Alignment with our County DA's Office (Non-punitive Framework)
- Staff Training on Truancy Best Practices
 - ◆ Before school starts
 - ◆ Monthly zooms
- Focus on support and solutions
 - ◆ Friendly communication
 - ◆ Welcoming front offices

Activity

Stand + Chat

What is one way your school/district currently supports families outside of the classroom?

What would you like to see added to your district?



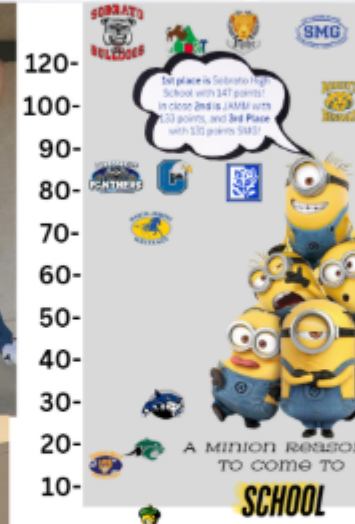
Non-Punitive Truancy Support



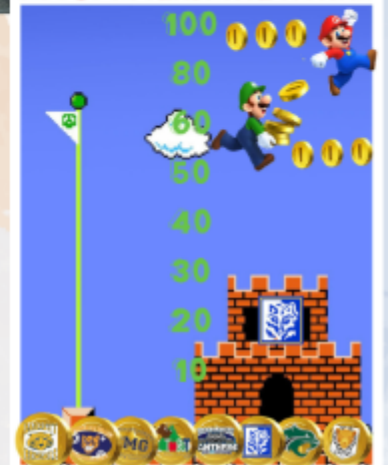
Attendance Challenges

A MINION REASONS TO COME TO SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2 Introduction to Attendance Month	3 This is your planning day to think about how you are going to win the Trophy this year!	4 Teachers at their door greeting 'em others (5 pts)*	5 Congrats letters (max 10 total) (1 pt per letter)*	6 PLC agenda with attendance data (different department from previous) (2 pts)*	7 
8 Office chair (art, chalk, GAF, laser) welcoming Students min of 3 pics (5 pts)*	9 Attendance Lesson plan that is used in class (homework, delivery, SLOs) (5 pts)*	10 On time crew pictures with admin or attendance clerk min of 3 pics (10 pts)*	11 PLC agenda with attendance data (different department from previous) (2 pts)*	12 Pick a process and improve it (10 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts)	13 On time crew pictures with admin or attendance clerk min of 3 pics (5 pts)*	14 
15 Parent Square post about the importance of attendance (10 pts)*	16 Attendance or similar (parent right, ELAC, SSC, etc.) where attendance data is discussed (10 pts)*	17 Parent meeting presentation (parent right, ELAC, SSC, etc.) where attendance data is discussed (10 pts)*	18 PLC agenda with attendance data (different department from previous) (2 pts)*	19 On time crew pictures with admin or attendance clerk min of 3 pics (5 pts)*	20 Attendance Plan (27 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts)	21 
22 Thursdays Letter (any 10 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts)	23 Attendance Celebration	24 School Choice with proof (5 pts)*	25 School Choice with proof (5 pts)*	26 Attendance Plan (27 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts)	27 Attendance Plan (27 pts) Highest att. rate (5 pts) Most improved att. Rate (5 pts)	28 
29 Attendance Celebration	30 Attendance Celebration	31 Attendance Celebration	32 Attendance Celebration	33 Attendance Celebration	34 Attendance Celebration	35 Attendance Celebration



MHUSD IS SUPER EXCITED ABOUT ATTENDANCE MONTH!



90-Day Contract

Truancy Plan Agreement
Morgan Hill Unified District

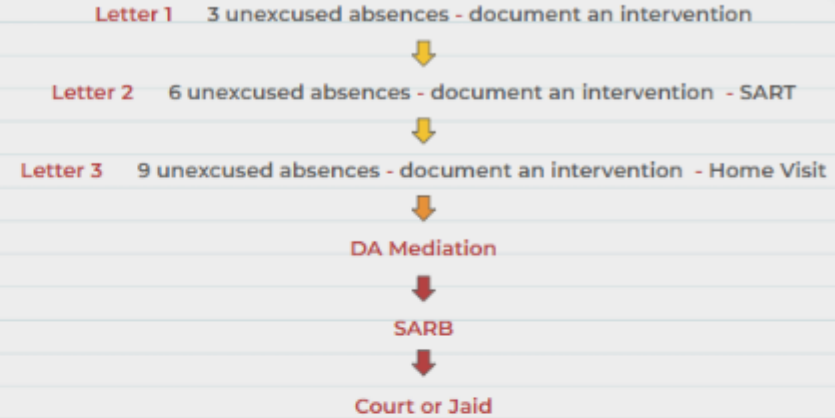
Student ID: _____

I, _____ hereby certify that as the guardian of _____, we commit to actively participating in and completing the designated classes or groups within a period of 90 days. I acknowledge that I have one week to enroll my student and/or myself in the voluntary classes/group and once services are completed the agreement is achieved. In addition, if I or my student discontinue our attendance at any time or fail to complete the class, I understand that the Truancy process will proceed accordingly. Furthermore, I agree to collaborate with the school to enhance the attendance and academic success of my student.

Guardian- Choose an option	Student- Choose an option
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Triple P: Community Solutions Positive Parenting Program is one of the most effective evidence-based parenting programs in the world. Triple P gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children's behavior, and prevent problems developing. (Offered by PEI and SLS Program)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Community Solutions (PEI or SLS) Children and families enrolled at participating MHUSD schools who are at risk of experiencing mental health or behavioral challenges. Service includes outcome-based parenting strategies, in-classroom support, family workshops, therapeutic, and psychiatric (SLS only) services.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Strengthening Families Program: Community Solutions The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is an evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general population families that is recognized both nationally and internationally. This program includes both the participation of the guardian and youth. (Offered by PEI program)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Connecting with DR (Differential Response) DR provides a partnership of hope and support to families to help keep children and their families safe and thriving. Our team of professionals will help reduce risk factors and increase family resiliency through your unique circumstances by providing comprehensive services and linkage to community resources.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Parent Project (ONLINE ONLY) The Parent Project is a 10-week program. Participants go one day a week for 2 hours to learn the skills needed to address destructive adolescent behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Living Above The Influence (CHILL OUT) Chill Out aims to teach the youth about valuable life skills, each week focusing on a new lesson. A great place to make new friends, Chill Out welcomes all young adults from ages 12 to 21. Weekly group, every Thursday at the Community & Cultural Center in the heart of Downtown MH from 5pm-7:30 pm.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. DR (Differential Response) DR provides a partnership of hope and support to families to help keep children and their families safe and thriving. Our team of professionals will help reduce risk factors and increase family resiliency through your unique circumstances by providing comprehensive services and linkage to community resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Parent University Parent University sessions will be offered at our Family and Community Engagement Center behind Britton Middle School. Each session is 4-5 classes.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Other: _____	

Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____
Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Truancy Process



- Alternative to traditional truancy escalation
- Voluntary agreement between family and district
- Participation in services: Wraparound, counseling, parenting classes, etc.
- Truancy paused for 90 days as families stabilize
- Truancy letters continue, but pause for DA, SARB or court referrals during contract period

Key Impacts



**Improved attendance
and engagement**



**Stronger School-Family
Relationships**



**Increased access to
tailored resources**



**Empowered families
and students through
advocacy**



**Reduced punitive
truancy actions**



**Be the bridge between
schools and families,
and connections to
resources.**

Lessons Learned & Next Steps

Invest in quality classified staff for meaningful family engagement

Give them room to grow

Fidelity- Constantly review caseload data and adjust

Embed CARE into school/Community systems (SST, PBIS, SARB, Community committees)

Continue innovating with compassion
(but never lower your expectations)



Activity

Stand + Chat

Take aways, or ideas sparked?



Turning ideas into action

What steps need to happen to
turn your idea into reality?

Let's Talk

Questions you have?

We can help brainstorm!



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