

San Marino Unified School District

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA ATTENDANCE FUNDING

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Dear Parents:

Beginning in 1998, school districts no longer receive funding from the State of California for pupils who are absent from school. This includes all absences, even those relating to illness, medical or doctors' appointments.

In other words, schools receive state funding only for students who actually attend school. Over the last several years this has not been a major issue for us here in San Marino because our attendance rate at all schools is consistently high—97 percent to 98 percent. In addition, many parents who are keenly aware that the District loses funds when their students are out have reimbursed the District for the lost ADA (Average Daily Attendance).

This revised manner (previously districts were reimbursed for verified absences for illness, doctors' appointments, etc.) of calculating ADA can have devastating consequences. During the 2001-2002 school year, for example, there was a major flu outbreak. It particularly hit Huntington Middle School and San Marino High School very hard. Many of our students even tried to come to school, but had to be sent home because they were so ill. As a result, the District lost funding for what amounted to a total of 20 students, or translating into dollars, a loss of \$100,000 in anticipated revenues for that school year. In a small district such as ours with a twenty-two million dollar budget, that is a significant loss.

If you find it necessary to keep your child out of school for reasons other than an illness, we encourage you to send your child to school for at least a part of the day so that your child will not be counted absent, and also will not miss out on important school assignments. **It is crucial that local schools continue to receive the financial resources necessary to provide quality educational services and reduce program cuts. We want to avoid the unnecessary absences that reduce District resources and limit your child's opportunity to obtain good grades.**

Studies show that there is a direct correlation between good school attendance and student achievement; therefore, we encourage you as parents to reinforce the importance of good school attendance and to make every effort to send your child to school on a regular basis.

Again, we encourage your continued support to promote good school attendance and student achievement.

Gary W. Woods
Superintendent