



Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Program

Report to Participating Boards of Education
August 2008

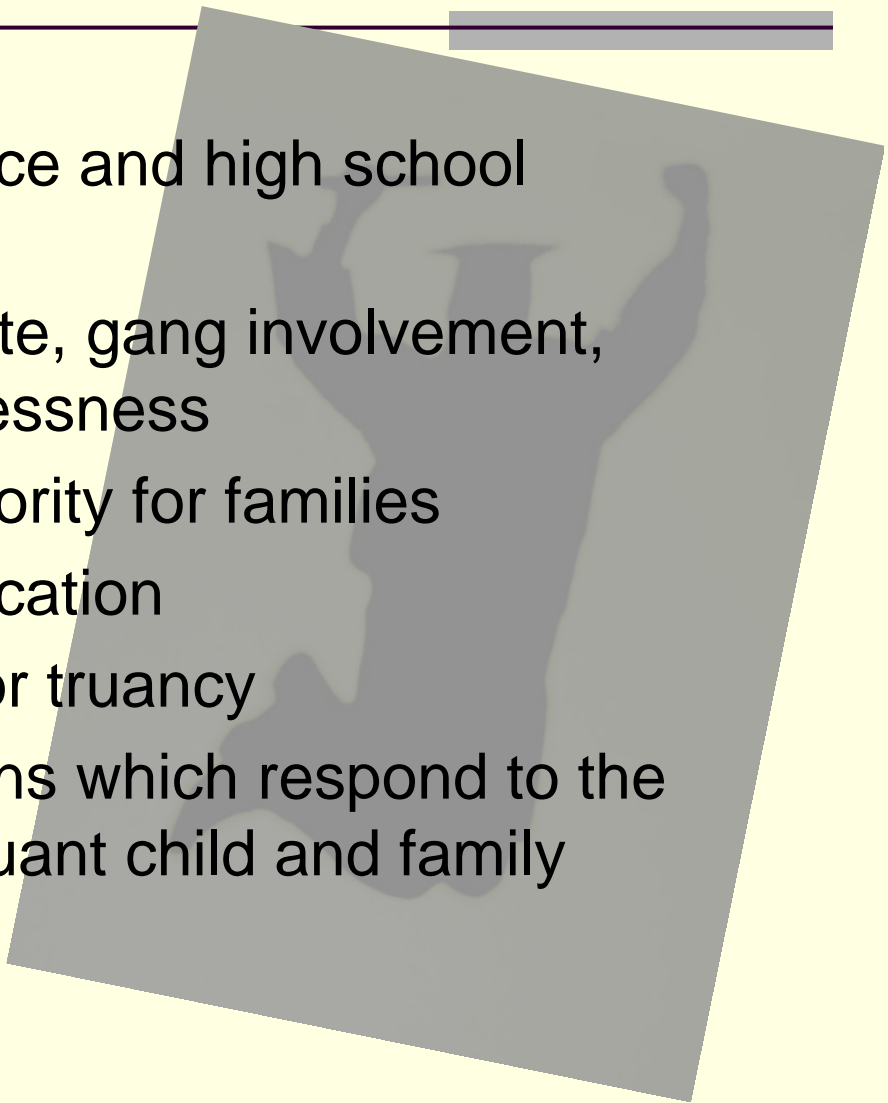
Need for Truancy Program

- Truancy has been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs of students headed for potential delinquent activity, social isolation, or educational failure via suspension, expulsion, or dropping out.¹
 - Lack of commitment to school has been established by several studies as a risk factor for substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout.²
 - A number of studies have found that truants have low self-esteem and experience greater feelings of rejection or criticism from their parents than non-truants.³

Truancy Program Steps

- Step #1 – Letter #1: Advise parents of their child's truancies through Letter sent by school. **(3 full day unexcused absences)**
- Step #2 – After School Meeting (ASM) : A group meeting focusing on parent/child accountability, legal responsibility and consequences, as well as information regarding available local resources for self-help.
- Step #3 – Truancy Mediation Team (TMT) Meeting: Multi-agency meeting with parent and child to identify possible solutions to improving the child's attendance.
- Step #4 – School Attendance Review Board (SARB): SARB and Informal Probation.
- Step #5 – Prosecution: Court intervention and Formal Probation.

Goals

- Improve school attendance and high school graduation rates
 - Reduce juvenile crime rate, gang involvement, adult criminality and joblessness
 - Make education a top priority for families
 - Empower youth with education
 - Enforce zero tolerance for truancy
 - Create individualized plans which respond to the particular needs of the truant child and family
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Community Partners Gathered to Work on the Truancy Challenge:

- Schools
- District Attorney
- Probation Department
- Law Enforcement
- Mental Health
- Child Welfare Services
- Community Based Organizations

With no formal program in place...

- Loss of average daily attendance to schools of approximately \$37 per day per student
- Prevention efforts are performed by each school individually without consistent procedures in place
- Lack of accountability for enforcing appropriate responses for continued truanancies
- Many high risk students would fall through the cracks and fail to be referred into needed services

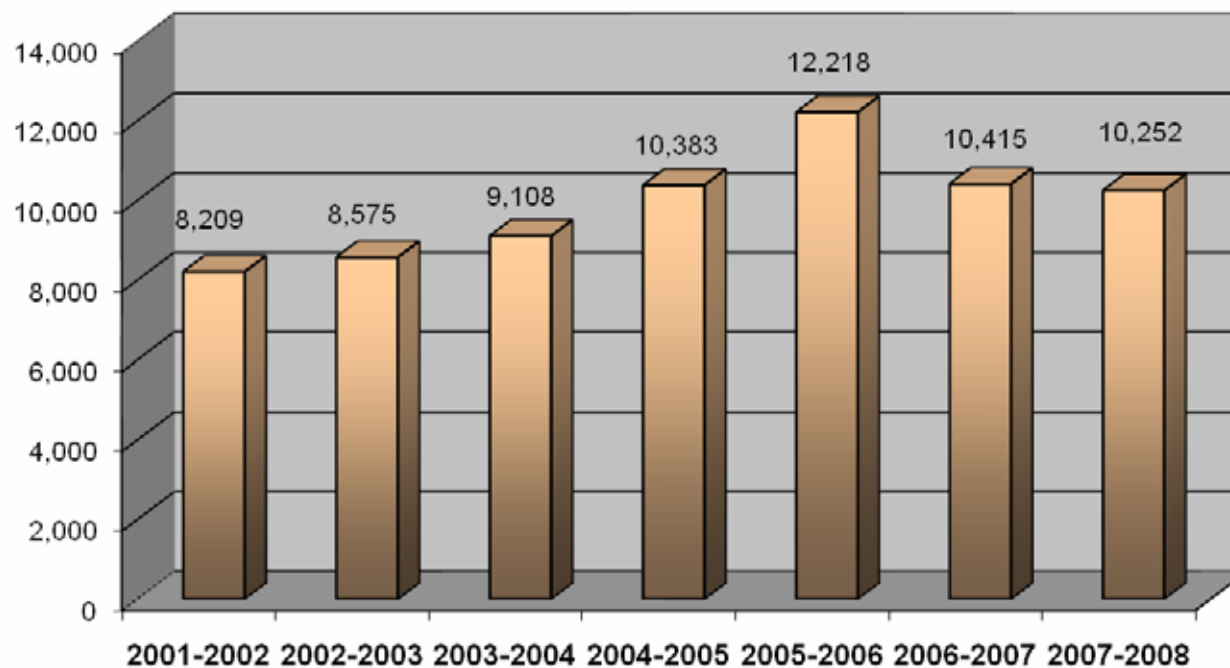
Cost of Truancy



- Expense of daytime juvenile crimes & related juvenile justice system costs
- Incalculable psychosocial and emotional loss
- Community Deterioration
- Future joblessness and adult criminality

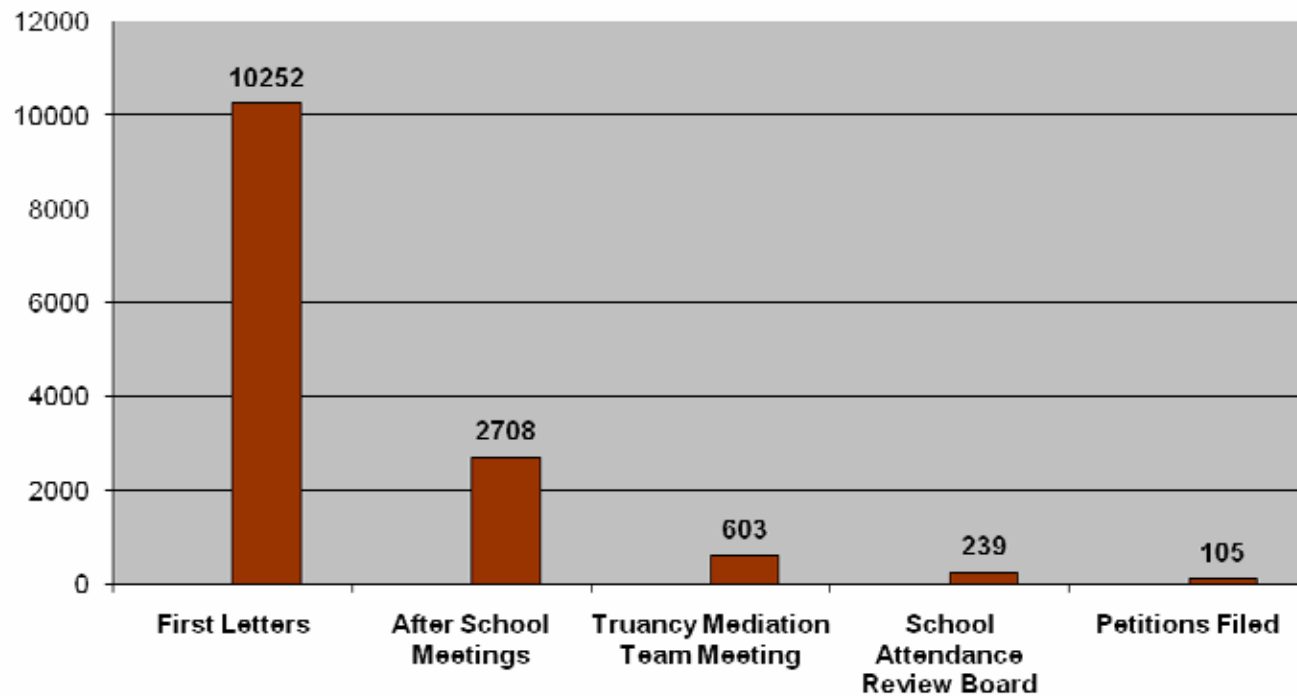
Truancy Program Has Been Effective

**Number of First Truancy Letters Sent
Countywide 2002-2008**



After a peak in 05-06, First Notices of Truancy have been on a steady decline.

Students at all Steps Countywide 2007-2008



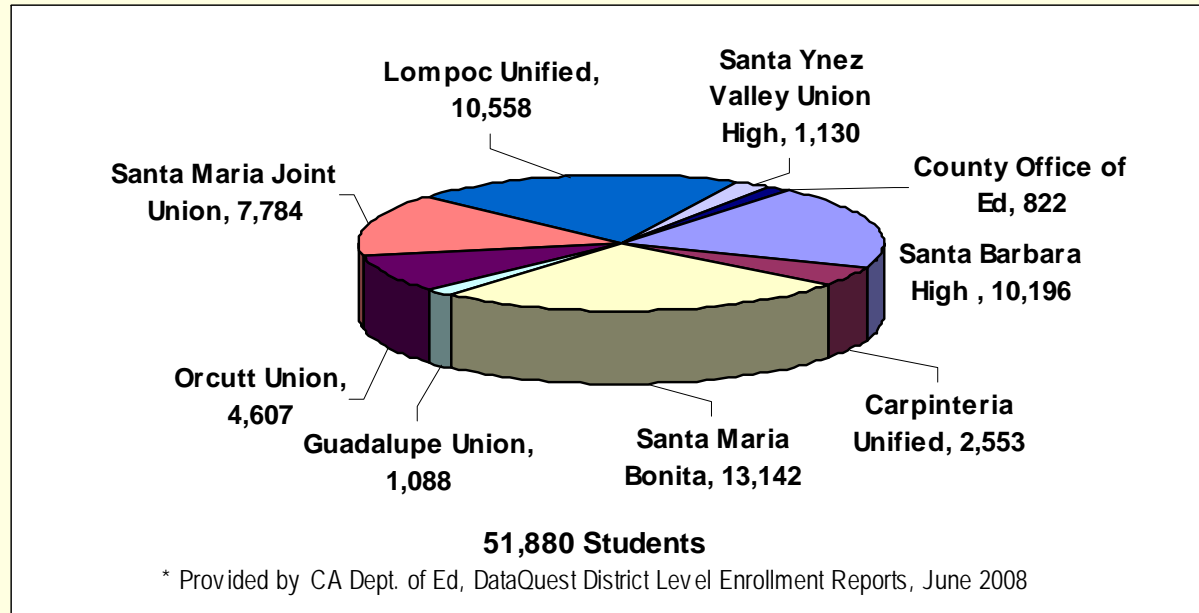
Less than 1% of students initially identified into the Truancy Program are ever prosecuted.

Estimated Gain in Average Daily Attendance Santa Barbara County Schools 2007- 08

Gain in Average Daily Attendance 2007- 08	
Number of First Letters Sent	10,252
Multiplied by Minimum of three more days in attendance	30756
Multiplied by approx \$37 per day per child	\$37.00
Estimated ADA from Step 1	\$1,137,972.00

First Letters are simply a factor used to estimate an amount of revenue schools could possibly receive. The District Attorney's Office stands behind the first letter notification of truancy by providing the consequences afforded by the legal system. Financial benefits are only one part of the larger picture of why our schools and communities need a formal truancy program in place to keep kids in school.

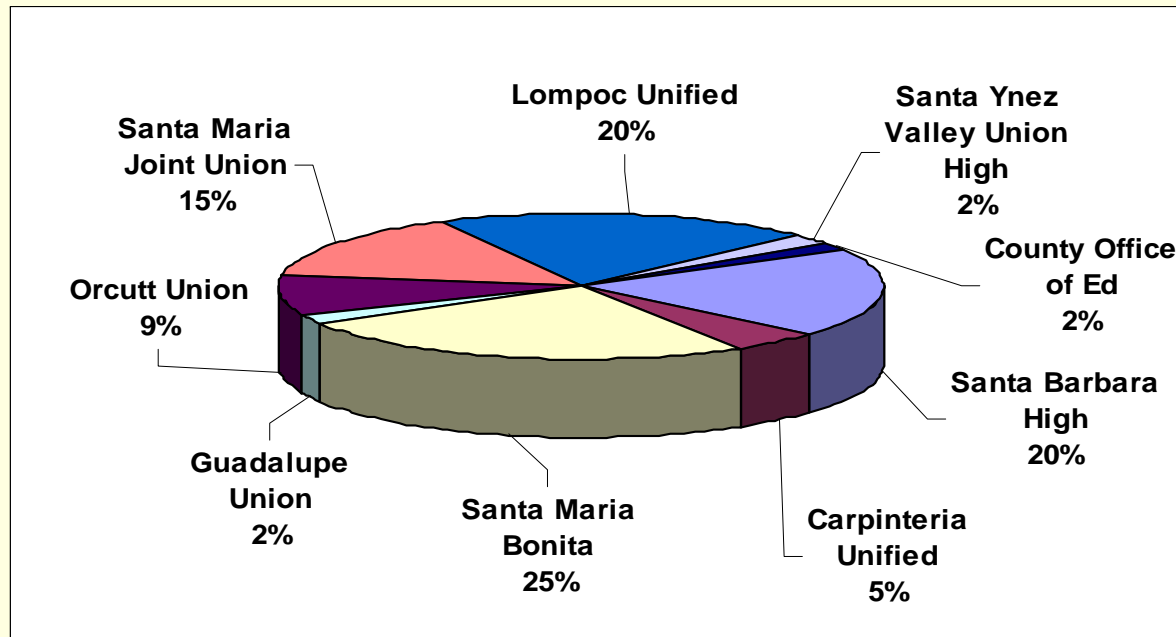
Countywide Student Population Served by Truancy Program 2007-2008



51,880 Students

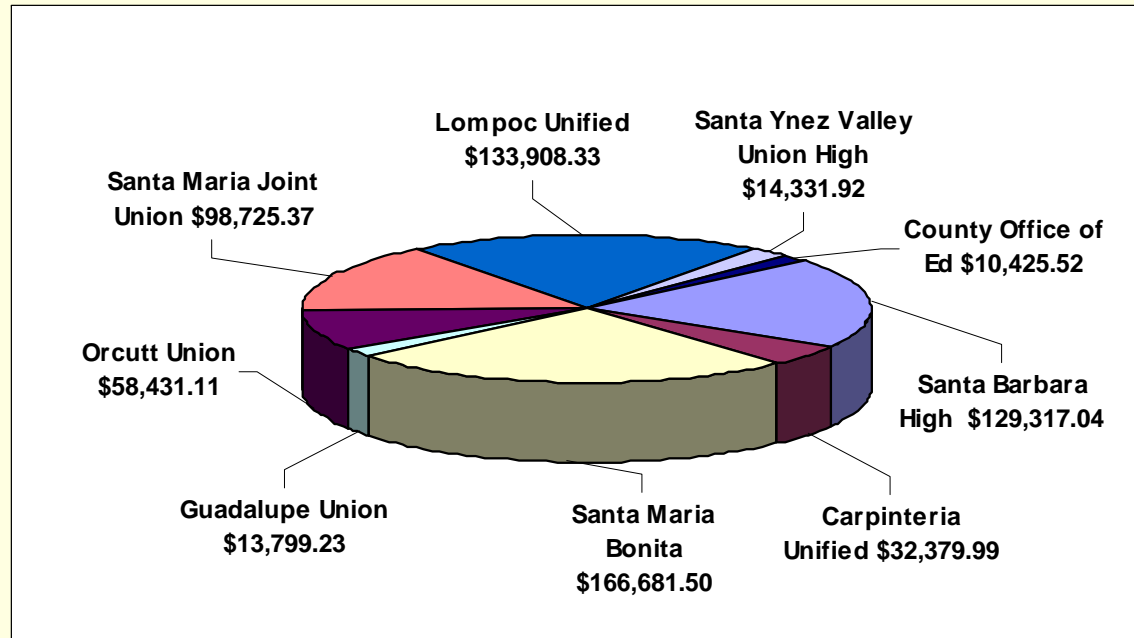
The District Attorney's Office is seeking a financial contribution towards the Truancy Program based solely on the student population of the school districts served by the DA's Office.

District Percentage of Population Participating 2007-2008



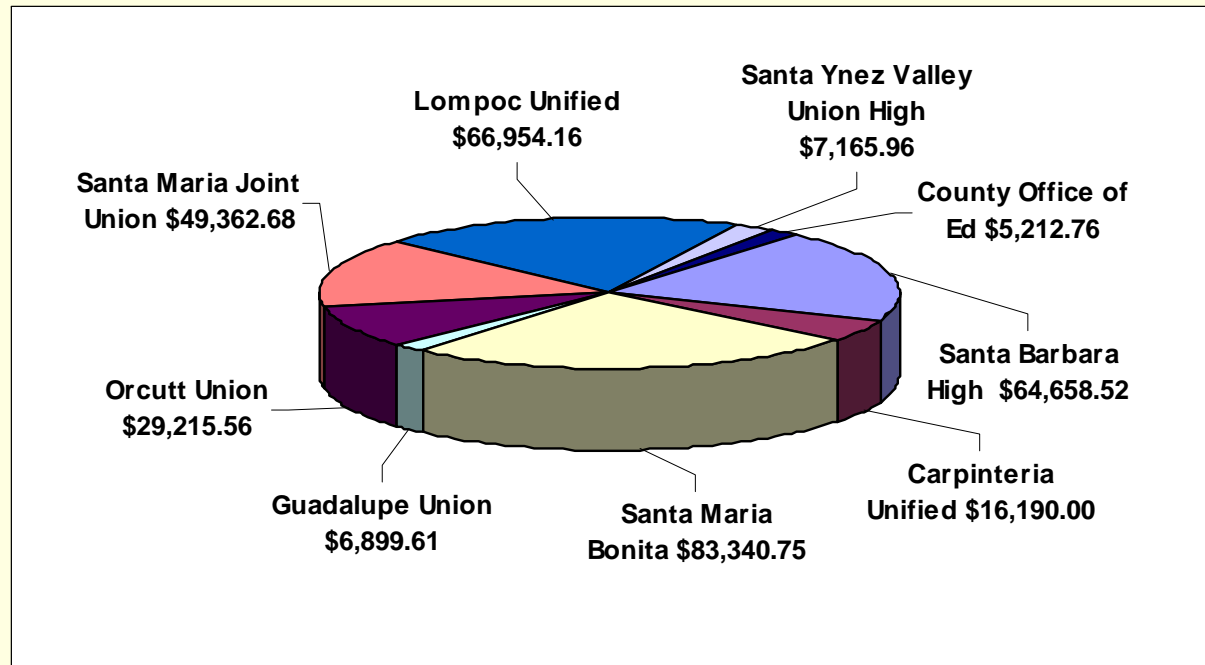
The percentage of a district's total population served is then used as the percentage of cost being sought.

Entire Program Cost: \$658,000



The entire program cost to run the Truancy Program throughout Santa Barbara County is \$658,000. Above, are listed percentages of that cost based on population percentages. School Districts are not being asked to contribute at this level.

In order to continue services at this level,
School's cost is...



School Districts are being asked to contribute one-half of the cost to operate the Truancy Program.

Thank you....

The Truancy Program has been a successful community partnership for the last eleven years. Thousands of students and families have benefited from our collaborative efforts. We look forward to your support and contribution this coming school year.

Sources Cited

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² U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services; and National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, 2001.

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³ Bell A., Lee A. Rosen, and Dionne Dynlacht, "Truancy Intervention," *The Journal of Research and Development in Education, Vol. 27, No. 3*, 1994, p. 203-211.

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