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INTERCOM

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS OF CHILD WELFARE AND ATTENDANCE

APRIL 1984

Sharon Rohrke, Editor - Modesto City Schools - 426 Locust - Modesto, California 95355

SPECIAL EDITION

SB 2208

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR HART

FEBRUARY 17, 1984

EDITOR'S NOTES

This special edition of the Intercom is devoted to SB 2208--alternative attendance accounting legislation--which was introduced by Gary Hart on February 17, 1984 as urgency legislation. Information provided should be studied and shared with your staff.

CASCWA SUPPORTS SB 2208. PASSAGE OF THIS BILL WILL BENEFIT DISTRICTS BY:

1. Simplifying attendance accounting; and,
2. Motivating schools and districts to develop and implement programs and strategies that would increase actual attendance for apportionment and academic achievement.

Any questions regarding SB 2208 may be directed to members of CASCWA's State Legislative Committee, (see page 11), or to Robert Bennett (916) 322-1472 or Mary Weaver (916) 323-0561 of the California State Department of Education.

Sincerely,

Sharon Rohrke
Supervisor, Child Welfare and Attendance
Modesto City Schools

(I have accepted this position with Modesto City Schools effective April 2, 1984 and look forward to new responsibilities and challenges. CASCWA correspondence should be forwarded to the above address).

" DAILY ATTENDANCE -- THE GATEWAY TO EXCELLENCE "



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS OF CHILD WELFARE AND ATTENDANCE

A POSITION STATEMENT

Where we stand on . . .

Attendance Accounting Reform

Education is an opportunity and a right. Children and youth who exercise this right to attend school regularly, have full opportunity for the basic education necessary to become knowledgeable and contributing members of society. Absence from school, regardless of the reason, limits the pupils' educational opportunities. Because of the direct negative effect on academic achievement, promotion, graduation, sense of worth, and employment potential of our students, we have a responsibility to encourage and increase student attendance.

CASCWA recognizes that poor school attendance is the most frequently identified symptom of the potential dropout. Pupils who leave school prior to completion, face statistically higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than do other workers; they are more likely to require public assistance; and they are more likely to engage in criminal activity. CASCWA believes students must attend school regularly and willingly to receive a quality education.

CASCWA recognizes the link between attendance and the amount of apportionment revenue earned by schools. The current funding system for average daily attendance (ADA) encourages schools to classify questionable absences as apportionment absences because of the otherwise potential loss in ADA. CASCWA believes all absences, excused and unexcused, adversely affect a pupil's academic achievement, although CASCWA does recognize there are legitimate reasons for absences.

CASCWA advocates a reform in the state ADA funding system from the current accounting procedure to one that would require a combination of actual attendance data and a fixed absence percentage factor to determine monthly earned apportionment.

CASCWA believes the reformed attendance accounting system would motivate schools and districts to develop and implement programs and strategies that would increase actual student attendance for apportionment and academic achievement.

CASCWA believes that the recommended system would simplify attendance accounting bookkeeping procedures and, thus, would make time available for attendance personnel to implement incentive strategies for improving attendance.

ALTERNATIVE ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING LEGISLATION
(History, Legislative Goal, Proposed Changes, and Justifications)

Following is a memorandum which was written by Robert Bennett and Mary Weaver of the California State Department of Education to attendance accounting personnel explaining the history, legislative goal, proposed changes, and justification for alternative attendance accounting legislation. This memorandum provides background information regarding SB 2208.



CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

721 Capitol Mall

Sacramento, CA 95814

Bill Honig

Superintendent

of Public Instruction

February 9, 1984

TO: Attendance Accounting Personnel

FROM: Robert Bennett, Field Representative (916) 322-1472 *RB*
Mary Weaver, Consultant (916) 323-0561 *MW*

SUBJECT: Alternative Attendance Accounting Legislation

In February 1984, we expect that the California Legislature will be considering a bill that would simplify attendance accounting. If the bill becomes law, the use of a percentage of daily enrollment would be substituted for the current method of determining the number of absences allowable for apportionment purposes. The basic relationship between attendance and revenue, however, would be unchanged.

History

During the past two years, 32 schools participated in the School Attendance Improvement Pilot Study (Chapter 1329, AB 3269/80) and tested an alternative system for calculating apportionment day credits. The alternative attendance accounting system combined actual attendance data and a fixed absence percentage factor to determine monthly earned apportionment. With a given absence percentage factor (percent of daily enrollment), schools focused on strategies to improve attendance rather than on the process of determining if absences meet Education Code (Section 46010) criteria for apportionment credit.

At the beginning of the school year, many schools had fewer real absences than the absence percentage factor credited; thus, those schools earned apportionment credit for every student enrolled. However, at the end of the school year, schools had more real absences than credited by the factor. The a.d.a. earned from the alternative system generally paralleled or slightly exceeded that earned from the traditional a.d.a. system, without the same clerical time required to complete district, county, and state apportionment forms.

Legislative Goal

To expand the use of the alternative attendance accounting system statewide.

Proposed Changes

To accomplish our goal, the following changes are proposed:

1. Remove current a.d.a. accounting methods in district or county regular, special education, and continuation programs that use absences for a.d.a. purposes (Education Code Section 46010).
2. Establish legislation for the alternative system that would include a standardized statewide absence percentage factor(s).
3. Replace the emergency attendance material decrease system with one that allows districts to eliminate data from the school month showing the lowest actual attendance-to-enrollment ratio.

Some existing Education Code sections would need to be repealed or amended, and new Education Code sections would need to be added. Title 5 sections 422-424 and 428 would be repealed or amended. Specific changes would include:

1. Education Code Section 46010 - Repeal
2. Education Code Section 46010.5 - Repeal
3. Education Code Section 46011 - Amend
4. Education Code Section 46012 - Amend
5. Education Code Section 46015 - Repeal
6. Add Education Code sections 46020, 46020.1, 46020.2, 46020.3
7. Add Education Code Section 46021
8. Add Education Code Section 46022
9. Add Education Code Section 46023
10. Education Code Section 46392 - Amend
11. Education Code Section 41601 - Amend
12. Education Code Sections 46500, 46501, 46510 - Repeal

Justifications - The alternative attendance accounting system offers the following advantages:

1. Objective standards (enrollment, absence factor, and actual attendance) would replace subjective interpretations of Title 5 standards (apportionment vs. nonapportionment absences).
2. The audit trail required of school districts would require only enrollment and actual attendance data, thus eliminating subjective quality documents.
3. The ability to set aside the lowest school month data eliminates the need for the Department to make administrative judgments regarding material decrease.
4. With an absence percentage factor used by all schools, any shortfall of state funds would be shared equally by all districts from an objective process.
5. The positive attendance a.d.a. incentive promotes school efforts that encourage students to return to school from part day absences (e.g., medical appointments).
6. Counseling staffs can deal with the fundamental reasons for absence; the current system may cost the district revenue if the reason for absence is a non-apportionment reason (e.g., truancy or a family's personal needs).
7. Once in place, the positive attendance accounting instructions, audit process, and management issues will simplify the requirements to monitor.

RB:MTW:rk

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PILOT STUDY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

	<u>Elementary</u> n=11	<u>Intermediate/Jr. High</u> n=5	<u>High School*</u> n=15
79-80 Baseline Actual Attendance (Averages)	91.49%	88.48%	87.21%
81-82 Actual Attendance (Averages)	94.11%	91.89%	91.52%
82-83 Actual Attendance (Averages)	94.61%	91.90%	92.60%
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79-80 ranges	87.43%-93.80%	79.98-91.52%	79.12%-91.75%
81-82 ranges	93.08%-95.12%	90.01%-92.64%	86.51%-93.72%
82-83 ranges	93.27%-95.29%	90.50%-92.70%	85-88%-94.49%
<hr/>			
81-82 Attendance Improvement**	2.62%	3.41%	4.31%
82-83 Attendance Improvement**	3.12%	3.42%	5.39%
<hr/>			
Baseline Absenteeism (excused & unexcused)	8.51%	11.52%	12.79%
81-82 Absenteeism (excused & unexcused)	5.89%	8.11%	8.48%
82-83 Absenteeism (excused & unexcused)	5.39%	8.10%	7.40%
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79-80 Baseline "excused" absence rates	5.81%	6.86%	8.13%

*Excludes continuation high school
 **Comparison made with 79-80 baseline year

MTW:rk
 August 1983



Introduced by Senator Hart
February 17, 1984

An act to amend Sections 41601, 46011, and 46012 of, to repeal Sections 46010, 46010.5, and 46015 of, to repeal and add Section 46392 of, and to add Sections 46020, 46020.1, 46020.3, 46020.5, 46021, 46022, 46023, and 48342.5 to, the Education Code, relating to schools, making an appropriation therefor, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 2208, as introduced, Hart. Schools: attendance.

(1) Existing law requires the governing board of each school district, for purposes of computing school apportionment allowances, to report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction during each fiscal year the average daily attendance of the district for all full school months, as prescribed. Existing law prescribes the method for the computation of pupil attendance, including a number of circumstances in which a pupil's attendance shall not be deemed an absence, as prescribed.

This bill would repeal specified provisions of existing law prescribing the method for the calculation of pupil attendance, and would prescribe another attendance accounting system. The new method would be based upon the actual attendance of pupils plus a specified percentage of the daily enrollment.

This bill would authorize a school district or county office of education to elect not to enter into the computation of average daily attendance the data for any one school month, based upon a material decrease of the actual attendance due to conditions of illness, climatic conditions, or other conditions in the community.

(2) Existing law requires the governing board of each school district to annually disclose to the public actual pupil attendance rates in the district.

This bill would require school districts and county offices of education to annually certify to the Superintendent of Public Instruction that it has made this public disclosure.

(3) This bill would appropriate the sum of \$30,000 from the General Fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for administrative costs incurred by the State Department of Education in the implementation of the alternative attendance accounting system prescribed by the provisions of this bill.

(4) Article XIII B of the California Constitution and Sections 2231 and 2234 of the Revenue and Taxation Code require the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Other provisions require the Department of Finance to review statutes disclaiming these costs and provide, in certain cases, for making claims to the State Board of Control for reimbursement.

This bill would impose state-mandated local costs by requiring school districts and county offices of education to revise the methods by computing pupil attendance, as prescribed.

However, this bill would provide that no appropriation is made and no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

(5) This bill would take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: 2/3. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby recognizes that poor school attendance is the most frequently identified characteristic of pupils who are potential dropouts. The Legislature also recognizes that, statistically, pupils leaving school prior to graduation face higher unemployment rates and lower wages and earnings than other workers, are more likely to require public assistance, and are more susceptible to engaging in criminal activity.

It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage school districts and county offices of education to develop and implement strategies and activities which emphasize the importance of school attendance and which encourage pupils to regularly attend school. It is also the intent of the Legislature to encourage school districts to use an attendance accounting procedure which promotes accountability and the most efficient and effective use of public funds.

SEC. 2. Section 41601 of the Education Code is amended to read:

41601. For the purposes of this chapter, *except as provided in Section 46392*, the governing board of each school district shall report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction during each fiscal year the average daily attendance of the district for all full school months during (1) the period between July 1st and December 31st, inclusive, to be known as the "first period" report for the first principal apportionment, and (2) the period between July 1st and April 15th, inclusive, to be known as the "second period" report for the second principal apportionment. The county superintendent of schools shall report the average daily attendance for the schools and classes maintained by him or her and the average daily attendance for the county school tuition fund. If the average daily attendance in the district or in schools and classes maintained by the county superintendent of schools for the period of time between July 1st and June 30th is greater or lesser than the average daily attendance reported for the second period report, the appropriate increases and decreases in the several categories of attendance for which separate foundation programs are required to be computed shall be recomputed on the basis of the foundation program and assessed valuation of the fiscal year in which such increases and decreases in average daily attendance were applicable and the appropriate increases and decreases in apportionments shall be added or withheld in the next succeeding fiscal year pursuant to Section 41341.

Each report shall be prepared in accordance with instructions on forms prescribed and furnished by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and average daily attendance shall be computed in the following manner:

(a) The average daily attendance in the regular elementary, junior high, and high schools, including continuation schools and classes and opportunity schools and classes, maintained by the school districts shall be determined by dividing the total number of days of attendance allowed in all full school months in each period, by the number of days such schools are actually taught in all full school months in each period, exclusive of Saturdays or Sundays and exclusive of weekend makeup classes pursuant to Section 37228.

(b) The average daily attendance in summer school and outdoor science and conservation education classes maintained during the period between the last day the regular day schools are in session during the preceding year and the first day the regular day schools are in session during the current year shall be reported on both the first period and second period reports. Such average daily attendance shall be computed by dividing the days of attendance allowed by 175.

(c) The attendance for schools and classes maintained by the county superintendent of schools and the county school tuition fund shall be reported in the same manner as reported by school districts. The average daily attendance of the school shall be determined by dividing the total number of days of attendance in all full school months in the first period by a divisor of 70, in the second period by 135 and at annual time by 175. For attendance in special classes and centers pursuant to Section 56364, the average daily attendance shall be reported by the county superintendents, but credited for revenue limit purposes to the district in which the pupil resides.

(d) The days of attendance in classes for adults and regional occupational centers programs shall be reported in the same manner as all other attendance under subdivision (a) or (b). The average daily attendance in such schools and classes shall be determined by dividing the total number of days of attendance in all full school months in the first period by a divisor of 85 in the second period by 135 and at annual time by 175.

SEC. 3. Section 46010 of the Education Code is repealed.

46010. (a) The total days of attendance of a pupil upon the schools and classes maintained by a school district, or schools or classes maintained by the county superintendent of schools during the fiscal year shall be the number of days school was actually taught for not less than the minimum schooldays during the fiscal year less the sum of his absences:

(b) The absence of a pupil from school or class shall not be deemed an absence in computing the attendance of a pupil if such absence was:

- (1) Due to his illness; or
- (2) Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer; or
- (3) For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered; or
- (4) For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of his immediate family, so long as such absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California; or
- (5) For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law;
- (6) Due to exclusion from school pursuant to Section 3281 of the Health and Safety Code, so long as such absence is not more than five schooldays pursuant to Section 46010.5.

"Immediate family," as used in this subdivision, has the same meaning as that set forth in the last sentence of Section 45194 except that references therein to "employee" shall be deemed to be references to "pupil."

The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply in the case of pupils attending summer school, adult schools, and classes, or regional occupational centers and programs other than pupils concurrently enrolled in a regular high school program and a regional occupational center or program.

SEC. 4. Section 46010.5 of the Education Code is repealed.

46010.5. The governing board of the district of attendance shall exclude any pupil of the district who has not been immunized properly pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 3280) of Division 4 of the Health and Safety Code; for up to five days in order to obtain such immunization; and such exclusion shall not be deemed an absence in computing average daily attendance if the following conditions are complied with:

(a) The governing board of the district notifies the parent or guardian of the pupil that they have two weeks to supply evidence either that the pupil has been properly immunized, or that the pupil is exempted from the immunization requirement pursuant to Section 3285 or Section 3286 of the Health and Safety Code.

(b) The governing board of the district, in such notice, refers the parent or guardian of the pupil to the pupil's usual source of medical care to obtain such immunization; or if no usual source exists, either refers the parent or guardian to the county health department; or notifies the parent that the immunizations will be administered at a school of the district.

SEC. 5. Section 46011 of the Education Code is amended to read:

46011. Absences due to illness or quarantine from school shall be verified explained by the parent or guardian in the manner prescribed by the school district policy adopted by the governing board district or the county superintendent of schools in such manner as the Superintendent of Public Instruction may provide.

SEC. 6. Section 46012 of the Education Code is amended to read:

46012. For purposes of any procedure for verification explanation of absences from school, a student 18 years of age or over, with respect to his own absences from school, shall have all of the responsibilities and powers which, in

the case of a minor, would be charged to the parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control of the minor.

SEC. 7. Section 46015 of the Education Code is repealed.

~~46015. Except as otherwise provided in this article, the absences allowed under Section 46005 shall be deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance and shall not generate state apportionment payments.~~

SEC. 8. Section 46020 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46020. The apportionment day credit earned in computing average daily attendance pursuant to Section 41601 in schools maintaining a regular day or special day class of a school district or classes of county superintendents of schools requiring daily attendance accounting shall consist of the sum of the actual attendance of pupils enrolled for at least the minimum schoolday plus a percentage of the daily enrollment identified in Sections 46020.1, 46020.3, and 46020.5. The total apportionment credit earned per school month shall not exceed the total daily enrollment during that school month.

SEC. 9. Section 46020.1 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46020.1. All classes whose attendance is reported for kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, including opportunity classes and pregnant minor classes, shall use 6 percent of the daily enrollment in computing apportionment credit.

SEC. 10. Section 46020.3 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46020.3. All classes whose attendance is reported in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, including opportunity classes and pregnant minor classes, shall use 8 percent of the daily enrollment in computing apportionment credit.

SEC. 11. Section 46020.5 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46020.5. All classes whose attendance is reported as special day classes for special education, regardless of the grade placement, shall use 8 percent of the daily enrollment in computing apportionment credit.

SEC. 12. Section 46021 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46021. Apportionment day credit earned in computing average daily attendance pursuant to Section 41601 for schools or programs of a school district or schools or classes of county superintendents of schools requiring hourly attendance accounting, except for programs under Sections 46022 and 46023, shall consist of the sum of the actual hours of attendance of pupils enrolled in programs specified in Sections 46170 and 52324.5 plus 10 percent of the actual attendance.

Apportionment hourly credit as a sum of actual attendance and 10 percent of actual attendance shall be divided by a factor of three to compute the apportionment day credit when computing average daily attendance pursuant to Section 41601. Continuation students shall not be reported for more than 15 hours of attendance credit per week.

SEC. 13. Section 46022 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46022. Apportionment day credit earned in computing average daily attendance pursuant to Section 41601 for school districts or county offices of education which maintain independent study programs, nonconcurrent regional occupational centers and programs, adult and summer school programs, or any other pupils enrolled in the regular or special day classes under a partial exemption for attendance for less than the minimum school day shall include only the hours of actual attendance. Apportionment hourly credit is the sum of actual attendance divided by a factor of 3 to compute the apportionment day credit when computing average daily attendance pursuant to Section 41601.

SEC. 14. Section 46023 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46023. Apportionment daily credit earned in computing average daily attendance pursuant to Section

41601 for school districts or county offices of education which maintain individualized home and hospital instruction shall only include the actual hours of instruction.

Each clock hour of time devoted to individualized home and hospital instruction shall count as one day of instruction. No pupil shall be credited with more than five hours of instruction per week or credited with more than three hours of instruction on any instructional day.

SEC. 15. Section 46392 of the Education Code is repealed.

~~46392. Whenever the average daily attendance of any school district during any fiscal year has been materially decreased during any fiscal year because of:~~

- (a) Fire;
- (b) Flood;
- (c) Impassable roads;
- (d) An epidemic;
- (e) The imminence of a major safety hazard as determined by the local law enforcement agency;
- (f) A strike involving transportation services to pupils provided by a nonschool entity; or
- (g) An order provided for in Section 41402;

such fact shall be established to the satisfaction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction by affidavits of the members of the governing board of the school district and the county superintendent of schools. The average daily attendance of the district for the fiscal year shall be estimated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in such manner as to credit to the school district for determining the apportionments to be made to the district from the State School Fund approximately the total average daily attendance which would have been credited to the school district had the emergency not occurred or had the order not been issued.

The provisions of this section shall apply to any average daily attendance which occurs during any part of a school year.

SEC. 16. Section 46392 is added to the Education Code, to read:

46392. A school district or county office of education may elect not to enter into the computation of average daily attendance for the funded principal apportionment specified in Section 41601 the data of any one school month. This election shall be based upon a material decrease of the actual attendance due to conditions of illness, climatic conditions, or other conditions in the community.

SEC. 17. Section 48342.5 is added to the Education Code, to read:

48342.5. School districts and county offices of education shall annually certify to the Superintendent of Public Instruction that they have complied with the requirements of Section 48342 regarding the annual disclosure of actual pupil attendance rates.

SEC. 18. The sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for administrative costs associated with the implementation of the alternative attendance accounting system required by this act.

SEC. 19. No appropriation is made and no reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution or Section 2231 or 2234 of the Revenue and Taxation Code because the Legislature finds and declares that there are savings as well as costs in this act which, in the aggregate, do not result in additional net costs.

SEC. 20. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to authorize school districts to implement the attendance accounting system prescribed by the provisions of this bill at the earliest possible time, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.

APPORTIONMENT ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING *

XYZ DISTRICT

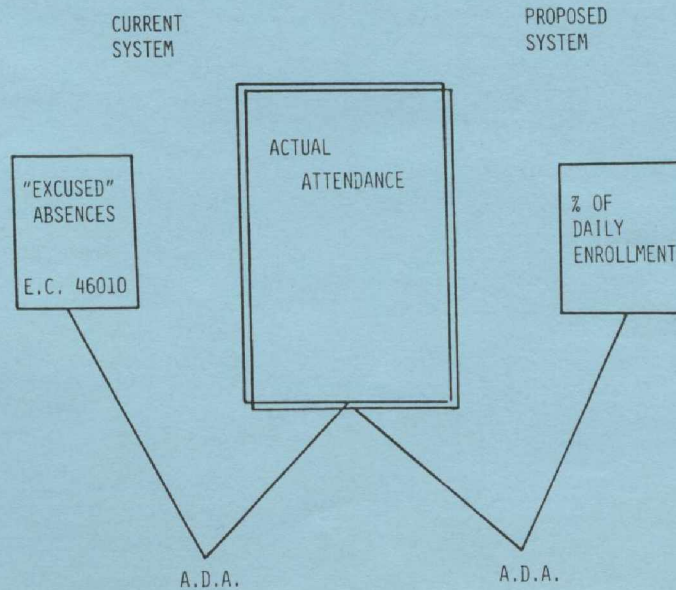
	NON-APPORTIONMENT ABSENCE	+	APPORTIONMENT ABSENCE	+	DAYS OF ACTUAL ATTENDANCE	=	TOTAL ENROLLMENT
K-8	15,617		76,862		1,220,052		1,312,531
9-12	19,883		25,242		313,013		358,138

	OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
K-8:		
A.	$1,220,052 + 76,862 = 1,296,914$	$1,312,531 \times .06 = 78,752$
B.	$1,296,914 \div 175 = 7,410 \text{ A.D.A.}$	$78,752 + 1,220,052 = 1,298,804$
		$1,298,804 \div 175 = 7,421.74 \text{ A.D.A.}$
9-12:		
A.	$313,013 + 25,242 = 338,255$	$358,138 \times .08 = 28,651$
B.	$338,255 \div 175 = 1,932.89$	$28,651 + 313,013 = 341,664$
		$341,664 \div 175 = 1,952.37 \text{ A.D.A.}$

OLD: $7,410.94 + 1,932.89 = 9,343.83$
 NEW: $7,421.74 + 1,952.37 = 9,374.11 \text{ A.D.A.}$
 + 30.28 A.D.A. (OR A 0.32% INCREASE IN A.D.A.)

*Illustration of how the proposed attendance accounting system compares to the traditional system for a.d.a. calculations.

APPORTIONMENT



ATTENDANCE IS NUMBER ONE PREDICTOR FOR COURT ADJUDICATED YOUTH OFFENDERS

Following is an excerpt from a research study by Dr. Butterworth who measured the variables of absences, grade point average, citizenship, discipline referrals to office and suspensions as a means of predicting behaviors of adjudicated youthful offenders. As you will note in his results, absences were shown to be the most powerful predictor of delinquent behavior followed in order by discipline referrals, suspensions, citizenship marks and academic GPA. I think this study again confirms the conclusions of CASCWA that attendance is a key to predicting potential delinquent behavior effecting school climate, violence, vandalism and other community problems.

Lee Lundberg, State Chairman
CASCWA Legislative Committee

PREDICTION OF COURT ADJUDICATED YOUTH OFFENDERS FROM SELECTED IN-SCHOOL VARIABLES: AN EX POST FACTO DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

A Research Study Report

Tom W. Butterworth Ed.D.

Division of Attendance, Pupil, and Administrative Services
Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools

January 1984

THE PROBLEM

Although a large number of studies have been conducted in recent years on juvenile delinquency, those involving prediction have been relatively few. (J. F. Feldhusen, Aversano, and J.R. Thurston, 1976). When the predictor variables isolated were assessed as a part of longitudinal research, the cost of conducting the study was usually considerable. In addition, the criterion variable of contact with law enforcement was most often based on post hoc self report. In contrast to police records based on actual contact, this measure has the likelihood of considerable bias. Many of the studies conducted have involved costly individual interviews and usually isolated only one or two variables.

There would seem to be need for the availability of in-school predictor variables which are easily accessible, unobtrusive, and inexpensive to assess, which could be supported if necessary by more costly measures such as personal interview, self report questionnaire, or other procedures. (L. R. Gaffney, and R. M., Mc Fall, 1981). In reviewing the literature the author was unable to uncover any studies isolating in-school attendance patterns as a possible predictor. This, of course, was a central predictor variable in the present study. Al-

though there are a number of home and community factors that

appear to relate to juvenile crime, there is general agreement among authorities that the school experience can also have a substantial effect on rates of community crime. For example, there is a suggested high relationship between rates of school attendance and crime. School programs that do increase student attendance are a possible way of reducing community crime. Other in-school student variables have been shown to have a relationship track (college bound versus non-college bound). (Hagenson, 1974 and Elliott and Voss, 1974).

Individual correlations with crime rates do exist for many of the above stated variables. However, little has been done in which a multiplicity of variables has been used in a multivariate format to predict juvenile crime. In addition, no discriminant analyses have been reported comparing delinquent youth as a dichotomous criterion variable.

The implications of the study would seem to be obvious. Given a set of predictor variables that have a combined substantial ability to distinguish between delinquent and non-delinquent behavior, the school is in a position to begin intervention earlier with students in which substitute, constructive behavior can be taught.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was designed to produce the relative weights (correlations) of predicting male juvenile offenders from a number of in-school variables in order that the best combination (multiple correlation) of the predictors will be revealed. In addition, by means of a discriminant analysis, this combination of predictors were analyzed to determine how accurate they are in predicting membership in one of two groups: an age level matched in-school, non-adjudicated group and an adjudicated group.

It was anticipated that the resulting equation with a discriminant function coefficient for each predictor variable would be useful in estimating the probability that a given "at risk" student would commit a felony.

PROCEDURES

During the spring of 1983, 100 seventeen year old boys were selected from the roster at the Los Angeles County Juvenile Hall. These subjects had been convicted of a felony by the Juvenile Court and were awaiting placement.

For each of these adjudicated boys, two non-adjudicated seventeen year old boys were randomly selected from the roster at their home school. This produced a potential total sample of 300. The schools were from throughout Los Angeles County. Retrospective data accumulated by this sample prior to the court adjudication was collected from school records. For each subject, data were collected on the variables of 1) absences, 2) academic GPA, 3) citizenship marks, 4) discipline referrals to the office and 5) suspensions. An initial attempt was made to gather data for the three time periods prior to adjudication 1) prior semester, 2) first prior year and 3) second prior year. However, only the prior semester produced adequate data due to the excessive mobility of the subjects.

Two masters level graduate students collected the data and a third data collector performed an independent reliability check on a sample of records. Using the ratio of agreements over agreements plus disagreements a coefficient of agreement of .90 was produced.

The Wilkes Lambda discriminant analysis method in the SPSS computer package was used to produce the discriminant functions and prediction equation.

RESULTS

The correlational nature of the study required that all data be available for every subject to be included. Therefore, due to the lack of data on some variables the sample size was necessarily reduced.

Reference to table 1 indicates that, based on the five predictor variables, the subjects in the adjudicated group were correctly classified in 78.5% of the cases and the non-adjudicated (remaining in school) were correctly classified in 89.0% of the cases. The overall percent of "grouped" cases correctly classified was 85.78%. It is clear that these five variables from school records constitute a powerful means of discriminating between delinquency and non-delinquency.

The relative power for each of the predictor variables in determining the probability of the occurrence of delinquent behavior was as follows;

ABSENCES WAS SHOWN TO BE THE MOST POWERFUL PREDICTOR OF DELIQUENT BEHAVIOR FOLLOWED IN ORDER BY DISCIPLINE REFERRALS, SUSPENSIONS, CITIZENSHIP MARKS AND ACADEMIC G.P.A.

CASCWA'S 1983-84 STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

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CASCWA
Spring State Conference
MAY 3 - 5, 1984
Beverly Garland Motor Inn
Sacramento, CA

**CHILD WELFARE AND ATTENDANCE IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS . . .
A PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

**INTERCOM SPECIAL EDITION
SB 2208**

**INTRODUCED BY SENATOR HART
FEBRUARY 17, 1984**

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