



# Fontana Unified School District

EVERY STUDENT SUCCESSFUL | ENGAGING SCHOOLS | EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-7600 | [www.fusd.net](http://www.fusd.net)

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 31, 2017

**CONTACT:** Juliette Funes

Maritza Fairfield

(909) 445-1001

## Fontana Unified School Attendance Program Recognized as a State Model

District's chronic absentee rate dropped 1.3% in one school year

**FONTANA, CA** – Fontana Unified School District's school attendance program is one of 27 across the state to be highlighted for its innovative and effective approach to reducing suspensions, expulsions and chronic absenteeism.

Fontana Unified has dropped its chronic absentee rate – defined as missing 10 percent or more of the total days enrolled for any reason – from 10.5 percent in 2015-16 to 9.2 percent in 2016-17. The state award recognizes the District's Model School Attendance Review Board (SARB), comprised of representatives who work together to address school attendance and behavior issues.

As a Model SARB, Fontana Unified and its SARB chairperson, Craig Baker, who serves as the District's director of Child Welfare and Attendance, can act as mentors for other SARBs in the state.

"Attendance is crucial to keeping students on a path to graduation and our District has made it a priority to stop chronic absenteeism before it starts," Fontana Unified Board President Mary Sandoval said.

"Research clearly shows the strong link between attendance and student achievement. Fontana Unified prides itself on focusing on increasing attendance to ensure students have the foundation to succeed in school and pursue higher education and careers."

The Model SARB awards will be presented at the California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance State Conference on April 19 in Tahoe City.

The model programs were selected by the State SARB, an expert panel appointed by State Superintendent Tom Torlakson. All model programs use a three-tiered approach to keep students in school.

The first tier rewards improved attendance and creates an engaging school climate with low suspension rates. The second tier identifies attendance problems early and provides personalized outreach to students and parents. The third tier refers the most persistent attendance or behavior problems to a SARB and combines resources to solve the underlying attendance problems.

Fontana Unified's SARB meets with and provides resources to students and families who are facing challenges to regularly attend school. Through persistent support, the District has maintained an overall attendance rate that exceeds 96 percent by emphasizing the value of attendance to students and their parents.

– more –

“Often it is not easy for parents to come and discuss the reasons for the negative attendance pattern,” Baker said. “However, once they enter the meeting they meet a group of people that truly want to listen and help.”

In September, deemed Attendance Awareness Month, the television crew at Fontana Unified’s A.B. Miller High School created a video promoting the importance of good attendance and the District’s theme, “Every Day, Every Day on Time.” Staff members at every school site and district department have taken the message to heart and continue to promote its importance.

“Students who attend school regularly are shown to achieve higher levels of success and have a greater chance of maintaining appropriate reading and math comprehension levels,” Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “We are proud of the progress our District has been able to make and the instrumental role our teachers, guidance counselors, principals and staff play in supporting our students reach their goals.”

# # #