

Charles Gover, Principal

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October 11, 2018

Yá'át'ééh Parents/Grandparents/Guardians:

There are many challenges facing our nation's public school systems, but there are similarities between certain key issues, which include funding, safe schools, classroom management, student technology use, parent involvement, and chronic absenteeism. A basic motto we believe in at Sanders Unified School District states, "Achievement Begins with Attendance." Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority, you help your child get better grades, develop healthy life habits, avoid dangerous behavior, and have a better chance of graduating from high school. With this thought in mind, we would like to share the following information with you: **ABSENCES NOW AFFECT FUNDING, ARIZONA LEGISLATURE, JUNE, 2018.**

G-3. Excessive Absences and Non-Fundable ADM

Students who have reached the 10% threshold for cumulative absences (excused and unexcused) based on the number of instructional calendar days at their school, and continue to incur absences may generate non-fundable Average Daily Membership (ADM) intervals in AzEDS. Prolonged absence periods, with or without a gap in membership (enrollment) and/or across reporting periods, will be identified as non-fundable intervals for any period of 10 or more consecutive absences, regardless of reported excused/unexcused status.

The following details affecting the ADM calculation will update with each ADM Calculation Engine (ACE) processing cycle in the event of a change:

- A. The actual calendar days for calculating the 10% threshold.
- B. The full-time equivalency value (FTE) value for the student's membership for calculating full absence days.

Students with a documented chronic health problem are not subject to the non-fundable ADM intervals. School districts and charter districts must submit a Chronic Illness Form, along with medical support need, to AzEDS to indicate a period of chronic health problem as defined in A.R.S. § 15-346 in order for the exemption to apply.

Interpreted: After 18 student absences (of any kind), or 10 student absences (of any kind) in a row up through the first 100 days of school will cut funding (ADM) by that many days UNLESS Arizona Department of Education approves a "chronic illness need" request.

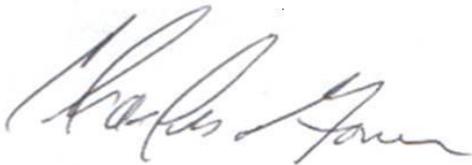
Based on this new legislation, many schools are developing stricter attendance guidelines and implementing Truancy Accountability Programs. We received a letter from Apache County Attorney, Michael Whiting, reminding us that “the Apache County Attorney’s Office and the Apache County Juvenile Probation Department are willing to assist you with any truancy problems that your District may be experiencing.”

Furthermore, it was recommended that, “each school set a specific number of unexcused absences, which will activate a referral of a student into the program. Once that number has been reached, your School Resource Officer (SRO) or any other law enforcement officer can be contacted to fill out a juvenile referral. That referral should be sent to the Apache County Juvenile Probation Office along with a copy of the juvenile’s attendance records, an affidavit of the school’s custodian of records, and a truancy referral form that has been completed by the school.”

With this, on October 4, 2018, Sanders Unified School District School Board, at the recommendation of SUSD Administration, passed by majority vote to establish the referral date of a student to three (3) days of unexcused absences. At this time the student will then be referred to the Truancy Accountability Program. This new policy will take affect October 15, 2018. We believe this program and other incentive programs/activities will increase our attendance rate with the support of parents and guardians.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns regarding this district-supported revision of our truancy policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Gover".

Charles Gover, Principal

[Sanders Elementary School Mission Statement](#)

It is the mission of Sanders Elementary to nurture and develop the inquiring mind according to each student's capacity within a safe and healthy environment.
