



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF SOLANO**

**KRISHNA A. ABRAMS  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

**John M. Daugherty**  
Chief Deputy

**Sharon S. Henry**  
Chief Deputy

**Brad W. DeWall**  
Chief Investigator  
(Interim)

August 10, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

For the past four years, the Solano County District Attorney's Office has joined the Vacaville Unified School District, the Solano County Office of Education, the Vacaville Police Department, the Solano County Sheriff's Office, the Solano County Superior Courts and the Solano County Probation Department to ensure that every child attends school on a regular basis, as required by law.

As parents, most of you do not need our help in getting your children to school. You do it on your own. So you may wonder why all these separate institutions – the schools, the police, the courts and the District Attorney – have decided to make school attendance a priority. The reason is simple: Studies have consistently shown that children who do not regularly attend school are at much greater risk of becoming involved in criminal activity – either as an offender or a victim – than those children who do regularly attend school.

Here are the statistics:

- Up to 75% of the children who miss 18 days or more of school in a school year without a valid excuse will end up dropping out of high school.
- Children who drop out of high school are 8 times more likely to end up in jail or prison than those children who graduate from high school.
- 68% of prisoners nationwide are high school dropouts.

The costs to our community of those children who end up in the criminal justice system are enormous. According to one reputable study, the total costs of each year's high school dropouts in California are estimated to be \$46 billion! Of course, no estimate can quantify the personal toll on the child and his or her family and loved ones when that child becomes either the victim of a crime or the offender.

So while the vast majority of parents who receive this letter do not need a reminder to get their children to school regularly, those parents who do not get their children to school affect us all. We encourage you to consider this important issue as a community responsibility for all of us who raise our families in Solano County.

Under California law, a student may be considered a "habitual truant" if he or she has 9 or more days of unexcused absences during a school year. A "chronic truant" is a student who has 10% (18 days) or more of unexcused absences. Truancy is a crime, which applies both to the parents of truant children and to truant students. Parents of habitually truant students may be

punished with fines and penalties starting at \$455.00, climbing to \$1,165.00. (Education Code section 48293) Parents of chronically truant students may be punished by up to a year in county jail or a fine of \$2,000.00. (Penal Code section 270.1) Students who are habitually or chronically truant in middle school and high school are frequently referred to the courts in Solano County.

***For a fifth consecutive year, the District Attorney's Office, with the cooperation of the schools, the police and the courts, will prosecute parents who fail to get their children to elementary school on a regular basis without a valid excuse and, therefore, violate the truancy laws.***

We recognize the hardships that some parents face and the multitude of reasons why not all parents succeed in getting their children to school. For those reasons, the District Attorney's Office will rely on the careful consideration of school officials to determine which parents should be referred for prosecution. Before any parent is referred by a school district for prosecution, the parent will be given all the opportunities that are currently available through the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) to work out his or her child's attendance issues with the school district.

While each of our institutions has other priorities, we have decided to make ending truancy in Solano County our common goal. By doing so, we hope to improve school attendance, decrease crime, save costs, brighten the educational and job prospects of our school children, and improve our communities.

Please join us in working together to end truancy in Solano County in order to ensure that every child has an opportunity to learn, grow and succeed in life as a productive member of our society.

Sincerely,



Krishna A. Abrams  
District Attorney  
Solano County

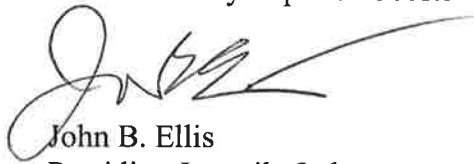
E. Bradley Nelson  
Presiding Judge  
Solano County Superior Courts



Jay Speck  
Superintendent of Schools  
Solano County Office of Education



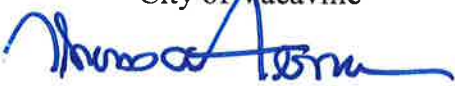
John Carli  
Chief of Police  
City of Vacaville



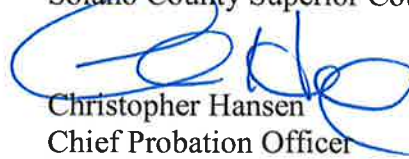
John B. Ellis  
Presiding Juvenile Judge  
Solano County Superior Courts



Jane Shamieh  
Superintendent  
Vacaville Unified School District



Thomas A. Ferrara  
Sheriff  
Solano County



Christopher Hansen  
Chief Probation Officer  
Solano County