



# cascwa INTERCOM

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

Merle Bell, INTERCOM Editor    Student Services, 1025 Second Ave., Oakland CA 94606    • (415) 836-8285    January 1983

## More Students Drop Out Before Eighteen, Study Finds

Laurie Olsen Associate Director of Citizens policy Center-Open Road, reported to the State Board of Education that 23% to 30% of all students in California drop out before the age of eighteen. Ms. Olsen indicates however, that these percentages are rough because neither the state nor the local schools keep statistics on dropouts. "People in the schools don't necessarily see it as a school problem."

The study concluded:

- The dropout rate is highest in minority communities, with 55 percent of Hispanics leaving before age 18, 15 percent to 40 percent of blacks, and 11 percent to 23 percent of whites.
- Twice as many boys as girls drop out. . . and of the girls, two-thirds nationally cite pregnancy or childbirth as the main reason. Eighty percent of pregnant or married students drop out, even though laws requiring them to leave school have been repealed.
- Of the dropouts interviewed, more than half cited a school related reason, including boredom, falling behind, poor teaching, racial prejudice and a feeling of not belonging.
- Forty-two percent of the dropouts said they had family problems. 22 percent said they used drugs or alcohol. . . half of those citing this as a reason for dropping out. . . and 10 percent said they couldn't afford to stay in school.
- Of the current students interviewed, one-third said they had seriously considered dropping out and almost half of those said pressure from parents had kept them in school.

One board member, the Reverend Lewis Bohler, attributed the dropout rate partly to fear of violence on campus. "I can't count the number of students who are not in school because they simply find it unsafe." Robert Arroyo, another board member believes that dropping out is sometimes "a productive alternative" for a student and "not all dropouts should be a target for returning to school."

## Notes on Pilot Attendance Projects

All pilot sites that have earned a bonus must submit a STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN to:

State of California  
Department of Education  
State Education Building  
721 Capitol Mall  
Sacramento, California 94714  
c/o Mary Weaver or Lanny Berry

- A short end-of-year report will be required of all pilot sites by June 30, 1983. Report forms will be sent to the Programs Operations person no later than February 1, 1983.
- A 1981-82 Pilot Project Report is currently being summarized. The report will highlight successful attendance strategies that many of you developed. Each pilot site will be sent a copy of this report.
- **NEWLY ELECTED SECTION PRESIDENTS:**  
BAY—Dave Davis  
NORTHERN—Sid Wadlly  
SAN JOAQUIN—Jake Calburn  
SOUTHERN—Tino Ledesma

### STATE CASCWA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

James J. Milner, President  
933 East Imperial Highway  
Los Angeles, California  
(213) 922-6231

Richard C. Davis, Vice President  
9738 Lincoln Village Drive  
Sacramento, California 95827  
(916) 366-2561

Jim Pierce, Secretary  
510 "G" Street  
Antioch, California 94509  
(415) 757-7110

Ms. Dale Turner, Treasurer  
656; Melrose Avenue  
North Highlands, California 95660  
(916) 332-0851



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## Truancy Program in San Leandro, California Makes Local Paper Headlines:

The San Leandro School District will be awarded \$90,400.00 because of improved attendance at San Leandro High School. San Leandro High School is a participant in the State's one year pilot program to improve attendance. The attendance at San Leandro High School has risen 3.7 percent, with 92.9 percent of the entire student body attending school during the 1981-82 school year. Mr. Lundberg, the attendance officer in the San Leandro Unified School District outlined the truancy reduction program:

- Aides and parent volunteers called parents at home or at work the day their child was absent all day.
- Aides and volunteers also reported about a fourth of one-period class cuts the same day.
- A Saturday guidance school offers tutoring and parent conferences. The number of students repeatedly late after lunch declined dramatically after four-hour Saturday school was assigned for tardy students.
- The school provided family counseling with a psychologist. In nine of ten families counseled, student attendance improved markedly.
- School officials ordered in-school suspension as punishment, rather than send misbehaving youngsters home. "The in-school suspension is the most despised sanction," Mrs. Brown, Dean, said. Under this plan, a suspended student attends from 12:30 to 4:30 and does his work under supervision. Students hate this, she says, because they lose all peer contact. Suspended students arrive after lunch is over and leave long after their friends are gone.
- A School Attendance Review Board handles stubborn cases, with 50 percent of the students involved showing improved attendance.
- Under Operation Stay-in-School, police picked up truants and returned them to school, where administrators called parents for immediate conferences.

It was also noted in the Daily Review that \$16,000 will be used to fund next year's push to further reduce truancy and cuts.

## Spring Conference— Palm Springs

CASCWA—Southern Section is hosting the Spring Conference to be held at the International Hotel Resort, Palm Springs, California, on May 5, 6, and 7, 1983.

Plans are currently under way for a great conference in beautiful Palm Springs. Come join us for fun in the sun and with a focus on OUR MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY—TODAY'S YOUTH.

A wide array of programs are being planned that should assist us in our day to day contact with Today's Youth.

If you have not circled these dates on your calendar, or have not joined CASCWA in preparation to attend—Please Don't Delay—DO SO TODAY!

More information will be forthcoming in our next newsletter.

## CASCWA Fall Conference "A Blueprint for Serving Youth in the 80's"

The CASCWA fall conference was hosted by the Bay Section in Oakland, California, on November 4, 5, 6, at the Airport Hilton Hotel. Program chairperson Dave Davis did an excellent job of organizing three days of stimulating workshops, knowledgeable, well-informed speakers, and usable, pertinent information.


The various workshops included: Truancy—A Community Problem (A Statewide Perspective from the Attorney General's Office), Special Education and Work Experience, Toughlove, Truancy and the Juvenile Justice System, CWA Update, Project Attend and Project I.E.P.—Computers, Special Education and Due Process, How to Assess a Truant—\$11 a Day and Have Them Pay, Attendance Improvement Project, Independent Study and the 601, A Report on Legislation, Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Program, and Working with the Chicano Student.

"ADA and You" was the subject of Alameda County's Superintendent of Schools Robert Coney, who gave the keynote speech Friday evening. Ms. Barbara Brown of San Leandro was very entertaining when she spoke about various school improvement plans at our Friday lunch.

Mr. Davis, president of the Bay Section chapter, is to be commended for his efforts in organizing and presenting a very successful conference.



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## T-A Editorial Today's Lesson

"Good morning, children. Welcome to the second day of school.

"Today's question is: How much does California care about your education?"

"Yes, Johnny, the state does have a long tradition of thinking schools are important. A long time ago, the California Constitution said education was the most important thing the state government had to do. For most of this century California has spent more money on education than other states. We have some of the best colleges in the world, and they're free for people who live in the state.

"What's that, Sally? If the biggest state in the union cares so much about education, why do you have to pay \$25 to play the flute in the marching band? That's because the state's priorities are changing. Music and sports are still important, but the state doesn't have enough money, so we have made your parents help pay for those programs.

"Your dad says he already pays property taxes and he's mad about having to pay more? And if you don't get to play the flute, you don't want to come to school? That's a tough one. Let's talk about it after class.

"If it makes you feel any better, things are tough on the teachers, too. No, we're not going to strike this year, but my pay raise doesn't match the cost of living—you know, paying for food and rent and gas. If I didn't love you kids so much, I'd get another job.

"Yes, Billy, jobs are hard to come by these days. It's because of the recession—when things aren't going so well in the economy. It's like when you set up a lemonade stand and nobody is thirsty, you don't get any nickels. That's one reason there's so little money this year.

"But it's more than that. Ten years ago, Californians spent about 6 percent of their income on public schools. Think of it this way: When your parents earned a dollar, six pennies were spent on your school. The state was ninth in the nation in that category.

"In this school year, California school will get only 3.7 percent of taxpayers' income. In other words, while your parents contributed six pennies for every dollar a decade ago, they now contribute about four pennies. That puts the state in 50th place. That's right. Very good. There are 50 states, so that means we're in last place.

"Of course, that's only one way to look at it. Since the state ranks near the top in what we call 'per capita income'—that means most Californians make more money than people in other states—we're not

last in the amount of money we spend on each student. Two years ago the state was 21st. Now it's 35th.

"Another way of looking at it is to compare the number of teachers to the number of students. There are more students this year because of what's called the 'baby boom echo.' In the 1950s, when your grandma had your mommy, there were lots of babies, and they all went to school when they got old enough. It was called the 'baby boom.' Those were your parents. They're grown up now, and they have their own children—you. When your mommy had you, you became part of this 'baby boom echo.' Enrollment is up about 1 percent this year—that means, if there were 100 children in school last year, there are 101 children this year.

"Meanwhile, class, there are fewer teachers. The superintendent of schools says the number will fall from 185,000 to 182,000. Part of the reason is that schools are cutting down the number of teachers because there's not enough money to pay their salaries.

"When you combine all those numbers, you get how many students each teacher has to take care of. The National Education Association—that's the union a lot of teachers belong to—says that, as of last fall, the national average was 18.4. Utah had the highest ratio with 24.7; California was second with 23.7.

"In Escondido, we haven't figured out what that ratio is yet, but the average number of children in each classroom will be about 30 this year.

"No, George. That's not too good.

"I guess that means the answer is that California doesn't care too much about your education, even though when you ask people they say it's really important.

"Yes, Debbie. It might get better. The state legislature (those people we elect and send to Sacramento to decide how to spend our tax money) is thinking about calling a special session—sort of like summer school—to try to find more money for schools. So far, this year, schools are getting the same amount of money they did last year—like your allowance. It may cost more to buy bubble gum this year, but if you get the same allowance you can't buy as much bubble gum.

"When you go home tonight, tell your parents to write their representatives and tell them to do what they can. Tell them the schools need a bigger allowance.

"The world is getting more and more complex, kids, and a good education is the best way for you to get ahead and make a decent living.

"No matter what the state does, I care about you. As long as I'm here, I'll give you the best education I possibly can.

"Oh, there's the bell. See you tomorrow."

