

# KINGS COUNTY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARD

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# Who's The Truant Officer?



- Former Reserve Police Officer LPD
- BA/AA Criminal Justice
- Employed by KCOE for 15+ years
- State SARB Board Member
- Cen-Cal Truancy Task Force Coordinator
- Cen-Cal Truancy Summit Founder
- Co-revising author of State SARB Handbook
- Co-Author of State SARB Training Curriculum
- Consultant to AG's Office for DA Best Practices for SARB Trials
- Non-Peace Officer
- EC 48264 – Arrest/Detain Truant Pupil

# MEET TRUANT OFFICER BRIAN GONZALES

by Mike Blount

**Q:** How did you become a Truant Officer?

**A:** After I graduated with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, I became a reserve police officer in Lemoore. Through that position I was approached by the Kings County Probation Department to be a Truant Officer for the Kings County Office of Education. I decided to give it a shot, but I didn't realize the importance of the job until I actually got into the position. When I started in August 2000, there were major truancy issues in Kings County. I began making constant home visits, making a lot of phone calls and anything else I could do to make parents aware of the issue.

**Q:** What are some of the issues surrounding truancy?

**A:** I came into this position from a good family background, so I wasn't familiar with some of the family issues that these kids face — divorce, domestic violence, drug abuse in the home, adultery, mental illness, suicide, cultural barriers,

**Q:** What are some of the tactics you use to reduce truancy?

**A:** I work directly with the students and their parents to resolve the issue. Truancy is a symptom of something else happening in the home. A lot of times when I confront the student, they tell me exactly what is going on. They just may not know how to get help or their parents have no idea because they are not involved in their lives. Sometimes, I have to dig. Some kids are just not used to expressing themselves to their parents, so just showing even a little bit of concern really makes them comfortable enough to talk. Parents and students have to attend [School Attendance Review Board] hearings by law when they are referred, and there are several community resources there that can get them help so the healing can begin.

**Q:** What is an average day like for you?

**A:** When I first started, it was pretty common for me to drive around and see kids skipping school. Sometimes, they would run from me and I'd have to chase them down, or in some instances I would just take them to school. But over time my position has become more proactive. I spend less time patrolling the streets and more time on the phone calling and pounding on doors to get in touch with the parents. Some migrant families in the community are not always aware that education is compulsory here in California, and the student may be three weeks absent because the family took a trip to Mexico. When they get back, they have a SARB hearing pending and they don't know why. I have to make them aware of the laws.

Truant Officer Brian Gonzales has been a Truant Officer for the Kings County Office of Education for 14 years.  
PHOTO BY JOHANNA COYNE



Help Save a Child's Life

Truancy is a multifaceted issue that can be addressed through a collaborative approach between families, schools, law enforcement and community agencies. Be part of the solution by helping to keep children in school.

**Find resources**  
**211** — In Kings or Tulare counties, call the information line to connect with resources that could alleviate truancy, such as substance abuse treatment, and behavioral and mental health services.  
**Life Steps (KINGS COUNTY)** — For enrollment in the Life Steps family skills program, call 559-852-2415.  
**SprigGo** — Many local schools in Kings and Tulare counties promote this website as an anonymous way to report bullying and other safety concerns that may lead to truancy. Visit [www.spriggo.com](http://www.spriggo.com) to make a report.

**Educate yourself**  
**"IN SCHOOL + ON TRACK"** — Read California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris' report on the state's elementary school truancy crisis, at [www.oag.ca.gov/truancy](http://www.oag.ca.gov/truancy).  
**Behavioral Intervention Strategies and Support S** — Learn about the California Department of Education's strategies to keep students in school while holding them accountable for their behavior at [www.cde.ca.gov/LS/ss/se/behavioralintervention.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/LS/ss/se/behavioralintervention.asp).

This publication is a collaboration with:









6 SAVE A LIFE. KEEP A KID IN SCHOOL. A special advertising supplement

"Once I began digging into why they were missing school, I would be exposed to these issues and it opened my eyes."

Brian Gonzales,  
Kings County Truant Officer

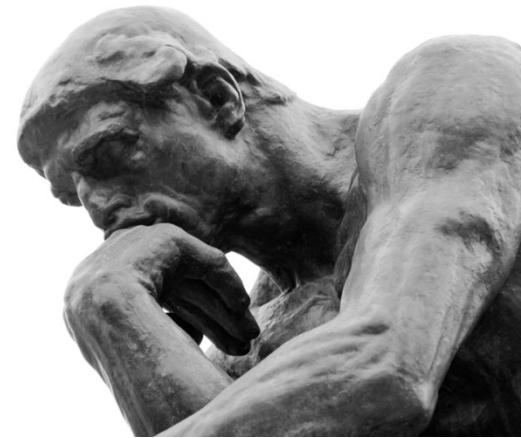
What does SARB mean?

**S – School**

**A – Attendance**

**R – Review**

**B – Board**



# 2015-2016 SARB Participating Districts

- Armona
- Central
- Corcoran
- Hanford Elementary
- Hanford High
- Kit Carson
- Lakeside
- Lemoore Elementary
- Lemoore High
- Pioneer
- Reef-Sunset

# Levels of SARB (EC 48321)

- County SARB – COE
- Local SARB – District Level

# Kings County SARB Members

- Behavioral Health
- Kings County Probation
- KCOE – County Superintendent
- School Counselor
- District Attorney
- CPS
- School Nurse
- Human Services
- Community Member
- KCAO
- Hanford Police

# Local SARB's

- Central USD – Christina Gonzales
- Corcoran USD- Esteban Velasquez
- Hanford ESD – Liz Simas
- Hanford JUSD– Ward Whaley
- Lemoore ESD – Brian Gonzales
- Lemoore UHSD – Apryl Skaggs
- LNAS SARB - Anne Gonzales (Central USD)
- Pioneer SD – Scott Ervin
- Reef-Sunset USD – Brian Gonzales
- Hanford Area – Brian Gonzales
  - Armona ESD, Kit Karson, Lakeside, Shelly Baird & KCS



# SARB: Where it all starts!

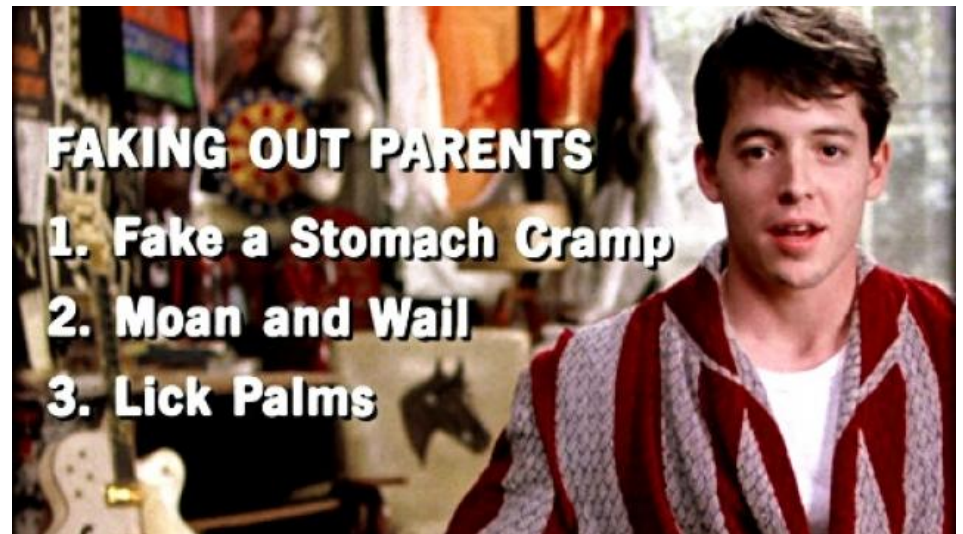


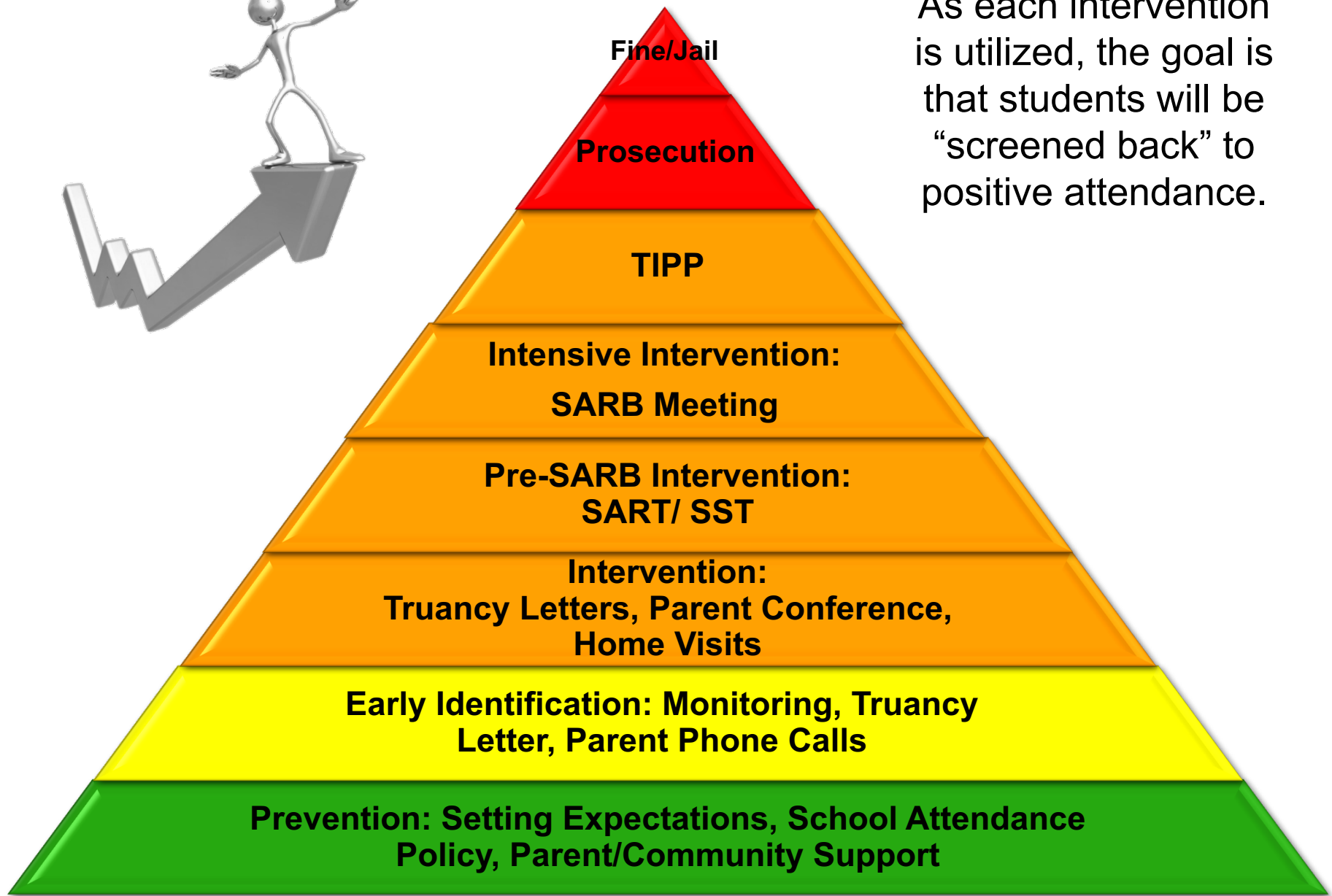
# EC 48200 - Compulsory Education

- Each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years not exempted under the provisions of this chapter or Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 48400) is subject to compulsory full-time education. Each person subject to compulsory full-time education and each person subject to compulsory continuation education not exempted under the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 48400) shall attend the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes and for the full time designated as the length of the schoolday by the governing board of the school district in which the residency of either the parent or legal guardian is located and each parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the pupil shall send the pupil to the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes and for the full time designated as the length of the schoolday by the governing board of the school district in which the residence of either the parent or legal guardian is located.

# Excusable Absence – EC 48205

- **48205.**
- Illness, purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered.
- Attending the funeral services of a member of his or her immediate family, not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is outside California.
- Illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent.
- Time w/ active duty family





As each intervention is utilized, the goal is that students will be “screened back” to positive attendance.

# Legal Definition of Truancy



EC 48260(a) A pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the schoolday without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, shall be classified as a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

# Letter #1 - Initial Notice of Truancy

- **48260.5.**
- Upon a pupil's initial classification as a truant, the school district shall notify the pupil's parent or guardian using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include electronic mail or a telephone call:
  - (a) That the pupil is truant.
  - (b) That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
  - (c) That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 of Part 27.
  - (d) That alternative educational programs are available in the district.
  - (e) That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
  - (f) That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264.
  - (g) That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
  - (h) That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

# Letter #2 – Second Notice of Truancy

- **48261.**
- Any pupil who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be reported as a truant to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the district.

# Letter #3 – Habitual Truant Classification

- **48262.**
- Any pupil is deemed an habitual truant who has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year, provided that no pupil shall be deemed an habitual truant unless an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil himself, after the filing of either of the reports required by Section 48260 or Section 48261. For purposes of this section, a conscientious effort means attempting to communicate with the parents of the pupil at least once using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include electronic mail or a telephone call.



# EC 48263 – SARB Referral by School

- **48263.**
- If any minor pupil in any district of a county is an habitual truant...may be referred to a school attendance review board...
- If the school attendance review board determines that available community services can resolve the problem ...The school attendance review board ...may require, at any time that it determines proper, the pupil or parents or guardians of the pupil, or both, to furnish satisfactory evidence of participation in the available community services.

# EC 48263 Cont. – SARB Summons

- Parents notified in writing:
  - Address of SARB Hearing
  - Reason for Referral
  - Date and Time
  - Parent, child and school official required to attend

# Local/District SARB Hearing



# Possible Outcomes of Local SARB

## Parent & Student Attend

- Attendance Contract (valid for one calendar year)
- Referral to TIPP
- Referral to other community resource
- Uncooperative – Referral to County SARB

## Parent and/or Student FTA w/ Proof of Service or Mailing of Summons

- Rescheduled (x1)
- Referred back to school site
- Referred to County SARB

# Truancy Intervention Prevention Program AKA Life Steps



- One day / 8hr program
  - Parent must arrive at 7:45 am and attend full day (5pm)
  - One time completion in 3 year period
  - Contact: Michelle Phillips – (559) 852-2286 ([michelle.phillips@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:michelle.phillips@co.kings.ca.us))
- Identifying parenting roles
  - Setting boundaries and limits
  - Out of control behavioral management
  - Tough love
  - Learning to take responsibility
  - Healthy decision making
  - Drug addiction & mental health issues
  - Formulation
  - CPS, Law Enforcement, West Care, SARB, KBH, etc.

# Utilization of TIPP

## Local SARB

- Required by contract for parent only
- Parent required to enroll and attend by date listed on contract
- Referral made by KBH rep on all Local SARB's
- If parent fails to enroll/complete/comply case can be referred to County SARB

## Court/Prosecution

- Order by court in addition to punishment
- Ordered in lieu of punishment



# If all has failed...

- Local SARB/School District refers case to Kings County SARB for hearing (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month)
- Parents/Students not invited
- Closed session
- Possible Outcomes:
  - Referred to DA
  - Referred to other agency
  - No action (17 yo, no sibs.)
  - No action due to insuf. info.



# If all has failed....

- **48291.** - If it appears upon investigation that any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child has violated any of the provisions of this chapter, the secretary of the board of education, except as provided in Section 48292, or the clerk of the board of trustees, shall refer such person to a school attendance review board. In the event that any such parent, guardian, or other person continually and willfully fails to respond to directives of the school attendance review board or services provided, the school attendance review board shall direct the school district to make and file in the proper court a criminal complaint against the parent, guardian, or other person, charging the violation, and shall see that the charge is prosecuted by the proper authority.



# SARB Criminal Case Referral

- Upon County SARB directive case, all criminal complaints are created by KCOE SARB Coordinator and submitted to DA.
- SARB Coordinator collates and writes crime report/SARB packet for submission to DA.
- SARB Coordinator to be considered contact/Investigating Officer for all Kings County SARB cases
- School witness to be considered main witness for all cases. SARB Coord. present for technical SARB information for Court.

# Punishment

## Infraction

- Any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any pupil who fails to comply with this chapter, unless excused or exempted therefrom, is guilty of an infraction and shall be punished as follows:
  - (1) Upon a first conviction \$100
  - (2) Upon a second conviction, by a fine of \$250
  - (3) Upon a third or subsequent conviction, (\$500). In lieu of imposing the fines prescribed in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), the court may order the person to be placed in a parent education and counseling program. **TIPP**

## Misdemeanor

- PC 272 – Requested after 3<sup>rd</sup> EC Conviction
- PC 270.1 – 1<sup>st</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade chronic truant (EC 48263.6 – 10%+) in single school year. TIPP

# Why we do what we do...

6'0"  
5'10"  
5'8"  
5'6"  
5'4"  
5'2"  
5'0"  
4'10"

**PRISON**  
**\$62,300**

**SCHOOL**  
**\$9,100**

**#DoTheMath**

health happens here

CSOAA  
CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANY  
QUESTIONS  
?