



Montebello Unified School District Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant Initiative

Upcoming Activities

April 1	School Emergency Response Plan Training
April 7	Basic School Emergency Response Training
April 8	Basic School Emergency Response Training
April 16	Mental Health Provider Meeting
April 19	Element Working Group Meeting
April 20	Basic School Emergency Response Training
April 21/22	Every 15 Minutes Program at Bell Gardens High School
April 23	ICS-100 for Schools Training

Take a Second, Make a Difference

April 2010 Newsletter

Truancy: A Complicated Issue

- **Truant is a noun:** *absentee, deserter, shirker*
- **Truant is an adjective:** *absent, missing, skipping*
- **Truant is a verb:** *go missing, be absent, play hooky*

A lot of words, but what do they mean? Absent from one class? Missing half a day? Skipping school daily? Montebello Unified School District is among thousands of district nationwide that wrestle with the problems of truancy, its causes, consequences, and solutions. The fact is, the complexity of truancy is such that it does not lend itself to any one simple strategy because it's often a three-fold problem: the child, family, school and community:

- A student's perspective may be: peer influence, relationships with teachers, curriculum content, bullying, family problems.
- Parents may see it as: boredom at school, lack of school discipline, bullying.
- And professionals cite: lack of self-esteem, lack of self-management skills, lack of academic ability, bullying, and the list goes on.

MUSD is heavily invested in keeping its kids in school. Their learning and safety depend on it. To this end, the District is utilizing the Montebello Alternative Center (MAC) as an alternative to criminal prosecution for chronic offenders. So far into this school year some 245 students have been referred

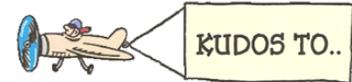


to MAC. Truancy seminars have taken place in four of the District's schools bringing together parents, guardians, and teachers to discuss the legal ramifications of truancy. Another strategy that seems to be working is conducting quarterly citywide sweeps. Some of the procedures resulting from a sweep include citations and transport to MAC for processing. At this time, parents will be notified to pick up their children from the Center.

On March 18, a sweep from Garfield High School, aided by the Montebello school police force and other enforcement and social agencies in the Los Angeles area netted a total of 49 students - 15 of those were from MUSD. And on March 23, Montebello conducted its own "in-house" sweep in the Bell Gardens area that saw 45 kids referred to MAC. MUSD authorities say sweeps are having a positive impact on students; 95% are remaining in attendance, daytime juvenile crime rates are lower and many dropouts are re-connecting to education. Good news all around.

For additional information

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Assistant Superintendent Robert "Bo" Henke

This friendly face belongs to Robert Henke, but everyone in the District knows him as simply "Bo". And he's been involved with MUSD for a very long time - try 35 years!

So just Bo seems natural and appropriate for this nice man who has worn a lot of hats in the District starting back in 1975 when he came on as an Opportunity Room Teacher at Vail Continuation High School. In the 80's he was a program manager/instructor in the Independent Study Program. He served as an Assistant Principal for Alternative Education, became a Director of Pupil & Community Services in the late 90's, and we now find Bo Henke Assistant Superintendent of the District.

When MUSD was awarded the large Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant, Bo became responsible for supervising Project Director, Mike Cobarrubias, to ensure that all projects under the initiative are completed on time and within budget. He serves on the Core Management Team working to expand school-community partnerships and collaborations, and Henke reviews all reports, interim and final, generated by the Project Evaluator. In other words, Bo has the grant's reins in hand to guide the District through many new and exciting programs now being implemented in its schools.

We're not sure where Bo Henke finds the time, but he really likes to travel, both here and abroad, and when he's in a far-off locale, there is probably a fishing rod in his hand! Bo keeps fit with racquetball, tennis, and golf. He can be found at Dodgers' and Lakers' games and is often ringside at a championship-boxing match. He confesses he likes to try his luck on the ponies now and then, and can occasionally be found courting lady luck at a casino or two. But for all his sports and activities, Bo says the most important and quality time of all is spent being with his family and friends.

Bo's dad, Robert Henke retired some years ago from teaching in the District and wife, Kathie, has recently hung up her credentials as a MUSD teacher. That's quite a history of service and the District lauds Assistant Superintendent Robert "Bo" Henke for carrying on the fine tradition.



Montebello Five

1. Asset #3-Other adult relationships
2. Asset #5-Caring school climate
3. Asset #10-School Safety
4. Asset #22-School Engagement & Participation
5. Asset #24-Bonding to School