

**DRAFT**  
**Modesto City Schools Reach Out to Students and Families**  
**With a goal of...**  
**“A DIPLOMA IN EVERY HAND”**

**Background**

Modesto City Schools has been experiencing attendance and dropout issues over the past several years. According to California Department of Education data for the 2006-2007 school years, the following are the dropout percentages for Modesto City Schools: Beyer 7.6%, Davis 10.0%, Downey 16.0%, Elliott Alternative 84.6%, Enochs N/A, Johansen 12.6% and Modesto 13.3%. This is part of a national crisis that can become an epidemic in our community if we do not implement a community-wide strategy that encompasses a community driven solution. Thousands of students, their families, neighborhoods and businesses are suffering. In Latino, African American and poor communities, only one out of four students graduate on time with a college prep diploma. Also, Stanislaus County has one of the highest dropout rates and unemployment rates in the state of California. One of the prime indicators for predicting which students will drop out is attendance. Compared to high school graduates, dropouts earn lower wages, pay fewer taxes, are more likely to commit crimes, are less likely to be employed, are more likely to be on welfare, are more likely to raise children in single parent homes, and are less healthy.

**Purpose**

The intent of the MCS Reach out to Students and Families walk is to identify and utilize resources available to support a comprehensive attendance improvement and dropout prevention strategy; that will build a constituency for a district-wide attendance improvement and dropout prevention campaign. To draft recommendations for schools, communities, businesses, and city and county governments in addressing attendance, truancy and dropout issues. The walk will target neighborhoods where students have attendance and dropout issues.

**Goals**

- To mobilize Modesto City Schools and the communities it serves, to develop strategies that will improve attendance and increase the graduation rate for all students.
- Examine and define roles played by individuals, organizations and institutions in truancy and dropout prevention.
- To establish personal connections and develop relationships with students and families, which will empower them to stay engaged in the educational process, which will ultimately improve attendance and academic achievement?
- Identify policies and practices which can positively and substantially impact attendance and dropout rates in Modesto City Schools within five years.
- Create a framework for measuring and responding to the attendance and dropout issues.

## **Strategy**

Involve the community in addressing the attendance and drop out issues, by “taking it to the streets”. Teams of three to four people preferably one from the school site, business community, service group, community based organization and high school student, will go out to homes of students who have had prior attendance issues and homes of drop outs, to encourage them to attend school regularly and explain the importance of a quality education. The team will strive to create a personal relationship and foster a sense of genuine concern about their educational and personal well-being. Teams will also disseminate pertinent school, support program and other information, which may assist the student and family in becoming successful in their educational and personal pursuits. Teams will be given a 3-4 block or 4-6 block radius in west, east and south Modesto, depending on the neighborhood and available volunteers. The walk will take place on a Saturday, the third week of school. Each school site or district person on a team will be the point person and have possession of the student information. A bilingual person will also be placed with the team as well, to address monolingual families. If there is nobody home during the walk, a “goody” bag of pertinent and useful information will be left on the door along with a post card with the inscription: “We Care”. The back of the card will have the African proverb: It takes a village to raise a child in both English and Spanish. We stopped by to talk to you about Shackelford School and how we can work together to help your child succeed in school or something similar. Each elementary school site will serve as the volunteer central and all coordination will be done from that site. Each site will have enough water and refreshments for 50 volunteers. The goal is to target 7 school neighborhoods the first year (Shackelford, Bret Harte, Orville Wright, Franklin, Robertson Road, Kirschen & Tuolumne) the first year and reach 500-700 students and families.

## **Underlying Assumptions**

1. We are committed to finding solutions that ensure that every Modesto City Schools student graduates from high school
2. We make decisions based on data and by seeking deeper understanding of our current outcomes by using data to explore root causes.
3. We agree that the problem and the solution are owned by the community rather than the sole responsibility of Modesto City Schools. There are multiple levels of support available to move our work forward.
4. We are responsible for building a platform for change that demonstrates the urging of improved attendance and increasing the graduation rate for all students and for communicating that message effectively to students, parents, teachers and others.
5. We are committed to ensuring that youth input (voice and recommendations) is a vital component to the success of our efforts.

**Expected Outcomes (Suggested)**

1. 20% improvement in attendance of students contacted
2. 20% decline in students dropping out among students contacted
3. Improved communication and personal connection with families
4. Improved personal connections with students
5. Improved communication and personal connections between schools, communities, businesses and the city.
6. Establishment of a District/City/Business committee on dropouts/truancy

**MCS Strategic Plan Focus areas: Five Essential Elements:**

- Essential Element #3- Strong Relationships
- Essential Element #4- Quality Leadership
- Essential Element #5- Shared Responsibility and Accountability

**Possible Partners:**

- Taco Bell (Ocat, Inc.)\*
- Common Wealth Modesto \*
- Kaiser Permanente
- Save Mart Supermarkets/Super Stores, Inc.
- Project UPLIFT\*
- West Modesto King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative
- City Ministry Network\*
- Advancing Vibrant Communities\*
- City of Modesto (Mayor Ridenour)\*
- Stanislaus County Office of Education\*
- Youth Graduation Empowerment Project (YGEP)\*
- Americas Promise Alliance\*
- Wal-Mart
- Stanislaus Workforce Alliance
- Republican Women's Federation
- Gallo
- Red Lobster\*
- NAACP\*
- United Way\*
- Crows Landing Road Comerciantes Unidos\*
- Modesto Nuts Professional Baseball Team\*
- Hispanic Leadership Council\*
- The Etiquette & Soft Skills Institute\*
- Salvation Army Red Shield Center\*
- Youth Action Commission of Stanislaus County\*
- Modesto Teachers Association (MTA)
- California School Employees Association (CSEA)
- Churches\*
- Gallo Center for the Arts\*
- Tapestry\*
- Anthem Blue Cross\*
- Service Clubs\*

- City of Modesto Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Department\*
- Weed and Seed\*
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Delta Iota Iota chapter\*
- Nu Alpha Kappa Fraternity CSU Stanislaus
- M.E.Ch.A.
- Phi Lambda Rho CSU Stanislaus
- El Concilio
- Modesto High Leadership\*
- The First Tee of Modesto\*
- PIQE Parent institute for Quality Education\*
- Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery, Education and Prevention\*
- West Modesto King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative\*

\*are on board at this time

### **Possible PSA Marketing Campaign**

DROPOUT – LOSE OUT

DROPOUT – MISS OUT

BE COOL- ATTEND SCHOOL

DON'T BE FOOLED – SCHOOL IS COOL

BE COOL – FINISH SCHOOL

The campaign slogan will go on all promotional materials and volunteer shirts along with the Modesto City Schools mantra: “A Diploma in Every Hand”.

### **Proposed Date:**

September 19

### **Needs:**

T-shirts for volunteers

Water for volunteers

Refreshments for volunteers

Printing of information and materials for families

Translation of information and materials

Maps of neighborhoods

Name of designated contact person at school sites

Bags to insert information and materials in; preferably bags with door handle holes

Community Service Officers from MPD

Media Relations/Press Conference (City of Modesto)

Commitment to graduation letters from Mayor and Superintendent to all incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders

Radio Ads

Design and printing of post card

Volunteer Coordinators

Volunteer orientation

<http://www.monet.k12.ca.us> Click on the volunteer link or call 576-4178

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