

**SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS**

**Date:** June 23, 2005

**To:** All School Principals

**Subject:** STATE CERTIFICATION – ATTENDANCE RECORDS

**Department and/or Persons Concerned:** Site administrators, classroom teachers, and classified support staff with attendance/enrollment duties; central office staff in Pupil Accounting and Information Technology

**Due Date:** Effective immediately.

**Action Requested:** Adhere to attendance recording and monitoring processes as outlined in this circular.

**Brief Explanation:**

The purpose of this circular is to alert principals and other appropriate staff to the serious findings of a recent audit by the district's internal and external auditors concerning attendance records and the critical need for the district to achieve state certification for Zangle. **To accomplish this goal, there are a number of required actions that will be necessary on the part of school and central office staff (see section C.) effective immediately. Staff will also be required to adhere to a new attendance taking monitoring process (see section D.) effective immediately.**

**A. Background**

Eighteen months ago, the Board of Education authorized the purchase and installation of the C-Innovations Zangle Student Information software and its related special education component, 4GL. Under the project names of DWA-Zangle, school sites and administrative sites have received computer upgrades, professional development, and technical assistance to assist in the installation and implementation of the new programs.

Zangle's attendance module was conceived and written by its developers as an electronic recording and reporting system. **However, the state's auditing standards still require a paper "trail" and signed, weekly summary of attendance forms from the teachers.**

**B. The Issue**

A recent audit by the district's internal and external auditors uncovered several substantial roadblocks standing in the way of state certification.

- **The first and foremost concern is to ensure that all district teachers are currently recording attendance on a daily basis (elementary) or a period-by-period basis (secondary).** The Zangle system provides central office the ability to monitor attendance-taking proficiency down to the individual level, a capability that did not exist within the former system. The central office has an obligation and responsibility to monitor the site administrator's success in affecting 100 percent compliance.
- The second concern involves site staffs' reticence to print and sign the appropriate reports, which constitute an auditable record for attendance.
- A third concern involves the reduction in site clerical staffs and consequently positions that were dedicated to the attendance process.

### **C. Immediate Required Actions Necessary to Achieve State Certification**

There are a number of actions that must be implemented as critical steps to achieving electronic certification.

1. Immediate changes need to be made in the classroom and office routines of the staff members who are not recording correctly on a day-to-day or period-by-period basis in order to achieve one hundred percent compliance every day. **Achieving 100 percent compliance of all teachers taking attendance is the most critical piece of the certification process.**
2. District procedures and attendance/enrollment handbooks have been revised to incorporate new accountability measures at each level of the organization, and should be read and reviewed with appropriate staff members.
3. Central office staff, in collaboration with site staff, will design and schedule appropriate professional development sessions for the fall of 2005.
4. Central office staff will also plan and deliver an information session for principals and key site staff about the impact of student attendance and the importance of taking accurate attendance.

### **D. Effective Immediately: Attendance Monitoring Process**

In order to improve the overall performance of all schools in the district, the following attendance monitoring process will be implemented effective immediately:

1. The Chief Administrative Officer, Office of School Site Support (OSSS), will periodically release graphs showing site effectiveness in reporting attendance.
2. The Pupil Accounting Office will contact sites deviating from expected performance levels, by telephone and in writing (e-mail). Pupil Accounting's initial contact is to determine the cause for deviation.
3. The principal will respond, in writing, with an explanation and actions to bring attendance reporting to the expected performance level in the following week. Pupil Accounting will assess the cause of the deviation and will provide training and support as well as refer any issues to other district departments as needed.
4. Should the site not meet the expected performance within the following two weeks, Pupil Accounting will contact the principal's immediate supervisor, by forwarding the e-mail originally sent to the site including the principal's response and a recap of any steps taken to address issues raised by the principal.
5. The principal's immediate supervisor will direct the principal to take actions that will achieve the expected performance level.
6. The principal's immediate supervisors will notify the Chief Administrative Officer and the Pupil Accounting Office of the actions site will use to achieve compliance.
7. If within the four-week period, the site continues to not perform according to expectations, the Pupil Accounting Office will notify the superintendent. The superintendent will initiate action to bring the site into compliance.

**E. State Certification Initiative**

In recognition of the significant burden the above actions place on school sites, over the next several months, the district will be in the process of seeking California Department of Education approval for use of Zangle with electronic certification of attendance, with several goals in mind:

1. A complete certification of the C-Innovations Zangle program as a fully electronic recording and reporting system through the use of Teacher Connect.
2. A reduction in the amount of paper reports and paper backup documents requiring teacher signatures.
3. Increased attendance accuracy and accounting.
4. A reduction in the exposure of staff to personal and professional liability due to inaccurate reporting of student attendance.

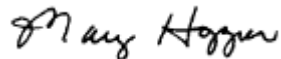
**F. Contact Information**

If you have questions or concerns about attendance reporting at your site, please contact:

<b>Overall Process and Requirements</b>	<b>Data System Issues</b>
Leona Jarstad Pupil Accounting Supervisor (619) 725-7579	Help Desk Information Technology (619) 725-7500

Scott H. Patterson  
Chief Financial Officer  
Financial Operations Division

APPROVED:



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