

OYCR

Office of Youth and
Community Restoration

2025

OYCR
AB 2176
Report

Message from Dr. Michael M. Massa

Health Policy Division – Chief

To the Legislature:

Educational health is the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to succeed academically, socially, and developmentally. It is as critical as physical or mental health. At The Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), we consider educational health a core component of advancing youth justice and supporting the long-term success of young people involved in the juvenile justice system.

Assembly Bill 2176 (Chapter 385, Statutes of 2024) reflects the State of California’s recognition that consistent access to education is foundational to rehabilitation, well-being, and community safety. The 2025 AB 2176 review cycle provided an important opportunity to examine chronic absenteeism in juvenile court schools through a systems-focused lens, one that emphasizes collaboration, context, and conditions for learning.

Aligned with best practices, OYCR promotes educational health for youth and young adults across the system by:

- Creating and convening an Educational Advisory Committee, composed of county and state leaders committed to improving educational access and outcomes in juvenile court schools and alternative education settings.
- Aiming to break down silos between education and juvenile justice partners at both the county and state levels to promote shared responsibility and coordinated support.
- Partnering with California Rising Scholars (State funded community college access), Project Rebound (California State University initiative that provides comprehensive academic, advising, and reentry support services to formerly incarcerated and

justice-impacted students to help them successfully access, persist in, and complete college degrees), Underground Scholars (University of California initiative and campus-based network that supports formerly incarcerated and system-impacted students by providing academic advising, peer community, mentorship, and reentry resources to promote access, persistence, and degree completion within the UC system) the Prison Education Program (PEP), the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), and quality literacy programs to expand educational opportunities for youth while they are in detention.

- Championing higher education and vocational pathways as critical components of healthy reintegration into the community and, in turn, increased public safety.
- Creating and supporting educational opportunities that promote equitable outcomes for every student across juvenile justice settings.
- Identifying excellence in county-level Probation Departments and County Offices of Education and elevating effective practices as models for shared learning across counties.

The findings highlighted in this report demonstrate that when education systems, probation, and community partners align around student-centered practices, meaningful improvements in attendance, engagement, and outcomes are possible. OYCR is grateful to county partners across the State for their collaboration, transparency, and commitment to continuous improvement.

OYCR remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting counties through technical assistance, partnership, and shared learning as we collectively advance educational health and equitable opportunity for justice-involved youth.

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Purpose and Scope

Pursuant to AB 2176, OYCR conducted a review of county-operated juvenile court school programs during the 2025 review cycle. AB 2176 review cycles operate on an annual calendar year basis. The purpose of this review was to collect and publish annual data on chronic absenteeism in juvenile court schools, a measure of how often students are missing school. If a juvenile court school has chronic absenteeism rates of 15% or higher, OYCR is charged with investigating why youth are not attending school. If the investigation finds causes under a facility’s control (such as insufficient staff, lack of transportation, or punitive practices that keep youth from attending classes), OYCR must provide technical assistance to help fix those issues. This report reflects observations, data review, and engagement conducted during the 2025 calendar year cycle.

Data Context

Chronic absenteeism data referenced in this report is drawn from the California Department of Education (CDE) DataQuest system unless otherwise noted.

Pursuant to AB 2176, this report focuses specifically on counties in which juvenile court school programs reported chronic absenteeism rates exceeding 15%, the statutory threshold identified in the legislation for review and examination. Counties included in this report were selected based on publicly available CDE DataQuest data indicating rates above this threshold during the applicable reporting period (see Appendix A).

The review emphasizes systems-level conditions, attendance practices, and cross-agency coordination in counties exceeding the threshold, rather than individual student or staff performance.

It is important to note that the California Department of Education’s DataQuest attendance data is published on an annual reporting cycle, which means it reflects the prior school year’s results rather than real-time conditions. As a result, when counties or facilities implement improvement strategies, such as changes to schedules, transportation, re-enrollment processes, or attendance supports, those improvements will not appear in DataQuest until the next data release cycle. In practice, this creates a built-in one-year lag between implementation and public reporting, so near-term progress is best tracked through local, internal data systems while awaiting the subsequent year’s statewide DataQuest update.

Background and Legislative Authority

Legislative Context and Timeline

AB 2176 Juveniles: Access to Education (see Appendix B), was introduced during the 2023–24 Regular Session of the California Legislature by Assemblymember Marc Berman. The bill was advanced in collaboration with key education partners, including the Santa Clara County Office of Education, in response to persistent concerns regarding disproportionate chronic absenteeism in juvenile court school programs and systemic barriers to educational access for justice-involved youth.

AB 2176 is grounded in long-standing constitutional and statutory protections affirming the right of all youth, including those who are incarcerated, to an equitable education. Under existing law, county probation departments operate juvenile halls, camps, and Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTF), while county offices of education are responsible for delivering educational services within those settings. Juvenile court schools therefore operate within a shared governance structure that requires close coordination between education offices and probation departments.

The legislation was developed in the context of state-wide juvenile justice realignment, including the closure of the state Division of Juvenile Justice and the transfer

of responsibility for nearly all incarcerated youth to county-operated facilities.¹ As part of this realignment, OYCR was established to advance a health-based, rehabilitative approach to youth justice and to support counties in system transformation.

Publicly available data from CDE demonstrated that, despite statutory expectations of near-universal school attendance for incarcerated youth, many juvenile court schools were reporting chronic absenteeism rates significantly higher than statewide averages. In several instances, reported rates exceeded 25%, raising concerns that systemic barriers—rather than student disengagement alone—were limiting consistent access to instruction.



1. Office of Youth and Community Restoration. (2025). *SB 823: 2025 DJJ realignment report: Executive summary*. California Health and Human Services Agency.

Statutory Role of OYCR Under AB 2176

AB 2176 expanded OYCR’s statutory responsibilities related to educational access in juvenile court schools. The legislation directs OYCR to:

- 1. Include juvenile court school chronic absenteeism data in its annual reporting.**
- 2. Review and examine contributing factors at sites where chronic absenteeism exceeds 15%.**
- 3. Provide technical assistance and subject-matter expertise to counties to improve educational access and attendance.**

The statute explicitly positions OYCR’s role as supportive and collaborative, intended to bring expertise and knowledge for capacity building with schools that are identified as having chronic absenteeism. The focus is on identifying system conditions, strengthening cross-agency coordination, and elevating effective practices that promote educational health for justice-involved youth that OYCR brings in the fields of both education and health policy.

It should be recognized that county juvenile court schools operate within distinct local environments and therefore do not operate in uniform ways. Not all schools partner with the same set of system partners, and governance, facility operations, and service configurations vary by county and site. In addition, approaches to tracking, coding, and analyzing chronic absenteeism data are not fully standardized across counties. These differences in partnerships, operational structures, and data practices necessarily shape both how attendance challenges are experienced and how improvement strategies are designed and implemented, underscoring the importance of interpreting findings within local context.

COUNTIES ABOVE 15% CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM:

- Kern County
- Santa Barbara County
- Santa Cruz County
- San Joaquin County
- Los Angeles County

PRIMARY DRIVERS IDENTIFIED:

Operational and systems barriers rather than student disengagement—e.g., inconsistent instructional schedules due to facility operations, delays in re-enrollment and records transfer during transitions, transportation and staffing coverage gaps, and inconsistent attendance coding/data-sharing practices.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED:

On-site reviews and workflow redesign, standardized re-enrollment and “welcome back” protocols, attendance data and coding alignment, transportation and tele-instruction contingencies, family outreach tools, and training on non-punitive, instruction-first attendance practices.

Student Population Characteristics and Disproportionality

Youth served in juvenile court school programs represent one of the most academically vulnerable student populations in California. Students in these settings frequently experience interrupted schooling, trauma exposure, housing instability, and unmet special education needs prior to detention, factors that directly influence attendance patterns.

Statewide data show that juvenile court school populations are disproportionately comprised of diverse student populations, socio-economically disadvantaged students, foster youth, and students with disabilities. Rates of special education identification are substantially

higher than in traditional school settings, and many students enter detention with a history of chronic absenteeism that reflects systemic barriers to educational access rather than disengagement from learning.²

Statewide Awareness and Engagement Efforts Initiated by OYCR

Following the November 2024 release of juvenile court school chronic absenteeism data on CDE’s DataQuest platform, OYCR initiated a coordinated statewide awareness and engagement effort to ensure that education and probation leadership shared a common understanding of the data, its limitations, and its implications under AB 2176.

2. Youth Law Center. (2023, November 14). *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: How California’s education data and accountability systems fail youth in juvenile court schools* (Executive Summary/Full Report). Youth Law Center. Retrieved from <https://www.ylc.org/resource/out-of-sight-out-of-mind/>

Cross-System Presentations and Outreach

As part of this initial effort, OYCR presented statewide chronic absenteeism findings to key stakeholder bodies whose leadership roles directly influence educational access for justice-involved youth:

- 1 California Probation Officers of California (CPOC)**
to engage probation leadership on how facility operations, supervision practices, and access protocols intersect with school attendance in juvenile settings.
- 2 County Office of Education Superintendents**
to ensure education leaders responsible for juvenile court schools had a clear understanding of statewide trends, site-level variation, and the implications of the 15% chronic absenteeism threshold established in AB 2176.
- 3 Juvenile Court and Community Schools Administrators of California (JCCASAC) Board**
to align court school administrators around the data, highlight emerging patterns, and reinforce the importance of consistent instructional access across facilities and counties.

These presentations emphasized that the chronic absenteeism data should be interpreted as a diagnostic tool, prompting inquiry into policies, staffing, scheduling, health access, and cross-system coordination, rather than as a performance ranking or punitive measure. OYCR also underscored known data limitations, including short student enrollment periods and eligibility rules, to support accurate interpretation and prevent misapplication of the data.

Central to this effort was OYCR's collaboration with the California County Superintendents Association (CCSA), the statewide professional organization representing County Superintendents of Schools. Because juvenile court schools operate under the authority of County Offices of Education, OYCR intentionally partnered with CCSA to ensure that outreach regarding chronic absenteeism occurred through established governance and professional leadership structures within county education systems.

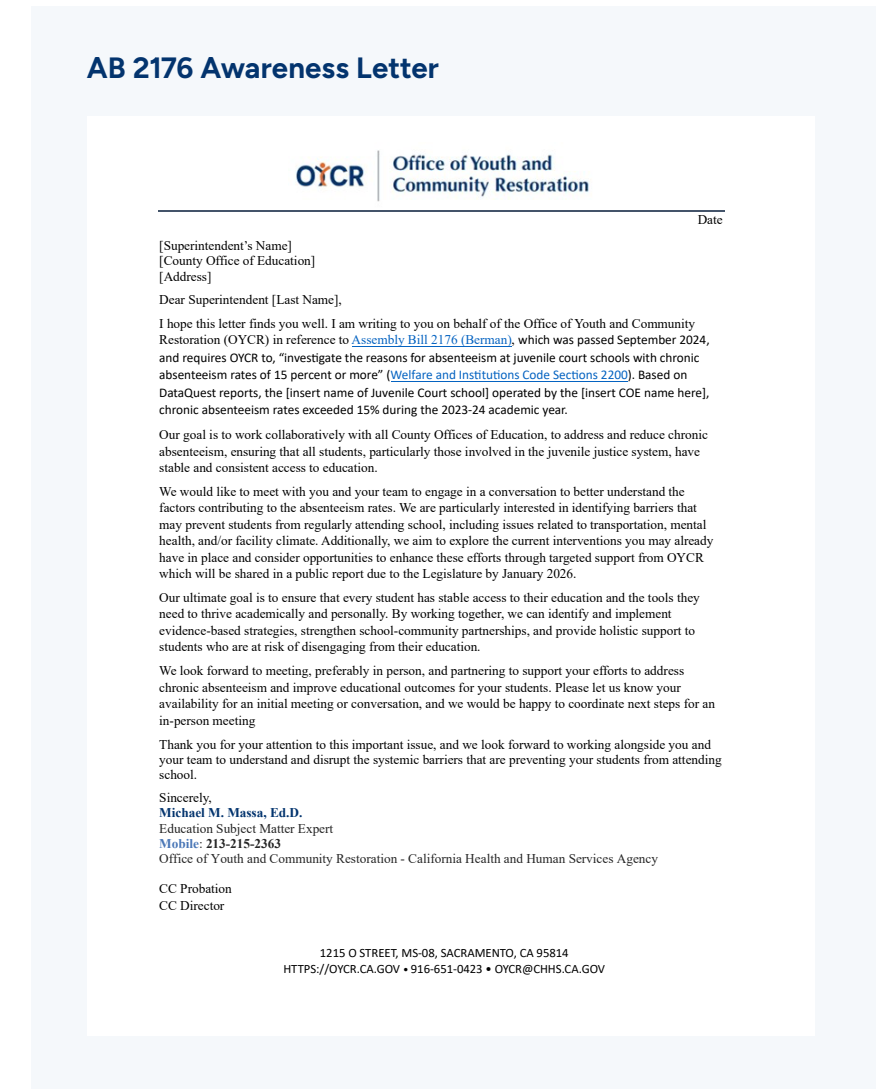
AB 2176 Awareness Letter to County Superintendents

As part of this collaborative approach, OYCR worked with the CCSA to develop an AB 2176 awareness letter addressed to County Superintendents whose juvenile court schools exceeded the statutory 15% chronic absenteeism threshold. The purpose of the letter was to formally notify County Offices of Education of the data, affirm OYCR's supportive role, and initiate a collaborative conversation regarding contributing factors and potential supports.

The letter emphasized that:

- OYCR's role under AB 2176 is to work in partnership with counties to understand barriers to consistent educational access.
- Identification of a chronic absenteeism rate above 15%, per AB 2176, was intended to prompt dialogue and system inquiry, not enforcement.
- Areas of inquiry may include transportation, health and behavioral health needs, facility climate, staffing, and operational practices; and
- Information gathered through these conversations would inform a public report to the Legislature due in 2026.

This approach aligned with AB 2176's intent by combining transparency, early engagement, and technical assistance, while respecting the authority and leadership role of County Superintendents. A copy of the AB 2176 awareness letter is included in the Appendices if this report (see Appendix C).



County Reviews

All participants in the site visits were identified and selected by local leadership to ensure appropriate representation across education, probation, and facility operations and to reflect site-specific roles in supporting attendance and instructional access.



Santa Barbara County

Based on statewide attendance data published on CDE’s DataQuest platform, Santa Barbara County Juvenile Court School reported a chronic absenteeism rate of **19.3%**, exceeding the 15% threshold established under AB 2176.

Overview and Initial Engagement

The first in-person meeting with Santa Barbara County partners occurred on May 27, 2025, bringing together leadership from probation and the County Office of Education. This visit focused on attendance practices, cross-system coordination, and opportunities to strengthen educational access for youth enrolled in juvenile court school and Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) programming.

Participating Partners and Roles

- **Facility Manager (Probation):** Serves as the liaison to the school and supports coordination between probation operations and educational programming.
- **Probation Facility Leadership:** Facility (SYTF) operations.
- **Santa Barbara County Office of Education:** Director, Juvenile Court & Community Schools

This cross-system participation supported a comprehensive discussion of attendance practices across education and probation.

Attendance Practices and Identified Areas for Review

Discussions during the site visit highlighted operational and procedural considerations relevant to chronic absenteeism reporting and interpretation:

Daily Attendance Reporting:

Attendance is currently reported on a daily basis, underscoring the importance of consistent alignment between school schedules, probation operations, and student movement, **as even small disruptions in daily operations can result in immediate instructional time loss and measurable impacts on chronic absenteeism rates.**

Safety Plan Meetings and School Participation:

The school’s presence in safety plan meetings was identified as necessary to ensure that educational access and instructional continuity are considered alongside facility safety and operational decisions.

Exit-Day Attendance Coding:

County partners identified a need to review how attendance is recorded on student exit days, particularly in situations where:

- A student attends school for part of the day (e.g., first period),
- Is subsequently transported to court,
- And is released the same day.

These discussions clarified that chronic absenteeism data—often interpreted in broader education systems as a proxy for student disengagement—more accurately reflect procedural and system-level barriers within juvenile justice and court school contexts, including scheduling constraints, movement logistics, re-enrollment delays, and data reporting practices, revealing structural drivers of missed instructional time that are largely outside of students’ control.

Interagency Coordination and Policy Alignment

OYCR and county partners reviewed applicable guidance from California Code of Regulations, Title 15 – Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities, the California Welfare and Institutions Code, and the California Education Code related to communication and coordination between probation and education staff. There was consensus that updating the existing Site Operating Procedures (SOP) document would help operationalize attendance-related expectations and improve cross-agency consistency.

Follow-up timelines were discussed, including continued coordination through the summer months to support implementation.

Additional Documentation and Follow-Up Communication

Following the May 27, 2025, site visit, OYCR provided a written update to the COE Superintendent and the Santa Barbara County Probation Chief summarizing the visit, data review, and agreed-upon next steps. The correspondence reinforced:

- The shared review of DataQuest chronic absenteeism and absenteeism-by-reason data.
- Identification of attendance coding practices, particularly related to student release days, as an area for further examination.
- Agreement to update the SOP to strengthen coordination between education and probation.
- Recognition of the strong collaborative culture observed during the site visit.
- A mutual commitment to continued engagement, including a follow-up visit, with the goal of implementing improvement strategies that could be reflected in improved attendance counts.

- The importance of accurate and consistent attendance coding.
- Strengthening education’s integration into probation-led planning and safety processes.
- Updating interagency documentation to support clarity and accountability.
- Leveraging SYTF planning structures to support attendance improvement.

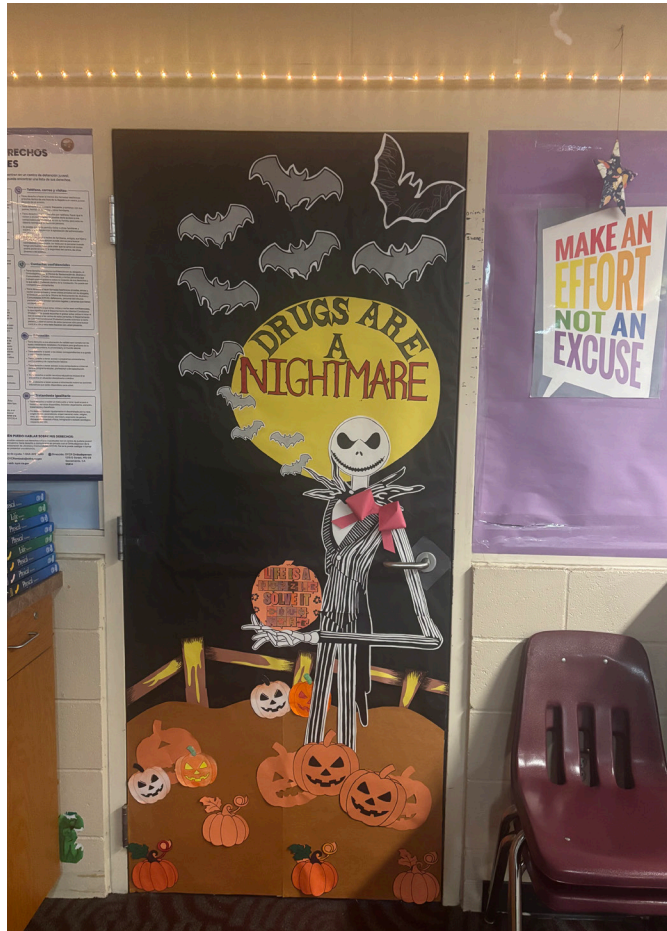
This follow-up communication served to document shared understanding, maintain momentum, and affirm OYCR’s supportive role as Santa Barbara County works toward reducing chronic absenteeism below the 15% threshold.

Follow-Up Engagement: October 24, 2025

As part of continued implementation of AB 2176 and ongoing collaboration with Santa Barbara County, OYCR conducted a follow-up visit on October 24, 2025, to review progress since the initial May engagement, assess coordination improvements, and identify opportunities for continued alignment to ensure consistent access to education for justice-involved youth.

This follow-up visit reflected substantial progress in both system practices and student outcomes, as documented in the county’s internal tracking systems, underscoring Santa Barbara County’s commitment to using chronic absenteeism data as a driver for continuous improvement.

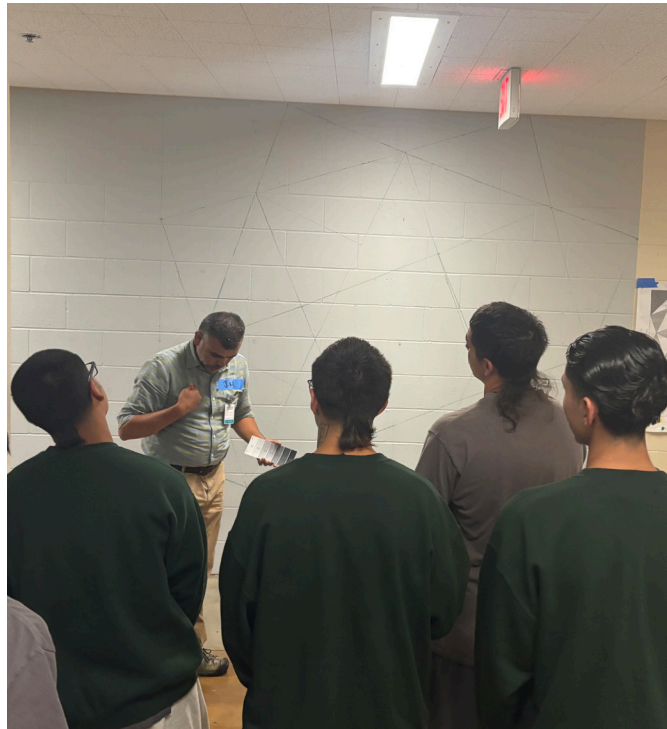




Programmatic Highlights and Student Engagement

During the visit, the Director of Juvenile Court & Community Schools shared several examples of expanded enrichment and engagement opportunities that support student connection to school and learning:

- Art programs offered in collaboration with the Children’s Creative Project, a Santa Barbara County Office of Education–affiliated nonprofit.
- Singer-songwriter workshops, including the student-created song “Get My Life Right,” facilitated by a local artist, providing youth with opportunities for self-expression and reflection.
- A mural project led by a local artist, consisting of weekly workshops in July that culminated in students collaboratively painting a mural in the facility’s main hall—now prominently visible to all who enter through the lobby.
- A Red Ribbon Week door decorating contest, designed to encourage creativity, school pride, and positive messaging.



These programs complement academic instruction and contribute to a school climate that emphasizes belonging, voice, and creativity, factors closely linked to improved attendance and engagement.³

3. Daily, S. M., Zullig, K. J., & Smith, M. (2020). *Using school climate to improve attendance and grades: Understanding the importance of school satisfaction among middle and high school students.* *Journal of School Health.* Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8385678>

Education Pathways and Postsecondary Access

The follow-up visit also highlighted continued expansion of postsecondary access for SYTF youth:

10 students

currently enrolled at Allan Hancock Community College.

One student

enrolled in online engineering coursework through Arizona State University.

One SYTF youth

enrolled with San Diego State University through a Learning Resource Program opportunity.

These pathways reflect meaningful progress in aligning juvenile court school programming with college and career readiness.

Systems Alignment and Attendance Interventions

County partners shared continued progress in cross-system coordination and attendance-focused interventions:

- Development of the updated SOP, was specifically intended to address attendance and access;
 - Enhanced weekly County Office of Education–Probation meetings, now including detailed attendance tracking at the period-by-period, daily, and weekly levels.
 - A joint intervention protocol whereby coordinated action is initiated if a student is absent for three consecutive days.
 - Ongoing adherence to the principle of using the lowest level of detention appropriate for each youth.

These practices reflect a proactive and collaborative approach to preventing attendance issues before they escalate.

4. All youth names and any related personal demographic information have been changed to protect their identity.

Updated Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Efforts

As of October 24, 2025, using their own internal attendance tracking, Santa Barbara County reported a current chronic absenteeism rate of **4.5%** reflecting a substantial improvement since the initial engagement.

Additional context shared included:

- **89 students** enrolled to date during the 2025–26 school year.
- **Four students** identified as chronically absent, all of whom were short-term enrollments.

This data suggests that improvements in attendance practices, early intervention, and student engagement are yielding positive results, particularly for students with longer enrollment periods.



STUDENT VOICE AND IMPACT: Youth “Carlos”

A particularly meaningful moment during the visit was the opportunity to meet with “Carlos,” a student enrolled at the facility. Carlos spoke with clarity and honesty about why education now matters deeply to him. He reflected on his prior lack of connection to school in the community and described how the consistent encouragement, structure, and belief shown by staff have been transformational.

Carlos shared that he now aspires to continue his education and pursue college, an outcome he stated he would not have envisioned previously. His reflections illustrate the tangible impact of aligned systems, supportive adults, and intentional educational access on student identity, motivation, and future orientation.



Kern County

Based on statewide attendance data reported to CDE through the DataQuest platform, Kern County Juvenile Court School reported a chronic absenteeism rate of **39.5%**, exceeding the 15% threshold established under AB 2176.

Overview, Initial Engagement, Participating Partners and Roles

The first in-person visit with Kern County partners occurred on June 2, 2025, bringing together leadership from the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and Kern County Probation. The visit focused on reviewing attendance data, examining program design, and understanding how enrollment patterns and operational structures influence reported absenteeism.

Attendance Practices and Identified Areas for Review

The initial meeting reflected a strong and well-established collaborative relationship between the County Superintendent of Schools and Probation leadership. County partners demonstrated a shared commitment to educational access, with probation and education teams working in close coordination to ensure students are connected to school as quickly and consistently as possible.

OYCR observed regular communication and problem-solving between systems, allowing Kern County to address attendance barriers proactively rather than reactively.

Data Systems and Attendance Monitoring:

County partners provided an overview of a robust and sophisticated data system used to monitor student enrollment and attendance. This system supports:

- Daily attendance tracking (attendance is taken once per day).
- Real-time monitoring of student participation.
- Documentation of teacher observations through daily notes, which provide important context for attendance data.

This level of documentation supports nuanced interpretation of attendance trends and allows for early intervention when students encounter barriers.

Interagency Coordination and Policy Alignment

Discussions highlighted several structural and programmatic factors that significantly influence Kern County's reported chronic absenteeism rate:

Bridges Program and Non-Residential Court School Reporting

The Bridges program, a non-residential alternative education setting, serves students who may not be present daily. County partners noted that when Bridges and the Juvenile Court School were combined for reporting purposes, due to declining enrollment at both sites, this aggregation contributed to a spike in unexcused absences and pulled chronic absenteeism numbers upward.

Kern County is actively exploring separating the non-residential school from the Juvenile Court School in reporting to more accurately reflect distinct student populations and attendance realities.

Central Site and Short-Term Enrollment

At the Central site, many students are transported to court by day three, and a significant number do not meet the enrollment threshold used for chronic absenteeism calculations. This high mobility complicates attendance reporting and reinforces the need for contextual interpretation.

Intake Class Model: Supporting Immediate Access and Stability

- **Immediate Enrollment:** Any student entering the facility is enrolled in school within 24 hours, ensuring rapid access to instruction.

- **Ten-Day Intake Period:** The Intake Class spans up to 10 days, allowing time for:
 - Academic assessments and transcript review.
 - Hands-on instructional activities.
 - Identification of mental health needs and referrals when appropriate.
- **Dedicated Staffing and Supports:** The Intake Class is led by a dedicated teacher with expertise in social-emotional learning and mental health-informed practices, enabling early identification of students' prior mental health needs and providing a structured "soft landing"⁵ as students transition into a new and often destabilizing environment.
- **Special Cases Meetings:** When needed, special cases meetings are convened with probation, mental/behavioral health, school, and medical staff to coordinate supports for students with complex needs.
- Additional supports include:
 - Probation allowing the school to lead the transition process.
 - Availability of the probation wrap team as needed.
 - Presence of a school social worker to support students with immediate needs.

Kern County's Intake Class Model emerged as a significant strength and a promising practice. This model reduces unnecessary movement within the facility, supports stabilization, and allows educators to better understand students' academic starting points. These discussions underscored AB 2176's emphasis on examining system design and enrollment dynamics, rather than relying on aggregate rates alone.

Additional Documentation and Follow-Up Communication

The June 2, 2025, visit highlighted Kern County's thoughtful, student-centered approach to educational access, alongside the structural complexities that influence reported chronic absenteeism. Key takeaways included:

- Strong Superintendent–Probation collaboration.
- Advanced attendance monitoring and documentation.
- Clear recognition of how program aggregation affects data.
- A robust Intake Class model that prioritizes stabilization and assessment.
- Intentional scheduling and instructional access protections.
- School Refusals - were not identified as a major issue. When safety or security considerations arise, teachers go to the living units, ensuring instruction continues. For youth who voluntarily separate, supports are in place, and an exclusion log is maintained to identify students not participating and the reasons why.
- Instructional Schedule Coordination - The school day at the Youth Detention Center begins at noon, intentionally designed so students attending court in the morning do not miss instruction. This reflects strong coordination between education and probation to protect instructional time.

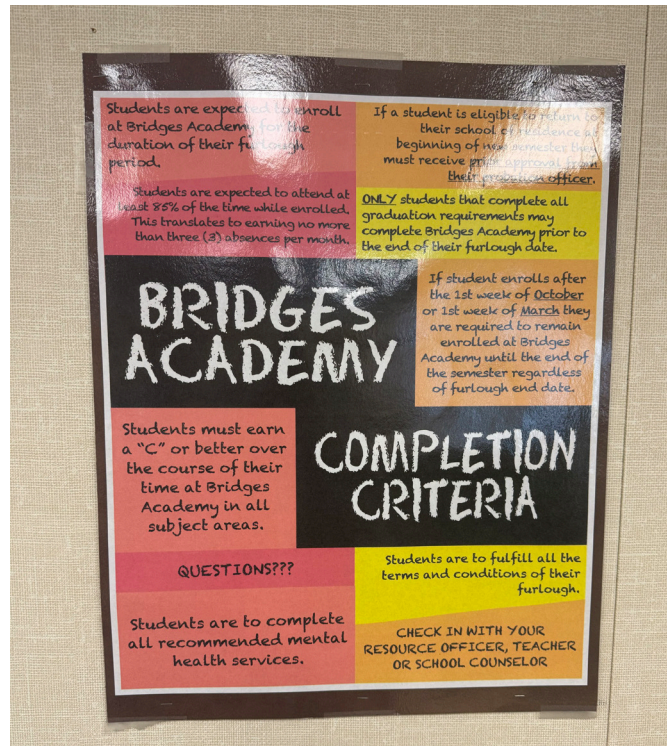
Follow-Up Engagement: November 6, 2025

COMMUNITY SCHOOL-BRIDGES ACADEMY AND YOUTH DETENTION CENTER

As part of continued collaboration under AB 2176, OYCR conducted a follow-up visit to Kern County that included site visits to the County Community School (Bridges Academy) and the Youth Detention Center. The visit provided an opportunity to observe instructional practice, review attendance-supporting systems, and engage directly with students and staff across multiple educational settings.

Across all sites, OYCR observed a deeply aligned partnership between the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) and Kern County Probation, with education positioned as a central component of rehabilitation, stability, and successful community reentry.

5. *Soft landing* refers to a structured, supportive transition process for youth entering, transferring within, or exiting a juvenile detention educational setting, designed to ensure immediate access to instruction, minimize lost instructional time, and reduce procedural barriers through coordinated planning among education, probation, and support staff, including individualized re-entry and stabilization supports.



Programmatic Highlights and Student Engagement

BRIDGES ACADEMY (COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL)

The visit to Bridges Academy, now designated as a County Community School, highlighted a strong instructional model designed to support both academic continuity and student independence. Notably, Bridges' designation as a community school ensures that its attendance data no longer impacts Juvenile Court School chronic absenteeism calculations, supporting more accurate reporting under AB 2176.

Key observations included:

Instructional Structure

- Each classroom is staffed with a teacher and paraprofessional.
- School day schedule is from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., accommodating students who maintain employment.
- Every student is issued an individual computer, supporting digital access and independent learning.
- Dual enrollment opportunities are available to support postsecondary pathways.
- Nearly all students remain connected to Kern High School, with the explicit goal of successful transition back to their home, comprehensive campus.

Student Supports and Services

- Probation is not present in classrooms, reinforcing a school-centered learning environment.
- Special Education services are provided through both push-in⁶ and pull-out⁷ models.
- On-site supports from Youth Prevention Services (probation) addressing anger management and substance use.
- Kern County Behavioral Health services are available to support students' social-emotional development, adjustment, and overall stability.

6. *Special education push-in* refers to a service delivery model in which a special education teacher or related service provider delivers individualized or small-group supports directly within the general education classroom, allowing students to access their instruction alongside peers while receiving targeted, IEP-aligned interventions without being removed from the instructional setting.

7. *Special education pull-out* refers to a service delivery model in which a student is temporarily removed from the general education classroom to receive individualized or small-group, IEP-aligned instruction or related services in a separate setting, allowing for more intensive, targeted intervention while maintaining overall access to the core instructional program.

- Probation-provided transportation, including coordinated van routes that serve just under half of enrolled students, with schedules aligned to school start and dismissal times to support consistent participation and reduce transportation-related disruptions.

Instructional Practice Highlight

- OYCR observed a Social-Emotional Learning lesson integrating breathing, stretching, mindfulness, soothing music, and reflective art. The lesson emphasized navigating chaos, building emotional awareness, and applying regulation strategies to real-life situations. Students then transitioned into a mindful arts activity, reinforcing learning through creative expression.

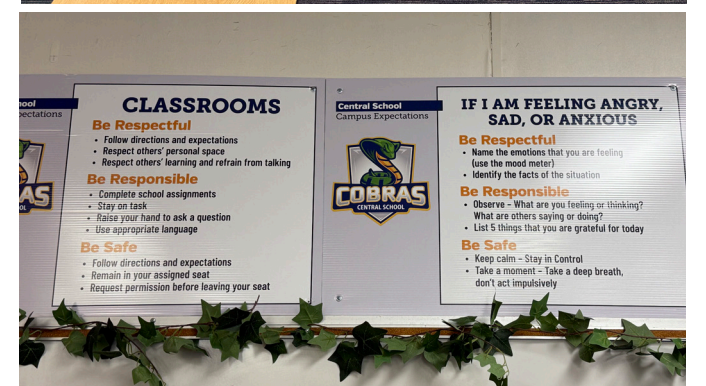
YOUTH DETENTION CENTER

The visit to the Youth Detention Center, led by the School Principal, highlighted strong alignment between intake procedures, instructional access, and wrap-around supports.

- Students are immediately enrolled in school upon entry, with assessments, screenings, and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) developed to prevent instructional loss.
- The Intake Class is limited to no more than 10 days (typically two to three days), providing stabilization without prolonged isolation from instruction.
- To the greatest extent possible, classes are organized by grade level.
- Probation is present on site but allows the school to lead classroom management, reinforcing educational authority and consistency.

Systems Alignment and Attendance Interventions

- The reopened on-site kitchen, staffed directly through probation, provides locally sourced meals and meaningful work-based learning opportunities for students. Kitchen staff are authorized supervisors, allowing students to participate safely and consistently as a workforce development opportunity.



- A de-escalation and incentive room, equipped with calming supports and comfort-based seating, is frequently requested by students, indicating high levels of student trust in staff and systems and illustrating the effectiveness of proactive, supportive behavior strategies in maintaining student engagement and instructional access within a detention environment.
- Wraparound supports include:
 - AmeriCorps mentors
 - School social workers
 - The RAP team (Reentry, ADA/Disability support, and Prevention) is available seven days a week and carries Youth Behavior Observation Records (YBORs).
 - Connections to DOR, Garden Pathways (Community Based Organization), and dedicated reentry staff.
 - The school's Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) behavior program is aligned with the Probation behavior management system.
 - Initial responder teams to support students needing immediate intervention
 - Each team member has a clearly defined role. One staff member focuses specifically on Special Education and Section 504, ensuring accommodations are communicated facility-wide through the Juvenile Detention Management (JDM) case management system.

Weekly special cases meetings bring together probation, education, mental health, and medical partners to address complex needs, including school refusals.

Family and Youth Engagement: Family engagement is embedded through:

- Back-to-school nights.
- Family events such as Halloween carnivals.
- Zoom visits facilitated by the RAP team for youth who do not receive in-person visits.

The facility also maintains an active Youth Council, which advises on incentives, Title 15 issues, and culturally responsive practices. Youth feedback is shared through town halls and has led to tangible improvements, such as requests for pillows and sleep masks, needs that staff may not have otherwise identified.

Updated Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Efforts

The Kern County follow-up visit demonstrated strong progress in aligning instructional access, student supports, and attendance-related practices across settings. Key themes included:

Clear separation of community school and juvenile court school data to support accurate AB 2176 reporting.

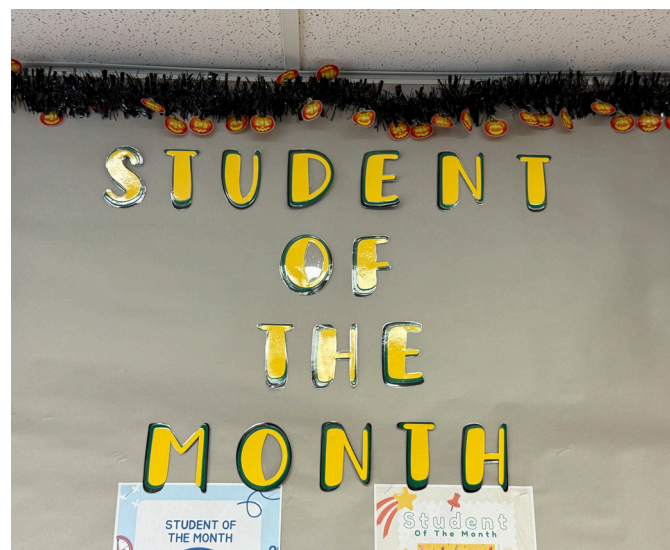
Student-centered instructional design and intake practices.

Robust wraparound supports and reentry planning.

Authentic youth voice informing practice and policy.

Continued refinement of internal attendance metrics and updated contracts with probation to support shared accountability.

OYCR looks forward to continued partnership as these practices are refined and documented as part of AB 2176 implementation.



STUDENT VOICE AND IMPACT: Youth "Olmos"

Meeting with "Olmos" was a particularly meaningful component of the visit. As a senior and member of the School Site Council, Olmos shared:

- Appreciation for the ability to earn credits and experience consistent academic progress.
- Recognition that teachers provide more individualized support than in prior school settings.
- The calming room as a critical support, noting that students often return to class "better" after using it.
- Gratitude for having adults who are genuinely available to help.

Olmos expressed aspirations to attend college and pursue a career in the medical field, potentially as a traveling medical assistant. Their advice to peers was especially powerful:

- Do not take opportunities for granted.
- Participate fully in school activities.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help.

As Olmos shared, *"It made me feel so much better to ask for help so I wouldn't get stuck in my head."* This reflection underscores the impact of supportive educational environments on student well-being and future orientation.





San Joaquin County

Based on statewide attendance data reported to CDE through the DataQuest platform, San Joaquin County Juvenile Court School reported a chronic absenteeism rate of **16.4%**, exceeding the 15% threshold established under AB 2176.

Overview, Initial Engagement, Participating Partners and Roles

OYCR met with leadership from the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) on July 18, 2025, to review attendance data practices, program design, and reporting structures relevant to juvenile court schools and related programs. The initial engagement included leadership from across the SJCOE, reflecting a strong internal alignment and shared commitment to supporting justice-involved youth. These partners played a central role in organizing the meeting and providing a comprehensive overview of current practices, challenges, and opportunities related to attendance and educational access.

Attendance Practices and Identified Areas for Review

A key strength identified during the engagement was San Joaquin County’s thoughtful and intentional approach to attendance data tracking and disaggregation. County partners described systems designed to examine attendance at the individual school-site level, even in circumstances where multiple programs share the same CDE location code.

This practice supports more accurate interpretation of chronic absenteeism data and aligns directly with AB 2176’s emphasis on understanding site-specific conditions rather than relying solely on aggregated metrics. County leadership indicated that additional data specific to the Juvenile Court School would be provided, further supporting targeted analysis and tailored improvement strategies.

Program Differentiation: Juvenile Court School and Biddick (County Community School)

Discussions also focused on the importance of clearly distinguishing the Juvenile Court School from Biddick, a foster youth placement school operated by the County Office of Education; while each school is independent from one another, they share the same CDE location code meaning that Biddick’s attendance rates impact the Juvenile Court School. County partners shared proactive efforts underway to ensure these programs are reflected independently in data and reporting, recognizing that each serves a distinct student population with different attendance dynamics and support needs.

An overview of the Biddick program was particularly informative and helped clarify how the design and student placement model may influence attendance patterns associated with the Juvenile Court School when programs are combined for reporting purposes. These conversations reinforced the importance of program differentiation to ensure that improvement strategies are appropriately matched to the unique context of each setting.

Interagency Coordination and Policy Alignment

The engagement reflected a strong spirit of collaboration and openness, with county leadership demonstrating a clear commitment to transparency, continuous improvement, and cross-agency partnership.

Additional Documentation and Follow-Up Communication

San Joaquin County’s initial engagement under AB 2176 highlighted several promising practices, including:

- Intentional disaggregation of attendance data at the school-site level.
- Proactive efforts to distinguish programs serving different student populations.
- Strong internal coordination within the County Office of Education.
- A shared commitment to refining data accuracy to inform targeted improvement strategies.

Follow-Up Engagement: October 29, 2025

As part of continued implementation of AB 2176, OYCR conducted a follow-up visit with SJCOE and San Joaquin County Probation to observe progress, assess alignment with AB 2176 focus areas, and review systems supporting attendance, educational access, and successful transitions for youth in detention.

The visit highlighted a deeply collaborative and mature partnership between SJCOE and Probation. In particular, the leadership demonstrated by SJCOE Facility Director and San Joaquin County Deputy Chief Probation Officer exemplified the type of cross-system alignment envisioned under AB 2176, one that prioritizes student well-being, consistency, and long-term opportunity.

Programmatic Highlights and Student Engagement

OYCR observed a consistent and well-structured instructional program operating Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (see Appendix D), with strong evidence of student engagement and active participation across classrooms. Instructional time was protected and purposeful, reinforcing AB 2176’s emphasis on ensuring meaningful access to education.

A notable strength was SJCOE Facility Director’s onsite leadership presence. His decision to locate his office within the detention facility has strength-

ened day-to-day alignment between education and probation and supported closer integration of PBIS with Probation’s behavior management system. This alignment contributes to predictable routines and supportive conditions that encourage regular attendance and student engagement.

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE, PBIS, AND THERAPEUTIC ENVIRONMENT

San Joaquin County has made intentional investments in school climate that directly support attendance and engagement:

- A jointly developed Expectations Matrix centered on Safety, Accountability, and Positivity provides clear, shared expectations across education and probation systems, reinforcing consistency for students.
- The facility-wide “Embracing Positivity” initiative, organized around quarterly themes and targeted lesson plans, promotes a positive school-going culture and reinforces pro-social behavior.
- Therapeutic environmental enhancements, including virtual reality experiences, nature-based wall coverings, and student-designed murals, contribute to a calming atmosphere that reduces stress and supports students’ readiness to learn.

These practices reflect AB 2176’s emphasis on addressing environmental and systemic conditions that influence attendance.





Education Pathways and Postsecondary Access

See Appendix E.

The follow-up visit highlighted a range of enrichment opportunities designed to foster belonging and motivation—key drivers of improved attendance:

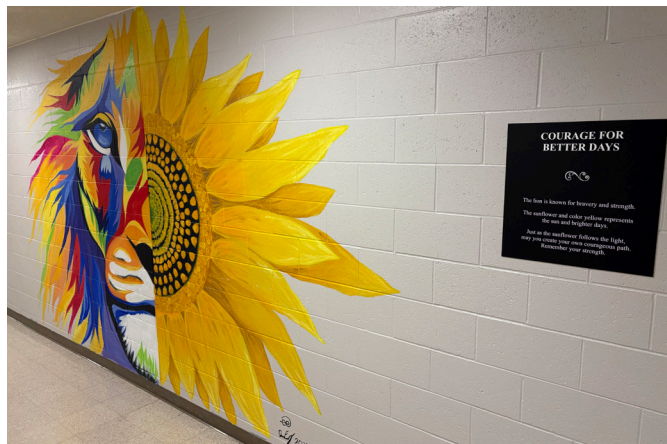
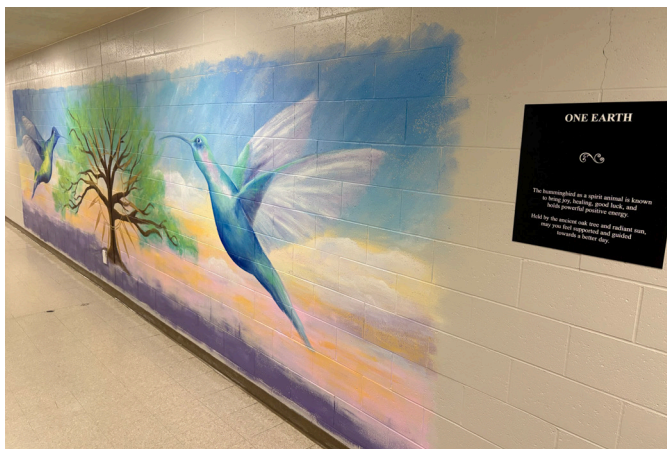
- Art therapy, quarterly art showcases, community-connected art projects, and Ethnic Studies themes.
- Partnerships supporting student exhibitions, including collaborations with the San Joaquin County Bar Association and participation in external art contests.
- Student feedback indicates that hands-on, creative programming increases their desire to attend school and remain engaged.

These enrichment strategies are intentionally designed to reinforce positive school identity and connection, key components of AB 2176’s focus on conditions for learning.

COLLEGE, CAREER, AND WORKFORCE PATHWAYS

- San Joaquin County continues to expand college and career-aligned programming, strengthening the relevance of education for justice-involved youth:
 - Career Technical Education (CTE) offerings include logistics, warehousing, culinary arts, and graphic design.
 - Workforce partnerships enhance real-world relevance and help sustain student motivation.
 - The Delta College Phoenix Project partnership provides Rising Scholars community college access, supporting continuity of education and smoother postsecondary transitions.

Notably, the COE maintains a contract to continue supporting graduates as they navigate higher education—an emerging best practice that extends educational access beyond confinement and aligns strongly with AB 2176’s intent (see Appendix E).



Systems Alignment and Attendance Interventions

While the follow-up visit did not focus solely on attendance metrics, several observations were directly relevant to attendance improvement:

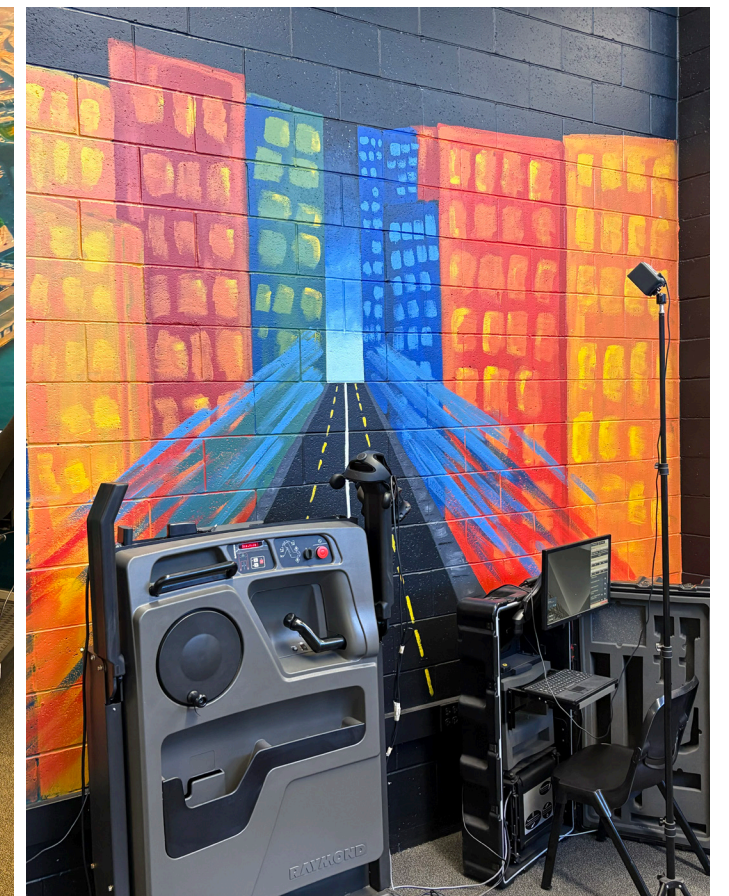
Strong student engagement and voluntary participation during instruction.

Direct student accounts related to art and hands-on programming increase their eagerness to attend school.

A unified COE–Probation approach to expectations and incentives, reinforcing consistency and reducing mixed messages—an essential foundation for improving attendance outcomes.

Updated Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Efforts

San Joaquin County’s approach reflects strong alignment with the spirit and goals of AB 2176: creating positive, engaging, and supportive educational environments that encourage regular attendance and strengthen pathways to postsecondary opportunity. Additionally, separating the County Community School from the Juvenile Court school will support attendance data accuracy for each school location. The depth of collaboration across education and probation partners was evident throughout the visit, as was the intentional design of programming to meet student needs.





Santa Cruz County

As part of OYCR’s statewide implementation of AB 2176, an initial site visit was conducted in Santa Cruz County on May 20, 2025. At the time of the visit, CDE DataQuest reported a chronic absentee rate of **15.4%** for the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Court School.

Overview, Initial Engagement, Participating Partners and Roles

The visit provided an opportunity to observe instructional practices, review attendance-related structures, and assess cross-system collaboration between the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) and Santa Cruz County Probation.

OYCR was welcomed by SCCOE Senior Director and School Site Director, who coordinated site visits to both the Hartman Juvenile Court School and the Freedom County Community School. The visit also included engagement with Probation Assistant Division Director, whose leadership and facilitation highlighted the strong partnership between probation and education staff.

Attendance Practices and Identified Areas for Review

A key systems-level development discussed during the visit was the planned separation of Hartman Juvenile Court School and Freedom County Community School, establishing individual school location codes through an application to CDE. Santa Cruz County leadership recognized that reporting both programs together obscures attendance patterns unique to each setting. The forthcoming separation is expected to:

- More accurately reflect attendance data for Hartman Juvenile Court School.
- Allow for targeted improvement strategies.
- Result in a reduction of Hartman’s chronic absentee rate below the 15% threshold.

This proactive structural adjustment demonstrates the County’s responsiveness to AB 2176 requirements and its commitment to data integrity and continuous improvement.

Interagency Coordination and Policy Alignment

A notable strength observed across the facility was the positive rapport between probation staff and youth. Probation officers were actively engaged alongside students, including participating in physical fitness activities, reinforcing a shared culture of wellness, trust, and relationship building. This level of staff engagement contributes to a supportive environment that encourages school participation and attendance.⁸

Instructional practices observed at Hartman Juvenile Court School reflected strong pedagogy, academic rigor, and real-world relevance. In one classroom, the teacher facilitated a mathematics lesson integrating nutritional analysis using a Starbucks menu. The lesson demonstrated:

- Alignment to academic standards.
- Application of math skills to real-life decision-making.
- High levels of student engagement and discourse.

Students were able to clearly articulate the purpose of the lesson and showed pride in their learning environment, particularly in the student-created murals displayed throughout the school space. These visual contributions reinforce student voice, ownership, and belonging—key protective factors related to attendance.⁹

8. Marsh, S. C., & Evans, W. P. (2009). *Youth perspectives on their relationships with staff in juvenile correction settings and perceived likelihood of success on release*. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 7(1), 46–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204008324484>

9. Daily, S. M., Zullig, K. J., & Smith, M. (2020). *Using school climate to improve attendance and grades: Understanding the importance of school satisfaction among middle and high school students*. *Journal of School Health*, 90(2), 123–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12838>

Postsecondary Pathways and Enrichment

OYCR also met with a Facility Probation Officer, who shared information about higher education access, including partnerships with the local community college and the role probation plays in supporting college enrollment and participation. These efforts align with AB 2176’s broader intent to ensure access to meaningful educational opportunities that extend beyond detention.

The visit further highlighted the culinary program, led by *Chef Maricela*, whose dedication and care were evident. The culinary program serves as both an engagement strategy and a pathway-oriented learning opportunity, contributing positively to student motivation and daily attendance.

Freedom County Community School: Alternative Setting and Supportive Practices

At the Freedom County Community School, OYCR was greeted by the Instructional Assistant who described the comprehensive supports provided to students in this alternative setting. The class Teacher was observed facilitating a restorative circle, inviting participation from both students and visitors. The circle emphasized relationship-building, communication, and shared accountability, practices that are foundational to positive school climate and consistent attendance.

Follow-Up Engagement: December 15, 2025

As part of continued implementation of AB 2176, OYCR conducted a follow-up in-person visit with SCCOE and Santa Cruz County Probation. The visit provided an opportunity to review progress from the May 20, 2025 initial engagement, observe facility and instructional practices, and assess how cross-system coordination is supporting student attendance, engagement, and well-being.

OYCR acknowledges and appreciates the leadership of the County Office of Education, whose presence

throughout the visit reflected a strong commitment to transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement. OYCR also recognizes Juvenile Court School Director and SCCOE Executive Director for their partnership and coordination. Santa Cruz County Probation, Facility Director and team, partnered in the visit and demonstrated an approach grounded in relationship-building and less institutional practices. Close coordination between the education and behavioral health professionals appears to contribute significantly to the positive, calm, and supportive facility climate observed during the visit.

Programmatic Highlights and Student Engagement

The visit included a comprehensive walkthrough of the juvenile facility, which has been approved as a SYTF. The phased construction approach, intentionally designed to avoid student displacement, underscored Santa Cruz County’s focus on continuity of services and student stability.

Key features observed included:

- Two distinct housing units are designed to support developmental and programmatic needs.
- A library is available to both high school students and graduates.
- Student-created murals, including those in the Soft Room, reinforcing youth voice, expression, and emotional regulation.

These environmental elements contribute to a setting that prioritizes dignity, wellness, and readiness to learn—critical conditions for reducing chronic absenteeism.¹⁰



10. Daily, S. M., Zullig, K. J., & Smith, M. (2020). *Using school climate to improve attendance and grades: Understanding the importance of school satisfaction among middle and high school students*. *Journal of School Health*, 90(2), 123–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12838>



Education Pathways and Postsecondary Access

Classroom observations during the follow-up visit highlighted arts-integrated, project-based learning that supports both academic growth and student well-being. Students engaged in visual art and music projects spoke candidly about the importance of creative expression in helping them regulate emotions, feel connected, and remain engaged in school.

Student feedback reinforced the County Office of Education's instructional philosophy, including:

- A commitment to graduating students under local graduation requirements, rather than the state minimums.
- Instructional approaches that value relevance, creativity, and student agency.

Hearing directly from students about feeling cared for, included, and supported affirmed the role of school climate and instructional design in sustaining attendance.

The follow-up visit also highlighted robust college, career, and reentry pathways, including:

- A culinary program offering skill development and career exploration.
- Cabrillo Community College Rising Scholars partnership.
- Support from UC Santa Cruz Underground Scholars for postsecondary access.

These pathways are complemented by proactive family outreach, including family nights and coordinated reentry supports facilitated through Public Health and community-based partners. Together, these efforts create a seamless continuum of educational and social supports that extend beyond detention.



Systems Alignment and Attendance Interventions

A significant strength observed during the follow-up visit was the depth of cross-agency collaboration. Regular multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings bring together the County Office of Education, Probation, Health Services, Behavioral Health, and psychiatry to discuss every student holistically.

This integrated approach ensures:

- Shared understanding of student needs,
- Coordinated interventions across education and care systems, and
- Alignment of attendance, behavioral, and wellness supports.

The strong relationships among facility partners were evident throughout the visit and reflect a mature implementation of the collaborative framework envisioned under AB 2176.

Updated Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Efforts

Santa Cruz County's integrated approach to attendance, behavior support, and student engagement is yielding positive results. While CDE DataQuest previously reported a chronic absentee rate of 15.4%, internal metrics shared during the follow-up visit indicated no current chronic absenteeism among enrolled students.

These outcomes reflect:

- Effective alignment of attendance practices with instructional and wellness supports.
- Accurate internal monitoring and rapid response to emerging concerns.
- Strong implementation fidelity to the intent and spirit of AB 2176.

OYCR commends Santa Cruz County for its comprehensive, student-centered approach and looks forward to continued partnership and shared learning. The county's progress offers valuable examples of how united systems, authentic student voice, and intentional facility design can collectively support improved attendance and equitable educational access for justice-involved youth.





Los Angeles County

Overview of Chronic Absenteeism Data

During the 2025 AB 2176 review cycle, two Los Angeles County Juvenile Court Schools reported chronic absenteeism rates exceeding the 15% threshold, as reflected in CDE DataQuest:

- Dorothy Kirby Center Camp – **15.3%**
- Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall – **18.9%**

These data points triggered inclusion in OYCR’s state-wide review; however, the nature and timing of broader system-level circumstances in Los Angeles County significantly shaped the scope and format of engagement during this cycle.

Engagement Efforts and Organizational Transitions

OYCR engaged in virtual meetings with Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) leadership during the review period. However, in-person site visits were not feasible due to substantial organizational and system transitions occurring concurrently.

Notably:

- The cabinet-level leader overseeing Juvenile Court Schools at LACOE departed during the review process.¹¹

- The new Chief of School Support and Transformation was appointed on December 1, 2025 but did not start in the role until January 2026, after the conclusion of the 2025 AB 2176 review cycle.¹²

These leadership transitions understandably required LACOE to focus on internal continuity, stabilization, and onboarding, limiting the ability to engage in the same in-depth site-based protocol implemented in other counties during the same timeframe.

Broader System Oversight and External Review Environment

In addition to leadership changes within LACOE, Los Angeles County juvenile detention facilities were subject to an unprecedented level of external oversight and review during the 2025 cycle. This included engagement and monitoring by:

- The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC),
- The California Department of Justice (DOJ),
- The Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission, and
- The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

During this period, an Order to Show Cause hearing was underway, followed by action from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recommending that Los Angeles County Probation be considered for receivership.¹³

Taken together, these circumstances created an environment in which operational priorities were necessarily focused on compliance, accountability, and system stabilization, rather than on discretionary site visits or additional review protocols.

Rationale for Modified AB 2176 Engagement

Given the convergence of executive leadership transitions, multiple external oversight processes, heightened scrutiny of juvenile detention operations, and countywide governance actions, OYCR determined that applying the same engagement protocol used in the other four counties, including on-site visits, classroom observations, and follow-up site reviews, was not feasible during the 2025 cycle.

This determination was made with full recognition of the complexity and scale of Los Angeles County, and with respect for the significant demands placed on county partners during this period.

Commitment to Partnership and Ongoing Support

OYCR is actively supporting Los Angeles County’s juvenile justice system through a coordinated set of initiatives focused on strengthening education, expanding community-based alternatives, and advancing system transformation. This work includes efforts to end girls’ incarceration; support and expand Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs) and convene monthly meetings of LRP providers; advance implementation of the Rising Scholars program; and support a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) that brings workforce development opportunities directly into the facilities.

OYCR is also partnering with the National Resource Center for the Transformation of Youth Justice to support a comprehensive system review and improvement process and is an active participant on the Probation Oversight Commission’s Education Subcommittee. Together, these efforts allow OYCR to build strong cross-system relationships and support improved outcomes for youth during a period of significant change. While OYCR was not on site for this specific visit, the Office remains engaged in multiple, ongoing ways across Los Angeles County to ensure sustained partnership, technical assistance, and a continued focus on improving educational access, quality, and stability for justice-involved youth.

As leadership stabilization progresses and oversight processes advance, OYCR remains fully committed to supporting Los Angeles County in future AB 2176 implementation efforts. OYCR will continue to make itself available for:

- Technical assistance,
- Data review and interpretation,
- Collaborative planning, and
- Future site-based engagement when conditions allow.

OYCR looks forward to strengthening collaboration with Los Angeles County under its current leadership and to supporting sustained improvements in attendance, access, and educational outcomes for justice-involved youth.



11. Buena Vista Unified School District. (n.d.). *Superintendent’s office*. <https://www.bUSD.k12.ca.us/departments/superintendentoffice#:~:text=Simon%2C%20Superintendent,Services%2C%20and%20Family%20Resource%20Centers>

12. Los Angeles County Office of Education. (2025, November 18). *Board agenda no. 13*. [https://www.lacoe.edu/content/dam/lacoeedu/documents/board/board-agendas/No.%2013%20\(11-18-25\)%20Agenda.pdf](https://www.lacoe.edu/content/dam/lacoeedu/documents/board/board-agendas/No.%2013%20(11-18-25)%20Agenda.pdf)

13. County of Los Angeles. (2025, May 22). *Statement on next steps after the court’s approval of Probation’s depopulation plan for Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall: Prioritizing youth wellbeing is public safety*. <https://lacounty.gov/2025/05/22/statement-on-next-steps-after-the-courts-approval-of-probations-depopulation-plan-for-los-padrinos-juvenile-hall-prioritizing-youth-wellbeing-is-public-safety/>

Recommendations

Based on statewide data review, county engagements, and site-based observations conducted during the 2025 AB 2176 review cycle, OYCR offers the following recommendations to strengthen educational access, attendance accuracy, and cross-system alignment in juvenile court school settings.

These recommendations are intended to support continuous improvement, promote educational health, and advance the rehabilitative goals of California's juvenile justice system, consistent with the intent of AB 2176. OYCR will continue its support, technical assistance and engagement statewide to help counties meet the goals of AB2176 while implementing its recommendations in counties where chronic absenteeism continues to exist or as requested by local county juvenile schools.

Strengthen Cross-System Governance and Shared Accountability

Counties should formalize and sustain structured collaboration between County Offices of Education, Probation Departments, and medical and behavioral health partners. Some of the ways to build these coalitions for collaborative work include regularly scheduled multidisciplinary meetings—where education is treated as a core operational priority, shared responsibility for attendance, strengthen instructional access, and continued increased student engagement. OYCR's assessment highlights, among other strengths, that counties demonstrating the strongest attendance improvements consistently integrate education into probation-led planning, safety processes, and individualized rehabilitation planning.

Align Attendance Practices with Facility Operations and Student Movement

Attendance systems should be explicitly aligned with facility schedules, court transportation practices, intake

procedures, and release protocols. Counties are encouraged to review attendance coding practices for entry and exit days, partial-day attendance, and short-term enrollments to ensure data accurately reflects instructional access rather than system logistics, including period by period class attendance which are aligned to match student schedules. Clear, jointly developed guidance between education and probation staff supports consistency and transparency in attendance reporting.

Disaggregate Programs to Improve Data Accuracy and Interpretation

Where juvenile court schools are reported alongside county community schools or non-residential programs, counties should pursue program separation through appropriate CDE reporting mechanisms. Disaggregating data by site and program type allows for more accurate interpretation of chronic absenteeism trends and supports targeted, context-specific improvement strategies aligned with AB 2176's diagnostic intent.

Protect Immediate and Continuous Access to Instruction

Counties should continue to prioritize immediate school enrollment upon entry into detention and limit time spent in intake or orientation classes to the shortest duration necessary for stabilization and assessment. Instructional schedules should be intentionally designed to minimize conflicts with court appearances and medical, and behavioral health services. Protecting instructional time signals the centrality of education and reduces avoidable absences.

Commit to Positive School Climate and Student Engagement Strategies

The report's findings underscore the relationship between positive school climate and improved attendance. Counties are encouraged to expand evidence-based practices such as PBIS-aligned systems, restorative approaches, arts-integrated instruction, culturally responsive programming, and youth leadership opportunities. Enrichment and postsecondary pathway programs increase relevance, foster belonging, and strengthen students' motivation to attend school consistently.

Elevate Student Voice and Family Engagement

Counties should continue to create structured opportunities for youth and families to provide feedback on educational experiences, facility conditions, and supports. Youth councils, town halls, and family engagement events provide critical insight into barriers and protective factors influencing attendance. Incorporating student and family perspectives strengthens system responsiveness and promotes dignity and trust.

Utilize Chronic Absenteeism Data as a Continuous Improvement Tool

Consistent with AB 2176, chronic absenteeism data should be used as a prompt for inquiry and collaboration rather than as a compliance or enforcement mechanism. Counties are encouraged to pair DataQuest reporting with internal attendance tracking systems that allow for real-time monitoring, early intervention, and contextual understanding of attendance patterns, particularly for short-term or highly mobile students.

Sustain Ongoing Technical Assistance and Shared Learning

OYCR will continue to support counties through technical assistance, follow-up engagement, and the dissemination of promising practices identified through AB 2176 implementation. Counties demonstrating effective strategies, such as intake class models, data disaggregation, and integrated MDT structures, offer valuable learning opportunities that can inform statewide improvement efforts.

Looking Ahead

The 2025 AB 2176 review cycle marks an important step in strengthening educational access and educational health for justice-involved youth across California. OYCR views AB 2176 as an ongoing framework for collaboration and continuous improvement.

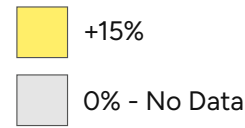
Looking ahead, OYCR will continue to support counties through a partnership-driven approach that centers education as a core component of rehabilitation, well-being, and successful community reentry. Future efforts will prioritize strengthened cross-system collaboration, accurate and meaningful interpretation of attendance data, and sustained alignment between education, probation, and health partners.

OYCR will also continue to elevate practices that promote positive school climate, immediate access to instruction, and meaningful student engagement, recognizing that attendance improves when learning environments are safe, supportive, and relevant. Expansion of postsecondary, career, and reentry pathways will remain a key focus to ensure educational continuity beyond confinement.

As implementation continues, OYCR remains committed to providing technical assistance, sharing best practices, and maintaining flexibility in future AB 2176 review cycles to account for local context and system conditions. Through continued partnership with counties and partners statewide, OYCR looks forward to advancing equitable educational access and improved outcomes for justice-involved youth.

Appendix A

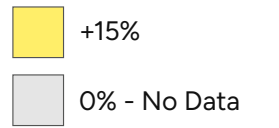
2023-24 Juvenile Court School Chronic Absentee Aggregate



County	Facility	Chronic Absenteeism Rate	URL
Alameda	Alameda Juvenile Hall	6.4%	Source
Butte	Table Mountain	0%	Source
Contra Costa	Mt. Mckinley	5.7%	Source
El Dorado	Rite of Passage	0%	Source
Fresno	Alice M. Worsley	7%	Source
Humboldt	Humboldt County Office of Education Juvenile Hall Court	5.6%	Source
Imperial	Imperial County Juvenile Hall/Community	0%	Source
Kern	Kern County Juvenile Court	39.5%	Source
Kings	J.C. Montgomery	0%	Source
Los Angeles	Afflerbaugh-Paige Camp	4.6%	Source
	Kirby, Dorothy Camp	15.3%	Source
	Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall	14.0%	Source
	Nidorf, Barry J.	18.9%	Source
	Kilpatrick	*Data Suppressed	
	Rockey, Glenn Camp	0%	Source
Madera	Juvenile Hall (Endeavor/Voyager Secondary)	3.8%	Source
Marin County	Marin County Juvenile Court	0%	Source
Mendocino	West Hills Juvenile Hall Court	4.0%	Source
Merced	Merced County Juvenile Court	4.3%	Source
Monterey	Wellington M. Smith, Jr.	0%	Source
Napa	Napa County Juvenile Hall/Court	0%	Source
Orange	ACCESS Juvenile Hall	8.7%	Source
Placer	Placer County Court Schools	0%	Source

Appendix A

Continued



County	Facility	Chronic Absenteeism Rate	URL
Riverside	Riverside County Juvenile Court	14.4%	Source
Sacramento	El Centro Jr./Sr. High	4.8%	Source
San Benito	San Benito County Juvenile Hall Court	0%	Source
San Bernardino	San Bernardino County Juvenile Detention and Assessment Center	8.8%	Source
San Diego	San Diego County Court	0%	Source
	San Pasqual Academy	12.8%	Source
San Francisco	S.F. County Court Woodside Learning Ctr	0%	Source
San Joaquin	John F. Cruikshank, Jr.	16.4%	Source
San Luis Obispo	San Luis Obispo County Juvenile Court	3.7%	Source
San Mateo	Hillcrest at Youth Services Center	0%	Source
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara County Juvenile Court	19.3%	Source
Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Court	0%	Source
Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz County Court	15.4%	Source
Shasta	Shasta County Juvenile Court	5%	Source
Solano	Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility - Evergreen Academy	0%	Source
Sonoma	Sonoma County Court	5.3%	Source
Stanislaus	Stanislaus County West Campus	0%	Source
Tehama	Tehama Oaks High	0%	Source
Tulare	Tulare County Court	6.8%	Source
Tuolumne	Gold Ridge Educational Center	0%	Source
Ventura	Providence	1.1%	Source
Yuba	Harry P B Carden	2.2%	Source

Appendix B

Assembly Bill 2176 (AB 2176) Juveniles: Access to Education Fact Sheet

AB 2176 (Berman) Juveniles: Access to Education

SUMMARY

AB 2176 increases transparency of court school chronic absenteeism rates and authorizes investigations and provision of technical assistance for sites with excessive rates of absenteeism.

BACKGROUND

The California Supreme Court held that Article IX, Section 5 of the California Constitution establishes a fundamental right to an equitable education for all youth, including those who are incarcerated.¹ Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Article 23 requires that county probation departments operate all juvenile halls and camps. WIC Section 889 requires the county office of education (COE) to provide for the operation of a school at juvenile halls and camps, generally known as court schools.

As a result, court schools are dually staffed and operated by probation and the COE. The probation department owns and maintains the facility, employs the security and administrative staff, sets schedules and policies, and generally operates and directs all aspects of the site that are not directly related to educational instruction. The COE employs qualified teachers who provide core academic instruction.

SB 823 (2021) closed the Department of Juvenile Justice and required that all current and future incarcerated youth be served in county juvenile halls. It also created the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) to support the transition of the juvenile justice system to a health-based approach. OYCR's responsibilities include: publishing annual reports on the outcomes of incarcerated youth; employment of ombudsmen to investigate youth complaints; review of county realignment plans; and provision of technical assistance.

PROBLEM

There is a long history of incarcerated youth being denied access to education services. Despite the fact that incarcerated students should have nearly perfect attendance rates, more than a dozen California court schools reported chronic absenteeism rates higher than 25% in 2021/22 and 2022/23.²

Punishment and isolation practices at some juvenile halls are the primary driver of high chronic absenteeism rates.³ For example, in Los Angeles County the probation department barred entire juvenile units from attending school if one youth misbehaved. In Kern County, "probation staff blatantly barred all youths labeled "high security

¹ LAUSD v. Garcia [Los Angeles Unified Sch. Dist. v. Garcia, 669 F.3d 956 | Casetext Search + Citator](#) <https://www.ylc.org/resource/out-of-sight-out-of-mind/>
²<https://www.ed-data.org/>

³ As evidenced by various complaints for injunctive relief over the last decade, including as recent as 2023: [Attorney General](#)

[Bonta Brings Enforcement Action Against Los Angeles County Due to Illegal and Unsafe Conditions, Lack of Outdoor Exercise and Education at County's Juvenile Halls | State of California - Department of Justice - Office of the Attorney General](#)

Appendix B

Continued

status" from attending school."⁴

THIS BILL

This bill would require OYCR to include court school chronic absenteeism data in its annual reports and would authorize OYCR to investigate the causes and contributing factors at sites with excessive rates of absenteeism. It would also allow OYCR to offer technical assistance and expertise to counties that are struggling to provide students with consistent access to educational services.

SUPPORT

Santa Clara County Office of Education (Sponsor)
Alliance for Children's Rights
California County Superintendents
California Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Association of California School Administrators
Youth Law Center
California Public Defenders Association (CPDA)

Oppose

None.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Isabelle LaSalle
Office of Assemblymember Marc Berman
(916) 319-2023
isabelle.lasalle@asm.ca.gov

⁴<https://www.ylc.org/resource/out-of-sight-out-of-mind/>

Appendix C

AB 2176 COE Letter



Date

[Superintendent's Name]
[County Office of Education]
[Address]

Dear Superintendent [Last Name],

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) in reference to [Assembly Bill 2176 \(Berman\)](#), which was passed September 2024, and requires OYCR to, “investigate the reasons for absenteeism at juvenile court schools with chronic absenteeism rates of 15 percent or more” ([Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 2200](#)). Based on DataQuest reports, the [insert name of Juvenile Court school] operated by the [insert COE name here], chronic absenteeism rates exceeded 15% during the 2023-24 academic year.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with all County Offices of Education, to address and reduce chronic absenteeism, ensuring that all students, particularly those involved in the juvenile justice system, have stable and consistent access to education.

We would like to meet with you and your team to engage in a conversation to better understand the factors contributing to the absenteeism rates. We are particularly interested in identifying barriers that may prevent students from regularly attending school, including issues related to transportation, mental health, and/or facility climate. Additionally, we aim to explore the current interventions you may already have in place and consider opportunities to enhance these efforts through targeted support from OYCR which will be shared in a public report due to the Legislature by January 2026.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure that every student has stable access to their education and the tools they need to thrive academically and personally. By working together, we can identify and implement evidence-based strategies, strengthen school-community partnerships, and provide holistic support to students who are at risk of disengaging from their education.

We look forward to meeting, preferably in person, and partnering to support your efforts to address chronic absenteeism and improve educational outcomes for your students. Please let us know your availability for an initial meeting or conversation, and we would be happy to coordinate next steps for an in-person meeting

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we look forward to working alongside you and your team to understand and disrupt the systemic barriers that are preventing your students from attending school.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Massa, Ed.D.

Education Subject Matter Expert

Mobile: 213-215-2363

Office of Youth and Community Restoration - California Health and Human Services Agency

CC Probation
CC Director

1215 O STREET, MS-08, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
[HTTPS://OYCR.CA.GOV](https://oycr.ca.gov) • 916-651-0423 • OYCR@CHHS.CA.GOV

Appendix D

San Joaquin County Office of Education Juvenile Court School Program Overview

Cruikshank Program Overview

25-26

Academics - Monday thru Friday 8:30-1:00

ALL additional programs started small with big dreams.....

- Art Therapy
 - Contracts built with artists
 - Art Shows quarterly along with Ethnic Studies topics and themes
 - Community Service Project built to allow students to feel connected to their community
 - Bigger than me, Bigger than you
 - Showcase and auction partnership with the SJC Bar Association
 - Outside agency art contests happening all year
 - SJC Board of Supervisors
- CTE Programming
 - Logistics and warehousing
 - Culinary at Camp
 - Graphic arts and design growth
 - TRANSFR VR Headsets for career exploration
- College Program
 - Current reality
 - 25 Grads In custody for the fall 2025 semester
 - 21 Enrolled in 2 or more courses
 - 3 Dual Enrolled
 - 1 Pending Enrollment (Recent Intake)
 - College Tours
- PBIS
 - Started initial planning with Probation and BHS in 24-25 school year
 - Created an Expectations Matrix focused on Safety, Accountability, Positivity
 - 25-26 school year has a facility wide focus on Embracing Positivity with quarterly Ethnic Studies Events
 - Surround Yourself with Positive Influences
 - Cultivate Hobbies and Passions
 - Foster a Supportive Social Circle
 - Accept and Learn from Challenges
 - Building lesson plans to specifically teach expectations
 - The goal for 25-26 school year is to have ALL expectations covered with fidelity including the STAFF expectations
 - Therapeutic Environment
 - VR Headsets
 - Landscape wallpapers inside ALL classrooms
 - Transformation of entire facility with fresh paint and murals in every recreational yard
- Entrepreneur Workshops

Appendix E

San Joaquin County Office of Education Juvenile Court School Graduate Transition Process

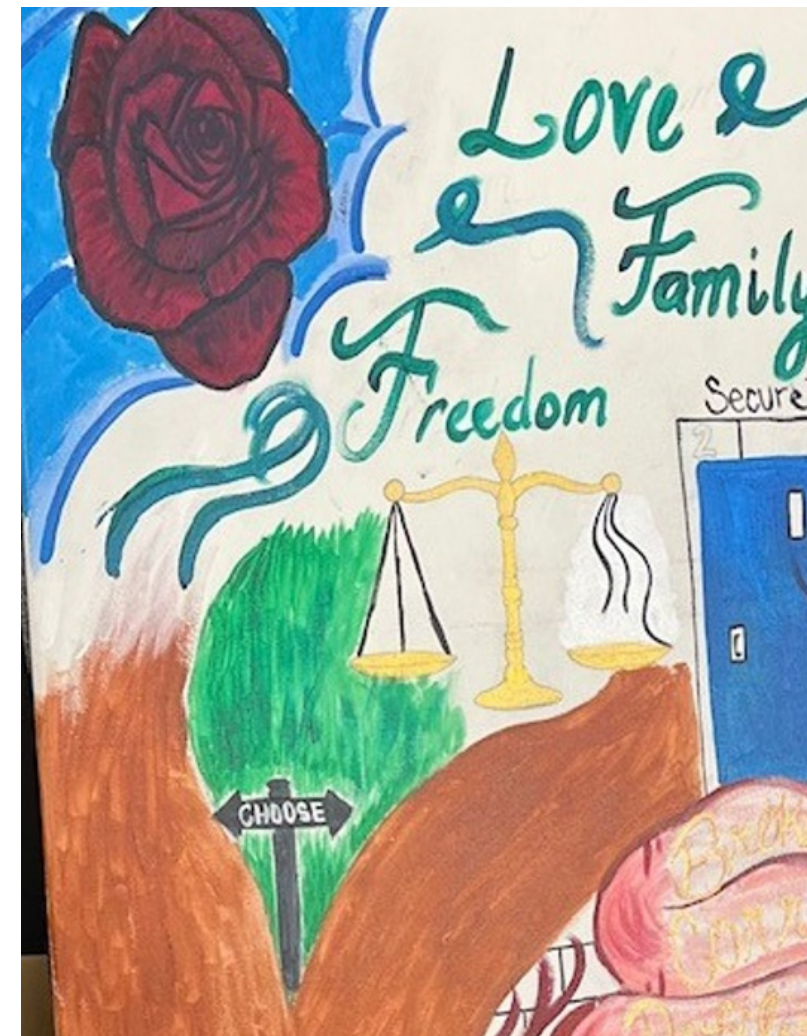
Graduate Transition Process

Student Graduates

1. Project Leader/counselor meets with student to gauge their interests for future
2. Project Leader conducts a learning styles assessment via O*NET Profiler
3. PL creates a hotmail account for student
4. PL completes the college application
 - a. Once college is complete with their process they will send over a student id and college email account
5. PL enrolls student based upon interest
 - a. First college course is usually a Life Management and/or Counseling course
6. Graduate starts their class/s
 - a. PL sets up college counselor appointment for each graduate during their second semester of coursework
7. PL facilitates courses with graduates individually and small groups

Graduate transitions out of JJC

1. PL creates a post release document
 - a. Post release document contains the following
 - i. Email account and password used to apply for college
 - ii. Learning management system username and password
 - iii. Rising scholars information for direct college access
 - iv. Transition specialists contact information
2. Probation sets up a transition meeting with multiple stakeholders
3. PL reaches out to receiving Rising Scholars department
4. Once graduate is released, Transition Specialist confirms/connects with graduate and Probation for proper follow up





OYCR

Office of Youth and
Community Restoration

oycr.ca.gov