CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2011 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s)	Project Number
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Project Title

TruantToday

Abstract

Objectives/Goals

For my project, I wanted to see whether increased parental awareness of a negative student behavior -- in this case, student truancy -- could affect, and stop, that behavior.

Methods/Materials

I built a website, TruantToday.com, that would quickly and easily send out text and email messages to parents when students were marked as truant by a school. I tested TruantToday with 12 chronically truant student (meaning they attended less than 50% of school days) for two years at Port Richmond High School. I compared truancy rates of my test group before and after using the program.

Results

My project was an unqualified success. 75% of students enrolled in the program improved their attendance to the point where they were no longer considered chronically-truant. Additionally, on average, 50% of students enrolled in the program came back the same day that their parents were notified of their absences. Finally, students enrolled in the program had, on average, a 15% GPA bump year-over-year.

Conclusions/Discussion

Reducing student truancy has many real-world benefits. Currently, schools in California receive funding based on Average Daily Attendance -- or how many students come to school each day. For every day that a student misses class, a school loses up to $48. By bringing students back to the classroom, we can help bring funding back to school. Additionally, the Department of Justice found that areas with higher truancy have higher rates of gang-violence, teen-pregnancy, and drug usage. By lowering truancy, we can also help lower crime. Finally, when students come to class, they are less likely to drop out of school.

Summary Statement

I built a website, TruantToday, to determine whether student truancy could be lowered by increasing parental awareness of that truancy.

Help Received