As a District, the SRVUSD is interested in improving our attendance rates and reducing our rate of chronic absenteeism. The key to achieving this goal is to help families develop a stronger understanding of the impact that missing school has on student achievement, and on the District, with the hope that they will change past practices and reevaluate current behaviors.

**Attendance Myth #1:** Attendance only matters in the older grades.

**Truth:** Regular attendance in the younger grades is a strong indicator of future student success. Absenteeism in kindergarten is associated with reduced outcomes in first grade. Absenteeism in first grade and subsequent years is associated with lower achievement in both reading and math. Additionally, students who dropout of high school have more absences in first grade, than students who graduate from high school.

**Attendance Myth #2:** Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused.

**Truth:** In California, the State does not count excused absences in the ADA for funding purposes. In other words, if a student is absent for any reason, the District does not get funding for that student for that day. Each day that a student misses school, the District loses approximately $70. Moreover, each day that a student misses school denies that student access to the instructional material that was covered that day. Access to learning opportunities in the classroom cannot be replaced.

**Attendance Myth #3:** Sporadic absences don’t matter. Absences are only a problem if they are consecutive.

**Truth:** Absences build upon themselves. Missing as few as 2 days per month can qualify a student as chronically absent. The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution has produced a short video to help explain how chronic absences affect all students. [View video here.](#)

**Attendance Myth #4:** It is okay to miss school for a family vacation because I have an Independent Study Contract.

**Truth:** Vacations when school is in session are not considered legitimate reasons to be absent from school. While in some cases Independent Study contracts help the District recover ADA for the missed days, the loss in learning for the student is irreplaceable. Much of learning that takes place in the classrooms happens beyond the textbooks and written assignments. Each day missed is a lost opportunity for a student and can affect their overall achievement.