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School news rollcall for Newhall School District features an article from Jeff Pelzel, superintendent, as follows:

Chronic absenteeism, a real challenge for the Newhall School District.

The increased emphasis on chronic absenteeism at the federal and state levels has put a premium on getting students to attend school. Students are considered chronically absent if they miss 10% of the school year. In the Newhall School District that's 18 days, or about 2 days a month. Keep in mind this is any combination of excused or unexcused absences. Often parents believe it's only unexcused absences that count, and that is no longer the case.

In the latest California school dashboard data, the Newhall School District's rating dropped to an overall orange rating, requiring the district to take immediate action to improve the attendance in all of our schools. Last year 392 students were identified as chronically absent, an increase of 0.7% from the previous year. Based on our current data we have 349 students projected to fall into this category for the 2019-2020 school year. This data all tracks to lost learning opportunities and decreased funding for all students across the district. Last year, Newhall School District lost over just 2 million dollars in revenue due to attendance.

In today's classrooms, student attendance is critical. Walk into any grade level and you will find students working in pairs or groups throughout the school day. Gone are the days of students working in isolated rows. Students depend on their thought partners to problem solve, think critically, and collaborate.

Taking an extended vacation or some long weekends here and there may not seem like much, but it impacts learning across the entire classroom. Did you know that if your child is going to be absent for an extended period, more than five consecutive days, you can inquire about independent study to gather the work ahead of time your child will miss. If they complete the work before they return and submit it to the school, your child gets credit for the work and the district gets credit for attendance. We encourage all families to take advantage of this opportunity. As always we look forward to collaborating with you to ensure we are empowering your child every day.

We at School news rollcall encourage you to read this issue in its entirety. To learn more about what is happening in your school district and on your school campus.

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