

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARD  
Model Hearing Format

Pre-Meeting

Primary Purpose: The primary goal of the SARB meeting is to identify and/or clarify the issues negatively impacting student attendance and implementing a plan/contract designed to provide services, incentives and consequences designed to help students improve his or her attendance. As such are not intended to result in furthering a student's progression into the criminal justice system until all other viable options have been explored and to the degree possible implemented.

SARB Participation: Local SARBs are encouraged to utilize a broad and diverse group of team members in support of finding positive resolutions to issues negatively impacting student attendance. This is the primary purpose of SARB Meetings. To the degree possible, such participation should include the student and parent/guardian; school staff; law enforcement – including representatives of the District Attorney's Office and VC Probation; community-based agencies; medical/mental health staff; public defender; and any other member of the school community allowed by law and interested in adding value to the effort to support a plan to improve the student's attendance. Based on information provided in the SARB referral packet, translation services may be required and if so, LEA should make all such arrangements and ensure that translators have been properly trained in SARB meeting protocols to the degree possible.

Tenor of the Meeting: SARB Meetings are not court room dramas and as such are not intended to be contentious. Decisions should be made in the best interest of the student including short and long term considerations.

Advocacy: It is important that families be allowed to have a representative of their choice attend SARB Meetings with them. SARB Chairs are advised to ask the family in advance of the proceedings if they have a representative with them. It is also important that representatives of the public defender's office be allowed to participate as a contributing member of the team, but that if such a representative is serving as an advocate for the student, they will be required to state so at the outset of the meeting. All student advocates/representatives will be excluded from the conversation related to team deliberations that generally preclude the participation of the student and parent. If the public defender is participating in the meeting as a member of the team, they may remain in all portions of the meeting and are encouraged to contribute to finding resolutions that encourage improved attendance on the part of the student and avoid open advocacy.

Welcome

SARB Chairperson: "Good morning / afternoon. I am (insert your name & position title). This is a meeting of the (insert district name) School Attendance Review Board. I am presiding over and moderating this hearing. I would like to begin by having the panel, family members, **representatives** and student introduce themselves."

(Have the panel introduce themselves giving their name, position and agency affiliation, followed by the family members and student.)

Verification of Address & Phone Numbers

SARB Chairperson: “Before hearing the presentation of the case from the school’s representative, I would like to verify home address and phone numbers listed in the districts records are correct. Please review this information let us know if there are changes that should be made.”

### Overview

SARB Chairperson: “California Education Code 48263 authorizes School Attendance Review Boards as an extension of the Juvenile Court process, to respond to cases involving Habitual Truancy, Irregular Attendance or Habitual Insubordination/Disruption. Our purpose is to work with you to develop a set of interventions and supports that will correct the issue of concern without the direct involvement of the courts ***in every case possible.***”

- We will begin with a presentation of the case by the school’s representative.
- Following this presentation the panel will have an opportunity to ask questions of the family members, student and school personnel.
- When we’ve finished with questions we may have the family ***and their representative*** step out of the room while we deliberate as a team. (Optional)
- Toward the close of the meeting we will inform you of the panel’s decisions.
- The panel can choose from four possible outcomes as a result of this hearing:
  1. The panel may choose to dismiss the case.
  2. The panel may choose to monitor the case and reconvene if necessary, at a later date.
  3. The panel may choose to issue directives that will be binding on the student and parent / guardian. Should the panel choose this option, it may also seek prosecution if the student or parent fails to follow the directives outlined in the summary document / contract.

4. ***In extreme cases, or if you are here to review your progress on a prior issued SARB Contract,*** the panel may choose to make an immediate referral ***a recommendation*** for prosecution to the District Attorney’s Office. (The decision to prosecute/cite will be solely at the discretion of the D.A.)

SARB Chairperson: “Do you have any questions about what I’ve covered so far?” (After answering questions...) “Let’s begin with the school’s presentation.”

### Presentation of Case

School Rep.: (School reviews the case using the material included in the referral packet to support the main points.)

Student/Family: ***The student, family or family representative will have a chance to explain why prior efforts have not worked and offer any insight into what they think might have been overlooked and what could be effective moving forward.***

SARB Chairperson: “I’d like to open the floor to our panel members to ask questions of the school, family or student.”

Panel Members: (Explore the problem with the intention of identifying the root causes and possible solutions.)

### Deliberation

SARB Chairperson: (Following adequate time for questions from the panel the chairperson should determine if interventions can be developed with the family present or if they should be discussed in closed session. ***The student, family and representative may be asked to leave the room briefly at this point.***)

### Actions

SARB Chairperson: ((1) Inform the family of the action the SARB intends to take. (2) If directives are to be issued, review the Summary of Directives (contract) and explain the consequences of failing to comply with the contract. (3) Ask if the family or student has any questions.)

### Closing

SARB Chairperson: (Summarize the meeting, express confidence in the family and student, thank the panel and adjourn the hearing.)

The SARB Chair explains the purpose of SARB Meeting and participants introduce themselves

The family is reminded why they were summoned to SARB

The child(ren)'s attendance and site/district-level interventions and outcomes are reviewed

A SARB Contract is created with input from all participants

The SARB Board discusses solutions and referrals to school and/or community resources

The family explains the attendance issues and why prior interventions were not effective

The follow-up/monitoring process is described

The consequences of failing to meet the terms of the SARB Contract is explained

The meeting is concluded

# WHAT TAKES PLACE AT A SARB MEETING?