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L.A. CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF ANTI-TRUANCY/ ANTI-GANG PROGRAM TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

*Operation Bright Future Specialists to Monitor Truancy at Sixteen
Elementary Schools Feeding into Local Middle Schools*

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo today announced his office, in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District, has expanded his Operation Bright Future (OBF) anti-truancy/ anti-gang program to the 16 elementary schools that feed into four of the 30 middle schools currently serviced by the OBF program.

“Research shows that early intervention at the elementary school level is a tried and true component of successful truancy and dropout prevention programs,” said City Attorney Delgadillo. “Through our partnership with LAUSD and other municipal agencies, we can ensure that every child attending LAUSD has the opportunity for the bright future they deserve.”

Operation Bright Future Community Resource Specialists assigned to each elementary school will work closely with school administrators to prevent truancy through early education and intervention; assist students and families having issues which often lead to truancy; as well as bridge the gap between elementary school and middle school through sustained involvement.

The program will work closely with school administrators to develop a meaningful and relevant school profile for each school in order to develop a strategy tailored to address factors unique to the elementary school and its surrounding community that contribute to truancy, including gang involvement, as well as provide needed information and services.

At the beginning of each academic year, each school assigned an OBF Community Resource Specialist will send all parents an introductory letter discussing truancy and outlining parental responsibility. OBF Community Resource Specialists and LAUSD counselors will follow up by conducting an assembly for all students, K-5th grade, regarding the importance of attending school. OBF Community Resource Specialists will also participate in Back to School Nights and meet with parents to discuss truancy issues.

Operation Bright Future Community Resource Specialists will also tailor a specific 5th grade truancy curriculum, including monthly interactive lesson plans, to address aspects of truancy. In addition, elementary school students with siblings in the OBF Middle School Program will be provided with an OBF mentor who will seek to promote school attendance and break any cycles of truancy.

The OBF Elementary School Expansion is also designed to identify students demonstrating pre-truancy signs such as disciplinary, academic, or behavioral difficulties; enhance and strengthen parent involvement; establish and build a positive relationship between students and LAPD Senior Lead Officers; and provide links to other Los Angeles City resources, such as the Neighborhood Prosecutor Program, Gang Prosecutors, School Safety Prosecutors, Tobacco Enforcement, and others.

As the school year progresses, OBF Community Resource Specialists will conduct individual parent meetings for students exhibiting excessive patterns of truancy in order to identify the root of the problem, propose solutions, and provide resource referrals. In extreme cases, when parents and students fail to comply with directives from the Student Attendance Review Board, recommendations for prosecution of parents can be made.

The expansion to feeder elementary schools builds on the City Attorney's successful Operation Bright Future program launched in 2002 and currently operating in 30 middle schools across the City serving more than 25,000 families. The program brings a financial benefit to the District, which receives state payments based on attendance figures. Since the program's inception five years ago, the City Attorney's Office has prosecuted 18 cases involving parents of habitually truant students. After the initial intervention by the City Attorney's Office, approximately 90% of the identified chronically truant students are back in class.

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