

[Supporting School Attendance and the “Be Here” Campaign]

Resolution supporting the efforts to decrease chronic absenteeism and promote belonging in elementary, middle, and high schools; and supporting the San Francisco Unified School District and Spark*SF Public School’s “Be Here Campaign.”

WHEREAS, Chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences, which equates to approximately two days per month; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of chronic absenteeism are severe, with students at higher risk of academic failure, dropping out, and negative impacts on their overall well-being; and

WHEREAS, Despite some initial improvements since the pandemic closures, chronic absenteeism remains much higher than it was before the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) made strides in reducing chronic absenteeism, in the last few years, from 29% of students in 2022 to 23% of students in 2024. Before the pandemic, chronic absenteeism hovered around 14%; and

WHEREAS, While the overall rate of chronic absenteeism is 23% in 2024, certain student groups have much greater rates, including 43% of foster system involved and homeless students, and 51% of African American and Pacific Islander students; and

WHEREAS, In 2024, SFUSD students missed 671,598 days of school, equating to nearly \$55 million in lost revenue from the State of California, which could otherwise have been used to support student learning, academic enrichment, and after school programming; and

1 WHEREAS, If chronic absenteeism were reduced in half, student outcomes would
2 improve and nearly the entire SFUSD deficit in the upcoming budget year could be resolved
3 without any additional cuts; and

4 WHEREAS, SFUSD and its not-for-profit partner, Spark*SF Public Schools, have
5 recently launched a citywide campaign, named “Be Here,” to encourage students and their
6 families to come to school and learn as well as engage educators and community partners in
7 working together with families to build a culture of attendance and address barriers to getting
8 to school; and

9 WHEREAS, SFUSD and Spark*SF made investments to address chronic absenteeism,
10 including developing a data dashboard, supporting a staff position dedicated to chronic
11 absenteeism, and support for students and their families with the issues that keep students
12 out of school; and

13 WHEREAS, The “Be Here” campaign includes a multi-year philanthropic effort to
14 significantly and permanently reduce chronic absenteeism; and

15 WHEREAS, September is National Attendance Awareness month; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors fully supports efforts to
17 reduce chronic absenteeism and proudly endorses the “Be Here” campaign.