

Day 5

Putting It All Together

The programs mentioned over the past few days are simply examples of the scores of programs that schools, courts, and communities have established to try to take a more effective approach to the problem of truancy among youth.

Click [here](#) for a table that summarizes and expands upon the three levels of antitrucancy strategies discussed in this event: prevention, early intervention, and legal intervention.

Click [here](#) to download a PDF document that reviews available research on effective truancy prevention and intervention strategies based in school, community, and court settings.

While many programs have collected data and been evaluated, it is not easy to draw definitive conclusions about their effectiveness. Many programs that may help truancy and dropout prevention may not bill themselves that way; they are part of a larger initiative to help children feel connected with school and protect them from a variety of risk factors, including violence, bullying, and gang involvement. These programs may not keep attendance records or other markers to indicate success in truancy prevention and intervention, even though they may well have an impact.

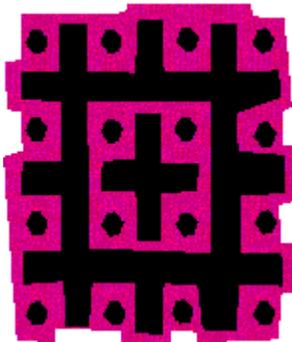
According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, the Dropout Prevention Demonstration Program (DPDP) is the only federal program that has dropout prevention as its sole objective. The program, which began in 2001, is so new that it has not yet been evaluated. Another federal program, the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program, funded 1988-1995, showed mixed results in evaluations.

Furthermore, each school district has its own definition of truancy and method for identifying truant students, further complicating the ability to evaluate and compare programs. In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, state and local recipients of funding under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) must develop and implement a Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) to provide information that can help guide the management of programs supported with SDFSCA funding. Truancy rates, which represent one of the many types of data to be collected under the UMIRS, are to be reported at the state level on a school-by-school basis. While each state can construct its own set of definitions, information collection instruments, and data collection protocols related to UMIRS, the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools will be collaborating with states to build a "model" UMIRS system. Truancy rates

will be one of the key topics under discussion in that process. Perhaps a greater understanding of how truancy is conceptualized by schools and states, as well as greater consistency in definitions, will emerge from this effort.

Click [here](#) for some tips for assessing truancy problems in your schools and communities.

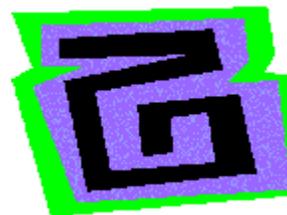
While one cannot draw definitive conclusions about the truancy programs, those with the most hopeful results do share some common elements. The Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program (TRDP), mentioned on the first day of this event, has funded seven sites to engage in an integrated, community-wide plan to reduce truancy. The initiative was based on lessons learned from other truancy and risk prevention programs that had shown promising results. According to the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention, one of the program's funders, the models that show the most promise of reducing truancy and its risk factors include the following key components:



- ◆ Parental involvement
- ◆ Meaningful sanctions or consequences for truancy
- ◆ Meaningful incentives for school attendance
- ◆ Ongoing school-based truancy reduction programs
- ◆ Involvement of community resources (for example, law enforcement)

As you move forward with plans to assess and address truancy problems among students in your schools and communities, consider making use of the following valuable resources. They are all PDF files, so please be sure to click on your Internet browser's "back" button or hit the "backspace" button on your keyboard when you are ready to return to this event after downloading and/or printing these materials.

- ◆ [TRDP evaluation model](#)
- ◆ [Logic model description for the TRDP evaluation](#)
- ◆ [Logic model example of a results-based truancy program](#)



Coming Up Soon!

***The 94th Annual Truancy, Dropout, and Delinquency
Prevention Conference***

October 31 - November 4, 2004
New Orleans, Louisiana

Hosted by the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention (IATDP). Visit the [IATDP Web site](#) and click on the "Conference" button for more information. When you are ready to return to this event, please click on your Internet browser's "back" button or hit the "backspace" button on your keyboard.

Additional Resources

There are numerous organizations and materials that can help you and your school dig deeper into the important topic of truancy. On this final day of the event, please complete the following steps:

- 1** **Review the list of [additional resources](#)** located in the Resources & Links section. You will find links to several on-line publications and organizations with information about the nature and prevention of truancy.
- 2** **Identify one resource that you find interesting**, follow the link, and spend some time reviewing the publication or learning about the organization.

No matter which resource you select, please consider also visiting the [National Center for School Engagement](#) and joining the National Truancy Listserv so that you can talk with others in the fields of juvenile justice, education, and human services about issues regarding out-of-school youth.

- 3** **Visit the Discussion Area** to share with your fellow participants and the event facilitator the link you followed and any interesting tips you learned.

As you explore additional resources on truancy prevention, keep in mind that several [past on-line events](#) are relevant to this topic. For example, you may want to review: *Using Existing Data in Your Needs Assessment*, *Promoting Prevention Through School-Community Partnerships*, *Selecting Research-Based Prevention Programs for Your School*, *Implementing Research-Based Prevention Programs in Schools*, *Are You Making Progress? Increasing Accountability Through Evaluation*, and *Sustaining Your Prevention Initiative*.

Please also take some time today to read the [summaries](#) of this week's on-line discussion and share any additional thoughts -- either about the topic of truancy or about this on-line event -- in the [Discussion Area](#) .



Click [here](#) to print today's materials in PDF format.



When you are done, please click [here](#) to complete a feedback form so that we can improve future on-line events!



**Thank you for participating in
*Truancy: A Serious Problem for Students, Schools, and Society.***

We hope that you enjoyed the event!

Truancy and school dropout initiatives mentioned in Day 5 materials:

School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Biennial/95-96/eval/129-97.pdf>

School Dropout Prevention Program
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/dropout/index.html>

Truancy Reduction Demonstration Project
<http://www.truancyprevention.org/programsPage.html>

References for Day 5 materials:

Baker, M. L., Sigmon, J. N. and Nugent, M. E. (2001). *Truancy reduction: Keeping students in schools*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Join Together Online. (January 1998). *Keeping kids in school*. Boston: Author. Available on-line at: <http://www.jointogether.org/sa/resources/database/reader/0,1884,256722,00.html>.

National Center for School Engagement Web site: <http://www.truancyrevention.org>.

Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office. (2000). *School attendance improvement handbook*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

School dropouts: Education could play a stronger role in identifying and disseminating promising prevention strategies. (2002). Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office.



Three Levels of Antitruancy Strategies

<p>Prevention: A supportive school climate and culture that provides all students with academic challenge and success</p>	<p>Early Intervention: Educational options to provide the best learning environment for students who are at risk of becoming truant</p>	<p>Legal Intervention: Strategies to help habitual truants find academic success</p>
<p>Board policies School norms Signs Safe and healthful school environment</p>	<p>Partnerships</p>	<p>Laws Suspension/expulsion options</p>
<p>Community norms Community partners</p>	<p>Student study teams Student success teams School attendance review boards (SARBs)</p>	<p>Parental involvement</p>
<p>Parental involvement Parents on campus Parent education programs Parent-teacher association (PTA)</p>	<p>Parental involvement Outreach programs and home visits Truancy sweeps</p>	<p>Community service Peer court</p>
<p>Extended learning opportunities Preschool and early childhood education and staff development Classroom management Effective teachers Service-learning Extra- and cocurricular activities After-school programs Alternative education</p>	<p>School resource officers Counselors Peer helpers/advisors Adult mentors Tutors and study groups</p>	<p>Citation <i>Vehicle code</i> -- traffic court, daytime curfew, juvenile court, Operation Stay in School, work experience, district attorney mediation</p>
<p>Rewards, incentives, and recognition</p>	<p>Mentoring/tutoring Educational options Independent study Work-study</p>	<p>Alternative educational placements Court community schools Community service</p>
<p>Safe schools, safe passages, and positive school climates Conflict resolution, counseling and guidance, pupil</p>	<p>Peer helping Conflict management, counseling</p>	

empowerment Closed campus		
Integrated services initiatives Schools as family resource centers After-school learning and safe neighborhoods partnerships program 21st-century learning centers	Alternative educational options Work-study In-house suspensions Compulsory Saturday school Continuation education Magnet schools Public home study (independent study)	
Comprehensive school health programs Tobacco, drug, and alcohol use prevention programs Health education Psychological and counseling services Physical education Nutrition services and education Teen pregnancy prevention	School attendance review boards (SARBs)	

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From:

Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office. (2000). *School attendance improvement handbook*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education (p. 6).

Assessing Truancy Problems in Your Area

The following are some suggestions for assessing truancy problems and related issues in your schools and communities:

- ◆ Look at school attendance records to see if unexcused absences are a big problem. Make sure to note if rates have changed over time. Have unexcused absences increased over the past few years? If so, what changes in the school and/or community may be influencing absenteeism among students?
- ◆ Consult with the local police department about rates of juvenile crime during school hours. If this is a problem, has it been getting worse or better over time? What measures are the police taking to address the problem, and how can you help?
- ◆ Find out how truancy cases are currently addressed in your community.
 - ◆ Are solid policies in place that seem well-suited to local conditions? If not, how can they be improved to better fit the reality facing youth in your community?
 - ◆ Are laws in place (i.e., curfews, fines, etc.)? If so, do the laws seem to be helpful or harmful? In other words, since the laws were enacted, how have truancy rates in your area changed?
- ◆ Learn about the transportation situation for students in your district and whether it poses a problem for some students.
- ◆ Think about extra steps your school could take to help kids who are frequently absent catch up on their schoolwork.
- ◆ Determine whether adequate after-school activities are available to students. If not, help get some programs started. Be sure to create options for a wide range of interests and skills, and market them to youth who are at risk for or currently displaying truant behavior. Also, make sure that after-school activities, including sports and clubs, are accessible to all youth. If costs seem potentially prohibitive (e.g., for uniforms), try to come up with creative solutions to help kids get and stay involved (e.g., ask local businesses to underwrite costs).

Common Elements of Successful After-School Programs

- ◆ Goal setting and strong management
- ◆ Quality after-school staffing
- ◆ Low staff/student ratios

- ◆ Attention to safety, health, and nutrition issues
- ◆ Effective partnerships with community-based organizations, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and youth groups
- ◆ Strong involvement of families
- ◆ Coordinating learning with the regular school day
- ◆ Linkages between school-day teachers and after-school personnel
- ◆ Evaluation of program progress and effectiveness

◆ Some students may be truant or dropping out of school because they need to work to help support their families. Make sure to explore the varied reasons behind truant behavior and that adequate and appropriate services are available to these families to help them consider different options that may allow students to complete their education.

◆ There are also many groups of young people who are not in school, but may not necessarily be considered officially truant. As you seek to assess and address the problem of truancy in your schools and communities, try to be inclusive and think through all possible groups of youth who may need help either connecting or reconnecting with school. For example, consider young people who are released from juvenile facilities. They are dropped from the rolls of the institution school on the day they are discharged; most are not enrolled in another school before leaving the facility. Also consider both legal and illegal immigrant youth who may not be enrolled in school.

To learn more about the Uniform Information Reporting and Management System, which represents a system with great potential for helping to assess and document truancy rates in schools and communities across the country, please review pages 34 through 36 of the following document: [Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Act State Grants: Guidance for State and Local Implementation of Programs](#). When you are ready to return to this event, please click on your Internet browser's "back" button or hit the "backspace" button on your keyboard.

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From:

Join Together Online. (January 1998). *Keeping kids in school*. Boston, MA: Author. Available online at: <http://www.jointogether.org/sa/resources/database/reader/0,1884,256722,00.html>.

Links to Additional Resources

Below are just some of the truancy prevention resources that you can access via the World Wide Web. For information about resources in your area, you may want to consult with staff at your local or regional prevention center and departments of education and public health.

[Organizations](#)

[Publications](#)

- ◆ [Truancy Statistics](#)
- ◆ [Truancy Prevention](#)
- ◆ [Truancy Intervention](#)

[Evidence-Based Prevention Programs](#)

- ◆ [Programs Mentioned in This Event](#)
- ◆ [Federal Program Review Web Sites](#)
- ◆ [National Program Review Reports](#)

Organizations

- ◆ The Ad Council: High School Dropout Prevention
http://www.adcouncil.org/research/wga/high_school_dropout_prevention/?issue3Menu
- ◆ Alternative Education Resource Organization
<http://www.educationrevolution.org/>
- ◆ American Indian Education: Plans for Dropout Prevention and Special School Support Services for American Indian and Alaska Native Students
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/INAR.html>
- ◆ Center for Adolescent Health and Development
<http://allaboutkids.umn.edu/cfahad/>
- ◆ Communities in Schools
<http://www.cisnet.org/>
- ◆ International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention
<http://www.iatdp.org>
- ◆ Join Together Online

<http://www.jointogether.org/home/>

- ◆ National Center for School Engagement
<http://www.truancyprevention.org>
- ◆ National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
<http://training.ncjfcj.org/truancy.htm>
- ◆ National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>
- ◆ National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk
<http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/>
- ◆ National Mentoring Partnership
<http://www.mentoring.org/>
- ◆ National School Safety Center
<http://www.nssc1.org/>
- ◆ National Truancy Prevention Association
Jeff Kuhn, Family Justice Strategies
525-K East Market Street, No. 321
Leesburg, VA 20176
Phone: 703-779-4620
- ◆ National Youth Court Center
<http://www.youthcourt.net/default.htm>
- ◆ No Child Left Behind
<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>
- ◆ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>
- ◆ Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html>
- ◆ Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, Truancy Mediation Program
<http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/courtcommunity.htm>
- ◆ Senator Jeff Bingaman's Hispanic Drop Out Prevention Homepage
http://bingaman.senate.gov/bingaman/hispanic_dropout_prevention.html
- ◆ Social Development Research Group
<http://depts.washington.edu/sdrg/>

- ◆ Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/grants/grantprograms/discr08.html>
- ◆ The Urban Institute
<http://www.urban.org>
- ◆ Vera Institute for Justice
<http://www.vera.org/>

◆ Publications

This list of truancy-related publications was created by the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE). Please visit the NCSE Web site (listed above under "Organizations") for a more comprehensive annotated bibliography on this important topic, which includes these and many additional publications.

◆ Truancy Statistics

Baker, M. L., Sigmon, J. N., & Nugent, M. E. (2001, September). *Truancy reduction: Keeping students in school*, OJJDP.

This bulletin is primarily an extensive review of two truancy reduction programs: ACT Now in Pima County, AZ, and the Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program operating in seven sites nationwide. The review includes thorough descriptions of both projects, and evaluation results. The introduction includes statistics on truancy and court involvement with truant students and a literature review on truancy as a predictor of delinquency. Four correlates of truancy are identified: family factors, school factors, economic influences, and student variables.

Dekalb, J. (1999, April). Student truancy. *ERIC Digest*, ERIC Clearinghouse On Educational Management, n. 125.

This short review article discusses the extent of the truancy problem in a few major city school districts, the consequences of failure to attend school, and some of the causes of truancy. It briefly lists the recommendations of the National Association of Secondary School Principals for creating successful attendance policies. A few hard-line policies and a few community programs are described, as well.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community. *Journal of Education Research*, 95(5), 308-320.

This paper reports the findings of a study called "Focus on Results - Study of Student Attendance" conducted during the 1996-1997 school year by the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. Results are reported for 12 elementary schools in MD, CA, MN, and PA, all of which had implemented family and community activities designed to improve attendance. The schools were successful in improving average daily attendance by 0.71% and the average percentage of chronically absent students from 8% to 6.1% over a 2-year span. Coordinators of the partnership programs at each school completed three surveys during the school year. They rated the perceived effectiveness of seven activities at improving attendance, giving 'home visits' the highest rating. They also ranked their own effectiveness at communicating with parents. The authors performed correlations between these rankings and rates of daily attendance, chronic absenteeism, and changes in those rates over time. Some activities were found to improve

both attendance measures, while others improved either one or the other. The article includes a literature review linking attendance to dropping out of high school.

Garry, E. (1996, October). Truancy: First step to a lifetime of problems. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, OJJDP.

This bulletin briefly describes seven truancy reduction programs nationwide including some data on program results, and program contact information. The programs take a wide variety of approaches including sanctions against parents, allowing police to detain juveniles, parenting classes, social worker supervision, counseling, and home visits. The programs are: 1) Truancy Habits Reduced Increasing Valuable Education in Oklahoma City; 2) At School, On Time, Ready to Work in Chanute, KS; 3) Project Helping Hand in Atlantic City, NJ; 4) Truancy and Curfew Violation Center in Ramsey County, MN; 5) Truancy Reduction Program in Kern County, CA; 6) The Save Kids Partnership in Maricopa County, AZ; 7) Daytime Curfew Program in Roswell, NM.

Mulrine, A. (2001, September 10). The kindergarten of crime. *U.S. News & World Report*, 51.

This brief news report provides some startling statistics on the attendance problem in a few major urban areas, along with some of the consequences school districts and courts are using to combat the problem. It has a little information about the link between truancy and crime, and between truancy and achievement in a few neighborhoods. Some interesting data, no literature review or study reports.

U.S. Department of Education in Cooperation with the U.S Department of Justice. (1996, July). *Manual To Combat Truancy*. Retrieved November 13, 2002 from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Truancy>.

The US Department of Education collaborated with the US Department of Justice to develop this manual to address the problem of truancy. At the time of the writing of this article there was not a lot of national data on truancy, but the article cites local statistics on truancy trends in different cities. A "Users Guide" to deterring truancy is then given, that includes parental involvement, firm sanctions for truants, meaningful incentives for youth and parents, ongoing school-based prevention programs, and involvement of law enforcement. Finally, selected model truancy programs are described.

Wilson K. (1993). Tough on truants. *American School Board Journal*, 180, 43-46.

The superintendent of the Tulsa County schools in OK describes changes in school attendance that occurred when the schools began uniformly sending truants to court. The article includes descriptions of eight steps needed to create an effective court system. She claims the first 200 court cases resulted in 400 students returning to school. The 648 cases files between 11/89 and 8/92 resulted in a 45% reduction in the dropout rate, and a drop in daytime crime. OK law requires school attendance until age 18, and the court imposes fines for truancy.

◆ **Truancy Prevention**

Anonymous, (2000). Truancy reduction efforts: A best practices review. *Spectrum*, 73(4), 13-15.

This article summarizes changes in Wisconsin truancy law (Wisconsin Act 239) made in 1997, some positive results of those changes, and some objections to the new laws. The changes include a stricter redefinition of both habitual truancy and simple truancy (one time

truancy), granting municipalities the right to enact ordinances against simple truancy as well as habitual truancy, increasing the sanctions available to municipalities for habitual truancy, and increasing sanctions for parents of truants. While an interesting summary of Wisconsin law, this is not really a "best practices" review.

Baker, M. L., Sigmon, J. N., & Nugent, M. E. (2001, September). *Truancy reduction: keeping students in school*, OJJDP.

This bulletin is primarily an extensive review of two truancy reduction programs: ACT Now in Pima County, AZ, and the Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program operating in seven sites nationwide. The review includes thorough descriptions of both projects, and evaluation results. The introduction includes statistics on truancy and court involvement with truants and a literature review on truancy as a predictor of delinquency. Four correlates of truancy are identified: family factors, school factors, economic influences, and student variables.

Beem, K. (2002). Eliminating dropouts with persistence and shoe leather: This small school district took on its truancy problem head-on. Its result: No dropouts. *District Administration*, 38(6), 18-19.

Kentucky's Walton-Verona school district has achieved a 100% graduation rate for three years in a row as a result of a truancy reduction program called Schools and Families Empowered (SAFE) in which about 60 students participate currently. The district is a small suburban two-school district in a mostly middle class area; however, about 1/5 of the students qualify for free and reduced meals. The overall state graduation rate is 66%. Test scores have risen as well.

Berger, W. B., & Wind, S. (2000). Police eliminating truancy: A PET project. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 69(2), 16-19.

A truancy reduction program in the Miami area is described in this bulletin. Truants are picked up by law enforcement officers who assess the reasons for truancy at a Truancy Evaluation Center (TEC). If it is the first time being truant the youth is returned to school. If they are out because of a suspension, they are enrolled in Alternative to Suspension Program (ASP). If they are found to be habitually truant, a meeting is held with parents and counselor to identify the problems and resolve them. The article attributes a reduction in daytime crime in part to the PET project.

Coordinating Council On Juvenile Justice And Delinquency Prevention. (1996, March). *Combating violence and delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan provides a summary of the problem of juvenile delinquency and violence, and its various chapters each focus on a different strategy for addressing the problem. Chapter 4 is entitled "Provide Opportunities for Children and Youth". It cites truancy as a major problem in many urban centers and links it to juvenile delinquency. It reviews a number of community-based programs that are designed to reduce truancy, and provides citations for program information.

Dekalb, J. (1999, April). Student Truancy. *ERIC Digest*, ERIC Clearinghouse On Educational Management, n. 125.

This short review article discusses the extent of the truancy problem in a few major city school districts, the consequences of failure to attend school, and some of the causes of truancy. It briefly lists the recommendations of the National Association of Secondary School Principals for creating successful attendance policies. A few hard-line policies and a few

community programs are described, as well.

D'Orio, W. (2002). Holding parents accountable for truants. *District Administration*, 38(10), 11.

This is a four-paragraph statement of Chicago's plan to hold parents accountable by requiring them to attend parenting classes, receive counseling, or, in the extreme, face arrest.

Enomoto, E. K. (1994). The meaning of truancy: Organizational culture as multicultures. *The Urban Review*, 26(3), 187-207.

This is an ethnographic study of truancy policy done in a multiethnic, urban high school serving 1,200 students in the Midwest. The school has been given a pseudonym. The author examines truancy policy from three "lenses of organizational culture: integration, differentiation, and fragmentation" to identify how each perspective contributes to understanding how truancy policy is formed, interpreted, administered, and viewed by different members of the school community. The integration lens focuses on the shared values of the school. The differentiation lens highlights the ways in which school members differ in their handling and views of truancy depending on their group membership such as teacher, attendance officer, administrator or student, as well as the temporary roles of, for example, teachers on hall duty, or parents staffing the attendance office. The fragmentation lens illuminates the ambiguities and confusion that surround truancy issues and that stem primarily from the conflicting (though shared) visions of the school as a "fair and just institution" on one hand, and a "caregiver" on the other.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community. *Journal of Education Research*, 95(5), 308-320.

This paper reports the findings of a study called "Focus on Results - Study of Student Attendance" conducted during the 1996-1997 school year by the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. Results are reported for 12 elementary schools in MD, CA, MN, and PA, all of which had implemented family and community activities designed to improve attendance. The schools were successful in improving average daily attendance by 0.71% and the average percentage of chronically absent students from 8% to 6.1% over a 2-year span. Coordinators of the partnership programs at each school completed three surveys during the school year. They rated the perceived effectiveness of seven activities at improving attendance, giving 'home visits' the highest rating. They also ranked their own effectiveness at communicating with parents. The authors performed correlations between these rankings and rates of daily attendance, chronic absenteeism, and changes in those rates over time. Some activities were found to improve both attendance measures, while others improved either one or the other. The article includes a literature review linking attendance to dropping out of high school.

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Gavin, T. (1997). Truancy: Not just kids' stuff anymore. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 66, 8-14.

This article describes in detail a truancy reduction center run by the St. Petersburg, FL police department with the intent of reducing daytime burglary. When the police pick up a truant youth, they bring him/her to the truancy center staffed by a juvenile officer and a teacher. Parents are called in to pick up their children and take them to school. This article provides suggestions for ways police departments can work with state statutes to develop reasonable truancy policies, and ways they can work with community agencies. The introduction provides interesting historical citations going back over a century to the link between truancy and delinquency.

Gullatt, D. & Lemoine, D. A. (1997). Truancy: What's a principal to do? *American Secondary Education*, 26, 7-12.

The author groups solutions to reducing truancy into four main categories and gives examples of each from around the country and internationally. First, stringent laws and regulations including fines for parents, zero-credit for absent students, school suspensions, and police interventions. Second, in-school programs include developing attendance policies, involving parents, providing guidance, and providing alternative programs. Third, the experiences of a number of districts that use computer telephoning systems to notify parents of their children's absences are related. Fourth, two community programs designed to provide services to truant youths are discussed. The article concludes with a list of school, teacher, family, and student responsibilities.

Haslinger, J., Kelly, P., & O'Lare, L. (1996). Counting absenteeism, anonymity and apathy. *Educational Leadership*, 54(1), 47-49.

Staff members from one low-income, racially diverse elementary school in southern Maryland describe their intensive efforts to successfully reduce absenteeism. Many specific policies that could be replicated elsewhere are described.

Ingersoll, S. & LeBoeuf, D. (1977, February). Reaching out to youth out of the education mainstream. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, OJJDP.

This OJJDP bulletin focuses on an initiative entitled Youth out of the Educational Mainstream (YOEM). The initiative had three goals: To reduce the number of youth leaving or who have left school; to reduce the number of youth at risk of delinquency because of being out of the educational mainstream; to heighten awareness of the YOEM problem and the need for intervention programs that address risk and protective factors in the lives of these youth. Youth out of the educational mainstream are out for a variety of reasons, including chronic truancy, suspension, expulsion, and dropping out of school. Problem summaries and promising approaches for addressing each of these reasons that youth leave the educational mainstream are provided.

McGiboney, G. (2001, March). Truants welcome here: An alternative school designed specially for truants is boosting student attendance. *American School Board Journal*, 43-45.

This article describes an alternative school for truant student only (not those were expelled for behavioral reasons) in DeKalb County, GA. Enrollment was 51 at the time of the writing. A full-day program, with curriculum designed to meet the special needs of truant students is offered. Although the per-pupil cost is higher than average, the results are striking - a 97% attendance rate.

Mogulescu, S. & H. J. Segal (2002). *Approaches to truancy prevention*. Vera Institute of Justice.

This paper describes seven truancy-specific programs identified by the Youth Justice Program as part of their effort to learn about effective approaches to truancy prevention. The programs fall into one of three categories: Prevention and Early Intervention; Alternatives to Filing a PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) Petition -- Diversion from Family Court; After a PINS Petition has been Filed -- Alternative Court Sanctions. All the programs functioned in a collaborative, multi-agency fashion and aimed to keep kids in school by providing services and support systems. The latter should minimize reliance on the juvenile justice system.

Mulrine, A. (2001, September 10). The kindergarten of crime. *U.S. News & World Report*, 51.

This brief news report provides some startling statistics on the attendance problem in a few major urban areas, along with some of the consequences school districts and courts are using to combat the problem. It has a little information about the link between truancy and crime, and between truancy and achievement in a few neighborhoods. Some interesting data, no literature review or study reports.

Nessel, P. A. (1999). Teen courts and law-related education. *ERIC Digest*. (Report No. EDO-SO-1999-2). Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED429031)

This brief article describes four models of school-based courts used as voluntary alternatives to juvenile court for status offenses and minor cases of delinquency. The courts offer law-related education to teens who serve as jurors, defense council, and sometimes judges. Some evidence indicates youths sentenced by teen courts have lower rates of recidivism.

Reglin, G. L. (1997, July/August). Mentoring and tutoring help (MATH) program fights truancy. *The Clearing House*, 70, 319-324.

The Truancy Court Conference Program is a community effort enlisting courts, a partnering agency, and schools, which was established in 1993 in Florida. The article describes the continuum of interventions provided by the program from the process of identifying the truant youth, an invitation to parents and youth to a voluntary conference held with a judge, a meeting with the lead agency (usually a counseling center), and finally a case management meeting to determine if additional services are needed or if a CINS (Child In Need of Services) petition should be filed with the court for unimproved attendance. The article goes on to describe the MATH Program (Mentoring and Tutoring Help), which is a year-long curriculum that links truants with mentors in the community. The article cites facts and outcomes from the MATH program and provides steps for replication.

Riley, P. & McDaniel, J. (1999, September). Youth out of the education mainstream: A North Carolina profile. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, OJJDP.

This paper reviews North Carolina's experience with the Youth Out of the Education Mainstream (YOEM) initiative. Ten alternative YOEM schools had been opened since 1997. The schools are attended by students who had difficulties in at least one of five categories: 1) fear of attending school, 2) suspensions and expulsions, 3) truancy, 4) dropping out, and 5) students who were reintegrated from juvenile justice settings. In order to encourage truant students to attend school more regularly, several YOEM schools provided transportation to and from school, and others initiated extended hours so that students' work schedules could be accommodated. The schools also implemented systems of positive reinforcement, issuing awards, and holding banquets for successful students. Ten lessons learned about

implementation are included.

Swope, C. (1995). Tracking down truants. *Governing*, 8, 52-53.

The author reviews the experiences of several US school jurisdictions as they tried tough approaches to reducing truancy. Programs discussed in the article include Milwaukee's Truancy Abatement and Burglary Suppression Centers (TABS), the practice of sentencing parents to attend school with their children in Paterson NJ, and Wisconsin's Learnfare program, that docks the welfare payments of habitually truant teens, among others. The drawbacks of tough programs are also discussed.

Tischelle, G. (2002, April 4). Battling truancy with wireless devices: Wireless technology may make it harder for students in Boston to play hooky. *Information Week*.

A four-paragraph description of new technology that will allow Boston's attendance officers to access truant students' attendance records from wireless phones while in the field. The system will replace the huge paper printouts the officers carried previously.

Twaite, J. A., & Lampert, D. T. (1997). Outcomes of mandated preventive services programs for homeless and truant children: A follow-up study. *Social Work*, 42(1), 11-18.

Two mandated preventive programs, the Homeless Families Project and the Truancy Diversion Program were studied to determine the following as five predictors of successful outcomes: intensity of parental involvement in the program, parental attendance, severity of child's pathology, parental understanding of child's pathology, and the extent to which parents provided their child with adequate structure, stimulation, and warmth. One hundred case files were reviewed and rated by social workers on these predictors. Criterion measures included compliance with termination plans and the child's adjustment six months after termination. Results indicated that the criterion measures were significantly correlated with four of the predictive factors.

U.S. Department of Education in Cooperation with the U.S Department of Justice. (1996, July). *Manual to combat truancy*. Retrieved November 13, 2002 from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Truancy>.

The US Department of Education collaborated with the US Department of Justice to develop this manual to address the problem of truancy. At the time of the writing of this article there was not a lot of national data on truancy, but the article cites local statistics on truancy trends in different cities. A "Users Guide" to deterring truancy is then given, that includes parental involvement, firm sanctions for truants, meaningful incentives for youth and parents, ongoing school-based prevention programs, and involvement of law enforcement. Finally, selected model truancy programs are described.

White, M. D., Fyfe, J. J., Campbell, S. P. & Goldkamp, J. S. (2001). The school-police partnership: Identifying at-risk youth through a truant recovery program. *Evaluation Review*, 25(5), 507-532.

This study is based on a random sample of 178 youths who were picked up in truancy sweeps by the Richmond, CA police department in the Fall semester of 1997 and brought to the police-school Truant Recovery Program in the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The program has several key components. Truant youths are picked up by the police and taken to the Student Welfare and Attendance Office, from which their parents are called to attend a meeting. Students may be sent to a School Attendance Review Board, or to the Suspension Alternative Class. The study is descriptive in nature; there is no control

group, and it is not intended to be an evaluation of the Truancy Recovery Program. The authors compare school attendance, grades, disciplinary incidents, and contact with the police during the 3 years prior to the truancy sweep, with the 1.5 years afterward. In general, the students picked up in the sweep were struggling. They have missed many days of school, have below-average grades, and 7% had been arrested prior to the sweep, despite a median age of 15. Improvement was seen in school attendance and behavioral incidents after program participation, but grades remained about the same, and numbers of arrests increased.

Wilson K. (1993). Tough on truants. *American School Board Journal*, 180, 43-46.

The superintendent of the Tulsa County schools in OK describes changes in school attendance that occurred when the schools began uniformly sending truants to court. The article includes descriptions of eight steps needed to create an effective court system. She claims the first 200 court cases resulted in 400 students returning to school. The 648 cases filed between 11/89 and 8/92 resulted in a 45% reduction in the dropout rate, and a drop in daytime crime. OK law requires school attendance until age 18, and the court imposes fines for truancy.

♦ Truancy Intervention

Bage, M. (1989). Five agencies close ranks to help kids avoid truancy. *Executive Educator*, 11(2), 16-17.

Bage provides a description of the impetus for and the process of forming a multiagency coalition to deal with truancy in the Hopewell (Virginia) Public Schools. The author presents 3 instances in which the process has made an identifiable difference by providing agencies, particularly the court, more information on which to base decisions.

Bell, A. J., Rosen, L. A., & Dynlacht, D. (1994). Truancy intervention. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 27(3), 203-211.

This article is a review of papers published between 1975 and 1991 regarding the psychopathology of truant behavior, implications of truancy and truancy interventions. The authors concluded that intervention effectiveness could be increased by using a multimodal approach that targets the student, the school and the family. They describe what a model program might look like.

Eastwood, P. (1989). Attendance is important: Combating truancy in the secondary school. *NASSP Bulletin*, 73(516), 28-31.

After describing the characteristics of the typical truant, the author delineates the components of effective attendance policies and discusses effective remedial programs. The main elements of effective attendance policies are: expectations and outcome that are clear and well-publicized; everyone consistently follows the policies; students are held responsible for their actions; and parents are involved. He concludes that schools need to take more control. There are no references for the information presented.

Jones, L. P., Harris, R., & Finnegan, D. (2002). School attendance demonstration project: An evaluation of a program to motivate public assistance teens to attend and complete school in an urban school district. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 12(2), 222-237.

This article reports the results of an evaluation of The School Attendance Demonstration Project (SADP), which was a collaboration of the San Diego County Department of Social

Services and the San Diego Unified School District. The program focused on 16 to 18-year-olds who received Aid for Dependent Children. Youth were randomly assigned to either the control or experimental group. Those in the experimental group were subjected to a financial penalty if their attendance fell below 80% minimum for 2 consecutive months and did not attend an orientation for services. Those in the control group were not financially penalized nor did they receive services. The difference in graduation rates (57.5% vs. 55.4%) was not significant. Analysis of data related to attendance found that 3% to 9% more experimental students met the attendance rule the months following the startup of the project. The analysis suggested that females, Hispanics and younger students had more difficulty meeting the 80% rule. Those in two parent households did better meeting the rule. There was also an indication that the extent of presenting problems negatively impacted attendance.

Kozinetz, C. A. (1995). Using administrative data to identify elementary schools at increased risk for student absences. *Journal Of School Health*, 65 (5), 262-264.

This paper reports the results of a study done in Texas designed to examine the feasibility of using administrative databases in school-based research and to identify school-level variables associated with absence to help define health services and policy for schools. The unit of study for this project was the school. Correlations between the absence rate and mobility rate, percent African-American, percent approved for free/reduced lunch and percent eligible for exceptional education were positive; those between absence rate and percent promoted, percent participating in gifted programs, percent white and percent bilingual were negative. The author concluded that it was possible to identify schools at-risk for high truancy to receive interventions.

Mogulescu, S. & H. J. Segal (2002). *Approaches to truancy prevention*. Vera Institute of Justice.

This paper describes seven truancy-specific programs identified by the Youth Justice Program as part of their effort to learn about effective approaches to truancy prevention. The programs fall into one of three categories: Prevention and Early Intervention; Alternatives to Filing a PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) Petition -- Diversion from Family Court; After a PINS Petition has been Filed -- Alternative Court Sanctions. All the programs functioned in a collaborative, multi-agency fashion and aimed to keep kids in school by providing services and support systems. The latter should minimize reliance on the juvenile justice system.

Quinn, L. (1995). Using threats of poverty to promote school attendance: Implications of Wisconsin's Learnfare experiment for families. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 1(2), 5-16.

This article reports the results of an examination of the impact of Wisconsin's Learnfare experiment on the level of truancy of teenagers. Learnfare, initiated in 1987, denied Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to families whose teenagers are not regularly attending school. A study released in 1992, showed that there were no positive impacts on school attendance in any of the six school districts evaluated. Further, in the largest district, Milwaukee Public Schools, there was a measurable worsening of attendance.

Waddington, C. (1997). The use of legal proceedings in cases of non-attendance at school: Perceptions of education welfare officers. *Educational Research*, 39(3), 333-341.

This article is a description of the British process for prosecuting parents of non-attending students and the pilot study done to consider its use, particularly regarding the views and practices of the Education Welfare Officers who are responsible for initiating these actions. This is only part of their duties regarding their interactions with families and being involved in

these legal proceedings were felt by some to have the potential for negatively impacting their more welfare-based work with these individuals. The decision to actually file is mostly subjective and a last resort when other interventions do not seem to be working. Perceptions were that threat of prosecution was more effective than actual prosecution, however, any improvement was short-lived.

Welsh, W. N., Jenkins, P. H., & Harris, P. (1999). Reducing minority overrepresentation In juvenile justice: Results of community based delinquency prevention in Harrisburg. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 36(1), 87-110.

This article reports the results of an evaluation of 5 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania community-based programs called Youth Enhancement Services (YES) designed to reduce arrest and rearrest rates for minority youth by addressing risk factors at the individual, group, family, school, and community levels. Effects on recidivism, academic performance, school dropout rates and truancy were examined in a quasi-experimental design comparing 3 program attendance groups (none, low, high). Data from the 5 centers were combined resulting in a sample of 191 youth. Analyses found reduced recidivism, but no improvement in GPA and short-lived improvement for dropout rates and truancy.

Evidence-Based Prevention Programs

◆ Programs Mentioned in This Event

Check & Connect

<http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/>

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

<http://www.idra.org/ccvyp/default.htm>

Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Program ®

<http://www.coe.uh.edu/cmcd/default.cfm>

Jacksonville United Against Truancy

<http://www.coj.net/Departments/State+Attorneys+Office+/Jacksonville+United+Against+Truancy/default.htm>

King County Superior Court Truancy Reduction Program/The Becca Bill

<http://www.metrokc.gov/kcsc/juv/truancy.htm>

Louisville Truancy Court Diversion Program

Jefferson County Family Court

Judicial Center

700 West Jefferson Street, Suite 220

Louisville, KY 40202-4730

Judge Joan Byer (joanb@mail.aoc.state.ky.us)

Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, Houston, Tex.

<http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/mayor/antigang/>

Sacramento City Unified School District: Truancy Reduction and Dropout

Prevention Program

http://www.scusd.edu/sfss/standards_of_behavior/trdp_4.htm

School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Biennial/95-96/eval/129-97.pdf>

School Dropout Prevention Program

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/dropout/index.html>

The START (School Tardiness and Attendance Review Team) Program

Christine Shaw, Truancy Prevention Program Coordinator, (617) 679-6555

<http://www.projectalliance.org/>

Truancy Reduction Demonstration Project

<http://www.truancyprevention.org/programsPage.html>

◆ **Federal Program Review Web Sites**

Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, U.S. Department of Education

www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/panel.html?exp=0

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

modelprograms.samhsa.gov/

◆ **National Program Review Reports**

Choosing the Tools: A Review of Selected K-12 Health Education Curricula

notes.edc.org/HHD/products.nsf/products/87

Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings of Positive Youth Development Programs

aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PositiveYouthDev99/index.htm

Preventing Mental Disorders in School-Age Children: A Review of the Effectiveness of Prevention Programs

www.prevention.psu.edu/CMHSxs.htm

Resilience: Status of the Research and Research-Based Programs

www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/5-28resilience.asp

Safe and Sound: An Education Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs

www.casel.org/progrevfr.htm

Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies

www.drugstrategies.org/

School Health: Findings from Evaluated Programs
www.ashaweb.org/

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