

New Attendance Law Work Session

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Christy asked three questions to the groups. The responses are listed below:

Question #1

What are districts already doing? What are some interventions that work?

- Working closely with the juvenile courts
- Truancy Boards
- Automated Calls
- 2 day, 3 day, 5 day, etc... letters for unexcused
- Letters for all absences – excused included
- Informal Attendance agreements
- Developing relationships with local Doctors, clinics, etc...working to help them develop better “return to school” notes such as being more specific about times seen in the dr. office and when the student is released to return to school
- Chronic absentee letters
- Having mental health facilities come into the schools to see students – keeping students from missing a day for a counseling session
- Personal phone calls and home visits
- Positive attendance incentives – both for good attendance and improved attendance
- Attendance informational signs/notices at Dr. offices
- Use the state attendance toolkit – letters to all stakeholders
- Make attendance a big part of Open House each year with various speakers address chronic absenteeism as well as truancy
- “Learning Lunch” – invite parents to school to eat lunch and discuss their student’s attendance
- Perfect Attendance Awards
- Set expectations for teachers to be a part of attendance accountability – call parents when students miss their class
- Use school counselors to address absenteeism with those students deemed at risk for chronic absences
- Health Connect – bring them into the school
- Develop support teams within the school
- Use the state data provided on your student chronic absentee list
- Academic Pep Rallies – include attendance
- Bulletin boards, stamps for attendance awards, movies, cash, banner – Strive to Arrive, etc...
- 2 calls – one automated / one personal
- Student Attendance Review teams
- Document all attendance activities in SIS package
- Use Social Workers and SRO for home visits – leave door knockers and take picture for documentation

- Engage community leaders in your attendance efforts – Mayor, Chamber of Commerce, Police Department, Juvenile Justice, DCS etc...ask for their help
- Tap into all resources available in your district
- Parent Education
- Attendance Awareness week/Month with positive rewards

Question #2

What can you add to what you are already doing with existing resources?

- New job assignments for existing personnel
- SRO visits
- Principal home visits
- Wake-up calls – school messenger
- Get counselors more involved in the attendance of students
- Have teachers call home
- Send texts to parents as opposed to calling – they may answer those more than phone calls
- Better communication with teachers on attendance issues
- Get Consolidated School Health/nurses involved in working with students and their families who are chronically absent
- Use a mentor system...teachers watch over several students
- Check in system where students check in each day with a faculty or staff member at school
- Use Health Department, other community agencies as resources and as help in educating students to the importance of being at school
- Add chronic absenteeism to the other groups of At-Risk students that receive extra help at school
- Use Best Practices when dealing with attendance
- What to do with excused absences??
- Dr. notes – communicate new attendance laws with the medical community
- Limit parent notes
- Don't start over with parent notes if a student was chronically absent the previous year
- Have parents sign a "Release of Information" so the school can discuss the child's absences with the Dr. and the health provider can provide information to the school
- Create a "template" for Dr. notes that will provide the school with the necessary information
- Send chronic illness letters to parents
- Use Family Engagement money on parent education on attendance
- Gift certificate to a family to a restaurant for a student with improving attendance
- Add attendance to positive behavior rewards
- Follow up meetings after Tier I interventions
- Student advisory groups that are comprised of at risk students
- Look at your school climate
- Change our attitudes – we want all our students present every day

Question #3

How will you get buy-in and implementation with the Juvenile Court?

- Create a judicial task force – meet with DA, Superintendent, Police Chief, School Board Chair, School Board Attorney, Juvenile Judge, ect...to have input on the new Tiered approach in your district
- The community needs to see that all community players are on board
- Truancy support meetings
- Letter from DA
- Letter from Juvenile Judge
- Meet with the Judge – what have we done in the past/what do we need to do differently
- Communicate – work together
- Partnership between the schools and the court
- Work with law enforcement BEFORE you have a need for them
- There may be a divide in rural and urban areas in the school's relationship with the juvenile judge
- Have meeting with the juvenile office and work together to plan your new procedures