

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Truancy Committee

	Name ...	Representing ...
1	Senator JoNell Bakke	Legislators
2	Senator Dwight Cook	Legislators
3	Rep Jerry Kelsh	Legislators
4	Bev Nielson	School Boards Association
5	Doug Johnson(CHAIR)	Council of Educational Leaders
6	Greg Burns	ND Education Association
7	Gary Gronberg / Bob Marthaller / Valerie Fischer	Dept of Public Instruction
8	Lisa Bjergaard	Dept of Juvenile Services
9	Bob Parisien	Indian Affairs
10	Brett Anderson	School Resource Officer Bismarck Police Department
11	Jeffrey. R Ubben	State Attorney's
12	Hope Rush	Social Workers
13	Wayne Fox	Principals (elem)
14	Mark Andresen	Principals (hs)
15	Scott Halvorson	Adult Education (retired)
16	Carrie Grosz	Private providers

The successful* comprehensive commonalities to addressing truancy can be identified as follows

State & District Infrastructure

- Uniform statewide definition of truancy
- Uniform statewide reporting
- Consistently enforced attendance policy and dissemination plan (students, parents, staff, law enforcement, community agencies)
- Regular monitoring of attendance patterns by a team
- School-parent-community collaboration
- Staff PD on truancy predictors, warning signs, prevention, intervention
- Comprehensive educational programs: early childhood, alternative middle/high school, 21st Century/after school programming, Career & Tech Ed offerings

Prevention

- Meaningful parental / family engagement and involvement
- Incentives and sanctions for students and parents
- Focus on school transition years
- Keep kids connected to a peer group
- BLST / Counselor referrals for at risk students
- Academic tutoring /social mentoring
- Community & business involvement and public awareness campaigns
- Consider unique remedies (i.e., second morning bus run, closed campus)

Intervention & Referral

- Consistent consequences
- A school re-entry plan is warranted (after even a day).
- Parents are called at home / at work if their child did not attend school that day
- Consider the full range of available sanctions
- Academic tutoring / social mentoring
- Community Service / Service Learning
- Referrals to social service agencies & juvenile justice programs

Program and Policy Evaluation

- Evaluate building / district data and modify, as necessary, truancy reduction efforts

Overall, truancy programs must ...

- Be comprehensive, consistent and persevering
- View children in the context of their families.
- Be long-term in preventative orientation with a clear mission and evolve over time.
- Incorporate a system of data collection and analysis to evaluate program outcome and performance.
- Be directed by a dedicated community coalition.

* that showed positive gains over a three year period of time

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

SB 2217 Truancy Committee

Recommendations

Recommendation #1:

Introduction of legislation (2011 session) for common definition of truancy for all students K-12.

Truancy is **any** unexcused absence by a student under the age of 16 to include:

Three (3) consecutive unexcused days within a semester; or

Six (6) one half unexcused days within a semester (elementary school); or

Twenty one (21) class hours, as defined by each LEA.

The truancy determination is then documented as **unexcused** by administration or its designee.

Excused absence: any student absent from class/school with a written/verbal excuse by the parent/guardian or administrator/school.

Each LEA determines number of truanancies before notifying parents, credit loss and disposition of student. Each LEA can develop more stringent policies.

Rationale:

A common definition will create consistent reporting and data. Secondly, a common definition will allow all districts to effectively communicate the same attendance expectations and policy to staff, students, parents and law enforcement/court system.

Recommendation #2:

The ND Department of Public Instruction will adopt ndSLEDs (North Dakota Statewide Longitudinal Data System) as the common truancy data collection process for all LEAs using PowerSchool.

Rationale:

Collecting and reporting consistent data will create an accurate 'picture' of the truancy issue in North Dakota and allow LEA and SEA partners to further identify commonalities for targeted intervention. ndSLEDs and ND ITD have agreed to make the necessary changes to the PowerSchool system to create a uniform data collection process.

Recommendation #3:

With appropriated state funds, identify best practices for truancy prevention/interventions, develop training protocol and provide collaborative training to LEA teams using the REA structure.

Rationale:

School buildings and districts will benefit from training as to effective research-based truancy prevention strategies and intervention programs which can be implemented at the elementary and secondary levels. SEA follow-up and review of the data will identify the most effective programs for duplication and support.

Recommendation #4:

Seek funding for LEAs to address truancy

Rationale:

With the loss of federal Title IV – Safe & Drug Free School funding, local efforts to address truancy may require funds for personnel and programs which are no longer funded.

Recommendation #5:

Further study is warranted of the 1) current North Dakota Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) system for truancy reporting and 2) city and county court referral systems and identifies further recommendations for legislative review and action.

Rationale:

Additional time and a wider group can explore the current system in both the BIE and court systems to make recommendations as to strengths, challenges and recommended changes. Consistency across the state will promote change in practice and policy.

Additionally:

DPI will continue to serve as the depository of annual truancy, dropout and graduation data and provide a report to the legislative interim committee, LEAs and education partners.

Rationale:

The DPI STARS system (and pending ndSLEDs) is in place to collect truancy data from all LEAs and is able to generate multiple reports and analysis data.

Include collection of truancy, dropout and graduation data as part of LEA self assessment/school improvement and/or accreditation process.

Rationale:

Requiring schools to collect, review and analysis reliable truancy data as part of the overall school/district improvement and accreditation process will enable schools to adequately address truancy issues unique to buildings, grades, practice and policy. Local strategies to address truancy will result in ownership and remedies in collaboration with other school/district initiatives.