



# Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

## Session Three

### *Establishing School Attendance Teams*

#### **Presentation Description**

Module three gives schools practical tips on establishing a multi-disciplinary team to manage the school's chronic absence strategy.

#### **Participant Goals**

- Educators will learn the role and responsibilities of an attendance team.
- Educators will receive a description of data that an attendance team would review.
- Educators will learn how to build a multi-disciplinary attendance team.

#### **Facilitation**

Have the participants review the module and reflections. Each reflection is designed to help participants further their understanding and learning of key concepts, frameworks, and strategies for reducing chronic absence.



*My role is messaging constantly. But talking isn't enough. When teachers could see the list of students by name and hear what the attendance team has done in each case, it shifted their attitudes."*

- **Nima Tahai**, Garfield E.S., Oakland, Calif.



10/20/18

## Attendance & Truancy Among Virginia Students

### Module 3: Establishing School Attendance Teams

#### The Purpose

- This PowerPoint serves as No. 3 in a series of modules designed to equip Virginia school divisions to reduce truancy and absenteeism.
- This module provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of an attendance team, the type of data the team should review, and suggested members.

#### Virginia Absenteeism & Truancy Professional Development Series

1. Understanding Chronic Absenteeism
2. Learning What Works to Reduce Chronic Absence
3. Establishing School Attendance Teams
4. Using Data to Drive Action
5. Messaging Attendance
6. Integrating Attendance In Parent Engagement
7. Utilizing Parent-Teacher Conferences to Talk with Families about Attendance
8. Recognizing Good and Improved Attendance
9. Providing Personalized Early Outreach
10. Identifying barriers
11. Creating opportunities for peer learning
12. Engaging Community Partners
13. State Attendance Laws and Regulations

### Warm Up - Reflection One

According to, “Analytic Culture in the US Intelligence Community” by Dr. Rob Johnson, “Successful teams have very specific organization and structure, and clearly stated goals that are shared by each team member. Effective teams have cohesion, communication, and cooperation.”

Take a moment and reflect on a team that you are part of. What are your team’s goals? How does your team communicate? Do the members cooperate with one another?

#### Warm Up Notes

## Reflection Two

List 5 things that makes a team dysfunctional. Now list 5 things that helps a team be successful. List areas of strength and concern in your school or division.

### Attendance Teams: Shifting Paradigms

#### Old Practice:

- Reacted to lagging indicators often after many absences had added up.
- Monitored only unexcused absences.
- Focused on individual students and their families.
- Offered punitive responses.



A mother is led away in handcuffs during a 2011 "tranny hunt" in Orange County, California. MICHAEL GOLDEN/GETTY IMAGES/CORBIS OUTLINE, VIA ZUMA PRESS

### Attendance Teams: Organizing the School Attendance Strategy

#### New Practice:

- Goal and action oriented.
- Coordinates the school's multi-tiered strategy to reduce chronic absence.
- Uses qualitative and quantitative data to understand the attendance challenges at their school.
- Uses trend data to identify which sub-groups of students are most vulnerable to absenteeism.
- Connects families and students to needed resources.
- Monitors progress.

## Reflection Notes

\*Additional information can be found on the last page of this guide

## Reflection Three

Reflect on a student who you know was missing school. Think of a time that several students were experiencing a similar barrier to attendance. How could a school staff member or community partner have assisted with developing a solution to the problem?

### Who Should Be on the Attendance Team?

Attendance Team Meetings should be led by the Principal and include the following members:

- School social worker
- Nurse
- School counselor
- Attendance clerk / School Secretary
- Teacher (engage on an as-needed basis, related to specific students, classrooms, or grades)
- District staff (engage as needed, to identify resources and partnerships)
- Parent liaison (engage as needed, focus on whole school strategies for all of the students and targeted strategies for groups of students who have shared barriers to attendance)
- Site-based community partners (engage as needed, focus on whole school strategies for all of the students and targeted strategies for groups of students who have shared barriers to attendance)

### Tips on Involving Community Partners

- Population data can be shared with community partners, e.g. grade level, demographic, and geographic data.
- Community partners should be invited to meetings that are focused on schoolwide and population strategies.
- Attendance team meetings can be organized to isolate discussion about individual students to the appropriate school staff.

## Reflection Notes

\*Additional information can be found on the last page of this guide

## Reflection Four

Do your school student support teams currently utilize both qualitative and quantitative data? What are some of the underlying causes that contribute to absenteeism in your school? Who are the students most affected by this issue? How has your school sought to address the barriers to attendance?

### What Data Should the Attendance Team Review?

Quantitative data include:

- Who is most likely to be chronically absent?
- What are the trends?
- Which grades are most affected?
- Which student populations are most affected?
- Who are the students who are at-risk for chronic absence based on a history of chronic absence, or some other evidence of vulnerability?

### What Data Should the Attendance Team Review?

Qualitative factors include:

- Why are the students chronically absent? Learn the story behind the data.
- How much do excused and health-related reasons contribute to absenteeism for your school or division?
- What supports and services do students and families need? Are they using the services and supports offered? Are these supports making an impact?
- How much do suspensions contribute to absenteeism for your school or school division?

### Reflection Notes

## Reflection Five

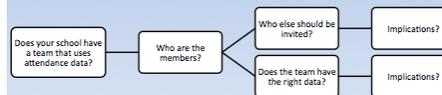
Does your school have a team that uses attendance data? Who are the members? Who else should be invited? Does the team have the right data? Implications?

### Attendance Team: Roles and Responsibilities

Assign team member roles

- Facilitator
- Note taker
- Agenda setter
- Data coordinator
- Time keeper

### Attendance Team Exercise



### Reflection Notes

# Learn More

Before moving on with the additional modules, we would like to encourage you to learn more about this issue. Specifically, please consider reading:

- **What Makes an Effective Attendance Team?** Attendance Teams are successful when they involve the right people and maintain a clear sense of purpose and responsibilities. School and district administrators should determine, based upon local conditions, if a new entity needs to be established to monitor attendance data and practice or if the work can be successfully incorporated into the responsibilities of an existing committee. For more tips refer to this handout: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Attendance-Data-Teams-7-18-13.pdf>
- **Develop Programmatic Responses to Systemic Barriers**  
If large numbers of students are affected by chronic absence, that suggests systemic barriers. Identifying the barriers to attendance can indicate the appropriate solutions, whether that involves establishing uniform closets, improving access to health care, launching walking school buses, providing tutoring, offering mentoring, developing morning or afterschool care and other approaches. Once you identify populations of students who are more vulnerable to chronic absence it is important to begin examining what factors might be affecting attendance. This guide discusses how you can use quantitative and qualitative data to inform your understanding. It includes a matrix to help you analyze factors that contribute to chronic absence, as well as what assets might help in addressing the issue. <http://www.attendanceworks.org/what-works/develop-programmatic-responses-to-systemic-barriers/>