

# School Information

Among developed countries, the United States ranks 18<sup>th</sup> in high school graduation rates (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2007). As school attendance is one of the greatest indicators of whether a student will graduate or not, it is essential to focus energies on engaging students and parents around the importance of school attendance. High school graduates are more likely to live longer (Muennig, 2005), engage in community activities, such as voting and volunteering, while less likely to be teen parents (Haveman et al., 2001), to commit crimes (Raphael, 2004), or use public services, such as food stamps or housing assistance (Garfinkel et al., 2005), as they will have a greater opportunity to obtain a job with a livable wage. For that reason, efforts to increase a student's attendance are not only a benefit to them as an individual, but to the community as well.

## What Does Truancy Diversion Mean in Scott County?

The diversion process begins with the initial efforts between student, family and school. Schools who have formal responses and interventions geared towards engaging students and families on the importance of school attendance have higher rates of changing the behavior. Therefore, the initial school response is stressed as a critical point in any successful attempt to increase a student's school attendance. (See Diversion Process in the forms section for specific expectations the school's response should include).

Once the school has followed the diversion process, including completing the School Support Plan, they may refer to the Scott County Attorney's Office by submitting the Offense Report (forms section) when those efforts have been unsuccessful in increasing student attendance. The Scott County Attorney's Office will screen the referral for necessary documentation and if approved will forward it to the appropriate truancy worker. The truancy worker will offer the student/family an opportunity to participate voluntarily in the Scott County's Truancy Diversion, to develop a plan to increase school attendance. If the student/family decline the opportunity to work voluntarily with the assigned truancy worker the case may be referred for court intervention by the County Attorney's Office.

## WHAT MIGHT A TRUANCY WORKER DO?

- Develop a diversion agreement based on the strengths and needs of the student/family.
- Assist with referrals for appropriate assessments/services/supports.
- Monitor school attendance.
- Coordinate with school staff regarding ongoing attendance concerns or progress.
- Meet with student/family at least once per month while attendance concerns exist.
- Discuss alternative education or treatment options that might address specific needs of student/family.
- Refer to the Truancy Diversion Team to screen for possible court intervention as needed.

## WHAT ARE THE DESIRED OUTCOMES OF DIVERSION SERVICES?

- Increased school attendance.
- Improved student/family relationships with school staff.
- Increased understanding of what factors are affecting the student's attendance and what options there are to build on strengths and address concerns.

### Truancy Worker Assigned School Districts

**Jennifer Nimps:** Belle Plaine, New Prague & Prior Lake

**Lindsay Chlan:** Shakopee, Jordan & Savage/Burnsville

**\*Online Schools, South West Metro Education Cooperative and Lakeville Area Schools will be distributed as they are accepted dependent on truancy worker case load. If student is currently working with a case manager or probation officer within Scott County that worker will oversee the truancy referral.**

### Links to Forms

- [Diversion Process](#)
- [School Support Plan](#)
- [Truancy School Cheat Sheet](#)
- [Resource List](#)
- [Truancy Brochure](#)
- [MHC – Truancy Group Brochure](#)
- [MHC – Truancy Group Referral](#)
- [Scott County Truancy Offense Report](#)
- [Truancy Newsletter](#)
- [Dropout Technical Report \(2007\)](#)
- [OJJDP Article \(2001\)](#)

### Linked Website Resources

**Statistic Brain** <http://www.statisticbrain.com/>

This website will give statistics on many different areas that are current within the last couple of years.

**Alliance for Excellent Education**

[http://www.all4ed.org/about\\_the\\_crisis/Students/Literacy/Issue+Briefs](http://www.all4ed.org/about_the_crisis/Students/Literacy/Issue+Briefs)

This is an article that speaks specifically to the benefits to the community/society when youth graduate from high school and the specific risk areas to the community when youth do not graduate.

**Attendance Works** <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

This website gives a variety of information on positive ways to increase attendance and how that benefits student, school and community. Attendance Works "Advancing Student

Success By Reducing Chronic Absence" (found within the above website) Gives sample Facebook Page posts recommended for everyday in September with many great links to specific tool kits, handouts or interactive links for parents/students/teachers to access regarding increasing attendance.

**Get Schooled** <https://getschooled.com/>

This website is aimed at helping students take control over their attendance with interactive tools/polls and videos.

**National Center for Education Statistics** <http://nces.ed.gov/>

The National Center for Education Statistics is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education.

### **Types of programs that research supports increase attendance and work towards decreasing school dropout rates**

<http://acrossages.org/>

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

### **References**

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2008* (Paris: Author, 2008).

P. Muennig, —Health Returns to Education Interventions, ll paper prepared for the symposium Social Costs of Inadequate Education, October 24–25, 2005, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

R. Haveman, B. Wolfe, and K. Wilson, —Childhood Events and Circumstances Influencing High School Completion, ll *Demography* 28, no. 1 (2001).

S. Raphael, —The Socioeconomic Status of Black Males: The Increasing Importance of Incarceration ll (Berkley, CA: Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, 2004).

13 I. Garfinkel, B. Kelly, and J. Waldfogel, —Public Assistance Programs: How Much Could be Saved with Improved Education?, ll paper prepared for the symposium Social Costs of Inadequate Education, October 24–25, 2005, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.