



**202:
Truancy: Prevention and Intervention**

Instructor Guide

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**For:
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Resource Center
University of Pittsburgh,
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**Agenda for 1-Day Workshop on
Truancy: Prevention and Intervention**

Day One

Estimated Time	Content	Page
25 minutes	Section I: Welcome and Introductions	1
2 hours	Section II: Assessment and Understanding	4
3 hours, 5 minutes	Section III: Prevention and Intervention Strategies	11
30 minutes	Section IV: Summary and Evaluation	19

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section I: Welcome and Introductions

Estimated Length of Time:

25 minutes

Section Objectives:

- ✓ Understand the workshop rationale, learning objectives, and agenda
- ✓ Become familiar with the other participants
- ✓ Articulate their own learning objectives

Quality Service Review Indicators:

- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 1a: Engagement Efforts
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 1b: Role and Voice

Method of Presentation:

Lecture and large group discussion

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Blank Flipchart Paper
- ✓ Flipchart Stands
- ✓ Idea Catchers
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ LCD Projector
- ✓ LCD Projector Screen
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Name tents
- ✓ Trainer-Prepared Flipchart: Parking Lot
- ✓ Trainer-Prepared Flipchart: What's In It For me (WIIFM)
- ✓ Handout #1: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention: PowerPoint Presentation
- ✓ Handout #2: Agenda/Idea Catcher
- ✓ PowerPoint Presentation:
 - **Slide #1: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention**
 - **Slide #2: Learning Objectives**
 - **Slide #3: Competencies**
 - **Slide #4: Competencies cont'd**
 - **Slide #5: Agenda**

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section I: Welcome and Introductions

Step 1: Introductions (Lecture, Large Group Discussion)

(15 minutes)

Before participants arrive, display **PowerPoint Slide #1 (Truancy: Prevention and Intervention)**, which is the introductory slide for the training.

Whenever possible, start the training session promptly at 9:00 AM.

As participants arrive, welcome them and ask them to complete their name tents following the format below:

- Name (Center)
- County (Top-Right Corner)
- Position (Top-Left Corner)
- Number of Years with the Agency (Bottom-Left Corner)
- One way learning about truancy can support the work they do with children and families (Bottom-Right Corner)

When the name and four corners are complete, ask participants to place their name tent in front of them.

After all participants have arrived and completed their name tents, introduce yourself including your name, area of expertise, current position, years of experience, and any other information related to the content.

Ask the participants to introduce themselves to the large group using the information they have written on their name tents.

As the participants share the one way learning about truancy can support the work they do with children and families, write these thoughts on the *What's In It For Children and Families?* (WIIFCF) flip chart. Tell participants that at the end of the training they will review the *WIIFCF* flip chart to ensure that all of the concepts/questions have been addressed. Create a *Parking Lot* for those items that will not be addressed in the training. Explain to participants that the items posted on the *Parking Lot* are items that may not be addressed in this training; however, you will direct them to resources that can meet their needs.

Step 2: Training Room Guidelines (Lecture)

(5 minutes)

Discuss the following training room guidelines:

- The 15-Minute Rule
- Training schedule – 9:00 to 4:00 with breaks/lunch

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

- Provide constructive and motivational feedback
- Show respect
- Take risks
- Practice makes permanent
- Focus on learning – Cell phones on vibrate & only contact office for emergencies

Step 3:

(5 minutes)

Trainer Note: The *Agenda* and *Idea Catcher* have been combined on one handout to help participants immediately capture interesting concepts that arise when you train a given section.

Refer participants to their workshop packets and review the competencies, learning objectives, and agenda for the workshop using **PowerPoint Slide #2 (Learning Objectives)**, **PowerPoint Slide #3 (Competencies)**, **PowerPoint Slide #4 (Competencies Cont'd)** and **PowerPoint Slide # 5 (Agenda)**. Distribute **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher)**. Suggest that participants keep **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher)** easily accessible so that at the end of each section they can write down important points.

Having given participants an overview of the content, it is now time to move into the next section of the training.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section II: Assessment and Understanding

Estimated Length of Time:

2 hours

Corresponding Learning Objectives:

- ✓ Discuss the term truancy in Pennsylvania.
- ✓ Recognize the urgency of addressing truancy.

Section Objectives:

- ✓ Discuss the term truancy
- ✓ Discuss current statewide and local truancy statistics
- ✓ Identify risks associated with truancy

Quality Service Review Indicators:

- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 4: Assessment and Understanding

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, small group activity/discussion, large group discussion, and individual activity

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Blank Flipchart Paper
- ✓ Flipchart Stand
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ LCD Projector
- ✓ LCD Projector Screen
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Masking Tape
- ✓ **Handout #2: Agenda/Idea Catcher (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #3: Key Terms**
- ✓ **Handout #4: PA Truancy Data**
- ✓ **Handout #5: Case Studies**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Presentation:**
 - **Slide #6: Examining the Data**
 - **Slide #7: Categories of Factors Contributing to Truancy**
 - **Slide #8: Consequences of Truancy**
- ✓ **Appendix 1: PA Enhancing Assessments Toolkit**

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section II: Assessment and Understanding

Step 1: What is Truancy? (Large Group Discussion/Activity)

(15 minutes)

Have two flip charts at the front of the room, each labeled “Truancy.” Divide the class into two separate groups. Instruct participants to approach the flip charts and write a word or phrase that comes to mind when they hear the term “truancy.” After participants complete this task, lead a discussion about what was written and compare the lists.

Inform participants that this section will identify some key terms and statistics related to truancy.

Trainer Note: On November 3, 2016, Governor Tom Wolf signed into effect Act 138 of 2016, which provides further clarification on key terms related to truancy as well as amends the penalties associated with violating the compulsory attendance requirements. Act 138 of 2016 went into effect immediately and applies to the 2017-2018 school year and all subsequent school years.

Step 2: Compulsory School Attendance and Habitually Truant (Lecture)

(15 minutes)

Inform the participants that Act 138 of 2016 was signed into law for the purpose of improving school attendance and deterring truancy by utilizing a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues as early as possible, utilizing credible intervention techniques. The intent of the act is to preserve the unity of the family whenever possible as the underlying issues of truancy are addressed; to avoid the loss of housing, the possible entry of a child into foster care and other unintended consequences of disruption of an intact family unit; and to confine a person in parental relation to a child who is habitually truant only as a last resort and for a minimum amount of time. (The Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 Article 13, Section 1325, amended by Act 138 of 2016).

Explain that previously the definition of truancy in Pennsylvania was not a simple matter. While the Pennsylvania’s Public School Code was very clear regarding compulsory school age, it did not provide a specific definition for the word “truancy.” Act 138 of 2016 gives more clarity to the definition of truancy, habitually truant, and other terms. “Truant” is defined by “having incurred three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.” Additionally, a child cannot be considered truant if they are not of compulsory school age.

Distribute **Handout #3 (Key Terms)**. The term “compulsory school age” means “the period of a child’s life from the time the child’s parents elect to have the child enter school and which shall be no later than six (6) years of age until the child reaches eighteen (18) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.” (The Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 Article 13, Section 1326, amended June 28, 2019, P.L. 117, No. 16).

Also review the definition of “beginner” which is on **Handout #3 (Key Terms)**.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (Bush, 2010), most states have compulsory school age requirements ranging from age five years to age seven years.

Refer to **Handout #3 (Key Terms)** which includes the exceptions for violation of compulsory school attendance that are set forth in Article 13, Section 1330 of The PA Public School Code.

In Article 13, Section 1326, amended by Act 138 of 2016, The PA Public School Code provides a definition for "habitually truant" which means “six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance under this article.” The first notice of truancy is given after a child’s third unexcused absence.

Act 138 also provides more provisions on excuses from attending school and explains what constitutes as an excused or an unexcused absence. Refer again to **Handout #3 (Key Terms)**, which includes the definitions of excused and unexcused absences, as well as the recently amended excuses from attending school.

It is important to emphasize that each school district in Pennsylvania is responsible for determining the validity of excuses and developing clear written policies regarding absences. This provision means, for example, that if a doctor provides a written excuse, it is up to the school district and their policies to decide whether or not to accept the doctor’s excuse as valid. What is acceptable in one school district may not be acceptable in another school district. The school district’s policies should be accessible to students and parents, as well as to child welfare professionals. Such policies are typically found in student handbooks and policy and procedure manuals.

Trainer Note: This section previously covered a Basic Education Circular (BEC) titled *Compulsory Attendance and Truancy Education Plan*, issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in August 2006. The BEC provided guidance on the implementation of laws, regulations, and policies related to compulsory attendance and truancy elimination plans. With the amendments of Act 138 of 2016, the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 now provides policy and procedure for addressing truancy.

As a reminder, Act 138 of 2016 was signed into effect on November 3, 2016. Provisions of the law went into effect immediately, and apply to the 2017-2018 school year and every school year thereafter.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Step 3: Incidence of Truancy (Small group activity, Large group discussion) (20 minutes)

Distribute **Handout #4 (PA Truancy Data)** and display **PowerPoint Slide #6 (Examining the Data)**. Direct participants to work with a partner at their table to answer the questions on **PowerPoint Slide #6 (Examining the Data)**.

After approximately 10 minutes, invite participants to share their findings.

Trainer Note: In order to best facilitate discussion, please familiarize yourself with the data relevant to the counties/regions that will be in attendance at your training session.

Refer participants to the last page of **Handout #4 (PA Truancy Data)** and lead a large group discussion about the data on grade and race. Ask:

- What are your initial responses when looking at the truancy data by grade and race?
- What factors might influence this data?
- Is this useful data to have when assessing truancy? Why or why not?

After examining the data, ask participants how the lack of a standard definition of truancy might affect the interpretation of the data. For example, because jurisdictions may define truancy differently, the rates may appear high/low in comparison to another jurisdiction but may not be an equal representation/measure.

Step 4: Identifying Factors Contributing to Truancy (Small group activity, Large group discussion, Lecture) (25 minutes)

Display **PowerPoint Slide #7 (Categories of Factors Contributing to Truancy)** and state that there are factors related to each of these four categories that may contribute to a youth being truant.

Divide the large group into four small groups (this can be done by table, by counting off in 4's, etc). Give each small group a blank sheet of flip chart paper and instruct them to divide the sheet into three sections (like the diagram below).

<i>Child/Youth</i>	<i>Short-term Effects</i>
<i>Long-term Consequence(s)</i>	

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Assign each group one of the following categories: child/youth, family, school, and community. Instruct them to label the top left section of their paper with the assigned category. The top right section should be labeled “Short-term Effects,” and the bottom section should be labeled “Long-term Consequences” (see diagram).

Tell participants they have five minutes to list ways their assigned category may contribute to truancy. (For example, how does a school contribute to truancy? What characteristics of a child/youth may contribute to truancy, etc.?)

When the small groups have finished brainstorming, instruct the groups to hang their sheet of paper on the wall and ask each group to present their list to the larger group. Ask the remaining participants if they can think of anything else to add to each list. Refer back to **PowerPoint Slide #7 (Categories of Factors Contributing to Truancy)** and make sure the following factors are identified (as identified in National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, 2012; and National Center for School Engagement, n.d.).

Child/Youth

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Lack of understanding of attendance laws
- Lack of social competence
- Mental health problems
- Physical health problems
- Poor academic performance
- Victim of child abuse or neglect

Family

- Lack of supervision
- Poverty
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Lack of awareness of attendance laws
- Negative attitude toward education
- Domestic violence
- Mental health problems
- Physical health problems
- Single parent

School

- School size
- Negative attitudes of staff and teachers
- Inflexibility toward meeting different learning styles and special education needs
- Inconsistent procedures for dealing with chronic truancy
- Poor record-keeping
- Unsafe environment (physical and/or emotional)
- Lack of parental involvement/notification

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Community

- Violence
- Crime
- Unemployment
- Lack of transportation
- Economics

Trainer Note: The topic of bullying may come up in this discussion. Bullying would fit into the category of school and/or child/youth. According to the resources referenced in this discussion there is little evidence to suggest a strong direct linkage between bullying and truancy; so while bullying may be a potential contributing factor it does not bear any more weight than any of the other contributing factors.

A tool that can aid child welfare professionals in making initial assessments about truancy is **Appendix #1: PA Enhancing Assessments Toolkit** which has a section titled “The Matrix.” This section provides a list of observations that a caseworker may typically encounter when working with any given family. The observations are followed by a list of possible underlying causes. This tool can help caseworkers begin to identify issues related to truancy and assist in case planning and identifying appropriate services for a youth and his/her family.

Pass around a copy of **Appendix #1: PA Enhancing Assessments Toolkit** and inform participants that they can find this toolkit on the Child Welfare Resource Center website at: www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Resources/PA%20Enhancing%20Assessments%20Toolkit.pdf Write this website on flip chart for participants to copy. The Matrix begins on page 29. It is important to remind participants that this is a guide and should not replace important discussions that should take place during supervision. It is also important to emphasize that assessment is an on-going process that should occur throughout the life of a case.

Trainer Note: In addition to passing around a hard copy of **Appendix #1: PA Enhancing Assessments Toolkit** and providing the link to participants, the trainer may find it useful to access the link via the internet and project the tool on the screen to show participants. If you are uncertain about internet availability at your training site, you can access the toolkit in advance and save a copy of it onto a CD or flash drive.
www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Resources/PA%20Enhancing%20Assessments%20Toolkit.pdf

Step 5: Case Scenario (Individual activity) (15 minutes)

Distribute **Handout #5 (Case Studies)**. Assign each table one of the scenarios. Tell participants to read the assigned case scenario and then on the back write down the factors that may be contributing to the youth’s truancy. This is an individual activity.

Step 6: Consequences Associated with Truancy (Small group activity, Large group discussion)

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

(25 minutes)

Instruct the small groups from the previous activity to move to the flip chart on the wall that is to the right of their original one. Each small group should review the contributing factors on the list they have chosen. After this brief review, each small group should identify and discuss short-term effects related to the contributing factors; for example, a short-term effect of poor academic performance may be falling behind/failing a grade. Allow the groups five minutes to identify some short-term effects and document their ideas on the flip chart paper.

After small groups have added short-term effects on the flip chart paper, instruct them to move clockwise to the next flip chart. At this chart they should review the contributing factors and the short-term effects listed. Next, the small group should identify some long-term consequences and document their ideas on the flip chart paper. For example, going along with the example given in the previous step, a long-term consequence of falling behind/failing a grade may be dropping out of school. Allow five minutes for this brainstorming.

After five minutes instruct participants to return to their seats and lead a large group discussion based on the potential consequences that have been identified, comparing them with those on **PowerPoint Slide #8 (Consequences of Truancy)**.

Step 7: Questions and Section Summary (Large group discussion; individual activity)

(5 minutes)

Ask participants if they have any questions about the information just covered. Give participants a few minutes to write down any ideas or questions related to this section on **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher)**.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section III: Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Estimated Length of Time:

3 hours, 5 minutes

Corresponding Learning Objective:

- ✓ Identify strategies, including Truancy Elimination Plans/School Attendance Improvement Plans, for preventing and intervening in truancy.

Section Objectives:

- ✓ List the six critical components for successfully addressing truancy.
- ✓ Identify the components of a Truancy Elimination Plan/School Attendance Improvement Plan and when such a plan should be used.
- ✓ Describe the parental notification procedures and possible outcomes of truancy proceedings.
- ✓ List at least three strategies for truancy prevention and/or intervention which the participant can use in their current work.

Quality Service Review Indicators:

- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 1a: Engagement Efforts
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 1b: Role and Voice
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 2: Teaming
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 3: Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 4: Assessment and Understanding
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 6: Child/Youth and Family Planning Process
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 9: Intervention Adequacy and Resource Availability
- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 11: Tracking and Adjustment

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, large group discussion, small group activity, individual activity

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Flipchart pad
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ LCD Projector
- ✓ LCD Screen
- ✓ **Handout #2: Agenda/Idea Catcher (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #5: Case Studies (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #6: Parental Notification and Legal Actions**
- ✓ **Handout #7: Penalties Upon Conviction**
- ✓ **Handout #8: School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Presentation:**

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

- **Slide #9: Six Critical Components for Successfully Addressing Truancy**
 - **Slide #10: Components of a TEP**
 - **Slide #11: TEP Peer Review**
- ✓ **Appendix 2: Is Cyber Charter School the Best Option?**

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section III: Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Step 1: Six Critical Components for Successfully Addressing Truancy (Lecture) (10 minutes)

The National Center for School Engagement has identified six critical components of successful truancy programs (2005). These core components are reflective of the PA Child Welfare Practice Model values, principles, and skills such as: family, community, teaming, engaging, assessing and understanding, planning, implementing, monitoring and adjusting.

Trainer Note: Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model was finalized and confirmed in February of 2013. It may be a good idea to ask participants about their awareness of the model prior to any discussion.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #9 (Six Critical Components for Successfully Addressing Truancy)**. The six critical components are:

- 1. Collaboration**
- 2. Family Involvement**
- 3. Comprehensive Approach**
- 4. Use of Incentives and Sanctions**
- 5. Development of a Supportive Context**
- 6. Evaluation of the Program**

Let's examine each component more closely.

Step 2: Collaboration (Lecture, Large group discussion) (20 minutes)

Refer back to the previous section in which some of the primary underlying causes of truancy were discussed and ask participants to identify the system partners that they think should be included in this collaboration. (Answers should include: the school, the county children and youth agency, the court system, law enforcement, the mental health system, any community-based organizations with which the family is involved, faith-based organization if family is involved with one, etc.)

Ask participants to share with the large group ways in which their agencies collaborate with partners to address truancy. Alternatively, allow participants to raise questions about collaboration and truancy concerns to participants from other counties.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Step 3: Family Involvement (Lecture, large group discussion)

(15 minutes)

When it comes to truancy, one of the methods by which family involvement is initiated is the parental notification of truancy that school officials must make. Look at **Handout #6 (Parental Notification and Legal Actions)** and review the process for notifying parents/guardians along with potential legal consequences taken from Article 13, Sections 1333 to 1333.3 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, amended by Act 138 of 2016. Note that **Handout #6 (Parental Notification and Legal Actions)** references School Attendance Improvement Conferences (SAICs), which are defined as a conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services. Note the areas on the handout where "county children and youth agencies" are referenced and reiterate the agency's role. (The Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 Article 13, Section 1326, amended by Act 138 of 2016).

Distribute **Handout #7 (Penalties Upon Conviction)** and briefly review with the group. Note that these penalties were clarified as part of Act 138 of 2016.

It is important to emphasize that for best results, family involvement should begin much earlier than the legal notification. According to the PA Child Welfare Practice Model, "Families are experts on themselves, are involved in decision making..." and the child welfare professional should practice the skill of Engaging, which means "Effectively establishing and maintaining a relationship...with families...by encouraging their active role and voice..." It is imperative to also include the youth in all aspects of addressing truancy.

A recommended strategy that fits with the critical component of family involvement is Family Group Decision Making (FGDM). FGDM is a strengths-based approach in which the family leads the discussion and planning. This strategy also embraces the components of collaboration (previously discussed) and comprehensive approach (the next component). FGDM can be used as both a truancy prevention strategy and a truancy intervention strategy. Ask participants to identify by show of hands if they have used FGDM as a strategy in dealing with truancy. After the show of hands, ask if one participant would be willing to briefly share their experience with the whole group.

Trainer Note: If participants are interested in learning more about FGDM, the PA Child Welfare Resource Center offers two trainings on FGDM: Introduction to FGDM Part 1 and Introduction to FGDM Part 2, which can be found on the CWRC website.

Ask participants to suggest other ways in which family (and youth) engagement and involvement in school-related issues can be initiated and maintained. Write these ideas on a flip chart and hang on the wall for later reference.

For the most positive outcomes, family members and the youth should be included in the development, implementation, and monitoring of a Truancy Elimination Plan

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

(TEP)/School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). The Truancy Elimination Plan/School Attendance Improvement Plan will be discussed in greater detail later in this section.

Step 4: Comprehensive Approach (Lecture)

(5 minutes)

According to the National Center for School Engagement (2005), programs that are effective address prevention and intervention at the same time. As discussed in the previous section, there are a variety of factors that contribute to a student being truant and effective truancy programs should be equipped to address individual, family, school, and community factors. These programs should be prepared to respond to the first unexcused absence of a child and continue to work with youth and families even if the student becomes habitually truant.

Step 5: Use of Incentives and Sanctions (Lecture, large group discussion)

(15 minutes)

Successful truancy programs use a combination of incentives and sanctions. The use of sanctions is the traditional and more punitive approach to dealing with truancy. Incentives are positive and tend to be recognition-based. The key is to find a balance between incentives and sanctions and to use ones that are meaningful to the youth and his/her family.

Ask participants to identify incentives and sanctions related to truancy with which they are familiar and/or to brainstorm possible incentives and sanctions. Write these ideas on a flip chart and hang on the wall for later reference.

Step 6: Development of a Supportive Context (Lecture, large group discussion)

(15 minutes)

Development of a supportive context includes all of the previous components. If one component is missing, it will be a challenge to have a supportive context. According to the National Center for School Engagement (2005), context, in this case "...refers to the environment in which the truancy program engages youth and their families. The context can be determined by an umbrella agency, a neighborhood, a set of laws and policies and/or a political reality." In part, this is reflective of the values of collaboration and a comprehensive approach, yet looks at context from a broader perspective.

One way of developing a supportive context is to create an educational climate that prioritizes students' connection to their school and engages families. In a report to the Pennsylvania State Roundtable in May 2010, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts workgroup on Educational Success and Truancy included the creation of positive educational climates as one of their recommendations. This strategy includes several steps and requires partnership from various community partners.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Engage participants in a brief discussion about how relationships within the community (families, businesses, faith-based organizations, law enforcement and government, schools, neighbors, etc.) might impact truancy and vice versa.

Trainer Note: Participants may suggest or question cyber charter school as an alternative. The Office of Children and Families in the Courts/Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts has developed a guide for those considering enrolling or supporting a student in cyber charter school. See **Appendix #2: Is Cyber Charter School the Best Option?** You may pass this around for participants to review if the topic arises.

Another resource regarding cyber schools is the PA School Performance Profile (www.paschoolperformance.org) where information about schools (public schools, charter schools, cyber schools) such as academic performance can be found and compared. It is also worth noting that charter schools and other alternative school options also must comply with truancy laws. Act 138 requires that each charter, regional charter and cyber charter school shall establish an attendance policy designed to accurately determine when a child who is enrolled in a charter, regional charter or cyber charter school has an unexcused absence. Also charter, regional charter and cyber charter schools shall report unexcused absences directly to the department annually through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

Step 7: Evaluation of the Program (Lecture, large group discussion)

(15 minutes)

A successful program continuously measures its impact to ensure quality services are being provided and also allows for opportunities for improvements. Program evaluation also puts programs in a strong position when applying for funding.

Ask participants to identify what factors they would look at (or measure) to determine a program's success. What would they look for in identifying a successful truancy program to make a referral for a child/youth on their caseload?

Step 8: Strategies Activity (Small Group Activity, Large Group Discussion)

(30 minutes)

Refer back to **Handout #5 (Case Studies)**. Ask the participants to reflect back to their assigned case study and discuss at their tables some possible prevention and intervention strategies that could be used with the child/youth and family. They may refer to the flip charts hanging on the wall from previous discussion or be creative and think of alternative strategies. Ask each group to select a person to be the recorder and one person to report out to the large group on their recommendations. After approximately ten minutes of small group discussion, bring the large group together to share their strategies.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Step 9: Truancy Elimination Plan/School Attendance Improvement Plan (Lecture, Large group discussion)

(15 minutes)

Trainer Note: This section previously covered a Basic Education Circular (BEC) titled *Compulsory Attendance and Truancy Education Plan*, issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in August 2006. The BEC provided guidance on the implementation of laws, regulations, and policies related to compulsory attendance and truancy elimination plans. With the amendments of Act 138 of 2016, the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 now provides policy and procedure for addressing truancy.

As a reminder, Act 138 of 2016 was signed into effect on November 3, 2016. Provisions of the law went into effect immediately, and apply to the 2017-2018 school year and every school year thereafter.

Act 138 of 2016 states that school attendance improvement conferences should be part of addressing truancy issues. Refer back to **Handout #6 (Parental Notification and Legal Actions)** for specifics on where SAICs have been incorporated into procedures for addressing truancy. Act 138 states that the following individuals shall be invited to the conference:

- The child
- The child's person in parental relation
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource
- Appropriate school personnel
- Recommended service providers

The Pennsylvania Department of Education truancy resource/toolkit *School Attendance Improvement and Truancy Reduction* provides information on developing a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP)/School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) as a means to address truancy issues. When a TEP/SAIP is developed it is a cooperative effort that occurs at a school-family conference. The school-family conference and the development, implementation, and monitoring of the TEP/SAIP reflect the skills that are part of the PA Child Welfare Practice Model: Engaging, Teaming, Assessing and Understanding, Planning, Implementing, and Monitoring and Adjusting.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #10 (Components of a TEP/SAIP)** and review.

Components of a TEP/SAIP include:

- Assessment (identifying root causes of truancy *and possible solutions* – may include student issues: academic supports; social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health supports; school environment issues that affect student's success; parent/guardian issues: home environment, work schedules, supervision; school issues: environment, student's interactions with adults and peers, schedule)
- Student's strengths and responsibilities

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

- Family's strengths and responsibilities
- Method of monitoring the effectiveness of the TEP/SAIP
- Consequences of not fully implementing the TEP/SAIP
- Benefits of successful implementation of the TEP/SAIP
- Follow-up and reporting outcomes

After reviewing the components of a TEP/SAIP engage participants in a discussion about how the school-family conference and the TEP/SAIP use the skills from the PA Child Welfare Practice Model.

Step 10: TEP/SAIP Activity (Small Group Activity, Large Group Discussion) (40 minutes)

Refer participants at each table back to their assigned youth from **Handout #5 (Case Studies)**. Distribute **Handout #8 (School Attendance Improvement Plan)** and instruct them to complete the School Attendance Improvement Plan for their assigned youth/family. Tell them to use the information given and also be creative if they think they need additional information that is not provided. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this work.

Trainer Note: The School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) is a sample form provided by the PA Department of Education. Be prepared for comments such as “this isn’t the form we use,” etc. and be able to redirect such comments to the purpose of the activity, which is assessment of truancy in a case example and practical application of identifying the components of a SAIP.

When each group has completed their **Handout #8 (School Attendance Improvement Plan)**, instruct them to pass it to the table/group to their right. Each small group will now have a completed TEP/SAIP to review and critique. Display **PowerPoint Slide #11 (TEP/SAIP Peer Review)** and instruct participants to consider the guiding questions in their review. Allow 15 minutes for this portion of the activity.

After 15 minutes, allow the groups to present their TEPs/SAIPs and receive feedback (Depending on class size, there may not be enough time for each group to report and receive feedback).

Step 11: Questions and Section Summary (Large group discussion; individual activity) (5 minutes)

Direct participants to revisit **Handout #2 (Action Plan/Agenda and Learning Objectives)** and to record concepts or strategies from this section that they would like to take back to their work with children and families.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section IV: Summary and Evaluation

Estimated Length of Time:

30 minutes

Learning/Performance Objectives:

- ✓ Summarize course and learning objectives, answer questions

Quality Service Review Indicators:

- ✓ Practice Performance Indicator 4: Assessment and Understanding

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, small and large group discussion, large group activity

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Flip Chart Pads
- ✓ Flip Chart Stands
- ✓ Idea Catchers
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ LCD Projector/Screen
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Masking Tape/Poster Putty
- ✓ Trainer-Prepared Flip Chart: What's In It For Me?
- ✓ Trainer-Prepared Flip Chart: Parking Lot
- ✓ **Handout #2: Agenda/Idea Catcher (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #9: References**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Presentation:**
 - **Slide #12: Questions?**
 - **Slide #13: Summary and Evaluation**

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

Section IV: Summary and Evaluation

Step 1:

(10 minutes)

Engage participants in a discussion pertaining to their experience throughout the training. Validate their comments and thank them for sharing. Ask participants to think about what they learned during the training and share the most valuable insights they gained.

Review the *What's In It For Children and Families?* flip chart, making sure that all points were addressed. Review the *Parking Lot* flip chart and assist participants in identifying any possible resources that may meet their needs.

Trainer Note: You may wish to review the group's responses throughout the day and note a few prompting questions to help with the discussion of the overall experience throughout the training.

Step 2:

(10 minutes)

Summarize key learning points from the day. Show **PowerPoint Slide #12 (Questions?)**. Give participants the opportunity to ask questions. Answer questions, address and validate comments.

Step 3:

(5 minutes)

Distribute **Handout #9 (References)**. Tell participants that these are the references used to write this curriculum. Participants should feel free to review them whenever time allows.

Step 4:

(5 minutes)

Show **PowerPoint Slide #13 (Summary and Evaluation)**. Distribute the course evaluations and ask participants to complete them.

Thank participants for participating in the training.

202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

References

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- Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, & the Center for Schools and Communities. (2007). *School attendance and truancy reduction (toolkit)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.patruancytoolkit.info/providers/291/PrintToolkit-final.pdf>
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202: Truancy: Prevention and Intervention

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