

Report of the Activities of the Truancy Prevention Work Group

**Prepared by Jane Patrick, Collaborative Coordinator
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New Members

The Truancy Work Group welcomes several new members to the table for the upcoming school year including new principals Pete Remboldt (Ashby), Carey Johnson (Parkers Prairie High School), Marlene Schoeneck (Parkers Prairie Elementary) and Ehren Zimmerman (Perham High School). Tamra Jokela is also new to the group replacing Brad Vold from OTC Human Services. Tyler Church, principal from Wadena-Deer Creek, has also expressed interest in joining the group in December.

Attendance Staff

This group met twice of the summer in preparation for the expanded Attendance Clerk positions. Guidelines for the positions include:

- a) Districts **must add staff time** in order to use these funds. These funds **cannot** be used to supplant an existing position, or used to supplant what was previously done within districts.
- b) Outlines are being drafted by each district to show how many hours will be added and what duties will be **expanded** for each school's attendance tracking process.
- c) Schools were requested to consider having assigned attendance staff put in more hours at the start of the school year rather than spreading them throughout the entire year. Impacting attendance is much easier if problems are caught and corrected early.
- d) The best time to connect with parents may be in the evening. Schools were also asked to consider requiring that staff be available some evening hours in order to connect with parents of children that are having attendance issues.

Evaluation

- a) Schools will be submitting additional baseline data directly from their technology departments using each individual district's attendance tracking system. This report will include the number of students missing one or more periods of school in the 2010-11 school year by grade level. This report will also include the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) that was reported by each district to the Minnesota Department of Education for the last school year. This will be the baseline data used for measuring progress.
- b) A group of at least 10 students from each school building with a past history of attendance issues will be identified. Attendance from last year will be pulled to document baseline data for these 10 students. These 10 students will then be tracked each month to document and monitor their attendance habits based on interventions provided during this school year. Students selected for attendance tracking will be students who are likely to remain in the district or county (families that have generational history of attendance issues.) Elementary level students (K-5) selected will be tracked longitudinally – over a period of several years or to high school graduation.

Other Updates

The County Mediation Program and intervention meetings at the courthouse will continue during this year. The Otter Tail County Attorney's Office and Human Services have developed a new condensed and streamlined process for the schools to use for Educational Neglect referrals. The County will also be directly involved with sending a variety of letters to students and parents about the importance of attendance.

Underwood Pilot Program

The Underwood School has agreed to develop a pilot program to address attendance within their school. The purpose of the program will be to develop an internal school/community team to address attendance issues with individual students. The team may consist of the principal, the attendance clerk, a representative from the Sheriff's Department, the city mayor, the school counselor and possibly a community representative. When unexcused absences or excessive absences occur, the team will meet with the student to discuss the situation. Meetings will be held at 7:45 a.m. one day each week. More information will be shared as the program is developed.