

# JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

## The Truancy Process: The Challenge of Improving Attendance in Pennsylvania Schools

*Report of the Advisory Committee on Act 138 of 2016*

April 2024



*Serving the General Assembly of the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Since 1937*

**REPORT**

*Act 138 of 2016*  
*The Truancy Process: The Challenge of*  
*Improving Attendance in Pennsylvania Schools*

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The Joint State Government Commission was created in 1937 as the primary and central non-partisan, bicameral research and policy development agency for the General Assembly of Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

A fourteen-member Executive Committee comprised of the leadership of both the House of Representatives and the Senate oversees the Commission. The seven Executive Committee members from the House of Representatives are the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. The seven Executive Committee members from the Senate are the President Pro Tempore, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. By statute, the Executive Committee selects a chairman of the Commission from among the members of the General Assembly. Historically, the Executive Committee has also selected a Vice-Chair or Treasurer, or both, for the Commission.

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A Commission study may involve the appointment of a legislative task force, composed of a specified number of legislators from the House of Representatives or the Senate, or both, as set forth in the enabling statute or resolution. In addition to following the progress of a particular study, the principal role of a task force is to determine whether to authorize the publication of any report resulting from the study and the introduction of any proposed legislation contained in the report. However, task force authorization does not necessarily reflect endorsement of all the findings and recommendations contained in a report.

Some studies involve an appointed advisory committee of professionals or interested parties from across the Commonwealth with expertise in a particular topic; others are managed exclusively by Commission staff with the informal involvement of representatives of those entities that can provide insight and information regarding the particular topic. When a study involves an advisory committee, the Commission seeks consensus among the members.<sup>2</sup> Although an advisory committee member may represent a particular department, agency, association, or group, such representation does not necessarily reflect the endorsement of the department, agency, association, or group of all the findings and recommendations contained in a study report.

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<sup>1</sup> Act of July 1, 1937 (P.L.2460, No.459); 46 P.S. §§ 65–69.

<sup>2</sup> Consensus does not necessarily reflect unanimity among the advisory committee members on each individual policy or legislative recommendation. At a minimum, it reflects the views of a substantial majority of the advisory committee, gained after lengthy review and discussion.

Over the years, nearly one thousand individuals from across the Commonwealth have served as members of the Commission's numerous advisory committees or have assisted the Commission with its studies. Members of advisory committees bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to deliberations involving a particular study. Individuals from countless backgrounds have contributed to the work of the Commission, such as attorneys, judges, professors and other educators, state and local officials, physicians and other health care professionals, business and community leaders, service providers, administrators and other professionals, law enforcement personnel, and concerned citizens. In addition, members of advisory committees donate their time to serve the public good; they are not compensated for their service as members. Consequently, the Commonwealth receives the financial benefit of such volunteerism, along with their shared expertise in developing statutory language and public policy recommendations to improve the law in Pennsylvania.

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Since its inception, the Commission has published over 450 reports on a sweeping range of topics, including administrative law and procedure; agriculture; athletics and sports; banks and banking; commerce and trade; the commercial code; crimes and offenses; decedents, estates, and fiduciaries; detectives and private police; domestic relations; education; elections; eminent domain; environmental resources; escheats; fish; forests, waters, and state parks; game; health and safety; historical sites and museums; insolvency and assignments; insurance; the judiciary and judicial procedure; labor; law and justice; the legislature; liquor; mechanics' liens; mental health; military affairs; mines and mining; municipalities; prisons and parole; procurement; state-licensed professions and occupations; public utilities; public welfare; real and personal property; state government; taxation and fiscal affairs; transportation; vehicles; and workers' compensation.

Following the completion of a report, subsequent action on the part of the Commission may be required, and, as necessary, the Commission will draft legislation and statutory amendments, update research, track legislation through the legislative process, attend hearings, and answer questions from legislators, legislative staff, interest groups, and constituents.

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Pa.C.S. § 1939.

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April 2024

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To Members of the General Assembly:

We are pleased to release, *The Truancy Process: The Challenge of Improving Attendance in Pennsylvania Schools*, which was written in response to Act 138 of 2016. The Act mandated changes in how schools handle truancy based on recommendations made by a previous JSGC truancy report and directed that a follow-up report study the effects of those revisions five years after its effective date.

An Advisory Committee was appointed which included representatives from schools throughout the Commonwealth, the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and the Department of Human Services (DHS), and others.

Surveys distributed to schools, magisterial district judges, and county children and youth agencies capture current practices in working with truant students. Based on survey results, data provided by PDE, and information gathered from Advisory Committee members and other experts, the Advisory Committee recommends investigating a graduated response to truancy that matches responses to its severity, allowing schools more flexibility to evaluate efficacy of School Attendance Improvement Plans, and that schools receive funding to provide for a dedicated truancy staff person. Further, the existing Student Assistance Program should be promoted as a response to truancy when appropriate. Finally, the report highlights and recommends the need for ongoing training on truancy processes for both schools, through the Intermediate Units, and for magisterial district judges.

The full report is available at <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us>.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn J. Pasewicz  
Executive Director





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## INTRODUCTION

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The Joint State Government Commission’s study of school truancy in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began almost a decade ago. On October 15, 2014, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously adopted House Resolution 1032, which directed the Joint State Government Commission to study the issue of truancy and school dropout prevention in this Commonwealth. HR1032 specified that Joint State study then-current Pennsylvania truancy laws and policies and examine the full breadth of the issue by focusing on barriers and best practices regarding education success and stability; court competencies; data collection; measurement of education outcomes for children in foster care; statutes, best practices and legislative initiatives in other states; studies or initiatives promoted by national educational advocacy organizations relating to truancy; and the manner in which charter and cyber charter schools enforce the truancy laws of this Commonwealth and impediments to enforcement.<sup>4</sup> That process resulted in the October 2015 publication of the report: *Truancy and School Dropout Prevention: Report of the Truancy Advisory Committee*.<sup>5</sup>

Act 138 was passed by the House and the Senate on October 26 of 2016 and signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf on November 3, 2016.<sup>6</sup> The statute amended the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 to significantly alter the Commonwealth’s response to truant students and their families.<sup>7</sup> Within this statute was a section directing Joint State to undertake, after five years had passed, a much narrower study of the procedures for how a school handles children who are truant and habitually truant and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures in improving school attendance and whether the procedures should be revised, including to require court involvement sooner in certain truancy cases.

Act 138 was implemented at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. And yet in the middle of this five year time frame set by Act 138, the COVID-19 pandemic descended and children could not attend school. Joint State staff discussed how this impacted the study (whether five years had indeed passed if students were not able to physically be in school for a portion of that time) and in the end decided to proceed. References to and accommodations of the pandemic are interspersed throughout this narrative. Chronic absenteeism has become a problem throughout the nation. Whereas truancy focuses on unexcused absences, chronic absenteeism encompasses both excused and unexcused absence and is at an unprecedented high in the U.S.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> House Resolution 1032, P.N.4283 of 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Joint State Government Commission, *Truancy and School Dropout Prevention: Report of the Truancy Advisory Committee*, October 2015, [http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/publications.cfm?JSPU\\_PUBLN\\_ID=439](http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/publications.cfm?JSPU_PUBLN_ID=439).

<sup>6</sup> Act of Nov. 3, 2016 (P.L. 1061, No. 138).

<sup>7</sup> Act of Mar. 10, 1949 (P.L. 30, No. 14).

<sup>8</sup> Jake Nelson, “Why chronic absenteeism is so high—and how district leaders can start fixing it,” EAB, May 8, 2023, <https://eab.com/resources/blog/k-12-education-blog/fix-high-chronic-absenteeism/>.

Although it has been four years since the COVID-19 pandemic first closed schools throughout the US, the education system continues to struggle with numerous ongoing issues, chronic absenteeism being one of the most prevalent.

According to a New York Times article, chronic absenteeism, defined as missing at least 10 percent of the school year, has risen nationally from 15 percent prior to the pandemic to an estimated 26 percent in 2023. The impact of chronic absenteeism cuts across race, income, and geography. In wealthier areas, districts have seen a doubling of the rate, from 10 percent before the pandemic to 19 percent in the 2022-23 school year. For districts in poor communities, the figures are even more stark. Where chronic absenteeism was 19 percent prior to pandemic, it is now around 32 percent for students in poor districts.<sup>9</sup>

The trend suggests a fundamental shift in how Americans view the culture of school, with one professor of education theorizing that, “Our relationship with school became optional.” The habit of daily attendance is no longer ingrained. While many educators hoped that student absenteeism would improve naturally after the pandemic, they have now begun to speculate that absenteeism is the root cause of many lingering educational issues. And as such, student absenteeism is hindering the nation’s recovery from pandemic learning losses.<sup>10</sup>

Joint State assembled an Advisory Committee and began to hold informational meetings. Joint State staff also met with those who are involved in truancy at different points in the process. To understand how procedures are being handled, the staff and Advisory Committee put together three different surveys – one for schools, one for magisterial district judges and one for county children and youth services (CYS). The results of these surveys along with the expertise shared by the Advisory Committee and those they brought to the table form the bulk of the report.

This report focuses initially on changes in the statute and other guidance brought around by Act 138. It then details current practices in schools, district courts and CYS offices as gathered from Advisory Committee meetings and information sessions. This information, along with feedback from the survey, forms the basis for evaluation of current practice and whether it has improved school attendance despite the difficulties that the pandemic brought to school attendance. The committee heard some best practices highlighting quality work that has been identified as such. Yet certain ambiguities have emerged, and those have been pointed out as needing resolution. Finally, the Advisory Committee has proposed recommendations that will strengthen the current process with the goal of reducing truancy and chronic absenteeism through graduated responses, family engagement, use of the Student Assistance Program (SAP), foster care information sharing between DHS and schools, and better communications between families, schools, CYS, and the courts.

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<sup>9</sup> “Why School Absences have ‘Exploded’ Almost Everywhere,” *The New York Times*, March 29, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

# TRUANCY STATUTORY PROCESS

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## *General Provisions*

Truancy provisions in general are found in statutory amendments to the Public School Code of 1949, Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14). After the publication of the reports on truancy from both the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) Educational Success & Truancy Prevention Workgroup and the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) in 2015, the General Assembly made changes to the truancy process through several statutes, including: Act 138 of 2016,<sup>11</sup> and Act 16 of 2019.<sup>12</sup>

### *School Districts*

Each school must adopt a written attendance policy that must be distributed to parents annually. The policy must comply with compulsory attendance laws and must allow the school to determine when a student who is enrolled has an unexcused absence.<sup>13</sup>

### *Charter Schools*

The charter, regional charter, and cyber charter schools will report unexcused absences directly to the PA Department of Education (PDE) annually through the PA Information Management System (PIMS).<sup>14</sup>

### *Nonpublic Schools*

Each nonpublic school will establish an attendance policy designed to accurately determine when a child who is enrolled in a nonpublic school has an unexcused absence. This policy may differ from the policy of the school district in which the child resides. The venue for the filing of a citation or referral under section PSC §1333.1; 24 P.S. § 13-1333.1 will be based upon the child's residence and the nonpublic school may participate in the proceedings.<sup>15</sup> For a student enrolled in a nonpublic school, the student's school district of residence remains responsible for complying with the authorities and obligations related to enforcing compulsory attendance laws.<sup>16</sup>

Schools and nonpublic schools are responsible for monitoring and maintaining accurate records of the attendance of all enrolled students. Copies of the attendance policy should be

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<sup>11</sup> Act of November 3, 2016 (P.L.1061, No.138), amending the Public School Code of 1949.

<sup>12</sup> Act of June 28, 2019 (P.L.117, No. 16), amending the Public School Code of 1949.

<sup>13</sup> PSC § 1327.2; 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2; 22 Pa. Code § 11.41.

<sup>14</sup> PSC § 1327.2(c); 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2(c).

<sup>15</sup> PSC § 1327.324 P.S. § 13-1327.3.

<sup>16</sup> PSC § 1332; 24 P.S. § 13-1332.

provided to parents at the beginning of each year and to all new enrollees upon enrollment in the school or nonpublic school. The attendance policy should also be posted on the school's or nonpublic school's publicly accessible website, if available. The attendance policy should be written in a way that is easily understood by all parents and translated when there are large populations of non-English speaking parents/families. To ensure that parents have dedicated the time necessary to understand the attendance policies, schools and nonpublic schools should have parents sign a form acknowledging their understanding of the attendance policy.<sup>17</sup>

Schools and nonpublic schools must determine whether there is a possibility that a child is truant or chronically absent due to a disability or a medical condition and should consider whether to address this topic in their attendance policies. A student who is truant or chronically absent for health-related reasons may be eligible for protections under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act.<sup>18</sup> If a student with a disability is truant or chronically absent, the school should convene the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team to determine whether revisions to the student's IEP are necessary or appropriate.<sup>19</sup> In those instances, the administrator responsible for handling truancy-related matters should be a participating member of the IEP team process.

Students who are absent from a school for 10 consecutive school days shall be dropped from the active membership roll unless the school is provided with evidence that the absence is legal or compulsory attendance prosecution is being pursued. Charter schools or cyber charter schools that drop students from their membership rolls must immediately inform the student's school district of residence. Standard disenrollment procedures do not apply when a student with an IEP has been absent for 10 consecutive days. Instead, schools must comply with the procedures required by IDEA and 22 Pa Code Chapter 14 when disenrolling a student with an IEP.

First, second and third class schools are required to employ at least one person whose title is attendance officer or home and school visitor. This employee's duties are to enforce compulsory attendance requirements. School districts of the fourth class may employ an attendance officer or home and school visitor and any school district may be part of a cooperative agreement to employ an attendance officer. Home and school visitors are required to be certified by PDE. They have police powers and may arrest a child who fails to attend school in violation of compulsory attendance laws.<sup>20</sup>

The school code distinguishes between "truant," when a child has three or more unexcused absences in the current school year, and "habitually truant," when a child has six or more unexcused absences. When a child has their third unexcused absence, and is thus truant, the school will send a written notification to the parent and may offer a school attendance improvement conference (SAIC).<sup>21</sup> If the unexcused absences continue, the school will schedule an SAIC. The

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<sup>17</sup> PDE Basic Education Circular.

<sup>18</sup> 20 U.S.C. § 1400 and 9 U.S.C. § 794.

<sup>19</sup> An IEP is a written plan for the provision of services for the education of students who are disabled or gifted. "IEPs and 504 Service Agreements," PA Department of Education, <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Homebound%20Instruction/Pages/IEPs-and-504-Service-Agreements.aspx>.

<sup>20</sup> PSC § 1341; 24 P.S. § 13-1341.

<sup>21</sup> PSC § 1333(a); 24 P.S. § 13-1333(a).



school may not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.<sup>22</sup>

Upon six or more unexcused absences, the child becomes habitually truant. If the child is under 15 years of age, the school has several options. The school may:

- refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program,
- refer the child to the county children and youth agency for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act, or
- the school may file a citation with the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation.<sup>23</sup> A school may not cite children who are younger than 15 in a magisterial district court.

If a child is 15 years or older at the time of their sixth unexcused absence, the school will either:

- refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or service, or
- file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the child or the parent.

For a child that is 15 or older, with continued additional unexcused absences after referrals to school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or they refuse to attend, the next step for schools is that they may refer the child to the county children and youth agency (CYS) for possible disposition as a dependent child.

Schools must convene an SAIC before referring truancy matters to either magisterial district courts or CYS agencies. Schools must provide written verification of a school attendance improvement plan (SAIP).<sup>24</sup>

At the magisterial district court hearing, the burden is on the school to prove that the child was habitually and without justification truant. It is a reasonable affirmative defense against a citation filed against a parent that the parent took every reasonable step to ensure attendance of the child at school.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> PSC § 1333(b); 24 P.S. § 13-1333(b).

<sup>23</sup> PSC § 1333.1(a)(2); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.1(a)(2).

<sup>24</sup> PSC § 1333(b)(3); 24 P.S. § 13-1333(b)(3).

<sup>25</sup> PSC § 1333.2; 24 P.S. § 13-1333.2.

### *Venue Location*

For brick-and-mortar charter schools and for public schools, the venue of the magisterial proceedings is determined based on the address of the school.<sup>26</sup> For cyber charter schools, the venue is based on the residence of the child or the person in parental relation.<sup>27</sup> Cyber charter personnel may participate in magistrate proceedings via teleconference or video conferencing.<sup>28</sup>

### *Notifications by Magisterial District Judges (MDJs)*

When there are truancy proceedings in a magisterial district court, the MDJ must notify the child, the person in parental relation and CYS.<sup>29</sup> The MDJ must also notify either the child or the person in parental relation of the availability of a pre-conviction diversionary program offered by the court.<sup>30</sup>

If an MDJ convicts a child of truancy, the penalties may include:

- fines; the first fine may not exceed \$300, the second fine may not exceed \$500 and the third fine may not exceed \$750,
- community service, or
- school attendance improvement courses which have been approved by the president judge.<sup>31</sup>

The judge can waive fines and costs if a child attends school in accordance with the plan devised by the court.

A person who is convicted of truancy may appeal *de novo* to the Court of Common Pleas within 30 days of the conviction. After 30 days, the appeal process is similar to other appeals of summary convictions.<sup>32</sup>

The statute provides for several scenarios where citations may not be filed against a child or a person in the household for truancy:

- if a proceeding is already pending (section 1333.1 and 1333.2) against a child or a person in the household, no citation can be filed against that child or person, unless a warrant has been issued for failure to appear in court and that warrant has not yet been served.

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<sup>26</sup> PCS § 1333.2(a); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.2(a).

<sup>27</sup> PSC § 1327.2(b); 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2(b).

<sup>28</sup> PSC § 1327.2(b); 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2(b).

<sup>29</sup> PSC § 1333.2(b)(1); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.2(b)(1).

<sup>30</sup> PSC § 1333.1(a)(2); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.1(a)(2).

<sup>31</sup> PSC § 1333.3(a); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(a).

<sup>32</sup> PSC § 1333.3(c); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(c).

- if a referral for services has been made to the CYS agency and the agency has not closed the case and the educational entity has not consulted with CYS prior to filing the petition.
- if a petition has been filed alleging that the child is dependent due to habitual truancy under 42 Pa.C.S Ch 63 and the case is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, then no citation may be filed.<sup>33</sup>

When a child or person within the household is convicted of truancy two or more times within a three-year period, the court will refer the child for services or possible disposition as a dependent child.<sup>34</sup>

If a person does not pay a fine that has been levied by an MDJ, they may be sentenced to county jail for no more than 3 days.<sup>35</sup>

The president judge may adopt a local policy that a juvenile probation officer may receive allegations that a child who fails to pay a fine or costs is dependent. A child's failure to pay a fine may not be considered a delinquent act.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Court Response When a Truant Child is Attending School*

If a child attends school in accordance with a plan devised by the court, the court may then suspend the sentence and may remit or waive associated fines and costs.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Expungement*

If a child who has truancy convictions earns a high school diploma or a GED and has satisfied any sentence imposed by the court, then the court must grant their application for expungement of their truancy convictions.<sup>38</sup>

#### *Appeals Process*

Appeals for truancy convictions are now under the same procedure as other summary cases. This means the defendant has 30 days to file an appeal and that failure to pay during that time is not grounds for imprisonment.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> PSC § 1333.3(d); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(d).

<sup>34</sup> 42 Pa.C.S. ch 63 and PSC § 1333.3(e); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(e).

<sup>35</sup> PSC § 1333.3(f); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(f).

<sup>36</sup> PSC § 1333.3(f)(2); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(f)(2).

<sup>37</sup> PSC § 1333.3(b); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(b).

<sup>38</sup> PSC § 1333.3(h); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(h).

<sup>39</sup> PSC § 1333.3(c); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(c).

### *Driver's License*

If a child is convicted of truancy and fails to comply with their sentence, the court may send the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) a certified record of the conviction. For the first offense, PennDOT shall suspend the child's license for 90 days and for a second or subsequent conviction, 6 months.<sup>40</sup>

The MDJ may also refer the conviction of a child to PennDOT, but only if the child fails to comply with a lawful sentence entered for the violation and is not subject to an exception to compulsory attendance. If PennDOT receives a certified record of a child's conviction, it must suspend the child's driver license for 90 days. Upon receipt of the record of the second conviction, PennDOT must suspend the child's license for six months.<sup>41</sup>

There are three scenarios under which PennDOT might restore a child's license. If a child has attended school, without having any unexcused absences or unexcused tardies, for two months after the first conviction or four months after the second conviction, then PennDOT may restore their license. If a child is subject to an exception to compulsory school attendance or if the child graduates, withdraws from school, receives a general education diploma (GED) or enlists in the military, then PennDOT may restore a child's license.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Highlighting Some Changes***

The following sections highlight some of the process changes that were contained in these statutes as well as brief notations of prior statute where it provides helpful contrast.

#### *Changes in Definitions*

Prior to Act 138 of 2016, "truancy" was an undefined term and "habitually truant" meant three or more absences from school following the first notice of truancy under section 1354. Act 138 defined "truant" as three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year and "habitually truant" as six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.<sup>43</sup>

*Because truancy was not defined in the Public School Code of 1949 prior to 2016, definitions varied from school district to school district. Additionally, there was variation in how districts calculated habitual truancy, which was a defined term. Some counted the number of unexcused absences in the current school year to determine habitual truancy while others counted them over the entire school career of the child.*

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<sup>40</sup> PSC § 1333.3(g); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(c).

<sup>41</sup> PSC § 1333.3(g)(2); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(g)(2).

<sup>42</sup> PSC § 1333.3(g)(4); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(g)(4).

<sup>43</sup> PSC § 1326; 24 P.S. § 13-1326.

Act 16 of 2019 established a compulsory school age of no later than 6 years of age until the child reaches 18 years of age.<sup>44</sup>

*Prior to Act 16 of 2019, the compulsory school age in PA was eight years old and a child would only be considered truant when they were eight years or older and absent.*

### *Charter Schools*

The charter, regional charter and cyber charter schools will report unexcused absences directly to PDE annually through the PA Information Management System (PIMS).<sup>45</sup>

*Prior to Act 138, the boards of trustees of charter and cyber charter schools were required to report unexcused absences to the superintendent or other designated individual of the school district where the parents of the child resided. (BEC 24 PS § 17-1701-A issued October 1, 2004, p 59 2015 JSGC report)*

A school may cite only the child or the parent in a magisterial district court, not both. An MDJ can no longer accept dual petitions against the child and the parent.<sup>46</sup>

*Previously, an MDJ could accept dual petitions against both the child and the parent.*

### *Once the Process Moves Beyond the School District*

All penalties, which include fines, community service, or completion of a course or program approved by the president judge, are issued at the discretion of the MDJ.<sup>47</sup>

*Statutory penalties prior to 2016 were mandatory leaving magisterial district judges little flexibility to tailor the penalty to the individual situation and to address situational barriers to school attendance.*

A court can impose a fine only if the defendant is able to pay the fine. The fine can only be imposed after the court has held an ability-to-pay hearing at sentencing to substantiate the defendant's financial circumstances.<sup>48</sup>

Act 138 clarifies that the "offense" for the purpose of imposing penalties is defined as the "citation."<sup>49</sup> This means that for a citation stating that a student was illegally absent on 10 school days, the student could only be fined up to \$300.

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<sup>44</sup> PSC § 1326; 24 P.S. § 13-1326.

<sup>45</sup> PSC § 1327.2(c); 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2(c).

<sup>46</sup> PSC § 1333.1(b)(2); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.1(b)(2).

<sup>47</sup> PSC § 1333.3(a); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(a).

<sup>48</sup> PSC § 1333.3(a)(1); 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(a)(1).

<sup>49</sup> PSC § 1326; 24 P.S. § 13-1326.

*Prior to Act 138, the levying of fines was inconsistent. Sometimes the fine was assessed once per individual and in other courts the fine was assessed per unexcused absence. For example, in the above scenario, if a student was illegally absent on 10 school days, the student might be fined \$3,000 or 10 days multiplied by a \$300 fine per day.*

# TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM CURRENT PRACTICES

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## *Schools*

The Allegheny County Intermediate Unit (AIU) conducted listening sessions focused on truancy with over 100 participants from public, charter, and private schools across Allegheny County. School employees who attended the listening sessions ranged from superintendents, to principals to social workers and counselors. Community providers also participated.<sup>50</sup>

The initial questions that the AIU presented to all attendees focused on how they could reinvent the school attendance building blocks to sustainable family engagement; why attending school mattered and how they could better communicate to families.<sup>51</sup>

Attendees communicated that students felt disconnected and are navigating immense mental health issues. In some cases, students were working full-time jobs, which compete with school as a priority. Students who navigated learning loss subsequently felt discouraged that they could not keep up with the work in their classes. Students had a perception that schools were unsafe and generally did not see the value of their education.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, attendees reported that parents did not see the value of their children's education. Post-pandemic, parents found it difficult to get back into a school routine and have become comfortable with the flexibility of virtual schooling. School relationships with parents were generally thought to be poor, with parents struggling to understand inconsistent absence policies through the pandemic.<sup>53</sup>

Schools reported that their attendance offices were understaffed and that caseloads were too large to manage. They commented that record keeping, state requirements, and paperwork are time consuming and burdensome for the limited staff. Although schools want to give individual support to families, they frequently lack the time to do so. Other barriers identified included a lack of reliable transportation, unmet mental health needs, some students' lack of access to basic food and housing, fear of school and community violence, and the need for parent permission to utilize services.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

During the Allegheny County listening session, participants were asked about resources, current policies and procedures, and how they respond to spiraling chronic absenteeism. Participants listed Pennsylvania’s Positive Behavior and Interventions Support (PBIS),<sup>55</sup> Student Assistance Programs (SAP), Check and Connect Program, Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), and individualized approaches as successful interventions that they use. Participants also listed a number of successful behavioral and mental health programs that they currently use. Notably, schools listed school attendance improvement conferences (SAICs) as a successful tool, with a caveat; they are only successful if parents show up and engage. SAICs are most successful in the middle school years.<sup>56</sup>

The AIU’s listening group participants were asked “Once a student becomes truant, what do you need to happen (in your school, community and the district magistrate) to successfully re-engage students and families back into the school community?” School responses varied widely, but some themes included needing alternatives to magisterial district judges (MDJs), needing in-school mental health services, wanting designated attendance officers, and in general, more staffing. Other responses focused on successful involvement of stakeholders, be they parents, the community, and even the students. Schools participating in the listening sessions wanted to see a program that did not require parental consent to enroll a student if parents are unresponsive. Schools requested additional resources, both personnel and programming to respond to chronic absenteeism.<sup>57</sup>

### *School-Based Intervention*

School-based interventions to address truancy are more successful early in the school year. If it takes until March for truancy to be addressed with a student, there will likely not be a change in behavior during that school year.<sup>58</sup> Each school district sets its own truancy policy.

As a service to school districts, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) often crafts model policies based on state regulations. School districts, in turn, use that language to develop their own policies, although some aspects are left up to school administrators. There are certain situations that are considered valid excused absences, but administrators can add more reasons for both excused and unexcused. For example, the School District of Philadelphia does not consider a family’s extended travel a valid excuse for absences.<sup>59</sup>

Because of this leeway, some districts use discretion regularly to try to keep students in school and keep the issues in-house. Long-time employees involved in this process are able to build relationships with families. However, workforce turnover means there is less experience in these roles, leading to a lack of trust between school staff and families. In order to combat this lack of trust, one Advisory Committee member said that their district employs family development specialists. The specialists do not need a particular degree or experience because they are able to

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<sup>55</sup> PBIS is an offshoot of the commonwealth’s Pennsylvania’s Community of Practice on School Based Behavioral Health, which includes partners from the Bureau of Special Education, who coordinate PBIS training and technical assistance for early childhood and school-aged settings.

<sup>56</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.



engage with families through similar life experiences and help connect them with resources. Since different schools face different challenges, there is a need for multiple solutions for each region and school. Advisory Committee members emphasized that intervention from child welfare and the courts is an invasive step and is used as a last resort. All other options should be exhausted first.<sup>60</sup>

### *School Strategies*

Joint State staff identified the 10 schools that reported the highest truancy rates and the 10 schools that reported the lowest for school years 2016-2017 through 2021-2022 and attempted to contact those 20 schools. Twelve schools responded and agreed to meet with staff to discuss their strategies for decreasing truancy.

#### High Truancy Schools

At one school with high truancy, there was at the time no community-based attendance improvement program option within the area. The district had previously partnered with the United Way program “Be There,” which matched chronically absent students with mentors. Although the program was a significant help to the district, it is no longer funded and that community-based option has been lost. Instead, the district sends letters to parents after three days of unexcused absences and then again at nine days. Between those times, the district makes home visits and creates an SAIP. The district refers the case to the MDJ and CYS when the nine-day letter is sent. Months may go by before the district receives a response from the MDJ. Additionally, CYS will reject the case unless there is a case already open or the child is being abused. Despite this being the ongoing response from CYS, the district maintains this step as a procedural approach because the MDJ always asks if the district has contacted CYS.<sup>61</sup>

At another school with high truancy that Joint State staff interviewed, school staff meets with families of habitually truant students. Sometimes a meeting is sufficient to “reset” and the child starts attending school regularly. In other cases, however, a reset is more complicated. Resolutions are difficult to achieve when matters like housing, family instability, employment, health, and other barriers, interfere with school attendance. For example, an older child might be working a paid job to help support the family’s income and leaving the job to attend school might not be feasible. When the school has exhausted its attempts, it can refer the case to Project GO, an anti-truancy program operated by the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Juvenile Justice Unit.<sup>62</sup> Staffing shortages had crippled this program in the first half of the 2022-2023 academic year.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>61</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>62</sup> ProjectGo is a program in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office’s Juvenile Justice Unit that is designed to, “partner with schools, families, youth advocates and other juvenile justice stakeholders to uncover, track and eliminate barriers to regular school attendance...” [and] “... help young people build relationships and access community resources that support and stabilize their school attendance.” Truancy Prevention and Child Support Enforcement, Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office website, <https://phillyda.org/juveniles/for-juvenile-witnesses/> .

<sup>63</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

At a charter school with high truancy, whether a student’s case is handled via SAIP or not varies by campus. The charter school makes use of the Philadelphia DA’s Project GO program. Programs and initiatives to improve school culture are expected to help improve attendance. School officials emphasized that the focus should be on the crisis in attendance rather than on enforcement of truancy laws and regulations.<sup>64</sup>

### Low Truancy Schools

For one low truancy school, attendance problems very rarely progress as far as MDJs or CYS. The district has a wealth of resources, and those resources pull together as a team to address attendance issues. The district does partner with a community program if attendance is an issue.

Another low truancy school does not refer students to CYS, saying that doing so does not work because the agency is overwhelmed. Instead, the district refers to a service provider such as George Junior, Republic, Adelphi, or the Bradley Group. However, those groups are also overwhelmed. At the time of the April 2023 interview with Joint State staff, cases from February 2023 had not yet been addressed.<sup>65</sup>

One low truancy school participates in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).<sup>66</sup> District social workers may participate in SAIP meetings but might not necessarily involve PBIS. The school utilizes “Check & Connect” training for its seven school counselors.<sup>67</sup> The district reported that the wait times for MDJ hearings can be as long as a month. CYS is notified along with the MDJ. CYS does not handle cases itself, but refers them to the K/S Truancy Prevention/Diversion Program, which is a service provider that contracts with Bucks and Lehigh Counties' school districts.<sup>68</sup>

A low truancy school Joint State staff spoke with has a good relationship with its local MDJ. Cases are heard within a month’s time. The MDJ comes to campus to hold truancy court to assist the district. The current MDJ is willing to fine families when warranted, but the previous MDJ was considered too lenient to enact change in truant students’ attendance. The MDJ can hold quick meetings via zoom, which is proving to be helpful for some parents. The CYS system in Butler County is overwhelmed with work. Cases must be severe for CYS to get involved. Nonetheless, CYS is open to discuss cases over the phone (in hypotheticals) to determine whether its involvement is needed.<sup>69</sup> This system overall is working. It is a tremendous amount of work, including working on engaging children, and a new emphasis on career pathways. The school is

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<sup>64</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> PBIS is an offshoot of the Pennsylvania’s Community of Practice on School Based Behavioral Health, which includes partners from the Bureau of Special Education, who coordinate PBIS training and technical assistance for early childhood and school-aged settings.

<sup>67</sup> Check & Connect “is a structured mentoring intervention to promote student success and engagement at school and with learning through relationship building and systematic use of data.” “Check & Connect: Introduction to the Model,” University of Minnesota, for the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), [https://www.pattan.net/getmedia/ab8ab1d8-75e2-448b-b48c-d2d0d6bbbbc9/12.%20pa\\_connectoverview\\_mts](https://www.pattan.net/getmedia/ab8ab1d8-75e2-448b-b48c-d2d0d6bbbbc9/12.%20pa_connectoverview_mts)

<sup>68</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

blessed with resources and compliant children; other schools are certainly not in the same situation.<sup>70</sup>

At another low truancy district, the community-based programs such as Justice Works and Adelphi Village cannot currently handle the volume of students in need of their services. Because truancy problems are generally grounded in other problems, such as mental health or drug and alcohol issues, SAP may be an appropriate program to involve. The process breaks down at the point of MDJ referral, where the district waits for two to four weeks for an MDJ hearing. Sometimes, the district is not referring until March or April and with the school year ending at the very beginning of June, referral to the MDJ becomes a yearly pattern with some families. The following September the pattern will restart with a new school year. Sometimes a family that ends up at the MDJ annually gets fined. For elementary school students, CYS will accept cases of truancy through April. There is no system for sharing information about children coming from outside of the county. For example, it is difficult to get information for children in the foster care system.<sup>71</sup>

### *SAP Teams*

One solution to eliminating specific barriers for specific students other than through the SAIP is through the SAP teams. SAPs are not mentioned in the truancy sections of statute, but it would make sense to refer truancy to an SAP team because it is equipped to handle mental health challenges. To implement truancy into SAP, there could be liaisons between teachers and students, and community members that could contribute to the team. Anyone can make a referral to the SAP team. This referral system is important because of the previously noted need for timely intervention in truancy. In many cases, members of the SAP team will regularly check in on students and their parents. SAP can do a lot of work connecting students with resources, but the family can refuse them. SAP is underutilized statewide, however there is discretion on what SAP will handle in each school. Some SAP teams will not see truancy as within their purview. The Advisory Committee supported using SAP teams to address truancy but cautioned that SAP does not receive much funding and administrators should be sure it is equipped to handle the responsibility before enacting it.<sup>72</sup> Often, attendance plans were viewed as one more task to do on top of SAP and Child Study. In too many schools, the different avenues of student support remain in silos. Schools have seen more referrals and connection to resources when silos are integrated. However, there needs to be more mental health resources and schools need more funding to provide better resources.<sup>73</sup> One important aspect to note is that the SAP program is voluntary. Parents must consent to the use of these services, which could cause additional difficulties to increasing accountability for attendance.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>73</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>74</sup> Conversation with PDE Representative, February 7, 2024.

### *Other School Responses*

The Pittsburgh Public School (PPS) system is working on pedestrian safety, attendance initiatives, and a buddy program. These measures help children get to school and feel appreciated while in school. PPS is trying a new notification system that sends texts and emails and tells parents how much school their child is missing compared to an average student. This program has reduced truancy by 10 to 15 percent. One Advisory Committee member believed that sometimes truancy can be overcomplicated, and simple solutions can be overlooked. Students feeling disconnected at school is a huge issue. A mentorship program that paired truant students with other students would probably decrease truancy significantly. For students, going to school when they feel invisible is a difficult and brave thing to do. Providing them support during the school day and improving their experience in school would bring more students back to school.<sup>75</sup> There is also a difference between school engagement and school attendance. Some students just go because they do not want their parents to get fined. Truancy cannot be discussed in a vacuum; school engagement is an important aspect of the conversation.<sup>76</sup>

### *Family/Parental/Community Involvement*

Advisory Committee members emphasized the importance of family involvement in dealing with truancy. One member was confident that if families were engaged and extended family supports were pulled in at the SAIC level, truancy would improve in schools. Typically, SAICs include a parent, maybe two, a child, and a table of professionals. It could instead be a table of extended family and kin and a few professionals.<sup>77</sup> Family is defined as not just parent and child, but extended supports.<sup>78</sup> Older students could be asked what extended family supports schools could contact. This member believed the SAICs as currently implemented do not work because parents are intimidated by the professionals at the table.<sup>79</sup>

Family engagement has to begin with back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences. A letter asking for an SAIC does not necessarily constitute family engagement. Often parents do not come to the SAIC, and as long as the school attempted to contact the family, they have fulfilled the statutory requirement. Schools that have successful family engagement connect with families far before this point.<sup>80</sup>

Family Group Decision Making is used across the Commonwealth for a variety of family issues. This means when an agency is addressing an issue, they are bringing the family and extended supports together to figure out what solutions they will employ. These plans will be much more detailed, specific, and tailored to the student than what professionals would put together. These plans can also be sustained when agency involvement is terminated. For agencies that are overwhelmed, this diverts students to alternate attendance improvement activities.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>77</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>80</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>81</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

## *Education Law Center Presentation*

The Education Law Center (ELC) presented its “Act 138: Recommendations to Address Truancy, Increase Attendance, and Improve Academic Outcomes,” to the Advisory Committee on August 17, 2023. ELC discussed how, in its experience, truancy is typically a symptom of underlying conditions related to a student’s undiagnosed and unmet needs resulting from disability, struggles with mental health, homelessness, and bullying. ELC delivered four broad recommendations to help reduce truancy at a system level and to help students overcome the obstacles that are contributing to their truancy. First, ELC recommended that schools receive more guidance through regulations. The guidance should show schools how to address underlying causes of truancy particularly in the areas of disability, bullying, and homelessness; how daily absences should be recorded consistently across schools and districts; how lateness is calculated; and how notices are sent to families. Second, ELC recommended that MDJ roles be clarified through rulemaking. MDJs should be provided with better training and greater support in identifying available community resources. Regarding families, ELC recommended that families be provided with information about their rights in truancy proceedings. ELC opposes fines, fees, and jail sentences as their research shows these measures to be ineffective. Further, ELC states that judicial rules should clarify what MDJs cannot do, such as fine both student and parent for the same truancy referral, require schools to file citations against both student and parents, impose fines for each unexcused absence, or force parents to enroll their student in a new school. ELC’s third overall recommendation is to adopt regulations that clarify CYS roles in truancy and to eliminate truancy as one of the contributing factors for dependency. Fourth, ELC recommended that criminal records of truancy citations be expunged from student records.

ELC also provided, “Examples of Truancy Issues and Trends,” during its presentation. The overview addressed cases ELC identified as being within the purview of two groups of stakeholders in the truancy system, MDJs and schools.

### MDJs

ELC presented six situations in which it alleged that MDJs were violating statute by forcing parents and students to comply with sentences that are not permitted by the Public School Code. In one case, a named MDJ was given as an example of judges sentencing both parents and students to fines for the same truancy violations when the law clearly states that MDJs may fine either students or parents but not both. In addition, “MDJs are requiring schools to file citations against both parents and children,” the ELC alleged; multiple citations could lead to higher fines. ELC also alleged that “ability to pay” determinations were not held prior to imposition of fines, which it says is a violation of Act 138. Act 138 states that fines for a first offense are not to exceed \$300. Second and third (and subsequent offenses) are not to exceed \$500 and \$750, respectively.

ELC identified cases in which MDJs allegedly forced parents to switch their children’s enrollment to different schools despite claims of homelessness, IEPs, or 504 Plans that should have been given proper consideration prior to sentencing.

## Schools

ELC highlighted situations that demonstrate areas where schools need further guidance with truancy policies, students' rights, and prevention strategies, among others. ELC stated that a school has had policies whereby tardy students were sent home and charged a full day of unexcused absence. After the intervention of the Department of Human Services (DHS), this district was supposed to have stopped this policy but its schools apparently continued to enforce it.

*Excuses.* ELC alleged that there are “many instances” when schools recorded students as having unexcused absences if they did not turn in notes within a “short 3-day or 6-day time period...”. While ELC and like-minded advocates may discuss extending the time frame, there is no statute or regulation that requires schools to give more time. In the Act 138 Advisory Committee survey of schools, 37 percent allow longer than three days for excuses to be turned in. Twelve percent have a three-day limit. The remainder decide based on family circumstances.

*Students with Disabilities.* There appear to be a number of cases where students with disabilities were not provided with appropriate screenings and services and were consequently absent from school. ELC claims that their truancy could have been avoided or mitigated had they received appropriate services. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic evidently left many students with disabilities without services, which exacerbated their disengagement and led to what were recorded as unexcused absences.

*Homelessness.* Homeless students face a number of barriers that prevent them from regularly attending school. ELC cites a number of obstacles, such as long commutes, difficulty with obtaining proper identification and documentation, and homeless shelters' rules that make online classes difficult to attend, among others. ELC highlighted students in dependency and juvenile justice systems who are required by court orders to meet with case workers, and attend hearings and meetings. The students might accrue unexcused absences while complying with these court orders.

*Best Practices and Ineffective Strategies.* ELC noted that some school districts are handling truancy well by hiring more school counselors and engaging school administrators. It stated that schools' sending notifications of SAICs that are already scheduled are not helpful because parents may not be able to attend at the scheduled time and date. Another finding by the ELC is that some schools delay addressing truancy until the end of the academic year and then file “hundreds of citations,” consequently leaving no time to address root causes of truancy.<sup>82</sup>

School districts that have an SAIP checklist are better able to implement these steps. Routinizing the process makes it easier for schools. However, when a school identifies that a “child lacks motivation to come to school” as a barrier through the SAIP, this is not truly a barrier, but a missed opportunity to identify real barriers. ELC has created a homelessness screener for students and also developed a checklist for creating SAIPs. If the SAIP does not contain relevant specific information about a student, MDJs do not have enough information to determine the best course

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<sup>82</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

of action with that student. Inherent racial bias is causing a lot of assumptions by schools MDJs and children and youth agencies.<sup>83</sup>

According to the law, absences caused by homelessness or court appearances are excused absences. There is often a belated identification of homelessness, but records should be expunged if the absences are a result of homelessness even if it was identified later. Absences should not be identified as homeless absences, just excused absences. Sometime students do not want to apply for college if homelessness is referenced on their transcript. Some also prefer to say they are McKinney-Vento eligible, not experiencing homelessness.<sup>84</sup> It would be ELC's hope that students experiencing homelessness would be identified at the time of enrollment by using the screener, however, things can change throughout the year and students may not self-identify as McKinney-Vento eligible.<sup>85</sup>

### *Process Changes*

Advisory Committee members suggested a graduated response system that would have varying tiers that triggered different levels of intervention. Members stated that those students that get a few more than six absences are sometimes able to resolve their barriers before the absences escalate. There might even be a small misunderstanding that leads to them having six or more absences. Often, attendance officers get bogged down by the sheer volume of students with six, seven, or eight unexcused absences. But the days missed by those on the higher end might be skyrocketing without enough attention and prioritization.<sup>86</sup> The statute does not make any special reference to the students with very high truancy numbers. One member suggested adding a time frame, so a certain number of absences within a period of time would trigger a certain response. Another member believed that referrals to CYS at six absences was too early. He suggested putting something in the statute requiring substantive action at a number around 25 absences.<sup>87</sup> Members approved of moving the threshold for involving outside agencies to a higher amount of absences. Schools could handle truancy internally at early absences like three or six, as Act 138 requires.<sup>88</sup>

The recommendation could be a more structured graduated response system that would respond to the needs of students. Moving other agency involvement downstream would mean stronger systems should be put in place before that. Services that do not have teeth to them could be used. Members believed that the SAIP process should be strengthened by having a level of accountability if they were not working. Members believed SAIPs need to give students enough time to improve. Students may not show up the next day after the plan but there may be improvement after a period of time. The Advisory Committee has acknowledged from the beginning that truancy is the result of a root cause. The SAIP is to identify possible root causes but is expected to remedy these causes within days. Behavioral change takes time.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>84</sup> The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.) is the federal statute addressing educational stability for homeless children.

<sup>85</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>86</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2023.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

One member cautioned the group on moving too far away from paying attention to early absences. If they are not addressed on some level, a small barrier that was not caught soon enough could escalate into a larger concern. If more emphasis is to be placed on SAIPs, there needs to be staff in schools who know how to properly use them to defer court involvement where possible.

### *Cyber Charter Schools*

Cyber schools make evaluating truancy unique because schools have flexibility in what is considered “present.” Cyber schools can be either synchronous or asynchronous, creating additional variation in measuring attendance. Some schools consider signing in as being present, while others do not count signing in for class at all and measure attendance by assignments completed. The variation makes comparing schools difficult because their metrics can be so different. Some Advisory Committee members believed that school district cyber schools were often used to discipline children who the school did not want back in the classroom, which is not a good way to handle misbehavior and can cause a child to fall behind. One member thought it would be interesting to see the difference between truancy rates in cyber and home districts and see if more or fewer children are truant from cyber schools.<sup>90</sup>

### *Philadelphia Schools Truancy Policy*

A member of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities within the Philadelphia School District presented the district’s truancy policy. The Philadelphia School District has 113,443 students in its 217 schools.<sup>91</sup> Philadelphia School district is a unique entity in the Commonwealth and navigates truancy from both a similar vantage point, as it adheres and responds to the same statutes and guidelines as other districts, but also a very different vantage point, as it responds to the complexities and challenges that arise from its size as well as the fact that the school district and the county are coterminous.<sup>92</sup>

Significant barriers to attendance exist in the school district, including remaining trauma from the COVID19 pandemic, high levels of gun violence within the district boundaries, transportation issues, and bullying and harassment. The district devotes substantial funding to school climate through its Office of School Climate and Culture, which works to create positive learning environments where students can engage in academic and social-emotional learning.<sup>93</sup> Staffing shortages, whether at the school bus driver level or the shortage of social workers, restrict the effectiveness of the implementation of planned programs and supports.<sup>94</sup>

All of the process that follows has been established as a result of the Act 138 changes.

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<sup>90</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>91</sup> “Fast Facts,” *School District of Philadelphia*, accessed February 16, 2023, <https://www.philasd.org/fast-facts/>.

<sup>92</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>93</sup> “Office of School Climate and Culture,” *School District of Philadelphia*, accessed Feb 16, 2023, <https://www.philasd.org/schoolclimate/>.

<sup>94</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.



## Process in Philadelphia School District<sup>95</sup>

Each time a student is absent or late, the parents or guardians receive an automated notification via phone call, email, or text. School staff may also personally contact a student for each absence. When a student reaches their third unexcused absence in the current school year, the parent will receive a notice within 10 school days of that third absence. This Notice of Third Illegal Absence is sent in the language preferred by the parent.

After the Notice of Third Illegal Absence has been sent, if a student continues to accrue unexcused absences, the district staff offers an SAIC. The purpose of the conference is to identify barriers to attendance and develop meaningful strategies to improve attendance. The district must invite appropriate school personnel as well as outside service providers to the SAIC. The parent may bring others who will be a helpful resource. Neither the student nor the parent is required to participate in the SAIC. As a result of this conference, a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) will be created and provided to the parent, the student, service providers and any appropriate district staff who support the student.<sup>96</sup>

In 90 of the 217 schools within the district, truancy providers will assign an attendance designee to assist a student at an early stage. These truancy providers become part of the process when the school schedules a SAIC at six unexcused absences. In the remaining schools, truancy providers become part of the process once the case is listed in Regional Truancy Court.<sup>97</sup> The truancy providers are paid for by the Office of Children and Families (OCF) within the Philadelphia City Mayor's office. The district identifies the 90 schools through an annual data review to determine which is neediest, as well as a determination of which schools have been using those resources well. For the rest of the schools, the provider does not attach until 10 absences at Truancy Court and provides services. The Philadelphia City's Department of Human Services is the county child welfare and juvenile justice agency and is overseen by the OCF.<sup>98</sup>

After the implementation of the SAIP the school will continue to monitor the student in 30, 60 and 90 day intervals. If unexcused absences continue but at a lower rate, interventions may continue at the school level. If, however, the pace of unexcused absences continue or increase, the district may move to refer to Juvenile Court.<sup>99</sup>

If the number of absences rises to 10, the family is assigned to the corresponding regional court staffed by district personnel, OCF personnel, and Family Court personnel. They make a docket, and children already active in court are not heard in this system. Those that are not active in court have their case heard by this court.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Follow up e-mail with Rachel Holzman, February 22, 2023.

<sup>98</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Students and families will be notified of their scheduled hearing via citation that is mailed to the home by Family Court. There are four locations for Regional Truancy Court. Although proceedings of the Truancy Court were held virtually during the pandemic, they have returned primarily to in-person as it has been demonstrated that in-person meetings for this purpose are more effective. Families are required to appear for the hearing. In addition, the truancy providers contracted by DHS will contact the family to arrange a meeting.<sup>101</sup>

If the student's attendance does not improve at the truancy court level, the case may be referred to Family Court, for more intensive services. A judge at Family Court has the authority to adjudicate the student as a dependent and assign the case to Philadelphia's DHS.<sup>102</sup>

Family engagement is a key component to success. Also, success tends to follow if the school uses the Tier 1 climate approach and the school feels warm and welcoming.<sup>103</sup> This system has been in place since 2017 or 2018. The Philadelphia School District's attendance is currently worse than before the pandemic. The schools have trouble with capacity and ensuring that every student receives the proper case management. In both capturing attendance and enacting attendance plans, the caseload makes it difficult to reach all chronically absent students. They are working to provide training to increase efficiency and efficacy. The city provides truancy case managers and brings in consultants to increase efficiency in these processes. They are investing money into student attendance and teacher attendance. Gun violence is continuing to escalate and that is continuing to scare parents and their children from being present in school.<sup>104</sup> According to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities within the district, the top reasons for low attendance in Philadelphia schools are gun violence, trauma, transportation issues, and bullying and harassment.<sup>105</sup> In fact, 11 Philadelphia school students were shot, one fatally, at bus stops within a mile of their schools over a three day period during the first week of March 2024. As part of the district's response to the Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> homicide, the district's largest high school switched to remote learning for the remainder of the week.<sup>106</sup>

### *School Violence and Truancy*

School violence is frequently at the top of the list of problems facing schools throughout the Commonwealth and is known to be a detrimental influence on the school environment, affecting not only physical and emotional safety, but students' sense of belonging, ability to thrive, and, of course, learning. While school mass shootings rise to the forefront of the national consciousness, school violence is an overall broad category of situations, generally regarded as including "incidents of abuse or injury in an educational institution that may include: assaults, threats, use of weapons (bombs, knives, guns, etc.), robbery, homicide, rioting, arson, or other acts of violence."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Carly Sitrin, "11 young people have been shot in Philadelphia this week," *Chalkbeat Philadelphia*, March 7, 2024, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/philadelphia/2024/03/07/11-students-shot-in-philadelphia-northeast-high-school/> .

<sup>107</sup> PA Department of Health, "School Violence," accessed February 16, 2024, <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/HealthStatisticsAtoZ/Pages/School-Violence.aspx>.

The National Institute of Justice conducted a meta-analysis of research into school violence and its effects on both the perpetrators and victims.<sup>108</sup> Most commonly, perpetrators of violence are linked to bullying, and are also at risk for carrying weapons, dropping out of high school, and committing further acts of violence. Aside from the antisocial and offending activities, however, perpetrators of violence might also suffer consequences wherein they themselves are at risk of self-harm, suicidality, and dating violence victimization. Victims of school violence are similarly correlated with perpetrating bullying. Aside from victimizing another person through bullying, they are at risk for loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, suicidality, and self-harm, among other behaviors and mental health problems.

Regarding academic performance, numerous studies have demonstrated that violence has a significant negative effect on learning. One report analyzed 110 studies from 21 countries to find that, “Children who have experienced any form of violence in childhood have a 13% predicted probability that they will not graduate from school.”<sup>109</sup>

The connection between truancy and acts of violence and other types of crime has been demonstrated in the research literature, typically from the perspective that some truant students act in ways that lead to criminal behavior; consequently, anti-truancy programs have been developed with the purpose of reducing the incidence of violence and crime committed by truant students during school hours. Similarly, evidence demonstrates that truant students are themselves at risk of being crime victims.

And while this section focuses on violence and truancy, it must be noted that school violence also takes a toll on teachers and staff who work in settings where the safety of their students and themselves might be at risk. A 2021 survey by the American Psychological Association of educators and school personnel found they were profoundly affected by verbal abuse and threats of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 15,000 educators and staff surveyed, 49 percent of teachers responded that they wanted to quit teaching or transfer because of threats and verbal abuse.<sup>110</sup>

### *School Absenteeism and Violence*

Violence and threats of violence in the school setting might themselves lead to absences and eventually truant behavior by students who feel threatened and choose to avoid school as an unsafe place. Significantly for this report, the authors concluded that, “Males who are bullied are

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<sup>108</sup> Jillian J. Turanovic and Sonja E. Siennick, *The Causes and Consequences of School Violence: A Review* (US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, February 2022), <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/302346.pdf>.

<sup>109</sup> Deborah Fry, Xiangming Fang, Stuart Elliott, et al., “The Relationships Between Violence in Childhood and Educational Outcomes: A Global Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Child Abuse & Neglect* 75, 6-28 (January 2018): 6-28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.06.021>.

<sup>110</sup> “Violence and Aggression Against Educators and School Personnel,” *American Psychological Association*, accessed October 19, 2023, <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/violence-educators>.

nearly three times more likely to be absent from school and girls who have experienced sexual violence have a three-fold increased risk of being absent . . .”<sup>111</sup>

School avoidance out of fears about safety is apparently not included among the valid reasons for absence, according to members of the Advisory Committee, and will be counted as unexcused under school district absence policies.

### Pennsylvania Youth Survey

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) administers a biennial survey, the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) of youth in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades: “PAYS asks questions about students’ perspectives of their school environment, as well as attitudes, knowledge and behaviors concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs (ATOD), violence, depression, and other problem behaviors,” and provides further analyses for stakeholders.<sup>112</sup>

The most recent report was completed using results from the survey administered in 2021. PCCD received responses from 246,081 (out of a pool of 353,920) students attending 1,072 (out of 1,908 eligible) schools. Among the many data elements collected by the survey, those relevant to this section of the report include students’ responses to categories: In the past 12 months, how often have you:

- been threatened to be hit or beaten up on school property?
- been attacked and hit by someone or beaten up on school property?
- been threatened by someone with a weapon on school property?
- been attacked by someone with a weapon on school property?
- how many times in the past 30 days have you brought a weapon (such as a gun, knife, or club) to school?<sup>113</sup>

It appears that the threats and incidence of violence have been declining since the 2017 survey. See Table 1. Each of the categories across the board shows a lower percentage of students experiencing that category in 2019 and in the 12 months preceding the 2021 survey.

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<sup>111</sup> Deborah Fry, Xiangming Fang, Stuart Elliott, et al., “The Relationships Between Violence in Childhood and Educational Outcomes: A Global Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Child Abuse & Neglect* 75 (January 2018): 6-28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.06.021>.

<sup>112</sup> “Pennsylvania Youth Survey 2021 - Frequently Asked Questions,” PCCD, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Documents/2021%20PAYS/2021%20PAYS%20FAQ.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> *2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey* (PCCD), [https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Documents/2021%20PAYS/County%20Reports%202021%20PAYS/State%20Reports\\_State%20of%20Pennsylvania%20Profile%20Report.pdf](https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Documents/2021%20PAYS/County%20Reports%202021%20PAYS/State%20Reports_State%20of%20Pennsylvania%20Profile%20Report.pdf), 48.

**Table 1**  
**Violence on School Property**  
**Pennsylvania Youth Survey**  
**2017-2021**

Percent of responses	Threatened at school			Attacked at school			Threatened with a weapon at school			Attacked with a weapon at school			Brought a weapon to school		
	2017	2019	2021	2017	2019	2021	2017	2019	2021	2017	2019	2021	2017	2019	2021
	20.5	18.9	16.7	8.3	7.6	6.6	3.8	3.9	3.5	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.8

Source: 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey, State of Pennsylvania, (PCCD), [https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Documents/2021%20PAYS/County%20Reports%202021%20PAYS/State%20Reports\\_State%20of%20Pennsylvania%20Profile%20Report.pdf](https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Documents/2021%20PAYS/County%20Reports%202021%20PAYS/State%20Reports_State%20of%20Pennsylvania%20Profile%20Report.pdf), 48.

The PAYS report makes comparisons between rural and urban school districts. Looking at the same data elements, students in rural schools experience threat of violence and incidence of violence at slightly higher percentages than do their urban peers across all categories. See Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Violence on School Property**  
**Urban & Rural Districts**  
**by Percentage**  
**Pennsylvania Youth Survey**  
**2017-2021**

Percent of responses	Threatened at school		Attacked at school		Threatened with a weapon at school		Attacked with a weapon at school		Brought a weapon to school	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
	20.6	16.4	8.1	6.7	4.4	3.4	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.7

Source: 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey, Rural/Urban student comparison, (PCCD), <https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Documents/2021%20PAYS/Rural-20Urban%20student%20comparison%20Profile%20Report.pdf>, 48.

### Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) administers a similar biennial national survey as part of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) to students in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.<sup>114</sup> The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) covers a similar although wider range of topics.

<sup>114</sup> CDC, Adolescent and School Health, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, selected results, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.

Pennsylvania’s results for the YRBS questions related to “Unintentional Injuries and Violence” for years 2015 through 2021 are presented in Table 3. There appear to be neither increasing nor decreasing trends in threats or incidents of violence.

**Table 3**  
**US CDC**  
**High School Youth Risk Factor Behavior Survey**  
**School Violence Experienced**  
**by Percentage**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2015 - 2021**

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2021</u>
Carried a weapon on school property (such as a gun, knife, or club, on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey)	2	2.2	1.3	2.5
Carried a gun (not counting the days when they carried a gun only for hunting or for a sport such as target shooting, on at least one day during the 12 months before the survey)	nd	4.3	3	3.2
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (such as a gun, knife, or club, one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	5	5.3	7.6	nd
Were in a physical fight (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	21.7	22.8	21.5	19.4
Were in a physical fight on school property (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	6.8	7.4	7.3	nd
Ever saw someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood	nd	nd	nd	23.2
Were electronically bullied (counting being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media, ever during the 12 months before the survey)	14.3	17.3	14.3	17.4
Were bullied on school property (during the 12 months before the survey)	19.9	21.7	19.1	nd
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school (on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey)	7.6	6.3	7.8	12.2

Source: CDC, Adolescent and School Health, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, selected results, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.

nd: no data.

YRBS allows for comparisons between national results, states, and a sample of large school districts. Further, YRBS provides a test of statistical significance that compares results for different groups of respondents. In other words, the analysis allows the reader to see how Pennsylvania’s results compare with national results, for example.

There were some differences in previous iterations of the survey. For example, from 2015 through 2019, Pennsylvania students were less likely than the national aggregate to carry a weapon on school property (either firearm or other). Table 4 shows that Pennsylvania’s results are consistent with the national data in 2021. See Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**US CDC**  
**High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey**  
**Violence Experiences by Percentage**  
**United States & Pennsylvania**  
**2021**

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>
Carried a weapon on school property (such as a gun, knife, or club, on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey)	3.1	2.5
Carried a gun (not counting the days when they carried a gun only for hunting or for a sport such as target shooting, on at least one day during the 12 months before the survey)	3.5	3.2
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (such as a gun, knife, or club, one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	6.6	nd
Were in a physical fight (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	18.3	19.4
Were in a physical fight on school property (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	5.8	nd
Ever saw someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood	19.9	23.2
Were electronically bullied (counting being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media, ever during the 12 months before the survey)	15.9	17.4
Were bullied on school property (during the 12 months before the survey)	15	nd
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school (on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey)	8.6	12.2

Source: CDC, Adolescent and School Health, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, selected results, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.

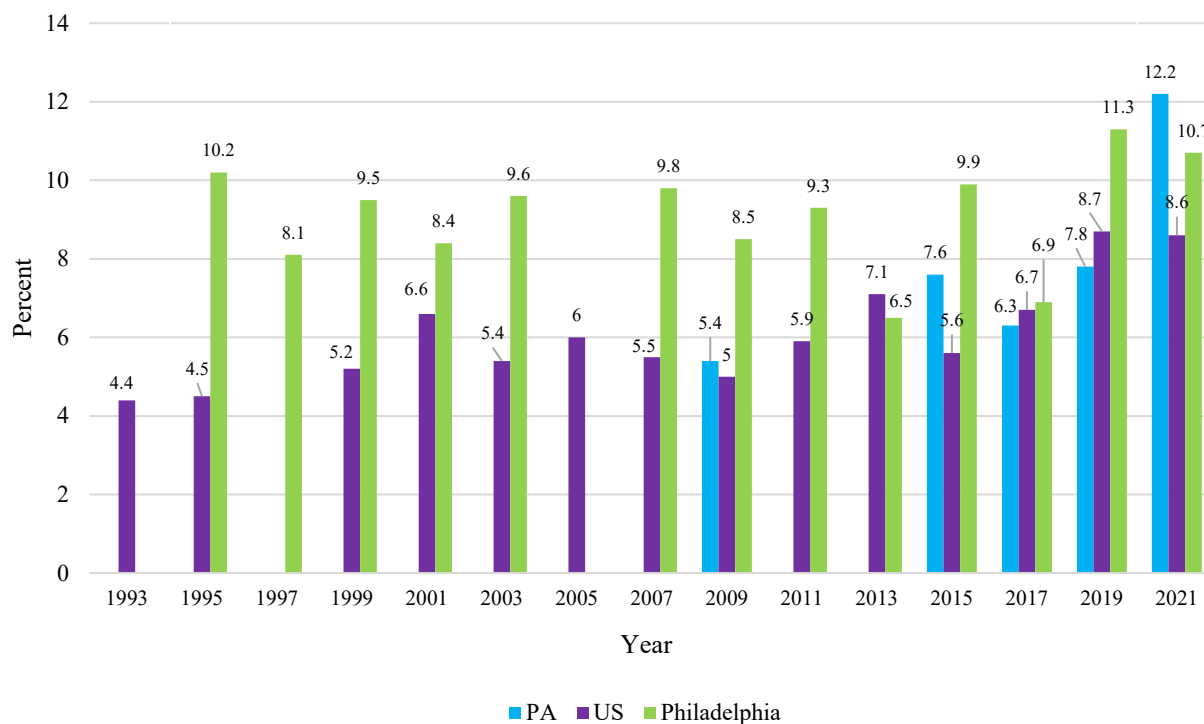
The most important element for purposes of this report is:

- did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school (on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey)

In 2021, 12.2 percent of Pennsylvania students reported that they had missed at least one day of school because they felt unsafe at school or on the trip to or from there. Although this percentage appears to be higher than the national average of 8.6 percent, it is not statistically significant. Therefore, one cannot draw the conclusion that more Pennsylvania students avoided school than did US students overall.

The YRBS shows the percentage of high school students who did not go to school because of safety concerns can be tracked from 1993 through 2021. The national rate nearly doubled (95 percent increase) with a statistically significant increase from 4.4 percent to 8.6 percent over those years. Similarly, data for Pennsylvania show an increase from 2009 to 2021, more than doubling from 5.4 percent to 12.2 percent (a 126 percent increase). Philadelphia data varied over the years 1995 through 2021, with neither an overall increase nor decrease over those years. See Chart 1.

**Chart 1**  
**High school students who did not go to school because they felt unsafe**  
**at school or on their way to or from school**  
**1993 - 2021**



Source: CDC, Adolescent and School Health, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, selected results, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.



## *MDJ*

Joint State staff met with three MDJs in individual conversations and hosted a panel of five MDJs in a roundtable discussion. One judge said she has eight or nine schools that she receives complaints from.<sup>115</sup> Other judges in the roundtable saw around 10 or 20 or 30 students in a year.<sup>116</sup> Another judge estimated that between her two districts, she received about 20 truancy cases a month for a population of 4,000 students.<sup>117</sup> Another judge in the roundtable whose jurisdiction covered an urban school district saw around 600-800 truancy cases a year.<sup>118</sup>

### *Act 138 Process Changes*

The judges stated that before Act 138 changes, the volume of caseloads was higher because students could be cited multiple times, and parents and students could both be cited. Now, students cannot be cited again if their initial citation has not been resolved. Therefore, students can miss their hearings and not be cited again.<sup>119</sup> For one judge, she was seeing around 7,000 to 8,000 cases a year before the changes, and 500-800 a year after the changes.<sup>120</sup>

Another judge stated that when she became a judge the fines were set at \$5 a day. When the law changed, the fine for the first offense increased to \$300. When the citation is dropped off, her staff runs the names. If they have prior offenses, the fine is increased to \$500. It could be as high as \$750 for a third or subsequent offense. This, the MDJs agreed, is a significant amount of money.<sup>121</sup>

One judge also stated that with the change of the age that students are allowed to drop out of school, there are students who are simply never going to come back to school who are not allowed to drop out and they will continue to be penalized and never improve their attendance. The better option for these students may be to drop out and begin working.<sup>122</sup>

Another judge stated that the truancy system was more effective when the law allowed juvenile probation to get involved. Juvenile probation officers used to have a supervisory role when youth were referred and adjudicated guilty. Failure to comply would result in them having appear before another judge. This is no longer the case.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

<sup>116</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>117</sup> Conversation with MDJ, August 15, 2023.

<sup>118</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Conversation with MDJ, August 15, 2023.

<sup>122</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>123</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

## *Noncompliance*

Most judges complained of students not showing up for their hearings. Compliance was the top concern mentioned by the roundtable of MDJs.<sup>124</sup> One judge approximated that 30 percent of students showed up for their hearings. These students were missing on average approximately 80 to 90 days, with some missing up to 130 days of school.<sup>125</sup> Another judge had 12 truancy hearings scheduled and only one student showed up.<sup>126</sup> Some of the judges schedule a hearing immediately instead of waiting for parents to enter a plea because they will not hear anything from parents if they do not.<sup>127</sup>

If a student does show up to their hearing and is found guilty or is found guilty in absentia, the possible penalties can be creative, but the court system's greatest recourse is a fine. However, one judge shared that when she finds students guilty, they might "fall off the face of the earth," as there is no follow-up tracking. No one is apparently responsible for going out into the homes to reinforce consequences and compel the students to attend school.<sup>128</sup> For many families, even the fines are not a strong enough consequence to ensure compliance. The roundtable of MDJs expressed frustration with a system that lacked "teeth." Some of these MDJs stated that truancy might as well be taken out of the courtroom because all they are able to do is hold a hearing and possibly assign a fine as a penalty. Students can simply not show up for the hearing, or not pay the fine and have a warrant out on them that will not be executed.<sup>129</sup>

Jail time is still an option for MDJs to employ but if the parent is in jail, there is no one home to ensure that a student goes to school.<sup>130</sup> One judge stated that though jail time is not a favorable option, she saw more compliance from parents and students when the threat of jail time was a more present concern. The parents at that time would be more motivated to push to improve their child's attendance.<sup>131</sup>

## *Punitive Measures*

MDJs are, consequently, practically limited to suspending students' driver licenses and threatening that CYS might be ordered to get involved with the student's family. According to one judge, a \$300 fine does not phase the youth or their families. They may or may not pay the fine but there are no consequences for not paying. She does not want to be punitive or suggest more jail sentences, but the corrective action currently allowed by law does not often motivate families.<sup>132</sup> Even court measures like revoking a drivers license will not motivate some students.<sup>133</sup> One judge suggested removing working papers from students who were able to arrive at work on time but not school. They conceded, however, that this would do nothing to motivate students who

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<sup>124</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Conversation with MDJ, August 15, 2023.

<sup>127</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>128</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

<sup>129</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

<sup>133</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

do not leave the house for any reason.<sup>134</sup> One judge finds the students guilty in absentia, and issues fines. Most families do not pay the fines, it becomes a warrant and nothing happens after this point. Most judges will not commit someone to prison for this. When there is a lack of accountability in the enforcement of penalties like fines, there is a lack of buy-in from families. They do not see reducing truancy as a priority.<sup>135</sup> One judge stated that out of 30 cases they currently had, only two students had demonstrated improvement in attendance.<sup>136</sup>

### *Schools and MDJs*

Schools manage the responsibility of following up with students' SAIPs and SAICs in a variety of ways. One judge characterized the schools as "frustrated," and unsure of how to handle habitually truant students. The schools that she handles wait for ten unexcused absences to make a truancy referral to her court through a 10-day letter notice. By that point, the youth are academically very far behind.<sup>137</sup>

However, another judge's districts were generally skilled at developing relationships with families to facilitate involvement in truancy matters. She noted that suburban parents were more willing to meet to discuss barriers and solutions. She believed the most helpful solution for schools would be a conversation during kindergarten orientation about the importance of attendance. In the older grades, schools should be taking proactive steps to eliminate bullying, as this is a reason for truancy often cited by students and parents.<sup>138</sup>

Some schools have truancy officers, while others have social workers or other school workers who wear a variety of hats.<sup>139</sup> One judge with a large student population stated that there were only five truancy officers that handled around 500 to 600 cases a year.<sup>140</sup>

Communication and cooperation between courts and cyber schools has improved since the enactment of Act 138. Cyber truancy officers are required to physically come to the courtroom by many MDJs and seem engaged in improving students' attendance.<sup>141</sup>

### *Social Services and MDJs*

In all meetings, judges expressed frustration with the ability of social services to connect students to resources. In one judge's district, by February or March the county's contracted service providers have full caseloads and can no longer accept new referrals. The Westmoreland County CYS does not provide services or supports for truancy cases and generally does not want to get involved.<sup>142</sup> In another school district, though Service Access Management (SAM) was an available service, by the second week in September, SAM had reached capacity and was unable to

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<sup>134</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>135</sup> Conversation with MDJ, August 15, 2023.

<sup>136</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>137</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

<sup>138</sup> Conversation with MDJ, August 15, 2023.

<sup>139</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

accept new clients. Additionally, services like SAM are voluntary for students. If SAM does a home visit and the family does not accept services, SAM does not press the issue. These students will then eventually end up in truancy court.<sup>143</sup> Another judge saw SAM as an amazing provider with minimal funding, leading to a small staff. This judge felt that expanded funding and therefore expanded staff could bring even more of a positive impact.<sup>144</sup>

The judges articulated that for many students, because of the SAICs and SAIPs, by the time they are seen in the courtroom, all other diversionary options have been exhausted. There are not hidden additional resources that suddenly become available in the courtroom.<sup>145</sup> One judge with a large district stated that she attempts to get students involved in sports or clubs at school that would increase their motivation to attend, but with the attitude of child welfare not wanting to be involved unless there is neglect, there are not many resources available.<sup>146</sup>

One judge summarized the situation saying that the pressing need is to help habitually truant students. A one-hour hearing from the bench does not sufficiently address the needs of the student and family. The parents need somebody who can help them call the appropriate offices to get services for their children. Parents do not know how to navigate the system well enough to find the help that they need. Currently, many county offices do not routinely return phone calls, making it a matter of knowing the correct person to contact to connect a student with services. This judge would like the CYS to become involved with students even when there is no neglect and abuse in the home. She finds value in sending a worker into the home and feels that multiple home visits would be extremely helpful. Often, youth come back into her court with nothing having been done and no change in their situation since the last citation.<sup>147</sup> In one egregious case, the mother would frequently keep her son out of school, stating that he was sick. The son was a good student and was not sick but he missed 60 days of school. It would have been helpful and beneficial to the student and his family to involve the CYS so they could receive services.<sup>148</sup>

### *Training*

New MDJs may go to magistrate school if they are not attorneys. There is very little training on the topic of truancy, which consists of a short section within the criminal procedures training section.<sup>149</sup> One of the first things that one judge did upon taking office was to research truancy and start a discussion with the President Judge and the CYS to learn how to access the diversionary services, the processes for fines, how cases are handled when a youth or family does not pay. There is an annual weeklong training at AOPC and truancy is usually mentioned if there are updates on new laws. However, there is no mention of how to deal with parents and children, only a focus on updates to law and statute.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>144</sup> Conversation with MDJ, August 15, 2023.

<sup>145</sup> MDJ Roundtable, November 1, 2023.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Conversation with MDJ, June 22, 2023.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

*Spotlight: Judge Olasz*

Judge Olasz had been an MDJ since 1988 and is currently the most senior MDJ in Allegheny County. He recalled a seminar the same year the act changed but says that after that they just received bullet point updates. Area meetings would include truancy and the topic would also be covered about once every three years statewide in continuing education.

For Judge Olasz, Act 138 had not changed much about his personal process and philosophy, though he did mention that over the last few years, the number of assets had increased, which helped students tremendously. Judge Olasz's personal approach emphasized his connection and commitment to his community. He has lived in the area his whole life, therefore most of the students that he saw had some kind of connection to him. He granted continuances and expected truant students to demonstrate some kind of improvement, no matter how small. When he held a hearing, he hoped to find any reason why a child was not going to school and find any reason to motivate them to attend school. He stated that he would be in the stands cheering on students in sports as well as cheering them on when they demonstrate improvement between hearings. He would look at grades and disciplinary notes in hearings as well as hearing from building principals and truancy officers. His goal was to find glimmers of hope to children to get them invested in their education. Judge Olasz stated that if a child receives a fine from him, all other interventions have failed. He avoided placing a monetary burden on disadvantaged families as much as possible. He may issue a fine and hold it in abeyance pending the student's improvement. He also encouraged technical school for students who are struggling with school and did not show interest in attending college. He almost never made a decision in the first hearing for a student. On those hearing days, someone from Allegheny Human Services, a representative of a brick and mortar charter school that might be a better fit for some students, and representatives from Gwen's Girls, a group that provides a continuum of services for at-risk girls, were in the courtroom and available to be utilized.

There were a few situations in which Judge Olasz might dismiss a case, including if there was a delay between an issue and the hearing and the situation has been corrected since the absences. Additionally, there were a lot of children who were raising their siblings because their mother was working and could not find childcare. Another common problem was a lack of transportation for displaced students. In these cases, Human Services would try to meet needs for families and arrange pickups for children who did not live near school bus stops. Other reasons included missing buses because of inclement weather, the struggle to bounce back from remote learning, and technology/connectivity issues for cyber students.

Judge Olasz expressed dissatisfaction that sometimes their investigations would come back with no findings from CYF and no meaningful interventions to remove barriers that he found to be obvious. He stated that Allegheny County Human Services did reasonably well with utilizing programs that help the whole family, so there were not multiple students coming before the judge over the course of a few years suffering from the same barriers.

Judge Olasz granted continuances for some of the cases that were filed at the very end of the school year. Instead of evaluating the last few weeks of school for improvement, he would check back after a few weeks of the following school year. If the students were not demonstrating

improvement in the new school year, they would move to other solutions. Otherwise, the case could be dismissed. He noticed that around the holidays and toward the summer, students and parents alike have a more flippant attitude toward attendance.<sup>151</sup>

### *Court System Involvement*

Because MDJs exercise discretion in their position, from county to county the interpretation of magistrate involvement differs. Staffing levels mean they may not have the capacity to take on a caseload of 30 truant students. For schools, one problem with this is the variety of district judges that oversee a school district. There may be discrepancies in the way truancy is handled between judges.<sup>152</sup> A judge might dismiss a case immediately and not put time into the issue for the benefit of the student. An experienced family court judge can be helpful. These cases are frustrating for the school and the court, and the students and teachers. Those who are dealing with truant students should be educated on what kind of issues can lead to truancy.<sup>153</sup> One Advisory Committee member suggested a recommendation to the procedural rules committee to set a higher expectation for MDJs' involvement in truancy, with the caveat that more involvement does not necessarily mean MDJs will treat the issue with the care it requires. Another member advocated for the involvement of courts by saying that dealing with truancy can become adversarial between schools and students. Someone else becoming involved in the conversation could change the dynamic. Additionally, whereas schools cannot require parental involvement, courts can.<sup>154</sup>

Generally, district magistrates do not have knowledge of all the resources that other social services have. However, there are no new resources to which access is unlocked after involvement with the MDJ. A majority of counties have Local Children's Roundtables. MDJs are included in these roundtables, but they do not often attend. If MDJs attended these meetings, they would be aware of the resources that are available. If the Advisory Committee can support these decisions at the MDJ level, it will drastically reduce involvement in the system. The child welfare system has access to a variety of resources. Before a case gets to child welfare, at the MDJ and school level, the involved parties do not always have a good understanding of the resources.<sup>155</sup>

One member believed meaningful family engagement should be part of the resources available at the MDJ hearing. She shared that Allegheny County has a team that goes to truancy hearings and tries to connect families to resources. She believed this system cannot be imposed from the top down; it needs to be built up from the inside out. Family Group Decision Making could be proposed as a best practice at the MDJ level. The definition of family is not just parent and child, it is the larger extended support network as well.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Conversation with Judge Olasz, September 28, 2023.

<sup>152</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

The majority of people that face punitive measures like fines cannot afford to pay these fines. One Advisory Committee member stated that schools will often try to avoid going to the magistrate because they understand that some have negative experiences with the court system and may not be trusting of it or responsive to it.<sup>157</sup>

As part of the Allegheny County IU listening sessions mentioned on page 11, schools perceived that MDJ fines are ineffective in encouraging school attendance. Court referrals damage school relationships with families. If a parent is jailed because they cannot pay a fine, the attendance issue is further complicated. Fines are not effective at motivating a change in student behavior and attendance. Schools also perceived that the MDJ court hearings produced a lot of empty threats with no forward movement. When the families do not see action, there continue to be large numbers of absences. School personnel verbalized that the length of the time involved in the process, from when the citation was filed until the child was in court, could be two to three months and allow the child to have many more absences. At a certain point, the process of referrals and finding services extends so long that the student has fallen too far behind and cannot catch up.<sup>158</sup>

Advisory Committee members noted differing interpretations of the statute that cause filing with the magistrate to delay CYS involvement. In some counties, CYS will not get involved while a child is in the court system, therefore a child could go almost a year without any intervention. Involvement with the magistrate is not meaningful intervention for the child or family. Interpretations by school districts about the interaction between CYS and magistrates are hurting children.<sup>159</sup>

## **CYS**

### *Beaver County Truancy Program*

Mr. Joshua Edenhofer from the Beaver County Truancy Intervention Program presented on the program's success. He first explained the program, saying that it is comprised of three full-time staff that attend meetings when truancy is identified. They sit in on SAICs and magistrate hearings and offer support and talk to families about the reasons for truancy and identify barriers. The staff runs a truancy class on a monthly basis and juvenile probation officer participates in that class. This program was very successful until the covid-19 pandemic, which changed the needs of families. Beaver County was averaging eight to 12 referrals for truancy up until 2019-20. In 2021, there were 44 referrals and there were 60 referrals in 2022 – obviously a significant increase post-covid-19. A response in Beaver County was to set up a truancy/parenting program in which parents go through a parenting program and the staff works with families to address the root causes of truancy. Twenty-three families did this in the first year of the program, 2022.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>158</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>159</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>160</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students were receiving as many as 50, 60, or 70 absences. Because of this, Beaver County now has an intensive truancy worker who only covers truancy and is working with the truant children two to three times a week along with two other staff members who work on truancy intervention. They are looking to hire an additional intensive position. This is funded through the needs-based budget process with OCYF. The two intensive positions were created by moving things around within the agencies. One worker was a foster care worker who was reallocated. The other was an ongoing caseworker that went out on home visits and because of their experience, Beaver County gave them a specialized position working with truancy.<sup>161</sup>

The most common root issues causing truancy in Beaver County were substance abuse and untreated mental health concerns. The truancy program attempts to encourage family participation early in the process, like during the SAIP process.<sup>162</sup>

In the last six years, program workers have attended on average 900 to 1,100 MDJ hearings a year, excluding the first pandemic year in which only around 300 MDJ hearings were attended. Eight hundred ninety-one school meetings were attended in 2016-17, 1,600 in 2017-18, 1,800 in 2018-19, 1,200 in 2019-20, and last year 1,687 meetings were attended.<sup>163</sup>

The program is involved with 14 schools. The program policy is universal, but it is not always implemented the same in all districts. There are internal variations with information the program receives from different schools. The schools use forms to collect information at early meetings, but the forms are school specific so different information is being collected amongst the districts. However, most schools have no problem with the truancy workers being at SAIPs, which ensures the necessary information is being collected.<sup>164</sup>

Family involvement in the program varies throughout the districts. Some districts are better than others at involving parents. An important goal of the intervention program is to reach parents because engaging with parents is effective at reducing truancy. The program will sometimes utilize incentives like buying a family dinner if the child goes to school for two weeks. Mr. Edenhofer did not have a statistic to represent how often extended family supports were involved but did say that anecdotally, this type of involvement is successful.<sup>165</sup>

Truancy referrals in Beaver County are low and Mr. Edenhofer credited that to the early engagement with students. There was an emphasis in Beaver County on in-home services, so numbers of children in the system were fairly low in general.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.



### *Foster Children Truancy Barriers*

Ms. Dawn Traill, Advisory Committee Member from the Office of Children, Youth and Families within the PA Department of Human Services presented on her work on tracking foster child truancy and increasing the quality and quantity of communication between schools and social workers. She asked different involved entities about specific details for each foster child, which caused each level of the system to look into and keep track of those details. The questions she asked were ones like: What is the child's IEP? Who is signing it? Where is the child living? Where are they going to school? What is their transportation? She believed one person from each agency should be asking these questions to ensure everyone had the proper information. The agencies involved in her project experienced strong collaboration because there were no enemy lines; everyone was helping each other understand the system. As part of a project called "The Education Barriers to Permanency Project Pilot," she developed a glossary of terms so schools and case workers could understand each other. She also developed a list of people to contact for specific requests or questions. Ms. Traill stated that for the foster children, truancy was not usually one of the reasons for placement. But when a child was returned to their home, truancy often became a problem. Westmoreland does rapid family groups, within 10 days, which Ms. Traill was able to get scheduled quickly to help students receive transportation to school as soon as possible. They also created a bench card for the judges to be able to ask the right questions to social workers. The workers also had those questions so they could prepare well for a court appearance.<sup>167</sup>

Ms. Traill stated that when she left the program, there were 186 foster children, not just those dealing with truancy, and there could now be anywhere from 100 to 260 children. Truancy would never be the sole reason a child was in foster care, but it could be a secondary issue. Ms. Traill thought that a database where she could put in information and then schools would be immediately notified of a foster child would be helpful, so children do not get left behind. She mentioned California as an example of a state that has a helpful data system for foster children.<sup>168</sup>

Ms. Traill stated that with the younger children they focused on family engagement, but the root causes for older students are often substance abuse by either the child or their parent. There are small pockets of community groups that are running parenting community programs.<sup>169</sup>

The practice of diversion of the youth prior to referral is extremely important. Any ability to collect data to identify trends in diversionary activities is important and would be helpful. Workers in the truancy field need to embrace the community supports and find ways to help them work together with agencies.<sup>170</sup>

### *Allegheny Human Services*

Ms. Samantha Murphy, Resource Services Manager and Education Liaison for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, gave a presentation to the Act 138 Advisory Committee on the positive and negative effects of the changes in policy since the implementation

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<sup>167</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

of Act 138. The positive changes Ms. Murphy noted included the compulsory school age changes, requiring a written SAIP from schools, clearer definitions of truant and habitually truant, and a course of action that focused on identifying and addressing the root causes of a student's truancy. Some negative effects of the changes were a lack of consistency from MDJs across the state, a frequent use of fines and jail time even though these corrective actions are not mandatory, and the persistence of duplicative citations, even though Act 138 was supposed to eliminate these. Schools also do not always demonstrate proof that a SAIC was held and schools do not always consider barriers caused by disabilities when addressing truancy. Lastly, Ms. Murphy stressed that notifying child welfare about truancy before every citation is treating truancy as neglect or child abuse before the hearing is ever held. A citation notice to child welfare acts like a referral.<sup>171</sup>

Allegheny Human Services uses an integrated model so that funding can be utilized across different offices to support children in providing services.<sup>172</sup>

The Education Success Truancy Prevention Workgroup created a roundtable that produced five recommendations for the state to utilize in their response to truancy.<sup>173</sup> Allegheny County modeled their local truancy committee after these recommendations:

1. Demonstrate effective collaboration including sharing the accountability and responsibility for truancy,
2. Create an educational culture/climate that prioritizes students' connections to their schools and engages families,
3. Implement specific strategies with measurable outcomes targeting prevention, early identification and intervention,
4. Track truancy data and program outcomes and share information with stakeholders, and
5. Build sustainable funding bases and allocate resources based on data informed decisions and partnerships that maximize efficiencies.<sup>174</sup>

Allegheny Human Services committed to a focus on the positive end of attendance; preventing chronic absenteeism through school campaigns emphasizing the importance of good attendance, not the threat of punishment for failure to meet certain standards. The plan looks for preventative use of child welfare funded services to address the root causes of truancy without having to involve an active child welfare case. This approach will result in the school and community and family strengthening being the first line of defense against truancy, incorporating the ideals "teach, engage, communicate, support, build on strengths, never give up, encourage

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<sup>171</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> The Education Success Truancy Prevention workgroup, commissioned by the PA State Roundtable, started in December 2009. Its final report was released in 2017.

<sup>174</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

school stability.” MDJ citations would encourage removing barriers, and CYS involvement would assess risk and intervene where safety is a concern.<sup>175</sup>

The pilot program found there to be eight major aspects of the problem: homelessness, high overlap in Human Service involvement, breakdown in court system communication, policy inconsistencies from school to school, a lack of positive engagement or a positive school environment, enrollment and immunization challenges, community involvement, and a lack of focus on older youth.<sup>176</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated this problem, causing higher rates of learning loss for students with disabilities, lack of access due to the workforce shortage, transportation or internet connection, decreased safety for students in their community, and an increase in mental health concerns.<sup>177</sup>

The approach does not believe that harsh consequences produce positive outcomes. What does produce positive outcomes is positive engagement with a student and their family. Examples of this would include a school adult being extra engaged with a student as they attend school, helping families with housing and connecting them to necessary resources, enrolling students in school sooner, and addressing mental health concerns. The above-mentioned 2010 recommendations from the Education Success Truancy Prevention Workgroup help parents and schools collaborate on removing the barriers that keep their children from attending school. In-home supports like parent-child conflict, mentoring, tutoring, behavioral health support, refugee and immigration support, academic support, clothing, housing, and many others can begin to remove barriers for truant students.<sup>178</sup>

In partnering with courts, Allegheny DHS provides support at the citation hearings to offer adjudication alternative programming. The family strengthening specialists attend these hearings, not the child abuse workers. Their local policy is that child welfare staff will not collect and respond to truancy citations. In the 2022-23 school year, out of 3,300 students issued citations, DHS workers connected 1,400 with services.<sup>179</sup>

Forty percent of students already have human services involvement when truancy is determined. Thirty percent are good candidates for in-home supports, and 55 percent have increased attendance after Allegheny DHS involvement.<sup>180</sup>

Ms. Murphy highlighted Allegheny County’s Truancy Diversion Protocol, a local rule where family court judges can write to the MDJ receiving the truancy citation and explain a child’s unique situation and request that the judge dismiss the truancy citation if the child is already involved in family court and has a judge familiar with their situation. The MDJ is not required to dismiss the citation, it just provides them with more context on the child’s unique circumstances.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

Children who are already involved in Juvenile Court will have truancy matters handled by their Juvenile Court Judge instead of having two separate court systems involved. The DHS Focus on Attendance Partnership will send a truancy notification to the Juvenile Court Judge, who will enter an Order Confirming Jurisdiction and possibly schedule an expedited hearing. This Order Confirming Jurisdiction will be sent to the MDJ and they will dispose of the truancy citation.<sup>181</sup> The mindset shift lies in sharing resources and having open communication. The assumption that because the system does not know what people are doing they must be doing something wrong is damaging.<sup>182</sup>

The parting thoughts Ms. Murphy left the group with were five recommendations:

1. At the school level, think about student attendance improvement plans for every student, 12 months a year. Tier interventions based on student and family needs.
2. Fund and support school-based attendance improvement programs built on positive engagement and positive school climate that are designed to assess for root causes and remove barriers.
3. Fund and support community-based attendance improvement programs built on positive engagement and community involvement that are intentionally designed to support school outcomes.
4. Offer adjudication alternative programming at the Magisterial District Court level built on positive engagement that is intentionally designed to support school outcomes.
5. Remove “truancy” as a condition of dependency and stop notifying the local child welfare agency when a truancy citation is filed.

### ***Community Program***

#### *Berks Initiative for School Attendance (BISA) and the Advancing School Attendance Program (ASAM) Presentation*

Dr. Betsy Adams and Ms. Stephanie Esser presented on the Berks Initiative for School Attendance (BISA) and the Advancing School Attendance Program (ASAP) through Service Access Management (SAM).<sup>183</sup>

Berks County contracted with Service Access Management (SAM) to establish a remediation program known as the Advancing School Attendance Program (ASAP.) Schools within the county refer students who have not responded to the school’s initiatives. ASAP then works with the family and the school with the goal of improving school attendance. The program

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<sup>181</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

uses a case management model to complete assessments and interventions. These are part of the preventative services that focus on strengthening families for the purpose of preventing placement. The child welfare system has a due diligence to the families that they serve and to the court and must provide documentation and testimony that they have provided the youth and families with services and interventions that are a reasonable effort.<sup>184</sup>

### Process

In Berks County, truancy cases must first be referred to ASAP, they are not directly referred to CYS. When ASAP receives a referral, they send a letter, as well as two phone calls and two home visits in an attempt to engage with the family. They present themselves as preventative to CYS getting involved.<sup>185</sup> Once the family agrees to services, ASAP will try to identify barriers to attendance and create solutions to remove those barriers. ASAP also sets up meetings between parents and schools. Families can also reach out to ASAP and referrals can come from other sources like mental health professionals.<sup>186</sup> More often than not ASAP is unable to engage families. They do the home visits, letters, and the calls and parents do not respond, or they respond to decline services. About 30 to 40 percent have agreed to services. The program has just been extended to Adams County and every family contacted so far has agreed to services.

Program staff focuses on attendance during three timeframes and identifies three distinct tiers of attendance. The timeframes are captured at three months prior to being referred to the program, three months into services and three months after being placed on monitoring. During monitoring, youth are mostly on their own to see if can maintain attendance without the support of staff. In Tier 1, a youth misses nine percent or less of available days. In Tier 2, a youth misses between ten percent to nineteen percent of available days and in Tier 3, a youth misses more than twenty percent of available days.<sup>187</sup>

Program staff complete an informal assessment with the student and family to look into the following areas: Basic needs/living situation; education and employment history; finances/mental health/behavioral health/school environment; substance use and more. Those areas that are identified as barriers from this assessment are then used to create goals to improve attendance.<sup>188</sup> The Reading city schools struggle to get parents to attend meetings but so do the other schools. BISA encourages schools to still hold the SAIC without parents if they are unresponsive because the subsequent steps cannot be pursued until this conference is held.<sup>189</sup>

### Funding

Participation in ASAP is free to the schools and the families. The program is funded by multiple county sources. Ten percent of the funding for staff costs comes through the county. The remainder is from needs based grants written by Berks County Children Youth Services and Berks

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<sup>184</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> E-mail, Stephanie Esser, September 13, 2023.

<sup>188</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

County Juvenile Probation Officers. The funding is called Alternative Truancy Prevention Program and is submitted in their budget under Special Grants. These are state funds to the county and the state submits to federal funding.<sup>190</sup>

### Measures of Effectiveness

In the 2011-2012 school year, there were 181 referrals to ASAP. The number of referrals has grown substantially and was 879 in the 2020-2021 school year.

In Berks County, 17 high schools have graduation rates of 90 percent or above. Eight high schools have graduation rate of 95 percent or above. For comparison purposes, the state average graduation rate is 89.5 percent.<sup>191</sup>

In 2023, 68 percent of ASAP program participants improved attendance after three months and 96 percent of program participants improved attendance after six months. None of the youth who successfully completed the ASAP program went on to become involved with CYS.<sup>192</sup>

### *Communication Between Agencies*

Advisory Committee members emphasized that the system is bringing in three different agencies to mitigate one behavior: MDJs, CYS, and the schools. Everyone is operating on a different process, which causes confusion.<sup>193</sup> Truancy reduction relies on a combination of programs from different social services. In the current system, some of the problem is that once CYS and magistrates get involved, there are some ways those programs no longer work as well together.<sup>194</sup>

One Advisory Committee member believed communication is effective in the counties that have local roundtables. However, schools often do not show up to the meetings even though they are invited. It takes time to build trust with the other agencies, but once built, the trust can strengthen communications. There should be clear, written policies and agencies should be accountable to adhere to their processes.

Advisory Committee members agreed that addressing preventative measures in the report was just as important as process changes. Without changes upstream, the system would continue to experience a flood of truancy referrals. Though a list of things each agency can improve on in their process will be helpful, preventative measures should help to address the problem upstream while process changes adjust the way truancy is handled downstream. Collaboration needs specificity all the way through the system.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>194</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>195</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2023.

One member believed the reform should come in how schools process truancy cases, believing that changes to the MDJ process would not be realistic. Another member was of the opinion that schools are unfairly burdened in dealing with truancy and offered that there is less accountability for MDJs and CYS to take these cases seriously; CYS can say their caseloads are full and MDJs are able to exercise discretion by dismissing cases or not imposing fines. But schools will always be held accountable for their truancy numbers.<sup>196</sup> One member emphasized that involving the three entities but holding only one of them accountable creates problematic relationships between schools and other entities. Schools are the central focus of the statute, so the schools naturally have more responsibility. Schools bear the primary obligations and they do not have funding to implement helpful changes.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2023.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.





## *Introduction*

Joint State staff prepared three surveys for three different populations that deal with truancy: schools, magisterial district judges (MDJs), and County Children and Youth (CYS) offices. For each of the three surveys, the process was similar.

An initial school survey draft was created by a small working group of the Act 138 Advisory Committee members. The survey was distributed by Midwestern Intermediate Unit (IU IV) to the other IU directors with the request that it be forwarded to all of the superintendents within their regions. The survey was also distributed by the PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools to their membership. Two hundred respondents filled out the survey in October and November of 2023.

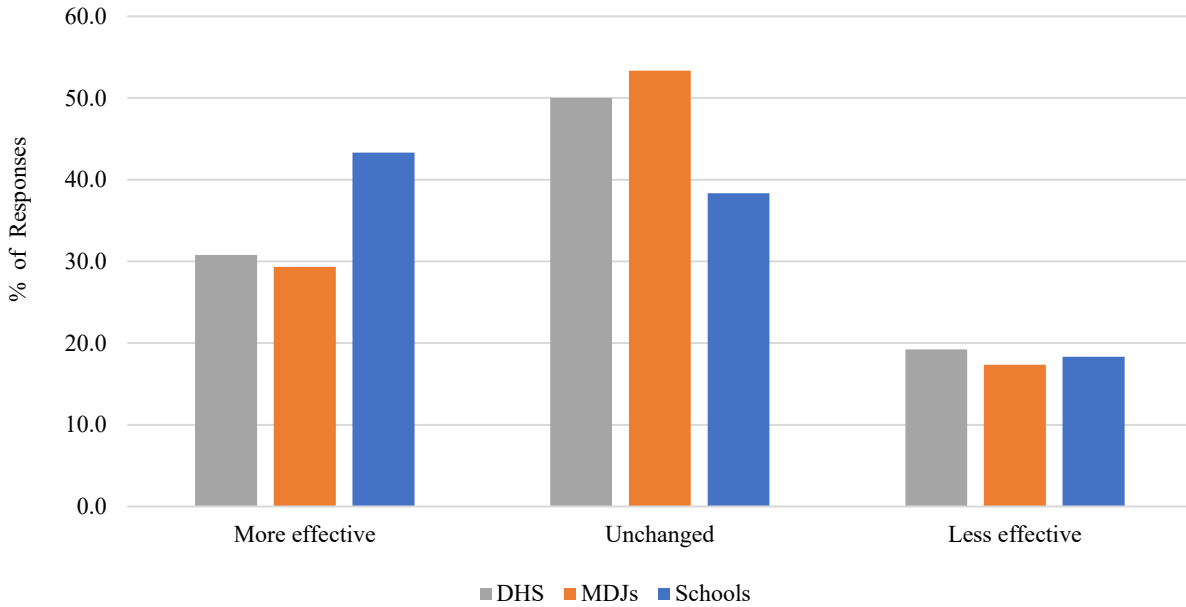
For the survey of MDJs, an initial draft was created by a small working group of Act 138 Advisory Committee members. Several former MDJs then reviewed the survey questions and changes were made based on feedback from these individuals. The survey was then created in Survey Monkey and distributed by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) to 546 magisterial district judges. As Philadelphia County does not use the statewide MDJ system, they are not included in this survey. Eighty-six respondents filled out the survey in October and November of 2023.

An initial draft of the survey for CYS was created by a small working group from within the Act 138 Advisory Committee. An education liaison from a County Department of Human Services office agreed to test the survey and changes were made based on feedback from this individual. The survey was then created in Survey Monkey. The survey link was sent from the Director of the Bureau of Child and Family Services within the PA Department of Human Services to the four regional directors, who then sent it to the county directors within their regions. Because of the wide variety of roles of respondents, survey respondents were told that they could skip questions to which they did not know the answer. Although 52 respondents filled out the survey, on certain questions a large percentage of respondents did not answer.

## Survey Comparisons

Chart 2

### Act 138 Changes' Effects on the Truancy Process



In the enabling legislation in which Joint State was directed to undertake this study, Joint State was directed to study “procedures for how a school handles children who are truant and habitually truant and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures in improving school attendance and whether the procedures should be revised.”

Because of this charge, the same question was posed to each of the groups of respondents: Did the changes instituted by Act 138 make the process more effective, unchanged, or less effective? School respondents were most likely to say that Act 138 had changed the truancy process in ways that make it more effective. Almost 44 percent of school respondents chose that option. Thirty-eight percent of school respondents stated that Act 138 had no effect on the truancy process at their schools and 18 percent said that the process was less effective since implementation of Act 138. For PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and MDJ respondents, the most common answer was that the implementation of Act 138 did not change the effectiveness of the process, with 50 percent of DHS respondents and around 53 percent of MDJs responding this way. Only around 38 percent of school respondents answered in kind. Both MDJ and DHS results hovered around 30 percent of respondents saying that the system was more effective. The three groups had a similar portion of respondents say that the system was less effective, with DHS having the most at around 19 percent, schools recording around 18 percent, and MDJs having around 17 percent.

On the question about why Act 138 had an impact on truancy, the 91 school survey respondents were divided in their answers. Many of them answered that the School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) process helped schools and families identify obstacles that could be mitigated. Others expressed frustration that, despite being able to identify obstacles and potential solutions, the availability of services remains scarce, or has even decreased over the past several years.

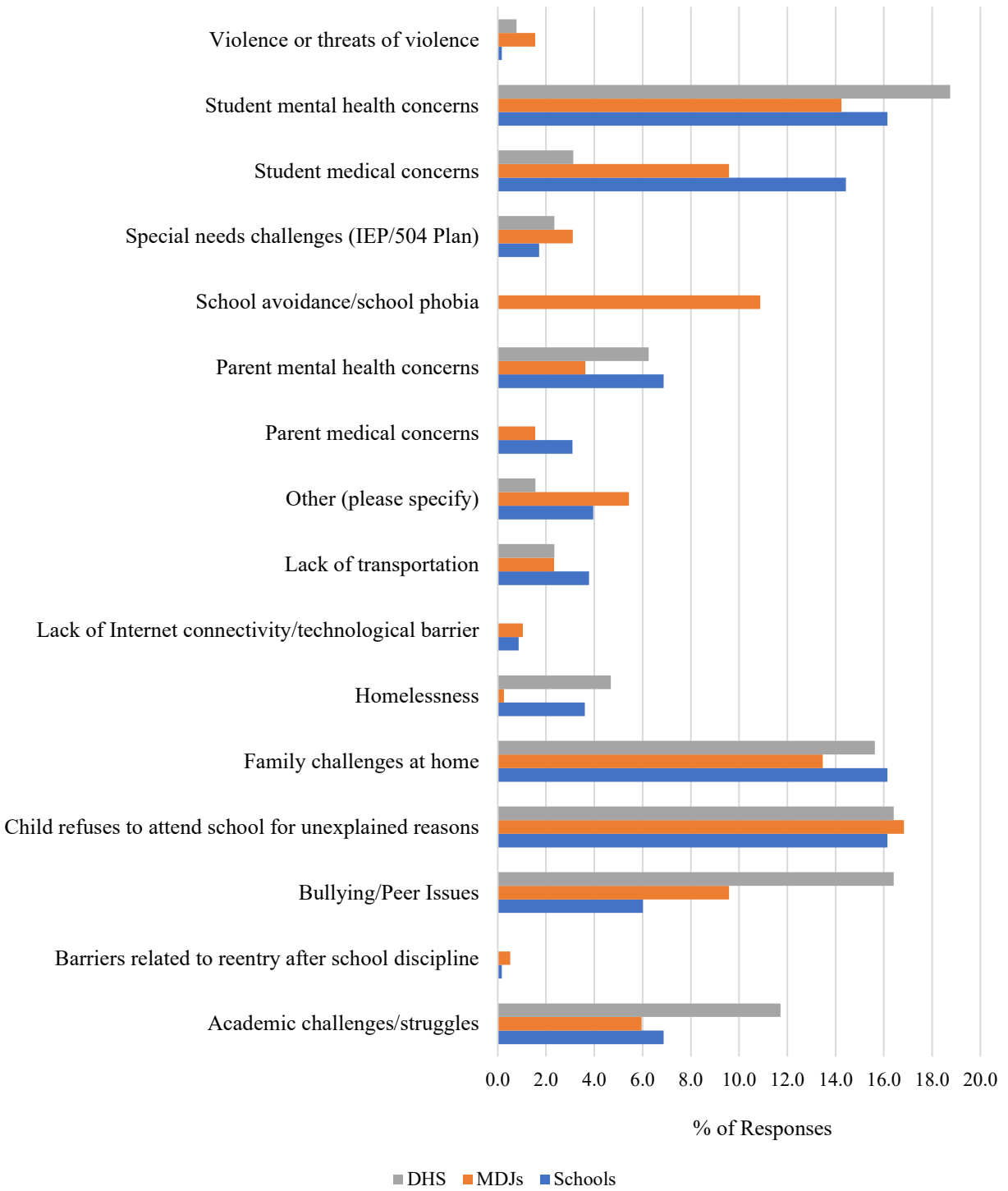
There were some answers from the school survey that might indicate misunderstanding of Act 138 and the truancy process. One school respondent stated that Act 138 doubled the number of days students can miss school before they are cited. Another school stated that Act 138 limits the school's options to engage CYS because CYS will not accept "complaints" about a family if the family has been cited for truancy.

When asked to elaborate on their responses to the question about the effectiveness of Act 138, two DHS respondents stated that the process was more effective because the new statute provided clear expectations of schools and clearer consequences for MDJs to impose. Three respondents noticed no change in process or referral policy. Three respondents mentioned COVID-19, either saying it made results impossible to assess fairly or that it exacerbated attendance problems. Four respondents noted the rising number of truancy cases, regardless of whether the changes made the process more effective. The state clearly has a growing truancy problem. Seven respondents felt that schools were not doing enough, either stating that the schools did not have the resources to devote adequate attention or prevention services to students who needed it, did not have good communication and relationship with the agencies, or did not prioritize truancy prevention. One respondent summed up this conundrum:

More effective for the schools that follow it. However, the changes didn't include any additional money for school districts to invest in school/community-based truancy programs. This left schools and county CYS scrambling to fill a need. Additionally, schools lacked the staff and time to complete School Attendance Improvement Conferences for all habitually truant students and lacked programs to meet the needs of those students.

**Chart 3**

**Common Reasons for Truancy All Surveys**



<b>Table 5 Percent of Responses for Each Reason for Truancy</b>			
<b>Reason</b>	<b>DHS</b>	<b>MDJs</b>	<b>Schools</b>
Academic challenges/struggles	11.7%	6.0%	6.9%
Barriers related to reentry after school discipline	0.0	0.5	0.2
Bullying/Peer Issues	16.4	9.6	6.0
Child refuses to attend school for unexplained reasons	16.4	16.8	16.2
Family challenges at home	15.6	13.5	16.2
Homelessness	4.7	0.3	3.6
Lack of Internet connectivity/technological barrier	0.0	1.0	0.9
Lack of transportation	2.3	2.3	3.8
Other (please specify)	1.6	5.4	4.0
Parent medical concerns	0.0	1.6	3.1
Parent mental health concerns	6.3	3.6	6.9
School avoidance/school phobia <sup>198</sup>	--	10.9	0.0
Special needs challenges (IEP/504 Plan)	2.3	3.1	1.7
Student medical concerns	3.1	9.6	14.4
Student mental health concerns	18.8	14.2	16.2
Violence or threats of violence	0.8	1.6	0.2

The other question that was the same across the three surveys asked respondents to check the top five reasons for truancy that they noted. To create the percentages for the above chart comparing the three surveys, the number of responses for each option was divided by the total number of responses for this question. For DHS, the top five were: student mental health concerns, child refusing to attend for unexplained reasons, bullying, family challenges at home, and academic challenges or struggles. For MDJs, the most common answer was child refuses to attend school for unknown reasons. Next was student mental health concerns, followed by family challenges at home. School avoidance was the fourth most common answer, and finally, bullying and peer issues and student medical concerns were tied for fifth most common. The top three

<sup>198</sup> School avoidance/school phobia was accidentally left out of the DHS survey.

responses for schools all had the same amount of selections. They were student mental health concerns, family challenges at home, and child refuses to attend school for unexplained reasons. Student medical concerns were the next most common answer. Two responses were tied for the fifth most common answer. They were academic challenges and struggles and student medical concerns. As the chart indicates, many of the top options were similar among all three surveys, namely child refuses to attend school for unexplained reasons, student mental health concerns, and family challenges at home.

In the school survey, those who selected “Other (please specify)” shared some common concerns. The majority of these short-form answers stated that parents were either not properly exercising their authority over their children or did not value education highly enough to compel their children to attend school. Another answer given by some respondents was a lack of student motivation or interest in school. One respondent stated that students lacked connection to school. A few respondents stated that the lack of legal consequences was a factor in student truancy. One respondent mentioned transportation as an issue that they were actively trying to resolve. Another respondent suggested a lack of understanding of truancy law and policy, one mentioned psychosomatic symptoms, and lastly one said “We are not sure. The ones that miss a lot of school without documentation appear to be abusing the system.”

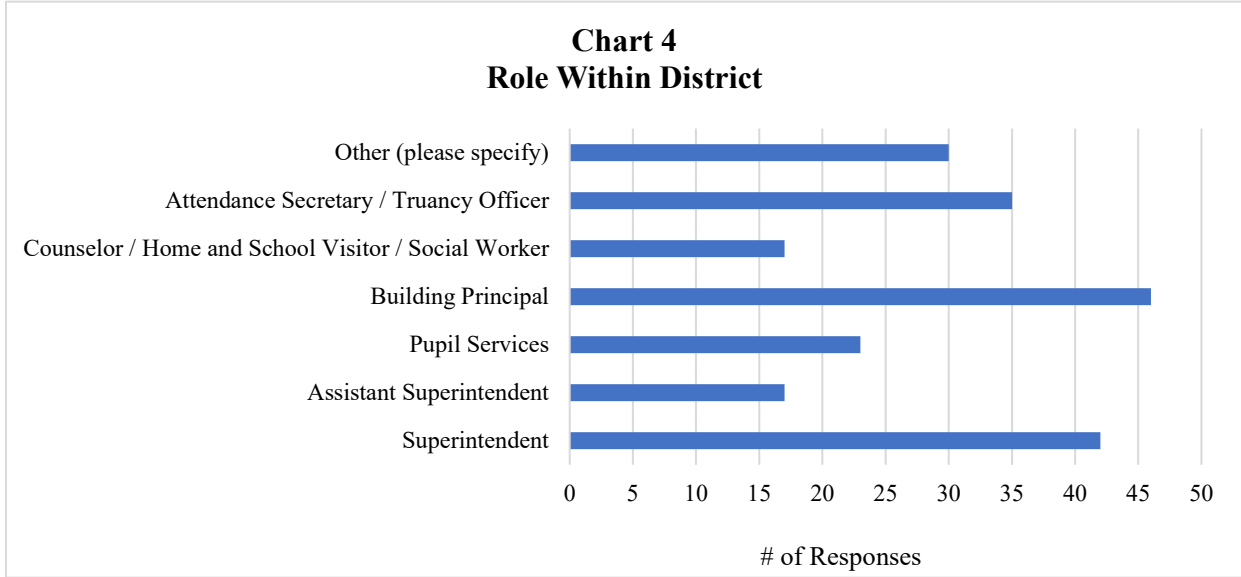
In the MDJ survey, those who selected “Other (please specify)” shared similar themes as school respondents. Again, the most popular response by far was a lack of parents exercising authority or not viewing attending school as a priority for their child. One respondent said parents were not keeping up with writing excuses for their child in a timely manner. Interestingly, two respondents specifically stated that parents did not enforce good boundaries with electronics and children were staying up all night on social media and then did not want to go to school. A few respondents noted lack of student motivation and one stated that students do not have excuses turned in for absences. One simply stated “Child verbalizes that they don’t care and don’t want to go to school!” Another response stated that 85 percent of their truant students’ families deal with substance abuse, mental health, children with chronic medical conditions, breakdown of the nuclear family, or incarceration of one or more parents. One respondent said a cyber school student admitted that he was autistic and chose to get a job to help support his family instead of attending school at 17 years old.

In the DHS survey, only two respondents selected “Other (please specify).” One cited child mental health concerns, which was an option available to be selected. The other stated “Parents do not value or prioritize education.”

## School Survey

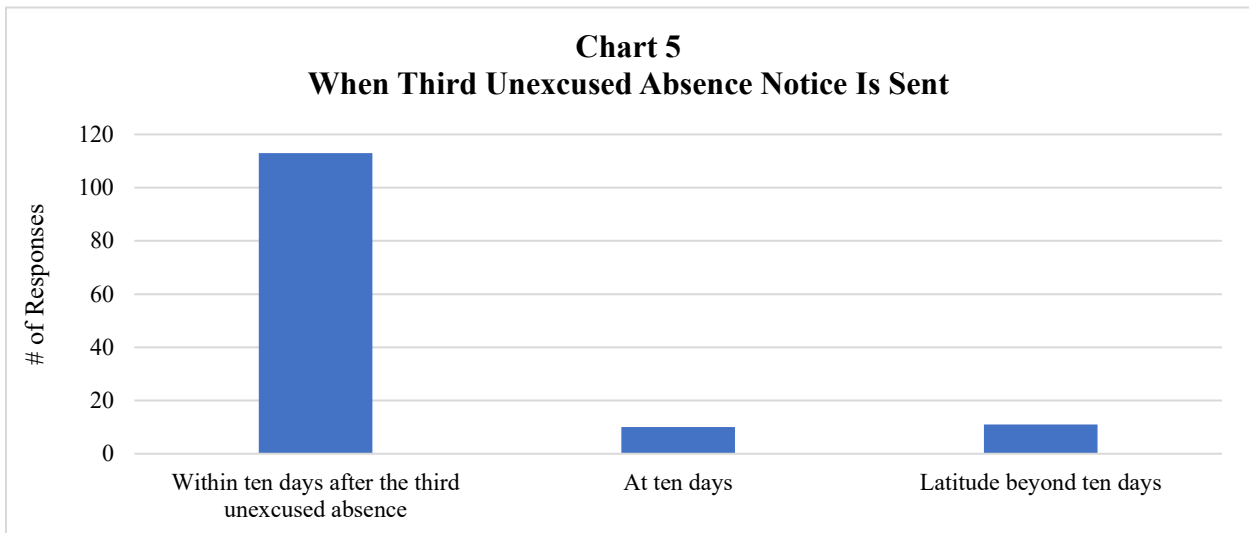
The survey sent to schools in the fall of 2023 started with background questions.

### Background

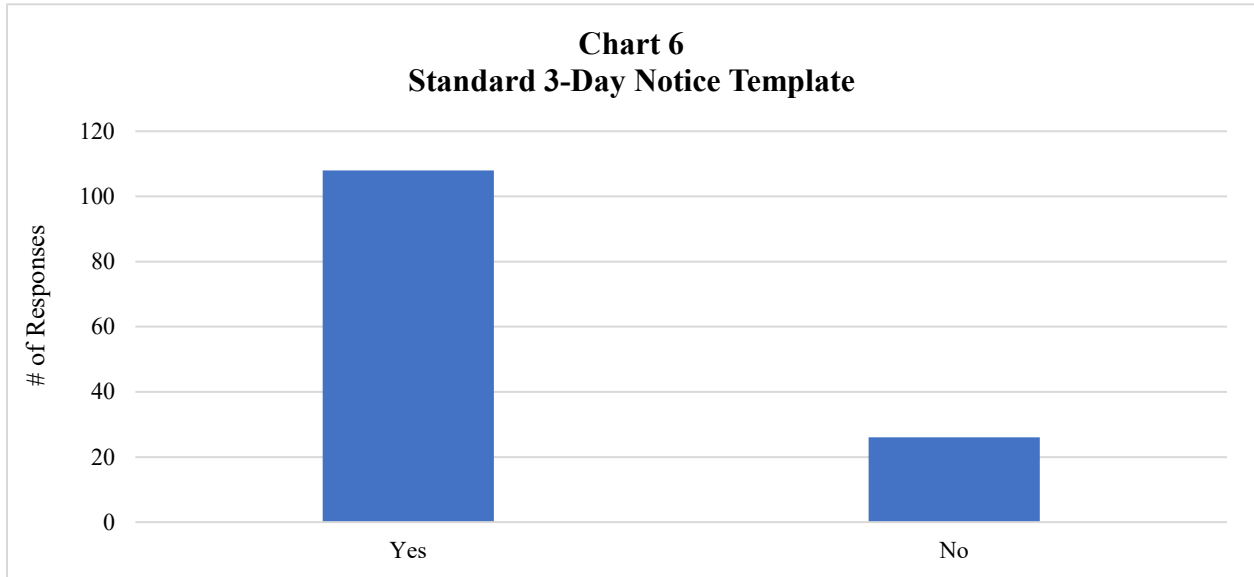


Survey respondents were asked what their role in the school is. The most common response, with 23 percent, was building principal. Superintendent was the next most common response, with 21 percent specifying that role. Attendance Secretary or Truancy Officer was next with 18 percent. Assistant Superintendent and “Counselor/Home and School Visitor/Social Worker” were both nine percent. Sixteen percent specified other, such as assistant principal.

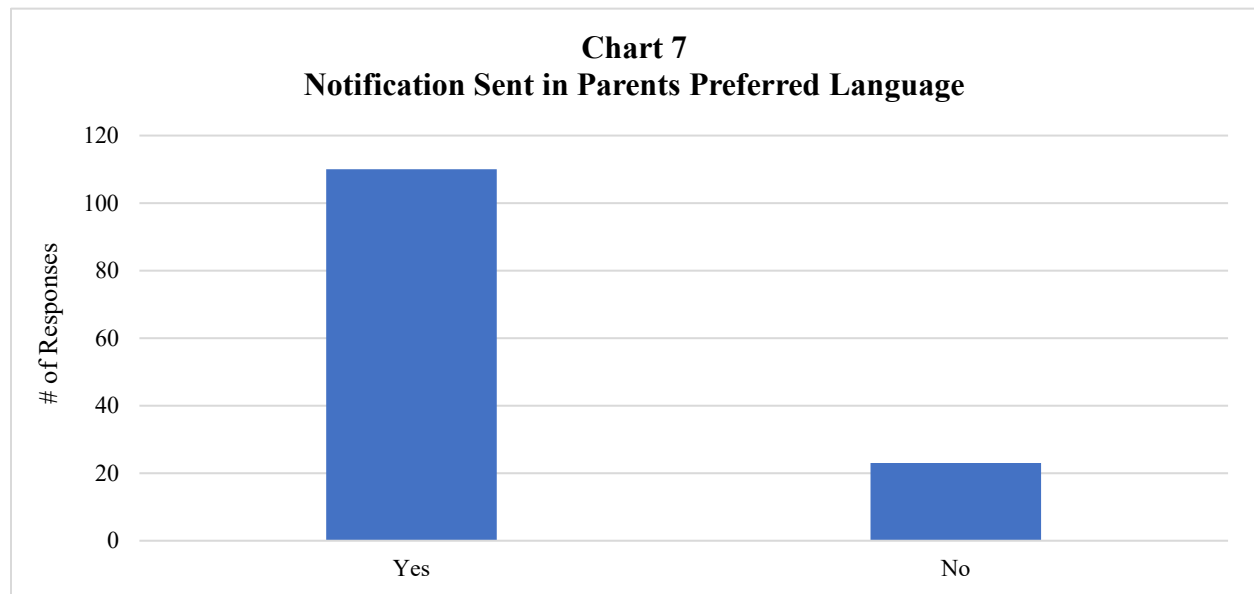
### Attendance Policy



Respondents were asked when they sent the third unexcused absence notice. Eighty-four percent send the notice within ten days after the third unexcused absence. The remaining responses were fairly evenly split between eight percent who give latitude beyond ten days and the seven percent of respondents who send the third unexcused absence notice right at ten days.



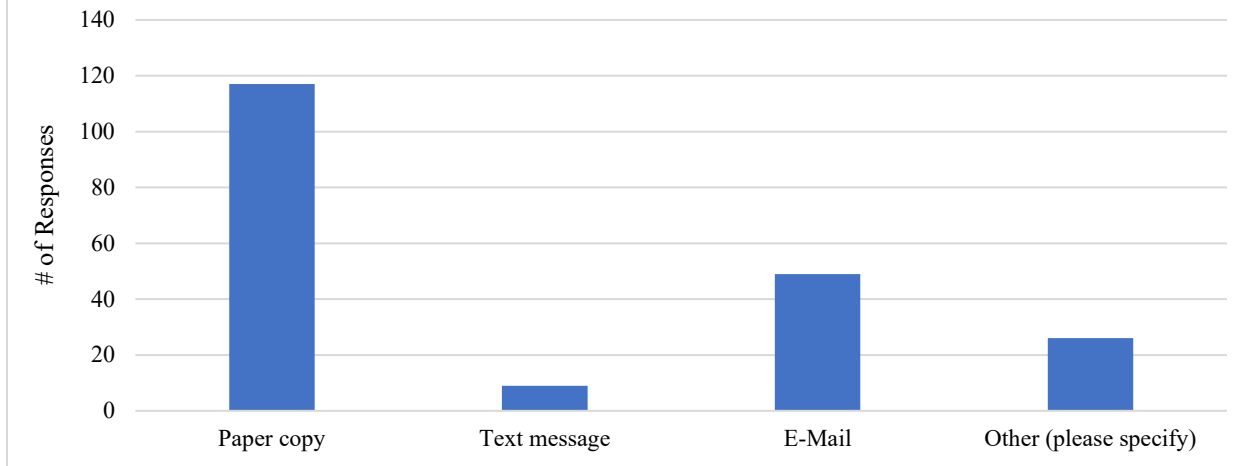
Respondents were asked if their school has a standard 3-Day Notice Template. Eighty-one percent do and 19 percent do not.



Respondents were asked if they send the notification in the parents preferred language. Eighty-three percent do and 17 percent do not.

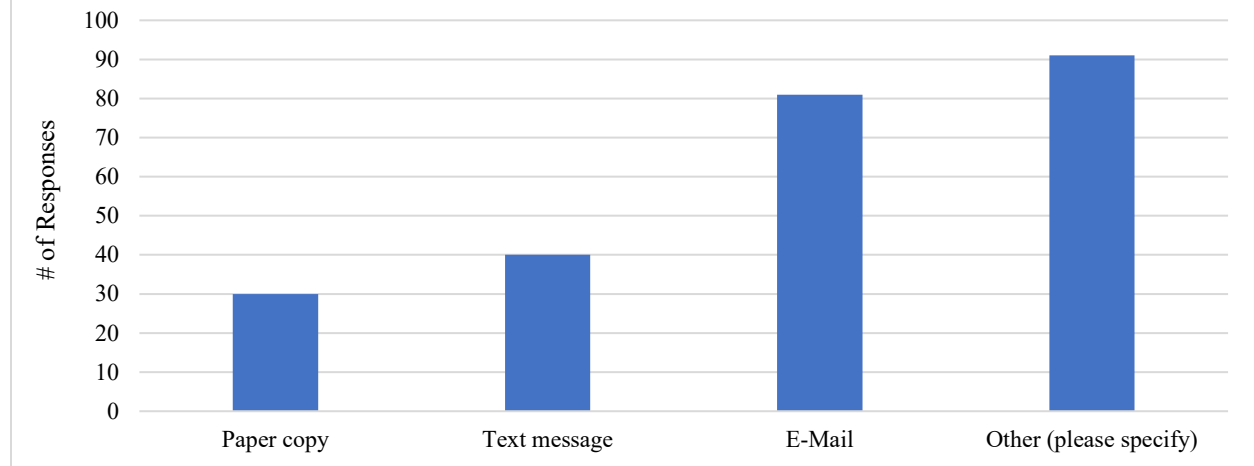


**Chart 8  
How Notification is Sent to Parents**

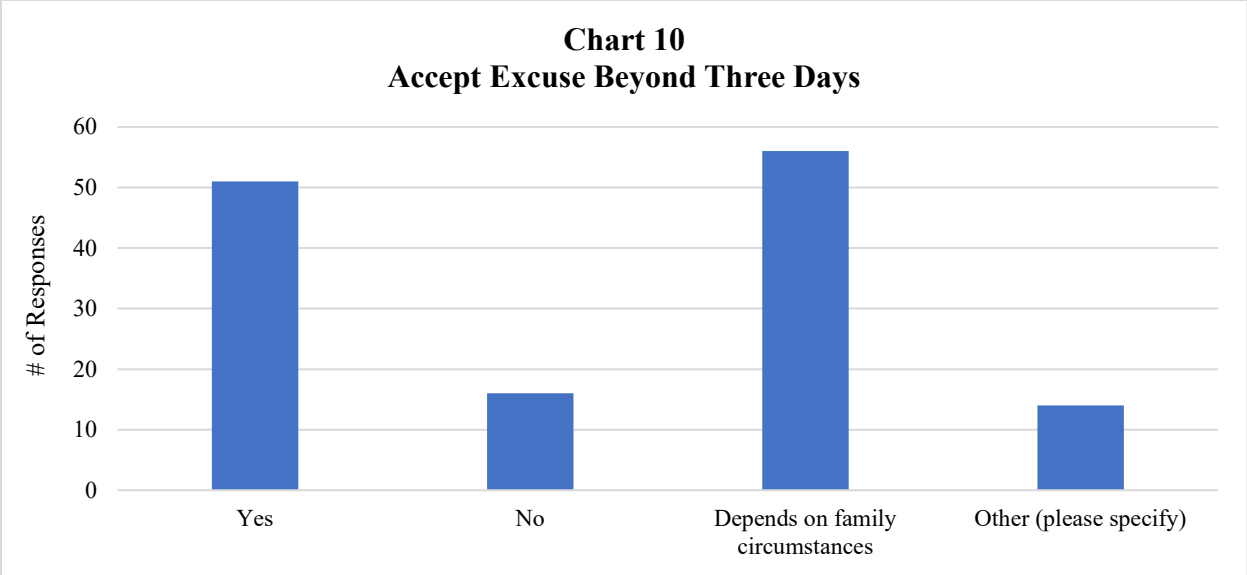


School respondents were asked how notification is sent to parents. Because schools were asked to check all that apply, the amount exceeds 100 percent. More than three quarters, or 86 percent, said that parents are notified through a paper copy. The next most common notification method was e-mail, with 37 percent. Only seven percent of the schools use text message for the 3-day notice. Those who filled in “Other” mentioned phone, or school district parent portals.

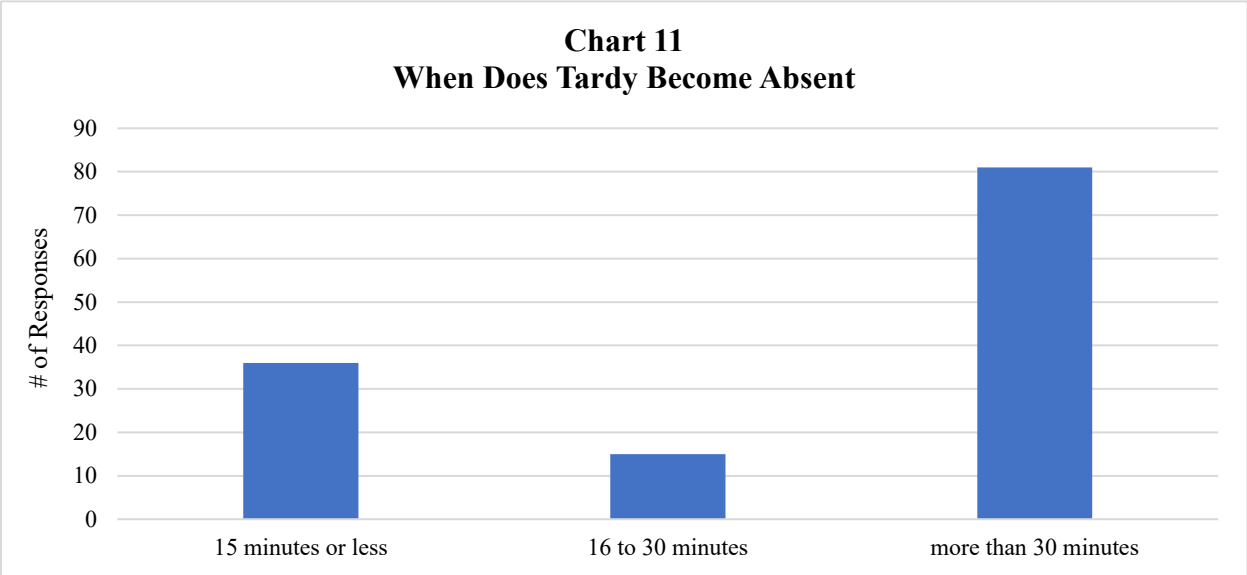
**Chart 9  
Correspondence Method with Parents on Attendance**



For daily absences, schools send messages to parents through e-mail, 59 percent, text message, 29 percent and paper copy, 22 percent. Because schools were asked to check all that apply, the amount exceeds 100 percent. Sixty-seven percent of schools also checked “Other,” with phone call and automated message being the most common other response.

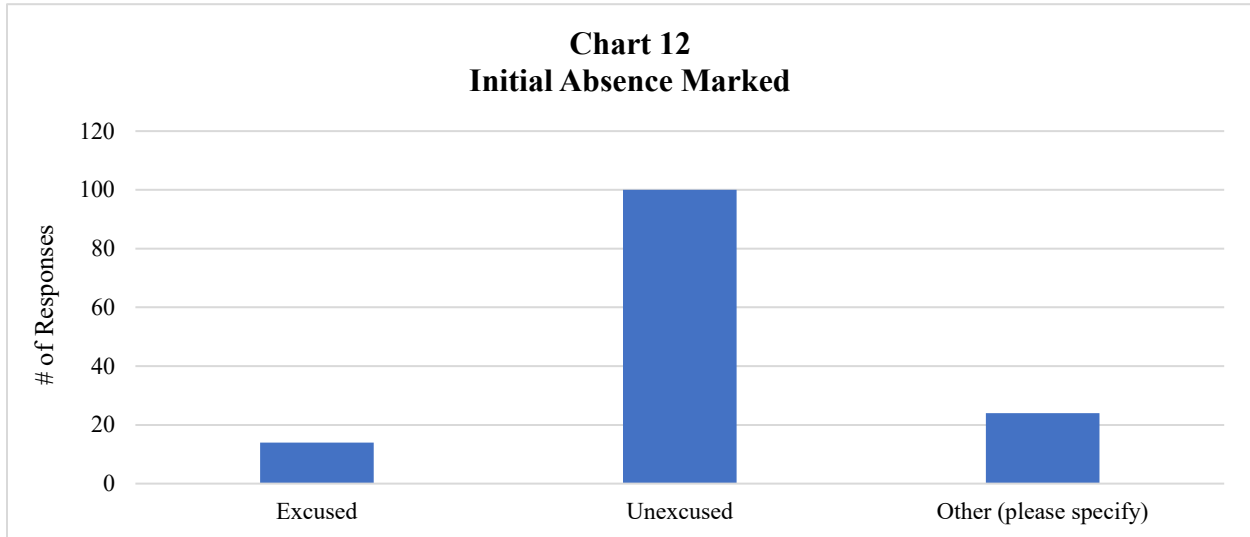


Respondents were asked if their district accepts excuse notes beyond three school days after the date of the absence. Thirty-seven percent said yes; 12 percent said no. Forty-one percent of respondents replied that it depends on family circumstances. For the 14 respondents who chose “Other,” a consistent theme was that a late excuse was accepted after three days if it was from a doctor or medical facility.



Schools were asked at what point a tardy student is recorded as absent. For more than the majority of respondents, or 62 percent, students are marked as absent when they have missed more than 30 minutes of school. Twenty seven percent record a tardy student as absent when they miss 15 minutes or less while the remaining 11 percent record a tardy student as absent when they miss

between 16 and 30 minutes of school. Advisory Committee members asked if these absences would be changed if students arrive later and explain why they were tardy. The question in the survey only asked about the original tardy becoming an absence.<sup>199</sup>



Almost three quarters, or 73 percent, of the respondents stated that when students are initially marked absent, it is recorded as unexcused. Ten percent stated that the absences are initially recorded as excused.

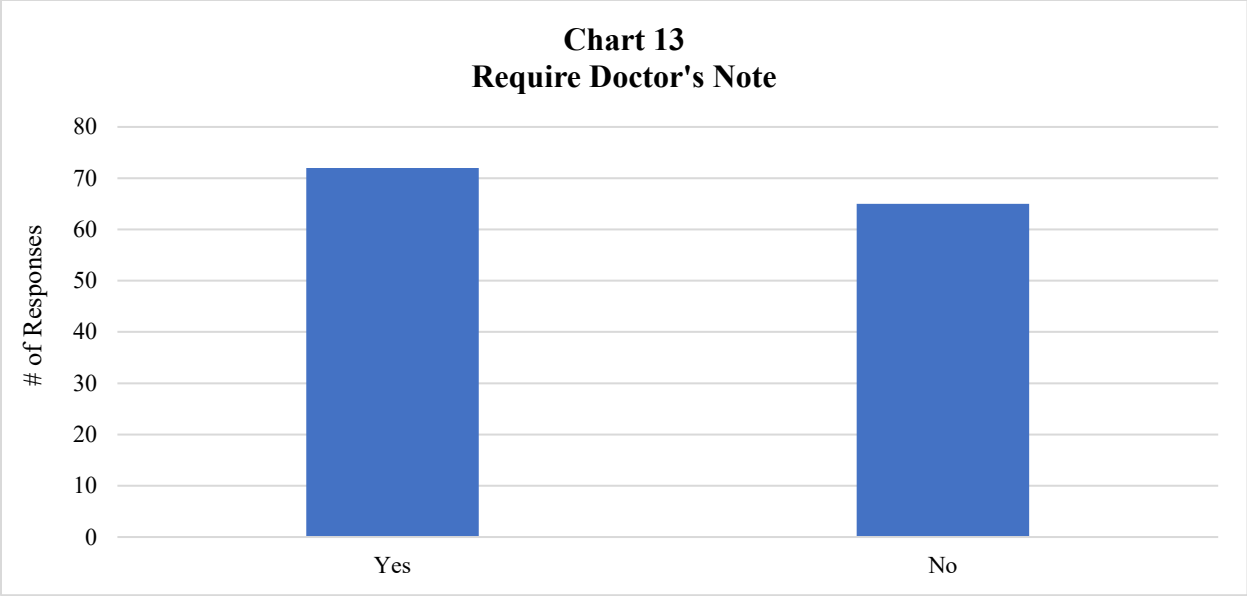
Those who chose “Other” were given a space for a short response. Several noted that sometimes parents will notify the school ahead of time. Others noted that their system will accept a pending unexcused absence. In a similar vein, several schools will mark “unverified” or “pending” and one school responded that they have a neutral code that is then replaced once the school has tracked down the student.

The statute does not dictate how long after an absence an excuse can be turned in. Schools make their own policies but very often it is three days. Schools can also tend to be lenient on this requirement and make exceptions in cases where they decide it would be appropriate.<sup>200</sup>

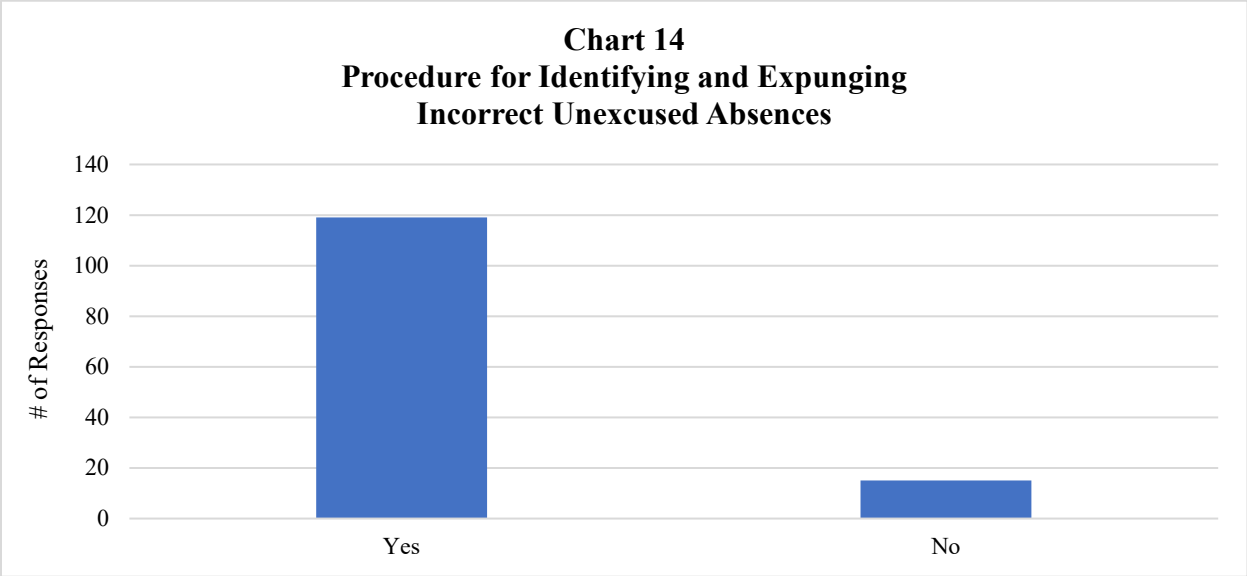
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<sup>199</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

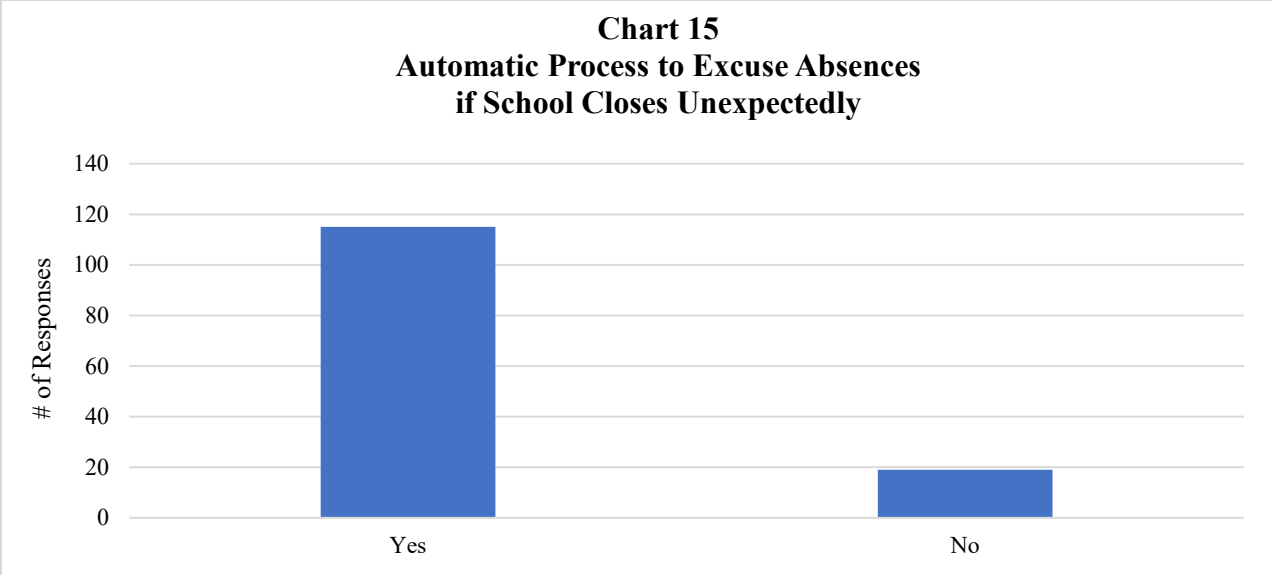


Schools were asked whether they require a healthcare provider’s note to document every absence due to healthcare-related appointments. The answers were fairly evenly split with 52 percent responding yes and 48 percent saying no. For students who have not displayed habitual truancy, a parent note that their child was at the doctor may suffice in many schools.<sup>201</sup>

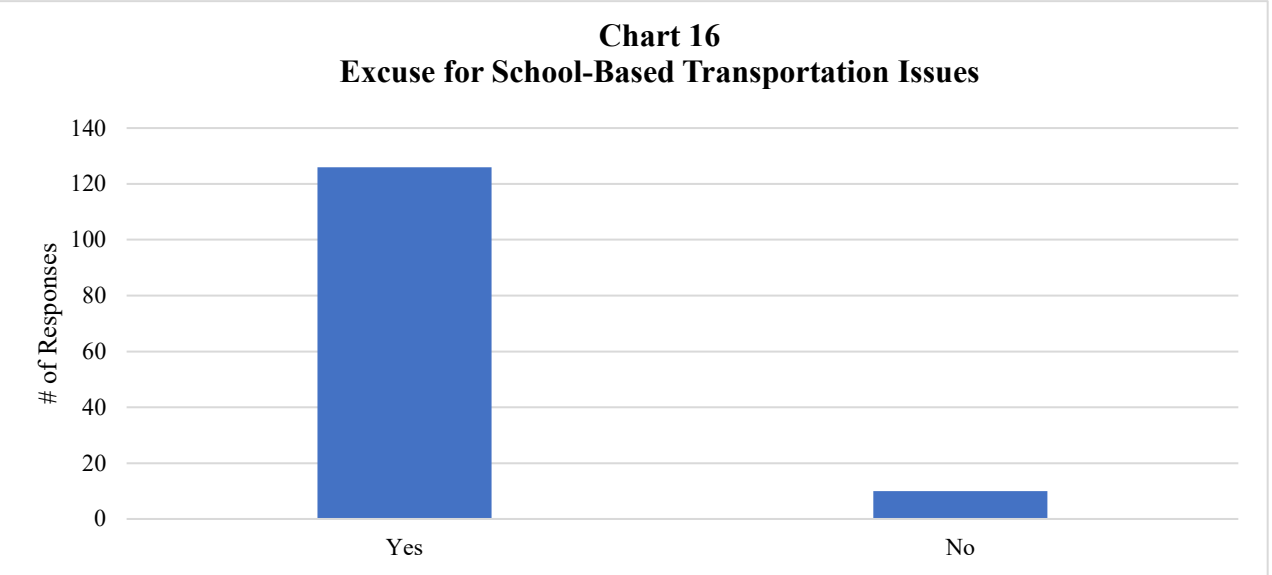


Schools were asked if they have a procedure to identify and expunge incorrect unexcused absences. Eighty-nine percent of respondents do, and 11 percent do not.

<sup>201</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

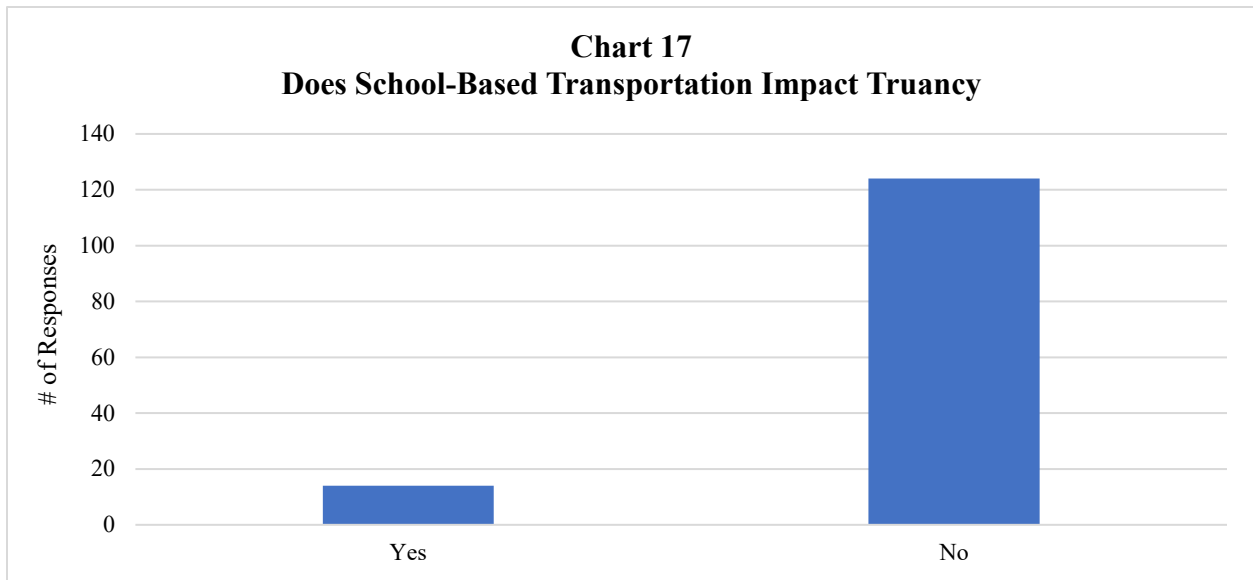


Schools were asked if they have an automatic process to excuse all children if the school closes unexpectedly. While 86 percent said yes, 14 percent do not have an automatic process to excuse all children when their school closes unexpectedly.



Respondents were asked whether they excuse all children if school-based or school-funded transportation is unable to get them to school on time. Ninety-three percent of respondents replied yes and seven percent of respondents do not excuse all children when school transportation does not get them to school on time. An Advisory Committee member noted that schools legally cannot hold students responsible for late school-based transportation. Any schools doing this are in violation of the law.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>202</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.



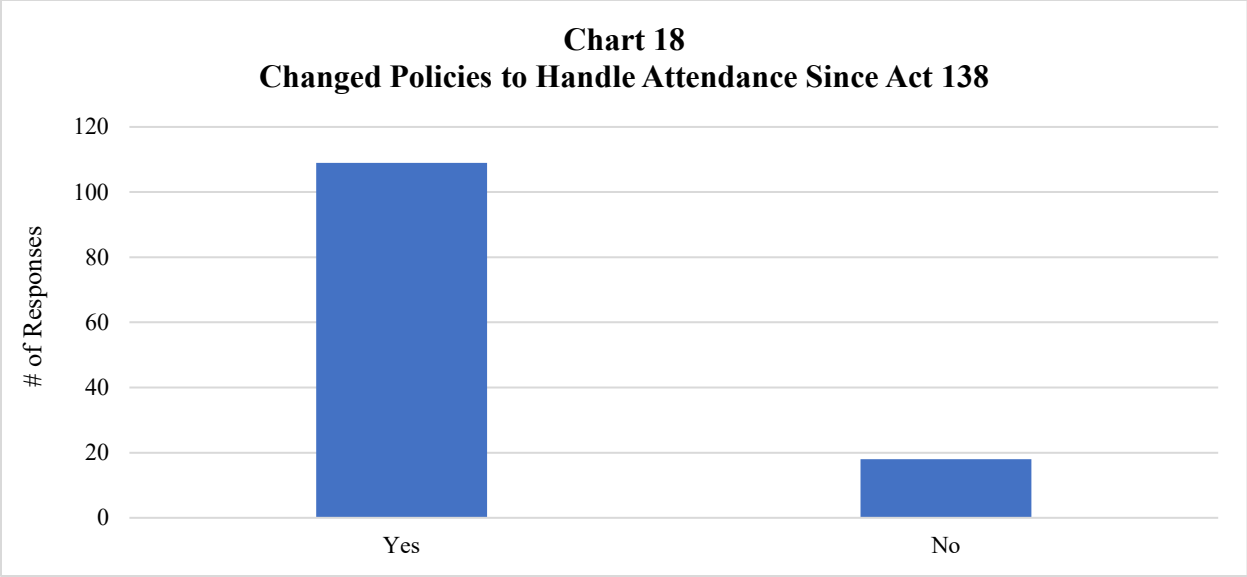
Schools were asked whether the timeliness of school-based or school-funded transportation impacts truancy in their school. Ten percent replied in the affirmative and 90 percent said that it does not.

### *Barriers and Supports*

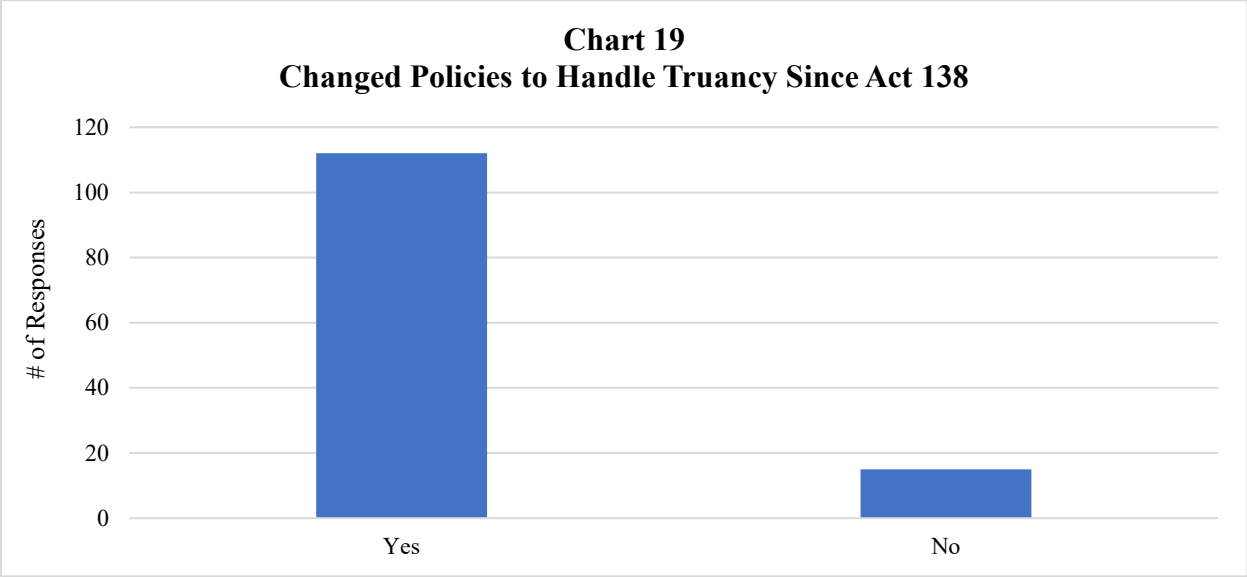
The schools were asked how they identify barriers to student attendance. About half, or 120, of the responding schools provided answers to the question. Nearly all schools responded that they convene some kind of meeting with the student and parents, many of which mentioned SAIPs directly. The remaining few described interdisciplinary teams involving staff from the school and outside agencies.

Several of the respondents gave answers that approached the question of barriers from a system standpoint rather than individual students and families. They described regular meetings for gathering information from different staff positions. One particularly systemic approach was described as, “Regularly run attendance reports to identify trends in attendance. Cross reference reports for those historically identified with barriers, such as McKinney-Vento. . . etc.”

One respondent simply stated, “We don’t.”

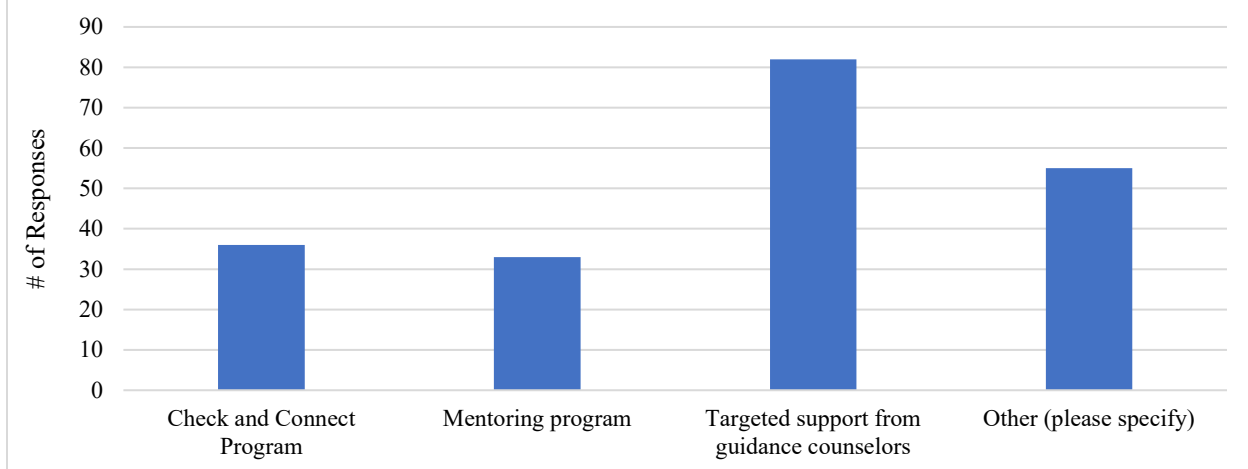


Respondents were asked whether they had changed attendance policies and practices to handle attendance since the enactment of Act 138 in the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. Eighty-five percent of schools have and 15 percent have not.



Shifting the focus from attendance to truancy, schools were asked if they have changed attendance policies and practices to handle truancy since Act 138 became effective at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. Eighty-eight percent said they have, and 12 percent said no, they have not changed attendance policies and practices.

**Chart 20**  
**What Programs Have You Instituted**



Schools were asked what programs they have instituted and were able to check all answers that applied. The most common choice, with 40 percent, was targeted support from guidance counselors. Eighteen percent mentioned the Check and Connect Program and 16 percent said a mentoring program. For the 55 respondents who selected “Other (please specify),” common answers included the implementation of School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC)/SAIP, the use of the Student Assistance Program (SAP), a school counselor, and a school social worker. A few respondents also mentioned having a dedicated attendance or truancy officer. Many respondents listed all of the above options, using a mix of these services as appropriate for each student. Some respondents also stated that their schools made an effort to either make their attendance policy more understandable or communicate better with parents about their child’s truancy. A few respondents mentioned positive incentives for students with good attendance. One respondent mentioned collaborating with CYS to improve the attendance process. A few respondents mentioned utilizing truancy support services provided by JusticeWorks. Other service providers named included Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), K&S Therapies, Inc., Colonial Intermediate Unit (CIU) 20’s School Attendance Improvement Program, the Valley Youth House Life Skills Afterschool Program, the Advancing School Attendance Program operated by Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM) in Berks County, and behavioral health provider Beacon Light. One respondent stated that they held pre-citation meetings with the local MDJ. Another respondent put multiple safety nets in place to utilize before citing to the MDJ.

There were 115 responses to an open ended question about schools’ in-house supports for attendance. All of them mentioned the use of a team approach to supporting regular attendance, and several mentioned staff and resources from outside agencies, whether directly through their county CYS agency or a contracted provider. School staff mentioned included teachers, building administrators such as principals, counselors, school nurses, social workers, and others.

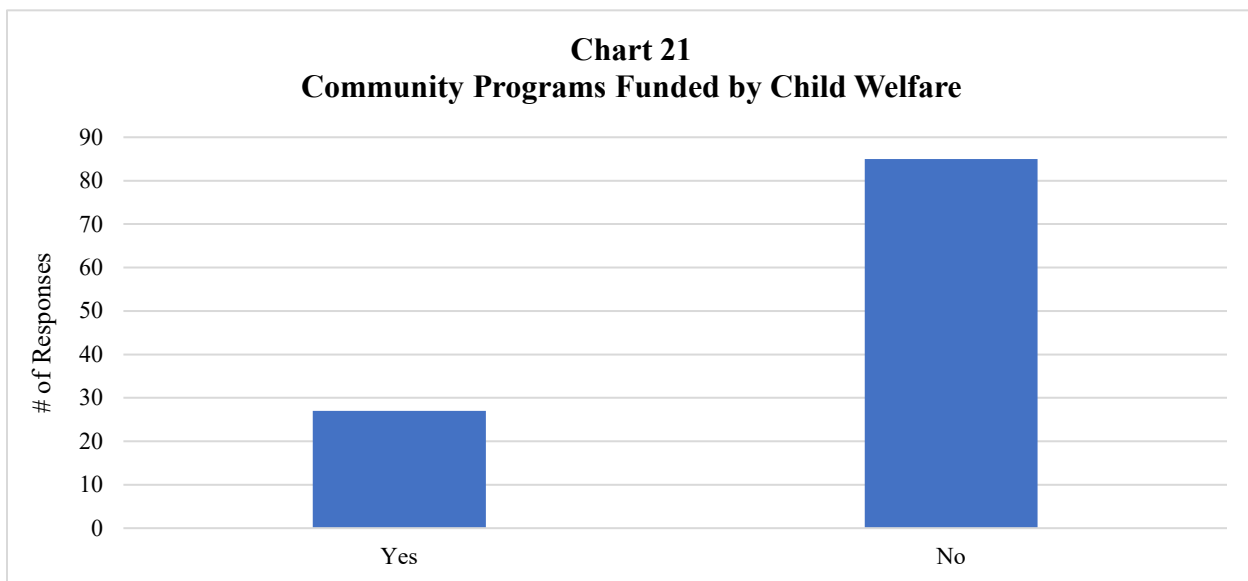
Several responses stood out for their unique approaches. These mentioned the use of such means as high school student-athletes to mentor elementary students, sending transportation vans to students who missed the regular school bus, providing free breakfasts and lunches, and having



“free school stores” that provide hygiene, school supplies, and clothing. Two mentioned the use of “entry-point safe spaces” or “calming corners.” One noted an improvement since extra-curricular participation had been tied to regular attendance.

The schools were asked to list their community service partners. Surprisingly, 24 of the 104 respondents answered that they partner with their CYS agency, sometimes solely and sometimes along with other providers. Fourteen schools mentioned the provider Justice Works, the most of any named provider. Ten of the 104 schools noted that they did not have community partners. One Advisory Committee member asked what percentage of districts stated that they used dedicated truancy officers. An insignificant number of districts noted this in the survey; four responses out of around 200 mentioned a truancy officer.<sup>203</sup>

There were three answers that stood out from the others. One school answered that it has used Justice Works, “though that is typically the student making the request to use them rather than us.” Another school stated that it uses “Behavioral Health” for primary and secondary students, “juvenile probation” for secondary students, and “children and youth” for students in primary grades. The third notable answer, “We usually refer to CYS but then that limits our ability to file a complaint for truancy later without CYS discharging due to Act 138.” Advisory Committee members confirmed that CYS and MDJs do not operate simultaneously regarding a child’s truancy. Often, the MDJ will be the preferred route first because involving child welfare is more intrusive than going to a courtroom.<sup>204</sup>

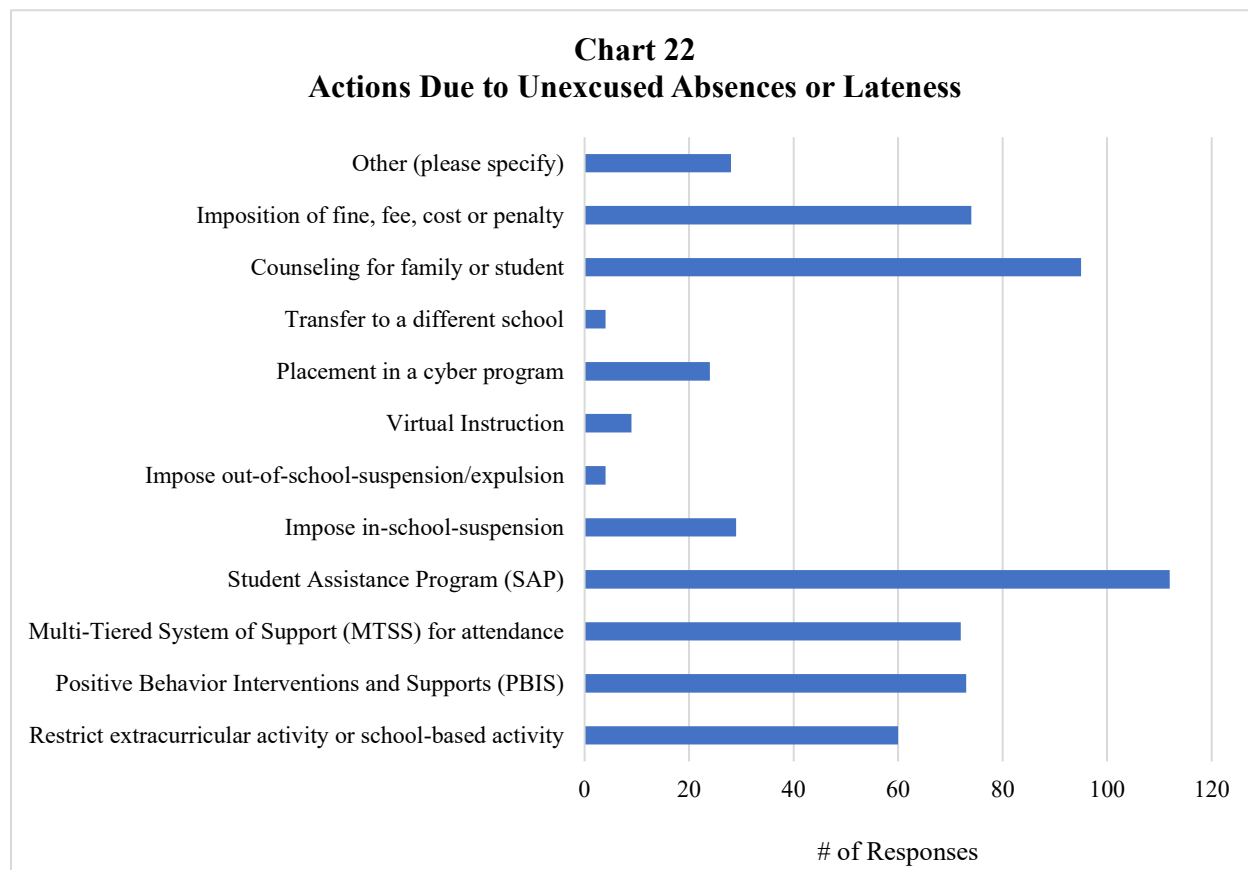


Respondents were asked if their community partners were funded by Child Welfare. Twenty-four percent said yes and 76 percent said no. One Advisory Committee member believed responses to a question about community programs funded by CYS were skewed because schools do not always know which programs are funded by CYS. Some schools might also choose not to utilize community programs that are available, and they would still answer no on this question.

<sup>203</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

There should be better communication between schools, child welfare, and district judges about who is providing what services.<sup>205</sup>



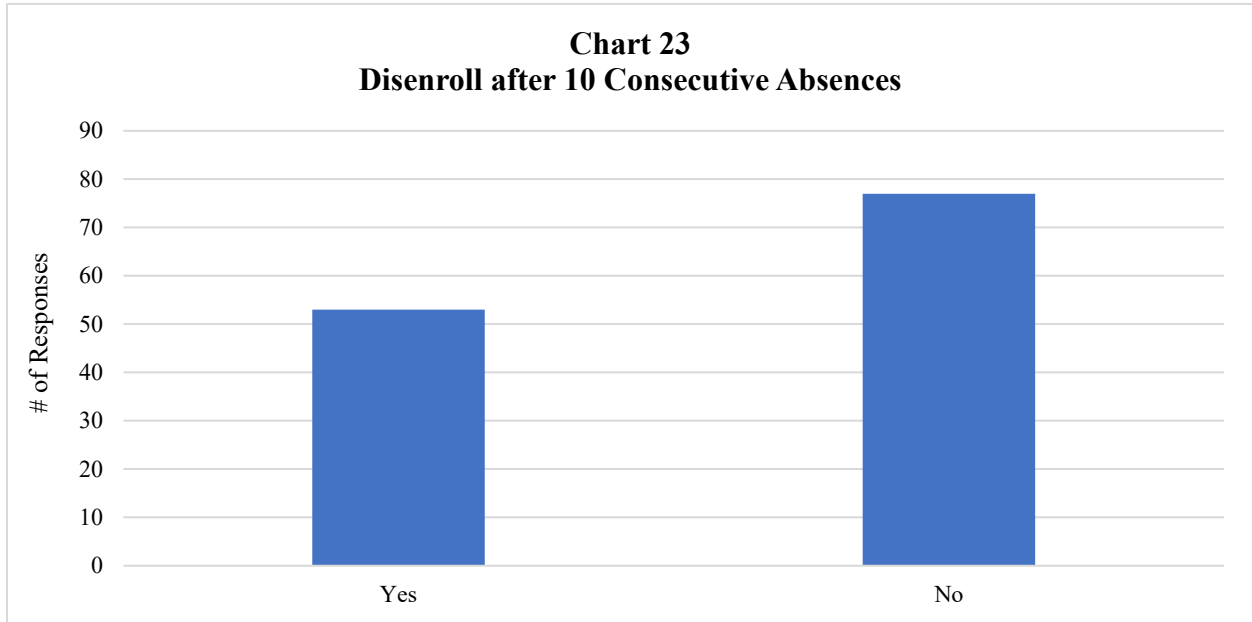
Respondents were asked if their schools undertake any of a specified list of actions due to unexcused absences or lateness. Because they were asked to check all that apply, the answers amount to more than 100 percent.

The most common answer, with 87 percent choosing, was SAP. The second most common response, with 74 percent choosing it, is counseling for a family or student. From there, two responses received an almost identical number, with Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for attendance, positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and imposition of fine, fee, cost or penalty receiving 55, 56 and 57 percent respectively.

For respondents who selected “Other (please specify),” the most common response was detention. Next, an equal amount of respondents mentioned CYS referrals, SAICs/SAIPs, and citations to the MDJs. One respondent mentioned SAIPs along with community based programs “like FGDM, IPT, Check & Connect, Valley Youth House, MH/IDD case management, IBHS services.” Two respondents said they meet with parents to see where they can be helpful, or do an attendance workshop for parents. One stated that students would be restricted from activities for both excused and unexcused absences. One respondent utilized restorative practices and one said,

<sup>205</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

“Creative approaches depend on each student situation, we prefer to approach each one with a problem solving lens to address the core issues.” Lastly, one respondent simply stated, “Habitual truancy results in an arrest.”



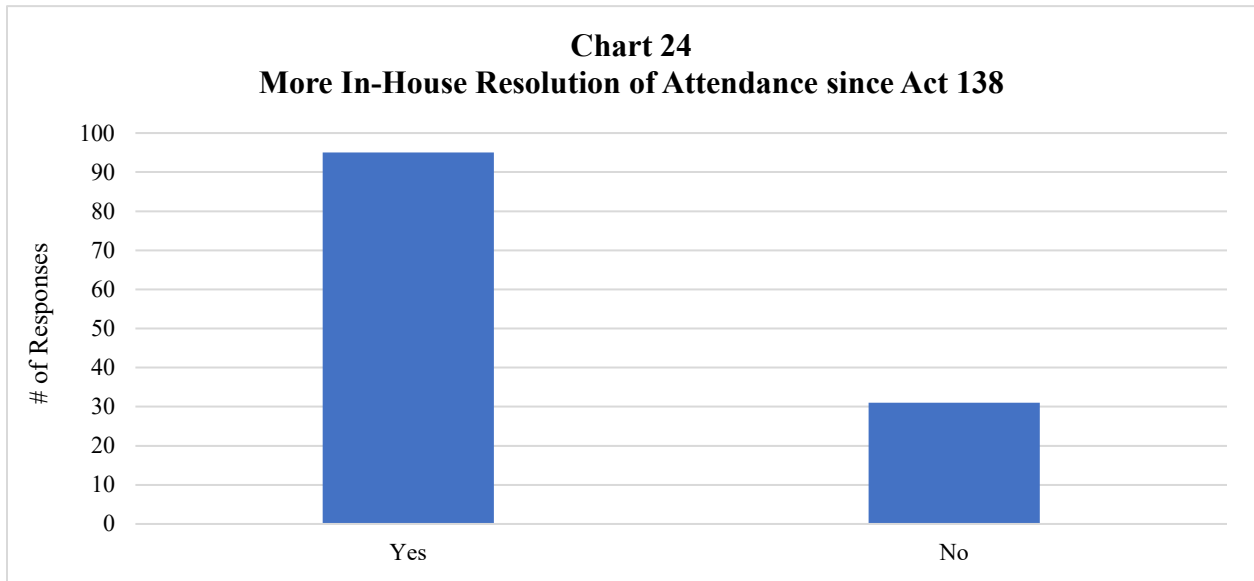
Schools were asked if they disenroll a student after 10 consecutive unexcused absences.<sup>206</sup> Fifty-nine percent replied that they do not and 41 percent replied that they do. One Advisory Committee member noted that schools might be motivated to drop students and not pursue truancy because doing so would result in more favorable data.<sup>207</sup>

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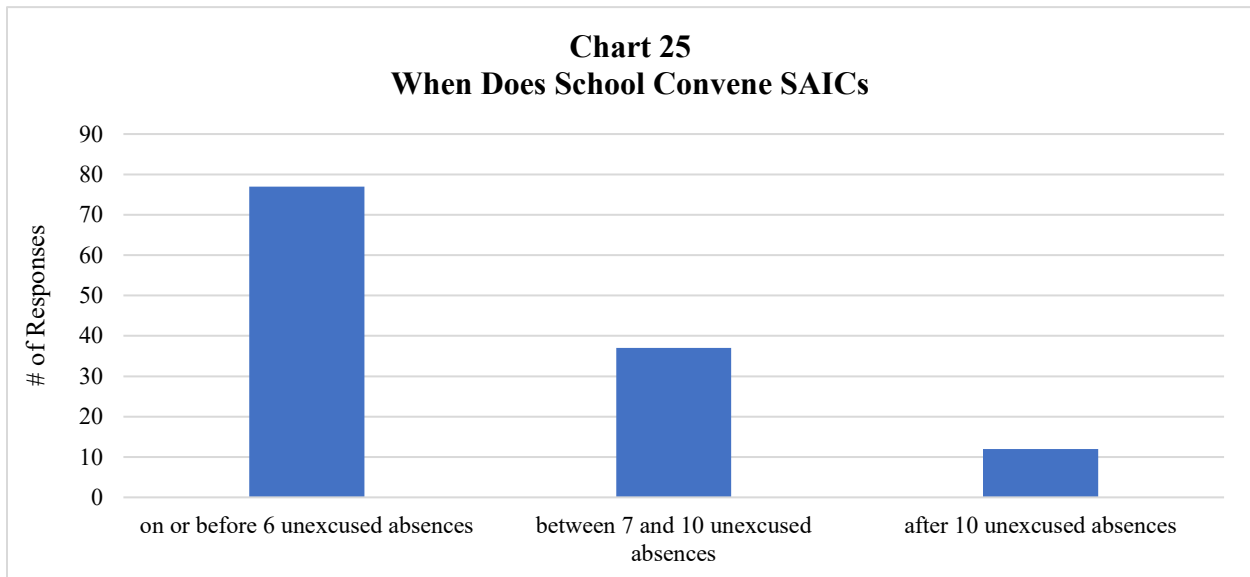
<sup>206</sup> Q26 was intended to read “After 10 consecutive unexcused absences, does your school disenroll a student?” But the question was mistakenly input into Survey Monkey as “After 10 consecutive unexcused absences, does your family disenroll a student?”

<sup>207</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

*School Attendance Improvement  
Conference/School Attendance Improvement Plan*

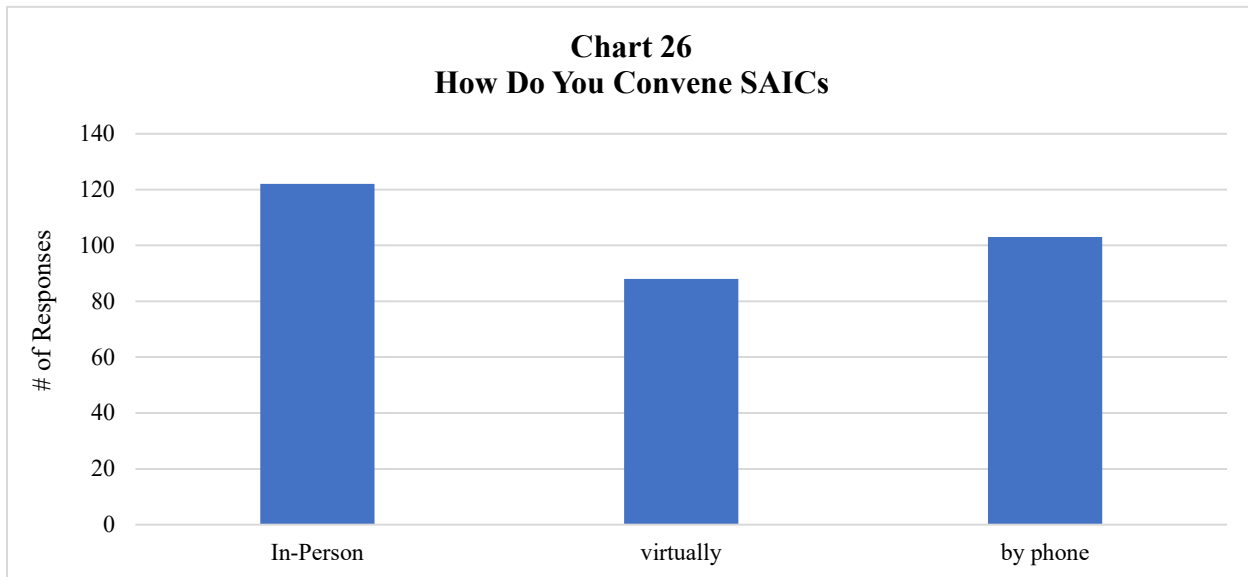


Respondents were asked if they are able to resolve more attendance concerns at the school level rather than referring cases to the magisterial district judge since SAICs have become mandatory. Over three quarters, or 76 percent, of respondents said yes and one quarter, or 24 percent, said no.



Respondents were asked when they convene SAICs. Sixty-one percent convene SAICs on or before six unexcused absences. Thirty percent convene the conference between seven and ten unexcused absences and nine percent convene after ten unexcused absences. Some Advisory

Committee members felt that the number of responses that said “on or before 6 unexcused absences” and “between 7 and 10 unexcused absences” was high. One member suggested that this might be because some respondents might be superintendents. They might be responding based on what the school policy is, whereas an actual attendance officer might know that they usually convene the SAICs beyond 10 days. The person who conducts SAICs can differ from school to school.<sup>208</sup>

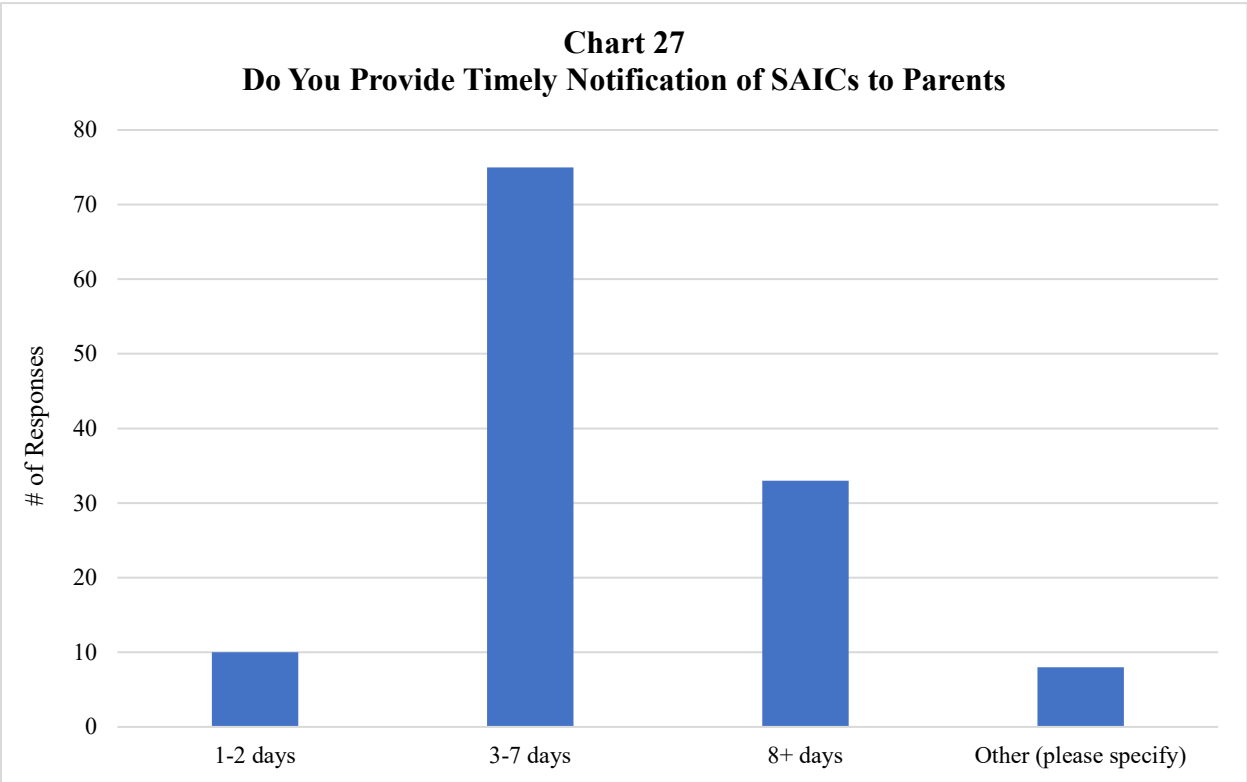


Respondents were asked whether they convene SAICs in-person, virtually or by phone. Because they were asked to check all methods that they use, the percentage of responses is above 100 percent. The most common response chosen by 97 percent of respondents was in-person. By phone and virtually were chosen by 82 percent and 70 percent respectively.

Respondents were asked approximately what percent of parents participate in SAICs. The average number was 57 percent.

There were 122 responses to the question, “How do you engage parents in the scheduling of the SAIC (e.g. tell parents that they have the option of rescheduling or can request another meeting time)?” Nearly all respondents stated that they use a variety of means to contact parents, including combinations of phone, letter, email, and school online portals. Similarly, they described flexibility with scheduling. Several noted that they arrange meetings according to parents’ availability. One answered, “We ignore them.” Although this could have been a flippant response to the survey, based on JSGC staff interaction with school personnel through previous interviews, it seems more indicative of school staff frustration with low parent engagement despite repeated school staff effort.

<sup>208</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

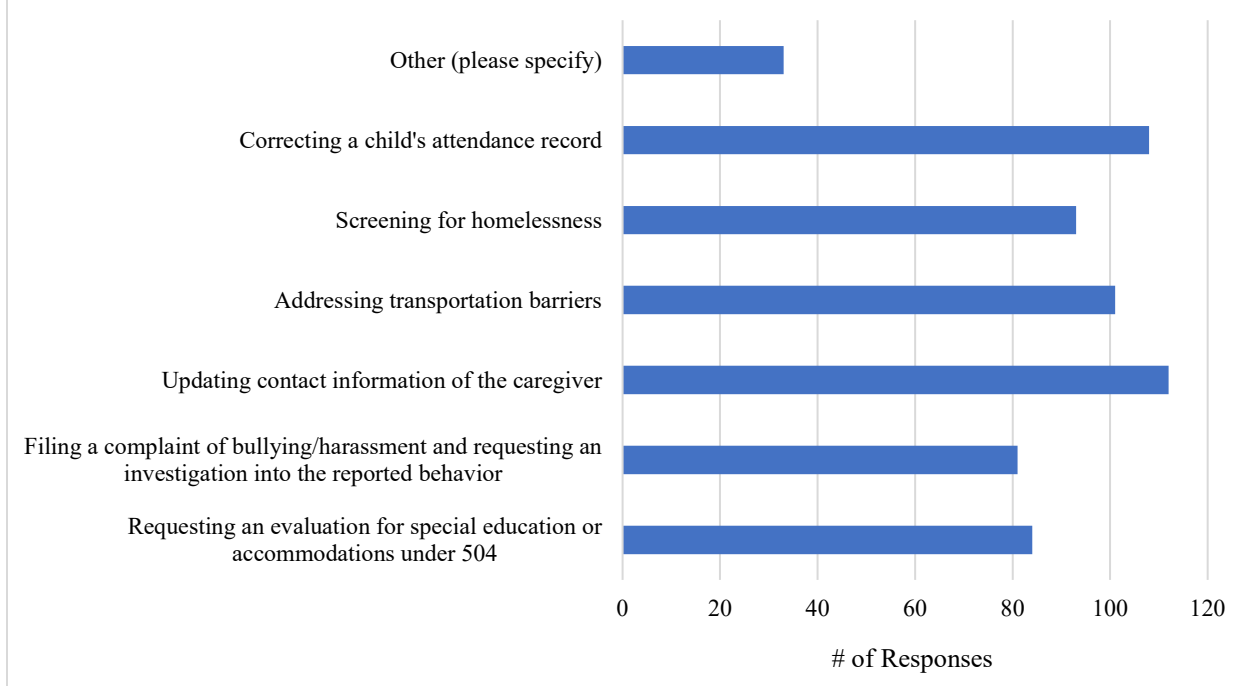


Respondents were asked if they provide parents with timely notification that a SAIC is scheduled. Almost 60 percent provide between three to seven days notification. Almost 26 percent provide eight plus days while almost eight percent provide between one to two days notification.

Eight survey respondents provided additional details. One stated that they “typically call them and do the conference in real time that day.” Several stated that parents are the ones to call and schedule the meeting.

One hundred twenty respondents answered the question, “How are the attendance barriers identified during the School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC)? Please explain.” In the simplest terms, as one replied, “We ask them.” The schools have a conversation with students and parents about what the barriers to attendance are. Some schools noted that they have a checklist or template of common barriers that they work through with the students and parents. Several emphasized that they try to establish an atmosphere of cooperation rather than to appear “punitive.” There were a number of answers that included mention of the team that comes together to help the student and parents find solutions.

**Chart 28**  
**How Does School Staff Support Families in SAICs**

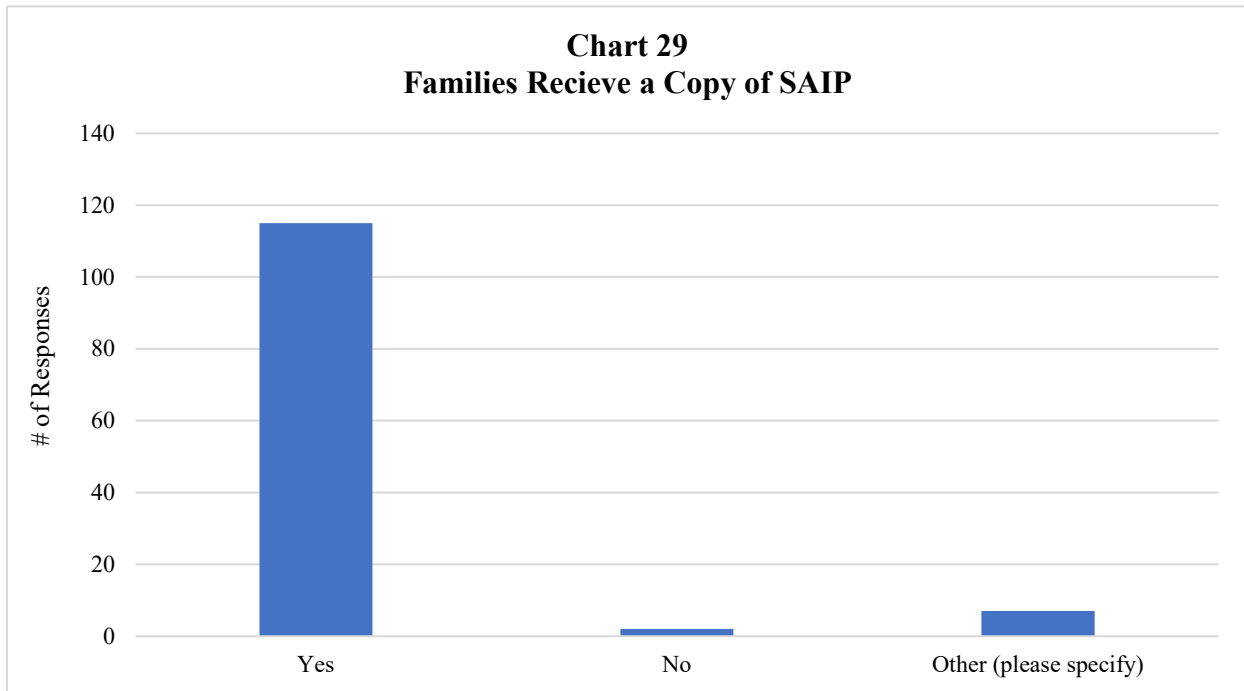


Respondents were asked how school staff supports families during an SAIC. The most common response was “Updating contact information of the caregiver” with 90 percent choosing this response. It was closely followed by 87 percent choosing “correcting a child’s attendance record.” Addressing transportation barriers and screening for homelessness were close with 82 percent and 76 percent, respectively. An Advisory Committee member drew attention to the fact that updating the contact information of a caregiver was a popular response. This demonstrates how difficult it can be to get in contact with a parent if schools often do not even have the correct phone number on file.<sup>209</sup>

For those respondents who selected “Other (please specify),” the vast majority stated that they would provide any and all of the above supports and any other supports the student would need. A few respondents specifically mentioned connecting students with mental health supports. A few mentioned referrals to SAP or MTSS, or a school social worker. One respondent said they reexplain attendance rules, and one said they will accept doctor’s notes if applicable. One respondent said they will consider the option of virtual schooling if that is what the family wants. One respondent stated “Majority of absences are healthy students refusing to go to school. They become so far behind that it seems hopeless. We offer credit recovery as well.” Interestingly, one school said they would review the bedtime routine of a student and would review their process of submitting excuses for absences with the student.

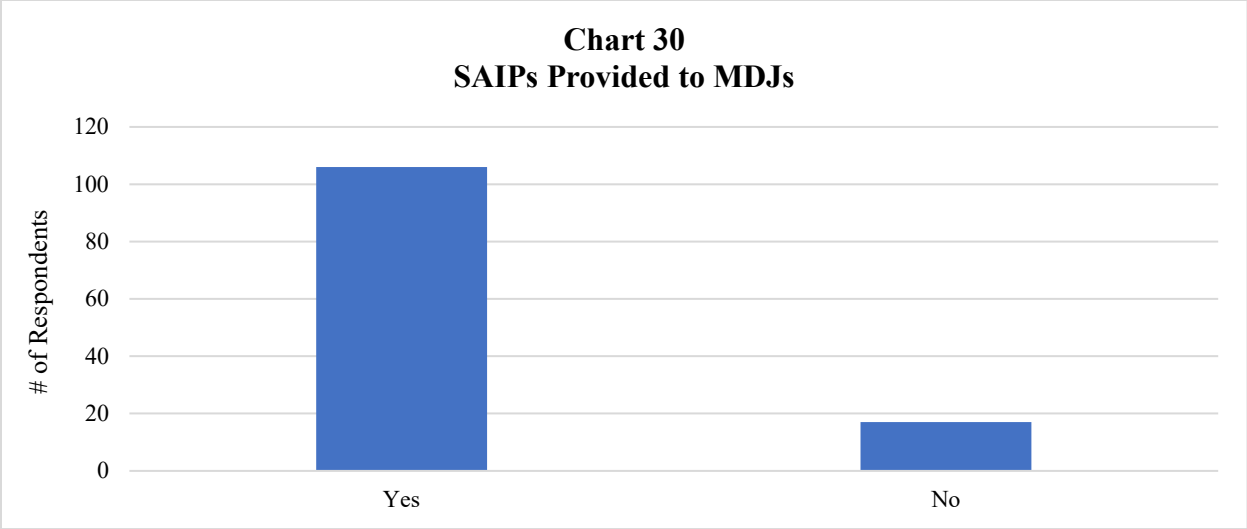
<sup>209</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

There was a range in the 103 answers provided for the question, “Please list effective strategies or services your district has used as part of the School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) to improve attendance for specific students.” Generally, schools answered that they try to provide the services or resources that are needed to resolve the obstacles identified in the SAIC. Some strategies focus on behavioral change, such as goal setting, rewards for improved attendance, and daily check-ins with a mentor. Schools have used engagement with extracurricular activities to help students achieve regular attendance. Other solutions include referrals to outside services such as drug and alcohol services, Family Group Decision Making, or mental health counseling services. Some obstacles involve day-to-day essentials and can be resolved with practical means. There were mentions of the school helping to arrange transportation alternatives to and from school, or, for example, by moving bus stops to safer locations. Schools have arranged for students to have access to showers and laundry facilities at the school. Finally, some schools resort to involving MDJs.



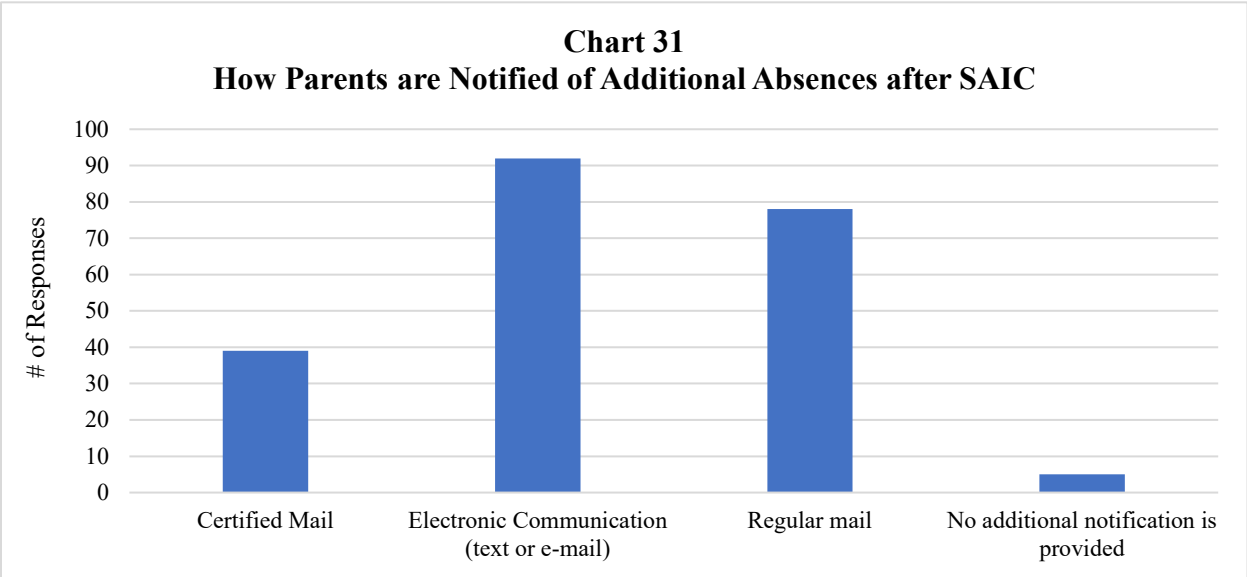
Schools were asked whether families receive a copy of the SAIP. Ninety-three replied that they do while almost two percent replied that they do not. Several respondents replied that families receive copies when they request them.



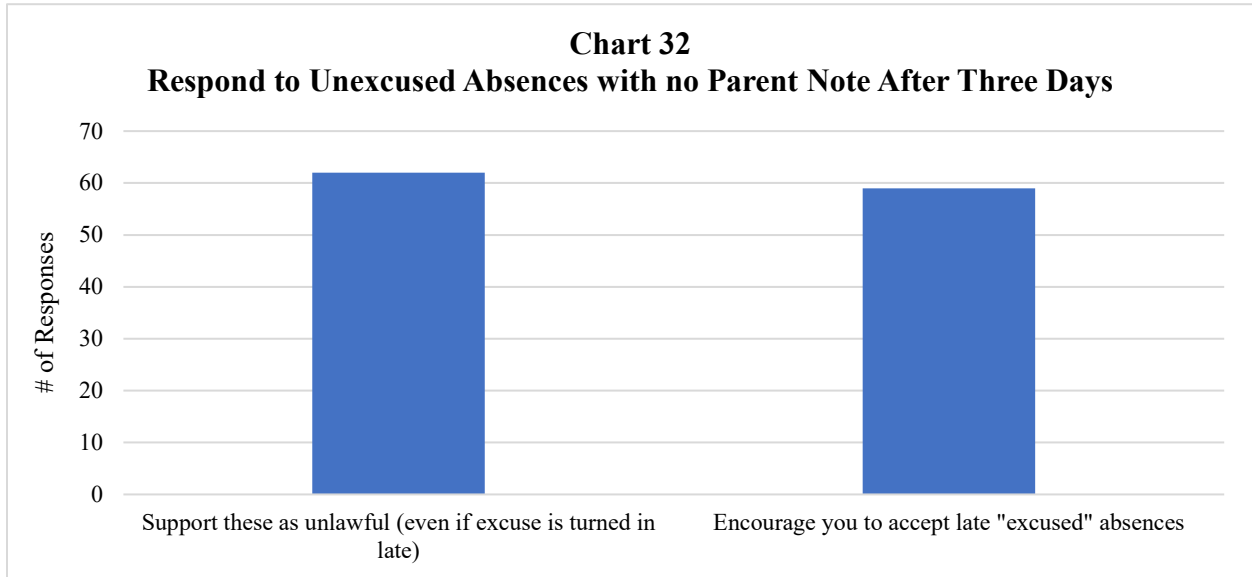


Respondents were asked if a citation is filed, is the SAIP always provided to the magisterial district judge or Regional Truancy Court. The vast majority, or 86 percent said yes while the remaining 14 percent said no.

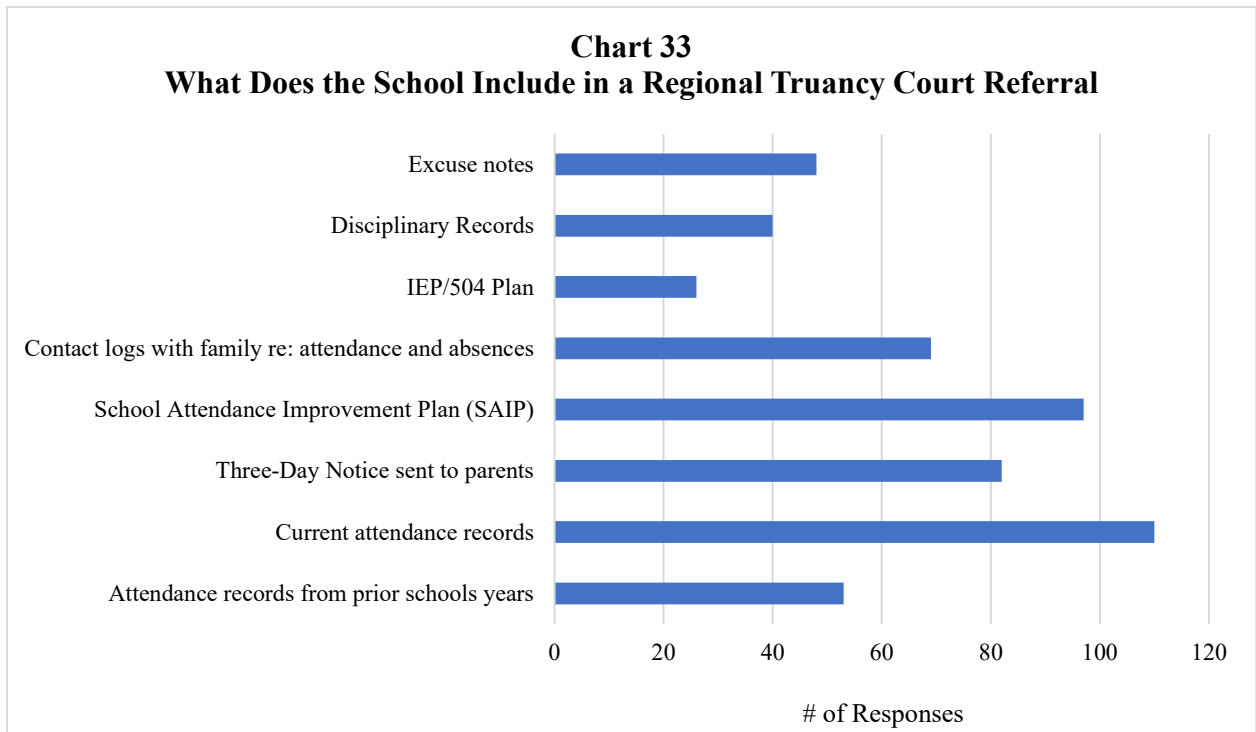
Respondents were asked what percent of children who go through an SAIC or community-based services program start attending school regularly. Respondents stated that a little over half, or 53 percent of students begin to attend school regularly after they go through the SAIC or a community-based services program process.



Respondents were asked how they notify parents of additional absences after the SAIC has taken place. Almost 74 percent communicate through electronic means such as text or e-mail, 63 percent use regular mail, 31 percent use certified mail and four percent provide no additional notification to a parent when there are additional absences after an SAIC has taken place.

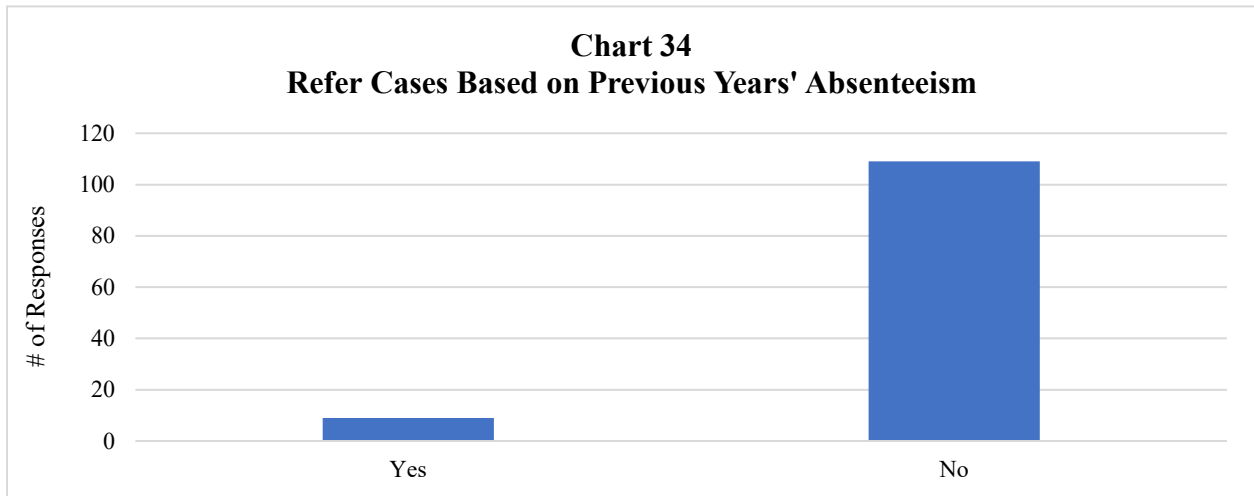


Based upon guidance from PDEs Basic Education Circular, absences are automatically documented as unlawful if a parent has not submitted a written excuse within three days. Schools were asked whether their magistrate generally encourages them to accept late “excused” absences or supports them as unlawful – even if the excuse is turned in late. Responses were fairly evenly split with 54 percent supporting them as unlawful even when an excuse is later turned in and 50 percent encouraging them to accept late “excused” absences.

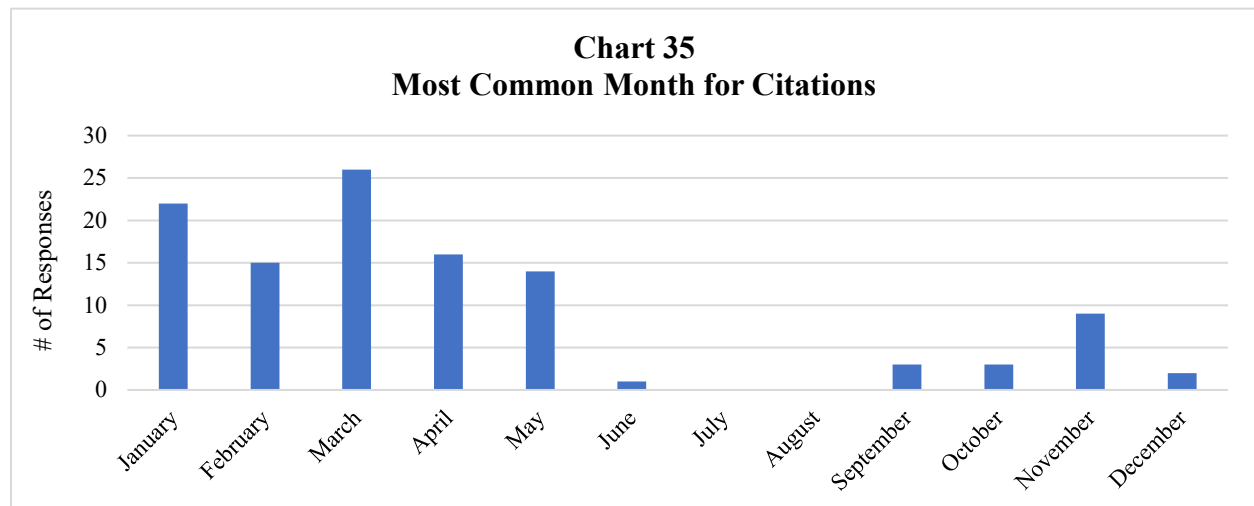


Respondents were asked when their school makes a referral to the magistrate or Regional Truancy Court, what does it include. Current attendance records were checked by 99 percent of respondents, then the SAIP (88 percent), the Three-Day Notice sent to parents (74 percent) and contact logs with family regarding attendance and absences (62 percent).

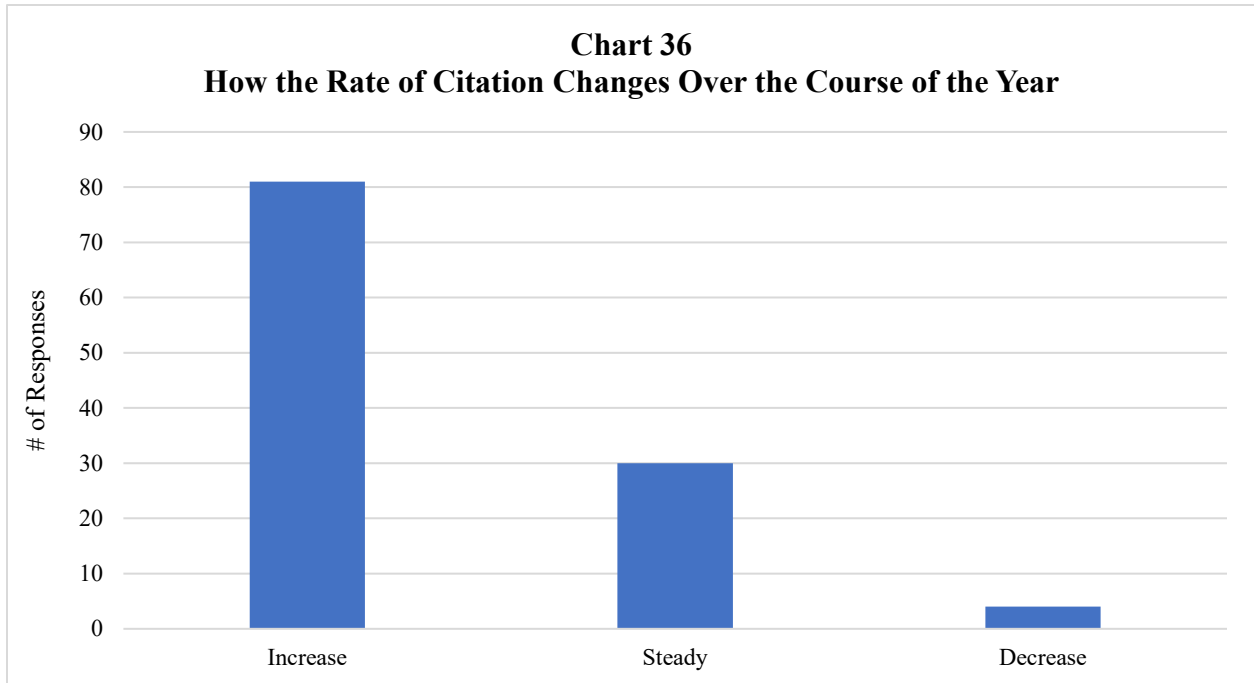
Respondents were asked what percent of children with any form of truancy get sent to the magistrate. According to the respondents, the average is 20 percent.



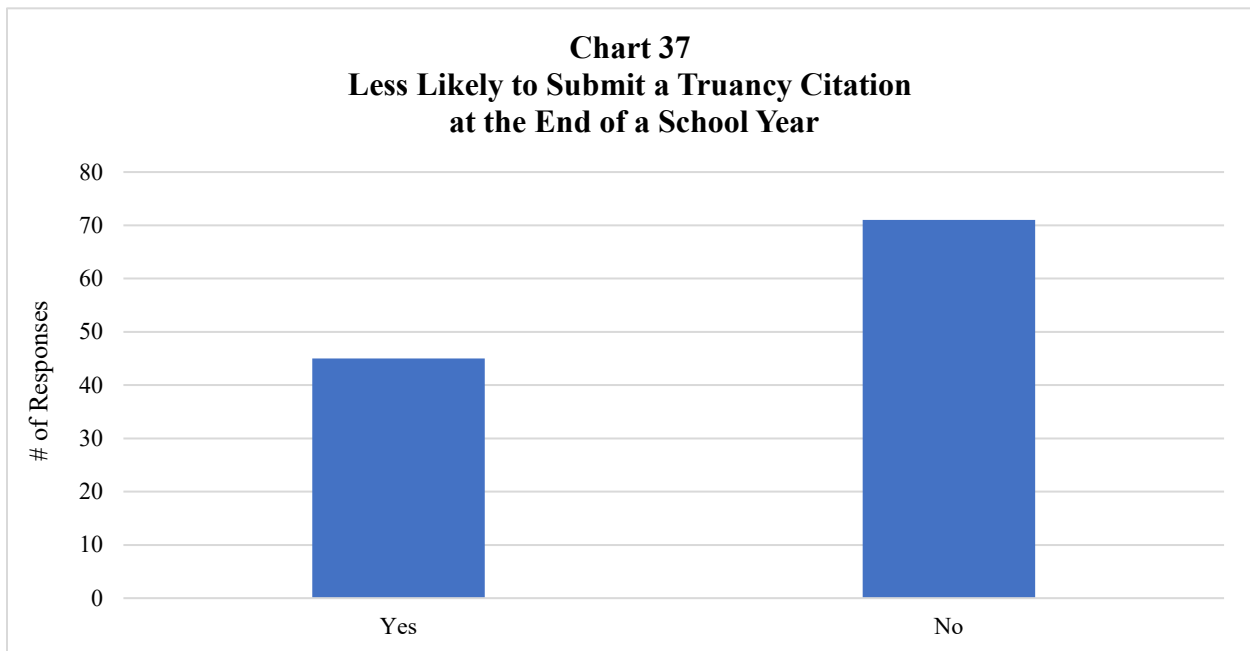
Schools were asked if they ever refer cases to the magistrate based on absenteeism from the previous school year. Ninety-two percent do not but eight percent do.



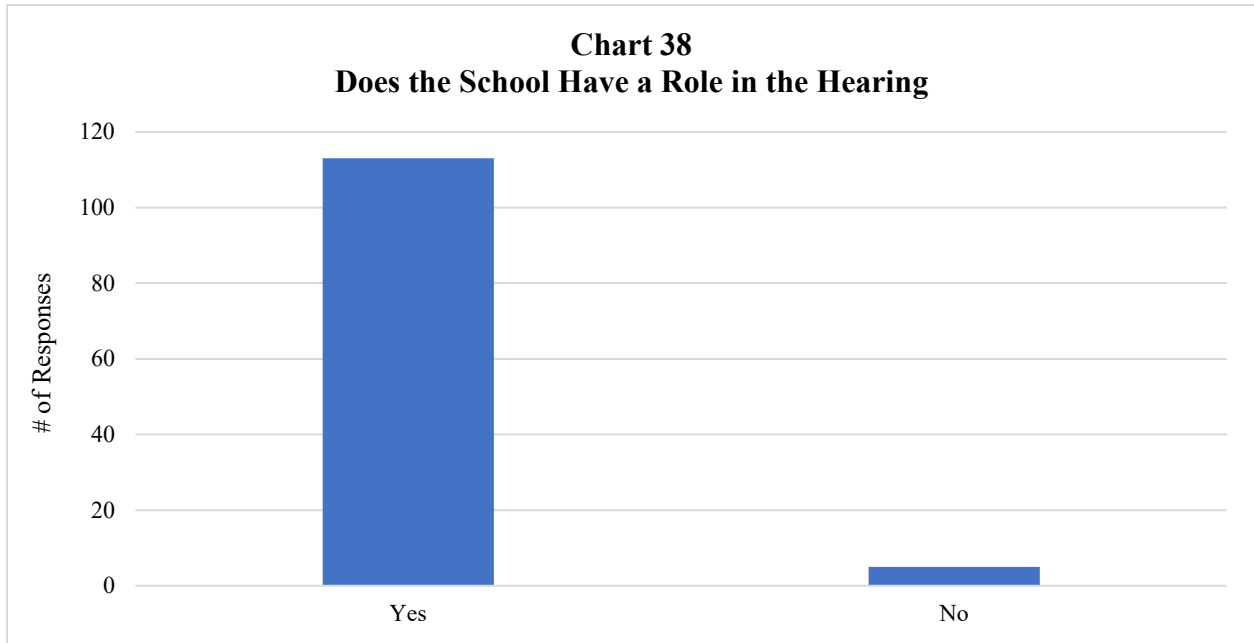
March (24 percent) and January (20 percent) are the most common months for truancy citations. April, February and May were the next three most common months with 14 percent, 13 percent and 13 percent, respectively.



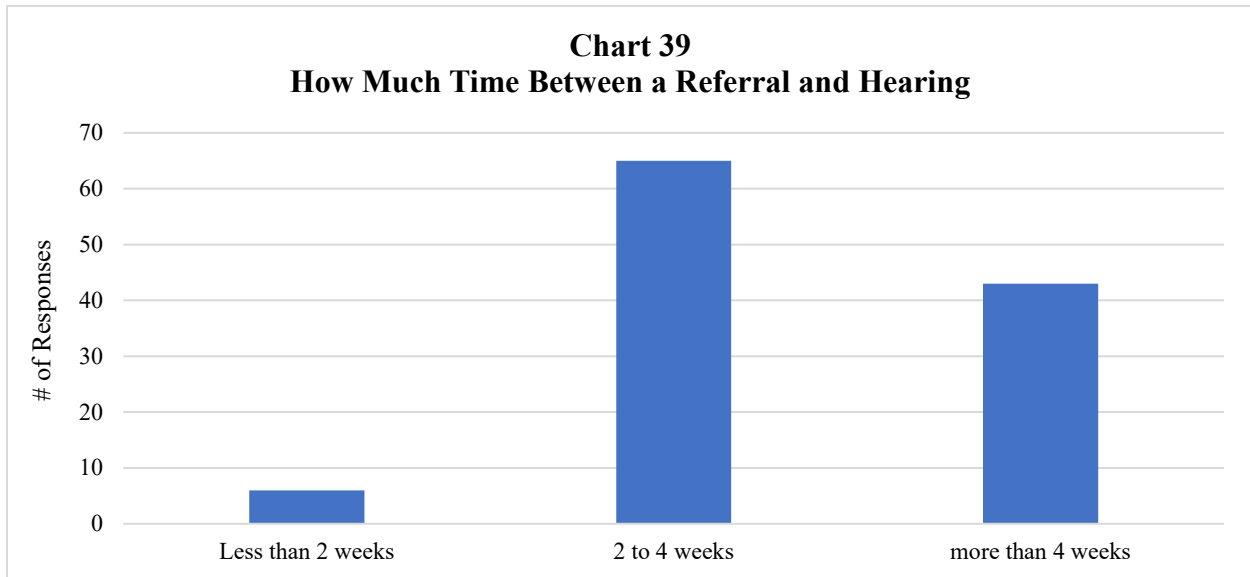
Respondents were asked if the rate of citations to the magistrate was steady or does it increase or decrease over the course of the academic year. Seventy-one percent of schools said that it increases, while 26 percent said that it is steady and three percent said that it decreases.



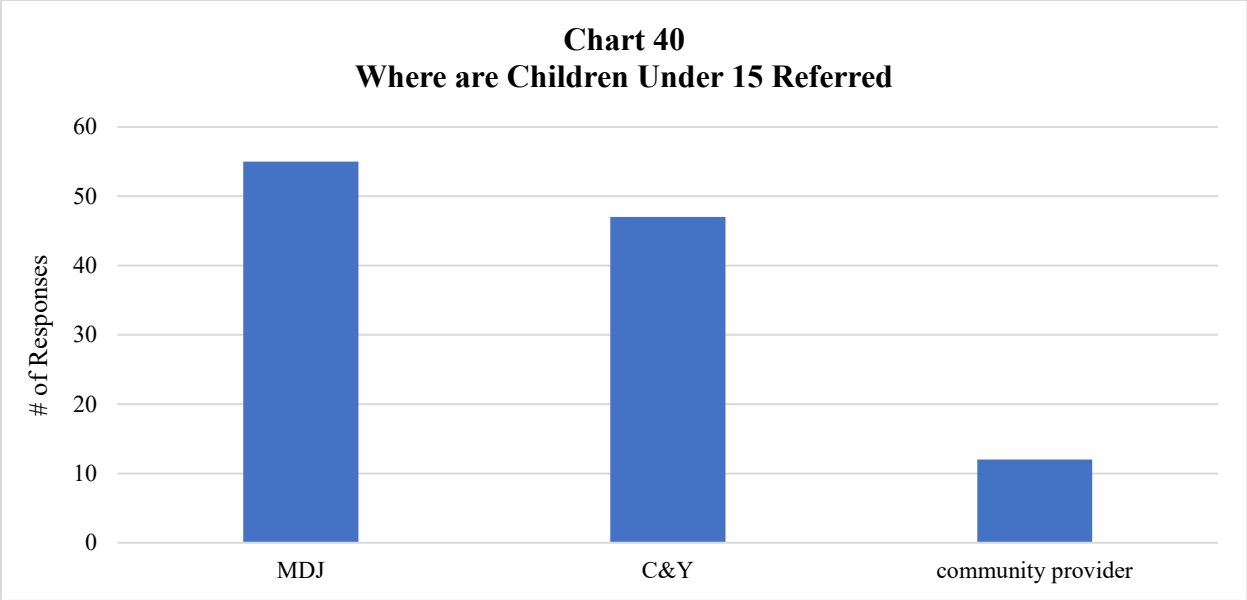
Sixty-one percent of schools are not less likely to submit a truancy citation if it is the end of the school year while 39 percent are less likely.



Ninety-five percent of the schools responded that they have a role in the hearing after they issue a citation and only five percent said that they have no role in the hearing.

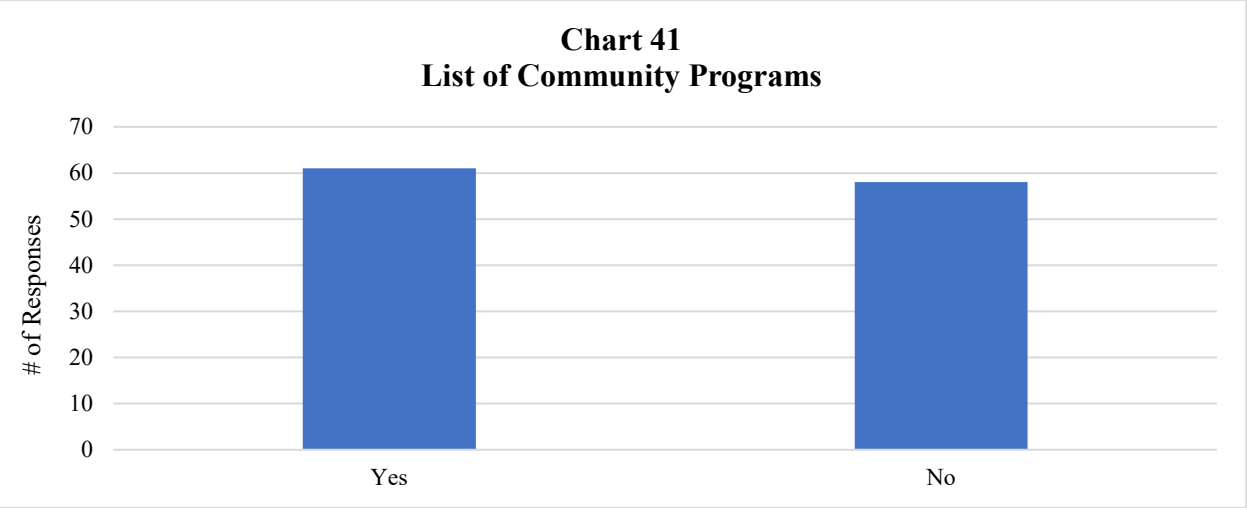


Schools were asked how much time elapses between when they refer a case to the magisterial district judge or Regional Truancy Court to when a hearing is held. The majority of respondents, 57 percent, stated two to four weeks passes. Slightly over 37 percent said that more than four weeks passes and five percent chose less than two weeks.

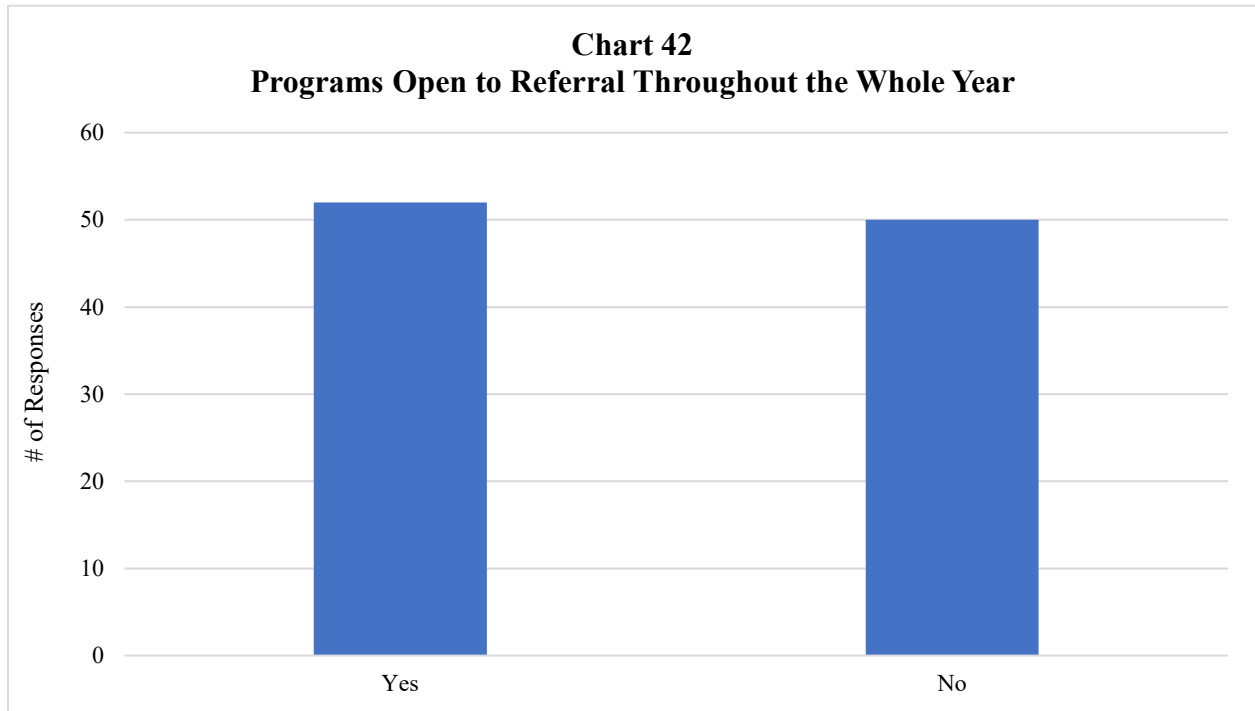


Respondents were asked whether the district policy and practice was to file a citation with the MDJ or refer to a community provider or to the Children and Youth Agency when a child under the age of 15 incurs additional unexcused absences after the SAIC. Slightly more chose the MDJ, with almost 49 percent of respondents choosing this option. Almost 41 percent chose C&Y and the remaining ten percent refer to a community provider.

*Children & Youth Agencies and Community-Based Services*



Fifty-two percent of respondents have a list of programs and courses in their county designed to eliminate truancy while 48 percent of respondents do not have a list.

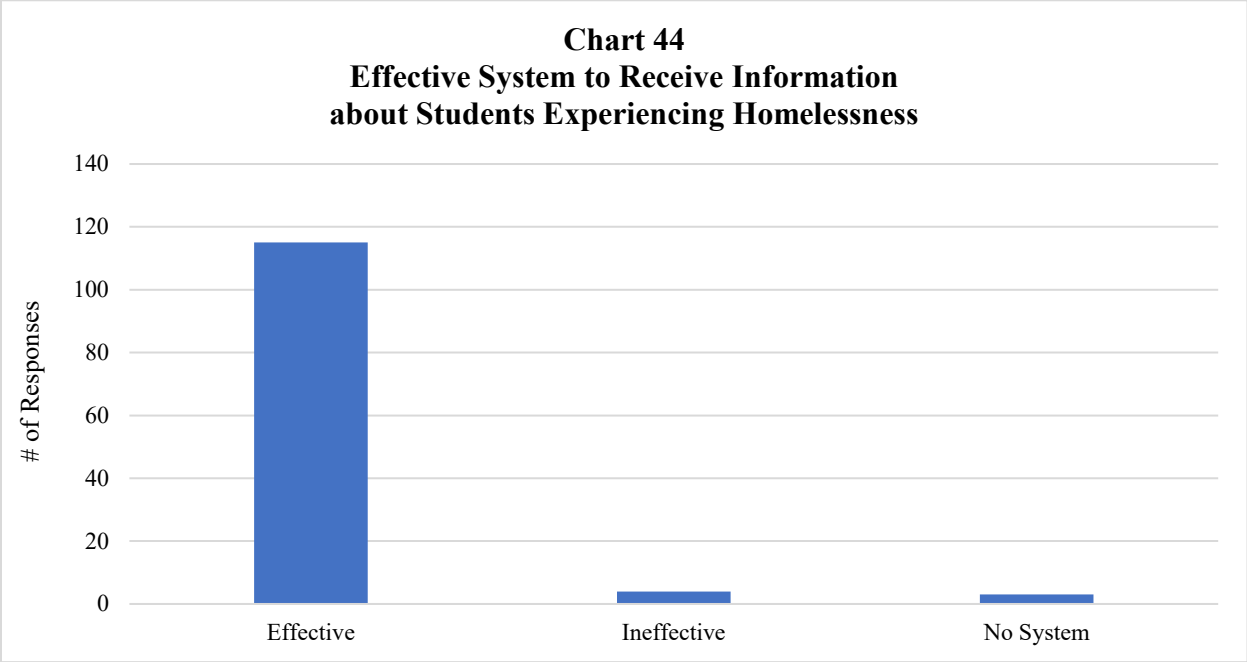
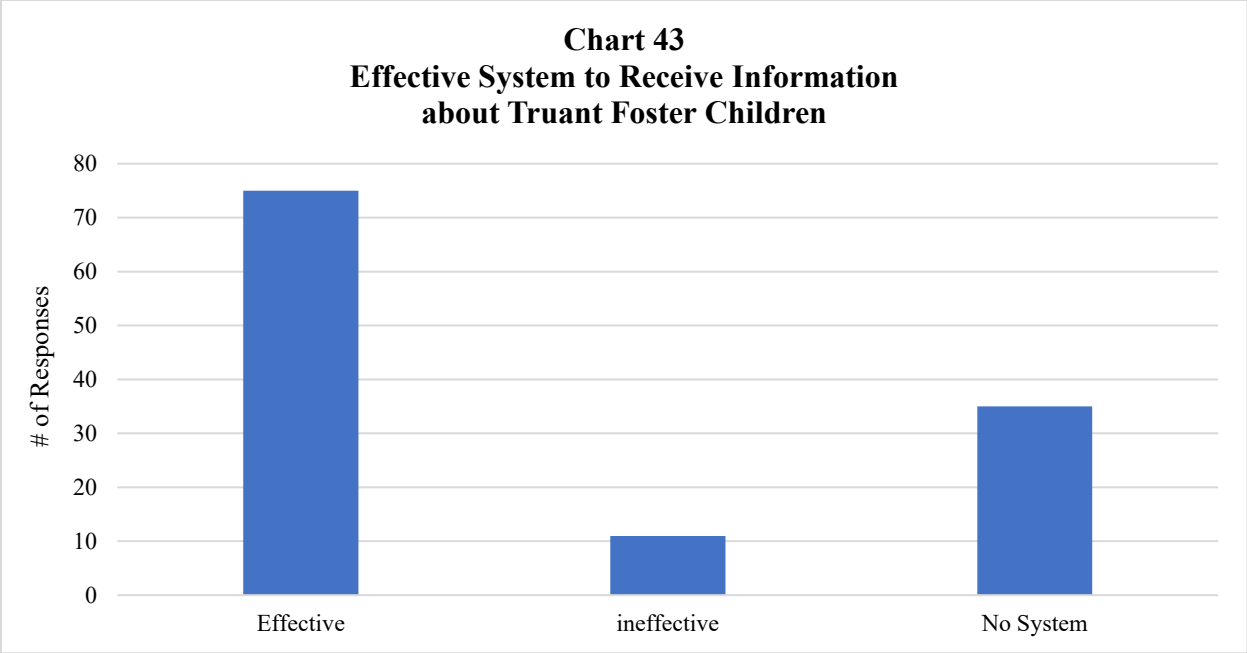


Schools were asked if the programs were open to new referrals for the whole of the 2022-23 school year. Answers were evenly split with 50 percent saying yes and 50 percent saying no.

Schools were asked what percent of their truant students are referred to their county’s children and youth agency or community-based services providers. The average response given was 42 percent. The schools were then asked, of the students that they refer to their county’s children and youth agency or their contracted providers, what percent receive services. On average, 34 percent of students receive services.

*Foster Care and Students Experiencing Homelessness (McKinney-Vento Students)*

Schools were asked if they have an effective system in place to get information about children in the foster care system who are truant. Slightly over 61 percent stated that they have an effective system in place. Ten percent said that they have an ineffective system while 29 percent said that they have no system in place at all.



Ninety-four percent of respondents stated that they have an effective system in place to get information about students who are experiencing homelessness. Only four percent said that their system is ineffective, with the remaining two percent saying that they have no system.



## Conclusion

Sixty-eight schools gave answers to the question, “What statutory, regulatory, or policy changes could be made to make Act 138 more effective in reducing truancy?” Recommendations involved the areas of CYS, school and program funding and resource allocation, and the MDJ process and its outcomes.

Some of the school’s responses left Commission staff unclear about whether the respondents fully understand the truancy process, which is concerning. The misunderstandings could be consequences of reforms of Act 138. The Commission’s 2015 report, *Truancy and School Dropout Prevention: Report of the Truancy Advisory Committee*, recommended that schools be required to offer SAICs as described in PDE’s Pennsylvania School Attendance Improvement and Truancy Reduction Toolkit. After implementation of Act 138, it could be the case that schools are now carrying out a task that they are not fully resourced to handle.

Another recommendation was not clearly understood by Commission staff. The respondent recommended, “To allow CYS to file a complaint for violations of SAIPs after they are open with the families.” Act 138 requires that SAICs must be offered by the schools but clearly states that students and their families are not required to participate. An Advisory Committee member believed the issue of CYS involvement is interesting because there are misunderstandings of the statute. Schools can file truancy to the MDJ if a child has a dependency petition for a different reason. It can only not be cited to the MDJ if the dependency petition has truancy listed as a cause.<sup>210</sup>

### Schools’ Open-Ended Recommendations for CYS

Fifteen respondents included CYS in their recommendations, whether solely or along with other recommendations. Aside from the recommendation to shift truancy reporting from ChildLine, most respondents recommended that CYS take some form of action when truancy cases are reported to them. Some reported frustration that CYS is not as responsive as expected. One respondent recommended a reform that would permit, “CYS to enter the home. . .” perhaps intimating that CYS is not allowed to participate in truancy cases. Another respondent expressed a desire for “CYS taking action and better communicating results to the schools,” while another expressed frustration at the area’s CYS not taking action: “When I make a referral to CYS. . . I am sometimes met with opposition. I am told they will not accept a referral for any student that didn't have an SAIC (even if the parents did not show), any student 16 years and/or older, and any student with an IEP.” There appear to be basic misunderstandings or miscommunications among some respondents. Some of these misconceptions might be helped by taking advantage of one recommendation for “Better communication with C & Y to understand the practices.” One respondent recommended making it a requirement that families respond to county agencies, the courts, and the school.

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<sup>210</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

Other respondents recommended that CYS be required to participate in truancy matters. For example, one wrote, “All school referrals with more than 18 unexcused should be opened for services with Children & Youth Services for a minimum of 3 to 6 months and reduce compulsory school-age back to age 17.” Another respondent recommended that CYS involvement be permitted and that SAIPs be mandatory for students and their families, writing, “To allow CYS to file a complaint for violations of SAIPs after they are open with the families.”

A respondent identified a space for CYS to be involved, where it can provide services beyond the school’s abilities to enforce school attendance and potentially resolve truancy cases before they reach the MDJs, writing, “Although the MJD's are helpful, I believe CYS needs to play a larger role to give more "teeth" to truancy situations. I believe that an in-between program between the SAIP and court date would also be helpful.”

Most respondents who included CYS in their recommendations cited insufficient resources as the agencies’ reason for not taking action and recommended increased funding for CYS. One recommendation summarizes what others had stated: “CYS is underfunded and understaffed that they are not able to make the appropriate changes to a child's environment to encourage attendance at school.” One expressed frustration, writing, “Honestly, the system is broken. CYF is filtering out cases that should be accepted for services. I ultimately feel this is due to lack of staff at the agency.”

Recognizing their own limitations as a school, another wrote of the need for increased funding and a statewide initiative to help resolve the paucity of staff, “I think the issues we face are more regarding access to needed services from community providers and through the local Children & Youth agency. The lack of staff in the CYF agency has led to less concern regarding truant students since they must focus on child protection regarding abuse cases first. There needs to be a state-wide push to encourage higher wages for CYF workers in order to recruit and retain quality staff, as well as more emphasis that truancy is a symptom of greater concerns within the family's household.”

One respondent recommended a change that would not necessarily involve new or increased funding but would require policy and personnel changes. The person wrote, “...provide for a legislative change where CYS case workers are assigned and work out of [school] districts instead of a county office so they can see students daily and interact with families.”

A respondent described how their district is handling truancy cases in ways that involve multiple agencies. While it is not a direct recommendation, it is an example of a district that is accessing resources, both internal and external, to provide services. They wrote, “We have been sending out truancy letters with more frequency and consistency. We have been involving CYS and YAP with more families, we hold TEP meetings for students all with the intent of reducing truancy. We hired a social worker who is involved with helping families to resolve barriers to coming to school regularly.”

## Schools' Recommendations on Funding and Resources

Fifteen respondents made recommendations about funding and resources that did not directly mention CYS or other specific entities. These recommendations ranged from “funding for personnel to work with our at-risk population,” and “Additional community agency supports” to more detailed requests. One recommendation noted the benefits of Act 138, “This is a magic wand question. ACT 138 helps to put into place formal practices, yet this is not the issue. We need more resources to address what students are experiencing and the reason for their truancy. The sanctions under PA Compulsory School Attendance Laws also need to be revamped.” Other responses included recommendations like, “More county agency funding, more providers in the area and more programs to support students especially funding related to in-school mental health counseling services by outside providers.” Two people recommended resources dedicated to parents, writing of the need for, “State and Federal funding for parent education and support,” and “More money needs to be provided to schools and community partners to facilitate truancy programs. Parents need more resources and support.” One person recommended the establishment and funding of county-level attendance improvement programs and added, “Online programs could also be a viable option.”

Other recommendations for increased funding included those for mental health supports for all families, transportation for all students, and “Funding for placement of chronic student cases.” Presumably the latter refers to placement other than in a traditional classroom or outside of the truant students' current schools. There was a recommendation to focus on older students: “I think we need more programs that address truancy at the secondary level. Triple -p offers for younger students, but not older ones.”

In writing of the dearth of resources, one respondent lamented the loss of a successful program because of underfunding. They wrote, “Lackawanna County has the STARS (Students That Attend Regularly Succeed) Truancy Program. In its inception it was a great program. CYS had a truancy unit with caseworkers assigned to each school and assisted with any and all student truancy concerns. The county has dissolved the unit and [we] now have little to no help from the county....”

One respondent, likely from a charter school, recommended, “More supports and access for charter school with additional funding resources,” although it is not clear to Commission staff that charter schools are particularly less equipped than brick and mortar schools are to handle truancy.

There were two other recommendations that referenced charter and cyber charter schools specifically, although the respondents were likely not from these schools. One person recommended, in part, “Cyber charter schools need to track down "releases of records" for students who report leaving their programs and if NO proof of enrollment is acquired then the cyber charter should be referring them to CYS.” A second responded, “Require cyber charter schools to share their attendance documentation with their home school districts. Cyber charters need to share this information so we can keep kids on track to graduate.” This may help school districts keep better track of student attendance within their boundaries.

In a lengthy response, one person sees drawbacks when cyber charter schools are used as a means of resolving truancy, writing:

If a parent had to pay to send their children to cyber, we would not have so many using this option as an out to avoid truancy. Yes, there are students who benefit from this, but we need to exhaust all other alternatives before we get to cyber. Once they hit cyber, we lose them. It's like throwing them back into seclusion. We start all over bringing them back into society. Cyber only reinforces anxiety which seems to be the culprit of truancy in many situations.

### MDJ

Approximately twenty-two respondents either limited their recommendations to stricter imposition of penalties or included them as part of wider recommendations. The recommendations describe a sense that the MDJ is the final step in the process and the point at which students and their families have exhausted the options and must assume accountability. As one respondent wrote, they want to see, "judges backing up that school attendance is a priority." There is a strong sense that the court system needs to play a stronger role in truancy. A respondent stated, "...get back into holding student/families accountable and having consequences..."

Five of the respondents limited their comments to simple recommendations for stricter penalties. As one wrote, "Give magistrates the power to impose stiffer penalties for non-compliance." Another recommended, "Require [MDJs] to impose fines." There were several recommendations that contributed ideas for options for consequences, because, as one stated, "Give teeth to the justice system that are something beyond monetary" and another wrote, "Having additional consequence options at the magistrate level could be beneficial as fines are not helping resolve truancy issues." One replied, "Finding something that will motivate kids more to come to school because sometimes I do not think the possibility of receiving a fine or getting their license suspended is something that motivates them enough to come to school. Maybe implementing some sort of classes for students instead of citation with other students who struggle with attendance issues to help build connections to others."

A theme emerged that tied truancy accountability to other services that sometimes involved only the student and for others included the parents as well. One respondent wrote, "Students who are receiving state benefits or social security should have to be attending school full time or they could risk losing their benefits." Also focusing on the student, two recommendations involved school alternatives. The first recommended removing the option of school choice: "For school choice schools, there should be attendance stipulations. Students who are chronically truant should be able to be disenrolled, once all the steps have been taken to support the family." The other recommended that students not be allowed to enroll in charter schools, "Not allow students who are truant to withdraw and enroll in a charter school when the district tries to hold them accountable." There was a sense among the respondents that some truant students use cyber schooling as a means of circumventing truancy accountability.

Regarding penalties for parents, recommendations ranged from a basic, “Institute penalties for parents,” to more punitive measures, like garnishing wages, “Follow through, placement, and higher fines that garnish wages.” One respondent’s recommendation attempted to connect social services assistance to truancy, writing, “Tie attendance to public assistance. Reward families who have children who go to school. Suspend or eliminate benefits for families whose children do not come to school.” Connecting social services to consequences, another recommendation would mandate services as a penalty for truancy: “Increase availability of outside services such as Justice Works. Instead of monetary fines being imposed by MDJ on students/families found guilty of truancy, perhaps impose community service (for students), probation, drug and alcohol services and court mandated participation in courses relating to the importance of regular attendance.”

There were recommendations that addressed system reform in ways that do not expressly recommend emphasizing accountability or increasing penalties. Three took the form of seeking a more efficient system. There was a recommendation that might sacrifice a fair hearing for expediency: “More instances of guilty verdicts by magistrates vs. having to go back in 60 days without anything really occurring.”

One recommended, “Only having to complete one SAIP per compulsory period from enrollment through graduation.” The other recommended, “Cut out all the unnecessary agencies, unless we need them. Get to the magistrate quickly. When we got to the magistrate more quickly, we saw things turn around for the better.” One respondent gave an overview of the process and its perceived inefficiencies, and that parents can manipulate the system to shirk accountability: “There is a tremendous amount of accounting that needs to occur before determining if a student will receive a citation. Is there an open OCYF case? Has the last citation been disposed of prior to the new citation? The latter questions create a backlog. Lastly, if a parent does not respond to their subpoena at the MDJ level, they should not be able to appeal the *in absentia* decision. This is a delay of payment tactic that creates backlog. If the case gets to the county level, the citation is significantly reduced or thrown out. This strategy is known to parents.” Another recommendation noted how parents manipulate the system, writing, “We provide so many alternatives to education that parents now know how to go from one to another. Even in the legal system, parents are learning how to avoid warrants and the court system.”

Some recommendations focused on creating uniformity. One respondent made a basic recommendation for uniformity with, “More uniformity through the counties and state.” Recommending county involvement, one person wrote, “Each county should be mandated to create a program that students and parents must attend if they continue to be truant after the SAIC. If they refuse, the case should be forwarded to the local magistrate, and they need to be held accountable if the school made all reasonable attempts to have the child attend regularly.” One respondent went so far as to recommend, “a statewide uniform attendance policy (same number of parental-excused days, same tardy policy, etc.)” One respondent called for uniformity among the MDJs, recommending, “Consistency across the board for magistrates.” Two commented on the overuse of medical excuses, one requesting, “A way to hold families accountable that abuse the system and provide ridiculous amounts of medical notes.”

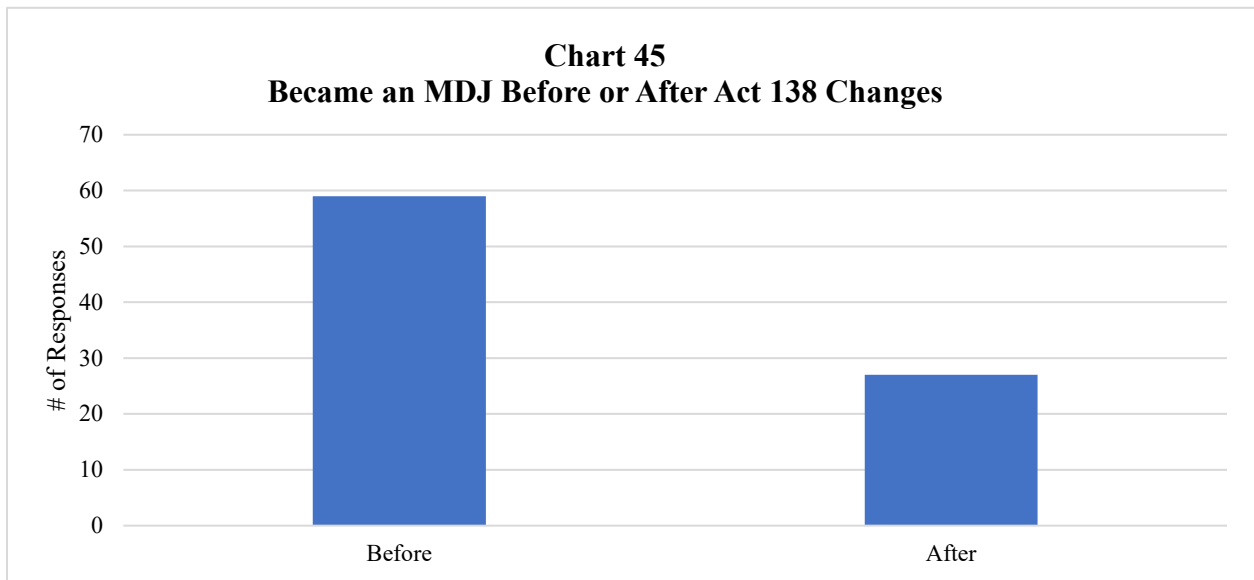
Also commenting on the system’s inefficiency, one recommended “Less time between the date of the filing and the district magistrate appearance. I marked 2-4 weeks, but depending on the month, it may be 4-6 weeks until the case is heard. At that point, it’s an additional month and a half of accrued absences.”

Finally, two broad recommendations could possibly be linked together. One person recommended, “PDE should do more to help,” and that could be linked to the recommendation, “Public Service Announcements on the importance of attending school make a difference.”

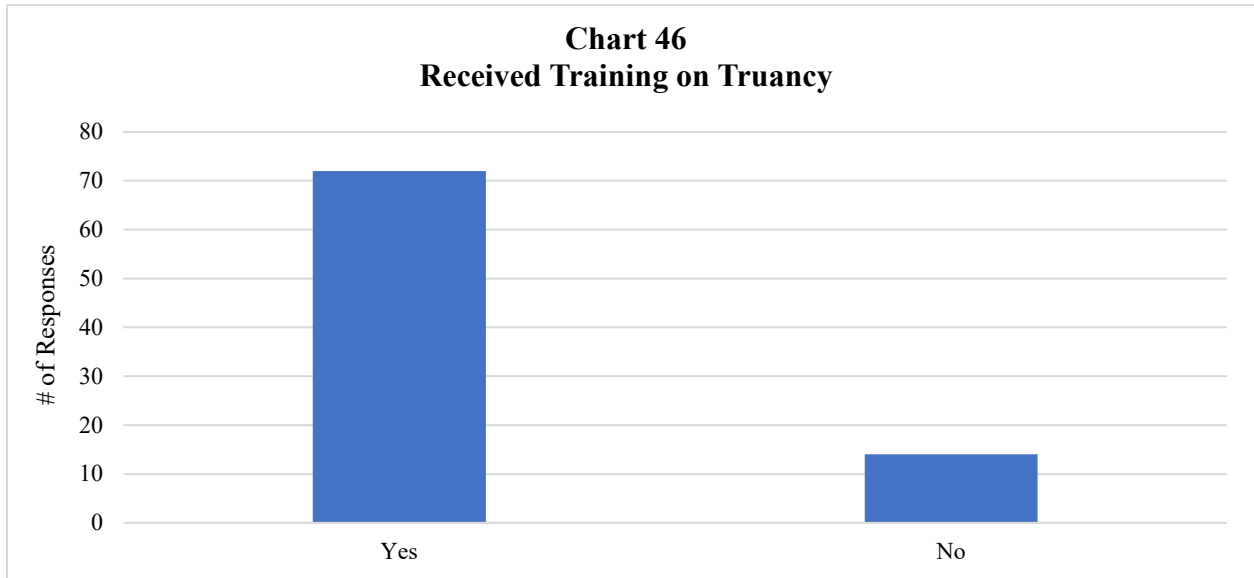
### *Magisterial District Judges Survey*

The survey distributed to MDJs in the fall of 2023 opened with background questions.

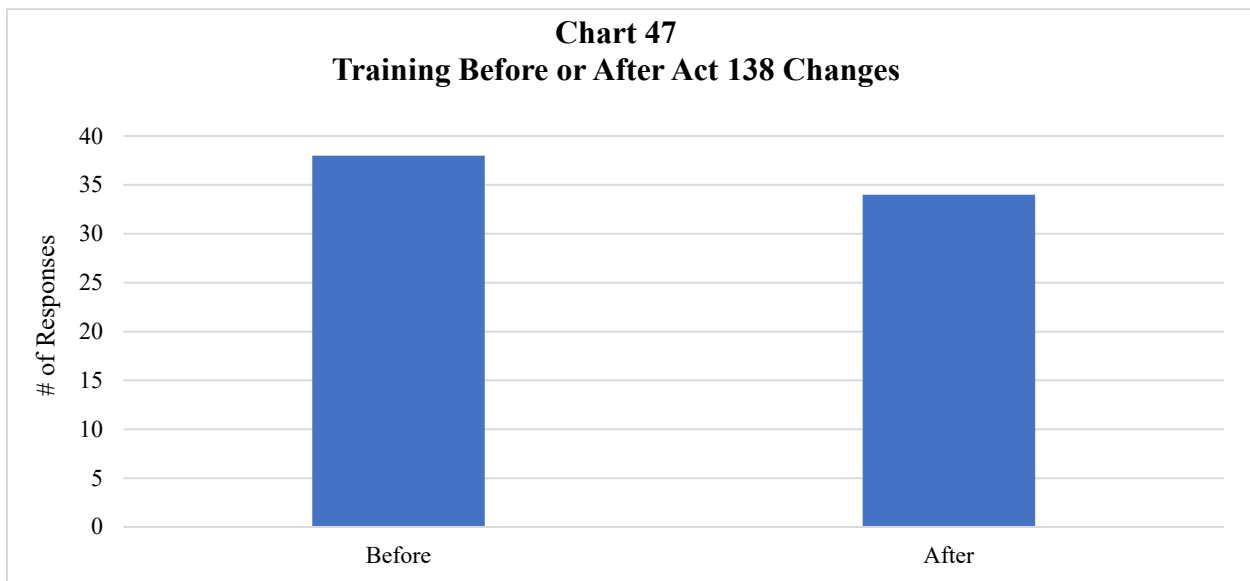
#### *Background*



Of the 86 MDJs responding, 67 percent became an MDJ before the implementation of Act 138 and 31 percent, or 27 MDJs, stepped into that role after the implementation of Act 138, which occurred during the 2017-2018 school year.



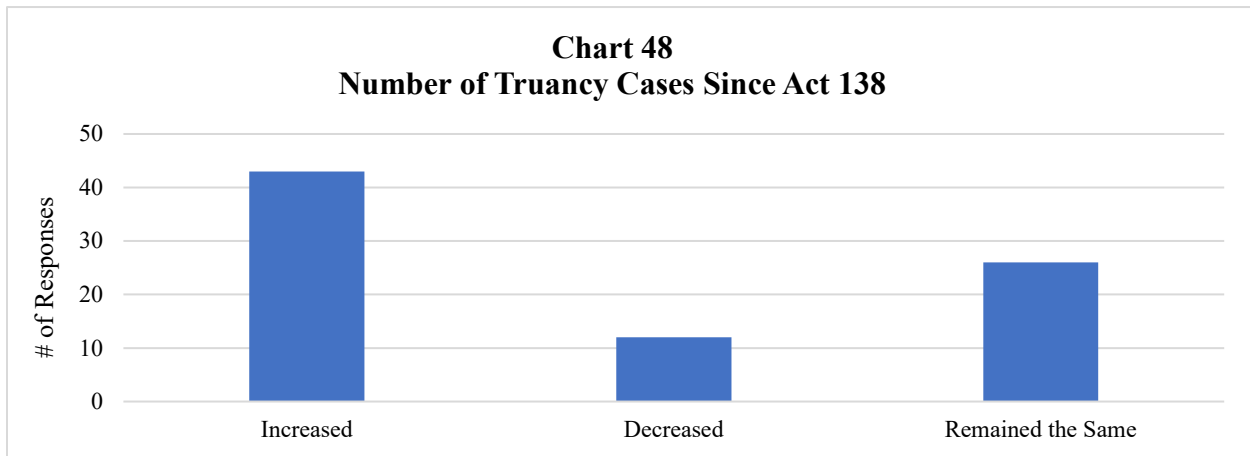
Eighty-four percent of the MDJs who responded stated that they had received training on how to handle truancy cases, while 16 percent, or 14 MDJs, stated that they had not received training that was directly focused on truancy.



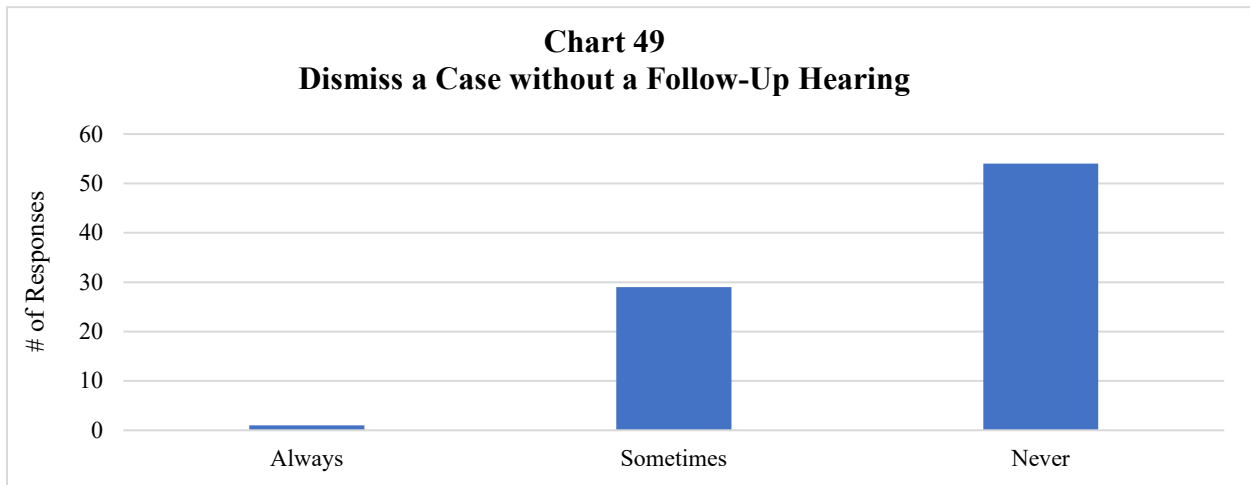
MDJs were fairly evenly divided on whether the training that they received regarding truancy was given before or after the passage of Act 138. Of the 72 MDJs who had received training on truancy, 53 percent received the training before the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year and 47 percent received the training after.

*Truancy Citations and Proceedings*

MDJs were asked how many truancy cases came through their courtroom in the 2022-2023 school year. The highest number was 2,012 with the second highest response being 664. Multiple MDJs responded that they did not know or were unable to pull that number out of the system. For those who responded with a distinct number, the range went from one to 250 and the median number of cases for one year was 40.

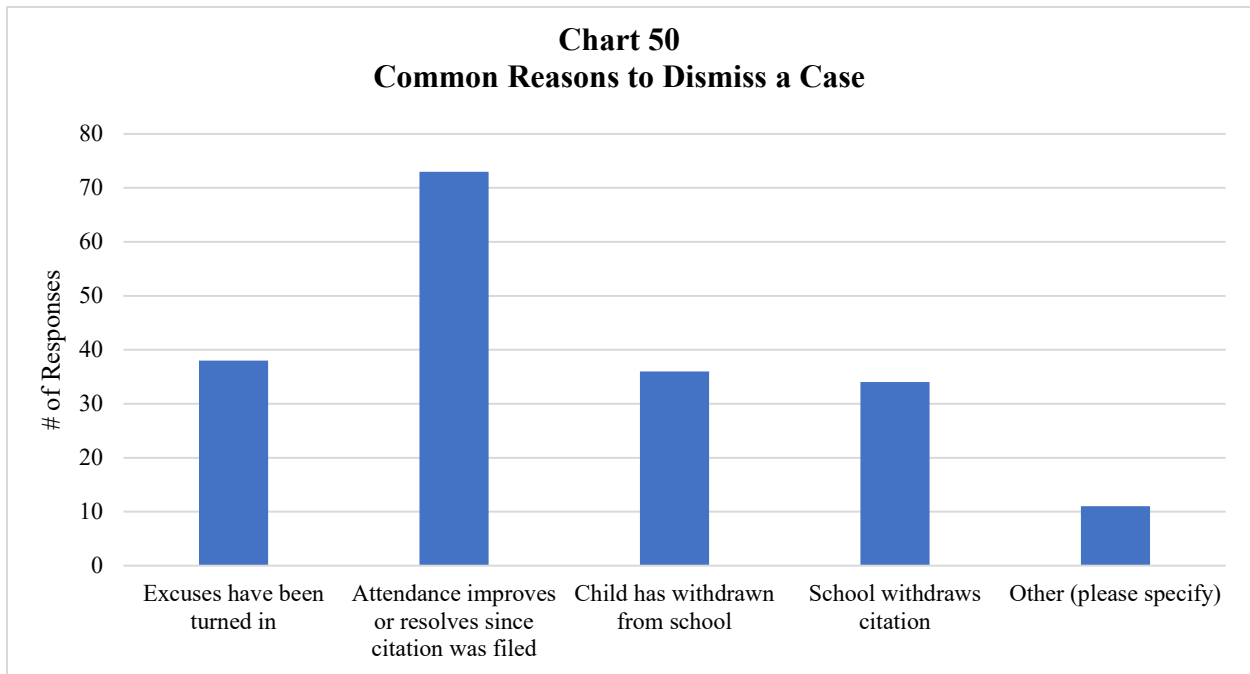


Over half, or 53 percent, of the MDJs have had an increase in the truancy cases filed in their courts since the implementation of Act 138. For 15 percent, the number of cases has decreased; for the remaining 32 percent, the number of truancy cases filed in their court has stayed the same.



When magistrates were asked how often they dismiss a truancy case without first conducting a follow-up hearing, 64 percent responded that they never dismiss under that scenario while 35 percent said that they sometimes dismiss without conducting a follow-up hearing. One respondent stated that they always dismiss without a follow-up hearing.





The magistrates were asked to pick all the indicators that cause them to dismiss a truancy case. “Attendance improves or resolves since citation was filed” was chosen by 90 percent of the respondents. Forty-seven percent of the respondents chose “excuses have been turned in.” The next two responses (“child has withdrawn from school” and “school withdraws citation”) were close with 44 percent, and 42 percent respectively.

Under “Other,” several magistrates offered a more detailed answer that further defined attendance improving. One referenced completion of assigned community service and in a similar vein, another referenced students following the compliance plan.

The MDJs were asked to provide their opinion on the most effective responses for addressing a truancy case. The responses fell under the following categories: barriers, communication and consequences, parents, schools, CYS, and lack of resources and accountability.

### Barriers

Many MDJs stated that determining the root cause or underlying problems was the most effective way to begin resolving truancy. Once these existing issues are identified, the MDJ can begin to address them by putting plans into place that can mitigate those causes.

### Communication and Consequences

Strong communication was listed by several MDJs as the most effective response to truancy cases. Communication is also the means through which barriers can be identified. This was framed both in the sense of communication from the MDJ but also enabling communication among all parties. In their focus on communications, MDJs referenced the how, the what, and to

whom. One MDJ stated that effective communication means not talking down to students or underestimating their intelligence and another mentioned treating them with empathy. Another stated that communication needed to be open and truthful. Several MDJs mentioned that their communication to students and parents consistently emphasizes the importance of school and attendance.

Several MDJs emphasized the importance of communicating consequences. MDJs should explain to students that if attendance is not addressed, then the citation must be sent to the Court of Common Pleas. MDJs should explain the importance of school and the possible consequences of continuing to not attend. They should communicate that it can lead to fines, child dependency, suspension of license, or even jail time. The most effective thing to do is to meet with the child and parents to educate them on Pennsylvania law and then try to resolve issues. One MDJ conducts weekly updates with each student and this has proven to be extremely effective. Several MDJs cited the importance of putting a plan in place for improved attendance and then being consistent in executing the plan.

### Parents

Some MDJs emphasized the need to adequately question parents about conditions in the home and also to be wary, as parents are not always completely truthful concerning their capabilities, skills and marital situations. Parents were seen as barriers by some MDJs, but by others, getting parents or guardians on board early and consistently was an effective strategy for reducing truancy, especially for younger students. One MDJ responded that they were “contemplating imposing parenting classes as an option for truancy.” If the parents do not enforce the rules at home, the MDJ will have little impact with punishments.

According to the MDJs, what works in some districts does not work in others. Although fines work for some magistrates, others commented that fines do not work at all. MDJs gave similarly conflicting answers regarding the suspension of a drivers’ license. Although one MDJ did suggest that if an elementary school student is truant, the MDJ be allowed to take away the parent’s driver’s license or even the license of another student within the household.

According to one MDJ, they had previously used a community educational program, but that was no longer available within their district. Several other MDJs mentioned that community services existing in their district were effective as well as counseling programs for both parents and children.

### Schools

According to one MDJ, it is the responsibility of the school district to file a case with the MDJ early, before the number of absences becomes excessive, that is most effective. Another MDJ also referenced the importance of schools, saying that the most effective action is taken by the school in creating and implementing alternative plans for attendance improvement.

## CYS

Several MDJs suggested that the MDJ should be permitted to make a referral to CYS for placement based on high numbers of unexcused absences. One MDJ stated that CYS should always be brought in to assess and provide needed resources prior to MDJ involvement.

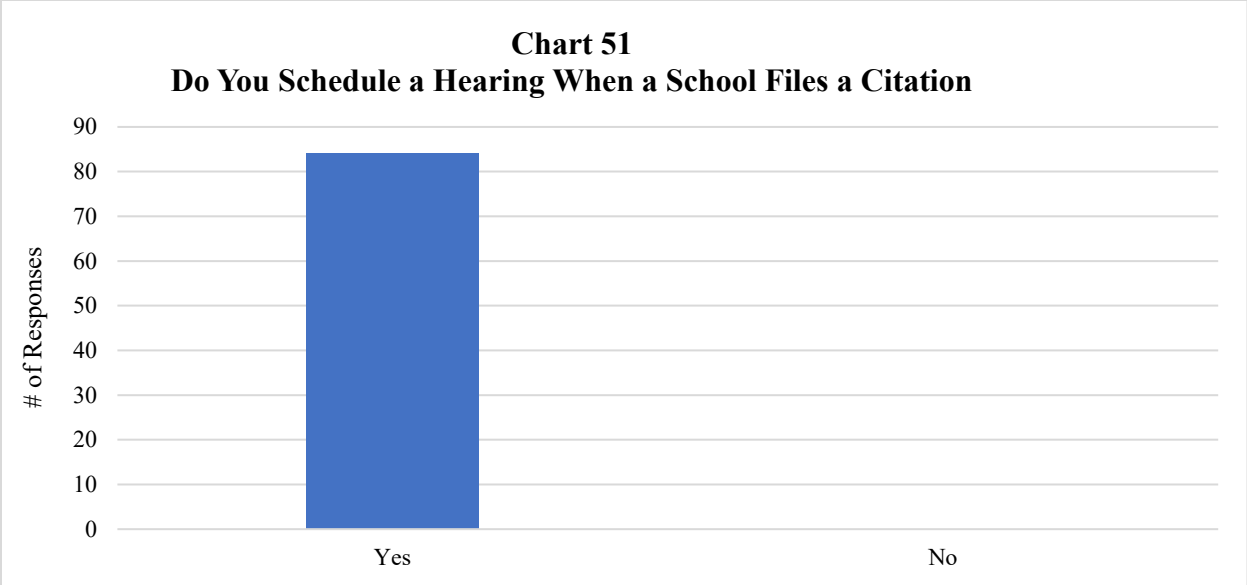
## Lack of Resources and Accountability

Although the survey question asked for positive feedback on effective solutions to mounting truancy numbers, many magistrates responded in the negative. Some stated that MDJ involvement is largely ineffective, and truancy is an issue more properly addressed through Children and Youth Services. Another stated that practically no response is effective.

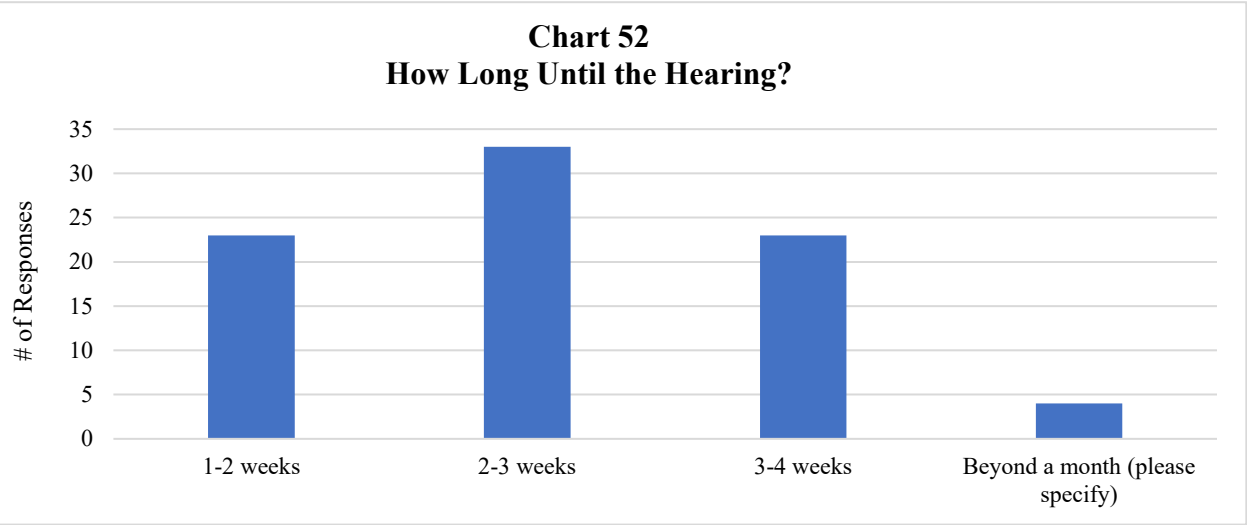
Another respondent went so far as to say that truancy should not go to the magisterial district judges. The magistrates do not have the resources to handle truancy. The lack of resources was a consistent theme for those who felt MDJs could not respond effectively to truancy. One respondent stated that “MDJs have extremely limited tools to force compliance.” Another respondent stated that they felt that their hands were tied when it came to stopping truancy.

One MDJ stated:

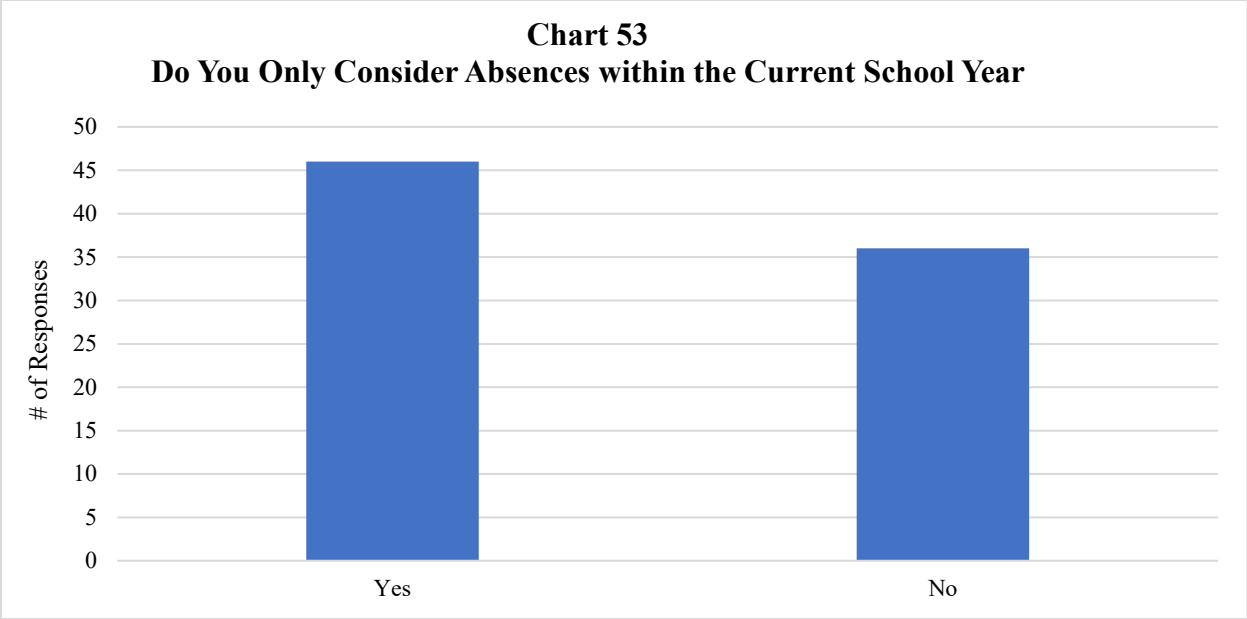
Nothing seems to work: I have tried doing classes for the parents, classes for both parents and child, community service, at the hearing I try to get the child to open up and tell both myself, the school and the parent as to why they don't want to attend. Nothing seems to work. Most of the kids just don't care anymore. Most give me a response of ‘I just don't like it’ and no reason as to why they don't like it or ‘I just don't want to go’ and a few are more honest and I hear depression or anxiety a lot. I think there needs to be a study focusing on the root cause analysis and then trying to come up with some solutions for the barriers as to why the child doesn't want to go or doesn't like it. In most cases you will probably find it has to do with the family dynamics, lack of parenting skills (most parents want to be the friend instead of the parent), and in some cases I think you will find it is a mental health of the child or parent and they need counseling on how to cope.



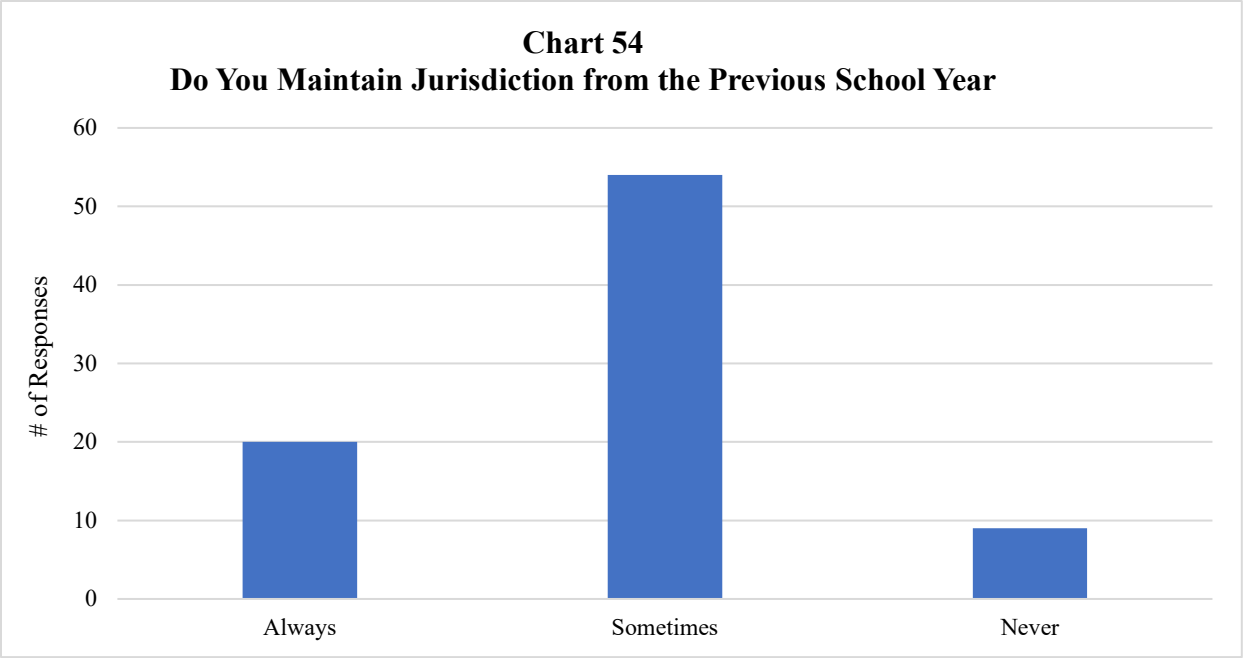
One hundred percent of the respondents stated that they do schedule a hearing when a school files a truancy citation in their jurisdiction.



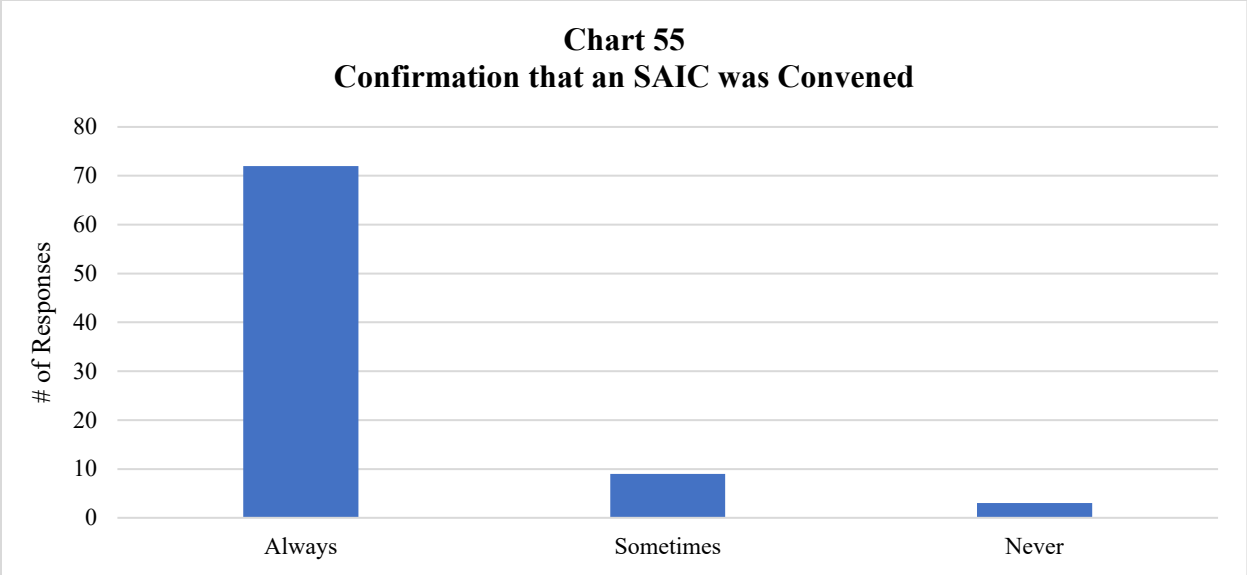
Two to three weeks was the most common length of time until a hearing is held, with 40 percent of the respondents choosing this option. One to two weeks and three to four weeks tied with 28 percent of respondents choosing each of these options. For the final option of beyond a month, respondents stated that it could be as much as 45 to 60 days out or that it could be two to six weeks based on the availability of the court schedule. Another magistrate holds truancy hearings once per month.



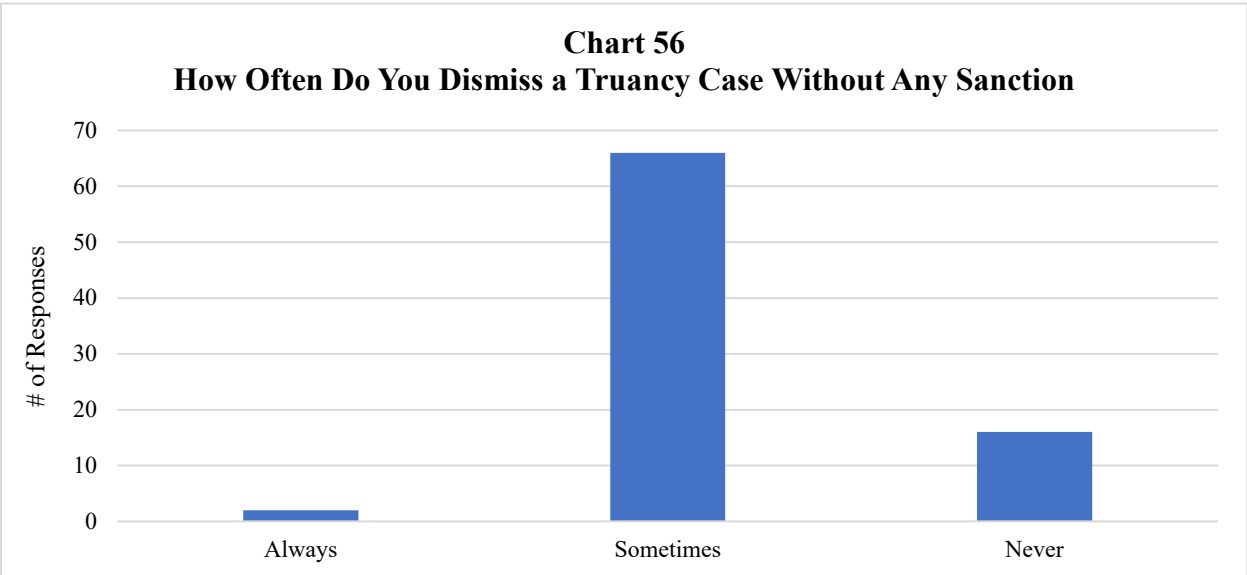
Magistrates were asked if they only consider unexcused absences accrued during the current school year when they review a truancy case. Slightly over half, or 56 percent, said yes, while the remaining 44 percent said no.



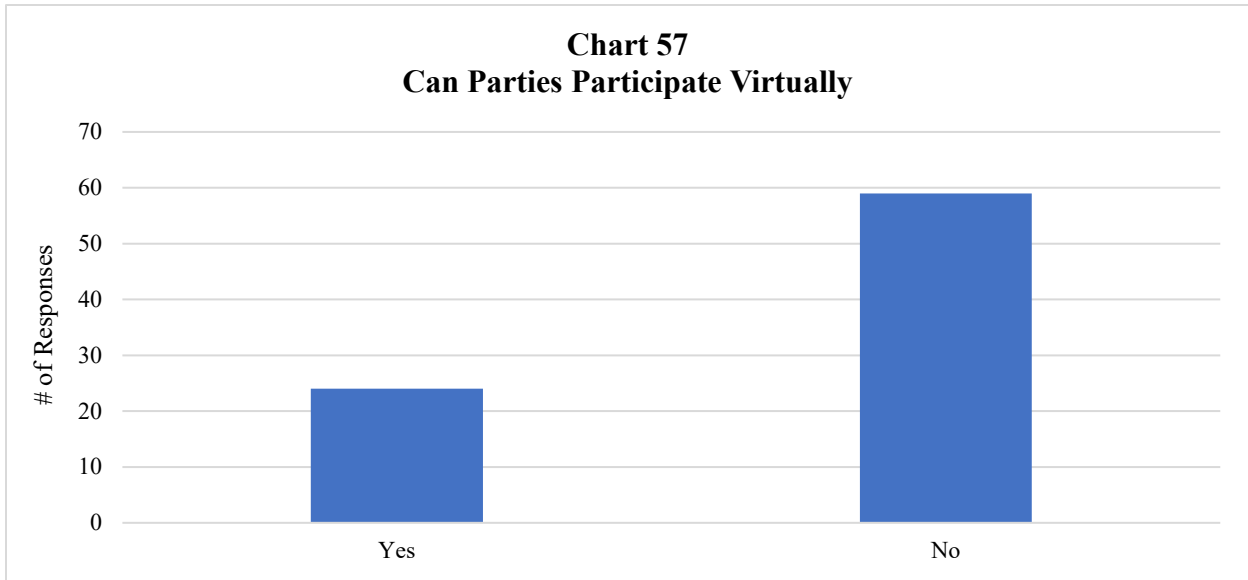
Magistrates were asked if they retain jurisdiction over a truancy case beyond the current school year. Sixty five percent said that they sometimes retain jurisdiction, while 11 percent said that they never retain jurisdiction and 24 percent said that they always maintain jurisdiction from the previous school year.



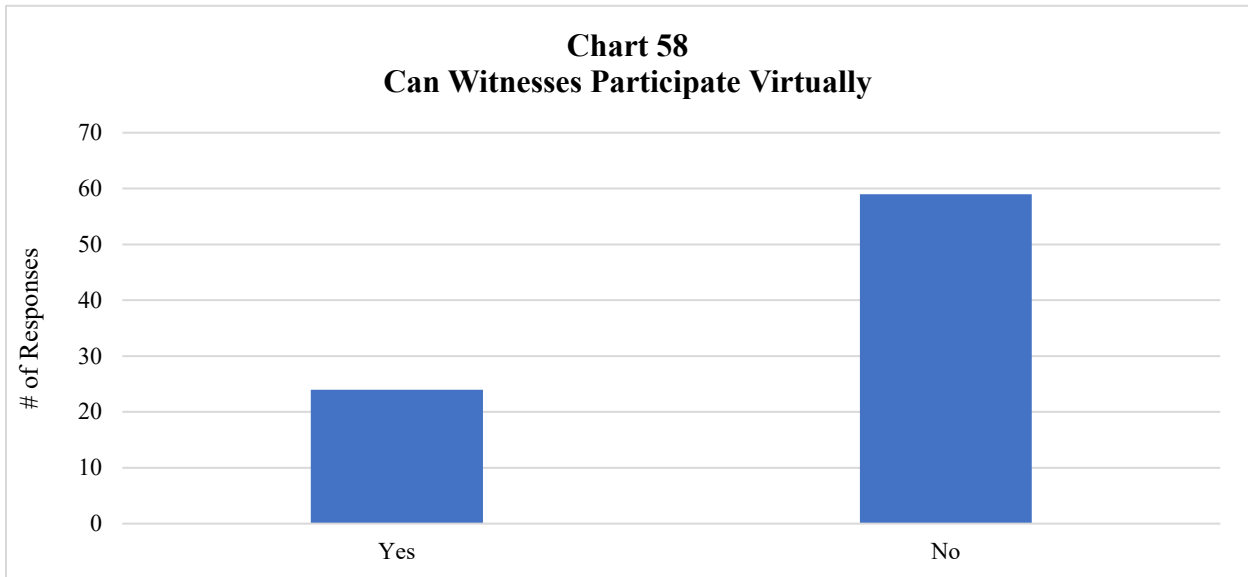
Eighty-six percent of the magistrates always receive confirmation that an SAIC was held. Eleven percent sometimes receive confirmation and the remaining four percent do not.



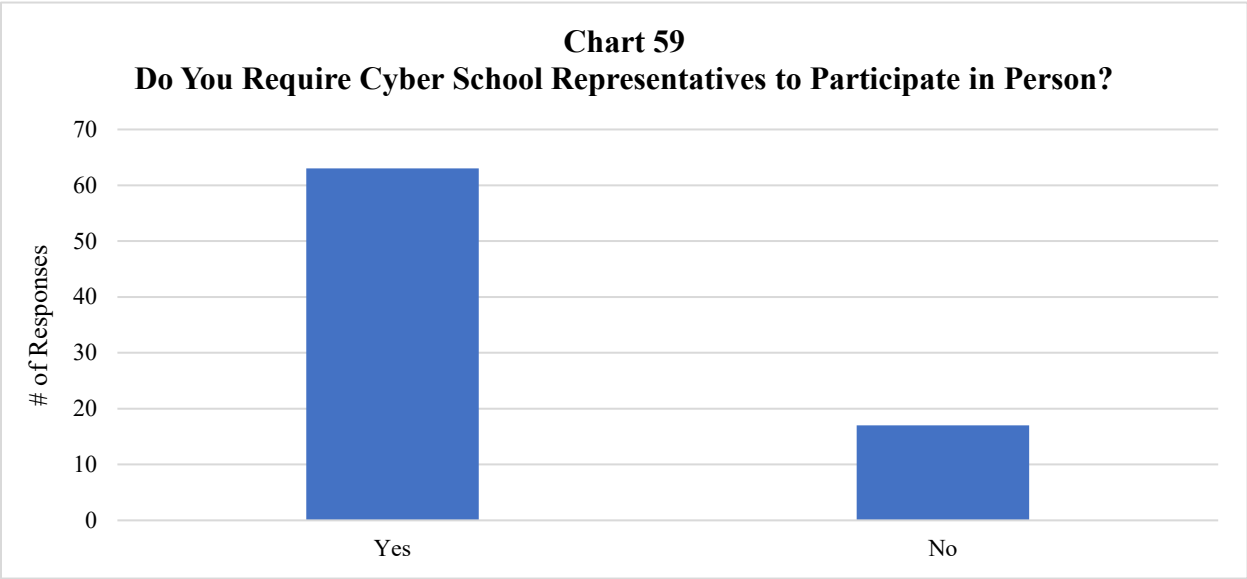
Seventy-nine percent of the magistrates sometimes dismiss truancy cases without imposing any sanction. Nineteen percent never dismiss without any sanction and two percent always dismiss without imposing any sanction.



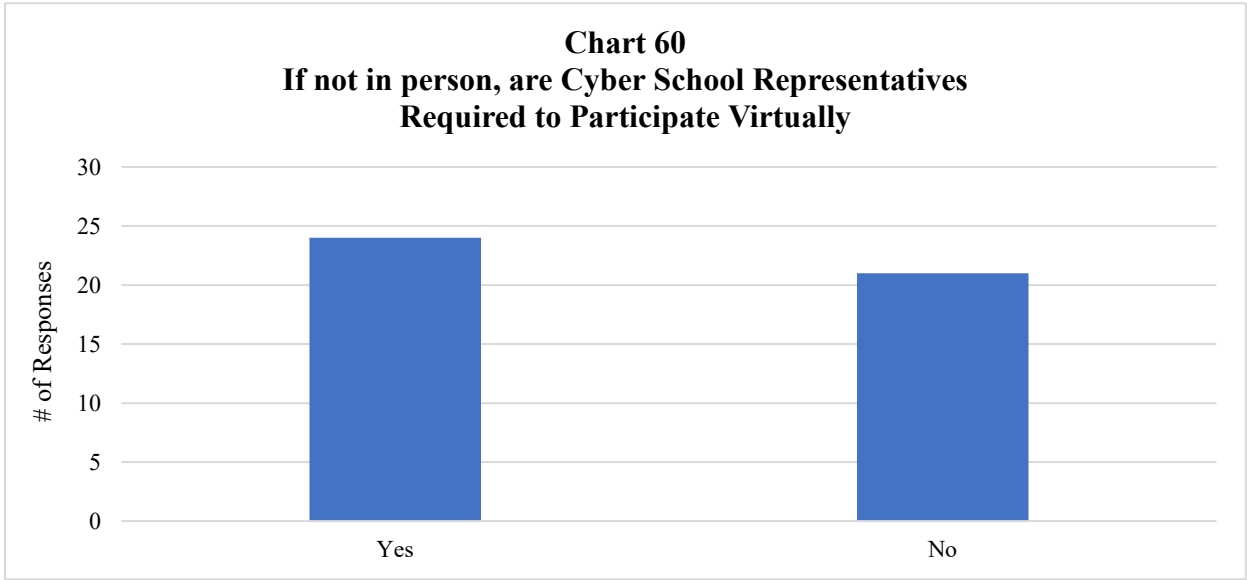
Seventy-one percent of the magistrates do not allow parties to participate via advanced communication technologies and the remaining 29 percent do allow for virtual or phone communication at hearings.



In a similar vein to Chart 57, 71 percent of magistrates do not allow witnesses to participate via advanced communication technologies and 29 percent do allow virtual participation in hearings.

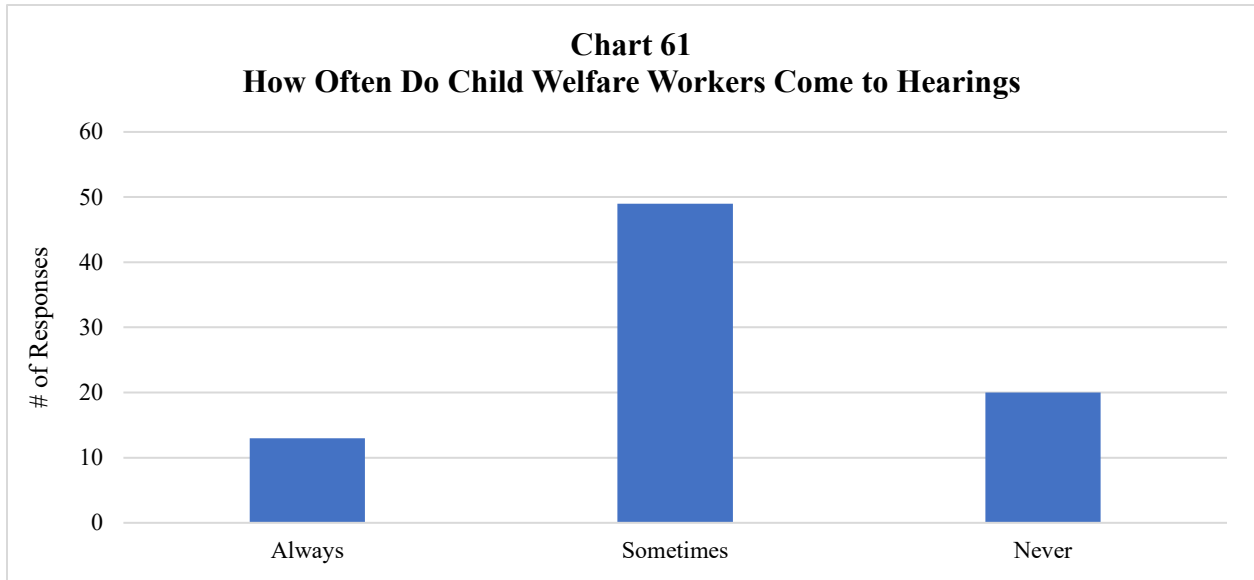


Seventy-nine percent of magistrates require cyber charter school representatives to participate in person while 21 percent of respondents do not require them to participate in person.



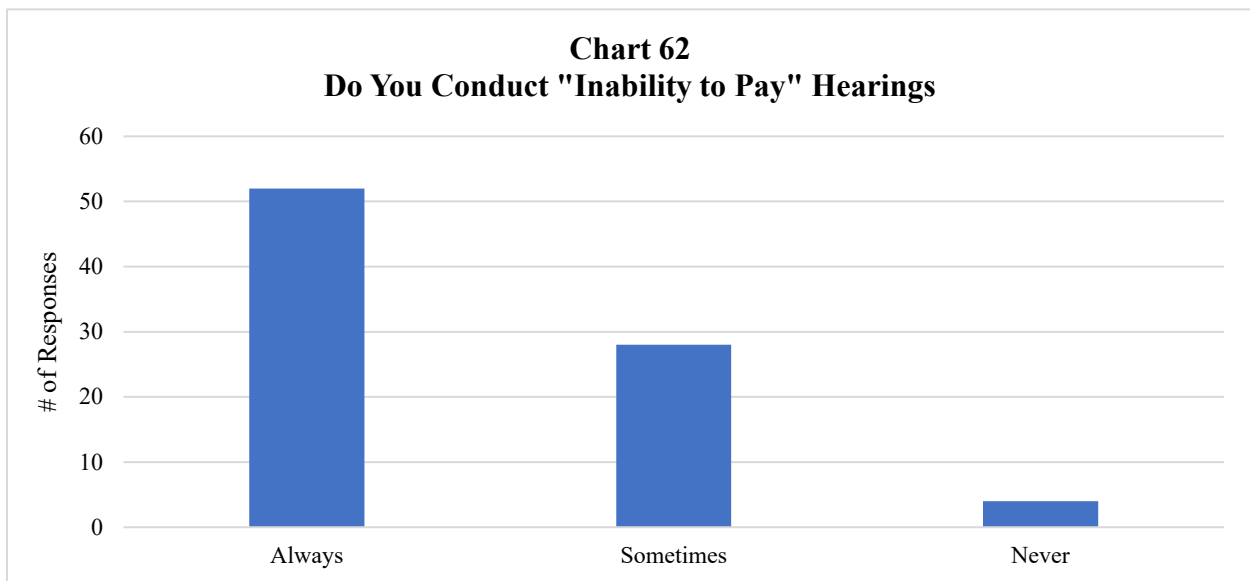
Of those MDJs that do not require in-person participation from a cyber charter representative, 53 percent require a cyber charter representative to participate via advanced communication technology while the remaining 47 percent do not.





Sixty percent of the magistrates responded that a representative from a County Child Welfare Agency sometimes attends truancy hearings. Twenty-four percent said that they never attend a hearing while 16 percent said that they always attend a court hearing regarding truancy.

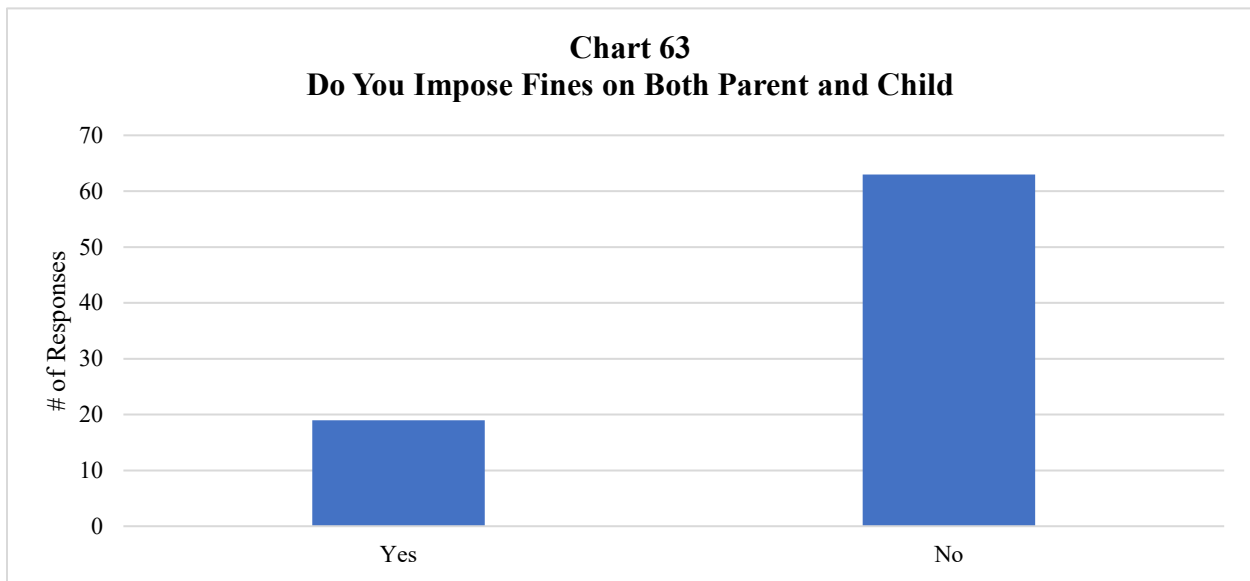
*Dispositions and Rulings*



Sixty-two percent of the magistrates always conduct an inquiry into a party’s ability to pay the fine in question. Thirty-three percent sometimes conduct the hearing and five percent never conduct an “inability to pay” hearing.

The MDJs were asked what factors they consider when determining a parent’s ability to pay fines. There was a broad range of answers covering numerous factors. Income and all other aspects of employment were the most cited factors. Some MDJs mentioned past income and work history, as well as current job security. Others noted a wide range of expenses, from medical to child support, mortgage payment, utilities, public assistance and disability, and expense of housing. One MDJ also mentioned whether the child is working. MDJs focus on family factors, such as the number in the household, medical conditions, whether the parent is a single parent, and other children within the household when determining a parent’s ability to pay. Prior cases, history of violation, and past payment history were mentioned. General hardship and mental health issues are acknowledged. Some MDJs mentioned cooperativeness.

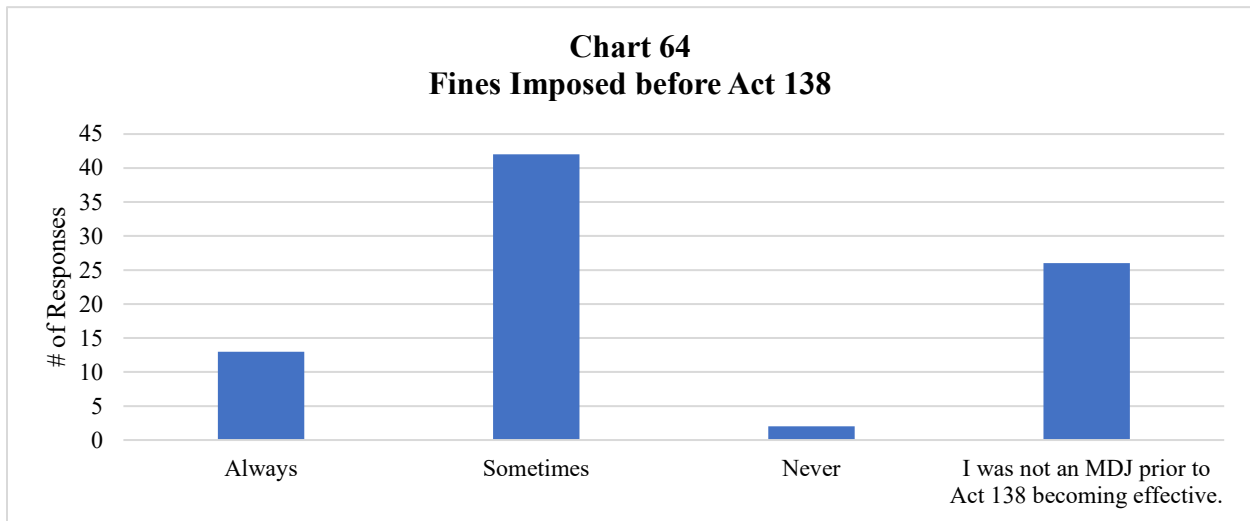
One magistrate wrote “Do they appear in court & provide information regarding income & expenses, how they appear in court & present themselves (*ie*: do they have expensive phones, are they dressed in designer clothes, do they have their nails done professionally, do they smoke, do they smoke marijuana, do they talk about their kids having gaming devices, if they regularly make payments on other fines in the office, etc).” Another magistrate responded “Normally, when a fine is assessed, it is on or after our 3rd hearing from the same docket. Parents and child, depending on who is cited for truancy, are given every opportunity to comply with requirements from the school and the court before a fine or community service is given, or both.” When a case is filed on the child, another magistrate stated “I give community service over the fine so the parent doesn’t pay the fine since it is against the child.”



Seventy-seven percent of magistrates never impose a fine on both parents and students while 23 percent sometimes impose a fine on both. Changes implemented through Act 138 state that the parent and child must not be cited simultaneously, however, some MDJs continue to do this.

While discussing truancy citations and proceedings, an Advisory Committee member stated that they had a judge tell them to file six citations on a particular child, one for each unexcused absence, impose the maximum fine, then tell the parent they will dismiss the case if the child goes from cyber school back to a brick and mortar school. Fines totaled almost \$30,000. The judge withdrew the ruling after the mother agreed to move her child back to a brick and mortar school. The member tried to push back on this process, but the judge insisted that the citations be filed.<sup>211</sup>

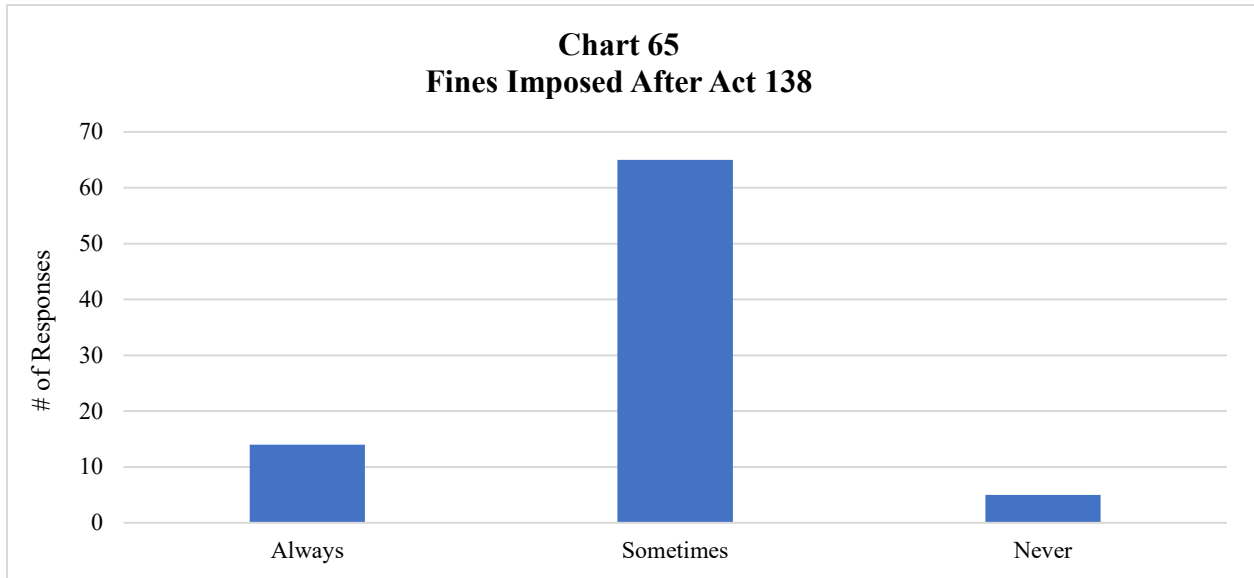
Through the survey results, the Advisory Committee identified clear abuses and violations of the law. They advocated for a system to hold MDJs accountable to the Act 138 changes. A reporting system does exist for reporting judges’ actions, however there was disagreement within the group about how intensely the infractions should be dealt with. Some said solicitors raising objections usually would cause such infractions to cease. One member suggested the report recommend a process to report violations and abuses of the law. Another member stated that the president judge has scheduling oversight over MDJs and usually has monthly meetings with MDJs, which could be one way to address such discrepancies. The disciplinary board/judicial conduct board is where one would file a complaint against a judge. A school district solicitor could be a referral source to this board. For MDJs who are misunderstanding the law, the Pennsylvania Education Law Center has a helpful fact sheet.<sup>212</sup>



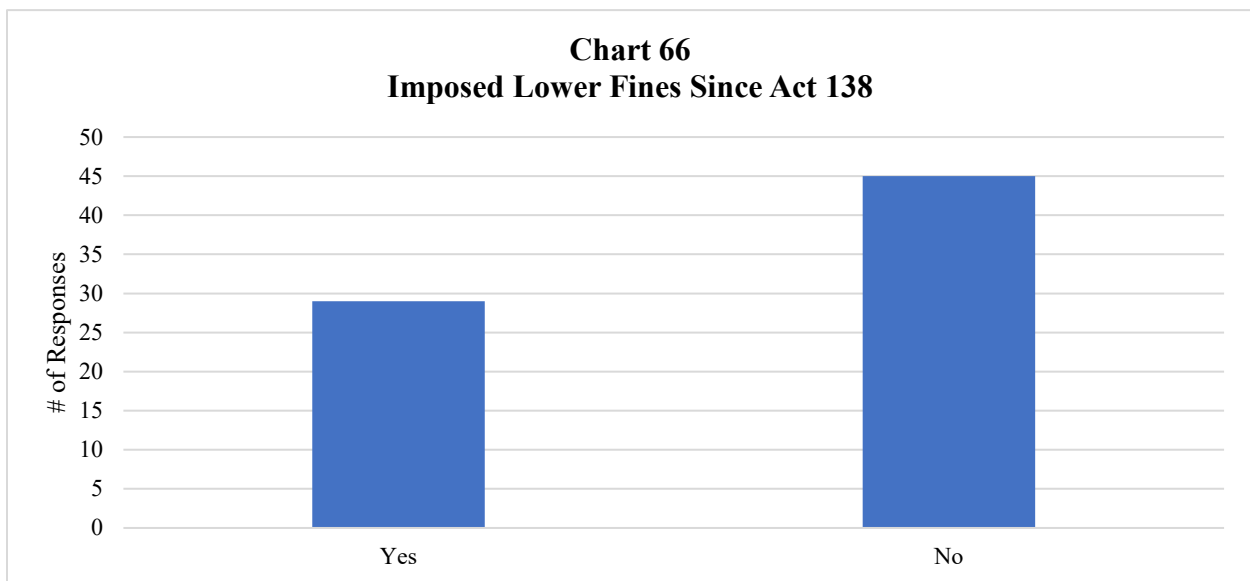
Half of the magistrates, or 51 percent, sometimes imposed fines prior to the 2017-2018 school year. Sixteen percent of magistrates always imposed a fine during that time frame. Two percent never imposed a fine and the remaining 26 respondents were not MDJs prior to the implementation of Act 138.

<sup>211</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, December 7, 2023.

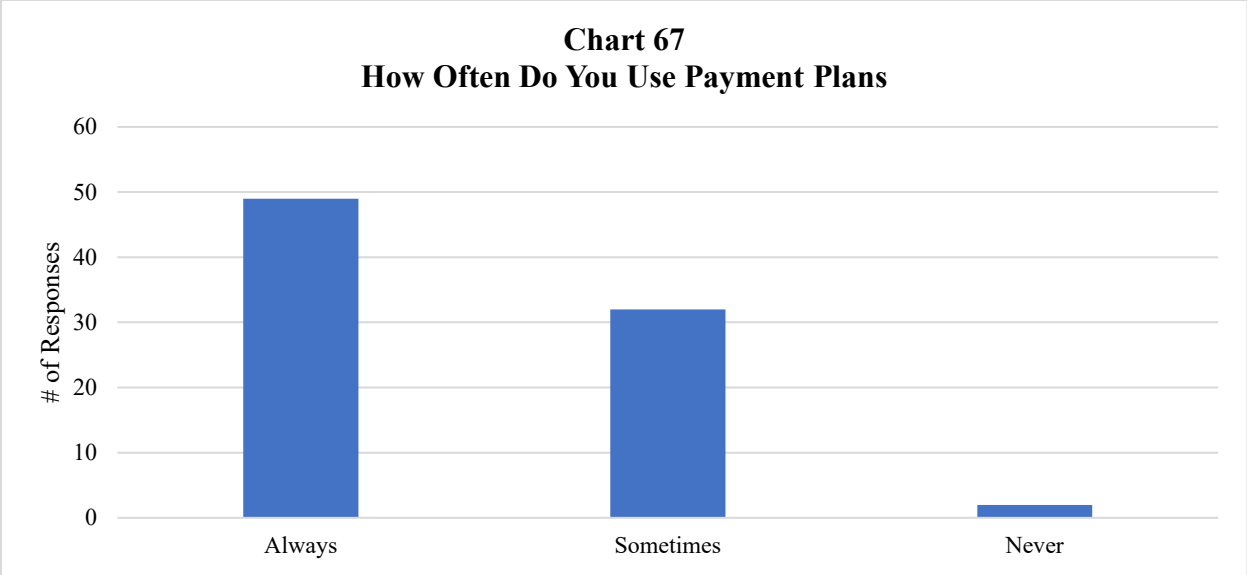
<sup>212</sup> Ibid.



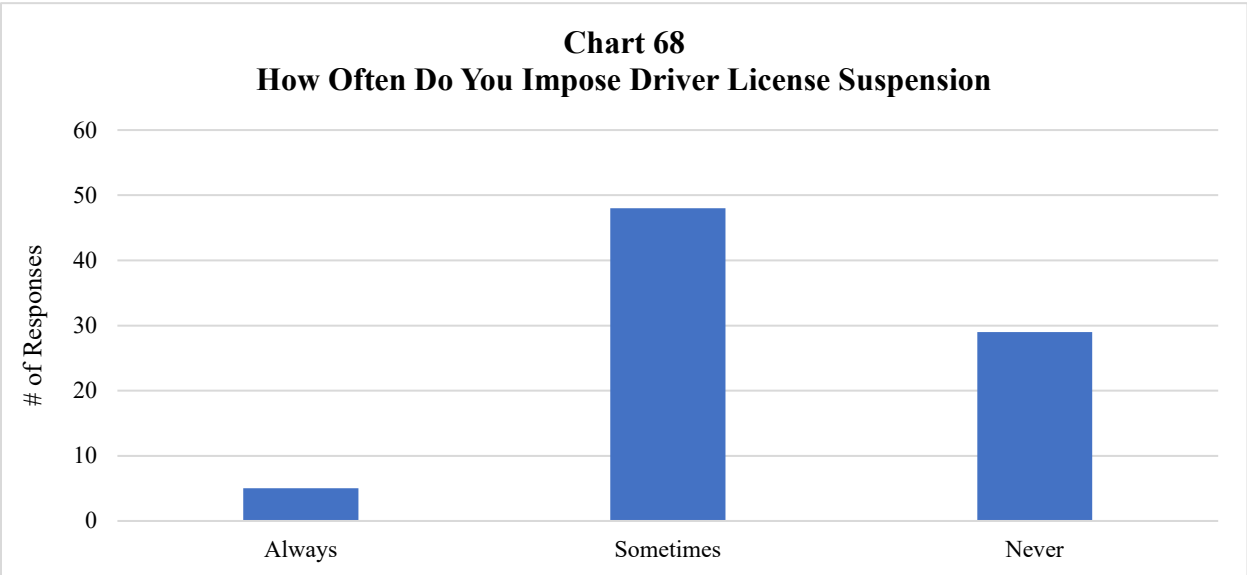
Seventeen percent of MDJs have always imposed fines in a truancy case since the 2017-2018 school year. Seventy-eight percent have sometimes imposed fines and six percent have never imposed fines.



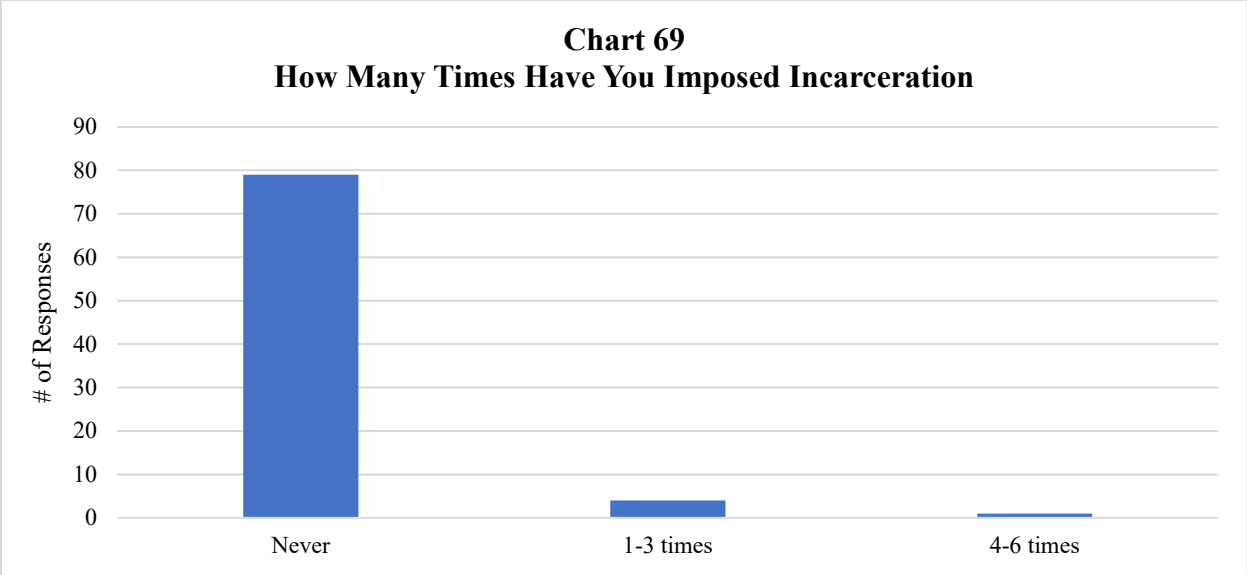
Sixty-one percent of magistrates have not imposed lower fines since the implementation of Act 138 while 39 percent of magistrates have imposed lower fines in this time frame.



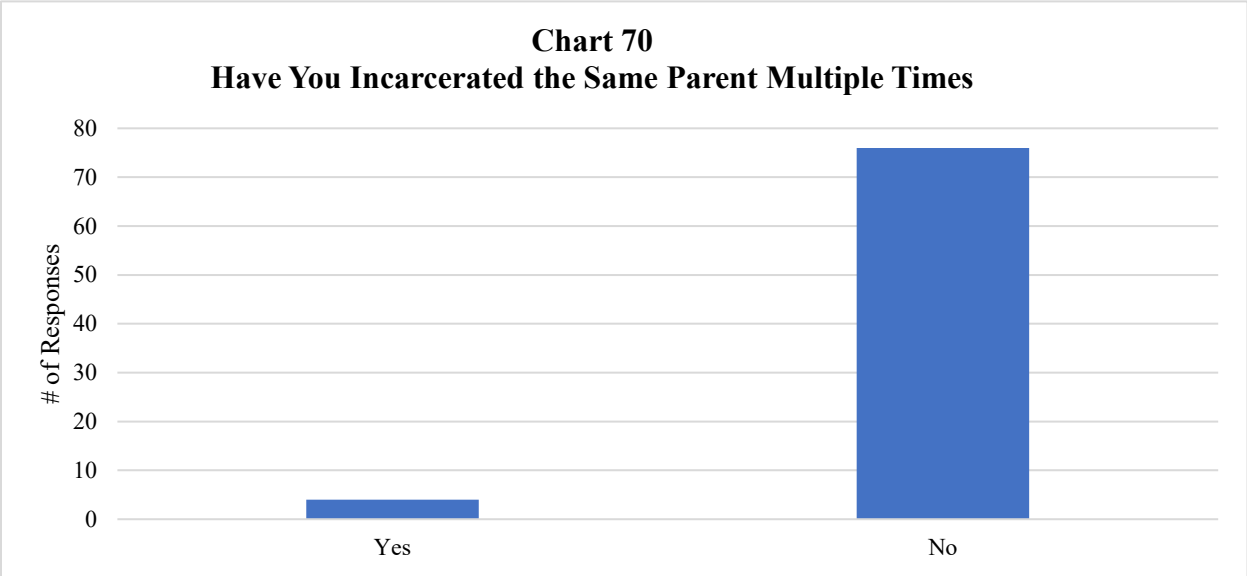
Fifty-nine percent of magistrates always use payment plans; 39 percent sometimes use payment plans and two percent never use payment plans when imposing fines.



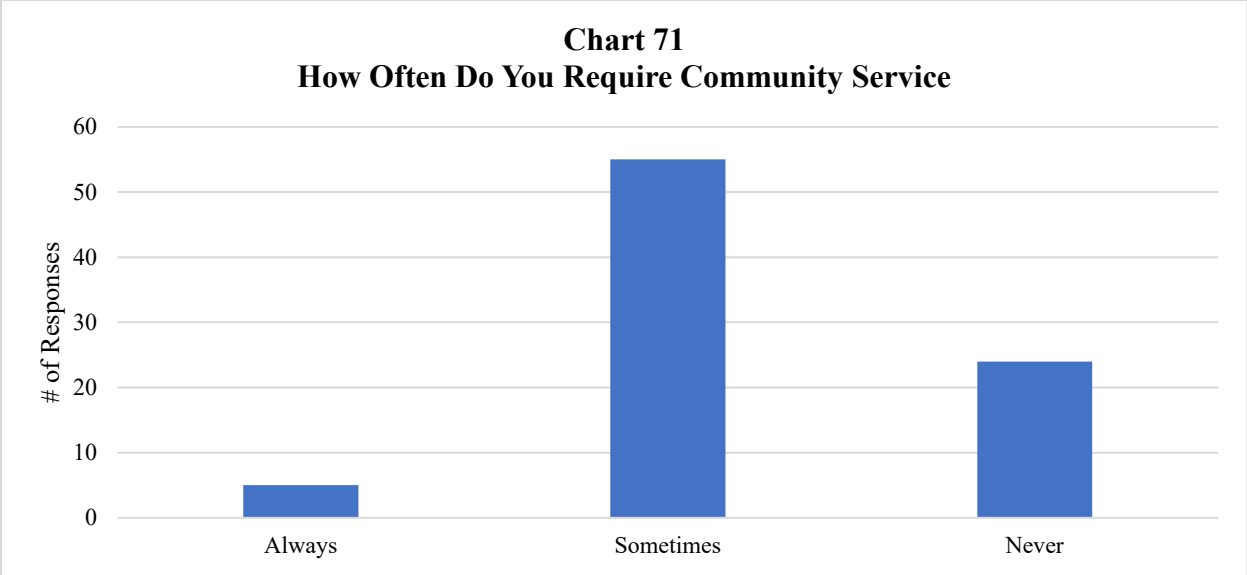
The majority of magistrates, 59 percent of respondents, stated that they sometimes suspend a driver license as a consequence for students. Thirty-five percent never impose a driver license suspension and six percent always use this as a consequence for students who are truant.



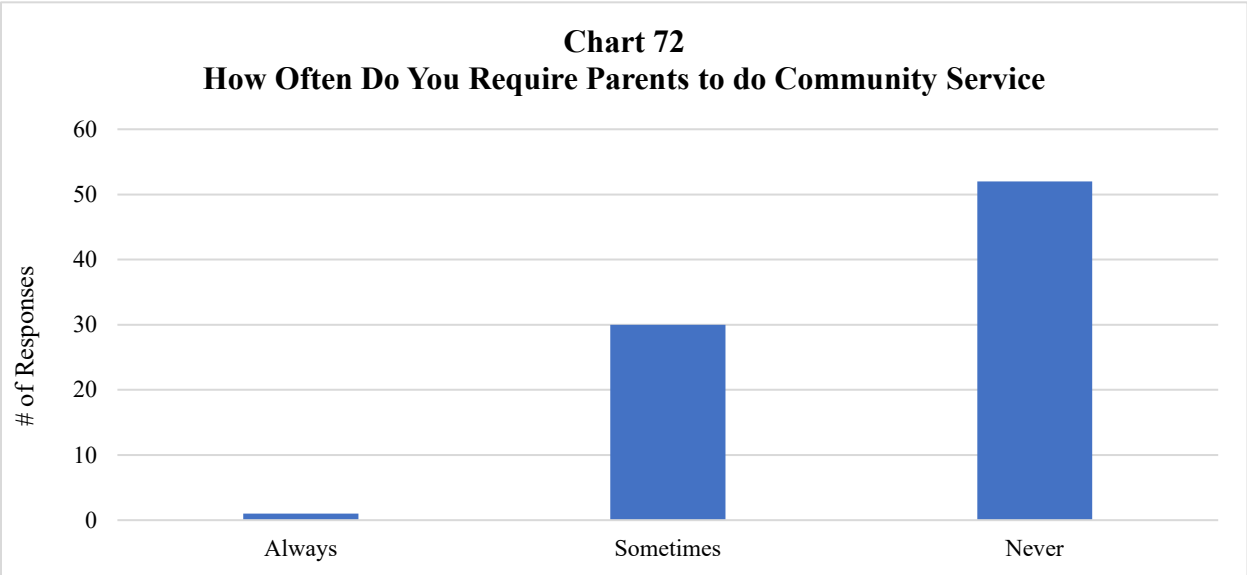
Ninety-four percent of magistrates have never imposed incarceration of parents as a penalty in truancy cases since the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. Five percent have incarcerated parents between one and three times while one respondent stated that they had used this as a penalty between four to six times.



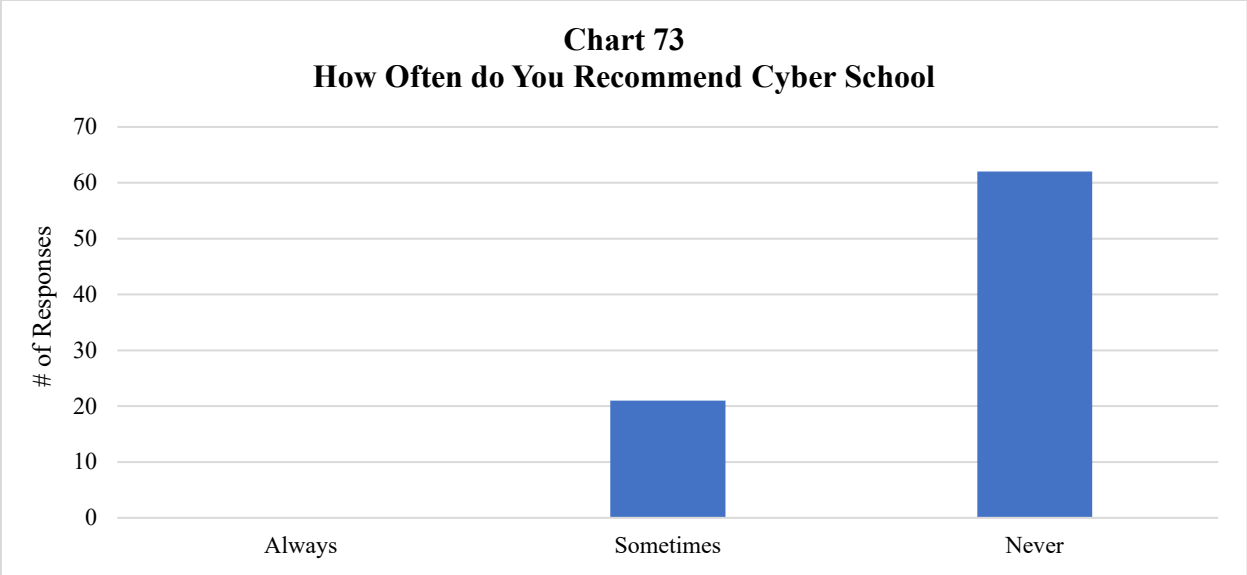
Five percent of magistrates responding stated that they had incarcerated the same parent multiple times while the remaining 95 percent had not.



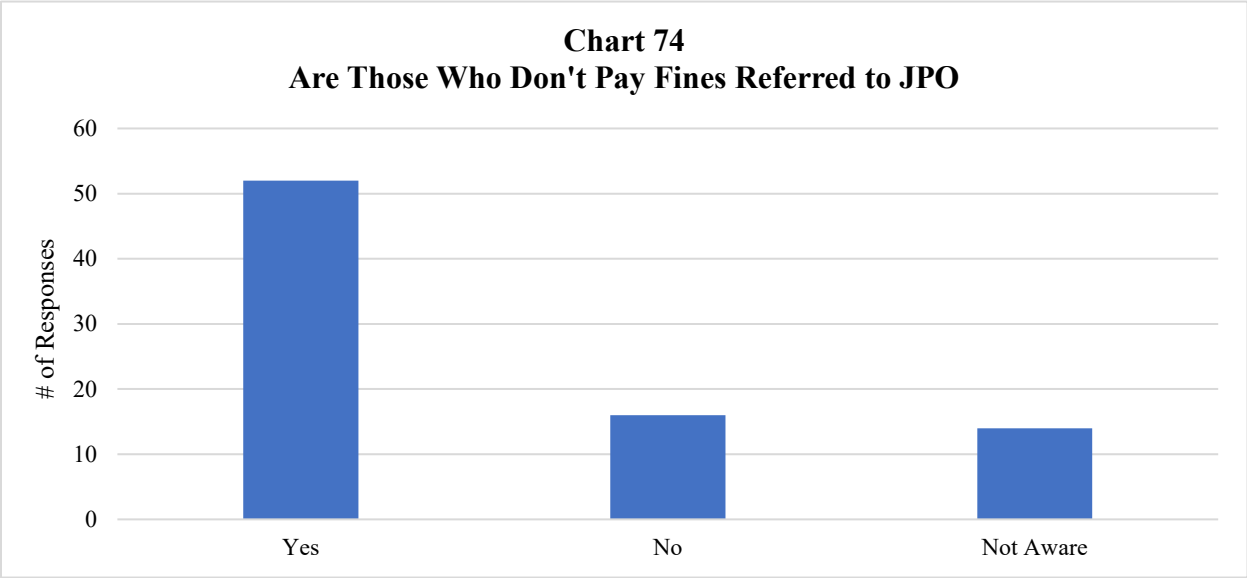
Sixty-five percent of magistrates responding sometimes require students to do community service. Twenty-nine percent never require community service and the remaining six percent said that they always incorporate community service as a consequence for truancy.



By comparison, 63 percent of magistrates who responded to the survey stated that they never require parents to do community service as a consequence of truancy. Thirty-six percent sometimes do, and one percent always require parents to do community service.



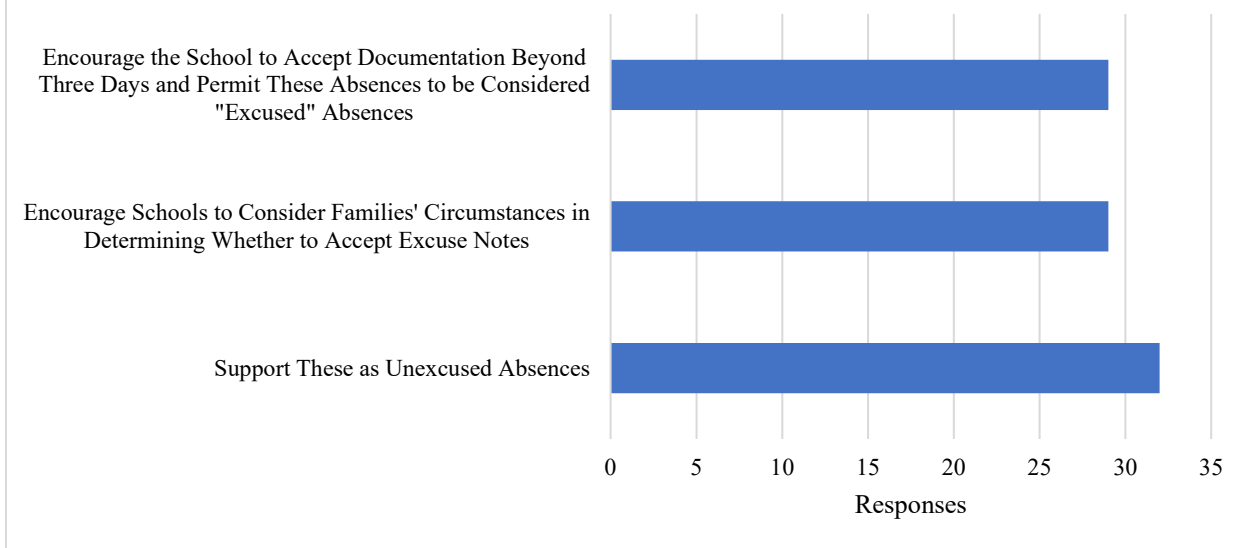
When asked how often they recommend that a child be transferred to a cyber school to address truancy, 75 percent said that they never do, and 25 percent said that they sometimes do.



If a student or parent fails to satisfy a truancy related fine, 63 percent of magistrates refer them to the juvenile probation department. Twenty percent do not refer them to a juvenile probation department and 17 percent are not aware of this as an option.

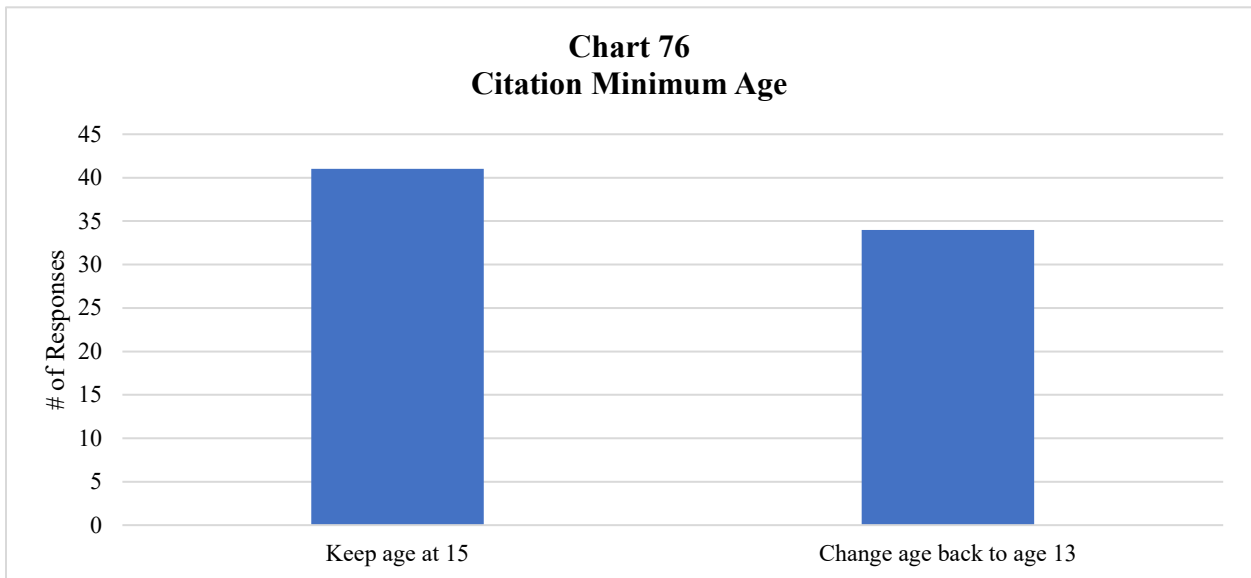


**Chart 75**  
**Response to Late Excuses**



When a school receives a written excuse for an absence after the third day, 39 percent of magistrates support maintaining these as unexcused absences, 35 percent encourage schools to consider families' circumstances in determining whether to accept excuse notes and 26 percent encourage the school to accept documentation beyond the three days and to change an unexcused absence into an excused absence when the proper documentation is received beyond the deadline.

**Chart 76**  
**Citation Minimum Age**

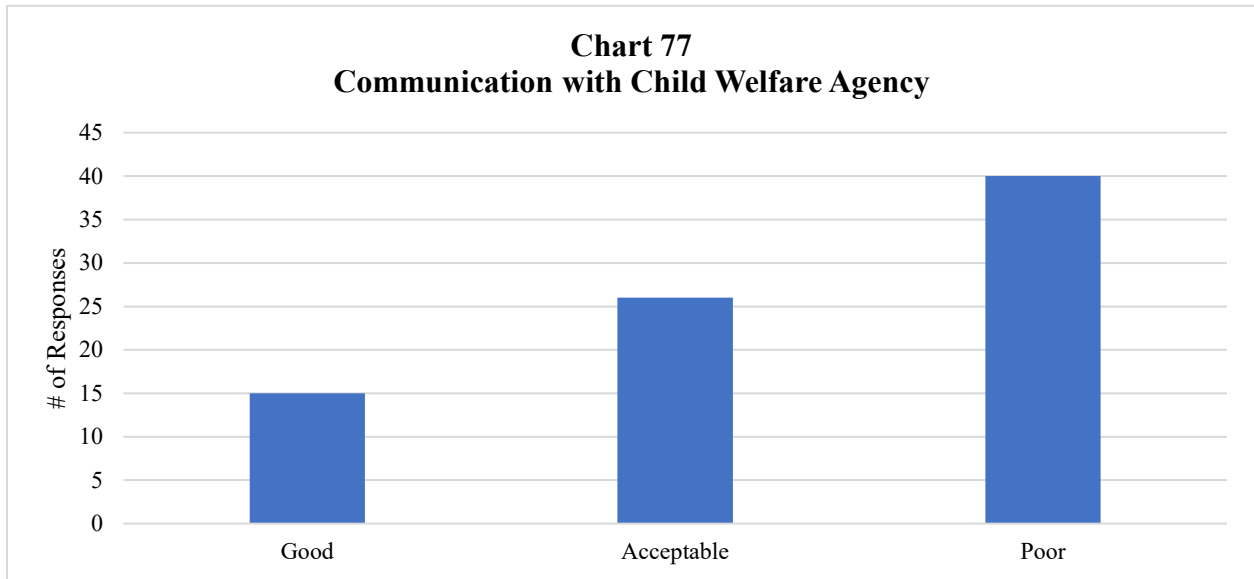


Act 138 raised the minimum age for magistrates to directly cite students from 13 years old to 15 years old. Magistrates were asked whether they would keep the age at 15 or prefer that the age be changed back to 13. Slightly more magistrates, approximately 55 percent, felt that the age should be kept at 15, while 45 percent responded that the age should be changed back to 13 years old.

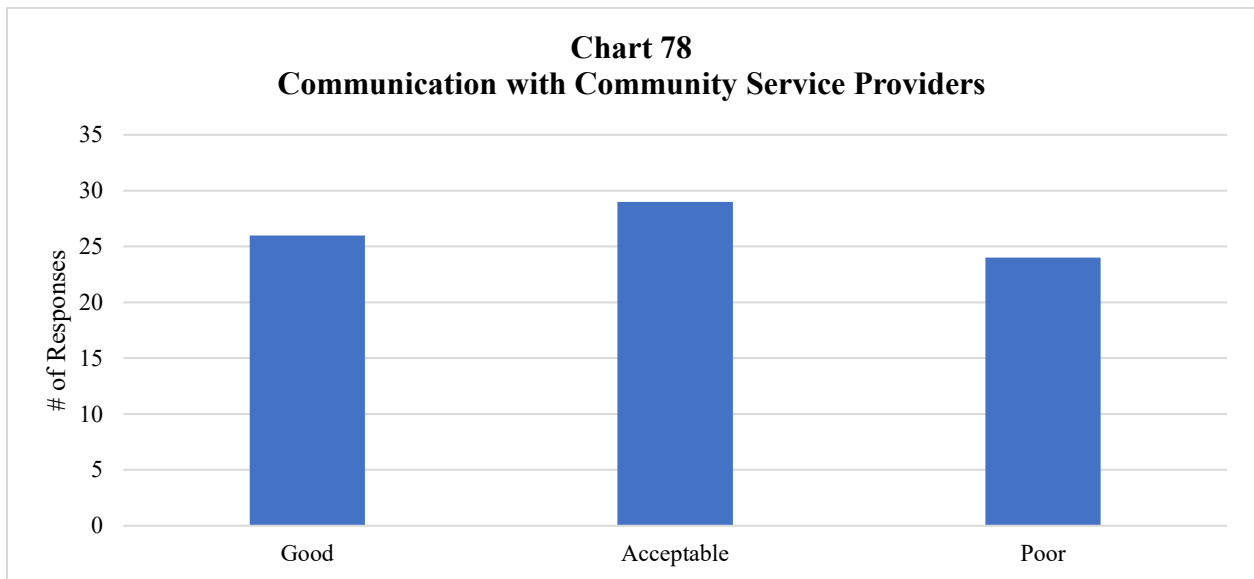
Of the MDJs who would prefer to change the age back to age 13, many felt that 13-year-olds are as accountable as 15-year-olds and able to get themselves to school, or not get themselves to school if they so choose. By that age, it is tough for a parent to force a child to get to school if they truly do not want to. Other magistrates favored returning the age to 13 simply to get the process started earlier. One magistrate responded:

Usually by age 13 the parents have no control over whether or not their kids attend school. Oftentimes my schools are forced to cite the parents with truancy even though the kids are 13 or 14 & the kids are refusing to attend school. I typically find the parents Not Guilty b/c it's not their fault the kids aren't attending school. Thus, the truancy issue isn't being addressed b/c the parents are Not Guilty & the kids know they can get away w/refusing to attend school since they can't be cited.

Of the MDJs who prefer to keep the age at 15, many felt that 13 was simply too young. Some respondents felt that 15-year-olds are more responsible and therefore it is a more reasonable age. Others pointed out that 15-year-olds generally are more mature than 13-year-olds. Fifteen-year-olds have more autonomy and are able to find work more easily. One magistrate wrote "I wasn't an MDJ prior to Act 138, but 13 seems like too young an age to hold a student financially accountable. They'll have a difficult time finding work in my area." Several magistrates mentioned that parents are truly the ultimately responsible party.



The magistrates were questioned as to their communication with their Child Welfare Agency. Forty-nine percent ranked the communication as poor, 32 percent ranked it as acceptable and 19 percent ranked the communication between their office and the Child Welfare Agency as good.



Similar to the previous chart, magistrates were asked to rank their communication with community service providers. Thirty seven percent of magistrates ranked the communication as acceptable; 33 percent ranked it as good and 30 percent ranked communication as poor.

## *Conclusion*

The MDJs were given the opportunity to respond in their own words to the question, “What changes to statute, regulation, or policy would make Act 138 more effective in reducing truancy?” Of the 546 MDJs who received the survey, 46 responded to this question and provided recommendations. The recommendations can be grouped into three categories: those who recommend reforms to the overall system that add measures to resolve truancy cases or would reassign responsibilities to other authorities, those who feel that their involvement is ineffectual, and those who appear to consider truancy a matter of children and their parents flouting the law, which would be appropriately handled by enforcement currently unavailable to the courts.

### Statutory Reform and Court Reform

Act 138 amended Sections 5 and 6 of the Public School Code by changing the age from 13 to 15 at which certain penalties such as fines, mandated CYS involvement, and dependency proceedings can be initiated. A few MDJs recommended that the age revert to 13.

Two MDJs recommended that, rather than assigning truant children to county children and youth agencies, statutes be changed so that truant children instead be assigned to juvenile probation departments, as had been a practice prior to Act 138. Their argument is that child welfare agencies “will not get involved with any child over the age of 15 unless there is abuse or neglect. These children usually need some kind of treatment or motivation and the Child Welfare agencies do not get involved.” Regarding juvenile probation, it should be noted that Section 1333.2 (f) (2) states:

The president judge of a judicial district may adopt a local policy under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6304 (relating to powers and duties of probation officers) and the Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure to provide that a juvenile probation officer may receive allegations that the child who fails to satisfy a fine or costs imposed under this section is dependent for the purpose of considering the commencement of proceedings under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63.

There was a recommendation to “give school districts discretion on whether to require a [SAIC] conference before filing the citation.” Currently, districts are required to offer a SAIC although neither the student nor parents are required to attend. The MDJ stated that, “many parents do not attend these, even by phone or other remote communication.” Section 1333(b)(3) states that “further legal action by the school,” may not be taken until after the date of the scheduled SAIC has passed.

Some MDJs recommended that truancy cases be removed from their jurisdiction and assigned to other authorities. One made a distinction between chronic absenteeism and truancy, feeling that the two are not necessarily one in the same, stating, “I feel I'm dealing with absenteeism issues vs true truancy issues. Perhaps the initial "penalty" should be dealt with under the School Code.” One MDJ stated, “Since the SAIP is now required, the school has utilized all the same resources we as MDJs have as well. I do not believe it should continue to come to the courts.”

One further stated that schools should be allowed to file more than one citation at a time per student. Prior to Act 138, a school could file multiple citations against a student. For example, after the initial citation was filed, a student could be cited for subsequent unexcused absences; this is no longer possible under Act 138.

An MDJ gave the opinion that they have neither effective statutory authority nor the resources to mitigate and resolve truancy. Further, an MDJ suggested that “more dependency hearings should probably take place,” because MDJs and Common Pleas judges seemingly have limited ability to compel students to comply with their orders.

Conversely, another MDJ stated that driver license suspensions are more effective as punishments when compared to fines. Others felt that driver license suspensions are not effective means of enforcement.

### Increased Enforcement Options

More than one MDJ stated that they “have no teeth,” when presiding over truancy citations, seeing that there would be little improvement in truancy cases without their having more authority and resources. As noted by one, “We have no teeth to mandate compliance and we have fewer resources.” Another suggested that the statute not be changed but that they be able to “utilize the Youth Aid Panel,” which are diversionary programs administered by county district attorney offices for first-time and misdemeanor offenders. A pessimistic description was submitted by another, who wrote, “The same kids who are habitually truant are the same kids who will not comply with sentences imposed [such as] community service, fines, online courses. The student knows there are no repercussions beyond getting referred to a PO. That PO is not going to send them into placement for non-compliance with truancy or community service. What we end up with are kids getting fines, not paying, and turning 18 with a boatload of warrants. Not a great start in life and that is all created by truancy.”

The most common area of MDJ recommendations involved the imposition of penalties such as fines, community service, and driver license suspension. Section 1333.3, Penalties for Violating Compulsory School Attendance Requirements, provides for the imposition of fines for students (or parents if the child is under the age of 15) who do not comply with compulsory school requirements. The maximum fines range from \$300 for the first offense to \$500 for the second and \$750 for the third. The MDJs’ general criticism, taken from both Commission staff interviews with MDJs and the results of the survey, is that there is often little or no recourse available when students or parents never pay the fines. Therefore, imposition of fines is frequently an inconsequential penalty. One recommendation is to “Re-authorize the ability to impose larger fines on parents as before when we deem them to be at fault to a larger degree,” which likely refers to changes brought in Act 138. Under previous law, fines could be imposed for each unexcused absence. Act 138 provides for one fine for each offense and defines offense as:

“Offense” shall mean each citation filed under section 1333.1 for a violation of the requirement for compulsory school attendance under this article regardless of the number of unexcused absences alleged in the citation.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> PSC § 1326; 24 P.S. § 13-1326.

Further, Act 138 does not allow subsequent citations to be filed until the initial citation has been adjudicated. Consequently, the judges generally ask that they be given authority to do more than impose fines.

MDJs asked for the ability to make penalties “real and immediate.” As one wrote, “Unless MDJs are given more options for how to handle truancy cases, I don't see any improvement in truancy happening.” Some MDJs were more specific in making recommendations that were broader than increased fines and driver license suspensions. One submitted, “Allow penalties other than fines, community service and driver's license suspensions such as summer school, confiscation of cell phones, referral to a boot camp type of facility.”

There were general recommendations, such as allowing MDJs “to convict even during pending CYS investigations” in ways that would hold parents or children accountable. It was noted by more than one MDJ that parents must bear the weight of accountability for their child's truancy. To wit: “When I have a 9-year-old not going to school, it's on the parent.” MDJ's expressed frustration: “Parents who for whatever reason don't want to send their kids to school or who enjoy playing the game of ‘something is wrong with my child and the school will bend over backwards to suit our schedule...’ will get away with it as our opportunity to hang a serious penalty over their head has been legislated out of existence.” Yet, MDJs understand the commitment demonstrated by the professionals working in the system: “The teachers, guidance counselors, police officers and principals that I work with work tirelessly to make a difference in a child's life/education.”

Several recommendations involved driver license suspensions. “The number one motivator of students is loss of driving privileges. If that same penalty existed for the parents as well, they would be much more responsive,” stated an MDJ. The ability to suspend parents' driver licenses was an option echoed by at least one other MDJ. Taking a perspective beyond driver license suspensions, one MDJ suggested, “mandatory jail time for defendants, longer license suspension for children.”

Despite numerous recommendations to increase and enforce payment of fines and wide recognition that driver license suspensions could be effective, the sentiment was not universal among the MDJs. One stated, “Fines and driver's license suspension are inappropriate penalties for most truancy violations.”

One MDJ took a wholistic approach by recommending changes to all parts of the truancy system, writing, “There needs to be an alternative solution to truancy. If a child fails to comply with the court's order to attend school the [j]udge has no recourse against the child. The cases stay in the file until the child turns 18 years of age and then warrants of arrest issue for non-payment of fines & costs. The student is made aware of this but generally doesn't care. Imposing a license suspension doesn't usually work and doesn't immediately impact the child. The truancy problem is usually based on issues within the household. The school administration is doing what they can to bring about compliance and to stress the value of education. They have limited resources and spend much of their time on conflict resolution. Parents need to step up.”

Finally, regarding reforms at the court level, one MDJ requested “More concise verbiage of procedures to share with all courts/agencies involved in truancy to produce a better understanding of what remedies exist and may be imposed. I have had several students [whose] driver licenses I wanted to suspend or [whom I wanted to] incarcerate, [and incarcerate] a few parents, but would like a more concise understanding of the exact procedures MDJs/agencies may use.”

### CYS Involvement and Support Services

Several MDJs recommended an increased or required role for county CYS agencies. One MDJ recognized that “it’s a truly difficult situation with each case being unique. Mental health support/counseling for students and or parents is a must.” Another similarly recommended a holistic reform to make support services available and enhanced: “Provide School Districts with Home and School Visitor/Social Worker, and time for the coordination among them, school psychologist, principals, guidance counselors and teachers.”

From some MDJs’ perspectives, CYS agencies “are not concerned about truancy,” and rarely participate in truancy hearings. One cited the need for “...stronger language to get CYF more involved when we certify a child when the student is found guilty.” Although the judges are aware that CYS might not have the resources to be involved, writing, “While it is understood that CYS agencies are understaffed,” they nonetheless recommend their involvement because “There [are] too often other issues in the household that are not obvious at a truancy hearing. Most times CYS does not attend my hearings. Even when an issue is considered in my court, I have no ability to deal with that issue other than to make a referral to CYS. Each county CYS should have dedicated staff to deal with every truancy issue.”

One MDJ recommended that CYS be used to enforce compliance because it can provide needed services to the student and family, stating, “For every truancy case file there needs to be an automatic mandated CYS referral with a real threat of removal of the child from the household.”

An MDJ’s recommendation framed the involvement of CYS as a less practicable option, “In my opinion, it should be made clear to the school districts that filing a citation with the MDJ will often bring a faster resolution than will a CYS referral. We can hold a hearing in about two weeks, whereas CYS will take over a month to complete their initial assessment. If the school is looking to show the student/parent that they want the problem to be resolved quickly, filing with the MDJs is much more likely to accomplish that.” An MDJ suggested that their courts ought not handle repeat cases and instead have them sent to Common Pleas, saying that one means of resolving truancy would be for “More dependency referrals and actual hearings being conducted by common pleas for repeat truant children.” Similarly, one recommended dependency proceedings as, “real consequences that are immediate. Real and immediate short-term placement when necessary. School is the job for these children and some of them will not treat it seriously until we treat it seriously.” Another MDJ summarized truancy as necessarily a matter for CYS and Courts of Common Pleas as “A child's failure to attend school is a dependency issue and should be treated in a similar fashion. Fines court costs and jail do not cause a child to attend school in a meaningful way, if at all.”

## School District Involvement

Several recommendations focused on having schools address truancy problems rather than involving MDJs. For example, one recommended that school districts be required “to treat the SAIC as an important step in the process and not just something they have to do to get the process moving.” Similarly, another MDJ said that a school’s ability to assign detention and suspension could be used, rather than the court system, to handle truancy.

There had been some discussion between Commission staff and others that MDJs may be able to assign or recommend that truant children switch from brick and mortar to charter or cyber-charter schools as a potential resolution. One MDJ commented in the survey that they ought to have the authority to reverse such decisions: “I have found that a majority of my truancy kids go cyber to slip under the radar. I had a kid admit that he never logged on to cyber and still received As and Bs for the year.” The judge added, “Cyber schools oftentimes refuse to file truancy.”

Truancy’s learning disruptions and disadvantages are at the forefront of some MDJs’ concerns. An MDJ recommended that truant students’ learning deficits should be ameliorated in the school setting, “Possibly make it difficult for a school district to advance a student with a significant truancy issue. i.e., if you miss 25 percent of your 8th grade days, you cannot move on to 9th grade.” One recognized that truancy can affect both the truant child and their classmates: “I believe repeat offenders that are clearly getting no education and hindering the education process for the other students should be moved to separate classroom/area where the school has better control of the student and the basics of reading, writing, math, and basic knowledge can be instilled. This could give truant students a chance to get an education and correct prior deficiencies in their education.” Taking education options perhaps a step further, an MDJ recommended that one way to reduce truancy would be to allow children to leave school at age 16 if they have employment or an apprenticeship ready for them. (Currently, children must attend school until at least 17 years of age or graduation, whichever comes first.) Carrying this train of thought forward, the recommendation continued:

Note that the education gained by 8th grade is really all that is used by many people in their adult lives. Competency in the basics, rather than mediocrity in higher grades needs to be re-examined. Even many college graduates and those with advanced degrees seem to have far less actual education than the high school graduates of the WWII generation. Grammar and writing skills are atrocious. Young people working at retail stores have to count change rather than using arithmetical skills to determine sums. The examples go on and on.

Another MDJ is tackling truancy from a grass roots perspective and recommends a wider use of their approach. “I am trying to do some speaking at schools, but most do not seem that interested or they're too busy to make it happen. I also hold a Criminal Justice Day for some of my truants every June and make them attend one of our Criminal Days to watch real Preliminary Hearings and we do some faux hearings in between. They meet the MDJ, law-enforcement, DA, PD, defense attorneys and get to see defendants in orange that I've had transported from prison. I



would like to do a tour of our local prison with some. Our Courts are so busy and sometimes I do not know who to ask or if it's too over the top some of my ideas but think things like that could be very effective.” Such a program would require a good bit of coordination and would rely on the willingness of the significant players to collaborate, but it would not necessarily entail the appropriation of new funds or the establishment of dedicated programs.

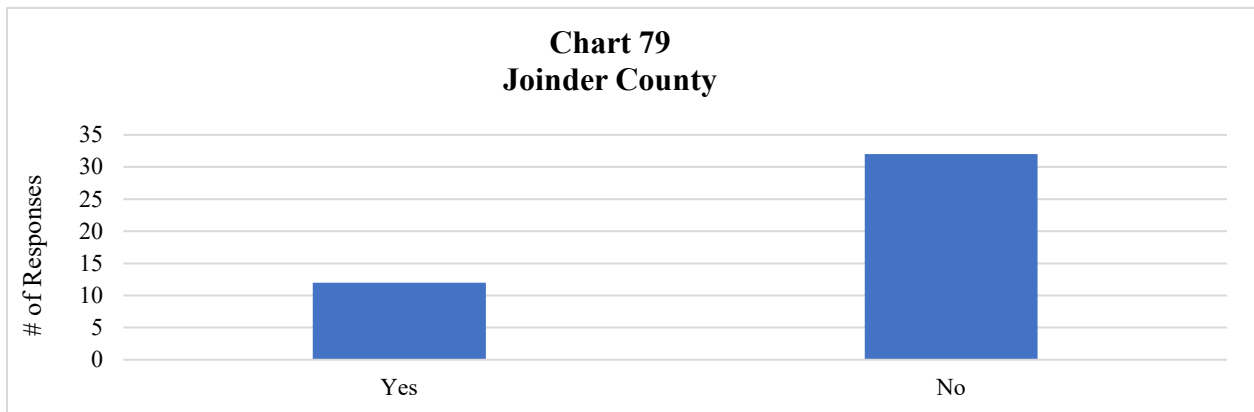
### Summary of MDJ’s Open-ended Recommendations

One MDJ wrote as a recommendation simply, “I’ll leave that to the legislators!” Broadly speaking, common recommendations are to expand judges’ authority to levy fines or enforcement options, recommendations to directly involve CYS agencies, and recommendations to remove MDJs from truancy cases. Such recommendations could be implemented through changes to statutes, department-level programming, and funding. There are a couple recommendations found in the MDJs’ comments that are actionable and can be accomplished relatively easily. For example, the recommendation “More concise verbiage of procedures to share with all courts/agencies involved in truancy to produce a better understanding of what remedies exist and may be imposed,” might already exist but not be widely familiar among those involved, especially those MDJs who see truancy cases more infrequently than their peers. Training or an awareness initiative might resolve confusion.

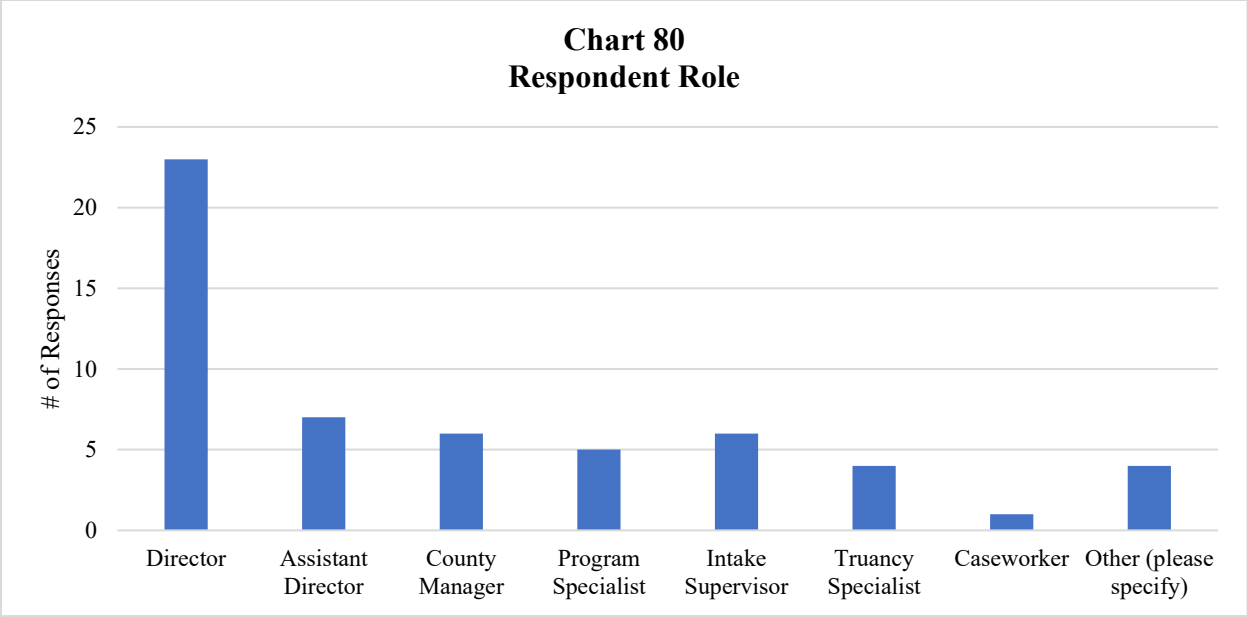
### *County Children and Youth Survey*

The survey distributed to CYS workers in the fall of 2023 opened with background questions.

#### *Background*

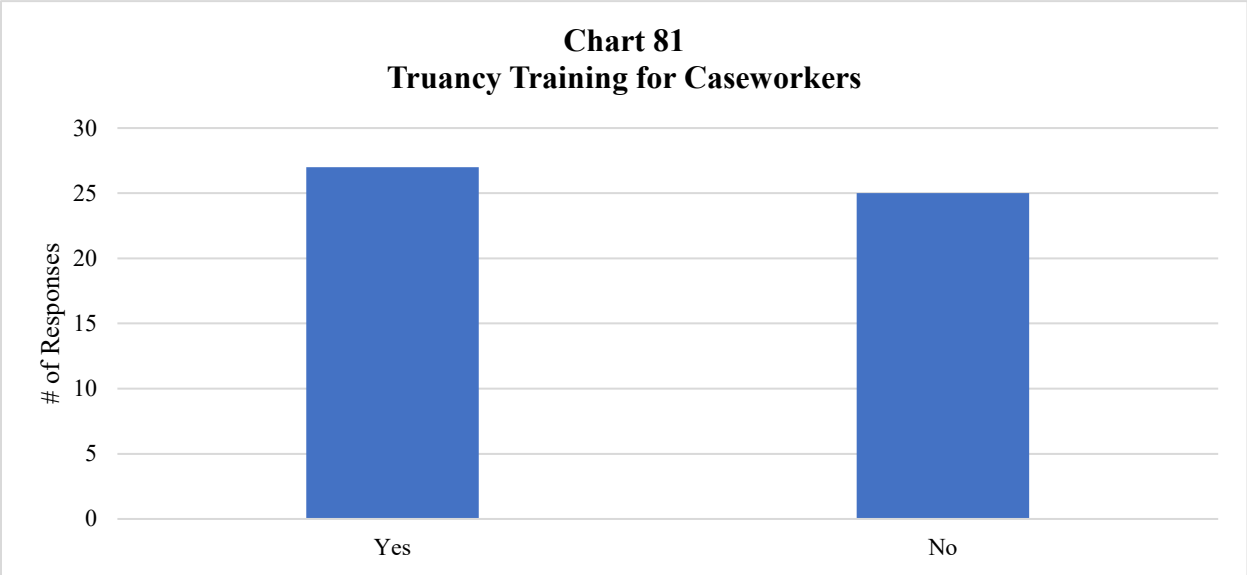


Of those responding, 27 percent are joinder counties, and the remaining 73 percent are not. Those that are not joinder counties administer their own services and those that are joinder counties partner with another county for service administration. Generally, this would be where the county is too small to justify administering the services on its own.



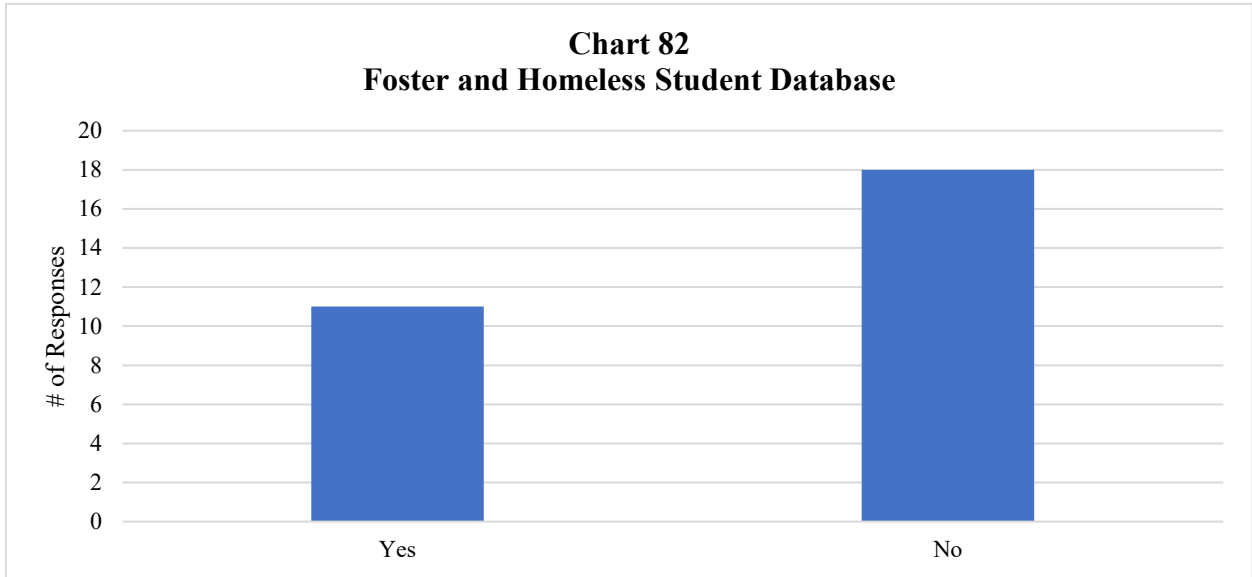
The survey was filled out by a broad range of job roles. The top three categories were more senior level with 46 percent of respondents in the role of Director, 14 percent of respondents in the role of Assistant Director, and 12 percent in the role of County Manager. Intake Supervisor, truancy specialist, and caseworker were 12 percent, eight percent, and two percent, respectively.

Those that filled out “other” specified that role as administrator, assistant administrator, call screener, and casework supervisor.

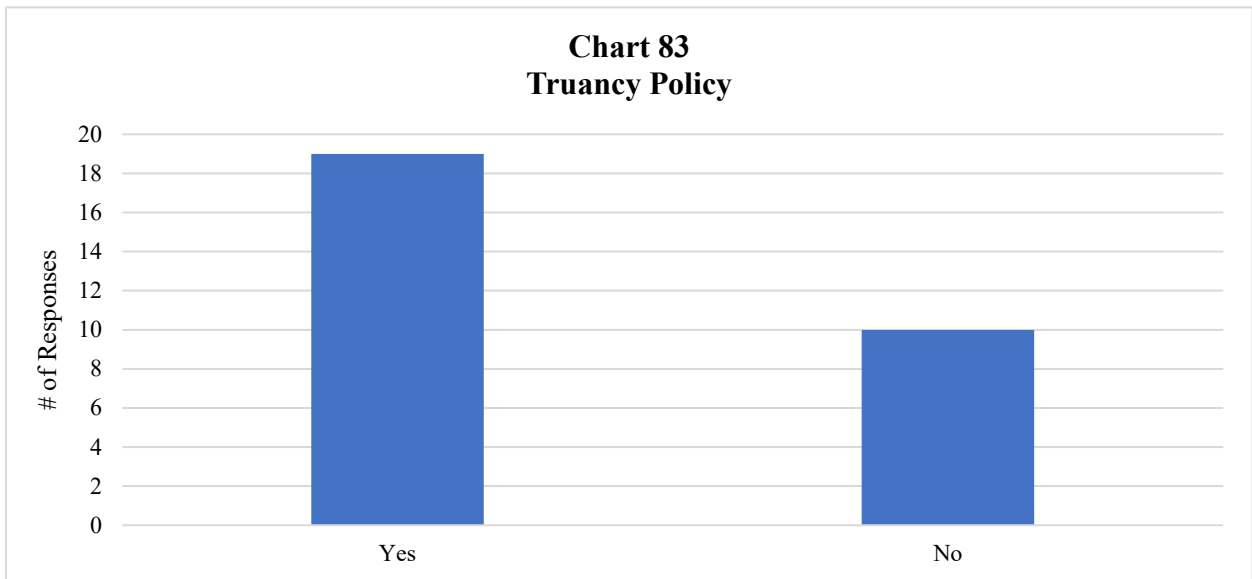


Survey respondents were asked if they had received training on truancy prevention and attendance improvement. In an almost even split, 52 percent had and 48 percent had not.

*Referrals and Services*



When the survey respondents were asked if an employee in their county keeps a database that is shared and updated with school districts on foster students and homeless students' referrals and services, 38 percent said yes and 62 percent said no.



Survey respondents were asked if their county child welfare office has a truancy policy. Sixty-six percent said yes and 34 percent said no.

<b>Table 6 Truancy Referrals in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	1,469
Minimum	3
Median	106

The county offices were asked approximately how many truancy referrals their offices received in the 2022-2023 school year. Answers ranged widely from a low of three to a high of 1,472. The office receiving 1,472 was an outlier with the next highest amount being 589 referrals. The median was 106. Fourteen of the 25 respondents received 100 or more truancy referrals. Nine received more than 200 referrals. The remaining 11 offices received less than 100 truancy referrals in the 2022-2023 school year.

<b>Table 7 Cases Accepted Solely on the Basis of Truancy in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	214
Minimum	0
Median	23

The county offices were asked how many cases their office accepted for services solely on the basis of truancy for the 2022-2023 school year. Answers ranged from zero to 214. The median number of cases that an office accepted solely on the basis of truancy was 22.5.

<b>Table 8 Cases Referred for Truancy but Opened for Other Reasons in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	100
Minimum	0
Median	10

Offices were asked approximately what percent of cases were referred for truancy but opened for other reasons. Answers ranged from none to a maximum response of 100 percent of cases. The median response was ten percent.

<b>Table 9 Percent of Students On-going Services in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	99
Minimum	2
Median	20

Respondents were asked, “In the 2022-2023 school year, of the students for which you received referrals from a school district, what percent of those students go on to receive on-going services through your agency?” The minimum percent was two percent and the maximum percent of students going on to receive on-going services was 99 percent. The median was 20 percent.

<b>Table 10</b>	
<b>Percent of Students Already Receiving County Services who receive an Additional Truancy Referral in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	40
Minimum	0
Median	4

Respondents were asked, “In the 2022-2023 school year, of the students for which you received referrals from a school district, what percent of those students were already receiving services through the agency and received an additional truancy referral?” With a range from zero percent to a maximum of 40 percent, the median response was four percent.

<b>Table 11</b>	
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed and Re-Opened from Prior School Year</b>	
Maximum	40
Minimum	0
Median	3

Respondents were asked how many cases were reviewed and re-opened that were closed from the prior school year. Several respondents said they did not track this information. Of those who did, two also added the caveat that some of their cases were the same students multiple times. With a range from zero cases to 40 cases, the median response was three cases.

Respondents were asked how many times, on average, a child is referred to diversionary programs before they are referred to CYS. Slightly over half, or 58 percent, responded “I don’t know” and 42 percent gave short answer responses with the amount of times. A few respondents said children went to diversionary programs twice before being referred. Two respondents said all truancy referrals would first be sent to a diversionary program. One respondent stated that CYS will not become involved without a ChildLine referral. One respondent said children are not referred to diversionary programs before they are referred to CYS, and one respondent said 50 percent of students are referred to diversionary programs before they are referred to CYS. Three respondents gave large numbers in response, seemingly misunderstanding the question.

When asked what diversionary program providers respondents utilized, including school, community or court-based providers, respondents gave the following answers:

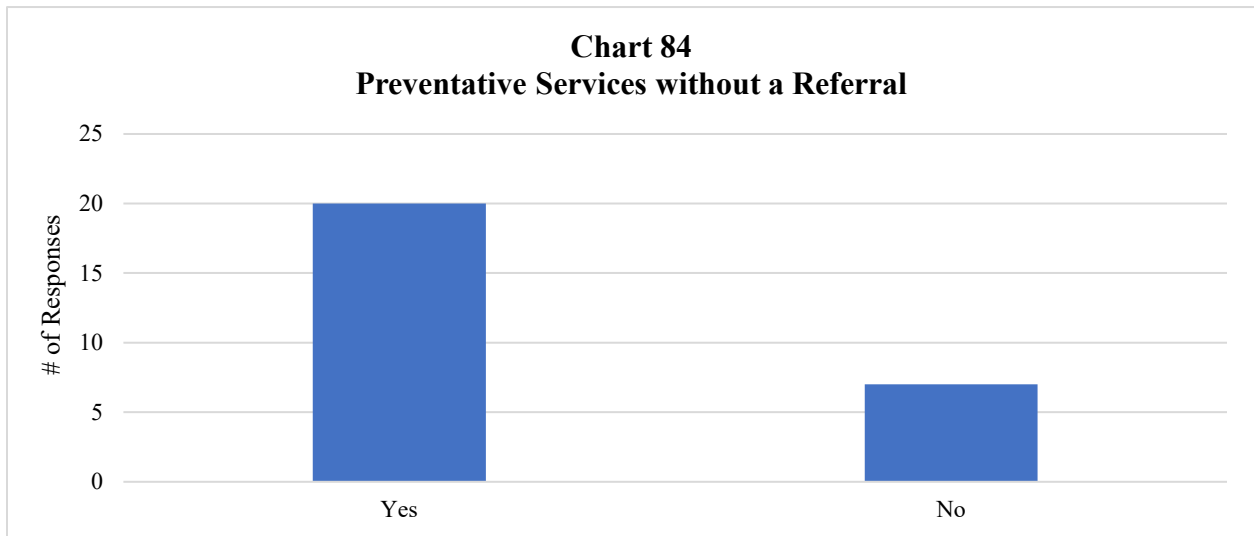
- Community County Services  
Truancy Program
- PASS
- Truancy Court
- Check and Connect
- Justice Works
- Neveah Inc
- George Jr. Preventative Aftercare
- Moving Forward
- Pressley Ridge
- Student Assistance Program
- Clarion County's Promise
- K/S Truancy
- The Academy
- Summer TRACK
- MST
- CYS Truancy Class
- Attendance Improvement Court
- School Outreach
- In-Home Outreach
- Family Group Decision Making
- Day Treatment
- Cray Truancy Program
- Act 360
- Youth Advocacy Program
- Communities in Schools
- Pinebrook Making the Grade
- Colonial IU School Improvement Program
- Homestead Truancy
- Why Try
- TIPP
- Fulton County Family Partnership
- PA Counseling
- United Way Youth Court Alliance
- Advancing School Attendance Program
- Strengthening Families
- Triple P Parenting
- Advent Learning

When asked what truancy services the CYS offices provided, many provided the same answers from the list of truancy diversion services. One respondent stated their office would offer services, make referrals, try to determine the barriers, assist with transportation to school, attend school meetings, MDJ Hearings, etc., offer family meetings, and identify family supports through Family Finding. One respondent said they refer to evidence-based practices and refer to service providers that address underlying problems. One respondent stated that they will call schools daily to check on the student's attendance. If the child is not at school, they will call the home. If no one answers the call, they will conduct a home visit. The agency will provide transportation to school. A few respondents also mentioned mentoring services. One mentioned cyber school help and in-home therapy. One respondent stated that they use school outreach services as much as possible to avoid involving the formal child welfare system. Another respondent mentioned a grant-funded truancy intervention program, referrals to community services, and COPE parenting. A few respondents mentioned caseworker intervention as the primary truancy service. Several respondents mentioned providing different parenting classes and interventions. Counseling services, either in person or *via* telehealth, were also mentioned by several respondents. An Advisory Committee member noted the wealth in variety of resources available to student, stating that capacity of the programs was the barrier, not the lack of types of programs or services provided in an area. If a program is full, it will contact other programs to try to find a space for a student.<sup>214</sup>

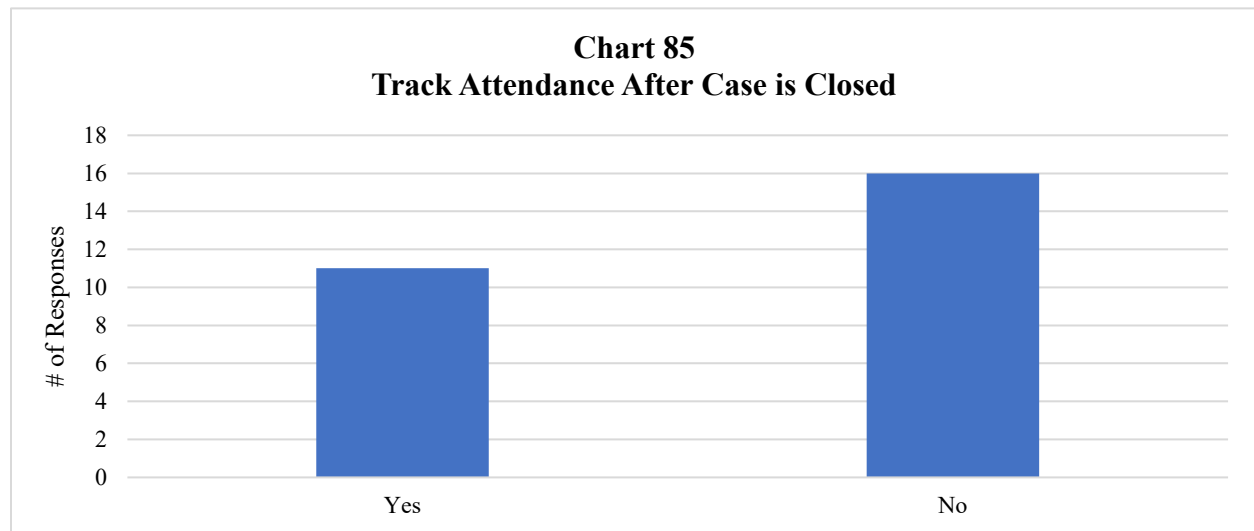
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<sup>214</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, December 7, 2023.

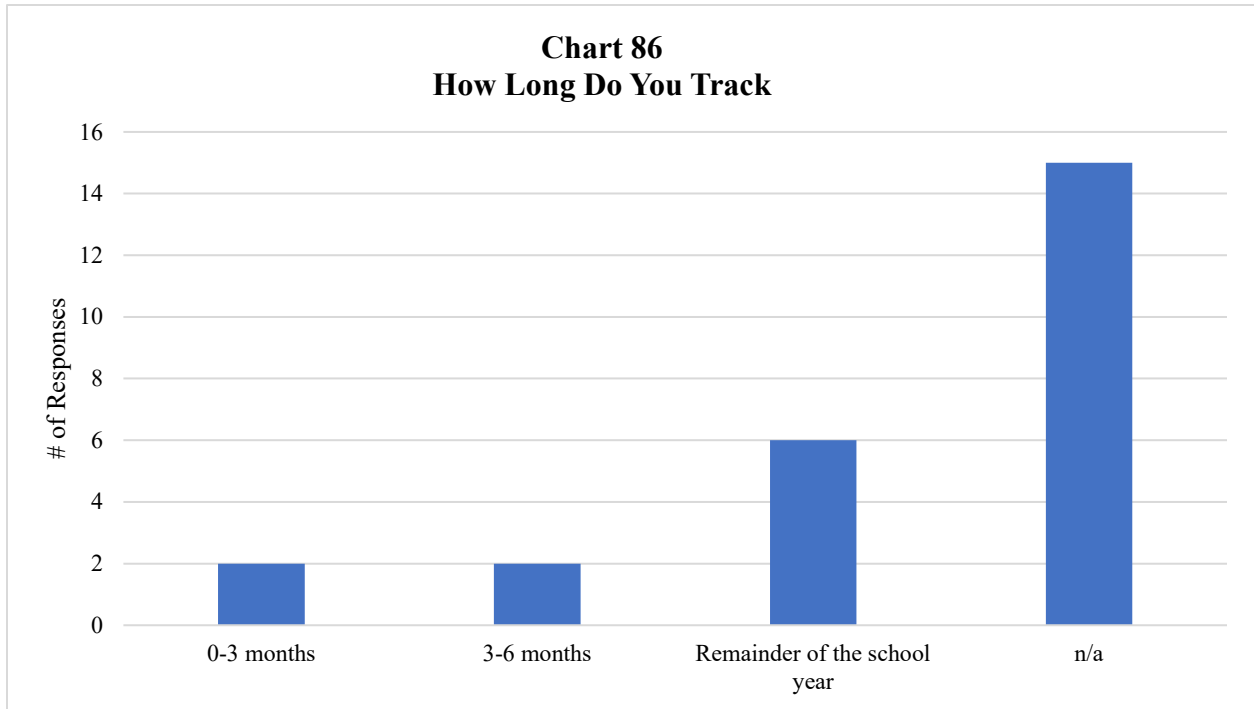
When asked how they determine what services to provide to a student, most respondents stated that they start with an assessment of the needs of the student and family to identify barriers. Through conversations with students and families, the caseworkers will identify their needs and refer them to services that will meet that need. Some respondents mentioned that their options are limited by the types of services available in their region. Several respondents also stated that they review the student's history of truancy. Overall, the respondents emphasized that the response is dependent on the individual students' situations and barriers.



Respondents were asked if they offer preventative services to the family without an active referral to the agency. Of the 27 who answered, 74 percent said yes and 26 percent said no.



Respondents were asked if they tracked whether student attendance improves after their services have been completed. Of the 27 that responded, 41 percent said yes and 59 percent said no.



Six of those responding track for the remainder of the school year. Two respondents track for “0-3 months” and another two track for “3-6 months.”

Maximum	100
Minimum	40
Median	76

Respondents who track whether student attendance improves after their services have been completed were asked what percent of students improve their attendance after DHS involvement. The percentage of students improving their attendance ranged from 40 percent to 100 percent with a median of 76 percent.

Maximum	\$1,211,000
Minimum	12,212
Median	\$200,000

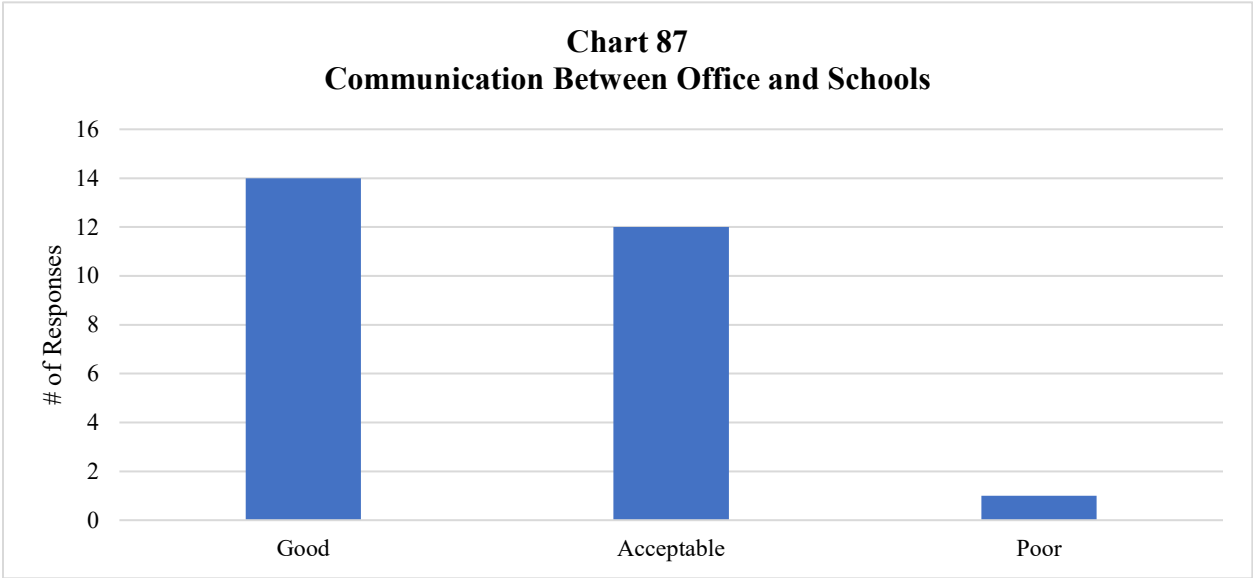
Respondents were asked how much the county paid as a whole to the preventative service in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. There was a wide range of responses, from \$12,212 to \$1,211,000. The median response was \$200,000.



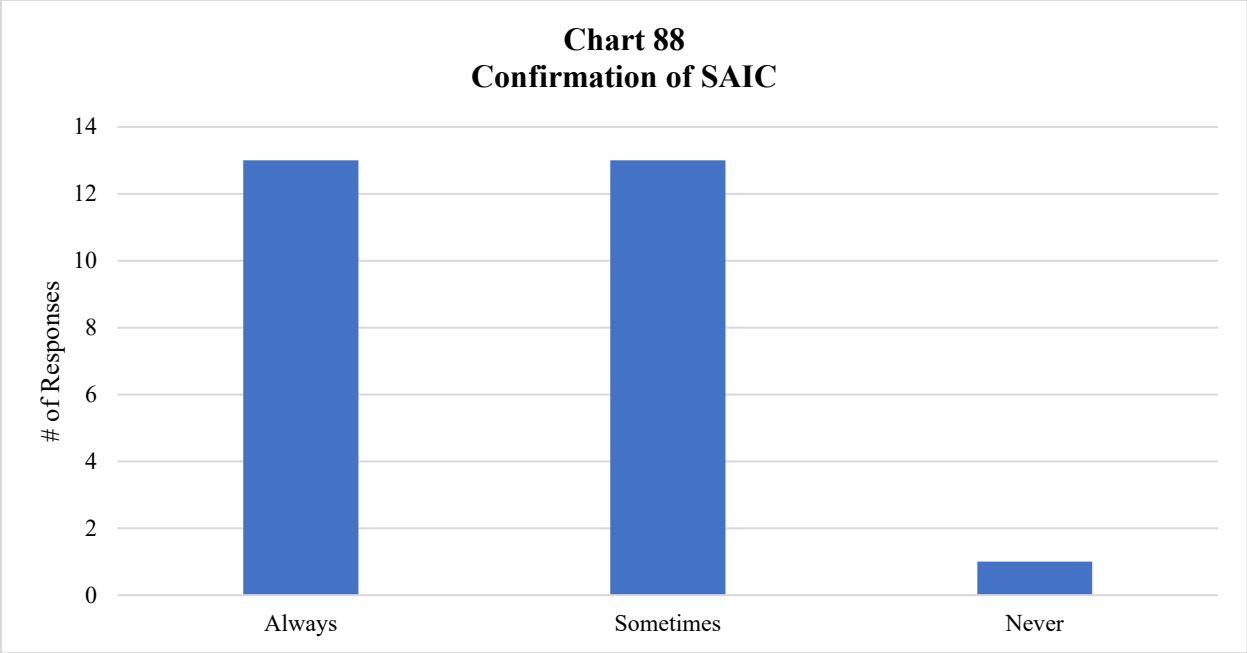
<b>Table 14</b>	
<b>County Payments without a Referral in the 2022-23 SY</b>	
Maximum	\$445,000
Minimum	0
Median	\$81,796

Respondents were asked how much their agency paid out to preventative services without a referral to the agency in FY 2022-23. Payments for preventative services with no agency referral ranged from none to \$445,000 with a median payment of \$81,796.

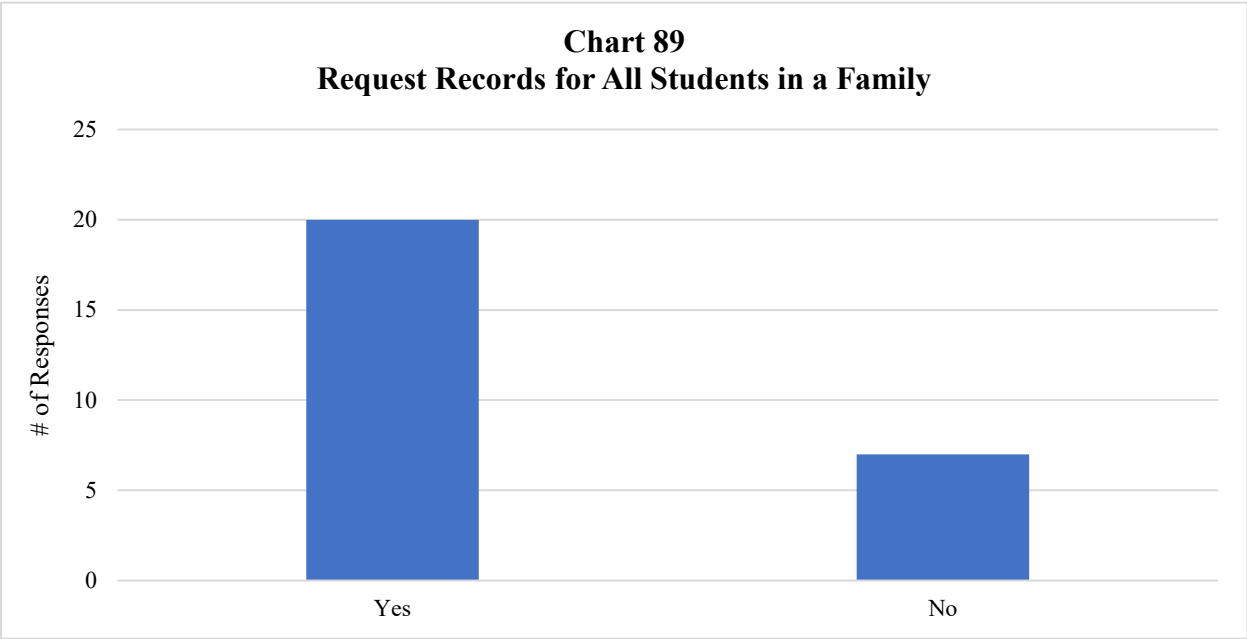
*Coordination with School Districts*



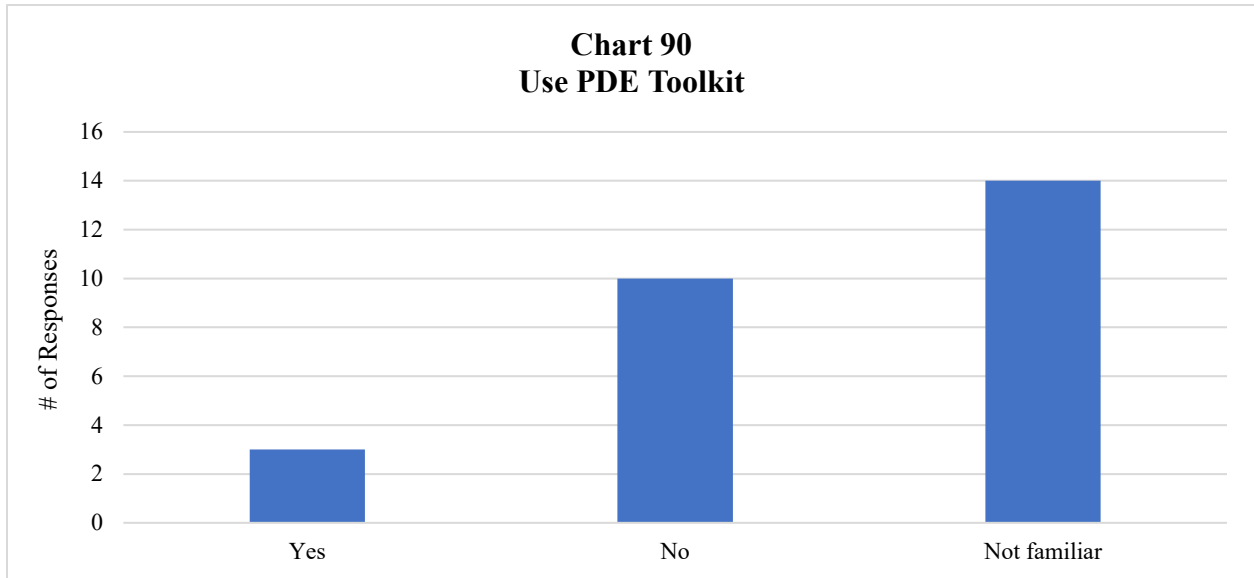
Survey respondents were asked to rank the communication between their office and the schools. Fifty-two percent said good, 44 percent said acceptable and four percent said poor. They were asked to explain these answers. The one respondent that answered “Poor” stated that this was an area that the agency aimed to improve through the County Children’s Roundtable. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that their offices communicated regularly, some even daily, with school staff and characterized their working relationship with schools as good. Several agencies had monthly or bimonthly meetings and a few had yearly meetings. One respondent offered: “The school and agency take a team approach to addressing truancy. The school makes truancy referrals and agency participates in SAIC meetings for those referrals as well as making referrals to the truancy intervention program.” A few respondents stated that their region encompassed districts with varying levels of communication. Two respondents stated that communication was good, but there was always room for improvement.



Survey respondents were asked if they receive confirmation that an SAIC was held when they receive a referral. Forty-eight percent always do, 48 percent sometimes do, and four percent never receive confirmation.

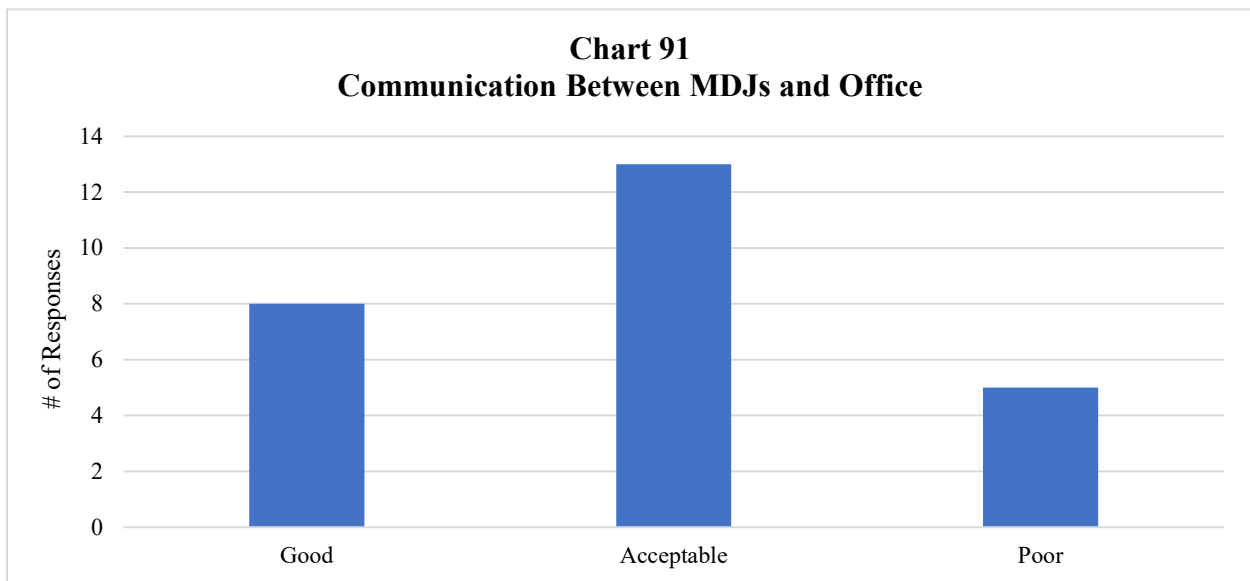


Survey respondents were asked if they request attendance records for all children when there are multiple school aged children in a home. Seventy-four percent do and 26 percent do not.



Survey respondents were asked if they use PDEs toolkit while working with truancy cases. Fifty-two percent were not familiar with the PDE toolkit, 37 percent do not use the toolkit and 11 percent utilize PDEs toolkit when they are working with truancy cases.

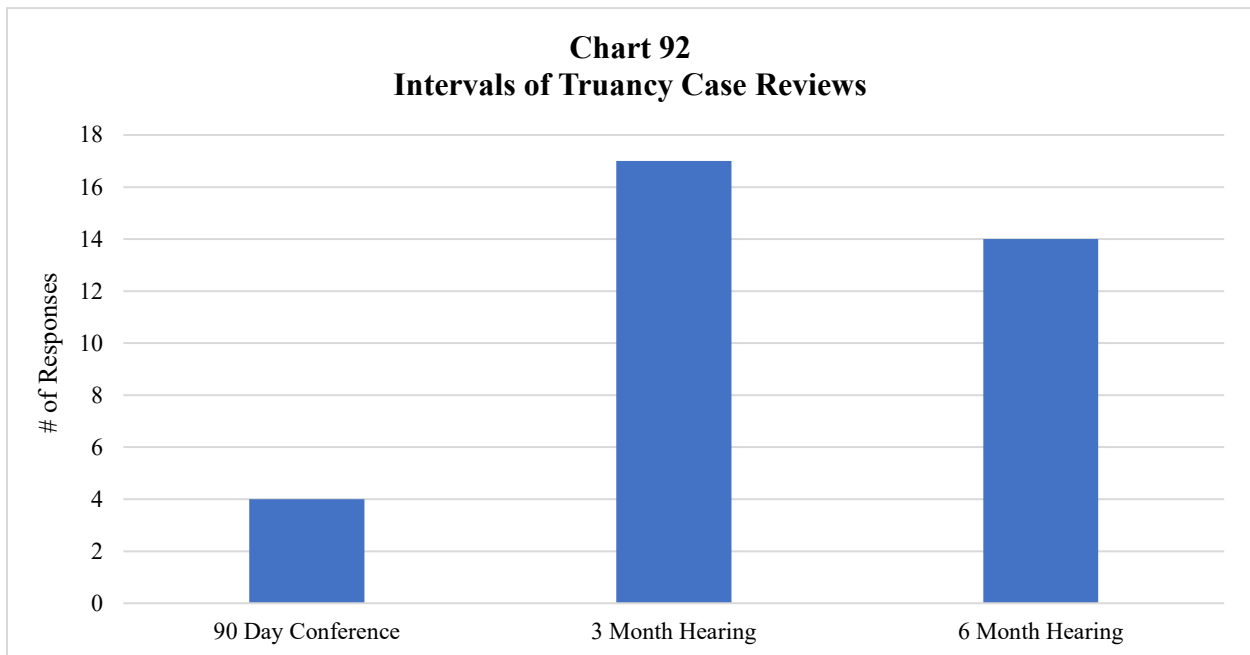
*Coordination with Magisterial District Courts & Dependency Court*



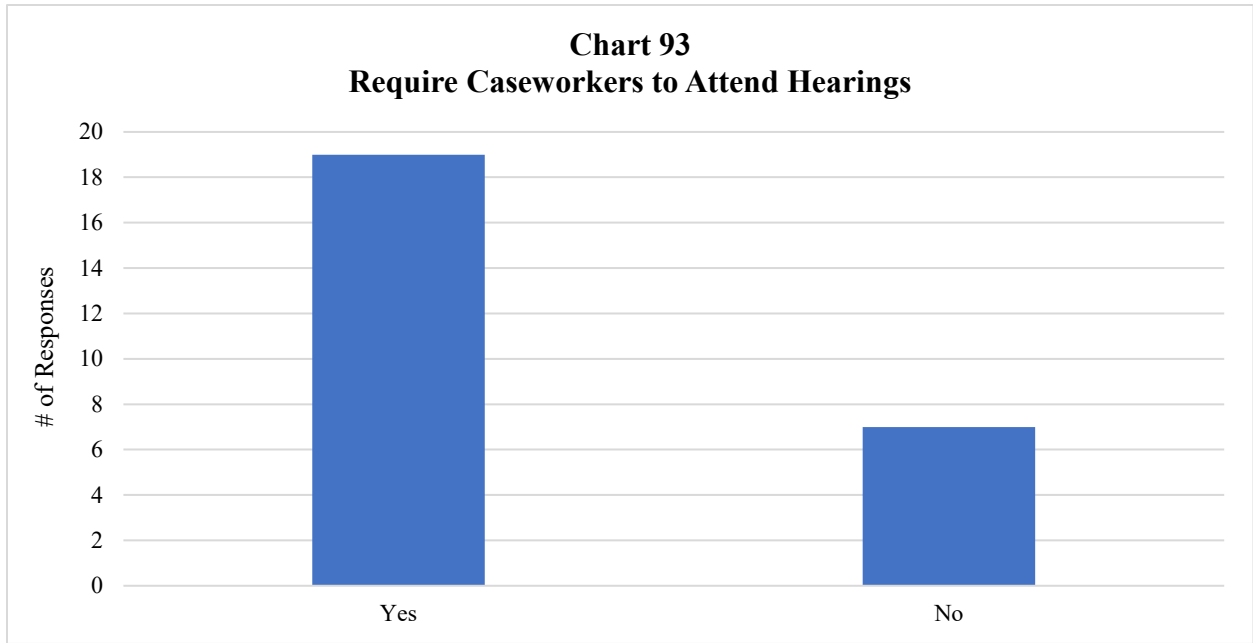
Survey respondents were asked to rank the communication between their office and the magisterial district court. Of the 26 respondents who answered, 50 percent ranked communication as acceptable, 31 percent ranked communication with the MDJ as good and the remaining 19 percent ranked communication as poor. The descriptions of the relationships provided by the

respondents offered some insight into what they consider good relationships with MDJs. Those with good relationships report back-and-forth communications, including check-ins for specific cases. For example, one described how their office has regular communications and goes as far as holding summer meetings to review and improve their collaborations. Another collaborates closely enough with the MDJ such that fines can be suspended while the family works on solutions with the CYS office.

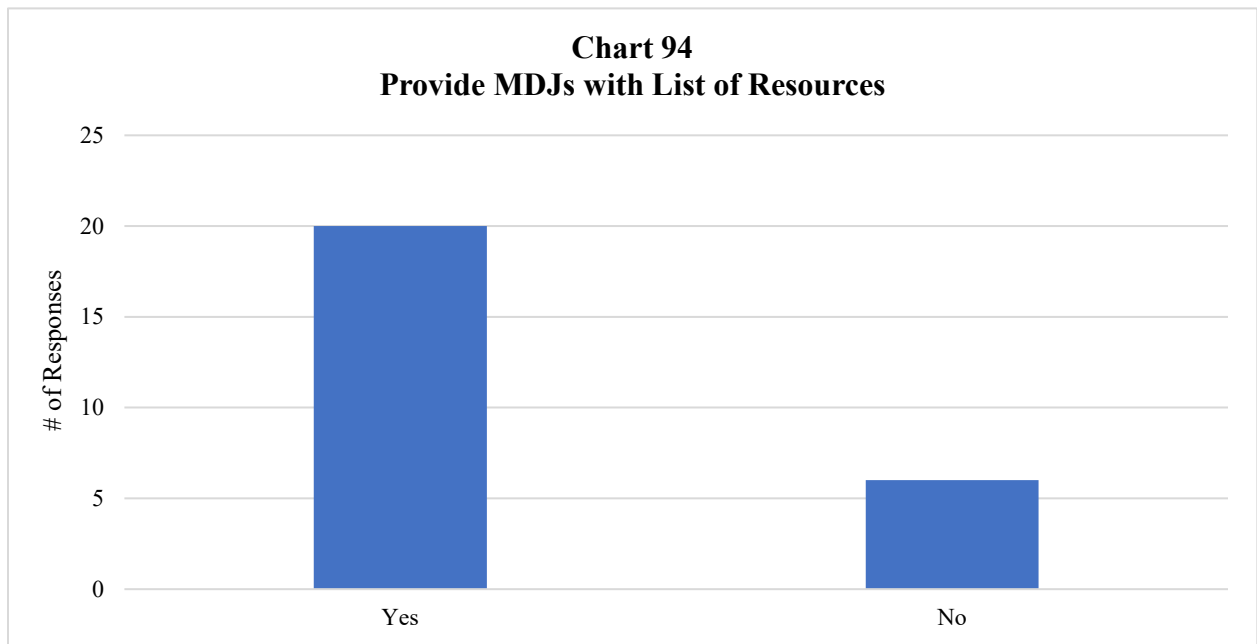
Others reported poor communications. They described situations wherein MDJs are not responsive to invitations to meet, or where MDJs are frustrated that CYS does not pursue dependency solely because of truancy. It was noted that some MDJs make decisions without checking on DHS involvement with the family. One respondent wrote that some MDJs are “unwilling to work with CYS.” Others wrote that communications suffer because of a lack of consistency across MDJs.



Survey respondents were asked at what intervals truancy cases are reviewed in dependency court. Because they were asked to check all responses that apply, the resulting figures are sum to more than 100. The three month hearing was the most common with 74 percent of respondents choosing this option. Next was the six month hearing with 61 percent and then 17 percent choose the 90 day conference. Twenty respondents answered this question and 29 skipped it.



Respondents were asked if they require their assigned case worker to attend Magisterial District Judge hearings. Seventy-three percent responded that they do, and 27 percent replied that they do not.



Respondents were asked if they provide their county(ies)' MDJ system with a list of services that are available either through their agency or through their contractors. Seventy-seven percent do and 23 percent do not provide magistrates with a list of services.

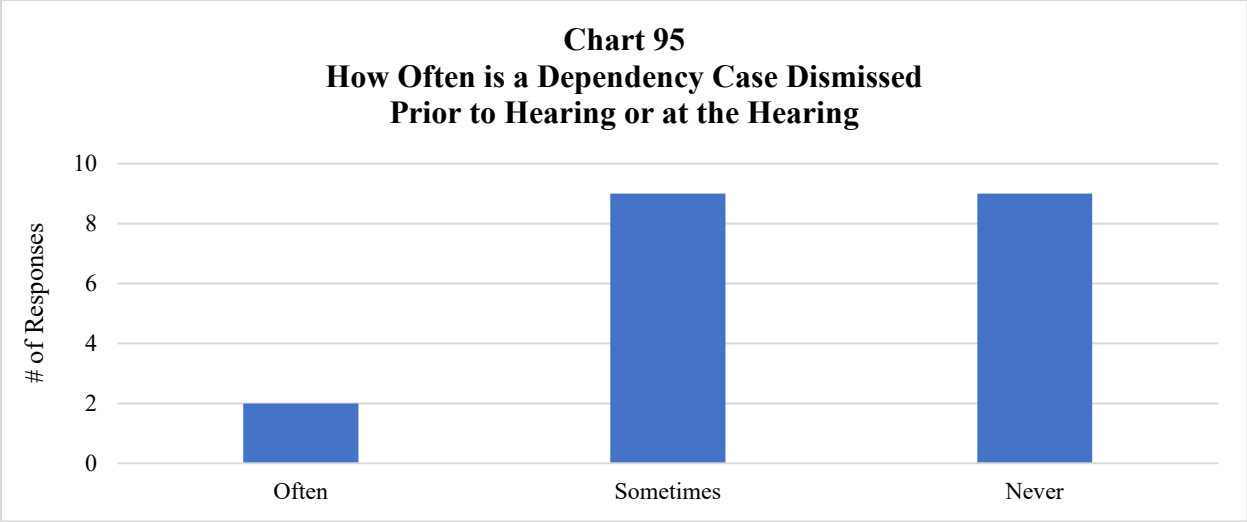
When asked how they determined that interventions were not working and dependency court should be engaged, the most common response was that respondents would monitor attendance and file a dependency petition if there was still no improvement or a worsening of truancy. As one respondent put it: “A sufficient period of time and opportunity to elicit positive change with supports engaged has been provided with no improvement or worsening of truancy.” Many respondents noted that they would first ensure that all barriers had been identified and removed. One respondent specifically noted that they would “try different options until we feel everything has been exhausted.” Many respondents stated that the decision to pursue a dependency petition would be reached in consultation with caseworkers, schools, and providers. Factors that would affect this decision include “prior histories of truancy, root causes of truancy, ages of children, and if removal from the home would be in the child's best interest.”

<b>Table 15</b>	
<b>Dependency Petitions including Truancy in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	512
Minimum	0
Median	10

Respondents were asked how many dependency petitions including truancy they filed for the 2022-2023 school year. Responses ranged from a minimum of none, to a maximum of 512 with a median of ten dependency petitions.

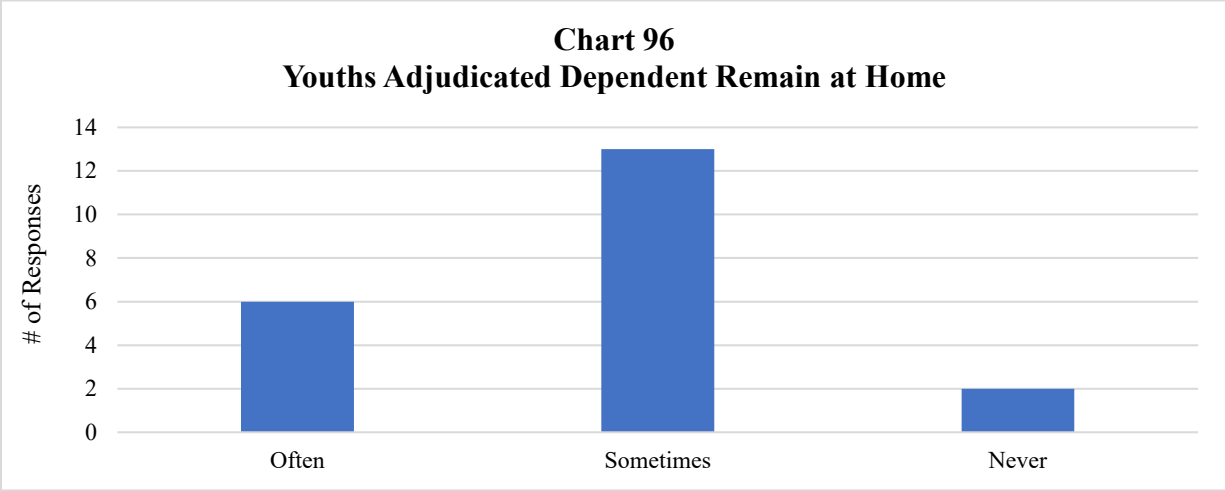
<b>Table 16</b>	
<b>Dependency Petitions filed with Truancy as the Lead Cause in the 2022-2023 SY</b>	
Maximum	52
Minimum	0
Median	3

Survey respondents were asked how many dependency petitions they filed in the 2022-2023 school year where truancy was the lead cause. Responses ranged from zero petitions to a maximum of 52 petitions with truancy as the lead cause for the dependency petition. The median was three petitions.

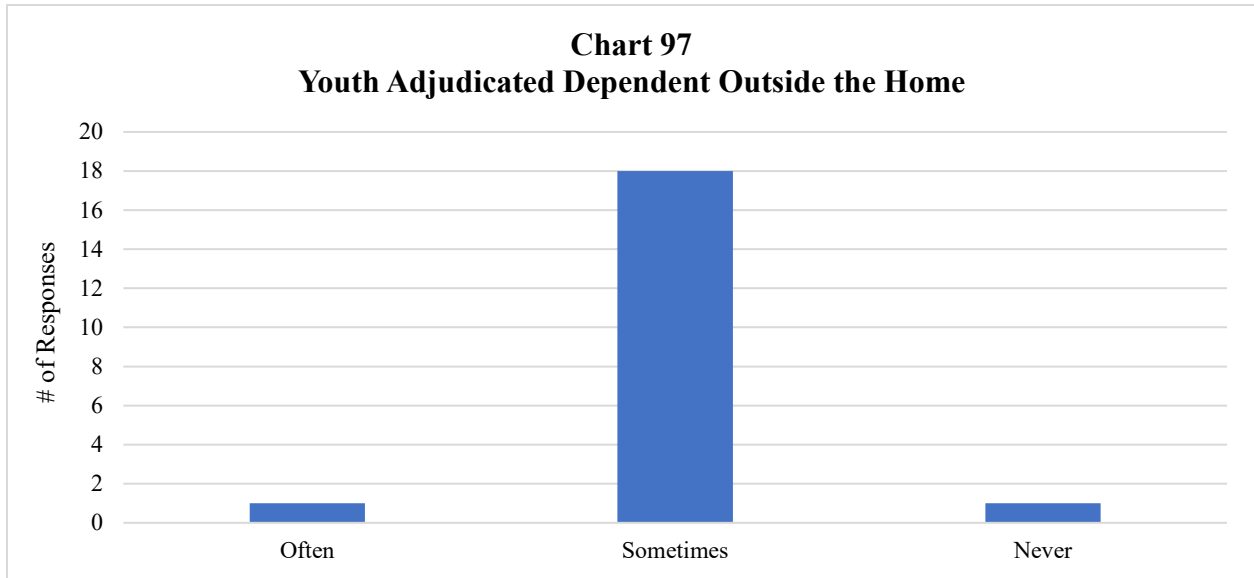


Respondents were asked, “Of the dependency petitions where truancy was the lead cause, how often was the case dismissed prior to the hearing or at the hearing?” Forty-five percent equally said sometimes and never while the remaining ten percent replied that the case was often dismissed prior to the hearing or at the hearing.

For eight respondents providing answers for why the truancy case was dismissed, dependency petitions were dismissed if attendance had improved between the date of filing and the scheduled date of the hearing, if the family engaged services, if the family moved, or if the student showed success in an alternative education setting, such as a cyber charter school. One of the eight also had a case dismissed because the student’s 18th birthday occurred prior to the adjudication hearing.



Respondents were asked, of the dependency petitions where truancy was the lead cause, how often do the youths adjudicated as dependent remain in the home. Sixty-two percent said sometimes, 29 percent said often and ten percent said never.



Respondents were asked, of the dependency petitions where truancy was the lead cause, how often are the youths who are adjudicated as dependent placed outside the home. The vast majority, 90 percent responded sometimes, while five percent of respondents replied in the often and never categories each.

**Table 17**  
**Youth Returning Home Within the 2022-2023 SY**

Maximum	5
Minimum	0
Median	1

Respondents were asked of the youth who were placed outside their home, how many returned to their home within the 2022-2023 school year. The median response was one and the responses ranged from zero youth to a maximum of five youth returning to their home.

### *Conclusion*

The CYS agencies were asked to submit their recommendations for how to address chronic absenteeism and how to better handle truancy cases. The following answers were submitted to the question, “What statutory, regulatory, or policy changes could be made to make Act 138 more effective in reducing truancy?”

The seventeen respondents’ answers can be sorted into four broad categories of program funding, school involvement, CYS roles, and MDJ roles. Their recommendations, as would be expected from professionals who are familiar with the common obstacles faced by families in need, tend to focus on mitigating what are often seen as causes of truancy.



## CYS Recommendations for Funding for Services and Schools

Several recommendations proposed increased program funding. These included a call for increased funding for school district transportation, funding for social services that are supportive of children and families who face struggles that may lead to truancy, and funding for truancy prevention programs. One specific program recommendation is to develop an “educational system of family engagement skills.” Schools might be the initial setting considered but given their primary obligation to provide academic services, out-of-school program providers (such as The Y or Boys & Girls Clubs) could be tapped to engage students through truancy prevention.<sup>215</sup>

Another recommendation is to “provide funding for the schools to handle their truant youth.” Students who are already chronically absent or statutorily truant might be helped with services that are school-based and provided during the instructional day so that missed class time is held to a minimum. Commission staff had heard comments that truancy proceedings can, ironically, pull students away from classroom time. One CYS respondent provided a recommendation that goes hand-in-hand with school-based truancy mitigation: “A social worker as a school employee would benefit the schools in addressing the truancy issues.” A social worker with training in resolving truancy might be able to help students avoid citations and their consequences. Similarly, another CYS respondent recommended increased funding for schools to employ home visitors. One respondent recommended, “More prevention services at the elementary school levels.”

Schools face an annual problem finding services for truant students because available resources are used up long before the end of each academic year. Some schools reported to Commission staff that they cannot place truant students after October or November, while others reported that programs are full by March. Being aware of the scant resources available as the school year progresses, one CYS respondent recommended that funding be increased because “referrals for truancy increase at the end of the school year and most often these are not accepted for services.” They added that schools might be able to help, through tracking and planning, students who exhibit chronic absenteeism. They wrote, “However, there is communication with the school prior to the new school year to identify youth [who] had truancy concerns and they are watched closely at the beginning of the school year. Referrals are then made early into the new school year.”

## CYS Recommendations for Stakeholder Roles

The several different types of stakeholders identified in the Public School Code were not originally designed to focus on chronic absenteeism and truancy. Schools’ primary focus is classroom instruction. The CYS’s focus is to serve children and youth who are victimized by neglect and abuse. MDJs comprise the first line of the judiciary for all types of cases brought before them, and in some jurisdictions truancy citations account for only a small percentage of cases. Yet, in many cases it would be expected that these stakeholders collaborate by resolving chronic absenteeism and truancy from their own strengths of purpose. Unfortunately, the spaces

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<sup>215</sup> Joint State Government Commission, *Return on Investment of Afterschool Programs in Pennsylvania* (June 2021), <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/resources/documents/ftp/publications/2021-06-25%20Afterschool%20ROI%20Web%206.25.21.pdf>.

between each are often blurry and rife with ambiguities. To be sure, there are some effective, successful arrangements between schools, CYS (and their providers) and MDJs, and Commission staff has seen examples of these.

#### CYS Recommendations for Schools

To help resolve questions over the different stakeholders' roles, one recommendation is for "stricter guidelines on school responsibilities." Another person recommended to "Clarify requirements of each entity and what truancy is for schools and child welfare a bit more . . ." The respondent further notes, "we get referrals [about students failing] in a class as truancy when a child is attending in person; this is not truancy that is school performance issues." One respondent placed the burden on schools for, from their perspective, not taking a more active role with truancy, writing, "When youth have not attended for 10 consecutive days they can be withdrawn from the system. Often, we are seeing that districts are not making efforts to engage these youth before withdrawing them from their system." That person recommended, "We would advise that this portion be reconsidered."

#### CYS Internal Recommendations

A CYS respondent gave a comprehensive answer that builds on components written into Act 138, and adequately summarizes others' recommendations: "Provide additional funding for social work staff to specifically coordinate School Attendance Improvement Conferences, develop School Attendance Improvement Plans, and work with community partners to build truancy elimination programs within the schools." And reaffirming their primary mandate, the respondent stated, "This should not fall on Children and Youth Services. This is not an abuse or neglect issue."

A different CYS respondent took the opposite position. They recommended creation of "a truancy program within CYS."

A middle ground apparently exists between the two perspectives. A third respondent wrote, "We are looking at making changes to how truancy cases are handled coming into our agency."

#### CYS Recommendations for MDJs

Some CYS respondents called for a stronger role for MDJs in their recommendations. One recommended, "Stricter and immediate consequences" for truancy. Along these lines, another wrote, "I think if juveniles had to be on probation and held accountable while they paid their fines, that would be a good measure to take. Some MDJ offices in my county will close cases and forgive fines for nonpayment. . ." Such judgements would certainly be welcomed by the truant children and their parents, but the CYS respondent sees the unintended consequences, adding to the statement, "and that has spread negativity around the district."

Three CYS respondents agree with several MDJs that the judges need to have more authority and accountability once a citation reaches their courtrooms. One CYS respondent was very similar to at least one MDJ's recommendation, writing, "magistrates should have more power to fine parents or put them in jail for children that are younger who are not attending school. Sometimes for teenagers it is not the parents' fault but for elementary students it typically falls on the parent. In which case the parent should be fined or placed in jail for not getting their child to school." A third respondent calling for strict consequences referenced involvement of juvenile probation authorities, writing, "I believe that for students that are over a certain age that they should be referred to juvenile probation. At the older age, it is more the student's fault for not attending. Probation could order community service or additional requirements that C&Y can't."

Several of the CYS respondents wrote about chronic absenteeism and truancy with statements that corroborated what Commission staff had heard from interviews with schools and MDJs. Chronic absenteeism and truancy are generally not considered within the purview of CYS agencies' responsibilities. Without referrals for neglect or abuse, these agencies' roles are limited, if not entirely absent. The schools and MDJs have recommended more active involvement from CYS, whereas the CYS respondents recommend that schools and MDJs handle the problems without CYS involvement. Most CYS respondents recommended that schools and MDJs develop a better understanding of how all their roles connect, that schools should receive funding to develop programs and employ staff within their own scope, and that MDJs should be given authority to levy more substantial consequences.



## RESOLVING AMBIGUITIES

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The effort to address chronic absenteeism in the Commonwealth is an extended program involving three separate systems: the schools, the courts, and the county children and youth offices (CYS). With a goal of improving school attendance and deterring truancy “through a comprehensive approach to consistently identify and address attendance issues as early as possible with credible intervention techniques,” Act 138 established an approach that focused on the individual child and allowed for improvement.<sup>216</sup> Implementing this system is a challenge; pandemic has made it even more so. The Advisory Committee and Joint State staff heard from many capable and dedicated professionals in each of the three systems. They also heard from those who struggle with the details of accurate implementation. Given the statutory charge to “evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures in improving school attendance and whether the procedures should be revised,” where practitioners encounter ambiguities in the process, it impedes effective implementation. This chapter highlights some of the more frequently mentioned areas where practitioners questioned how to implement the process to ensure accurate data, accessibility of resources, effectiveness of supports, and, when necessary, consistency of consequences.

### *Notification of Absences in the Parents’ Preferred Language*

Section 1333(a)(2) (Procedure When Child is Truant) of the Public School Code states that the school shall send a written notice to the parent or person in parental relation within ten school days of the child’s third unexcused absence and that that notice shall be “in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation.”<sup>217</sup> The Act 138 survey asked schools if they send notification in the parents’ preferred language. As reflected in Chart 7 on page 52, 83 percent of schools send notification in the parents’ preferred language, but the remaining 17 percent do not. The PDE should continue to encourage schools, through the Truancy Toolkit, BECs, and other training, to comply with the statute.

### *Lack of Clarity for when Tardy Becomes Absent*

Several schools and practitioners pointed out that one process not named in statute, notably, when a student goes from being tardy to absent, can heavily impact truancy. This process is not addressed in statute, BEC, or directive. The uncertainty led to the question “When Does Tardy Become Absent” as found in Chart 12 on page 55. The majority of respondents replied that students are marked absent when they have missed more than 30 minutes of school. However, 27 percent of responding districts mark a student as absent if they come in 15 minutes late or less. When combined with the transportation issues that have plagued the Commonwealth in recent

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<sup>216</sup> Act 138 of 2016.

<sup>217</sup> Section 1333(a)(2) of the Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No14) known as the Public School Code of 1949, 24 P.S. § 13-1333(a)(2).

years, students may be marked absent under circumstances that they cannot control due to district transportation issues.

### *Imposition of Fines*

Two members of the Advisory Committee had knowledge of schools imposing truancy fines on families. Only judges have the authority to impose fines for truancy; school districts do not. Aside from hearing these anecdotes, most Advisory Committee members were unaware that schools are imposing fines and were surprised that the practice has not been reported.

One survey question asked MDJs if they cited both the parent and the child for truancy matters. Nineteen MDJs answered yes to this question, amounting to 23 percent of respondents, even though, with recent changes of Act 138 in Section 1333.3(d)(1) of the Public School Code<sup>218</sup>, MDJs are able to cite only the parent OR child. It seems that some judges must be reminded of this change.<sup>219</sup>

Similarly, the recent changes allow only one truancy citation at a time, meaning the student cannot be issued another citation until the first one has been dealt with in court. Section 1333.3(d)(1) states: “No citation may be filed against a child or a person in parental relation with the child who resides in the same household as the child for a subsequent violation of compulsory school attendance if any of the following circumstances apply: (1) A proceeding is already pending under sections 1333.1 and 1333.2 ...”<sup>220</sup> One truancy supervisor told the Advisory Committee that they had experienced a judge clearly violating the law and asking them to issue around 30 citations with six absences on each simultaneously. The supervisor said they told the clerk that this was against the law and the clerk told them to do it anyway. The judge then issued the maximum fine on each citation and used the threat of a \$30,000 fine as leverage to compel the family into sending their child back to a brick-and-mortar school. The judge dismissed the case when they agreed to do this.<sup>221</sup>

### *MDJ Process*

Advisory Committee members discussed the problem of MDJs not holding hearings if the family does not enter a plea.<sup>222</sup> When a truancy citation is filed with the MDJ, a summons is sent to the student’s family that gives them 10 days to notify the court as to whether the student will plead guilty or not guilty. If a non-guilty plea is received by the MDJ, a date for the trial is set with notice provided to the parties. The defendant is advised in the notice that failure to appear for trial will constitute consent to trial in the defendant’s absence. The rules say a bench warrant shall be issued if the defendant fails to respond to a citation or summons.

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<sup>218</sup> Section 1333(a)(2) of the Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No14) known as the Public School Code of 1949, 24 P.S. § 13-1333(a)(2).

<sup>219</sup> MDJ Survey, Chart 63. See page 94.

<sup>220</sup> Public School Code Section 1333.3(d)(1).

<sup>221</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, December 7, 2023.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

Trials cannot be scheduled if the defendant has not entered a non-guilty plea. A bench warrant can be issued if the defendant had been served personally or by certified mail return receipt.<sup>223</sup> Apparently, the MDJs refrain from issuing bench warrants when the families do not respond to the summonses. It was mentioned at the December 7, 2023 Advisory Committee meeting that a potential reason for not issuing bench warrants could be that too few constables are available to serve the summons in rural areas.

### *McKinney-Vento Program Students*

One Advisory Committee member learned through presentations in Advisory Committee meetings that absences found to be caused by homelessness after the fact are to be changed from unexcused to excused absences in a child's attendance records so they do not contribute to the eventual accumulation of absences that indicate habitual truancy.<sup>224</sup> This member was previously not aware of this policy and discussed it with their school's solicitors, who responded that they will not excuse old absences because they are following school policy. This member felt that this was another area where schools could benefit from better education and explanation on the existing statute.<sup>225</sup>

### *Communication Between Systems*

Responses collected from the surveys of schools and CYS workers coupled with anecdotal experiences of CYS workers indicated a language barrier and occasional misunderstanding of process between schools and CYS agencies. To resolve these misunderstandings, one Advisory Committee member created a master document with a glossary of terms that would allow schools and CYS agencies to engage with one another with a better understanding of the steps being taken and the resources available. Use of this or a similar document in all counties could allow for stronger collaboration between the siloed agencies involved in the truancy process.<sup>226</sup>

### *Data*

Joint State staff learned from conversations with schools that attendance data errors can occur when the person entering the data does not have adequate training, information, or does not correctly implement the guidance for attendance. Internal systems fail before the data reporting reaches PDE and no one is reviewing it. Some schools that Joint State staff spoke to were passionate about the fact that they're focused on getting children back in school and not focused on attendance data. These schools felt that reviewing attendance after the fact simply bogs down their staff. Additionally, one Advisory Committee member noted that anyone who works with PIMS can agree that it is confusing, which could lead to user error. Usually, errors result from an incorrect input at the local level. School staff may benefit from additional training on how to enter attendance and avoid common input errors.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Email from Advisory Committee member Marsha Landers to Commission staff, January 12, 2024.

<sup>224</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 11431 *et seq.*

<sup>225</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, December 7, 2023.

<sup>226</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*





## SCHOOL TRUANCY DATA IN PENNSYLVANIA

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The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) each collect data sets related to different aspects of truancy and the truancy process. PDE requires schools to submit both truancy figures and attendance figures. The AOPC reports the number of truancy cases that have come before magisterial district judges and the dollar amount of truancy-related fines that are collected and remitted to school districts. DHS receives and transmits General Protective Services (GPS) reports of truancy and educational neglect. Each of these data sets is in the Appendices.

### *School Attendance: Calculation of Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism Data*

School attendance and truancy data are reported to PDE through two different lenses, both collected through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS). The first lens, truancy, reflects students who have more than six unexcused absences. The second lens, chronic absenteeism, focuses on attendance and specifically children who miss more than 10 percent of school days. Chronic absenteeism is the inverse of regular attendance. One of the key differences between the terms truancy and chronic absenteeism is that under Pennsylvania's statutory definition of truancy, excused absences are not counted toward truancy, whereas in chronic absenteeism, frequent absences – whether excused or unexcused – show that a student misses too much school time. Students who are chronically absent are more likely to miss academic goals, more likely to fall behind, and more likely to drop out of high school.

The truancy rate is calculated by taking the number of habitually truant students and dividing that figure by district enrollment. The district enrollment figure used by PDE is an October snapshot of a school's attendance. The truancy number, i.e. the number of students included in the habitually truant count, includes students who have six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. Those numbers are subject to the certification of the Superintendent or CEO of the school after the end of the school year as part of PDE's Safe Schools Data report. The Safe Schools Accuracy Certification Statement (ACS) report is next uploaded into PIMS. Each school enters student attendance numbers into its student information system and the PDE does not change or adjust any of the numbers.

An "ERROR" shows in the PIMS rate column when a school reports more truant students than are enrolled. Based on the use of October snapshot enrollment in the calculation, this could legitimately occur if there has been a substantial increase in enrollment during the school year. However, it also might reflect a data entry error that was loaded into PIMS.

An alternate data set kept by the PDE is cumulative enrollment, which is also known as end-of-year (EOY) data. EOY enrollment data are not available for school years before 2015-2016. In cumulative enrollment, any student who has been enrolled throughout the school year is included in the number. Over the last five years, which include the pandemic, some schools have had large increases in enrollment. This EOY enrollment figure captures those dynamics. However, the truancy data set in the appendix has the October enrollment in the denominator, as that is the data set that PDE primarily uses.

The rate of chronic absenteeism is calculated for public schools based on the number of students who have missed more than 10 percent of school days during one academic year. Ten percent of school days equates to roughly 18 days in a 180 day school year. If a student is present or enrolled in a school for fewer than 90 days, then they are excluded from that school's calculation of chronic absenteeism as they have not been present enough and the school has not had sufficient opportunity to apply intervention strategies.<sup>228</sup>

Student membership and attendance data currently collected by PDE are used to calculate chronic absenteeism. Because these data are used for subsidy calculations and a variety of other purposes, the department extensively reviews the accuracy and quality of the data. This review causes the data to lag by one school year. In other words, data that are released in October 2023 are for the 2021 - 2022 school year.

Chronic absenteeism is one of the measures of the accountability indicators in Pennsylvania's ESSA plan.<sup>229</sup> Chronic absenteeism is viewed as a robust measure of school climate. Both excused and unexcused absences are included in the calculation of chronic absenteeism because instructional hours are lost in both scenarios. Students are considered absent when they are not physically participating in instruction or instruction-related activities on school grounds or an approved off-grounds location.<sup>230</sup> An emphasis on student and parent/family engagement is important for the improvement of attendance and learning outcomes. Chronic absenteeism is then used as an ESSA accountability indicator and in the Future Ready PA Index to emphasize the importance of student and parent/family engagement.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *Pennsylvania ESSA Consolidated State Plan* (September 2017), <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/ESSA/Pennsylvania%20Consolidated%20State%20Plan.pdf>, 35.

<sup>229</sup> "Guidelines for Reporting Regular Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism," *Department of Education*, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/ESSA/FutureReady/Pages/Attendance.aspx>. The amendment to Pennsylvania's consolidated state plan was approved by the US Department of Education on January 20, 2023. The original plan, known as Pennsylvania's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan was approved in January of 2018.

<sup>230</sup> *Pennsylvania ESSA Consolidated State Plan*, 35.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

## *Identification of Absence*

School attendance policies impact the number of students reported to be truant. The initial identification of a child's absence as excused or unexcused can have a practical impact on a school's truant count. If the school's attendance policy establishes that absences without an excuse are marked unexcused, then in reality, some of those might remain recorded as unexcused even if the child brings a note in within the required time frame. The recorded truant count would consequently become higher than the actual count. Conversely, if a school's protocol directs that an absent student be recorded as excused, there is a chance that the absence might inadvertently remain excused, even if the child fails to bring in a note.

## *Accuracy of Data*

Joint State staff spoke to schools with very high and very low truancy numbers to gain a better understanding of the data recording process and hear what challenges schools were facing and what solutions were working.

### High Truancy Schools

One school responded that their truancy rate was accurate. While another believed the PIMS data were not accurate; the superintendent suspected that the truancy rate had been incorrectly replaced by the attendance rate in their system. The superintendent attributed this to staff turnover—three new employees had been responsible for doing this work over the previous 18 months. Another school believed their truancy rate of 89.17 percent was not accurate. Rather, they believed the truancy rate was around 67 percent. Staff derived this number by exporting data from PIMS and combining it with data of known habitually truant students. This school does not include in its calculations students who are enrolled for fewer than 10 days and ostensibly suspects these students are nonetheless included in PIMS truancy calculations, which could explain the discrepancy between the figures. Another school's high truancy rate of 96.65 percent shown in PIMS was attributed to human error and staff turnover. Further, staff from a charter school that operates 24 schools across grades K-12 in Philadelphia and Camden, NJ questioned the comparability of data across different schools given that schools have some flexibility to determine which absences are excused and which are not.<sup>232</sup>

### Low Truancy Schools

In conversations with Joint State staff, the schools with low truancy rates all stated that their reported truancy rates—of 0.16/0.17, 0.51/.052, and .05 percent consecutively—were accurate.<sup>233</sup>

Through speaking to schools about their truancy data and attendance policies, Joint State staff learned that there is room for error when the end user is someone who does not have the information or does not implement the guidance correctly on attendance. Internal systems fail before reporting reaches PDE and no one is reviewing the submission. Sometimes attendance is

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<sup>232</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

first recorded on paper and then recorded digitally, and there is discretion in how information is entered into the system. Data are uploaded to PIMS, which then populates the Safe Schools Reports. Advisory Committee members agreed that the PIMS system can be confusing, which could lead to user error. One member thought PIMS information could be entered incorrectly, but some schools might have their own way to collect information that might be more accurate. Another member believed more input mistakes happened before the district level, at the individual school level.<sup>234</sup>

Schools track attendance diligently because of its direct relationship to funding, but the recording of truancy has less accountability. One Advisory Committee member emphasized that it should be important to school administrators (e.g. superintendents) to sign off on correct data, reasoning that if there were consequences for incorrect data entry then maybe they would pay more attention to the numbers. Protocols for ensuring the accuracy of data are in place but there is some sense that they are not being taken seriously enough. All numbers have been signed off on by the superintendent, which means the superintendent is not paying attention to the accuracy of their information. If protocol is not being taken seriously, it is difficult to enforce accuracy. Given that superintendents sign off on the truancy report, which gives them an overall percentage, if it is noticeably different from their perception of truancy, they could flag it and ask for a review.<sup>235</sup> Another member added that sometimes there are increases in recorded truancy if a school hires a staff person to concentrate on truancy. One member pointed out that there is a clear difference between what is being reported and what schools perceive as their truancy rate. One conclusion was that the Advisory Committee cannot base decisions on currently available data because its validity is questionable.<sup>236</sup>

Varying charter and cyber charter attendance policies bring additional complexity to this issue.

### *School Day Absentee Procedures*

#### High Truancy Schools<sup>237</sup>

At one school's elementary and middle schools, a teacher takes attendance at 8:30 a.m. When a child enters late, a worker at the front desk manually enters tardy or excused tardy. Around 9:30 a.m. or 10:00 a.m., the office runs a report of all students who are absent. All teachers reply if they see a student on the absent list who is present in class. All excuse notes are sent to the offices and the offices code each note and files it appropriately. If a parent says that they kept their child home from school, the school accepts that as excused for three absences. After the third absence, even with a parental note, each absence is considered unexcused. After three unexcused absences, the school sends a letter and explains the truancy procedure. Another letter is sent to the parents at six unexcused absences and at 10 unexcused absences. The truancy team takes on

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<sup>234</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, March 16, 2023.

<sup>237</sup> Joint State staff sorted enrollment data to identify and reach out to ten of the schools with the highest rate and ten with the lowest rate and try to ask if the information seems correct and if the schools have explanation for success or low rates.

students at 10 unexcused absences. The truancy report is updated weekly. How quickly a student can be assigned to an outreach team varies because of the sheer number of truant students. The school uses community-based partnership programs and Project Go, a program run through the Philadelphia District Attorney's office. In the 2022-2023 school year, Project GO has been inundated and overwhelmed and the previous interventions have not been occurring, even though students have been referred. A charter school's administrators emphasized the difference between chronic absenteeism and truancy. The school compliance manager pulls data for PIMs. The school uses PowerSchool Information System to collect data.<sup>238</sup>

Another school uses Sapphire as their student information system (SIS) to log attendance. The district is now reviewing the data entry process to improve accuracy. Another school stated they use Deans List, which automatically contacts families via phone, email, or text when a child is absent. Another school contacts families afterward to see how they can help get children back in school. In the charter school, higher grade levels use a tap-in system to record their attendance upon entering school. Families receive a robocall if their student is absent. Staff (typically assistant principals) code absences as excused or unexcused. Three unexcused absences result in an automatic letter being sent to families. Six unexcused absences result in an automatic letter that includes an invitation to an SAIP conference.<sup>239</sup>

### Low Truancy Schools

One school has historically had very, very low truancy. There are three buildings within the school district: an elementary school, a middle school and a high school, and each building has a dedicated attendance secretary. If a parent sends in a note ahead of time, the absence is marked in advance. If a child does not show up to school and there has been no previous notice, a teacher must mark the child as unexcused. One of the attendance secretaries then updates the student's attendance status by the end of third period. If the student is still not present, the district initiates a robocall, which is then followed up, as needed, individually. The unexcused absence report is run daily and followed up on immediately. The formal process starts at the third unexcused absence. By the third day notice, the parent will have heard multiple times that their child has an attendance issue. If a high school student who normally drives is not showing up for school, their driving privileges are revoked and they must ride the bus.<sup>240</sup>

Another low truancy school sends unexcused absence letters to parents at three, six, and 10 unexcused absences. If there is no improvement after an SAIP, the district sends a notice warning of the potential for referral to the MDJ. If there is no improvement after that first notice, a second notice is sent, and a citation issued for the MDJ. Despite the formal process, the district's emphasis is to work with families to keep their children in school rather than penalize families.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

At one school, they send a three absences letter and a 10 absences letter prior to the Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP).<sup>242</sup> The three and 10 totals for absences include excused and unexcused absences. The notice for the TEP contains information that they may have charges filed against them. The attendance secretary keeps track of absences and excused absences. If it is the end of the year, they use common sense; if absences are sporadic, they use discretion on whether to send it to the magistrate. Sometimes the process between the magistrate and the District Attorney takes many weeks, while other times it takes only a few weeks. The magistrate requires that if you file on a student, you also must file on a parent. The district is told to do both. At this school, parents will gladly send an excuse in; at that point the concern is about how many absences parents will excuse. This makes the primary concern attendance, not truancy. The distinction is between excused and unexcused absences.<sup>243</sup>

At another school, daily attendance is recorded by teachers in an electronic gradebook system. Students are marked absent in the gradebook. Later in the morning, a report is run by attendance secretaries, who compare the list of absences with a list of students out on field trips or who were late arrivals. They upload the information into the grade book system. The district has experimented with different approaches to how absences are entered into the system. At present, all absences are marked as 'absent,' being neither excused nor unexcused. A portal allows parents to write excuses that go directly to the building secretary. The building secretary recodes absences as excused absences unless they reach the point of being unexcused. District staff regularly run reports. Students with 10 or more absences are notified by letters posted to their portal accounts. Unexcused absences take credit from courses needed for graduation. Five unexcused absences can lead to failure of a semester-long course. Ten unexcused absences can lead to failure of a year-long course.<sup>244</sup>

In another district, each school chooses how to code their attendance information into PIMs. This district has had difficulty aligning buildings. The Assistant Superintendent is working with the technical director to clarify why the attendance process in different buildings looks different. According to the Assistant Superintendent, it is important to ensure that teachers are taking attendance. Their student information system is clunky and cumbersome. The district was in the midst of reviewing student information systems and they are expected to choose one a few weeks after Joint State staff spoke with them. In elementary school, students' attendance is measured by the full school day. However, in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, students are marked period by period. The district must go in and choose where the cut-offs for marking a student tardy will be. Each district does this process differently. Prior to SAICs, district staff must pull accurate and necessary records. The district is attempting to change the process of pulling records as it is currently done by hand and leaves a margin for error. Generally, the district sees high participation in SAICs and goals are set in place. Although the district is supposed to hold SAICs after three unexcused absences, the district does not have the manpower and realistically holds the SAIC closer to ten unexcused absences.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Prior to the establishment of the SAIP, schools utilized the Truancy Elimination Plan or TEP.

<sup>243</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

In one school with low truancy rates, every building had a person who was in charge of attendance at that building, calling parents after third period if a child never showed up to school. There is a difference between someone taking attendance and someone being a dedicated attendance officer who works solely on attendance. The attendance officer should be aware of the resources available for a range of truancy issues and engage with the family on the issue. This staff also needs to be comfortable and confident to go find parents. Attendance officers must be able to move from truancy monitoring to truancy action items. Members generally agreed that a dedicated attendance officer would help with truancy, however there is currently no funding available to correct the problem.<sup>246</sup> This practice can be effective, but it is a matter of resources. Some schools cannot afford to pay someone to check on whether students showed up throughout the day or make phone calls to parents. One member recommended that the legislature consider an option for funding for schools that commit to oversight to have a dedicated truancy position, like a grant for a truancy officer where the funding could be tied to data collection, not the efficacy of the results. One member was hesitant to approve of such measures because the legislature often passes mandates that burden schools without the necessary support.<sup>247</sup>

### *Transportation's Impact on Truancy*

#### High Truancy Schools

One high truancy school has experienced ongoing transportation issues. Four out of five buses arrive after the school start time and those students are marked unexcused absent (UA), with nobody reviewing and changing the designation later. Another school has experienced significant problems with transportation because of driver shortages, drivers making multiple runs, and parents not having alternative means of getting their children to schools. Elementary school buses are frequently 90 minutes late, which causes some students to miss the first reading block. Middle- and high school students ride SEPTA, which itself struggled with delays because of driver shortages.<sup>248</sup> Joint State's study on The School Bus Driver Shortage in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, released in 2022, supported transportation issues as a cause for tardiness in certain schools in the Commonwealth.<sup>249</sup>

#### Low Truancy Schools

Transportation or busing is not a cause of tardiness at two low truancy schools. Another has experienced some issues due to the driver shortage, but students are not being marked absent or unexcused because of it.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>247</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, January 25, 2024.

<sup>248</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>249</sup> "Commission Publications," *Joint State Government Commission*, accessed February 16, 2024, <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/publications.cfm>.

<sup>250</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

## *COVID-19 Pandemic*

In the 2020-2021 school year, some schools were shutting down due to covid for one to two weeks. Anecdotally, there were cases where those days were then being considered absent.

### High Truancy Schools

At one high truancy school, the pandemic has absolutely impacted attendance. The school has lowered attendance goals. It seems as though, since pandemic, parents view school as optional. School administrators believed that this year (the 2023-2024 school year) would be different, but a change has not occurred. The school is currently rethinking their approach to attendance for the next school year. Part of the approach next year will include 100 percent home visits and a goal of doubling the Attendance, Truancy, Intervention & Prevention (ATIP) team.<sup>251</sup>

For another school, the pandemic has not generally impacted truancy and the school's approach to handling truancy within the district. The district is more willing to do home visits than they did prior to pandemic. The school applied to the PA Department of Education and received authorization to do up to five flexible instruction days (FID) where children can learn remotely. On Feb 14, 2023, the district called an FID day due to weather. Not all students have daytime access to the internet. A student has up to three days to complete all work that was conducted during the FID to be counted present. This school only used online schooling for the 1st marking period of the 2020-2021 school year.<sup>252</sup>

In another school, students were discouraged from attending school during the pandemic if they had symptoms that could be COVID-19 or would otherwise have been normal allergy or benign cold viruses. Staff were not aggressive about getting excuse notes from families. They are now switching back to encouraging children to attend school if they experience normal allergies and benign colds.<sup>253</sup>

### Low Truancy Schools

In the 2020-2021 school year, a low truancy school gave students the option of hybrid or fully virtual schooling. Students were allowed to change back and forth between different modes of schooling. For the 2021-2022 school year, the district partnered with the local IU to provide a virtual program and the district went back to full-time, in-person schooling. A very small number of students chose virtual programming. This was due to health issues.<sup>254</sup>

Another low truancy school stayed open during the pandemic and are back to status quo. The administration believes the transition was smoother since the school remained open all through the pandemic. They brought in outside agencies to provide mental health counseling in the schools using ESSR funds. Students do not have to leave school for counseling and the district believes it helps keep children in the school. The Board is putting money in place once ESSR funds are gone

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<sup>251</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.



to maintain this program because it improved attendance. The Superintendent noted a strong correlation between parental involvement and attendance. The parents in this district value education and this is clear from their truancy rate. The Superintendent has noticed that since the pandemic, parents are more willing to take family vacations during the school year. Also, tardiness, in general, is a more of an issue than it was previously.<sup>255</sup>

At another low truancy school, classes were remote during the pandemic and students were counted as present so long as they turned on their computer. Regarding the impact of the pandemic, attendance is “improving” since COVID-19. During the pandemic, a different school counted logging into class as attendance for the day. The Assistant Superintendent of another district was not sure if the pandemic impacted their attendance rates. At the beginning of the pandemic, the district was overwhelmed with trying to figure out how to track attendance. Once they did establish a system, the district was lenient. Since the pandemic, there has been a noticeable number of students with mental health issues that skip class routinely. However, attendance feels back to normal. During the pandemic, the district had to reevaluate what they were excusing and what they were not excusing, especially when students were participating on-line.<sup>256</sup>

#### ***Truancy Data Collected by AOPC: Before the Courts and Fines Remitted to Schools***

When a child or parent is convicted of truancy and fined under section 1333.3 of the School Code, that fine is for the benefit of the school. Table 21 in Appendix D contains a breakdown by county of the monies that are disbursed to school districts from these fines. Prior to the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, the amount of the fine and how it was calculated by offense was different in the Public School Code. Because the county of Philadelphia does not participate in the statewide Magisterial District Judge System (MDJS), they are not included in this system.

The AOPC also maintains data on the count of truancy offenses that are recorded either in the MDJS or the Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS). Again, as Philadelphia County does not use the statewide MDJ system, they are not included in Table 20 located in Appendix C. The 2020 case file counts are generally lower than the other years presented; and with the onset of pandemic in March of 2020 this would be expected. However, this is not reflected in every county’s cases filed count.

#### ***Truancy Incidence Data through General Protective Service Concerns Reporting***

As part of their Child Protective Services Annual Report, the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) releases data on truancy as it relates to General Protective Services (GPS) valid concerns. That data is contained in Table 22 in Appendix E. General Protective Services (GPS)

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<sup>255</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

reports are those reports that do not rise to the level of suspected child abuse but allege a need for intervention to prevent serious harm to children. These reports can be made by mandated or permissive reporters. A report becomes a concern (and is included in the first column of data) when it is determined through investigation that a report was valid and meritorious. When a report is determined to be invalid, it means that the concern did not meet the criteria.<sup>257</sup>

The maximum number of valid truancy/educational neglects as a valid GPS concern was 569, in Philadelphia County. The minimum number of valid truancy/educational neglect as a valid GPS concern was one in Montour County. The average number of valid concerns per county in 2022 was 111.

The next column contains the total concerns within the county for 2022. Beyond truancy, total concerns will include other concerns such as: caregiver substance use, child behavioral health/intellectual disability concerns, conduct by a caregiver that places the child at risk or fails to protect the child, homelessness and other concerns.

The final column contains valid truancy concerns as a percent of total concerns within the county. Statewide, valid truancy concerns are 8.3 percent of total valid concerns. The highest percent amongst the counties is 30 percent for Cameron County. Overall, Cameron also has one of the lowest number of concerns, with only three valid truancy GPS concerns. The lowest percent of truancy as a percent of total valid concerns amongst the counties is three percent and is found in Cambria County.

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<sup>257</sup> 2022 PA Child Protective Services Report 8-10-2023 final, provided by Dawn Trail, September 26, 2023, e-mail.

Throughout the process of developing this report, the committee members and Joint State staff heard of some programs and responses to chronic absenteeism and truancy that stood out. These responses were characterized by excellence or effectiveness in practice. Some programs were brought up by the Advisory Committee members themselves, while others arose through the surveys or staff discussions. This section serves to highlight strategies, some previously mentioned elsewhere in the report, that can reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy. The programs mentioned below are grouped by schools, magisterial district judges (MDJs), and children and youth services (CYS). It is in no way an exhaustive list but an effort to highlight excellent work in the area of chronic absenteeism that is ongoing in the Commonwealth.

### *Schools*

- dedicated staff trained to monitor and follow-up with chronic absenteeism and truancy on a daily basis

In discussing school's practices in reducing truancy, Joint State staff found that Lower Moreland experienced low truancy rates. When staff spoke to representatives from this school they stated that they have enough resources to be very regimented and disciplined. They review the attendance during the day to check and see if students have arrived late. They perform immediate follow-ups with students. Similarly, in other schools with low truancy rates, every building had a person who was in charge of attendance at that building, calling parents after third period if a child never showed up to schools. This practice can be effective, but some schools cannot afford to pay someone to check on whether students showed up throughout the day or make phone calls to parents.<sup>258</sup>

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) is trying a new notification system through EveryDay Labs that sends texts and emails and tells parents how much school their child is missing compared to an average student. This program has reduced truancy by 10 to 15 percent.<sup>259</sup>

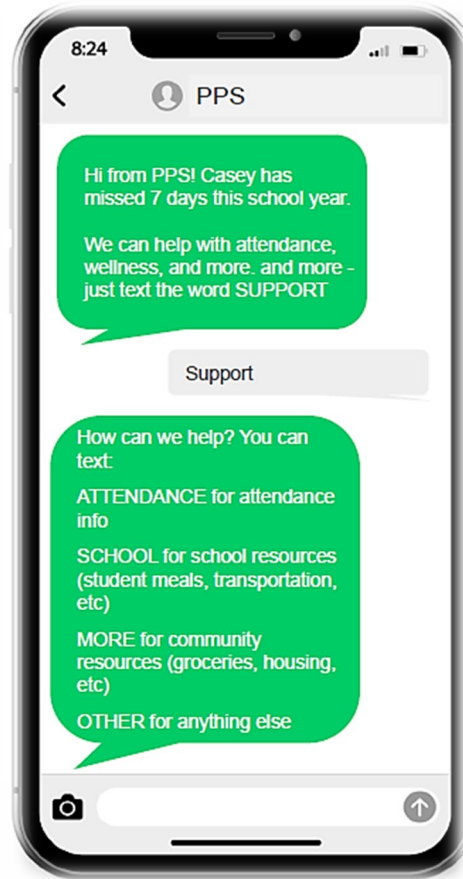
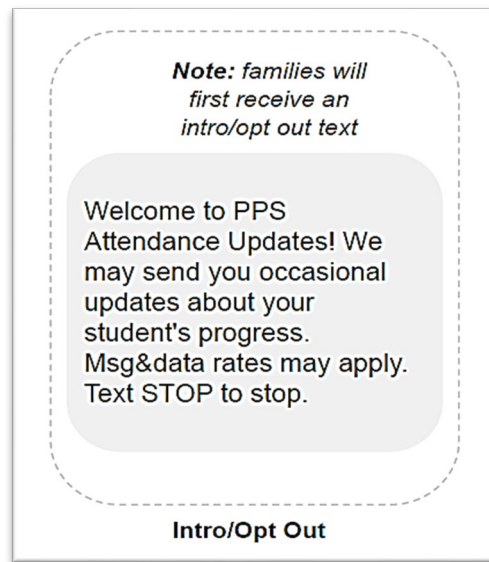
EveryDay Intervention uses nudges to connect with families about their child's attendance. Nudges are communications through letter about six times a year and through texts which are sent bi-weekly.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>259</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023.

<sup>260</sup> E-mail from Tiffini Gorman, January 16, 2024



EveryDay Labs implemented the program within the PPS in the 2022-2023 school year, launching the program in October 2022 and sending final communications in May of 2023. Fifty-seven schools from the PPS were involved, 18,594 students and families of chronically absent or at-risk students received intervention with a total of 172,339 mail or text nudges and general support texts sent. In this wide-spread application, 58 percent of students between kindergarten and 12<sup>th</sup> grade improved their attendance rates after receiving the intervention.<sup>261</sup>

- use of a school-based team approach, including district staff trained in truancy, county Children and Youth (CYS) agencies, and Magisterial District Judges (MDJ)s keep communications open and provide solutions.
- mentoring, goal setting, and extra-curricular activities support positive behavioral changes in students.
- Family Group Decision Making, mental health counseling, and drug and alcohol services help remove barriers to regular attendance.

<sup>261</sup> E-mail from Tiffini Gorman, January 16, 2024, Pittsburgh PS A+ -EOY Presentation 22-23.

All schools Joint State surveyed that provided information about direct support for students mentioned the use of a team approach. Several mentioned staff and resources from outside agencies, whether directly through their County CYS agency or a contracted provider. Strong collaboration between all of the agencies involved in truancy has been repeatedly mentioned in survey responses and Advisory Committee meetings as a helpful practice. Some schools meet on a regular basis with social workers and MDJ staff to assess their effectiveness and stay informed on specific student cases. School staff mentioned included teachers, building administrators such as principals, counselors, school nurses, social workers trained on truancy, and others.

Some schools surveyed mentioned a focus on behavioral change, such as goal setting, rewards for improved attendance, and daily check-ins with a mentor as strategies for improving attendance. Schools have used engagement with extracurricular activities to help students achieve regular attendance. Several school survey respondents stood out for their unique approaches. These mentioned the use of such means as high school student-athletes to mentor elementary students, sending transportation vans to students who missed the regular school bus, providing free breakfasts and lunches, and having “free school stores” that provide hygiene, school supplies, and clothing. Two mentioned the use of “entry-point safe spaces” or “calming corners.” One noted an improvement since extra-curricular participation had been tied to regular attendance.<sup>262</sup>

Other solutions include referrals to outside services such as drug and alcohol services, Family Group Decision Making, or mental health counseling services.<sup>263</sup>

School districts that have a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) checklist are better able to implement these steps. Routinizing the process makes it easier for schools. Education Law Center has created a homelessness screener for students and developed a checklist for creating SAIPs. School staff needs to ask the correct questions to identify homeless students, as the definition for homeless students under the McKinney-Vento Act includes situations that some people would not typically identify as homelessness. If absences are found to be caused by homelessness, they are not to be marked unexcused. Additionally, if the SAIP does not contain relevant specific information about a student, MDJs do not have enough information to determine the best course of action with that student. Inherent racial bias is causing a lot of assumptions to be made by schools, MDJs, and children and youth agencies.<sup>264</sup>

Family Group Decision Making was often mentioned by Advisory Committee members as a best practice. It is used across the Commonwealth for a variety of family issues. This means when an agency is addressing an issue, they are bringing the family and extended supports together to figure out what solutions they will employ. These plans will be much more detailed, specific, and tailored to the student than what professionals would put together. These plans can also be sustained when agency involvement is terminated. For agencies that are overwhelmed, this diverts students to alternate attendance improvement activities.<sup>265</sup>

- systemic barriers can be identified and mitigated through regular district staff meetings.

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<sup>262</sup> School Survey, open-ended response. See page 61.

<sup>263</sup> School Survey, open-ended response. See page 68.

<sup>264</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

<sup>265</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

Several of the school survey respondents gave answers that approached the question of barriers from a systemic standpoint rather than individual students and families. They described regular meetings for gathering information from different staff positions to identify barriers. One school wrote that it regularly runs attendance reports to identify trends. It then cross-references the reports against known attendance barriers, such as homelessness (McKinney-Vento students). The school can then attempt to mitigate barriers that are affecting particular students.<sup>266</sup>

An issue one school system tackled to improve attendance was a lack of transportation. In the PPS system, they have been working on pedestrian safety, attendance initiatives, and a buddy program. These measures help children get to school and feel appreciated while in school.

The York Youth Court Alliance in York County was the recipient of the 2019 International Association of Truancy Dropout and Prevention Award. The goal of the program is to re-engage students at school and keep these students and their families from entering the Magisterial District Court for truancy hearings.<sup>267</sup> School districts that offer the program determine what age of students they will serve; typically the program has been offered in grades 7 through 12.<sup>268</sup> This program is a partnership of York County Office of Children, Youth and Families, the York County Truancy Prevention Initiative and the United Way of York County and has been in existence since 2014.

Rather than issue a citation to court, the school sends an Option Letter to the truant student and their parent or guardian. Within 10 days, the parent must contact the Youth Court Alliance to enroll in the program and set up an intake meeting. To continue participation throughout the program, students may not have unlawful absences or tardies for three weeks. Students must participate in at least two of the offered options, including: tutoring, apologies, research, community service, essay, college or career path development, journaling, mindfulness activity with a reflection, a writing assignment, a vision board, or project-based learning.<sup>269</sup> Overarching supervision includes representatives from the educational system and trained staff from United Way.

Importantly, the Youth Court is a student operated court dedicated to truancy issues, and rather than being presided over by an adult, includes a student judge, prosecutor, advocate for the offender, bailiff and jurors. The youth court achieves great impact through the development of problem-solving skills, grasp of civic responsibility, sensitivity to other class mates, community responsibility, and self-reflection by participants. It is critical to note that one of the most profound outcomes is generated by the bonding of the participants including those who originally were offenders with one another. This bonding of the Youth Court Alliance participants replicates a significant support group and inherently becomes a source of peer mentoring. If the student and parent/guardian completes the program, the truancy referral to the Magisterial District Court is withdrawn.

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<sup>266</sup> School Survey, open-ended responses. See page 58.

<sup>267</sup> "Youth Court Alliance," *United Way of York County*, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.unitedway-york.org/youth-court-alliance>.

<sup>268</sup> *Youth Court Alliance: Our Goal* (United Way of York County, 2021), accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.unitedway-york.org/sites/unitedway-york/files/2022-08/YCA%20Brochure%202021%20F.pdf>.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Magisterial District Judges*

- MDJs' flexibility, community investment, and collaboration with local agencies helps resolve truancy.
- county service agencies and MDJs should formalize an approach to truancy.

One MDJ, Judge Olasz, spoke to Joint State staff about his unique approach to his role as an MDJ. He said he took an active role in his community, was familiar with many of the students he saw in the courtroom and did everything in his power to encourage meaningful improvement in attendance for students. He granted continuances to allow a chance for a student to improve, and if they improved, he would continue to grant continuances. He would not employ punitive measures unless he had exhausted every other resource available to students. Additionally, he had workers from relevant agencies in his courtroom for each hearing and would allow students to go meet with the workers and come up with a plan for improvement before they even left the courtroom.<sup>270</sup>

Meaningful family engagement can be promoted throughout all levels of the truancy process. One Advisory Committee member recommended they be part of the resources available at the MDJ hearing. She shared that Allegheny County has a team that goes to truancy hearings and tries to connect families to resources. Family group decision making could be proposed as a best practice at the MDJ level. The definition of family is not just parent and child, it is the larger extended support network as well.<sup>271</sup>

Allegheny County's Truancy Diversion Protocol means that children who are already involved in Juvenile Court will have truancy matters handled by their Juvenile Court Judge instead of having two separate court systems involved. The resource specialists from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services will send a truancy notification to the Juvenile Court Judge, who will enter an Order Confirming Jurisdiction and possibly schedule an expedited hearing. This Order Confirming Jurisdiction will be sent to the MDJ and they will dispose of the truancy citation.<sup>272</sup>

### *County Children and Youth Services*

- county service agencies with dedicated truancy staff make resources available in the early stages of chronic absenteeism
- county agencies that standardize information gathering can practice Evidence-based Decision Making to help families identify and access services

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<sup>270</sup> Staff Meeting with Judge Olasz, September 28, 2023.

<sup>271</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>272</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, August 17, 2023.

- foster child education intermediary/collaboration

The Beaver County Truancy Program is acknowledged across the state as a truancy program that engages best practices in order to reduce truancy. Joshua Edenhofer presented to the Advisory Committee on the program's success. He first explained the program, saying that it is comprised of three full-time staff that attend meetings when truancy is identified. They sit in on SAICs and magistrate hearings and offer support and talk to families about the reasons for truancy and identify barriers. The staff runs a truancy class on a monthly basis and a juvenile probation officer participates in that class. This program was very successful until the pandemic, which changed the needs of families. Beaver County was averaging 8-12 referrals for truancy up until 2019-20. In 2021 there were 44 referrals and there were 60 referrals in 2022; obviously a significant increase post-covid-19. One response to this from Beaver County was a truancy/parenting program in which parents go through a parenting program and the staff works with families to address the root causes of truancy. Twenty-three families did this in the first year of the program, 2022. During covid-19, students were getting as many as 50, 60, or 70 absences. Because of this, Beaver County now has an intensive truancy worker who only covers truancy and is working with the truant children two to three times a week. The most common root issues causing truancy were substance abuse and untreated mental health concerns. The truancy program attempts to encourage family participation early in the process, like during the SAIP process. Also, most schools have no problem with the truancy workers being at SAIPs, which ensures the necessary information is being collected.<sup>273</sup>

An important goal of the intervention program is to reach parents because engaging with parents is effective at reducing truancy. The program will sometimes utilize incentives like buying a family dinner if the child goes to school for two weeks. Mr. Edenhofer did not have a statistic to represent how often extended family supports were involved but did say that anecdotally, this type of involvement is successful.<sup>274</sup>

Dawn Truill, a Human Services Analyst from the Department of Human Services, presented to the Advisory Committee on her approach to reducing truancy for foster children. While working in Westmoreland County as an Educational Liaison, she asked different involved entities about specific details for each foster child, which caused each level of the system to look into and keep track of those details. The questions she asked were ones like: What is the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)? Who is signing it? Where is the child living? Where are they going to school? What is their transportation? She believed one person from each agency should be asking these questions to ensure everyone had the proper information. She would then share this information with relevant parties to ensure that the child was receiving the best education possible.

In Westmoreland County, Ms. Truill also worked on the "Education Barriers to Permanency Project Pilot," which ran from October of 2018 to the fall of 2022. The goal of this project was to increase education outcomes for children in foster care. The strategies included increasing collaboration between all groups involved with children in foster care, including schools, the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau, legal stakeholders, and community partners. County

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<sup>273</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.



Children and Youth Agency workers were given a list of roles and responsibilities and given training on educational advocacy and the importance of school stability for children in foster care.

Her office also created a bench card for the judges to be able to ask the right questions to social workers. The workers also had those questions so they could prepare well for a court appearance. The agencies involved in her project experienced strong collaboration because there were no enemy lines; everyone was helping each other understand the system. She developed a glossary of terms so schools and case workers could understand each other. She also developed a list of people to contact for specific requests or questions. The Barriers project collected anonymized data to assess the efficacy of the pilot project. They found that school stability rose from 43 percent in the 2017-2018 school year to 74 percent in the 2021-2022 school year. A Barriers project is currently being launched in Lancaster. Other counties can participate with the ABA Permanency Barriers Project, which is funded through the PA DHS Office of Children, Youth, and Families.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting, May 4, 2023.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on the findings from the three surveys and conversation with Advisory Committee members and stakeholders, the Advisory Committee collaborated to develop the following recommendations to improve the efficacy of the truancy process as revised by Act 138.

### **RECOMMENDATION # 1:** *A Graduated Response to Truancy*

The General Assembly should investigate the development of a graduated response to habitual truancy. By statute, a student with seven unexcused absences will be treated the same as a student with 45 to 60 unexcused absences even though the barriers these students are facing may be of entirely different magnitudes. When a child reaches habitual truancy with six unexcused absences, and, after the school creates a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) after three or more unexcused absences, Section 1333.1 lists a school's second-level options as involving the county children and youth agency or the Magisterial District Judge. Advisory Committee members felt that the current statutory definitions of truancy at three unexcused absences and habitual truancy at six unexcused absences do not capture the full range of truant behavior. Overall, the recommendation for a graduated response grew from the Advisory Committee's belief that schools should be given more time to identify and mitigate barriers before requiring involvement of either Magisterial District Judges (MDJs) or the child welfare system, especially given that the resources and programs in counties are available to students without involvement in the MDJ and child welfare systems. A graduated response system for truancy would escalate only severe cases of truancy to child welfare or MDJ involvement after the other options have been exhausted.

To replace early court or children and youth involvement in truancy matters, Advisory Committee members advocated for a system in which schools were allowed a period of time to evaluate the effectiveness of the SAIP and could follow-up on students' compliance with their SAIPs before additional steps were taken. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that SAIPs, which schools noted as beneficial, were sometimes not fully implemented before additional steps were taken for students. Members believed that a delay of involvement of courts and children and youth services would need to be coupled with a strengthening of the existing SAIP process, including more detailed instruction on what must be done in a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) and the opportunity to revise an SAIP that was not effective in decreasing a student's truancy.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** *Funded Dedicated Truancy Services*

Advisory Committee members repeatedly emphasized the need for dedicated people whose primary responsibility is to monitor truancy, engage the student and their family, and address barriers related to truancy. The dedicated attendance person would not have responsibilities in addition to tracking attendance: contacting absent students and their parents would be their primary function. With this as their sole role, they would have the time to dedicate their attention to each student's specific case and maintain ongoing cooperation and accountability with the student and their family. Schools could either hire a person to address these needs or contract a worker from a community partner to perform these services or split the relevant responsibilities between the groups. Outcomes should be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. A recommendation to create such a position should include state support to allow schools to do so. The General Assembly and Governor should consider appropriating funds to enable schools to secure such positions.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** *Infuse Truancy into the Student Assistance Program (SAP)*

Advisory Committee members suggested utilizing the existing SAP, which provides support for students with mental health or substance use needs, to include it as a resource in the development of the SAIP. The purpose would be to build a bridge between two existing programs that were created at different times. SAP's enabling statute (Act 211 of 1990) does not restrict the use of SAP as a school-based attendance improvement program, as established in section 1333 and 1333.1 of the PA School Code of 1949. Section 1547(c)(6) of the school code should be clarified to state that mental health problems and substance use contribute to chronic absenteeism, therefore making SAP a legitimate option to respond to truancy. Further, SAP is underutilized statewide. SAP team members are supported through professional development and a nonprofit organization provides resources to SAP teams. If SAP is utilized for truancy, administrators need to be sure SAP has the resources to accomplish its objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** *An Intermediate Unit (IU) Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism Hub*

IUs should provide their members' staff with training and consultation in statutory and regulatory updates and general education on truancy and chronic absenteeism. Schools with high truancy rates should receive priority training. Moreover, the IUs should designate an IU staff member as point of contact for their member districts regarding truancy and chronic absenteeism. The IU should receive funding to take on this role.

Some of the schools' survey responses left Commission staff unclear about whether the respondents fully understand the truancy process, which is concerning. The misunderstandings could be consequences of reforms of Act 138. The Commission's 2015 report, *Truancy and School Dropout Prevention: Report of the Truancy Advisory Committee*, recommended that schools be required to offer school attendance improvement conferences as described in the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Pennsylvania School Attendance Improvement and Truancy Reduction Toolkit. After implementation of Act 138, it could be the case that schools are now carrying out a task that they are not fully resourced to handle.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** *MDJ Ongoing Training on the Act 138 Truancy Process*

Improved ongoing education for MDJs on an annual basis could be beneficial. Eighty-four percent of MDJs surveyed by Joint State received training specific to truancy: however, 53 percent received this training before the implementation of Act 138 changes. Fourteen percent did not receive any truancy training, and 47 percent of those who were trained had not received training since Act 138 was implemented. The uneven background of training could account for some misinterpretations of Act 138 process.

**RECOMMENDATION #6:** *Improved Communication*

The Advisory Committee recommends that stakeholders recognize the significant value of communication with parents and between schools, MDJs, and CYS in reducing truancy and chronic absenteeism. Although it can sound cliché, communication amongst the systems is crucial. People involved with the three branches of the truancy system, i.e. schools, children and youth services, and the judicial system, commonly highlight communication as being one of the necessary means of getting truant children back to school and in reducing the overall rate of truancy. Communications exist in at least two domains. One domain includes the communications that occur between the individual student and family and the education system, the social services system, and the judicial system. The other domain includes the communications that occur between the systems.

Communications with Students and Parents: The Advisory Committee recommends that stakeholders in the truancy system continue to improve their methods of communication with parents and students. Schools are required to notify parents within 10 days of when their children accumulate three unexcused absences and are therefore considered truant. Based on the results of this report's schools survey, however, nearly one in five schools is not communicating with parents "in the mode and language preferred by the person in parental relation." It could help reduce truancy if schools were able to comply with Act 138 in this manner. Engagement of extended family supports can also be utilized to improve communication.

MDJs noted that their communication with students and families is among the most effective pathways to resolving truancy cases, particularly when it comes to identifying barriers to attendance.

Communication between Schools, CYS, and MDJs: Respondents to both the school and MDJ surveys stated that they convened meetings with other stakeholders to address truancy from a systemic standpoint. They meet regularly to identify attendance trends, barriers to attendance, and discuss how to remove the barriers. In an effort to improve effective communications between schools and CYS, the Westmoreland County CYS agency partnered with the American Bar Association to publish, "Foster Care & Education Glossary of Terms." This is a further example of how stakeholders can increase their effectiveness through improved methods of communication.

Pennsylvania's judicial districts convene Local Children's Roundtables (LCRs) that are facilitated by each county's dependency judge and CYS agency for the purposes of discussing a range of topics related to dependency and permanency. At the judge's invitation, these roundtables may include decision makers from local school districts. Because regular meetings among participants could lead to effective cooperation to reduce chronic absenteeism and prevent truancy, the Advisory Committee recommends that stakeholders, i.e., judges, CYS, and schools, take advantage of the opportunity presented by the LCRs.

## APPENDICES

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Table 18

Truancy Rate (%)  
by Local Education Agency  
Pennsylvania  
2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
21st Century Cyber CS	CS	29.72%	23.62%	11.63%	27.96%	44.0%
A W Beattie Career Center	CTC	15.79	9.47	45.5	30.79	29.13
Abington Heights SD	SD	5.26	3.71	20.14	22.3	17.36
Abington SD	SD	2.37	1.21	1.96	4.32	6.94
Achievement House CS	CS	21.46	51.02	51.4	73.1	84.66
Ad Prima CS	CS	13.88	36.69	21.04	18.78	15.64
Adams County Technical Institute	CTC	--	--	39.84	12.74	9.84
Admiral Peary AVTS	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Agora Cyber CS	CS	39.69	38.13	42.03	56.98	55.26
Albert Gallatin Area SD	SD	28.95	34.34	52.49	41.01	36.18
Aliquippa SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0
Allegheny IU 3	IU	0	NA	0.58	NA	34.36
Allegheny Valley SD	SD	12.88	12.66	24.24	29.7	26.88
Allegheny-Clarion Valley SD	SD	0.58	0.46	1.3	0.68	0.34
Allentown City SD	SD	47.27	26.04	2.45	NA	62.29
Alliance for Progress CS	CS	40.26	20.12	93.15	96.28	15.36
Altoona Area SD	SD	14.62	9.95	NA	16.82	26.32
Ambridge Area SD	SD	NA	17.07	27.56	30.5	36.96
Annville-Cleona SD	SD	2.21	0.76	5.92	8.14	0
Antietam SD	SD	14.4	24.93	48.35	43.17	21.17
Antonia Pantoja Community CS	CS	10.21	12.38	43.12	1.03	2.29
Apollo-Ridge SD	SD	16.32	7.92	45.08	25.2	21.89
Appalachia IU 8	IU	0	NA	NA	NA	0
ARIN IU 28	IU	0	0	0	NA	0
Armstrong SD	SD	9.66	5.8	17.55	16.89	17.4
Arts Academy CS	CS	21.23	15.51	1.2	NA	51.6
Arts Academy Elementary CS	CS	97.4	3.76	24.77	37.8	23.67
ASPIRA Bilingual Cyber CS	CS	40.55	28.7	41.33	49.15	ERROR <sup>a</sup>
Athens Area SD	SD	6.18	5.37	16.22	23.72	22.96
Austin Area SD	SD	0.52	0	0	0	1.17
Avella Area SD	SD	10.96	NA	NA	NA	NA
Avon Grove CS	CS	4.32	1.84	9.97	10.82	13.41
Avon Grove SD	SD	0	2.24	26.77	11.66	0
Avonworth SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Baden Academy CS	CS	10.45	2.85	NA	2.13	20.48
Bald Eagle Area SD	SD	4.05	2.29	11.71	9.12	9.49

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Baldwin-Whitehall SD	SD	7.29%	27.3%	37.75%	46.97%	NA
Bangor Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bear Creek Community CS	CS	7.73	3.01	21.46	14.98	11.94%
Beaver Area SD	SD	0.45	0.54	0.61	0.55	0.51
Beaver County CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Beaver Valley IU 27	IU	0	0	0	0	0
Bedford Area SD	SD	14.78	8.72	10.56	23.5	0
Bedford County Technical Center	CTC	NA	0	1.67	3.09	0
Belle Vernon Area SD	SD	14.56	9.02	25.15	27.65	27.23
Bellefonte Area SD	SD	1.63	0.52	3.45	1.63	2.65
Bellwood-Antis SD	SD	3.69	1.68	12.54	14.74	9.78
Belmont CS	CS	69.55	NA	NA	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	64.04
Bensalem Township SD	SD	41.35	20.71	56.21	82.16	33.48
Benton Area SD	SD	4.04	60.03	0	94.65	93.24
Bentworth SD	SD	6.41	3.85	14.13	8.61	38.73
Berks County IU 14	IU	78.21	41.22	16.2	47.06	68.28
Berks CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Berlin Brothersvalley SD	SD	4.17	1.41	6.07	7.76	9.41
Bermudian Springs SD	SD	3.7	2.61	26.88	11.29	4.15
Berwick Area SD	SD	52.71	41.24	NA	NA	NA
Bethel Park SD	SD	1.28	0.42	18.09	12.57	7.69
Bethlehem Area SD	SD	14.11	9.62	42.07	26.85	26.9
Bethlehem AVTS	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Bethlehem-Center SD	SD	18.61	NA	NA	25.35	29.08
Big Beaver Falls Area SD	SD	34.39	15.99	33.93	37.2	32.65
Big Spring SD	SD	5.22	2.62	11.21	7.76	7.4
Blackhawk SD	SD	15.93	20.81	19.81	27.36	21.79
Blacklick Valley SD	SD	23.24	14.67	37.44	33.39	28.95
BLaST IU 17	IU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bloomsburg Area SD	SD	9	6.68	34.5	25.03	24.05
Blue Mountain SD	SD	2.32	1.29	15.17	1.18	4.2
Blue Ridge SD	SD	6.26	3.9	46.71	14.24	5.36
Bluford CS	CS	31.58	32.3	4.76	36.68	45.39
Boyertown Area SD	SD	2.9	1.52	3.78	5.1	4.49
Boys Latin of Philadelphia CS	CS	1.36	0.36	0.47	12.53	63.92
Bradford Area SD	SD	8.14	2.09	5.54	6.79	7.16

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brandywine Heights Area SD	SD	2%	1.89%	7.55%	8.13%	4.13%
Brentwood Borough SD	SD	24.23	32.18	53.02	52.44	48.62
Bristol Borough SD	SD	36.65	20.57	32.94	49.96	40.51
Bristol Township SD	SD	5.49	2.48	23.69	14.74	13.37
Brockway Area SD	SD	3.35	2.48	20.92	18.38	15.17
Brookville Area SD	SD	1.07	0.34	0.36	1.3	8.94
Brownsville Area SD	SD	46.87	28.72	58.19	61.61	47.98
Bucks County IU 22	IU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bucks County Montessori CS	CS	0	NA	0	NA	0
Bucks County Technical High School	CTC	NA	23.3	NA	12.53	12.44
Burgettstown Area SD	SD	14.26	6.17	19.78	17.34	17.78
Burrell SD	SD	8.21	NA	1.9	18.36	9.37
Butler Area SD	SD	14.93	5.44	22.59	24.65	23.01
Butler County AVTS	CTC	19.53	NA	NA	NA	NA
California Academy of Learning CS	CS	--	--	--	--	NA
California Area SD	SD	20.42	0	0	0	NA
Cambria Heights SD	SD	11.35	6.16	8.72	1.94	1.87
Cameron County SD	SD	12.55	3.43	16.96	17.33	9.6
Camp Hill SD	SD	3.67	1.15	5.52	3.92	7.98
Canon-McMillan SD	SD	1.83	1.84	1.4	4.2	4.13
Canton Area SD	SD	2.6	0.55	2.69	2.1	2.82
Capital Area IU 15	IU	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Area School for the Arts CS	CS	10.22	0	5.67	28.13	3.76
Carbon Career & Technical Institute	CTC	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Carbondale Area SD	SD	2.79	1.15	5.88	1.51	1.61
Carbon-Lehigh IU 21	IU	NA	9.49	28.66	27.41	19.4
Career Institute of Technology	CTC	0	0	NA	0	0
Carlisle Area SD	SD	5.44	3.57	0	6.57	7.33
Carlynton SD	SD	31.34	16.61	4.03	8.39	3.84
Carmichaels Area SD	SD	7.29	1.79	0	14.66	43.39
Catalyst Academy CS	CS	--	--	NA	NA	87.1
Catasauqua Area SD	SD	4.52	4.17	10.54	16.71	15.26
Centennial SD	SD	16.89	7.88	41.72	26.41	26.72
Center for Student Learning CS at Pennsb	CS	33.79	51.85	44.16	46.63	32.52
Central Bucks SD	SD	1.57	0.92	2.27	2.26	2.16
Central Cambria SD	SD	5.21	2.35	10.8	10.64	8.43

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

<b>LEA Name</b>	<b>LEA Type</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Central Columbia SD	SD	69.27%	1.15%	2.91%	3.46%	4.08%
Central Dauphin SD	SD	9.4	4.54	20.75	21.2	21.03
Central Fulton SD	SD	5.65	5.25	46.02	15.9	14.58
Central Greene SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	27.22
Central IU 10	IU	0	NA	NA	0	0
Central Montco Technical High School	CTC	0	0	NA	NA	0
Central PA Digital Learning Foundation C	CS	27.34	64.79	56.59	0	86.49
Central PA Institute of Science & Techno	CTC	0	0	0	0	NA
Central Susquehanna IU 16	IU	0	0	0	0	NA
Central Valley SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Central Westmoreland CTC	CTC	19.17	13.03	NA	0	0
Central York SD	SD	4.79	5.4	30.7	15.74	13.05
Centre Learning Community CS	CS	NA	NA	0	1.59	1.33
Chambersburg Area SD	SD	11.53	6.88	42.23	67.56	16.84
Charleroi SD	SD	21.78	11.73	47.63	NA	NA
Chartiers Valley SD	SD	5.88	2.8	34.83	12.06	7.27
Chartiers-Houston SD	SD	13.74	17.54	26.4	13.37	17.7
Cheltenham SD	SD	23.17	9.69	25.72	0	NA
Chester Charter Scholars Academy CS	CS	41.54	25.85	62.48	NA	62
Chester Co Family Academy CS	CS	5.38	15.19	8.33	9.68	10
Chester Community CS	CS	68.53	22.11	32.3	34.42	57.03
Chester County IU 24	IU	44.46	31.94	44.35	27.22	53.65
Chester County Technical College HS	CTC	36.83	24.2	42.03	17.94	30.08
Chester-Upland SD	SD	0	67.55	0	NA	NA
Chestnut Ridge SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0
Chichester SD	SD	0	0	NA	NA	45.65
Christopher Columbus CS	CS	NA	NA	16.33	63.07	56.61
Circle of Seasons CS	CS	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
City CHS	CS	26.26	46.38	30.57	25.82	NA
Clairton City SD	SD	NA	27.52	62.69	74.05	75.7
Clarion Area SD	SD	0.64	0.14	1.87	1.98	1.15
Clarion County Career Center	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Clarion-Limestone Area SD	SD	5.85	1.68	0	1.88	2.43
Claysburg-Kimmel SD	SD	3.7	3.3	37.05	10.01	7.35
Clearfield Area SD	SD	4.08	1.63	8.94	6.94	6.84
Clearfield County CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

<b>LEA Name</b>	<b>LEA Type</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Coatesville Area SD	SD	16.4%	25.37%	56.63%	18.38%	15.29%
Cocalico SD	SD	1.69	0.91	7.37	7.03	5.52
Collegium CS	CS	6.26	3.64	37.52	25.69	34.04
Colonial IU 20	IU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Colonial SD	SD	0.14	0.04	NA	NA	0.15
Columbia Borough SD	SD	27.34	17.13	54.52	NA	NA
Columbia-Montour AVTS	CTC	16.17	5.43	34.53	22.9	14.61
Commodore Perry SD	SD	1.11	0	2.41	1.18	3.26
Commonwealth Charter Academy CS	CS	20.19	NA	3.97	4.09	12.43
Community Academy of Philadelphia CS	CS	8.7	8.52	11.65	24.24	19.42
Conemaugh Township Area SD	SD	1.75	0.89	3.21	0	4.3
Conemaugh Valley SD	SD	2.69	3.78	6.4	4.89	13.78
Conestoga Valley SD	SD	NA	51.78	15.8	12.71	16.31
Conewago Valley SD	SD	11.52	8.95	NA	22.05	21.87
Conneaut SD	SD	38.04	14.62	17.17	26.14	31.41
Connellsville Area Career & Technical Ce	CTC	17.27	15.87	14.37	15.04	NA
Connellsville Area SD	SD	22.56	31.18	32.66	52.45	NA
Conrad Weiser Area SD	SD	7.15	6.26	31.69	14.58	11.31
Cornell SD	SD	38.27	29.67	35.77	37.62	42.21
Cornwall-Lebanon SD	SD	9.82	6.3	46.21	23.67	25.09
Corry Area SD	SD	13.46	4.38	13.44	14.19	12.2
Coudersport Area SD	SD	5.98	6.67	17.72	20.28	17.95
Council Rock SD	SD	1.3	0.64	2.4	3.37	2.39
Cranberry Area SD	SD	0.53	0.35	7.47	1.12	3.43
Crawford Central SD	SD	10.72	5.62	77.34	91.73	21.3
Crawford County CTC	CTC	NA	NA	0	0	0
Crestwood SD	SD	0	1.16	0.04	11.6	13.99
Crispus Attucks CS	CS	0	0	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	ERROR <sup>a</sup>
CTC of Lackawanna County	CTC	46.43	17.91	97.71	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	99.08
Cumberland Perry Area Career & Tech	CTC	18.25	0	30.84	17.33	7.59
Cumberland Valley SD	SD	2.98	4.22	21.57	15.36	6.13
Curwensville Area SD	SD	72.44	1.93	10.58	11.86	7.48
Dallas SD	SD	0.04	7.77	19.55	30.24	28.42
Dallastown Area SD	SD	2.34	1.64	7.83	6.97	7.9
Daniel Boone Area SD	SD	0	0	15.75	16.4	15.5
Danville Area SD	SD	10.77	6.65	17.06	10	14.42

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Dauphin County Technical School	CTC	18.8%	7.71%	49.65%	26.78%	28.89%
Deep Roots CS	CS	0	NA	0	0	NA
Deer Lakes SD	SD	11.69	7.27	20.53	25.75	26.85
Delaware County IU 25	IU	26.68	21.26	40.51	38.11	82.29
Delaware County Technical High School	CTC	23.4	16.87	20.88	19.23	12.78
Delaware Valley SD	SD	13.37	6.88	19.9	33.67	23.12
Derry Area SD	SD	8.56	5.3	23.3	16.52	NA
Derry Township SD	SD	3.01	2.72	7.94	3.33	8.56
Discovery CS	CS	NA	0	0	NA	27.81
Donegal SD	SD	8.2	6.21	22.18	NA	16.28
Dover Area SD	SD	4.72	2.58	NA	7.28	NA
Downingtown Area SD	SD	3.62	2.56	15.74	4.38	6.18
Dr Robert Ketterer CS Inc	CS	21	16.95	20.35	50	48.63
DuBois Area SD	SD	10	11.11	11.31	18.16	15.13
Dunmore SD	SD	39.93	NA	NA	NA	NA
Duquesne City SD	SD	40.95	30.98	77.03	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	84.74
East Allegheny SD	SD	30.85	16.01	27.3	53.89	53.35
East Lycoming SD	SD	8.75	5.95	30.18	22.85	18.14
East Penn SD	SD	0.76	0.26	12.09	12.5	15.6
East Pennsboro Area SD	SD	7.26	4.19	28.21	16	14.1
East Stroudsburg Area SD	SD	17.21	9.87	39.16	33.01	31.43
Eastern Center for Arts & Technology	CTC	0	NA	0	0	0
Eastern Lancaster County SD	SD	6.03	14.88	NA	10.22	24
Eastern Lebanon County SD	SD	6.29	3.93	16.18	16.77	14.59
Eastern Westmoreland CTC	CTC	NA	0.81	5.91	11.67	11.75
Eastern York SD	SD	4.73	4.75	26.03	12.21	12.67
Easton Area SD	SD	1.33	7.09	24.16	16.6	25.77
Easton Arts Academy Elementary CS	CS	4.52	6.5	15.56	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	10.21
Elizabeth Forward SD	SD	3.95	2.05	7.59	3.57	6.52
Elizabethtown Area SD	SD	1.72	1.21	6.85	4.26	6.92
Elk Lake SD	SD	8.78	5.29	8.01	4.77	12.96
Ellwood City Area SD	SD	NA	NA	40.54	35.93	28.41
Environmental CS at Frick Park	CS	2.97	NA	0.1	19.88	18.77
Ephrata Area SD	SD	5.2	4.7	14.41	11.98	10.47
Erie City SD	SD	29.57	18.81	45.66	47.07	42.19
Erie County Technical School	CTC	NA	3.9	39.51	27.26	21.69

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Erie Rise Leadership Academy CS	CS	5.3%	4.22%	0%	0%	NA
Esperanza Academy CS	CS	37.18	21.88	38.21	27.73	11.47%
Esperanza Cyber CS	CS	98.19	38.2	73.28	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	78.89
Eugenio Maria De Hostos CS	CS	8.13	9.21	27.38	3.25	0.79
Everett Area SD	SD	6.68	3.64	11.97	12.34	6.87
Evergreen Community CS	CS	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Executive Education Academy CS	CS	16.83	8.38	23.09	13.6	30.85
Exeter Township SD	SD	5.54	3.04	10.64	9.34	9.38
Fairfield Area SD	SD	2.85	0.32	10.43	6.35	14.26
Fairview SD	SD	0.51	0.39	3.11	2.17	3.2
Fannett-Metal SD	SD	2.86	2.55	3.42	2.46	1.56
Farrell Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fayette County Career & Technical Inst.	CTC	0	0	NA	0	0
Fell CS	CS	43.83	39.73	47.15	33.33	32.67
Ferndale Area SD	SD	12.86	0.99	NA	NA	NA
First Philadelphia Preparatory CS	CS	34.8	24.48	37.47	66.02	48.37
Fleetwood Area SD	SD	6.2	4.41	11.33	12.78	13.55
Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures CS	CS	9.2	1.2	12.65	5.18	14.99
Forbes Road CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	NA
Forbes Road SD	SD	NA	0	NA	0	0
Forest Area SD	SD	0.48	0	0	0	0
Forest City Regional SD	SD	8.1	7.82	NA	15.1	10.64
Forest Hills SD	SD	3.15	1.99	1.23	3.06	2.98
Fort Cherry SD	SD	14.56	16.89	55.27	52.6	73.83
Fort LeBoeuf SD	SD	2.8	2.32	10.9	NA	4.98
Fox Chapel Area SD	SD	5.95	1	2.42	14.33	13.46
Franklin Area SD	SD	2.45	1.15	0	NA	8.64
Franklin County CTC	CTC	0	NA	0	NA	NA
Franklin Regional SD	SD	0.14	0.18	0.12	0.42	10.71
Franklin Towne Charter Elementary School	CS	10.65	5.45	0.53	16.36	22.44
Franklin Towne CHS	CS	22.59	14.85	14	39.49	36.51
Frazier SD	SD	2.84	0.54	7.67	1.42	1.89
Frederick Douglass Mastery CS	CS	29.63	52.29	15.18	0	79.79
Freedom Area SD	SD	13.77	7.67	18.49	7.87	0
Freeport Area SD	SD	1.34	0.79	13.93	4.2	4.09
Freire CS	CS	36.85	21.95	29.7	59.56	ERROR <sup>a</sup>



**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Fulton County Center for Career and Tech	CTC	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA
Galeton Area SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0%
Garnet Valley SD	SD	2.67	1.52	3.19	3.51	2.68
Gateway SD	SD	12.6	10.44	19.08	25.72	23.83
General McLane SD	SD	1.04	0.19	0.92	0.66	8.4
Gettysburg Area SD	SD	11.44	7.99	42.15	1.16	30.31
Gettysburg Montessori CS	CS	5.38	3.4	3.35	NA	13.92
Gillingham Charter School	CS	7.79	2.81	37.45	13.85	5.67
Girard SD	SD	3.92	3.24	8.31	11.21	10.94
Glendale SD	SD	9.67	6.93	26.56	36.02	22.79
Global Leadership Academy CS	CS	31.88	7.28	NA	80.38	71.54
Global Leadership Acad CS Southwest a	CS	49.21	5.37	NA	95.83	78.84
Governor Mifflin SD	SD	0	17.08	41.31	37.16	32.86
Great Valley SD	SD	0.54	0.2	2.88	0.59	3.68
Greater Altoona CTC	CTC	0	0.19	0	0	0
Greater Johnstown CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	NA
Greater Johnstown SD	SD	35.19	33.61	37.42	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	45.29
Greater Latrobe SD	SD	0.81	0	0	0	0.81
Greater Nanticoke Area SD	SD	29.72	25.08	45.22	51.28	45.2
Green Woods CS	CS	0	0	0	0	NA
Greencastle-Antrim SD	SD	4.17	2.58	13.6	6.24	6.17
Greene County CTC	CTC	34.56	23.86	48.28	38.93	81.36
Greensburg Salem SD	SD	16.34	7.05	36.49	20.98	21.71
Greenville Area SD	SD	0.87	4.17	13.52	22.2	13.07
Greenwood SD	SD	0.93	0	0	0	4.51
Grove City Area SD	SD	9.03	5.82	23.49	26.26	16.2
Halifax Area SD	SD	5.96	4.18	7.81	12.01	8.13
Hamburg Area SD	SD	1.17	0.33	14.91	14.48	4.67
Hampton Township SD	SD	3.36	1.65	5.64	5.4	5.33
Hanover Area SD	SD	24.13	18.58	51.66	0.83	39.4
Hanover Public SD	SD	NA	1.71	1.39	NA	NA
Harambee Institute of Science and Tech	CS	0.19	38.65	0	0.17	7.93
Harbor Creek SD	SD	NA	0.28	0	0	2.75
Harmony Area SD	SD	2.37	1.98	2.42	3.94	0
Harrisburg City SD	SD	59.01	36.08	75.03	78.34	71.07
Hatboro-Horsham SD	SD	4.7	0	0	0	0

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

<b>LEA Name</b>	<b>LEA Type</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Haverford Township SD	SD	4.2%	0.38%	0.44%	0.85%	0%
Hazleton Area Career Center	CTC	42.28	38.37	86.17	76.26	72.85
Hazleton Area SD	SD	41.72	28.44	72.5	68.88	61.99
Hempfield Area SD	SD	6.05	3.15	11.68	10.95	12.51
Hempfield SD	SD	4.05	0	0	NA	0
Hermitage SD	SD	1.53	7.56	16.97	20.48	NA
Highlands SD	SD	23.29	41.66	44.3	36.45	31.74
Hollidaysburg Area SD	SD	7.96	4.74	14.33	12.89	9.9
Homer-Center SD	SD	6.02	2.03	13.36	9.54	9.54
HOPE for Hyndman CS	CS	36.53	5.95	19.54	NA	31.21
Hopewell Area SD	SD	0.09	0	0	0	0
Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence CS	CS	19.27	NA	9.09	29.93	33.33
Huntingdon Area SD	SD	13.48	7.18	23.56	26.91	23.1
Huntingdon County CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Imhotep Institute CHS	CS	NA	NA	0	46.35	67
Independence CS	CS	12.47	NA	18.82	23.53	21.1
Independence CS West	CS	NA	NA	64.81	NA	65.6
Indiana Area SD	SD	3.09	2.1	6.65	6.95	5.95
Indiana County Technology Center	CTC	0	0	0	0	NA
Infinity CS	CS	1.29	0	0	0	NA
Innovative Arts Academy CS	CS	0	0	52.53	65.52	NA
Inquiry CS	CS	55.51	NA	NA	31.82	32.09
Insight PA Cyber CS	CS	53.87	47.03	27.46	40.57	94.45
Interboro SD	SD	21.33	15.3	2.92	1.85	1.97
Intermediate Unit 1	IU	0	0	0	0	46.92
Iroquois SD	SD	5.55	2.86	12.29	8.4	9.47
Jamestown Area SD	SD	1.13	0.24	1.2	0	0
Jeannette City SD	SD	0	0	0	0	26.94
Jefferson County-DuBois AVTS	CTC	4.68	NA	0	2.56	NA
Jefferson-Morgan SD	SD	26.47	9.42	28.2	46.39	34.34
Jenkintown SD	SD	1.11	0	0	0	0
Jersey Shore Area SD	SD	1.25	0.43	NA	14.94	12.05
Jim Thorpe Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	7.77
Johnsonburg Area SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0
Juniata County SD	SD	4.41	2.99	18.25	16.82	9.19
Juniata Valley SD	SD	8.07	3.45	12.12	5.76	4.1

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Kane Area SD	SD	1.37%	1.13%	5.71%	4.08%	4.78%
Karns City Area SD	SD	2.27	2.23	NA	NA	2.67
Kennett Consolidated SD	SD	2.92	2.91	2.02	22.15	7.65
Keystone Academy CS	CS	25.15	13.48	36	37.32	39.94
Keystone Central CTC	CTC	65.22	NA	NA	NA	NA
Keystone Central SD	SD	19.16	NA	NA	0	0
Keystone Education Center CS	CS	NA	0	0	0	84.92
Keystone Oaks SD	SD	8.86	23.46	0	13.79	10.99
Keystone SD	SD	5.25	1.96	0.45	0.68	1.41
KIPP DuBois CS	CS	66.09	41.68	66.42	97.31	86.6
KIPP North Philadelphia CS	CS	83.5	49.16	81.06	96.65	92.69
KIPP Philadelphia CS	CS	44.59	39.81	76.16	88.59	80.95
KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto CS	CS	--	--	--	--	82.41
KIPP West Philadelphia CS	CS	69	39.39	69.68	86.06	89.63
Kiski Area SD	SD	11.28	8.32	7.08	16.59	16.99
Knoch SD	SD	NA	4.84	15.85	14.74	11.59
Kutztown Area SD	SD	2.61	2.77	10.93	5.02	6.79
La Academia Partnership CS	CS	38.91	34.21	0	89.8	81
Laboratory CS	CS	NA	NA	46.36	NA	76.67
Lackawanna Trail SD	SD	22.37	13.92	23.91	24.35	31.66
Lakeland SD	SD	8.63	3.68	1.98	10.62	NA
Lake-Lehman SD	SD	6.91	5.99	0.9	1.54	0.32
Lakeview SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0
Lampeter-Strasburg SD	SD	3.74	3.12	8.59	8.87	7.97
Lancaster County CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Lancaster SD	SD	19.28	1.87	62.87	51.09	43.03
Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13	IU	16.3	13.3	31.13	29.81	22.65
Laurel Highlands SD	SD	1.13	0.07	1.9	0.11	19.47
Laurel SD	SD	4.51	2.19	14.99	15.39	18.48
Lawrence County CTC	CTC	0	0	12.86	9.82	0
Lebanon County CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Lebanon SD	SD	14.81	8.15	48.4	31.78	0
Leechburg Area SD	SD	0	NA	NA	0	13.22
Lehigh Career & Technical Institute	CTC	25.58	19.18	73.08	42.11	36.92
Lehigh Valley Academy Regional CS	CS	1.89	4.97	21.44	27.08	NA
Lehigh Valley Charter High School	CS	1.11	NA	NA	NA	NA

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Lehigh Valley Dual Language CS	CS	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lehigh Area SD	SD	8.27%	4.18%	23.5%	9.25%	15.5%
Lenape Tech	CTC	0.61	0.75	0.38	0.56	0.52
Lewisburg Area SD	SD	1.26	0.56	1.33	1.9	5.43
Life Male STEAM Academy CS	CS	--	--	--	84.78	51.61
Ligonier Valley SD	SD	2.39	0.66	2.52	1.85	1.23
Lincoln CS	CS	13.7	34.93	49.84	NA	54.43
Lincoln IU 12	IU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lincoln Leadership Academy CS	CS	0	0	NA	NA	0
Lincoln Park Performing Arts CS	CS	5.99	4.3	3.99	7.93	5.44
Lindley Academy CS at Birney	CS	62.97	30.94	82.6	78.89	50.14
Line Mountain SD	SD	1.18	0.45	5.37	6.32	6.65
Littlestown Area SD	SD	71.53	58.97	77.1	87.98	84.36
Lower Dauphin SD	SD	2.97	2.55	8.03	7.2	7.05
Lower Merion SD	SD	2.56	1.28	11.21	8.29	8.4
Lower Moreland Township SD	SD	0.04	0.04	0.62	0.32	0.65
Loyalsock Township SD	SD	7.77	3.55	11.53	6.15	7.2
Luzerne IU 18	IU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lycoming CTC	CTC	0	NA	NA	0	0
Mahanoy Area SD	SD	11.73	22.76	64.76	49.66	13.26
Manchester Academic CS	CS	NA	NA	0	NA	0
Manheim Central SD	SD	6.28	3.81	13.02	10	11.15
Manheim Township SD	SD	3.87	2.61	3.07	9.54	6.35
Mariana Bracetti Academy CS	CS	0.42	0.6	0.74	1.65	72.06
Marion Center Area SD	SD	0.53	0.93	0.24	6.82	6.18
Maritime Academy CS	CS	NA	NA	0	NA	NA
Marple Newtown SD	SD	NA	NA	3.83	5.56	NA
Mars Area SD	SD	2	0.91	3.54	3.32	NA
MAST Community CS	CS	3.18	0.55	5.4	8.74	11.85
MaST Community CS II	CS	5.48	4.38	5.8	19.63	23.48
MaST Community CS III	CS	--	7.42	18.68	37.7	31.42
Mastery CHS-Lenfest Campus	CS	56.85	51.37	0.65	1.91	72.13
Mastery CS John Wister Elementary	CS	56.48	42.64	17.62	0	79.18
Mastery CS-Cleveland Elementary	CS	52.03	24.97	10.17	0.29	66.86
Mastery CS-Clymer Elementary	CS	67.35	40.15	13.03	74.27	72.83
Mastery CS-Francis D. Pastorius Elementa	CS	5.33	44.25	7.03	4.66	70.3

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Mastery CS-Gratz Campus	CS	54.17%	60.42%	5.33%	5.11%	62.27%
Mastery CS-Hardy Williams	CS	45.6	31.81	2.11	7.55	63.87
Mastery CS-Harrity Campus	CS	53.1	31.51	4.12	5.35	66.17
Mastery CS-Mann Campus	CS	47.4	23.27	3.48	0.56	54.89
Mastery CS-Pickett Campus	CS	63.36	43.4	2.36	0	69.79
Mastery CS-Shoemaker Campus	CS	48.39	32.19	0.13	0	74.46
Mastery CS-Smedley Campus	CS	38.31	20.68	17.6	0	64.28
Mastery CS-Thomas Campus	CS	47.19	35.89	5.09	0	47.38
Mastery Prep Elementary CS	CS	48.18	35.33	14.78	9.41	66.3
Math Civics and Sciences CS	CS	NA	3.4	16.58	3.76	11.17
McGuffey SD	SD	19.19	11.54	3.11	23.38	2.01
McKeesport Area SD	SD	34.42	39.7	73.67	72.7	54.09
McKeesport Area Tech Ctr	CTC	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mechanicsburg Area SD	SD	0	1.23	8.57	9.86	6.96
Memphis Street Academy CS @ JP Jones	CS	77.33	45.42	82.24	NA	83.27
Mercer Area SD	SD	6.47	1.63	4.38	19.61	15.99
Mercer County Career Center	CTC	0	0	0	0	NA
Methacton SD	SD	NA	NA	0	3.51	4.04
Meyersdale Area SD	SD	2.81	2.13	6	6.26	6.27
Mid Valley SD	SD	2.61	1.03	16.23	8.72	5.86
Middle Bucks Institute of Technology	CTC	0	0	0	NA	NA
Middletown Area SD	SD	10.23	7.27	0	0	NA
Midd-West SD	SD	3.15	2.32	8.79	7.54	5.54
Midland Borough SD	SD	2.57	2.27	5.86	2.93	14.69
Midland Innovation & Technology CS	CS	--	--	--	--	NA
Midwestern IU 4	IU	2.56	4.55	13.33	6.45	10.53
Mifflin County Academy of Science and Te	CTC	NA	34.4	NA	NA	63.66
Mifflin County SD	SD	9.47	5.96	21.53	21.6	18.98
Mifflinburg Area SD	SD	0.63	0.51	2.85	1.54	NA
Millcreek Township SD	SD	2.05	1.47	6.67	9.14	7.83
Millersburg Area SD	SD	0.76	2.2	10.93	37.19	8.37
Millville Area SD	SD	0.47	24.72	3.66	5.79	6.83
Milton Area SD	SD	6.52	4.15	23.05	17.41	13.7
Minersville Area SD	SD	11.26	5.67	18.58	26.71	27.4
Mohawk Area SD	SD	12.39	6.42	17.85	24.15	26.74

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Mon Valley CTC	CTC	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Monessen City SD	SD	44.47	0	0	0	0
Moniteau SD	SD	3.57	1.55	7.15	7.87	5.93
Monroe Career & Tech Inst	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Montessori Regional CS	CS	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery Area SD	SD	0.44	0	0	0	0
Montgomery County IU 23	IU	33.66	40.13	34.01	17.58	37.62
Montour SD	SD	5.31	4.21	13.71	12.26	10.31
Montoursville Area SD	SD	5.82	3.84	8.82	12.04	7.18
Montrose Area SD	SD	5.92	2.56	26.54	42.74	24.83
Moon Area SD	SD	16.9	18.85	14.33	7.11	18.12
Morrisville Borough SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Moshannon Valley SD	SD	24.01	12.47	NA	3.92	38.54
Mount Carmel Area SD	SD	9.86	9.19	20.67	28.13	12.44
Mount Pleasant Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	0	NA
Mount Union Area SD	SD	0.83	4.64	14.58	9.93	NA
Mountain View SD	SD	4.9	3.14	0	0	0
Mt Lebanon SD	SD	6.45	4.38	5.75	15.98	19.68
Muhlenberg SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	35.16	NA
Multicultural Academy CS	CS	19.41	14.83	26.69	35.25	73.6
Muncy SD	SD	5.33	4.57	11.72	6.88	7.64
Nazareth Area SD	SD	2.82	0.46	2.7	6.87	6.95
Neshaminy SD	SD	1.35	0.92	0.07	1.79	2.85
Neshannock Township SD	SD	NA	NA	8.55	NA	27.45
New Brighton Area SD	SD	8.9	5.51	23.41	15.09	11.43
New Castle Area SD	SD	44.51	30.69	75.61	88.31	77.99
New Day CS	CS	41.4	69.57	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	88.97	69.32
New Foundations CS	CS	0	0	0	0	0
New Hope-Solebury SD	SD	0	0	0	8.16	5.68
New Kensington-Arnold SD	SD	34.86	25.62	58.09	57.53	48.49
Newport SD	SD	3.91	3.14	7.36	8.21	6.48
Nittany Valley CS	CS	0	0	0	0	0
Norristown Area SD	SD	28.81	20.54	35.71	51.55	15.52
North Allegheny SD	SD	4.51	2.18	6.85	6.71	8.36
North Clarion County SD	SD	1.11	NA	NA	0	0
North East SD	SD	1.39	0.37	3.8	2.97	3.3

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
North Hills SD	SD	0.49%	0.73%	1.28%	0.61%	0.5%
North Montco Tech Career Center	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
North Penn SD	SD	0.84	1.18	4.72	3.27	3.25
North Pocono SD	SD	12.16	6.38	13.18	17.83	15.94
North Schuylkill SD	SD	14.15	25.21	0	16.56	0
North Star SD	SD	7.47	NA	13.26	8.39	2.6
Northampton Area SD	SD	6.08	3.55	19.35	17.41	16.01
Northeast Bradford SD	SD	9.17	3.31	NA	23.46	NA
Northeastern Educational IU 19	IU	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Northeastern York SD	SD	15.51	9.12	37.15	11.09	8.75
Northern Bedford County SD	SD	1.35	0.45	5.4	4.92	4.62
Northern Cambria SD	SD	9	6.04	7.58	15.28	11.21
Northern Lebanon SD	SD	7.99	2.22	0	0.91	1.03
Northern Lehigh SD	SD	2.9	0	0	0	0.19
Northern Potter SD	SD	0	0	0.83	0.4	3.11
Northern Tier Career Center	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Tioga SD	SD	8.99	1.33	15.43	8.05	4.71
Northern Westmoreland CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Northern York County SD	SD	1.77	1.26	12.76	5.51	4.77
Northgate SD	SD	2.61	0	52.48	37.51	25.98
Northumberland County CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Area SD	SD	14.06	9.46	23.68	8.34	21.04
Northwest Tri-County IU 5	IU	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Northwestern Lehigh SD	SD	4.73	2.09	11.21	8.37	6.99
Northwestern SD	SD	7.93	2.97	23.35	16.35	23.3
Northwood Academy CS	CS	NA	0	43.68	49.01	61.18
Norwin SD	SD	3.55	3.53	21.3	7.87	7.08
Octorara Area SD	SD	0	8.22	21.67	19.15	20.57
Oil City Area SD	SD	4.47	5.06	7.63	16.51	17.07
Old Forge SD	SD	17.77	4.18	34.29	NA	49.01
Oley Valley SD	SD	1.89	NA	9.99	6.69	3.81
Oswayo Valley SD	SD	3.11	1.25	10.06	15.15	22.62
Otto-Eldred SD	SD	0	0	0.52	0	1.11
Owen J Roberts SD	SD	1.88	NA	22.33	3.48	3.99
Oxford Area SD	SD	11.17	6.18	30.24	22.64	0
Palisades SD	SD	5.94	NA	13.82	6.88	12.56

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Palmerton Area SD	SD	3.27%	4.38%	7.72%	4.33%	6.34%
Palmyra Area SD	SD	4.45	0	NA	NA	NA
Pan American Academy CS	CS	62.53	22.25	71.5	71.43	70.68
Panther Valley SD	SD	34.41	9	61.61	57.87	50.27
Parkland SD	SD	1.63	0.61	4.91	2.94	2.9
Parkway West CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Passport Academy CS	CS	NA	NA	33.33	NA	NA
Pen Argyl Area SD	SD	2.74	3.49	18.67	NA	15.6
Penn Cambria SD	SD	7.48	5.64	28.54	13.79	11.63
Penn Hills CS of Entrepreneurship	CS	79.3	2.13	36.99	5.71	29.61
Penn Hills SD	SD	28.96	47.6	0.06	NA	26.07
Penn Manor SD	SD	10.62	6.68	21.85	19.25	15.33
Penncrest SD	SD	3.43	NA	NA	NA	NA
Penn-Delco SD	SD	10.89	2.37	15.2	8.43	9.42
Pennridge SD	SD	0.65	0.16	0.04	NA	0
Penns Manor Area SD	SD	3.82	2.1	3.46	5.5	2.56
Penns Valley Area SD	SD	3.97	49.2	27.23	18.38	16.12
Pennsbury SD	SD	0.18	0.14	0.27	0.17	0.23
Pennsylvania Cyber CS	CS	15.86	9.44	16.06	21.61	26.77
Pennsylvania Distance Learning CS	CS	23.37	16.03	27.41	31.45	42.15
Pennsylvania Leadership CS	CS	12.27	6.81	7.49	10.66	14.22
Pennsylvania STEAM Academy CS	CS	--	--	--	50	48.7
Pennsylvania Virtual CS	CS	5.05	2.61	4.61	13.03	19.45
Penn-Trafford SD	SD	0.29	0	NA	0.52	5.67
People for People CS	CS	53.82	47.1	77.74	6.95	NA
Pequea Valley SD	SD	14.64	2.66	18.61	NA	NA
Perkiomen Valley SD	SD	0	0	0	11.81	10.63
Perseus House CS of Excellence	CS	40.59	41.37	70.88	57.61	50.98
Peters Township SD	SD	15.77	6.08	0	NA	8.24
Philadelphia Academy CS	CS	5.24	2.32	4.13	2.39	2.4
Philadelphia City SD	SD	44.29	26.02	44.93	57.36	54.57
Philadelphia Electrical & Tech CHS	CS	1.33	1.85	4.19	6.08	3.43
Philadelphia Hebrew Public CS	CS	--	41.56	70.48	69.25	60.53
Philadelphia Montessori CS	CS	42.46	20.2	10	18.69	90.68
Philadelphia Performing Arts CS	CS	9.53	6.76	16.19	13.02	9.62
Philipsburg-Osceola Area SD	SD	6.57	3.13	53.26	10.42	10.31



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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Phoenixville Area SD	SD	5.07%	2.23%	12.69%	7.96%	19.87%
Pine Grove Area SD	SD	4.02	0.95	1.69	5.79	7.23
Pine-Richland SD	SD	3.77	0.42	3.42	5.03	5.18
Pittsburgh SD	SD	4.51	3.31	4.15	50.13	43.91
Pittston Area SD	SD	5.74	18.09	9.97	55.33	55.42
Pleasant Valley SD	SD	12.76	0.75	NA	NA	NA
Plum Borough SD	SD	5.59	4.02	8.99	10.66	89.89
Pocono Mountain SD	SD	14.34	12.56	33.21	29.76	30.8
Port Allegany SD	SD	1.12	1.22	2.83	NA	0
Portage Area SD	SD	3.98	4.25	13.88	9.07	9.42
Pottsgrove SD	SD	1.58	11.94	5.34	3.06	28.09
Pottstown SD	SD	25.17	23.25	45.47	49.47	32.91
Pottsville Area SD	SD	13.1	7.94	26.32	17.25	16.57
Premier Arts and Science CS	CS	19.2	NA	NA	NA	30.13
Preparatory CS of Mathematics Science Te	CS	NA	NA	43.06	26.84	NA
Propel CS-Braddock Hills	CS	73.56	42.22	65.65	78.96	75.69
Propel CS-East	CS	29.47	17.35	49.08	30.99	33.05
Propel CS-Hazelwood	CS	79.93	61.65	72.46	85.87	74.17
Propel CS-Homestead	CS	61.46	46.13	76.92	76.74	74.61
Propel CS-McKeesport	CS	35.53	17.15	56.41	44.99	44.84
Propel CS-Montour	CS	51.97	33.74	55.1	50.9	51.06
Propel CS-Northside	CS	57.54	30.32	47.51	52.03	50.79
Propel CS-Pitcairn	CS	52.22	35.58	61.66	40.91	67.3
Provident CS	CS	NA	7.53	27.88	31.82	25.46
Punxsutawney Area SD	SD	1.96	0.56	0.27	3.17	4.73
Purchase Line SD	SD	2.46	1.41	24.08	NA	1.27
Quaker Valley SD	SD	0.21	3.12	12.69	8.21	11.38
Quakertown Community SD	SD	14.34	6.06	28.03	19.46	16.77
Radnor Township SD	SD	0	0	0	5.5	5.72
Reach Cyber CS	CS	18.41	11.76	24.83	31.08	NA
Reading Muhlenberg CTC	CTC	24.19	14.04	32.04	62.64	64.01
Reading SD	SD	29.44	20.66	44.27	50.4	45
Red Lion Area SD	SD	4.64	2.73	14.64	11.56	8.29
Redbank Valley SD	SD	3.29	1.47	0.39	4.42	NA
Renaissance Academy CS	CS	11.29	4.16	31.24	26.87	18.26
Reynolds SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

<b>LEA Name</b>	<b>LEA Type</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Richard Allen Preparatory CS	CS	NA	NA	9.58%	40%	43.03%
Richland SD	SD	0.46%	0.46%	0	NA	0
Ridgway Area SD	SD	4.07	6.05	NA	6.14	6.82
Ridley SD	SD	0.99	1.43	0	2.93	3.55
Ringgold SD	SD	17.22	15.38	28.72	49.09	43.67
River Valley SD	SD	NA	NA	23.46	20.27	12.31
Riverside Beaver County SD	SD	33.68	19.38	51.61	47.38	20.77
Riverside SD	SD	19.05	22.32	NA	NA	NA
Riverview IU 6	IU	0	0	0	0	0
Riverview SD	SD	11.74	0	NA	0	NA
Robert Benjamin Wiley Community CS	CS	NA	8.08	6.61	NA	NA
Roberto Clemente CS	CS	29.93	16.99	57.89	44.52	37.58
Rochester Area SD	SD	6.3	3.36	11.19	5.85	9.92
Rockwood Area SD	SD	7.51	NA	NA	NA	0
Rose Tree Media SD	SD	2.58	1.73	6.69	5.75	6.17
Russell Byers CS	CS	9.4	47.7	61.12	64.81	71.33
Saint Clair Area SD	SD	1.97	1.87	27.4	3.39	18.61
Saint Marys Area SD	SD	4.2	3.72	13.1	9.24	7.77
Salisbury Township SD	SD	4.75	NA	11.96	9.76	88.26
Salisbury-Elk Lick SD	SD	4.83	2.59	7.69	15.77	6.97
Sankofa Freedom Academy CS	CS	17.81	12.88	0	21.5	5.42
Saucon Valley SD	SD	6.28	0	0	NA	1.02
Sayre Area SD	SD	24.31	30.7	16.93	NA	40.74
School Lane CS	CS	6.4	2.67	25	4.81	19.11
Schuylkill Haven Area SD	SD	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Schuylkill IU 29	IU	0	0	0	0	0
Schuylkill Technology Centers	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Schuylkill Valley SD	SD	5.13	3.27	11.54	8.8	9.31
Scranton SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Selinsgrove Area SD	SD	1.76	1.11	9.25	6.92	6.17
Seneca Highlands Career and Technical Ce	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Seneca Highlands IU 9	IU	NA	0	0	NA	NA
Seneca Valley SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	0.51	NA
Seven Generations CS	CS	6.31	0	NA	NA	NA
Shade-Central City SD	SD	10.64	4.05	19.27	9.52	17.88
Shaler Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	21.99	NA

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Shamokin Area SD	SD	3.91%	0%	5.25%	4.5%	50.29%
Shanksville-Stonycreek SD	SD	NA	9.32	3.61	19.29	20.36
Sharon City SD	SD	19.34	16.82	36.89	47.13	71.55
Sharpsville Area SD	SD	6.91	4.41	19.13	14.45	15.44
Shenandoah Valley SD	SD	20.42	1.11	52.85	48.62	41.36
Shenango Area SD	SD	0	3.04	6.67	6.17	6.51
Shikellamy SD	SD	0	3.15	32.63	22.79	19
Shippensburg Area SD	SD	7.4	5.18	29.93	17.36	16.38
Slippery Rock Area SD	SD	7.68	5.43	23.06	15.6	14.91
Smethport Area SD	SD	0.38	0.13	0.66	0.92	0.92
Solanco SD	SD	8.38	8.35	18.04	12.22	12.2
Somerset Area SD	SD	9.5	4.86	4.37	11.99	1.91
Somerset County Technology Center	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Souderton Area SD	SD	6.45	1.5	9.85	6.56	9.21
Souderton CS Collaborative	CS	0	NA	NA	0	1.67
South Allegheny SD	SD	60.29	65.01	69.54	81.18	73.22
South Eastern SD	SD	4.29	2.68	14.56	10.78	10.61
South Fayette Township SD	SD	1.45	0.17	1.54	1.42	1.13
South Middleton SD	SD	1.6	NA	20.23	9.16	4.81
South Park SD	SD	2.03	1.07	23.82	18.74	15.29
South Side Area SD	SD	16.65	67.05	35.92	22.86	16.44
South Western SD	SD	9.44	7.53	30.83	11.58	11.48
South Williamsport Area SD	SD	12.18	8.52	14.31	16.64	17.27
Southeast Delco SD	SD	2.12	1.5	0.84	0.69	2.16
Southeastern Greene SD	SD	23.46	1.43	4.19	56.56	46.03
Southern Columbia Area SD	SD	4.88	0.93	6.69	5.56	4.53
Southern Fulton SD	SD	0.42	NA	NA	0	0
Southern Huntingdon County SD	SD	1.76	6.1	24.28	26.66	15.38
Southern Lehigh SD	SD	5.15	3.16	5.07	7.05	10.47
Southern Tioga SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Southern York County SD	SD	3.61	2.97	16.59	9.85	8.22
Southmoreland SD	SD	14.16	5.16	33.48	24.93	4.24
Southwest Leadership Academy CS	CS	NA	NA	13.42	50.47	59.87
Spectrum CS	CS	0	3.13	9.68	10.53	6.67
Spring Cove SD	SD	5.78	3.46	18.64	8.72	8.44
Spring Grove Area SD	SD	9.32	4.77	18.98	17.54	16.4

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Springfield SD	SD	0%	0.02%	0%	0%	0%
Springfield Township SD	SD	2.07	1.12	0.51	1.87	0.08
Spring-Ford Area SD	SD	6.39	NA	19.53	9.27	10.15
State College Area SD	SD	0.3	0.22	1.06	0.53	0.94
Steel Center for Career and Technical Ed	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Steel Valley SD	SD	29.75	17.41	75.79	42.39	38.69
Steeltown-Highspire SD	SD	51.64	20.47	60.96	79.52	66.26
Stone Valley Community CS	CS	NA	NA	0	0	21.95
Sto-Rox SD	SD	14.1	17.71	30.39	25.56	NA
Stroudsburg Area SD	SD	NA	62.2	65.12	91.05	88.61
Sugar Valley Rural CS	CS	1.44	0	0	0	2.96
Sullivan County SD	SD	0	0	0.17	3.59	6.17
SUN Area Technical Institute	CTC	NA	0	NA	37.16	36.24
Susquehanna Community SD	SD	13.57	5.02	33.08	20.57	17.47
Susquehanna County CTC	CTC	14.1	17.75	82.89	82.91	71.7
Susquehanna Township SD	SD	17.37	33.1	43.46	37.23	31.16
Susquenita SD	SD	5.63	2.52	19.68	8.79	0
Sylvan Heights Science CS	CS	NA	NA	NA	0	55.09
Tacony Academy CS	CS	16.65	12.66	NA	28.74	27.03
Tamaqua Area SD	SD	2.03	0.84	11.45	15.87	NA
TECH Freire CS	CS	30	37.04	56.08	57.7	71.8
The New Academy CS	CS	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	NA	65.79	ERROR <sup>a</sup>	ERROR <sup>a</sup>
The Philadelphia CS for Arts and Science	CS	52.98	33.2	49.55	43.37	36.07
Tidioute Community CS	CS	1.36	1.34	19.86	2.07	7.88
Titusville Area SD	SD	11.53	7.72	22.65	27.35	19.63
Towanda Area SD	SD	29.13	16.79	53.59	33.86	33.84
Tredyffrin-Easttown SD	SD	0.17	0.21	2.85	2.14	0.97
Trinity Area SD	SD	20.83	12.92	42.04	29.84	NA
Tri-Valley SD	SD	4.98	3.19	29.58	16.44	NA
Troy Area SD	SD	17.37	NA	27.32	NA	0
Tulpehocken Area SD	SD	6.47	1.82	11.57	7.07	8.51
Tunkhannock Area SD	SD	14.36	3.89	NA	26.93	21.94
Turkeyfoot Valley Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tuscarora IU 11	IU	0	0	0	0	0
Tuscarora SD	SD	5.47	3.44	21.45	0	8.47
Tussey Mountain SD	SD	1.91	1.4	9.68	6.47	8.54

**Table 18  
Truancy Rate (%)  
By Local Education Agency  
Pennsylvania  
2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

<b>LEA Name</b>	<b>LEA Type</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Twin Valley SD	SD	0%	4.82%	3.97%	11.01%	NA
Tyrone Area SD	SD	8.86	5.46	25.53	18.61	15.63%
Union Area SD	SD	17.92	11.37	19.8	24.56	11.36
Union City Area SD	SD	0	0	0	NA	0
Union SD	SD	5.42	2.94	23.32	13.54	15.11
Uniontown Area SD	SD	0.15	0	0	0.04	0
Unionville-Chadds Ford SD	SD	2.63	NA	0	4.51	3.37
United SD	SD	10.7	7.8	23.62	32.26	28.87
Universal Alcorn CS	CS	28.57	60.34	18.34	45.23	67.75
Universal Audenried CS	CS	56.56	53.13	8.41	46.96	70.88
Universal Creighton CS	CS	48.45	53.54	19.97	41.96	58.77
Universal Institute CS	CS	35.54	34.62	10.53	51.39	8.92
Universal Vare CS	CS	47.16	81.95	0	54.59	37.33
Upper Adams SD	SD	1.25	1.45	5.82	6.65	5.8
Upper Bucks County Technical School	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Darby SD	SD	15.77	7.39	6.42	3.32	37.95
Upper Dauphin Area SD	SD	4.19	4.46	17.32	18.35	17.11
Upper Dublin SD	SD	1.63	0.69	3.39	1.8	1.85
Upper Merion Area SD	SD	3.66	2.11	8.5	9.61	10.51
Upper Moreland Township SD	SD	0.16	0.81	1.53	1.51	15.41
Upper Perkiomen SD	SD	12.82	26.77	36.9	22.71	26.99
Upper St. Clair SD	SD	0.54	0.24	20.33	2.8	2.39
Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh CS	CS	64.42	0.94	28.57	54.84	48.33
Urban Pathways 6-12 CS	CS	41.16	33.64	43.77	62.71	37.62
Urban Pathways K-5 College CS	CS	56.36	61.73	72.68	87.25	18.21
Valley Grove SD	SD	4.43	2.26	12.36	6.01	6.1
Valley View SD	SD	0	0	0	0	0
Venango Technology Center	CTC	0	0	0	NA	0
Vida CS	CS	12.2	7.35	7.69	18.5	5.46
Vision Academy CS	CS	7.52	12.57	0	NA	0
Wallenpaupack Area SD	SD	2.8	7.24	9.13	21.12	18.17
Wallingford-Swarthmore SD	SD	3.51	2.35	5.19	6.69	NA
Warren County AVTS	CTC	3.32	0	0.62	8.31	0
Warren County SD	SD	4.1	5.25	10.7	10.29	7.44
Warrior Run SD	SD	6.23	3.91	23.09	13.61	8.97
Warwick SD	SD	3.74	2.06	8.14	8.43	8.52

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Washington SD	SD	64.98%	16.25%	74.36%	NA	0%
Wattsburg Area SD	SD	2.54	2.19	14.97	9.15%	5.7
Wayne Highlands SD	SD	0.52	0.28	1.22	0.73	0.59
Waynesboro Area SD	SD	7	5.06	16.46	17.1	13.87
Weatherly Area SD	SD	4.76	6.79	2.98	17.85	8.83
Wellsboro Area SD	SD	2.41	0.65	7.45	5.84	4.44
West Allegheny SD	SD	18.37	10.81	18.48	22.95	14.57
West Branch Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	0	17.85
West Chester Area SD	SD	2.51	1.04	9.11	6.82	6.45
West Greene SD	SD	17.41	14.75	30.17	NA	33.83
West Jefferson Hills SD	SD	3.05	2.64	8.16	18.67	13.98
West Middlesex Area SD	SD	0.49	0.36	6.12	22.31	10.33
West Mifflin Area SD	SD	28.37	19.01	48.12	38.42	38.53
West Oak Lane CS	CS	12.55	3.18	24.67	48.39	14.64
West Perry SD	SD	2.67	2.27	18.3	NA	0.64
West Phila. Achievement CES	CS	0	0	0	93.9	NA
West Shore SD	SD	1.46	3.35	16.39	13.06	10.83
West Side CTC	CTC	28.16	28.08	67.67	48.51	55.56
West York Area SD	SD	7.61	3.3	20.8	3.31	12.68
Western Area CTC	CTC	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Western Beaver County SD	SD	25.89	28.46	40.08	30.55	39.26
Western Montgomery CTC	CTC	0	0	NA	0	0
Western Wayne SD	SD	16.08	8.32	23.71	16.6	12.54
Westinghouse Arts Academy CS	CS	20.37	NA	0	0	0
Westmont Hilltop SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	1.87	14.5
Westmoreland IU 7	IU	11.88	23.5	0.54	1.14	15.93
Whitehall-Coplay SD	SD	4.64	2.78	26.58	16.67	16.74
Wilkes-Barre Area CTC	CTC	0	0	0	0	0
Wilkes-Barre Area SD	SD	34.09	24.38	30.91	54.46	49.48
Wilkesburg Borough SD	SD	87.6	52.23	78.05	67.19	53.27
William Penn SD	SD	1.78	21.03	18.3	15.69	11.91
Williams Valley SD	SD	6.22	10.19	32.04	36.19	28.11
Williamsburg Community SD	SD	5.96	8.25	19.19	26.68	26.29
Williamsport Area SD	SD	17.95	8.9	24.29	24.58	34.3
Wilmington Area SD	SD	NA	NA	NA	20.08	NA
Wilson Area SD	SD	2.8	2.23	4.68	4.06	5.88

**Table 18**  
**Truancy Rate (%)**  
**By Local Education Agency**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Wilson SD	SD	0.26%	1.19%	4.68%	3.8%	7.39%
Windber Area SD	SD	3.56	1.4	27.21	12.33	10.2
Wissahickon CS	CS	27.34	13.63	21.89	47.17	44.58
Wissahickon SD	SD	3.87	1.09	4.19	8.55	7.01
Woodland Hills SD	SD	43.81	41.73	70.35	76.79	20.09
Wyalusing Area SD	SD	22.52	1.35	9.53	12.51	10.37
Wyoming Area SD	SD	2.43	1.27	4.3	2	2.86
Wyoming Valley West SD	SD	43.97	29.19	64.46	68.42	69.34
Wyomissing Area SD	SD	4.33	NA	NA	20.91	15.36
York Academy Regional CS	CS	86.76	80.35	57.19	97.63	93.04
York City SD	SD	35.98	22.46	57.3	58.57	52.97
York Co School of Technology	CTC	8.3	5.42	18.9	19.93	10.25
York Suburban SD	SD	2.15	1.87	19.85	16.65	9.11
Yough SD	SD	NA	0	0	0	0
Young Scholars CS	CS	49.3	4.56	8.93	7.04	10.86
Young Scholars of Central PA CS	CS	0	0	0	NA	0.54
Young Scholars of Greater Allegheny CS	CS	76.3	63.75	44.52	12.8	12.46
Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania C	CS	13.21	7.01	25.71	0	0
Youth Build Phila CS	CS	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Data Provided by PDE, February 16, 2024.

<sup>a</sup> PDE shows an “ERROR” when a school reports more students truant than are enrolled. Based on the use of October snapshot enrollment in the calculation, this could legitimately occur if there has been a substantial increase in enrollment during the school year. However, it also might reflect a data entry error.





Table 19  
Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)  
Pennsylvania  
2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
21st Century Cyber CS	CS	99.5%	99.5%	100%	89.6%	90.8%
A W Beattie Career Center	CTC	67.7	70.5	70.2	64.3	65.7
Abington Heights SD	SD	93.1	92.3	90.6	85.5	83.9
Abington SD	SD	89.7	91.4	84.2	76.8	80
Achievement House CS	CS	57.2	62.4	71.6	66.3	65.1
ACT Academy Cyber CS	CS	20	--	--	--	--
Ad Prima CS	CS	94.9	87.9	87.5	89.5	80
Adams County Technical Institute	CTC	--	--	66.5	57.1	67.3
Admiral Peary AVTS	CTC	69.3	68	24.6	50.8	66
Agora Cyber CS	CS	60.8	66.6	68.6	66.2	63.4
Albert Gallatin Area SD	SD	75.4	82.6	68.4	68.3	70.1
Aliquippa SD	SD	73.5	76.4	45.6	58.5	59.3
Allegheny IU 3	IU	62.6	51.6	50.4	60.7	47.4
Allegheny Valley SD	SD	77.8	78	87.2	71.1	71.7
Allegheny-Clarion Valley SD	SD	89.4	85.1	81.8	70.4	84.8
Allentown City SD	SD	73.1	72.6	56.4	45.7	55.5
Alliance for Progress CS	CS	88.3	85.9	63.5	33.6	68.8
Altoona Area SD	SD	84.8	86.1	77.1	73.9	75.3
Ambridge Area SD	SD	80.9	80.6	81.3	70.8	71.3
Annville-Cleona SD	SD	90.6	86.4	88.9	77.6	88
Antietam SD	SD	86.7	85.1	80	72.2	79.2
Antonia Pantoja Community CS	CS	84.6	88.7	73	68.2	50.4
Apollo-Ridge SD	SD	78.5	81.1	71.2	58.4	77.2
Appalachia IU 8	IU	56.1	65.1	48.1	40.2	51.3
ARIN IU 28	IU	54.8	66.7	80.8	63	71.8
Armstrong SD	SD	84.5	86.3	84.8	81.9	81.9
Arts Academy CS	CS	84.9	79.1	97.8	73.5	80.8
Arts Academy Elementary CS	CS	79.8	85.4	87.6	71.7	72.9
ASPIRA Bilingual Cyber CS	CS	60	71.3	60.4	51.1	40.5
Athens Area SD	SD	90.2	91.5	87	80	81.9
Austin Area SD	SD	84.7	88.3	86.9	68.9	84.9
Avella Area SD	SD	86.8	88.9	87.1	82.1	77.8
Avon Grove CS	CS	91.7	92.9	89.2	80.8	85
Avon Grove SD	SD	93.6	92.4	91.5	86.4	88.7
Avonworth SD	SD	93.5	93.3	93.8	88.1	89.5
Baden Academy CS	CS	94.4	93.7	88.7	83	81.7
Bald Eagle Area SD	SD	92.4	89.9	87.4	84.2	81.8

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Baldwin-Whitehall SD	SD	92.8%	91%	85.7%	86.3%	85.8%
Bangor Area SD	SD	89.9	82.9	88.7	77.7	80
Bear Creek Community CS	CS	94.8	90	85.4	63.7	77.3
Beaver Area SD	SD	92.3	90.8	93.8	83.8	85.1
Beaver County CTC	CTC	63.6	64.7	47.6	52	50.7
Beaver Valley IU 27	IU	65.6	69.6	60.1	47.3	55.4
Bedford Area SD	SD	85.8	85.5	89.8	80.3	80.4
Bedford County Technical Center	CTC	73.1	77.4	78.7	73.3	65
Belle Vernon Area SD	SD	77.2	79.5	84.4	73.3	74.5
Bellefonte Area SD	SD	90.6	89.6	90.3	84.3	85.6
Bellwood-Antis SD	SD	90.2	88.8	84.9	77.4	82.4
Belmont CS	CS	74.8	80.2	59.1	35.2	47.3
Bensalem Township SD	SD	84.1	86.9	73.2	66.2	71.9
Benton Area SD	SD	86.9	88.2	91.9	79.5	75.7
Bentworth SD	SD	85.6	85.4	89.4	82	96.3
Berks County IU 14	IU	66.7	85	83.5	94.5	93
Berks CTC	CTC	71.6	80.8	71.2	90.1	69.8
Berlin Brothersvalley SD	SD	92.5	91.3	92.7	87	86.5
Bermudian Springs SD	SD	92.5	90.8	84.4	81.1	84.7
Berwick Area SD	SD	80.6	81.5	76.2	73.8	87.6
Bethel Park SD	SD	95.7	93.7	92.6	91.5	91.5
Bethlehem Area SD	SD	88.9	87.5	70.6	72.1	78.9
Bethlehem AVTS	CTC	71	74.9	43.7	61.9	71.1
Bethlehem-Center SD	SD	78	74.5	91.2	72.2	68.9
Big Beaver Falls Area SD	SD	76.4	78.6	76.1	68.6	67.8
Big Spring SD	SD	92.2	91.6	92	85.2	87.7
Blackhawk SD	SD	89.6	88.2	92.8	86.1	81.6
Blacklick Valley SD	SD	84.2	79.9	81.2	80.2	80.4
BLaST IU 17	IU	68.8	72	60.4	50.8	53.7
Bloomsburg Area SD	SD	90.7	88.7	76.2	71.4	82.3
Blue Mountain SD	SD	92.2	91	81.5	88.3	87.8
Blue Ridge SD	SD	90.7	88.1	79.6	60.6	81.2
Bluford CS	CS	72.2	74.3	64.8	49	63.9
Boyertown Area SD	SD	96.5	91.9	94.8	92.7	90.9
Boys Latin of Philadelphia CS	CS	86.5	87	58.9	56.8	71.3
Bradford Area SD	SD	84.1	83.1	72.9	70.4	73.6
Brandywine Heights Area SD	SD	93.5	91.1	94.8	91.4	98.2

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brentwood Borough SD	SD	86.7%	88.2%	84.5%	79.4%	78.7%
Bristol Borough SD	SD	82.6	83.3	83.8	65.2	77.3
Bristol Township SD	SD	89.4	88	87	81.8	79.3
Brockway Area SD	SD	90.8	88	77.9	84.4	86.2
Brookville Area SD	SD	90	91.7	94.1	88.8	87
Brownsville Area SD	SD	68.8	75.7	58.5	55.9	63.9
Bucks County IU 22	IU	76.2	72	52.1	57.4	62.7
Bucks County Montessori CS	CS	99.5	95.1	97.2	90.8	87.8
Bucks County Tech High School	CTC	86.4	85.9	82.4	72.3	76.9
Burgettstown Area SD	SD	82.6	87.4	88.7	72.5	79.7
Burrell SD	SD	89.1	88.5	90.7	81	79.3
Butler Area SD	SD	82.9	82	80	64.4	72.8
Butler County AVTS	CTC	73.4	76.8	61.5	55.3	71.9
California Acad of Learning CS	CS	--	--	--	--	87.5
California Area SD	SD	81.3	79.9	82.1	68.4	64.9
Cambria Heights SD	SD	90.6	88.4	89.2	79.6	79.3
Cameron County SD	SD	85.5	83.9	87.4	66.5	83.9
Camp Hill SD	SD	94.9	91.9	95.3	86	87.3
Canon-McMillan SD	SD	91.9	90.8	92.6	89.1	89.3
Canton Area SD	SD	87.9	86.9	85.6	78.5	81.5
Capital Area IU 15	IU	57.9	64.1	55.7	44	51.9
Capital Area Sch for the Arts CS	CS	78.2	86	77.4	66.7	75.7
Carbon Career & Tech Institute	CTC	89.6	71.3	72.6	63.2	65.1
Carbondale Area SD	SD	70.3	70.2	69	59.3	59.6
Carbon-Lehigh IU 21	IU	68.2	69	64.7	53.2	64.4
Career Institute of Technology	CTC	74.3	70.6	37	53.7	68.8
Carlisle Area SD	SD	89	87.5	87.5	90.1	81.2
Carlynton SD	SD	88.8	86.4	64.9	47.6	65.7
Carmichaels Area SD	SD	79.7	81.8	80.3	49.9	66.1
Catalyst Academy CS	CS	--	--	37.1	49.1	40
Catasauqua Area SD	SD	89.1	86.3	85.7	80.4	79.8
Centennial SD	SD	90.6	90.7	91.4	89.3	91.8
Center for Stud Learning CS at Pe	CS	54.4	53.6	56.1	41.5	49.7
Central Bucks SD	SD	94.4	94	96.8	91.1	90.5
Central Cambria SD	SD	87	86.6	94.5	83.4	81.5
Central Columbia SD	SD	93.6	93.7	94.5	82.1	90.9
Central Dauphin SD	SD	87.4	87.7	86	73.2	79.6

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Central Fulton SD	SD	80.6%	78.8%	75.7%	76.6%	77.1%
Central Greene SD	SD	77.3	74.9	88.8	63	63.6
Central IU 10	IU	100	100	94.7	100	94.1
Central Montco Tech High School	CTC	68.3	80	24.2	11.4	13.7
Central PA Digital Learning Fdn C	CS	82.2	71.1	71	65.5	50
Central PA Inst of Science & Tech	CTC	80.9	79.6	65.5	68.7	72.3
Central Susquehanna IU 16	IU	97.3	98.8	89.3	90.6	91.9
Central Valley SD	SD	89.4	87.3	91.5	80.9	81.6
Central Westmoreland CTC	CTC	72.2	75.4	56.6	41.1	49.5
Central York SD	SD	92.4	92.4	75.6	85.8	85.3
Centre Learning Community CS	CS	94.4	88	96.9	83.1	85.9
Chambersburg Area SD	SD	89.7	87.3	81.2	78.5	80.3
Charleroi SD	SD	77.9	81.5	70.6	59.9	73
Charter High Sch for Architecture	CS	42.6	56.8	--	--	--
Chartiers Valley SD	SD	92.6	90	75.5	82.9	86.2
Chartiers-Houston SD	SD	83.2	84.1	88.1	97.4	84.4
Cheltenham SD	SD	88.3	92.3	90.5	81.6	79.1
Chester Charter Scholars Acad CS	CS	84.4	84.5	68.6	60.9	68.1
Chester Co Family Academy CS	CS	86.8	79.2	100	63.1	67.3
Chester Community CS	CS	51.4	59.7	38.2	35.1	39.3
Chester County IU 24	IU	57.9	63	49.2	44.5	48.9
Chester County Tech College HS	CTC	74.4	73.6	63.8	67.6	68.9
Chester-Upland SD	SD	42.4	33.4	39.6	40.3	36.3
Chestnut Ridge SD	SD	85	88.1	89.3	82.3	84.4
Chichester SD	SD	79.3	82.2	71.6	64.1	68.8
Christopher Columbus CS	CS	95.2	94.1	92.8	84.4	87.7
Circle of Seasons CS	CS	97	94.3	95.8	73.1	98.5
City CHS	CS	83.4	79.5	83.5	75.6	82.9
Clairton City SD	SD	67.5	71	55.2	48.1	42.4
Clarion Area SD	SD	90.6	90.6	88.8	84.2	82.4
Clarion County Career Center	CTC	66.8	69.9	28.7	35.3	64.2
Clarion-Limestone Area SD	SD	85.4	85	87.8	70.2	78.7
Claysburg-Kimmel SD	SD	89.6	89.2	78.6	86.6	88.6
Clearfield Area SD	SD	87.9	86.8	90.1	59.8	78.6
Clearfield County CTC	CTC	50.9	57.4	29.1	44.9	55.7
Coatesville Area SD	SD	61.4	61.9	51.3	51.5	58.4
Cocalico SD	SD	93.5	91.4	92.3	79.8	87.8

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Collegium CS	CS	92.5%	92.3%	81.1%	82%	79.2%
Colonial IU 20	IU	68.2	70.6	71.4	58.8	58.9
Colonial SD	SD	95.5	94.5	97.7	94.6	92.7
Columbia Borough SD	SD	79.3	80	58.3	65.2	71.4
Columbia-Montour AVTS	CTC	86.8	82.6	69.1	52.9	73.8
Commodore Perry SD	SD	86.9	88.7	85.1	84	90.6
Commonweal Charter Acad CS	CS	86.2	92.1	92.5	90.8	88.6
Community Acad of Phil CS	CS	77.5	85.5	83.1	62.8	68.9
Conemaugh Township Area SD	SD	88.7	90.3	91.9	85.9	84.5
Conemaugh Valley SD	SD	88.4	85.7	83.4	83.4	80.1
Conestoga Valley SD	SD	93.8	92.2	88.9	87.3	84.8
Conewago Valley SD	SD	90.1	88.1	87.1	84.8	84.8
Conneaut SD	SD	93.1	94.5	86.1	85.8	90.2
Connellsville Area Car& Tech Ce	CTC	54.9	67.8	80.9	34.9	50.5
Connellsville Area SD	SD	71.3	79	82.2	53.1	64.1
Conrad Weiser Area SD	SD	97.4	88.5	91.3	88.4	89.2
Cornell SD	SD	74.9	75.5	64.7	69.1	62.7
Cornwall-Lebanon SD	SD	91.6	90.1	85.4	84	86.1
Corry Area SD	SD	88.3	89.5	89.5	77.7	81.9
Coudersport Area SD	SD	90.4	90.2	86.6	60.3	81.5
Council Rock SD	SD	93.5	91.6	98.7	87.4	89.1
Cranberry Area SD	SD	88.5	87.9	90.7	86.6	82.6
Crawford Central SD	SD	86.6	85.1	77.4	76	76.5
Crawford County CTC	CTC	79.7	81.1	64.4	53.8	82.6
Crestwood SD	SD	93.4	92.9	95.4	93.7	84.6
Crispus Attucks CS	CS	31.5	25.8	1.6	4.2	21.2
CTC of Lackawanna County	CTC	81	84.2	66	64	73.6
Cumberl Perry Area Car & Tech	CTC	74.6	75.1	43.7	49.4	70.8
Cumberland Valley SD	SD	92.8	91.3	92.4	81.3	88.2
Curwensville Area SD	SD	90.9	89	90.3	78	81.6
Dallas SD	SD	76.5	85.4	92	80.5	78.8
Dallastown Area SD	SD	91.3	89.5	91.8	85.8	85.7
Daniel Boone Area SD	SD	92.4	88.7	89.3	82.3	85.7
Danville Area SD	SD	93.6	92.6	89.5	89.6	87.3
Daroff CS	CS	61.2	64	53.9	40.9	--
Dauphin County Technical School	CTC	73.8	77.4	69.5	62.8	73.6
Deep Roots CS	CS	68.3	78.9	48	28.7	39.2

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Deer Lakes SD	SD	90.3%	89.4%	92%	74.6%	76.8%
Delaware County IU 25	IU	79.8	81.7	60.3	56.3	53.1
Delaware County Tech High Sch	CTC	56.7	62.3	62.2	52.9	61.6
Delaware Valley SD	SD	89.3	88.3	89	69.2	83.6
Derry Area SD	SD	84.7	86.8	84.6	62.8	79.5
Derry Township SD	SD	89.5	86.9	91.9	76.4	81.9
Discovery CS	CS	92.9	89.8	74.4	99.3	73.8
Donegal SD	SD	90.5	86.9	83.9	79.2	82.6
Dover Area SD	SD	89.8	91.4	96.6	74.6	87.9
Downingtown Area SD	SD	81.6	90.7	87.9	84	88.9
Dr Robert Ketterer CS Inc	CS	72.6	70.7	65.4	66.2	61.3
DuBois Area SD	SD	87.2	85.2	91.2	85	87.8
Dunmore SD	SD	80.6	81.5	88.4	75	79.3
Duquesne City SD	SD	72.6	77.7	52.1	46.4	44.5
East Allegheny SD	SD	72.2	76.2	67.5	44.9	54
East Lycoming SD	SD	91.3	88.3	76.2	66.6	82.6
East Penn SD	SD	92	87.5	92.9	86.2	82.6
East Pennsboro Area SD	SD	90.3	89.3	85.5	85.2	85.9
East Stroudsburg Area SD	SD	81.2	80.3	79	67.2	72.6
Eastern Center for Arts & Tech	CTC	78.9	87	78.9	71.1	77.4
Eastern Lancaster County SD	SD	92.6	91.9	89.8	86.7	89.4
Eastern Lebanon County SD	SD	92.9	91.2	89.1	82.5	88.3
Eastern Univ Acad Charter Sch	CS	86.8	--	--	--	--
Eastern Westmoreland CTC	CTC	62	62.7	57.5	71.6	76.7
Eastern York SD	SD	89.9	84.9	69.2	74.7	82.2
Easton Area SD	SD	90.9	79.7	59.2	75.3	71.2
Easton Arts Acad Elementary CS	CS	89.3	88.1	93.8	79.3	98.6
Elizabeth Forward SD	SD	86.2	87.9	85.2	74.4	80.4
Elizabethtown Area SD	SD	91.9	92.3	89.7	90.2	86.4
Elk Lake SD	SD	83.6	83	86.2	74.9	69.5
Ellwood City Area SD	SD	86.7	83.7	74.3	71.3	79.3
Environmental CS at Frick Park	CS	96.1	85	97.5	73.3	78
Ephrata Area SD	SD	91.6	83.6	86.6	83.1	85.1
Erie City SD	SD	73.4	73.2	64	58	62.3
Erie County Technical School	CTC	86.3	87.5	70.8	65.1	78.6
Erie Rise Leadership Academy CS	CS	53.3	51.2	59.5	47.9	68.2
Esperanza Academy CS	CS	78.9	81.5	69.2	63.2	67.7

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Esperanza Cyber CS	CS	71.4%	84%	60.1%	54.2%	67.5%
Eugenio Maria De Hostos CS	CS	83.8	85.4	86.3	69.8	66.9
Everett Area SD	SD	84.7	84.8	91.1	79.8	81.5
Evergreen Community CS	CS	80.4	81.6	100	88.1	77.2
Executive Education Academy CS	CS	84.8	84.1	81.3	69.6	76.4
Exeter Township SD	SD	90.6	90	92.6	84.9	85.1
Fairfield Area SD	SD	90.2	85.5	91.7	86	76.8
Fairview SD	SD	95.5	94.2	98.2	81	88.6
Fannett-Metal SD	SD	89	83.2	79.6	64.3	84
Farrell Area SD	SD	75.9	70.8	55.1	52.4	60.2
Fayette County Car & Tech Instit	CTC	52.5	65	28.2	42.9	40
Fell CS	CS	71.4	78.8	65.6	60.2	70.3
Ferndale Area SD	SD	87.5	85.7	82.3	76.3	79.4
First Philadelphia Preparatory CS	CS	74.6	80.9	64.4	44.3	64.4
Fleetwood Area SD	SD	92.7	90.1	93.3	80.8	80.1
Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures CS	CS	96.1	94.4	93	92.8	86.7
Forbes Road CTC	CTC	15.8	29.9	19.7	11.7	20.2
Forbes Road SD	SD	88.7	84.9	87.1	45.1	72.2
Forest Area SD	SD	84.3	82.6	87.5	74.3	75.1
Forest City Regional SD	SD	83.6	96.1	85.7	74.8	75.8
Forest Hills SD	SD	87.5	86.4	91.6	81.4	83
Fort Cherry SD	SD	87.6	87.5	83.8	77	81.6
Fort LeBoeuf SD	SD	89.1	86	86.9	82.6	86
Fox Chapel Area SD	SD	91.6	90.6	89.1	88.5	88.1
Franklin Area SD	SD	85.2	85.5	87.3	81.7	79
Franklin County CTC	CTC	89.9	91.8	87.1	86.2	87.5
Franklin Regional SD	SD	96.2	95.9	95.6	91.5	92.4
Franklin Towne Charter Elem Sch	CS	96.6	95.7	98.3	91.4	89.1
Franklin Towne CHS	CS	93.6	89.4	96	81.5	84.4
Frazier SD	SD	77.8	79.3	81.9	69.2	73.7
Frederick Douglass Mastery CS	CS	63.5	72.5	55.5	50.7	66.3
Freedom Area SD	SD	87.8	86.7	89.1	72.8	82.3
Freeport Area SD	SD	91.8	90.5	93.2	84.8	83.7
Freire CS	CS	85	84.6	90.6	63.2	65.3
Fulton Cty Center for Car/Tech	CTC	30.5	62.1	41.5	55.7	64.6
Galeton Area SD	SD	80.7	67.1	70.5	55.6	76.6
Garnet Valley SD	SD	95.9	95.4	97.7	92.5	93.8



**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Gateway SD	SD	86.9%	83.6%	88.2%	71.4%	75.1%
General McLane SD	SD	93.1	91.1	88.7	80.3	82.3
Gettysburg Area SD	SD	90.3	86.7	77.1	77.6	83.3
Gettysburg Montessori CS	CS	88.4	88.3	89.9	80.6	76.5
Gillingham Charter School	CS	70.9	74.5	70.1	69.8	62.9
Girard SD	SD	89.3	90	87.8	79.9	80
Glendale SD	SD	88.6	83.8	83	77.5	75
Global Leadership Academy CS	CS	84.3	89	50.7	49.9	58
Global Leadership Acad CS SWe	CS	62.7	73.5	42	33.8	51.6
Governor Mifflin SD	SD	90.6	92	89.2	83.2	82.2
Great Valley SD	SD	94.8	93	93.1	89.1	87.5
Greater Altoona CTC	CTC	63.1	73.8	37.6	69.5	73.8
Greater Johnstown CTC	CTC	31.4	45.3	13.6	36.8	25.2
Greater Johnstown SD	SD	72.2	79.1	65.5	58.1	57.3
Greater Latrobe SD	SD	87.4	87.5	81.8	79.2	81.9
Greater Nanticoke Area SD	SD	76.2	79.5	75.3	60.1	66.2
Green Woods CS	CS	94.1	92.1	93	87.4	87.8
Greencastle-Antrim SD	SD	89.7	89.4	88.5	81.9	83
Greene County CTC	CTC	30.8	42.1	8.1	8.6	11.6
Greensburg Salem SD	SD	87	85	80	65	72.8
Greenville Area SD	SD	85.2	84.7	80	65.4	75.6
Greenwood SD	SD	93.2	90.1	92.4	87.5	89.9
Grove City Area SD	SD	85.7	84.8	86.4	77.5	79.5
Halifax Area SD	SD	88.2	86.9	87.8	84.4	82.5
Hamburg Area SD	SD	89.3	87.1	88.4	81.1	83.5
Hampton Township SD	SD	93.4	92.2	94.6	91.8	90.3
Hanover Area SD	SD	67.5	72.2	61.1	58	55.5
Hanover Public SD	SD	89.4	89.7	81.1	80.3	79.4
Harambee Inst of Sci and Techno	CS	70.9	74.1	53.3	59	56.6
Harbor Creek SD	SD	94.4	92.3	81.2	76.7	87.8
Harmony Area SD	SD	82.3	79.7	95.2	80.6	75.6
Harrisburg City SD	SD	57.3	62.2	45.4	36.1	47.2
Hatboro-Horsham SD	SD	90.6	89.9	94.7	80.4	83.8
Haverford Township SD	SD	95.6	95.1	95.8	91.9	91.4
Hazleton Area Career Center	CTC	55.3	60.7	38	36.3	50.6
Hazleton Area SD	SD	73.7	74.9	57.3	47.5	56.6
Helen Thackston Charter School	CS	--	--	--	--	--

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Hempfield Area SD	SD	89.1%	90.3%	88.7%	84.7%	82%
Hempfield SD	SD	94	91.9	91.7	87.6	88
Hermitage SD	SD	89.4	89.8	83.8	73.3	82.6
Highlands SD	SD	72.7	72	65.9	64.1	66.9
Hollidaysburg Area SD	SD	86.7	87.4	89	79.2	82.7
Homer-Center SD	SD	90.9	88.6	83.7	70.8	78.3
HOPE for Hyndman CS	CS	71.9	71.9	74.7	61.9	60
Hopewell Area SD	SD	84.8	86.1	85	66.3	81.3
Howard Gardner Multi Intelli CS	CS	90.6	85.8	84.2	81.5	77.5
Huntingdon Area SD	SD	82	84.4	79.9	84.2	82.6
Huntingdon County CTC	CTC	66	69	44	50.9	64.7
I-LEAD Charter School	CS	38.6	35.3	--	--	--
Imhotep Institute CHS	CS	77.7	59.7	57.8	56.9	53.2
Independence CS	CS	94.8	94.5	90.4	80.4	81.2
Independence CS West	CS	73.7	80.6	60.5	58.2	65.2
Indiana Area SD	SD	89.1	89.7	88.8	83.2	83.3
Indiana County Technology Center	CTC	79.4	77.1	55.4	49	69
Infinity CS	CS	97.4	95.2	97.2	93.7	90.6
Innovative Arts Academy CS	CS	58.6	55.4	65.7	33.7	25.3
Inquiry CS	CS	90.7	96.8	88.2	83.8	81.1
Insight PA Cyber CS	CS	75.7	82.5	80.8	72.4	58.9
Interboro SD	SD	87.2	86.7	92	90.7	93.5
Intermediate Unit 1	IU	44.3	52.5	53.9	38.2	44.2
Iroquois SD	SD	87	87.4	82.7	72.8	79.9
Jamestown Area SD	SD	93.2	91.7	88.6	88.4	87
Jeannette City SD	SD	80.6	80.5	71.6	74.9	73.4
Jefferson County-DuBois AVTS	CTC	78	63.1	45.7	47.1	56
Jefferson-Morgan SD	SD	71.9	75.4	83.7	53.7	68.5
Jenkintown SD	SD	93.3	94.3	98.6	94.1	92.1
Jersey Shore Area SD	SD	90.8	90.7	89.2	86.6	87
Jim Thorpe Area SD	SD	81.9	79.8	79.2	60.8	66.9
John B Stetson CS	CS	65	68.9	33.8	40.3	--
Johnsonburg Area SD	SD	83.5	83.4	78.3	77.5	79.9
Juniata County SD	SD	90.5	88.6	88.8	83.5	83.9
Juniata Valley SD	SD	85.4	83.6	84.6	78.7	83.1
Kane Area SD	SD	92.3	89.3	86.2	84.8	83.2
Karns City Area SD	SD	85.5	84.4	67	64.6	77.3

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
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LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Kennett Consolidated SD	SD	93.1%	90%	97.5%	81.3%	83.8%
Keystone Academy CS	CS	89.5	90.7	84.9	80.1	81.8
Keystone Central CTC	CTC	44.1	72.2	89.7	65.5	73.8
Keystone Central SD	SD	76.1	81.9	81.9	77.6	75.6
Keystone Education Center CS	CS	44.6	43	41.1	42.5	42.4
Keystone Oaks SD	SD	91.7	90.5	90.3	78.5	82.8
Keystone SD	SD	84.2	84.6	79.7	73.4	76.8
Khepera CS	CS	--	--	--	--	--
KIPP DuBois CS	CS	70.5	78.9	68.5	46.6	56.5
KIPP North Philadelphia CS	CS	65	78	38.6	40.5	42.2
KIPP Philadelphia CS	CS	73.9	85.5	57.8	48.4	64.3
KIPP Phil Octavius Catto CS	CS	--	--	--	--	60.9
KIPP West Philadelphia CS	CS	71.6	78.4	52.4	61	57.7
KIPP West Phil Preparatory Chart	CS	82.4	86.5	--	--	--
Kiski Area SD	SD	90.2	88.6	93.4	76.4	79.1
Knoch SD	SD	87.5	83	91.5	83.9	81.6
Kutztown Area SD	SD	94	90.8	91.5	80.1	88
La Academia Partnership CS	CS	49.5	69.6	96.7	36.3	53
Laboratory CS	CS	87.9	95	80.9	42.7	61
Lackawanna Trail SD	SD	83.2	83.8	92.5	80.3	71.2
Lakeland SD	SD	89.4	92.2	94.1	76.2	84.8
Lake-Lehman SD	SD	86.6	85.2	85.6	79.5	80.6
Lakeview SD	SD	90.1	87.8	89.5	84.5	84
Lampeter-Strasburg SD	SD	93.8	94.4	89.8	87.4	90.7
Lancaster County CTC	CTC	78.8	79.7	71.4	72.6	76.9
Lancaster SD	SD	77.5	74.5	51.3	63.1	70.3
Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13	IU	63.7	69.1	59.2	47.5	54.7
Laurel Highlands SD	SD	69.7	82.7	80.2	70.7	70.7
Laurel SD	SD	91	90	92.8	85	83.2
Lawrence County CTC	CTC	65.5	88.4	53.1	48.3	73.9
Lebanon County CTC	CTC	70	70.8	76.3	71.7	76.7
Lebanon SD	SD	79.4	78.2	57	61.4	69.7
Leechburg Area SD	SD	92.3	92	78.2	79.1	81.6
Lehigh Career & Tech Inst	CTC	73.3	73.9	46.7	65.8	73.3
Lehigh Valley Acady Regional CS	CS	88.2	87.8	90.9	70.3	84.6
Lehigh Valley Charter High Sch	CS	78.2	79.7	94.8	66.1	74.5
Lehigh Valley Dual Language CS	CS	82	83.3	78.5	72.1	71.9

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Lehigh Area SD	SD	92%	87.5%	87.4%	79.6%	81.1%
Lenape Tech	CTC	81.8	82.9	72.5	77.1	75.9
Lewisburg Area SD	SD	95	91.8	91.2	81.6	86.7
Life Male STEAM Academy CS	CS	--	--	--	59.6	71.4
Ligonier Valley SD	SD	87.2	88.5	86.4	80.3	79
Lincoln CS	CS	83.2	86.1	78.6	67.6	80.3
Lincoln IU 12	IU	69.8	71.2	78.8	66.6	61.9
Lincoln Leadership Academy CS	CS	85.8	84.4	57	68.7	68.9
Lincoln Park Performing Arts CS	CS	81.7	73.6	90.2	58.3	78.7
Lindley Academy CS at Birney	CS	76.6	87.2	45.8	50.9	70.1
Line Mountain SD	SD	86.4	78.3	83.3	61.4	73.9
Littlestown Area SD	SD	90.5	88.8	87.6	82.8	82.5
Lower Dauphin SD	SD	90.5	88.7	92.2	84.2	83.4
Lower Merion SD	SD	95.1	94.5	95.1	91.6	90.5
Lower Moreland Township SD	SD	94.9	93.6	98.6	94	92.4
Loyalsock Township SD	SD	87.1	89	85.8	83.8	83.9
Luzerne IU 18	IU	53.3	57.8	46.3	44.8	43
Lycoming CTC	CTC	83.2	82	9.4	7.8	16.5
Mahanoy Area SD	SD	80.7	97.4	74.5	79.3	78
Manchester Academic CS	CS	88.1	89.7	79.3	69.6	74.7
Manheim Central SD	SD	92	90.9	87.9	79.3	84.7
Manheim Township SD	SD	94.6	94.2	88	83.4	88.9
Mariana Bracetti Academy CS	CS	76.1	79.9	78.1	61.7	71.2
Marion Center Area SD	SD	83.6	82.9	85.3	80.2	81.5
Maritime Academy CS	CS	88.8	92.1	80.7	58.3	59.9
Marple Newtown SD	SD	98.4	98	95.1	96.3	96.6
Mars Area SD	SD	93.4	91.8	95.8	89.8	90.3
MAST Community CS	CS	95.6	93.7	93.6	85.8	86.9
MaST Community CS II	CS	94.7	91.1	92.4	79.2	81
MaST Community CS III	CS	--	85.5	88.6	73.1	78.4
Mastery CHS-Lenfest Campus	CS	71.4	69.5	67.3	62.1	57.1
Mastery CS John Wister Elem	CS	75.2	80	68.1	56.4	58
Mastery CS-Cleveland Elementary	CS	82.5	86.5	59.6	67.8	70
Mastery CS-Clymer Elementary	CS	70.2	80.2	52	61.8	60.4
Mastery CS-F. D. Pastorius Elem	CS	75.2	82.1	73.1	65.3	69.5
Mastery CS-Gratz Campus	CS	72.1	71.3	63.4	47.2	69.2
Mastery CS-Hardy Williams	CS	78.9	80.2	79.1	76.6	66.4

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Mastery CS-Harrity Campus	CS	75.7%	81.8%	70.3%	68.2%	70.4%
Mastery CS-Mann Campus	CS	82.5	85.2	77.6	77.1	70.6
Mastery CS-Pickett Campus	CS	67.3	72.3	68.4	61.3	54.5
Mastery CS-Shoemaker Campus	CS	78.9	80	72.3	73.5	56.3
Mastery CS-Smedley Campus	CS	83.1	88.5	61.9	63.9	65.6
Mastery CS-Thomas Campus	CS	78.8	82.1	75.8	76.3	75.3
Mastery Prep Elementary CS	CS	72.9	86.3	58.9	76.4	77.8
Math Civics and Sciences CS	CS	88.7	79.6	84.2	64.9	65.1
McGuffey SD	SD	82.5	84.7	68.4	68.7	75.9
McKeesport Area SD	SD	61.4	71.7	45.9	28.6	38.2
McKeesport Area Tech Ctr	CTC	53.3	40.1	37.4	20.1	28.4
Mechanicsburg Area SD	SD	93.5	92.9	87.4	79.9	84.7
Memphis St Acad CS @ JP Jones	CS	56.6	67.4	39.3	49.2	55.3
Mercer Area SD	SD	85.8	84.4	74.2	72.7	76
Mercer County Career Center	CTC	79.3	80.8	59.2	68.4	80.3
Methacton SD	SD	94.8	94.4	95.1	87.9	91.2
Meyersdale Area SD	SD	87.8	86.3	89.5	84.7	85.2
Mid Valley SD	SD	86.9	85.5	77.1	69.2	74.8
Middle Bucks Inst of Technology	CTC	48.6	71.7	56	44.3	54.4
Middletown Area SD	SD	88.6	86.4	82.6	79.5	77.5
Midd-West SD	SD	90	88	92.7	88.2	87.3
Midland Borough SD	SD	82.6	81.5	80.2	60.6	73.7
Midland Innovation & Tech CS	CS	--	--	--	--	48.3
Midwestern IU 4	IU	70.6	78.8	66.7	63.2	50
Mifflin County Acad of Sci and Te	CTC	80.2	77.1	42	48.6	77
Mifflin County SD	SD	84.4	82.1	71	66.5	76.1
Mifflinburg Area SD	SD	87.9	87.5	87.1	84.1	85.2
Millcreek Township SD	SD	93.5	92.1	94	82	80.7
Millersburg Area SD	SD	87.8	86.7	89.3	78.1	82.8
Millville Area SD	SD	91.5	98.2	95.4	87.5	88.6
Milton Area SD	SD	92.8	90.9	87.7	80.4	85.4
Minersville Area SD	SD	79.7	82.5	82.8	67.4	66.9
Mohawk Area SD	SD	88.8	89.1	93.8	80.2	80.1
Mon Valley CTC	CTC	52.1	64.8	47.9	38.1	52.6
Monessen City SD	SD	68.7	71.4	48.3	48.8	53.4
Moniteau SD	SD	86.4	83.8	89.1	84.4	80.9
Monroe Career & Tech Inst	CTC	75.4	36.6	44.6	64.6	75.2

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Montessori Regional CS	CS	91.3%	91.5%	99.5%	84.9%	83.2%
Montgomery Area SD	SD	92.8	89.9	91.1	85.9	87.5
Montgomery County IU 23	IU	77.9	75.3	77.2	72.1	75.2
Montour SD	SD	91.8	90.2	91.9	88	87
Montoursville Area SD	SD	91.8	90.5	92	88.4	89.3
Montrose Area SD	SD	84.6	83.3	77.3	69.4	82.9
Moon Area SD	SD	90.3	89.3	94.2	86.4	84.4
Morrisville Borough SD	SD	84.5	82.2	80	74.1	74.8
Moshannon Valley SD	SD	87.5	90.2	91.1	87.9	83
Mount Carmel Area SD	SD	81.1	81.1	88.6	66.8	71.2
Mount Pleasant Area SD	SD	88.6	87	75.3	72.4	75.3
Mount Union Area SD	SD	76.3	74.3	71.9	66.2	74.4
Mountain View SD	SD	83.3	83	85.6	75.6	68.4
Mt Lebanon SD	SD	95.3	92.5	96.3	90	89.7
Muhlenberg SD	SD	90.7	86.3	82.2	78.7	81.3
Multicultural Academy CS	CS	80.9	87.3	81.9	68.1	62.9
Muncy SD	SD	89.4	87.1	90.1	70.9	81.3
Nazareth Area SD	SD	91.1	88.8	95.2	79.1	83.7
Neshaminy SD	SD	91.1	79.8	73.5	77.2	86.4
Neshannock Township SD	SD	87.6	83.9	89.1	67.7	78
New Brighton Area SD	SD	84.2	84	81.1	79.8	77.9
New Castle Area SD	SD	69.5	74.3	49.9	50.5	55.7
New Day CS	CS	48.6	47.6	39.4	30.7	33.5
New Foundations CS	CS	87.6	87.7	86.6	79.3	76.7
New Hope-Solebury SD	SD	96.4	94.7	96.7	86.7	89.2
New Kensington-Arnold SD	SD	72.9	70.8	59.2	50.3	66.8
Newport SD	SD	96.5	96.1	95.1	94.5	94
Nittany Valley CS	CS	95.7	100	93.5	81.3	89.6
Norristown Area SD	SD	82.1	84.7	71.2	68.9	71.6
North Allegheny SD	SD	91.3	95	97.7	93	91.8
North Clarion County SD	SD	91.6	89.5	90.6	79.5	87.1
North East SD	SD	92	89.5	85.7	79.1	83.5
North Hills SD	SD	96.5	94.7	93.2	86	84.7
North Montco Tech Career Center	CTC	90	87.6	59.5	81.1	73
North Penn SD	SD	92.1	91.2	95	89.3	88.3
North Pocono SD	SD	84.9	86.5	93.4	84.1	83.9
North Schuylkill SD	SD	87.9	85.1	95.3	59.1	74.9

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
North Star SD	SD	87.8%	89.6%	88.4%	90%	88.7%
Northampton Area SD	SD	92.1	90.9	89.1	79.9	83
Northeast Bradford SD	SD	87.7	87	85	82	79.7
Northeastern Educational IU 19	IU	57.8	48.6	50	42.4	50
Northeastern York SD	SD	91.9	92.3	90	84	85
Northern Bedford County SD	SD	92.8	90.5	92.9	84.9	86
Northern Cambria SD	SD	88.9	85.2	91.1	76.6	79.9
Northern Lebanon SD	SD	90.2	89.6	84.2	82.4	84.8
Northern Lehigh SD	SD	92.1	91.7	90.6	87	87.9
Northern Potter SD	SD	82.8	77.1	74.9	71.8	77.4
Northern Tier Career Center	CTC	72.1	72.6	53.1	58.3	71.6
Northern Tioga SD	SD	85.7	87.2	84.9	80.6	79.4
Northern Westmoreland CTC	CTC	72.6	76.9	42.2	70.9	61.8
Northern York County SD	SD	92.6	89.1	88.9	85.6	85.8
Northgate SD	SD	82.8	84.4	72.5	70.5	70.9
Northumberland County CTC	CTC	55.2	57.9	24.4	49.6	48.5
Northwest Area SD	SD	82.8	82.5	92.7	73.4	79.2
Northwest Tri-County IU 5	IU	91.4	77.5	80.7	78	81.6
Northwestern Lehigh SD	SD	95.3	93.9	93.1	92.4	90.9
Northwestern SD	SD	82.7	85.3	83.2	57.3	73.1
Northwood Academy CS	CS	92.6	93.5	77.9	76.6	65.3
Norwin SD	SD	93	92	85.8	79.8	86.1
Octorara Area SD	SD	93.8	93.5	88.7	86.4	85.8
Oil City Area SD	SD	87.3	85.2	83.5	59.3	78.7
Old Forge SD	SD	88.7	87.4	81.6	60.9	68.3
Oley Valley SD	SD	91.9	89.1	80.5	86.6	87.5
Olney Charter High School	CS	29.5	45.5	23.5	9.6	--
Oswayo Valley SD	SD	79.3	86.4	86.1	71.9	71.9
Otto-Eldred SD	SD	87.1	84.3	84.2	73.9	84
Owen J Roberts SD	SD	95.1	94.1	89.2	81.4	90.7
Oxford Area SD	SD	89.2	96.3	74.7	82.3	83.4
Palisades SD	SD	93.2	90.2	91.2	84	90
Palmerton Area SD	SD	90.8	87.2	89.5	70	84.2
Palmyra Area SD	SD	91.1	90.4	91.9	88.7	86.8
Pan American Academy CS	CS	85.9	90.8	63.9	59.3	65.7
Panther Valley SD	SD	82.2	81.3	69.4	49.9	65.5
Parkland SD	SD	93.9	93.5	92.2	90.5	89.7

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Parkway West CTC	CTC	57.1%	59.4%	33%	30.6%	36.3%
Passport Academy CS	CS	3.4	4	39.4	8.9	17.7
Pen Argyl Area SD	SD	90.6	87.3	89.6	76.3	82.4
Penn Cambria SD	SD	90.4	89	78.5	57.6	78
Penn Hills CS of Entrepreneurship	CS	88.1	91.5	97	87.6	89.1
Penn Hills SD	SD	77.3	78.1	73.1	56.5	66.8
Penn Manor SD	SD	91.2	91.3	87.2	78.2	84.7
Penncrest SD	SD	90.7	89.5	81.9	81.7	84.8
Penn-Delco SD	SD	91.3	91.2	95.6	92.4	88.9
Pennridge SD	SD	91.7	87.9	85.8	77.7	81.4
Penns Manor Area SD	SD	89.4	87	88.7	78.8	75.3
Penns Valley Area SD	SD	91.1	85.6	89	76.8	84
Pennsbury SD	SD	91.7	91.7	92.2	82.4	80.6
Pennsylvania Cyber CS	CS	83.9	87.4	87.9	86.1	83.3
Pa Distance Learning CS	CS	80.3	89.1	83.5	84	76
Pennsylvania Leadership CS	CS	94.3	95	95.9	94.8	93.7
Pennsylvania STEAM Acad CS	CS	--	--	--	52.1	56.9
Pennsylvania Virtual CS	CS	95.9	96.8	94.3	91.6	88.1
Penn-Trafford SD	SD	93.9	91.3	93.8	83.7	86.2
People for People CS	CS	70.4	73.6	51.2	38.2	62.7
Pequea Valley SD	SD	93.8	91.4	87.9	88.2	88
Perkiomen Valley SD	SD	95.4	95.4	94.8	93.1	92.5
Perseus House CS of Excellence	CS	58	63.2	60.2	42.7	53
Peters Township SD	SD	95.2	93.3	96.8	84.5	91.7
Philadelphia Academy CS	CS	82.5	86.7	84.1	80.1	82.2
Philadelphia City SD	SD	75.2	79.6	71.9	61	63.3
Phil Electrical & Tech CHS	CS	50.6	72.1	84.9	46.1	50.8
Philadelphia Hebrew Public CS	CS	--	75.5	51.5	60.4	64.7
Philadelphia Montessori CS	CS	90.2	94.9	77.9	63	57.1
Philadelphia Performing Arts CS	CS	85.1	86.5	91.1	86.2	88.6
Philipsburg-Osceola Area SD	SD	81	85.4	85.5	77.2	73.8
Phoenixville Area SD	SD	94.7	93.1	88.3	81	86.4
Pine Grove Area SD	SD	88.7	86.7	79.7	64.9	77
Pine-Richland SD	SD	88.9	92.1	97.7	93.5	97.5
Pittsburgh SD	SD	72.1	74.3	71.4	57.4	65.2
Pittston Area SD	SD	69.6	74.9	86.4	60.7	62.6
Pleasant Valley SD	SD	79.4	73.3	74	65.5	75.4



**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Plum Borough SD	SD	88.2%	88.1%	94.3%	81.8%	81.2%
Pocono Mountain SD	SD	82.8	81	83	69	75.7
Port Allegany SD	SD	89.5	86.7	74.8	54.1	71
Portage Area SD	SD	86	85.9	83.6	79.6	79
Pottsgrove SD	SD	89.7	89.1	76.9	68.7	78.5
Pottstown SD	SD	76.9	78.1	66.3	46.6	58.3
Pottsville Area SD	SD	81.4	83.1	60.7	60.5	73.7
Premier Arts and Science CS	CS	87.3	87.5	75.4	74.1	75.2
Preparatory CS of Math Sci Te	CS	78.7	92.1	68.3	55.3	50.8
Propel CS-Braddock Hills	CS	68.5	71.2	62.3	52.7	53.5
Propel CS-East	CS	81.6	82.8	77.7	76.2	69.4
Propel CS-Hazelwood	CS	50	60.8	53.6	44.4	35.8
Propel CS-Homestead	CS	69.1	75.3	49.7	55.2	58.2
Propel CS-McKeesport	CS	84.5	86.1	80.1	73.8	67.1
Propel CS-Montour	CS	72.9	80.9	71.8	71.6	68.1
Propel CS-Northside	CS	75.1	78.6	76.7	68.6	66.7
Propel CS-Pitcairn	CS	77.5	79.2	67	78.1	60.6
Provident CS	CS	90.4	100	97.4	74.2	69.7
Punxsutawney Area SD	SD	79.7	81	71.9	54.5	73.9
Purchase Line SD	SD	82.6	83.5	77.3	75.4	74.7
Quaker Valley SD	SD	96.4	95.4	92.9	94.2	90.6
Quakertown Community SD	SD	89.6	88.2	85.8	79.5	84.5
Radnor Township SD	SD	95.7	94.2	93.4	91.5	90.7
Reach Cyber CS	CS	88.1	90	85.5	80.7	87.9
Reading Muhlenberg CTC	CTC	72.5	75.8	68.5	63.5	60.4
Reading SD	SD	82.8	76.5	77.9	52.3	63
Red Lion Area SD	SD	92.4	90.5	90.8	77.1	83.8
Redbank Valley SD	SD	92.9	90.7	86.5	78.3	85.4
Renaissance Academy CS	CS	92.2	89.5	93.6	78.2	79.1
Reynolds SD	SD	84.6	85.8	86.8	69.4	73.3
Richard Allen Preparatory CS	CS	59.9	86.1	100	47.1	76.2
Richland SD	SD	93.9	94.1	91.5	91.6	92.1
Ridgway Area SD	SD	92.7	91.4	84.1	81.8	86.7
Ridley SD	SD	86.7	89.1	76.4	82.8	85
Ringgold SD	SD	76.6	78.8	76.7	59.7	59.9
River Valley SD	SD	86.6	84.6	77.1	73.2	70.5
Riverside Beaver County SD	SD	89.6	92.1	91	76.1	94.8

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Riverside SD	SD	85.1%	82.8%	78.9%	73.7%	69.8%
Riverview IU 6	IU	53.2	62	60	46.4	45.9
Riverview SD	SD	83.6	85	88.3	73.2	76.2
Robert Benjamin Wiley Com CS	CS	77.7	78.5	56.5	65.3	68.3
Roberto Clemente CS	CS	89	87	73.8	60.1	84
Roberto Clemente Elem Char Scho	CS	--	--	--	--	--
Rochester Area SD	SD	82.9	85.5	67.6	61.1	72.8
Rockwood Area SD	SD	87.5	86.9	86.5	77.3	84.8
Rose Tree Media SD	SD	95	92.4	94.2	84.8	87.2
Russell Byers CS	CS	84.8	83.9	77	69.6	59
Saint Clair Area SD	SD	86.6	88.1	79.9	63.1	75.1
Saint Marys Area SD	SD	88.9	88	84.8	81.7	83.1
Salisbury Township SD	SD	92.3	90.6	91	78.9	89.2
Salisbury-Elk Lick SD	SD	86.4	85.8	92.5	79.5	82.5
Sankofa Freedom Academy CS	CS	76.2	84.6	64.7	63	68.9
Saucon Valley SD	SD	92.5	89.7	86.9	82.1	87.8
Sayre Area SD	SD	92.2	95.8	86.2	94.9	94.5
School Lane CS	CS	91.6	93.4	89.1	85	87.3
Schuylkill Haven Area SD	SD	89.8	87	88.2	79.6	84.2
Schuylkill IU 29	IU	56	51	41.6	38.1	37.7
Schuylkill Technology Centers	CTC	90.3	89	80.8	81.6	88.5
Schuylkill Valley SD	SD	95	92.4	94.9	82.8	89.3
Scranton SD	SD	54.1	61.6	78.7	48.5	42.4
Selinsgrove Area SD	SD	94.3	93.9	95	87.6	87.5
Seneca Highlands Career Tech Ce	CTC	68.5	70.5	44.4	38.3	47
Seneca Highlands IU 9	IU	78.4	81.2	72.4	56.3	61.6
Seneca Valley SD	SD	92.7	90.9	92.6	84.5	85.9
Seven Generations CS	CS	94.8	95	81.5	68.3	85.4
Shade-Central City SD	SD	87.6	91.5	90.7	84.8	86.4
Shaler Area SD	SD	91.8	90.6	89.5	79	90
Shamokin Area SD	SD	67.4	69.6	64.1	60.2	59
Shanksville-Stonycreek SD	SD	95.4	94.2	91.4	85.3	86.5
Sharon City SD	SD	78.9	81.7	67.1	50.4	71
Sharpsville Area SD	SD	90.5	90.3	86.9	81.3	84.8
Shenandoah Valley SD	SD	78.5	81.8	44.9	61.6	63.5
Shenango Area SD	SD	88.2	87.4	88.4	68.8	81
Shikellamy SD	SD	82.2	84.7	71.2	71.5	72.2

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Shippensburg Area SD	SD	90.8%	88.4%	85.1%	86%	83.7%
Slippery Rock Area SD	SD	87.4	86.8	83.1	69.3	78.8
Smethport Area SD	SD	86.2	92.8	83.3	68.7	75.1
Solanco SD	SD	87.1	85.8	83.3	79.4	81
Somerset Area SD	SD	83.5	84.2	91.5	67.1	82.1
Somerset County Tech Center	CTC	67.4	75.7	44.1	62.3	62.3
Souderton Area SD	SD	90.3	88.3	89.2	83.2	82.4
Souderton CS Collaborative	CS	98.3	96	95.7	--	95.4
South Allegheny SD	SD	81.6	77.1	77.9	56.3	79.7
South Eastern SD	SD	92.1	90	86.3	81.5	83.3
South Fayette Township SD	SD	93.4	93	96.8	90.9	88.4
South Middleton SD	SD	93.9	93.4	81	89.6	88.2
South Park SD	SD	91.5	89.3	79.9	73.5	83.7
South Side Area SD	SD	78.2	82.9	83.8	65.3	68.9
South Western SD	SD	93.2	92.3	79.7	79.8	84.2
South Williamsport Area SD	SD	89.6	87.1	74.7	61.5	76.7
Southeast Delco SD	SD	72.5	72.9	72.5	53.3	46.9
Southeastern Greene SD	SD	74.8	73.3	92.9	54	61.5
Southern Columbia Area SD	SD	94.2	95.1	96.5	74.8	86.3
Southern Fulton SD	SD	88.4	89.4	96.2	84	82.2
Southern Huntingdon County SD	SD	79.4	83.2	75.1	64.4	66
Southern Lehigh SD	SD	94.7	93.1	94.5	88.7	93.1
Southern Tioga SD	SD	91	89.5	82	80.9	84.1
Southern York County SD	SD	93	92.8	87.2	82	87.2
Southmoreland SD	SD	86.1	84.8	62.9	55	72.4
Southwest Leadership Acad CS	CS	87.2	90.6	66.6	81.2	85.6
Spectrum CS	CS	68.8	64.5	75.8	55.3	63.6
Spring Cove SD	SD	94	92.8	87.5	86.4	87.8
Spring Grove Area SD	SD	93.1	92.9	89.5	76.3	84.7
Springfield SD	SD	94.2	92.5	93	84.6	87.1
Springfield Township SD	SD	95.1	94.7	92.9	87.2	92.3
Spring-Ford Area SD	SD	92.3	92.3	92.5	90.1	89.4
State College Area SD	SD	91.4	90.3	96.1	79.8	84.8
Steel Center for Career and Tec Ed	CTC	49.5	51.8	10.2	44.7	58.1
Steel Valley SD	SD	77.4	82.7	61	54.6	61.5
Steelton-Highspire SD	SD	64.5	64.9	40.4	35.2	47.3
Stone Valley Community CS	CS	97.6	85.4	81.9	52.3	56.8

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Sto-Rox SD	SD	60.5%	55.3%	44.6%	34.1%	45.7%
Stroudsburg Area SD	SD	83.8	85.1	82	79.4	78.5
Sugar Valley Rural CS	CS	76.3	80	88.1	67.6	75.9
Sullivan County SD	SD	85.9	83.5	79.8	58.2	81.7
SUN Area Technical Institute	CTC	86	89.1	90.9	86.7	88.6
Susq-Cyber CS	CS	49.3	61.8	50	57.7	--
Susquehanna Community SD	SD	94.5	91.8	89.4	91.9	88.6
Susquehanna County CTC	CTC	81.1	73.9	53.4	58.2	65
Susquehanna Township SD	SD	83.8	83.6	71	70.6	75.2
Susquenita SD	SD	88.1	85.7	76.1	67.1	78.9
Sylvan Heights Science CS	CS	80.5	78.6	96.2	42.2	65.6
Tacony Academy CS	CS	61.4	81.3	78.1	68.5	68.7
Tamaqua Area SD	SD	89.7	85.7	90.2	78.8	78.4
TECH Freire CS	CS	65.8	68.8	74	38.3	54.5
The New Academy CS	CS	13	12.5	4.6	4.9	9.1
The Phil CS for Arts and Science	CS	75.2	79.9	62.1	68.9	74.2
Tidioute Community CS	CS	75.3	69.1	73.8	75.7	66.7
Titusville Area SD	SD	88.2	86.9	87	73.1	79
Towanda Area SD	SD	82.6	85.4	80.5	75.4	76.7
Tredyffrin-Easttown SD	SD	92.3	93.1	97.9	85.7	86.4
Trinity Area SD	SD	87.3	85.2	87.7	79.5	81.2
Tri-Valley SD	SD	92.7	92.2	96.3	88.6	87.4
Troy Area SD	SD	89.2	87.5	76.3	91.5	86.9
Tulpehocken Area SD	SD	87.7	88	90.3	87.9	86.8
Tunkhannock Area SD	SD	87.3	87.1	83.2	81	79.3
Turkeyfoot Valley Area SD	SD	69.4	69.8	69	48.4	55.4
Tuscarora IU 11	IU	70	0	0	--	--
Tuscarora SD	SD	89.7	88	76.9	72.9	85.2
Tussey Mountain SD	SD	82.2	80.3	78.6	76.4	74.1
Twin Valley SD	SD	88.5	93.1	91.9	87.8	92.5
Tyrone Area SD	SD	88.9	91.3	82.6	65.2	84.8
Union Area SD	SD	84.6	83.8	88.7	83.7	88.1
Union City Area SD	SD	87.7	82.5	76.1	66.8	80.2
Union SD	SD	83	82.2	78.2	57.9	77.8
Uniontown Area SD	SD	75.6	79.2	70.5	44.8	62.6
Unionville-Chadds Ford SD	SD	97.2	95.2	97.8	94.6	94.9
United SD	SD	78.2	82.6	81	68.8	66.7

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Universal Alcorn CS	CS	81.3%	78.7%	54.2%	69.7%	70. %3
Universal Audenried CS	CS	59.7	48.3	66.9	82.4	96.9
Universal Creighton CS	CS	80.2	77	58.6	66.9	73.3
Universal Institute CS	CS	83.9	84.1	64	55.8	52.6
Universal Vare CS	CS	58.3	73.2	68.5	66.4	78.2
Upper Adams SD	SD	90.5	90.3	93.2	83	83.4
Upper Bucks County Tech School	CTC	38	60.9	22.4	29.3	57.3
Upper Darby SD	SD	80.8	87.1	85.9	77.3	70.1
Upper Dauphin Area SD	SD	90.9	84.5	84.6	78.5	76.5
Upper Dublin SD	SD	96.7	93.3	95.8	90.1	89.9
Upper Merion Area SD	SD	92.9	91.9	93.2	79.8	85.3
Upper Moreland Township SD	SD	93.7	92	88.7	87.4	82.7
Upper Perkiomen SD	SD	93	90.9	93.5	80.3	88.2
Upper St. Clair SD	SD	96.1	96.6	98.2	91.2	91.1
Urban Acad of Greater Pittsb CS	CS	87.3	77.1	73.3	81.2	65.6
Urban Pathways 6-12 CS	CS	67.2	71.2	83.4	56	61.1
Urban Pathways K-5 College CS	CS	71.5	80.5	51	62.1	64.7
Valley Grove SD	SD	86.6	83.3	81.8	68.9	83.1
Valley View SD	SD	84.5	82.8	89.4	76.9	80.3
Venango Technology Center	CTC	77.7	71.6	45.5	50.1	64.6
Vida CS	CS	92.1	90.5	95.8	87.8	96.7
Vision Academy CS	CS	97.2	98.1	80.2	88.1	91.2
Wallenpaupack Area SD	SD	84	81.5	90.4	70.2	72.5
Wallingford-Swarthmore SD	SD	95.8	94.8	96.4	93.4	92.3
Warren County AVTS	CTC	75.4	85	57.6	49	68.4
Warren County SD	SD	82.7	82.1	78	56.4	74.3
Warrior Run SD	SD	94.4	90.9	89.6	81.4	83.9
Warwick SD	SD	92.6	92.3	93.6	89.9	87.6
Washington SD	SD	74.4	79.8	69.3	52.6	66.6
Wattsburg Area SD	SD	91.2	91.2	86.9	86.4	86
Wayne Highlands SD	SD	88.5	85.4	88.3	85.5	83.9
Waynesboro Area SD	SD	90.3	86.7	79.4	79.7	78.9
Weatherly Area SD	SD	88.2	88.8	79.1	72.4	73.5
Wellsboro Area SD	SD	91.4	92.3	90.7	93.4	87.2
West Allegheny SD	SD	91.9	91.3	88.8	87.4	86
West Branch Area SD	SD	83.1	84.6	86.6	72.2	72.2
West Chester Area SD	SD	94.8	92.1	93.7	84.7	88.5

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
West Greene SD	SD	82.1%	79.6%	87.8%	67.9%	70.2%
West Jefferson Hills SD	SD	90.4	92.4	93.1	89	90.1
West Middlesex Area SD	SD	89.3	86.7	87	81.9	83.4
West Mifflin Area SD	SD	72	72.3	73.3	52.8	63.5
West Oak Lane CS	CS	86.5	89.4	90.2	75.7	70.4
West Perry SD	SD	88.1	86.9	68.2	73.8	81.4
West Phila. Achievement CES	CS	61.5	74.3	73.7	67.3	65.3
West Shore SD	SD	87.8	87.7	86.9	83.7	83.3
West Side CTC	CTC	58	58.9	41.8	44	45.7
West York Area SD	SD	91.6	87.9	74.9	73.6	83
Western Area CTC	CTC	37.6	49.1	17.8	36.8	60.1
Western Beaver County SD	SD	82.4	82.5	87.6	90.1	80.2
Western Montgomery CTC	CTC	79.6	78.5	86.2	82.7	79.8
Western Wayne SD	SD	82.5	80.4	79.4	57.9	73.7
Westinghouse Arts Academy CS	CS	58.4	91.2	42.7	30.5	33.8
Westmont Hilltop SD	SD	93.9	92.3	90.6	87.5	83.8
Westmoreland IU 7	IU	61	68.3	64.5	49.2	48.4
Whitehall-Coplay SD	SD	89	87.9	86.7	80.8	79.6
Widener Partnership CS	CS	86.5	86	100	74.2	--
Wilkes-Barre Area CTC	CTC	51.1	61.2	73.9	41.4	19.3
Wilkes-Barre Area SD	SD	73.8	73.8	81	57.3	64.3
Wilkesburg Borough SD	SD	70.6	84	42.7	57.3	57.4
William Penn SD	SD	73.7	76.2	70.9	46.3	56.9
Williams Valley SD	SD	83.5	81.4	78.2	71.4	74.3
Williamsburg Community SD	SD	89.7	91.4	88.2	84.5	82.3
Williamsport Area SD	SD	84.6	86.2	63	58.4	74.4
Wilmington Area SD	SD	76.8	89.5	91.9	70.2	81.2
Wilson Area SD	SD	87	85.8	82.3	80.4	80.4
Wilson SD	SD	92.9	91.6	93.6	90.8	87.5
Windber Area SD	SD	83.1	79.5	82.4	80.2	80.2
Wissahickon CS	CS	92.9	93.5	93.9	70.9	75.4
Wissahickon SD	SD	96.2	95	96.3	91.7	90.2
Wonderland CS	CS	--	--	--	--	--
Woodland Hills SD	SD	68.3	70.1	53.4	42.1	53.5
World Communications CS	CS	--	--	--	--	--
Wyalusing Area SD	SD	88.3	87.6	91.8	84.4	83.1
Wyoming Area SD	SD	70.3	75.5	69.3	50.2	59.8

**Table 19**  
**Regular Attendance Rate by LEA (%)**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-19 through 2022-23 School Year**

LEA Name	LEA Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Wyoming Valley West SD	SD	64.8%	66.5%	65.2%	51.8%	47.2%
Wyomissing Area SD	SD	93.3	78.8	87.5	76.3	82.6
York Academy Regional CS	CS	94	92	88.5	76.8	95.1
York City SD	SD	68	67.5	47.5	32.9	53.2
York Co School of Technology	CTC	82.8	83	90.3	77.7	83.2
York Suburban SD	SD	94.6	94.5	90.3	79.8	80.8
Yough SD	SD	82.6	86.9	83.8	76.3	73.8
Young Scholars CS	CS	81.1	94.3	75.3	75	71.7
Young Scholars of Central PA CS	CS	94.2	91.6	95.3	75.1	85.7
Young Schol of Greater Alleg CS	CS	80.2	93.7	82.6	64	93.4
Young Scholars of Western Pa C	CS	87.6	82.3	97.2	96.5	92.7
Youth Build Phila CS	CS	9.4	13.8	0.6	0	0.6

Source: Data Provided by PDE, February 14, 2024.





Table 20  
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts  
Statewide Count of Case Files with Truancy Offenses  
By County  
Pennsylvania  
2018-2023

**Table 20**  
**Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts**  
**Statewide Count of Case Files with Truancy Offenses**  
**By County**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-2023**

<b>County</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Adams	200	170	150	366	126
Allegheny	4,124	3,615	2,807	3,016	3,734
Armstrong	195	224	142	299	290
Beaver	568	605	636	1,030	623
Bedford	34	44	29	58	79
Berks	3,286	1,218	769	2,496	1,668
Blair	214	260	175	430	349
Bradford	160	258	200	463	249
Bucks	683	748	459	789	762
Butler	259	260	130	368	351
Cambria	160	179	193	335	294
Cameron	17	21	28	39	38
Carbon	127	246	169	316	218
Centre	143	144	146	319	264
Chester	577	339	273	628	515
Clarion	50	92	77	156	99
Clearfield	152	167	162	301	242
Clinton	156	178	186	310	174
Columbia	135	138	88	164	160
Crawford	113	100	57	107	236
Cumberland	412	600	328	715	553
Dauphin	919	1,049	567	1,164	980
Delaware	889	977	484	877	968
Elk	66	68	31	72	95
Erie	2,077	2,971	2,213	3,490	3,186
Fayette	508	566	515	1,177	1,033
Forest	6	2	0	0	13
Franklin	315	323	296	531	516
Fulton	8	13	4	14	10
Greene	997	262	167	249	187
Huntingdon	66	70	25	48	50
Indiana	97	159	106	165	119
Jefferson	62	109	113	150	123
Juniata	42	50	49	87	64
Lackawanna	215	219	244	275	197
Lancaster	1,121	1,334	540	1,035	1,125
Lawrence	77	56	41	186	120
Lebanon	305	300	104	191	120
Lehigh	1,100	1,368	788	1,030	1,431
Luzerne	915	1,034	733	964	985

**Table 20**  
**Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts**  
**Statewide Count of Case Files with Truancy Offenses**  
**By County**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-2023**

<b>County</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Lycoming	331	241	138	434	581
McKean	123	86	126	219	239
Mercer	400	299	311	514	481
Mifflin	92	59	33	35	52
Monroe	219	328	260	588	552
Montgomery	1,621	1,585	666	611	1,142
Montour	7	8	5	37	15
Northampton	342	384	276	705	520
Northumberland	478	497	244	807	669
Perry	130	164	102	235	156
Pike	112	120	101	137	122
Potter	13	11	31	18	31
Schuylkill	191	298	106	257	314
Snyder	217	110	97	252	190
Somerset	157	122	123	150	154
Susquehanna	47	34	49	110	82
Tioga	67	76	30	101	111
Union	15	27	39	85	47
Venango	174	173	168	224	277
Warren	39	49	55	134	104
Washington	531	638	378	980	768
Wayne	64	30	44	105	81
Westmoreland	663	676	472	951	717
Wyoming	70	67	35	71	48
York	749	1,229	344	884	1,077
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,402</b>	<b>27,847</b>	<b>18,457</b>	<b>33,054</b>	<b>30,876</b>

Source: Data provided by AOPC, September 6, 2023.



Table 21  
Dollars Disbursed to School Districts  
from Truancy Violation Fines  
by County  
Pennsylvania  
2018-2023

**Table 21**  
**Dollars Disbursed to School Districts from Truancy Violation Fines**  
**by County**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-2023**

<b>County</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Adams	\$18,562	\$15,200	\$9,544	\$13,729	\$7,312
Allegheny	51,604	44,260	31,569	38,584	39,378
Armstrong	6,161	5,537	4,458	3,697	6,171
Beaver	26,002	29,139	29,262	44,488	28,957
Bedford	1,765	1,405	2,078	931	3,542
Berks	64,374	34,494	21,964	31,597	22,283
Blair	3,900	4,382	4,335	5,978	8,204
Bradford	13,697	19,468	21,465	41,261	28,627
Bucks	28,106	21,602	13,078	21,325	21,594
Butler	9,782	7,286	3,879	8,372	13,343
Cambria	3,677	4,851	7,407	13,513	13,757
Cameron	3,582	2,232	1,884	1,819	1,875
Carbon	7,201	7,302	5,278	17,686	10,722
Centre	11,361	6,354	9,158	14,590	15,093
Chester	10,561	13,059	10,774	11,141	12,390
Clarion	2,705	2,507	1,142	6,910	3,289
Clearfield	9,260	5,897	3,052	8,574	5,315
Clinton	2,321	1,993	1,171	2,083	1,743
Columbia	12,708	9,730	7,620	7,327	5,723
Crawford	2,995	3,326	1,988	6,191	11,927
Cumberland	18,699	18,235	19,154	21,481	14,672
Dauphin	36,261	26,537	23,640	26,664	20,995
Delaware	29,346	25,376	14,170	16,119	23,685
Elk	4,872	6,948	3,991	4,515	7,953
Erie	45,071	56,364	59,495	86,445	79,660
Fayette	34,210	25,006	21,195	33,570	35,469
Franklin	13,708	14,696	10,952	16,015	22,417
Fulton	429	1,120	210	0	300
Greene	10,695	18,165	17,361	19,469	12,297
Huntingdon	4,092	3,311	1,277	840	2,000
Indiana	7,342	13,600	4,236	11,403	10,968
Jefferson	4,353	3,370	1,887	4,264	4,323
Juniata	2,819	1,851	234	1,754	4,665
Lackawanna	51	0	64	0	0
Lancaster	38,140	30,365	32,117	32,273	22,566
Lawrence	3,318	1,727	1,446	4,857	6,180
Lebanon	94,854	69,002	37,793	41,237	19,980
Lehigh	54,291	49,224	46,548	38,147	32,939
Luzerne	19,790	17,153	10,879	8,864	14,162
Lycoming	10,822	10,408	10,575	13,460	17,329
McKean	3,322	3,147	2,962	3,215	4,214
Mercer	13,996	13,275	9,275	19,680	24,756
Mifflin	10,043	8,467	4,968	5,673	4,091
Monroe	6,923	9,655	5,600	9,815	9,724
Montgomery	22,287	21,623	15,171	8,790	12,177
Montour	166	360	157	275	80
Northampton	15,107	15,977	13,926	27,351	22,272

**Table 21**  
**Dollars Disbursed to School Districts from Truancy Violation Fines**  
**by County**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2018-2023**

<b>County</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Northumberland	\$16,449	\$18,908	\$17,371	\$22,643	\$21,477
Perry	5,616	5,127	5,227	7,186	7,379
Pike	4,659	1,696	3,468	7,266	2,134
Potter	136	915	521	952	1,387
Schuylkill	6,060	8,251	5,635	7,934	7,468
Snyder	9,967	13,691	11,008	13,100	12,413
Somerset	3,776	5,443	3,230	3,671	3,692
Susquehanna	354	312	506	438	200
Tioga	1,559	1,692	1,885	2,245	2,434
Union	891	925	320	832	1,106
Venango	16,912	16,221	9,147	12,803	10,892
Warren	2,104	987	728	5,463	5,636
Washington	19,312	20,583	21,808	36,716	22,051
Wayne	1,283	674	1,124	733	2,112
Westmoreland	9,231	14,456	10,374	13,347	12,021
Wyoming	3,702	3,728	2,341	2,434	815
York	199,010	143,402	112,100	108,374	86,965
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,096,352</b>	<b>961,998</b>	<b>767,180</b>	<b>1,002,110</b>	<b>891,303</b>

Source: Data provided by AOPC, September 6, 2023.





Table 22  
Department of Human Services  
Truancy/Education Neglect Concerns  
by County  
Pennsylvania  
2022

**Table 22**  
**Department of Human Services**  
**Truancy / Education Neglect Concerns**  
**by County**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2022**

<b>County</b>	<b>2022 Truancy/Educational Neglect as a valid General Protective Services (GPS) Concern</b>	<b>2022 Total County Concerns</b>	<b>Truancy as a % of Total Valid Concerns</b>
Adams	191	1,655	11.5%
Allegheny	381	4,106	9.3
Armstrong	57	337	16.9
Beaver	47	200	23.5
Bedford	35	526	6.7
Berks	85	2,563	3.3
Blair	94	975	9.6
Bradford	77	904	8.5
Bucks	201	2,966	6.8
Butler	107	1,258	8.5
Cambria	42	1,381	3.0
Cameron	3	10	30.0
Carbon	74	561	13.2
Centre	71	1,016	7.0
Chester	44	1,084	4.1
Clarion	66	758	8.7
Clearfield	167	590	28.3
Clinton	20	463	4.3
Columbia	224	2,226	10.1
Crawford	127	1,700	7.5
Cumberland	226	3,278	6.9
Dauphin	196	2,686	7.3
Delaware	185	1,836	10.1
Elk	51	227	22.5
Erie	440	6,038	7.3
Fayette	124	1,725	7.2
Forest	6	34	17.6
Franklin	238	1,735	13.7
Fulton	5	137	3.6
Greene	59	468	12.6
Huntingdon	69	735	9.4
Indiana	60	861	7.0
Jefferson	39	457	8.5
Juniata	61	313	19.5
Lackawanna	111	3,331	3.3
Lancaster	99	1,771	5.6
Lawrence	84	715	11.7
Lebanon	117	1,364	8.6
Lehigh	248	3,238	7.7
Luzerne	289	2,569	11.2
Lycoming	102	790	12.9

**Table 22**  
**Department of Human Services**  
**Truancy / Education Neglect Concerns**  
**by County**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**2022**

County	2022 Truancy/Educational Neglect as a valid General Protective Services (GPS) Concern	2022 Total County Concerns	Truancy as a % of Total Valid Concerns
McKean	80	762	10.5%
Mercer	181	1,413	12.8
Mifflin	66	984	6.7
Monroe	50	994	5.0
Montgomery	93	1,184	7.9
Montour	1	4	25.0
Northampton	135	2,640	5.1
Northumberland	135	2,640	5.1
Perry	43	265	7.6
Philadelphia	569	4,990	11.4
Pike	92	663	13.9
Potter	24	234	10.3
Schuylkill	169	3,494	4.8
Snyder	23	228	10.1
Somerset	113	1,254	9.0
Sullivan	3	56	5.4
Susquehanna	50	307	16.3
Tioga	41	1,114	3.7
Union	35	354	9.9
Venango	49	975	4.0
Warren	25	178	14.0
Washington	104	2,346	4.3
Wayne	48	680	7.1
Westmoreland	102	2,346	4.3
Wyoming	28	253	11.1
York	231	1,980	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,412</b>	<b>90,733</b>	<b>8.2</b>

Source: 2022 PA Child Protective Services Report 8-10-2023 final, provided by Dawn Trail September 26, 2023 e-mail to Commission staff.



**Public School Code of 1949 - Omnibus Amendments  
Act of Nov. 3, 2016, P.L. 1061, No. 138, Cl. 24  
Session of 2016, No. 2016-138, HB 1907**

Section 1333.4. Study of Truancy Procedure.--(a) Five (5) years after commencement of the first school year to which section 1333 applies, the Joint State Government Commission shall undertake a study of the procedures for how a school handles children who are truant and habitually truant and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures in improving school attendance and whether the procedures should be revised, including to require court involvement sooner in certain truancy cases.

(b) The Joint State Government Commission shall establish an advisory committee that may include representatives of the Department of Education, educational entities and organizations, the judiciary, district attorneys, law enforcement, public organizations involved in truancy issues, representatives of county children and youth agencies and juvenile justice agencies and other organizations selected by the Joint State Government Commission to consult with the Joint State Government Commission in conducting the study.

(c) The Joint State Government Commission shall hold informational meetings to receive testimony from professionals or organizations with expertise in truancy and truancy prevention.

(d) The Joint State Government Commission shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee of the Senate and the Education Committee of the House of Representatives not later than twelve (12) months after undertaking the study.