



MODULE 16: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR ATTENDANCE SPECIALIST



Once students with chronic attendance issues are retrieved, it is time to decide how to encourage these dropout-prone students not to leave again. Students with excessive absences create the most significant concern for school personnel and school districts, knowing that they become behind in their reading skills compared to their peers. In addition, it is more challenging for them to pass exams. Quite often, issues lead to discipline, which decreases the opportunity for these students to graduate.

When students return to school after chronic absences, we must make them feel significantly missed and needed. They should be sincerely told that their presence is vital for learning and developing into well-rounded adults. Getting the student back on campus is one small but important aspect of the school staff's efforts. These students feel like their presence is crucial for their well-being and to enrich the school community.

The school's responsibility is to make students and parents feel welcome, respected and encouraged when they enter the school campus. If staff work together in creating a nurturing school environment, this will increase the parents' participation and decrease student absences.

Many states use the local truancy courts to provide legal intervention while providing support and accountability for a child's unexcused absences. Most states make it clear the age threshold for referring students for legal intervention. Below is a list of consequences resulting from excessive or unexcused absences for parents and appropriate-aged students.



Parents\guardians are responsible for getting their children to school. When students are identified as truant, parents and some students may be referred to court for legal intervention in most states.

- Family attendance conference
- Attendance behavior plans
- Counseling
- Referred to court for legal intervention (misdemeanor charges, jail time, parenting class, community service, etc.)
- Suspension of driver's license
- Home evaluation
- Repeal of welfare benefits
- Mediation
- Truancy investigation

Age-appropriate students in most states can be referred to court for legal intervention along with their parents. In addition, many states recognize that some parents have attempted to make sure their child attends school. Still, the students continue to skip without permission so that they may face legal interventions.



Consequences for excessive and/or unexcused absences for age-appropriate kids are below:

- Community service
- Fines
- Extended day programs
- Counseling
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Repeal of works in recreation permit
- No driving privileges
- No extracurricular activities
- Alternative educational programs
- Community resources

Most states detail the process of notifying parents regarding students' unexcused absences in their state education codes. Notifying students' parents about their child's excessive absences hopefully reduces truancy. And informing parents there may be legal consequences if they continue to miss school without a valid reason. In addition, some states require notification to parents when they receive an unexcused absence. In contrast, others have certain thresholds to cross before sending a parent or guardian notification. Finally, a few states send parents notifications about their child's excessive absences are not mandatory. Still, others must send a message to their local legal personnel.



Many states are proactive and attempting to provide additional support and intervention for parents and students with excessive absences and dropouts. The list below shows the different types of services or interventions that many states attempt to help reduce truancy (Frey, 2011).

- Family mediation
- School counseling
- Class evaluation

Many states require that school districts employ or designate an attendance officer responsible for enforcing their state attendance laws. Also, as discussed above, there are many responsibilities associated with this position regarding ensuring students attend school. Parents and students are provided with the resources and assistance needed to help them become successful.



LESSON 01: FINAL THOUGHTS ON MANAGING CAMPUS ATTENDANCE

Students with excessive absences often need the most help from the community and the school. Their non-attendance is often not the critical issue, but more significant problems commonly manifest at home. For example, truancy cases amongst our students are very individualized and require the whole community's attention to improve their circumstances. That is why the school must properly assess student needs and work with families to refer them to the appropriate resources. But there are also issues we can tighten up on in our schools. See the list below.

All school personnel should be aware of the truancy intervention plan. Staff should understand the importance of treating students and families with respect. A consistent approach to dealing with delinquency and behaviors is needed. Addressing all student's concerns should be a priority.

Communicate to parents their legal responsibility. Communicate to age-appropriate students their legal and academic obligations. Emphasize the importance of a consistent rewards program for good and approved attendance.



WORKBOOK SECTION

1. How to encourage these dropout-prone students not to leave again?

2. What are the consequences for excessive absences for age-appropriate kids?

3. List the different types of services that many states attempt to help reduce truancy.
