

JOINT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

State Level

- Build and maintain the health and productivity of a School Attendance Task Force.
- Clarify and share information at the state level among schools, courts, probation, social services, mental health, faith, business, and law enforcement regarding school attendance law, system flow among agencies, services, supports, and gaps.
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding among agency partners to commit to the improvement of school attendance.
- Develop a public education and awareness campaign targeting parents/guardians, youth, and the general community about state law, consequences for non-attendance, and importance of staying in school.
- Form a group to target key legislators for support in passing statutes that will support the goals of the coalition.
- Educate and empower community members to write their legislative representatives about the need for supporting prevention programs.

Law Enforcement

- Provide outreach to the community about the importance of school attendance—show an interest in youth that are out of school during the day—let them know you are aware.
- Make routine visits to schools to inform school personnel and students about attendance law and consequences.
- Established procedures and protocols should be put in place for reporting of nonattendance by the community and escorting students to school or to a community center.
- Law enforcement should be integrally involved in the community-level programs that improve school attendance. Several community policing models are in existence nationally that use the cooperation of law enforcement to significant advantage, including documented reductions of daytime crime.

Juvenile Courts

- The court should consider a variety of sanctions for non-attending youth, such as community service, denied driving privileges, required school attendance of parents/guardians, and other consequences prior to detention.
- Judges and magistrates need to be made aware of existing community programs to positively engage youth in school.
- The juvenile court needs to be represented in any state or local-level efforts targeting re-engaging youth in school.

Department of Juvenile Justice

- Develop standard protocols for intake and processing of cases of violation of attendance law. Train staff on the proper procedures and use of these protocols.
- Forge an information sharing agreement among agencies to reduce duplication of services for multiple-issue youth and their families.
- Access local universities for assistance in data collection and interns to assist with direct services in local pilot communities.