



COPPER COUNTRY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Copper Country Intermediate School District Truancy Program Overview

The Truancy Program is the result of a collaborative effort between the Intermediate School District, the local school districts, judicial system, law enforcement and social services.

Personnel and Involvement:

Superintendents from the local districts meet on a quarterly basis at the ISD for updates on the truancy program. A quarterly report is prepared and distributed to each for an overall view and one specific to their district. The truancy officer may be present for “questions and answers” to the group and individually for their respective districts. A truancy program year-end report serves as a compilation of: total number of truancy cases filed, prosecutor referrals, number of parent meetings, watch list students, and total cost of the truancy program to the districts in Baraga-Houghton-Keweenaw Counties.

Principals are primary contacts for the truancy officer if the district has no assistant principal. Meetings are conducted weekly at a regularly scheduled time to review attendance problems that may be developing.

Other school personnel, such as secretaries to the principal, and staff assigned to attendance, meet with the truancy officer prior to meeting with the administrator for providing current updates regarding a student with attendance issues.

Family court, prosecuting attorneys and assistants become involved as legally necessary and are proactive in helping resolve issues before they enter the hearing phase.

The sheriff department offers assistance with locating parents addresses that may otherwise be unavailable when home visits are necessary, and will provide uniform presence if requested.

Department of Human Services becomes involved when there is a family on the “cash assistance program,” or when a report of finding is necessary.

Michigan Law and Enforcement of It:

Revised School Code Act 451 of 1976, Compulsory attendance at public school; enrollment dates; exceptions; Section 380.1561

Intervention/Involvement with Students:

The procedures developed over time serve as a guide to the districts for a means of intervention with students developing excessive attendance related issues. These include placing students on “watch lists” (this initiates an unofficial conversation with the truancy officer), phone call to parents requesting return call to discuss matter with truancy officer, second warning from truancy officer or meeting scheduled

with parents, letters from school, letter from truancy officer delivered to student's home with copies of MCL 380.1561, filing of a non-compliance order, filing a complaint with the court, letter from the prosecuting attorney, attendance contract, involvement of DHS.

Levels of Involvement Through Truancy Program:

The truancy officer is the frontline of enforcement for the truancy program. Weekly visits to each school are the standard operating procedure, and being pro-active with watch lists has revealed a positive result for depleting the number of cases filed with the court system.

School:

Administrators request placement of student on watch list, provide notification with weekly updates for student progress, and provide meeting place for truancy officer and student to discuss issues in an unofficial low key meeting. There may be a second meeting before official involvement to check for extenuating circumstances. Setting up a parent meeting is also a possibility.

Telephone/E-mail:

Face to face meetings at school or home are preferred, but circumstances may not permit them. Telephone and e-mail are a secondary means of contacting parents to inform them of a truancy problem.

Home:

Home visits are routine for the truancy officer seeking the student or parents. Transporting of students to school, informing parents of the law, or leaving attendance law copies and means of contact for truancy officer when face to face contact is not made are typical.

Work:

Visiting a parental workplace is a last resort after exhausting efforts to make contact.

Social Services:

Social services are notified and will check for parents on cash assistance program initiating their required response to recipients.

Court System:

Attempts are made to involve the court system unofficially if and when possible, i.e. by letter from the prosecuting attorney or contact with the truant officer. In extreme cases, and after all other attempts have been deemed unsuccessful, a meeting is scheduled by the Family Court with all interested parties, i.e. family, school, prosecutor, court, and truant officer. Following discussion, goals are agreed upon, put in written form, and signed off on by all parties (including the truant student).

Truancy Program as Such is Successful Because:

The truancy program's success is through the diligence of each entity involved not allowing something to develop that can be contained. Use of watch lists and meeting with students and parents eliminates many of the potential "official" caseload students filed by the truant officer.

Caseload: Official filing of truancy complaint (this is not reflective of those students on watch lists).