

## IOSCO COUNTY TEAM ACTION PLAN

### TRUANCY

DECEMBER, 2013

The Iosco County Truancy Team has completed at least the beginning steps for an action plan. The team has had participation and input from all four school districts (five with IRESA) at all grade levels.

#### OBJECTIVES:

The Iosco County team has collaborated and identified the need to have a county-wide model that will still allow for local flexibility and discretion in the areas of truancy. In order to achieve this model, all districts are looking at their own policies and will attempt to have them modified to be as close to identical as possible with all other districts in Iosco County. The team is absolutely committed to keeping youth engaged in school and to engaging parents in the process of educating their children.

#### ACTION STEPS:

- (A) The team has agreed to look at truancy based on a percentage rather than a straight number. All members believe that 10% absence with poor/bad classroom grades and a 20% absence rate for students with an average of a B or better is a common denominator we should use. It is also important to understand that each new school year isn't necessarily a "start over" for absent students. The Prosecutor and Courts will accept truancy situations that begin in on school year and roll over into the next school year.
- (B) The Team has also identified the absolute need to have common, acceptable definitions for their absences. It is imperative that the Attendance Officer and the legal community have definitions that are universal and understandable when students appear in Court. All districts have agreed to work towards common definitions of absences which would include excused, unexcused, and suspensions. Absences resulting in court appearances will be presented to the court with these three areas clearly identified.
- (C) The Team has identified that before legal action would be sought that each district and the County Attendance Officer would follow the mandates required in the compulsory education laws of Michigan. Each district would maintain their procedures for parent notification. At the time the Attendance Officer is brought into a case, the three referral step process will be followed. To make attendance referrals common across the county, the team has agreed to utilize the county wide attendance referral form as developed by the Iosco County Prosecutor's Office and Family Court. (Copy included in this document)
- (D) In addition to the protocols outlined in the compulsory education laws, the Team has adopted an interim step to assist with developing a complete model. At the time that the attendance officer receives the second referral, a notice to attend a meeting with the Assistant Prosecutor and Juvenile Officer will also be included in that legal mailing. These youth and parent meetings will be held in each school district to assist parents in attending. The meetings will be pre-scheduled so that all districts will know when the Assistant Prosecutor and Juvenile Officer are

scheduled to be in their district. It is hoped that this additional step will lend credence and support to the local districts and at the same time provide one more chance to resolve truancy issues prior to formal court proceedings.

- (E) The Losco County Department of Human Services will be invited to attend these meetings as well as child abuse, neglect, and family payment issues may all be identified during these meetings as possible concerns manifesting themselves into truancy situations.
- (F) Judge Martin, our presiding Family Court Judge (via concurrent jurisdictional assignment plan) will now hear all District Court related educational neglect matters where parents of younger children are charged with the criminal education neglect. This will insure that we have a unified approach in the legal community to deal with truancy and educational neglect.
- (G) When formal court involvement does occur, the court will utilize the services offered in each district as part of probationary orders to further engage students in completing work required. These services could include but are not limited to extended days, tutoring sessions, weekend classes, etc. These restorative services will have the desired goal of catching students up, assisting with areas of work they may need, will be supported by the Court, and will work to encourage and engage parents in the educational system.

#### ONGOING PLANS:

In addition to each of the local districts working on their own attendance policies and definitions, the Losco County Truancy Team will continue to work toward the goals outlined in this policy. Meetings will continue to be held at least quarterly to monitor our successes and modify the plan as necessary. The next meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2014. This meeting date is after the first round of Court and Prosecutor meetings have been held in each district.

12/2013