Truancy Prevention/Intervention Program

Overview:

Attendance Matters. Regular attendance is an important factor in a student’s achievement at school and helps prepare students to be college and career ready. Missing just 2 school days a month makes a student more likely to drop out.

It has been well documented that absenteeism, and specifically truancy, is often a symptom of other things going on in the student’s life. Many times it is conflict at home, school and/or other circumstances that are influencing poor school attendance. There are many reasons for absenteeism and truancy that pose difficulties for students, families, and schools.

New Mexico defines “students in need of early intervention” at five (5) unexcused absences and “habitual truancy” as students with ten (10) unexcused absences. Truancy is often addressed within the school district as a referral process. The three (3), five (5) and ten (10) day notices have been assumed to be efforts of intervention.

Best practice in addressing truancy are to utilize a wellness approach of early identification, intervention and referral to community or school based programs. The use of a school-level team to address early intervention is the core component for the APS Truancy Intervention Program.

2013-14 School Year – Pilot

- 13 schools (6 elementary, 5 MS and 2 HS)
- Small cohorts of students in each pilot with 5 or more unexcused absences
- Tested process (see attached Truancy Intervention Pilot Report for recommendations)

2014-15 School Year – Implementation

Restructuring occurred in order to best serve schools, families and students in addressing truancy prevention and intervention.

1. **Truancy Team** expanded:
   - Executive Director, SFCS Division
   - Coordinated School Health Department
   - Truancy Manager
     - Truancy Coordinator, Truancy Advisors, UNM Work Study Students
   - Truancy Social Worker Unit – LISW, Manager
     - Truancy Social Workers – (8)
     - Social Work graduate student interns
   - Administrative Assistant
   - Evaluation Team – UNM Center for Education Policy and Research)
**Truancy Social Workers**
- Supervised by Truancy Social Worker Manager, Coordinated School Health Department, Student Family and Community Supports Division.
- Master’s degrees in social work and provide higher level interventions to students who are chronically absent or exhibiting signs of school avoidance and/or not attending school due to serious emotional, familial, psychological, mental and other environmental issues or traumas.
- Function as student/family advocates.
- Provide direct individual and family interventions including assessment.

- **Role of the Social Workers**
  - Coordinate the Truancy program and collaborate with school staff.
  - Conduct assessments of targeted “Students in Need of Early Intervention” to determine core causes of truancy.
  - Work collaboratively with school staff, students and families to develop intervention plans designed to bring students back to school and keep them there (student, parent and school signs off on this plan).
  - Conduct home visits, with Truancy Prevention Unit team members, as appropriate, in order to: identify root causes of absences, engage students and families, provide school staff with key information and ensure that students do not fall through the cracks of the school system.
  - Assist individual implementation school sites in developing comprehensive school-wide attendance plans.
  - Assist individual implementation school sites in developing and monitoring individual student attendance plans.
  - Participate in multidisciplinary teams such as: Health and Wellness Teams, etc.
  - Provide linkages and referrals to community services.
  - Develop community partnerships and linkages.
  - Track and analyze assigned implementation school site data.
  - Recommend district wide best practices for prevention of Truancy.
Truancy Advisors
o Supervised by Truancy Prevention Program Manager, Coordinated School Health Department, Student Family and Community Supports Division.

- **Role of the Truancy Advisors**
  o Assist in coordination and implementation of the Truancy Program in implementation schools.
  o Work collaboratively with the social workers and school staff in the implementation schools.
  o Recommend district wide best practices for prevention of Truancy.
  o Collect and distribute data to implementation school sites.
  o Regularly monitor data.
  o Provide early intervention through regular check-ins with identified students who are experiencing chronic absences or at risk of becoming truants.
  o Assist in communication efforts from District Truancy Prevention office to keep implementation school sites well informed and up to date with student information as it is learned.
  o Attend implementation school events such as registrations, open house, etc. to promote the program, help welcome and engage students and families and provide information/resources/education.
  o Assist with workshops and trainings.
  o Make phone calls to families.
  o Assist with home visits.
  o Provide resources to schools/students/families.

UNM Work Study Students
o Supervised by Ron Lucero, Truancy Prevention Program Manager, Coordinated School Health Department, Student Family and Community Supports Division.

- **Role of the Work Study Students**
  o Collect data for implementation school sites.
  o Input Intervention data as needed.
  o Regularly monitor data.
  o Make phone calls to families.
  o Recommend district wide best practices for prevention of Truancy.
Truancy Prevention/Intervention Process Overview

SCHOOL SITE ATTENDANCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT:
A meeting takes place at beginning of each school year with Truancy Prevention Social Worker, Truancy Advisor, school principal and staff members who typically are involved in overseeing attendance/truancy matters (i.e. clerk, counselor, other administrator, etc.) to develop and/or revise plan.

- Name school employee who is responsible for entering data, what is the specific process for entering data and determine Truancy Prevention team member that will assist.
- Name school employee who will be responsible for data collection (who pulls reports?).
- Truancy Advisor will pull 5 & 10 day unexcused absence report and excessive unexcused absence reports to review, analyze and consult with TP social worker to determine next steps
- Weekly data review and tracking of student attendance: Will be the shared responsibility of the school and Truancy Prevention Team.

INTERVENTIONS
1. **EARLY INTERVENTION** (2-3 unexcused absences)
   - Best practice- call by teacher/school staff, referral to Truancy Prevention Social Worker/Truancy Advisor if 3 unsuccessful attempts made and/or there is warranted concern.
   - Calls by clerks, administrators, truancy advisors, work studies, volunteers.

2. **LEVEL ONE INTERVENTION**: calls/interactions on referral and on students who have reached 5 unexcused absences.
   - Assessment, triage and connections with resources take place during these interactions.

3. **LEVEL TWO INTERVENTION**: Face-to-Face meeting to establish a truancy intervention plan with the family, student and school.
   - Assessment is conducted to determine the core/root cause(s) of the truancy
   - Solutions are discussed and agreed upon by all parties.
   - Solutions are documented on the Truancy Interventions Plan form.
   - All parties (family member, student and school representative) sign off on the plan.
   - All parties are provided with a copy of the plan (one copy goes into students attendance file)

4. **LEVEL THREE INTERVENTION**: If student continues to have unexcused absences.
   - Another face-to-face is conducted
   - Possible home visit.

5. **MONITOR & SUPPORT**:
   - If student attendance holds continue to monitor and support
   - If student reaches 10 unexcused absences move to Level Four Intervention.

6. **LEVEL FOUR INTERVENTION**: If student continues to miss with unexcused absences, parent is uninvolved after repeated attempts from school/Truancy Program Team:
   - Possible Home Visit
   - Possible referral to Juvenile Probation Office