

Spokane County *Models for Change*
Narrative of Truancy Process

Step 1:	Child accruing unexcused absences: School interventions
Participants:	School Staff, Child, Parent/Guardian
Decisions and/or Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance policies and procedures included in student manual 2. School confirms absences excused/ unexcused 3. Electronic or manual phone calls home 4. Discipline: school detention, in or out of school suspension 5. Letter or e-mail of concern mailed home to parent or guardian. 6. Offer/schedule conference between students, family, and school
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Secretaries, Attendance Secretaries, Building Administrators, Counselors, Teachers
Criteria:	Number of unexcused absences (RCW 28A.225.005; 28A.225.015; 28A.225.020)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policies, procedures, decisions and actions vary among every school in every district in Spokane County 2. Student must bring a note from guardian or doctor to excuse absence; Time allotted to bring in the note varies among schools and districts 3. Definition of unexcused absence and method of counting absences varies 4. Schools do not have the staff resources to intervene after every absence 5. Appropriate responses are outlined in the Becca Bill; however, exceptions are made b/c of circumstances in children's lives 6. WA RCW requires students be dropped from attendance rosters after 20 unexcused absences (WAC 392-121-108 (1))
Existing Data:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WSU school administrator survey conducted by all 14 districts, 66% response. 2. District self-report 3. Yearly OSPI unexcused absence district report 4. WSIPP truancy reports on school procedures and costs
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear and consistent policies and procedures within a school district: define an unexcused absence including single periods and school and school interventions for unexcused absences 2. Through student data system (for example, Skyward), automatically generate letter of concern to be sent home when child meets criteria of 2,5,7,10 unexcused absences. The letter could be from school or district. Be sure the letter includes warnings regarding possible consequences of noncompliance, as well as possibility of conference

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	<p>between school, youth, and parents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. School staff assigned to monitor attendance and initiate interventions 4. Give child and guardian WARNs 5. Arrange services to meet needs 6. Court provide education to school districts on the court process (possibly through all school district meeting each Fall) 7. Set up meeting with parents, youth, and school to talk about attendance problems earlier in process 8. Data: Number of children who respond to interventions, reengage in school and do not have stay petitions filed
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Step 2:	Child has 5 or 7 unexcused absences in a month or 10 in a year
Participants:	School Staff, Child, Parent/Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to record attendance and clarify absences 2. Decision to file a truancy stay petition. (As soon as eligible) 3. Conduct conference with student and guardian 4. Notify student and guardian of consequences of continued trancies 5. Possible change of school placement, schedule adjustment, or any additional interventions 6. Phone calls home
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Secretaries, Administrators, Counselors, Teachers
Criteria:	# of unexcused absences (RCW 28A.225.020)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Becca Bill outlines school requirements for unexcused absences; Application of this Bill varies in every school 2. The decision to file a petition is inconsistent across schools and districts, although a child has the eligible # of absences 3. Appropriate responses are outlined in the Becca Bill; however, exceptions are made b/c of circumstances in children's lives
Existing Data:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approximately 2,000 truancy stay petitions filed every year 2. Number of petitions each school district files 3. OSPI and AOC attendance data
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early and timely truancy petition filing 2. School staff assigned to monitor attendance and initiate interventions 3. Superior Court notify district of transfer children who have truancy stay petitions

Step 3:	School files truancy stay petition with Superior Court
Participants:	School Staff, Child, Parent/Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School staff fills out truancy stay petition paperwork

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	<p>and delivers (by mail or in person) to Superior Court</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. WVSD, SPS and EVSD hold Community Truancy Boards: format of the boards and actions after the boards vary
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Administrator, School Staff assigned to file paperwork
Criteria:	5 or 7 unexcused absences in a month or 10 unexcused absences in a year (RCW 28A.225.030)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After a petition is filed, interventions continue in some school districts: staff time and resources vary 2. In WVSD, SPS and EVSD: Child and guardian have the opportunity to attend CTB. If they do not attend, then case may go to court. Attempts may also be made to reschedule the youth for the CTB or other interventions, as appropriate. 3. Some school districts choose to not file truancy petitions b/c don't believe in court process, child is too old, child leaves school district 4. There is a need to find a way to follow/re-engage students who drop out or are expelled or disenrolled by the school. 5. There is no "cut off date" for filing stay petitions.
Existing Data:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of children with eligible absences vs number of children with truancy petitions 2. % of children dropping out of school
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document Truancy Specialist process 2. Study and document WVSD Community Truancy Board process and outcomes 3. Develop a Community Truancy Board Toolkit 4. If documentation shows they are effective, have a Community Truancy Board and Truancy Specialist in every district 5. Look into possibility that Truancy Stay petition paperwork could be electronically generated and filed, rather than in person or by mail

Step 4:	Superior Court receives, files stay petition and sends letter to child and family
Participants:	Truancy Coordinator, Prosecutor, Court Clerks
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Court Truancy Coordinator receives the stay petitions and checks them for completeness 2. Truancy Coordinator submits the Stay petitions to Prosecutor for approval/signature 3. The Stay petitions are given to the Prosecutor for filing and generation of Court case number 4. The Court Clerks send a copy of the completed/filed Stay Petition to the school 5. The Court Clerk sends a copy of the completed/filed Stay petition and a letter from the Judge to the student

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Who Decides and/or Acts:	Court Truancy Coordinator, Prosecutor, Court Clerks
Criteria:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5 or 7 unexcused absences in a month or 10 in a year. 2. Stay Petition generated, correctly filled out by school, and approved by the prosecutor (RCW 28A.225.030)
Notes:	It is difficult for schools to identify if/how many previous Truancy petitions have been filed on students, especially those who transfer from other districts.
Existing Data:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of stay petitions filed in Spokane County and WA state 2. AOC and OSPI data: Number of children who meet criteria for stay petition 3. WSIPP reports on court procedures and costs
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools could contact the Truancy Coordinator for information regarding students who transfer from other districts to see if they have previous Truancy petitions 2. Stay petitions need to be filed as soon as youth are eligible so the "Court" letter can (hopefully) encourage attendance

Step 5:	School monitors attendance: Does child attend school and meeting credit requirements?
Participants:	School Staff, Child, Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School conference with student and guardian 2. Possible change of school placement, schedule adjustments, other interventions 3. Truancy specialist, where available, works with child, family and school to re-engage child in school (home visits, meetings with school and family, connect child to school and community resources, etc)
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Administrator, Counselors, Teachers, Staff
Criteria:	# of unexcused absences (RCW 28A.225.020; 28A.225.025; 28A.225.030; 28A.225.035)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring varies among schools and districts 2. Staff resources and time are a challenge and vary
Existing Data:	Number of children who do not have stays lifted
Reform Opportunity:	Assign a staff member/s to monitor children with truancy petitions

Step 6:	Child complies with petition: attend school & meeting credit requirements-no further action is taken
Participants:	Child and school staff
Decisions and/or Action:	Child attends school and meets credit requirements
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Child and school staff
Criteria:	Whether or not the child attends school & meets credit requirements
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If child attends alternative school, child has to meet

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> credit requirements along with attendance 2. Truancy cases in compliance are routinely dismissed at the end of the school year in June
Existing Data:	Number of children who do not have stay lifted
Reform Opportunity:	School continues interventions and assigns a staff member/s to monitor children with truancy petitions

Step 7:	If student does not comply with stay petition, school continues interventions and files amended truancy petition with Superior Court
Participants:	School Staff, Child, Parent/Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasonable efforts made to have a conference with youth and guardian 2. Include all interventions (phone calls, letters sent, meetings with date, time, who attended and notice to families of truancy consequences) on amended petition
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Secretaries, Administrator, Counselors
Criteria:	Unexcused absences continue (RCW 28A.225.035)
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff time and resources to arrange a conference with families is challenging 2. Parent/Guardian and school collaboration can be challenging 3. Cut of date in mid-May
Existing Data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of stay petitions 2. Number of amended petitions 3. Number of petitions from each school and district in Spokane County
Reform Opportunity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School conference held for all truant children prior to fact finding hearing: focus on school reengagement and challenges preventing child from attending school; school, child and parent/guardian together develop a plan and agree on action steps 2. Child Study Team (CST) or other meeting held, prior to fact finding hearing, to make appropriate school placement changes 3. School attendance tracking systems could automatically generate notification and/or amended petitions as soon as a student qualifies 4. Amended petitions filed as soon as youth is eligible so court involvement can support schools efforts

Step 8:	Superior Court receives, staff reviews and files amended petition: Court date set
Participants:	Truancy Coordinator, Prosecutor, Court Clerk
Decisions and/or Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amended Petitions are sent to Truancy Coordinator for review 2. Truancy Coordinator checks the youth's prior history 3. Prosecutor then reviews the amended petition and prepares a proposed order to compel the youth to

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	<p>attend school. Prior to March, the order to compel is effective until October of the following school year or age 18 if this is the youth's 3rd order in the system. Orders filed after March 1st of a school year are effective until October of the following calendar year or age 18 if this is the youth's 3rd order in the system (this is subject to review if effective)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Truancy Coordinator then double checks to be sure all pertinent information is included in the document and calls the school or the prosecutor if something is missing. (Pertinent information could include steps taken by the school, what is the youth's primary language, contact info, case numbers, etc.) 5. The document is then submitted to the Prosecutor for review and signature 6. The document goes to the Court Clerk for filing and conforming 7. A court date is set approximately 2 weeks out (No personal service is expected by the school for the first setting. The Court sends notice to the student and guardian(s). If the family does not show at court, then the case is continued and the school is responsible for serving the student)
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Truancy Coordinator, Prosecutor, Court Clerk
Criteria:	Meets legal requirements for fact finding hearing (RCW 28A.225.035)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was agreed most youth are receptive to educational options at this point, so it would be beneficial if school staff who know the student could meet with students and their families prior to court to make a plan to continue their education 2. It was agreed that, if appropriate educational plans were made and the Court was notified, there would be good argument for these cases to go to continuance for monitoring, rather than fact finding
Existing Data:	Number of amended petitions filed
Reform Opportunity:	Necessary data: Number of students with repeat petitions

Step 9:	Public Defender, youth and family review filed petition
Participants:	Public Defenders and Prosecutor
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review information in file 2. Contact clients for information if necessary
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Lawyers
Criteria:	Meets legal requirements for fact finding hearing (RCW 28A.225.035)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lawyers attempt to contact clients and gather all necessary information for the case 2. Case could be continued on conditions (The Court needs to be advised of what the conditions will be) or whether fact finding is contested or agreed

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Existing Data:	Number of stay petitions resulting in fact finding hearing
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Defender and Prosecutor need appropriate school district contact information (create list of contacts) 2. Extra Public Defender and Prosecutor support when needed (shift of resources depending on needs)

Step 10:	If facts support petition by preponderance of evidence: Commissioner orders student to school. If not: case dismissed
Participants:	Commissioner, PD, Prosecutor, Truancy Coordinator, Child, Parent, School
Decisions and/or Action:	Whether or not to order child to school
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Commissioner
Criteria:	Do facts support case (RCW 28A.225.090)
Notes:	Information regarding the student should be supplied to the Court. Pertinent information should include: number of unexcused absences, whether they were whole days or periods, what interventions and notices occurred, why the student is missing school (if available), has the student's behavior changed since they were served with their Court notice, and how many prior truancy petitions
Existing Data:	
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have school representative provide updated information about child-either in writing or by a personal appearance 2. Commissioner sets reviews for high risk cases (<i>This has been implemented with a good success rate</i>) 3. If an early review hearing is set and schools determine the youth is in compliance they can call to have the Court strike the review 4. If an early review hearing is set and schools determine the youth is still not in compliance, they could/should file a contempt motion, serve it to the youth, and have it docketed for the same day as the early review 5. Necessary data: Number of students with repeat petitions 6. Provide information to Judicial Officer if previous Truancy petitions have been filed. (Is this the 1st, 2nd 3rd, etc.? It would be useful if this info. could be provided on the docket.)

Step 11:	School continues interventions and monitors child attendance
Participants:	School Staff, Child, Parent/Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child attends or does not attend school 2. School continues to contact child and/or parent/guardian

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Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Secretaries, Administrators, Counselors, Teachers
Criteria:	Child's attendance and academic progress (RCW 28A.225.035)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of school staff and resources to provide interventions and monitor 2. Families move and location unknown
Existing Data:	
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign school or Truancy Specialist to monitor children with truancy petitions 2. We need better ways of following up with students in contract based or internet school, home schooled, and enrolled in GED programs 3. Court will follow kids enrolled in GED programs if they are subject to a Truancy Petition

Step 12:	Additional absences: School files contempt motion with Superior Court
Participants:	School Staff
Decisions and/or Action:	Typically, when the student has 3 unexcused absences since the Fact Finding, the paperwork is sent to the Truancy Coordinator
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Staff
Criteria:	(RCW 28A.225.090)
Notes:	
Existing Data:	
Reform Opportunity:	

Step 13:	Truancy Coordinator and Prosecutor receives, reviews and files contempt motion: Court date set
Participants:	Truancy Coordinator, Prosecutor, Public Defender, Court Commissioner
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Court Coordinator receives paperwork and checks it for accuracy 2. The paperwork goes to the Prosecutor for review and signature. The Truancy Coordinator sets a court date 2-3 weeks out and the school/prosecutor ensures all parties have been served 3. School will coordinate date with Truancy Coordinator. (Court dates could be set earlier than 3 weeks out for students identified by the school, however, service would need to be done within time limits.)
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Prosecutor, Public Defender, Court Commissioner
Criteria:	Usually 3 unexcused absences since the amended petition (RCW 28A.225.090)
Notes:	Over 90% of Truancy Contempt hearings are non-contested.
Existing Data:	Number of Truancy Contempt hearings held
Reform Opportunity:	Set court dates ASAP

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Step 14:	If court finds a violation of the court order: Judicial Officer orders student to Juvenile Court sanctions. If not: contempt denied
Participants:	Judicial Officer, PD, Prosecutor, Child, Parent/Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate sanction for child 2. Single and multiple contempt findings are given graduated sanctions.
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Commissioner
Criteria:	Court order violated (RCW 28A.225.090)
Notes:	** Judicial Officers wanted to be very clear that Detention time is not the best option for truant youth. They emphasized the importance of appropriate sanctions for truant youth.
Existing Data:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of children who have contempts filed 2. Number of Truant youth sentenced to community service, Weekend Programs, holding cells and Detention time
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a school representative is not in attendance, Prosecutor/Truancy Coordinator e-mails information (sanctions, requirements of child) about signed order to schools. Copy of order could follow later; schools should continue to send letters, request meetings 2. Schools could attend by phone conference call 3. Commissioner set review in September of high risk cases and/or cases held in the spring

Step 15:	Possible sanctions: Weekend Program, community service, report to holding cell with purge conditions, Electronic Monitoring, up to 7 days of detention, SAC School or other options as appropriate. If parent is found in contempt, parents pay fine, perform community service, and/or attend week-end program
Participants:	Child, Guardian, Juvenile Court Staff, Commissioner, PD and Prosecutor
Decisions and/or Action:	Appropriate sanction
Who Decides and/or Acts:	Judicial Officer
Criteria:	Number of unexcused absences, circumstances, attitude of child/parent (RCW 28A.225.090)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single and multiple contempt findings are given graduated sanctions 2. Prosecutor makes recommendations
Existing Data:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of children from truancy contempts in Detention Alternatives Program (DAP) and detention and completion information 2. Data: Number of children who have truancy petitions and number of children in other JC programs (At-risk youth (ARY) and Children in Need of Services (CHINS))
Reform Opportunity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand sanctions to include Evidence Based

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	<p>Programs (EBP) for truant youth</p> <p>2. Data: Include truancy information in monthly “Becca Stats”</p>
Step 16:	Steps 11-15 may continue: Petitions can not be filed past June of each school year
Participants:	School personnel, Superior Court, Juvenile Court, Child, Guardian
Decisions and/or Action:	Whether or not to file amended petition and contempt/ additional contempt motion?
Who Decides and/or Acts:	School Staff, Commissioner, Sup. Court & Juv. Court Staff
Criteria:	Continued Unexcused Absences (RCW 28A.225.090)
Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some school districts choose to not file truancy petitions b/c don't believe in court process, child is too old, child leaves school district or circumstances in child's life 2. It is important to continue to file new, timely contempt motions if absences continue
Existing Data:	Numbers of petitions filed, hearings held, contempts found, and youth sentenced to and completing Court sanctions
Reform Opportunity:	