

Development of a Plan for Juveniles Alleged to be Truant

Presented to the Virginia Commission on Youth
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September 17, 2013



Overview

- ▶ The Commission on Youth has a long history of addressing truancy and the effects of missing school are well documented.
 - ▶ Truancy is linked to substance abuse, gang involvement, serious assault, and daytime crime.
 - ▶ We recognize that truancy is a symptom of a larger problem.
 - ▶ We must keep students connected to and interested in school.
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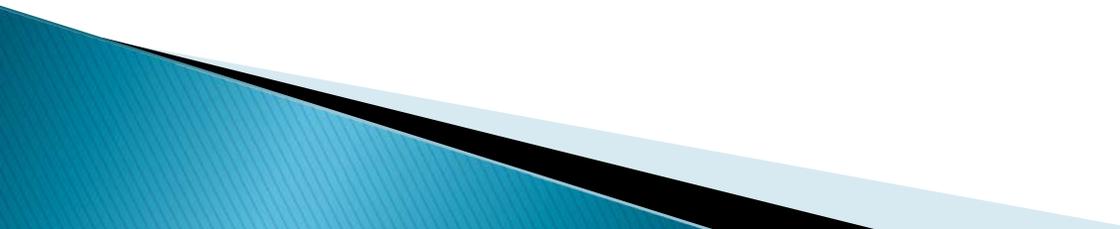
Overview

- ▶ As part of his All Students campaign, Governor McDonnell introduced HB 2060 (Yancey) and SB 1194 (Alexander) to prevent court referrals and provide students access to services prior to being adjudicated truant.
 - ▶ HB 2060 failed to report out of Appropriations, SB 1194 was signed into law with a re-enactment clause.
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SB 1194

- ▶ Building on the 10-day conference already required by Virginia law, this concept promotes early, school-level intervention by requiring a school-based multi-disciplinary team to develop a truancy assessment and plan. This could include a family assessment and planning team (FAPT) or a locally based team assembled by the Court.
 - ▶ The school principal is given broader discretion to determine whether to file a petition with the Court after the 6th unexcused absence; current law requires Court involvement. This allows a school attendance officer the option to proceed informally.
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SB 1194

- ▶ Additionally, SB 1194 specifies that a truancy plan must have measurable goals and outcomes to evaluate the student's progress.
 - ▶ It allows for earlier parental and community involvement.
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Trigger –Fifth Unexcused Absence

- ▶ Current: School makes direct contact with the parent and makes an attendance plan.
 - ▶ *SB 1194: School makes direct contact with the parent and develops written strategies to resolve non-attendance.*
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Trigger –Sixth Unexcused Absence

- ▶ Current: School convenes a conference with parent, school leadership, and may include a community based provider. *
- ▶ *SB 1194: School convenes school-based multi-disciplinary team to perform a truancy assessment and plan. Alternatively, school may refer to a locally-based team or FAPT for development of the plan.*

* Virginia schools reported holding 42,240 truancy conferences in 2009–10

Trigger –Unsatisfactory Progress

- ▶ Current: Upon the next absence, the school must refer the student to juvenile intake. If first petition, intake officer may in her discretion divert for development of a truancy plan or refer to interagency team for interagency review of truancy assessment and plan. If second petition, intake officer must file petition. **
- ▶ *SB 1194: At the discretion of the principal, the school refers student to juvenile intake. If first petition, intake officer may in her discretion divert for review and revision of the truancy plan or refer to interagency team for interagency review of truancy assessment and plan. If second petition, intake officer must file petition.*

** In 2011, there were 9,865 juvenile intake complaints filed due to status offenses.

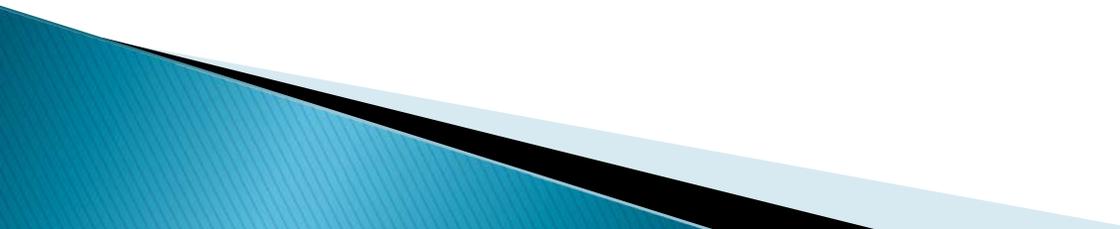
90 Days

- ▶ If satisfactory progress, plan continues.
- ▶ If unsatisfactory progress, intake officer files petition.

Survey

- ▶ To help determine the impact SB 1194, the Department of Education will send out a survey to school divisions.
 - ▶ The survey should reveal how many school divisions are using school-based multidisciplinary teams, and how well these teams are working in reducing truancy and preventing referrals to juvenile court.
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Survey Details

- ▶ The survey is anonymous and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.
 - ▶ Asks how the administration weighs the costs of multidisciplinary teams against the benefits to the student.
 - ▶ Identifies funding sources for services and team member participation.
 - ▶ Asks schools to identify successes and failures in the process.
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Opportunities

- ▶ The goal will be to collect and analyze school division data to determine how many additional teams would meet under SB 1194.
 - ▶ If services are being provided through FAPT, we will have the capacity to determine if services are being provided in accordance with each child's needs and if they are effective through the SAS data collection and analysis project at the Office of Comprehensive Services.
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Questions?

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