Attendance Matters

“Every Day Counts”

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About the presenter

• MCIU (MontcoWorks Now) Youth Workforce Career Counselor
• Norristown Municipality Councilman (4th District)
• Norristown Area School District (Truancy / Home and School)
• Youth Athletics (High School and Youth Football)
• Workforce Development, Education, Mental Health, Public Service & Nonprofits
ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW

GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEANS...

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS read well by the end of third grade

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS pass important courses

HIGH SCHOOLERS stay on track for graduation

COLLEGE STUDENTS earn their degrees

WORKERS succeed in their jobs

Too many absences—excused or unexcused—can keep students from succeeding in school and in life. How many are too many? 10% of the school year—that’s 18 missed days or 2 days a month—can knock students off track.

www.attendanceworks.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Lessons Missed Each Year</th>
<th>Days or Weeks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>47 lessons</td>
<td>8 days or 1 week and 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95 lessons</td>
<td>16 days or 3 weeks and 1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>142 lessons</td>
<td>24 days or 4 weeks and 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>190 lessons</td>
<td>32 days or 6 weeks and 2 days</td>
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</tbody>
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**ATTENDANCE MATTERS**

**WHAT DO YOUR ATTENDANCE FIGURES ACTUALLY MEAN?**

**BE SMART BE THERE!**

Percentages based on 190 academic days
Truancy – Also known as

AWOL
Playing Hooky
No-show
Absent without leave
Astray
Away

Gone
Missing
Not present
Ditching
Cutting
• South Africa - bunking, mulling, skipping or jippo
• Jamaica - skulling
• Antigua and Barbuda - skudding
• New Zealand and Australia - wagging, "jigging", ditching
• United Kingdom – bunking off, mitching, twagging, "skiving" or on the knock, sagging, doggin, playing tickie or puggin
• Scotland - on the hop, on the bunk, mitching, beaking, skiving, doggin it or on the beak
• Ireland, mitching, on the hop, dosing, on the duck or skiving
• Trinidad and Tobago - breaking biche
• Singapore and Malaysia - fly
• Pakistan and India – bunking
• South Korea, it is called ddaeng-ddaeng-i (땡땡이 [땡땡이 치다])
• Japan – zuruyasumi
• Indonesia - "bolos" or "cabut"
The Impact of Truancy (Quiz)
Truancy Defined

• The action of staying away from school without good reason; absenteeism.

• Missing 3 or more days of school without a valid reason or circumstance

• Chronic lateness over the course of a school year. Some school districts tally up the minutes late and convert them to unexcused absences
Excused vs Unexcused Absences

• Grow familiar with your school district handbook or attendance policy
• Students miss school for various reasons both good and bad (Birthdays vs Medical Procedures)
• Documentation, Documentation, Documentation (Don’t rely on your 7 year old) Follow Up, Be Prepared, Youth Forget!
• Understand the documentation / note policy in your district
• Real world work rule if all fails (What would your employer do?)
• Excused medical notes and other items can be denied depending on the circumstances
Pennsylvania Law

• In Pennsylvania all children of “compulsory school age” must attend school. (Kindergarten – Age 16)

• “Attend school” means that the child must go to a regular public school, a charter school, a licensed private or religious school, or an approved cyber or homeschooling program.

• Exception: A parent can legally withdraw their child if he/she is 16 years of age and holds a full-time job. A letter from the employer is required along with working papers which are provided by the school district.

• A student who turns 17 can legally make the decision to sign out of school unless under the Special Education Umbrella
Changes at the State Level in 2016

• **Act 138 of 2016** was signed by Gov. Tom Wolf in November of 2016 and went into effect with the 2017-18 school year. It gives clearer guidelines for truancy standards and penalties.

• Current Pennsylvania law stipulates that youth under the age of 17 must attend school and it sets out maximum penalties if they don’t. But it leaves many of the details to be defined by schools and district local magistrates. (Local Control)

• Kindergarten students are not exempt from missing school. Once a child is enrolled and begins school, they are also required to follow the same rules and regulations.
Changes cont’d

• The goal was not to fix a complicated, convoluted truancy law with a more complicated, convoluted truancy law. The goal was to really come up with a better overall care plan of corrective actions.

• Under the new law, the state wanted to outline a clear definition of truancy -- for the first time and implemented both

• The law states a child is truant after accumulating three unexcused absences in a school year. They are considered chronically truant after six absences

• Students cannot be disciplined for truant behavior in a way that excludes them from the regular education classroom. Under the new law, schools cannot expel, suspend, transfer, or reassign a child to a disciplinary placement such as Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) for truant
Student Assistance Improvement Plan (SAIP)

- Formerly known as the Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP)
- Proactive attempt for school districts to engage with both the family and student to identify the issues while working together to address them
- Individual school districts determine who’s responsible for handling this process
- A SAIP meeting, conference call or home visit should take place when a student misses 3 unexcused absences.
- Counselors, Truancy Officers, Home and School Visitors, Case Managers, IEP team, Assistant Principals, Therapists.
- Must be meaningful with well thought out interventions and recommendations.
- Family must be contacted and presented with a copy
- Required by state law before a family is summoned to district court and face potential penalties
Interventions & Key Contacts

• 504 Medical Plan Option (mental health or physical related circumstances)
• Case Management / IEP resource meetings
• School Counselors and connection to Community Based Programs
• Special Education and Pupil Services Departments
• Transportation Department
• Office of Children and Youth and diversionary services
• School Resource Officer and Local Police Department
District Court and the Citation Process

- Continued unexcused absences after SAIP completion / conference
- When can you be cited?
- Who will be cited?
- How much will the citations be?
- What are my rights?
- What to expect in district court?
- Can I bring an advocate or lawyer?
- Ultimate goal of district court?
- Long term ramifications of being found guilty of truancy and or having unpaid fines in the system?
Extenuating Circumstances

• Housing Issues beyond your control (Condemnation, displacement)
• Financial hardship resulting in the loss of housing and or school related items such as uniforms, clothing, needed supplies
• Unexpected tragic or traumatic turn of events
• Death in the family
• Hospitalization - mentally or physically (parent, guardian or student)
• Juvenile detention / incarceration
• Dependency related placement
McKinney Vento Homeless Act

• Under the McKinney-Vento Act, state departments of education and public school districts, (or state and local educational agencies (SEAs/LEAs) must ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. SEAs and LEAs must review and take steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of children or youth experiencing homelessness.

• Additionally, every SEA must designate an Office of Coordinator and every LEA must designate a local liaison to help children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed in school.
Every Student Succeeds Act

• Accountability - Under ESSA, states are accountable for focusing resources on low-performing schools and traditionally underserved students who consistently demonstrate low academic performance.

• Assessments - ESSA supports states in implementing high-quality assessments by providing new assessment flexibility, funding, and a new pilot program. These new policies will support teachers in using assessments to foster deeper learning among students, including the ability to master core academic content, think critically and solve complex problems, and communicate effectively.

• Teachers and School Leaders - Under ESSA, states and districts are responsible for improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders in increasing student academic achievement.
Pennsylvania - Chapter 339 Plan

• Pennsylvania requires all school districts to have a K-12 School Counseling Plan as part of Chapter 339. This plan addresses the importance of career planning for all students related to labor market projections and workforce needs.

• (For Example) The Franklin Regional School District’s Chapter 339 Plan aligns with the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Academic Standards for Career Education and Work. There are four main standards concentrations categories. They include Career Awareness and Preparation (discovering self-awareness, interests and relationships), Career Acquisition (getting a job), Career Retention and Advancement (keeping a job), and Entrepreneurship (creating a job).
Future Ready PA Index
Future Ready PA Index and Truancy

• The Future Ready PA Index will serve as Pennsylvania’s one-stop location for comprehensive information about school success, and will use a dashboard model to highlight how schools are performing and making progress on multiple indicators.

• Increases emphasis on student growth measures, which incentivizes a focus on all learners and is less sensitive to demographic variables.

• Incentivizes career awareness instruction beginning at the elementary level.

• Provides indicators of student success after graduation.

• Increases the emphasis on student access to course offerings such as AP, IB, college credit, and CTE programs of study.

• Incentivizes schools to offer career pathways that culminate with high value, industry recognized credentials.
Educational Alternatives

- Job Corps
- Centers for Technical Studies (Tech School)
- WIOA Youth Programs – Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act
- GED or High School Equivalency Programs
- District In House Cyber Programs (MVP, BVA)
- District in House Credit Recovery Programs
- Community College Partnerships if Available
- Co-op Learning / Work Opportunities
Contact Information

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