



Truancy Reduction

1. Purpose:

This funding is provided solely for the implementation of [chapter 291, Laws of 2017](#), the compulsory attendance laws.

2. Description of services provided:

This funding solely supports OSPI staff to develop guidance, disseminate best practices, communicate to schools and districts, provide professional development, provide technical assistance, inform data reporting requirements and interpretation, convene peer learning opportunities, and collaborate across agency and cross system partners to improve our state's approach to attendance & truancy.

3. Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:

N/A

Beneficiaries in 2021-22 School Year:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Number of School Districts: | All |
| Number of Schools: | N/A |
| Number of Students: | N/A |
| Number of Educators: | N/A |
| Other: | N/A |

Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): 1.33

Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 0

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| FY22 Funding: | State Appropriation: | \$178,000 |
| | Federal Appropriation: | \$0 |
| | Other Fund Sources: | \$0 |
| | TOTAL (FY22) | \$178,000 |

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?

No

5. State funding history:

| Fiscal Year | Amount Funded | Actual Expenditures |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2022 | \$178,000 | \$178,000 |
| 2021 | \$178,000 | \$141,781 |
| 2020 | \$178,000 | \$169,616 |
| 2019 | \$178,000 | \$164,537 |
| 2018 | \$186,000 | \$78,192 |

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:

| Fiscal Year | Number of Districts |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 2022 | 295 school districts |

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

The truancy program has grown and become more established since staffing was funded through this proviso. Throughout the pandemic, OSPI had to pivot to respond to defining absences from remote learning through administrative code, this position led the rule change work, and subsequent guidance and TA to schools and districts that spanned the topics of defining, tracking, responding to, providing supports for student absences, and a wide range of reengagement/disengagement topics. Throughout the pandemic, this position supported a monthly state-wide networking and learning opportunity that supported those responsible for attendance and truancy in school districts as they managed and overwhelming caseload of students that had significant absences or had completely disengaged.

8. Evaluations of program/major findings:

School districts consistently over the last several years, even prior to the pandemic, under file truancy petitions on students that meet the criteria. During the three school years prior to the pandemic (SY 2017, 2018, 2019), of the students that met the criteria for a truancy petition, only 11.3%, 12.6%, and 11.1% ever had a truancy petition filed on them. Anecdotal evidence based on state-wide conversations with stakeholders have indicated that schools and district systems for responding to absences and truancy have much room for improvement.

9. Major challenges faced by the program:

Schools and districts do not follow the truancy law consistently across the state. A fundamental purpose of the Becca law is to ensure that key societal organizations, specifically schools, are paying attention when a student is absent, and taking steps to support a student and family. This includes understanding when a student's home life is not safe. There is a need to engage key stakeholders in a cross-system discussion about how we can improve the safety net and early warning systems for our students most at-risk.

Traditional approaches to truancy which rely on a punitive approach, are still widely used. The elimination of the valid court order which allowed courts to place students in juvenile detention has resulted even less intervention from courts in some areas and contributed to a more hands off approach in some districts. Improving and enhancing school and districts' tiered approaches and early warning systems is critical, as we have learned even schools with strong systems prior to the pandemic were overwhelmed during the last two years, and now are picking up the pieces. The state, and its partners, have a key role in supporting schools, districts, and courts to rethink this approach to one of support and addressing barriers to learning, either student or system caused. The District Truancy & Excessive Absenteeism liaison position, required by law, is not funded and is often one small part of someone's job, and often without positional authority to influence school or district practice. School districts continue to see truancy as an unfunded mandate.

10. Future opportunities:

Future opportunities include building on the pilot implementation of a temporarily ESSER funded regional capacity to support schools and districts address absences and truancy. ESDs have a key role to play to provide a need layer of support and reengagement services, so that courts can truly be a last resort in truancy cases. They also play a key role in supporting training and coaching of districts to embed attendance and early warning systems in their multi-tiered system of supports through teaming, data, tiered interventions, and community partnerships as well as support districts with developing their Community Engagement Boards.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

ESSB 5693, Sec. 522(4)(g)(iii) - \$178,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$178,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for implementation of [chapter 291, Laws of 2017](#) (truancy reduction efforts).

12. Other relevant information:

OSPI partnered with ESD 112 to develop a robust set of tools, resources and trainings for districts to build or enhance their Community Engagement Boards. See the website [here](#).

13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:

See [OSPI's grantee list](#).

14. Program Contact Information:

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