Washington State Institute for Public Policy

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TRUANCY AND DROPOUT PROGRAMS: INTERVENTIONS BY WASHINGTON'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Summary

In 2008, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy was directed by the legislature to study various aspects of truancy. We first investigated the truancy problem in school districts, and found the following:

- Statewide, the number of students with ten or more unexcused absences out of all enrolled students was 4.9 percent.
- This truancy rate was much greater for high school (11.7 percent) than elementary school students (1.2 percent).
- School districts with larger enrollments and a greater percentage of minority students had higher truancy rates.

Next, we focused on school-based interventions for truant youth or students at-risk of dropping out. In a survey, 173 districts indicated the following about high school programs in 2007–08:

- 50 districts (29 percent) had targeted programs for truant and at-risk students. The most common programs were alternative schools and credit recovery strategies.
- 39 districts (22 percent) reported programs and services that were not specific to truancy and dropping out, but could be helpful to at-risk students.
- 84 districts (49 percent) indicated that they had no relevant interventions.
- These figures are likely to be underestimates of the numbers of districts with targeted and other types of interventions because interventions were reported in other locations (e.g., district websites).

In addition to school-based services, districts throughout the state have been involved in at least four collaborative efforts with county and community agencies that intervene with truant and at-risk students. These collaborations serve large numbers of youth and provide a diverse set of services to participants.

Dropping out, also known as school failure, is a serious problem throughout the country.[1] Beyond the lack of academic skill attainment, dropping out is a concern because it is associated with various negative outcomes for youth (e.g., increased delinquency/criminality, unemployment, etc.).[2]

When students consistently miss school, they may fall behind academically and become disengaged from school. Research has established that without attachment to school, truant youth are at greater risk for dropping out than their peers.[3] Thus, throughout the country, policymakers are interested in intervening with chronically truant students and students who are otherwise at risk for dropping out in order to prevent negative outcomes.

THIS STUDY

In 2008, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute of Public Policy (Institute) to survey truancy intervention programs and services currently available in school districts and to report on gaps in accessing services. Due to the close link between chronic truancy and dropping out, we investigated not only programs targeting students with specific attendance problems but also those that are directed toward students at a greater risk

[1] C. B. Swanson (2004). *Who graduates? Who doesn't? A statistical portrait of public high school graduation, class of 2001*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

[2] L. N. Robins & K. S. Ratcliff (1980). The long-term outcome of truancy. In I. Berg & L. Hersov (Eds.), *Out of school* (pp. 85-110). Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.; A. Hibbett, K. Fogelman, & O. Manor (1990). Occupational outcomes of truancy. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 60*(1), 23-36.; C. E. Rouse. (2007). Consequences for the labor market. In C. R. Belfield & H. M. Levin (Eds.), *The price we pay: Economic and social consequences of inadequate education* (pp. 99-124). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

[3] D. S. Kaplan, B. M. Peck, & H. B. Kaplan (1995). A structural model of dropout behavior: A longitudinal analysis. *Applied Behavior Science Review, 3*(2), 177-193.; K. L. Alexander, D. R. Entwisle, & C. S. Horsey. (1997). From first grade forward: Early foundations of high school dropout. *Sociology of Education, 70*(2), 107-127.

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of school failure. We also investigated several community-based collaborations that include school district partners.

This research is part of a larger study of truancy that examined the practices of Washington's juvenile courts and school districts (see "Study Language"). A review of the national literature on truancy and dropout programs was also conducted.[4] We concluded that two general intervention approaches—alternative educational programs (e.g., schools-within-schools) and school-based mentoring programs—offer promise. However, a comparison of evidence-based truancy and dropout interventions with interventions currently implemented in Washington State was not possible because the meta-analysis did not generate a list of specific ("brand name") programs that are effective.

This report is presented in three sections. We first discuss school-based interventions with truant students and students at-risk of dropping out. Then, we explore school services that state experts believe to be lacking for these populations, as well as barriers to accessing services that exist. Finally, we describe several collaborative efforts in Washington that address truancy and dropping out.

BACKGROUND

While high truancy and dropout rates are problematic throughout the country, they clearly differ by state. Below, we describe the scope of these problems in Washington. Afterwards, we review the interventions that state policymakers have mandated and those that have been left to local school discretion. The latter are investigated in this report and differ greatly by district.

Washington's Dropout Problem

In Washington, only 70 percent of high school students graduate on time (and another 5 percent graduate late).[5] Although, on average, less than 6 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 drop out ("annual dropout rate"), by the end of 12th grade each cohort or class loses over 21 percent of its students ("cumulative dropout rate").[6]

Study Language
ESHB 2687, Sec. 610 (19)
Chapter 329, Laws of 2008

"…Washington state institute for public policy [shall] analyze local practices regarding RCW 28A.225.020, 28A.225.025, and 28A.225.030 [truancy laws].

(a) The institute shall:

(i) sample school districts' and superior courts' expenditures in fiscal years 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 used to comply with [truancy laws];

(ii) evaluate evidence-based, research-based, promising, and consensus-based truancy intervention and prevention programs and report on local practices that could be designated as such;

(iii) survey school district truancy petition and intervention programs and services currently available and report on any gaps in accessing services;

(iv) survey the districts' definitions of "absence" and "unexcused absence";

(v) survey the courts' frequency of use of contempt proceedings and barriers to the use of proceedings; and

(vi) analyze the academic impact of RCW 28A.225.030 by sampling school districts' student academic records to ascertain the students' post-petition attendance rate, grade progression, and high school graduation for students where the school district filed a truancy petition in superior court.

(b) In conducting its analysis, the institute may consult with employees and access data systems of the office of the superintendent of public instruction and any educational service district or school district and the administrative office of the courts, each of which shall provide the institute with access to necessary data and administrative systems."

Dropout rates are not distributed equally across the population. American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students in Washington have disproportionately high percentages of dropouts. Also, schools with larger numbers of low-income students have greater dropout rates than other schools. Both findings are consistent with national statistics.[7]

Washington's Truancy Problem

As explained earlier, students who ultimately drop out often undergo a gradual process of disengagement from school. One marker of disengagement is repeated truancy, that is, the student misses multiple school days without an official excuse (e.g., medical problems). In

[4] T. Klima, M. Miller, & C. Nunlist (2009b). *What works? Targeted truancy and dropout programs in middle and high school*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-06-2201.
[5] L. Ireland (2007). G*raduation and dropout statistics for Washington's counties, districts, and schools: School year 2005–2006*. Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Swanson, 2004.

Washington, chronic truancy is identified at seven unexcused absences per month or ten per year.[8] These are the points at which school districts are required to file a truancy petition with the courts (this process is explained later).

Every year, Washington's school districts report to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) the number of students in their district with ten or more unexcused absences during the past school year. This information is published by OSPI in a legislative report.[9]

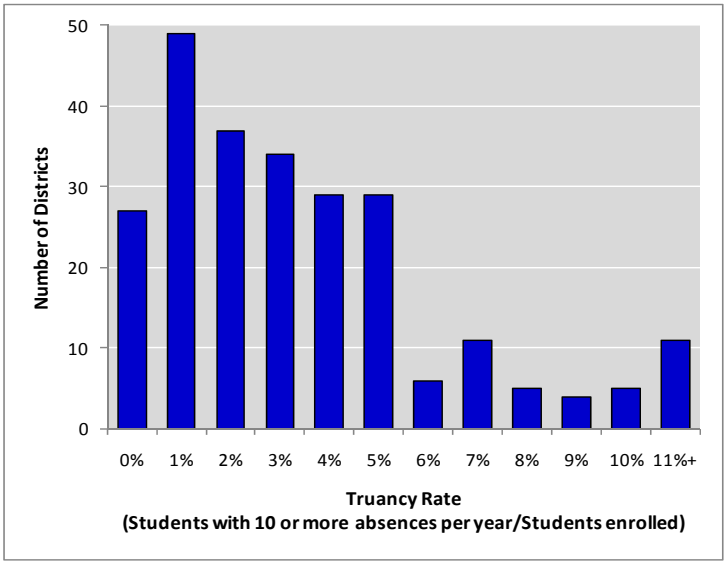
We reviewed this report from the 2007–08 school year and calculated a truancy rate for each K–12 district (247). The truancy rate is *the number of chronically truant students (with ten or more unexcused absences per year) divided by the number of enrolled students.* This figure can be viewed as a measure of the truancy problem in Washington's districts.

Statewide, the truancy rate of K–12 school districts in 2007–08 was 4.9 percent.[10] However, Exhibit 1 shows the variation in rates across districts. Some districts did not have any chronically truant students in their district (i.e., 0 percent). Approximately half of the districts (49 percent) had between 1 and 3 percent chronic truancy. Fifteen percent indicated that more than 6 percent of their student body was chronically truant. For the truancy rates of particular school districts, see the Appendix.

Several issues should be kept in mind when evaluating these figures. First, the truancy rates are calculated based on the number of students who missed at least ten unexcused days in a school year, which is the minimum requirement for filing a truancy petition in Washington. Note that this is a large number of days to miss school (without an excuse), and individuals in this group are likely to be disengaged from school already. Other students who are beginning to disengage (e.g., five to nine unexcused absences) and may also be at risk for dropping out are not represented here. To the extent that truancy rates lack a measure of low-grade or developing truancy issues, they do not capture the full extent of this problem.

Second, the truancy rates reflect the percentage of chronically truant students in the *entire* district, including elementary and high school students.[11] When these two groups are separated, the statewide truancy rates differ dramatically: for students in grades 1 through 8 the rate is 1.2 percent, whereas for students in grades 9 through 12 the rate is 11.7 percent. Thus, the overall truancy rates in Exhibit 1 mask a more serious truancy problem in advanced grades.

Exhibit 1
Overall Truancy Rates of K–12 School Districts in Washington, 2007–08



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[8] RCW 28A.225.030.

[9] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2009). *Reports to the Legislature, Truancy/Becca Bill, 2007–08*, available at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/truancy/default.aspx>.

[10] The truancy rate of K–8 districts statewide is 1.2 percent, indicating that younger students in Washington generally exhibit less chronic truancy than do older (high school) students.

[11] Middle school students are included with elementary school students, such that districts reported on truancy in grades 1–8 together. Thus, we are unable to determine truancy rates for middle school students only.

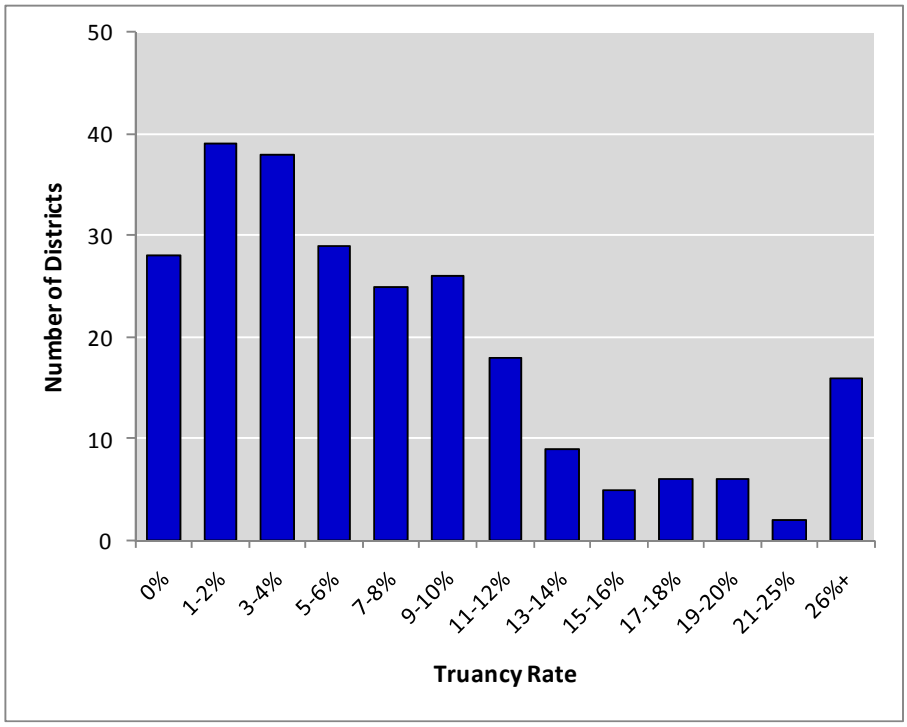
Exhibit 2 presents truancy rates for high school students *only*. Note that when only high school students are examined, 46 percent of K–12 districts have a truancy rate that is greater than 6 percent (compared with 15 percent of districts when elementary school students are included). Sixteen districts report a truancy rate of more than 25 percent, indicating that more than one-fourth of their high school students regularly miss school. High school truancy rates for individual districts are reported in the Appendix.

Because the truancy rates differ across school districts, we were interested in testing whether district characteristics are associated with varying truancy rates. Using multivariate statistical analyses, we found that districts with the following characteristics had higher truancy rates:[12]

- Larger enrollment size
- Higher percentage of minority students[13]

Districts with higher truancy rates may have more "difficult" student populations, may respond less adequately to truancy problems, or both. There may also be systemic factors, such as levels of local funding, that influence truancy rates. The reasons for differential rates cannot be distinguished with the data presented here.

Exhibit 2
High School Truancy Rates of K–12 School Districts in Washington, 2007–08



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[12] Multiple regression model: $R^2 = .26$, $F(3, 243) = 27.70$, $p < .001$. Percentage minority students (b = .47, $p = .000$) and district size (b = .17, $p = .025$) were significant predictors of truancy rate. Rural-urban commuting area designation was not a significant predictor (b = .08, $p = .275$); that is, truancy rates do not reliably differ based on whether the district is located in an urban or rural area.

[13] The percentage of minority students in a district is highly correlated with the percentage of bilingual students (r = .81) and students receiving free/reduced meals (r = .60). Due to problems with collinearity among the three variables, only one was included in the regression model; however, we recognize that the other two variables likely predict truancy rates as well.

Washington Laws Addressing Truancy

For over a century, the state of Washington has mandated that children attend school.[14] In 1979, laws[15] were enacted requiring the following specific actions from schools, which are still required today:

- Parent notification of unexcused absences,
- Parent and student conference for the purpose of analyzing causes for the absences, and
- Steps taken to eliminate or reduce the student's absences.

Notably, specific "trigger points," or numbers of absences required to trigger each action, were not established at that time.

In addition, the truancy petition process, whereby courts intervene with chronically truant youth, was introduced in 1979. Today, this process includes a court order for the child to attend school. The court may also offer special programs to avoid additional court proceedings, provide case management and referrals to services, require hearings, and even order detention (if the student does not comply with the attendance orders). For more details about the truancy court process, see Miller, Klima, and Nunlist (2009).[16] Note that, in 1979, filing of the petition was left to the schools' discretion.

In 1992, the following trigger points were established:[17]

- Parent notification after one unexcused absence, and
- Parent/student conference and steps to address the problem after two unexcused absences.

Additionally, a trigger point for the petition process was set at five unexcused absences per *year,* but the decision to utilize this process remained at the schools' discretion. That is, after five unexcused absences, schools could choose to file a petition.

In 1995, Washington passed a law known as the "Becca Bill," intended to empower parents, schools, law enforcement, and courts to intervene early in the lives of at-risk youth.[18] Truancy was included because it was believed to put children at risk for dropping out and delinquency; thus, the truancy provisions sought to hold these parties accountable for remediating children's attendance problems.

According to the Becca Bill, schools are *required* to file a truancy petition.[19] The trigger points for a petition, as set in 1995, were five unexcused absences per month or ten unexcused absences per year. Additionally, the Becca Bill first defined community truancy boards, which serve as another mechanism for helping students and parents problem-solve barriers to attendance.[20]

In 1996, several important modifications were made to the Becca Bill that have remained in place.[21] First, the trigger point for the petition changed from five to seven unexcused absences per month (or ten unexcused absences per year).

Additionally, the definition of an unexcused absence was established. Lastly, additional school actions were mandated at five unexcused absences per month, which include:

- Entering into an attendance agreement with the student/parents,
- Referring the student to a community truancy board, or
- Filing a truancy petition.

Note that the latter provision is one of several options; thus, as of 1996, the schools may, but are not required to, file truancy petitions after five unexcused absences per month.

[14] RCW 28A.225.010.
[15] RCW 28A.225.020; 1979 ex.s. c 207 § 1.
[16] M. Miller, T. Klima, & C. Nunlist (in press). *Implementation and Cost of Washington's Truancy Laws in the Juvenile Courts.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
[17] RCW 28A.225.020; 1992 c 205 § 202.
[18] C. Webster (1996). *Truancy: Preliminary findings on Washington's 1995 law*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 96-01-2201.
[19] RCW 28A.225.030; 1995 c 312 § 68.
[20] Community truancy boards are described in Miller et al., in press, op. cit.
[21] RCW 28A.225.030; 1996 c 134 § 3.

In sum, Washington law mandates various school interventions at specific trigger points in the child's progression. However, it is also important to note that each school district retains some discretion. For instance, the law directs schools to "take steps to eliminate or reduce the child's absences."[22] The law suggests intervention strategies, such as adjustment of the child's schedule or curriculum, remedial instruction, vocational courses or work experience, referral to a community truancy board, alternative school or program, and referral to additional services for the child and family. However, since no *specific* course of action is required by this provision, schools maintain a degree of autonomy that allows for wide variation in their approach to truancy. The following analysis aims to better understand the diversity in school district practices with truant youth.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS BY WASHINGTON'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Methods

To assess school district practices and policies, a survey was sent to Washington's 295 districts.[23] Because serious truancy problems and dropping out occur mostly in high school, in this report we focus on the 247 districts that contain at least one high school (K–12 districts). Of these 247 districts, 173 (70 percent) reported whether or not they had truancy- or dropout-specific programs in their high schools. These districts are similar to K–12 districts that did not respond to the survey, with the exception of enrollment size: districts in our survey are significantly larger than other districts in the state, thus, the findings do not fully reflect the practices of smaller districts.[24]

Findings

We first asked the 173 representatives whether high schools in their district have any programs *specifically* designed to reduce chronic truancy or the likelihood of dropping out. The responses indicated that 89 districts (51 percent) have at least one such program, while the rest do not.

However, upon examination of the interventions listed by district representatives, we determined that only 50 districts (29 percent) have discrete programs that specifically target at-risk student populations either by explicitly defining these students as their population of interest or by addressing their specific needs. These districts are similar to other K–12 districts with respect to the demographic characteristics of their students but are larger in size and have twice the truancy rate of others, suggesting that they may have the greatest need for such programs.

Among these districts, the most common programs are:[25]

- Alternative schools, and
- Credit recovery options (e.g., online or in-person, sometimes through an accelerated curriculum).

Alternative schools educate students in separate facilities from traditional schools. They often offer at-risk students remedial instruction, mental health services, case management, and specialized on-site services (e.g., childcare for offspring). Credit recovery options allow students to make up class credits that they did not earn, because they did not enroll or successfully complete one or more classes.[26] In Washington, a certain number and type of credits are necessary in order to graduate.

Alternative schools and credit recovery programs accommodate the individual circumstances of students who have not been successful in traditional schools to date. Thus, it appears that when districts provide targeted services for at-risk students, they primarily focus on flexibility in the medium, pace, and setting of curriculum delivery.

[22] RCW 28A.225.020.

[23] For more details about the design of the survey and district participation in it, see T. Klima, M. Miller, & C. Nunlist (2009a). *Washington's truancy laws: School district implementation and costs*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-02-2201.

[24] No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups by filing rate, truancy rate, percentage minority or bilingual students, percentage students with free/reduced meals, or percentage students in Special Education.

[25] Districts in the sample also reported targeted truancy or dropout programs that include case management or mentoring. However, the majority of these programs are funded by Building Bridges grants (see Partnerships section), which suggests that these are innovative efforts and not standard school practice.

[26] For example, students who must work during the day and are unable to enroll in certain courses, or students who failed a class needed for graduation.

Since the 1990s, the number of public alternative schools in the United States has increased.[27] On average, alternative schools make up 7 percent of the nation's schools, while in Washington this figure is 12 percent.[28] In fact, Washington ranks as the sixth highest state with respect to percentage of alternative schools. In the 2008–09 school year, 229 alternative schools served 34,331 high school students in 128 districts;[29] this figure represents 10 percent of Washington's high school population.

Several observations about the number of districts reporting targeted programs warrant further discussion. First, we believe that this figure is an underestimate for two reasons:

- In conducting random checks of district websites among districts that reported not having truancy- or dropout-specific interventions, we found multiple instances of programs that would fit this category (e.g., credit recovery programs).
- Also, in the survey, we asked whether districts regularly refer chronically truant high school students to alternative schools. Of the 84 districts that originally reported no targeted programs, 37 (44 percent) endorsed referrals to alternative schools. It is likely that many (if not most) of these referrals are to schools that serve at-risk students within the district; thus, it stands to reason that many more districts offer alternative schools as a targeted intervention.

Second, we wish to address the interventions that we determined *not* to be targeted interventions for truant and at-risk students. It is clear from these data that schools provide programs for overlapping student groups[30] and other types of services that are not specific to truant or at-risk students but may help these students nonetheless. Examples of common interventions from the survey include:

- Counseling/life skills classes or drug/ alcohol treatment,
- Alternative curricula (e.g., school-within-a-school, adjusted hours),
- Opportunities for making up class work and homework help (e.g., after school study table, Saturday school),
- Behavioral contingencies (rewards and punishments), and
- Other accommodations (e.g., providing alarm clocks, transportation).

Once again, during random district website checks, we uncovered many more of these interventions than were listed by survey respondents, providing additional evidence of underreporting.

In sum, schools may serve truant and at-risk students via targeted programs, as well as other services and interventions. We found that alternative schools and credit recovery options are two ways that Washington's schools support struggling students. Due to a somewhat biased sample (dominated by larger districts) and presumed underreporting in our survey, it is likely that we did not fully capture the extent of school interventions. Thus, it is not clear how prevalent such programs are among districts in the state.

[27] B. Kleiner, R. Porch, & E. Farris (2002, September). *Public alternative schools and programs for students at risk of education failure: 2000–01*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

[28] National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics (2008). *Table 98: Public elementary and secondary schools, by type and state or jurisdiction: 1990–91, 2000–01, and 2006–07*. Retrieved June 11, 2009, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_098.asp. NCES defines an alternative education school as "A public elementary/secondary school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school; provides nontraditional education; serves as an adjunct to a regular school; and falls outside of the categories of regular, special education, or vocational education." The nationwide statistic is a per state average weighted by each state's total student enrollment.

[29] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2008, December). *Downloadable files and school information, school building directory*. Retrieved June 23, 2009, from http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/pubdocs/directory/bldg.xls. The vast majority of alternative schools in Washington serve high school students; however, there are 30 schools for elementary school students.

[30] Examples of overlapping groups (i.e., students characterized by particular problems that may also be experienced by truant or at-risk students) include: students with mental health/substance abuse issues, students who need to work during the day (to financially support their family), students who are struggling academically (in one or more classes), and low-income youth.

GAPS IN ACCESSING SCHOOL SERVICES

The legislature directed the Institute to identify "any gaps in accessing services."[31] In order to overcome weaknesses in our survey data (which did not allow us to accurately infer the prevalence of various types of school interventions), we turned to experts in the state who are particularly knowledgeable about service delivery to at-risk populations in the educational system.

We talked with seven individuals, some of whom work directly with students in the field, while others address these issues at a systemic or policy level.[32] In selecting experts who were both internal and external to the educational system, we included a group of informants with diverse perspectives. All individuals are in managerial positions within their respective agencies, reflecting their experience and knowledge. Information was collected through brief phone interviews. The following sections summarize the insights and opinions of the seven informants.

Services Missing From the Schools

Almost without exception, our informants expressed the need for struggling students to have one caring adult in the school system who is responsible for helping them. Several informants argued that a robust intervention required an individual, such as a case manager or intervention specialist, whose sole responsibility is to work with at-risk students. A couple of informants offered other possibilities, such as pairing students with currently available school personnel in various positions (i.e., teachers, coaches).

According to informants, the responsibilities of such "case managers" should include:

- Conducting an in-depth assessment of the reasons for truancy and other school problems,
- Referring the student and family to academic and community services, and *actively* facilitating the connection, and
- Maintaining continued contact with the student and, importantly, their parents.

In addition, two informants noted that students who require reintegration into the educational system—either due to an extended absence (e.g., suspension, incarceration) or having dropped out—are generally unsupported in their school. A case manager could be helpful in actively "retrieving" students from the community and facilitating the complex transition.

Some districts already utilize case managers, especially districts that received a grant from the state Building Bridges program (see Partnerships section). Based on brief survey responses and grantee descriptions in legislative reports, it appears that current case managers analyze barriers to school attendance and achievement with at-risk students, as well as refer students and their families to services. However, from these responses and descriptions, it is less clear whether they are active in ensuring that their clients obtain the necessary services and how long they maintain contact with them.

Two informants mentioned that career/technical services are lacking. Both referred to a range of programs that include in-school classes, skills centers, and apprenticeships in the community. Informants acknowledged that some services already exist (e.g., skills centers, Career Academies), but noted that their student capacity is limited. One informant emphasized that, in addition, career orientation services, which raise awareness regarding the connection between school and later employment and quality of life, are necessary.

Barriers in Accessing Services That Exist

Most informants highlighted the critical role of parents in collaborating with school personnel and obtaining appropriate services for their children. However, they noted that many parents are unaware of their child's school struggles and uninformed about the options available to them because schools do not maintain continued contact with parents, engage them in their child's education, and provide the tools for them to intervene. For instance, some informants mentioned that state-mandated phone calls notifying parents of their child's unexcused absence are conducted via automated calling mechanisms. In such cases, there is no personal contact with the parent; therefore, the opportunity to recruit parents into problem-solving early on is overlooked.

[31] ESH 2687, Sec. 610 (19).

[32] We would like to thank the following individuals for offering their time and insight: Marcia Stegman, West Valley School District (Spokane); Ruth McFadden, Seattle Public Schools; Annie Blackledge, OSPI; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals; Lile Holland, Washington Association for Learning Alternatives; Anne Lee, TeamChild; and Janis Avery, Treehouse.

Another type of barrier is a lack of collaboration among different groups that serve at-risk students. Several informants discussed the disparate goals, structures, and funding sources of the education system and other systems, such as mental health, juvenile justice, and social services. Such differences often lead to practical problems in coordination and integration. For example, one informant discussed the inclusion of mental health services in schools. Whereas counselors or therapists might desire at least one hour per week with each student, educators view this time as critical to ensuring that students do not fall further behind in their schoolwork. This competition for students' time during the school day means that mental health services are relegated to after-school hours, which creates greater obstacles for students and families to access counseling.

In addition, there may be problems of collaboration within the school system. For instance, one informant observed a lack of coordination between school officials responsible for truancy and disciplinary matters (e.g., administrators and truancy coordinators) and those who intervene with learning and other problems (e.g., Special Education departments). Based on informant accounts, lack of intra- and inter-agency cooperation can lead to an inconsistent referral process, as well as a lack of "user-friendly" services for students and families.

Finally, many informants mentioned that transportation is a significant barrier to accessing services. This gap was reported particularly for youth in rural areas, where services are located far away from one another (e.g., the child's home school and skills center, between which the child's day is split). This gap was also noted for existing after-school services (e.g., tutoring). Children who rely on school buses may be forced to return home at the end of the day, rather than taking advantage of additional supports.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR TRUANCY REDUCTION AND DROPOUT PREVENTION

In addition to programs implemented by districts in schools or alternative educational settings, some districts have collaborated with other institutions (such as the courts or community organizations) to address the problems of chronically truant and at-risk youth. Collaborations with these structures were funded and implemented in Washington in the past.[33] Next, we describe four current initiatives, which are also summarized in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3
Community Partnerships Targeting Truancy and Dropout in 2007–08

Partnership	Location	Number of Students Served	Interventions Included in Program
Building Bridges[a]	Washington State	2,359 850 147	Prevention activities Early intervention (alternative education, tutoring, case management, mentoring, life skills training/counseling) Dropout recovery
Truancy Project	Clark and Cowlitz Counties	695	Case management, community truancy board
Positive Steps	Pierce County	101	Case management, parent mentoring, family therapy, multidisciplinary teams
PASS Project	Thurston County	N/A[b]	Case management, community truancy board, youth court

[a] Grant funds were distributed beginning in February 2008. The number of participants reported here represent the 11 grantees that were able to immediately offer services and track the individuals served. The number of students served in 2008–09 is expected to increase. For more information on number of participants, see C. Blodgett, L. Holmes, & B. Wagner (2009, February). *Building Bridges: Dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval*. Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
[b] PASS commenced in July 2008; therefore, in the 2007–08 school year no students were served. According to its manager, the program has a capacity of 200 students.

[33] For instance, the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJJAC) has funded various projects for status offenders.

Building Bridges Grant Program: Statewide

In 2007, the legislature directed OSPI to establish the Building Bridges initiative, a dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval system.[34] One component of the initiative was the provision of grants to partnerships between school districts and other organizations (e.g., community agencies) that serve at-risk middle and high school students and their communities.

In 2008, state general funds supported 15 grants, which were awarded to school and non-school entities (e.g., community groups). Some grantees include multiple districts; thus, in all, 36 districts have participated in the Building Bridges grant program.[35]

The 15 projects are characterized by diverse approaches, but all include activities based on three goals.[36] First, *prevention* activities address universal dropout risks, such as communicating the value of education; an example of such an endeavor includes a local campaign that increases awareness about the importance of high school completion.

Second, *early intervention* targets students who demonstrate significant difficulties and are at-risk of dropping out. These activities include:

- Alternative educational programs (e.g., career and technical education, night school),
- Educational supports (e.g., tutoring, credit recovery),
- Case management (especially linking students to community resources),
- Mentoring and advocacy, and
- Psychosocial interventions (e.g., counseling, life skills training, mental health screenings).[37]

Finally, grantees are responsible for dropout *recovery*, that is, re-enrolling high school-age students who have dropped out in an educational program. This goal is accomplished via outreach to individuals in the community, re-engagement strategies, and supports for the transition. This goal is unique insofar as most dropout efforts in the state are focused on preventing youth from leaving educational settings in the first place, not on retrieving students after their departure.

Truancy Project: Clark and Cowlitz Counties

In the Truancy Project, Educational Service District (ESD) 112 has partnered with Clark and Cowlitz Counties to intervene with students who have a truancy petition filed in the courts. Previously, in Cowlitz County, students were referred to the project immediately following the filing of a petition and prior to an initial hearing, whereas in Clark County only youth who continued to struggle with attendance *after* the initial hearing were referred. Thus, Clark County referred a smaller proportion of truant youth than did Cowlitz. However, following a recent Appellate Court ruling,[38] Clark's referral process now resembles that of Cowlitz.

Students who participate in the Project experience the following interventions:

- Orientation with their parents detailing the program and truancy laws, and
- Assignment of a case manager who assists in identifying and resolving barriers to attendance through communication with relevant parties (e.g., parents, school) and referral to community-based services (e.g., Youth Workforce Program, alternative academic program, etc.).
- If students continue to be truant, they are referred to a community truancy board.[39] If students continue to miss school, their district may decide to send them back to court for formal hearings.

The Truancy Project constitutes a collaboration of multiple groups: 14 school districts work with the case managers to resolve academic issues and supply volunteers for truancy boards. ESD 112 provides management, oversight, and staff for the

[34] M. Johnson (2008). *Building Bridges: Dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval, SHB 1573 2007 legislative report.* Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
[35] For specific grantees, see Johnson, 2008. The first cycle of grants recently ended; during the next academic year, five or six new grants will be awarded. These will be smaller (with a maximum award of $90,000) due to dramatic cuts to the Building Bridges budget during the last legislative session (A. Blackledge, Program Supervisor, personal communication, June 29, 2009).
[36] C. Blodgett, L. Holmes, & B. Wagner (2009, February). *Building Bridges: Dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval*. Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each grantee established specific and measurable objectives for each of its goals based on the type of intervention it planned to carry out.
[37] Project descriptions are available in Johnson, 2008.

[38] *Bellevue School District v. ES*, No. 60528-3-I (Wash. Ct. App. 2009).
[39] For more information on community truancy boards, see Miller, Klima, & Nunlist, in press.

project. Community agencies provide various academic, career, and family services. Community members volunteer to participate on the truancy boards. The courts provide funding and judicial endorsement of the program. In Cowlitz County, the funding has been supplemented by the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJJAC),[40] while in Clark County school districts have provided additional funds.

Positive Steps: Pierce County

Since 2000, several agencies in Pierce County—the county health department, juvenile court, school districts, and community human service coalitions—have partnered to address the problems of truant youth. The majority of youth served by Positive Steps are referred by the court after being found in contempt of the court order to attend school.

The intervention consists of the following:

- Assessment of the child and family's issues and risk factors,
- Development of an "action plan" with the family,
- Case management,
- Parent mentoring by peers,[41] and
- Family therapy (as needed).[42]

The case managers work closely with school officials to identify and enroll participants in an appropriate educational program, as well as monitor attendance and troubleshoot problems over time.

In addition, Positive Steps has formed multidisciplinary teams in eight school districts. The teams provide a forum for discussion of students currently enrolled in Positive Steps by the team members, as well as other students struggling with attendance (and other serious school problems). Because these teams consist of school officials, case managers, and community agency representatives, school officials utilize the teams to problem-solve individual students' difficulties and obtain the necessary supplemental services (e.g., mental health treatment).

Positive Steps is a countywide intervention that relies on multiple parties to accomplish its goal of providing "the infrastructure and resources to create a collaborative service system through Pierce County."[43] The funding derives primarily from the City of Tacoma and Pierce County Criminal Justice Sales Tax.

Positive Attendance and School Support (PASS) Project: Thurston County

In July 2008, Thurston County's Community Youth Services (CYS) began administering the PASS program, supported by a grant from GJJAC.[44] Chronically truant youth may be referred prior to a truancy petition through their school, or following a petition through the court.

The PASS program involves three types of interventions:

- Case management to all youth; this includes weekly contact with a staff member, support services (e.g., transportation), and referrals to additional CYS or other agency services (e.g., counseling).
- Some participants may be sent to the newly re-formed community truancy board, in which adult volunteers from the community help students to problem-solve barriers to attendance.[45]
- Students may participate in a youth court in which peers from local schools act as "lawyers" and "jurors" in a mock trial for the truant individual. In addition to a "court order" for school attendance, truant students may be "ordered" to complete community service and/or serve as a juror in future "trials."[46] Although adult "judges"

[40] This three-year grant ends this year.

[41] Mentoring is provided by parents who have shared similar experiences with their children and have been trained to provide support. See: http://acommonvoice.org/parent_partners.

[42] Specifically, Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is provided to approximately one-third of participants (B. Wilson, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, personal communication, April 30, 2009).

[43] Positive Steps Program Description (for more information on this program, contact Beth Wilson, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department).

[44] In this report, we have highlighted several truancy-related grants from GJJAC. For information about additional grants targeting truant or at-risk youth, see "Currently Funded Projects" at http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ojj/aboutGJJAC.shtml.

[45] For more on community truancy boards, see Miller, Klima, & Nunlist, in press.

[46] In a previous report by the Institute (S. Aos, M. Miller, & E. Drake, 2006). *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates*, Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document

> monitor the process, peers are responsible for determining appropriate consequences, which are seldom overturned by the "judge."[47]

PASS collaborates with local agencies by conducting outreach, coordinating interventions and student monitoring, and relying on "triage" from the juvenile court and schools. A unique aspect of this program is its collaboration with the local prosecutor's office, which provides the facilities and adult "judges" for youth court. In this sense, the prosecutor's office represents yet another party that is attempting to divert truant youth from the formal court hearing process in Thurston County.

Final Note About Washington's Partnerships

The common thread that ties these projects together is the provision of a diverse and flexible set of services that can target multiple needs simultaneously. This approach is consistent with the literature on risk factors for chronic truancy and dropping out, which highlights both the substantial overall needs of this population as well as the great diversity among such students.[48] Outcome evaluations would be helpful in understanding the impact of these collaborations on truant and at-risk children. For more information on evidence for effective truancy and dropout programs, see the Institute's review of the literature.[49]

CONCLUSION

Like many other states, Washington faces high truancy and dropout rates. As such, policymakers have mandated a court process for chronically truant youth. The law also states that, prior to petitioning the courts, schools must intervene with students and their families, although the type, duration, and intensity of these interventions are left to school discretion.

It is, therefore, no surprise that great diversity characterizes the approaches taken by school districts. In our study, school districts primarily reported using alternative schools and credit recovery options to target truant and at-risk students. Moreover, they described general programs (e.g., counseling) and accommodations (e.g., altering class schedule) that serve various populations, but could help these struggling students.

Some Washington school districts have partnered with community agencies to provide a more comprehensive set of services that meet the psychosocial and educational needs of at-risk youth and their families. Four such initiatives were detailed in this report.

Despite many efforts throughout the state, several experts told us that services, such as case management and additional career and technical educational programs, are missing in many schools. Moreover, they highlighted barriers—deficient inter-and intra-agency collaboration, lack of parent engagement, and inadequate transportation for particular groups of students—that impede accessibility to existing services.

Importantly, the information summarized in this report was acquired via multiple avenues. Survey methodology alone was insufficient in addressing the research questions posed by the legislature. This experience suggests that establishing a state-wide inventory of current school and community practices is not a simple endeavor and may require merging data from multiple sources in order to obtain a more complete statewide picture.

No. 06-10-1201), we concluded that youth (teen) courts are effective in reducing crime among juvenile offenders. Because we have not found rigorous evaluations of youth courts with truants, however, it is not clear whether they are effective in improving school outcomes among non-offenders.

[47] J. St. Ours, PASS Manager, personal communication, June 19, 2009.

[48] C. Hammond, D. Linton, J. Smink, & S. Drew (2007). *Dropout risk factors and exemplary programs: A technical report*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.

[49] Klima, Miller, & Nunlist, 2009b.

APPENDIX
Truancy Rates of Washington's School Districts in 2007–08

District	K–8 Only District[a]	District Enrollment in Grades 1–12[b]	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 1–12	*Overall* Truancy Rate [column (3) divided by column (2)]	Total High School Enrollment	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 9–12	*High School* Truancy Rate [column (6) divided by column (5)]
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Aberdeen School District		3,287	272	8%	1,292	252	20%
Adna School District		544	8	1%	180	6	3%
Almira School District	Yes	92	1	1%			
Anacortes School District		2,749	66	2%	1,029	59	6%
Arlington School District		5,122	210	4%	1,852	194	10%
Asotin-Anatone School District		537	1	0%	182	1	1%
Auburn School District		13,593	936	7%	5,333	826	15%
Bainbridge Island School District		3,822	20	1%	1,586	20	1%
Battle Ground School District		12,365	331	3%	4,411	304	7%
Bellevue School District		15,495	393	3%	5,636	332	6%
Bellingham School District		10,016	213	2%	3,776	186	5%
Benge School District	Yes	5	0	0%			
Bethel School District		16,729	464	3%	5,921	390	7%
Bickleton School District		94	3	3%	32	1	3%
Blaine School District		2,081	53	3%	744	39	5%
Boistfort School District	Yes	67	0	0%			
Bremerton School District		4,581	299	7%	1,573	223	14%
Brewster School District		811	55	7%	277	54	19%
Bridgeport School District		651	85	13%	214	78	36%
Brinnon School District	Yes	42	0	0%			
Burlington-Edison School District		3,671	165	4%	1,242	134	11%
Camas School District		5,294	79	1%	1,764	66	4%
Cape Flattery School District		437	11	3%	143	7	5%
Carbonado School District	Yes	167	0	0%			
Cascade School District		1,230	24	2%	460	18	4%
Cashmere School District		1,376	8	1%	502	7	1%
Castle Rock School District		1,278	46	4%	478	36	8%
Centerville School District[c]	Yes	83					
Central Kitsap School District		11,190	146	1%	4,278	134	3%
Central Valley School District		11,458	277	2%	3,852	260	7%
Centralia School District		3,190	113	4%	1,071	95	9%
Chehalis School District		2,779	44	2%	1,139	36	3%
Cheney School District		3,423	141	4%	1,147	117	10%
Chewelah School District		1,024	42	4%	471	41	9%
Chimacum School District		1,082	59	5%	404	47	12%
Clarkston School District		2,487	133	5%	986	121	12%
Cle Elum-Roslyn School District		900	34	4%	334	34	10%
Clover Park School District		10,796	538	5%	3,080	510	17%
Colfax School District		649	10	2%	239	7	3%
College Place School District	Yes	711	7	1%			
Colton School District		179	0	0%	69	0	0%
Columbia (Stevens) School District		195	3	2%	67	2	3%
Columbia (Walla Walla) School District		902	29	3%	326	26	8%
Colville School District		1,965	42	2%	756	28	4%
Concrete School District		698	21	3%	247	21	9%
Conway School District	Yes	400	4	1%			
Cosmopolis School District	Yes	160	0	0%			
Coulee-Hartline School District		146	3	2%	99	3	3%
Coupeville School District		1,096	33	3%	378	23	6%

District	K–8 Only District[a]	District Enrollment in Grades 1–12[b]	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 1–12	*Overall* Truancy Rate [column (3) divided by column (2)]	Total High School Enrollment	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 9–12	*High School* Truancy Rate [column (6) divided by column (5)]
Crescent School District		226	2	1%	78	2	3%
Creston School District		109	0	0%	44	0	0%
Curlew School District		217	1	0%	96	1	1%
Cusick School District		267	8	3%	102	6	6%
Damman School District	Yes	33	0	0%			
Darrington School District		509	26	5%	195	17	9%
Davenport School District		540	15	3%	173	6	3%
Dayton School District		498	17	3%	184	17	9%
Deer Park School District		2,305	16	1%	841	14	2%
Dieringer School District	Yes	1,118	1	0%			
Dixie School District	Yes	18	0	0%			
East Valley School District (Spokane)		3,865	108	3%	1,392	98	7%
East Valley School District (Yakima)		2,574	61	2%	873	44	5%
Eastmont School District		5,054	49	1%	1,754	41	2%
Easton School District		103	0	0%	35	0	0%
Eatonville School District		1,967	35	2%	725	25	3%
Edmonds School District		19,230	923	5%	7,156	734	10%
Ellensburg School District		2,711	63	2%	939	57	6%
Elma School District		1,665	76	5%	710	68	10%
Endicott School District	Yes	78	0	0%			
Entiat School District		352	10	3%	127	6	5%
Enumclaw School District		4,338	158	4%	1,627	147	9%
Ephrata School District		2,131	98	5%	763	80	10%
Evaline School District	Yes	44	0	0%			
Everett School District		17,294	658	4%	5,817	403	7%
Evergreen School District (Clark)		23,458	1,478	6%	7,459	1,179	16%
Evergreen School District (Stevens)	Yes	9	0	0%			
Federal Way School District		20,718	882	4%	7,335	786	11%
Ferndale School District		4,890	222	5%	1,698	201	12%
Fife School District		3,247	100	3%	1,229	92	7%
Finley School District		917	16	2%	352	11	3%
Franklin Pierce School District		7,123	475	7%	2,503	435	17%
Freeman School District		912	1	0%	344	1	0%
Garfield School District		100	1	1%	38	0	0%
Glenwood School District		56	0	0%	20	0	0%
Goldendale School District		1,025	52	5%	391	34	9%
Grand Coulee Dam School District		703	60	9%	311	60	19%
Grandview School District		3,067	284	9%	988	260	26%
Granger School District		1,365	68	5%	401	25	6%
Granite Falls School District		2,187	151	7%	766	138	18%
Grapeview School District	Yes	180	0	0%			
Great Northern School District	Yes	30	0	0%			
Green Mountain School District	Yes	110	0	0%			
Griffin School District	Yes	588	1	0%			
Harrington School District		113	0	0%	38	0	0%
Highland School District		1,055	20	2%	351	13	4%
Highline School District		15,910	2,141	13%	5,535	1,860	34%
Hockinson School District		1,923	25	1%	697	20	3%
Hood Canal School District	Yes	258	12	5%			
Hoquiam School District		1,884	142	8%	739	122	17%
Inchelium School District		187	73	39%	59	43	73%
Index School District	Yes	18	0	0%			
Issaquah School District		15,267	301	2%	5,156	268	5%
Kahlotus School District		59	1	2%	28	1	4%
Kalama School District		937	2	0%	330	0	0%

District	K–8 Only District[a]	District Enrollment in Grades 1–12[b]	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 1–12	*Overall* Truancy Rate [column (3) divided by column (2)]	Total High School Enrollment	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 9–12	*High School* Truancy Rate [column (6) divided by column (5)]
Keller School District	Yes	30	6	20%			
Kelso School District		4,845	248	5%	1,893	186	10%
Kennewick School District		13,824	301	2%	4,948	281	6%
Kent School District		25,421	1,807	7%	8,952	1,635	18%
Kettle Falls School District		754	24	3%	274	16	6%
Kiona-Benton City School District		1,468	37	3%	530	28	5%
Kittitas School District		718	4	1%	292	3	1%
Klickitat School District		126	2	2%	47	2	4%
La Center School District		1,452	11	1%	479	10	2%
LaConner School District		618	9	1%	226	9	4%
LaCrosse School District		143	1	1%	61	1	2%
Lake Chelan School District		1,257	70	6%	471	67	14%
Lake Quinault School District		240	29	12%	94	27	29%
Lake Stevens School District		7,156	275	4%	2,418	247	10%
Lake Washington School District		21,817	327	1%	7,186	293	4%
Lakewood School District		2,353	8	0%	795	0	0%
Lamont School District	Yes	32	0	0%			
Liberty School District		467	4	1%	187	4	2%
Lind School District		217	1	0%	78	1	1%
Longview School District		6,699	304	5%	2,324	257	11%
Loon Lake School District	Yes	221	0	0%			
Lopez School District		227	3	1%	83	3	4%
Lyle School District		314	5	2%	97	5	5%
Lynden School District		2,625	33	1%	961	26	3%
Mabton School District		845	0	0%	279	0	0%
Mansfield School District		81	4	5%	42	4	10%
Manson School District		564	15	3%	191	8	4%
Mary M Knight School District		173	2	1%	58	2	3%
Mary Walker School District		542	25	5%	223	16	7%
Marysville School District		11,063	890	8%	3,854	568	15%
McCleary School District	Yes	231	0	0%			
Mead School District		8,686	79	1%	3,255	63	2%
Medical Lake School District		1,998	74	4%	718	70	10%
Mercer Island School District		3,763	90	2%	1,394	89	6%
Meridian School District		1,531	42	3%	532	40	8%
Methow Valley School District		531	2	0%	208	2	1%
Mill A School District	Yes	59	0	0%			
Monroe School District		6,657	271	4%	2,480	240	10%
Montesano School District		1,202	34	3%	460	19	4%
Morton School District		370	0	0%	136	0	0%
Moses Lake School District		6,685	462	7%	2,106	394	19%
Mossyrock School District		598	5	1%	216	5	2%
Mount Adams School District		882	330	37%	252	145	58%
Mount Baker School District		2,067	106	5%	751	105	14%
Mount Pleasant School District	Yes	47	0	0%			
Mount Vernon School District		5,460	549	10%	1,860	501	27%
Mukilteo School District		13,224	719	5%	4,572	617	13%
Naches Valley School District		1,391	6	0%	512	5	1%
Napavine School District		708	1	0%	250	1	0%
Naselle-Grays River Valley School District		426	2	0%	216	2	1%
Nespelem School District	Yes	128	1	1%			
Newport School District		1,046	55	5%	386	50	13%
Nine Mile Falls School District		1,634	33	2%	619	28	5%
Nooksack School District		1,543	55	4%	580	51	9%
North Beach School District		638	11	2%	224	10	4%

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North Franklin School District		1,669	11	1%	549	6	1%
North Kitsap School District		6,275	164	3%	2,302	144	6%
North Mason School District		2,148	61	3%	896	42	5%
North River School District		53	0	0%	22	0	0%
North Thurston Public Schools		12,797	673	5%	4,332	574	13%
Northport School District		191	0	0%	83	0	0%
Northshore School District		18,616	180	1%	6,882	142	2%
Oak Harbor School District		5,093	332	7%	1,703	247	15%
Oakesdale School District		105	1	1%	40	1	3%
Oakville School District		255	26	10%	95	22	23%
Ocean Beach School District		903	14	2%	353	11	3%
Ocosta School District		600	8	1%	188	4	2%
Odessa School District		208	0	0%	84	0	0%
Okanogan School District		932	9	1%	357	7	2%
Olympia School District		8,630	235	3%	3,464	202	6%
Omak School District		1,587	164	10%	546	154	28%
Onalaska School District		827	18	2%	339	8	2%
Onion Creek School District	Yes	30	0	0%			
Orcas Island School District		450	2	0%	169	2	1%
Orchard Prairie School District	Yes	52	0	0%			
Orient School District	Yes	47	0	0%			
Orondo School District	Yes	159	0	0%			
Oroville School District		609	34	6%	210	29	14%
Orting School District		1,993	134	7%	645	117	18%
Othello School District		3,073	33	1%	944	27	3%
Palisades School District	Yes	30	0	0%			
Palouse School District		191	0	0%	87	0	0%
Pasco School District		11,998	1,295	11%	3,467	1,190	34%
Pateros School District		265	3	1%	99	2	2%
Paterson School District	Yes	90	0	0%			
Pe Ell School District		312	2	1%	108	2	2%
Peninsula School District		8,875	329	4%	3,404	265	8%
Pioneer School District	Yes	648	8	1%			
Pomeroy School District		340	0	0%	128	0	0%
Port Angeles School District		4,016	389	10%	1,561	340	22%
Port Townsend School District		1,394	30	2%	579	25	4%
Prescott School District		210	0	0%	64	0	0%
Prosser School District		2,702	87	3%	1,004	78	8%
Pullman School District		2,078	34	2%	700	31	4%
Puyallup School District		20,327	1,046	5%	7,276	788	11%
Queets-Clearwater School District	Yes	20	0	0%			
Quilcene School District		247	11	4%	123	7	6%
Quillayute Valley School District		2,302	65	3%	1,564	45	3%
Quincy School District		2,207	159	7%	691	140	20%
Rainier School District		896	4	0%	338	4	1%
Raymond School District		493	6	1%	167	5	3%
Reardan-Edwall School District		645	17	3%	235	16	7%
Renton School District		12,629	988	8%	4,117	793	19%
Republic School District		395	14	4%	163	14	9%
Richland School District		9,470	335	4%	3,513	293	8%
Ridgefield School District		1,989	11	1%	682	8	1%
Ritzville School District		336	14	4%	125	12	10%
Riverside School District		1,635	17	1%	653	10	2%
Riverview School District		2,873	19	1%	961	17	2%
Rochester School District		2,142	80	4%	809	72	9%

District	K–8 Only District[a]	District Enrollment in Grades 1–12[b]	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 1–12	*Overall* Truancy Rate [column (3) divided by column (2)]	Total High School Enrollment	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 9–12	*High School* Truancy Rate [column (6) divided by column (5)]
Roosevelt School District	Yes	25	0	0%			
Rosalia School District		229	0	0%	78	0	0%
Royal School District		1,288	7	1%	396	0	0%
San Juan Island School District		857	29	3%	324	27	8%
Satsop School District	Yes	56	0	0%			
Seattle Public Schools		41,081	1,508	4%	13,763	1,059	8%
Sedro-Woolley School District		4,236	214	5%	1,629	195	12%
Selah School District		3,170	36	1%	1,085	16	1%
Selkirk School District		304	3	1%	122	2	2%
Sequim School District		2,769	86	3%	1,065	79	7%
Shaw Island School District	Yes	17	0	0%			
Shelton School District		4,033	288	7%	1,877	244	13%
Shoreline School District		8,683	420	5%	3,412	380	11%
Skamania School District	Yes	63	0	0%			
Skykomish School District		53	0	0%	26	0	0%
Snohomish School District		8,893	426	5%	3,109	371	12%
Snoqualmie Valley School District		5,298	79	1%	1,604	79	5%
Soap Lake School District		454	16	4%	177	12	7%
South Bend School District		539	4	1%	193	3	2%
South Kitsap School District		9,740	504	5%	3,609	465	13%
South Whidbey School District		1,837	81	4%	761	72	9%
Southside School District	Yes	208	0	0%			
Spokane School District		27,055	2,695	10%	9,157	2,441	27%
Sprague School District		88	0	0%	51	0	0%
St. John School District		188	5	3%	107	5	5%
Stanwood-Camano School District		5,048	261	5%	1,947	231	12%
Star School District	Yes	13	0	0%			
Starbuck School District	Yes	25	0	0%			
Stehekin School District	Yes	14	0	0%			
Steilacoom Hist. School District		4,336	26	1%	713	26	4%
Steptoe School District	Yes	33	0	0%			
Stevenson-Carson School District		940	32	3%	367	29	8%
Sultan School District		2,008	79	4%	713	54	8%
Summit Valley School District	Yes	81	0	0%			
Sumner School District		7,746	354	5%	2,813	325	12%
Sunnyside School District		5,217	584	11%	1,558	468	30%
Tacoma School District		27,024	1,368	5%	9,080	1,081	12%
Taholah School District		190	38	20%	70	31	44%
Tahoma School District		6,755	179	3%	2,322	156	7%
Tekoa School District		196	0	0%	79	0	0%
Tenino School District		1,257	38	3%	467	30	6%
Thorp School District		139	2	1%	27	2	7%
Toledo School District		911	12	1%	345	9	3%
Tonasket School District		984	20	2%	369	19	5%
Toppenish School District		2,941	122	4%	912	97	11%
Touchet School District		297	0	0%	117	0	0%
Toutle Lake School District		603	4	1%	219	4	2%
Trout Lake School District		144	1	1%	58	1	2%
Tukwila School District		2,603	52	2%	899	8	1%
Tumwater School District		5,921	255	4%	2,329	220	9%
Union Gap School District	Yes	533	53	10%			
University Place School District		5,131	198	4%	1,942	166	9%
Valley School District	Yes	518	6	1%			
Vancouver School District		20,837	2,356	11%	7,180	2,105	29%
Vashon Island School District		1,501	24	2%	580	22	4%

District	K–8 Only District[a]	District Enrollment in Grades 1–12[b]	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 1–12	*Overall* Truancy Rate [column (3) divided by column (2)]	Total High School Enrollment	Number of Students with 10 or More Unexcused Absences in Grades 9–12	*High School* Truancy Rate [column (6) divided by column (5)]
Wahkiakum School District		456	3	1%	175	3	2%
Wahluke School District		1,701	21	1%	476	19	4%
Waitsburg School District		328	5	2%	123	2	2%
Walla Walla School District		5,662	202	4%	2,277	170	7%
Wapato School District		3,134	356	11%	1,034	324	31%
Warden School District		896	28	3%	284	12	4%
Washougal School District		2,814	129	5%	948	115	12%
Washtucna School District		53	4	8%	21	2	10%
Waterville School District		291	4	1%	120	2	2%
Wellpinit School District		514	47	9%	309	31	10%
Wenatchee School District		6,976	291	4%	2,436	255	10%
West Valley School District (Spokane)		3,544	160	5%	1,540	128	8%
West Valley School District (Yakima)		4,540	106	2%	1,539	86	6%
White Pass School District		458	8	2%	189	6	3%
White River School District		4,159	105	3%	1,614	79	5%
White Salmon Valley School District		1,071	92	9%	348	92	26%
Wilbur School District		236	0	0%	83	0	0%
Willapa Valley School District		331	2	1%	128	2	2%
Wilson Creek School District		116	0	0%	45	0	0%
Winlock School District		793	28	4%	290	28	10%
Wishkah Valley School District		155	1	1%	67	0	0%
Wishram School District		62	0	0%	21	0	0%
Woodland School District		2,069	30	1%	746	29	4%
Yakima School District		13,036	3,179	24%	4,447	2,502	56%
Yelm School District		5,052	297	6%	1,778	274	15%
Zillah School District		1,202	12	1%	409	7	2%

[a] Districts with a "yes" in this column (i.e., K–8 districts) will not have data for high school students (columns 5–7).
[b] Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollment was excluded because districts report on the number of chronically truant students from first grade only.
[c] Data for this district are not available in the OSPI truancy report.

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