



## An Evaluation of the 2016 Act to Promote Attendance and Reduce Truancy—*Meta-Analysis Appendix*

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### Introduction

In Washington State, compulsory school attendance laws require school-aged children to attend schools and mandate how schools and courts respond to unexcused absences.<sup>1</sup> In 2016 and 2017, the Washington State Legislature made changes to those laws.<sup>2</sup> The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) evaluated the overall effectiveness of those legal changes. WSIPP’s findings are detailed in a separate report.<sup>3</sup>

The 2016 and 2017 legislation altered the stipulated options that schools and courts have for intervening with truant youth.<sup>4</sup> For example, the new legislation requires schools to provide, where appropriate, an approved best practice or research-based intervention for students with between two and five unexcused absences. To aid in identifying best practices, WSIPP evaluated the research literature on truancy prevention and treatment interventions that could be used for youth within Washington State. The results of those analyses are provided in this appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1995 Becca Bill requires schools to formally request the juvenile court’s involvement via a truancy petition when a student has accrued enough unexcused absences.

<sup>2</sup> [Second Substitute House Bill 2449, Chapter 205, Laws of 2016.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Barch, M., Knoth, L., & Wanner, P. (2020). *An evaluation of the 2016 act to promote attendance and reduce truancy* (Document Number 20-12-2201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

<sup>4</sup> In Washington State, a youth is truant if he or she has five or more unexcused absences in a month or ten in a year. Johnson, Krissy. (2018). *Truancy Report*. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

[Section I](#) of this appendix discusses WSIPP’s standard meta-analytic approach. [Section II](#) describes the selection of programs reviewed for the current report. [Section III](#) outlines the populations examined, and [Section IV](#) outlines the specific outcomes we included from the evaluations we reviewed. [Section V](#) reports the findings of our meta-analyses, including information for interpreting the results. Finally, [Section VI](#) provides a summary of our meta-analytic findings and describes the reviewed programs.

## I. WSIPP's Standard Meta-Analytic Approach

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WSIPP implements a standard, rigorous research approach to undertake meta-analyses. WSIPP conducts a meta-analysis—a quantitative review of the research literature—to determine if the research evidence's weight indicates whether desired outcomes are achieved, on average. In short, the goal is to use meta-analysis to identify what works (and what does not).

WSIPP follows several key protocols to ensure a rigorous analysis for each program examined.

- **Search for all studies on a topic**—WSIPP systematically reviews the national and international research literature and considers all available studies on a program, regardless of their findings. That is, we do not “cherry-pick” studies to include in our analysis.
- **Screen studies for quality**—We only include rigorous studies in our analysis. We require that a study reasonably demonstrates a cause-and-effect relationship between the program and relevant outcomes using appropriate statistical techniques. For example, studies must include both treatment and comparison groups with an intent-to-treat analysis. Studies that do not meet our minimum standards are excluded from the analysis.
- **Determine the average effect size**—We use a formal set of statistical procedures to calculate an average effect size for each outcome, which indicates the expected magnitude of change caused by the program (e.g., mentoring) for each outcome of interest (e.g., school absences).

These three procedures support the rigor of the analyses and allow programs to be compared on an apples-to-apples basis. For full detail on WSIPP's methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (December 2019). *Benefit-cost technical documentation*. Olympia, WA: Author.

In 2009, WSIPP published a meta-analysis of evidence-based practices for truancy reduction and dropout prevention among middle and high school students. In that meta-analysis, we identified several issues when screening studies for quality (the second step above).<sup>6</sup> We encountered those same issues during this current review. They include the following:

- **No comparison group or non-equivalent comparison group:** Many studies lack an equivalent comparison group, which interferes with our ability to make inferences about program effects.<sup>7</sup> We do not include studies with non-equivalent comparison groups.
- **High attrition rates:** In some studies, many participants initially enrolled in the intervention choose to leave before its completion. Therefore, they do not supply data about their outcomes. This sampling issue could result in artificially inflating positive outcomes that are not the result of the intervention. Evaluations presenting this problem are also not included in our analyses.
- **Inadequate follow-up:** Many studies have difficulty measuring participants' outcomes over time because at-risk populations (e.g., truant students) are often highly mobile. When many participants have incomplete data, the results are less reliable, and we cannot infer causality. We exclude evaluations with this issue from our analyses.

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<sup>6</sup> Klima, T., Miller, M., & Nunlist, C. (2009). *What works? Targeted truancy and dropout programs in middle and high school* (Document No. 09-06-2201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy,

<sup>7</sup> In other words, if the intervention group contains more high-risk youth (e.g., worse attendance records, lower GPAs, or more school behavioral problems) than the comparison group, there is greater potential for improvement among the former group that is unrelated to the type of intervention received.

## II. Program Selection

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Before any of the steps listed above can be taken, we must first select programs to study. For this report, we prioritized programs from the following three sources:

- 1) The Model Program Guide from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP),<sup>8</sup>
- 2) WSIPP's 2009 meta-analysis<sup>9</sup> of truancy prevention programs, and
- 3) Consultation with experts.<sup>10</sup>

We focused on truancy prevention or treatment interventions currently active and feasible to implement in Washington State by the schools, the community, or the juvenile courts. Programs outside of this scope were excluded.

We conduct separate meta-analyses for each program identified from the three sources. For example, we report on the effects of participation in a specific program like the Repeat Offender Prevention Program on its own rather than reporting on the combined effect of participating in all similar programs with intensive supervision for youth on probation. Our reasoning behind this choice is twofold. First, it makes it easier for practitioners and policymakers to understand and compare the findings across specific programs. Second, it makes it easier for them to identify specific programs for implementation.

### 1) OJJDP Model Truancy Programs

In December 2010, OJJDP published a literature review<sup>11</sup> and a model program guide for truancy prevention. Within the literature review, OJJDP identified a total of 24 programs with evidence concerning truancy treatment and prevention. WSIPP reviewed the literature for the 24 programs and eliminated four of them for having no studies of sufficient quality. We included the remaining 20 programs for meta-analysis.<sup>12</sup>

### 2) WSIPP's 2009 Meta-Analysis on Truancy Interventions

In 2008, WSIPP was directed by the legislature to study various aspects of truancy policy and research.<sup>13</sup> One component of the assignment was to review evidence-based practices for truancy reduction and dropout prevention among middle and high school students. The corresponding report, published in 2009, focused on programs implemented by schools, courts, and law enforcement agencies.

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<sup>8</sup> OJJDP. *Model programs guide—Truancy/unexcused absences*.

<sup>9</sup> Klima et al. (2009).

<sup>10</sup> From these three sources, we reviewed the literature for 26 programs and meta-analyzed 21 programs.

<sup>11</sup> Development Services Group, Inc. (2010). *Truancy Prevention*. Literature review. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

<sup>12</sup> Four of the 24 programs did not have rigorous literature that demonstrated a reliable causal impact that we could use in a meta-analysis. We could not use the literature for several reasons including the author's use of non-equivalent comparison groups, lack of comparison groups, overall and differential attrition issues, and, in one case, a study lacked information to calculate an effect size.

<sup>13</sup> *Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2687, Chapter 329, Laws of 2008, Sec. 610 (19)*.

The 2009 WSIPP report reviewed a total of 877 programs for possible inclusion, sourced from websites, databases, and over 460 individual publications. After screening for relevance and rigor, WSIPP published meta-analytic findings for six broad categories of truancy prevention or intervention programs. Those six categories included evaluations of 13 programs by 22 studies. As discussed above, WSIPP now typically takes the approach of conducting separate meta-analyses for name-brand programs that can be more easily implemented by policymakers or practitioners rather than evaluating general categories of interventions (e.g., behavioral programs).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, we evaluated the 13 programs individually for inclusion in this appendix.

Of those 13 programs, we excluded 10 for the following reasons:

- Four programs were already included in other WSIPP meta-analyses that we did not update for this appendix.<sup>15</sup>
- Six programs appeared non-active, meaning that the program is no longer used for students.

For the remaining three programs, we conducted literature reviews. One of the programs (the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program) was excluded for having no evaluations of sufficient rigor. Two of the programs, Check & Connect and Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (BMRP), were included for meta-analysis. Check & Connect was also identified by OJJDP as a truancy intervention.

### 3) Expert consultation

We also asked for recommendations from criminal justice and education experts in Washington State. However, the recommended programs were either already identified in the OJJDP list of programs (e.g., nudge letters) or already reviewed in WSIPP's other work (e.g., Functional Family Therapy).

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<sup>14</sup> Multiple interventions or name-brand programs with similar goals or components existed within these six, broad categories. Rather than continue to report information as a broad category, we identified the specific interventions that comprised the categories.

<sup>15</sup> Three were mentoring programs, and one was a workforce development program called Career Academies. For information regarding mentoring, see [Mentoring: School-based \(by teachers or staff\)](#), [Mentoring: School-based by volunteers \(including volunteer costs\)](#), and [Mentoring: School-based by volunteers \(taxpayer costs only\)](#). For information regarding Career Academies, see [Career and technical education](#).

### III. Populations Examined

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For the meta-analyses in this study, we examined programs targeting the following populations:

- Youth at-risk of dropping out of school (e.g., youth with excessive absenteeism or disciplinary issues),
- Truant youth in court or police programs,
- Prevention samples of children and youth (e.g., children and youth with lower socioeconomic status),
- Younger cohorts of youth (e.g., preschool and early learning programming), and
- Youth with general delinquency or disciplinary issues.

## IV. Outcomes Examined

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Often, when WSIPP is asked to review the effectiveness of interventions within a specific topic area, a few primary or required outcomes are reported in all the literature included in the meta-analyses. For example, in K–12 education programs, test scores are typically the reported outcome. In juvenile justice programs, a measure of criminal recidivism is nearly always reported.

Truancy programs can be implemented at the family, community, school, or juvenile court level, and specific metrics may vary across settings. No single outcome was universally measured across all the programs. We include all relevant outcomes in our review and do not require studies to report specific metrics to qualify for inclusion.

### Truancy

Regarding the outcome of “truancy,” the specific definition of this measure depends on the intervention setting. Specifically, “truancy” from an academic perspective represents chronic absenteeism (i.e., excessive days absent from school) as opposed to attendance (i.e., days present at school). “Truancy” in the juvenile justice system reflects students referred to juvenile court with a truant offense. Much like juvenile justice recidivism (i.e., youth involved in the juvenile justice system committing subsequent criminal acts), truancy outcomes (as a status offense) measure subsequent truancy offenses committed by a justice-involved youth due to truant behavior. For reporting purposes, when the outcome “truancy” is indicated, it represents chronic absenteeism. The outcome “status offenses,” can include truancy petitions filed in juvenile court.

In addition to the two measures of truancy, excessive absenteeism, and truancy offenses, we systematically reviewed outcomes commonly reported in the research.

### Other Outcomes

For education, the primary outcomes of interest are attendance (measured as the percentage of days the student is present in school), high school graduation (measured as on-time high school graduation), academic test scores (measured as student-level scores on any standardized and validated math or reading test), and grade point average (measured as student-level average grades, regardless of the scale on which grades are measured).

For public health and prevention, juvenile justice, and workforce development programs, the most commonly measured outcomes were school dropout (measured as a student permanently disenrolling from school), crime (measured as official criminal behavior that leads to involvement in the criminal justice system), and earnings (measured as either quarterly or annual taxed economic earnings).



In addition to the primary outcomes of interest, we also reviewed outcomes that were less commonly measured, including office discipline referrals, externalizing behavior symptoms, internalizing behavior symptoms, employment, teen birth, substance use (e.g., use of illicit drugs or alcohol by middle school or high school), status offenses,<sup>16</sup> and delinquent behavior.<sup>17</sup> Again, not all studies report all outcomes. More detailed definitions of these outcomes can be found in WSIPP's [Technical Documentation](#).

Descriptions of how to read the meta-analytic results are provided in [Exhibit 3](#).

All outcomes analyzed by the program are reported in [Exhibit 4](#) and are published on WSIPP's website.<sup>18</sup> For some programs, benefit-cost analysis findings can also be found on WSIPP's website.<sup>19</sup>

Of the 26 programs we reviewed, 21 had sufficient rigorous research to complete a meta-analysis. [Exhibits 1 and 2](#) present the full list of examined programs and indicate whether the intervention has an effect on each of the primary outcomes measured in the analysis. A program effect is labeled "effective" if the meta-analyzed effect size was both statistically significant and in the desired direction (e.g., an increase in attendance or test scores, or a reduction in crime or school dropout). A program effect is labeled "poor" if a meta-analyzed effect size is statistically significant and in the undesired direction and labeled "not significant" if it is not statistically significant.<sup>20</sup>

[Exhibits 1 and 2](#) are sorted into two tables based on the policy area and the typical institution(s) responsible for implementing the program. Specifically, [Exhibit 1](#) reports on K–12 education programs that are often implemented within schools by school staff and personnel.

[Exhibit 2](#) presents three types of programs. First, it includes public health and prevention programs, which are typically implemented in the community. These programs aim to prevent behaviors that may be indirectly or directly linked to poor education-related outcomes. Second, [Exhibit 2](#) presents findings for programs administered through the juvenile justice system by juvenile court staff and personnel. For these programs, youth in the evaluations are formally involved in the juvenile justice system, and the outcome typically measured is crime. Finally, [Exhibit 2](#) shows results for a single program classified as a workforce development intervention. This program focuses on vocational and occupational training once formal avenues of education have been exhausted.

More detailed findings for each program can be found in [Exhibit 4](#).

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<sup>16</sup> "Status offenses," among other status offenses (e.g., underage smoking, running away) can include truancy petitions filed in juvenile court, the criminal justice definition of "truancy."

<sup>17</sup> Delinquent behavior measures criminal/delinquent behavior outside of formal involvement with the Juvenile Justice system (i.e., behavior that does not result in arrests, charges, convictions, incarcerations) for young people. Some common examples of delinquent behavior include hitchhiking where illegal, lying about age to gain access somewhere (e.g., movie or nightclub), cheating on school tests or homework, making obscene telephone calls, or avoiding paying for services (e.g., running out on a check at a restaurant).

<sup>18</sup> WSIPP. [Benefit-cost results](#). Olympia, WA: Author.

<sup>19</sup> [Ibid.](#)

<sup>20</sup> Statisticians often rely on a metric, the p-value, to determine whether an effect is significant. The p-value is a measure of the likelihood that the difference could occur by chance—values range from 0 (highly significant) to 1 (no significant difference). For the purposes of WSIPP's analyses, p-values < 0.20 (a 20% likelihood that the difference occurred by chance) are considered statistically significant findings.

## V. Findings

**Exhibit 1**  
K–12 Education—Program Findings

Program	School attendance	High school graduation	Test scores	Grade point average
"Nudge" attendance programs	Effective	---	---	Effective
Ability School Engagement Program	Not significant	---	---	---
Across Ages <sup>#</sup>	Not significant	---	---	---
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (BMRP)	Effective	---	---	Effective
Check & Connect Plus Truancy Board (C&C+TB) <sup>#</sup>	---	Effective	---	---
Check & Connect <sup>#</sup>	Not significant	Not significant	---	Not significant
Child-Parent Centers (CPC)	---	Effective	Effective	---
Family Development Research Program (FDRP)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest			
Harlem (NY) Children's Zone—Promise Academy Charter Middle School	---	Effective	Effective	---
Peer Group Connection (PGC)	---	Not significant	---	---
Playworks Coach	Not significant	---	Not significant	---
Project Learn	Effective	---	---	Effective
Reconnecting Youth	---	---	---	Effective
School Transitional Environment Program (STEP)	---	---	---	Effective
School-Based Mentoring Program for At-Risk Middle School Youth <sup>#</sup>	Effective	---	---	---
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest			
Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (TOP) <sup>^</sup>	---	---	---	---

**Notes:**

"---" outcome is not measured or reported in rigorous evaluations.

"Effective" programs have improved outcomes for children and youth who participate compared to non-participants.

"Poor" programs have poor outcomes for children and youth who participate compared to non-participants.

"Not significant" programs have non-significant outcomes for children and youth who participate compared to non-participants.

<sup>^</sup>Program reports secondary outcomes only.

<sup>#</sup> This program is a special analysis for the purpose of this inventory and does not have a program-specific webpage on WSIPP's website.

## Exhibit 2

### Public Health and Prevention, Juvenile Justice, and Workforce Development—Program Findings

Program	School dropout	Crime	Earnings
<b><i>Public health and prevention</i></b>			
CASASTART (California’s Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows)	Not significant	Not significant	---
Gang Reduction Program (Los Angeles, CA)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest		
Gang Reduction Program (Richmond, VA)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest		
Prime Time <sup>^</sup>	---	---	---
Summer Youth Employment Program	---	Effective	Not significant
<b><i>Juvenile Justice</i></b>			
Comprehensive Homicide Initiative (Richmond, CA)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest		
Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP) <sup>#</sup>	---	Effective	---
Parenting with Love and Limits	---	Effective	---
<b><i>Workforce development</i></b>			
JOBSTART <sup>#</sup>	---	Not significant	Not significant

Notes:

“---” outcome is not measured or reported in rigorous evaluations.

“Effective” programs have improved outcomes for children and youth who participate compared to non-participants.

“Poor” programs have poor outcomes for children and youth who participate compared to non-participants.

“Not significant” programs have non-significant outcomes for children and youth who participate compared to non-participants.

<sup>^</sup>Program reports secondary outcomes only.

<sup>#</sup> This program is a special analysis for the purpose of this inventory and does not have a program-specific webpage on WSIPP’s website.

### Exhibit 3

#### How to Interpret WSIPP's Meta-Analytic Results

The columns of the meta-analytic exhibits are described below.

- 1) [Program](#) describes the name of the intervention or policy analyzed. Some programs and policies are general categories of a type of intervention, while others are specific name-brand programs. Descriptions of each program can be found preceding each exhibit as well as on our website.
- 2) [Outcome](#) identifies the specific outcome of interest measured in the studies included in the meta-analysis.
- 3) [# of effect sizes](#) represents the number of effects we included in our meta-analysis. Generally, this number reflects the number of studies included in the meta-analysis.
- 4) [Effect size](#) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy (e.g., dual enrollment) affects a measured outcome of interest (e.g., college enrollment). Positive effect sizes indicate that averaged across all included studies, the intervention increased the likelihood of treatment groups' outcome. Negative effect sizes indicate that, on average, participation in the intervention reduced the likelihood of the outcome. We report adjusted effect sizes, which account for the rigor of study research designs.
- 5) [Standard error](#) identifies the variation or uncertainty in our estimated adjusted effect size. Our effect sizes are estimates and can vary depending on numerous factors. The smaller the standard error, the more certain we are about the estimated effect size.
- 6) [p-value](#) is another measure of certainty in our estimated effect size. The p-value can range from 0 to 1 and represents the chance that we would observe the reported effect if the intervention truly had no effect at all. We report the p-value associated with the unadjusted effect size.
- 7) [# in treatment](#) represents the total number of treated individuals across all studies included in the meta-analysis.
- 8) [Age at ES1](#) reports the average age at which the effect size was measured. Studies may measure outcomes at different ages after participation. We take a weighted average of the ages at which the effect was measured across the included studies to arrive at the age at ES1.

**Exhibit 4**

Outcome-Specific Findings by Program

(1) Program	(2) Outcome	(3) # of effect sizes	(4) Effect size	(5) Standard error	(6) p-value	(7) Total N in Tx group	(8) Age at ES1
"Nudge" attendance program	Grade point average	1	0.099	0.059	0.095	569	15
	School attendance	1	0.124	0.059	0.036	569	15
Ability School Engagement Program	Crime	1	-0.115	0.211	0.207	45	14
	Truancy	1	-0.049	0.209	0.587	45	13
	School attendance	1	-0.089	0.292	0.484	49	13
Across Ages	Grade point average	1	0.012	0.224	0.958	76	11
	School attendance	1	0.186	0.224	0.406	76	11
	Alcohol use before end of middle school	1	-0.119	0.224	0.596	76	11
	Cannabis use before end of middle school	1	-0.260	0.225	0.246	76	11
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (BMRP)	Dropout	1	-0.252	0.282	0.021	87	16
	Grade point average	5	0.188	0.122	0.002	170	16
	Illicit drug use before end of high school	1	-0.166	0.542	0.426	30	18
	Office discipline referrals	1	-0.304	0.223	0.173	49	15
	School attendance	5	0.192	0.161	0.003	137	16
Project Learn	Grade point average	1	0.663	0.161	0.000	81	12
	Office discipline referrals	1	-0.167	0.157	0.287	81	12
	School attendance	1	1.518	0.178	0.000	81	12
California's Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP)	Crime	1	-0.224	0.148	0.131	176	15
	Technical violations	1	0.529	0.167	0.002	176	15
CASASTART (California's Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows)	Dropout	1	-0.113	0.302	0.709	264	13
	K-12 grade repetition	1	-0.345	0.212	0.104	264	13
	Truancy	1	0.384	0.178	0.031	144	14
	Office discipline referrals	1	0.428	0.155	0.006	176	14
	Alcohol use before end of middle school	1	-0.141	0.165	0.391	144	13
	Teen pregnancy (under age 18)	1	-0.272	0.352	0.440	264	13
	Illicit drug use before end of high school	2	-0.167	0.316	0.598	264	14

(1) Program	(2) Outcome	(3) # of effect sizes	(4) Effect size	(5) Standard error	(6) p-value	(7) Total N in Tx group	(8) Age at ES1
	School attendance	1	0.030	0.250	0.906	264	13
	Status offense	1	0.379	0.150	0.012	144	13
	Crime	2	0.008	0.178	0.962	408	14
Check & Connect	Dropout	1	0.119	0.257	0.643	276	12
	Grade point average	1	0.090	0.300	0.763	25	12
	High school graduation	1	-0.010	0.207	0.963	276	18
	Office discipline referrals	1	-0.408	0.303	0.178	25	12
	School attendance	2	0.089	0.116	0.445	958	10
Check & Connect Plus Truancy Board (C&C+TB)	Dropout	1	-0.455	0.265	0.086	64	18
	GED attainment	1	0.000	0.235	1.000	64	18
	High school graduation	1	0.597	0.230	0.009	64	18
Child-Parent Center (CPC)	K-12 grade repetition	1	-0.446	0.147	0.002	893	13
	High school graduation	1	0.229	0.158	0.146	893	18
	K-12 special education	1	-0.401	0.170	0.018	893	16
	Smoking	1	-0.014	0.090	0.877	723	17
	Child abuse and neglect	1	-0.394	0.196	0.044	893	15
	Out-of-home placement	1	-0.319	0.265	0.229	893	15
	Crime	1	-0.209	0.184	0.258	893	22
	Test scores	1	0.191	0.058	0.001	853	12
Comprehensive Homicide Initiative	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest.						
Family Development Research Program (FDRP)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest.						
Gang Reduction Program (Los Angeles, CA)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest.						
Gang Reduction Program (Richmond, VA)	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest.						

(1) Program	(2) Outcome	(3) # of effect sizes	(4) Effect size	(5) Standard error	(6) p-value	(7) Total N in Tx group	(8) Age at ES1
Harlem Children's Zone - Promise Academy® K-12 Charter Schools	High school graduation	1	0.268	0.075	0.000	446	17
	Test scores	1	0.254	0.080	0.001	403	17
JOBSTART	Crime	1	-0.009	0.224	0.969	982	22
	GED attainment	1	0.359	0.216	0.097	988	22
	Substance use	1	-0.056	0.272	0.836	980	22
	Cannabis use	1	-0.079	0.282	0.779	980	22
	Employment	1	0.100	0.221	0.652	988	20
	Public assistance	1	0.017	0.168	0.917	962	20
	Hours worked	1	-0.020	0.168	0.906	988	20
	Earnings	1	-0.029	0.051	0.566	988	20
	Food assistance	1	-0.055	0.168	0.742	962	20
	Graduate with 4-year degree	1	-0.064	0.224	0.773	988	22
Parenting with Love and Limits	Crime	3	-0.326	0.123	0.008	327	17
	Externalizing behavior symptoms	1	-0.721	0.36	0.045	19	16
	Internalizing symptoms	1	-0.772	0.361	0.032	19	16
Peer Group Connection (PGC)	High school graduation	1	0.037	0.741	0.961	93	17
	Cannabis use before end of high school	1	-0.134	0.858	0.876	70	15
Playworks Coach	Suspensions/expulsions	1	0.010	0.134	0.939	1,144	8
	Test scores	1	0.044	0.166	0.793	1,144	8
	Truancy	1	-0.066	0.218	0.764	1,144	8
	School attendance	1	0.009	0.009	0.325	28,919	10
	Externalizing behavior symptoms	1	-0.017	0.122	0.890	1,144	8
Prime Time	Externalizing behavior symptoms	1	0.176	0.130	0.174	116	16
	Contraceptive use	2	0.257	0.084	0.002	175	16
Reconnecting Youth	Grade point average	1	0.416	0.193	0.031	55	15
	Alcohol use before end of high school	1	0.019	0.071	0.784	615	15
	Tobacco use before end of high school	1	0.182	0.071	0.010	615	15
	Delinquent behavior	1	-0.099	0.071	0.160	615	15

(1) Program	(2) Outcome	(3) # of effect sizes	(4) Effect size	(5) Standard error	(6) p-value	(7) Total N in Tx group	(8) Age at ES1
School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)	Grade point average	1	0.127	0.062	0.039	1,204	15
	Anxiety disorder	1	0.020	0.062	0.744	1,204	15
	Major depressive disorder	1	0.027	0.062	0.660	1,204	15
	Delinquent behavior	1	0.047	0.062	0.450	1,204	15
School-Based Mentoring Program for At-Risk Middle School Youth	Office discipline referrals	1	-0.516	0.358	0.002	16	14
	School attendance	1	0.239	0.360	0.130	16	14
Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)	Earnings	1	-0.004	0.005	0.427	114,013	20
	Death	1	-0.011	0.004	0.016	114,013	20
	Crime	2	-0.009	0.004	0.033	114,743	20
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program	No rigorous studies measuring outcomes of interest.						
Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (TOP)	Suspensions/expulsions	2	-0.265	0.115	0.000	438	15
	Social and emotional development	1	-0.146	0.136	0.283	106	15
	STD risky behavior	1	-0.098	1.034	0.924	3,352	15
	Teen pregnancy (under age 18)	3	-0.174	0.081	0.053	3,711	15



## VI. Program Descriptions & Summary

### Exhibit 5 Program Descriptions

Program	Program description
<b><i>K–12 education programs</i></b>	
Project Learn	Project Learn is an educational program targeting youth in subsidized public housing that provides after-school activities to youth already participating in the Boys and Girls Club (BGC). Local BGC staff deliver educational enhancements and structured activities at BGC/Program Learn sites.
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (BMRP)	The Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (BMRP) is a school-based intervention that aims to prevent juvenile delinquency, substance use, and school failure for adolescents at high-risk for school dropout. For two school years, beginning in 7 <sup>th</sup> grade, students' school records are monitored for attendance, tardiness, and disciplinary action by program staff, often teachers at the school. Program staff informs parents of their student's progress in school.
Check & Connect	Check & Connect is a school-based, structured mentoring program that targets students in grades K–12 who are at risk of disengagement or dropping out. Mentors use school data to “check” student attendance, social-behavioral performance (e.g., referrals, suspensions, detentions), and academic performance. Then, mentors “connect” students with personalized services to boost engagement in school.
Check & Connect Plus Truancy Board (C&C+TB)	Check & Connect Plus Truancy Board (C&C+TB) uses both a truancy board and the Check & Connect program to target students who have a petition filed for truancy in juvenile court. The youth create a plan and participate in Check & Connect to receive personalized services to improve attendance.
Child-Parent Centers (CPC)	Child-Parent Center (CPC) is a school- and family-based program that provides educational and family support services to economically and educationally disadvantaged children. CPC includes activities designed to promote success, parental involvement in school, and aid transition into kindergarten and elementary school.
Harlem (NY) Children's Zone—Promise Academy® Charter Middle School	The Harlem Children's Zone—Promise Academy® K–12 Charter Schools (Promise Academy) offers extended day, extended year education to elementary, middle, and high school students. Promise Academy includes after-school tutoring and additional classes on Saturdays for children who need remediation in mathematics or English language arts skills.

Program	Program description
Reconnecting Youth	Reconnecting Youth is a school-based prevention program that targets underachieving students at risk of dropping out. The Reconnecting Youth class consists of 10 to 12 students and incorporates social support and life-skills training into a daily, semester-long class using a 75-lesson curriculum to improve school engagement.
School Transitional Environment Program (STEP)	The School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP) is a program designed to reduce poor educational outcomes by improving the transitional learning environment. STEP targets students transitioning from elementary and middle schools to large urban junior high and high schools in lower-income neighborhoods.
School-Based Mentoring Program for At-Risk Middle School Youth	The School-Based Mentoring Program for At-Risk Middle School Youth aims to prevent behavioral disabilities among at-risk middle school students (i.e., students with high absenteeism rates and several office discipline referrals). Faculty and staff at the middle school volunteered to serve as mentors for the at-risk students and participated in weekly one-on-one mentoring sessions over 18 weeks.
Family Development Research Program (FDRP)	The Syracuse Family Development Research Program (FDRP) is a comprehensive early childhood program that develops child and family functioning through home visitation, parent training, and individualized daycare. FDRP families receive individualized training and support from paraprofessional Child Development Trainers (CDTs) weekly home visits to each family before childbirth and until they are five years old.
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program	In the Valued Youth Program, participating students tutor elementary school students four days a week during regular school hours. These tutors attend training (e.g., training in tutoring, reading, problem-solving) once per week and earn minimum wage for their efforts. Students can attend educational outings with their tutees and attend seminars where adult professionals speak about long-term success and careers.
Wyman's Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®)	Wyman's Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®) is a youth development program designed to prevent adolescent problem behaviors by developing healthy behaviors, life skills, and purpose. TOP® comprises three elements: community service learning (i.e., 20 hours of community service), adult support and guidance, and curriculum-based group activities (i.e., weekly meetings to utilize the Changing Scenes© curriculum).
"Nudge" attendance program	"Nudge" attendance programs are designed to reduce the school-to-parent information gap by sending periodic messages to the student's parent or guardian. Typically, at least one parent/guardian receives timed messages about their students' absences, missing assignments, or class performance.

Program	Program description
Ability School Engagement program	The Ability School Engagement Program (ASEP) uses a group conferencing model to help parents, truant students, police, and school representatives collaboratively discuss and address issues, using a child-focused action plan, that contributes to the chronic absenteeism of the student.
Across Ages	Across Ages is a mentoring program where middle school youth in high-risk settings (e.g., youth in neighborhoods with lower socioeconomic status) are matched with older adults who provide weekly support to curtail alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Across Ages seeks to increase youths' self-control, self-confidence and decrease youths' negative attention-seeking or problem behavior.
Peer Group Connection (PGC)	Peer Group Connection (PGC) uses peer education to strengthen relationships among students across grade levels. Junior and senior high school students are trained as peer leaders who deliver messaging (e.g., team building, stress management) to 9 <sup>th</sup> -grade students.
Playworks Coach	The Playworks Coach program operates in low-income elementary schools to promote physical activity, develop social skills related to cooperation and conflict resolution, improve classwork, decrease behavioral problems, and improve school climate.
<b>Public health &amp; prevention</b>	
Summer Youth Employment Program	Cities across the U.S. develop the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to provide youth with summer job opportunities. The purpose of SYEP is to increase job skills and provide supplemental income to aid low-income families. Programs range in duration, length, and eligibility requirements.
CASASTART (California's Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows)	California's Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows (CASASTART) is a community-based strategy that targets youth living in highly distressed neighborhoods. CASASTART aims to decrease youth exposure to crime and drug activity by providing intensive case management, family services such as counseling and parent training, community-enhanced policing, after-school activities, tutoring; mentoring; vouchers; and special events.
Gang Reduction Program (Los Angeles, CA)	The Gang Reduction Program (GRP) was a targeted multiyear initiative to reduce crime and violence associated with youth street gangs in Los Angeles, California. The LA GRP implemented alternative programs for at-risk youth and families, provided social, educational, and behavioral interventions, and implemented programs to reduce gang crime in the target area. Each of the services provided was categorized by three programming types: prevention, intervention/reentry, and suppression. GRP programming varied from site to site.

Program	Program description
Gang Reduction Program (Richmond, VA)	The Gang Reduction Program (GRP) was a targeted multiyear initiative to reduce crime and violence associated with youth street gangs in Richmond, Virginia. The Richmond GRP implemented programs for at-risk youth and families with additional attention paid to youth-at-risk for gang involvement; programs were classified as either prevention- or intervention-based. GRP programming varied from site to site.
Prime Time	Prime Time is a clinic-based youth development intervention for adolescent girls at high risk for pregnancy. Using one-on-one case management and peer leadership programming, Prime Time aims to reduce teen pregnancy precursors, including sexual risk behaviors, violence involvement, and school disconnection.
<b>Juvenile justice</b>	
Comprehensive Homicide Initiative (Richmond, CA)	The Richmond (California) Comprehensive Homicide Initiative (RCHI) is a problem-oriented policing program that uses enforcement and nonenforcement strategies to reduce homicides. The RCHI combines traditional law enforcement practices with specific prevention and intervention efforts that involved partnerships with the community, other city agencies, and local schools. To achieve fewer homicides, RCHI targets domestic violence, investigative capabilities, at-risk youths, and outdoor-, gun-, drug-, and gang-related violence.
Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP)	California's Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP) is an intensive supervision and wraparound services program for moderate- and high-risk juveniles. ROPP focuses on youth with their first offense to provide them with enhanced case management and integrated services.
Parenting with Love and Limits	Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) is a therapeutic community intervention for families of children with severe emotional or behavioral problems, including aggression, conduct disorders, chronic truancy, drug or alcohol abuse, trauma, anxiety, and depression. PLL relies on a multiple family group approach with four to six families in a group setting and two co-facilitators for six to eight weeks of parenting training.
<b>Workforce development</b>	
JOBSTART	JOBSTART targets students who dropped out and provides them with an alternative source of education and vocational training in hopes of leading them to better and higher-paying jobs. JOBSTART concentrates on four core components: education, occupational training, support services, and job placement assistance. The JOBSTART program instructs youths in necessary academic skills (e.g., communication skills, literacy, and math). Also, youths received vocational/occupational skills training.

## Summary

We found 12 out of 21 meta-analyzed programs had a positive effect on students' outcomes. Our analyses are not an exhaustive review of truancy prevention and intervention programs, as they focus on the programs identified either by OJJDP or by WSIPP's 2009 report. However, we do see that several programs in the realm of truancy prevention (i.e., BMRP, CPC, Harlem Children's Zone, Project Learn, Reconnecting Youth, STEP, School-Based Mentoring, and SYEP) and truancy treatment (i.e., C&C+TB, "nudge" attendance programs, ROPP, and Parenting with Love and Limits) improve primary outcomes of interest for students.

However, the state of knowledge about truancy and dropout programs' effectiveness remains limited, as it was when WSIPP conducted its first review in 2009. Many programs are never evaluated, and those that are evaluated use research designs that do not permit us to conclude that they affect student outcomes (e.g., studies with non-equivalent comparison groups). We echo the sentiments in our 2009 report—in order to know if truancy programs are effective, more rigorous evaluation is needed in the realm of truancy prevention and treatment.

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