

ATTENDANCE NEWSLETTER



Regional Office of Education #11

Kyle Thompson, Ph.D.
Regional Superintendent



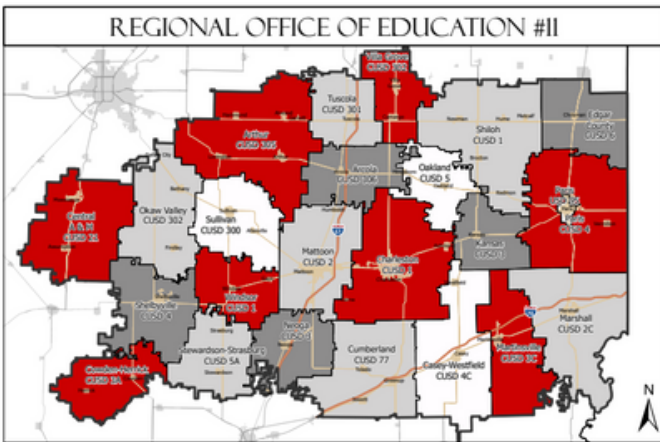
Approach to Addressing School Absenteeism

Addressing school absenteeism - including cases classified as chronic absenteeism and truancy - should involve a multifaceted, student-centered, social services approach. Such an approach has been proven to be more effective at decreasing absenteeism than a punitive approach. The process of intervening with students and families to identify and support the root causes that lead to absenteeism, and working alongside them to share the importance of attendance, can make a huge difference. Early intervention is key. This includes putting supports in place to engage students and families before attendance patterns become more problematic. Building a school community culture of attendance as early as early childhood and kindergarten can positively change the trajectory of a child's K-12 school experience. Each stakeholder has an important role in this work. Students who attend schools where they are engaged in learning, feel safe, appreciated, accepted, cared for and connected with educators and peer are more likely to have high rates of attendance.



**Every
Student.
Every
Day.**

**FALL
2024**



Common Causes of Student Absenteeism

- Desire to escape or avoid something at school (e.g., conflict with teacher or other students, bullying, harassment, struggles with schoolwork).
- Desire to obtain or access something outside of school.
- Need to work or provide childcare due to family needs.
- Illness or mental health concerns.
- Lack of safe, reliable housing or transportation.



Implications and Impact of Chronic Absenteeism

Research has revealed a direct correlation between poor school attendance and short-term and long-term problems for students, their families, schools and communities, such as:

- Social isolation - isolated from teachers and peers, students may experience lack of social support, chronic stress, disengagement, anxiety, and depression.
- Decline in academic performance - students who are absent are likely to fall behind and chronic absenteeism can lead to dropping out of school, affecting employability and stability as an adult.
- Potential for risky behavior - when not in school and unsupervised, students are more likely to engage in substance abuse and criminal behavior.



SHOWING UP TOGETHER!

Success Stories

In my first year as an Attendance Specialist, I inherited an upper elementary student on my caseload who had been in truancy since 2020 and was already to the point of being in the court system due to his lack of attendance. I worked with him and his mom all year without much success, and our relationship was very tense. When I discovered that he had not been registered for middle school at the start of the following school year, I made it my personal mission to locate him and make sure he was registered in school somewhere. I was able to get a hold of his mom and found out that the family had been evicted from their apartment over the summer and became homeless; staying with different family members in various towns and even sleeping in their car some nights. Over the course of about a month, I collaborated with several agencies and the mom to get the student placed with his grandmother so that he could have stable housing and register for school. For the first time in our working relationship, his mom saw me as an ally and a resource. We were then able to get the student placed in one of our alternative education programs to help him recover credits. He spent one semester in our alternative education program, where he only had a few excused absences, and then was able to return to his home school for the second semester. I later ran into the family one random afternoon grocery shopping and they were all together and happy, and the mom even hugged me and thanked me for helping her and her son.

- Samantha Shores, ROE #11 Attendance Specialist

Essential Practices for Building a Positive School Climate

- Build and maintain trusting relationships with students by prioritizing community building, listen and responding with empathy, bringing positive energy to school each day, being consistent, and helping students see educators as human beings who care about them through tutoring, attending athletic events, supporting theater productions, etc.
- Provide a welcoming, safe, supportive learning environment by greeting students by name, maintaining predictable daily routines, and showing care through communication, welcoming actions, and words.
- Design engaging learning opportunities that are interactive, relevant, make real life connections, and meet the needs of diverse learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetics, etc.).

ROE # 11 Attendance Specialists

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Attendance Improvement Matters (AIM)

Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program

The purpose of AIM is to provide direct services to students that will assist them in overcoming barriers that interfere with school attendance. The attendance specialists develop positive relationships with truant students and their families through home visits, school/classroom visits, incentive programs, mentoring, monitoring and any other activities that are relevant to the intervention process.

If you have a success story or content you would like to be featured in our newsletter, please email Sue Shumway, ROE #11 Director of Communications & Community Partnerships at sshumway@roe11.org

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