G.T.P.

Glades Truancy Program

Program Rationale

Reducing chronic absenteeism is at the forefront of student attendance policies across the nation. Not showing up for school matters; it generates an achievement gap that translates into lower academic performance, which may lead to dropping out of school. The challenge for districts is to develop policies that include all relevant stakeholders that identify and remove barriers that impede regular school attendance. The intent of the truancy intervention program referral process is to identify students with patterns of non-attendance to provide escalating services that aim to reengage students and their families in the learning process for greater academic achievement.

District school boards are tasked with the enforcement of school attendance, as outlined in F.S. 1003.26 Enforcement of school attendance. Habitual truants must be the subject of services to address patterns of nonattendance. To this end, principals shall refer these students to the school’s committee responsible for attendance to determine if patterns of truancy are developing. Some of the strategies include: meeting with parent; frequent communication between teacher and parent; evaluation for alternative education programs; attendance contracts; implementation of corrective strategies; tutoring; mentoring; and referral to social service agencies. The school’s committee shall facilitate intervention services to students and families with the aim of resolving non-attendance patterns.

Florida statute 1003.01 defines a habitual truant as a student who has 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge and consent of the student’s parent, is subject to compulsory school attendance under s. 1003.21 School attendance and (2) (a), and is not exempt under s. 1003.21(3) or s. 1003.24 Parents responsible for attendance of children; attendance policy, or by the meeting of the criteria for any other exemption specified by law or rules of the State Board of

Education.

Glades County Public Schools collaborates with Lutheran Services, which is funded by Florida’s Department of Juvenile Justice for truancy diversion services for at risk youth.

Glades County District Policy

The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session. School attendance is the responsibility of parents and students. Absences shall be reported to the school attendance office by the parent or adult student as soon as practicable.

In accordance with statute, the Superintendent shall require, from the parent of each student of compulsory school age or from an adult student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a statement of the cause for such absence. The School Board reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence.

In addition, educators have the responsibility to encourage regular attendance of students, maintain accurate attendance records, and follow reporting procedures prescribed by the Superintendent. Schools will record absent and tardy students in the automated student attendance recordkeeping system.

Provision shall be made for promoting school attendance through adjustment of personal problems, education of parents, and enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws and related child-welfare legislation. Accordingly:

A. absences must be reported to the school by the parent or adult student as soon as practicable. Failure to report and explain the absence(s) shall result in unexcused absence(s). The final authority for determining acceptability of the reason for the absence(s) shall rest with the principal

B. teachers shall record absentees each period of the school day and report absences, excused and unexcused, as required by the school;

C. insofar as possible, parents should be contracted each time their child has an unexcused absence, or an absence for which the reason is unknown, to prevent the development of patterns of nonattendance;

D. when a student has at least five (5) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a ninety (90) calendar day period, the teacher shall report to the Principal that the child may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. Unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, the Principal will refer to the case to the school's child study team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the child study team finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, a meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies. If the problem is not resolved, the child study team will implement interventions as provided in F.S. 1003.26.

Glades Truancy Program Procedures

The guide below provides an overview of the steps to be taken should a student show a pattern of non-attendance:

LEVEL TRUANCY INFRACTION INTERVENTION

1ST Level 5 or more unexcused absences Parent Contact

within a 30-day period, or 10

unexcused absences within a

90-day period

2nd Level 2 additional unexcused Letter to Parent

absences scheduling a meeting

3rd Level 2 additional unexcused Letter scheduling final

absences intervention

Truancy Complaint 15 or more unexcused absences File complaint w/GCSO and/or

within a 90-day calendar period. forward a “Child in Need of

Services/Family in Need of

Services” petition to the

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Board considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for time missed at school:

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|  | A. | Personal illness of the student (medical evidence may be required by the principal or designee for absences exceeding five (5) consecutive days). |
|  | B. | Court appearance of the student. |
|  | C. | Medical appointment of the student. |
|  | D. | An approved school activity. |
|  | E. | Insurmountable problems. Prior permission by principal or designee is required except in the case of an emergency. |
|  | F. | Other absences with prior approval of the principal or designee. |
|  | G. | Attendance at a center under Children and Families Services supervision. |
|  | H. | Significant community events with prior permission of the principal. When more than one (1) school is involved, the Area Superintendent will determine the status of the absence. |
|  | I. | Religious instruction or religious holiday. |
|  | J. | Death in the immediate family. |

\*\* At the principal’s discretion, students will be allowed 3 notes from parents per semester for excusing an absence.