

# Family Engagement Strategies



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**Public Instruction**



Wisconsin Department of  
Children and Families



Spring 2024

# Truancy Prevention Learning Communities

Register to receive the recording



## Truancy: Wisconsin Statute & Best Practice Approaches

*This first session will be a review of truancy basics presented by DPI & DCF Staff*

Tuesday, February 6, 8:30am-9:30am | [Register](#)



## Family Engagement Strategies

Wednesday, February 21, 8:30am-9:30am | [Register](#)



## Using Data to Improve Attendance

Wednesday, March 6, 8:30am-9:30am | [Register](#)



## School-County Collaboration

Tuesday, March 19, 8:30am-9:30am | [Register](#)



Registration open for  
Members and Non-members

# UPCOMING WEBINARS



9

APR

Supporting Attendance  
Through the IEP Process

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

16

APR

Affirming Practices for LGBTQ+  
Students with Chronic  
Absenteeism

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

23

APR

Evidence-Based Practices for  
Identifying & Managing School  
Refusal

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Register at [wsswa.org](https://www.wsswa.org)

CEHs have been applied for  
through NASW WI

*FREE for student members!*



April 9<sup>th</sup>

Tim Peerenboom - DPI

Eva Shaw - DPI



April 16<sup>th</sup>

Ronnie Rivera -

Department of Gender &  
Identity Inclusion, MPS



April 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dr. Becky Thompson,

Clinic Director at Thriving  
Minds Family Services



# Family Engagement Matters

Parent involvement → Improved academic outcomes

Schools with stronger engagement → Attendance rates 25% better



[Investigating the relationship between pre-pandemic family engagement and student and school outcomes](#) (Oct 2023)

# Families want more opportunities for involvement

**80%**

of family members reported that they were never asked by a judge what should happen to their child.

**86%**

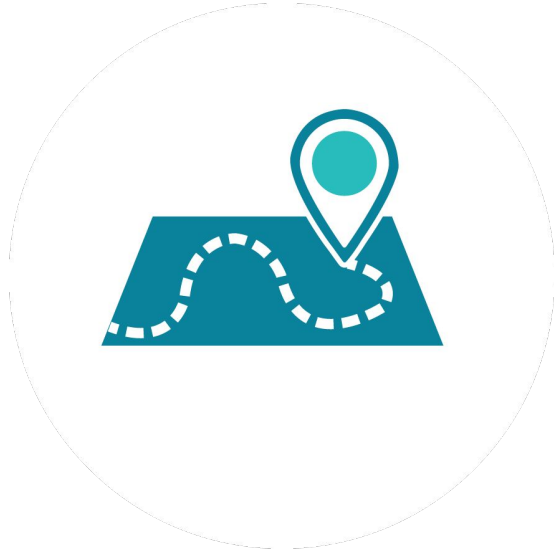
of family members of youth in placement in the youth justice system said they wanted to be more involved in their children's treatment.

*Source: Justice for Families, Families Unlocking Futures (2012)*

# Strategies - Laying the Foundation

- **Expand the definition of family**
- **Work to change exclusionary historical practices**
- **Work to improve trustworthiness of system**
- **Involve families to understand root causes and solutions**
- **Orient caregivers on school policies and expectations**

# Strategies - Laying the Foundation



- Communicate early & often about the importance of absences
- Target absenteeism in Elementary
- Teach caregivers to track attendance
- Relationship first, problem solving second
- Establish [Resource Maps](#) and [Referral Pathways](#)
- Support Educational Stability

# Strategies - Ongoing

- **Personal calls home**
  - (Don't just contact; connect!)
- **Texting or “nudging”**
- **Proactive family meetings in comfortable location**
- **Proactive home visits**
- **Leverage already scheduled meetings**





# Strategies - Ongoing



- **Communicate in primary language**
- **Multiple ways of communication**
- **Focus on caregiver hopes for student**
- **Involve families in student success plans**
- **Mailings home**

# What Can YOU Control?




# Resources

- [Family Engagement Issue Brief](#) (DCF)
- Parent Toolkit - [Bringing Attendance Home: Engaging Parents in Preventing Chronic Absence](#) (Attendance Works)
  - [Bringing Attendance Home: Parent Video](#)
- [Connect with Families](#) (Attendance Works)
- [A Whole School Approach to Family Engagement and Attendance Messaging](#) (Attendance Works)

# Resources (Cont)

- [Communication Tools](#) (California DOJ Truancy Toolkit)
  - [Top 10 Things to Consider When Talking to Parents About Attendance](#)
- [Supporting Tribal Youth Attendance Achievement: A Resource to Support Community-Based Truancy Prevention Programs](#) (2022)
- [What Does High-Impact Family Engagement Look Like in Reducing Chronic Absence?](#) (Connecticut DOE)
- [Diagnostic Tool for Addressing the Root Causes of Chronic Absenteeism](#) - Oregon DOE

# Presenters Today

- **Bridget Todd-Robbins**
    - La Crosse County
  - **Mary Green**
    - School District of Waukesha
  - **Meghan Everhard**
    - School District of Janesville
- 



Spring 2024 - Upcoming

# Truancy Prevention Learning Communities

**Learn from and connect with communities who are addressing attendance with best practice strategies.** Each session will highlight promising practices and feature school district and county human service staff from across the state of Wisconsin.



## Using Data to Improve Attendance

Wednesday, March 6, 8:30am-9:30am



## School-County Collaboration

Tuesday, March 19, 8:30am-9:30am

*Find link to register for sessions on DPI's [School Attendance page](#).*



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Minds Family Services



# Thank You!

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