

CHAPTER 260A

TRUANCY

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260A.01 TRUANCY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The programs in this chapter are designed to provide a continuum of intervention and services to support families and children in keeping children in school and combating truancy and educational neglect. School districts, county attorneys, and law enforcement may establish the programs and coordinate them with other community-based truancy services in order to provide the necessary and most effective intervention for children and their families. This continuum of intervention and services involves progressively intrusive intervention, beginning with strong service-oriented efforts at the school and community level and involving the court's authority only when necessary.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 37

260A.02 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Scope.** The definitions in this section apply to this chapter.

Subd. 2. **Board.** "Board" means a school attendance review board created under section 260A.05.

Subd. 3. **Continuing truant.** "Continuing truant" means a child who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of section 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in section 120A.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for:

- (1) three days if the child is in elementary school; or
- (2) three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

Nothing in this section shall prevent a school district from notifying a truant child's parent or legal guardian of the child's truancy or otherwise addressing a child's attendance problems prior to the child becoming a continuing truant.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 38; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1Sp1997 c 4 art 2 s 41; 1998 c 397 art 11 s 3

260A.03 NOTICE TO PARENT OR GUARDIAN WHEN CHILD IS A CONTINUING TRUANT.

Upon a child's initial classification as a continuing truant, the school attendance officer or other designated school official shall notify the child's parent or legal guardian, by first-class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

- (1) that the child is truant;
- (2) that the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
- (3) that the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school pursuant to section 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under section 120A.34;
- (4) that this notification serves as the notification required by section 120A.34;
- (5) that alternative educational programs and services may be available in the district;

(6) that the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;

(7) that if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under chapter 260C;

(8) that if the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to section 260C.201; and

(9) that it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 39; 1998 c 397 art 11 s 3; 1999 c 139 art 4 s 2

260A.04 COMMUNITY-BASED TRUANCY PROJECTS AND SERVICE CENTERS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** (a) Community-based truancy projects and service centers may be established to:

- (1) provide for identification of students with school attendance problems;
- (2) facilitate the provision of services geared to address the underlying issues that are contributing to a student's truant behavior; and
- (3) provide facilities to receive truant students from peace officers and probation officers.

(b) Truancy projects and service centers may provide any of these services and shall provide for referral of children and families to other appropriate programs and services.

Subd. 2. **Community-based action projects.** Schools, community agencies, law enforcement, parent associations, and other interested groups may cooperate to provide coordinated intervention, prevention, and educational services for truant students and their families. Services may include:

- (1) assessment for underlying issues that are contributing to the child's truant behavior;
- (2) referral to other community-based services for the child and family, such as individual or family counseling, educational testing, psychological evaluations, tutoring, mentoring, and mediation;
- (3) transition services to integrate the child back into school and to help the child succeed once there;
- (4) culturally sensitive programming and staffing; and
- (5) increased school response, including in-school suspension, better attendance monitoring and enforcement, after-school study programs, and in-service training for teachers and staff.

Subd. 3. **Truancy service centers.** (a) Truancy service centers may be established as facilities to receive truant students from peace officers and probation officers and provide other appropriate services. A truancy service center may:

- (1) assess a truant student's attendance situation, including enrollment status, verification of truancy, and school attendance history;
 - (2) assist in coordinating intervention efforts where appropriate, including checking with juvenile probation and children and family services to determine whether an active case is pending and facilitating transfer to an appropriate facility, if indicated; and evaluating the need for and making referral to a health clinic, chemical dependency treatment, protective services, social or recreational programs, or other school or community-based services and programs described in subdivision 2;
 - (3) contact the parents or legal guardian of the truant student and release the truant student to the custody of the parents, guardian, or other suitable person; and
 - (4) facilitate the student's earliest possible return to school.
- (b) Truancy service centers may not accept:

(1) juveniles taken into custody for violations of law that would be crimes if committed by adults;

(2) intoxicated juveniles;

(3) ill or injured juveniles; or

(4) juveniles older than mandatory school attendance age.

(c) Truancy service centers may expand their service capability in order to receive curfew violators, and take appropriate action, such as coordination of intervention efforts, contacting parents, and developing strategies to ensure that parents assume responsibility for their children's curfew violations.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 40

260A.05 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARDS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** A school district may establish one or more school attendance review boards to exercise the powers and duties in this section. The school district board shall appoint the members of the school attendance review board and designate the schools within the board's jurisdiction. Members of a school attendance review board may include:

(1) the superintendent of the school district or the superintendent's designee;

(2) a principal and one or more other school officials from within the district;

(3) parent representatives;

(4) representatives from community agencies that provide services for truant students and their families;

(5) a juvenile probation officer;

(6) school counselors and attendance officers; and

(7) law enforcement officers.

Subd. 2. **General powers and duties.** A school attendance review board shall prepare an annual plan to promote interagency and community cooperation and to reduce duplication of services for students with school attendance problems. The plan shall include a description of truancy procedures and services currently in operation within the board's jurisdiction, including the programs and services under section 260A.04. A board may provide consultant services to, and coordinate activities of, truancy programs and services. If a board determines that it will be unable to provide services for all truant students who are referred to it, the board shall establish procedures and criteria for determining whether to accept referrals of students or refer them for other appropriate action.

Subd. 3. **Oversight of truant students.** A school attendance review board shall oversee referrals of truant students and provide appropriate intervention and services under section 260A.06. The board shall establish procedures for documenting student attendance and verifying actions and interventions with respect to truant students and their families.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 41; 1998 c 398 art 5 s 31

260A.06 REFERRAL OF TRUANT STUDENTS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARD.

Subdivision 1. **Referral; notice.** An attendance officer or other school official may refer a student who is a continuing truant to the school attendance review board. The person making the referral shall provide a written notice by first class mail or other reasonable means to the student and the student's parent or legal guardian. The notice must:

(1) include the name and address of the board to which the student has been referred and the reason for the referral; and

(2) indicate that the student, the parent or legal guardian, and the referring person will meet with the board to determine a proper disposition of the referral, unless the board refers the student directly to the county attorney or for other appropriate legal action.

Subd. 2. **Meeting; community services.** (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), the school attendance review board shall schedule the meeting described in subdivision 1 and provide notice of the meeting by first class mail or other reasonable means to the student, parent or guardian, and referring person. If the board determines that available community services may resolve the attendance problems of the truant student, the board shall refer the student or the student's parent or guardian to participate in the community services. The board may develop an agreement with the student and parent or guardian that specifies the actions to be taken. The board shall inform the student and parent or guardian that failure to comply with any agreement or to participate in appropriate community services will result in a referral to the county attorney under subdivision 3. The board may require the student or parent or guardian to provide evidence of participation in available community services or compliance with any agreement.

(b) A school attendance review board may refer a student directly to the county attorney or for other appropriate legal action under subdivision 3 if it has established procedures and criteria for these referrals.

Subd. 3. **Referral to county attorney; other appropriate action.** If the school attendance review board determines that available community services cannot resolve the attendance problems of the truant student, if the student or the parent or guardian has failed to comply with any referrals or agreements under subdivision 2 or to otherwise cooperate with the board, or if the board determines that a student should be referred directly under this subdivision, the board may:

(1) refer the matter to the county attorney under section 260A.07, if the county attorney has elected to participate in the truancy mediation program; or

(2) if the county attorney has not elected to participate in the truancy mediation program, refer the matter for appropriate legal action against the child or the child's parent or guardian under chapter 260 or section 120A.34.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 42; 1998 c 397 art 11 s 3; 1998 c 398 art 5 s 32

260A.07 COUNTY ATTORNEY TRUANCY MEDIATION PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; referrals.** A county attorney may establish a truancy mediation program for the purpose of resolving truancy problems without court action. If a student is in a school district that has established a school attendance review board, the student may be referred to the county attorney under section 260A.06, subdivision 3. If the student's school district has not established a board, the student may be referred to the county attorney by the school district if the student continues to be truant after the parent or guardian has been sent or conveyed the notice under section 260A.03.

Subd. 2. **Meeting; notice.** The county attorney may request the parent or legal guardian and the child referred under subdivision 1 to attend a meeting to discuss the possible legal consequences of the minor's truancy. The notice of the meeting must be served personally or by certified mail at least five days before the meeting on each person required to attend the meeting. The notice must include:

(1) the name and address of the person to whom the notice is directed;

(2) the date, time, and place of the meeting;

(3) the name of the minor classified as a truant;

(4) the basis for the referral to the county attorney;

(5) a warning that a criminal complaint may be filed against the parents or guardians pursuant to section 120A.34 for failure to compel the attendance of the minor at school or that action may be taken in juvenile court; and

(6) a statement that the meeting is voluntary.

History: 1995 c 226 art 3 s 43; 1998 c 397 art 11 s 3