

Overview of the Truancy Process and Education Reengagement Supports in King County

CSEC Lunch & Learn
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Agenda

2/25/2022

- “Becca Law” Overview and Background
- Overview of King County’s Approach to Truancy & Education Reengagement
 - KCERT- King County Education Reengagement Team
 - Education Reengagement Resources
 - Truancy Process

“Becca Law” Background

Safety

- Students who are unsupervised during school hours are more vulnerable to negative pulls that can lead to safety concerns and further disengage them from their education.
- The law mandates communication between schools and home any time a student is absent to verify that the child’s whereabouts are known
- Schools, parents, and the court are compelled to work together to monitor and provide interventions to youth at risk.

Prevent School Drop Out

- Truancy and chronic absenteeism are proven early warning indicators that a student is at risk of falling behind academically and dropping out of school.



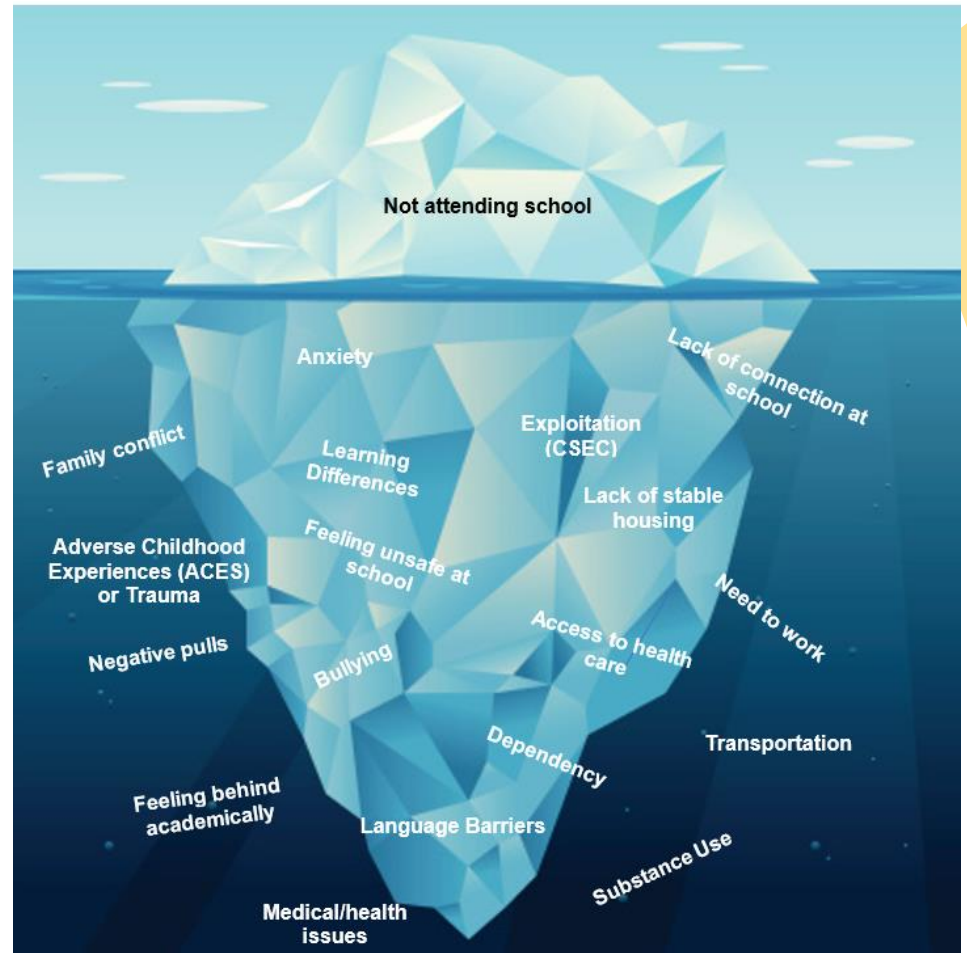
The law was passed in 1995 and named for Rebecca Hedman.

Absenteeism as an Indicator

Absences can be a sign that a student is facing barriers to achievement or engagement or is facing challenges at home.

Patterns of chronic absence or truancy can be signs of systemic barriers or challenges- issues like community safety or transportation, school climate, etc.

Attendance is one of the most reliable early warning indicators that a student is at risk of falling behind academically.



Education Reengagement Through a Public Health Lens

It is imperative, even in the time of a pandemic, to ground ourselves in the understanding of the benefits of education.

- Science has established that better-educated individuals have a much **longer life expectancy** even after accounting for various background factors such as family income, patterns of family formation, and access to health care (*Hummer 2015*)
- In addition to the striking mortality differences, **lower educational attainment** is associated with **health-related co-morbidities** such as cognitive, social and psychological impairment as well as less access to health care that can cause can negatively affect lifetime physical and psychological health (*Kwakye 2021*)
- Other studies have demonstrated that each additional year of school increases an individual's **lifetime income** between 7.5 percent and 10 percent on average.

Overview of the Becca Law

RCW 28A.225.010

Attendance - Mandatory

- Parents are required to cause any child between the ages of 8 and 18 to attend school unless an exception applies
- Children have the responsibility to attend full time when school is in session unless an exception applies
- 6- or 7-year-olds who are enrolled are required to attend regularly
- Schools are required to promote regular school attendance and take action if children accumulate unexcused absences. (RCW 28A.225.020)



[Chapter 28A.225 RCW: COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ADMISSION \(wa.gov\)](http://www.wa.gov)

Overview of School's Duties (RCW 28A.225.020)

Monitor Attendance

Excused absences

- Verified by parent/guardian or health care provider per district policy
- Meet the definition of “excused” per district policy and WAC
 - Ex: Illness, Family Emergency, religious observances, etc

Unexcused absences

- Unverified (no contact with parent)
- Doesn't meet the definition of “excused”

• **Inform:** (RCW 28A.225.005)

- **Inform** parents annually about the importance of regular school attendance, supports available at school, attendance laws and policies, and potential consequences of absences. **Notify** parents after an unexcused absence.

• **Conference**

- To identify causes of absences and develop a plan to address barriers to attendance
- If youth is subject to Dependency, convene the team
- If youth as an IEP or 504, convene the team
- If an elementary school student has accumulated excessive excused absences

• **Take Data Informed Steps**

- Take steps to address the student's **specific** barriers to attendance
- **Needs assessment** for secondary students (WARNS or other)
- **Convene the IEP/504 Team** if student has an IEP/504
- **Offer an IEP/504** for any student reasonably believed to have a disability who does not currently have an IEP/504. Inform parents of right to evaluation.

• **Refer to a Community Engagement Board (CEB)**

- District-run Community Engagement Board
- King County Community Attendance Support Team

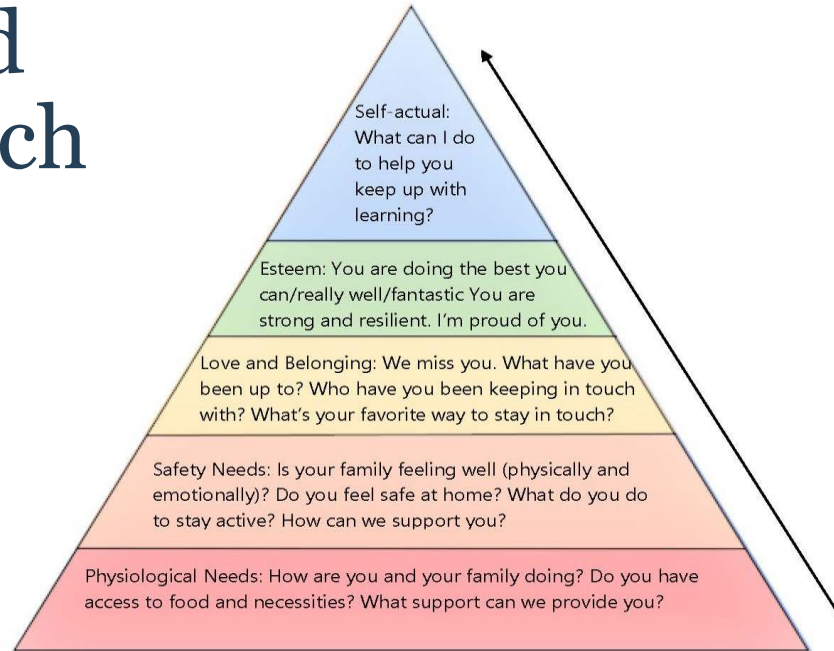
• **File a Truancy Petition**

[OSPI Attendance Resources & Materials](#)

Family Connections Tool & Resource List

Created by Kimberly Strong, Regional Capacity Builder for HDESD. Kimberly.strong@hdesd.org

Tiered Approach



Purpose: To help educators build relationships with families and connect them to needed resource BEFORE assessing learning needs.

To use:

- When calling families, start at the bottom of this pyramid and work your way up.
- Use the question frames as guides.
- Use the links to connect to resources as needed.

Suggestions:

- Put your own oxygen mask on first by practicing self-care. You can't help if you're not okay.
- Keep shared google sheet with check in call notes.

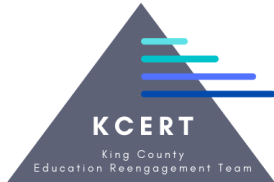
Important Contacts:

(Make a copy and add your own link with contact info for your counselors, district contacts, SPED case managers, etc.)

START HERE!

King County Education Reengagement Team “KCERT”

[King County Education
Reengagement Team- About Us](#)



Superior Court:

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King County's Approach to Truancy/Education Reengagement

The purpose of the Becca Law is not to punish students for past absences, but to provide a safety net to keep youth safe and prevent school drop out.

KCERT Goals:

- Provide a tiered approach to the compulsory attendance laws to promote the well-being of the student and improve educational outcomes.
- Promote collaboration between stakeholder including students, families, school districts, and community partners to identify and reduce barriers to educational goals.
- Assist stakeholders with accessing resources to address barriers to school attendance.
- Develop a community-wide safety net to prevent truant and opportunity youth from dropping out of school.



King County Education Reengagement Workshops

Workshops are open to **all students & their families in King County, with or without a truancy petition.** School districts can invite students & families directly, and parents can request a workshop invitation through the [KC attendance website](#) or by emailing Lorena Villa, PAO Workshop Coordinator at lvilla@kingcounty.gov. Workshops are coordinated by the King County PAO and facilitated by contracted community partners.

Workshops are held via Zoom and are available for Elementary and Secondary students.

Workshop Goals:

Workshops provide a welcoming space for students to learn ways to stay connected and engaged with their education and feel inspired to invest in themselves and their education. Workshops also empower students and families with strategies to access supports at school and in their community and gain a better understanding of the attendance laws in Washington State.

Workshop Providers

Unleash the Brilliance (UTB) :

UTB workshops are predominantly youth-designed and led with support from their founder, Terrell Dorsey. “The vision of Unleash the Brilliance is to inspire youth to proactively engage in their education. We teach tools that empower students to positively take charge of their future and connect with their community.” UTB has facilitated Education Reengagement workshops in King County since 2010.

SafeFutures Youth Center:

SF Case Managers facilitate King County’s Latinx Education Reengagement Workshops in Spanish. SafeFutures “empowers and advocates for under-served young people from low-income communities and communities of color to maximize their potential”. SF has facilitated workshop in King County since 2018.



Community Attendance Support Team (CAST)

The King County [Community Attendance Support Team \(CAST\)](#) is a county level Community Engagement Board (CEB) coordinated by the Superior Court Becca Program Facilitators. The CAST functions in collaboration with the KCERT, King County school districts, and community partners. CAST meetings connect students and families with a hand-selected team that works together to identify barriers to attendance and recommend methods of improving attendance.

CAST members include representatives from community agencies that provide a variety of opportunities, supports, and resources to youth and families across King County. Members complete or meet statutory training requirements for CEB members, and each meeting includes CAST members selected based on the needs of the student or family.

Parents and school districts can make a CAST referral as a data-informed step before a truancy petition is filed or request a CAST at any time after a truancy petition is filed.



King County

COMMUNITY ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM

King County Truancy Petition Overview

When is a truancy petition required?

- If the supports offered or attempted by a school district are not successful in **substantially reducing absences**, the school district is **required** to file a **truancy petition** after **7 unexcused** absences in a month and **not later than 15 cumulative unexcused** absences in a school year.

What is a truancy petition?

- A Truancy Petition is a civil legal document filed with King County Superior Court against the student, parent, or both.

What happens after a truancy petition is filed?

- In King County, the Court issues a Case Schedule, setting progress checks at regular intervals
- No “Court” action until all other interventions have been exhausted
 - Pre-pandemic (2018), only around 4% of truancy cases ended up having a hearing scheduled.*
- The truancy petition expires after **one calendar year**, unless the district requests to dismiss the petition sooner, or the student meets an exception under the truancy statute (turns 18, graduates or earns a GED, etc).

Resources

Resource Room at the CFJC:

The Resource Center helps ensure youth and families have access to Information, programs, and opportunities. The Resource Center partners with non-profit organizations and community members to provide coordinated assistance to youth and families in one central location at the Children and Family Justice Center. The resource room also has a youth closet that youth can access for free!

Contact: Paula Moses, (206) 263-8634 or SCResourceCenter@kingcounty.gov

Resource Link for King County Youth Resources:

<https://youthresources.kingcounty.gov/>

King County Attendance Website:

<https://kingcountyattendance.org/>

King County Handouts and Resources Google Drive:

[Truancy Handouts and Resources - Google Drive](#)

Attendance Works:

[Attendance Works](#)



Thank You!