



**Roger D. Breed, Ed.D., Commissioner**  
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August 30, 2012

Patrick J. O'Donnell, Clerk  
Room 2018, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Clerk O'Donnell:

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-527.01 requires that the Truancy Task Force report to the Legislature on or before July 1 of each year, its recommendations to reduce the incidents of excessive absenteeism. A preliminary report was sent to you on June 22, 2012. The following constitutes the revised and complete Report of the Truancy Task Force including the attendance data from the 2011-12 school-year.

Mission:

"The task force shall study and evaluate the data contained in the reports required by 79-527 and shall develop recommendations to reduce incidents of excessive absenteeism. The task force may contact a school district or a county attorney for additional information. The task force shall report to the Legislature on or before July 1, 2011 and each July 1 thereafter."

Participants:

Roger Breed, Commissioner of Education  
Ellen Brokofsky, Probation Administrator  
Kerry Winterer, CEO – Department of Health and Human Services

Report:

A summary report of the 2011-12 attendance data is attached. As the report shows, the overall number and percentage of students who were excessively absent (missed more than twenty school days) declined to 16,297 students, or 5.65% of the 288,374 public school K-12 students. Last year the corresponding numbers were 18,100 students, or 6.33%. There were also comparable declines in the numbers of students who missed 15 or more days (from 35,121 to 31,699), and in the number of students who missed 10 or fewer days (from 74,836 to 68,497). Further, there was a reduction in the number of student

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absences across all grades K-12. This is the third year of the attendance data collection and excessive absenteeism is clearly trending downward.

In reviewing the data from the attendance reports for 2011-12, the Truancy Task Force would note the following trends:

1. Absenteeism appears to be trending downward as reported on both the monthly and year-end reports;
2. Absenteeism (student with more than 2 absences per month), as percent of membership, is higher in public school settings than in private, denominational or parochial (non-public) schools. The non-public schools absenteeism as a percentage of membership is around 5% to 7% on a monthly basis while a public school is around 15% to 18% on a monthly basis;
3. With primarily the exceptions of Douglas County School District No. 1 (OPS) and Lancaster County District No. 1 (LPS), the top reason for absences is "medical" in non-public schools and all other public school districts. The numbers for Douglas County School District No. 1 for "Reasons Other" are so large (sometime almost 8,000 more) than "Reasons Medical" that it pushes the "Reasons Other" category for public school districts to be almost 60% of the absences and medical as 40% of the absences each month when looking only at public school districts. It should be noted that OPS requires a doctor's note to categorize an absence as "Reasons Medical", thus a number of absences for sickness might be included in the "Reasons Other." Most other public school district reasons are comparable to any non-public school for reasons, although some public school districts report 'Reason Other" for more student absences than "Medical Reasons";
4. Long-term suspensions and expulsions constitute a very small percentage of the reasons for students not being present in schools; and
5. The overwhelming number of referrals to the County Attorney and Contacts with law enforcement is by public schools;

Based on the 2011-12 attendance data and observations, the Truancy Task Force would offer the following recommendations to reduce incidents of excessive absenteeism:

1. That the Legislature make no changes to Sections 79-201 through 79-210 regarding attendance expectations.

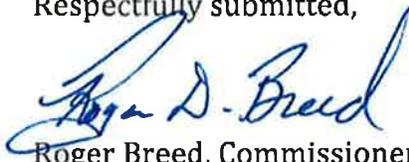
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2. That the Legislature consider configuring and supporting the sharing of student-specific data across agencies. Cross-agency data sharing between Health and Human Services, School Districts and Juvenile Court/Office of Probation would assist in aligning services and efforts in support of education and societal goals.
3. That the Legislature monitor the Greater Omaha Attendance and Learning Services (GOALS) project and consider, if effective interventions are documented, creating and supporting a statewide model. This recommendation builds on the recommendation last year to support/fund county-wide projects between school districts, county attorneys and other community agencies to mitigate attendance issues including encouraging early intervention with students and parents/guardians particularly when students are excessively absent at grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4. High absenteeism for younger students is a strong predictor of truancy in later elementary and secondary grades.
4. That the Legislature introduce legislation in the 103rd Legislature, First Session, to amend Section 79-527(2) to eliminate the monthly reporting of data by public, private, denominational and parochial schools and replace it with the "public school districts reporting individual student attendance on a quarterly basis to NDE as determined and directed by the Commissioner of Education". Since Fall membership is reported as of the last Friday in September and due on or before October 15 of each school year {Section 79-528(4)(a)}, and student summary attendance is reported on an annual basis at the close of the school year and due on or before June 30 of each year {79-528(2) "such other information as the Commissioner directs"}, then individual attendance could be reported as of the last day of October, the last day of December, the last day of March, and the last day of June of each school year.
5. That the required report date of the Truancy Task Force to the Legislature be changed from July 1 to October 1 of each year in order to give the Truancy Task Force more time to review, analyze, and report to the Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Breed, Commissioner of Education

On behalf of Ellen Brokofsky, Probation Administrator, and  
Kerry Winterer, CEO, Department of Health and Human Services

cc: Senator Greg Adams  
Senator Brad Ashford

**OVERALL ATTENDANCE 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12**

	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12*</b>
More than 10 days absent	29.03%	26.18%	23.75%
More than 15 days absent	14.34%	12.29%	10.99%
More than 20 days absent	21,980 – 7.76%	18,100 – 6.33%	16,297 – 5.65%

\*2011-12 data confirmed by October 15, 2012

**K-12 MEMBERSHIP AND STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10/15/20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES  
 ABSENCES DATA FROM NSSRS: 2011-2012 STUDENT SUMMARY ATTENDANCE TEMPLATE**

**STATEWIDE SUMMARY**

	STUDENT COUNT	% OF MEMBERSHIP
MEMBERSHIP	288,374	
STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	68,497	23.75%
STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	31,699	10.99%
STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	16,297	5.65%

GRADE	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	
		ABSENCES	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	MEMBERSHIP
KG	23,795	4,768	20.04%	1,761	7.40%	736	3.09%						
01	22,951	3,788	16.50%	1,272	5.54%	465	2.03%						
02	23,100	3,373	14.60%	1,121	4.85%	406	1.76%						
03	22,428	3,187	14.21%	1,039	4.63%	401	1.79%						
04	22,279	3,257	14.62%	1,112	4.99%	413	1.85%						
05	21,948	3,485	15.88%	1,222	5.57%	422	1.92%						
06	21,738	4,173	19.20%	1,585	7.29%	648	2.98%						
07	21,244	5,013	23.60%	2,191	10.31%	993	4.67%						
08	21,116	5,886	27.87%	2,770	13.12%	1,385	6.56%						
09	21,962	6,562	29.88%	3,474	15.82%	2,050	9.33%						
10	21,983	7,556	34.37%	4,210	19.15%	2,463	11.20%						
11	21,500	8,240	38.33%	4,693	21.83%	2,803	13.04%						
12	22,330	9,209	41.24%	5,249	23.51%	3,112	13.94%						
TOTAL	288,374	68,497	23.75%	31,699	10.99%	16,297	5.65%						

RACE/ETHNICITY	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	4,093	2,105	51.43%	1,356	33.13%	854	20.86%
ASIAN	6,046	984	16.28%	415	6.86%	210	3.47%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	19,142	7,083	37.00%	4,098	21.41%	2,535	13.24%
HISPANIC	46,692	13,632	29.20%	6,910	14.80%	3,687	7.90%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	337	116	34.42%	57	16.91%	28	8.31%
TWO OR MORE RACES	8,820	2,700	30.61%	1,452	16.46%	817	9.26%
WHITE	203,244	41,877	20.60%	17,411	8.57%	8,166	4.02%
TOTAL	288,374	68,497	23.75%	31,699	10.99%	16,297	5.65%

GENDER	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
FEMALE	139,876	34,241	24.48%	15,693	11.22%	7,857	5.62%
MALE	148,498	34,256	23.07%	16,006	10.78%	8,440	5.68%
TOTAL	288,374	68,497	23.75%	31,699	10.99%	16,297	5.65%

MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	
	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES
POVERTY	126,379	40,500	32.05%	20,885	16.53%	11,426	9.04%					
YES												

POVERTY = Y STUDENTS ONLY												
MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	
	MEMBERSHIP	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES	ABSENCES
RACE/ETHNICITY												
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	3,179	1,764	55.49%	1,158	36.43%	734	23.09%					
ASIAN	2,777	522	18.80%	232	8.35%	125	4.50%					
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	15,509	6,174	39.81%	3,632	23.42%	2,260	14.57%					
HISPANIC	37,753	11,353	30.07%	5,779	15.31%	3,089	8.18%					
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	192	85	44.27%	46	23.96%	24	12.50%					
TWO OR MORE RACES	5,273	1,945	36.89%	1,113	21.11%	654	12.40%					
WHITE	61,696	18,657	30.24%	8,925	14.47%	4,540	7.36%					
TOTAL	126,379	40,500	32.05%	20,885	16.53%	11,426	9.04%					