



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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October 1, 2015

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

Clerk O'Donnell:

Nebraska Revised Statute Section 79-527.01 requires that the Council on Student Attendance report its activities to the Legislature on or before October 1 of each year. The following constitutes the Report of the Council on Student Attendance including attendance data from the 2014-2015 school year.

Mission:

The Council shall study and evaluate the data contained in the reports required by section 79-527(2) and develop recommendations to reduce incidents of absenteeism. In addition, the Council shall review school district policies developed under Section 79-209, and consider whether school district policies and practices for addressing absenteeism are operational and effective.

Participants:

Treva Haugaard—Executive Director, GOALS Center
Sarah Graham—County Attorney
Heidi Schutz—School Board Member
Brenda Vosik—Parent Representative
Robert Stark—Parent Representative
Timothy DeWaard—Superintendent, Centennial Public School
Aslynd Holmes—Student Representative
Matt Blomstedt—Commissioner of Education
Courtney Phillips—Chief Executive Officer, Department of Health and Human Services
Jeanne Brandner—Deputy Administrator, Administrative Office of Probation

Report:

A summary report of the 2014-2015 attendance data is attached. As the report shows, the overall number of students who were absent more than twenty school days increased for the third consecutive year to 21,103 students, or 7.10% of the total membership in public schools. Last year, the total number was 20,031 students, or 6.84% of the total membership in public schools. Also attached is a chart with NeSA test scores correlated to student attendance.

Meetings in 2014-2015:

The Council on Student Attendance met quarterly in the 2014-2015 school year, organized into three sub-committees to carry out its work: Data, Policy, and Recommendations. Council members reviewed compulsory attendance law, model school district policies and discussed the importance of a clear policy statement and practices around collaborative plans to reduce the incidence of absenteeism. Members reviewed and shared national, regional, and state resources and developed a resource guide that is available on the Nebraska Department of Education website. Council members also reviewed and analyzed attendance data submitted to the Department of Education and discussed the importance of systems to support schools and districts in reducing the incidence of absenteeism. Council members represented the Council on Student Attendance at Administrators' Days, hosting a panel discussion, a question/answer session, and a resource table. Council members provided information and resources to the Nebraska Association of School Boards about Attendance Awareness Month in September. The county attorney representative was reappointed for a three-year term in June 2015 and a new student representative was appointed to a three-year term by the State Board of Education in August 2015.

The Council on Student Attendance will meet quarterly in the 2015-2016 school year. The Council's work in the upcoming year will include reviewing district attendance policies and collaborative plan processes, reviewing 2014-2015 attendance data, and continuing work to develop resources and support for schools and districts in an effort to support student attendance. The Council will also align its work to the broader AQuESTT framework, with a particular focus on the Student Success and Access domain, in order to develop knowledge about the underlying causes of absenteeism and to develop partnerships among schools, families, and communities to decrease referrals to County Attorney offices as much as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



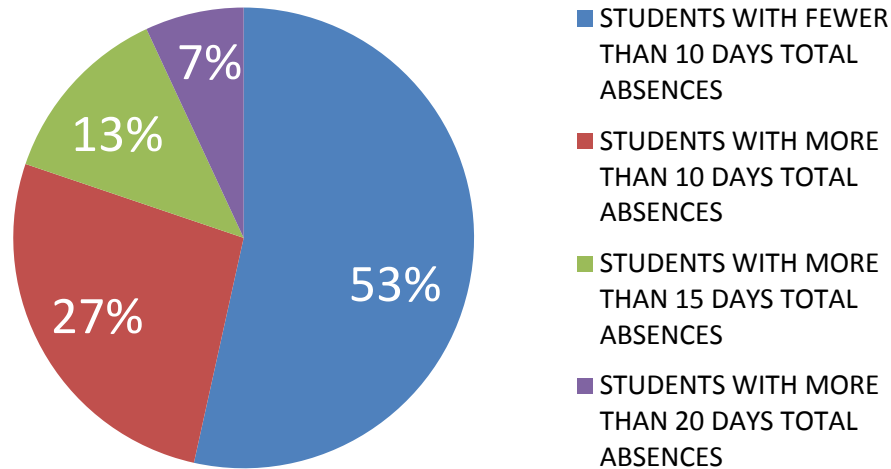
Timothy DeWaard
Chair of the Council on Student Attendance

Student Attendance Data Summary

2014-2015

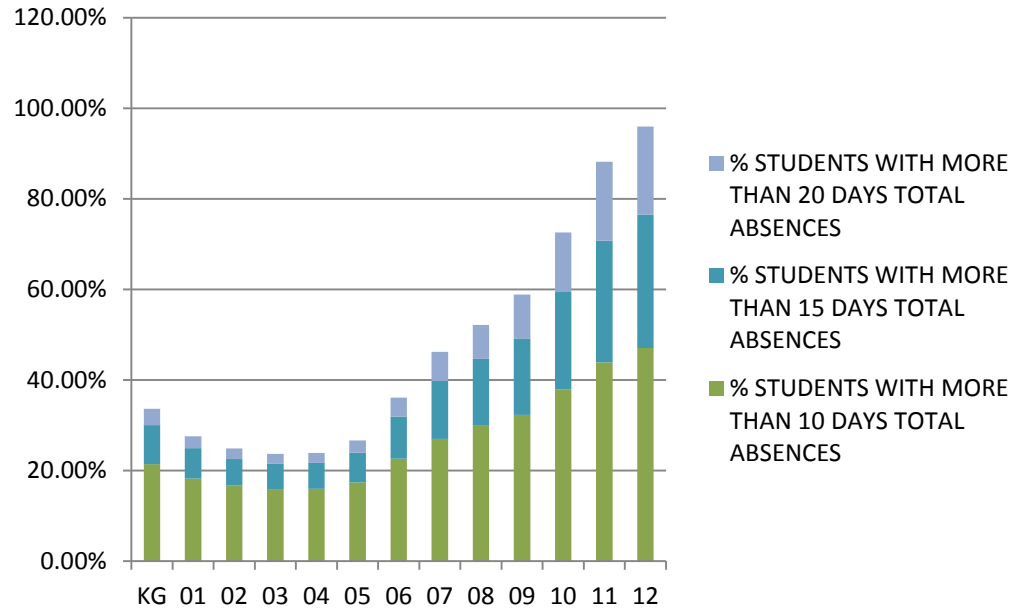
Statewide summary

% TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 2014-2015



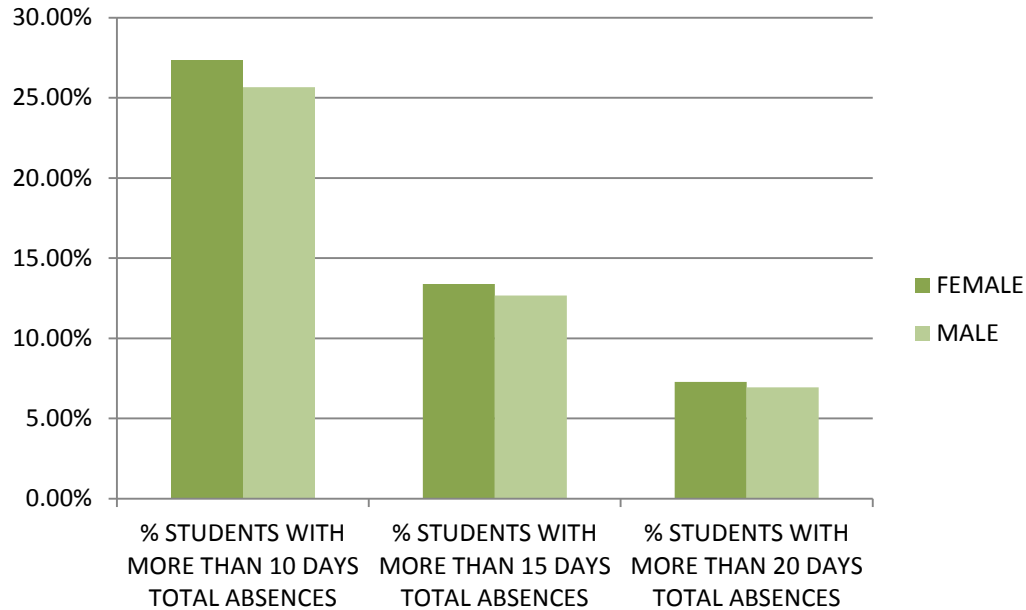
Statewide Summary Attendance Data 2014-2015		STUDENT COUNT	% OF MEMBERSHIP
MEMBERSHIP		297,028	
STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		78,642	26.48%
STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		38,675	13.02%
STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES		21,103	7.10%

Absences by grade level



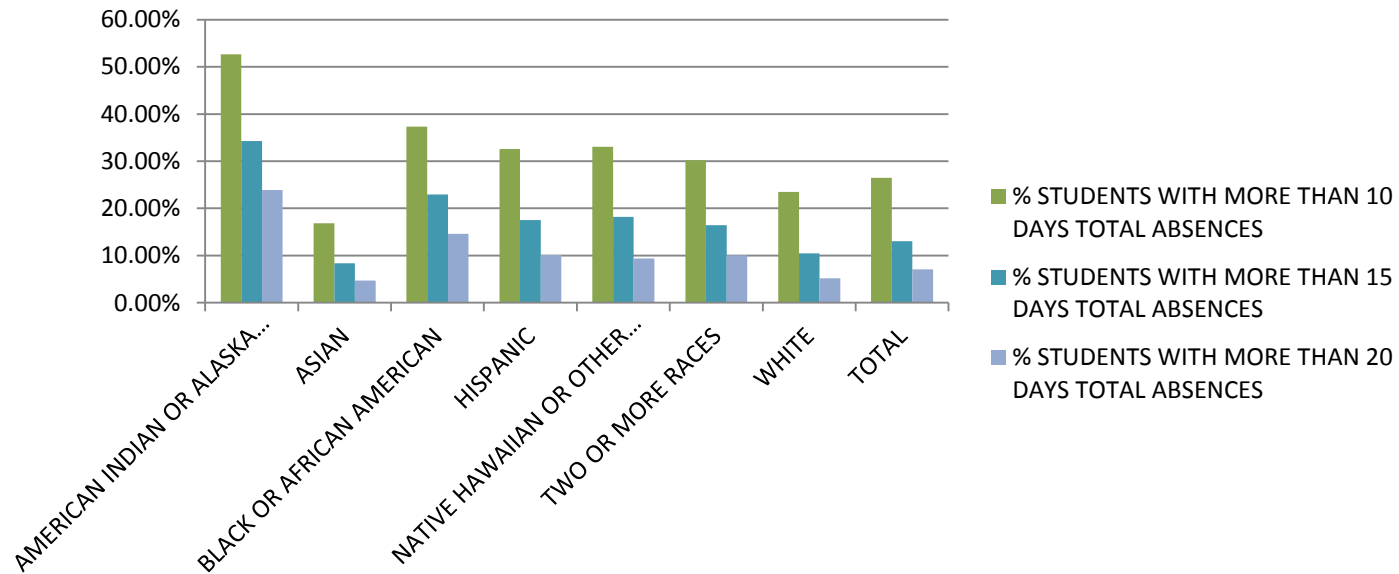
GRADE	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
KG	23,951	5,124	21.39%	2,070	8.64%	868	3.62%
01	23,892	4,359	18.24%	1,600	6.70%	634	2.65%
02	22,112	3,693	16.70%	1,301	5.88%	513	2.32%
03	23,394	3,697	15.80%	1,323	5.66%	519	2.22%
04	22,921	3,659	15.96%	1,313	5.73%	498	2.17%
05	23,277	4,053	17.41%	1,524	6.55%	620	2.66%
06	22,790	5,153	22.61%	2,132	9.35%	952	4.18%
07	22,707	6,132	27.00%	2,905	12.79%	1,461	6.43%
08	22,372	6,694	29.92%	3,300	14.75%	1,674	7.48%
09	22,722	7,337	32.29%	3,838	16.89%	2,196	9.66%
10	22,270	8,432	37.86%	4,798	21.54%	2,927	13.14%
11	21,742	9,540	43.88%	5,841	26.87%	3,785	17.41%
12	22,878	10,769	47.07%	6,730	29.42%	4,456	19.48%
TOTAL	297,028	78,642	26.48%	38,675	13.02%	21,103	7.10%

Absences by gender



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	144,093	39,411	27.35%	19,290	13.39%	10,499	7.29%
MALE	152,935	39,231	25.65%	19,385	12.68%	10,604	6.93%
TOTAL	297,028	78,642	26.48%	38,675	13.02%	21,103	7.10%

Absences by race/ethnicity

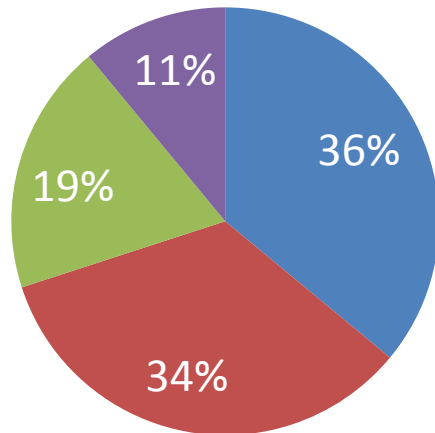


RACE/ETHNICITY	MEMBERSHIP	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES	% STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	4,131	2,176	52.67%	1,416	34.28%	987	23.89%
ASIAN	7,189	1,210	16.83%	603	8.39%	337	4.69%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	19,693	7,348	37.31%	4,521	22.96%	2,877	14.61%
HISPANIC	52,313	17,030	32.55%	9,177	17.54%	5,299	10.13%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	384	127	33.07%	70	18.23%	36	9.38%
TWO OR MORE RACES	10,088	3,046	30.19%	1,659	16.45%	1,016	10.07%
WHITE	203,230	47,705	23.47%	21,229	10.45%	10,551	5.19%
TOTAL	297,028	78,642	26.48%	38,675	13.02%	21,103	7.10%

44.49% of students in Nebraska qualified for free/reduced lunch in 2014-2015

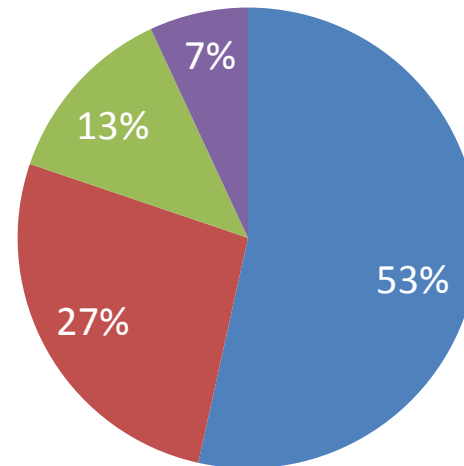


% STUDENTS FRL 2014-2015



- STUDENTS WITH FEWER THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
- STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
- STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 15 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
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% TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 2014-2015



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- STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES

**K-12 MEMBERSHIP AND STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 10/15/20 DAYS TOTAL ABSENCES
ABSENCES DATA FROM NSSRS: 2014-2015 STUDENT SUMMARY ATTENDANCE TEMPLATE**

STATEWIDE SUMMARY

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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
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INDICATORS	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
POVERTY	132,167	45,087	34.11%	24,823	18.78%	14,433	10.92%
SPECIAL EDUCATION	42,598	15,363	36.07%	8,610	20.21%	5,157	12.11%

POVERTY = Y STUDENTS ONLY							
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	3,105	1,671	53.82%	1,106	35.62%	761	24.51%
ASIAN	3,499	599	17.12%	324	9.26%	214	6.12%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	15,987	6,014	37.62%	3,772	23.59%	2,447	15.31%
HISPANIC	41,866	14,118	33.72%	7,691	18.37%	4,429	10.58%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	5,908	2,103	35.60%	1,215	20.57%	770	13.03%
TWO OR MORE RACES	235	97	41.28%	55	23.40%	28	11.91%
WHITE	61,567	20,485	33.27%	10,660	17.31%	5,784	9.39%
TOTAL	132,167	45,087	34.11%	24,823	18.78%	14,433	10.92%

PRELIMINARY State Average Scale Score Range 1-200

State Average Reading Scale Scores: Scale Score Range 0-200

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Compare
Grade 3	101	104	109	111	114	118	Higher
Grade 4	104	109	112	115	119	121	Higher
Grade 5	101	108	114	118	121	129	Higher
Grade 6	101	109	113	115	119	121	Higher
Grade 7	104	110	116	122	126	128	Higher
Grade 8	102	106	109	115	114	117	Higher
Grade 11	101	102	102	106	110	109	Lower

State Average Math Scale Scores: Scale Score Range 0-200

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Compare
Grade 3	101	108	110	112	113	Higher
Grade 4	104	106	109	112	112	Same
Grade 5	101	108	109	112	113	Higher
Grade 6	101	106	106	109	110	Higher
Grade 7	104	104	106	109	110	Higher
Grade 8	102	99	102	104	105	Higher
Grade 11	101	95	100	102	102	Same

State Average Science Scale Scores: Scale Score Range 0-200

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Compare
Grade 5	101	104	106	107	Higher
Grade 8	100	103	105	106	Higher
Grade 11	99	103	103	104	Higher

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND NeSA SCALE SCORES

Nebraska Public Schools 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

	Reading						Math					Science			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Grade 4 - NeSA															
Students absent less than 20 Days	105	110	112	115	119	121	103	107	109	113	112	NA	NA	NA	NA
Students absent greater than 20 Days	84	89	91	92	97	99	80	83	86	90	88	NA	NA	NA	NA
Students absent less than 10 Days	106	111	113	116	121	123	105	108	111	115	114	NA	NA	NA	NA
Students absent greater than 10 Days	95	101	103	106	109	110	93	96	98	101	100	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grade 8 - NeSA															
Students absent less than 20 Days	104	108	110	117	116	119	100	101	104	106	107	101	104	107	108
Students absent greater than 20 Days	83	82	84	89	88	93	68	71	74	74	77	75	80	81	83
Students absent less than 10 Days	107	110	113	120	119	121	103	104	107	109	110	104	106	109	110
Students absent greater than 10 Days	93	96	98	104	104	107	85	85	89	90	92	89	92	94	96
Grade 11 - NeSA															
Students absent less than 20 Days	102	104	106	110	116	114	98	100	106	108	108	102	106	107	108
Students absent greater than 20 Days	72	72	72	78	81	83	58	62	65	69	70	78	83	84	85
Students absent less than 10 Days	107	107	109	114	120	118	103	105	112	114	113	104	109	110	111
Students absent greater than 10 Days	90	87	89	92	97	97	75	78	81	85	86	89	93	94	95

OVERALL ATTENDANCE 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
More than 10 days absent	82,240 – 29.06%	74,786 – 26.21%	68,461 – 23.78%	72,915 – 25.19%	77,751 – 26.54%	78,642 – 26.48%
More than 15 days absent	40,627 – 14.36%	35,091 – 12.30%	31,668 – 11.00%	33,218 – 11.48%	37,548 – 12.82%	38,675 – 13.02%
More than 20 days absent	21,964 – 7.76%	18,079 – 6.34%	16,274 – 5.65%	16,941 – 5.85%	20,031 – 6.84%	21,103 – 7.10%

Recommendations to Schools to Reduce Incidents of Absenteeism

Developing and Implementing an Attendance Review Board

- Schools could create a central attendance review board that does the following:
 - ensures attendance procedures are followed
 - identifies at-risk students and meets with students and parents
 - ensures legal requirements are followed
- The attendance review board can be formatted as defined by the school, including:
 - Membership (administrator, school social worker, school counselor, special education staff, school nurse)
 - Time, location, and frequency of meetings
 - Whether students may sit on the board (i.e. student council members) and what their role is
 - What actions the board may/must take

Intervention Schedule

- At absenteeism milestones designated by the school, the school could define concrete actions that must be taken to address attendance barriers, including but not limited to:
 - define at what stage letters are sent, phone calls are made, meetings are held, home visits are made, referrals to community services are made, collaborative plan is created, an attendance advocate is assigned, etc.
 - define who is responsible to complete the actions listed above
 - create a system for documenting all absenteeism related contacts
- Early intervention should be a priority and the focus should be understanding why the absences are accruing

Addressing Families with a History of Absenteeism/At-Risk Families

- In families where a student missed 20 days (or less if the school decides) in the previous school year, it is recommended that the school schedule a face-to-face meeting at the beginning of the school year to discuss attendance barriers that existed in the previous year and barriers that may continue in the current school year
- Create collaborative plan at the beginning of the school year
- Identify a staff member the family trusts or has a relationship with who can maintain contact with the family as the school year progresses and address attendance issues (possibly an Attendance Advocate/Mentor)

Attendance Advocate/Mentor

- Schools could designate staff that can act as Attendance Advocates/Mentors who can provide regular, frequent in-school support to the school and can maintain contact with the parents
- This could include use of an incentive system if appropriate
- This could include the use of support groups for students or parents if appropriate

Ensuring Collaborative Plan is Created

- At a milestone designated by the school (recommended at no later than 10 unexcused days of school), the school should have a face-to-face meeting with the parent and student, where appropriate, to develop a written collaborative plan referred to in Nebraska Revised Statute 79-209(2)(b)
- A copy of this plan should be given to the student and parent, or mailed to the family if:
 - the meeting was conducted over the phone, or
 - despite the school's efforts to reach out to the parent and student, the parent and student did not attend the meeting
- Attendance review board should monitor compliance with the collaborative plan at intervals defined by the school

Designate Staff to Connect Family to Services (mental health, economic, therapeutic, supportive, etc.)

- Schools could designate staff who are responsible for offering services and connecting families with service providers to address attendance barriers. Services could be either those available within the school or those out of the school to which the family needs to be referred
 - Examples of staff who could fulfill this role: school social workers, school counselors, administrators, etc.
- Staff should follow up with the family to ensure the family has been connected to the service and the family is following through with the service

Internet Resources	Website
Attendance Works	http://www.attendanceworks.org/
California Public Education	http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch8/attendance.aspx
Truancy Prevention Registry	http://www.schoolengagement.org/truancy-prevention-registry/index.cfm?fuseaction=programlist
Safe Supportive Learning	http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/index.php?id=01
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/Home/Error?aspxerrorpath=/mpg/Default.aspx
School Justice Partnership	http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/justiceforchildren/school-justice.shtml
Nat'l Leadership Summit on School Justice	http://www.school-justicesummit.org/papers/papers.cfm
Everyone Graduates	http://www.every1graduates.org/
National Resources	
National Center for Education Statistics	http://nces.ed.gov/
National Center for School Engagement (NCSE)	http://schoolengagement.org/
Success Mentors New York City	http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/html/resources/success_mentors.shtml
Student Attendance Review Board California School Districts	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/sb/
Check N Connect University of Minnesota	http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/
Diplomas Now	http://diplomasnow.org/
Community In Schools	http://www.communitiesinschools.org/
Department of Education New York City	http://schools.nyc.gov/StudentSupport/StudentAttendance/default.htm
Walking School Bus Springfield, Massachusetts	http://saferoutespartnership.org/state/srts-in-your-state/massachusetts
Nebraska	
Building Bridges (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)	http://k12engagement.unl.edu/building-bridges
Nebraska Family Helpline (888) 866-8660	http://dhhs.ne.gov/behavioral_health/Pages/nebraskafamilyhelpline_index.aspx
School Community Intervention & Prevention (SCIP) Program	http://www.lmep.com/SCIP.aspx
Strategic Targeted Attendance Reporting System (STARS) —Grand Island, Nebraska	
State of Nebraska Behavioral Healthcare Network *Professional Partner Program	http://dhhs.ne.gov/behavioral_health/Pages/networkofcare_index.aspx
D2 Center Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.d2center.org/
Goodwill—Youth Build Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.goodwillomaha.org/
Youth Attendance Navigators Urban League —Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.urbanleagueneb.org/
GOALS Center —Omaha, Nebraska	http://goals-center.com
ReConnect 2 Success —Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.lswstrategies1.com/
Pathways to Success Latino Center of the Midlands Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.latinocenterofthemidlands.org/
School and Family Enrichment (SAFE) CSI and Region 6 Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.childsaving.org/
Gateway to College Metropolitan Community College Omaha, Nebraska	http://www.mccneb.edu/gtc/

In **April, 2014**, the Nebraska Legislature amended **Section 79-209** regarding the duties of school officials with respect to school attendance. These changes took effect with the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition, the Legislature also revised **Section 79-527.01** to create the **Council on Student Attendance** with the following duties:

- (a.) Study and evaluate the data contained in the reports required by subsection (2) of Section 79-527;
- (b.) Develop recommendations to reduce incidents of absenteeism;
- (c.) Consider whether school district policies and practices for addressing absenteeism are operational and effectively working to address absenteeism and make recommendations for improvement where necessary; and
- (d.) Review all school district policies developed under subsection (2) of Section 79-209 and make specific recommendations for school district policy improvement.

The Council on Student Attendance membership includes representation from various stakeholders:

Name:	Role:
Matt Blomstedt	Commissioner of Education
Jeanne Brandner	Deputy Administrator Administrative Office of Probation
Tim DeWaard	Superintendent, Centennial Public School
Sarah Graham	Douglas County Attorney
Treva Haugaard	Executive Director, GOALS Center
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Brenda Vosik	Parent
Megan Miller	Student

For more information go to:

<http://www.education.ne.gov/APAC/StudentAttendance.html>



Student Name:

This collaborative plan has been developed as a result of a meeting or meetings held on the following dates:

Participants in creating the collaborative plan include (name/role):

Participants considered the following actions to reduce barriers to improve regular attendance:

1. Illness related to physical or behavioral health of the student:

- It was determined that the physical or behavioral health of the child is not a barrier to improve regular attendance.
- The child's physical or behavioral health poses a barrier to regular attendance. The following actions will be taken in response:

2. Educational counseling (e.g. curriculum changes):

- It was determined that educational counseling is not needed to reduce barriers to improve regular attendance.
- Educational counseling has been or will be provided, consisting of the following:

3. Educational Evaluation:

- It was determined that an educational evaluation is not needed to reduce barriers to improve regular attendance.
- An educational evaluation has been or will be conducted to assist in determining the specific condition, if any, contributing to the problem of excessive absenteeism. This evaluation included or will include:

4. Referral to community agency for economic services:

- It was determined that economic services are not needed to reduce barriers to improve regular attendance.
- The family has been or will be given information about community agencies which may have economic services available to the family, which include:

5. Family or individual counseling:

- It was determined that family or individual counseling is not needed to reduce barriers to improve regular attendance.
- The family has been or will be given assistance in working with community services that include:

6. Assisting the family in working with other community agencies:

It was determined that assistance in working with community services is not needed to reduce barriers to improve regular attendance.

The family has been or will be given assistance in working with community services related to:

Notes or other actions to be taken:

Participants' signatures (name/role):