

CRACKING THE ATTENDANCE CODE

Proven Strategies to Increase
Student Attendance



Empty desks

OREGON'S ABSENTEEISM EPIDEMIC

By BETSY HAMMOND | betsyhammond@oregonian.com

Photography and video by MICHAEL LLOYD | mlloyd@oregonian.com

5. Clackamas High School cracks the attendance code

Feb. 6, 2014

Ray Byzewski, dean of students at Clackamas High, gets straight to the point with Jonathan, a junior at the big suburban school:

"You have 42 missed class periods. I need to know what is going on."

The teen, who enrolled at Clackamas High a few weeks into the school year, did not see this coming. He routinely skipped class at his last school, and no one called him on it like this.

He verbally dodges and weaves, claiming the records are wrong, that he's been in class, that there was a family emergency, that he's thinking of trying for a GED.

Byzewski, however, has done his homework and buys none of it. He offers help but says

16 8a 17 30 da 88 17 47 49 75 de 31
c0 cd 80 90 90 e8 9d ff ff ff 41 41



EMPTY DESKS

Oregon's absenteeism news

Targets

1. Identify at least one student attendance improvement strategy.
2. Understand how the truancy court process works and how to implement at your school.
3. Detect the code components.

Practice Reflection

- Identify 5 Students that have attendance issues
- What are your school's current practices for handling truant students?

The 3 C's of the Code

- **C**CULTURE

Attitude, behaviors, beliefs, values

- **C**OMMUNICATION

Language, who speaks to whom, how and when

- **C**ELEBRATION

daily, weekly, monthly..... praise, candy, iPods, \$

The 3 R's of the Code

- **R**ESEARCH
gathering information and tracking
- **R**ESOURCES
seek partners, grants
- **R**ESULTS

Milwaukie High School Pilot Program



1925

MILWAUKIE
HIGH SCHOOL

11300

MILWAUKIE HIGH SCHOOL

Milwaukie HS Profile

- 1340 School population
-
- 61% Caucasian 27% Latino 2% Asian 2% African American 1% Native American
 - 62% Free and reduced lunch
 - 14% Second Language Learners
 - 16% Special needs
 - 12 Spoken languages
-
- Staff size: 125 licensed and classified

Attendance Program – Research & Resources

2008 Milwaukie High School:

- Average Daily Membership 87 percent
 - Bill Stewart (District Attorney)
 - Milwaukie Circuit Court
 - Pilot program implemented mid-year 2008/09
 - Communication with ALL stakeholders
-

Changing the Culture and Communication

- Utilizing the data
- Communication with ALL stakeholders
- Weekly attendance meetings (CARE team)
- Weekly CARE team meetings
- Student Attendance Team

Celebration and Rewards

- Incentives: daily, weekly and monthly
- Class challenge (Freshman, Sophomores, Jr. and Sr.)
- Celebration

Milwaukie HS ADM

Fall of 2008 = 87%

Spring of 2010 = 93%

State Average = 91%



Milwaukie High School Achievement Data

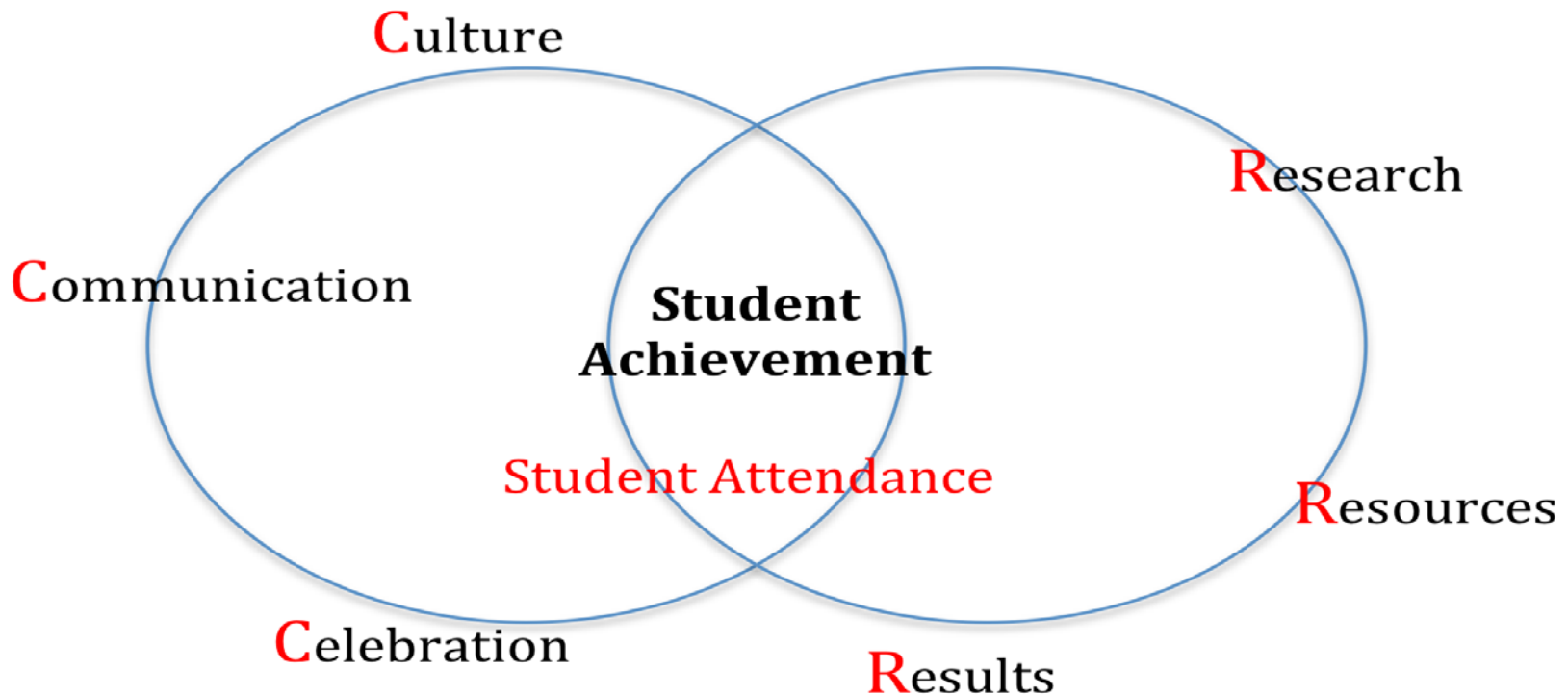
6 Years Ago

Reading	55.1%
Math	38.5%
Writing	47.6%
Attendance (ADM)	87.0%
ODE Rating	Needs Improvement

2012-2013

Reading	Increased 25.7%
Math	Increased 34.6%
Writing	Increased 19.0%
Attendance (ADM)	Increased 6%
ODE Rating	Outstanding

3 C's + 3 R's = SUCCESS



CARE Team

- Creating a CARE team: Deans, Administrators, Counselors, additional resources – mental health, D & A counselor, mentors, faith based groups, Big Brother/Sister, etc.
-

- Weekly meetings
 - One minute per student
 - Next steps?
 - Who is responsible?
-

Clackamas High School

West campus

East campus



16 8a 17 30 da 88 17 47 49 75 de 31
c0 cd 80 90 90 e8 9d ff ff ff 41 41

About Clackamas High School

- 2,360 Students

-
- 66 % Caucasian, 9% Latino, 15% Asian, 6.0 % Slavic, 2.0% African American, 2.0% Native American
 - 34% Free/Reduced Lunch
 - 12% Second Language Learners
 - 10% Special Needs
 - 26 Spoken Languages

-
- Two campuses
 - 160 staff members

Clackamas High School

Program Implementation:

- 2010 Attendance program comes to CHS
- ADM 92.3 percent (State Ave. 91%)
- History of dealing with attendance issues
 - Discipline consequences (detentions and Saturday school)

Adapting the Program to Clackamas High School

Program adaptation starts with:

1) *Attendance team:*

deans, counselors, attendance secretary, campus monitors, SRO, and the student management assistant principal

2) *Teachers*

Teachers should alert dean(s) or attendance secretary when a student misses 3 or more consecutive classes

Culture and Communication

- Student attendance goal
- Concerted effort to communicate attendance expectations to all stakeholders
- Registration packet
- Outreach team
- Due process
- Calls
- Email
- First truancy letter

Strategies

- Weekly attendance runs
 - (8 ½ days in a 4 week period = 16 class periods, or 5 days excused without medical documentation in a two month period.)
 - Weekly attendance runs shared with counselors
- Teachers alert us to chronic absenteeism
- First letter sent / Parent's response - phone calls, drop-ins

1st Letter

Compulsory Attendance Law and Penalty:

Signs of irregular attendance:

16 unexcused period absences within 4 week period

20 excused period absences within a 3 month period

40 excused period absences within 6 months of school

Necessary Attendance Meeting

Process:

- Call home or send letter to arrange meeting

Attendees:

- Dean of students
- Counselor
- Student
- Parent(s) or Guardian



Mandatory Attendance Meeting

Agenda:

- Identify the barriers
- Review academic progress
- Craft the attendance agreement/Goal(s) for improvement
- Resources for parent(s) and student
 - Family center, parent classes, ParentVue access, after-school tutoring
- Feeling connected
- Monitoring
 - Daily attendance sheet, etc.

Barriers

- Identify barriers to attendance
 - Documentation
-

- **Counseling**
- **DHS**
- **Mental Health Services**
- **D & A Counselor**

Crafting the Attendance Agreement

- Form after-school tutoring
 - Daily check-ins
 - Parents – how to access information (Synergy, teachers, counselor, etc.)
 - Connection to school – clubs, tutoring, sports, activities
 - Do they have someone they connect with?
 - Violation of the agreement
 - Citation delivery
-

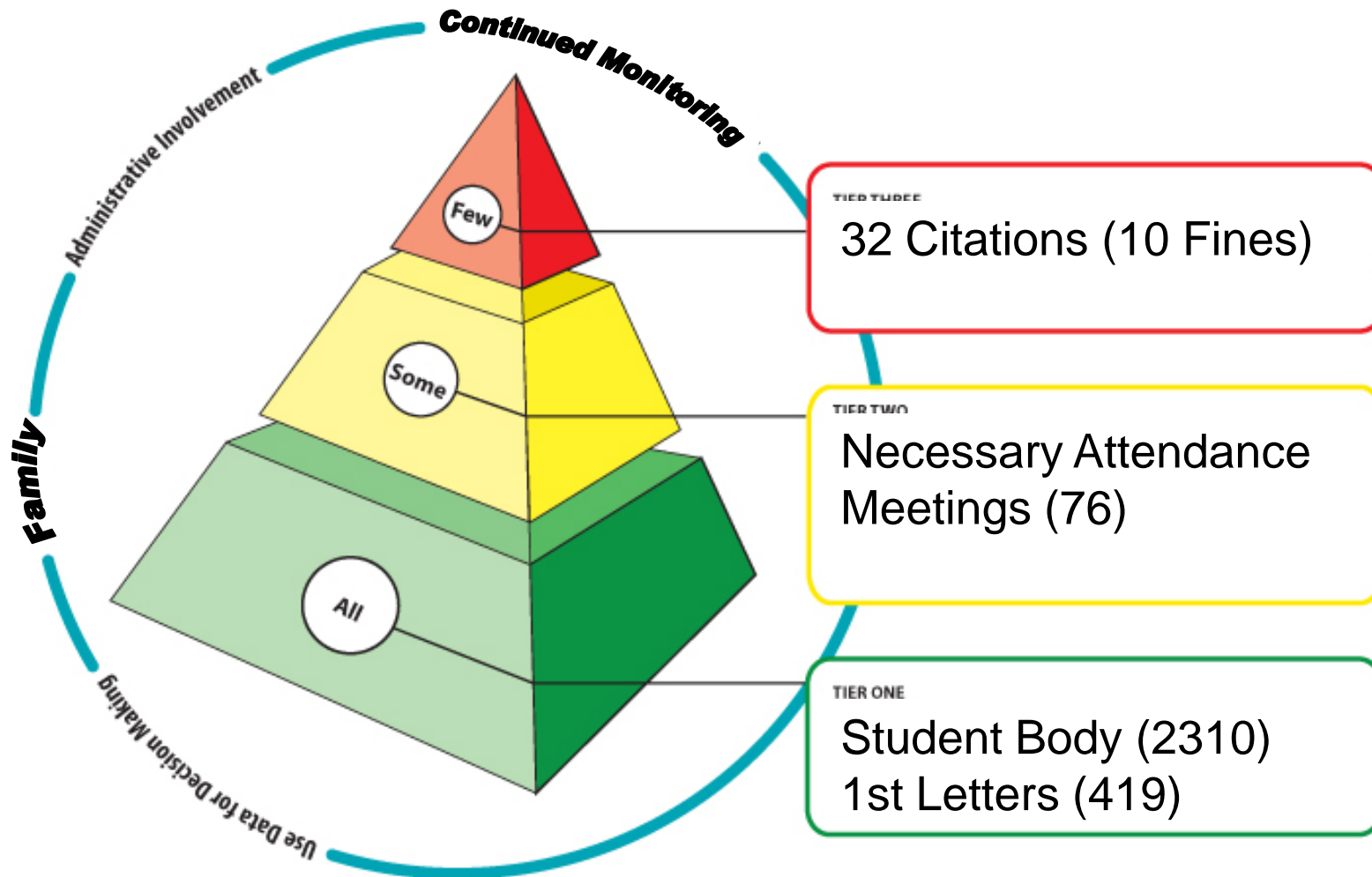
The Hammer: Judge Darling

- Truancy court
- Experiences – Empowering parents



BETSY HAMMOND/THE OREGONIAN

Truancy Court Process 2013 - 2014



Current CHS Truancy Data

Month	# 1 st letters	NAM	ADM	Citations
September	50	0	99.4	0
October	116	12	99.1	5 (2 fines)
November	43	11	98.7	2
December	81	16	98.19	5 (3 fines)
January	54	8	98.7	5
February	24	19	98.43	7 (2 fines)
March	8	3	98.88	0 (1 fine)
April	32	7	97.56	8 (1 fine)
May	11	3	97.46	0
June	0	0	98.1	0 (1 fine)
<i>Totals</i>	<i>419</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>98.45</i>	<i>32 (10 fines)</i>

16 8a 17 30 da 88 17 47 49 75 de 31
c0 cd 80 90 90 e8 9d ff ff ff 41 41

Creating a Truancy program at your School

- Circuit or municipal court
- Bill Stewart – District Attorney Clackamas Co.
Phone: 503 722-2786 direct
Email: Billste@co.clackamas.or.us
- Judge Deanne Darling –
deanne.DARLING@ojd.state.or.us

Why Do they Care?

-Bill Stewart (Clackamas County D.A.)

“It is the most cost-effective deterrent of juvenile and future adult crime in our community that I have ever been involved with. Chronic absences lead to school failure. School failure leads to the lack of a diploma. The lack of a high school diploma is a key indicator of participation in juvenile crime and future involvement in adult criminal activity.”

-Judge DeeAnne Darling

- “Early intervention in any problem is always the best use of time and resources. It’s kind of like dieting. It’s easier to lose 10 pounds than it is to lose 50, but often no one decides it is a problem until it’s 50 pounds.”
- “School failure is the number one predictor of juvenile crime and the best defense against school failure is school attendance and connecting kids.”

Resources

- Table talk – what resources do you have available?
- Identify 3 resources you can connect kids with...
- Share at your table

Activity

Identify the barriers using the provided scenarios and craft an attendance agreement.

Empty desks | A special report

Empty Desks Article:

- Oregon's absenteeism epidemic
- By BETSY HAMMOND | betsyhammond@oregonian.com
Photography and video by MICHAEL LLOYD |
mlloyd@oregonian.com
- Series 5. Clackamas High School cracks the attendance code
- Published Feb. 6, 2014
- <http://www.oregonlive.com/absent/chapter-5.html>

Pride in our successes

- Reduced drop-out rate
- Increased enrollment
- Impact on number of low-income students that graduate
- Junior students VIP program
- Freshman early identification/intervention

The Code

- Culture
 - Communication
 - Celebrations
 - Research
 - Resources
 - Results
-
- What can you do when you return to your building to engage those 5 students you identified?

Questions? Contact Information

Kristin Turnquist

- 503 353-5751
- turnquistk@nclack.k12.or.us

Tom Meyer

- 503 353-5774
- meyert@nclack.k12.or.us

Ray Byzewski

- 503 353-5803 work
- byzewskir@nclack.k12.or.us