



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August 2015
Supplement to Annual Truancy Report

Truancy Referrals

Data on Repeat CFSA, Court and SST Referrals

Council requested an analysis of the subsequent re-enrollment and truancy patterns of students referred to an Attendance Student Support Team (SST) or to another agency, namely Child and Family Services (CFSA) or the Court Social Services (CSS, or court), for truancy in SY13-14. Our analysis of the data shows the number of students who (1) re-enrolled in or withdraw from DCPS in SY14-15, as well as (2) those who were truant in the next school year.

Student Support Team Referrals

Students who accrue five or more unexcused absences should be referred to an attendance SST. The chart below delineates the number of students for whom an attendance Student Support Team (SST) meeting was held in SY13-14. The data is disaggregated to show which of those 13,700¹ students (a) did not return to DCPS in SY14-15; (b) returned in SY14-15, but were no longer registered at the end of the year (EOY); (c) were registered at the end of the year; and (d) students for whom an attendance SST meeting was held in SY13-14, were registered at the end of SY14-15 and ended up being truant.²

Of the 13,700 DCPS students who had an SST meeting in SY13-14, 1,998 (14%) did not return to DCPS in SY14-15. 1,625 (12%) returned to the district, but were not registered at the end of SY14-15. 10,077 (74%) returned to DCPS in SY14-15 and remained registered at the end of SY14-15. Of those 10,077 students who had an SST meeting in SY13-14 and remained enrolled in DCPS at the end of SY14-15, 3,756 (27%) ended up being truant at the end of SY14-15.

	#	%
Students who had an SST meeting in SY13-14	13,700	-
Did not return in SY14-15	1,998	14%
Returned in SY14-15, but not registered at EOY14-15	1,625	12%
Registered at EOY14-15	10,077	74%
Students who had an SST meeting in SY13-14 and were registered at EOY14-15	10,077	-
Students who had an SST in SY13-14 and ended up being truant at EOY14-15	3,756	27%

¹ 13,700 is the total number of students for whom an attendance SST meeting was held during SY13-14. This includes students who left the district and were not registered in DCPS at the end of SY13-14. The 9,285 SST meetings referenced in our 2015 Annual Truancy Report for SY13-14 reflects students who were still enrolled in the district at the end of SY13-14.

² A truant is a school-aged child who is absent from school without a legitimate excuse for 10 or more days within a single school year.

CFSA Referrals

Students between the ages 5-13 who accumulate 10 or more unexcused absences should be referred to CFSA. The chart below delineates the number of students who were referred to CFSA in SY13-14. The data is disaggregated to show which of the 1,756³students (a) did not return to DCPS in SY14-15; (b) returned in SY14-15, but were no longer registered at the end of the year; (c) were registered at the end of the year; and (d) students referred to CFSA in SY13-14 who were registered at the end of SY14-15 and were again truant.

1,756 students were referred to CFSA in SY13-14, and 163 (9%) did not return to the district in SY14-15. 215 (12%) students returned to the district in SY14-15, but were not registered at the end of SY14-15. 1,378 students (79%) returned to DCPS in SY14-15 and remained registered at the end of SY14-15. Of those 1,378 students who were referred to CFSA in SY13-14 and remained enrolled in DCPS at the end of SY14-15, 630 (46%) ended up being truant at the end of SY14-15.

	#	%
Students referred to CFSA in SY13-14	1,756	-
Did not return in SY14-15	163	9%
Returned in SY14-15, but not currently registered at EOY	215	12%
Registered at EOY14-15	1,378	79%
Students referred to CFSA in SY13-14 and registered at EOY14-15	1,378	-
Students referred to CFSA in SY13-14 who ended up being truant at EOY14-15	630	46%

Court Referrals

Students ages 14-18 who accumulate 15 or more unexcused absences should be referred to the court system. The chart below delineates the number of students who were referred to the court system in SY13-14. The data is disaggregated to show which of the 975⁴ students (a) did not return to DCPS in SY14-15; (b) returned in SY14-15, but were no longer registered at the end of the year; (c) were registered at the end of the year; and (d) students referred to the court system in SY13-14, were registered at the end of SY14-15 and were truant.

975 students were referred to the court system in SY13-14. Of those, 176 (18%) did not return to the district in SY14-15. 230 (24%) returned to DCPS in SY14-15, but were not enrolled at the end of SY14-15. 569 students returned to DCPS and remained registered at the end of SY14-15. Of those 569 students who were referred to the court system in SY13-14 and remained enrolled in DCPS at the end of SY14-15, 387 students (60%) ended up being truant at the end of SY14-15.

³ 1,756 is the total number of students DCPS referred to CFSA during SY13-14. This number includes students who left the district and were not registered in DCPS at the end of SY13-14. The 1,177 CFSA referrals referenced in our 2015 Annual Truancy Report reflects students who were still enrolled in the district at the end of SY13-14.

⁴ 975 is the total number of students referred to the court system during SY13-14. This includes students who left the district and were not registered in DCPS at the end of SY13-14. The 690 court referrals referenced in our 2015 Annual Truancy Report reflects those students referred to CSS who were still enrolled in the district at the end of SY13-14.

	#	%
Students who had a Court referral in SY13-14	975	-
Did not return in SY14-15	176	18%
Returned in SY14-15, but not currently registered at EOY	230	24%
Registered at EOY SY14-15	569	58%
Students referred to CSS in SY13-14 and registered at EOY14-15	569	-
Students referred to CSS in SY13-14 who ended up being truant at EOY 14-15	387	68%

Under each of these referral scenarios – to SSTs, CFSA and CSS – the students who ended up being “repeat truants” represent a segment of our students (as well as their families) who are trauma-exposed and display challenges associated with a range of chronic social, emotional, and environmental factors. Deep exposure to trauma significantly impacts these students’ ability to focus on learning and contributes to their academic performance and attendance. To address this population, we continue to work with our partners to identify and implement appropriate interventions; and with our schools to increase their capacity to provide stronger case management, resource identification and academic programming. We are continually learning from our work with these families to discern their needs for support and tweaking our practices to better meet their needs. To be sure, there is no expectation of immediate turnaround of these students’ attendance behavior; we recognize that it will take a few years to abate the most challenging issues.

Truancy Repeaters

The chart below delineates the number of students who were truant in SY13-14. The data is disaggregated to show that of the 8,689 students who were truant in SY13-14 (a) did not return to DCPS in SY14-15; (b) returned in SY14-15, but not currently registered at the end of the year; (c) currently registered at the end of SY14-15; and (d) students who were truant in SY13-14, were registered at EOY14-15 and were again truant in SY14-15.

	#	%
Students who were truant in SY13-14	8,689	-
Did not return in SY14-15	1,262	15%
Returned in SY14-15, but not currently registered at EOY	1,047	12%
Currently registered at EOY	6,380	73%
Students who were truant in SY13-14 and currently registered EOY14-15	6,380	-
Number of students truant in SY13-14 who ended up being truant in SY14-15	3,723	58%

Students who were Truant in SY13-14 and SY14-15 Currently Registered EOY14-15, by grade

SY14-15 Grade	# Truant SY13-14 and Registered EOY14-15	# Truant in both SY13-14 and SY14-15	% of SY13-14 Truants Also Truant in SY14-15
All Grades	6,380	3,723	58%
K	186	72	39%
1	406	173	43%
2	360	146	41%
3	259	97	37%
4	264	99	38%
5	239	75	31%
6	146	47	32%
7	175	67	38%
8	253	90	36%
9	631	497	79%
10	1,074	834	78%
11	1,137	855	75%
12	1,151	617	54%
C1	7	6	86%
C2	16	10	63%

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SY14-15 Grade	# Truant SY13-14 and Registered EOY14-15	# Truant in both SY13-14 and SY14-15	% of SY13-14 Truants Also Truant in SY14-15
C3	23	17	74%
C4	24	11	46%
C5	4	1	25%
EV	25	9	36%

Analysis of Truancy Definition and Comparative Calculations

Effective SY13-14, the legal definition of truancy in the District was modified to require that students attend 80% of the scheduled periods to be considered present. With this rule in place, any student missing more than 20% of school periods are now considered absent for the entire day, which has resulted in a significant increase in recorded absences and truancy calculations. This has had a particularly big effect in DCPS schools with four-period school days; specifically, the 80/20 rule now affects any student who misses just one period of the four in a regular school day.

In SY14-15, based on this new rule, there were 8,400 truant students district-wide. However, if the rule had been 75/25, there would have been 7,207 truant students, a difference of 1,193 students. If the rule had been 60/40, 6,211 students would have been truant – or 2,189 fewer; and if the rule had been 40/60, 5,384 students would have been truant (or 3,016 fewer truant students).

Rule Applied	Truant Students	Difference Between 80/20 Rule and Listed/Alternate Rule
80/20	8,400	N/A
75/25	7,207	1,193
60/40	6,211	2,189
40/60	5,384	3,016

Improving the SST process for Elementary and Secondary Schools

During the Truancy Roundtable held on June 29, 2015, Council raised a question regarding the comparative implementation of SST meetings in elementary and secondary schools. Currently, in elementary schools, social workers or administrators typically manage the attendance SST process. Secondary schools, for the most part, entrust their attendance counselors, who are non-clinical staff. The district's secondary schools are required to hold many more SST meetings than elementary schools, based on the sheer volume of truant older students; this sometimes results in delayed interventions. Secondary school students are more independent, have more complex issues, deeply entrenched patterns of non-attendance and may be academically disengaged, and it is more difficult to match these students with appropriate interventions and services. It is important to note that DCPS can refer, but not mandate students' and families' participation in recommended services. Still, ideally, staff with case management skills and experience could better manage the SSTs and work more intensively with students and families to identify the barriers to attendance and identify the very best supports and interventions.