

Our program , modeled on the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management's Truancy Prevention Through Mediation program, has been highly successful.

The Toledo Public Schools that were chosen to pilot the mediation program were schools that were in need of a program that would increase attendance rates and decrease truancy. Every one of the six schools that we are currently piloting the mediation program have shown improvement in attendance rates. We are very pleased with the program's positive results.

Outside of coordinating the mediation program, I'm also the Supervisor of Central Toledo Pupil Personnel for Toledo Public Schools. Everyday I hold attendance hearings with junior high and high school students, whose attendance rates and grades at times can be very disheartening. Most of these families by this time have given up all hope of ever seeing their student graduate from high school.

The truancy prevention through mediation program is a program that is tackling the heart of the truancy problem. This program is preventative and is dealing with the truancy issue before it gets to the point where the parent is overwhelmed and the student has given up.

Mediation is a safe place for parents to come for help in order to get their child to school everyday and on time. It is also a safe place the teacher to express their feelings regarding the student missing school and what effect that has on the classroom and the other students.

Our mediation program has been so very successful that we have taken the necessary steps in order to implement an expansion plan. We would like to expand this program into another four elementary schools next school year. Without the Commission's help, our expansion plan would be nearly impossible to complete.

Toledo Public Schools is thrilled about this program and the great possibilities that its continued success will bring.