

STATEWIDE OVERVIEW

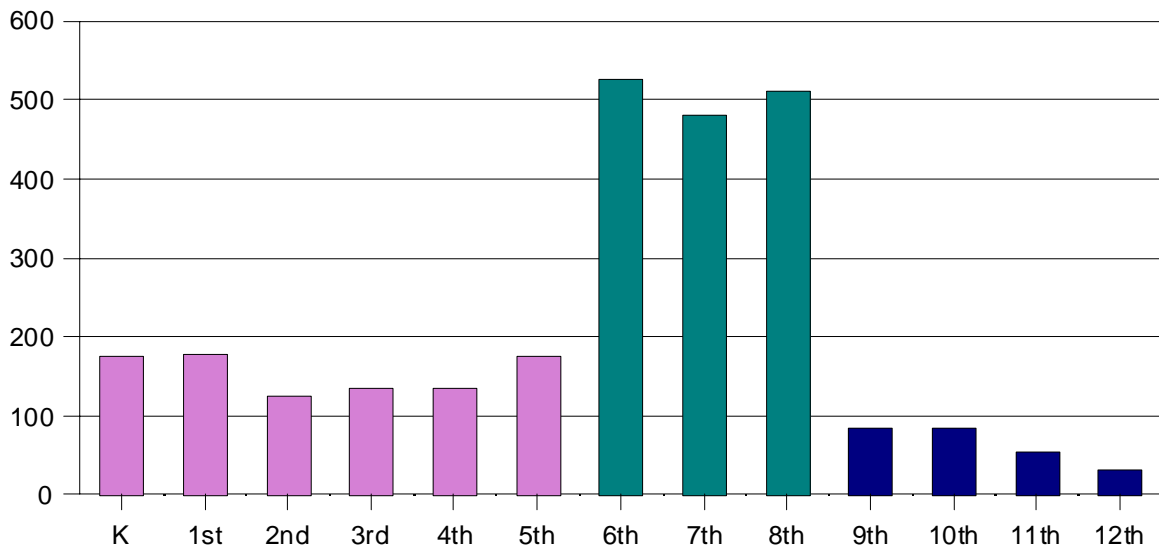
During the 2004-2005 school year 2,790 students were identified for mediation. Over 63% ($n = 1,494$) of the mediations were first mediations and approximately 4% of the mediations were second mediations ($n = 104$). Over 39% of the mediations were no shows ($n = 1,097$) and this information was not reported for another three percent of the mediations ($n = 95$). Eighteen counties participated in this program during the school year. The following table presents the number of mediations in which evaluations were conducted¹.

County	# of Mediations	County	# of Mediations
Butler	75	Ottawa	93
Clark	236	Portage	102
Columbiana	49	Preble	43
Cuyahoga	383	Putnam	8
Franklin	1,241	Ross	59
Greene	32	Sandusky	91
Holmes	31	Stark	165
Lorain	53	Wayne	40
Lucas	71	Wood	18

Demographics

Grade Level

The mediations in which evaluation information was collected occurred primarily with students in the middle school grades. This is somewhat skewed by Franklin County in that they conducted a large number of mediations solely in middle schools. The following chart presents the overall division of mediations by grade.



¹ Some counties submitted evaluation information after data were entered and cleaned, thus in some instances more mediations occurred that are not reflected in this report.

Agreements

An agreement on all issues was reached in almost 82% of mediations ($n = 1,306$). An agreement on some, but not all issues was reached in 8.2% of the mediations ($n = 131$), and no agreement was reached in two percent of the mediations ($n = 25$). This information was missing for 8.5% of the mediations ($n = 136$).

Reasons for Absence

After the mediation, mediators were asked to complete an item about reasons for the student=s absence from school. The student=s illness and not getting up in time were most frequently mentioned as reasons for a student=s chronic absenteeism (29.6% and 24.3%, respectively). Other reasons for a child not attending school regularly are depicted in the chart below.

Reason	Frequency	Reason	Frequency
Parent separation anxiety	46	Student illness	512
Parent divorce/separation	121	Student asthma problems	52
Parent employment interfered	190	Student had lice	58
Parent was ill	132	Student mental health issues	119
Parent does not feel child is safe	46	Student anxiety	101
Parent alcohol/drug issues	41	Medication side effects	48
Parent didn't know child missing school	172	Student does not feel safe	23
Lack of parenting skill	316	Conflict with other students	112
Unsafe conditions in home	45	Not understand assignment	99
Transportation problems	364	Homework not completed	207
Childcare problems	80	Student alcohol/drug issues	10
Homeless	27	Not feel need to attend	253
Other family member ill	66	Not getting up in time	421
ADD/ADHD mismanagement	58	Does not turn in notes	322

Referrals

In addition to inquiring about the reasons for a student=s excessive absence, mediators were also asked whether a referral to a social service agency was made during the mediation. Referrals were not made in approximately 39% of the cases ($n = 674$). When referrals were made, it was usually for in-school programming (23.3%; $n = 404$). Referrals were also made for counseling services (11.9%; $n = 206$), medical/health services (8.8%; $n = 153$), and medical insurance services (1.4%; $n = 24$). Referrals to other services and agencies were made in approximately 10% of the mediations ($n = 185$), and these ranged from after school activities/programs, county children's service bureaus, and courts to parenting classes, social workers, and support groups.

Program Impact

Absences & Tardies

Overall, the *Truancy Prevention through Mediation Program* had a significant impact on reducing absenteeism and truancy among the target population for those counties that participated in the program. That is, students whose parents/legal guardians, school representatives and in some cases, themselves attended mediation were absent and tardy significantly less after the mediation

than before. More specifically, students who were mediated were absent, on average, 13.41 days before the mediation and were absent 7.21 days after the mediation ($t_{(1,723)} = -13.12, p \leq .001$). On average, students who were mediated were tardy 8.50 days before the mediation and 5.48 days after mediation ($t_{(1,667)} = -7.37, p \leq .001$).

Interestingly, for students= families who had been identified for participating in the program but did not attend the mediation, results were also encouraging as the average number of absences and tardies also decreased significantly, but these declines were not as dramatic. For instance, the average number of absences for the no shows before the mediation was scheduled was 14.39 days and after the scheduled mediation date was 8.61 days ($t_{(1,118)} = -4.86, p \leq .001$). The average number of tardies prior to the scheduled mediation date was 9.14 and after the scheduled date was 4.48 ($t_{(1,117)} = -5.54, p \leq .001$).

Individual County Results

The following table represents the program impact on absences and tardies for each county participating in the *Truancy Prevention through Mediation Program*. The **ASignificantly different@** column indicates whether the differences in the average number of pre-mediation absences/tardies and average number of post-mediation absences/tardies were statistically significantly different.

	Average Absences			Average Tardies		
	Pre	Post	Sig Different	Pre	Post	Sig Different
Butler	14.45	3.99	Yes	8.83	3.25	Yes
Clark	12.82	8.15	Yes	9.42	8.85	No
Columbiana	19.45	2.54	Yes	6.34	.39	Yes
Cuyahoga	15.31	10.04	Yes	14.43	7.49	Yes
Franklin	17.27			11.29		
Greene	22.91	4.38	Yes	6.67	2.14	Yes
Holmes	9.33			5.50		
Lorain	14.96			16.90		
Lucas	14.08	7.37	No	5.91	3.79	Yes
Ottawa	9.54	4.10	Yes	3.48	2.58	No
Portage	14.21	5.07	Yes	9.47	2.81	Yes
Preble	13.68	2.58	Yes	8.86	2.28	Yes
Putnam	13.75	20.25	No	4.25	5.86	No
Ross	15.03			13.71		
Sandusky	9.83	6.90	Yes	7.06	2.71	Yes
Stark	15.76	10.98	Yes	7.69	6.32	No
Wayne	25.03			4.37		
Wood	17.88	6.53	Yes	10.07	3.71	Yes

For those counties in which post information is missing, this indicates county coordinators were unable to submit post-mediation data for their county.

School Level Differences

Because there was more variability in the school levels participating in the *Program* this year than in previous years, school level differences may be interesting to examine. Thus, what follows is a

presentation of the program impact for students who were mediated and those who were not by school level.

Mediated Students

	Absences			Tardies		
	Average Pre	Average Post	Sig Different	Average Pre	Average Post	Sig Different
Elementary ($n = 423$)	12.43	6.76	Yes	9.72	5.92	Yes
Middle Schools ($n = 143$)	15.57	8.36	Yes	7.59	4.78	Yes
High Schools ($n = 149$)	14.08	7.35	Yes	5.90	4.89	No

As indicated by the previous table, the *Truancy Prevention through Mediation Program* is having the desired impact on absenteeism and tardiness for all school levels if the student and his/her parent/legal guardian attend mediation. The sole exception to this is with tardiness among high school level students.

Non-Mediated Students

	Absences			Tardies		
	Average Pre	Average Post	Sig Different	Average Pre	Average Post	Sig Different
Elementary ($n = 74$)	12.25	5.93	Yes	9.78	4.91	Yes
Middle Schools ($n = 28$)	15.18	11.89	No	8.29	3.00	Yes
High Schools ($n = 9$)	25.67	22.11	No	9.13	7.25	No

This table illustrates the mixed impact of the *Program* for students and their parents/legal guardians who do not attend a scheduled mediation. Seemingly, simply knowing mediation is scheduled may be enough to induce compliance among families with children in elementary grades; however, as can be seen, the decreases in the average number of absences and tardies are not as dramatic as for those students who are mediated. Furthermore, for high school students there was not a statistically significant difference in the average number of absences and tardies before mediation and after mediation was scheduled for these students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The *Truancy Prevention through Mediation Program* had the desired impact on truancy for most of the participating counties. As can be seen, overall, those families who participated in the program reduced the absenteeism and tardiness of their children significantly. For children in elementary school, regardless of whether a student was mediated or simply had a mediation scheduled, there was usually a significant improvement in his/her attendance. Unfortunately, simply knowing attention was being paid to attendance in middle and high schools was not enough to spur attendance. For these families, school attendance may be a secondary or tertiary issue impacting their lives and thus, the motivation for attending because someone is paying attention may not have the same impact as for younger students.

The most oft cited reason for a child's absence from school was the student's illness and the student not getting up in time, yet no referral was made in 39% of the mediations. When referrals were made, they were usually for in-school programming. What is not known from these data are whether the in-school programming referrals were for programs which were designed to assist with a student's illness or having the student get up in time for school. Moreover, from these data it is not clear which referrals were followed through to fruition and if they were helpful. This information may be useful in the future and worthy of more in-depth study.