Abstract: Truancy is a serious concern with youth in our community. Truancy can lead to academic failure, dropping out of school, substance abuse, delinquent and other risky behaviors. The goal of the truancy program is to get parents and school officials involved with helping students that are heading in the wrong direction. This report will explain and evaluate the effectiveness of truancy intervention programs. The evaluation of this program involves two studies that have been conducted on truancy programs, a review of truancy intervention programs/strategy on other crime prevention websites, the existence of any truancy programs in the city of Rochester NY as well as other communities, and the types of crime this program is intended to reduce. Furthermore, I will conclude the findings of the program and give some of my own recommendations.

1. Describe it:

Truancy intervention programs are still under early development. What is truancy? Truancy is the failure to attend. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) truancy can be defined as unexcused absences from school by a minor that exceed the number of such absences allowed under state law. Truancy intervention programs focus on early intervention and stress of problems youth face in school. The program partners up with school officials, parents, the community and the students to determine the reasons behind each student’s truancy. The program also focuses on the student’s poor achievement in school, the involvement and relationship between the school and students parents, the reasons for why the students is regularly staying always from school, and the process of withdrawing from school activity. These are also types of issues that can lead to youth dropout rates. The goals of the truancy intervention programs are to assist troubled youth in returning back to school; helping the youth in setting long term goals as well as day-to-day goals, graduation rates and to help the youth develop positive behaviors. This program also provides troubled youth with a mentor, so that the youth can have someone who is a positive role model in their life. The mentors also monitor the
youth daily school attendance and obtain tutors for the youth if they are struggling with any subject area.

2. **Is the program or something similar reviewed on** [http://www.crimesolutions.gov/](http://www.crimesolutions.gov/) **or Blueprints for Violence Prevention** ([http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/))?

   A similar program of truancy has been reviewed on the Crime Solutions website, Positive Action (PA), which was reviewed, is designed to improve youth academics, behavior, and character. A curriculum-based approach is used to increase positive behaviors and decrease negative ones, according to the review on the Crime Solutions. This program was rated effective and is still an active program. This program or anything similar was not reviewed on the Blueprint website.

3. **What types of crime is it intended to prevent or reduce?**

   Truancy intervention programs are intended to prevent and reduce youth dropout rates. Truancy interventions also prevent youth delinquency behavior, which can keep these youth out of the criminal justice system. In some states truancy is considered a status offense and youth can be charged with this offense as well. For example, if a youth is violating any curfew laws or is picked up by an officer during school hours they can be charged with a truancy offense.

4. **Is there a clear theoretical foundation?**

   Even though truancy intervention programs are still in the early development phase, the program does have a clear theoretical foundation. By identifying if a youth is having issues at school or home, and linking them with interventions specific to these issues, as a result the youth have a chance of preforming better in school and home as well as not ended up being juvenile offenders. Overall, this program helps to keep youth out of the justice system.
5. **Is there a direct, indirect or no clear link to Crime reduction?**

I will say that there is not a clear link to crime reduction in truancy intervention programs however there could be an indirect link to crime reduction. I state this because the program is more focus in helping youth in preforming better in school and not in crime reduction, however, the better school performance could influence crime reduction. The program does indeed help in preventing youth from becoming juvenile offenders.

6. **Describe the logic model. Diagram it. How is it intended to reduce crime?**

By focusing on early interventions and the stresses of certain problems that youth face in school can help reduce the issue of truancy. The collaboration between school officials, parents, the community, police departments and students can aid truant youth in succeeding in their academics. By appointing the truant youth with a mentor, a social worker, tutoring help, and counseling for behavior issues can also theoretically prevent future truancy. This can lead to better outcomes in school for the truant youth and improve the relationship between the youth and their parents as well as with school officials. Similarly, youth will be in school and out of the criminal justice system.
7. Does this program or strategy exist in this community? If yes, what agency does it run through? How long has it been in existence here? How is it funded?

As of January 2013, truancy intervention program are under development in the Rochester City School District. According to the media the city school board president stated that there data has shown that in September as many as 1,500 students are not in school half of the time which is a big truancy problem. The school is now taking action and had launched a comprehensive approach to deal with the truancy issue with the students of the Rochester. The program will focus on the elementary school children, because an early start can benefit the child and the family. To fund the program the Rochester City School asked the city to spend $15,000 to hire a consultant from Yonkers, according to the media. I have attached some news articles for your viewing on the issue and devolvement of truancy in Rochester NY.
Other programs in the City of Rochester that deal with truancy issues are as followed:

- Person In Need of Supervision (PIN)
- Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection

8. **Does it exist in other communities? If yes, where?**

Yes, truancy intervention programs exist throughout the United States, but every program is operationalized under different strategies. Most of these programs are run through the city school district for that given community. Truancy intervention programs or something similar also exits in other many countries.

9. **Does research exist on its effectiveness? Briefly summarize the conclusions.**

Provide citations.

Research shows that a more effective response to truancy requires identifying and addressing the problems that youth and their families experiencing through effective truancy intervention programs (Dembo & Gulledge, 2008, pg. 441). According to the researcher’s, there are several critical elements that are necessary for a truancy program to be an effective (pg.440). The critical elements pointed out by the researchers are as followed:

- Parent or Guardian Involvement
- A Continuum of Services
- Collaboration with community Resources
• School administrative support and Commitment
• Ongoing Evaluation

Moreover, the collaboration between truancy intervention programs and police departments does not have any effective with the issue of truancy.


10. Provide a review of the research (at least 2 studies)
   a. What was the research design?

John N. Marvul conducted a study titled “If You Build it, They Will Come: A Successful Truancy Intervention Program in a Small High School”. A 5-month program involving attendance monitoring, sports participation, and a moral character class would reduce absenteeism (Marvul, 2011, pg. 145). This study focused on an inner-city alternative high school for at risk students. The population the study focused on was the students that were assigned to the alternative school, because of their truancy issue in their regular schools. Forty students were randomly assigned to intervention, control groups, and pre-and post-intervention on educational expectations, attitude toward education, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, and attendance (Marvul, 2011, pg.145). Eighty percent of the students in the study lived on or below the poverty level and had alcohol and drug problems. The researcher in this study also informed the parents/guardians of the students about the study that was being conducted. The students were assigned to either the intervention or control group. Overall, the researcher’s major
question is “To what extent did the intervention change attitudes toward schooling and attendance?”.

Richard Dembo and Laura M. Gulledge conducted a study titled “Truancy Intervention Programs: Challenges and Innovations to Implementation”. The researchers experiment focused on three questions:

1. What kind of truancy program exists in the United States?
2. What evidence do we have regarding their effectiveness?
3. What system and programmatic issues present obstacles to implementing successful truancy programs and need to be considered in establishing effective programs?

To answer all the questions the researcher’s proposed, they conducted a review of the key issues, experiences, and lessons learned from the implementation of various truancy reduction programs in the United States (Dembo & Gulledge, 2008, pg.440). They also looked at other truancy reduction programs and an overview of efforts that are underway in Hillsborough Country, Florida considering truant youth. Overall, the study provides examples of programs that operate in a variety of settings and illustrate the expenses, successes, and challenges of these programs instead of an exhaustive review of truancy reduction programs (Dembo & Gulledge, 2008, pg.442).

b. Describe the data.

Students were administered the “Student Engagement Survey”, which focuses on three domains of student behavior. These behaviors have direct correlations to school engagement, which is related to obeying rules, participating in school activities, and the absences of disruptive behavior. The researcher tracked daily, weekly, and monthly attendance rates and class attendance/truancy through individual teachers’ reports and through the school’s attendance
officer at the main office (Marvul, 2011, pg.157). In this study the student in both the intervention and control groups were monitored as follows:

- Missing school that day.
- Skipped a class.
- Coming in late.

According to Marvul, the sample representative of the student body at large split approximately 50-50 between Black and Hispanic students, with a small number of Native American and other students (pg.155).

The reviews looked at of school-based programs, community-based programs, school and community- based programs, law-enforcement based programs, and court-based programs. The study also looked at 883 truant youth that were processed at Hillsborough County truancy intake center in the years 2007&2008. The youth were mainly males, were mainly non-Hispanic and the age average younger than 14 years of age. According to Dembo & Gulledge, a majority of the truant youth were African American and most of the youth (77%) were in grades seven, eight, or nine (2008, pg. 447). It was also reported that 23 % of the youth had a moderate or high level of drug involvement in the past year and 30% had arrest records.

c. Summarize the findings.

The researcher found that there was not a significant difference between the two groups when compared on pretest educational expectations, attitude toward education, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement and absences. According to the researcher, due to the multivariate nature of the research question, a discriminant analysis was run comparing the intervention group with the control group (pg.158). Additionally, it was found that the intervention group showed
differences in educational attitudes and expectations compared to the control group. The three school engagements that were measured in this study showed that there was not a significant relationship between school engagements and pre-intervention absences. Furthermore the findings also indicate that there is a way to reduce absenteeism, by developing a program that provides support, hope, and positive reasons for attending school.

Dembo & Gulledge found that efforts to address truant behavior are too often sanctioned and procedure oriented, with truant youth being treated as disciplinary and management problems (2008, pg. 452). They also found that some of the truancy programs are starting to move away from older strategies and are getting involved a more collaborative approach. Both researchers’ state that none of the interventions reviewed in their study came without any challenges. Program barriers were often related to both funding and staffing limitations (Dembo & Gulledge, 2008, pg.452). Overall, the researcher’s feel that a partnership between the communities, school, courts, and law enforcement agencies is needed to decrease truancy. Furthermore, truancy intervention programs cannot be effective if it places its focus on just one setting and the whole partnership.

11. How would you rate this program or strategy?
   a. Generally recognized as effective
   b. Good likelihood that it is effective
   c. Inconclusive
   d. Probably not effective
   e. Generally recognized as not effective
   f. Harmful or likely to be harmful

12. Explain your rating.
I believe that truancy intervention program can be successful because of the collaboration between school officials, parents, the community, police departments and students themselves. I think that by targeting issues of behavior, family relationships, and relationships between school officials and students can actually lead to improvement in school with truant youth. I do feel that it can also depend on how committed the youth is in the process of the intervention and this why I rated the program “Good likelihood that it is effective”.

13. Finally, provide a one paragraph summary of the program, the findings and your recommendation.

Truancy intervention program focus on promoting regular school attendance which can leads to higher graduation rates. The programs involves school officials, parents, students, and the community which all working together to reduce the issue of truancy. According to researcher’s, truancy intervention programs should proceed a collaborative approach in order for the program to be effective in reduce truancy. My recommendation for the Truancy Intervention Programs is that they should obtain a researcher within the program to evaluate their success in truancy control as well as the strategies that are being used within that given program. After the evaluation of the programs the results should be compared so that programs coordinator can get a better understanding of what strategies lead to improvement of truancy.