

COLUMBUS, OHIO TRUANCY MEDIATION REPORT  
JANUARY, 2009

The Truancy Prevention Through Mediation program for Columbus City Schools, about one year old, is in three elementary schools and three middle schools, with expansion currently being explored for the 2009-2010 school year. The program issued a report<sup>1</sup> January 7, 2009, on the program, known as *Keep Engaging Youth* (KEY). Findings:

**Goal 1:** Project KEY schools should meet or exceed the Columbus City Schools district standards of 94% attendance for middle schools and 95% attendance for elementary schools, which are higher than the state standard of 93% for elementary and middle schools.

**Outcome 1:** All six KEY schools exceeded the state standard for attendance and two of the middle schools exceeded the higher district standard. Five of the six pilot schools improved their overall rate of attendance as compared to the previous year, even though the number of mediated students represents only one eighth of the total enrollment at the pilot schools<sup>2</sup>.

**Goal 2:** Reduce the number of chronically truant students eligible for court referral by 50%.

**Outcome 2:** The number of chronically truant students (15 or more unexcused absences) at the six pilot schools fell by 40% as compared to the previous school year. By comparison, six control schools chosen on the basis of similar demographic and attendance patterns showed virtually no decrease in the number of chronic truants.

**Goal 3:** Reduce by 75% the rate of unexcused absences for mediated students.

**Outcome 3:** One-third of the mediated students reduced their rate of unexcused absences by 75% or more following truancy mediation.

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<sup>1</sup> Research and evaluation conducted by Community Research Partners.

<sup>2</sup> The phenomenon of over-all attendance improvement in schools with truancy mediation programs is one that has been observed numerous times in the 31 Ohio counties with truancy mediation programs. It appears to be the result of increased yet positive attention, with the community becoming aware that the school and school district are becoming more serious about improving attendance.