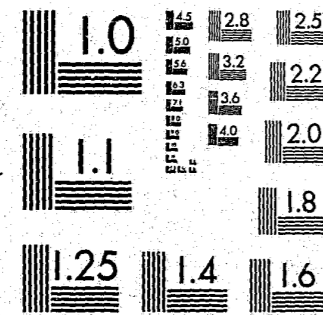


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National Institute of Justice
United States Department of Justice
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3/8/82



San Diego

 ASSOCIATION OF
 GOVERNMENTS

80659

TRUANCY PROJECT EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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July, 1981

San Diego



ASSOCIATION OF
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Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

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PREFACE

The Criminal Justice Evaluation Unit of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) was authorized by the Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board (RCJPB) to evaluate three projects funded to reduce truancy: El Cajon Valley High School, Escondido Middle Schools, and Lemon Grove Junior High Schools. The school districts received a total of \$110,345 in two-year funding from the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA).

The goal of the projects was to reduce truancy by increasing parental awareness of the problem, utilizing justice system and social service agencies and providing remedial services to students.

The Executive Summary of this report presents conclusions and recommendations concerning questions raised by the RCJPB. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of the issues relative to project activities, project impact on attendance and delinquency, cost effectiveness and the factors associated with truancy.

This report should be useful to those in education and criminal justice fields who are interested in the relationship between truancy and delinquency, and specific approaches to these problems. Also, the findings should assist local school district personnel in funding and program decisions regarding the projects studied.

The assistance and cooperation of school, law enforcement and probation staff toward evaluation efforts is sincerely appreciated.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Truancy was designated a funding priority by the San Diego Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board (RCJPB) based on the presumed association with burglary and drug abuse. Three school districts (Grossmont, Escondido and Lemon Grove) received funds totaling \$110,345 for two-year projects with the goal of reducing truancy at the secondary school level. The twofold approach was to increase parent awareness of truancy through telephone verification of absences and to provide counseling and/or problem-solving services to individual students. Project counselors/truancy aides intended to assist individual students by placement in alternative school programs, liaison with juvenile justice agencies and referral to community agencies.

The expected benefits of the truancy projects were improvements in attendance, reductions in juvenile justice involvement and increases in state financial reimbursements based on attendance.

None of the original projects were funded by school districts when the federal grants expired. However, some of the functions were retained. Lemon Grove hired a part-time social worker to assist students with behavioral and attendance problems in the district. El Cajon High School, in the Grossmont Union School District, retained an aide to telephone parents regarding absences and a part-time position to continue home visitations for students with chronic attendance problems.

The State Education Code defines an habitual truant as any student absent without a valid excuse for three or more days. Consistent with Section 48205 (Education Code, 1979), schools have defined truancy as an "absence without parental consent or due to parent neglect", and it is included in the category of unexcused absences. Data available on trancies, based on this definition, are unreliable due to problems in determining the reasons for absences (e.g., contacting parents to verify absences and parents signing a note to excuse a truancy). Therefore, for purposes of evaluation, truancy is measured as excessive unexcused absences.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The truancy projects were successful in reducing schoolwide unexcused absences primarily through telephone verification of absences or informal contacts with students on campus. The resulting increases in state revenue were not sufficient to cover project costs, although specific program elements may be cost-effective.

For most students, telephone or informal contacts are sufficient to encourage attendance, but not for students with chronic attendance problems. Individual counseling/problem-solving efforts directed toward chronic non-attenders did not significantly increase their attendance nor did they reduce delinquency. The expectation that the schools alone could impact the behavior of students with chronic attendance problems may have been unrealistic. Other social and economic factors are associated with truancy (e.g., family relationships, peer associations, employment) and have a significant influence on truant behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *The El Cajon and Escondido schools should continue telephone verification of absences and measure the effects of this strategy independent from other program efforts to increase attendance.*
2. *Lemon Grove Junior High Schools should retain a part-time staff position to contact students informally on school grounds regarding attendance. The cost-effectiveness of a part-time, rather than a full-time, position should be determined by comparing state reimbursements from 1978-79 to 1981-82.*
3. *Schools should develop and test alternative approaches to chronic truancy which focus on factors that can be impacted in the school setting. These include school performance, school conduct and peer associations.*
4. *Since school personnel are in a position to evaluate student behavior and identify problems, increased efforts should be made to link parents and students with appropriate community-based and government agencies.*
5. *Truancy should not be addressed independent of the other factors which are either causes or effects of truancy behavior.*
6. *The effectiveness of the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) should be evaluated locally as a means for enforcing statutes relating to school attendance. Findings should be communicated to the State legislators and recommendations made regarding changes in the legislation, if appropriate.*
7. *Further studies should be conducted to validate the finding that there is not a significant association between truancy and serious, Part I, offenses. This could have policy implications regarding the advisability of expending funds in the schools to address delinquency problems.*

ISSUES, CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

ISSUE I: WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF INTERVENTION FOR REDUCING TRUANCY BEHAVIOR?

Conclusions

The primary method for early identification of students with attendance problems was a phone call to parents to verify reasons for absences. This procedure was not grant-funded in Lemon Grove. Through home visits, student counseling and parent conferences, project staff identified alternative school programs appropriate for students, and/or provided counseling and problem-solving services. A greater number of students received such services in Escondido and Lemon Grove during two years of operation, compared to El Cajon. Community and law enforcement agencies were used as a resource in varying degrees by the three projects.

Findings

1. Only 119 students or families were contacted in El Cajon through home visits. Staffing problems contributed to the relatively low number. The target population consisted of students with six consecutive absences, five absences per month, or ten absences per semester. Recommendations were made for placement in alternative school programs for 22% of the students, based on 46 sample cases. Referrals to community agencies were made for 7% of the students, and to law enforcement for 4%.
2. The project teacher in Escondido counseled 373 students during the two years. Student conferences on campus were the primary type of contact, but home visits were also made. The target group served had a 10% or greater absence rate. The Escondido project staff made more placements in alternative school programs (52% of the students) and utilized law enforcement to a greater extent (12%) than other projects. Community-based agencies were contacted in 7% of the 85 sample cases.
3. The Lemon Grove project worker relied on student conferences and home visits to contact 332 students over two years. The target population for second year was students with three or more unexcused absences (habitual truants), but the focus of the project shifted to include students with behavior, not attendance, problems. This shift in direction occurred because staff felt behavior problems may lead to truancy. School program changes were made in 4% of 101 sample cases. Community agencies were used in 5% of the cases and juvenile justice agencies were contacted in 6%. Lemon Grove was the only project to refer students to the state-mandated School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

ISSUE II: WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING TRUANCY?

Conclusion

Individual services, such as counseling and home visits, were not effective in decreasing absences of students with chronic attendance problems to a level at which they could be expected to perform course work adequately. Attendance improved slightly for project students in El Cajon and Escondido after intervention, but absence rates continued to be high.

Schoolwide attendance increased at all sites during the two grant years. This was primarily due to telephone verification of absences in El Cajon and Escondido, and patrolling of school grounds and informal student contacts in Lemon Grove. Other factors at each school could have affected attendance, but it is concluded that project activities contributed to increased schoolwide attendance.

Findings

1. A sample of students referred for home visits in El Cajon showed a decreased absence rate (excused and unexcused absences) eight weeks after intervention during the first year (25.5% to 17.7%). However, the absence rate remained higher than the schoolwide rate of 8.9% and the 11% rate used in identifying the target population (10 days per semester). The second year sample students experienced an increased absence rate, but the sample was too small to draw definitive conclusions (9) due to the high proportion of students dropped from enrollment.
2. Escondido project students' absence rate decreased in the first year (33.5% to 31.4%) and second year (30.7% to 24.8%) after project intervention for sample cases. Students who miss 25% to 31% of the total possible attendance days, even after intervention, are likely to have problems maintaining acceptable academic grades.
3. For both the first and second year Lemon Grove sample students, the absence rates increased after counseling (from 13.3% to 14.8% and 6.8% to 8.2% for the respective years).
4. Total schoolwide unexcused absences decreased from 1978-79, the pretest period, to 1980-81 in El Cajon (2.1% to 1.8%), Escondido (2.5% to 2.3%) and Lemon Grove (1.6% to .8%).

ISSUE III: HAVE PROJECTS HAD AN IMPACT ON DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR OF TRUANTS?

Conclusions

The three truancy projects did not reduce delinquency, as measured by arrests, for a sample of students receiving counseling, home visits, and problem-solving services.

Findings

1. Approximately the same number of El Cajon project students were involved in officially reported delinquent acts before and after contact by the truancy aide. In addition, the seriousness of offenses committed increased. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the arrests six months before contact were misdemeanors or felonies compared to 84% after contact.
2. In both Escondido and Lemon Grove, the number of students arrested increased after counseling as did the number of offenses committed. Arrests increased from three to seven in Escondido six months after contact and from two to ten for Lemon Grove students.
3. The increase in the seriousness of offenses committed or the number of arrests may result from the effects of maturation or the fact that juveniles previously identified by the criminal justice system are more likely to be arrested for subsequent offenses.

ISSUE IV: IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPECIAL TRUANCY PROJECT COST-EFFECTIVE FOR ADDRESSING TRUANCY BEHAVIOR?

Conclusions

The increased state reimbursements due to schoolwide reductions in unexcused absences were not sufficient to cover operating expenses for the three projects.

Findings

1. The increases in state revenues ranged from \$7,689 to \$9,754.
2. El Cajon recovered 64% of the project costs compared to 51% in Lemon Grove and 32% in Escondido.

ISSUE V: WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO TRUANCY?

ISSUE VI: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE TRUANT STUDENTS INVOLVED IN DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR?

Conclusion

Findings indicate that the following factors are associated with a high unexcused absence rate (truancy): academic problems; self-reported school ability; school-related behavior problems; peer associations; relationships with parents; employment; arrests and self-reported delinquent acts. Other variables tested were not statistically associated with truancy in the study sample.

Findings

1. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the students attending school regularly had an A or B grade average in the 1979-80 school year, compared to 26% of the students with a high unexcused absence rate.
2. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the students who regularly attend school consider themselves above average in school ability, compared to 45% of those with high unexcused absences.
3. Students who attend school more often receive higher conduct grade averages, with 70% receiving an outstanding (or A-B) average, compared to 24% of those with high unexcused absences.
4. A higher proportion of the students with unexcused absences were suspended during the school year (13% vs. 3% for regular attenders).
5. Students with friends who have been truant are more likely to have unexcused absences (38%) than other students (14%).
6. A higher percentage of students who regularly attend school live with both their natural parents (68%) compared to those with frequent unexcused absences (59% live with both parents).
7. Survey data indicate that students with a high unexcused absence rate are more inclined to agree that their parents do not understand them (31%) than are students with low absence rates (6%).
8. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to be employed (71%) compared to those with unexcused absences (52%).
9. Thirteen percent (13%) of the students with excessive unexcused absences were arrested during a one-year period compared to 2% of the regular attenders.
10. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students in the high unexcused category reported that they had committed one or more offenses during a year, compared to 56% of those with a low absence rate. This difference is evident in delinquent behavior relating to alcohol and drugs, but not other categories of offenses (e.g., robbery, assault, burglary, etc.).

Grossmont Union High School District

July 22, 1981

Robert L. Pyle, Superintendent

Susan Pennell, Director
Criminal Justice Evaluation Unit
San Diego Association of Governments
Suite 524, Security Pacific Plaza
1200 3rd Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Ms. Pennell:

Thank you for the Draft Copy on the Truancy Project Evaluation - Final Report. This report has been reviewed by the principal, project director, and myself. We wish to commend you for a very thorough, scholarly, and insightful report. We want you to know that we are in an agreement with the conclusions in your report.

In addition to your report, we would like to add some comments based on experience with the program over the last two years including the effect of the project on other regular students in the high school that is not captured in your final report because data, conclusions, and information are restricted to the chronic truants that participated in the project. The basic reaction of the administrative staff at El Cajon High School is that the "effect of visits to absent truant students is not reflected in the report, i.e., the action/reaction consequences as perceived by the regular students is that they are not absent because they know that there will be a home visit with their parents." This is not supported by data but it is apparent when the attendance record at El Cajon is compared against the other high schools within the Grossmont Union High School District over the last two-year period. Attendance decreased at other high schools, while the El Cajon High School attendance not only increased, it did not decrease proportionately when compared with other schools.

Another question that the report covered was the effect of home visits on changing the chronic truant. The conclusions in the report were that it did not change the attendance behavior of the chronic truant but the administrative staff at El Cajon again believes that it did have an effect on other students. Again this is not supported by data from target students in your study, but from the overall attendance level at El Cajon High School in the last two years of the study. The staff believes that the project activities had an effect on the other students in maintaining better attendance.

Another item that the staff at El Cajon High School would like to highlight in your report (although it's mentioned in the body of the text and again in the tables) is that students who get older get in more serious trouble. The report would tend to indicate that students that were counseled got into more serious trouble. The staff feels that the reverse is probably more accurate and that students with a history of delinquent behavior will continue to get into progressively more serious trouble as they get older--ages 15 to 17. Their assumptions, and they are not born out by data, are that truant delinquent behavior would be even more serious if the attendance project has not been performed.

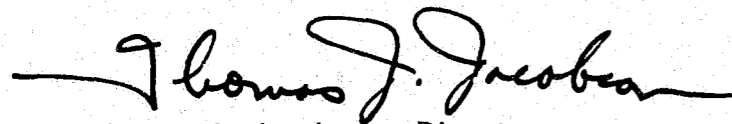
The staff feels that the rapid telephone contact as mentioned in your report is perhaps the more effective strategy. One point made by the staff is that with single and working parents, it is almost impossible to reach parents at home during the day. For this reason, calls were made in the evening, or calls were made to emergency numbers reaching parents at work. Reaching parents at work had a mixed reaction -- in some cases, parents were extremely gratified, but in others it created a problem for them from their employers and they were frankly turned off. Calling at home in the evening proved to be very effective. The staff concurs with your report in that rapid phone contact to truancy is a bit early is the most effective strategy.

Your final point "that the school alone cannot deal with effectively with chronic truancy" is one which the staff at El Cajon High School agrees with completely. There must be a concerted effort on the part of the family, the community through various agencies, plus the school, to get total effective action initiated and implemented.

In summary, on behalf of the Grossmont Union High School District, we wish to thank you for the opportunity of participating in this truancy evaluation project over the last two years. You may wish to know that El Cajon High School will continue both project positions, the telephone aide, and the home visitation aide as part of the school's responsibility to combat truancy after this project is completed on July 31, 1981.

Should you have any additional questions or want more information, please call me, Mr. Frank Cole at El Cajon High School, or the new Principal, Mr. Art Pegas.

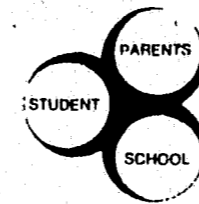
Sincerely,



Thomas J. Jacobson, Director
Grants & Contracts/School Improvement

TJJ:ej

cc: Art Pegas, Principal, El Cajon Valley High School
Frank Cole, Vice Principal, El Cajon Valley High School
Gordon Teaby, Principal, El Capitan High School



ESCONDIDO UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

980 NORTH ASH STREET ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA 92027 (714) 745-7000

July 28, 1981

Ms. Susan Pennell, Director
Criminal Justice Evaluation Unit
San Diego Association of Governments
Suite 524, Security Pacific Plaza
1200 Third Avenue
San Diego, California 92101

Dear Ms. Pennell:

We are in receipt of the draft of the Truancy Project Evaluation Final Report dated July, 1981.

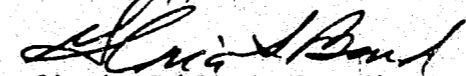
We feel it is quite gratifying that there was a reduction in unexcused absences when comparing last year's attendance with that of three years ago. This is especially significant when considering that three years ago the EUSD provided full transportation for pupils, whereas during the past two years transportation services have been curtailed sharply. During the past school year (1980-81) transportation was only provided for certain special education pupils. The pilot study that we did to determine whether there was a difference between attendance of pupils formerly bussed with those pupils now that there is no bussing resulted in an extremely small sample such that no valid conclusion could be made.

We were also extremely pleased with the positive impact upon a number of the target group students, some of whom previously had not attended school for periods as long as one year. It is felt that the dramatic improvement in the pupils' attitudes toward school and school attendance behavior can be directly attributed to efforts of the Project RAISE staff.

It is hopeful that the EUSD staff (attendance clerks, counselors, school psychologists, teachers, and administrators) will take some of the techniques utilized in Project RAISE and incorporate them into their regular programs.

Our thanks to your staff for expeditiously providing evaluation reports to us.

Sincerely,



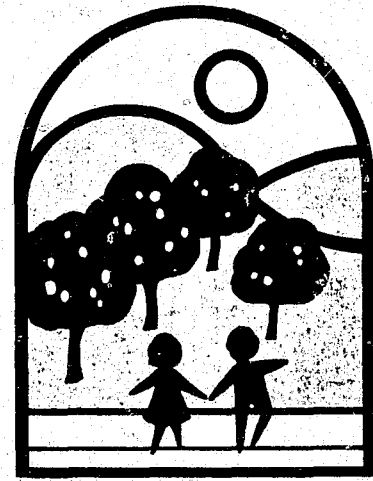
Gloria S. Bond, Coordinator
Pupil Personnel Services
Director, Project RAISE

GSB:lo

cc: Rose Barber

**Lemon
Grove
School
District**

8025 Lincoln
P.O. Box 128,
Lemon Grove,
California 92045



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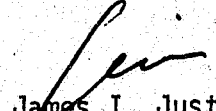
Mrs. Susan Pennell, Director
Criminal Justice Evaluation Unit
San Diego Association of Governments
Suite 524, Security Pacific Plaza
1200 Third Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mrs. Pennell:

Thank you very much for the draft of the Truancy Project Evaluation Final Report. I do not find any aspects of the draft for which I would suggest changes. I would only emphasize that the interactions among students, staff, families and our project worker have no doubt enhanced some lives in ways that are not easily reduced to data relationships.

I would like to thank you and your staff for the professional relationship we have enjoyed over the past two years in this pilot project.

Sincerely,


James I. Justeson, Ph.D.
District Superintendent

JIJ/c

**Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION**

INTRODUCTION

In 1978, the San Diego Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board (RCJPB) determined that the problem of truancy should be a funding priority, based on the assumption that there is a relationship between burglary, drug abuse and truancy. The solicitation for proposals suggested three approaches to this problem:

1. Development of a closer liaison among school districts, probation and law enforcement in dealing with the problems of truancy and drug abuse.
2. Development of more accurate student accounting systems to identify truants.
3. Development of programs to encourage school attendance.

The three truancy projects funded by the RCJPB tested methods designed to increase attendance at the secondary school level. The truancy program attempted to impact truancy at two levels: schoolwide and on an individual basis. The project personnel identified students with attendance problems, notified parents of truanies and excessive absences, provided counseling for students, developed alternative school programming when appropriate, made referrals to social service agencies and worked with law enforcement to solve truancy-related problems.

Before the projects were initiated, school counselors and/or administrators dealt with truancy problems. Many of the same options were available for student programming and agency referrals, but staff did not have sufficient time to work with students on an individual basis. Also, the focus was on all behavior problems, not specifically truancy. Telephone verification of absences did occur prior to the grants, but on a limited basis.

The state mandated School Attendance Review Board (SARB) was underutilized and viewed as ineffective due to the lack of authority in enforcing decisions. This board is composed of community members who review cases of truancy and recommend action.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF REDUCING TRUANCY

In addition to the primary goal of reducing truancy, two other benefits of the projects were expected: reduction in juvenile delinquency and increased state reimbursement to schools.

Juvenile Delinquency

There is a common belief among local school administrators that truancy is related to juvenile delinquency. Truancy is seen as either a first step from a status offense to a more serious crime, or as an opportunity to commit crimes during the free time a youth has while truant. The projects' focus was on increasing attendance to decrease delinquent behavior.

The relationship between truancy and delinquency is explored in this report, with emphasis on the projects' impact on both types of behavior.

State Allocations

The State of California reimburses school districts based on the average daily attendance (ADA), therefore, the schools closely monitor absences. The schools receive funds for each day a student is actually in attendance and absences excused for certain designated reasons. These reasons include: (a) illness, (b) quarantine directed by a county or city health officer, (c) medical or dental appointment, (d) attending funeral services of an immediate family member, and (e) jury duty.¹ These absences are excused, whereas unexcused absences include those in which a student stays out of school for a reason other than those noted above (e.g., vacation, babysitting, truancy). The projects attempted to decrease unexcused absences for which the schools receive no state revenue, thus increasing the total financial apportionment.

DEFINING TRUANCY

The State of California defines a truant as any pupil who is absent from school without a valid excuse three or more days in one school year. The individual schools have further refined this definition, based on Sec. 48205, to exclude the student who is out of school for a "justifiable" reason not considered by the State as an excused absence for apportionment.² Operationally, some schools have defined truancy as "an absence without parental consent or due to parent neglect", and it is included in the category of unexcused absences. Since the number of trancies, by this definition, is not used in determining state reimbursements, the measure is not consistently recorded. Also, determination of an absence as a truancy is not possible when a parent cannot

¹Attendance and Absenteeism in California Schools - Report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, March, 1979.

²Section 48205 (Education Code, 1979) states that: "a pupil shall be excused from school for justifiable personal reasons, including but not limited to, an appearance in court, observance of a holiday or ceremony of his or her religion, or an employment conference, when the pupil's absence has been requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board."

be reached for verification, or the parent writes a note excusing an absence that is actually a truancy. The evaluation focuses on excused and unexcused absences which are the most reliable measures of non-attendance.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation effort is based on the issues prepared by the RCJPB. These include: (1) procedures for early identification of truants, (2) project impact on truancy, (3) project impact on delinquency, (4) the cost-effectiveness of the projects, (5) factors contributing to truancy, and (6) student involvement in delinquent behavior. The preliminary evaluation (June, 1980) presented a process evaluation of project activities which addressed early identification and reduction of truancy/attendance problems.

This final report evaluates the impact of the projects on school attendance and delinquency, as well as the cost effectiveness of the projects. The methods employed include analysis of project records, discussions with project staff, a survey of school administrators, and a pre- and post-test comparison of attendance and delinquent behavior. The cost-effectiveness issue was evaluated in terms of increases in state reimbursements due to project intervention.

An additional study was conducted to research the issue of factors contributing to truant behavior and the possible correlation between truancy and delinquency behavior. Data were collected from school records, student surveys and law enforcement and probation files for comparison groups with differing attendance rates. (See Methodology, Appendix A, page 69.)

Chapter 2
PROJECT OPERATIONS AND
EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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PROJECT OPERATIONS
AND EARLY IDENTIFICATION

ISSUE I: WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF INTERVENTION FOR REDUCING TRUANCY BEHAVIOR?

SUMMARY

The primary method for early identification of truants and students with attendance problems was a telephone call to the parents to verify reasons for absences. This procedure was not grant-funded in Lemon Grove. The El Cajon truancy aide used the home visit as the means of intervention for students identified as non-attenders, whereas the other two projects relied heavily on student conferences by the truancy aide/counselor. The emphasis in El Cajon was to discuss alternative school programming with parents, although actual placement in such such programs was made for only a small proportion of students. In Escondido and Lemon Grove, student counseling was performed in addition to program changes and problem-solving activities. Community and juvenile justice agency referrals were made in a small percentage of cases studied.

DISCUSSION

To evaluate the ability of the truancy projects to identify truants and increase attendance, it is necessary to understand that there are very distinct differences in implementation among projects, despite common goals. These differences concern the point at which truancy or attendance problems are identified and intervention occurs, the types of services provided, the target population, staffing and involvement with the juvenile justice system. The discussion of these issues will be divided into five areas: (1) description of the school area, (2) identification and referral procedures, (3) intervention and results (e.g., number of students, duration of service, average number of contacts), (4) coordination of efforts with school staff, and (5) juvenile justice system involvement. The data presented in the following narrative are summarized in Table 1, page 20.

EL CAJON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

The El Cajon Valley High School truancy project, Project STAY, was budgeted for two years of operation at \$30,350. Two full-time staff positions were funded: a truancy aide and a community services liaison aide. One and one-half positions have been budgeted for continuation with local funding in FY 1981-82 to provide telephone verification of absences and home visits.

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TABLE 1
TRUANCY PROJECTS - DESCRIPTION

<u>DESCRIPTORS</u>	<u>EL CAJON VALLEY</u>	<u>ESCONDIDO</u>	<u>LEMON GROVE</u>
Budget	\$30,350	\$50,000	\$30,000
Funds Expended as of April 30, 1981	\$27,103	\$46,781	\$22,274
Project Initiation Date	October 1, 1979	July 30, 1979	September 24, 1979
Staff Positions Budgeted	1 Truancy Aide (full-time) 1 Community Service Liaison Aide (full-time)	1 Project Teacher (half-time) 1 Community Service Officer (24 hrs. per month) 3 Attendance Aides (part-time) 1 Typist (2 days per month)	1 Project Worker (full-time) 1 Typist (2 hrs. per day)
Level of School	High School Grades 9-12	Middle School Grades 6-8	Junior High School Grades 7 & 8
Number of Schools	1	3	2
Enrollment (April/May, 1981)	1,734	2,743	672
Actual Number of Students Counseled (6/30/81)	119	373	332
Average Number of Contacts per Student (sample)	1.8	3.2	2.6
Average Duration of Service (sample)	23 days	59 days	96 days
Most Frequent Types of Contact (sample)	1) Home Visit (48) 2) Phone (2) 3) Student Conference (2) 4) Parent Conference (2)	1) Student Conference (114) 2) Home Visits (53) 3) Phone Call (49) 4) Parent Conference (31)	1) Student Conference (113) 2) Phone Call (78) 3) Parent Conference (24) 4) Home Visits (18)
Sample Size	46	85	101

School enrollment was 1,734 in May, 1981, with grade levels ranging from 9th to 12th grades. The school is located in an area with highly mobile families, contributing to a high turnover rate for students.

Project STAY was the only project evaluated that served high school students. Therefore, the attendance problems addressed were somewhat different from other projects. At the high school level, some students have already developed set patterns of non-attendance which affect efforts to impact truancy. Also, compulsory education is only required until age 16, which presents the additional problem of school dropouts. To remain in school, 16 and 17 year olds must attend at least a partial day.

Identification and Referrals

Two objectives of Project STAY were immediate identification of truants and early identification of school dropouts. The primary method for identifying truants and non-attenders has been a phone call to verify the reasons for an absence. This was done before the project began, but on a limited basis. During the past two years, project staff called parents on the first, second or third day that a student was out of school. If the parent was not reached by the third day, a referral was made to the truancy aide for a home visit. Referrals were also made for home visits on students absent five or six consecutive days, even if telephone contact occurred. An additional source of referrals was the inactive enrollment roster. Attempts were made to re-enroll students who had been dropped. In the second grant year, monthly printouts were used to identify students with five or more absences in a 20-day period, or 10 absences during a semester.

Intervention

Methods employed to impact students' attendance behavior include home visits and student conferences with the truancy aide to explain alternative school programs designed to increase the likelihood of attendance. School counselors did not have sufficient time to provide such individualized attention.

The following school program alternatives were available:

1. Alternative School. Students in alternative school take only basic courses and physical education. The classroom is at El Cajon Valley High School and is staffed by a resource teacher. Assignments are made by individual subject teachers with work performed on a contract basis. The program is designed for students with 20 or more absences in a semester who are likely to fail their courses.
2. Independent Study. This program is for students on the inactive enrollment list who have not attended school for an extended period. School work is completed off campus and turned in on a weekly basis. El Cajon Valley High School has participated in a pilot program (Phoenix) which expanded the use of independent study as an alternative to the traditional high school program.

3. Continuation School. Students attend classes half-day at the Chaparral Continuation High School campus. Classes are small and individualized instruction is provided. Reasons for placement include request by a student, a conflict with the traditional school schedule or disciplinary action.
4. Work Exemption, including job placement.
5. Standard Program. This option is used for school dropouts who are re-enrolled in school.

Community and juvenile justice agencies were additional resources available to the truancy aide.

Telephone verification of absences also can be viewed as an intervention strategy in addition to a means of identifying students with attendance problems. The telephone calls can act as a deterrent to truancy by increasing the opportunity for detection of truancy.

Target Population. The target population identified for the second year was consistent with the procedures for early identification of non-attenders. The following groups were to be the focus of project activities:

- o Students absent six consecutive days who have not been contacted by the school.
- o Students absent five days in one month or ten or more days per semester.

These criteria were used in making referrals to the truancy aide, but project records indicate that only a small number of students were actually identified during the second year as non-attenders (56).

Project Results. Project results have been negatively affected by staffing problems. The truancy aide did not contact any students after February 3, 1981. The aide was terminated in May, 1981, for not performing the required duties, and the position was not filled for the remaining two months of the grant. This limited the effects of the project and hindered evaluation efforts.

Another factor which affects the evaluation is the unavailability of certain data. Data elements requested by the evaluator were not all incorporated into the contact forms completed for students receiving individual services (e.g., referral date, source of referral, etc.).

There was an increase in the frequency of contacting students during the first few months of the second school year (before February, 1981). Despite this, project records indicate that only 119 students were contacted by the truancy aide either through home visits or conferences on campus during almost two years of operation. The average number of contacts per student was 1.8 with the duration of service averaging 23 days, based on a sample of students served (46). This is significantly

lower than other projects, but Project STAY was not designed to provide extended counseling services. The truancy aide discussed alternative programming with parents and students and made recommendations to the vice-principal or counselor.

It is not possible to determine if students referred to the truancy aide were contacted in a timely manner. Information on the referral contact dates was not maintained by project staff.

During the second year of project operations, the truancy aide was expected to follow up on recommendations to ensure that appropriate actions had been taken. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the sample project students were contacted more than once, which was an improvement over the first year.

The most common recommendation for alternative programming was independent study (15% of the cases). Alternative school placement was made in 7% of the cases.

Community Agency Contacts. Project staff was not qualified to address the personal and family problems which affect school attendance. For this reason, the evaluator recommended that staff utilize existing community resources and counseling services during the second year. The truancy aide identified community agencies appropriate for referral but relatively few referrals were made (7% of the cases).

Telephone Contacts. Telephone verification of daily absences by the community services liaison aide has continued consistently throughout the two years of project operations. There is some indication that this has had a positive effect on schoolwide attendance.

Coordination With School Staff

Survey responses from school administrators and counselors indicate an increased awareness of project activities and coordination of efforts between counselors and project staff. However, there was still a need for increased communication regarding procedures for referral and the specific responsibilities and authority of project personnel. In addition, feedback on home visitations and student conferences was insufficient according to some respondents. It should be noted that the surveys were administered in March, 1981, before problems with the truancy aide became apparent to school staff.

Juvenile Justice Involvement

School administrators indicate that efforts were made to increase involvement with law enforcement during the first few months of the 1980-81 school year. The truancy aide, hired in September, 1980, was a reserve officer with the El Cajon Police Department and provided liaison with that agency. Juvenile justice agencies were contacted in only 4% of the sample cases involving project students.

ESCONDIDO MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The truancy project (Project RAISE) in the Escondido Union School District served three middle school campuses (Del Dios, Grant and Hidden Valley). Two-year funding totaled \$50,000. The budget was higher than the other two projects because of additional staff positions which included a project teacher (half-time), three part-time attendance aides, a community service officer (CSO) and a clerk typist. Project RAISE was the only project with a representative from law enforcement on staff. The project has not been funded locally for fiscal year (FY) 1981-82.

The three middle schools had a total enrollment of 2,743 as of April, 1981, and include grades 6 through 8. The areas in which the schools are located are diverse in terms of socioeconomic factors, ethnic composition and mobility of the population.

The school district has a year-round program. Students are placed on one of four "tracks" (schedules) consisting of four quarters with vacations at different times throughout the year for each track. This presents problems for school staff in dealing with truancy and attendance. For example, it cannot be assumed that students who are off campus during school hours are truant, since a segment of the school population is on vacation at all times. Also noted by Escondido middle school administrators is the increasing problem of parents taking students out of classes for family vacations, which constitutes an unexcused absence.

Identification and Referral

In most cases, the attendance aides at each school telephoned parents on the first day that a student's name appeared on the master absence list. This was to increase parent awareness of a student's non-attendance as well as to identify students in need of an individualized program. Attendance clerks telephoned parents regarding absences before Project RAISE, but not on a regular basis.

Truants and students with a high absence rate (10%) were referred to the project teacher for individual attention. A student was only referred if the attendance problem was perceived as excessive, even if the student was identified at an earlier stage as having a potential problem.

Intervention

Most referrals to the project teacher were made by the attendance aides or the school counselors. The initial contact with parents was usually a phone call to arrange a home conference. The primary emphasis has been on home visits, but during the second year, student and parent conferences on campus increased. Also, the use of a contractual agreement with students regarding attendance behavior was initiated in July, 1980.

Through conferences and home visits, the project teacher determined the reasons for non-attendance and provided problem-solving and counseling services. Problem-solving included changes in a student's school program, arrangements for transportation and referrals to community and government agencies.

The types of schedule changes available as alternatives are as follows:

1. Shortened Day. A student takes only basic courses and physical education but is enrolled in regular classes on campus.
2. Educational Opportunity Program. This is a half-day class taken by students during their interim session to make up work missed during the school year. It was also used as an entry point for non-attenders who were not ready to enter a regular class program.
3. Opportunity School. This is a separate classroom on an elementary school campus where students perform basic class work during the regular school year. Students are referred here for deviant behavior which could include truancy.
4. Independent Study. The student obtains assignments from teachers at school and performs the work off campus. There is no classroom instruction. This was rarely recommended by the project teacher.
5. Retention. The student is held back a grade.
6. Track Changes/School Changes. The track system was utilized by project staff to allow a student to begin a new nine-week quarter when he/she was behind in course work.

Community Service Officer. As stated previously, Project Raise was the only truancy project with a budgeted law enforcement position. A Community Service Officer (CSO) is a non-sworn officer who handles certain tasks previously the responsibility of sworn personnel. The CSO's function under the grant was to provide career and educational counseling, family and pupil counseling and to act as liaison between the juvenile justice system and the school district.

The CSO wears a badge and a uniform which creates an impression of authority. This was viewed by some school administrators as an advantage. In recent years, juvenile justice agencies have decreased their involvement in truancy and other status offense cases, and these administrators feel that this has reduced the options for dealing with truancy.

Target Population. The target population of Project RAISE consisted of those students with an absence rate of 10% or higher. The project was designed to address chronic attendance problems. For a sample of project students, the average unexcused absence rate for four weeks prior to contact by the project teacher was 14%, and the excused absence rate was 23%. This indicates that the project was providing services to the intended target group.

Project Results. The project teacher worked with 373 students from July 1, 1979 to June 30, 1981. These students received in-depth counseling with continued follow-up. The average number of contacts for a sample of students (85) was 3.2, with a duration of services of 59 days. Community agency referrals were made in only 7% of the cases.

The Escondido project made more placements to alternative school programs than other projects. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the sample students were referred to the Educational Opportunity Program, 19% either changed schools or class schedule, and 9% were recommended for Opportunity School.

The project teacher, with only half-time funding, served a larger student population (2,743) than the projects that had a full-time counselor or truancy aide. In addition, this individual was on sick leave for a considerable period of time. Even though a substitute was hired for part of this time, the absence of the project teacher may have affected continuity of services provided. The effects of the project may have been greater if the project had been fully staffed throughout the two years. Despite these limitations, there is evidence that counseling and problem-solving have benefited some students (see page 35).

The telephoning by attendance aides was expected to positively affect schoolwide attendance rates. An assertive discipline program was introduced in the Escondido schools during FY1980-81. As a result, it is difficult to attribute changes in schoolwide attendance solely to telephoning by Project RAISE.

Coordination With School Staff

School administrators surveyed (10) at the Escondido middle schools felt that there was cooperation between school staff and Project RAISE personnel. This included referrals, feedback on student behavior, and discussions of methods for dealing with students. The respondents did not mention a need for more communication as they had in the interviews conducted during the first year.

Juvenile Justice System Involvement

The majority of the school administrators (6) still express a need for increased involvement with law enforcement. There is frustration concerning the inability to enforce attendance requirements, and these administrators feel that more authority is required. They are supportive of the use of a CSO as a representative from law enforcement, but would like that role enhanced. Project records indicated that the CSO or other juvenile justice personnel were involved in 12% of the cases compared to 4% in El Cajon and 6% in Lemon Grove.

LEMON GROVE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Two junior high schools, Lemon Grove and Palm, are involved in the truancy project in the Lemon Grove School District. The grant was

funded for \$30,000 (two years) with a full-time project worker/counselor and a part-time typist (10 hours per week). The project will not be continued by the school district, but some of the functions will be performed on a more limited basis by a social worker added to the FY1981-82 budget.

The junior high schools in Lemon Grove have only two grade levels, 7th and 8th. The student enrollment for both schools is considerably smaller than for the El Cajon and Escondido projects (672 students). The two schools have a somewhat different population of students, with Lemon Grove Junior High School having more ethnic diversity and families with lower socioeconomic status, compared to Palm.

Identification and Referral

The mechanism used for early identification of truants and students with excessive absences was in existence before the project began and is not grant funded. School staff call parents of students on the master absence list on the first day, if possible. Students meeting the criteria for referral to the truancy project were those with: (1) one or more truancies, or (2) excessive excused or unexcused absences.

In addition to referrals by the attendance clerk, a monthly print-out of attendance by student name was checked for excessive absences. This is not an up-to-date report (2-3 week lag period); therefore, it did not identify truancy at an early stage.

Intervention

In contrast to the other projects, the project worker at the Lemon Grove Junior High Schools spent most of his time on campus rather than making home visits. Counseling of students occurred on a formal and informal basis. The project worker walked the campus during lunch and breaks and talked to the students. He had high visibility on the school grounds and was known by students as the staff member responsible for attendance problems.

When he contacted parents, he usually arranged a conference at school, although he did make home visits. The manner in which the project was implemented provided maximum contact with students. This is reflected by the number of students contacted between September, 1979 and April of this year (332).

The project worker, in addition to counseling, tried to elicit behavior changes using the following options/resources:

1. Shortened Day. A program change is made in which the student only takes core classes.
2. Opportunity Program. This is an on-campus class in which a resource teacher monitors the work done on a contract basis for other teachers.

3. Independent Study. The student performs course work off-campus on a contract basis.
4. Referrals to a social worker, the school psychologist or private counseling.
5. Socialization Skills Group. This group is led by the school psychologist and is designed to explore factors causing attendance and behavior problems and to develop methods of coping with these factors.
6. School Attendance Review Board (SARB). This is a state-mandated board which takes referrals of students with three or more trancies. Parents are required to appear before the board, and a contract is made with the student regarding attendance and behavior. The project worker is a member of SARB.
7. Child Study Committee. This committee is composed of school staff and deals with students who are failing or having problems with behavior or attendance.

Target Population. The target population for the second year was students with three or more unexcused absences. While this was to be the primary group addressed, counseling was to be provided for students with less severe attendance problems. Of a sample of students (101) contacted by the project worker, 13% meet the definition of the target group.

The population served included students with behavior problems who did not have attendance problems. This was a change in focus from the original objectives of the project. The Lemon Grove schools do not have severe attendance problems compared to the other projects, which limits the number of students in need of counseling related to attendance. Also, project staff felt that behavior problems could lead to truancy, and were therefore within the scope of the project.

Project Results. A total of 332 students were counseled formally by the project worker as of April 30, 1981. In addition, numerous informal contacts were made on campus. Students receiving counseling services were contacted an average of 2.6 times, based on a sample of students. The duration of services was longer than other projects (96 days) because of follow-up on first-year students. Referrals were made to community-based agencies in 5% of the cases studied. The Lemon Grove project was the only one to utilize the School Attendance Review Board (4% of the cases). Sample data indicate that the primary activities have been counseling and referrals to school staff rather than alternative education programs. A program change was made for only 5% of the project sample students.

Evaluation efforts focused on attendance behavior as it relates to delinquency to measure the original goals of the truancy projects. Since a significant number of Lemon Grove project students were referred for behavior problems, measures of attendance behavior may not reflect project efforts.

Coordination With School Staff

The project worker and the three school administrators were in regular contact with each other (2-4 times a week). These contacts included discussions about specific students and parent conferences. Interaction was facilitated because the administrative staff is small and work in close proximity in the school office. The project worker also coordinated his activities with the school psychologist, and made referrals to him.

Juvenile Justice System Involvement

The project worker continued the linkage with law enforcement during the second year. He worked with the Sheriff's juvenile liaison officer on cases in which students with attendance problems also had police contacts. In 6% of the sample cases, the Sheriff's Department or Juvenile Hall authorities were contacted.

**Chapter 3
PROJECT IMPACT
ON TRUANCY AND DELINQUENCY**

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**PROJECT IMPACT ON
TRUANCY AND DELINQUENCY**

ISSUE II: WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING TRUANCY?

ISSUE III: HAVE PROJECTS HAD AN IMPACT ON DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR OF TRUANTS?

SUMMARY

Individual services, such as counseling and home visits, were not found to be effective means to significantly increase attendance for students identified as non-attenders. Two projects (El Cajon and Escondido) show improved attendance for project students after intervention. Despite this, the students continued to have a high absence rate after intervention. In addition, individual services provided by the three projects did not result in a decrease in delinquency, as measured by arrests.

Schoolwide attendance increased at all sites. This was primarily due to telephone verification of absences in Escondido and El Cajon, and patrolling of school grounds and informal counseling in Lemon Grove. Other factors at each school could have affected changes in attendance, but it is concluded that project activities contributed to increased schoolwide attendance.

DISCUSSION

The issue of project impact on truancy is addressed at two levels. First is the effect of the project counselor or truancy aide's activities on individual students' attendance behavior. The expectation was that through home visits, counseling, referrals and alternative programming, excused and unexcused absences would decrease. As a result of increased attendance, project rationale suggests that delinquency would be reduced, assuming an association exists between poor attendance and delinquent behavior.

The second level of evaluation deals with changes in schoolwide attendance rates due to project efforts. Specifically, telephone verification of absences in addition to individual services were expected to deter truancy and encourage school attendance.

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Individual Services

A pre-post study was conducted of absence rates for first and second year project students receiving individual services at each site (see Methodology, Appendix A, page 69). In selecting sample students, it was difficult to obtain a sufficient number of students for whom pre- and post-test attendance data were available. A significant number of the project students were in one of the following categories:

1. New to the school district
2. Dropped from enrollment due to extended absences
3. Moved from the district
4. Transferred to another school
5. Graduated

The study periods before and after project intervention were limited to eight-week periods to increase the sample size and enhance the validity of comparative findings. Therefore, data presented only reflect immediate, not long-range effects.

The following factors could affect results:

1. Changes in project staff
2. Changes in school administration or policies
3. Changes in project activities or procedures
4. Seasonal variance in attendance

These factors are discussed as they relate to individual projects.

El Cajon Valley High School

Comparative attendance data could only be collected for 38 project students in El Cajon for the eight-week periods before and after contact. Seventy-three students (73) were eliminated from the sample for the following reasons. The turnover rate at this school is close to 60%; therefore, over half of the school population is dropped from enrollment during a school year. In addition, students who do not attend school for an extended period of time are placed on the inactive roster. For students either dropped or inactivated during the study period, reliable attendance data could not be obtained. The resulting sample is biased in favor of students who were more likely to attend school, since chronic non-attenders have a greater chance of being placed on the inactive list. As a result, data presented do not represent the total impact of the project.

During the first year of operations, the overall absence rate for 29 project students decreased from 25.5% to 17.7%, with unexcused absences decreasing from 6.5% to 3.8%. Although there was improvement, the absence rate during the post-test period for these students remained significantly higher than the schoolwide rate of 8.9%. In addition, the 17.7% rate is above the rate for the target group (11%) to be contacted by project staff (10 absences per semester). Research has demonstrated that when students do not attend school regularly, school performance is negatively affected (see page 53).

For second year sample students (9), the absence rate increased from 15.8% to 20.0%. Unexcused absences increased from 1.2% of the possible attendance days to 10.2%. Results are not conclusive due to the limited sample.

There was considerable staff turnover in the truancy aide position during the first grant year and in the last year home visits discontinued after February 1981. These factors influenced the results for project students.

Escondido Middle Schools

The sample for Escondido Middle Schools consists of 51 students. The absence rate decreased for first year (33.5% to 31.4%) and second year students (30.7% to 24.8%) subsequent to project intervention. During both years, decreases occurred in excused and unexcused absences (see Table 2).

Project RAISE served chronic non-attenders; therefore, the absence rates in the pretest period were high compared to other projects. Although results were positive, absence rates were still high eight weeks after counseling began. Students who miss 25% to 31% of the possible attendance days are likely to have problems maintaining acceptable academic grades.

Lemon Grove Junior High School

Attendance data were tracked for 80 project students in Lemon Grove. Results indicate that counseling by the project worker did not impact absence rates as expected. For both the first and second year samples, absence rates increased (from 13.3% to 14.8%, and 6.8% to 8.2% for the respective years). Increases were experienced in both excused and unexcused absences. A change in project staff in 1980-81 did not seem to affect the results. Data do indicate that second year students' attendance problems were not as severe.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence does not support individual counseling services as an effective means of significantly reducing chronic truancy. Dealing with chronic truants and non-attenders may be an effort which requires more than the schools can offer. It should be realized that sociodemographic factors contribute to truancy which are beyond the control of school staff. Some students were helped, but the overall impact was not positive. Alternative approaches to chronic non-attendance should continue to be assessed by the schools.

This study has not fully tested the use of alternative education to address the delinquency problem. A limited number of project students were placed in such programs, and the programs utilized represent various alternatives to traditional programming. Therefore, a single approach could not be examined. Alternative education programs are now being developed and studied nationwide under federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) funding.

TABLE 2
 ABSENCE RATES, SAMPLE OF PROJECT STUDENTS
 EL CAJON, ESCONDIDO & LEMON GROVE TRUANCY PROJECTS
 1979-80 AND 1980-81

	EL CAJON			
	First Year		Second Year*	
	Before	After	Before	After
Excused Absences	19.0%	13.9%	14.6%	9.8%
Unexcused Absences	6.5%	3.8%	1.2%	10.2%
Total Absences	25.5%	17.7%	15.8%	20.0%
Sample Size	N=29	N=29	N=9	N=9

	ESCONDIDO			
	First Year		Second Year	
	Before	After	Before	After
Excused Absences	16.1%	14.7%	18.7%	13.6%
Unexcused Absences	17.4%	16.7%	12.0%	11.2%
Total Absences	33.5%	31.4%	30.7%	24.8%
Sample Size	N=19	N=19	N32	N32

	LEMON GROVE			
	First Year		Second Year	
	Before	After	Before	After
Excused Absences	11.6%	12.8%	6.0%	6.3%
Unexcused Absences	1.7%	2.0%	.8%	1.9%
Total Absences	13.3%	14.8%	6.8%	8.2%
Sample Size	N=57	N=57	N=23	N=23

*Due to the limited sample size, El Cajon data for the second year are inconclusive.

SCHOOLWIDE ATTENDANCE

Even though the impact on project students was limited, all three schools show a decrease in schoolwide absences.

El Cajon Valley High School

Total absences decreased for the El Cajon Valley High School in the two years after Project STAY began. The total absence rate for the pre-test period (1978-79) was 10.2%, compared to 8.6% in 1980-81. The unexcused absence rate declined during the same period from 2.1% to 1.8% (see Table 3).

This can be attributed to the telephone verification of absences, since the truancy aide had only limited impact on students receiving individual services. A new project was introduced to the school in September 1980 which may have affected attendance. The Phoenix Project attempts to re-enroll school dropouts in an independent study (home instruction) program. The Phoenix Project has reportedly had a significant impact by increasing state reimbursements, but the effect on overall school attendance rates may not have been as significant. If a student does not report to school one day a week on independent study, an unexcused absence is reported for five days.

Escondido Middle Schools

Escondido middle schools only record data for unexcused absences, since an accounting of excused absences is not required by the state. Table 3 indicates that, after an increase in unexcused absences during the first grant year, unexcused absences declined slightly in the second year (2.5% to 2.3%). This is, in part, the result of telephone contacts with parents by the aides.

Factors which may also influence the results are changes in attendance procedures and adoption of an assertive discipline program. During the fall of 1979, Project RAISE staff reviewed attendance reporting at the middle schools and recommended more stringent accounting of absences (i.e., excusing absences only for reasons specified in the Education Code). The schools also discontinued the practice of dropping students from enrollment after extended absences, which tends to inflate attendance rates. This could account for the increased absence rate in 1979-80.

The assertive discipline program began in September 1980 and may have contributed to the decrease in unexcused absences. Success in reducing behavior problems with this discipline program has been reported by school staff.

Lemon Grove Junior High School

The absence rate continued to decline during the final grant year in the Lemon Grove schools. In 1978-79, the absence rate was 9.0% decreasing to 6.8% in 1980-81; unexcused absences were 1.6% in the pretest

TABLE 3

SCHOOLWIDE ABSENCE RATES*
TRUANCY PROJECTS

	EXCUSED ABSENCES			UNEXCUSED ABSENCES			TOTAL ABSENCES			% DIFFERENCES Time 1 to Time 3
	Pre-Test Time 1	Post-Test Time 2 Time 3		Pre-Test Time 1	Post-Test Time 2 Time 3		Pre-Test Time 1	Post-Test Time 2 Time 3		
El Cajon	8.1%	7.7%	6.8%	2.1%	1.2%	1.8%	10.2%	8.9%	8.6%	- 1.6%
Escondido**	---	---	---	2.5%	2.9%	2.3%	---	---	---	---
Lemon Grove	7.4%	5.8%	5.5%	1.6%	1.0%	0.8%	9.0%	6.8%	6.0%	3.0%

*The absence rate is the number of excused and/or unexcused absences divided by the total number of possible attendance dates during the specified time period (excluding days not enrolled).

**Data are not available for excused absences at Escondido middle schools.

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period and .8% in the second year. Compared to other schools studied, Lemon Grove has consistently had the highest attendance rate and a less severe truancy problem.

Although attendance rates did not improve for a sample of students counseled, the positive schoolwide results can be partially attributed to the activities of the project worker. His contact with students was extensive, and students recognized him as the staff person responsible for truancy. Also, he had high visibility by "patrolling" the school grounds during lunch and breaks, which had a deterrent effect.

When the truancy reduction project was initiated, the school administration at both junior high schools changed. Changes in philosophy introduced by the new principals may have had some influence on attendance due to differing approaches to attendance reporting, discipline, etc. Decreases in absence rates occurred at both schools, which reinforces the conclusion that the project had an impact independent from other factors.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

After the first grant year, each project revised its objectives to increase measurability and to more accurately reflect project activities during the second year. Part of the assessment of project effectiveness includes a determination of the extent to which second-year objectives were met (see Table 4).

El Cajon

The objectives for Project STAY (El Cajon) both address schoolwide attendance. Data indicate that the excused absence rate did not increase from 1979-80 to 1980-81. Also, the unexcused absence rate decreased during the same period (see Table 4). Thus, both objectives were accomplished. The conclusion is that this was primarily the result of telephone calls to parents of absent students.

Escondido

The objectives for Project RAISE were either not measurable or not accomplished. In Escondido, project staff felt that attendance rates increased during the first year due to termination of bus service. This variable was to have been controlled in the measurement of the first objective. Attendance was to be compared over time for students who would have been eligible for bus transportation (outside the three-mile walking limit) and those who were not. Reliable data were not available for the pre-test period, making this objective unmeasurable. A study was conducted to determine the effects of transportation eligibility in 1980. It was found that there was not significant difference in absence rates for students within and outside the three-mile walking limit.

TABLE 4
PROJECT OBJECTIVES
SECOND YEAR

Objectives	Compliance
<u>El Cajon</u>	
1. The excused absence rate will not increase (1979-80 to 1980-81)	Yes
2. The unexcused absence rate will be maintained or decreased by 2% (1979-80 to 1980-81)	Yes
<u>Escondido</u>	
1. Unexcused absences will be reduced 35% and there will be no increase in excused absences as measured by a comparison of pupils within the three-mile walking limit for the 1978-79 and 1980-81 school years (this would control for effects of termination of bus service)	Data unavailable
2. Fifty percent of the chronic non-attending students will reach contract objectives	No
<u>Lemon Grove</u>	
1. On the average, habitual truants will maintain a 75% attendance rate after counseling	Yes
2. As a group, all project students will maintain an average attendance rate of 90% after intervention by the project worker	Not an appropriate objective
3. The schoolwide attendance rate during FY1980-81 will be equal to or greater than the attendance rate during the first grant year	Yes

The second objective involved the contract system introduced in 1980. Fifty percent (50%) of the chronic non-attending students were expected to meet contract objectives for attendance. The compliance rate was only 10% for 41 contracts with the second year sample project students.

Lemon Grove

All three objectives were met in Lemon Grove. On the average, the attendance rate for the 27 habitual truants counseled was maintained at 76%, which is slightly higher than the 75% goal. This represents 13% of the students counseled.

The attendance rate for all project students before intervention was 94%, based on sample data. Therefore, the objective of maintaining a 90% rate after contact by the project worker was not a appropriate indicator of effectiveness. The schoolwide attendance did increase over the rate of the first year showing overall improvement as a result of the project.

DELINQUENCY

The measure used to study delinquency of project students is arrests. It is acknowledged that the following are limitations in using arrest data:

1. Arrests do not represent all delinquent acts.
2. Guilt of the arrestee has not been proven.

Some authors suggest that self-report studies are more likely to represent all offenses. An attempt was made by the evaluator to collect data on self-reported delinquency for the project students. Due to the legal requirement for written parental permission to administer such a survey, the sample of respondents was too small to yield reliable results.

In regard to determination of guilt, only a small proportion of arrests actually reach juvenile court for a decision to be made regarding the validity of the charges. An increasing number of cases are diverted at an early stage in the juvenile justice process. Therefore, the number of true findings for the sample of project students was insufficient to test the significance of the results.

The sample for the pre-post comparison of arrests is the same as that used in the study of attendance. The study periods are six and twelve months before and after project intervention. Data are not presented for sample cases in which the student was contacted within the last six months. Twelve month data were only available for a portion of the sample.

The results are presented by type and seriousness of offense: status offenses, misdemeanors and felonies. A status offense is an act which is a crime for a juvenile but not for an adult (e.g., truancy, curfew).

It should be noted when reviewing findings that students at the high school level tend to be involved in more delinquent activities than junior high school students. Only 28% of all juvenile arrests in the San Diego County during 1979 were in the 11 to 14 age group, whereas 69% of those arrested were 15 to 17.

Findings

The three truancy projects did not influence arrests for a sample of project students. These students were receiving counseling, home visits and problem-solving services.

El Cajon

Approximately the same number of students were involved in officially reported delinquent acts six and 12 months before and after contact by the truancy aide (see Table 5). The most significant change after project intervention was an increase in the seriousness of offenses. Status offenses decreased while misdemeanor offenses increased. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the offenses committed six months before contact were misdemeanors or felonies (24 offenses), compared to 84% after (31 offenses). A similar trend is seen in the 12-month data. (The changes in offenses are statistically significant at the .10 level.)

Escondido and Lemon Grove

In both Escondido and Lemon Grove the number of students arrested and the number of offenses committed increased after counseling (see Table 5). In Escondido, the number of offenses increased from 3 to 7 arrests six months after contact. Similar data for Lemon Grove show an increase from 2 to 10 arrests. These findings may reflect a typical progression of delinquency as students grow older, but the projects were not able to reverse this trend.

TABLE 5
PRE- AND POST-COMPARISON OF ARRESTS BY TYPE
PROJECT STUDENT SAMPLE

	EL CAJON			
	6 Months Before	6 Months After	12 Months Before	12 Months After
Status Offense	17	6	20	10
Misdemeanor	12	18	17	24
Felony	12	13	21	16
Total Arrests	41	37	58	50
# of Students Arrested	23 (21%)	23 (21%)	27 (40%)	28 (42%)
Sample Size	108	108	67	67

	ESCONDIDO			
	6 Months Before	6 Months After	12 Months Before	12 Months After
Status Offense	0	0	0	0
Misdemeanor	2	5	2	11
Felony	1	2	1	2
Total Arrests	3	7	3	13
# of Students Arrested	3 (5%)	7 (12%)	3 (13%)	9 (39%)
Sample Size	59	59	23	23

	LEMON GROVE			
	6 Months Before	6 Months After	12 Months Before	12 Months After
Status Offense	0	4	0	6
Misdemeanor	3	3	4	8
Felony	0	12	0	12
Total Arrests	3	19	4	26
# of Students Arrested	2 (3%)	10 (14%)	3 (5%)	12 (22%)
Sample Size	70	70	55	55

Chapter 4
COST EFFECTIVENESS

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COST EFFECTIVENESS

ISSUE IV: IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPECIAL TRUANCY PROJECT COST-EFFECTIVE IN ADDRESSING TRUANCY BEHAVIOR?

SUMMARY

As stated previously, schoolwide attendance increased at all three project sites due to either telephone contacts or informal student contacts by project staff. The result was an increase in state reimbursements, but the additional funds were not sufficient to cover project costs. The most cost-effective project, when viewed as a total approach, was El Cajon, recovering a higher proportion of budgeted expenditures. Telephone verification of absences may be the most cost-effective means of increasing revenues and should be evaluated separately.

DISCUSSION

The State of California reimburses school districts for each attendance day and excused absence. To measure the cost-effectiveness of the three projects, the number of unexcused absences that did not occur as a result of project intervention was estimated. This number was multiplied by the daily reimbursement rate to obtain the cost savings for each project.

Data indicate that all three projects increased state reimbursements, ranging in amounts from \$7,689 to \$9,754 (Table 6). Although net savings did not vary significantly among projects, the proportion of budget expenditures recovered did. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the project costs were saved in El Cajon compared to 51% in Lemon Grove and 32% in Escondido. The high schools receive a higher amount per attendance day than the junior high schools which accounts for the high recovery rate for El Cajon. The budget for Escondido schools was approximately \$10,000 over other projects, which affects comparative results. This was due to additional staff and higher salary levels.

Telephone verification of absences has had the greatest impact on attendance in El Cajon and Escondido. This approach alone may prove to be cost-effective when studied separately.

³The change in the absence rate between 1978-79 and 1980-81 was multiplied by the total possible attendance days in 1980-81.

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TABLE 6
 COST SAVINGS AS A RESULT OF
 DECREASES IN UNEXCUSED ABSENCES
 PROJECTED FOR FY1980-81

	<u>Annual Project Budget</u>	<u>Cost Savings*</u>	<u>% of Total Budget</u>
El Cajon	\$15,175	\$9,754	64%
Escondido	\$25,000	\$8,088	32%
Lemon Grove	\$15,000	\$7,689	51%

*Based on \$11.60 per attendance day in State reimbursements for El Cajon, \$9.14 for Escondido, and \$8.78 for Lemon Grove.

Chapter 5
FACTORS ASSOCIATED
WITH TRUANCY

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TRUANCY

ISSUE V: WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO TRUANCY?

ISSUE VI: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE TRUANT STUDENTS INVOLVED IN DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR?

SUMMARY

Study findings indicate that several factors are significantly associated with a high unexcused absence rate (truancy).⁴ Students with a high absence rate are less successful in school than regular attenders in terms of grades and self-reported school ability. Additionally, non-attenders are more likely to exhibit behavior problems when in school. Peer association is another important element, with truants showing a tendency to have friends who have been truant.

Attendance is also related to students' relationships with their parents. Students with a low absence rate are more likely to live with both natural parents, compared to students with a high unexcused rate. A smaller proportion of regular attenders feel that their parents do not understand them.

Finally, arrest and self-reported delinquency data suggest an association between truancy and delinquency. Students with a high unexcused absence rate are arrested more often and report significantly greater involvement in alcohol and drug-related offenses.

DISCUSSION

To evaluate the factors associated with truancy, this study compared students with differing attendance rates on variables suggested in the literature as possible correlates of truancy and/or delinquency. A sample of students was selected from El Cajon Valley High School and the two Lemon Grove Junior High Schools. The criterion used in selecting students was attendance behavior during the 1979-80 school year. The top 5-10% of the students in each of the following categories were chosen:

1. Students with a high unexcused absence rate (includes students with one or more trancies)
2. Students with a high excused absence rate (excludes unexcused absences)

⁴Chi square significance level was at least .10.

- Students with a low absence rate (excludes unexcused absences and trancies)

For purposes of comparison, the truants and students with a high unexcused absence rate were combined into one category since they both constitute unexcused absences. The reliability of data on trancies is questionable because not all trancies are identified by the schools (e.g., parents are not contacted or they write a note excusing the absence). The State Education Code defines an habitual truant as a student with three or more unexcused absences; therefore, excessive unexcused absences are used as the most valid indicator available for truancy.

The control groups in the study are the students who attend school regularly and students with a high proportion of excused absences. Some variables, such as grade average and school ability, may be associated with classroom instruction received rather than the reasons for absences (e.g., illness vs. truancy). The control groups enable the testing of this hypothesis.

Two collection methods were employed. For 593 students, data were collected from school and juvenile justice agency records on:

- demographic characteristics
- school course work
- grades
- attendance
- school-related problems
- arrests

For a portion of the total sample (101 students), a survey was administered with questions relating to family, friends, school, extracurricular activities, and delinquency. The survey sample is limited because parental permission was required for participation. Also, some students were not attending school when the survey was conducted. Survey data are representative of all three comparison groups, but the size of the sample affects analysis of the results and the generalizability of the findings. (For a more detailed discussion of methodology, see Appendix A, page 69).

Theoretical Framework for Research

The variables selected have both theoretical and empirical foundations that support the relationship with delinquency and/or truancy. This research study is not designed to test any one theory, but the data elements do relate to various aspects of the following theoretical approaches to deviance.

- Social Control Theory hypothesizes that a breakdown in social control, or a lack of attachment to conventional values, norms and institutions leads to delinquency.

- Differential Association Theory states that attitudes favorable to law violation are learned through interaction with other persons.
- Labeling Theory is concerned with the negative effects of identifying a juvenile as a delinquent.

Several factors have been identified in previous research as correlates of truancy, such as academic failure, disruptive behavior in school, and delinquency.⁵ The findings presented support many of the conclusions of other studies. The results are categorized in the following areas:

- School performance
- Peer influence
- Relationship with parents
- Employment
- Delinquency
- Factors not related to truancy
- Policy implications

School Performance

A significant association was found between success in school and attendance. The indicators of success are grade average and self-reported school ability in relation to other students. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the students attending school regularly had an A or B grade average in the 1979-80 school year, compared to 26% of the high unexcused absence group (see Table 7). Students with a high excused absence rate performed at a higher level than those in the high unexcused group, but not as well as the regular attenders. Thus, exposure to classroom instruction does have a positive effect on grades, but the type of absence is also associated with grades.

TABLE 7

GRADE AVERAGE BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
JULY 1, 1979 - JUNE 30, 1980

	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
GRADE AVERAGE			
A - B	66 (26%)	54 (34%)	120 (68%)
C	102 (40%)	71 (44%)	39 (22%)
D - F	88 (34%)	36 (22%)	17 (10%)
TOTAL SAMPLE	256	161	176

$\chi^2 = 89.4$ Significance = .001

NOTE: Significance levels differ on the tables because the probability for each Chi-square value differs based on the sample size and degrees of freedom.

⁵Reports of the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Centers - Alternative Education: Exploring the Delinquency Prevention Potential, U.S. Department of Justice, June, 1980.

Survey data on students' assessment of their own school ability show a similar relationship among the comparison groups. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the students who regularly attend school consider themselves above average in school ability, compared to 45% of the high unexcused group. (See Table 8.)

Achievement scores were also measured, but the sample size was not sufficient to enable controlling for grade level, an important factor in assessing results.

TABLE 8

SELF-REPORTED SCHOOL ABILITY BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY, SURVEY RESULTS

Question: How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with other students in your school?

Response	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Above Average	14 (45%)	8 (26%)	25 (69%)
Average	16 (52%)	19 (61%)	11 (31%)
Below Average	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	0 (-0-)
TOTAL SAMPLE	31	31	36

$\chi^2 = 27.4$

Significance = .001

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Behavior in School. Students with high absence rates tend to have behavior problems when they do attend school. Students who attend school more often receive higher conduct grades from teachers, with 70% receiving an outstanding⁶ grade average compared to 24% of the high unexcused absence group (see Table 9). In addition, a higher proportion of the non-attenders were suspended one or more times during the school year. Thirteen percent (13%) of the high unexcused group and 11% of the high excused group were suspended, while only 3% of the low absence group received this sanction (see Table 10).

⁶Outstanding is the equivalent of an A/B average in schools using the A-F grading scale.

TABLE 9

CONDUCT GRADE AVERAGE BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
JULY 1, 1979-JUNE 30, 1980

CONDUCT GRADE AVERAGE	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Outstanding	60 (24%)	60 (37%)	122 (70%)
Satisfactory	186 (73%)	99 (61%)	46 (26%)
Unsatisfactory	8 (3%)	2 (1%)	6 (3%)
TOTAL SAMPLE	254	161	174

$\chi^2 = 98.26$

Significance = .001

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 10

SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
JULY 1, 1979 - JUNE 30, 1980

Suspensions	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
None	223 (87%)	143 (89%)	171 (97%)
One or More	33 (13%)	18 (11%)	5 (3%)
TOTAL SAMPLE	256	161	176

$\chi^2 = 13.10$

Significance = .001

Peer Influence

Survey data support the theory that peer influence contributes to truancy. Table 11 shows that students with friends who have been truant are more likely to have unexcused absences (38%) than other students (14%). This association is also found in relation to class-period trancies (see Table 12). In addition, the most frequently mentioned reason for being absent without an excuse was that friends were also absent.

TABLE 11

SELF-REPORTED FULL DAY TRUANCIES BY PEER TRUANCIES
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY, SURVEY RESULTS

Self-Reported Full Day Truancies	Friends Truant	Friends Not Truant
None	44 (62%)	12 (86%)
One or More	27 (38%)	2 (14%)
SAMPLE SIZE	71	14
$\chi^2 = 2.93$	Significance = .09	

TABLE 12

SELF-REPORTED CLASS-PERIOD TRUANCIES BY
PEER TRUANCIES, COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Class Truancies	Friends Truant	Friends Not Truant
None	52 (63%)	14 (89%)
One or More	31 (37%)	2 (12%)
SAMPLE SIZE	83	16
$\chi^2 = 3.73$	Significance = .05	

Relationship With Parents

The majority of the school administrators cite lack of parental support and supervision, as well as broken homes as possible causes of truancy. Data substantiate that a higher percentage of students who regularly attend school live with both natural parents (68%) compared to those with unexcused absences (59% live with both parents).

Survey data indicate that students with a high absence rate are more inclined to agree that their parents do not understand them (31%) than are students with excused absences (13%) and low absence rates (6%). Other questions were asked regarding attitudes toward parents, but no correlation was found (see tables, Appendix D).

TABLE 13

LIVING SITUATIONS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY

	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Natural Parents	118 (59%)	83 (61%)	116 (68%)
Other	83 (41%)	52 (39%)	55 (32%)
TOTAL	201	135	171

NOTE: There is a significant difference between the high unexcused and low absence rate groups ($\chi^2 = 3.30$; significant at .07 level.)

TABLE 14

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

My parents don't really understand me.

	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Agree	10 (31%)	4 (13%)	2 (6%)
Undecided	3 (9%)	4 (13%)	9 (25%)
Disagree	19 (59%)	24 (75%)	25 (69%)
TOTAL	32	32	36

$$\chi^2 = 10.89$$

Significance = .03

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Employment

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to be employed (71%) compared to those with a high unexcused absence rate (52%). This could reflect a stronger commitment to conventional values, but also other factors, such as economic status and age, may account for the relationship. Due to the sample size and the absence of economic indicators, the association with other variables cannot be validated.

TABLE 15

WORK STATUS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

WORK STATUS	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Employed	16 (52%)	17 (55%)	25 (71%)
Unemployed	15 (48%)	14 (45%)	10 (29%)
TOTAL	31	31	35

NOTE: Association is significant at .10 level for two groups: high unexcused and low absence rate ($X^2 = 2.74$).

Delinquency

The association between truancy and delinquency was tested by comparing students' absence rates to the number of actual arrests and self-reported delinquent behavior. Arrest and disposition data were collected from law enforcement agencies, Juvenile Hall and the Probation Department, for a one-year study period (July 1, 1979 to June 30, 1980). The sample size was 593 students distributed among the three comparison groups.

Self-reported delinquency information was available for 100 students responding to survey questions. Students reported on fifteen offense categories ranging in seriousness from running away from home to robbery. Survey questions were adapted from delinquency scales used by Elliott and Voss and Hirschi. The use of both arrest and self-reported delinquency data controls for the limitations of each approach for measuring delinquent behavior.

Findings. Arrest data suggest an association between truancy and contacts with the juvenile justice system. Thirteen percent (13%) of the students with a high unexcused absence rate were arrested at least once during a one-year period, compared to 9% of the students with a high excused absence rate and 2% of the regular attenders. Non-attenders are more likely to be arrested than other students in all categories of offenses: felonies, misdemeanors and status offenses (see Table 16).

The number of arrests per 100 students is used to indicate the frequency of arrests (i.e., arrest rate). The arrest rate varies from 19 arrests per 100 students for the high unexcused group to 2 per 100 for the low absence group (see Table 17).

⁷Elliott, Delbert S. and Harwin L. Voss, Delinquency and Dropout, Heath & Co., Lexington, 1974, and Hirschi, Travis, Causes of Delinquency, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969.

TABLE 16

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS ARRESTED FOR
FELONY, MISDEMEANOR AND STATUS OFFENSES
BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
JULY 1, 1979 TO JUNE 30, 1980

Offense	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
FELONY			
None	243 (95%)	158 (98%)	175 (99%)
One or More	13 (5%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)
Total	256	161	176
	$X^2 = 8.42^*$		
MISDEMEANOR			
None	241 (94%)	151 (94%)	174 (99%)
One or More	15 (6%)	10 (6%)	2 (1%)
Total	256	161	176
	$X^2 = 6.75^*$		
STATUS OFFENSE			
None	241 (94%)	157 (98%)	175 (99%)
One or More	15 (6%)	4 (2%)	1 (1%)
Total	256	161	176
	$X^2 = 9.49^*$		
ALL ARRESTS			
None	224 (88%)	147 (91%)	172 (98%)
One or More	32 (13%)	14 (9%)	4 (2%)
Total	256	161	176
	$X^2 = 14.22^*$		

*Significant at .10 level or higher

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 17

NUMBER OF STATUS OFFENSE, MISDEMEANOR AND
FELONY ARRESTS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
JULY 1, 1979- TO JUNE 30, 1980

Arrests	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Status Offenses	18	4	1
Misdemeanor	17	12	2
Felony	13	2	1
Total	48	18	4
Sample Size	256	161	176
Arrests per 100 Students	19	11	2

Self-Reported Offenses. When all offenses are considered, there is a significant difference in self-reported delinquency among comparison groups, but it appears that high attenders are more involved in delinquent acts than official records indicate. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students in the high unexcused category reported that they had committed one or more offenses during a one-year period, compared to 56% of the low absence group (see Table 18). This difference is evident in delinquent behavior relating to alcohol and drugs. When analyzed separately, these were the only offense categories to show a significant difference in the study groups. Part I offense categories studied (robbery, assault, burglary, theft and auto theft) did not differ significantly among the study groups.

TABLE 18

SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT ACTS BY
COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESPONSES

% Committing Delinquent Acts	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Robbery	3%	3%	3%
Assault	28%	16%	28%
Burglary	6%	6%	6%
Theft over \$50	-0-	-0-	3%
Theft \$5 - \$50	16%	3%	6%
Theft Under \$5	34%	28%	36%
Auto Theft	13%	6%	8%
Vandalism*	38%	6%	28%
Sold Drugs	3%	13%	6%
Used Hard Drugs**	22%	16%	3%
Drunk Driving**	25%	22%	3%
Used Marijuana**	56%	34%	23%
Bought Liquor**	31%	16%	9%
Drank Liquor**	78%	78%	53%
Runaway	13%	6%	14%
All Offenses**	75%	36%	56%
# of Respondents	32	32	36

*No significant difference between high unexcused and low absence rates.

**Significant difference at .10 level or higher

Survey data show that students with differing attendance rates do not vary in the degree to which they view themselves as delinquent nor the extent to which they feel others view them as delinquent. In addition, the majority of the students surveyed do not feel that it is right to violate the law. Tables reflecting this information and other data related to delinquency are in Appendix D.

Policy Implications

The finding that truancy is related to school achievement, misbehavior at school, peer influence, family relationships, employment, and delinquency is consistent with other research studies. In addition, these factors have been the basis for policy and program decisions, i.e., alternative education, peer and family counseling and career guidance. These elements were also included in the three projects evaluated.

The expectation that the schools alone can change the behavior of chronic truants may be unrealistic because of the other problems these youth

experience. The schools should focus on the issues that can be impacted in that social setting. Schools should be encouraged to develop and test alternative programs to increase success in school and reduce misbehavior. In addition, school personnel are in a position to evaluate student behavior and identify problems. To the extent possible, more efforts should be taken to link parents and students with appropriate services either in school or by referral to outside agencies.

It is suggested that truancy should not be addressed separately from other problems faced by chronic non-attenders. A program designed solely to influence attendance may ignore other factors which are the causes and effects of truancy.

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REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation design for the truancy projects consists of three elements:

1. A process evaluation to document the three different approaches to truancy reduction and to determine which project interventions occurred.
2. An impact study to evaluate the effects of the projects on truancy and delinquency and the relative cost-effectiveness of the three approaches.
3. An in-depth study to examine the factors which contribute to truancy and to determine if there is a correlation between truancy and delinquency.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Through observation, surveys of school administrators, discussions with project staff and review of student records, the following information was collected:

1. Historical antecedents of the projects
2. Organizational structure
3. Target population
4. Population actually served
5. Demographic characteristics of project students
6. Point at which intervention actually occurred (average number of absences one month prior to contact)
7. Referral sources
8. Intervention strategies
 - a. Average number of days from referral to contact
 - b. Average number of contacts
 - c. Duration of service
 - d. Type of contacts (e.g., phone call, home visit, school conference)

- e. Result of contacts (e.g., referral, placement in a school program, etc)
- f. Community/government agencies contacted

This process evaluation provides the necessary documentation that project activities did occur. In addition, it allows a comparison of the different intervention strategies of each project. This information is used to establish what activities, if any, yield positive results.

IMPACT STUDY

A pre and post-comparison of non-attendance rates (excused absences, unexcused absences, and trancies) was the method for determining project impact on school attendance. This analysis was performed at two levels: schoolwide and for individual project students contacted. Schoolwide absence rates were compared for the months of July through April/May of 1978-79, prior to project implementation, and July through April/May of 1979-80 and 1980-81 when the projects were operational.

Attendance data for a sample of first and second-year project students were studied for eight-week periods before and after intervention by the project worker. A comparable comparison group was not available for study. A large number of students/parents are contacted by project staff through phone calls to verify absences or informally on campus by the project worker. Therefore, students in a control group could be affected by project activities and this would contaminate the results.

The types of services provided by each project were compared to the relative success in reducing non-attendance/truancy both schoolwide, and for students receiving individual services. Cost-effectiveness was measured as the cost savings in ADA state reimbursements for each school, based on changes in schoolwide attendance rates after projects began operation. This analysis is the basis for recommendations regarding the most appropriate methods for dealing with attendance problems.

Delinquency

A before and after comparison of first and second-year project students was used to measure project effectiveness in reducing delinquent behavior. The study periods were six months and one year prior to, and after, the students were contacted by the project worker. Data elements include:

1. Arrests
 - a. felony
 - b. misdemeanor
 - c. status offense
2. Petitions filed
3. True findings (the equivalent of a determination of guilt in the State of California)

Limitations

Due to time constraints, a longitudinal study was not possible. Short term effects of the projects, either in reducing truancy or delinquency, may not last. Other factors, such as peer influence or family problems, may have a greater impact on this type of behavior than the efforts of school personnel.

Attendance data were not available for all project students for an extended period of time, which limited the study period and affected the sample size. Non-attenders tend to be a student population with a high turnover rate (e.g., move or transfer to another school, drop out, etc.). In addition, some school place students on an inactive roster if they are absent for an extended period. This affects the availability of reliable attendance data.

Self-reported delinquency data were not obtained for a sufficient number of project students to be used in the analysis. The Education Code requires written permission to ask students questions regarding such behavior, and only 6 project students participated in the survey (see discussion of comparison group study).

COMPARISON GROUP STUDY

A one-time only static group comparison study was conducted to determine the factors which contribute to non-attendance/truancy among secondary school students and to examine the relationship between truancy and delinquency. Study data represent one high school (El Cajon) and two junior high schools (Lemon Grove). The four comparison groups were defined as follows:

1. Students who have been truant
2. Students with a high unexcused absence rate
3. Students with a high excused absence rate
4. Students with a low absence rate

The study period was July 1979 to June 1980. Sample students were selected from attendance printouts for this time period. Students were only selected if they were enrolled for the entire year to ensure that attendance data were comparable. This procedure may have eliminated some of the students who are likely to be non-attenders (e.g., drop-outs, students placed in continuation school). Since the groups represent extreme categories of attendance, there is sufficient divergence between the groups on attendance behavior to evaluate differences in the study variables.

The sample size for each group is represented in the following table:

	<u>El Cajon</u>	<u>Lemon Grove</u>	<u>Total</u>
Truants	89	--	89
High Unexcused Rate	123	44	167
High Excused Rate	110	51	161
Low Absence Rate	123	53	176
TOTAL	445	148	593

Data Collection

Study variables are those factors which may be related to non-attendance or delinquent behavior, based on a literature review. The sources for data are student school files, school attendance records, a student survey and official law enforcement and probation records. (See data collection form and questionnaire, pages 74 and 77). Data elements include:

1. Demographic characteristics
2. School status
3. Current living situation
4. Extracurricular activities
5. Parents' education
6. Student employment status
7. Course of study
8. Grade average
9. Achievement test scores
10. School suspensions and expulsions
11. Excused and unexcused absences
12. Truancies
13. Student attitudes about school, self, friends and parents
14. Arrests (felony, misdemeanor and status offenses)
15. Petitions filed
16. True findings
17. Self-reported delinquency behavior

Student Surveys

As mentioned previously, written permission was required for participation in the student survey which was administered in the comparison group study and to project students. Consequently, surveys were not completed for everyone in the study groups (there were 101 survey respondents representing 17% of the total sample). The self-selection procedure could introduce a bias but, due to legal constraints, this could not be avoided. A sufficient number of surveys were completed in each comparison group to allow analysis of these data.

Validity of Delinquency Data

Problems in measuring delinquency have been documented in the literature. The two major sources for data on delinquency are official records and self-report studies. Official records only represent delinquent behavior

which comes to the attention of authorities. In addition, an arrest, in itself, is not a determination that a delinquent act has actually been committed by the juveniles arrested.

Self-report studies have the advantage of collecting data on unreported events, but they are subject to bias (e.g., over or underreporting). Therefore, both methods have been employed to increase the validity of study findings.

**TRUANCY PROJECTS
STUDENT TRACKING FORM
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY**

APPENDIX B

STUDENT NAME: _____

I. IDENTIFIERS

- A. Project Code** 1
 1 = El Cajon Valley H.S.
 2 = Palm Junior High
 3 = Lemon Grove Junior High
- B. Student Number** 2
- C. Comparison Group** 5
 1 = High unexcused rate
 2 = High excused rate
 3 = Low absence rate
- D. Project student** 6
 1 = Yes
 2 = No

II. DEMOGRAPHICS

- A. Sex** 7
 1 = Male
 2 = Female
- B. Date of Birth** 8 - 13
- C. Age** 14
 (As of June 30, 1980)
- D. Ethnicity** 16
 (Use picture as indicator)
 1 = Anglo
 2 = Panasian
 3 = Black
 4 = Spanish
 5 = Native American
 6 = Other _____
 9 = Unknown
- E. Living Situation** 17
 01 = Natural mother
 02 = Natural father
 03 = Both natural parents
 04 = Natural mother/stepfather
 05 = Natural father/stepmother
 06 = One guardian
 07 = Two guardians
 08 = Spouse
 09 = Self
 10 = Unknown
 11 = Other _____

III. SCHOOL DATA

- A. Grade level** 19
 (As of June 30, 1980)
- B. School Status** 21
 Sept., 1979
- 23
 June 30, 1980
- 01 = Attending full-time regular program
 02 = Shortened day, regular program
 03 = Alternative/opportunity school
 04 = Home study
 05 = Independent study
 06 = Dropped from enrollment
 07 = Continuation school
 08 = Adult school
 09 = ROP
 10 = Work exemption
 11 = Other _____
- C. Course of Study** 25
 1 = Remedial
 2 = Applied
 3 = College
 4 = Honors
 5 = Developmental
 6 = Advanced
 7 = Accelerated
 9 = Unknown
- D. Grade Average** 26
 Lemon Grove = 4 quarters
 El Cajon - 2 semesters
- E. Conduct Grade Average** 28
 Lemon Grove - 4 quarters
 El Cajon - 2 semesters
- F. Courses Completed** 30

- G. Achievement Test Scores** (most recent)
- Lemon Grove percentile 32 Read
34 Language
- El Cajon 36 Math
 01 = met
 02 = not met

IV. ATTENDANCE (School year)

- A. Excused Absences** 38
- B. Unexcused Absences** 41
- C. Truancies (full day)** 44
- D. Class Truancies** 46
- E. Tardies** 48
- F. Days Not Enrolled** 50
- G. Days Attended** 53
- Tally: _____

V. SCHOOL INFRACTIONS AND SANCTIONS (SCHOOL YEAR)

- A. V.P. referrals** 56
- B. Suspensions** 58
- C. Expulsions** 60

VI. JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT (July 1, 1979 - June 30, 1980)

- A. Police Contacts**
1. Status Offense 62
2. Misdemeanor 64
3. Felony 66
- B. Petitions Filed** 68
- C. True Findings** 70
- D. Juvenile Hall** 72
- E. CYA** 74

Homeroom _____

APPENDIX B

First Year _____
 Second Year _____

**TRUANCY
PROJECT STUDENTS**

Student Name _____ School _____

DOB _____ Age _____ Sex _____ Grade _____ Track _____

Date Referred _____ Referred by _____

Date Contacted _____ Date of Final Contact _____

Reasons given for absences:

Parent _____

Student _____

TYPE OF CONTACT	NO.	RESULT OF CONTACTS	NO.
-----------------	-----	--------------------	-----

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Phone parent | _____ | 1. Counsel student | _____ 1 |
| 2. Home visit | _____ | 2. Counsel parent | _____ 2 |
| 3. Letter to parent | _____ | 3. Counsel student/parent | _____ 3 |
| 4. School conference/student | _____ | 4. Referred to V.P. | _____ 3 |
| 5. School conference/parent | _____ | 5. Referred to school counselor | _____ 5 |
| 6. School conference/student & parent | _____ | 6. Referred to school psych. | _____ 6 |
| 7. Other _____ | _____ | 7. Referred to private psych. | _____ 7 |
| | | 8. Referred to CBA | _____ 8 |
| | | 9. Referred to government agency | _____ 9 |

TOTAL CONTACTS: _____

Community/Government Agencies Contacted:

- | | | |
|-------|--|----------|
| _____ | 10. Alternative or opportunity school* | _____ 10 |
| _____ | 11. Independent study* | _____ 11 |
| _____ | 12. Continuation* | _____ 12 |
| _____ | 13. Adult school* | _____ 13 |
| _____ | 14. Work exemption* | _____ 14 |
| _____ | 15. SARB | _____ 15 |
| _____ | 16. CSC | _____ 16 |
| _____ | 17. Social skills* | _____ 17 |
| _____ | 18. Police | _____ 18 |
| _____ | 19. Probation | _____ 19 |
| _____ | 20. ROP* | _____ 20 |
| _____ | 21. EOP* | _____ 21 |
| _____ | 22. Arrange transportation | _____ 22 |
| _____ | 23. Change in program | _____ 23 |
| _____ | 24. No action - illness | _____ 24 |
| _____ | 25. No action - other | _____ 25 |
| _____ | 26. Home study* | _____ 26 |
| _____ | 27. Dropped from enrollment | _____ 27 |
| _____ | 28. Other _____ | _____ 28 |

Other Comments: _____

*Indicate P if actual placement is made.

Attendance period in which contact occurred _____

TO: BEFORE

Months/Attendance Periods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Excused Absences													
Unexcused Absences													
Full Day Truancies													
Days not Enrolled													
Class Truancies													

Total Possible Days
Suspension

TO: AFTER

Months/Attendance Periods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Excused Absences													
Unexcused Absences													
Full Day Truancies													
Days not Enrolled													
Class Truancies													

Total Possible Days
Suspension

76

1 2 3 4

STUDENT SURVEY

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

1. What grade are you in?

<u>0</u> 6th	<u>23</u> 10th
<u>1</u> 7th	<u>13</u> 11th
<u>50</u> 8th	<u>14</u> 12th
<u>0</u> 9th	

5

2. How old are you?

<u>1</u> 12	<u>19</u> 16
<u>15</u> 13	<u>15</u> 17
<u>32</u> 14	<u>6</u> 18
<u>13</u> 15	<u>0</u> Over 18

6

3. Who do you live with? (Check all that apply)

<u>20</u> Mother
<u>54</u> Natural Parents
<u>17</u> Mother and Stepfather
<u>1</u> Father and Stepmother
<u>6</u> Other

7 8

4. Some people your age like going to school and some don't. How do you like school? (Check only one)

<u>23</u> Like school a lot
<u>62</u> Like school fairly well
<u>9</u> Don't care one way or the other
<u>3</u> Dislike school
<u>3</u> Dislike school very much

9

5. Are you active in any school connected activities like these? (Check all that apply)

<u>88</u> Yes
<u>22</u> No

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

6. How many hours do you spend taking part in all these activities during an average week?

22

- 22 None
- 13 Less than one hour
- 20 1 to 2 hours
- 14 3 to 4 hours
- 11 5 to 6 hours
- 21 7 or more hours

7. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with other students in your school?

23

- 0 Among the best
- 38 Above average
- 46 Average
- 5 Below average
- 0 Among the worst
- 0 Don't know

8. How important is getting good grades to you personally?

24

- 64 Very important
- 25 Somewhat important
- 9 Fairly important
- 2 Not important

9. Let's think for a minute about school plans. How far would you like to go in school?

25

- 3 Quit as soon as I can
- 16 Graduate from high school
- 11 Go to a business or trade school
- 9 Go to a university or college for a year or two
- 61 Graduate from a university or college

10. How far do you think you will actually go?

26

- 1 Probably won't graduate from high school
- 29 Graduate from high school
- 9 Go to a business or trade school
- 12 Go to a university or college for a year or two
- 49 Graduate from a university or college

11. How many times in the last six months have you been absent without an excuse, such as illness or a doctor's appointment?

27

- 57 None
- 8 One
- 15 Two or three
- 7 Four or more

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

12. What are the reasons why you have been absent without an excuse? (Check all that apply)

28

- 60 I have never been absent without an excuse
- 4 I stayed home to take care of brothers and sisters
- 3 I was working at a job
- 4 My classes are not interesting
- 1 I do not do well in classes
- 0 I do not get along with other students
- 7 My friends were absent also
- 4 I did not have a way to get to school
- 1 I do not get along with teachers
- 12 Other (what?) _____

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

13. How did your parents or guardians feel about your staying away from school without an excuse? (Check only one)

38

- 50 I have never stayed away without an excuse
- 8 They didn't know about it
- 2 They didn't care
- 8 They disapproved
- 6 They approved
- 1 I don't know
- 0 I'm not living with my parents or guardian

14. Have any of your good friends ever been absent without an excuse?

39

- 83 Yes
- 16 No

15. How many times have you cut classes during the school day in the last six months?

40

- 67 Never
- 6 One
- 16 Two or three
- 11 Four or more

16. Does someone from school call your home when you are absent to find out the reason?

41

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

17. Since last September, have you or your parents been contacted by the truancy aide at your school?

42

- 7 Yes
- 81 No
- 1 don't know

18. Why did he contact you? (Check all that apply)

43

- 88 I was not contacted
- 4 I was absent from school
- 3 Other (give reason) _____

44

45

46

47

48

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

19. Did he help you?

49

 Yes No Not contacted

↓
If yes, in what way?

50

20. On the average, how many hours a week do you work for pay outside the home?

51

39 None
21 Less than 5 hours
14 5 to 10 hours
15 11 to 20 hours
3 21 to 30 hours
5 More than 30 hours

21. If you could have any job you wanted, what job would you like to have as an adult?

52 53

Describe: _____

22. What do you think are your chances of ever getting that kind of job?

54

31 Very good
32 Good
28 Fair
1 Poor
2 Very poor

23. How good do you think your chances are of getting ahead and being successful?

55

36 Excellent
54 Fair
9 Somewhat limited
 Not very good

24. On the average, how often do you attend religious services?

56

32 Once a week or more
12 Two or three times a month
2 Once a month
11 Only on holidays
30 Hardly ever
12 Never

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

25. Would you say that students in your school have nicer clothes than you have?

57

8 A lot nicer
27 A little nicer
54 About the same
3 Poorer
8 I never thought about it

26. Would you say that students in your school have nicer homes than you have?

58

8 A lot nicer
15 A little nicer
51 About the same
12 Poorer
14 I never thought about it

27. What is the last grade your father and mother attended?
(Check one for father and one for mother)

59

60

		father	mother	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>			No formal schooling
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>			Elementary (1 to 6 years)
<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>			Junior High (7 to 8 years)
<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>			High School (9 to 11 years)
<u>22</u>	<u>40</u>			Completed high school
<u>19</u>	<u>18</u>			Some college
<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>			Completed college
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>			Post college work
<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>			Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please check one item for each question.)

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	
28. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	<u>17</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>	61
29. I cannot talk to my parents about personal problems.	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>28</u>	62
30. At times I think I am no good at all.	<u>7</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>18</u>	63
31. It is all right to break the law if you can get away with it.	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>67</u>	64

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
32. I don't think I'm quite as happy as others seem to be.	6	18	15	39	22	65
33. Whatever I do, I try hard.	26	50	16	8	1	66
34. Most people like me.	6	66	20	4	1	67
35. My parents usually know where I am when I'm away from home.	43	49	3	4	2	68
36. My parents don't really understand me.	5	11	16	41	28	69
37. I would like to be the kind of person my best friends are.	5	15	26	30	25	70
38. I often talk to my parents about how things are going at school.	28	40	10	19	4	71
39. I often feel I would like to be someone else.	7	29	13	38	14	72
40. The members of my family are very close to each other.	23	44	14	12	8	73
41. I respect my friends' opinions about important things in life.	36	46	14	5	0	74
42. I have been happy in my home.	40	42	7	5	0	75
43. I often feel discouraged.	9	23	18	40	10	76
44. My parents never ask me about things I do.	4	6	9	40	41	77

How often have you done the following things during the past year?

	Never	Once	2 or 3 times	4 or more times	
45. Stolen little things worth less than \$5 that did not belong to you.	67	20	9	5	78

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

	Never	Once	2 or 3 times	4 or more times	
46. Stolen things of medium value (\$5 to \$50).	92	3	4	1	79
47. Stolen things of large value over \$50.	99	1	0	0	80
48. Purposely damaged or destroyed things that did not belong to you.	77	13	8	3	81
49. Run away from home.	90	10	1	0	82
50. Used force to get money from another person.	98	1	1	1	83
51. Used marijuana.	62	10	8	20	84
52. Used LSD, Cocaine or other drugs that are not legal besides marijuana.	87	2	7	4	85
53. Driven a car without the owner's permission.	92	5	2	2	86
54. Broken into or tried to break and enter a building with the intention of stealing.	94	3	2	1	87
55. Beaten up, fought or physically attacked another person.	76	10	10	5	88
56. Drunk beer, wine or liquor.	31	15	29	26	89
57. Bought beer, wine or liquor.	82	7	4	7	90
58. Driven a motorcycle or car while you were drunk or high.	85	6	4	6	91
59. Sold illegal drugs.	94	3	1	3	92

DO NOT WRITE
IN THIS SPACE

60. How many times have the police had to talk to you about doing something wrong during the last year?

93

- 78 Never
- 18 Once
- 4 2 or 3 times
- 0 4 or 5 times
- 0 6 or 7 times
- 0 8 or more times

61. Have you ever been arrested by the police during the last year?

94

- 93 Never
- 7 Once
- 0 2 or 3 times
- 0 4 or 5 times
- 0 6 or 7 times
- 0 8 or more times

62. Do you ever think of yourself as a "delinquent"?

95

- 77 Never
- 18 Once in a while
- 1 Often
- 0 All the time
- 4 I don't know what the word means

63. Does anyone else ever think of you as a "delinquent"?

96

- 69 Never
- 15 Once in a while
- 2 Often
- 1 All the time
- 10 I don't know
- 3 I don't know what the word means

64. Think of the friends you are with most often. How many of them have ever broken the law or gotten into trouble with the police?

97

- 3 Most
- 13 Several
- 46 Very few
- 27 None
- 11 I don't know

Thank you for completing this survey.

MARCH, 1981

QUESTIONNAIRE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

1. Have you personally worked with truancy project staff on truancy-related problems?

19 yes no (skip Question 2)

2. In general, how often do you work directly with project staff?

- 4 on a daily basis
- 5 two to four times a week
- 7 once a week
- 2 once every two weeks
- once a month
- less than once a month

3. Is the project addressing the students who are most in need of the services provided?

18 yes no 1 don't know
(If no) What do you mean?

4. Is there a cooperative effort between school personnel and truancy project staff in dealing with specific students? (Examples of cooperative effort are referrals, feedback on student behavior, discussion of methods for dealing with a student, among others.)

18 yes 1 no don't know
(If yes) In what way?

5. Have the efforts directed toward individual students, such as home visits, counseling or referrals by project staff, had a positive effect on students' behavior?

13 yes 1 no 3 don't know 2 no response
(If yes) In what way? (For example: improving attendance, delinquent behavior, classroom conduct, etc.)

6. Do you think the project has been effective in reducing truancy school-wide? More specifically, increasing the ADA rate?

14 yes 1 no 3 don't know 1 no response

7. Other than the truancy project, has anything taken place within the last year which could have affected the attendance rate at this school?

7 yes 6 no 6 don't know

(If yes) Please explain:

8. Should project staff increase their involvement with law enforcement officers in dealing with truancy?

10 yes 3 no 6 don't know

(If yes) In what way?

9. To the best of your knowledge, has the project staff encountered any problems in gaining acceptance on this campus or in implementing the program?

1 yes 15 no 3 don't know

(If yes) What problems?

10. Are there any specific ways in which you think the effectiveness of the truancy project could be improved?

11 yes 3 no 5 don't know

APPENDIX D

TABLE 19

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
PROJECT STUDENT SAMPLE

	<u>El Cajon</u>	<u>Escondido</u>	<u>Lemon Grove</u>
AGE			
Under 12	-	10 (12%)	-
12-13	-	57 (70%)	87 (93%)
14-15	18 (39%)	14 (17%)	7 (7%)
16-17	26 (57%)	-	-
18 and Over	2 (4%)	-	-
Total	<u>46</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>94</u>
SEX			
Male	23 (50%)	37 (44%)	58 (57%)
Female	23 (50%)	48 (56%)	43 (43%)
Total	<u>46</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>101</u>
GRADE			
6	-	24 (28%)	-
7	-	35 (41%)	87 (86%)
8	-	26 (31%)	14 (14%)
9	17 (37%)	-	-
10	11 (24%)	-	-
11	8 (17%)	-	-
12	10 (22%)	-	-
Total	<u>46</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>101</u>

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

CONTINUED

1 OF 2

TABLE 20

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY

	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
SEX			
Male	120 (47%)	75 (47%)	85 (48%)
Female	134 (53%)	86 (53%)	91 (52%)
Total	254	161	176
$X^2 = .10$ No significant difference			
AGE			
11-14	76 (30%)	61 (38%)	61 (35%)
15-18	177 (70%)	100 (62%)	113 (65%)
Total	253	161	174
$X^2 = 1.45$ No significant difference			
ETHNICITY			
Anglo	173 (76%)	112 (84%)	114 (69%)
Non-Anglo	55 (24%)	22 (16%)	52 (31%)
Total	228	134	166
$X^2 = 2.52$ No significant difference			

TABLE 21

DELINQUENT SELF-CONCEPT BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

View Self As Delinquent	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Yes	9 (29%)	4 (13%)	5 (15%)
No	22 (71%)	26 (87%)	29 (85%)
Total	31	30	34
$X^2 = 3.07$ No significant difference			
Others View As Delinquent			
Yes	10 (31%)	8 (26%)	10 (29%)
No	22 (69%)	23 (74%)	24 (71%)
Total	32	31	34
$X^2 = .23$ No significant difference			

TABLE 22

ATTITUDES TOWARD ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR
BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Question: It is all right to break the law if you can get away with it.

	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Agree	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Undecided	6 (19%)	2 (6%)	3 (8%)
Disagree	25 (78%)	29 (91%)	32 (89%)
Number of Respondents	32	32	36
$X^2 = 2.99$ Not significant at .10 level.			

NOTE: Percentage may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 23

SELF-RELATED POLICE CONTACTS AND ARRESTS
DURING A ONE-YEAR PERIOD
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
POLICE CONTACTS			
None	22 (69%)	26 (81%)	30 (83%)
One or More	10 (31%)	6 (19%)	6 (17%)
ARRESTS*			
None	27 (84%)	30 (94%)	36 (100%)
One or More	5 (16%)	2 (6%)	0 (-0-)
Number of Respondents	32	32	36
Significant at .10 level or higher.			

*The time period is not directly comparable to the actual arrest data.

TABLE 24
TRUE FINDINGS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
JULY 1, 1979 - June 30, 1980

TRUE FINDINGS	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
None	251 (98%)	159 (99%)	176 (100%)
One	5 (2%)	2 (1%)	0 (-0-)
Total	256	161	176

Significant at .10 level

TABLE 25
PARENTS' SCHOOLING BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Fathers' Schooling	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
High School or Below	13 (48%)	17 (63%)	16 (55%)
College	14 (52%)	10 (27%)	13 (45%)
Total	27	27	29

$x^2 = 1.2$

No significant difference

Mothers' Schooling	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
High School or Below	17 (61%)	17 (59%)	18 (56%)
College	11 (39%)	12 (41%)	14 (44%)
Total	28	29	32

$x^2 = .12$

No significant difference

TABLE 26
ATTITUDE ABOUT FUTURE SUCCESS BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Chances of Getting Desired Job	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Good	20 (69%)	17 (55%)	26 (76%)
Fair	9 (31%)	12 (39%)	7 (21%)
Poor	0 (-0-)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)
Total	29	31	34

$x^2 = 4.93$

No significant difference

Chances of
Being Successful

Chances of Being Successful	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Excellent	10 (31%)	12 (39%)	14 (39%)
Fair	18 (56%)	14 (45%)	22 (61%)
Limited	4 (13%)	5 (16%)	0 (-0-)
Total	32	31	36

$x^2 = 6.5$

No significant difference

TABLE 27
ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Attitudes Toward School	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Like School	25 (78%)	28 (88%)	32 (89%)
Undecided	5 (16%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)
Dislike School	2 (6%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)
Total	32	32	36

$x^2 = 4.30$

No significant difference

TABLE 28

ATTITUDE TOWARD GRADES BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Importance of Grades	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Very Important	19 (59%)	18 (56%)	27 (75%)
Somewhat Important	8 (25%)	9 (28%)	8 (22%)
Fairly or Not Important	5 (16%)	5 (16%)	1 (3%)
Total	32	32	36

$x^2 = 4.78$

No significant difference

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 29

ATTITUDES SCALES BY COMPARISON GROUP
ATTITUDE GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

ATTITUDE TOWARD	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
SELF			
High*	14 (44%)	17 (53%)	16 (44%)
Medium	15 (47%)	15 (47%)	15 (42%)
Low	3 (9%)	0 (-0-)	5 (14%)
Total	32	32	36

$x^2 = 4.71$

No significant difference

PARENTS

High*	19 (59%)	20 (63%)	23 (64%)
Medium	9 (28%)	11 (34%)	12 (33%)
Low	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Total	32	32	36

$x^2 = 3.60$

No significant difference

FRIENDS

High*	24 (75%)	22 (69%)	24 (67%)
Medium	7 (22%)	9 (28%)	12 (33%)
Low	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0 (-0-)
Total	32	32	36

$x^2 = 2.10$

No significant difference

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

*A high rank indicates a positive attitude toward self, parents or friends.

TABLE 30

RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE BY COMPARISON GROUP
COMPARISON GROUP STUDY
SURVEY RESULTS

Frequency	High Unexcused Absence Rate	High Excused Absence Rate	Low Absence Rate
Two or More Times Per Month	16 (52%)	11 (34%)	17 (49%)
Once a Month or Less	15 (48%)	21 (66%)	18 (51%)
Total	31	32	35

$x^2 = 2.19$

No significant difference

END