School-Family Conference and Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP)

The Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP), as described in Section IV (A)(3) BEC 24 P.S. 13-1327, is designed to serve as guidance. The TEP is developed cooperatively with involved stakeholders through a school-family conference, which is required upon the school's notice to the student's parent/guardian upon the third unlawful absence. Teachers are the first line of defense for compulsory attendance, as they are the first to recognize students with possible attendance issues. Therefore, teachers should implement a plan of action including (but not limited to):

- Sharing and reviewing school policy on attendance and student responsibilities with students and families;
- Contacting the student's parent/guardian upon his/her absence;
- Meeting individually with students to discuss reason(s) for absence;
- Following up with the building principal (or assigned truant officer);
- Making referrals to guidance counselors and;
- Collaborating with Student Assistance Teams as appropriate.

Pursuant to the BEC 24 P.S. 13-1327, schools are required to notify the parent/guardian regarding the need for a joint conference upon the third unlawful student absence. The school-family conference engages all participants involved in the student's life to explore possible solutions to increase the student's school attendance. Maintaining open communication between the student and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the school-family conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to assure regular school attendance. The school-family conference provides both parties with the opportunity to identify, understand and explore all issues contributing to the student's truant behavior. Participation by the student and family is an integral component for this conference. In addition, representatives from relevant and/or involved community-based agencies, community and school services, and school personnel should be invited to participate. During the school-family conference, a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP) shall be developed cooperatively with the student and other meeting participants as described in Section IV (A)(3) BEC 24 P.S. 13-1327. A sample TEP is located at the end of this document and can be used as a guide for schools when developing their own plan format.

Issues to be addressed at the school-family conference should include but not be limited to:

- Appropriateness of the student's educational environment;
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success;
- Student's current academic level and needs;
- Social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health issues;

- Issues concerning family and home environment and;
- Any other issues affecting the student's attendance.

The participants in the school-family conference should work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the student is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member should have a vested interest in and responsibility for determining an appropriate plan to assist the student to succeed both socially and academically. This school-family conference also provides an opportunity to ensure that both the student and the family clearly understand the legal ramifications of not adhering to the state's compulsory attendance requirements. This methodology promotes full understanding and appreciation of the root causes of truancy as well as the resultant personal and societal impacts when truant behavior is not adequately addressed. The primary goal of the school-family conference is the development of a comprehensive TEP which is understood by, agreed upon and supported by the student, the parent/guardian, the school representatives and all other conference participants. The TEP should include but not be limited to the following components as appropriate:

- Identification and provision of appropriate academic supports by the school and/or community organization(s);
- Identification and provision of appropriate social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health supports from the school and/or community organization(s);
- Identification of the school environment issues that affect the student's success and solutions to address these issues;
- Explanation of the student's strengths and responsibilities related to the TEP;
- Explanation of the family's strengths and responsibilities related to the TEP;
- Clarification of method(s) used for monitoring the effectiveness of the TEP;
- Explanation of the consequences for each stakeholder if the TEP is not fully implemented;
- Discussion of the benefits for successfully implementing the TEP;
- Following up and reporting the outcome of the TEP.

The TEP substantiates efforts made by the school, the family and other vested third parties to assist the student in addressing and resolving school attendance issues. This comprehensive system of supports and services provides documentation of the "good faith" effort between the school and the student's family should future action be required (e.g. citation to the magisterial district judge and referral to the county children and youth agency upon the fourth unexcused absence).

Directions to complete the Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP)

The TEP should be completed at the school-family conference. The school administrator should complete the TEP in collaboration with other conference participants. Participants should include, but are not limited to: student, parent/guardian, other relevant family members, school staff, partner organizations, community-based organizations and other agencies involved with family (e.g. Children and Youth, Juvenile Probation.). To identify and resolve root causes of truancy, all members should contribute their unique knowledge about the student and his/her environment to group discussion. Only then can meaningful results be achieved.

Directions

1. **Goal: Increase** (insert student's name) **school attendance**.
2. **Date:** Enter the date when TEP is being completed
3. **Student Information (enter the following):**
    a. Name of the student (First M. Last)
    b. Birth date (mm/dd/yyyy)
    c. Gender (male/female)
    d. Grade Level (K-12)
    e. Home Address
    f. Home Phone Number
    g. Special Needs (include any special needs identified through an IEP, and/or other accommodations not mandated by IEP, etc.)
    h. Health Concerns (these can be identified by student, parent/guardian, school staff, and others)
4. **School Information (enter the following):**
    a. Name of School
    b. School Address
    c. Phone Number(s)
    d. Principal's Name
    e. Referring Teacher's Name
    f. Email address/es (can be provided to ensure ongoing communication)
5. **Parent/Guardian Information (enter the following):**
    a. Name
    b. Home Address
    c. Home Phone Number
    d. Work Address
    e. Work Phone Number
    f. Email address(es) (can be provided to ensure ongoing better communication)

6. **Absence (enter the following):**
    a. Dates of each absence
    b. Whether or not an excuse was provided
    c. Reason(s) for each absence
    d. Action taken by the school on each incident of absence
    e. Provide meaningful information for future reference, including the name of the person taking the action, the date action was taken and any other relevant information.
7. **Assessment (enter the following):**
    a. Identify root cause/s of the truancy. It is crucial (yet sometimes overlooked) to build rapport with the student. This dialogue benefits all involved parties.
        i. Student: academic, social, physical, mental, behavioral health issues
        ii. Parent/Guardian: home environment, work schedules, unsupervised time for student, special circumstances, etc.
        iii. School: school environment, student's interaction with other adults and with other students, school schedule, etc.
    b. Consider possible solutions:
        i. These may include maximizing programs and services available in the school or community to involve the student.
        ii. They could include pairing the student with a mentor (family member, teacher, school staff, community businesses, etc.)
        iii. They may involve coordination of services to student and/or family to address health, social or financial issues.
        iv. They may include activities intended to build self-esteem or confidence (e.g. the student may be asked to tutor elementary school students for some type of credit).
    c. Responsible party (enter the following):
        i. Name of the person/agency that will take ownership for <u>each</u> stated solution (will ensure that the action step is completed).
        ii. Contact information for each person/agency listed (to assist in monitoring/follow up).
8. **Strengths (enter the following):**
    a. Identify the strengths of the student, family and the school to support the goal of increasing attendance for the student.
    b. Relate each strength to the plan's overall goal.
        i. For example: If the student reads well, a solution could be the student tutoring elementary students. This engages the older student in a meaningful activity, increases confidence, and supports his/her sense of responsibility by tutoring a younger student, thereby regular school attendance and academic success of both the older and younger student.

ii. If the student has plans for employment or further schooling after high school graduation, then appropriate activities could include:

1. Discussing the ramifications of any future absences and how they could negatively impact those future plans.
2. Pairing the student with a business member in the field that interests the student. This may help the student to understand the relevance of what he/she is learning in school and future endeavors.

iii. If the student has a single parent who works in the evening, leaving the student unsupervised, an appropriate action step could be to have a neighbor, extended family member or other adult either stay with the student or be in contact with the student during the parent's absence.

iv. If the student values school and the absences occurred three days in a row, then perhaps this was an isolated incident. However, it should be made clear that consequences for the fourth absence will result in a citation to the magisterial district judge and referral to the county children and youth agency.

9. **Consequences for Non-compliance:** Outline consequences for the student, parent/guardian, school, and other participants if they do not follow-through with the recommendations of the TEP and the BEC.
10. **Benefits for Compliance**: Benefits could include better grades for the student, graduation, higher graduation rates for the school, more involved community members, improved self-esteem, better relationship with parent/s and other adults, etc.
11. **Signatures:** The student, parent, and school official will sign and date the TEP as verification that all parties understand and agree to all components of the TEP.
12. **Outcome Meeting:** With school-family participants present, a follow up meeting will be scheduled. At that time each responsible party listed in the Solutions section will report on the progress of their area of responsibility.
13. **Outcome:** The group members will list the outcome(s) of the TEP and outline Next Steps, if any.
14. **Signatures:** The student, parent/guardian, and school official will again sign and date the TEP.

- **A copy of the TEP will be retained in the student's file.**
- **A copy of the TEP must be provided to the:**
  - **student**
  - **parent/guardian**
  - **appropriate school personnel**

Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP)

Date: _____

Goal: **Increase** *(Insert Student's Name)* **school attendance.**

Name of Student **Date of Birth** **Gender** **Grade Level**	Address Phone Number	**Special Needs** Health Concerns
Name of School	Address Phone Number	**Principal's Name** **Referring Teacher's Name**
Name of Parent/Guardian	Home Address Home Phone Number	Work Address Work Phone Number

Date of Absence	**Written Excuse Provided? (Y/N)**	Reason(s) for Absence	**Action Taken** (e.g. Parent Letter 1 sent out on 04/01/2006, John Doe called parent, Mrs. Smith to discuss
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Assessment

Description	Solution(s)	Responsible Party
1.		
2.		
3.		

Strengths

Description	Relevance to the Plan
1.	
2.	
3.	

Solutions

Description	Responsible Party(ies)	Completion Date
1.		
2.		
3.		

Consequences for non-compliance
1.
2.
3.

Benefits for compliance
1.
2.
3.

This TEP was created collaboratively to assist the student in improving attendance, to enlist the support of parent/guardian and to document the school's attempts to provide resources to promote student success.

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

School Official: _____ Date: _____

cc: student ___ (initial upon receipt)
parent/guardian ___ (initial upon receipt)
school personnel ___ (initial upon receipt)
other ___ (initial upon receipt)

Date for Follow-up Outcomes Meeting:

Outcomes:
1. 2. 3.
Next Steps:
1. 2. 3.

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

School Official: _____ Date: _____

In order for agencies outside of the school district to assist with this plan, your permission is needed to release the plan to the following:
_____

Please sign below:
Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____