

# Youth & Parent/Guardian Re-envisioning Truancy Participation FAQ

## Which students and families are we hoping to talk to?

We are looking for youth who are in grades 6 through 12th or parents or guardians of youth in grades Kindergarten-12th who have had both positive and negative experiences with the schools, courts, and systems. Specifically, youth who within the last 2-3 years experienced any of the following:

- had unexcused absences,
- were reengaged through the truancy process or reconnected to school,
- received supports, interventions for truancy,
- received punishment or consequences from their school or district because of their unexcused absences,
- had a truancy petition filed with the local juvenile court,
- have been referred to, or participated in, a truancy workshop or a community engagement board, and/or
- have been withdrawn due to nonattendance.

Youth and their families who most experience truancy in Washington State, specifically those that identify as:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Youth who are unaccompanied<sup>1</sup>
- Youth experiencing homelessness
- Youth in foster care
- Students from low-income households
- Youth who are migratory

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<sup>1</sup> The McKinney-Vento Act defines unaccompanied youth as "a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" [42 USC § 11434a(6)]. Taking a closer look at the definition, two conditions must be present for a child or youth to be considered an unaccompanied youth under the McKinney-Vento Act:

1. The child's or youth's living arrangement meets the Act's definition of homeless, and; 2. The child or youth is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.



- Gender X<sup>2</sup>
- English Language Learners
- Students with disabilities

## Why are we talking with youth & families?

We want to hear from youth and families about their lived experience so that we can change our system to better serve youth to access and benefit from their education.

The [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#) seeks to understand what resources, supports, and policy changes will help ensure that our state's truancy system:

- Meets the needs and experiences of youth and families,
- Supports school engagement & reengagement rather than punishment,
- provides early intervention and supports and
- addresses gaps in our systems when the needs of students and families are outside the ability or role of the education system.

## What is our goal?

The goal of this project is to develop recommendations for OSPI leadership by May 2024. These recommendations will be informed by students, families and people working to support students and families; these are the people in our state that are most impacted by [Chapter 28A.225 RCW](#) - Compulsory Attendance to inform policy recommendations.

## How will participants be selected?

We may not be able to include everyone who indicates interest in participating in sessions. If you are selected to participate in sessions, we will follow up by contacting you via email or phone within two weeks. The research team will select participants to have a diversity of experiences, demographic backgrounds, and geographies represented.

## What are the opportunities to participate?

- **One-on-One Conversations.** Join us for three conversations about your experiences and thoughts about attendance policies. Each conversation will be about an hour.

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<sup>2</sup> A gender that is not exclusively male or female, including, but not limited to, intersex, agender, amalgagender, androgynous, bigender, demigender, female-to-male, genderfluid, genderqueer, male-to-female, neutrois, nonbinary, pangender, third sex, transgender, transsexual, Two Spirit, and unspecified.

- **Listening session.** This is a one-hour session that will include other youth or families. You will have the opportunity to share your experiences and thoughts and also listen to what other youth and families share.
- **60-minute working sessions to discuss what we are hearing from youth and families.** We will share what we have heard from our conversations and listening sessions and ask for your thoughts and feedback. These sessions will include the opportunity to meet (either virtually or in-person), share and discuss with other youth and families. Each session will be about 60 minutes.

## Will participation be in-person or virtual?

Your participation can be virtual or in-person; we will ask youth and families for their preference.

## Will youth and families be compensated?

Yes, each participant will receive a \$45 gift card. If they participate in multiple opportunities, including interviews for the narrative interview, they will receive a gift card for each interview.

## Who is the research team?

The research team includes staff from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD). Researcher bios are linked [here](#). Our staff use [trauma-informed](#) and [culturally-responsive approaches](#).

## How can youth participate?

Please complete the [Interest form](#). Once the Interest form is complete the research team will contact you. Your parent/guardian needs to give consent before you participate.

## I am the parent or guardian of a young person impacted by truancy. How can I participate?

Complete the [Interest form](#) and the research team will contact you.

## When will we contact youth and families?

We will begin reaching out to youth and families interested in participating in interviews in May. We will close recruitment for interviews at the end of June but there will be future opportunities to engage in focus groups and meaning-making sessions in the fall.

## I have questions. Who can I contact?

Email the research team at [AttendanceWA@air.org](mailto:AttendanceWA@air.org) or 425-917-7724