Abstract

**Ready For Life**

*An Evaluation: Factors relating to truancy and promising practices*

Truancy has been linked to serious delinquent activity in youth and to significant negative behavior and characteristics in adults. Truancy is one of the most common factors leading to dropout and students not meeting graduation standards. Nevada has arguably the highest high school dropout rate in the nation. This evaluation was prepared for Ready for Life: A movement created by Nevada Public Education Foundation (NPEF), to connect youth to school and work by age 25, but can be of use to several audiences. Practitioners who work with struggling students, court representatives and parents, teachers and administrators, and anyone who has taken an interest in Nevada’s up and coming workforce. This evaluation should provide an introduction and overview of the range and seriousness of the truancy issues in Southern Nevada and shed light on the correlates of truancy as well. It will also provide recommendations for best practices as well as some resources for parents to help prevent truancy.

A list of the costs associated with the educational failure that chronic truancy generally implies includes the following:

- High school dropouts earn less, on average, and have higher unemployment rates.
- They pay less in income taxes to federal and state governments.
- They cost government more in social service program funds.
- They incur higher criminal justice costs, both as juveniles and adults.
- The victims of crime bear a cost, both monetary and non-monetary.
- A second-generation cost is incurred by the children of high school dropouts.
The gravity of these costs as it relates to Southern Nevada can only be understood in terms of the current high school dropout rate.

A key question posed for this evaluation was to identify dimensions of effective practice across the country with a view to developing the Ready for Life’s knowledge base about what constitutes effective practice in truancy reduction programs and services.

Presented in the report are recommendations for how the Southern Nevada community of educators, parents, youth and service providers can come together to improve the engagement of youth and their education. In addition there is a review of promising practices in and outside of Southern Nevada that can be initiated and/or fully implemented in order to improve youth outcomes. The long term positive effect of health and educated youth becomes a vital component to a healthy and thriving community.