

**Port Angeles School District
Truancy-Outreach Group Report
July 16, 2007**

BACKGROUND

Becca Hedman’s tragic story prompted the July 1995 legislative session to enact the “Becca Law.” This law gives parents more control over runaway children and curbs truancy and absenteeism by requiring schools to take action following unexcused absences. The law was codified as Chapter 28A.225 Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

In 2002-03 the Port Angeles School District decided to create a Truancy-Outreach Group, a broad-based community leadership panel to give advice and support improvement in an attempt to prevent unexcused absenteeism. After four years of operation the committee has increased in number, allowing more ways to be effective in both truancy and outreach efforts. Programs are being developed and steps taken to assure that students have the best attendance possible.

This brief report summarizes data representing the changes from 2005-06 to 2006-07. A list of the Truancy-Outreach Group membership is included in Appendix A.

DISTRICT TRUANCY SUMMARY

The Truancy-Outreach Group reviewed district-wide data on filings of petitions and contempt of court proceedings over the past two school years: 2005-06 and 2006-07. During 2006-07, the district schools handled a total of 368 petition filings with Clallam County, a slight increase over the 2005-06 school year. A brief review of Table 1 reveals that 70.6 percent of this year’s filings

Table 1 Port Angeles School District Truancy Petitions Filed				
School	2005-06	Percent	2006-07	Percent
Port Angeles High School	249	69.4%	260	70.6%
N. O. P. Skills Center	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Lincoln High School	41	11.4%	44	12.1%
Roosevelt Middle School	22	6.1%	13	3.5%
Stevens Middle School	40	11.1%	24	6.5%
Fairview Elementary	3	0.8%	0	0.0%
Franklin Elementary	0	0.0%	6	1.6%
Jefferson Elementary	2	0.6%	3	0.8%
Hamilton Elementary	0	0.0%	5	1.4%
Dry Creek Elementary	1	0.3%	13	3.5%
Total	359	100.0%	368	100.0%

are attributed to Port Angeles High School. While Lincoln High School and Stevens and Roosevelt Middle Schools drew 22.1% of the filings, the elementary schools yielded 7.3%.

Similar to the 2005-06, Port Angeles High School students continue to represent over two-thirds of the filings.

PORT ANGELES HIGH SCHOOL TRUANCY SUMMARY

Table 2 displays petition filings for the Port Angeles High School for each month over the past two school years. Overall, in 2006-07 there was a 4.4% increase in petitions filed by Port Angeles High School compared to the number filed in 2005-06. However, the enrollment at PAHS increased by 7.0% in 2006-07 to 1,348 from 1,260 in 2005-06. The bulk of the increase occurred during the months of December and May, while the filings decreased significantly in September.

The December and May numbers can be attributed to more vigilance in terms of monitoring students during traditionally busy times. The large decrease in September's figures can be attributed to the extra effort the high school office staff made in determining the enrollment status of those students that did not pick up their schedules in August.

Table 3 disaggregates the data by grade at Port Angeles High School. This data demonstrate over 80% of the first time petitions were equally divided among grades 10-11 and fewer in grades 9 and 12.

Table 2 Port Angeles High School Truancy Petition Filing Comparison 2004 - 2007					
Month	Petitions Filed			Change for 2006-07	
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Number	Percent
September	9	35	15	-20	-57%
October	9	50	47	-3	-6%
November	20	37	38	1	3%
December	8	10	26	16	160%
January	19	39	37	-2	-5%
February	52	22	37	15	73%
March	39	31	25	-6	-19%
April	14	20	15	-5	-25%
May	4	5	20	15	300%
June	0	0	0	0	0
Total	175	249	260	11	4.4%

IMPROVING PROCESSING OF TRUANCY AND CONTEMPT PETITIONS

Over the 2006-07 school year, the Truancy-Outreach Group members continued discussing ways to support and reduce the number of petitions that staff find necessary to file to comply with the statute. Port Angeles schools continue their efforts by:

- Maintaining school-parent contact before filing a petition.

- Ensuring that the filings are for the proper purpose and have the potential to make a difference.
- Developing a guide for students, parents, and staff to use to better understand the processes in place for supporting student attendance.
- Developing a better system for tracking petitions and contempt and where cases are in the process of the courts.

Port Angeles High School, which is the largest school filing big volumes of petitions, tried to file smaller amounts more often to help Juvenile Services be more efficient in setting up the court calendar. However, as contempt of court filings began to be added to the truancy calendar, it became necessary to add an additional court day during the week. Table 4 details the volume of letters and truancy and contempt petitions that were generated by staff work at just the district’s comprehensive high school. There were 280 total contempt of court filings this year at Port Angeles High School compared to 275 contempt of court filings last school year.

Grade	Number	Percent
Grade 9	54	20.8%
Grade 10	84	32.0%
Grade 11	89	34.0%
Grade 12	30	12.0%
Total First Petitions	257	98.8%
Petitions Filed Twice	3	1.2%
Total Petitions	260	100.0%

REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS

During the Truancy-Outreach Group meeting on June 20, 2007, Pathways to Success/Youth Services Assistant and Dropout Prevention Specialist Tammy Napiontek reported that she had enrolled 25 students over the 2006-07 school year. Nineteen of these students were passing more classes at the end of the school year than when they enrolled, only 2 decreased, and 4 showed no improvement. Rotary member Chuck Hatten, with the Black Tie Program designed for students who are failing classes and demonstrating a “turnaround,” reported the program got off to a slow start this year. However, recently 250 students had been identified and letters were sent home. The program hopes to be in full swing during the 2007-08 school year. Karen Meyer with Communities That Care: Port Angeles shared information about parenting workshops available to all families. The workshops emphasize attendance and parent education.

Becca Letters	459
Total Petitions	260
1st Contempt	168
2nd Contempt	72
3rd Contempt	27
4th Contempt	9
5th Contempt	3
6th Contempt	1
Total Contempt Filings	280

The Truancy-Outreach Group continues its efforts to enhance the outreach efforts in concert with the work of the Port Angeles School District’s staff.

Port Angeles School District administrators plan to meet over the summer to review the attendance policy, working to make it easier to understand and more academically helpful.

The Truancy-Outreach Group plans to meet the third week of September 2007 and every other month from 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Central Services Building.

Written comments about this report may be sent via U.S. Mail to:

Superintendent's Office
Port Angeles School District
216 East Fourth Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Appendix A

Truancy-Outreach Group Membership

	Group Composition	Members	
1	Juvenile Court; Commissioner	Bill Knebes	
2	Juvenile Services; Probation Officer	Danetta Rutten	
3	County Prosecutor’s Office; Prosecuting Attorney	Deb Kelly	
4	Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe; Education Director	Tracy Hosselkus	
5	County Prosecutor’s Office; Assistant Prosecuting Attorney	Tracey Lassus	
6	Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe; Chief of Police	Rod Charles	
7	County Public Defender	Harry Jackson	
8	Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe; Language Teacher	Jamie Valadez	
9	Native American Interventionist; Elementary School	Rena Francis	
10	Native American Interventionist; Middle School	Michelle Charles	
11	Native American Interventionist; High School	Jessica Elofson	
12	High School Principal*	Scott Harker	
13	High School Principal	Cindy Crumb	
14	High School Secretary	Darla Ochs	
15	High School Attendance Officer	Marielle Eykemans	
16	Middle School Assistant Principal	Kate Wenzl	
17	Middle School Assistant Principal	Jeri Goebel	

	Group Composition	Members	
18	Rotary Club of Port Angeles/Black Tie Program	Chuck Hatten	
19	Assistant Superintendent	Michelle Reid	
20	Assistant Superintendent	Mary Hebert	
21	Pathways to Success/Youth Services Assistant	Tammy Napiontek	
22	OESD 114 Educational Services Coordinator	Minnie Whalen	
23	Peninsula College/Upward Bound Grant	Maria Pena and Sharon Cline	
24	Communities That Care	Karen Meyer	
25	Juvenile Service Truancy Clerk	Vanessa Jones	
26	Boys and Girls Club	Carrie Columbus	
27	PASD School Nurse	Resa Yamamoto	
28	Program Director Clallam AmeriCorp	Jacques Livingston	
29	Y House/Teen Program Coordinator	Karen Toth	
30	Principal/Stevens Middle School	Chuck Lisk	
31	Principal/Hamilton Elementary	Loren Engel	
32	Principal/Nancy Pack	Marielle Eykemans	
33	Principal/Jefferson Elementary	Michelle Olsen	
34	Principal/Roosevelt Elementary	Doug Hayman	

**Chairperson
June 29, 2007*