

# Leadership Champlain Project

## Combating School Truancy -- Guiding Principles

*As of 6-5-06*

The following is a summary list of similar practices used by various cities, counties and states, as determined by the Leadership Champlain Truancy Policy Group. The group conducted a Best Practices Review to collect the information. The Best Practices Review provides a survey of what and how these communities are addressing the truancy issue, but does not provide an in-depth analysis of these practices:

### ***Best Practices:***

1. Clearly stated goals and written objectives that address truancy -- provide basis for program in which communities can participate.
2. Consistent written guidelines on program procedures, including sample letters to parents and referral forms.
3. Annual training for key truancy officials who can discuss program goals and provisions.
4. Clear determination across community (often at county level) of attendance policy which states when a student is truant.
5. Established minimum number of absences before a student is referred to a truancy program for assistance.
6. Use of a new source of leverage in responding to truancy (i.e., license seizure, threat of parental prosecution) and a consistent response when schools refer parents of truant students to a program after a minimum number of unexcused absences.
7. Coordinated response that includes services to address the underlying causes of truancy.
8. Enforcement of attendance statutes to send a consistent message to parents and youth regarding the seriousness of truancy.
9. Effective use of media coverage of program and associated truancy sweeps to increase community's awareness of truancy, its consequences, and efforts to combat it.
10. Preventive mechanisms for students skipping class (i.e., closed campus at lunch, implement block schedule vs. hourly schedule).
11. Established personal contact with parents/guardians to verify truancy information is being received (i.e., no auto-dialing, pre-recorded message).
12. Change in grading policy to include an attendance component.
13. Use of truancy abatement centers to accommodate truant students -- interview and assist students and parents/guardians in effectively addressing truancy issue.
14. Established system to effectively collect data to determine if program is working to reduce truancy rates.