

**Chat Transcript for Brainstorming Session on Reducing Truancy at High Schools  
12/13/06**

**Chat Event Moderator: rablegen**

nablegen joined.  
guest342 joined.  
guest342 left.  
guest342 joined.  
Connie joined.  
guest342 Welcome, Connie!  
nablegen Welcome, Connie!  
nablegen Guest 342 is also me...I was just testing out what it was like for a regular user to login.  
Rosa\_at\_Central joined.  
nablegen Welcome, Rosa!  
nablegen Just type in the box at the bottom of the chat box and click the 'Send' button (or hit return on your keyboard)  
participant23 joined.  
nablegen Hi participant23! Welcome!  
participant23 Hi, Thanks  
nablegen To send a message to the group, type in the box at the bottom below all the buttons.  
participant23 Are we waiting until 6pm to ask questions?  
nablegen Yes  
nablegen We're just chattin' right now and asking any questions you may have about using the chatroom  
participant23 Once the chatting begins at the end of the session can the dialoges be printed?  
noggin joined.  
nablegen Welcome, noggin!  
nablegen Rosa, have you connected ok to the chatroom?  
nablegen I will have a transcript recorded on the admin control panel.  
nablegen I don't think you'll be able to print the dialogue from within this java applet.  
nablegen Remember, once the chat officially starts, if you have a question about using the chatroom, you can right click my name on the left of the screen and click 'Private Chat'  
noggin hi.....i'm connecting from outside APS network....there seems to be an issue when connecting inside.....maybe firewall or something (I'll check it out tomorrow).

rablegen thanks for the information, noggin.

Rosa\_at\_Central yes I have. Sorry i was away

rablegen no problem, Rosa.

participant4 joined.

rablegen Welcome, participant4!

participant\_10 joined.

rablegen Welcome, participant\_10!

Jose joined.

participant\_10 Thanks, glad to be here!

rablegen Welcome, Jose!

Jose Thanks for the opportunity.

participant4 left.

rablegen We are still waiting to officially begin, so if you have any questions about using the chatroom, fire away! This is our first time using it, so we want as much feedback as possible.

participant4 joined.

rablegen Remember, if you accidentally get disconnected, you may click on the Action menu item up above and then click 'Connect'

Jose So, while we wait, is this the first of a series of these we're doing?

rablegen There was about 15 people who signed up...

rablegen Jose: this is the first in a series we plan on hosting

rablegen We hope to get some good brainstorming and ideas tonight and also put this chatroom through its paces.

PARTICIPANT\_533 joined.

rablegen Welcome, PARTICIPANT\_533!

Jose paces?

participant4 were we supposed to hear the sound that was sent?

rablegen Jose: We hope to test this chatroom out and see if there are any glitches

noggin yep

participant4 volume is up on computer - no sound came through

rablegen Welcome, everyone! Let's take two more minutes and allow a few more people to arrive. We will officially start at 6:10

rablegen By the way, is there anyone who has connected to the chatroom who is working from a school or district computer?

noggin not me.....I'm at Starbucks

rablegen Let's begin! Welcome everyone. The following inaugural chat event will be about brainstorming ideas for solving truancy at high schools.

participant\_51 joined.

rablegen If you have any more questions about using the chatroom, right click on 'rablegen' and then click 'Private Chat'

rablegen If you REALLY get stuck, you can call me on my cell listed in the e-mail message I sent: ::smile

rablegen We will run this chat until 6:45 pm

rablegen People are free to add their comments whenever they want to.

rablegen or questions, suggestions, etc.

participant23 Is truancy at a higher rate in APS than other districts?

rablegen Let's run this as a brainstorming session. If you also have some constructive feedback, that is great also.

participant\_51 what is the district doing to put teeth in the attendance policy?

participant\_51 what can we do as high school people to aid in the truancy problem?

Jose rich, are you going to pose q's or is this an open forum?

noggin how about talking with students/parents about the problem? they may be able to provide some insights....

rablegen The forum is an open brainstorming session.

rablegen Feel free to ask questions or answer other people's questions as they appear.

participant\_51 is the truancy problem related to a specific grade level or across the board?

participant4 With truancy being such a serious issue in our high schools, is it possible to have funding for an attendance person in each school to work with parents and students

Jose Truancy is a problem 9-12 at our school.

noggin i agree with p-4.....we should be more pro-active with contacting parents (other than just having the automated dialer call parents at night).

participant\_10 I agree. We need someone to take this on full time.

Jose Calling late student parents is extremely time-consuming

rablegen What can we do to be more proactive with contacting students?

Rosa\_at\_Central And many times you discover the parent is the root of the problem

Rosa\_at\_Central What then?

participant\_51 I think money should be set aside for a specific person to make home visit

participant4 With Dean's having to deal with discipline issues, maybe we should consider having a 3rd Dean or TOSA in the Dean's office to deal only with attendance issues. This would allow a consistent person to contact students and parents.

Jose Whatever it is it needs to be realistic on its demands on teacher's times

participant23 A suggestion might be Monday mornings are attendance meetings for any student who was late more than 3 times the previous week and they have to write a plan on how to change that behavior.

noggin how can we better support teachers in addressing this issue....they see the truancies first-hand, and we need to give them better support.

participant4 Jose, my point exactly. Teachers would refer attendance issues to a particular person - consistency with teachers and parents and students would be optimized.

participant\_51 we really need to come up with a plan that the parents will buy into. Make the parent responsible.

rablegen participant23: interesting idea, has anyone tried this at any of the high schools?

noggin i agree with p-23.....more frequent, face-to-face contact with students would be helpful.....if we have the human resources to do that.

participant23 With the truancy issue as big as it is in high school you need a whole building and community approach, which includes all employees in the building, students, parents, and businesses. Some area businesses allow students to be in them even

noggin has anyone tried any positive re-inforcement techniques with students to encourage attendance?? we seem to always be focusing on 'the stick' rather than 'the carrot'.....

participant\_10 It just can't be the teachers and phone dialer making the contacts.

noggin p10: the phone dialer is impersonal, and can be ignored.....it seems we need to deal with this in real-time with parents/students.

participant23 At my school we have parents attend classes with students, we do trackers where students can earn way off and get a pop and popcorn.

participant\_10 I've had some success with the carrot, but they have to show up to have those talks.

participant4 My suggestion of having one person work on attendance issues which are referred by teachers would allow for positive plans of improvement.

participant23 We also have students do community service around the building with the custodians

noggin p23: is that an effective 'stick'?

participant23 One person is not enough for the attendance issue it is too big and overwhelming

Jose Are these quick fixes that ignore a much bigger problem, say lack of an academic setting?

participant23 It depends on the individual. Usually the earlier you catch the ditching the better the success in getting student back on track and

to class.

noggin everything seems to be getting back to resources.....we can all do a lot more if we can allocate the time/money towards this problem

participant\_51 what do you do when kids do not show for community service?

participant4 I am not sure that would be the case----with teachers making referrals and a consistent contact person, some of the games will be eliminated - no one said this is going to be easy

participant23 they get a more severe consequence

participant4 what would that be?

participant\_51 could you give example

Connie left.

participant23 trust me with 100 teachers and even 1 referral each there is 100 students to see just for that day

PARTICIPANT\_533 I agree with the idea of having one person to work the attendance issues, ie Dean of Attendance. Also if there is consideration for a closed campus, perhaps adding security staff would help!

participant23 They might spend a day in inhouse suspension or do Saturday school, or 5 days restricted lunch it just depends

Connie joined.

participant4 If they don't show up for community service, what would make them show up for Sat. school, etc.?

participant23 I agree it is a big issue at my school it is overcrowded, open campus, off period, open lunch and too much freetime, 9th graders struggle with it

participant\_10 Once a kid screws up, they think they can't save themselves... and they are often right. What do we do for the kid that wants back into the fold? Wait til semester?

participant23 We call a parent and if a student misses Sat school they go in inhouse Monday and are rescheduled for following Sat. 2 no shows they get suspended.

participant\_10 This is all punitive. What can we do proactively?

noggin open campus seems to be an issue.....more afternoon truancies than morning on average

participant23 Some times the student needs reassurance that is it ok to go back to class even if they screwed up

Connie Sorry, I am catching up because of a poor computer connection.

participant4 I think there are interventions that could avoid waiting for a semester----once again dealing with the same Professional everytime, could head off some potential problems.

rablegen Welcome back, Connie. I am glad you were able to connect. You are connecting from Central, right?

Connie Perhaps zero tolerance for truancy would be a novel approach.

Connie Yes. I am in my computer lab.

rablegen We had some people who could not connect from school computers.  
p-22 joined.

Connie I believe I had too many windows open.

rablegen Please note that we have 15 minutes left in our brainstorming session.

rablegen I am glad to see so many of you responding and asking questions.  
participant23 left.

participant\_51 are there any schools out ther that have 3 Dean with one dealing with attendance only?  
participant23 joined.

PARTICIPANT\_533 Staffing Saturday School with teachers with whom students could expect to receive help might not be a bad idea!

Connie I would like to link truancy to something that will get their attention--such as driver's license

participant23 have other districts been looked at for intervention ideas and suggestions

participant4 Is it possible to form a committee to involve all schools in the district so we could make attendance policies the same in all schools. I believe Rangeview has a Dean who deals only with attendance. This would be their 3rd Dean.

Connie Parents play a fundamental role in the education of their children. We need to look into parenting education programs.

participant\_51 most of the truancy problem is linked to 9th/10th grade and they are not ready for driver's license.

Jose Proactive/punitive, how effective can you be against truancy if you lack an academic setting? If students are at school to socialize, as many of my truant students are, how do we compete against that?

Connie Point is that they won't be getting one in the future if school is not a priority.

participant23 What about another alternative school, there are several students who start to run out of time and can't break their ditching and unsuccess patterns, 17 and 2.0 credits

participant\_10 I don't propose to know how, but we need to begin to change the culture that makes this an acceptable choice for the students.

Connie This problem needs a community effort and community solutions. We need to involve more people in finding the solution.

Jose For those that have been in the business a while, how effective are closed campuses and uniforms in combating truancy?

Jose Does it just cause other probs?

participant4 I have been in both of the situations you mentioned Jose, it was the same there.

PARTICIPANT\_533 Might CDE have resources with ideas on effective strategies for working with At Risk students who experience truancy problems?.

participant\_51 I am a proponent of closed campus but do not have a clear understanding where the uniforms play a part.  
p-22 left.

participant23 I think the student climate needs to be changed, students think it is fun to ditch and school is boring or they say there is no point to school

participant\_10 Even if you close the campus you don't address the root problem.  
uniforms: dress code issues, gang paraphernalia, identifying ditchers...not an answer in itself, but maybe a step towards it.

Jose

Connie Just read of a place in Arizona where parents must inform school officials of steps they have taken to ensure their children attend school regularly. When students continue to be truant, cases are referred to the local district attorney.

participant23 Some students say it is easy to ditch and if they decide to stop are scared teachers don't like them anymore or that it is too late and they can't pass

participant\_10 Like I said.

Connie Perhaps a work program to hire students for parttime work and get them involved.

participant23 I think early intervention is key most especially with middle students going into high school and involving parents

Connie Identify truant students and assign staff member to be support person for that student.

Connie Make home visits to explain compulsory attendance law, school policy, and develop interventions.

participant\_10 Absolutely! So many patterns are set way before high school.

participant23 Statistics show students that feel connected in school are able to find success. Having an adult pay attention to a student is a good positive intervention

participant23 For a shy student in a class of 38 can truly be uncomfortable and overwhelming

rablegen Since we started a little late, I will leave this brainstorming session open until 7 pm. If you need to leave before then, that is fine. Just click 'Action' up above and then click 'Exit'

Connie Extensive career exploration and related career education to help students develop educational goals may help direct.

participant\_10 We need more than that. We lose kids even when we've gone

above and beyond. We can't give them attention if they're not there!

Connie Every student should have to create an educational plan. Many students do not see success or have any idea of how to achieve it.

PARTICIPANT\_533 How about asking the students for their ideas on addressing this matter!

participant4 Getting students involved in extra-curricular activities and give them a buy in to their school might keep school from being boring. Each school deals with a different set of reasons for lack of attendance, but consistent attendance polici

Connie Obviously, we need policy and written attendance expectations for students.

participant4 par533, Great Idea

participant\_10 I think 533 may have hit on something.

Jose I'll do it tomorrow p533, but I'm almost certain many will say zero-tolerance.

Connie How about developing a "Best Practices Manual" for truancy and excessive absenteeism. I have never seen anything in writing.

participant23 What will you do with kids who fail to change and meet policy expectations for example 10 absences in a semester, how will they get educated or what will change if we just withdraw them

Jose Id like to look at that book, Connie.

participant\_10 I'll begin a dialog with kids in th a.m. Let's see what they have to say.

Connie Fine the parent. There must be some accountability

PARTICIPANT\_533 Speaking of school & boredom - what makes for a classroom that holds the interest of students! Does the use of tech in the classroom help to make the learning relevant!

Connie Some school districts tie truancy with benefits that parents receive. If the student does not attend school they lose some of their social services benefits.

Connie Like I said. . .It is a community effort. We definitely need more parenting classes. Parents need to be involved in the solution.

participant23 In another state, students cannot have part-time jobs if they do not have a certain GPA

participant4 rablegen, thanks for the opportunity to participate in this chat room. I hope this will continue and we will be given the opportunity to participate in the future.

Connie Jobs sometimes keep kids in school. Lets look at rewards for attending.

Connie Do we have truant officers?

rablegen You're welcome, p4. ::smile

PARTICIPANT\_533 Social privileges such as, a 9th grader with 2 or more failing grades, that student does not leave campus for lunch.

participant23 But having a job is also a carrot, students want to have a part-time job so it could provide incentive to stay in school

participant4 jobs are also the reason in many cases for kids not coming to school or leaving school early, so why not make it a reward?

Jose I've heard of schools having truancy tickets given at a machine in school.

Connie Absolutely!

participant4 Jose, How does that work?

PARTICIPANT\_533 left.

rablegen We have 10 minutes left in the brainstorming session.

Jose I'd have to get more info but students were given tickets after the second time they missed class by some automated system.

participant4 Interesting - did they have to go to court?

Jose Fines and court.

participant\_51 the state legislature has increased the attendance requirement to age 17, what are they willing to do to aid in this problem?

participant\_10 It won't change til the whole community buys into this as a priority. We should concentrate on involving as many stakeholders as we can.

Connie How about developing a "Truancy Center? Process the student based upon the reason for his truancy. Set up an affirmative support program for the student and family aimed at focusing on the problems that led to the truancy. We have lot

participant4 Court usually gets both the student and parent's attention

participant\_10 Do the courts feel as overwhelmed as we do?

participant\_51 there should be a simpler process in getting students in truancy court.

Connie It should be an option. Taking truants and parents to court would certainly get their attention.

Connie How about having some retired judges hold court right here at school. Community effort. They could levy fines.

Jose Sweet!

Jose I'd take my civics classes.

participant\_10 Now there's an idea!

participant\_51 maybe a traveling judge

participant4 Connie, sounds like a plan. I bet there would be interest from retired judges.

participant23 Good idea

guest342 Wow! All of you have come up with some great questions and

suggestions. Just wanted to let you know we have 5 minutes left.

Connie I truly believe it is a community problem and a community solution. I actually read that this is happening in another community.

Jose I'm with you, Connie.

participant\_10 You still have to round them up. Who drags the truants in?

Jose There isn't one solution. We need a myriad of approaches 'cause kids come from all sorts of circumstances.

Connie Police officers. They know where all the hangouts are located. That

participant\_51 maybe certified letters from the judge just as we do for 10 day letters.

participant4 If it becomes a legal issue of sorts, their ability to get a drivers license, etc. could be affected. That alon would be an incentive to take care of the problem.

Jose Truancy court would work for a lot of my kids.

participant\_10 I think we're onto something again!

Connie The police officers. They know where all the truants hang out. That is where the truancy center would come in.

Jose There will always be some, that require the incentive approach, but many would attend if there were real consequences.

rablegen Some of you may have figured out I am also guest342. I wanted to test out logging on as a regular user. Please note we have only a couple of minutes left in this chat session.

Connie I believe I just got disconnected.  
Connie left.

noggin connie: no you are still there.....

participant\_10 Again, it takes everybody.

participant4 Once again, thanks - is there going to be a follow up of this session?

rablegen Thanks so much for a great chat session! We will definitely be holding more chat events in the future.

Jose I don't think we can isolate truancy from the rest of what makes up a school.

rablegen We will most likely post the transcript of this event in E-News next week as well as advertise the next chat session.  
connie joined.  
tom joined.

rablegen Thank you so much for participating. If you have any feedback about the session in general or about the chat program specifically, feel free to email me at richb@admin.aps.k12.co.us or call my cell

720-233-6326

connie Are you all still there?

participant\_51 thanks for the ideas. Truancy is definitely a major problem at my school.

connie Thanks, Rich. This was fun.

rablegen Hi Connie. we have noticed that if you are able to connect from a district computer, it kind of goes in and out.

Jose thanks, good night.

tom well, perhaps I can get connected earlier next time.....sorry I missed the discussion.

Jose left.

participant4 left.

tom good night all

rablegen no problem tom.. we will definitely be hosting others!

rablegen ::smile

tom left.

connie Yes, I kept being dropped from the district computer.

participant\_10 left.

connie Have a good evening.::biggrin

rablegen To leave the chatroom, just click 'Action' up above and then 'Exit'

rablegen You can also close the browser window

participant23 left.

rablegen Have a good evening!

rablegen ::laugh

Rosa\_at\_Central bye

rablegen Have a good night, Rosa!

participant\_51 i am looking for the exit

rablegen Good night, Connie!

rablegen If you click on the word 'Action' up above you should get a menu option called 'Exit'

connie Good night.

connie left.

rablegen p51: you can also just close the entire browser window.

guest342 left.

noggin left.

rablegen Good night everyone! I am now going to close the chatroom.

Rosa\_at\_Central left.

participant\_51 left.

rablegen left.

