

Guidance Document

Attendance Study

Ohio Attendance Law (House Bill 410) Implementation Findings

WINTER 2024

Purpose

A primary purpose for this study was to learn more about local district's attendance policies and tracking procedures. The findings presented in this guidance document demonstrate the administrative responsibilities local districts reported pertaining to HB410 and the changes in student attendance rates when HB410 processes are implemented.

HB410 Background

The Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 410 in December of 2016. This bill enacted several changes to statewide attendance law and policy. It requires districts to track student attendance by the hour and defined "habitually truant" students as those who miss 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in one school year without legitimate excuse. Additionally, it defined excessive absences as missing 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in one school year *with or without* a legitimate excuse.

Under the bill, districts must notify the student's parents in writing within seven days of the "triggering absence" for those who are excessively absent. For habitually truant students, districts must create an absence intervention team and make three meaningful attempts to gain parent or guardian participation on the absence intervention team within seven days of the triggering absence. Within 14 days of the team assignment, the district must create an absence intervention plan for the student. If, after 61 days, the student continues to be excessively absent, the district must file a complaint in juvenile court.

Research Notes

Methods

This mixed methods study utilized quantitative and qualitative data sources. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze survey data, EMIS records and local districts daily attendance patterns. Content analyses were conducted on open ended survey responses.

Data Sources

- Ohio Attendance Survey (2023)
- EMIS
- Local District Attendance Data

Contact

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Major Findings

Full-Time Equivalencies Dedicated to HB410

Survey respondents were asked how many full-time equivalencies are dedicated to implementing HB410 requirements in their district. 52% of respondents reported 1-3 full time staff equivalencies were dedicated to HB410. The majority of districts that reported more than 6 full-time equivalencies were dedicated to HB410 were suburban.

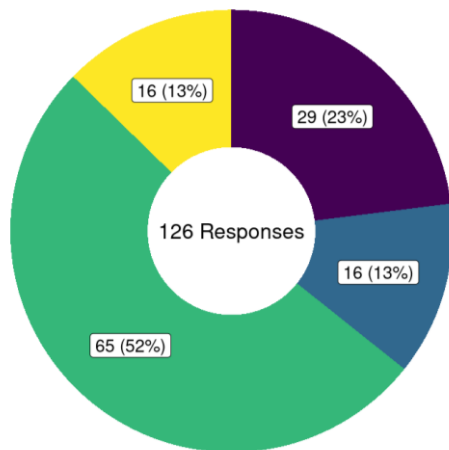


Figure 1. FTE Dedicated Overall

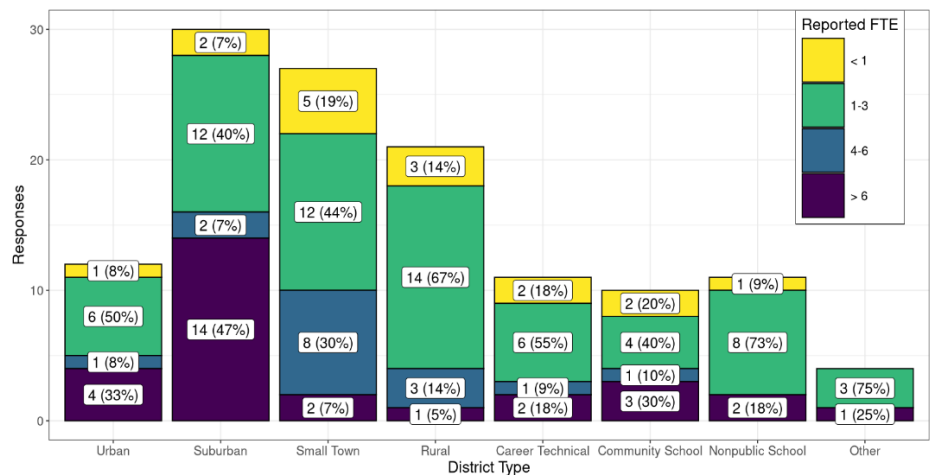


Figure 2. FTE Dedicated by District Type

Administrative Responsibilities

Survey respondents were asked what was taking the most administrative time pertaining to the implementation of HB410. Responses were open-ended. Analyses revealed the dominant theme was the absence intervention plans, specifically communication with families:

“Attendance Intervention Team Meetings - mostly canceling, rescheduling by families and no show components;”

“Creating an AIP when it's very hard to even get the parent to show up, answer a call, or get in touch with at all.”

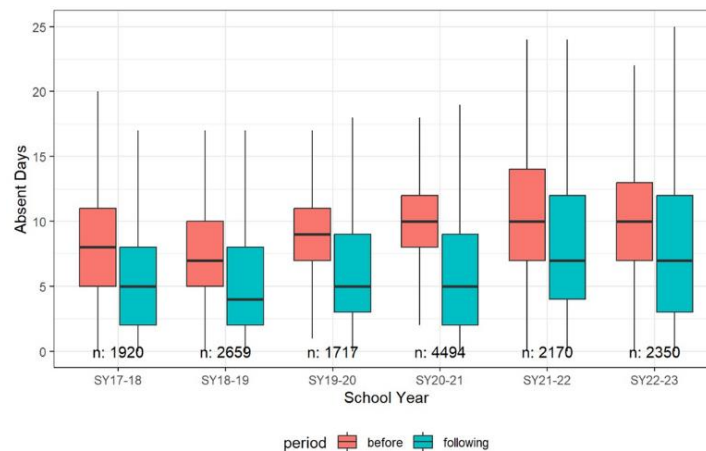
Two additional high-frequency responses were: chronic absenteeism letters and tracking and monitoring student attendance. Some of this administrative burden, as other parts of this study demonstrate, is dependent on how automated school district's student information systems are.

HB410 Interventions

Using the daily student attendance records provided by partnering local school districts, analyses show the number of days students were absent 30 school days before and 30 school days after a parent was notified of their student's excessive absences. For this suburban district, the number of days absent decreased after the chronic absenteeism letter was mailed home. This finding is

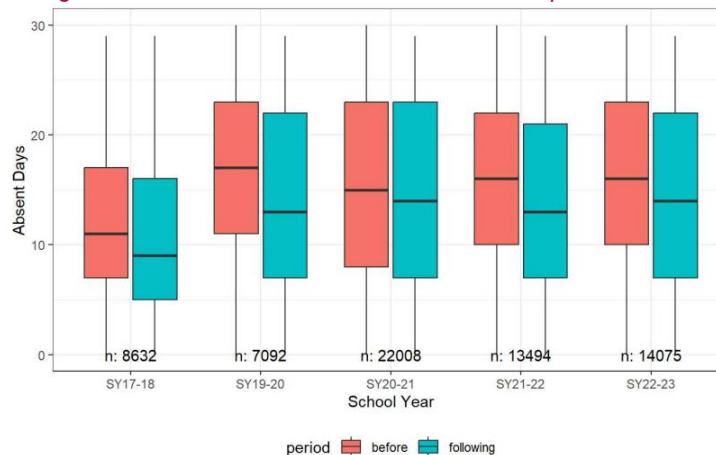
consistent with other district's results in this study. Only one large urban district saw little to no change after parents were notified of their student's excessive absences.

Figure 3. Attendance after parent notification



Similarly, using the daily student attendance records provided by partnering local school districts, these analyses present the change in absences from 30 school days before to 30 school days after an absence intervention plan was implemented. For this urban district, the number of days absent decreased after the absence intervention plan was implemented in most years. This is consistent with other districts' results in this study.

Figure 4. Attendance after absence intervention plan



Policy and Practice Considerations

Results suggest that communicating with families makes a difference in attendance, which is consistent with strategic actions recommended by organizations like the Stay in the Game! Network. District and school personnel need support in finding a balance between the best practices for communicating with families to ensure their participation in absence intervention plan meetings and achieving administrative efficiency through automated and/or technology-driven processes. The best approaches to family engagement are frequently high-touch and resource-intensive. Allowing flexibility in the means of contacting families (e.g. permitting electronic communication in place of hard copies of letters), may lighten administrative burden and allow for more resources to be devoted to family engagement.