

House Bill 410: Ohio's Attendance Law

Ohio has recently changed its law on school attendance in House Bill 410 in an effort to improve school attendance. Here are some important points to know about the new law.

- **Attendance is important.** As early as elementary school, students who miss just 2 days a month, regardless of the reason for the absence, are more likely to fall behind academically and less likely to graduate. This is true regardless of race, ethnicity, language, family income, and other variables.
- The new law focuses on habitual truancy. **Habitual truancy** is when a student is absent without a legitimate excuse 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one month, or 72 or more hours in one school year.
- **A school must create a Student Absence Intervention Plan when a student is habitually truant.**
- **A Student Absence Intervention Plan** is a student-centered, personalized plan that addresses barriers to attendance when a student becomes habitually truant. The plan is developed collaboratively by the school, the family, and the student. The plan spells out agreed-upon strategies for improving attendance.
- The new law also addresses excessive absences. **Excessive absences** occur when a student is absent with or without a legitimate excuse for 38 or more hours in one month or 65 or more hours in the school year.
- **The goal of House Bill 410 is to decriminalize truancy. However, there is still the potential for court involvement even with a Student Absence Intervention Plan.** Once a plan is in place, a complaint against the student will be filed in Juvenile Court 61 calendar days after the plan has failed **or** if the student has been absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours or 42 or more hours in a school month during the plan's implementation.