

## **TRUANCY MEDIATION PROGRAM**

### **Information for Parents and Students**

#### **What is Truancy Mediation?**

Truancy mediation is offered to families as an alternative to a formal referral to the juvenile court for habitual truancy. Mediation is a process that uses the presence and skills of a neutral third party (mediator) to assist people to resolve conflict in a safe environment where all viewpoints are acknowledged. The mediator assists the people involved to create and test the feasibility of possible solutions until they can agree on an outcome that serves all.

Truancy mediation provides a relaxed atmosphere for the student, parents and school personnel to discuss the truancy problem. The program uses a “team approach” rather than an adversarial approach to resolve the problem. The agreements are individualized to meet the needs of the student and the school.

Truancy mediation is voluntary for everyone involved. The student, parents, or school may choose to go to court at any time during the process. The mediation is also confidential.

#### **Who are the Mediators?**

All of the trained mediators in the program are volunteers from the community or ADR staff from the Administrative Office of the Courts Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Department. The Mediators are not employed by the student’s school or the school district.

#### **What does a Mediation session look like?**

The mediation is held at the student’s school. Plan for the mediation session to last about 2 hours. Mediations requiring a translator may last up to 3 hours. The mediation is held in a private room with all the participants sitting around a table. The mediator begins by describing the process and the ground rules for the mediation. Then everyone around the table is given the opportunity to share his/her point of view regarding the truancy problem. Usually the mediator will also spend time alone with the student, parent, and the school to allow people to share privately and to brainstorm possible solutions.

When possible solutions have been identified, the group is brought back together to discuss and finalize the solutions in the form of an agreement (plan).

#### **What are the benefits of Truancy Mediation?**

- The Program is supportive versus adversarial and attempts to get at the source of the truancy problem.
- It puts school personnel, parents and student on a level playing field.
- Communication between parents, school and student is improved. The student is actively involved in the decision making process.
- More information becomes available to all involved parties. This leads to a better understanding of obstacles and challenges faced by both school and family.
- Relationships between student and school staff are strengthened as well as relationships between parents and school staff.

#### **If you have questions or would like more information about this program you may contact:**

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