

King County Superior Court
Education Reengagement/Truancy Process
2023-2024 School Year

Goal:

- To reduce or eliminate unexcused absences from school by providing intentional supports to address barriers to attendance. The purpose of the Becca Law is not to punish students and/or parents for past absences, but to provide a safety net to keep youth safe and prevent school dropout.

School's Duties:

- Notify parents of unexcused absences in the family's preferred language (RCW 28A.225.020(a)),
- Schedule a conference with parent and student to discuss absences, (RCW 28A.225.020(b)),
- Take data informed steps to reduce or eliminate student's absences, including but not limited to (RCW 28A.225.020(c)i- RCW28A.225.020(c)iv):
 - Administer the WARNS or other assessment (*middle and high school only*),
 - If the student is dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW, have a support team meeting
 - If the student has an IEP or 504, convene the IEP or 504 team
 - For students reasonably believed to have a disability, including mental, behavioral, or emotional, who do not have an IEP or 504, the following steps must occur: 1) Student should be referred to the district's existing Child Find process (WAC 392-172A-02040), 2) parent must be informed of right for eval, and 3) If eligible for services, a plan needs to be put in place to address identified needs.
- File a Truancy Petition with the King County Superior Court after the student's **7th unexcused absence** in a month and no later than the **15th unexcused absence** in a school year (RCW 28A.225.030).
 - A Truancy Petition is a legal document filed with King County Superior Court that alleges a violation of RCW 28A.225.010. In King County the Court issues a Case Schedule and takes no action on the petition until all other interventions have been exhausted.
- Develop Multi-Tiered Systems of Support as outlined in WAC 392-401-045.
- Maintain a Community Engagement Board and refer students and families as required (RCW 28A.225.026)

King County Truancy Petition Process:

- In King County, a truancy petition stays in place for one calendar year from the day it is filed, unless it is dismissed prior to its expiration or the student turns 18.
- After filing a truancy petition the school/district is required to report periodically to the Court on whether the student's attendance has improved and what interventions have been attempted or offered by the school, in accordance with the Case Schedule.
- If a student's attendance improves, or the parties agree upon and engage in interventions, no further action is taken on the petition.
- For students whose attendance does not improve, the school district or family may request additional intervention including, but not limited to, Education Reengagement Workshops, Community Engagement Board (CEB) or Community Attendance Support Team (CAST), referrals for mental health or drug and alcohol assessments, alternative educational programming, parent support, youth advocates, or support through the Becca At Risk Youth or Child in Need of Services Programs.

Community Engagement Boards (CEB), King County Community Attendance Support Team (CAST), Education Reengagement Workshops:

- After a truancy petition is filed, students and/or their parents/guardians will be invited to a district level CEB or a county level CEB known as a Community Attendance Support Team (CAST). Students and families also have the option to attend an Education Reengagement Workshop (Workshop) facilitated by community partner Unleash the Brilliance. (*See below for additional information*)

King County Superior Court Becca Program Supports:

- Upon request of the student, family, or school/district, the Superior Court Becca Program can offer assistance obtaining referrals for supplementary services, coordinate a Community Attendance Support Team, or help navigate the Truancy Court process.

Pretrial Conference

- If a CEB, CAST, Workshop and/or other supports are not successful in reducing or eliminating the student's absences, the Court may issue an order setting a Pretrial Conference. Conferences may be held via Zoom or in person. The goal of any Court-ordered intervention is to convene the parties to review the student's absences and develop a plan to reduce or eliminate further absences.

Truancy Jurisdiction/Court Hearings:

- If the parties are unable to resolve the attendance issues or agree upon next steps or interventions after attempting all other available avenues and resources, the school district or parent may request a Preliminary Hearing in front of a Judicial Officer.
- At a Preliminary Hearing, the Judicial Officer reviews the evidence, hears from the parties, and determines whether to take jurisdiction and issue an order compelling school attendance. All parties are required to appear in person unless otherwise notified of possible virtual appearances. Failure to appear as directed may result in the Court issuing a default order. The court may take jurisdiction over a case for one calendar year from the date of the preliminary hearing or until the student's 18th birthday.
- If the student's attendance improves, and/or the parties engage in interventions, the case will be monitored through Progress Reports filed with the Court by the school district at least every 90 days, or the petition may be dismissed.
- If the student's attendance does not improve, a Review Hearing may be requested to review progress of either party and determine whether further orders are needed.

Additional Information:

Community Engagement Boards (CEBs): Are a team of community members who meet with a student, their family, and the school to identify barriers preventing the student from attending school and develop a plan to address those barriers and improve the student's attendance.

The King County Community Attendance Support Team (CAST): Is a county-level CEB made up of representatives of community agencies and school district representatives, coordinated by the King County Superior Court Becca Program. The members of each "CAST" are selected based on the needs and interest of the student and family. Teams meet with students and families meet to identify barriers to school attendance and recommend methods to improve school attendance. Parents and students may make direct referrals to the CAST. <https://kingcountyattendance.org/cast>



Education Reengagement Workshops: Are open to students and families in King County with or without a truancy petition. Workshops are led by community partner Unleash the Brilliance. Workshops provide a welcoming space for students to learn ways to stay connected and engaged with their education and feel inspired to invest in themselves. Workshops also provide tips for students and their families on how to access and advocate for supports needed at school and in their community and gain a better understanding of the attendance laws in Washington State. <https://kingcountyattendance.org/education-reengagement-workshops>



RCW 28A.225.010- Washington State's Compulsory Attendance Law, also known as the "Becca Law":
Read the law in full here: <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.225>



For more information contact: truancy@kingcounty.gov