

Your Question: You asked for examples of states that have taken steps to decriminalize truancy or provide alternative programs to addressing the issue.

Our Response: I have gathered various state legislation examples on how they are addressing truancy through alternative means. Keep in mind that states and districts may be making alternative efforts to curb chronic absenteeism outside of the policy arena.

State Policies

The following states have passed legislation to address chronic absenteeism through alternative means, including notifying parents earlier and identifying contributing factors.

- **Indiana**, [S.B. 338](#) (2013): This legislation makes revisions to state truancy policies, including directing school districts to identify contributing factors to chronic absenteeism and to develop reduction plans. Also directed the department of education to provide resource and guidance to school districts about various practices and strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- **Connecticut**, [S.B. 1058](#) (2015): In 2011 the state created a pilot truancy clinic within one specific area of the state – expanded to a second area in 2014 – to resolve chronic absenteeism through nonpunitive procedures. The 2015 bill expands the truancy clinic program to the state’s lowest-performing districts. Also directs any district with a chronic absenteeism rate of at least 10 percent and any school with a rate of at least 15 percent to establish an attendance review team. The review teams are responsible for reviewing cases of chronically absent students, identifying interventions and referrals, and working with the students and their parents. Finally, this measure directs the department of education to develop a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for districts to help them reduce chronic absenteeism.
- **Colorado**, [H.B. 1021](#) (2013) and [S.B. 184](#) (2015): The 2013 bill created policies encourages districts to establish attendance procedures around chronically absent students, including working with parents and local groups to improve the student’s attendance. The 2015 bill directs specific leaders within the judicial system to convene stakeholders to discuss methods to review alternative means for addressing truancy, using detention only as a last resort.
- **Maryland**, [H.B. 207](#) (2013): Requires county board of education to develop an active intervention system for truant students and requires schools to immediately refer K-12 chronically absent students to the board.
- **West Virginia**, [H.B. 2550](#) (2015): Requires schools to notify parents earlier about unexcused absences (after 3 unexcused absences rather than 5) and to hold a conference with school administrators after 5 unexcused absences.
- **California**, [A.B. 2616](#) (2012): Directs schools to require students and/or their parents to meet with school officials the first time the student receives a truancy report and to discuss causes and develop an improvement plan.

In recent years, two states have passed bills prohibiting districts from using expulsion to address chronic absenteeism.

- **Oregon**, [S.B. 556](#) (2015)
- **Rhode Island**, [H.B. 7287](#) (2012)

A few states have called for task forces or studies to review issues around chronic absenteeism and district and school responses. I didn't have time to track down the resulting reports, but can do so if you would like to see them.

- **Illinois** [H.B. 3197](#) (2016)
- **Pennsylvania**, [H.R. 1032](#) (2014)
- **Delaware**, [H.B. 24](#) (2013)
- **New Mexico**, [S.M. 72](#) (2013)

Finally, in the past some states have created policies to link teenage driving licensing privileges to school performance and attendance, although I did not see any recent examples of this.