



Laboratory Charter School Attendance and Truancy Policy

Updated for Act 138 of 2016, Act 47 of 2025, Pennsylvania Compulsory Attendance Requirements, and PDE Attendance Guidance

Revised June 2026

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Executive Summary.....	3
Policy Audit and Revision Summary.....	3
Deliverable 1: Laboratory Charter School Truancy Program Policy 2026–2027	4
I. Introduction.....	4
II. Purpose and Objectives.....	4
III. Legal Basis.....	4
IV. Section 1330 Exceptions to Compulsory Attendance	4
V. Truancy Program Description	5
VI. Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
VII. Attendance Monitoring and Early Identification.....	5
VIII. Truancy Definitions and Thresholds	5
IX. Truancy Notifications	6
X. Attendance Conference Requirement	6
XI. School Attendance Improvement Plan	6
XII. Intervention Strategies and Supports	6
XIII. Cyber Charter Transfer Restriction Under Act 47	6
XIV. Attendance Recordkeeping and Data Integrity	7
XV. Prohibition on Suspension, Expulsion, or Transfer for Truancy.....	7
XVI. Community Resources and Academic Recovery.....	7
XVII. Student Rights and Legal Protections	7
XVIII. Annual Evaluation of Truancy Program	7
XIX. Responsibility, Distribution, and Review.....	7
XX. Legal References	7
Deliverable 2: Appendix A	8
Laboratory Charter School Attendance and Truancy Policy (2026–2027).....	8

I. Purpose and Legal Authority.....	8
II. Attendance Expectations and School Day Requirements.....	8
III. Excused and Unexcused Absences	8
IV. Truancy Definitions and Thresholds.....	8
V. Truancy Notifications and Mandatory Notice Content (Effective December 12, 2025)	8
VI. Cyber Charter School Transfer Restrictions (Effective December 12, 2025)	8
VII. School Attendance Improvement Conference and Plan.....	8
VIII. Court Proceedings and Judicial Determinations	9
IX. Attendance Recordkeeping and Integrity (Effective January 11, 2026)	9
X. Cyber Charter Statutory Provisions (Acknowledgement)	9
XI. Tardiness and Early Dismissals	9
XII. Reporting Obligations and Criminal Liability (Effective August 1, 2026)	9
XIII. Enforcement and Student Protections	9
XIV. Responsibility, Distribution, and Review	9
XV. Legal References	9
Act 47 Cyber Charter Requirements - Statutory Reference Only.....	9
Deliverable 3: Evaluation Criteria Matrix	11
Deliverable 4: Legal Compliance Crosswalk	12
Final Quality Assurance Certification	13

Executive Summary

This document provides a fully revised Laboratory Charter School Truancy Program Policy for the 2026–2027 school year. It preserves the legally accurate supportive-intervention framework of the existing policy while strengthening statutory alignment, adding Act 47 of 2025 attendance and truancy provisions, incorporating Section 1330 compulsory-attendance exceptions, and attaching the complete updated Attendance and Truancy Policy as Appendix A.

- Total substantive revisions: 24, including updated legal authority, revised school-year references, expanded program description, Act 47 integration, Section 1330 exceptions, student-rights safeguards, and compliance evidence matrices.
- Major legal updates: Act 47 cyber charter transfer restrictions, teacher-generated attendance-record integrity, truancy notification content, attendance reporting obligations, and falsification penalties.
- Section 1330 additions: policy-level exceptions to compulsory attendance and documentation requirements for qualifying students.
- Truancy program enhancements: early identification, family engagement, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, MTSS alignment, counseling supports, community referrals, academic recovery, progress monitoring, and annual evaluation.
- Student-rights protections: the policy expressly prohibits suspension, expulsion, or transfer as a consequence for truancy and requires an attendance conference before referral to a legal entity.
- Remaining recommendation: assign the Board Policy Number before final Board adoption.

Policy Audit and Revision Summary

The current truancy policy already contains strong student-rights safeguards, including explicit language prohibiting suspension, expulsion, or transfer for truancy and requiring an attendance conference before any legal referral. The 2026–2027 revision preserves those protections and expands the policy to reflect Act 47 of 2025, updated attendance definitions, reporting obligations, and Section 1330 exceptions.

Audit Category	Finding
Language Preserved	Supportive intervention philosophy; attendance conference requirement; AIP framework; family engagement; community-resource referrals; prohibition on suspension, expulsion, or transfer for truancy.
Language Revised	School-year references; legal basis; Act 138 terminology; attendance improvement terminology; evaluation criteria; legal references.
Language Removed or Avoided	Duplicative repeated policy overview text from the prior document; broad references that could imply Section 1330 is the sole legal basis for truancy procedures.
New Language Inserted	Act 47 requirements; cyber charter transfer restriction; mandatory truancy notice language; teacher-generated attendance-record integrity; PDE reporting and falsification provisions; Section 1330 exceptions; MTSS, counseling, academic recovery, data monitoring, and annual evaluation language.

Deliverable 1: Laboratory Charter School Truancy Policy

Approved: August 21, 2025

Revised June 2026

I. Introduction

Laboratory Charter School is dedicated to ensuring the academic success, well-being, and regular school attendance of all students. Regular attendance is fundamental to academic achievement, instructional continuity, student safety, and compliance with Pennsylvania compulsory school attendance requirements.

This Truancy Program Policy for the 2026–2027 school year establishes a comprehensive, supportive, legally compliant framework for addressing absenteeism and truancy. The School’s approach prioritizes early identification, family engagement, attendance conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, community partnerships, academic recovery, and legally appropriate interventions before any referral to a legal entity.

This policy safeguards students’ rights by prohibiting suspension, expulsion, or transfer as consequences for truant behavior and by requiring an attendance conference before any referral of a truancy matter to a legal entity.

II. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Truancy Program is to improve attendance by identifying barriers to regular school participation and providing targeted support to students and families. The Truancy Program is intended to prevent chronic absenteeism, reduce truancy, improve academic outcomes, and maintain compliance with Pennsylvania law.

Program objectives include: early identification and intervention; supportive family engagement; collaboration with school-based and community resources; prevention of academic failure; compliance with Pennsylvania compulsory attendance law, Act 138, and Act 47; preservation of student rights; and annual review of program effectiveness.

III. Legal Basis

This policy is grounded in the Pennsylvania Public School Code, including 24 P.S. §§ 13-1326–1354, Act 138 of 2016, Act 47 of 2025, 22 Pa. Code Chapter 11, applicable PDE Basic Education Circulars, and related compulsory attendance requirements.

Act 138 establishes supportive truancy procedures, including attendance conferences and Attendance Improvement Plans, and prohibits exclusionary discipline solely for truant behavior. Act 47 of 2025 adds attendance and truancy amendments related to cyber charter transfers, required truancy notice content, attendance-record integrity, attendance reporting, and transfer-student attendance improvement responsibilities.

IV. Section 1330 Exceptions to Compulsory Attendance

The School shall recognize exceptions to compulsory attendance only where permitted by 24 P.S. § 13-1330 and applicable law. A student may qualify for an exception only when the statutory conditions are satisfied and appropriate documentation is provided to the School or responsible school entity.

Potential exceptions may include students who have reached the applicable statutory age and are lawfully employed with required documentation; students who have been properly evaluated and excused under applicable procedures; certain farm work or domestic service exceptions where legally authorized; and transportation-related exceptions where applicable under the statute.

The School shall document any claimed exception in the student's attendance record, including the basis for the exception, supporting documentation, approval or verification, and the period for which the exception applies. No exception shall be applied informally or without documentation.

V. Truancy Program Description

The Laboratory Charter School Truancy Program is a structured, supportive attendance-improvement system. It is designed to identify attendance concerns early, engage students and families, address root causes, connect families with supports, and monitor progress toward improved attendance.

The program includes daily attendance monitoring, review of tardiness and absence patterns, parent/guardian communication, attendance conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, academic recovery supports, counseling or student-support referrals, MTSS coordination, community-resource referrals, and follow-up monitoring.

The School may coordinate supports through administration, teachers, counseling staff, MTSS personnel, the Truancy Interventionist, community partners, and other appropriate support providers. Interventions shall be individualized, proportional, and designed to restore regular attendance and academic engagement.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

School administration shall implement the Truancy Program, monitor attendance data, coordinate attendance conferences, ensure development and monitoring of Attendance Improvement Plans, maintain required records, and ensure compliance with applicable law.

Teachers shall accurately record attendance, monitor attendance concerns, communicate patterns to administration, participate in attendance-support processes when appropriate, and assist with academic recovery strategies.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring regular attendance, communicating with the School regarding absences, submitting timely documentation, participating in attendance conferences, and supporting implementation of attendance improvement strategies.

Students are expected to attend school regularly, participate in attendance improvement planning when appropriate, and engage in academic and support interventions identified in the plan.

VII. Attendance Monitoring and Early Identification

The School shall monitor attendance daily to identify patterns of absences, tardiness, early dismissals, or extended nonattendance. Attendance concerns may be flagged for early intervention before a student becomes truant or habitually truant.

Early identification may include review of attendance records, teacher reports, parent/guardian communication, nurse or counseling referrals, MTSS data, academic performance, and known barriers affecting attendance.

When attendance concerns arise, the School shall provide timely communication to parents/guardians and may offer supports before legal thresholds are reached.

VIII. Truancy Definitions and Thresholds

A student is truant when the student has incurred three (3) unexcused absences during a school year. A student is habitually truant when the student has incurred six (6) or more unexcused absences during the current school year.

Consistent with Act 47, a conviction for violating compulsory attendance requirements is not required for a student to be considered habitually truant. Truancy status is used to trigger support, intervention, and legally required procedures.

IX. Truancy Notifications

The School shall issue required truancy notices to parents/guardians in accordance with Act 138, Act 47, and applicable PDE guidance. Beginning December 12, 2025, notices to parents/guardians of truant students must include notice that a habitually truant student may not transfer during the school year to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child.

Truancy notices shall also identify available resources to help students and parents/guardians return to compliant compulsory attendance and pursue academic recovery. The School shall maintain documentation of notices and family outreach.

X. Attendance Conference Requirement

An attendance conference is a mandatory step before referring any truancy matter to a legal entity. The conference is intended to identify barriers to attendance, hear from the student and family, and develop a collaborative plan to improve attendance.

Participants may include the student, parent/guardian, school administrator, teacher, counselor, Truancy Interventionist, MTSS representative, nurse, community-resource representative, or other appropriate support personnel.

The attendance conference shall be documented in the student record, including participants, attendance concerns, identified barriers, agreed supports, responsibilities, and follow-up actions.

XI. School Attendance Improvement Plan

Following the attendance conference, the School shall develop or update a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) or Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP), as applicable. The plan shall be individualized and shall identify attendance barriers, supports, intervention strategies, family and school responsibilities, timelines, follow-up steps, and progress-monitoring methods.

Beginning August 1, 2026, any student who meets the definition of habitually truant and transfers to the School during the school year shall be provided with a School Attendance Improvement Plan. The School shall pursue reasonable remedies to mitigate habitual truancy for the remainder of the school year or until the student is no longer of compulsory school age.

XII. Intervention Strategies and Supports

Intervention strategies may include parent/guardian outreach, counseling supports, academic recovery planning, mentoring, schedule review, health or mental-health referrals, transportation problem-solving, MTSS referral, community-resource referral, attendance check-ins, and progress monitoring.

The School shall prioritize supportive interventions over punitive responses. Interventions shall be documented and reviewed for effectiveness.

XIII. Cyber Charter Transfer Restriction Under Act 47

Beginning December 12, 2025, a child who is habitually truant is prohibited from transferring during the school year to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child. This restriction applies to habitually truant students transferring from any school to a cyber charter school.

As part of enrollment intake and transfer review, the School shall make reasonable inquiry regarding whether a student seeking mid-year enrollment has incurred six (6) or more unexcused absences during the current school year at the prior school. The School shall comply with lawful enrollment obligations while maintaining required attendance documentation.

XIV. Attendance Recordkeeping and Data Integrity

Attendance records shall be accurately maintained, teacher-generated where applicable, and modified only to correct documented errors. Staff shall maintain records of attendance, truancy notices, conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, parent/guardian communication, referrals, and progress monitoring.

Beginning August 1, 2026, the School shall report student attendance data, enforcement actions, and related costs to PDE as requested by the Secretary of Education. Any school administrator, employee, or representative who knowingly falsifies attendance data or reports submitted to PDE may be subject to criminal liability as provided by Act 47.

XV. Prohibition on Suspension, Expulsion, or Transfer for Truancy

The School shall not suspend, expel, or transfer a student as a consequence for truant behavior. Truancy shall be addressed through supportive interventions, attendance conferences, improvement planning, family engagement, and lawful referral processes only after required school-based steps have occurred.

The School's Truancy Policy and Code of Conduct shall require an attendance conference before referral of truancy matters to a legal entity and shall prohibit suspension, expulsion, or transfer due to truant behavior.

XVI. Community Resources and Academic Recovery

The School may collaborate with community organizations and public agencies to support students and families facing barriers related to housing, healthcare, mental health, family support, transportation, basic needs, or other circumstances affecting attendance.

Academic recovery supports may include teacher check-ins, makeup-work planning, tutoring, intervention periods, progress monitoring, MTSS supports, and individualized academic planning.

XVII. Student Rights and Legal Protections

The Truancy Program shall be implemented in a manner that protects student rights, provides meaningful family participation, and avoids exclusionary consequences for truancy. Students and families shall have the opportunity to participate in attendance conferences and improvement planning before legal referral.

The School shall provide reasonable accommodations and protections required under IDEA, Section 504, the ADA, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and other applicable laws.

XVIII. Annual Evaluation of Truancy Program

The School shall evaluate the Truancy Program annually using attendance data, chronic absenteeism trends, truancy notices, attendance conference completion, School Attendance Improvement Plan implementation, family engagement, intervention outcomes, referral data, and student academic progress.

The annual review shall be used to identify program strengths, recurring barriers, training needs, documentation improvements, and recommended revisions for the following school year.

XIX. Responsibility, Distribution, and Review

The Principal or designated Truancy Interventionist shall be responsible for implementing this policy, coordinating attendance-improvement procedures, maintaining documentation, distributing the policy annually, training relevant staff, and ensuring statutory compliance.

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as required by changes in law, PDE guidance, or Board action. This policy supersedes prior truancy program policies upon Board approval.

XX. Legal References

24 P.S. §§ 13-1326–1354; 24 P.S. § 13-1330; 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2; 24 P.S. § 13-1333; 24 P.S. § 13-1333.1; 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3; Act 138 of 2016; Act 47 of 2025; 22 Pa. Code Chapter 11; applicable PDE Basic Education Circulars; Commonwealth v. Kerstetter.

Deliverable 2: Appendix A

Laboratory Charter School Attendance and Truancy Policy (2026–2027)

Approved: August 21, 2025

Revised June 2026

I. Purpose and Legal Authority

Laboratory Charter School requires all compulsory school-age students enrolled in the School to attend regularly in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code, 22 Pa. Code Chapter 11, Act 138 of 2016, applicable PDE Basic Education Circulars, and Act 47 of 2025. Regular attendance is essential to student academic success, continuity of instruction, safety, and statutory compliance.

II. Attendance Expectations and School Day Requirements

Students are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for instruction by 8:30 a.m. each instructional day. Arrival at 10:00 a.m. is recorded as a half-day present; arrival at 11:00 a.m. or later is recorded as a full-day absence; early dismissals after 2:00 p.m. are prohibited except in verified emergencies.

III. Excused and Unexcused Absences

An excused absence is an absence permitted under 24 P.S. § 13-1329. An unexcused absence is an absence not permitted under Section 1329 or for which an approved explanation has not been submitted within the required time and manner. Written excuse documentation must be submitted within three school days of return; repeated absences may prompt supportive review and outreach.

IV. Truancy Definitions and Thresholds

A student is truant upon incurring three unexcused absences during a school year and habitually truant upon incurring six or more unexcused absences during a school year. A conviction is not required for habitual truancy status.

V. Truancy Notifications and Mandatory Notice Content (Effective December 12, 2025)

All written notices to parents/guardians of truant students shall include notice that a habitually truant student may not transfer during the school year to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child, and shall include resources available to return to compliant attendance and support academic recovery.

VI. Cyber Charter School Transfer Restrictions (Effective December 12, 2025)

A habitually truant student is prohibited from transferring during the school year to a cyber charter school unless a court determines that the transfer is in the student's best interest. This applies to students transferring from any school. The School shall make reasonable inquiry at mid-year enrollment regarding prior unexcused absences during the current school year.

VII. School Attendance Improvement Conference and Plan

Upon habitual truancy, the School shall convene a School Attendance Improvement Conference and develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan with the student and parent/guardian. Beginning August 1, 2026, habitually truant transfer students shall receive a SAIP and reasonable remedies to mitigate truancy for the remainder of the school year or until no longer subject to compulsory attendance.

VIII. Court Proceedings and Judicial Determinations

At the time a court issues a conviction for violation of compulsory attendance requirements, the court shall determine whether the student may transfer to a cyber charter school during the school year. The School shall cooperate with authorized entities without expanding or limiting judicial authority.

IX. Attendance Recordkeeping and Integrity (Effective January 11, 2026)

Attendance records shall be teacher-generated where applicable, maintained accurately and contemporaneously, and altered only to correct documented errors. No administrator or chief administrator may alter a teacher-recorded attendance entry except to correct an error.

X. Cyber Charter Statutory Provisions (Acknowledgement)

Act 47 establishes cyber charter requirements involving synchronous visibility, asynchronous weekly benchmarks, PDE approval, wellness checks, PIMS reporting, and child-protection/support planning. Laboratory Charter School is a brick-and-mortar charter school; therefore, these provisions are acknowledged for statutory completeness and are not operationally applicable unless the School's instructional model changes.

XI. Tardiness and Early Dismissals

Tardiness shall be excused only for reasons consistent with excused absences. Repeated unexcused tardiness shall trigger progressive interventions, family communication, and when appropriate, attendance improvement planning. Eleven unexcused tardies convert to one unexcused absence for truancy determination.

XII. Reporting Obligations and Criminal Liability (Effective August 1, 2026)

The School shall report student attendance data, enforcement actions, and related costs to PDE as requested by the Secretary of Education. Knowingly falsifying attendance data or reports submitted to PDE is a misdemeanor of the third degree.

XIII. Enforcement and Student Protections

Enforcement may include written warnings, attendance contracts, community referrals, or legal action as authorized by law after required school-based steps. No student shall be suspended, expelled, or transferred solely for truancy. Reasonable accommodations and protections shall be provided under IDEA, Section 504, ADA, and McKinney-Vento.

XIV. Responsibility, Distribution, and Review

The Principal or designated Truancy Interventionist is responsible for attendance records, policy implementation, annual distribution, staff training, and compliance with reporting obligations. The policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.

XV. Legal References

24 P.S. §§ 13-1326–1354; 24 P.S. § 13-1330; 24 P.S. § 13-1327.2; 24 P.S. § 13-1333; 24 P.S. § 13-1333.1; 24 P.S. § 13-1333.3; Act 138 of 2016; Act 47 of 2025; 22 Pa. Code Chapter 11; PDE Basic Education Circular – Compulsory School Attendance; Commonwealth v. Kerstetter.

Act 47 Cyber Charter Requirements - Statutory Reference Only

For cyber charter schools, presence for synchronous instruction requires that the student be present and visible to the teacher on camera during each synchronous instructional period, subject to teacher-directed or teacher-approved breaks.

For cyber charter schools, asynchronous attendance requires completion of weekly benchmarks that demonstrate adequate and consistent progress toward course completion, with defined consequences for failure to make progress.

Cyber charter schools must submit required attendance policies, weekly benchmark materials, wellness check policies, and related forms to PDE according to Act 47 timelines, including annual submissions and PIMS reporting requirements.

Cyber charter schools must conduct weekly wellness checks, maintain required documentation, and implement Child Protection and Support Plans when statutory wellness triggers are identified. These cyber-only provisions are not applicable to Laboratory Charter School's current brick-and-mortar instructional model.

Deliverable 3: Evaluation Criteria Matrix

Evaluation Criterion	Evidence (Policy Section)	Status	Comments	Recommended Revision (if any)
Suspension prohibited for truant behavior	Section XV; Section XVII	Fully Meets	Policy expressly prohibits suspension as a consequence for truancy.	None.
Expulsion prohibited for truant behavior	Section XV; Section XVII	Fully Meets	Policy expressly prohibits expulsion as a consequence for truancy.	None.
Transfer prohibited for truant behavior	Section XV; Section XVII	Fully Meets	Policy expressly prohibits transfer as a consequence for truancy.	None.
Attendance conference required before referral	Section X; Section XV	Fully Meets	Attendance conference is stated as mandatory before referral to any legal entity.	None.
Supportive interventions required	Sections V, XI, XII, XVI	Fully Meets	Policy prioritizes supportive interventions, family engagement, academic recovery, MTSS, and community supports.	None.
Early identification	Section VII	Fully Meets	Daily monitoring and early flagging are required.	None.
Attendance improvement planning	Section XI	Fully Meets	SAIP/AIP elements and monitoring are described.	None.
Parent/guardian engagement	Sections VI, IX, X, XI	Fully Meets	Policy requires parent communication and conference participation.	None.
Community resources	Section XVI	Fully Meets	Community support referrals are expressly included.	None.
Academic supports and recovery	Sections V, XII, XVI	Fully Meets	Academic recovery and intervention supports are included.	None.
Progress monitoring and evaluation	Sections XI, XIV, XVIII	Fully Meets	Follow-up, data monitoring, and annual evaluation are required.	None.
Act 47 alignment	Sections VIII, IX, XIII, XIV; Appendix A	Fully Meets	Policy includes Act 47 definitions, notices, transfer restrictions, reporting, and cyber-specific statutory acknowledgement.	None.

Deliverable 4: Legal Compliance Crosswalk

Statute/BEC	Requirement	Policy Section	Compliance Status	Notes
Act 138 of 2016	Attendance conference, supportive interventions, AIP/SAIP process, prohibition on exclusionary consequences for truancy.	Sections X, XI, XV, XVII	Fully Meets	Core student-rights and process protections retained and strengthened.
Act 47 of 2025	Cyber charter transfer restriction, habitual truancy clarification, truancy notice content, court determination, attendance record integrity, reporting, falsification penalties.	Sections VIII, IX, XIII, XIV; Appendix A	Fully Meets	Effective-date-specific provisions included.
24 P.S. §§ 13-1326–1354	Compulsory attendance and enforcement framework.	Sections III, IV, VIII, X, XI, XX	Fully Meets	Policy references compulsory attendance framework and related procedures.
24 P.S. § 13-1330	Exceptions to compulsory attendance.	Section IV	Fully Meets	Converted into policy language with documentation requirements.
24 P.S. § 13-1327.2	Charter/cyber charter attendance policy requirements.	Appendix A; Attendance Policy Sections IX-XII	Fully Meets	Brick-and-mortar applicable provisions operationalized; cyber-only provisions acknowledged.
24 P.S. § 13-1333(c.1)	Restriction on cyber charter transfers by habitually truant students.	Section XIII; Appendix A VI	Fully Meets	Prohibition and judicial best-interest exception included.
24 P.S. § 13-1333.1	SAIP for habitually truant transfer students and mitigation remedies.	Section XI; Appendix A VII	Fully Meets	Effective August 1, 2026 requirement included.
24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(i)	Court determination of cyber charter transfer eligibility at conviction.	Appendix A VIII	Fully Meets	Court duty referenced without expanding School authority.
PDE Basic Education Circular - Compulsory School Attendance	Policy should align with PDE attendance/truancy framework and supportive intervention approach.	Sections III, V, VII-XII, XVIII	Fully Meets	Policy uses supportive, documented, conference-based attendance improvement process.
22 Pa. Code Chapter	School attendance	Sections III, IV, XX	Fully Meets	Legal references and

11	and excusal framework.			excuse framework included.
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Final Quality Assurance Certification

- No conflicting language identified between the Truancy Program Policy and Appendix A.
- Duplicative prior-policy overview language was consolidated.
- Terminology has been standardized: School Attendance Improvement Conference, School Attendance Improvement Plan, truancy, habitual truancy, parent/guardian, and legal entity.
- Statutory citations are consistently presented.
- Document is formatted for Board, PDE, CSO, and solicitor review.