

Carlsbad Municipal School District Truancy and Drop-Out Prevention

Gary Perkowski, Superintendent
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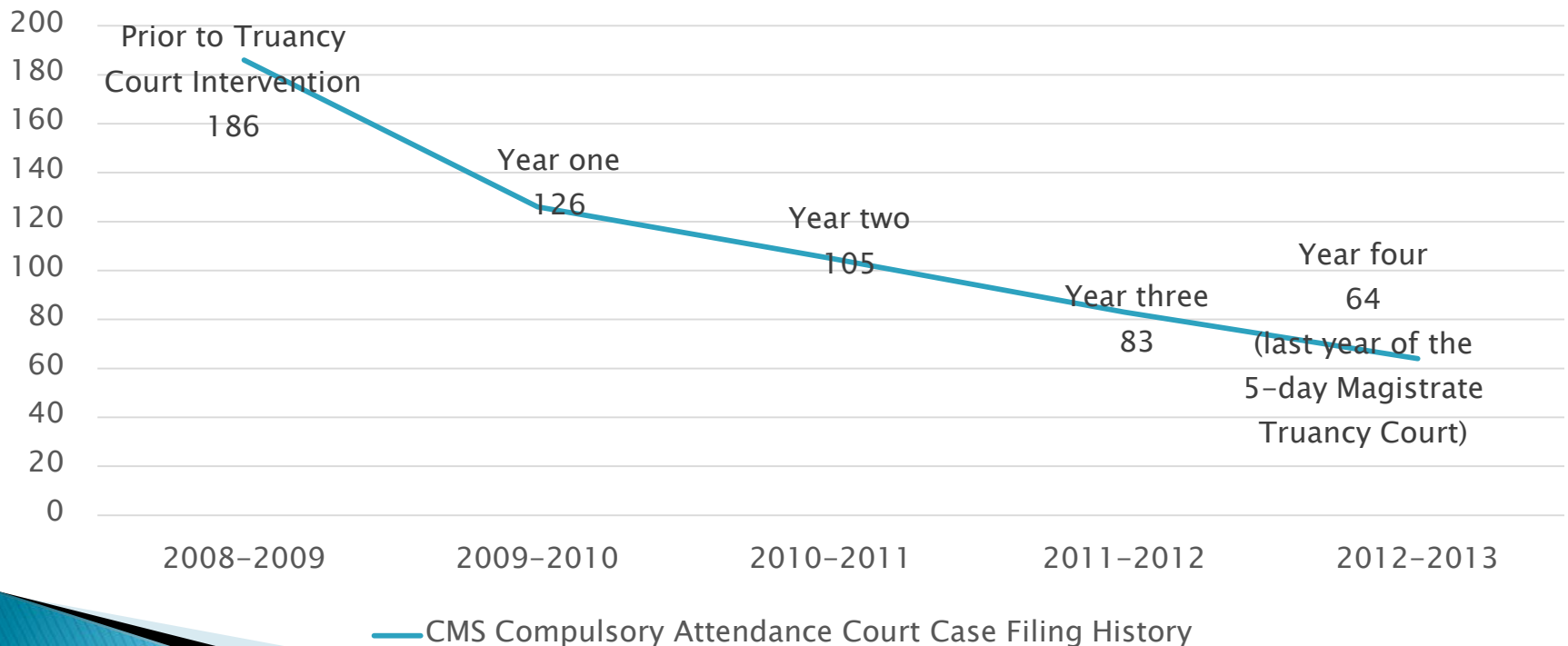
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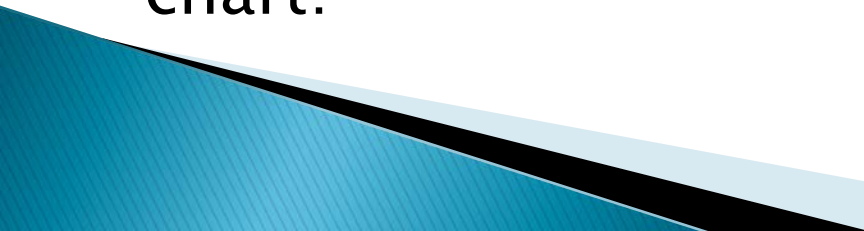
Truancy Court Intervention History

- ▶ Due to high truancy rates, the Carlsbad Municipal School District implemented a *Truancy Court Intervention Program* in February, 2009,
- ▶ Any student with 5–9 “unexcused” absences was required to appear in *Truancy Court, with a parent/guardian*, before the school truancy officer, principal, and a presiding magistrate judge.
- ▶ The student & parent were assigned consequences/interventions by the school, and supported by the judge, in an effort to improve attendance and overall academic/behavioral performance.
- ▶ This five day truancy court intervention was successful as indicated in the chart on the following slide:

Five Day, Magistrate TRUANCY COURT INTERVENTION EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

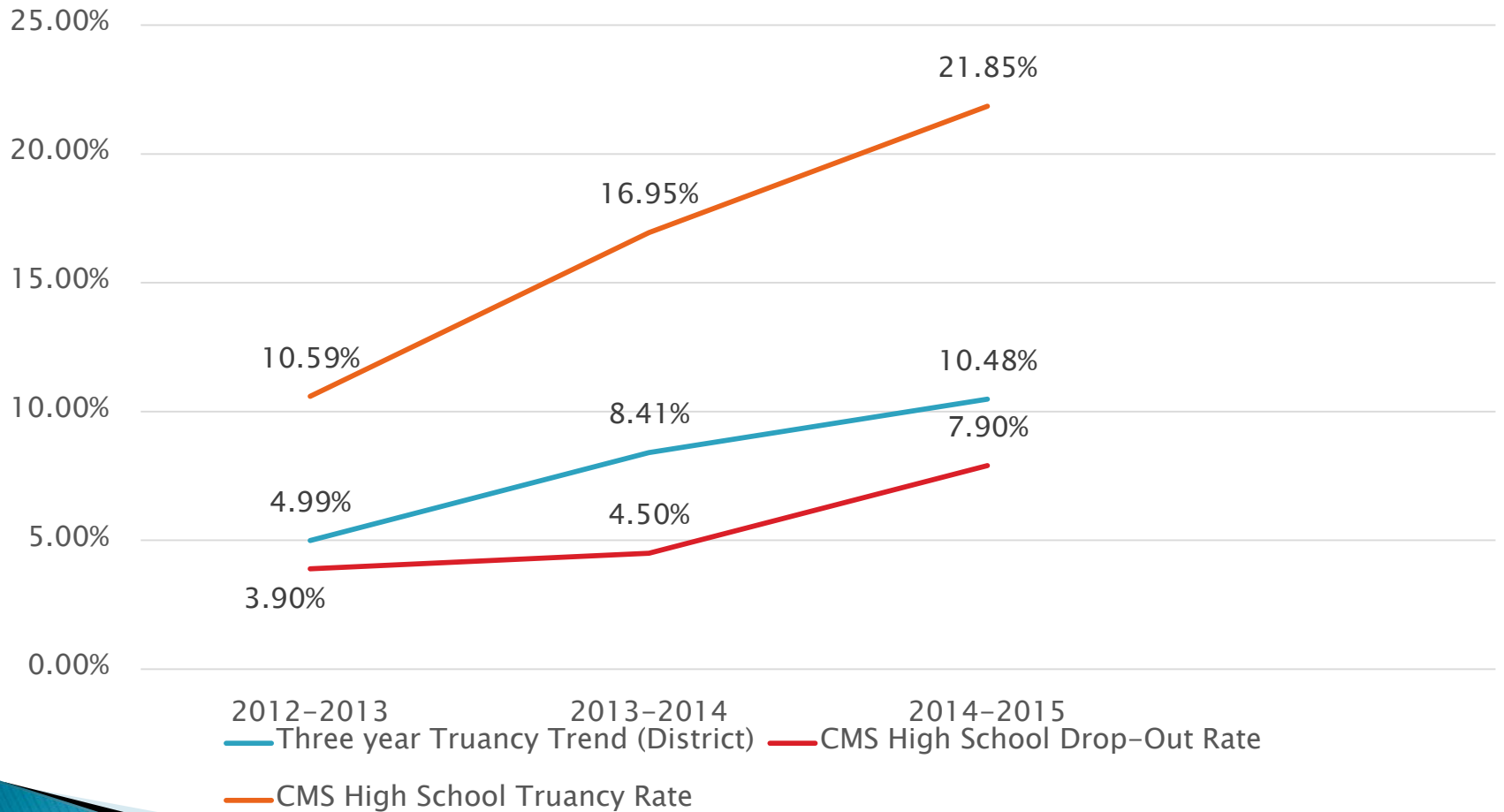
With the initial implementation of the five-day *Truancy Court* Intervention, CMS saw a drastic decline in the number of students/guardians in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and the number of Magistrate Court case filings



- ▶ At the close of the 2012–2013 school year, the Administrative Office of the Courts informed Carlsbad Municipal School District and the Magistrate Court Judge that the district could no longer use a Magistrate Judge for the 5–day Truancy Court Intervention.
 - ▶ Due to lack of resources and loss of the Magistrate Judge’s involvement, CMS halted the 5–day truancy court process and began seeking alternative solutions to the truancy problem.
 - ▶ As a result of the ceasing of Magistrate Truancy Court Intervention, in 2013, Carlsbad Municipal Schools began to see an immediate increase and correlation in truancy and drop–out rates. The high school truancy and drop–out percentages **doubled** in two years, as shown in the following chart:
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CMS Truancy and Drop-Out Rate Trends

(Upon the Ceasing of 5-Day Magistrate Truancy Court Intervention)



The result of dismissing the 5-Day Truancy Court Intervention with Magistrate Court (ending in 2013), caused an overwhelming increase in the overall truancy rate in all grades of the Carlsbad Municipal School District

2012–2013 School Year	2013–2014 School Year	2014–2015 School Year
4.99%	8.41%	10.48%

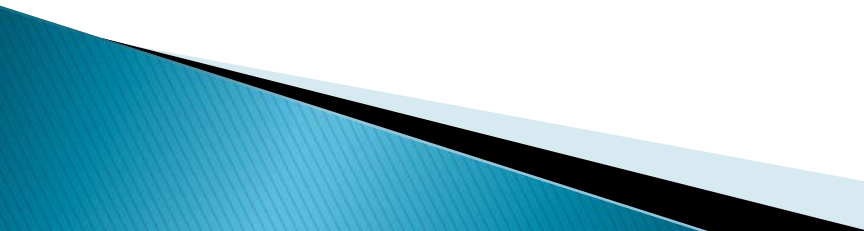
Therefore, the Carlsbad Municipal School District identified a need to recover the 5-day truancy prevention/intervention court and worked directly with the NMPED during the N.M. 2015 Legislative Session to develop HB240 (School Attendance Law Early Warning System).

CMS Truancy Prevention Plan

Early Warning System

- ▶ In response to the drastic increase in truancy and drop-out rates upon the ceasing of the Magistrate 5-Day Truancy Court Intervention, Carlsbad Municipal School District saw immediate consequences over the next two years and developed a new intervention plan in September, 2015 to address the immediate need for action.
- ▶ Several community partners have supported the district with the implementation of the Truancy Intervention Court Program, including United Way of Carlsbad & South Eddy County (\$70,000 in grant funding).
- ▶ The Truancy Prevention, Early Warning System provides interventions based on individual student needs and addresses the specific underlying cause of the student's truancy.

Truancy cannot be improved with JUST imposing consequences. CMS Identified and Began to Address the Underlying Causes of Truancy

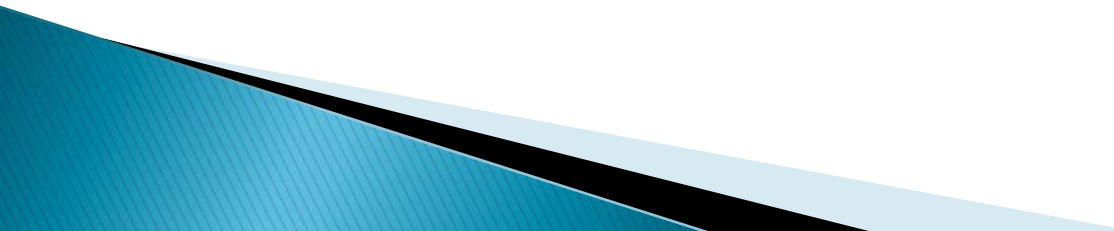
- ▶ Lack of Resources for Students and Families
 - Medical (Behavioral and Physical Health)
 - Food, Shelter, clothing
 - Childcare
 - Transportation
 - ▶ Homelessness
 - ▶ Academic and Social Needs
 - ▶ Lack of Support Systems for Students and Families
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Solutions and Interventions

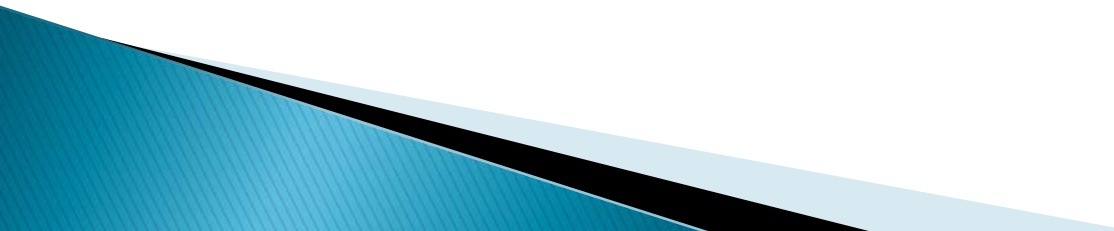
▶ Early Warning:

- A student with three Unexcused absences is identified as a student in need of support/services.
- A letter is delivered to the parent/guardian explaining the Compulsory Attendance Law and meeting with the school Social worker, principal, and parent/guardian is held and a “needs assessment” (intake) is completed.
- At five unexcused absences, a student is in need of intervening services. The student and guardian are notified to appear before the Community Truancy Action Committee.

Solutions and Interventions

- ▶ The confidential process of appearing before the Truancy Action Committee involves the following process:
 - Student and family have the opportunity to meet with a school social worker to determine the need for intervening services
 - Principal provides the committee and Truancy Court Judge information, evidence of attempted interventions, and attendance history
 - Student/family respond with reasons for truancy and may request intervening services in and effort to improve attendance
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Solutions and Interventions

- Resources are available on site, to **IMMEDIATELY** address barriers that may be impeding successful attendance
 - Student/family are provided time with a social worker to determine long-term services and provide support with securing essential necessities
 - Student/family respond with reasons for truancy and may request intervening services in and effort to improve attendance
 - Resources are provided as available, a plan for monitoring student attendance and progress is developed, and interventions implemented
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Interventions Assigned by Truancy Action Committee:

- ▶ During Truancy Intervention Court, parents and students are assigned interventions appropriately aligned to the individual needs of the student and family:
 - Parent will walk student to the office in the morning and sign-in
 - Before, during, or after-school tutoring
 - Saturday School (for parents and student)
 - Credit Recovery
 - Follow-up meetings with the social worker and/or appearance in Truancy Intervention Court the following week

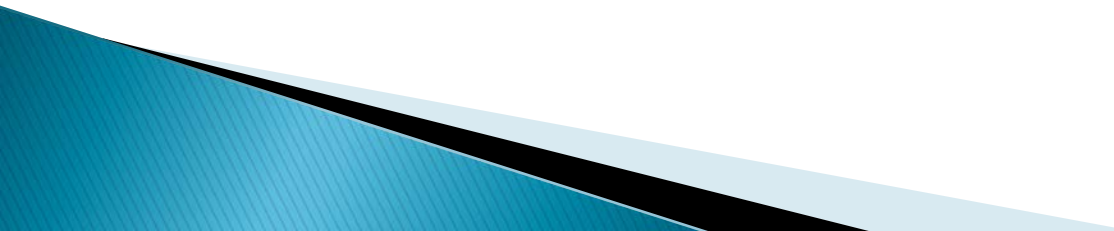
Saturday School

- ▶ Carlsbad Municipal School District applied for a Community Impact Grant from United Way of Carlsbad & South Eddy County
 - ▶ Funds are used to provide a Saturday School 2–3 times per month
 - ▶ Students and parents attend Saturday School together and receive supports such as:
 - Tutoring, homework assistance
 - Healthy cooking, living, life, study and success skills for students and parents
 - Parenting Class
 - Drug-free Education
 - Community Agency presentations and supports
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Saturday School

- ▶ Students will make up any work missed during absences and tutoring from certified, highly qualified staff
- ▶ Unexcused absences may be recovered
- ▶ Parents/students earn “Carlsbad Community Cash” (CCC)
 - Local agencies, grocery stores, restaurants, businesses donate vouchers for basic living needs, meals, etc.
 - Participation in Saturday School qualifies as Community Service for those assigned

Success

- ▶ During the 2015–2016 school year, CMS implemented Community Truancy Action Committee Intervention
 - ▶ 98% of students/parents assigned interventions based on individual needs and Saturday School, showed improvement in attendance and graduated from Truancy Intervention Court
 - ▶ Community agencies and partners participated and a community approach was embraced to support the students and families
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Community Truancy Action Committee/Truancy Court Solution

- ▶ As indicated in the data, when CMS implemented Magistrate Truancy Court Intervention at five unexcused absences, the truancy and drop-out rates decreased and behavioral/academic performance improved.
 - ▶ The three years CMS was unable to implement the Five Day Truancy Court Intervention at Magistrate Court, an immediate and drastic rise in at-risk behaviors including truancy and drop-out was apparent.
 - ▶ However, a 100% success rate in attendance improvement occurred in 2016, when CMS reinstated the revised Truancy Court Intervention Program, identifying the underlying causes of truancy for students/families participating.
 - ▶ Using a presiding judge demonstrated to parents/students that the community is supportive in preventing convictions for violating the Compulsory Attendance Law. A judge's involvement also provides an accountability system based on needs of individual students and a systemic approach to improve attendance and decrease in drop-out in our community.
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THANK YOU, LESC MEMBERS

- ▶ Thank you for the opportunity to present the Carlsbad Community Truancy Action Committee, Early Warning System Plan
 - ▶ Questions?

 - ▶ Gary Perkowski, Superintendent
 - ▶ Kelli Barta, Assistant Superintendent
575-234-3300
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