



Valley View Community Unit School District 365U

Romeoville & Bolingbrook, Illinois



Home

District Information

District Departments



School Board

Parent Information



News



Links

[District News](#) | [District Events](#) | [District Calendar](#) | [District Accolades](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Valley View having great success in reducing the truancy rate



Date Posted: November 7th, 2008

Forget yesterday's stereotype of the truant officer tracking down a student who is skipping school and hauling him into the principal by his ears. There's a better, more successful way to handle things these days.

"I'm an interventionist," said Stacy Baumgartner, program coordinator and attendance specialist for the Education Service Network. "I'm not snagging kids off the street."

Baumgartner, whose desk is located in Bolingbrook High School's Transition Center, has played a key role in Valley View School District 365U's highly successful efforts to reduce the truancy rate at all grade levels.

Brooks Middle School Principal Ron Krause says Baumgartner is "worth her weight in gold."

And she may well be because, while state regulations require 80 percent of a school district's students to be in class 90 percent of the time, Valley View's total attendance numbers hover around 94 percent.

"Our program is a prevention based program," said Baumgartner. "The key to success is building relationships with kids and families. Sometimes I problem solve with the parents and/or students to help them work through the issues that are contributing to non-attendance, for example, I may work on scheduling or help them find day care, we always try to work with the family in a positive way."

Baumgartner, is currently monitoring a case load of 238 youngsters that have been identified during the three school years she has worked with Valley View. Out of those cases 158 are current cases and the rest are follow-up cases from previous years. She has received about 60 new cases since the start of the 2008-09 school year.

Generally speaking, she is tipped off to a potential truancy problem by school officials, and the first thing she does is contact the student's parent or guardian.

"Most of the situations are easy to resolve at this stage," Baumgartner said. "Many of the youngsters and their parents need to be informed about the attendance laws and all it takes is a little encouragement."

But sometimes things go a little further and Baumgartner has to send out a formal letter detailing the consequences and calling the parent or guardian in for a conference with a school administrator.

If truancy issues continue, Baumgartner has no choice but to file the case with the Will County Truancy Officer for an official truancy hearing or to open a case with the courts. But that doesn't happen very often.

"The important thing in this whole process is that I am the objective third party," said Baumgartner, whose program is supervised by Dr. Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, Superintendent of the Will County Regional Office of Education. "I don't work for the school district. I don't get paid by the school district."

"Everyone in the school district works together as a team," she added. "I facilitate the work. The school staff, administration, social workers, deans and counselors all contribute to putting a plan together to improve school attendance for the lifelong benefit of the individual students and their families."

[District Info.](#) | [District Departments](#) | [VVSD Board Info.](#) | [School Information](#) | [News](#) | [District Forms](#) | [Educational Links](#) | [Site Map](#)
[Contact Us](#)