

# MONROE COUNTY TRUANCY PROTOCOL

## “Project Graduation”

MONROE COUNTY PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE

WILLIAM PAUL NICHOLS, Prosecuting Attorney



MONROE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

MONROE COUNTY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Airport Community Schools

Bedford Public Schools

Dundee Community Schools

Ida Public Schools

Jefferson Schools

Mason Consolidated Schools

Monroe Public Schools

Summerfield Schools

Whiteford Agricultural Schools

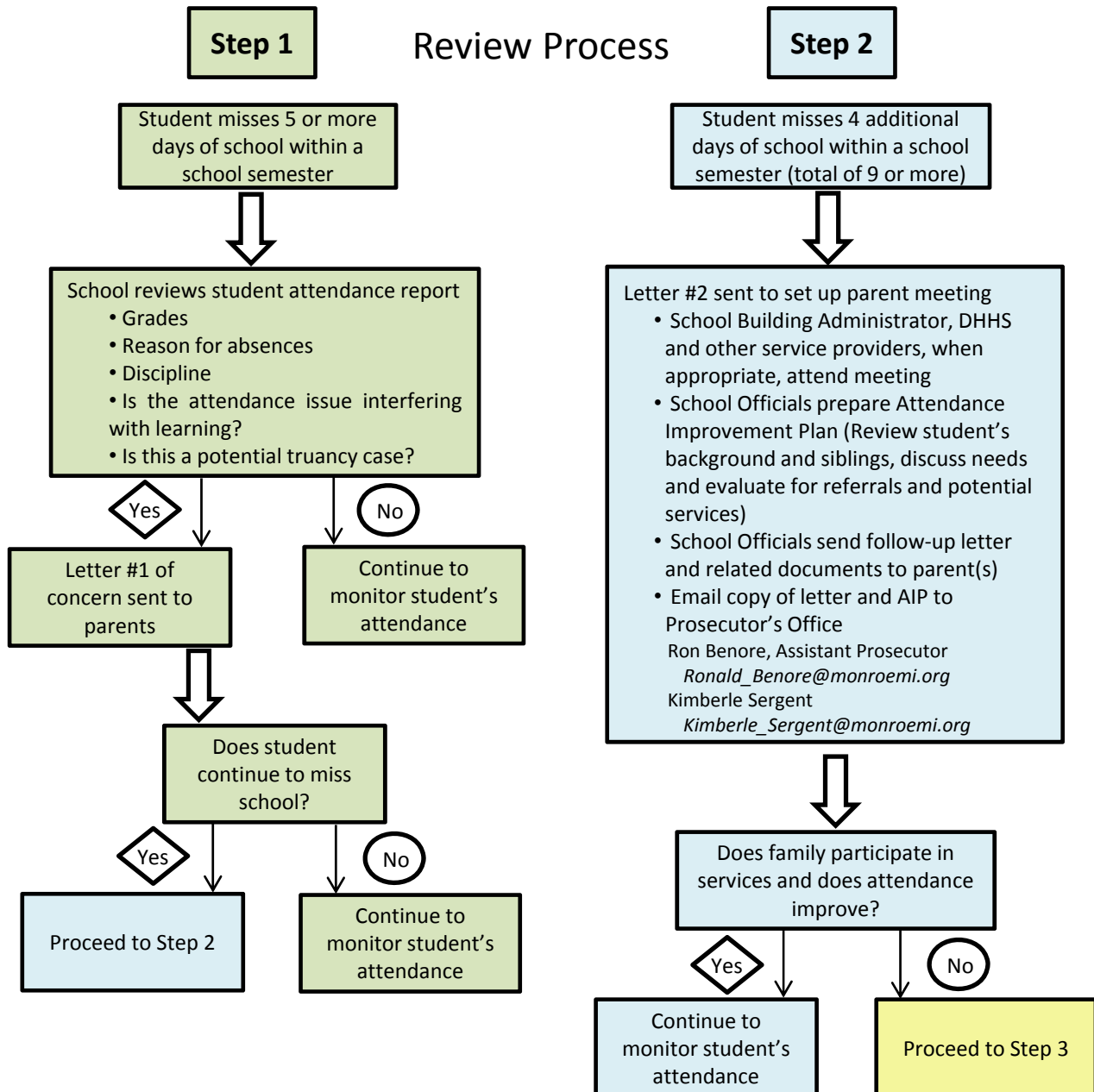
Triumph Academy

New Bedford Academy



# MONROE COUNTY TRUANCY PROTOCOL

## “Project Graduation”



### Step 3

Email Prosecutor the Prosecutor Truancy Referral Form with attachments:

- Copy of Letter #1
- Copy of Letter #2
- Student's Attendance Report
- Attendance Improvement Plan
- Other documents

*Ronald\_Benore@monroemi.org and  
Kimberle\_Sergent@monroemi.org*



Prosecutor meets with family and/or student to review potential consequences and offer an Attendance Agreement to avoid prosecution

- Copy of Agreement will be emailed to School Attendance Officer



Do family and student follow attendance agreement and does attendance improve?

Yes

Continue to monitor student's attendance

No

Proceed to Step 4

### Step 4

Email local Police Agency the Law Enforcement Truancy Referral Form with attachments:

- Letters to Parents
- Student's Attendance Report
- Attendance Improvement Plan
- Prosecutor Truancy Referral Form
- Prosecutor Attendance Agreement
- Additional Documents



Criminal charge(s) will be filed against parent(s) (when appropriate) and/or delinquency charge will be filed against the juvenile (when appropriate)

### Monroe County Schools "Project Graduation" Contact Information

#### Monroe County Office of Prosecuting Attorney

125 E. Second Street  
Monroe, Michigan 48161  
734-240-7600 (main)  
734-240-7626 (fax)

William Paul Nichols, County Prosecutor  
*William\_Nichols@monroemi.org*  
Ron Benore, Assistant Prosecutor  
*Ronald\_Benore@monroemi.org*  
Kimberle Sergent  
*Kimberle\_Sergent@monroemi.org*

# MONROE COUNTY TRUANCY PROTOCOL

## “Project Graduation”

### School Checklist

**Step 1:** Send Letter #1 by certified mail to parents once the child has missed 5 days of school AND absences are interfering with education. Keep a copy of this letter for your records only. Proceed to Step 2 if attendance continues to be a problem.

**Step 2:** Send Letter #2 by certified mail to parents to set up a meeting to personally meet regarding attendance problem. This letter should be sent out once the student has 9 absences. This meeting may include DHHS and any other providers. E-mail a copy of Letter #2 to the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office by sending it as an attachment to [ronald\\_benore@monroemi.org](mailto:ronald_benore@monroemi.org) and [kimberle\\_sergent@monroemi.org](mailto:kimberle_sergent@monroemi.org). The Prosecutor's Office will also send a letter to the parent(s) urging them to meet with the school and work to remedy the problem to avoid additional consequences. Proceed to Step 3 if attendance continues to be a problem or the parents fail to attend the meeting at the school.

**Step 3:** Send Prosecutor Truancy Referral Form along with the following attachments:

- Copy of Letter #1
- Copy of Letter #2
- Student's Attendance Report
- Attendance Improvement Plan
- Other documents

E-mail referral form and all attachments to [ronald\\_benore@monroemi.org](mailto:ronald_benore@monroemi.org) and [kimberle\\_sergent@monroemi.org](mailto:kimberle_sergent@monroemi.org) or fax them to (734) 240-7626.

The Prosecutor's Office will then set up a time to meet with the parents (and child when appropriate) and offer to enter into an Attendance Agreement to avoid prosecution. A copy of this agreement will be emailed to the Attendance Officer at the school.

**Step 4:** If attendance continues to be a problem, send Law Enforcement Truancy Referral Form and all attachments by e-mail to the local police agency. Criminal charges will be immediately filed against the parents (when appropriate) and/or delinquency charges against the juvenile (when appropriate).

**Repeat Offenders:** For families who have been through all of the above steps, send a Law Enforcement Truancy Referral Form and all attachments to the local police agency seeking immediate prosecution.

**STEP 1**

**FORMS**

**[DATE]**

Parent/Guardian of:

**[Students Name]**

**[Street Address]**

**[City, State, Zip]**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Student attendance is a critical factor in determining academic success at all grades. At every age, families play a key role in providing an understanding of why attendance is so important for success in school and in life. Research shows that:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absences are a proven early warning sign for students at risk of dropping out of school.
- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores.

**Clearly attendance matters!**

Our records indicate that **[STUDENTS FIRST NAME]** has reached **(#)** morning absences, **(#)** afternoon absences, **(#)** tardies and has left early **(#)** times. A student is considered chronically absent if he or she has missed 10 percent or more of the days he or she has been enrolled in school. Your child's attendance has reached a level of concern.

We realize some absences are unavoidable. However, when students miss too much school – regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically.

We want your child to be successful. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time. As **[INSERT NAME]**, my role is to help support you, your child and your child's teacher to improve his or her attendance.

Here are a few suggestions to help support your child's attendance.

- Establish a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Only allow your child to stay home if he/she is ill.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers or Student Support Staff for suggestions regarding your child's comfort.
- Develop a support system you can rely on for assistance in getting your child to school.

Let me know how we can best support you and your child in order to improve his or her attendance. If I can be of assistance, please contact me. I can be reached during school hours at **[PHONE NUMBER]**. We want your child to be successful!

Your Partner in Education,

**[Name]**

**[Title]**

Cc: **[Building Principal's Name]**, Principal  
Student Cumulative File

**STEP 2**

**FORMS**

**[Date]**

Parent/Guardian of:

**[Student Name]**

**[Street Address]**

**[City, State, Zip]**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Monroe Public Schools is dedicated to academic achievement and success for all students. Consistent school attendance is a critical part of that success. Our district is committed to increasing the student attendance rate in all of our district schools. Regular attendance improves academic skills, as well as social and emotional growth for our students.

We understand some absences from school are unavoidable. However, chronic absenteeism can be a barrier to your child's education. Chronic absenteeism is linked to drop out rates and academic struggles. We care about your child and their future success.

You have been contacted regarding **[STUDENT's NAME]**'s attendance reaching a level of concern. Our records show that **[STUDENT's FIRST NAME]** continues to be chronically absent from school and has reached **(#)** morning absences, **(#)** afternoon absences, **(#)** tardies and has left early **(#)** times.

If this pattern continues, state law requires Monroe Public Schools to file legal truancy charges. In an effort to support you and your child in identifying and eliminating barriers to regular attendance we will hold an Attendance Improvement Plan meeting. You are an important member of our team and your presence at this meeting is critical. The meeting has been scheduled for **[DATE/TIME]**. Please call me at **[PHONE NUMBER]** at your earliest convenience to confirm your attendance.

Our Student Support team is committed to supporting you and your family in this effort to have **[STUDENT's FIRST NAME]** attend school regularly.

Your Partner in Education,

**[Name]**

**[Title]**

**[BUILDING PRINCIPAL]**

Principal

Cc: Student Cumulative File



## Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Student Name		Date
Address		DOB
School		Grade
Home Phone	Parent Cell Phone	Student Cell Phone

### AIP Team Participation

Individual(s) participated in the Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting

Principal/Designee	Date	Other(note relationship or title)	Date
Family(note relationship to student)	Date	Other(note relationship or title)	Date
Student	Date	Other(note relationship or title)	Date
Other(note relationship or title)	Date	Other(note relationship or title)	Date

Did parent(s) attend: ☐ Yes ☐ No      Forms given to parent: ☐ Yes ☐ No      Forms given to student: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cc: Student Cumulative File

Student Family

FOOTNOTE: STEP 2 - Attendance Improvement Plan

## Attendance Improvement Plan

Student Name	Date
School	Grade
Primary Reason(s) for absences: (Identify family and student barriers)	
Previous Attendance Interventions:	
Identify Student's Strengths/Goals	

## Attendance Improvement Plan

**Attendance Improvement Plan:** (Identifying specific goals and responsible parties)

**Student Check-In Plan:** (Include time of day, frequency and contact person)

**Additional Interventions / Supports Needed:** (Consider family, school and community supports)

**Other Comments / Considerations:**

**[DATE]**

To the Parent of:

**[STUDENT NAME]**

**[STREET ADDRESS]**

**[CITY, STATE, ZIP]**

Dear **[PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME]**,

Thank you for attending the Attendance Improvement Plan meeting regarding **[STUDENT FIRST NAME]**. It is very important that schools and families work together to ensure success at school. Regular attendance is a critical part of every student's success. The State of Michigan requires that every child of compulsory school age attend school daily.

This letter is intended to summarize the **[DATE]** Attendance Improvement Plan held for **[STUDENT NAME]**.

Information provided to parent during the Attendance Improvement Plan:

- Student Attendance Summary
- Student Attendance Detail
- Attendance Improvement Plan

Information included in this letter:

- Compulsory Attendance – Michigan Law
- District Attendance Policy
- Copy of Attendance Improvement Plan

If **[STUDENT FIRST NAME]**'s attendance does not improve your child's attendance records will be submitted to the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office for further review.

**[SCHOOL NAME]** have an active Student Support Team and other services to assist you and your child. Please contact me at **[PRINCIPAL'S PHONE NUMBER]** to discuss **[STUDENT'S FIRST NAME]**'s attendance and any other barriers that may be preventing **[STUDENT'S FIRST NAME]** from attending school regularly.

Thank you for your support in this matter. I look forward to working with you in furthering your child's educational success.

Your Partner in Education,

**[PRINCIPAL NAME]**

**[SCHOOL NAME, PRINCIPAL]**

Cc: Student Cumulative File  
Student's Teacher(s)

FOOTNOTE: STEP 2: Meeting Summary Letter



## OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Monroe County Courthouse • Third Floor  
125 East Second Street  
Monroe, Michigan 48161-2193

January 22, 2016

RE: **Meeting with School to Discuss Lack of School Attendance  
Student -**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Our office has been informed that your child has been excessively absent from school. Currently, the school reports your child has been absent a total of \_\_\_\_\_ days. You should know that truancy is a criminal offense for both the parent and the child. For an adult, the penalty carries a minimum sentence of not less than 2 days in jail and a maximum sentence of 90 days. Additionally, educational neglect can result in child protective services action. For a child who refuses to go to school, the result can be probation or even the removal of the child from the home.

If you have not yet met with the school to discuss this attendance issue, you need to contact them immediately and schedule a meeting. In the meantime, because of the excessive absences, your child needs to be at school every day or be excused, in writing, by a doctor. There are no other acceptable excuses at this point. If the school documents that your child is ill, the school may allow your child to return home. If your child is too ill to attend school, then a doctor's visit is required.

At this point, our office is choosing not to file criminal charges against you on the condition that your child attends school every day. We are willing to help you if you are having problems getting your child to school or there are problems at school. However, we will file charges for all the past and current absences if you do not fulfill your promise to get your child to school every day.

Your child's success in school is very important to us. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter, please contact me. I am sending a copy of this letter to the school and requesting they notify us if attendance continues to be a problem. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Benore, Jr.  
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

CC: School -  
c/o Attendance Officer -

FOOTNOTE: Prosecutor Letter – Sent by PA, STEP 2

**STEP 3**

**FORMS**

**MONROE COUNTY SCHOOLS "Project Graduation"**  
**PROSECUTOR TRUANCY REFERRAL FORM**

**Student's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Male ☐ Female  
**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birthdate:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's age:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City, Zip Home Phone Cell Phone

**Mother's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City, Zip Home Phone Cell Phone

**Father's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City, Zip Home Phone Cell Phone

**Legal Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City, Zip Home Phone Cell Phone

**Child Resides with:** \_\_\_\_\_

List communications that have taken place, the date completed and by whom:

☐ Letter 1 date sent \_\_\_\_\_ School Official \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Letter 2 date sent \_\_\_\_\_ School Official \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Parent Meeting \_\_\_\_\_ School Official \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Unexcused Absences:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Range:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
School District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Building

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal/Designee: email and phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Attach copies of all documents in chronological order:**

- ☐ Letter #1
- ☐ Letter #2
- ☐ Student's Attendance Report
- ☐ Attendance Improvement Plan
- ☐ Other documents

**Email Referral Form and Attachments to [ronald\\_benore@monroemi.org](mailto:ronald_benore@monroemi.org) AND [kimberle\\_sergent@monroemi.org](mailto:kimberle_sergent@monroemi.org) or fax to (734) 240-7626**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ronald Benore at (734) 240-7620.

FOOTNOTE: STEP 3 – Prosecutor Truancy Referral Form



## OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Monroe County Courthouse • Third Floor  
125 East Second Street  
Monroe, Michigan 48161-2193

January 22, 2016

**RE: Meeting with Prosecutor's Office to Discuss Lack of School Attendance  
Student -**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Our office has been informed that your child continues to have attendance problems despite our previous letter to you and the school's attempts to address this issue.

We previously did not file criminal charges against you because the school was attempting to work with you to resolve this problem. It appears that effort was not successful.

At this point, our office has no choice but to consider filing criminal charges against both of you. However, to avoid possible arrest and prosecution our office is willing to personally meet with you at our office on \_\_\_\_\_. We are located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Monroe County Courthouse at 125 East Second Street in Monroe, Michigan. You must bring with you documentation for any days that your student was properly excused from school. If you fail to appear for that meeting, our office will immediately file criminal charges.

Our office remains willing to help you, but we can no longer allow this attendance problem to continue. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Benore, Jr.  
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

CC: School -  
c/o Attendance Officer -

FOOTNOTE: Prosecutor Letter – Sent by PA, STEP 3





# MONROE COUNTY TRUANCY PROTOCOL “Project Graduation”

## ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

As a **Parent**, I agree that it is my responsibility that \_\_\_\_\_ attends school. I promise to do the following:

1. I will ensure my child attends school on a daily basis. I will provide written documentation from any medical professional regarding any illness that requires my child to miss school.
2. I will sign any medical or school releases of information and provide any other documentation that is required for the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office to verify the terms of this Agreement are being satisfied.
3. If applicable, I will contact the School Attendance Officer within the next business day. I will fully cooperate with them and follow the terms of any agreement that is reached.

**I understand that breaking the promises of this Agreement may result in criminal prosecution and this information being shared with the Court.**

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**The Prosecutor's Office also agrees that as long as these promises are kept, no truancy charges will be filed against the child or the parent/guardian.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ronald J. Benore, Jr.  
Monroe County Prosecutor's Office  
734-240-7620

FOOTNOTE: STEP 3 – Attendance Agreement with Prosecutor/Parent



# MONROE COUNTY TRUANCY PROTOCOL "Project Graduation"

## PARENT / STUDENT ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

As a **Parent**, I agree that it is my responsibility that \_\_\_\_\_ attends school. I promise to do the following:

1. I will ensure my child attends school on a daily basis. I will provide written documentation from any medical professional regarding any illness that requires my child to miss school.
2. I will sign any medical or school releases of information or provide any other documentation that is required for the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office to verify the terms of this Agreement are being satisfied.

**I understand that breaking the promises of this Agreement may result in criminal prosecution and this information being shared with the Court.**

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

As a **Student**, I agree that my education is important for my future. Therefore, I promise to do the following:

1. I will attend school every day and attend every class unless excused by the school.
2. I agree to cooperate with my School Attendance Officer and teachers to improve my attendance.

**I understand that if I break my promises in this Agreement I will face charges.**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

**The Prosecutor's Office also agrees that as long as these promises are kept, no truancy charges will be filed against the child or the parent/guardian.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ronald J. Benore, Jr.  
Monroe County Prosecutor's Office  
734-240-7620

FOOTNOTE: STEP 3 – Parent/Student Attendance Agreement

**STEP 4**

**FORMS**

**MONROE COUNTY SCHOOLS "Project Graduation"**  
**LAW ENFORCEMENT TRUANCY REFERRAL FORM**

School District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's age: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address

City, Zip

Home Phone

Cell Phone

**Parents:** See Prosecutor Referral Form

**Number of Unexcused Absences:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Range:** \_\_\_\_\_

I am submitting the following documentation to law enforcement seeking truancy charges against

☐ Parents and/or ☐ Student:

- Letters to Parents
- Student's Attendance Report
- Attendance Improvement Plan
- Prosecutor Truancy Referral Form
- Attendance Agreement(s)
- Additional Documents: \_\_\_\_\_

The following witnesses have personal knowledge of the excessive absences:

- School Attendance Officer: \_\_\_\_\_
- School Liaison Officer: \_\_\_\_\_
- School Representative at Parent/School Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_
- Service Providers: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name/Agency/Title/Address
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Monroe County Prosecutor's Office would like to acknowledge and thank Judge Frank Arnold - Monroe County Probate Court; Monroe County ISD - Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth Taylor and Assistant Superintendent Michelle Brahaney; Monroe Public Schools - Deputy Superintendent Julie Everly and District Climate and Engagement Liaison Kim VanDevelde for their efforts and assistance in the development of this Truancy Protocol.

We would also like to thank the Muskegon County Prosecutor's Office for allowing us to use their successfully implemented program as a model.