

HR 180 (2025) Report

February 2026

Background

HR 180 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session created a study group to study student truancy, including the feasibility and advisability of adjusting the student count methodology used in the state's elementary and secondary education funding formula in the effort to address truancy, and to submit a written report to the House Committee on Education and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) not later than February 1, 2026.

BESE staff coordinated meeting logistics, and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) staff supported content development for the group.

Membership

Dr. Sharon L. Clark, BESE Member – Chair	
Mr. Nathaniel Adams, Caddo Parish	Dr. Brittany Pecor, Lafayette Parish
Dr. Kristy Brumley, Sabine Parish	Dr. Janet Pope, LA School Boards Association
Mr. Anthony Cain, Downsville Charter	Ms. De’Errka Scott, Magnolia Charter
Dr. Monya Thomas-Criddle, Jefferson Parish	Mr. Robert Wells, EBR Parish
Ms. Christina Faulk, Central Community	Ms. Kendra Taylor, LaSalle Parish
Ms. Nicole Meyers, St. Tammany Parish	Ms. Jazlyn Thibodeaux, Acadia Parish
Mr. Chris Kimball, St. James Parish	Dr. Jason VanMetre, Calcasieu Parish
Ms. Kelly Bonaventure, District Attorney’s Office	
LDOE Liaison Dr. Cade Brumley, State Superintendent of Education Ms. Ashley Townsend, Assistant Superintendent	BESE Staff Mr. Tavares A. Walker, Executive Director Ms. Regine Williams, Communications Manager

Meetings

The HR 180 Truancy Study Group met a total of three times on the following dates:

- 1. October 15, 2025
 - a. [Agenda](#)
 - b. [Minutes](#)
- 2. November 20, 2025
 - a. [Agenda](#)
 - b. [Minutes](#)
- 3. December 10, 2025
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Minutes

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Student Count Methodology

The study group recommends maintaining an enrollment-based MFP formula and avoiding adopting ADA, which would disproportionately harm high-need districts and undermine attendance improvement efforts.

- a. Maintain an enrollment-based MFP formula.
- b. Avoid ADA-based funding, which would destabilize high-need districts.
- c. Consider incentive-based supplemental funding for demonstrated attendance improvement.
- d. Expand funding for attendance clerks, truancy staff, and community-based partnerships.

Recommendation 2: Increasing Student Attendance

The study group recommends investing in proactive strategies that strengthen school climate, student engagement, and family partnership to increase daily attendance.

- a. Provide a statewide attendance support option within the Super App, prioritizing high-need LEAs.
- b. Expand universal tools such as communication templates, model policies, and family outreach guides.
- c. Implement evidence-based programs and practices that improve school climate and student engagement.
- d. Expand nonprofit and business partnerships, not only for engagement but to address real barriers such as transportation, healthcare, and basic needs.

Recommendation 3: Reducing Chronic Absences

The study group recommends that the state serve as a source of support for LEA-led interventions that identify the root causes of absenteeism and provide targeted support for students and families, while continuing to coordinate with FINS, which has made meaningful progress in mapping service availability and connecting families to needed supports.

- a. Continue to implement LDOE's multi-tiered support structure, guided by interdisciplinary attendance teams that include administrators, counselors, teachers, and secretaries.
- b. Work with FINS/judicial partners to create regional service hubs to support districts lacking social services, healthcare partners, or attendance infrastructure.
- c. Expand collaboration with transportation, healthcare, and juvenile services to address root causes.

Recommendation 4: Leveraging the Role of Processes School Counselors

The study group recommends that the state ensure school counselors can fully support attendance by integrating it into their existing prevention, intervention, and student support work, while limiting inappropriate administrative duties.

- a. Issue statewide guidance limiting non-counseling duties so counselors can provide direct services in alignment with ASCA and Louisiana policy.
- b. Develop a Counselor Role Audit tool enabling districts to identify tasks that should be reassigned and to realign counselor time toward direct student support.

Recommendation 5: Accountability for Students and Families

The study group recommends reinforcing shared accountability between schools, families, the justice system, and FINS by ensuring consistent policy enforcement and early, supportive engagement.

- a. Reinforce shared responsibility among schools, families, courts, and FINS in improving attendance.
- b. Ensure consistent, statewide enforcement of attendance laws and policies.

- c. Encourage schools to partner with families and FINS early, prior to the chronic absenteeism threshold, using supportive, relational approaches.
- d. Maintain clear consequences and expectations while emphasizing early support, prevention, and coordinated intervention with FINS.

Recommendation 6: State-Level Coordination — The Power of Presence Advisory Council (PPAC)

The study group recommends that LDOE establish the Power of Presence Advisory Council (PPAC) to ensure continuity and a unified direction across Louisiana’s attendance and truancy efforts, replacing and building upon both the STAR Task Force and the HR 180 Truancy Study Group.

Purpose

- Coordinate statewide attendance and engagement efforts
- Align cross-agency work and policy
- Sustain the momentum of the Power of Presence campaign
- Promote data-driven decision-making and cross-sector collaboration

Membership should include representatives from key education, justice, and community sectors to ensure comprehensive, cross-agency coordination.

- Local school system leaders
- Legislative representation
- Louisiana Supreme Court Office of Juvenile Justice
- District Attorneys Association
- Judges Association
- DCFS, LDH, Louisiana Workforce Commission
- Parents and students
- Nonprofit and community partners

This Council will provide ongoing guidance and continuous state-level support beyond the life of this report.

Conclusion

The HR 180 Study Group found that improving attendance in Louisiana requires coordinated, developmentally informed, community-connected strategies, not punitive funding reductions. The recommendations in this report reflect the complexity of attendance challenges and the need for aligned statewide action supported by the Power of Presence Advisory Council.