

**Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (EURēCA)
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Student Name(s): Jessica Heins	Title of Presentation: Effectiveness of interventions provided by Knox County for families with truant behavior.
Division of Entry: Social Work	Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sungkyu Lee

Abstract: *(Type in 12 point font to fit the box below.)*

Education provides endless opportunities for achievement in today's world. It is vital that children are given every chance to develop successful education habits and are provided with support from the community. The state of Tennessee has clear laws regarding school attendance for children ages six to eighteen. Parents of school age children may face judicial consequences if their children are chronically absent without approved documented excuses. However, regardless of the penalties, parents sometimes struggle to get their children to school. The Knox County School system, together with the Juvenile Court and District Attorney's office offer several interventions in attempt to remedy problems the family may be experiencing. These inventions are intended to offer support to parents. Included are letters and home visits by the school social workers, a community wide meeting for parents of truant children, and finally a court held Truancy Review Board (TRB). The purpose of this research was to examine the effectiveness of the TRB, which is led by the District Attorney's office. The secondary data were retrieved from records kept in the D.A.'s office to include attendance and court files. To evaluate this specific intervention, thirty-nine families were selected using systematic random selection from a list of all families who were invited to a TRB from 2008 to 2011. As a dependent variable, attendance was recorded before and after the intervention. Also, it was indicated whether or not the families attended the community wide meeting and whether charges were filed within court after the TRB. To better understand, other factors, including parental marital status, employment, and number of children in the home, were also examined. From analyzing the initial results, it appears the TRB is effective in preventing further truant behavior within families. The number of days missed before the TRB averaged at 20.21, while the average number of days missed after the intervention was 15.28. The results of paired-samples t-test indicate the difference was statistically significant ($t=2.109$, $df=38$, $p=0.04$). These outcomes show this intervention should be continued as part of the process to stopping truant behavior. In the future, it could be beneficial to examine the content of the intervention more closely and review the resources provided during the meeting.