

# Addressing Truancy

Pueblo City Schools

# Contributors to truancy and drop outs in Pueblo City Schools

- ▶ 22% live in poverty
- ▶ Teen birth rates among highest in state
- ▶ 1,800 homeless (McKinney–Vento)
- ▶ 58% high school graduation rate
- ▶ 51% student mobility



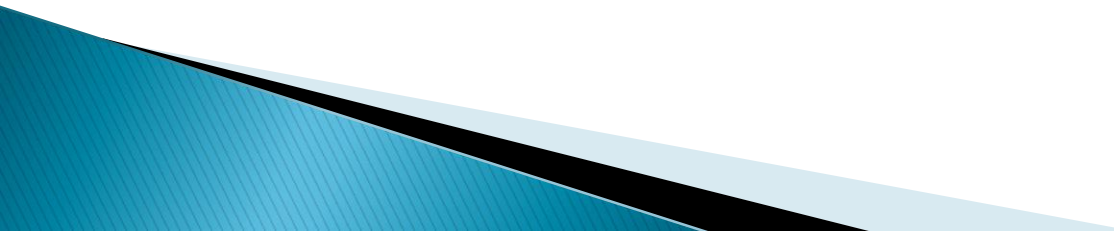
# Demographic Data

	Community	District	Drop Out
Hispanic/ Latino	39%	62%	67%
White/ Caucasian (non Hispanic/ Latino)	57%	33%	26%
Other	4%	5%	7%

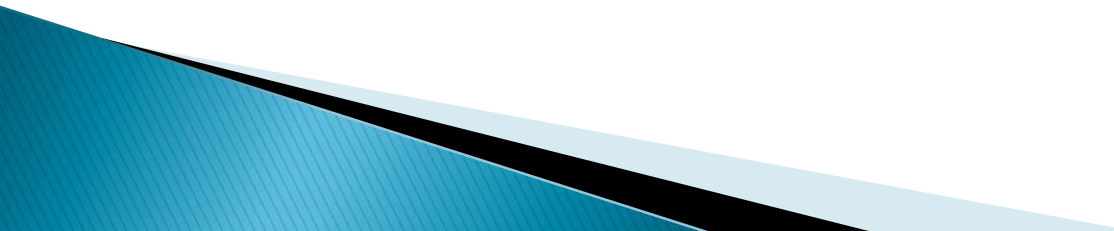
# Truancy Reduction Program

- ▶ Goal– reduce the truancy rate by identifying the causes of truancy and implementing effective interventions in order to give all children the educational opportunities they deserve.

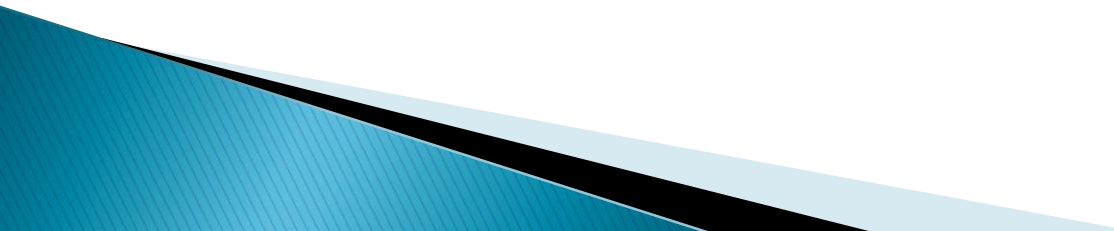
# Truancy is a problem because:

- ▶ Truancy leads to drop out
  - ▶ Government costs per drop out (est. \$209,550)
  - ▶ 90% of youth in detention for delinquency have history of truancy
  - ▶ Can lead to or encourage other high risk behaviors
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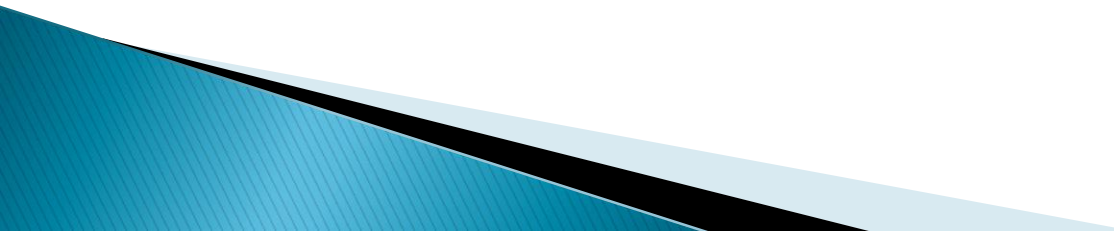
# How it works

- ▶ Partnership between Pueblo City Schools and 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court started in 1999
  - ▶ Students w/ 4 unexcused absences/ month or 10 per semester
  - ▶ Other community partners (e.g. mental health, DSS, Others) regularly attend as court as well.
  - ▶ Students may remain in “Truancy Court” for several years
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# Role of Community Advocates

- ▶ Case manage students (about 25–40 students) in Truancy Court or at risk of truancy
  - ▶ Home visitation
  - ▶ ID barriers to attendance and resources
  - ▶ Bridge between student, family and the courts
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# Court Commitments

- ▶ 6 Court Dockets per week
  - ▶ Review student's progress including attendance, behavior and academic achievement
  - ▶ Frequency of review depends upon individual students progress or lack thereof
  - ▶ Give students and families access to Judges
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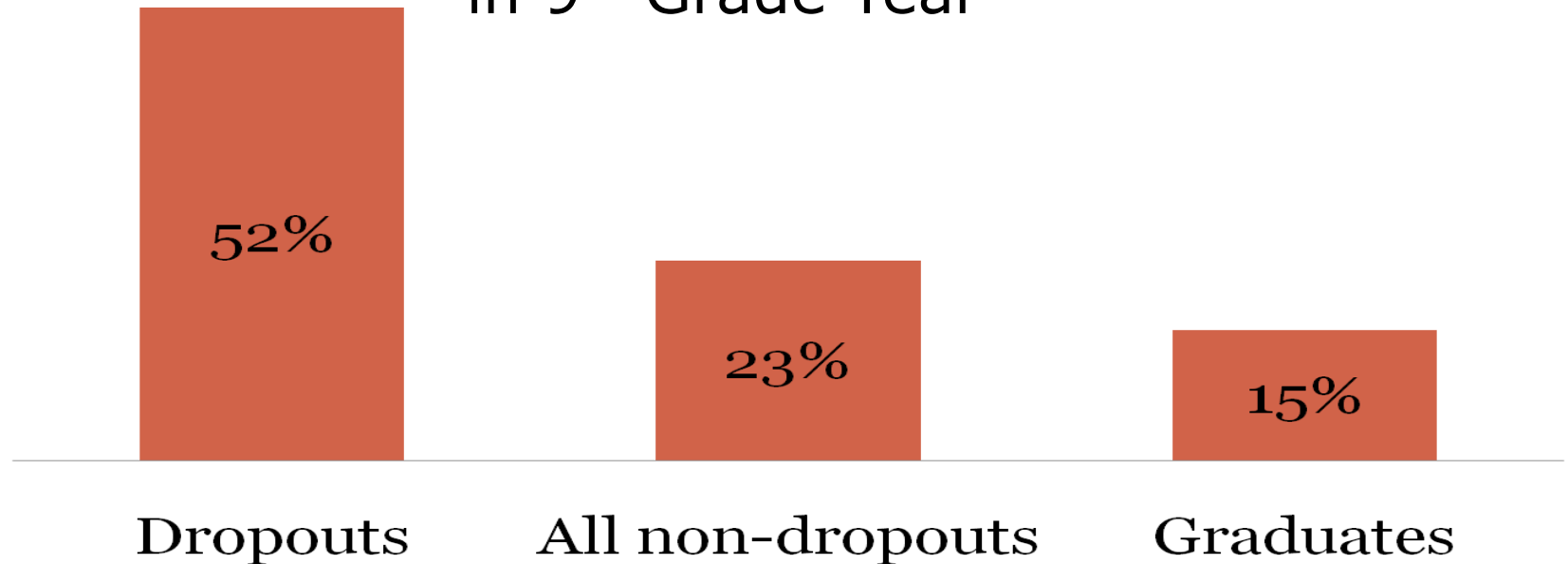


# Why attendance, behavior, and performance?



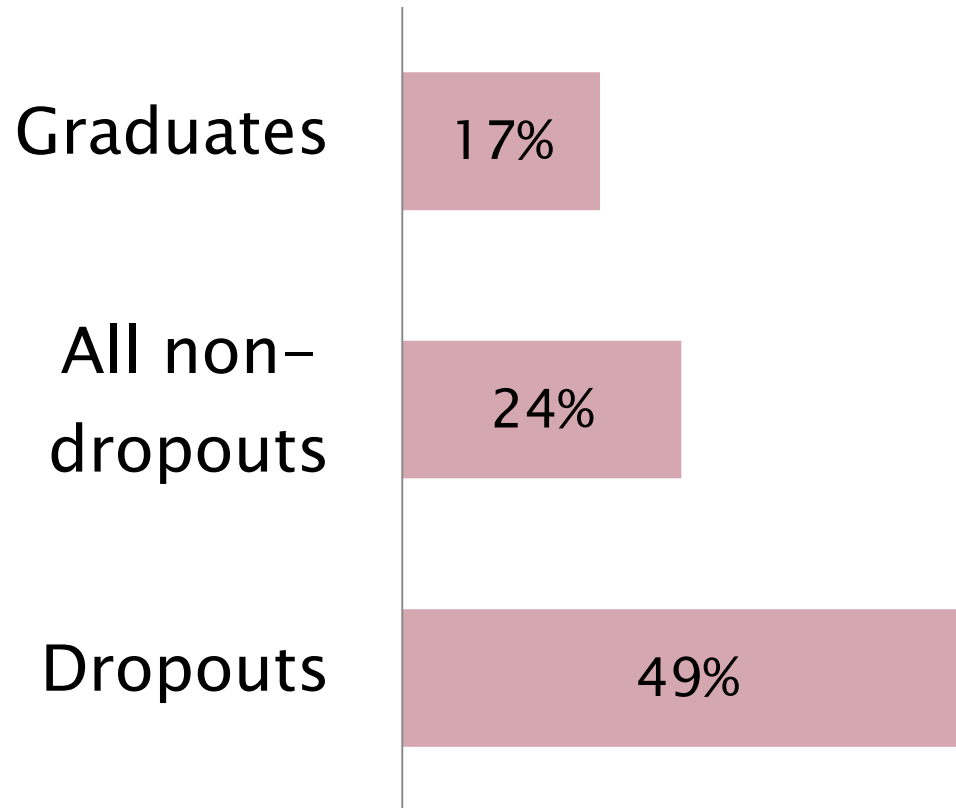
# Attendance Signals from Dropouts

Percent of 2009-10 H.S. students with less than 90% attendance (absent at least 18 days) in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Year



# Behavior

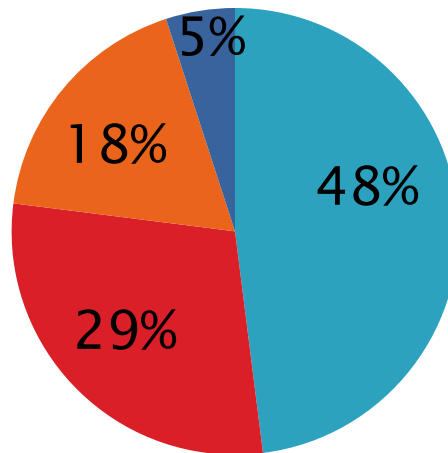
Percent of students with at least one suspension over past four years



# Credits Short of Graduation Requirement

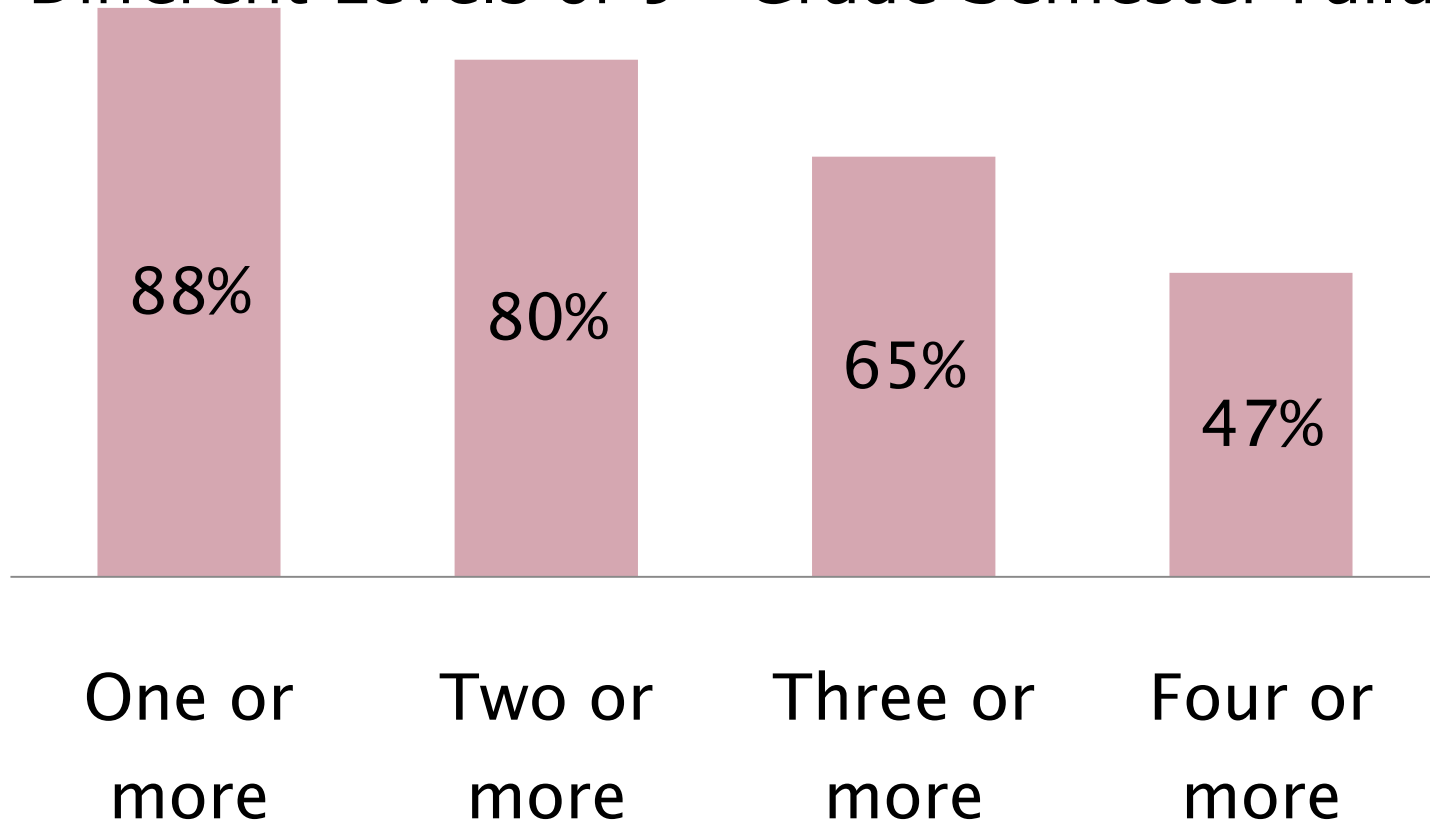
Roughly half of dropouts in grades 9–12 were more than 10 credits short of 22 required for graduation

- More than 10
- Between 5 and 10
- Between 1 and 5
- Within 1



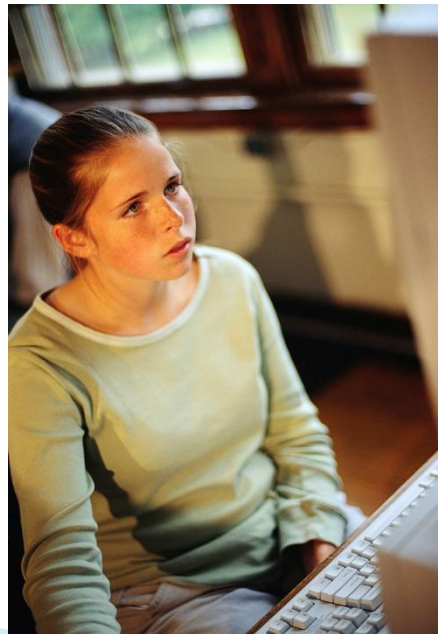
# High Levels of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Failure among Dropouts

Percent of 2009-10 Dropouts with Different Levels of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Semester Failures

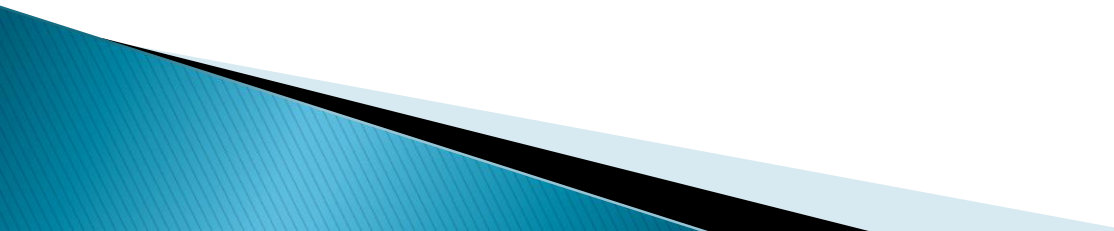


# Challenges

- ▶ When program started, students were sent to truancy court who were absent 35–40 days
- ▶ Difficult to recover– students lost a year
- ▶ Needed to address the problem sooner

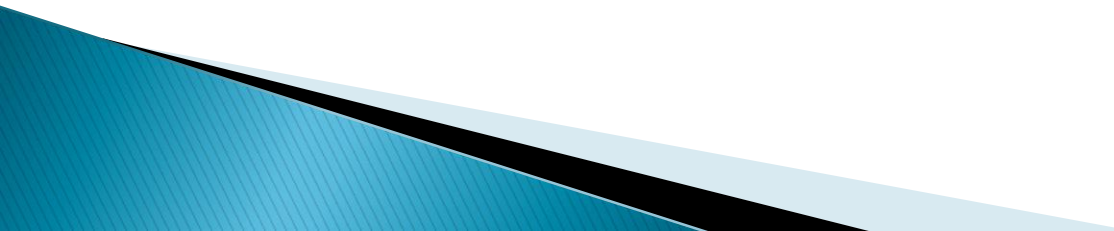


# District Policy

- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> major challenge– Develop a comprehensive and aggressive district policy addressing truancy
  - ▶ Thrust of policy was to prevent students from being summoned into court by requiring school intervention upon each unexcused absence.
  - ▶ If efforts are unsuccessful then court is involved as quickly as possible.
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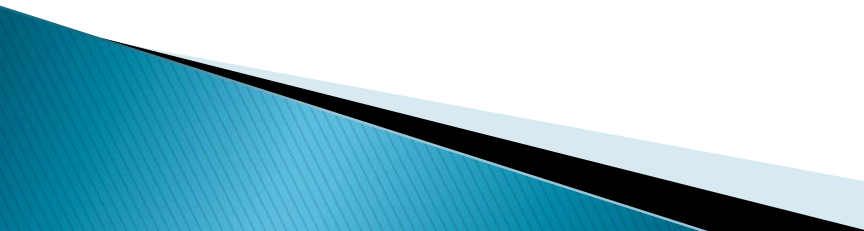


# Other Challenges

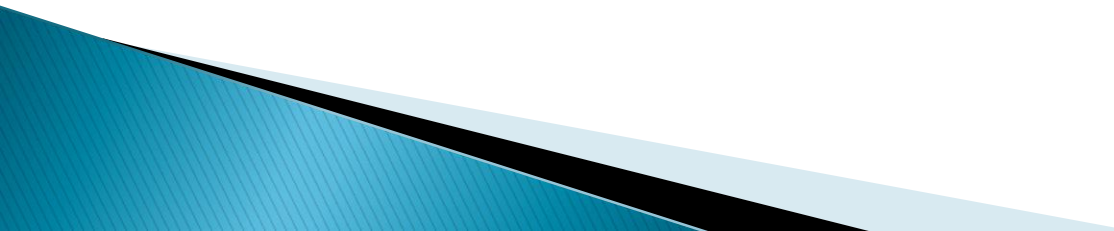
- ▶ State mandatory attendance policy only required school attendance between ages 7 and 16
  - ▶ Medical excuses that excused children from school for long periods of time
  - ▶ Multi-generational culture of absenteeism
  - ▶ Finding the parents
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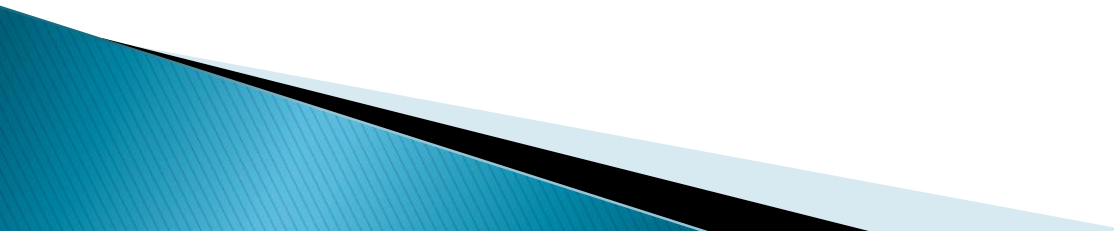
# Outcomes– Academics

- ▶ 57% improved mathematics to a C grade by an average gain of 22% points over their baseline score
  - ▶ 53% improved reading to an averaged B grade by a gain of nearly 30 percentage points over their baseline
  - ▶ 55% improved language arts up to a C grade by an average gain of 23 percentage points over baseline
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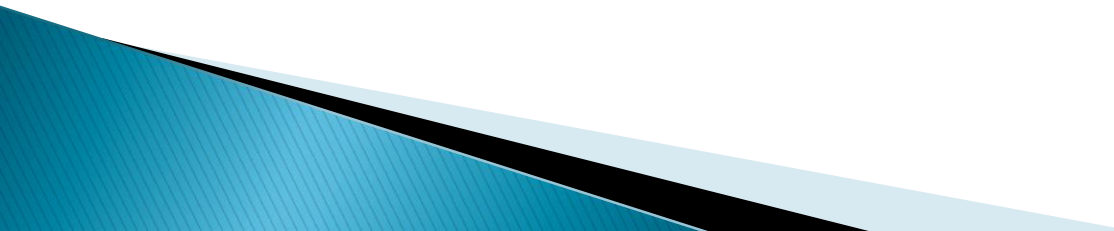
# Outcomes– Attendance

- ▶ 43% improved their overall avg. daily attendance
  - ▶ Reduced absences by 83% from avg. of 29 days to 5 days
  - ▶ 26% reduced their average tardiness from 21 days to one from previous school year
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# Outcomes– Behavior

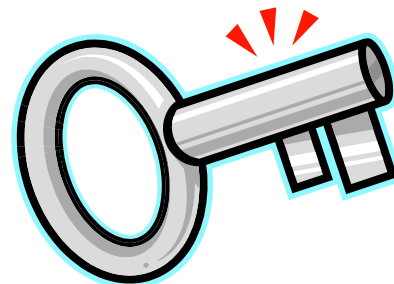
- ▶ 64% of students had an average reduction of 71% in the number of out of school suspensions from previous year
  - ▶ 36% showed a 91% reduction in the number of office discipline referrals from previous year.
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# Other Outcomes

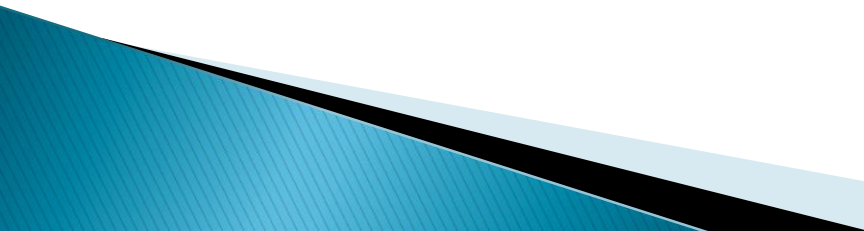
- ▶ 66% of those with judicial involvement have not had any further arrests or tickets throughout the school year
  - ▶ 58% of the Truancy Reduction Program's families participated in parent-teacher conferences with their child's teacher and other members of school support team.
  - ▶ 58% of the students exited the program. 65% of those successfully completed their program goals.
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# Key Elements to Success

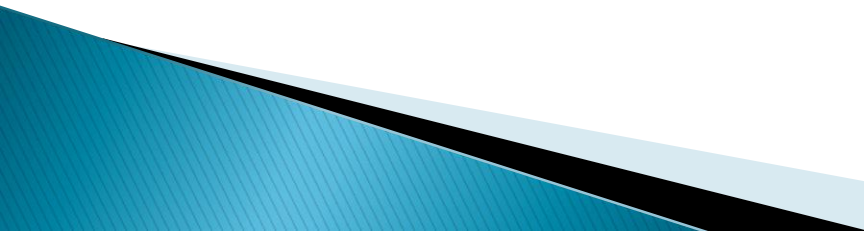
- ▶ Community collaboration and support
- ▶ Everyone commits time and energy
- ▶ Community advocates
- ▶ School District Buy In/ Adherence to Policy
- ▶ Commitment and passion of District Judges
- ▶ Resources at the disposal of the District Court
- ▶ Grant funding



# Community Partners

- ▶ SS/HS– funding community advocates
  - ▶ Mental Health– SPMHC, Catholic Charities
  - ▶ Health Department– teen pregnancy,
  - ▶ Probation– share resources if a JD case
  - ▶ Dept. Social Services– case workers, family conflict resource, dependency and neglect
  - ▶ CSU–Pueblo– Tutors, volunteers
  - ▶ Pueblo Youth Center– GED, contempt
  - ▶ SB 94– ATOD counseling, ankle monitors
  - ▶ HB 1451– Family support teams, transportation
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# Funding the program

- ▶ Counselor Corps Grant
  - ▶ Juvenile Assistance Grant
  - ▶ Toyota Family Literacy Grant
  - ▶ Tony Grampsas Grant
  - ▶ Safe Schools/ Healthy Students Initiative
  - ▶ Pueblo City Schools General Fund
  - ▶ Colorado Department of Education–Expelled Student Grant
  - ▶ LEAF Grant
  - ▶ 21<sup>st</sup> Century After school Grant
  - ▶ Private Donors
  - ▶ Fundraising Activities–Run, Golf Tournament
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# Contact Information

Randy Evetts, Project Director.

Pueblo SS/HS

719-549-7285

[Randy.evetts@pueblacityschools.us](mailto:Randy.evetts@pueblacityschools.us)



**THANK YOU!**

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