SEAT 13

THE SEAT SERIES · HANDOUT A · SEAT CARD: DO THIS MONDAY

Practitioners · K-12

Truancy as the Last Resort

When is a court or formal referral appropriate, and what must come first?



THREE MOVES FOR THIS WEEK

☐ Check the law

Learn exactly what your state requires at each stage; act no sooner or harsher.

Cost: $0

☐ Document the path

Show classification, SALT plan and supports tried before any referral.

Cost: $0

☐ Partner with courts

Share the four reasons with judges and diversion staff.

Cost: $0

BEFORE ANY REFERRAL, CONFIRM

1. A direct conversation determined the category.
2. A strengths-first plan was written and tried.
3. Less restrictive supports were attempted and documented.
4. The step matches what state law requires at this stage.

CLASSIFY BEFORE YOU CONSEQUENCE

Truancy
Confirmed only after the conversation and matched supports.

Withdrawal
Refer to family supports, never to court first.

Avoidance
Fix the environment; a court cannot.

Refusal
Refer to clinical care.

AVOID THESE MISSTEPS

- x Acting sooner or harsher than state law requires
- x Using the word truancy before a conversation confirms it
- x Referring withdrawal or refusal cases to court

HOW YOU WILL KNOW IT WORKS

Leading: Referrals with documented prior supports
Lagging: Referrals avoided

Evidence: Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 1 (Maria, composite case); Attendance USA Attendance Intelligence Briefs, Aug to Oct 2026 (primary-source checked).