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March 2021 Newsletter



Ask any parent what their biggest challenge has been during COVID-19 pandemic and you'll likely hear about school. Every district is trying their best to educate students safely this year, but with all the rotations, hybrid schedules, and remote learning it has been extremely challenging. Education has been one of the top news stories this last year, but even with schools returning to "normal" many students have not returned to class.



According to many news outlets, mental health and drug and alcohol concerns have been on this rise this past year due to quarantine. Students who suffered from anxiety and depression prior to shut down, are in worse situations now. Mental health services are overwhelmed and families have been placed on extensive wait lists. Since truancy is a symptom of something else being out of control in a child's life, it is not shocking to see the high truancy cases this school year. Districts are working hard to make accommodations and connect with services like, ACT 360 °(Attendance Counseling Team 360°), to help their students pass for the year. ACT360° serves both Blair and Huntingdon Counties and works closely with the family, school district, probation, and children's services, to address the barriers to school attendance. **Evolution Counseling Services LLC has a variety of mental health and drug and alcohol services available at no cost to families. For more information regarding Evolution Counseling's programming, staff, or how to make a referral please visit us at www.evolutioncounselingservices.com.**

"There were 66 allegations of truancy in Blair County that were submitted to Childline between 8/10/2020 and 01/26/2021. 30 of these cases are considered to be a part of Truancy Protocol for Blair County and 36% of these cases are now being processed in dependency court. Compulsory school age changed in August of 2020 and many students who intended to "Sign out" at age 17 no longer had this option. Referrals have increased as a result and families have been resistant to working with services because of COVID-19 concerns. Families who take advantage of services often seen more success than families who do not."

—April Hauck, Assessment Supervisor-Blair County
Children Youth, and Families

"Huntingdon Area High School was thankful to begin our work with Evolution Counseling's ACT 360 program last March, shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic began. Evolution was very helpful in working to engage families that had learners struggling with their academics and work completion. This work continued through the summer.

Many schools have encountered increased truancy issues this year as remote and hybrid learning has been difficult for families, along with any traditional barriers to learning that may have been faced. As we've met with students and families to address these concerns, Evolution has been great at diligently working with the learner and the family to get them on track for success. Evolution's counselors promote engagement with school and strategies to support positive attendance." —Travis Lee,
Principal-Huntingdon Area School District