

## *Truancy legislation enacted*

Legislation passed by the 131<sup>st</sup> Ohio General Assembly in its “lame duck” year-end session to address student truancy will become effective April 6, 2017.

House Bill 410 changes state law to define habitual truancy based on hours (rather than days) and, beginning July 1, 2017, prohibits public schools from suspending or expelling students based solely on unexcused absences.

Under the provisions of H.B. 410, public schools are required to update student absence policies to include certain intervention strategies. Absence intervention teams must be established to identify and address the underlying causes of individual students’ absences.

School attendance officers must notify students’ parents, guardians or custodians when students are absent with or without legitimate excuse for 38 or more hours in a month or 65 hours in a year.

The bill requires a complaint to be filed in juvenile court against a student on the 61<sup>st</sup> day after implementation of an absence intervention plan unless the school fails to make meaningful attempts to re-engage students.

Under the new law, schools may allow students to complete any classroom assignment missed because of suspension. Schools are prohibited from applying all or any remaining part of a suspension to the following school year; however, students may be required to participate in community service or alternative consequences for the number of hours equal to the time left on the suspension.

