

# *Rhea County Department of Education*

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**Levengood Educational Center**  
1385 Broadway Street  
Dayton, TN 37321  
(423) 775-7813  
FAX (423) 775-7831

**Jesse Messimer, Director**  
[messimerj@rheacounty.org](mailto:messimerj@rheacounty.org)

## **Rhea County Truancy-Discipline Board**

Our main goal is to make sure that students are learning to the best of their ability. In order to learn, students have to be in school and have a safe learning environment. If a student isn't in front of a teacher in a classroom, learning cannot take place to the fullest extent. If they are under the influence of nicotine or other vape product, they are not focused. This past school year, we had a problem with both chronic absenteeism and vaping by students. Our new programs in Rhea County Schools have support systems that connect families to the schools and can also provide needed resources to help students attend school.

### Addressing Attendance

The Progressive Truancy Plan offers a three-tiered approach to help families and students who are facing chronic absenteeism. At each tier, there's a different action or support.

Tier 1 applies to all students and includes school-based incentives for good attendance. The designated school personnel will contact parents/guardians of students who accumulate 3 unexcused absences to schedule a conference or phone call with parents/guardians and student. The attendance law will be given to the parents/guardians. The school contact will explain attendance expectations for the student.

Tier 2 begins after a student has accrued five unexcused absences. At this point, the Attendance Supervisor will notify the parents and request a meeting and reiterate the attendance expectations and laws. This is a way to open communication and provide support. In this meeting, interventions such as Saturday School, and available community resources will be assigned and encouraged.

If things don't improve after the Tier 2 meeting and a student reaches eight unexcused absences, a district level meeting is set. Parents and student must meet with the Rhea County Truancy-Discipline Board at Central Office on set date and time. This meeting reiterates the importance of attending

school as well as the punitive measures that come if the absences continue to pile up. Student service from local juvenile court services will be made available, but not limited to: Juvenile Justice Reform, Department of Children's Services, and U-Turn Programs.

For Tier 3, have partnered with Judge Jace Cochran to ensure laws written to make sure students attend school and make sure parents get them to school are followed. Efforts will be made to protect our students from any abuse situations or neglect. We need to do what is best for our students and families.

#### Addressing the use of Vaped by Students

In an effort to eliminate vaping among our students, we are using the **American Lung Association's In-Depth Program** which stands for Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health teaches students about nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and how to kick the unhealthy addiction. Completion of this program will be required on the first vaping offense by the student. The parent and child must complete it on the second offense. First-Time Offenders will appear before the Truancy/Discipline Board. On the Second and Third Offense, the student and parent will be issued a summons to Juvenile Court.

Other School Issued Citations, such as unruly, will also require an appearance before this Board and if deemed appropriate, a petition will be filed for Juvenile Court.