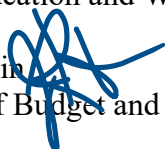


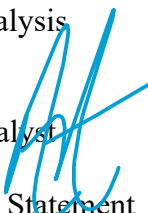


September 21, 2023

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

TO: Edward Burroughs, III  
Chair, Education and Workforce Development (EWD) Committee

THRU: Josh Hamlin   
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Arian Albear   
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement  
CR-074-2023 Truancy Workgroup

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CR-074-2023 (*Proposed and presented by:* Council Members Oriadha, Watson, Olson, Fisher, Hawkins, Blegay, Burroughs, and Dernoga)

Assigned to the Education and Workforce Development (EWD) Committee

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A RESOLUTION CONCERNING ESTABLISHING A WORKGROUP TO STUDY TRUANCY: CAUSES, EFFECTS, AND SOLUTIONS for the purpose of establishing a Truancy Study Workgroup; providing for the purpose of the Truancy Study Workgroup; providing for the composition of the Truancy Study Workgroup; providing for the staff and technical support for the Truancy Study Workgroup; providing for the issuance of a report; and generally regarding the Truancy Study Workgroup.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**Direct Impact**

*Expenditures:* Minimal.

*Revenue:* None likely.

**Indirect Impact**

Potentially favorable.

### **Legislative Summary:**

CR-074-2023<sup>1</sup>, proposed by Council Members Oriadha, Watson, Olson, Fisher, Hawkins, Blegay, Burroughs, and Dernoga was introduced and referred to the Education and Workforce Development (EWD) Committee on September 6, 2023. The resolution would establish a “Truancy Study Workgroup” to examine the causes and effects of student truancy and propose solutions to address the impact of truancy.

The composition of the Workgroup is proposed to include the following 15 members:

1. The State’s Attorney for Prince George’s County, or their designee.
2. The DCAO (Deputy Chief Administrative Officer) for Public Safety, or their designee.
3. The Chief Executive Office (*now Superintendent*) of Prince George’s County Public Schools, or their designee.
4. Sheriff for Prince George’s County, or their designee.
5. The Chief of Prince George’s County Police Department, or their designee.
6. The Director of Prince George’s County Family Services, or their designee.
7. The Secretary of Juvenile Services, or their designee.
8. The Director of the Department of Social Services, or their designee.
9. The Public Defender for Prince George’s County, or their designee.
10. The Elected Student Board Member of the Prince George’s County Board of Education.

The following Five (5) members are to be selected by the Prince George’s County Council:

11. One (1) representative from the Prince George’s County Council.
12. One (1) representative from the Police Chief’s Association for Prince George’s County.
13. One (1) representative from the Prince George’s County School Board of Education.
14. Two (2) representatives from a community-based non-profit serving youth.

Members are not compensated for their work outside of the entitled reimbursements for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations,<sup>2</sup> as provided by the County Budget.

The Workgroup is tasked with examining and providing solutions to the following topics and concerns, as stated throughout the text of the Resolution:

1. Identifying the causes of truancy.
2. Identifying the effects of truancy.
3. Examining whether truancy and drop-out rates increased as students returned to in-person instruction on school campuses after the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Identifying and developing strategies to substantially reduce overall truancy in the County.

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<sup>1</sup> [CR-074-2023](#).

<sup>2</sup> [COMAR, Subtitle 02 Business Administration 23.02.01 Standard Travel Regulations](#)

5. Consider whether there is a correlation between truancy, drop-out rates, and juvenile delinquency.
6. Provide recommendations to combat truancy focused on procedural, budgetary, or policy changes.

The Resolution highlights a particular focus on the interrelation between truancy and juvenile delinquency.

The Workgroup is tasked with issuing one (1) report to be transmitted to the County Executive and the County Council no later than thirty (30) days following the June 2024 meeting.

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### **Background/Current Law:**

Section 506 of the Charter for Prince George’s County<sup>3</sup> provides that “[T]he Council or the County Executive may appoint, for designated periods, one or more temporary advisory boards of citizens of the County who shall assist in the consideration of County policies and programs.”

Prince George’s County Board of Education Policy Number 5113<sup>4</sup> addresses Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy. The policy establishes definitions for lawful absence, unlawful absence, and truancy. The policy defines Truancy as “a student’s unexcused or unlawful absence from school for the entire day or a portion of the day without lawful cause as defined in COMAR 13A.08.01.03 and Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) policies and procedures.” Additionally, the policy entrusts the CEO (*now superintendent*) to develop strategies to prevent truancy and methods to monitor the strategies, as well as establish administrative procedures to improve student attendance.

In 2008, The District Court for Prince George’s County implemented the [Truancy Reduction Court](#) with the stated mission of “improv[ing] student attendance, academic achievement, and identif[ying] causes of habitual truancy with collaborative efforts between community agencies and the local school districts.” This Court may be an initial source of information for truancy-related data and reduction practices in the County for the Workgroup.

The Court maintains a program that requires students to attend school regularly and comply with court-ordered services or mandates. Services, rendered on a case-by-case basis, may include mental health counseling, family counseling, grief counseling, anger management, behavioral services, and/or other forms of therapeutic interventions.

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### **Resource Personnel:**

Amanda Denison, Chief Legislative Officer

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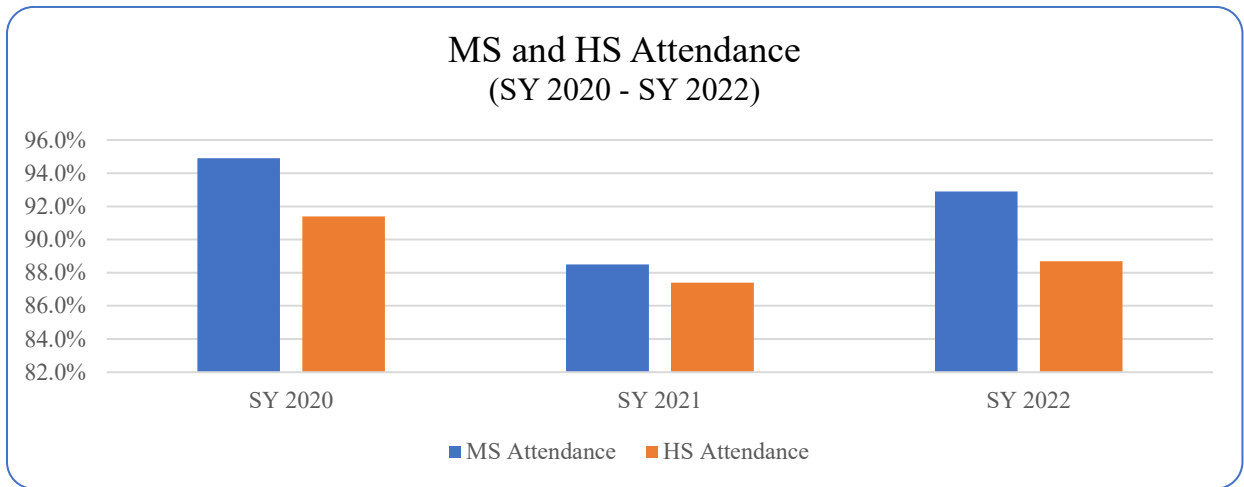
<sup>3</sup> Charter for Prince George’s County, [Section 506](#).

<sup>4</sup> Prince George’s County Public Schools, [Board Policy 5113 – Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy](#).

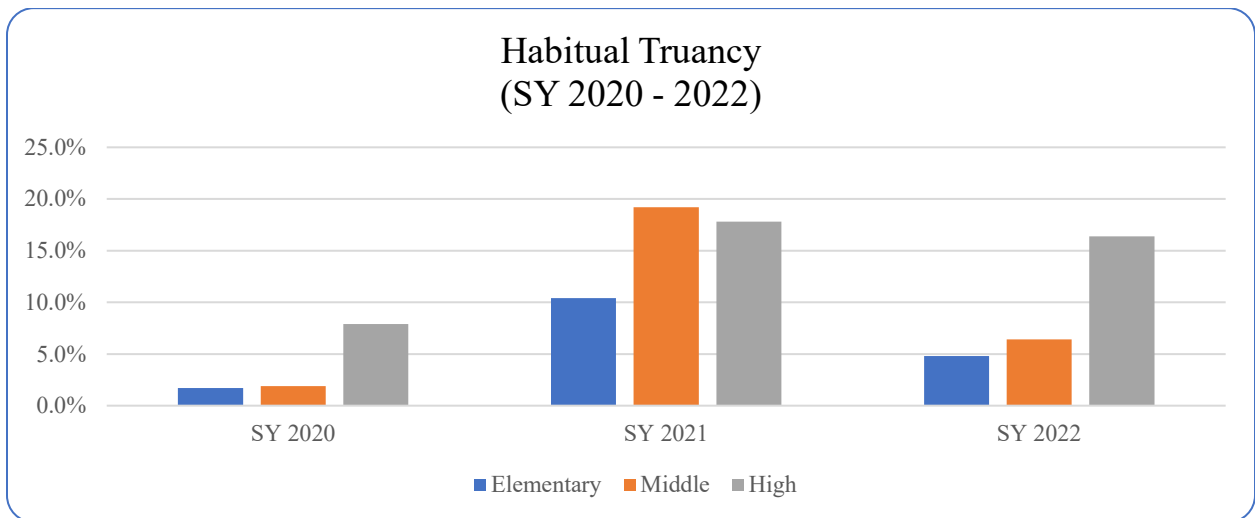
**Discussion/Policy Analysis:**

CR-074-2023 would establish a Truancy Workgroup to examine the causes and effects of student truancy and its link to juvenile crime. The Workgroup is also tasked with providing and identifying solutions and resources.

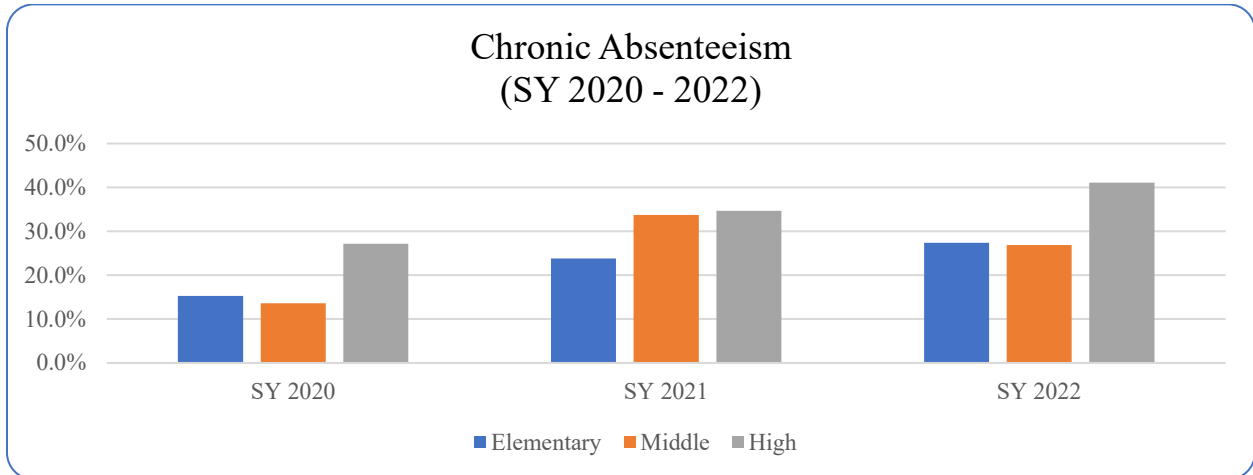
As provided during the FY 2023 budget discussion, current attendance and truancy rates can be found in the charts below:



Attendance rate in middle schools and high schools decreased in school year 2021 and improved for the following school year.



Habitual truancy, defined by the school system as “the percentage of students with unexcused absence rates over 20%,” peaked in 2021 and has also begun to decline. High school habitual truancy remains high at 16.4%.



Chronic absenteeism, defined by the school system as “the percentage of students with absence rates (excused or unexcused) over 10%,” decreased for middle schools from 2021 to 2022 but increased for elementary and high schools. High school chronic absenteeism stands at 41.1%.

Additional truancy data provided by the school system per school can be found in the response to question 12 of the *Second-Round Budget Review Questions*.

To reduce truancy, PGCPS noted the following school-based and district-level initiatives:

- Hazel Telehealth and Tele-therapy.
- Mental Health Support.
- SMART Goals.
- School Instructional Team Referral (SIT).
- ALLHERE – Chatbot.
- Attendance Taskforce.
- CEO and State Joint Letter and Video.
- GEER Grant.
- Pupil Personnel Workers.
- School Messenger.

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### **Fiscal Impact:**

- *Direct Impact*

Adoption of CR-074-2023 should have only minimal direct fiscal impact, if any.

- *Indirect Impact*

None likely.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year?*

N/A.

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**Items for Committee Consideration:**

- Legislative Branch staff will be required to provide support for several workgroups operating simultaneously;<sup>5</sup> this may have an impact on performance.
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**Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:**

The proposed Resolution shall be effective upon its adoption.

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Please email me if you require additional information or have questions about this fiscal impact statement.

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<sup>5</sup> See [CR-075-2023](#), [CR-077-2023](#), and [CR-081-2023](#)