

Lamoille Valley Truancy Project

Lamoille Restorative Center, Hyde Park VT

www.lrcvt.org

Heather Hobart, Executive Director

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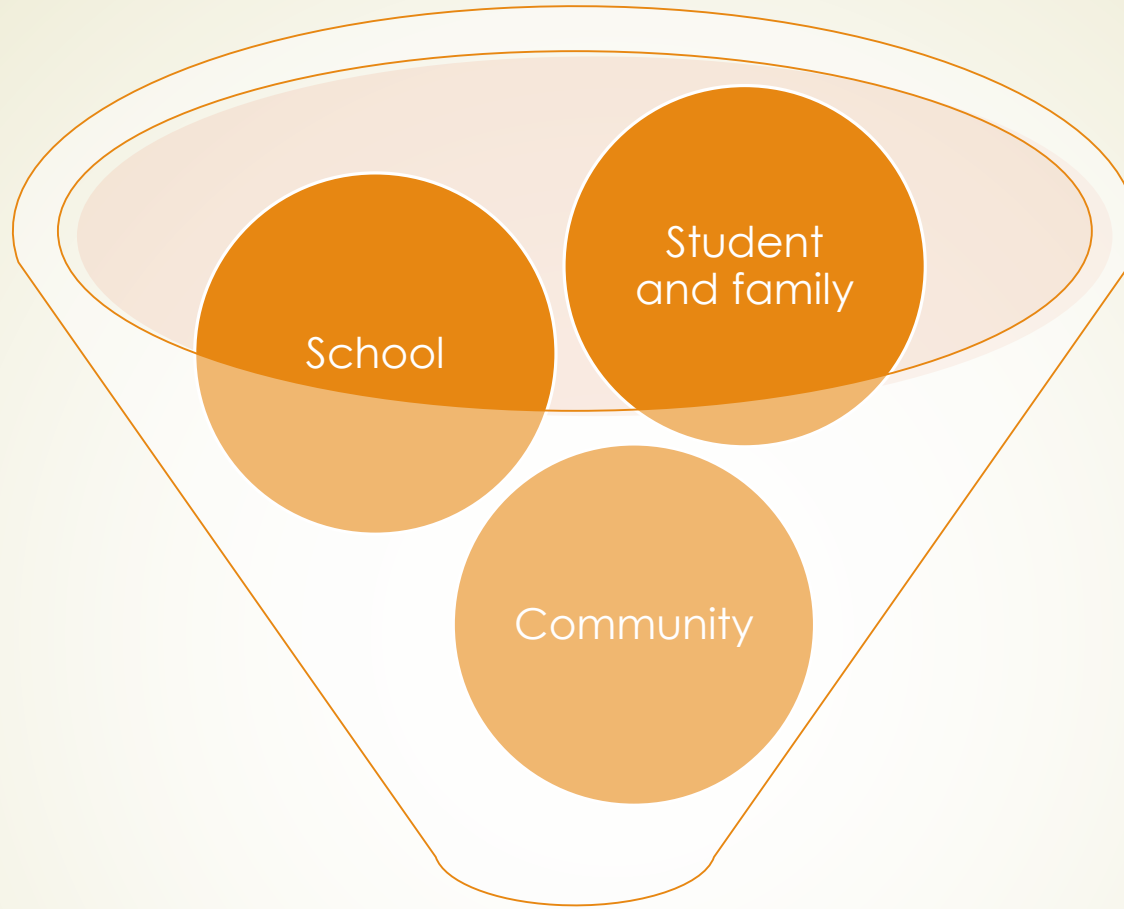


Joint Child Protection Oversight Committee

October 31 2019

Twenty years of experience

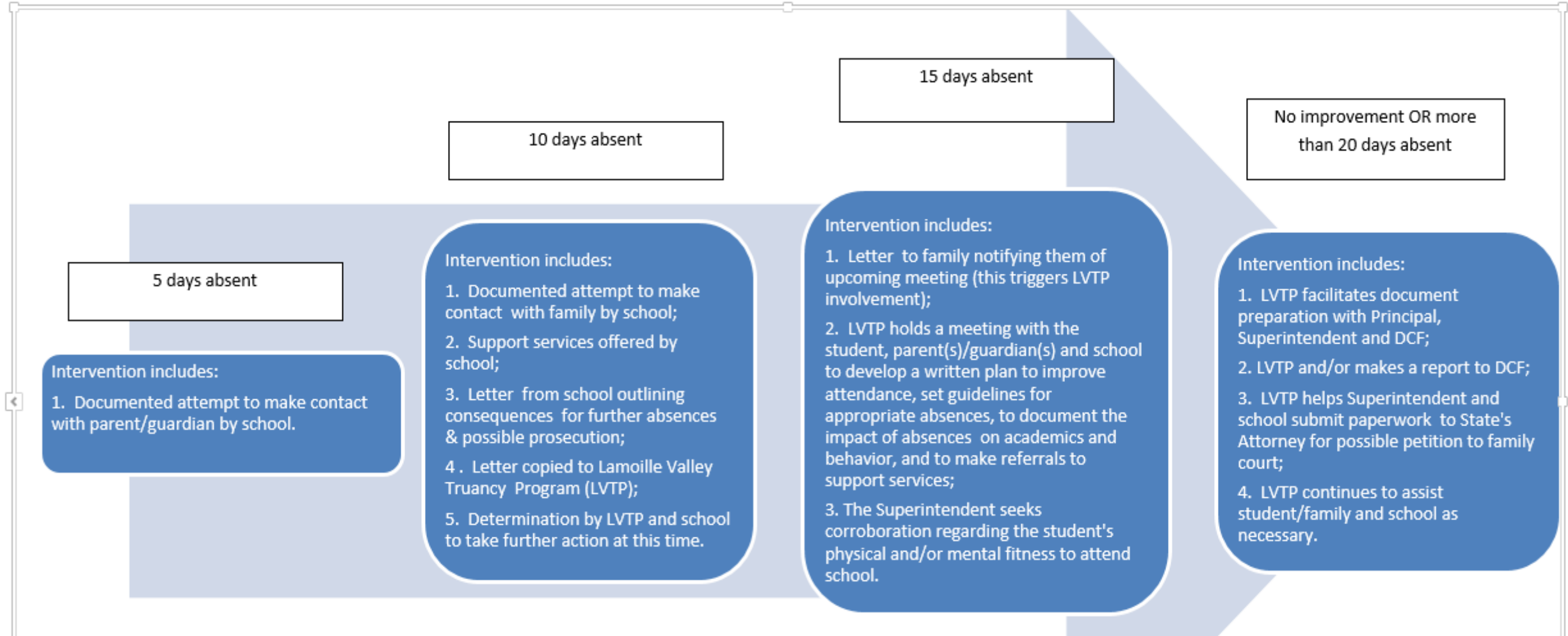
- ▶ “Research” in the late 90s
 - ▶ Large number of Court Diversion referrals - crimes during the school day
 - ▶ Partnered with schools to do outreach to families
 - ▶ Funding from CFCPP
- ▶ Mid 2000s
 - ▶ Borrowed practices from Burlington and Rutland
 - ▶ Funding from 3 Supervisory Unions to hire a school attendance specialist
- ▶ March 2010, Commissioner of Education required all SUs to develop countywide truancy protocols
 - ▶ In May 2010 LRC hosted a valley-wide summit, involving Orleans Southwest, Lamoille North, and Lamoille South supervisory unions and representatives from our local DCF-Family Services office.
 - ▶ Adopted a *unified* truancy policy. (See handout: *Lamoille Valley Truancy Policy*)



School Success

Lamoille Valley Truancy Project Protocol

Lamoille Valley Truancy Project Protocol



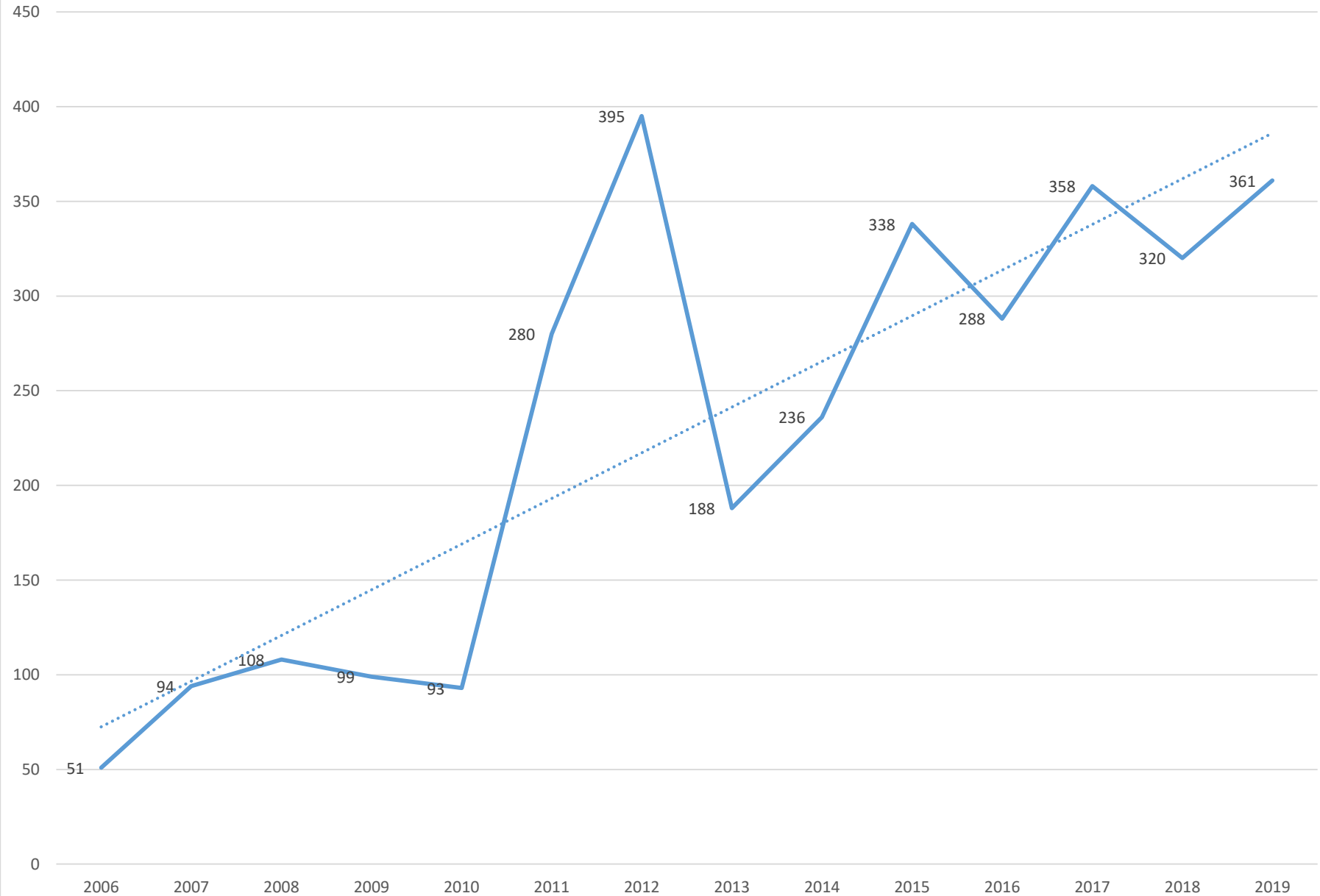
Truancy Work: A day in the life


Typical Day:

- ▶ On the phone with a parent, a child, and/or a school
- ▶ In the home of a student to address attendance barriers
- ▶ Drive a child to school
- ▶ Work with a school nurse to address a child's health issue
- ▶ Meet with a school team to develop an educational plan
- ▶ Visit a student at school to acknowledge attendance accomplishments that week

<https://www.vpr.org/post/lamoille-county-program-fights-truancy-social-work-and-prevention#stream/0>

Lamoille Valley Truancy Program - Total Referrals





Student data – 2018/19 School Year

OSSU 978

LNSU 1,800

LSSU 1,569

➤ Total: 4,347

➤ 361 referrals = 8.3% of total student population



Ages of Students

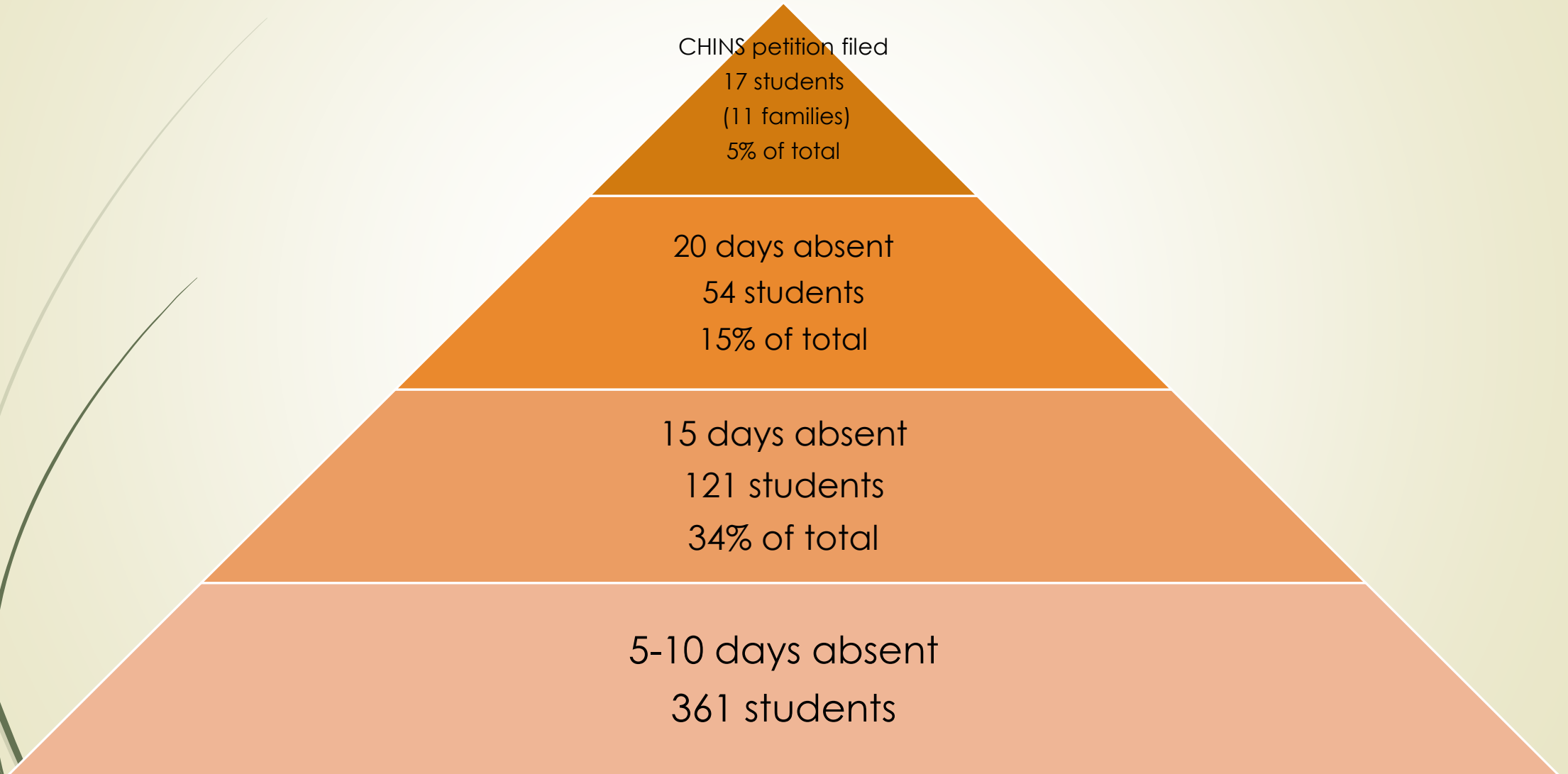
2017-2018: 358 Referrals

>50% of the students were elementary-aged

2018-2019: 361 Referrals

>60% of the students were elementary-aged

2018-2019 School Year



Reasons for Chronic Absences

- ▶ *Family stress related to poverty and basic needs*
 - ▶ *Most families experience some type of economic hardship: access to water/heat, nutritious and plentiful food, or ability to shower and care for themselves while accessing clean clothes and shoes.*
 - ▶ *Of the 11 families that went to court (CHINS petition), 9 of them are children from a single-mother household.*
- ▶ *Parental substance misuse*
 - ▶ *School attendance specialist provides referrals to local substance treatment services when appropriate.*
 - ▶ *Access to MAT or other treatment services can conflict with school attendance.*
- ▶ *Anxiety is a major factor in reasons a child may not want to go to school*
 - ▶ *Parent may struggle with bringing the children to school. Often this looks like stomach aches, headaches, panic attacks, and encopresis.*
 - ▶ *At least a dozen youth identify anxiety and related symptoms as the major reason for missing school.*

Strengths & Challenges:

Strengths:

- ▶ Community-based service
 - ▶ Supports and interventions exist outside of school and connect to social services in the community
 - ▶ In partnership with school & family
- ▶ Utilizes R-N-R principles
 - ▶ Intervention based on risk and needs of student & family
- ▶ Targeted Intervention Model
 - ▶ Reserve court process for 5% highest risk, highest need students and families
 - ▶ 95% are served successfully in community
- ▶ Supported by all schools, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, health-care providers (incl. mental health and substance use), other social service providers

Challenges:

- ▶ Ratio of families/students per 1.0 FTE school attendance specialist is too high
- ▶ BARJ resources are limited
- ▶ Current funding only allows for 10 months of work
- ▶ Patchwork funding



Current Funding

- **3 Supervisory Unions contribute equally**
- **DCF/FSD Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Contract (BARJ)**
- **Full time, year-round school attendance specialist position at LRC is \$86,000**



Resources

- **Heather Hobart, Executive Director, Lamoille Restorative Center**
 - hhobart@lrcvt.org (802) 279-1665
- **Becky Penberthy, Court Diversion & Pretrial Services Director**
 - bpsenberthy@lrcvt.org (802) 730-2406
- <http://www.lrcvt.org/community-programs/>