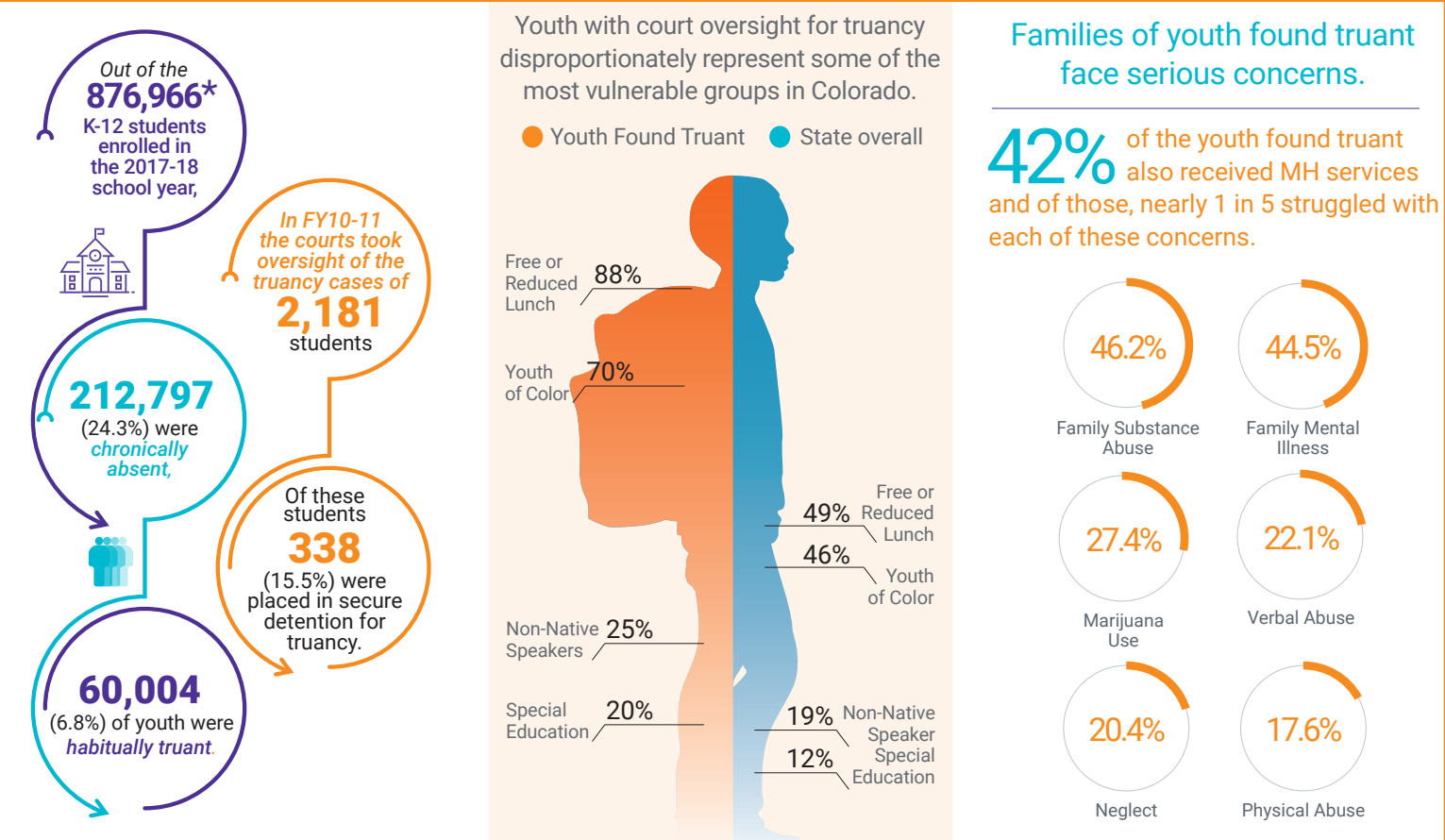


# Secure Detention of Youth Found Truant: IMPACTS ON COLORADO YOUTH

Juvenile justice reform efforts are underway both in Colorado and across the country. The impact of using secure detention for truancy is largely understudied. A prior Colorado study of the practice suggested that detaining truant youth had negative impacts. Youth with court oversight for truancy were 1.9 times more likely to have a subsequent criminal filing and 14.5 times less likely to graduate from high school than comparable youth who did not go to secure detention for truancy. The updated study added three additional years to outcome data and incorporated data from the public mental health system.

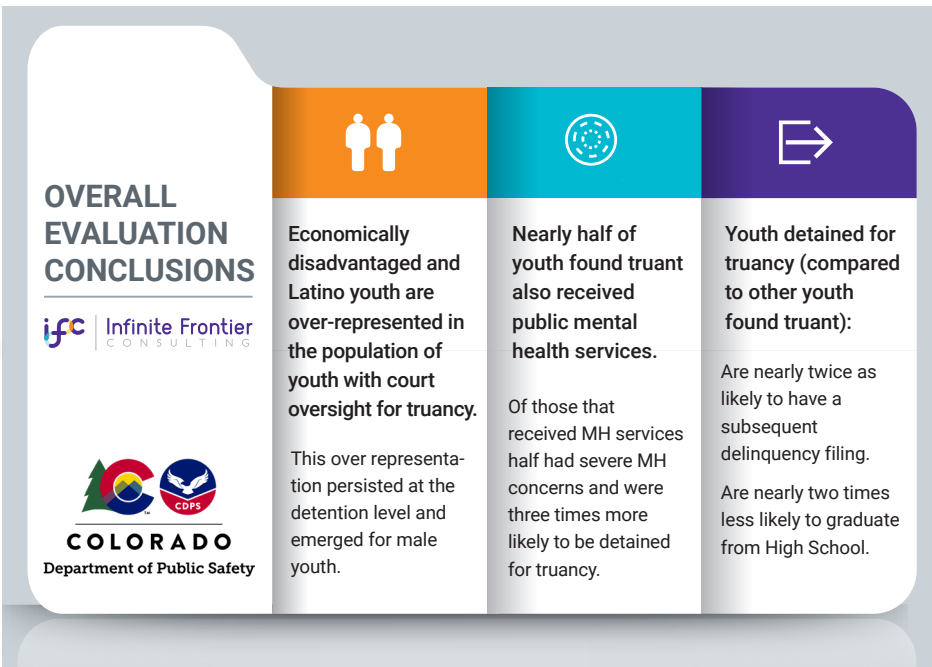
## Who are Colorado's Youth Found Truant?



**METHODOLOGY:** This study matched historical data from Juvenile Justice (FY08-10), Child Welfare (FY03-10), and Mental Health (FY06-10) to students with court oversight of their truancy cases filed in FY10-11.



These data were then analyzed to determine the relative importance in predicting each of three outcomes: Secure Detention, Subsequent Criminal or Juvenile Justice Filings, High School Graduation.

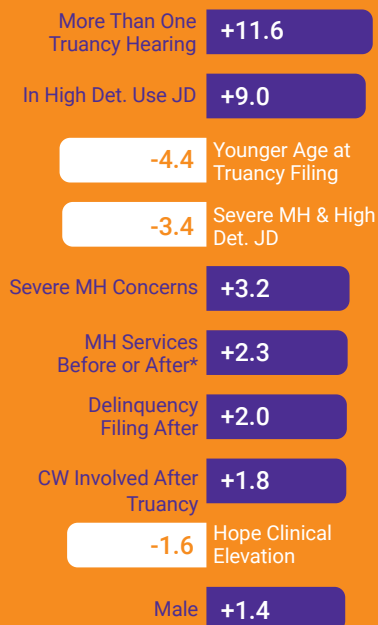


\*<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/truancystatistics>. Accessed on 10/11/19

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dcj/truancy-and-use-detention>

## How much more or less likely is a youth to be detained for truancy?

● Times Less Likely ● Times More Likely



## PREDICTORS OF SECURE DETENTION

**Local practice:** Some JDs filed on youth prior to intensively engaging with families, resulting in an unexpected number of youth with a single court hearing. Youth who appeared before the judge on multiple occasions were more likely to go to detention. Risk of secure detention was also higher if youth had court oversight in a JD that frequently used secure detention for truancy.

**Other system involvement:** Youth with a delinquency filing after the truancy filing and youth with Child Welfare (CW) involvement after the truancy filing were more likely to be detained for truancy.

**Behavioral Health:** Youth with mental health needs were overall more likely to go to detention for truancy. Youth with high mental health needs were even more likely to be detained, except when they were filed on in a JD that had high rates of detaining youth for truancy. An absence of hope for the future was also associated with a lower likelihood of detention.

**Socio-demographic:** Two demographic factors were important: age and gender. Youth with truancy petitions filed under the age of 12 were less likely to be detained across the duration of the study. It is possible the young filing age provided a window into the broader family and environmental challenges influencing school attendance. Male youth were more likely to go to secure detention.

## PREDICTORS OF SUBSEQUENT DELINQUENCY FILINGS

**Socio-demographic:** Youth with a truancy filing before age 12 were 9x less likely to have a later delinquent filing. Male youth were 1.9 times more likely to have a later delinquency filing.

**Local practice:** More than one truancy hearing, detention for truancy, and a truancy filing in JD C or E all increased the likelihood of a subsequent delinquent filing. In contrast being filed on in JD A or in a high truancy detention utilization JD decreased the likelihood of a delinquency filing.

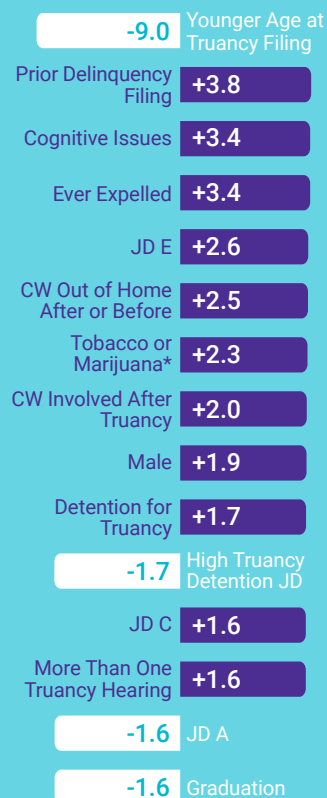
**Education:** Expulsion and graduation predicted a later delinquency filing.

**Other system involvement:** Youth with a delinquency filing prior to truancy were nearly 4 times more likely to have a filing after their truancy case started. Youth with child welfare involvement after truancy and youth with a child welfare out of home placement before or after their truancy filing were more likely to have a later delinquency filing.

**Behavioral:** Marijuana use, tobacco use, and clinically elevated cognitive scores suggesting cognitive impairment were associated with a higher likelihood of later filings.

## How much more or less likely is a youth to have a subsequent delinquency filing?

● Times Less Likely ● Times More Likely



## TRUANCY TERMINOLOGY

**Court Oversight:** The youth was filed on, had one or more court hearings and the court record indicated a) the youth was found truant by the court or b) the court entered an order (i.e., attend school) compelling an action by the youth or family.

**Subsequent Delinquency Filings:** includes both delinquency filings (for those under 18) and criminal filings (for those over 18).

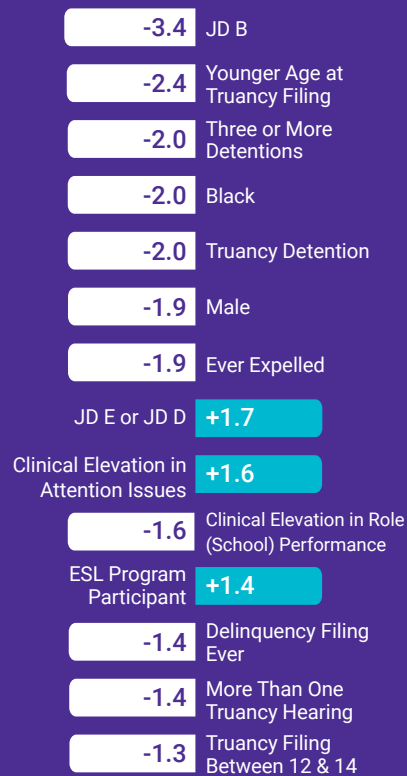
**More Than One Truancy Hearing:** A variable used in analyses to differentiate youth with a single court hearing from those with multiple court hearings.

\*Composite variables - represents range of values

Factors that Did NOT Impact the Model: Race/Ethnicity or Social Factors (FRL, SPED, ESL, Non-Native English Speaker)

## How Much Less/More Likely is a Youth to Graduate Based on Each Variable?

● Times Less Likely ● Times More Likely



Note: this model only included the 1,853 youth who were 17.5 years of age by the end of the study period.

## ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

A moderate model emerged predicting high school graduation. There are many factors that influence whether a student will graduate so it is not surprising that the variables available are only moderate predictors of graduation. No one factor dominated, although being filed on in JD B did make it 3.4 times less likely that a student would graduate.

**Local practice variables also had mixed associations with the likelihood of graduation.** A truancy filing in JD B decreased the likelihood of graduation while truancy filings in JD E or D increased the chances of graduation. Having a truancy case length of greater than one hearing also moderately decreased the likelihood of graduation.

**Other system involvement was related to decreased likelihood of graduation.** A key finding is that being detained for truancy made youth two times less likely to graduate as did having three or more detentions. Ever having a delinquency filing (either before or after the truancy filing) also decreased the likelihood of graduation.

**Only one behavioral health variable was associated with a higher likelihood of graduation.** Having attention issues that were identified and possibly addressed by the public mental health system was associated with higher graduation rates.

**Socio-demographic factors including age, race, and gender did impact the likelihood of graduation.** Two age variables, being under the age of 12 or between the ages of 12 and 14 both made it less likely a student would graduate. Furthermore, Black students were two times less likely to graduate and males were 1.9 times less likely to graduate.

**Education variables had mixed associations.** Ever being expelled decreased the likelihood of graduation. A clinically elevated rating (by a MH clinician) on the Role domain which indicates problems in school performance was also associated with a decreased likelihood of graduation. Participation in an English as a second language program (ESL), however, moderately increased the likelihood of graduation.

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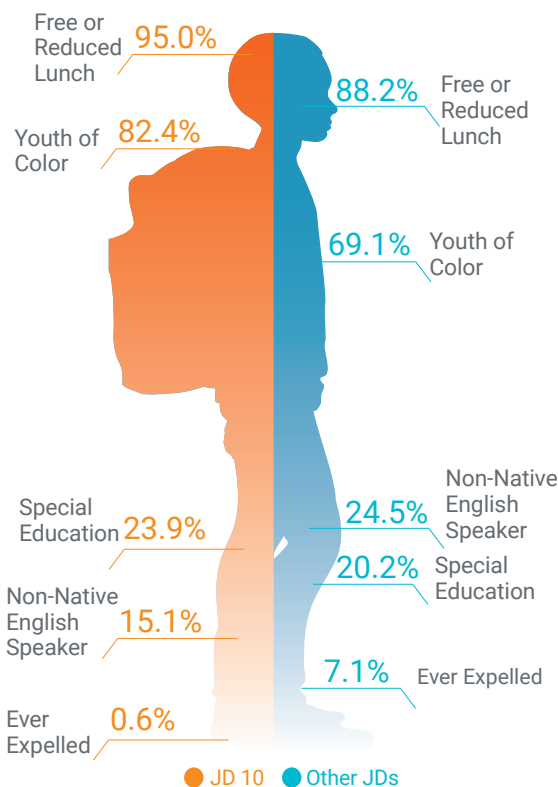
The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Bureau of Justice Assistance nor the Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety.

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dcj/truancy-and-use-detention>

# 10<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

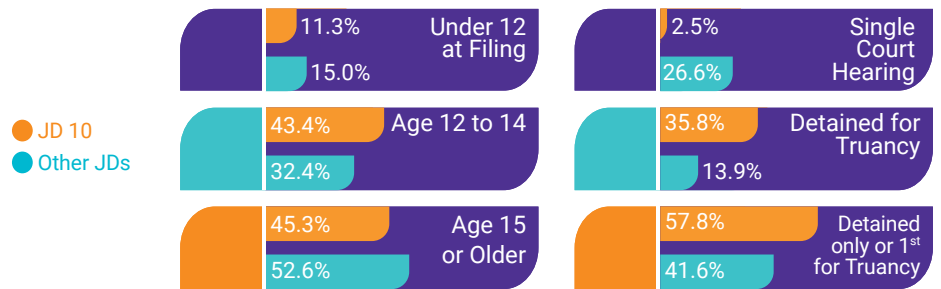
The 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (JD) encompasses Pueblo county. There are more than 25,000 children enrolled in the public school districts in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD. A substantial number of youth (n = 159, 7.3%) in the truancy study had a truancy filing in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD. For study inclusion, court oversight started in FY 10-11.

Youth found truant in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD were significantly more likely to be male, to be a minority, and to be impoverished relative to youth found truant in other JDs. They were less likely to be a non-native English speaker and less likely to be expelled from school.



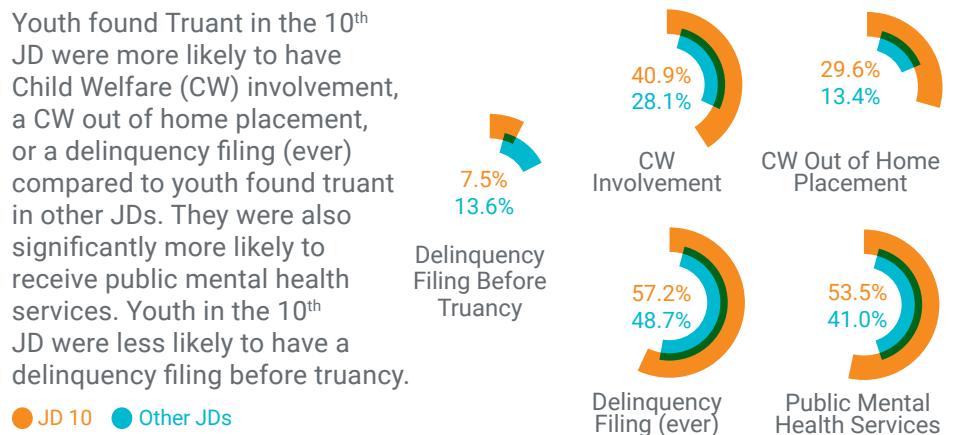
## LOCAL PRACTICE

Youth in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD were most likely to be filed on at age 15 or older, with fewer than 12% filed on under the age of 12. Fewer youth in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD had a single court hearing, with nearly 98% having multiple hearings. The 10<sup>th</sup> JD used secure detention at a higher rate than other JDs, with over 35% of youth found truant going to secure detention for truancy. Further, among youth who went to secure detention for any reason, the first detention was significantly more likely to be for Truancy in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD than in other JDs.



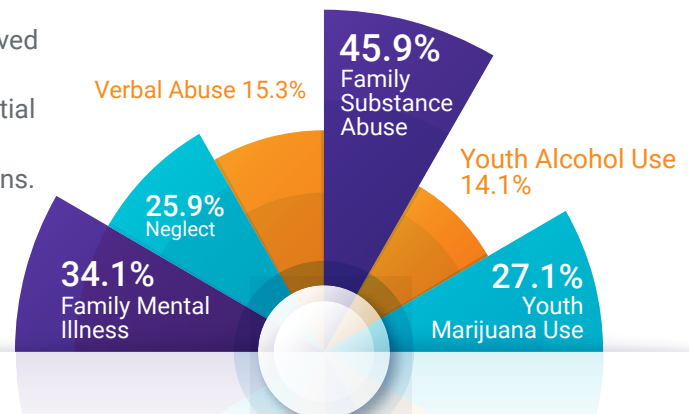
## OTHER SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

Youth found Truant in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD were more likely to have Child Welfare (CW) involvement, a CW out of home placement, or a delinquency filing (ever) compared to youth found truant in other JDs. They were also significantly more likely to receive public mental health services. Youth in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD were less likely to have a delinquency filing before truancy.



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Among youth who received public mental health services (85), a substantial proportion of families reported serious concerns.



## OUTCOMES

Compared to other youth found truant, youth in the 10<sup>th</sup> JD were more likely to have a delinquency filing after their truancy filing. They were also significantly less likely to be committed to the Division of Youth Services (DYS) and less likely to graduate from high school.

