



**[Benton and Franklin Counties Juvenile Court]  
Existing [Truancy] Data Analysis and Case Tracking**

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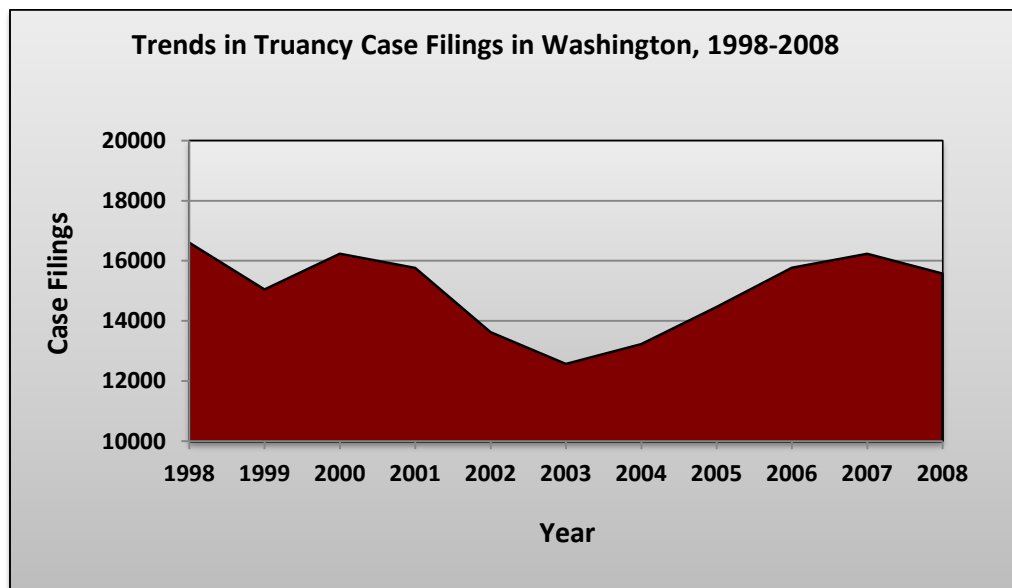
*June 30, 2009*

## Benton and Franklin Counties Juvenile Court Existing Data Analysis and Case Tracking

The existing data analyses proposed in our initial plan of work involved selecting a random sample of approximately 200 cases referred to the juvenile courts during the 2007-2008 school year to assess type and scope of participation in programs, duration of participation, progression of the case, and resolution of the truancy petition. Building on the data analysis conducted by the Vera Institute, the focus of our data analysis shifted to a primary consideration of differences between Latino and non-Latino youth in case processing and associated risk factors for truant behavior. The analyses presented here represent two pieces of this analysis: 1) a comparison of Latino and non-Latino youth using data from the BFJJC Juvenile Tracking System (JTS), and 2) an analysis of truant youth with risk assessments.

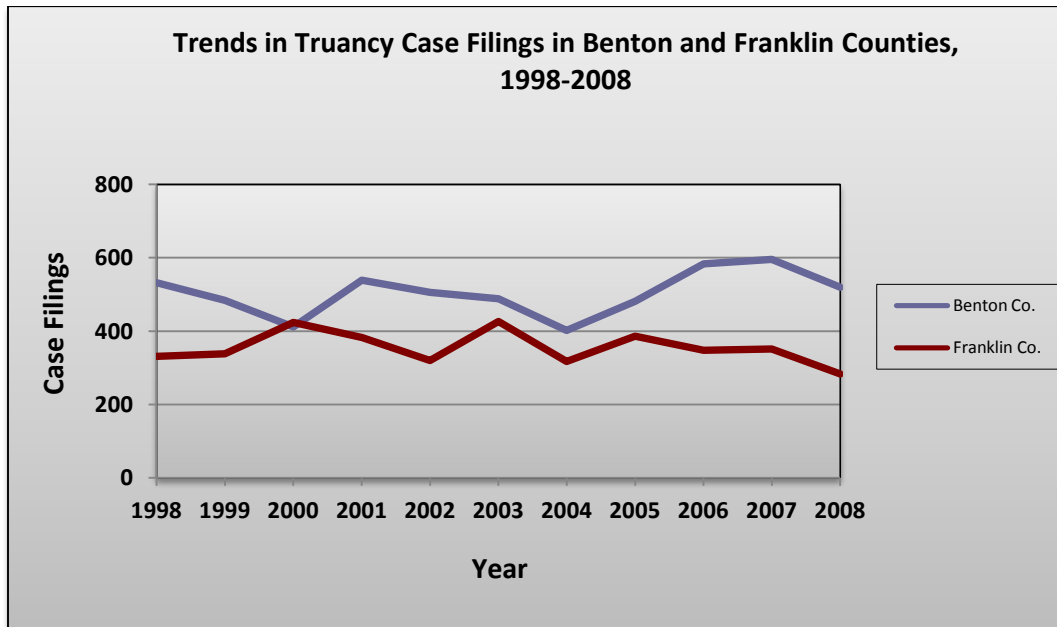
### *Truancy Statistics in Washington State and Benton and Franklin Counties*

To provide some context to the analysis of truancy data in Benton/Franklin Counties, data regarding truancy filings was obtained from the Washington State Courts website (Administrative Office of the Courts: The Superior Courts Annual Tables, n.d.).<sup>1</sup> Individual county data regarding truancy was available for the years 1998 to 2008. Figure 1 displays the trends in truancy case filings statewide from 1998 to 2008.



<sup>1</sup> Administrative Office of the Courts. (n.d.). *The Superior Courts Annual Tables: Washington Courts*. Retrieved April 4, 2009: (<http://www.courts.wa.gov>).

Figure 2 displays trends in the number of truancy case filings in Benton and Franklin Counties during this same period.



### **Comparison of Latino and non-Latino Truant Youth**

*[Prepared by Timothy Manuel, MA and Leana A. Bouffard, PhD]*

The analyses conducted here sought to address whether there are differences in the court processing of Latino and non-Latino truant youth. Data was collected through an internal database maintained by the Benton/Franklin Juvenile Justice Center known as the Juvenile Tracking System (JTS), which records information on each juvenile as they are processed through the juvenile court system. The sample used here includes 1,866 juveniles between the ages of 5 and 17 who were referred to the Benton/Franklin county courts for truancy petitions during the 2005-2006 or the 2006-2007 school years. Of those petitions, 165 involved truancy petitions filed against the parent. For the purposes of these analyses, parent petitions were eliminated from the data, resulting in a sample of 1,700 truancy petitions against a juvenile.

Most of the youth in the sample (60.5%) were under the jurisdiction of Benton County; the remainder (39.5%) was under the jurisdiction of Franklin County. This resembles the distribution in the total population of Benton and Franklin Counties. Considering only the juvenile population (ages 5-17), 67.6% of that population resides in Benton County, and 32.4% of juveniles reside in Franklin County. The sample consisted of 50.5% males and 49.5% females. Ages ranged from 10 to 17, with an average age of 15.2. The sample was predominantly white (94.1%), with 2.9% Asian or Pacific Islander and 2.7% Black or African American.

Of particular concern in this project is whether Latino youth are overrepresented in truancy cases. In this sample of 1,700 referrals, 851 youth were identified as Latino (50.1% of the sample). Compared to the overall Latino population in Benton and Franklin Counties (37.1% Latino) and to the school enrollment population (36.4% Latino; see Literature Review for official population and school enrollment calculations), it appears that Latino youth are significantly overrepresented in truancy referrals. It is important to note that Benton and Franklin Counties look very different with respect to the size of the Latino population, so additional analyses considered each county separately. In Benton County, Latino youth appear to be significantly overrepresented when compared to the overall juvenile population (33.6% compared to 23.9%) and to the school enrollment population (33.6% compared to 21.5%). Similarly in Franklin County, compared to both the overall juvenile population (61.7% Latino) and school enrollment figures (67.8% Latino), Latino youth appear to be significantly overrepresented among truancy petitions (75.3%).

**Table VIII-1: Sample/Population Comparison of Percent Latino**

Population Groups	Percent Latino
Truancy Referrals (n = 1,700)	50.1
Benton/Franklin County Juvenile Population (ages 0-17)*	37.1
Benton/Franklin County School Enrollment*	36.4
Benton County Truancy Referrals (n = 1,029)	33.6
Benton County Juvenile Population (ages 0-17)*	23.9
Benton County School Enrollment*	21.5
Franklin County Truancy Referrals (n = 671)	75.3
Franklin County Juvenile Population (ages 0-17)*	61.7
Franklin County School Enrollment*	67.8

\* Latinos significantly overrepresented compared to population.

Additional analyses compared Latino and non-Latino youth on a number of other relevant factors, including the total number of truancy, criminal, and dependency referrals and whether a contempt petition was filed. As compared to non-Latino youth, Latino youth had significantly fewer criminal referrals and dependency referrals in their record. There was no difference between Latino and non-Latino youth in the number of truancy referrals. Additionally, Latino and non-Latino youth were equally as likely to have had a truancy contempt petition filed. While there is evidence of disproportionately Latino involvement with the juvenile court, once that involvement is processed there is little evidence of Latino/non-Latino court outcomes.

**Table VIII-2: Comparing Latino and non-Latino Youth on Prior Record and Court Processing**

Variables	Latino	Non-Latino
Number of Criminal Referrals*	1.11 (1.88)	1.37 (2.14)
Number of Truancy Referrals	0.51 (0.90)	0.46 (0.82)
Number of Dependency Referrals	0.05 (0.24)	0.08 (0.32)
Percent with Contempt Petition Filed	32.4%	32.3%

## **Analysis of Truant Youth with Risk Assessments**

*[Prepared by Linus Lin, Ph.D.]*

As a supplement to the analyses reported above, the WSU research team also received access to the risk assessments conducted with youth in Benton/Franklin Counties. The records from the Juvenile Tracking System (JTS) and the risk assessment data have been merged and cleaned. The JTS data contained all referral records of the juvenile cases referred to the juvenile court during the years 2006 and 2007 in Benton and Franklin counties. The risk assessment data measured 11 domains of risk/protective factors: *crime, demographic, school use of free time, employment, relationship, family, alcohol/drug, mental health, attitudes/behaviors, and aggression*. After merging the JTS and risk assessment data, the dataset included nearly 500 cases. [Note: Risk assessments are not conducted with status offenders, so this analysis represents only those status offenders who also have had a criminal referral at some point for which they were given a risk assessment.] The analyses in this section sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) Do Hispanic youth enter the criminal justice system earlier than white youth?
- 2) Do Hispanic youth have a higher number and/or more serious referrals than white youth?
- 3) Compared with white youth, do Hispanic youth have more risk factors and fewer protective factors?

The analyses are still IN-PROGRESS, therefore, descriptive analyses are presented to demonstrate the preliminary answers of the questions. A complete multivariate statistical analysis will be included in the project final report.

Among the 496 youths included in this sample, 241 were non-Latino, and 255 were Latino. Juveniles of Hispanic origin were younger than their non-Latino counterparts (an average of 16.55 years for non-Latino and 15.91 years for Latino). The sample consisted of 70.2% males and 29.8% females. Compared with Latino, the non-Latino group consisted of a larger proportion of female youths (non-Latino: male 63.5%, female 36.5%; Latino: male 76.5%, female 25.5%). Both non-Latino and Latino juveniles had a similar length of time in criminal

justice system (2.7 years). Latino youths were younger than their non-Latino counterparts at the first referral for both criminal (non-Latino: 14.15 year-old; Latino: 13.62 year-old) and truancy (non-Latino: 15.12 year-old; Latino: 14.32 year-old). After entering the system, there was no difference between non-Latino and Latino youths regarding the number of referrals and weighted referral scores (see Table VIII-3).

Table VIII-3: Descriptive Statistics by Hispanic Origin

	Hispanic Origin			
	Non-Latino (N=241)		Latino (N=255)	
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.
<b>Age in 2007</b>	<b>16.55</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>15.91</b>	<b>0.09</b>
<b>Gender (% of male)</b>	<b>63.5%</b>		<b>76.5%</b>	
Years in CJ System	2.7	0.13	2.71	0.13
<b>Age of 1st Criminal Referral</b>	<b>14.15</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>13.62</b>	<b>0.11</b>
<b>Age of 1st Truancy Referral</b>	<b>15.12</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>14.32</b>	<b>0.11</b>
Number of Criminal Referral	8.88	0.48	9.39	0.42
Number of Truancy Referral	2.54	0.14	2.69	0.13
Weighted Referral Score <sup>1</sup>	22.02	1.05	23.47	1.00
Weighted Referral Charge Score <sup>1</sup>	37.75	2.01	40.95	1.84

Note. Bold texts represent the difference between non-Latino and Latino was greater than 2 S.E.

<sup>1</sup> The severity level of referral and referral charge were used to compute the weighted score (e.g., # of level 0 \* 1 + # of level 1 \* 2 + # of level 3 \* 4 + ... + # of level 9 \* 10)

Table VIII-4 demonstrates the difference between Latino and non-Latino youths on the comparison of the first truancy and first criminal referrals. Both Latino and non-Latino juveniles were more likely to have criminal referrals earlier than truancy referrals. However, the white group consisted of more youths committing crimes prior to their truancy referrals (non-Latino: 71.78%; Latino: 65.10%).

Table VIII-4: Hispanic Origin by Time of Truancy and Crime Referrals

Truancy and Crime Referrals	Hispanic Origin				Total
	Non-Latino		Latino		
Crime after Truancy	67	27.80%	88	34.51%	155
Crime before Truancy	173	71.78%	166	65.10%	339
Crime and Truancy in the same referral	1	0.41%	1	0.39%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>		<b>255</b>		<b>496</b>

The impact of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) on individuals’ physical and social health has been well documented in the Adverse Childhood Experiences study conducted by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente’s Department of Preventative Medicine. The ACE scores measure exposure to stressful or traumatic experiences in childhood, which include 10 categories: *psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, parental separation or divorce, parental substance abuse, parental mental illness, domestic violence, and parent involved in criminal behavior.*

The information for seven of these ten categories can be extracted from the risk assessment measures. Table VIII-5 presents detailed comparisons of specific ACE scores between Latino and non-Latino youths and reveals substantially higher prevalence for non-Latino juveniles for all seven items and total scores.

Table VIII-5: Comparison of ACEs by Hispanic Origin

Domain	Non-Latino	Latino	Total
Physical Abuse	24.89%	15.65%	20.49%
Sexual abuse	10.86%	7.39%	8.61%
Neglect	24.43%	17.39%	20.49%
Household Substance Abuse	51.14%	36.40%	44.31%
Separate/Divorced Parents	80.91%	76.86%	79.07%
Parent mental health	13.70%	4.82%	8.90%
Parent Jail or Prison	53.85%	36.52%	45.49%
<b>Total ACE Score [mean(S.E.)]</b>	<b>2.44 (.09)</b>	<b>1.83 (.08)</b>	2.13

In terms of risk scores, Latino youth did not always have higher risk than their non-Latino counterparts for all domains (see Table VIII-6). For some domains, indeed, they had higher risk scores than their counterparts, such as on ***criminal history, school, and relationship.*** In contrast, Latino youths were scored at lower levels of risk for some domains: ***family, alcohol/drug, and mental health.*** For the other domains, white and Hispanic youths had similar level of risk, which included ***free time use, employment, attitude, aggression, and skill.***

Table VIII-6: Comparison of Risk Scores by Hispanic Origin

Risk Scores	Non-Latino (N=221)		Latino (N=228)		Disadvantaged Group
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
Criminal History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
<b>Criminal History Static</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>7.76</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>H</b>
School History Dynamic	0.18	0.04	0.24	0.04	
<b>School History Static</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Current School Dynamic</b>	<b>9.17</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>10.04</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>H</b>
Current School Static	-	-	-	-	
Free Time History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
Free Time History Static	-	-	-	-	
Current Free Time Dynamic	0.22	0.03	0.25	0.03	
Current Free Time Static	-	-	-	-	
Employment History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
Employment History Static	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.02	
Current Employment Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
Current Employment Static	-	-	-	-	
Relationship History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
<b>Relationship History Static</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Current Relationship Dynamic</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>H</b>
Current Relationship Static	-	-	-	-	
Family History Dynamic	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	
<b>Family History Static</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>W</b>
Current Family Dynamic	10.26	0.35	9.95	0.33	
Current Family Static	-	-	-	-	
<b>Drug &amp; Alcohol History Dynamic</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Drug &amp; Alcohol History Static</b>	<b>5.36</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Current Drug &amp; Alcohol Dynamic</b>	<b>5.67</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>W</b>
Current Drug & Alcohol Static	-	-	-	-	
<b>Mental Health History Dynamic</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Mental Health History Static</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Current Mental Health Dynamic</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>W</b>
Current Mental Health Static	-	-	-	-	
Attitude Dynamic Risk Factor	7.23	0.31	7.39	0.30	
Attitude Static Risk Factor	-	-	-	-	
Aggression Dynamic Risk Factor	4.15	0.18	3.82	0.18	
Aggression Static Risk Factor	-	-	-	-	
Skills Dynamic Risk Factor	9.32	0.36	9.29	0.37	
Skills Static Risk Factor	-	-	-	-	

Note. Bold texts represent the difference greater than 2 S.E.



Tables VIII-7 presents the detailed comparisons of specific protective scores between non-Latino and Latino juveniles and reveals the similar conclusion: **Latino youth did not belong to the disadvantaged group across all domains.** Latino youth had lower protective scores than whites for the domains of *school, free time use,* and *relationship.* Non-Latino youth had relatively lower protective scores for the specific domains of *family, alcohol/drug,* and *mental health.*

Table VIII-7: Comparison of Protective Scores by Hispanic Origin

Protective Scores	Non-Latino (N=221)		Latino (N=228)		Disadvantage Group
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
School History Dynamic	1.82	0.04	1.76	0.04	
<b>School History Static</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Current School Dynamic</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>H</b>
Current School Static	-	-	-	-	
Free Time History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
<b>Free Time History Static</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Current Free Time Dynamic</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>H</b>
Current Free Time Static	-	-	-	-	
Employment History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
Employment History Static	0.40	0.07	0.48	0.07	
Current Employment Dynamic	1.54	0.12	1.39	0.12	
Current Employment Static	-	-	-	-	
Relationship History Dynamic	-	-	-	-	
<b>Relationship History Static</b>	<b>1.35</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Current Relationship Dynamic</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>H</b>
Current Relationship Static	-	-	-	-	
Family History Dynamic	0.99	0.01	0.99	0.01	
<b>Family History Static</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>W</b>
Current Family Dynamic	9.70	0.27	9.81	0.24	
Current Family Static	-	-	-	-	
<b>Drug &amp; Alcohol History Dynamic</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>W</b>
Drug & Alcohol History Static	1.13	0.10	1.26	0.10	
Current Drug & Alcohol Dynamic	0.14	0.02	0.13	0.02	
Current Drug & Alcohol Static	-	-	-	-	
<b>Mental Health History Dynamic</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Mental Health History Static</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Current Mental Health Dynamic</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>H</b>
Current Mental Health Static	-	-	-	-	
Attitude Dynamic Protective Factor	6.37	0.32	6.04	0.32	
Attitude Static Protective Factor	-	-	-	-	
Aggression Dynamic Protective Factor	2.27	0.15	2.47	0.17	
Aggression Static Protective Factor	-	-	-	-	
Skills Dynamic Protective Factor	6.64	0.34	6.47	0.33	
Skills Static Protective Factor	-	-	-	-	

Note. Bold texts represent the difference greater than 2 S.E.

