



**Education, Truancy, Dropout and Literacy**  
**02/05/08**

This packet contains handouts that were distributed at the Education, Truancy, Dropout and Literacy Subcommittee meeting on February 5, 2008 and includes the following item:

- Memo from Renee Brust (COJ) to Bill Scheu (School Safety Workgroup Chair) that details recommendations from both DCPS and the State Attorney's Office on Truancy.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 4, 2008

TO: Bill Scheu, School Safety Workgroup Chair

FROM: Renee Brust, COJ

RE: Recommendations for Full Education Subcommittee

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After presentations by both Duval County Public Schools and the State Attorney's Office on Truancy, members voted to submit the following recommendations to the full subcommittee:

- 1.) The immediate addition of 30 full-time Attendance Service Workers to Duval County Public Schools. These additional workers would work within the current anti-truancy framework and have the immediate effect of reducing the current caseload on employees involved in this work.
- 2.) DCPS will provide an alignment proposal for the new employees, factoring in their current staff.
- 3.) The immediate creation of a Truancy Team, a group of interested parties that would bring together community resources, including social services, SAO, JSO and DCPS.
- 4.) Long term: The workgroup would like to recommend an overall goal of pushing anti-truancy efforts more vigorously into elementary schools.

TO: Chairman W.C. Gentry and Members of the Education, Literacy, Truancy and Dropout committee of the Jacksonville Journey

FROM: Chairman Bill Scheu and Members of the Truancy Workgroup

DATE: February 1, 2008

SUBJECT: **Subcommittee Recommendations**

The Truancy subcommittee will present three recommendations for consideration by the full committee that hold promise for reducing the truancy crisis in Duval County Public Schools. Each of these recommendations contains an overview of the proposed solution, identifies the lead design and implementation agency, and has a fiscal note.

**Recommendation #1** Hiring and Deployment of 30 additional Attendance Social Workers.

Hiring, training, and deploying 30 additional attendance social workers will reduce the number of schools served by staff members, increase personal contact and follow-up with truant students, and promises to reduce the number of students who have missed 20+ school days.

During the 2007-2008 school year DCPS has worked with its combined staff of truant officers and attendance social workers. Staff has been reallocated to decrease the number of schools served by each staff member (Table 1).

Staff Ratio	2006-2007	Staff Ratio	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009
District Wide (159 Schools)	10 Staff Avg. 15.9 Schools	<b>District Wide  (147 Schools)</b>	17 Staff Avg. 9 Schools	38 Staff Avg. 4 Schools
Priority Schools (7 Schools)	13 Staff Avg. 2 staff per school	<b>16 Turn around Schools</b>	7 Staff Avg. 2 Schools	16 Staff 1 School per staff member
Truancy Centers (4 sites)	11 Staff Avg. 3 staff per site	<b>Truancy Centers (4 sites)</b>	7 Staff Avg. 2 staff per site	7 Staff Avg. 2 staff per site

DCPS should be the lead development and implementation agency for truancy. Better alignment with governmental, JSO and State Attorney's office, and community wide partners will be necessary in order to create a lattice of support services that meets the needs of students and families.

**Fiscal Note:** The anticipated salary and benefits of each social worker will be \$60K. The cost of this recommendation will be \$1.8 Million. DCPS will incur recruitment, training, and equipment expenses

**Recommendation #2** Identification, alignment, and Coordination of Community resources to support elimination of truancy.

Jacksonville has numerous community based and governmental organizations that in their own manner attempt to address truancy problems. Truancy should not be viewed as a cause but as a symptom of more serious individual, family, and community conditions. It is the recommendation of the subcommittee that we identify promising strategies and resources from these organizations or "Map" the community. "Mapping" the community will create a comprehensive inventory of strategies and resources that students and families may be referred. An outgrowth of the community "Mapping" must be the coordination of strategies and resources to scale, so that more students may benefit.

The United Way of NE Florida should be the lead agency for "Mapping" the community. This agency currently publishes the 211-resource guide. Their work with this valuable resource could be expanded to address community based and governmental organizations that address truancy.

**Fiscal Note:** The cost of "Mapping" the community and coordinating these resources is \$10,000. These costs include research, labor, printing, and distribution.

**Recommendation #3** Development of Community Truancy team

Galvanizing Jacksonville around the truancy crisis will require a team of concerned citizens to engage the community in this effort. Maintaining awareness and concentrating resources on those students most in need of intervention would be the focus of this team.

Jacksonville United Against Truancy (JUAT) should be the lead agency in creating and maintaining the truancy team. The experience of JUAT in focusing the community on this issue is critical. This "war room" atmosphere would consist of members from Duval County Public Schools, the State Attorney's Office, Youth Crisis Center, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and other community

agencies that serve youth. This group would meet regularly throughout the school year to monitor truant students at all school levels.

Fiscal Note: The cost of developing and maintaining the Truancy Team is \$60,000. These costs include research, labor, printing, conducting community meetings, and distribution. The truancy team will largely be staffed by the members of JUAT mentioned above with the addition of a Truancy Team Coordinator.