



City of Jacksonville – The Jacksonville Journey

Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Sub-Committee

MINUTES

OF

SCHOOL RELEVANCY WORKGROUP

January 30, 2008

The Jacksonville Journey – Education, Truancy, Dropout &

Literacy Sub-Committee

School Relevancy Workgroup

January 30, 2008

12:00 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS before the Jacksonville Journey - School Relevancy Workgroup taken on Wednesday, January 30, 2008, Edward Ball Building, 8th Floor - 214 N. Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida commencing at approximately 4:00 p.m.

APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & MEMBERS:

TERRIE BRADY, Chair

TOM MAJDANICS, Member

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

JOHN FLETCHER, Member

GERLIEVE OLIVER, Member

MICHAEL EDWARDS, Member

ROBERT LEE, Member

STAFF:

SANDY SIMMONS

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kathy Graw

W. Earl Kitchings

Ysryl

Cheryl Grymes

PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME

Terrie Brady welcomed everyone and reminded attendees to sign in. **PRIORITIZE NEEDS FROM RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Ms. Brady stated that the subcommittee will look this over. She will rank them and have them for everyone based on the input. Also, this will be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. Brady also mentioned that the presenters did not bring enough handouts and that she will be provided the handouts and will make sure they are forwarded to the subcommittee along with the **QUANTIFIED PRIORITIES** that will verbally be talked about today.

a) PRESENTATIONS

1. Career Academies

a. Duval County School System

Mr. John Hamen, Executive Director of Career Development, Duval County Public Schools thanked the subcommittee for the opportunity to address one of the top priorities of the school system. Not for just crime prevention, but for economic development and that career academies are an excellent vehicle to address young people within the Duval County school system.

Mr. Hamen goes on to say that a career academy is a small learning community, career focused and academically challenging that prepares students for both college and the workforce according to national standards and Senate Bill 1232 which is now law in the State of Florida, **Career and Professional Education Act**. Sometimes it is a school within a school or a separate school. Mr. Hamen mentioned that it is believed that career focus is the hook that captures children to stay in school. Students have a great life and a great living when they exit the Duval County school system. Also, academically challenging is where children can keep up with college level math, reading, and language arts skills no matter what career is chosen. Mr. Hamen went on to say that this will equip students for both college and the workforce. This program also allows students to enter into college with as little remediation courses as possible.

Mr. Hamen mentioned that the difference between the traditional academics is the worksite experience, industry certification, internships, and mentorships and that there are advisory boards at each of the high schools made up of business people in the industry.

Mr. Hamen reported that there are seventeen (17) existing career academies and that 11 are recognized by the Chamber of Commerce. Six (6) new academies make twenty-three (23) academies all in all.

Communities in Schools have tried to put case managers (student advocates / graduation coaches) at A. Philip Randolph, William H. Raines, and Frank H. Peterson. Mr. Hamen also reported that CSX has committed \$150,000 and that if we could capture the children that are having the most trouble, this will prevent drop out and crime, and bring economic development.

Mr. Hamen also stated that the dating and the marriage of the Chamber of Commerce, Florida Community College at Jacksonville (FCCJ), and other entities in creating three collaborative (umbrella advisory committees) that will center in on a career focus of: Finance, Information Technology (IT), and Health in which the new health academy at Mandarin will come under this new collaboration with no structure except the agreements that company executives will donate money and advise in the three areas. Mr. Hamen reported that The Alliance for World class Education dedicated \$160,000 and Blue Cross/Blue Shield dedicated \$140,000.

Mr. Hamen went on to introduce Ms. Crystal Forest, Director of Career Technical Education and Career Academies. He also stated that Ms. Forest runs a banner school at Wolfson High School.

Ms. Forest stated that schools have identified what resources they have in the schools that will complement the industry in order to figure out how to strategically set up the programs. This makes it a win-win situation. The schools win, the students win, and the businesses / industry wins.

Ms. Forest reported that career academies were started out a need for entry level employees in many different industries. The program is tested and true. There is a ten (10) year study that was conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Resource Corporation which proves that students who attend this program do have better attendance in school.

Some of the things we want to accomplish in career academies are improving the graduation rate, involve businesses in a meaningful way, and provide direction to students stated Ms. Forest. She goes on to say that student retention usually lower the drop out rate and in the long term this will impact the economy for economic development.

Ms. Forest also stated that there is a resume' interview practice and that the students experience running a mock insurance agency business. They also got to visit a real insurance agency which made them able to see and experience that the parts they played are real jobs.

Ms. Forest concluded that there is an annual program review in training the volunteers which is a very huge part of this.

b. Schultz Center

Linda Lewis reported that the Schultz Center Leadership Council was established in 2006 and consists of the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce to establish a regional network of career and professional academy representatives of universities and community colleges to address career academies which report to the Schultz Center. Goals for the Leadership Council is to identify leadership programs within the five (5) counties, advance placement, and career academies. Ms. Lewis stated that representatives revised and revamped the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce Career Academy Manual and implemented regional training provided by the Ford Foundation, called Pass, for teachers and industry representatives on how to use the manual along with regional certification at the national level.

Ms. Lewis stated that along with Worksource, the Schultz Center Leadership Council coordinated the design of the Five Year Strategic Plan for Career and Professional Education. She went on to introduce David DeRidder and stated that Mr. DeRidder worked with each individual subcommittee to address the various requests reported above.

Mr. DeRidder stated that we wanted is have career technical education directors from each county identify career academies that are ready to go for the certification process and that there are ten (10) different sections and twenty-four (24) different and specific elements that are required in which the level of silver or gold has to be achieved. Mr. DeRidder continued to say that the plan is to have a team of six (6) people representing secondary education, post secondary education, Worksource, Schultz Center, the Chamber, and Career Partners. A team would come into the school once certification is obtained and go through each element. If all eight (8) of the required elements are achieved and a score of 68 of 108 points or higher are maintained, a circle of excellence certification is will be received for the region. This information is shared with the district rather certification is achieved or not. Mr. DeRidder stated that this give the schools something that can be shared with administration. Also, the document itself is a guide and is based on national standard, but not as rigorous as the national which allows each academy something to grow towards and also is something that could be achieved.

Ms. Brady reported that the subcommittee will make recommendations to the full committee and the mayor and other committee members will try to put some additional partnerships together to try to help with the certification, senate bill, or whatever because not all children are prepared to go to college and if the children are not attending college, then what happens to the children? This needs to be published so not only the children are aware, but the parents as well. There is not enough money, so what will happen five years down the line to the children. Ms. Brady also stated that if quantified needs can be identified, email the information and it will be addressed at the next meeting so we can classify and prioritize.

Mr. Earl Kitchens - What kind of overlapping is happening with the two academies, Raines and Philip Randolph because they are so close together? **Mr. Hamen** - All the mentoring programs receive between 4,000 and 58,000 kids. There are multiple mentoring agencies and often meet to make sure there are no overlapping. Raines only has one academy, Information Technologies (IT), that we offer and at Randolph, there are several academies. They have totally different student bodies attending the schools.

Ms. Brady requested that as a follow up, a list be forward to the subcommittee of the academies and / or the high schools that do have schools within a school and what those skills are that are being focused on. This will give us a broader understanding of the extensiveness of what is being provided.

Cheryl Grymes – Has there been any discussion about blending the magnet program and career academies? **Mr. Hamen** – Yes, there are discussions.

Ysryl- stated that a lot of children are interested in the construction trade, but the way the construction trade is being marketed brings fear because of not being able to comprehend. Would

like to be able to bring a marketing strategy together. Children have a real problem in truly believing that all white people are racist against blacks but they have no idea that there are just as many whites as blacks that are fighting for the children's future to give them a better quality of life.

As far as marketing, the children need to know that it is not about race, but about their future and black and white together want to see them get there.

Tom Majdanics – How many students are attending career academies today? **Mr. Hamen** - Approximately at Wolfson, 173; A. Philip Randolph, 700; and Frank H. Peterson, between 1100 to 1200, but overall, it is over 2000.

Ms. Brady – What about all the other high schools? Can you get back with us on that?

Mr. Majdanics - Are you measuring graduation rates for career academy participants? **Mr. Hamen** - The only one I know off the top of my head is Wolfson. 97% college going rate, no drop out. The only ones that did not go to on to college went into the military.

Ms. Brady – Can you provide us a list of all of the students who attend the academies and the graduation rate?

Mr. Majdanics – Are there any plans to target career academies towards at risk students or at risk areas? **Mr. Hamen** - Career academies are already in an at risk area and was started as a hook to keep kids in school.

Ms. Brady stated that statistically, the majority of people who live, work, and raise their families in Jacksonville are blue collar workers. There is not enough emphasis on the expansion and the involvement of everyone who can establish training and career development on blue collar skills to be trained correctly with licensing, not certification. Greater salaries can be earned than teachers and have better benefits of people who have white collar jobs that do not have degrees. There are a lot of white collar workers that do not have college degrees. Example is Blue Cross / Blue Shield who hire semi professional, white collar workers that are working with skills.

This district pigeon holes certain groups like Homebuilders and FCCJ Construction and do not venture out to see where there are greater involvement by the partnerships like Miller Electric and WW Gay Construction who are the two largest employers of blue collar workers. The programs have a five (5) year apprentice program in which they pay individuals to go to their academies and they are guaranteed job opportunities at a higher rate. This is a true example and expansion of what the real needs of the city are currently. In the construction trade in this community, travelers are coming from outside. I do not want travelers taking our monies and leaving and not investing in our families, school system, Chamber, or communities. This is a question I have asked for several years where still nothing has been expanded on this issue. If not, we will go and have it mandated at the legislature. You do not alienate one. All options should be put on the table to allow the students to experience and select the various programs. Senator Gates sited as an example and specifically used the partnership of Miller Electric in which they provided their nationally certified curriculum, paid for the instructor to be in the schools and gave the rising junior and senior student's apprenticeship in the summer so that when they graduated they just phased right into the program.

We are not utilizing our biggest employees and community involvers. The current president of the Chamber is the vice president of Miller Electric. I just want to educate and recruit our own young men and women to do the job and benefit from the programs instead of bringing in outside people.

2. Drop Back In

Ms. Brady introduced Mr. Chris Larson, Duval County public schools system. He is specialized in Drop Out Prevention and Intervention, Drop Back In and a whole lot of things offered in our community.

Chris Larson stated that he is very passionate and have been for thirty-one (31) years about keeping kids in school. He has provided a summery of the Safety Net Program and stated that the school board has been committed now to the idea of not having students drop out. When a student drops out, it is a tragedy for the family, community, and the student.

Mr. Larson continues to report that every classroom teacher in Jacksonville is a drop out prevention teacher because it begins in each individual classroom and is more individualized today than in the past. Teachers track the progress and the needs of each student. Expanding out from that, there are thousands of experienced and dedicated school teachers.

Mr. Larson goes on to say that every school has an internal safety net which is when students are experiencing difficulties they are helped getting caught up and not waiting until a student gets to the point of needing an official drop out prevention program. There are also district wide programs which are a major commitment representing over 12 million dollars and are constantly adding to options.

Drop Back In Academy is a partnership with Alternatives Unlimited which is in the 2nd year. With the approval of the school board, students are able to get back in school. This is a public high school with multiple sites operated in collaboration with Alternatives Unlimited with over 1100 students. A lot of the students are typically between seventeen (17) and twenty (20) years old and may or may not be living at home or often have children of their own. Currently there are eleven (11) sites that are almost always leased or donated space from a church. The company, at their own expense, remodels the space to make it look like one of the classrooms and the children will earn their standard diploma the same as any other high school, including passing the FCAT. Mr. Larson concludes that it is an awesome partnership and through this partnership, this is one of the largest recovery programs.

Ms. Brady request for Mr. Larson to explain how the accelerated program compliments Nathan B. Forest and Andrew Jackson.

Mr. Larson stated that having come from a background as a teacher, I was surprised that when children get to be 15 – 17, they may or may not be living at home and the only way this program will work is to be real flexible, non traditional approaches and learn differently than we did.

Accelerated Learning Center, Forest High School and Andrew Jackson High School. Half of the classroom is a regular classroom and the other half is a computer lab. The kids only come to school for only two (2) hours a day and work hard on one course. Work six (6) to eight (8) weeks until they have mastered that skill and then move on the next one. There is also an extended time of day they also agree to work at home. They sign a contract. If they do not come to school, we call the home and we find them. It has been wildly successful. They also offer credit recovery in which they attend after school. These students are not drop outs, they are just behind. Progressing through a standard high school diploma.

Mr. Larson stated that his first and second priority middle schools would be Standards Based Promotion and Renaissance Academy and high school is Comprehensive Accelerated Learning Centers (ALC) and Renaissance Academy. Setting up an ALC for one year would cost \$1.5 million for one school and \$400,000 per year per school to establish an academy in a school.

Cheryl Grymes – What is the difference between Renaissance and ALC? **Mr. Larson** - They are really very similar, but the primary difference is that students come to ALC and take one course at a time, two (2) hours a day and students who come to the Renaissance Academy are there all day.

Ms. Grymes - How do you measure success? **Mr. Larson** - “I only have one criterion and will only accept 0.0 drop out rate.” 67% is the highest graduation rate. Last year was 65%. The lowest drop out rate was 4.8% and we are currently at 5.2%

Ms. Grymes - How do you measure success for the specific program? **Mr. Larson** - It depends on if it is elementary, middle, or high. There are academic indicators, courses completed, and for high school it would be the graduation rate.

Ms. Grymes - Do you have something that shows what all the indicators are showing for each program? **Mr. Larson** – Key indicators can be provided.

Ms. Brady - How many students are in these programs? **Mr. Larson** - This will be included in the key indicator.

Mr. Kitchings - Are the indicators going to be broken down by different demographic areas by race, gender and possibly by income levels? **Mr. Larson** - Yes.

Ms. Grymes - How do the students find out about these programs? **Mr. Larson** - Each year we get the database and word of mouth.

Tom Majdanics – What are your measurable results and how can we track it. **Mr. Larson** – All of the good collectives are measured.

Mr. Ysryl- Is there a way to spend more money in advertising? **Mr. Larson** – If there is anyway the school can bring in more counselors and educate them to identify with the children.

Ms. Brady stated that there will be a meeting that will focus on the one topic of guidance counselors as an individual topic.

Mr. Kitchings - What are the next schools targeted for either Renaissance or ACL. **Mr. Larson** - In terms of funding for next year to keep the programs as they are.

Mr. Kitchings - If the funding was there is there a short list of schools that you would like to see targeted. **Mr. Larson** – No.

1.New Business

- a) Last time we were asked to rank what the priorities and the recruitment and retention were. Today we are asked to look over the priorities and rank priorities on the particular programs and then when we get them from the career academies, they need to be quantified. Once you get them reviewed they need to be submitted to Rbrust.coj.net. She will pull them together and give them to us in our notebooks.
- b) If you are not present at the meetings, you can go to coj.net / Jacksonville Journey icon / education relevance committee. Minutes and hand outs can be downloaded.

2.Adjournment

Terri Brady adjourned the meeting at 1:52 PM.