



City of Jacksonville – The Jacksonville Journey

Education

MINUTES

OF

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

TRUANCY WORKGROUP

January 31, 2008

The Jacksonville Journey – Education

Education Sub-Committee

Truancy Workgroup

January 31, 2008

1:30 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS before the Jacksonville Journey - Education Sub-Committee, Truancy Workgroup taken on Tuesday, January 31, 2008, Edward Ball Building, 8th Floor, Room 851 - 214 N. Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida commencing at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Truancy Workgroup

Bill Scheu, Chair
Jonathon Brice, Member
Pastor Moses Criswell, Member
Councilwoman Mia Jones, Member
Shelley Grant, Member
Bill Hodges, Member
Connie Hodges, Member
Tom Majdanics, Member

APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & MEMBERS:

Bill Scheu, Chair
Jonathon Brice, SME/Advisor
Pastor Moses Criswell, Member
Councilwoman Mia Jones, Member
Shelley Grant, Member
Bill Hodges, Member
Connie Hodges, Member
Tom Majdanics, Member

ABSENTEE MEMBERS:

Ed Pratt-Dannals

STAFF:

Renee Brust
Alice Checorski

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nancy Broner
Kathy Graw
W. Earl Kitchings

PROCEEDINGS

January 31, 2008

Education Sub-Committee, Truancy Workgroup 1:30 p.m.

Call to Order and Comments. Chairman Bill Scheu called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Purpose of Meeting.

Discuss the challenges centered on truancy impacting the Mayor's crime initiative - The Jacksonville Journey.

Bill Hodges, State Attorney's Office, presented a video on truancy which was developed to be shown to the parents of truant children. In the video, State Attorney Harry Shorstein stated "The correlation between truancy and crime is absolute".

Chairman Scheu asked Mr. Hodges to explain how the State

Attorney's Truancy Program works in conjunction with the Duval County Public Schools Truancy Program. Mr. Hodges said that attendance and intervention team meetings are scheduled by the school program before the case is referred to the State Attorney's Office. The programs succeed when students get back in school and reduce the number of absences. Case management personnel work with parents since the State Attorney's program holds the parent accountable.

Jonathon Brice, DCPS Truancy Program, said that truancy is often a symptom of a deeper problem within the family. Previously, DCPS followed the State's minimum attendance requirements for 2006-07. For the 2007-08 school years, the process for truant students was revised. Mr. Brice provided a handout which outlined the attendance bands, or number of absences and the school and district responsibilities at each level. Excessive absences should be investigated regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused. Attendance service workers are required to attend the Attendance Intervention Team (AIT) meetings. The current attendance service worker ratio is 10 to 1.

Mr. Majdanics asked how many AIT's have been conducted thus far in the school year. Mr. Brice responded he will pull the data from monthly reports and provide it to the workgroup.

Mr. Brice made a recommendation that 30 social workers are needed to work with schools, families and students. Councilwoman Mia Jones asked how long the case workers stay with the families, to which Mr. Hodges replied for the school year or longer in most cases.

Shelley Graham provided a handout outlining the State Attorney's Office process, which is available at www.coj.net. The Colorado study finds that families have 3 major stressors a year, which influence the drop in school attendance.

Connie Hodges asked if the attendance service workers have the capacity to make referrals and do follow up work. Mr. Brice stated staff understands how to use 2-1-1 and full service schools as referrals. Nancy Broner said we should look at asset-mapping as discussed at the last meeting in order to take advantage of community resources.

The group discussed the correlation between chronic absenteeism and the number of dropouts. Mr. Brice reported that the district just approved a strategic early intervention initiative with programs for students 16-18 years old. Councilwoman Jones said the State law allows for dropouts at the age of 16 with the parent's signature. Nancy Broner stated we have a bill in this legislative session to raise the age to 18 and we are asking this to be a pilot in Jacksonville.

Councilwoman Mia Jones recommended taking a look at existing Truancy Centers. Mr. Brice stated there is a need to expand on this resource, but funding has steadily declined.

In summary, Chairman Scheu made a motion to present the workgroup's recommendations to the subcommittee as follows:

- Recommend 30 new attendance service workers to be employed, trained and deployed (preliminary cost to be included)
- Ask DCPS to bring an alignment proposal for the 30 workers
- Create a Truancy Team, an ongoing body of people who bring

community resources together.

- Develop a "war room" proposal for alignment of services
- Make long-term recommendation to develop a focus on younger students.

2. Action Items

Jonathon Brice - Report on number of AIT's conducted to date for current school year.

Jonathon Brice and Shelley Graham - Design presentation with recommendations to the full committee for the February 5, 2008 meeting.

Chairman Scheu set the next meeting for Thursday, February 14, 2008 at 4 p.m.

Adjournment. The meeting ended at 3:05 p.m.