



City of Jacksonville – The Jacksonville Journey

Education, Truancy, Dropout and Literacy

Subcommittee

MINUTES

OF

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

SCHOOL SECURITY WORKGROUP

February 7, 2008

The Jacksonville Journey – Education

Education, Truancy, Dropout and Literacy Sub-Committee

School Security Workgroup

February 7, 2008

10:00 a.m. Meeting

PROCEEDINGS before the Jacksonville Journey - Education Sub-Committee, School Security Workgroup taken on Thursday, February 7, 2008, Edward Ball Building, 8th Floor, Room 851 - 214 N. Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida commencing at approximately 10:00 a.m.

School Security Workgroup

Skip Cramer, Chair
Tony Bellamy, Member
Nancy Broner, Member
Bobby Deal, Member
Carolyn Floyd, Member
Joe Henry, Member
Nongongama Majova-Seane
Paul Perez, Member

APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & MEMBERS:

SKIP CRAMER, Chair

CAROLYN FLOYD, Member

ABSENTEE MEMBERS:

TONY BELLAMY, Member

NANCY BRONER, Member

BOBBY DEAL, Member

JOE HENRY, Member

NONGONGAMA MAJOVA-SEANE, Member

PAUL PEREZ, Member

STAFF:

Renee Brust

Alice Checorski

OTHERS PRESENT:

David Coffman, JSO

Shirley Durham, SAO

Chris Guajardo, PTSA

Gary Killam, JSO

Paul Soares, DCPS

PROCEEDINGS

February 8, 2008

Education Sub-Committee, Early Learning Workgroup 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order and Comments. Skip Cramer, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:11 a.m. at which time introductions were made.

1. Purpose of Meeting.

Discuss the Mayor's crime initiative, *The Jacksonville Journey - Take a Step* Education, Truancy, Dropout and Literacy Subcommittee, School Security Workgroup.

2. Discussion Items

Mr. Cramer stated the objective of the workgroup is to learn from the experts to see what we can do as part of the *Jacksonville Journey* anti-crime initiative to enhance school safety and security. To that end, we will try to determine the current status of safety and security within our public schools; what tools are available to address safety and security issues; what is working and what is not; what is needed in terms of resources, etc. We want to be sure information flows back and forth between the committees.

As a matter of background provided to the public, Chairman Cramer referred to the 2008 JCCI Progress Report in which the indicator of serious student violence raised a red flag. We saw a trend line that is going upward with an increasing incidence of weapons over the past three years. School expulsions continue to increase and we are looking at how this ties in with increased violence.

Chairman Cramer provided a handout entitled "Problem Matrix", which included categories titled "Problem", "Solution" and "Desired Outcome", which must be measurable. For example, if metal detectors were used in schools, would the expectation be to get to zero weapons? The workgroup expects to have 3 or 4 recommendations to improve school safety and security.

At this time, Chairman Cramer introduced Shirley Durham, State Attorney's Office to speak to the group. Ms. Durham provided a handout produced by A. Jay Plotkin, entitled "School Law". Ms. Durham stated that students are being faced with violence and threats from their classmates. The State Attorney's Office can only become involved when it rises to criminal behavior as they are held by the 4th Amendment and the individual's right to privacy. Teachers are allowed to search children when they believe that a weapon may be present. They are finding that some students are now bringing weapons to school to protect themselves.

Carolyn Floyd asked how reckless endangerment plays into the situation when a gun is found and does the SAO's office apply the same laws to drugs? Ms. Durham responded that a teacher only needs reasonable suspicion to conduct a search and seizure, but a police officer needs probable cause. It is a matter of a civil violation vs. a criminal violation.

Mr. Cramer asked if the school police officer is held to the same level as any JSO law enforcement officer. Paul Soares, Duval County Public Schools Chief Officer of Operational Support, replied they function under the same rules and procedures but not beyond their jurisdiction. They have the same authority from one

school to another.

Chairman Cramer asked Ms. Durham what policies and procedures or tools can be strengthened to assist us in reducing violence in the schools?

Ms. Durham stated we should talk to the children in the schools. They need to feel safe at the bus stop and while in school. There should be zero tolerance. Metal detectors would prevent weapons from being brought on campus.

Chris Guajardo, PTSA, expressed concern for the societal trend of "no snitching". The no bullying policy needs to be enforced at all schools.

At this time Chairman Cramer invited Chris Guajardo, Duval County Public Schools PTSA, to address the parental perspective. Ms. Guajardo said more training is being given to parent addressing school safety, including internet safety. The apprehension to attend sporting events affects parental involvement. There is a need to encourage parents, students, the community and businesses to become partners with the schools. Mr. Cramer asked if they have observed any "best practices" that might be duplicated in our schools. Ms. Guajardo stated some of the PTA's have been successful are sharing resources such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club and other community agencies. In addition, family fitness nights are being held to address health issues, which often result from school safety and the students not wanting to go outside after school.

Gary Killam, JSO addressed internet safety by reporting there are free resources available to parents which should be shared. Ms.

Guajardo agreed this would be a good topic to bring to the general PTA membership.

Carolyn Floyd asked if there has been a discussion with all of the PTA board and members regarding targeted schools that have serious violations involving drugs, guns, bullying, etc., which carry over into after-school activities. Ms. Guajardo stated that the PTA board, chairs of the various committees, county level PTA chairs, area coordinators have looked at a lot of schools that do not have active PTA's. Again, it is an issue of lack of parent involvement. They are trying to build resources in all schools, particularly the designated 63 Title 1 schools that are not getting the extra funding because the free and reduced lunch applications are not being turned in. Schools are now offering mentoring programs. The faith-based community is also a key resource since this is a community problem.

Skip Cramer asked Ms. Durham to clarify the role of school advisory councils. Ms. Durham stated she is not very involved with this group, but their role is more operational.

At this time, Dave Coffman, JSO, joined the workgroup.

Chairman Cramer invited Paul Soares, Duval County Public Schools, Chief Officer of Operational Support, to address the workgroup.

Mr. Soares stated they are trying to balance the education mission and the privacy aspect with the issue of security. He said the alternative schools are ready to handle that population of students. Duval County Public Schools have a total of 125,000 students and we should keep in perspective the number of violent crimes committed. From a prevention aspect, the previous MARS

Program identified the 5 highest offenders within any given school. They were closely monitored and eventually came off that list. It had a negative impact that certain people were being targeted. They are working on a program called "Safe Students in Schools". The key is to find level 2 behavior, which clearly shows acts of defiance and non-conformity. This program will identify the five worst students.

Shirley Durham asked if level 2 is a criminal infraction and who is to deal with the child? Mr. Soares responded that School Resource Officers (SROs) do not discipline. They will be meeting with senior School Board members next week and hope to have the program in place by the next school year.

Mr. Cramer stated that the *Jacksonville Journey* is looking for opportunities where the task force can get behind initiatives such as this program.

Paul Soares then discussed security training for the SROs and hired security paralegals. Assessments are conducted throughout the year to determine if additional fencing or lighting is needed, if gates are secured with panic hardware, etc. However, the level of training for the security paraprofessionals needs to be raised. Mr. Cramer asked if it is at the principal's discretion to use dollars for paraprofessional security. Mr. Soares stated SROs are mandated and funding is provided. Additional resources to hire day-time officers would be helpful.

Ms. Floyd asked if any safety training is being considered for teachers. Mr. Soares stated they have metal wands available. There is a school counseling group available to meet with teachers

and students. Mr. Cramer then stated the School Relevancy workgroup is looking at the role of school policies.

At this time, Mr. Gary Killam, DCPS Police Department officer addressed the workgroup. His discussion centered around school uniforms and his recommendation to provide guidelines to dress codes without mandating uniforms. He defined his role as a School Police Officer, which is different from the SRO in that the school police force works at night. They secure the schools and check the campuses. During the day, they conduct security surveys and develop training.

David Coffman, Assistant Chief of Community Affairs with JSO, joined the workgroup. He provided a handout of recommendations, which he reviewed with the workgroup. Some of the highlights include the use of early intervention programs such as Team-Up. Officer Coffman also mentioned Project Safe Students in Schools, a program that is designed to track students by their identification numbers to identify large numbers of referrals. The goal is to encourage these students to succeed. It is not a criminal program. JSO has included Empowered Parents and United Way as resources for the SROs in addition to working with the 2-1-1 system, Kesler Mentoring training, the State Attorney's Office and the Department of Juvenile Justice with the goal toward intervention. They have started a student Crime Stopper program and are working with the Duval County School Board's Anti-violence/Anti-drug program. Consideration is being given to implementing an advisory council for students.

JSO also recommends that a contingency plan be in place for

9

emergencies.

Carolyn Floyd asked if JSO has blueprints for all schools, which they do have available on their laptops, but not keys.

Officer Coffman expressed concern with the funding for the re-opening of the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) since they have no place to take students they pick up.

It was noted that there are 48 SROs in 46 schools. United Way's "Achievers for Life" Program is something they would like SROs to get engaged in. The program is funded by Bank of America.

Carolyn Floyd applauded the efforts of the Duval County Public School Board and JSO and encouraged them to showcase their successes.

Chairman Cramer asked Chris Guajardo to respond back to the committee with her recommendations for school safety and security.

3. Action Items

Chris Guajardo will provide recommendations from PTSA. The workgroup will determine 3 or 4 recommendations to improve school safety and security to be submitted to the Education subcommittee.

Adjournment. Meeting ended at 12:15 p.m.