



City of Jacksonville – The Jacksonville Journey

Education

MINUTES

OF

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

TRUANCY WORKGROUP

February 15, 2008

The Jacksonville Journey – Education

Education Sub-Committee

Truancy Workgroup

February 15, 2008

1:00 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS before the Jacksonville Journey - Education Sub-Committee, Truancy Workgroup taken on Friday, February 15, 2008, Edward Ball Building, 8th Floor, Room 851 - 214 N. Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida commencing at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Truancy Workgroup

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

APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & MEMBERS:

Bill Scheu, Chair
Pastor Moses Criswell, Member
Shelley Grant, Member
Bill Hodges, Member
Connie Hodges, Member

ABSENTEE MEMBERS:

Nancy Broner, Member
Councilwoman Mia Jones, Member
Jonathon Brice, SME/Adviser

STAFF:

Renee Brust
Alice Checorski

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kathy Graw
Donna Massie-Cobb
Melanie Patz
Vickie Pierre
Jeff Sweeney

PROCEEDINGS

February 15, 2008

Education Sub-Committee, Truancy Workgroup 1:00 p.m.

Call to Order and Comments. Chairman Bill Scheu called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

1. Purpose of Meeting.

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

Mr. Scheu indicated the workgroup is almost ready to make a recommendation to the sub-committee regarding the truancy program. At this time, the chairman invited Melanie Patz, United Way to report on the dropout issue.

Ms. Patz stated United Way has embarked upon a development project

with The Community Foundation as a stakeholder. They found that dropout is related to truancy and academic failure resulting in over age for grade. The primary causes are:

1. Lack of attendance
2. Poor behavior in the classroom
3. Low GPA or being over age for grade

The "Achievers for Life" initiative was developed by United Way. They are providing family advocates, achievement advocates for the students, who are connected to full service schools. The program has dollars available for the principals to identify research-based programs for the parents to participate in the school. United Way is piloting "Achievers for Life" at Arlington Middle School and Ft. Caroline Middle School. They are currently working with 96 families with a focus on transition from elementary into middle school. To date, 30% of the students in the pilot have improved their GPA and 40% had improvement in attendance. The principals are also looking at a summer orientation camp.

The Community Foundation is focusing on transition into 9th grade. Ms. Patz asked the committee if it could put together some dollars for transition programs for middle schools. Mr. Scheu requested that they put together a proposal, including budgets, for the workgroup. He asked Ms. Patz what the program does.

Ms. Patz stated that the Jewish Family and Community Services meets with families to help them stabilize. The students are assigned an achievement advocate. Family advocates identify the need for additional services. Communities In Schools is providing the mentoring piece.

Connie Hodges added that referrals are made by the teacher or the principal when 5th grade students are identified who have behavioral issues, high absenteeism or below a 1.5 GPA.

Bill Hodges said it might be helpful if the students are being referred to the Detention/Intervention process. Donna Massie-Cobb agreed that it is an excellent link to partner with the school. Mr. Scheu said he thought the State Attorney's Office was focusing on truancy in elementary school. Mr. Hodges said it becomes increasingly difficult to prosecute a parent in middle or high school. They are trying to reduce truancy at the elementary school level.

Melanie Patz stated The Community Foundation wants to pilot a program on transition from middle school to the 9th grade before taking it to the Juvenile Justice Department.

Mr. Scheu recommended they submit one proposal and include truancy.

Renee Brust spoke with Jonathon Brice during the meeting and determined he is working on the proposal. He will work with Melanie Patz and combine the report for the sub-committee meeting on Tuesday.

The minutes of the February 5, 2008 workgroup meeting were approved.

2. Action Items

On behalf of Jonathon Brice, Donna Massie-Cobb will forward the Truancy Report which will be presented to the full committee.

Adjournment. The meeting ended at 1:45 p.m.