



**City of Jacksonville – The Jacksonville Journey**

**Education**

**MINUTES**

**OF**

**EDUCATION, TRUANCY, DROPOUT &**

**LITERACY**

**SUB-COMMITTEE**

**March 12, 2008**

**The Jacksonville Journey – Education**  
**Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy**

**Sub-Committee**

**March 12, 2008**

**1:00 p.m.**

PROCEEDINGS before the Jacksonville Journey - Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Sub-Committee, taken on Tuesday, March 12, 2008, Edward Ball Building, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 851 - 214 N. Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida commencing at approximately 1:00 p.m.

**Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Sub-Committee**

W. C. Gentry, Chair  
Tony Bellamy, Member  
Terrie Brady, Member  
Nancy Broner, Member  
Vicki Burke, Member  
Charles "Skip" Cramer, Member  
Pastor Moses Criswell, Member  
Michael Edwards, Member  
John Fletcher, Member  
Deborah Gianoulis, Member  
Cheryl Grymes, Member  
Bill Hodges, Member  
Connie Hodges, Member  
Kevin Hyde, Member  
Mia Jones, Member  
Robert Lee, Member  
Tom Majdanics, Member  
Nongongama Majova-Seane, Member  
Gerlieve Oliver, Member  
Perry Robinson, Member  
Bill Scheu, Member  
Connie Stophel, Member

## APPEARANCES

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS & MEMBERS:**

W.C. GENTRY, Chair  
NANCY BRONER, Member  
VICKI BURKE, Member  
CHARLES "SKIP" CRAMER, Member  
MICHAEL EDWARDS, Member  
JOHN FLETCHER, Member  
DEBORAH GIANOULIS, Member  
CHERYL GRYMES, Member  
BILL HODGES, Member  
CONNIE HODGES, Member  
ROBERT LEE, Member  
TOM MAJDANICS, Member  
BILL SCHEU, Member  
CONNIE STOPHEL, Member  
LUCRETIA WILLIAMS, Member

### **ABSENTEE MEMBERS:**

TONY BELLAMY, Member  
TERRIE BRADY, Member  
PASTOR MOSES CRISWELL, Member  
COUNCILMAN KEVIN HYDE, Member  
MIA JONES, Member  
NONGONOMA MAJOVA-SEANE, Member  
GERLIEVE OLIVER, Member  
REVEREND PERRY ROBINSON, Member

### **STAFF:**

SUSIE WILES  
LINDA LANIER  
RENEE BRUST  
ALICE CHECORSKI  
ANNA BRADLEY

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Donna Massie-Cobb, DCPS  
Shelley Grant, SAO  
Susan Main, ELC of Duval  
Tia Mitchell, T-U  
Tyler Winkler, Communities in Schools

## **PROCEEDINGS**

March 12, 2008

Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Sub-Committee, 1:00 p.m.

**Call to Order and Comments.** Chairman W.C. Gentry called the meeting to order at approximately 1:05 p.m.

### **1. Purpose of Meeting.**

Discuss the Mayor's crime initiative - *The Jacksonville Journey*, Education, Literacy, Truancy and Dropouts Sub-committee.

W.C. Gentry, Chair, said today's meeting will be devoted to review of each of the workgroups' recommendations. We will make comments and suggestions and re-draft as necessary prior to presenting the Subcommittee's recommendations to the Steering Committee on Thursday, March 13, 2008 at 2 p.m., Room 851, Ed Ball Building. Anyone and everyone who would like to attend are welcome. Mr. Gentry has already asked the chairs of each of the workgroups to attend.

At this time, Mr. Gentry expressed his appreciation for the incredible job done by this Subcommittee's workgroups and staff. Mr. Gentry stated that Ms. Lucretia Williams has been in attendance at most of the meetings and he would like her to join the Subcommittee as a member. Let the record reflect this.

### **2. Discussion Items**

#### **Truancy and Dropout Workgroup - Presented by Bill Scheu, Chair**

##### **1. Truancy Prevention**

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

**Approved unanimously**

The Subcommittee asked questions and provided comments.

W.C. Gentry asked if the Attendance Social Workers would be district-wide and Bill Scheu agreed they should be.

Vicki Burke asked if the recommendation was to have Truancy Officers at the high school and in the middle school have a Social Worker also. Mr. Scheu stated the focus is on increasing the number of social workers in the schools.

W.C. Gentry stated the recommendation is to have a district level person who will oversee Truancy at the schools.

Renee Brust said that Jonathon Brice, DCPS, made a point that instead of basing the social workers in the schools, they will be housed at some of the difficult schools but will report to the district.

Donnie Massie-Cobb reported that in January 2006 they began operating the four Truancy Centers. They used to have a social worker at each, but because of funding they no longer have a social worker at every site. The Truancy Centers are staffed by either full or part-time Truancy officers. Full-time social workers assist at the centers. The Truancy Center staff makes referrals to the social workers.

Vicki Burke asked what the difference is in Challenge Schools, Focus Schools and Turnaround Schools. Ms. Massie-Cobb said that Turnaround Schools are F or D schools.

Cheryl Grymes asked that the Fiscal Note include that training and in-kind will be provided.

Skip Cramer asked Ms. Massie-Cobb if there is a cost due to the absence of students. Ms. Cobb replied that in October and February they perform a student count, which is the basis for the FTE dollars received.

Bill Scheu recommended adding a sentence to the financial justification:

If enough students are in school during the FTE counts in October and February that will have a positive impact on the budget of the school system that might help offset some of these expenses.

**Additionally, the subcommittee agreed that the recommendations should include the following:**

- District-wide instead of being based in schools**
- Donna Massie-Cobb, DCPS, will provide definitions of Turnaround, Focus, Challenge Schools**
- Add a sentence to fiscal Note: If enough students are in school during the FTE counts in October and February that will have a positive impact on the budget of the school system, which might help offset some of these expenses.**

Tom Majdanics asked if we have any idea how much truancy can be reduced and the \$9 million dollar investment added to the City. We should make a case that 30 additional social workers will reduce the number of truants, with a saving to the City.

W.C. Gentry suggested adding the goal to the end of the recommendations:

**Goal: To reduce truancy by 50% over the next two years and it will be measured.**

Renee Brust asked if Jonathon Brice's recommendations were in place. Ms. Cobb stated they are in place to re-align the staff. Bill Scheu stated that United Way is already doing much of the following recommendation already.

**Recommendation #1B Identification, alignment and coordination of community resources to support elimination of truancy**

**Approved unanimously**

In a response to Vicki Burke, Bill Hodges said that the Jacksonville United Against Truancy (JUAT) has a voluntary staff and is under the State Attorney's Office and not an independent resource.

**Recommendation #1C Development of Community Action Truancy Team**

**Approved unanimously**

## **2. Dropout Prevention**

**Recommendation #2A United Way - Achievers for Life**

Connie Hodges said that United Way has non-profit partners in this prevention strategy.

**Approved unanimously**

**Recommendation #2B Part 1 Making the Move: Transition to Middle School**

The example given was the use of summer camps.

**Approved unanimously**

**Recommendation #2B Part 2 Making the Move: Transition to High School**

The Community Foundation will pilot this program at Terry Parker this spring.

**Approved unanimously**

**Notes: 2B should be measured.**

W.C. Gentry's only suggestion with respect to Truancy would be to address the goals and the fact that there will be measurements to achieve those goals.

**Early Learning Workgroup, Presented by Connie Stophel, Chair**

**Goal 1: Add 25 more childcare centers to *Guiding Starts of Duval* and provide support to the remaining 77 Zone 1 centers.**

W.C. Gentry stated he learned of the Children's Zone and that a neighborhood has been chosen. This program overlaps with many of the program recommendations. It will encompass the Children's Zone. Linda Lanier stated that the Newtown area has been selected for the Children's Zone and that Sheriff Glover and Pam Paul, chairs of the program would be happy to present to the committee.

John Fletcher said he doesn't think we have narrowed down the area for the Children's Zone. W.C. Gentry asked Renee Brust to provide a map to show the areas where the programs are (Zone 1 map, not each site location) which will coordinate with Sheriff Rutherford's map showing the hotspots.

Approved unanimously

Goal #2: Provide (a) five early intervention specialists who will provide mental health consultation services to the 79 participating centers receiving *Guiding Stars* intensive support in Zone 1 (based on a caseload of 16 centers per staff person); and (b) provide assistance in implementing social/emotional developmental curricula to 79 Zone 1 centers participating in *Guiding Stars*

Approved unanimously

The Subcommittee recommended adding the Behavior Intervention Specialist (to model after the HeadStart Program).

Goal #3: Increase parent engagement in their child's education in the newly identified 57 Zone 1 centers

Develop network of churches using the *I Care* program in Zone 1 to promote parent engagement

Approved unanimously

The *I Care* Program comes with its own assessment and a measurement for the teachers. It has an accountability measure for the parents as well.

The Subcommittee recommended the following:

- Identify this *I Care* program so as not to be confused with other services called *I Care*.

- Identify the network of churches with a Memorandum of Understanding

- Develop an outreach plan

Goal #4: Use a rigorous evaluation and accountability system

**Approved unanimously**

Tom Majdanics expressed concern for the children not enrolled in voluntary pre-kindergarten. Connie Stophel agreed, but said this is beyond the scope of our committee. W.C. Gentry said that the Public Relations Committee has gone into the community. We just now received their report, but should advise them about the advantages of going to a *Guiding Stars* center. Mr. Gentry further stated that constitutionally we are required to find funding for every child who wants to go to a pre-K school. Susan Main, Early Learning Coalition, reported that 70% of the four-year olds in Duval County are in voluntary pre-K (approximately 8,400 children). There are 84 sites offering Voluntary pre-K, most of which are participating in the *Guiding Stars* program.

Deborah Gianoulis stated it is the quality issue not just the number of children who participate. W.C. Gentry said it will take getting involved with the community and the families.

**Subcommittee notes to Early Learning Recommendations:**

- Add an addendum to identify acronyms (ELC, FIE, etc.)
- Do not include FIE report, High-Quality School Readiness as attachment - too confusing.
- Supplemental recommendation might be that Libraries should be fully funded. (For now, use data sheet as attachment).

Barbara Gubbin, Executive Director, Jacksonville Public Library, reported that they work with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. If you have a library card, you can get a free pass

to the library. From October 2006 through September 2007, over 49,000 children participated in pre-school organized programs at the Library. A \$1 million reduction to the budget would close all libraries one day a week, many of which are inner city and located in Zone 1.

Nancy Broner stated much of the subcommittee's recommendations assumes the current level of funding. W.C. Gentry stated it needs to be addressed at the Funding Committee that programs in place should be continued and we need to find funding to expand them. Bill Hodges suggested attaching a preamble to the recommendations stating we recognize the budget circumstances. The Subcommittee agreed that the message need to be shared with the Duval Delegation. We have big problems and we have a big price tag. Our job is to recommend solutions and find the money. Robert Lee said if we don't find the money, we won't have the opportunity again.

Vicki Burke said she looked at what other states have done. Superintendents and school boards have sued their State legislators for lack of funding. W.C. Gentry said there is considerable thought being given to that approach now.

Susie Wiles asked to speak about the process. She stated the Funding Committee has had two meetings thus far. Federal and State opportunities are slip. She recommended packaging up these recommendations, getting them to the lobbyists and tell them that this group wants them to be considered. Eventually, there will be 152 people from the *Jacksonville Journey* who have ratified and coalesced.

Robert Lee said it would be great to have some of the leadership stand up that it is not an option to fund this. Susie Wiles said at the staff level, we are working on something like that.

**School Security Workgroup - Presented by Skip Cramer, Chair**

**Recommendation #1 Bring the Full Service Schools program to full operating capacity**

Cheryl Grymes asked how this is integrated with the Truancy recommendations. Mr. Cramer stated it is filling a hole at the school-staffing level. W.C. Gentry said it may overlap with the Truancy recommendation for social workers. Skip Cramer said they can add it will access services directly to the students.

**Adopted unanimously**

**Recommendation #2 Implement the Safe Students in Schools initiative in All Middle and High Schools**

Much discussion surrounded this recommendation and the concern that children do not accrue a juvenile record unless they commit a crime. Michael Edwards, JSO, said they are currently negotiating with the Duval County School Board to look only at class 3 or 4 level violations.

Skip Cramer said that the Law Enforcement School Safety Workgroup raised the issue of the role of the School Resource Officer.

Lucretia Williams asked if there is a program to help the children who are arrested. Mr. Cramer said there are two different tracks, the school and the criminal side, who make the decision where the children should be placed.

Robert Lee asked if there were any studies to gain some knowledge of what the long-term implications would be. Mr. Cramer stated this was looked at with the Juvenile Justice Comprehensive Strategy Steering Committee in the mid-1990s. W.C. Gentry recommended **adding that close monitoring is required to address any Disproportionate Minority Contact and minority behavior problems.**

**Adopted unanimously**

**Recommendation #3 Reduce out-of-school suspensions**

The subcommittee **recommended breaking this into two parts:**

**3a. Reduce out-of-school suspensions**

This was a specific suggestion from the School Superintendent's office.

**Approved unanimously - with an amendment to reduce out-of-school suspensions to at least the State level average.**

**3b. Suspension Centers**

**Tabled - Return to the committee**

**Recommendation #4 Improve school security staffing, training and response capability**

Skip Cramer said that the Law Enforcement School Safety workgroup is looking at weapons training.

**Tabled**

**Return to the committee to articulate regarding training and not to be the first responder. Determine what aspect is being done by the Law Enforcement & Deterrence Subcommittee.**

**Recommendation #5 Accelerate implementation of Student Crime**

**Stoppers in all Middle and High Schools**

**Approved unanimously**

**Recommendation #6 Expand non-fee based after-school programs with academic enrichment in targeted areas**

**Approved unanimously**

**Linda Lanier reported this will be also be recommended by the Positive Youth Development subcommittee.**

**School Relevancy Workgroup - Reported by Tom Majdanics on behalf of Terrie Brady, Chair**

**Recommendation #1 Teacher Retention and Recruitment**

The recommendation of a scholarship fund (#1A) would help new teachers who are coming through an alternative educational route. Recommendation #1B recommends recruiting teachers among our local high school students and establish a chapter of the Florida Future Educators of America in each Duval County High School. Recommendation #1D recommends in-kind donations from area businesses and utilities.

**#1 A, B, & D Approved unanimously**

Recommendation #1C relates to stipend funds for recruiting outside of Duval County and for relocating teachers to Turnaround Schools.

**#1 C - Back to committee to be costed out \$1,000 stipend for relocation teacher (outside of County) and \$1,000 stipend for Turnaround school teacher**

**Recommendation #2 Career Academies**

The subcommittee needs to discuss how the money will be used.

**Tabled**

**Recommendation #3 Drop Back In Initiatives**

Tom Majdanics explained that recommendation #3A encourages students to attend and earn credits and a diploma at their own pace. Nancy Broner stated the Accelerated Learning Centers have been very successful.

**#3A Approved unanimously**

**Note: Change Alternative Learning Center to Accelerated**

**#3B Tabled**

**#3C Tabled**

**Recommendation #4 The Jacksonville Commitment**

W.C. Gentry recommended approving in concept subject to more specificity as to the number of schools where program is placed and how the cost is derived. Nancy Broner will work on getting the information from UNF President Delaney and Sheriff Glover.

**Provisionally recommended - (More study is needed)**

**Recommendation #5 Challenge Schools**

**Tabled**

**3. Action Items**

- Donna Massie-Cobb will forward to Renee Brust for distribution the definitions of each type of school (Challenge, Focus, Turnaround)
- Renee Brust to provide a map to show the areas where the programs are (Zone 1 map, not each site location) which will coordinate with Sheriff Rutherford's map showing the hotspots.

Cancel subcommittee meeting scheduled fro Friday, March 14, 2008  
and reschedule by the end of March.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.