

Truancy Task Force Meeting Summary
Children's Court
December 13, 2011

Attendees:

Courts: Michael Nash, Donna Groman, Jack Furay

Law Enforcement: Lydia Bodin, Kristen Byrdsong

Legal: David Sapp, Jane Newman, Lisa Greer, Carol Richardson, Ruth Cusick

LA County Chief Executive Office: Trish Ploehn

City of Los Angeles: Michael de la Rocha

Schools: Edward Velasquez, Ray Vincent, Jewel Forbes, Laurel Bear, Elmer Roldan,
Teresa Garcia, Valerie Corcoran, Laura Zeff, Karla Estrada, Jewel Forbes,
Henry Sandoval

Community/Advocacy: Eugenia Wilson, Zoe Rawson, Barbara Lott-Holland, Julie
Matsumoto, Josof Sanchez, John Smith

Education Coordinating Council: Sharon Watson

Welcome and Introductions:

Judge Nash welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their tremendous work over the past year. He recently met with City Councilmember Tony Cardenas, LAUSD Board President Monica Garcia and LAPD Chief of Operations Paysinger about ways to more effectively increase school attendance in Los Angeles and discussed the fact that, although the juvenile court can do some things to improve attendance, schools and the broader community have the most responsibility for this goal. He proposed that the name of the Task Force be changed from "Truancy" to "School Attendance," to more accurately (and more positively) capture our charge.

Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court Reforms:

Judge Nash reviewed two of the pieces he has drafted, with input from the IJTC, the judicial community and several members of the Task Force, to reform IJTC current practice with respect to truancy/daytime loitering/daytime curfew violations. The piece on Community Service Availability directs that, effective immediately, community service will always be available at the youth's option in lieu of any fine (including assessments and fees) for any offense adjudicated in the IJTC. The second piece lays out guidelines for the IJTC's handling of school attendance cases and declares that the court shall dismiss any citation where the evidence shows the youth was late to school or en route to school. Both directives lay out the specifics for implementing these reforms.

Task Force members were very supportive of both of these policies, saying they "are a big step in the right direction." Nash was urged to look at parity for the amount of

community service to be ordered (for misdemeanors vs felonies, for example), whether the court visit could be eliminated for these attendance cases, and to develop a process or procedure for incorporating charges dealt with in the IJTC with 602 petitions to ensure that minor infractions aren't converted to misdemeanors. Judge Nash responded that he is committed to working on this packaging of 602 petitions with IJTC actions during 2012. He also let the Task Force know that he is working on a third directive for informing youth of their rights in ITJC that, hopefully, will be ready for discussion at our next meeting. An attendance plan needs to be spelled out for youth under the supervision of the court and Nash suggested that this be a topic at the Education Coordinating Council's next School Superintendent's Meeting.

The ultimate goal for ITJC's handling of school attendance issues is for youth to go to school. "Going to school trumps everything" and will now negate fines, community service, driver's license suspensions, etc. The ITJC will test these new directives during 2012 to see how they impact attendance.

Michael de la Rocha reported that the City of Los Angeles will launch 13 new youth worksource centers, as an alternative to fines, for dealing with daytime curfew violations. He will bring the leaders of this program to the next meeting of the Task Force so that we can learn more about it.

Draft Report of the TTF's Work During its First Year

Sharon Watson reviewed the draft report for Task Force members, highlighting its format, recommendations and the proposed actions for the Task Force during 2012.

Task force members agreed that we should issue a comprehensive version of the report that would be available electronically, as well as an executive summary for general distribution. A host of suggestions were made to the body of the report, especially to the proposed actions for 2012, and these will be incorporated into the final draft that will be sent to members in the week before our next meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the task force will be on **Tuesday, January 10, 2011 at 12 noon** in the Judge's Lounge at the Children's Court.