

School Attendance Task Force Meeting Notes

Children's Court
December 16, 2014

Attendees

Judge Michael Nash, Juvenile Court	Judge Donna Groman, Juvenile Court
Ruth Cusick, Public Counsel	Sean Dwyer, Asian Pacific Dispute Cntr
Lauren Gase, Public Health Dept	Jack Furay, Probation Department
Ed Johnson, Probation Department	Natasha Khamashta, Public Defender
Lesley Kasoff, Superior Court	Kim McGill, Youth Justice Coalition
Gil Espinoza, Advancement Projects	Jewel Forbes, LACOE
Jennifer Gomeztrejo, LACOE	Vicente Bravo, LACOE
John Gutierrez, LASPD	Amelia Defosset, Public Health Dept
Vincent Holmes, CEO	

Welcome and Introductions

Judge Michael Nash welcomed Task Force members and allowed participants to introduce themselves.

Judge Nash informed attendees that this would be his last meeting as Presiding Judge. He reminded attendees to remain focused finding new and creative ways of diverting youth away from the juvenile justice system by ensuring they attend school. Special attention should be paid to Probation and Foster Youth but all youth should be considered.

Judge Nash noted his belief that the School Attendance Task Force (Task Force) would continue and the Court's involvement would remain.

Probation Juvenile Citation Project (Update)

Ed Johnson introduced himself to the Task Force as the new Bureau Chief in charge of Probation's Juvenile Citation Program. Mr. Johnson described his experience with the department and desire to bring that expertise to this new assignment.

Judge Nash reiterated the importance of diverting youth who are issued citations and the need to regionalize the ability of youth to resolve their citations in a timely manner. Judge Groman noted the need for data to ensure that discussions regarding this topic were done in an informed manner.

Mr. Johnson noted that two new regional officers have been assigned in the San Gabriel and Antelope Valley. Mr. Johnson also noted that documentation is being drafted to ensure all

Probation staff are operating under the same set of instructions. Additional hearing officers are planned.

Ruth Cusick noted the need to ensure that the Task Force continue to look at law enforcement agencies and how citations are issued by them. Kim McGill also suggested that Probation consider placing hearing officers at non-traditional locations such as community based organizations, etc.

Lesley Kasoff noted that some of the daytime curfew citations are multi-layered and might benefit from additional Probation involvement. These cases are now being handled through Teen Court.

School Attendance Task Force Member Survey

Vincent Holmes noted the creation of a member survey by the Public Health Department. The survey will be used to gauge member interest in the direction of the Task Force and seek their input. The survey is still being finalized, but should be completed by January.

Lauren Gase from Public Health also noted that the survey could also be used as a way of reengaging with attendees who haven't participated in some time.

Exclusionary School Discipline Work Group Report

Ms. Cusick noted efforts that will be occurring in 2015 related to Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP). Several agencies will be reviewing all the Los Angeles County school district LCAPs. They will be identifying goals related to improving the educational outcomes of foster youth.

Ms. Cusick also informed attendees that AB420 had been enacted. This new law precluded schools from suspending youth in kindergarten through third grade.

Free Student Transit Passes Work Group Report

Kim McGill informed attendees of a meeting with MTA staff (Karen Gorman). The meeting was held to discuss possible funding sources within MTA that might be used to fund free transit passes for youth. MTA was asked to review their current public safety contract to determine if some of those funds can be used to provide free youth transit. Ms. McGill also noted that several other law enforcement agencies are considering applying for the MTA public safety contract.

Ms. McGill also noted meeting with Supervisors Solis and Kuehl. Those discussions will continue in hopes of gaining their support for free youth transit.

Ms. McGill also mentioned two bills that are moving through the legislature. Those are:

- AB1276 – would require the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations to institute the use of a classification committee to assess the readiness of a youth at reception for lower security placement and encourage the youth to commit to positive change and self-improvement.

- SB1111 – would provide safeguards for youth involuntarily transferred to county community or community day schools to ensure their educational rights are protected and that the transfer is for a limited time.

Updates

Gil Espinoza noted the efforts of the Advancement Project (AP) to train police officers on adolescent brain development and the work done by gang intervention workers.

Judge Groman noted the efforts of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to train judges on attendance and school climate issues. She believed these efforts would nicely align with the efforts of the Task Force

Sean Dwyer noted great progress with the juvenile dispute resolution efforts of Asian Pacific American Dispute Resolution Center.

Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting is TBD

Conclusion and Adjournment

Judge Nash adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m. and asked attendees to remain loud, vocal and vigilant.