

School Attendance Task Force Meeting Notes

Children's Court

March 5, 2015

Attendees

Judge Michael Levanas, Juvenile Court	Judge Donna Groman, Juvenile Court
Ruth Cusick, Public Counsel	Danielle Tenner, Alliance For Children
Lauren Gase, Public Health Dept	Jack Furay, Probation Department
Ed Johnson, Probation Department	Natasha Khamashta, Public Defender
Lesley Kasoff, Superior Court	Kristen Byrdsong, LA City Attorney
Monica Garcia, Probation	Jewel Forbes, LACOE
Jennifer Gomeztrejo, LACOE	Vicente Bravo, LACOE
Katie Butler, Public Health Dept	Zoe Rawson, Community Rights Campaign
Julie Matsumoto, Operation Street Kidz	Tom Steele, LACOE
Patrick Hirsch, Children's Law Center	Zhaira Gastelum, LAUSD
Gail McFarland-Sosa, Probation	Michelle Newell, Children's Defense Fund
Angela Daughtry, CASA	Marisol Sanders, Alhambra Unified
Vincent Holmes, CEO	

Welcome and Introductions

Judge Michael Levanas welcomed Task Force members and thanked them for participating. Members were then asked to introduce themselves.

Judge Levanas noted his interest in learning more about the work of the Task Force. He also reiterated his commitment to the Task Force. With the assistance of Judge Groman, the Task Force would continue to advocate for efforts that improve school attendance.

Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Initiative

Judge Groman informed the Task Force of an effort led by California Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye to decrease juvenile court involvement by increasing school retention. A summit was held in late 2013 where practitioners gathered to better understand the relationship between the juvenile justice system and limited school attendance.

A task force was created to urge judges to work with school districts in their communities to reduce court involvement with youth.

To that end, Judge Groman suggested the Task Force look at how it might assist with this effort. It was suggested that this effort become part of the work of the Exclusionary Discipline Subcommittee.

Probation Juvenile Citation Project

Ed Johnson provided statistics on juvenile citation cases. The data included;

- Total citation issued for:
 - January 2015: 1,880 February 2015: 1,335
- Citation breakdown by gender:

January 2015: male- 1,348; female – 532	February 2015: male – 970; female – 365
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- Citations issued by ethnicity
 - January 2015:

Hispanic 984	Black 595	White 189
Other 66	Other Asian 22	Unknown 22
Asian Indian 2		
 - February 2015

Hispanic 837	Black 317	White 94
Other 52	Other Asian 7	Unknown 22
Asian Indian 4	Filipino 1	Native American 1
- Citations issued by age:

January 2015			
18: 329	17: 411	16: 466	15: 416
14: 186	13: 45	12: 18	11: 6
10: 3			
February 2015			
18: 287	17: 283	16: 278	15: 271
14: 173	13: 24	12: 15	11: 3

10: 1

- Citations issued by Offense Type

Offense	Fare Evasion	Daytime Curfew	Truant	Habitual Truant	Loitering
January 2015	346	255	134	118	69
February 2015	175	118	84	79	48

Mr. Johnson was queried regarding his ability to provide this information as well as additional information on an ongoing basis. He noted that data is currently only compiled manually. While he would like to provide additional information, he is hampered by staffing issues.

It was noted that traffic infractions are still processed in the adult traffic courts. Several Task Force members noted their concern with this process and suggested it be reviewed further. It was also suggested that the Traffic Court be contacted to better understand the reasoning for leaving those cases there and if there is an opportunity to bring them to Probation as well.

Ruth Cusick and Zoe Rawson noted their interest in researching this issue. Vincent Holmes stated he would contact them and look more into this issue.

Monica Garcia also noted the possibility of involving the ECC; to recommend that the Board of Supervisors take action. Ms. Cusick stated her interest in doing this after the matter had been more substantively reviewed.

School Attendance Task Force Member Survey

Lauren Gase noted the creation of a member survey. The survey will be used to gauge member interest in the direction of the Task Force and seek their input. Task Force members were urged to complete the survey so that results could be shared at the next meeting. The link to the survey is https://qtrial2015az1.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eVEtBgRuBK6aGRT

School Attendance Month Efforts

Jennifer Gomeztrejo reminded the members of the effort to support School Attendance Month. Started in 2012, School Attendance Month seeks to promote prevention efforts aimed at increasing and maintaining regular attendance by students. School districts are asked to develop campaigns aimed at students and parents to ensure they are all aware of the importance of school attendance. The effort was also supported by the Board of Supervisors who declared September “School Attendance Month.”

Since its inception, over 1.2 Million students have been impacted. Each successive year, the number of schools participating has increased. Approximately 42 school districts participated in 2014.

Ms. Goemestrepo noted that given some staffing changes at the County Office of Education, she may not be able to facilitate the effort this year. She suggested the Task Force begin the process of finding another champion

Exclusionary School Discipline Work Group Report

Zoe Rawson noted some of the previous effort of the Exclusionary School Discipline Work Group and stated she looked forward to working with Judge Groman on the “Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Initiative.

Free Student Transit Passes Work Group Report

Ms. Rawson relayed information from Kim McGill noting actions taken in support of the Free Student Transit Passes Work Group. Members of the Work Group have met with Supervisors Solis, Ridley-Thomas, Kuehl, Mayor Garcetti and three LA City Councilmen. These meetings have attempted to galvanize support for free transportation for youth. While there appears to be support, members of the MTA Board have not given full support because of the funding issues.

It was suggested that a one page fact sheet be created that identified the ask, reasons for asking and potential funding opportunities.

Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting is Thursday, April 30, 2015.

Conclusion and Adjournment

Judge Levanas adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.