

School Attendance Task Force Meeting Notes

Children's Court

August 13, 2015

Attendees:

Judge Donna Groman, Delinquency Court	Alaina Moonves-Leb, Alliance for Children's Rights
Taylor Schooley, Public Health	Megan Stanton-Trehan, Alliance for Children's Rights
Gabrielle Green, Public Health	Ron Rios, DCFS
Karen Petterson, Children's Law Center	Marlow Gory, Superior Court
Vincent Holmes, CEO	Leslye Kasoff, Superior Court
Barbara Lott Holland, Strategy Center	Sunshine Daye, CA Conference for Equality and Justice
Zoë Rawson, Strategy Center	William Cochrane, DCFS
John Guttierrez, Los Angeles School Police	Jesus Corral, Probation
Patrick Hirsch, Children's Law Center	Melissa Schoonmaker, LACOE
John Furay, Probation	Lauren Gase, Public Health
Sam Chan, Mental Health	Mike Alba, Mental Health

Welcome and Introductions:

Judge Donna Groman welcomed Task Force members and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Strategic Planning:

Identifying Unique Strengths and Resources:

Lauren Gase led the group in an activity where members were asked to work together to identify key strengths and resources brought to the Task Force by each member agency. The following categories were posted around the room to prompt discussion: law enforcement, school districts, community organizations, courts, health and social services, and other groups (e.g., legal services).

Judge Groman noted one important strength discussed during this activity was that of law enforcement modeling working together and building consensus. Others agreed law enforcement can send a powerful message to the larger community by serving as an example of positive cross-sector collaboration.

William Cochrane discussed the strengths community organizations bring to partnerships with other agencies.

SATF PARTNERS	IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS / RESOURCES
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience with youth - First point of contact - Diversion models - Resources - Familiarity with neighborhoods and conflict - Taken seriously / can provide consequences - Setting limits on interactions in schools - Serve as an example of consensus-building / culture shift - Explore avenues for building trust / empathy
School Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection to students & parents - Support / attention of the community - Data - Knowledge of individual students - Time with students (1/3 of the day) - Direct impact (e.g., punishment for late arrival or poor attendance) - Connection between Teen Court and school clubs
Community Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection to neighborhood / community - Trusted / non-threatening - Direct services to family / students - Feedback / ideas for implementation - Resources (e.g., programs for youth) - Diversion models - Brings community voice to partnerships (e.g., School Attendance Review Board)
Superior Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authority - Support - Knowledge of laws / policy - Ability to access records - Neutral / trusted conveners - Diversion models and resources (e.g., SHADES, Teen Court) - Explore restorative justice practices
Health & Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Referrals to programs / services - Access to community networks - Data - Training / workforce development (e.g., Prevention & Early Intervention) - Trauma lens - Neutral
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of laws / policy - Feedback / ideas for implementation - Advocacy experience

Sharing Results of Round II Member Survey:

Lauren Gase presented the results of a brief survey sent to Task Force members to determine preferences regarding priority areas, workgroup structure and participation, and meeting frequency. Ms. Gase opened the discussion for further reflection on the survey results.

Patrick Hirsch noted the opportunity to connect evidence-based practices and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) funding criteria as a point of leverage when working with schools.

Judge Groman discussed restorative justice and school climate as well as what could be done to improve dialogue with system-involved youth.

- Sunshine Daye suggested implementing restorative circles and surveys in court waiting rooms to engage youth and their families. Ms. Daye suggested utilizing time spent before court proceedings as a time for check-in and identification of what is needed for a young person to reintegrate successfully after his or her system involvement.
- Zoë Rawson noted that issues may arise if such check-in circles reveal unmet needs but the resources to connect where needed are not available. It was noted that the time of interaction with the justice system is particularly stressful for youth and families. Ms. Rawson noted that the YouthSource center model may be a promising way to ensure youth are connected to the services they need in a timely and sensitive manner.
- Melissa Schoonmaker noted that a school court liaison program ended 5-6 years ago. Jesus Corral mentioned the challenge of consistent personnel resources and importance of a warm hand-off when referring youth and family to resources.

William Cochrane noted the importance of building on existing models such as the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). Ms. Daye asked how SARB processes could be more restorative rather than punitive in nature. Increased involvement of community organizations in SARB meetings was discussed.

Sam Chan noted the importance of the language of connection in these efforts, giving as example the way “restorative justice” approaches are often discussed in terms of “strengthening families” in the mental health system. Mr. Chan discussed moving towards shifting culture by coordinating the ways in which both issues and solutions are framed.

Ms. Rawson noted that the Task Force itself should make a unique contribution by presenting a unified voice modeling shifts in culture and frame as well as identifying opportunities for prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for youth.

Leslye Kasoff asked that the mission and history of the Task Force be clarified. Vincent Holmes explained the group’s early successes regarding youth citations and attendance. Mr. Holmes noted that the group was now tasked with identifying new priority areas.

Mr. Chan asked what expectations for the work of the full Task Force would be if meetings are held quarterly. John Furay noted the importance of identifying measurable goals. Ms. Gase noted that workgroups would be asked to develop action plans before the next meeting that include measurable goals and expectations for scope and timeline of activities.

Mr. Corral asked about protocol for reporting the work done by the Task Force. Mr. Holmes explained that the SATF is able to report to the Education Coordinating Council (ECC). Ms. Gase noted that each workgroup may have different methods for communicating or reporting according to their objectives and target issues or populations.

- Mr. Hirsch provided an example, noting that the reporting methods appropriate for an objective such as having every school district in Los Angeles adopt restorative justice practices to achieve LCAP targets might include research reviews highlighting recommendations tailored for each district.

Ms. Gase noted that school climate is one of six LCAP priority areas and that Public Health could contribute on the metrics side given that districts may be working to figure out ways to make their goals measurable and meaningful.

Ms. Rawson suggested that priority areas identified through the SATF survey results be merged into three workgroups that then look at the Task Force’s original report and early work before presenting updates on the status of their action plan at the next meeting.

Mr. Cochrane noted the need for schools to be represented in the Task Force. Ms. Schoonmaker explained that LACOE has recently undergone personnel changes but expressed the agency’s continued commitment to the group when possible.

Identifying and Prioritizing Workgroups:

Ms. Rawson suggested that both “identifying and creating linkages to services” and “identifying best practices for county and city agencies” could serve as a blueprint for working towards remaining workgroup priorities. Ms. Gase noted that part of such a blueprint for “linking evidence-based practices and LCAP priorities” may be identifying ways that county and city agencies can best support schools. Mr. Chan noted the strength of such a transdisciplinary approach and mentioned the example of the Gateways to Success program.

Judge Groman asked where school climate might fall in the above workgroup structure. Mr. Hirsch noted that the three workgroups as listed would overlap, citing a need for open communication between groups to avoid duplication.

The Task Force identified the following three workgroup priority areas:

1. Promoting alternatives to school discipline
2. Linking evidence-based practices for schools and LCAP priorities
3. Reducing juvenile arrests and incarcerations

Task Force members identified which workgroup they could commit to joining or leading. Groups were asked to meet before the next full Task Force meeting to solidify goals and objectives, potential activities, and invite any additional partners needed to for the workgroup to be successful.

Next Meeting:

The date for the next School Attendance Task Force meeting is Thursday, October 8, 2015.

Conclusion and Adjournment:

Lauren Gase adjourned the meeting and thanked members for their participation in strategic planning activities at 2:00PM.