Making Attendance a Priority

Pre-Court Intervention Group
Progress and Recommendation Report
September 28, 2007

Purpose: To support students and families in maintaining regular school attendance.

Initial Committee Goals:
1. Share district and agency practices/ policies/terminology/definitions regarding absences.
2. Develop a model for uniform reporting process.
3. Gather community list of family resources and determine access.
4. Develop strategies and programming options to work with students/families in diversion.
5. Bring forward dollar requests for strategies that support regular school attendance.

Initial Goals 1 & 2 were determined to be more appropriately addressed by other committees, or not a priority for our group focus. Our committee felt Goals 3 & 4 warranted immediate attention and action. These goals have been developed combined into two objectives. Objectives, Areas of focus, Committee roles, and Next steps and Connection with Bright Futures are summarized below.

Objective: Develop an Attendance Supports Resource Guide

Areas of Focus:
- Purpose of compiling a Resource Guide
    - Use by Schools and Systems Professionals
    - Will include entire spectrum of attendance supporting resources: prevention – intervention; internal – external; social-emotional; behavioral-normative
    - The design of the guide will be a living document allowing for and demanding updates as appropriate

- Guide Inclusions:
    - Purpose Statement
    - Assessment
        - Importance and purpose, examples, suggested interventions based on results
    - Matrix of current school practices and procedures with timelines
    - Program Substantiation section
    - Program Types:
        - School Information
            - Includes prevention and intervention strategies used within the schools and/or school districts
        - Legal/Justice Information
            - Includes procedures used within the Justice System (such as assessments at the JAC)

- ▪ Recreation/Leisure
  - • Includes all out of school time (e.g. mentoring, links to peers and activities, tutoring, access to positive recreational activities, etc.)
- ▪ Credit Recovery/ Educationally Specific
  - • Includes the community availability of credit accrual and/or credit recovery in a non-traditional school setting
  - • Availability to access programming that leads to 'real world' job readiness. Collaborative efforts to look at culinary, electrical, plumbing and/or carpentry trades tied to diploma with skills specific core curriculum.
- ▪ Comprehensive Programming
  - • Includes programs which offer all components related to supporting school attendance through the spectrum of home, school, and community
- ▪ Community-Based
  - • Includes programs which provide single component programming which may be needed as a part of an attendance supporting plan
- ▪ Behavioral Health
  - • Examine the present status of availability by students and families of community-based and private behavioral health care.

- ▪ Importance of Program Substantiation

Committee Roles:
- ▪ Study current Best Practice models.
- ▪ Form consensus on notion of program substantiation.
- ▪ Gather targeted attendance supporting resource information from school districts, community agencies, government agencies, and justice (to include program substantiation for all resources).
- ▪ Collaborate to ensure inclusion of all necessary Guide components.

Next Steps and *Connections to Bright Futures*
- ▪ *Provide technical assistance and support in the areas of gathering and compiling information.*
- ▪ *Work together to identify effective means of publishing and/ or disseminating Guide information.*
- ▪ *Assist with communication strategies for the conversation with resource providing agencies relating to the initial implementation for data collection (why it is necessary, what data points should be collected, how to analyze and use the data).*
- ▪ *Provide technical assistance and support options for schools to implement attendance support plans to include services, shown necessary through assessment processes, to support school attendance.*

Comments / Suggestions:

Objective: Provide an Ongoing Working Group

for Service Providing Agencies, School Personnel, and Systems Professionals

Areas of Focus:
- Importance of Program Substantiation
- Specific needs and data points from schools and attendance supporting resources
- Identification of insufficiencies in current attendance supporting resources

Committee Role:
- Ongoing attention to and research regarding current Best Practice models.
- Analysis of currently utilized attendance supporting resources.
- Identification of high needs areas not currently available within schools or the community.
- Solicit feedback from Guide users and resource providers.
- Provide an ongoing working group to collaborate with Service Providers in the interest of program partnerships, improvement, and/or development.
- Examine communication strategies related to continuous quality improvement.

Next Steps and *Connections to Bright Futures*
- *Collaborate in on-going efforts to improve and add to the content of the Resource Guide.*
- *Assist in the facilitation of conversations with Guide users and resource providers in efforts to improve both the Guide and attendance supporting programming.*
- *Collaborate to assist schools providing agencies with process consultants and expertise in delivering more effective prevention and intervention strategies.*
- *Assist with collaboration among resource providing agencies relating to analyzing and using data to improve services, as well as partnering to develop or augment programming.*
- *Promote, through resource allocation and communication, the improvement and development of more effective prevention and intervention strategies, based on initial outcome measures.*
- *Support, with creative intervention strategies and resource allocation, options to supplement identified need areas (such as transportation to resources shown necessary to improve attendance).*

Comments / Suggestions:

The collaborative nature of our sub-committee has resulted in a positive understanding between and among our members that has led to wide-based understanding of our community's need for positive experiences for youth. We collectively appreciate the willing participation of each member to work to the common goal, without prejudice, to address the needs of the children in the metropolitan area.