

PRIMARY PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE
MCAC/JJPF COMMITTEE

Committee Co-Chairs: Regina Williams, Boys and Girls Club
Dan Radicia, Elkhorn Public Schools

Final Report Recommendations to BBF: November 9, 2007

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

Initial Committee Goals:

1. Share school strategies that maintain safe and engaging school climates.
2. Share / develop best practices for engaging struggling students. (i.e. poverty)
3. Explore processes to assist families, particularly those in poverty, in school access.
4. Bring forward dollar requests for strategies that support regular school attendance.

Three Objectives have evolved during our committee meetings. These objectives incorporate the initial goals. These objectives and connection to Building Bright Futures (BBF) are summarized below.

Priority Objective:

1. Promote with intentionality and process a school climate / culture that supports regular school attendance.

- Provide support to school districts as they examine and update practices in the areas of people, places, policies, programs, and processes.(see supporting documents)
 - Request from BBF – Develop a RFP to provide professional assistance/consultation to school districts to complete a process that includes assessment, skill refinement/development, and implementation of practices that ensure a climate / culture that supports regular school attendance and the benefits derived.
 - Requests from BBF—Provide incentive dollars to be used in the form of reward and recognition for exemplary school engagement practices leading to improved school attendance through intentional focus on school climate. This might be known as a *Bright Futures Award*.
- Provide support to school districts as they examine and implement practices that increase student engagement in relevant learning for academic success.
 - Request from BBF – Assist with community connections through a working relationship with the Academic / Career Task Force.
 - Request from BBF – Assist with collaboration opportunities among the academic curriculum expertise within districts and the larger community.

Research abounds to support the emphasis on building relationships and relevancy to create a climate that would support students and encourage their attendance and engagement in school. The attached notes from the truancy task force meeting at Marrs Middle School capture the comments of students self-identified as truant and potential dropouts prior to attending the smaller learning community at North High School. (see supporting document)

Secondary Objectives:

2. Leadership to provide active support and ongoing sanctioning of school environment and students engagement focus.

- Every leader within every district provides ongoing attention to goals and strategies that create inviting school environments and student engagement for academic success.
 - Request from BBF: Provide liaison / access to district leadership to enhance understanding of and implementation of strategies and processes that support school climate and student engagement.

3. Connect families, schools, students, and community organizations around the common interests and promotion of regular school attendance.

- City-wide campaign (i.e. “Count Me In”) to focus attention and common language.
 - Request from BBF: Include this concept in any mass marketing plans to support regular school attendance throughout our community.
- Develop and enhance school / community partnerships – (Joyce Epstein, School and Community Partnership John Hopkins University)
 - Request from BBF: This strategy is connected to the initial objective of school climate that promotes school attendance and would be incorporated in the RFP and Incentive Requests.
- Determine and address barriers to regular school attendance. (i.e. moving due to inability to pay rent, student pregnancy, family vacations, school suspensions)
 - Request from BBF: Continue support through communication and funding “community conversations” concept. Connect to the work being done by Pre-Court sub-committee resource guide and other BBF groups.
 - Request from BBF: Specifically with regard to the use of out-of-school suspensions, examine the use of district suspension policies as they relate to attendance and behavioral problems. Support analysis of transition rooms in use by area high schools, a educational placement option before alternative school placement is considered.

Key Considerations:

These items are listed in order or priority of focus for sustainable impact to support students and families in regular school attendance. Dollar amount requests could be determined through conversation with members of the primary prevention sub-committee and BBF representatives.

Report Prepared and Submitted by:

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