

# Making Attendance a Priority

## **Primary Prevention Group Progress and Recommendation Report September 28, 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.
3. Explore processes to assist families 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. Areas of focus, Committee role, and Next steps and Connection with Bright Futures are summarized below.

**Objective: Promote with intentionality and process a school climate / culture that supports regular school attendance.**

### Areas of Focus:

- School environment that invites all students and families to attend
  - Inviting School Success Quadrant – (William Purkey, Invitational Education)
  - Invitational Assessment – 5 P's – (William Purkey, Invitational Education)
- Student engagement through academic achievement success
  - 3 R's – Relationships, Relevancy, Rigor – ( Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)
  - Collaboration with the academic / curriculum expertise within districts and the Bright Futures Task Forces

### Committee Roles:

- Gather best practices for inviting schools and student engagement (current state and evidence based) among school districts.
- Share best practices
  - Electronic communication / blogs
  - EXPO to bring together all parties involved in the efforts to making attendance a priority and reality.
- Research and provide expertise contacts for professional development departments to focus training on inviting practices, student behavior, and engaging teaching strategies.

- Facilitate utilization of and application of results from the Invitational Education Assessment (ISS-R).
- Review and incorporate school environment and student engagement strategies in the Truancy manual.

**Next Steps and *Connections to Bright Futures***

- Determine interest in the use of the Invitational Education Assessment (ISS-R) by districts *and secure financial support for the assessment process.*
- *Provide technical assistant and support options for schools making change efforts based on environment and engagement data points.*
- *Launch web based communication among school districts and community agencies.*
- *Support schools with process consultants and expertise in becoming more inviting and engaging in support of regular attendance and academic success for all students.*

Comments / Suggestions:

**Objective: Leadership to provide active support and ongoing sanctioning of school environment and students engagement focus.**

**Areas of Focus:**

- Every leader within every district provides ongoing attention to goals and strategies that create inviting school environments and student engagement for academic success.
- Effective and efficient communication among boards, superintendents, building leaders across the community.

**Committee Role:**

- Technical assistance and communication strategies provided to leadership.
- Develop blogs and communication processes for school leaders and community agencies for resource support.

**Next Steps and *Connections to Bright Futures***

- Liaison / access to district leadership
- *Launch web based communication among school districts, community agencies, government agencies, and justice.*

Comments / Suggestions:

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

**Areas of Focus:**

- City-wide campaign (i.e. “Count Me In”) to focus attention and common language.
- Develop and enhance school / community partnerships – (Joyce Epstein, School and Community Partnership John Hopkins University)
- Determine and address barriers to regular school attendance. (i.e. moving due to inability to pay rent, student pregnancy, family vacations)

**Committee Role:**

- Explore social marketing campaigns for school attendance through school environment and student engagement.
- Gather community examples of “barrier removal” efforts / strategies.
- Develop family learning opportunities via computer to provide timely information regarding school attendance and other related issues.
- Create conversation opportunities throughout the community to engage families, schools, and community organizations in the common language and goals discussion of making attendance a priority.

**Next Steps and *Connections to Bright Futures***

- *Launch social marketing campaign*
- *Support through communication and funding the “community conversations” concept.*
- *Support through resource allocation and communication the efforts and strategies found to be working that impact the barriers to regular school attendance.*

**Comments / Suggestions:**

Our committee is excited about and committed to the efforts that result in supporting students and families in maintaining regular school attendance and achieving academic and social success. We are grateful for the partnerships being formed within our group and extending into the community at large.