

**SECONDARY PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE
MCAC/JJPF COMMITTEE**

Committee Co-Chairs: Dusti Hansen, Juvenile Assessment Center
 Libby Blazeovich, Papillion/LaVista Public Schools

Final Report Recommendations to BBF: November 9, 2007

Purpose: To support students/families experiencing school attendance issues.

Initial Committee Goals:

1. Share current school/agency strategies in place to support regular school attendance.
2. Identify current school-based programs in place to address school attendance issues.
3. Explore root causes and common themes of attendance issues.
4. Explore and bring forward a process to address issues impacting school attendance.
5. Bring forward dollar requests for strategies that address attendance issues..

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: Revise and Update the 2001 MCAC Best Practices Manual for Schools

Areas of Focus:

- Update Historical Review to include MCAC/JJPF subcommittee work
- Revise Causes/Contributors of Excessive Absences and “What Schools Can Do?”
 - Include Kearney, et al research
- Update statutes and legal requirements section
 - Age 5-18 amendment
 - Evaluation of Educational Neglect appendix
 - Referral for Violation of Mandatory Attendance Policy
 - Sample County Attorney Referral
- Revise National Recommendations section to focus on school intervention
 - Bibliography of Readings
- Replace Local Recommendation with model recommendations from MCAC/JJPF
 - Early identification methods and use of Student Move Notification Form
 - Use of warning letters with CC to County Attorney
 - Administration of School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS)
 - Case management and attendance planning driven by SRAS scores
 - Pyramid of Interventions
- Replace Task Force Submission form with references to additional resources
 - Pre-Court resource guide for school district and community services

Request from BBF

- Duplicate posting of revised manual on BBF website upon completion. Timeline for completion is the end of May, 2008.
- Consultation as to content in the development of Best Practices Manual.

Objective: Implement Training Opportunities on the use of Best Practices Manual

Areas of Focus:

- Facilitate training seminars for School Social Workers, SPAs, key School Administration and Principals.
- Enhance communication between schools and school districts when a child transfers out of the district
- Instructions on how to write an effective, uniform CA referral with all pertinent information
- How to administer, score and utilize the School Refusal Assessment Scale.
- How to utilize a menu of services (developed by Pre-Court subcommittee) available to parents as a referral basis at the point of first contact.
- How to implement an effective method for early identification and intervention.

Request from BBF

- Liaison / access to district leadership to ensure active participation in training
- \$10,000 to bring Dr. Kearney, (UNLV, and developer of the School Refusal Assessment Scale) for a 1 day training and consultation program for school personnel identified above.

Objective: Identify barriers and challenges to implementing Best Practices and propose changes to ensure uniformity in addressing excessive absenteeism

Areas of Focus:

- Communication and collaboration with medical clinics and physicians regarding doctor's notes, multiple notes from different medical practitioners.
- School district's ability to access and refer cases for supportive services provided by the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) prior to county attorney referral.
- Determine benchmarks and data points to use at outcome measures of success in decreasing excessive absenteeism. Specifically, access to excessive absence reports as a means to identify buildings in need of assistance and those with apparently successful procedures and programs to reduce excessive absenteeism.

Request from BBF

- Influence in setting up a meeting between school district leadership and the medical community. The purpose is to develop mutual understanding and uniformity in how school districts handle absences related to illness and how medical practitioners write doctor's notes and communicate with schools.
- \$32,000, plus benefits package to sponsor a new position at the JAC - an attendance specialist to work in direct connection with families and school districts for students with attendance concerns, but for those who have not met school policy criteria (e.g. 20 days) for referral to the county attorney.
- Influence in causing school districts to establish, create and share excessive absence reports by building as a means to assess need for assistance.