

RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTING THE CITY OF OAKLAND'S TRUANCY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, The People of Oakland require that their municipal government provide every assistance to insure that school aged children, not otherwise excused during regular school hours, are in school and not on the public streets or facilities or involved in illegal or unsafe activities; and

WHEREAS, on any given day in the City of Oakland there are as many as 3,200 school aged and school registered children unaccounted for, most of whom are truant from Oakland schools, not including school aged students not registered for any Oakland schools; and

WHEREAS, Oakland Public Schools has undertaken major efforts under the state school compulsory attendance laws to reduce truancy and handled 2,118 truants last year; and did significantly reduce the number of truants; over a year's time, more than 25% of Oakland's school aged children have been truant; and

WHEREAS, the people of Oakland regard truancy as a top priority issue facing the City, increasing crime and vandalism in our communities, resulting in appallingly low test scores and low rate of graduation of our students, and resulting in life-long pathologies that contribute to poor employment skills and many social ills; and

WHEREAS, there are many different City of Oakland, Oakland Public Schools, and Alameda County departments, social service agencies, commissions, committees, and private funding organizations addressing many of these issues, there is no single unifying policy, leader, or organization that is effectively bringing these efforts together to solve the run away truancy problems of the City; and

WHEREAS, successful models across the nation have not been identified for Oakland to establish the most effective methods of dealing with the truancy problems, nor have uniform policies been established to guide all agencies, nor has a client tracking system been established to measure and evaluate outcomes of all programs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Oakland hereby adopts the following policies and organization affecting all of these independent and well-meaning efforts for the implementation and institutionalization of a consolidated truancy program:

Section 1. Title and Philosophy

- 1.1 This program shall be known as the TRUANCY PROGRAM of the City of Oakland.
- 1.2 Truancy is hereby reaffirmed as the top priority public concern of all City departments, agencies, commissions, committees and policies.
- 1.3 Several principles will govern the TRUANCY PROGRAM:

- 1.3.1 Truancy solutions will be an integrated, case management, and holistic approach for each truancy student.
- 1.3.2 All programs will be focused on both short-term and long-term preventive solutions. Short-term solutions will be aimed at all current truants; long-term aimed at six-year old students.

Section 2. Organization

- 2.1 Both Oakland Public Schools and the City of Oakland have major responsibilities, programs, and policies regarding truancy, however, the lead responsibility for truancy in the future will rest with the City which will serve as the lead agency, with Oakland Public Schools, as a separate agency, responsible for all matters dealing with mandatory attendance and the education of the students.
- 2.2 To carry out the TRUANCY PROGRAM, a Truancy Partnership will be formed from among Oakland Public Schools, Alameda County Office of Education, City of Oakland Departments and Agencies, County of Alameda Social Service Agencies, Alameda County Healthcare Services Agencies, Alameda County District Attorney's and Public Defender's offices, Alameda County Superior Courts, and any and all public and private agencies dealing with Truancy.
- 2.3 The TRUANCY PROGRAM'S Truancy Partnership organization will be headed by the Mayor of the City of Oakland and administered by the City Administrator with a dedicated full time Truancy Director reporting to the City Administrator and Mayor, responsible for the coordination of the Truancy program. All truancy efforts of the city will be directed by the Truancy Director; and the truancy work of each of the partnership agencies will be coordinated by the Truancy Director.

Section 3. Truancy Centers

- 3.1 The operation of the current West Oakland Truancy Center will be reviewed by the Truancy Director and by the Truancy Partnership to assure implementation of the city's and Oakland Public School's truancy policies and the active participation of all of the social service agencies and to assure that individual case management needs are assessed and a program implemented for each student. If, as a result of this review, it is decided that another community-based approach would work more effectively, the Director and Partnership shall develop a new plan to implement this Program.

- 3.2 If the current approach is continued, a new East Oakland Truancy Center, closer to the students, will be opened and the Partnership agencies will participate in developing the center and implementing the program making use of best practices developed at the West Oakland center.

Section 4. Refocusing and Coordinating Current Truancy Institutions

- 4.1 All current organizations addressing truancy issues will be reviewed by the Partnership and the Truancy Director to bring their programs, policies, and efforts into alignment with the new citywide truancy program. In some cases this may lead to the elimination or streamlining of current organizations and will provide for a more effective and efficient use of resources. Some of the measures used will include the following:
 - 4.1.1 Is the program student based, holistic in approach, with case management needs assessed and addressed with specific outcomes planned for each student?
 - 4.1.2 Are all the tools the various agencies offer available and being used for every appropriate student?
 - 4.1.3 If it is an existing agency such as the Truancy Advisory Commission or Safe Passages, does the organization offer unique services, policies, or programs that would not be duplicated by the Truancy Partnership? If not, can the organization be subsumed into the new Truancy Partnership?
 - 4.1.4 Based upon Oakland Police Department and neighborhood reports, along with any available statistics, has there been a marked reduction in the number of school aged children wandering the streets and engaging in illegal or anti-social activities during school hours?
 - 4.1.5 Has the organization effectively reached school aged children who are currently on the streets during school hours through outreach efforts to them where they are located rather than just relying upon police or others to bring them to a central office or school location?
 - 4.1.6 Does the organization's program include directly approaching: parents of truant youth in their homes, neighborhood representatives, neighborhood churches, neighborhood beat officers and community policing organizations to identify and make certain that no truant

child is ignored and that all of Oakland's children are being served by our schools?

Section 5. Relationship to Other City Programs

- 5.1 Funding programs of the City such as Kids First, Measure Y, Workforce Training Programs, COPS programs, Safe Streets and any other State or Federally funded programs will be reviewed and criteria rewritten to emphasize that the Truancy Program is a top priority of the city and will be considered first for any available funding.
- 5.2 Each Department of the City will reflect in its budget considerations that the Truancy Program is a top consideration and a specific program element of the City and appropriate truancy programs and funding will be reflected in all department budgets and programs.
- 5.3 The City Schools Partnership Council / School Board Committee will review at each meeting the coordination and progress of the Truancy Program.

Section 6. Tracking Progress

- 6.1 The Truancy Partnership under the direction of the Truancy Director will have as its goal the complete elimination of truancy in our city. Towards that end, progress toward that goal will be measured, reported upon, and tracked on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.
- 6.2 The Truancy Partnership will study specific models for reducing truancy from around the country and specifically the North Richmond Verde School model, and will adopt best practices and track results.

Section 7. Leadership

- 7.1 Success of this program will depend upon strong leadership from the Mayor, City Administrator, and the Oakland Public Schools Administrator. While the County of Alameda and Oakland Public Schools are equally responsible for truancy, in the end the quality of life in Oakland depends on the coordination and success of the Truancy Program. Therefore, the Mayor and Oakland Public Schools Administrator are tasked with reporting to the public at least quarterly on the progress of the Truancy Program and the Director will issue an annual report and accounting of the programs, successes, failures, and plans for the next year.

(OTT 1/30/06)