

Commission on the Improvement of the Status of Children in Indiana
Education Outcomes Task Force Meeting
July 9, 2015
10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
Indiana Government Center South Building Conference Room 12

Present: Melissa Ambre, Sean Coleman, J.T. Coopman, Cathy Danyluk, Rebecca Kubacki, Anita Silverman, and Susan Lockwood.

Susan Lockwood initiated the meeting by reviewing the minutes from the May 8, 2015 meeting. Minutes were approved.

The group discussed the issue of Truancy and Decreasing School Absenteeism. Cathy Danyluk cited the code associated with school attendance and mentioned a guidance document that had been provided to school officials. There was much emphasis on the need to allow school corporations to maintain “local control” regarding school attendance and defining “excused” and “unexcused” absences.

Some relevant issues discussed by the Task Force Members included the following:

- In order to combat chronic absenteeism, schools could be required to include the Attendance Plan as part of the School Improvement Plan.
- Schools should address the issue comprehensively, including the need to support homeless students, students with medical issues, students who are working to help support their families, students with transportation issues, and students who are parents and need daycare for their children.
- Schools should work with students individually and document medical issues through a Section 504 plan if necessary.
- Some Parents and School Administrators need additional guidance regarding the law associated with “Educational Neglect”.
- Parents often don’t understand the difference between “Suspension” and “Expulsion” and think they are one and the same.
- School social workers could go to homes (although time does not allow)
- At what level should law enforcement be involved? If they see students roaming the streets during school hours? What kinds of relationships already exist between law enforcement and the schools?

Since school attendance issues are often different in rural areas, “local intervention” was mentioned several times. Attendance policies need to be tailored to specific issues, not “one size fits all.”

As a follow up to the discussion of transitioning youth from incarceration to school upon reentry, J.T. Coopman invited Susan Lockwood to make a presentation to the public school superintendents at the IAPSS Fall District meetings. Susan will speak to issues regarding re-enrollment and support for youth transitioning from incarceration. These meetings are scheduled for late October and early November.

Regarding the Action Plan established for the OJJDP Comprehensive System Reform for Juvenile Reentry, the following “big ideas” were presented from the South Bend Regional Reentry Task Force and the Indianapolis Regional Reentry Task Force:

1. To address barriers to substance abuse treatment for youth, what would need to happen to make substance abuse treatment available in schools?
 - Since there is a state-wide shortage of substance abuse counselors, perhaps existing school staff could be trained and licensed? Perhaps they could be incentivized in some way, either by tuition reimbursement or PGP credits towards teacher license renewal.
 - Higher Ed would need to be involved with the training process
 - Instead of expelling a student for substance abuse, establish a contract with the student and parent allowing him to stay in school as long as he was receiving substance abuse treatment
 - Who would be responsible to pay for the treatment? Would the substance abuse counselors be part of the school staff and the treatment funded through the school some way?
 - How would we address substance abuse with parents and school staff? What type of education would need to be provided to help them understand drug use and addiction?
2. There is a need to educate teachers and school staff regarding students who have experienced trauma and the impact of trauma on classroom behavior and academic performance.
 - Teachers and school staff need strategies for working with children and youth who have been traumatized
3. There is a need to SHARE INFORMATION regarding children and youth who are transitioning between school environments, including specific information about the need for supervision and the level of supervision.
4. How can we embed a Medicaid specialist with DYS to help youth and families resume services as soon as a youth is released from DYS custody?
5. How might we utilize technology to continue substance abuse or mental health treatment throughout the period of incarceration if a youth is already established with a care provider?

Anita Silverman provided the group with a presentation on Trauma and Cognitive Development. The presentation was emailed to the entire Task Force following the meeting.

Cathy Danyluk and Susan Lockwood provided the group with an update on the School Discipline and Climate Sub-Committee, scheduled to meet immediately following the Education Outcomes Task Force meeting. Julie Smart, from IDOE, will chair the committee and staff from the American Institute of Research have agreed to provide Indiana with technical assistance on this project.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.