

Joint Subcommittees' Meeting  
Judicial Support Task Force Report  
September 30, 2011  
Judge Kelly Evans, Co-Chair  
Judge Leonard Ray Saenz, Co-Chair

# Community Partners Engaged

- **AISD** 
  - Dropout Prevention/Reduction
  - General Counsel
  - School Resource Officer
  - Supervisor of Discipline
- **Travis County** 
  - County Attorney
  - Health & Human Services
  - Constable Pct. 1
  - Constable Pct. 2
  - Constable Pct. 5
  - District Attorney
    - Justice of the Peace Pct. 1
    - Justice of the Peace Pct. 3
    - Justice of the Peace Pct. 4
    - Justice of the Peace Pct. 5
  - Juvenile Probation / Gardner Betts
    - Travis County District Court
    - Truancy Court
- **City of Austin** 
  - Austin Police Dept.
  - City Manager's Office
  - Health & Human Services
  - Law Department
  - Municipal Court Judges
  - Municipal Court Clerk

# Community Partners Engaged

- **Local Non-Profit Organizations**
  - Communities in Schools
  - La Voz
  - LULAC/Madre
  - Diocese of Austin
  - PODER
  - The Austin Project
- **Community Members**
  - **Others**
    - Austin Human Rights Commission
    - Retired Municipal Court Judge

# Charge

- How to make the current system less punitive and more supportive of children/families?
- What model can best accomplish this or what modifications can be made to our current system?
- What immediate reforms can be recommended given current financial limitations?

# Current System

- Justice of the Peace – Process Failure to Attend cases in Middle and High Schools
- Municipal Court – Process Failure to Attend cases on parents of Elementary students as well as city-wide class “C” misdemeanors.
- Truancy Court – On Site court held during school hours at Fulmore, Mendez, Pearce and Martin Middle School

# **Current System: Case Work Manager**

- **Justice of the Peace**
  - **Case Work Managers**
- **Municipal Court**
  - **Youth Services**
- **Truancy Court**
  - **Probation Officers**
- **Juvenile Court** - 10 and 11 yr. olds as of 9/1/11

# **AISD Strategies**

- **Child Study Teams**
- **Advanced Case Management Tool**
- **Class C Initiative**
- **Referrals to Communities in Schools (CIS)**
- **Referrals to Family Resource Centers (FRC)**
- **District wide pre-filing Process for Failure to Attend Cases**
- **District wide process for filing Failure to Attend Cases**

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# **Recommendation: Pre-Court Action**

- Establish a Neighborhood Conference Committee (NCC) in every school in collaboration with Family Resource Centers and Communities in Schools. ( long-term goal)
- Establish a part-time Case Work Manager that supports the NCC.



# NCC

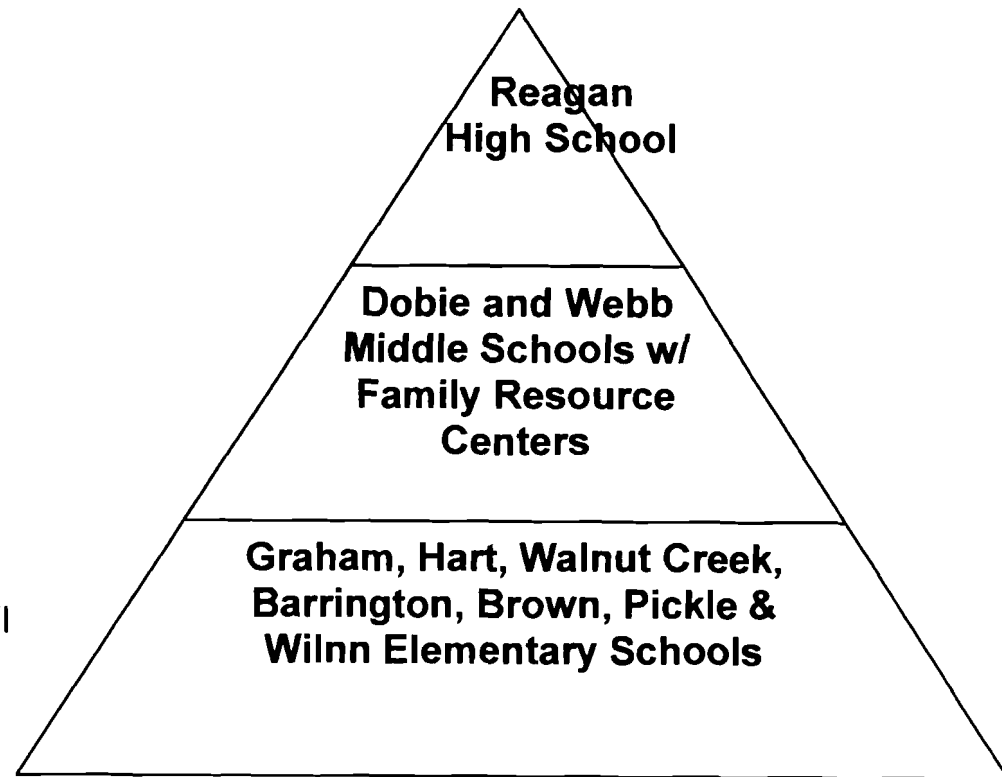
- NCC relies on community volunteers
- Restorative Justice
- Community members along with families and youth work toward a final resolution to the offense (social contract).
- NCC volunteers are residents of the geographical regions they serve.
- Case work managers implement the contract, connect families and youth to services and continue to work with families until completion or transfer of non-compliance.

# **Recommendation: Pre-Court Action**

- Create a diversion program
  - Deferred Prosecution with APD and AISD PD
- Community-Based Leadership supporting:
  - Youth Leadership Programs
  - Restorative Circles
  - Support Community Connection, Learning & Action

# Recommendation: Vertical Court Approach

- A two year pilot consisting of the Reagan Vertical Team in which all Class C misdemeanors and FTAS cases will be filed in Municipal Court.
- Establish an NCC for the Reagan Vertical Team. Employ one half time case work manager
- Employ a full time case work manager to support the Reagan Vertical Team, preferably a social worker who would be able to conduct assessments as well as recruit volunteer interns. Funded by the City of Austin Case Work Manager Fund
- Adopt the duties and responsibilities of the Travis County Case Manager Job Description.



# Other Considerations

- In the event additional resources become available Judge Susan Steeg of Precinct 3 (JP3) is open to piloting a second vertical court approach at Akins or Crockett High Schools.
- Judge Yvonne Williams of Precinct 1 (JP1) is also open to piloting a third vertical court approach.
- Municipal Court would transfer Class C misdemeanors cases for those students who have pending FTA cases before the Justice of the Peace Courts.

# Recommendation: Vertical Court Approach (Cont.)

- Yearly Evaluation
  - Attendance rate
  - Promotion rate
  - Recidivism rate
- Adopt the use of Justice of the Peace Precinct 3 Student Profile Survey
  - Uses the TRAIN software (assessment and case management tool as well as data collection)
    - Annual Software cost of \$600

# **Conclusion:**

## **Vertical Team Approach**

- Benefits of the vertical team/court approach will enhance the current system by making it less punitive and more supportive of children/families.
- The system will provide for timely and consistent handling of cases.
- Case work managers will ensure the compliance of court orders along with the coordination of services.
- Generally, schools start filing FTAS cases at the end of September. By adding the Class C Misdemeanors the vertical court approach can set a plan with the potential to intervene before a child meets the legal threshold for a Failure to Attend School case.

# **Conclusion:**

## **Vertical Team Approach**

- Allows case work manager to connect children and families to services within the vertical team.
- Provides a continuum of supports with appropriate incentives and consequences.
- Using the Youth Management System allows case work manager to access services within the community.
- Quarterly meeting with the vertical team encourages healthy interaction between all stakeholders.