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October 26, 2004

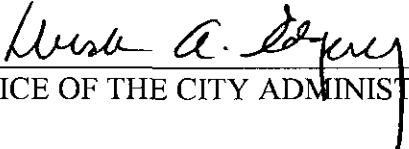
Education Partnership Committee
Oakland, CA

RE: REPORT FROM OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ON THE
ATTEND & ACHIEVE/TRUANCY REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

Dear Co-Chairpersons Chang and Gallo and Committee Members:

The Oakland Unified School District has submitted the attached report on the Attend & Achieve/Truancy Reduction Campaign.

FORWARDED TO THE
EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE



OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Item: _____
Education Partnership Committee
October 26, 2004



Oakland Unified School District

STATE ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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October 8, 2004

Education Partnership Committee
Oakland, California

RE: Report on Attend & Achieve / Truancy Reduction Campaign

Dear Co-Chairpersons Henry Chang and Noel Gallo, and Members of the Committee

Summary:

The following is a report and Power Point presentation on the Oakland Unified School District's strategies to improve student attendance and address truancy for the 2004/05 school year.

Background:

Truancy at Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has reached monumental proportions in recent years. In 2003/04, there was an average of 4,000 students absent from school everyday. OUSD loses \$27 dollars per student per day when a student is not in school. In the 2003/04 school year, OUSD lost \$16.8 million due to student absences.

Truancy is the #1 indicator of future delinquent and/or criminal behavior. Research indicates that truancy will negatively influence the future of a youth and typically results in delinquent and criminal activity including crimes related to drugs, alcohol, and violence (U.S. Department of Justice Bulletin, October 1996). Furthermore, truancy may be the first step to a lifetime of unemployment, crime and incarceration because the student rapidly falls behind in academic performance that leads to dropping out of school. Truant students are a significant crime problem for law enforcement authorities.

Mayor Brown and Dr. Ward began discussions about truancy in August, 2003. Representatives from OUSD, the City of Oakland, and Alameda County agencies began work on the project in September 2003 and continued through June 2004, with the goals of 1) Increasing attendance; 2) Reducing truancy; and 3) Improving student achievement.

They agreed to build a program based upon successful models currently in practice throughout the nation, and that the work should build upon the current OUSD attendance strategies with an emphasis upon: —Early Intervention (K-5); Alternatives to Court/Family Intervention (Grades 6-8); Alternative Court sanctions and Truancy Interventions (Grades 9-12). Regular working meetings were established for staff to work out the “nuts and bolts” of the Attend and Achieve Campaign.

The outcomes of the Truancy Task Force work (April 2004) were the following set of recommendations:

- Improve OUSD's current internal attendance program while building on 2003/04 successes e.g. Notification of Truancy (NOT) letter process;
- Refine the Student Attendance Review Team (site) and Student Attendance Review Board (central) process;
- Establish a Pilot Program for habitual truants in 10 schools;
- Strengthen the District Attorney Court Filing and Probation Mediation Process; and,
- Address students who are loitering on the streets, as well as students who are chronically absent through the creation of truancy centers.

Program Description

Based on the Task 2004/05 recommendations, the following strategies are in place (see the Power Point slides attached).

1. The Notification of Truancy letters (NOT letters)
 - Notice of Truancy (NOT) letters are generated when students are absent from school without valid excuse three days in one school year or tardy without valid excuse for more than any 30 minute period during the school day on three occasions in one school year.
 - Continue the 2003/04 school year strategies including the Notification of Truancy letters and daily phone calls home to verify absence
 - Early identification or detection of truancy, identifying the underlying causes of truancy, and prompt intervention through the Student Attendance Review Team (school site) or Student Attendance Review Board (central office) that will re-engage students into the educational system of the Oakland Unified School District
2. The Student Attendance Review Team (SART) and the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) Process
 - Increase central office support and improve site level support of attendance clerks.
 - Serve 100% of the school site referrals for attendance support.
 - Place youth in short-term support groups such as anger management or truancy diversion.
 - Create East and West centers to support school site referrals regarding attendance support.
3. The District Attorney Court Filing and Probation Mediation Process
 - Refer to District Attorney/Probation Department cases for attendance support, as needed.
 - Refine OUSD's process through enhanced source documentation from sites.
 - Shorten the time from initial notification of truancy to filing case with DA/Probation.
 - Re-affirm DA/Probation staffing to process cases for attendance support.

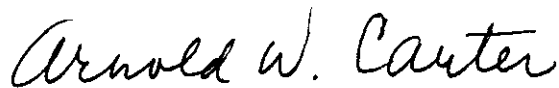
4. Initiate a program to target habitual truants
 - Pilot the best practice model in Oakland at 10 schools.
 - Closely monitor the use of all procedures and best practices.
 - Focus on clear communication between SART and SARB.
 - Create closer working relationship between CBOs/Community and families in need.
 - Early DA intervention (letters sent on DA letterhead, assemblies, SART, SARB)

5. The Oakland Truancy Attendance Program (OTAP) Center will:
 - Reengage truants into the educational system.
 - Function as a “one stop” center for truancy retrievals.
 - Provide on-site support and follow-up to truants and their families that will address both the cognitive and non-cognitive barriers to regular school attendance and student achievement.

Action Requested

The Education Partnership Committee to accept the report on the Oakland Unified School District’s strategies to improve student attendance and address truancy for the 2004/05 school year.

Respectfully Submitted



Arnold W. Carter
Deputy Superintendent
Oakland Unified School District



Attend & Achieve – Every Day Counts: Oakland School District's Truancy and Attendance Program

A collaborative solution to a
shared problem

Agenda

- Quick Facts about Truancy and Attendance
- Overview and history of the Truancy Task Force
- Recommendations for the 2004/05 School Year
- Strategy updates
- Conclusion

Quick Facts and Statistics about Truancy and Attendance

- Truancy is described as “**gateway behavior**” for educational failure, delinquency, welfare, unemployment, and the penal system.
- On any given day **4,000** OUSD students are not in school.
- OUSD loses **\$26.88** dollars each day a student is not in school in 2004/05.
- OUSD would have gained **\$7.4 million** dollars if we had met our attendance goals in 2003/04.
- Truant students are a **significant crime problem** for law enforcement authorities and local communities.

Overview of the Truancy Task Force

- Mayor Brown and Dr. Ward began discussions on the issue in August 2003.
- Representatives from OUSD and City / County agencies began earnest work on the project in September, 2003 and continued through June, 2004.
- Goals were established to:
 - Increase attendance
 - Reduce truancy
 - Improve student achievement

Participating Agencies / Individuals

- Alameda County District Attorney
- Alameda County Probation Department
- Safe Passages / Our Kids
- Mayor's Office / City of Oakland
- Alameda County Office of Education
- City Councilmember Jean Quan
- Oakland Police Department
- Oakland Unified School District
- Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services
- Alameda County Social Services Agency
- Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley's Office

How does this approach differ from the past efforts?

- Truancy centers in the past focused primarily on visible truants.
- This is a "holistic approach"; an integrated agency effort between city, county, OUSD, etc.
- Focuses on K-12...Prevention, Intervention and Remedial actions.
- Actions are data-driven and research-based.
- The visible problem is on the street, and this is where we want to be.
- The unseen problem is far greater and more destructive.
- The intent is to design a one-stop approach to address student and family issues.

Task Force Recommendations

- Improve OUSD's current internal attendance program while building on 2003-04 successes e.g. Notice of Truancy letter process
- Refine the SART and SARB process
- Establish a Pilot Program for habitual truants in 10 schools
- Strengthen the District Attorney Court Filing and Probation Mediation Process
- Address students who are loitering on the streets, as well as students who are chronically absent through the creation of truancy centers

Notification of Truancy Letters

- Delay central office mailing of letters by 72 hours to allow for sites to update student attendance data.
- Reduce the number of “false positive” notices
- Revise the 1st Notification of Truancy letter to include reference to options for improving student attendance

Notification of Truancy letters, continued

- Re-affirm daily calling by sites to parents, guardians, or caregivers for absent students
- Re-convene Media Task Force to assist with incentives, rewards for improved school attendance

Student Attendance Review Team (SART) & Student Attendance Review Board (SARB)

- District forms for the SART and SARB process are located at OUSD's Webportal
- Central Office staff is aligned by feeder patterns of the six comprehensive high schools
- SARB will serve 100% of school site referrals for attendance support
- Create two SARB units East (9925 International) and West (900 12th Street)

SART & SARB, continued

- Plan to place youth in short term support groups such as anger management, truancy diversion, ATOD prevention, and girls support
- Provide central office support to site level attendance staff
- Create attendance staff “institute” through Adult Education to increase individual skill levels

Ten Schools for SART Pilot

– High Schools

Castlemont

McClymonds

– Middle Schools

Elmhurst

Lowell

– Elementary Schools

Hoover

Garfield

Cox

MLK

Jefferson

Webster Academy

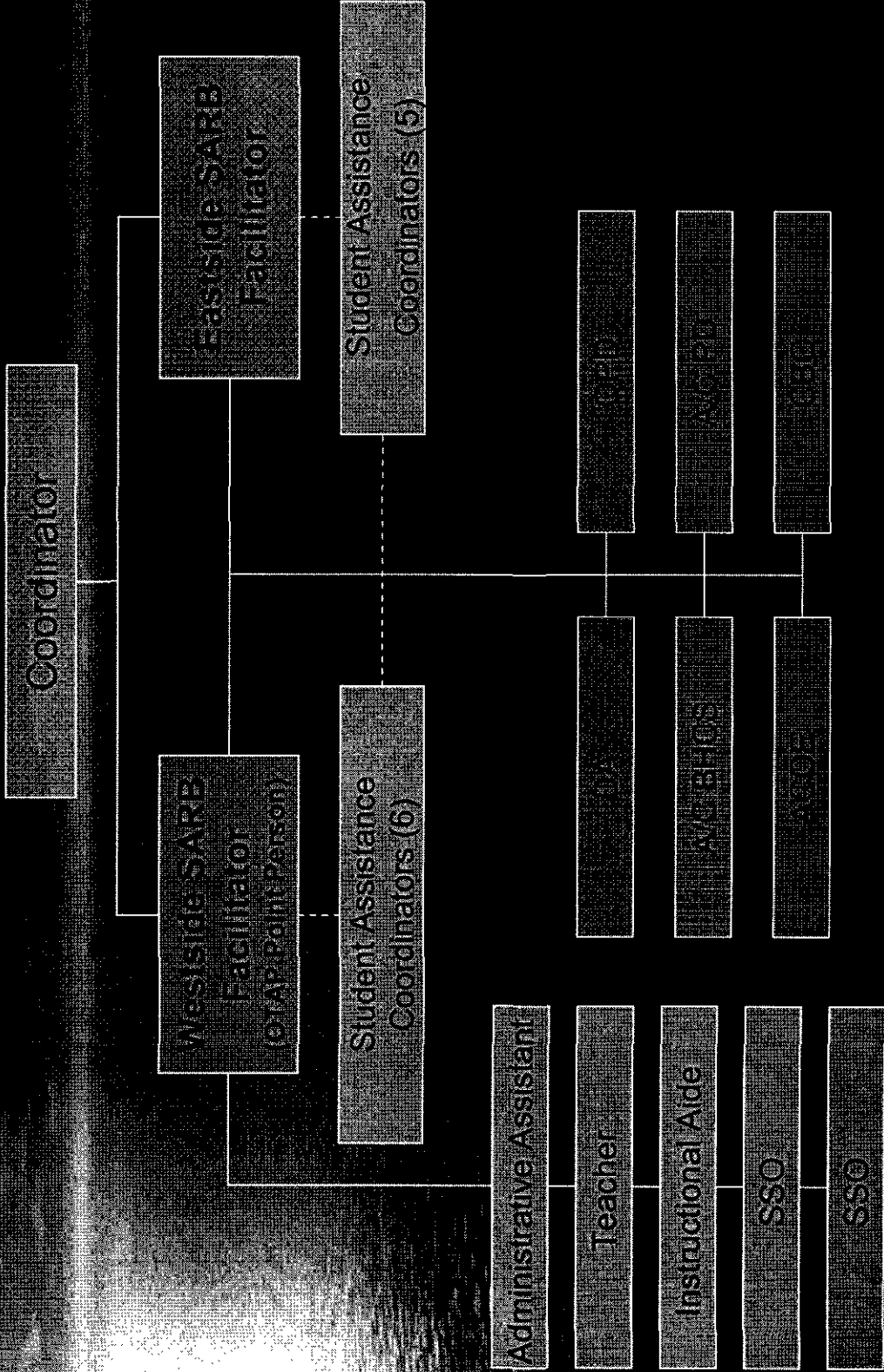
SART Pilot Program

- Obtain buy in from each pilot school.
- Create procedures using best practices.
- Improve communication between SART and SARB.
- Develop close working relationship between CBOs/community and families in need.
- Early DA intervention (assemblies, SART, SARB)
- Kick-off week of October 4th at Garfield, Lowell

District Attorney/Probation

- Refer to District Attorney/Probation Department cases for attendance support, as needed.
- Refine OUSD's process through improved documentation from sites.
- Shorten the time from initial notification of truancy to filing case with DA/Probation.
- Re-affirm DA/Probation staffing to process cases for attendance support.

Oakland Truancy Attendance Program Center



OTAP Center, continued

- Opened 9/21/04
- # of truants served 85 as of 10/7/04
- Law enforcement partners include OPD,
BART Police
- Hours of operation – 8:30 to 4:30
- Hours of instruction – 9:30 to 3:30

OTAP Center, continued

- Funding for only one center. Measure Y passage will support future centers.
- Waiting for two community providers from A/C Behavioral Health Care Services
- Waiting for Probation Department to "outstation" Probation Officer at center
- Held preliminary discussion with OCO representatives

Conclusion

Truancy Task Force identified key follow up areas:

1. Need for an operational binder to be used by all partners involved
2. Need for more positive media on collaborative effort
3. Must create a successful model to keep kids in school once they have gone from truancy to attendance
4. Convert draft truancy brochure into final document