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CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Sabrina B. Landreth
City Administrator

FROM: Sara Bedford
Director, Human Services

SUBJECT: City Effort With OUSD to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

DATE: April 6, 2017

City Administrator Approval _____ Date: 4/13/17

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Accept An Informational Report On Implementation And Impact Of City Of Oakland Investment From Fiscal Year 2015-2017 Budget Dedicated To Reducing Student Chronic Absenteeism.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Schools that received consistent support through the case management staff funded through the City and Oakland Unified School District show reduced rates of chronic absenteeism. Students assigned support through case management services show improvement in their rates of attendance. Data included in this report and ***Attachment A*** are provided by the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD).

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City Council approved an appropriation in the City of Oakland Adopted Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2017 to fund two case workers to reduce chronic absenteeism from school and increase student attendance. The Memorandum of Understanding to establish responsibilities and expectations for the effort in partnership with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) was approved on January 2016.

Over the two fiscal years (2015-2017), OUSD's Office of Student Discipline and Attendance and the Human Services Department were to hire two case managers to support and implement efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism. The Human Services Department (HSD) completed the hiring process for two staff positions in March 2016 after creating the new Case Manager II Youth Services classification. OUSD hired a staff person in Fall of 2015. OUSD was unable to find a qualified candidate to fill a second case manager position despite multiple attempts.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Research shows that children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of third grade. By sixth grade, chronic absences are a proven early warning sign for students at risk of dropping out of school. OUSD has established district-wide targets to reduce chronic absence to five percent of students at every school. Elementary schools with high rates of chronic absence and high number of students chronically absent (CA) were identified for the project. Students are classified as severe chronically absent if they are absent more than 20 percent of the year, and moderate chronically absent if absent more than 10 percent of the year.

Case managers are assigned to schools with high absenteeism to provide case management services to the identified chronically absent/truant students to shift the students out of chronic absenteeism. Case managers work with the school administrator and staff to develop school-wide strategies to support increased attendance. In late FY 2015-2016, the case managers were assigned schools and student caseloads and became familiar with the school site attendance issues, site leadership, Coordination of Service Team (COST) and attendance teams, and access to data on attendance available in the OUSD Aeries database.

Of the two City funded positions, one was vacated at the beginning of the school year. Data is available for this report on the results for two schools assigned case management under the single remaining and presently filled position.

Attachment A provides the past school year and this school year's attendance data as of April 4, 2017, grouping students according to the attendance rate group used (severe or moderate chronically absent, at risk, or satisfactory attendance rate). The dashboard tables provide the attendance data and percentage by group for all OUSD students and for students in four schools provided with case managers. Students are chronically absent if their attendance rate is below 80 percent, moderately absent if the attendance rate is below 90 percent, and at risk of chronic absence if the attendance rate is below 95 percent. Students with an attendance rate of 95 percent or higher have satisfactory attendance.

For OUSD as a whole, between 2015-16 and 2016-17 the percentage of students identified as chronically absent has increased from 11.2 percent to 13 percent. The increase in absenteeism may be affected by increased enrollment and the barriers faced by families, such as homelessness, illness and transportation costs. Currently OUSD reports that 28 schools are struggling with chronic absenteeism, meaning for these schools 15 percent or more of students are identified as chronically absent.

The dashboard in Attachment A indicates that the percentage of students identified as severe chronically absent or moderate chronically absent has decreased to date in 2016-2017 for the two schools Horace Mann and Howard Elementary. These schools have received consistent case management services over the school year through the position funded by the City. Between last year and this school year, Horace Mann is a showing 21.5 to 19.2 percent drop (as of April 4, 2017) in students identified as chronically absent. Howard Elementary is showing a 23.3 to 21.8 percent drop in students classified as chronically absent.

OUSD also provided information that 29 of the 37 students on the caseload show improved attendance. Of the 37 students, 29 were with OUSD last year. Of the 29 students, 13 now have 90 to 95 percent attendance, and 21 have attendance rates between 85 and 89 percent.

OUSD's case manager shows similar results at Reach Elementary, where between 2015-2016 and 2016-17 the percentage of students identified as chronically absent has dropped from 23.3 percent to 18.3 percent.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impacts are associated with this informational report.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

This report contains information of public interest as it is directly related to the education of Oakland youth.

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated with the Oakland Unified School District and prepared in consultation with the Controller's Bureau and the Office of the City Attorney.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

OUSD tracks data on student attendance by school site on an ongoing basis to inform the effort to target schools with high chronic absenteeism to increase student attendance. This effort is reported on annually.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Collaboration to increase student attendance will have long term benefits for Oakland by improving the educational outcomes of the students served and thereby assuring increased economic opportunity and a more sustainable future for these Oakland youth.

Environmental: Improvements in educational outcomes will improve community development, public safety, and productivity.

Social Equity: This collaboration strives to more equitably service children and families by addressing resources and support to students with chronic absence often due to trauma, illness and other barriers impacting families affected by poverty.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Accept An Informational Report On Implementation And Impact Of City Of Oakland Investment From Fiscal Year 2015-2017 Budget Dedicated To Reducing Student Chronic Absenteeism.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Sara Bedford, HSD Director, at 238-6794.

Respectfully submitted,

SARA BEDFORD
Director, Human Services Department

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION
Prepared by: Sandra Taylor, Manager

Attachment A

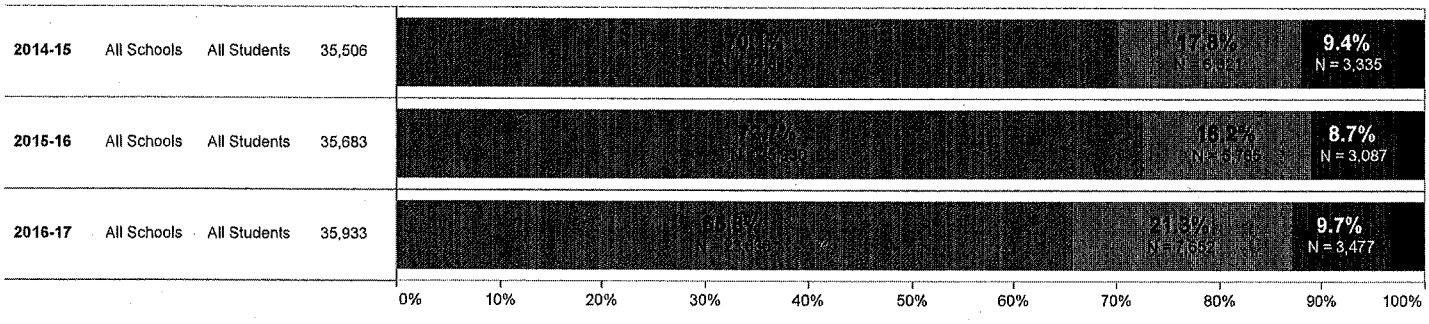
ATTACHMENT A

Percent Of Students - By Attendance Group

Current Year Source: Aeries as of April 4, 2017

Attendance Rate Group
- Severe Chronic Absent
- Moderate Chronic Absent
- At Risk
- Satisfactory

Select Academic Year	View by Network/School	Select Network/School	Grade Text	View By Group	Select Group(s)
Multiple values	District	All	All	All Students	All



For any comments or questions please email **Kevin Smith** at **Kevin.Smith@ousd.org**.

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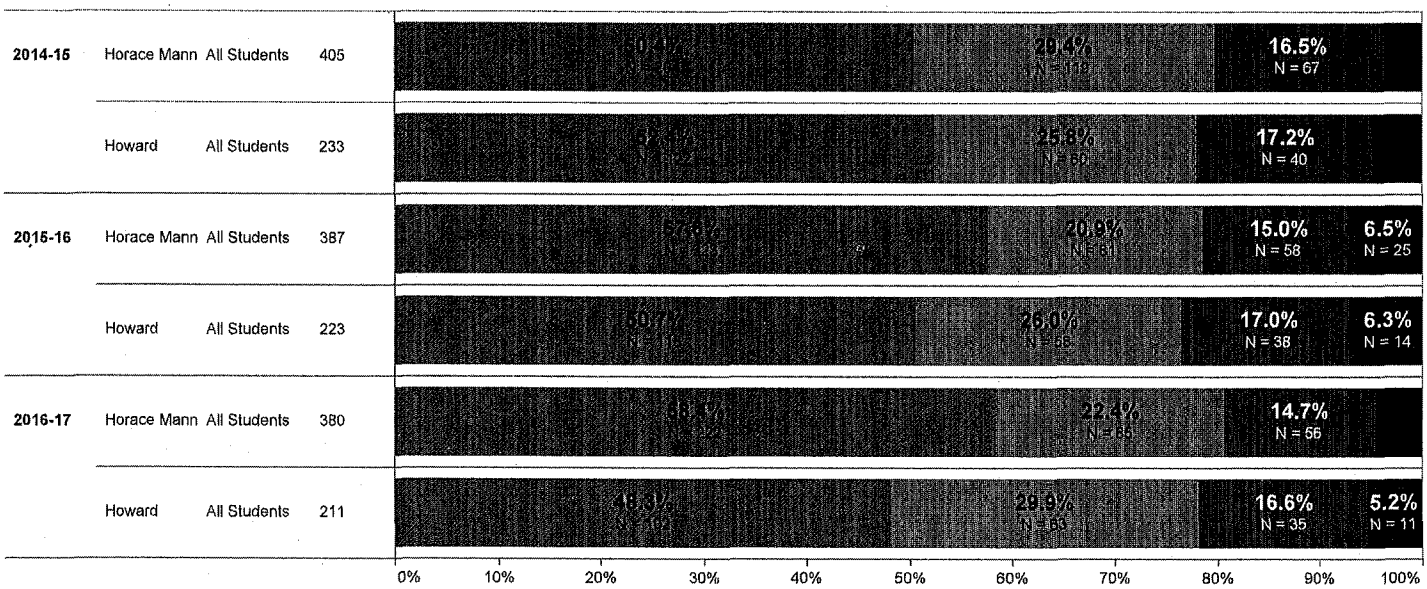
Select Academic Year	View by Network/School	Select Network/School	Grade Text	View By Group	Select Group(s)
Multiple values	School	Multiple values	All	All Students	All



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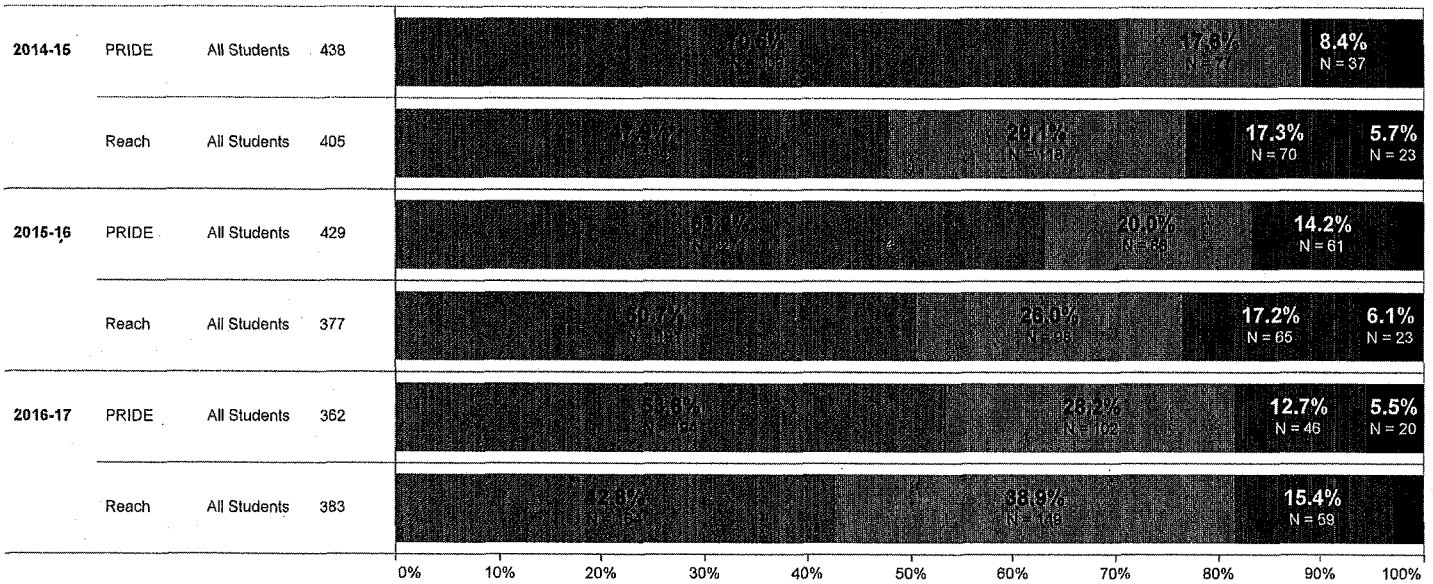

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