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OAKLAND

2016 JAN 13 PM 5:15

# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Sabrina B. Landreth  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Sara Bedford  
Director, Human Services

**SUBJECT:** HSD MOU with OUSD to Increase  
Student Attendance

**DATE:** Jan. 13, 2016

City Administrator Approval

Date:

1/14/16

## RECOMMENDATION

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Execute A Memorandum Of Understanding Between The City Of Oakland And The Oakland Unified School District To Reduce Chronic Absenteeism And Increase Student Attendance For Fiscal Years 2015-2017.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report authorizes the City Administrator to negotiate and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen the City's partnership with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to reduce chronic absence and address student attendance through the provision of targeted support to schools with high rates of chronic absence, the engagement of families and community around the importance of school attendance, and the hiring of case managers to support elementary schools with high rates of chronic absence, including two positions funded by the City. The report "Attendance Strategies in the Oakland Unified School District" is included herein as **Attachment A**. From the City's standpoint, obligations would include funding for two staff positions.

## BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City Council approved an appropriation in the City of Oakland Adopted Budget FY2015-2017) to fund two case workers to reduce chronic absenteeism from school and increase student attendance. A MOU has been developed to establish responsibilities and expectations for this effort in partnership with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). Section 504(1) of the City of Oakland Charter requires City Council approval for intergovernmental relations and contracts for joint governmental actions.

Item: \_\_\_\_\_  
Life Enrichment Committee  
January 26, 2016

## ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Research shows that children who are chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. By 6<sup>th</sup> 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 5% of students at every school (currently it is 10% (See **Attachment A**).

The MOU establishes the City's and OUSD's joint responsibilities in the effort to reduce chronic absence through the hiring of two City funded case managers. Over the two fiscal years (2015-2017), OUSD and the City will each hire two case managers to support and implement efforts to reduce truancy. HSD and the OUSD Community Schools and Student Services will meet regularly to coordinate the effort.

HSD's Children and Youth Services Division will manage and supervise the two City case managers. Case managers will provide case management services to identified chronically absent/truant students and work with the school administrator and staff to develop school wide strategies to support increased attendance. They will also work with families, teachers, and other resource organizations to help support students to improve their attendance. Case managers will maintain confidentiality and comply with all policies in place at OUSD and school sites. Case managers will be hired by February 2016.

OUSD will assign case managers to school sites and provide ongoing support, professional development and problem solving. OUSD will ensure reasonable access to student data to inform case management. The Coordinator of Attendance and Discipline Support Services will coordinate case manager workloads and support day to day supervision.

School sites are expected to provide a confidential meeting space as needed, a point person at the school site to serve as liaison to the case manager, approval to access the Aeries Student Information system from the school principal, formal introductions to teachers and other school staff, membership on the school site's Coordination of Service Team (COST) and attendance teams, and private space with computer access.

Elementary schools with high rates of chronic absence and high numbers of students chronically absent (CA) will be served by this collaboration between the City and OUSD.

<u>OUSD School Name</u>	<u>Number of students CA 2014-2015</u>	<u>%</u>
Community United (CUES)	76	17.4%
Futures	83	25.2%
Sankofa	112	32.9%
Emerson	55	17.8%
Parker	66	24.6%
Markham	82	21.5%
Fruitvale	84	21.4%
Howard	51	21.9%
Reach	93	23.0%

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The two City Case Manager positions were authorized and included in the FY 2015-2017 Adopted Budget and funded by the General Purpose Fund (1010), Youth Services Organization (78251), Reduce Chronic Absenteeism/OUSD Project (A90830).

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

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

### **COORDINATION**

HSD's Children & Youth Division coordinated with the Oakland Unified School District, Controller's Bureau, and the Office of the City Attorney to develop the MOU and report and resolution.

### **PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

OUSD and HSD will establish a data based report to track improvements in student attendance through this effort and report back annually.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** This joint effort will have long term benefits for Oakland by assuring educational attainment for Oakland youth across the city.

**Environmental:** Fewer chronic absences improves educational outcomes thereby improving community development, public safety, and productivity.

**Social Equity:** The MOU will establish a formal set of responsibilities between the City and OUSD to better and more equitably serve the Oakland community with regard to educational outcomes for all Oakland youth.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the City Administrator to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Oakland Unified School District to reduce chronic absenteeism and increase student attendance for fiscal years 2015-2017.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Sandra Taylor, Manager, Children and Youth Services, at 238-7163.

Respectfully submitted,



SARA BEDFORD  
Director, Human Services Department

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION  
**Prepared by:** Sandra Taylor, Manager

Attachment A: Attendance Strategies in Oakland Unified School District

# **ATTACHMENT**

## **A**

### **Attendance Strategies in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)**



## Attendance Strategies in OUSD

### **Background Information**

Approximately 5 years ago OUSD engaged its stakeholders and developed a Strategic Plan. One of the priorities outlined in the plan was a reduction in chronic absenteeism. Our Local Control Accountability Plan identifies attendance as a measure of student achievement. A review of our data shows that students who are chronically absent have lower test scores.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. However, we also know that when students miss too much school— regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically. Research shows that:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absences are a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores.

According to data provided by Attendance Works, chronic absenteeism is highest among students in kindergarten and first grade.

During 2014-2015, there were 6587 OUSD students who had 3 or more unverified absences. Students in Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade had the highest rates of absence in this category.

It has been suggested that there is a correlation between truancy and crime rates. Initial Oakland data does not support this allegation. According to data received from the Alameda County Probation Department, a total of 190 Oakland Youth have been referred to probation, this year, for robbery, theft, and burglary. This represents a very small percentage of the students who have 3 or more unverified absences.

It is important to understand that truancy classification includes students who are absence with and without an excuse and also includes students who are tardy.

Before outlining the strategies that have been implemented in OUSD to address chronic absenteeism, we'd like to provide definitions for the terms used when discussing attendance.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Chronic Absence - missing 10% or more of school days

Excused Absences – absences that meet State guidelines. (Ex: illness or medical appointment). Refer to Education Code 48205 for a complete list.

Unexcused absences – absences that are verified by a parent/guardian, however, the absence does not meet State guidelines. (Ex. travelling out of town to care for a sick relative).

Unverified absence – absences that have not been verified by an adult.



Truant –a student with 3 unexcused/unverified absences or 3 tardies of more than 30 minutes, or any combination thereof. (Education Code 48260)

Opportunity Youth-disconnected youth 16-24 years of age who have dropped out of school.

**Students can have good attendance and still be classified as truant**

1. Students can be classified as truant and still attend school 95% of school days.
2. Many students labeled as truant have unexcused absences. This means that a parent/guardian sent a note to the school to explain the reason for the absence.

Example: student missed 6 days of school this year. 4 days to travel out of town because grandmother had surgery and 2 days due to illness. Attendance rate is 96% of school days.

Even though this student is not chronically absent, he is considered truant because of the 4 days he traveled to visit his grandmother. These 4 days are considered unexcused absences which are also known as truant absences.

3. High school students referred to Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) are sometimes present at school 95% of school days but are considered truant because they cut class.

Example: Student attends 1st-3rd periods and 5th-6th periods every day. He cut 4<sup>th</sup> period 10 times during the year. This student is considered truant

4. Students who are tardy more than 30 minutes, 3 or more times during the school year are classified as truant regardless of the number of days attended during the school year.

Example: School starts at 8:30 am. Student arrives each day at 9:10 am for a variety of reasons. Although student only missed 4 days of school during the school year, she is considered truant because of her tardies.

**How is Oakland Unified addressing attendance?**

- A. We established district wide targets
  1. Reduce chronic absence to 5% of students at every school.
  2. Ensure that 85% of students attend school 95% of days annually.
  3. Reach an average daily attendance (ADA) rate of 98% at every school.
- B. Strategies were implemented to reduce chronic absence/truancy
  1. Produced bi-weekly attendance reports
  2. Created a chronic absence intervention protocol that provided a timeline and action steps that schools should take to monitor chronic absence and truancy.
  3. Accountability measures included reporting the number of Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meetings and efforts to promote positive attendance (early outreach efforts, incentive programs, establishing attendance teams)



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS & STUDENT SERVICES

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4. Professional development/training provided to district administrators and clerical staff at the beginning of the school year (required) and optional trainings are available during the year.
5. Produced an Attendance Manual to promote positive attendance. Intentionally not designed as a compliance manual that would be put on a shelf to gather dust. It provided practical strategies for creating a positive attendance culture at school sites.
6. In collaboration with the Oakland Education Cabinet and other community partners, we produced a toolkit for k-5 schools that provide tools that school can use to promote positive attendance (flyers for parents, self assessment, talking points for school staff, after school providers and community partners to use to engage parents in conversations about attendance).
7. In an effort to educate parents about the importance of attendance, we created a chronic absence letter. Since absences for any reason compromise academic performance, we wanted to produce an informational letter. This "did you know" letter is sent to parents on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of absence regardless of the reason for the absence.
8. Targeted support provided to schools with high rates of chronic absence to help build site capacity to manage attendance.
9. Produced an attendance video featuring OUSD students.
10. Engaged families and the community around the importance of attendance.
11. Established partnerships with Oakland Housing Authority and Attendance Works.
12. Recognized sites for good and improved attendance/celebrated success.
13. Engaged site leadership through data, PD, CSSSP.
14. Hiring of 4 Case managers (MSWs), during the 2015-2016 school year, to support 10 elementary schools with high rates of chronic absenteeism. 2 positions funded by the City of Oakland and 2 positions funded by OUSD.

**What is our progress to date?**

Chronic absence rates in OUSD dropped from 16% to 11% over the last 5 years.

**Next Steps**

We look forward to continued opportunities to collaborate on how best to reduce chronic absenteeism.

2016 JAN 13 PM 5:15

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

  
City Attorney

RESOLUTION No. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

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**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF OAKLAND AND THE OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT TO REDUCE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND INCREASE STUDENT ATTENDANCE FOR FISCAL YEARS 2015-2017**

**WHEREAS**, efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism and improve school attendance are strongly aligned with the citywide goals to promote student success in school, to prevent violence and youth involvement in gangs, and to ensure a healthy transition to adulthood for all of Oakland's youth; and

**WHEREAS**, when students miss too much school it can cause them to fall behind academically and research shows that children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; by 6<sup>th</sup> grade, chronic absences are a proven early warning sign for students at risk of dropping out of school; by 9<sup>th</sup> grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores; and

**WHEREAS**, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has established district-wide targets to 1. Reduce chronic absence to 5% of students at every school, 2. Ensure that 85% of students attend school 95% of days annually, and 3. Reach an average daily attendance (ADA) rate of 98% at every school; and

**WHEREAS**, OUSD has identified strategies to address attendance including the provision of targeted support provided to schools with high rates of chronic absence to help build site capacity to manage attendance, engagement of families and the community around the importance of attendance, and the hiring of four case managers during the 2015-2016 school year to support ten elementary schools with high rates of chronic absenteeism, including two positions funded by the City of Oakland and two positions funded by OUSD; and

**WHEREAS**, the two City-funded case managers will be City employees hired by the City of Oakland and supervised by the Human Services Department's Children and Youth Services Division; and

**WHEREAS**, the two City-funded Case Managers are authorized positions that were included in the Fiscal Years (FY) 2015-2017 Adopted Budget funded by the General Purpose Fund (1010), Youth Services Organization (78251), Reduce Chronic Absenteeism Project (A490830); and

**WHEREAS**, section 504(l) of the City of Oakland Charter requires City Council approval for intergovernmental relations and contracts for joint governmental actions; now, therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the City Council hereby authorizes the City Administrator to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OUSD for the purpose of establishing an agreement for the provision of two case workers funded and hired by the City of Oakland to help reduce chronic absenteeism and increase student attendance at school sites for the period FY 2015-2017; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the City Administrator is hereby authorized without returning to Council, to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, modifications, payment requests and related actions which may be necessary for the above referenced MOU; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That said MOU agreement shall be reviewed as to form and legality by the Office of the City Attorney and copies will be filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, \_\_\_\_\_

**PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

AYES- BROOKS, CAMPBELL WASHINGTON, GALLO, GUILLEN, KALB, KAPLAN, REID, AND  
PRESIDENT GIBSON MCELHANEY

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
LaTonda Simmons  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council  
of the City of Oakland, California