

**SAN ANTONIO/BEXAR COUNTY
JOINT COMMISSION ON TRUANCY
MEETING MINUTES**

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2014

11:30 A.M.

MEDIA BRIEFING ROOM

Members Present: Councilmember Rey A. Saldaña, Chair, *Council District 4*
John W. Bull, *Presiding Judge, Municipal Court*
Rogelio Lopez, *Justice of the Peace, Bexar County, Precinct 4*
Jeanne Russell, *Chief Strategist, SA2020*
Jill Mata, *Chief Assistant Criminal District Attorney, Bexar County*
Mike Villarreal, *State Representative, Texas Legislature, District 123*
Lisa Jarrett, *Judge, 436th District Court, Bexar County*

Members Absent: Laura Parker, *Judge, 386th District Court, Bexar County*
Leticia Van de Putte, *Senator, Texas Legislature*
Brian T. Woods, *Superintendent, Northside ISD*

Staff Present: Clarissa Chavarria, *Judge, Municipal Court*; Jo Ann Flores, *Assistant City Attorney*; Fred Garcia, *Court Clerk, Municipal Court*; Victor Vinton, *Administrator, Juvenile Case Management, Municipal Court*; Alicia Trujillo, *Senior Juvenile Case Manager, Municipal Court*

Also Present: Meghan Regis, *Director of Constituent Services, Representative Mike Villarreal*; Minnie Abrego-Sanchez, *Representative of Senator Leticia Van de Putte*; Judy McCormick, *Executive Director, P16Plus*

1. Welcoming Remarks by Councilman Rey Saldaña, Chair of the San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy

Chairman Saldaña reviewed the work of the Committee and Subcommittees performed to date.

Approval of Minutes of the February 24, 2014 San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy Meeting

Jill Mata moved to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2014 San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy. Rogelio Lopez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

2. Individual Briefing

- a. Briefing on Video Diversion Demonstration
[Presiding Judge John W. Bull, Judge Clarissa Chavarria, Municipal Court]

Judge Bull reported that Juvenile Case Managers (JCMs) were compensated from the Juvenile Case Management Fund. He stated that changes made by the Texas Legislature in 2013 allowed for Juvenile

Case Managers to provide Intervention Measures addressing Truancy before a Case was filed in Court. He explained that the JCM, student, parent, and a School District Representative would meet at the School Campus with a Judge via the Video Court Process. He noted that this would apply to students who were at or near the threshold of having an Initial Court Case filed. He stated that the student and parent would enter into a Diversionary Contract (Contract) for a term of five months as a first measure to address Truancy. He mentioned that the Judge would review the terms and approve/disapprove said Contract. He stated that based on his prior experience, the Contract Process carried more weight if the Judge was inserted into the process early. He stated that ultimately, this would become the precursor to the filing of a Case with the exception of Repeat Offenders. He noted that said Contract would not become part of the student's permanent record and would most likely be expunged at the end of the School Year. At this time, Judge Bull demonstrated the proposed Video Court Process.

Jeanne Russell asked of common data collected by schools and the reliance of said data. She suggested that the Committee identify the data to be collected by all parties to ensure consistency. Judge Bull noted that the JCMs had access to grades, attendance patterns, and disciplinary issues. He indicated that said information could be provided to the Judge prior to initiation of the Diversionary Contract Process. Ms. Russell suggested that said information be included on the Case Management Plan.

Jill Mata indicated that access to said student information could not be provided to the Judge prior to execution of the Diversionary Contract. Judge Bull stated that the JCM or School Representative would have access to the information.

Chairman Saldaña asked of the level of interaction between the JCM, student, and parent before entering into said Contract. Alicia Trujillo indicated that the School Representative would have met with the student prior to the meeting where the Diversionary Contract would be executed to gather the student's information. Judge Bull added that Intervention Measures would be comprised of a combination of School District and Municipal Court Requirements. Desiree Vitale reviewed Curriculum currently used by Municipal Court, some of which required parental engagement.

Jill Mata asked if the five month time period of the Diversionary Contract could be extended for an additional six months. Judge Bull replied that it could not.

Minnie Abrego-Sanchez asked of the source of funds supporting the JCM System. Judge Bull stated that an internal City Fee of \$5.00 was assessed on every case filed in Municipal Court to support the JCM Department. He noted that the State Legislature approved an additional fee of \$2.00; \$1.00 of which would stay in-house in the event that a JCM System existed. He added that a request could be made to the State for the other \$1.00 if a Plan was presented that would prevent Juvenile Criminal Referrals.

Rogelio Lopez stated that the County collects those same fees.

Representative Mike Villarreal noted that initially, there was concern that the Contract Process would place a financial burden on the School Districts but use of said funds generated by Court Fees and those requested from the State would remedy that. He mentioned that an evaluation would be required that noted a measurable decrease in absenteeism and generation of funds.

Minnie Abrego-Sanchez asked of the Court's recourse if the student complies and the parent does not. Judge Bull replied that the parent would be asked to speak with the Judge. In some cases, the JCM could address the issue and provide additional resources if warranted.

Judge Bull noted that if adopted, the Video Court Process would be the first in the nation utilized in these types of cases. He indicated that the Cisco Systems Representative was actively monitoring the issuance of Grants supporting same.

Jill Mata asked of the costs associated with the implementation of the Video Court Process. Judge Bull stated that the cost would be determined at a later date as the original cost continues to decrease.

Jeanne Russell asked if the implementation of the use of the Video Court Process was dependent on Grant Funding. Judge Bull replied that it was not. He stated that feasibly, use of the Video Court Process to establish Diversionary Contracts could be implemented in schools that were currently working with Municipal Court as soon as September 2014.

Chairman Saldaña asked if the successful use of Diversionary Contracts would impact Court Revenue. Judge Bull replied that no fines were involved in the prosecution of Truancies. He confirmed that the \$5.00 fee was assessed on all cases filed including those for traffic violations.

Chairman Saldaña noted that Judge Chavarria identified helpful information to be provided to the Judges as: 1) Grades; 2) Attendance Reports; 3) Number of Credits Earned; and 4) Disciplinary Information.

No action was required for Item 3a.

b. Briefing and Possible Action on Meeting of Superintendents
[Victor Vinton, Juvenile Case Manager Administrator, Municipal Court]

Victor Vinton reported that a meeting of the Bexar County Superintendents was held on March 7, 2014 with 13 of the 15 Bexar County Superintendents present. He stated that when polled by Dr. Woods, those present expressed interest in a Centralized Filing Process as part of a Uniform Truancy Policy for Bexar County. He indicated that a Subcommittee of the Bexar County Superintendents would be formed to develop Standard Prevention Measures for Bexar County. He noted that the individual School Districts could utilize additional Prevention Measures specific to their School District. He stated that Dr. Woods emphasized the importance of assigning a School Representative who was an Administrator engaged in the filing of Truancy Cases.

Jeanne Russell asked of the charge of the Subcommittee. Mr. Vinton stated that the Subcommittee's charge was to develop minimal Prevention Measures to be utilized by all 15 Bexar County School Districts as a precursor to the filing of a Truancy Case. Ms. Russell asked if outside resources would be utilized to develop the Prevention Measures. Mr. Vinton replied that the Subcommittee would favor same.

Representative Villarreal suggested that the Subcommittee establish a standard definition of Absenteeism.

Judge Bull asked of major barriers to School District compliance. Mr. Vinton indicated that School Districts would likely resist the culture change.

No action was required for Item 3b.

c. Briefing on Court Proceedings Working Group

[Judge Rogelio Lopez, Jr., Chair, Justice of the Peace, Bexar County, Precinct 4]

Judge Lopez distributed draft copies of the proposed Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between the City of San Antonio and Bexar County to the Committee Members. He noted that the ILA did not include the changes discussed at the previous Committee Meeting. He stated that the ILA was modeled after one developed by the City and County of Dallas. He mentioned that all Class C Juvenile Misdemeanor Cases would be filed in Municipal Court.

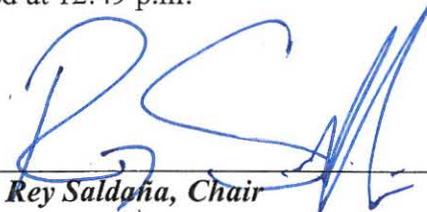
Jeanne Russell asked for examples of Class C Juvenile Misdemeanors. Judge Bull responded that Truancy, Assault, Shoplifting, Minor in Possession of Alcohol, Disorderly Conduct, and Graffiti were examples of Class C Juvenile Misdemeanors.

Judge Lopez stated that said ILA designated Judge Bull as the Presiding Judge. He noted that Justices of the Peace would represent the County in Municipal Court. He stated that this would ensure that funding for the Justices of the Peace Truancy Court would be maintained. He added that there were six JCMs assigned to the Justice of the Peace Truancy Court. He noted that he would meet with Judge Bull to discuss the logistics of the Centralized Filing Process. He stated that the proposed ILA would be forwarded to Bexar County Commissioners Court and to the full City Council for consideration with the proposed revisions. He noted that a meeting of the Justices of the Peace would be held on Saturday, March 22, 2014.

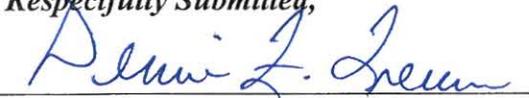
No action was required for Item 3c.

3. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.


Rey Saldaña, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,



*Denice F. Trevino
Office of the City Clerk*