

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

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 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, *Member of the General Public*
Brian T. Woods, *Superintendent, Northside ISD*

Members Absent: Lisa Jarrett, *Judge, 436th District Court, Bexar County*
Jill Mata, *Chief Assistant Criminal District Attorney, Bexar County*
Laura Parker, *Judge, 386th District Court, Bexar County*
Leticia Van de Putte, *Senator, Texas Legislature*
Mike Villarreal, *State Representative, Texas Legislature, District 123*

Staff Present: Veronica M. Zertuche, *Deputy City Attorney*; Jo Ann Flores, *Assistant City Attorney*; Clarissa Chavarria, *Judge, Municipal Court*; Fred Garcia, *Court Clerk, Municipal Court*

Also Present: Judy McCormick, *Executive Director, P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County*; Bricio Vasquez, *Data Director, P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County*; Meghan Regis, *Director of Constituent Services, State Representative, Texas Legislature, District 123*

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

Chairman Saldaña welcomed everyone and stated that many had inquired of the Committee's Progress.

2. Approval of Minutes of the November 18, 2013 San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy Meeting

Brian Woods moved to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2013 San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy. Justice of the Peace Rogelio Lopez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

3. Individual Briefing

- a. Briefing and Possible Action on Court Proceedings Working Group [Judge Rogelio Lopez, Jr. Chair, Justice of the Peace, Bexar County, Precinct 4]

Judge Lopez stated that the Court Proceedings Working Group examined the current Court System and noted that it was decentralized with multiple points of Truancy Intake. He noted that this had caused

significant inconsistencies in the way Truancy Cases were filed and dealt with at the Court Level. He stated that there was currently a 30-60 day back-up of Truancy Cases in Bexar County. He added that current case histories were not always accurate and/or up-to-date. He stated that the Subcommittee recommended:

1. Creation of a Unified Court System that would require intervention before a charge was filed in a District, County or Municipal Court which would decrease the number of cases filed.
2. Development of a Uniform Court Policy that would improve the accuracy of case histories.

He reported that Dallas County formed a Unified Truancy Court System by use of an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between the City and the County of Dallas. He reported that said ILA was utilized until Legislation was passed establishing the Court. He noted that the development of a Unified Truancy Court System in San Antonio and Bexar County would require the same. He mentioned that there was a call for a Centralized Court System by the Justices of the Peace in Bexar County. He indicated that a draft of the ILA would be presented at the next Subcommittee Meeting. He noted that the Subcommittee contacted the County Judge of the Dallas Court to learn from their experience in developing a Unified Truancy Court System. He reported that Municipal Court had the necessary resources to operate a Unified Truancy Court System. He stated that resources for Case Managers were currently provided from certain funds and it would be necessary to structure the ILA in such a way that said resources were maintained.

Judge Bull proposed that a Diversionary Program be instituted. He explained that said Program would require that Diversionary Orders be issued by Campus-Based Juvenile Case Managers before a case was filed in the Central Filing Process. He indicated that additional funding could be applied for from the Governor's Office to supplement the increased case load. He suggested that a Virtual Docket by Video be utilized and the Diversionary Judge, Parent, Student, City Attorney, School Representative, and the Juvenile Case Manager would appear on the Virtual Docket. Judge Bull stated that including the appearance of the Diversionary Judge would impart the seriousness of the issue. He noted that as long as the student complied with the Diversionary Program, a case would not be filed. He reported that the cost of the software for the Virtual Docket was \$2,000 per unit. He reported that only Texas and one other state do not have a Diversionary Program in place.

Dr. Woods reported that a Court Fee was assessed for all Courts and all cases, a portion of which was submitted to the Governor's Fund. He stated that Courts could then apply for Case Management assistance from said fund.

Judge Bull noted that the State Statute establishing said fund was very specific and required that Plans be submitted whose objective was to prevent referrals to Juvenile Court. He proposed that he and Dr. Woods submit the application for State Funding.

No action was required for Item 3a.

- b. Briefing and Possible Action on Truancy Prevention Measures and Filing Working Group [Dr. Brian Woods, Chair, Superintendent, Northside ISD]

Dr. Woods stated that the Truancy Prevention Measures and Filing Working Group determined that all parties would have to agree on the specific Prevention Measures to be utilized. He stated that the preventive measures should be established by those with expertise in that area. He explained that to accomplish that, Bexar County Superintendents would be requested to delegate a liaison to contribute to the development of a comprehensive intervention plan, outside of the working group, and contribute to the final recommendation of a uniform policy on Truancy prevention.

No action was required for Item 3b.

c. Briefing and Possible Action on Data Collection and Recording Working Group
[Jeanne Russell, Chair, Chief Strategist, SA2020]

Jeanne Russell reported that the Data Collection and Recording Working Group extended an invitation to key school officials from Northside Independent School District (ISD), San Antonio ISD, Southwest ISD, and Harlandale ISD to attend their meetings. She reported that the charge of the Subcommittee was to determine a consistent data profile of student data and to review existing data to determine if any consistent patterns were present. She indicated that the data gathered by said School Districts represented small, large, urban, suburban, and rural School Districts. She stated that a standard method between School Districts for recording unexcused absences would be developed through a collaborative process with the P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County, Community Information NOW (CI: NOW) Data Collection Agency, and various School Districts. She noted that P16Plus would present their findings-to-date at the March 17, 2014 Subcommittee Meeting. She requested a joint meeting with the Court Proceedings Working Group to discuss the connection between information sharing and filing. She suggested that a key member of each Subcommittee meet to discuss how each of their findings and recommendations may intersect.

Chairman Saldaña stated that data should be shared between the School Districts and asked if that would be difficult to accomplish. Dr. Woods noted that schools utilized different Student Information Systems and could present a challenge. He expressed concern that not all School Districts tracked attendance for each period, as the accuracy of said data would be diminished. He stated that School Districts may consent to share their data on prior filings, general attendance profiles, grades and attendance with the Committee through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Chairman Saldaña asked Judge Chavarria what case histories should include. She requested that the student's current attendance reports, grades, credits earned, and any disciplinary referrals be made available for review.

Ms. Russell stated that the Subcommittee had reviewed existing data collected by the School Districts and noted that the data was collected in many different forms. She noted that it would be helpful to have information on a student's social service and/or health issues. Dr. Woods stated that since intervention would be introduced at the campus level, the campus representative would have access to that information.

Chairman Saldaña asked if the campus representative would be an employee of the School District. Dr. Woods replied that said representative would most likely be employed by the Court and assigned to a cluster of schools.

Judge Bull stated that work would begin on the application.

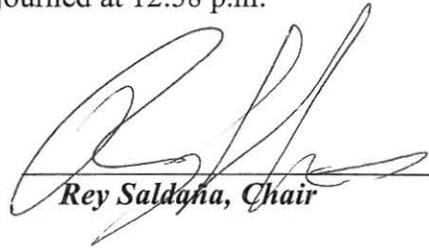
No action was required for Item 3c.

4. Action Items [Rey Saldaña, District 4 Councilmember, City of San Antonio]

Item 4 was not addressed.

5. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m.



Rey Saldaña, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,


Denice F. Trevino
Office of the City Clerk