

COLLABORATIVE MEETING
January 22, 2015 – 8:00-9:30 a.m.
MIWORKS! Conference Room
1209 S. Garfield Ave., Traverse City

Meeting called to order at 8:02 a.m. by Jim Moore.

Welcome and Introductions

Financials: received.

Truancy Intervention and the School to Prison Pipeline

Honorable Melanie Stanton, Grand Traverse Family Court Judge

Diane Conklin, Family Court Administrator

Heather Prevo, Truancy Coordinator

Kathy Nixon, Truancy Intervention Center

Dan O’Berski, West Senior High Neighborhood Principal

- **Truancy Intervention:**
 - Michigan ranks 40th in graduation rates, with 250,000 youth not enrolled in school.
 - 49% of the 8,800 people sentenced to prison in 2012 do not have a GED or high school diploma
 - 72% of inmates read at less than a 3rd grade level
 - Chronic absenteeism is a strong indicator of potential academic struggles and eventual dropping-out.
 - Truancy can start in Pre-K or kindergarten
 - Truancy prevention workers are spending most of their time in the middle schools working with kids who developed truancy habits in elementary school.
 - Truancy leads to increased daytime crime – most juvenile crimes are committed between 10 am – 2 pm
 - Truancy charges can be levied against youth if they are frequently and willfully absent, or if they are frequently breaking school rules. Even in-school suspension means that they aren’t in class learning.
 - Intervention starts with discussion between parents, principal, and student if age appropriate to discuss the situation and develop a corrective plan.
 - Truancy can be caused by peer pressure/low self-esteem, lack of academic skills, mental/physical health issues, substance abuse (student or parents), separation/divorce, abuse/neglect, and financial problems.
 - Program goals: improve student attendance, ensure an education for every child, reduce juvenile crime, increase parent involvement/accountability, and put services in place to help families. They count it a success if they can keep a student uninvolved in probation.
 - Program works with Third Level Crisis Center to provide counseling services to families.
 - Collaboration with all county schools, students and families, law enforcement, prevention services, the Prosecutor’s office, the Family (charge against student) & District Court (charge against parents), and probation officers.
 - See statistics for past four program years in attached PowerPoint
 - 36% of youth involved in probation and 49% involved in behavioral or sobriety treatment courts during 2013-14 had been involved in truancy
- Dan O’Berski, West Senior High – how do we reduce truancy?
 - Many truant youth don’t have the skill set or family support for attendance and importance of school.

- “Community Schools” programs in areas with impoverished schools – have local human services agency reps at the school so the parent can bring the child to school and connect easily with community supports in one trip.
- Need to recognize and reward positive behavior in a personal way. “It’s good to see you here at school today!”
- Engage their parents. How many parents get phone calls from school praising their student, and how many only hear from the school when there’s a problem?
- Monitoring attendance and educational success-related data – new software helps flag students who may need additional attention and support.
- Identify and remove barriers to attendance.
 - Transportation to/from school, particularly with schools of choice.
 - Kids who ride the bus need a ride if they stay after school for tutoring programs
 - Help parents learn to value education, and they will support their child’s education.
 - Substance abuse awareness and education in Saturday morning sessions instead of punishment.
- Actionable data, capacity building, shared accountability, and positive messaging are needed through community and school district partnerships.
- There is a truancy classroom operating at MIWorks!. Participants learn how to operate within a school environment, a skill they may not have previously learned.
- Dawn McLaughlin noted that DHS, in keeping with the PATH program being used in some urban schools as mentioned in the Governor’s State of the State address, is going to return to having outstationed workers in local schools.
- Beaver Island Lighthouse School is another excellent program. Mr. O’Berski graduated from it in 1993 when he was unsuccessful in local schools. The program is experiencing financial need.
- Local truancy program through the court system is designed to be preventive rather than punitive.
- One local challenge is that different schools in the local system use different standards for when they will engage the truancy prevention program (more or less absences). Consistency will support success.
- Judge Stanton asks all parents involved in her programs to have a literacy assessment, with a goal of gauging whether they can adequately understand extensive court paperwork..
- **School Justice Partnership (School-to-Prison Pipeline) summit will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort in May 2015**
- **SAMHSA Grant** – The System of Care group is considering making a grant application. Focus would be on providing continued wraparound style services to youth after their involvement with specialty courts has ended.

BRIEF Special Announcements & Closing Thoughts:

- Cathy Anthofer has just joined the Court system, to help better coordinate the variety of services they offer.
- Mary Manner: next Your Health Lecture will be at NMC 3/24, 9:00 a.m. Panel of child abuse experts from Michigan State. Panelist will meet with Great Start Collaborative immediately after.
- NMCAA providing free tax preparation for low and medium-income households. Many don’t realize they are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which can make filing worthwhile.
- Traverse Health Clinic would love to come to staff/volunteer meetings to provide an update on the comprehensive and support services they offer to the community.
- Court has an increasing need for people to serve as conservators and advocates for aging citizens. Judge Stanton would love to talk more with anyone.
- Wendy Trute: medical waivers from immunizations require a doctor’s visit. Non-medical waivers (philosophical/religious) require an educational session with the Health Department prior to provision of waiver. No coercion involved. The health Department has also started an immunization task force
- Jane Hayes is leading WRC client advocacy efforts for the next 90-days. Completing client survey of their legal needs. Several lawyers have approached them recently who are willing to

help meet domestic violence law needs pro bono. WRC talking to NMC about supporting LGBTQ students, particularly when they experience domestic violence or sexual assault.

- Mary Hubbard – thanks to those who completed the needs assessment requested by CMH. She will share the results. CMH must submit to DCH annual statistics about their annual performance and a list of top priorities for the coming year. They develop the latter using surveys and complaint forms. Leading issues are transportation and housing. Some issues mentioned are things they cannot prioritize as a CMH, but are still mentioned to DCH because they might be able to find other ways to address them. Hope to provide more info March or April.

Adjourn 9:16 a.m.

UPCOMING 2015 COLLABORATIVE MEETING DATES

March 26

April 23

May 28