



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: 1st & 5th Districts
Department No.: 011
For Agenda Of: May 22, 2012
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Tme: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Supervisor Salud Carbajal, First District
Director(s) Supervisor Steve Lavagnino, Fifth District

Contact Info: Dennis Bozanich, Assistant to the CEO, 568-3400

SUBJECT: **Board Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Truancy Final Report and Recommendations**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Accept and file the Subcommittee's Final Report
- B. Consider funding request for one Deputy District Attorney and a 0.5 Legal Office Professional during the June Budget Hearings

Summary Text:

Since November 2011, the Board of Supervisors' Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Truancy, Supervisors Carbajal and Lavagnino, have conducted a series of fact finding sessions to assess the impacts of truancy in Santa Barbara County and options for renewing efforts to prevent truancy in the future. This Final Report provides a summary of truancy programs past and present, identification of opportunities and challenges in responding to truancy and options for improving the effectiveness of truancy programs in Santa Barbara County.

Background:

The 2010-11 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) published a report entitled Where is the Truancy Program in Santa Barbara County? (Truancy is Troubling ... for Everyone). This report recognized the success of the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Program and noted that truancy rates increased by 48% when the program ended in 2008 due to funding

constraints. The report recommended that the county reinstate an enforceable truancy program for all Santa Barbara County Schools.

The Board of Supervisors considered and adopted a response to the Grand Jury on October 18, 2011. A portion of their response to the Grand Jury's Report included the formation of a Board Subcommittee (Subcommittee) to investigate the re-creation of a county-wide truancy program that would effectively address the growing problem of truancy in Santa Barbara County. The Subcommittee was identified as Supervisors Salud Carbajal and Steve Lavagnino.

The Subcommittee requested the participation of District Attorney Joyce Dudley; Sheriff Bill Brown; Chief Probation Officer Bev Taylor; Chief Deputy District Attorney Gordon Auchincloss, Deputy Probation Officer Steve DeLira and Assistant to the County Executive Dennis Bozanich. Additionally, the County Office of Education identified Superintendent Kathy Boomer (Goleta USD), Superintendent Ed Cora (Guadalupe USD), Superintendent Phil Alvarado (Santa Maria USD), Superintendent David Cash (Santa Barbara USD) and Superintendent Paul Turnbull (Santa Ynez Valley UHSD) and Jan Clevenger (Santa Barbara County Education) as additional participants in the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee worked together over the course of several meetings to establish a plan for renewing truancy prevention programs as a partnership between school districts and the County of Santa Barbara.

The Plan: Renewing Commitments to End Truancy

The Subcommittee devised a new paradigm for a truancy prevention program based on:

- School district autonomy and responsibility for organizing and operating individual truancy prevention programs that have common standards but are tailored to that individual district's problems. Schools, rather than the District Attorney, will now be responsible for running their own truancy programs. Collaboration among school districts will be essential to gain efficiency, avoid redundancy and take into account the scope of each district's truancy problem.
- County support for limited staffing in the District Attorney's Office to provide school districts with guidance on unified minimum standards for designing individual truancy programs. The staff would also provide schools with continuing support of a District Attorney presence and referrals to other needed County services at school meetings and participation in that school district's truancy program.^[1] The goal will be to maximize the availability of County staff to school districts but the limited resources may cause temporary short delays.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of the renewed truancy prevention programs will be the individual commitment of school districts and sites, County departments including District Attorney, Probation Sheriff, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services, Social Services and others to fulfilling their unique role and responsibilities **and** the commitment of all parties to continue to work together to identify successes and failures to continuously improve the truancy prevention programs. Both schools and County departments have an equal stake in delivering the proper interventions to end truancy. Below are the Truancy Prevention Program participant's roles and responsibilities:

^[1] As described below, District Attorney support for schools will be limited to the availability of one full-time Deputy District Attorney plus volunteer support when available.

Schools Districts and Sites

- Establish and operate their own truancy programs that conform to the legal requirements for such programs pursuant to Education Code 48260 et seq. School districts will have flexibility to network and collaborate with other school districts in designing programs that avoid unnecessary duplication of resources and address that district's individual needs.
- Incorporate the standards described in the attached Santa Barbara County Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Program (TIPAP) Checklist. This checklist provides schools with standards for a graduated approach to:
 - Identify truants,
 - Provide all needed and meaningful learning and school environment interventions and, if all school efforts fail,
 - Seek the assistance of the District Attorney and the courts to enforce truancy laws.
- Collect and maintain data regarding students' unexcused absences and the success of intervention to establish concrete and reliable measures for success.

County of Santa Barbara

- Identify funding for one Deputy District Attorney along with the expenses associated for all necessary travel and a half-time office support staff member to enforce truancy laws countywide and, when necessary, prosecute truancy cases. The newly funded Deputy District Attorney and half-time office support staff member will:
 - Work exclusively on truancy programs, truancy enforcement and other truancy related issues.
 - Provide administrative support, training, infrastructure, and available volunteer support to enforce truancy laws countywide.
 - Assist schools with the design, operation and maintenance of their truancy prevention programs that are enforceable under the law.
 - Identify other County resources, such as mental health, child welfare services, juvenile probation services or others to increase the effectiveness of the intervention to end truancy.
 - Provide school districts with District Attorney truancy information letters for parents of truants that school districts will send to all families of school aged children located in Santa Barbara County at the beginning of the school year.
 - Provide letters to school districts that they may send to families of truants at each stage of the truancy intervention process as outlined in the Santa Barbara County Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Checklist.
 - Prosecute truancy cases referred by the schools provided schools have adequately fulfilled the standards for such cases set by the District Attorney as described in the Santa Barbara County Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Checklist.
- Provide applicable support services for young people and their families through other County departments, such as Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services, Probation, Public Defender, Sheriff and Social Services, to reduce the causes of truancy.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

No financial impacts are anticipated as a direct result of this Subcommittee Report. The Board may choose to consider funding of staff during the June Budget Hearings. Staff has calculated those possible staffing expenses as follows:

<u>Program Needs</u>	<u>FY 12-13</u>	<u>FY 13-14</u>
1.0 Deputy District Attorney	\$ 120,000	\$ 125,000
0.5 Legal Office Professional	\$ 30,000	\$ 35,000
Vehicle and travel	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
TOTAL	\$170,000	\$180,000

Attachments:

A – Board Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Truancy Final Report

B – Sample School District Memorandum of Understanding

C – Santa Barbara County Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Program (TIPAP) Checklist

D – 2010-11 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) published a report entitled *Where is the Truancy Program in Santa Barbara County? (Truancy is Troubling ... for Everyone)*

Authored by:

Dennis Bozanich, Assistant to the County Executive Officer

cc:

Joyce Dudley, District Attorney

Bill Brown, Sheriff

Beverly Taylor, Probation Chief

Anne Detrick, Director, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services

Kathy Gallagher, Director, Social Services

Ted Sten, Foreperson, Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury

William Cirone, County Superintendent of Schools