



Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Dr. Raymond Crowel  
*Director, DHHS*

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COMMISSION ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

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**Tuesday, January 21, 2020**

**7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**101 Monroe Street 9<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, Rockville, MD**

**CITIZEN MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kimberly Alfriend, Diana Barney, Tracy Friedlander, Dan Gaskill, Erynn Penn, Joshua Pestaner, Kevin Redden, Vernon Scott, Ebony Stoutmiles and Gwen Williams.

**AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joanna Bonner, Francha Davis, Frank Duncan, Steve Miller, Steve Neff, Willie Parker-Loan, Mary Siegfried, Nathaniel Tipton, Amy for Carlotta Woodward, and Dalbin Osario for Elijah Wheeler.

**EMERITUS MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chris Fogleman and Wendy Pulliam

**ABSENT MEMBERS:** Bonnie DeWitt, Amy Daum, Susan Farag, Chris Jennison, Melanie Rush, Thomas Squire, Angela Toliver, Michael Subin,

**STAFF LIASON PRESENT:** Diane Lininger

**I. Welcome** – Ebony Stoutmiles, Vice Chair.

**II. Speakers-** Steve Neff, Director, Division of Pupil Personnel and Attendance Services  
George Simms III, Assistant State's Attorney office to discuss the Truancy Board  
Presentation Highlights

- Truancy law is written in such a way as the parent is the offender which is very difficult to prosecute especially when the youth is a teen.  
Applicable legal code:  
[https://govt.westlaw.com/mdc/Document/N8B63C58075A711E8B63FF4DDA9E602C3?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/mdc/Document/N8B63C58075A711E8B63FF4DDA9E602C3?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default))
- Every Student Succeeds Act – each state evaluates their school system through a variety of criteria including chronic absenteeism.
  - o Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of school days enrolled regardless

- Maryland Report (MSDE) -  
<https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/Graphs/#!/AtaGlance/Index/3/17/6/15/XXXX>
- Truancy stems from many reasons such as school related anxiety, housing (e.g., homelessness, couch surfing, frequent moves, etc.), childcare related hurdles, etc.
- MCPS and State's Attorney's Office approach truancy from a prevent/intervention standpoint:
  - "selling the idea of good attendance" – efforts include educating families and students on the importance/impact of attendance, dispelling myths such as Kindergarten is just play time or nothing happens on half days, building good attendance habits early, etc.
  - Most of the truancy issues are at the high school level – efforts include creative ways to compel/motivate attendance and engagement such as implementing specialized programs like the Thomas Edison Program as well as localized programs at individual schools, Saturday school options, creative scheduling, online courses, vocational programs, etc.
  - Efforts focus first on linking families and youth to resources such as mental health, medical supports, housing, food, clothing, etc. to address the underlying causes or hurdles impacting attendance.
- MCPS Truancy data shows that students of color have higher rates of truancy and data significantly skews toward Hispanic families being impacted at the highest rates.
  - Truancy in Montgomery County report published by Office of Legislative Oversight -  
[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/2010-7\\_truancy.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/2010-7_truancy.pdf)
  - Note - Students are no longer suspended in response to Truancy
- State's Attorney's Office – focus is to start with prevention efforts before moving to prosecution, efforts include:
  - Truancy Prevention Program (TPP) – voluntary program in 18 of 40 MCPS middle schools; 10 week incentive-based program; early intervention with students with 10-20% absenteeism geared to "catching students doing something good"
  - Truancy Review Board (TRB) – multi-agency team that collaborates with the youth and family to problem solve; expectation of the parent is to collaborate with the team and recommendations made
  - Truancy Cases in Court – approximately 20 cases in 2019
- What are the pre-cursors to truancy?
  - Higher rates and patterns of absences at an early age/grade
  - MCPS has not found the ideal supports/solution needed to support Hispanic students/families
- What is the number of chronic truancy in Montgomery County?
  - Historically chronic truancy has been 1-2%
  - Chronically absent number has been closer to ~15%
- How many of the students in TPP go on to graduate?

- Specific data was not available however Steve shared that MCPS has a variety of strategies that offer students opportunities to complete credit recovery.
- Truancy pattern is typically established by the time a youth reaches DJS. Discussion around the need for early intervention with younger students/grades and needs to continue to develop programs that support older students with few/no credits when they enter MCPS.

### **III. Old Business**

- a. November 2019 meeting minutes – approved, no objections

### **IV. New Business**

- a. Legislative Committee - Testimony and letter sent in Support of HB36 (Juvenile Fines & Fees) – see attached.
- b. This bill was introduced last session and supported by the commission but did not pass last year. The bill was reintroduced this year and things appear favorable that it will be passed.
- c. Ad-hoc Youth Panel Committee teleconference – Diane was unable to set up a teleconference and more members are needed as two of the members have too many responsibilities. Sign- up sheet being sent around.

### **V. Announcements from Agency Members, Commissioners and Members of the Public.**

- Juvenile Justice Reform Council Listening Sessions – Information shared with commission regarding upcoming listening sessions taking place on 1/22 from 1:30-3:30pm and 6:30-8:30pm.

### **VI. Legislative committee and Ad-hoc youth committee connect and set up next teleconferences.**

### **VII. Meeting Adjourned**

Commission on Juvenile Justice

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