

MEMORANDUM

January 28, 2016

TO: Education Committee
Public Safety Committee

FROM: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJF*

SUBJECT: **Update: Truancy Prevention Program**

Today the Joint Committee will receive an update on the Truancy Prevention Program by the State's Attorney's Office. Those expected to brief the Committee:

John McCarthy, State's Attorney
Rexanah Wyse, Assistant State's Attorney, Truancy Prevention Program Coordinator

Created in 2010 as a partnership among the State's Attorney's Office, the Montgomery County Public Schools, and the University of Baltimore School of Law's Center for Families, Children, and the Courts (CCFC), the Truancy Prevention Program is designed to increase student attendance by assisting students and their families with issues that impact attendance. The program model includes a "judge," mentor, program coordinator, and MCPS Pupil Personnel Worker at each school, who work together with the student and the student's family to identify barriers to attendance and help mitigate them. The State's Attorney's Office response to questions is included at ©1-3 and includes historic participant and graduation data since inception.

Program Expansion for School Year 2015-2016

Funding for the program was expanded significantly in FY16. The approved FY16 operating budget added just slightly over \$75,000 to the program, almost doubling funding from the prior fiscal year, for a total approved budget of \$153,158. The funds pay for one Program Coordinator, one new Assistant Program Coordinator, and operating expenses that pay for small rewards and other incentives for participating students. The increased funding allowed an expansion from 10 to 15 middle schools over the past year. During the fall 2015 semester, the program added two new middle schools: Redland Middle School (Derwood) and Sligo Middle

School (Silver Spring). For the spring semester, the program has been expanded to Rocky Hill Middle School (Clarksburg), Forest Oak Middle School (Gaithersburg), and Parkland Middle School (Rockville).

The expansion to 15 middle schools now covers over one-third of all the middle schools in the County. The current list of participating middle schools now includes:

1. A. Mario Loiederman Middle School (Silver Spring)
2. Argyle Middle School (Aspen Hill)
3. Briggs Chaney Middle School (Silver Spring)
4. Forest Oak Middle School (Gaithersburg)
5. Francis Scott Key Middle School (Silver Spring)
6. Julius West Middle School (Rockville)
7. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School (Germantown)
8. Neelsville Middle School (Germantown)
9. Parkland Middle School (Rockville)
10. Redland Middle School (Derwood)
11. Roberto Clemente Middle School (Germantown)
12. Shady Grove Middle School (Gaithersburg)
13. Silver Spring International Middle School (Silver Spring)
14. Sligo Middle School (Silver Spring)
15. Rocky Hill Middle School (Clarksburg)

Part of the program expansion included hiring a new Assistant Truancy Prevention Program Coordinator. This coordinator has functioned as a site coordinator for five middle schools and will soon oversee six middle schools.

Partnership with Volunteer Maryland

Last spring, the State's Attorney's Office applied to AmeriCorps Volunteer Maryland Program. Volunteer Maryland has provided a Volunteer Maryland Coordinator who developed a newly-established after-school tutoring component for the Truancy Prevention Program. The Volunteer Maryland Coordinator has also implemented a volunteer program. Over 20 volunteers have been recruited to serve in the spring 2016 Truancy Prevention Program.

Partnership with University of Maryland School of Public Policy

The State's Attorney's Office has partnered with a graduate-level evaluator who is analyzing the Truancy Prevention Program. The evaluator is expected to develop a summative evaluation to measure the impact of the program on participants' attendance. It will also measure the program's impact on participants' grades.

Discussion Issues

1. Fall 2015 data show a few schools where only a few participants graduated from the program, such as Key Middle (3 out of 9 participants), Roberto Clemente Middle (2 out of 8), and Briggs Chaney Middle (3 out of 10). Does the State's Attorney's Office has information on why the graduation rates were low at these schools this semester?
2. The State's Attorney's Office has partnered with the University of Maryland to obtain impact data on participants' attendance and grades. When is this data expected to be available?
3. What types of services are the new volunteers providing for the Program?
4. What are the SAO's proposed next steps with regard to the Truancy Program?

January 27, 2016

Responses to the following request on the Truancy Prevention Program

A. Participant and “graduation” data since inception;

1. Spring 2010: Data Unavailable
2. Fall 2010- Spring 2011
 - a. Francis Scott Key Middle School: 20 of the 24 participants graduated from the Program.
 - b. Neelsville Middle School: 23 out of the 26 participants graduated from the program.
3. Fall 2011 – Spring 2012: Unavailable
4. Fall 2012- Spring 2013:
 - a. Francis Scott Key Middle School: 11 out of 17 participants graduated from the Program.
 - b. Neelsville Middle School: 14 out of 23 participants graduated from the Program.
 - c. A. Mario Loiederman Middle School implemented the Program in Spring 2013. 6 out of 7 participants graduated from the program.
5. Fall 2013-Spring 2014
 - a. Francis Scott Key Middle School: 14 out of 19 participants experienced a reduction in their absences.
 - b. Neelsville Middle School: 13 out of 24 participants experienced a reduction in their absences.
 - c. A. Mario Loiederman Middle School: 18 out of 27 participants experienced a reduction in their absences.
 - d. Argyle Middle School: 15 out of 22 participants experienced a reduction in their absences.
 - e. Roberto Clemente Middle School: 6 out of 21 participants experiences a reduction in their absences.
 - f. Shady Grove Middle School: 5 out of 8 students graduated from the Program.
6. Fall 2014- Spring 2015
 - a. Francis Scott Key Middle School: 18 out of 23 participants graduated from the Program
 - b. Neelsville Middle School: 11 out of 20 participants graduated from the Program
 - c. A. Mario Loiederman Middle School: 8 out of 21 participants graduated from the Program
 - d. Argyle Middle School: 9 out of 16 participants graduated from the Program
 - e. Roberto Clemente Middle School: 15 out of 20 participants graduated from the Program.
 - f. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School: 11 out of 20 participants graduated from the Program
 - g. Shady Grove Middle School: 10 out of 13 participants graduated from the Program

- h. Briggs Chaney Middle School: 8 out of 18 participants graduated from the Program
 - i. Julius West Middle School: 8 out of 19 participants graduated from the Program
 - j. Silver Spring International Middle School: 10 out of 21 participants graduated from the Program.
7. Fall 2015:
- a. Francis Scott Key Middle School: 3 out of 9 participants graduated from the Program
 - b. Neelsville Middle School: 10 out of 12 participants graduated from the Program
 - c. A. Mario Loiederman Middle School: 5 out of 12 participants graduated from the Program
 - d. Argyle Middle School: 4 out of 8 participants graduated from the Program
 - e. Roberto Middle School: 2 out of 8 participants graduated from the Program
 - f. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School: 6 out of 8 participants graduated from the Program
 - g. Shady Grove Middle School: 7 out of 7 participants graduated from the Program
 - h. Briggs Chaney Middle School: 3 out of 10 participants graduated from the Program
 - i. Julius West Middle School: 5 out of 10 participants graduated from the Program
 - j. Silver Spring International Middle School: 4 out of 8 participants graduated from the Program
 - k. Redland Middle School: 3 out of 6 participants graduated from the Program
 - l. Sligo Middle School: 5 out of 10 participants graduated from the Program.

Please note that the State's Attorney's Office partnered with the University of Baltimore to have the Truancy Prevention Program in place since the program's inception until fall 2014. The University of Baltimore took the lead in obtaining and analyzing attendance data. It was not part of the State's Attorney's Office regular course of business or practice to keep the graduation or attendance data after the sessions were completed. The State's Attorney's Office was able to maintain some of the attendance and/or graduation data due to the study that was conducted last year on the program.

B. A status update on expansion

During the 2015-2016 school year the Truancy Prevention Program expanded from 10 middle schools to 15 middle schools. This covers over one-third of the middle schools across Montgomery County. The State's Attorney's Office will continue our partnership with the Montgomery County Public School System to determine which schools to collaborate with in implementing the Truancy Prevention Program for the 2016-2017 school year.

C. A status update on any grants received or applied for (if any); and

In spring 2015, The State's Attorney's Office applied to AmeriCorps Volunteer Maryland Program to become a service site for the 2015-2016 service year. Volunteer Maryland helps partner organizations provide more services, improve the effectiveness of the organizations' volunteer programs, and increase organizational capacity to manage volunteer programs. The State's Attorney's Office was one of 40 organizations that applied to become a partner organization. The State's Attorney's Office was one of the 30 service sites selected to become a partner. Through Volunteer Maryland we received a Volunteer Maryland Coordinator who developed a newly established after school tutoring component for the Truancy Prevention Program. The Volunteer Maryland Coordinator created, implemented, and actively managing the State's Attorney's Office volunteer capacity for the Truancy Prevention Program. Through the Volunteer Maryland Coordinator, over 20 volunteers have been recruited to serve in the Spring 2016 Truancy Prevention Program.

D. Any new initiatives.

Through the generous approval of the County Council, the State's Attorney's Office hired an Assistant Truancy Prevention Program Coordinator. The assistant coordinator has assisted in maintaining the Truancy Prevention Program by being a site coordinator at five now going onto six middle schools.

Through a partnership with the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, the State's Attorney's Office has a graduate-level evaluator analyzing the Truancy Prevention Program. Through the University of Maryland's Social Policy Project Course, the evaluator will integrate their prior course instruction with a real-world experience grappling with current policy questions and the practical needs of policy makers and managers. The evaluator will develop a summative (impact) evaluation to measure the impact of the Truancy Prevention Program on participants' attendance. The Evaluation will also measure the Truancy Prevention Program's impact on participants' grades. This evaluation is currently on-going.