



October 23, 2013

Brandon Samuel
Department of Technology Management and Budget
DTMB Procurement
2nd Floor, Mason Building
530 Allegan Street
Lansing, MI 48933

**Social Impact Bonds—Pay for Success Based Financing
Request for Information
Project Number: #0071141113B0000535**

Dear Mr. Samuel,

Attached is the Request for Information regarding the subject Project Number submitted by The Legacy Center for Community Success.

Please direct inquiries and future communications regarding this matter to:

Richard Dolinski
The Legacy Center for Community Success
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Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Heronema
President

State of Michigan
MIDLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT
FORTY-SECOND CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

Dorene S. Allen
Presiding Probate & Juvenile Judge

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October 23, 2013

Re: The Michigan Leadership School-Justice Partnership Social Impact Bond Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

In September, The Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships: Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System convened in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was a very successful pulling together of 73 teams from 73 different counties. The individual teams consisted of a juvenile judge, Intermediate School Superintendents and a diverse remainder for the rest of the team. The topic was keeping kids in school, the prevalence of suspensions/expulsions and stopping the School to Prison pipeline.

We are privileged to have had Governor Snyder's participation and support in this Summit. Also supporting the Summit goals are Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan, Department of Education State Superintendent Mike Flanagan, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Mary Beth Kelly and Michigan Supreme Court Justice Bridget McCormack.

It was apparent that there is a significant issue of keeping kids in school. The teams have gone back to their counties and are working on their plans for reducing this phenomenon. This is the beginning of a Three Year Plan. The need is extraordinary for the state of Michigan. The Social Impact Bond proposal being submitted definitely goes to the need as identified at the Summit and the pathway forward. I applaud The Legacy Center in its moving forward on this profound topic for a resolution. The funding solicitation is specifically coming from The Legacy Center in its identification of the funding needs. My support goes to the identification of the needs of this state in resolving this very important issue.

I want to thank you for your serious consideration of this Social Impact Bond and clearly identify my support of the needs that it supports. Should you have any questions regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dorene S. Allen'.

Dorene S. Allen, Chair
The Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships:
Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System
Probate & Juvenile Judge, Midland County



ORIGINAL



**Michigan School-Justice Partnership
Keeping Kids In School And Out Of The Justice System
Reducing The School To Prison Pipeline
Social Impact Bond Proposal
Project Number #0071141113B0000535**

Introduction/Background

Considerable research provides a compelling inverse relationship between school participation and delinquency. Initiatives that reduce truancy, increase graduation rates, and decrease delinquency will promote the state's business climate and reputational perceptions while reducing costs associated with property loss, personal pain and suffering, adjudication, incarceration and substance use disorders. It is far more cost effective to engage young people in school and prepare them for constructive participation in the workforce than to incarcerate them in prison. The overall objective of this proposal is to reduce the "school to prison pipeline" thereby reducing the overall number of people entering prison and reducing the state's expenses associated with this population. A successful approach will result in an estimated cost savings of \$37,500 per person for each year they are not incarcerated in the state. In addition, the state incurs \$175 up to \$625 per day for very intensive mental health services to keep youth in secure facilities that will also be reduced with a successful intervention. Finally, about \$387 million is spent by the state annually through the Child Care Fund (CCF). A portion of these funds is used for residential placements and for related support costs associated with delinquency. Both the mental health services and CCF costs will be decreased through this initiative.

In Michigan, high school dropout rates are alarmingly high especially in urban districts. These high rates are often issues associated with school discipline, multiple suspensions, truancy, lack of differential responses to juvenile's needs and eventual disconnection with the education process. It is estimated that over 250,000 young people in Michigan between the ages of 16-24 do not have a high school diploma or GED certificate and are neither currently enrolled in school nor employed. An alarming 82% of prisoners nation-wide are high school dropouts with low literacy schools and Michigan's numbers reflect this pattern.

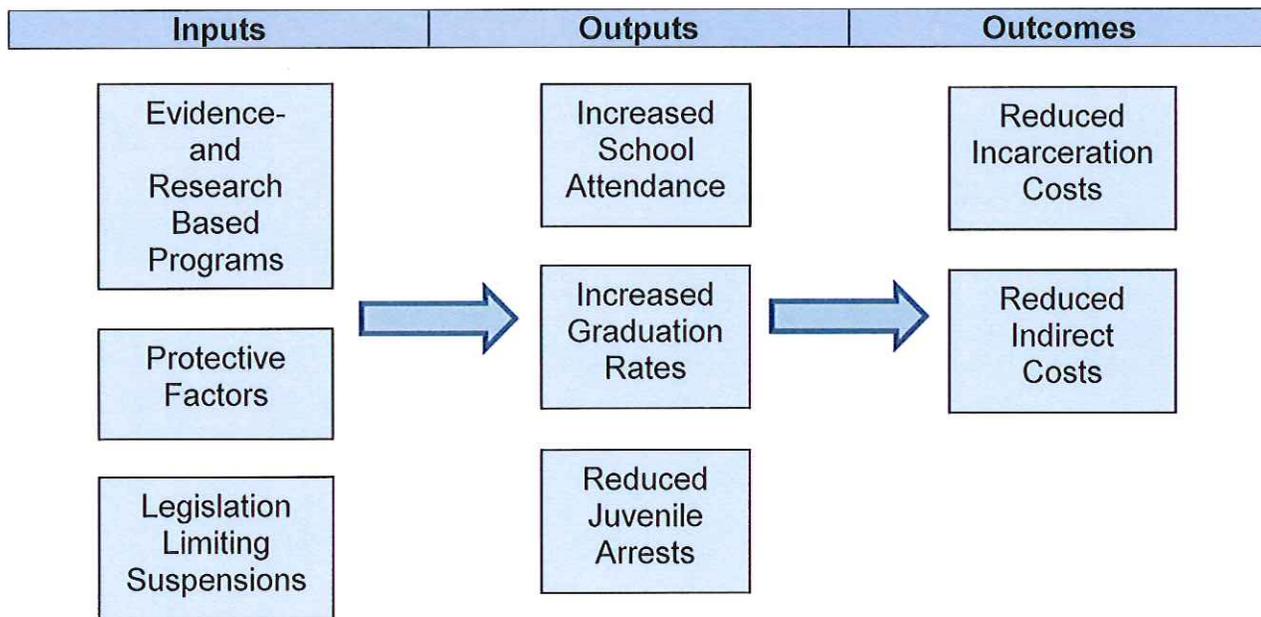
These data present a most compelling case for a concerted, integrated and collaborative effort across the state to reduce school absenteeism, increase graduation rates, reduce juvenile adjudications, and to eliminate what has been referred to as the "school to prison pipeline". The approach described below summarizes one such framework that has been established to address this issue thereby improving the quality of life for all Michigan citizens while significantly lowering the costs of incarceration and related expenses for the state government.

Program Model

The model for reducing the "school to prison pipeline" relies on two complimentary strategies. The first is to implement a continuum of targeted, high-quality, non-residential research and evidence-based programs* and services that improve school retention and reduce school

absenteeism. Substantial evidence exists supporting the correlation between consistent school attendance and educational achievement, including high school graduation. Among the recognized best practices is the enactment of legislation that limits out-of-school suspensions except in cases where school safety is threatened or where the educational mission is severely disrupted. The second strategy involves the inclusion of research and evidence-based interventions along with promising practices to build certain protective factors that effectively minimize a youth's participation in various risk-taking behaviors. The combination of these strategies based on proven effective programming will achieve the desired objective of lowering the incidence of and the related costs of prisoner incarceration.

Program Model Schematic



Technical Requirements

- *Availability of performance measures for assessing outcomes.*

The principal measures required to assess the achievement of the identified Objectives are readily available. School attendance is tracked at each school, graduation rates are published by the state department of education, while delinquency and incarceration information is available from the state.

A baseline of the current status for each of these variables will be established then improvements tracked longitudinally. Comparisons versus nominally demographically equivalent school districts and counties will assess outcomes of the initiative relative to outcomes that would have occurred in the absence of the initiative.

- *A strong evidence base indicating that the intervention model is likely to achieve the outcome target.*

Truancy has been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs that youths potentially are headed for educational failure, delinquent activity, and social isolation. Research has shown that truancy is related to delinquency, substance use and abuse, high school dropout, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and early sexual intercourse. For instance, recent research shows that truancy is not only the most significant risk factor for predicting first-time marijuana use, but it also predicts 97 percent of first-time drug use. These early patterns have long-term costs for both the individual and society at large: according to the 2000 census, while 83 percent of college graduates and 71 percent of high school graduates were employed, high school dropouts had an employment rate of only 52 percent. In addition, decades of research have also identified a link between truancy and later problems in marriage, in jobs, and with violence, adult criminality, and incarceration.

In Clayton County Georgia, a concerted behaviorally based multi-system alternative school discipline programs has produced stunning results. Graduation rates have increased by 20% while delinquent felony rates have decreased by 50%.

A compelling case study of the effectiveness of an early intervention to improve school attendance is Midland County's experience at Eastlawn and Floyd Elementary Schools. These two schools have similar demographics and are considered among the most economically disadvantaged in the county. As indicated in the table below, the introduction of the Community Schools Model was highly successful in improving attendance in a relatively short period of three months. After only six months, attendance significantly improved at both schools and approached 100% at Eastlawn School**.

School	Free & Reduced Lunch Eligible (%)	Students with DHS Services (%)	(Before) Students With 5 Or More Absences (%)	(After 3 Months) Students With 5 Or More Absences (%)	Decrease In 5 Or More Absences (%)	(Before) Students With 8 Or More Absences (%)	(After 3 Months) Students With 8 Or More Absences (%)	Decrease In 8 Or More Absences (%)
Eastlawn	68	53	39.4	27.1	31.2	24.8	12.1	51.2
Floyd	65	52	38.4	28.5	25.8	15.0	10.2	32.0

A study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) concluded that increasing school attendance lowers dropout rates and increases graduation rates. There are considerable research- and evidence-based programs along with promising practices that have been implemented, replicated and tracked indicating long-term positive outcomes for youth in prevention, early intervention and chronic truancy. For example, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development evaluates programs meeting strict criteria with evidence of positive, sustainable change. WSIPP analyzes such programs and determines their cost benefit ratios. Multisystemic Therapy is among the more effective programs for high-risk youth with school attendance, substance use, criminal behavior, violence and family issues. Positive outcomes are the norm with economic savings realized in excess of 300%. Other promising practices such as the "Sibley School" model will also be considered in the continuum of interventions.

Midland County has enjoyed considerable success in reducing delinquency rates utilizing research- and evidence-based programming provided through community-wide collaboration between the Probate Court and multiple youth-serving organizations. Over the past five years, delinquency is down ~50%, rearrests/recidivism is down ~70%, the percentage of younger siblings of offenders has been reduced to <5% from over 40%. Direct court-related cost savings in the order of \$3 million also have been realized during this period. The county uses interventions based on experience and evidence-based practices from cognitive behavioral therapy that relies on intensive relationships between high-risk youth and trained adults, as well as targeted programming. The best example of the county's retooled focus on effective programming is Multisystemic therapy (MST). This evidence-based program targets multigenerational cycles of abuse and neglect in a court that frequently sees all the children under one roof, one by one, by establishing boundaries for the kids while parents are being trained on how to enforce them.

Other evidence-based programs brought into the mix include the court's truancy protocol, a youth intervention specialist, youth assessment and screening, serious emotional disturbance waiver services, the court operated foster care program, Midland Mentors and baby court.

Among the successful approaches utilized in Midland County is the application of the Developmental Assets concept in the community. Two studies have been made in a five-year longitudinal effort that identified the key protective factors associated with a reduction in a variety of risk-taking behaviors among adolescents. Several key factors are the promotion of association with positive peers, instilling restraint and resistance skills, and providing adult role models for adolescents. The application of these strategies has resulted in an average 15% increase in these protective factors throughout the community with a corresponding contribution to the reductions in delinquency and the cost savings realized in the county that are cited above.

- *A sufficient and well defined participant base (at minimum, initiatives should serve 200 participants per year)*

Two parallel approaches will be utilized each with significantly more than 200 participants in each cohort. One will involve a targeted effort focused on two different counties but with similar demographics with each other and the state. The tentative selections are Muskegon and Berrien Counties. The following table demonstrates the similarity of the two sites and the state of Michigan:

Location	Population Estimate	White (%)	African American (%)	Hispanic (%)	Poverty Level (%)
State of Michigan	9,900,000	80	14.3	4.6	15.7
Muskegon County	170,000	77	14.0	4.8	18.0
Berrien County	156,000	76	15.2	4.5	16.4

Several proven specific research- and evidence-based programs will be selected with community partners and implemented in the two counties. Regular assessments will track the desired outcomes of school absenteeism reductions, improved graduation rates and reduced youth arrests.

A second, broader, approach will utilize the 3-Year Plan developed in the recently completed (September 18-19, 2013) Michigan School-Justice Partnership Summit. Over 400 participants representing leadership from 73 Michigan counties met to discuss, develop and agree to strategies and Objectives for the next 3 years. The Objectives selected are:

Strategic Objectives:

- Increase overall state graduation rates by 5%
- Increase local graduation rates by 10%
- Reduce juvenile arrest rates for truancy and school-related misconduct by 5%

Tactical Objectives

- Reduce truancy rates by 5%
- Reduce school expulsion by 10%
- Reduce out-of-school suspensions by 10%

As indicated in the attached Summit "Three Year Plan" and Agenda, the methodology agreed to at the Summit is to form local "Home Teams" in each of the counties. These teams will identify the specific local issues and then develop and implement Action Plans to address these issues in order to achieve the Objectives. Five regional meetings will be held at the mid-point of the 3-year effort to share successes and identify best practices that can be utilized throughout the region. In addition, a director has been identified who will oversee and lead the 3-year effort and the achievement of the Objectives across the state.

Throughout the 3-year plan implementation, the key metrics of school attendance, graduation rates, and juvenile arrests will be tracked and evaluated as programmatic feedback both for the two-county program as well as the statewide effort. As successes are identified, they will be promptly disseminated across the network to assure rapid implementation in other locations as appropriate.

When accomplished, these Objectives will result in an improved business climate for the state, promote economic development, and reduce social costs associated with adjudication and incarceration, property loss, personal pain and suffering, substance use disorders and the like. In addition to the intangible benefits of improved reputational perceptions furthering Michigan's growth and development, improved graduation rates will result in more productive, income-producing citizens resulting in increased tax revenues for the state.

The attached press release, Bridge article and Detroit News editorial indicate the broad level of support for and commitment to this initiative ranging from Governor Snyder through superintendents of public schools, judges, and academicians. In addition, leadership from the Department of Corrections, the Department of Human Services, the Michigan Supreme Court and other youth-serving agencies have rallied behind the Summit Plan to endorse this effort.

- *Ability to take the initiative to scale if results show that the initiative is working*

A broad statewide network has already been established at the September 18-19 Summit to take the initiative to scale. Multidisciplinary county "Home Teams" have been assembled to address the issues associated with the "school to prison pipeline", to develop and implement Action Plans based on research- and evidence-based programs along with a variety of promising practices, and to quantitatively track the outcomes longitudinally. The Action Plans are aligned with the achievement of identified specific Objectives to reduce school absenteeism, increase graduation rates, and to reduce juvenile arrests.

In addition, a "Knowledge Center" concept has been established to assure the rapid dissemination of information to the participants at the county level. Periodic reports of identified successes and problems will be forwarded to the Knowledge Center from the county Home Teams, best practices and key barriers will be identified, and then made available to the network for consideration. Best practices can be adapted for local use as appropriate and suggestions to successfully overcome impediments can be offered through this Knowledge Center.

The Legacy Center for Community Success, a Midland-based youth serving agency with 9.5 years of experience focusing on learning and youth development throughout Michigan and beyond, will be overseeing this effort. The Legacy Center has secured the services of Angela M. Cole, a highly qualified and experienced attorney, as the Director of the Michigan School-Justice Partnership initiative. She currently is serving in a *pro bono* capacity. There a pending \$100,000 grant from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation to underwrite this cost. Approximately \$70,000-80,000 that will remain in the Summit account after the final bills are paid will also be applied to this effort.

- *Clear and identifiable state budgetary savings*

The average annual cost of incarceration in the state of Michigan is \$37,500 per person. Approximately 400 youth ages 14 through 18 are housed in adult correctional facilities in the state. This amounts to approximately \$15 million as the annual cost of incarceration. Achieving a 10% total reduction over three years at a rate of about 3.33% improvement per year will reduce the cost of incarceration by about \$3 million over the 3-year scope of this framework. In addition, the associated savings related to indirect costs are estimated to increase savings by an additional \$200,000-400,000 per year or \$600,000-1,200,000 for the 3 years of the plan.

The estimated investment required for this approach is \$1.8 million over 3 years or ~\$600,000 per year. The return on investment for the base case (reduction of incarceration costs only) over 3 years is $\$3.0 \text{ million} \div \$1.8 \text{ million} = 167\%$

Adding the indirect costs savings yields a return on investment over 3 years ranging from 200% to 233% ($\$3.0 \text{ million} + \$600\text{K} \div \$1.8 \text{ million} = 200\%-233\%$). Additional savings are anticipated in the reduction of Child Care Funds directed towards truant and delinquent youth that will improve the rates of return on the original investment. For example, in Midland County, truancy reduction efforts have diverted 120 youth from court petitions. Each youth in the court costs the county about \$12,000, half of which is eligible for the Child Care

Fund reimbursement. The 120 avoided petitions at \$6,000 per petition from the Child Care Fund saved the state over \$700,000. These types programs and their resultant savings will be extended in this project.

***Referenced Definitions**

Evidence-based: A program or practice that has had multiple-site random controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for the population.

Research-based: A program or practice that has some research demonstrating effectiveness, but that does not yet meet the standard of evidence-based practices.

Promising Practice: A practice that presents, based upon preliminary information, potential for becoming a research-based or consensus-based practice.

** On October 9, 2013, six months after the onset of the Community Schools model program, Eastlawn School's attendance was 100%.

THREE YEAR PLAN

Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships: Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System



Bringing teams of leaders from Michigan's 83 counties together to develop strategies for keeping children in school and out of court and subsequent incarceration.

1. Executive Summary

The National Leadership Summit on School – Justice Partnerships: Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court was convened in New York to promote the development of partnerships among the court system, school administration, law enforcement and the community to keep kids in school and out of the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Michigan sent a cross-systems team of participants, including Honorable Dorene Allen, Presiding Probate and Juvenile Judge, Midland County; Honorable Mary Ellen Brennan, Circuit Judge from Oakland County; Honorable Michael Petoskey, Chief Judge, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians; Bob Higgins, Project Director for the Safe Schools Project from the Michigan Department of Education; and Terri Gilbert, Director of Child Welfare Funding and Juvenile Programs, Department of Human Services.

Anchored by the startling results of a statewide study of the school to prison pipeline completed in Texas, and the resultant report *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study on How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement*, the conference provided a national perspective on issues occurring in every state reflecting the connection between school attendance, school disciplinary policies and involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The Michigan team was energized by this extraordinary opportunity to gain a national perspective, and most importantly, to begin a strong collaborative effort to address the school to prison issues as they are reflected in our state.

Upon reviewing the data and participating in the excellent workshops and panel discussions offered at the National Summit, our team decided that Michigan must engage in resolution of this issue across disciplines. Only through opening communication between the courts, the schools, law enforcement and social service agencies can we effectively address this issue. As a result, Department of Human Services Director Maura D. Corrigan convened the Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships: Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System.

The Michigan Leadership Summit is a call to action. It is a two-day summit hosted by the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), the Michigan Supreme Court, State Court Administrative Office, Michigan Department of Education (MDE), the University of Michigan, the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice (MCJJ), and Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency. The summit is the beginning of a very exciting three-year project focused on truancy and eliminating the “school-to-prison pipeline” in our state. It will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, September 18 and 19, 2013, at the Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel.

2. Situational Analysis

- The national high school graduation rate in 2010 was 69.2%
- Michigan’s rate was better at 74.33%¹; however, this figure reflects the overall state average and masks very low performing school districts with high dropout rates
- Dropout rates are often issues of school discipline, multiple suspensions, school truancy, lack of differential response to juvenile’s needs, and eventual disconnection with the educational process all together ²
- Minority, mentally ill and disabled students are over represented in school suspension and discipline data³
- It is estimated that there are 250,000 young people (ages 16-24) in Michigan without a high school diploma or GED and who are neither currently enrolled in school nor employed
- Eighty-two percent of prisoners nation-wide are high school drop outs, and Michigan’s numbers reflect this pattern

¹ Center of Educational Performance and Information, 2011 Cohort Four Year Graduation Rates

² Skiba, Russell; “Reaching a Critical Juncture for our Kids: The Need to Reassess School – Justice Partnerships” Indiana University, 2010

³ *ibid*

- Michigan currently houses almost 400 youth ages 14 through 18 in adult correctional facilities
- We currently spend \$37,500 per year to house each prisoner, which is much higher than tuition and board for any higher educational institution in our state

These are just some of the compelling data that imply the connection between school participation and delinquency. Also, the rise in zero tolerance policies that expel youth from school to the streets has contributed to the increase in student dropout rates and can be positively correlated to the rise in juvenile crime.

In order to reinvent Michigan with an educated workforce, we must tend not only to educational reform within the schools, but we must focus on keeping kids in school and out of the courts. We must reinvent school discipline and expulsion policies in an effort to keep our young people engaged in education. It is more cost effective for the state to engage young people in preparing for participation in the workforce than in preparing and paying for a prison sentence. Given these considerations, three desired outcomes have been identified (below) for the Michigan Summit to promote positive youth development in Michigan.

3. **Summit/Meeting Desired Outcomes**

- Better understanding of the wide-ranging impact of school exclusion and truancy:
 - impact on school retention/graduation rates,
 - how school exclusion is connected to delinquency
 - how keeping kids in school contributes to youth's success and Michigan's economic development
- Agreement with/commitment to a strategic plan to improve school inclusion and student retention outcomes in Michigan
- Agreement with /commitment to formulate and implement an Action Plan that enables the accomplishment of the strategic plan

4. **Segmentation by Teams/Counties/Years**

We invited leaders from all 83 counties to the Michigan Summit where they will make a commitment to solving the school to prison issues in their communities. The judiciary and the education communities will work together as a team (with three other leaders of their choosing) to formulate an action plan for implementation in their county. These

team members may include, but are not limited to, leaders from the Department of Human Services (DHS), juvenile referees, prosecutors, probation officers, school truancy officers, school principals, teachers or other school staff, law enforcement, and community mental health representatives. They will be known as the County Leadership Teams. Not only will the County Leadership Teams be charged with developing action plans on how to address the school to prison pipeline issues in their own counties, but they will also be expected to lead further work through the formation of a Home Team (described below) and implement their plans over the next three years. Opportunities for longitudinal research regarding effective interventions will be offered during the summit for interested schools via the University of Michigan.

After the summit, County Leadership Teams will expand into Home Teams. Home Teams will include any and all individuals deemed necessary to implement action plans in the local community. Suggestions for expanded team membership include, but are not limited to, school district officials within counties, parents, students, school board officials, local law enforcement, non-profit youth organizations, faith based groups and the interested public.

In Year Two, regional meetings will be held to review relevant research, review county plans to share successes and best practices, discuss barriers, review outcomes to date and further refine local action plans. Local districts will be given training and technical assistance where needed, including identification and adoption of evidence based models, implementation assistance, data collection issues and peer review techniques. Information will be shared between counties on an information hub located on the Summit website. Counties will report on their progress to a committee formed specifically to review progress after the summit (known hereafter as the Summit Review Committee.) The University of Michigan will provide an overview of their intervention research.

Year Three will consist of a Statewide Summit to provide a forum for Leadership Teams to report on and identify examples of best practices, discuss challenging implementation issues and the development of Return On Investment indicators. Briefings will be developed containing recommended actions targeting the executive branch, legislators, courts, counties, school districts, parents, students, and other stakeholders. The outcomes in Year Three should reflect possible legislation addressing the elimination of the school to prison pipeline. This should also be the basis of consistency state-wide. At the state level, departmental policies and budgets should be directed to support adoption of evidence based practices in schools, courts and other stakeholders.

5. Vision and Objectives

Upon reviewing the data and participating in the excellent workshops and panel discussions offered at the National Summit, our team determined that Michigan must engage in resolution of this issue by creating and emphasizing a vision for Michigan. Since our long-term desired outcome is that all youth in Michigan graduate from high school instead of ending up in prison, the vision is **“Justice. School. For All.”**

To achieve our vision, distinct objectives must be accomplished. These objectives fall into both strategic and tactical categories, the assumption being that accomplishment of the tactical objectives will directly impact the accomplishment of the strategic objectives. Over the next three years, the following objectives need to be realized to move us closer to achieving the vision. The objectives are:

Strategic Objectives:

- **Increase overall state graduation rates by 5%**
- **Increase local graduation rates by 10%**
- **Reduce juvenile arrest rates for truancy and school – related misconduct by 5%**

Tactical Objectives

- **Reduce truancy rates by 5%**
- **Reduce school expulsion by 10%**
- **Reduce out-of-school suspensions by 10%**

Accomplishing these strategic objectives will require thoughtful change to the current educational environment in Michigan. The Michigan Zero Tolerance legislation may need to be revisited; individual school discipline policies may need revisions, schools may need to take a more active role in following up on absenteeism in order to reduce truancy. And finally, in conjunction with the Summit, communities need to work together to support the change in approach required across the system in order to affect change.

Each of these objectives, as accomplished, will result in an improved business climate for the state, promote economic development, and reduce social avoidance-related costs such as property loss, personal pain/suffering, adjudication/incarceration, substance use disorders, etc. In addition, the state will realize intangible gains such as improved reputational perceptions further advancing growth for Michigan. An educated citizenry is Michigan’s best investment for future success.

6. Strategies

Three broad strategies have been identified to achieve the objectives. These are:

- I. Cross-system collaboration to effectively track, trend, identify and address the issues
- II. School-based prevention and intervention efforts
- III. Individual, student-level interventions for pre-school to graduation.

7. Goals

The steps required to accomplish each of the strategies above are:

- I. **Cross-system collaboration**
 - a. Develop greater communication and consistency between schools, law enforcement, juvenile justice, children's protective services, courts, legislators and others involved in studying and resolving the expulsion, truancy and crime connections
 - b. Develop standardized data definitions, better data sets and integrated data at the highest levels to detect problems and track changes
 - c. Address the negative impact of Zero Tolerance legislation and amend as possible in keeping with the federal statute
 - d. Provide continuing professional development for all persons involved with youth, focusing on new developments in the field, for example, trauma and its impact on school performance and participation, the role of malnutrition, poverty and abuse/neglect in school truancy, new ideas on classroom management and development of different responses to school discipline, truancy and drop outs
 - e. Require additional regulation on home schooling so that youth do not become invisible to the system and more easily disengage and drop out
 - f. Develop multi-disciplinary responses to expulsion and truancy across the state
 - g. Encourage involvement in asset building opportunities such as mentoring, faith-based and after school programs

II. School-based prevention and intervention

- a. Implement evidence-based practices for school discipline
- b. Develop mechanisms to keep youth engaged in education as opposed to out of school suspension and expulsion
- c. Develop multi-disciplinary, cross-agency responses to truancy
- d. Create mechanisms for regular review of school data on suspensions and truancy, benchmark the data to state-wide outcomes and similar district outcomes
- e. Create additional ways to involve parents in the educational process
- f. Engage in effective school-wide conflict resolution using balanced and restorative justice approaches to problem solving

III. Individual, student-level interventions

- a. Development of an assessment method to determine the actual seriousness of offenses
- b. Provide additional supports to at-risk students and families
- c. Create a multi-disciplinary response to discipline and truancy
- d. Provide supports for individual and group therapeutic interventions
 - i. example: anger management, recognition of the impact of mental and emotional health on behavior, teaching pro-social skills, life skills, healthy living

8. Forecast, Budget and Resource Requirements

A summit of this magnitude, with participants from all of Michigan's 83 counties, and with ongoing follow up, will require significant resources. However, this initial investment will result in a commitment to policy changes which have the potential for a significant *Return On Investment*, saving the State of Michigan, individual counties and school districts millions of dollars in costs associated with:

Short Term Costs of Inaction:

- school discipline proceedings, and subsequent "re-teaching" of youth who are returning from discipline/suspension/expulsion
- law enforcement contact and arrest of youth who commit crimes
- court involvement, including workload and docket issues for prosecutors, referees and judges

- jail and/or prison expenses to house youth who commit crimes
- criminalization of behaviors of mentally ill youth
- the overrepresentation of minority, mentally ill and disabled students in the school exclusion population
- community service agency provision of services for delinquent youth and their families
- social service agency provision of services and oversight of juvenile delinquency cases
- county supervision and oversight of juvenile delinquency cases
- the impact on families who have to take time from work to deal with these issues

Long Term Costs of Inaction:

- decline in the educational performance level of students who end up in the justice system
- peer performance suffers from transitions of students in and out of classes
- impact on communities who experience crime, declining property values, etc.
- leads to further involvement in the justice system including adult incarceration
- productivity affected for the rest of their lives
- human costs of removal from society

Summit Costs

With teams of five professionals from each of Michigan's 83 counties, speakers, workshop presenters, and staff from the sponsoring agencies and the university, we estimate an audience of about 500. The estimated cost for the initial two-day summit is \$220,000.00. These cost estimates include local and national speakers, breakfast, lunch, venue, transportation, lodging, audio visual needs and materials. Costs may increase or decrease depending upon food costs, number of individuals needing lodging, etc.

In order to continue momentum, progress, and furthering of this important work, we will bring teams back together for follow up meetings. Teams will be assigned to distinct geographic regions based on the Governor's economic development regions. Each region will meet during a different quarter to provide the opportunity for Home Teams to meet their regional peers once per year. These follow up meetings will be held in a location conducive to each region's geographic area. The cost of travel and

logistics for Home Teams for quarterly, regional one day (or two half days) follow up meetings is estimated to be approximately \$200,000.00

9. **Action Plan for the Summit**

Judges and intermediate school district (ISD) superintendents will work together to determine County Leadership Team membership; however, at a minimum, the five-person team must include a judge and ISD superintendent or their designee. Leadership teams will be strongly encouraged to include a DHS county director. DHS business service center directors will be able to facilitate DHS county director participation on the leadership team. Suggestions to the teams for additional leadership team membership will include, but are not limited to, juvenile referees; prosecutors; probation officers; school truancy officers; school principals, teachers or other school staff; law enforcement; and community mental health representatives.

During the summit, leadership teams will not only be charged with developing action plans for how to address the school-to-prison pipeline issues identified in their communities, but also with completing further work and implementation of their plans after the summit ends. There will be several opportunities provided during the summit for leadership team planning sessions. In addition, instructions and templates for planning sessions will be provided during the summit. After the summit, leadership teams will be asked to expand their County Leadership Team into a Home Team. Home Team members may be comprised of any and all individuals deemed necessary by the leadership team to further this work in the local community. Information and suggestions Home Team membership will be provided at the summit.

Leadership teams will be encouraged to consider assigning roles to members prior to the summit. For example, at least one member should be designated as a team scribe for purposes of documenting action plans. In addition, leadership teams will be asked to bring information about any resources, programs, best practices, etc., that other counties may find helpful. These resources will be compiled and distributed to teams.

The summit will consist of plenary presentations, breakout sessions and County Leadership Team planning sessions. On the first day of the summit, County Leadership Team participants will be introduced to the concept of, and research behind, the "school-to-prison pipeline" by Carl Reynolds, senior legal and policy advisor to the Council of State Governments Justice Center. Rodd Monts, field director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, will discuss Michigan-specific data related to the

pipeline. Judge Brian Huff (retired), faculty member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, will discuss truancy protocols, graduated sanctions and principles of courts of excellence.

On the second day of the summit, Governor Snyder will give a call to action to leadership team members. Hedy Nai-Lin Chang, director of Attendance Works, will discuss advancing student success by addressing chronic absence. Peter Edelman, distinguished professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center, will provide a framework and make connections between myriad issues to consider as leadership teams move forward.

Throughout the two days, breakout sessions will be offered on topics including DHS's Pathways to Potential initiative, truancy laws, adolescent brain development, disproportionate minority contact, dual child abuse/delinquency wards, positive behavior intervention and support, the Midland County Truancy Team, and the "Sibley Model" from Kent County's Sibley Elementary School.

Templates for the development of specific county Action Plans for the advancement of the objectives will be made available. Instructions for their use also will be provided.

10. Action Plans for Each County to Achieve Vision and Objectives

Teams of leaders at each county will develop specific Action Plans for their contribution towards achieving the state-wide objectives. For each objective, County Leadership Teams are requested to complete an Action Plan Template that lists the specific tasks to be accomplished, the accountable person or group, the timeline for achieving the task, and the resources required. Keeping in mind each county will have specific needs/barriers/situations, the sum of each of the counties Action Plans should sum to the state-wide targets developed at the summit.

As a means to keep the Action Plans current, teams are encouraged to adopt an agenda format that enables them to periodically review their Action Plans and assess the progress (or lack thereof) in accomplishment. In addition, the periodic evaluations will provide the ability to make adjustments to the Action Plans as improvements or delays occur and modifications are required.

11. Summit Review Committee

A Summit Review Committee composed of the following five people:

- Michigan Supreme Court Justice Mary Beth Kelly
- Bob Higgins from the Michigan Department of Education
- Terri Gilbert from the Michigan Department of Human Services
- Professor Elizabeth Moje, PhD from the University of Michigan
- Honorable Dorene S. Allen, Presiding Probate and Juvenile Judge of Midland County

has been formed to provide statewide oversight of local implementation plans and progress. The County Leadership Teams representing all 83 counties will report to the Summit Review Committee regarding their plans, implementation and any technical assistance that they may require. This project has had stellar commitment from many professionals who have provided very important support and it is the hope that those professionals continue their time investment by support of the Summit Review Committee. The Summit Review Committee will be critical to the success of the Summit as the Three Year Plan is implemented.

12. Fiduciary for Funding

The Michigan Council on Crime & Delinquency (MCCD) has agreed to perform important continuity tasks. The MCCD will act as fiduciary for the funding necessary to carry out the Three Year Plan. They will also provide website management services. MCCD’s commitment comprises part of the funding that is being requested in the form of staff funding.

13. Metrics

We will know we’ve succeeded by measuring the following and noting improvements in the outcomes:

- Days attended
- Absences
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
 - a. District Discretionary
 - b. Federal Mandated
- Schools opting for moratorium on Expulsion
 - a. Days missed before vs. after adoption
- Truancies
- Adjudications
 - a. In School

- b. Out of School
- Dispositions
 - a. In Home Care
 - b. Community Programs
 - c. Residential Placement
- Completion Rates (School Year)
- Graduation Rates
- School Protection and Advocacy Referrals
- Grades
- Performance on standard tests
- School district performance on AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress)
- Adoption of Evidence Based Practices

- Technical Assistance Contacts
 - a. Phone
 - b. Visits
- Webinar Attendance
- Website Analytics – Downloads

14. **Research and Evaluation Projects**

Opportunities for longitudinal research regarding effective interventions will be offered during the summit for interested schools via the University of Michigan.

The research projects will help inform decisions on the ground (e.g. in the schools) and help advance the knowledge base. These research projects will represent partnerships between individual school districts (or individual schools) and the University of Michigan – specifically the School of Education, the Law School and the School of Social Work.

Opportunities will be created throughout the summit for (1) an exchange of ideas and (2) an agreement to develop, implement and evaluate innovative ideas in the field.

These ideas will be jointly identified – drawing on the collective expertise of school teachers/administrators and university faculty with a demonstrated expertise in the areas of interest. The ultimate objective is to develop interventions (at both the micro and macro levels) that help vulnerable students remain engaged in school and limit the need for court-related intervention. The research components will permit sites to monitor progress, make modifications when necessary, document findings and disseminate information to a variety of audiences.

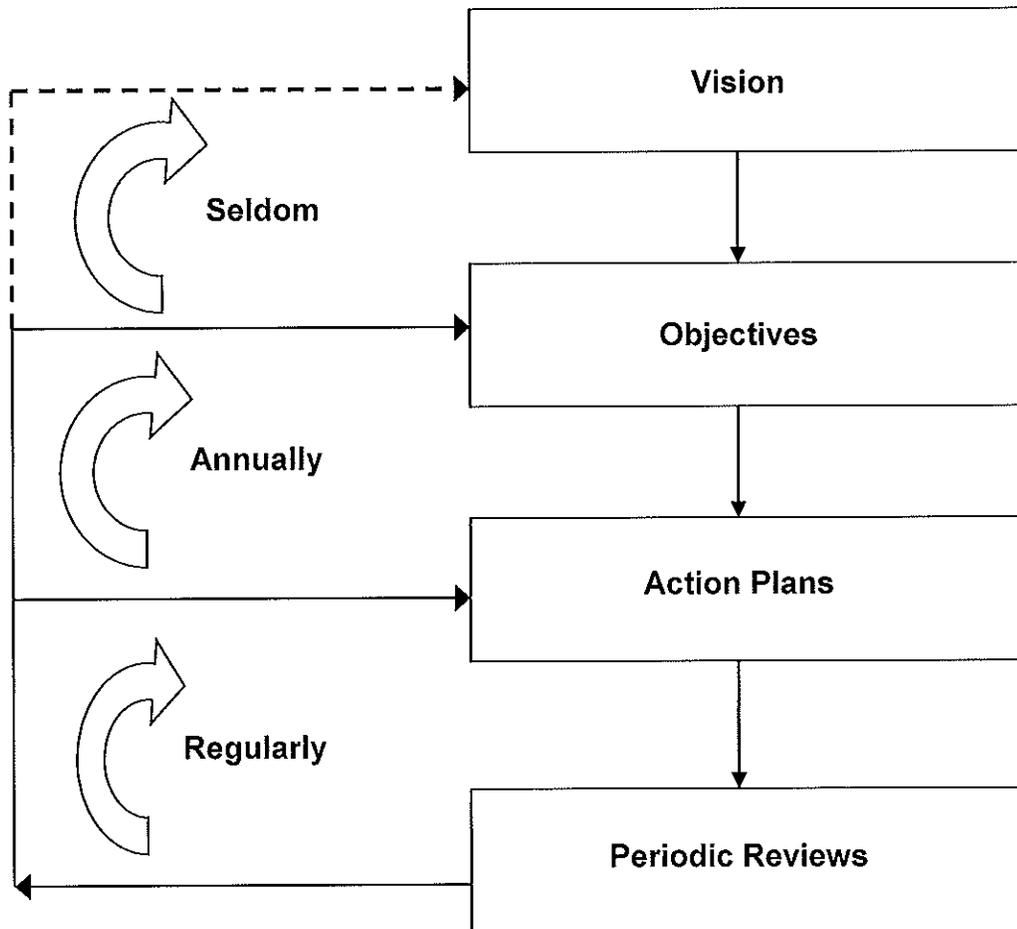
Action Plan Template Example
(One Required For Each Objective)

What (Tasks)	By Whom (Accountability)	By When (Timeline)	How Much (Resources)
2014			
Task 1	Committee A	1Q	NA
Task 2	Individual 1	2Q	\$1.5K
Task 3	Individual 2 + Committee B	2Q	3.0K
Task 4	Individuals 1 + 3	4Q	NA
2015			
Task 1	Individual 2	2Q	\$2.0K
Task 2	Committee C	3Q	\$3.5K
2016			
Task 1	Committee A + Individual 1	2Q	NA

Action Plan Formulation Guidelines

- Define the specific required tasks—“how” you’re going to achieve each Objective
- Emphasize the current/coming year (i.e., 2014)—this becomes the Annual Plan for that year
- It’s appropriate to be less specific and complete for the subsequent years—these will be expanded as the next year approaches
- Keep Action Plans at the major milestone level—don’t be as concerned about daily activity or wordsmithing
- Assign accountabilities to the responsible person(s) or group(s)—it’s appropriate to have combinations of either when necessary
- Assign target completion dates by quarter
- Estimate resources in time or dollars
- Review, (re)prioritize and adjust/update Action Plans as appropriate when tasks are accomplished or delayed or when new relevant information is made available (Cf. Review Process and Agenda Templates)

Strategic Plan Review Process



Agenda Template

- **Opening Items**
 - Roll Call & Introductions
 - Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
 - Vision Reminder
 - “Justice. School. For All.”
- **Objective 1**
 - Increase graduation rates by X%
 - Review Action Plans for Objective 1
- **Objective 2**
 - Reduce truancy* rates by X% (*need definitions, include suspensions, expulsions,...)
 - Review Action Plans for Objective 2
- **Objective 3**
 - Improve results of standardized tests* by X% (*e.g., MEAP, MME, ACT,...(specifics TBD))
 - Review Action Plans for Objective 3
- **Objective 4**
 - Reduce delinquency* by X% (*include considerations of dispositions, recidivism,...)
 - Review Action Plans for Objective 4
- **Other Items**
 - Next Meeting
 - Adjournment

CREATE A LOCAL COLLABORATION PLAN

1. Define collaborative partners (e.g., presiding judge, ISD member, DHS leader, community mental health, etc.)

Name	Title	Contact Information

2. Define scope of expectations for team members.

3. Identify success / desired results:

4. Define ways to measure progress and success. Establish milestones to ensure the group is on the right track.

5. Establish time commitments and communication

a. Meeting frequency, meeting venue, meeting time frame (e.g. group will meet quarterly from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. at the courthouse. 2014 meeting dates are January 11, April 12, July 12, and October 11).

b. Additional communication methods (e.g., email, phone conference, etc).

6. Create action items for each partner to complete before your next meeting.

7. Identify potential barriers and problem solve around those.

**Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships:
Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System**

September 18 – 19, 2013
Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel

Agenda – Day One

Wednesday, September 18, 2013	
7:30 – 8:30 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:45 – 9:00 AM	Introduction by Master of Ceremonies <i>Dave Akerly, Acting Communications Director, Michigan Department of Human Services</i>
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Welcome <i>Maura D. Corrigan, Director, Michigan Department of Human Services</i>
9:15 – 9:30 AM	Opening Remarks <i>Justice Mary Beth Kelly, Michigan Supreme Court</i>
9:30 – 9:45 AM	Keeping Our Kids on a Forward Path <i>Mike Flanagan, State Superintendent, Michigan Department of Education</i>
9:45 – 10:45 AM	Plenary I: The School Discipline Consensus Project <i>Carl Reynolds, Senior Legal & Policy Advisor, Council of State Governments, Justice Center</i>
10:45 – 11:00 AM	Break
11:00 – Noon	Plenary II: In School – On Track – Out of Trouble: Keeping Children out of the Pipeline to Prison <i>Rodd Monts, Field Director, ACLU of Michigan</i> <i>Mark P. Fancher, Attorney for the Racial Justice Project, ACLU of Michigan</i>
Noon – 1:00 PM	Lunch and Instructions for County Team Planning Sessions
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Plenary III: Reducing School Arrests and Improving Graduation Rates Through Collaboration <i>Brian Huff, Attorney at Law</i>
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Workshops: A. Truancy Law: An Overview <i>Frank E. Vandervort, Clinical Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School</i> B. The Department of Human Services' Pathways to Potential Model <i>Sheryl Thompson, Field Operations Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Human Services</i> C. Adolescent Brain and Cognitive Development: Lessons for the Justice System <i>Dr. Daniel Keating, Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan</i> D. Efforts to Reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in Michigan's Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems <i>Paul Elam, Ph.D., Project Manager, Public Policy Associates</i>
3:00 – 3:15 PM	Break
3:15 – 4:15 PM	County Team Planning Session
4:15 – 4:30 PM	Ensuring Consistent and Reliable Data: Statewide Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences <i>Bob Higgins, MA, CPC-R, ICPS, S3 Project Director, Coordinated School Health & Safety Programs, Michigan Department of Education</i> <i>Kyle Guerrant, LMSW, Director, Office of School Support Services, Michigan Department of Education</i>
4:30 – 4:45 PM	Reflecting On and Wrapping Up What We Have Learned <i>Elizabeth Birr Moje, Associate Dean for Research and Community Engagement and Professor, School of Education, University of Michigan</i>
4:45 – 5:00 PM	Closing Remarks <i>Honorable Dorene S. Allen, Midland County Probate and Family Court Judge</i>

**Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships:
Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System**

September 18 – 19, 2013
Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel

Agenda – Day Two

Thursday, September 19, 2013	
7:00 – 8:00 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Plenary IV: Youth-led Restorative Practices <i>Kayla Mason, Director, YOUTH VOICE</i> <i>Trevon Stapleton, YOUTH VOICE</i> <i>Michael Reynolds, YOUTH VOICE</i> <i>Britney Tipler, YOUTH VOICE</i> <i>Royce Williams, YOUTH VOICE</i>
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Using the Three Cs – Collaborate, Create, Connect – to Build a Talent Advantage for Michigan <i>Governor Rick Snyder</i>
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Workshops: E. Child Welfare, Education and the School-to-Prison Pipeline <i>Joseph P. Ryan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Michigan</i> F. Supporting School's Efforts to Reduce Violence Using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Framework (PBIS) <i>Steve Goodman, Ph.D., Director, Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative</i> G. Truancy Prevention for Any Budget: Midland's Experience <i>Lori Pritchard, Assistant Principal, Northeast Middle School</i> <i>Diana LaRue, Court Services and Foster Care Coordinator, 42nd Circuit Court - Family Division</i> <i>Christopher Corbat, Success Coach/Eligibility Specialist, Midland County Department of Human Services</i> H. Signals for Success : A Community School Model for Increasing Student Attendance and Raising Student Achievement <i>MaryAnn Prischchenko, Principal, Sibley Elementary School, Educational Consultant</i> <i>Sergio Cira-Reyes, Kent School Service Network, Community School Coordinator, Sibley Elementary School</i> <i>Abbey VanHoeven, Case Manager, Sibley Elementary School, Kent County Department of Human Services</i>
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Plenary V: Charting a Different Course: Addressing Chronic Absence as Part of a Comprehensive Approach to Reducing Truancy <i>Hedy N. Chang, Director, Attendance Works</i>
11:30 – 12:15 PM	Lunch
12:15 – 1:15 PM	County Team Planning Session
1:15 – 1:30 PM	Break
1:30 – 2:30 PM	Plenary VI: School-Justice Partnerships: A Broader Perspective <i>Peter Edelman, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center</i> <i>Introduction of Peter Edelman by Justice Bridget Mary McCormack, Michigan Supreme Court</i>
2:30 – 3:00	Closing Remarks <i>Honorable Dorene S. Allen, Midland County Probate and Family Court Judge</i>

State of Michigan
MIDLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT
FORTY-SECOND CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

Dorene S. Allen
Presiding Probate & Juvenile Judge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ending “school to prison pipeline” is goal of Michigan anti-truancy summit

ANN ARBOR, MI, October 1, 2013 – Kids who skip or are ousted from school for bad behavior are at risk of dropping out and entering the “school to prison pipeline.” Efforts to find solutions to school truancy – and keep kids from lives of crime – got a boost at the recent “Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships: Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System.”

With the theme of “Justice. School. For All.”, the September 19-20 summit focused on ways to keep young people in school.

Governor Rick Snyder, in a message to the participants, said “When we increase school attendance, when we lower truancy and absenteeism, and when we see fewer kids on the street, it improves the quality of life for all of us. We will see fewer adults behind bars, fewer people in need of public assistance, and a safer, better educated, and more prosperous Michigan as a result.”

“Anyone who works in the juvenile justice system knows that kids who are suspended or expelled are much more likely to drop out altogether,” said Midland Probate Judge Dorene S. Allen, who also served as Chair of the Summit. “And when kids drop out of school, the likelihood that they’ll become involved in some kind of criminal activity increases dramatically. In fact, this phenomenon is so common, it’s come to be known as the ‘school to prison pipeline.’ The statistics are chilling: of Michigan prisoners, 49 percent do not have a high school degree or GED.”

The two-day summit, convened in Ann Arbor, Michigan, involved a wide array of experts on juvenile justice and truancy: juvenile judges, intermediate school district superintendents, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and community mental health workers. Seventy-three county teams heard from national and state speakers, including Governor Rick Snyder, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Mary Beth Kelly, Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan, and Department of Education Superintendent Mike Flanagan. Also attending was Michigan Supreme Court Justice Bridget M. McCormack.

Allen said that school "Zero Tolerance" policies, which mandate suspending or expelling students, often have unintended consequences. "When children are expelled or suspended, they disproportionately end up in the criminal justice system," the judge said.

The 73 county teams worked on their own solutions, using data and information from the summit presenters. Some county teams had as many as 10 members in attendance, Allen noted.

"There was an extraordinary level of collaboration within the county teams and throughout the state," Allen said. "This is the first step of a three-year implementation of truancy priorities. In Michigan, it is clear that we have to keep kids in school and out of the judicial system: we need to stop the School to Prison pipeline."

Michigan is the first state to hold a statewide summit on truancy issues.

The summit was endorsed and supported by the University of Michigan schools of law, social work, and education, and the provost office. Also involved were the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Department of Human Services, Michigan Supreme Court State Court Administrative Office and the Casey Family Foundation.

For more information, contact Midland Probate & Juvenile Court at SBurdick@co.midland.mi.us



Bridge

News and analysis from *The Center for Michigan*

Michigan's 91,000 truant students: skipping school, skipping opportunity

9 October 2013

Chris Andrews
Bridge Magazine contributor

When Grand Rapids Schools Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal visits schools and classrooms, she can't help but notice the empty seats. More than one in four students missed at

least 10 days with unexcused absences in 2011-12, one of the highest rates in the state. And some parents and guardians may not even realize when it's happening in their own family.

"A child missing a day here, or two days there or three days a month, it really adds up over the course of a year," Neal says. "Instruction is going on every single day, from bell to bell. Even bringing kids in a couple of hours late, or picking them up early — all of that goes against instructional time."

Armed with data and backed by her school board, Neal has launched an all-hands-on-deck effort to boost attendance and, ultimately, lift lives. Billboards and radio ads emphasize the importance of being in school every day. Educators and students are being challenged to do better. New attendance policies start conversations between parents and school officials sooner and nudge students' grades when they miss too much school.

The absentee epidemic in Grand Rapids is by no means unique. Across the state, in alarming numbers, children are tripping on this an important step toward educational success — being in school ready to learn. According to 2011-12 data obtained by Bridge Magazine, more than 91,000 students missed at least two full weeks of school with unexcused absences. That's enough students to fill Spartan Stadium with another 16,000 milling around outside. The figures come from reports that school districts and charter schools must submit to the state.

Truancy rates vary dramatically from district to district. They are disproportionately high in urban areas with high poverty rates, where children and families cope with a wide range of issues including transportation, health care, and gaps in parenting skills that can create barriers to attendance

A Bridge analysis of the data shows:

- The truancy rates for two financially troubled districts on the east and west side of the state were the highest in the state. More than half of the students in Highland Park and Muskegon Heights schools, both operating under state-appointed emergency managers, missed at least two weeks of school without excuses (57 percent in Highland Park, 55 percent in Muskegon).
- While the Grand Rapids region is economically booming, poor attendance in Grand Rapids Public Schools is working against the city's ability to produce a high-skilled workforce that employers need and demand. The school district is one of 10 where more than 25 percent of the students were truant. At the same time, some schools in the Grand Rapids area have strong attendance records and are national models for success.
- Most of the state's urban areas have trouble getting students to come to class in satisfactory numbers. The truancy rate in Flint topped 22 percent, and Jackson's was 23 percent. Detroit reported a much lower truancy rate at 7 percent. Even if that's accurate (and there's no reason to believe that Detroit's absenteeism was three times lower than other cities), that meant 4,600 students missed two weeks of school for unexcused reasons.
- Attendance can be a significant problem in rural areas, especially poor ones. More than 36 percent of the students in the Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools in northeastern Michigan were

considered truant. More than three-quarters of the families qualify for free or reduced-price lunches because of low incomes.

- Many charter schools face truancy crises as well. A few, including Detroit Premier Academy and Mildred C. Wells Preparatory Academy in Benton Harbor, actually reported rates at higher than 100 percent, likely the result of misreporting and/or the influx and outflow of students during the school year. Thirty-one had truancy rates of more than 50 percent.
- Some districts, including many affluent suburban ones, reported little or no truancy. The Forest Hills schools outside Grand Rapids reported five truant students among 10,147 enrolled, and Bloomfield Hills in suburban Detroit just 32 out of 12,306. But Kentwood, another metropolitan Grand Rapids district, had 590 truant cases, representing 6.8 percent of its students, according to the data.

The problem of getting children in their classroom seats and keeping them there is more complicated than the state data suggests. Department of Education officials caution that the self-reporting as well as locally set standards for what constitutes unexcused absences create problems in comparing districts.

Beyond that, excused absences are a problem themselves. If parents excuse their children to extend Christmas vacations to get cheaper airfare, to let children take a “mental health day,” or to babysit a younger child, the result is the same: lost learning. Because of that, some experts say it’s more useful to measure chronic absenteeism (defined as missing 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days, for any reason).

There is no shortage of reasons for students to miss class. They can be bored or bullied, sick or scared. A single mom might ask an older child to stay home to babysit a younger one. A student may be embarrassed for being behind his or her friends or may feel disrespected by a teacher.

Attendance also has cultural elements to it. Parents who didn’t complete school themselves may place less value on it for their children. And for some Latino families, it is traditional to spend several weeks visiting family in the southwest or in Mexico in the winter.

The cost of no-shows

Excessively absent students fall behind, lose interest and are less likely to graduate from high school, let alone go to college or a technical school. They are less apt to end up with the skills to hold good-paying jobs that support a middle class quality of life.

Harry Wilson, of the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, tells a story of a single father who sent his child to school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays when he was at work but not on Tuesdays and Thursdays when he was home. He didn’t see the problem until school officials talked to him. The problem is that a chronically absent kindergartner is an unprepared first grader. And on and on.

“When students for whatever reason aren’t in school, they are more likely to fall behind their cohort, and in middle school and high school, they begin making their own decision not to go

because they don't know the content or don't have good friends," said Carol Paine McGovern, executive director of the Kent School Services Network.

And ultimately, those who repeatedly miss school are more likely to be headed for lives of crime and end up in prison, which hurts public safety and drains public resources. Experts even have a name for it: the school-to-prison pipeline. That's why Governor Rick Snyder included truancy in his 2012 message on public safety, and launched Michigan's schools-human services collaborative Pathways to Potential initiative in Detroit, Saginaw, Flint and Pontiac, the cities with the highest crime rates.

And it's why hundreds of local educators, human services workers, and courts officials convened in Ann Arbor in September to begin a three-year drive to develop local solutions based on what's been proven to work.

"The problem has been there for years, but it's a problem we really need to address," Governor Rick Snyder told Bridge magazine after making a presentation to the Michigan Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships. "It's great to see people from the educational system coming together with people from the justice system. Between the two of them, they can do a lot."

The good news, Snyder and state and national experts agree, is that there's plenty of clear research about what's effective in improving school attendance. Giving children and families encouragement and support, whether it's to restore utilities or rewarding a child with a perfect-attendance charm for her bracelet — works. Fear (think Scared Straight) and punishments — especially those that keep kids out of school additional days or hours — don't. And some of the best models are operating in Michigan.

"You have pioneers in your own room doing fabulous work," Hedy Chang, the director of the national group Attendance Works, told summit participants, turning her head toward the table where leaders of the Kent County Services Network were seated.

Kent County's Community School model

Several years ago, members of the Kent County Family and Children Coordinating Council were examining why school reforms didn't seem to be paying off as they had hoped. They looked at the barriers impeding children's success. And for solutions for addressing them. They concluded that a collaborative effort using the Community School model would bring teachers, students, parents, social workers, businesses and others together working toward the common goal of educating children for a better future.

Since then, the effort has transformed 27 schools in seven Kent County school districts. They are much more than schools. They are the hub of their neighborhoods, where services and support are made available to families. Parents are encouraged to volunteer, and some work part time.

The poster school is the Sibley School, where truancy dropped from 48 percent to 12 percent in seven years. It went "from worst to near first" among district schools.

The Michigan Department of Human Services agreed to move caseworkers from county offices into the schools. That move gives many parents and guardians a reason to come to school and ups the chances that children will be there as well. The case workers are designated as “success coaches” who get to know students and families, become aware of problems early, and work to address them.

Attendance is a key focus, according to the program’s executive director, Carol Paine-McGovern. “People didn’t have alarm clocks, so we started buying alarm clocks, and we still give them out. If a mother with four children can’t walk her children to school, the schools set up walking groups.”

Through a partnership with Spectrum Health, each school in the program has either a nurse or school-based clinic, improving the likelihood that parents will send a child with asthma or the sniffles to class. Clinical therapists also are in the schools.

Sibley School encourages students to come to school through attendance rallies and a Signals for Success program that rewards good attendance. Those who earn green lights for strong attendance qualify for benefits such as holiday food baskets. A room in the building is designated for parental activities, such as cooking and English language classes. Parents have prepared potluck lunches for teachers.

Replicating what works: Pathways to Potential

The Snyder administration was duly impressed by the Kent County anti-truancy efforts, and Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan used it as the model for Pathways for Potential, a program that began with 21 schools in Detroit, Flint, Saginaw and Pontiac in 2012. The schools saw attendance improve by 9 percent in the first year, and Pathways will expand to more than 150 schools this year.

The schools are open 12 hours a day, seven days a week and are staffed by community resource coordinators as well as success coaches.

“The goal is to make the school a hub of the community, where the services are, so that families can come to the school, and the school is like it was generations ago, the center of the community,” Corrigan said

DHS has also implemented sanctions, linking school attendance to welfare benefits. Families with truant children can have their Family Independence Program payments reduced or eliminated, which critics say is punishing children.

DHS officials say that only 120 cases have been closed, a sign that the program is changing behavior, and that the program is working.

“We are not saying cut people off, but examine the circumstances, see what is happening in the family and why the child is not in school,” Corrigan said. At the same time, she said, parents have a legal responsibility to get their children to school.

Collaboration and success in Midland

In Midland, Probate Judge Dorene Allen sees education as the great equalizer. She has made truancy a top priority since joining the bench in 2001. Her goal is to get students in school and keep them out of court, and she wants to be a convener to make that happen.

When she took office, the court had no protocol for handling truancy, and only one truancy officer responsible for 50 schools throughout the county. As a practical matter, it was impossible for the officer to know children and families personally and to nip problems in the bud.

“By looking at the record before I went on the bench, you could see that enforcement was really occurring in April and May, which was too late in the school year,” Allen said.

So working with the intermediate school district, she deputized a truancy officer in every school — typically a principal or assistant principal. The truancy officers work closely with students and families to determine why kids are missing school frequently and what can be done.

When cases persist, the court schedules truancy conferences, where a youth intervention specialist screens the children and families to determine whether the appropriate services are in place, and works to develop a plan for improving attendance. Most of the time, it works. Of the 70 truancy conferences held in 2012, only 11 led to truancy petitions, where the court can take legal action against the child or responsible adult.

Allen, who chairs the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, heard about the success of the Kent School Services Network and dispatched a team for a sight visit. Earlier this year, the model was enacted at two Midland County elementary schools, which saw almost immediate improvement in attendance.

To punish or restore?

The school attendance problem is bigger than truancy, and the school justice summit tackled another key issue: the overuse of suspensions and expulsions, often because of zero-tolerance laws or policies that come down hard on students for a first offense.

Students banned from school for extended periods of time end up isolated from their peers and academically behind. Research has shown they are less likely to complete high school and more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system — the precise outcomes teachers, judges, police officers and taxpayers would like to avoid.

While federal law requires expulsions for students who bring firearms to class, Michigan lawmakers have imposed zero-tolerance laws that call for suspensions and expulsions in other cases, including assaults on school employees, weapons other than firearms, and arson. And in cases where local school officials have discretion, they too often don't use it, according to the State Board of Education, among others.

Harry Wilson, of the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, advocates a restorative approach, rather than punitive, to help students who misbehave get back on the right track. Young people are more likely to succeed if they are required to perform community service or help out in the school than if they are suspended or expelled.

“Anything that takes a kid away from school ends up with that young person more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system,” Wilson said.

State Court Administrator Chad Schmucker said county judges have discretion in how they approach juvenile cases, and the trend is moving toward restorative justice. “In general, there is less detention than there was 10 years ago,” he said. “Cost is a factor, but I also think there is a lot in the literature that says it doesn’t really work in all cases.”

Cooperation, collaboration are critical

With the close of the school justice summit, state leaders have asked teams from every county to engage educators, judges, law enforcement, social service agencies, parents and students to develop and carry out strategies that get students in their seats and keep them there.

Grand Rapids is already on the way. Superintendent Neal launched the attendance challenge at the start of the school year to encourage each school to improve attendance by up to 10 percent. Newsletters went out to parents. Residents read about attendance on billboards and hear it on radio ads and from church pulpits.

“You’re getting the same message at church, at the grocery store, or at school. Everywhere,” said Mel Atkins, executive director of community and student affairs for Grand Rapids schools. “We’re getting the community to recognize the importance of attendance and being there on time.”

The Detroit News

Oct 15, 2013

There is little doubt that students who are expelled from school for bad behavior are at risk of going down a path of crime and ending up in state prisons. Specific numbers at the local level are not available, but one fact is clear: 49 percent of those in Michigan correctional facilities do not have a high school diploma.

Breaking this "school-to-prison pipeline" is the object of an ambitious program recently under way in Michigan. Midland County Probate and Juvenile Judge Dorene Allen is an enthusiastic supporter of the project and will be one of the key proponents throughout the three-year project.

"Anyone who works in the juvenile justice system knows that kids who are suspended or expelled are much more likely to drop out altogether," Allen says. "And when kids drop out of school, the likelihood that they'll become involved in some kind of criminal activity increases dramatically."

How to keep kids in school is the purpose of the statewide study, which is attracting diverse participants such as juvenile court judges, intermediate school district superintendents, prosecutors and law enforcement officers.

The program has the backing of top state officials, such as Gov. Rick Snyder and Department of Education Superintendent Mike Flanagan.

The first step is for each county in Michigan to form study "teams" that will analyze their particular truancy problems.

Allen says she was encouraged because 73 counties formed such investigative squads at a recent summit.

The teams will share information about their problems and discuss solutions. A five-member state committee chaired by Allen will review county model solutions.

Allen stresses it will be important to keep track of the data showing the net effect of the "school-to-prison" problems.

The most critical issue is to look for improvement in school attendance from now to the end of the three-year period.

The project's goal of keeping every youth in school is likely unreachable. But any increase in keeping young people in school and out of prison is a step in the right direction.

Director Role
Michigan School-Justice Partnership
Keeping Kids in School and Out of the Justice System

Fiduciary

The Legacy Center for Community Success will act as the fiduciary agent for this project

Director Role Description

- Oversee the 3-Year Plan to keep children in school and out of prison
- Lead the achievement of the Desired Outcomes of the 3-Year Plan
- Facilitate the achievement of the strategic and tactical objectives of the 3-Year Plan
 - Strategic Objectives
 - Increase overall state graduation rates by 5%
 - Increase local graduation rates by 10%
 - Reduce juvenile arrest rates for truancy and school-related misconduct by 5%
 - Tactical Objectives
 - Reduce truancy rates by 5%
 - Reduce school expulsion by 10%
 - Reduce out-of-school suspensions by 10%
- Coordinate Action Plan development and provide implementation assistance and guidance to county Home Teams
- Identify barriers to implementation and assist in overcoming them
- Identify evidence-based models and best practices and rapidly disseminate them throughout the network
- Promote collaboration in problem solving
- Assist and guide appropriate outcomes-based data collection and evaluation
- Facilitate program reviews with Program Review Committee

Budget (2014)

Item	Budget (K\$)
Program Director	50
Training and Technology	10
Travel/Lodging	7
Postage, supplies, copying, printing	5
Communications	5
Telephone	2
Webinars	5
Evaluation	3
Administration	13
Total	100