

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

**Education and Youth Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**March 6, 2019**

**4:00 pm**

**Conference Room A**

**Fourth Floor, City Hall**

**117 W. Duval Street**

Chair: W.C. Gentry

Betty Burney

Amy Donofrio-Excused

Constance Hall

Timothy Sloan

Ceil Pillsbury-Schellenberg

Warren Jones, DCPS Subject Matter Expert- Excused

Brandon Griggs, Youth Subject Matter Expert

**Topic:** Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction –Education and Youth Development Subcommittee

**Attendance:** Colleen Hampsey- Council Research; Chiquita Moore- Mayor’s Office; Carol Owens, Crystal Shemwell and Jessica Smith- Legislative Services

For all other attendees please see the sign in sheet

**Meeting Convened:** 4:12 pm

Chairperson Gentry convened the meeting and welcomed the group. Mr. Gentry reiterated his request to have a DCPS representative at all the subcommittee meetings, as there was not one in attendance. Chairperson Gentry reviewed the subcommittee’s mission, commented on the correlation between literacy rates and criminal behavior and then distributed a handout which described various programs from the Jacksonville Journey, specifically highlighting the SAIL after school and summer initiative. The SAIL program focused on early literacy for children in disadvantaged neighborhoods in zip codes covered by the Jacksonville Journey programs, where in some schools more than 75 percent of 3rd - 5th grade students read below grade level (for example only 13 percent of George Washington Carver Elementary students grades 3-5 were proficient in reading). Task Force member Preston Harris commented on prioritizing summer activities for older youth, with a concentration on innovative programming and quality over quantity. The group talked about the value of evidence based programs with performance metrics. Mr. Harris added that new, smaller organizations struggle with this aspect, since they are just getting started. It was also said that new programs can and should incorporate performance metrics in the program design phase, as that is what makes programs evidence based.

The subcommittee members discussed the lack of teen after school activities and lack of funding directed at that age group. Betty Burney spoke about her youth leadership organization, the “I’m a Star Foundation” in which the participating students raised more than $100,000 since 2013 for other students experiencing homelessness. Ms. Burney also discussed the importance for teens to have a safe neighborhood place to congregate and play. The “I’m a Star Foundation” will hold a leadership conference on March 30th at Stanton High School.

Denise Marzullo, the President & CEO at Early Learning Coalition of Duval, explained the role of that organization. ELC assists families with getting their children into early learning care, provides child care financial assistance and helps child care providers improve the quality of their early learning programs. ELC focuses on school readiness and high quality affordable early learning for children aged 0-5 years. In Duval County, approximately 57 percent of children are “school ready” when they enter kindergarten and 70-75 percent of 4 year olds participate in the free, state funded VPK program. There was also a conversation about pre-K teacher salaries, which tend to be hourly pay rates between 8-10 dollars/hour. These low salaries can increase teacher turnover and decrease quality applicants for these teaching positions. With a dedicated revenue stream for children’s services (possibly from raising the millage rate), there could be more funding for pre-K teacher salaries, tuition scholarships, extended VPK hours and childcare vouchers.

Mr. Sloan spoke briefly about the level of crime within schools, citing DCPS data which reflects the numerous reports annually about weapons and drugs on school grounds. Mr. Sloan advocated for more community policing and an increased level of involvement by JSO to build relationships in schools. The group talked about the importance of mentoring, which is being examined by a different subcommittee. The group also talked about funding innovative children’s programs as opposed to the same organizations which always receive funding.

With no further business, Chairperson Gentry adjourned the meeting. The next Education and Youth Development subcommittee meeting date will be on determined after the full Task Force meets on March 8, 2019.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 6:04 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted 3.11.19 5:00 pm

Tape: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Education and Youth Development Subcommittee -Legislative Services Division 3.6.19