

JCCI Forward

2001 Issue Forum: Human Needs

Members of the Human Needs forum studied the truancy issue in Duval County. They devised ways in which the community can assist in solving the truancy problem in Duval County Public Schools.

Key findings:

- Truancy programs are under-funded and seeking increased funding compounds the problem.
- Students cannot be forced to participate in programs that alleviate truancy.
- Transportation is a problem due to the 1.9 mile bus rule.
- School reporting of absences is not always consistent.

Action plan:

- The committee will create and participate in an ad hoc committee to develop truancy stickers for businesses and promote awareness of truancy.
- The committee is in the process of devising a report which details its findings and recommendations.
- The committee will send the report to the Alliance for World Class Education, Jacksonville United Against Truancy (JUAT), superintendents, regional superintendents, area principals, The Duval County School Board, the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor of Jacksonville, and various media outlets.
- Committee members pledge to personally involve themselves in the fight against truancy. They plan to do so by attending School Board meetings, JUAT meetings, and speak on the report's findings and recommendations, per request.

Issue forum groups met with both community leaders and resource experts who provided valuable information for group discussions. We thank the following individuals for their contributions to the Forward process.

Jay Plotkin; State Attorney's Office
Hodges Sneed; Duval County Public Schools
Donna Cobb; Duval County Public Schools
Marilynn Bahari; Matthew Gilbert Middle School
Jimmie Johnson; Duval County School Board
Shelley Grant; State Attorney's Office
Chief Gordon Bass; Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
J.R. Manning; School Resource Officer; Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
Morgan Miller; Youth Crisis Center
Dr. Shannon Perry; The Bridge of Northeast Florida
Sandi Harrington; PACE Center for Girls
Carrie Rittberger; Truancy Case Manager; State Attorney's Office
Sylvia Johnson; Principal; West Jacksonville Elementary School
Gene Heath; Chief Truant Officer; City of Jacksonville

Forum groups met biweekly for five months. They received information from knowledgeable resource people and additional written materials provided by *Forward* staff. We congratulate their efforts, civic involvement, and advocacy.

Bill Joel; Chair
Michelle Smith; Vice Chair
Paula Weatherby; JCCI
Advisor
Tricia Booker

Angela Johnson
David Keating
Laura Lane
Kate Luby
Marsha Oliver

Jay Plotkin
Maria Richardson
Mitch Velasco

JCCI *Forward* Staff

Lois Chepenik
Caroline Thong
Wanda Tivey