School Justice Partnerships: An Overview

Honorable Steven Teske, Chief Presiding Judge, Clayton County, Georgia

Honorable J. Corpening, Chief District Court Judge, District 5
IT’S ABOUT ME
(FOR BOTH OF US)
(SORT OF)
IT’S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

(and the big picture)

(with each other and with our students)
Taking Care of Children
Challenges of Inter-Agency Action
WHAT’S AT STAKE HERE?
(where have we been and where are we going?)
History of the Problem

- Zero tolerance
- Policy shifts: juvenile justice and education
- Law enforcement in schools
- Columbine
- Societal trend toward litigation

- Who is affected?
  - Suspensions?
  - Court involvement?
Impact of Broad Zero Tolerance Policies on School Campus
Why Is This Important?

- We’ve criminalized adolescent behavior
- Research on suspensions
- Phillippi’s comparison: one to court and one not
- Correlation to gang activity
- And yes, the school to prison pipeline
Frontal lobe of brain filters emotion into logical responses is not developed until age 25.

Kids are neurologically wired to do stupid things!

Kids are still under neurological construction.

Kids are being hard-wired and need positive influences such as school.
School Connectedness


- School connectedness is linked to lower levels of substance abuse, violence, suicide attempts, pregnancy, & emotional distress. *Journal of School Health* 72 (4).

Why Is This Important?

- Research shows a strong link between court referrals and dropout rates
- Student arrested in high school is twice as likely to drop out
- Student who appears in court during high school is four times as likely to drop out

Sweeten, Gary, Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement. 24.4, Justice Quarterly, 462-480 (December 2006)
Why is this important

TRAUMATIZED PEOPLE TRAUMATIZE PEOPLE
A Solution

Figure App.1: School Referrals to Clayton County Juvenile Court

Number of Court Referrals

- Number of Court Referrals

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<th>Year</th>
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NEW HANOVER COUNTY JOURNEY
KEY COMPONENTS

- CONVENER
- FACILITATOR
- THE TEAM
- FOCUS ACTS
- DISCIPLINE FACTORS
- GRADUATED RESPONSES
- AGREEMENT
- MONITORING
The Purpose

The purpose of the Interagency Agreement is to:

- Obtain agreement of all parties who respond to non-emergency school disruptions.
- Provide a consistent response to student misbehavior.
- Clarify the role of law enforcement in school disciplinary matters.
- Utilize alternative support services.
- Reduce involvement of law enforcement and court agencies for minor misconduct at school and school-related events.
The Agreement

- Utilize classroom, in-school, family and community strategies and maintain a positive climate within schools.
- Response to school disruptions should be reasonable, consistent and fair.
- Consider relevant factors such as age, nature of severity and impact on the learning environment.
The Agreement

- Hold students accountable for their actions.
- Graduate the response to minor misconduct to provide a continuum of services.
- Provide increasingly more severe sanctions for continued misbehavior.
- Use appropriate redirection and support for disruptive students.
- Use in-school and community resources prior to involvement of law enforcement.
The Agreement

- Clarify the responsibilities of school and law enforcement personnel with regard to non-emergency disruptive behavior promotes the best interests of the student, the school system, law enforcement and the community at large.

- Implement the partnership plan.
Purpose

To truly address behavior when and where it happens

Instead of pushing the behavior out of school and never actually addressing it
Purpose

To return to an approach of discipline (to teach) as opposed to punishment
MINDSET SHIFT
TESKE: “WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT KEEPING KIDS IN SCHOOL WOULD INCREASE GRADUATION RATES.”
QUESTIONS?
Thank You