



be@school

A Program of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office

The be@school mission is to increase school attendance and improve community connections across Hennepin County through a collaborative early intervention providing education and support services to school-age youth and their families.



Every day. On time.

February 2012

Issue 1

Happy New Year!

I am excited to be sending you this first edition of the be@school newsletter. This newsletter has been designed to share program updates, improve communication and share the strengths of collaboration.

The mission of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office is to serve justice and public safety through commitment to ethical prosecution, crime prevention, and innovative and reasoned client representation. The be@school program is a crime prevention initiative and is vital to the success of Hennepin County citizens. I often describe the program as a targeted, tiered intervention, utiliz-

ing a multidimensional model for engagement. While collaborative multidimensional work is not easy, the most successful school attendance intervention programs reflect a multidimensional approach involving the family, school, community and when needed, court (Fantuzzo, 2005). Students experience the best outcomes when we all work together.

So far this school year, we have received approximately 3,748 referrals to the program. This reflects a 21% increase over last year. Similar to previous years, an overwhelming majority of referrals we receive are students ages 15-17. We encourage the

elementary schools to refer, refer, refer so that

We want to hear about your success with be@school! Email your stories and suggestions for our newsletter to abby.hartman@co.hennepin.mn.us.

the pattern of non-attendance is never established.

I hope this letter finds you doing well in the new year. Please contact us if you have questions.

Yours in collaboration,
Tamiko Thomas
be@school program manager



We Asked, You Answered!

Many thanks to all the school personnel who responded to the October survey requesting feedback. There was overwhelming support for the fall training with 93% responding that they felt satisfied with the training they received. Most respondents reported feeling

it was great to have a refresher on the be@school process.

Several of you offered suggestions for improving the training, such as showing a video of a PGM, separating into elementary and secondary groups from the start, and

more informal time for sharing with each other. Specifically, school staff reported wanting to know more about attendance policies of other districts, illness policies, unenrolled students, and the Check and Connect program.

As we design our training for the 2012-2013 school year, we are working to incorporate many of your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback and participation in our program.



Bloomington Kennedy Hall Sweeps Program

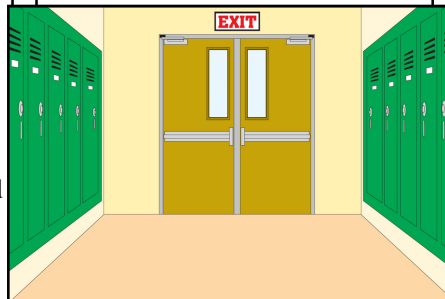
Many thanks to Kennedy High School Principal Andy Beaton for sharing the Hall Sweeps policy with us. We consider this a best practice in addressing on time school attendance.

Principal Beaton reported that the Hall Sweeps Program has had a tremendous impact on the school culture. Last year was Principal Beaton's first year at Kennedy. To acclimate to the school, he conducted focus groups with parents and students. As a result of the focus groups the school established 3 goals: Achievement, School Climate, and Equity.

Last year was the first year implementing the Hall Sweeps Program. Principal Beaton said addressing the issue of tardies supports all three school goals. He also said the action the adults in the building take make a difference in the school.

Principal Beaton reports the reduction of tardies has had a cascading effect on other variables such as teacher morale, school perception and parent connectedness. Last year Kennedy High School experienced a 70% reduc-

tion in tardies from the 2009-2010 school year. The Hall Sweeps Program has reduced classroom disruptions, protected instructional time and allowed greater connections between parents and the school. Here is the program's policy:



The goal of the Hall Sweeps Program is to protect instructional time from the interruption of students arriving late to class. JFK also wants to send a strong message that punctuality is part of showing respect for yourself and our school. The protocol for the hall sweep program is explained below:

1. At the final bell, teachers will direct all students to enter the classroom. After the door is

closed, no student will be allowed to enter without a pass.

2. Those students who are in the hallway and do not have a pass will report to the office. Students must contact their parent/guardian by phone in order to receive a pass to class. If a guardian cannot be reached, lunch detention will be assigned before receiving a pass to class. Students who are repeatedly late to class will receive additional consequences (ISS, parent conference, OSS, behavior contract, etc.).

3. Students who are uncooperative with JFK staff after being caught in the hall sweep will be dismissed for the remainder of the day or suspended the following academic day for insubordination.

4. Parents/guardians of students who are absent or tardy to class will receive an automated telephone call regarding the absence/tardy.

5. If a student is more than fifteen (15) minutes late to any class period, the student will be marked absent.

Upcoming PGMs:

- ✓ Mondays, 3 p.m. at Powderhorn Partners
- ✓ Mondays, 5 p.m. at Brookdale Library
- ✓ Tuesdays, 9 a.m. at Urban League
- ✓ Tuesdays, noon at Division of Indian Work
- ✓ Tuesdays, 5 p.m. at Urban League
- ✓ Thursdays, 5 p.m. at Southdale Library

*Call (612) 348-6041 to verify dates.

Did you know that some experts across the country define chronic absenteeism as missing more than 10% of the school year? (Chang, 2008)



We're on the Web!
www.be-at-school.org

be@school

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Please contact (612) 348-6041 to request be@school posters or brochures. Brochures are available in English, Hmong, Somali, and Spanish.

Meet the be@school Team!

Tamiko Thomas, Program Manager
Linda Ritchie, Contract Manager
Beverly Bushyhead, Program Supervisor
Kenneth Garnier, Outreach Worker/Liaison
Kevin Carlisle, Outreach Worker/Liaison
Lisa Radintz, Office Specialist
Chrissy Hassa, Office Specialist
Roberta Jones, Attorney
Don Johnson, Attorney
Jamie Cork, Attorney
Becky Morrisette, Attorney
Grace Song, Attorney
Travis Adams, Law Clerk
Abby Hartman, Paralegal

Contracted Community Agencies
Center for Policy Planning and Performance
 (612) 874-0535
Centro
 (612) 874-1412
Division of Indian Work-GMCC
 (612) 722-8722
Family Partnership
 (612) 728-2068
Headway Emotional Health Services
 (612) 861-1675
Hmong American Partnership
 (651) 495-9160
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center
 (612) 977-3253
Pillsbury United Communities
 (612) 787-3654
Relate Counseling Services
 (952) 932-7277
The Link
 (612) 871-0748
YMCA
 (612) 789-8803
Youthlink
 (612) 252-1200



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Articles and References

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Baltimore Education Research Consortium (2011). Destination Graduation: Sixth Grade Early Warning Indicators for Baltimore City Schools their Prevalence and Impact.

Chang, N.H. & Romero, M. (2008). "Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades." National Center for Children in Poverty.

Epstein, J.I. & Sheldon, S.B. (2002). "Present and Accounted For: Improving Student Attendance through Family and Community Involvement." *Journal of Educational Research* 95(5): 308-318.

Fantuzzo, J., Grim, S. & Hazan, H. (2005). "Project Start: An Evaluation of a Community-Wide School-Based Intervention to Reduce Truancy." *Psychology in the Schools* vol. 42(6).