

**REPORT OF THE
CITY OF RICHMOND AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Progress Status Report: Truancy Reduction and Prevention Program

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 99

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2005**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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November 30, 2005

The Honorable John H. Chichester
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Virginia General Assembly
P.O. Box 904
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404-0904

The Honorable Vincent F. Callahan, Jr.
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Virginia General Assembly
P.O. Box 1173
McLean, Virginia 22101

Dear Senator Chichester and Delegate Callahan:

The 2005 General Assembly funded a pilot project in the City of Richmond to address truancy and school attendance. Item 146, 7.e.3c of the Appropriation Act calls for the City of Richmond and the Department of Education to develop a plan for project implementation and to provide a status report on the pilot by December 2005. Mayor Wilder approved the plan on May 23, 2005, and it was transmitted to you in June. Full implementation of the pilot began in August.

On behalf of the City of Richmond and our agency, I have enclosed a status report on the project prepared by the City of Richmond Police Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jo Lynne DeMary".

Jo Lynne DeMary

JLD/CAC/cp

Enclosure

c: The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder
Albert Stokes

City of Richmond
Truancy Reduction and Prevention Program
(TRAPP)

Status Report
December 1, 2005

Overview of Program

Richmond's *Truancy Reduction and Prevention Program* (TRAPP) has two primary components to the initiative's overall strategy. The first component focuses on a targeted intensive neighborhood approach while the second component involves a citywide presence in conducting truancy sweeps, assessment, and service linkages for truants and their families. The truancy initiative includes, but is not limited to, individual and family assessments, academic support, parent education, youth employment, family counseling and support, drug prevention initiatives, and intensive, aggressive case management.

Understanding the need for addressing those underlying factors related to the unacceptable truancy rates, the City of Richmond has set an overall goal that will positively impact the issues at hand.

The goal of TRAPP is to implement a comprehensive plan which:

- holds parents and students accountable
- changes the culture of schools from passive acceptance to high expectations
- empowers citizens and businesses to take action against truants
- assesses and prioritizes the community's risk factors associated with truancy and delinquent behavior
- develops successful strategies that will reduce and prevent truancy

TRAPP QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES

Summary of School and Community Partnerships

During July and August, the City was laying the foundation for implementation by hiring and training staff, setting up offices in the targeted communities and meeting with current and potential collaborative partners. While this initiative remains a work in progress, September was a very busy month for building school and community partnerships. While the initiative is citywide, the City has targeted three communities with extremely high truancy and delinquent behavior rates. The reports on those targeted communities follow.

Hillside Community

Six clients were referred to Hillside TRAPP from the Oakgrove-Bellemeade Social Worker. These youth had five unexcused absences. Home visits were conducted by Hillside staff. Five youth were not living at the addresses given by School Social Worker; one youth had an excused absence that

the mother stated had been shared with the school. Hillside staff attempted to obtain additional information from the Oakgrove principal and attendance staff. They were unable to share information, stating it was currently against school code. This issue is being addressed.

One referral for a student who had five unexcused absences was received by the Truancy and Diversion Center. TRAPP staff conducted a home visit to find that the mother had not obtained proper medical documentation for the youth. Staff assisted the family with getting the youth an appointment for a physical. A three-day follow-up concluded that the youth is currently attending school consistently. A non-targeted school referred two youth who lived in the Hillside community to the program. Staff assisted one family with scheduling a medical appointment and referred the youth back to the school worker at the non-targeted school. TRAPP staff is currently assisting the family of the second referral with school registration and documentation; this youth will be attending Oakgrove Elementary School.

Three community walk-ins were serviced this month. Hillside staff assisted two young ladies with career education. As a result, one gained employment as a home health aid, while the other completed enrollment at J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College. She was given school supplies to assist her with her new school year. One family who recently moved to the Hillside Community was assisted with transportation to register their children for school.

The Hillside Community Day was celebrated on Saturday, September 18. TRAPP staff coordinated with Hillside Court Management and Hillside Tenant's Association for an informational and fun-filled day. Hillside staff met and greeted residents, notifying them of the program purpose and giving out program brochures. One of the exciting highlights for the TRAPP staff was the opportunity to donate back-packs filled with school supplies that were given by the Police Department.

Mosby Community

Two clients were referred to the Mosby TRAPP team by the Truancy and Diversion Center. Mosby staff assisted families with medical appointments and obtaining medical records. There was one community walk-in, who was assisted by the staff with scheduling a doctor appointment, allowing the youth to be enrolled in school. The Mosby staff was not successful in the month of September with receiving referrals from their targeted schools, due to lack of information from school personnel.

During the month of September, the Mosby staff did spend many hours meeting with housing tenants, targeted schools and community leaders to introduce them to the program. On September 23, Mosby Court had a Community Day with a wide range of activities sponsored by the tenant's counsel with assistance from the TRAPP program. School supplies and book bags were given to youth in the community.

Highland Park Community

Eleven clients were referred to Highland Park from the Chandler Middle School Dean of Students. One student had five unexcused absences. Four home visits were conducted by case managers. Two youth were not living at the addresses given by schools. The School Attendance Counselor later

found that the two youth no longer attend Chandler Middle School.

Two community walk-in referrals were received by the Diversion Center who was not in the targeted schools.

One referral, a youth with five absences, was received by the Diversion Center. TRAPP staff conducted a home visit to locate the mother and found that there was inadequate care for her and her children. Staff assisted the mother by referring her to the Department of Social Services. These cases are still being managed for intensive case management services.

The Highland Park team visited and met with their targeted schools and community teams to introduce the truancy program during the month of September.

Recreation Activities

The City of Richmond did not conduct any recreational activities during the first quarter.

Training

The following training classes were conducted for, and attended by, TRAPP staff during the month of August:

- Communities in Schools Training
- Truancy and Diversion Center Overview
- Gang Training Part I (Schools)
- Individual Service Plan / Case Management Training
- Individual Educational Plan Training
- City Driving Course
- GILS Automated Database Training

- GILS Database Overview
- School Truancy / Attendance Overview
- Truancy's Overview – Police
- Cultural Diversity Training
- Gang Training Part II
- Police Personnel Rules
- Department of Justice's Program Overview
- City of Richmond's Personnel Policies and Procedures
- Communication Skills Training
- Ride A-Longs (Police)
- TRAPP Overview
- Department of Justice Services Ride A-Longs

The following training classes were conducted for, and attended by, TRAPP staff during the month of September:

- Court procedures pertaining to truancy

Virginia Department of Education Statewide Truancy Prevention – Promoting School Attendance Institute, attended by program manager

Highlights/Program Celebrations

TRAPP Kick-Off/Back to School Event – Mayor Douglas Wilder introduced the TRAPP program to over 80 parents, school personnel, community members, business owners and media at the TRAPP Kickoff on August 30, 2005. The event was held at Martin Luther King Middle School, one of the schools in a targeted community. Several parents and youth showed their commitment by signing contracts accepting responsibility and reiterating their commitment to adhering to school attendance policy.

Sites were invited to participate in Community Day Programs, which gave the staff an opportunity to explain their program and meet their potential clients.

In addition, the City has begun an aggressive awareness campaign that highlights, among other aspects, the initiative's citywide focus, resources, partners and hotline (804-646-ABCD).

Primary Partners

City of Richmond Department of Justice Services
City of Richmond Police Department
Richmond Public Schools
Richmond Redevelopment Housing Authority
Communities in Schools
Richmond Retail Merchants Association
City of Richmond Department of Social Services
13th District Court Services Unit

PROGRAM WORK PLAN
Status November 2005

PROGRAM
CATEGORY Truancy Reduction and Prevention Program

DATE(s) September 05 – June 06

LOCALITY: CITY OF RICHMOND

OUTCOME MEASURES	NUMBERS	ACTUAL		DOCUMENTATION
		BEGIN	END	
1. Number of participants	Hillside – 6 Mosby – 2 Highland Park - 11	September 2005		These youth were referred based on five unexcused absences. (Please note: cases are low due to the fact schools have not given permission to the City to receive attendance information.)
2. Number of participants in compliance with school attendance policy	Hillside – 6 Mosby – 2 Highland Park – 11	September 2005		All youth have been following program and school guidelines.
3. Reduction in crime % of crime reduction during school hours in targeted neighborhoods.	Hillside – 100% increase (one to two) Mosby – 30% decrease Highland Park – 19% decrease	September 2005 – October 31, 2005		Statistics were provided by the crime analyst and are recorded monthly for the targeted neighborhoods. For Hillside, the grand total of major crimes was one during the same reporting period in 2004 compared to two major crimes during the current reporting period.
4. Number of services provided (Groups, Case Management Services, Therapeutic Programs etc.)	Case Management Services are being provided for all 19 clients we have in our TRAPP program.	September 2005		Service plans are completed for each client, and additional services will be provided as needed.
5. Number of community members involved in program	Currently the sites are getting acquainted with their communities, and they are meeting with tenant council members in each housing community to establish working relationships.	N/A		Interviews for community leaders will be done in November
6. Number of participants in workshops, groups etc.	Groups and Workshops have not started.	N/A		Groups will be starting in November
7. Number of public awareness initiatives	Six different public awareness initiatives have been completed.	August 2005 September 2005		Posters through-out the City Media Coverage Brochures Retail Merchants Assoc. Truancy Kick-off