

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND YOUTH SERVICES

June 28, 2010

5:30 PM

Chairman Ouellette called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Ouellette, O'Neil, Osborne, Craig, Arnold

Messrs: M. Boldin, K. Burkush, S. Legasse

Chairman Ouellette addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Updates on drug and alcohol status in the community and proposed goals to be achieved.

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Arnold, it was voted to discuss this item.

Chairman Ouellette stated I basically called this meeting together to first of all familiarize, not only myself, but newer members of the Board and Committee of the activities of the Committee. It is my understanding that this Committee has not met for quite some time. It was pretty active a few years ago. I believe we have a past chairman of the Committee, Alderman O'Neil, so we have a good background and basis of where the Committee was and where we are going. I thought it would be important for this Committee to get active again. I think these issues are very important to the community. That being said, Marty, I'll let you start with where we are going to go as briefly as possible.

Mr. Marty Boldin, Office of Youth Services Director, stated I prepared a document that has essentially seven talking points about seven of the most significant issues that are facing young people in the community today. The first one is truancy, which is pretty significant in our community in terms of being an unmoved mover. When kids aren't going to school, that is really the beginning of significant issues that we have with them in the schools. Also, it is a pretty decent precursor to juvenile delinquency and there is significant need for intervention on that. The second one is access to healthcare, most specifically alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse. Quite frankly, when we don't see the problem or have

resources to deal with the problem, we stop diagnosing the problem. I think whatever we can do to raise awareness about those issues in the community is significant. In Manchester, we have very few resources for young people who have significant issues with substance abuse problems. I think that is pretty important for us. Media literacy, I believe, is probably one of the most significant public health issues of the oncoming generation. According to the Kaiser Foundation, the average American child spends 11.5 hours a day engaged in media. Correlations between maladapted behavior and media consumption are higher than correlations between cigarette smoking and lung cancer. I think that we as a community have a few pretty amazing resources to address that and might want to think about engaging that more significantly. We need to start tracking young people, the next bullet point, between service providers so we get a better idea of utilization, what rates and the way young people move through systems in and around the community. There have been significant dialogues. Alderman O'Neil has been a part of one of those dialogues in the past, and I think that would be very helpful to coordinate service delivery among and between service providers in the community. Obviously, there is significant focus on the City side on violence prevention on bullying. We have been looking at gang culture in Manchester and the prevention of the organization of young gangs in Manchester. I really think that for us, a more useful paradigm is the last bullet point, looking at disconnected youth, trying to find out what we are going to be doing about youth employment and the future of Job Corps in Manchester. Essentially, we are trying to find alternative ways to engage disconnected youth and get them to the places where they need to be. We are really trying to work to establish a sense of belonging in our community for young people and really creating opportunities where young people can be active participants in civic engagement. On each one of these levels, I think that the City of Manchester has some very outstanding ideas, programs and initiatives in place, but if I was going to focus a long term plan for youth in the City, these would be seven points that would be on it overall.

Alderman Craig asked what age are you talking about from a youth perspective?

Mr. Boldin replied I would be thinking from an access perspective when we look at healthcare it is really prenatally to 21, but the Office of Youth Services primarily deals with children in middle school through the end of high school, sometimes in early college.

Alderman Craig asked do you have statistics over time that talk to alcohol use, drug use, or violence with this age group?

Mr. Boldin replied we have the YRBS data, which in Manchester spans 2005, 2007 and 2009. They are pretty comprehensive data that talk about a variety of

risk behaviors. I did not prepare complete reports for the entire Committee tonight, but I can absolutely make those available to you.

Alderman Craig stated or just an overview that would indicate if we have cut down on these issues or if they are getting worse.

Mr. Boldin stated when we look at the overall percentages there are different areas and different subsets of the data that show improvement and there are some subsets in the data that show that there are also developing or increasing problems. Kelly Hobbs of the Makin' It Happen Coalition is working right now with the Superintendent's Office to present an overall review of the YRBS data, which will be happening for the School Board. I think it would be a great idea to replicate or bring that data here as well. I'm reluctant to talk about any specific data point here without providing an overall view of the whole thing.

Alderman Arnold stated Marty, I have a couple questions about the handout. Under the first bullet point of truancy, you have, 'Beware of the dropout trap'. Is that a term used in your line of work that might refer to something more?

Mr. Boldin stated I think we are looking a lot at graduation rates and dropout rates and statistically speaking, a dropout is hard to define. I think one of the most important pieces of data that is emerging for us is looking at data around something called disconnected youth, which covers a variety of activities that allow us to look at young people who are not just engaged in school, but civically engaged or engaged in after school programs to really start identifying where young people are outside of positive social connections. I feel like if we focus a whole bunch on a number and don't pay attention to the overall picture of whether youth in our community are disconnected, we could lose the forest for the trees.

Alderman Arnold stated I partially agree with that assessment, although I will say that I think that it is perhaps easier for policy makers when there are numbers presented.

Mr. Boldin stated there are numbers that will help us identify disconnected youth, and I'm not saying that the dropout numbers are insignificant or shouldn't be evaluated. It absolutely should. Truancy dropouts have a lot of efforts put in across the nation. I'm just saying that we need to be informed about the data overall, not just a particular number.

Alderman Arnold asked on the last bullet point, talking about the role of the family, I am interested to know, and not necessarily tonight, but throughout the course of our discussions and perhaps over the summer and the months that follow, what other communities are doing to address this because we hear a lot

that it starts at home or you need to get the parents involved and I think it is very difficult, for at least this Alderman, to figure out what we can do to promote parental involvement and family involvement. I think that would be helpful. The only other question I have is on gangs in Manchester. I don't know if you want to respond to that. I think it might properly be directed to the Police Department representative, but if you want to comment on the status of gangs in Manchester.

Mr. Boldin stated well I think one of the most significant issues for us right now is that we are trying to develop with the Police Department, the School District and a variety of other service agencies, after school programs, the Office of Youth Services, Department of Health and Human Services through Division of Juvenile Justice Services and the Division of Children, Youth and Families and I know I am leaving people away from the table. Alderman Long is at the table. The City of Manchester under the Weed n' Seed initiative was awarded a grant to develop a protocol or a series of protocols to help prevent gang evolution in Manchester. I think the fairest statement is that young people in Manchester are engaging in what we would call identified gang behavior and that behavior is problematic, but what is important to say is also that the young people who we have involved in gangs...when we say gang we don't mean gangs like there are in Boston or Detroit or Los Angeles, and a lot of those stereotypes are really not useful for us anymore. What OYS and the Police Department and all these other stakeholders are trying to do is identify young people who are at risk. We are actually focusing on three specific areas that are important. The first is the development of data sets that are going to enable us to actually understand and target services at the needs that are out there. The second one is to improve communication among and between service providers and frankly, we are in the process of developing, with the help of Information Systems, some pretty exciting ways of intervening and having improved communication. The last one is to actually implement evidence-based practices for intervention with gangs in Manchester. With all that said, Lieutenant Legasse will add value to that conversation.

Alderman Arnold stated I appreciate that overview and I appreciate that you made that distinction between gangs in Boston or larger cities like Los Angeles where I don't think we quite have that level of gang activity, but nonetheless we do have issues in Manchester that we certainly should not be neglecting.

Alderman O'Neil asked Marty, of the seven bullets, what items are measurable? I'm not sure all seven can be measured.

Mr. Boldin replied frankly, almost every single one of these data points have some measures, but some are harder than others. The first one, truancy, is something that we could get some real hard data on and look at and really target resources at it and almost on a month by month basis make determinations about whether or

not practices are proving to be fruitful. Quiet frankly, access to resources related to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are easily documentable and should be, either through SAP programs in the schools or through the Office of Youth Services or other providers in the community easy to try to figure out how we can enhance and utilize those services as need be. Media literacy would be more difficult to measure in terms of outcomes, but it can be done. There are several initiatives about using tracking systems which would provide us a very strong data measurement for the way young people move among and between key service providers in the community. I think that kind of data would be invaluable to CIP, United Way and City planning. Violence prevention is a work in progress. I know the Police Department, the School District and a variety of other key stakeholders are working on that. I'm not really sure what the actual measures would be at that point, but I know incidents of school violence are absolutely measurable and reportable. I think looking at developing an overall infrastructure around youth employment and disconnected youth is probably more difficult to measure and the sense of belonging, I want to let Alderman Arnold know that there is hope. There are programs out there that really do measure and try to evocate youth belonging and community belonging. The measurements around that are obviously fuzzier than some of the things that I mentioned.

Alderman O'Neil stated so what I heard was that truancy is measurable. We should get that data, go back some amount of time, maybe ten years, to see what that data is. I think that would be helpful. Same thing with access to healthcare. I agree that media literacy is not really a measurable item. The tracking system is an action item or a tool. I know there was a discussion and for some reason the decision was made not to move forward on it.

Mr. Boldin stated financial. We are really trying to find the resources to implement it.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think it was a little more than financial, but the mechanics of how it was going to work and who controlled it were probably the biggest stumbling blocks.

Mr. Boldin stated I think we have worked through the School District.

Alderman O'Neil stated well, if you have I'm not aware of it.

Mr. Boldin stated we can have that conversation.

Alderman O'Neil stated so that is an action item. Violence prevention and bullying, there has to be data on school violence and data on non-school violence.

Mr. Boldin stated absolutely.

Alderman O'Neil stated we should get that data. There will be numbers on youth employment. There are a number of City associated youth employment programs that may involve Parks and Recreation, your office, along with MCRC. That data should exist and we should be able to at least get that again. We should go back at least five years on all these and it might make a difference. I would like to see the data on truancy, access to healthcare, violence prevention and bullying, violence data and youth employment. Although I don't disagree with your...I wrote it down as feel good data, where you talked about an overall picture. I do agree with Alderman Arnold that that is okay, but the policy makers need measurable data. We need to know that when money is being spent we are making a difference. You made a comment about seeing through the forest. That is all well and good, but we need to work on measureable data to know where we can put our resources and make a difference. I would think that by September that we should be able to get data at least on those four bullets on truancy, healthcare, violence and youth employment.

Chairman Ouellette stated I think it would be helpful if Scott and Karen could come up and engage in the conversation because some of these things involve both of your departments. What are your initial thoughts, Karen, in terms of being able to provide the Committee data? I think that is what we are looking for to move forward. Obviously, we are not going to meet again in the summer months, but I certainly would like to do something in September, I know it is very busy, but maybe September or October to start looking at data in terms of supporting your three departments to move forward on these issues. Do you have any comments?

Alderman Osborne stated like Alderman O'Neil said, once we get the tracking and the data and all that, what do you think in your mind...you deal with a lot of youth and everything else so I think you know a lot about that and how their minds work and everything else so do you think deep down inside would be the cure for all of this? Education only?

Mr. Boldin replied I think Alderman O'Neil is actually making the best point. The next major thing that youth service organizations are going to have to do is really start to identify data sets that are going to be able to point the resources we have to specific problems. Manchester actually has a pretty long history of doing really effective things when different service providers coordinate about a particular issue. The Healthy Manchester Leadership Council did a great job in reducing teen pregnancy in Manchester about a decade ago because a whole bunch of people focused on that issue overall and studied the data on it. If I were going to say what area I would like to see resources pointed at right now, the biggest area in Manchester, for the Office of Youth Service, would be the truancy issue and

seeing how we could work on that. The biggest cure that we could have is to really start to look at how kids move among and between different service providers in the community because by seeing what cohorts of kids use what services, we can identify what services are needed. We can also identify what actual utilization rates are. We can also map where kids drop off the attention span of adults in the community. We need to know where kids are and that is going to help us know where to put our services and the data point for the has to do with tracking.

Alderman Osborne stated the old saying is that you are your environment, but I think the thing here is that problems can be cured a lot easier at home. I think it is where it all begins if you think about it. It is rough today. Parents have to work two jobs and things of that sort. The kids get stranded and hang around with the wrong bunch, so you are your environment.

Ms. Karen Burkush, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, replied sure. I'll use Marty's talking points to fill in the School District's position. With regards to truancy, we absolutely can get you that data. That is probably going to be the cleanest data that we actually have a definition for. We can get that overtime. We are in the process actually of revising our truancy law because there is a revision to the law, which does require parent engagement so we do have three parents on the work group that we are working on. At the same time, we are looking at our attendance policy. All of those do require parental participation. With regards to access to healthcare, the alcohol and tobacco as Marty mentioned, we do have a student assistance program. Unfortunately for the FY10 budget which we just finished, we did reduce the middle school student assistance counselors so we had two student assistance program counselors who were doing three middle schools so as you can image, there is a challenge to meet the needs of all of the students and there was a waiting list this year in all of the middle schools. Of course, the SAP, the counselors themselves, do a tremendous job. In February, we got some data on it and as of February at the high school level there was about a 17.3% referral rate. It is greatly used. It is used not just for drug and alcohol problems, but if children are having family problems at home or going through some type of grieving, the counselors are there for the students. At the beginning of the year, they let all of the students know that they are available. It is similar usage and referral rate at the middle school. With regards to the violence prevention and the bullying, as you probably all know because it got a lot of media attention, the New Hampshire bullying law has been changed and it has passed. We had training recently which is a requirement of the law that we have to train our staff as well as our parents so we did the beginnings of that on Monday. That was the day that the teachers were available to us for some training and we divided it into three sections of high school, elementary and middle school. Actually, Lieutenant Legasse spent the whole day with us and the SROs who are assigned to our

schools also attended because we thought it was really important. The Superintendent went over the law and every single staff member in the Manchester School District who was present, the majority were, was provided a copy of the bullying law and then we had a training session with a person who did the introduction to changing behaviors to avoid bullying. It is really about a climate change and about how adults react to students. We can provide data with regards to violence in schools, but I am not 100% convinced that it is clean because of how we define things. This year when we worked on our code of conduct, and Lieutenant Legasse and Marty were members of that work group, we took our student information system and we defined what people are going to put in so we narrowed it down from 121 to about 60 so that everyone know that when you put in assault on a staff member, everyone know what that means; everyone knows what trespassing means. That I think will be helpful, but we can certainly get information from the past, just with a disclaimer that it might not have been the same and there were so many codes that when they indicated that someone did something at school there could have been some freedom in terms of how they defined it. Again, we have a code of conduct that was revised in several sections. It requires parental involvement, it requires reentry plans so if a student is suspended from school there has to be a reentry plan and the parent and the student have to participate in that so there is more parent engagement, so that sort of touches on the belonging part. We are going to continue to have the training for the bullying throughout the year. We have not selected a speaker or figured out how we are going to train all the parents. We may go school to school or have it geographically because we really do want to get to as many parents as possible and have it at different times of the day. The other part of our code of conduct that we did was the drug and alcohol section. It has always been a code that incorporates or has a first level so if students are caught with drugs or in the presence of drugs, their first consequence is impacted by the fact if they are going to go to the SAP or not. If they chose to go to the SAP for ten or fifteen days, then their consequence is reduced. It has always been that way to try to address the issue in a positive and proactive manner versus just having a consequence and having them expelled or suspended from school.

Chairman Ouellette stated I noticed that staffing is an issue, especially in the middle schools for the SAPs. Is that being addressed with this year's budget or not?

Ms. Burkush replied it has not increased the positions this year.

Chairman Ouellette stated the other issue of staffing that we have talked about when I was a member of the Board of School Committee, and I'm sure they continue to talk about it today, is the fact that there is only one truant officer for the entire District.

Ms. Burkush stated that's accurate.

Chairman Ouellette stated that is a big issue in terms of not having enough hours in the day for one person to handle 15,800 students. I think that as policy makers we need to look at those two areas moving forward in terms of the data because if you had, and I'm sure there is plenty of work for another truancy officer, the data would be more complete.

Ms. Burkush stated actually, I can't not mention the fact that the Office of Youth Services, John Donovan or other individuals from the Office of Youth Services often accompany our attendance officer and sometime we have the SROs helping out. Everyone in the communities of the youth serving agencies has tried to help, but I absolutely agree with you that one attendance officer is not adequate for the City of Manchester, especially since we do not allow people to go into homes alone. You really have to have two people. We have the assistance of these two agencies and we also have a court liaison who is part time and other times there have been people in our office, if it is an emergency situation when our attendance officer will come down and ask if anyone could come with him just so there is a second person. That child is ready to go to school and we have to seize that opportunity. We have special education coordinators; I've gone myself; administrative assistance just to have that second person there because it is not a safe thing to be sending people into homes alone. In 1942 or 1949 there were four attendance officers in the City of Manchester and a lot fewer students.

Alderman Osborne asked on the new bullying law, what type of teeth does this have?

Ms. Burkush replied it has the progression of any other physical assault. They can be suspended. It can be verbal assault, physical assault, taunting, things like that, but you go through the progressive discipline of suspension and it can be expulsion from school.

Alderman Osborne asked does this stay within the School District or can it go to the Police station?

Mr. Scott Legasse, Manchester Police Department, replied it is focused on the schools. It doesn't make it a crime. The bullying statute is geared towards the administrative policy with the School District in structuring timelines and getting parental involvement in cases.

Chairman Ouellette stated I was always under the impression that it was a crime, but it's not.

Alderman Osborne asked is that because of the age?

Mr. Legasse replied no. Without speaking to anybody...I think the focus is to stop the bullying in school, not make it a crime, but address policies that we are actually lacking in the School District statewide. Parents weren't getting involved because they didn't know. Now what is going to happen is schools are mandated to get the parents involved. I think there is a timeline on the disposition administratively for the school to keep the parents involved.

Alderman Osborne asked what if the child was physically hurt and it was off school grounds?

Mr. Legasse replied simple assault can be bullying or criminally threatening. When I am talking to parents and they tell me their kid is being bullied in a big long story and in the story we have a criminal threat for simple assault, I tell them right away that I don't need to deal with the bullying part; my job is to deal with the simple assault and the criminal threat. We address it the same way, but for a title of a juvenile petition, we are not going to type a delinquency petition for bullying. It will be a simple assault or whatever the criminal or delinquent behavior is.

Alderman Osborne asked is the new bullying law passed out to all the students in all the schools?

Ms. Burkush replied it has not yet been sent out to all of the schools.

Alderman Osborne stated I think it is a good idea.

Ms. Burkush stated it is part of our student code of conduct so that is printed over the summer and then it is distributed to every single student. It will be sent home the first day of school with every single student. It will be posted on our website soon. We actually have to develop a policy and we're trying to pull apart the law so we have the policy part and then all the regulations and what the procedures are going to be, so the teeth part, parents know.

Alderman Osborne stated this is the big thing. The parents have to get their hands on that piece of paper. That is a big thing.

Ms. Burkush stated and we do, by law, have to do training with parents.

Alderman Osborne stated when I came out with that graffiti thing for or five years ago, I worked kind of hard on that, but I was all by myself then, but anyway, as

you notice on the three channels, 22, 23 and 16, you'll see that on the TV a lot—graffiti, jail time. You have probably seen that on television, right? It is a good reminder to have the stations. It wouldn't hurt if you could talk to the TV stations so they could put that on TV because the bullying thing is getting to be out of hand a little bit and the more we know about what is going on out there the better it is going to be. I can't think of a better way than using all the advertising you can for nothing.

Alderman Craig stated Karen, just one more question regarding bullying. Within that policy, will you be talking about enforcement and how you are going to insist on consistent enforcement from school to school and grade to grade?

Ms. Burkush replied yes, we are. That is what we are going to do in terms of the regulations. You do this first and then have model forms so principals will be filling that out. I think defining things was a problem with our previous policy. Things weren't defined so it wasn't clear. We are working on that.

Alderman Craig stated Marty, you had mentioned regarding truancy how student moved from one service to another to another. When you are providing us with the data could you also provide, within each bullet, the programs of services are that are available to these students or youth? I'm just not familiar with all of them.

Mr. Boldin replied sure.

Alderman Craig stated regarding truancy, I think a part of that may be students who are not going into a service. Do you agree? They are dropping out of school and they are done. What are we doing about those kids?

Mr. Boldin replied I think that the major issue is really trying to get a clear idea on how many times a child is absent and what services are available to them. One thing that Karen is saying is that with the limited numbers of staff who are specifically responsible for high truancy in young people that lessens the number of young people who can be engaged before the behavior becomes problematic. We are working pretty nicely together with the resources that we have, but I think we need more.

Alderman Craig asked did we ever do anything with the work that the Mayor's Youth Advisory Counsel did last year? They identified key risk factors that should have been incorporated into the School District's system so that they could identify these students early on, the high risk.

Mr. Boldin replied the final draft of the implementation plan and progress on the implementation plan has been prepared for final review by the Superintendent of

Schools and Mayor Gatsas. My assumption is that sometime in the fall a full presentation will be made to both Boards.

Alderman Craig asked is there any way we could incorporate some of those data points? Research has shown that they are very simple and if we can incorporate those into the system now, sooner rather than later, I think it would help everyone involved. If teachers are looking at a student's data and it shows they have been out of school for a number of days or they are moved from school to school...is there any way that we can get that going?

Ms. Burkush replied absolutely. I think we can look at the progress because when Senate Bill 18 was passed, and Gary Hunter is our consultant from the DOE, there are a lot of programs and services and supports that have been put in place since that time. It would probably be a good time to look at those, but I can speak to the Superintendent about that.

Alderman O'Neil stated we don't need it for tonight, but is there a way for someone to summarize, to get to us at a later date, one or two pages on the bullying? There is going to be a point where that fine line from that administrative internal school issue to where it becomes a crime and I think Alderman Osborne was going down that road. I don't know if the law is clear as to where that fine line is or if it is open for interpretation. Maybe between the District and the Police Department and maybe including Youth Services, if someone can summarize the new bullying law. I'm not asking for your interpretations, I guess. That fine line has to be defined. Where is it? Where does it stop being an administrative function of the School District and become a crime and now an issue of the Police Department and the court system? I think that would be good for all of us to discuss. I don't know where it is exactly where it is, but I tend to lean more that it is going to become a crime earlier. It doesn't mean I'm right, but that is what I believe based on the current status of what is going on in our City. It might be helpful for all of us if there is a way to summarize it and maybe break down the new statute on it. That would be helpful. Also, the issue of truancy, we talked about how it is measurable. The School District would have some pretty good data on it. It is clear that our current structure in how we try to administer it, and I say we as a City, it's not that it doesn't work or is inefficient. I don't know what to call it. To have one truancy officer and he has to try to find an assistant superintendent or a police officer or a school administrator to go out with him, what does he maybe see? Five to ten kids a day? I don't know how he can see any more than that. I guess my question as we move forward is if there is a model. Usually somebody somewhere has made strides in particular issues. Sometimes we are the first ones out of the box, but many times we are able to borrow ideas from other places. I throw this out for all three agencies here tonight, but is there a model out there, based on data collected, that a community, not a town of 1,000

kids or the City of New York, but a city of 75,000 to 175,000 people that has made a difference in this truancy issue? There must be a model that we can take and fine tune it to fit Manchester because this is a big issue that continues to be a big issue. As a community, we are not doing a very good job of trying to resolve it. The role of the SRO in the truancy issue...Scott and I were talking a little earlier, but it is my opinion that the roles of the School Resource Officers need to be clearly defined and consistent in the seven and now going to be eight schools if MST comes on board. It has to be clearly defined. I think the administrative offices have a certain thought process and it may not be the same in the eight schools. What is the role of the School Resource Officer, both on the truancy issue and in general? I know the Chief is working with, and I may be getting ahead of myself, Dr. Brennan, on trying to come up with a plan. I don't know if it is actually doing that, clearly defining the role of the School Resource Officer. I opened my roll with the question regarding truancy so I'll let you answer that then if someone wants to take a shot at the overall role of the School Resource Officer they can.

Mr. Legasse stated as you said, the Chief and Dr. Brennan have been working quite a bit on the plan. That certainly could be part of it or we could develop a policy. As we had talked before, a lot of times it is the relationship between the individual SRO and the individual school administrator as to what point the issue becomes a police issue. Some administrators want to handle as much as they can in house and deal with it to correct the behavior and not make a crime out of it. There are other administrators who are in line with you and are a little tougher. They want the Police Department involved sooner. It doesn't mean that we are going to make an arrest, but we get involved a little earlier.

Alderman O'Neil asked Scott, can I stop you right there? As a 20 year police officer, shouldn't it be consistent and clear in all the schools?

Mr. Legasse replied I would expect that whatever service that principals are looking for it falls in the criminal or delinquent arena. I'm not looking for the SROs to be doing other duties because honestly, if there is downtime, it is just like their patrol route they start patrolling the hallways and they are walking around. Downtime to me doesn't mean that they aren't doing anything. I'm hoping that they aren't being busied up. I'm not hearing that they are unnecessarily being busied up with anything. I'll give you a good example. There is a lot of activity done between the SROs and the school administrators when they hear of a fight. It is not a police matter at that point. There is bickering going back and forth and they are hearing things. I fully want the SROs involved with the administrators and there are a bunch of different interviews that go on. Those are the types of things that I like to see and hear about because they are preventing something from happening. That is a non-criminal role, but they are doing crime prevention and I

think that that is great police work. That is what community policing is all about. They are working with the administrators and they are trying to prevent something from happening. I can work to tightening things up with the School District so that at least there is a better understanding of what we want the role of the SRO to be from school to school.

Alderman O'Neil asked Scott, what specifically about truancy and the role of the SRO with truancy? Could the SROs play a larger role? Obviously, if they get involved in going out it means they are not in the building. Is it something the juvenile division could be doing? I know all the investigators have caseloads up to here, but is there something in the bigger picture that the Police Department could possible do to help on the truancy issue?

Mr. Legasse replied we'll do whatever we can to help. To speak directly to the caseload and caseload management, I don't have another eight staff members in the unit to go and run out and track down all the other truants. That's just the reality of it. I may have two other investigators working day shifts in a given time. That is where it is at, but if there is help that people are asking for we'll go out and help, but it wouldn't be something that we are looking for a police officer on a routine basis to go out and see if someone is lying in bed. If they need some help we will give help when it is needed.

Alderman Arnold stated I thank the three of you for bearing with us. I know we are dealing with a lot of issues tonight. Karen, you said, I want to make sure I heard you right, that you could provide statistics on the SAP?

Ms. Burkush replied yes. We can also provide statistics on that for the whole year, I would just have to get in touch with the staff over the summer. For the fall we could definitely have that.

Alderman Arnold asked Scott, is there a report that is somewhat current on gang activity in the City? Is there anything that has been published or compiled by the department?

Ms. Legasse replied nothing that I am familiar with, definitely not with the kids or juveniles. I can't speak for Captain Kelley, but something like that might be more regional and developed through a task force if there is anything. Again, I guess the answer is that I'm not too sure that there is anything out there.

Alderman Arnold asked Karen, can I ask you, and I might be making this up, but I could have sworn that the School District did something with parents or maybe it is staff that has to do with gang activity? Am I making that up?

Ms. Burkush replied I know that Jamie Branch did something with our administrators so maybe you heard about that. He did a great presentation at one of our principals meetings. I believe, and Lieutenant Legasse can correct me, Detective Branch has done some trainings, at least at the McLaughlin School and some other schools of overviews.

Mr. Legasse stated yes, Jamie is our in house guy. It is more or less self taught through the years, but he has gone to some schools and he has a presentation that he put on.

Alderman Arnold asked would it be possible for you to touch base with him and if he has any written materials to get copies?

Mr. Legasse replied sure.

Alderman Osborne asked Karen, do you have a copy of the bullying law?

Ms. Burkush replied not with me, I don't. I didn't realize that was going to be a topic. I thought we were just doing drugs and alcohol, but I can get it immediately.

Alderman Osborne stated whenever you can give it to the courier I would appreciate that.

Chairman Ouellette stated in terms of the media literacy, Karen, if I remember right, Rona Zlokower had a program for media literacy. Is she still involved in that? I think she would be a good resource to tap into in terms of that because she is very thorough with her research in media literacy.

Ms. Burkush replied absolutely, you are correct. We can get that from her.

Chairman Ouellette asked Lieutenant, do you have anything else to add or have we touched on things that you were going to say tonight?

Mr. Legasse replied in preparation for this, the one thing that I did was focus on the drug and alcohol issue and I specifically asked the SROs because they deal with the kids each and every day. To nobody's surprise marijuana and alcohol are still used and then it is prescription medication, which I don't think would be a surprise to anybody. That is pretty much a growing trend across the board in both adults and juveniles across the country.

Chairman Ouellette asked do you see a rise in drug and alcohol use among the youth or is it pretty much flat?

Mr. Legasse replied I didn't pull all the stats through past years. When I produce some stats for juveniles, don't get hung up on numbers because you are talking about a smaller population so sometimes it doesn't seem like it is that much. I think the numbers that we are going to come together with, whether it be through the SAP folks or Marty's people, we look at it globally. We are just dealing with the cases where kids get arrested. We all know that that is not the true number. I can get you some statistics to give you some idea of where it is with the past number of years. We are dealing with two computer systems so they are going to be a little different number wise. The newer system is a little better to pull direct information from for specific kinds of crimes, but I'll get you some information for tracking.

Alderman O'Neil asked Scott, just to follow up on your comment about...was there any order to you mentioning marijuana, alcohol and prescription drugs? Is there is any data on the use of those three that might show that marijuana has higher use in the high school, but prescription drugs in the middle schools? Do you have data that breaks it down that way?

Mr. Legasse replied I could hopefully get as specific as you want, certainly for 2009. Beyond that it might not be as good, but the statistics that I looked at for just last year, marijuana was the overriding problem out of the 39 cases of kids who were arrested. Keep in mind that that is 16 and below so you are dealing with a very tight section of the community. Of the 39, 36 were marijuana and the other three dealt with prescription medication. That gives you an idea on the drug end just on the arrest cases. Alcohol in the juvenile world, I would have to go back and dig for numbers, but when it comes to minors, you are dealing with people under 21, but to charge people the statute, it says that 16 and above you are considered an adult. Really, the statistics that I have for you for kids who are 15 and under, there were only six of those cases that we dealt with. The rest of them were minors and the bulk of those involved were older kids, 18, 19, and 20.

Alderman O'Neil stated I know we are asking for a lot tonight, but I think it may be helpful. It is a good opportunity for the City to look at it to include the City, the School District and our departments to look at where we are, where we have been and where we can be going. We're all in this for the long haul so I don't think it is anything that we are looking for that we need tomorrow. Maybe we can plug away as boards have done in the past to try to address a certain issue over a number of years.

Mr. Boldin stated I have three data points that respond to Alderman O'Neil's question from Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data for 2005, 2007 and 2009. They indicated that over the last six years, essentially somewhere between 35% and

42% of young people have had at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days. Somewhere between 23% and 24% had used marijuana once in the last 30 days. Right around 10% of youth have used prescription drugs in the last 30 days. This is high school youth, but that data, being taken over such large numbers over such a significant period of time, seems to be relevantly stable and pretty reliable.

Alderman Osborne stated staying on the same subject, what grade levels do you find that alcohol and prescription drugs are being used?

Mr. Boldin replied we see the use of alcohol and drugs in middle school students all the time.

Alderman Osborne asked that the highest problem, the middle school?

Mr. Boldin replied no, it escalates until early adulthood, but we see the onset in sixth or seventh grade for alcohol and drug use and those numbers increase through early adulthood.

Alderman Osborne asked but the percentage in middle school and high school...

Mr. Boldin stated we don't have that data.

Alderman Osborne stated I was just curious on that one. On the psychological end of it, what makes you feel or what do you think makes these kids want to do, whether it might be alcohol or prescription drugs or marijuana? Everybody has their choice, is that it? Some might do marijuana, but never do prescription drugs; some will do the alcohol thing and never touch the other two...how does that all work?

Mr. Boldin replied well I think the data tells us that there are really three significant pieces of information that we can analyze to glean the likelihood that someone will use or abuse alcohol or other drugs. The most significant one on an individual basis has to do with hereditary factors, family history, rules within the family around using alcohol or other drugs. Another one has to do with young people having tolerance or being able to consume larger amounts of alcohol or drugs than their peers and still appear to function. One of the most significant issues that we can look at that is a very interesting data point looks at distribution points. In other words, the number of access points that people have to actually obtain alcohol or other drugs directly corresponds to use patterns in certain geographic areas.

Ms. Burkush stated I just wanted to add to Alderman O'Neil's question about truancy. We can't forget that juvenile probation and parole assist us a great deal

with students who are truant, especially those who are actually on probation. Frank Nugent and the gentlemen and ladies who work for him, if John Crookshank calls them, even if it is a family that they are familiar with, if they are free they will assist and then through WYR, which is the wrap for youth resiliency that is out of OYS. They do a lot around truancy. Finally, I think the SROs assist if they know a family or know because of the community policing what is going on so John Crookshank may have a connection with them just to get information if they know where the students have been or just a little bit about their background. They are very helpful. The Department of Juvenile Justice also assists a great deal.

Alderman O'Neil stated it seems very centralized that it has to go through that one person and then he has to try to get it out and get the assistance, whether it is juvenile probation and parole, the Police Department or the Superintendent's Office. Is there a model that we could attempt to adopt here as a community? This is not a School District issue; this is a community issue. Is there a model out there for a city with approximately, a little small or larger, the same population of students? It might require some investment of some resources to do it, but what is that model?

Ms. Burkush replied I know one that the School District believed worked quite well with, was it Lieutenant Paula Glennon at the time, when there was some grant money out there and she came up with the acronym of CLAS, collaboration to locate absent students. Once or twice a week a police officer and our attendance officer or our court liaison, one or the other, would go out with a list of students. I think that was great. We had resources at the time. Unfortunately, that grant is gone, but that model we thought was great for our community, if we ever had any resources.

Alderman O'Neil asked is there any data that would show the success? I know Paula was a lieutenant a long time ago.

Ms. Burkush stated I believe it was right before she retired and went to Florida. Then Kevin Kelley was on it a little bit.

Chairman Ouellette stated it was about eight or ten years ago.

Alderman O'Neil stated if there is any data that might be helpful and maybe that is where we need to go. That sounds interesting.

Chairman Ouellette stated Alderman O'Neil and I were discussing that it is good to have this meeting because these are discussions that do not just pertain to the School District or any one or two agencies. It is a City issue and it needs to be

addressed. I think this Committee should be charged with coming up with a plan moving forward. The data that you will collect will be invaluable to this Committee moving forward. I too think that the truancy situation needs to change. It is going to take a commitment from the City and the School District as well to move forward with that. I think there is a willingness to do that, providing that we are not just throwing dollars at another failed program, but it really is something we can sink our teeth into that will work. I think we will support it. That being said, is there anything else?

Alderman Osborne asked all this data will be sent by courier? That way we can look it over and study it a little bit.

Chairman Ouellette stated I was going to suggest giving you the summer months, come up with the data, the three of you work together and probably call me when you have it ready. Then what I would do, if it is ready sometime either mid or late September, is plan our next meeting accordingly after everybody has had the information for a couple of weeks so they can go through it and not be rushed to come to the Committee. I want everybody prepared when they come here to talk about how we are going to move forward and what plans we are going to try to use to tackle these issues.

Alderman Osborne asked whenever they do have it, they will send it to us regardless, all in one package?

Chairman Ouellette replied that's correct. What I was saying is that we will make sure we schedule the next meeting sometime within at least a couple of weeks so everyone has a chance to look at it.

Alderman Osborne so we have enough time to go over it and have questions if there are any.

Alderman O'Neil stated just to follow up with the Assistant Superintendent, Karen, you greatly intrigued me with this CLAS thing. It was one police officer with either the School District truant officer or, I didn't catch the other position?

Ms. Burkush replied our court liaison who at the time was full time, but now is part time. Two of them would go out. They would take a cruiser. The other individual would be doing follow up on the phone so it was stretching our resources.

Alderman O'Neil stated I would like the data on that and how much money was involved from the grants.

Chairman Ouellette stated I want to thank the three of you for coming in and engaging the Committee. Thank you very much.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Craig, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee