



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: March 21, 2023

In Control: Public Safety Committee

DEPARTMENT: Municipal Courts

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Carla Obledo

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

A Municipal Court update concerning the Municipal Court Juvenile Court Case Manager Program.

SUMMARY:

The San Antonio Municipal Court Juvenile Court Case Manager Program oversees the administration of truancy prevention and intervention assistance, supervision of juvenile court orders, and initiating restorative efforts and restitution programs for juveniles. Assistance is provided through services delivered by juvenile case managers (JCMs).

The Bexar County 436th Juvenile District Court handles juvenile offenders from the age of 10 to the age of 17 who have been accused of violations of the Texas Penal Code. Judge William “Cruz” Shaw presides this Court and he will be providing an overview to the Public Safety Committee of the functions of this Court.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City of San Antonio Municipal Court Juvenile Court Case Manager Program

The role of a JCM is to prevent behaviors in children that would increase their involvement in the justice system, and deter juvenile crime at the local level. JCMs assist with administering juvenile court dockets, and supervise the administration of court orders for juvenile cases. The Court's JCMs also perform additional services such as overseeing summer community service programs, administering diversion classes, conducting mediations, and collaborating with St. Mary's Law School to hold peer court proceedings.

In 2015, a truancy reform bill was passed in the Texas Legislature. House Bill 2398 effectively decriminalized truancy, making it now a civil offense. The practice of fining students and parents for missing school was shown to disproportionately affect minority and poor students, as students increasingly found themselves with a criminal conviction on their records before graduating high school. The San Antonio Municipal Court Juvenile Services Program administers a truancy prevention and intervention services framework which holds students accountable for non-attendance, in collaboration with the school districts and charter schools.

The Court's case manager program handles cases from school districts, and charter schools within Bexar County. Cases handled by the Court under student non-attendance range from elementary to high school with a service population of approximately 380,000 children.

Through the program, communications with a JCM, a school administrator, the child, and their parent/guardian is initiated when a student is flagged with 3+ unexcused absences. Upon escalation of absences, intervention in the form of a contractual agreement to deter truant behavior is implemented. Continued absences result in more formal proceedings before a Municipal Court Judge for truancy mediation.

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ISSUE:

Briefing on the City of San Antonio Municipal Court Juvenile Case Manager Program presented by Municipal Court Presiding Judge Carla Obledo.

Briefing on the Bexar County 436th Juvenile District Court presented by Presiding William "Cruz" Shaw.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.