



March 13, 2008

**Termination of Marriage and Family Counseling Truancy Prevention Family Support Contract**

**Item IV.B.**

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<b>Recommended Action:</b>	JWB staff is recommending the termination of the Marriage and Family Counseling Truancy Prevention Family Support Program contract, effective, April 30, 2008.
<b>Issue:</b>	The program is experiencing underutilization of program services.
<b>Program:</b>	Truancy Prevention Family Support Program.
<b>Budget Impact:</b>	The FY 07-08 budget was \$171,717. Transfer of the remaining allocation to community contingency in FY 07-08. In FY 08-09, these funds will be used for the Family Counseling Program.
<b>Strategic Plan Goal:</b>	Wisely invest the public's resources.

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**Background:**

In March 2006, the MFC Truancy Prevention Family Support program began implementation in six elementary schools and was part of the JWB Truancy Initiative. Since then the program has faced challenges in meeting its contracted service levels. In FY 06-07, the program served 48 youth, 36% of their contracted service levels. One of the challenges the program faces is that school board employees must obtain parental consent prior to a referral to the program, according to the Federal law FERPA. In FY 05-06, the program staff was able to attend Child Study Team meetings and was able to receive referrals prior to obtaining parental consent from school board personnel. Previously agency staff obtained parents consent. In FY 06-07, the School Board Attorney determined this process was no longer in compliance with the law and policy of the school board, and program staff had to stop attending school meetings, and only received referrals when parental consent had been obtained by school staff.

During the JWB staff site visit in FY 06-07, school personnel indicated they did not have time to obtain parental consent and said the previous process of agency staff attending Child Study Team meetings and contacting parents worked because agency staff and school staff worked together as a team. Other issues identified were more elementary schools needed the program and the criteria used for a program referral was too narrow. The table below illustrates the changes that were made from initial implementation until the present.

<b>Original Program Methodology</b>	<b>Changes Made</b>
Agency staff participated in Child Study Teams and obtained parental consent	School staff must obtain parental consent before a referral is made to the program
Program participated in 6 elementary schools	Program expanded to participate in 15 elementary schools
10 unexcused absences are needed to be eligible for the program	No change

In FY 07-08, despite the expansion to 15 elementary schools, that strategy has not worked as the program has served a total of 16 youth to date, 11% of their contracted service levels to date. Below is a table that shows how many youth have been served each fiscal year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Participants Served</b>	<b>Contracted Service Levels</b>
2005 -2006	58 youth	68 youth
2006 – 2007	48 youth	135 youth
2007 – 2008	16 youth	135 youth

Upon termination of the contract, a plan is in place to transition all open active cases to the South County Truancy Interdiction Center. The center staff can receive referrals from elementary school staff who students have truancy issues and/or the parents may refer directly. The center offers case management services to youth and their families to identify barriers to school attendance.