

## **Gang Awareness Forum - December 4, 2008**

### **Question and Answer Session**

#### **1. How do I prevent my child from joining a gang?**

*Talk with and listen to your child. Spend some special time with each child.  
Put a high value on education and help your child to do his or her best in school.  
Do everything possible to prevent dropping out.  
Help your kids identify positive role models and heroes, especially people in your community.  
Do everything possible to involve your children in supervised, positive group activities.  
Praise them for doing well and encourage them to do their very best – to stretch their skills to the utmost.  
Know what your children are doing and with whom. Know about their friends and their friends' families.*

#### **2. What community resources are available to keep students from joining gangs?**

*Clayton County Parks and Recreation, school clubs, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, intramural sports, Girls & Boys Club, Friday & Saturday night church activities, Keep America Beautiful, work for homeless shelters, food pantry.*

#### **3. How will the CCCFG&VP-Group establish partnerships with the various organizations; faith base organizations, Board of Education Systems, Law Enforcement Agencies?**

*By developing strategic plans and having commitments from representatives to stay in contact. There are representatives from each organization that also participate in the Clayton County Action Nexus Group (Clayton CAN) which is lead by the Clayton County Public Schools Director of Student Engagement.*

#### **4. How do you get out of a gang?**

- Be willing to make changes including changing your environment.  
Deciding to leave a gang means changing your life, your activities, and your friends. Remember that you will make new friends and find other things that interest you.*
- Make a plan.  
Leaving a gang takes courage. Don't give up.*
- Find someone to help.  
Go to someone you trust to help you. It could be a counselor, parent, spiritual leader-someone you can talk to about how you are feelings and who can help you figure out your next steps.*

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#### **5. What is the school doing to keep students safe?**

*Education & Awareness videos*  
*Counseling & Guidance sessions*  
*ID Badges*  
*Random Wandering*  
*Hotline Cards*  
*Additional security in schools*  
*Heightened foot patrol to monitor the school*  
*SMASH program*  
*GREAT program for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades (started 2<sup>nd</sup> week in January)*  
*Additional volunteers at extracurricular activities*  
*Video Monitoring of entire bus - Bus monitors are provided as needed*  
*All bus drivers going through gang awareness training*

#### **6. Is there an alcoholic or drug abuse organization for and by the use of teenagers only?**

*ALATEEN*  
*Student Services initiative*  
*Drug Awareness Seminars*  
*Drug Awareness & Prevention (Health classes at the High Schools)*  
*100 Black Men Health Awareness*

#### **7. What's being done about tolerance in the school? Why not zero tolerance on fighting and disruption continuance.**

*The student handbook addresses this in Appendix C under the Student Code of Conduct. A copy of the handbook can be found on the web site under Student Services.*

#### **8. Are test scores impacted by the number of gangs in the area?**

*No research substantiates a direct connection between standardized test scores and gangs.*

#### **9. Why do we tolerate gangs at all?**

*Gang Activity is not tolerated. There are legal consequences for gang involvement.*

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**10. Why don't we pass a no tolerance, no gang law?**

*There are laws that address gang activity.*

**11. How many identified gangs are in Clayton County?**

*51 identified gangs in Clayton County*

**12. Do we know what "business" the gangs are in (selling)?**

*They are involved in unlawful activities.*

**13. How does the school system handle known gang members that attend our schools?**

*The school system follows the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix C) in the Student Handbook to address gangs and undesirable group activities.*

**14. What is the process used to remove students in gangs?**

*The school system follows the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix C) in the Student Handbook to address gangs and undesirable group activities. The consequences of gang activity are left to the discretion of the principal depending on the circumstances.*

**15. What training are teachers receiving to identify gangs in school?**

*Teachers are receiving training and awareness about gang signs and gang activity.*

**16. Why is it that lower Clayton County has no YMCA or Boy's & Girl's Clubs in the county?**

*The school system supports the establishment of organizations that promote positive activities for students. We encourage community members to contact the county commission to advocate for positive interventions in the community.*

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**17. Is there a difference between girls & boys in regards to behavior, prevention, & intervention around gang violence?**

*No research that the Student Services department reviewed indicates a difference exists between gender and gang violence. There is research being conducted about gang involvement which may substantiate a difference in the future.*

**18. How do I become involved in community intervention?**

*Contact your local police department, juvenile court, or one of the community partners that you heard on December 4 to offer your assistance.*

**19. What is the county doing to address the other forms of violence in addition to gang violence that's happening in our schools?**

*Teachers and Administrators are trained to address student behavior concerns at school. There are teams at the school that work with parents to develop and implement interventions to address behavior concerns. Each school has a school-wide discipline plan and personnel from Student Services to address the behavioral needs of students.*

**20. How can the local PTA's assist in this initiative?**

*Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) can host speakers to discuss such topics as local law enforcement and other personnel experienced with gangs to address gang prevention and interventions for the community.*

**21. Could you have one number that's visible in the schools and in the public to call for support?**

*Call 1-877- SAYSTOP (729-7867). The call is anonymous and toll free. It is monitored 24 hours a day by the Department of Education and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.*

**22. What time should all children be in?**

*The curfew for most cities is Monday thru Thursday – 11:00 p.m.; Weekends – Midnight for children under age 17.*

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- 23. When schools initiate or implement the uniform attire, do you feel this will assist the kids in dressing alike to address gangs? (Such as red T-shirts, etc.) If not, this is really happening.**

*Research indicates that uniform dress in schools deters discipline problems.*

- 24. What are some things we can say to support worried kids?**

*Talk with students about their worries and concerns. Address concerns openly and honestly. At school, counseling providers are creating safe zones where students can speak to their counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist when necessary.*

- 25. How do I know if my child is in a gang?**

*Gangs leave signs of their presence such as the following:*

*Wearing specific colors or emblems.*

*Using special hand signals.*

*Wearing or drawing gang symbols – on walls as graffiti or on books, paper, or clothing.*

*Possessing unexplained, relatively large sums of money.*

*Declining grades and interest in school.*

*Staying out without good reason.*

*“Hanging” with known or suspected gang members.*

*Carrying weapons.*

- 26. Students talk back and don’t care about the teacher or others in middle school. Why do the schools and teachers let this go on?**

*Talking back and disrespecting school personnel are not tolerated. The school system follows the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix C) in the Student Handbook to address behavior concerns and the consequences of disrespectful behavior.*

- 27. How are teachers and school personnel trained to implement method’s of preventing or recognizing gang affiliation?**

*Teachers and administrators are receiving training and awareness about gang signs and gang activity that is sponsored by the police department and the juvenile court.*

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**28. Are you doing this for the Hispanic community too?**

*The gang awareness initiative is for all community members and the advocacy efforts do not target any specific ethnic or cultural group. Gangs and gang activity impact all communities.*

**29. Has anyone considered meeting with Parks & Recreation administration to consider programs that will address issues of Gang & Youth Violence & Crime?**

*The school system is meeting and has a collaborative partnership with Parks & Recreation to disseminate information to the community through school system channels about the positive programming available for children.*

**30. Of the 51 gangs, how many are outside the schools? What areas are the worst areas?**

*Research indicates that gangs are not embedded in schools. Gangs start and operate within the community and are in all areas of the country.*

**31. How do you recognize gangs? Signs of gang, involvement?**

*Gangs leave signs of their presence such as the following:*

*Wearing specific colors or emblems.*

*Using special hand signals.*

*Wearing or drawing gang symbols – on walls as graffiti or on books, paper, or clothing.*

*Possessing unexplained, relatively large sums of money.*

*Declining grades and interest in school.*

*Staying out without good reason.*

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*Carrying weapons*

**32. Who takes the sneakers down from the power lines?**

*Contact your local utility company.*

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#### **33. What if you are a two parent household, middle income, go to church and still have a gang banger in your house?**

*A. Address the Issue: It is important to discuss with your child gangs and the problems they can create. The best time to talk about gangs is before there's a major problem.*

*Tell your child that:*

*You disapprove of gangs. You don't want to see your child hurt or arrested.*

*You see your child as special, and worth protecting.*

*You want to help your child with any problems he or she might face.*

*Family members don't keep secrets from each other.*

*You and other parents are working together against gangs.*

*Listen to what your child has to say.*

*B. Talk to Other Parents. For one thing, you'll find out what everyone else's parent really said. For another, you can support each other and share knowledge that will help spot problems sooner than you can on your own.*

#### **34. Gang signs – What are they and who do we call about them?**

*Gangs leave signs of their presence such as the following:*

*Wearing specific colors or emblems.*

*Using special hand signals.*

*Wearing or drawing gang symbols – on walls as graffiti or on books, paper, or clothing.*

*Possessing unexplained, relatively large sums of money.*

*Declining grades and interest in school.*

*Staying out without good reason.*

*“Hanging” with known or suspected gang members.*

*Carrying weapons.*

*If you suspect gang activity in your area, contact the police immediately. Gangs often lead to crime problems, and the police should be made aware of any potential problem areas.*

#### **35. What kinds of students are likely to join a gang?**

*Young people (as young as 9 or 10 years old) are joining gangs in ever-growing numbers in all parts of the country. The reasons they are joining are remarkably similar:*

*To belong to a group.*

*For excitement.*

*To get protection.*

*To earn money.*

*To be with friends.*

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- 36. Are we also holding the teachers accountable? I realize they may be over worked and underpaid, but as the panel stated, my child spends more time with them than with the parent. When an incident occurs, or behavioral problem or change in friends, why isn't the parent immediately notified. We have too many ways of communication. I was not aware my child was not in ISS until I called a parent-teacher conference. By no means do I blame the school, but it would help tremendously if parents are notified in a timely manner. We need to form a better partnership because the child is the primary concern. Can I as a parent get better or more updates from the school? (I want to know earlier not until it has gotten out of hand)**

*Teachers and administrators are held accountable for behavior concerns at the school including notifying the parent when discipline concerns are raised that require a disposition such as in-school suspension. Clayton County Public Schools has a parental involvement component in the Student Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Student Handbook in Appendix C.*

- 37. What school resources are available to prevent Gang Violence?**

*Education & Awareness videos  
Counseling & Guidance sessions  
School Counselors, School Social Workers, and School Psychologists  
School Resource Officers and Security personnel  
ID Badges  
Random Wandering  
Hotline Cards  
Additional security in schools  
Heightened foot patrol to monitor the school  
SMASH program  
GREAT program for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades (started 2<sup>nd</sup> week in January)  
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**38. Please define gang.**

*The gang code is 16-15-3(1). That statute defines gangs and goes on to discuss related offenses.*

*Gangs: Any group of 3 or more that commits, conspires, solicits, coerces, or intimidates another person to commit an act/offense defined as criminal gang activity.*

*Section 16-15-3(1) reads: Criminal gang activity means the commission, attempted commission, conspiracy to commit, or solicitation, coercion, or intimidation of another person to commit any of the following offenses....*

*Section 16-15-3(2) reads: Criminal street gang means any organization, association, or group of three or more persons associated in fact, whether formal or informal, which engages in criminal gang activity as defined in the Code....*