County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.
Director

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

April 4, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.
Director

FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT

On February 14, 2006, your Board took the following actions:

1. Adopted the Education Coordinating Council's (ECC) Blueprint, including its Seven Basic Agreements for those responsible for the educational success of foster and probation youth, and the twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of these youth;

2. Directed the ECC, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Schools, to convene a meeting of all school district Superintendents in the County in order to provide a briefing of the Blueprint and create strategies for implementing the recommendations pertinent to the school districts;

3. Directed the ECC to report back to the Board every six months on the progress made in implementing the recommendations identified in the Blueprint;

4. Directed the Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report to the Board on how they can respond to Recommendation No. 2, page 11, of the attached report, as it relates to caregivers; and

5. Directed the following departments take the actions as detailed below and report back to the Board by April 4, 2006:

- Directed the Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint;

- Directed the Director of Children and Family Services to report on whether they have begun requesting individual orders in each child's Juvenile Dependency case enabling the Department of Children and Family Services to obtain educational information from the school districts, and if not, why not;

- Directed the Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to draft a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on a proposed legislative amendment to improve social workers' access to educational information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act; and

- Directed the Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to make the ECC's proposed Educational Case Plan process meaningful, detailing how the departments will ensure that each child's plan is implemented.

The ECC's Blueprint is a very effective guide to focus the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, especially DCFS, Probation, the Department of Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The Blueprint helps our Departments lay the foundation to greatly improve the educational achievement for the youth in our systems. Establishing high academic expectations with shared responsibility and accountability for all of our stakeholders and youth will help to overcome the historic challenges in raising the educational achievement for foster and probation youth.

Attached are the Seven Basic Agreements (Attachment A), the Recommendations (Attachment B) and each agency's stand-alone response report to your Board's directives.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board Relations Section at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:PM:pm

Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller

Seven Basic Agreements

Those responsible for the educational attainment of foster and probation youth must agree to at least seven things if we are to achieve the results we want.

1. Everyone must understand the ***central importance of education*** for the current well-being and future prospects of children and youth, expressing that value clearly and consistently in every aspect of their work.

> **"If we can master the system, we can master college."**
>
> ***—Berisha Black, Los Angeles County Emancipation Ombudsman and former foster youth***

2. Everyone needs to adopt and maintain ***high expectations for the children and youth*** involved in these systems, believing in their ability to succeed educationally and demanding improvements in school attendance and achievement.

3. A ***strong investment in prevention***, assuring that children are enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs, is fundamental. Current research demonstrating the power of high-quality child care, preschool, family support, and family literacy programs in preventing maltreatment—and the long-term benefits of such services—makes it vital for us to assure that vulnerable children have priority access to such programs.

4. Everyone must ***pay attention to and address early on any factor affecting educational success***, including the social, developmental, health, mental health, and learning challenges of youth.

5. ***School stability*** must be strongly considered when making residential and educational placement decisions, except when a school does not adequately meet the needs of the child or youth. School stability, in the right school for that youth, is the basis for building positive attachments and educational continuity, and is essential to raising academic achievement. When a change in schools is unavoidable, or is found to be in the child's best interest, records should be transferred quickly and youth enrolled immediately in the new school.

6. ***Parents and caregivers should be involved*** in all aspects of their children's education.

7. A ***shared understanding of educational responsibility*** must be achieved among all partners and groups who help to care for these youth, so that roles and responsibilities can be clarified and each group held accountable.

ECC Recommendations from
Expecting More
A Blueprint for Raising theEducational Achievement of
Foster and Probation Youth

1. Higher numbers of children in the care of DCFS, and the children of foster and probation youth, should be enrolled in high-quality early intervention, care, and education programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.

2. Community organizations and county departments should offer increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them be good nurturers and provide the positive learning environments that will ensure that their children are ready for school.

3. Higher numbers of DCFS and Probation youth should be enrolled in skill-building and enrichment programs that include non-system students and provide opportunities for positive and enduring connections to nurturing adults.

4. Youth should be systematically engaged and meaningfully involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the programs, activities, and events in which they will participate.

5. Families, caregivers, and agency staff should pay greater attention to preparing DCFS and Probation children and youth for transitions to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, college, and employment, and for transfers between schools.

6. The ECC should participate in and work to align local efforts to create safer schools (including passages to and from), particularly within and among the seven school districts represented on the ECC—the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the Lancaster School District, the Pasadena Unified School District, the Compton Unified School District, the Long Beach Unified School District, the Pomona Unified School District, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).

7. The enhanced sharing of information among school districts, county departments, the juvenile courts, and counsel for children who appear in those courts should be assured by concurrently working to:

    - Resolve differing views about what federal law and California law allow, especially regarding federal confidentiality regulations, so that placing agencies (such as DCFS and Probation) and counsel for the child can access school records without a court order or authorization from a

parent/guardian/holder of education rights, thereby enabling them to carry out their responsibility to meet the educational needs of children in their care.

- Establish a clear and consistent understanding of federal and state confidentiality laws among school districts, DCFS, Probation, and children's counsel so that information necessary for school success is routinely shared in a timely and effective manner.

- Pursue amendments to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), if needed, to clarify that child welfare agencies and legal representatives are able to independently access, share, and receive educational information with and from all school districts.

- Advocate for school districts in Los Angeles County to include child welfare personnel among those designated as eligible to receive 'directory information' on enrolled students. (School districts currently include juvenile justice personnel, but those provisions have not been interpreted in Los Angeles County as including DCFS employees.) '*Directory information' includes the pupil's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (for members of athletic teams), dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous public or private school attended by the pupil. Parents have the right to opt out of sharing this information with any entity on the school district's eligibility list.*

- Draft a court order that would permit county departments and the youth's attorneys, while a youth is under the Juvenile Court's jurisdiction, to access pupil records, grades, transcripts, special education assessments, individual education plans, and current attendance records.

- With foster and probation youth, develop guidelines for information-sharing that do not violate their need for privacy and confidentiality.

8. The ECC should work with the Chief Administrative Office, other county departments, school districts, and placement provider agencies to ensure the development of an electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of DCFS and probation youth.

9. Educational liaisons and school-based staff should be provided with the information they are requesting about who these youth are, the names of those responsible for their education (holders of educational rights, caregivers, caseworkers, attorneys, etc.), how best to contact them, and what services and supports are available for these youth.

10. School-based staff should be trained regarding the educational and emotional needs of foster and probation youth and ways to meet those needs.

11. County departments, school districts, and the judiciary should cross-train the stakeholder groups listed above on their collective and individual responsibilities for ensuring that foster and probation youth receive a solid education.

12. DCFS/Probation caseworkers, caregivers, and the courts should each be accountable for the educational success of foster and probation youth through a three-pronged approach:

    - DCFS and Probation caseworkers shall ensure, by using multidisciplinary team decision-making and case conferences, that academic expectations are established for these youth and that educational plans are developed which outline the activities youth should participate in to meet those expectations. These team meetings should include, at a minimum, youth, parents, caregivers, and school representatives.

    - Caregivers and others identified in the plan shall implement these educational plans by facilitating the child's involvement in the agreed-upon programs and activities.

    - Courts shall monitor the creation of these plans and the progress made in achieving them, and hold the involved parties accountable for their implementation.

Attachment I

Department of Children and Family Services
Report

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.
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Board of Supervisors
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To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT

On February 14, 2006, your Board adopted the Education Coordinating Council's (ECC) Blueprint, including its Seven Basic Agreements for those responsible for the educational success of foster and probation youth, and the twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of these youth. At the same time, Supervisor Knabe requested a report on how the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department can respond to Recommendation 2, of the ECC Blueprint, as it relates to caregivers. Your Board then directed the following:

1. **The Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.**

2. **The Director of the Children and Family Services to report on whether they have begun requesting individual orders in each child's Juvenile Dependency case enabling the Department of Children and Family Services to obtain educational information from the school districts, and if not, why not.**

3. **The Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to draft a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on a proposed legislative amendment to improve social workers' access to educational information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.**

4. **The Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to make the ECC's proposed Educational Case Plan process meaningful, detailing how the departments will ensure that each child's plan is implemented.**

The Department's plan to implement the ECC's Education Blueprint to improve the educational achievement of the children and youth we serve will address the Seven Basic Agreements and each of the twelve recommendations taken directly from the report, "Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth."

The Education Unit will oversee the implementation plan and will be supported by the Regional and Program Education Liaisons as well as the Educational Specialists, who we plan to house in each of our regional offices. The Educational Specialists will serve as educational consultants to our Children's Social Workers (CSW) and caregivers. They will help navigate the school systems and address the more challenging educational issues faced by our youth. Our goal is to provide one full time equivalent person for each of the nineteen regional offices.

Efforts will be made to develop a system where the Department can ensure the name of each child's school and educational status and progress will be input into his or her CWS/CMS record. If this can be accomplished, eligibility and accessibility to available resources will be enhanced, and service provision documented in a more thorough and accurate reporting to the courts.

Department policy and procedures exist for many of the suggested recommendations found in the ECC Blueprint. A review of the current work structure will be conducted to address feasible options to facilitate full compliance with these important policies and procedures.

The Seven Basic Agreements

The Department endorses the tenets delineated in the Seven Basic Agreements. The children and families we serve will benefit from articulating these shared values, which integrate the central importance of education in their current and future lives. The Department is committed to incorporate the Seven Basic Agreements into the agency's culture and work practices. The Department will disseminate these principles to our stakeholders and community partners to emphasize the shared responsibility each holds to improve educational outcomes. We will have the document translated into Spanish, as well as simplifying the language and creating a brochure for the youth and caregivers. We will have posters displayed and the brochures available in each of our regional offices.

We will integrate the Seven Basic Agreements, along with a discussion of the Department's commitment and the Children's Social Worker's (CSW) obligation to address children's academic progress and educational needs in their daily work, into

the core training CSWs receive upon entering the Department. Similar training will be conducted for newly entering foster and resource families.

Recommendation 1

The Department is committed to increasing the enrollment of young children into high-quality early intervention programs, such as Early Head Start, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and Head Start, by:

- Using the Medical Hub Program to address the issues of early intervention and high quality care for children detained in foster care. Caregivers receive information via the Hub Caregiver Letter, the Hub Caregiver Notice and the Informational/Town Hall meetings. The Developmental Specialist at the Medical Hub Program will conduct an initial screening and refer to a Regional Center when necessary.
- Creating a component in the Model Approach to Partnerships and Parenting (MAPP) training that includes the benefits to the child and specifics of how and where to enroll DCFS children into these programs. Providing a program list according to SPA/geographical service areas, which includes the various program names, addresses, phone numbers, registration requirements, program descriptions, and hours of operation.
- Creating a component in the Kinship Education, Preparation and Support (KEPS) training that includes the benefits to the child and specifics of how and where to enroll DCFS children into these programs. Providing a program list according to SPA/geographical service areas, which includes the various program names, addresses, phone numbers, registration requirements, program descriptions, and hours of operation.
- Providing the Kinship Resource Centers with applications for the pre-school programs.
- Having quality preschool providers promote their programs and encourage registrations at the foster parent and kinship trainings and conferences, such as the annual Mi Casa Su Casa Conference.
- Conducting mailings of program listings by SPAs to foster and relative caregivers of pre-school aged children.
- Including provider lists in the placement packets of the children under 5 years of age.
- Encouraging providers to share their program information with the Regional Community Advisory Councils, Foster Family Agencies (FFA), foster parent associations and Adoption Promotion and Support Services programs.
- Discussing the benefits of high quality pre-school and encouragement to enroll, when appropriate, in the Team Decision-Making (TDM) Conferences or at the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) meeting which occurs 30 to 45 days after detention.
- Inviting providers will be invited to provide in-service trainings at the Regional Offices' General Staff Meetings.

- Providing the addresses and phone numbers of early care and education resources by SPA, in the referral letters to DCFS families qualified to receive 18 months of subsidized childcare. This will be done to ensure greater participation into these programs.

Recommendation 2

The Department will offer increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers and foster parents by doing the following:

- In addition to encouraging enrollment into quality pre-schools, in-service training and conference formats referenced above, the Department will continue to hold local networking conferences, including local education providers /representatives at the SPA/Office level. Local SPAs offices now have access to AB 2129 funds to support such activities and some offices have done this with great success. Such networking events facilitate development of relationships with school and district personnel at the local level where educational progress is most effectively monitored. Such events would focus on creating shared understanding at the local level of the following:

    i. Educational Advocacy Role- training in AB 490, and grade performance expectations, and resources to assist the care provider with skill development ; and,
    ii. Available resources in the local school and community (after school programs, tutors, educational scholarships and internship opportunities).

- DCFS will discuss the Department's commitment to education and provide the "Seven Basic Agreements and What They Mean" brochures at all Foster Care and Adoption orientations and caregiver conferences and trainings.
- The Kinship Resource Centers are available to receive and disseminate community educational resources to support the needs of the relative caregivers.
- DCFS will collaborate with community partners (FFAs, group homes, and residential facilities) to develop methods to improve learning environments for children.
- We will clearly define in writing what a "positive learning environment" is and what it looks like. This needs to be defined to CSWs, relative care providers, foster parents and FFAs so that everyone is consistent.
- Train potential foster care and kinship caregivers on providing a "positive learning environment" during their MAP and KEPS Training.
- The importance of trying to keep the child in their school of origin and helping the child focus on their school responsibilities, can be discussed in the Team

Decision-Making (TDM) Conferences or the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) meeting, when appropriate.

- The MAT process could be utilized to help identify educational issues up front, when children are removed from their homes, and in giving caregivers information to assist in preparing children for educational progress.
- CSWs need to inquire with their families what resources are being utilized and actively encourage families to avail themselves to those resources.
- Kinship Resource Centers can be instrumental in supporting relatives and Post Adoption Services should be equipped to support and encourage adoptive parents.
- Collaborate with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) on how to make education a priority in each child's life and how to create the best learning environments in their FFA's and group homes.

Recommendation 3

Children and youth will be encouraged to participate in after-school, off-track and summer academic and enrichment activities by their CSWs and caregivers. Program providers will be invited to the regional offices' general staff meetings and caregiver conferences to promote their tutoring, arts and culture, recreation, sports and athletics, community service and civic engagement, leadership development, internships and work experience, and life skills development opportunities.

Probation and DCFS are working on establishing a mentoring database for all existing matches, and tracking newly trained mentors through the matching process. We are working with the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) Associates and collaborative partners on an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency grant to fund a position for Foster Youth Initiative. We are also working with Children Uniting Nations, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the University of Southern California and California State University at Northridge to support academic mentoring programs at Foshay Middle School and Van Nuys High School. Both of these programs will support system as well as non-system youth determined to be at high risk. DCFS has set a goal of 400 new mentor-mentee matches by the end of 2006.

Recommendation 4

Youth involved with the California Youth Connection, the Transition Resource Centers, the various programs provided by The Community College Foundation, and the Transitional Housing Placement Program, to name a few, are available and willing to share their experiences to strengthen existing programs and develop new ones.

Recommendation 5

The schools and providers may be best set-up to organize a "Transition Assembly Day" for each transitioning level which could include discussion on what to expect, and how to navigate the new system, field trips and orientations to the transitioning school sites, college campuses, vocational schools, etc.

When no formal programs are available, the families and caregivers should be encouraged to talk about the upcoming changes and what can be expected, learning and soothing the child's concerns, bringing the child to the new school for a visit to become familiar with the surroundings, etc.

The Department has developed systems to insure that a higher percentage of eligible youth have a well-developed Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). The Training Section, with support from Emancipation Services and Juvenile Dependency Court, has revised the TILP curriculum for a new round of training scheduled for roll out to the DCFS offices in the near future. Workshops on TILP planning and available resources for emancipating youth are also scheduled for upcoming countywide conferences for caregivers (Mi Casa, Su Casa). Caregivers and CSWs can discuss with the child, their future goals on a regular basis so that when the youth is eligible for TILP services they are prepared to participate. The child's school performance should be tied into these discussions in order to put into context why achieving in school is important to their future plans.

Recommendation 6

The Department is committed to the safety of the children we serve and will continue to work with the ECC and represented school districts to achieve safer campuses, as well as safer passage to and from schools.

Recommendation 7

The Department addresses the concerns related to information sharing below in directives two and three, Individual Court Orders and Proposed Legislative Amendment, on page 8.

Recommendation 8

The Department is committed to participate in the development of a secured electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of the youth we serve.

Recommendation 9

In November 2005, the Department in partnership with Dependency Court established a procedure to notify the school district's educational liaisons and school-based staff when the holder of the education rights for the child has been changed. Further, policy is in place and forms exist notifying the school of the student's foster care status,

providing the CSW's and caregiver's names and contacts, and briefly identifying the child's educational needs. Better efforts will be made to enhance policy compliance.

Recommendation 10

Efforts to develop a better understanding of the educational and emotional needs of the youth we serve for school-based staff may best be accomplished through local networking conferences. Training and developing relationships with the local education providers and representatives at the SPA and regional office level will most effectively build a bridge of collaboration and a shared understanding between the two systems. Courses are available to increase the sensitivity of school personnel to the needs of children in the foster care system. AB 2129 funds could be utilized to support these efforts. Again, the key is the development of relationships at the local level where educational progress is most effectively monitored and achieved.

Recommendation 11

The Department's commitments delineated above addresses the cross training of the stakeholders and their collective and individual responsibilities for ensuring that the educational outcomes improve for the children and youth we serve.

The development and maintenance of key collaborative relationships to support the educational progress for foster children best occurs at the local level. In addition to suggestions noted under Recommendation 2, the Training Section currently has an E-Learning module on AB 490 (Educational Rights for Foster Children) for internal use by DCFS staff that can and will be adapted for posting on the Internet, allowing providers, school personnel and resource family members to access interactive training and information in electronic form on the internet. Such training, once adapted, will be posted via the DCFS Web-site.

Recommendation 12

As mentioned in the introduction and throughout this implementation plan, the Department is committed to utilizing multidisciplinary team decision-making processes in establishing the academic expectations and educational plans, which will direct the actions of the participates in the plan to achieve success.

At the individual child/family level, educational assessment and progress should be key points of discussion and planning in any and all team based formats for case decision-making including Team Decision Making (TDM.) Additionally, since placement out of area most frequently leads to a disruption in school and community ties, TDM's at initial placement should maximize attention to placement in the same school area and maintenance of key educational/social relationships.

Individual Court Orders

Currently the Department is utilizing a parental consent form to obtain the records. Under the Education Code, child welfare agencies may access a pupil's education records with the parent's consent or for the purposes of providing educational summaries for the Juvenile Court. Foster family agencies are also entitled to records of grades, transcripts, and any individualized education plans. If we are not able to obtain parental consent, we will request an individual court order and work with County Counsel, the school districts, and the Juvenile Court to obtain the necessary records in a timely and cost efficient manner. That order has been prepared and we have requested that County Counsel begin seeking Court orders when parental consent has not been obtained.

Further, the Juvenile Court has drafted a blanket order that could improve the Department's ability to access school records. At this point the Court is waiting to hear comments back about the proposed blanket order.

Proposed Legislative Amendment

The federal legislative agenda has been revised to include language to support proposals that would provide child welfare agencies, juvenile courts, and court-appointed advocates with access to educational records on children who they are serving. The following language is the proposed legislative amendment:

FERPA: Proposed 20 USC 1232g (b) (1) (K): State or local agency child protective services worker who is providing case management services for the child for the purposes of (1) ensuring that appropriate services are being provided to the child; and (2) promoting family reunification and permanency by reporting educational issues to the court. Any further dissemination of this information shall be in accordance with existing law, parent/guardian consent, or a valid court order.

Educational Case Plan

A review of current policy shows that all of the elements recommended in the ECC sample educational case plan are currently incorporated in a variety of case documents that must be updated regularly, such as court reports, the Health and Education Passport, and TILPs. The Department has established a work group consisting of regional offices, the Education, Policy, Information Services, and Court units to develop a quality improvement plan to streamline and reduce redundancy in the documentation of key educational elements and enhance the detailed reporting in CWS/CMS, court reports, and TILPs. The goal is to use the current information systems available to gather and document all the relevant educational plan information in records, and to be accountable for comprehensive plans.

The Education Unit will develop age-appropriate standards for pre-schoolers, school-age children and high school students, to clarify the Department's academic and

enrichment expectations. This will help identify for CSWs what must be documented in the educational records and addressed at case conferences.

The Department is committed to the ECC's Blueprint and our implementation plan to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to establish academic expectations and educational plans for the children and youth that we serve. Together we will raise their educational achievement to enhance their future prospects in life.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board Relations Section at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:PM:pm

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller

Attachment II

Probation Department
Report

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PROBATION DEPARTMENT
9150 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY — DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA 90242
(562) 940-2501

PAUL HIGA
Chief Probation Officer

April 4, 2006

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: Robert B. Taylor Bob Taylor
Acting Chief Probation Officer

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- **The Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.**

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- **Direct the Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to make the ECC's proposed Educational Case Plan process meaningful, detailing how the departments will ensure that each child's plan is implemented.**

The Department's plan to implement the ECC's Education Blueprint will include its Seven Basic Agreements and twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of our youth. Implementation will be advanced across our Department's Juvenile Bureaus (Juvenile Field, Residential Treatment Services and Detention Services) through Adult Field Services and in identified areas, in collaboration with DCFS as follows:

ECC - Seven Basic Agreements

The Department fully supports the ECC Blueprint's Seven Basic Agreements as foundational in order to achieve the results we are seeking for the educational success of our youth. The Department will incorporate the Seven Basic Agreements as a part of the development of our juvenile case planning process. The Department recently began the process to develop and implement a case plan that is predicated on our validated assessment (Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checkup). The Seven Basic Agreements and the proposed ECC Educational Case Plan will be enfolded into this in order to ensure a continuum of planning and care for each youth under our supervision.

Recommendation 1

The Department will continue efforts to promote and encourage the enrollment of the children of our probationers into high quality early intervention, care and education programs such as State Preschool, Early Head Start, Head Start and the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) program. The Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care, in partnership with ECC, launched an outreach campaign to promote high quality preschool programs. In September 2005, Probation provided our Field staff with information on how probationers could enroll their children in State Preschool, Early Head Start, Head Start or the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) program. Our Probation liaison (staff) continues to participate in the pilot that matches children to these programs.

Additionally, the first meeting of the County New Directions Task Force formed a Pregnant and Parenting County Taskforce held on February 22, 2006, brought together the Department of Social Services (DPSS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), DCFS and Probation in order to identify and meet the challenges of pregnant and parenting teens in Los Angeles County. In order to further engage parenting probationers to fill available openings in Head Start and preschool programs, Probation convened a meeting with the Department's dedicated Pregnant and Parenting Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) and St. Anne's and Florence Crittenton Group Home on-site placement DPOs in order to facilitate early enrollment of the children of our probationers.

Probation will also continue to collaborate with the ECC, DCFS and the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care to connect probation families to subsidized childcare.

Probation currently participates by directly entering names of youth requiring services into the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL).

Recommendation 2

Probation has undertaken the following efforts to help ensure that parents, relative caregivers and foster parents are supported and provided resources to become good nurturers and ensure their children are ready for school:

- Encourage enrollment into quality childcare and preschool programming (see Recommendation 1).
- Recommend in our court reports that parents attend parenting classes that provide an arena for skill building and also support by other parents.
- Provide a basic parental education guide to parents of our youth transiting from probation camps that suggests proactive ways that parents can be involved in their child's educational process.
- Build parental skills and increase the ability of our camp aftercare parents to work with schools regarding the educational needs of their children (through contact with the parent prior to the youth's release from Camp into the community and assisting with the school enrollment process).
- Implement parent empowerment meetings at several high risk Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) School-Based Supervision Program sites designed to engage, empower and encourage parents to become more involved in the academic process (including homework, attendance and academic monitoring), while providing them with proven research-based strategies and interventions that underscore the importance of setting clear, positive standards that provide youth opportunities to contribute to their families and communities and recognizing them for their contributions. In collaboration with school administrators and community-based organizations, families are also introduced to programs (YMCA, faith-based, parks and recreation, etc) that give them an opportunity to spend meaningful time together. Additional parent empowerment meetings will be implemented in the up-coming months.
- Collaborate with the Community College Kinship Education Preparation and Support Program (KEPS) in order to assist Probation with engaging and supporting relative caregivers in our youth's educational development.
- Implement initiatives to accomplish your Board's Motion that, "*Probation, Public Library and LACOE will develop a plan to provide each student {in Probation camps and halls] with a library card.*" The Department plans to expand this initiative by working with Residential Treatment Services, Detention Services and Field staff, in conjunction with other agency staff (e.g. Group Home Providers) to accomplish this task.

Recommendation 3

Probation has taken the following steps to enroll probation youth in skill-building and enrichment programs that include non-system students and provide our youth with opportunities for positive and enduring connections to prosocial adults:

- Development of a comprehensive mentoring program to match each Placement youth with an adult mentor. We are currently collaborating with DCFS on an on-going basis to implement a mentoring program in order for youth to develop a meaningful, trusting and lasting relationship with a nurturing adult that will support them toward their goals.
- JJCPA Housing-Based DPOs provide interventions and connects families to resources to assist with resolving family conflict, health/educational and/or any other crisis the family encounters. Additionally, DPO provides educational monitoring services and proactively works with school officials to ensure minors are enrolled in appropriate educational programs.
- Los Angeles City Parks (JJCPA After-School Enrichment programming) conducts a year-round Youth Employment Program that employs probation and at-risk youth at various City Park sites.
- JJCPA Clusters 1 and 4, through the All Peoples Christian Center, continue to conduct Leadership Academies based on the Pacific Institute concept.
- West Angeles Church of God Ten Point Initiative, designed to assist in the integration of males graduating from Camp, ages 15-18 years, provides life skills training, tutoring and mentoring. Each youth is assigned a volunteer mentor to assist them with daily functioning in the community and interact with the family, school officials and any social network that the minor is involved in.
- JJCPA Gender Community Programming provides workshops, mentoring, mother/daughter activities, and other family/daughter strengthening activities designed to empower girls to make better decisions for the future, increase the options they have for future employment and increase perception of who they are, with exposure to different cultural, recreational and educational events and social skill building.
- Cognitive-based anger management/effective decision-making programs conducted at two JJCPA Cluster 2 sites in South Los Angeles (Washington High School and Athens Park).
- JJCPA Cluster 2 Annual Summer Basketball Camp, which brings in community volunteers to conduct sessions from health to hygiene to personal achievement, personal empowerment and scholastic achievement. This three (3)-day event culminates in a basketball tournament designed to teach sportsmanship and provide youth with an opportunity to interact with prosocial adults. Facilitators include professional athletes, parents, community leaders and healthcare professionals.
- Annual Christmas Luncheon at Athens Park that is designed to honor families that have participated in programming and that support the efforts of moving the park to a more family-focused recreation site.

- Court ordered community service will be utilized to encourage youth to give back to their communities. Both youth and their communities will benefit from increased youth engagement.

Recommendation 4

Probation conducts annual youth surveys at the JJCPA Housing-Based and After-School Enrichment (Parks) sites to obtain feedback on safety issues and programs. Additionally, surveys to do mapping to create safety collaboratives resulted from a Summit held at Compton College. The feedback obtained through Summit surveys identified "unsafe zones" around the schools. This allowed for parental involvement in addressing survey concerns.

Additionally, Probation will utilize the Peer Quality Case Review process to engage Placement youth in their educational process. This input will be incorporated into the youth's case plan. Probation will also participate in on-going youth SPEAKOUTS (public meetings with former foster youth to identify and discuss issues that affected them while in foster care and after emancipation from foster care) with DCFS on a quarterly basis through our Emancipation Services and the California Youth Connection.

Recommendation 5

Probation utilizes parent empowerment meetings during the summer months to identify transition issues and provide parents with resources and a network with school officials to ensure that they are more proactively involved in the child's school transition. In collaboration with school officials, parent empowerment meetings focus on high school requirements, proficiency exams, dress codes and attendance expectations at designated JJCPA High School-Based sites. Additional sites will be added in the upcoming months.

Camp Aftercare DPOs expedite efforts to transition youth graduating from camp into the appropriate educational setting by working with identified school personnel and the youth's family. Efforts are made to contact the parent/guardian prior to the youth's release from camp to effectively address transition and school enrollment issues.

Placement and Independent Living DPOs will continue to utilize the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) in order to better transition high school placement youth to continuing education. Staff will receive regular TILP training in order to facilitate this process.

Additionally, CBOs provide job training as well as support services for the Camp Aftercare and Intensive Gang Supervision probationers as they enter the world of work through the JJCPA High Risk/High Need (HRHN) Employment program. To accomplish the program goal of job placement, support services are delivered to participating

probationers (information on appropriate attire, job etiquette, chain of command and job performance).

Recommendation 6

Probation's JJCPA School-Based program, in collaboration with school officials and law enforcement partners implemented/re-established on-site school safety collaboratives designed to ensure safe passages for youth traveling to and from school in high crime areas. The safety collaborative planning groups solicited and engaged parents, students, neighborhood block club members, faith-based organizations, community-based providers and other governmental agencies to address issues youth faced on a daily basis that negatively impacted school attendance and academic performance. The County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) were major contributors to the success of the Safe Passages program in order to enhance the safety of youth traveling to and from school by reducing the amount of crime, racial tension and gang activity around JJCPA school sites. This was accomplished through: 1) High visibility patrols in areas around designated JJCPA school sites to intervene in unlawful activities; 2) Exchanging useful information in identifying criminals and criminal activities in and around School-Based sites and 3) Partnering closely with the community in an effort to more completely understand and address specific problems in communities around School-Based sites. Additional sites will be added in the up-coming months.

Recommendation 7

Probation will continue to work with ECC regarding the sharing of information among school districts, county departments, the juvenile courts and counsel for children who appear in those courts. A draft court order that would permit county departments and the youth's attorneys, while the youth is under the Juvenile Court's jurisdiction, to access pupil records, grades, transcripts, special education assessments, individual education plans and current attendance records was developed by the Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court. *Additionally, the Department is in the process of developing a consent form in order for the DPO to gain access to educational records for our probationers.*

Recommendation 8

Probation will continue to participate in discussions regarding an electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of probation youth.

Recommendation 9

Probation will participate in the process with ECC to develop standard protocols for sharing information relevant to the school success of probation youth.

Recommendation 10

All Probation staff (Juvenile Field and Camp) will receive training on education code and special education in order to emphasize the importance of educational advocacy. Probation is in the process of hiring a consultant. An educational "toolkit" intervention along with education code training will be implemented by July 2006. Updated training on Assembly Bill 490 will also be provided to applicable staff as needed. Additionally, JJCPA School-Based DPOs will continue to attend annual in-service training with school officials and teachers.

Recommendation 11

The Department will collaborate with stakeholders to encourage additional opportunities for educationally focused cross training. Additionally, we will provide training across Juvenile Field programs regarding navigating the educational system, advocacy, parental/youth engagement and case planning.

Recommendation 12

The Department is committed to utilizing multidisciplinary team decision-making and case conferences in order to ensure that academic expectations are established for our youth and that educational plans are developed. Youth and parental engagement will continue to be emphasized in the case planning process.

Proposed Legislative Amendment

The federal legislative agenda has been revised to include language to support proposals that would provide child welfare agencies, juvenile courts, and court-appointed advocates with access to educational records on children who they are serving.

The following language is the proposed legislative amendment:

FERPA: Proposed 20 USC 1232g (b) (1) (K): State or local agency child protective services worker who is providing case management services for the child for the purposes of (1) ensuring that appropriate services are being provided to the child; and (2) promoting family reunification and permanency by reporting educational issues to the court. Any further dissemination of this information shall be in accordance with existing law, parent/guardian consent, or a valid court order.

Educational Case Plan

Elements of the ECC Sample Educational Case Plan are currently incorporated in our reports to court (a case plan is incorporated into our Pre-plea/Disposition court report), the Foster Care Case Plan for Suitable Placement recommendations and Transitional

Independent Living Plans. As indicated, the Department is in the process of developing an automated, individualized juvenile case plan that is predicated on our validated assessment. We will consider the elements of the ECC Sample Educational Case Plan in the development of our Juvenile case plan.

The Department is fully committed to the implementation of the ECC Blueprint recommendations and looks forward to this continued work so that all of our youth have the educational opportunities they deserve.

If you have questions, please call me at (562) 940-2694.

RT:sh

c: David Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Chief Administrative Office

Joanne Sturgess, Acting Executive Officer
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors

Raymond G. Fortner Jr., County Counsel
Office of County Counsel

David Sanders, Ph.D., Director
Department of Children and Family Services

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Director
Department of Mental Health

Darline P. Robles, Ph.D, Superintendent
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Attachment III

Department of Mental Health
Report

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.
Director

SUSAN KERR
Chief Deputy Director

RODERICK SHANER, M.D.
Medical Director

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DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

http://dmh.lacounty.info

April 4, 2006

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, DSW
Director, Department of Mental Health

SUBJECT: **FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT**

Direct the Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
ECC Blueprint – Implementation Plan

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) endorses and supports the "Seven Basic Agreements" and corresponding recommendations in the Education Coordinating Council's *Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*.

DMH currently provides mental health screening, assessment and treatment services to a significant number of children and youth who are in the care of the County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and/or the Probation Department. The academic success of these children and youth is enhanced by increasing their functional capacities within their individual school settings. This is a primary focus of the Department's efforts to serve their needs, in partnership with DCFS and Probation.

As the State of California's designated administrator of the Local Mental Health Plan, DMH provides mental health services based the following service philosophy:

Medi-Cal Services provided under the federal Rehabilitation Option focus on client needs, strengths, choices and involvement in treatment planning and implementation. The goal is to help clients take charge of their lives through informed decision-making. Services are based on the client's long-term goals/desired result(s) from mental health services concerning his/her own life and his/her diagnosis, functional impairment(s) symptoms, disabilities, life conditions and rehabilitation readiness. Services are focused on achieving specific, measurable objectives to support the client in accomplishing his/her desired results. Program staffing is multi-disciplinary and reflects the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, age, gender, sexual orientation and other social characteristics of the community that the program serves. Families, caregivers, human services agency personnel and other significant support persons are encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation process in meeting the client's needs, choices, responsibilities and desires. Programs are designed to use both licensed and non-licensed personnel who are experienced in providing services in the mental health field.

Based on the application of this service philosophy, DMH will focus on two principal goals in support of selected ECC Blueprint recommendations:

1. Ensuring Fidelity to the Service Philosophy
   Develop comprehensive service planning and delivery approaches that would ensure fidelity to the "Rehabilitation Option" service philosophy. These would include active student/client and family caregiver engagement in mental health services design and delivery; teaming with mental health professionals, paraprofessionals, educators, DCFS and Probation staff, public health nurses, judges, advocates, and all other health and human services workers who provide "learning supports" that contribute to the students' school success; and "voice and choice" for the children, youth and family caregivers in determining what services would best support their strengths and needs.

   DMH School-based Mental Health Services Coordinators for each of the eight Service Planning Areas meet monthly to review key issues and mechanisms for ensuring fidelity to the Rehab Option service philosophy. The School Mental Health Coordinators will continue to develop and monitor corresponding performance indicators for participating providers of school-based mental health services (including the use of evidence-based and best practices). This process will further inform the establishment of service standards for children enrolled in the Specialized Foster Care Mental Health Services programs in selected Service Areas as well as "Full Service Partnership" (FSP) focal populations who will be served as part of the LA County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Services and Supports (CSS) Plan; these include children/youth (0-15) with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) "who are experiencing truancy, expulsion or suspension (or at risk of either), violent behaviors, drug possession or use, and/or suicidal or homicidal ideation."

2. Early Education

   The DMH Prenatal to Five (P25) Program will pursue its primary objective of promoting the delivery of effective, family-centered, and culturally responsive mental health services and supports for children and their families by: a) enhancing local Service Planning Area agency/community capacity to address the mental heath needs of infants, young children, and their families; b) supporting relevant education/training, consultation, and technical assistance for mental health service providers and other early care and education specialists; and c) collaborating with local, state, and national organizations to advocate for related program/policy development, implementation of best practices, and promoting public awareness of the importance of infant and early childhood mental health. These endeavors will be augmented through the DMH "ICARE" Network of over 200 mental health providers and representatives from early care and education programs/agencies, and will further contribute to increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them promote school readiness in their children.

   FSP focal populations identified in MHSA CSS Plan also include: children 0-5 years who are involved with or at high risk of being detained by DCFS; and young children who are at high risk of being expelled from preschool and ultimately entering the juvenile justice system. The implementation phase of the CSS Plan will serve to address the needs of these high-risk children and thus contribute to related ECC Blueprint recommendations pertaining to prevention and early intervention.

In coordination with ECC leadership, DMH will provide an update to the Board of Supervisors within six months regarding progress toward the achievement of these goals.

Attachment IV

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Report

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Leading Educators • Supporting Students • Serving Communities

April 4, 2006

Darline P. Robles, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Los Angeles County Board of Education

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To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: Darline P. Robles, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT

Direct the ECC, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Schools, to convene a meeting of all school district Superintendents in the County in order to provide a briefing of the Blueprint and create strategies for implementing the recommendations pertinent to the school districts:

Dr. Darline Robles, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools and Jose Huizar, Chair, Education Coordinating Council have invited school district superintendents to participate in a cross-system *"Education Dialogue: Opportunities for Foster and Probation Youth,"* to explore ways to improve educational opportunities for students under the supervision of the courts and county departments as follows:

Wednesday, April 19, 2006
10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Los Angeles County Office of Education – Room EC-281
9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, California

With the invitation, superintendents received a copy of "Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth.

District superintendents have been informed about the creation of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) in November 2004 by the County Board of Supervisors to bring together the major stakeholders and policy makers responsible for the educational performance of foster and probation youth. The effort has already begun with school districts that have large numbers of system youth: Compton, LACOE, Lancaster, Long Beach, Pasadena and Pomona, county departments and the Juvenile Court.

At this first Education Dialogue meeting, superintendents will be given the forum to discuss strategies, opportunities, best-practices for serving foster and probation youth as well as district concerns and obstacles that hinder them from meeting the needs of students.

The prominent goals of the Education Dialogue are to: (1) Discuss effective means to eliminate the barriers faced by these youth; (2) Build a stronger coordinated effort; and (3) Build a better communication process among and within all of the various systems that are responsible for providing high quality service to these students.

Direct the Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.

Recommendation 1
The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), through its early childhood initiatives, will ensure priority participation and enrollment opportunities to foster youth children, children living with foster parents, and children with parents who are in foster care and/or juvenile probation. Those initiatives include the following:

- Head Start-State Preschool
- Family Literacy Support Network
- Child Care Training Institute
- Early Advantage at WIC
- LA DADS
- CalSAFE
- Promoting Responsible Parenting
- LACOE Authorized Charter Schools

Recommendation 2
LACOE will make available classes to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them become good nurturers and ensure that their children are ready for school. A directory of resources to districts of services and educational resources will be made available through:

- The LACOE web-page
- Foster Youth Services Trainings
- AB490 Educational Liaisons
- Child Welfare and Attendance Regional Meetings

Recommendation 3
The county Superintendent will disseminate an annual bulletin to district superintendents to apprise them of their need to provide for the participation of foster and probation students in:

- after school enrichment programs,
- off-track tutoring,
- homework help programs, and
- any district-sponsored program or activity that will benefit and enhance learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4
LACOE will encourage schools to include probation youth on the Shared Decision Making Councils of the Juvenile Court and Community School (JCCS) and the Alternative Education programs, as appropriate. A majority of the Council shall be bargaining unit members.

Recommendation 5
LACOE will encourage school districts to provide ongoing information seminars to parents, caregivers, and foster and probation youth to prepare them to transition at each school benchmark, Pre-Kindergarten through High School. This information will be available through the following programs:

- Head Start-State Preschool
- Foster Youth Services
- Regional Occupational Programs
- Workforce Investment Act Programs
- The Parent Academy
- Transition, Special Needs
- Student Support Services

Recommendation 6
LACOE will remain actively involved in the Safe Schools program throughout the county by continuing to provide guidance and assistance through its Safe Schools Center. Resources provided will include information about:

- Gang Intervention/Prevention
- Bullying
- Classroom Management
- School Crisis Intervention

Recommendation 7
LACOE will work with the school districts and other agency partners to establish a clear understanding of the federal, state and local laws regarding sharing of information for school aged youth.

Recommendation 8
LACOE will continue to participate in the development of an electronically-based information system.

Recommendation 9
LACOE will convene a county-wide meeting of district superintendents to discuss strategies to develop a standardized protocol for identification of services to foster and probation youth. Major stakeholders and policy makers responsible for the educational performance of these students will participate.

Recommendation 10
LACOE will continue to provide a directory of resources and training to all AB490 educational liaisons regarding meeting the educational and emotional needs of foster and probation youth.

DPR/EDL:dr