County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE
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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
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First District

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Third District

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ADOPTED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

12 MARCH 17, 2009

SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

March 17, 2009

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL WITHIN THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

On January 6, 2009, your Board passed a motion directing us to report back in 60 days on the feasibility of institutionalizing the Education Coordinating Council within the Chief Executive Office, ensuring that no new net county costs would be incurred by this move. This letter recommends approval to institutionalize the Education Coordinating Council within the Chief Executive Office in its Service Integration Branch.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve the institutionalization of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) within the Chief Executive Office (CEO) Service Integration Branch (SIB) effective July 1, 2009.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The purpose of the recommended action is to acquire educational expertise within the County to best meet the needs of children and youth under our care. By working from within the CEO structure, the ECC will be able to align the educational activities across multiple departments, help coordinate the educational resources in both Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department, and provide better

accountability and oversight for the education of system youth. Further, the County will be able to more effectively partner with the ECC to align our respective goals.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The ECC's Proposed Strategic Plan (Attachment I) includes the goals the ECC will be working on. They align well with the County's Strategic Plan Goal 2—Children and Families' Well-Being and Goal 5—Public Safety. Specifically, their work will help us with our data sharing efforts; reducing the number of transitioning youth who become homeless; cross-cluster communication (as department directors from three different clusters sit on the ECC and regularly attend its meetings); coordinating child care resources; strengthening community partnerships; and implementing the Dependency Education Pilot Program and the Probation Department's Comprehensive Education Reform plan.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Bringing the ECC into the CEO will not result in additional Net County Cost. DCFS and the Probation Department value the ECC and have included sufficient funding in their Fiscal Year 2009-10 Proposed Budget to finance the ECC's $200,000 annual operating budget. This funding will offset the costs of one staff position and miscellaneous operating expenses (Attachment II). Funding will be appropriated during the Final Changes Budget phase. The California Community Foundation has awarded the ECC with a grant in the amount of $100,000 over the next two years to allow for consultants to be hired on short-term specific projects. These grant funds are currently included within the Children's Council Foundation, Inc. budget. The ECC has also secured in-kind resources from the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles and in-kind accounting services from the Children's Council of Los Angeles.

FACTS AND PROVSIONAL/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

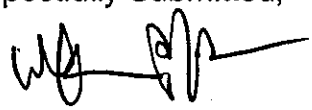
In the four years since your Board created the ECC, it has made significant progress towards closing the significant educational achievement gap between the County's youth and non-system youth. Of particular note, the Juvenile Court has agreed to modify its minute order language (a document that is generated for every youth under the supervision of DCFS) in such a way that the existing educational data-sharing barrier for County case workers will be solved; as a result of the data-sharing agreement brokered between DCFS and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), LAUSD assigned 14 staff to work directly with over 1,500 identified DCFS and probation youth; since the summer of 2008, DCFS has either developed or found ways to access over $1 million in funding for tutoring services for children in foster care; and

collaborated with the County and LAUSD to secure over $8 million in federal funding for LAUSD's George Washington Preparatory High School complex. This complex has the largest number of foster and probation students of any Los Angeles County school district. Attachment III is the latest progress report highlighting the achievements made by the Council and its members over the last six months.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of the institutionalization of the ECC within the CEO/SIB will enable the ECC to continue working on solving the existing educational data sharing barriers, enrolling DCFS children in high-quality early care and education programs, enrolling system youth in after-school and summer enrichment programs, and implementing the Dependency Education Pilot Project and the Probation Department's Comprehensive Education Reform report. If this recommendation is not approved, the ECC will not be able to move forward with its work.

Respectfully Submitted,



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:MS
KH:CDM:hn

Attachments (3)

c: Raymond G. Fortner, Jr., County Counsel
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Patricia Ploehn, Director of Children and Family Services
Robert Taylor, Chief Probation Officer of Probation Department
Carrie Dunbar Miller, Director of Education Coordinating Council

Education Coordinating Council
Proposed Strategic Plan

Overall ECC Focus: To raise the educational achievement of children and youth under the supervision of the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation to equal that of other youth.

Strategy 1: Ensure that the Dependency Education Pilot Project is successfully completed and introduced countywide.

Objective: Complete implementation of the pilot project now underway in the Montebello Unified School District and the Pomona Unified School District. Glean lessons learned through its evaluation process and develop strategies for rolling out the model in all DCFS regional offices.

Implementation steps:

a. Continue partnership with the First Supervisorial District, Chief Executive Office, DCFS, Montebello Unified School District, Pomona Unified School District, and Casey Family Programs, serving as co-lead on the project, through September 2009, the end of the pilot period.

b. Use evaluation findings to determine the most effective model components for implementation countywide.

c. Identify sources of funding to support expansion of project to other Los Angeles County school districts.

d. Work with DCFS on how best to incorporate the model components into departmental practices.

e. Train social workers on model components and how to routinely include educational planning into overall case planning.

Strategy 2: Work closely with the Probation Department to ensure that the Comprehensive Educational Reform for the Juvenile Halls and Camps is successfully institutionalized.

Objective: Assist the Probation Department in implementing the 35 recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Educational Reform Report adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 14, 2008.

Implementation steps:

a. Continue to participate on the Comprehensive Educational Reform Committee (CERC) to provide guidance and feedback on the reform effort progress.

b. Assist the Probation Department develop a plan for more successful transitions of probation youth from probation halls/camps into their local communities and mainstream district schools.

c. Work with members of the CERC to design a charter school and/or a school to be operated by a neighboring school district that would be located at one of the probation camps and secure the necessary waivers/approval to allow for its creation.

d. Help develop a plan for using multidisciplinary teams to conduct comprehensive educational case plans for every probation youth residing in the halls/camps.

e. Train probation officers on effective educational case planning methods and educational advocacy.

Strategy 3: Partner with the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care to significantly increase the number of DCFS children under the age of six—and the children of DCFS and probation youth—who are enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs.

Objective: Work with the Office of Child Care, DCFS, and the Probation Department to develop a set of procedures for enrolling DCFS children under the age of six, and the children of DCFS and probation youth, into high-quality early care and education programs.

Implementation steps:

a. Secure commitments from DCFS and Probation Department leadership to significantly increase the participation of their children, and the children of their youth, in high-quality early care and education programs.

b. Establish baseline data on the need for and the ability of DCFS and probation clients to access child care and developmental services.

c. Based on the data findings, work with the Office of Child Care, DCFS, and the Probation Department to develop an effective referral mechanism to such programs and a process for tracking enrollment.

d. Train DCFS and probation workers on the mechanism and process.

e. Help develop a curriculum for training licensed child care staff in family child care homes and child care and development centers to meet the unique needs of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and their families.

Strategy 4: Collaborate with youth development programs, County departments, and school districts to significantly increase the number of DCFS and probation youth participating in after-school and summer extracurricular and enrichment programs.

Objective: Work with DCFS and the Probation Department to develop a set of procedures for enrolling DCFS and probation youth in after-school and summer extracurricular and enrichment programs.

Implementation steps:

a. Secure commitments from DCFS and Probation Department leadership to significantly increase the participation of their youth in after-school and summer programs.

b. Create a resource guide of existing youth development programs which have the capacity and training to work with system youth.

c. Work with DCFS and the Probation Department to develop a recruitment and referral mechanism to such programs and a process for tracking enrollment.

d. Train DCFS and probation workers on the mechanism and process.

Strategy 5: Resolve remaining barriers to allow for the sharing of educational information between County departments and school districts throughout Los Angeles County.

Objective: Create an electronic data transferring process for sharing educational records with Los Angeles County case managers.

Implementation steps:

a. Develop a vehicle for sharing educational records that is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

b. Work with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to determine the ways in which this information can be shared without violating its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

c. Work with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and DCFS to ensure that the appropriate education fields are incorporated into the next generation of CWS/CMS (California's SACWIS system).

d. Work with the Probation Department to ensure that the appropriate education fields are incorporated into PCMS.

e. Partner with a software company to develop software that allows for the electronic transfer of educational data.

f. Work with DCFS, Probation, County Counsel, and Los Angeles County school districts to establish a protocol for sharing electronic education data.

EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL
Operating Budget
Fiscal year 2009-10 through 2011-12

OPERATING BUDGET	FY 2009-10 Proposed Budget	FY 2010-11 Proposed Budget	FY 2011-12 Projected Budget
Salaries and Employee Benefits	179,000	179,000	179,000
Services & Supplies	21,000	21,000	21,000
Other Charges	0	0	0
Fixed Assets (Equipment)	0	0	0
Other[1]	50,000	50,000	0
Gross Appropriation	250,000	250,000	200,000
Less: Intrafund Transfers[2]	200,000	200,000	200,000
Net Appropriation	50,000	50,000	0
REVENUES			
Miscellaneous	0	0	0
CCF Grant [1]	50,000	50,000	0
Total Revenue	50,000	50,000	0
NET COUNTY COST	0	0	0
Budgeted Positions	1.0	1.0	1.0

(1) - Reflects monies raised from a private foundation to hire short-term consultants for specific projects; these funds are located in the Children's Council Foundation, Inc. budget.
(2) - Reflects annual funding from DCFS and Probation ($100,000 from DCFS and $100,000 from Probation)

Note: Children's Law Center will make an in-kind contribution of a part-time law clerk;
Children's Council of Los Angeles will contribute in-kind all necessary accounting services.

Attachment II

3/5/2009 11:21 AM

Attachment III

Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

February 14, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Carrie D. Miller
Director, Education Coordinating Council

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN *"EXPECTING MORE; A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH"*

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved "*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth,*" developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006; this is now the sixth report.

During the past six months the ECC and its members have continued to make very significant strides in implementing the recommendations in *Expecting More*, and we thank the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Probation Department and the W.M. Keck Foundation for the significant financial support that made a lot of this progress possible. Much is being accomplished in the quest to raise the academic performance of children and youth under the supervision of DCFS and Probation, as will be seen in the following pages.

Of particular note:

- The Juvenile Court has agreed to modify its minute order language (a document that is generated for every youth under the supervision of DCFS) in such a way that the existing educational data-sharing barrier that has hampered the ability of county case workers to plan, implement and track educational goals for their children will be solved.

- Since the summer of 2008, DCFS has either developed or found ways to access over $1 million in funding for tutoring services for children in foster care.

- Collaborated with the Second Supervisorial District, LAUSD, DCFS, Probation, Department of Mental Health, Sheriff's Department, Department of Public Health and the Human Relations Commission to secure a Safe Schools/Healthy Students federal grant in the amount of $2.2 million for each of the next four years for LAUSD's George Washington Preparatory High School complex. This complex has the largest number of foster and probation students of any in LAUSD and should prove to be an excellent pilot.

- As a result of the data-sharing agreement brokered between DCFS and LAUSD that was reported to your Board last February, LAUSD assigned 14 staff, at the start of the fall semester, to work directly with over 1,500 identified DCFS and probation youth.

Further, DCFS and the Inter-University Consortium developed a training curriculum for all of the department's case-carrying social workers and their supervisors on the incorporation of education into case planning. Specifically, the trainings will cover the important role social workers play in a child's education; how to more effectively communicate with school districts, parents, and key stakeholders; AB 490 and other relevant state legislation affecting the education of DCFS youth; and available resources for improving the education outcomes of their youth. Trainings on this curriculum began in the Pomona office this month and will be conducted in all regional offices within one year.

The ECC continues to play a key role on the Comprehensive Education Reform Committee (CERC), chaired by Chief Probation Officer Taylor, whose plan for strengthening educational services to probation youth in the juvenile halls and camps was approved by your Board on October 14, 2008. Workgroups are now addressing the plan's major recommendations and, through their efforts, are helping to implement the ECC's Blueprint, especially with respect to Recommendations 3, 5, 7, 8, and 11.

Some of the key achievements with respect to individual Blueprint recommendations are:

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Recommendation #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.

- The Los Angeles County Office of Child Care, with input from the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and the Child Care Planning Committee, county departments, community stakeholders and the ECC, developed Bridging Child Development and Related Services Sectors: A Policy Framework for Los Angeles County. This seminal document, which will guide the integration of child care development work into the services offered by public and private children and family agencies and significantly expand access to high quality early childhood education, was approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 6,

2009. It will be a major tool for achieving Recommendation 1 of the ECC's blueprint and the ECC looks forward to partnering with the Office of Child Care to successfully implement it.

- 200 child development centers and licensed family child care homes have now submitted applications to enroll in STEP, about one-third of the participation goal set for the target date of 2010. 153 supplemental STEP Quality Improvement mini-grants have been awarded to date, totalling $695,000, and they are being used primarily to enhance facility learning environments. 641 child development professionals have participated in over 30 trainings on teacher-child relationships, the identification and inclusion of children with special needs, family and community connections, staff qualifications and working conditions, and regulatory compliance.

- The County Office of Child Care has trained Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) agency staff on the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL), enabling them to place families directly onto the CEL, in addition to trained DCFS, school district, and resource and referral agency staff. It is now taking an average of 8 months for child protective service/at-risk families to be pulled from this list and placed in available child care program openings, so it is critically important that DCFS families are added to the list as quickly as possible. Having this extra capability from PIDP agencies will help facilitate this.

- The Office of Child Care is also partnering with DCFS and community-based organization representatives to develop a cadre of professionals in licensed child care settings (including family child care and child care centers) who are trained to meet the unique needs of children who have experienced abuse and neglect and their families. Trainings are scheduled throughout this fiscal year and will address developmental screening tools, provide information on the Strengthening Families Model and identified protective factors, and help child care staff understand how to work with the child welfare system.

- The Policy Roundtable for Child Care is working to amend a proposed regulation change to the Education Code that would limit at-risk families to only 3 months of California Department of Education child care subsidies. This limitation would clearly undermine the access of foster children and the children of foster and probation youth to high quality child development programs.

Recommendation #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.

- The Magnolia Place Network, in partnership with the Center for Nonviolent Parenting and Education (CNVEP), has scheduled a series of 9 comprehensive trainings for parents, staff and caregivers, based on the "It Takes a Community"

curriculum developed by the CNVEP, PACE Head Start and the Department of Mental Health. These trainings will support parents and caregivers in promoting the social-emotional development and emotional intelligence of their young children and provide information on how to help children respond to those who struggle with mental health issues. They will also assist parents and caregivers to prepare their children to face classroom and playground challenges and to be successful in school.

- DCFS updated and re-published its Developmental Milestones Guide, in both English and Spanish. This Guide addresses young children from birth to five years of age, and organizes key developmental milestones into 3 categories—Physical/Motor, Emotional/Social and Intellectual. It also includes red flag alerts and prescribed activities to stimulate growth and development for each specified age, along with available child care and development resources. The department is now working with county agencies and community stakeholders who serve DCFS clients or potential ones to distribute this Guide.

- LACOE implemented its Early Advantage Initiative, which will ensure that all of LACOE's programs and services for young children and their families (e.g., Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Literacy Support Network, Early Start, the California Preschool Instructional Network) are coordinated and that resources are maximized to support families and children.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation #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.

- The Children, Youth, and Family Collaborative and Children Uniting Nations/mPLAY continue to expand their successful academic mentoring programs for foster and at-risk students on public school campuses. CYFC has added new programs in the Compton Unified School District at 4 elementary schools (Caldwell, Carver, McKinley, and Lincoln Drew) and at 2 middle schools (Bunche and Davis), and is now serving almost 2,000 students in the Los Angeles and Compton USDs.

  CUN is currently working with students at 7 middle schools—Foshay Learning Center, John Muir, Bethune, Drew, Markham, Gompers, and Virgil—and has added a Saturday School that helps youth improve their grades, attendance, behavior, self-esteem and relationships with others. Enrichment opportunities for mentees, their families, and mentors are provided, including visits to colleges and universities, sporting events, the Griffith Observatory, and the Skirball Cultural Center. A recent grant by the California Endowment has enabled CUN to provide training and support to mentors, caregivers, teachers and counselors with respect

to the mental health needs of foster youth, helping to ensure that students receive the services and supports they need to succeed in school.

- Family Outreach Community Intervention Services (FOCIS), a vendor at last year's ECC Resource Fair, is organizing a community resource fair for an expected 2,500 participants that will take place on May 9, 2009 in Pico Rivera. The ECC is partnering with FOCIS to ensure that foster and probation youth, their families, and those who work with them are included in the Fair, as well as many of the vendors who specialize in serving this population and who participated in ECC's resource fair last June.

- The Youth Transition Action Team (YTAT), whose members include the Probation Department, DCFS, Los Angeles City's Community Development Department and the ECC, is continuing its work to increase foster and probation youth participation in the City's workforce development programs. As a result, the number of foster and probation youth enrolling in the Los Angeles Summer Youth Employment Program in 2008 increased to 200, a significant improvement over the past two summers. Also, the City's Workforce Investment Board finalized its certification process for providers of its Summer Youth Employment and Hire LA Programs. For the first time, providers will earn incentives for prioritizing the inclusion of foster and probation youth in their programs.

- LACOE has begun offering in-home music lessons to eligible foster and probation youth (those residing in out of home care) to emphasize the importance of music in enriching children's lives. Over 100 youth are expected to benefit from this very popular program by the end of June 2009. Also, LACOE has arranged for 8 weekend computer camps for foster and probation youth, ages 13-18, beginning this month, Each camp provides 20 hours of instruction in the use of computers and Microsoft Office software and, upon completion, youth receive a computer and printer, software, and a backpack. Camps are being held in the South Bay, Los Angeles, Pomona, Hacienda Heights, San Fernando Valley and the Antelope Valley.

- The Juvenile Court and Children's Law Center created a program to provide homework and study help to students during the time they spend at the Children's Court awaiting appearances. The pilot, which began in October, uses Cal State Los Angeles students as tutors.

- Since the summer of 2008, DCFS has either developed or found ways to access over $1 million in funding for tutoring services for children in foster care. The department is now circulating information on local opportunities to each of its regional offices.

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

- DCFS has resurrected its Director's Youth Council, a group of current and former foster youth who meet with the Director of DCFS on a quarterly basis to discuss issues of importance to them and provide information to the Director about the impact of the department's services and policies on foster youth.

- The Los Angeles chapter members of the California Youth Connection (CYC), concerned that youth in care did not seem to be knowledgeable about the resources available to them, interviewed over 250 system youth to assess what they knew. CYC members then presented their findings at a Community Dinner for stakeholders and policy-makers in November at Pasadena City College, and used this occasion to generate recommendations on how to better publicize existing programs and opportunities.

- Los Angeles chapter members met with the State Director of Social Services and legislators during CYC's Annual Day at the Capital last month to discuss a set of recommendations developed during CYC's Policy Conference last summer. These recommendations touched on ways to improve access to higher education, stengthen the youth transition program, increase transitional housing resources and expand health care for current and former foster youth.

Recommendation #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.

- The Probation Department has assigned an ILP (Independent Living Program) Coordinator to each of its juvenile camps. These coordinators are responsible for working with camp-based probation officers to connect ILP-eligible youth transitioning out of the camps to housing, college, and employment resources.

- LACOE, in collaboration with DCFS, Probation and its community partners, convened a "Transitions 411" conference in August 2008. 186 youth and 75 adults participated in 25 workshops that highlighted self-advocacy strategies and provided essential information about transitioning out of the child welfare system. 55 exhibitors in the areas of financial aid, health services, housing, jobs, the library, and the military participated and, courtesy of CASA, youth received books and either shirts & ties or evening gowns.

- The Children's Law Center and the Children's Court are ensuring that every youth who leaves the system receives a letter verifying his/her status as a former foster youth. This letter confirms the eligibility of former foster youth for college scholarships and other unique opportunities available only to them.

- Los Angeles City College has joined the Guardian Scholars Program, which provides on-campus supports and resources to current and former system youth, such as financial aid, counseling and tutoring. The Probation Department is assisting this program by assigning an MSW intern to the LACC campus to identify eligible students.

- The Court Scholars Program, created by the Juvenile Court and Cal State Los Angeles, assists 35 former foster youth identified as students at the university. These students are being given priority access to—and are being connected to—a host of resources available on that school's campus.

Recommendation #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.

- Collaborated with the Second Supervisorial District, LAUSD, DCFS, Probation, Department of Mental Health, Sheriff's Department, Department of Public Health and the Human Relations Commission to secure a Safe Schools/Healthy Students federal grant in the amount of $2.2 million for each of the next four years for LAUSD's George Washington Preparatory High School complex. This complex has the largest number of foster and probation students of any in LAUSD and should prove to be an excellent pilot. The monies are being used to create a network of programs that: ensure students feel safe on campus, as well as traveling to and from school; address student issues such as drug and alcohol use, gang activity, and student violence; connect students to resources such as tutoring, mentoring, and afterschool activities; provide mental health services; and enhance early childhood social and emotional learning programs. This grant will also help to ensure the successful transition of probation students from juvenile halls/camps back into the community.

- Project 51, an Acton/Agua Dulce School District program to reduce student bullying, has established an 800 number and a website, which are available 24 hours a day/7 days a week, to receive complaints of bullying occuring within the District. The District has agreed to investigate all reported complaints within three business days, and to work in partnership with Project 51 staff to ensure that each complaint is dealt with satisfactorily. A comprehensive anti-bullying program handbook is currently being drafted, using best practices from other anti-bullying programs and research. This handbook will also include the program's implementation plan and delineate the ways in which anti-bullying language will be incorporated into school policies. In addition, the District is expanding its peer mentoring program to require that, beginning this fall, every incoming freshman is assigned an upperclass student mentor. These mentors must have completed

the anti-bullying education curriculum developed through Project 51 and agree to report any bullying complaints to the Project.

DATA AND INFORMATION-SHARING

Recommendation #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 Educational 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.)

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

- The Juvenile Court has agreed to modify its minute order language (a document that is generated for every youth under the supervision of DCFS) to ensure that it can be used as an individual court order for the sharing of educational records in a manner which is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). **When this is finalized, the existing educational data-sharing barrier that has hampered the ability of county case workers to plan, implement and track educational goals for their children will be solved!**

- An MOU is being drafted to facilitate the sharing of aggregate data on school performance and juvenile arrests among LAUSD, the Sheriff's Department, City of Los Angeles Police Department, the Probation Department, DCFS, and A Better LA.

Recommendation #8: The ECC should work with the Chief Administrative Office, 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.

- DCFS helped shape the RFP for the re-design of California's electronic Child Welfare System/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to ensure that the new system captures education information for pre-school children and significantly expands the amount of information captured for K-12 students.

- Partnering with the California Department of Social Services to create a Los Angeles County educational data-sharing system proposal to be presented to the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We are seeking clarification on the proposal's compliance with the State Auotmated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to ensure that there are no further barriers to moving forward on developing an electronic system.

- Working with SAGA Technologies to refine the data elements and system requirements needed to allow for education data to be electronically accessed by county case workers, should HHS deem the proposed system SACWIS compliant.

- DCFS is now testing, in four pilot offices, a protocol established by the Pomona regional office to achieve consistent entry of data into the Education Passport section of CWS/ CMS. These pilot offices had a 0% entry rate at the start of the new school year in September, but by December the entry rate of current and accurate school and grade information had increased significantly and it continues to grow each month. Because of this initial success, the department is now rolling out this protocol in all of its offices.

SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT

Recommendation #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.

- The ECC is now completing a data match between the Lancaster School District, DCFS and the Probation Department to determine the academic performance of system youth in that district and identify the schools they are attending. A follow-up data match between the Pomona Unified School District and DCFS is also being completed.

- As a result of the data-sharing agreement brokered between DCFS and LAUSD that was reported to your Board last February, LAUSD assigned 14 staff, at the start of the fall semester, to work directly with over 1,500 identified DCFS and probation youth. Eight of these staff are working with youth at 80 group homes within the district's boundaries, and six are working at 7 schools with high concentrations of system youth—Audubon Middle School, Washington Prep High School, Dorsey High School, Fremont High School, Hollywood High High School, Monroe High School, Panorama High School and Aggeler Community Day School. These staff are ensuring that foster and probation students are appropriately connected to college/career counseling, tutoring, and other supportive services and resources, with an emphasis on linking them to community colleges, four-year colleges, vocational programs and jobs for those graduating from high school. Additionally, these staff are working with probation youth leaving the juvenile halls/camps and their parents to create smoother transitions back into the community.

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

- At the urging of Supervisor Antonivich, LAUSD trained all district staff in the fall of 2008 on the responsibilies of being mandated child abuse reporters and how to properly report suspected abuse.

- 100% of the school-based counselors in the Montebello Unified and Pomona Unified school districts (28 and 27, respectively) will be trained on how to effectively meet the unique needs of DCFS students, as part of the First Supervisorial District Educational Pilot Project. Initial trainings will be completed this year, with on-going training to be completed as needed. Topics will include: education law, confidentiality and the release of school records, special education, AB 3632 mental health services, the role of social workers, unique programs and services available to system youth, and how best to address their emotional needs.

- In the fall, LAUSD foster care unit staff trained:

    - over 350 school counselors, teachers and personnel at 10 schools (including elementary, middle and high schools), all school counselors in Local District 4 and over 60 teachers who serve as on-site tutors for local group homes on the unique needs and challenges of system youth.
    - 35 Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and almost 150 biological parents, foster parents and kinship caregivers on the education rights of system youth, how to best navigate the school system, and what school resources exist that would help their students succeed in school. This spring, staff are planning a training on these same topics for 100 group home administrators

- over 70 probation officers on how the district's probation camp-returnee program works and how to access it.

ACCOUNTABILITY

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

- On October 1 Supervisor Knabe sponsored, in conjunction with the Probation Department, Department of Mental Health, Children's Council of Los Angeles County, and the Los Angeles Unified School District, " A Transformational Learning Opportunity: Understanding How Trauma and Violence Impact Children and Youth." This first-ever cross-training conference for mental health professionals, probation officers, community workers, school administrators and teachers examined how exposure to trauma and violence shapes the behavior of system youth. It sought to transform the approach of county and school personnel and the staff of their community partners who work with the County's youth through presentations and cross-dialogues about new, compelling research-generated information on the effects of this exposure on youth, practical interventions that work, and how to strengthen relationships between staff and youth. Hundreds of staff participated and were highly enthusiastic about the training offered and the opportunity it created to build more solid relationships among county departments, schools and the community organizations who serve probation youth. One of the key recommendations coming out of the conference was to do a similar training with DCFS staff and its community partners.

- DCFS and the Los Angeles Unified School District created an Advisory Council of county social workers, teachers and school counselors in January to improve the communication and working relationships between DCFS and LAUSD staff and engage in a joint effort to produce better educational outcomes for youth in foster care. The Advisory Council is promoting cross-training, service integration, the identification and use of best practices, the monitoring and evaluation of various interventions, the development and implementation of systemic procedures for needs assessments, and is coordinating efforts to bring parents, school staff, and community stakeholders together.

Recommendation #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, 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.

- The First Supervisorial District Education Pilot Project, which has now been launched in the Montebello and Pomona Unified School Districts for about 90 DCFS high school students, is testing the concept outlined in this Recommendation. These students are each receiving an assessment of their academic performance to date and this information is being used by the youth's multidisciplinary Core Team to create an individual educational case plan. Core Teams, which include the student, his/her education rights holder, caregiver, primary social worker, school-based social worker, school-based counselor, and other people the student chooses to invite, help the student decide what they want to do when they graduate and what they need to do during high school to be able to accomplish that goal. The school-based social worker then helps the student access school and community-based educational resources that will help them meet their identified goals. Casey Family Programs is evaluating this pilot project to determine its best practices and lessons learned so that the program can be, eventually, instituted countywide. Preliminary data shows that 53% of Pomona pilot students and 68% of Montebello pilot students have improved their grades since participating in this project.

As can be seen by all of the above, ECC members, partners and community organizations are all actively engaged in making *Expecting More* a reality and the Council looks forward to our making further significant progress. If you should have any questions or require any additional information, your staff may contact the ECC at: (213) 974-5967.

CDM:SGW

cc: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director, Children and Family Services
Chief Probation Officer
Director, Mental Health
Superintendent, Office of Education
Education Coordinating Council