



## **Education Coordinating Council**

**October 7, 2010**

**9:30 a.m.**

The California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities  
1000 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California

- Present:
- Allison Bajracharya
  - Donald Blevins
  - Carol Clem
  - Edwin Díaz, representing Renatta Cooper
  - Mónica García
  - René Gonzalez, representing Ramón C. Cortines
  - Judge Donna Groman, representing Judge Michael Nash
  - Jon Gundry
  - Leslie Heimov
  - Jodi Kurata, representing Bruce Saltzer
  - Aubrey Manuel
  - Machelle Massey
  - Martha Powell, representing Helen Kleinberg
  - Joi Russell, representing Trish Ploehn
  - Fabricio Segovia
  - Marvin J. Southard
  - Rick Tebbano, representing Christopher Steinhauser
- Guests:
- Helen Berberian, Fifth Supervisorial District
  - John Deasy, Los Angeles Unified School District

Chair Mónica García brought the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m., welcoming everyone and noting that Judge Michael Nash was attending a conference at Georgetown University, and Trish Ploehn was involved in meetings with the Board of Supervisors this morning. Education Coordinating Council director Carrie Miller thanked García for her dedication in attending today's meeting despite its conflict with a major press conference being held at the Los Angeles Unified School District, where García is president of the school board, about seniority-based teacher layoffs.

- García gave a special welcome to three individuals attending their first ECC meeting:

Jon Gundry, Los Angeles County's Interim Superintendent of Schools, who assumed leadership of the Los Angeles County Office of Education on the retirement of Darline

Robles at the end of August. Gundry has been aware of and involved in the work of the ECC for some time, and expressed his pleasure at being at the table.

Edwin Díaz, Superintendent of the Pasadena Unified School District, attending in the place of school board member Renatta Cooper. Pasadena has quite a number of foster and probation youth enrolled, and Díaz said the district is working hard to coordinate services and provide support to those youth, making sure they have access to community resources.

Donald Blevins, Los Angeles County's new Chief Probation Officer, who arrived in the job during a particularly challenging time. Blevins has more than 35 years' experience in probation, most recently as Chief Probation Officer in Alameda County, and is looking forward to improving the programming that Los Angeles County offers to youth in the juvenile justice system. He is personally passionate about literacy and education, which he sees as the ticket to success for these youth. "While they're with us," Blevins said, "we're going to make sure we move their education agenda forward." Blevins introduced Jeremy Nichols, the department's first Director of School Services, whom he characterized as "a perfect fit for this county."

- As members recall, the Children's Law Center was involved in founding the ECC and served as its initial fiscal agent. When the ECC was formally established by the Board of Supervisors in the fall of 2004, those responsibilities were transferred to The Children's Council Foundation. Because that foundation is now concentrating all of its work and resources on community organizing, the Children's Law Center graciously offered to serve once again as the ECC's fiscal agent, and resumed that role on July 1. On behalf of the ECC, García thanked the Children's Law Center profusely for its generosity and commitment to the organization over the years.
- The next education dialogue with school district superintendents will be held on November 1, 2010, hosted by LACOE's interim superintendent Jon Gundry. A report on that gathering will be presented at the February ECC meeting.

### **ECC Accomplishments for 2009–2010**

The August 17, 2010, report to the Board of Supervisors on the ECC's progress in implementing its Blueprint recommendations was included in member packets, and Chair García highlighted some of the most important achievements.

- Minute-order language has been finalized that solves, once and for all, the decade-long disagreement about how education information can be legally shared in a way that complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). That language is now being routinely inserted into court orders for all foster youth entering the dependency system, and the necessary adaptations are being made so it can be used by the delinquency court as well.
- The Department of Children and Family Services has begun a first-time intensive effort to refer at least 90 percent of its children under the age of six to high-quality early care and education programs. As research has shown, participation in these programs is one of the most

powerful tools that exists for preventing further child maltreatment and for ensuring positive long-term benefits to a child's future academic and personal success.

- As discussed at the last ECC meeting, a unique pilot program has been established at Camp Scott/Scudder School that provides an innovative 'charter-school-like' alternative to the traditional LACOE academic model.
- Students participating in the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program—a collaboration between school districts and DCFS to prioritize education for foster youth—increased their grade point averages by 25 percent. Over 1,020 course credits were recovered for these students, and 76 percent of those participating graduated from high school. Of those graduates, 77 percent enrolled in either a two- or four-year college, a statistic that compares very favorably to the national average for foster youth going on to higher education of only 20 percent.

The design of the program, which outstations DCFS social workers on school campuses to work intensively with individual students, "sounds simple," García commented, "but in reality it's highly labor-intensive and very complicated. The fact that we could create a structure like this for kids to get services is a gigantic accomplishment."

### **Countywide Self-Sufficiency Goal**

In 2003, the Department of Children and Family Services embarked on a systematic process of planning child welfare service delivery by focusing on three outcome goals for children and families: safety, permanency, and a reduced reliance on detentions. If departmental functions did not contribute specifically to one of those goals, resources were redirected and staff were redeployed. Contracts became performance-based, and DCFS and the Probation Department joined the state in negotiating a waiver to Title IV-E that allowed more spending flexibility to achieve those goals. As a result of these steps, along with recommendations for innovative service delivery made by collaborative work groups, DCFS saw several improvements by the end of 2009:

- Improved child safety
- An 18 percent reduction in caseloads
- A 32 percent improvement in timelines to permanency
- A 36 percent reduction in children residing in out-of-home placement

Between 2005 and 2009, Probation reforms realized:

- A 19 percent reduction in the number of youth in congregate care
- A 32 percent reduction in the number of re-entries into the system
- A 15 percent reduction in the median length of stay in the system

Despite these shifts, the prospects in 2010 for many of the 1,500 youth who age out of county supervision every year at age 18 remain dismal. Many emerge from years of multiple out-of-home placements without being safely reunified with their birth families, without an alternative 'forever' family, and without any lifelong connection to a committed, caring adult. As a county, Los Angeles had neither identified an outcome goal specific to the needs of these youths nor gone through the same kind of robust planning process that has brought success in other areas.

“As a county, we are these children’s family,” Fifth Supervisorial District deputy Helen Berberian said. “We must prepare them to be self-sufficient. Failure to do so is nothing less than government-sanctioned child abuse.”

Berberian explained the motion brought to the Board of Supervisors in February by Supervisor Michael Antonovich to address this gap and establish a fourth countywide goal—transition-age youth (TAY) self-sufficiency. The Board’s approval of this motion directed:

The realignment of existing revenues and expenditures across county departments to support innovative strategies to improve youth self-sufficiency, including housing, education, employment, and well-being

The centralization of concurrent youth development planning services

The integration of youth-centered self-sufficiency services across various county departments to create seamless service delivery, plus the establishment of youth self-sufficiency MAPP (Management Appraisal and Performance Plan) goals for responsible managers within those departments

The creation of an evaluation mechanism to establish baseline data and annually measure improvements around this goal

Since February, county managers and their child welfare partners have met every two weeks to brainstorm innovations and pilots to achieve these directives, and Berberian expressed appreciation to all involved. A list of self-sufficiency work group members was included in member packets. When Antonovich takes office as the chair of the Board of Supervisors on December 7, he will announce the TAY self-sufficiency goal and introduce a motion to implement the work group’s recommendations. (Berberian also acknowledged on Antonovich’s behalf the co-sponsors of AB 12, recently passed legislation that extends services and supports for foster youth to age 21.)

In a Casey Family Programs ‘breakthrough series’ in which work group member Joi Russell participates, representatives from around the state bring youth with them. “They tell us what we’re doing wrong,” Russell said, “and how we’re failing them. In the Molina project, for example, kids had earned more school credits than we thought—they’d just gotten lost in their moves from foster home to foster home. What I love about the self-sufficiency work group is its diversity and the fact that it has all levels of staff. We have honest and painful discussions about what we’re not doing well. We need to start working with these kids the minute we come into contact with them, not wait until they’re fourteen or fifteen.”

The group’s main objective, Carrie Miller said, is to develop a doable action plan, and members met at a retreat earlier this month to address four areas of self-sufficiency for youth from birth to age 21: permanency, education, workforce development, and social and emotional well-being. A focus group with probation youth, Miller noted, found that the last was by far the most important. “We don’t do nearly enough in the area of social and emotional well-being,” she said.

When the floor was opened to discussion, Marv Southard suggested a different thrust for social and emotional health, moving from a historical focus on simply reducing the stigma of mental

illness to a more positive spotlight on social inclusion. “The real issue with foster and probation youth,” Southard said, “is that those labels systematically exclude these individuals. Add to that the exclusions of racial or economic or immigration status, and you get layer upon layer of exclusion, leading in part to the disproportionate representation of minority youth in the system. We need to find ways of including these kids as equals, as being the same as the rest of us. It’s not a program as such, but an overarching strategy to dispel those multiple layers of exclusion.”

Judge Donna Groman recommended immediate intensive assessments for youth seen by the juvenile court. “Permanency can be achieved only if we determine the issues the youth and their family are facing, and address them right away,” she said. “Once kids are removed from their homes, they’re already lost. They’re taken from their families, they lose ties with their parents—we’re setting them up for poor transitions. Kids with no permanent ties to anyone don’t succeed.” Groman believes that badly planned transitions often create situations where students not only lose course credits, but are often out of school for weeks because of the time it can take to get them re-enrolled when they are released from custody.

Jon Gundry sees a continuing problem with the exchange of information among agencies. “Sometimes it’s easy, but sometimes it’s not,” he said. “Kids do get lost. They walk out the door from Probation and no one knows where they’re going.” In a school system where Gundry previously worked, state law required that any student leaving school, even when expelled, be re-enrolled elsewhere within three days, and the school they left was mandated to ensure that happened. “We didn’t just watch kids walk away,” Gundry said. “We followed up. It wasn’t the responsibility of the place where they said they were going—it was ours.”

Transitional placements in district or county community day schools are often appropriate for students released from camps or juvenile halls, rather than their being automatically sent back to comprehensive high schools. “We have county programs available,” Gundry said of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, “and our role is to serve the kids coming out of the juvenile court system. We can do that better with improved communication and coordination.”

Donald Blevins would like to see the expanded use of multidisciplinary teams, so agencies share information more effectively across their silos. He also agrees with focusing on transitions from juvenile halls and camps to the community—ensuring that youth with medical or mental health issues have providers and appointments arranged prior to their release, for example, and that school transitions go more smoothly, with no gaps in enrollment.

Edwin Díaz spoke of the difficulty of creating education systems in which individual youth are able to establish relationships with adults who become their advocates—who know the system well and can coordinate resources on behalf of the student. “We all start with good intentions,” he said, “but unless someone has a strong, positive relationship with that kid, they tend to get lost. Each kid needs someone who is there for them all the time. We have to do a better job of creating structures to support that.”

Schools need the flexibility to accept students at whatever time in the school year they enroll, Díaz added, and district staff need to be aware of transitional options to appropriately place re-entering students. “The worst thing we can do when kids show up is not to immediately embrace

them,” he said. “It makes them think they’re not wanted.” Some schools are clearly open to welcoming foster and probation students, Leslie Heimov commented, and efforts should begin there.

Heimov went on to highlight one success story: a charter high school in which 61 percent of the students participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program (indicating high levels of poverty), yet where the attendance rate last year was 98 percent. “You talk to these kids and they say they come to school because it’s their family, and they know their teachers care about them,” Heimov said. “That’s what’s essential.” It is also important to look at each child individually to determine the school setting in which he or she would excel and be nurtured, and then provide the appropriate support (transportation, homework help, etc.) to ensure success.

“Academically, we’ve got two roads,” Mónica García said. “The kid reading at grade level who can access any classroom, and the kid who’s behind a few grades and can’t read. We need to treat that situation just as we would a medical condition—we do an intervention or they’re lost. Some kids are resilient, and others need help.” She advocated the use of technology for vertical case management, particularly with regard to student transitions mid-semester.

In addition, García urged an accountability piece—that professionals making decisions about students sign off on those plans and are then evaluated on whether those choices led to the students doing well. “In LAUSD, our move to smaller schools is encouraging relationships and personalization,” she said. “Personalization equals accountability.” García also wants to identify transition metrics to be included in the annual LAUSD report card to the public.

Southard spoke of a foster child he recently encountered who had threatened suicide. When a mental health team evaluated him, they found that he was not serious about harming himself, but was devastated by the need to change his placement. “His life was in his school and his extracurricular activities,” Southard said. “That’s what he connected with—his band program. His proposed placement was far away, and he couldn’t have continued those activities. His initial reaction was to end his life.” The anecdote illustrates the importance of personalization—it took someone actually talking to the boy to find out what the underlying issue was. “You can’t just look at the kid’s GPA,” Southard said. “For him, other things mattered. Policies can be great, but we need to find a way to attend to particular individuals.”

In the past, Heimov remembers, the Glendale Police Department used to call school counselors the day after it responded to any domestic violence call with children in the home. “If the child’s not on their game the next day,” Heimov said, “the school will know why. That’s not hard to achieve—maybe we can find out if that’s still happening?”

Charter schools—which are often smaller and more conducive to relationship-building—may be good options for foster and probation youth, Allison Bajracharya said. They are open to all students, youth can remain enrolled no matter where they live, and if vacancies exist, enrollment is possible at any point in the semester. Bajracharya offered her assistance to county agencies in identifying charter schools that might be appropriate for individual youth, and Heimov suggested compiling a directory to promote access, especially for foster parents.

René Gonzalez asked for the ECC’s help in including charter-school representatives in Los Angeles Unified’s discussions of options for probation students transitioning back into that dis-

trict. He also commented on breaking down the silos that still exist between parts of the system, citing an effort to improve college access for foster youth that only recently invited LAUSD representatives to its meetings. “How can we become involved earlier in things like that?” he asked. “Kids get their information through us. We need to change that thinking.”

Machelle Massey spoke passionately about the inability of foster and probation youth to function well in school when they are living in out-of-home placements where they are simply considered a paycheck. “Caregivers may comply with medical appointments and other mandated things, but they’re not giving these kids the emotional support they need,” she said. “I see these kids every day. I’m the one asking them how they’re doing in school, whether they had a test that day. The people they live with couldn’t care less. Kids can’t be expected to want to go to school when they live with people for whom education is not a priority. School counselors are just programming classes—they don’t have time to focus on the kids themselves. In one school I know, the dropout prevention counselor has become these kids’ therapist. That’s not his job, but they have no one else to talk to. We can talk all we want to about what needs to happen inside schools, but everything starts with where we’re placing these kids, especially the ones in group homes and out-of-home care. Caregivers may go to all the trainings, but they still have an emotional disconnection. Our kids want discipline, and they want to be cared about.”

An audience member from an agency serving foster children agreed. “Everything you’ve said, I see every day,” she said. “Most kids are terrified of [the] foster care [system]. There’s nothing positive about it. They feel like a number, they have no advocate, they get treated poorly. The environment they live in is really important. We need to train foster parents and caregivers on A–G requirements, on how to persist with counselors, on where to get tutoring services. It needs to start in the home.”

As part of the All Saints Church Foster Care Project, Jeannette Mann is one of 100 volunteers who have direct contact with foster, probation, and homeless youth. “What we haven’t heard today,” she commented, “is the tremendous strength these kids have with regard to their love and concern for their younger siblings. We should build on that strength—keep siblings in the same schools, let them know what’s happening.” Her group of volunteers are often the only people dealing with these youth, she said, who are not paid to be there. “They’ll talk to us in a way they won’t talk to a paid caregiver.”

Joi Russell would like to see local colleges and universities link students in master’s education programs to foster and probation students in one-on-one relationships that would begin when youngsters are 14. “They’d stay with the kids the whole time,” Russell said, “providing role modeling and a connection to the university. They’re an untapped resource. And it would give future teachers a chance to become familiar with the needs of foster and probation kids.” Judge Groman also suggested training volunteer community advocates who would assist parents and other caregivers in navigating the foster care and probation systems.

Candace Kavanagh mentioned a job-readiness program developed by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, a shift in focus within the 4-H organization for urban participants, and a pre-release planning program for incarcerated youth that has improved outcomes in Boston.

Chair García asked that individuals with further comments on self-sufficiency send them to Miller at the ECC office.

### **Truancy/Dropout Prevention Efforts**

Last year, the ECC agreed to look at ways of reducing school truancy, and vice chair Michael Nash offered to create a task force to generate ideas that would build on or add to current efforts within the county, and develop a coordinated approach. Judge Donna Groman, supervising judge of the delinquency court, reported on the first meeting of that task force, which took place on September 20; a summary was included in member packets.

All three branches of the juvenile court system—dependency, delinquency, and the informal juvenile and traffic courts—deal with truancy in one form or another. Of the approximately 180,000 citations issued to youth every year, about 30 percent are for truancy, and the informal juvenile and traffic courts see about 30,000 youth annually. A comprehensive program that can keep truancy out of the court system is the goal of the task force, which began by gathering information from school districts on their relevant programs. (A draft of that matrix was included in member packets.) “The criminalization of truancy is not working,” Groman said. “We want to work with schools to keep cases out of the juvenile justice system, and we want to find evidence-based practices to combat truancy that are effective. We encourage all interested parties, especially law enforcement, to join the task force, and look forward to a good collaboration.”

Chair García commented that the Los Angeles Unified School District lost about \$300 million last year through student absences (although she also pointed out that about \$450 million was also lost through employee absences), and two years ago, 30,000 middle-school students were absent every day. “The way we’re dealing with truancy,” she said, “is more evidence of failure.”

One bright spot, however, is LAUSD’s Student Recovery Day, which was initiated in 2009 by school board member Steve Zimmer primarily to address the fact that 20,000 students appear every year on the potential dropout report. On two days—one in October 2009 and one in February 2010—teams of volunteers made phone calls and home visits in an effort to encourage and support students to return to school, and 432 students were recovered.

John Deasy, deputy superintendent of LAUSD, reported on his involvement with this year’s Student Recovery Day, held at 15 high schools on September 24. Its primary focus was recovering ‘no show’ and ‘leaver’ students, and targeting those with chronic attendance problems (25 or more absences last year). Since that date, 737 students have been recovered, and a new mechanism has been added to track returnees’ progress toward their educational goals, and whether or not they ultimately earn their high school diplomas.

“Almost universally,” Deasy reported, “kids just didn’t know how to get back into school. I visited twenty-three homes with my team, and for the most part, the kids were there, just sitting at home. They tell you the problem, you take fifteen minutes to listen and care, and so much is solvable. The whole program is about them finding their way back without judgment. We don’t care about anything but solving the issue that’s keeping them away from school.” Some students were discovered to have moved and enrolled in other schools without notifying the district, but others were untraceable. Those who could be found were often without one or both of their parents, or in

families that had been displaced as a result of losing a home or rental unit because of the economic downturn. “They had to relocate, and they thought they’d be in trouble if they came back,” Deasy said. “That’s one of the reasons recovery was so high. I found the experience personally very moving, very grounding—going to the homes, walking the neighborhood, understanding the totality of the youth in our classrooms. It needs to be part of the practice in our district.”

Amnesty-like agreements with law enforcement in Los Angeles and 26 other cities were in effect during the week of the recovery day, so that students with minor infractions could return without penalty (often a concern). Foster youth with outstanding traffic court warrants, fines, or tickets for other minor infractions, Leslie Heimov noted, should contact their Children’s Law Center attorney for help with simple procedures for handling them.

An audience member asked whether a special-needs review was part of the recovery program, since truancy can be a manifestation of underlying learning disabilities that may not become evident until middle or high school. Some teams, for example, found 17-year-olds who had earned only five credits at their comprehensive high schools. “Almost all the youth we recovered, we knew previously,” Deasy acknowledged. “We’re not being successful with them in the programs they’ve been in, and that contributes to their walking away. We definitely need to re-identify their needs. It’s not going to do them any good to come back and participate in the same program that didn’t work for them before. This is a trigger to make some adjustments. It’s a change in trajectory—before, it’s been easier to ‘invite students out’ than to invite them in to resolve problems. We need to change that tone, and we’re being very deliberate in talking about that.” The district is putting together a matrix so that students, parents, and caregivers know what alternatives are available to them.

Aubrey Manuel recommended rolling out the welcome mat for returning students. “Right now, we criminalize truancy and take punitive measures against kids who are late to school,” he said. “We need to welcome those kids who show up, not give them detention.” Manuel also stressed what he sees as the core issue of stability in placement. “We have got to stop moving these children,” he maintained. “That’s the hidden enemy. Without placement stability, we’ll never get this solved.”

Another concern is that of bullying, Groman added. Recent news items about the suicides of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth only highlight the issue. “They experience bullying all the time, but it doesn’t happen just to that group,” she said. “Unless we deal with it, we’ll lose a lot of kids. We need to make sure that bullying is not going on, and if it is, that it’s being dealt with. We can’t be pushing kids out of school because they don’t feel safe.” A Long Beach Unified School District survey found that the number-one reason students did not want to come to school was safety, Rick Tebbano reported. That district has seven high schools with approximately 3,000 students per school. “Not all kids are comfortable in that large a population,” he said, “and not all children learn in the traditional way. We need to pull in more charter schools, more alternatives for foster youth, for truants, for all students who need other options.”

ECC members offered congratulations to LAUSD and its partners—expanded this year to include the mayor’s office, the Community Development Department, and City Year—for the success of Student Recovery Day, with Marv Southard calling it “a perfect example of the social inclusion approach.”

### **CEO/SIB Structural Changes and Their Impact on the ECC**

As a result of recent internal restructuring in the county's Chief Executive Office and the promotion of Kathy House to Assistant CEO in charge of service integration across the five administrative clusters of county government, the newly elevated status of the CEO's Service Integration Branch—within which the ECC resides—should help the ECC to better integrate education issues into policy work across all departmental clusters. In addition, a second full-time staff person for the ECC has been approved, and director Carrie Miller introduced Helen Chavez, who will begin on October 25. Chavez has a long history with the goals of the ECC, having helped achieve the fee waiver for foster children within Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP). She will be transferring from the county's Office of Child Care.

Antonia Jimenez has been appointed the Deputy CEO in charge of the Children and Families' Well-Being cluster.

### **Director's Report**

Carrie Miller highlighted information in her written director's report, which is attached to and made part of these minutes.

- Jodi Kurata from the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) encouraged ECC member involvement in planning the second resource fair for foster and probation youth, scheduled at The California Endowment for June 28, 2011. She expressed appreciation to the Probation Department for stepping up to be the first co-sponsor, and said that monetary donations would be used to pay the necessary fees for youth to receive vital documents (birth certificates, Social Security cards, DMV identification cards, etc.), and to provide box lunches for the youth and caregivers who attend.
- Liz Díaz from the Los Angeles City Community Development Department welcomed Miller to the city's newly created Board of Community and Family Services, a consolidation of previous commissions related to children's and other human services. Miller's appointment is a good opportunity to cross-fertilize city and county work with regard to achieving the ECC's goals for improving education outcomes, Díaz said. The body's first meeting is October 18.
- The Department of Children and Family Services' Michael Gray expressed appreciation to Randy Gottlieb of the Stuart Foundation for its \$150,000 Ready to Succeed planning grant to DCFS. Pat Levinson from the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Foster Youth Services, Norma Sturgis from the Los Angeles Unified School District, and Nancy Shea from Mental Health Advocacy Services were also acknowledged for their help in securing the grant and working on the initiative.

The Stuart Foundation has been committed to improving educational outcomes for children in foster care for many years, and this initiative will concentrate particularly on youth served by DCFS's educational consultants. Representatives from the initiative met with Foster Youth Services representatives in Orange County to look at the electronic database for education information in use there, and were impressed with its components. Progress on the initiative will be regularly reported to the ECC.

### **ECC Focus Areas for 2011**

In the brief time still available during the meeting agenda, Chair García solicited suggestions for focus areas for the organization during the next year.

- Especially in light of the emphasis in the truancy discussion on the positive relationships that children need at school, Martha Powell urged more mental health services (psychologists and other professionals) at school sites.
- Jon Gundry encouraged attendees to read the July 20 report to the Board of Supervisors from the Los Angeles County Office of Education (included in member packets) with regard to addressing the structural funding deficit in the Juvenile Court Schools program, through which youth incarcerated at juvenile halls and camps receive their education. “If something is not done,” Gundry said, “this ongoing deficit could lead to the insolvency of the program.”
- Marv Southard expects mental health and other social services to be profoundly affected by health care reform and the run-up to its full implementation in 2014, and suggested that the ECC focus on those changes. “As families move into coverage,” he said, “the most significant piece—and the most unknown—will be that of the undocumented population, since they will still be without coverage.”

García asked that members e-mail Carrie Miller with further thoughts on 2011 focus areas, along with any updates or announcements that time constraints prevented them sharing.

### **Next Meeting**

The next ECC meeting is scheduled for:

**Thursday, February 3, 2011**

**9:30 a.m.**

Location to be announced

There being no further public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.



## **Director's Report**

October 7, 2010

### **New Foster Youth Legislation**

To become effective on January 1, 2011, unless otherwise stated:

**AB 12 (Beall)** will enact the State option to use Federal Title IV-E funds to extend Foster Care and Kin-GAP benefits to foster youth up to 21 years of age. This measure becomes effective January 1, 2012.

**AB 743 (Portantino)** will help to keep siblings together in the foster care system. The bill clearly defines a required timeframe of ten days that the child welfare system must notify the child's attorney before a planned separation of siblings.

**AB 1758 (Ammiano)** will remove the designation of the Wraparound Services Program as a pilot project and will authorize all counties to provide comprehensive services to allow children to remain in a family-like setting instead of being placed into group homes and allows certain dependent or ward categorically eligible foster youth to remain eligible for Medi-Cal.

**AB 1905 (Cook)** will ensure continued approval and payments for foster youth relative or extended family member caregivers, pending the annual reassessment visit.

**AB 1933 (Brownley)** will allow foster children to continue attending their school of origin and, if applicable, secondary schools in the same attendance area, when placed with a family in a different neighborhood.

**AB 2322 (Feuer)** will clarify and strengthen the ability of county departments to share records for the prevention, identification, management or treatment of child abuse or neglect, and expand the type of information that may be entered on the Family and Children's Index for persons living in the home with the child to include criminal convictions which involve crimes against children. This is an urgency measure and becomes effective immediately.

**SB 654 (Leno)** will expand eligibility for the Independent Living Program to former foster youth who are placed with a non-relative guardian on or after the child's eight birthday. This allows some former foster youth who left foster care prior to aging out to later seek ILP services, until age 20.

**SB 1353 (Wright)** will require consideration of the proximity to the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care as one indicator of the best interests of the child with respect to educational stability.

**SB 1440 (Padilla)** will guarantee a California community college (CCC) student who completes an associate's degree in his or her field of study, the ability to transfer to the California State University (CSU) as a junior standing.

## **Los Angeles County Promise Neighborhood Grantees**

On May 13, 2010, the ECC co-hosted a convening of several public entities, including the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Unified School District, and First 5 LA, along with a number of non-profit and philanthropic organizations to discuss strategies for partnering on promise neighborhood grants. This cross-sector partnership offered its support to applicants in order to strengthen their overall applications and increase the likelihood of one grant being awarded in Los Angeles County. We are thrilled to report that two planning grants were awarded: Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission in Boyle Heights and Youth Policy Institute in Pacoima and Hollywood. This presents a wonderful opportunity to create a place-based integrated services pipeline to help children succeed academically.

## **Department of Education's Investing in Innovation Fund Grantee**

The Children Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) was awarded a 4-year \$3.6M grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation Fund, known as an i3 grant. Los Angeles Unified School District was also awarded a grant in partnership with UNITE-LA. The CYFC grant will expand the accessibility of academic remediation services to students attending the Montebello and Pomona Unified School Districts and help to expand the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program to middle school students in those two school districts.

## **DCFS/Stuart Foundation Pasadena District Pilot**

DCFS has been awarded a \$150,000 planning grant from the Stuart Foundation for the Los Angeles County component of that Foundation's Ready to Succeed Initiative. In our County, the initiative will study DCFS's Education Consultant Program and track the educational outcomes of the youth served, but will include a focus on the electronic sharing of individual foster youth education records. The Ready to Succeed Initiative is also being conducted in Fresno, Orange, and Sacramento counties, highlighting their electronic education data-sharing systems. The ECC, LACOE's Foster Youth Services (FYS), LAUSD and the Pasadena Unified School District have been asked to serve as partners for this Initiative, along with parent, caregiver, and youth representatives. Mental Health Advocacy Services and California State University, Los Angeles will be conducting the project evaluation.

## **Camp Scott/Scudder Student Transition Planning**

To ease the transition of Camp Scott/Scudder School students into schools in their home communities when they complete their camp stays, they will be transferred, whenever possible, to schools that share as many characteristics of Big Picture model, now being implemented at these camps, and that would provide a compatible culture and programming. The ECC held a meeting between Camp Scott/Scudder School Committee members and the superintendents of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) eight local school districts to identify the most appropriate schools in their districts for Camp Scott/Scudder students to transfer to, and determine the most effective process for making these transfers successful. A similar meeting has been arranged with Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) staff.

## **SACWIS**

The interpretations of what was considered compliance with the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) have changed such that the State has issued a recent

PowerPoint presentation entitled, “SACWIS: Not the Barrier You Thought.” In light of this new development, the ECC is discussing the idea of electronically sharing educational data with State officials, and CDSS has asked the ECC to prepare an Advanced Planning Document that proposes linking the California Department of Education and DCFS data systems electronically. CDSS is also interested in having further conversations about electronically linking other data systems within Los Angeles County. The ECC is working with the County’s Commission for Children and Families, Chief Information Office, and the Children’s Action Network on developing a plan for connecting several of these systems and minimizing the amount of data entry duplication which currently exists.

### **2011 ACHSA Resource Fair**

The Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) is spearheading an effort to hold a second resource fair for DCFS and probation youth at The California Endowment on June 28, 2011. It will be modeled after the ECC’s Resource Fair in 2008 where over 800 people attended, including more than 350 foster and probation youth, and 80 exhibitors offering everything from arts and literacy programs to legal services, housing, jobs, and on-site applications for vital documents. The fair will be designed to make DCFS and probation youth, and the people who work with them, aware of the variety of educational and social outlets they may not know about, particularly during the summer months.

### **LA City Commission for Community & Family Services**

The ECC’s Director has been asked by the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles to represent County government on the newly created Board of Community and Family Services, which is charged with enhancing and coordinating the City’s efforts to serve children, youth and their families; establishing collaborations with the City, County, LAUSD, other educational and governmental entities, parent groups, and community-based organizations; and participating in the design, administration and evaluation of the City’s Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan that serves low-income communities. Being a part of this Board will assist the ECC in building the strong relationship with the City of Los Angeles government necessary to raise the academic achievement of approximately one-third of the County’s youth.