



## **Education Coordinating Council**

**October 26, 2006**

**9:30 a.m.**

The California Endowment, Yosemite Room A  
1000 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California

Present: Yolie Flores Aguilar  
Louis Ayala, representing Kathleen Duba  
Celia Balderrama, representing Carol Clem  
Berisha Black  
Reuben De Leon, representing Evelyn Martinez  
Jullie Eutsler, representing Steve Gocke  
Monica Garcia  
José Huizar  
Helen Kleinberg  
Miriam Aroni Krinsky  
Rafael Lopez, representing Lark Galloway-Gilliam  
Hector Madrigal, representing David. L. Brewer III  
Aubrey Manuel  
Judge Michael Nash  
Trish Ploehn  
Darline P. Robles  
Bruce Saltzer  
Marvin J. Southard  
Robert Taylor  
Rick Tebbano, representing Christopher Steinhauser  
Machelle Wolf

Guest: Wendy Aron, Third Supervisorial District

Chair José Huizar brought the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. and asked ECC members and the audience to introduce themselves. He thanked The California Endowment for hosting the meeting and Jessica Lieder, the Endowment's events coordinator, for her help with the arrangements. Huizar then welcomed new ECC members Trish Ploehn, incoming director of the Department of Children and Family Services (and the first director to be promoted from within), Bob Taylor, the county's Chief Probation Officer, and Lark Galloway-Gilliam, president of the city of Los

Angeles's Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families. He also acknowledged that commission's new interim executive director, Rafael Lopez.

Huizar congratulated Berisha Black, an ECC co-chair, and Beatriz Olvera Stotzer, a former ECC member, for having received Leading Boldly awards presented by the Children's Planning Council at its fifteenth anniversary celebration last week.

### **Updates**

- Huizar thanked the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the departments of Children and Family Services and Probation, and the county's Interagency Operations Group for granting additional monies to the ECC this year, allowing the expansion of its consultant team. The California Community Foundation also awarded a two-year grant to help support the ECC's Blueprint implementation activities.
- Following an August 7 presentation by the ECC to the city of Los Angeles's audits and governmental efficiency committee, a meeting of city departments found that, despite their desire to serve foster and probation youth, they did not know where those youth were, nor whether departments were being successful in reaching them. A clear need exists to regroup and focus on data collection, and Amy Cooper thanked John Kim and the Healthy City project for creating maps with the data that is available so far.
- Jacquelyn McCroskey explained that those maps (distributed in member packets) identify concentrations of DCFS and Probation students enrolled in the Los Angeles Unified School District, so that services can be focused in the right areas. Efforts continue to map city resources and community-based agencies, so that children and youth can both be prepared for school and served outside of school hours.
- LAUSD school board member Monica Garcia said that incoming superintendent David Brewer, who takes his post on November 13, has already made it plain that he is supportive of partnerships and committed to serving foster and probation youth. She invited the ECC to think about how to guide and educate him about its work. Miriam Aroni Krinsky and Helen Kleinberg agreed, suggesting that the ECC facilitate whatever meetings are necessary between Brewer and the appropriate county departments. Hector Madrigal confirmed that Brewer had been invited to today's ECC meeting, even though he is not formally on board yet. Madrigal added that Superintendent Brewer has been asking the schools that he visits about the numbers of foster children enrolled. Said Madrigal, "Mr. Brewer seems to be coming at his new position from a child welfare perspective, making comments such as 'Yes, I know this school has low test scores, but its attendance rate is also very low. We need to find out why.'" Huizar said that after district leadership being focused for so long on reading, writing, and test scores, it's refreshing to hear that the new superintendent seems interested in the whole child, and aware that children come to school with a lot of other variables.

Garcia offered to host a meeting between Brewer and ECC members prior to the ECC's January meeting, to take him up on his desire to work with others.

- Since its last meeting, the ECC has:
  - ✓ Presented on the progress of the ECC's Blueprint implementation to the county's Commission for Children and Families (in early September)
  - ✓ Participated in a 'great ideas' roundtable at the Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families national conference (in late September)
  - ✓ Joined the design team for the California Education Collaborative for Children in Foster Care—which is attempting statewide what the ECC is doing in Los Angeles County—and has also been active on its data-sharing subcommittee
  - ✓ Participated in an October conference on using data to improve child well-being with the National Governors' Association and Casey Family Programs (where former DCFS director David Sanders now works)
  - ✓ Coordinated several meetings of the resource partnership formed at the July meeting to oversee the development of an electronic education record; a series of upcoming focus groups will finalize data elements that can be included immediately without violating legal restrictions
  - ✓ Postponed its next meeting of school district superintendents until January because of schedule conflicts this fall
- Miriam Krinsky announced that the administrative offices of the court have developed a well-being checklist to be used at all children's hearings, two full pages of which address educational needs. The checklist will be distributed widely to juvenile court judges, attorneys, and others, and Krinsky suggested that it also be presented to the ECC.
- Casey Family Programs is sponsoring a state educational summit on January 23, with a team from every county being invited to participate. Lisa Parrish from DCFS will seek the ECC's advice on who should be part of Los Angeles County's ten-person team.
- A national meeting recently brought together representatives from the University of Chicago, Chapin Hall, Casey Family Programs, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation to study progress being made on meeting the education needs of youth in foster care, including what data should be tracked and how.
- In 2007, work groups will be looking at ways to insert clarifying language into the reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, after which AB 490 was modeled, to improve Federal law.

### **Data-Sharing Progress**

At the ECC's July meeting, members agreed to convene interested parties to establish a memorandum of understanding that would delineate a process for implementing the July 15 blanket order issued by Judge Nash to release foster and probation youth's educational records to DCFS, Probation, court-appointed special advocates, and children's attorneys. Monica Garcia from

LAUSD chaired the meeting, which included both legal and program representatives from DCFS, Probation, the Department of Mental Health, the Public Defender's Office, County Counsel, LACOE, LAUSD, the Children's Law Center, and CASA.

Unfortunately, the day prior to that meeting, LACOE made public a letter it had received from the U.S. Department of Education, stating that a blanket order could not be used as the authority for schools to share educational information. The group nevertheless proceeded with developing a process that it believes honors the spirit of the blanket order while satisfying everyone at the table. It created a number of documents, including a collaborative agreement to share information (to be signed by all those attending plus the remaining school districts sitting on the ECC), a parental consent form, a student records request form, and language to be included in individual minute orders for each child's case.

Following Judge Nash's review of the proposed minute order language, however, he has stated that he cannot approve this alternative process. Nash commended the committee on its work, saying that it made great progress toward its charge of establishing a process to implement the blanket order so that educational information could be shared smoothly and in a timely fashion. He takes issue, though, with the idea of the group's creating a court order, since that does not fit in with the way court proceedings function. More significantly, he respectfully but vehemently disagrees with the indication that the blanket order is of no consequence. The issue was litigated early this year, and the blanket order was issued only after everyone involved had had sufficient time to study it, and after a June court hearing that discussed it in depth. School districts have had every opportunity to handle the blanket order within the legal process, he said, and it is not acceptable for them to refuse to accept it. Certain districts might disagree with the court's ability to issue such a blanket order, but it nonetheless remains in effect. If a district refuses to turn over educational records after a request has been made, the court is prepared to take whatever action is necessary. "One way or another, we're going to get those school records," Nash stated, "because they are crucial for us to do the right thing on behalf of our kids."

As Chair Huizar opened the subject up to discussion, he noted that this was one of the few times in the ECC's history that opinions have been so divergent, and he encouraged attendees to speak up honestly about the pros and cons of different approaches.

Bruce Saltzer expressed concerns about laws being passed but not implemented, and asked how the educational attainment of foster and probation youth can come to the attention of the court, so it is publicly discussed. Nash admitted that the courts have not traditionally dealt with the education issue as well as they might have. Some judges ask questions at every hearing about how a child is doing in school, but most rely on reports from Probation and DCFS caseworkers. One of the most critical reasons for the blanket order is youth in probation camps who don't attend school at all because their caseworkers cannot get information from LACOE regarding their educational status. (One in four children who cross from the dependency to the delinquency system, Miriam Krinsky said, has no connection to school.) Part of the solution, Nash contends, are the education manuals recently developed for both the dependency and delinquency courts that contain the blanket order, the education checklist for judicial officers to use in every hearing, and a new process for the appointment of education advocates to deal with specific issues. Over the next few months, Nash will be traveling to all 27 courts to do training on the use of these

manuals, and during the next year, he will develop standards for representing youth in delinquency court. The court's approach with regard to educational needs will become stronger and more effective, he says, with judges asking a whole series of questions at each hearing that will highlight the growing need for the shared information covered under the blanket order.

Yolie Flores Aguilar agreed that educational records should not be in the hands of people whose goal is not to help these youth—law enforcement, she has heard, sometimes uses school records as a means to incriminate—but asked for guidance in understanding the school districts' resistance to sharing. Monica Garcia decried the fact that most children are not well served by the school system, and that only about 30 percent of LAUSD students get a chance for a high-quality education. "We have to change the way we think about services," she said. "With the foster and probation population, data-sharing is a powerful tool, and we need the ECC to push for this." The committee did, she stressed, develop data-sharing forms that everyone agreed to, but technicalities still exist that need to be worked through.

Kelly Barnes, LAUSD's assistant general counsel, praised the real change the ECC has brought about, saying that she has been working on these issues for nine years and has never gotten this far. However, the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs pupil record information in very specific, detailed ways, and penalties for FERPA violation include the suspension of Federal monies to a school district for up to five years. Her department consulted with its regulating agency and learned that the blanket order would not meet the terms of FERPA compliance. "We are constrained by that," she said, since legislative change at the Federal level is the only way to modify FERPA. However, LAUSD is more than happy to participate in the proposed alternatives, offering to hold trainings at every school site on the use of the documents developed by the committee.

The alternative to the blanket order, Judge Nash said, seeks an individual court order in every single case where permission to release school records has not been obtained from a parent or holder of educational rights. "That means lots of paper flying around," he commented, while the whole purpose of the blanket order was to avoid that.

Miriam Krinsky pared the question down to its essential: Does FERPA override the state law that compels the sharing of information? Social workers and others have made it clear that they need this data, and California state law mandates that the 'collective parents' of foster and probation youth know how these children are doing in school. The court has ruled, and unless and until that ruling goes up on appeal, it stands. Krinsky empathizes with the districts' view, but children should not be caught in the crossfire. In many large urban areas around the country, schools routinely share educational information through memoranda of understanding, and not a single one has lost Federal funding, or been deemed in violation of FERPA. In that case, Bruce Saltzer asked, why is there concern here? Why are LACOE and LAUSD not willing to do what's been done in other parts of the country? Kelly Barnes said that copies of the MOUs in effect elsewhere had been reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's family policy compliance office, which found them defective.

Krinsky proposed changes to the committee's draft collaborative agreement that would straddle the fence—they would not compromise Judge Nash's position that FERPA does not prevent the

sharing of information, but neither would they require LACOE and LAUSD to sign anything that concedes their position. Her suggested language would refer to a ‘court order (if applicable),’ rather than to the specific blanket order, in several places. She proposed similar changes to the student records request form, also making it clear that fax service of the document was acceptable as long as the original followed by mail. Helen Kleinberg asked that information on very young children (whether they attend preschool, are receiving services from Regional Centers, have been enrolled in programs prior to kindergarten, etc.) also be added to that form. Barnes noted that other parties may have further comments, and suggested that all input be incorporated before presenting a final version of these documents.

In answer to Flores Aguilar’s original question, Hector Madrigal said that the sharing of pupil records is important for several reasons: to avoid the duplication of services, to perform accurate assessments and gap analyses, and to provide the intervention, case management services, and other supports necessary to bolster student achievement. Madrigal cautioned that the release of student data also has some negative sides, including the stigmatizing of vulnerable children. In addition, “the sharing of data, particularly pupil discipline data, can, if no safeguards are created, be used to the detriment of students.” Madrigal indicated that professionals sometimes use data to ‘track’ high-risk students away from regular schools and into alternative programs, such as county programs. Alternative programs may be great options for some students, but are not always appropriate for high-risk students, Madrigal said. He also stated that although he sees the need to share data as very important to help foster and probation students, he still must defer to the LAUSD general counsel for guidance with regard to the legal implications of entering into memoranda of understanding on record-sharing; educators, in general, find blanket orders difficult to scrutinize in terms of legal ramifications. With regard to other jurisdictions developing MOUs that may or may not be in compliance with FERPA, Garcia observed that, “Throughout the country, we have multiple examples of how laws are enforced or disregarded, depending on whom they serve. In following the FERPA law, I think we’re at 100 percent compliance—even though we’re not at 100 percent anywhere else in the organization.” She would like to be aggressive about confronting the status quo, and sees as a positive the opportunity to move this issue forward without denying the blanket order. “If we’re going to see a legal challenge,” she said, “that will be good for our systems and our kids.”

Monique Shay, LACOE’s Assistant General Counsel, stressed the fact that FERPA ensures the privacy rights of parents, who need to consent to the release of information about their children. According to the blanket order, she said, probation and foster youth don’t have parents; parental rights are transferred to surrogate parents—the holders of educational rights—not to the child’s caseworker. “We’re trying to follow the law about kids’ privacy rights,” she said. “A specific court order, that parents receive notice of, means they haven’t lost their right to make decisions—something that happens in the probation system especially.” We must engage families honestly, Flores Aguilar said, so that they understand precisely what they are agreeing to in terms of information about their child.

Disagreements abound on whether FERPA language needs to change, Sharon Watson said, and strong opinions exist on each of the many complicated solutions possible. However, for the ECC to move forward to address the topic of electronic education records, it must come to some resolution on the data-sharing issue. Judge Nash’s blanket order is in effect, and parties will be

held accountable to it. At the same time, a process needs to be adopted for those who feel that is not enough. **Yolie Flores Aguilar moved that Miriam Krinsky's proposed changes to the committee's documents be accepted, and that final language be presented to the ECC in January. Marvin Southard seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

### **Reports on Blueprint Implementation**

- On September 11, Terry Ogawa began as the ECC's consultant taking the lead on the Blueprint's early childhood development recommendations. She is in touch with many players, identifying opportunities to coordinate linkages between the child care and child welfare worlds. Barriers to that collaboration tend to fall into three categories: cultural (where systemic views simply don't match), attitudinal (where perspectives differ, for example, about who should qualify for services), and regulatory (even though participants may be unclear about which agency has promulgated any given rule). She hopes that a list of potential opportunities for working together will be available by the January meeting, along with a list of barriers that the ECC might begin addressing.
- Michelle Koenig joined the ECC consultant team in early October to spearhead the implementation of the Blueprint's youth development recommendations, and thanked all who have welcomed her to their agencies and referred her to others. In her search to uncover where foster and probation youth can benefit from existing programs, she has met with DCFS, Probation, LAUSD, the county's Parks and Recreation Department, the children's court, the American Indian Children's Council, several community-based organizations, and youth themselves. In the next 60 to 90 days, she will focus on meeting with the SPA youth councils and on convening small groups to address specific recommendations. She urged anyone with contacts for her to see her after the meeting.
- Haydee Cuza, the southern regional policy coordinator for the California Youth Connection, wants to empower youth to be involved in self-advocacy and hopes to work with agencies and organizations to implement suggestions that youth themselves generate. A document to be released tomorrow offers a number of recommendations for attitude, policy, and practice changes, such as county child welfare departments partnering with local colleges and universities to include system youth in planning and outreach for college, groups to support former foster and probation youth who are attending college, and peer advocates and peer mentors to help middle and high school students. Copies of the document will be distributed at the ECC's January meeting.

Many youth do not have the textbooks, computers, and other equipment they need for school, and Helen Kleinberg suggested putting a group together to work on getting system youth the materials they need. Berisha Black said that Assemblymember Karen Bass helped get eight bills related to foster care signed into law this year, none of which mentioned education specifically, but which made provisions for home support, mentors, and other means to help youth focus on education. (Black is also working with Cal State Los Angeles and local community colleges to implement the Guardian Scholars program on those campuses.) Although AB 2489 with its \$14 million in new money was not signed, some of its key provisions did make it into the state budget, and the legislature will return to those issues next year.

- Yolie Flores Aguilar reviewed highlights from Jacquelyn McCroskey's report commissioned by the Board of Supervisors and published in April of this year, *Youth in the Los Angeles Juvenile Justice System: Current Conditions and Possible Directions for Change*, which is available in full at <http://www.childrensplanningcouncil.org>. One of the key purposes for the report was to begin to shine a light for the public on the issue of youth within the juvenile justice system, since parents often don't understand how it works and feel lost and unable to advocate for their children. The report is also meant to promote partnerships with families and communities, since the juvenile justice system cannot solve its problems by itself. It must do a better job of engaging the families of youth in the system and of making the community a large part of the solution.

Between 1997 and 2002, California ranked 46th among the 50 states in the number of juveniles residing in detention and correctional facilities, with 392 youth there out of every 100,000 youth aged 10 to 21. In 2003, a similar rate (310 out of every 100,000 youth) was estimated for Los Angeles County. The county's juvenile justice system is immense—over 100 law enforcement jurisdictions, the district attorney and public defender, panel and pro bono attorneys, the Probation Department and other county child and family services departments, community and faith-based organizations, 81 school districts, and 88 cities—and coordination is difficult.

In 2003, 99 percent of the 31,081 youth arrested in the county were referred to the Probation Department to await disposition. Two-thirds of the '601' and '602' youth (19,771 individuals) were declared wards of the court under Probation supervision. Both regular and special education students in camps and juvenile halls—mostly ages 15 to 17—test at well below grade level, with math and reading scores averaging at a fifth-grade level or lower.

Severe limitations exist on data collection and analysis within the system, and tracking changing conditions must be an essential element of effective planning with community-based partners. Mental health issues are endemic within the juvenile justice population, yet few services are available during prevention, treatment, or aftercare. Re-screening for youth entering probation camps must be a high priority, and a more effective community-based continuum of mental health resources for adolescents is critically needed. Key challenges for education within the system include the high percentages of special education students in camps and halls; the need for timely transfers of records between local school districts and LACOE; communication and information-sharing among Probation, LACOE, and other school districts; the reluctance of some school districts to accept youth returning from detention; and the need for transition supports.

Serving crossover or dual-jurisdiction youth (those involved with both Probation and DCFS, which are separate delinquency and dependency systems in this state) requires intense interdepartmental coordination, working with community partners to provide options for these youth, and assuring that they do not remain in suitable placement too long if other less intensive community-based options are available. The 241.1 protocol developed by Judge Nash simulates dual jurisdiction, but cannot address all the hurdles to providing adequate services. Help for parents in understanding the juvenile justice system and participating effectively in the legal process is urgently needed, and information, support, transportation,



and translation services for parents could help ease the transition when youth return home. Services for youth returning to their communities are limited, and finding them jobs when they leave Probation is complicated. Services for pregnant and parenting teens, plus mentoring for young men about to become parents, is essential, as are better relationships between Probation and Regional Centers to provide support for special-needs youth.

Current staffing requirements are not meeting the needs of the detention population, especially with reduced educational requirements for detention services officers and a continuous need for training. When the ratio of adults to youth is inadequate, staff tend to revert to 'guard' behavior rather than interacting with youth, and the failure of that positive interaction could mean that youth don't get the help they need to redirect their lives. Coordination with other departments such as DCFS and Mental Health would benefit youth in the system, but reform efforts are severely limited by ageing and outdated facilities. African-American youth are disproportionately represented within the juvenile justice system, and Los Angeles could make better use of the lessons learned in other jurisdictions. In Pima County, Arizona, for example, community-based detention alternatives are being coupled with neighborhood-based efforts to reduce disproportionate minority confinements.

McCroskey is leading an ad hoc committee for the Children's Planning Council that will look at the next steps for policy issues identified in the report, such as legal representation for children, data, family and community engagement, cross-departmental collaboration, and personnel and workforce issues.

The latest version of the Children's ScoreCard, released last week, was distributed in member packets, and Flores Aguilar noted that the headline story in the media coverage of the release event was that child poverty is on the rise. Poverty is at the root of many ills for children, and most families whose children enter the foster-care and probation systems are poor families. If we cannot prevent more families from falling into poverty, Flores Aguilar said, ultimately we will be looking at more children within the system.

- Chief Probation Officer Robert Taylor said that he and other department heads are working closely together to understand how information-sharing affects their efforts to help minors within the system. Mental and physical health go hand in hand, and the extent of co-occurring disorders—where abused or delinquent children also have alcohol or drug problems, for instance, or are mentally ill—must be better determined. He and Marv Southard, director of the Department of Mental Health, have applied for a grant to identify systemic brain disorders in the probation population so that those youth can be treated appropriately.

Overall, crime has declined over the past decade, and juvenile crime is at a 50-year low. At the same time, some types of violent incidents have risen, with 35 children so far this year—innocent victims—being killed in drive-by shootings. Systemic violence in the community and in the home must be addressed, with probation staff getting more involved not only with juveniles who violate the law, but with siblings in the family who may be at risk.

After Taylor joined the Probation Department and assessed what would be needed to repair that system—approximately \$500 million, in his estimation—he asked the Board of Supervisors for \$164 million to address the department's worst unmet needs. When even that figure

caused severe distress, he pared his request down to \$104 million. A few weeks ago, the Board agreed to \$31 million as the first part of that allocation, and Taylor hopes more will be forthcoming next year to begin repairing a system “as broken as the rest of the criminal justice system,” which in California needs serious reform. Courts are in disrepair, the transfer of responsibilities to the state has not been successful, and prisons cannot be built fast enough to prevent a backup into county jails.

Part of Taylor’s budget request will go to redesigning probation camps so that once minors are sentenced to time within the juvenile justice system, they will undergo a comprehensive assessment process to determine their programmatic needs and assign them to the camp with the programs that will best serve them. As a youth’s release date approaches, he or she will be paired up with a probation officer who will provide guidance to community programs and supports when the youth returns home, thus providing a continuum of care for the duration of the department’s supervision.

- Darline Robles, superintendent of county schools, expressed her pleasure at the progress made on the memorandum of understanding with regard to information-sharing, particularly since the seven school districts that sit on the ECC serve the majority of students within the probation system. She also reported that LACOE has:
  - ✓ Agreed to host a second meeting in January between school superintendents and county leadership to continue the positive dialogue begun in April
  - ✓ Continued to meet with AB 490 school liaisons; on September 28, 37 districts were updated regarding foster-care legislation
  - ✓ Increased its Foster Youth Services staff from eight part-time to eight full-time personnel plus four more counselors (through increased AB 1808 funding), branching out into the Antelope Valley, Compton, and southeast Los Angeles County
  - ✓ Established a multiagency steering committee for its foster youth programs that includes Probation, DCFS, the Department of Health Services, LAUSD, the Association of Community Human Services Agencies, the California Youth Connection, the Community College Foundation, CASA, the county’s Commission for Children and Families, and other Title I programs; anyone else who wishes to join is welcome

LACOE also sponsored a bill to allocate additional funds to probation youth who are former foster youth. Although the bill was folded into the regular budget and its \$1 million allocation reduced to \$650,000, transition services will be available to follow youth released from camp who may not have a home to go to. A significant adult will track the child until he or she is placed, then work with the youth for another six months.

The governor recently received praise for signing legislation allocating \$200 million for youth counseling services, but Robles was dismayed and offended that the bill excluded youth in court schools and alternative education, despite the money’s being available. In January, she will ask the ECC for its support on legislation to correct that, so that everyone will know that “probation kids still have value and need to be supported,” as she put it.

- Rick Tebbano reported that the Long Beach Unified School District has:
  - ✓ Adopted a policy to address AB 490, collaborating closely with the education liaisons for transportation and other needs
  - ✓ Created a tiered communication structure with school enrollment officers, counselors, and liaisons to provide better outreach services for foster and probation youth and improved data collection
  - ✓ Begun a school and community mentoring program to match youth with administrators and counselors for modeling and motivation to do better in school
  - ✓ Established a foster youth partnership with Long Beach City College, as well as an internal partnership within the district; these meet monthly to deal with issues surrounding system youth
  - ✓ Applied for a \$25,000 grant through ChildNet Youth & Family Services this spring to provide an online resource through the city library website, which lists 150 Long Beach agencies with services for system youth

Together, the superintendent and the school board have committed to work with the city of Long Beach to provide top-quality resources and create an encouraging environment for children and families, which all agree are the hope of the future.

### **Public Comment**

- Jed Minoff, director of emancipation services for the Probation Department, is working with DCFS emancipation services and with community colleges, the chancellor's office, and other juvenile advocates to make sure that all youth in suitable placement are aware of the box that can be checked on the FAFSA form that allows a fee waiver for foster and probation youth. He is currently clarifying language for a letter to the community colleges on this topic, and will forward the draft to be posted on the ECC website. If anyone has questions, they are encouraged to contact him at <http://www.ilponline.org>.
- Candace Kavanagh from Kavanagh Community said that her nonprofit stands ready to assist in any way possible in coordinating vital documents so that foster and probation youth can be served. "If school districts and courts are large ocean liners navigating a narrow channel," she said, "let us be your tugboats."

### **Next Meeting**

The ECC's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2007, at 9:30 a.m., at a location to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.