



## **Education Coordinating Council**

**October 29, 2009**

**9:30 a.m.**

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

Present: Carol Clem  
Sandy Pat Colbert, representing Aubrey Manuel  
Amy Cooper, representing Mónica García  
Maryam Fatemi, representing Trish Ploehn  
René Gonzalez, representing Ramón C. Cortines  
Leslie Heimov  
Jitahadi Imara, representing Robert Taylor  
Yvette King-Berg  
Helen Kleinberg  
Miriam Long  
Richard Mata, representing Richard Martinez  
Judge Michael Nash  
Ron Randolph, representing Darline P. Robles  
Bruce Saltzer  
Machelle Wolf

In the absence of Chair José Huizar, Vice Chair Michael Nash brought the meeting to order at 9:43 a.m., asking that Education Coordinating Council members and the audience introduce themselves. Trish Ploehn is speaking at the opening of the Leavy Center this morning, Huizar and Mónica Garcia are speaking at the opening of a new Los Angeles Unified District School, and Robert Taylor is in Houston presenting on his department's new strategic plan. Nash welcomed Helen Kleinberg back to the ECC upon her reappointment to represent the county's Commission for Children and Families.

### **Case Planning Efforts in Juvenile Camps**

Strategy 2 of the ECC's strategic plan involves working with Probation and the Los Angeles County Office of Education to implement an education reform plan at the juvenile halls and camps. One focus of this effort is creating education case plans for detained probation youth. Judge Donna Groman, from the delinquency court at David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center, is one of the lead judicial officers working on this project, and Judge Nash asked her to discuss its progress.

Despite some initial frustrations, a year of meetings and the implementation of pilots at Camp Onizuka and Camp Holton have yielded a process that should benefit all camp youth. “When bench officers send youth to camp, we want them to have an opportunity to work on their education and to experience achievement,” Judge Groman said. “We also want them to continue with their education once they’re released back into the community. In the past, that hasn’t been a seamless transition. The hurdles and challenges youth experience in enrolling in school—missing transcripts, outstanding expulsions, schools not wanting them—often mean a lot of idle time after they’ve been released from the very structured situation at camp. Within 48 hours of their release, we want them to be enrolled in a school setting that’s appropriate for them.”

When an individual arrives at juvenile hall bound for probation camp, a multidisciplinary team gathers school records and other information, tracks past credits, administers an assessment, and creates a plan for the youth’s education both in camp and after discharge. The team includes representatives from Probation, LACOE, the Department of Mental Health—to address undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues that may be affecting student work—and, currently, the Los Angeles Unified School District. (Other districts will be incorporated in future.) Sixty days before the youth’s discharge, the team meets again to create a post-release plan and make assignments to those entities who will monitor the ‘hand-off’ as the youth transitions into another school setting and, if needed, pursues referrals to community-based agencies.

“Integral to the success of these plans,” Groman said, “is the participation of parents and youth in the multidisciplinary team meetings. The input from them about the youth’s hopes and goals is vital. Our agencies are working hard, and we no longer have the fragmentation frustrations we had before. This will be a successful program when it is rolled out into all the probation camps.”

Jitahadi Imara thanked Judges Groman and Nash for the tremendous leadership role the courts have played in developing this process. “It’s important to note that this is a systems approach,” Imara said. “The juvenile justice system as a whole is involved in educating these youth. That’s a big difference. Agency cooperation, collaboration, and information-sharing are cutting down on finger-pointing and blame. We’re focusing on what kids need to flourish and thrive.”

The cross-system assessment is also involving families more, making youth and parents aware of health, mental health, and learning disorders that may exist, and agencies are working together to seek interventions. “We have a limited time to deal with youth who may have ADHD, depression, educational deficits, family dysfunction, substance abuse issues, and other risk factors,” Imara said. “This cross-discipline approach allows us to use experts in those fields and also take a robust approach to education. Youth should leave camp better than they came in, in terms of educational preparation, reading, study habits, social skills, and so on.”

Improvements are still needed in encouraging parent and youth participation, and in making youth more comfortable expressing themselves to adults around the table. Probation is also working with LACOE on skills-training opportunities for parents so they may better navigate the education system. What should they request from schools during a transition? What educational strategies can they support at home? How can they best participate in parent conferences?

The project is a major step forward for systems reform, Imara believes, and he solicited input from ECC members and the audience.

Although Carol Clem certainly supports treatment and services to youth in probation camps, she expressed grave concerns about information-sharing. She recommended that access be granted only to those on the multidisciplinary team, that information not be included in database programs that can be viewed by school districts and others, and that data be destroyed after the process is complete. “There’s some very sensitive information involved here,” she said, “including histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychiatric hospitalizations, delinquency, or gang involvement—and the gang involvement may simply be the opinion of a probation officer, not a matter of actual fact. If we truly want to rehabilitate these youth, make them into whole citizens, they’re not going to want this kind of thing out there when they turn forty.”

For Gary Puckett from the Department of Mental Health, the project’s biggest challenge is intensifying the engagement of youth and their families. “After discharge, they tend to just want to step away from the system, and then we become professionals talking about people who aren’t there,” he said. “We need to develop strategies to sustain and maintain engagement around information-sharing and informed consent, and continue that with youth and families at every point of service. They need to be the arbiters of what information gets shared.” Puckett also encouraged aiming discharge activities toward wraparound or full-service programs, and asked if the project’s rollout to all probation camps would focus on geographic areas where those services are available. Groman replied that all programs are being considered to help youth and families with the transition into the community. Referrals are made at camp by the Department of Mental Health. “At that point,” Groman said, “we titrate our system based on the challenges of reality. As we move into full implementation, we want to make sure services are available immediately.”

Richard Mata reported that the Pomona Unified School District takes a sensitive approach to the needs of probation students returning to its schools, sitting down with them and their families in a 30- to 60-minute welcome meeting. Staff members familiar with gang activity or other issues in the area look at students’ educational needs and encourage them to accept their personal responsibility for getting those needs met. “We do want them, and we care,” Mata said. “We present a plan of action for them, and we follow them. The worker goes to the alternative school and visits them, and we track the changes in attendance, grades, and behavior that need to happen [for them to graduate]. But ultimately the students themselves have to do this—it’s their responsibility. But we’ve made it a district priority for these students to be successful.”

Helen Kleinberg asked about youth released from camp who are not going home to their families, but instead are returning to the Department of Children and Family Services or being placed with foster families or relatives. These issues are addressed at the multidisciplinary team meetings, Groman said, and the Probation Department often does family-finding to locate extended family or community members who might agree to take the young person. Youth do not often return to DCFS care, but that situation will be addressed as necessary.

How are youth’s vocational or other interests being handled, Kleinberg inquired, to ensure that their camp education is relevant to them? Can other youth help newcomers prepare for the multidisciplinary team meetings, and experienced parents mentor parents new to the system? Who is responsible for working with a new school district or the individual school, and how much information is being given? Are advocates involved?

The initial assessment determines the most successful route an individual student can pursue, LACOE's Ron Randolph explained. Vocational education is one option, and youth may be assigned to camps offering specific programs. The assessment process also includes an evaluation by a transitional counselor who works with students and parents, and is in touch with his or her counterpart in the school district when youth are released from camp.

In LAUSD's case, Norma Sturgis said, the district begins working with LACOE at the point of detention. A special unit helps youth who have been expelled get re-enrolled in school, and staff co-located in various schools advocate for students and work with them. During the multidisciplinary team process, youth are asked about their strengths and interests and get connected with arts schools, culinary schools, and technical programs in community colleges. District personnel track their attendance and grades, and also contact parents, make home visits, and work with the Probation Department. In addition, LAUSD partners with community agencies to hold a job and resource fair each year for youth who want jobs. "Kids are falling between the cracks," Sturgis said, "and Judge Groman is holding us responsible for that. We've made wonderful progress, and this process is long overdue."

René Gonzalez recognized Sturgis for the "phenomenal job" she is doing. "One of our primary challenges in this work is resources," he commented. "LAUSD has the largest percentage of incarcerated youth in the county, and staffing, transition planning, and follow-up are not cheap. We've gotten some stimulus funds for our delinquent minor program, and we're shifting dollars to concentrate resources for that population, but that money is available for only two years. We need to increase our investment over time for neglected and delinquent students."

According to Judge Nash, four key elements in the delinquency system will help achieve better outcomes:

- Interested and active judges who recognize their unique role (something Nash finds in Groman)
- Well-trained, interested, and hard-working attorneys who are both conversant with criminal law and also willing to serve as child advocates (Nash's office has been developing practice guidelines for the delinquency system this past year, and he expects to have a draft to circulate for statewide comment early in 2010)
- The Probation Department's acting on the notion of incorporating social work—thinking and acting like social workers—into its traditional law enforcement role
- The greater involvement of families

"We're starting to see all that," Nash said. "We have a long way to go, but the conversation is moving in the right direction, and so are a lot of the actions. Thank you all. Keep at it."

### **Addressing Truancy for Foster and Probation Youth**

The ECC was created to address the educational needs of children and youth within the juvenile court system, which is composed of three discrete divisions:

- The dependency court, which at last count oversees 24,569 abused and neglected children, about 18,500 of whom are in out-of-home care
- The delinquency court, which deals with crimes committed by youth under age 18; over 20,000 youth are currently on probation in Los Angeles County
- The informal juvenile and traffic court, which consists of 13 courts in 11 locations that last year heard more than 170,000 citations, about 30 percent of which were traffic-related

The remaining 70 percent of informal juvenile and traffic court cases are minor offenses for which individuals may be fined or sent to community service, or lose their drivers licenses. Non-traffic cases include infractions such as spitting on the sidewalk, possession of alcohol, or day-time loitering—also known as truancy.

With the 10,000 to 15,000 citations for truancy every year, the youth appears in court, where the citation is sustained and a \$50 fine imposed, which with various assessments comes to a ticket of approximately \$450. “What have we accomplished by that?” Nash asked. “Families can’t afford that, and parents have already lost a day of work appearing with the kid in court. I’m not sure we’ve done anything positive for anyone.” Nash also observes a good deal of what he considers misuse of the citation process, with schools citing students who are simply late to school. “I see lots of those,” he said, “and I tell [the judges] to throw them out.”

In all three of the juvenile court divisions, “What are we doing to come up with a coordinated effort to address truancy?” Nash queried. “Studies talk about its effect and its being a precursor for delinquency, but we have kids in all three systems who aren’t going to school, and we’re not doing anything to deal with them. It’s time to change that.”

Nash proposes creating a truancy task force similar to the group now studying the disproportionality of African-American and other populations within the child welfare system in Los Angeles County. “We brought key stakeholders together,” he explained, “we looked at the numbers, and we found that African-American children are both overrepresented in the child welfare system and receive disparate treatment within it, too. We’ve had some courageous conversations about that, looked at efforts folks are making elsewhere, and developed some strategies. It’s not a fast process. We started at the end of last year, and we’re just now putting the finishing touches on two strategies. The first one is based on efforts by Maryam Fatemi and her staff in the Pomona DCFS office that we’d like to see transferred elsewhere, and the second one involves the dependency court’s being one of three pilot courts in the U.S. to use bench cards developed by a national panel of judges that look at the initial dependency hearing through a racial-equity lens. We’re getting ready to implement both strategies, and we hope they’ll make a difference. I expect the disproportionality committee to last a long time.”

The idea behind the truancy task force is similar—to bring together key stakeholders, study the data, and catalog ongoing efforts within the county (in the 80 school districts and other agencies) to address the issue. Once that data is all in one place, the group would research successful efforts in other cities, counties, and court systems in California, then expand its review throughout the country. “Then we can strategize what we can do to address truancy within the framework of each of the three juvenile court divisions,” Nash told attendees. “Should this be a project of the ECC? Director Carrie Miller says yes, but we’re just beginning to talk about it. I’m curious to hear what you think.”

Reaching out to individual truant students is not enough, Richard Mata said. “You have to know the other students at their age level, you have to know their parents and grandparents—whoever has influence on the student. You go to their homes, you knock on their doors, you establish a rapport. If you have a working relationship with the family, word will get back that you have a problem with the youngster [not coming to school]. If not, you’ll lose them. That’s our approach in Pomona. You have a former gang member telling them, ‘If I can do it, you can do it, too.’ Sincerity is the key.”

“It’s astute to look at the compliance issue,” Gary Puckett maintained. “Having to fine folks for not showing up at school is definitely an indicator of some unmet needs. If schools are primarily responsible for education, teachers recognize that other needs to be met as well. But are we adding the role of social worker to their plate, asking them to engage and deal with unaddressed substance abuse or mental health or domestic violence issues, fomenting at home? We know what to do, but where are the resources to do it? We need to triage and engage, and get community partners to help.”

“Truancy is an enormous problem at LAUSD,” Amy Cooper said. “We dedicated an entire board meeting to the topic. We heard from schools with best practices of progressive interventions and support, and we also heard from principals who use the tool of law enforcement. Kids fade out, they don’t drop out, and we have an opportunity to intervene in a positive way, with support, or a negative way, through the courts. A *Los Angeles Times* article in your packets talks about Superintendent Cortines’s door-to-door truancy effort. They found kids who were clinically depressed, they found kids who felt unwelcome at school and who were surprised anyone was looking for them. We’re all in agreement about taking a supportive approach, but there’s a very real tension in public policy. Expanding the reach of the LAPD to ticket on school sites is a motion on the LAUSD table. We need to figure this out faster, or see the punitive efforts ratchet up.”

René Gonzalez acknowledged that any effort to address truancy cannot be done by schools alone, but must be a community effort involving neighborhoods and families. The ‘student recovery day’ that Cooper mentioned pulled 380 people from LAUSD’s central office, local districts, and classified staff positions (along with parent volunteers) who made 1,400 phone calls and 800 home visits. In all, 125 students were brought back to school and between 400 and 500 potential dropouts were cleared from the rolls (students who had moved, for example, and were attending other schools). Schools and principals are critical informants, as Cooper commented, but engaged agencies and neighborhoods coming together to bring kids back to school could be very powerful.

Helen Kleinberg urged the proposed task force to listen to what students themselves say about why they go to school and why they don't. "They're not engaged and their families are not engaged," she said. "Some are scared to go to school. We need to look at the reasons, or law enforcement won't make a difference."

As the City of Los Angeles deputy mayor for education, Miriam Long is trying to make a series of public policy changes about truancy and other issues. "Where kids don't feel safe," she said, "we want to partner with law enforcement to get the community robustly involved in keeping them safe, going to and from school. Often there's simply no paradigm for support. These kids' parents and grandparents may have gone to schools that have been underperforming for 30 years. Plus our kids have nothing to do on campus. I ended up at Princeton, but I originally went to school because I wanted to be a cheerleader. You can't provide activities two blocks away, not when kids have to cross three gang lines to get there. They've got to be on campus. Please count me in on the task force."

Ron Randolph urged a look at the preventive side of truancy, inculcating in five- to seven-year-olds that school attendance is their responsibility—part of their job. "Kids begin to drop out when they don't feel successful," Yvette King-Berg said. "If you look at elementary versus middle versus high school, you see that by junior high they start to give up. It's critical that members of this task force are recipients of services in schools—kids who've dropped out themselves—so we see things through their lens. Don't just talk around them. Involve them as critical partners in terms of solutions."

One audience member thought the task force a good idea, but would also like immediate efforts in oversight and training for those schools misapplying the law and misusing the citation process. Lisa Adler encouraged Judge Nash to continue reinforcing his instructions to judges to reject that misuse. Without that, the tendency to rely on the punitive side will become greater and greater. Adler also strongly recommended including community-based organizations on the task force. "The juvenile courts are working with more than 200,000 children and families every year," Nash said. "We have to figure out how the system addresses this, and we can't do it without working with everyone else."

**Ron Randolph moved that the ECC agree to be a key component of a task force to address truancy with the juvenile courts in Los Angeles County. Helen Kleinberg seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

### **Increasing the Enrollment of DCFS Children in Early Care and Education Programs**

Enrolling young children in high-quality early care and education programs has been a focus for the ECC since its inception, when one of its first actions was to secure a fee waiver for DCFS children—and the young children of DCFS and Probation youth—to attend Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) schools. Enrollment is now Strategy 3 of the ECC strategic plan.

The Department of Children and Family Services is likewise committed to enrollment in early care and education programs, Maryam Fatemi said. Approximately 10,000 children from birth to age five are under the care of DCFS, with 40 percent living with their biological or adoptive parents and the remainder in out-of-home care. Of the latter, about 20 percent are in foster family

agencies, and the department hopes to work with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies on the enrollment issue.

DCFS children, Steve Sturm said, “tend to have terrible outcomes”—50 percent have some developmental or learning delay, compared with 10 percent of the general population. Those in out-of-home care experience disruptions in the development of basic learning and social skills, and as they move into the K–12 school system, much of their success there stems from their exposure to early care and education programs. Studies show, however, that only 20 percent of young children in the child protective services system across the country are enrolled in those programs, while a 2008 RAND study found that 70 percent of non-CPS children are enrolled in a high-quality early care setting.

During Fatemi’s tenure as head of DCFS’s Pomona office, she built a pilot case-planning project with LACOE that works with families, foster parents, and staff to enroll children in Head Start, a Federally funded program for which children in foster care are categorically eligible. Over the past year, social workers identified 190 three- and four-year-olds in the Pomona and El Monte offices, discussed the benefits of early care and education with their caregivers, and worked with Head Start staff to shepherd their applications through the process.

Workers found that a willingness to involve children in early care programs is widespread. Of the 190 children identified, 97 were already enrolled—47 percent in Head Start preschools, 26 percent in center-based services, 17 percent in community preschools, and the balance in family child care homes or with other family or neighbors. Only four caregivers declined enrollment, and 58 forwarded applications to Head Start. Fifteen children have been enrolled to date and many more are on waiting lists.

Overall, DCFS’s education section has worked with a number of collaborative partners—LACOE Head Start, child care resource and referral agencies, and LAUP—to make presentations at DCFS offices around early care awareness. In the Pomona and El Monte service area, those efforts have increased the number of children enrolled in early care and education programs from 32 percent in 2007 to nearly 50 percent in 2009; adding in the children enrolled through this pilot program brings the total there to 57 percent.

The collaboration with LACOE Head Start continues to study best practices that involve other community partners, families, and social workers, and staff want to expand the model to Early Head Start, LAUP, and other subsidized child care. “Everyone is willing to help,” Sturm said. “Next summer we’ll have a much larger push for enrollment. This needs to be part of the daily conversation for social workers dealing with children zero to five so they all understand how to get those kids enrolled.”

In answer to questions from Helen Kleinberg about practices following reunification, Sturm explained that DCFS tries to enroll children as soon as they are categorically eligible, wherever that child is placed. If the placement changes, or children are reunified with their families, workers try to enroll them in another setting or work with families leaving the system to keep children enrolled. In the team decision-making conferences that are part of all transitions out of foster care, education is discussed and efforts are made to keep children in the same schools or child care centers. Kleinberg also suggested altering visitation policy so that parents visit their children



at child care centers and thereby see and understand the value of those programs to the child. (In departmental studies of failed reunifications, families often comply with DCFS directives only until they get their children back, and then cease their involvement in beneficial programs.)

Leslie Heimov recommended that Head Start and Early Head Start staff be made aware that the client is actually the child's parent, not the foster parent, who may be the only adult that staff see. (This can be especially true with teen parents.) Staff are able and willing to change the way they identify cases, and—particularly with in-home Early Head Start—to plan visits that coincide with the family of origin's schedule. "We need to encourage conversations with providers," Heimov said. "There's often simply a lack of awareness."

Terry Ogawa brought up the importance of consistency in the lives of children birth to age five, and mentioned that the circumstances of children and families in the child welfare system often do not match the realities of the child care system. Children associated with child protective services have enrollment priority, yes, but they and their families have to fit themselves into certain structures to access that priority. "Steve [Sturm] does a yeoman's job of getting the child care people to listen," Ogawa said. "After his presentation at the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, it was clear they want to participate, but don't know how to find those kids. I'm happy this plan will roll out."

## **Updates**

- Judge Nash highlighted the brochure included in member packets for the 14th annual partnership conference, *A New Beginning for Partnerships for Children & Families in Los Angeles County*, to be held November 3 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. This year's event offers 32 workshops in three sessions, and a number of fine speakers, and Nash encouraged everyone to attend.
- Concerned about the ongoing deficit in the juvenile court funding model that is the responsibility of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Board of Supervisors in 2008 directed the Auditor-Controller's Office to work with LACOE to review its juvenile court schools program. Are funds being used appropriately? Are funding levels sufficient? How does the program compare with those of other counties? Does enough money exist to implement the 35 recommendations of the educational reform committee?

The outside auditing group performing the study for the Auditor-Controller, Ron Randolph reported, found that funds are indeed being expended appropriately and that practices within LACOE are being streamlined. However, a structural deficit exists within California that no amount of streamlining can make up for: court schools are funded at \$9,000 per student per year, but costs are closer to \$13,000 per student.

As a fix for that structural deficit, LACOE introduced SB 698, which passed in the Senate Education Committee by a vote of 8 to 1. Unfortunately, further progress on the bill has been suspended because of the legislature's need to fund current expenditures rather than new ones, and the ongoing deficit will therefore continue. On October 13, the Board of Supervisors asked LACOE and the CEO for quarterly reports on the progress of this legislation and other measures addressing the deficit.

- Carrie Miller announced that the minute-order language to facilitate the electronic sharing of records between DCFS and the courts has been finalized, and the courts' technology division is in the process of making it a regular part of the minute-order system. (Until that happens, clerks are adding it manually.) Miller thanked Judge Nash for his leadership on resolving the issue, which has been a longstanding hurdle to the core need for shared information. In turn, Nash thanked key players for reaching agreement on the finalized language—the Children's Law Center, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). "It's really a monumental accomplishment," former lead consultant Sharon Watson said. "The reason the ECC was founded was to do this kind of thing—we've been battling this issue for decades. Congratulations to all."
- Miller highlighted her written director's report, which is attached to and made part of these minutes.
- Leslie Heimov announced that the Children's Law Center's first training sessions for volunteers to serve as holders of education rights for foster children have concluded, and those volunteers are beginning to be appointed. Another class will be starting soon.

### **Public Comment**

- Eugenia Wilson from Living Advantage, Inc., welcomes the idea of the truancy task force, and encouraged participants to look at the individual reasons children have for not attending school, including the fact that parents may not value education.
- With regard to citations for jaywalking and other minor infractions handled by the informal juvenile and traffic court, an audience member reminded attendees that young people may forget they have been issued those tickets. If they later come to the attention of the juvenile court, outstanding arrest warrants may be discovered. She suggested that youth have the opportunity to fulfill any requirement for community service resulting from those tickets while they are incarcerated.
- Another audience member encouraged the concept of training biological parents and foster parents together on foster-care issues, thus minimizing the anger biological parents may feel about having their children taken away. She also raised the problems foster youth attending out-of-state schools experience in getting prescriptions and medical care—especially those youth who are medically fragile—since Medi-Cal does not cross state lines. In one case, medicine needing refrigeration is sent to the foster parent, who then must pay \$90 for overnight shipping to the youngster. "Someone should look into this," she said. "We're making strides in some ways, but we still have lots of problem areas."

### **Next Meeting**

With the ECC moving into its implementation phase and doing more work in small groups rather than as a whole council, director Carrie Miller suggested the idea of allowing more time between main meetings for that work to take place. Location challenges also come into play, since booking a large venue can be difficult during certain busy times. She proposes reducing the ECC's

quarterly meeting schedule to three times a year—perhaps in February, June, and October—and will poll members via e-mail prior to setting the 2010 meeting schedule.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.



## **Director's Report**

October 29, 2009

### **First District Education Pilot Project Expansion**

The ECC won a Special Merit Award from the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission, along with its partners: the First Supervisorial District, Chief Executive Office (CEO), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Pomona and Montebello Unified School Districts.

A procedural manual is currently being developed that details how to implement the model and includes the assessment and case planning tools created for this project. The First Supervisorial District and Casey Family Programs have agreed to co-sponsor printing this manual.

Expansion of the pilot to the El Monte Union High School District has begun, with plans underway to further expand it to the Bassett, Hacienda/La Puente and El Rancho Unified School Districts, using a modified approach. Instead of utilizing non-case-carrying social workers as the leads for developing educational assessments and plans, each youth's primary social worker will now be responsible for these duties. To make this work, social worker caseloads will consist entirely of students attending a particular district and their siblings.

### **A New Beginning for Partnerships for Children & Families in Los Angeles County Conference**

The ECC and its education pilot partners will be presenting a workshop on: Raising the Educational Achievement of DCFS Youth through Implementation of the First Supervisorial Education Pilot Project, at this conference co-chaired by the Los Angeles County Superior Court and California State University, Los Angeles on November 3, 2009 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

### **Creating a Blueprint Conference: Supporting Former Foster Youth in Higher Education**

The ECC participated in the planning for this conference, co-chaired by College Pathways and United Friends of Children, and presented in a session entitled: Effective Collaboration Across Systems, along with representatives from the California Department of Education, Orange County Office of Education, Kern County Foster Youth Services, and San Diego Office of Education on October 28, 2009 at the California Endowment.

### **Education Record Sharing Solution**

The additional language to be added to dependency minute orders allowing for the sharing of education records with DCFS, the Juvenile Court and attorneys has been finalized. This language

creates a FERPA-compliant mechanism for sharing these records by creating individual court orders for every dependency case.

### LACOE/CEO Board Motion Regarding Juvenile Court Schools

On October 13, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion directing the CEO and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to develop a plan that addresses LACOE's structural deficit, outlines both fiscal and legislative strategies to address it, and discusses the fiscal impacts of implementing recommendations recently made by the Auditor-Controller.

### Missouri Juvenile Justice Model

A constituency of Los Angeles and San Francisco County officials and community partners, including the ECC, recently visited Kansas City, Missouri to tour a couple of their Juvenile Detention Centers. The Missouri Youth Services Institute has implemented significant changes to Missouri's juvenile justice programs, running them similarly to state-of-the-art residential treatment facilities. This nationally and internationally recognized model has reduced juvenile recidivism rates to 10% of its population compared to California's 75%, and it has improved the educational attainment of its youth with 91% of juveniles earning high school credits compared to 46% nationally. Additionally, this program spends \$43,000 per year compared to California's \$72,000 per year. The goal was to glean strategies that could be implemented in Los Angeles County to improve our juvenile justice system.

### Youth Offender Re-entry Grant

Community and Senior Services (CSS) received one of only five grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor to develop a comprehensive plan for addressing the needs of juvenile and young adult offenders transitioning out of correctional facilities and back into their communities. A Community Re-entry Partnership has been formed among key public and private stakeholders, including the ECC, to develop recommendations for securing education, employment, mentoring, and case management services for these youth to help reduce recidivism and improve their overall outcomes.

### Foster Youth Legislation Updates

Governor Schwarzenegger has signed into law a number of bills directed at helping to improve access to services and supports for children in California's foster care system. Related to their education: AB 1393 requires California State University and requests that University of California and California Community Colleges give priority access to on-campus and year-round housing; AB 167 exempts foster youth who transfer schools in their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years from additional local high school requirements, if they would prevent that youth from graduating; and AB 669 exempts foster youth and former foster youth under the age of 19 from in-state residency requirements for tuition and fees at California State University, University of California and California Community Colleges.