



## **Education Coordinating Council**

**May 26, 2011**

**9:30 a.m.**

St. Anne's Foundation Room

155 South Occidental Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90026

Present: Patti Azevedo, representing Richard Martinez  
Carol Clem  
Renatta Cooper  
Mónica García  
René Gonzalez, representing John Deasy  
Sharon Harada, representing Donald Blevins  
Helen Kleinberg  
Aubrey Manuel  
Evelyn V. Martinez  
Machelle Massey  
Judge Michael Nash  
Ron Randolph, representing Jon Gundry  
Carol Richardson, representing Leslie Heimov  
Bruce Saltzer  
Fabricio Segovia  
Marvin J. Southard  
Rick Tebbano, representing Christopher Steinhauser  
Diane Wagner, representing Jackie Contreras

Guests: Alex Johnson, Second Supervisorial District  
Miguel Martinez, Assembly Speaker John Pérez's office

Chair Mónica García brought the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m., welcoming everyone and noting that Donald Blevins and Jackie Contreras are in meetings today at the Hall of Administration. García thanked Marv Southard and Tony Walker (President and CEO of St. Anne's) for their support in co-sponsoring today's meeting, and expressed special appreciation to Walker for offering the venue. She then asked ECC members and the audience to introduce themselves.

### **Mental Health Services at the Challenger Memorial Youth Center**

Dr. Marv Southard, director of the Department of Mental Health, presented an overview of the mental health program in the Challenger Memorial Youth Center probation camp.

Prior to the expansion of mental health services at Challenger starting about four years ago, the program suffered from limited clinical and psychiatric staffing and high caseloads. It was also structured around a crisis intervention model, through which a youngster's frequency of contact with mental health staff was determined by when his or her needs were most acute; ongoing services were generally not available. In addition, all youth in the juvenile justice system who were prescribed psychotropic medications were housed at Challenger. When youth initially started on medication, the requisite transfers often disrupted their educational progress at other placements.

With the passing of 2007's Mental Health Services Act, funding became available to expand services in the probation camps, allowing for the decentralization of youth on medication. All girls are now housed at Camp Scott-Scudder, and boys may be housed at Camp Rockey or at Challenger. MHSA funds also helped create a camp assessment center, where Probation, Department of Mental Health, and Los Angeles County Office of Education staff are co-located to provide shared decision-making about camp placement. "Using MHSA monies was a delicate sell," Southard explained. "According to the official rules [of the Act], funded services needed to be voluntary, so we looked at them either as preparation—assessments and so on—for involuntary services, or as focused on after-care services, preparing for youngsters' release. Our local planning group was open to this interpretation, and we were successful in persuading the oversight/accountability commission, and the state Department of Mental Health, that the approach was valid."

A further expansion in services occurred in 2009 with the state's Youth Offender Block Grant, which funded increased mental health staffing at Camp Onizuka—on the Challenger campus—for youth who would previously have been sent to the state's Department of Juvenile Justice (formerly the California Youth Authority). Caseloads decreased as a result of these additional funds, and Camp Onizuka was able to pilot multidisciplinary team meetings. This approach includes Probation, DMH, and LACOE staff who focus on transition plans, and also involves transition counselors from the Los Angeles Unified School District to improve community transitions back to school. The multidisciplinary team pilot program improved collaboration with LACOE and Probation staff, and has subsequently been implemented in all probation camps.

Also, in 2009, mental health staffing at Camp Challenger was increased by 24 additional positions—social workers, mental health clinicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and enhanced supervisory staff—to meet the provisions of a settlement agreement with the Federal Department of Justice. This has resulted in smaller clinical caseloads, mental health coverage seven days a week (including weekends and evenings), and an increased frequency and quality of clinical contact—compared to 2005, nearly double the number of unique clients have been seen, from around 2,000 to almost 4,000. Mental health services are no longer driven by crisis.

Additionally, increased collaboration with LACOE exists with regard to Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and the overall improvement in addressing youths' mental health problems has resulted in improved learning in school. "Silos just don't work," Southard maintained. "If probation and mental health and education staff aren't working together, our outcomes are not what they need to be." An on-site quality assurance committee monitors clinical documentation and quality of care—using newly developed metrics required by the Department of Justice—and also supports and trains new clinical staff as they learn to work in this complex interagency environment.

As part of an ongoing camp reorganization, three camps at Challenger are closing this week, which will allow for increased probation staffing to attend multidisciplinary team meetings and provide more support to the school and to the DMH staff at Challenger. (Southard made clear that reassigned staff would follow the youth.) Increased probation staff will also support the implementation of an integrated treatment model at Camp Onizuka, an adapted Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) approach intended to enhance behavior changes through a focus on learning new skills to replace negative behavior, using reinforcement to increase desired behavior, and teaching problem-solving, mindfulness, and distress tolerance, with the ultimate goal of reducing youth-on-youth violence. “This is a signature reform,” Southard said, “and it’s definitely a change in the social environment for both staff and kids. All participants in the equation need to react to situations in ways that don’t make them worse. We started training in March with the supervisors on this model, and Probation and DMH staff are being trained together. I hear it’s going well, and the DOJ monitors are also feeling positive.”

During the discussion following Southard’s presentation, Helen Kleinberg expressed concerns regarding the lack of parent involvement when youth are in camp, which is caused at least in part by the camps’ remote locations. How are parents involved in the new behavior model, and how can families be better prepared for handling youngsters after their return from placement?

Southard acknowledged that after-care is the most important factor of the model. (He is in the process of developing a plan, to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors, to increase staff for DMH’s after-care efforts.) “Even if we do a great job stabilizing kids in camps,” he said, “if we return them to the environment that produced whatever got them [placed] there, it’s likely that the long-term benefits will be slighter than we would hope. From the DMH perspective, we make sure that kids are linked to mental health care in communities, and that they get a warm handoff. Sometimes there are capacity issues with community agencies, sometimes there are transportation issues for the participants. And almost always, there are issues of stigma.” Insofar as parents are willing to work with agencies in the community, their cooperation is part of the after-care program’s discharge plan. Because of stigma, however, there tends to be a lack of receptivity to getting that help. “Getting ‘mental health’ services on their home turf doesn’t exactly increase these kids’ popularity or safety,” Southard continued. “We want to create ways of getting mental health support to them that aren’t labeled that way—through drop-in centers, health venues, and other places that are non-stigmatizing. How can we make those services attractive and welcoming? Families often experience the involvement of outsiders as a criticism of their parenting. It can be a tricky connection, but if we can do it, we should.”

Parent involvement with youth in the camps has been an issue for years, Judge Michael Nash said. “Probation has never been good at involving parents, even though it is required to include information on how that’s being done in reports to the court,” he said. “As the multidisciplinary team process goes countywide, that should help. The chief [Chief Probation Officer Donald Blevins] has been here a year now, fighting an uphill battle to do his job. The restructure of the camps has been started, but we’re in a holding pattern waiting for Probation to give us a plan for the whole camp process. The question of family involvement is a valid and important one; that piece has always been minimal at best.”

Judge Donna Groman is helping work through the barriers involved in developing the multidisciplinary team process being piloted at Camps Smith and Onizuka, Sharon Harada said, with the goal of rolling out the program countywide as required by the Department of Justice. “It’s been bumpy,” Harada admitted. “We’re still working through things, and we appreciate all the support we’ve gotten from LACOE and Mental Health. The transition back to the community is supposed to start on the day the youth enters camp, but we’re not there yet. We definitely want to work with families, and we’ll keep the ECC updated on our process.”

Since most youth returning from camp are on probation in any case, Aubrey Manuel suggested making the participation of parents a probation issue. He also recommended the use of a wrap-around model for community service delivery, and not casting the assistance as counseling or therapy but rather as participation in a support group. Renatta Cooper also encouraged enlisting the support of the faith community, involving churches and other groups who have the space to work with families. “Not all families are what we call ‘churched,’” she acknowledged, “but this could add another layer of support and convenience for them, and it could open up other doors. Churches who are willing to partner with the county often have other resources to offer.”

Chair García thanked Southard for his presentation, inviting him and others to keep the ECC informed about how parents are being integrated into solution-building. “It’s a challenge for all of us,” she concluded.

### **Impact of State Budget Cuts on Education**

Miguel Martinez, field representative for Assembly Speaker John Pérez, thanked ECC members for the invitation to address them with regard to the impact on education of impending state budget cuts. Governor Jerry Brown’s proposed budget seeks to address a \$25.4 billion deficit, which swelled to \$26.6 billion with the decision earlier this year to cancel an anticipated sale of state buildings. Reductions to this deficit were planned to be half cuts in services and half enhancements to revenue. However, although only a majority vote of the legislature is required for cuts to the budget, a two-thirds vote is required for any increases in revenue. Despite 30 hearings held by the Assembly Budget Subcommittee, bipartisan support could not be secured for any extensions of taxes already on the books, and no June special election on that issue (as proposed by the governor) will be held.

The budget passed by the Assembly in March included \$14 billion in cuts, but the May revise issued last Monday gave legislators “a glimpse of hope,” as Martinez phrased it, since improvements in the overall economy have generated an unexpected extra \$6.6 billion in the general fund. This means less of a funding decrease in many areas, but details of the ultimate budget remain uncertain. More hearings are going on now to seek bipartisan agreement before the budget deadline of June 15. Republicans would like to see an all-cuts budget, but Assembly Speaker Pérez does not believe there is support for that.

With regard to K–12 funding, the May revise included \$52.4 billion in cuts to Proposition 98 funding for 2011–2012 (legislation that guaranteed minimum spending for education), a reduction of \$3 billion over levels assumed in January. For the 2010–2011 budget year, cuts are \$49.7 billion, maintaining funding levels under the suspension of Proposition 98 put into effect last year.

(Martinez was also asked about the possible restoration of cuts to child care funding, which Speaker Pérez is working on; Martinez will get information on that to the ECC office for distribution. Likewise, the possible repeal of AB 99, which would take \$1 billion from Proposition 10 commissions like First 5 LA, is under discussion pending the outcome of lawsuits that have been filed.)

Megan Reilly, chief financial officer for the Los Angeles Unified School district, distributed a handout—*LAUSD: The Reality of a Budget in Crisis*—and reviewed salient points.

Education in California is primarily funded by sales and income tax. When the economy is depressed, as it has been for the past couple of years, schools are hit especially hard, and this only contributes to the state's historic underfunding of education. (California now ranks 47th in per-pupil spending out of the 50 states.) In addition, Sacramento has borrowed school cash to pay its bills and balance its budget for nearly a decade. In 2011–2012, the state proposed owing more than \$9.5 billion to schools—for LAUSD, that equals hundreds of millions of dollars. Reilly also pointed out that overall reductions in school funding include not only the proposed 18 percent deficit factor to Proposition 98, but also the 'running tab' caused by the state's historical borrowing from that pot.

The reality is that if public education in California sustains a \$5 billion cut because proposed tax extensions—if they are passed at all—will not go into effect in time to prevent local cuts, school funding will be just above where it was in 1999–2000. (The expiration of recent Federal stimulus monies is also a factor.) A \$408 million deficit for LAUSD in 2011–2012 could be the equivalent of eliminating 120 schools or cutting the school year by almost two months. Three-quarters of LAUSD's general operating budget is spent on people—classroom and school personnel, bus drivers, counselors, and so on—positions that have already been cut dramatically over the past three years. The district now averages one counselor for every thousand high school students, for example, and bus drop-off points and safety corridors have been extended to between one and two miles.

For the upcoming school year, plans are already in place for five fewer days of instruction resulting from furloughs, and required layoff warnings have been distributed to many teachers. "Four out of nine union bargaining units have been given furlough dates," Chair García said, "and we'd really like to rescind those layoff notices. We are fighting a major war here for children's rights, and advocacy efforts from all of us are necessary to counter this de-funding of education."

The Pasadena Unified School District is also facing cuts, Renatta Cooper reported, and because it serves a large number of the county's foster youth, the necessary—and costly—enhanced services they receive have become an issue. "We're getting pushback and resentment from principals and school staff regarding mandated services for foster youth," Cooper said. "They aren't kids from our community—they're here because they're placed in the group homes located in the San Gabriel Valley. We had a meeting with State Senator [Carol] Liu and other policymakers last week about this. Some of the situations just don't make sense. For one kid at Five Acres, the IEP process required a nonpublic school, and the child was placed in a school in Santa Ana! That's \$15,000 per year plus a \$52 cab fare each way every school day. That kind of situation makes things difficult."

The Los Angeles County Office of Education has the AB 1200–mandated job of overseeing the fiscal solvency of school districts in the county, Ron Randolph said, although he acknowledged that, “Right now we’re playing more of a counseling role than an oversight role. There’s very little room to cut any more in school budgets. Furlough days, for example, may seem a viable way to save on personnel costs, but we need to remember that they are non-instructional days for students, and their cost to kids’ education has not been calculated.” A lot of pressure is being put on school districts and on LACOE to come up with solutions that, so far, don’t seem to exist. “We want to give school districts the flexibility to think as broadly as they can about utilizing other creative and legal funding areas,” Randolph continued. “LACOE has never seen such a crisis in finance and instructions as we do now. All we can do is work together to see how many services we can coordinate, and we are doing that. Unfortunately, we’re getting no sympathy about our financial difficulties from lawsuit settlements or the Department of Justice. ‘The money is your problem,’ they say. ‘Fix what we see as the lack of services.’ But how do you do that in a way that doesn’t decimate the entire system? We wish we had more answers.”

Cooper finds it ironic that after all the push toward research-based practice called for by the No Child Left Behind Act, budget cuts are forcing districts to do things they know are not in the best educational interests of children. “We need a longer school year, we need smaller class sizes,” she said. “It’s taken all this time to force the field to go to the research, and we shouldn’t have to ignore that.”

Tony Walker, whose wife teaches in an LAUSD charter school, sees the constant change and uncertainty as a huge stressor for school staff—not knowing from day to day what is going to happen. “We need to get to the point where we make decisions and go forward,” he said, “for the benefit of kids, parents, and teachers.” School starts in July, García said, and LAUSD is waiting on California to make decisions, but they are not forthcoming. If the governor would extend current taxes for one full year, Reilly added, then put them up for a general vote, there would be much more certainty simply because revenue assumptions could be relied on. “That’s the rub now between unions, schools, and everyone,” she said. “What are the assumptions?”

García sees the entire budget situation as causing “educational malpractice,” as she put it, but lack of dollars is not the only disturbing element. “We have a 54 percent graduation rate in LAUSD,” she said. “That’s up 11 percent from four years ago, but it’s still not good. In addition to advocating for money, we have to call on each other for joint jurisdictional improvements. The ECC provides a place for amazing conversations—people coming together to find those answers Ron talked about. We need to find a way to include parents and to get service providers on board with policymakers and practitioners. The budget challenge can be an opportunity as we go into the ECC strategic plan discussion. There is definitely something rich and right in what the ECC is helping people do.”

### **Updated ECC Strategic Plan, 2011–2014**

ECC executive director Trish Ploehn reviewed the update to the organization’s strategic plan (sent to members in advance), which builds on the past five years’ successes in implementing the Blueprint established at the ECC’s outset, and establishes numerous new goals. Developing the update was a very inclusive process, encompassing more than 40 interviews of ECC members

and other stakeholders through which hundreds of suggestions were captured, sorted, and prioritized. The ECC's mission in particular has been changed, calling not for simply raising the achievement levels of foster and probation youth to equal those of other youth, but for more broadly giving foster and probation youth every advantage possible for a successful adulthood. In the same way, the ECC's role and approach has been revised to emphasize the sense of belonging that every child needs and to promote relationships for system youth with people who care about them and their educational success.

The three-year strategic plan update encompasses five priority areas—early childhood education, youth education and development, school/department coordination and support, data- and information-sharing, and system accountability—along with corresponding outcomes and actions.

Bruce Saltzer had several detailed suggestions for the body of the plan, including specifying the successful collaboration the Pomona Unified School District has developed with the Probation Department as a model to use for other school districts to improve camp-to-community transitions for youth. He also wants to add a further bullet in plans to expand the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program to ensure that students' needs for special education services are properly identified, and include an action item under School/Department Coordination and Support to determine how the special education needs of foster youth are being met. With regard to youths' timely enrollment in school, Saltzer would like to track results from the simple tool now in place for enrolling foster and probation youth within 24 hours of any placement transition. Which school districts are implementing that tool, and how effective is it? Saltzer would also like to see data matches broken down by school attendance area to further identify target areas for improvement.

In the language addressing enrollment in early childhood education, Marv Southard asked for clarification that the phrase "children of DCFS and probation families" refers to the offspring of foster and probation youth themselves, not to their siblings.

Steve Sturm from DCFS recommended adding incremental thresholds to the aim of enrolling 90 percent of system children in early childhood education, starting with progress that has already been made. Chair García noted that ongoing benchmarks would be a part of the implementation.

Fabricio Segovia asked for a more in-depth discussion of system accountability. "What happens if a kid's education needs *aren't* being addressed, as mine weren't?" he asked. "How is that dealt with in court? Once a kid is detained and a case goes on, are caregivers being asked about education?" Ongoing assessments are the key to that issue, Renatta Cooper said, and accountability must reside in multiple places. The role and responsibility of caregivers—including ongoing training—was outlined in great specificity in the original ECC Blueprint, but René Gonzalez believes it should be called out again in this update. "It's a critical piece that we don't pay enough attention to," he said.

**Aubrey Manuel moved to accept the updated strategic plan with the suggested changes. Marv Southard seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

Helen Kleinberg suggested putting together a work group to oversee the implementation of the plan and, Tony Walker added, to make sure staff resources are available to make it happen. "Foster and probation youth typically don't score well on tests, and they tend not to be welcome

in schools,” Kleinberg said. “There will be problems getting them the IEPs and the services they need. A huge advocacy push for these kids is necessary, and it’s hard to get the work done when the ECC meets only a few times a year. This is an ambitious plan and we need to move forward.”

### **Executive Director’s Report**

- Trish Ploehn called attention to *Helping Foster and/or Probation Youth Recover High School Credits* (in meeting packets), a document developed by Angel Rodriguez, who has been active with the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program. “These are guidelines for recovering high school credits that have been vetted by numerous people in the field,” Ploehn said, “all of whom said, ‘Yes, this works.’ Over the past two years, the Gloria Molina program has recovered 1,100 credits for its participants by using these methods. Thank you, Angel—we encourage all of you to use this handout, share it, and pass it around.” It will be e-mailed to all ECC members and to school district liaisons.
- Also in meeting packets was an updated sheet of contact information for education-related questions regarding foster and probation youth.
- Ploehn highlighted several items in her executive director’s report, which is attached to and made part of these minutes.
  - ✓ The Foster Youth Services funding application will be submitted to the state tomorrow, and Pat Levinson expressed appreciation for the letter of support from the ECC. The California Department of Education has not yet announced the funding formula for these monies, but some county advisory boards are looking into it.
  - ✓ The barrier of a Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) interpretation that prevented the sharing of education records has been solved for foster youth, and Carrie Miller hopes that similar language will be developed for probation youth by the ECC’s next meeting. One recommendation of a recent conference call among education advocates nationwide supports the use of the Los Angeles County solution as a model for other jurisdictions.
  - ✓ Kristi López from Assemblymember Anthony Portantino’s office expressed appreciation for everyone’s help with the May 7 Town Hall event. Forty youth and representatives from 20 agencies attended, and she particularly thanked Harvey Kawasaki at the Department of Children and Family Services for ensuring that all appropriate DCFS divisions were there. Other participants included the Department of Public Social Services, Foster Youth Services, Guardian Scholars, Public Counsel, and the Alliance for Children’s Rights.
  - ✓ One goal of the upcoming June 28 resource fair is to maximize the number of foster youth who are able to attend, Bruce Saltzer explained, with three time slots accommodating 250 youth each. Fifty vendors have confirmed their attendance, and other presentations will also be scheduled. The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder’s office will be there, but because of new regulations, the Social Security Administration will be permitted only to take names and refer youth to the nearest Social Security office for official

documents. Saltzer thanked the ECC's Helen Chavez, who has been active in the resource fair work group, for her help with the organization effort.

- Ploehn highlighted a number of bills on the legislation update document in meeting packets.
  - ✓ AB 194 would require each campus of the California State University system and all California community colleges to give priority enrollment to current and former foster youth up to 24 years of age, and would request the University of California system to do the same.
  - ✓ SB 486, which would transfer monies to the state's general fund from the state's First 5 commissions—ultimately abolish them—has died in committee for this legislative session, Evelyn Martinez said, but is expected to be reintroduced in the future.
  - ✓ SB 578 allows foster youth to earn transferable credits for partial coursework satisfactorily completed.
  - ✓ Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 19 emphasizes the importance of early childhood education programs.

### **Member Updates**

- According to Marv Southard, one of the biggest changes caused by the state budget process is the realignment of AB 3632—legislation that mandates mental health services for special education students—so that, beginning July 1, implementation responsibility falls on school districts rather than county departments. “The program as it has existed for 25 years ends in a month—this is a big deal,” Southard said. “How the transition functions between the county and school districts will be crucial to making sure that kids and families don't get less than they need. This is not a turnkey program that can change over in five weeks. Dollars and responsibility must continue to flow during the transition period, and right now we don't know what the length of that period will be nor what rules will be in place. Very quickly, we need to develop some kind of mutual understanding of the process. How can we make this change without doing harm?”

René Gonzalez said that the Los Angeles Unified School District—whose intention it is to fully take over services by the end of the fiscal year—is working with the Department of Mental Health and with outpatient, residential, and nonpublic school settings receiving mental health services. “Services for some youngsters will continue to be contracted with DMH,” he said, “and LAUSD will begin to take over others as of July 1.”

- Trish Ploehn wished Pat Levinson well on her retirement from the Los Angeles County Office of Education after more than 30 years of service. Ploehn also welcomed John Keane, Levinson's successor as Foster Youth Services Coordinator.

### **Public Comment**

- Pat Levinson asked for the ECC's help in surmounting a barrier that Foster Youth Services has encountered to do with data. In collaboration with the Department of Children and Family Services, FYS recently purchased the Foster Focus data system from the Sacramento County Office of Education, an application that stores school information for foster children and also allows a weekly upload from the state's CWS/CMS data system of casework information that can then be shared with school districts. In 17 other counties in California, the CWS/CMS upload is permitted, but Los Angeles County Counsel has advised DCFS that it cannot be allowed here. "We've been connected on Foster Focus since February, and we're happy to link with school districts and others," Levinson said. "But we need to remove this barrier." Michael Gray announced that a letter had been sent to the DCFS interim director about this matter.
- Kristi López encouraged everyone to contact the chair of the Assembly Budget Committee in support of AB 181, the Foster Youth Mental Health Bill of Rights, which would mandate that county departments make sure foster youth receive notice of those rights. The phone number for support communication is (916) 319-2039, and the fax number is (916) 319-2139.
- With regard to parent involvement while youth are incarcerated in probation camps, Rosalie Reyes-Moreno mentioned that, when the minor consents, clinicians at the camps during weekend hours are working with parents to address mental health concerns, and three vans and drivers are available to pick up parents at their homes and transport them to the camps for those sessions. Kim Brettschneider from the Children's Defense Fund, on the other hand, hears camp youth reporting that their parents don't have access to them. "The vans are not enough," she said.
- Brettschneider also asked about expanding the educational program pilot going on at Camp Scott-Scudder to other camps, and Ron Randolph replied that the intention is to use the pilot as an archetype, polishing the program and its assessment data prior to rolling it out. "A timeline hasn't yet been determined because we are in the infancy of the pilot," he said. "Project-based learning is a different delivery model from the comprehensive high school approach, but it's been successful so far. The girls experience a much more positive attitude toward education, self-image, and their return to the community. We're very encouraged, and we look forward to piloting it at a boy's camp."

### **Next Meeting**

The next ECC meeting is scheduled for:

**Thursday, October 6, 2011**

**9:30 a.m.**

Hall of Administration, Room 140

500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

There being no further public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.



## **Executive Director's Report**

May 26, 2011

### **Challenger Memorial Youth Center WASC Accreditation**

As a follow-up to our last ECC meeting, the ACLU agreed to research the issuance of a six-year WASC accreditation to the Probation Department's Challenger Memorial Youth Center, awarded only one year prior to the filing of a lawsuit that cited severe education deficiencies. They have assigned staff to further explore this issue and will keep the ECC informed of the results of their investigation.

### **LACOE Foster Youth Services State Funding Application**

The ECC collaborated with DCFS, Probation, and several community partners to draft LACOE's Foster Youth Services funding application for Fiscal Years 2011–14, due to the state by May 31, 2011. The application identified four key areas that address the educational needs of Los Angeles County foster and probation youth: tutoring, case management/planning, camp-to-community transitions, and youth advocacy. Additionally, the ECC signed and submitted a letter of support along with the application. Unfortunately, the maximum award amount that may be allocated to Los Angeles County is \$2.1 million, a significant reduction from previous years' funding, that will yield reductions in staffing and support programs for system youth.

### **FERPA Regulations**

The ECC joined educational advocates nationwide to participate on a conference call on May 12, 2011, to collaboratively draft comments on the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations pertaining to sharing educational records. Although locally we now have the ability to share this information, we are still committed to ensuring that these issues are clarified at the Federal level. As a result, the group developed a cohesive set of recommendations that were submitted to the Federal Department of Education this week.

### **Assemblymember Anthony Portantino Town Hall: *Breaking Barriers to Higher Education***

Assemblymember Anthony Portantino hosted his 4<sup>th</sup> annual foster youth town hall meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup> at All Saints Church in Pasadena. Over 70 participants came together to address the educational barriers facing foster and probation youth. The event was held in partnership with the ECC, All Saints Church, Five Acres, Casey Family Programs, DCFS Youth Development Services, and Pasadena Community College's Foster/Kinship Care Education Program. Issues addressed during the town hall included housing options, employment opportunities and access to financial aid resources to support youth's enrollment in colleges and universities.

## 2011 ACHSA Resource Fair

The Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) will host the second resource fair for DCFS and probation youth, their caregivers, and caseworkers at the California Endowment on June 28, 2011. The event will take place from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., and will include various exhibitors offering everything from arts and literacy programs to legal services, housing, jobs, mental health, child care and—perhaps most importantly—on-site applications for vital documents such as birth certificates. For more information about the event, please contact ACHSA staff member Maria Rose at 213-250-5030 or by email at [mrose@achsa.net](mailto:mrose@achsa.net).