

February 14, 2007

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sharon G. Watson
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PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN “*EXPECTING MORE; A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH*”

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

As you will see in the attached Annual Report, the ECC and its members have made significant progress in implementing the recommendations in “Expecting More” during 2006. Some of the key accomplishments include:

- DCFS is partnering with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) on a pilot program at the department’s Pomona office to increase the awareness and training of preschool providers about the needs of children and families under the department’s supervision. Training is also being provided to that office’s social workers on the importance of early childhood education and how to access those resources.
- The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is implementing a Prenatal to Five (P25) program to promote the delivery of effective family-centered and culturally-responsive mental health services and supports for young children and their families within the County’s SPAs.
- Obtained the signatures of the superintendents of five ECC-member school districts— Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the Lancaster, Long Beach, Los Angeles and Pasadena school districts--on a letter, drafted by the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) and the Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles, outlining AB 490 regulations. This letter was created at the request of DCFS and the Performance Measures Task Group, and caregivers are now successfully using this letter to expedite enrollment of their foster youth in these school districts.

- Probation expanded its Library Card Initiative to include all youth on probation--or at risk of becoming so--to enable them to access free internet-based tutoring for grades 4 through 12. The department is also providing a series of after-school enrichment opportunities that includes a year-round youth employment program for probation and at-risk youth at various Los Angeles City park sites and is piloting its innovative Students for Higher Education Program, described in the attached February 7, 2007 memo, for 50 youth at Camp Gonzalez.
- LAUSD has, as of this month, appointed foster youth advocates at 350 of its schools, and is holding a training session in April for another group of recruits.
- Long Beach USD launched a school and community mentoring program that matches youth with administrators and counselors to motivate them to do better in school and established a foster youth partnership with Long Beach City College.

In addition, at the ECC's quarterly meeting on January 29, 2007, the Council ratified an historic Collaborative Agreement and process for sharing educational information among ECC member organizations and its partner agencies. This Agreement will facilitate the development of the electronic education record for foster and probation youth that is proposed in *Expecting More* and that is needed to fully implement several of the other recommendations in that report.

Finally, a second ECC Dialogue with school superintendents was held on February 5, 2007, co-hosted with the Los Angeles County Office of Education. 24 school districts participated, with a palpable sense of excitement about the opportunities for working more closely together and with the ECC to raise the academic achievement of system youth. Several agreements were reached to further coordinate activities and some promising ideas were proposed to further expedite school enrollment, improve communication by designating specific contact people between schools and county departments, and initiate regional level dialogues among schools and providers to develop solutions to local concerns.

In summary, ECC members, partners and community agencies are successfully making the Blueprint a reality and the Council looks forward to reporting further progress in its next report. If you should have any questions or require further information, your staff may contact the ECC at (213) 974-4530.

Attachments: Education Coordinating Council 2006 Annual Report
February 7, 2007 Probation Department Memo

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