

# Strategic Plan

## 2016–2021



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### ECC Mission

To raise the educational achievement of system-involved youth.

### ECC Role and Approach

The job of the Council is to coordinate efforts across organizations and jurisdictions, encouraging varied networks of people to work together to expand best practices and help fill the gaps where necessary to prevent system-involved children from being left behind educationally. Our primary role is to be a **champion of education** and to promote the achievement, well-being, and safety of youth in the following ways:

- As an *advocate*, mobilizing support across various public and private stakeholder groups;
- As a *convener* and *broker*, working with other organizations to identify problems and develop solutions; and
- As a *policymaker*, spearheading strategies that support the increased educational achievement of the County's youth.

## **ECC Strategic Plan 2016–2021**

### *Priority Areas, Outcomes, and Action Items*

#### **Priority Area 1: Enrollment in Early Childhood Education**

**Outcome:** At least 90% of system-involved children under the age of six participate in high-quality early care and education programs.

#### **Actions to help achieve this outcome:**

1. Work with partners to create policies, procedures, and practices to increase enrollment of system-involved children in early care and education programs.
  - a. Address Board-supported legislation and policy issues around access. Take action in the forms of education, coordination, and advocacy.
2. Support the continued development, expansion and implementation of an electronic referral system in DCFS regional offices to increase enrollment of children in early care and education programs.
  - a. Collaborate with partners on developing access to electronic referral systems and other support services for families of young children on their mobile devices.
3. Help convene trainings—such as early learning symposiums and caregiver/parent summits—to instill the value of early education and early identification of special needs for the County’s most vulnerable children, and to strengthen partnerships between County departments and early care and education providers.
4. Work with First 5 LA, County departments, and other partners to promote the utilization of home visitation programs.

## **Priority Area 2: Achievement for School-Aged Youth**

**Outcome:** Departments, Courts, schools, caregivers, and other providers work in concert to supply system-involved youth with the supports they need to be working at grade level (at a minimum) and on target to graduate from high school.

### **Actions to help achieve this outcome:**

1. Ensure youths' **timely enrollment** in schools.
  - a. Work with partners to update, disseminate and track the effectiveness of **informational tools** that help school staff understand and implement enrollment-related **legislation**.
  - b. Collaborate with partners to **convene caregiver summits** to educate, train, and gather input from care providers (including teachers, social workers, caregivers, mental health providers, education-rights holders, and parents) about the educational and emotional needs of foster and probation youth focusing on the areas of enrollment, school stability, and school-based support.
  
2. Help to develop **robust school-based support** for youth.
  - a. Work with partners (including The Coalition for Educational Equity for Foster Youth (CEEFY)) to facilitate the creation, implementation, and evaluation of strong **Local Control Accounting Plans** (LCAPs) that maximize educational support for system-involved youth. Collaborate with partners to compare LCAPs to identify best practices.
  - b. Collaborate with partners such as DMH to encourage **trauma-informed care** by supporting the training of teachers and the implementation of new programs/pedagogy in the classroom. Promote trauma-informed care for all providers including social workers, attorneys, health care providers, and resource families.

- c. Support the provision of **educational liaisons** for each child whose responsibilities include: facilitating enrollment; the transfer of grades, credits, and records; the development and implementation of individual, specialized educational, behavioral, and mental health plans; and communication to the youth about services and supports that are available to them.
  - i. Ensure that educational liaisons provide consistent encouragement, support, and monitoring for each student.
- d. Work with schools, courts, DMH, and special education advocates to achieve **early and timely identification of special education, behavioral, and mental health needs** for system-involved youth and the provision of necessary services. Invite regional center involvement.
- e. Work with partners to **increase access to the arts and sports** for system-involved youth.
  - i. Collaborate with those doing research in this area to conduct a review of the impact of access to and participation in the arts and sports on educational outcomes for system-involved youth.
  - ii. Convene key stakeholders, disseminate findings of review, and gather input on how to increase provision of the arts and sports to system-involved youth.
  - iii. Support increased enrollment in arts and sports programs during school and summer periods for system-involved youth and work with partners to evaluate the impact.
- f. Support the creation of and/or encourage participation in existing **tutoring and homework help programs** for system-involved youth including those that facilitate **remedial work** that can meet youth where they are academically and help them achieve grade-level performance more quickly and easily.

3. Work with partners to ensure **school stability** and continuity in instruction.
  - a. Work with partners to ensure **education advocacy is part of case planning** in the courts, the schools, and at home.
    - i. Ensure that **key providers** (such as judges, attorneys, social workers, teachers, caregivers, and education rights holders) are **communicating** with one another about **educational issues** including: school placement; academic performance and support; behavioral and mental health needs; transportation; attendance; and involvement in extra-curricular activities.
  - b. Facilitate efforts to ensure that every youth has an effective **holder of education rights**. Parents and legal guardians should be supported and encouraged to maintain educational rights. Where necessary, an educational rights holder should be assigned as soon as a youth enters the system. The identity of the holder of education rights should be consistently noted in court orders, and the information immediately shared with caseworkers, caregivers, children's attorney, and school staff.
  - c. Work with partners (such as The Roving Advocates from Public Counsel and the Advancement Project, and Parents in Partnership) to **improve parent engagement in the schools**.
  - d. Monitor and work with partners (such as the My Brother's Keeper and Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court task forces, and DMH) on issues including diversion and exclusionary school discipline, to **improve school attendance and inclusion**.
  - e. Work with partners (such as Children's Law Center and Neighborhood Legal Services) to facilitate access to high-quality **mentoring** programs available for system-involved youth who want it.
  - f. Monitor and ensure that children who enter care receive **high-quality education** and **minimize disruptions in school settings**.
  - g. Collaborate to encourage school personnel attendance at Child and Family Team meetings to improve **coordination of care and communication** between providers.
4. Support the development of a Countywide policy regarding active implementation of legislation that supports system-involved youth<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A Citywide policy regarding active implementation of legislation will be supported, not only for school-aged youth, but for system-involved children of all ages.

### **Priority Area 3: Job/College Access for Transition-Aged Youth (TAY)**

**Outcome:** Improve readiness for and access to college and/or jobs for transition-aged youth.

#### **Actions to help achieve this outcome:**

1. Convene County agencies, advocates, and other partners to develop a Countywide plan to improve access to education and employment opportunities for transition-aged youth.
2. Identify new goals to meet the unique needs of this population, starting engagement and service delivery as young as possible.
3. Work with Community and Senior Services (CSS) and other partners, such as those involved in the Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (P3), on County program coordination and service integration in order to more robustly and seamlessly deliver education, workforce, and social services to disconnected youth.
4. Support the Alliance for Children's Rights' "Opportunity Youth Collaborative" and other partners, by helping to bring together public agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational systems and employers to coordinate services, and align strategies to improve access to education and employment opportunities for transition-aged youth in Los Angeles.
5. Work collectively with partners, such as DMH, to improve policies and resolve barriers that impact the ability of transition-aged youth to benefit from education and employment opportunities.
6. Work with partners (including 2&4-year Colleges) to educate transition-aged youth about the possibilities for support in preparing for, getting into, and paying for college.
7. Work with partners to improve access to college counseling.

### **Priority Area 4: Electronic Information Sharing**

**Outcome:** Expand the sharing of education information related to system-involved youth across departments, providers, and youth.

**Actions to help achieve this outcome:**

1. Support the continued development and expansion of a mechanism that can electronically access system-involved youths' education records and share these records with eligible users as legally permissible.
  - a. Facilitate the implementation of this mechanism by all districts and eligible users including social workers, probation officers, legal providers, health care providers, foster parents, and foster youth.
  - b. Collaborate with partners to ensure that the shared data is used to improve outcomes through more informed and timely advocacy, support enrollment and case planning.
2. Ensure the Health and Education Passport (HEP) is electronically populated with required information such that the data is complete and up-to-date.
  - a. Work with the State on developing electronic connections to the new Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).
  - b. Facilitate a connection between LA County's Health Information Exchange (LANES) and DCFS, and Student Information Tracking System (SITS)/ Education Passport System (EPS) and DCFS, so that the HEP in CWS/CMS can be populated with required information.
3. Support data sharing efforts that connect information on availability and utilization of subsidized early care and education resources with information on the child care needs of children involved with DCFS.
4. Monitor the implementation and evaluation of data-sharing efforts among eligible users and modify as needed.

### **Priority Area 5: Research and Evaluation**

**Outcomes:** Assess the progress of the educational achievement level for system-involved youth in Los Angeles County.

**Actions to help achieve this outcome:**

1. Work with partners to develop outcome measures to monitor outcomes in each priority area and assess educational achievement levels of system-involved youth in Los Angeles County.
2. Review progress on these educational achievement measures in 2-3 years and modify the Strategic Plan as needed.