

The At-Risk Children, Family & Communities Caucus

Final Report



January 2017

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History

In 2013, Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf and Representative W. Curtis Thomas worked together to form a bipartisan, bicameral caucus directed at examining and investigating the many issues facing children and families in Pennsylvania such as school truancy and dropout, delinquency, poverty, family separation due to incarceration and other problems.

Their interest in developing the caucus emanated from discussions with Judge Doris A. Smith-Ribner (Ret.) and the work she had done to help address issues like school truancy and dropout.

Through various meetings with state officials, agencies and other organizations, the caucus hoped to identify, confront and recommend solutions to a diverse set of challenges that pose risks to the health, safety and welfare of Pennsylvania's children and families. A goal of the caucus was to improve the outcomes of at-risk children and families.

In December 2014, Sen. Greenleaf and Rep. Thomas published a newsletter which provided information on various programs and best practices presented to the caucus during their initial meetings. *A copy of the newsletter is found in Appendix D. They also agreed to continue the work of the At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus in the 2015-2016 legislative session.

The At-Risk Children, Family & Communities Caucus held a total of 12 meetings from October 2013 through April 2016. *A complete listing of caucus meeting dates/locations is found in Appendix A. The caucus membership included a total of 33 legislators from the Senate and House. *A listing of caucus members is found in Appendix B. In addition, each meeting was summarized by staff. *A detailed summary of each caucus meeting is found in Appendix C.

This report contains a summary of all the caucus meetings as well as any recommendations and considerations offered by the presenters. One suggestion to reform the Public School Code to help address the problem of truancy was accomplished through the passage of [House Bill 1907](#) as Act 138 of 2016. Similar truancy legislation, [Senate Bill 359](#), sponsored by Sen. Greenleaf and Sen. Schwank, was incorporated into HB 1907.

Overview of Caucus Meetings

October 2, 2013 Meeting

The At-Risk Children & Family Caucus held its first meeting on October 2, 2013 to discuss the direction and focus of the caucus. Rep. Thomas talked about the value of utilizing the caucus to target limited resources in a way that strengthens PA families. Sen. Greenleaf remarked that the caucus was “all about the kids.”

The meeting included a brief presentation from the Honorable Doris A. Smith-Ribner regarding truancy and dropout issues. Judge Smith-Ribner shared with the caucus a report she prepared which showed truancy and dropout in Philadelphia by zip code. She remarked that it was critical that we get children into school as early as possible (i.e., full day kindergarten) and the need to address truancy and dropout.

In addition, Department of Public Welfare Secretary Beverly Mackereth attended the meeting. Sec. Mackereth suggested that the caucus create a goal and consider inviting representatives from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission since they have a wealth of information that may be helpful to the caucus.

*A detailed summary of the October 2nd meeting is found in Appendix B.

November 20, 2013 Meeting

Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency \(PCCD\)](#), provided the caucus with an overview of the organization. Ms. Rosenberg talked about the mission (serve as the criminal and juvenile justice planning agency) and goals (i.e., increase safety of our communities) of PCCD.

Ms. Rosenberg also talked about evidence-based prevention and intervention programs which PCCD helps to fund. These programs are aimed at promoting positive youth development and preventing violence, delinquency and other problem behaviors in children and adolescents. She remarked that these programs have been shown repeatedly to save taxpayers money. **The monetary value of saving a high-risk youth from embarking on a life of crime was estimated to be between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million.**

Ms. Kelly Brown, Director of Community Prevention Services, for Family Services in Montgomery County, also shared with the caucus about Norristown Area Communities That Care for Youth.

*A detailed summary of the November 20th meeting is found in Appendix B.

January 15, 2014 Meeting

Linda Rosenberg of PCCD continued her discussion with the caucus about the importance of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs and remarked that for each \$1 spent on prevention, we save \$5.30 in future costs.

Ms. Rosenberg also discussed the [Communities That Care \(CTC\) model](#) and how they promote training and technical support through the EPIS Center at Penn State. CTC allows communities to come together, identify the priorities and problems and determine which of the communities are best ready to engage to make a difference.

In addition, Ms. Rosenberg informed caucus members about the [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) and how the data collected (provides benchmark for alcohol, tobacco, drug use and anti-social and delinquent behaviors) from this voluntary survey of youth in 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grade is helpful in identifying risk factors and needs of a community. It was pointed out that some school districts (e.g., Philadelphia and Pittsburgh) do not use PAYS. Ms. Rosenberg informed caucus members that PCCD does outreach to school administrators to help answer any questions regarding PAYS.

Ms. Rosenberg also noted that funding for CTC and evidence-based prevention and intervention programs has dropped from \$20 million in 2002 to \$3.8 million in 2013.

*A detailed summary of the January 15th meeting is found in Appendix B.

April 2, 2014 Meeting

Sen. Greenleaf mentioned that the caucus invited officials from the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school districts to attend today's meeting regarding the PAYS but they were unable to participate. Ms. Rosenberg with PCCD indicated that she would contact these school officials about future participation in the PAYS. She mentioned speaking with an official from the Philadelphia school district about PAYS.

Given the interest in CTC's, Ms. Rosenberg provided a more detailed explanation of this model to caucus members.

She also shared information that highlighted the benefits of their Violence Prevention Programs. Ms. Rosenberg stressed the need to fund these programs and urged the caucus to support the Governor's FY 2014-15 proposed budget that provides additional monies for these evidenced-based programs.

*A detailed summary of the April 2nd meeting is found in Appendix B.

June 4, 2014 Meeting

Sen. Greenleaf briefly shared about a trip that he, Judge Smith-Ribner and Linda Rosenberg of PCCD took to the Harlem Children's Zone ([HCZ](#)) in Harlem, New York. They met with the founder, Geoffrey Canada, a Harvard graduate who returned to Harlem and then preceded to transform the community.

Karyn Lynch, Chief of Student Support Services for the Philadelphia School District, attended the meeting to discuss the matter of PAYS and how the district views the survey. She mentioned that the district already participates in a federal youth at-risk survey but that they remain open to discussions with Ms. Rosenberg of PCCD about PAYS.

Finally, Jim Anderson and Keith Snyder, Executive Director and Deputy Director of the [Juvenile Court Judges' Commission \(JCJC\)](#) provided a presentation about the juvenile justice system. It was mentioned that the mission statement of the juvenile justice system is: Community Protection, Victim Restoration, and Youth Redemption.

Mr. Anderson mentioned that a law (Act 204 of 2012) sponsored by Sen. Greenleaf requires the juvenile justice system to achieve its mission by employing evidence based practices whenever possible and the courts are mandated to use the least restrictive alternative in every disposition that is consistent with the child's treatment, supervision and rehabilitation needs. Mr. Snyder discussed in detail the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy ([JJSES](#)) that JCJC has been implementing in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Snyder informed caucus members that funding is critical for JCJC to implement evidence based practices. He remarked that every dollar invested now will save \$10 later for kids going through the juvenile justice system. They urged the caucus to support the Governor's FY 2014-2015 budget proposals for the JCJC:

- \$2,765,000 to enable JCJC to maintain its current staff complement and continue its aggressive pursuit of evidence-based policy and practice at every stage of the juvenile justice process; and
- \$21,445,000 for the Juvenile Probation Services appropriation to enhance our capacity to
 - Assess juveniles' risk to re-offend;
 - Identify and target evidence-based interventions for high risk offenders; and
 - Determine the effectiveness of juvenile justice policies, programs and practices

*[A detailed summary of the June 4th meeting is found in Appendix B.](#)

February 4, 2015 Meeting

As a follow-up to Ms. Rosenberg's presentation on CTC, Sen. Greenleaf noted that some caucus members are pursuing this model in their district. Rep. Thomas also welcomed any feedback from members on the caucus newsletter that was published. *A copy of the newsletter is found in Appendix D.

Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director and Deputy Director of the JCJC, provided a presentation to the caucus focusing on four main areas – Statewide Juvenile Crime Trend, Juvenile Justice Recidivism Data, Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol and Truancy.

Mr. Snyder shared data which revealed that the number of juvenile delinquency dispositions of new allegations decreased 36% between 2007 and 2013. He also showed that placements as a percentage of dispositions dropped from nearly 10% to 8% from 2007 to 2013. He attributed the reduction to judges relying on evidence-based practices more and more at the local level in lieu of placement.

Mr. Snyder further shared that the arrest rates for juveniles involving violent crimes has decreased 29% between 2007 and 2013.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that the foundation of their work is the [Youth Level of Service \(YLS\)](#) Risk/Needs Assessment. He said this tool helps to assess kids that are at a high-risk level to recidivate or at a low-risk to recidivate. It further helps to identify their needs or the reasons as to why they are likely to get into trouble and focuses attention on those high-risk kids in order to reduce the recidivism rate.

*A detailed summary of the February 4th meeting is found in Appendix B.

April 22, 2015 Meeting

Keith Snyder and Rick Steele with the JCJC continued their presentation from February regarding Statewide Juvenile Crime Trend, Juvenile Justice Recidivism Data, Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol and Truancy.

Mr. Snyder further discussed in detail statewide juvenile crime data. He highlighted that Total Delinquency Placement Days of Care decreased significantly from 1.7 million to 1.2 million from FY 2008-09 to FY 2012-13.

Mr. Snyder also discussed the recidivism rate for juveniles. The five year (2007—2011) statewide rate went down from 22% to 18%.

Mr. Steele indicated that JCJC’s overall goal in the juvenile justice system is to lower recidivism. By simply identifying risk and using risk assessment instruments like YLS, research shows that they can start reducing recidivism rates.

*A detailed summary of the April 22nd meeting is found in Appendix B.

June 17, 2015 Meeting

Keith Snyder and Rick Steele with the JCJC resumed their presentation from April about their work on “Recidivism”, Service Provider evaluation – Standard Program Evaluation Protocol and Truancy.

Mr. Snyder shared some data regarding kids that come into the juvenile justice system that get rearrested for another crime. It revealed 19% of the kids who are rearrested come from married households, while 27% come from divorced/separated households. It further shows that kids from parents never married are rearrested 47% while kids with one or both parents deceased were rearrested 7%.

He further shared recidivism rate by family status. It showed a recidivism rate of 26% for juvenile offenders with one or both parents deceased, 25% for parents never married, 20% when parents are separated or divorced and 17% when parents are married.

Mr. Snyder said their first choice is to try to keep families together whenever possible. He indicated that there are several evidence-based programs available to try and support families. One such program is called [Functional Family Therapy \(FFT\)](#) and the other is [Multisystemic Therapy \(MST\)](#). Both models have been proven through research to work to lower violence.

*A detailed summary of the June 17th meeting is found in Appendix B.

September 30, 2015 Meeting

Keith Snyder and Rick Steele with the JCJC continued their presentation from June to discuss Juvenile Justice Recidivism Data, Service Provider evaluation – Standard Program Evaluation Protocol and Truancy.

Mr. Snyder provided some updated statistics on juvenile delinquency dispositions and placements as well as data on Serious, Violent, and/or Chronic Offenders as well as Child/Sex Offenders and recidivism.

Mr. Steele proceeded to discuss the [Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol \(SPEP\)](#). He explained that SPEP is a validated process of reviewing any type of intervention for delinquent youth and measures how effective that program might be in reducing recidivism.

Mr. Steele emphasized that JCJC evaluates residential or placement programs as well as community based programs. He also said that research shows it is more effective to keep kids out of residential programs and put them into community-based services.

Finally, Mr. Snyder discussed the issue of truancy. He mentioned that the courts in 2010 established the [Educational Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup](#) designed to take a look at truancy and educational issues. He also noted that the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) was conducting a study on truancy as a result of [House Resolution 1032](#).

Mr. Snyder outlined some of the Public School Code amendments (e.g., adding various definitions; requiring schools to offer a school attendance improvement conference before filing a citation; providing MDJs with a wider range of dispositional options) under consideration by the Workgroup and JSGC for revising the truancy law. It was noted that Sen. Greenleaf and Sen. Schwank jointly introduced legislation ([SB359](#)) which would prohibit jailing of a parent for truancy and require the use of the school improvement plan before a referral to a Magisterial District Judge.

*A detailed summary of the September 30th meeting is found in Appendix B.

October 28, 2016 Meeting

The caucus invited the new Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary, Ted Dallas, to discuss his vision for the department and share what initiatives they are currently undertaking or considering implementing aimed at helping at-risk children and families.

Sec. Dallas remarked that in dealing with dependency and delinquency issues, the best place for a child to be is in the home (family) if possible. He indicated that we need to look at ways to deal with kids in the system and in the long term identify issues early on and get at the root cause of the problem.

Sec. Dallas stated that there is a need to return to the things we know work (i.e., family group decision making, family involvement) as well as adopt new strategies. He said one of the reasons there is an increase in placement is due to the growth in heroin and drug abuse by parents and the opioid crisis statewide.

Deputy Secretary for DHS Office of Children Youth & Family, Cathy Utz, stated that they need to make sure that kids are prepared for the workforce and do better at job training, job skills, and mentoring of youth so that they have the skills necessary to succeed once they leave the system.

She also mentioned improving the success of foster care kids who pursue a post-secondary degree. Finally, she stated that we have a strong youth advisory board which allows them to engage in conversations with kids who have gone through the system.

Dep. Sec. Utz commented that DHS has been working with the [Casey Family Programs](#) (national foundation focused on foster care and child welfare) for many years and they have assisted the department in identifying best practices.

*A detailed summary of the October 28th meeting is found in Appendix B.

November 18, 2015 Meeting

Gregg Volz, Esquire, a representative of [EducationWorks](#) (a non-profit organization providing support for economically disadvantaged communities in Philadelphia and Chester Pennsylvania, and Camden New Jersey), along with two students and a teacher informed the caucus about their [Youth Court Program](#).

Mr. Winterstein, a Youth Court teacher at Strawberry Mansion High School, indicated that the structure of a youth court is similar to an average courtroom/trial with a jury, a judge, a bailiff, a defense lawyer (called a youth advocate), and the respondent (student in trouble). He also noted that youth court is approved by the school as an elective class and students can receive credit.

One student remarked that his involvement in youth court helped to humble him and be responsible for his actions as well as learn to control his anger. Another student indicated that youth court provided her with skills to help her deal with her problems.

Mr. Volz stated that it may cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000 to come into a school and start a youth court. He remarked that it is an affordable program and research suggests that the kids going through these courts makes a difference in their lives.

Mr. Volz suggested that caucus members see a youth court hearing. He also recommended legislation to provide for youth courts.

*A detailed summary of the November 18th meeting is found in Appendix B.

April 6, 2016 Meeting

Deputy Secretary for DHS Office of Children Youth & Family, Cathy Utz, returned to share more with the caucus about what the department is doing for at-risk children and families.

She mentioned the passage of 24 bills revising the child protective services law and that the department has been working for the last 16 months with county children and youth agencies on implementation of the new requirements (e.g., expanded definition of child abuse, mandated reporters of child abuse).

Dep. Sec. Utz stated that child abuse reports come from all over the Commonwealth with the majority coming from Philadelphia. She further remarked that all counties have seen a significant increase with some more than others due to the changes in the law. Reports of child abuse increased from 25,000 in 2014 to nearly 40,000 in 2015. In addition, the number of background clearances jumped from nearly 600,000 to 1.5 million, which includes both employees as well as volunteers.

Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that substance abuse is a primary driver of children into the system. As such, DHS has been working with Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Gary Tennis and his staff on tackling the issue of substance abuse. She mentioned that extensive research was done in seven counties through a national resource company which assessed those counties and then developed county specific strategies. The department would like to take that information and share it with all 67 counties so they can see what practices are working.

A number of other topics (e.g., increased workload of county workers, best practices, foster children) of interest to caucus members were raised and discussed.

*A detailed summary of the April 6th meeting is found in Appendix B.

Presenter Recommendations

Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director, PCCD

- **Support Funding for PCCD's Evidence-based Delinquency Prevention Programs.**
 - Ms. Rosenberg urged support for the Governor's proposed budget for FY 2014-15, which provides an additional \$2 million for these programs (from \$3.8 million to \$5.8 million).
 - She noted that state funding for Communities That Care (CTC) and Evidenced-based Prevention Programs funded through the Violence Prevention Grant Programs (VPP) line item appropriation dropped 76% from \$16.2 million in FY 2002-03 to \$3.8 million in FY 2013-14.
 - In addition, federal funds which support Evidence-based Prevention programming has been cut by 89% during same timeframe.
 - She pointed out that \$2 million invested on delinquency prevention programs for 5,000 juveniles produces \$7.97 million in benefits with a reduction in delinquency, drug use, anti-social behavior, and violent tendencies.

NOTE: Several members of the Caucus sent a letter of support to the Majority and Minority Chairs of the Appropriations Committees in the Senate and House for the Governor's proposed funding (\$5.8 million) for Violence Prevention Programs within PCCD for the FY 2014-15 budget.

Policy Items for Consideration:

Delinquency Prevention Strategies

- **Encourage communities to develop and implement delinquency prevention strategies** that adhere to the Public Health Approach.
 - The following key components are essential to all strategies:
 - Community Leadership,
 - Formalized Collaborative Effort;
 - An Understanding of the Risk and Protective Factors in Each Community;
 - Evidenced-Based Programs;
 - Outcomes Measurement and Reassessment; and
 - Resources.
 - A Public Health Approach looks at the community rather than just one faction of the community.

Outreach and Education

- **Provide education and outreach to community leaders** about the key components of delinquency prevention strategies and evidence-based delinquency prevention programs.
- **Provide technical assistance and peer mentoring to communities** implementing these strategies and programs.

NOTE: Several members of the Caucus reached out to communities in their district to educate them about and consider pursuing the Communities That Care model which includes the use of an assessment tool (Pennsylvania Youth Survey) and utilization of evidenced-based programs to help address issues facing a community.

Investments should yield results

- **State officials should ensure that investments in delinquency prevention efforts are used to support proven and effective programs and interventions.**
 - (Washington State Policy Institute, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, EPISCenter at PSU)
- **Community leaders should also ensure that investments in delinquency prevention efforts yield results.**
- **Possibly target communities with high rates of violence, delinquency and/or school failures.**

NOTE: In June 2016, the Senate approved a resolution ([SR 294](#)) directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study examining the use of evidence-based decision making by the Commonwealth. The study shall include a review and analysis of the existing evidence-based program registries (i.e., Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development) currently available, the standards of evidence used by each and an assessment of the strengths and limitations of each. A report will be issued in 18 months.

Keith Snyder, Executive Director, JCJC

- **Support Funding for the operation of JCJC and implementing Evidence-based Practices.**
 - Mr. Snyder urged support for the Governor's FY 2014-15 proposed budget for JCJC's operations (\$2.7 million) and for Juvenile Probation Service (\$21.4 million), a county grant program.
 - Mr. Snyder indicated that funding was critical for JCJC to carry out evidence-based practices and noted that every dollar invested now will save \$10 down the road for kids going through the juvenile justice system.

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- He also noted that the funding for the Juvenile Probation Services appropriation will enhance their capacity to assess juveniles' risk to re-offend, identify and target evidence-based interventions for high risk offenders and determine effectiveness of juvenile justice policies.

NOTE: Several members of the Caucus sent a letter of support to the Majority and Minority Chairs of the Appropriations Committees in the Senate and House for the Governor's proposed funding for JCJC and Juvenile Probation Services (\$2.7 million and \$21.4 million, respectively).

- **Support legislation revising Public School Code to Reform the Truancy Law.**
 - Mr. Snyder indicated that the courts established the [Educational Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup](#) in 2010 designed to look at truancy and educational issues. He also noted that the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) was conducting a study on truancy via [HR 1032](#).
 - He outlined several amendments to School Code (e.g., adding various definitions; requiring schools to offer a school attendance improvement conference before filing a citation) under consideration by the Workgroup and JSGC for revising the truancy law.
 - It was noted that Sen. Greenleaf and Sen. Schwank jointly introduced legislation (SB359) which would prohibit jailing of a parent for truancy and require the use of the school improvement plan before a referral to a Magisterial District Judge.

NOTE: In October 2016, the General Assembly approved legislation ([House Bill 1907](#)) providing for comprehensive reform of the truancy law which was signed into law as Act 138 of 2016. Similar truancy legislation, [SB 359](#), was incorporated into HB 1907.

Gregg Volz, Esquire, a representative of Education Works

- **Urge members to attend a Youth Court hearing.**
 - Mr. Volz argued that viewing a court hearing will help to convince members of the benefits of the program.
- **Support legislation establishing a Youth Court Program law in Pennsylvania.**

NOTE: In September 2016, Sen. Farnese introduced a resolution ([SR 422](#)) directing the Joint State Government Commission to study the use of youth courts in Pennsylvania's education and juvenile justice systems.

Appendix A: Caucus Meeting Dates/Locations

October 2, 2013

State Capitol Building

Hearing Room #2, North Office Building

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Judge Doris A. Smith-Ribner (Ret.) & DPW Secretary Beverly Mackereth

Discussion: Organizational Meeting

November 20, 2013

State Capitol Building

Room 14 East Wing

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenter: Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of PCCD

Discussion: Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD): Part 1 – Agency Overview/Evidence-based Programs

January 15, 2014

State Capitol Building

Room 14 East Wing

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenter: Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of PCCD

Discussion: PCCD: Part 2 – Communities That Care (CTC) model/Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS).

April 2, 2014

State Capitol Building

Senate Rules Room

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenter: Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of PCCD

Discussion: PCCD: Part 3 – CTC and PAYS.

June 4, 2014

State Capitol Building

Room 14 East Wing

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Jim Anderson and Keith Snyder, Executive Director and Deputy Director of JCJC & Karyn Lynch, Chief of Student Support Services for Philadelphia School District

Discussion: Juvenile Courts Judges' Commission (JCJC): Part 1- Agency

Overview/Harlem Children's Zone/Philadelphia School District & PAYS.

February 4, 2015

State Capitol Building
Room 14 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director & Deputy Director of JCJC
Discussion: JCJC: Part 2- Statewide Juvenile Crime Trend/Youth Level of Service
Risk/Needs Assessment

April 2, 2015

State Capitol Building
Room 14 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director & Deputy Director of JCJC
Discussion: JCJC: Part 3- Statewide Juvenile Crime Trend/ Juvenile Justice Recidivism
Data

June 17, 2015

State Capitol Building
Room 14 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director & Deputy Director of JCJC
Discussion: JCJC: Part 4- Statewide Juvenile Crime Trend/ Juvenile Justice Recidivism
Data

September 30, 2015

State Capitol Building
Room 14 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director & Deputy Director of JCJC
Discussion: JCJC: Part 5: Juvenile Justice Recidivism Data/Standard Program Evaluation
Protocol and Truancy

October 28, 2015

State Capitol Building
Room 14 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Department of Human Services Secretary Ted Dallas/Deputy Sec. Cathy Utz
Discussion: DHS: Discussion of Department efforts in the area of At-Risk Children and
Families

November 18, 2015

State Capitol Building

Room 14 East Wing

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenters: Gregg Volz, Esq., Director of the Youth Court Support Center; Mike Winterstein, Youth Court teacher at Strawberry Mansion High School and two students

Discussion: Youth Court Program

April 6, 2016

State Capitol Building

Room 14 East Wing

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Presenter: Deputy Secretary for DHS Office of Children Youth & Family, Cathy Utz

Discussion: Various Issues including Best Practices utilized by the Department

Appendix B: List of Caucus Members

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Jamie Barton (for Rep. Lowery Brown)	jbarton@pahouse.net	717-783-3822
Anne Griffin (for Sen. Costa)	agriffin@pasenate.com	717-787-7683
Shannon Sargent (for Sen. Costa)	ssargent@pasenate.com	717-787-2410
Joni Mitchell (for Rep. Kampf)	jmitchel@pahousgop.com	717-260-6166
Harry Lewis (for Rep. Lewis)	hlewis@pahousegop.com	717-787-1806
Barbara Mowery (for Rep. Readshaw)	bmowery@pahouse.net	717-783-0411
Tajuanna Franklin (for Rep. Kim)	tfrankli@pahouse.net	717-783-9342
Jenna Harris (for Rep. Toohil)	jharris@pahousegop.com	717-260-6136

Appendix C: Detailed Summary of Each Caucus

At-Risk Children and Family Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, October 2, 2013
Hearing Room #2, North Office Building
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf and Representative Thomas opened the meeting thanking the members for their interest and participation in the caucus. Both gentlemen indicated that their interest in developing the caucus emanated from discussions they had with Judge Doris A. Smith-Ribner and the work she has done to help address issues like truancy and dropout. Rep. Thomas spoke of the value of utilizing the caucus to target limited resources in a way that strengthens Pennsylvania families. Sen. Greenleaf noted that the caucus was “all about the kids.” Representative Watson indicated that Representative Clymer is very interested in the caucus but a scheduling conflict prevented him from attending. She also suggested inviting Reps. Marsico and Caltagirone to be part of the caucus, because of the overlap of identified policy issues typically considered by the Judiciary Committee.

Judge Smith-Ribner commented on the importance of getting kids into school as early as possible (i.e., full day kindergarten) and the need to deal with truancy and dropout. She shared with the caucus a document she prepared that provides geographic mapping of data collection by zip code regarding truancy and dropout in Philadelphia. She worked with the Department of Corrections and PA State Data Center to help develop the report. The report reveals “hot spots” of truancy and dropout rates. With this information Judge Smith-Ribner wanted to inform and present policymakers with her research so that trouble areas can be identified and needed resources could be targeted to address the issues using evidenced-based programs. Judge Smith-Ribner indicated that she would share her “final” report with members of the caucus through Representative Thomas.

Beverly Mackereth, Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare, briefly commented on the issue in Philadelphia and acknowledged the concerns raised by Representative Youngblood and others regarding the Philadelphia School District. Secretary Mackereth remarked that to help bring about change everyone needs to work together.

Secretary Mackereth shared about her efforts in York County and how she was able to save \$10 million in 18 months and turned things around in the county. She remarked that it is not just an education or child welfare issue and that you need a community-based approach. She commented that the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) has a wealth of evidence-based programs as a model. She stressed the value of targeting resources based on community need and lent support to Judge Smith-Ribner’s approach of using zip codes.

Secretary Mackereth also commented about a survey called the Pennsylvania Youth Survey or PAYS conducted by PCCD (every two years) that would give a base line in your community and help prioritize where and how to spend resources. She commented that some school districts (i.e., Philadelphia) are not participating in this survey (even though the 2013 survey is being offered at no cost to districts) of students in grades 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th to learn about their behavior, attitudes and knowledge concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and violence. This provides a good profile of issues in an area so that community leaders can target prevention resources to areas that have the greatest impact. See link about PAYS:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/justice_research/5259/pennsylvania_youth_survey_for_2013/1340339

Representative Mark Rozzi commented that it is not just a Philadelphia issue and that his district is also facing the same issues. Representative Youngblood and other members of the caucus agreed that all counties have similar concerns facing children and families. We have to look at each of our communities and work as a community to address these issues.

The Secretary also suggested that the caucus establish a goal and consider best practices from across the Commonwealth. Rep. Thomas, with Sen. Greenleaf’s input, suggested the goal of the caucus would be to: “Improve the outcomes of at-risk children and families.”

Rep. Watson noted that it was important to add a public component to the discussion. The Secretary added that it was important that the work that is done through the caucus, including policy changes, be sustainable, so future policymakers do not find themselves back to square one on the issue.

Additional questions were raised about tracking of individuals in foster care and their outcomes and if there was some thought to looking at how the children of incarcerated women are being cared for.

Secretary Mackereth commented that there are many agencies involved in children and family issues (PCCD, Departments of Health, Welfare and Education) and that there is overlap and no coordination of programs and it might be beneficial to inventory what they are doing. She recommended that the caucus invite representatives from PCCD and Jim Anderson, Executive Director of Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, since they have a wealth of information that may be helpful to the caucus. The secretary said she would be interested and willing to attend that meeting.

Attendance for 10/2/13 meeting of At-Risk Children and Family Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf
Rep. W. Curtis Thomas
Rep. Steve McCarter
Rep. Kathy Watson
Rep. Rosita Youngblood
Rep. Dan Miller
Rep. Mark Rozzi
Rep. Mark Cohen
DPW Secretary Beverly Mackereth
Judge Smith-Ribner
Eric Pauley (for Sen Greenleaf)
Robb Miller (for Rep. Thomas)
Beth Horne-Beachy (for Rep. Thomas)
Chad Schlanger (for Rep. Rozzi)
Angela Fitterer (for Rep. Sturla)
Mark J. Rosenstein (DPW Legis Affairs)
Tim Scott (for Rep. Waters)
Gretchen Dlugolecki (for Rep. Mundy)
Liana Walters (for Sen. Williams)

At-Risk Children and Family Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2013
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf opened the meeting thanking the members for their interest and participation in the caucus, which is a bicameral, bipartisan effort for the children. He remarked that Senator Kitchen has joined the caucus. Representative Watson also remarked that we are here for the children and we need to put them first and the caucus could speak as one voice. Representative Thomas indicated that he is excited about the caucus and envisioned that it would develop recommendations which in turn could be shared with the legislative standing committees. He said we're here to investigate how we can improve the circumstances of children. Representative Thomas indicated that he asked Representative Gainey to join the caucus to help provide leadership.

Representative Gainey commented that he believes we can put together a comprehensive plan or roadmap to help impact the lives of children. Representative Waters commented on the caucus and being excited about both chambers working together and that children need to know that we care for them. We need to figure out how we can be both fiscally sound yet provide the services that our young people need and deserve. Representative Rossi also remarked that children are our most important resource and stated "if not us, who, if not now, when." He commented that Reading ranks 2nd in poorest cities in the nation and that we need to step up and turn things around. Representative Youngblood also indicated that she is pleased to be a part of the caucus and is hopeful that we can get things done for the commonwealth.

Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency \(PCCD\)](#), proceeded to share with the caucus via a power point presentation about the organization, delinquency prevention, and evidence-based programs. She was accompanied by Derin Myers, Director of Administration and Finance (PCCD), John Frain, Director of Juvenile Justice Delinquency prevention (PCCD), and Kelly Brown, Family Services in Montgomery County. Ms. Rosenberg talked about the Mission (serve as the criminal and juvenile justice planning agency) and Goals (i.e., increase safety of our communities) of PCCD. They work to implement system-wide programs. She shared that investment in evidence based risk-focused delinquency prevention efforts help to reduce recidivism and prevent crime. She shared how only \$2.7 million for delinquency prevention programs for 5,300 juveniles results in \$11.1 million in benefits with a reduction in delinquency, drug use, anti-social behavior and violent tendency.

Ms. Rosenberg also discussed what evidence-based practice means and shared about risk and protective factors and how they can impact learning. Thirty years of data collection has shown that evidence-based programs work. If we were to monetize the cost of a life of crime, society pays \$1.3 – 1.5 million, versus the value of saving a child from a life of crime, which produces a value of \$1.7 – 2.3 million. As the number of risk factors increase in a child's life, the greater the probability that students will not meet achievement test standards. Representative Waters raised the concern with kids playing violent video games today and bullying and how do we address those issues. Ms. Rosenberg mentioned the [Communities That Care \(CTC\) model](#) – a risk-focused approach to reducing adolescent problem behaviors through community mobilization and planning. Representative Thomas raised the issue of a CDC study and screening of the brain and rewards. Representative Miller also commented on the issue of earning rewards if doing something positive.

Ms. Rosenberg also spoke about [Blueprint Programs](#) – those identified as having strong evidence as to their effect and can be replicated in other communities. One such program she highlighted was The Incredible Years Parent Program. A short video clip about the program was shown. She also pointed out that the [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) is an important component to assessing the issues in a community.

A caucus member asked if there were any mentoring programs which helped to teach kids a skill or trade. Ms. Rosenberg mentioned Big Brothers/Big Sisters. It was stated that there is an Apprenticeship Program in Philadelphia and the trades are still running them but you need to get in touch with them. Representative Youngblood indicated the issue is that the kids can't complete the courses (not prepared to pass math and science exams) because the schools are not teaching them (need to know metrics). Derin Meyers with PCCD commented that Lehigh County has an excellent Apprenticeship program. There was also a comment about Glen Mills having a good trade program and providing follow-up after the program but it is only available to those who are court-ordered (underutilized).

There was discussion about parent education programs and how do we get people to come into these programs who truly need it. Representative Miller commented that it is a multigenerational issue. Kelly Brown indicated that you need incentives (i.e., child care), build trust, and intensive recruitment. Ms. Brown clarified that CTC is not a program but a community effort to look at and understand the local youth risk factors and involves a 6 month planning process and use of the PAYS. Senator Kitchen talked about the role of the medical community as part of the effort.

Representative Thomas asked if PCCD could give the caucus some policy recommendations. Recognizing that PCCD officials were unable to give their entire presentation, Senator Greenleaf indicated that the caucus would invite them back for our next meeting to be scheduled in the New Year.

Attendance for 11/20/13 meeting of At-Risk Children and Family Caucus

Rep. Ed Gainey
Rep. W. Curtis Thomas
Rep. Kathy Watson
Rep. Ronald Waters
Rep. Dan Miller
Chad Schlanger (Rep. Rozzi)
Eric Pauley (Sen Greenleaf)
Beth Horne-Beachy (Rep. Thomas)
Lissa Geiger-Shulman (for Rep. Miller)
John Frain – PCCD
Kelly Brown, Family Services, Montgomery County
Jim Anderson, Executive Director JCJC

Rep. Mark Rozzi
Sen. Shirley Kitchen
Sen. Stewart Greenleaf
Rep. Rosita Youngblood
Tim Scott (for Rep. Waters)
Angela Fitterer (Rep. Sturla)
Robb Miller (Rep. Thomas)
Stephanie Hardman-Dick (Rep. Gainey)
Ashley Jere' Roach (Rep. Youngblood)
Derin Myers – PCCD
Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director PCCD
Keith Snyder, Deputy Director JCJC

At-Risk Children and Family Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, January 15, 2014
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf opened the meeting and reminded the members that during our November meeting we had been unable to complete the presentation offered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). He then commenced by introducing Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of PCCD, who then took a moment to introduce some members of her staff, including John Frain, Derin Myers and Safe Schools Advocate Kelley Hodge. She brought to everyone's attention a recently issued report from the Joint State Government Commission entitled, "[*Violence Prevention in Pennsylvania: Report of the Advisory Committee on Violence Prevention.*](#)" She believes the report contains some valuable suggestions and encouraged the caucus to read the chapter on Violence Prevention Programs which begins on page 33.

Linda then resumed her presentation by reiterating the importance of why violence and delinquency prevention is so important. What matters most are outcomes in terms of both efficiencies (costs) and program performance (reducing recidivism and crime). She spoke of the value of saving a high-risk youth from a life of crime, estimated to be between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million. For each \$1 spent on prevention, we save \$5.30 in future costs. Thirty years of research shows these programs reduce dependency, delinquency, violence, substance abuse and other risky behaviors. She described what "Evidence-Based" means – applying what we know in terms of research to what we do in our work with youth, their families, and the communities in which we live.

Turning to page 7 of Ms. Rosenberg's PowerPoint presentation, she believes the statistic given here bears emphasis, that the higher the number of risk factors a child has, the less likely that child will do well in school.

After a quick review of PCCD's prevention initiatives, a discussion ensued about the [Communities That Care \(CTC\) model](#) and how they promote training and technical support through the EPIS Center at Penn State. Currently, there are 65 CTC's functioning statewide but, having sustained an 85% cut in the program's budget since 2001 (combined federal and state contributions) the program's future growth is limited.

Caucus members were dismayed to learn that school districts in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia don't participate in the CTC coalition due in part to a reluctance to administer the [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#). This is a critical component of CTC; baseline information must be gathered from a host of sources before meaningful work can be invested in solving the problems in a given community. Senator Greenleaf opined "If we don't know what the problems are, how can we fix them?"

Before a CTC coalition starts, PCCD uses a variety of sources (federal and state crime reports, PDE Reports for Schools, county data, local level data and PAYS) to fully identify both risk factors and protective factors in a given community. But Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school districts have been unwilling to have PAYS conducted in their schools. Rep. Gainey asked why the Philadelphia School District does not participate. Seemingly the district is fearful of what the data will reveal about the children in the district. In doing so, they forfeit access to federal and state funding that would be invested in violence and delinquency prevention services, like those offered through CTC. It was suggested that the Philadelphia delegation might want to address this issue. Kelley Hodge then stated that she was hired, in part, to help in this effort; she described a few of her efforts since assuming her post, saying that she has attended numerous meetings in an effort to try to engage the school districts, at this point to no avail.

The survey takes about 45 minutes to administer and PCCD provide proctors to guide students if they have any questions. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia school districts do conduct the [Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#) but it's much smaller and given only to a random sample of students in grades 9 through 12. While Temple University helps facilitate the YRBS, they support implementation of the PAYS in the Philadelphia School District. PAYS, which is voluntary, starts its assessment earlier, measuring students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. And because students in both 6 and 12th grade take the survey, the reading level is kept low. It provides benchmark data for alcohol, tobacco, drug use and anti-social/delinquent behaviors. Rep. O'Neill asked about the number of schools that are participating in the PAYS. In the current administration of the PAYS, 70% of school districts (347), including some cyber and charter schools, agreed to participate. After the survey is conducted, CTC programs can commence and funding begins to flow. The PAYS and YRBS can both be used to strengthen a request for funding but neither automatically create eligibility for federal or state funding. The inclusion of PAYS data in an application to PCCD for state funds is very useful and at this point it would be difficult for someone to be funded who did not include PAYS data since the applications that have this are typically of much higher quality.

PCCD typically funds start-up costs to allow the coalition to begin work and they'll help fund the program as well, but other funding becomes available as well. DPW, for example, provides technical support.

Funding once reached a high of \$20 million, but PCCD now operates with a budget of \$3.8 million which prompted Senator Greenleaf to state that if all four caucuses were in agreement about increasing this line item, it could happen.

Questions were then raised by various members about how DOC can become more involved and how we might do a better job of surveying youth already in the juvenile justice system. But PCCD's main focus is prevention; other programs focus on kids currently in the system.

Members asked PCCD for assistance in identifying the appropriate line items.

Rep. Watson described the Glen Mills program and how impressed she was with it after a recent visit. She described a follow-up program they have for kids who graduate from the program. St. Gabriel was also mentioned as an impressive program.

Outreach efforts are made by PCCD to school administrators to help them answer questions about PAYS. Judge Smith-Ribner indicated a willingness to engage a coalition to promote PAYS in the school district in Philadelphia. Information about PAYS is sent to all school districts statewide. Many however have internal review boards that don't allow the study to be administered and this seems to be a major impediment to further expansion of the program. Many are afraid of the exposure it will have for their districts. It was pointed out that while schools are the venues used to collect the data from the PAYS, the PAYS is actually meant to be a community survey, not a school scan.

Rep. Miller inquired about a sample of the PAYS survey and several members asked about a list that showed which school districts participated in PAYS and which ones did not.

The topic of mandating PAYS and tying compliance to funding was broached. Several members indicated a willingness to draft legislative proposals providing for such. Senator Folmer was mentioned as a member who should be made aware of the problem.

It was reiterated that we must ensure that state funds are spent on evidence-based programs with proven outcomes/results.

About ten years ago, Philadelphia was under-reporting the results of survey work it had been doing, leading to a great disparity with Pittsburgh's results. This breach of trust led to the creation of the office of Safe Schools Advocate.

A question was raised about the Intermediate Units and their involvement and it was reported that they do participate in PAYS.

Senator Greenleaf closed the meeting by announcing that we'd endeavor to meet again in March or April and he asked Ms. Rosenberg if she would agree to continue her presentation at that time; she enthusiastically agreed.

Attendance for 1/15/14 meeting of At-Risk Children and Family Caucus

Rep. Ed Gainey
Rep. Mark Rozzi
Rep. Kathy Watson
Sen. Stewart Greenleaf
Rep. Ronald Waters
Rep. Rosita Youngblood
Rep. Dan Miller
Rep. Thomas Murt
Rep. Bernie O'Neill
Rep. Tarah Toohil
Angela Fitterer (for Rep. Sturla)
Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)
Robb Miller (for Rep. Thomas)
Beth Horne-Beachy (for Rep. Thomas)
Lissa Geiger-Shulman (for Rep. Miller)
Ashley Jere' Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)
David McGlaughlin (for Rep. Caltagirone)
Greg Grasa (for Rep. Watson)
Michelle Smith (for Sen. Kitchen)
Christine Zubeck (for Sen. Hutchinson)
Liana Walters (for Sen. Williams)
John Frain – PCCD
Derin Myers – PCCD
Kelley Hodge, Safe Schools Advocate
Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director PCCD
Jim Anderson, Executive Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission
Keith Snyder, Deputy Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission
Judge Smith-Ribner

At-Risk Children and Family Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, April 2, 2014
Senate Rules Room
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf opened the meeting by stating the caucus reached out to the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school districts inviting them to participate in today's meeting but they were unable to attend at this time. He mentioned that maybe Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director of the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency \(PCCD\)](#), could reach out to them about the [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) and their future participation. He mentioned that two of his ten school districts did not participate in the survey and that he was planning to send a message and encourage them to reach out to Ms. Rosenberg.

Representative Thomas added that he spoke to Dr. Hite (Philadelphia School Superintendent) and Maria Ambrose, Commissioner of the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS), and asked her to also reach out to the Secretary (DPW) and to Ms. Rosenberg about the PAYS survey. Sen. Greenleaf commented about the importance of educating people about the need for the survey.

Ms. Rosenberg indicated that she spoke to Karen Lynch (Dr. Hite's Chief of Staff) about the importance of the PAYS survey and noted that PCCD staff also met with her to discuss the survey. Ms. Lynch still has additional concerns but PCCD will follow-up with her. They are trying to educate her about the importance of the PAYS and how the survey will help the entire community rather than a random sample like the survey they are using now.

Representative Thomas also mentioned that we have 19 public housing developments in PA and when you look at some of these issues facing children and families in public housing developments, we also see many of those issues in schools. We should consider looking at those 19 public housing developments and getting them to undertake this study also. Ms. Rosenberg said she would touch base with the Penn State Data Center as she believed they had some details about what's been happening in some of those developments.

Ms. Rosenberg began her presentation and commented that based on our last meeting, she brought an overview of the [Communities That Care \(CTC\) Model](#). In addition, she passed out a one page sheet that highlights the benefits of their Violence Prevention Programs which receive funding in the budget. It reinforces that delinquency prevention programs work and 30 years of research support that fact - proven to prevent youth violence, substance abuse and delinquency (see Slide 5 and 6 of power point).

With regard to PCCD's strategy of evidence-based delinquency prevention programs, she stated there are four key components. First is Leadership and Community Involvement (see Slide 12 of power point). She commented on the importance of the community taking an active interest and showing leadership in helping to understand the needs of its community as well as oversee the implementation of the programs. Second, the foundation of these programs is using data like the PAYS and other sources of data (i.e., federal or state crime reports, county data) to understand what the problems are in a community and inform decision-making. Third, she stressed the need for funding to support these programs. Finally, there is technical assistance and training. She stated that PCCD has a good partnership with DPW. Through a memorandum of understanding, DPW provides funding to PCCD who contracts with the [Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support \(EPIS\) Center](#) at Pennsylvania State University's Prevention Research Center. The Center helps provide training and technical assistance to communities as well as helps them in their implementation of the programs.

Ms. Rosenberg said PCCD's role is to help provide technical support and training as well as the resources to help implement these types of program.

Ms. Rosenberg indicated that the CTC model is used by PCCD in Pennsylvania (see Slide 14). To get communities involved in setting up a CTC, PCCD can bring in a national expert (Dr. Hawkins) who created the CTC model and explain how it can assist the needs of the communities. Referring to a slide 16 of the power point presentation, she stated that for every \$1.00 spent in the CTC program there is more than a \$5.00 return. Rep. Brown asked where the CTC model is being implemented. PCCD officials mentioned the CTC in Erie and Norristown as examples. It was also pointed out that a map (see Slide 17) showed where all the CTC's are located. Ms. Rosenberg said she will provide a list of all the communities that are currently implementing CTC.

A follow up question was asked if Philadelphia is a CTC site and it was explained that they are not because in the past the entire city tried to embrace the CTC model rather than focusing on the specific needs of a community within the city and it failed. The benefit of the PAYS is you can understand what the needs are of a particular community and bring in community leaders, teachers, behavioral health and law enforcement. It was stated, however, that communities within the city could become a CTC.

Another question was raised as to how you get a CTC started. Ms. Rosenberg said the best way is to hold a town hall meeting where you bring in some key people and PCCD can help guide them through the process. The EPIS Center could provide some help and maybe initially bring in a community that has already successfully implemented CTC. Also, they could bring in other national leaders and start out that way. It's getting everybody to the table telling them this is a real option and we are here to support you.

Ms. Rosenberg next talked about the need for data (see Slide 19 and 20) like PAYS and other information (i.e., crime data from State Police, data from the Department of Education, and county). The EPIS Center can help groups capture this data and have a better understanding of the community. This is one of the core functions of the CTC model.

She proceeded to talk about [Blue Print Programs](#) – programs that are proven through research to be effective in addressing risk factors (see Slides 22-25). Research has been conducted over and over again and proves the effectiveness of these programs. Through the EPIS Center they offer a menu of programs, where each one of these programs address a particular age group as well as a particular risk factor so once you determine what the needs are they can help you find a program that they know is effective in addressing those needs. It was mentioned that Big Brothers/Big Sisters is an example of an effective Blue Prints Program.

Senator Greenleaf asked if these programs are open to every community in PA and do they have the resources to help start them. Ms. Rosenberg stated that the programs are available to whoever wants to implement the programs but said their resources are limited. The Commission receives funding in the budget to implement these types of evidence based programs. She said PCCD would appreciate support for the Governor's proposed budget that provides additional dollars for these programs. The monies go to communities, via a competitive process, to implement these programs. If PCCD doesn't have the resources, there might be other sources (Education Department, DPW, and Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs). She further stated that PCCD is working on their partnership with the other state agencies to ensure that they are only funding programs that they know work (i.e., Blue Print Programs).

Senator Kitchen asked if a startup program would be eligible for these dollars. Ms. Rosenberg said yes. All they ask from the community is that they use the PAYS or some other data sources previously mentioned. In addition, show that you have a necessity in your community and understand what the risk factors are and what the needs are in the community. If you are able to articulate that, then PCCD would award funding.

Senator Greenleaf asked who you invite to start up a CTC. Kim Nelson with PCCD shared the example of the City of Erie. Several years ago public leaders (i.e., district attorney, non-profit groups) gathered many people to work with the Erie School District. They sat down and went through the model. Ms. Nelson clarified that CTC is not a program but a process. Teaching communities to sit down with leadership groups to learn the model, move forward, collect the data and have discussions around what your communities' needs are, what kinds of services you have in that community and what you need to serve the kids. She said the community guides the process. Like the example of Philadelphia – maybe start with one school building – that would be a lot of kids to impact. Take one population at a time to get the process down and see the outcomes to move forward. The EPIS Center (see Slide 27) can provide assistance and they have two staff designated and mandated to work with any community and give lessons about CTC. How you start a CTC is you decide you want to do it, get the leadership within that community, call the EPIS Center or call Kim Nelson at the PCCD and they will start that process.

Ms. Nelson said “leaders” of a community could be different people from community to community. In some cases it is appropriate for the mayor to be there, police chiefs, superintendents, school board members and business owners, whoever has a hand in the health of that community should be around the table. She said that when you call PCCD to help at the first meeting they will see who's around the table and can then make recommendations of who else should be included to make it more successful. It depends on what the discussion is in that community. That's why it's hard to explain CTC because it's different in every community.

Rep. Youngblood asked if the CTC's have been incorporated into the Community Umbrella Agencies (CUA) in Philadelphia. Ms. Rosenberg said she would touch base with DPW. Kelly Hodge, Office of Safe School Advocate with PCCD, mentioned that there is a safety and engagement committee that the Philadelphia School District set up about a year and a half ago, now headed by Karen Lynch. The committee has a lot of the partners around the table being suggested so there is an entity that already exists that may incorporate, at least for the Philly region, a lot of people who you would consider inviting to start up a CTC. However, it would have to be more regionalized since the safety and engagement committee represents the entire city. Kim Nelson commented that it might be easier to select a particular school building. You have teachers and administrators that know the dynamics of that community and it's a safe place to meet with kids.

Rep. Gainey asked for clarification that communities have to utilize only the programs offered by the commission. PCCD officials said yes. They are proven programs. If one program is not available there is another one that might help. The benefit of having leadership come to the table and educate themselves on the data is that they can make the best possible decisions. Ms. Nelson clarified that the programs are tailored to the community by taking the data from that community and having leadership evaluate this information (risk factors of community and needs). The EPIS Center could provide technical assistance in trying to figure out what decisions do you make. She said they have a wide range of programs.

Rep. Thomas remarked that CUA's are different from CTC's. CUA's are community based delivery of services to children and families aimed more at intervention than prevention although a second phase is trying to incorporate prevention and safety. He commented that the CUA's in his area started with a stakeholders group by identifying particular needs and then DHS contracted with a community based organization that had some history of services to children. So maybe at some point we can take look at how you take CTC model and incorporate that into these organizations. Ms. Nelson stated that they are incorporated once you have your first cycle or training with CTC and the third step is to list all those things in your community that serve children. This allows you to see where your gaps of services are and the risks factors for your kids. It's not ruling out anybody else currently serving that community so it's just gathering it together so you can really see the big picture. It's getting everyone around the table and talking about what is needed to assess the risk, and move forward with positive outcomes.

Rep. Brown asked how CTC is different than Weed and Seed (i.e., community policing, safe haven). Ms. Rosenberg said PCCD didn't fund implementation of these specialized programs. She said CTC is focused on delinquency prevention but said both programs have a lot of the same people around the table. Jim Anderson, Executive Director for the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC), commented that CTC was first brought to PA in 1994 and has a long history with some very successful communities. He remarked that Weed and Seed was mostly weeding and not enough seeding. CTC allows communities to come together, identify the priorities and problems, and determine which of the communities are best ready to engage to make a difference. If the right interventions are implemented you're going to impact everything from truancy to drug and alcohol abuse to school success to delinquency prevention. He said communities identify their problems and identify solutions to those problems. It's not Harrisburg or Washington DC telling them what to do. The leaders come together and say here are our problems, here are our priorities and we own the problem and we own the solution. He said in Philadelphia there are a lot of places to start but community readiness is a big part of it and you could use some of the community groups that exist but you might need to change what they are offering to assist children and families.

Rep. Davidson asked for a list of the 26 CTC organizations in the 23 counties that are mentioned on slides 32 and 33 of the power point presentation. Ms. Rosenberg said that as a result of working with DPW and JCJC, they closed a Youth Development Center which they estimated would save \$79 million over 5 years. With that closure, PCCD received \$2 million to invest in delinquency and prevention programs. With that money PCCD was able to support 26 organizations in 23 counties and serve over 5000 people. Ms. Rosenberg said she would provide a list of sub grantees (and how much they received) and a list of the communities implementing CTC.

Rep. Waters asked whether innovative programs, which may not necessarily have research behind them, could get funding. Ms. Rosenberg said PCCD has selected a list of programs they know are effective and built an infrastructure that is able to support communities as they implement those programs. If the program is followed, they are confident it will realize the outcomes projected. She did point out that there is a different pot of money – federal dollars - they have available to fund more innovative programs or start up programs. They do occasionally do start up programs but what PCCD is talking about is a model they follow and a menu of programs.

Kelly Hodge mentioned that there are 10 or 13 schools that are currently being trained for Life Skills in Philadelphia as part of a pilot program this year. She said this is a good example of what's being funded through PCCD. She also mentioned two schools that have enacted social and emotional learning in their buildings by purchasing the tool kits, receiving training and implementing them.

Rep. Thomas commented that in Baltimore, a Senator from an area convened a hearing where you take the evidence-based information and a stakeholders group is organized. He mentioned Judge Smith-Ribner's work in Philadelphia County – we know from the data that there are certain zip codes where certain things stick out.

Senator Greenleaf commented that the CTC model might have an impact on his communities and asked if there are any CTC's in Montgomery County. PCCD officials said there are at least 2 in Montgomery County and several in Bucks County. He expressed interest in starting a CTC in his district to deal with the heroin issue.

Rep. Thomas asked for a list of the CTC's and an inventory of successful evidence based programs in those CTC sites. Rep. Waters asked if PCCD found any common themes in the CTC organizations in place. Ms. Rosenberg said yes and mentioned drugs and alcohol.

Ms. Rosenberg again asked for support for funding their violence prevention programs which is contained in the budget. She commented that funding for these programs was reduced significantly over the years (see Slide 31). Senator Greenleaf asked that she put something in writing which outlines everything and he would share it with the members of the caucus.

Senator Greenleaf closed the meeting indicating that the caucus would look to have officials from the JCJC at the next meeting.

Attendance for 4/2/14 meeting of At-Risk Children and Family Caucus

Rep. Ed Gainey
Sen. Shirley Kitchen
Rep. Ronald Waters
Rep. Dan Miller
Rep. Margo L. Davidson

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf
Rep. W. Curtis Thomas
Rep. Rosita Youngblood
Rep. Tarah Toohil
Rep. Vanessa Lowery Brown

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)
Lou Takacs (for Rep. Miller)
Diane Boyer (for Rep. Youngblood)
Christine Zubeck (for Sen. Hutchinson)
Hank Beaver (for Rep. Waters)
Kim Nelson – PCCD
Kelley Hodge, Safe Schools Advocate
Stephanie Bradley – PSU EPIS Center
Keith Snyder, Deputy Director JCJC

Robb Miller (for Rep. Thomas)
Ashley Jere' Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)
Michelle Smith (for Sen. Kitchen)
Liana Walters (for Sen. Williams)
John Frain – PCCD
Linda Rosenberg, Executive Director PCCD
Geoff Kolchlin - PCCD
Jim Anderson, Executive Director JCJC

At-Risk Children, Family & Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, June 4, 2014
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf opened the meeting by sharing about a trip he recently took with Judge Smith-Ribner and Linda Rosenberg of PCCD to the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) in Harlem, New York. He indicated that they met with the founder, Geoffrey Canada, a Harvard graduate who return to Harlem and then preceded to transform the community. Senator Greenleaf said we can learn a lot from his efforts and provided caucus members with a summary of the project and encouraged members to also check out their website: <http://hcz.org/>.

Judge Smith-Ribner remarked that Mr. Canada has done a tremendous job dealing with at-risk youth, at-risk families and at-risk communities. She pointed out that they have all kinds of support for at-risk families, including mental health, alcohol treatment programs, and after school programs, and that the project involves a 100 block area in Harlem. She also mentioned that the President has followed Mr. Canada's lead in determining the Promise Neighborhood Initiative that he's established all around the country, all based on Geoffrey's ideas of how you can turn around at-risk communities.

Representative Youngblood also mentioned viewing a story about Geoffrey Canada and the HCZ on Channel 12 (PBS) which was very interesting. Senator Greenleaf indicated he would check into obtaining a copy of the program. Representative Waters also remarked that when President Obama was running for office he pointed to Geoffrey Canada's programs and said he would like to see more programs like that. As a result of his visit to the HCZ, Sen. Greenleaf suggested the name of the caucus "At-Risk Children and Family" should be revised to add "Communities" since we are really dealing with kids, families and communities. There were no objections.

Karyn Lynch, Chief of Student Support Services for the Philadelphia School District, commented that when she came to Philadelphia with the current superintendent from Maryland, they were successful in working with communities to establish two Promise Neighborhoods and received two grants from the Federal Government. She mentioned that the Philadelphia School District is submitting two applications for a federal Community Schools Program grant and the deadline for submission is soon approaching. Community Schools is very much the same concept that was implemented with the HCZ. To really create a center in their schools, they are going to submit one with the University of Pennsylvania and another in their Strawberry Mansion area. This could bring in health care, after school programs and employment to one or two of their school centers.

Sen. Greenleaf asked what assistance the district may need in the matter and Ms. Lynch said it could very well be a letter of recommendation from representatives as they submit the applications to the federal government. Sen. Greenleaf ask Ms. Lynch to send an e-mail outlining what they asking for and who we send a letter too. Rep. Watson inquired whether it would be more effective to receive a group letter rather than individual letters and Ms. Lynch agreed.

Rep. Thomas commented that he thinks the recommendations are good but there are some things to do before sending any letters of recommendations. He commented that we have all these resources with Strawberry Mansion and several Promise Academies and other initiatives that are good, but there has to be some way to tie all of them together to get the maximum effort out of it. Once we get that all worked out it would be in order to send individual and group letters requesting support. Sen. Greenleaf indicated that he was aware that this is a

local matter regarding Philadelphia and he would defer to local representatives in the area regarding any issues and that whatever issues may exist can be resolved and then a joint or individual letters of support for the applications could be sent.

Sen. Greenleaf then proceeded to ask Ms. Lynch to discuss the matter of PAYS and how the district views the survey and what concerns they may have and how the caucus could work with PCCD and DPW to try and alleviate those concerns. Ms. Lynch indicated that for the last 7 years the district has participated in a federal youth at-risk survey called the Youth Risk Behavioral Survey and from this survey they get tons of data, which is the basis of state agencies, foundations and nonprofits seeking funding at the state and federal level and it's the basis of which a good number of foundations give them money. She remarked that the Philadelphia DHS, which is funded by the DPW, puts about \$120 million into services (i.e., social workers, truancy case workers) for the schools. They receive funding from the Federal government for a position that helps with implementing that survey and she emphasized that they have used it to receive lots of assistance and funding.

She commented that given their financial circumstances one of the challenges that they have is that much of the money they are receiving, like from DHS, is not educational money therefore they cannot use it for educational services (purchase teachers). While the federal or state surveys are going to result in monies that can assist at-risk children, they cannot be used for educational dollars and right now their greatest need and emphasis is educational dollars. As such, their energy and resources haven't been able to do two surveys in the district.

Rep. Davidson asked for clarification as to whether the district was willing to pursue the state survey. Ms. Lynch said the district remains open to all possibilities and that they have had some discussions with Linda Rosenberg from PCCD and her staff. She indicated that Ms. Rosenberg has committed to come back to Philadelphia to sit down and further discuss PAYS.

Senator Greenleaf next recognized Jim Anderson and Keith Snyder with the [Juvenile Court Judges' Commission \(JCJC\)](#). Mr. Anderson, who recently retired from the JCJC after 36 years, shared about the juvenile justice system and the great work that's being done and their enhancement strategy. He mentioned some of the material that was handed out including a document called Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy as well as The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report. JCJC has laid a foundation for their commitment to evidence based practices by establishing a three year benchmark on recidivism, which they can use to measure their evidence based practice implementation.

In terms of background, Mr. Anderson stated that the JCJC, established in 1959, is a small agency under the Executive Branch, comprised of 9 judges appointed by the Governor, and nominated by the Chief Justice. He mentioned that JCJC has a legislative mandate which includes advising juvenile courts on all matters relating to the proper care and maintenance of dependent and delinquent children and administering a Grant-in-Aid Program to improve county juvenile probation services (See page 1 of handout). Most recently, their enabling legislation was modified through a bill sponsored by Rep. Toohil, based on a recommendation of the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice, so that JCJC now has a legislative mandate to collect and analyze data to identify trends in the juvenile justice system, make recommendations on evidence based practices to judges, the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts and to others, and to have all of this information on evidence based practices included on their website (Slide 2 of Power Point Presentation (PPP)).

Jim remarked that our juvenile justice system is generally regarded as a national model. Pennsylvania was the first state selected by the MacArthur Foundation to participate in their [Model for Change](#) initiative. It focused on three targeted areas of improvement: coordinating the mental health and juvenile justice systems, improving aftercare services and supports for youth and their families and addressing disproportionate minority contact within the juvenile justice system. JCJC worked with them from 2004 through 2010. He also remarked that our juvenile justice system has a statutory mandate for every kid that comes into the system that was enacted during the special legislative session on crime in 1995. The system is to provide programs of treatment, supervision and rehabilitation that provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed and perhaps most importantly the development of competencies to enable each child to become responsible and productive members of their community (Slide 3 of PPP). He said the mission statement of the juvenile justice system is: Community Protection, Victim Restoration, and Youth Redemption (Slide 4 of PPP). These are concepts that are easily understood and that's what their system works each and every day to achieve.

Mr. Anderson also mentioned [Act 204 of 2012](#) that was sponsored by Sen. Greenleaf which requires the juvenile justice system to achieve its mission by employing evidence based practices whenever possible and the courts are mandated to use the least restrictive alternative in every disposition that is consistent with the child's treatment, supervision and rehabilitation needs. No other state has the statutory mandates and due process protections that Pennsylvania has. Jim referred to several charts on Slide 7, 8 and 9 of power point presentation which he said was good news. The Juvenile Arrest Rates for Violent Crimes is down 26.9 % from 2007 to 2012, the Juvenile Delinquency Dispositions are down 31% from 2007 to 2012, and our Juvenile Delinquency Placements are down almost 31% over that period of time. In 2010 the JCJC adopted a statement of purpose for the juvenile justice system enhancement strategy which is aimed at a balanced and restorative justice mission by utilizing evidence-based practice at every stage of the juvenile justice system.

Keith Snyder, the new Executive Director for JCJC, directed everyone to Slide 11 of the power point presentation which highlights some key partnerships (Casey Foundation, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown) JCJC has in implementing PA's [Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy \(JJSES\)](#). Keith proceeded to discuss the JJSES Framework (one page handout) and what evidence based practices really means. He indicated they have developed a staged approach which represents what is actually going on in our counties right now. Mr. Snyder indicated that they have 4 stages and leaders are assigned to each stage so they are very organized in the juvenile justice system and partner with juvenile probation officers in almost everything they do. He indicated that they talk to district attorneys, public defenders and service providers. In Stage One they get ready to engage in their evidence based practices and reach out to stakeholders and staff and they need to think carefully about what they are trying to do before they do it in order for it to be successful so it's basically a planning stage. JCJC has developed organizational readiness tools, including power points to help understand what is meant by evidence based practices so they can thoroughly train their staff.

Stage Two of the JJSES Framework gets into structured decision making instruments such as a detention assessment instrument or screening tool to help identify behavioral health issues kids may have. Mr. Snyder indicated that the foundation of their work is [YLS \(Youth Level of Service\) Risk/Needs Assessment](#) which helps to assess kids that are at a high risk level to recidivate or at a low risk to recidivate. It also helps to identify their needs or the reasons as to why they are likely to get into trouble and focus attention on those high risk kids in order to reduce the recidivism rate. He said most kids don't get re-arrested but the trick is to try and figure out which kids are more likely to get re-arrested and provide services to them.

The Third Stage is about behavioral change after you've identified kids who are at high risk and what you do with them. Mr. Snyder said they have changed the tone of conversations that probation officers have with kids to focus on the needs they have as identified by the YLS assessment tool. He indicated that they now know through research why kids get in trouble and they can assess them to find out what their needs are. They include family circumstances and parenting, education or employment if you are older, peer relations, substance abuse, what you do in your free time, and involvement in school activities. He indicated that many of the kids they see never saw a football team or played baseball or basketball. Essentially, they do an assessment, identify their risk (high or low) and needs and try to target programs that cater to their specific needs.

The Fourth Stage, refinement, involves ongoing feedback for the purpose of making improvements to policy and performance measures related to evidence based practices. Mr. Snyder indicated that he thinks this is the most comprehensive juvenile justice system strategy in the country and that they have been getting calls from consultants all over about it and they are now using it in other places.

Due to time constraints, Sen. Greenleaf suggested that the last 10 minutes be used for members to ask questions and that maybe Mr. Snyder could come back. Sen. Greenleaf indicated he heard that York County closed down their detention center some years ago by using evidence based practices. Is that true? Mr. Snyder indicated that the numbers (arrest rates, delinquency dispositions and placements) are going down and he thinks it's primarily a function of fewer kids coming into the system and a pursuit of evidence based practices. In terms of why the numbers are going down, Mr. Anderson said to one degree or another, its evidence based practices, fewer kids going into detention, fewer kids being arrested, and fewer kids being rearrested.

Rep Thomas asked how this drop in offenses lines up with the growing number of juveniles that are in the adult system rather than the juvenile system. Those numbers seem to be too high and at the next meeting he asked Mr. Snyder to comment on that. Secondly, as JCJC develops this evidence based model, Rep. Thomas was curious as to whether or not they had a chance to look at Justice Elena Kagan's decision which declared laws in Pennsylvania and other states unconstitutional based on how we are treating young people. He was also wondering if the decision has had any impact in their decisions. Mr. Snyder indicated that they haven't looked at the court decision so at the next meeting he will be able to report back to him on that and they will also take a look at the population in the criminal justice system.

Rep. Thomas said that one of the things that keeps jumping out at him, especially in Pennsylvania, is that we are expanding the number of crimes that provide automatic certification of kids and once that happens you have a different set of circumstances which skews the information on the juvenile side of what's happening to kids. Mr. Anderson pointed out that in 1995 we provided a mechanism in the criminal justice system, where the criteria is set in statute that the judge must consider and decide if the child should stay in the adult criminal system, so many of the kids that start out in the adult system come back to the juvenile system.

Rep. Gainey raised two questions. The first is when there is an older sibling in the system and it looks like the younger is starting out on the same path, is there anything with evidence based practices to deal with that? Also, what types of conversations are happening with DA's because the "get tough on drugs" is not helping the youth who go into the system and come out labeled for life.

Before answering the questions, Senator Greenleaf recognized Representative Dan Miller who had a question. He asked if their mapping on recidivism does not include failure to adjust (FTA's) kids for their facilities. Mr. Snyder said yes. Rep. Miller commented that FTA's are a factor and mentioned you could be 13 with a

misdemeanor charge and never leave the juvenile justice system until 18. He asked what a public facility is. Mr. Snyder said they are called [Youth Development Centers \(YDCs\) and Youth Forestry Camps](#) (secure program). You won't get into a secure program unless you're a high risk kid. The private sector deals with low risk kids. Rep. Miller asked if there are no public facilities that deal with low risk kids anymore? Mr. Snyder indicated that they did a study and evaluated every kid in the YDC and 95% were high risk kids. He commented that their risk assessment instrument will make their decision of placement so if you have a misdemeanor charge that's a low risk kid and shouldn't be placed in a secured location.

Rep. Miller commented that if you FTA from a facility you could FTA your way up the ladder and end up in an YDC with a misdemeanor. Rep. Gainey asked whether a lot of that power rests with the DA. Mr. Anderson said the power ultimately lies with the judge. He commented that we have two youth forest camps operated by DPW and they are for low risk kids (shorter term programs) while the YDCs by and large are the tougher kids. He pointed out that a change occurred in our system in the last year and a half and judges now have to put on the record as to their reasons for every disposition and if it's a placement they have to state on the record why that placement is the least restrictive placement that meets the needs of that child. Rep. Miller said FTA's are something he would like to hear more discussion about and the mental health issue.

Representative Watson indicated the lower youth crime rates really stuck out to her, but if you come from the media market in the Philadelphia area, you would think children are killing children every day. She asked if they have crime rates in terms of regional areas. She understood you can get a 30% decrease statewide but her concern is that we really haven't reached people. Mr. Anderson said that you are going to have different rates and those rates are available thru UCR reports. He further commented that if you look at the recidivism report, 80% of the kids who recidivated within two years were from disruptive family situations and the highest recidivism rates are kids with one or both parents deceased. He concluded that we need to surround these kids and families with everything we can to help them succeed and to help them create a new vision for their lives.

Finally, Mr. Snyder directed everyone to page 10 of the handout which listed JCJC's 2014-2015 budget request. He wanted the caucus members to know that funding is really important for them to implement evidence based practice and that every dollar now will save \$10 down the road for kids going through the juvenile justice system. He noted that they are one of the smallest agencies in the state and even with a staff reduction of 25% from where it was, they have implemented all these reforms without adding any new staff. Senator Greenleaf thanked everyone for coming and indicated that members would have more questions next time the JCJC comes before the caucus.

Attendance for 6/4/14 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf	Rep. W. Curtis Thomas
Rep. Kathy Watson	Rep. Ronald Waters
Rep. Rosita Youngblood	Rep. Dan Miller
Rep. Tarah Toohil	Rep. Margo L. Davidson
Rep. Ed Gainey	Judge Smith-Ribner
Karyn Lynch (Philadelphia School District)	Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)
Robb Miller (for Rep. Thomas)	Ashley Jere' Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)
Michelle Smith (for Sen. Kitchen)	Christine Zubeck (for Sen. Hutchinson)
Vicki Wilken (for Sen. Browne)	Liana Walters (for Sen. Williams)
Hank Beaver (for Rep. Waters)	Greg Grasa (for Rep. Watson)
Keith Snyder, Executive Director JCJC	Jim Anderson & Rick Steele, JCJC

At-Risk Children, Family & Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, February 4, 2015
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Reflecting on what the caucus learned last session, Senator Greenleaf commented on the [Communities That Cares \(CTC\) model](#) and the fact that some members are pursuing a CTC in their district. Sen. Greenleaf complimented Representative Thomas on the great idea of the newsletter which highlights the results of the caucus' previous meetings and commented that there is some interesting and helpful information that comes out of these discussions.

Rep. Thomas remarked that the caucus made some big strides last term and we look to build on this term as we move forward. He introduced Phil Murray as the contact person from his staff for the caucus and stated that Mr. Murray would make sure everyone receives a copy of the newsletter (*see attached). **Rep. Thomas requested members of the caucus to provide any feedback on the newsletter before considering sending out another newsletter in the future.** He told members not to hesitate raising questions or contacting him or Sen. Greenleaf for any information. He and Sen. Greenleaf believe there is work to be done and interested in best practices and new ideas for dealing with some of the challenges that we are facing throughout the Commonwealth.

Senator Greenleaf recognized Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director and Deputy Director of the [Juvenile Court Judges' Commission \(JCJC\)](#). Mr. Snyder said their presentation would cover four main areas – Statewide Juvenile Crime Trend, Juvenile Justice Recidivism Data, Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol and Truancy.

Mr. Snyder directed everyone to page 2 of his power point presentation which shows that the number of juvenile delinquency dispositions of new allegations dropped 36% between 2007 and 2013 (*see attached). He remarked that their numbers are going down which is good news and proceeded to discuss the next slide (page 3) concerning juvenile delinquency placements. He indicated that people ask how many kids they place and the slide shows that the numbers decreased 37% over the same time period. Mr. Snyder noted that in 2013 the Youth Development Center (YDC) in New Castle, the largest state-run secured program, was closed because the numbers were down (only 70 kids out of 200 beds).

Sen. Greenleaf asked why the York County YDC reopened. Mr. Snyder said it was his understanding that they closed the secure part (detention center) of it but opened it up for shelter care which is a non-secure way to hold kids. He commented that the number of kids in YDC's are down and that they are about 70% to 80% capacity across the YDC system. It's what they're witnessing across the system right now. Some of the placement facilities are going away.

Mr. Snyder indicated that the next slide (page 4) talks about placement as part of dispositions. It shows that placements as a percentage of dispositions dropped from nearly 10% to 8% from 2007 to 2013. He said it's a way they can measure what's going on in their court cases across the state. Mr. Snyder said he believes the reason for the reduction is due to judges relying on evidence-based practices more and more at the local level in lieu of placement.

Mr. Snyder said the next slide (page 5) directly pertains to juvenile detention centers (temporary holding centers) like York which Sen. Greenleaf mentioned earlier. The graph shows that juvenile secure detention admissions are going down – decreased 40% between 2007 and 2013. He remarked that since 2006 the number of detention centers dropped from 24 to 15, which represent a 38% reduction. A concern with so many going out of business is that some counties have to travel 2 hours to put a kid in a secured setting. Many of the facilities that remain are east of the Susquehanna with very few in the western part of the state.

Rep Thomas inquired as to what extent the change in law (requiring children who commit certain crimes to automatically go in to the adult system - Direct File process) is the reason for the drop. Mr. Snyder said he did not believe that the direct file change, which occurred in 1996 is connected to the decline. The data in the slide reflects more current information (2007-2013). He believes the reduction is attributed to being smarter about what they are doing and using instruments to help them make decisions.

Mr. Snyder explained that the foundation of what they are trying to do with evidence-based practices is using an instrument to identify the kids that are high risk and allocate their resources towards them. The high-risk kids are the ones you want to focus your attentions on as some need to be placed. He commented that you don't want to mix high-risk offenders and low-risk offenders.

Mr. Snyder proceeded to discuss the slide on page 6 of the power point. He commented that the arrest rates for juveniles involving violent crimes has decreased 29% between 2007 and 2013. The next two slides (pages 7 and 8), which is data collected from the Dept. of Human Services (DHS), pertain to days of care and costs. DHS (formerly DPW) oversees the funding stream that goes to the counties for days of care for delinquency placements. Overall, if you add them up across the state, they decreased about 30% since FY 2008-09. The next slide shows expenditures. Over \$300 million was spent on delinquency placements in 08-09 but that decreased to 261 million in FY 2013-14, which represents a \$60 million reduction, or 20%. He said the placements include kids going into foster homes, group homes, institutions such as Glen Mills, or secure settings.

Sen. Greenleaf asked whether juvenile judges have embraced the change in public policy which requires courts to use the least restrictive alternative in every disposition. Mr. Snyder said he believes that the judges have accepted the change for the most part and that evidence-based practices are making a difference. He shared with members of the caucus an [YLS & Case Plan Bench Card](#) (*see attached). Mr. Snyder indicated that the foundation of their work is the YLS (Youth Level of Service) Risk/Needs Assessment on Page 1 of the Bench Card which helps to assess kids that are at a high-risk level to recidivate or at a low-risk to recidivate. It also helps to identify their needs or the reasons as to why they are likely to get into trouble and focus attention on those high-risk kids in order to reduce the recidivism rate.

Rep. Miller raised a question regarding the delinquency placement slides and asked why children in foster care would be captured in this data. Mr. Snyder indicated that some kids adjudicated delinquent could be placed in foster care by a judge, not just dependent children. Rep. Toohil asked if the numbers include Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) that foster children are placed in like [KidsPeace in Orefield](#). Mr. Snyder said it would be included in the number if it was a juvenile court commitment. It would not count if placed through Children and Youth. Rep. Toohil also asked if they could pull data statewide for RTFs. Mr. Snyder said he would work with her and that he may need to obtain this information from the [Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services \(OMHSAS\)](#) within DHS.

For the information of the caucus, Rep. Toohil said she recently discovered in Luzerne County that 129 kids are in foster care and cannot find a home. She mentioned one child (with autism) waiting for 7 months and that this may be something separately the caucus can look at. Rep Thomas said that raises the question of what happens with delinquent kids who are dual diagnosed. Which facility takes precedence over the other? Do you go to the mental health (MH) system for payment but go to the juvenile facility for placement.

Mr. Snyder commented that to access MH services right now across the state you have to go through the county MCO (managed care organization) and actually get a medical necessity determination in order to place these kids in a MH program. He remarked that this is sometimes problematic for them. Judges use to be able to just admit kids to MH programs but now because of funding they have to go through the hoops at the local level of getting these medical determinations in order to place the kids in such programs. He said judges are frustrated sometimes because they would just like to have the kids go but they have to work with the local level so the counties get reimbursed for those services. He commented that it's complicated at the local level and with the MCO process it's even more difficult.

Rep. Thomas said he welcomes any recommendations from Mr. Snyder to address some of these issues being raised so we can have a system that has predictable outcomes, not a hodgepodge system. He mentioned that RTFs should have the resources to properly treat these children.

Rep. Miller commented that more RTFs are needed in Allegheny and asked how many children (%) have a diagnosis of mental health or disability no matter where they are placed. Mr. Snyder stated that kids with mental health issues do come into the juvenile justice system. He remarked that parents have called him saying they were encouraged to have their child arrested because the only way to get them treatment was to get into our system because we'll do something with them. He commented that there is a need for more mental health facilities dealing with delinquent kids. The YDCs end up becoming MH providers but it is difficult to help these kids. There are not adequate MH services and they end up in the criminal justice system.

On the treatment side Rep. Miller asked how many of the kids with a MH disability are moving up the ladder within the juvenile justice system because the treatment options are not funded at the lower level. Mr. Snyder said that they need to do a better job of tracking kids with a mental health diagnosis or other issue and indicated he would share what spotty data they currently have. He mentioned that they just entered into an agreement with the Council of State Governments to improve their system of data collection.

As a follow-up to what Rep. Thomas said earlier, Sen. Greenleaf asked Mr. Snyder how we can resolve some of the issues (i.e., parents encouraged to have child arrested to get services) raised today. He said the caucus would welcome any ideas for legislation. Would the issues being raised need more money or a legislative fix? Mr. Snyder said he would go back and think about it and talk to his colleagues and come up with ideas. He did point out that children with mental health issues are a big deal in the juvenile justice system and indicated that they have circulated a Request for Proposal in the past for private secure RTFs but there was no interest.

Rep. Miller also remarked about the model (9 month program) used by private providers and that a set time frame doesn't necessarily mean successful treatment and kids are just timing out. As facilities like New Castle close, he is concerned with the use of private companies and their model and maybe we need to go back to a redesigned state model facility that takes the private issues and questions out of it. Mr. Snyder said that he might be right and that he will go back and talk to his colleagues who know about this.

Rep. Thomas said that we need to be creative and it is critical that we intervene early on and then be able to do something to separate the ones that need help to those that need secure facilities. There needs to be some benchmarks before approving a placement. What can we do in PA?

Sen. Greenleaf remarked that a child is better off if we can treat them at home and that more damage can occur when they are taken out of their home environment. He asked for any statistics on how many kids who come into contact with the juvenile justice system are placed. Mr. Snyder responded that only 8% end up in placement.

Rep. Miller wondered if there should be more occasion for review or audit of a private provider's report of a child's placement. Mr. Snyder indicated that they are going down that road now with the use of the YLS assessment (risk/needs) instrument, which list 8 criminogenic risk/need factors (i.e., family circumstances, substance abuse, peer relations) that can be used to identify why kids get into trouble. He said they are telling service providers to work through this assessment to make programs more responsible and encouraging judges to ask providers specifically about these areas.

Rep. Thomas remarked about the 8 factors listed on the YLS Bench Card that was distributed to caucus members. He asked members for the next meeting if they would review the factors and identify, in their opinion, what the top three risk factors from this list are. Mr. Snyder and Mr. Steele said they have data they could show the caucus. In response, Rep. Thomas said they could bring their data and the caucus members can bring what they think and see if we can get a consensus around what are the highest risk factors.

Sen. Greenleaf asked how many of the 8% placed in the juvenile justice system find their way into the adult criminal justice system. Mr. Steele said they have learned that all this evidence-based practice is equally applicable to both juvenile and criminal justice, so the risk assessment instrument developed for juveniles was based on the one that was done for the adult system.

Rep. Thomas raised a question about the use of the YLS assessment instrument in terms of age. Mr. Snyder indicated that it is used for individuals under the age of 18 at the time the offense is committed. Mr. Steele further stated that the instrument is done when they first come into the system, at 6 month increments to measure improvements and when they close the case. He said they have all sorts of data on the transition of kids.

Sen. Greenleaf said that would really be important because we are also concerned about a juvenile's recidivism and graduating into the adult system. The data could reveal commonalities of these individuals and what kind of treatment, if any, they received. With all this data, we can start narrowing the factors (8 listed) that are causing this and zero in on them to stop the cycle so they don't graduate to the adult system. This would really be an interesting discussion to have.

Clarissa Freeman (Sen. Kitchen's Office) asked if the automated system is put in place so that these 8 factors (YLS assessment) are observed or evaluated objectively. Mr. Steele said yes and stated that the instrument requires training and certification along with quality assurance (send test cases out to probation officers). He indicated that Pennsylvania is used as a model state for how we implemented risk assessment in the juvenile justice system.

Rep. Thomas noted that we stopped on page 8 of the presentation dealing with delinquency placement expenditures and that we can pick up from that point at the next meeting. He reminded caucus members of their assignment to review the YLS risk factors on the Bench Card and identify what they think are the top three risk factors. He commented that the beauty of this is that he knows a few people around the table come from backgrounds that deal with young people so they have some exposure. We will bring that to the next meeting and start from there.

Attendance for 2/4/15 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf	Rep. W. Curtis Thomas
Rep. Dan Miller	Rep. Tarah Toohil
Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)	Philip Murray (for Rep. Thomas)
Dontie Brooks (for Rep. Watson)	Ashley Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)
Clarissa Freeman, Esq. (for Sen. Kitchen)	William Casey (for Sen. Schwank)
Angela Fitterer (for Rep. Sturla)	Brandon Flood (for Rep. Lowery-Brown)
Keith Snyder, Executive Director JCJC - ksnyder@pa.gov	
Rick Steele, Deputy Director JCJC – ricsteele@pa.gov	

At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, April 22, 2015
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf welcomed everyone and thanked Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director and Deputy Director of the [Juvenile Court Judges' Commission \(JCJC\)](#), for returning and continuing their presentation from February. Sen. Greenleaf noted that any material handed out at today's meeting, along with the minutes, would be distributed to every member of the caucus which will help educate us and give us ideas to move forward and change our system with best practices to help our kids and families.

Mr. Snyder noted that he stopped on page 8 of the power point presentation at the last meeting. To refresh the memory of caucus members, he decided to briefly go through the first 8 pages again before moving forward to data on juvenile justice recidivism. Mr. Snyder indicated that the information on these pages reflect data on the kids coming through the juvenile justice system. The purple line on Page 2 shows that the total number of Juvenile Delinquency Dispositions in PA has declined 36% from 2007 to 2013. He commented that juvenile crime is heading in the right direction. The slide on Page 3 pertains to Juvenile Delinquency Placements and reveals that placements went down 37% during the same period of time. He remarked that they only place kids when absolutely necessary. Mr. Snyder said another measure that they use in their system is the percentage of placements as a percentage of dispositions found on Page 4. The slide shows that in 2007 roughly 10% of all cases coming into the system ended up going into a placement facility compared to 2013 which shows placements decreased to about 8%. He said this means the courts are using alternatives to placement whenever possible. The slide on Page 5 deals with secure detention admissions. It shows that the numbers went down 40% from 2007 – 2013. He said these are the temporary holding places where kids await court proceedings and pointed out that about 1/3 of all our juvenile detention centers went out of business which is a good thing because we are locking up fewer and fewer kids within the system.

Mr. Snyder next discussed the slide on page 6 of the power point dealing with Juvenile Arrest Rates. He mentioned that the data for this slide comes from the State Police UCR Reports and that these are for violent crimes as a rate per 100,000 kids. The arrest rates for violent crimes decreased 29% from 2007 to 2013. Sen. Greenleaf inquired as to the reason for the drop. Mr. Snyder said they are using evidence-based practices and while he cannot directly show a correlation between what they are doing and the decrease, he said research shows when you implement evidence-based practices you can reduce recidivism, which will then reduce crime. Sen. Greenleaf further asked if it includes all crimes and not just violent crimes. Mr. Snyder indicated that they can collect everything but this slide just focused on violent crimes in the UCR report. He said they have ways of capturing all crimes but they pulled out the violent crimes because that's the most significant to communities.

Representative Kinsey asked whether there is any correlation of monies spent toward children's programs and the decreases being seen. Mr. Snyder remarked that he was recently speaking about how funding for violence prevention programs through PCCD has significantly decreased over the years but at the same time showing decreases in crime. That being said, however, he is a big supporter of using these evidence-based programs and commented that it takes a long time for those differences to be made with these kids.

Representative Gainey asked what the overall number of juvenile arrests is and has it declined. He would like to see the overall view of juvenile detention right now. Mr. Snyder said he believes its declining as well and remarked that he wasn't trying to pick out the best numbers by using violent crimes. He thinks it would mirror all of their juvenile court dispositions (previous slides).

Rep. Gainey also remarked that the only way we reduce recidivism is through education and that the power of education can transform the mind and not put them back into the system. He asked if they could discuss this and share of any programs they have on education that makes these kids college ready or connecting them to a college so that when they come out they aren't put into the old system. Mr. Snyder agreed that education is a key to success and mentioned that they have done some initiatives in the area of after care.

Rep Gainey further elaborated that the problem is a lack of structured education in our juvenile detention centers and halfway houses. If these young boys and girls are educated and ready when they come out, we could stop recidivism and stop them from becoming better criminals and teach them to be better students. Mr. Steele said in 2005 PA became involved with the MacArthur Foundation and participated in their [Models for Change Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative](#). One of the areas they focused on were ways to improve their after care services (which are like parole services but only for juveniles). They identified proper education as being an issue and started looking closely at the residential facilities (i.e., quality of the academic experience, credit transfer). Mr. Steele said they worked with a number of their partners, including the Education Law Center, on ways they could improve on this. In addition, an initiative began called "[The PA Academic and Career/Technical Training Alliance](#)". The program, which was initially funded through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), specifically went into facilities and assisted them in upgrading their academic career standards as well as their career and technical training. Rep. Gainey concluded that he would rather see tax dollars spent on how we educate kids in juvenile detentions more than how we incarcerate them and that recidivism rates would come down if we educate them.

Representative Toohil mentioned that she uncovered a parallel issue where you have children who have never committed a crime being placed in a facility with children who have been deemed juvenile delinquent. Rep. Toohil discovered that there are a number of children (15 to 20 years of age) who are not getting adopted via

the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) or who are aging out of foster care and there are no homes for them. As a result, they are being placed in the same residential treatment facilities (RTFs) for delinquent kids. She asked if they had any numbers on such kids in RTFs, how are they being handled, and what impact it has on them being mixed with children who committed crimes. Mr. Snyder indicated that for the kids who are younger the situation could occur where you have kids that are dependent and delinquent in the same institution, however, it would not occur in secure programs. Mr. Snyder said they are careful in their system to not mix the high risk kids with the low risk kids within the delinquent population because you can make the low risk kids worse by hanging around with kids that are high risk. Rep. Toohil also referenced the violent crimes arrest rate for juveniles on page 6 and asked if the other crimes rates are going up. Mr. Snyder said he believes the rates are going down across the board and said next time (if they can come back) he would provide a UCR sheet with all crimes. Sen. Greenleaf remarked that the caucus would like them to come back to continue their presentation.

Rep. Toohil commented that even though they have less money, if they're focusing these evidence-based practices on the high risk children, then maybe that is what this decrease in number is. Mr. Snyder agreed with the statement and said that while he cannot absolutely say there is a direct correlation, their practices are based on the best research that's available and it shows that if you do these things you can reduce recidivism and reduce crime. He said their focus is on the high risk population since research says you don't want to put the low risk kids in facilities. He added that you only want to work with high risk kids and focus your services on them and leave the low risk kids alone so they can self-correct. Sen. Greenleaf agreed that if you leave the low-risk kids alone they will correct themselves but if you treat them badly they could turn delinquent.

Rep. Davidson commented that youth 18 to 21 is a critical age to determine whether or not someone is going to be a lifelong criminal. She said it's a time where kids are at risk for a lot of mental health issues and the court system is not dealing with it. She indicated that it happens a lot at college and it's something we need to address. She is interested in seeing some research and education done on this matter. Mr. Steele remarked that research shows that parts of the brain (reasoning and impulse control) do not develop fully in kids until they are 23 to 25 years of age. Mr. Snyder also pointed out that there is an "age crime curve" from say 10 to 27 years of age with the top of the curve being ages 18 to 24. He agreed with Rep. Davidson that kids are impulsive and make bad decisions during that age period. Mr. Snyder said if they commit a crime before 18, they can maintain jurisdiction until the kid is 21. But once they turn 18, 19 or 20 and commit a crime they are considered an adult. Rep. Davidson reiterated the critical age period (18 to 21) for kids and expressed interest in learning more about that population because they are receiving no services and support and just being thrown into jail. She further stated that once they get into the criminal justice system their lives are ruined.

Also, Rep. Davidson expressed concern with probationary rules and how violations (not crimes) keep these people in the criminal justice system. Sen. Greenleaf mentioned that is the reason why he is sponsoring legislation to merge the PA Board of Probation and Parole with the Department of Corrections. The bill changes the name of the agency to Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and parole and probation, the front line people, would be placed under the agency and employ a broader range of tools to supervise parolees. Sen. Greenleaf said currently parole agents are not on board with what we are doing and we have to change their attitude. Mr. Snyder commented on the technical violation issue as it relates to juveniles. He said under the old system each probation officer would determine whether something was a violation which raised an issue of fairness. Now they are developing something called "graduated responses" where there are technical violations but you don't lock up somebody right away depending on what the violation is.

Liana Walters (Sen. Williams' Office) indicated that there are many families in Sen. Williams' district that have a lot of the same concerns of Rep. Davidson, kids between 18 and 21 experiencing mental health issues (schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder). She indicated there are families that don't know where to turn for mental health services for their kids and some are praying that they get arrested to receive help. She asked if they have any evidence-based practices on treatment for that population (adults 18 – 25 specifically) and how we can better address their mental health treatment as opposed to simply relying on them being arrested. Mr. Snyder commented that he has heard the same thing on the juvenile side about parents getting their kids arrested to receive treatment. He said there are some evidence-based programs available on the juvenile side (like [Multisystemic Therapy \(MST\)](#) and [Functional Family Therapy \(FFT\)](#)), which is supported by grants via PCCD. While he is not aware of programs on the adult side, he presumes there are some evidence-based programs. Mr. Snyder remarked that if parents don't know where to turn, somehow within the county structure of mental health system there needs to be somebody that can help parents navigate the system because it's difficult. Mr. Snyder further stated that they have worked with the Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to try and get them to improve services for kids in the juvenile system. Mr. Steele also commented that they have done a lot of work in the juvenile justice system to find appropriate diversion mechanisms for kids with mental health issues so they don't have to go through the juvenile justice system.

Mr. Snyder directed everyone to the slides on Pages 7 and 8 of the power point. He said the data on these slides, which pertains to placements, comes from DHS. Page 7 shows that Total Delinquency Placement Days of Care decreased significantly from 1.7 million to 1.2 million from FY 2008-09 to FY 2012-13. Page 8 shows the cost associated with these placements. In FY 2008-09, DHS spent \$321 million but decreased to \$260 million in FY 2012-13. Mr. Snyder also mentioned that Rep Thomas previously raised a question about the number of kids in jail in state prisons who are Direct File (i.e., if you commit a murder at any age you go jail, if you commit armed robbery at 15 you go to jail). He said there are certain offenses, they call them direct file offenses, that even though they are less than 18, they go to jail. Mr. Snyder said their numbers are looking pretty good according to the slide on Page 9 that shows the Number of Juveniles in County Jails and State Prisons. Between 2009 and 2013, the number of juveniles in county jails and state prisons decreased 41% and 48%, respectively.

Mr. Snyder proceeded to discuss the Juvenile Justice Recidivism data starting on page 10. He said they define recidivism as "a subsequent delinquency adjudication or conviction in criminal court for a felony or misdemeanor offense within two years of case closure." They didn't study this just for the purpose of seeing what their recidivism rate was but they did it for the purpose of trying to reduce their recidivism rate after they found out what it was. Mr. Snyder referred to a separate sheet of paper (see attached) which shows what their recidivism rates were pre-Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES). He said they started their new initiative around 2009-2010 in terms of evidence-based practices. The pre-JJSES provides a benchmark by which to compare future recidivism rates. The four year (2007 to 2010) average rate for recidivism was 22%. On Page 13 (unmarked page) of the power point (Five-Year PA Statewide Recidivism Rates) it shows a significant decrease (18%) from 2010 to 2011, the first year that they could reasonably expect any change to happen in terms of recidivism under the new system. He said this is a big deal for them because their recidivism rate went down from 22% to 18%. Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Steele to discuss what they are doing to try to decrease the recidivism rate.

Mr. Steele said at the heart of the [JJSES](#) is the use of evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism rates and so it was important that if they were going to get into this they needed to measure what their outcomes were.

In 2009 they started the first of several years' worth of incremental utilization of an instrument called [Youth Level of Service \(YLS\)](#), which was passed out to members (see attached). He said this is a document that was prepared in part for juvenile court judges. Probation officers would give judges information about the results of this risk assessment instrument so they can incorporate it into their decisions around dispositions.

Mr. Steele said the risk assessment instrument measures the perceived risk to recidivate if nothing happens to intervene. First of all, it gives an overall risk level - low, moderate, high risk or very high risk. What's important about low, moderate and high risk is that research also tells them that depending on what risk level, the way you effectively deal with that individual overall in terms of supervision levels and interventions is different depending on the risk level, so it's important that you have an accurate assessment of what that level is. He remarked that the YLS is the most highly validated risk assessment instrument that's out there for juveniles. He indicated that YLS identifies what they call criminogenic risk factors, factors which increases the risk that a kid is going to recidivate. There are two types of risk factors, static risk factors and dynamic risk factors. The static risk factors are those factors that don't change (i.e., the kid's age at the time he was first arrested, gender, etc.). What's more important are the dynamic risk factors. These are the factors they've learned that can be changed so that kids that have high levels of risk, if you target interventions that are normally evidence-based, you can reduce that risk level.

Mr. Steele said that their overall goal in the juvenile justice system is to reduce recidivism. By simply identifying risk and using risk assessment instruments, research shows that they can start reducing recidivism rates. You identify those criminogenic needs and attach services to those needs. He commented that probation officers need to do more than just watch and sanction when kids do something wrong or violate a condition of probation. He said they need to be "change agents" so that they are going in there and not just telling kids what not to do but also teaching them what to do.

Mr. Snyder said he would stop and pick up their presentation from this point at the next meeting of the caucus. Mr. Snyder also offered a final thought that when he started in the field in 1980 he was given a case book of about 35 kids with different crimes (from burglary, simple assault, rape), and he treated everyone the same. He said they never really developed interventions on their specific needs and he had no idea how many kids were high risk or low risk. Mr. Snyder said it's now a smarter way to separate the kids in your case load, the high risk kids and the low risk. He remarked that it's a way they have changed their business and they are continuing to change their business.

Attendance for 4/22/15 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

Rep. Ed Gainey

Rep. Margo Davidson

Rep. Stephen Kinsey

Rep. Tarah Toohil

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)

Philip Murray (for Rep. Thomas)

Liana Walter (for Sen. Williams)

Frank Mulbah (for Sen. Williams)

Keith Snyder, Executive Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission - ksnyder@pa.gov

Rick Steele, Deputy Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission - ricsteele@pa.gov

At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2015
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf thanked Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director and Deputy Director of the [Juvenile Court Judges' Commission \(JCJC\)](#), for returning and continuing their presentation from April.

Before starting on Page 14 (Family Status) of their presentation, Mr. Snyder wanted to follow up on an issue previously raised regarding a PA State Police chart on arrest rates for violent crimes. A question was asked whether all juvenile crimes were declining, not just violent crimes. Mr. Snyder said yes. The data shows that it has continually decreased since 2007. Sen. Greenleaf asked if that was true for adults as well but Mr. Snyder couldn't confirm if that was the case.

Mr. Snyder proceeded with his presentation and remarked that so far they have talked about their collection of data on how to reduce recidivism based on evidence-based practices and how they were able to show a decrease in recidivism from 22% in 2010 to 18% for cases closed during 2011. He remarked that JCJC did a recidivism analysis primarily to determine if they can reduce recidivism in the juvenile justice system. While they were doing this analysis, they started to look deeper at some data and the types of kids that recidivate.

Representative Gainey announced the presence of a number of young people at the caucus meeting who were shadowing members of the House. Mr. Snyder introduced himself to the guests and explained that he is with the JCJC and that he works closely with juvenile court judges in each of our 67 counties. He explained that their focus is on kids who get arrested for crimes, what they should do with them, how they should treat them and what they are doing in the juvenile justice system to implement practices that are consistent with the most recent research. Mr. Snyder said that they actually know what kinds of programs work for kids right now and they are trying to reduce recidivism, which happens when kids get rearrested for crimes after they have come into the juvenile justice system.

Mr. Snyder said page 14 of the presentation (Family Status) takes a closer look at kids who get rearrested. He remarked that the pie chart on the left shows the family status of all juveniles aged 9-18 in the US. It reveals that 71% of the kids are likely to come from a married household whereas 18% come from divorced or separated families. Parents that were never married represent 10% and kids where one or both parents are deceased comprise 1% of the general population in the whole country. The pie chart on the right shows kids that come into the juvenile justice system that get rearrested for another crime. It reveals that 19% of the kids who are rearrested come from married households, while 27% of kids rearrested are from divorced/separated households. It also shows that kids from parents never married are rearrested 47% and kids where one or both parents are from deceased households were rearrested 7%. Mr. Snyder indicated that the types of households where kids who are recidivists come from are typically disruptive families.

On page 15 of the presentation, it again shows the recidivism rate by family status. It reveals a recidivism rate for juvenile offenders of 26% with one or both parents deceased, 25% for parents never married, 20% when parents are separated or divorced and 17% for juveniles with parents who are married. Mr. Snyder remarked that their general recidivism rate for all kids in the system is 22 percent.

In light of this information, Sen. Greenleaf asked if there are any programs or models available to help provide these kids with a good family environment (i.e., foster care). Mr. Snyder said yes and indicated that their first choice is to try to keep families together whenever possible and there are several evidence-based programs available. One such program is called [Functional Family Therapy \(FFT\)](#) and the other is [Multisystemic Therapy \(MST\)](#). He further remarked that they have group homes with house parents such as Milton Hershey School. They are court-committed kids being raised by house parents in a setting where they get a lot of attention to school, health issues, mental health issues, etc. Mr. Snyder said they try to support the families and FFT and MST are two models that have actually been proven through research to work to decrease violence.

Representative Dan Miller remarked that he is interested in early intervention for helping young children (ages 2-5) and how such services make a sizable difference in a child's life. With regarding to young kids, he commented that our goal is to prevent them from being arrested in the first place and that the demographics highlight that if you come from a certain household (i.e., parents never married), you have a greater percentage of risk. Rep. Miller said that with these early warning signals, do we have programs sufficiently in place to target children at a younger age (4 or 5 years of age) rather than when the kids are age 10 or 11. Mr. Snyder indicated that there are programs like that via the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) called delinquency prevention programs which can start as early as when young women are pregnant with children – [Nurse Family Partnership](#). He further commented that it's a smart way to go about their business to try to prevent them from coming into the juvenile justice system from the very beginning. Mr. Snyder also stated that truancy is another area that they are very concerned about where kids are skipping school. If a child is in first or second grade and not coming to school there's some family issues there and they put the child at risk of coming into the juvenile justice system in another 5, 6 or 7 years. Therefore, he is totally supportive of delinquency prevention programs.

Rep. Miller asked how prevalent these delinquency prevention programs are. Mr. Snyder stated that PCCD's funding for these programs were significantly cut (about 80%) over the last 8 years. He stated that the programs (Blue Print Programs) offered by PCCD have been proven to work and they provide technical assistance to help get programs up and running.

Rep. Gainey asked if JCJC has broken the data down by urban, suburban and rural areas because he believes to get a snap shot of this issue you need to reflect the socioeconomic differences of the areas. He also remarked how children in urban areas are not given as much latitude as children in suburban and rural areas when it comes to interactions with law enforcement. Finally, he commented that there are other programs (i.e., Healthy Start) that have a tremendous impact in allowing us to know where children are at from the beginning. He further remarked that there needs to be early intervention and that we have to look at programs that deal with people who are below the poverty line.

With regard to looking at whether children are from an urban, suburban or rural setting, Mr. Snyder indicated that this data is statewide but they do have county specific data. Rep. Gainey remarked that the county data may be more useful. With respect to police officers having discretion about whether or not a kid gets arrested in one community verses another community, Mr. Snyder made reference to a phrase - Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) - a disproportionate number of kids of color coming into our juvenile justice system. Rep. Gainey asked if kids are coming from the urban setting and Mr. Snyder acknowledged that is typically the case.

Mr. Snyder stated that one of the things that they've done is work with the MacArthur Foundation from 2005 to 2010 on the DMC issue and they established curriculum for the police officers (new police cadets) when they go through initial training to try to sensitize them to this whole issue. Also, they developed some law enforcement community forums in areas with a high number of DMC kids like Lancaster, Reading, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. They conducted forums with some PCCD dollars to try to bring the community and law enforcement together in an attempt to have a discussion about some of these issues.

Sen. Greenleaf commented that the Judiciary Committee has been looking into how to deal with the hostility between law enforcement and the community. Rather than interacting in a positive way everyday with the community, law enforcement has lost the idea of community policing. He remarked that when law enforcement knows the kids and the family they may be less likely to take them to jail. Rep. Gainey wholeheartedly agreed with the remarks and commented that he has talked to police and that the "war on drugs" really got away from community policing because it made a description or criteria of what a criminal looks like. He also mentioned "search and seizure" and how that took away from police and community relations because not everybody based on this criteria is a drug dealer. Rep. Gainey concluded by saying that police officers coming onto the force today have not been around minorities and there is a lack of curriculum and we will always have this problem until they are educated on the history of police and community relations. Sen. Greenleaf remarked that police can have a tremendous impact on the community and as barriers are broken down there can be improved community relations.

Representative Thomas commented that part of the problem is there is no consensus on what is community policing (different definitions and different methodologies) and maybe the JCJC can develop some recommendations on community policing when it comes to juveniles. Rep. Thomas also asked Mr. Snyder to take into consideration, as he reviews the data on juvenile crime and recidivism, that over 200,000 grandmothers are raising kids today. He remarked that the "family" as we know it today is a lot different than a decade ago and that we have a growing population of elderly people who are raising kids whose parents might be incarcerated or on drugs.

A guest (young lady) commented that she lives with her grandmother who has been very helpful to her. She also said that kids need to be inspired to do what is right and they need good influences in their lives. She remarked that kids in foster homes do not have good influences and they are being taken advantage of by the people operating the homes.

Clarissa Freeman (Sen. Kitchen's Office) commented that in reviewing the data on pages 14 and 15 on family status, it is important to realize that the whole definition of family has changed (i.e., grandparents and older siblings are now raising children). She further remarked that what community policing looks like in Harrisburg is vastly different from what policing looks like in Philadelphia because of the community structure. She said if the JCJC is looking at models or a standard of practice for community policing, they should keep in mind the differences in policing from one community to another as well as new family structure. A question was raised whether the data compiled on family status was based on a traditional definition of family - one male and one female or father and mother. Mr. Snyder said yes.

Kalonji Johnson (Sen. Kitchen's Office) mentioned an incident in California involving a 14 year old boy with mental health issues and how he was tased twice by an officer. Questions were raised as to whether or not the amount of force was justified. He commented reading some studies which showed that with respect to

community policing it's not just an issue of having more police in the communities but rather an issue of communication and police officers not being trained to use non-physical forms of communications. He asked whether there is any data that shows a correlation between gender, recidivism and interaction between young males that come through the juvenile system and the males that they encounter in the system.

Mr. Snyder first focused on a comment made by the young lady that she had other people in her life who were mentoring her. He said that's a really important point in the matter of what kind of family you grow up in if you have a positive role model somewhere in your life who cares about you and encourages you to get involved in extracurricular activities and study. He said research shows that mentorship programs work (i.e., Big Brothers Big Sisters). With regard to who they get into the system in terms of males showing up higher for recidivists, Mr. Snyder said generally speaking they have more males coming into their juvenile justice system. Mr. Steele also remarked that based on resiliency studies they found that mentoring made a difference in the lives of kids.

Rep. Miller remarked that he has an upcoming event regarding childhood trauma (i.e., poverty, divorce, domestic abuse). He pointed out that as a child encounters multiple traumas (4, 5 or 6), it become more difficult for them to succeed in life given the number and depth of these traumas. It may be too late to deal with a child at age 13 who has experienced multiple traumas. He said we really need to get to those kids in the early years (before 10 years old) when they've already identified several points of trauma. Early intervention will allow them to build up their defenses and teach them how to deal with those issues. He welcomed any information that JCJC might have on this matter. Mr. Snyder said there is one evidenced-based program that he is familiar with called [Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy \(TF-CBT\)](#). In terms of cognitive therapy, they have found that TF-CBT is the most effective type of treatment they can give kids in the juvenile justice system and PCCD just awarded some grants.

Rep. Thomas remarked about Universal Pre-K and how there has been ongoing conversation about the matter. He said it might be a good opportunity to integrate some behavioral curriculum (i.e., acceptable and unacceptable behavior, how to deal with certain situations) into the Universal Pre-K conversation. Mr. Snyder reflected back on the importance of mentoring and how it can play a big role in guiding kids through their life about how to behave and how not to behave and how to act in certain situations.

Mr. Snyder moved on to page 16 (Race and Gender) of the presentation which shows that males have higher recidivism rates than females and it also has race mixed in there as well. Page 17 talks about the length of time it took kids to get rearrested for a crime. Mr. Snyder said if you're going to be rearrested it typically is within 6 months of the time your case is closed. Page 18 talks about the age at which you are first arrested and your recidivism rates. What this shows is that if you are really young (9, 10 or 11) when you first come into the juvenile justice system, the likelihood of recidivism is higher (36% when age 9; 30% when age 10 or 11). Research shows that the age at which you first start getting arrested for crimes is a big signal as to whether or not you will continue to be arrested for crimes. What this means to juvenile justice professionals is that when a young kid comes into their system they should not dismiss him because he may have some real issues.

Rep. Miller said he thought Pennsylvania doesn't arrest under 10. Mr. Snyder said that you can be charged with a crime but you can't be adjudicated delinquent in the juvenile justice system. You would go into the child welfare system. Rep. Gainey asked for clarification about going into the child welfare system. Mr. Snyder said that means the kid would go to a caseworker and be involved with children and youth agencies.

Rep. Miller said he would be interested in knowing of the kids who continue to get back into trouble, how many of them have a mental health diagnosis. He remarked that in Allegheny County they've seen a spike of kids with autism. He also wondered about the transition of treatment when they leave a facility and return home. Mr. Snyder pointed out that they have a lot of kids coming into the juvenile justice system with mental health problems that haven't been treated in the community. He remarked that we have parents that actually were encouraged to have their kids arrested just so we would get a handle on them and get them some help because they weren't getting the help through mental health services in their community. Mr. Snyder admitted that their data needs to be better in this area and said they are working on trying to collect information on mental health diagnosis.

Rep. Miller also mentioned mental health courts and juveniles and the desire to help these kids get the services they need and give them a chance at success. Mr. Snyder said there are a couple of models out there now (i.e., York County and Lehigh County) regarding mental health court for juveniles. He remarked that Lehigh County has a really good program ([Special Program for Offenders in Rehabilitation and Education or SPORE](#)) which is less than a formal mental health court but you have a partnership between probation officers and mental health professionals.

Ms. Freeman commented that when growing up she recalled juvenile judges coming into the schools for career day and wondered if that happens today in Pennsylvania. Rep. Thomas remarked that there is a big disconnect between the courts and the school system and maybe we can identify ways to fill the gap because all the systems have to work together.

Given the limited time remaining, it was agreed to have Keith Snyder and Rick Steele return at the next caucus meeting to finish their presentation. Rep. Thomas thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting.

Attendance for 6/17/15 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

Rep. W. Curtis Thomas

Rep. Ed Gainey

Rep. Dan Miller

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)

Philip Murray (for Rep. Thomas)

Clarissa Freeman (for Sen. Kitchen)

Kalonji Johnson (for Sen. Kitchen)

Tamekia Woods (for Rep. Kim)

Ryan Gephart (for Rep. Kim)

Brittany Hartman (guest of Rep. Miller)

Kelly Howard (guest of Rep. Miller)

Ashley Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)

Keith Snyder, Executive Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission - ksnyder@pa.gov

Rick Steele, Deputy Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission - ricsteele@pa.gov

At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, September 30, 2015
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Keith Snyder and Rick Steele, Executive Director and Deputy Director of the [Juvenile Court Judges' Commission \(JCJC\)](#), welcomed the opportunity to return and continue their presentation from June.

Before starting on Page 19 (Serious, Violent, Chronic, and Child Offenders) of their presentation, Mr. Snyder shared with members several things that have occurred over the past couple of months in our juvenile justice system. In July, the Joint State Government Commission issued a report and recommendations pursuant to SR 304 (sponsored by Sen. Greenleaf), which directed the Commission to appoint an Advisory Committee to reconcile Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act with the Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure and to review Pennsylvania's response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Miller v. Alabama* (life without parole for kids who are charged with murder).

In August, the Cresson Secure Youth Development Center in Cambria County was closed. Mr. Snyder said there are discussions with DHS about reinvesting the savings (juvenile justice reinvestment initiative) to improve community-based and residential services that better serve the youth in its care. Also, in October the JCJC has a training program for juvenile court judges in State College on how to conduct effective hearings (i.e., evidence-based practices using instruments to assess risk). Mr. Snyder said they want to make sure judges can implement strategies in their courtrooms so that they illicit information based on assessment risk tools. They will also discuss issues related to mental health and over medication. There will also be five regional training programs between Oct. and Dec. involving 100 judges with a focus on motivational interviewing which is basically a set of communication skills that they can use on the bench. Finally, in November the JCJC is having its annual statewide juvenile justice conference at the Harrisburg Hilton which will include training workshops. Mr. Snyder said to contact him for a free registration if anyone is interested in attending.

Mr. Snyder also wanted to provide members with updated data (2014) on some slides previously highlighted. He directed members to page 2 pertaining to Juvenile Delinquency Dispositions of New Allegations and pointed out that the total number of dispositions (purple line) have decreased from 28,957 in 2013 to 25,567 in 2014, with a reduction of 44% since 2007. Juvenile Delinquency Placements found on page 3 also showed a decrease in total dispositions from 4,762 in 2013 to 4,136 in 2014. Between 2007 and 2014, total delinquency placements decreased by 45%. On page 4 (Juvenile Delinquency Placements as a Percent of Dispositions), he showed that the percentage of placements as dispositions continued to decline in 2014 to 7.6% and that it decreased 23% since 2007, so what that means is that judges are placing fewer kids as a percentage of all cases. The total number of Juvenile Secure Detention Admissions (page 5) also declined in 2014 to 10,120, which represents a 48% decrease since 2007. Secured detention refers to temporary holding in a secure program until a kid gets through court. Mr. Snyder also remarked that since 2006, 9 of our 24 (38%) secure juvenile detention centers have ceased operations. He said this is good news as we have less sentences in juvenile court which means less juvenile crime.

Also, the total number of days of care for delinquency placements (page 7) also declined from 1.25 million days in FY 12-13 to 1.15 million days in FY 13-14. Such a decline translates into cost savings as shown in the chart on page 8 entitled "Total Delinquency Placement Expenditures". Total expenditures decreased from \$321.6

million to \$236.1 million between FY 08-09 and FY 13-14, a difference of \$85.5 million. Mr. Snyder remarked that statewide juvenile justice costs have declined and he believes that the implementation of evidence-based practices is working.

Mr. Snyder proceeded to discuss the slides on pages 19 through 23 pertaining to Serious, Violent, and/or Chronic Offenders as well as Child/Sex Offenders and recidivism. The slide on page 19 provides a definition for the different types of juvenile offenders (i.e., Serious, Violent, Chronic and Child). Mr. Snyder said the idea is that we want to reduce recidivism among all juvenile offenders and the reality is that we have a small percentage of kids who get re-arrested time after time. The trick, however, is trying to identify those kids who are most likely to recidivate and provide some intensive services to them. That said, a well-known researcher of juvenile justice matters, Buddy Howell of North Carolina, developed definitions for serious offenders, violent offenders, chronic offenders and child offenders (page 19). His research showed nationally that if you can be classified as one of these types of offenders, you are at a higher risk to recidivate. To identify who those kids are in Pennsylvania so that we can provide them with services to reduce our recidivism rate even further, Mr. Snyder said we did research with our Pennsylvania data utilizing Mr. Howell's national definitions. On page 20 it shows that 14% of our kids were chronic offenders while some kids met more than one definition. On page 22 they calculated recidivism rates of these populations. Those classified as "Serious" had a recidivism rate of 37% while Serious, Violent, and Chronic Offenders had a 55% recidivism rate. With this information, juvenile courts can target resources to those offenders in an effort to reduce recidivism.

The slide on page 22 entitled "Child Offenders" (a juvenile who was under the age of 13 as of the date of first adjudication of delinquency), shows that 33% of child offenders (whose case was closed between 2007 and 2010) were recidivists but they only comprise 3% of all juveniles. While they do not get many of these kids, when they do get them they will recidivate. The slide on page 23 reveals that about 1.7% of Sex Offenders with a case closed from 2007 to 2010 were convicted again for another sex offense. Juveniles who committed indecent exposure were adjudicated/convicted within two years for another sex offense at the highest rate (5%) followed by juveniles who committed statutory sexual assault (2%). That said, a juvenile convicted of a sex offense doesn't necessarily mean they will be convicted again for a sex crime.

Bill Casey (Sen. Schwank's Office) asked how much of the projections in juvenile numbers from 2007-2012 is reflective of changes in the population of the total juvenile number. Mr. Snyder indicated that the numbers from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data are decreasing and that would account for any decreases in population that may occur in PA. That said, Mr. Snyder said he will need to look at the raw data behind the UCR data and get back to Mr. Casey.

Rick Steele indicated that he would discuss the next four slides of their presentation (pages 24 through 27) regarding the [Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol \(SPEP\)](#). He proceeded to explain that this protocol emerged in 2011 and PA was part of a contingent of four states that engaged the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University to review their juvenile justice system improvement project concepts. It was at that time we were introduced to this concept of what is called SPEP. Mr. Steele indicated that Dr. Mark Lipsey of Vanderbilt University developed this validated process of reviewing any type of intervention for delinquent youth and measure how effective that program might be in reducing recidivism. The assessment produces an actual score. What research shows is the higher the score, the lower the expected recidivism rate for kids that participate in that program.

Page 25 shows the four factors most strongly correlated to recidivism reduction. The **first factor** is the **type of services**. Mr. Steele commented that there are certain types of services for delinquent kids that may be more effective than others so overall you need to take a look at what that service is. **Second**, they developed a statewide specific **quality of service** measure. This includes things such as whether they have a written protocol, properly trained staff, monitoring the quality of service, and procedures for responding to departures. The **third factor** is **amount of service (dosage and duration of service)**. Mr. Steele remarked that research shows that there's a certain dosage and duration that is effective and anything outside of those lines may not be helpful. The **final factor** is **youth level of risk**. Mr. Steele indicated that we need to put certain kids in appropriate services. In other words, if we put low risk kids and even sometimes low/moderate risk kids in the programs with other high risk kids, their risk levels will go up. You need to target the high risk kids so you can get significant reductions in recidivism rates.

The slide on page 26 talks about how the SPEP program works. Mr. Steele emphasized that they evaluate residential or placement programs as well as community based programs. He also mentioned that research shows it is more effective if they can keep kids out of residential programs and put them into community-based services that provide some of the types of interventions that would happen in residential facilities. When they evaluate these programs, Mr. Steele said there are individuals that have been trained on how to evaluate them through this SPEP process. Programs are provided with an initial score in each of the factors mentioned earlier that are correlated to recidivism reduction. Part of the process also includes the development of a Program Improvement Plan so that programs can work to improve their score.

The slide on page 27 talks about the implementation of SPEP in PA. Mr. Steele indicated that we continue to receive ongoing technical assistance from Dr. Lipsky and some of his staff at Vanderbilt. The pilot site for all this was in Berks County. SPEP was ultimately expanded to four additional counties (Allegheny, Dauphin, Lehigh and Bucks) and training will be taking place in the next couple of weeks to further expand SPEP to six additional counties (Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Venango and York). As of today, 85 programs (both community-based and residential) have been evaluated using SPEP. Mr. Steele indicated that their goal is a statewide program assessment of both community-based programs as well as residential programs. He also stated that PA is the only state (entity) outside of Vanderbilt that has been approved by Vanderbilt to certify SPEP assessors, which means we can expand and train our own people in house without having to go back to Vanderbilt.

Greg Grasa (Rep. Watson's Office) asked for a breakdown of the 85 programs evaluated by SPEP. Specifically, how many were community-based verses residential? Mr. Steele indicated that while he is not aware of the exact breakdown, the majority of them were community-based programs. Mr. Snyder remarked that it is easier to SPEP a community-based program because you only have one service (i.e., family counseling or group counseling) to evaluate compared to a residential program which offers different services. Greg further asked whether most community-based programs are not multi-dimensional and just provide one service. Mr. Snyder indicated yes.

Mr. Snyder commented that the juvenile justice system has evolved over the years due to research and evaluation tools like SPEP and they have taken the research that has been done in the field and are actually implementing it in PA in a way that they can use information to make better decisions. If a judge knows the SPEP score for a program, he is probably going to send kids to a program that has high scores. He further remarked that it is a really interesting time in their field as they take the research and make local policies and local decisions better based on the research.

Sen. Scavello asked what percentage of juveniles come before the courts for drugs. Mr. Snyder said he would need to review some information and get back to the Senator with an answer. He remarked about getting information several different ways (i.e., total number of offenses verses total number of drug and alcohol offenses).

Mr. Snyder indicated that the final three slides (Pages 28-30) pertain to the issue of truancy. He mentioned that last summer an unfortunate incident occurred in Reading where a mother was incarcerated for failure to pay fines and costs associated with a truancy conviction and died in a Berks County jail. In addition, a House Resolution (#1032) was approved last year requiring the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to conduct a study on truancy and make some recommendations. That study is due out in the fall. Prior to the tragic incident and resolution, Mr. Snyder indicated that the Supreme Court was actually involved with this issue. He stated that Justice Max Baer was very interested in child welfare issues and created a concept called the round table process which brought interested stakeholders (i.e., children and youth administrators, juvenile court judges) to the table. In 2010, the courts created the [Educational Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup](#) designed to take a look at truancy and educational issues. He also remarked that some of the individuals involved in the Supreme Court's Workgroup were able to participate in the JSGC study and share with them their work (see page 28).

Mr. Snyder proceeded to page 29 to review some of the Public School Code amendments under consideration by the Workgroup and the JSGC study for revising the truancy law. One change being reviewed is amending or adding various definitions like truancy and habitual truancy to provide a standard definition that's more easily understood. Another issue is about suspending driver's licenses for kids. Right now it's mandatory but both groups are looking at making it a "may".

Sen. Scavello commented on the issue of driver license suspension and mentioned that many of the kids become adults with families and still have their license suspended for something they did at an early age. He remarked that some individuals contact his office at age 30 + and now have kids of their own and cleaned up their act but still cannot drive to work. He said that this is something that should be looked at. Eric Pauley (Sen. Greenleaf's Office) commented that Sen. Greenleaf has sponsored legislation this session (SB 62) aimed at addressing this issue by revising the probationary license law. He further stated that Senator Rafferty, the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, is currently reviewing the measure for possible committee action in the near future.

Mr. Snyder said another issue being reviewed about truancy is requiring schools to offer a school attendance improvement conference before filing a citation against the parent or before referring a child to a community-based program or service or county children and youth agency. He then stated that the first bullet point on page 30 takes the conference a step further by requiring schools to document the outcome of the conference in a school attendance improvement plan. The second bullet point looks at increasing the minimum age (from 13 to 15) that schools may file a citation against a child before a Magisterial District Judge (MDJ). Mr. Snyder said this issue is still up for debate among the groups looking into reform of the truancy law. The final bullet point talks about providing MDJs with a wider range of dispositional options instead of just having a fine. He indicated that across the state there is not a lot of services that are available to schools or MDJ's for these truancy cases and they are working with the Office of Children, Youth and Families on this matter. He indicated that kids are not typically referred to Children and Youth (C&Y) agencies but rather to an MDJ. Therefore, why don't we have C&Y agencies contract with providers and communicate that list to schools and MDJs so these kids can get some services.

Bill Casey remarked about a proposal (SB 359) jointly sponsored by Sen. Greenleaf and Sen. Schwank which would prohibit jailing of a parent for truancy and require the use of the school improvement plan before a referral to an MDJ. It was mentioned that a public hearing was held on the bill by the Senate Education Committee in June. Mr. Snyder commented that the JCJC supports the concept of not jailing parents for failing to pay fines and costs but that it is still a hot button issue with the groups reviewing the matter. He said a middle ground may be to provide some cautions (make sure parents have ability to pay fines, make sure parents had every notice, and that they are willfully not paying the fines) before jail. Mr. Casey commented that if you have someone not paying the fine and you've gone through all these other steps, it's not as a result of willfulness but rather the result of inability. Thus, locking them up does not solve the problem. Mr. Snyder said that the JSGC will be releasing their report in October or November on truancy and they will be including some draft language.

In closing the meeting, Eric Pauley noted for planning purposes that there are **two upcoming caucus meetings scheduled**. He indicated that **DHS Secretary Ted Dallas** has accepted an invitation to come and share with members of the caucus on **Wednesday, October 28th**. Phil Murray (Rep. Thomas' Office) also mentioned that representatives with **Education Works** will share with caucus members about their **Youth Court Program** on **Wednesday, November 18th**. Both meetings will take place in Room 14 East Wing from 10am to 11 am.

Attendance for 9/30/15 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Mario Scavello

Christine Zubeck (for Sen. Scavello)

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)

Philip Murray (for Rep. Thomas)

April Ashe (for Rep. Thomas)

Isaac Schaphorst (for Rep. Thomas)

Ashley Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)

Greg Grasa (for Rep. Watson)

Dontie Brooks (for Rep. Watson)

Brandi Miller (for Rep. Sturla)

Bill Casey (for Sen. Schwank)

Keith Snyder, Executive Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission - ksnyder@pa.gov

Rick Steele, Deputy Director Juvenile Court Judges' Commission - ricsteele@pa.gov

At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus Meeting

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Room 14 East Wing

Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf welcomed everyone and thanked Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Ted Dallas for coming and sharing with the caucus what the department is doing to help kids. Sec. Dallas remarked that he appreciated the opportunity to have a dialogue with members and hoped to share some things the department is looking at on the dependency and delinquency side as well as get a sense from members of where the department is doing a good job and where they may improve.

Sec. Dallas stated that in dealing with dependency and delinquency issues, the best place for a child to be is in the home (family) if possible. He indicated that we need to look at ways to deal with kids in the system and in the long term identify issues early on and get at the root cause of the problem. He noted that on the dependency side Pennsylvania has seen an increase in the number of kids coming into care after years of reductions. Sec. Dallas indicated that 16 counties (i.e., Philadelphia, Jefferson) experienced an increase and he would provide a list of the counties (see attached). In order to reduce the number of kids in placement and return to the progress that had been made by the department and counties over the past decade in this area, Sec. Dallas said there is a need to return to the things we know work (i.e., family group decision making, family involvement) as well as adopt new strategies. He said one of the reasons there is an increase in placement is due to the growth in heroin and drug abuse by parents and the opioid crisis statewide. Another thing that happened was the Jerry Sandusky situation which resulted in the legislature enacting numerous laws (24) and the system overcorrecting itself – erring on the side of caution and taking kids out of the home.

Sen. Greenleaf commented that you can pass a law but if the people implementing it within the system do not alter their mindset, the law change doesn't really matter. This is an issue happening now with the parole board. Sec. Dallas agreed and commented that the department, especially on the delinquency side, has to work with judges and the counties. He said the department needs to work with the courts and get folks to change how they look at things. He recalled in Maryland when significant reductions occurred in placements that it wasn't just the department changing the regulation and the legislature passing a law, but sitting down with judges and the local jurisdictions and getting them to look at things differently.

Sec. Dallas commented that in Maryland all the child agencies reported to him directly and he could change policy for the state. In PA, he reiterated that DHS works with the counties and noted the need for better communications with them (i.e., Dauphin County/issuance of provisional license). Greg Grasa (Rep. Watson's Office) said the matter of provisional licenses issued to some county children and youth agencies (Dauphin, Luzerne and York Counties) is a critical topic and that the House has begun to preliminarily explore how to improve caseworker complement as well as professionalize and incentivize the profession. Sec. Dallas agreed that well-trained workers of any governmental agency are an asset and critically important. While staffing level is vital, equally important is reviewing and assessing the system of care to ensure it is functioning properly.

Mr. Grasa further commented that there is a need for retention and putting the right people in a very sensitive job. He pointed out that Dauphin County is in a crisis situation with high caseloads. Rep. Miller also commented that each county has its own issues (Luzerne – staffing problems, and in Allegheny County - high caseloads). He remarked that caseworkers are overworked and underpaid without enough support and retention is a critical issue.

Sec. Dallas responded that they met with elected officials (i.e., Rep. Toohil) to talk about Luzerne County's provisional license which lead to a good discussion about the salaries of workers and the percentage paid by the state. He commented that staffing levels, professionalism and increased wages would be important pieces to the situation in Luzerne as well as some other pieces. In Allegheny County, he complimented them for using data analysis and trying to help kids early on in the process so that they are not removed from their home.

Sen. Greenleaf indicated that one of the reasons why he got involved in the caucus stemmed from a meeting with York County officials and learning about the juvenile detention center being closed. There was a gentleman (Richard Gold) who was implementing new programs to help reduce the population in detention centers.

Sen. Greenleaf asked if the department was continuing to implement such programs or whether there has been a change in philosophy or direction. Cathy Utz, Deputy Secretary for DHS Office of Children Youth & Family, commented that the department has continued to implement such programs and reducing the number of kids in care is a goal but the key is how to sustain it.

Dep. Sec. Utz remarked that it is not just about the numbers. She indicated that you need to review and analyze what you are doing and see if there are any changes or things you can do differently. In some counties (i.e., Allegheny County) there was a reduction in numbers along with a change in practice behind the scenes to make sure it's sustainable. In other counties where they are seeing increased numbers, she isn't sure that work was done to review their practices and determine if any changes are necessary. She remarked about partnering with other counties and maybe do some mentorship across counties to show what has work.

Dep. Sec. Utz noted earlier remarks about the issue of recruitment and retention of staff. She commented on the importance of staff feeling supported and noted that workers go into some tough situations and experience trauma so we need to make sure that they are supported and a lot of counties are working on this. She added that it's about changing the culture in the agency and understanding that they not only need to support children and families but they also need to support their staff.

Dep. Sec. Utz also said they are looking at the utilization of congregate care. Some counties with a large number of teens coming into care have a philosophy of placing them in an institutional setting as it is easier. In those counties with a high utilization of congregate care, she said the department is working with the courts (AOPC) to see how they can reduce it because the outcomes are not good and part of their focus is on successful reentry. They are finding that about 30% of the kids come back into the system after a short time (3 to 6 months) of being placed back in the home. Therefore, they need to do something differently (i.e., additional support services for the family) to make sure the kids stay home. She said the department is focused on using data to guide them and more evidence-based programs and that they need to help counties determine which services are working and build those programs while phasing out services that aren't necessarily working. She said better assessment of families and their needs are key to ensuring that they receive appropriate services.

Sec. Dallas stated that if we can avoid putting a child into the welfare system that is a good thing because even going through the system will result in trauma for the kids let alone the trauma of being taken out of their only home they know. Rep. Miller also pointed out the trauma the kids experience by being in the court room.

Sen Greenleaf mentioned that he had sponsored a law (Act 204 of 2012) which changed the preamble of the Juvenile Act to require the juvenile justice system to achieve its mission by employing evidence-based practices whenever possible and mandate the courts to use the least restrictive alternative in every disposition that is consistent with the child's treatment, supervision and rehabilitation needs. He stated that taking children out of the home harms them and this revision recognizes the need to try and keep them in their home.

Rep. Gainey commented that you need to engage the family and help the parent. Until you help the parent make achievements, the child may not be inclined to change. Sec. Dallas said DHS has three goals: 1) Expanding access to quality services, 2) Serving more people in the community and 3) Encouraging and finding ways to employ the individuals they serve. He remarked that work is not only for earning money but is also therapeutic for the person and wholeheartedly agreed that it's not just important to the parent but also important to the child to see their parent succeed. Rep. Gainey said it is vital for the child to see his mother or father achieve something. If the parent shows progression it will have an impact on the child.

Sec. Dallas indicated that he also wanted to bring to the members' attention something called Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). Dep. Sec. Utz explained that APPLA is something that is considered for older youth. What they have recognized is that there are some kids who linger in the foster care system far too long that it becomes their goal that they will be discharged from foster care at age 18 or 21 rather than looking to ensure that they have permanency through kinship care, adoption or another form of permanency. She said the department is focusing on how they can reduce the number of children that have a goal of APPLA, which means they are planning to graduate from the child welfare system at some point in time. The department does not believe that APPLA should be a goal for youth until an older age. Ms. Utz indicated that federal law now says that a child under 16 cannot have a goal of APPLA and that DHS is working on legislation that could mirror it. However, she commented that a long term goal is that no child in the welfare system should have a goal of APPLA and efforts made to find a permanent resource and connection for that child. She mentioned about stories of youth who left the foster care system but were unable to function in society. Dep. Sec. Utz further remarked that changing the public's perception is important because there are some that say you shouldn't focus on older youth because it is too late. She said the department's position is that these youth are the parents of tomorrow.

Dep. Sec. Utz also said they need to make sure that kids are prepared for the workforce and do a better at job training, job skills, and mentoring of youth so that they have the skills necessary to succeed once they leave the system. She also mentioned improving the success of foster care kids who pursue a post-secondary degree. Finally, she mentioned that we have a strong youth advisory board which enables them to engage in conversations with kids who have gone through the system. Dep. Sec. Utz added that she remains connected to many of the youth who have left the foster care system. She said it allows them to find out what made the difference for some and what would have helped others toward success.

Sec. Dallas mentioned reading a national study about kids aging out of the child welfare system and pointed out that it is not just a Pennsylvania issue. The study found that within 18 months of kids graduating from the system, 50% of them were homeless and without a job. He said if you don't have a job you are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system and maybe involved in substance abuse. That said, you want to have a much better path for these kids to make that transition into adulthood.

Sen. Greenleaf suggested that the department look at involving non-profit and faith-based organizations in their mission. He indicated that as part of the prison reform initiative (SB 100) adopted in 2012 (Act 122), it contained provisions which provided that the Corrections Department and Board of Probation and Parole may use and contract with community organizations and other nonprofit and for-profit entities to assist the department and the board in meeting the needs of offenders reentering the community. He commented that there are a lot of good-hearted people out there that would be willing to help. Sec. Dallas said this reminded him of an initiative that was just getting started in Maryland before he left which involved mostly faith-based groups in a process called "open table". Basically, a group of people would sit down with a kid who is moving towards aging out of the system and they would talk and plan with them and take responsibility for meeting with the kid. An individual in the group with a financial background could talk with the kid about budgeting while another person who is good at cooking could help teach them how to cook. He remarked that it was a very powerful thing to see strangers who cared about this kid and see a community get involved.

Sen Greenleaf also mentioned that there are numerous seminars all over the nation about best practices and wondered whether there is someone who is looking into these seminars and proposals for new ideas. Dep. Sec. Utz commented that DHS has been working with Casey Family Programs (national foundation focused on

foster care and child welfare) for many years and they have assisted the department in identifying best practices. There are also other associations involving Human Service Secretaries and Child Welfare Directors from around the nation where information about best practices are exchanged. She further commented that they have gone to other states to learn about what they are doing as well as brought teams into PA where they (and counties) were able to learn from them. We have also received technical assistance from the National Governor's Association.

Sen. Greenleaf invited Sec. Dallas to come back and he agreed. Sec. Dallas said he could go over some of the best practices next time. The Secretary also extended to caucus members an invitation to the youth advisory board so that they could participate and meet some of the kids in the child welfare system and hear from them their experience in the system.

As a follow-up to an earlier discussion, Rep. Gainey asked whether drug abuse is the main reason why some of the kids coming out of the homes and entering the workforce go to jail. Sec. Dallas said he thinks it is different for different people but pointed out that these kids sometimes see family members involved in drugs and a quick way to make cash. He thinks it has more to do with the environment and the individuals they know than the use of drugs.

Clarissa Freeman (Sen. Kitchen's Office) asked about looking at local bar associations as a resource for getting people involved to help these kids. She commented that you could tap into a young lawyers association at the local level and these attorneys know their court system. Sec. Dallas commented that having folks who are lawyers who know the legal system is good and that there is always a shortage of folks to help kids.

In closing the meeting, Sen. Greenleaf informed members that representatives with **Education Works** would be sharing with caucus members about their **Youth Court Program** at our next meeting which is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 18th in Room 14 East Wing from 10am to 11 am.**

Attendance for 10/28/15 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

Rep. Steve McCarter

Rep. Dan Miller

Rep. Ed Gainey

Rep. Tarah Toohil

Rep. Mark Cohen

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)

Philip Murray (for Rep. Thomas)

April Ashe (for Rep. Thomas)

Clarissa Freeman (for Sen. Kitchen)

Liana Walters (for Sen. Haywood)

Greg Grasa (for Rep. Watson)

Jenna Harris (for Rep. Toohil)

Christine Zubeck (for Sen. Scavello)

Brandi Miller (for Rep. Sturla)

Bill Casey (for Sen. Schwank)

Ted Dallas (DHS Secretary)

Cathy Utz (Deputy Secretary, DHS Office of Children Youth and Family) – cutz@pa.gov

Abdoul Barry (DHS Legislative Affairs Director) - abbarry@pa.gov

At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf thanked everyone for coming and welcomed Gregg Volz, Esq., a representative of [EducationWorks](#) (a non-profit organization providing support for economically disadvantaged communities in Philadelphia and Chester Pennsylvania, and Camden New Jersey), to discuss their [Youth Court Program](#). In addition to Mr. Volz, Director of the Youth Court Support Center, Sen. Greenleaf welcomed Mike Winterstein, a Youth Court teacher at Strawberry Mansion High School as well as two high school students (Anrico and Chenell) from Strawberry Mansion who could share with the caucus about their experience/participation in youth court at their school and how kids react to it.

Mr. Winterstein shared how he always wanted to teach and after receiving his certification in teaching he desired to work at his neighborhood high school (Germantown) but it closed. That led him to Strawberry Mansion and last year he took over the youth court program from another person. He remarked that the nice part about youth court is that it lends itself to a teacher's style and is flexible enough where it can be used in different types of environments and different types of schools.

Sen. Greenleaf inquired as to the purpose of youth court and how is it structured. Mr. Winterstein stated that the structure is similar to an average courtroom/trial with a jury, a judge, a bailiff, a defense lawyer (called a youth advocate), and the respondent (student in trouble). He also remarked that youth court is authorized by the school and that it's an elective class and students receive credit. In addition, youth court focuses on restorative justice, which is restoring any type of harm that was done. Mr. Winterstein added that the kids are in charge of everything in the room (from the jury to the judge), which is one of the most powerful parts of it. He commented that the kids learn to take control of everything and that sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work but he believes the process is most important.

Sen. Greenleaf questioned how students are chosen to be a part of youth court and the type of punishment that is administered under the program compared to the school district. Mr. Winterstein said they do not deal with any discipline that the school district itself imposes like detention or suspension, which are punitive ways of handling problems. He said youth court takes a different approach (restorative in nature) and does not allow students to punish other students or have any kind of punitive action. The sanction imposed by the youth court must be restorative in some way. Sen. Greenleaf remarked that it is vital for them at an adult level as well as youth level to understand the consequence of their actions on another person and then to try to rectify that.

Clarissa Freeman (Sen. Kitchen's Office) asked for examples of the types of infractions handled by the youth court. Mr. Winterstein commented that there is a wide range. He said that for every student that enters the court room, the alternative was a suspension. Therefore, every time they have a court case it prevents a suspension. Typically, the infraction can range from cursing at another student or teacher, to disrespect in the classroom toward a teacher or another student, to walking out of the room without permission. The smallest infraction would probably be disruption and the highest infraction fighting.

Dontie' Brooks (Rep. Watson's Office) inquired as to the frequency of youth court. Mr. Winterstein replied that youth court occurs every day. He added that every Monday they handle all the paperwork and introduce all the students who have been in trouble with the students who will handle the process. The rest of the week (Tuesday through Friday) they handle one trial per day.

Sen. Greenleaf asked what grade levels participate in their youth court. Mr. Winterstein said 9th through 12th grade. He also asked who chooses the participants. Mr. Winterstein said it is more or less what fits into that student's schedule because certain students need certain classes to graduate so that dictates a lot of the schedule. He stated that this year they have a big transition since nearly 90% of those participating in youth court are new students. He added that Chenell is one of the students who has stayed in the youth court program, which is a goal - try and keep as many students as they can to teach the new students how youth court works and be an example.

Sen. Greenleaf inquired as to the effectiveness of the overall program and its impact on the student in trouble. Mr. Winterstein said he thought that it depends on the student and the room that day. He believed the program to be extremely effective overall because each day the students in the class grow from the experience and although they may not be able to teach the students in trouble that day, they end up teaching themselves by default. Mr. Winterstein agreed and added that as students try to teach somebody something, they are holding themselves accountable to that standard. He further commented that at least once a week students who enter the room for trial recognize things in their actions and behavior due to the process. While it may be hard to change the student's overall behavior for the rest of their life from only one time in youth court, Mr. Winterstein feels this experience with peers ignites their thought process and is more powerful than coming from those in a position of authority.

Ms. Freeman inquired whether they have repeat offenders and the consequences. Mr. Winterstein said it is typically up to the principal and she will not allow repeat offenders to come to youth court. That said, he has yet to see a student come into youth court who has repeated that same behavior again.

Mr. Winterstein preceded to share prepared remarks (*see attached) which he thought may answer some questions about youth court as well as share his story and experience with the students.

Next, a student (Anrico) shared how he was impacted by his involvement in youth court. Anrico noted seeing many people where he lives (North Philadelphia) get into trouble with the law because of gangs, drugs and violence. He learned to separate himself from those things. He commented that the youth court class helped him change and learn decision making skills. Anrico said he didn't think he would like the class at first but he learned ways to help people solve their problems both inside and outside school. He said youth court helped to humble him and be responsible for his actions as well as learn to control his anger. Also, youth court helped him to understand why people behave the way they do. Sen. Greenleaf asked what roles he played in youth court, how he liked it and whether he knew the kid that was in trouble. Anrico said his favorite role was bailiff but he also played the judge and the jury. He also commented knowing the kid in trouble and it forced him to put himself in the other person's shoes. Sen. Greenleaf asked Anrico how the students in trouble respond to this process and whether he thinks he has more influence with them than teachers. Anrico said that the students take it better coming from him than if they heard it from a teacher. He tells them the best way and they listen but when they hear it from a teacher they don't want to hear it. Sen. Greenleaf asked if he saw any changes in his friends who went through the youth court. Anrico said yes and shared a story of a friend who changed after the trial.

Ms. Freeman asked what the structure was for follow-up with students after the trial. Anrico stated that when the trial is done, they go over what the student told them and come up with something for them to do to make up for it. For example, if a student cussed at a teacher, they may tell them to apologize verbally or write a letter

saying they are sorry. The youth advocate follows up with the student to make sure that the student performs the task. Mr. Brooks asked what happens if they don't do it. Anrico said they get sent to the principal's office.

Bill Casey (Sen. Schwank's Office) asked if someone could walk the caucus members through the whole youth court process. Chenell said the process is as follows: *The bailiff gets the student who is in trouble (respondent) from the hallway and brings them into the courtroom and swears them in; *The judge reads the rules of the court room; *The bailiff reads the teacher's statement and the student's statement; *Then you have the opening statements; *Then the jury begins questioning; *Then both sides give closing statements and go out into the hallway as the jury does their disposition; *Then you come back in the court room and the judge reads the disposition and makes sure that the respondent understands it.

Mr. Casey asked if one person is always the judge or do students take turns. Chenell said they take turns. He asked whether students like Anrico and Chenell take turns in each of the roles. Mr. Winterstein said yes. Once they get comfortable in all the positions, they figure out who's good at what and place them in that role to be most effective. He remarked that Chenell is one of their better judges and Anrico is one of their better bailiffs but they could probably do other positions. He added that they are the two leaders in the court room because the judge and bailiff handle all the discipline. Mr. Winterstein said once the trial starts he simply observes.

Ms. Freeman asked how their youth court program translates into keeping students out of the juvenile justice system and whether they invite people from the courts to come in and talk to the kids. Mr. Volz remarked that he experienced resistance in trying to do this with the juvenile justice system so he decided to work with the schools. However, he indicated that the Deputy Commissioner for Philadelphia Police Department, Kevin Bethel, recently received a Stoneleigh Fellowship for 3 years to expand a pre-arrest diversionary program in the Philadelphia School District. Mr. Bethel wants to develop six youth courts not just in the schools but also create juvenile justice based youth courts. Mr. Volz said youth courts are not the only diversionary program that work but they are unique in that the kids operate it and not the adults. Mr. Winterstein added that youth court gets kids to think about their actions and start the thought process before they act and end up in the juvenile justice system.

Ms. Freeman asked if parents or families ever come back and say thank you for helping their child. Mr. Winterstein said maybe a handful of times. Mr. Volz added that in Chester they initially required the parent to be at the hearing but they ended up not following through with that because there were so many parents that couldn't get to school. He said parents generally loved youth court and thought it was a great idea.

Liana Walters (Sen. Haywood's Office) asked what role Mr. Winterstein plays if the students run the entire court room process. Mr. Winterstein said they do not hold any trials for the first few months and just start out teaching the process/roles. He said in the beginning they teach the kids about restorative justice – what are things we can do to fix issues as opposed to punishing kids for things. As a teacher he needs to build strong relationships with the kids to where they trust you and buy into this process.

Sen. Greenleaf asked if there is a cost associated with the program. Mr. Volz said it can be very cheap to set up a youth court. He can train a teacher and kids how to run youth court in the first year but they may not need him after that and shared an example. He also uses undergraduates and law students to help do training and commented that kids can teach other kids (peer learning) how things work. He said it may cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000 to come into a school and start a youth court. He said the bottom line is that it is an extremely affordable program.

Ms. Freeman asked how many teachers are trained in a school so if one leaves another teacher can step in and run the program. Mr. Volz said they will train whoever they want but the problem in public education is that some buildings do not have enough teachers.

Mr. Volz proceeded to say that he believes you need to bring the juvenile justice system and the educational system together. He shared a story that five or six years ago he did a youth court presentation in Harrisburg with both systems and while they thought it was a great idea, when he spoke privately with key people from both agencies, each side said they didn't know how to work with the other.

Philip Murray (Rep. Thomas' Office) asked if this could be utilized for other offenses in the school and Mr. Volz said yes and shared how a youth court teacher said he felt they could handle other situations in the school.

Ms. Freeman asked about interest in maybe a bar association or young lawyer association doing some pro bono work. Mr. Volz said it was a great idea and something they have been thinking about for 5 or 6 years but with very little success in getting the legal community to support them. He remarked about an upcoming presentation to judges in Philadelphia and that he does trainings all the time on law campuses.

Sen. Greenleaf asked if youth courts are a best practice and inquired about results and how successful the program has been and whether it stops truancy and kids dropping out of school. Mr. Volz said the best research he has seen is out of Washington, DC. In 2012, Research for Action did research on the Chester youth courts. He said there is a lot of research that suggests that the kids going through these courts makes a difference in their lives. He added that they are going to train 500 kids this year to run 20 different youth courts and the kids tell him that it changed their lives. He believes it's a life transforming process and it cost very little money and what they really need is public sector support. Mr. Winterstein said that while the program may not transform issues like truancy, fighting and dropout rates, you cannot ignore the positive things that the program is doing. Sen. Greenleaf suggested following up with the students that have gone through the youth court process to see how effective it has been.

Mr. Brooks asked whether a kid whose infraction is heard through youth court is placed on their school records. Mr. Volz said if you come to youth court and they give you a disposition and you complete it, your record is supposed to be expunged so there's no evidence that you did anything.

Mr. Volz proceeded to share about himself and said he had been doing this for 9 years. He had a private foundation pay him for 4 years and then the past few years he has headed up the Youth Court Support Center. He remarked that youth courts empower kids and they are the ones that are going to turn themselves around, their school and their neighborhood. While you are not going to solve every problem in urban America by starting a youth court, it is a powerful tool which is why he included 18 or 19 letters of support from people who know and believe in youth courts. He commented that it takes about 20 hours to teach a group of kids to run a court. There are two types of youth courts. A court in the school that deals with school offenses and one in the juvenile justice system that deals with minor juvenile problems. He remarked that PA has very few juvenile justice youth courts with none in the Philadelphia region. Also, PA is the largest state in the country who doesn't have a robust system of youth courts. He said Florida estimates that youth courts save them \$50 million dollars a year. He added that there's about 1,100 youth courts in the U.S. of which 1/3 are in schools and 2/3 are in justice systems.

Mr. Volz said students view peer justice as fairer than adult discipline. He stated that they have some data which shows lower recidivism and higher graduation rates. He said students that participate in the process acquire legal knowledge and a positive attitude toward the legal system. They also learn what it's like to contribute to their community, analyze facts, problem solve, and improve their public speaking and communication skills. Also, he believes it's a dropout prevention program. He indicated that they are doing youth courts in 6 schools in Philadelphia, 6 schools in Chester and have run them in Camden, NJ. The most recent place is Montgomery County. He added that there have been resolutions passed by the PA Bar Association, the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Philadelphia City Council supporting youth courts.

Mr. Volz stated that he would make some recommendations. He suggested that caucus members see a youth court hearing. He argued that once you see a 20 to 25 minute court hearing, the program will sell itself. He also said both the education system and the juvenile justice system need to be brought together and that high school students like Anrico and Chenell should be included so that they can be involved in the process. Finally, he mentioned that 5 years ago they were asked to draft a youth court statute for PA. He said they did but no action was ever taken. He understands the many issues that the legislature is dealing with and just wanted people to know that they, with the help of a panel of law students, researched every youth court statute in the U.S. and drafted a bill. Mr. Volz commented that he believes that PA really needs a law.

To close out the meeting, Chenell shared about herself and how she was impacted by her involvement in youth court at Strawberry Mansion. Chenell said she was never able to see the good in herself as she viewed living in her neighborhood (North Philly) as a negative place (i.e., black on black crime, gang violence and drug dealers). She shared how her little brother was killed by a stray bullet. Chenell said she has been in youth court for 3 years and saw people come in with the same type of problems that she had been through. She said kids act out in school because of things they may be dealing with at home. She stated that in youth court you listen to their problems so you have a better understanding of why they get in trouble in school and with law enforcement. She said youth court gives them a chance to open up and a second chance to better themselves despite their problems. She added that youth court has given her skills that will help her escape the problems she faces every day in her life. She commented that youth court has given her skills to be successful in her future career as a lawyer and has given her hope to believe there is something bigger for her.

Sen. Greenleaf once again thanked everyone for coming and concluded the meeting.

Attendance for 11/18/15 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)

Philip Murray (for Rep. Thomas)

Clarissa Freeman (for Sen. Kitchen)

Liana Walters (for Sen. Haywood)

Bill Casey (for Sen. Schwank)

Dontie' Brooks (for Rep. Watson)

Ashley Roach (for Rep. Youngblood)

Gregg Volz (EducationWorks, Director of the Youth Court Support Center) -

Micah Winterstein (Youth Court teacher at Strawberry Mansion High School)

Chenell and Anrico (students at Strawberry Mansion High School)

At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus Meeting
Wednesday, April 6, 2016
Room 14 East Wing
Summary of Meeting

Senator Greenleaf welcomed everyone and thanked Cathy Utz, Deputy Secretary for DHS Office of Children Youth & Family, for coming. Sen. Greenleaf remarked that in October DHS Secretary Ted Dallas and Dep. Sec. Utz were kind enough to come and share with the caucus what the department is doing to help at-risk children and families. At the end of the meeting, Sec. Dallas expressed a willingness to return and share more about best practices being utilized by the department.

Dep. Sec. Utz started off the meeting by saying that she looks at child welfare in terms of safety, permanency and wellbeing. In terms of safety, she mentioned the passage of 24 bills which changed the child protective services law in PA and that the department has been working for the last 16 months with county children and youth agencies on implementation of the new requirements (e.g., expanded definition of child abuse, mandated reporters of child abuse, expanded requirements around clearances). She commented that when we talk about children who are most at risk, some of the most vulnerable citizens are between the ages of 0 and 18 receiving services in child welfare. At the county level they have seen a large increase in the number of reports to both the state's child abuse hotline as well as to the county children and youth agencies. Reports of child abuse increased from 25,000 in 2014 to nearly 40,000 in 2015. In addition, the number of background clearances jumped from nearly 600,000 to 1.5 million, which includes both employees as well as volunteers.

Dep. Sec. Utz also mentioned that one of the new requirements is to ensure that mandated reporters receive training. Between November 2014 and December 2015 over 600,000 individuals were trained either in-person or through online training courses. She remarked that child abuse and neglect impacts all socio-economic levels and that people are more aware of it as a result of recent events. This has led to an increase in reports at the county level. Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that the state is working with the counties in how to identify and properly assess cases to make appropriate decisions.

Sen. Greenleaf inquired as to whether the child abuse reports being filed are more serious or less serious? Dep. Sec. Utz responded that the cases are a mix of both. She remarked that people want to do the right thing and with increased penalties for failure to report, training, a heightened awareness around the Sandusky case and the recent grand jury report involving priests in Altoona, the department has seen an over reporting by individuals to fulfill their statutory mandate. She commented that in time people will have a better idea of what to report.

Sen. Greenleaf remarked that there is a need to change the attitude and culture toward children. That children are not property and they have rights and protections and that they cannot be abused. He said that prosecution of sensational cases are important to deal with and expose child abuse and neglect but we need to change public opinion.

Judge Smith-Ribner inquired if the department knew where the 40,000 child abuse reports were concentrated. Dep. Sec. Utz stated that the reports come from all over the Commonwealth but the majority are in Philadelphia. She said they probably represent about half of the cases. She further remarked that all the counties have seen a significant increase with some more than others.

Sen. Greenleaf asked what types of offenses are reported. Dep. Sec. Utz said most cases are sexual abuse (historically sexual abuse represents about 48% of substantiated reports) followed by physical abuse. She said that many of the cases of child abuse occur within the family (not someone external) and that the high profile cases like Jerry Sandusky are not typical.

Rep. Toohil questioned if the perpetrators of child abuse are outside the family. Dep. Sec. Utz mentioned the Jerry Sandusky case as well as the Grand Jury report related to Altoona as examples of perpetrators being outside the family and involving multiple victims. When abuse occurs inside the family it usually involves one child.

Rep. Toohil further asked if the reports were founded. Dep. Sec. Utz said the reports are referrals and need to be investigated to determine if they are substantiated or not. She said that typically 15% of the total cases reported become substantiated and that the department is looking to see if that remains constant since the change in law and increased reporting.

In performing the 1.5 million background clearances, Dep. Sec. Utz said the department identified 2,000 individuals who were either named as perpetrators or were pending an investigation. As a result, the agency that was looking to approve them to volunteer or to hire them benefited from this information that they wouldn't have necessarily had before.

Sen. Greenleaf asked how many complaints are associated with domestic disputes. Dep. Sec. Utz said the department is looking into this matter and they have an upcoming meeting with representatives from the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence about how county child welfare agencies and domestic violence agencies can better assess and work together. Sen. Greenleaf also asked how many of the reports are determined to be unfounded and how many are related to some divorce action. Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that in prior years about 84% to 85% of the cases were unfounded but they are still analyzing current data to see if the percentage of unfounded reports has changed since the revisions in law. She did not have any data on divorce actions but said they should have some data in the future.

With regard to the high number of unfounded reports, Dep. Sec. Utz attributed it to the relatively high standards (serious incident) in our definition of child abuse in the past. She commented that the recent law changes in the definition of child abuse has lowered the threshold and the department is trying to make sure they have correct information (make sure it is child abuse). In addition, she believes PA is now more in line with other states in terms of the definition of abuse. She also said they have general protective services which is typically more neglect type cases. About 70% of the cases are neglect and the county can actually intervene with child services to prevent it from escalating to a higher nature.

Rep. Toohil remarked that county children and youth agencies are overburdened because the number of reports coming in have doubled. Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that each county children and youth agency may be set up differently depending upon the size. In smaller counties every worker may do investigation as well as placement services while larger counties have a particular unit which specializes in investigations. In talking with counties, they have found that the increased burden is on the front end and not necessarily with ongoing services that are delivered after those decisions have been made on whether the family needs services. She said some counties may shift their workforce from the back end to the front end. That said, services haven't grown at the same rate across the board but rather they need more staff that deals with intake services.

Rep. Toohil expressed concern with counties not increasing the number of employees to meet the burden. She mentioned that the state will give you increases in salary for these positions but the county must approve more people. She asked whether any counties have approved the hiring of new employees to help alleviate the increased workload. Dep. Sec. Utz acknowledged that there have been some hiring freezes at the county level but indicated that there are some counties that have increased their staff complement. She also agreed with Rep. Toohil that the counties control the staff salary and that the state pays 80% of the cost and the other 20% comes from the county. Dep. Sec. Utz mentioned that they have looked into salaries at the local level through Pennsylvania Management Associate (PMA) and indicated that the salaries are not at the average they would pay right now so there would be room to possibly grow the salary if the county chooses to do that.

Greg Grasa (Rep. Watson's Office) expressed interest in the PMA salary data. Dep. Sec. Utz said she could share that information with him as well as internal data through their HR office. Mr. Grasa mentioned that the House Children & Youth Committee, chaired by Rep. Watson, held a hearing (the first in a series) on Monday looking into the child welfare system and agency staffing. He also brought to Sen. Greenleaf's attention a bill (SB 1156) currently on the Senate calendar which would fix the background clearance law.

Sen. Greenleaf mentioned that his attention was drawn to the habitual violent sexual predator with the murder of Meghan Kanka in New Jersey. He assumed that the 40,000 reports of child abuse did not all involve these types of predators. Dep. Sec. Utz said she agreed and noted that they work on the civil side not criminal. She noted that there has been a significant increase in the number of reports that Childline and counties are referring to local law enforcement officials because it was expanded as part of the task force recommendations. Sen. Greenleaf ask if the department had any idea how many reported cases involve violent sexual predators. Dep. Sec. Utz said she did not know but could look into it and possibly get that information. Sen. Greenleaf remarked that we need to identify these predators and target resources toward them.

Clarissa Freeman (Sen. Kitchen's Office) asked if the department has any type of mandated counseling for repeat sex offenders or child victims. She indicated reading that if you were violated as a child there may be some correlation to the child becoming an offender. Dep. Sec. Utz said at the time of determination they do an assessment of the child and family needs in order to alleviate the problems and make sure it doesn't happen again. She indicated that there is a growing body of evidence that when you're victimized as a child that you have a greater propensity to potentially become a perpetrator in the future. However, she indicated that the department is taking a more comprehensive look at the entire family and they are trying to be more trauma focused and utilize evidence-based programs to address the trauma. She noted that substance abuse of parents is a main reason why children find themselves in the child welfare system.

Rep. Toohil also expressed concern for abused children. She indicated that they are required to go to court or forced to visit their drug addicted parent rather than going to counseling or attending school every day like other kids. She commented that we don't have enough focus on the best interest of the child. In addition, she raised concerns with guardians ad litem. Dep. Sec. Utz remarked that the department has been partnering with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) for nearly ten years. The courts formed a statewide leadership round table which is chaired by Supreme Court Justice Max Baer and involves Secretary Dallas. It recognizes the vital role that the court plays in child welfare and making sure they have the information and tools needed to make decisions. Dep. Sec. Utz said they have been working with the courts to help them better understand some of the child development related issues. In addition, she said they have been working with the courts on better training for guardians ad litem as well as county solicitors and parent attorneys to help ensure better representation across the system.

Ms. Freeman asked if there is a way to find out how many guardians ad litem exist throughout the 67 counties and whether they have been increasing or decreasing. There may be an opportunity to volunteer or do pro bono work. Rep. Toohil also commented on the issue and said that you want a guardian ad litem to be someone with passion for kids. Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that there's a federal requirement that in order to be a guardian ad litem you have to be trained to your role. She also indicated that the department has been working with the AOPC on this matter. DHS has been tracking information when counties submit their budget request to fund a guardian and they have to show that they have gone through training. Dep. Sec. Utz also mentioned that AOPC has been doing court observations with staff from within AOPC. Staff is assigned to each of the 60 judicial districts and they actually go out and observe court and provide feedback.

Sen. Greenleaf asked if the department is implementing best practices to help evaluate individuals (e.g., victim) similar to the criminal justice system that uses a risk assessment tool. Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that this is an area where there's a growing body of information on better assessment and identification of strength and needs in the child welfare system. Sen. Greenleaf indicated that the same story is happening over and over again and therefore you should be able to predict what will happen in the future. Dep. Sec. Utz said that they are moving in that direction. She said it is called predictive analytics in the child welfare system and it is emerging. She said they are having conversations with other states who are moving in that direction and noted that Allegany County is looking at predictive analytics. Also, they have been working with a foundation (Casey Family Partners) to learn more about what's happening in this field. She agreed that the best predictor is that if I'd done something repeatedly chances are I'm going to do it again. So how do we break that cycle and more importantly how do you prevent it from happening so that it doesn't have to come to the attention of the child welfare system.

Dep. Sec. Utz also said that we need to get others engaged and involved in making sure that children in their community are safe. Given that we know substance abuse is a primary driver of children into the system, how are we going to work on the crisis so we know that the families are going to come to our attention and can be served in the community. She indicated that DHS has been working with Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Gary Tennis and his staff on tackling the issue of substance abuse. She mentioned that extensive research was done in seven counties through a national resource company which assessed those counties and then developed county specific strategies. They would like to take that information which was gathered and share it with all 67 counties so they can see what practices are working.

Judge Smith-Ribner asked what percentage of suspected child abuse reports come from educators since they have exposure to kid's every day. She also asked if DHS works with the PA Department of Education (PDE) with regard to teacher training. Dep. Sec. Utz indicated that educators are the largest group of mandated reporters so most of them are coming from schools and confirmed that DHS does work with PDE on training.

Rep. Toohil commented on the fact that we have 67 counties but they are all doing different things and ask for any thoughts on standardizing things across the state or having a state children and youth like other states. Dep. Sec. Utz said she thought that the [Legislative Budget & Finance Committee](#) had previously done a study on this matter. She said there could be some positives and negatives. While there may be an opportunity for greater efficiencies and decreased administrative burden, there will probably be some of the same challenges. Given the diverse nature of PA (rural /urban communities), what may work in Philadelphia may not work in Potter or Monroe.

Dep. Sec. Utz took some time to talk about child welfare workers and said that regardless of whether it's a state position or a county position, child welfare is a job that should be respected given the enormous amount of responsibility they have. She also said that they need to talk about what is working well and be proactive rather than reactive.

Rep. Toohil talked about whether we can use the strategies (predictive analytics) discussed earlier to help foster children have more success. She mentioned that only a certain percentage (3%) of foster kids attend college. Dep Sec. Utz remarked that some foster kids haven't receive the respect they deserve, whether participating in sports or going to school dances. It was mentioned that federally there has been a push to improve the lives of foster children which is forcing states to move in that direction. Mr. Grasa mentioned that the PA General Assembly recently (December) passed legislation (HB 477) which was a federal mandate as far as normalizing the lives of foster kids by letting the foster parents make the decisions as a normal parent.

Rep. Toohil said that foster children getting haircuts can be a problem in her county when you have controlling biological parents going to court. Dep. Sec. Utz said that she thinks that part of it is changing culture within agencies. She remarked that we just changed the law in December and that it takes some time to see systems change. It is just a matter of implementation and following the federal law.

Ms. Freeman asked if there is a way to empower the child (i.e., entitled to a haircut). Dep. Sec. Utz said they have a huge network called the Youth Advisory Board consisting of a statewide board, 6 regional boards and most counties have a youth advisory board where they bring youth who are in the foster care system or existed the system and talking to them to get their feedback. She said it is very powerful to listen to them and hear from them what they think they need and what they want. She also mentioned that Allegheny County has a great program called "[Youth Support Partners](#)" where they actually employ former foster youth who go out and talk with other youth who are in placement and provide guidance.

Attendance for 04/06/16 meeting of At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus

Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

Rep. Tarah Toohil

Rep. Bernie O'Neill

Judge Smith-Ribner

Eric Pauley (for Sen. Greenleaf)

Clarissa Freeman (for Sen. Kitchen)

Malik Pickett (for Sen. Kitchen)

Greg Grasa (for Rep. Watson)

Shannon Sargent (for Sen. Costa)

Bill Casey (for Sen. Schwank)

Ashley Roach (Rep. Youngblood)

Cathy Utz (Deputy Secretary, DHS Office of Children Youth and Family) – cutz@pa.gov

Angela Bertugli Spece (DHS Legislative Affairs) – abertugli@pa.gov

Appendix D: Caucus Newsletter

*The Word version of the 2014 Caucus Newsletter follows on the next page.

*The PDF version of the 2014 Caucus Newsletter is attached to the e-mail message which contains this Report.

The At-Risk Children, Family & Communities *Caucus*

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WINTER 2014

In late 2013, Sen. Stewart Greenleaf and Rep. W. Curtis Thomas collaborated to form a bipartisan, bicameral caucus in the Pennsylvania General Assembly aimed at examining, investigating and addressing myriad issues such as school truancy and dropout, delinquency, poverty, family separation due to incarceration and other problems facing many Pennsylvania families, especially children.

Through meetings with some of the organizations and individuals working on a state level with children and families, the caucus hopes to identify, confront and recommend solutions to a diverse set of challenges that pose risks to the health, safety and welfare of Pennsylvania's children and families.

In this report, some of the results of the initial meetings are detailed, with links and information on various programs and best practices as presented to the caucus.

The At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus will continue its work in the 2015-16 legislative session. The goal of the caucus is to improve the outcomes of at-risk children and families.

CAUCUS TIMELINE

Inaugural meeting: Oct. 2, 2013

PCCD Presentation (Part I): Nov. 20, 2013

PCCD Presentation (Part II): Jan. 15, 2014

PCCD Presentation (Part III): April 2, 2014

JCJC Presentation (Part I): June 4, 2014

MEET THE ORGANIZERS:

CHAIRMEN:



Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

(R-Montgomery/Bucks) has represented Pennsylvania's 12th Senate District since 1978. Currently, he serves as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Rep. W. Curtis Thomas

(D-Philadelphia) has represented the 181st Legislative District since 1988. Currently, he serves as Democratic chairman of the House Commerce Committee.

CO-CHAIRMEN:



Sen. Shirley M. Kitchen

(D-Philadelphia) has represented Pennsylvania's 3rd Senate District since 1996. Currently, she serves as Democratic chairwoman of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee.

Rep. Katharine M. Watson

(R-Bucks) has represented the 144th Legislative District since 2000. Currently, she serves as chairwoman of the House Children and Youth Committee.



Rep. Edward Gainey

(D-Allegheny) has represented the 24th Legislative District since 2013.

Communities That Care (CTC)

A PCCD objective is to empower communities through collaboration. One of the ways PCCD achieves these goals is through a dynamic process called Communities that Care (CTC) prevention-planning model, which is a foundation for research-based delinquency and violence prevention programming in Pennsylvania.

Through CTC, communities are assisted in mobilizing, identifying risk and preventative factors, and developing a prevention plan to assist at-risk youth. This is achieved by creating population-level public health improvement. By investing in evidence-based, risk-focused delinquency prevention efforts, tailored to the specific needs and demographics of a community, there can be a reduction in delinquency, drug use, anti-social behavior and violent tendencies. This, in turn, leads to improved academic achievement for youth in these communities.

Currently, there are more than 65 active CTC coalitions across the commonwealth.

CTC allows communities to come together, identify the priorities and problems and determine which of the communities are best ready to engage to make a difference. In this model, it is not Harrisburg or Washington, D.C. telling a community what to do, but the local leaders.

Mission: To enhance the quality and coordination of criminal and juvenile justice systems, to facilitate the delivery of services to victims of crime, and to increase the safety of Pennsylvania communities.

Background: Created in 1978 to be a state and local leader in promoting justice for all citizens and communities of the commonwealth; focused on enhancing the quality and coordination of services for all components of the justice system.

- Goals:**
- Ensure safe communities;
 - Reduce the impact of crime on victims; and
 - Serve as a criminal and juvenile justice center of excellence.

Risk-focused Prevention Makes Cents ROI for Each Dollar Spent



Category	Investment	Return
Community-Based Prevention (CTC)	\$2.7M	\$11.1M
Police Services	\$1M	\$1.7M
Juvenile Justice	\$1M	\$2.0M
Probation Services	\$1M	\$2.4M
County Jail	\$1M	\$2.8M
State Prison	\$1M	\$3.2M
State Police	\$1M	\$3.6M
Total	\$11.1M	\$54.8M

For every \$1 spent in the CTC process there is more than a \$5 return

\$2.7 million invested in delinquency prevention programs for 5,300 juveniles resulted in \$11.1 million in benefits



Risk-focused Prevention Makes Cents for ROI for Each Dollar Spent

Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC)

Established in 1959 and legislatively mandated, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, or JCJC, is composed of nine judges appointed by the Governor and nominated by the Chief Justice to:

- advise juvenile courts on all matters relating to the proper care and maintenance of dependent and delinquent children;
- establish standards and make recommendations regarding administrative practices and judicial procedures used in juvenile courts, and personnel practices used in juvenile probation offices;
- administer a Grant-in-Aid Program to improve county juvenile probation services;
- collect and analyze data to identify trends and determine program and practice effectiveness;
- make recommendations to judges and others concerning evidence-based programs; and
- oversee the delinquency dispositions reporting process in the Pennsylvania State Police Repository.

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system generally is regarded as a national model. It was the first state selected by the MacArthur Foundation to participate in its Models for Change Initiative when it launched in 2004. The goal of the initiative is to make juvenile justice systems more effective, fair, rational and developmentally appropriate.

In 2010, when the five-year commitment to the MacArthur Foundation was drawing to a close, the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) staff agreed at an annual planning meeting to consolidate the five years of gains under one roof and that the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) was needed.

Under Act 204 of 2012, Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system was mandated to achieve its mission through the use of evidence-based practices. To date, no other state has the statutory mandates and due process protections found in the Commonwealth.



*“Juvenile
Justice:
Community
Protection;
Victim
Restoration;
Youth
Redemption.”*



Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice State Enhancement Strategy (JJSES)

With the purpose of enhancing the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve a balanced and restorative mission using evidence-based practices, the Juvenile Justice State Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) provides a framework to achieve its purpose.

JJSES Framework

Stage One: Readiness – *the planning stage, when there is an introduction to evidence-based practices, completion of a cost-benefit analysis and stakeholder engagement*

Stage Two: Initiation – *structured decision making instruments, such as a detention assessment to help identify any behavioral health issues a child may have, as well as utilizing tools like the Youth Level of Service (YLS) Risk/Needs Assessment, which helps to assess children who are at either a high or low risk to recidivate*

Stage Three: Behavioral Change – *after identifying at-risk children and a plan to help prevent re-arrest in stage two, this stage is about providing children with skill building and cognitive behavioral interventions*

Stage Four: Refinement – *in this stage, ongoing feedback is given on the children for the purpose of making policy and performance measures improvements*

(PCCD)

Interested in CTC in your community?

Here's how it works

1. **REACH OUT TO PCCD** – the commission can help to identify key people and to organize efforts.
2. **ORGANIZE AND HOLD A TOWN HALL MEETING** – bring together key people, stakeholders and community leaders for discussion around the community's needs, identify what kind of services you have in the community and what is needed to serve children, begin to learn evidence-based Blueprint programs, a point person to lead the efforts should be identified.
3. **CAPTURE DATA ON THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SURVEY, SUCH AS PAYS (THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SURVEY), AS WELL AS LOCAL, COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL REPORTS** – this data and report shows the necessity in the community, as well as identifying risk factors and needs.
4. **APPLY TO PCCD FOR FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED BLUEPRINT PROGRAMS** – this is a competitive process and successful communities are those who are better able to articulate local needs, risks and resources.
5. **IMPLEMENT THE COALITION** – PCCD typically starts start-up costs to allow the CTC to begin work.



Evidence-based Blueprint Programs in Pennsylvania

What are they?

Programs identified as having strong evidence as to their effect that can be replicated in other communities.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS WORKING IN PA COMMUNITIES:

- Trauma Focused CBT** – a combination of cognitive, behavioral and family sessions.
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)** – Promotes emotional and social competencies and reduces aggression and behavior problems in elementary school-aged children while enhancing the educational process in the classroom.
- Strengthening Families Program** – aimed at increasing a caregiver's skills in set appropriate limits and show affection and support to youth and in providing skills in youth such as coping and peer pressure resistance.
- Life Skills Training** – a classroom-based universal prevention program designed to prevent adolescent tobacco, alcohol, marijuana use, and violence in middle school-aged students.
- Aggression Replacement Training** – a cognitive behavioral intervention program to help children and adolescents improve social skills competence and moral reasoning, better manage anger and reduce aggression behaviors.
- Prevent Training the Drug Abuse** – a drug prevention program for high school youth who are at risk for drug use and violence-related behavior.
- Big Brothers-Big Sisters** – matches adult volunteer mentors with at-risk youth to create caring and supportive relationships.
- The Incredible Years** – group training programs for parents and children aimed at preventing, reducing and resolving behavioral and emotional problems in children and increasing positive parenting behaviors.

Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support (EPIS)

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Human Services (formerly DHS), PCCD contracts with the Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support (EPIS) Center at Pennsylvania State University's Prevention Research Center.

The center helps to provide training and technical assistance to communities as well as assistance in implementing programs.

A FEW OTHER MODELS
Hartem Children's Zone, Inc.
 Begun in 1970 as Rheebart, Hartem Children's Zone Inc. expanded from working with young children and their families as the city's first business-revolution program, to taking on issues such as open-air drug markets. This is a model program nationally.

It all began with efforts to address the myriad problems of poor families within a single block in Hartem. These problems ranged from violent crime and chronic health problems, to crumbling apartments and failing schools. Today, the several organization serves more than 10,000 children and more than 7,400 adults in a 100 block area through such proactive programs as The Baby College parenting workshop, the Hartem Game pre-school program, the HCCZ Asstoria Initiative, the Promise Academy public charter school and an obesity program to help children stay healthy.

These programs, and others, are offered free to children and families of Hartem in an effort to break the cycle of generational poverty.

What is PAYS?

The Pennsylvania Youth Survey, or PAYS, is a voluntary survey conducted biannually in Pennsylvania schools for youth in 5th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades. The data collected provides a benchmark for alcohol, tobacco, drug use and anti-social and delinquent behaviors by assessing risk factors that are related to these behaviors. The survey generally takes about 45 to 50 minutes to complete.

Data is used at the state and local levels to inform decision-making, providing community leaders and school administrators the ability to direct prevention resources toward areas where they will have the greatest impact.

PAYS first was administered in 1989 and the number of participating school districts continues to grow. PCCD collaborates with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to make PAYS free to all schools in the commonwealth.

Currently about 70% of school districts (347), including some cyber and charter schools, have agreed to participate. As of the writing of this report, neither Pittsburgh nor Philadelphia participates in PAYS.

Results from the survey are sent directly to participating school districts. PCCD and other state agencies receive data from the volunteer schools, although data from schools selected to participate as part of the statewide sample is aggregated.

PAYS is different from the federal Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. YRBS uses a smaller random sample of students in grades 9 through 12. Many state agencies, foundations and nonprofits use the data when seeking or allocating funds.

The program became the basis of the national Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

Southwite

In Carrollton, Ga., the Southwite Co. spent in 2007 launched a program to help prepare young people for employment by ensuring they had adequate workplace skills.

Through the initiative, the company brings 16- and 17-year-old school dropouts into the plant for a week-long program. In 2007, there were 69 students and today there are 250 young men and women who participate.

Students who participate work four hours a day at \$9 an hour in the packaging department and the rest of the day in classrooms at either the company or their former school (depending upon subject matter). Diplomas are issued by the local school district.

To date, 40 percent of graduates of the program went on to higher education and 18 percent have taken jobs at Southwite.



Millions of people are becoming

To learn more, visit some of these websites

Communities That Care
www.episcenter.psu.edu/ctc

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)
www.pccd.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)
www.pccd.pa.gov/Justice-Research/Pages/The-Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey.aspx

EPISCenter
episcenter.psu.edu/

Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC)
www.jcjc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/jcjc_home/5030

Department of Human Services Children, Youth and Families
www.dpw.state.pa.us/dpworganization/officgofchildrenyouthandfamilies/index.htm

Department of Human Services Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services
www.dpw.state.pa.us/dpworganization/officeofchildrenyouthandfamilies/bureauofjuvenilejusticeservices/index.htm

Department of Human Services Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
www.dpw.state.pa.us/forchildren/omhsas/index.htm

Department of Education – Early Warning System/Dropout Prevention
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early_warning_system/21791

Department of Education – Homelessness Program
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/homeless_education/7491

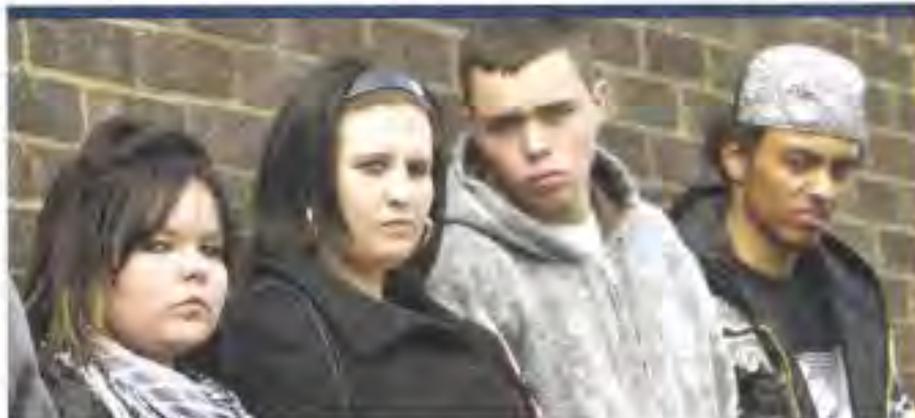
Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
www.ddap.pa.gov

Harlem Children's Zone Project
hcz.org/

Models for Change
modelsforchange.net/index.html

Prevent Delinquency Project
preventdelinquency.org/index.php

Programs to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency
www.livestrong.com/article/251501-programs-to-prevent-juvenile-delinquency/



Communities That Care Outcomes and Economic Benefits



CTC is estimated to generate \$5.30 per dollar invested

Research has found that CTC youth were:

- 33% less likely to start smoking cigarettes
- 32% less likely to start drinking
- 24% less likely to start engaging in delinquency

These reductions have long-term financial benefits:

- \$812 per youth related to the prevention of cigarette smoking
- \$4,438 per youth related to delinquency prevention
- Alcohol use reductions have not yet been monetized

Over 120 communities trained in PA on CTC.

65 currently functioning CTC communities in 48% of our counties.

21% of PA youth (or 335,000) are in a school district with a CTC Coalition.

Kalishnik, M. R., Brown, J. S., Haskins, J. D., & Crissino, K. (in press). Cost benefit analysis of Communities That Care outcomes at eighth grade. *Perspectives on Science, Culture, and Society*, 20(1), 1-12.

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