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LEGISLATIVELY ESTABLISHED INTERAGENCY INITIATIVES

The State of California and the Federal Government have implemented a number of initiatives designed to integrate services for defined groups of children. One of the main goals in each of these interagency initiatives is to improve outcomes for children and families by reducing service fragmentation. Ironically, many counties now struggle with coordinating all of these interagency initiatives. This report is offered as a resource to help this process by briefly summarizing the various interagency policy and planning groups that may exist in any one county.

There are approximately fifteen initiatives that are intended to coordinate and/or integrate services and supports for children, youth and their families. This report discusses these fifteen interagency initiatives in five different categories:

- School-Based Interagency Initiatives
- Child Welfare-Based Interagency Initiatives
- Probation-Based Interagency Initiatives
- Mental Health-Based Interagency Initiatives
- General Interagency Initiatives

School-Based Interagency Initiatives

This section describes five school-based initiatives, including the children to be served and the requirements for an interagency policy-level council. The five initiatives include:

- Healthy Start and Support Services Program
- After School and Safe Neighborhood Program
- School-Based Early Mental Health Intervention and Prevention Services for Children
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers

- High-Risk Youth Education and Public Safety Program

Healthy Start and Support Services Program

The Healthy Start Initiative is intended to provide local school communities with seed money to develop and implement a system of collaborative school-integrated services and informal supports to improve the functioning of children and youth, families, schools, agencies, and communities, and to support educational success for all children and youth. The system should include a collaborative process for administration and governance. There are different expectations regarding collaboration for local Healthy Start sites.

The first expectation is that the local Healthy Start site will establish a collaborative process for administration and governance. The collaborative process may include:

- Children, youth and families
- Teachers, school staff and site administrators
- Colleges, training institutes, and other schools
- Support and service agencies, community-based organizations, businesses, faith communities, cities and/or counties, etc
- District and/or county office of education

The Healthy Start site is expected to use the collaborative process they establish to:

- Develop the Healthy Start program during the planning stages.
- Design and operate the program.

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- Facilitate communication between the LEA and state, local, and community-based organizations providing support services to children.
- Make recommendations to appropriate organizations regarding ways to improve delivery of support services to children, and in the most cost-effective manner.

The second expectation is that the local Healthy Start site link with the Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council if the county established such a council pursuant to Chapter 12.8 (commencing with section 18986) of Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council is expected to approve the Healthy Start grant application. In addition, the council is expected to regularly review the implementation of any program developed through the Healthy Start grant. Finally, the Interagency Coordinating Council may be the collaborative process established to:

- Develop the Healthy Start program during the planning stages.
- Design and operate the program.
- Facilitate communication between the LEA and state, local, and community-based organizations providing support services to children.
- Make recommendations to appropriate organizations regarding ways to improve delivery of support services to children, and in the most cost-effective manner.

After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnership Program

The After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnership Program provides incentives to local school communities to establish after-school enrichment programs. Schools and communities are expected to partner in developing locally driven after-school enrichment programs that provide academic and literacy support and safe, constructive alternatives for youth. The strength of the collaboration is included as part of the criteria for judging an application, but there are no formal guidelines for collaboration.

School-Based Early Mental Health

Intervention and Prevention Services for Children (EMHI)

The Early Mental Health Initiative (EMHI) provides grants to local education agencies to develop early intervention programs for children who are experiencing difficulties adjusting to the school environment. The program may include partnerships between the local education agency and local mental health service providers. However, there are few requirements for formal policy and planning councils. The one expectation for policy and planning councils is that the local education agency submitting the application allow the Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council to review and approve the application.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (Title X, Part 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) provides grants to high-need rural and urban communities to enable them to plan, implement, or expand Community Learning Centers. A Community Learning Center is an entity within a public elementary, middle or secondary school building that:

- Provides educational, recreational, health, and social service programs for residents of all ages within a local community
- Is operated by a local education agency in conjunction with local governmental agencies, businesses, vocational education programs, institutions of higher education, community colleges, and cultural, recreational, and other community and human service entities

While only public schools or local education agencies may receive grants, schools applying for the grants must collaborate, to the extent possible, with:

- Other nonprofit agencies and organizations
- Businesses
- Educational entities
- Recreational, cultural, and other community service entities

High-Risk Youth Education and Public

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Safety Program

The High-Risk Youth Education and Public Safety Program offers county offices of education or school districts an enhanced apportionment to provide prevention and early intervention services to high-risk first-time juvenile offenders and/or high-risk juvenile offenders transitioning to a public school from a ranch, camp, or juvenile hall. The prevention and early intervention services are intended to enhance educational opportunities and reduce juvenile crime and delinquency for youth who are at high-risk for becoming chronic repeat offenders.

To be eligible to establish and maintain this program, the county superintendent of schools or the superintendent of a school district must develop a comprehensive, multi-agency plan. The county superintendent of schools or the superintendent of the school district should include participants from local education agencies within the county, local government entities, and the community. These representatives may include:

- Community-based youth development organizations
- Probation, social service, and mental health agencies
- Civic organizations
- The business community
- Religious groups
- Parents
- City or county law enforcement
- The district attorney
- The public defender
- Youth who are representative of those needing services

Child Welfare-Based Interagency Initiatives

This section describes three child welfare based interagency initiatives, including the children to be served

and the requirements for an interagency policy-level council. The three child welfare-based interagency initiatives include:

- Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment
- Family Preservation and Support
- SB 163 Wraparound Project

Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPT)

Counties may establish child abuse prevention coordinating councils, which are community councils whose primary purpose is to coordinate the community's efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse. These councils must encourage representatives from the following:

- Public child welfare services, including: the county welfare or children's services departments, the probation department, and licensing agencies
- The criminal justice system, including: law enforcement, the district attorney's office, the courts, and the coroner
- Prevention and treatment service communities, including: medical and mental health services, community-based social services, and public and private schools
- Community representatives, including: community volunteers, civic organizations, and the religious community

The child abuse prevention coordinating councils' functions include:

- Providing a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination to prevent, detect, treat, and assist in the legal processing of child abuse cases
- Promoting public awareness of the abuse and neglect of children and the resources available for intervention and treatment
- Encouraging and facilitating training of professionals in detecting, treating, and preventing child abuse and neglect
- Encouraging and facilitating community support

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for child abuse and neglect programs

- Recommending improvements in services to families and victims

Family Preservation and Support Program

The Family Preservation and Support Program provides funds to county social service departments to implement programs designed to protect children and strengthen families. Each county that is interested in participating is expected to establish a local planning body to develop a county plan for their family preservation and support program. Local planning bodies have included:

- Parents
- Consumers
- Child advocates
- Clergy
- Indian tribes
- The court
- Local businesses
- Community-based organizations
- Local agencies

While the plan for the Family Preservation and Support Program is expected to be developed by a collaborative local planning body, statute designates the local social services department as the lead administrative agency responsible for carrying out day-to-day planning activities.

SB 163 Wraparound Services Pilot

The SB 163 Wraparound Services Pilot allows counties to use state foster care funds to provide eligible children with family-based service alternatives to group home care. Children eligible for the SB 163 Wraparound Services Pilot include children who are currently, or would be, placed in a group home licensed at a rate classification of 10 or higher. Adopted children who are otherwise eligible for adoption assistance program funded group home placement and are currently, or would be, placed in a group home licensed at a rate classification of 10 or higher may participate in the pilot.

Counties that choose to participate in this five-year pilot must submit a plan to the California Department of Social Services, which must be approved. Among other things, the plan must include written interagency agreements or memoranda of understanding between the county departments of mental health, social services, and probation that specify the jointly provided or integrated services, staff tasks and responsibilities, facility and supply commitments, budget considerations, and linkage and referral services.

Probation-Based Interagency Initiatives

This section discusses four probation-based interagency initiatives, including the children to be served and the requirements for an interagency policy-level council. The four initiatives include:

- Juvenile Crime and Accountability Challenge Grant Program (Challenge Grant)
- Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 (AB 1913)
- Comprehensive Youth Services Act
- Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP)

Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Challenge Grant Program (Challenge Grant)

The Challenge Grant program has provided competitive grants to counties to help them identify and implement locally developed strategies for responding to juvenile crime and delinquency. The program targets at-risk youth and young offenders between the ages of 11 and 17, and typically involves the youths' families, emphasizing the use of multiple interventions based on a thorough evaluation of various needs and risk factors. The program also requires counties to establish an interagency policy and planning council to develop and administer the grant.

Counties that received a Challenge Grant were expected to establish a multi-agency juvenile justice coordinating council. The council membership is different for the first Challenge Grant and the second Challenge Grant. The membership for the first Challenge Grant includes the Chief Probation Officer and representatives from:

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- District attorney’s office
- Public defender’s office
- Sheriff’s department
- Board of supervisors
- Department of social services
- Department of mental health
- Community-based drug and alcohol programs
- City police department
- County office of education or school district
- Community at large

In addition to these representatives, recipients of the second Challenge Grant were required to include a representative from a community-based organization that works with at-risk youth.

Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 (AB 1913)

The Crime Prevention Act requires counties to develop a plan for implementing programs that provide for a continuum of responses to juvenile crime and delinquency and demonstrate a collaborative and integrated approach for implementing a swift, certain, and graduated response for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders. Programs must be based on successful models. Counties are expected to establish a Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council to develop the comprehensive juvenile justice plan. The Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council is the same council that was expected to develop and implement the Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Challenge Grant Program.

Comprehensive Youth Services Act

The Comprehensive Youth Services Act authorizes the California Department of Social Services to allocate among probation departments the old Title IV-A Emergency Assistance Funds that are now part of the TANF Block Grant. The Act requires the county board of supervisors to establish a local planning council to advise the Chief Probation Officer in developing the proposed expenditure plan for the funds. The planning council

should include representatives from:

- County health, mental health, probation, child protective services, and education departments
- Local school districts
- City and county law enforcement agencies
- Community-based organizations that serve at-risk youth
- One or more youth at risk or who have been adjudicated under section 601 or 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code
- Parents or family members of at-risk youth

Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP)

The Repeat Offender Prevention Program is intended to test intervention strategies designed to reduce recidivism among the small percentage of first time juvenile offenders identified in research conducted by the Orange County Probation Department as having the potential of becoming repeat serious offenders. Minors eligible for participation in the ROPP are based on the following factors:

- The minor is 15 ½ years of age or younger and has been declared a ward of the juvenile court for the first time.
- The minor has been evaluated and found to have at least three of the following factors, that place the minor at a significantly greater risk of becoming a chronic juvenile or adult offender:
 1. **School behavior and performance problems** include at least one of the following: attendance problems, school suspension or expulsion; or failure in two or more academic classes during the previous six months or comparable academic period.
 2. **Family problems** include at least one of the following: poor parental supervision or control; documented circumstances of domestic violence; child abuse or neglect; or family members who have engaged in criminal activities.
 3. **Substance abuse** includes any regular use of

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alcohol or drugs, other than experimentation.

4. **High-risk pre-delinquent behavior** includes at least one of the following: a pattern of stealing; chronic running away from home; or gang membership or association.

Counties participating in the ROPP must create a multi-agency, multidisciplinary, and culturally competent treatment team that includes, among others, education, mental health, drug and alcohol, health, social services, and probation.

Mental Health-Based Interagency Initiative

This section discusses one mental health-based interagency initiative, including the children to be served and the requirements for an interagency policy-level council. The one initiative is the Children’s System of Care.

Children’s System of Care

The Department of Mental Health allocates funds to most counties for them to establish the children’s system of care planning model. Children’s System of Care funds are intended to provide integrated services to children and youth who have a serious emotional disability and their families. A policy and planning council is part of the children’s system of care planning model that is expected to be implemented.

The policy and planning council is expected to act, in essence, as the interagency lead agency for the children’s system of care. As the lead agency, the policy and planning council identifies gaps in services, implements collaborative programs, and ensures collaboration on countywide policy and planning. The council is expected to include the following members:

- Family members of children who have been or are currently being served in the county mental health system
- A member of the board of supervisors
- A juvenile court judge
- The district attorney
- The public defender
- The county counsel

- The county superintendent of schools
- The public social services director
- The chief probation officer
- The mental health director

General Interagency Initiatives

This section discusses three general interagency initiatives, including the children to be served and the requirements for an interagency policy-level council. The three general interagency initiatives include:

- Children and Families First (Proposition 10)
- Youth Pilot Project (AB 1741)
- Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council (SB 997)

Children and Families First (Proposition 10)

The Board of Supervisors must establish a county children and families first commission to plan and implement early intervention programs for children ages birth to five. The commission must include at least five members and may not exceed nine members. Two of the members must be from among the county health officer and persons responsible for management of the following county functions:

- Children’s services
- Public health services
- Behavioral health services
- Social services
- Tobacco and other substance abuse prevention and treatment services

One member must be a member of the board of supervisors. The remaining three to six members must come from the following:

- County health officer

Manager of children’s services

- Recipients of project services included in the strategic plan
- Educators specializing in early childhood develop-

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ment

- Representatives of a local childcare resource or referral agency, or a local childcare coordinating group
- Representatives of a local organization for prevention or early intervention for families at risk
- Representatives of community-based intervention for families at risk
- Representatives of local school districts
- Representatives of local medical, pediatric, or obstetric associations or societies

Youth Pilot Project

The Youth Pilot Project allows six competitively selected counties to ask for waivers to implement integrated services for children, youth and families. As part of participating in the Youth Pilot Project, the county board of supervisors is expected to create an interagency children’s services coordinating council. However, the law does not specify the membership or duties of the interagency coordinating council.

Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council (SB 997)

The Presley-Brown Interagency Children’s Services Act was intended to provide counties with the opportunity to develop a comprehensive system for the delivery of services to children and youth and to provide fiscal incentives in the form of waivers and negotiated contracts to encourage collaboration. A number of counties established an Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council pursuant to this act. The Interagency Children’s Services Coordinating Council includes persons responsible for management of the following functions:

- Alcohol and other drug programs
- Children’s services
- Housing and redevelopment
- Probation department
- Public health services
- Social services

- Presiding judge of the juvenile court
- County schools superintendent
- Prosecuting attorney
- CBO serving children
- Early Start program
- CBO with ties to the ethnic communities.

The Act expected the interagency children’s services coordinating council to perform the following functions:

- Ensure collaboration and countywide planning
- Identify gaps in services
- Develop policies and set priorities to ensure service effectiveness
- Implement public and private collaborative programs
- Provide for countywide interagency case management
- Coordinate and integrate with existing children’s services groups

Conclusion

Two striking issues emerge from this review of interagency initiatives that should be helpful to county and school administrators in designing policy and planning committees that better coordinate these various interagency initiatives. The first is that many of these interagency initiatives serve similar children or fit together in a continuum of services. For example, Proposition 10 and CPA 2000 funds may be used to provide services, such as home visiting, intended to reduce future juvenile delinquency. Some of those children and youth who enter the juvenile justice system may receive services from the SB 163 Wraparound program or Children’s System of Care. There are clearly a number of other overlapping features to these various interagency initiatives, which suggests they need to be coordinated.

The second is that there appears to be a common set of county department and school administrators who are expected to participate or should participate in these various policy and planning bodies, which may make it easier to actually coordinate these various interagency

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initiatives.

For example, the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council required by the Crime Prevention Act of 2000 and the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Accountability Challenge Grant Program contain many of the same participants as the policy council required to implement the Children's System of Care. These same participants should also be involved in planning and implementing a SB 163 Wraparound Program. These two findings suggest counties may be able to create fewer inter-agency planning and policy committees that address a wider scope of issues and better coordinates these various interagency initiatives.

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