RENNIE CENTER
for Education Research & Policy

POLICY BRIEF

Toward Interagency Collaboration:

The Role of Children's Cabinets

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Introduction

Education reforms over the past fifteen years have focused on moving all students to proficiency—where all means all. Public schools are expected to —and indeed held accountable for—ensuring that *all* students reach a level of academic proficiency that will enable them to pursue a post-secondary education or enter the workforce, and ultimately, become actively engaged members of society.

Yet, public school students bring with them a range of social, emotional, economic and other needs that affect their ability to learn and may limit their capacity to reach their full potential. Children who are hungry, in need of dental or health care, struggling with emotional issues, or who have been evicted from their homes are simply not able to focus on learning in the same way as their healthy, well-fed classmates who have a stable home to return to after school every day.

Students bring this diverse, complex range of needs with them to school each day, yet most schools are not designed to address—or even identify—these needs for every child. Instead, a child who is homeless, struggling with emotional issues and in need of dental care may already be receiving services from several different state and local agencies, or may need assistance in obtaining the services he or she needs. Too often there are no systems or protocols in place to foster communication among the various agencies that serve thousands of children and youth each year. As a result, children and youth are receiving care from individuals representing different agencies who may be unaware of the other services the child is receiving.

In an effort to better align state and local services, many states have begun establishing children or youth cabinets, councils or commissions which are designed to better align the services provided by the myriad agencies that serve children. The most effective of these cabinets, commissions and councils have improved coordination and efficiency across state departments and local levels of government, mobilized resources to address the governor's priorities for children, facilitated a holistic approach to serving children, and strengthened partnerships with the non-profit and private sectors.[1]

In October 2008, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick established the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet—a state leadership team focused on streamlining state efforts to improve services for children, youth and families that is jointly chaired by the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Now in its infancy, the Cabinet is charged with determining a strategic plan for "interagency policy planning," which is intended to

1 National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices. (2004). *A Governor's Guide to Children's Cabinets*.

advance the "health, well-being and education of the Commonwealth's children and youth, and prepare them to be successful and contributing citizens."[2]

The focus of this policy brief is on the work of the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet, and specifically, what its role can be in creating infrastructure that will lead to better coordinated services, which will in turn improve the health, well-being and educational success of children and youth. Drawing on examples from other states, the brief presents models for Massachusetts policymakers to consider.

Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this policy brief is to:

- Inform the general public about the purpose of children's cabinets and to highlight the potential role that non-government stakeholders (such as parents, youth leaders, advocacy groups, and service providers) might play as Massachusetts' Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet begins its work.
- Contribute to the policy dialogue about how to increase the level of collaboration among state departments and agencies that serve Massachusetts' children, youth and families by putting forth examples of structures and strategies being used by other states' children's cabinets to carry out their work.

This brief includes four sections:

1. A description of Massachusetts' Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet.
2. An overview of other states' children's cabinets.
3. Case examples that highlight structures and strategies being used by cabinets in three states (Pennsylvania, Ohio and Louisiana) and the District of Columbia.
4. Considerations for Massachusetts' Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet members and other policymakers.

Research for this brief included a review of relevant literature, a scan of state websites and online documents, as well as email and/or telephone contact with state personnel to obtain information not available online. The brief draws on the work of the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices[3] and The Forum for Youth Investment.[4]

As stated above, this brief includes case examples of children's cabinets in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Louisiana and the District of Columbia. The case examples were selected because they represent different structures and strategies that are being used to promote interagency collaboration designed to advance the health, well-being and educational success of children and youth. The case examples highlight strategies the cabinets use to connect to local jurisdictions and engage non-government stakeholders in their work. Data reporting systems being used in Pennsylvania and Ohio are also described.

While most states' children's cabinets monitor a variety of outcomes related to the health, well-being and educational success of children and youth, outcomes were not the basis for our selection of case examples. The case examples were selected to provide ideas for policymakers to consider; they are not intended to serve as models of state cabinets exhibiting effective outcomes.

2 Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order 505. Downloaded from http://www.lablib.state.ma.us/EO505.pdf.

3 The National Governors Association (NGA) is a public policy organization located in Washington D.C. Its members are the governors of the 50 states, three territories, and two commonwealths. The NGA Center for Best Practices is a policy research and development firm that directly serves the nation's governors.

4 The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan "action tank" dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21®: ready for college, work and life. Since 2005, the Forum for Youth Investment has convened the Children's Cabinets and Councils Network and has produced a series of reports which draw on the experiences of more than 20 children's cabinets and councils.

Massachusetts' Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet

In October 2008, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed Executive Order 505, which established the Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet. The Cabinet is co-chaired by the Secretaries of Education and Health and Human Services. The Cabinet's membership also includes the Secretaries of Administration and Finance, Housing and Economic Development, Labor and Workforce Development, Public Safety and Security, and the Child Advocate. The Executive Order states that all state agencies and departments in the Executive Branch, whether represented on the Cabinet or not, may be called upon to facilitate and implement the Cabinet's policy agenda and objectives.

The purpose of the Cabinet is to foster and coordinate efforts to enhance the level of collaboration across the state departments and agencies that serve Massachusetts children, youth and families. The Cabinet is responsible for establishing a shared vision for how best to establish a network of state services and supports for children, youth and families in the Commonwealth; identifying priority areas for collaborative state action; formulating baseline goals and benchmarks for assessing the extent to which state agencies successfully strengthen their cooperation and collaboration in providing services to children, youth and families; and directing the development and monitoring the progress of targeted interagency projects as defined by the Cabinet.[5]

> "The Cabinet shall set the strategic direction for interagency policy planning, development and implementation, thereby working to advance the health, well-being and education of the Commonwealth's children and youth, and prepare them to be successful and contributing citizens."[6]

The Patrick Administration's report *Ready for 21st Century Success: The New Promise of Public Education,* the capstone of the 18-month "Readiness Project,"[7] described two Cabinet initiatives:

- **Urban Schools Early Warning and Dropout Prevention Pilot:** The Cabinet will oversee the creation of an Urban Schools Early Warning and Dropout Prevention Pilot designed to identify students at risk of dropping out of high school and provide timely interventions in qualifying districts.
- **Statewide Child and Youth Data Reporting System:** The Cabinet will offer recommendations for the development of a statewide child and youth data reporting system. The Cabinet is to include suggestions for developing a "Readiness Passport" for every child and youth enrolled in Massachusetts schools. The Readiness Passport is a tool that will summarize and document the delivery of educational, health and human services and will help facilitate a smooth transition for those who move to different schools or communities.

Patrick's executive order also states that the Cabinet may function through established or ad hoc committees, task forces or interagency working groups. While not mentioned in the executive order, *Ready for 21st Century Success* suggests that a stakeholder group, made up of leaders from the legislative and judicial branches, as well as from the provider community and statewide youth community, will advise the cabinet.[8] In an effort to provide more information and clarity about the possible roles of such a stakeholder group, this policy brief describes the composition and role of other state's children's cabinet advisory groups.

When the members of the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet came together and began their work, the approach outlined in *Ready for 21st Century Success* was refined. Rather than serving as an open-ended venue for issues and actions that emerge at the intersection of the various agencies represented, the Cabinet has decided to focus on one collaboratively identified priority project at a time. The belief is that by bringing the collective attention and focus of the

5 Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order 505. Downloaded from http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/EO505.pdf.
6 Ibid.
7 The Patrick Administration. (2008). *Ready for 21st Century Success: The New Promise of Public Education.*
8 Ibid.

Governor and the Cabinet to bear on a single issue at a time, progress will ensue. Once the Cabinet has incubated and launched a priority project, it will continue to guide, monitor and collectively advance that project as it adopts a subsequent priority project.

The Cabinet's first priority project is the development of a child and youth data warehouse and reporting system. The Cabinet has identified three deliverables as interim benchmarks on the path toward creating that system: 1) dropout early warning and prevention system; 2) Readiness Passport; and 3) Readiness Coaches in high-need schools. The Cabinet has retained the services of a consultant to develop a strategic plan for the development of an integrated data system. To provide examples of how data systems are being used in other states, this brief highlights data systems being used in two states, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

State Trends

Over the last fifteen years, governors throughout the nation have been establishing cross-agency entities that seek to promote coordination across state agencies to better serve youth and families. In many states these entities are called children's cabinets, while in other states they are called commissions or councils. As shown in Figure 1, at least 22 states, including Massachusetts, have children's cabinets or similar entities.

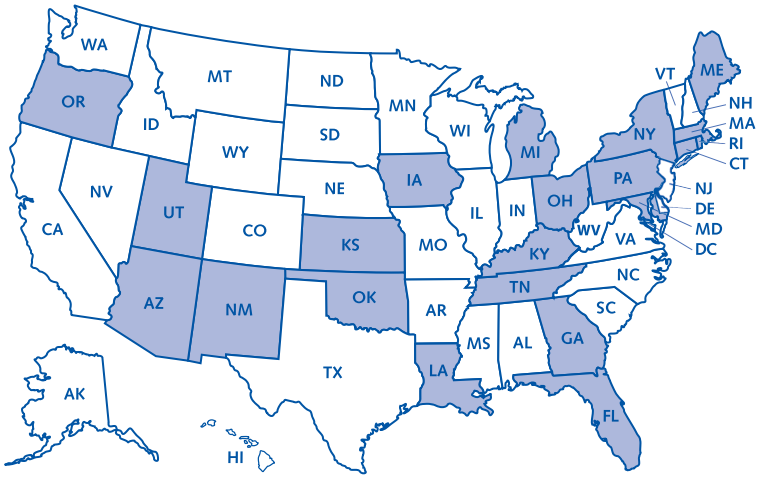
Throughout the remainder of this policy brief, children's cabinets, commissions and councils that seek to promote coordination across state agencies to better serve youth and families are referred to as children's cabinets or cabinets, for purposes of brevity.

Cabinet membership and involvement of stakeholders

Children's cabinets are typically made up of heads of government agencies that serve children and youth, such as the departments of education, health and social services, although a handful of states include non-government stakeholders on their cabinet. The Forum for Youth Investment, through their work with children's cabinets nationwide, observed that a frequently debated issue among cabinets is how to include the voices and concerns of non-government stakeholders (such as advocacy groups, service providers, parent groups, youth leaders and the public at-large) in the cabinet's work. In order to ensure a confidential environment for open discussions about cross-system issues, challenges and potential solutions, as well as frank conversations about resource allocation, The Forum recommends that a cabinet be made up solely of government officials. However, The Forum also recommends that stakeholders be provided an opportunity to inform and influence the work of the cabinet as members of an advisory or working group rather than as formal members of the cabinet itself.[9]

Similarly, the National Governors Association (NGA) encourages newly established cabinets to solicit stakeholder input early in the planning process. NGA's Center for Best Practices' publication, *A Governors Guide to Children's Cabinets,* lists steps to follow in moving forward with a recently launched

Figure 1: Statewide Children's Cabinets*



*See Appendix A for the formal name of each state's Children's Cabinet.

9 Gaines, E., Faigley, I., Pittman, K. (August 2008). *Elements of Success Issue 1: Structural Options. State Children's Cabinet and Councils Series*. Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment.

cabinet. After establishing leadership roles, a meeting schedule and expectations for participation, the next step is for the cabinet to define a vision and identify potential goals, outcomes and measures, with input from stakeholders, including the public. NGA has found that input from the public aids the Cabinet in adding specificity to its mission statement and provides objectives for its strategic plan. NGA points out that public input can be collected in a number of ways including: focus groups, town meetings, written comments or email, surveys, and discussions with those most familiar with the issues at hand. As described in the text box below, Maryland's Children's Cabinet solicited community input through what they called "Listening Forums" and "Discussion Groups" as well as through an online survey.

Leaders in state and local government have found that by giving youth a voice in shaping decisions that affect their lives, leaders can create better policies and solutions to key issues affecting youth. In recent years, youth councils have become a popular and powerful way to promote young people's participation in state and local government. The National League of Cities' (NLC)[10] website lists more than 140 local youth councils in 20 states (including the District of Columbia). The Forum for Youth Investment found that 12 states have youth councils that act in an advisory role to state policymakers.[11] In addition to helping create better policies, there are positive outcomes for the young adults who serve on youth councils, including the young adults learning firsthand how government works; developing a sense of responsibility, belonging, confidence and empowerment; and realizing that their voices matter and that they can improve their communities.

Maryland: Community input to develop an interagency strategic plan

In November 2007, Maryland's Children's Cabinet initiated the planning process for the development of the state's 2008 Child and Family Services Interagency Strategic Plan.[12] Throughout the development of the strategic plan, significant efforts were made to solicit community input through Listening Forums and Discussion Groups, held across the state, and an online survey.

Listening Forums served as a vehicle through which a broad cross-section of community members could voice their opinion on what works and what does not, based on their own experiences with the child and family serving systems, and provide their recommendations for how the interagency systems could be improved. Each Listening Forum included both large and small group facilitated discussions, and the opportunity for community members to engage with members of the Children's Cabinet (or their representatives).

Family and Youth Discussion Groups served as a vehicle through which family members and youth could share their individual stories and experiences with the various systems in a small group setting. Families and youth voiced their concerns and offered suggestions based on their personal experiences.

An online survey was disseminated to everyone who participated in a Listening Forum or Discussion Group, the heads of local units of the Children's Cabinet Agencies, and the chairpersons and staff from interagency task forces, associations, working groups and committees. The survey asked respondents to indicate what was working at the child and family serving agencies, what was not working, and to provide recommendations for how to improve the interagency systems.

The discussions that took place at each Listening Forum and Discussion Group were documented and synthesized. The information collected from these events was found to be quite informative and helped shape the direction of working groups, as well as the Cabinet's interagency strategic plan.

10 The National League of Cities is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance.

11 Martin, S., Pittman, K., Ferber, T., McMahon, A. (April 2007). *Building Effective Youth Councils: A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making.* Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc.

12 *The Maryland Child and Family Services Interagency Strategic Plan.* (June 2008). Downloaded from: http://www.jhsph.edu/preventyouthviolence/images/MCFSI_Strategic_Plan_08.pdf.

Oregon: County-level coordinating structure

Oregon's Commission on Children and Families is responsible for statewide planning, setting standards, policy development, and providing communities with research-based best practices on which to base local programs. Each of Oregon's 36 counties have their own Commission on Children and Families, which are responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan that guides the development of initiatives and supports for children and families in the county.[14] Each local commission brings community partners together to initiate the planning process, with the ultimate goal of providing programs that are based on best practices and have measurable outcomes. The planning process involves the residents of each county in assessing their communities' needs, assets and strengths, and examining their capacity to support children, youth and their families. It is a collaborative process that produces an overall county plan.

Cabinet duties

The duties of children's cabinets vary across the states based on their membership and mission. While the duties of individual cabinets vary, cabinets are typically responsible for the following:

Establishing goals and indicators of success. Cabinets are often responsible for creating policies and strategic plans for addressing children's issues statewide, setting goals with measurable outcomes for their member agencies to achieve, and monitoring the outcomes. For example, Maine's Children's Cabinet created "Maine Marks," a set of state-level indicators aligned with the mission and outcomes set by the Cabinet. The Maine Marks indicators are the mechanism through which the Cabinet tracks and measures how Maine's children and youth are faring. The public can view Maine Marks online.[13]

Providing technical assistance and oversight to local jurisdictions. Cabinets often set policies for and provide technical assistance to local government and/or distribute and oversee grants to local initiatives or organizations. Some cabinets connect to local jurisdictions formally through community, county or regional coordinating structures that receive some level of financial and technical assistance from the state cabinet. (For an example, see the side bar at left describing Oregon's county-level coordinating structure.) Other cabinets have less formalized ties to local jurisdictions. Some states provide assistance with local planning or provide grants to particular communities to integrate services for youth and families.

Making policy and funding recommendations. Cabinets are often responsible for making policy and funding recommendations to the Governor, pooling diverse funding streams to improve service delivery across agencies, and in some cases, leveraging new resources to support children's initiatives. For example, Louisiana's Cabinet is charged with developing a Children's budget that cuts across multiple funding streams, creating programs to improve coordination and reduce duplication across services, and exploring options for pooling funds.[15]

13 Maine Marks online can be accessed at http://www.mainemarks.org.

14 In 1999 the Oregon Legislature adopted Senate Bill 555, which established a state policy requiring state agencies to work in partnership with local communities to plan, coordinate, and provide services for Oregon´s children and families. It defined the role for the state and local commissions on children and families in coordinating and facilitating community-based comprehensive planning.

15 Chapter 45 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes. Downloaded from http://www.legis.state.la.us/leg_docs/981ES/CVT1/OUT/0000CYWK.PDF.

Case Examples

The following case examples were selected because they represent different structures and strategies that are being used to promote interagency collaboration, to better serve and advance the well-being of children, youth and families. The case examples highlight strategies the cabinets use to connect to local jurisdictions and engage non-government stakeholders in their work. Two states' data reporting systems are also described. The case examples were selected to provide ideas for policymakers to consider; they are not intended to serve as models of state cabinets' exhibiting effective outcomes.

CASE EXAMPLE 1:

Pennsylvania's Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families

Mission

The Governor's Cabinet for Children and Families was created by Executive Order in September 2003 to coordinate and streamline services for children and families among the government agencies across the state of Pennsylvania.

Membership

Membership includes: the Secretary of Education; the Secretary of Health; the Secretary of Labor and Industry; the Secretary of the Budget; the Insurance Commissioner; the directors of the Office of Health Care Reform and Governor's Office of Policy; the Governor's Chief of Staff; and the chairpersons of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Structure

Commission

The Governor announced the creation of the Commission for Children and Families shortly after establishing the Children's Cabinet (April 2004). The Commission was established to assist and advise the Cabinet on identifying policy, program and systemic barriers that prevent state and local governments from effectively and efficiently serving the needs of children and families; and formulating remedies and solutions to those problems.[16] In addition, "the Commission was designed to maximize community input and respect community differences, yet recognize that Pennsylvania's children and families have common needs and aspirations."[17]

The Commission is chaired by the Executive Director of Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, a non-profit advocacy organization. The Commission is organized under six regional chairs and is comprised of stakeholders from across Pennsylvania, including parents, family members, and advocates. The regional chairs convene forums in six regions across Pennsylvania to discuss various areas, such as identifying barriers to accessing services and possible solutions, and convening regional budget forums to discuss the Governor's proposed budget and its impact on children and families.

Working groups

Ad hoc working groups have been assembled to address needs in specific areas including: improving access to services; supporting parents' mental health needs; improving children's mental health and well-being; improving behavioral health in schools; and preventing violence. The Cabinet has a standing committee on communications and raising public awareness on positive parenting.

In addition, local jurisdictions have been charged with integrating children's services through Pennsylvania's Integrated

16 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Office, Executive Order 2003-12. Downloaded from http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/about_us/2101/executive_order/401778.

17 Governor's Commission for Children and Families website http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/about_us/2101/guiding_principles/401777.

Pennsylvania: Integrated Children's Services Plan[18]

Pennsylvania takes a comprehensive approach to serving children, youth and young adults (birth to 21 years of age) through programs that focus on long-term prevention, early intervention and services that support family stability, child safety, community protection and healthy child development. This comprehensive approach began in June 2004 with the development of the Integrated Children's Services Plan.

Through the Integrated Children's Services Plan, all child-serving systems within a county plan together to establish one system in which appropriate services can be accessed regardless of the agency through which a child may initially enter the system. Every year, each county in Pennsylvania develops and submits a children's plan that describes how that county will integrate their children's services. One of the goals of the integrated plan is to initiate collaborative planning efforts in service programs that historically may not have planned together and ensure coordination, consolidation and, ultimately, the integration of program administration and resource allocation for services to children and families.

Each spring, Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare develops and distributes guidelines for integrating children's services to all 67 counties in the state. Counties then devise and submit a plan for the next fiscal year. Cross-systems teams review the plans and offer suggestions and feedback to help counties implement their plans. Counties can receive technical assistance and training resources through their regional offices. The Department of Public Welfare also contracts with a consultant who provides more intensive on-site technical assistance to counties who request this type of assistance.

Children's Services Plan. As described in the side bar to the left, all child-serving systems within a county plan together to establish one system in which appropriate services can be accessed regardless of the agency through which a child may initially enter the system.

CASE EXAMPLE 2:

Washington D.C. Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC)

Mission

The Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC) was created by the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007.[19] The purpose of ICSIC is to address the needs of at-risk children by reducing juvenile and family violence and promoting social and emotional skills among children and youth through the oversight of a comprehensive integrated service delivery system. The Commission was also charged with supporting evidence-based programs at schools throughout the District of Columbia to further its mission.

Membership

The Commission has 21 members: Mayor; Chairman of Council of the District of Columbia; Chair of the Committee on Human Services; Chief Judge, Family Court, Superior Court of the District of Columbia; Deputy Mayor for Education; City Administrator; State Superintendent of Education; Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools; Chair of the Public Charter School Board; Director of the Department of Human Services; Director of the Child and Family Services Agency; Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services; Director of the Department of Corrections; Director of the Department of Health; Director of the Department of Mental Health; Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department; Director of the Court Social Services Agency; Attorney General for the District of Columbia; Director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation; and Director of the District of Columbia Public Library.

Structure

Goal-based meetings

Commission meetings are described as "performance-based accountability sessions."[20] Each meeting concentrates on one of the six citywide goals for children and youth:

1. Children are ready for school.
2. Children and youth succeed in school.

18 Information in this section is from: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare website: http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/About/Secretary/IntChildServsPlan.

19 Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007. Downloaded from http://www.dc.gov/mayor/pdf/DC_Public_Education_Reform_Act_final.shtm.

20 District of Columbia Deputy Mayor for Education website. http://dme.dc.gov/dme/cwp/view,A,1409,Q,606868.asp.

3. Children and youth are healthy and practice healthy behaviors.
4. Children and youth engage in meaningful activities.
5. Children and youth live in healthy, stable and supportive families.
6. All youth make a successful transition into adulthood.

Agency directors prepare for meetings by critically examining the relevant outcomes their agency measures and considering ways in which they can improve their performance. During Commission meetings, both data and current policies are discussed. Through this process, the Commission determines where opportunities for collaboration exist.

Interagency working groups

The Commission has also developed interagency working groups, each focused on one of the six citywide goals for youth. The efforts of two working groups, one focused on Goal 2 and one focused on Goal 6, are described below.

- **Interagency working group on truancy regulations (Goal 2).**[21] ICSIC agencies have concentrated on improving student attendance as a main priority under Goal 2. A working group was established to develop truancy regulations that would be presented to the State Board of Education for approval. The working group included representatives from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the public school system (DCPS), the Public Charter School Board, the Child and Family Services Agency, Court Social Services, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and numerous community-based organizations. This interagency partnership also led to other services and supports being delivered in the schools (such as mental health services and school nurses) to address the root causes of truancy which often are associated with factors external to the classroom (such as poor health).

- **Interagency working group on engaging disconnected youth (Goal 6).**[22] The Department of Employment Services, the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, the Child and Family Services Agency, and both the DCPS and public charter schools collaborated on re-engaging youth who are not in school and not working. Since ICSIC began, this working group has expanded opportunities for disengaged youth by opening the Youth Engagement Academy, a school that currently serves 60 over-age and under-credited 9th graders through alternative learning opportunities and internships. The working group has also developed training and employment opportunities in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and other government service agencies.

Washington D.C.: Focus on evidence-based programs

As its full name suggests, ICSIC was established to foster interagency collaboration that would strengthen services integration. The enhanced services integration would, in turn, improve outcomes in six agreed-upon goal areas for children and youth in the District of Columbia. To increase the likelihood of success, the legislation that established ICSIC (Title V of the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007) requires that ICSIC concentrate on identifying and implementing "evidence-based" programs. The term evidence-based refers to programs that have been shown, by rigorous research, to be effective in other communities. The legislation also requires that ICSIC evaluate the outcomes of those programs for children and youth in the District of Columbia.

21 Development Services Group, Inc. (2008). *FY 2008 Annual Evaluation Report, To the Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC)*. Downloaded from: http://newsroom.dc.gov/show.aspx/agency/dme/section/2/release/16147.

22 Ibid.

CASE EXAMPLE 3:

Louisiana's Governor's Children's Cabinet

Mission

Louisiana's Children's Cabinet was established in 1993. The purpose of the cabinet is to facilitate coordination of policy, planning, and budgeting affecting programs and services for children and their families; to coordinate delivery of services to children and their families; and to eliminate duplication of services, where appropriate.[23] The Cabinet established a mission statement with goals for three areas: "The mission of the Children's Cabinet will produce measurable improvements for children in: Education, Health Care and Family Life."[24] Indicators of progress on the Education goal include percentage of highly qualified, certified teachers in the classroom and percentage of 4th and 8th graders scoring proficient or higher on the National Assessment of Educational Proficiency (NAEP) tests. Indicators of progress on the Health and Family Life goals include percentage of children without health insurance, number of school-based health clinics, percent of children in poverty and extreme poverty, and juvenile violent crime arrest rate and recidivism rates.

Membership

Membership includes the following State Agency Directors: Social Services, Health and Hospitals, Labor, Youth Services, Education, Commissioner of Administration, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Supreme Court. A State Representative, State Senator and the Chair of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board are also members.

Structure

Advisory Board

The Children's Cabinet Advisory Board was established to provide information and recommendations to the Cabinet from the perspective of advocacy groups, service providers, and parents.[25] The board is made up of 41 advocates, community members, and representatives from state agencies. The advisory board is invited to cabinet meetings and may participate in its discussions but advisory board members do not have a vote. In the past, the board has been responsible for developing an initial Children's Budget to pass to the Children's Cabinet, Governor and then on to the Legislature.[26]

Legislative Task Force

The Legislative Task Force was established to analyze all legislation being introduced to assess its impact on children and families and then advise the Children's Cabinet accordingly.[27]

Research Council

The Children's Cabinet Research Council was established in 2003 as a specialized advisory function to the cabinet[28] and was disbanded in 2008. When in existence, the research council was responsible for collecting data and preparing reports on specific issues related to children and youth and trends as requested by the cabinet. Membership included the executive director of the Cabinet, a representative from the Louisiana Board of Regents, a representative from the Office of Social Services Research and Development, and representatives from 14 Louisiana colleges and universities.

Local Planning Boards

Children and Youth Planning Boards are community-level collaborations that function as local satellites of the Cabinet. The local planning boards examine problems and align resources. The state-level cabinet provides technical assistance to these local planning boards.

23 Louisiana Revised Statute (RS) 46:2602. Downloaded from http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=100738.

24 Louisiana Children's Cabinet. (July 2003). *Louisiana Children's Cabinet Strategic Plan*.

25 Louisiana Revised Statute (RS) 46:2605. Downloaded from http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=100741.

26 Gaines, E., Ravindranath, N., Folliard, J. (December 2007). *State Children's Cabinets and Councils 2008 Directory.* Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment.

27 Ibid.

28 Louisiana Revised Statute (RS) 46:2605.3. Repealed by Acts 2008, No. 780, §2.

CASE EXAMPLE 4:

Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) Cabinet Council

Mission

Established in 1993, Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) is a partnership of state and local government, communities, and families that enhances the well-being of Ohio's children and families by building community capacity, coordinating systems and services, and engaging and empowering families.[29]

Membership

Membership includes the Directors of the following state agencies: Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services; Budget and Management; Education; Health; Job and Family Services; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; and Youth Services. The First Lady of Ohio is also a member.

Structure[30]

Advisory Board

The OFCF Advisory Board consults with the cabinet council regarding the council's activities and initiatives. The advisory board is responsible for evaluating existing initiatives and helps guide the direction of new activities and initiatives. The advisory board also provides guidance regarding efforts to seek local input about the council's activities, initiatives, and achievement of the indicators set forth by the cabinet council.

Members of the Advisory Board include one member from the Governor's office, two members of the House of Representatives (each from a different political party) and two members of the Senate (each from a different political party). In addition, the Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate each appointed one member of the general public who is either a primary caregiver or uses/has used a service provided by an agency represented on the cabinet to serve on the advisory board. The Governor also appointed one member representing a faith-based organization, one member from a county family and children first (FCF) council in a rural county, and one member from a county FCF council in an urban county.

Local Family and Children First Councils

Each board of county commissioners in Ohio was required to establish a county family and children first (FCF) council. The purpose of the county council is to streamline and coordinate existing government services for families seeking services for their children. Each board of county commissioners was permitted to invite any local public or private agency or group that funds, advocates, or provides services to children and families to have a representative serve as a permanent or temporary member of its county council.

Each county council was required to include the following individuals: director of the Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services; the Health Commissioner or a designee; director of the County Department of Job and Family Services; executive director of the Public Children Services Agency; superintendent of the County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; the superintendent of the city or local school district with the largest number of pupils residing in the county; a school superintendent representing all other school districts; a representative of the municipal corporation with the largest population in the county; a representative of the county's Head Start agencies; a representative of the county's early intervention collaborative; a representative of a local nonprofit entity that funds, advocates for, or provides services to children and families; the president of the Board of County Commissioners, or an individual designated by the board; and a representative of the regional offices of the Department of Youth Services.

29 Ohio Children and Family First website: http://www.ohiofcf.org/main.asp.

30 Information in this section is from: Ohio Family and Children First. *An overview of OFCF structure, membership, and responsibilities.* Downloaded from: http://www.ohiofcf.org/document_library.asp?v=2&c=4.

Each county council was required to include at least three individuals on the council who are not employed by an agency represented on the council and whose families are receiving or have received services from an agency represented on the council (or another county's council). Where possible, the number of members representing families is equal to 20% of the council's membership.

The county's juvenile court judge may advise the county council on the court's utilization of resources, services, or programs provided by the entities represented by the members of the county council and articulate how those resources, services, or programs assist the court in its administration of justice.

A 2006 bill mandated that each county FCF council and the state cabinet council engage in a comprehensive planning process to determine the greatest needs of children and families. Each FCF council selected at least one commitment and priority area, developed strategies to address that area, and chose indicators that could be used to measure progress with selected commitments. Each year, local FCF councils report progress on their selected priorities and outcomes.

Spotlight on Data Tracking Systems

As previously mentioned, the Massachusetts Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet's first priority project is the development of a child and youth data warehouse and reporting system. To provide readers with examples of how data systems are being used in other states, this brief highlights data systems used in the city of Philadelphia and in the state of Ohio.

Philadelphia's Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS)[31]

What is KIDS?

Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS) is a fully integrated municipal data system that includes all records for children and youth age 0 to 21 in the City of Philadelphia. Agencies that contribute data include: Department of Public Health; Department of Human Services; Office of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services; Office of Emergency Shelter and Services; and the School District of Philadelphia. The database infrastructure is maintained by the University of Pennsylvania, under agreement with the City of Philadelphia.

How is it used?

KIDS is used for community planning, program evaluation and research. Studies using KIDS data have answered the following research questions:

- How do multiple risk factors impact school readiness?
- How are educational outcomes affected by experiences in multiple public systems?
- What is the overlap between Department of Education Special Education Services and Community Mental Health Services?

A Data License Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania outline the procedures under which the data may be accessed. The procedures ensure confidentiality under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).[32]

Who oversees it?

The KIDS Policy Group (which is made up of representatives from the University of Pennsylvania and each participating agency) monitors all projects using KIDS. The group reviews research and evaluation proposals in light of the city and school district's priorities. In order for a proposed project to receive approval, the researcher must clearly demonstrate the benefit of the project's findings to one or more of the agencies that contributes data to the system. Research proposals must state how the findings could be directly applicable to the vision and goals of the city agencies and must outline how the data will be employed to serve the children and youth of Philadelphia.[33]

How is it funded?

The William Penn Foundation awarded a $600,000 grant to the University of Pennsylvania to develop the system. Researchers who use the database are responsible for costs associated with the KIDS data integration work required for their project. Thus, research projects provide fiscal support for the database so that its existence is not financially dependent on a particular city administration's budget.

Where is it housed?

The KIDS system is not a live data warehouse. It is an archival system where data are integrated for specific purposes. Data is linked on a project-by-project basis according to each project's parameters. The database infrastructure is maintained by the University of Pennsylvania, under agreement with the City of Philadelphia.

31 Information from this section is from: Rouse, H. (2007). *Kids Integrated Data System, KIDS: Who, What, and How.*

32 Fantuzzo, J, Culahane, D. & Hadley, T. (2005). *Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS).* Penn CHILD Research Highlights.

33 Ibid.

Ohio's Electronic Service Coordination, Outcomes, Research and Evaluation (EScore) System[34]

What is EScore?

Electronic Service Coordination, Outcomes, Research and Evaluation (EScore) is an Internet-based data collection platform designed to track youth and families with multiple needs who are provided assistance through Ohio's Service Coordination system.

How is it used?

Service Coordination. Service coordination refers to using a team-based approach to providing service and support planning. In this team-based planning process, the local family and children first (FCF) coordinator works closely with families and community support personnel in order to organize activities that reinforce common goals built around the individual needs of each child and family touched by service coordination. This process places great value on the family's perspective of what they want and need, and thus emphasizes the essential nature of having family members become equal partners in the decision-making process with regard to the development, implementation, and monitoring of their individualized plan. EScore allows county professionals to track multi-need youth and families that are being served through Ohio's Service Coordination system.

Outcomes, Research and Evaluation. The Internet platform provides users at the county level with the ability to collect data on a wide range of factors that will inform research and evaluation activities. This includes the collection of outcomes data that documents the effectiveness of specific services and also aids in the identification of gaps in service at the local level.

Where is it housed?

EScore was created by The Ohio State University Center for Family Research (CFR). In addition to developing, testing, monitoring, and upgrading the Internet platform, the CFR provides technical assistance and training to county workers on navigation and ongoing use of the website, as well as entering, coordinating, downloading, manipulating and interpreting the data that are collected at the county level.

34 Information in this section is from: EScore website: http://escoreohio.org.

Considerations

The policy considerations listed below summarize the key findings from the case examples and our research in compiling this brief. As policymakers in Massachusetts consider strategies to advance the work of the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet, we offer the options below.

Solicit and incorporate input from non-government stakeholders. It is important to capture the voices and concerns of parents, youth, advocacy groups, service providers and the public at-large in the work of the Cabinet. Many cabinets have created advisory groups and working groups to include a broad range of stakeholders. This model ensures that high-level officials are able to have open and candid discussions in a confidential environment while also incorporating stakeholder voices in the decision making process. Public input can also be systematically collected throughout the state via focus groups, town meetings, email, surveys and meetings with those most familiar with the issues at hand. Key stakeholders are more likely to support the work of the Cabinet if they feel they are partners in the process.

Work with the Governor's Statewide Youth Council. As mentioned above, including the voice of stakeholders, and youth in particular, is critical. Several states have established youth councils to advise their cabinets. In April 2008, Governor Patrick established a statewide Youth Council comprised of youth and young adults from each of the Commonwealth's 14 counties. Involvement with the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet could provide members of the Governor's Statewide Youth Council with the opportunity to share what they experience in their communities, engage in decision making, and participate in policy discussions that would enable the Cabinet to better fulfill its mission.

Create regional planning and coordinating entities. Cabinets in some states, such as Louisiana, Maryland, Ohio and Oregon, connect to local jurisdictions formally through community, county or regional coordinating structures that receive guidance and technical assistance from the state cabinet. The rationale for this approach is that local communities are best suited to determine their needs, and thus, decisions on how to meet these needs are best rendered at the local level. Given the Commonwealth's varying geographic and socio-economic landscape, the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet may wish to consider establishing regional entities or charging existing regional entities with responsibility for integrating services for youth and families in their communities, towns and cities under the guidance of the state Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet. Under this model, the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet would be responsible for establishing statewide policies; providing regional entities with technical assistance and best practices on which to base local programs; building the policy framework for the regional entities' work; ensuring accountability; and helping evaluate progress in each region.

Engage colleges and universities in research and evaluation. Massachusetts is home to over 100 colleges and universities, and an even greater number of faculty and researchers who are engaged in program evaluation and research on educational and social programs, and issues associated with the health, well-being and success of children and youth. Thus, the college and university community could serve as a valuable resource to the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet. The Cabinet may wish to consider engaging faculty and researchers from area colleges and universities to conduct research on specific issues that are of interest to the cabinet. One way to formally engage researchers from the higher education community in this work is by establishing a Research Council.

Establish the Cabinet as a permanent structure. If the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet selects priority projects that require long-term planning and oversight, the Governor may wish to work with the Legislature to authorize the Children's Cabinet under statute to ensure the Cabinet's sustainability and stability through changes in the state's executive and legislative leadership. The Forum for Youth Investment recommends that children's cabinets be established through an executive order and then adopted by legislative statute to achieve permanency.[35] This progression allows a newly formed cabinet to establish a structure and make adjustments to its purpose, form or function before becoming a

35 Gaines, E., Faigley, I., Pittman, K. (August 2008). *Elements of Success Issue 1: Structural Options. State Children's Cabinet and Councils Series.* Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment.

permanent entity. Furthermore, the National Governors Association (NGA) found that Children's Cabinets supported by legislation and by both the Executive and Legislative branches, are more likely to survive administration changes.[36]

Consider the role of the Legislature. Policymakers in Massachusetts may wish to consider what role, if any, the Legislature might play in guiding the work of the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet and holding the Cabinet accountable for meeting its goals. In some states, the Legislature plays a role in determining how the cabinet carries out its work by mandating initiatives such as local interagency planning and/or the frequency of cabinet meetings; establishing cabinet advisory boards; defining the membership of cabinet advisory boards and local planning boards; as well as establishing other types of requirements. For example, a legislative mandate expanded the focus of Maine's Children's Cabinet, which was first established by an Executive Order then later adopted in statute. In addition, the Washington D.C. legislature requires that the cabinet (called ICSIC) concentrate on identifying and implementing evidence-based programs. The Legislature also requires an annual independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs supported, facilitated, or overseen by ICSIC.

Conclusion

Massachusetts has a clear interest in increasing the level of cooperation and collaboration across the state departments and agencies that serve the Commonwealth's children, youth and families. Throughout this brief we have provided examples of some of the strategies and structures that have been used by other states seeking to promote interagency collaboration to advance the well-being and education of children and youth. It is our hope that this information will contribute to the dialogue on how state agencies can collaborate with one another as well as engage local jurisdictions and non-government stakeholders as they work to deliver a coordinated system of services to the Commonwealth's children and families.

36 National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices. (2004). *A Governor's Guide to Children's Cabinets.*

Appendix A: Children's Cabinets and Councils

Arizona Governor's Children's Cabinet

Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet

Connecticut Youth Futures Committee

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

Georgia First Lady's Children's Cabinet

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development

Iowa Empowerment Board

Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Kentucky Youth Development Coordinating Council

Louisiana Governor's Children's Cabinet

Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet

Maryland Governor's Children's Cabinet

Massachusetts Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet

Michigan Governor's Children's Cabinet

New Mexico Governor's Children's Cabinet

New York Governor's Children's Cabinet

New York State Council on Children and Families

Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

Oregon Commission on Children and Families

Pennsylvania Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families

Rhode Island Children's Cabinet

Tennessee Governor's Children's Cabinet

Utah Governor's Child and Family Cabinet Council

Washington, D.C. Interagency Collaboration & Services Integration Commission

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In an effort to promote public discourse on educational improvement and to inform policy discussions, the Rennie Center periodically publishes policy briefs, which are broadly disseminated to policymakers and stakeholders in the public, private, nonprofit and media sectors. Policy briefs contain independent research on issues of critical importance to the improvement of public education. Briefs are designed to present policymakers and opinion leaders with just-in-time information to help guide and inform their decisions on key educational issues.

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The Rennie Center's mission is to develop a public agenda that informs and promotes significant improvement of public education in Massachusetts. Our work is motivated by a vision of an education system that creates the opportunity to educate every child to be successful in life, citizenship, employment and life-long learning. Applying nonpartisan, independent research, journalism and civic engagement, the Rennie Center is creating a civil space to foster thoughtful public discourse to inform and shape effective policy. For more information, please visit www.renniecenter.org.

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