**Foster Youth Education Task Force**

**January 9, 2012**

**10:00 AM -3:00 PM**

**Administrative Office of the Courts**

1. **Welcome Agenda and Review**
2. **Special Topics Committees**

Each committee reported out on the work they are doing with their special topic. There were three fact sheets distributed from the following committees; Educational Advocacy, Disciplinary Action, and School of Origin.

Reminder/Deadlines for Special Topics Committees:

* Conference Call Check In – Jan. 30th
* Submit the language for legislation – Jan. 31st
* Summit s focus of special topics work – Feb. 1st

**Early Education**

Elisha Kingshott reported that the Early Education group had their first meeting on December 1st and is currently trying to schedule a second meeting. The team consists of 27 members from a wide range of experiences. A survey was sent out to members to get preliminary information around the interest of this group and its deliverable. Deliverables could be: collecting more data in the population, how many people are accessing early education, young adults in foster care who have their own children in foster care, infant care and case planning, inappropriate diagnosis and prescriptions for ADHD of children in the foster care system. Results from this survey will help inform the work ahead.

Educational Advocacy

Currently the group is gathering best practices around the state regarding educational advocacy programs. Goal is to compile a white paper on best practices.

*Proposed Legislation:*

Potential areas to improve upon include more investigation or determination on who should be the educational rights holder, ideally this would be a person acting as an advocate for the youth that has a connection with the youth. Another area of improvement would be improving communications between educational rights holder, caseworker and courts with regards to the youth. This can be done by requiring educational rights holders to maintain contact with the youth and other entities.

**Mental Health**

Betsy DeGarmoe gave the report that the group is strategizing on the topics they want to research that ensure children in the foster youth system continue to receive the mental health services. Some of the proposed topics are: trauma informed communities, AB3632, and coordination of mental health services. The group could also be a resource for Katie A. but this has not been discussed yet.

Suggestions for Mental Health:

* Circle back with Alicia Lieberman who is a leading person in trauma informed therapy and work.

**School of Origin - AB490/1933**

Laura Faer reported that the group has been working with Adreena Lowe at CDSS to create appendixes for sample case plan language and a check list to ensure educational stability. ACLs will be distributed in the next couple weeks. A survey monkey was created which was intended for stakeholders to define the issues that are preventing educational stability. Example issues would be: implementation, transportation, enforcement etc. Still need to analyze the survey results which will inform the work.

Folks on the Sub-Committee have been very clear that it is the school of origin that should be financially responsible for the youth. Proposed legislation is to add a sentence to the Education Code that makes it clear that it is the school of origin district that is responsible for the child’s education.

This bill clarifies that, the district of the school that the child is attending is the district that is responsible for the financial costs associated with attendance and shall also receive any funding from the state or otherwise to provide for the education of the foster child.

Census from the school districts is to make sure they understand which way the rule runs so that no one is arguing. Want to ensure that the new sentence does not make things more confusing and solves the issues. This adjustment to the Education Code should solve this for special education and general education alike.

Next Steps:

* Susanna will circulate the suggested language to the Task Force.
* Laura will forward the memo around special education.

**Post Secondary**

Jordan Horowitz gave the report. There is a lot of interest in supporting post secondary work. California is considering fee waivers at the university level for children in care. There is also a lot of interest in parents of children in care attending college. Senator Lew has stated she would consider anything we want to put forth

One of the issues the group will focus on is preferential registration. Jordan received a call from one of the community college groups asking for help in how to identify children in care so that they are receiving preferential registration. Local University’s are using the FAFSA to identify etc.

**School Discipline**

Dan Senter reported this group would like to amend the Education Code for school districts to make best efforts to notify county social workers and court-appointed attorneys for the foster youth when a foster youth is pending expulsion or subject to a manifestation determination IEP. The group has produced a fact sheet for the Task Force’s review.

*Proposed Legislation:*

Intent is to reduce disproportionate rates of expulsion in foster care and to make efforts to notify entities involved with the youth when the youth is pending expulsion.

*Question: How are we going to make sure that this information regarding minor’s counsel goes to the school districts?*

We have been trying to compile a list of representation models and a structure for how counties get foster care status. There is concern that the Child Welfare worker often changes for the student so we reframed Child Welfare Worker to Child Welfare Designee.

*Question: Should we include Probation Officers?*

 We do not want to include probation officers, concerned for the role of probation officers. But would include public defenders and the public defender would be the link to the probation officers.

*Question: Is the minor’s counsel not getting the information now? what are they going to do with the information?*

Currently there is not an automated way to inform the agencies. Minor’s *counsel would* represent youth at the meeting and hopefully request a continuation until an attorney can be appointed.

Suggestions/Next Steps for School Discipline:

* Add a section to the WIC code; require that the social worker and attorney are made aware of suspension as well as expulsions;
* The court should be responsible for notifying the school district of minor’s *counsel name and contact information*;
* Suggest using a form/notice already in existence;
* Look at programs for foster youth that exist already for expulsion prevention. Talk to the core programs about their successes.
* The Task Force agreed that notifying the agency and minor’s *counsel* is a good idea and to move forward around this issue.
1. **Ed Summit Overview and Planning**

October 15th and 16th are the proposed dates for the Summit at the Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento. Room block negotiated at the Doubletree is $84/night. The group reviewed the draft overview and team structure documents. The suggested changes/additions are noted as tracked changes on the attached Summit Overview document. There was discussion about the flow of the agenda for day 2 at the Summit given we lose lots of attendees that afternoon. Doing team time earlier and having a powerful speaker and/or having part of the special topics work in the afternoon were discussed but also provided dilemmas. It was suggested that 3 hours was sufficient for Special Topics working groups in themorning, that team time should continue to be scheduled for the afternoon, and that the event should end by 3:30 or 4 PM. Additional input regarding Summit Planning included:

*Workshops:*

* Summit workshops will be specifically focused around the special topics.
* Adreena Lowe suggests having someone at the summit from CDSS specifically the Rates Department. This representative can be available with program-focused presenters to address any questions around rates during the workshop. Adreena will follow up with CDSS to get representation/support for the workshop portion of the summit (Jackie will also send an outreach to assist with this).

*Suggestions for keynote speakers:*

* Jackie Wong will follow up with Barbara Eaton and Deborah Williams regarding presenters for the summit.
* Suggested Speakers include: A Youth that has had an experience with poor school discipline and Chris Samuel.

*Special Topics Summit Work:*

* Some special topic areas are broad. Request the Special Topics Teams submit list of areas of focus for their Special Topics work so that it can be added to the Save the Date. Jesse will join Susanna on the Special Topics Team.
* Special topics committee will decide content/format for the white paper for summit. (Note: White paper may not be the right term – the document will help provide background or context to Summit attendees regarding the Special Topic.

There was also a lot of discussion regarding youth engagement and how the resources that made this possible last year are not available for this year’s Summit. There was great interest in finding a way to move this forward and various members suggested resources and strategies that could help:

* Jackie Wong will follow up with Department of Ed regarding ability to use FYS funding for travel/participation in the Summit.
* There is interest at the local team and higher ed school level; people may be willing to pay or research a way for youth to attend the summit. Last year the higher ed schools received philanthropically supported scholarship funds to cover half their registration; letting them know now may allow them the opportunity to set the students up to attend.
* Joy Salvetti can get the Guardian Scholars Outreach Committee to be involved. Suggest we need someone to coordinate and have capacity to guide and support the Guardian Scholars who could act as youth ambassadors. Joy has a program advisor that may be able to assist with this.
* Suggest Teresa Rowland reach out to community colleges to confirm funding to bring students.
* Crystal and Jackie will connect on some resources.
* We need to design it to ensure that youth attendees are well prepared and supported to attend and be meaningfully involved; it was suggested we consider adding a committee and chair dedicated to this.
* Suggest that each of us bring one youth.
* Michelle will check in with Jenny Vinopal to see if she might be interested in helping out with this part of the Summit.

Next Steps:

* Special Topics Teams to submit bullets areas that they are working on so that it can be added to the Save the Date.
* Jill to send out the Summit Committee Team Structure to the Task Force. If you would like to be added committee please email your name to Jill Worthington/Mia Stizzo mia.stizzo@cfpic.org
* Jackie Wong and Kim Parker’s Summit Team would like to hear any suggestions from Task Force members about speakers for the Summit, hot topics etc. Forward your ideas to Jill Worthington/Mia Stizzo mia.stizzo@cfpic.org
1. **Updates**

**Early Care:** Update was given by Elisha Kingshott. California put in the application for Race to the Top grant and received 52.6 million dollars; 13 million a year for 4 years. This will not increase slots or improve access to early care and education, but it will look at infrastructure development, ratings of teachers, foster parents and outreach. People looking for quality early care education can use these ratings. Ratings will eventually impact all of early care but other Race to the Top activities will focus on ages 3-5.

Governor’s proposed budget; cuts to child care. Since 2008 child care has been cut 26% and if the proposed budget goes through it will increase to 40%. Will be trying to make sure these cuts do not go through.

Developmental screenings for reimbursement cuts were not passed.

**Higher Ed:** Jordan Horowitz reported that there is a need to identify foster youth on post-secondary campuses. Right now there are systems, but they depend on the student identifying themselves on the enrollment form. Currently working with 11 community colleges Foster Youth programs on developing a tool for secondary institutions to flag their foster youth on campus and get information on how these youth compare to non-foster youth. There may be a FASFA route to identify foster youth on post secondary campuses.

Worked with the Barbara Needell Group to link the CalPASS data to the CWS reporting system and piloted in four counties. A report on Foster Youth Education Outcomes can be found on the Stuart Foundation website and the Institute for Evidenced Based Change website at iebcnow.org. The goal is to link the data on a regular basis - we are currently trying to find the funding for that. The research is important as foster youth in California are at risk for poorer educational outcomes. We will be doing a statewide report that will continue tracking the youth even after they return home.

This data will help support policy, program changes and decisions being made. Example data:

* Placements, disabilities have correlation with English proficiency CST.
* Foster youth are five times to not do well in Math proficiency as a non-foster youth.
* Those who receive financial aid were five times more likely to go after the degree than those that did not.

**Data Summit:** Short Term Goals: 1) Develop and disseminate evidence based information on parent behaviors that support school success and 2) Geo-mapping Schools and Foster Homes

Long Term Goals: 1) Facilitate county level education data sharing for students in foster care and 2) Establish an on-going team as subcommittee of the State Interagency Team (SIT)

1. **Hot Topics**

Cheryl Theis was not available to present; this will be on the agenda for next month.

1. **Santa Cruz Project Sharing**

Rachel Velcoff is overseeing the implementation of FosterEd in Santa Cruz County. There are two main factors contributing to educational success:

* Educational Programming;
* Home life; parent engagement and what it means to be actively engaged. Communication with the child at home.

The idea is to ensure that there is an Education Champion in every foster child’s life. And make sure that this person has the behaviors, beliefs and capacities that social science say correlate to educational success. This is a shift from a reactive model to a proactive model.

Focus on making sure everything we do is sustainable. The county is not getting any additional money, they have to re-organize and think about how to do this without foundation resources.

We are at the beginning stage of the process; between now and August 1st we are planning the process needed implement the model. By April 1st we will have everything laid out to implement. In August 2012 we will go through preliminary implementation. The hope is to launch in August of 2013 to co-incide with the school year.

There are five work groups designed to go in depth with resources pertaining to that work group. Workgroup members includes the Presiding Judge, CASA and the, Foster Youth County coordinator.

1. Measuring Success workgroup: Tasked with developing instruments for measuring educational strengths and needs and working with a project evaluation team.
2. Foster Focus workgroup: Tasked with the implementation of Foster Focus in Santa Cruz County.
3. Assessment Resources workgroup: Tasked with ensuring there are sufficient resources to identify educational strengths and needs and developing processes for measuring educational strengths and needs.
4. Intervention Resource workgroup: Tasked with ensuring there are sufficient intervention resources and developing strategies and processes surrounding intervention delivery.
5. Educational Champions workgroup: Tasked with developing uniform processes for the selection and monitoring of educational champions, for informing educational champions of their rights and responsibilities, and for the recruitment, trainings and support of volunteer education champions.

*Question: Is this something you might have as a requirement for reunification?*

 Right now the answer is no because there is so many requirements for reunification right now, may be considered as a class.

*Question: Who will do your training and coaching?*

Foster youth services provided through Santa Cruz County.

The hope is that the bio-parent would have a mentor. CASA will help figure what their role would be.

*Question: Have you considered migrant status and language barriers?*

There will be a focus on bilingual assessment. One of research centers is assisting us with what assessments to deliver and how to deliver them.

Rachel and Jesse will give another update in August 2012. If you have suggestions for questions that would help determine the intervention, please forward them onto Jesse and Rachel. For more information please visit [www.FosterEdConnect.org](http://www.FosterEdConnect.org) or contact Jesse Hahnel jhahnel@youthlaw.org.

1. **Leadership Transition**

Ann Quirk’s term is coming to an end in February. Recommendation from the Task Force was for staggered terms so that we were building the capacity of new co- chairs as they came in - one change with each new chair having a three year term.

If you are interested in being Task Force co-chair or if you have recommendations/nominees, pass those names along to Jill Worthington via email to jill.worthington@cfpic.org or mia.stizzo@cfpic.org. Then we will set up a doodle or survey monkey for voting to come up with the next co-chair. Please get you nominations by the end of January.

1. **Next Steps and Close**

**Next Meeting** will be a conference call on **Monday February 6th from 3:00 – 5:00 PM.** The call in number is 866-231-3596 pass code 7282345#.

Suggested agenda items: Wish list around federal foster youth, Ed Summit – Youth Participation/Resources