

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KUEHL AND SOLIS

September 15, 2015

In Los Angeles County, an alarming number of children live in impoverished communities; are at risk of low academic achievement due to poorly performing schools; have mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and/or negative peer networks; and lack appropriate parental supervision due to struggling and isolated parents.

Each year thousands of youth enter the juvenile justice system in Los Angeles County, the largest juvenile justice system in the nation. Because Probation-involved youth enter with so many of these risk factors, it is necessary that collaboration take place among County Departments such as Health Services, Mental Health, Public Health, Children and Family Services, and the Office of Education.

In 2012, to address these challenges, the WM Keck Foundation funded the Advancement Project and its partners to examine current data practices as well as the path of representative youth through the Probation system, and to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve youth outcomes. These partners, including researchers from California State University Los Angeles, School of Criminal Justice & Criminalistics; University of Southern California School of Social Work; the Children’s Defense Fund - California; the Los Angeles County Departments of

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Probation, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Office of Education, released the *Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study* in April 2015. This study examines the characteristics and experiences of youth exiting from probation camps or suitable placements in Los Angeles County. The study found that many of these youth face traumatic challenges that began well before entering adolescence. Without support from family, school or community, roughly one-third of youth had a new arrest within a year of leaving camp or placement, cycling right back into the system.

These results provide an important framework for continuing to track pathways of youth and families who may encounter a number of County departments before, during and after their involvement with Probation in order to improve county policy and service delivery. The report underscores the need for service integration, collaboration and data sharing that protects confidentiality across County departments to better serve juvenile justice youth and their families who may require evidence-based trauma informed mental health services, substance abuse treatment, health services, educational services, housing or other supports. In addition, community-based systems that support youth and families are also essential to prevent delinquent behaviors and assure effective transition and reentry. It is unsound to continue placing these youth back into the same situations without additional support and then expect different outcomes. This study can be used as a first step in creating an effective and integrated multi-system approach to improving our County's Juvenile Justice System.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that in order to build on the report's findings, create a mechanism to implement the report recommendations and ensure continued systems improvement and monitoring of youth outcomes, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors direct the Interim Chief Executive Officer and the Probation Department to review the *Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study* and establish an interagency workgroup

comprised of the following:

- Researchers, including a representative from California State University Los Angeles School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics
- Probation Executive Team representative, Bureau Chief representative, and other key administrative personnel including the Chief Information Officer
- Probation Department staff representatives from all levels, ranging from line staff to Directors and inclusive of Probation Case Management System managers and programmers
- Representatives from the District Attorney, Public Defenders, Alternate Public Defenders, Juvenile Indigent Defense Panel, Department of Children and Family Services, Public Social Services, Mental Health, Public Health, Juvenile Health Services, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Community & Senior Services, and any other departments serving these youth and their families
- A judicial officer
- One or two formerly or currently justice-involved youth or young adult representatives
- A family representative
- Two representatives from advocacy and community based organizations that may include a service provider
- A representative from the Los Angeles Probation Commission and a representative from the Commission on Children and Families

The goals of this workgroup, led by study author Denise Herz, Ph.D., are to support Probation in its on-going development and implementation of best practices in juvenile

justice. In particular, this group shall focus its efforts on maximizing service integration, strengthening coordination between County departments and community based service providers, ensuring a data driven, transparent and accountable juvenile justice system, and improving information sharing within Probation and across County departments. To achieve these goals, the workgroup shall:

- Articulate a Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice Strategy;
- Identify ways in which the current array of countywide services/initiatives available to this population align with the strategy and areas in which best practices and evidence based programs are currently used;
- Identify challenges, gaps and unmet needs in services, including community-based front end prevention and intervention services, services and interventions while youth are in placement, and community-based services for youth who are transitioning back into the community;
- Develop a seamless referral system for accessing appropriate County and community-based services in a timely manner;
- Identify key outcomes for regular and consistent reporting; and
- Develop a plan for establishing a Probation based research unit that would partner with external researchers to produce a research agenda that aligns with the plans listed above, ensures the key outcomes be reported regularly and consistently to inform practice, programming and policy decisions, and ensures ongoing evaluation of juvenile justice programs and interventions.

Interim CEO is directed to report back to the Board of Supervisors in 90 days.