

INTRODUCTION

The King County Systems Integration Initiative is a collaboration of state and local agencies and organizations in King County (Seattle), Washington that have come together to examine and improve the coordination and integration of program and policy development, and to enhance service delivery, in order to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

It is increasingly evident that child protection and well-being are no longer viewed as the responsibility of one or two public entities, but rather as a shared responsibility of many agencies, individuals, and institutions (formal and informal) in a community. Similarly, responsibility for guidance and accountability for delinquent youth requires the engagement of many supportive entities. Achievement of desirable outcomes for children and youth being served by child welfare and juvenile justice agencies requires concerted effort and communication among many organizations and individuals, and the active engagement and support of their families. Success is more likely when all invest in the common goal and fully carry out their part in meeting it. The King County Systems Integration Initiative partners believe that expectations should be high, accompanied by the appropriate supports and teamwork to bring about success in this committed endeavor.

In recent years we have come to understand the undeniable link between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency. Many youth are served by both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems simultaneously, and many graduate from one to the other. The aforementioned link is confirmed in an increasing volume of research irrefutably identifying an increased risk for maltreated children/youth for involvement in some form of delinquent or criminal activity, often including serious and violent offending. In fact, the initial point-in-time data examination conducted for this effort in King County reflects that nearly 40% of delinquent offenders (age 12-17 years) have current or past dependency histories. This troubling percentage does not reflect preliminary data findings suggesting an equally alarming percentage of very young offenders (age 8-12 years) that experience this dual jurisdiction involvement. The rich body of credible research also confirms that many of these same youth – and families - are in need of mental health, substance abuse, and specialized educational services. However, as with most jurisdictions throughout the country and our state, we are short on the services and supports children/youth and their families need to change the course and adequately address these multiple needs. To further compromise our well-intentioned efforts at safety, reduced recidivism, and overall well-being, too often services are provided by each of our systems in isolation from the other, absent adequate

sharing of information, joint case planning and management, and a coordinated and collaborative effort in support of their success.

We recognize that child welfare and juvenile justice agencies, and their community partners are increasingly measuring their achievement in meeting clearly identified outcomes (such as child safety, well-being, community safety, successful transition to adulthood), tracking progress over time, and sharing information with the community as to successes and concerns. These measures are an important part of accountability to the communities the agencies serve, and form the basis for continuous quality improvement efforts. With the commitment to evidence based programs, practices, strategies mandated by the state, and the continuing requirement to utilize a strained pool of resources to serve our county's children, youth and families, it is no less than imperative that we engage this important system integration effort.

The King County System Integration Initiative also recognizes the recent changes in federal statutes that provide additional impetus for examining this effort with greater rigor. The amendments to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), signed into law in November 2002, specifically require that states implement a system that makes public child welfare records known when a juvenile is before a court in the juvenile justice system and that these records are incorporated into juvenile justice records for purposes of establishing and implementing treatment plans (Part B, Federal Assistance for State and Local Programs, 42 U.S.C. 5633[a][26], [27]). Additionally, new amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), signed into law in June 2003, added to permissible uses of basic state grants the enhanced collaboration between child welfare and juvenile justice to improve delivery of services and continuity of treatment as children transition between the two systems. Also, states are now required to report in their state data reports the numbers of children in the child welfare system who become involved in the juvenile justice system (42 U.S.C. 5106a[a][13]; 42 U.S.C. 5106a[d][14]).

In King County, Washington, as a result of this research and statutory foundation, a positive history of cross system coordination, and a commitment to collaborative strategic planning, a broad based group of government and community entities concerned about improving success for our children and youth have come together in support of a more integrated system of services and responses for dependent children and youthful offenders. Initially invited by Casey Family Programs to begin a dialogue on systems integration, our enthusiastic coalition developed a

unified focus intent on examining our respective client populations, methods of communication, and collaborative processes, and improving outcomes. We have been able to build upon the many fine examples already in existence in the county to advance this critical enterprise. We have also benefited from a passionate and committed group of public and private youth serving professionals at both the county and state level.

BACKGROUND

King County has consistently demonstrated a commitment to comprehensive organizational planning and collaborative approaches toward the development of resource allocation and service delivery. In the past 10 years, there have been numerous examples of this commitment that have yielded valuable lessons regarding the benefit of this approach. An excellent example is found in the 2001 Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan (JJOMP) which has helped shape the course of juvenile services and programs for the past 3 years. It is this type of success that has supported an environment for constructive dialog regarding cross system coordination and integration – and shared responsibility for the youth and families of King County.

Following his attendance at the CWLA Juvenile Justice National Symposium in June 2003, Mr. Lyman Legters, Director of the Seattle Field Office for Casey Family Programs, initiated direct outreach to Mr. John A. Tuell of CWLA to discuss the strategic planning framework on system coordination and integration featured at the event. With the generous funding support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, for four years CWLA had been focusing on the connection between maltreatment and delinquency and developed a planning framework to assist state and local jurisdictions in improving child welfare and juvenile justice system coordination. During exploratory conversations between Mr. Legters and Mr. Tuell, plans were made to invite a broad array of youth serving system leaders for attendance at a local training symposium that detailed the CWLA strategic planning framework for child welfare and juvenile justice system coordination and integration.

An initial one day symposium was convened in October 2003, and then re-convened in December 2003 so that important stakeholders not in attendance initially could attend. There were representatives from multiple disciplines – at the county and state level - in attendance at these meetings that included the King County Superior Court (the Chief Juvenile Court Judge and King County Probation), the Region IV DSHS Children’s Administration (Administrator), the King County Department of Community and Human Services, the Puget Sound Educational School

District, DSHS Region IV Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, the King County Council, the King County Executive's Office, state legislators, and private providers and community organizations. It was from these two meetings that an outstanding group of leaders was chosen to sit as an Executive Steering Committee with responsibility and oversight for the King County Systems Integration Initiative. This leadership group contracted with CWLA in March 2004 to partner with the King County System Integration collaborative partners to examine and analyze relevant issues impacting improved system coordination and integration.

CWLA has employed an interactive consultation process designed to engage community leaders in the tasks of analysis, design, planning and implementation. The CWLA consultants (John A. Tuell and John George) have assisted and supported the authority, talents, work and actions of the participants in the process. Their work has appropriately recognized that the knowledge and expertise of our public and private county and state participants is the critical foundation for success in this effort. Our initiative has worked to achieve its goals with the guidance, active involvement and support of two core groups:

The King County Systems Integration Executive Committee (Membership Roster – Appendix A)

The Executive Committee has met at regular intervals with the CWLA Consultants to develop and finalize the collaborative work plan; guide in the composition of the Steering Committee and subcommittees; discuss relevant expectations, parameters, and goals; draft and execute a charter; and set any other necessary directions for the joint work. The Executive Committee has reviewed progress and project deliverables, and planned and organized ongoing outreach to the membership of the Steering Committee. The Executive Committee has maintained final decision-making authority regarding the work of the collaboration and the CWLA project in support of it.

The King County Systems Integration Steering Committee (Membership Roster – Appendix B)

The Steering Committee (inclusive of Executive Committee members) has also served as a leadership group for this initiative. The Committee is inclusive of the major agencies, governmental units and community entities who work in support of King County children and youth who are served by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Members are individuals with decision-making responsibility for their organizations, with authority to commit resources and enter into inter-agency agreements. The Committee has provided a forum for learning, consensus-building, conflict resolution, and mutual accountability. The

CWLA Consultants have assisted in setting the agenda for the Steering Committee, and has facilitated its work sessions.

With the initial formation of a governance structure, our first task was to develop a charter that articulated the goals of our work and framed the parameters and scope of our multi-system partnership. The adopted Charter agreement is presented below:

KING COUNTY CHILD WELFARE/JUVENILE JUSTICE CHARTER

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The Systems Integration Initiative is a collaboration of state and local community agencies and organizations in King County that have come together to examine and make improvements in integrated program development, policy development and service delivery for children, youth and families served by Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems.

Since December 2003, the initiative has been working with the Child Welfare League of America to explore and address issues around Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare to enhance the level of collaboration and improve the quality of services delivered to youth and families.

In consideration of the foregoing, the parties agree as follows:

1. Goals.
 - 1.1. Promote increased cooperation, coordination, and integration at the administrative and service delivery levels for the benefit of children and families within the purview of children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
 - 1.2. Through a comprehensive, strategic planning process that embraces and values inclusion of youth, families, and a broad based representation of youth serving agencies and organizations, achieve and institutionalize greater multi-system coordination and integration to improve outcomes for King County children, youth and families.
2. Scope of Work. Each member agency and organization agrees to work with CWLA to:
 - 2.1. Produce an inventory of resources in local child serving systems, including: programs and services; a comparative analysis of missions, mandates and policies; identification of best practices nationally and locally; determination of the use of assessment instruments; review and analysis of the funding to support the services and programs; and creation of training for personnel in both systems.
 - 2.2. Assess the current management information systems utilized by participant agencies/organizations and assist CWLA with the preparation of a report on the current capacity to share information across agencies/organizations. The report will

identify barriers and obstacles and jointly provide recommendations to overcome the identified impediments to enhanced information sharing. The report will also identify critical information that must be shared across agencies/organizations to enhance case management and service delivery to youth and families

- 2.3. Inventory available data systems and identify data sets that must be shared across agencies/organizations and ensure that this information contributes to improved analysis of current trends. This effort will lead to enhanced decision-making, particularly regarding prioritizing the allocation of shared resources among and across agencies/organizations.
 - 2.4. Conduct an examination of the legal, policy, and procedural mandates unique to each agency/organization in order to make recommendations for changes that will contribute to improved coordination of initial decision-making, case management, and service delivery. The parties agree to provide a report of their findings and recommendations available to participant agency/organization leadership.
 - 2.5. Have agency representatives that participate in an ongoing oversight committee (“Executive Committee”), as well as have members assigned to and participate in subcommittee meetings organized to address the multiple issues articulated in this agreement. Each representative shall serve until he or she resigns or a replacement is appointed. The Committee may add additional members at any time.
 - 2.6. Utilize the best available information, research, and practices to guide the process.
 - 2.7. Maintain confidentiality of their client information.
 - 2.8. Assist in the development of a means to track and evaluate the Program’s success.
 - 2.9. Jointly compile subcommittee reports to produce findings and recommendations for action strategies resulting in youth serving system coordination and integration.
 - 2.10. Jointly produce an implementation strategy with benchmarks and timelines, no later than 120 days from the adoption of the final report.
3. General Terms
- 3.1. Term. This agreement will be effective through December 31, 2004 (recently extended to December 31, 2005).
 - 3.2. Termination. Member Agencies and Organizations can withdraw from this agreement at any time by making said request in writing with the effective date and reason for withdrawal.
 - 3.3. Renewal. This Agreement may be renewed by the parties’ mutual agreement for additional terms.
 - 3.4. Liability. Each party is responsible for its own acts and omissions and those of its officers, employees, and agents. No party is responsible for the acts of third parties.

During the course of our rigorous fact gathering, examination, and analysis detailed in the Charter agreement, the King County System Integration Initiative moved through four of the five phases of activity (documented in the *Guidebook for Juvenile justice and child Welfare System Coordination and Integration: A Framework for Improved Outcomes*, By Janet K. Wiig with John A. Tuell, CWLA Press 2004 and in *Promoting a Coordinated and Integrated Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice System: An Action Strategy for Improved Outcomes*, by John A. Tuell, CWLA Press 2003) that CWLA facilitated to organize the manner in which we met the goals of our Initiative:

1. Mobilization and Planning:
 - Identifying and commitment to strategic goals and objectives of the collaboration
 - Identifying and determining means of measuring collective client-oriented outcomes
 - Identifying and addressing sticking points which act as barriers to teamwork
 - Developing a governance structure

2. Data Collection and Analysis:
 - Identifying and sharing available baseline data
 - Determining county-wide data elements that may inform priorities and action steps of the collaboration; planning for gathering and study
 - Examining King County information against applicable state and national data
 - Common client identification and study
 - Development of capacity for sharing of data between systems

3. Assessment and Inventory:
 - Inventorying of resources and resource shortage across the continuum
 - Structural analysis of the youth-serving systems
 - Identification of key decision points and decision-makers
 - Conduct an examination of the legal, policy, and procedural mandates unique to each agency/organization in order to make recommendations for changes that will contribute to improved coordination of initial decision-making, case management, and service delivery.
 - Study of funding and funding structures
 - Identification of issues
 - Issue analysis

4. Action Strategy Development:
 - Development of prioritized action agenda
 - Consensus involving all partners
 - Planning of action steps
 - Development of funding mechanisms necessary to support integrated approaches

5. Implementation:
 - Assignments of leadership responsibility
 - Agreement on timelines, phasing and milestones
 - Outcome evaluation with incremental measurement
 - Process evaluation toward further improving the collaboration

Subcommittees were formed to address the plethora of tasks and issues detailed in these five phases of activity. The following is a listing of the subcommittees that have served the King County System Integration Initiative:

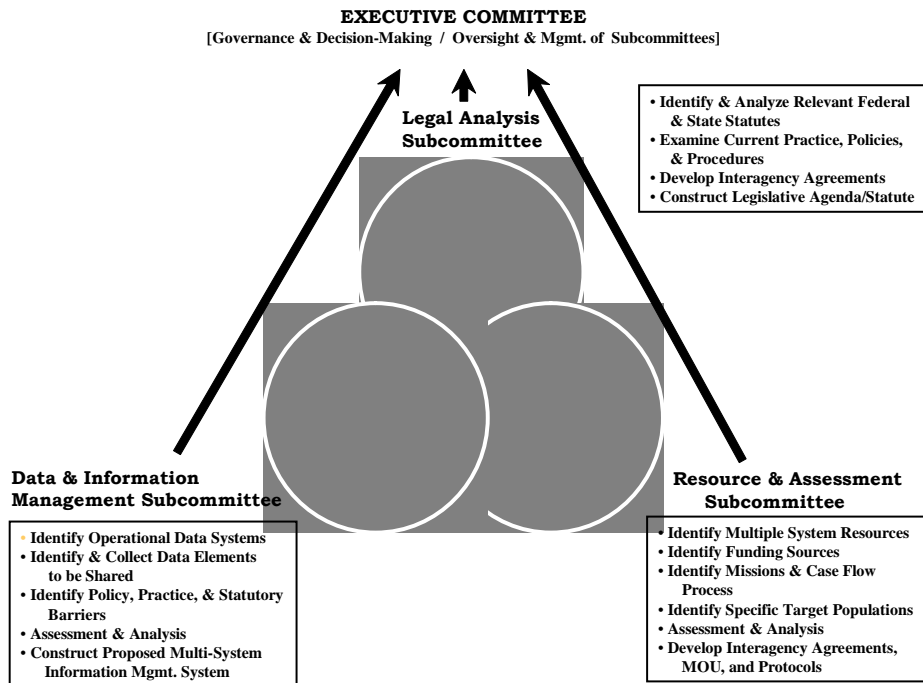
Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee (Membership Roster – Appendix C)

Data and Information Management Subcommittee (Membership Roster – Appendix D)

Legal Analysis Subcommittee (Membership Roster – Appendix E)

The membership of each subcommittee has been dynamic throughout the process. As new tasks have emerged, additional expertise has been enlisted to effectively and thoroughly examine the questions and issues. The efforts of each of these subcommittees has resulted in a compilation of almost 100 pages of new documentation that captures data, data systems, sharable information, survey results, inventories of programs, funding sources, assessment instruments, existing inter-agency agreements, system case flow diagrams, applicable and relevant state and federal codes, preliminary findings and reports, and meeting notes and minutes, among others. (Note: The referenced supporting documentation is posted at: www.cwla.org/programs/juvenilejustice and then click on “Consultation Initiatives”). From this examination and analysis, each subcommittee has produced findings and recommendations for action strategies resulting in youth serving system coordination and integration that have been approved by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Steering Committee.

The interaction of the governance and working structure is depicted in Figure 1 below.



SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

LEGAL ANALYSIS SUBCOMMITTEE

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

The Legal Analysis Subcommittee has undertaken an extensive examination of the legal landscape in King County and how it impacts the ability of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to collaborate on behalf of their common clients. This examination involved two main tasks: 1) legal research and analysis focusing on laws, regulations, and policies that regulate information sharing; and 2) qualitative research consisting of interviews designed to assess the impact of the laws, regulations, and policies.

The legal research component required an in-depth exploration of both federal and state law in areas such as child welfare, juvenile justice, physical and mental health, substance abuse, education, and privacy. Other sources such as administrative codes, Rules of Professional Conduct, and agency administrative policies were also reviewed. The research component also involved surveying information sharing statutes in other states and reviewing current literature addressing legal issues surrounding system collaboration.

The interview component consisted of more than twenty interviews with participants holding various positions in King County's child-serving entities. Participants were questioned about two main topics: 1) their knowledge and impressions of current information sharing and collaboration practices; and 2) their knowledge and impressions of the laws, regulations, and policies that affect such practices.

Throughout the project, the Legal Analysis Subcommittee held regular meetings as well as attended meetings and events involving all members of the Systems Integration Initiative. The Subcommittee has summarized pertinent findings in the *Legal Analysis Subcommittee Preliminary Report*, which was distributed to all participants. In addition, the Subcommittee developed several documents offering guidance on specific legal questions and concerns that arose as the work of the Initiative continued. The major findings from these efforts are briefly summarized in the following section.

FINDINGS

From the results of the above research, two essential conclusions were drawn: 1) barriers to information sharing and collaboration between child welfare and juvenile justice workers and court participants are primarily cultural, technological, and tactical, rather than legal; and 2) legal barriers most often arise when entities such as schools, health care providers, and mental health/substance abuse providers become involved.

Essentially, both federal and state law support efforts by child-serving systems to develop information sharing strategies to better serve their clients. Most pertinent to the work of the initiative is the section of Washington law addressing the use and keeping of information in juvenile records, RCW 13.50. The statutes under this section allow for information to be exchanged between “juvenile justice and care agencies,” which is defined broadly in the section. Although this exchange of information is necessarily limited by other state and federal mandates, RCW 13.50 generally offers support for information sharing procedures.

In light of the above conclusions, a striking finding is the disparity between what the law actually allows regarding information sharing, and what those implementing the law believe it allows. Most participants interviewed believe that the law is far more restrictive than it truly is. Such misunderstanding contributes to a culture of fear and distrust, resulting in highly fragmented systems with few structures in place for needed information sharing. In response to these findings, the Legal Analysis Subcommittee has crafted the action strategies listed below.

ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Develop a Model Interagency Agreement to Guide Information Sharing

The Legal Analysis Subcommittee will draft a Model Interagency Agreement to provide guidance on the legal parameters of information sharing between child-serving entities. Recognizing the need for specific protocols guiding the exchange of information, this Agreement will outline the primary relationships and communications necessary for systems integration, emphasizing legal allowances and limitations. The Subcommittee will work closely with the Resources and Data Subcommittees to ensure that the Agreement supports their efforts and needs. A final draft of the Agreement will be presented to the Executive Committee on or before August 1st, 2005.

2. Produce Legal Opinions to Dispel Myths About Information Sharing

The Legal Analysis Subcommittee will produce a collection of opinions addressing legal concerns about information sharing and will develop and produce a document outlining a procedure through which child-serving entities can obtain future opinions. Recognizing that professionals within the various child-serving entities encounter many of the same recurring issues regarding information sharing, the Legal Analysis Subcommittee will provide answers to the most common legal questions, as identified by the surveys and interviews conducted during this process, in the form of opinions. The Subcommittee will also develop a procedure for dissemination of such opinions, ensuring the utilization of this important tool. The first draft of opinions was completed on March 1st, 2005, and the final draft will be completed on or before July 1st, 2005. The outline of the procedure for obtaining opinions will be drafted by July 1st, 2005, and a dissemination strategy will be presented to the Executive Committee on or before September 30th, 2005.

3. Convene Annual Meetings to Consider Statutory and Court Rule Reform

The Subcommittee will convene annual meetings to decide whether statutory or court rule reform is necessary for the upcoming legislative session; will draft proposed legislation and court rules; and will submit any proposed legislation or court rules for approval by the Executive Committee. Recognizing the importance of legislative support for the success of systems integration efforts, the Legal Analysis Subcommittee will determine whether legislative action should be proposed during the 2006 legislative session, and will consider the need for such recommendations each following year.

4. Inform Legislators About the Progress of the Strategic Plan

The Subcommittee will draft updates for the legislature which inform legislators of the progress of the implementation of the strategic plan and details how the legislature might best support these efforts. Recognizing the excellent support that has been received throughout the planning process from legislators, the Legal Analysis Subcommittee will ensure that the legislature remains an informed and active partner in the implementation of this strategic plan.

5. Respond to the Needs of the Executive Committee and Subcommittees

The Legal Analysis Subcommittee will continue to monitor the needs of and requests of the members of the KC-SII and be responsive to support the ongoing work. Additional subcommittee members will be recruited to add to the current expertise and support the implementation of the aforementioned action strategies. This strategy will be ongoing.

6. Convene Attorney Focus Groups to Discuss Solutions to Information Sharing Issues

The Legal Analysis Subcommittee will continue to develop and convene attorney “focus groups” to discuss concerns about information sharing and to invite ideas for additional efforts. Recognizing that attorneys working within the child welfare and the juvenile justice systems have specific concerns regarding access to and use of information about a client, the Subcommittee will offer the opportunity for legal professionals to share thoughts about and solutions to such information sharing issues. This strategy will be ongoing.

7. Participate in the Development and Execution of Cross-Systems Training.

In addition to the specific strategies listed above, the Legal Analysis Subcommittee will continue to engage in and expand current efforts to provide representation and active participation in the development of the proposed Cross-System Training Curriculum. Members of the Legal Analysis Subcommittee are already committed to the Cross-System Training working group recently constituted.

RESOURCE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee undertook an in-depth examination of programs and services offered by the partner agencies to the KC-SII resulting in the construction of comprehensive services matrices and the identification of service gaps within those systems. Additionally, the Subcommittee constructed a matrix of the assessment and screening instruments currently utilized by the King County Juvenile Court, DSHS Region IV Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, and the DSHS Region IV Children’s Administration. The Subcommittee also identified and compared organizational missions, mandates and policies, which helped determine existing collaborative efforts, opportunities to explore coordinated approaches, and identify the real and perceived limitations in achieving the goals of the KC-SII.

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee conducted a study of case processing and management in each organization to further examine the existing intersections, overlaps, and barriers either supporting or precluding system coordination. The Subcommittee consistently engaged in a rich cross-system discourse regarding strengths and weaknesses of services for cross-system youth and families and committed to the identification of principles for cross-system support of children/youth and their families. These will guide the KC-SII in the implementation of inter-agency agreements, protocols, policies, practices, and legislative actions. This work resulted in a reinforcement of the existing commitment to utilization of evidenced-based practices supported by accurate data and credible research.

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee also identified specific cross-system target populations that will be the focus of improved multi-system interventions. The Subcommittee concluded that these target populations often necessitate a broad array of services and penetrate more deeply into these multiple service systems. However, these target populations of cross-system youth will require further study in order to design services, program interventions, and system responses that more effectively meet their multiple service needs.

Throughout the project, the Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee convened regular monthly meetings, attended meetings and events involving all members of the Systems Integration Initiative, and communicated via scheduled conference calls and electronic mail. The Subcommittee summarized preliminary pertinent findings in the *Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee Preliminary Report*, which was distributed to all Initiative participants in November 2004. The major findings from these efforts are briefly summarized in the following section.

FINDINGS

1. Strengths and conditions already exist in King County which are supportive to the sharing of responsibility and resources, and collaborative resource development:
 - Protocols exist or are in development between many of the partner systems in the KC-SII that provide a solid foundation and example for future collaborative effort.
 - There is good will and a spirit of openness between the leadership of these organizations, demonstrated by their enthusiastic engagement in the work of the KC-SII and this subcommittee.

- The current service matrix includes a number of evidence-based approaches that subcommittee members feel could be explored for expansion or enhancement.
- A Systems of Care (SoC) approach has been embraced within King County, bringing participant systems together based on a common set of practice principles.
- The successful Blended Funding Project has been in existence for a number of years, supporting a narrow band of high-needs multi-system children/youth and may serve as an example in the further development of blended systems efforts.

2. The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee confirmed its fundamental commitment to building a cross-system infrastructure for DSHS and the King County Juvenile Court that supports a coordinated and integrated approach to service delivery for dual jurisdiction (child welfare and juvenile justice) youth and families. This commitment will require the development of multi-system screening and assessment of dual jurisdiction youth, construction of interagency staffing teams to determine needs and access services for identified target populations of dual jurisdiction youth, development of multi-agency protocols and procedures that guide these processes, and development and implementation of additional blended funding strategies to serve these populations.

Specific King County target populations will require focused cross-system action. The subcommittee determined that the focus of its multi-system efforts will need to be on children/youth who are in contact with both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems or have been involved first with one system and then with the other. These children/youth are at high risk for a broad range of negative outcomes, and our mission is to develop systemic approaches which can be expected to reduce the risk and increase positive results for these youth.

This commitment represents a significant challenge both of our systems. Within the above group, a critical and sometimes frustrating intersection point is when youth are released from JRA or detention facilities and there is the professional opinion that placement in out-of-home care is necessary for community safety, for child well-being, or for treatment purposes. It is our plan to build appropriate infrastructure for responding to the needs of those children/youth perceived as requiring the services of both systems.

The Data and Information Management Subcommittee has been asked to explore methods by which an accurate data and information profile for the shared population may be constructed.

3. Cross-system youth who are not well served by our social service systems are also not appropriately or fully served by our educational systems.
4. Our systems, individually and collectively, are not doing enough to engage families in assessment, planning and services, nor to support and enforce their role and responsibilities as parents.
5. The partner agencies of this collaboration, having learned much about each other, still have much to offer each other in terms of evidence-based models of practice and the development of new approaches that might be developed in partnership for youth and families shared between systems.
6. Mental health services are inadequate to meet service needs, difficult to access, and over-reliant on institutional and client-focused (rather than family-focused) treatment responses.

ACTION STRATEGIES

Goals

The Resource Subcommittee is committed to the following goals with respect to children/youth involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems:

- Improved outcomes
- Improved services and access to services
- Better use of resources through combined effort and shared responsibility
- Use of evidence-based practices
- Reduction of further system penetration and prolonged public service involvement

Toward these goals, the subcommittee recommends the following initial action strategies:

1. Develop Cross-System Infrastructure Supporting Integration for Improved Outcomes

It is recommended that an overarching memorandum of understanding (MOU) be drafted and adopted, including the signatory agencies working on the KC-SII, to be completed on

or before July 1, 2005 to confirm the commitment to building a cross-system infrastructure for DSHS and the King County Juvenile Court that supports a coordinated and integrated approach to service delivery for dual jurisdiction (child welfare and juvenile justice) youth and families.. This MOU will articulate the organizations commitment to screening and assessment of dual jurisdiction youth, enhancement of interagency staffing teams to determine needs and access services for identified target populations of dual jurisdiction youth, review and strengthening of multi-agency protocols and procedures that guide these processes, and strengthening of blended funding and other strategies of shared responsibility to serve these populations. The MOU will also commit to regular meetings of an Executive Committee that provides oversight and leadership in the implementation of the recommendations and action strategies delineated in this strategic plan document. The MOU will be time limited and subject to review and revision on an annual basis.

The Executive Committee will task a subcommittee to strengthen and/or adapt multi-system screening and assessment instruments that will more effectively “flag” the dual jurisdiction youth and identify their service needs through the eyes of an inter-agency staffing team that is empowered to make case management and disposition recommendations. The examination will result in a recommended protocol for cross-system utilization of screening, assessment, and inter-agency staffing for dual jurisdiction youth. In concert with the recognition of specific sub-target populations, this work will also explore the creation of inter-agency staffing teams for these youth and families as well (i.e., 8-12 years of age, etc.)

2. Expand Blended Funding Mechanisms and Shared Responsibility

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee made the commitment to explore the expansion of blended funding and shared responsibility as means of better addressing the complex needs of multi-system youth and families

- Complete an inventory of currently-operating shared funding arrangements in the county
- Specifically focus on the Systems of Care project and expand to include juvenile justice.

- Specifically focus on Functional Family Therapy and expand to include the DCFS and cover Becca and dependent youth
- Examine additional opportunities for blended funding utilizing the resource matrices completed by the Resource committee members representing youth-serving systems.
- Identify what the state task force on Mental Health Services for Children may have done in this area and explore its applicability to King County system integration

The Executive Committee will form a work group to further examine the possibilities for additional blended funding efforts. It will be the responsibility of the group to construct blended funding strategies that are accompanied by a protocol defining access to these funding opportunities. From this examination, the group will develop a set of recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee on or before September 30, 2005. The following will be a part of that consideration:

a. Consider Implementing Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee will explore and assess the feasibility of implementing Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care in the county by:

- Learning about the pilot/demonstration project currently underway in Eastern Washington and considering replication in King County.
- Identifying the populations and numbers of King County youth this evidence-based approach could serve

b. Better Engage with our Mental Health Services to Improve Outcomes

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee has a strong interest in better engaging Mental Health services for children and youth in the county. There has been a great increase in the availability of services (the numbers served have doubled in the last five years) which must be maintained and expanded at the same time there are continuing decreases in state funds for these services. Our collective consensus is that once kids are in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems, many do not get the mental health support they need. The Subcommittee plans to:

- identify among our systems the gaps in services

- improve access to services through improved dissemination of information about the referral process
- improve cross-system coordination through dissemination of interagency working agreements already in place
- improve cross-system education and understanding through a structured training program
- close the gap for non-Medicaid eligible consumers by advocating for funding for those in need of service
- assist in implementing the King County Children’s Mental Health Plan, with emphasis on:
 - a. comprehensive responses to families rather than individual clients
 - b. family and youth partnership in the process
 - c. evidence-based approaches
 - d. system collaboration

3. Further Develop and Implement a Cross-System Training Approach Which Supports Integration

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee made the commitment to develop an in-depth Cross-System Training Curriculum for practitioners in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and treatment systems. A work group from the KC-SII has been formed to create the Cross-System Training Curriculum. Initial leadership for this group has been assigned to Lois Nicholas, retired Administrator for Region IV of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration. The purpose of the training is to help personnel in each system to understand the roles, responsibilities, and key decision points unique to each system, to identify and appreciate commonalities and dissimilarities in these work processes, and to work together to identify methods by which their work could be done in a more coordinated manner to reduce duplication of services and improve outcomes. The training will also serve to de-mystify legal aspects and delineate specific policies that often interfere with coordinated case work. The work group will develop a set of recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee on or before September 30, 2005.

4. Better Engage with our Educational Systems to Improve Educational Outcomes

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee made the commitment to better engage with our educational systems to improve outcomes for the populations identified. Recognizing the failures of both the social services and education systems to address cross-system youth, the commitment is made to have our education, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems work more effectively together. The Subcommittee has created a Task Force to address multiple issues concerning the coordination and integration of services for youth impacting these multiple systems. Initial leadership for this group has been assigned to Mick Moore, Assistant Superintendent Puget Sound Education School District. The Task Force will develop a set of recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee on or before September 30, 2005.

5. Better Engage Families in Planning and Service Delivery

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee made the commitment to increase the involvement of families in the King County System Integration Initiative, and ensure the full engagement of families in the delivery of services. This will include the appointment of family representatives on the Executive Steering and Resource Committees, which is being explored at the time of this writing.

6. Consolidate Court Processes

The Resource Inventory and Assessment Subcommittee is interested in examining the current court calendars and processes to determine whether a consolidated hearing structure might better accommodate and improve outcomes for dual jurisdiction youth (those who are both dependent, Becca, ARY or CHINS and in the delinquency court process). Subcommittee members acknowledge that this is a complicated initiative to undertake, and that it should be undertaken with great care and consideration. They recommend this study be delayed until after Becca matters are consolidated and after evaluations are completed of the treatment court, drug court, and family drug court currently in place. In that way, important learning from those experiences will better inform the options, benefits and drawbacks of consolidating hearings for dual jurisdiction youth.

DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

The Data Collection and Information Management Subcommittee conducted an extensive examination of the existing information systems that serve the multiple youth serving agencies in King County and the state. This work was undertaken with the understanding that data serve as an important foundation for critical decision-making for informed and successful system integration, augmenting the knowledge and expertise of case workers and managers in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. This subcommittee adopted the premise that workers, managers and directors need easy and regular access to data and detailed case information about the youth served by each system in order to plan, create, and implement coordinated case planning and service delivery. Additionally, data systems and the data derived therein, often serve a critical function in the process of program, practice, and funding reform. This premise was endorsed by the King County Systems Integration Executive Steering Committee and helped guide the work over the past 9 months.

This subcommittee inventoried existing data systems for the agencies or institutions served by these systems. Within each of the systems (i.e., JUVIS, SCOMIS, etc.), data elements, responsibility for data entry, and internal and external worker access was identified. Qualitative research was conducted in the form of random surveys and interviews of child welfare and juvenile justice case workers and managers to determine the data and information necessary to effectively make case management decisions. Assessment tools that provide information for these databases were analyzed and catalogued for the child welfare and juvenile justice. Collaborative research was conducted between the King County Juvenile Court and the Department of Social and Health Services to identify the universe of dual jurisdiction youth (age 12-17 years) from the offender, dependency, Truancy, CHINS, and ARY populations. Additionally, workload data was collected for Calendar Year 2003 on the aforementioned groups. Specific data elements from multiple systems were identified that would result in the construction of a multi-system “database” or a “sharable information grid” that will serve the goals of the KC-SII. Finally, this subcommittee explored external resources, through training and technology that would advance and enhance the development of a real-time system for inter-agency information sharing.

Throughout the project, the Data and Information Management Subcommittee convened regular monthly meetings, attended meetings and events involving all members of the Systems Integration Initiative, and communicated via scheduled conference calls and electronic mail. The Subcommittee summarized preliminary pertinent findings in the *Data Collection and Information Management Subcommittee Preliminary Report*, which was distributed to all Initiative participants in November 2004. The major findings from these efforts are briefly summarized in the following section.

FINDINGS

The multiple data systems that serve King County youth and families contain the necessary data elements to serve the goals of the KC-SII. However, the coordination and sharing of that information has limited cross-system access that is frequently guided by incorrect perceptions of statute, policies and practices derived from those misperceptions. The case workers and managers using these systems are often frustrated by the inability to gain access to the information contained in systems external to their agency. Survey results acknowledged an ignorance of the actual rules that govern information exchange and revealed that information exchange is often propelled forward by relationship histories - not by strict policy or procedure adherence. In short, the findings are consistent with the finding of the Legal Analysis Subcommittee. Specifically, barriers to information sharing and collaboration between child welfare, juvenile justice workers and court participants are primarily cultural, technological, and tactical.

Additionally, this Subcommittee recognized that neither the juvenile justice system nor the child welfare system has sufficient access to information on the mental health and educational needs of King County youth to support the goals of the KC-SII. Recent developments have resulted in new protocols, such as the DCFS agreement for information sharing with Seattle Public Schools, however, this kind of solution is currently the exception. The Subcommittee finds the need for the establishment of additional protocol instruments that explicitly guide the process for sharing information with these critical youth serving institutions. The construction and development of such protocols should be informed by the findings of the Legal Analysis Subcommittee to ensure the adequate protection of records and information contained within these multiple information systems.

The Subcommittee experienced first-hand the barriers and difficulty in identifying the population of youth simultaneously populating the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (i.e., dependency/offender, FRS/ARY, etc.). The Subcommittee found that the effort to conduct this “common client, point-in-time research” was not guided by any defined procedure and would only be produced on an as-needed or requested basis. While this data profile was completed and has served the KC-SII, there is no agreement that will ensure that this information will be available to decision-makers in the future.

Finally, from the Subcommittee’s examination of existing technology companies and participation in the Juvenile Integrated Information Sharing (JIIS) training in Portsmouth, Virginia in September 2004, there is a clear understanding of the capacity to develop and implement a real-time information system containing agreed upon sharable information and data elements that will support the goals of the KC-SII. This system will not require new data entry from existing systems. Rather, the inter-agency information can be “connected” and will be “populated” with data and information as it is entered into each agency’s system. The system can be constructed with guidance from users and managers regarding access and information utility.

ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Construct a Cross-System Sharable Information Grid

The Data and Information Management Subcommittee will continue its current efforts to complete construction of the sharable information grid that contains information identified by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems as necessary for carrying out the responsibilities of their agency mandates and roles. The strategy will include a goal for the sharable information grid to subsequently incorporate data and information from additional systems (i.e., education, mental health, etc.) that are currently impacted by additional statutes and regulations (i.e., HIPAA, FERPA). The outreach to the OSPI system to incorporate relevant educational data is an important strategy for the continuing development of this model sharable information system. The grid will also provide a usable database that supports evaluation and quality control measures. The Subcommittee will work closely with the Legal Analysis Subcommittee in this construction and monitor the development of the proposed Inter-Agency Working

agreement currently in development. The initial sharable information grid will be targeted for completion by July 1, 2005. Completion of the second phase is targeted for completion by October 1, 2005.

2. **Explore Fiscal Feasibility & Funding Plan for Technology Solutions to Cross-System Information Management**

The Data and Information Management Subcommittee believes that it is critical to utilize existing and available technology to implement this data and information management system that serves the goals of the KC-SII. Several technology companies have provided demonstrations of their capacity to support the planning, development, and implementation of the system contemplated by this subcommittee. Therefore, ongoing exploration of the fiscal feasibility and funding plan for utilization of a technology company in the development and implementation of the real-time, multi-system information system is a part of the action strategy.

3. **Develop a “Guidebook” to Instruct the Use of the Sharable Information Grid**

The Data and Information Management Subcommittee will develop a multi-system “Guidebook” that will identify the processes and practices for use of the sharable information grid. This Guidebook, or manual, will define such aspects as purpose and allowable circumstances for access, process for gaining access, and levels of access. Within this manual, protocols will be developed that define these parameters. The Guidebook will be targeted for completion by October 1, 2005.

4. **Provide Ongoing Support for Data and Information Requests from the Executive Committee**

During the development period for the sharable information grid and the user’s manual, the Data and Information Management Subcommittee recognizes the need to support Executive Steering Committee requests for inquiries regarding specific target populations that have been identified as a special focus or emphasis for the KC-SII. Therefore, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for participating agencies will be developed and ratified that commits to the cross system exchange of data for purposes of collaborative research. The exchange of information will comply with all existing federal and state statutes and be guided in its development by the findings articulated in the Legal Analysis Subcommittee report. The MOU will be targeted for completion by July 1, 2005.

5. Recruit Additional Subcommittee Members with Expertise to Support the Implementation of the Action Strategies

The Data and Information Management Subcommittee will continue to monitor the needs and requests of the members of the KC-SII and be responsive to support the ongoing work. Additional subcommittee members will be recruited to add to the current expertise and support the implementation of the aforementioned action strategies. This strategy will be ongoing.

6. Support the Development of the Cross-System Training Curriculum

In addition to the specific strategies listed above, the Data and Information Management Subcommittee will continue to engage in and expand current efforts to provide representation and active participation in the development of the proposed Cross-System Training Curriculum. Members of the Data and Information Management Subcommittee are already committed to the Cross-System Training working group recently constituted.

SUMMARY

The King County Systems Integration Initiative has completed a comprehensive strategic planning process and presents this report detailing the findings, recommendations, and action strategies proposed to produce a more coordinated and integrated juvenile justice and child welfare system in the county. The Executive Committee and the subcommittees assigned to particular aspects of investigative and analytical work that have supported the development of the action strategies have committed time, energy, and expertise to this extraordinary effort. The additional participating stakeholders have also contributed information and perspectives that have further enriched the process. As with any strategic plan, it is essential that an organized implementation plan be constructed to ensure action on the priority recommendations. The members of the King County Systems Integration Initiative have established a governance structure, committees, and working groups to support the action steps recommended in the strategic plan. It is through this construct and continuing effort that the King County Systems Integration Initiative Strategic Plan will provide for improved coordination and integration of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems that will result in improved outcomes for our children, youth, and families.