

**Children's Court Improvement Commission**  
**Data Governance Committee**  
**Results of Data Exchange**  
**2013-2014 School Year**

**Background**

Efforts to create data sharing began in late 2012 as part of the Children's Court Improvement Commission's Court Improvement Project (CIP) Strategic Plan. Representatives from the NM Public Education Department (PED), the NM Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD), and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) participated. These three agencies participate in an MOU and Data Governance Agreement intended to provide secure and authorized access to education, child welfare, and juvenile justice data for research and evaluation purposes. The Governance Agreement recognizes and honors the data governance structures of the Participating Agencies and in no way intends to supersede them. The goal is as follows:

To institutionalize the routine exchange of data between agencies that would be de-identified and aggregated to describe the educational outcomes of children and youth in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems

Casey Family Programs generously stepped up to provide the funding for the analysis and reporting of results.

**The Research Design**

The framework for ongoing efforts is outlined in the Data Plan. The Plan calls for a comparative research design where a number of data elements are selected and vetted for inclusion in the model. The overall research design is intended to answer a number of research questions formatted as:

Are there different educational outcomes when comparing children and youth in protective services, children and youth in juvenile justice services, and children and youth in public schools statewide?

There are essentially three categories of data elements: (1) identification and demographic items required to match cases across data systems that the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) provides to the Public Education Department (PED); (2) data elements from CYFD that describe child/case characteristics; and (3) education outcome data elements from the PED STARS system that address involvement in special services; mobility; retention and graduation; attendance, enrollment, and truancy; disciplinary infractions and response; and testing and assessment.

**The Data Share**

Research and data staff from CYFD/Juvenile Justice and CYFD/Protective Services submitted files to PED through a secure access portal. PED research and data staff in turn matched these records to PED files using name, date of birth and gender. Because CYFD/Juvenile Justice and CYFD/Protective Services format key data elements differently, the files had to be matched and analyzed separately. In addition, and unbeknownst at the time the data plan was developed, it turned out that PED keeps most of the critical information as separate records for each student. Thus for most students in the analysis, there were multiple records. These multiple records resulted from multiple entries around Districts enrolled; multiple withdrawals of various types; multiple entries on disciplinary infractions and responses; and multiple entries on tests and scores.

Overall Juvenile Justices staff submitted 3872 records (3872 youth) with juvenile justice involvement at any

time in the 2013-14 school year. Those 3872 records became 27,812 records. Of these, 2845 students were matched involving 26778 records for analysis (match rate of 73.5%). The 1027 unmatched records were moved to a separate file. The number of records per juvenile justice involved students in the analysis ranges from 1 to 432.

Protective Services staff submitted 3968 records (3968 children and youth) with protective services involvement at any time in the 2013-14 school year. Those 3968 records became 10,975 records. Of these, 2013 students were matched involving 9123 records for analysis (match rate of 53.2%). Of the 1852 unmatched, 76.3% were under 5 on 9/1/13 (1413 children) so the lack of match is not particularly disturbing. The 1852 unmatched records were moved to a separate file. The number of records per protective services involved students in the analysis ranges from 1 to 162.

## **The Analysis**

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used for all analyses. Because of the multiple records per student, considerable effort was expended to aggregate findings to allow for student based analysis. There were 52 data elements in the original Juvenile Justice data set that became 234 data elements in the final data set. There were 70 data elements in the original Protective Services data set that became 253 data elements in the final data set. Programming to accomplish this resulted in a 758 line syntax file. Efforts to repeat this data share for subsequent school years will require at least 60 hours even with the syntax in place. AOC and CYFD staff should plan accordingly. In addition, findings were compared to statewide aggregate data, where available, from various PED sources. The original idea of including all students in the STARS system to allow for these comparisons was abandoned for several reasons, not the least of which would have been the exorbitant level of work that would be required to analyze data on 339,219 students (and likely two million or more records).

## **Overview of Findings**

Special Education: System involved students have higher rates of participation in special education. The statewide special education participation rate was 13.9%; the rate for juvenile justice involved students was 23.2% and the rate for protective services involved students was 31.3%.

English Language Learner (ELL) services: System involved students have lower rates of participation in English Language Learner (ELL) services. The statewide ELL participation rate was 15.4%; the rate for juvenile justice involved students was 9.7% and the rate for protective services involved students was 8.4%.

Mobility: 32% of juvenile justice involved students and 26% of protective services involved students were in more than one district in the 2013-14 school year. In addition, 69% of juvenile justice involved students and 55% of protective services involved students experienced one or more withdrawals in the 2013-14 school year. Even in the absence of comparable data for all students in New Mexico, these two results are noteworthy in terms of pointing to issues of school stability, disenrollment, and reentry.

Retention: Retention rates for all students statewide are available by grade so they are not directly comparable to the rates derived from this analysis (grade retained was not provided). Statewide rates go from a low of 0.38% (fifth grade) to a high of 9.43% (ninth grade) with an average across grades of 3.29. The juvenile justice retention rate of 9.7% exceeds both this maximum and average. The protective services retention rate of 3.2% is less than both the maximum and average.

Graduation: Statewide rates are established on four-year cohorts (69.3% for the 2014 four-year cohort) and are thus not directly comparable to the rates derived from these data. However what is known is that 129

juvenile justice involved students were graduating and 321 were in grade twelve; 17 protective services involved students were graduating and 28 were in grade twelve.

Attendance, Enrollment, and Truancy: There was a difference of 10 days or more between attendance and enrollment for 36% of the juvenile justice involved students, and a difference of 10 days or more between these two data elements for 19% of protective services involved students. The data element "truancy days" from PED shows 56% of juvenile justice involved students with 10 or more days truant, and 34% of protective services involved students with 10 or more days truant. The habitual truancy rate reported by PED for 2013-14 for all students and all districts was 16.3%. From either of the above perspectives (either 36% or 56% for juvenile justice; either 19% and 34% for protective services), the truancy rates for system-involved students exceed those for the state as a whole.

Discipline: Statewide data on discipline infractions and responses could not be found in an aggregated fashion so there is no way to make comparisons. Overall, the relative percentage of system involved students with discipline infractions is 2.0% or less for all discipline infraction codes except for juvenile justice involved students with 14.5% with alcohol, drug and tobacco infractions; 7.1% with assault and battery infractions; and 6.0% with disorderly conduct infractions. For protective services involved students, only assault and battery exceeds 2.0%; that rate is 4.1%. Discipline responses show higher rates and may be more of an accurate representation of these students' involvement in disciplinary issues. For juvenile justice involved students, 22.6% experienced out-of-school suspensions and 7.3% experienced in-school suspensions. For protective services involved students, those rates are considerably lower at 7.2% and 2.5% respectively.

Testing/Assessment: Juvenile justice involved and protective services involved students score lower than students statewide:

The NMSBA (NM Standards Based Assessment) data are overall scale scores. Available statewide data are provided as means (averages) by discipline: Reading = 38.9; Math = 37.0; and Science = 37.9. The mean scale scores for juvenile justice involved and protective services involved students are respectively 25.10 and 26.10, considerably below the state averages of 37.0 to 38.9. Fewer than 20% of each of these groups achieved scores of 35 or above.

The PLAN (a version of the ACT) scores are compared to national norms that are expressed as percentiles. For juvenile justice involved students, their mean score of 16.55 corresponds to about the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile (meaning 24% of the students taking the PLAN will score at or below 16.55 and 76% will score higher). For protective services involved students, their mean score of 18.18 (based on only 17 students) corresponds to about the 34<sup>th</sup> percentile. The 50<sup>th</sup> percentile falls at a score of 20; about 18% of juvenile justice involved students and 35% (6/17) of protective services involved students scored at 20 or above).

PSAT normative scores are also interpreted as percentiles. For juvenile justice involved students, their mean score of 36.98 corresponds to between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> percentile. For protective services involved students, their mean score of 39.59 (based on only 17 students) corresponds to between the 36<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> percentile. The 50<sup>th</sup> percentile falls at a score of 42-43; about 24% of juvenile justice involved students and 29% (5/17) of protective services involved students scored at 42 or above).

EOC scores are difficult to interpret as passing scores vary by course and the data provided by PED does not specify course. Passing scores for 2013-14 were published and fell between 14 and 31, depending on the course. Both the juvenile justice involved student mean of 26.81 and the protective services involved mean of 23.73 fell in this range but that does not tell us much. We need to continue to work with PED to see if there is a better way to interpret these data.

# Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in Protective Services: A Local Response

## Bernalillo County

Representatives from Protective Services (PS), and two Clusters of the Albuquerque Public Schools were invited by Judge John Romero to participate in a meeting discussing opportunities to collaborate on improving educational outcomes. The two Clusters are Atrisco Heritage Academy and Highland High School. The meeting was held December 14, 2015. Twenty-eight people attended from these two organizations.

In attendance: Judge John Romero, 2nd Judicial District; Kristine Meurer, Executive Director, APS; Annamarie Luna, Deputy Director, CYFD/PS; Delphine Trujillo, Regional Manager, CYFD/PS; Angela Teertstra PPW, CYFD/PS; Xuan Le, PPW, CYFD/PS; Veronca Montes, PPW, CYFD/PS; Brenna Dotson, COM, CYFD/PS; Joseph Madrid, COM, CYFD/PS; Tracy Hollingworth, CYFD/PS; Leslie Kelley, Director of Counseling, APS; Lucinda Sanchez, Associate Superintendent, Special Ed, APS; Gabriella Blakey, Associate Superintendent, Middle Schools, APS; Silvina Tello, Community School Coordinator, APS; Kaitlyn Gray, Special Ed Teacher, APS; Aaron Arellano, Assistant Principal, APS; Bernadette Martinez, Office of Equity and Engagement, APS; Barbara Trujillo, Family Liaison, APS; Rachael Perea, Student Assistance Team Chair, APS; Phyllis Muhovich, Principal, APS; Sonora Rodriguez, Assistant Principal, APS; Marcus Jaramillo, Investigations, CYFD/PS; Doreen Chavez, Acting COM, CYFD/PS; Gary "Skip" Ritter, Investigations, CYFD/PS; Christina Nuanes, Placement, CYFD/PS; Marco Harris, Highland HS, APS; Jesus Villarreal, Highland HS, APS; April Barela, Management Analyst, Administrative Office of the Courts; and Mary Ann Shaening, Consultant to the Administrative Office of the Courts.

The meeting began with introductions and an overview of the Local Response initiative. Data were presented on children and youth involved with Protective Services (PS) in Bernalillo County. Information was also presented on applicable federal and state laws.

Participants noted that this is about more than data; it is about communication. The goal was described as children and young people having an uninterrupted education experience and ultimately experiencing success in school. School stability was noted as a challenge. Participants also talked about having educational liaisons in PS in the past and though that is no longer financially feasible, they wanted to make every effort to regain as much of that functionality as possible.

Additional discussion then centered on the core strategies that could be adopted in the two participating APS Clusters to improve educational outcomes. Decisions made by the group are in ***bold italics*** below.

### **Testing**

The group discussed opportunities to coordinate court hearings, planning meetings, investigation interviews, and other activities and events with critical testing dates in the schools. Testing dates are known well in advance and schools can provide the schedule to PS and they in turn can provide this to the attorneys who represent children and youth as well as to Investigation and Permanency Planning Workers (PPWs). With attorneys and workers on board, schedules could be coordinated better.

***It was decided that APS would provide testing schedules to PS through Delphine Trujillo who would then provide them to COMs for distribution to attorneys and workers.***

### **Sharing information**

Several areas were discussed including PS use of the CYFD Standardized Letter notifying schools of a child in custody, identifying the case worker and the foster parents, requesting records, and identifying the Educational Decision Maker. School representatives noted that ultimately this information needs to go to several people in the schools and a protocol needed to be formalized and distributed to principals from Associate Superintendents. The notice should have several options listing who should receive it. There may also be a need to add a cover memo to principals that describes their responsibility to distribute the letter. In addition to specifying where the notification goes, the protocol would outline next steps for the schools upon receiving notice, including pulling the records requested for PS and a copy of those records for the schools to facilitate communication with PS. The protocol would also outline how school staff would request information from CYFD/PS. It would also speak to how coordinated planning between PS and APS could be pursued, especially when there are behavioral health issues, and how to coordinate when a child or youth is transitioning from RTC (and other transitions). This protocol would be developed for youth in custody and needs to describe the role of the court. (Investigation is a different process as children are not in custody and a Release of Information is needed from the parents.)

***It was decided that a workgroup would be formed to develop this protocol. Minimally the protocol would address (1) the notice of a child in custody, (2) steps schools should take upon notice, (3) requesting information from CYFD/PS, (4) coordinated planning, and (5) the role of the court in this process. See paragraph above.***

The group discussed looking into accessing information more efficiently by allowing PPWs to access the Parent Portal. PS workers in attendance confirmed that this would be very helpful in their case management responsibilities.

***Whether to create access to Parent Portals will be discussed as part of the Protocol Work Group and will be included in the Protocol if APS agrees to provide this access.***

Attendees noted the need for training APS staff on the Protocol, the Uninterrupted Scholars Act, and matters relating to reporting and various other PS processes.

***The Protocol Workgroup will address training and recommend how this would be developed and delivered.***

### **Education Liaison/Point Person**

As noted above, there used to be Education Liaisons in PS offices and the group would like to reinstate that function even though specific dedicated positions are not a budget reality. It was also decided that both PS and APS could identify "point persons" as liaisons (perhaps "point positions" because people change). These individuals would be counted on to secure information and help with any other challenges around PS and APS working together.

***A workgroup will be formed to outline this process – who should be designated as liaisons in each system; roles and responsibilities of liaisons in each system; maintaining contact lists; and other matters as identified by the group.***

### **Coordinated Teaming and Planning**

The group discussed the need to team and plan across systems when there are child/youth specific issues to resolve or decisions to be made that would be better done with both schools and PS at the table. This could be focused on “transitions” – transitions from residential treatment back to the community; transitions home through Trial Home Visitation and otherwise; transitions resulting from placement changes; transitions resulting from school changes; and so forth. Such an effort is in alignment with the Community School concept where family engagement is promoted and children and families are connected to external resources. Schools often use teams in this process (e.g., Health and Wellness Teams, Student Assistance Teams, and other school-based teams). PS often uses teams as well, most notably with Family Centered Meetings.

***A third workgroup will be formed to design this process – how to join teaming processes on specific case-based issues, needs and/or decisions. The process would be piloted in the two APS clusters represented at this meeting.***

### **Formalizing cross-system relationships through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)**

***The group reported that there would like to formalize an MOU with the agreements made during this meeting as well as other agreements initiated through the three workgroups. The large group will re-convene in late January to review the work and recommendations of the workgroups and decide next steps in terms of developing an MOU as well as implementing workgroup recommendations. Delphine Trujillo (PS) and Kristine Meurer (APS) will organize these workgroups along with the specific individuals who offered to participate.***

***The three workgroups will respectively address Protocol, Liaisons, and Teaming.***