

2010 Pennsylvania State Roundtable

May 27 & 28, 2010

Summary

Representatives of the Leadership Roundtables in attendance:

Leadership Roundtable 1

Honorable Kevin Dougherty, Philadelphia County
Honorable David Wecht, Allegheny County
Honorable Kim Berkeley Clark, Allegheny County
Marc Cherna, Allegheny County CYF
Cynthia Stoltz, Allegheny County
Laurie O'Connor, Montgomery County

Leadership Roundtable 2

Honorable Leslie Gorbey, Lancaster County
Keith Hayes, Chester County

Leadership Roundtable 3

Honorable Brian Johnson, Lehigh County
Peter Vriens, Dauphin County

Leadership Roundtable 4

Honorable Chester Harhut, Lackawanna County
Honorable Kelly Streib, Butler County
William Browning, Lackawanna County
Wendy Hoverter, Cumberland County

Leadership Roundtable 5

Honorable Caron VanHorn, Franklin/Fulton Counties
Maryanne Burger, Blair County
John Perrot, Fayette County

Leadership Roundtable 6

Honorable Charles Saylor, Northumberland County
Richard Saylor, Lycoming County

Leadership Roundtable 7

Honorable Carol Hanna, Indiana County
Honorable Oliver Lobaugh, Venango County
David Schwille, Venango County
Bill Cisek, Venango County
Kerith Strano Taylor, Jefferson County
Brian Mowrey, Jefferson County

Leadership Roundtable 8

Honorable Craig Miller, Clinton County

Honorable Scott Naus, Columbia/Montour Counties

Rose Weir, Snyder County

Invited Guests:

Frank Cervone, Executive Director, Support Center for Child Advocates

Jim Anderson, Executive Director, Juvenile Court Judges Commission

Mimi Laver, J.D., American Bar Association

Richard Gold, Deputy Secretary, Office of Children, Youth and Families
Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Honorable George Hartwick, III Dauphin County Board of Commissioners

Members of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts:

Honorable Max Baer, Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Michele Makray, Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Zygmunt A. Pines, Esq. Court Administrator of Pennsylvania

Joseph Mittleman, Director of Judicial Programs

Sandy Moore, Administrator, Office of Children and Families in the Courts

Ralph Hunsicker, Judicial Automation Division

Barbara Holmes, Judicial Automation Division

Angelo Santore, Program Analyst, Office of Children and Families in the Courts

Elke Moyer, Administrative Assistant, Office of Children and Families in the Courts

Stephenie Strayer, Program Analyst, Office of Children and Families in the Courts

Angela Sager, Program Analyst, Office of Children and Families in the Courts

Lynne Napoleon, Program Analyst, Office of Children and Families in the Courts

Stephen Feiler, Director, Judicial Education

Welcome/Introductions

State Roundtable members were welcomed by Sandy Moore, OCFC Administrator. Sandy also shared with the group that the Honorable Mark Mascara, Washington County Judge and co-chair of LRT 4 is unable to attend due to illness. Attendees were asked to sign a card for Judge Mascara and his family.

After reviewing the agenda, Sandy provided an update as to the SRT outreach plan created at last year's meeting to garner participation from non-involved counties. Sandy presented charts showing a significant increase in participation at this year's LRT as compared to previous years both in the number of counties involved and the leadership within counties involved (additional dependency judges and child welfare administrators). Sandy thanked co-chairs and others who provided the outreach.

The Honorable Max Baer, Supreme Court Justice, led introductions. In welcoming members, Justice Baer acknowledged the growing camaraderie, partnerships and networking that is

occurring throughout Pennsylvania. Justice Baer indicated his belief that the common focus we now share has led to the 25% decrease in PA children in care (as compared with the 9% national decrease). Justice commended attendees on the exceptional work being done across Pennsylvania and noted the interest being shown by other states, especially as it relates to the Children's Roundtable structure. Justice further stated, "Over the next year we will see aspirations being met. We need to finish our work and move forward. There is no room for failure."

Leadership Roundtable Reports

Roundtable 1 — Honorable Kevin Dougherty, Philadelphia County Administrative Judge Cindy Stoltz, Esq.; Allegheny County Children's Court Administrator

The Honorable Kevin Dougherty and Cindy Stoltz, Esq. reported on behalf of Leadership Roundtable (LRT) 1 providing specific details regarding activities of each county. LRT1 membership includes Allegheny, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. It is the goal of LRT 1 to have all members participating as a PPI county. Currently, four of the five counties are participating or have applied to participate.

Judge Dougherty announced that Philadelphia is Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI) applicant for Phase 3. In preparation, they established sub-committees to the Children's Roundtable to address implementation of 90 day reviews, strengthening legal representation, data collection/review and streamlining the adoptions process. Philadelphia will go live on CPCMS July, 2010.

Montgomery County is growing the success of their local Children's Roundtable (CRT) by expanding the role of community stakeholders; particularly law enforcement and school personnel.

Allegheny is expanding upon the foundational PPI practices. FGDM is now available at all regional offices and "in house" at the Children's Courthouse improving the ease of referrals. Questions related to Family Finding are now asked by the judge in the courtroom. And, goal change and TPR proceeding are now combined.

Judge Clark, Allegheny Court of Common Pleas, convened a sub-committee to address concerns regarding visitation for children with incarcerated parents. The sub-committee issued recommendations and a protocol for visits in the prison. With the key support of the warden, the paradigm has shifted away from the old philosophy that "children don't belong here". When visitation in prison is not an option, contact can occur via video conferencing. Additionally, case workers are now required to interview incarcerated parents using video conferencing to facilitate their inclusion in developing their Family Service Plan.

Allegheny County is poised to go live on CPCMS August 23, 2010. Marc Cherna, Allegheny County Human Services Director, complimented AOPC Judicial Automation for their assistance in addressing Allegheny County's unique technical issues.

Cindy Stoltz commented on the rich discussion on PPI issues by all LRT 1 counties; specifically noting the exceptional ideas and practices being shared. The roundtable system

allows counties to build on each others strengths and network regionally to develop relationships as people and neighbors. Laurie O'Connor, Montgomery County Child Welfare Administrator, noted the high transient rates of families highlighting that as families move and cross county lines there is great value in knowing each other and leaning protocols to better serve families.

Justice Baer recognized and commended Philadelphia for their progress and fundamental changes in both the agency and the court. Justice Baer particularly congratulated Judge Dougherty and DHS Commissioner Ambrose for their implementation of 3 month reviews and CPCMS.

Roundtable 2 — Honorable Leslie Gorbey, Lancaster County Judge Keith Hayes, Chester County CYS Administrator

The Honorable Leslie Gorbey and Keith Hayes reported for LRT 2. LRT 2 is comprised of representatives from Berks, Chester, Lancaster, Westmoreland and York Counties; each county with a population of approximately ½ million residents. Although the counties are roughly the same size, each county has unique concerns, struggles and solutions. As such, when Summit plans were reviewed during the Spring LRT, there were some similarities and some significant differences related to concerns and successes addressed.

Both Berks and Chester Counties reported making significant changes to the Children's Roundtable (CRT) structure to increase diversity of the stakeholders.

Lancaster County implemented Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), as well as "1 Family – 1 Judge". As a result, the family has the same judge, solicitor, attorney and GAL throughout the case. The continuity of this process is effective and efficient for the courts and beneficial to the family; especially for the child's emotional well being. Several counties reported taking this philosophy one step further by maintaining the same case worker, or case work team throughout the life of the case.

York County has many priorities however highlighted their work in the area of truancy. This has now become an ongoing issue for their CRT.

Many of the counties in LRT 2 depend on the faith community for volunteer recruitment and donations, particularly around the holidays. York County utilizes a local faith-based foundation to assist with Family Finding efforts. Chester County plans to teach Family Group Decision Making in churches to increase use of the practice while reducing CYS involvement. Furthermore, Chester County is working to reduce disproportional treatment through a strategic plan that partners the agency with local churches.

Judge Gorbey reported that all counties in LRT2 are using CPCMS. However, CPCMS is not viewed as being entirely user friendly. She requested that Judicial Automation consider increasing the size of the print. Sandy agreed to forward this request to Judicial Automation.

It was noted that an abbreviated (20 hour) Family Development Credentialing (FDC) course is being developed. In order for FDC to become more embedded, it is important for leadership to better understand the practice. Therefore, this course would be more geared toward leadership (i.e. judges, provider and agency administrators). Justice Baer requested that Steve Feiler work to establish judicial education on FDC.

**Roundtable 3 — Honorable Brian Johnson, Lehigh County Judge
Peter Vriens, Dauphin County Human Services Director**

The Honorable Brian Johnson and Peter Vriens reported on LRT 3. LRT 3 consists of the following five counties: Dauphin, Erie, Lehigh, Luzerne and Northampton, four of which participated in the meeting in March.

The counties provided updates on their Summit plans and various county initiatives. Additionally, all counties have shifted their local Children's Roundtable (CRT) to a subcommittee structure. Lehigh County suggested that if the local CRT adds a person to the roundtable that they add a task. This would provide a role for that person.

All counties in attendance are part of the Pennsylvania Permanency Practice Initiative and all have implemented Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and three-month court reviews. Three counties (Lehigh, Northampton and Dauphin) have developed Family Engagement Units as a means to implement Family Finding and further provide FGDM.

The group also discussed the 2009 Summit. While they enjoyed the full Summit, there was consensus the Youth Panel and Data presentations were outstanding. The group also appreciated the ability to have time with their teams to develop a plan.

Lastly the counties were reaching out to others to see if any counties have developed a quick reference guide (or cheat sheet) for CPCMS system. Northampton has created something they use and are happy to share with any counties who are interested.

**Roundtable 4 — Honorable Mark Mascara, Washington County Judge
Bill Browning, Lackawanna County CYA Administrator**

Leadership Roundtable 4 (Beaver, Butler, Cumberland, Lackawanna, and Washington) was represented at the State Roundtable by co-chair Bill Browning. Due to illness, his co-chair, the Honorable Mark Mascara, was unable to join the LRT or the State Roundtable. Bill reported that LRT 4 was well attended and that all but one county was a Phase 1 or Phase 2 Permanency Practice Initiative county with the remaining county anticipating applying to Phase 3 of the Initiative. Members of LRT 4 recognized that the Permanency Practice Initiative is first and foremost a paradigm shift from which comes a change in practice. All of the counties are using Family Group Decision Making, though are at differing levels of implementation. Family Development Credentialing was a conversation topic as the roundtable members provided ideas and support to each other in dealing with implementation barriers and struggles. Other themes from LRT 4 included truancy, ensuring quality visitation, updates on creating a more family friendly court, and decreasing the dependency on shelter care facilities.

Following the update from the roundtable, discussion was held regarding implementation struggles associated with Family Development Credentialing. Several ideas were posed as potential aids to the implementation process including creating a rule or regulation that a certain percentage of staff need to become credentialed each year, education for judges, juvenile court master, and other system players so they have an awareness of expectations for child welfare workers, and dealing with the logistics such as delays in testing and portfolio approval. There was a general consensus that an imbedded practice is better than one that is required by regulation so efforts will continue to be made to support the implementation and a report of progress will be brought back to the State Roundtable next year.

Permanency Practice Initiative

Sandy Moore provided an update on the progress of the PPI. To date there are 27 PPI counties in Phases 1 and 2. Several applications for Phase 3 were received by the May 14, 2010 deadline. Currently, site visits are being scheduled for the counties that applied. A report from the site visits will be made to the PPI Oversight Committee, which in turn, will make recommendations to Justice Baer, Dept Secretary Gold and Sandy for a final decision. Sandy also described the annual PPI meeting held last month which included representatives for all Phase 1 and 2 counties. All facets of the PPI were discussed throughout the day; however, the main focus for most counties remains cultural change through perseverance, focus on the Mission & Guiding Principles and lots of reinforcement/modeling of behavior.

Next, Sandy Moore reviewed the Family Finding data from the most recent Kevin Campbell training with Phase 2 counties. During the training, Family Finding was conducted on behalf of 84 youth. At the beginning of the training, there were a total of 390 identified resources and 324 lasting resources for these youth. Upon completion of the training there were a total of over 2,000 identified resources and 706 lasting resources. It is important to note that the youth selected were initially defined by the case workers as the loneliest and most at-risk youth. Most had been in care for many years, with multiple placements and extremely serious emotional & behavioral issues.

Justice Baer next introduced the trailer for the documentary "From Place to Place". The movie was filmed in Missoula, MT and chronicles the lives of 6 former foster care youth who aged out of the system. The movie demonstrates what potentially can happen when the "system" doesn't ensure timely permanence for children, lasting connections or stable placements. Justice Baer announced that 2 of the youth in the movie have been invited to attend the 2010 Summit. While the youth come from another state's dependency system, their experiences are representative of many youth aging out of care across the United States, including many in Pennsylvania.

Following the movie there was significant discussion regarding its message. Much of the discussion centered on the urgency needed in securing lasting connections for youth and reducing the number of youth "aging out". Justice Baer further noted the movie clearly underscores the relevance of Family Finding and the PPI. Additionally, group consensus stressed, to the extent possible, permanency must occur early and not age 18.

Laurie O'Connor questioned how the court can help facilitate assistance across systems that can impact "multi-need" youth? She acknowledged the difficulty in finding permanence for these youth without the support of mental health, probation, drug and alcohol and such.

Sandy Moore responded that one role of the local Children's Roundtable could be to identify multi-system responses to meet the needs of the child/family encouraging local teams to consider having representatives from these systems at the table. Other members suggested sub-committees as an effective structure for problem solving around specific barriers. Finally, several PPI counties highlighted the use of the expedited review process as a means for identifying issues/solutions earlier, especially for these highly involved, multi-system youth.

Sandy further indicated several large providers have expressed their concerns over empty beds and have asked us to send them more youth. Sandy shared her response in that while we will most likely always need some level of facility based providers, only those children needing this level of care should ever be placed in such facilities and only for the duration of time needed to effectively treat their issues. Future service needs may look different and providers may need to re-engineer their business in order to meet the changing needs. Deputy Secretary Gold agreed we absolutely need providers, but perhaps different services.

Mary Ann Burger, Blair County Child Welfare Administrator, articulated a shift in the message we must send to foster families emphasizing the need to partner in helping birth families. Maryanne highlighted the importance of using foster care to bridge gaps for children, but believes the focus on safety (both physical and emotional) will encourage all of us to work more closely with birth families.

Kerrith Strano-Taylor, Jefferson County GAL, expressed concern that while we are working diligently to find permanency some youth will continue to age out. She suggested that local Children's Roundtables focus on transition services. John Perrot, Fayette County Parent Attorney, stated that is difficult to place older youth. As such, father engagement is very important particularly in families with single mothers. Bill Browning suggested that youth who may age out of the system need to have evaluations that identify their individual needs and services that continue beyond the time of agency/court involvement.

Sandy Moore shared some counties are utilizing practices such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST), community coaching, mentoring and various in-home services to help keep youth at home and out of placement. She also noted that several PPI counties have chosen to focus on older youth. Those youth are benefitting from all of the PPI practices.

Sandy Moore indicated some next steps for the PPI as follows:

- ◆ Proceed with Phase 3
- ◆ Broaden the utilization of SWAN services to address issues of grief and loss
- ◆ Increase the capacity to provide Family Finding training in PA though a curriculum being developed with CWT
- ◆ Revise the PPI Data Report

Bench Book

The Honorable Chester Harhut, President Judge, Lackawanna County and Dependency Bench Book Chairperson provided a brief update on the Dependency Bench Book. Judge Harhut shared with the group that this time last year, the committee was discouraged as to the progress of the Bench Book. This year the Committee is genuinely pleased with the progress and the Bench Book will be finished in time for the July State Conference of Trial Court Judges (SCTCJ). Additionally, the Bench Book will be available electronically on the OCFC Website.

Judge Harhut thanked the judges and OCFC staff who have worked tirelessly to develop the Bench Book. In particular, Judge Harhut thanked members of the Bench Book Edit Committee who participated in weekly conference calls aimed at fine tuning the document. The Edit Committee members include Judge Hanna, Judge Clark and Judge Saylor who are also members of the State Roundtable.

Judge Harhut also shared with the Roundtable that the Committee has discussed ways in which future revisions will be addressed. Although not fully determined at this time the Committee plans to release annual Bench Book updates to keep abreast of any changes in legislation, Procedural Rules or best practice. Finally, Judge Harhut advised the document will be released in two phases with the Bench Book, itself, being release in July 2010 and the Science Companion scheduled for release at the SCTCJ in February 2011.

2010 Children's Summit

Judge Dougherty reported that the 2nd Children's Roundtable Summit would take place at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel September 23-25, 2010. Topics will include Data Informed Decision Making, Truancy, Creating a Culture of Father Inclusion, and Legal Representation. Each county will be invited to send 5 CRT members including the Dependency Judge and the Child Welfare Administrator. The county may choose to pay for an additional 5 team members. The Summit Planning Advisory Committee is suggesting use of public transportation to the Summit. Additionally, the committee has asked OCFC to request participants stay for the entire event if federal funds will be used to support their attendance.

Judge Dougherty invited everyone to the "Taste of Philadelphia" to be held on Thursday evening on the 33rd floor of the Loews, overlooking the city.

CPCMS

Ralph Hunsicker, AOPC Judicial Automation, Senior Projects Director gave a presentation on the accomplishments of CPCMS to date, system enhancements and Philadelphia and Allegheny County progress in transitioning to the CPCMS system. To date, 65 of the 67 counties are using CPCMS to track child dependency cases. AOPC Judicial Automation (JA) staff is working with both Philadelphia and Allegheny to assist in the transition. JA staff is working on migrating Philadelphia's existing caseload and information into CPCMS. Six weeks of training is in progress with a go-live date of June 14, followed by 5 weeks of on-site support. Allegheny County has implemented the dependency petition and the statewide outcome-based orders into its e-filing system. Training for Allegheny County will occur from

July 26, 2010 through August 20, 2010 with a planned go-live date of August 23, 2010 followed by four weeks of on-site support.

Mr. Hunsicker also provided information on CPCMS application enhancements including electronic signatures for judges on outcome orders, pre-population hearing date on outcome orders and Master's names now appearing on the case profile screen. There were also several updates to the Dependency Petition and the Aggravated Circumstances Motion and Orders. Mr. Hunsicker also reported that JA staff is currently developing new Shelter Care and Emergency Custody Applications. The New Shelter Care and Emergency Protective Custody Orders drafts are under review with the Department of Public Welfare and the Forms Sub-Committee of the Juvenile Procedural Rules Committee and will be released soon.

Mr. Hunsicker reported that a new dependency report, *Unscheduled Active Cases #3910* is under development. This report, which can be used as a management tool, will display all open dependency cases where there is no future scheduled event. Mr. Hunsicker explained that web based e-filing is a future enhancement of the system. The Electronic Records Management System will permit the electronic filing of the Dependency Petition for acceptance by a CPCMS user.

Mr. Hunsicker commented that the statistical reports (#3920, #3921 and #3922) will be available in July. JA is in the process of sending counties lists of cases with missing demographic and placement data. In order to enhance the quality of data being generated, counties are being asked to "clean up" these cases so more accurate statistical reports can be generated. Mr. Hunsicker noted that JA staff is working closely with OCFC staff in counties to improve data quality. Mr. Hunsicker encouraged counties to continue cleaning up case histories and reiterated the importance of counties reviewing case management reports regularly to ensure accurate data. Mr. Hunsicker further noted that 2009 statistics were missing information in several categories including date of birth, gender, ethnicity, race, placement and improper docketing. Mr. Hunsicker commented that JA and OCFC staffs will continue working with counties to improve the quality of data.

DPW/OCYF

Richard Gold, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Children, Youth and Families provided an update to the Roundtable. Mr. Gold opened with some positive statistics from the last six year period (2003 – 2009):

- There has been a 3% increase in the use of kinship care.
- There has been a 23% decrease in the number of children in care.
- The number of children who were discharged to kinship increased from 8.7% to 13.8%.
- Currently the largest number of youth entering care is 14, 15, and 16 year olds, which is a significant shift from 2, 3 and 4 year olds in 2003.

DPW/OCYF is shifting licensing priorities from a compliance driven approach to an outcomes driven approach using a new Quality Services Review tool. The tool is currently being piloted in Venango County and Allegheny County and will be rolled out in stages statewide next year.

The use of the in-home safety assessment is having a profound impact on increasing safety for children in their own homes. DPW/OCYF is currently piloting a safety assessment for children in placement.

DPW/OCYF is also rolling out a Shared Case Responsibility Protocol in an effort to encourage JPO and CYS to work collaboratively on shared cases.

DPW has reached an agreement with the Administration for Children and Families that funds deferred in 2008 will be restored by the end of June in one check to counties. Only 8% of the funds are being withheld.

The Needs Based Plan and Budget for the 2011-2012 fiscal year was issued on May 17th and included special grants for Truancy Prevention and Family Engagement.

It is currently budget time and the OCYF budget has again received scrutiny and questions from the legislature. OCYF is the only office which has asked for an increase in funds. The request was for \$28 million in additional funds. The request for the increase is compounded by the fact that last year OCYF was \$52 million under spent (these were funds allocated to counties, but not spent). The under spending included \$44 million from the needs based budget and \$8 million in special grants. Mr. Gold indicated that there was \$8 million under spent in FGDM special grant alone and only \$3 million was spent by counties.

This under spending was universal with no county spending all of their allocated funds. Mr. Gold's budget presentation led to questions and concerns regarding spending and future policy. It was raised that the State Roundtable may be a good way to suggest policy that will last through the change in administrations. Mr. Gold suggested that while there will be a new administration change one of the last duties of the current administration is to certify the 2011-2012 budget. Additionally, the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which resulted from the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is submitted to ACF and is in effect for two years. In essence, these two items ensure that the priorities from this administration are set for the next two years. However this does not ensure that funding levels will remain.

Members suggested the State Roundtable convene a committee to develop a possible transition recommendation, including funding and budget recommendations

JCJC

Jim Anderson, Executive Director of the Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC), updated the group on pending legislation related to dependency and provided a synopsis of the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice. Mr. Anderson provided a brief history on the inception of the Commission and summarized the reports recommendations to the State Roundtable. Mr. Anderson provided comment on recommendations in the following areas: Crime Victims, Judicial Ethics, Judicial Discipline, Attorney Discipline, Continuing Education, Juvenile Prosecutors, Juvenile Defense Lawyers, Ethics for Juvenile Probation Officers, Court Hiring Practices, Continuing Supreme Court Oversight, Use of Data and Statistics, Stating Dispositional Reasoning on the Record, Reducing or Eliminating the Practice of Shackling, Juvenile Placement Decisions, Youth Level of Services Initiative, Appellate Rights, Appellate Review, *Nunc Pro Tunc* Relief, County Commissioners and Department of

Education elements. Copies of the written report summary and details were provided to members.

Fatherhood Workgroup Report/Roundtable Discussion

The Honorable Kim Berkeley-Clark, Allegheny County, reported on the work and recommendations of the Fatherhood Workgroup. The group's focus is on the non-resident father, with their first task being the identification and engagement of those fathers. There is a growing awareness that fathers play a vital role in the lives of their children and within the realm of child dependency. Fathers and their families can provide for more timely permanence for children, potential placement options, and additional support. The workgroup believed it important to create a mission statement to clearly articulate the role that father's have in dependency proceedings. As such, the workgroup mission statement is: "Pennsylvania endorses the positive involvement of fathers and paternal family to protect children, promote strong families, promote child well-being, and provide timely permanence for children." They further offered a vision statement that sets the tone for the workings of the group. The vision statement is: "Positive connections between children and their fathers are achieved and nurtured by prompt identification, outreach, and engagement in services that recognize fathers' unique strengths, and are tailored to meet each father's individual needs." State Roundtable members supported both the mission and vision statements.

The identification of father begins with the establishment of paternity if there is no father already acknowledged. Judge Clark highlighted the importance of having just one legal father per child and that the practice of dealing with multiple fathers at any given time for a child may do a disservice to the legal father. She offered a protocol for establishing paternity that encompassed both the activities of the agency and those of the court. The agency protocol includes activities such as using the PA Child Support Enforcement Services for orders of support and interviewing the child and the mother about the father. In cases where the father is still unnamed, it can be useful to check other collateral sources such as school and medical records for a father's name. On the part of the court, the protocol suggests questioning the child and mother, helping mother understand the importance of paternity and using a colloquy about obligation on the record if no legal father exists and an alleged father appears in court. Using acknowledgements of paternity and specifics about how and when to use genetic testing is included in the protocol as well.

The task of locating a non-resident father was addressed by the workgroup as well. A protocol, similar to the one for establishing paternity, was also developed. From the perspective of the agency, the first place to begin in trying to locate the father is by interviewing the mother and child to ascertain if the father's whereabouts are known. If not, the group offered a multitude of places to search for his location. Further, until the father has been located, the court should inquire about his whereabouts with the mother and ask the agency what efforts have been made to locate him at each hearing

Once the father are located, efforts need to be made to engage the father with the same vigor as that used to engage mothers. These attempts need to be more than a letter and should be strengths-based and solution-focused. Fathers should be involved in case planning and attempts made to include the paternal family in the process as well, with equal time being given to both the maternal and paternal side of the family. Issues of cultural awareness and values clarification may need to happen at the service system level to

emphasize the important role of fathers. In the case of an incarcerated father, caseworkers should be diligent in reaching out early in the case and include the father through all available means, such as telephone or video conferencing.

Visitation with fathers was also explored by the workgroup with their consensus that visitation should support the parent-child relationship in a meaningful and productive way. The group believed the issue of visitation was so crucial that one of the recommendations to the State Roundtable was to form a subgroup to look at the issue of quality visitation for children with their parents as well as siblings. Other recommendations included: adopting the mission/vision statements; establishing a paternity and locating fathers protocol, creation of a parent handbook, changing the CPCMS orders to reflect a finding of paternity and a survey of all 67 counties to find out current practices and trends regarding fathers. Lastly, Judge Clark recommended that regional training be commenced to train system participants in areas of father engagement and gender specific communication. The presentation with a video clip of a very powerful piece of poetry called Knock! Knock! by Daniel Beaty.

Discussion following the presentation centered on how to proceed when establishing paternity. There was a recognition that no one wished to create a situation in which a child was denied access to a father figure who had been in his/her life by dealing with only a legal father on a case. Likewise, there was recognition that it is important to establish paternity at the very onset of a case as a way of ensuring more timely outcomes. Part of any training process will need to help caseworkers and other system participants learn to approach and divulge information to non-resident fathers who may not know of their fatherhood to a particular child, especially in cases where fathers have moved on and created new families. Justice Baer reminded the group that the issue of "legal father" is a complex one and needs to be approached carefully and thoughtfully. All agreed.

Other training issues may include how to proceed in questioning mother and children about the identity or location of the father. Concerns were raised that if this is done in an intimidating manner, with sworn testimony from the witness box, children may become frightened or too anxious to answer. Additionally, mothers asked repeated under oath about father may be in the position where they would perjure themselves in changing their answer. State Roundtable members asked the workgroup to further consider these issues and potential training.

As such, the fatherhood workgroup was asked to continue working on the protocols of establishing paternity and locating fathers to include the many good suggestions brought out by the roundtable members. Justice Baer suggested further work with Domestic Relations professionals to ascertain if there is anything that can be done differently in the situation of a father who steps forward for his child and then is immediately charged with a child support action. This suggestion was supported by roundtable members. There was group consensus that the mission/vision statement be adopted and that visitation issues be expanded to include mothers as well as fathers. Training on the protocols and other issues related to fatherhood was agreed upon but it was agreed this would occur after the protocols are revised and adopted.

Leadership Roundtable Reports

Roundtable 5 — Honorable Carol Van Horn, Franklin/Fulton Counties Judge Mary Ann Burger, Blair County CYS Administrator

Leadership Roundtable 5 co-chairs, the Honorable Carol Van Horn and Mary Ann Burger, provided a synopsis of Leadership Roundtable 5 held on March 29, 2010 in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Judge Van Horn reported that five of the seven counties in Leadership Roundtable 5 attended the meeting. The co-chairs are hopeful for full participation next year. The roundtable discussed their individual county plans from the 2009 Summit. All counties reported progress and the need to build upon existing plans at the 2010 Summit. All counties reported they are in the process of restructuring their Local Children's Roundtables and are doing more to involve community members. Other reported areas of discussion from Leadership Roundtable 5 included truancy, parental consent in regard to Fostering Connections Act of 2008 and Fast Track Appellate decisions.

Roundtable 6 — Honorable Charles Saylor, Northumberland County Judge Rick Saylor, Lycoming County CYS Administrator

Leadership Roundtable 6 (Lebanon, Mercer, Lycoming, Lawrence, Northumberland, Adams, and Crawford) was represented by co-chairs, the Honorable Charles Saylor and Rick Saylor. Both reported their roundtable is comprised of counties that typically have three to five judges per county. The concerns reported in the roundtable were very similar for all counties. These included working with incarcerated parents, engaging fathers and finding solutions that worked. There is not yet full participation from all counties, with two counties who need further efforts of reaching out and engaging in the process. Judge Saylor reported that Northumberland has had some success in negotiating through visitation with incarcerated parents by inviting the local correctional facility officials to the local children's roundtable.

The issue of empathy fatigue was raised at their roundtable with members sharing ways to combat it. Most found spending time with colleagues who work in similar situations helpful as well as having children in the courtroom. Their presence seemed to encourage system players to focus on what is best for the children while providing levity and energy to the situation. Others talked about keeping the focus by having visual reminders of the desired outcomes by hanging posters of the Mission and Guiding Principles for Pennsylvania Dependency System or hanging the county's PPI Summit Banner in the court room or waiting area.

Roundtable 7 — Honorable Carol Hanna, Indiana County Judge Brian Mowrey, Jefferson County CYS Administrator

Leadership Roundtable 7 co-chairs the Honorable Carol Hanna and Brian Mowrey provided a synopsis of Leadership Roundtable 7 held on April 15, 2010 in Venango County. Judge Hanna reported that Leadership Roundtable 7 is the largest of the eight Leadership Roundtables. Twelve of the fifteen judicial districts participated in the meeting including six Court of Common Pleas Judges and eight Children and Youth Administrators. The main discussion areas included Venango County's facilitation practice, how to best organize engaging the faith-based community and Armstrong County's Local Children's Roundtable Guide.

Roundtable 8 — Honorable Craig Miller, Clinton County Judge Rose Weir, Snyder County CYS Administrator

The Honorable Craig Miller and Rose Weir provided the report from Leadership Roundtable 8. Leadership Roundtable 8 consists of 13 counties (11 judicial districts) including: Bradford, Carbon, Clinton, Montour/Columbia, Snyder/Union, Pike, Potter, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne and Wyoming/Sullivan.

Snyder and Union counties (a single judicial district) are initiating a training to help attorneys prepare their clients for court. The training includes strategies on how to interact with children and families and how to adequately prepare them for the hearing. The training is being led by the judges in the judicial district.

Additionally, Snyder County has begun a rollout of trauma training in the county. Snyder County purchased a curriculum specific to trauma in the child welfare system. The training shares what children and families experience in the system to help caseworkers understand what they might go through and how they might help. Private providers were invited to participate in the training.

A topic of discussion at the meeting was concurrent planning. While most counties think they are addressing concurrent planning, others believed they are struggling with the concept, particularly with more experienced workers. Some staff believe working towards two opposing plan outcomes is a conflict that does not do the family justice.

All counties participating in this roundtable report no issues with CPCMS.

Legal Representation Workgroup Report/Roundtable Discussion

The Honorable Kelley Streib, Workgroup chairperson, presented the report created by the Legal Representation Workgroup. Through a PowerPoint presentation, Judge Streib began by outlining the need for training of guardians *ad litem* (GALs) and parent attorneys. From a national perspective, both the National Association of Counsel for Children and the American Bar Association have standards of practice that include pre-service and ongoing training. The basis for this is the belief, echoed nationally as well as within the state of Pennsylvania, that training is essential to high quality representation for children and parents in the child dependency system. Likewise, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act mandates pre-service training for GALs prior to taking a first appointment if a state chooses to use federal funds to support GALs. In a national review completed by First Star and the Children's Advocacy Institute, titled A Child's Right to Counsel, Pennsylvania did not rate well in the area of training, receiving a zero out of ten possible points.

The focus of the presentation then shifted to the results of a statewide survey on GALs that had been completed. It was found that Pennsylvania has more than 361 guardians *ad litem* with the predominance of those being part-time and only 9% being full-time employees. The turnover is very small with counties reporting adding new GALs less than once per year and many reporting they have had the same GAL for many years. Conclusions drawn from the survey were that Pennsylvania has GALs appointed on all child dependency cases and that those GALs provide consistency in representation for their child clients, that they are typically appointed at the beginning of proceedings and that counties have a genuine interest in

having well trained, highly qualified GALs representing children. Most counties do not offer any training to their GALs with a few exceptions in the largest urban areas. While there was no survey done for parent attorneys, it is known that a large number of parent attorneys are practicing in Pennsylvania. Finally, there is strong support for training for parent attorneys and that many of their training needs are parallel to those of GALs.

Training recommendations to the state roundtable from the workgroup were then presented. It was recommended that training efforts should be focused on core training that will be provided to every practicing GAL and parent attorney in Pennsylvania during their first two years. Additionally, it was also recommended every GAL and parent attorney now practicing should complete the core training. The workgroup further recommended a two day in-person training to be held regionally throughout the state utilizing local experts as well as drawing upon pre-recorded demonstration and panel segments to ensure consistency. Pre-service training will be drawn from the elements of the core training and will be available to counties on DVD so that it can be immediately accessible as needed.

The workgroup recommended both the pre-service and the core training be mandatory, with attorneys receiving certificates of completion and CLE credits for their time. In addition to the training, attorneys would be required to complete some pre-work including reading over the applicable laws and rules and would receive a resource manual during the training that would provide an ongoing reference to important information and documents. The workgroup anticipated the first core training to be held sometime early in 2011 with pre-service training available shortly thereafter. The workgroup also recommended there be a pilot training followed by an evaluation of that training that will be reported to the state roundtable next year.

Following Judge Streib's presentation, there was discussion of the report and recommendations. Justice Baer initiated the discussion by stating that Pennsylvania has a process in place for attorneys who are qualified to represent in death penalty cases and suggested a similar process be explored and mimicked for child welfare qualified lawyers. Since attorneys are already required to complete 12 credits of continuing legal education, some of those credits each year could be used to complete child welfare approved training and then maintain a designation of child welfare qualified. He also strongly agreed with a commitment to live training and that it not be piggybacked onto training that was already being provided by other entities.

The issue of standards for legal representation in child welfare cases was raised by Frank Cervone, Executive Director, Support Center for Child Advocates and member of the Legal Representation Workgroup. He reminded everyone that while training is now the focus, at some point performance standards would also need to be addressed. Dissatisfaction of quality of counsel would be impacted by focus and change in this area. Also relevant to this area is the financial reimbursement of attorneys in child welfare cases. OCYF Deputy Secretary Gold offered that the Department of Public Welfare is supporting the training through the 2011/2012 needs-based plan and budget by including the allowance of monies for lodging and transportation for GALs to attend the training. He also reported federal compliance regulators are pleased with the progress that Pennsylvania is making in this area and are being kept apprised of what is happening.

Several comments were made regarding the dissemination of information about trainings and other educational opportunities available in counties and how sharing this information on

some website or through another mechanism might be helpful in having highly trained attorneys. There is currently no organized group for GALs or parent attorneys and it is hoped the evening between the two days of core training might be used as a networking opportunity for those attorneys to develop informal supports.

Roundtable members were in consensus the workgroup should continue, that the training should be mandatory and the pilot training should occur in early 2011. The workgroup was also asked to provide suggestions regarding ways in which pre-service and core training could be mandated. The workgroup was asked to explore a child welfare qualified designation. Finally, the roundtable authorized the remainder of the recommendations as presented by the Legal Representation Workgroup.

Truancy Workgroup Report/Roundtable Discussion

The Honorable John Kuhn, Cynthia Stoltz, Esq. (workgroup co-chairs) and Angela Sager, Judicial Program Analyst, Office of Children and Families in the Courts presented the Truancy Workgroup's report "*Truancy: A Call to Action ~ Report and Recommendations to the Pennsylvania Roundtable*". The presenters outlined the Workgroup's task and offered information on national and Pennsylvania truancy issues, court and education data, Pennsylvania truancy laws and recommendations for local communities who want to address truancy.

Judge Kuhn explained that during the 2008-2009 school year 8.6% or approximately 154,904 Pennsylvania students were habitually truancy (6 or more unexcused absences). He also noted that truancy varies greatly across the Commonwealth. Truancy rates per county range from 0%-38%. Judge Kuhn also noted that 25% of students in both elementary and middle schools are truant and 50% of the truant population is in high school. It was also reported that disproportionality rates exist when examining truancy in Pennsylvania. African American students represent the largest truant population but only 17% of the total compulsory school age children. As with African American students, disproportionality also exists with Hispanic students. The presenters also discussed magisterial district court data. It was reported that truancy accounted for 13% of all non-traffic citations filed in magisterial district court and that in 2009 2,707 cases were transferred to the Court of Common Pleas for failure to pay fines.

The presenters next discussed the recommendations of the Truancy Workgroup. The recommendations outlined five core themes to support local community truancy reduction efforts. Those themes are:

- 1. Demonstrate Effective Collaboration Efforts Including Sharing the Accountability and Responsibility for Truancy*
- 2. Create an Educational Culture/Climate that Prioritizes Students' Connection to their School and Engages Families*
- 3. Implement Specific Strategies with Measurable Outcomes Targeting Prevention, Early Identification and Intervention*
- 4. Track Truancy Data and Program Outcomes and Share Information with Stakeholders*
- 5. Build Sustainable Funding Bases and Allocate Resources Based on Data Informed Decisions and Partnerships that Maximize Efficiencies.*

Finally, the presenters offered the Truancy Workgroup's recommended next steps. The workgroup asked permission to continue meeting and focus their efforts next year in the following areas: (1) implement a strategy to disseminate the report, support communities in implementing the recommendations, and communicate the message about a sense of urgency to address truancy; (2) collaborate with the Juvenile Court Judges Commission to identify truancy laws needing clarification or alteration; (3) engage the medical community as a valued partner in addressing truancy at both the state and local levels; and (4) explore possible surveys and other tools that communities can utilize to assess local truancy issues.

The State Roundtable then held a rich discussion regarding the topic of truancy and the report. Justice Baer commented the report and presentation changed his thinking about truancy. While initially he'd hoped for a program or practice that could be implemented statewide, he now believes local strategies (informed with the above-stated five themes) should be encouraged. He stressed it is time to stop studying the problem and for local communities to do something about decreasing the number of truant students. He also noted that collaboration and sustainability are two keep factors that communities must consider and that early identification and intervention is critical. The Honorable David Wecht, Allegheny County, offered the suggestion of partnering with the Pennsylvania Medical Society to assist in engaging the medical community. Dept. Secretary Gold requested the information be shared with all groups dealing with truancy including the Magisterial District Judges. Sandy Moore explained the report will be sent to all the Leadership Roundtable members and each county will receive a copy of their individual county truancy data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The State Roundtable commended the work of the Truancy Workgroup, unanimously approved the report and asked the Workgroup to continue their efforts during the next year.

Meeting Conclusion

The State Roundtable meeting concluded with Justice Baer and Sandy thanking everyone for their extensive work and commitment to improving Pennsylvania's Child Dependency System.