

The At-Risk Children, Family & Communities *Caucus*



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In late 2013, Sen. Stewart Greenleaf and Rep. W. Curtis Thomas collaborated to form a bipartisan, bicameral caucus in the Pennsylvania General Assembly aimed at examining, investigating and addressing myriad issues such as school truancy and dropout, delinquency, poverty, family separation due to incarceration and other problems facing many Pennsylvania families, especially children.

Through meetings with some of the organizations and individuals working on a state level with children and families, the caucus hopes to identify, confront and recommend solutions to a diverse set of challenges that pose risks to the health, safety and welfare of Pennsylvania's children and families.

In this report, some of the results of the initial meetings are detailed, with links and information on various programs and best practices as presented to the caucus.

The At-Risk Children, Family and Communities Caucus will continue its work in the 2015-16 legislative session. The goal of the caucus is to improve the outcomes of at-risk children and families.

CAUCUS TIMELINE

Inaugural meeting: Oct. 2, 2013

PCCD Presentation (Part I): Nov. 20, 2013

PCCD Presentation (Part II): Jan. 15, 2014

PCCD Presentation (Part III): April 2, 2014

JCJC Presentation (Part I): June 4, 2014

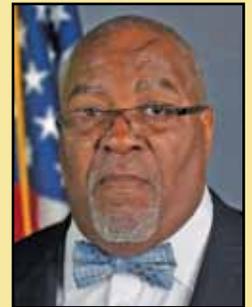
MEET THE ORGANIZERS:

CHAIRMEN:



Sen. Stewart Greenleaf

(R-Montgomery/Bucks) has represented Pennsylvania's 12th Senate District since 1978. Currently, he serves as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Rep. W. Curtis Thomas

(D-Philadelphia) has represented the 181st Legislative District since 1988. Currently, he serves as Democratic chairman of the House Commerce Committee.

CO-CHAIRMEN:



Sen. Shirley M. Kitchen

(D-Philadelphia) has represented Pennsylvania's 3rd Senate District since 1996. Currently, she serves as Democratic chairwoman of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee.

Rep. Katharine M. Watson

(R-Bucks) has represented the 144th Legislative District since 2000. Currently, she serves as chairwoman of the House Children and Youth Committee.



Rep. Edward Gainey

(D-Allegheny) has represented the 24th Legislative District since 2013.



Interested in CTC in your community?

Here's how it works

- 1. REACH OUT TO PCCD** – the commission can help to identify key people and to organize efforts.
- 2. ORGANIZE AND HOLD A TOWN HALL MEETING** – bring together key people, stakeholders and community leaders for discussion around the communities' needs, identify what kind of services you have in the community and what is needed to serve children; begin to learn evidence-based Blueprint programs. A point person to lead the efforts should be identified.
- 3. CAPTURE DATA ON THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SURVEY, SUCH AS PAYS (THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SURVEY), AS WELL AS LOCAL, COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL REPORTS** – this data and report shows the necessity in the community, as well as identifying risk factors and needs.
- 4. APPLY TO PCCD FOR FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED BLUEPRINT PROGRAMS** – this is a competitive process and successful communities are those who are better able to articulate local needs, risks and resources.
- 5. IMPLEMENT THE COALITION** – PCCD typically funds start-up costs to allow the CTC to begin work.



Evidence-based Blueprint Programs in Pennsylvania

What are they?

Programs identified as having strong evidence as to their effect that can be replicated in other communities.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS WORKING IN PA COMMUNITIES:

Trauma Focused CBT – a combination of cognitive, behavioral and family sessions

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) – Promotes emotional and social competencies and reduces aggression and behavior problems in elementary school-aged children while enhancing the educational process in the classroom

Strengthening Families Program – aimed at increasing a caregiver's abilities to set appropriate limits and show affection and support to youth and in promoting skills in youth such as coping and peer pressure resistance

Life Skills Training – a classroom-based universal prevention program designed to prevent adolescent tobacco, alcohol, marijuana use, and violence in middle school-aged students

Aggression Replacement Training – a cognitive behavioral intervention program to help children and adolescents improve social skills competence and moral reasoning, better manage anger and reduce aggressive behavior

Project Toward No Drug Abuse – a drug prevention program for high school youth who are at risk for drug use and violence-related behavior

Big Brothers/Big Sisters – matches adult volunteer mentors with at-risk youth to create caring and supportive relationships

The Incredible Years – group training programs for parents and children aimed at preventing, reducing and treating behavioral and emotional problems in children and increasing positive parenting behaviors

What is PAYS?

The Pennsylvania Youth Survey, or PAYS, is a voluntary survey conducted biannually in Pennsylvania schools for youth in 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades. The data collected provides a benchmark for alcohol, tobacco, drug use and anti-social and delinquent behaviors by assessing risk factors that are related to these behaviors. The survey generally takes about 45 to 50 minutes to complete.

Data is used at the state and local levels to inform decision-making, providing community leaders and school administrators the ability to direct prevention resources toward areas where they will have the greatest impact.

PAYS first was administered in 1989 and the number of participating school districts continues to grow. PCCD collaborates with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to make PAYS free to all schools in the commonwealth.

Currently about 70% of school districts (347), including some cyber and charter schools, have agreed to participate. As of the writing of this report, neither Pittsburgh nor Philadelphia participates in PAYS.

Results from the survey are sent directly to participating school districts. PCCD and other state agencies never see data from the volunteer schools, although data from schools selected to participate as part of the statewide sample is aggregated.

PAYS is different from the federal Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. YRBS uses a smaller random sample of students in grades 9 through 12. Many state agencies, foundations and nonprofits use this data when seeking or allocating funds.

Risk-focused Prevention Planning (CTC Model)



Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support (EPIS)

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Human Services (formerly DPW), PCCD contracts with the Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support (EPIS) Center at Pennsylvania State University's Prevention Research Center.

The center helps to provide training and technical assistance to communities as well as assistance in implementing programs.

A FEW OTHER MODELS

Harlem Children's Zone Inc.

Begun in 1970 as Rheedlen, Harlem Children's Zone Inc. expanded from working with young children and their families as the city's first truancy-prevention program, to taking on issues such as open-air drug markets. This is a model program nationally.

It all began with efforts to address the myriad problems of poor families within a single block in Harlem. These problems ranged from violent crime and chronic health problems, to crumbling apartments and failing schools. Today the overall organization serves more than 10,000 children and more than 7,400 adults in a 100 block area through such innovative programs as The Baby College parenting workshops, the Harlem Gems pre-school program, the HCZ Asthma Initiative, the Promise Academy public charter school and an obesity program to help children stay healthy.

These programs, and others, are offered free to children and families of Harlem in an effort to break the cycle of generational poverty.

The program became the basis of the national Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

Southwire

In Carrollton, Ga., the Southwire Co. plant in 2007 launched a program to help prepare young people for employment by ensuring they had adequate workplace skills.

Through the initiative, the company brings 16- and 17-year-old school dropouts into the plant for a work-study program. In 2007, there were 69 students and today there are 250 young men and women who participate.

Students who participate work four hours a day at \$9 an hour in the packaging department and the rest of the day in classrooms at either the company or their former school (depending upon subject matter). Diplomas are issued by the local school district.

To date, 40 percent of graduates of the program went on to higher education and 18 percent have taken jobs at Southwire.

Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC)

Established in 1959 and legislatively mandated, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, or JCJC, is composed of nine judges appointed by the Governor and nominated by the Chief Justice to:

- advise juvenile courts on all matters relating to the proper care and maintenance of dependent and delinquent children;
- establish standards and make recommendations regarding administrative practices and judicial procedures used in juvenile courts, and personnel practices used in juvenile probation offices;
- administer a Grant-in-Aid Program to improve county juvenile probation services;
- collect and analyze data to identify trends and determine program and practice effectiveness;
- make recommendations to judges and others concerning evidence-based programs; and
- oversee the delinquency dispositions reporting process in the Pennsylvania State Police Repository.

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system generally is regarded as a national model. It was the first state selected by the MacArthur Foundation to participate in its Models for Change Initiative when it launched in 2004. The goal of the initiative is to make juvenile justice systems more effective, fair, rational and developmentally appropriate.

In 2010, when the five-year commitment to the MacArthur Foundation was drawing to a close, the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) staff agreed at an annual planning meeting to consolidate the five years of gains under one roof and that the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) was needed.

Under Act 204 of 2012, Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system was mandated to achieve its mission through the use of evidence-based practices. To date, no other state has the statutory mandates and due process protections found in the Commonwealth.



*“Juvenile
Justice:
Community
Protection;
Victim
Restoration;
Youth
Redemption.”*



Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice State Enhancement Strategy (JJSES)

With the purpose of enhancing the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve a balanced and restorative mission using evidence-based practices, the Juvenile Justice State Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) provides a framework to achieve its purpose.

JJSES Framework

Stage One: Readiness – *the planning stage, when there is an introduction to evidence-based practices, completion of a cost-benefit analysis and stakeholder engagement*

Stage Two: Initiation – *structured decision making instruments, such as a detention assessment to help identify any behavioral health issues a child may have, as well as utilizing tools like the Youth Level of Service (YLS) Risk/Needs Assessment, which helps to assess children who are at either a high or low risk to recidivate*

Stage Three: Behavioral Change – *after identifying at-risk children and a plan to help prevent re-arrest in stage two, this stage is about providing children with skill building and cognitive behavioral interventions*

Stage Four: Refinement – *in this stage, ongoing feedback is given on the children for the purpose of making policy and performance measures improvements*

To learn more, visit some of these websites

Communities That Care
www.episcenter.psu.edu/ctc

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)
www.pccd.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)
www.pccd.pa.gov/Justice-Research/Pages/The-Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey.aspx

EPISCenter
episcenter.psu.edu/

Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC)
www.jcjc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/jcjc_home/5030

Department of Human Services Children, Youth and Families
www.dpw.state.pa.us/dpworganization/officeofchildrenyouthandfamilies/index.htm

Department of Human Services Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services
www.dpw.state.pa.us/dpworganization/officeofchildrenyouthandfamilies/bureauofjuvenilejusticeservices/index.htm

Department of Human Services Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
www.dpw.state.pa.us/forchildren/omhsas/index.htm

Department of Education – Early Warning System/Dropout Prevention
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early_warning_system/21791

Department of Education – Homelessness Program
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/homeless_education/7491

Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
www.ddap.pa.gov

Harlem Children's Zone Project
hcz.org/

Models for Change
modelsforchange.net/index.html

Prevent Delinquency Project
preventdelinquency.org/index.php

Programs to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency
www.livestrong.com/article/251501-programs-to-prevent-juvenile-delinquency/

Communities That Care Outcomes and Economic Benefits



CTC is estimated to generate \$5.30 per dollar invested

Research has found that CTC youth were:

- 33% less likely to start smoking cigarettes
- 32% less likely to start drinking
- 24% less likely to start engaging in delinquency

These reductions have long-term financial benefits:

- \$812 per youth related to the prevention of cigarette smoking
- \$4,438 per youth related to delinquency prevention
- Alcohol use reductions have not yet been monetized

Over 120 communities trained in PA on CTC.

65 currently functioning CTC communities in 48% of our counties.

21% of PA youth (or 335,000) are in a school district with a CTC Coalition.

Kuklinski, M. R., Briney, J. S., Hawkins, J. D., & Catalano, R. F. (in press) Cost-benefit analysis of Communities That Care outcomes at eighth grade. *Prevention Science*, online first Nov 23, 2011; doi:10.1007/s11121-011-0269-9.

