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CCYD California

Collaborative for Youth Development

TO ADVANCE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AT THE STATE-LEVEL THROUGH LEADERSHIP, POLICY AND PRACTICES THAT CREATE SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH ACROSS CALIFORNIA.

developing and implementing an overarching plan for meeting the needs of youth. At least 25 individual states have established children's cabinets, youth councils, or similar entities focused on youth. Duties range from developing and implementing a shared vision across agencies and fostering coordination to producing cost-savings, increasing efficiency, and improving service delivery and effectiveness. The New Mexico Children's Cabinet, created in 2003 by Executive order, is charged with focusing state resources on improving the lives of New Mexico's children and youth by increasing the interaction among state departments, streamlining services and decreasing bureaucratic red tape. Cabinet members include department Secretaries from Labor; Economic Development; Finance and Administration; Health, Children, Youth and Families; Human Services; Corrections and other departments. Similarly, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Office of Youth Development was created to design, coordinate and promote innovative strategies to advance youth

Keeping California's Promise to its Youth

The nation is beginning to see the positive impact of youth development strategies. A comprehensive study released November 2006 by *America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth*, documents that when youth are provided with sufficient fundamental resources, known as the Five Promises (caring adults, safe places, effective education, healthy start, and opportunities to serve others), their life chances for success dramatically increase across all income and ethnic groups. Unfortunately, the data also show that, while progress has been made in individual communities, more than two-thirds of America's young people – 34 million children – are not receiving enough of the Five Promises to be confident of success. The strongest

recommendation of the *Every Child, Every Promise: Turning Failure Into Action* report is that as a nation we make a renewed commitment to collaboration in support of youth. It stated that: "first and foremost, at the national, state and local levels, we must work together for better, more integrated solutions to the needs of children." Our current US Congress is recognizing the importance of investing in our youth. Through the passing of the Tom Osborne Federal Youth Coordination Act in Fall 2006, they created the Federal Youth Development Council consisting of the Secretaries of all major federal departments, community and faith-based organizations, states and local officials, and young people, charged with

developing and implementing an overarching plan for meeting the needs of youth. At least 25 individual states have established children's cabinets, youth councils, or similar entities focused on youth. Duties range from developing and implementing a shared vision across agencies and fostering coordination to producing cost-savings, increasing efficiency, and improving service delivery and effectiveness. The New Mexico Children's Cabinet, created in 2003 by Executive order, is charged with focusing state resources on improving the lives of New Mexico's children and youth by increasing the interaction among state departments, streamlining services and decreasing bureaucratic red tape. Cabinet members include department Secretaries from Labor; Economic Development; Finance and Administration; Health, Children, Youth and Families; Human Services; Corrections and other departments. Similarly, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Office of Youth Development was created to design, coordinate and promote innovative strategies to advance youth



THE CALIFORNIA STORY

California, unfortunately, has not kept pace. California provides education, services and support to its young people through thousands of programs, organizations and institutions at the state and local levels that, all too often, operate in isolation from one another. This fragmentation is both inefficient and damaging to young people. It results in a "silo" approach that most often leaves young people with unmet needs and lost opportunities for positive growth.



Keeping California's Promise to its Youth

A COLLABORATIVE STEPS UP TO RESPOND

THE CALIFORNIA STORY [Continued]

From 1996 to 2004, the Senate Select Committee on Family, Child and Youth Development, chaired by former Senator Dede Alpert, played a prominent role in promoting a coordinated approach to preparing California's youth for a successful, law abiding future. The Committee sponsored Mentoring and Youth Development Summits, held public hearings, created collaboratives across state agencies and community based organizations. It twice secured passage of legislation to create a California Youth Policy Council to promote

positive youth development and coordinate state policy related to youth services.

Unfortunately, the bills were vetoed by successive Governors who feared overlap with the

now defunct Workforce Investment Board's State Youth Council. One of the few remaining statewide mechanisms for measuring the positive youth development outcomes for youth is the Resiliency and Youth Development Module (RYDM) of the Department of Education's California Healthy Kids Survey. Conducted annually by most California school districts, the survey provides a snapshot of youth

perceptions of their own personal strengths and of the developmental supports and opportunities available in their schools and communities. This data, strongly linked by research to academic and life success, is then shared with decisionmakers via Listening to Youth workshops throughout the state. As yet, minimal statewide policy change has resulted. Additionally, in the California Friday Night Live System, young people in over 30 California counties participate in the Youth Development Survey, designed and implemented by the Youth Leadership Institute. Each of these instruments measures young people's experiences and impacts of participation in youth development based strategies and programs.

“First and foremost, at the national, state and local levels, we must work together for better, more integrated solutions to the needs of children.”

The California Collaborative for Youth Development (CCYD), which has authored this White Paper, is itself an outgrowth of the Senate Select Committee's collaborative efforts, and continues to function, with periodic youth input, as an ad hoc coalition of organizations with statewide and/or local interests in Youth. CCYD's mission is to advance positive youth development at the state level through leadership, policy analysis, and adoption of practices that create supports and opportunities for youth across California. CCYD also tries to find better ways of working together across member organizations. However, these efforts are but a drop in the bucket compared to California's need to plan and act in cross-sector ways to maximize state resources for youth.

Recommendations:

1. California should reconstitute the **Senate Select Committee on Family, Child and Youth Development** (possibly as a Joint Legislative Committee). This Committee would promote and support responsive and consistent involvement by the California Legislature in assisting the positive development of the state's most precious resource – its young people.
2. California should put forward the **California Youth Development Act**. This legislation would create within the Governor's office the **California Youth Development Council** to coordinate state policy regarding youth development and youth outcomes, and to provide mechanisms for policy makers across state systems to plan and act in new, cross-sector ways to maximize state resources for youth.

Working together, these entities could not only position California to take full advantage of newly enacted Federal legislation, they could spearhead the development of a coherent framework to guide public and private efforts to serve our state's youth.

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