

OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT  
COMMITTEE: 2009 ANNUAL  
REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR  
AND LEGISLATURE

JUNE 2010

Submitted by: New York State Council on Children and Families  
Pursuant to: Chapter 392 of the Laws of 2005



## OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Deborah Benson (Chair)**

*Executive Director, Council on Children and Families*

**Karen Carpenter-Palumbo**

*Commissioner, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services*

**Gladys Carrión, Esq.**

*Commissioner, Office of Children and Family Services*

**Richard Daines, M.D.**

*Commissioner, Department of Health*

**Michael Hogan, Ph.D.**

*Commissioner, Office of Mental Health*

**Diana Jones Ritter**

*Commissioner, Office of Mental Retardation and  
Developmental Disabilities*

**Robert Maccarone**

*Director, Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives*

**David M. Steiner**

*Commissioner, State Education Department*



Out-of-State Placement Committee:  
2009 Annual Report to the Governor  
and Legislature

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Deborah Benson, Executive Director



# **OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT COMMITTEE**

## **2009 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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The Council on Children and Families is required to submit an annual report on behalf of the Out-of-State Placement Committee (hereinafter referred to as "Committee") to the Governor and the Legislature. This fifth annual report begins with a brief background on the establishment and past work of the Committee, and then outlines the status of out-of-state residential placements by the New York State Education Department (SED) and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and other activities addressing services and placement issues for New York's children and youth. As discussed below, since the reporting of out-of-state placements data in 2005 (Snapshot Data of June 30, 2004), out-of-state placements have been reduced by 51.7 percent - from 1,400 children and youth to 676 children and youth placed in out-of-state residential schools and programs in 2009. For 2010, through the continuing efforts and activities of Committee members, the work of two newly designated cross-systems staff, the strengthening of the Coordinated Children's Services Initiative and systems of care, combined with the interagency joint activities supporting the implementation of the New York State Children's Plan, work will focus on further exploring and implementing more effective integration approaches for delivering services and supports for children, youth and families.

### **I. BACKGROUND**

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The Out-of-State Placement Committee was established in statute (Chapter 392 of the Laws of 2005) to accomplish the following:

- Develop a monitoring and accountability structure to address the health and safety of children served by out-of-state schools and facilities;
- Enhance New York's service system infrastructure to allow for the children most at risk of being referred and placed in out-of-state schools and facilities to be served within New York in the most appropriate, least restrictive and safest setting; and
- Strengthen in-state mechanisms that enhance service delivery across agencies.

The Committee is chaired by the Executive Director of the Council on Children and Families and comprises the Commissioners of seven state agencies [the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the State Education Department (SED), the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA)].

## **II. 2009 OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS UPDATES**

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### **A. Reduction in Out-of-State Placements**

#### **Activities of SED Non-district Unit (NDU) and OCFS Out-of-State Placement Oversight Office**

As of December 1, 2009, there were 676 children and youth placed in out-of-state residential schools and facilities. Of these 676 children and youth, 521 were placed by local school districts and 155 by local departments of social services (LDSS). In the 2008 Annual Report, it was reported that a total of 654 children and youth were placed in out-of-state residential schools and facilities, with 478 being placed by local school districts and 176 by LDSS. While the total increase in out-of-state placements from 2008 to 2009 was 3.4 percent, local school districts increased out-of-state placements by 9 percent; this increase was offset by the reduction in LDSS placements by 12 percent. It is very important to note, however, that 2009 is the first year since 2005 that an increase was reported by local school districts. Previously, the number of out-of-state placements had demonstrated a noticeable decrease from year-to-year. For LDSS, since 2005, the year-to-year reductions in out-of-state placements continued.

Although there was an increase in out-of-state placements in 2009, overall there has been a 51.7 percent reduction in out-of-state placements since 2004.

SED reports that ongoing monitoring at the state level by SED of requests for out-of-state placements by Committees on Special Education (CSEs) continued during 2009. The OCFS policy communicated to local social service districts requiring them to make every effort to identify appropriate in-state placement options before referring a child or youth in foster care to out-of-state residential programs continues to result in declining numbers of out-of-state placements during 2009.

### **B. Development of Monitoring and Accountability Structure**

#### **Interagency Review of Out-of-State Schools and Residential Programs**

The SED Non-district Unit (NDU), created in 2005, has responsibility for quality assurance and oversight functions for all SED approved in-state and out-of-state residential schools. During 2008-09, the SED NDU conducted out-of-state residential school program reviews at Kolburne School (New Marlborough, Massachusetts) and Woods School (Langhorne, Pennsylvania).

When feasible, administrative staff from in-state private schools accompany SED on visits made to the out-of-state residential schools to observe programming and operations. These joint visits are helpful in contributing to planning efforts to build in-state capacity and for the seamless transition of students back to NY. As a result of monitoring visits conducted since 2005 and concerns identified, three out-of-state residential schools are no longer authorized to serve NY students through public funding.

SED has finalized a self-review protocol for all in-state and out-of-state residential schools to complete during the first semester of the 2010-11 school year, based on a review of 2009-10 student records and policies and practices. This protocol focuses on compliance with SED program standards for behavioral interventions for students with disabilities, including Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans, use of time out rooms, emergency interventions, as well as required procedures for the protection from abuse,



maltreatment or neglect. Any deficiencies identified by SED will require correction by the residential schools.

In 2009, due to staffing concerns and restricted travel, OCFS conducted only one out-of-state site visit to Kolburne School in Massachusetts. For 2010, OCFS plans to conduct on-site visits to the Whitney Academy and Stetson School (both in Massachusetts), as well as the Devereux Residential Treatment Programs in Pennsylvania.

During 2009, OCFS sent out desk reviews to 33 out-of-state residential programs in 17 different states. In responding to these reviews, out-of-state residential programs were requested to provide to OCFS the following documents:

- school licensure
- policies and procedures on room isolation and confinement
- last 6 months of restraint reports on NYS youth, discipline and restraint methods as well as reasons for restraints
- resident rights, grievances and complaint procedures
- resident handbooks and procedures that are given upon admission
- Agency Accreditation

OCFS' review of the responses and information collected from out-of-state residential programs reflected no health and safety concerns. OCFS will be requesting out-of-state residential programs to update desk review information annually. OCFS continues to monitor restraint reports submitted by out-of-state residential programs for children and youth placed by LDSS from NYS.

### **Contract Parameters for Out-of-State Schools and Residential Programs**

In 2006, the Committee recommended a set of contract parameters for local school districts and LDSS to include in their contracts with out-of-state schools and residential programs. These parameters are intended to provide greater accountability for the health and safety of New York's children and youth who are placed in out-of-state schools and residential programs.

OCFS has integrated the contract parameters recommended by the Committee into its model contract, and notified LDSS Commissioners and Executive Directors of Voluntary Agencies of these parameters through an administrative bulletin (06-OCFS-ADM-02).

### **Communication Agreements with Other States**

OCFS has sent out communication agreements to the responsible state agencies in five states serving the highest numbers of New York State foster care children and youth in out-of-state residential programs. These states are Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Texas. The agreements stipulate that OCFS be immediately notified of any serious incidents and closures of intake at any residential programs licensed by the five states. For 2009, OCFS reports that the status of communication agreements with these five states continue to remain intact, with no changes noted from what was referenced in the 2008 Annual Report.

## **Development of Out-of-State Registry**

SED has operated its registry of approved out-of-state schools since July 2005. A link on the Council's website currently directs the user to the approved out-of-state schools registry on SED's website.

The OCFS Residential Care Registry became available on the OCFS intranet during the fall of 2009. The link for this is on the OCFS Geographical Information Center (GIC) - <http://gis.ocfs.state.nyenet/gic/>. The registry is currently only available to individuals with access to the OCFS *intranet*. OCFS anticipates that the Residential Care Registry will become available to the public on their website in mid-year 2010. As with the SED registry, when the OCFS Residential Care Registry becomes available to the public, a link will be placed on the Council's website to direct users to their registry.

The Residential Care Registry contains information on all Voluntary Agencies (in-state and out-of-state) that provide congregate care to youth placed by LDSS. The Registry includes the following:

- Agency name, location and basic information on programs and populations served.
- A mapping feature that allows the user to determine the closest available program for placing children and youth.
- Hyperlink capability so that the user can access an Agency's website for additional information.
- A search capacity that will allow a user to search for a specific service provision (under development).

The Registry also has data available that may be useful for New York State local planning purposes. Data currently available on the Registry includes:

- Bed Utilization
- County Care Days
- Foster Care Admissions and Discharges
- LDSS Out-of-State Residential Placement numbers

## **C. Data Collection and Surveys**

### **Children and Youth Discharged from Out-of-State Schools and Residential Programs**

SED reports that, at the conclusion of the 2008-09 school year, a total of 135 children and youth were discharged from out-of-state residential schools. At the end of the 2007-08 school year, a total of 167 children and youth were discharged, and in the 2006-07 school year, 213 children and youth were discharged from out-of-state residential schools. This decline is attributed to less children and youth being placed out-of-state since 2005 (with the exception of 2009). The following data is reported by SED for all children and youth returning from out-of-state CSE placements during the 2008-09 school year (the most recent data currently available).

JUNE 30, 2009

ALL NYS STUDENTS DISCHARGED FROM OUT-OF-STATE SCHOOLS  
(WHERE THEY WENT UPON RETURN)

INSTATE PUBLIC	16
INSTATE PRIVATE	30
AGED OUT (students who have reached 21 years of age without a diploma)	36
GRADUATED (students between the ages of 18 - 21, who have received their diploma)	22
HOME INSTRUCTION-(MEDICAL)	1
INSTITUTION (psychiatric center or developmental center)	0
OTHER: DECEASED	1
QUIT	4
MOVED	15
UNKNOWN	<u>10</u>
TOTAL	135

### **Children and Youth Profiles and Surveys**

SED reports that it continues to employ the same student profile developed several years ago. The profile is completed by the out-of-state school whenever a school district-placed student is accepted by the school. Aggregate data from the student profiles allows SED to describe and quantify information on students placed out-of-state. Individual student profiles are shared with in-state private schools that may be able to serve students returning to New York. The following data is reported by SED regarding disabilities for all out-of-state placements made by local school districts from 2005 to 2009.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES GOING OUT-OF -STATE

(2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10)

DISABILITY	2005-06 (as of 12/1/05)	2006-07 (as of 12/1/06)	2007-08 (as of 12/1/07)	2008-09 (as of 12/1/08)	2009-10 (as of 12/1/09)
Autism	181	181	152	142	162
Deafness	21	20	20	26	31
Emotional Disturbance	567	385	187	146	136
Learning Disability	30	29	26	6	6
Mental Retardation	49	66	48	51	42
Multiple Disabilities	153	140	85	85	102
Speech Impairment	28	20	16	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	17	10	11	6	6
Visual Impairment	2	2	2	1	0
Other Health Impaired	28	17	19	15	33
Deaf/ Blind	0	0	0	0	1
Orthopedicly Impaired	0	0	0	0	1
Hearing Impaired	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1076	870	566	478	521

SED and OCFS have a process in place to collect all the necessary data elements to create a statewide database on New York children and youth placed residentially out-of-state. SED and OCFS have created a unified format for this purpose. Efforts by OCFS and SED to develop a financial database (for rate-setting) for students placed by local school districts and foster care children and youth placed by LDSS in out-of-state schools and residential programs are currently on hold. SED and OCFS report that, in 2009, funding necessary to create this database continued to be unavailable.

In December 2009, OCFS sent Youth Profile Surveys to all out-of-state residential programs that had New York children and youth in placement from LDSS. Data requested on the Youth Profile Surveys includes information on discharge, permanency planning, medical and psychiatric diagnoses and other treatment needs. Information collected by OCFS will be summarized and shared with the appropriate state agencies.

Due to fiscal limitations, the development of a statewide database that would have tracked all New York State children and youth placed in out-of-state residential programs was put on hold. During 2009, at monthly interagency meetings held between OCFS, OMRDD and SED, out-of-state placement data and numbers were shared and distributed among the agencies.

## **D. Residential Bed Development**

SED, OCFS and OMRDD continue to coordinate the implementation of a 5-Year Interagency Plan to develop in-state residential capacity. The target for bed development for students with developmental disabilities is 311 [255 in Children's Residential Projects (CRP's) and 56 approved in-state private schools (known as 853 schools)].

*Students with Emotional Disturbance* – The bed development for students with emotional disturbance has, to date, primarily been a conversion of existing residential capacity. The bed development for students with emotional disturbance was 106 beds, and the need continues to be evaluated. Of the 106 beds, one included a NYC project for 24 beds that is open and filled. Further development is ongoing.

*Students with Developmental Disabilities* – In New York City, 106 of the 311 residential beds for students with developmental disabilities will be developed. Fifty of these beds in New York City are projected to open during the 2010-11 school year. Of the 205 beds being developed for students with developmental disabilities in Long Island and the Upstate region, 81 are available and are currently being filled. The remaining 124 beds are projected to open the beginning of the 2011-12 school year.

Since July 2009, an average of 15 students per month requiring initial out-of-state residential programs are placed out-of-state. This totals to approximately 180 students per year. Current bed development for students with developmental disabilities is designed to reduce the rate of placement of students out-of-state.

## **E. Other Interagency Accomplishments**

### **The Commissioners' Committee on Cross-Systems Services for Children and Youth**

As reported in previous Annual Reports, a key high-level development in cross-systems coordination is the Commissioners' Committee on Cross-Systems Services for Children and Youth (hereinafter referred to as the "Commissioners' Committee"). Convened in December 2007, nine commissioners or directors of State agencies (CCF, CQCAPD, DOH, OASAS, OCFS, OMH, OMRDD, OTDA and SED), as well as family and youth partners, came together under the leadership of the Council on Children and Families to share a collective goal of achieving better outcomes for children, youth and families. The Commissioners' Committee was established to articulate a vision and strategies for change, and to provide much needed leadership to effectively address barriers to meeting the complex needs of children, youth and families who require services from multiple agencies. For 2010, the Commissioners' Committee has established workgroups, composed of Senior Staff and Family/Youth Partners, to work on issues regarding regulatory impediments, respite care and services, and cross-systems training.

## **The Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) and Bringing Systems of Care to Scale in New York State**

The work of the Commissioners' Committee builds on the efforts of CCSI – a statewide cross-system initiative grounded in a set of core principles and organized by a multi-tiered governance structure at the local, regional and state levels. Additionally, it builds on the efforts of *System of Care* – a philosophy that incorporates a broad array of services and supports that are organized into a coordinated network, integrated care planning and management across multiple levels, are culturally and linguistically competent, and builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth at service delivery and policy levels. CCSI and System of Care support localities in the provision of integrated systems of care that help children and youth, and their families, who have needs that cross administrative and service delivery lines.

In 2009, activities of the Commissioners' Committee focused on exploring ways of supporting and strengthening the existing infrastructure of CCSI and Systems of Care as a multi-level, cross-systems structure for serving children and youth with cross-systems needs; developing a mechanism for channeling systems barriers issues from local agencies through a request for interagency technical assistance; hosting a videoconference with regional state agency leadership staff and family representation leadership; scheduling Regional Forums to visit and engage in dialogue with members of CCSI regional technical assistance teams (RTAT's) and systems of care sites, and advancing interagency joint initiatives that support the implementation of the Children's Plan.

The Governor's SFY 2010-11 Budget proposes to place CCSI within the administrative purview of the Council on Children and Families. In so doing, this proposal seeks to streamline CCSI efforts under the Council on Children and Families, and thereby provide a single point of accountability and resources for interested parties, including state and local officials and family and youth representatives, to best meet the needs of New York's children and families.

### **Single Point of Access (SPOA)**

The SPOA concept was developed by OMH to help coordinate mental health services across the State. The intent of the SPOA process is to identify those children and youth with significant mental health needs, and develop appropriate supports (both formal and informal), with the goal of maintaining them in their home communities. The OMH Statewide SPOA Coordinator, and each OMH Regional Field Office, continue to monitor the implementation of SPOA within each county and borough in the State. In 2009, the total number of referrals to SPOA remained constant, as well as the sustained effort of serving youth within their community of origin (as opposed to placing residentially). Currently, over 65 percent of SPOA Coordinators also serve as their community's CCSI Coordinator. This cross-over has created a lack of clarity on the role and function of both the SPOA and CCSI initiatives. In 2010, OMH will be working with sister agencies, providers, families and youth to review the CCSI and SPOA structures. The objective will be to provide recommendations to the Commissioners' Committee on the most advantageous way to provide:

- a consistent , statewide transparent and accountable mental health structure that determines eligibility to specific levels of care within OMH; and
- a community process that links children, youth and families with services that are flexible and unique to the nuances of each community.

## **Innovations Project for Children and Families**

The *Innovations Project for Children and Families*, instituted in 2009, serves as a mechanism for local agencies to work cooperatively with state government to improve the delivery of services to children and families. This initiative, administered by the Council on Children and Families, enlists the expertise and creativity of those most affected by the challenges of the current system – those who are also likely to have the best insight on resourceful and practical solutions to bring about needed change. Proposals are submitted to the Council on Children and Families through a request for technical assistance process and request expeditious, high level assistance in removing these barriers. The Innovations Project provides an accessible and authoritative mechanism for turning innovative ideas into action and change. State agencies work with individuals and organizations to remove identified barriers imposed by cumbersome or unnecessary governmental structure. The Innovations Project seeks local proposals that are likely to improve the quality, availability, productivity, or cost effectiveness of services to children and families, and that demonstrate multi-service, integrated and collaborative efforts (not requiring new funding).

## **Commissioners' Committee Videoconference**

On February 25, 2009, the Commissioners' Committee hosted a statewide video conference, with eight remote sites (Rensselaer, Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, NYC, Long Island, Newburgh and Binghamton) for State and regional staff leadership, and youth and family representatives, to affirm its cross-systems mission and discuss mutual State and regional-level expectations. Approximately 90 regional participants were engaged in the video conference.

During the video conference, the participating members of the Commissioners' Committee:

- provided an overview of its formation, mission and values; committed to strengthening a multi-level system of care structure, with the Commissioners' Committee assuming the lead role at the state level;
- explained the role of the Council and Children and Families in coordinating the Commissioners' Committee activities, serving as the conduit for Committee information, coordinating responses to systems barriers, and accepting innovative proposals from cross-systems partners;
- discussed the Children's Plan as a blueprint for articulating a vision and strategies for change;
- emphasized to all participants that youth and families must be full partners;
- discussed mutual expectations for improving cross-systems communication; and
- announced plans for the Commissioners' Committee to schedule regional forums across the state for discussions with regional participants.

## **Regional Forums**

During the latter part of 2009, Regional Forums were scheduled by the Council on Children and Families for the Commissioners' Committee to engage state leadership with regional and local leadership in developing strategies to strengthen New York's cross-systems, multi-level system of care structure for children, youth and families. This effort began with a "System of

Care Community” Forum that was held on June 18, 2009 with nine active, graduated and applicant system of care grant site teams (Albany, Chautaugua, Erie, Monroe, Nassau, New York City, Onondaga, Orange and Westchester). Additional regional forums were held, in 2009, in Syracuse (June 23rd), Kingston (June 26th), Batavia (August 18th) and Canandaigua (September 9th).

The regional forums provided:

- updates from the state leadership on current cross-systems initiatives;
- “leadership-to-leadership” dialogue on what works, as well as what doesn’t;
- highlights of successful programs and partnerships in the respective region visited; and
- the opportunity to collectively shape New York’s system of care structure and identify future policy goals.

Key issues from the System of Care Community Forum and Regional Forums were collected by the state leadership to better inform the work of the Commissioners’ Committee for future planning and policy direction.

## **The Children's Plan**

### ***Systems ENGAGE to Improve the Social and Emotional Well Being and Learning of New York's Children and Their Families***

The Children’s Plan presents a new way of thinking about the social and emotional needs of children and charts a course of action to improve the services and supports provided to children and their families in New York State. The Plan, developed in October 2008, was built on the premise that the promotion and maintenance of mental health is a universal concern for all individuals, as it is directly linked to future physical health, well-being, and longevity. The blueprint for the Commissioners’ Committee work is the Children's Plan – a resource produced as a truly collaborative effort among State agencies and stakeholders that provides the framework for engaging all New Yorkers in supporting the social and emotional development of children and youth. State agencies have undertaken a number of joint initiatives, some of which are identified as follows, as a result of recommendations made within The Children's Plan.

### ***Joint Initiatives of the Children's Plan***

- Newly forged partnerships between the county departments of Probation, Substance Abuse and Mental Health in Onondaga, Monroe and Niagara Counties to identify and address needs for mental health and substance abuse services and supports for young people to get back on course for success. This involves provision of on-site universal screening for youth entering Probation, which includes both social-emotional and substance use screens, and adaptation of Clinic-Plus, a voluntary mental health screening tool, to target to probation offices. Onondaga and Monroe County partnerships are underway, Niagara County began in April 2010, and Albany County will begin in July 2010.
- Newly forged partnerships have begun between pediatricians, family practice physicians, the health and mental health county departments, County Government and family support. These partnerships are intended to strengthen the “medical home” of



the young person to promote and restore all aspects of health through access to child psychiatry consultation and training, as well as linkages to specialty mental health care and family support. *Project TEACH*, a collaborative effort of State and County Governments with medical providers is designed to link pediatricians and primary care physicians with child mental health experts across New York State. It is a collaboration of OMH, DOH, Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the New York State Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

- New York Promise Zones for Urban Education is an action strategy to achieve goals regarding student engagement, academic achievement, dropout prevention, social and emotional competence, positive school culture and school safety. This statewide, interagency framework includes an external change partner, school support team and social worker, and a community services support network. The initiative is underway in Syracuse, the Bronx, and Buffalo.
- **Youth Power!** – Establishes five regional Youth Partners for a statewide effort to create capacity and youth leadership through grassroots efforts to provide a youth voice to government, provider agencies and organizations. This will enable the provision of feedback and a youth voice into programs and policy changes that better reflect the needs and preferences of children, youth and families. *Youth Power!* is in the process of hiring five regional Youth Partners.
- Newly forged partnership between Substance Abuse and Mental Health (Institute for Research Education and Training in Addictions and Northeast Addiction Transfer Center) to provide “Train the Trainers” on Adolescent Co-Occurring Disorders for mental health and substance use treatment providers throughout the State. Through this partnership, young people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders will access evidence-based treatment thus accelerating their return to school, work and community. Fifteen OASAS and fifteen OMH trainers were trained in New York City to lead the first stages of competency-based, ‘train the trainers’ implementation. The first session is planned to occur in Albany for approximately 30 trainers.
- Newly forged partnership between the Council on Children and Families, OCFS, OMH and DOH to develop statewide recommendations for infusing evidence-based curricula and social-emotional development consultation into early care and education programs. Through an interagency Social Emotional Development Consultation Workgroup that has been established, recommendations will be developed to provide increased opportunities for positive social and emotional development for young children, along with greater access to needed supports for families and for early care and education providers. In September 2009, the Council on Children and Families received a 5-year federal SAMHSA grant to initiate Project LAUNCH, a national grant program for promoting the wellness of young children from birth to 8 years of age by addressing the physical, emotional, social, cognitive and behavioral aspects of their development. While using a range of evidence-based public health strategies to achieve its goals, Project LAUNCH seeks to improve coordination among child-serving systems, build infrastructure, and improve methods for delivering services.
- Newly forged partnership between OMH and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to create a curriculum to train providers in the best ways to navigate the mental health and developmental disabilities systems with their clients. This will enable children with dual diagnoses to receive coordinated and seamless care through

increasing awareness of providers regarding eligibility processes and available services of the two systems. Work has begun on producing a training/instructional DVD and curricula.

- Newly forged partnerships between State agencies and their regional offices participating in the Children's Plan, along with school districts and CASEL (national social emotional learning center). There was a major convention held in Syracuse with broad participation from all local systems and state representatives. Follow-up is underway with ties to Promise Zones and Systems of Care.
- Newly forged partnership between Child Welfare, Mental Health, Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) and the Children's Coalition - "*Building Bridges*." In 2009, oversight of the *Building Bridges* initiative transferred to the Commissioners' Committee for Cross-Systems Youth, with plans to strengthen linkages to community-based, cross-systems innovations initiatives in 2010.

### **Two Newly Designated Cross-Systems Staff Positions**

To accomplish the work involved with strengthening CCSI and bringing Systems of Care to scale in the state, along with implementing the recommendations of the Children's Plan, it became necessary for the Commissioners' Committee to realign resources. The Council on Children and Families, in collaboration and partnership with OMH and Families Together in New York State, reviewed existing resources to explore expanding staffing responsibilities in order to accomplish this work. As a result of this review, and through a process of reallocating resources, two newly designated cross-systems staff positions were created - a ***Statewide Systems of Care Director*** and a ***Statewide Children's Plan Director***. Staff for each of these positions began their employment in October 2009 and work closely with one another, along with serving as liaisons to the Commissioners' Committee to achieve cross-systems coordination and improvement.

- The ***Statewide System of Care Director*** is responsible for promoting cross-systems integration at the statewide, regional and county levels through the development of ***System of Care*** in communities throughout the State. Targeted technical assistance is provided on systems of care philosophy and practice to regional and local cross-system collaboratives; county provider and family-run organizations; and emerging and existing system of care communities. In 2009, the Statewide System of Care Director assisted the emerging system of care in Broome County through advisement on its funding application to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Targeted technical assistance was provided in the area of system of care philosophy - family-driven, youth-guided, culturally competent, integrated and community-based services. Additionally, the Director chairs the monthly statewide System of Care Steering Committee meetings, and is coordinating a group of system of care stakeholders to formulate clear overarching goals and strategies for the System of Care Steering Committee and communities to adopt. The outcome will be a clear statement of the Steering Committee's mission, vision, values and responsibilities.
- The ***Statewide Children's Plan Director*** is responsible for developing guiding principles, strategies and plans for the successful implementation of the New York State Children's Plan through collaborations with State agencies, the Commissioners' Committee, and the Statewide System of Care Director. This individual will ensure measures for accountability so that the mission and goals of the New York State Children's Plan are pursued at all times, and achieved in an effective manner. Additionally, the Statewide Children's Plan Director will conduct comprehensive

needs assessments; determine education, training and development priorities, and seek funding and legislative changes as determined by the Commissioners' Committee.

### **III. IMPROVING THE COORDINATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES IN 2010**

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The Committee will continue to focus on assessing and supporting local service networks in an effort to more effectively prevent unnecessary residential placements. Work with State agencies, regional and local service networks for exploring more effective integration approaches for delivering services and supports for children and youth with complex needs, and their families, will continue in 2010. The Committee also will continue to monitor out-of-state residential placements for appropriate utilization options when less intensive supports, and in-state residential alternatives, have been exhausted.

The Children's Plan articulates a course of action to improve the services and supports provided to children and youth and their families in New York State and serves as a blueprint for the Commissioners' Committee work. Additionally, the Children's Plan provides a framework for engaging all New Yorkers in supporting the social and emotional development of children and youth. As a result of recommendations made within The Children's Plan, State agencies have undertaken a number of joint initiatives.

Two newly designated cross-systems staff positions are in place in 2010 to accomplish the work involved with strengthening CCSI, bringing Systems of Care to scale in the State, and implementing the recommendations of the Children's Plan. The *Statewide System of Care Director* and *Statewide Children's Plan Director* will work closely with the Commissioners' Committee, chaired by the Executive Director of the Council on Children and Families, to intensify efforts in 2010 with regional and local service networks to explore ways of supporting and strengthening the Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) and System of Care sites as a multi-level, cross-systems structure for serving children and families with cross-systems needs.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Committee will continue to monitor the number of New York's children and youth placed out-of-state. The on-site monitoring of out-of-state residential programs will continue through 2010 contingent on available agency resources. Also continuing in 2010 is the work to increase in-state residential capacity by SED, OCFS and OMRDD in accordance with the implementation of the 5-Year Interagency Plan. The Office of Mental Health will work with State agencies, providers, families and youth to assess the CCSI and SPOA structures, and will make recommendations to the Commissioner's Committee. Through the efforts and activities of the Commissioners' Committee on Cross-Systems Services for Children and Youth, the work of the two cross-systems staff positions, the strengthening of CCSI and systems of care, combined with the interagency joint activities supporting the implementation of the Children's Plan, the Committee will continue to explore and promote more effective integration approaches for delivering services and supports for New York's children, youth and families.