

# Models for Change: Innovations in Practice

An initiative supported by the John D.  
and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
[www.macfound.org](http://www.macfound.org)

**ModelsforChange**  
Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

# Models for Change: Innovations in Practice

Prepared by Patrick Griffin, National Center for Juvenile Justice

Models for Change provides funding, technical assistance, and other forms of support to a range of juvenile justice systems reform efforts in four key partner states: Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, and Washington. By supporting change in a variety of sites, and on a range of issues, Models for Change is helping to generate multiple models of systems reform—all home-grown, but all capable of being studied, shared, and adapted elsewhere. This report briefly summarizes four promising practice innovations that have emerged from this work. Each is a locally developed response to a core challenge faced by juvenile justice practitioners everywhere.

## 1 PACTT: Coming Home Prepared in Pennsylvania

Each year, as many as 100,000 young people return to their home communities following periods of residential placement in delinquency institutions.<sup>1</sup> In general, their prospects are grim. Besides all the other strikes against them (they suffer disproportionately from mental illness, they are often alcohol- and drug-dependent, their families tend to be fragile and their neighborhoods distressed, etc.), returning youth have too often burned their bridges to school, and lack the skills, credentials, and connections needed to access the legal job market. And their median age is 17.

Models for Change partners in Philadelphia knew what that meant in practice. During the early part of this decade, about 1,300 delinquent youth were returning to the city from residential placements every year—and mostly walking right back into trouble. As many as a third of them, in fact, were in placement facilities again within six months of discharge. This cycle of re-entry failure is what motivated the launch of the Reintegration Initiative, an ambitious multi-agency collaboration that aimed

to change practically everything about the way Philadelphia youth released from placement were reconnected with their community. With funding support from state and local sources as well as Models for Change, the Reintegration Initiative has instituted new assessment, planning and monitoring practices, new mechanisms for collaborating and sharing information, and new forms of “step-down” structure and support for youth making the transition from custody to freedom.

But the organizers of the Reintegration Initiative recognized that they couldn’t do much to promote successful reintegration without tackling some of the core problems of the city’s delinquent youth: academic failure, disconnection from school, and lack of job preparation and marketable skills. According to Candace Putter, who as “Cross-System Manager” coordinated the effort during its early years, “The Reintegration Initiative forced us to turn our attention back to what we were doing to *prepare kids*.”

Their efforts to address these preparation issues—and particularly to assess and improve the quality of education and job training for youth in placement—eventually led to the formation of a unique partnership known as the Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Training (PACTT) Alliance. PACTT brought together key players in the aftercare reform network fostered by Pennsylvania Models for Change—including the

<sup>1</sup>Snyder, H. (January 2004). “An Empirical Portrait of the Youth Reentry Population.” *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 2 (1).



November 2010  
© National Center for Juvenile Justice

state's two biggest users of delinquency placement services, Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) and Philadelphia, and the handful of private residential placement agencies that collectively house the vast majority of their committed youth—to begin the work of aligning and enhancing academic instruction and occupational skills programming in institutions. Now a formal project of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, with its own diverse funding sources and a growing roster of affiliates, PACTT has brought about a series of concrete improvements in the way Pennsylvania's youth in placement are educated, trained, and equipped with the skills they need to make the transition to productive adult lives.

In Pennsylvania's highly decentralized juvenile justice system, with its unusual degree of local control and heavy reliance on private placement service providers, it's no easy task to make across-the-board changes—in *anything*. But PACTT had advantages: not just the combined purchasing power of Pennsylvania's two largest counties and the commitment of the state's probation leadership, but the willing participation of many of its most prominent private residential facilities. Any changes that began here weren't likely to end here. Collectively, the 10 institutions making up the original PACTT Alliance serve approximately 2,600 youth at any given time, or about a third of all Pennsylvania youth in placement. An eleventh provider has now joined, and others are in the process of becoming PACTT members. "While PACTT began as a collaboration between Philly and Allegheny," says Allegheny Juvenile Probation Administrator Russ Carlino, "its work will benefit every county, small or large, that commits juveniles to PACTT-affiliated programs."

Much of PACTT's work has centered on tightening up classroom instruction in institutions. Individual assessments

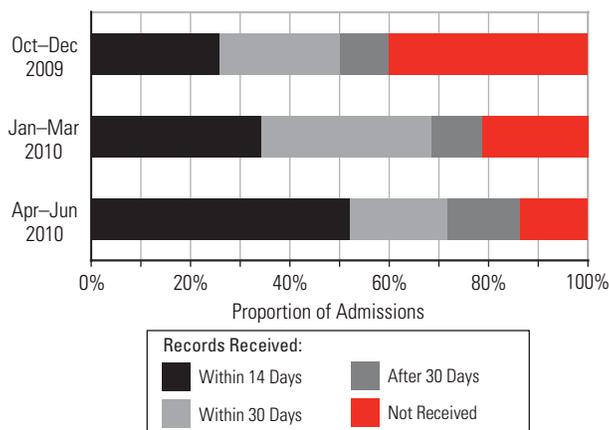
## PACTT Facilities: Academic Achievements at Discharge

Academic Achievement	Number of Youth			Total
	Oct–Dec 2009	Jan–Mar 2010	Apr–Jun 2010	
All Discharged Youth	352	302	455	1,109
High School Diploma	39	24	68	131
GED	46	69	105	220
Math Scores Raised:				
One Grade Level	60	82	105	247
Two Grade Levels	81	72	50	203
Reading Scores Raised:				
One Grade Level	63	60	59	182
Two Grade Levels	116	103	96	315

by PACTT academic specialists generally found academic programs in placement to be uneven, fragmented, too often lacking in rigor, and unrelated to educational requirements in the school districts to which delinquent youth would be returning. "To be fair, no one was really paying attention to education in placement," points out Candace Putter, who now serves as PACTT's Director. "Not the state, not probation, and not the local schools. Young people were showing up in facilities *years* behind academically, and just getting their educational records was extremely difficult." But PACTT has helped all affiliated facilities to align their curricula with state standards issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Institutional teaching staff have received PACTT training in literacy strategies, and in effective techniques for combining remedial education with credit recovery. And PACTT has worked with notable success at the community end, to ensure that schools back home are fully cooperating with placement facilities on such vital matters as communication, credit transfer, and timely records transmittal.

But the most striking advancements in PACTT facilities have come in the area of career/technical education (CTE). PACTT has stimulated a rapid expansion of CTE training in its affiliate facilities—from a pre-Alliance total of about 16 programs that Putter frankly describes as "random," to more than 60 focused and credible career training tracks today. The expanded CTE programs offered in PACTT facilities are mostly in high-demand areas—culinary arts, indoor/outdoor maintenance, auto body, welding, office support, and other fields where jobs are waiting. They are structured around industry-recognized, competency-based standards, and wherever possible they lead to skill certifications that employers know and value. Every PACTT facility now also offers training for at least one entry-level certification as well—like the "ServSafe" food handlers'

## PACTT Facilities: Educational Records Transfer



certificate, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s “10 Hour Card” for building trade workers, and the “International Computer Driving License” for administrative assistants.

“The re-entry process for our young people is not easy, and employers aren’t standing in line waiting to hire them,” says Putter. “But by preparing them well, giving them a strong foundation to continue their education, and helping them earn certifications that employers value, we give them a leg up—something to counter the negative mark that their delinquent history puts on their resume.”

<b>PACTT Facilities: Employment Preparation Achievements at Discharge</b>				
Employment Preparation Achievement	Number of Youth			Total
	Oct–Dec 2009	Jan–Mar 2010	Apr–Jun 2010	
All Discharged Youth	352	302	455	1,109
ServSafe Certified	18	6	23	47
OSHA 10 Hour Card Certified	42	63	127	232
Microsoft Office Certified	25	30	41	96
Employability Skills Manual Completed	92	112	86	290
Work Experience	123	88	86	297

To guide and standardize instruction in the foundational “soft skills” that every young person needs to succeed in the job market—personal and social skills, conflict resolution and collaboration skills, job-keeping skills—PACTT has developed an *Employability and Soft Skills Manual* that is now used in every PACTT-aligned facility in Pennsylvania. The manual, which is available for free download from PACTT’s website ([www.pacttalliance.org](http://www.pacttalliance.org)), provides a uniform listing of 27 basic competencies that all youth should be taught, including skills needed to seek out and secure a job, manage finances, understand and meet employer expectations, and handle typical workplace issues and conflicts. The manual also provides definitions, a standardized checklist for recording progress, and rubrics for assessing competency, as well as a uniform framework for the development of a “student employability portfolio.” Every student in a PACTT-aligned facility is now expected to complete one of these portfolios, which serves as a useful and portable record of skills acquired and goals achieved.

But thanks to the efforts of the PACTT Alliance, Pennsylvania youth in placement are getting more than just job training that is connected to real prospects in the real economy. They’re getting a chance to work—and practice work-related skills—

in a protected environment. Workforce Investment Board funds are being used for the first time to subsidize jobs inside placement facility walls. In the past year alone, over 200 youth held such jobs, in the kitchens, maintenance plants, and offices of the institutions in which they reside, often earning legitimate wages for the first time in their lives, in addition to establishing work histories, practicing “hard” and “soft” employment skills, and developing confidence that they can carry with them back to their communities. “PACTT facilities are providing programming to further their skill sets in these disciplines,” in the words of Philadelphia Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Jim Sharp, “and paying jobs to complete the cycle.”

PACTT is now in the process of expanding on this model by developing a direct pipeline from jobs in placement to jobs in the community following release. PACTT’s new Learn to Earn Project, a partnership with Goodwill Industries and two PACTT-affiliated residential facilities serving Allegheny County youth, has been awarded federal funding that will enable 112 youth per year to be employed in a chosen career/technical field for six weeks in placement, then six additional weeks in the community upon discharge. Learn to Earn will provide coordination, oversight, and instruction in the facilities and will manage linkages, payroll, and employment troubleshooting at job sites in the community. The goal is to develop a pool of employers willing to transition youth from subsidized to unsubsidized and permanent work.

“The next task for PACTT is to make those crucial connections to employers,” says Putter. “To convince them that by giving our kids a chance, they’re actually helping themselves by acquiring trained and enthusiastic employees. And of course we need to build connections to ongoing training, so these kids can continue their education and keep building their technical skills.”

## 2 Peoria: Expanding Informal Alternatives in Illinois

The formal juvenile justice system can’t substitute for strong families, schools, and communities, and was never meant to. For the vast majority of young people who get into trouble, the best responses are informal and close to home, guided by the community’s traditions and restrained by its common sense. It’s not just cheaper than arrests, petitions, court hearings, detention stays, and everything else that comes with formal processing. It’s more effective in the long run.<sup>2</sup> That’s

<sup>2</sup>Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C. and Guckenburg, S. (2010). Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 2010: 1. <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php>.

why Models for Change seeks to increase the use of sensible, informal, community-based responses to juvenile offending.

But there are formidable structural obstacles in the way. When Models for Change began working in Illinois, one of those obstacles included a statewide system of fiscal incentives that perversely encouraged local communities to rely on state-funded incarceration for youth who didn't need it, and inhibited the growth of less formal and punitive programs that could have served as effective alternatives closer to home. Models for Change research and public education efforts have gone a long way toward changing that. Redeploy Illinois and other Models for Change-supported reforms have begun to correct this fiscal imbalance, and channel resources back to local communities. But new infrastructure doesn't appear overnight. And in places like Peoria, the legacy of a long history of institutional preference for formal and centralized approaches remains. In fact, Peoria posed a particular challenge to local Models for Change partners: how do you develop informal, indigenous alternatives in the face of some of the state's highest rates of reliance on formal processing, detention, and commitment?

Start small. In Peoria, the effort to begin shifting some of the responsibility for responding to juvenile offending away from police, courts, and correctional systems started in a single high school, with a single experiment in school-based restorative conflict resolution techniques. But it has spread—throughout the school, to other schools, into the larger community and beyond. Now it is developing a strong evidentiary base, recruiting new sources of support and funding, and modeling an array of practical alternatives to formal court processing of youth.

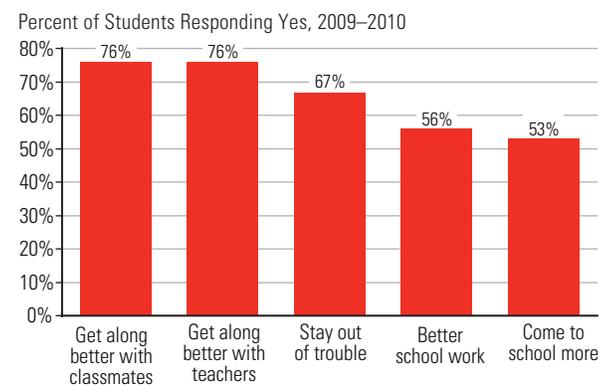
The school-based work in Peoria can be traced back to state-funded efforts early in the decade to understand and address the disproportionate detention of minority youth. Analyses of local juvenile arrest and detention data, undertaken to find contributing sources of disproportionality in Peoria's detention center, had pointed unmistakably to "aggravated battery" referrals from one public high school on the city's predominantly African-American south side. Interviews with Manual High School administrators and others suggested that these referrals usually originated in fights—particularly where legally protected school personnel were involved in efforts to break them up. But this was not simply a matter of official overreaction to minor disciplinary infractions: the fear at least was real. A survey and focus group interviews with area students revealed pervasive anxiety about gangs and violence, as well as a widespread disposition to use force as a way of resolving problems. Teachers were affected too: the frequent formal charges and school removals, it appeared, were responses to a

school environment characterized by general insecurity, broken relationships, and lack of trust.

Changing this culture at Manual and other area schools began with a restorative justice technique called "Peacemaking Circles." Circles offer a way for participants to air issues, explain feelings, work out misunderstandings, resolve differences, and support one another in a protected setting in which everyone has an equal right to be heard. "When used appropriately," explains Peoria Models for Change Coordinator Lori Brown, "Circles are extraordinary in opening lines of communication and understanding." Like other restorative justice practices, they emphasize "changing relationships by engaging people: doing things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them. It's the relationships, not specific strategies, that bring about meaningful change."

With technical assistance from Models for Change partners skilled in restorative justice practice, Circle training for Manual teachers was provided in the spring of 2006, and Circles were implemented on a voluntary basis in Manual classrooms in the 2006–07 school year. Within three years, with the help of a Models for Change-funded Restorative Justice Coordinator overseeing training, recruitment, and documentation, hundreds of local teachers had been trained and Circle practice had spread to seven other area schools. At one of them, a K–12 school for young people with emotional and behavioral problems called Kiefer Academy, results of Circle practice were carefully documented from a variety of angles over the 2008–09 and 2009–10 school years. In response to qualitative surveys, students participating in Circles reported better relationships with classmates and teachers, more success in avoiding trouble, and improved schoolwork and attendance since Circle practice was instituted. Teachers also reported improvements in students' relationships, conduct, and academic

### Student Responses to Peacemaking Circles Survey



performance. Absenteeism declined, according to school records. So did school removals and use of physical restraints. And student behavior, as measured by pre-/post-testing using a standardized tool known as the Behavioral Evaluation Scale, showed clear improvements in five key domains.

Use of one restorative technique in Peoria schools has led to fruitful experiments with others. Beginning once more at Manual High School, a Peer Jury program known as MANYO—the name stands for Motivating and Nurturing Youth Opportunity—is modeling an alternative approach to school discipline that emphasizes youth-led, consensus-based conflict resolution and active efforts to repair harm and make peace. “It’s about talking it out, not kicking kids out,” explains local Restorative Justice Coordinator Holly Snyder. “Holding youth responsible for their decisions and giving them a chance to repair the harm they’ve caused. It’s easy to suspend them—no one talks to them, no one holds them accountable. And then they come back to school, and again no one deals with them.”

But with the peer jury approach, Snyder says, “the youth is held accountable. Relationships can be repaired, and new social skills can be learned.”

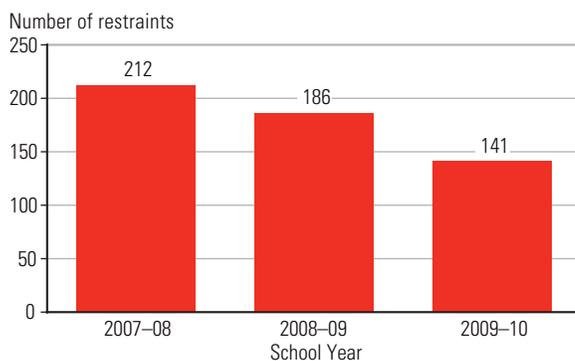
During the 2008–09 and 2009–10 school years, trained student volunteers—at Manual and two other area schools to which the peer jury practice has spread—have handled a total of 119 cases referred by school administrators in lieu of ordinary disciplinary measures. Nearly all of these cases have involved fighting, intimidation, classroom insubordination, or other misconduct capable of contributing to a violent and chaotic school environment if not effectively resolved. And they have been resolved, fully and finally: of the 119 cases processed, only 6 (5%) had to be referred back to school administration for further disciplinary action.

Restorative practices have achieved a foothold in Peoria schools, and are steadily spreading. More area schools are expressing interest in starting peer jury programs as well as peace circles. Teachers who have been exposed to restorative training and techniques are moving around, taking ideas with them. Administrators have begun calling for crisis assistance. Temporary and experimental programs have been institutionalized and made permanent—reflected in disciplinary manuals, embedded in protocols, incorporated into staff training.

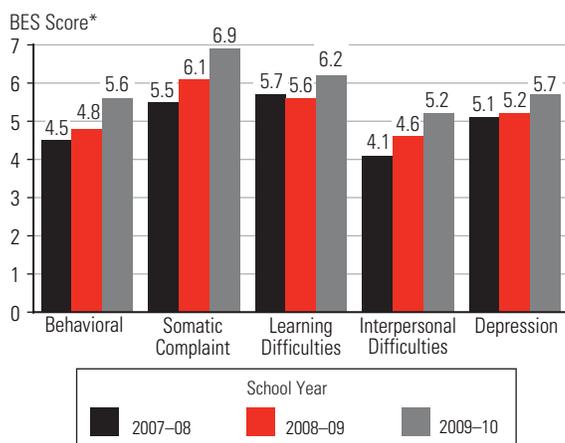
Now restorative alternatives are expanding out of the schools and into the Peoria community. In the summer of 2010, with Models for Change funding and technical support, a collaboration involving local Models for Change partners, the Covenant with Black America, and the Peoria Police Department launched a new “Community Peace Conferencing” diversion program for nonviolent, first- and second-time juvenile offenders. These are “station adjustment” cases that Illinois law authorizes local law enforcement to resolve. But in Peoria, police are instead referring them to community volunteers trained in restorative justice techniques, who work with young offenders, victims, and families to achieve solutions that repair the harm and hold youth accountable without formal prosecution. The program is just getting off the ground—as of October 2010 a total of 40 community volunteers had completed facilitator training and 10 young offenders’ cases had been resolved through Peace Conferencing—but those involved say the approach is showing good results and helping to build the local base of support, both inside the system and out, for alternative solutions.

“If we want peace in our community,” points out Lori Brown, “the community itself must take an active role in obtaining it. This program is about ordinary citizens partnering with the police to fight crime and improve the lives of youth.”

### Use of Restraints in Kiefer Academy



### Behavioral Scores for Kiefer Academy Youth



\* on a scale of 1–20

# 3 Jefferson Parish: Dealing with Racial Disparities at the Front Door in Louisiana

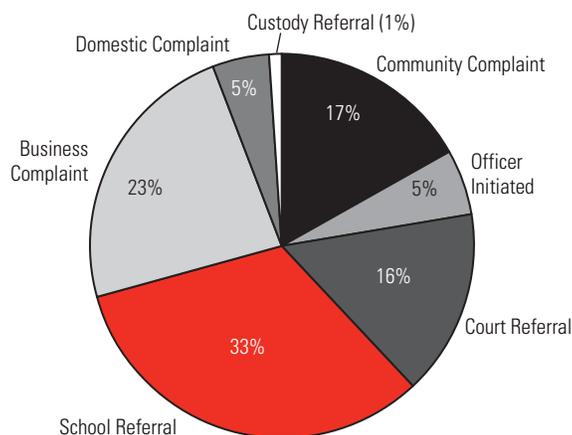
Nationally, black youth get arrested at about twice the rate of non-Hispanic white youth.<sup>3</sup> Once arrested, they are more often detained, and their cases more often result in formal charges. At most points of contact with the juvenile justice system, in fact, the data show subtle or not-so-subtle disparities in the ways minorities and non-minorities are handled. And with each yes-or-no decision, at each processing stage, the statistical differences tend to get amplified. The ultimate result is that about two-thirds of the juveniles in custody nationwide are youth of color. And black youth particularly are held in confinement at more than four times the rate of white youth.<sup>4</sup>

The short-hand term for this phenomenon is “disproportionate minority contact” or DMC, and it’s a problem in nearly all states. In Louisiana, Models for Change research has found significant minority overrepresentation in the state’s secure care, non-secure care, and probation caseloads. In 2007, African-American youth—less than 40% of the state’s youth population—made up 80% of those held in secure custody by the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice.

Yet as striking as disparities like these look when viewed in the aggregate, and at the end-stage of juvenile justice system processing, they are really the product of many small, routine and local decisions—most of them made much earlier in the process.

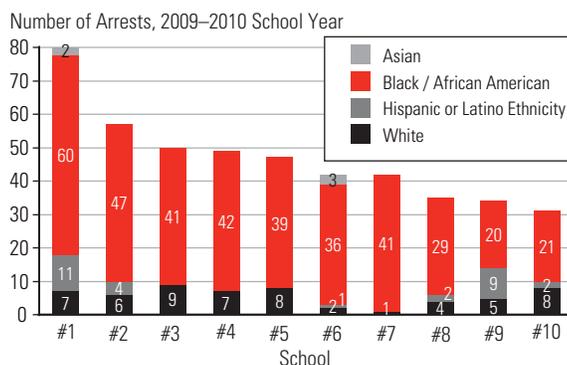
For example, in schools. In Jefferson Parish, a Models for Change and DMC Action Network demonstration site just west of New Orleans with a youth population that is 38% African-American, about two-thirds of delinquency petitions in 2006 involved black youth. Even higher proportions were seen in detention admissions and state commitments. The reason clearly had something to do with schools. According to data analyzed by Models for Change partners for the Jefferson Parish Children and Youth Planning Board, fully a third of all juvenile arrests in the parish were originating in schools. Out of

## Juvenile Delinquency Arrest Referral Sources, Jefferson Parish



Note: Data are for August 2009–May 2010.

## School Arrests in Top Ten Jefferson Parish Schools by Race/Ethnicity



a total of 88 public schools in the parish, 10 accounted for 66% of these school arrests. “These are predominantly African-American schools,” explains Roy Juncker, Director of the Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services, “and 84% of these arrests involved minority youth.”

A subsequent Models for Change-supported study that enabled experts at the University of New Orleans to dig deeper into the data revealed that the vast majority of these school arrests were for nonviolent misdemeanor offenses—most often “interference with an education facility” or “disturbing the peace.” Offenses like these may have threatened school order, but not public safety. Nevertheless, Juncker says, “It’s built into the way the school system operates. Kids get arrested, suspended, expelled, and that’s how you get rid of the problem. As opposed

<sup>3</sup>Puzzanchera, C. and Adams, B. (2010). *National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook*. Developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Online. Available: <http://ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/dmcdcb/>.

<sup>4</sup>Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 2006* [machine-readable data files]. Washington, D.C.: OJJDP.

to focusing on the problems causing the misbehavior and dealing with that.”

Change had to begin at the source. “It’s learning what *not* to call the police for,” in the words of Carol Mancuso, the Jefferson Parish Public School System’s Director of School Safety and Discipline. At the urging of Juncker’s Department of Juvenile Services and with funding support from Models for Change, Mancuso was able to arrange a special training in 2008 to help Jefferson Parish school staff intervene more effectively with students posing discipline problems. About 60 counselors, social workers, and other staff received training in Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools, a component of School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support training designed to improve the learning environment, enforce consistent expectations, and manage behavior in school settings without resorting to police. “You don’t pick up the phone because a kid is running down the hall,” says Mancuso. “You can’t pick up the phone just because you don’t know what else to do.” At the same time, she adds, “Teachers and principals are at their wit’s end sometimes [dealing with] students with emotional and learning problems, yelling, screaming, kicking.” It’s tempting, as she puts it, to “call the police and get some relief.” Avoiding those calls takes practical intervention techniques.

It also takes constant tracking and adjustments. Jefferson schools are now required to log all police calls electronically into a database, so that Mancuso’s office can review them regularly for appropriateness. It’s both a check and learning tool, Mancuso says. Multi-disciplinary teams in each school

also review their own discipline data each month, to ensure that interventions are appropriate.

Overall, school arrests in Jefferson Parish declined about 16% from the 2008–09 to the 2009–10 school year. “We have gone down [in our referrals]—probably not as much as Roy wants us to,” Mancuso says. “But we’re a big system. We’re getting more comfortable with the new procedures.”

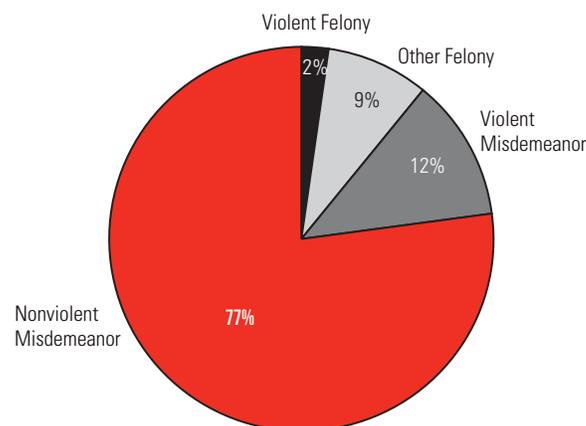
Law enforcement also has a role to play in reducing unnecessary school arrests to the formal justice system. “Most of those schools [that the data showed contributed the most arrests] had police officers right on campus,” Roy Juncker points out, referring to School Resource Officers employed by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office to provide security on school grounds at many of the parish’s predominantly minority schools. “We wanted to make sure we could have good training for those officers.”

Shauna Epps, a DMC Policy Specialist with the Center for Children’s Law and Policy, which provides technical assistance to Jefferson Parish’s Models for Change project, describes one common scenario: “Unfortunately, when kids act out in school, sheriffs remove them [from the classroom], yell at them, the kids yell back. . . . The next thing you know, it’s ‘disturbing the peace.’” Rewriting that scenario, again, takes training. Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training is especially designed to help law enforcement officers respond to emergencies without making them worse by overreacting or misinterpreting signs. “It helps them develop intervention, counseling, and de-escalation skills,” Epps explains. “It [shows them] how to work with kids who are acting out.” In the summer of 2010, Models for Change funded CIT training for all Jefferson Parish’s School Resource Officers. In addition, four of Juncker’s staff in the Department of Juvenile Services are being certified as CIT trainers, and will begin training probation and detention officers throughout the department by the end of the year. School system employees are expected to get CIT training early in 2011. Juncker envisions it as a “three-tiered approach,” enhancing the response capacity of law enforcement, probation/detention, and the schools, and he expects it to pay further dividends.

“Once the three of us all pull together, we should be able to reduce arrests, handle problematic behavior without arrests, and keep kids from penetrating the juvenile justice system. That’s what the goal is.”

For youth who do end up being arrested, other changes being made by Juncker’s Department of Juvenile Services are designed to minimize unnecessary formal processing and confinement that tend to impact minority youth most severely.

## Jefferson Parish Arrests at School



Note: Data are for the 2009–10 School Year.

A “Graduated Sanctions Ladder” policy put in place in October 2010 structures the Department’s responses to probation violations to ensure that they are measured, consistent, and effective in encouraging compliance, without making inappropriate use of secure detention. Detention alternatives have also been greatly expanded, and overall detention usage is way down—with 2010 detention admissions projected to be 14% below those in 2009, and nearly 40% below those in 2004. Plans are in the works to develop new restorative programming to serve as alternatives to court processing, and to expand diversion options for nonviolent offenders as well.

## 4 King County: Uniting for Youth in Washington

Child maltreatment is a risk factor for delinquency. That means researchers have found a strong correlation—too strong to be a coincidence—between being abused or neglected as a child and later offending as a youth. For children who are removed from their families, the risk of later delinquency is even higher. Such children face other serious risks: they may be more likely to suffer mental illness, be learning-disabled, have drinking problems.<sup>5</sup> That’s why they are sometimes called “multi-system” or “cross-over” youth—because their complex needs and challenges bring them to the doors of multiple systems in the course of their troubled lives. Serving them effectively may require these systems to confer on or coordinate their various responses, or at least be aware of them. But that rarely happens because things are not set up that way.

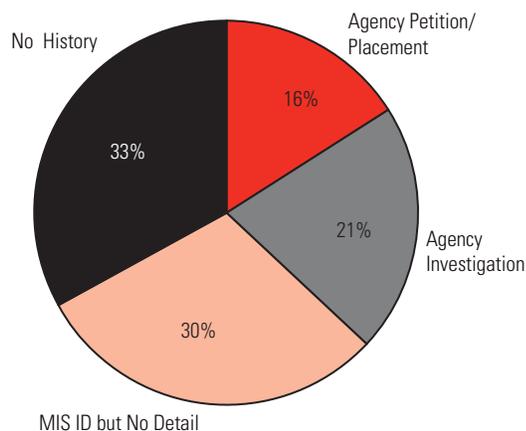
In King County, Washington, leaders from the King County Juvenile Court and the Children’s Administration of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, in collaboration with other local stakeholder agencies serving multi-system youth and their families, have been making efforts to change that since 2004. Working through a planning partnership known as Uniting for Youth (formerly the King County Systems Integration Initiative), assisted by Casey Family Programs, the Child Welfare League of America, and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University, King County has developed a foundational charter agreement on multi-system collaboration, a multi-system information-sharing guide, detailed recommendations for a shared data system, and a dual

jurisdiction protocol for providing coordinated case management and services to youth who are simultaneously involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. “King County has made a strong commitment to multi-system collaboration and coordination as a means of routine practice for youth experiencing difficulties in multiple domains,” says John Tuell, one of the experts who has helped to guide the King County effort from the beginning. “Their historical commitment has resulted in the effective implementation of practices that are positively impacting the outcomes for the most troubled and disadvantaged youth and families in their community.”

Since 2007, Models for Change has helped to fund an ambitious expansion of King County’s multi-system service integration efforts. The Models for Change-supported work of Uniting for Youth includes research to guide planning, a demonstration project aimed at improving cross-system case assessment, case planning and case management, and a sweeping program of county-wide cross-system training for youth-serving professionals.

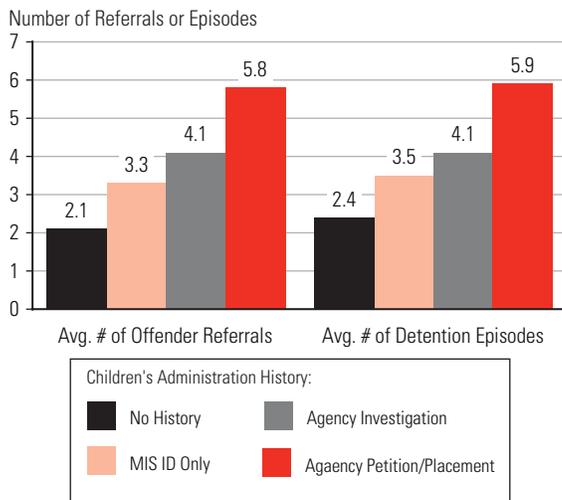
The Multi-System Youth Prevalence Study, a project undertaken for Models for Change in King County by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, established a baseline summary of the estimated numbers and case characteristics of cross-over youth in King County, using automated court data matched and extracted by the Washington State Center for Court Research. The study found that, among 4,475 youth referred to the juvenile court for offenses in 2006, *two-thirds had some kind of history of contact or involvement* with the state’s child welfare agency. While the records of 30% of referred youth indicated that the agency’s involvement with the family was minimal, 37% of them had family issues serious enough to merit agency

2006 King County Offenders: Child Welfare History

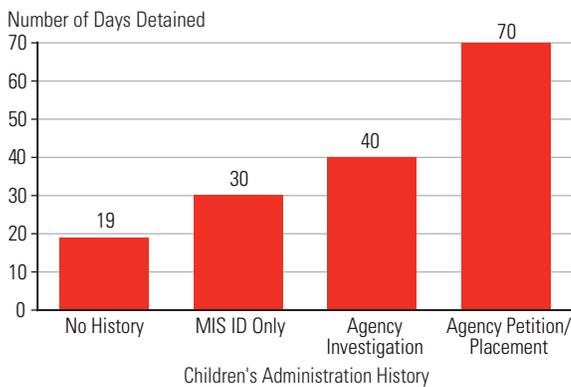


<sup>5</sup>Wiig, J., Widom, C., and Tuell, J. (2003). Understanding Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Delinquency: From Research to Effective Program, Practice and Systemic Solutions. Washington, DC: CWLA Press.

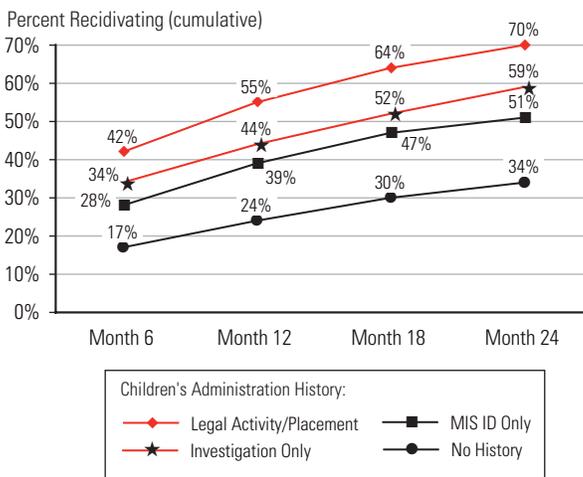
## Offender Referrals and Detention Episodes by Extent of Child Welfare History



## Days Detained (Overall) by Extent of Child Welfare History



## Recidivism by Extent of Child Welfare History



action—either an investigation (21%) or a formal dependency petition or placement in agency custody (16%). And youth with agency histories were found to offend at earlier ages, spend longer periods in detention, penetrate deeper into the juvenile justice system, and recidivate at higher rates than those with no child welfare history. The findings of the study are informing the development of new intervention strategies, and will enable King County's Uniting for Youth partnership to measure the impact of its multi-system coordination work going forward.

In 2008, Uniting for Youth launched an experimental project—the Kent District Dual System Youth Pilot Program—involving juvenile probation and Children's Administration Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) units in an area south of Seattle. Among other innovations, the Kent District project instituted routine joint unit meetings to promote communication between DCFS social workers and probation counselors, a new protocol in which probation and child welfare unit supervisors regularly compare lists of active cases to identify cross-over youth, and a requirement that a shared case planning meeting be conducted within 30 days of identifying a youth who is active in both units. The case planning meeting is typically attended by the youth and the youth's family and other supporters as well as probation and DCFS staff and supervisors. It's designed to eliminate redundancies and conflicting orders; address all issues important to probation, DCFS, the youth, and the family; and result in a coordinated service plan that specifies action steps, services, and responsibilities. Shared case planning meetings certainly save time and clarify expectations. But by making probation aware of DCFS services available to stabilize the youth, they may also discourage unnecessary detention and sanctioning recommendations.<sup>6</sup>

Another simple but effective change instituted by the Kent District project addressed delays in granting DCFS social workers access to detained youth on their caseloads. After a list of "pre-screened" social workers was given to detention staff, and a social worker notification protocol was developed, supervisors reported that all cross-over youth in detention were seen by social workers within 24 hours—which expedited placement and treatment planning, and resulted in reductions in detention stays estimated at about two days per youth.

As of October 2010, 65 young people had received joint case assessment and management services through the project.

<sup>6</sup>Siegel, G. (2009). "The King County (Washington) Systems Integration Initiative: A First Look at the Kent District Dual System Youth Pilot Program." *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 60, no. 4 (Fall), pp. 44–59.

Results were encouraging enough to induce King County leadership to expand the Kent District approach county-wide, beginning in August 2010. The King County Juvenile Court now sends a weekly juvenile arrest list to DCFS, which performs a cross-check against DCFS data to look for youth with active dependency or open DCFS cases. From August through October, a total of 118 cross-over youth have been identified using this new process. Whenever a cross-check reveals a match, the DCFS social worker assigned to the youth is identified and given notification of the arrest as well as a copy of the protocol for handling dual jurisdiction youth. "We believe this is going to be far more effective than just training on the protocols from time to time," says Lee Selah, Regional Program Manager for Children's Administration in King County.

But training is key. It's doubtful that any jurisdiction has ever undertaken a more extensive program of multi-system cross-training than King County. According to Marcus Stubblefield, Uniting for Youth's Systems Integration Coordinator, 6 training events have been held since May 2008, involving more than 1,200 individuals, including representatives of 17 public sector agencies and 49 community organizations. The purpose of the trainings is to help a broad cross-section of professionals serv-

ing King County youth to understand how the various youth-serving systems and agencies function, what they have to offer one another, and how they can work together more effectively. Trainings feature workshop presentations from the Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, the King County Juvenile Court and its juvenile probation staff, the Youth Services Division of the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, the public schools, and state and county behavioral health and developmental disabilities agencies. Each agency offers an overview of its goals and responsibilities, its methods, services, resources and programs, its budget, its eligibility criteria, etc. In addition, participants are broken into multi-system teams and given a chance to develop joint case plans for hypothetical cross-over cases (often based on real-life field experiences). "The importance of the teams," says Stubblefield, "is that they give folks a chance to see how the systems can and should work together. They talk through the issues and understand what resources are available from each of them, how they all fit into that puzzle." The exercise, he adds, also reinforces the sense that "they're accountable on a group basis, and not just as individual systems, for the outcomes they produce."

---

## For More Information

Information on these and other Models for Change practice innovation products is available at <http://www.modelsforchange.net/reform-progress/>. To learn more about the work profiled here, contact:

### **PACTT**

Candace Putter  
Director  
Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical  
Training Alliance  
[www.pacttalliance.org](http://www.pacttalliance.org)  
[cputter.pactt@comcast.net](mailto:cputter.pactt@comcast.net)

### **Peoria, Illinois**

Lori Brown  
Peoria Models for Change Project Coordinator  
Children's Home Association of Illinois  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

### **Jefferson Parish, Louisiana**

Roy Juncker  
Director  
Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services  
[RJunker@jeffparish.net](mailto:RJunker@jeffparish.net)

### **Uniting for Youth**

Marcus Stubblefield  
Systems Integration Coordinator  
Uniting for Youth  
Office of Strategic Planning & Performance Management  
Office of King County (Washington) Executive  
[Marcus.Stubblefield@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Marcus.Stubblefield@kingcounty.gov)

## Models for Change

Models for Change is an effort to create successful and replicable models of juvenile justice reform through targeted investments in key states, with core support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Models for Change seeks to accelerate progress toward a more effective, fair, and developmentally sound juvenile justice system that holds young people accountable for their actions, provides for their rehabilitation, protects them from harm, increases their life chances, and manages the risk they pose to themselves and to the public. The initiative is underway in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Washington, and through action networks focusing on key issues in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin.

**ModelsforChange**

Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

[www.modelsforchange.net](http://www.modelsforchange.net)