

Report of the Activities, Projects and Recommendations of the Planning and Evaluation Work Group

Prepared by Jane Patrick, Collaborative Coordinator
January 25, 2010

Minnesota Student Survey

The Minnesota Student Survey, administered every three years since 1998, will be given to 6th, 9th and 12th grade students in 2010 during the months of February, March and April. The survey is an important vehicle for youth voice. School district leaders and educators, local public health agencies and state, community and social services agencies use the survey results in planning and evaluation for school and community initiatives and prevention programming.

The information derived from the Minnesota Student Survey is invaluable to the Planning and Evaluation Work Group and to all of us across the county as we conduct our joint and individual program planning. The P & E Group is requesting that the partners have a discussion today about the consistent administration of this test ***and would welcome ideas on how the partners can support our schools as they conduct this important activity.***

2010 Collaborative Coordination Contract Evaluation

The group is undertaking their final Work Plan Task for the year which is to evaluate the Collaborative Coordination contract. The group will be using a survey tool that is similar to the one used in 2008, the last time that this evaluation was conducted for Independent Contract Services. The group is sharing a copy of the evaluation with the group today for those that wish to complete a hard copy. In addition, the group will distribute the survey electronically with the help of Scott Backstrom at Otter Tail County. ***P & E is requesting your help in taking the time to respond openly and honestly to the survey so they can accurately assess the thoughts of the partners with regard to overall coordination.***

Biennial Planning Process

P & E continued their work on the Biennial Planning Process during the month of January. The group is nearing completion of the 2010 Biennial Plan and has identified some of the key components which will be included in the final outline. Because the work group work plans are due to be presented at the March 1 CEO Group meeting, P & E is requesting a preliminary approval of the Biennial Plan so that the work groups can use it as a guide when developing their work plans for FY11. The preliminary Biennial Plan includes the following:

- **What do we want to accomplish?** The Biennial Plan is about identifying ways to bring partners together to maximize resources. Specifically, P & E is recommending that the 2010 Biennial Plan focus on: continued partnership opportunities; collaborate to learn how to change and better serve; share services; pool resources; enhance referrals among our agencies without duplication; and develop increased trust in our partnerships.
- **What are the needs in Otter Tail County?**
 - i) **Data** – Current data specifically shows concerns in the following areas:
 - a) **Economic environment** concerns in OTC include: food shelf usage; free and reduced lunch usage; WIC usage; increased average cost of child care; and percentage of children living in poverty.
 - b) **Social environment** concerns include: *number of children re-entering foster care system within 12 months of initial placement**; *number of children abused/neglected**; *number of children born to teen/unwed mothers**; and *number of juvenile out-of-home placements**.

- c) **Health related** concerns include: percentage of children obese/overweight; *number of children in placement that received a mental health screening**; *children born to mothers that received late or no prenatal care**; *increase in children with autism or other health impairments**

***Note: These indicators reflect small actual numbers of children/families directly affected.**

- ii) **Partner assessment** – A survey of our partners in late 2009 indicated the following:
- a) Top challenges facing our partners:
 - 1) Finances & budget cuts
 - 2) Short staffed – same services, less staff
 - 3) Lack of resources available for needed services
 - 4) Intake and reporting requirements are too demanding.
 - b) Partners identified the following challenges which are affecting the families they serve:
 - 1) Poverty and borderline poverty
 - 2) Unemployment and underemployment – loss of hours
 - 3) Family structure – divorce, single parents, extreme stress
 - c) Partners think that local agencies and services could do the following to address their needs and the needs of families:
 - 1) Do a better job of connecting clients with appropriate services, resources and finances
 - 2) Offer support and advocacy
 - 3) Locate help where the need is, and not where the agency office is located
 - 4) Subsidize basic needs (food, housing, clothing, etc.)

iii) **Community assessment:**

United Way is currently working on a community needs assessment. Mary shared information about the Minnesota Compass and the possibility of United Way conducting an independent community needs assessment using web-based, paper and phone surveys. P & E agreed to look at the Compass tool when it comes out on January 29th and determine if it is sufficient to meet the need to tell us what consumers are saying. Diane also indicated that the SHIP program conducts routine assessments and these will be updated again next year. The group will continue to monitor these data sources to determine if our goals and objectives align with what the reports tell us. At this point P & E is comfortable that they have seen enough data to validate consumer needs but will continue to look at what individual surveys tell us as they become available.

• **Identify strategies we can use to address our current needs.**

RECOMMENDATION: Planning and Evaluation proposes that the Collaborative ask each work group to conduct activities during the next two fiscal years which will improve:

- Food/nutrition - identify specific strategies and tasks to improve intake systems to ensure those who qualify for food support programs are referred to available resources as part of their common intake processes
- Support – identify specific strategies and activities to be used within their programs which will help families identify and access programs, services and resources
- Education - create and promote educational opportunities for families and/or children which are specific to their agency and/or work group goals and objectives
- Family structure – identify specific strategies to enhance, support and develop the family structure when education, services and/or community opportunities are offered

• **How do we address the needs with the resources we have available?**

RECOMMENDATION: Ask each group to review the Biennial Plan and identify strategies and activities they can conduct within the scope of their annual work plans to address the needs identified above.