

FOSTERING RESULTS

MEDIA EVENT: NATION'S LEADING JUDICIAL ORGANIZATIONS COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

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RUFUS KING: (In progress) – about this morning. Our judges and staff work closely with other community agencies. We have worked closely with Tommy Wells, who you will hear from shortly, but I'd especially like to note the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency, and the District of Columbia Department of Mental Health in our effort to serve children and families. We look forward to sharing our experiences with other courts and to learning from other courts and agencies around the country.

I'd also like to thank Shirley Dobbin, who is here from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She and Mary Mentaberry and Sophie Gatowski have been extraordinary workers in this field and in the various efforts that we have been involved in, and I'd particularly like to thank them for their invaluable assistance to us, both by informing us of new approaches and supporting our efforts to implement them. The success of that kind of partnership foretells only good things about the collaborations that are to come out of the effort that we're dedicating today.

I want to conclude by thanking all of the people who have worked diligently – far too many to go down the list, because you don't want to hear me, you want to hear from them – to work for better outcomes for abused children and their families, so that the children can return to what should be their birthright, a safe, happy, and healthy childhood. Together, by collaborating in our efforts, we can achieve outcomes that truly reflect the children's best interests.

Now I'd like to turn the podium over to Judge Satterfield, who has been Presiding Judge of the Family Court since August of 2001. Judge Satterfield. (Applause.)

LEE SATTERFIELD: Thank you and good morning and thank you, Chief Judge King, for those kind remarks. You know, we are really excited about the fact that they wanted to unveil this new curriculum here at the Superior Court, and we thank you for that. And thank you for inviting us to participate in that because I think I've looked at it and it's going to do great things for children in foster care.

We strongly believe in the principle of collaboration, and not just believe in it, but practice here as the Chief Judge has said, whether it's individual meetings between leadership of the child welfare agency in our family court, to initiatives on how to schedule cases better so that social workers can be out in the field doing the social work that helps them return children out of foster care to go home to relatives or to adoptive families. And so we practice it and we believe in it and that's why it's so important that you have now a new national curriculum on how to do it well.

I'd like to think, if I can, about collaboration in this way. If you think about a puzzle and when you go out and you get a puzzle, you get this box. And if you think about this particular box having a picture of a child on it, smiling, looks healthy, looks nurtured, looks like a child not in foster care because the child is safely at home, the child is in guardianship, the child is in an adoptive home. You think about that and you think, when we buy a puzzle, we look at that picture to see how we are going to create it. But if you go into that box, we start off – I know I do – creating the little edges on the puzzle, you know, the easy part - now, stay with me, because I've got a point, all right - (chuckles) – on the edges there and you create that little edge. And then when we get to that particular face, just imagine that the nose or the eyes is not there, or the smile, the face, the mouth is not there in the box, or they're there and they don't fit together.

So if you talk about the court and the child welfare agency being the mouth and the eyes and not being in the box together, you're not going to get that happy face as often you'd like. You're not going to get that happy face as quickly as you like. You're not going to get that happy child. So this is so important that – and I want to congratulate all of these people here who created this – I'm not going to run through their names because you're going to hear from them – for this big effort and creating this national curriculum.

It's my job to bring up Mr. Wells, Tommy Wells, who is a man of – I call him many hats, because I know him in the child welfare system, and in the job that he does now as Executive Director of the Consortium for Child Welfare. But I also know him in other ways. We work on collaboration here in the city on truancy together because he's a member of our school board. And so he knows a lot about collaboration. He does a wonderful job in collaborating with courts and other agencies to help reduce our truancy rate in this town. And so he's a man that I think is welcomed here at any time and he's going to take us through the rest of the agenda today with all of the participants here who have created this national curriculum. So, thank you for being here and I hope you can take this forth so people will know that institutions are trying to do their best to get better outcomes for children. Thank you. (Applause.)

TOMMY WELLS: Thank you, Judge Satterfield. Well, welcome everyone. This is an exciting day, a very interesting day, and it's a very important roll-out of a new curriculum of products of how to do things differently and better in the child welfare system, especially with our partners at the court. We're going to be hearing from a number of folks that have been involved in this effort today, but let me start by thanking The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The Pew Charitable Trusts decided to make a very substantial investment in improving the foster care system for the nation. That takes a lot of chutzpah to say, I think, that we're going to change or alter or improve the child welfare system for the country. And they really have set about doing it very thoughtfully. They've brought in some of the best thinkers, some of the leaders of our country on foster care that are working in different states, that are improving best practices. And then, part of what's

happening today and what we're rolling out on behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts and their partners is part of that effort and it's really an honor for all of us to be a part of that.

The list of who we'll be hearing from today, and I'll be introducing Judge Salyers a little bit later, but we'll also – so we'll hear from Judge Salyers, but we'll also hear from Howard Davidson, my friend, who is the Director of the ABA Center on Children and the Law; Doug Somerlot, who is the Vice President of the Justice Management Institute, Maureen Conner – she's with the Judicial Education Reference, Information and Technology Transfer Project – Bill Stanton, Division Director for the Arizona Supreme Court Department of Children Services Division; Richard Van Duizend, Principal Court Management Consultant with the National Center for State Courts; Shirley Dobbin, Assistant Director of Permanency Planning for Children at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, a very important group; Marvin Ventrell, the Executive Director of the National Association of Counsel for Children, a great group as well; Diane Nunn, Center for Families, Children & Courts, the California Administrative Office of Courts.

And so we will hear from each of them, but part of what we're talking about, what's being rolled out today, is a curriculum for the court to partner and team with the other professionals that are involved in the foster care system. And it's collaboration. Not only does it envision teaming around a case to really end the delays and address the delays that can happen in the legal court process so that a child doesn't stay in foster care longer for an unnatural reason, which would be just our administrative reasons rather than the family being ready and such, that this curriculum tries to address that to move everyone in the same direction. The curriculum is produced through a collaborative effort by some of the organizations that I've just listed, but includes Fostering Results, the Justice Management Institute. Everybody that you're going to be hearing from have helped put together this curriculum.

Now in relationship of why this is important, as many of you know, the DC Child Welfare System has been going through a transformation, I guess since 1988, since the ACLU with Children's Rights Inc. filed a lawsuit against the city, a class-action lawsuit that was decided in 1991, about not being able to provide the supports and also abide by the laws, local laws and federal laws that we're supposed to do in the child welfare system. A number of states are dealing with those same issues. In DC since '91, we've gone about reforming our child welfare system. We've created a front end to this system through our neighborhood-based collaboratives, we've rewritten the child welfare laws to restructure how we do child welfare in the district, but what we also did is we brought on a family court. The impact of having a family court and the role of the court is – it just cannot be overestimated. Not only do you get another partner in leadership on child welfare issues like we have with Judge Satterfield – and just about the truancy effort – I'm not sure if I would have had a partner from the family court before who would be able to provide a sustained effort, where we do now because we have a head of DC's family court. That's just a small example of how your judges from your family divisions can provide leadership on child welfare issues in your jurisdiction.

But also, I would say about those six years, we had about 3,000 children in foster care and the number of adoptions for children out of foster care was around 65 per year. Now, over the past three years since we've had a family court, we're averaging between 200 and 350 adoptions per year of children coming out of the foster care system. And we have one of the highest rates of minority adoptions by minority families in the nation. Clearly, the family court has had an extraordinary impact in reforming DC's child welfare system. So having a curriculum that works with the other professions that are all involved in the foster care system is a very powerful tool that I think will make a difference around the country.

Who we're going to hear next from is a friend, Nancy Salyers. Judge Salyers, she is the Co-Director of this project Fostering Results. Early in her career, she was the Co-Chair of Cook County's first domestic violence task force and that's a position she held until she was elected to the bench in 1992. And there, she volunteered to be assigned to domestic relations where she demonstrated a commitment to families that led to her assignment in juvenile court in 1994.

In '95, the largest unified court system in the world was restructured with Judge Salyers to create a child protection division. Judge Salyers was chosen as its first presiding judge, and for the following five years, her focus on the best interests of children led to reforms with dramatic results. For the first time in its 100-year history, the court closed more cases than it opened each month on a sustained basis. Previous backlogs were targeted with vigor and in five years, the number of children dependent on the court plummeted from 58,000 to 20,000.

I have a friend who was a public defender in Cook County, one of the largest public defender services in the country. He was in the juvenile division and he called me from Chicago and he said, you need to see what's happening in one of our courtrooms under Judge Salyers. So I said, great, because you know DC was going through its transformation. So I got a plane ticket, went up to Cook County, went up to Chicago, and got permission to sit in Judge Salyers' courtroom for a day – classroom would be a good way to describe it as well. And I was so inspired, that truly solidified the fact for me that we had to have a family court in DC, certainly a sustained focus in our courts on family matters. And so that is part of what inspired me to really work very hard to bring about the family court in DC, and that was Judge Salyers.

She's a leader for the country. She did great work at Cook County and now she's sharing that expertise with the rest of us. Thank you, and I give you Judge Salyers. (Applause.)

NANCY SALYERS: Thank you, Tommy. It just goes to prove you never know who you're going to run into. (Chuckles.) Who would have thought - all these years later?

I'm really thrilled to be here, and this project itself, the project about the curriculum and the project about the collaboration paper, which is the second part, or the

other half of what we're unveiling today, is as exciting as it can get for someone who began her career as a judge in 1992 and in new judges' school, which for those of us in Illinois takes two full weeks, didn't have one passing reference to the juvenile court, not one passing reference. Collaboration was not a part of the terminology. In fact, a year later, when I heard the term collaboration, it was only to distinguish itself from collusion, which is a Judge Fitzgerald anecdote from Louisville, Kentucky. Collaboration was identified with collusion, as though if people got together to talk about system reform and they were from different systems, judges would be accused of collusion with the enemy. Well, who is the enemy here? The enemy is delay for children. The enemy is lack of urgency and lack of focus on best interests. And so, I will gladly collude with anyone and I certainly am more than welcoming to the collaborative concept.

I kept telling myself when I walked into juvenile court that I am just a judge. I have no training in child development. I have no training in case-flow management. I have no training in all of the principles that I would need and all of the additional skills and training that I would need in order to make decisions that impact children's lives and so many children's lives in Cook County.

Luckily for me, Doug Somerlot was a part of the Family Justice Institute, the training branch on family matters in Cook County. He had a very good and well-developed case-flow management program, and I was able to take part in that. And I carried those principles and those ideas forward. And becoming a presiding judge, the first thing I did was call a meeting, bring together the experts from universities, from legal offices, from national offices, anywhere that I could get good ideas and a good foundation to do better work going forward. And I would begin those meetings saying, I am just the judge. My decisions are only as good as the information you all give me. They're only as good as my mental processes as I put this information together. So teach me well so that I can bring the rest of the judges along.

And I was taught very well. I got ideas from around the country and when you read our brief, the brief that Cecilia Fiermonte wrote from the American Bar Association, when you read the brief that talks about examples from around the country of good, collaborative models and tremendous results, you'll know why I was so excited to start those ideas and to start those improvements in Cook County.

It all starts with an idea. The collaboration paper that you now have in front of you tell you about lots of ideas from around the country. Once you have an idea, of course, my next trigger – or the next part of the way I think – is to set a goal. And the goal is to be able to have those ideas and those improvements and those best practices have a positive impact on the children in my jurisdiction. With that goal in mind, I had to come up with a plan and then once the plan was in fact, there needed to be an evaluation to see if I really was on the right track. So you have the ideas in the collaboration paper and you've got the plan as well as the evaluation tool in the curriculum that we're unveiling.

In going about putting the curriculum together, I wanted to make sure that we brought as many people to the table, as many organizations to the table, as we could to come out with a meaningful product. And I'm confident that this is the best product that we could deliver and the best product that's out there – this core curriculum. You'll hear from people who have used the curriculum, both tested it and have continued to use it, and you'll hear about their results.

Just about a year ago, Fostering Results released *A View From the Bench*, which was our paper based on a survey sent out to juvenile judges across the country. And one of the things that the judges candidly admitted was that their own overcrowded dockets contributed to the delay in permanency for children. This curriculum is a way to open up those overcrowded dockets. It's a tool that can be used to make sure that the time in court is meaningful and productive and can help move that child's life on to a positive result.

I think all of us here want to make sure, as each of us speaks to you about their particular role and their view on these two articles, both the paper and the curriculum, we want to make sure that you know that we're united in making sure that these examples are no longer the exception, but become the rule, and that judges who collaborate and have meaningful collaborations in their jurisdictions are not deviating, but they're setting the new standard, the standard for excellence.

I'd like now for you to turn your attention to Howard Davidson who is the director of the ABA Center on Children and the Law. (Applause.)

HOWARD DAVIDSON: Thank you for your leadership, Judge. I'm honored to make some comments today on the release by Fostering Results of documents that, thanks to the support as has been mentioned of The Pew Charitable Trusts, should be especially helpful to legal professionals that are advocating permanent placements for America's children who are languishing in foster care. And I'm grateful that the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law was asked to help develop these.

I want to say that our Center has itself, with the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, has developed materials ourselves to provide ongoing technical assistance to aid in enhancing cooperation and mutual support between courts and children's services agencies. For example, last year, we published a book called *How to Work with Your Court: a Guide for Child Welfare Agency Administrators*, written by Mark Hardin, who unfortunately couldn't be with us today, who is our Director of Child Welfare. We've also produced, with the two national judicial organizations that are represented here, a guide on *Building a Better Court: Measuring and Improving Court Performance*, and *Judicial Workload in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases* that is the basis for work we're now doing with courts across the country. And each year, in our annual court improvement progress reports, again supported by the Administration on Children,

Youth, and Families, we share information on new collaborations and other child-protective judicial reforms throughout America.

It's very appropriate that the release by Fostering Results of new materials is being announced at a place created to assure the type of child welfare collaboration that we hope these materials will facilitate nationwide. The family court for the District of Columbia, under Judge Satterfield's superb leadership and an outstanding group of judges and magistrate judges, has become a model for court, agency, and community partnerships to more rapidly achieve legal permanency for abused, neglected, and abandoned children. I want to specifically recognize my colleague, attorney Cecilia Fiermonte, of our National Child Welfare Legal and Judicial Resource Center staff for her work on identifying, as Nancy has mentioned, important models of court-agency collaboration across the country, from Utah, where there is already a high-level commission co-chaired by the state's Chief Justice and a former Governor, to implement the recommendations of the Pew Commission; to Ohio, where the state Supreme Court's Beyond the Numbers project is bringing agencies and courts together to actively identify problems and create solutions; from Virginia, just across the river, where a best-practices court initiative is focusing on improved collaboration within counties; to Minnesota and Washington state, where there are joint-court-agency leadership-directed child welfare reform initiatives.

For far too long, the critical role that courts play in helping ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of foster children has been under-acknowledged. Judges are indeed the gatekeepers of the foster care system, and the materials released today, if used appropriately and widely, should help speed the movement of children's cases through that system. I'm also thrilled that the curriculum requires judges and others, as part of the training that the curriculum focuses on, to hear from consumers of the system; that is, the young people who have experienced foster care. If we simply listen better to these kids, we will understand what we need to do.

Finally, I am pleased that the sponsors of the new curriculum on case management acknowledge that lawyers must play a key role in moving cases rapidly through the system. We must do more to recognize, promote, and reward quality legal representation for children, for parents, and for child welfare agencies. Families in trouble are entitled to the very best that our judicial system can offer, and the work being described today represents an important step in that direction. But we should not fool ourselves. It will also require a renewed commitment from the government to provide courts with the financial resources they need to better meet the needs of our most vulnerable children. Doug? (Applause.)

DOUGLAS SOMERLOT: Good morning. I'm Doug Somerlot. I work for the Justice Management Institute. My piece of this business this morning is to spend a few minutes talking to you about how the curriculum came into existence. As a little bit of background, I should tell you that I've been involved in dealing with caseload management and delay reduction issues in various kinds of courts since longer than I should probably confess to, but since the early 1970s. The second piece of background

that Nancy has already mentioned is that I had the extreme good fortune of working for Nancy Salyers at the circuit court of Cook County, while she was putting together that incredible record that you've already heard about. Tommy, your description of Nancy's room as a classroom was absolutely apt. Nancy is a living example of the idea that great leaders are great teachers.

So I've been doing caseload management delay reduction programs for a number of different courts around the country, different kinds of courts, felony cases, civil cases, problem-solving courts, and also been taking a look at building effective teams to manage courts and justice systems. And what occurred to me, or what was obvious from that, is that the courts that succeed in doing this are characterized by the existence of multi-disciplinary interagency teams that get together to collaborate and make things happen. Typically, these teams come into existence as an ad-hoc organization to deal with some specific problem. Because they succeed, they tend to become institutionalized and end up dealing with a lot of different kind of problems in a lot of different kind of areas.

Think about what they have to overcome - differences in training, differences in education, differences in experience and perspective, all of the turf issues that are endemic to any kind of a public or private institution, for that matter, competition for funds, the advocacy process, and just the basic fact that people turn over and you get new folks into the same jobs. What a collaborative process does is to translate all of those problems into strengths to allow people to express their ideas collectively in a way that increases the value and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire system.

JMI, the organization for which I have worked, had done some programs, some prior programs for, not surprisingly, the state of Virginia, the state of Utah, for the National Judicial College, on caseload management issues. Also, under a grant from the state justice institute, we'd also done a national symposium on achieving prompt and affordable justice in family law cases that brought together teams from all over the country. So many of the exercises and ideas that found their way into the curriculum that was ultimately produced had been themselves pilot tested in other forums, in other places.

We drafted a curriculum based upon what we'd done in Virginia and Utah and for the national symposium, tailoring that curriculum to meet the specific issues involved in dependency cases, because it's a different group of folks, a different number of players, a different just about everything you can describe when you stand inside a dependency courtroom than it is most others. The curriculum presents a mix of plenary presentations, plenary panel discussions involving people who have had some success and who represent all of the different entities who are on the teams, and finally, and most importantly, a series of facilitated small-group team activities, where people have the opportunity to analyze what their individual problems are in their court, develop and agree on the management information they need to know in order to deal with those problems – if you can't measure it, you can't manage it – to set priorities for what problems they'll address first and in what sequence, and lastly, to build before they leave

the workshop the beginnings of an improvement plan to deal with the problems and implement the issues that they've discovered.

So, after we put that draft curriculum together, it was reviewed by the advisory committee, many of whom appear in front of you today. Then, based upon the changes that they made, we did a pilot test of a two-and-a-half day version of the program in Flagstaff, Arizona last September. And Bill Stanton will be talking to you in a few minutes about the results of that effort. We also did a one-day version of the program for the National Center on Adoption Law and Policy in Columbus, Ohio in the fall of last year. After each time we piloted it, we fine-tuned. We went back and tried to make improvements, strengthen things that were weak, knit the program more tightly together. That, basically, is how it works. That's basically how we got to where we're going. Collaboration works. Multi-jurisdictional, interagency teams bring a collective expertise that improves, not only the system, but the individuals who are involved in it.

Coincidentally, and I'll close with this, I was at a meeting last week in California, where I was hearing presentations on a number of different topics – courthouse security, juvenile mental health courts, complex civil litigation. All three of those things, the judges and staff involved in putting them together had first recruited a multi-disciplinary interagency team to collaboratively develop the process. It works.

Now I'm going to turn this over to Maureen Conner who had the unenviable task of trying to put together an evaluation form to describe what it is that we did in the curriculum. Maureen, you're on. (Applause.)

MAUREEN CONNER: Thank you, Doug. Good morning. When you attend training programs or you sponsor training programs or you fund training programs, do you wonder if anything ever happens as a result of the program? Yes.

Well, we decided that we, being the advisory committee - Pew, Fostering Results, and all the people that you see here in front of you, said we want to know if our efforts result in a difference. Did we make something happen for the better? That became a goal of the training and education program. Not only did we want that to happen, but could we measure whether that happened or not? Thus, you will find in the curriculum before you, an evaluation plan that accompanies the program, and sets forth criteria to evaluate at two different levels.

The first level of evaluation that we were attempting to look at and to measure related to what happened in the program. As you know, if you don't make an impact in the room, you're not going to make an impact in the jurisdiction in which the principles, theories, and models are going to be implemented. So this curriculum represents that implementation in practice is critical.

And the first thing to do was to evaluate what took place in the program, and we decided to do that by acknowledging that we have a contract with the learners, the participants, the teams that come to this program. And that contract – most people don't

think of it this way – but, it is represented in the learning objectives that were established for the program, which states, you will leave this room with x, y, z knowledge and with the skills to implement what you have learned. That’s what the learning objectives are about. The second contract piece was the agenda, where we said this is what you’re going to cover in this amount time.

So, the first level of measuring the impact – and you’ll find it again in the curriculum – are daily evaluations. This first level evaluation process continues to reinforce the learning of that day. At each day, there is an evaluation, and then adjustments can be made to the curriculum, to the program, to get questions, answers, needs met that are particular to that jurisdiction while the individuals are still within the training room, continuing to reinforce the education and training.

The second part of the impact evaluation based on this program is interesting in that each – it is tied to the implementation plan that Doug referred to. Each team or jurisdiction that participates in the curriculum that you have before you must leave the room with the beginnings of an implementation plan, and I say beginnings because there are many more people in a collaborative model you must consult with when returning to your jurisdictions. So they must leave with an implementation plan that has markers and progress of success associated with it, and the idea then is to evaluate the impact of the implementation of that plan.

So the idea, of course, is to improve the quality of children’s lives, give them a solid foundation for a bright future, which hopefully we will be able to do through our program. We’re confident that we will. But additionally, this collaborative process is about building systems that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of what we do, thus reducing cost. So the in-class evaluation looks at are we successful with the learning and shoring up any challenges that may be there before they leave the room. Then the second piece of that is continuing to monitor the work of the collaborative effort through the impact evaluation process that takes place over a certain set of intervals. This impact evaluation process then can document how change occurred, when it occurred, and what the result is, and it lays the foundation for future cost-benefit analysis.

So the evaluation of the impact extends the learning, builds momentum, and keeps the momentum going. The other thing that keeps the momentum going is the distribution of information. This curriculum was developed so that momentum could continue to be increased. The JERITT Project, which I direct, is responsible for disseminating information on education and training for judges and court personnel around the country. We operate about eight databases. I left brochures in the back of the room that have our website on it. And that will become important for you to have because we are hosting all of the documents that you have before you. They will be on there, in fact on the JERITT website, as we speak.

So it makes this curriculum available for all of you, provides a roadmap for change, and you will be receiving updates related to this work as we move through the process. The JERITT project will also have other curriculum products and innovations

related to it. We're funded by the State Justice Institute and there are a variety of products related to their funding on this particular issue that's also on the website. So again, the evaluation of the impact, critically important to maintaining the momentum, and JERITT's responsibility in this is to continue to keep all of you informed about the innovations and the progress that are being made through the posting of the curriculum-supporting documents and through establishing e-communications where best practices can be exchanged among the jurisdictions who are participating in this initiative.

And now I would like to turn the program over to Bill Stanton. And Bill can talk with you about impact and about the project that they undertook in Arizona. He's also an advisory committee member, and he piloted the curriculum. He's the Division Director for the Arizona Supreme Court Dependent Children's Services Division. Bill? (Applause.)

WILLIAM STANTON: Good morning. Thank you for attending. Now, I could stay up here and talk for about an hour or two about this program because in Arizona, we were really fortunate to be able to pilot it. When we took on this project in September of 2004, we selected in Arizona three counties. Now, in Arizona, we only have 15 counties. Other states, I know, have hundreds, but we selected three. And the three counties we selected were Maricopa County, which is the Phoenix metropolitan area, Cochise County, which is a real small, rural county, and also Yavapai County, which is a mid-sized county. And we specifically selected those three counties to really test if this curriculum would work.

We wanted to see – and one of the things that we from the courts see a lot of the time is, in Maricopa County with Phoenix, sometimes it's almost like, if they do it, then the rest of the state ought to do it the same way. And it doesn't necessarily work that way. So we pulled together the three presiding judges from those particular counties and we asked them to participate in the project. I will tell you, this project would not have worked if it was not for the judges' leadership on this. They really took this thing on, and they decided that this was something that they needed to do within their counties.

Now, there were some things that were driving this. For example, in many, many states, you hear that the numbers of children in out-of-home care has decreased. Unfortunately, in Arizona, we've skyrocketed, and we continue to do that. So the courts were struggling with that already. The other thing that the courts were struggling with in Arizona is just processing the cases – not only are there several cases coming in, but the timeframes of trying to get these things done and to stick with the federal mandates. So the caseload management came along really at a perfect time.

Each county, again, was led by the presiding judge, and they selected their team that was going to participate in this program. Now, we got some input from Doug and myself to encourage the judges who to invite to this particular curriculum. But, in essence, what happened is they had to bring the key players and basically, the people who could make decisions. So, on the teams – and I'm not going to go into each one of them – but on the teams, you had folks like the behavioral health folks, because they provide

services. You need to have them at the table. You had the attorneys, not only for the parents, but also for the child. They make decisions. They had to be at the table.

And what we did was, we – each county selected their teams – and the other thing that we did, which was a strength, and perhaps a weakness, is we took them out of their community – the teams – and we made them go to Flagstaff. Now, it wasn't like that was a death sentence, because Flagstaff is a beautiful area, but what it basically did was it made them get away from their work every single day, and we had to pull them out and make them work together and gel and so on. The one thing that we found when we did this is that a lot of these folks who were collaborating on these teams really had never spent any time talking to each other. The judge has a certain image, he does what he has to do, but he never really sat down and spoke with the caseworker or the behavioral health folks, and so on folks.

And one of the things that I think we learned from this process is that people are brutally honest with each other, and that really needed to happen. There were things that the judges were doing that the other folks in the room had issues with, and they were able to express that. There were things that the other folks were doing that the judge had issues with, and it really worked together.

When we finished with the session, each of the counties basically pulled together a plan that they were going to move forward with, and some of the things – and there have been many successes across the state and I'm just going to kind of touch on a couple of them. Unfortunately, I only have five minutes, so I'll make this quick. Yavapai County, for example, one of the issues that they identified when they were up there is on the dual-adjudicated cases – kids who are in probation and also that are on child abuse cases. What was happening is you would have a hearing one day for the delinquency, and then you would have another hearing the next day on the dependency. And one of the things that they identified – and the attorneys and everyone basically came together and said, you know, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Maybe we can condense these together. And that's something that they ended up doing.

One of the other things that they ended up doing was making agreements with the service providers that when these cases came before the court and the services needed to be provided, the service provider would come to court and set it up right then and there. So, for example, in one of the small rural communities, the service provider shows up and they actually make appointments right then and there for when the parent is going to go for treatment, and so on. So those are some of the things that came out of it.

A permanent planning mediation process was set up. In the real small – Cochise County, for example, unfortunately they don't have – maybe I shouldn't say unfortunately – fortunately, they don't have a lot of dependency cases. So you have attorneys who are working on these cases who really didn't have a whole lot of knowledge on the dependency system. And what they did in that county is they set up a specific training specifically on dependency for those particular attorneys.

So there are many, many things that came out of this particular process. I will tell you that all three counties, all of their teams are currently still meeting. They meet on a monthly basis. They sit down and they go through: what are the issues, what are the problems, and they actually do some problem-solving each month. They've all developed a plan and, on a statewide basis in Arizona, we're now in the process of developing a plan to rollout caseload management to all fifteen counties. What's interesting about when you do this process is when you have a success with the three counties that we've had, they talk to the other counties, and so on. Now, you have other people coming to us saying, "We want this thing. We want to have this implemented in our county." And it's kind of this snowball that's kind of grown.

Arizona basically has embraced the whole caseload management. The curriculum you have in front of you, we've embraced it. It's something that we will be using in the future. Our vision within our state is that every county takes this on, and that as a result of it, the process, the dependency cases move through the system quicker, the children are placed in safe, permanent homes, and that that in essence is what we're all here for. At this time, I'd like to turn this over to Dick Van Duizend. Thank you.

RICHARD VAN DUIZEND: Good morning everyone. I'm Dick Van Duizend from the National Center for State Courts. NCSC is a training, technical assistance and information organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice in the courts in the U.S. and around the world, and we're very pleased to be able to contribute to this very important effort to apply the basic principles of case management to the area of child protection cases. It was a pleasure to work with Doug and Nancy, and I commend them for the excellent product that they've developed and, as you've heard, has had tremendous results.

Why is collaboration important? It's because neither the courts, nor child welfare agencies, nor the bar, nor parents, nor anyone else you can think of that's affected and involved in child protection, can do it alone. On a host of social, drug-related, and mental health problems, we have found that collaboration between courts and the agencies and individuals who are involved in dealing with the problem is absolutely essential to addressing it. This is true as well in child welfare. Now, the court and the child welfare agencies have different roles and different functions, but they share the overriding interest in making sure that children have, as was said earlier, safe, permanent homes, and that the process operates in as timely a manner and as effectively as possible.

To that end, beyond this particular project, the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators, who are the chief – the judge of the highest court in each state and the chief executive officer of the courts of each state – together with the National Center for State Courts and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, are sponsoring a national leadership summit on the protection of children this fall in Minneapolis. The title of the summit is *Changing Lives by Changing Systems*. Teams from each state, led by the chief justice or the chief's designee, will be coming together for two-and-a-half days to learn, but most importantly, to collaborate. The teams will include not only the chief, but the state court administrator, a trial judge,

the child welfare director, and the head of the court improvement program for that state. Chief Judge King is going to be leading the delegation from the District of Columbia.

What they're going to be working on is a state action plan for improving the processing of child protection cases in that state. And these plans will be rolled together and summarized in a national action plan, which will be issued in November of this year. This effort is only possible because of the very generous support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, and additional support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Fostering Results, and the State Justice Institute. The Pew Commission's recommendations on improving foster care will be a central focus.

To move the program along now, I'd like to bring up to the podium my colleague from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Shirley Dobbin. (Applause.)

SHIRLEY DOBBIN: Good morning everybody. On behalf of Mary Mentaberry, who is the Executive Director of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and who was unable to join us this morning, I would just like to take a moment to congratulate The Pew Charitable Trusts, Fostering Results, and all of the partners sitting up here on the wonderful curriculum that's been produced. It was an incredible amount of time and effort that went in to producing this product, and it is something that we're very proud of in terms of the role that we played, and we think it's going to provide a critical tool to judges, courts, communities, and jurisdictions across this country as they engage in reform efforts.

The NCJFCJ has a number of initiatives nationally, locally, and at the state level that really are about improving outcomes for children and families that come before the juvenile and family court. One of our key initiatives with respect to child welfare is our Victims Act Model Courts Project, funded by the OJJDP, that works with 28 jurisdictions in 24 states across the country, ranging from the three largest, Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles, through a whole series of mid-sized jurisdictions to tribal jurisdictions, and of course, the DC Superior Court, under the amazing leadership of Chief Judge King and Judge Satterfield, who are really engaged in bringing about system reforms and improving outcomes for the children who are abused and neglected in this country.

Foundational to that project is the concept of multi-system, multi-agency collaboration. Building creative collaborations within our communities to engage in creative problem-solving, planning, implementation, and evaluation of reform efforts. And the most successful jurisdictions in this country, in terms of facilitating reforms and improving outcomes for children are those with very strong, collaborative networks in their jurisdictions, working around these key issues. A second core principle is system accountability and court accountability for the outcomes that it achieves. The most important people in the process are the children, and it's the best outcomes and the best interests of those children that we have to set as the standard, and we have to hold the system accountable for the achievements in reference to those children.

Both of these core principles, which are foundational to everything that we do are also the foundation to the national curriculum. It stresses, as you've heard, multi-partner, multi-system collaboration. It stresses strong court oversight and court leadership. It stresses a child focused, child outcome-driven system. And it stresses the need to include the voices of children and families in that process.

As I said, we are very proud of our involvement in this initiative. We are going to be making it available to the jurisdictions that we work with across the country in helping to support their reform efforts. The national council provides a wide range of resources, training, technical assistance, materials and tools, many developed in partnership with the people that you see at the front here and many of you around the room, and this is one of those critical pieces that we will be adding to those series of tools.

So again, congratulations to everyone up here. I think this is critical and I think this is part of what we see as the national movement and the increasing national attention on the need to improve outcomes for the nation's most vulnerable children and their families. Thank you. And I'd like to invite up now Marvin Ventrell, Executive Director from the National Association of Counsel for Children. (Applause.)

MARVIN VENTRELL: Thank you. Good morning. As she said, my name is Marvin Ventrell. I'm the director of the NACC, the National Association of Counsel for Children, which name should suggest to you that we are a national membership association of attorneys. Our 2,000 members across the country are the attorneys who represent children, who represent parents, and who represent state agencies in juvenile and family court proceedings. So we're uniquely interested in this project.

We're fortunate and grateful to be a part of the project. And the reason we care about this is because the NACC, for many years now – three decades – has been working to provide training and technical assistance to lawyers who do this work. And the reason we do that is because we believe that good outcomes are a result of good advocacy, that information is received by the court through counsel, that judges' decisions are only as good as the information upon which those decisions are based, and it is the lawyers who have the ability to bring these important facts to the court. So, for this project and this leadership to recognize that lawyers are not obstructionists in the process, but rather are part of the solution, that we help and are integral in producing good outcomes, is both, I think, correct, and certainly heartwarming to us, and we're very glad to be at the table in this important effort, so thank you very much. (Applause.)

DIANE NUNN: I'm Diane Nunn. I'm the Director of the Center for Families, Children and the Courts. It's a division of the California Administrative Office of the Courts. And I wanted to tell you just briefly about the Center because I think it ties in with the theme today of collaboration. The Center was created about five years ago and it is, as I said, a division within the Administrative Office of the Courts. We report to the chief justice and the judicial council. We take a multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary approach. We have attorneys, social workers, mental health professionals, researchers, statisticians, and others working together to try and problem-solve issues pertaining to

children and families within the court system. The fact that this Center was established shows, in my opinion, the commitment by our Chief Justice, Ronald George, and our Administrative Director of the courts, William Vickery, to these very, very important issues. Bill Vickery was a member of the Pew Commission and, as such, took a very active role and still takes an active role in forwarding their recommendations and improving the system.

Other examples of collaboration that we have been conducting – our annual Beyond the Bench conference. We bring together teams from all 58 counties; judges, social workers, child welfare directors, probation officers, all together on an annual basis to talk about how we can collaborate, both locally and a statewide basis, on improving the system. We always try and bring in the users of the system: former foster youth, parents who have been successful in navigating the system, foster parents, casars, and others, so that we can really put a face to what's taking place so that we know that what we're talking about is not just a system, but individuals, individual children, individual families. We sent a team to Cincinnati last October to help work on and understand the curriculum and, as a result of that, we're going to be in California rolling it out on a voluntary basis so that we can push it forward and really see it happen.

I want to thank Judge Salyers and all the other members of the team. It's been a great and exciting project and together, I know we're going to make change, very positive change. Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. WELLS: Thank you, Ms. Nunn. We have just heard from an extraordinary lineup from across the country of experts that have really provided leadership to come together to reform the foster care system, especially in how our legal services and court system works. The other thing we've done is – I can't believe with this lineup, with the complexity and depth of each issue, of each topic we've had to talk about, we've actually gotten exactly to the time on the agenda at 11:05. You guys are amazing. That was quite disciplined. Clearly, on the social services side, we're not quite so disciplined. You guys are terrific.

This is a time when you can ask questions. If anybody has any questions for any of our presenters about the curriculum, about the process, about collaboration, about why this works, and what we expect to accomplish, and I will help see that the question gets to the right person. Do we have any questions? Yes, Ms. Labbe?

THEOLA LABBE, WASHINGTON POST: Is DC going to – (inaudible) – to using them and what is going to be the – (inaudible).

MR. WELLS: The question is, is DC going to adopt this and what's the plan to get this adopted in other jurisdictions across the country? Let me start with Judge King.

MR. KING: I haven't actually had the conversation with Judge Satterfield about this, but my answer would be yes. I'm sure there's not going to be an effort of this magnitude and this quality that we're not going to get in. I can promise you that.

MR. WELLS: Thank you, judge. Judge Salyers?

MS. SALYERS: As far as how we're going to get this rolled out across the country, we'll be distributing the curriculum at critical conferences all across the summer. I mean, school is out, but not for judges and not for system administrators and not for everyone else that is involved in foster care. And so, we'll be delivering the curriculum. We have it available on the website. We already have a commitment from the state of Ohio that they'll be implementing this curriculum. We have it from the state of California.

And, as far as the word voluntary – the word voluntary applies when the court system says, “We will be using this and we'll be asking for jurisdictions to volunteer to be the initial participants”, just the way this rolled out in Arizona where three jurisdictions were selected, but then, because there were such remarkable results, others now – all the rest of the state - is wanting to come on board. So we're working in individual states, we're working with national organizations, and we really want to make sure everybody has this accessible. That's why we're releasing it in connection with the collaboration paper. Because when people see results, they're going to want to know how to achieve those same good results.

MR. WELLS: Okay, anyone else want to respond? Okay, any other questions? Yes, sir.

Q: Speaking of results, how will results of the rollout in various locations be tracked and will that information be shared with other parties? And with whom will that information be shared?

MR. WELLS: Who would like to answer that?

MS. CONNER: Thank you. Part of what the JERITT project's commitment is to this program is to continue to disseminate information about the states, organizations, jurisdictions that will roll this out, become involved in the program and then collect the information related to the evaluation and their experiences with it, and we'll post it on the website, the section on the JERITT project's website related to this particular project, so that we can do with this particular subject matter what we do with other subject matters related to education and training in the judiciary is that we can decrease our learning curve by sharing our mutual experiences across the country. So we have spoken with Nancy. We're going to be establishing e-communications to alert you to when the next installment becomes available so you don't have to constantly go to the website and look for it. But again, it will be posted on the JERITT project website. We'll be hyperlinking to a whole variety of other websites so that information can become readily available. And if all else fails, call us.

MR. WELLS: Yes, here?

Q: I'm going to try to cheat and slip in two questions. First, is this an indefinite project or you know, ongoing? And then the other question is, for outcomes, in terms of measuring outcomes, how would you describe an outcome or what kind of thing needs to be measured to determine a good outcome? For a court particularly, I mean obviously you want to place the child in a safe home, that kind of thing. But what would we measure in a court process?

MR. WELLS: I think that – I'll get answers to that – but I think that what your question is, what's the duration of the project of getting the curriculum adopted by courts around the country and also how do we measure outcomes. It's clear that the playing field now has been defined by the Adoption Safe Families Act. And so with the Adoption Safe Families Act compliance, along with the federal reviews that are going on in each jurisdiction regarding compliance with their performance measures and then each community or city or state having to come up with a performance improvement plan, it's clear that those measures will be. And I think most states failed the reviews, if you want

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COMMISSIONER JOAN OHL: Were not in compliance.

MR. WELLS: Were not in compliance. Right, I'm not supposed to say failed. But I think on a state level, they feel like they've failed, but not in compliance. And so I think that because of the court's relationship to compliance with the Adoption Safe Families Act and such and bringing them altogether that stats are now looking at how do we do this, how do we improve the timelines for children in care, or shortening the time. But with either of those questions, do I have any takers from the audience here?

MR. SOMERLOT: Two short answers – the first one is, and everybody loves this answer, it depends. Because the curriculum is designed for each individual court team to go away with a plan that is focused on what their problems are, measuring outcomes depends on what the problems are that they identify. That's one of the reasons why we build into the curriculum a vehicle to allow them to self-develop a long-term impact evaluation form. I think more generally, more systemically, I suppose that one of the things we were trying to get at when we built this was to take out the time, which is in the process, which doesn't need to be there.

It's pretty difficult for me to quantify that but one of the exercises we go through is to have people take a look at the process, walk the tracks, if you will, and figure out where within the process things take too long, and then to address those issues. So we're not trying to speed the process up to the point where kids and parents don't have the opportunity to have a fair and just disposition, but we're trying to get rid of those places where it's the system that gets in the way.

MR. WELLS: Howard?

MR. DAVIDSON: One example of how we can practically use the curriculum and the curriculum process is in looking at certain roadblocks in the permanency process

that are court-related. For example, one of the things that was found in the Child and Family Service Reviews was that there were delays clearly attributable to the court process in having permanency hearings and then moving, when appropriate, towards termination of parental rights, so that as states in their program improvement plans – every state has to have something called a program improvement plan – work on implementation of those reforms, they need to involve the judiciary, and the judiciary can use this curriculum as a tool to address some of those issues that are in the program improvement plans. So my hope is that the CFSR process, which is ongoing again, and the program improvement plans, will tie in to the use of the curriculum as a process to make changes in the courts.

MR. WELLS: Thank you, Howard. Yes?

MR. STANTON: I would just add on, one of the things we found in Arizona was that going into the project, we went into it with the belief that there – what we wanted to resolve was court delays, and that was happening across the whole, entire state. What we found when we finished the curriculum is that yes, there were court delays, but in each county, it was for a different reason. And that was one of the neat things about the curriculum is it really made the team start looking at their own county, their own court, and why are there court delays and then how do you address those particular delays.

MR. WELLS: Any more questions? Yes, sir.

TOM HAY, NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER FOR CHILD WELFARE DATA AND TECHNOLOGY: I'm Tom Hay, with the National Research Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology, and we're funded by the Children's Bureau to work with states and courts and tribes on information technology and data. And I know in some of your materials, you have some discussion of some of the data issues. I think these relate to a number of the areas that you're talking about in terms of collaboration with the child welfare agency and monitoring outcomes and tracking caseload and all of that. Just wanted to put in a plug for our data conference this summer here in Washington, D.C., in July. Judge Salyers is going to be one of our speakers there and we've worked with the Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues at ABA to have a court-track to look at some of these data issues as they relate to child welfare in the process and also measuring the outcomes. I guess my question is how do we find out more about what's going on innovative in different states to improve data flow between the child welfare agencies and the courts, and what kind of funding is out there for states and courts to work on that process to make the data flow not be part of the blockade or bottleneck in the system?

MR. WELLS: I think you're part of that answer of how information is shared around data flow and such, but would anyone else like to help address that, of how - Yes?

MS. DOBBIN: Just sort of building on what you said, we are, with the National Council, in collaboration with the ABA and the National Center for State Courts, with

funding from the Children's Bureau, looking at how to take the national court performance measures that were developed by that same group, and roll those out around the country. Those national performance measures – and it was the publication that Howard held up – have been endorsed by the Pew Commission. They incorporate the Adoption and Safe Families Act, they incorporate the Child and Family Service Reviews and the program improvement plans that Tommy made reference to, and they set a framework upon which all of these issues that are identified in the curriculum in terms of walking through caseload management can be addressed.

Data is a huge issue across this country for courts and good data management. And through various collaborative efforts, what we're trying to do is work with jurisdictions across the country to identify data stumbling blocks as well as to help them build capacity and then use that to start to roll out that information through the various resource centers and through other jurisdictions and all the dissemination networks that each of the national organizations has to sort of share that innovation and to share some of those strategies to overcome those barriers.

Many courts in this country don't have the capacity to track good data outcomes, and there is a great effort across the country to try and provide that kind of support so that we can start to build in that accountability piece and really start to track outcomes. And I think through the national resource centers as well as through the various projects with the national partners around court performance, we'll start to see that come out over the next couple of years, and start to disseminate that information from what we're learning on the ground, working with the courts and the jurisdictions in a collaborative environment to identify some of these issues and start to figure out a way to come up with strategies to identify some of those barrier issues so that that in itself is not a barrier to performance.

MR. WELLS: Thank you.

MR. DAVIDSON: If I could just supplement that, several years ago, Senator Mike DeWine from Ohio and others created a piece of legislation called the Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act, or SANCA. There's only been one appropriation under that act, and the focus of SANCA, as we call it – the Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act – is on helping courts build the data technology that they need to better track cases and case outcomes. And there is a project now again where we're working with the national council and National Center for State Courts with the support of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, thanks to that SANCA money, to work with some pilot sites around the country that are doing some very exciting things about being better able to track their cases.

But, as I said in my remarks, that money is going to run out. There have been no further appropriations under SANCA, although the law stands on the books. And this goes to show you again, to point out that if we are serious about strengthening the role of the courts, we need to give the courts the resources to be able to do what needs to be

done. This federal SANCA law was the first step, but again, unfortunately, it isn't getting the funding that it needs from the Congress.

MR. WELLS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOAN OHL: May I respond to that?

MR. WELLS: Of course you can.

MS. OHL: Hi, I'm Joan Ohl. I'm the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, United States Department of Health and Human Services, and I wasn't sure I was going to be able to make it, but I did. I wanted to come here today because what it is – some years ago, when The Pew Trusts was thinking about doing the work in child welfare, and particularly when they came to talk with Health and Human Services and ACF, they particularly were focusing on the financing. And we said, in addition to financing, look at the whole court process and how it is that courts and the child welfare system work together.

So over the period of time, I have followed with great interest and have had meetings with Judge Salyers and others because we are looking to make systemic reform in child welfare across this country. And everybody here, across the front, is working at the same. It does my heart good when we talk about Child and Family Service Reviews, when we talk about the court improvement programs, and other things that HHS through ACF is involved in and the resources centers that we fund.

We have the greatest opportunity now to make the kinds of fundamental change that we want to make. We have the reviews that have been underway that we have now finished and we're getting ready to gear up for round two. We do not say failed. We say not in compliance with. But I think that how it is that the collaboration happens, looking at this curriculum, looking at how it is that these systems change and change together in order to improve the lives of children and families, this is the gold moment to do this. And I was concerned because, as we went across the country on the Child and Family Service Reviews, we had unevenness, in terms of the participation of the courts, and getting that even stronger has been one of the items on my agenda. So I have spent time in the bench in Miami, Florida. I was in El Paso County, Colorado just last week. And I am headed next week to be with Judge Gray in New Orleans.

It is important that we talk about how the systems work together, how it is – there are always problems on each side – how it is that together we identify them and work them through. So I think this curriculum, the momentum that we have, the meetings that have been referenced are all part of this, and we should see systemic change across the country. Thank you.

MR. WELLS: Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Well, as we wrap up, I want to leave you with two thoughts. One is that we started with the idea of the court as gatekeeper. And when you think about that, one of the things that is, I think, very exciting, energizing, but also a tremendous amount of responsibility, is that how we as a country or as a society view responsibility and whose responsibility it is for the safety, health, and welfare of children is an evolving thing. If you think about the turn of the last century, where the concerns were about children working and things like that and were children property or were they not property, one of the discussions was, did the government have a right to intervene with the family or was the family a place where the government could not go? And we've evolved, and then we had the problems of what we decided urbanism was the problem and we put children on orphan trains. And then we developed the idea eventually of dependency and dependent children and we had institutions. We decided those were warehouses. Then we moved to family-based care and foster families were safe harbors. Now foster families are partners and they get to know the birth families.

We're in a very evolving system and one of the things that we must always resist is the temptation that there's going to be a model and that model is going to be it and then we're done. We've done our work as a society and that's how we do it and from now on that's how we're going to do it. We know it's going to continue to evolve and the only way that we can truly embrace that responsibly is to continue to provide leadership for what role we have in the journey of a child through their life to a productive adulthood, and that's clearly what you all have done is that you've taken responsibility for your role, relationship, and reached out to the other partners and said this is how it can be done and that's an act of leadership. And a special thanks again to the Pew Charitable Trust to help make that happen.

The last thought I want to leave you with is that for anybody here that's the first time to this building, I really want you to go down to the family court level. And as you notice, anywhere how these hallways are, but when you go down to the family court level and just get a feel down there of what they've done in this building to make the building far more less of an adversarial relationship because it's – as you know, it 's terribly scary for children, families, foster families, to come into a courthouse and to go into this process and to be in front of a judge. And so, if you get a chance, walk through downstairs and you'll see the life of the DC court system, and how we're trying to address that very scary moment and event. And thank you for everyone being involved in this today and thanks for being here.

(END)