



The Honorable Charles F. Pratt, Judge  
Allen County Superior Court, Family Relations Division  
Allen County Court House, Room 209  
715 South Calhoun Street  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

February 16, 2015

Dear Judge Pratt,

I appreciate the privilege of speaking with you and several Indiana colleagues recently about the progress of Indiana House Bill 1196 addressing collaborative multi-system action on behalf of the challenging population of dual status youth. The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice (RFK NRC) strongly endorses this legislation and sees great future promise for its impact on the youth in Indiana – both in human and fiscal terms. Additionally, given our long history of focus on improving policy, practice and outcomes through our partnerships with state and local jurisdictions for dual status youth, we believe that this proposed seminal legislation will serve as an outstanding framework for multiple other states to positively impact dual status youth outcomes.

As you know, the Dual Status Youth Technical Assistance national initiative, jointly sponsored for a second round of site based work by the MacArthur Foundation and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recently launched our partnership with Marion County, Indiana. The county was one of four competitively selected participant jurisdictions. In this work, we will use a framework to implement practice reforms and enhancements that we developed in 2003 and have continued to refine based on valuable lessons learned in the field. The framework is captured in our publications *Guidebook for Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare System Coordination and Integration: A Framework for Improved Outcomes, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* and the *Dual Status Youth – Technical Assistance Workbook* (Tuell, Wiig and Heldman, 2013). The language of Indiana House Bill 1196 effectively reflects principles of cross-system practice; early opportunities for screening and assessment; effective alternative responses to formal involvement in the juvenile justice system; and targeted treatment interventions with a balance for offender accountability that are articulated in these publication resources and that we maintain are crucial to successful reforms for this population of youth and their communities.

On behalf of the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, I applaud you, your colleagues and the House Bill 1196 legislative sponsors for their vision, leadership and expert direction in offering this opportunity to improve outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged and challenging population of youth that come to the attention of Indiana's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to further support this remarkable legislative effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John A. Tuell".

John A. Tuell, Executive Director  
Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice  
at the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps