

Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program

School Administrators For Effective Public Operations

Leading to Improved Children and Youth Services

Kokomo – Howard County

“A COMMUNITY OF SERVICES AND RESOURCES”

Beginning in January of 1988, the leaders of the agencies who provide services to juveniles in Howard County sat down to talk. Each agreed that the issues of “at-risk” youths, juvenile delinquency, and habitual offenders were community problems, and these problems could only be effectively addressed by a community based cooperative effort. This cooperative effort would only be effective if it were to include schools, prosecutor’s office, probation, police, juvenile courts, office of family and children, and parole. To insure the success, the broader base of all agencies providing juvenile services would need to be included in the concept.

During a self-assessment phase, it was identified that the lack of timely information was one of the causes of ineffective action. During the study of the juvenile population, it was discovered that most students in trouble, either by academic or disciplinary standards at school, were receiving attention from another non-school agency. It was noted that the lack of a strategy and forum to address issues was missing from the system. It was also realized that the lack of resources in one area can be offset by other resources found in another area or agency. It also came to light that effective suppression of certain habitual offenders could impact the total amount of juvenile delinquency because these habitual offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of juvenile crime.

The lack of timely information was easily recognized as a problem. However, the perception that this information could not be legally shared was an issue. After research in the Indiana Juvenile Code and assistance from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), United States Department of Justice, no legal barriers were found. To further the process, the Howard Circuit Court Judge issued a blanket order authorizing the exchange of information. With the legal issues resolved, the chief executive officer of each agency met, resolved issues, and signed a Memorandum of Commitment of interagency cooperation.