



Keys for Networking, Inc.

Kansas Parent Information and Support Network • www.keys.org org

The State Organization of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Testimony to the Senate Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee

By Dr. Jane Adams, Executive Director, Keys for Networking

With Taylor Miller, (parent, Topeka) and Cherrie Reynolds (parent, Atchison)

Senator Smith and Members of the Senate Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Jane Adams, Ph.D., and the director of Keys for Networking, Inc. Keys is the statewide parent information center, supported in part with funds from KDADS to assist families access services for children who have severe emotional, behavioral problems.

I support SB 367.

I do so based on the last seven years working with the Kansas Department of Corrections/Juvenile Services. From 2009 to 2012, with a grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), Keys staff assisted parents secure community based services for youth returning from out of home placements. This included securing medical cards quickly so families could pay for court ordered reintegration services. Since 2013, with funding from Kansas Kids@GEAR UP, Wichita State University, Keys has assisted the 258 community supervision officers, statewide, assure KDOC/JS involved youth success in high school.

I will talk briefly about the successes of these two projects to illustrate two community-based strategies that keep youth at home in the community. With the CMS project, KDOC/JS referred 3000 parents to us on release of the child from a state facility. Keys staff secured medical cards for the child (often times for other children in the family as well), taught parents how to use the card to pay for primary health, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment. Keys also taught parents how to use services, implement home safety procedures, and reconnect to their children with research effective management techniques. Outcomes: For youth whose parents were served by the Keys project, the majority remained home with their families. This is a cost savings of \$200+ a day per youth. The American Institutes for Research conducted the evaluation.

For the iGRAD project with GEAR UP@WSU, Keys assists over 404 high schools, GED programs, technical schools manage the credits of highly mobile students, transfer credits between schools, recover lost credits when youth move mid semester, and plan activities to make up credits. Keys staff help students access special programs to maintain academic progress to graduate on time, including using the SB 23, 21-credit requirement. In 2014, Keys served 1389, KDOC/JS involved youth. And raised the graduation rate for KDOC/JS involved youth to 80%.

I am telling you about these two programs to illustrate two different kinds of assistance in the community and how interventions impact child outcomes, and keep the child in the community, and maintain the family.

With me today, are two mothers, Taylor Miller (Topeka) and Cherrie Reynolds (Atchison). Their stories are very different. Taylor is a twenty-four year old mother and sister of five boys: Rashaad, age 6, Parker, age 16, the twins, Blake and Brian, age 19 and Chris, age 20. These boys became involved in the juvenile justice system when they were very young. The boys were separated from each other and from their family. None of these boys have graduated from high school.

Cherrie's story is different. Cherie's son Jacob remained in the community, received high quality, connected, coordinated mental health and education services. Jacob just graduated from Atchison high school.

Thank you for allowing the three of us to testify today.