

Institute for Public Health and Justice

Institute Spotlight

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Dane Bolin

Dane Bolin, director of the Calcasieu Parish Office of Juvenile Services, has been active in the juvenile justice system for more than 18 years and has led the effort to make juvenile justice reform a hallmark of Calcasieu Parish. Dane is also the project director of the Models for Change initiative in Calcasieu Parish and the Louisiana Juvenile Detention Association. Bolin was awarded three grants since 2007. Grant funds were used to strengthen Calcasieu Parish's Children and Youth Planning Board (CYPB) and encourage the use of evidence-based practices. Bolin uses his role as chairman of the CYPB to educate community stakeholders and child-serving agencies throughout Calcasieu Parish on the importance of using evidence-based practices, reducing racial disparity and community engagement.

Bolin has also focused his leadership beyond Calcasieu Parish with his work on the development of detention standards for the state of Louisiana. He was a key player in the passage of legislation (House Bill 1477) outlining the development of "best practice standards" for juvenile detention facilities and licensing. He worked with key stakeholders and members of the Louisiana Juvenile Detention Association (LJDA) to come to a set of standards that worked for everyone involved. The standards have been submitted to the Louisiana Department of Children and Families to develop rules governing the licensing of juvenile detention facilities consistent with the standards recommended by LJDA.

Bolin was recently honored by the MacArthur Foundation-supported Models for Change initiative as a Champion for Change in juvenile justice reform. Louisiana Models for Change is pleased and privileged to have Bolin as a local leader in juvenile justice reform.

Denna McGrew

Denna McGrew, director of operations for the Children's Coalition of Northeast Louisiana, was first introduced to Louisiana Models for Change in 2008, when the MfC Lead Entity began to explore the 4th Judicial District Court as a possible Models for Change grantee. Throughout grant development, Denna and the Children's Coalition of Northeast Louisiana proved to be invaluable in bringing together the local juvenile justice community including the prosecutors, judges and service providers. As a result, Denna was designated the co-project director focusing on developing a strategic plan for implementing evidence-based practices in her community and selecting and implementing a parenting program through the Children's Coalition. In addition, Denna became a member of the Mental Health and Juvenile Justice

Action Network, which subsequently led to a strategic innovation grant being awarded to the Children's Coalition to implement the Parent Empowerment Program at an early entry point for status offenders and their families coming in contact with the local juvenile justice system.

Denna has made a huge difference in an incredibly short period of time. She has led the efforts for the Children and Youth Planning Board to analyze a substantial body of local data, much of which she helped institute processes necessary for collecting. With these data, she coordinated efforts with the Models for Change National Resource Bank to facilitate strategic planning discussions. Denna then took those discussions and led the way to writing the board's strategic plan which will guide and sustain the efforts initiated by Models for Change long after the grant ends.

As if this wasn't enough, during this same time, Denna took on a local, state and national leadership role in working with the REACH Institute, the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, and the Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network to develop, pilot and implement the Parent Empowerment Program-Juvenile Justice. This powerful parent advocacy tool is now being used in the 4th JDC to reach both parents and juvenile justice professionals and teach them specific skills to advocate for juvenile justice youth with mental health problems. Future plans for PEP-JJ, include expansion into the state's new coordinated systems of care. Denna has also led her region and is actively working in the state with the implementation of Triple P. Triple P, now in full implementation in the 4th JDC, is a culturally sensitive evidence-based program which offers parents and caregivers support strategies designed to prevent and intervene in social, emotional, behavioral and developmental problems in children and adolescents by enhancing their parents' knowledge, skills and confidence.

Most importantly, through the Children's Coalition, Denna provides those with a passion for helping children with a method for doing so effectively. Her talent for doing this on a macro and micro level is apparent. She speaks with equal depth and compassion whether describing her work with an individual or an entire system of stakeholders. Denna truly loves what she does and the people she works with and that is not something taught or demanded by her job, it is just who she is.

As a person, professional, mother and co-worker, Denna stands out as a true advocate. It only takes a few minutes to be drawn into the passion of her life's work be it her own family or the families she helps in her community each and every day.

Dr. Mary Livers

Dr. Mary Livers, deputy secretary of the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice, was named to the position of deputy secretary in October 2008. From the start of her tenure at OJJ, Livers has partnered with Louisiana Models for Change to develop and collaborate in the implementation of evidence-based reforms. This direct collaboration with MacArthur and MfC led to Louisiana OJJ's adoption of the SAVRY tool for youth in state custody. Under the direction of Dr. Livers, OJJ has developed prevention and diversion programs, serving youth in the community who are not directly involved in the juvenile justice system. Dr. Livers has taken the lead in working with stakeholders including Models for Change, as well as the state judiciary, district attorneys, community providers and advocacy groups to provide for the treatment needs of at-risk and adjudicated youth in the least restrictive environment and to provide needed services for families. Today,

Louisiana's secure facilities house 80 percent fewer youth than a decade ago. The results speak for themselves.

Louisiana juvenile justice is undergoing a radical, systemic change, from community-based interventions to the deep end of secure care. Dr. Livers has taken the lead, on behalf of Louisiana state government, to keep the positive systematic change moving ahead. Dr. Livers believes that motivated and educated staff provides better and more humane care for inmates and juveniles. She has dedicated her career to actively promoting excellence and professionalism in the field of corrections, and she strongly supports leadership development for her staff. She believes in the hands-on approach and often visits OJJ's secure facilities and field offices. Louisiana Models for Change is pleased and privileged to have Dr. Livers as a leader in juvenile justice reform.

David Burton

District Attorney David Burton has been involved in the Louisiana District Attorneys Association juvenile justice reform efforts for many years. The LDAA Juvenile Justice Task Force was created as part of the LDAA's first Models for Change grant in 2008. Mr. Burton is a founding member of the Task Force and assumed the role of chairman in 2011. Past initiatives of the Task Force include the development of Juvenile Diversion Guidelines and recommendations on Graduated Sanctions in the Juvenile Justice System. These products along with LDAA's current work addressing training needs of juvenile prosecutors and data collection will enhance positive outcomes for youth and promote public safety.

Mr. Burton was also recently appointed by the chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court to the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission, created by Act 1225 of the Louisiana legislature to oversee the reform of the state's juvenile justice system by implementation of the recommendations contained in the Juvenile Justice Reform Act and House Concurrent Resolution 56, both of Regular Session 2003.

When asked how he became involved with Louisiana Models for Change, Mr. Burton said he was "drafted" into service by a close friend and colleague who was district attorney in a neighboring parish and also serving as the president of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association. Mr. Burton said neither he nor his colleague could have envisioned the effort would become "the most comprehensive re-evaluation and reformation of any part of the Louisiana criminal justice system in the history of our state."

"A district attorney, in evaluating proposals for changing the juvenile justice system, or the adult criminal justice system, must first assess the anticipated impact that such a change will have on the safety of the citizens whom we are elected to serve," Mr. Burton said.

Mr. Burton said juvenile justice reform in Louisiana is still a "work in progress."

"We could not have anticipated the disruption of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Gustav; nor could we have anticipated the deepest recession since the Great Depression," Mr. Burton said. "The JJ system in Louisiana has been transformed, over the last 10 years, despite fiscal challenges from these events and others, but much remains to be done."

"I remain hopeful that we will see the quality of service delivery at each level of our system of graduated sanctions, from diversion to secure care, that will allow JJ reform to deliver on its promise of better results for the kids in our care, and for the communities that we serve."