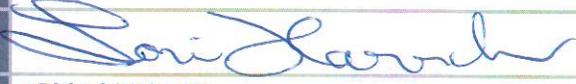
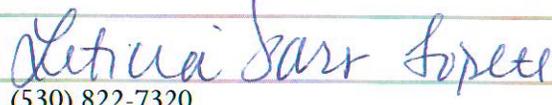


California – Child and Family Services Review Signature Sheet

For submittal of: CSA SIP Progress Report

County	Sutter
SIP Period Dates	06/05/2012-02/04/2014
Outcome Data Period	Quarter Ending – October 2013 (Q2-2013)
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Signature*	
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County Chief Probation Officer	
Name	Leticia Paras-Topete, County Chief Probation Officer
Signature*	
Phone Number	(530) 822-7320
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Signature*	
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Mail the original Signature Sheet to:

Children and Family Services Division
 Outcomes and Accountability Bureau
 California Department of Social Services
 744 P Street, MS 8-12-91
 Sacramento, CA 95814

*Signatures must be in blue ink

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California Child and Family Services Review

Annual SIP Progress Report

6/5/2012 – 2/4/2014



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SIP Progress Narrative

Introduction

The Sutter County System Improvement Plan (SIP) Progress report is a report on the progress that Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the Juvenile Probation Department in Sutter County have made since the implementation of the three year SIP submitted in June 2011.

The 2011 SIP outlined strategies that CWS and the Juvenile Probation Department plan to implement over a three year period to improve outcomes for children and families in our community. The 2011 SIP incorporated the findings from the 2010 County Self Assessment (CSA) and the 2010 Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR), and is operational from June 2011 to June 2014. A SIP one year update was completed covering June 2011 to June 2012. This is the second review of our three year SIP Plan. However, changes have been implemented to transition to a five year plan; therefore, Sutter County will have another SIP Progress report due in February 2015, and will then cycle into the CSA process with the CSA plan due in September 2015 and the five year SIP due in February 2016.

During this current review period, Sutter County's goal has been to review the effectiveness of our SIP by monitoring quarterly outcome data along with the goals, strategies, and milestones (action steps). The most recent UC Berkeley quarterly report is October 2013 (Q2 2013)¹. There have been seven quarterly reports since the last SIP update in 2012, in which the data reviewed was January 2012 (Q3 2011). Generally, Sutter County CWS and Juvenile Probation continue to make positive headway with the goals of the SIP. However, it should be noted that in smaller counties, such as Sutter County, families that may have several siblings can create a skewed view of the statistics that are produced in the quarterly data. Further, some of the data will continue to be skewed for several quarters as the same children are counted again depending upon the methodology of data, entry or exit cohort data, and rolling quarter data.

¹ Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Williams, D., Yee, H., Hightower, L., Mason, F., Lou, C., Peng, C., King, B., & Lawson, J. (2013).

Child Welfare Services Reports for California. University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website.

URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare>

Stakeholders Participation

CWS:

Sutter County CWS and Juvenile Probation continue to work with agency and community partners. The goals of the (SIP) lend themselves to working with many and varied partners. With our increasing utilization of the Safety Organized Practice (SOP) family engagement model, there has been opportunity to forge strengthened partnerships with many of our service providers and to educate them on this model. The SOP model illustrates how empowering this type of strengths based approach is in effecting change for our children and families with an increase in safety, permanency, and well-being. Also, with the advent of the Icebreakers model, many of our foster parents are developing relationships and support networks with the parents with a view to being the lynch-pin to support a shorter time to reunification and greater placement stability.

Sutter County is dedicated to promote Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approaches to serve our children and families with an appropriate level of mental health services to keep children safely in their homes or to reduce or prevent placement of children. Partners involved in the team approach include mental health, probation, public health, schools, and other service providers in the community. Reducing the number of children being placed in foster care by identifying the needs of the children and families is a key feature of MDT groups in Sutter County.

Collaborative efforts with the Juvenile Court include regular monthly meetings which occur between Human Services leadership, Welfare & Social Services, Mental Health, Probation, and the Juvenile Court Judge to promote strong communication and address high level operational or systemic issues that arise.

The Linkages project, which partners CalWorks and Child Welfare, provides a team approach to better serve families and improve outcomes. These collaborative meetings incorporate the review of families in the SOP framework of what is working well, and what are the worries and next steps for the providers and/or the families. This type of format has solidified the SOP framework with our agency partners. Working with families and CalWorks provides the information and resources to be put into place which has a direct impact on time to reunification.

Probation:

As Probation navigates through its implementation of new systems and programs such as CWS/CMS and AB12, several agencies have been instrumental in aiding the department. Sutter County Child Protective Services, the resource center for family-focused practice, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) have all provided information and feedback regarding Probation’s implementation of said programs. The Sutter County Juvenile Court Judge has supported our efforts to implement AB12; including making the correct findings and ordering the services that are in the best interest of our youth.

Current Performance Towards SIP Improvement Goals

CWS:

Reunification Within 12 Months (Measure C1.3)

The most recent data from October 2013 (Q213) shows that Sutter County is performing above the national average. However, since the previous review period of January 2012 (Q311) there have been seven quarterly reports which show that Sutter County has performed intermittently below the national average, but has climbed back to the national average and above during the most recent five quarters.

C1.3 Reunification Within 12 Months

Standard ≥48.4%

Quarter	Performance	Number of cases above/below compliance threshold	Direction From Previous Quarter	National Standard Compliance
Q213 (01/01/12-06/30/12)	53.80% (14/26)	-5	↑	YES
Q113 (10/01/11-3/31/12)	39.30% (11/28)	-4	↓	NO
Q412 (07/01/11-12/31/11)	50.00% (14/28)	0	↑	YES
Q312 (04/01/11-09/30/11)	50.00% (15/30)	0	↑	YES
Q212 (01/10/11-06/30/11)	30.30% (10/33)	-6	↓	NO
Q112 (10/01/10-03/31/11)	36.10% (13/36)	-3	↓	NO
Q411 (07/01/10-12/31/10)	53.50% (23/43)	+3	↓	YES
Q311 (04/01/10-09/30/10)	54.30% (25/46)	+3	↓	YES
Q211 (01/01/10-06/30/10)	58.60% (17/29)	+3	↑	YES
Q111 (10/01/09-03/31/10)	55.60% (15/27)	+2	↑	YES

Re-entry Following Reunification (Measure C1.4)

The most recent data from the October 2013 quarterly report (Q213) indicates that Sutter County is at 29.3%, which is above the National Standard of 9.9%. Because this is a measure in which lower numbers indicate positive performance, Sutter County is not yet in compliance with this measure and during the last five quarters performance has been inconsistent. Given the county's smaller population relative to other counties in the state, there is significant impact to the performance percentage with small changes.

C1.4 Re-entry Following Reunification

Standard ≤9.9%

Quarter	Performance	Number of children above/below compliance threshold*	Direction From Previous Quarter <i>(note: down arrow indicates positive performance)</i>	National Standard Compliance
Q213 (07/01/11-06/30/12)	29.30% (12/41)	-8	↑	NO
Q113 (04/10/10-3/31/12)	23.30% (10/43)	-6	↓	NO
Q412 (01/10/11-12/31/11)	24.40% (11/45)	-7	↓	NO
Q312 (10/01/10-09/30/11)	27.10% (13/48)	-8	↑	NO
Q212 (07/01/10-06/30/11)	10.50% (6/57)	0	↓	NO
Q112 (04/01/10-03/31/11)	12.70% (8/63)	-2	↓	NO
Q411 (01/01/10-12/31/10)	16.20% (11/68)	-4	↑	NO
Q311 (10/01/09-09/30/10)	16.10% (10/62)	-4	↓	NO
Q211 (07/01/09-06/30/10)	26.70% (12/45)	-8	↑	NO
Q111 (04/01/09-03/31/10)	26.30% (10/38)	-7	↑	NO

*Note the impact that, sibling groups of 3 or more, for example, has on compliance with this measure. The trend toward decreasing performance percentages demonstrates improvement in this measure during the period of this update review.

This is a quasi-entry cohort measure, as each cohort is comprised of children who “enter” the status of successful reunification at the same time. Because of the timelines involved with collecting entry cohort data, it is difficult to directly correlate whether activities from the current SIP are having an effect on performance. However, with continued tracking of performance of our strategies and implementation plans and comparing those results to our data trends it is expected that we can ascertain how impactful these have been to the data for the quarters during the period of 2012 to the end of 2014.

The current trend shows that there could be some impact of cases which have not benefitted from being followed by the family engagement model of Safety Organized Practice from the beginning of the case, and that supportive networks may have not been fully formed to provide a solid foundation for safe and stable families. Also, there are some larger sibling groups which have returned to the system which will skew the percentages and impact several quarters of data.

Exits to Permanency (Measure C3.1)

The most recent data from October 2013 quarterly report (Q213) indicates that Sutter County is at 26.3% which is close to the National Standard of 29.1%.

Measure C3.1 is not an entry cohort measure; however, data collection for this measure is dependent to some extent on entry dates (the cohort is made up of children from multiple entry cohorts). It should be noted that this measure is reported by UC Berkeley in “rolling quarters,” which means that there is some data overlap from quarter to quarter. This is an exit cohort measure, which considers outcomes (specifically, an exit to permanency) that occur within one year regarding children who are in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the respective quarter.

C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months in Care)

Standard ≤29.1%

Quarter	Performance	Number of children above/below compliance threshold*	Direction From Previous Quarter <i>(note: down arrow indicates positive performance)</i>	National Standard Compliance
Q213 (07/01/12-06/30/13)	26.30% (10/38)	-1	↑	NO
Q113 (04/10/12-3/31/13)	21.10% (8/38)	-2	↓	NO
Q412 (01/10/12-12/31/12)	28.90% (11/38)	+1	↑	YES
Q312 (10/01/11-09/30/12)	24.30% (9/37)	-2	↓	NO
Q212 (07/01/11-06/30/12)	38.20% (13/34)	+3	↑	YES
Q112 (04/01/11-03/31/12)	25.90% (7/27)	-1	↑	NO
Q411 (01/01/11-12/31/11)	5.60% (1/18)	-4	↓	NO
Q311 (01/10/10-09/30/11)	37.90% (11/29)	+3	↑	YES
Q211 (07/01/10-06/30/11)	31.00% (9/29)	+1	↓	YES
Q111 (04/01/10-03/31/11)	40.60% (13/32)	+4	↓	YES

Achieving permanency within this time-frame can sometimes be challenging, particularly with some older children who may have suffered years of abuse and neglect before becoming known to us. Some of the barriers to finding permanency for this group include children's mental health issues that need to be stabilized and maintained. Also, locating appropriate family or non related extended family members can prove difficult when children have significant mental health and other behavioral challenges. Further, finding foster families with the necessary training and supports to provide an appropriate level of care for children who are stepping down from group home settings or are at risk of group home settings is a gap in available services. Identifying and addressing children's mental health needs is a focus that is being addressed. Collaborative efforts are strengthened through partnerships with Sutter-Yuba Mental Health for assessment and delivery of specialty mental health services when there is an identified need for children in placement or at risk of placement. It is our hope that services developed as a result of the Katie A. settlement will further contribute to better outcomes for children with significant mental health and behavioral problems and ultimately lead to improvement in the Exits to Permanency measure.

It should be noted that Sutter County is doing very well on the C2.1 measure which captures adoptions within 24 months using an exit cohort. Sutter County has consistently been well above the national standard of 36.6% since the previous review period of January 2012 (Q311). This success is the result of thoughtful effort and collaboration. We have worked consistently with our partners at California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to achieve adoption within a 24 month timeframe, and particularly as this is identified as a permanent outcome for many of our children, early referrals to adoptions are made so that their concurrent plan is reviewed on a regular basis.

Sometimes barriers are systemic and can include the court process and proceedings which can be delayed for good cause continuances or during the appeal process when terminating reunification services to parents or terminating parental rights. These barriers are being addressed through collaborative meetings with the court and with feedback and training from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

Probation:

Since 2010, Probation's improvement goal was to improve outcomes for youth transitioning from group homes and other residential commitment programs to their homes. Unfortunately, Probation had never collected data or outcome measurements to provide a comparison. In 2012, our youth were provided minimal services once they reached the age of majority.

Further, after they completed their probation grant, they were no longer provided guidance and/or services from our Department.

In June 2012, Sutter County Probation received its first AB12 qualifying youth eligible to receive additional services. To date, this Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) successfully completed his grant of probation, transitioned into Section 450 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (Transition Jurisdiction), successfully resided by himself in a Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP), has been attending college, and has been working towards obtaining employment. The NMD has received continued guidance from his probation officer. Thus, since AB12 services went into effect, Probation is providing more services compared to 2010.

In August 2013, a second youth successfully completed his placement program and was returned home to reside with his mother. Probation has been providing him intensive case management and case planning services. Prior to 2010, these services were not extensively utilized. This youth has not committed any new offenses since his return home and is attending a public high school.

Strategies Status

CWS:

Sutter County Child Welfare Services (CWS) has engaged in continuous efforts to maximize resources and examine ways to improve outcomes for children and families. The following describes the ongoing efforts of the selected strategies.

Strategy 1- Safety Organized Practice is a strategy designed to provide skills, techniques, and an overarching practice methodology for child welfare work. It offers techniques for creating constructive working partnerships between frontline child welfare practitioners, the families they work with, and community resources. Sutter County CWS has continued to foster significant ongoing efforts of this strategy and maintain an emphasis on family engagement. Social Workers continue to utilize this practice and have observed a positive level of engagement with families. CWS is still finalizing methods to accurately determine effectiveness with regards to Measures C1.3 Reunification within 12 months and C1.4 Reentry following Reunification. It appears that this promising practice will provide long term successes for Sutter County families.

Safety Organized Practice has been adopted as a practice method to the toolbelt of social workers and other agency partners alike. There has been positive feedback from families in particular. Examples of feedback from parents include comments regarding their perception that they are being “heard” by family and friends as well as the social worker. One grandmother stated, “I was able to share my feelings in a safe place, and could say I was worried about my son’s drug use and the safety of my grandchildren”.

Several parents have also stated that they have a better understanding of what CPS is expecting them to achieve in order to have their children returned to their care. One parent stated, “I did not know what to do on my case plan until I had a safety mapping”.

Strategy 2- Icebreaker Meetings are the first meetings between the birth parent and foster parent to increase collaboration between them and to encourage working together in the best interest of the child. CWS implementation of the Icebreaker meetings is still in its infancy. This meeting is seen as the first element of family engagement. CWS will evaluate throughout this process the efficacy of this strategy with regards to Measures C1.3 Reunification within 12 months and C1.4 Reentry following Reunification. It appears that this strategy will show positive outcome results as it is another method which encourages family engagement.

Strategy 3- Explore development of expanded community support services targeted for family reunification. CWS Social Workers continuously search for services in our community and surrounding areas to meet the specific needs of families in the Family Reunification program. CWS implementation of Safety Organized Practice has required families to cultivate independence by finding and/or creating their own support systems. This allows for plenty of “eyes” to discover additional natural and formal supports for families. Longstanding resources in the community include programs such as First Steps (substance abuse treatment), Family Soup (parental support/advocacy), and Sutter-Yuba Mental Health (mental health services). Social workers have always made efforts to maintain communication with everyone involved in the case individually, but with the implementation of Safety Organized Practice, these efforts are more streamlined. The social worker and the family work with the identified natural and formal supports in an enhanced collaborative framework which allows for long term success. It is hopeful that this strategy will strengthen families which will improve outcomes in Measures C1.3 Reunification within 12 months and C1.4 Reentry following Reunification.

Strategy 4- Improve evaluation of time to permanency for children in foster care for 24 months or longer. This strategy is no longer being utilized. It was the hope that CWS could create a

more realistic view of the statistics guiding Sutter County's performance with children in foster care for 24 months or longer. CWS has chosen to concentrate efforts on other strategies, but mindful that the need for this information is always valid.

Strategy 5- Focus efforts on permanence for children that are in care for more than 18 months, but less than 3 years. CWS has maintained a steady focus on this strategy recognizing the importance of permanence for children. CWS is always aware of a child's concurrent plan, which identifies the first goal of working toward reunification while simultaneously identifying the secondary goal of permanence. When the latter option must be explored, CWS works to identify options of permanence appropriate for the child. These options may include legal guardianship with relatives, who would be eligible for KinGAP at a later date and legal guardianship with non-relatives when appropriate. CWS has demonstrated significant ongoing efforts in Safety Organized Practice which provides the perfect formula to identify and notify relatives and non related extended family members that a child is in foster care. These individuals would learn how they can become a resource as a placement option, which ideally could lead to guardianship or adoption. CWS has fostered a great collaborative working relationship with California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Sacramento Adoptions Services Unit. This relationship has allowed for better case management and improved communication with children, families, and prospective adoptive care providers. CDSS shifted the jurisdiction of Sutter County CWS adoptions cases to the Chico Adoptions Services Unit in September 2013. Regardless of this transition, CWS will again work to establish the same successful collaborative working relationship with the Chico Unit. While it has always been a priority to promote permanence for children, there are a variety of challenges that present themselves with this population. The difficulties which may deem a child not suitable for adoption include a child's decision to not be adopted or a child's mental illness/behavior. Despite these hurdles, CWS staff continually seek to provide the most appropriate permanent plan for each individual child.

CWS utilizes SafeMeasures to maintain accurate data of those children in foster care for more than eighteen (18) months but less than three years. CWS will develop a workgoup to analyze the utilization and effectiveness of permanence efforts.

Strategy 6- Focus efforts on permanence for children that are in care for more than 3 years.

While it has always been a priority to promote permanence for children, there are a variety of challenges that present themselves with this often older youth. The difficulties which may

deem a child not suitable for adoption include a child's decision to not be adopted or a child's mental illness/behavior. Despite these hurdles, CWS continually seeks a wide range of opportunities to provide the most appropriate permanent plan for each individual child. One strategy is preparing older youth for the transition to independent living through participation in the Independent Living Program(ILP). Another option for youth is remaining a dependent of the court after the age of eighteen (18) by becoming a Non Minor Dependent (NMD) to ease the transition to independence. Furthermore, CWS has fostered a great collaborative working relationship with California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Sacramento Adoptions Services Unit. This relationship has allowed for better case management and improved communication with children, families, and prospective adoptive care providers. CWS meets monthly with the Adoptions Unit to discuss active cases which allows for a forum to share information. CWS and CDSS Adoptions Social Workers are completing home visits together to create a joint support for children. CDSS shifted the jurisdiction of Sutter County CWS adoptions cases to the Chico Adoptions Services Unit in September 2013. Regardless of this transition, CWS will again work to establish the same successful collaborative working relationship with the Chico Unit. It is hopeful that the continuous proactive efforts in this strategy will help to steadily improve in Measure C3.1 Exits to Permanency.

Adoption Promotion and Support Services are being utilized in-house. Sutter County is promoting these efforts through a master's level social worker who is an avid proponent of SOP and is working with older children who have been in care for three years or more without achieving permanency. By exploring options through SOP tools such as the "three houses" and the "safety house", a great deal of invaluable information is gathered from the children about other "safe" adults in their lives which are potential options for permanency if reunification fails. One child initially stated, "I never want to be adopted" (age 9 just entering foster care). After program services were delivered, the child identified her aunt as someone she would feel safe with, and ultimately she was adopted by this aunt. Another child stated, "I want to go home and live with my mom" (child age 9 just entering foster care). However, twelve months later she was thriving in a home that is offering her permanency and she has verbalized, "I want to live here always".

Strategies 7- In collaboration with Sutter-Yuba Mental Health, implement the requirements of the Katie A settlement identifying areas where services integration would lead to positive client outcomes. CWS has started to develop a procedure to ensure timely use of the Mental Health Screening Tool (MHST) for children with an open CWS case. Sutter County CWS with Sutter-Yuba Mental Health are coordinating efforts to implement the Katie A settlement requirements. Continued screening, assessment, and delivery of specialty mental health

services to the youth identified as having a need is part of the current practice and is being further developed. This system will be designed to ensure effective implementation of mental health interventions which will result in positive outcomes in Measure C1.3 Reunification within 12 months, C1.4 Reentry following Reunification, and C3.1 Exits to Permanency.

Probation:

Probation's first strategy was to improve outcome measurement practices to reduce recidivism rates and improve other outcomes for children transitioning from group homes and other residential commitment programs to their homes.

In Action Step A, we outlined using the DataMart software to measure various outcomes. The software did not prove to be beneficial due to its complexity and lack of training on the software; thus, it was never utilized by the Probation department. Since DataMart will not be utilized, the new action step will be to track recidivism (new crimes committed by youth while under probation supervision and/or AB12 supervision) and to compare protective factors based on assessments.com needs assessments. Based on the results of the data collected, the Probation Department will determine if/what new practices need to be implemented.

In Action Step B, fortunately, we have not had youth with highly specialized needs since 2010; however, in 2010 we utilized a psychological evaluation to determine the suitable placement for a youth requiring sex offender treatment. Also, during the current review period, Probation utilized psychological evaluations for two youth and found that it was in the best interest of these youth to remain in the care of their parent/guardian with services. Probation is currently obtaining a psychological evaluation for a youth to determine if placement is a viable option as the youth is facing a commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

In Action Step C, we have successfully integrated the CWS/CMS system into our everyday placement activities. CDSS has been using our data to report on face to face contacts and Independent Living Program (ILP) services delivered and is providing feedback on meeting Federal Standards. In the future, CDSS will provide feedback regarding face to face contacts with parents/guardians and percentage of contacts within the actual placement of the youth.

In Action Step D, there have been numerous barriers preventing the full implementation of Family Findings. Barriers will be addressed below. In October 2012, three probation officers were trained in family mapping to assist the Department in locating family support for youth. In December 2013, ten probation staff will be attending a family engagement training which

will include family mapping and genograms. (In the future, this Action Step will be incorporated into Strategy 2, as it is more in line with Strategy 2.)

Probation's Second Strategy was to provide ongoing services to children who are transitioning into adulthood and who are transitioning from group homes and other residential commitment programs to living independently.

Probation's Action Step for this strategy was to implement AB 12 for eligible youth. We currently have two AB12 eligible youth who have transitioned into Non-Minor Dependent status. One is under Delinquent Jurisdiction while the other is under the Transition Jurisdiction. These two cases aided in our learning process in determining the eligibility criteria for youth, collaborating with other agencies for smooth transitions, making the proper findings in Court so there are no funding issues, and working closely with eligibility to assist in the funding process. The AB12 process has benefited our Department in helping provide education, housing, and financial assistance to youth that have nowhere to go when they exit foster care. Probation is working closely with the youth to help the youth meet the goals in their transitional Independent Living Plan so they can transition into self-sufficient adulthood. Due to the small number of Sutter County Probation AB12 youth, the AB12 implementation has so far been a smooth process. Probation is committed to expanding our knowledge and execution of the evolving AB12 process.

Barriers to Implementation

CWS

SOP has ultimately been embraced by social workers within the agency. Many of the long term experienced social workers were initially resistant to a new way of critical thinking with this model. Some of the less experienced social workers were somewhat hesitant to immerse themselves in the model framework without a good deal of encouragement and support in training efforts provided both in-house and through the Regional Training Academy. However, with the support from administration and management, supervisors and peers, social workers have now become more confident in themselves and the model. Recent reviews by social workers include, "having safety mappings has made my job easier as the clients support team are calling clients on their stuff". Further, reports from social workers include that it makes case planning easier and also helps with writing court reports. Initially, there were also concerns voiced by social workers that the parents were not going to trust the process, but many parents have and are also spreading the word to other clients in other venues about the value of safety mappings.

Fully implementing Icebreaker meetings has been challenging because of some reluctance of foster families to engage with biological parents. We have collaborated with our Foster Family Agency (FFA) partners to overcome the history of foster parents focusing on providing care to the children and not always considering the value of the benefits to the well-being of the children by meeting parents of the children in their care. We have seen that the foster parents and parents who have participated in the icebreaker process, have developed more supportive roles with the families which often continues past children reunifying with the parents. Foster parents who continue to provide day care or occasional respite care for children supports the safety network to these children in their family home.

Sutter County continues to contract with CDSS for adoption services; however, the Sacramento regional office which has historically served Sutter County has been reorganized and no longer serves Sutter County. The regional office currently serving Sutter County is Chico. The transition seems to be working well. Sutter County will continue to research the feasibility of performing this function at a county level as a possibility for the future beyond the current contract with CDSS.

Probation:

In Strategy 1, Step A, as previously stated above, DataMart's complexity and lack of comprehensive training rendered the software useless for our needs.

In Strategy 1, Step C, in CWS/CMS there is a closed case that was opened manually by another county which is skewing Sutter County's data. CDSS staff were contacted via email regarding this issue. They responded stating they would close the case manually; however, this has yet to occur. There is currently no liaison to provide assistance in this matter.

In Strategy 1, Step D, due to confidentiality issues with the Family Finding statute, there has been hesitation across the state to fully implement Family Finding. Sutter County Probation has found that there is a lack of training on this statute to troubleshoot the unclear interpretations. This includes which youth are included under Family Findings in regards to Title IV-E. This matter was discussed at a Probation Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting and it appeared the majority of the other counties were coming across the same barrier. It is hoped that with new Title IV-E training, the Family Finding mandate will be addressed.

Other Successes/Promising Practices

CWS:

With the ever changing climate of Child Welfare and Probation, the strengthening of our MDT groups is paramount. Sutter County already has several MDT groups that provide the partnership needed to review children in group homes and other placements on a regular basis.

We also have strength in our Peer Review group which is made up of social workers, supervisors, and a manager. It is presented in the format of SOP and Structured Decision to review next steps to return children into the care of their parents or move a case towards a successful transition to closing out of the child welfare system.

In spite of the changes and challenges of staffing and having almost half of child welfare social workers with two years or less experience in child welfare, there has been an ongoing commitment to train and provide quality social work to the children and families we serve. There continues to be an emphasis on training and implementing SOP, and training more social workers to become facilitators is a goal. Additionally, many of the social workers have integrated this practice in the field, and using the solution focused approach with children and families with the Three House method gives the children a voice in the process.

Icebreakers has been rolled out with training and guidance to social workers. This has been in effect since October 2013, and the hope is to provide a coordinated effort to forge relationships between foster parents and the families of the children for whom they provide care. This is an essential part of the work with engaging families and working with them to provide healthy and supportive relationships, and foster parents are an integral part of this foundation.

Family Resource Centers are currently operating in our community and our families are able to access services through these centers. For families with children who have special needs Family Soup provides an array of resources. Such resources provide an impact on our outcomes measures which we have included in our SIP, such as Time to Reunification and Reentry outcomes, and those that are not encompassed in the SIP such as Recurrence of Maltreatment, and Placement Stability.

Probation:

In May 2013, Probation implemented its first Parent Project session. The Parent Project is a best practice program utilized across the world to teach parents specific techniques in dealing with their strong-willed children. Ten parents participated in the pilot session and five successfully graduated. During the same time period, a Spanish Speaking session was provided to eight parents, and six graduated. In October 2013, the second English Speaking session began with twenty-five parents.

In 2014, Sutter County Probation will be implementing Moral Reconciliation Therapy, The Change Companies Journaling Curriculum, and Aggression Replacement Therapy to enhance services for our high risk youth population, most of which are at risk of being removed from the home.

Outcome Measures not meeting State/National Standards**CWS:**

Sutter County continues to concentrate efforts in outcome measures that are not meeting State/National Standards on a consistent basis in our SIP. There are no other areas that are not currently being addressed in the SIP that Sutter County falls below the State/National Standards on a regular basis. However, we are continually monitoring our outcome measures. The measures are inextricably linked in the sense that children and families cannot be best served without a holistic approach of considering safety, permanency, and wellbeing throughout the life of the case and beyond.

Probation:

Due to the minimal number of youth in placement (5 youth), our data is not suggestive of our performance. Further, Probation recently completed our CWS/CMS implementation and has not collected enough data to provide outcomes.

State and Federally Mandated Child Welfare/Probation Initiatives

CWS:

Katie A v. Bonta refers to a class action lawsuit filed in Federal District Court in 2002 concerning the availability of intensive mental health services to children in California who are either in foster care or at imminent risk of coming into care. A settlement agreement was reached in the case in December 2011. Child welfare and mental health leaders from state and local levels are working together to establish a sustainable framework for the provision of an array of services that occur in community settings and in a coordinated manner. As part of this agreement, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) agreed to take specific actions that will strengthen California’s child welfare and mental health systems with objectives that include:

- Facilitating the provision with an array of services delivered in a coordinated, comprehensive, community-based fashion that combines service access, planning, delivery, and transition into a coherent and all-inclusive approach, which is referred to as the Core Practice Model (CPM).
- Addressing the need of some class members with more intensive needs (referred to as “subclass members”) to receive medically necessary mental health services in their own home or family setting in order to facilitate reunification and meet their needs for safety, permanence, and well-being. These more intensive services are referred to as Intensive Care Coordination (ICC), Intensive Home Based Services (IHBS), and Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC).
- Clarifying and providing guidance on state and federal laws as needed to implement the settlement agreement so that counties and providers can understand and consistently apply them.

Within Sutter County we have been working closely with our mental health partners and identifying the needs of our youth both in foster care and in the home. Sutter County already has a WRAPAROUND program which serves our dependent children and wards. Further, we have an extensive System of Care for children that provides services to both children and families in placement and in the home.

Sutter County has also looked at mental health screening tools for our children and has also worked closely with our partners at mental health to assess the efficacy of these tools. We have strategized with a work group to implement the screening tool process and procedure at

various points of the case and document findings and outcomes in our Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

With the emphasis that children and families are best served when children are placed in committed, permanent, and nurturing families, CDSS began working with stakeholders to review congregate care in September 2012. The outcome of this review brought about the need to review children in group home care for a cumulative period/period of more than 1 year along with those children who are in group home care under the age of 12. Sutter County already had a number of MDT groups in place to review these children, and have strategized with our MDT groups such as FAST and SuperFAST to thoroughly review our group home placements and review the plan of transition into lower levels of care which resemble more family like settings.

AB12 - Services to Non Minor Dependents (NMDs). There are several social workers who have knowledge and training in this area and are readily available to assist others with placement types and court related issues.

Probation:

Probation is mandated to implement AB12. The implementation of this bill was previously discussed in “Strategies Status.”

3 – YEAR SIP CHART

Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor(CWS): C1.3 Reunification Within 12 Months (Entry Cohort)

National Standard: 48.4 %

CSA Baseline Performance: 44.4%

Current Performance: 58.3%

Target Improvement Goal: The county's goal is to continue performing at or above the National standard of 48.4%.

Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor(CWS): C1.4 Reentry Following Reunification (Exit Cohort)

National Standard: 9.9%

CSA Baseline Performance: 16.1%

Current Performance: 29.3%

Target Improvement Goal: The county's goal is to steadily reduce Reentry into Foster Care by 19.4% to meet the national standard of 9.9%.

Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor(CWS): C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months In Care)

National Standard: 29.1%

CSA Baseline Performance: 25%

Current Performance: 26.3%

Target Improvement Goal: The county's goal is to steadily improve Exits to Permanency by 2.8% to meet the national standard of 29.1%.

Priority Outcome Measure or Systemic Factor (Probation): 8A Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood.

National Standard: N/A (Not Measured)

CSA Baseline Performance: There was no means of measuring a baseline performance at the time of the original Systems Improvement Plan.

Current Performance: Over the past year Sutter County Probation has had two youth in placement who are over the age of 18. One youth will be completing his high school diploma in June 2014 and is making progress towards transitioning to a college dormitory. The other youth is in a SILP and attending community college while seeking employment.

Target Improvement Goal: Improve outcomes for youth transitioning from group homes and other residential commitment programs to their homes. This includes reducing recidivism for all youth exiting placement and furthering education and obtaining employment for our youth over the age of 18.

Strategy 1(CWS): Sutter County CPS will fully implement the Signs of Safety (SoS) Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Family Engagement Model.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C 1.3 Reunification within 12 months C1.4 Reentry following Reunification <input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A		
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Expand SoS SOP training to a wider array of social workers within the Department, beyond the SoS SOP Core Implementation Team.	June 2011	June 2012	CPS Ongoing Social Worker Supervisor
B. Utilize the existing inter-county collaborative to support implementation of SoS SOP.	June 2012	June 2013	CPS Program Manager All CPS Social Worker Supervisors CPS SoS SOP Core Implementation Team
C. Create a Policy and Procedures for implementation of SoS SOP.	June 2011	January 2012	CPS Program Manager

D. Develop a monitoring tool to report implementation progress to CPS Program Manager.	June 2012	June 2015	All CPS Social Worker Supervisors CPS SoS SOP Core Implementation Team
Strategy 2(CWS): Implement “Icebreaker meetings” (first meeting between birth parent / foster parent) to increase collaboration between the foster parent and birth parent.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C 1.3 Reunification within 12 months C1.4 Reentry following Reunification	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A		
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Explore how other counties have implemented “Icebreaker” meetings	June 2012	June 2013	Social Worker IV/SIP Project Manager
B. Develop Policy and Procedures to implement “Icebreaker” meetings, including policy and training.	June 2012	September 2013	CPS Program Manager CPS Supervisor/SIP Project Manager

C. Implement "Icebreaker meetings."	June 2012	October 2013	CPS Social Workers
D. CPS Supervisors will be trained to encourage and monitor usage of Icebreaker protocol	June 2012	October 2013	All CPS Social Worker Supervisors
E. Develop a measure to assess the utilization and effectiveness of Icebreaker meetings.	October 2013	June 2015	CPS Supervisor/SIP Project Manager
Strategy 3(CWS): Explore development of expanded community support services targeted for family reunification.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C 1.3 Reunification within 12 months C1.4 Reentry following Reunification <input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A		
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:

<p>A. Attend trainings to expand knowledge of the function and principles of Family Resource Centers.</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>CPS Program Manager Peer Empowerment Provider</p>
<p>B. Conduct research to determine which natural supports (such as Family Resource Centers) are currently operating in the region.</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>Peer Empowerment Provider</p>
<p>C. Integrate information regarding familial utilization of natural supports during family reunification cases into the Peer Case Review process.</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>June 2014</p>	<p>Peer Review Participants (CPS Social Workers, Peer Empowerment Provider, and Management)</p>
<p>D. Continue to explore barriers encountered by reunifying families preventing connection to natural supports, such as Family Resource Centers.</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Peer Review Participants (CPS Social Workers, Peer Empowerment Provider, and Management)</p>

Strategy 4(CWS): Improve evaluation of time to permanency for children in foster care for 24 months or longer. No longer a strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months In Care)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Develop a measure to assess Sutter County's performance with achieving permanence for children that enter foster care over time.	June 2012	No longer a strategy.	Permanency Data Workgroup, SWIV Data Team Lead
B. Develop a data collection process and procedures.	June 2012	No longer a strategy.	Permanency Data Workgroup
C. Evaluate data and analyze trends.	June 2012	No longer a strategy.	Permanency Data Workgroup

Strategy 5(CWS): Focus efforts on permanence for children that are in care for more than 18 months, but less than 3 years.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months In Care)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A		
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Develop a system to track foster youth that are approaching two years in foster care.	June 2012	June 2013	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup
B. Present the plan to CPS management.	June 2012	June 2014	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup
C. Conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of implementation of policy through periodic reviews and quarterly reports.	June 2012	June 2015	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup
D. The Department of Social Services transitioned authority of Sutter County adoption cases from the Sacramento Adoptions Services Unit to the Chico Adoptions Services Unit. CPS will continue to conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of implementation of policy through periodic reviews and quarterly	September 2013	February 2015	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup

reports.			
E. Develop a workgroup to assess the utilization and effectiveness of permanency efforts.	June 2014	June 2015	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup
Strategy 6 (CWS): Focus efforts on permanence for children that are in care for more than 3 years.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months In Care)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A		
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Utilize SafeMeasures to track foster youth that have been in care for more than 3 years.	June 2012	June 2013	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup
B. Conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation through periodic reviews and quarterly reports.	June 2012	June 2013	Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup

<p>C. The Department of Social Services transitioned authority of Sutter County adoption cases from the Sacramento Adoptions Services Unit to the Chico Adoptions Services Unit. CPS will continue to conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of implementation of policy through periodic reviews and quarterly reports.</p>	<p>September 2013</p>	<p>February 2015</p>	<p>Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup</p>
<p>D. Develop a workgroup to assess the utilization and effectiveness of permanency efforts.</p>	<p>June 2014</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Ongoing Unit Supervisor Permanency/Adoptions Workgroup</p>
<p>Strategy 7(CWS): In collaboration with Sutter Yuba Mental Health implement the requirements of the Katie A settlement, identifying areas where service integration would lead to positive client outcomes.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	<p>Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): C 1.3 Reunification within 12 months C1.4 Reentry following Reunification C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months In Care) <input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project</p>	
<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>Implementation Date:</p>	<p>Completion Date:</p>	<p>Person Responsible:</p>

A. Form a county Implementation Team including child welfare and mental health services.	April 2013	May 2013	CPS and MH Program Managers
B. Through a partnership between mental health (Children System of Care and WRAP) and child welfare, design a coordinated services delivery system for children, youth and families served by both agencies to include services assessment and delivery of specialty mental health services when identified as a need.	May 2013	February 2015	CPS and MH Program Managers
C. Develop a screening tool procedure as an element of the Katie A settlement to assess youth for mental health services and identify the need to be assessed for specialty mental health services.	September 2013	February 2014	County Katie A Implementation Team
D. Train CPS social workers on the screening tool procedure.	February 2014	May 2014	County Katie A Implementation Team
E. CPS Supervisors will monitor Social Worker utilization of the screening tool procedures with children and families.	May 2014	February 2014	CPS Supervisors

Strategy 1 (<u>Probation</u>): To improve our outcome measurement practices to reduce recidivism rates and improve our outcomes for children transitioning from group home and other residential commitment programs to their homes.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 8A Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A		
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Further efforts to implement Evidence Based Practices by utilizing Assessments.com software and adding in the “DataMart” package for outcome measurement.	July 2011	It was decided that DataMart would not be used by Sutter County Probation. This action step will be stricken from our plan.	
B. Utilize specialized psychological assessment and testing measures for those minors prior to placement that require more highly specialized treatment needs. These minors include those who are in sex offender treatment programs and those who suffer from mental health disorders. The assessments have allowed Probation and the Court to determine appropriate placements and treatment for such minors and has successfully aided in the rehabilitation of minors.	January 2012	The use of the assessments will continue throughout the SIP process.	Supervising Probation Officer
C. Integrate the use of CWS/CMS for outcome measures.	January 2012	March 2013	Supervising Probation Officer and Placement Officer

D. Integrate Family Findings for those minors who are in need of guardians, besides biological parent(s).	January 2015	March 2015	Supervising Probation Officer
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Strategy 2(Probation): To provide ongoing services to children who are transitioning from group homes and other residential commitment programs to living independently.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	Applicable Outcome Measure(s) and/or Systemic Factor(s): 8A Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood	
	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP		
	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project	
Action Steps:	Implementation Date:	Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Implement AB12 for eligible youth.	June 2012	January 2013	Supervising Probation Officer and Placement Officer