



Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your participation in the Sparrow Lake Alliance Consultation Day regarding service integration held on January 20, 2006. We very much appreciated your involvement and insight that day.

As agreed, we are forwarding a draft summary of the recommendations to the Government of Ontario formulated that day.

Board Governance and the Integration of Services for Children and Youth

Report and Recommendations: This is a short summary of the recommendations arising from a daylong consultation and group discussion hosted by the Sparrow Lake Alliance. Thanks to Ruth Armstrong and Bruce Rivers who led the day with two presentations designed to stimulate the afternoon discussions. The following insights and recommendations are a synthesis of the input provided by a mix of Board and staff representatives from various child and youth serving organizations across Ontario.

Key Benefits and Opportunities: Why Should Boards Be Encouraged to Think and Participate at a Systems Level?

- Provides a broader, more strategic, less agency driven perspective
- Creates the possibility for a shared or collective vision for Child and youth outcomes at a community / regional level,
- Agency participation in system efforts is a critical element of accountability,
- Boards need to understand collaboration and service integration – its strategic!
- Creates a stronger collective voice and opportunities for joint advocacy on issues affecting children and youth,
- Offers new opportunities to engage Board members in strategic roles; a far better utilization of their skills, personal networks and social capital.

Strategies for Agencies and Boards: What can Boards, Executive Directors and Staff do to better engage and support Board Participation in Service Integration?

- An enhanced role for Board requires leadership from the E.D. and Chair,
- Interest in system wide outcomes should be included in the organizational Mission; identified as a core agency value and operating principle
- Board processes, time allocation and meeting activities must reflect and support the interest in systems wide issues and opportunities,
- Specific strategies may include:
 - Service and system issues as a standard agenda item
 - Board cross-appointments in common agencies
 - Shared recruitment and volunteer succession planning
 - Interagency Meetings across sectors (e.g. Children's Aid and the Boards of Education) to discuss common issues, share ideas
 - Hosted Board meetings at other agencies
 - Boards take a lead on supply chain management opportunities and service integration, resource sharing discussions,

Strategies for Government and Funders: What can government and other funders do to help encourage and support Boards in their efforts to better understand and support service integration and system wide outcomes?

- Ministries need to model coordination and service integration; help address the system issues they create,
- Commit longer term funding (2/3 years) to groups of agencies seeking to better integrate and improve service coordination,
- Clearly communicate that system wide outcomes for children and youth is an appropriate role and expectation of Boards of Directors,
- Host annual Board training sessions to provide a broader perspective, identify shared issues and concerns, disclose all funding information,
- Support local planning initiatives that encourage service integration and enhanced coordination,
- Establish 2 or 3 pilot communities to launch the effort at engaging Boards in system wide issues; use the lessons learned to expand the initiative.