Philadelphia's Policy Analysis Center   OVERVIEW /January 2010
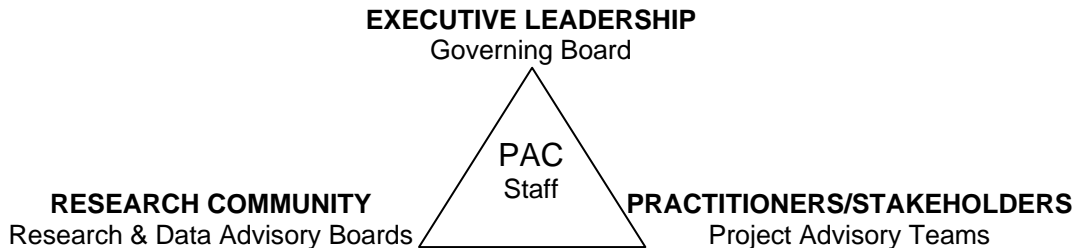
Purpose

The City and School District of Philadelphia are joining forces to establish a Policy and Analysis Center to improve health, education and social services for Philadelphia residents. The Center will analyze routine administrative data gathered by both systems to inform policy and practice with evidence-based research using the Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS) model developed by primary KIDS co-founders John Fantuzzo and Dennis Culhane, professors at the University of Pennsylvania, and drawing upon the City's state-of-the-art database and computer system, CARES.

The practical and economical value of the PAC will be demonstrated through a series of research projects. The City and the School District will develop and implement a common research agenda. The PAC will translate findings from completed research projects into policy or practice changes and conduct new research to inform policy and cross-agency collaboration. By coordinating their efforts, both the City and the School District aim to increase opportunities for the individuals and families they serve and improve investments in services that are supported by public funds.

The PAC is being seeded with a grant from the William Penn Foundation to Penn's Graduate School of Education with Drs. Fantuzzo and Culhane as co-principal investigators. They will be transferring the operation of KIDS to the PAC and serving in a consultative capacity during the start-up.

PAC Operations and Governance

The goal of PAC is to position quality information at the center of government decision-making. The figure below shows the three constituencies who will support PAC operations and meet Center objectives. The Center started operations in January 2010.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP
Governing Board

PAC
Staff

RESEARCH COMMUNITY
Research & Data Advisory Boards

PRACTITIONERS/STAKEHOLDERS
Project Advisory Teams

Executive Leadership
Executive Leadership for the Center will be provided by Dr. Donald F. Schwarz, Deputy Mayor for Health and Opportunity and Everett A. Gillison, Esq., Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, and three members of the School District's leadership team: Pamela Brown, Interim Chief Academic Officer; David Weiner, Chief Accountability Officer; and John Frangipani, Chief of School Operations.

Policy and Analysis Center Staff
The PAC will be staffed by an Executive Director, James Moore; a Research Director, to be hired in late 2010; Deputy Research Director and Stoneleigh Fellow, Dr. Heather Rouse; and a Database Analyst to be on board by spring 2010.

Governing Board
Members of the Governing Board will be representatives of all the participating data-providing agencies and other leaders identified by the Executive Leadership. The Board will establish and carry out the policies and protocol for reviewing and approving research projects and evaluating the practical utility of the findings to inform policy and practice for their agency in particular and for potential cross agency collaborations. Similar to the original KIDS Policy Group, the PAC Governing Board will function as the gatekeepers for the data, carefully considering all uses to ensure that the conducted research fulfills the legal and ethical standards stipulated by the data use agreements and that it informs policy.

Research & Data Advisory Boards
Two advisory boards will be established to maximize the benefits of PAC research and improve the quality of administrative data. The Research Advisory Board will consist of invited members of the research community in Philadelphia and researchers within participating agencies. This board will be knowledgeable of state-of-the-art scientific methods, including research approaches using population-based longitudinal systems. The board will help mediate the relationship between researchers and the Executive Leadership by ensuring that all PAC research projects are methodologically feasible and scientifically rigorous. Additionally, this board will facilitate transactions between the researchers and stakeholders/practitioners in the community by helping with the translation of research findings into practical and understandable information to foster policy considerations. The Data Advisory Board will consist of invited data analysts from participating agencies and data experts from the community at large. This board will discuss data quality issues and consider the feasibility of routine audits or quality checks and develop priorities for data quality improvement.

Project Advisory Teams
Project Advisory Teams comprised of practitioners and stakeholders with content expertise will be involved in each research project. Their role will be to help researchers translate findings into actionable steps and ensure that findings are communicated to other important constituents in a timely and coordinated manner. Project Advisory Team members will also assist in the development of process and performance metrics to monitor the impact of change.

For more information on the development of the KIDS model and the PAC contact John Fantuzzo (johnf@gse.upenn.edu) or Dennis Culhane (culhane@mail.med.upenn.edu)