

Statement Of Need

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, all relevant child serving agencies, including school districts have an obligation through the Court in the Cordero v. Commonwealth remedial order to “**pursue an interagency approach**” to provide timely and appropriate educational services to children “**who would otherwise be referred for placement in restrictive and usually private facilities**”. The purpose of this interagency process is to develop a plan which would enable the child to receive the supports necessary to “**remain in the public school**”. [Since the overwhelming percentage of students placed outside of home, school and community into restrictive placements are those who display disruptive behaviors, children with emotional and behavioral issues are the primary target population of the interagency process.]

“These options must therefore be based on the community and family of the student so that, to the maximum extent possible, services are designed to maintain and support students in their home community and family setting.” The options first considered must be how to provide educational services in his/her neighborhood school in a regular classroom. Best practices suggest the need to develop a balance between natural support systems such as family members and friends and the related child service systems. This balance should be weighed heavily towards natural supports as the child emerges into adulthood.

The Home, School & Community Council, is Chester County’s response to this requirement, and emphasizes the use of families and communities as the focus for change. It is a process which can begin to bridge the isolation of families with problems in living and communities which isolate them. Families with problems in living cannot remain stigmatized and isolated from the community which supports them. They need the support of their neighbors both for succor and for positive expectation for change. The Council can provide the beginning of a regeneration of community, and the regenerated community is the source of nurture to the family with problems in living.