



December 1, 2011

Dear Texas Juvenile Justice Department Board Member,

Over the past five years, the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition has worked with the leadership and staff of both the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission, and we look forward to providing the same support to the new Juvenile Justice Department. Perhaps the most pressing responsibility of the Board will be to choose an Executive Director to lead the new agency during this time of reform.

As you conduct the Executive Director search, we urge you to consider the following qualifications, which we believe an Executive Director must possess to effectively meet the mission of the new agency:

- A strong understanding of and commitment to the missions and goals of the new agency, as laid out by Senate Bill 653, including:
 - Prioritizing the use of community-based or family-based programs and services for youth over the placement or commitment of youth to a secure facility;
 - Assuring accountability, quality, consistency, and transparency through effective monitoring and the use of system-wide performance measures; and
 - Promoting the use of program and service designs and interventions proven to be most effective in rehabilitating youth.
- An ability to lead the agency through reform and to establish a new agency culture fully in line with the missions and goals of S.B. 653.
- A history of strong working partnerships with all relevant stakeholders, including families of youth, advocates, juvenile departments, at-risk and system-involved youths, and agency staff.
- Experience in facility and program oversight at both county and state levels, including the successful implementation of best practices.
- A history of encouraging safety and effective programming for youth in secure facilities through strong standards and monitoring, especially in regard to programming and service provision, with an emphasis on mental health needs, physical and educational disabilities, and trauma-informed care.

Continued on reverse.

- A commitment to reducing referrals to the juvenile justice system by prioritizing community-based prevention and intervention programs.
- High cultural competency, as well as an understanding of gender-specific needs and the needs of LGBTQ youth.
- A commitment to reducing disproportionate minority contact throughout the juvenile justice system.
- A strong understanding of the re-entry needs of youth leaving placements in the juvenile justice system, especially in areas of education, employment, and any ongoing, necessary treatment.
- Experience in the enhancement of continuity of care for youth throughout the juvenile justice system, including through the use of evidence-based assessment tools at youths' entry-point in the system to determine an appropriate treatment plan, ongoing evaluations, and an appropriate re-entry plan to support youths during their transition to the community.

Thank you again for your critical service on the TJJD Board. We welcome any opportunity to work with you to ensure every child in Texas feels safe and confident in a bright future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Yáñez-Correa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Ana Yáñez-Correa, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition