Keys to Effective Implementation

Across the numerous theories describing effective, sustainable systemic change and implementation, there are several commonly identified elements:

- **Leadership Commitment and Executive Sponsorship:** Involvement of the commissioner and his/her executive team is critical to establishing a vision, creating a sense of urgency about the project and authorizing project managers to carry it out.

- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Throughout the process, planfully involve internal stakeholders (including middle managers, frontline supervisors and social work staff) and external stakeholders (including service providers, oversight agencies, schools, courts, youth advisory groups, university partners, juvenile justice agencies, etc.).

- **Family Engagement:** Support families in playing a significant role in project design and implementation to help ensure the project is designed to meet their real needs in a culturally responsive manner.

- **Culture and Climate:** Conduct an environmental scan of organizational culture and climate to understand potential sources of support, readiness, acceptance, resistance, and other reactions.

- **Communication:** A communication plan focused on clear, consistent and frequent communication is an important component of the implementation plan.

- **Cross-Functional Project Team**: Create and authorize a cross-functional implementation team or taskforce to guide the project, manage its details and solve problems that risk impeding success.

- **Coaching:** Provide deliberate support to help staff assimilate training and improve practice; support the integration of new skills by providing on the job teaching and mentoring.

- **Operational Details**: Pay thorough attention to the operational details and processes required to align/re-align practice, policy, training, quality assurance and personnel to support and sustain change.

- **Organizational Structures**: align organizational structures to achieve horizontal and vertical integration.

- **Resources:** Secure resources for extra costs, effort, equipment, materials, access to expertise and training for new organizational roles during the project.

- **Ongoing Commitment:** Sustained change requires ongoing resources and support providing time, scheduling for coaching, participatory planning, exercise of leadership and evolution of teamwork.

- **Frequent Monitoring and Evaluation**: Assess progress and impact and disseminate findings through a clear feedback loop to ensure fidelity to the new practice or program and to guide adjustments needed to sustain the systemic change.