



“HB 6824 Testimony for March 3, 2015 Appropriations Committee”

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the committee:

My name is Betsy Dean and I am the Executive Director of Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Service (DMYFS). I am very concerned about the proposed \$1.3 million dollar cuts made to CT YSBs in the Governor’s proposed budget. We have been working with our school system, RSD#13 to collect data and report to SDE as a measure of success for many years. I fear we will loss the access to this data with a move to DCF and this would make tracking the success of our programs and students much harder, if at all.

In 1978, Public Act 78-183 of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) established Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs). DMYFS is the lead agency for the community designated to act as the agent of one or more municipalities, for the purpose of evaluating, planning, coordinating and implementing services, including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, young parents and troubled youth.

The statute further states that YSBs shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide a comprehensive delivery of prevention and intervention, treatment and follow-up services. (See C.G.S. 10-19m). Here in Durham and Middlefield it is Youth and Family Services that is the lead agency fulfilling this role. We work closely with the school district and the office of Social Services and police to provide a comprehensive prevention and intervention plan as well as serving as the point of contact for information on treatment options and follow-up services.

YSBs receive referrals from community, regional and state service providers, parents/guardians and the youth themselves. The issues presented to YSBs are complex and often require a network of services. YSBs annually track referral information that is then used to assist in developing programs and activities.

The RBA Reporting Framework: In FY 2011-12, the statewide implementation of the YSB/RBA data collection method took place. As a result of earlier piloting and the coordinated efforts of several agencies to strengthen accountability within the Juvenile Review Board (JRB) program, a third survey has been added for FY 2013-14, specific to youth participating in the JRB process. The JRB in Durham and Middlefield is a well-respected program in our community with referrals coming in from the

police, RSD#13 and from parents with family concerns. The JRB plays an integral role in intervention and provides youth with creative learning opportunities and increased ability to make positive future decisions.

102 YSBs are funded via SDE and provide services in over 145 Connecticut communities. YSBs reported having referred or diverted over 26,000 children and youth and in addition over 448,000 youth and parents participated in YSB Programs over the past 2 years.

Sixty-five percent of the funds that support YSBs are from the local municipalities' both direct (57 %) and in-kind (8 %) contributions. The state-funded YSBs reported combined available funding of \$29,709,937, which includes municipal and in-kind contributions and a variety of other funds YSBs leveraged beyond the basic state grants. This funding was used as a match when Durham and Middlefield applied for and received a federal drug free community's grant, without this match I'm not confident we would have received this funding.

Contribution to the Result: YSBs provide direct services designed to provide supports and build assets for youth, including special populations such as justice involved youth, youth with mental health needs, other youth at risk, and youth needing services to enhance their education and career advancement.

DMYFS partners with the following: State Department of Education, Department of Labor, Court Support Services Division, the Department of Social Services, Department of Children and Families, Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, municipal departments, law enforcement agencies, parents, local non-profits, faith-based organizations, school districts, & Regional Action Councils.

In the last three years, DMYFS has increased its services in many areas. Most notable is a doubling of the number served in positive youth development programs. Statewide a total of 40,483 individuals who each received 20 or more hours of services were served last year, many individuals often received multiple services, and a significant amount received services as part of a diversion from the juvenile justice system. The actual mix of services offered depends largely on the needs of the individual communities.

Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Services is the conduit to support and services our community has turned to and relied on for many years. Please oppose these drastic cuts to Connecticut Youth and Family Services line in this proposed budget.

Thank you for your time, consideration and support,

Betsy Dean

Executive Director

Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Services

