



University of New Haven

HENRY C. LEE COLLEGE OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND FORENSIC SCIENCES

Tow Youth Justice Institute

JJPOC Meeting Minutes

April 16, 2015

LOB, Room 1E

2:00-3:30 PM

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker

Sen. Gary Winfield

Sen. John Kissell

Erica Bromley

Judge Bernadette Conway

Rep. Matthew Lesser

Sec. Ben Barnes

Loel Meckel

Derrick Gordon

Mark Zeck

Jeanne Milstein

Jim Isenberg

Bill Carbone

Kitty Tyrol

Abby Anderson

Stephen Grant

Christine Rapillo

Fran Carino

Linda Dixon

Patrick Hynes

John Frassinelli

Rep. Toni Walker called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Sec. Ben Barnes thanked everyone for the hard work and preparation for the meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made and seconded. Minutes accepted unanimously.

The Tow Youth Justice Institute and Renee LaMark Muir presented a draft of a strategic plan based on the contributions from the work groups, state agencies and review of relevant reports and research; including numerical goals and targets.

Short term goals include completing the current studies and analyses per statute. Medium term goals are based on 5 categories that have been consistent throughout JJPOC meetings: diversion, incarceration, recidivism, data interoperability, and disproportionate minority contact. Numerical targets for each goal have been established as follows: a 20% decrease in incarceration, a 10% decrease in recidivism and a 20% increase in diversion.

Discussion began with Rep. Toni Walker emphasizing the importance of determining cost reduction due to a decrease in incarceration and asking that TYJI conduct a cost benefit analysis. Sec Ben Barnes inquired about the numerical targets and indicated that based on current trends, we should consider increasing the goals. Mr. Carbone indicated that the strategies for increasing diversion came from the work groups. Abby Anderson suggested flexibility based on community needs and resources when we are looking at diversion, and practices in addition to JRBS. Ms. La Mark Muir reiterated that all of these strategies came from the goals and law enforcement work groups and that there will also be a comprehensive evaluation of the Juvenile Review Boards to assess their effectiveness and to determine consistency.

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Mr. Carbone explained that we have access to all of the referrals to courts by town; knowing where JRBs are located. JRB is a primary diversion resource because it is economical and effective at diverting kids and although not all services are available locally, perhaps they can be made available since we do not want communities to refer youth to court in order to access services.

Rep. Toni Walker indicated that JJPOC increase the goal for diversion, agreeing with Sec. Barnes that CT can achieve a higher goal. Mr. Carbone emphasized the importance of expanding the School Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) with current research and evaluations highlighting its success in reducing school based arrests, reducing suspension and expulsion, and ultimately help in reducing disproportionate minority contact (DMC).

Rep. Walker asked what percent of children and youth involved with juvenile justice come from the three big cities. Stephen Grant responded that 75% of referrals are from 5 or 6 of the big cities and was asked by Rep. Walker to send the data. Sec. Ben Barnes asked if there is a way to measure performance directly on the number of youth who have been arrested by starting at a local level to learn about interventions resulting in lower arrest rates for youth; to which Bill Carbone stated that TYJI would follow up.

Chris Rapillo informed JJPOC that there already is existing data when grants are disbursed to towns through OPM, with information and progress made by JRBs in some of small and midsize communities. Mr. Carbone indicated that the CT Youth Service Bureau Association is working with the National League of Cities where selected cities concentrate on executive actions in the juvenile justice system, identifying community responsibilities and prevention. Erica Bromley coordinates the effort with seven communities involved.

Erica Bromley reported that each of the cities involved would be getting data on arrests in order to learn more about types of crimes and trends. The cities are a mix of small and large including Bridgeport, East Hartford, Middletown, Hartford, New Haven, Norwich, and Stamford.

Rep. Walker asked that this information be posted on the website to be used as a reference.

Jeanne Milstein reported that CHDI is working with TYJI to address the statutory requirement for assessment of the overlap between mental health and juvenile justice.

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Ms. La Mark Muir discussed the next medium term goal of decreasing incarceration by 20% as a cumulative decrease to which Rep. Walker asked that the costs for each facility be presented to the JJPOC. Sec. Barnes indicated that if the number of youth who are incarcerated decreases by 20%, then the number of youth in pretrial should also shrink by 20%. He asked if any efforts are concentrated for youth in pretrial. Mr. Carbone responded that youth who are diverted are the ones who commit minor offenses., indicating that 90% of kids committed to court never make it to detention as detention is for youth with higher needs. Mr. Carbone further explained that a juvenile could be arrested multiple times counting each arrest individually; the number of admissions is not based on the number of juveniles but on the number of commitments made to the detention center.

Mr. Grant confirmed that the racial breakdown is 70% minority in detention and 75% in CJTS. Mr. Carbone stated that when the probation violation is targeted, there could be alternative strategies for reduction. Additionally, if the JJPOC identifies better strategies and different supervision, then there is hope that there will be a decrease of youth violated on parole. The report previously presented by Dr. Kendell Coker identified common themes in services offered to youth versus their diagnosis (ex. mental health services); concluding the importance of better matching to programs congruent to the needs of the youth.

Final discussion addressed the lack of variety of programs and services for youth, affecting the number of juveniles incarcerated due to mental health, language barriers, and substance abuse.

Jeanne Milstein suggested that the JJPOC create a work group on Data which will identify opportunities for collecting consistent data, cross system analysis, confidentiality issues and other areas consisting of State agencies, members of JJPOC, state and private academic researchers and lawyers. Mr. Carbone asked the JJPOC to consider the goals that were presented as TYJI continues working with the work groups to prioritize strategies in a work plan with timelines.

Rep. Walker concluded that the goals be more aggressive emphasizing the importance of identifying and measuring outcomes and developing more prevention initiatives.

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Presentation: An Overview of Collaborative Efforts to Improve Juvenile Risk Assessment by Raymond “Chip” Tafrate, Ph.D., Stephen Cox, Ph.D., (CCSU); Steve Smith (DCF), and Mark White (Judicial)

Dr. Chip Tafrate introduced the collaborative effort between CCSU and CSSD with a general overview of juvenile risk assessment practice in juvenile probation, currently utilizing the JAG (Juvenile Assessment Generic). In short, Dr. Tafrate likened juvenile risk reduction practice to the framework of symptom reduction in mental health in the medical model. Mental health and risk assessment influence each other but most of us come to the table with a mental health symptom reduction framework. People may not have any symptoms but they can be at high risk for developing them. Efforts focus on fostering a culture and cohesion among administrators and practitioners around the values of risk reduction.

Dr. Stephen Cox shared that we know a lot more about risk assessment now than we did 15 years ago when the JAG was put into place, reviewing the Georgetown University recommendations for the risk assessment process for both judicial and DCF agencies. The overall goal is to get everyone on the same page using similar tools and making decisions with those tools, using similar processes so they can share the same data and understand it to make similar decisions regarding youth.

Mark White from the Judicial Branch, Juvenile Probation in New Haven, stated that the current JAG risk assessment tool started in 2000 but in 2011 the Judicial Branch began developing a new risk assessment tool, engaging line staff in the development and implementation of the tool, and enhancing risk assessment for juvenile probation.

The new tool was piloted in the community on a non-justice youth population and has now been utilized by Juvenile New Haven Probation and is subject to NYAP (National Youth Assessment Program) in order to learn if the tool is performing in an effective manner prior to statewide implementation, which is targeted for first quarter 2016.

Stephen Smith indicated that DCF has benefited from the work of Judicial and CCSU. With the DCF population being a distinct subset of the judicial population, their juvenile justice workforce development plan is to implement risk reduction training and practice in two distinct phases. The first step establishes a cohort within DCF Juvenile Services to be trained on risk need, and responsivity (RNR) and motivational interviewing beginning in mid-June. By September, this cohort will utilize a (nationally validated) tool (YLS/CM) Youth Level Service Case Management System to foster alignment with the CCSU/Judicial tool in development. The MOA between DCF and CCSU is being finalized and DCF cohort staff has been identified. CCSU is providing the majority of training to the DCF cohort as well as MHS (YLS/CM developers)

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Brief discussion focused on juvenile services remaining dedicated to reducing disproportionate minority contact by training officers to use discretion as Rep. Walker emphasized the importance of having staff that administers the tool speak the same language as the youth and reflect the community they serve. Mr. Carbone emphasized the critical importance that both agencies (DCF and Judicial) use the same or complementary practices with coordinated training, uniform ways of sharing information, and similar goals; and this collaboration demonstrates that effort.

Mr. Carbone thanked all of the staff from Judicial, CCSU, DCF and UNH.

Rep. Walker thanked everyone for participating in a good discussion and that JJPOC members submit ideas for goals by the end of the day April 25, 2015.

The next meeting of JJPOC will be held on May 21, 2015 at 2pm in room 2A of the LOB.
Meeting adjourned.
