



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2021

2:00pm-4:00pm

Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker

Marc Pelka

Anthony Nolan

Gary Winfield

Ilianna Pujols

Erica Bromley

Macklin Roman

Patrick Callahan

Hector Glynn

Marilyn Moore

Martha Stone

Catherine Osten

Judge Patrick Carroll

Judge Dawne Westbrook

Robyn Porter

Greg Howard

Gary Roberge

Tais Ericson

Christine Rapillo

Brian Casinghino

Vannessa Dorantes

Angel Quiros

Derrick Molden

John Frassinelli

Amy Marracino

Lisa Sementilli

Stacy Schulman

Sarah Eagan

Derrick Gordon

Vernon Beaulieu

TYJI Staff:

William Carbone

Erika Nowakowski

Kelly Orts

Danielle Cooper

Donna Pfrommer

Susan Cusano

Patrick Saley

Shauntaye Monroe

Welcome and Introductions

Sen. Gary Winfield temporarily filled in for Rep. Toni Walker and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Undersecretary Marc Pelka filled in for Secretary Melissa McCaw of OPM.

The JJPOC co-chairs welcomed, introduced, and thanked the members of the community expertise workgroup for joining the meeting.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Sen. Gary Winfield asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the November 17th, 2021 meeting. The motion to accept was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Final Review and Approval of JJPOC Strategic Plan

For the diversion section of the strategic plan, it was amended to add the goal that youth remain in home with families, which was requested by DCF. In the strategies and indicators, there is an additional defining criteria for appropriate ordering of temporary custody in partnership with parents from the community expertise workgroup. In the indicators, tracking the number of



youths in juvenile justice who were in out of home placement, such as foster care and congregate care or on an order of temporary custody, was added.

Additional feedback was received on the goal to reduce inappropriate referrals to the juvenile justice system. The feedback recommended policies that grant law enforcement access to juvenile's full criminal records at the point of the stop to ensure custodial rests are made in appropriate circumstances. There was an explanation that they have already addressed this in CSSD's new policies, which allows to request information for cases and the focus of diversion is to address the front end of the system, which would mean that these youth would likely not have criminal records. Another recommendation was to add a new section to define the limits of effective diversion and the appropriateness of judicially imposed consequences for habitual offenders whose criminal conduct has escalated in severity after initial diversion.

The incarceration goal of the strategic plan includes the reviewing of the quality and availability of behavioral health services. There was a suggestion to study DCF and CJTS to house nonviolent, low risk juvenile offenders but there was concern that it would lead to having low level youth more easily removed from their home. It was deemed appropriate, instead, to expand the use and accessibility of existing community-based services of youth at risk of system involvement. There was also a suggestion to modify the transfer statute, which was revised to reflect the transfer language proposed by JJPOC last year. Lastly, feedback was received to increase the use of GPS monitoring, which is a concern because electronic monitoring is already available in lieu of a detention order and would be outside of the resources that were provided; however, there can be a continued discussion about pre-adjudication supervision. Also, the incarceration co-chairs expressed that they are not in favor of "A" felonies automatic transfer since they are already to be transferred automatically within the age limits.

The RED goal is to ensure that race and ethnicity data and the strategies address disparities are interpreted and developed in true partnership with communities of color. It was recommended that law enforcement make mandatory fingerprinting of juvenile arrest. There are several police chiefs who have participated with the RED workgroup and the RED co-chairs agreed to examine practices, such as fingerprinting, in partnership with the community members.

A vote was called to approve the JJPOC Strategic Plan. There were 27 yeses and 2 nos.

Presentation on Draft 2022 JJPOC Recommendations

Currently, the draft language for all recommendations and reports is being finalized for the committee to review and vote on come January of 2022. Tow will be releasing draft recommendations and reports to the committee on December 23rd. There will be deadlines for



feedback on the draft reports and recommendations, then revisions will be made to the documents and resent to the JJPOC.

Diversion Recommendations

For alternatives to arrest, it is recommended that mandatory pre-arrest diversion of low-risk children to YSBs or other services for tier one offenses. The report outlines the capacity of YSBs and other local agencies, accountability mechanisms, process for victim input and involvement, data collection and tracking, and communication and outreach to stakeholders regarding local services. They have reviewed YSB/JRB data, as well as CSSD data on tier one offenses. There was also a survey of law enforcement, a discussion and presentation of restorative practices, and a review of other state models. There were 59 responses were from the police officers and about half of those were SROs. The implementation plan with findings and recommendations for mandatory prearrest diversion of low-risk children include disorderly conduct and larceny in the 6th degree, which were originally tier two offenses. There was some cannabis related language in the initial legislation but the report notes changes in accordance with new laws. Additional recommendations in the plan include standardizing the referral process using a JRB or diversion ticket book for law enforcement, as well as the continued use of the YSB referral form for schools, strengthening the relationship between police departments and YSBs/JRBs, and increasing law enforcement trainings in identifying and handling youth trauma, local community resources, and mentoring and mental health. The low-risk categorization includes very low-level offenses, which historically equates to low risk.

The state has previously raised the minimum age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 7 to 10 and the Diversion workgroup would like to increase the minimum age from 10 to 12. The group has researched other jurisdictions, reviewed data from CSSD invited guest speakers from other states, and research national and international best practices. They want to increase the minimum age to be developmentally appropriate and aligned with recommendations from professional organizations including the National Association of Social Workers, American Academy of Pediatrics, Society for Adolescent Health in Medicine. They reviewed a statement from seven professional organizations that endorse the minimum age of at least 12 for juvenile justice system jurisdiction. They prepared educational materials regarding the change from 7 to 10 to raise awareness on the new law. They looked at data showing that most of the offenses under 12 are misdemeanors and most cases are handled non-judicially by JRBs. They also looked at data that most of the under 12 who were referred were low risk. The referrals under age 12 average around 130 referrals a year, in 2019 data there were proximately 100 under the age of 12 arrested and sent to court so this creates a weight on the system and can introduce trauma. There were



discussions that formally processing a youth in the system doesn't prevent future rearrest and avoiding court involvement and providing interventions increased the chance to remain at home and in communities. This was viewed through a racial justice lens and reviewed reports showing that youth of color account for 57% of arrests underage 12. The number would have a small impact on community systems but, would be significant for an individual child's future.

Lastly, there is a recommendation to funding the implementation of the community-based diversion system by July 2022. The workgroup is recommending all available funding sources to be considered to address the current crisis, such as utilizing the family first prevention services act. Efforts should be coordinated between juvenile justice, behavioral health, education, and prevention services to ensure short-term and sustainable development of the child serving system. It is important to have one coordinated system that is sustainable for the youth.

Incarceration Recommendations

The task for the commissary subgroup was to look at recommendations for commissary needs of 18- to 21-year-olds who are incarcerated. They created and distributed a survey to individuals who were 21 and under in DOC facilities. The survey asked questions regarding their feedback on current commissary offerings and what they'd like to see expanded or changed. There were about 105 responses. Current DOC commissary was reviewed, as well as what CSSD provides in their juvenile residential facilities, what CJTS previously provided, and other state models. The first recommendation is to enhance quality control for commissary throughout the agency. One approach that has been discussed is utilizing a credible messenger approach and polling of the entire inmate population into the DOC regarding their needs. There are currently 56 employees, along with the inmate worker population, that supply all the commissary products throughout the state. On a yearly basis, they review what is available for purchase, with the goal to expand that information system and gather more feedback. The agency considers equal protection and equal opportunities for their population. The second recommendation in this report is to expand commissary options. Most individuals would like to see more hygiene products and healthier options. The current commissary system has 31 halal products and 31 kosher items. The third recommendation is to improve feminine hygiene product options to include organic and additional brands. The DOC purchased and distributed \$22,000 worth of feminine hygiene products to the female population at York CI. They would also like to increase opportunities and incentives for education employment and programming. This includes increasing meaningful job opportunities and increasing pay for students and for individuals that are completing programming opportunities. A fiscal analysis was completed based on some of the recommendations, it could cost between \$64,000 and \$1.52 million to implement these



recommendations. In the past five years, the commissary fund has had \$3.3 million put into the general fund and this fund is for staffing for the DOC and inmate programming. The \$3.3 million funds are not general fund dollars, they are revolving fund account dollars. The commissary and Connecticut enterprises are self-funded through a revolving account. The final recommendation is to decrease the markup on prices for commissary goods. The current federal regulation permits for a 35% commissary markup and CT DOC currently has a 30% markup on commissary goods. For example, California reduced their commissary markup on all goods to 10%. Any decrease in markup could result between \$1.7 and \$2.66 million for DOC.

The DOC report on alternatives to chemical agents is currently being worked on and will be submitted to the JJPOC in February 2022. Data analysis focuses on why serious juvenile incidents are occurring and leading to the use of chemical agents. Information is being extracted and examined to identify those individuals that may require intervention and diagnosing the issues that may exist through pinpoint data analytics. Additionally, verbal intervention is being reviewed on whether it is tactical or therapeutic. There is a significant decrease in DRs, chemical agent usage, and specific reports for fighting. In March, there was a survey through CLA, 34 states responded and 18 of those states said they utilize chemical agent as a last resort with juvenile youth and young adult offenders. Other states were consulted and said that they are conducting monthly staff training to include de-escalation techniques. Some have implemented a dedicated crisis intervention for officers and verbal judo. Verbal judo is verbal intervention. There have been efforts to integrate more specific training at to include tactical communication, restorative justice, and verbal de-escalation. There has been enhanced collaboration and communication to add any training opportunities available through DCF and CSSD. From 1990-2021, there is a significant increase in the unsentenced population, which caused a lot of anxiety and stress of youth and young adults. Cold blue is verbiage for an inmate fight. A covered window is if an officer is not able to see the resident behind that glass which is a safety and security concern. There was an incident where a covered window was not addressed and the cellmate ended up killing his partner resulting in firing two staff members and suspending another six officers. There was a question asked if youth have been written up for covering their window for issues such as privacy but there hasn't been someone disciplined for privacy as the issue is only when someone is refusing to uncover their windows. The RAMP program allows the youth to have a voice in the process. RAMP has been in effect since March and there has been 21 out of 25 successful mediations. If a youth gets into altercations with each other or chemical agents have been used by a staff member, the youth can sit with the staff member to get an understanding of what happened.

The Judicial Branch is in the process of developing a report that will go to the Judiciary Committee and the JJPOC about the transfer of pre-trial youth under 18-year-olds from MYI and York to the



CSSD. The group started to meet in July and met every other week since then to develop this report. There were a few options considered and looked at for available space and the group has a developed consensus on recommendations. For this population, average length of stay was 140 days, which is longer than what the current length of stay which is 23 days. It is important to make sure there are facilities that can address several items including education, vocational needs, recreational needs, and there needs to be space for developmental needs of this population. The implementation plan is undergoing final edits and will be prepared to be submitted on January 1st to the General Assembly.

Education Recommendations

The education committee is re-proposing the pilot program to review school calls to 911 in ten opportunity school districts. This recommended should not involve additional responsibility of the schools, as the information is already tracked by 911 call centers. The demographics of the child, and reason for the call will be reviewed. This will also be compared with 211 call data provided from CHDI.

A minor recommendation from the education committee is also to amend technical legislative language to the new DCF administrative unit that will oversee educational services for incarcerated youth. These technical changes will clarify the differences between the unit and USD2, as well as their role and responsibility in overseeing services.

The suspension and expulsion committee is drafting a report to find viable alternatives to exclusionary discipline for pre-K through 2nd grade. Some preliminary recommendations focus on necessity of funding for the alternatives to be viable. The group will be recommending funding for proactive on social and emotional learning and every school district should have a social and emotional learning program. There needs to be therapeutic interventions available for children and a blur in the boundaries between community agencies that provide mental health services and the schools. Training is also necessary, both in the pre-service level but also for teachers and with that goes de-escalation. They are going to recommend better strategies for family involvement and to be aware of the mental health concerns of the children. There is an attempt to understand alternatives to exclusionary discipline while also understanding that there are things that happen at the various levels of the process. The position statement from the Connecticut State Board of Education addressing the reduction of disproportionality and suspension and expulsions highlight several guidelines that echo numerous themes. There needs to be a systemic approach, making sure that there are a variety of ways to offer access to our students and that there is a welcoming environment for everyone. It is also important to bridge the policy level to the needs of the schools.



Community Expertise Recommendations

The community expertise workgroup will be re-proposing the same recommendation as last year, which would increase the JJPOC membership by 2 youth and 2 parents. They also specified that the funding aspect that would be provided through an expansion of existing contracts of the workgroup.

RED Recommendations

The RED workgroup is building off all of the work from the traffic stop task force and is re-proposing the recommendation to collection pedestrian stop data. The recommendation would look for patterns around pedestrian stops across Connecticut cities with youth who are more likely to be impacted by pedestrian stops than vehicle stops. The workgroup also is trying to build consensus on a recommendation related to SROs. There are discussions held on the role that SRO's play in school. Standardization of the SRO roles and responsibilities across the state is lacking so recommendations may focus on standardizing the criteria, training, and agreements that SROs might be required to have. They are also waiting for a report from Connecticut voices about the effects and disparities that SRO's can have in schools.

Next Meeting: January 20, 2022, 2:00-4:00pm (Voting meeting)