



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2022
2:00pm-3:30pm
Legislative Office Bldg, Rm 1E
Zoom Option Available

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker	Sarah Eagan	John Frassinelli
Marc Pelka	Tais Ericson	Michael Williams
Anthony Nolan	Susan Hamilton	Steven Hernandez
Gary Winfield	Brian Casinghino	Tammy Exum
Derrick Gordon	Iliana Pujols	
Christina Quaranta	Stacy Schulman	TYJI Staff
Erica Bromley	Amy Marracino	Bill Carbone
Macklin Roman	Lisa Sementilli	Sue Cusano
Janeen Reid	Warden Michael Pierce	Erika Nowakowski
Martha Stone	Glen Worthy	Brittany LaMarr
Hector Glynn	Gwendolyn Samuel	Shauntaye Monroe
Robyn Porter	Gary Roberge	Donna Pfrommer
Greg Howard	Judge Dawne Westbrook	Hunter Clark
Dr. Derrick Gordon	Brian Hill	Paul Klee
Laura Furr	Vincent Russo	Sydney de Lannoy

Welcome and Introductions

Undersecretary Marc Pelka and Representative Toni Walker welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Overview of the Meeting

Erika Nowakowski introduced the Connecticut Youth Services Association, Dillinger Research and Applied Data INC, and Department of Children and Families, who presented data on Connecticut’s Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards.

Acceptance of JJPOC Meeting Minutes

Representative Toni Walker asked for a motion to accept the November 17, 2022, meeting minutes. The motion was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Connecticut Youth Services Association—Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards Presentation

In Connecticut, there are currently 103 Youth Service Bureaus (YSB’s) that provide services for 136 communities. YSBs are codified by state statute CGS 10-19m by Public Act No. 75-487, and it is stated that YSBs shall be “coordinating unit of community-based services”. The state statute specifies that Youth Service Bureaus are required to conduct ‘Administrative Core Unit Functions’ which include the following: management and administration, needs assessments, community resource development,



community involvement, and advocacy. YSBs receive state funding which is made up of a Base Grant and an Enhancement Grant. Base Grants are primarily reserved for administrative functioning, while the Enhancement Grant is used for direct services, which is contingent on available funds. Enhancement Grants for YSBs may range from roughly \$6,000 to \$17,000, but funding is dependent on population. 76% of YSBs receive under \$30,000, with 30 YSBs receiving the Base Grants minimum of \$14,189. As of 2019, Youth Service Bureaus are placed under Department of Children and Families. The 103 YSBs in Connecticut serve youth birth to 18 years old, where they provide prevention and intervention programs for “Delinquent, predelinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youth”. These prevention and intervention programs are offered on a continuum. An individual may be referred to YSBs by police, schools, community agencies, parents, or by self-referral.

In 2022, the YSBs of Connecticut served 15,940 individuals that were identified as ‘Tier 2’, which involve programs considered to be more intensive and lasting more than 20 hours. Roughly 38% of individuals served were in the 12-15 age range. In the Tier 2 group, 51% of youths were female, 48% were male, and 1% were non-binary or transgender. 60% of Tier 2 youth who received services from the YSB were white, and 71% were not Hispanic or Latino. The majority of youth receiving Tier 2 services had not been suspended or expelled within the past two school years.

Juvenile Review Boards (JRB) are a community-based diversion program for youth who may otherwise be referred to the Juvenile Court for minor violations of the law. The first JRB was created in Enfield, CT in 1968 and there are now approximately 90 JRBs serving over 135 communities in Connecticut. Most JRB’s are placed under YSB’s, with only 10% being ran by other entities. The purpose of diversion to a JRB is to redirect youth from involvement in the formal juvenile court system in an effort to hold youth accountable for their behavior without resorting to legal sanctions, court oversight, or the threat of confinement to mitigate future risk and subsequent delinquent behavior. Funding for Juvenile Review Boards differs greatly; 3 JRB’s are fully funded by DCF (Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven), while more than half are not funded but may receive a portion of their respective YSB’s grant funding. Approximately 34 JRBs in 2020 received smaller amounts of funding from DCF for Support and Enhancement (ranging from \$1,725 to \$31,650) while 10 more JRBs were identified in 2022 to apply for Support and Enhancement dollars.

Connecticut JRBs served 1,903 youth in 2022. Roughly 20% of all youth served by JRBs were 15 years old, with 92.5% being between the ages of 12 to 18. Males were most commonly served, (58%). Females made up 41.4% and Non-Binary or Transgender youth made up 0.7% of those served by JRBs. 49% of youth served by JRBs were white, and 33.3% were Black/African American; 63.3% were not Hispanic or Latino. Unlike YSBs, the majority of youth (56.2%) had been suspended or expelled within the past two school years, with only 30.7% being in Special Education in the present school year. Although there are many referral sources for JRBs (police, courts, parents, school, and others), police accounted for 66.9% of all JRB referrals for the 2022 year. Larceny, illegal drug possession, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, breach of peace, and assault were the most common incidents for referral, with breach of peace being the highest frequency at 27.4%. Breach of peace was the highest for all age groups (under 12, 12-14, and 15-18) but was the highest for the 12-14 age group—being responsible for 36.3% of referrals in that age range. The top 5 services provided by JRBs in 2022 were as follows:



positive youth development, individual therapy, community service programs, case management, and other. The most frequently utilized service by JRB was case management at 21.8%. In 2022, the JRB saw 69.6% of cases successfully completed, but when these cases were not completed it was frequently due to non-compliance of the program requirements (12.2%). The JRB has seen a dip in number of youth served from pre-pandemic levels, but are currently on the rebound. Many of the incidents' individuals are referred for remain the same as they have been in the last six years, but they are seeing slightly more referrals in the 12-14 age range than in previous years. There has also been some variation in gender of youth referred- there are more females than we have seen in past years and they're most frequently referred due to fights in school. The cases that are coming to diversion are more complex than in previous years, which is the reason for a slightly lower completion rate than pre-COVID levels.

The JRB Pilot project began in September 2022 and is still currently in progress at 7 sites: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, Naugatuck, Norwich, and Wethersfield. Advisory groups for the project include the 7 pilot JRB sites, CSSD, DCF, Connecticut Youth Services Association, victim advocates, a restorative justice expert, law enforcement and a family engagement expert. There have been a variety of listening sessions to encourage youth and parent involvement, with focus on referrals, screening, services, restorative justice, family engagement, and outcome measures. Listening sessions are about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way complete, and the project plans to take into consideration these listening sessions when implementing changes in January and February for statewide roll out. Restorative justice practices are the forefront of discussion and the basis for the program foundation. The programs and procedures that were outlined in 2016 have been adjusted to be more restorative based than the previous versions.

Dillinger Research and Applied Data—Landscape Data Analysis Presentation

Dillinger Research and Applied Data Inc (DillingerRAD) is a Connecticut-based 501(c)3 nonprofit that works with youth-centered organizations around their data needs and goals. DillingerRAD has partnered with numerous school districts both in and out of Connecticut, other youth-based non-profit organizations, and state level Boards of Education. Over the last two years, DillingerRAD has been working with CYSA and DCF to help the network of member organizations move towards expanded data capacity, management, and use.

Goals of Dillinger Research and Applied Data's Landscape analysis were focused on improving outcomes for Youth Initiative Taskforce and JJPOC Approved Recommendations by specifying the mission and continuing to strengthen the capacity and diversionary function of YSBs and JRBs statewide and to adopt research-based policies and practices. The Landscape Analysis focused to collect data to better understand functioning and capacity, analyze the data to better understand where and when organizations are able to directly or indirectly provide services in accordance with state mandates, and identify barriers that exist which limit an organization's ability to provide services in accordance with state mandates when gaps in services are found.

The Landscape Analysis was designed to be a multi-step project. The first step of the analysis was to start with an initial desk review, where existing state mandates and best practices for YSBs and JRBs were reviewed to develop a complete picture of current organizational expectations. After this initial



review, the survey was designed to target understanding of Connecticut's statewide variability in organizational structures and capacity, alignment with state mandates, and challenges/barriers that may be present. Survey questions were reviewed and approved by DCF and CYSA. Two surveys were developed; one focused on YSBs and included 154 questions, the other focused on JRBs and included 167 questions. Questions in the survey were designed to evaluate functional areas specific to YSBs and JRBs, then were further categorized into 'tiering' questions (related to alignment with state mandates) or 'context' questions (seeking to understand how an individual organization is ran). Each organization received a unique online link to fill out an individual survey. Ultimately, eighty-three (94%) JRBs across the state completed the survey and ninety-nine (96%) YSBs across the state completed the survey. The Landscape Analysis has shown that the 'Typical' YSB in Connecticut has 2 or fewer full-time staff and 2 or fewer part-time staff and utilizes the majority of their budget for staffing and programing, but are simultaneously underfunded in areas of Staffing and Tier 2 programming. There also appears to be limited funding in addressing specific youth needs and providing specific programming for the youth they are seeing. The typical YSB has not seen a change in their overall budget over the last five years. Most services are provided for children between 0-20 years of age and serve approximately 400 youths per year (approximately 300 Tier 1 youth and approximately 100 Tier 2 youth). There has been an increased complexity of Tier 2 cases, while continuing to have unmet needs in the community for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 youth. Although direct services have appeared to grow within the last five years, the availability of external programing has remained the same. Connecticut YSB's are typically meeting state mandated requirements across multiple measures, but there is still room for improvements across many benchmark categories. The more successful YSBs have more community partners, receive referrals from a diverse set of community partners, have directors who are actively involved in CYSA and often have many years of experience, and have more core staff (full-time and part-time). The 'Typical' JRB in Connecticut serves one town while being run by the local YSB. On average, the typical JRB has operated for 15 years. The typical JRB is comprised of 10 board members, who attend each meeting. These board members are appointed by the local YSB, and there is no maximum number of terms a member can serve. They have access to 14 different service types to utilize during creation of the JRB agreement and prioritize using trust and relationship building questions during intake. The JRBs are always able to accept cases and allow families to choose virtual or in-person meetings. These meetings are scheduled in collaboration with family, can be offered with translation services, and the services are all free of charge. The JRBs in Connecticut tend to be similar in tiering to the YSB's, with most benchmarks meeting state mandates. However, Connecticut's JRB's average 'Youth and Family Engagement' benchmark show that many of these organizations are maximizing impact through meeting and exceeding state mandate expectations. Improvements still need to be made within staffing and training within Connecticut's JRBs, but this average benchmark is not exceptionally below state mandated standards. The most successful JRBs have more services available within the community, use restorative practices, emphasize collaboration with youth and their families/ provide additional accommodations to support the process, provide translation services, accept youth following second offenses, provide restorative training to board members, provide onboard training to board members, and have an equity plan.

Using this Landscape Analysis, DillingerRAD has created many recommendations specific to some of the issues that have arose from the compiled survey data. The main areas of concern are in service



coverage and availability, evidence-based and quality assurance practices, training, and data collection and reporting systems. Some of the noted recommendations are: explore access to existing statewide services to address current gaps in community supports and educate organization regarding availability, expanded options around youth needs screening tools that could be utilized to address various needs across YSB and JRB youth, development of regularly scheduled topical trainings identified through state trends and CYSA member suggestions, and additional investment in improving YSBs and JRBs methods for consistent and complete data collection and reporting. These recommendations are only a few of the numerous recommendations listed for each issue. Implementation of recommendations focuses on realizing community-based diversion system, fiscal stability, enhancing diversion and youth-justice statewide, expanded data projects, and landscape analysis re-survey. Continuing to work with YSB's and JRB's data can ensure that these organizations are meeting state benchmarks and providing the best possible services for the youths in Connecticut.

Preliminary Presentation of Draft 2023 JJPOC Recommendations

Recommendations are planning to be put forward by the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee for the 2023 Legislative Cycle. The workgroups have been working through 2022 to create these recommendations, with recommendations being put forward by the Diversion Work Group, Incarceration Work Group, Community Expertise Work Group, and the Suspension and Expulsion Work Group. Diversion Work Group's recommendations are targeted at raising the minimum age of juvenile court jurisdiction from age ten to age twelve and recommending that the following behaviors would be automatically diverted pre-arrest to the community-based diversion system for first and second-time offenses: simple trespass, creating a public disturbance, disorderly conduct, larceny in the fifth and sixth degree, and breach of peace. These recommendations are based on IOY Youth Task force, JRB/YSB data, and research of best diversion practices. Incarceration Work Group's recommendations are creating a phased in approach implementing a PBIS framework in facilities that house youth 17 and under, the DOC, in consultation with the Incarceration Workgroup, shall submit a commissary implementation plan to the JJPOC, and developing a Reentry Success Plan for youth released from DOC and Judicial Branch facilities and contracted programs for the purpose of reintegrating these youth back into their communities successfully. The Incarceration Work Group reviewed national best practices, reviewed fiscal analyses, met with Maine DOC to discuss their youth re-entry services and transitional living programs, studied JBCSSD re-entry policies, reviewed DOCs re-entry policies, and spoke with youth from MYI about their needs and gaps in services to create these recommendations and addendums. The Community Expertise Work Group recommends increasing membership of JJPOC to add 2 youths and one community member that have been impacted by the CJ system/lived experiences. This recommendation came from working closely with Consultant Laura Furr to survey members of the workgroup to enhance and strengthen the language of the recommendations. The Suspension and Expulsion Work Group is recommending that the State Department of Education shall require certain districts to submit a response and improvement plan to CSDE and the committee of cognizance a phased-in plan with the aim to reduce and cap classroom student-to-teacher ratio, encourage all schools to administer the Columbia Suicide Severity Scale, and fund 4 additional positions to the State Department of Education for the purpose of providing support, technical assistance, on-site monitoring, and oversight of districts improvements plans and provide funds to permit districts to implement



improvement plans. The Suspension and Expulsion Work Group further recommends in this phased-in approach that the Department of Education shall organize a team comprised of members of the subcommittee and others to develop guidance and strategies that aim to reduce out-of-school suspension and expulsions in pre-k -2 including precise, research-based, developmentally appropriate definitions of the terms “violent or sexual nature”. These recommendations were established by reviewing national best practices, working with Bellwether Consultants, reviewing the 2022 Suspension & Expulsion report, and gaining qualitative insight from educators focus group conducted and analyzed by Dr. Danielle Cooper, University of New Haven/ Tow Youth Justice Institute.

These recommendations will be voted on during the January 19, 2023 JJPOC meeting.

Next Meeting: In-Person Voting Meeting, January 19, 2023, 2:00-4:00 PM