



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

September 17th, 2020

2:00PM

Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker	Patrick Carroll	Lisa Sementilli	
Kosta Diamantis Christina Quaranta	Bernadette Conway	Stacey Shulman	TYJI Staff:
Erica Bromley	Gary Roberge	Joshua Bernegger	William Carbone
Macklin Roman	Tais Ericson	Maria Pirro-Simmons	Erika Nowakowski
Janeen Reid	Christine Rapillo	Derrick Gordon	Susan Cusano
Hector Glynn	Francis Carino	Sarah Eagan	Kelly Orts
Martha Stone	Vannessa Dorantes	Gary Winfield	Donna Pfrommer
Rosa Serrano	Angel Quiros	Dennis Bradley	Danielle Cooper
Rep. Robyn Porter	Desi Nesmith		Hellen Vasquez
	John Holland		

Representative Toni Walker called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Rep. Walker moved a motion to accept the minutes of June 2020 and July 2020.

An announcement regarding Mr. John Frassinelli’s resignation as Diversion Workgroup Co-Chair was made. The JJPOC chairs, as well as many JJPOC members, thanked John for his service and dedication to this work.

Update on Approved Recommendations of the IOYouth Task Force

Josh Weber, Program Director at the Council of State Governments (CSG), presented a PowerPoint on the IOYouth Task Force recommendations relating to YSBs, JRBs, CSSD, and DOC. CSG conducted multiple site visits to CT and spoke with over 100 stakeholders to discuss areas of improvement. The key takeaways from their analysis emphasized that diversion systems vary considerably across the state. Focus group participants expressed significant concerns with placing youth in short term detention facilities for extended periods of time and effectively meeting their needs. They also found that most stakeholders do not believe that DOC facilities are the most appropriate place for youth. Also, although delinquent referrals to juvenile courts have declined 26% since 2014, many were still being arrested and referred to system for low-level offenses and most of these youth were youth of color. Admissions to pretrial detention have declined 51% since 2014, but this decline is disproportional for Black and Hispanic as well, as their numbers have increased. They also discussed the need for more efforts to identify the challenges to ensuring youth and family engagement in services.

Their recommendations, that have been approved by the IOYouth Task Force, are as follows:

- Decriminalize in statute specific adolescent behavior; divert all low risk youth from any form of system supervision and establish a pilot/ landscape analysis process to explore the viability of strengthening the YSB/JRBs statewide to serve as a more robust research-based diversion service system.
- Establish family engagement/safety planning protocols to limit the automatic detention of youth on warrant/ taken into custody orders and base initial detention decision from detention screening tool.
- Strengthen youth and family engagement policies and practices.
- Create an equity dashboard to ensure the equity changes are having a positive impact on system disparities.
- Eliminate short-term housing of youth in secure, state-run facilities and engage in a planning process designed to facilitate the phased transfer of responsibility for youth from DOC to CSSD.

The next steps outlined in the presentation focused on the establishment of the IOYouth Implementation Committee, which will be co-chaired by leadership from the three branches of government and comprised of agencies/entities that are responsible for implementing the approved recommendations. A timeline was also established for the Implementation Committee.

There was a Q&A held at the end of the presentation. It was suggested that people who have been affected, be included during the process and discussion, and to have a final group for decisions, but it is also important that everyone have an opportunity. There was discussion on the inclusion of youth and community member on the Implementation Committee. It was suggested that the position should go to families, an IOYouth task force member, or an advocate.

Presentation on Integrating Public Health, Social-Ecological, and Restorative Justice Models

Dr. Derrick Gordon and Dr. Keisha April presented a PowerPoint on conceptualizing juvenile justice reform that incorporates elements of the public health, social-ecological, and restorative justice models. This presentation was vetted through the JJPOC Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup.

Dr. Gordon emphasized that there needs to be a more targeted and strategic initiatives and practices that promote a more equitable outcome for all Connecticut's youth. Reform efforts in CT have effectively reduced front and deep end justice involvement, but rates of disproportionality for youth of color remain high; this leads to poorer outcomes for youth of color. The RED Workgroup was established to help reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. This workgroup is tasked with collecting, reviewing, and reporting RED data at each point

of contact in the system. The workgroup identified that there is no single unifying theory or orientation employed across CT. This may result in disproportional impacts and more vulnerable communities. Many youth enter the system through schools and contact with police in their communities. These youth experience behavioral and emotional challenges which are not met with the appropriate resources or intervention. Youth also act out as a function of negative home or community contacts; these youth need to be identified early on. Also, as mentioned in the earlier presentation, YSB's and JRB's function independently across CT and youth may not receive the same services applied as other towns.

In the Public Health model, youth entry to the system is caused by the intersection of multiple risks: individual, societal, and community health. The goal of prevention is to reduce new occurrences of problem and promote greater community health. We intervene at three tiers of risk: universal/the entire population, selective/subgroups with risk factors, and indicated/high-risk individuals. Universal interventions focus on preventing new cases by providing resources to all; helps keep society healthy and avoid system involvement risk factors. Selective interventions provide resources for youth identified as at risk; act to catch youth on the path to justice involvement before a chance to offend by providing appropriate services. Indicated interventions target high-risk youth and require more intensive treatment.

The Socio-ecological model states that youth offending is a result of disorder/disruption in systems/relationships. Their intervention focuses on positive development of youth, building relationships and strengthening youth competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. The goal is to change the youth's relationship with their environment to promote connection with a desire to be a positive part of their community and society.

The Restorative Justice model views youth offending as a break in relationships between a youth and their community. Their interventions focus on community-based approaches targeting youth accountability, public safety, and community healing. This approach brings together victims, offenders, community stakeholders to discuss how an offense has affected all parties and collaboratively develops ways to redress the harm. Depending on the harm, practitioners can apply a diverse range of restorative justice practices.

At each of these levels of public health intervention, there are ecological impacts that then play a role in the restorative justice approach that can be used. This may help adopt an integrated approach to promote more equitable treatment, so youth are impacted in the same way. Our youth exist within a series of systems that affect how the youth view their world.

There was a Q&A held at the end of the presentation. A discussion on school dependency of law enforcement, lack of mental health supports, and need for a more universal approach to reducing racial and ethnic disparities also took place. The Public Health model is consistent with the primary and secondary prevention focus of the overall child welfare system reform efforts as well. This theory is more of a test and see model; as it unfolds, we will check if it has the outcome that was intended and receive feedback to see what is or isn't working.

Next meeting: November 19, 2020, 2:00 pm

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

*Audio and/or video of the meeting can be found on

https://www.cga.ct.gov/app/taskforce.asp?TF=20141215_Juvenile%20Justice%20Policy%20and%20Oversight%20Committee