



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2022

2:00pm-3:30pm

Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker
Maurice Reaves
Anthony Nolan
Gary Winfield
Ilianna Pujols
Christina Quaranta
John Kissel
Erica Bromley
Macklin Roman
Patrick Callahan
Anne Dauphinais
Janeen Reid
Hector Glynn
Martha Stone
Judge Patrick Carroll

Judge Dawne Westbrook
Greg Howard
Gary Roberge
Tais Ericson
Christine Rapillo
Susan Hamilton
Brian Casinghino
Vannessa Dorantes
Desi Nesmith
Amy Marracino
Lisa Sementilli
Joshua Bernegger
Gwendolyn Samuel

Sarah Eagan
Derrick Gordon
Vernon Beaulieu
Natasha Pierre

TYJI Staff:

William Carbone
Erika Nowakowski
Donna Pfrommer
Susan Cusano
Patrick Saley
Shauntaye Monroe
Danielle Cooper

Welcome and Introductions

Maurice Reaves was in attendance for Melissa McCaw and Marc Pelka.

Representative Toni Walker welcomed everyone. Maurice Reaves thanked the Community Expertise Workgroups, Full Circle, AFCAMP, CTJA, and CCA members.

Department of Children and Families introduced a new member of the team to JJPOC, Glen Worthy.

Education

The Education subcommittee proposed a pilot data study of school phone calls to 911. The ten SDE designated opportunity school districts were looked at and these included Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, New London, Derby, and New Britain. These are the lowest performing on the accountability index, the data will be collected by MOUs by the 911 call centers, which is going to include student demographic information, disability status, and reasons for the 911 call. Lastly, the committee will look at the data and compare it to school 211 calls from CHDI and it will be done twice a year.



Suspension and Expulsion

The committee looked at the suspension and expulsion of youth. There were eight charges ranging from funding recommendations, timelines, individual school and district needs, training recommendations, implementation procedures, strategies for family engagement, recommendations for screening of health and mental health, and recommendations for strengthening connections with community-based services. The committee had a very broad representation from a wide variety of stakeholders and perspectives. In 2015, Connecticut became the first state to pass legislation banning out of school suspension and expulsion of students in grades pre-kindergarten through second grade with some limited exceptions. There has been a declining trend from 2015 through the current school year then students' removals from class. In 2016, no child in Connecticut in grades pre-K through second have been expelled. There are some exceptions to this law, cases where the student's behavior was judged to be of violent or sexual nature. This data can be tracked overtime and by demographics, it was mentioned that disproportionalities by race and by poverty still exist and are persistent. The recommendations focused on addressing these disproportionalities, the State Department of Education has public data that puts districts in tiers by how disproportional they are or are not for their discipline practices. The first recommendation was the legislature and the governor shall adequately fund school needs alternative in school disciplinary practices strategies and intervention the support students and school's personnel as outlined in this report for the purpose of implementing the public act. It was stated that the stipulation of stating the necessity of adequately funding was important, often times our district feedback is that they are left on their own to figure out how to fund the wrap around costs that is being talked about. Adequately funded can be interpreted differently in each district, a very well-resourced district may not have a particular line of resources at their disposal, and they may benefit from sharing across districts, less resource districts may need specific interventions that involve community interaction as well, so it just depends on the district. The first recommendation passed.

The second recommendation was the committee shall work towards recommending strategies to reduce to zero all suspensions, in school and out of school expulsions, and out of school removals of students in preschool and kindergarten- 2nd grade. The 2015 legislation that restricted the suspension and expulsion of young students was the first of its kind in the nation. Unfortunately, it didn't go far enough and the language that currently is maintained in the law uses violent or sexual nature to describe the behaviors of small children. It is detrimental, developmentally inappropriate, and a large loophole because many young children are still being suspended for



conduct that schools are calling violent as there is no specific language in the bill detailing what constitutes a violent or sexual behavior. Examples of behaviors resulting in suspensions would include a student picking up a chair and hitting a teacher with it, any inappropriate touches from one student to another, a student acting violently in a classroom to the point where that classroom must be cleared. It is important for these children to have the right interventions and not just being sent home. Instead of sending them home, they need to be connected to services that help them to understand what the behaviors are that are appropriate and how to correct inappropriate behavior. There are concerns about having to remove a child based off behavior, and behavior alone. If a child must be removed from the classroom, their issues need to be addressed and met, which can also be done outside of school. Additionally, there will be times when a child will need to be removed from school and a situation like that should be discussed. There were also concerns for the child who is being targeted by another child. Will the targeted child not want to participate in school anymore? These situations were addressed by the committee and future recommendations will discuss these issues that were raised. The second recommendation passed.

The third recommendation was to provide funding to build successful, existing models of reducing exclusionary discipline such as SBDI. Funding should be identified to support the implementation of pilots for elementary schools with high utilization. The recommendation is to expand on the funding, what is being modeled is SPDI is working, and that SPD is a commitment that should be continued. The third recommendation passed.

The fourth recommendation was CSSD, and CHI will develop a program of training and effective methods of addressing within the school environment the underlying issues that students who are presenting disruptive or dangerous behavior to reduce those incidents of exclusion. The fourth recommendation passed.

The fifth recommendation was CSDE will develop a comprehensive systems approach to identify and support districts with high suspension rates in pre-K to grade two and to help districts address challenging behaviors. The fifth recommendation passed.

The sixth recommendation was providing parents and or caregivers a description of the precipitating incidents what supports were provided for the child while exhibiting challenging behavior in the outcome of those implemented supports and strategies. Parents want to be more engaged with their children and be aware of what they are doing in school, and how the school is supporting their children. The sixth recommendation passed.



The seventh recommendation was the adequate funding by the legislature and the governor to expand the school based mental health workforce support staff and behavioral support programs and services. The issue of school based mental health supports is the first line of intervention when it comes to children in distress. It is not on the teachers for the intervention, but for the mental health practitioner that is school based. The seventh recommendation passed.

The eighth recommendation was crisis prevention and response partnership in districts and municipalities. This is how mobile crisis works, how it is that we rely on the community and the community relies on schools to communicate with each other on how to intervene in emergency and in crisis. The committee and other people across the state have spoken about how in these last two years, more and more of the children have been experiencing situational or chronic crisis. Crisis can be as simple as suicidal ideations or as complex as long term need that is exacerbated by either conditions and the environment of the child or that are triggered by the environment of the school. It's the support system outside of school recognizing that the district should not be on their own for crisis interventions and that it needs to be a community effort. The eighth recommendation passed. All the suspension and expulsion recommendations passed.

Commissary

It was stated that it may be premature to bring this recommendation to a vote, so it was suggested to have a motion to refer it back to the incarceration workgroup to look at the changes that were proposed, and for the group to vote on the changes, then bring it back to the JJPOC to be voted on. The Tow Youth Justice Institute will work with the incarceration co-chairs to bring it back to be voted on.

DCF Operational Plan

The change was to make sure the plan says administrative oversight and not a service delivery unit. Rep. Toni Walker asked for a motion to vote on this recommendation, it was moved, seconded and passed.

Next Meeting: March 17, 2022, 2:00pm-3:30pm.