

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board - Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 30th, 2019

Subcommittees Members or Designees Present:

Maria Mossaides, The Child Advocate, Chair (OCA)
Katherine Lipper (EOE)
Michael Glennon (MDAA)
Sana Fadel (Citizens for Juvenile Justice)
Thomas Capasso (Juvenile Court)
Barbara Kaban (CPCS)
Kim Occhiuti (DCF)
Elizabeth Walk (Office of Rep. Dykema)
David Chandler (DYS)
Abigail Averbach (DPH)
Matthew Broderick (DMH)
Laura Lempicki (Probation)
Lydia Todd (Children's League of MA)

Other Attendees:

Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
Melissa Williams (OCA)
Lindsay Morgia (OCA)
Members of the Public

Meeting Commenced: 1:05pm

Welcome and Introduction from the Child Advocate:

Maria Mossaides welcomed the attendees to the first Juvenile Justice Data and Policy Board - Data Subcommittee meeting and each person introduced themselves.

Ms. Mossaides briefly discussed the important role of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board - Data Subcommittee in improving the juvenile justice system. She spoke about the improvements in juvenile justice data collection and reporting that have been made in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts over the years, including agencies developing MOU's and identifying gaps in data collection and reporting capacity. She further explained that although we have made progress, agencies still face numerous challenges. Those challenges include the

limited availability of data, data not existing altogether, agencies being bound by statutory requirements, funding, and lack of available technology. Even though agencies are facing these challenges, expectations for open access to data from the public and lawmakers has increased over the years.

Ms. Mossaides is excited to work with everyone on the Data Subcommittee, as this group has the perfect opportunity to identify and address these limitations.

Ms. Mossaides introduced Melissa Threadgill, the Office of the Child Advocate's Director of Juvenile Justice Initiatives. Ms. Threadgill will be providing lead staffing for the JJPAD Data Subcommittee meetings.

Ms. Threadgill announced that the Data Subcommittee meetings are subject to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Open Meeting Law and stated that any subcommittee member or member of the public with questions regarding the law may either contact her or find more information on the Attorney General's website. She also requested the Data Subcommittee members sign the OML certification form.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the agenda.

Purpose of the Data Subcommittee:

Ms. Threadgill explained that the Data Subcommittee is part of the overall Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board (JJPAD) and is one of the three subcommittees. Ms. Threadgill went over the three year-one priorities of the JJPAD:

1. Improving Aggregate Data Collection
2. Expanding and Improving Community Based Interventions
3. Identifying Early Impacts of Statutory Changes

The Data Subcommittee will be responsible for focusing their work on priority one; Improving Aggregate Data Collection.

Ms. Threadgill discussed the legislative requirements of the JJPAD, which she described as broad. She stated that this gives the board an opportunity to choose what they want to focus on as long as they fulfill the board's requirements. The legislative requirements include the following:

1. Make recommendations for improving transparency and accountability with respect to state-funded services for youth in the juvenile justice system.

2. Make recommendations for promoting the efficient sharing of information between the executive branch and the judicial branch to ensure regular collection and reporting of data.
3. Analyze and make recommendations on the feasibility of the Child Advocate creating an instrument to record aggregate statistical data for every contact a youth has with a juvenile justice agency or service-provider working with said agencies.

The feasibility report will be due June 30th, 2019, and the Legislature has requested that we look at the feasibility of including data on age, gender, racial or ethnic category, and type of crime. The data subcommittee can decide if they want to make any other topics a priority.

Pre-Meeting Survey Results (Part One):

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the findings of the pre-meeting survey that was sent out to the participating subcommittee members. She explained that the survey responses were anonymous. She went over the “goals” section of the survey first.

Ms. Threadgill explained that there were five key themes that came out of the “goals” section.

1. **Be purposeful and strategic: we need a cross-agency plan;** We need to know why we are collecting the data, what questions we are answering, what we are going to do with the data, and make sure the data analysis is connected to the day to day work.
2. **Desire to report on outcome data as well as process data;** Process data is important to look at what the agencies are doing, but we should be looking at the outcome of those efforts as well.
3. **Disaggregate data by demographic categories:** Data will be more useful if we break it down in a variety of ways (e.g. demographic category, geography). However, we will not make data individually identifiable.
4. **Desire for more multi-agency collaboration and reporting;** We could produce more useful data analysis if we broke down barriers and use data from multiple agencies. This requires conversations on universal definitions, reporting scheduling, and privacy/confidentiality.
5. **Increase transparency and public accessibility;** The information should be easily understood by members of the public so people can understand what the data really means.

Ms. Threadgill asked the subcommittee for questions and comments.

Ms. Mossaides stated that we should add the concerns of each individual agencies as we are all bound to our individual statutory functions.

Mr. Glennon mentioned that there is a much-needed focus on racial, ethnic, and gender data, but there is also a need to look at socio-economic data. He noted that collecting socio-economic data can be challenging and brought up the idea of looking at the data by zip code

Ms. Lipper stated that some agencies have data that we could cross-check by zip code.

Ms. Todd commented that we need to look at the bigger picture and figure out how everything fits together with juvenile justice and child welfare.

Ms. Mossaides stated that the purpose of the task force is to look at the impact of the larger changes within both juvenile justice and child welfare. She provided the example of recommending people to go to a Family Resource Center for assistance instead or before a school file a CRA. We want to look at how children are becoming identified in the beginning and look at where they end up in the system. One focus should be to see if there is a disparity between how groups are being treated and placed. Ultimately, we want to make sure we are placing children in the right services.

Ms. Todd talked about decriminalizing youth offenses. She mentioned that on the recent ethnic, race, gender, and geography offense, the JDAI (Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative) did a ton of work on this at all levels of the system. She said that EOPSS has also done a lot of standardization on this already. She would like to have them included at the table.

Ms. Threadgill said that EOPSS was not included by the legislation that created the JJPAD. However, she has reached out to staff at EOPSS and invited them to join the meetings, given the important role they play with data collection. Although they were unable to make this meeting, Ms. Threadgill is working to keep lines of communication open.

Ms. Kaban asked, what are the goals that we have for the kids? She said that this is missing from the statement of goals.

Mr. Chandler talked about the idea that the subcommittee should focus on goals regarding the collection and reporting data and other committees should focus on the analysis and policy implications. He further stated that we need to define and understand the inputs before defining the outcome measures of the data.

Ms. Kaban explained that agencies have been tracking this type of data for years. Before, juvenile court system data was available, but now it's harder to get a hold of.

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Mr. Chandler stated that the subcommittee needs to look at cross-agency data. It's hard to do a relative rate of disparities since there are so many variables. Output doesn't tell us much besides guessing.

Ms. Mossaides stated that we need a standard protocol to how we collect this data, especially for data that could be self-identified vs. not or those who choose not to identify.

Mr. Chandler said that one of the most useful things that has come out of the JDAI data meetings was learning about each agency's data capacity.

Mr. Glennon agreed that the subcommittee should be focusing on the data collection itself instead of what the data means. Defining the points of data collection should be the first priority. He also stated that most of the JDAI data comes from DYS and probation.

Ms. Occhiuti also agreed that there needs to be a normalization of data between the agencies.

Proposed Year One Objectives:

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the proposed year one objectives based on the legislative requirements and the survey outcomes.

1. Aggregate Data Collection Improvement Feasibility Report (Deadline: June 30th, 2019)
2. Develop Starter Juvenile Justice System Data Website
3. Develop Interagency Data Collection and Reporting Plan

June 30th Feasibility Report:

Ms. Threadgill discussed the purpose of the June 30th feasibility report as well as the outline for the report. The outline includes looking at aggregate statistical data for every contact a youth has with a juvenile justice agency or service-provider at different points. She broke down the report into a three-step approach.

1. **Step One: Now** -- What we can produce now with our current systems and processes?
2. **Step Two: Soon** -- What we could produce within six months to one year with some non-resource intensive changes to the current systems and processes?
3. **Step Three: Later** -- What we would ultimately like to produce and what it would take to get there?

Ms. Threadgill stated that our goal would be to get the "now" and "soon" sections of the report finished by June 30th, and then, if need be, file an addendum to finish up the "later" section.

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Ms. Threadgill described the steps it will take to complete the “now” section of the report. A spreadsheet to identify what data is currently available for aggregate reporting will be sent to the agencies for review/feedback. Subcommittee members should reply by February 8th, and then have it finished by 2/27 for the full JJPAD to approve. Ms. Threadgill believes that if everyone can commit to the work that needs to be done, we should be able to make the June 30th deadline.

Ms. Threadgill asked for comments on the feasibility report timeline.

Ms. Todd stated that it’s hard to think about completing this within this timeframe because agencies have been trying to do this for years.

Ms. Threadgill noted that the June 30th deadline is just to document what is currently possible and what could be done with a modest amount of effort, not to “fix” the overall problem.

Ms. Occhiuti, from DCF, explained that it will be hard for her to commit on behalf of others since most is involved around juvenile justice and not child welfare

Ms. Mossaides offered the idea that we could look at dually-involved youth in order to include both juvenile justice and child welfare.

Ms. Kaban brought up that we could look at the court data to see if there is a correlation between the decreased number in DYS youth and the current CRA statistics.

Mr. Capasso confirmed that the juvenile court system does data on CRAs.

Ms. Lempicki explained that the CRA numbers did increase for a while but now it is beginning to level out.

Mr. Capasso stated that although the juvenile court system does have data available, context is sometimes needed to understand what is going on with the data. For example, there is some confusion regarding arrest data between the juvenile court, probation, and the police. The numbers are currently showing a marked decrease in arrests since the recent legislative changes. However, there may be some confusion on the ground regarding when a youth can be arrested, and what counts as a first offense.

Ms. Mossaides explained that we need clarity and more information to figure out what is happening on the ground. Some measures could be decreasing in certain places, but not in others.

Mr. Chandler said that we could also look at trends in overnight arrest data.

Ms. Fadel talked about how police can divert these kids instead of arresting them. She talked about how they have options for diversion. She further explained that we do not have data on police diversion and that it's hard to look at the outcome and understand what is happening with the overall system until we understand each decision point, what data we have available, and what data we still need.

Mr. Glennon asked if subcommittee members can make changes to the spreadsheet.

Ms. Threadgill responded what she put together is just a draft to react to, and she is hoping people will make their changes, edits, and comments.

Juvenile Justice Data Website:

Ms. Threadgill described the creation of juvenile justice data website section of legislation. She explained that the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) will be funding this project. She said that the goal is to start with data that is already being made available to the public or is otherwise easy for agencies to produce and combine them to make them easy to access in one place.

Ms. Lempicki agreed with this method as the work needed to produce new reports requires a huge effort compared to starting off with data that is already available.

Ms. Threadgill talked about using Massachusetts Probation Services' Tableau data and Ms. Lempicki agreed that would be a good place to start.

Ms. Todd wanted to confirm that this project is more about gathering reports instead of raw data.

Ms. Threadgill confirmed Ms. Todd's statement and said this website will be more of a Tableau-type format where we put the data from reports all in one place to make it more accessible.

Ms. Averbach asked if we want people to be able to interact with the data or just find it more easily.

Ms. Threadgill stated that she is hoping that the website will eventually be interactive. Once everyone agrees on what data is readily available to put together on the website, the OCA will work with EOTSS to produce the website.

Mr. Capasso mentioned that the Juvenile Court has a lot of data already available.

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Ms. Todd further stated that EOPSS has a ton of published data already and she thinks that they should be part of the JJPAD Data Subcommittee. She explained that they are the first point in delinquent arrests.

Ms. Threadgill noted that she is talking with staff at EOPSS about the arrest data. She stated that Mr. Chandler, from DYS, noted that he has a lot of data requests and this could be a way to push people towards this website and reduce the amount of individual data requests staff are asked to handle

Mr. Chandler agreed and explained that he hopes in the future to be able to refer people looking for data to this website.

Interagency Planning:

Ms. Threadgill discussed the third year-one objective: develop interagency data collection and reporting plan. This objective evolved from the results of the goals survey. She explained that the subcommittee will not be working on this until after the completion of the June 30th feasibility report.

Ms. Threadgill described her thoughts for the data collection and reporting plan. The elements of the plan could include:

1. Process mapping and data point identification
2. Data dictionary
3. Definition of alignment plan
4. Data sharing agreements and discussions
5. Joint data project brainstorming and prioritization
6. Long-term planning (re: juvenile justice data website)
7. Recommendations on technology updates

Ms. Threadgill described the third objective as a chance to look at what things we could and want to accomplish together.

Ms. Lempicki said that the Leadership Forum document has looked into the differences in definitions between race and ethnicity between agencies.

Ms. Mossaides also mentioned that the OCA has worked with DCF on the reform of CIR definitions and this conversation has come up. There has been miscommunication between legislation and agencies understanding children and youth definitions as they are not aligned. We need a shared sense of definition understanding. This is an opportunity to build on that.

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Ms. Todd talked about the difficult of comparing data from different agencies when agencies collect it using different definitions.

Mr. Glennon explain the difficulty in collecting arrest data since every police department collects data differently.

Ms. Threadgill stated that this could be a chance to make legislative requests and changes to make this work easier.

Mr. Glennon stated that a lot of this focus is on de-identifying data, but it could be helpful to break down the data between agencies and possibly start new and create new MOUs.

Ms. Fadel talked about the possibility that youth will have their own ID fingerprint and number within the next year. She asked how this will affect our work.

Mr. Capasso explained that the state is currently not requiring fingerprinting at arrest and we are dealing with the consequences of that. Massachusetts currently uses name, DOB, etc. but fingerprinting would make this so much easier.

Ms. Mossaides agrees that data sharing across agencies should happen. She stated that the OCA feels strongly about this. We need to look at a child and family holistically. The use of this information could permit a public dialog that is needed especially in Massachusetts. Advocacy groups are currently voicing their concerns about this.

Ms. Fadel discussed her thoughts on how some families of color may believe that services are not here to help, and more about surveilling them. This is one barrier.

Mr. Capasso stated that changes in data collection over the course of the years is another barrier to keep in mind.

Ms. Fadel discussed the topic of juvenile expungement information. She stated that in Massachusetts, we do not keep non-identifying information for research purposes only, but other states do.

Mr. Capasso said that could be something we recommend.

Ms. Threadgill reminded the group that we wouldn't focus on this until after June. She asked DMH and DPH representatives to comment as most of the conversation is focused around juvenile justice agencies and would like to hear their thoughts.

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Mr. Broderick explained that DMH staff at court clinics are currently assisting the court with evaluations even if the person is not involved in DMH services. The court clinic has been involved in many pilot projects and could have useful data to contribute, however DMH is not the owner of this data so he could not say for sure. He brought up the issue with law enforcement and HIPPA privacy violations. We could better serve families if each agency knew what was going on but there are always the privacy concerns. He will look to see if DMH has any useful data. Along with definitions, we should look at the guidelines line staff in the field are using. He also talked about how we collect difficult to collect and unclear data. As a state, we need a more uniformed data collection process.

Ms. Mossaides mentioned that the OCA annual report has a recommendation for uniform data collection.

Ms. Todd stated that there has been a ton of work done on uniform data collection, but we do still have a lot of work to do, especially with new topics such as gender identification.

Mr. Capasso agreed with Ms. Todd and used her example as a reason why we cannot compare historical data.

Ms. Todd said some people are still recording gender identification by observation instead of asking their consumers.

Ms. Occhiuti agreed and said that DCF has this issue with identification vs. self-identification from 51 A reports.

Ms. Mossaides stated that racial identify within DCF is first captured in 51As. This should not be the point to record this information because it could be from the mandated reporter and not the child themselves.

Ms. Averbach said from the DPH perspective, she is very excited to be a part of this table as her agency is looking at race and ethnic disparities as well. She brought up the work of the Office of Health Equity. DPH was able to compile a data public health warehouse at the individual level with approval from legislation (Chapter 55) due to the opioid crisis. Now, because of Chapter 237, they can look at anything deemed necessary by the Commissioner. Released on Monday, DMH now has a public health information tool which is a website for information/reports instead of responding to individual data requests. She stated that this data could be shared with JJPAD for the website. She stated that JJPAD could help DPH too. Her focus is on contextualizing all data by putting in information about historical racism. She mentioned that birth mother data is the best way to collect race and ethnicity data.

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Ms. Threadgill discussed the potential opportunity for learning sessions and asked the subcommittee who they want to want to invite to the table. She continued by stating that the OCA is forming a partnership with the BU Hariri Center for technology services. She has had discussion sessions with potential academic research partners and said it could be interesting to bring in academic research departments to develop government partnerships.

Ms. Fadel asked if we could use the data group to not only collect the data, but to also identify ways to address disparities.

Ms. Threadgill responded that a good first step would be to identify what data on racial and ethnic disparities is and is not available, but this is something that could be discussed as part of the strategic planning effort.

Ms. Kaban asked if other states have tackled this project.

Ms. Threadgill will do more research on other states. She mentioned that Utah is one state she knows has strong data systems and data collaboration.

Ms. Occhiuti mentioned that it would be interesting to see each agency is already doing with regards to data visualization and public sharing of information.

Ms. Threadgill will pull together some examples and send it out to the subcommittee.

Ms. Mossaides commented that Rutgers University and their state DCF work together and have a great county/area data tool. The University of Florida does too.

Pre-Meeting Survey Results (Part Two):

Ms. Threadgill moved on to discuss the remaining second half of the survey results which identified barriers and challenges. From the survey answers, it was evident that there are many barriers and challenges that each agency is currently facing. She stated that the top three are data quality, legal barriers, and not enough staff. Further, when the challenges and barriers were ranked, the top barriers were existing infrastructure and agency culture/resistance.

Ms. Threadgill identified success stories within agencies from the survey and said that she will use the success stories to put together a resource list. JDAI data dashboards, DYS/DCF data shares, and Suffolk DA partnership with UMass were some of the success stories mentioned. The top factors identified as leading to success were leadership support, change in agency culture, interagency relationships.

Ms. Mossaides followed up and told everyone to please feel free to contact the OCA if they ever have an idea they would like to share.

Meeting Wrap-Up:

Ms. Threadgill concluded the meeting with a final reminder about the June 30th deadline for the Feasibility Report. Ms. Threadgill mentioned that she will resend the spreadsheet for everyone to review the draft. The deadline for edits and comments is February 8th, 2019.

Ms. Threadgill asked the group to vote on which meeting date works best for most people as there was no single date identified through Doodle Poll that worked for everyone. There were six votes for February 27th and 8 votes for March 4th. The next data subcommittee meeting will be held on March 4th. Ms. Threadgill will send out a new Doodle Poll shortly in order to schedule meeting dates through July 2019.

Ms. Todd asked if all of the data subcommittee meetings will be held in the same conference room and Ms. Threadgill responded that it can be hard to find conference rooms but they will most likely either be held at One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA or 600 Washington Street, Boston, MA.

Ms. Threadgill stated that if anyone in the group had ideas for conference room space, please email her. Two ideas mentioned were the DYS facility on Harvard Street as well as Mr. Chandler stated that he could help coordinate rooms at DYS on 600 Washington Street.

Ms. Mossaides and Ms. Threadgill thanked everyone for attending the first data subcommittee meeting.

Adjournment: 2:42pm