

# Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

November 6, 2015

2:00pm – 5:00pm

EOPSS, Transportation Building

## Meeting Minutes

**JJAC Member Attendance:** Robert Gittens (Chair), Cecely Reardon (Vice Chair), Wes Cotter, Mark Booher, Kimberly Larson, Glenn Daly, Reynolds Graves, Peter Forbes, Jeff Butts.

**EOPSS Staff:** Andrew Polk, Ednei Furtado, Angela Davis, Undersecretary Jennifer Queally.

**Guests:** Chief Justice Amy Nechtem, Lashon Amado, Alisa Yang, Josh Dohan, Barbara Morton, Gina Patterson.

### Agenda:

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Approve Minutes (*tabled*)
3. Report on Legislative Hearings and JJAC Testimony
4. Discussion with Chief Justice Amy Nechtem
5. Boston Mayor's Office – My Brother's Keeper Initiative, Gina Patterson
6. DYS Leadership Series Proposal (Vote)
7. DYS Central Region Reception Center (CRRC) Evaluation
8. Discussion of Annual Report Draft (Vote)
9. Vote on Funds for Annual Report Copies (Vote)
10. Coalition for Juvenile Justice Dues (Vote)
11. Discussion re Use of Social Media
12. Updates:
  - a. Effective Police Interactions with Youth TOT (*tabled*)
  - b. Diversion Study
  - c. JJAC Membership Issues (*tabled*)
  - d. Court Holding Facilities (*tabled*)
  - e. Leadership Forum Retreat (*tabled*)
  - f. JDAI Conference (*tabled*)
13. Work Plan Review (*tabled*)
14. Other Business?

**Handouts:** Agenda, Minutes, DYS Proposal, Annual Report, Work Plan, My Brother's Keeper Presentation.

The meeting began with a welcome by Chair Gittens and introductions by all attendees.

**Chief Justice Amy Nechtem** discussed the various projects and activities that the juvenile court is involved with, the types of cases appearing before the court and the values that court administration are attempting to inculcate in judges and staff.

- The court is raising awareness about the importance of taking a positive youth development, results-oriented approach to the juveniles who appear in court.
- There has been an increase in the number of care and protection cases.
- The Executive Office of the Trial Court (EOTC) is participating in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Leadership Forum.
- The EOTC is aware of the need for a functioning data collection and analysis system. Recent attempts to fix the DataMart have failed.
- The court is very involved in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).
- Chief Justice Nechtem shares concerns about the lack of adequate sight and sound separation between juvenile and adult detainees in many of the court holding facilities.
- All judges participated in a day-long implicit bias training and related task forces are being formed in the various court divisions.

Gina Patterson who coordinates **My Brother's Keeper Initiative** for the Boston Mayor's Office spoke about the goals, activities and accomplishments of the initiative. It is following in the footsteps of the federal initiative to help at-risk and system-involved Black and Latino young people. Boston's initiative began in September 2014. It has a 40 member advisory board and a diverse array of strategies and projects such as workforce development, education, public safety and the arts. Mentoring, summer jobs and parental engagement are also part of the multifaceted approach to assist with the positive development of Black and Latino young people in Boston.

Commissioner Peter Forbes presented a **proposal for a Leadership Training Series** that the Department of Youth Services (DYS) will coordinate. It will be similar to the training series that DYS coordinated earlier in 2015. It will train different staff from the various stakeholder groups on issues relating to positive youth development, the adolescent brain, effective use of data, effective programming, etc. The total cost will be \$26,007. There was discussion and an update on available funds. A **motion** was made to approve the DYS proposal and to use funds from the JJAC allocations from the recent Formula Grant awards. A vote was taken and the motion **passed**.

Barbara Morton and Commissioner Forbes presented the evaluation that was completed of the **DYS Central Region Reception Center (CRRC)**. The evaluation was positive overall while also indicating there may be areas for improvement. The CRRC uses an assessment tool – the Detention Placement Instrument (DPI) – to assess new detainees as low, medium or high risk. Generally, low risk youth are held in foster care placements in the community. DYS provides transportation to and from court on dates they are scheduled to appear in court, as well as to and from school. There is a very high success rate for ensuring the appearance of juveniles for their court dates. This program represents a new model for working with detained youth. For the youth that are housed in foster homes it is a type of alternative to detention. The question of placing “detained” youth back in their parent/guardian homes was raised as another

possibility during the presentation. At the moment, home detention is not planned. DYS is hoping to begin programs modeling CRRC in other regions of the Commonwealth.

A report of the **JJAC testimony** at recent legislative hearings regarding juvenile competence to stand trial, expungement of records and data collection was provided by Chair Gittens and Kim Larson.

The JJAC 2014 **Annual Report** draft was discussed. The Juvenile Justice Specialist requested that comments and suggested edits be provided within a week. A motion was made to accept the current content subject to edits. The motion passed. A motion was made to allow up to \$300 from the JJAC Formula Grant allocation to be spent on producing copies of the Annual Report. The motion passed.

The **Diversion Study** was the next topic of discussion. Chair Gittens suggested that it be released at a meeting of the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Leadership Forum. Cecely Reardon and Chair Gittens are concerned about the potential reactions of District Attorneys. Chair Gittens agreed that groundwork with the District Attorneys should be done before releasing the study. He will work to get a sense of DA sentiment about releasing the study.

There was discussion about the JJAC's potential **use of social media** such as Facebook. EOPSS Undersecretary Jen Queally stated that this possibility will have to be decided on by EOPSS. Some concerns about the possibility included: the time commitment of maintaining the site and ensuring that inappropriate content is not put on the site by the public. It is not clear whether political content would first have to be approved by EOPSS or the Governor's Office prior to being posted. This will be looked into further by EOPSS staff and management.

The next agenda item discussed was payment of the **Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) dues** for 2016. The annual dues are \$5000. Cecely Reardon, the current National Chair of CJJ's Executive Board, explained its goals and activities. A motion was made to pay the CJJ dues for 2016. The motion passed.

EOPSS Undersecretary Jen Queally addressed the group and discussed her background as a former prosecutor. Part of her work connected to a juvenile diversion project in Middlesex County and juvenile justice matters are a passion of hers. She was also a prosecutor in Worcester County.

The meeting was adjourned.