

Office of the Child Advocate  
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Approved: February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Council Members or Designees Present:**

Maria Mossaides, The Child Advocate, Chair (OCA)  
Representative Carolyn Dykema  
Senator Joseph Boncore  
Commissioner Edward Dolan (Probation)  
Commissioner Peter Forbes (DYS)  
Rebecca Brink (DCF)  
Cristina Tedstone (DCF)  
Linsey Tucker (DPH)  
Katherine Lipper (EOE)  
Kevin Kennedy (MA Chief of Police Association)  
Mike Glennon (MDAA)  
Naoka Carey (Citizens for Juvenile Justice)  
Tammy Mello (Children's League of MA)  
Tom Capasso (Juvenile Court)  
Nancy Connolly (DMH)  
Barbara Kaban (CPCS)

**Other Attendees:**

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

**Meeting Commenced:** 10:07am

**Welcome and Introduction from the Child Advocate:**

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

Ms. Mossaides recognized the importance of holding the first Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board (JJPAD) as a time to discuss what type of juvenile justice system we currently have in the Commonwealth, what kind of system we want to have and what it will take to make the changes we hope to see. She mentioned how this group gives us an opportunity to look outside the Commonwealth for great leading examples on how other states and counties have adopted successful practices. She noted a variety of way in which the state had made significant progress in recent years, including drops in juvenile crime and arrests, drops in the use of secure detention and commitment, the adoption of the Positive Youth Development framework, and collaborative efforts like the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives and the Leadership Form. She also stated that despite the progress, much work remains to be done, noting that the community-based resources and responses available for children and families who need help differ dramatically across the Commonwealth, and that the treatment and outcomes of children can vary by a variety of factors, including the zip code they come from, the color of their skin, the language they speak, the socioeconomic status of their family, the physical or intellectual disabilities they may be struggling with, or the gender or sexual orientation they identify with. She discussed the vital role of the board members' participation to create a key stakeholder partnership in which everyone can bring their ideas together, agree on issues, analyze data, and propose recommendations in hopes for positive outcomes for youth in the Commonwealth's care.

Ms. Mossaides introduced Melissa Threadgill, the Office of the Child Advocate's new Director of Juvenile Justice Initiatives, who will be providing lead staffing for this board. Ms. Mossaides explained that the OCA is the host agency of the JJPAD. She discussed the initial first steps that Ms. Threadgill took by meeting with each stakeholder/board member involved in juvenile justice and developing a proposed work plan that will be further discussed throughout the meeting.

Ms. Mossaides then announced that the JJPAD meetings are subject to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Open Meeting Law (OML) and stated that any board member or member of the public with questions regarding the law may either contact her or find more information on the OCA website. She also requested the Board Members sign the OML certification form.

### **Proposed Work Plan for the JJPAD:**

Ms. Threadgill began by providing a brief summary of the legislative mandate that created the JJPAD. She recognized that the statute is fairly broad with a first initial requirement of preparing a data feasibility study by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The purpose of this study will be to determine the feasibility of recollecting aggregate statistical data for every contact a youth has with a juvenile justice agency or service provider. Long term, the JJPAD will annually report on data collection and interagency coordination. The key areas of focus required by the statute include youth justice system diversion, community-based juvenile justice services, dually-involved youth, juvenile justice and mental health care, and gender, racial and ethnic disparities.

Ms. Threadgill briefly discussed the Childhood Trauma Task Force and the legislative statute that follows. She mentioned the JJPAD Board will later decide whether to keep this task force separate or combine it with the JJPAD as a subcommittee of the larger group.

Ms. Threadgill provided an overview of the three key proposed priorities for year one, which include the following:

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

Ms. Threadgill continued by proposing a sub-committee structure for the board and a timeline of responsibilities for each group. She mentioned the idea of having the sub-committees meet monthly and the full JJPAD Board meet approximately every other month. The three proposed sub-committees include:

1. Data Subcommittee
2. Community-Based Interventions (CBI) Subcommittee
3. Childhood Trauma Task Force

### **Priority One: Improving Aggregate Data Collection**

Ms. Threadgill went over the key legislative requirements involving the improvement of aggregate data collection. The requirements include a feasibility report due by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, developing recommendations for the creation of a web-based statewide information center, and developing an analysis on gender, racial and ethnic disparities. Ms. Threadgill mentioned the OCA's interest in hosting and building this website with the technical assistance from various groups. The OCA is in the process of developing an MOU with the Boston University Hariri Center.

Ms. Threadgill discussed the first step in tackling the legislative requirements is to identify what is currently available with regards to data. Next, identifying collective short- and long-term goals by better understanding the barriers and challenges the juvenile justice system currently faces. The data subcommittee will be responsible for making recommendations to the full board and respond to requests for information while the OCA acts as project manager and will draft the written materials.

Ms. Threadgill asked the board for their comments on the proposed timeline and data-subcommittee responsibilities.

Ms. Mello talked about being intentional about maintaining confidentiality since the data being collected is extremely confidential information. She brought up the importance of using non-identifying information.

Ms. Mossaides discussed focusing on data regarding the quality of treatment for all areas involved.

Ms. Lipper asked if the web-based statewide information center is intended to be a one stop shop or a place to obtain data across agencies.

Ms. Threadgill discussed the possibility of launching projects with the Hariri Center. She currently does not have an answer to Ms. Lipper's question, but stated that they can collect data from each individual agency for now and then see what we can do with it over time for further analysis

Ms. Lipper mentioned the recent development of a shared Data Use License Agreement for Executive Office data sharing.

Ms. Mossaides stated that the statute implies that the JJPAD will be tracking data at each point in a youth's time in the system in order to identify barriers.

Representative Dykema discussed the challenges of data flexibility and how data is currently captured in different ways and the need for a continuity of language across agencies.

Ms. Mossaides discussed the lack of shared understanding of definitions and how that causes challenges in comparing data.

Mr. Kennedy asked, is everyone collecting the same data at the same point in time? An example would be a person's racial identity.

Ms. Carey mentioned the importance of diverse representation. She stated that while thinking about racial and ethnic disparity, she noticed that the JJPAD board is entirely white. She brought up the importance of having a voice for minorities who are involved in the system.

Representative Dykema discussed federal funding and financial challenges of data collection.

Ms. Mossaides discussed how the Commonwealth does not have a policy/ uniform definition on how racial/ethnic data questions are collected. For example, there could be a difference in collection methods between data sets if one agency uses self-identification and another agency does not. She stated that we need a uniformity of practice.

## **Priority Two: Expanding and Improving Community-Based Interventions**

Ms. Threadgill went over the key legislative requirements surrounding the expansion and improvement of community-based interventions which include reporting on the key focus areas of youth justice system diversion, community-based services, and the overlap between juvenile justice and the mental health care system.

Ms. Threadgill explained what community-based interventions are (PowerPoint slide 18) and how many of the agencies represented in the room want to focus on diversion and other community-based interventions, but they are unsure of what other agencies currently offer. Community-based interventions start off with early intervention through school involvement and Children Requiring Assistance (CRA). The next level of intervention includes diversion with law enforcement, clerks, district attorneys, and judicial involvement. Lastly, post-disposition through administrative probation and risk/need probation. Ms. Threadgill stated that many stakeholders have noted concerns that we currently do not have the appropriate interventions needed for high need youth.

Ms. Threadgill described the proposed objectives for the community-based interventions subcommittee. The year one objectives focus on five key areas:

1. Understand current diversion policies and community treatment programs
2. Identify shared goals
3. Understand the barriers and challenges
4. Develop recommendations
5. Issue report

Ms. Threadgill noted that OCA is receiving technical assistance on these objectives from some outside groups, including a pair of students from the Harvard Kennedy School and the Council of State Governments in partnership with the Leadership Forum.

Ms. Threadgill asked the board for their comments on the proposed objectives and CBI-subcommittee responsibilities.

Ms. Mello discussed how the legislation talks about juvenile justice and mental health but not DCF. She proposed to place DCF and child welfare in the early intervention category.

Ms. Tucker talked about positive youth development services.

Commissioner Forbes brought up that MassHealth flags children who are receiving services, especially behavioral health services. DYS worked directly with MBHP and it is possible to find trends within the data without identifying information. For example, you can see youth trends by geographic location.

Ms. Mossaides discussed the importance of identifying what services are needed for specific locations and populations. She stated that Family Resource Centers track data that is released through DCF semi-annually. The FRC's are a community link for resources (one stop shopping) as well as for CRA help.

Mr. Glennon stated that communication between agencies is lacking. He mentioned that even though multiple agencies can be involved in a child's life, the agencies do not communicate together about that specific child's needs.

Representative Dykema discussed how the JJPAD is looking at two different things; the board is looking at overall aggregative data as well as individual data. She brought up the idea using an ID number as data sharing language between the two types of data in the hopes to reveal where there are a lack of resources and services.

### **Priority Three: Identifying Early Impacts of Statutory Changes:**

Ms. Threadgill described the two relevant legislative requirements surrounding the identification of early impacts of statutory changes, which include assessing the impact of any statutory changes to the juvenile justice system and the development of recommendations for juvenile justice system statutory changes. The proposed year one objectives and methods to completing the legislative requirements include:

1. Improve Communication on Implementation
2. Develop Framework for Identifying Early Impacts
3. Identify Early Impacts of Recent Statutory Changes
4. Develop Recommendations Report

The full JJPAD board will be responsible for providing updates on implementation, reviewing/approving the framework and methodology, providing data to extent possible, collecting information on early impacts, reviewing and approving findings, determining whether the findings require a response, and reviewing the draft report on recommendations. The OCA's role in priority three will include providing support where needed, developing draft framework/methodology for discussion, working with individual agencies to collect and analyze data, and presenting the data and draft findings to the JJPAD.

Ms. Threadgill asked the board for their thoughts on the best way to meet this statutory requirement.

Ms. Kaban stated that CPCS has previously done an analysis on the changes the bill made to the statute. It was discussed that the group should focus on the importance of qualitative data as well as quantitative data to understand the impact of the new legislation.

Mr. Capasso said it is tough to look at the success/impacts of the legislative implementations since they are so new.

### **Approval of Work Plan & Meeting Wrap-Up**

Ms. Tucker asked for a white paper explaining what each subcommittee will be responsible for.

Ms. Threadgill will send an email with a brief explanation of each subcommittee and ask what subcommittees everyone wants to be on.

The board asked if the parent designees have been decided on. Ms. Mossaides and Ms. Threadgill stated that the Governor's office was in charge of those appointments, and that they have not yet been made.

Ms. Threadgill asked the board to consider if it wanted to have the Childhood Trauma Task Force operate as a subcommittee or as a separate entity.

Ms. Brink stated that it's good to think about childhood trauma being connected as a continuum.

Mr. Glennon stated that he is concerned about it being a subcommittee since not everyone that should be involved on the CTTF is on the JJPAD board

Representative Dykema proposed to keep it part of the JJPAD since we will want to see the childhood trauma data connect to the JJPAD data. She mentioned that schools tend to be a first contact point for childhood trauma.

Ms. Carey stated that we need to think about how to structure it if we do connect both.

Ms. Mossaides discussed the possibility of joint meetings when appropriate.

Commissioner Forbes agreed that the task force needs to be connected and should be a subcommittee.

Ms. Threadgill asked if the board had any overall comments, questions or concerns with moving forward with the proposed subcommittee structure and work plan. Seeing none, Ms. Mossaides moved to conclude the meeting by noting that Ms. Threadgill and Ms. Mossaides will be available to discuss any further questions or comments people may have. One board member asked about the creation of the subcommittees and Ms. Threadgill stated that not everyone will have to join each subcommittee, but if anyone has relevant staff that may be interested or information they would like to share, please include them.

As a closing statement, Ms. Mossaides noted the OCA's excitement to be the conveyor of the JJPAD.

**Adjournment:** 11:45am