

Office of the Child Advocate  
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board  
Wednesday June 29, 2022  
2:00pm – 4:00pm  
**Meeting held virtually**

**Board Members or Designees Present:**

Maria Mossaides (OCA)  
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)  
Nancy Connolly (DMH)  
Cecely Reardon (DYS)  
Matthew Conolly (EOE)  
Dawn Christie (PPAL)  
Leon Smith (CfJJ)  
Rebecca Brink (DCF)  
Duci Goncalves (CPCS)  
Yves Singletary (DPH)  
Rachel Gwaltney (CLM)

**OCA Staff:**

Melissa Threadgill  
Kristi Polizzano  
Alix Rivière  
Jessica Seabrook  
Morgan Byrnes

**Other Attendees:**

Fabiola White (Probation)  
Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)  
Liz Roccoforte (CfJJ Intern)  
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola (JDAI)  
Members of the public

**Meeting Commenced:** 2:02 pm

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Juvenile Justice Policy & Data (JJPAD) Board meeting. Members of the Board and guests introduced themselves.

**Meeting Agenda**

Ms. Threadgill presented the agenda for today’s meeting, including updates from the OCA, the state Diversion Learning Labs, the JJPAD subcommittees, and from Board members, as well as reviewing and voting on the previous JJPAD Board meeting minutes.

### **Approval of Minutes from the March Meeting**

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the previous JJPAD Board meeting minutes. Maria Mossaides, Rachel Wallack, Dulcinea Goncalves, Yves Singletary, Rebecca Brink, Nancy Connolly, Rachel Gwaltney, Cecely Reardon and Matthew Conolly all voted in the affirmative. No one abstained or opposed.

The meeting minutes for March were approved.

### **OCA Updates**

Ms. Polizzano presented the OCA updates, including new data and pages that will be added to the Data Website. She also gave an update on the OCA’s continued work looking into juvenile records, explaining that a forthcoming memo on the subject would be shared at an upcoming meeting.

Ms. Threadgill then updated the group on OCA supported bills up for vote in the senate, including a bill that eliminated the \$40 bail administrative fee for youth and a bill that expands opportunities for judicial diversion. Additionally, she presented on funding in the budget for OCA supported projects, including the expansion of the Diversion Learning Lab sites and the expansion of the Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma.

### **Updates on the state Diversion Learning Labs**

Ms. Threadgill welcomed Commissioner Reardon to provide an update on the State Diversion Learning Lab. Commissioner Reardon provided updates on the continued roll out, including lessons learned, the creation of community level partnerships, and the increase in referrals. Additionally, she mentioned the forthcoming request for response that would be taking proposals from community organizations in an effort to expand to two more sites to the Diversion Learning Lab.

Ms. Threadgill thanked Commissioner Reardon for the update and reminded the group that the program began taking referrals in January 2022. She then began presenting program data on the following:

- All time referrals by sending county, referral point (police, district attorney or judge), offense type and age
- Intakes by race and gender identity
- An overview of the MASYI-2 and YLS assessment outcomes

Ms. Threadgill welcomed questions. One member asked what the Diversion Learning Lab’s process on creating partnership with referrer agencies looked like. It was explained that there have been education campaigns and meetings with different stakeholders in each county. During these meetings, the diversion coordinators discuss the research behind diversion in both promoting positive outcomes for youth and public safety and also provide information on the Diversion Learning Lab’s program model. These meetings have resulted in greater referrals. It was noted that as a next step, the Learning Lab will implement some lessons learned from the first three sites into future outreach for new sites.

### **Subcommittee Work Report Outs**

The Board was then updated on the work of the Community Based Interventions (CBI) Subcommittee, the Data Subcommittee and the Childhood Trauma Task Force.

#### Community Based Interventions (CBI) Subcommittee

Ms. Threadgill updated the Board on the CBI Subcommittee’s study into the Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) system, including an overview of the group’s spring and early summer meetings, with a focus on presentations given by representatives from New York State and Connecticut on their CRA system reforms. She then presented on the following preliminary findings:

1. The goals of the 2012 reforms (limit juvenile court involvement, reduce harm for youth and increase supports for youth) to the CHINS system have only been partially realized, with overall CRA cases only declining 6% between FY13 and FY19, and research from various sources indicating that the reform introduced more court involvement without expanding supports for youth.
2. There is no shared understanding of what the current CRA system is for, leading to misinformation at every level.
3. The system operates with significant differences in different parts of the state with both court counties using the CRA process at higher rates than others, and pre – and post-filing practices varying widely.
4. There are disparities in how the CRA system is used and who is referred to it. Black and Latino youth are overrepresented compared to their white peers. Additionally, youth of color and other youth with specific needs (immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, girls, adopted youth and youth with learning disabilities) are being processed through the system differently.
5. Many youth in the CRA system could have their needs better met outside of the CRA system. When faced with barriers to obtaining appropriate services families are pushed toward the CRA system, however, the CRA system does not provide quick or special access to services.
6. The CRA process can be a helpful “fail safe” for families, particularly for youth with complex needs that require multiple agency involvement. The CRA system has been found to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to come together and collaborate.

7. There is limited data on outcomes from the CRA system that could be used to evaluate the system.

On member asked if the CBI Subcommittee was able to review data on CRA outcomes, or the outcomes of the reforms in Connecticut and New York State. It was explained that one of the group's findings was that there was limited outcome data on Massachusetts's CRA system. It was noted that both New York State and Connecticut reported no uptick in their juvenile justice or child welfare systems after their reforms.

Members discussed the findings, with one member asking if the study found any evidence to suggest that the CRA system acted as a pipeline to the juvenile justice system. It was explained that currently there is no access to that data, but stakeholders reported in interviews that there have been cases where a CRA resulted in a delinquency case, and vice versa.

A member asked if eliminating the CRA system would result in an increase in child welfare cases. It was explained that stakeholders reported that there already exists a large overlap between CRA cases and child protective cases. Members discussed how those children will be diverted and connected to services in the community.

Members discussed school based CRAs, including how truancy programs and school partnerships with local FRCs vary, with some schools not engaging at all with their local FRC. Members discussed different strategies to bolster these partnerships, including, increase funding, providing special support to specific FRCs and incentivizing schools to create more robust partnerships.

Ms. Threadgill thanked the group for their questions and noted that the CBI Subcommittee would discuss potential recommendations in July, that would inform the CRA report that will be available for the Boards review and approval in the fall.

#### Data Subcommittee

Ms. Polizzano gave updates on the Data Subcommittee's work, including:

- The group's look into racial and ethnic disparities (RED) at the "front door" (i.e., the arrest stage and complaint application stage) of the juvenile justice system, as a result of the JJPAD Board identifying in its 2021 Annual Report that there is a disproportionate number of Black and Latino youth in the state's juvenile justice system, compared to their rates in Massachusetts' youth population. Ms. Polizzano presented the group's preliminary analysis of the data, explaining that this analysis would inform the Board's forthcoming brief on the subject.
- The group's work on studying the feasibility of creating an Administrative Data Center (ADC) to serve as Massachusetts' central coordinator of record-level state data for child-

serving entities. Ms. Polizzano gave background information on the definition of an administrative data center, how they create opportunities for richer analyses and popular data matching techniques. She also presented on examples of ADCs in Wisconsin, California, and Minnesota.

Members discussed the potential use of ADCs, including the ability to leverage them to look at protective factors. Additionally, members noted that this model would solve current gaps in data and issues around cross-agency data sharing.

#### Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF)

Ms. Threadgill then updated the group on the CTTF's continued efforts to recommend to the state what, if anything, the Commonwealth should do to support and/or require specific child trauma identification practices. Ms. Threadgill explained that the group had spent the spring discussing general considerations and recommendations for trauma screening as well as sector specific (child welfare, juvenile justice, first responder, early childhood, and K-12) trauma screening recommendations. She explained that next, the CTTF would be discussing possible recommendations for trauma screening in pediatric primary care and sectors with high prevalence of trauma (e.g., teen parenting programs, family shelters).

#### JJPAD Board

Ms. Threadgill then presented on the Board's fall and early winter plan, including:

- In the fall, the Board will review the RED data brief, review and vote on the CRA report recommendations and hear Subcommittee report outs.
- In early winter, the Board will review and vote on the FY22 Annual Report, review and discuss the CTTF Annual Report and hear Subcommittee report outs.

#### **Board Member Updates and Closing Comments**

Ms. Threadgill gave members opportunity to share updates of their agencies. Ms. Threadgill thanked the group for their time and adjourned the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned:** 4:00 pm