

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Tuesday March 2, 2021
2:00pm – 4:00pm
Meeting held virtually

Board Members or Designees Present:

Maria Mossaides (OCA)
David Melly (Rep. Dykema’s office)
Joshua Dohan & Barbara Kaban (CPCS)
Rebecca Brink and Cristina Tedstone (DCF)
Dawn Christie (Parent representative)
Ed Dolan, Fabiola White, John Millet (Probation)
Lindsey Tucker (DPH)
Nancy Connolly (DMH)
Naoka Carey and Leon Smith (CfJJ)
Peter Forbes (DYS)
Tammy Mello (CLM)
Chief Justice Nechtem (Juvenile Court)
Daria Afshar (Sen. Patrick O’Connor’s Office)

Other Attendees:

Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
Kristi Polizzano (OCA)
Alix Rivière (OCA)
Ed Jacoubs (Plymouth)
Nicole Barnaby (Juvenile Court Clinic)
Angela Brooks (AGO)
Alexis Yohros (Northeastern University)
Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
Rebecca Pries (ACS)
Members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 1:05pm

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.

Approval of Minutes from November Meeting

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the previous JJPAD Board meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes for November were approved.

Meeting Agenda

Ms. Threadgill presented the agenda for today’s meeting, including legislative updates, a discussion around the Model Program Guide developed for state diversion Learning Labs hosted by DYS, presentation and discussion around the 2021 work plan, and Board member updates.

Legislative Update

Ms. Threadgill discussed bills that were recently filed that stemmed from this group’s work:

- *An Act updating bail procedures for justice-involved youth* filed by Rep. Dykema and Senator Boncore
- *An Act creating a center on child wellness and trauma* filed by Rep. Khan & Senator Chandler

Other juvenile justice-related bills filed this legislative cycle include:

- *An Act clarifying the child advocate’s authority to access juvenile records* filed by Rep. Dykema & Senator Boncore
- *An Act improving juvenile justice data collection* filed by Rep. Miranda & Senator Creem

Diversion Learning Lab Update

Commissioner Forbes updated the group on the work the Department of Youth Services (DYS), the host agency for the Diversion Learning Lab, has done regarding outreach to the key stakeholders in this program. DYS envisions an open procurement for interested counties to apply. He is unsure of launching this fiscal year. DYS plans to hire a Diversion Manager to help with data and onboarding.

Ms. Threadgill presented a timeline for the development of a Model Program Guide. In 2019, the CBI studied diversion best practices across the state and country. The Guide was developed after 10 CBI Subcommittee meetings, (February 2020 – February 2021), 4 Information Sharing Work Group meetings, 5 JDAI county presentations & discussions, and countless hours of prep and review from the Subcommittee. CBI plans to act as in an advisory capacity with the Learning Lab launch. The OCA has secured funding for the Learning Lab.

Ms. Threadgill reviewed the overall content in the Model Program Guide that the CBI Subcommittee has put together. She reiterated that this was a consensus document and alerted the group that there are three options on how to move forward:

- Vote as Board to approve the Guide today as a JJPAD document
- Decide that this Guide should remain as a CBI Subcommittee report only and not a JJPAD report to the legislature.
- Issue as “Draft” with intention to hold Board vote in June after members have more time to review.

Members discussed the different options. Many members agreed that the CBI had expertise in the topics discussed in the guide and the group did not want to hold up the Guide’s release by taking time to review as a group and hold a vote at the next meeting. Members agreed they

would need more time to review if it was decided the Board would vote on the Guide. Members discussed the potential barriers to making changes to the Guide if they require a formal vote by this body for each change. Ms. Threadgill mentioned that the benefit to approving the Guide sooner is to be able to use it in the RFR process for Learning Lab sites. The Board agreed to leave the Model Program Guide as a product of the CBI Subcommittee.

Proposed 2021 Objectives & Work Plan

Ms. Threadgill thanked the group for meeting with the OCA staff to discuss work plan ideas for the next year. She informed the group that the work plan she would present stemmed from those conversations and others this group has been a part of in the past year.

New JJPAD initiatives this year:

1. Crossover Youth: Ms. Threadgill mentioned that the OCA sees this work as a natural extension of all three subcommittees' previous two years of work. She stated how years of reform have decreased the overall population of our juvenile justice system. The next step is analyzing the processes and systems impacting youth that remain justice involved. Ms. Threadgill explained this is a multiyear project that provides opportunities for cross-committee work and collaboration.
2. Data analysis and Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED): Ms. Threadgill explained that over the past two years the group solidified the data basics for the annual report and website and this year the Board has the opportunity to deepen their analysis. She mentioned that JJPAD discussed racial and ethnic disparities seen across the system and this project would allow the group to look more closely at the drivers of disparities. She recommended the Data Subcommittee identifies and prioritizes research questions and data availability. The goal would be to report a research brief this year.
3. Trauma screening and referral: Ms. Threadgill explained this is part of the Childhood Trauma Task Force's (CTTF) statute and the CTTF identified this work as a goal too. This year the group will study and make recommendations regarding trauma screening and referrals. Members asked if analysis for capacity post-assessment will be taken into consideration. Ms. Threadgill mentioned this concern has been discussed in the group, and clarified that the CTTF would study this topic before making any recommendations on implementation or not.

Oversight and continuation of previous JJPAD work:

1. COVID-19: Last year the CTTF put out a report on children's behavioral health and the JJPAD Annual Report highlighted agency policies and practices that shifted during the pandemic. Ms. Threadgill mentioned the goal of this year's report would be to highlight positive changes in the system, and also concerns for the future of children's well-being and risk of delinquency. Ms. Threadgill discussed the timeline of this report through a fall report. There was discussion about this report informing the FY23 budget cycle.
2. Impact statutory changes: Ms. Threadgill reminded the group that the new policing bill had a few juvenile justice elements surrounding school resource officers training, developed a memorandum of understanding commission, and expanded juvenile

expungement. She said the previous SRO Working Group will reconvene to analyze implementation if necessary. In the meantime, the OCA will track this work and asked the JJPAD members to bring concerns to the Board if needed. She reminded the group of continued data collection around the Criminal Justice Reform Bill in 2018.

3. Continuation of ongoing work: This objective is to continue the work the Subcommittees have already done including:
 - FY21 Data Report
 - Updating the 2019 data availability report
 - Updates to the Juvenile Justice Data website expansion
 - Diversion Learning Lab oversight
 - Ongoing work around the Trauma Informed and Responsive Framework

Ms. Threadgill presented the four reports stemming from this work over the next two years. She then discussed the topics for the Full Board quarterly meetings for 2021.

Crossover Youth

Ms. Threadgill told the group she thought it would be helpful to provide some foundation setting for this topic. She explained the population of this group can be expansive or narrowly defined based on the degree and timing of system involvement. For the purposes of this work, Ms. Threadgill will use “crossover youth” as a general term to discuss the work plan. The OCA is suggesting this work for the JJPAD as an opportunity to address several different priorities/mandates of JJPAD, which include:

- Reducing racial/ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system
- Preventing traumatized youth’s involvement in the juvenile justice system
- Intervening earlier and more effectively

Ms. Threadgill presented a process chart that highlights some of the potential pathways, referral points, and system for crossover youth. She explained that data in Massachusetts are limited, but it is clear a significant percentage of youth in the juvenile justice system have child welfare involvement in the Commonwealth.

Ms. Threadgill highlighted the relationship between maltreatment and delinquency. The group discussed the difficulties around studying this population. National data looking at emerging adults also looks at these trends from child welfare to adult justice system involvement.

Ms. Threadgill highlighted efforts in the state to address needs of this population including the CHINS to CRA reform in 2012, a Hampden County Pilot Program, and Crossover Youth Practice Model (DYS/DCF/Partners). She explained there has been some successes from these initiatives, but challenges and gaps remain. She said that this is where the JJPAD membership and expertise allows for a systems-level approach to the problem.

Ms. Threadgill continued to explain the role the JJPAD could have in this work. She sees this as an opportunity to do a state-level review of policies, practices, funding, and service gaps. She suggested the JJPAD could focus this work by age, stage in the system, and referral point.

Ms. Threadgill presented the big picture plan of how each subcommittee will take on part of this work. Ms. Threadgill suggested the first year of this work should concentrate on researching the topic and issue a report with recommendations in 2022. A member mentioned the Juvenile Court's partnership with National Center for State Courts to conduct a mapping analysis for services across the state based on Sequential Intercept Mapping.

Members recommended bringing voices of families and children to this work as well. Ms. Threadgill asked this Board for help with how outreach can be done for focus groups. Another member mentioned federal legislation around Family First legislation implementation. Ms. Mossaides highlighted that the goal is to approach this issue through a system lens since many youth are involved in multiple state systems. Members from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) mentioned the ability to present on what Families First is to this group.

Last, members discussed some of the myths and miscommunication around service referrals. Members discussed if this work could coincide with EOHHS' behavioral health redesign. Ms. Threadgill will send that presentation out with this Board's presentation.

There was unanimous approval for this work plan.

Board Member Updates

Ms. Threadgill asked Board members if anyone had updates to share with this group. Members from DCF gave an overview of their Alternative Lock-Up Program and ongoing work with DYS to make changes to the current system in place. DCF explained there is a low number of youth in these programs, and much has changed since ALPs were initially developed as discussed in the 2019 JJPAD Report. DCF and DYS are working through some sticking points regarding streamlining the process and improving communication. They will update this group as they progress through their work.

There were no other member updates.

Closing Comments

Ms. Threadgill thanked the group for their time. The next meeting for the JJPAD Board is scheduled for June 24, 2021. She informed members that the Subcommittee meetings are being held monthly at set meeting times.

Meeting adjourned: 3:37pm