

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Wednesday March 2, 2022
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Meeting held virtually

Board Members or Designees Present:

Maria Mossaides (OCA)
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
Cecely Reardon (DYS)
Matthew Conolly (EOE)
Edward Dolan (Probation)
Naoka Carey (CfJJ)
Rebecca Brink (DCF)
Kevin Kennedy (Mass. Chief of Police Association)
Yves Singletary (DPH)
Lauren Matteodo (Sen. Gomez’s Office)
Daria Afshar (Sen. O’Connor’s Office)

OCA Staff:

Melissa Threadgill
Kristi Polizzano
Alix Rivière

Other Attendees:

Fabiola White (Probation)
Joseph Abber (Probation)
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola (JDAI)
Members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 1:04 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 JJPAD subcommittees, and from Board members, as well as the review and vote of the JJPAD

Board annual report and the 2022 Data Availability report. Additionally, the group will be discussing and voting on the JJPAD 2022 work plan.

Approval of Minutes from December Meeting

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the previous JJPAD Board meeting minutes. Maria Mossaides, Rachel Wallack, Dulcinea Goncalves, Naoka Carey, Rebecca Brink, and Matthew Conolly all voted in the affirmative. Cecely Reardon and Kevin Kennedy abstained.

The meeting minutes for December were approved.

OCA Updates

Ms. Threadgill updated members about the Diversion Learning Labs, which have received referrals in all three counties involved (Worcester, Middlesex and Essex). She also informed the group that training has begun, and that early data shows the racial and ethnic diversity of juveniles referred to the Diversion programs. Members asked about the frequency of data updates they will be receiving regarding these Diversion programs and were informed that after the initial six months Board members would be receiving quarterly updates.

Ms. Threadgill then updated the group about recent legislative and policy changes regarding School Resource Officers. The SRO MOU commission has concluded and EOPSS/DESE issued a model Memorandum of Understanding in February. Members also discussed the combined training between schools and police officers to ensure a good understanding of responsibilities among all entities involved.

Next, Ms. Polizzano updated Board members on new pages added to the Juvenile Justice Data Website Updates. She also explained anticipated updates coming in FY22.

2022 Data Availability Report

Ms. Threadgill reminded members of the general agreement the Board reached on the data availability report. She presented the edits made since the last meeting, which mostly include new language detailing the long-standing nature of data barriers and potential solutions that could come from the Legislature. Hearing no additional edits, the Board voted on the report.

The following members voted in the affirmative: Naoka Carey, Duci Concalves, Lauren Matteodo, Maria Mossaides, and Cecely Reardon.

The following members abstained: Edward Dolan, Kevin Kennedy, Matthew Connolly, Yves Singletary, Rachel Wallack, Rebecca Brink, and Daria Afshar.

The report was adopted.

JJPAD 2021 Annual Report

Ms. Threadgill summarized some of the content of the JJPAD 2021 annual report. Then, Ms. Polizzano discussed six key data findings. Overall, the data demonstrates a continued trend in lesser utilization of the state’s juvenile justice system. Nevertheless, data shows that there are still opportunities to diver more youth, particularly at the front end of the system. Additionally, Ms. Polizzano presented data on the continued racial and ethnic disparities throughout the juvenile justice system.

Next, the group looked at edits made to the 2021 annual report. Members did not have any comments on the edits made. The group discussed how a juvenile court record can affect a youth’ access to housing, employment, and/or education. Members discussed examples of how this could happen, despite it being illegal. The group suggested this could be a future topic of investigation for the Board.

The Board then voted on the report:

The following members voted in the affirmative: Naoka Carey, Duci Concalves, Lauren Matteodo, Maria Mossaides, Cecely Reardon, Edward Dolan, Lauren Matteodo, and Kevin Kennedy.

The following members abstained: Matthew Connolly, Yves Singletary, Rachel Wallack, Rebecca Brink, and Daria Afshar.

The report was adopted.

JJPAD 2022 Work Plan

Ms. Threadgill introduced the work plan of the JJPAD Board as well as the work plan of CBI and Data subcommittees and the Childhood Trauma Task Force. In 2022 the Board and its subcommittees hope to:

- Publish a report with research findings and recommendations for improvements to the Child Requiring Assistance system
- Publish data briefs focused on the feasibility of establishing an Administrative Data Center, racial/ethnic disparities, and county-based trends
- Continue to track recommendations from the COVID-19 report
- Continue to monitor the implementation and impacts of the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform Act and 2020 Policing law
- Advise the Diversion Learning Labs, Center on Child Wellness and Trauma
- Publish a report with recommendations on trauma screening and referral practices

Data Subcommittee

Ms. Threadgill updated the Board on the Data Subcommittee’s work plan. In the spring, the group will be focusing on a racial and ethnic disparities data brief as well as review other states’ public data reporting measures. In the summer, the subcommittee will be studying the feasibility of establishing an Administrative Data Center. In the fall, the group will present on FY22 Data analysis and review data on the Diversion Learning Lab.

Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF)

Next, Ms. Threadgill updated the Board on the CTTF, highlighting its work on developing recommendations for trauma screening and referral processes. Additionally, Ms. Threadgill explained that the CTTF will continue to provide advisory functions for the Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma.

Community Based Interventions (CBI) Subcommittee

Ms. Threadgill explained that the two big tasks of this group will be to draft a report on the CRA system and the ongoing advising of the Diversion Learning Labs.

JJPAD Board

Ms. Threadgill explained that at the next meeting (early summer), the Board will have the opportunity to review the subcommittee work to date. In the fall, it will review and discuss the CRA Report recommendations, the CTTF trauma screening and referral recommendations report, and hear subcommittee report outs.

Closing Comments

Ms. Threadgill gave members opportunity to share updates of their agencies. Cecely Reardon informed members of changes at DYS, including the departure of Commissioner Peter Forbes and the promotion of former JDAI Coordinator Nokuthula Sibanda to Chief of Staff at DYS. Ms. Threadgill thanked the group for their time and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 2:20 pm