

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Data and Policy Board

Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2020

Members and Designees in Attendance:

- Maria Mossaides, Chair (Child Advocate)
- Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
- Tammy Mello (Children's League)
- Fabiola White (Probation)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Kathrine Lipper (EOE)
- Lindsey Tucker (DPH)
- Peter Forbes (DYS)
- Maggie Randall (Sen. Boncore's Office)
- Cristina Tedstone (DCF)
- Naoka Carey (CFJJ)
- David Melley (Rep. Dykema)

Other Attendees:

- Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
- Crissy Goldman (OCA)
- Kristi Polizzano (OCA)
- Alix Riviere (OCA)
- Members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 1:10pm

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board March 2020 meeting, and each person introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from November

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the previous meeting minutes. The November meeting minutes were approved.

Legislative Update

--Ms. Threadgill updated the Board on legislative items and funding the OCA has requested related to the work of this group. Funding requests included:

- Funding for a Diversion Coordination Learning Lab

- Funding for a project to support implementation of School Resource Officer's Memoranda of Understanding and Standards of Operating Procedures implementation support.
- Funding to support implementation of Trauma-Informed and Responsive Framework with a Center on Child Wellness and Trauma

--Ms. Threadgill explained to the group that the OCA continues ongoing conversations with legislative committee chairs and leadership in both the state House and Senate regarding the 2019 reports from this Board. Finally, she announced that there will be a Legislative Briefing for the entire legislature and public. Information on that will be sent out to the group.

2020 Work Plan Presentation and Discussion

-- Ms. Threadgill thanked the group for meeting with us and went over the subcommittees' workplans for 2020.

- Community Based Interventions (CBI) Subcommittee
 - This group will prepare for the launch of a statewide diversion coordination learning lab.
 - The OCA also has outside Technical Assistance from the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) to help with project development and implementation.
 - Ms. Threadgill went over the scheduled outline for this subcommittee from February through December and broke it into two main timeframes:
 - February to July this group will work on developing the program design plan. Ms. Threadgill presented on the monthly topics for this work moving forward:
 - February- Foundation setting (target audience, diversion home)
 - March- Developing the diversion agreement
 - April- Case management and close out
 - May- Diversion coordinator job description and information sharing
 - June- Outcome Measurement and continuous quality improvement
 - July- Review of program design plan
 - July to December this group will monitor the launch of the Learning Labs, pending budget funding
- Data Subcommittee
 - This subcommittee will focus on improving data reporting quality and availability.
 - Ms. Threadgill explained to the Board that this subcommittee will work on two main projects simultaneously throughout 2020:
 - Launch a juvenile justice data website
 - February to June – Finalize and launch the juvenile justice data website

- July to December—Work on the next iterations of the website
 - Standardize reporting and produce a FY20 data trends report
 - February to July – Develop data reporting standards
 - July to October – Produce data trends report with FY20 data
 - This group is still waiting on arraignment data from Department of Criminal Justice Information Service (DCJIS). This data will be added to the JJ Website once its analyzed.
 - Ms. Threadgill explained the other half of the Data subcommittee’s workplan involved definition standardization across juvenile justice agencies. These categories include standard reporting categories for: Race; Ethnicity; biological sex and sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) data; geography and offense type. The group asked to clarify that this project deals with reporting not individual agency data collection.
- Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF)
 - Ms. Threadgill explained the CTTF will work on two main projects simultaneously throughout the year:
 - Develop trauma informed and responsive (TIR) practice framework
 - January to April – Develop and Publish Draft TIR framework
 - April to June—Solicit feedback on draft framework
 - July to September – Finalize and publish TIR framework
 - Develop recommendations for implementations of the TIR Framework
 - January to July – Solicit feedback on implementation needs/gaps; and develop and refine recommendations for implementation support
 - July to September – Finalize and publish implementation recommendations
 - The group will continue to work on and finalize the statewide framework recommended in the 2019 report to address trauma informed and responsive practice across state agencies. Ms. Threadgill responded to questions regarding framework audience and explained that this framework is geared to any child serving system in the Commonwealth.
 - In addition to the development of the framework, the CTTF will seek feedback on the document and on implementation concerns across the Commonwealth.
 - The goal is to have this work be presented in an annual report in September.
 - Some members in the group expressed concern over the word “framework” suggesting that that word means something very specific to educators and other professionals. There were also suggestions to align this work with Safe and Supportive School initiative and a comprehensive framework update produced by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).
- Full Board

- Ms. Threadgill explained to the group that the Full Board will continue to provide ongoing oversight, feedback and direction for the three subcommittees.
- In addition to that core function, Ms. Threadgill suggested this group work on a SWOT+ (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis to organize, analyze and address commonly cited systemwide concerns. She mentioned examples such as:
 - Human service staffing/ capacity
 - Data system interoperability/sharing
 - Regional CPCS Attorney Shortages
 - Persistent racial and ethnic disparities
 - Service availability tracking
 - Ability of “upstream” systems to address adolescent behavioral needs/challenges
- Ms. Threadgill explained this SWOT analysis will also include an agreed upon vision. The goal of this work is to provide a big picture vision of Massachusetts’ juvenile justice system 2, 5, and 10 years from now. Additionally, any questions identified that this group cannot answer themselves, can be directions for other larger bodies for future work.
- Ms. Threadgill presented an outline of what the Full Board’s 2020 work plan could look like:
 - March—Review of work plans and subcommittee report outs
 - May—Subcommittee report outs and SWOT+ Brainstorm (part 1)
 - July – Juvenile justice data website presentation, updates on data reporting standardization, diversion program design plan presentation, and TIR Framework update
 - September- Review of TIR Framework and Implementation Recommendations report, review and approval of Data Reporting Standards Recommendations, and SWOT+ brainstorm (part 2)
 - November—Review/ approval of Data Trends and JPAD Work Update Annual Report and SWOT+ Presentation
- Ms. Threadgill asked the group for feedback. Overall, the group expressed excitement over the work plans and specifically, the SWOT+ analysis. One suggestion was to also spend time reporting down to subcommittees what the Full Board was working on, and what each subcommittee is doing to ensure the groups are moving forward with a common understanding of the work. The group also suggested each subcommittee do their own SWOT+ analysis to inform the larger board.
- During the general discussion of the work plan, some Board members expressed concern that the timeline of these projects might change especially if more immediate projects pop up. Ultimately, it was suggested that the Board vote on the 2020 work plans as they are with the caveat that the committed should be able to tweak work plans should any immediate needs arise. If adjustments need to be made to the work plans, they will be brought to the Full Boards’ attention.

- The Board voted to approve the work plans.

Subcommittee Report Outs

-- After the vote, Ms. Threadgill spent time reporting on the current work each subcommittee is doing.

- At the last Community- Based Interventions (CBI) subcommittee meeting, the group worked on foundation setting for a statewide diversion program. There were two main questions this group aimed to discuss: “who should the target audience for statewide diversion be?” and “who should run statewide diversion?” Ms. Threadgill reported to the full Board the discussion that the subcommittee had regarding both these questions.
 - “Who should the target audience be for statewide diversion?” – The current recommendation from the CBI subcommittee is that the decision on *who* should be part of diversion should be left to the referrers (police, district attorneys, clerks, and judges) for any delinquency case they consider appropriate. Referrers would be strongly urged to refer first-time and/or lower-level offenses, as well as any cases where a youth’s unmet needs may be driving delinquent behavior. If intervention efforts do not succeed and it appears a higher level of court-involvement is necessary, the youth will be referred back to the original referrer.
 - The Board specifically asked to be more explicit in addressing racial and ethnic disparities with the target audience.
 - “Who should run statewide diversion?” – Ms. Threadgill explained that the hosting agency would need to be a state agency to administer the program, but operations could be run by a state agency (the same one or different) or could be contracted out to a community-based provider.
 - Ms. Threadgill continued to report out that the CBI subcommittee group created pros and cons for a list of juvenile justice agencies to help this determination. She explained pros and cons for an Executive Branch agency (specifically the Executive Office for Health and Human Services), the Judicial branch (specifically Probation), and community providers administering statewide diversion.
 - The Board generally was supportive of this analysis and asked for clarification on how the Board will pick an agency. Ms. Threadgill explained that, ultimately, the group needs to get the funding for the learning labs first and find an agency willing to take this one. The group agreed that the culture and vision of the host agency needs to match the culture and vision of this initiative.
- At the last Data subcommittee meeting, the Executive Office for Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) presented its latest iteration of the juvenile justice data website and received feedback from the group. Additionally, the group determined data categories they would like to see reporting alignment standards on—race/ethnicity, gender, SOGIE, geography, and offense type categories.

- At the last few Childhood Trauma Task Force meetings, the group continued work on the 5 domains and 5 principles of the Trauma Informed & Responsive (TIR) Practice Framework. Ms. Threadgill explained this framework addresses youth in the system as well as the staff doing the work. She then reported the three ways in which the state can implement this framework:
 - A statewide/cross-sector TIR practice resource and coordination hub
 - Sector-specific implementation training and technical assistance
 - Quality assurance/practice advancement
 - A Center on Child Wellness and Trauma that address the previous 3 implementation strategies under one roof. The Board asked questions regarding this Center and suggested the importance of having this Center do coaching and not just “one-off” trainings. There also was interest in sector specific trainings. The group advised that other guests might need to be brought into the CTTF discussions. Ms. Threadgill reminded the group all meetings are open to the public and welcome guests.

Agency Report Outs

--Ms. Threadgill announced that the remainder of the meeting time was reserved for Board representatives to report out based on the following prompts:

- Has your agency implemented any new initiatives/policy changes that the Board should be aware of?
- Any challenges/barriers to success your agency/organization is experiencing that may be relevant to other Board members, or that this group should try to tackle?

-- Trial courts: No report out since the representative was a last-minute substitution.

-- Probation: There is a new juvenile administrative hearing policy for violations of probation. Overall, non-delinquent violations of probation are down 52% and delinquent violations of probation are down 47% in the last two years.

-- Representatives from the legislature: Reminded the group that any budget requests they have, please reach out.

-- Department of Youth Services (DYS): Reframed their “direct group worker” staff title to “juvenile justice youth development specialist” to increase role clarity in the workforce. They also discussed the goal to pair this group with security to increase collaboration and are working on a training curriculum. DYS was awarded another Second Chance Act grant with CPCS and Probation to continue the work developed from their first awarded Second Chance Act grant. This grant takes the Suffolk county pilot initiative to a statewide practice.

-- The representative from Citizens for Juvenile Justice (CFJJ) said they are busy with general core functions and advocacy in the state house.

--The representative from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) announced that they released the first DCF Annual Report at the end of calendar year 2019. They also reported on foster care policy reforms that are being implemented this year and are in the process of re-procurement of congregate care providers.

-- The Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) reiterated that the FY21 budget request for the office included the initiatives mentioned at this meeting. They also reported on other projects the office is working on including: a Worcester trauma project; Transition age youth study and launching of an interagency working group on the topic; emotional injury and youth suicide in the state specifically regarding 11-12 year old children; and the new role of co-lead with DPH on the statewide child-fatality review board.

--Ms. Threadgill thanked everyone for their participation and reminded them of the next meeting on May 11, 2020 1-3pm at 1 Ashburton Place 21st Floor.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:36pm