

Office of the Child Advocate  
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board  
Community Based Interventions Subcommittee  
Thursday, February 17, 2022  
1:00PM-2:30PM  
**Meeting held virtually**

**Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:**

Maria Mossaides (OCA)  
Amy Ponte (CAFL)  
Leon Smith (CfJJ)  
Brian Jenney (DPH)  
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)  
Karin Orr (DMH)  
Susan Gil-Hickey (DMH)

**OCA Staff:**

Melissa Threadgill  
Kristi Polizzano  
Morgan Byrnes  
Jessie Brunelle

**Other Attendees:**

Araya Landry (Family Continuity)  
Katie Perry-Lorentz (DYS)  
Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola (DYS)  
Krystyna Boisjolie (RFK Community Alliance)  
Jennifer Hallisey (CBHI)  
Michael Glennon (SCDAO)  
Johana Rodriquez (PPAL)  
Other Members of the public

**Meeting Commenced: 1:07PM**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Ms. Polizzano welcomed the attendees to the Community Based Interventions (CBI) subcommittee virtual meeting. She then presented the agenda, explaining that the majority of the meeting will be dedicated to the continued discussion of the CRA system. Before beginning the meeting, she asked the group if next month's meeting could be moved from March 17, 2022, to March 24, 2022. There were no issues discussed and the meeting date was changed.

**Learning Lab Update:**

Ms. Polizzano introduced Dr. Sibanda who gave the group an update on the Diversion Learning Lab. Dr. Sibanda announced that at next month's Subcommittee meeting the diversion coordinators from each of the three Learning Lab sites would present on their work to date and take questions. She then informed the group that the program has accepted three referrals, two being served in Middlesex County and one being served in Worcester County. Additionally, there are approximately five referrals currently in the pipeline in Middlesex County. Dr. Sibanda continued by highlighting some implementation challenges, to date and encouraged the group to attend next month's meeting for a more detailed discussion on the state diversion Learning Labs.

### **Continued Discussion on CRA Research Findings Presentation:**

Ms. Polizzano gave an overview of the work done by this Subcommittee and the OCA in 2021, explaining that in 2022, the Subcommittee will be moving into the recommendation phase.

Ms. Polizzano reminded the group of the OCA interview process, explaining that the office conducted over 100 interviews with stakeholders across the system. She then went on to discuss the findings of the interviews including overarching takeaways, the strengths in the CRA system, weaknesses of the CRA system and a review of CRA systems in other jurisdictions. Ms. Polizzano opened up the group to questions or discussion. There were no questions or discussion on the research to date.

Next, Ms. Threadgill asked meeting participants to respond to the following questions on an online brainstorming platform:

1. What *should* the overall goal of the CRA system be?
2. What does success look like?
3. When should CRAs be used?

She explained that members would submit their answers interactively via Ideaflyp. Ms. Polizzano gave the Subcommittee a short demonstration on how to best use the online platform. Members took some time to add their ideas. After a few minutes Ms. Threadgill presented the ideas that the group submitted. She highlighted that "access to services" and "minimal court intervention" were common themes among the answers. She welcomed the group to discuss submissions that they agreed with, or ones that they opposed. A member noted that a common theme was the idea

that court intervention was not necessary to get young people and their families the services they need. The group briefly discussed this point.

Ms. Threadgill transitioned back to the presentation. She explained to the group the concept of the “magic wand question: If you had a magic wand and could change anything about the CRA system, what would you do?” stating that the remainder of the presentation would be the presentation of common themes/responses that interviewees gave to that question. She explained that the responses presented meet the following criteria:

- Fall within the scope of the JJPAD Board’s work
- Not illegal or represented a separation of power between branches of government issues
- Not already happening
- More actionable and less aspirational (e.g. eliminate poverty)

Ms. Threadgill also explained that the ideas listed were not necessarily ones that the OCA supported or opposed, but rather all ideas that met the criteria that the OCA heard throughout the interviews. She then went on to present responses that fall into the following categories:

- Expanding Prefiling Interventions
- Promoting Inter-agency Collaboration
- Restructuring Out-of-home Placement Options
- Reducing/Changing Size & Scope of CRA System
- Data & Administrative Changes

Members discussed the various responses/themes highlighted in the presentation, including how services could be altered to be more family focused rather than centered on the child. Members also discussed school based CRAs, noting that society’s understanding of the causes of truancy have evolved since the creation of the CRA system, and how those causes are not directly addressed in the current CRA system. A member noted that removing school based CRAs was listed as a potential recommendation. Members discussed the pros and cons of this change, mentioning that schools could work closer with FRCs to get young people the services needed to better address the root causes of truancy.

Ms. Threadgill transitioned the group back to the second iteration of the brainstorming exercise, explaining that members will be given time to add their own “magic wand” ideas using the same categories highlighted in the presentation. Members would then have a few minutes to read what other submitted and “like” the ideas they agreed with and “dislike” any they were opposed. Members took a few minutes to add their ideas via Ideaflip.

Ms. Threadgill ended the brainstorming session by informing the group that members could continue to add to the Ideaflip for the next week, at which point it would be closed. She explained that the information submitted will be condensed to a more readable format and shared with the group. She then welcomed Ms. Polizzano to hold a formal vote on the previous meeting’s minutes.

**Review and Approval of Minutes from November Meeting:**

Ms. Polizzano held a formal vote on the approval of the previous Community Based Interventions meeting minutes. Nokuthula Sibanda, Brian Jenney, Amy Ponte, Karin Orr and Rachel Wallack voted to approve the minutes. Director Mossaides abstained. No one was opposed.

The meeting minutes for November 18, 2021, were approved.

**Closing Comments:**

Ms. Threadgill thanked the presenters and members for their participation. She informed the group that the next meeting will take place on March 24, 2022, from 1:00PM to 2:30PM.

**Meeting adjourned: 2:28pm**