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

Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:
Amy Ponte (CAFL)
Karin Orr (DMH)
Susan Gill-Hickey (DMH)
Leon Smith (CfJJ)
Thula Sibanda (DYS)
Dawn Christie (Parent)
Barbra Wilson (CLM)
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)

OCA Staff:
Melissa Threadgill
Kristi Polizzano
Morgan Byrnes
Jessica Seabrook

Other Attendees:
Daniele Rose (DYS)
Katherine Hughes
Jillie Santos (CfJJ)
Michelle Martinez (FSMV)
Araya Landry (Family Continuity)
Michael Kilkelly
Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
Katie Perry-Lorentz (DYS)
Other Members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 1:02 PM

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Polizzano welcomed the attendees to the Community Based Interventions (CBI) Subcommittee virtual meeting. She then presented the agenda, explaining the group would hear a presentation from the Department of Youth Services (DYS) diversion team, after reviewing and voting on the October meeting minutes.

Review and Approval of Minutes from the October Meeting:
Ms. Polizzano held a formal vote on the approval of the previous Community Based

Interventions meeting minutes. Dawn Christie, Susan Gil-Hickey, Amy Ponte, Karin Orr and Thula Sibanda all voted to approve the minutes. Rachel Wallack abstained. No one opposed.

The meeting minutes for October 20, 2022, were approved.

Learning Lab Updates from DYS and Diversion Learning Labs:

Ms. Threadgill welcomed Daniele Rose, the Diversion Program Manager to present program and data updates. Ms. Rose began updating members on the Diversion Learning Lab including case trends and recent stakeholder meetings in each of the counties (Essex, Worcester, Middlesex).

She then welcomed Araya Landry, Diversion Coordinator for Worcester County to present program data. She highlighted:

- Referrals by county, referral point (Police, Clerk Magistrate, District Attorney, Judge), offense type and age of youth at time of referral
- Number of youth who went through the intake process, including their demographic data (e.g., race) and if they were dually involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Michelle Martinez, Diversion Coordinator for Essex County, presented on the following:
- MAYSI – 2 assessment results
- YLS assessment results

Ms. Rose then presented on successful exits of the program. Ms. Martinez and Ms. Landry shared examples of youth who successfully completed the program from their counties.

Ms. Rose then presented on challenges, including:
- Stakeholders who are hesitant to make referrals
- Staffing transitions
- Aligning the length of diversion programming with the risk level of the youth

She also announced that the Diversion Learning Lab will be expanding to both Plymouth and Hampden County. Dr. Sibanda added that they will be looking to expand to more counties in 2023.

Ms. Rose welcomed questions. A member asked for the judicial referral process to be described. It was explained that DYS' partnership with the defense bar plays a large role in this process and that often defense counsel will recommend diversion to the judge.

Members discussed the demographics of the youth referred to the Learning Labs with one member noting the low number of Black youth. One member asked if it was possible to see what percent of eligible Black youth are getting diverted. Members discussed reaching out to more diverse stakeholders to educate parents, youth and others on diversion opportunities.

Members discussed referrer buy-in challenges and successes.

Ms. Polizzano asked what is being communicated back to the referrer after a successful case closure. It was explained that it depended on the risk level and level of intervention. Generally, high-level details of the diversion activities and the youth's accomplishments are shared.

Members thanked the diversion team for their work and their presentation.

Closing Comments:
Ms. Polizzano thanked the members for their participation and noted that the December meeting would be cancelled and that the group will reconvene in 2023. She adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 1:51 PM