

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Friday, December 12, 2025
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Meeting held virtually

Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:

Dana Bernson (DPH)
Daniel Wolfski (Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association)
David Chandler (DYS)
David Whitham (EOHHS)
Eric Klingaman (CLM)
Heidi Gold (EOE)
Melissa Williams (DCF)
Laura Miller (MDAA)
Laura Lempicki (Probation)
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)

OCA Staff:

Kristi Polizzano
Arianna Turner
Jessica Seabrook
Bessie Pierre

Other Attendees:

Lisa Lundquist (OGR)
Dan Rosenthal (DYS)
Jen Rocha (DYS)
Jennie Wang
Juliet Anctil
Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
Lindsey Sagasta (DPH)
Paige Hubbard (DPH)
Josh Dankoff (CfJJ)

Meeting Commenced: 10:33am

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Polizzano welcomed attendees. She then invited Subcommittee members to introduce themselves and invited non-members to introduce themselves in the chat.

Ms. Polizzano thanked members for their data submissions and contributions for the JJPAD 2025 annual report, acknowledging the time and energy that members spent completing data requests.

Approval of February Meeting Minutes

Ms. Polizzano invited questions or feedback regarding the February 14, 2025, meeting minutes. None were raised. Laura Miller, Dana Bernson, David Whitham, Daniel Wolkski, David Chandler, Eric Klingaman, Melissa Williams, and Laura Miller all voted in the affirmative. Rachel Wallack, Laura Lempicki, and Heidi Gold abstained. No one voted against the meeting minutes.

The February meeting minutes were approved.

OCA Presentation: JJPAD Board 2025 Annual Report Data to date

Ms. Polizzano started the presentation by sharing some data notes. Ms. Polizzano also noted that agencies reported more data this year than in prior years and that the OCA will receive additional data on summons and arrests in the upcoming weeks to complete this year’s analysis. She highlighted that Probation and the Department of Youth Services (DYS) provided additional data this year to support the Board’s analysis.

Ms. Polizzano shared that there will be a early 2026 meeting to discuss juvenile justice system data trends at the initial stages of the juvenile justice system, as well as demographic and geographic breakdowns.

Ms. Polizzano began by reviewing overall juvenile justice system data trends thus far. She noted that the substantial increase in pretrial court involvement may be connected to the fact that the Criminal Justice Reform Act (CJRA) established a Pretrial Unit at Probation. Ms. Polizzano welcomed feedback. None was raised.

Ms. Polizzano then reviewed the pretrial data trends and the changes in offense types/severity for these process points. She invited questions and discussion.

One member raised concerns about language describing two different types of supervision for youth with pretrial release conditions. Probation “monitors” Category A cases and “supervises” Category B cases. They also raised concerns about year-over-year comparisons regarding these categories since they are relatively new to MPS. Ms. Polizzano responded that the language can be updated and reflected in the narrative of the report.

Another member asked how the data accounts for youth who are detained for multiple reasons. DYS explained they report based on the most serious offense youth are alleged of committing, and whatever is decided in regard to that charge.

Members discussed the pros and cons of including both numbers and percentages in visualizations. Ms. Polizzano said that the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) team will try to include this feedback, but she voiced concerns that the chart’s scale would pose a challenge.

Ms. Polizzano reviewed the “Post disposition data trends” section and welcomed feedback.

One member raised that they find axis labels helpful, rather than a key. They also added that it may be helpful to include a story or description alongside the visualizations. Ms. Polizzano responded that the report would include all context.

Another member asked for the definition of “disposition” and recommended wordsmithing further to be able to adequately explain this data to the public.

Next, Ms. Polizzano summarized the high-level takeaways from the data presented thus far. She welcomed questions and discussion. No questions or comments were raised.

Ms. Polizzano then reviewed the “Other child-serving systems data trends” section and welcomed feedback.

In the Child Requiring Assistance section, Ms. Polizzano noted that the OCA estimated trends for 2025 due to a change in the Trial Court’s data reporting for these cases. In prior years, the Trial Court reported the total number of CRA filings that year, regardless of the case outcome. In FY25, the Court reported the number of cases *not* expunged that year, which is a fraction of what was previously reported. Ms. Polizzano noted the change makes year-to-year comparisons difficult. She explained the OCA estimated – comparing prior reporting totals with new public reporting – that about 66% of cases were expunged each year. Using that estimate, the OCA calculated the FY25 estimated total to be able to compare to prior fiscal years. Ms. Polizzano asked for feedback on the OCA’s estimation methodology. None was raised.

In the Juvenile Court Clinic section, Ms. Polizzano noted that data for 2025 will look different due to an organizational data migration and will be corrected in 2026.

In the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) Admissions and Referrals sections, one member noted the decrease in program participation prior to a program closure. Ms. Polizzano added that a note about the program closure will be included in the report.

In the BSAS Referral Eligibly section, one member asked if referrals result in program admissions. BSAS clarified that referrals do not necessarily equal admission. Another member asked for this distinction to be clarified in the report. Another member suggested that including an explanation of the relationship between grant availability and program availability could be helpful, particularly in the context of school-based BSAS referrals.

One member asked if a chart could break down the missing BSAS referrals by year. Ms. Polizzano said this change may be possible and would look into it further.

Last, Ms. Polizzano reviewed the “Data summary: other systems” slide and welcomed discussion to put things in context of overall child serving systems trends. No comments were made.

Next Steps

Ms. Polizzano shared that the OCA team is working on compiling the final data for juvenile justice system data trends at the initial stages. She shared that there will be a similar presentation in early 2026 for subcommittee members to review the remaining data and provide feedback.

Ms. Polizzano shared that, following that meeting, the OCA team will draft the data section of the annual report for feedback, which members will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on at a future meeting.

Ms. Polizzano asked attendees if there were any concerns with the next steps. None were raised.

Finally, Ms. Polizzano shared that the Data Subcommittee will meet more frequently in 2026, with the year's main project being centered on crossover youth data.

Concluding Remarks

Ms. Polizzano thanked members again for their attendance and data sharing. She asked members to look for an email to schedule the next meeting and welcomed members to reach out in the meantime.

Adjournment: 11:48am