

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday July 14, 2022
10:30am-12:00pm
Meeting held virtually

Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:

- Nancy Brody (DCF)
- Barbara Kaban (CPCS)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Dana Bernson (DPH)
- Sana Fadel (CfJJ)
- Kim Occhiuti (DCF)
- Lydia Todd (CLM)
- Dave Chandler (DYS)
- Anne Marie Ritchie (Juvenile Court)

OCA Staff:

- Melissa Threadgill
- Kristine Polizzano
- Janice Neiman
- Taylor Loyd
- Jessica Seabrook
- Morgan Byrnes

Other Attendees:

- Anne Marie Ritchie (Juvenile Court)
- Rebecca Pries
- Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola (DYS)
- Joshua Dankoff (CfJJ)
- Madison Tompkins
- Noor Toraif (DYS)
- Jillie Santos (CfJJ)
- Jonah Schennum (DCF)
- Kristina Sladek (Probation)
- Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
- Meg Danisewich (DYS)
- Katie Perry-Lorentz (DYS)
- Other members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 10:33 AM

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Polizzano welcomed the attendees to the Data subcommittee meeting. Members and attendees introduced themselves. Ms. Polizzano explained that the group would review a draft of the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Research brief, after voting on the June and April meeting minutes.

Approval of April and June Meeting Minutes

Ms. Polizzano asked if anyone had any questions or feedback regarding the April 14, 2022, meeting minutes. The group did not offer any feedback or objections. Sana Fadel, Nancy Brody, Kim Occhiuti and David Chandler all voted in the affirmative. Ann Marie Ritchie abstained. No one voted against the meeting minutes.

The April minutes were approved.

Ms. Polizzano asked if anyone had any questions or feedback regarding the June 23, 2022, meeting minutes. The group did not offer any feedback or objections. Sana Fadel, Nancy Brody, Kim Occhiuti and David Chandler all voted in the affirmative. Ann Marie Ritchie abstained. No one voted against the meeting minutes.

The June minutes were approved.

Review draft: Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) at the Front Door of Massachusetts Juvenile Justice System Research Brief

Ms. Polizzano explained that this brief was the outcome of the group's looking into RED in the front end of the juvenile justice system, including a presentation heard in March by former Rappaport Fellow Ayanna Miller-Smith, an analysis of currently available data and a literature review on national trends.

Ms. Polizzano welcomed general questions and edits to the document. Members suggested including a limitations section that would provide context for the data used including: the source of data set, the date the data was accessed for analysis, and other factors that could have impacted the data, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Members also provided edits to the format of the document.

After general edits, the group discussed each section of the report. Members discussed the different hypotheses, with some members discussing the need to add language that clarifies why the group chose to investigate those specific hypotheses.

Members then discussed hypotheses four: "Racial disparities in applications for compliant as well as the use of arrests instead of summons can be explained by individual police officer biases and decision making. Members challenged the focus on individual police officers, citing that the disparities observed could also be caused by department level policy. Language was added to include that in the analysis.

Ms. Polizzano then requested feedback on the following recommendations:

- Investing in Prevention and Alternatives to Arrest: including, increasing investments in community-based programs aimed at reducing system involvement, promoting prosocial activities and expanding the state Diversion Learning Labs.
- Gathering and Using Data to Spot Problem Areas and Improve Practice: including having police departments regularly report the use of summons to the FBI's NIBRS data system, review internal data and begin documenting the reasons an arrest is used over a summons.

- Reducing Disparities through Practice and Policy Change: including having police departments provide more guidance and limitations on when to use an arrest versus summons, when to offer diversion and review internal policies that may be contributing to RED in arrests.

Members discussed the recommendations, with some members requesting that more language be added to clarify how the recommendations would specifically impact the observed racial and ethnic disparities. Members also discussed adding language around best implementation practices.

Concluding remarks:

Ms. Polizzano thanked the group for their feedback and participation. She welcomed anyone who had further comments to submit their edits via email. She then explained that the document will be updated to incorporate the suggested edits and that the updated draft will be emailed out prior to the September meeting for a final review before ultimately being presented to the JJPAD Board in its October meeting.

Ms. Polizzano wished everyone well and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment: 12:06 PM