

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday July 8, 2021
10:30am-12:00pm
Meeting held virtually

Subcommittees Members or Designees Present:

- Cristina Tedstone & Nicholas Campolettano (DCF)
- David Chandler (DYS)
- Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Sana Fadel (CfJJ)

Other Attendees:

- Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
- Kristine Polizzano (OCA)
- Janice D. Neiman (OCA)
- Alix Rivière (OCA)
- Judy Touzin (OCA intern)
- Ayanna Miller-Smith (OCA intern)
- Patricia Bergin (EOPSS)
- Kristina Sladek (Probation)
- Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
- Rowan Curran (DYS)
- Margaret Danisewich-Martin (DYS)
- Dan Rosenthal (DYS)
- Noor Toraif (DYS)
- Other members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 10:32am

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Data subcommittee meeting held virtually via Teams. Members introduced themselves. She explained that after the review of the June meeting minutes the group will discuss the update of the data availability report.

Review and Approval of the June Meeting Minutes

Ms. Threadgill asked if anyone had questions or feedback regarding the June 10, 2021 meeting minutes. The group did not have any additions or corrections. The minutes were approved.

Review of the Data Availability Report Draft

Ms. Threadgill explained that the goal of this report is to update the 2019 data availability report, add new data elements from partner entities, and include all of it as a section in the JJPAD annual report. After this meeting, the OCA will send another draft in the fall for a final review before submitting the report to the JJPAD Board.

Before reviewing the report page by page, members discussed big picture remarks. Some members noted that the recommendations seemed to be coming from the OCA, not from the group. Ms. Threadgill explained that the OCA based these recommendations on research done and conversations that have taken place in this subcommittee, but that they are only suggestions meant to be discussed by the group during review. Members also wish to see the report highlight even more the work that each agency put into collecting and reporting data for this report.

It was suggested that the report could say more about how the data is being used and who is using it to highlight the benefits of collecting and analyzing all this data. Ms. Threadgill explained that the type of data gathered and analyzed stems from requests and questions from members of the JJPAD Board, the Legislature, and different stakeholders. Next, the group discussed the possibility of laying out more clearly a hierarchy of questions and data sets with a “priority list,” especially regarding data that the group would like to collect in the future. This list would also describe both data analysis questions and data requests that would require change in agencies’ reporting processes. Ms. Threadgill proposed to add a column to some of the report’s tables indicating if the lack of data availability is due to an analysis issue or a collection issue.

Next, the group discussed the recommendation for Massachusetts to develop an administrative data center. Many members were not aware of the use of such centers to analyze state data and had questions regarding privacy matters, administrative responsibilities, data sharing logistics, and cost. It was explained that these centers usually evaluate outcomes from state agency projects beyond their agency data and do longitudinal studies using anonymized data. Members suggested the report add more examples of how these centers have been used in the past few decades by state agencies throughout the country. Ms. Threadgill discussed a conversation OCA staff had with Dr. Ryan, co-director of the Child and Adolescent Data Lab at the University of Michigan. She suggested asking Dr. Ryan to present on his data center to answer questions the group might have.

Ms. Threadgill then shared the draft report on the screen for the group to review page-by-page. In the “Progress since 2019” section, members discussed the possibility of adding a graph listing major data points, with data recently added in green and missing data in red to show the significant progress in data availability made in the past two years. Ms. Threadgill also suggested that individual agencies let the OCA know how much time, funds, or additional staff it took to collect and analyze the data for this report. Others mentioned adding a discussion about additional funding the Legislature put in to support agencies in their data collection efforts (e.g. Court Bond Bill, funds for CPCS and DYS). It was also suggested the report highlight previously unanswered questions that can now be addressed thanks to the added data and provide answers to those questions.

Next, the group examined Finding #1 stating that basic data on decisions made at critical juvenile justice process points is not available to the JJPAD Board. Members suggested updates to the data table based on data that is available.

Members of the subcommittee had no comments on Finding #2 which states barriers to matching data across process points makes it difficult-to-impossible for the Board to accurately assess the impact of some policy and practice changes.

Next, the group discussed Finding #3 which states barriers to accessing data with greater levels of detail negatively impacts the Board's ability to conduct deeper analysis and make focused policy recommendations. Members made some comments on formatting for the graphs.

The group then discussed Finding #4 which states there is limited ability to report data on youth involved in multiple state systems. Members focused on questions the JJPAD Board cannot yet answer because of lack of data, including "How many youth with a Care & Protection (C&P) and/or a CRA filing have ever been arrested or had/have a Delinquency case?" It was argued that while the paper records are deleted, the information is still housed by the courts data management system.

Next, the group examined Finding#5 stating there is limited ability to report data on youth life outcomes over time. Members noted that some agencies collect data on Positive Youth Development measures in paper format. It was therefore decided to clarify that no agency collects this data *electronically*.

With only fifteen minutes left, Ms. Threadgill suggested that the group save a discussion of recommendations for a future meeting. Members noted their wish to have guest speakers come to discuss administrative data centers, such as the Child and Adolescent Data Lab at the University of Michigan, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at MIT, and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Concluding remarks:

Ms. Threadgill explained that OCA staff would work on an updated draft and share it with subcommittee members before the next meeting on September 9, 2021. She added that the group would not convene in August.

Adjournment: 11:50am