

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

**Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:**

- Kim Occhiuti (DCF)
- Nancy Brody (DCF)
- David Chandler (DYS)
- Lydia Todd (CLM)
- Barbara Kaban (CPCS)
- Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Sana Fadel (CfJJ)
- Dana Bernson (DPH)

**OCA Staff:**

- Melissa Threadgill
- Kristine Polizzano
- Janice Neiman
- Alix Rivière
- Gabe Sultan
- Morgan Byrnes
- Taylor Loyd

**Other Attendees:**

- Patricia Bergin (EOPSS)
- Kristina Sladek (Probation)
- Noor Toraif (DYS)
- Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
- Meg Danisewich (DYS)
- Katie Perry-Lorentz (DYS)
- Jenyka Spitz – Gassnola (DYS)
- Other members of the public

**Meeting Commenced:** 10:30 AM

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Ms. Polizzano welcomed the attendees to the Data subcommittee meeting and welcomed all to introduce themselves. Members and attendees introduced themselves. Ms. Polizzano explained that the group would be reviewing and discussing the 2022 work plan as well as hearing a presentation on overnight arrest admissions data after reviewing the February meeting minutes.

**Review and Approval of the February Meeting Minutes:**

Ms. Polizzano asked if anyone had any questions or feedback regarding the February 10, 2022, meeting minutes. The group did not offer any feedback or objections. Nancy Brody, David Chandler, Sana Fadel and Dana Bernson all voted in the affirmative. No one abstained or voted against the meeting minutes.

The February minutes were approved.

### **Review & Discussion of 2022 Work Plan**

Ms. Polizzano began to present the JJPAD Board 2022 work plan. She presented members with the following goals:

1. Reduce crossover from child welfare to juvenile justice system
2. Increase ability to use data to drive systems improvements
3. Track implementation of juvenile justice system-related statutory changes & JJPAD recommendations
4. Promote earlier identification and intervention practices for youth who have experienced trauma

She reviewed previous steps taken in 2021 to achieve those goals and presented what work will be done in 2022. After a general overview, Ms. Polizzano focused the group on goal number 2, explaining that the Data Subcommittee will do the following:

- Publish data briefs on racial and ethnic disparities and other topics to be determined
- Study the feasibility of creating an Administrative Data Center
- Publish FY22 Annual Data Report

Ms. Polizzano welcomed any questions or discussion from the group. After hearing none, she introduced Ayanna Miller-Smith. Ms. Miller-Smith is a PhD student at Northeastern University who was a Rappaport fellow with the Office of the Child Advocate and Department of Youth Services over the summer. During her fellowship, Ms. Miller-Smith studied racial and ethnic disparities in policing.

### **Presentation & Discussion: Overnight Arrest Admissions Racial and Ethnic Disparities Data**

Ms. Miller-Smith presented on racial and ethnic inequalities in overnight arrests (ONA) data. An overnight arrest occurs when youth are arrested when court is not in session and held in a DYS facility until the next business day. First, she gave a brief introduction of key terms and reviewed conclusions of the literature on this topic. Of note, she highlighted studies found that, controlling for a wide variety of criteria, frequency of individual delinquent acts do not solely account for the racial and ethnic disparities in arrest data. Moreover, studies demonstrate that nation-wide, police discretion and decision-making, which varies depending on areas of study, greatly influence racial and ethnic disparities in arrests.

Then, Ms. Miller-Smith discussed recent data trends regarding overnight arrest admissions in Massachusetts by age, gender, demographics, arrest type, penalty type, and offense type. Next, she discussed bail status by race and ethnicity. She then discussed the racial and ethnic breakdown of data on detainment after release, which refers to the outcome after a youth has gone to court after overnight arrest. Next, Ms. Miller showed racial and ethnic data on offense type, putting it in context of national data. Her analysis showed that compared to the general Massachusetts youth population, Black and Hispanic/Latino youth are overrepresented in every offense type category, while White youth are simultaneously under-represented.

After her presentation, the group discussed the data. Members discussed that arrests are counted by occurrence of arrest rather than youth. Members also asked if analysis of county-specific data was possible.

Next, members discussed how race and ethnicity data is reported. It was explained that race and ethnicity data collected by the Department of Youth Services (DYS) is self-identified and provided by the youth. Members noted that generally, Hispanic youth tend to identify ethnically and not racially. Members discussed how that reflects in the data.

Ms. Threadgill asked Ms. Miller-Smith what her biggest takeaways from the data analysis. Ms. Miller-Smith responded that most of the race and ethnicity disparities are built in systematically and therefore, to reduce the disparities she would recommend working with police to divert youth prior to arrest.

Members also discussed how this data should best be distributed. It was explained that DYS reports out the data. Ms. Threadgill also noted that mentioned that the result of this work will be a data brief that can be easily shared with stakeholders. Ms. Miller-Smith mentioned that this data encompasses ONA during the COVID-19 pandemic. She explained that it would be interesting to work with police departments to learn more about their arrest processes. Ms. Threadgill added that the OCA is looking to interview urban police officers and asked members to assist in setting up interviews.

**Concluding remarks:**

Ms. Polizzano thanked Ms. Miller-Smith for her presentation and the group for their participation. Ms. Polizzano wished everyone well and adjourned the meeting.

**Adjournment:** 11:26 AM