

Office of the Child Advocate  
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board  
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
Thursday May 13, 2021  
10:30am-12:00pm  
**Meeting held virtually**

**Subcommittees Members or Designees Present:**

- Barbara Kaben (CPCS)
- Kim Occhiuti (DCF)
- Cristina Tedstone (DCF)
- David Chandler (DYS)
- Lydia Todd (CLM)
- Matthew Broderick (DMH)
- Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
- Patricia Bergin (EOPSS)
- Joshua Dankoff (CfJJ)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)

**OCA Staff:**

- Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
- Kristine Polizzano (OCA)
- Alix Rivière (OCA)

**Other Attendees:**

- Rowan Curran (DYS)
- Michael Glennon (Suffolk County's District Attorney)
- Noor Toraif (graduate intern with DHS)
- Diana Howat (intern CfJJ)
- Dan Rosenthal (DYS)
- Kristina Sladek (Probation)
- Matan Kotler-Berkowitz
- Meg Danisewich-Martin (DYS)
- Other members of the public

**Meeting Commenced:** 10:31am

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Data subcommittee meeting. Members introduced themselves in the WebEx video conference. She explained that after the review of the April meeting minutes the group will discuss the impact of COVID-19 on data as well as the update of the 2019 data availability report.

**Review and Approval of the April Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Threadgill asked if anyone had any questions or feedback regarding the April 8, 2021 meeting minutes. The group did not have any additions or corrections. The minutes were approved.

## COVID-19 Data Conversation

Ms. Polizzano reminded the group that JJPAD Board is planning on putting out a report on the impact of COVID-19, which each subcommittee will be contributing to. She began the discussion of the impact of the pandemic on juvenile justice data and policies, going over each juvenile justice process point:

- Arrests and overnight arrests: Members discussed the data presented and noted that the number of youth not detained seem to be proportionate to ONA admissions. They discussed the fact that while some had suggested there is a concentration of more severe cases in arrests, DYS admission data has not borne this out. Members also mentioned that the group should monitor if the reduction in arrests has impacted crime rates or recidivism. They mentioned data since the Criminal Justice Reform Bill (2018) has shown the switch from Probation Officers to Clerks to make decisions regarding overnight arrests was a positive one.
- Juvenile Court Case processing: Ms. Polizzano noted that emergency hearings were prioritized for in-person hearings, but given that FY21 data is not yet available, trends for applications for complaint, delinquency filings, or arraignments are not able to be reported on yet.
- Pretrial proceedings: Ms. Polizzano noted a decrease in detentions but longer length of stays (on average youth remained 20 days longer in detention during the pandemic compared to the year prior, for those youth released during the period of review). Members were interested in conditions of supervision. Some members wondered if internet access had impacted court proceedings and were told that unreliable internet access had slowed down courts' ability to resolve cases. It is uncertain if it has impacted the number of youths held in detention. Ms. Threadgill explained that the Community Based Intervention (CBI) subcommittee is currently discussing how virtual hearings have negatively and positively impacted court practice. Finally, Ms. Polizzano noted that pretrial supervision cases have increased 9% since March 2020—a trend that Probation has also noted for the past two years.
- Dispositions and ongoing case management: Ms. Polizzano discussed dispositions and ongoing case management, including new limits around the use of GPS. Data-wise, there was a decrease in Risk/Need as well as Administrative Probation cases. Members noted that the proportion of youth with low, median, high risk levels returned to what it was before the use of OYAS the screening tool. The group also wondered how the resumption of jury trials will change caseload numbers.
- DYS commitments: Ms. Polizzano noted a 62% decrease in average monthly new commitments during the first year of the pandemic.

Next, the group discussed the provision of mental health and substance use services. Ms. Polizzano highlighted shifts to virtual visits by juvenile court clinicians, as well as DPH providers, which enabled BSAS facilities to reduce bed capacity and provide individual rooms to clients.

Ms. Polizzano suggested that the group's understanding of the impact of the pandemic on data could further benefit from quarterly data, length of time data, as well as average, ranges, and medians. She asked members if they had any other ideas.

### **Data Availability Report Update**

Next, Ms. Threadgill introduced the discussion on an updated report on juvenile justice data availability. She first reviewed the 2019 findings and how these have changed over the past two years, as noticeable progress has been made on data collection, sharing/coordination, and availability. She then went over data availability by process point. She pointed out that there are still issues regarding availability of data on school-based arrests, law enforcement referrals, and clerk decisions regarding filing of complaint. Additionally, there is no data on police or District Attorney use of diversion. Members also noted the group is lacking data on police interactions before an arrest (e.g. on the use of stop and frisk). Next, Ms. Threadgill discussed the lack of pre-trial data (e.g. arraignments, 58A, pretrial decisions regarding detention and bail). In terms of post-trial data, she mentioned that there is no public data for adjudication, disposition, youth arraigned in adult/trial courts as well as long-term/life outcomes from justice system involvement. Members asked about data on revocations and Ms. Threadgill agreed it should be added to the list of data the group will try to collect and analyze in the future.

Ms. Threadgill then explained that the OCA is proposing adding two new sections to the report:

- 1) Life outcomes data: She presented some of the outcomes the group could look at, including recidivism, educational achievements, employment, substance use, and use of public benefits. Members suggested the following other outcomes: housing, social connectedness (e.g. meaningful and permanent connection to an adult), community engagement, civic engagement (e.g. voting), social participation. Some suggested that the group clearly define a framework for the use of these life outcomes in the report. Members also shared ideas on data that the group could try to collect, including DESE data on school exclusion and data on family status (i.e. if youth became a parent and at what age). The group discussed DYS's data on parenting and the possibility of examining 20 to 30 years of data to understand the impact of generational involvement with DYS.
- 2) Crossover youth data, which would include data on CRAs, delinquency, and Care & Protection cases and how these overlap.

Finally, she presented on the group's overall data reporting challenges, including missing data, the inability to examine data through an intersectional lens (often because of small numbers), the inability to look at a variety of timeframes (some data is in Fiscal Year, other is Calendar Year or quarterly), and difficulty analyzing data longitudinally. Members suggested adding data on expungements. Others mentioned that the missing data is particularly problematic as the group may have information that a youth was held, but not enough data on the reason or decision process, limiting in-depth analysis. Members also noted the need to highlight that these challenges are mostly about agencies' lack of resource to collect and analyze data and suggested the group recommend the Legislature prioritize support for data collection and reporting.

### **Concluding remarks:**

JJPAD Data subcommittee Meeting Minutes—APPROVED 7/8/21

Ms. Threadgill explained that the OCA will incorporate today's feedback and update the 2019 report, which the group will review this summer. Additionally, the 2021 data requests will be sent out in July and will reflect the updates discussed today.

**Adjournment:** 12:00pm