

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 10, 2020
1pm – 2:30pm
Meeting held virtually

Subcommittees Members or Designees Present:

- David Chandler (DYS)
- Lydia Todd (CLM)
- Cristina Tedstone (DCF)
- Kim Occhiuti (DCF)
- Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Abigail Averbach (DPH)
- Sana Fadel (CfJJ)
- Josh Dohan (CPCS)

Other Attendees:

- Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
- Kristine Polizzano (OCA)
- Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
- Grace Picariello (Rep. Cronin's Office)
- Other members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 1:02pm

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Data subcommittee meeting. Ms. Threadgill introduced the individuals in the WebEx video conference. Individuals on the phone introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of the October Meeting Minutes

Ms. Threadgill asked if anyone had any questions or feedback regarding the October 15, 2020 meeting minutes. The group did not have any additions or corrections.

The October meeting minutes were approved.

Review of the Agenda

Ms. Threadgill explained the entire meeting is devoted to reviewing the Data section of the 2020 JJPAD Legislative Report.

Review and discussion of Legislative Report Data Sections

Ms. Threadgill went through the Data sections of the legislative report section by section. There were no edits to the 2020 work review, explaining the work the Data Subcommittee accomplished throughout the year, Ms. Threadgill went over the 2019 data recommendations and the updates pertinent to each recommendation. She discussed the additional juvenile justice system process points the Board received data on including: arraignment occurrences, dangerousness hearings, probation start dates, DYS snapshot and caseload data, DYS placement type data, DYS YES transitions, data on youthful offenders and improved demographic updates.

Ms. Threadgill mentioned remaining challenges regarding data gaps including: data on school based arrests and court referrals, data on the use of diversion, pretrial decision making, plea offers and acceptances, adjudications and dispositions, responses to probation violation notices, data on competency hearings and assessments, transfer hearings and data on juvenile homicide offenders. The group discussed gaps regarding the competency hearings/assessments, transfer hearings and juvenile homicide offenders as recommended by CPCS. Ms. Threadgill will follow up DMH for more information from the Juvenile Court Clinic.

Next, Ms. Threadgill moved on to the FY20 data analysis, starting with an introduction. She introduced the section regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the data for FY20. Members of the Subcommittee were interested in continuing the conversation about the pandemic's impact on the data in the new year. There was a discussion around how the reporting recommendations for race may have impacted the data this year. The OCA will follow up with DYS regarding that concern.

There was a suggestion to change the language around no “jury trials” in the Juvenile Court during the pandemic. The Subcommittee said the report should explain that “evidentiary hearings” as well as jury trials, were delayed due to the Court having to switch all their in-person procedures online. Once the video technology was up and running, there were still concerns about remote hearings and contributed to delays in the court process. The Courts also suspended speedy trial rights and how long individuals could be held on bail due to the pandemic. The group explained that simply having dates for process points helps move the work, and youth’s case, ahead, and without those set dates, many cases were delayed.

Ms. Threadgill moved on to the data the Board received this year at each process point. There was a discussion to add more context around when Delinquency Filings started to be counted with multiple charges starting in 2014 (after the switch to MassCourts in 2013). There was also discussion to include the DYS discharge data to the YES graph to give context to how many youth are staying involved with the Department on a voluntary basis.

Ms. Threadgill discussed the section on Diversion and how many youth are already being diverted from the system. There were no comments on this section.

Ms. Threadgill moved on to the demographics section to discuss the big picture overview on how many kids in each demographic were included in each process point, and how that may have changed since the prior fiscal year. There was a discussion on how the data corresponds to the JDAI analysis regarding race/ethnicity as well. Ms. Threadgill also showed the Subcommittee the section on utilization of other systems that still needs to add DMH data that was just received.

Concluding remarks:

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Ms. Threadgill explained that the Full Board will be reviewing the entire Legislative Report during their meeting on November 19th and, once voted on will be sent to the Legislature. She thanked the group for their work.

Adjournment: 2:14pm