

Approved by Data Subcommittee on January 24, 2020

Office of the Child Advocate

Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board - Data Subcommittee Meeting

November 15, 2019

Members and Designees in Attendance:

- Patricia Bergin (EOPSS)
- Enedia Anjos (DCF)
- Dave Chandler (DYS)
- David Melly (Rep. Dykema's office)
- Leon Smith (CfJJ)
- Matthew Broderick (DMH)
- Lydia Todd (NFI representing the Children's League)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Josh Dohan (CPCS)

Other Attendees:

- Melissa Threadgill (OCA)
- Lindsay Morgia (OCA)
- Kristi Polizzano (OCA)
- Kristina Johnson (EOTSS)
- Elizabeth Ride (EOTSS)
- Wisly Douyon (DYS)
- Other members of the public

Meeting commenced: 10:05AM

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the Data subcommittee and introduced Kristi Polizzano. Ms. Polizzano is the new Juvenile Justice Specialist at the OCA. She informed the group that there were three major agenda items for the meeting: a review of the early impacts report/appendix, a presentation from DYS, and a review of the newest draft of the Juvenile Justice Data Website

Mr. Chandler introduced Wisly Douyon. Mr. Douyon is the new Research Analyst at DYS.

Early Impact Report—Data Trends & Appendix Overview

Ms. Threadgill introduced the “Early Impacts” report that will be submitted to the full board 11/21/2019. Prior to today, the Data subcommittee received a draft of the data trends section and appendix of this report to address any edits that need to be made.

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Ms. Threadgill went through each juvenile justice process point and asked for feedback and edits with any of the data presented.

Arrests

Ms. Todd asked if this data could be interpreted as the legislation being successful with regards to decrease in arrest. She suggested that we make sure to note that some police officers are reporting that they feel as if they just cannot arrest youth anymore, and that might be contributing to the decline in arrests. She cited examples of assaults in programs that staff/police feel like they can no longer respond with an arrest. Ms. Anjos also cited these examples in STARR programs. Mr. Smith suggested the report add a caveat that these numbers might go back up after the initial implementation year.

Overnight Arrest Admissions

There were no edits to this section.

Applications for Complaint

There were no edits to this section.

Delinquency Filings

Mr. Melley suggested adding data labels to this graph

Mr. Chandler commented that the case types listed do not match the case type categories that DYS uses. Ms. Threadgill mentioned that these are the case types the Trial Court uses based on Massachusetts sentencing practices. Mr. Chandler suggested standardizing these in this group.

Mr. Douyon asked if we had first time arrest data. The group explained that we do not.

Mr. Smith asked if there was a document that matches offense type with DYS Grid Level. Ms. Threadgill explained this exists and is quite long, but we could put it as a footnote link or appendix. Mr. Chandler said he can get a list to Ms. Threadgill listing common offense types and their corresponding DYS Grid Level.

Probation

Ms. Lempicki asked if the Probation caseload data were averages. Ms. Threadgill explained that the data is a monthly caseload sample from July of each year that we were provided data.

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Mr. Melley suggested clarifying the labels to indicate the percent change between which fiscal years. He also suggested clarifying that the report has limited data because of the way the data was submitted (due to privacy issues), not because the sample size is too small.

CRA Filing graph

Ms. Threadgill mentioned that we would be fixing the y-axis label on this graph. There were no further edits.

DMH Data Pending

Mr. Broderick mentioned that DMH is trying to collect data for report including referrals and court clinic services by categories, but he was working with the DMH legal department to get that approved.

Racial Disparities:

Ms. Lempicki commented that Probation has data to add for Tables 1 and 2 in the report. Ms. Bergin said she could get corresponding data for arrests as well.

Mr. Chandler asked if DYS should report their race data to match the categories of the other agencies, but Ms. Threadgill suggested to report the data as it is to keep the DYS data robust. Mr. Melley asked about the 35% change and if the data is all FY18-19. Mr. Chandler responded that he was able to send FY2017 data to include in the report

Race Data section:

Ms. Todd asked if the report would be printed in color to make it easier to read. Ms. Threadgill explained it would be, but we can also provide an easier version to read with gray scale. Ms. Johnson suggested putting labels inside the pie graphs. Mr. Chandler mentioned that pie charts can sometimes be misleading, and thus, he preferred other types of graphs.

Ms. Todd commented that racial breakdown of youth being referred to BSAS and the racial breakdown of the charges for Drug/Alcohol offenses was interesting and similar to what Probation saw when looking at Drug Court data.

Mr. Melley: Suggested clarifying the number and percentage for the pie charts. Mr. Melley: Suggested matching the number of significant figures in the text of this section.

Overall:

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Ms. Anjos observed that there was BSAS and potentially DMH data, but inquired why there was no DCF data. Ms. Threadgill responded that DCF was unable to provide data for this report. Ms. Anjos said that moving forward it would be good to have DCF data.

Mr. Smith suggested not splitting up the tables/graphs across pages.

Mr. Melley observed that this section of the report really emphasises that collecting data points across systems is a big challenge, and asked if that is one of the specific recommendations of this report. Ms. Threadgill explained that specific recommendation is in the Data report submitted to the legislature in June. This report does not have specific data recommendations, but does refer to the previous June report.

Appendix

Ms. Polizzano led the discussion regarding the appendix. She told the group that the data is broken down at the county level by process point. The discrepancy is that agencies define county differently. Ms. Todd asked if there was a way to norm this by adding census data to the County level tables to indicate general youth population for each county. Ms. Threadgill said that we did this for race, so we could do it for this. Ms. Lempicki said it would be helpful to see percent change at the end. Mr. Broderick said that it was a good idea to include age range of arrests.

In Appendix B, Mr. Smith asked about the gender category “non-reported.” Ms. Polizzano said BSAS indicated that some of their non-reported youth identified as transgender, but no other agencies made any similar indications. Mr. Broderick suggested adding a third category of “other” that could include chooses not to report, transgender, and missing data. Mr. Melley asked what the trial court data said. Ms. Threadgill said all data in the report is as reported, but will follow up with the juvenile court.

Ms. Lempicki asked why some of the totals from Appendices A and B do not match. Ms. Threadgill said that they were working on the wording, but essentially some of the data was suppressed for privacy reasons. Ms. Polizzano pointed out the footnote regarding race and asked the group if it made sense. Ms. Threadgill said they can add a note for case type. Ms. Todd suggested changing the court data to “youth of color” instead of “non-white” categories. Mr. Melley asked when DYS changed to self-reporting. Mr. Chandler said the change was made in the beginning of FY18, which is why they have no “other” data. Ms. Polizzano said that for the juvenile court demographic data the OCA received, Black, Latino and Asian youth were combined into a non-white/youth of color category, which was not ideal.

Ms Polizzano then reviewed the age data. Mr. Melley said it would be helpful to put a zero instead of leaving a blank space, as this could be confusing. Ms. Johnson suggested writing out

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the charge types. Ms. Polizzano noted that where the percent change is zero, it is typically less than 1%.

Ms. Threadgill said that they will make the edits and confirmed that Probation, DYS, and DMH would still be sending data by early next week. The reports will go before the full JPAD on Thursday, November 21st.

DYS Presentation: Evaluating the Effects of Raise the Age in Massachusetts

Mr. Chandler presented on a project DYS has been working on for the past year with the University of Pennsylvania and Northeastern University. He explained the goal was to look at overall social impact of the “raise the age” [of juvenile court from 16 to 17] legislation in Massachusetts.

Mr. Chandler explained the policy background and prior research that led them to this study. DYS is currently looking at youth detained 3 years before the legislation and 3 years after in order to do a recidivism study for commitments to DYS.

Mr. Chandler mentioned that DYS and the university partners are looking for other agencies who would like to work on this project to help fill in the data gaps. They are looking to publish this study as well. Mr. Chandler stated that the goal of this study is to compare the kids who went to adult jail to those who went to DYS facilities and track outcomes. One finding so far suggests that 17 year olds in the juvenile system have an increased rate of being committed to DYS compared to 17 years olds in the adult system being incarcerated.

Mr. Chandler commented that the study partners were struggling to get incarceration data and the group pointed him in a few directions to obtain that data. It was also suggested that he reach out to another research group –MCJARG—to see if the participants there could be of help.

EOTTS Dashboard Discussion

Ms. Threadgill explained the Data dashboards website that is in progress with the OCA and EOTSS. The goal for today’s session is to go over DYS data and suggest any major edits/changes/ requests. The design will change and there is a lot of footnoting to do yet

Ms. Johnson presented the DYS data dashboard to the group. Ms. Johnson first made note that the group will need to decide if the data should be aggregated up. This would solve issues with small cell sizes that cannot be reported. She explained this was the first attempt to get at overall DYS admissions data (compared to caseload data).

Ms. Todd asked what years this was for. Ms. Johnson explained the data presented is for January 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019. She also mentioned that the dashboard can be

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broken down by time. Ms. Lempicki noted that the courts do it by fiscal year on their dashboard. Ms. Threadgill asked if both calendar year and fiscal year be presented since calendar year is what the general population uses most. Ms. Todd added that most legislative and policy changes occur on the fiscal year too. Mr. Chandler asked who the audience is for this dashboard? He commented that he never receives fiscal year data requests. Ms. Johnson said both can be shown, but the group will need to decide on a “default” option.

Ms. Johnson continued with the Dashboard presentation and brought up the issue of cell sizes again. As the dashboard adds more labels, cell sizes get too small to report on. She posed the question to the group “Which of these filters are most important?” Ms. Todd mentioned that one of the most important aspects of this dashboard for her agency is to see trends over time from an age perspective. She mentioned that the average age of the youth her agency sees went from 14.5 to 17.6 years old. They would want to see that age breakdown by year. Mr. Dohan suggested disaggregating the youth in the age category “18+.” Ms. Johnson reminded the group of cell size issues but suggested a separate graph of just age trends.

Mr. Chandler asked if the corresponding research departments’ contact info will be listed on the dashboard. Ms. Threadgill mentioned that the OCA contact information will be listed at a minimum and maybe we can link to other agency specific dashboards.

Ms. Lempicki asked if the data could be filtered by county? Ms. Johnson said yes. She then clarified that they would need to suppress data for the small cell sizes since the data is going up on a public server. This protects the confidentiality and identity of individuals. In order to report the most accurate numbers, the dashboard could show groups/bins of certain categories with smaller frequencies.

Mr. Dohan asked for clarification regarding county of origin and court jurisdiction county reporting. Mr. Chandler clarified that DYS has four statuses: overnight arrest admissions, detention admissions, commitments and YES. Ms. Todd commented that each of those stages tells us something different and asked if DYS was just one graph. Ms. Ride responded that they could separate these process points out. Mr. Dohan said that if that does not happen, it needs to be very clear in the definitions of each stage. Nationally, people use “detention” and “commitments” interchangeably when they mean something very specific in Massachusetts.

Ms. Johnson asked the group if the website should be built by juvenile justice system process point or by agency, as that will help clarify where each dashboard goes. Mr. Dohan suggested that the graphs can be in more than one place on the website. Ms. Threadgill suggested making the webpage as simple as possible, and thought that it makes sense to do either agency or process flow. She preferred process flow. Ms. Johnson also reminded the group that they can link to other agencies’ pages. Mr. Melley suggested that there be a glossary on every page.

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Mr. Dohan asked if the dashboard could show the court jurisdiction numbers with detention and committed numbers. Ms. Threadgill mentioned this had been a previous discussion. Mr. Chandler commented the DYS reports out data based on the status of the youth: Overnight arrest data is reported by arresting county, detention data is reported by county, and committed youth are reported on by home county. Ms. Threadgill suggested that however DYS typically reports this data is how the data should be represented on the dashboard.

Ms. Johnson explained the complications of small cell size again through the lens of age and race data dashboards. She also explained the difference between admission numbers and actual caseload numbers. Ms. Threadgill asked if these should be separate dashboards. Mr. Chandler mentioned that a youth could also have a commitment and a detention status at the same time. Mr. Dohan also mentioned the status of “revocation,” to which Mr. Chandler replied that a youth could be “committed”, “detained” and “revoked” all at once. Ms. Lempicki responded that it is important to explain each of those on the website. Mr. Smith suggested that this data would show if there was a small number of kids (Mr. Chandler referred to as “frequent fliers”) who are accounting for a large number of admissions. Ms. Todd suggested adding in Average Daily Census as well. Mr. Dohan commented that overall it is really great that DYS has all this data and is willing to share it.

Ms. Johnson showed the data dashboard with commitments admissions by grid range and explained wanting to show that change over time. Mr. Chandler explained that for reporting purposes, DYS decided to show Low (Grid Level 1-2), Medium (Grid Level 3) and High (Grid Level 4-7). Mr. Chandler mentioned that eventually they want to talk about residential versus community placements.

Ms. Johnson concluded with the following questions: What is the priority for the public? Ms. Threadgill responded that the priorities are total numbers over time, demographic breakdowns over time, charge type over time, and length of stay. Ms. Todd also suggested geography. Ms. Johnson responded that length of stay was tricky, but is in the edits. Mr. Chandler commented that youth are spending less time with DYS than in the past because of raise the age (about 4 months less). Mr. Dohan suggested that this was not uncommon prior to raise the age.

Ms. Threadgill concluded the meeting by suggesting a working sessions with DYS and EOTSS to go over the DYS Data dashboard prior to the Data subcommittee meeting on 12/18/19.

Adjournment: 12:01PM