

Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 26, 2024
10:30 AM -12:00 PM
Meeting held virtually

Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:

Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
Michael Ames (CLM)
David Chandler (DYS)
Joe Mulhern (CPCS)
Kim Occhiuti (DCF)
Sana Fadel (CfJJ)
Patricia Bergin (EOPSS)
Laura Lempicki (Probation)
Dana Bernson (DPH)
Nancy Brody (DCF)

OCA Staff:

Kristi Polizzano
Morgan Byrnes
Arianna Turner
Jess Seabrook

Other Attendees:

Kathleen Bitetti (OSA)
Jen Rocha (DYS)
Jennie Wang (Probation)
Erin Stewart (Northeastern)
Juliet Anctil (Probation)
Lisa Lundquist (OGR)
Lindsey Sagasta (DPH)
Josh Dankoff (CfJJ)

Meeting Commenced: 10:33 AM

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Polizzano welcomed the attendees to the Data Subcommittee meeting. Members and attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Ms. Polizzano asked if anyone had questions or feedback regarding the September 27, 2024 meeting minutes. None were raised. Rachel Wallack, Dana Bernson, Joe Mulhern, Sana Fadel, David Chandler, and Kim Occhiuti voted in the affirmative. No one abstained or voted against the meeting minutes.

The September meeting minutes were approved.

Ms. Polizzano introduced the agenda for the meeting, which centers around an FY24 annual report data presentation and discussion. She then provided an overview of the annual report data, including several data notes, and reviewed which data had been provided to the Board to date.

FY24 Annual Report Presentation and Discussion

Ms. Polizzano provided an overview of the data presentation, which would consist of:

- Overall juvenile justice system data trends
- A deeper look at custodial data trends
- Other child-serving systems' data trends

Ms. Polizzano then welcomed Ms. Byrnes to begin presenting the data.

Ms. Byrnes began presenting the FY24 annual report data, highlighting the following:

- FY24 juvenile court data
 - Between FY23 and FY24, system use was relatively stable except ONA and Pretrial Detention Admissions, which increased at 9% and 17%, respectively
- Offense severity data
 - In FY24, 60% of ONA admissions and 48% of pretrial detention admissions were for lower “grid” level offenses
 - Between FY23 and FY24 there were small increases for felony cases at each court process point
- Most cases/admissions involved persons related offenses
- In FY24, boys represent the majority of cases at each process point
- However, between FY23-FY24, there was a greater rate of increase for girls than boys
- Black and Latino youth represent over half of cases/admissions at each process point

Ms. Byrnes then shared an update on the Massachusetts population data available and posed a question to the group about how the Board should handle calculating race and ethnicity data. Members discussed the current process the Board uses for pulling the data and the process to employ moving forward to ensure the correct comparisons are made during analysis.

Ms. Byrnes then continued presenting the data, highlighting the following:

- Between FY23-FY24, at most process points, cases involving Black and Latino youth increased, while cases involving white youth decreased
- Most process points are still down since pre-CJRA (FY18)
- The rate of change between FY23&FY24 was less than what the JJPAD predicted based on increases between FY22&FY23

Ms. Byrnes then shared a data summary on the data presented and welcomed questions and discussion of the data.

One member commented on the large increase in the percentage of girls in pretrial detention between FY23 and FY24. Ms. Byrnes noted the increase and shared that the Board will explore this trend further in the report.

One member asked what factors were driving the large increase in pretrial detention admissions. Ms. Byrnes shared that this year, the Board will receive lead charge data for pretrial detention admissions, and the group will use that data to help answer that question and others like it.

Ms. Polizzano asked the group if they had insights on why there is an increase in system involvement for girls.

Members discussed the impact of trafficking concerns on girls being held in pretrial detention more often; they shared current trends in, and policies for identifying, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) concerns. However, one member reported that self-reported instances of sexual exploitation have not increased for youth in pretrial detention in recent years.

Members also discussed cash bail and detention capacity issues as they relate to the trend of increased system involvement for girls.

One member shared that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, girls were typically arrested for warrants and boys were typically arrested in the community. Since May of 2023, they shared that trend has flipped, with more girls being arrested in the community.

One member noted that the almost 20% increase in Latino youth becoming system-involved is concerning and that it would be helpful to analyze a geographical breakdown of that race data.

Ms. Byrnes then continued presenting on pretrial detention data, including:

- Youth with DCF involvement at the time of admissions represent a smaller percent of overall admissions than previous years
- Youth were detained pretrial – on average – 12 days less in FY24 compared to FY23

- 75% of youth detained pretrial are detained without bail set
- Of those youth, a little under half were held as a result of bail or personal recognizance being revoked
- For detention admissions where bail was set (n=220), 25% were held for \$100 or less
- Between FY23&FY24, the level of need in youth detained generally stayed the same or decreased
- Between FY23&FY24, the level of need in youth detained generally stayed the same or decreased

Ms. Byrnes then presented data on first time commitments, including:

- In FY24, youthful offender cases represented 10% of first-time commitments
- A little over a quarter of first-time commitments were from Hampden County

Ms. Byrnes asked the group for feedback on the idea of the Board publishing county-level data briefs and asked members what data they would like to see in those briefs.

Members discussed including length of stay data, deeper analyses at each process point, comparisons to FY18 data, and policing and court data.

Ms. Byrnes then shared a summary of the data presented in this section of the presentation and welcomed questions and discussion of the data.

One member asked if the information presented on first-time commitments was first-time commitments to DYS only. Ms. Byrnes confirmed and shared that the annual report will include a further breakdown.

One member shared that first-time commitments is an important process point at which to conduct county-level breakdowns because they can highlight the importance of specific actors and policies.

One member asked if weapons offenses were playing a role in the increase in pretrial detention admissions.

One member shared an interest in further analyzing how youthful offender cases are handled and exploring whether or not race has an influence on the outcome of those cases.

Ms. Byrnes then welcomed Ms. Polizzano to present on other systems' data.

Ms. Polizzano shared background information on other systems' data, including:

- Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) Filings
- Referrals to the Juvenile Court Clinic

- Youth Violence Prevention Programming (DPH)
- BSAS Admissions (DPH)
- JJ Referrals to BSAS as a percent of potential eligible cases
 - Of the known referral data, about a quarter stem from JJ sources
- DMH Full Service Authorization
- DMH – CYF Referrals by Service Category

Ms. Polizzano then provided a data summary of the section and welcomed questions and discussion of the data presented.

There were no questions or discussion of the data presented.

Concluding remarks:

Ms. Polizzano shared that the OCA would wait until it receives all of the data for the annual report before scheduling the next meeting so that members can review the full data section of the annual report at that meeting. Ms. Polizzano told members to check their emails for an availability poll for a meeting at the start of 2025 and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment: 11:40 AM