Office of the Child Advocate
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday September 8, 2022
10:30am-12:00pm
Meeting held virtually

Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:

- Nancy Brody (DCF)
- Barbara Kaban (CPCS)
- Laura Lempicki (Probation)
- Dana Bernson (DPH)
- Sana Fadel (CfJJ)
- Lydia Todd (CLM)
- Dave Chandler (DYS)
- Patricia Bergen (EOPSS)

OCA Staff:

- Melissa Threadgill
- Kristine Polizzano
- Janice Neiman
- Taylor Loyd
- Jessica Seabrook
- Alix Rivière
- Morgan Byrnes

Other Attendees:

- Rebecca Pries
- Kris Johnson
- Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola (DYS)
- Joshua Dankoff
- Madison Tompkins
- Noor Toraif (DYS)
- Jillie Santos (CfJJ)
- Jonah Schennum (DCF)
- Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)
- Meg Danisewich (DYS)
- Katie Perry-Lorentz (DYS)
- Other members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 10:02 AM

Welcome and Introductions:

Ms. Polizzano welcomed the attendees to the Data Subcommittee meeting. Members and attendees introduced themselves. Ms. Polizzano explained that the group would hear presentations from guest presenters, after voting on the July meeting minutes.

Approval of July Meeting Minutes

Ms. Polizzano asked if anyone had any questions or feedback regarding the July 14, 2022, meeting minutes. The group did not offer any feedback or objections. Sana Fadel, Nancy Brody, David Chandler, Patricia Bergin, Dana Bernson, Laura Lempicki, and Matthew Broderick all voted in the affirmative. No one abstained or voted against the meeting minutes.

The July minutes were approved.

Guest presentations on administrative data centers by Dr. Joseph Ryan, Director of the Child and Adolescent Data Lab at the University of Michigan and Dr. Kristine Piescher, Director of Research and Evaluation, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota

Ms. Polizzano introduced the presenters Dr. Joseph Ryan from the University of Michigan and Dr. Kristine Piescher from the University of Minnesota, explaining that each will present on their administrative data centers.

Dr. Ryan began by introducing himself and gave a brief overview of his career. He then presented on the University of Michigan's Child and Adolescent Data Lab, including:

- A background on the development of the Data Lab, which began with researchers and policymakers in Michigan's inability to understand the scope of their child and family serving agencies and what, if any, were the long-term outcomes for children and families involved in those agencies.
- An overview of the siloed nature of state agency data, which made it difficult to track the way populations served interacted cross-agency and how the linking of cross-agency administrative data allows for richer policy analysis.
- An example of how the data was used to link school record data (e.g., enrollment, test results and high school completion rates) with child welfare records. The study found that children involved in maltreatment investigations scored significantly lower on standardized math and reading tests, were more likely to be identified as needing special education and were more likely to be held back at least one grade. Additionally, the study found that child welfare involvement had a negative impact on high school graduation rates.
- A summary of lessons learned from the Data Lab's experience, which focused on creating sustainable partnerships between the data lab and its state partners through collaboration and the creation of a feedback loop that allows for research to be shared from the administrative data center to the agencies that provide the data.

Next, Dr. Piescher presented on the Minnesota-Linking Information for Kids (Minn-LInK) project, housed at the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota, including:

- An overview of the creation of Minn-LInK, which was developed in response to the recognition that some of the most vulnerable children and families were likely served in multiple systems, yet there was no method in place to form broader pictures of multi-system involvement.

- A description of Minn-LInK's data integration process, which included how state agency send their data, how the data scientists link that data, and an overview of its data governance framework.
- An example of how the data was used by linking academic records with Minnesota's Homelessness Management Information System records. The study found that students who experience homelessness are at higher risk of negative academic outcomes, including lower attendance, higher school mobility, and lower rates of proficiency in math, English, and science in comparison to stably housed, economically disadvantaged peers.

Question & Answer

Ms. Polizzano thanked the presenters and welcomed members to ask questions.

Members asked about the return on investment for state agencies that send their data. It was explained that state agencies in Michigan and Minnesota have reported that working with an administrative data center has given them the ability to better understand their populations served, which has resulted in stronger system/programs. It was also mentioned that sending agencies benefit from not having to take on the cost of data analysis and management but get all of the benefits of having the data. They have also leveraged their relationship by applying for research grants they would otherwise not qualify for.

Members asked each presenter to describe the pros and cons of their models. Both Dr. Piescher and Dr. Ryan explained that a strength of partnering with a university is that the research and data security infrastructure is well established, and that they are separate from the political environment. They explained that one downside is the funding model as most universities fund their administrative data model by grant money, which can be unsustainable. They also mentioned that it can be difficult at times to balance research priorities with the state's interests.

Members discussed how having an administrative data center as part of state government would differ. Dana Bernson, Special Analytic Projects Director at the Department of Public Health's Public Health Data Warehouse (PHD) explained that structurally it is very similar, the only difference being that the state has more control over the research agenda and how the data is used. She explained that much like universities, the PHD also allows researchers to come in and work with the data.

Finally, members asked each presenter how their administrative data centers support state agencies in their data collection and reporting. Dr. Piescher explained that Minn-LInK was currently helping state agencies link their own records prior to sending it to get integrated with cross-agency data. Dr. Ryan explained that the Data Lab's technical assistance is focused on data quality issues.

Concluding remarks:

Ms. Polizzano thanked the presenters and before signing off, asked Dr. Piescher for any lessons learned she could share with members. Dr. Piescher explained that cultivating buy in and expecting each project to take three times longer than anticipated are her two biggest lessons learned.

Ms. Polizzano explained to members that they would continue this conversation at October's meeting and hear a presentation on the PHD from Ms. Bernson. She wished everyone well and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment: 11:59 AM