

JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

July 19, 2016
Capitol Annex, Room 171

Members Present: Senator Whitney Westerfield; Representative Darryl Owens; Secretary John Tilley, Justice & Public Safety Cabinet (JPSC); Vestena Robbins for Acting Commissioner Wendy Morris, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS); Gretchen Marshall for Commissioner Adria Johnson, Department for Community Based Services, CHFS; Acting Commissioner LaDonna Koebel, Department for Juvenile Justice (DJJ), JPSC; Rachel Bingham for Laurie Dudgeon, Director, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); Christina Weeter, Department of Education; Ed Monahan, Department of Public Advocacy (DPA); Honorable Lisa Jones, Chief District Judge; Major Shara Parks, Louisville Metro Police Department; and Dr. John Sivley, LifeSkills, Inc.

Members Absent: Steven Gold, Henderson County Attorney, and Paula Stafford, Montgomery County Public Schools.

Staff Present: Marlene Mundine

I. Welcome/Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Representative Owens who welcomed members and guests and called for a motion to approve minutes from the June 28th meeting. Minutes were approved as submitted.

II. Presentation: Juvenile Justice Advisory Board Overview & Recommendations

Mr. Benjamin Deaton, Chair of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board (JJAB), provided an overview of the board and his involvement beginning as a youth member. He is the first youth member to be elected chair. The JJAB is a federally and state mandated group that advises policymakers on matters relating to improving the system of care for the juvenile justice system. JJAB has four core requirements: the deinstitutionalization of status offenders, sight and sound separation, jail removal, and reducing disproportionate minority contact. Mr. Deaton stated that the JJAB administers over a half million dollars in federal grant funding which is distributed across the state.

Commissioner Koebel commented that the JJAB makes recommendations to the legislature and it would be beneficial for the Council to see those recommendations as well.

Secretary Tilley commented regarding the school to prison pipeline and asked what the experience has been in working with the schools. Mr. Deaton noted they have been met with some resistance but they are working to educate to change views.

Dr. Sivley commented on the safety risk to runaways and inquired if the JJAB has seen any intervention strategies or programs that have been successful. Mr. Deaton stated that he could follow up with information on that issue. Secretary Tilley responded that recommendations are needed on that issue as many rural areas do not have resources to address it and detention facilities are not the answer. He asked Mr. Deaton to bring recommendations to address those concerns.

Mr. Monahan inquired about legislation supported by JJAB. Ms. Bingham responded that SB 270 was supported by the JJAB. Mr. Monahan suggested testimony on the specifics of the legislation at a future meeting.

III. Presentation: Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Overview

Ms. Theresa Wolcott, JDAI State Coordinator, Department of Juvenile Justice, gave an overview of the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI). The purpose of JDAI is to demonstrate that jurisdictions can establish more effective and efficient systems to accomplish the purposes of juvenile detention. Ms. Wolcott stated that JDAI is a national best practice that has been implemented in more than 250 jurisdictions within thirty-nine states. In Kentucky, it is a statewide initiative. She noted that it provides a framework for safely reducing overreliance on secure detention and for ongoing juvenile justice system improvements. Ms. Wolcott stated that the objectives of JDAI are to eliminate inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention, minimize failures to appear and incidences of delinquent behavior, redirect public finances to successful reform strategies, and improve conditions in secure detention facilities. She noted Kentucky became a JDAI statewide initiative in 2012 with pilot sites in Campbell, Fayette and Jefferson counties and gave an overview of the eight core strategies.

In response to a question from Commissioner Koebel regarding reasons for delays in case processing, Ms. Wolcott noted that failing ankle monitoring is an issue that has been discovered in Jefferson County. The length of time spent on monitoring was based on the worker requesting a six to eight week predispositional report timeframe. JDAI is working with the agency in that area to move those reports forward.

Representative Owens inquired about the caseload and how many of those cases actually need to be cases. Ms. Wolcott noted that is being addressed. Representative Owens inquired if that could have an effect on the disproportionality. Ms. Wolcott agreed that is could have some impact.

Data presented indicated the average length of stay for youth has increased in all pilot sites. Mr. Monahan asked about disparities based on race in that data. Ms. Wolcott stated that the disparities are overwhelming and agreed to provide data. She stated that the alternatives to detention are not directed for youth of color.

Senator Westerfield inquired about those currently viewing the data and if any input has been given regarding the reason behind the racial disparity. Ms. Wolcott responded that all those involved in the collaboration are sharing the data. Ms. Maria Gurren, Jefferson County JDAI Coordinator, remarked that Jefferson County has a high number of youth with gun charges which

increases the number of youth in detention. She also commented on issues with data collection and sharing between agencies and how they are working to address those concerns. Senator Westerfield noted that the point of SB 270 was to address data collection and reporting.

Representative Owens commented that a system should be developed to keep youth out of the courts. Ms. Gurren commented that they are working on developing a civil citation pilot in Jefferson County in an effort to focus on disproportionality at arrest. Dr. Sivley noted the system needs to be based on the needs of the individual youth rather than using the same system used for adults.

Commissioner Koebel inquired about the availability of current data from the JDAI. Ms. Wolcott stated that the 2015 data would be submitted in November. Representative Owens asked for the updated data to be made available to the Council.

IV. Agency Updates

Ms. Weeter gave a brief update for the Department of Education and noted the department has gathered together a cross agency team to address issues of chronic absenteeism, which includes both excused and unexcused absence from school. She stated they were invited to a meeting in DC on the issue of chronic absenteeism, truancy and are developing a plan to address and reduce chronic absenteeism, which could impact truancy referrals.

Written updates were also submitted by the Department for Behavioral Health Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

V. Adjourn

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 16th at 10AM. With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.