

The Tow Youth Justice Institute is a university, state and private partnership established to lead the way in juvenile justice reform through collaborative planning, training, research and advocacy.

UPCOMING JJPOC MEETINGS:

JJPOC Meetings are the third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m., at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

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2018 Juvenile Justice Legislation

We are pleased to share the news! The 2018 Recommendations of the JJPOC that passed are contained in Public Act 18-31. The following are the components:

DIVERTING CHILDREN FROM CONTACT WITH THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- Codifies the Community Based Diversion System Plan developed under PA 16-147, 18(K), in which the Youth Services Bureaus are identified as the primary agent for diversion of children from the juvenile justice system. The Community Based Diversion Plan addresses the newly developed process for making referrals of juvenile justice children from police, schools and other agents to the youth services bureau system.
- Codifies the School Based Diversion Plan developed under previous legislation. The Plan addresses priority strategies for school-based diversion: disciplinary policy review, use of community resources such as the Emergency Mobile Crisis Teams, improved professional development for school staff.

REMOVING BARRIERS IN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

- Starting 8/1/18, school districts where juveniles reside must continuously maintain the enrollment of youth

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Restorative Justice Practices Project



The Restorative Justice Practices Project, established in the fall of 2016 through a partnership with the Child Health and Development Institute under their School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI), is a training, coaching and technical assistance project to support school staff in implementing Restorative Practices within their buildings. By implementing Restorative Justice Practices, school communities are offered beneficial alternative responses to challenging and harmful behaviors.

Research is showing a lack of effective outcomes when schools intervene in behavior challenges with exclusively punitive discipline policies. There is increasing evidence of a long-term destructive impact on the individuals being punished, as well as their communities, resulting in higher rates of repeat behavioral issues and damage to school relationships. A restorative approach works to create an environment where individuals take ownership of their behavior, increase their empathy for the experiences of others in their community, and work to rebuild relationships when harm occurs.

Restorative Justice is a justice theory which moves away from focusing on the breaking of laws and the punishment of offenders, and looks, instead to identify the harm that has been caused to a person, object or the community, and to identify approaches by which things can be made better. Restorative Justice Practices are a series of practices that are used to accomplish a restorative outcome to crime or challenging behavior. These practices include, but are not limited to, Restorative Circles and Restorative Conferences.

Restorative Circles are a conversational style involving positioning participants in the shape of a circle, where each participant has equal value and opportunity to participate. Circles have certain foundational elements, including the use of a facilitator, a talking piece, rounds, an agreements list, an opening and a closing. Restorative Conferences are the most formal of the Restorative Practices, reserved for the most serious and harmful



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incidents, involves the convening of people impacted by the incident(s) in a very structured and planful process. Conferences involve preparatory work by the facilitator with each of the participants, assigned seating during the Conference process, and a formal series of questions in an organized order. Many Conferences end with some form of commitment(s) from the person who has created the harm, which is often comprised of actions the group agrees will help to heal the situation.

The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) was created in response to the concerning numbers of youth in the state of Connecticut being arrested in our schools. The goal of the SBDI is to increase access for students and families to mental health prevention supports and treatment services in their school and local community, as well as decrease the rates of school based arrests by utilizing better alternative interventions. SBDI works to engage teachers, staff, administrators, and school resource officers through consultation, expert training and capacity building activities to institute more productive and healthy interventions to challenging youth behavior. SBDI serves schools and districts statewide with demonstrated need, interest, and capacity to decrease exclusionary discipline and to strengthen access to behavioral health services and supports. The project is partially funded and overseen by the State Department of Education, the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, with CHDI serving as the SBDI Coordinating Center.

Through the Tow Youth Justice Institute, the RJPP provides a spectrum of training content, ranging from introductory information through advanced level practices. We train under the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) model, providing the following trainings:

- Introduction to Restorative Practices
- Using Circles Effectively
- Facilitating Restorative Conferences

RJPP also provides custom-made professional development sessions by school request, ranging from one-hour to full-day sessions. In addition to our IIRP trainings, our staff has also been thoroughly trained in the Suffolk University Center for Restorative Justice model, which involves particularly in-depth Restorative Circle training, allowing for more nuanced training around increasing Circle Practice efficacy.



In addition to our robust training menu, our RJPP Manager also provides school-centered technical assistance. We tailor our implementation support to reflect the goals of each school, and work to establish meaningful relationships with each of our school partners.

Examples of our technical assistance include:

- Implementation assessment
- School-centered implementation planning
- On-demand materials cultivation and resources
- Problem-solving and general implementation coaching

As we look forward to our next year of Restorative Justice Practices Project implementation, we are excited to be able to work with some of our past SBDI participants, in New Britain and Torrington, and to welcome a new set of schools for a year of robust, school-centered training and technical assistance. The Tow Youth Justice Institute's RJPP is deeply passionate about Restorative Justice as a mindset and bridge to the future of youth justice work, and are always looking for new ways to engage with and support our Connecticut community.

For more information, contact Devon McCormick, Restorative Justices Practices Project Manager at DMcCormick@newhaven.edu.

Leadership Program Alumni Fellows provide PEER support for 2018 Cohort Members

Nicole Herrington, 2017 Alumni Fellow of the 9-month “Transforming Youth Justice: A Leadership Development Program” shared her own experience in developing a Capstone Project with the 15 members of the current 2018 leadership cohort. The “Capstone” is a culmination of each leader’s personal and professional learnings, their research on one key issue affecting juveniles, and a recommended policy change or action step written up as a formal two-page proposal on a best practice that advances youth justice reform. Each of the 15 leaders completes this requirement as part of TYJI’s unique capacity-building program aiming to nurture well-informed, skilled change-agents.

Alumni Fellows reflect a diverse range of community leaders. An alumni network is evolving as the third cohort will graduate in November 2018. Fellows can support the program in a number of ways. Some encourage colleagues and mentees to apply, or they may nominate and provide a letter of recommendation for a prospective member. Some suggest a new resource for a speaker. Other alums, like Nicole, present at a session to support current leaders in the Capstone planning process and talk about how to enhance team collaboration and secure the latest research. Nicole utilized the TYJI Capstone Planning Guide to help define and describe the problem and its impact on a young person. It also assisted her with identifying necessary collaborators within the system for input and approvals. Leaders then translate this information into a required 5-step format and then later submit their final Capstone Proposal. A summary of all the Capstone Projects is shared at the graduation event attended by agency supervisors and colleagues.



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Nicole’s Capstone, “Juvenile Residential Services LGBTQI Policy Reform,” addressed existing policies within Connecticut’s two detention facilities for handling young people, including LGBTQI and any self-identified transgender youth. The modified policy written up in her Capstone Proposal was presented and finally approved by the judicial department, thereby changing the routine search procedures by detention staff, especially for teens identifying as LGBTQI. A revised policy now permits youth to have some input and “choice”, thereby allowing for sensitivity to the initial search by male or female staff, permissible apparel while placed in detention, and clarity about any “disclosure about identity” on the official forms and/or publically. Critically important was her recommendation for structured staff training, for detention staff, and also strongly recommended for probation and other case management staff. Nicole shared with the group her careful outreach and discussion with her superiors and the heads of Detention, and her thorough research on best practices for working supportively with LGBTQI youth and their families. Nicole perfectly exemplifies Goals 2 and 3 of the TYJI Leadership Program, “To support future change agents for youth justice reform, and to be a resource to the organizations, communities, and systems serving youth.”

Recent Events

2018 Janet Reno Forum: Transforming Juvenile Justice Systems

At the 2018 Janet Reno Forum: Transforming Juvenile Justice Systems on May 21st, William H. Carbone, Executive Director, Tow Youth Justice Institute, presented on Shrinking the Footprint of the Juvenile Justice System and the successes Connecticut has experienced over the past decade. He shared that from 2007 to 2017, there were 50% less cases referred to juvenile courts despite raising the age to 17 in 2010 and to 18 in 2012.

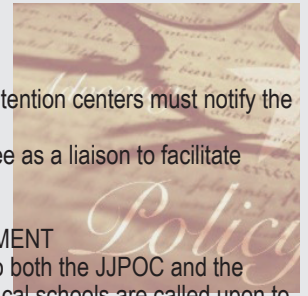
Status offender reform began 10 years ago when the law was changed that status offenders could no longer be “punished” by using detention. Although concerns were raised by judges and prosecutors that this would increase the likelihood of safety issues for both the youth and the community, none of these things happened. In 2015, nearly 3,300 status offenders were referred to juvenile court, and 75% of them were for truancy and defiance of school rules. With the growing body of research on brain development and exposure to trauma, legislators were convinced that the schools and community could be doing more for these youth. This led to legislation that became effective August 15, 2017, removing truancy from offenses being referred to the Juvenile Courts.



These reforms and others have led to the reduction of juvenile crime and the closing of Connecticut’s only juvenile “jail”, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. By July 1, 2019, there will be no status offenders in the juvenile justice system in Connecticut. All of the changes Connecticut has implemented are evidence-based practices, and the outcomes of these legislative changes will be evaluated in the coming years. The Transforming Juvenile Justice Systems to Improve Public Safety and Youth Outcomes report was announced at the event and can be read by clicking the button below. Other states presenting that day include Kentucky, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts and Florida.

Thank you to The Center for Juvenile Justice at Georgetown University and the Council of State Governments for the opportunity to participate in the 2018 Janet Reno Forum!

2018 Juvenile Justice Legislation (continued)



who are held in juvenile detention centers so that they can more seamlessly transition when they are returned. State detention centers must notify the district to which the child is returning as soon as the discharge date is determined.

- On August 1, 2018, each eligible school district (those with more than 6,000 students) will have to designate an employee as a liaison to facilitate transitions between the school district and the child in "justice system custody".

OPENING ACCESS TO THE TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN RETURNING FROM OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

- By January 1, 2019, the Board and the Superintendent of the Technical Schools shall submit a plan to accomplish this to both the JJPOC and the appropriate committees of the legislature. The collaboration is intended to create a pathway to enrollment and the technical schools are called upon to amend their admission criteria to enable this change.

CREATING A DATA SYSTEM FOR "REAL TIME" SHARING OF EDUCATION RECORDS

- By 1/1/20, the Education Department must develop a plan to incentivize and support school district participation in a statewide information technology plan that allows for real time sharing of education records.
- By 2/1/19, the commissioner will provide information to JJPOC on the progress being made on the above plan.

PLANNING FOR A CONSOLIDATED EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR YOUTH IN CUSTODY

- By 1/1/20, the Education Department must develop a plan to incentivize and support school district participation in a statewide information technology plan that allows for real time sharing of education records.
- By 2/1/19, the commissioner will provide information to JJPOC on the progress being made on the above plan.
- By January 1, 2021, a single agency will be in charge of a statewide system for education of transitional supports for children in custody
- By 7/1/18, the JJPOC will convene a committee, the member of which are designated in the bill, to develop the plan mentioned above.
- By 1/1/19, the JJPOC will receive a report from such committee and propose legislation to vest responsibility for the education of children in custody in a single state agency that will provide all education and related transitional supports, effective July 1, 2020.
- Among the many things that the Plan must address are the following: the range of services for the justice-involved youth must include, at a minimum, a traditional high-school diploma program, an accelerated credit recovery program, vocational training, and access to post-secondary options.
- By 10/1/18, the JJPOC must report on the services available for persons under the age of 18 at the Manson Youth Institution.

PLANNING FOR JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

- By 1/1/20, the JJPOC shall report on a Justice Reinvestment Plan that will allow for the reinvestment of a portion of the savings from the decreased use of incarceration and congregate care programming to become strategic investments in home, school and community based behavioral health services for children diverted from the juvenile justice system.
- The remainder of the bill addressed the technical changes necessary to transfer juvenile functions from the Department of Children and Families to the Judicial Branch.

Recent Events

Connecticut's State Forum on Public Safety

A broad coalition of criminal justice stakeholders met on Monday, June 25, at the University of New Haven for the Connecticut State Forum on Public Safety. Connecticut is nationally recognized for achieving double-digit decreases in both its incarceration and crime rates between 2006 and 2016. These trends not only deserve acknowledgement but can also be analyzed to help develop additional strategies to continue these efforts and broaden the scope to include more public safety priorities. Attendees examined the policies and practices that have contributed to favorable criminal justice trends in Connecticut as well as review ways to lower recidivism cost-effectively. Guests at the State Forum were asked to give honest reactions and perspectives, as well as provide input about their priorities for increasing public safety. In 2019, Connecticut will experience a transition in state leadership, and Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane, Chief Public Defender Christine Perra Rapillo, State Victim Advocate Natasha Pierre and New Haven Chief of Police Anthony Campbell participated in a discussion on public safety priorities for the state's next leaders. This Council of State Governments event was hosted by the University of New Haven and held at Gehring Hall Henry C. Lee Forensic Science Institute and the Tow Youth Justice Institute. Dean Mario Gaboury, Dr. Henry C. Lee, TYJI Executive Director William H. Carbone, and Tow Foundation's Diane Sierpina gave remarks.



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