



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2022
2:00pm-3:30pm
Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker
Maurice Reaves
Linda Dixon
Christina Quaranta
Macklin Roman
Hector Glynn
Martha Stone
Judge Dawne Westbrook
Gary Roberge

Sarah Eagan
Derrick Gordon
Susan Hamilton
Christine Rapillo
Com. Vanessa Dorantes
Brian Hill
Lisa Sementilli

TYJI Staff:

William Carbone
Erika Nowakowski
Donna Pfrommer
Patrick Saley
Shauntaye Monroe
Brittany LaMarr

Welcome and Introductions

Chairs of the JJPOC, Rep. Toni Walker and Attorney Maurice Reaves, welcomed the membership and expressed their appreciation for the great work from Attorney Christine Rapillo, as she transitions out as a member of the committee and to her new Judge appointment. The chairs also welcomed the community expertise members, Center for Children Advocacy, AFCAMP, Full Circle, and CTJA.

Acceptance of JJPOC Meeting Minutes

Maurice Reaves asked for a motion to accept the March 17, 2022, meeting minutes. The motion was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

CT Youth Employment Programs Presentation

Lisa Sementilli, from the Connecticut Department of Labor, presented on Connecticut's Youth Employment Programs. Connecticut's workforce structure is made up of the five regional workforce boards, the state workforce board is located at the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Department of Labor oversees the funds that run through the each of the workforce boards. There are multiple sources of funding for these programs, including the Department of Children and Families, which serves many participants. CT Youth Employment programs include career awareness, exploration, occupational training, mentorship, follow up, post-secondary transition, subsidized work experience, and other prep activities. There have been



significant changes this year to the scope of work for the workforce board and others that participate. The changes have been career development oriented; they have worked to eliminate barriers to participation. Pre-COVID there were 2500-3000 young people participating, currently there are about 2,250 youth ages 16-24 and about 200 DCF involved youth participating in the programs. There is also a stimulus impact on the economy as 505 businesses participate in the program.

There have been losses since the pandemic, due to societal changes and social isolation. Prior, the programs were making gains in reconnecting youth who had fallen away from school or other educational programs. In Connecticut, there are about 40,000 youth who are not connected to school or work. Nationally the highest rates of disconnection are among Native American and Black youth, however, in Connecticut, Latinx/Hispanic youth have the highest rates of disconnection. Disconnections pose risks, which typically impacts urban areas, in Connecticut particularly in New Haven for Latinx/Hispanic youth. This information helps develop outreach tools and impacts how the programs do their case finding. Currently, most participants are in high school, and new to the program, youth in northcentral and southcentral regions have the highest participation, the same is true for the DCF youth employment collaborative.

In a yearly youth survey, experience, and the things that the youth learned were noted as more important than the wages they earned. In terms of behavioral and emotional health, some respondents of the survey stated that feeling down or depressed, and lacking confidence or self-esteem got in the way of their employment experience. The hope is that these programs provide a safe space for youth to fail, to find what they are good at or what they are drawn to. In terms of barriers, food assistance is often ranked highly, but the hope is that expenditures will be used to support young people in terms of food and nutrition. Many of the young people have a range of plans from continuing to work, education, travel, and more. An employer survey found that the overall majority would participate in the program again, however, more can be done regarding employer engagement. Offering leadership opportunities, having mentorship, or job shadowing can help youth develop more important skills. The CT youth employment program hopes to increase activity in enrollment programs and continue the evolution of youth programming.

Presentation of 2022 Work Plans and Draft JJPOC Annual Agenda

The diversion work group is going to reengage the three subgroups and begin to collect updated data and establish plans for future recommendations. The subgroups are truancy, alternatives to arrest, and raising the minimum age. For truancy, they will review best practices and continue to work on engaging stakeholders on how to access services. Continue the work of the landscape



analysis across YRBS and JRBS that involves a tearing system identifying capacity, issues, gaps, and strengths, the surveys for this have already been completed.

The Racial and Ethnic Disparities work group will continue to work with the team at OPM to finalize the equity dashboard. They will continue to collaborate with IMRP and OPM on the pedestrian stop depending on how the recommendations pan out. They have worked with the city of Hartford, probation and CSSD to look at a pilot for high-risk youth information sharing and care coordination. The SRO subgroup will be re-established to look at the MOU's that is currently in statute and see if there are best practices from around the country that strengthen that set of work. They will invite the RED committees established by the Center for Children's Advocacy to report out every meeting. RED will continue to receive technical assistance from the Center for Children's Law and Policy.

The incarceration workgroup will continue to look at the commissary recommendations as required by PA 21-147 and looking into seeing if some of those recommendations can be implemented without legislation. They will continue to review the information that DOC reports of the alternatives to use of chemical agents. The workgroup will be looking at youth served both by the child welfare and youth justice system, and how access to those services can be maximized through the Children's Behavior Plan. Reviewing the pilots that CSSD has underway and continuing to receive information on outcomes to possibly expand the programs statewide. Continue to oversee implementation required in connection with the transfer of young people from CSSD to MYI pre-adjudication. Looking at recommendations and getting information on improving conditions of confinement and MH services, then monitoring how to continue to improve those conditions. They will review the implementation of best practices to see where they stand. Helping to support the DCF educational unit in terms of centralizing and enhancement of the educational supports in juvenile residential facilities. The workgroup will continue to receive updates and look to see if changes related to COVID are needed in facilities.

The Suspension and Expulsion workgroup will continue to work its work as required by last year's legislation. Focusing on K-2 this year, they will use that work as a foundation moving forward with strategies for reducing suspensions and expulsions in grades 3-12. The workgroup will be receiving technical assistance by the Bellwether Education Partners. The research, expertise, and best practice of Bellwether will help to bring the committee nationwide, by broadening and deepening their understanding. Stakeholder focus groups and surveys were done by Dr. Cooper, in the future they would like to focus on getting more families and students involved with this. The workgroup will be coming up with recommendations for the 2023 legislative session around how to significantly reduce suspensions and expulsions in K-12.



The education workgroup will continue its efforts to get data on school phone calls to 911. This will hopefully be done through a pilot study in five designated opportunity school districts. They will continue to collaborate with DCF on the new administrative oversight unit for the educational services of youth in juvenile justice facilities. Continue to support the work on the implementation study team on reducing suspension and expulsion.

The community expertise workgroup will be provided with technical assistance by Laura Furr. She will work with the CEW to assess current and past engagement efforts by the JJPOC and all its workgroups. Then recommend some next steps to improve JJPOC outcomes through authentic youth and community engagement. They will work on plans for a recommendation for the next session to include the CEW as voting members of the JJPOC. Providing feedback and input on other workgroup recommendations that go in front of the legislature. There will be a training in June with the JJPOC provided by Laura Furr.

The cross-agency data workgroup will be working with multiple agencies to compile information and data necessary to complete the juvenile justice strategic goals annual report. They will provide support and assistance for any data-related needs of other workgroups. OPM has been providing help with ideas and information to implement the equity dashboard. OPM will engage and partner with TYJI in efforts to meet with other workgroups and stakeholders to get additional input on the dashboard.

Within the work plan for the JJPOC this year is updating the JJPOC Orientation Manual. Some sample topics for the coming months, bringing CT non-profit organizations for input, DCF update on the Children's Behavior services and CT connect to Care, State Department of Education update on education data and services provided, and an update on truancy status and practices within schools to combat it. Agenda requests are reviewed regularly to try and determine when it is best to put requests on the agenda.

Update on JJPOC 2021 Legislation

Moved to May meeting.

Next Meeting: May 19th 2022, 2:00-3:30pm