



## Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Advisory Board

December 10, 2024

2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

WEBEX Video Conference and 60 E Van Buren, Suite 1374, Chicago

### Meeting Minutes

#### I. Roll Call & Introduction

Board members present: Robert Vickery, Emily Buss, Sabrina Davis, Meghan Olson, Devon Van Houten-Maldonado, Jenny Vollen-Katz

Absent members: Alison Flaum, David Olson, Zachary Wahl-Alexander

IDJJ Staff: Omar Jamil, Brittany Groot, Jullian Brevard, Luis Klein and Dominique Newman

#### II. Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

Minutes from September 26, 2024 were approved.

#### III. Department of Juvenile Justice Reports

##### A. **Status of Litigation** – Jullian Brevard, Chief Legal Counsel

The two remaining areas are full day/full-time school and compensatory education.

*Compensatory education:* The northern facilities have after school tutoring programs for students. Services provided include one-on-one tutoring and one-on-two tutoring tutorial services through LVI tutoring (in-person) or varsity tutoring (online). Last school year, five students graduated because of their participation in the program. As new youth arrived at DJJ, the challenge was engaging and convincing them of the benefits of participating in the programs. Upon enrollment, youth were excited and continued the program. Some have expressed interest in a culinary program, and we will engage with vendors to partner with us. For graduates taking career exploration, we created a combat program which includes financial literacy. We have youth taking Construction one and Construction two, and we have comp Ed that goes along with these programs also.

**Devon Van Houten-Maldonado:** *Has there been delays in programs because of the significant staffing challenges at Warrenville and St. Charles? What can people expect in terms of getting the programs running again?*

We had a lot of challenges which have affected comp Ed program and full day school. There was the fire at Warrenville, which caused Warrenville to relocate to St. Charles, and we have a security staff shortage. We just had or will have a class of security personnel graduate next week. And in January, another class will start and graduate in six weeks, then another class begin follow. We will have an influx of new security staff onboarding. With this influx of new personnel, we hope to have enough staff so that we can provide **full day/full-time school every day**—which is the other remaining area.



On the school side, positions for Educators have been posted. We have contracted with a company to provide us with substitute teacher. This is new for DJJ. Currently, we have five substitutes at Chicago and three at Warrenville. The substitutes teachers have permitted classes to continue due to teachers' absences. Prior to the additional staff, attendance rate had been in the 50% ranges and now, 70% and 80% attendance rate. In the past four months or five months, there have been with NO school cancellations due to teacher absences and that is based on the substitutes.

**Jennifer Vollen-Katz:** *How many staff are being hire; what positions? Are they in training or are they at the academy?*

We did not the number of personnel graduating from this current class this Friday, but 37 individuals are expecting in the January class. The graduates (JJS Interns) will be assigned to all locations.

#### DOC Litigation

The new litigation stems from a subset of people that DJJ had a statutory duty to educate but were not being educated after the split off from DOC in 2006. The school district was under DJJ. The agency's our jurisdiction ends at 21, but, per statute, we are to educate people through their 22nd birthday. There was a subset of people that were at DOC that we did not educate through our school district because of our statutory cutoffs. Programs were being put in place to educate these individuals, but a group of them sued before we could get everything in order. Good progress is being made to get this done, with help from the Governor's office, and LT Governor's Office.

Two of the people that went through due process are named plaintiffs in the lawsuit. DJJ have provided computers to DOC, set up tutorial sessions, and created curriculum. Last Friday, the first person began his educational program. We have also set up pilot programs at two DOC facilities: Illinois River and Shawnee. There are approximately 25 to 30 people in the pilot programs: up to 15 people at each location. When one person graduates from the program, another person is ready to fill that vacancy. There are two people ready to graduate: one from each facility.

Job postings for educators at these facilities have been posted. The goal is to have full time classes all day long, five days a week. Next, the same model program will be extended to DOC facilities at Lincoln, Logan, and Pinckneyville. And job postings will be posted for these positions. The goal is to have the classroom operating in the spring. This really is a big expansion of our school district's footprint.

#### Sexual assault lawsuits

There are the nine cases, three of those are multi plaintiff lawsuits; the rest are individual. We reviewed the DJJ lawsuits thoroughly and identified anyone who was still working that was alleged in those lawsuits. Eighteen individuals were locked out, and so far, 17 people on lockout have returned. One individual is currently under investigation.

**Emily Buss:** *You stated that of the 18 lockouts, 17 have returned. Does that mean you found all those allegations to be unfounded?*

Yes. The challenging thing that there is an anonymous allegation in a lawsuit that provides minimal information. You dig through everything you have access to and must make a choice. The option of locking out people forever with unsubstantiated allegations is unrealistic. Obviously, if we get new information about any situation, we will look back into it. The allegations occurred 25-30 years ago.

**B. Aftercare Data Report** – Brittany Groot, Quality Assurance & Research Manager

Data collection on discharge from Aftercare for Fiscal year 2024: The data comes from a survey completed by staff at the completion and discharged off Aftercare. The survey focuses on the youth needs, program attendance and any outcome data that we can collect. There has been a geographical change in our population. Ten to 15 years ago, most of our cases were in Cook County, but now most of our youth come out of Central Illinois.

*Employment data:* One-third of our youth have NO requirement for employment, usually younger individuals that are already enrolled in high school. A quarter of our youth did not obtain any employment while on after care. A quarter of our youth were employed at discharge and then about 20 % had some employment during their term on Aftercare but were unemployed at discharge. On average, youth were employed 4.4 months. They were employed for about half of their Aftercare term.

*Mental Health programming:* There has been an increase in this area. Most youth have some mental health condition attached to Aftercare. There has been a slight increase in those that have successfully completed their treatment from under 40% to slightly over 40%.

*Psychotropic medication:* there has been an increase in this requirement from slightly over 40% to over 60% in the past 3-6 fiscal years. About 40% of youth are actively compliant with their medication requirement upon termination on Aftercare. *Substance abuse programming:* more youth have this condition while on Aftercare and more youth have successfully complete the treatment for the condition. In FY 2022, 70% of youth had the completed the condition required, and fiscal year 2024, it was over 85%.

*Multi systemic therapy and day reporting center.* These programs are not referred to at near the rate that like substance abuse programming or mental health treatment is. Twenty percent of our youth are referred for day reporting center programs and less than 20 % of our youth will be referred for multi systemic therapy, but we do see higher completion rates. Completion rate for multi systemic therapy in the community was 50%, and for day reporting center requirements, 70%.

Other treatment programs are available for referrals but are not tracked: juvenile six offender, different placement programming, mentorship. Co-occurring disorder programs, anger management and transitional system therapy.

**C. Legislative Updates** – Luis Klein, Quality Assurance & Research Manager

We are waiting for approval on a couple of bills, but we have gotten approval from the Governor's office to move forward with one of them. It relates to our youth who are aging out of DJJ and would be transferring to the Department of Corrections. This bill would allow those youth to get a hearing before the Prison Review Board, prior to their transfer to the Department of corrections, requesting that their time in DJJ could be taken into consideration and possibly be given mandatory supervised release instead of into DOC. The language has been approved by Legal and once it is approved by the Governor's office, we will be looking for a sponsor. Senator Chris Belt sponsored the bill last year.

**Devon Van Houten-Maldonado:** *Has there been any kind of updated language to this bill from when the bill was presented last year?*

This bill is really targeting a slightly a specific group of youth. The targeted group are youth who are going to DOC because of turning 21 and have a short length of stay expected after they transfer. It becomes a question of does really make sense for the State to spend all those funds to keep someone set up at DOC for a few months. Is it more beneficial for a young person to be in a programmed rich environment with lots of supports or go sit at reception at Statesville for however weeks or months?



**D. Departmental Updates (including Transformation) – Robert Vickery, Director**

We are making good progress in construction, planning and procurement for the Monarch Youth Center, our new facility in Lincoln. The focus of the facility will be on making trust based relational interventions, our trauma informed model. We plan to hire a superintendent, assistant superintendents, and other department heads personnel in January and February 2025. Screening has begun for frontline staff positions, and over 30 people have already gone through screening and background checkpoints. Our goal is to hire 45 staff for this facility, and most by April or May. There will be an academy class training just for this facility. We want to start serving youth in June or July of next year.

Another goal is to transition the Harrisburg campus to an emerging adult population. The facility serves young adults currently in DOC between the ages of 18 and 22 who still need their high school education. This is one of the strategies alongside those classrooms that were already opening in certain DOC facilities. This is another strategy to provide those educational services. The goal is to start serving adults from DOC in September or October. This will give us time to move all the juvenile youth to other facilities.

We start negotiations with ASFCME, which is our primary union about the Harrisburg transition in January. Thus far I think we have seen a fair amount of cooperation and collaboration around this.

Warrenville is the other big capital project. We had a fire in July that caused us to move out of that facility. Our operations staff and capital development board are quickly moving to do rehabilitation remediation from the fire. The main administrative building has been completely remodeled and will be ready for occupancy next fall. The school will be completely redone. Flooring, wall coverings, skylights replaced, dietary is being completely redone, all new equipment, all new dining room furniture, pretty much everything in that main building is getting a complete overhaul, as well as fixing other underlying issues, such as plumbing.

There will be a phase two and a phase three of Warrenville transformation projects to redo the housing units, reconfigure the healthcare space, the treatment space, and build a new multipurpose programming building to replace the trailers. Those will be able to be accomplished in phases with us still on the campus.

Mobile intake update: This is our replacement for the reception and classification process, which took from 10-14 days and was a chaotic process. Now DJJ staff travel to the detention centers as soon as we get the notification that a young person has been committed to DJJ, normally within a day or two. Staff perform all of the same youth assessments and are able to get them right in the program rather than waiting 10-14 days in reception. Currently, the mobile intake program is being piloted at the Winnebago Detention Center and at the Lake Detention Center and are ready to take the program statewide. We are submitting our request to CMS to reorganize and move intake functions from within our secure facility organization chart to the community service division, Aftercare Service org chart. This process should take a few months, and we will have to bargain with ASFCME over this as well.



**IV. New Business**

No new business

**Closing Comments**

Topics for next meeting: contra band, data, anecdotal challenges, and solutions we are working on, secondary programs for graduates, restorative interventions. May want to invite Karima Douglas to speak on this. Plans for the Chicago campus.

**Adjournment: 3:50 pm**

**Next Board Meeting:** March 4, 2025