



## Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Advisory Board

September 21, 2022  
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
WEBEX Video Conference

### Meeting Minutes

#### I. Roll Call and Introduction

##### Board Members

David Olson, Walter Brandon, Annetta Wilson, David Kelly, Rick Velasquez, Heidi Mueller  
Absent: Julie Biehl, Jennifer Vollen-Katz, Jennifer North

##### Attendees:

DJJ Staff Omar Jamil (Moderator), Brittany Groot, Andrew Munemoto, Michael Walters

##### Guest:

Nick Rohm, Policy Manager, John Howard Assn

#### II. Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 2022 minutes approval, however, voting for approval of March 2022 minutes will be tabled to next meeting to give the Board time to review.

#### III. DJJ Reports

##### A. Population trends / Monthly Data Review – Brittany Groot

Weapon Offenses: A slide overview was presented to specifically address the questions surrounding weapons offenses of youth. Fiscal year 2022, a total of 365 youth admitted to the facilities for personal crimes or property crimes, most likely robbery, arm robbery, or hi-jacking, which are the three biggest individual crimes that we have. **Twenty percent** of our population come in for weapons offensive, which was a total of 75 youth.

Weapons offenses are defined as an offensive, but not necessarily the use of weapons against another person that fall into an arm robbery category or assault category. Most are for possession or use of a weapons: *unlawful use a weapon or aggravated unlawful use of a weapon, reckless discharge of a firearm; possession of a handgun; possession of a firearm with no FOID or defaced gun; and possession of a stolen firearm.*

Seventy-five (75) youth admitted with these crimes as their primary holding defenses, which was the largest number DJJ has ever had. This was the single largest crime category or type of crime admitted in the past year and is the new trend for the past four years. Most are class 1 or class 2 felonies, not class 3 or 4 felonies. If sentenced as an adult, these would be decently long sentences.

Data for the rate of change is not available, but weapons offenses were not the primary reasons for admissions until the past 5 years. Previous crimes were for possession of controlled substance. Ten years ago, this would have been our single largest category, including robbery or burglary or domestic battery. The past 6 years, we have gone from 19 weapons offenses on average to 75 last year. So far this year, the number is sixty-three (63) and growing and becoming extraordinarily prominent with our population.

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This past year DJJ had more felons come for weapons offenses than other offenses: 30 felons, and 17 of them were weapons offenses. Prior years, weapon offenses came from Cook County. This year, Central Illinois, predominately Peoria, Sangamon, and Champaign counties. Demographically, more African Americans are in on weapons offenses than for non-weapons offenses. Overall, about 69% of our admission is African American and 80% are in for weapons offenses.

At the next meeting, we will look at statistics for length of stay related to these offenses.

## **B. Status of Litigation – Michael Walters, Assistant Chief Legal Counsel**

A plan for compensatory education was filed with the Courts that focused on the department identifying youth in the northern facilities based on the time they spent in the facilities and on how many days in Education. Those youth (facility and Aftercare) will be sent a letter notifying them of their eligibility for compensatory education services. DJJ will identify potential vendors and start the contracting process and get some vendors in place to begin tutoring services. This was negotiated with the plaintiffs and the new Education monitors, Dr. Zablocki. The plan was approved by the Courts and filed on the first of the month. The hiring plan for education staffing was filed today.

### **Key highlights and timelines – Director Heidi Mueller**

- Monitor reports (*Education, Mental Health, and Condition of Care*) due October 31, 2022.
  - Anticipate that the monitors in both condition of care and mental health will report substantial compliances and that monitoring is no longer required. DJJ has met all the remedial requirements in both of those areas.
- Remaining areas requiring substantial compliance on is in Education:
  - Staffing. Need teachers certified in specific subject matter, subject areas of Special Education personnel.
  - Full-time, full day school. The compensatory piece that Assistant Chief Walters spoke on flows from this. For a period during the pandemic, the plaintiffs asked how much education was provided. It is hard to tell how much school was provided or whether youth it was full time, full day during COVID because of sporadically shut down of operations. We remediated that by agreeing to these compensatory education services, implementing this plan, which should be up and running soon. The education monitor will evaluate and see how many services are provided in March 2023.

## **C. COVID Updates – Director Heidi Mueller**

DJJ is moving into a post-COVID stands. We continue to follow our protocol, and mask in all our congregate care facilities. We self-screen and continue to utilize a testing protocol, if we have any evidence of spread within a facility. Every three days, all staff are tested until we have not had a case for 14 days. Announcement of changes to our quarantine protocol that has been approved by the IL Department of Public Health. It allows us not to have to quarantine, even if staff are not vaccinated. Exposure does not require quarantine anymore. Testing protocol will be followed.

There were some spikes at Warrenville, Pere Marquette, and Harrisburg, but things have settled down. We are going off grounds and have volunteers and visitors coming in.

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#### D. Transformation Plan Updates – Director Heidi Mueller

For the second year, DJJ has been designated a promising practice site and look forward to hosting our next round of visitors, cohorts of DJJ, other juvenile justice systems and across the country. In October, the agency will host a group from Georgia and another group from Oklahoma. This group will visit IYC Chicago and IYC Warrenville, followed by a debrief with them, share policy and protocols, and answer their questions.

The designated as a promising practice site was for the way we have been able reduce the use of solitary confinement and replace that practice with more evidence-based practices: *Intensive and targeted interventions, revamping our disciplinary practices, using an incentive-based approach; utilizing the escalation techniques and other ways to manage behavior.* DJJ will be presenting at the OJP Conference in December. It's been a great opportunity for our staff to see.

We have piloted one on the key recommendations from our advancing transformation work group and one of the key components of our community services division on mobile intake. In partnership with Kane County, launched a mobile intake in the Spring. About 7 to 8 youth have come through mobile intake, and we have seen positive outcomes in using the mobile intake approach. Much more family engagement, more robust orientation, more robust engagement with Aftercare from the very start, and more communication along continuity of care with the detention centers. We are looking to expand to Lake County and into remote options where there is further distance between detention centers.

The department is required to negotiated with AFSCME and we are ready to start negotiating about some change in job location and job description.

Lincoln Illinois site: Design phase has been completed; project is out for bid and waiting to see who the construction partners will be.to start some of the remodel; some of renovations are currently in process at IYC Pere Marquette; and the architects have been selected and have started the design process for renovations and remodeling at IYC Warrenville.

Uniforms: After two years, we have bids for new staff and youth uniforms. Contracted with vendors to provide youth with different uniforms and clothes--out with the prison blue and in with khaki pants and polo shirts for our youth.

Continue to work on reorganization of our Aftercare to develop the community service division; established additional social worker positions and have started negotiating with the union; implementing our trauma-informed training throughout the department; and implementing TBRI – Trust Based Relational Interventions and cultural competency.

Chief Omar Jamil: Family Engagement working group has initiated its first Family Council. This will be a safe space where family can connect with one another and to provide feedback on the work that DJJ is doing. Family and community play vital roles to the recovery and responsiveness of young people leaving DJJ. Family roles: partners, part of the multidisciplinary team as well as work in collaboration with making decision about family placement.

The first Family Advisory Board meeting will be September 27, and that is just for families.

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*Trust Based Relational Interventions (TBRI):* This is part of grant funding to provide training opportunities for staff. This is a holistic approach to understanding problematic behavior among youth, which was started as this modality for adopted parents to work with youth from trouble backgrounds. With the transformation and the move to smaller facilities, we need to move staff in that direction and provide the necessary trainings: *family engagement training, justice training, as well as technical skills for staff to better relate to through TBRI.*

Chief of Training, Marna Satlak and I attended a weeklong training to become practitioners. The internal work to change our policy and procedures and how we interact with youth to become more trauma-informed is in the works.

Chief Jamil was asked to report on the first Family Council meeting at the next Advisory Board Meeting.

**IV New Business:**

Board member Rick Velasquez: Heard that OJJDP had determined that the State of Illinois was out of compliance, relative to DOC. Does this affect DJJ funding or entitlements. Director Mueller: DJJ have not received any notification from DOC regarding this.

Board member David Olson: Next meeting, discuss option for in-person attendance or continue use of video conference or hybrid option.

**No Public Participation**

**V. Adjournment: 1:24 pm**

**Next Meeting**

Date: December 14, 2022