

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Advisory Board

July 23, 2015

James R. Thompson Center, 9th Floor Conference Room, 100 W. Randolph, Chicago, IL and via teleconference
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Present in person: Jerry Butler, David Olson, and Jennifer Vollen-Katz

Present by phone: Julie Biehl, Director Candice Jones, Jennifer North, Randolph Stone, and Annetta Wilson (joined at 10:35 a.m)

Others present: Beth Compton, Gloria Davis, and Mary Reynolds (by phone)

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Chairperson Jenny Vollen-Katz.

Approval of Minutes

Jerry Butler made a motion to approve the June 1, 2015 minutes. David Olson seconded. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director Jones invited questions from the Board. Julie Biehl asked about the status of aftercare. Director Jones provided a brief update about the rollout of aftercare statewide, reporting that migration of all youth to Aftercare Specialists was substantially complete by January, 2015, except for sex offenders who were moved by the end of April 2015. Offices are opened statewide, and a new class of Specialists graduated yesterday, helping to balance caseloads. The monitor in the M.H. v. Findley consent decree has been reviewing the process implemented. Vera Institute has received a grant to assist with the development of graduated sanctions and a reward grid for DJJ, and will help train Aftercare staff on its use. Jenny Vollen-Katz asked about the success DJJ is having building relationships with service providers. Director Jones responded that a recent report by Chapin Hall helped frame the challenges with defining the relationships between Aftercare Specialists and service providers, acknowledging that DJJ continues to work in these areas. Director Jones will forward the report to the members of the Advisory Board. She also noted the establishment of the first Day Reporting Center in Chicago and the interest to open two more centers statewide. David Olson asked about the service providers in the Center.

Jenny Vollen-Katz suggested that this discussion helped provide more structure and organization to the Advisory Board meetings and requested that members email the Chair of the Board prior to meetings to help build items on the agenda and ensure that appropriate DJJ staff and resources are available. Jerry Butler suggested that a topic for a future meeting include the status of employees in DJJ, staff morale, and expectations. He suggested that staff aligned with the DJJ Leadership will produce the highest quality of services to youth. David Olson recommended that members identify themes for the year that help structure the agendas and invite broader audience participation and stimulate additional interest in the work of the Department.

Director Jones provided a brief update on the status of the Fiscal Year 2016 budget process, noting that the federal court issued an order requiring DJJ to continue to provide services to meet the consent decree. The order is available on the DJJ website and Director Jones will share it with the Board. Director Jones also stated that one of the five juvenile reform bills has been signed by the Governor, House Bill 2471, and the additional four bills await action by the Governor.

Jenny Vollen-Katz inquired about the status of hiring to meet the consent decree order. Director Jones noted that the Department has accelerated the hiring of educators this summer and that changes to the process have enabled educators to be hired more quickly than in the past. DJJ School Superintendent Gloria Davis reported that good progress has been made in recruiting and hiring educators. For example, the Illinois Youth Center at Pere Marquette has recently hired all of the necessary teachers and is in the process of filling special education positions. Director Jones noted the connected staffing challenges between educators and security staff, stating that sufficient security staff is needed in order to ensure that youth get to class.

Old Business

Second Chance Act Grant

Last spring, the Department was awarded a federal OJJDP Second Chance Act grant. Director Jones reported that the Council of State Governments will be the monitors for the grant. David Olson inquired about the timeline included in the grant materials shared with the Board and if the data used to determine program effectiveness was Illinois specific. Director Jones noted that DJJ is now in Phase 3 of implementation and that Illinois data was used. David Olson indicated that evaluations on program effectiveness were recently discussed at the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform. He encouraged collaboration and coordination across adult and juvenile areas to design and execute research methodology in the most consistent and effective ways possible. David Olson will work with the Department to establish a work group to address these issues.

New Business

Board Action Steps

Jenny Vollen-Katz emphasized the need for members of the Advisory Board to be collaborative with the Department on the development of the Annual Report and in its role with the Second Chance Act grant oversight. David Olson suggested that Board members review the 2014 Annual Report and email comments and ideas to him for further discussion to create a more meaningful process and report.

Nomination & Election of New Advisory Board Chairperson

Jerry Butler made a motion to amend the agenda and add the "election" to the item of "Nomination for Advisory Board Chairperson." Annetta Wilson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Jenny Vollen-Katz opened nominations for a new Chairperson of the Advisory Board. Director Jones nominated David Olson. Julie Biehl seconded the nomination. David Olson accepted the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Jerry Butler to adjourn, seconded by David Olson. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Approved by Board October 28, 2015.