



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**J.B Pritzker**  
Governor

**Heidi Mueller**  
Director

**Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice School District #428**

**Board of Education Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes -January 20, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.0** The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Heidi Mueller on Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:38 a.m. via WebEx video conference.

**ROLL CALL**

- 1.1** The following Board Members were present: President Heidi Mueller, Member David Green, Member Willa Taylor, Member Lamont Holifield, Member Heather Dalmage, and Member Briana Morales.

Not Present: Member Shawn Jackson

Others present: Dr. Tresa D. Dunbar, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Bambi Bethel-Leitschuh, Assistant Superintendent of Schools/Director of Special Education, Mr. Noah Boudreau, Director of CTE and Vocational Programs.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 2.0** Followed as printed

**APPROVAL OF  
AGENDA**

- 2.1** Quorum was confirmed. Member David Green motioned for approval. Member Heather Dalmage second the motion. No objections

Motion passed

**APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES OF  
NOVEMBER 2022  
MEETING**

- 2.2** Board member Lamont Holifield motioned for approval. Board member Willa Taylor second the motion. No objections.

Board Member Heather Dalmage abstained.

Motion passed

**PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION  
PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT**

**3.0** None

**4.0** President Mueller shared the IDJJ 2022 Annual Report. The report is accessible on the IDJJ website.

In 2018 IDJJ developed a multi-stage operation plan with four core priorities. The operation plan was meant to cover the four years from 2018-2022. IDJJ is now in the process of developing a new strategic plan, making it participatory as possible. There were Department wide surveys, Lunch and Learns and a December retreat with administrators to begin to categorize and prioritize what the operating plan priorities will be for the next four years starting the end of 2022 through 2026.

The initial operation plan focused on four core priorities: 1) transformation from an adult-focused prison mode to a youth and family-focused community. 2) compliance with and successful exit from the consent decree litigation. 3) improving youth outcomes by improving practices designed to assist with youth success. 4.) building efficient and supportive infrastructure.

Since 2019 some of our legislative milestones include adding family engagement as a core function and duty to IDJJ. Establishing family engagement as a central piece of youth treatment plans. More equitable and proportionate sentencing for the youth was establish for youth designated as habitual and violent juvenile offenders. Legislation was passed in 2021 for established Civics education for soon to be released citizens, including IDJJ.

In 2021, legislation required DJJ to implement a Staff Wellness Program. In 2022 legislation was passed that empowered DJJ to apply 180-day discretionary sentence credit to any qualifying youth in the care of DJJ. It was passed with respect to adult in DOC and in 2022 it was extended to young people with adult sentences that are in the custody of DJJ.

In Fiscal Year 2022 the average age of youth is 17.2 and it has been consistent in the past couple of years. The average age of youth in secure custody has slightly increased.

Average age for the youth in Aftercare community 18.4 years. The average length of stay is 5.7 months. It includes a wide range of different sentences and does not include pre-custody credits. Some youth that come in DJJ have already spent a significant amount of time in detention centers. DJJ has 145 youth in secure custody and 183 monitored and supported in Aftercare community.

DJJ's 21<sup>st</sup> century transformation has been a big focus for the department since the announcement in the summer of 2020. Significant progress was made towards the transformation in 2022. DJJ expanded mental and behavioral health services for the youth, including transitional services increasing the amount of transitional behavioral health treatment being provided to the youth that are transition back to the community. Keeping the youth connected to their mental health professionals and their therapists making sure they keep the

relationship they have formed while in secure custody. As a result, in shifting that practice, in 2022, 65% of the young people in Aftercare maintained connection. There was an increase on family engagement opportunities, expanded partnerships with community organization, educational institutions, and career programs. Another key component is moving to a Trauma Informed Care Model, TBRI a model of interaction for staff and youth. It is meant to support the youth in developing the skills and the tools they need to cope with trauma and make decisions that are more adapted to being successful and healthy in the community.

School District #428 highlights, Mr. Boudreau who has demonstrated a huge heart and passion for the team. All the facilities offer a Youth Career Exploration course, and vocational certifications programs. Lakeland College partnerships, Drafting courses, Principal partnership, and latest is the Larry's Barbershop College Program. In 2023 DJJ will offer driver's education through Nova Driving School. A driver's license is a huge component to being able to move forward in life upon release.

Number Highlights youth in secure custody:

46-High School Graduates

15-GED

12-8<sup>th</sup> Grade certificate

Total number of youths earning a diploma is 61 and DJJ's average enrollment is 100. DJJ's team is helping the youth realize that education is a tool that will benefit the pathway where they belong. Perfect attendance has been recently celebrated considering the educational background the youth come from.

The School District launched After School Programs that were led by volunteer educators. They have built relationships with the youth. Higher education continues to be a priority in addition to post-secondary vocational certification programs. There are college credit earning opportunities at all five facilities. In the 2022-2023 fall semester more than 15% of our youth population was enrolled in higher education in secure custody. Children come into DJJ not expecting to graduate from high school, considering the age range, it is a large percentage of youth coming in to DJJ and finding a education track for themselves, getting excited and pursuing higher education.

The second part of the mission is strengthening families. In the fall of 2022 DJJ launched an advisory group. It was an overwhelming positive experience; parents were engaged and excited for the next meeting. Meetings will be scheduled quarterly. DJJ is partnering with the Center for Juvenile Justice in Georgetown to help develop policy and structure. Social worker positions were created to help our young people transition successfully. Since March 2022 there was over 2300 family engagement contacts.

DJJ is working on a shift towards the idea, that the entirety of a youth's commitment, whether in secure custody or in the community, it is DJJ's responsibility. The transitioning part is the area that will determine success or failure. In secure custody is not the real-world environment that the youth will

have to face when they return home. DJJ will succeed or fail in how well they can help and support the youth in the transition and help navigate all the barriers faced.

In addition to educational outcomes, a youth had the opportunity to do an art, independent internship and sell some of her work. In addition to the 61 youth in secure custody that earned a diploma, 30 more youth in the Aftercare program earned their diploma.

In 2022 over 80% of youth were employed while on the program.

DJJ continues to make progress in the getting out of the consent decree. DJJ has successfully able to terminate monitoring in two out of the three areas. It is anticipated to be in substantial compliance in 2023 in education.

It will be the second consent decree that has come to close under the Governors' administration.

DJJ doesn't not want to be driven on a compliance mindset but an excellence mindset.

DJJ partnered with SkyART Program and had the opportunity to display "Can you see me?" artwork created by the youth at DJJ facilities. Colleague cohorts from other jurisdictions that came to visit from our promising practice site were able to see the exhibit.

Project Flex is a continued partnership with Northern Illinois and is now in three facilities. DJJ continues to expand restorative justice programming through New Life Centers.

DJJ is a designated Promising Practice which means DJJ is recognized nationally as a model that other jurisdictions should emulate. DJJ hosts cohorts, in the fall of 2022 Georgia and Oklahoma and in the Spring, cohorts from Wisconsin and Arizona. They are provided with technical assistance and share the policy to help and make positive changes.

Challenges are anticipated, staffing is at crisis level in a lot of juvenile justice systems. Small number of hires and retirement. Recruitment and retention are a huge focus.

DJJ continues to move forward and work on transformation. It will be a challenge to become a trauma informed while still maintaining safety.

Dr. Dunbar acknowledged President's report.

Board member Briana Morales asked President Mueller to restate the three core areas in the consent decree: mental health services, conditions of care in facilities and education. Monitoring was successfully terminated in mental health services and conditions of care in facilities. Education is the remaining with a few requirements left: staffing ratios, full-time, full day school. The

remaining facility is Warrentville due to Covid outbreaks. Last item is the Blending Learning a model that truly offers both educator instruction and online learning. Monitor recommends more energy is being invested in non-computer learning days. In 2022 hiring process has accelerated.

Heather Dalmage appreciates the information shared. She inquired on the Nova Driving School and how they would go about obtaining vehicle for driver's test.

Dr. Dunbar discussed, the intent that all youth under 17 will be able to obtain the white slip. Youth over 18 will have full filled every requirement to take the driver test. A simulator will not count towards driving hours. SD will be working with Aftercare to make sure the youth in the community complete the full process for obtaining Driver's license.

Nova Driving School is committed to DJJ and the community in reassuring fulfillment of driver's license process.

Member Dalmage suggested the Board of Member to have a retreat to include the members in the process of DJJ's mission. President Mueller stated with the new strategic planning, there is opportunity to see where they can include Board Member to help and become part of the mission.

Board Member Briana Morales referred to competency- based pilot school and the involvement at IDJJ as it allows students to move at their pace. It is like credit recovery programs where students can earn credits faster. She also stated that if IDJJ had staff who are trained in project-based learning or in competency-based education, DJJ would recruit a more diverse staff.

Superintendent Dunbar stated DJJ was previously engaged in the pilot program. DJJ was invited to introduce the program. The program provides good leverage for support and is something to consider. However, DJJ's current shift is towards engagement, involvement and excellence with the staff. DJJ is not yet prepared for the competency pilot program. The current focus is on instructional learning and being fully staffed.

President Mueller is excited to have Board Member Morales as she has experience with the Competency- based program.

<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT #428 OPERATIONAL FOCUS 2023 DR. TRESA D. DUNBAR</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<p>The operational focus of the district is that DJJ continues to move forward and planning to have culture of excellence, culture of intentional learning and international engagement. DJJ will not only focus on consent decree or compliance but be driven by instructional intent, culture, climate, and operational intent.</p> <p>SD#428 is using and building more data to ensure the needs are met of the students. The School District is providing more focused professional development.</p>
<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT #428 UPDATE WINTER NIA/NIAR DAYS DR. TRESA D. DUNBAR</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<p>During the NIAR/NIAR days, which are non-instructional for the students, the School District is using that time to engage more and provide more professional development, workshops and real-world experiences for the educators and the overall staff based upon their interests. In 2023, the intentional focus is to focus on best practices in all areas.</p> <p>The expectations for alignment and excellence of instruction have been delivered. Monthly Staff meetings have been held since 2020. Direct expectations have been set and have been authentic.</p>
<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT #428 ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES DR. TRESA D. DUNBAR</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<p>With the Professional Learning Communities SD #428 is making sure the courses are instructional focused, there is an authentic alignment of instruction, and the educators are certified in the correct area. Curriculum is based of Illinois Board of Education guidelines. It is an improvement, the youth show interest and are engaged. Educators are dealing with youth you have not been successful in school, therefore, through the professional learning communities the educators, themselves, must be engaged for climate and culture.</p> <p>Dr. Dunbar extended the invitation to the All-Staff School District Retreat in April to all the Board of Education members.</p> <p>Board Member Holifield shared how he, as principal, is also doing a lot of revamping. He appreciated the fact that most professional development is based on teacher interests. As Principal, he understands that the resources are there to help identify and provide the areas that need improvement. Board Member Holifield is willing to provide any resources he is using for his staff.</p>
<b>ASST. SUPT/DIR OF SPECIAL ED. UPDATE DR. BAMBI BETHEL-LEITSCHUH ASST. SUPT/DIR OF SPECIAL ED. UPDATE DR. BAMBI BETHEL-LEITSCHUH</b>	<b>6.0</b>	
	<b>6.1</b>	<p>The current focus is on SAT/ PSAT preparations. There is weekly contact with staff to make sure the youth have what they need. PSAT/SAT will be held in March and in April. There is an Administrative Directive to look over for</p>

GED. IDJJ is the only school district in the state of Illinois that can offer GED to high school students while in the facilities.

Weekly meetings are being held with four of the five schools to reconcile and look over data, to make sure it is entered correctly and what they reflect. Pere Marquette is under construction and unable to go into the facility. Data findings show increase in student attendance rate which means engagement increase. Supplement support is offered to students who are refusing school. Data is showing the promotion full day schools.

PLCs for Science and Social Science are coming together to draft new courses in better alignment with the Illinois State Board of Education and learning standards and approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.

There will be a Life Science hybrid course, reduction in Government course and will include a course that will be campaign related. The English Learning Arts PLC will better integrate intensive writing.

DJJ continued to train staff on Connexus. Training is held every two years. The next NIAR day, Educators will be retrained on adaptations that Pearson provides.

All the schools have Windows 10. Therefore, the Text to Speech is available for the youth that need that accommodation for their courses.

In February, there will be a Pearson training on how to take a Connexus course to build out a blended course.

DJJ continues to utilize external Connexus and Pearson in After Care.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION  
MONTHLY DATA  
SUMMARY/ NARRATIVE  
FOR OCT/NOV 2022  
DR. BAMBI  
BETHEL-LEITSCHUH**

**6.2** DJJ continues to work very closely with the Youth and their IEP's. Change of placement is closely monitored to be able to provide a least restrictive environment with smaller class sizes and one on one instruction. The Special Education youth also have the opportunity to learn with their non-disabled peers. Continuing to work towards compliance, IEP's and re-evaluations are currently updated.

This the third year working alongside the Liaison Program with the youth moving back into the community.

There is still a focus on parent engagement and continue to invite them to meetings. Student-led IEPs are in progress.

**CTE/VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION UPDATE  
NOAH BOUDREAU**

**7.0** Larry's Barber college program had the open-house at IYC-Chicago. DJJ will now be able to administer the State of Illinois Barber license exam on site.

Youth were able to talk about their goals and how much they enjoy the barber program.

IYC- Warrenville will have their open house in the afternoon.

Governor Pritzker was in support of all the skill building, vocational and educational programs. He attended the first graduation class from the Larry Barber program.

**BOARD DISCUSSION  
ITEMS**

**8.0** DJJ's website includes staff pets, with a possibility of adding Board Member's pets. This will encourage Newsletter views.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**9.0** A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Dalmage. Board member David Green then followed with a second motion. The motion was passed. No objections. Motion carries. President Mueller concluded the meeting at 11:19a.m.