

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Advisory Board

September 30, 2020

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

WEBEX Video Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

Board Members

via WebEx: Heidi Mueller, David Olson, Walter Brandon, Rick Velasquez, Jennifer Vollen-Katz

Absent: Jerry Butler, Julie Biehl, David Kelly, Jennifer North, Annetta Wilson

Attendees:

DJJ Staff Deloris Smith, NeAngela Dixon, Brittany Groot, Erin Johnson, Michelle Jenkins, Omar Jamil

Guest: Stephanie Coleman

I. Roll Call and Introductions

The meeting began at approximately 12:08 p.m. with a quorum present.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION moved by Walter Brandon to approve June 3, 2020; Jennifer Vollen-Katz asked if a quorum was present, quorum was confirmed. Motion SECONDED; motion PASSED.

III. Director's Report

Director Mueller presented the following material to the Board Members and provided a brief overview of each subject. Director introduced IDJJ staff who provided updates on the various subjects.

- June 2020 Monthly Report
- COVID Return to Work
- IDJJ Transformation Plan

A. Population Trends/Monthly Data Review

- **Brittany Groot** – We have continued a downward trend in population due to: (1) a decrease in admissions due to the COVID shutdown, and (2) during this fiscal year we would have been down about 10% from the previous year. The mental health needs, the education needs, and the substance abuse needs of our youth continue to increase. We have a higher rate of youth with multiple mental health diagnoses, youth with higher mental health needs and youth on psychotropic medications. A higher percentage of our youth are receiving substance abuse treatments and special education services.

Reportable Incidents: As the population has gone down, there is a continuous decrease in number of reportable incidents at the facilities: youth-on-youth fights, youth-on-youth assaults and youth-on-staff assaults. The rate has decreased as well.

Walter Brandon: What do you attribute the decrease in reportable incidents? **Director:** *It has a lot to do with the decrease in population. The facilities are safer and there are few incidents. Each facility is managing a smaller number of youth which allows staff to build stronger relationship with youth and their families.*

Rick Velasquez: What is attributing to the increase in the percentage of mental health and behavioral health issues? **Brittany Groot:** *It is largely due to the reduced population.*

TRD reduction: During the pandemic, we are still doing a lot of TRD reduction time, which is about four and one-half months, compared to ten months five years ago.

Walter Brandon: Do you have the racial breakdown of youth in custody? **Brittany Groot**: *August statistics: 131 youth in custody: 68% African American, 20% White, 9% Hispanic, 3% Bi-racial. Aftercare: 69% African American, 17% White, 8% Hispanic, 5% Bi-racial. Males: 95%. Average age in custody: 17.8. Average age on Aftercare: 18.5.*

B. Status of Litigation

Chief NeAngela Dixon – RJ litigation: Due to the pandemic, we were not allowing visitors in the facilities. DJJ arranged to host interviews via WebEx. Kelly Dedel, general and safety monitor, and Dr. Peter Leone, education services monitor, have completed their interviews. We are wrapping up interviews with the mental health monitors, Dr. Louis Kraus and Dr. Alan Morris.

ACLU will start interviewing youth in the next few weeks via WebEx. Equip for Equality, which joined last year as General Counsel for the class of Special Education students, have started to meet with youth via WebEx and with our School District staff to ask about our policies. The ACLU and the Equip for Equality interviews should be finished within the next few weeks.

The monitors will present their reports to the Courts by the end of October. Based on the reports, the Plaintiff and DJJ will have an opportunity to respond if there are any rulings or further instructions by the Courts to achieve substantial compliance.

David Olson: What about youth privacy during the WebEx interviews: **Chief Dixon**: *We have been utilizing WebEx videos and Zoom conferences for youth and their attorneys for pending litigation in the courts and revocation proceedings. The facility will find a space where the youth can be closed-off: a video conference room or a counselor's office. Staff connects youth to the video conference, then steps out and closed the door so youth can have privacy for the call. If there are any security issues, we have communicated with the attorneys or monitors to arrange a different time and place, if necessary.*

C. COVID Updates

Return to Work timeline: Mid-May we started implementing Phase 3 of re-opening for State of Illinois and began the process of resuming intake and reopening. We tied our reopening to the Governor's Restore Illinois Five-phase plan. We are in Phase 4. We staggered our reopening by facility based on what we were seeing among our staff and youth populations and positive COVID cases. At this point, we are back to our regular operation. Some staff are on remote work status and able to work from home. They will remain on remote work status through the end of the year.

We are diligent about source control: masking, daily temperature check of youth, and temperature check and screening with everyone who enters the front door of facility. Family visits and volunteers programming have resumed, as well as off-ground activities. We have increased our group size, so long as we can maintain social distancing.

In-person training in small groups and cross-facility training have resumed, with source control protocol in place. If we have an up tick in any facility, we will move back to an early stage of mitigation. We will take the necessary action to prevent the spread and mitigate the virus.

This situation has allowed us to realize that we have the capability and ability to deliver some services remotely, to do work remotely, and to be a little more flexible. We are looking at developing protocols and policies that allow employees to have some remote days and flexibility in their schedules. Additionally, we are looking at ways to deliver services to youth where they are at in the community by using the technology that have been effective for our youth on Aftercare.

Statistics: Accumulative positive COVID count since March:

- Staff: 54; Youth:18
- STC had highest number of cases: staff=30, and youth=14

D. IDJJ Transformation Plan Update

Director Mueller: The goal with this transformation is to divest ourselves from a model that we know did not work, imposes harm and trauma on youth, and built on a foundation of structural racism. We will invest instead in interventions and responses to juvenile offenses that are more effective at helping youth grow and thrive, helping restore young people so that they can return to their community as more healthy and well individuals.

We see this happening by letting go, unfettering ourselves from an adult prison design where large groups of youth are housed in large numbers, far away from their families. We want to keep youth as closed to home as possible, as interactive with their families as possible, and as integrated in their communities as possible.

We plan to develop a wide-range continuum of responses of support and services and resources for youth and families that will help youth achieve better outcome. The continuum on the very low-end can be low-key supervision and Aftercare Service monitoring. The continuum on the very high end for youth who pose a real risk to the community can look like secured custody. However, the secured-custody model would look much more humane and more developmentally appropriate and restorative for an adolescent.

The available responses would include intensive wrap-around services, mentoring, multi-system therapy, utilizing our day reporting centers, and residential treatment placements. The goal is to try to move youth toward the least restrictive of these responses that we can. We will try to foster and preserve good, positive connects to communities for support and utilize the family as a partner, as much as possible in the response.

Walter Brandon: Have we adopted any of the Missouri plan? **Director:** *This model is influenced by the Missouri model. We are also looking at the close-to-home models of New York and Washington DC as guides. We refer to ours as the "Missouri-plus" model. We look to achieve a similar close-to-home model, but we also are including a meaningful investment in capacity building in communities so that communities can support their own youth.*

David Olson: What do you see as the shortest-term goal? **Director:** *Our immediate priorities:*

- *Setting up virtual town hall meetings for our stakeholders so we can gather information; Lieutenant Governor's office is forming a transition team who will focus on specific recommendations/questions related the DJJ transformation; Establishing an ongoing advisory board to advise and help shape the transformation.*
- *Building out our community services division; reshaping how we think about our role and our purpose at DJJ. Moreover, realizing that the youth in DJJ custody encompasses of all youth in the facility and those under Aftercare supervision; restructuring Aftercare by building a community services division to manage the continuum.*

IV: New Business

No new business

V: Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting. Motion moved by W. Brandon; seconded by H. Mueller
The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:52 p.m.

Next Meeting

Date: **December 2, 2020**