



Youth Justice Oversight Committee

Meeting Minutes from April 4, 2024

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) met on April 4, 2024, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room C. Judge Dana Kenworthy chaired the meeting.

Members Present:

The following members of the Committee were present in person:

- Judge Dana Kenworthy, Chair
- Dr. Matthew Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine
- Stephen Balko, Indiana Department of Education
- Serrilla Blackmon, Division of Mental Health, FSSA
- Judge Marshall Broadwell, Marion Superior Court 16
- Shannon Chambers, Johnson County Probation
- Terrie Decker, Indiana Department of Correction
- Judge Darrin Dolehanty, Senior Judge
- Tracy Fitz, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- Magistrate Carolyn Foley, Allen Superior Court
- Judge Faith Graham, Tippecanoe Superior Court 3
- Mary Kay Hudson, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Judge Ryan King, Ripley Circuit Court
- Emily Krauser, Indiana Housing and Economic Development Authority
- Devon McDonald, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute
- Nichole Phillips, Bartholomew County Probation
- Magistrate Amy Richison, Huntington Circuit and Superior Courts
- Sarah Sailors, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Nancy Wever, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Joel Wieneke, Indiana Public Defender Council
- Kia Wright, Voices, Inc.

Members Attended Via Zoom:

Jade Palin, from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, who will temporarily serving as the proxy for Devon McDonald.

Members Absent:

Stephen Balko, Serrilla Blackmon, Judge Marshall Broadwell, Judge Darrin Dolehanty and Sarah Sailors.

Staff:

Leslie Dunn, Nick Parker, Michelle Goodman, April Dubree, Payton Lester, Colleen Saylor, Joseph Fischer, Lisa Thompson, Megan Horton, Chris Biehn, Tyler Mason and Mindy Pickett from the Office of Judicial Administration attended. Mark Fairchild and Blane Cook from the Commission on Improving the Status of Children (CISC) attended. Renee White from Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) attended.

Welcome and Introductions:

Judge Kenworthy welcomed members. Judge Kenworthy and Mark Fairchild will give a joint update on the Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) and the Commission on Improving the Status of Children at the Juvenile and Family Court Conference on June 12-14. Judge Kenworthy asked Workgroup Chairs to let her know by May 31 if there are any topics or items they would like her to include.

Approval of Minutes from the February 1, 2024 Meeting:

Shannon Chambers moved to approve the February 1, 2024 minutes as written; Nancy Wever seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Grants Update:

Devon McDonald will be gone for four months for military JAG training. His duties will be covered by his Chief of Staff, Jade Palin. Grants are currently in progress. There were some delays from the last round of grants due to contract issues, but they are moving forward now. For the current round of grants, they have 30 applications in the system and about 20-21 are unique requests. New grant requests are due by April 12. So far, they have the most Behavioral Health grants, around 10. They have 5-6 grant applications in the diversion and community alternatives categories. Some grantees applied in all three categories. ICJI has held webinars which were well-attended. There was some confusion about the planning grants, and they are working on making the information clearer. He anticipates that ICJI will see about 20-30 grant applications per grant cycle.

They have planning grants in progress now that will come to fruition later. Nancy Wever asks if the issues with the contracts will go more smoothly in the second round; Devon said yes. Tracy Fitz requested a one-pager on the planning grants to cover what can you do with them and, what do they entail? Devon said they are working on that. Judge Kenworthy introduced Renee White from ICJI who assists with the grants. ICJI will have a table at the Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conference in June to answer questions and they will also provide a one-pager with grant tips and things to avoid.

Legislative Wrap-up:

Mark Fairchild recognized Senator Jean Breaux, who passed away recently. She was a member of the YJOC Screening and Assessment Workgroup. The Commission on Improving the Status of Children (CISC) is naming their internship after Senator Breaux. The legislation allowing ICJI to advance grant funds passed. Legislators also discussed how to facilitate better communication among parents and caregivers. There is interest in legislation that would put processes in place for families and others to work well together. Legislators also discussed concurrent planning and truancy. Both preventative programs and more punitive approaches to truancy were discussed.

The truancy issue needs more study; the CISC agreed to study truancy and come up with recommendations. CISC will coordinate with YJOC's Diversion Workgroup to see how they can help, how we could use the grants in this area. The CISC will also look at how the Cross-System Youth subcommittee can work with CISC on truancy.

There was a question about Safe Baby Court and how that operates. The program focuses on children under the age of three to help with better case management and access to services, recognizing these families have unique needs. IOCS is looking at how Safe Baby Court fits into the existing problem-solving court model as it is a subset of a family recovery courts. There are already hundreds of problem-solving courts in Indiana that focus on expediency, comprehensive assessments and getting services more quickly.

2023 Annual Electronic Reporting Report:

Michelle Goodman from IOCS assists the state and local Justice Reinvestment Advisory Councils (JRAC) with reports required by statute. They are required to report specific data for adults and youth on electronic monitoring. 2023 was the first year for the report. JRAC asked that YJOC be made aware of this report to decide if any action steps need to be taken as it relates to the use of electronic monitoring of youth. Michelle emailed a copy of the report to all YJOC members. The report collected information on adults and youth both pre and post disposition. The key takeaway is that more youth are on our pre-disposition electronic monitoring supervision than post disposition. The information from the report comes from the agencies who supervise electronic monitoring conditions. This report will stay on the agenda for the next YJOC meeting to allow people to review the report and come back with questions.

Workgroup Updates:

Data Workgroup:

Mary Kay Hudson reported that the Data Workgroup has met twice. They have been looking at current data collection efforts in youth justice. They had a presentation from Dr. Aalsma on the ADAPT project and the lessons learned, data collection challenges and differences in data on the county level. Nancy Wever presented what JDAI collects and said they have similar challenges. Colleen Saylor gave a presentation on the Court Performance Measures and their process, how she provides support to the counties and how she captures and reports the data. Lisa Thompson reported on the adult abstract of judgment and whether we could develop a similar document for juveniles such as a juvenile disposition form that summarizes key dispositional information and related data. Judge Kenworthy attended the workgroup meeting and was excited to see IOCS is trying to build on what already exists, like using the abstract of judgment framework to create a juvenile disposition form. These reports show how complex the issues are and how much support courts need in this area. We have to balance the need for consistency and uniformity with the variations in local practices and resources.

OJA is submitting a grant application to ICJI in the diversion category to help fund data projects and reporting requirements. They chose the diversion category because we have to report on diversion data by statute. The funds would help with supporting related pilot projects and research.

Devon mentioned a presentation by Dr. Lowder at JRAC on a tool called "Relative Disadvantage," and noted it would be a valuable tool for youth; he asked if we should look into this. He noted a

colleague had received an NIJ grant to adapt this tool for youth. Mary Kay said they are requesting funds in the grant for contracted services and they want to work with Dr. Aalsma. They are also already working with Dr. Lowder and Dr. Ray. She hopes IOCS can self-fund research in the future.

Screening and Assessment Workgroup:

Shannon Chambers reported that they have met twice. They prioritized recommendations and reviewed their action plan. They discussed key reminders for judges and probation to comply with HEA 1359. A sub-workgroup drafted a cover sheet to communicate the IYAS Diversion and Detention results, other detention screening tool scores and recommendations to stakeholders prior to hearings. The cover sheet was sent out to everyone to review. Another sub-workgroup is working on recommendation #5 to update the Standard Preliminary Inquiry Report for informal adjustments, which requires approval by the Judicial Conference. The main focus right now is recommendations 5, 6 and 7. They are preparing a letter with key reminders to be sent out in the Wednesday Weekly message, sent to CPO's and to JDAI programs. Judge Kenworthy will review the letter and approve it. They had a presentation from IOCS Education Division on training for juvenile justice stakeholders. The Public Defenders do not get a lot of training on IYAS; IOCS will work on webinars to provide stakeholders to share information about assessment tools.

Behavioral Health Workgroup:

Nick Parker reported that they have six new members and a new co-chair, Judge Dolehanty. Joel Wieneke is a new member as well. Their focus is on diagnostic assessments including discussing how and why the Indiana Department of Correction/Division of Youth Services (IDOC/DYS) is doing these assessments. They discussed a checklist or benchcard for judges. They reviewed a benchcard from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. They discussed concerns with the quality of telehealth and its availability. They have no sub-workgroups yet but will continue to meet monthly. The workgroup chairs asked members to look at what other states are doing. Judge Graham provided links to information from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Judge King asked what the benchcard would include and suggested asking the judges what additional questions might be helpful for a benchcard. He would like to know key answers to be expected from any diagnostic assessment and maybe a menu of what the court wants and expects. The purpose of the benchcard is to clarify what is expected from the assessment, when to send the youth to IDOC-DYS and when not to do so. Joel said the benchcard could help judges determine what areas they want guidance on and what questions they want answered, while allowing the professionals to look at what they think needs to be addressed as well. Judge Graham noted that the benchcard could also include information on who is qualified to perform different types of assessments and what level of education is required to conduct the assessment.

The workgroup is also looking at why youth are being sent to IDOC/DYS for assessment and why their assessments are so much better than what they get from other places. Could providers be trained by IDOC/DYS to do these diagnostic assessments? Dr. Dwenger from IDOC/DYS noted that some youth sent there for diagnostic assessments should not be there and this lessens treatment time for other youth in IDOC/DYS.

Judge Kenworthy noted that there is a difference of opinion as to what a diagnostic assessment can and cannot give you. Nancy Wever asked if there is any research on what happens as a result of the diagnostic assessment? A lot of youth get the assessment at IDOC and then go home.

Diversion Workgroup:

Tracy Fitz reported that the Diversion Workgroup is preparing a diversion resource guide and program directory. They sent out questions to counties previously on what type of diversion programs they are using. They are reaching back out to counties to get more information on programs, how they are funded, who they are working with, to define program goals, outcomes and parameters. They would like the directory to show model programs, such as model truancy programs. They want the directory to be used to help counties apply for the YJOC grants. They will provide links to sample MOU's, eligibility guidelines and definitions as well as links to various toolkits. This is a living document and will be updated. They would like to know what else should be included. They would like feedback from YJOC members by the end of the week and any documents (MOU's and eligibility criteria) that members may have that would be helpful.

Judge Kenworthy will share information about the diversion resource guide at the upcoming Judges Juvenile and Family Conference in June. It should be distributed at the IPAC conference, too.

Transitional Services Workgroup:

Terrie Decker reported that they have met once and will meet again today. They have done some research and want to pull together resources so counties know what is available to them. Smaller counties struggle with what to do with difficult youth. They are doing three focus groups with several groups of judges to talk about the criteria they use when they are considering resuming jurisdiction when a youth is discharged from IDOC including what steps they use, what policies and practices they use, what services they put in place and why. For the focus groups, they contacted the counties that send the most youth to IDOC. Sarah Sailors presented some information to the group about an internal group they have for high acuity youth who are hard to place. David Reed will present to the group about the DCS policies on transitional services (transition out of IDOC and/or residential placement).

Judge King asked for clarification on what transitional services encompass. He thinks courts may need to set up procedures that are not currently in place. Terrie Decker stated that there are counties that resume jurisdiction now. Terrie noted that IDOC/DYS has youth being committed there as a last resort when there are no other options for placement; once a placement is located, the youth is discharged and put into the placement. Judge King said we should consider a step-down procedure. Can they identify youth to be considered for early transition out of IDOC? Magistrate Foley said that this is the reason for the focus groups-to find out what practices are out there. The workgroup is considering whether it would be possible to create statewide policies or best practices on this issue.

Judge Kenworthy noted that there are lots of differences in what counties do. DCS said that there are transitional services available in all 92 counties, but youth are treated very differently across the state. The Community Transition Program (CTP) for adults is a very interesting parallel. Judge Kenworthy mentioned that the Parental Participation Plan that exists could be used to make sure the parents are engaged and are learning what the youth are learning; if we don't address the parents and the home, we are not helping. Terrie said that Marion County does CTP for youth coming out of IDOC and they re-assume jurisdiction. The juvenile courts in some counties (Lake, Marion and St. Joseph) put language in their court orders stating that they are considering this youth for resuming jurisdiction for transitional services. Nancy Wever noted that there is no funding for the services unless they are under the court's supervision; she would like to find a way to fund the programs without having youth under supervision. Judge King asked about funding for

transitional services through IDOC-DYS. Terrie stated that she has to put youth on parole to pay for services; otherwise, it has to be paid for through DCS. Kia Wright from VOICES said all their services are grant funded; there is no funding for wrap-around services to transition kids back into the community. Judge Kenworthy asked that if we are housing kids at DOC, would it make sense to spend less money providing services to the youth in the community?

Grants Workgroup:

Devon McDonald noted that it is an entirely new Grants Workgroup, made up of the people required by statute to review the grants. Michael Moore from the Indiana Public Defender Council joined as well as Tracy Fitz. Their next meeting is tomorrow to provide training on scoring grants. The current grants close on April 12. The grants will be offered quarterly, and the next round will open sometime in June.

Wrap-Up /Closing:

Judge Kenworthy asked if there were any other topics we should discuss or initiatives going on we should know about. Joel Wieneke is looking for a judge who works with dual status youth to help with a presentation. Terrie Decker reported that detention beds are a huge issue. Knox County lost their detention center; she met with five counties in southern Indiana to help find locations for youth. Knox County had 40 beds and helped a lot of southern counties. They closed for financial reasons. Nichole Phillips asked whether they should advocate for a new detention center. Bartholomew County doesn't put their kids in there, but they house kids from other counties.

Mary Kay announced that the Chief Justice will appoint a replacement for her position on YJOC. Mark Fairchild shared that the CISC is having a youth engagement summit on February 17-18, 2025, which includes a day at the statehouse for youth so they can learn how to use their voices. Tracy Fitz reminded members to provide feedback on the Diversion Resource Guide and provide documents. Nancy Wever shared that there is a JDAI Inter-site conference in October and they are putting out RFPs for presenters. The theme is "Building Tomorrow Together." Kia Wright reported that they opened "Jake's Place," for 18–21-year-olds where youth can stay rent free for 15 months and receive full wrap-around services. Dr. Aalsma is working with several counties on screening kids for suicide and making sure there are services available to support needs.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, June 6, 2024, Indiana Government Center, Conference Room B, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 1, 2024, Indiana Government Center, Conference Room C, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 3, 2024, Indiana Government Center, Conference Room C, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 5, 2024, Indiana Government Center, Conference Room C, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.