



Youth Justice Oversight Committee

Meeting Minutes from August 1, 2024

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) met on August 1, 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:

- Dana Kenworthy, Chair
- Dr. Matthew Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine
- Stephen Balko, Indiana Department of Education
- Sirrilla Blackmon, Division of Mental Health, FSSA
- Judge Marshelle Broadwell, Marion Superior Court 7
- 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
- Judge Ryan King, Ripley Circuit Court
- Emily Krauser, Indiana Housing and Economic Development Authority
- Devon McDonald, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute
- Jade Palin, 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, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
- Joel Wieneke, Indiana Public Defender Council
- Kia Wright, Voices, Inc.

Members Attended Via Zoom:

None

Members Absent:

Hon. Marshelle Broadwell, Hon. Ryan King, Devon McDonald, Jade Palin and Nichole Phillips

Staff:

Leslie Dunn, April Dubree, Payton Lester, Colleen Saylor, Lisa Thompson, Megan Horton, Chris Biehn, Mindy Pickett, Michelle Goodman, Nick Ackerman and Shelby Price from the Office of Judicial Administration attended. Mark Fairchild and Blane Cook from the Commission on Improving the Status of Children (CISC), Renee White from Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) and Harmony Gist from Department of Child Services (DCS).

Welcome and Introductions:

Judge Kenworthy welcomed members.

Approval of Minutes from the June 6, 2024 Meeting:

Magistrate Amy Richison made a motion to approve the June 6, 2024 minutes as written; Magistrate Carolyn Foley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Commission on Improving the Status of Children (CISC) Update:

Mark Fairchild, Executive Director of the CISC, provided an update on the work of the CISC. He has been talking to the workgroups about what kind of legislative support the CISC can provide. Topics they are watching include Family Resource Centers (prevention programs), family and youth engagement (asking for a new position dedicated to this), diversion, truancy and chronic absenteeism, attorney representation for human trafficking victims and funds for data collection for ICJI and IOCS. If there are other topics we want on CISC's radar, let him know.

Judge Kenworthy talked to legislators about funds for data collection and suggested that one-quarter of the requested funding be allocated from each of the Diversion and Community Alternatives grant funds, and one-half of the requested funding from the Behavioral Health fund; legislators thought that sounded reasonable. Data was the number one request from HEA 1359, so they support whatever it takes to make that happen. The other legislative issue is determining the reporting requirements for the behavioral health grant reports.

Dr. Aalsma noted that resources are more difficult to access due to the need for probation to bill for them. This makes it harder to maintain youth on diversion. They need a way to get services without going through probation (more prevention without court involvement).

Nancy Wever asked if multiple groups would be able to access the CISC's "pool" of youth and families with lived experience. Mark stated that they would and that is part of the reason he is seeking specific staffing to support the concept of an Indiana lived experience network. They could develop a process where a person requests that a person with lived experience be available to help with a certain topic and the network can select the best person.

Mark shared that Indiana was one of five states selected for the Best Youth Initiative. They will be working with the Forum for Youth Investment to bring youth voices to the forefront. Their focus is absenteeism. They have 3 youth and one parent with lived experience participating. Mark reported that there is an interim study commission on education looking into similar issues as YJOC and CISC, including diversion and absenteeism. Mark made a motion to write a joint letter from CISC and YJOC noting our work on these topics and our desire to be part of the discussions. Nancy Wever seconded the motion. All YJOC members present approved.

Indiana's Program Improvement Plan Presentation:

Harmony Gist, Deputy Director of Strategic Solutions & Agency Transformation of DCS, and Sarah Sailors, Chief Deputy Director, gave a presentation highlighting the intersection of the DCS Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and YJOC work. (See PowerPoint presentation from DCS). Over four hundred stakeholders help develop the PIP and will help implement it. One of the sections of the PIP addresses collaboration with the courts. DCS is developing a state-level PIP Task Force to oversee implementation work and track improvement on the PIP. DCS has eighteen months to improve but the PIP Task Force will operate for two years; membership will be from all stakeholders. The PIP Task Force may create a one-page summary of meetings to share with other agencies to promote better cross-agency communication and avoid duplication of efforts.

Harmony noted that they scored lower on timely permanency-the timeliness of hearings, quality of hearings, etc. They developed three strategies to address. One strategy is addressing data quality. The second strategy is on improving the management of dual status cases, focusing on training, outreach and education. The last strategy is more macro, quality-assurance based, and will look at quality assurance of the entire system. They want to start a pilot in 3-5 counties; they will request the permanency hearing date at the initial hearing and schedule it, so everyone knows. They are updating the interagency agreements between courts and probation. Finally, DCS is working with IOCS and the Center for Building Capacity for Courts on a quality hearing study; they will use a measurement tool, observe hearings and learn what we can do more efficiently.

They want to formalize stakeholders' meetings on the local level to review the big picture, trends, and data to help improve the process. This is a statewide process and review, not just DCS and all agencies and stakeholders need to support it.

Workgroup Updates:

Grants Workgroup: Judge Kenworthy presented two action items for the Grants Workgroup. She asked them to draft language for proposed legislative amendments. Second, she requested the workgroup review the funding formula. The grant application numbers have decreased; we need to open the funding for additional opportunities. We want to make sure we are using the money and not leaving it on the table.

Data Workgroup: Dr. Aalsma stated that IOCT is working on reports, including the Preliminary Inquiry, the Pre-Disposition and Modification Reports, and developing a cover sheet. They are moving forward with the pilots and over twenty counties expressed interest. The counties are a good mix of geographic areas, size and database systems. They are looking at what data exists, what is missing, what is inconsistent, etc. Later, a smaller pilot will examine the data more closely and consider improvements.

Screening and Assessment Workgroup: Shannon Chambers said they sent out a reminder letter to all Chief Probation Officers and judges signed by Judge Kenworthy. They are working with IOCT on their recommendation #5 to update the reports and build the requirements. IOCS is getting input from various judicial committees on the forms including the Juvenile Justice Improvement Committee, Probation Officers Advisory Board, Juvenile Benchbook and the Probation Committee. They will go to the Judicial Conference Board in December for approval of the updated forms with an effective date of July 1, 2025.

Behavioral Health Workgroup: They met OJA's new State Court Behavioral Health Administrator, Brittany Kelly and the Chair of the Behavioral Health Committee, Judge Campbell. They have two subgroups, one on diagnostic evaluations and one on the Benchcard. They will review the DYS evaluation to identify duplication of information. They are developing a list of assessments and evaluations, what is recommended and what level of professional must complete them. They are reviewing the DCS assessment standards and looking at the most appropriate process for assessments (telehealth) and mapping out options. They want to develop a guidance document or a Benchcard outlining when to seek a diagnostic assessment, and what criteria should be present. They are getting input from judicial committees; the Benchcard will help judges and others know when to request a diagnostic assessment and when not to do so. Vicki Davis would like the Benchcard for new juvenile judges' orientation. They are also looking at mapping out communication pathways between systems. Judge Dolehanty noted that courts are probably over-assessing and if we communicate better, we probably will not need to do as many. Judge Kenworthy noted that at least one-third of the judiciary is new, so there is a need for better communication with them as well.

Diversion Workgroup: Tracy Fitz reported that they are working on a Diversion Program Directory so they can connect people to other programs. They are working with IOCT on a searchable online directory. Bart Doan from the Department of Workforce Development presented to the workgroup and provided extremely helpful information on how to connect youth to jobs.

Transitional Services Workgroup: Terrie Decker reported that they have two subcommittees. David Reed and Don Travis were helpful in explaining the DCS processes. They are reviewing results from their survey of juvenile judges. They presented at the Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conference in June.

Wrap-Up /Closing:

Judge Kenworthy stated that we have invited Bart Doan to our October YJOC meeting to present on what is available for youth from DWD. We will be sending out 2025 meeting dates.

Kia Wright reported that Voices is offering a nine-month leadership training for youth aged 14-24 and they are having a grand opening of a new building this Saturday. Sarah Sailors reported that the high acuity work is going well. If anyone has youth that could benefit from this process, let her know. They have a request for proposals but now for intensive foster care; it is a service that targets harder to place youth, provides in-home support and wraparound services. They hope to have it running by November. Leslie Dunn announced that IOCS has a new executive director, Catheryne Pully.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, October 3, 2024, Indiana Government Center, Conference Room C, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

Thursday, December 5, 2024, Indiana Government Center, Conference Room C, 10:00 am-12:00 pm