



## **Advisory Council on Juvenile Services**

### Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 16, 2022 @ 10:00 a.m.  
2515 South Congress Ave, Austin, Texas 78704

#### **Advisory Council Members present:**

Ed Cockrell, Chair, Marc Bittner, Judge Mark Allen, Shanna Floyd, Shandra Carter, Lou Serrano, Homer Flores, Christy Ashworth-Mazerolle

**Advisory Council Members not present:** Vice Chair, Lynn Hadnot, Judge Natalia Oakes, Melanie Ramsey, Karina Browning, Judge Larry Thorne

#### **TJJD Staff in attendance:**

Amy Miller, Ryan Bristow, Ashley Kintzer, James Wilson, Mark Williams, Preston A Streufert, and Ronnie Solano, Travis County Chief Cory Burgess.

#### **Other attendees:**

Rachel Gandy- Sunset Representative

#### **Call to Order/Introductions:**

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. with Ed Cockrell introducing himself and taking roll call of the Council members.

#### **Approval of Minutes: July 15, 2022 Meeting**

Marc Bittner made a motion to approve the minutes. Shanna Floyd, seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**DFPS Involvement with County detained youth** – Amy Miller, Director of Probation Services discussed DFPS involvement with county detained youth. She reported that as an agency they have been taking these types of situations case by case that are involved with DFPS. The approach is to have a regionalization juvenile justice liaison and regional county program administrators liaison's working together along with the county probation department that have a case to staff the case and work together to look for solutions for that individual youth. Mrs. Miller reported that some staffing's are getting good results.

Jillian Bonacquisti, DFPS Director of Placement, provided information on CWOP (children in need of placement) youth. She reported that CWOP issues began in October of 2020 and peaked in the summer of 2021. The cause was due to an unprecedented amount of loss capacity. During the COVID 19 pandemic, DFPS lost approximately 18 residential treatment centers. That was a total of approximately 1,500 beds. Due to the loss of beds, it created a backlog issue with staff resources. Currently there are approximately sixty youth without placement. The places with the highest number of youth are mostly urban areas. The profile of the majority of youth without placement are ninety percent having psychological problems, ninety three percent have a history of aggression toward peers and adults and eighty percent have runaway history. They are also experiencing a high level of defiance from these youth. About fifty five percent of CWOP youth have juvenile justice involvement. Ninety percent of CWOP youth are 14 to 17 years of age. Several of the 17 years olds are refusing to participate in treatment and refusing placement. The majority of youth that are without placement are coming from psychiatric hospitals and are runaways. There are 8 percent of youth coming from jails or detention centers. They are trying to build more psychiatric stabilization and residential treatment programs. They are not finding many people that are willing to work with youth and the ones that do are struggling due to their inability to handle psychiatric or behavioral issues. Due to these problems, several youth are being placed outside of Texas.

#### **Texas Juvenile Justice Department updates:**

Interim Executive Director Shandra Carter reported that the Sunset meeting has been moved from October 2, 2022 to November 10, 2022. TJJJ is in the process of working through suggestive modifications from the members. At this time there are no modifications that suggest TDCJ or to send all youth to the counties. They are having an LBB and LAR meeting on September 23, 2022. Chief Lynn Hadnot has been invited to the meeting to discuss the complexities of funding for the field. She feels that it is important for the LBB and LAR to hear these issues directly from someone who is impacted by their decisions and formulas. Mrs. Carter discussed the stories that are being discussed in the media concerning TJJJ. She reported that these are repeated stories and some of what is reported is inaccurate such as youth not having access to restrooms for 22 hours. She discussed the current state of TJJJ's staffing issues. This continue to be a problem. At the moment, twenty five percent of the current direct care staff are in training.

Lou Serrano, TJJJ Deputy Executive Director provided an update on probation services. He reported that one hundred thirty four youth are pending admission from forty-one departments. TJJJ is moving youth at an average of 8 to 10 weekly. They are on track to end the week with one hundred twenty six youth pending transportation. He reported on the regionalization efforts. We ended FY22 with departments submitting three hundred twelve diversions applications resulting in two hundred forty three youth placed, two hundred seventy one youth placed with the Travis and Randle County programs. We started FY23 with two hundred youth in diversion placements. For the first time TJJJ have sent out diversion information to the field. This information will show the number of applications submitted by each department provided regionally, the number of youth placed through RDA, and the number of commitments by each

department. The thought on sending this information out is so that everyone can see data from other departments across the state. This data will be sent out regularly.

Ashley Kintzer gave a brief report on the Regionalization Task Force. The task force have met twice. She reported that the first draft of the regionalization plan went out to the task force this week. The task force is slowly revising the original plan and are hoping that the plan will be completely revised by the end of the year. Thus far, the task force have revised the background and target population sections and are now getting into the regional sections of the plan.

Ryan Bristow reported on the two new directives from the executive director concerning minimum lengths of stay. The first is a pilot program which will allow TJJD and county partners to work together to start youth in the TJJD rehabilitative program while awaiting admissions to TJJD. The second directive will allow youth with an indeterminate sentence to receive an adjustment of their minimum lengths of stay assigned under GAP.380.8525 for the number of days spent in detention between the date of commitment to TJJD and the date of admission to TJJD.

### **TDFPS Update**

Christy Ashworth-Mazerolle, DFPS, CPS Director of Policy and Program reported that DFPS has a new youth specialist at the state office. He will also serve as a liaison to TJJD for youth who are exiting TJJD. She reported that the MOU in place with TJJD is going well. At the end of the year, they will be reviewing the MOU and will be open to changes as needed. They have a judicial conference that they will be presenting at in October. One of the topics they will be presenting on is TJJD and the process of working with youth in both systems. Finally, she discussed the requirement of her agency to inform TJJD if a youth is a victim or an aggressor. TJJD is not required to take any action at that point. TJJD will notify the county probation departments.

### **Sub Committee Report:**

Long Range Strategic Planning - Chairman Cockrell gave an update in the absence of Chief Hadnot. The committee have not met since the last AC meeting. The committee will allow the regionalization task force to continue its work and collaborate with that committee and the field to focus on the LAR.

FFSP - Amy Miller reported on FFSP workgroup. The workgroup continue working on the negotiations process between DFPS, ACF at the federal level and TJJD to try to get proposals approved. We are getting closer but it's a slow process. Currently working with NOBLE on automating assessments into NOBLE platform.

Chapter 55 Workgroup – Chairman Cockrell read Chief Hadnot' committee update in the absence of Chief Hadnot. The Chapter 55 workgroup have completed its proposed revisions. A draft of the proposed revisions have been provided to Molly Davis of the Juvenile Commission of Mental Health. Revisions will be formally presented to the JCMH during the month of September 2022. A copy of the proposed revisions have also been forwarded to Representative Wu. Rep. Wu have served on the workgroup as a perspective sponsor for the Bill. Co-chairs Susan Palacios, Amanda Britton and the workgroup have done a phenomenal job working on the revision of Chapter 55.

**New Business**

Lou Serrano reported on concerns with the Independent Audit process. In 2017, TJJJ implemented the process of having Counties that received less than \$750,000 in state aid and federal reimbursement and that scored high on their previous independent audits, can waive the audit every other year. The problem with the process is that when departments do have their audit, they are audited for both the current year and the year that was waived. Discussion was based on whether the single audit can be allowed in place of the independent audit. The independent audit is a requirement from the State Auditing Office (SAO) and a Sunset Review which recommended the additional accountability measures be included in the contract. Mr. Serrano will visit with TJJJ legal about the requirements and report back to the AC.

**Public Comment**

The AC recognized the Sunset Review Staff member, Rachel Gandy is present at the meeting.

**Advisory Council Member Updates and Announcements**

Chairman Cockrell announced that Judge Larry Thorne, 317<sup>th</sup> District Court, Jefferson County was not running for re-election. He was not present for the meeting but the group acknowledged his efforts on the Advisory Council. Judge Thorne was an original AC member when the council was created in 2012.

Chairman Cockrell reported that he is stepping down as the Chairman of the Advisory Council. He will remain on the council. Vice Chairman, Lynn Hadnot was named the new Chair. The Vice Chair will be named at the next AC meeting.

**Next Meeting:**

The council will meet in person on Friday, Dec 16, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

**Meeting Adjourn** – at 12:04: pm.