



Advisory Council on Juvenile Services

Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 19, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

2515 S. Congress Ave, Austin, TX 78704

Travis County Juvenile Probation Dept., Gardner Betts

Advisory Council Members present:

Chairman Lynn Hadnot, Ed Cockrell, Vice Chair Melanie Ramsey, Lou Serrano, Shandra Carter Homer Flores, Karina Browning, Lindsey Van Buskirk, Judge Mark Allen, Shanna Floyd

Advisory Council Members not present:

Judge Natalia Oakes, Judge Teana Watson

TJJD Staff in attendance:

Ashley Kintzer, LaTonya Ferrell, Ryan Bristow, Marcus Boyd, Lynn Jackson, Javier Aguilar, Richard Mann, Anthony Kibble, Todd Novak, Alawan Thomas Chief Scott Matthew, Jana Jones, Kaci Singer, Daryl Liedecker, Daniel Guajardo, Chelsey Oden, Eleazer Garcia, Carmella Sanchez, Emily Anderson, Neil Eddins, David Hensley, James Wilson, Cameron Taylor, Scott Friedman, Casey J Koenig, Aparna Karki, Preston Streufert and Ronnie Gamez

Other attendees:

Call to Order/Introductions:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Meeting minutes for January 19, 2024 discussed. Chief Hadnot proposed a correction regarding the next meeting date for April 19, 2024 on page 4. Chief Ed Cockrell made a motion to approve the minutes with proposed changes. Chief Karina Browning, seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Texas Juvenile Justice Department Updates:

Shandra Carter, Executive Director of Texas Juvenile Justice Department reported early focus work on the Legislative Appropriations Request continues. Collaborative discussions continue with TACOOMI, HHSC, and DFPS. Resources for services for higher acuity youth is a focus point including services, pre-secure detention and post-secure detention. Youth are being

committed faster than youth are completing treatment at state facilities. State agency focusing on the backdoor to help alleviate pressure on the system being caused by the waitlist and youth staying in state institutions longer. Director Carter advised of the importance of local collaboration and shared decision making regarding risk, as opposed to making independent state agency determinations. Determinate sentence youth release decision are already established. Recruitment has improved but remains at the pre-pandemic poor rates. New-build update includes recent meeting with TDCJ who have had good experiences staffing facilities in the locations identified by the feasibility study. Potential to share land discussed but not a feasible option with TDCJ. State agency is working with a broker on site selection research and will pull in counties as more information becomes available. State agency also working with TFC and a project management firm; the firm has lots of experience in the JJ/CJ facility construction world. Strategic project plan is expected to be received within 60 days of launching the project.

Lou Serrano, Deputy Executive Director, advised of risk-assessment processes for committed youth being considered for high-intensity parole supervision release. Efforts and discussions continue in hopes of reducing the waitlist while not compromising community safety. Screening of these youths and communication at the local level is happening and will remain critically important for decision making. Work on strengthening supervision and leadership amongst staff continues within the division. Deborah Harris-Wiggins retirement necessitated change, and Ryan Bristow will now be leading the Regionalization Taskforce team. Other initiatives include the research department taking a deep dive into parole supervision and services. Dr. Rosemary Ricciardelli will be presenting in person Monday on The Impact of Mental Health on Leaders in a Correctional Setting. Presenting will be at 10:30 AM at the Barbara Jordan Building. Customer service survey which is required by the LBB was executed and yielded good participation from the field with functionality concerns with the agency website and the Fluxx system being common concerns expressed.

Ashley Kintzer, Director of Probation Services provided an update on regionalization work. The state agency will be looking to fill a position for Regionalization Planner. The position will provide support for regionalization planning and managing the waitlist. Taskforce work is ongoing and the group meets monthly. Regionalization taskforce work is seeking to have the regionalization plan ready for submission to the TJJD Board of Directors in November 2024. There have been 244 diversion applications submitted this year with 142 youth being placed. These numbers do not include DSA-Residential Expansion Grant programs which are currently operational in Travis, Randall, Harris, Garza, and Nueces counties. El Paso County will have their DSA program operational soon. Program delayed due to facility damage. The state agency is working with HHSC on daily-rate. State agency hopes to have this work done and back to the field and council soon.

Todd Novak, Director of Parole and Re-Entry Services reported parole services remapping strategy continues to go well with communication and services collaboration continuing to be the focus. There are currently 165 youth currently on parole supervision in the community, including youth on Interstate Compact (ICJ). Parole services works with all youth in the state system to

build re-entry services planning. The total number of youth in institutions, halfway houses, etc. is 789. Currently, there are 19 youth on abscond status, 3 kids in local detention facilities, and 24 youth in adult facilities. In order to alleviate pressure on the waitlist, the parole division has implemented a new supervision level called super-intensive supervision. Details of how the supervision structure works provided to council members. Components include risk-based assessment, increased physical contacts, electronic monitoring, and reduced threshold for technical violations.

Sunset Review Update & Council Objectives:

The mapping grant is on hold for now. State agency is working with the federal government to ensure procurement requirements are executed appropriately. As more information becomes available, updates will be provided to the field. This mapping is a statutory requirement and the collaborative with the Meadows Foundation continues. Rule-making work as prescribed in the sunset bill has made excellent progress. The group has been working on a rule package stemming from a recommendation added to the bill by a Sunset member governing diversion application requirements. Another rule for development will be coming to the council after the May board meeting. Senators Paxton and Johnson worked together on a recommendation that requires us to adopt rules directing counties to submit info to TJJD on resource, program, and service gaps; the info should come in at "useful and reasonable intervals". Applications to join the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee will come out in May. Help recruiting members would be appreciated. Membership/Nominations should include:

- Two (2) county juvenile probation chiefs
- Two (2) individuals with professional experience in areas related to our existing vocational training programs, such as agriculture, construction, technology, manufacturing, and business
- A certified educator
- A representative from a post-secondary CTE provider
- A member of a youth advocacy group

The committee already has members identified from DFPS, TWC, TEA, and TDLR.

LAR Review:

Emily Anderson, Deputy Executive Director of Support Operations and Finance reported the agency Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) is ahead of schedule with collaborative discussions being held with President's Council, Urban Chiefs, and other stakeholders. The LAR will be broken down into six (6) categories:

- Staff Wellness/Recruitment/Retention Initiatives
- Facility Safety
- System Movement
- Family Resources and Reentry
- Medical and Education
- IT/Preventative Maintenance (Support Operations)

Other requests being considered include requesting an additional 25% for pre-adjudication and post-adjudication to cover the increased costs of services for both. Other requests include but are not limited to an additional 25% for diversion to cover those increased costs.

TDFPS Update:

Lindsey Van Buskirk, DFPS, CPS Director of Field reported the agency is down to approximately 15 youth without placement. The agency is currently averaging between 15-18 youth with nearly all of the youth coming from a correctional, residential, or other controlled setting. Director Buskirk noted creating connections between stakeholders continues to be a focus since our systems do not share information. Fentanyl use concerns have become an increasing issue within the system with use of fentanyl by youth while in care and youth coming into care with established use history both increasing.

Sub Committee Report:

- **Regionalization Task Force:**
Diversion rule work presented and reviewed by council. Rule approved to move forward to the TJJD Board of Directors by the council.
- **OIG Abuse, Neglect, & Exploitation Subcommittee:**
Workgroup has had multiple meetings with OIG’s office provided an overview of the investigations process at the initial meeting. Second meeting looked at definitions. Next meeting scheduled to review the actual appeals processes and timelines. Workgroup looking to have work done and ready for TJJD Board consideration in August.
- **Standards Subcommittee:**
Standards subcommittee has not met.

New Business:

Open positions on the advisory council discussed. Lou provided an update regarding council appointments to be considered by the TJJD board in May. Nominations include Judge Mark Allen, Jason Davis from Kerr County, Ed Cockrell, Karina Browning; Two (2) Judges have now been nominated: Judge Lori Rickert, County Court 4 and Judge Fernando Macias – 93rd Judicial District.

Juvenile Case Management/ Information Sharing discussed.

Old Business:

Raise-the-Age Workgroup discussed. It was determined the workgroup would be suspended in light of climate of the legislative interest at this time.

Public Comment:

None

Next Meeting:

The council will meet in person on Friday, July 12, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourn – at 12:00 p.m.