



Advisory Council on Juvenile Services

Meeting Minutes

Friday, July 12, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

Barbara Jordan State Office 1601 Congress Ave.

Austin, TX 78711

2nd Floor Meeting Room 2.027

Advisory Council Members present:

Chairman Lynn Hadnot, Ed Cockrell, Vice Chair Melanie Ramsey, Lou Serrano, Shandra Carter Homer Flores, Judge Natalia Oakes, Judge Teana Watson, Lindsey Van Buskirk, Shanna Floyd, Judge Foy O'Brien, Jason Davis.

Advisory Council Members not present:

Chief Karina Browning (Excused), Judge Mark Allen

TJJD Staff in attendance:

Ashley Kintzer, LaTonya Ferrell, Ryan Bristow, Marqus Boyd, Lynn Jackson, Stefan Richards, Javier Aguilar, Richard Mann, Anthony Kibble, Patrick Williams, Todd Novak, Alawan Thomas Chief Scott Matthew, Jana Jones, Kaci Singer, Daryl Liedecke, Daniel Guajardo, Chelsey Oden, Eleazer Garcia, Carmella Sanchez, Danny Butts, Emily Anderson, Neil Eddins, David Hensley, James Wilson, Cameron Taylor, Scott Friedman, Casey J Koenig, Aparna Karki, Preston Streufert.

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: April 19, 2024 Meeting

Chief Ed Cockrell made a motion to approve the minutes. Chief Homer Flores, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Texas Juvenile Justice Department Announcements/Updates:

Shandra Carter, Executive Director provided the council with an update regarding the feasibility study findings and progress regarding new facility builds. TDCJ has some acreage in the Houston Texas area being considered. The second location being reviewed is in the San Antonio area. The state agency will look to have feasibility study discussions/updates with the TJJD Board in August. Important work continues with HHSC and DFPS. Previous agency focus sought one of the new builds to be specifically for mental health services. Direction on mental health build may shift due to direction and guidance from legislative stakeholders.

Conversations and education regarding waitlist is ongoing with legislative stakeholders, including strategies for addressing determinate sentence offender (DSO) population within TJJJD facilities currently. A recent roundtable was held with Advisory Council, Presidents Council, and other stakeholders in Austin to brainstorm and discuss strategies to address the current waitlist and seek consensus building. Consensus from those discussions included focusing on older youth (17-18 years of age) with non-violent offenses in hopes of providing waitlist relief while also not compromising community safety. Super-Intensive Parole (Home Detention) and the utilization of halfway houses where appropriate will continue to be a strategy the state agency will leverage to absorb the waitlist. Collaboration with local probation departments will continue to be a point of emphasis also. The goal is to get the wait-time reduced to approximately 45 days.

Lou Serrano, Deputy Executive Director provided an update on probation services. Data for referrals, dispositions, violent felonies, are all trending up. These numbers will drive the next legislative session. Building communication between probation and DFPS continues to be an important initiative. The number of children without placement (CWOP) youth are drastically down, reaching a recent low of only 12 youth. Data shows the number of committed youth who have some conservatorship with DFPS is approximately 16%. The state continues to seek ways to provide relief to the field with the waitlist with additional consideration being provided to local probation departments who are experiencing significant pain points, e.g. holding a large number of committed youth on the waitlist. There are 132 youth on the waitlist currently and 119 projected for the end of the week. Focus continues toward reducing the actual waiting time for committed youth. The average has improved from approximately 100 days to roughly 80 days. The waitlist contributes to the field reliance on contract detention. The cost of contract detention services continues to increase with rates as high as \$350.00 per day. Supplemental reimbursement funding for smaller departments has been exhausted. Before being exhausted, the reimbursement rate provided \$120.00 per day which does not cover actual costs, but does provide some relief. Parole services is focusing on caseload numbers across each of the seven (7) regions. Parole services division is now conducting post-commitment interviews with youth and families on the waitlist to initiate relationship building and service planning. Recent events have increased officer safety concerns within the division including staff attempting to check in with kids and families for supervision in areas during incidents of active gunfire. Division exploring safety measures including additional protective equipment (body armor) and parole officers carrying weapons while out in the field to promote safety.

Ashley Kintzer, Director of Probation Services introduced new division staff member Ashley Terrazas. Ashley Terrazas will serve as TJJJD Planner and will be managing the waitlist moving forward. 75% of the Regionalization Plan is complete. Next steps include sending out the preliminary draft to members of the taskforce in anticipation and preparation of the next Taskforce meeting which is scheduled for July 17, 2024. Both Ryan Bristow and Ashley Kintzer will be leading the effort to present a summary of this work to the TJJJD Board in August. Regionalization numbers are up from last year. There have been 189 youth placed through RDA. All grant funded RDA programs are operational (Travis, Randall, Harris, Garza, Nueces, and El Paso Counties). There have been 33 kids served in these respective programs. Detention Expansion Programs are growing with two (2) additional awards in process. These include awards for Cameron County, and a new award for Denton County. The Denton County award will begin next fiscal year. Current Detention Expansion Programs include Grayson, Collin, Tom Green, Angelina, and Cameron counties. The OJJDP grant was awarded the state received approximately \$800,000.00. Committee members will be sought for this important work (identifying service gaps). Each region will be represented. State agency staff worked closely with HHSC on a daily-rate workgroup, leveraging prior work of HHSC and rates adopted by the

legislature. It is important to ensure conformity between HHSC and justice involved youth regarding rates. Members representing the state agency included Ashley Kintzer, Ryan Bristow, Scott Friedman, Casey Koenig. Daily-rate calculation includes detailed operational data points for both pre-adjudication or post-adjudication operational dynamics. An educational webinar is in development. Rollout plan includes beginning with large, urban probation departments due to their familiarity with this type of cost-analysis for initial discussion, followed by providing to entire field.

Sunset Review Update & Council Objectives:

Rachel Gandy, Chief of Staff reported compliance monitoring for Sunset has already begun with the state auditor's office reviewing management action items. The full sunset review will cover management action items (those not requiring statutory changes/agency already has authority), changes involving rule-making, and changing surrounding funding. The Advisory Council has already addressed all management requirements. Other tenants of compliance review are expected to ramp up in the fall. Sunset directive for rule governing state agency collection of information on service gaps will be primarily collected from the annual resource survey process already established. Most rule-making work required of the council already executed will become effective in September. Internal work continues on the development of risk-based monitoring instrument. The tool will soon be presented to the advisory council subcommittee for review. The Office of Independent Ombudsman (OIO) is working on rule development required by Sunset. Current work involves establishing rule governing how to track justice system involved youth who are being housed in private facilities. Once rule comes into greater focus, it will be shared with the advisory council and field for feedback.

Subcommittee Updates:

- **Facility Safety and Best Practices Subcommittee**
Initial subcommittee meeting held on June 26, 2024. Discussion regarding the established objectives for the group will include review of current best-practices, use of seclusion, and impacts and strategies for effectively managing the changing behavioral needs of youth in local facilities. Future meeting date is pending but will include collaboration and leveraging state agency staff in the monitoring and inspections division. The state agency will leverage this subcommittee in the development and review of the risk-based monitoring instrument work.
- **OIG Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation Subcommittee**
The subcommittee has met on two (2) occasions with the most recent meeting taking place in April of 2024. Associated definitions have been sent out the subcommittee for review. Kaci Singer has worked on development of drafts for Chapters 345, 349, and 358 and they have been disseminated for review. TJJD continues to have internal discussion with the OIG and the next meeting of the subcommittee is scheduled for July 19, 2024.

TDFPS Update:

Lindsey Van Buskirk, DFPS, CPS Director of Field reported youth in care has averaged approximately 16,500 – 17,000. Children without placement (CWOP) numbers have been reduced dramatically with only 15 youth currently in CWOP status. Continued struggles exist finding placements adequate to meet youth needs, coupled with a lack of willingness for youth to cooperate with placement options. Collaborative efforts continue with the TJJD in addressing the needs of cross-over youth. Youth who have only pending charges but no adjudications continue to be a challenge. The goal is to address the needs of these youth and prevent them from accruing additional charges. Improving collaboration with HHSC also continues with an

emphasis on services for kids in need of mental health and trauma services. The transition to community-based care agencies continues with established transitions in place in the Panhandle region, all of east Texas, all of the Dallas, Fort Worth area. The next areas in the transition will be Bexar and Harris counties.

New Business:

The Office of Independent Ombudsman (OIO) will now be conducting interviews of youth who have been adjudicated and committed to TJJD, and are being housed in pre-adjudication facilities while on the waitlist. This is a substantive change for pre-adjudication facilities with no prior work history with OIO.

New language is in development and will soon be presented to the council to address recent variance requests from the field. Current variance language speaks to an “inability to meet” criteria as it relates to standards as opposed to practicality. In order to address needed changes, standards review will be proposed as the appropriate solution. Variance request in question involve a standard adopted in 2003 and may not reflect the changing demographic of today’s youth.

Old Business:

None

Public Comment:

None

Next Meeting:

The council will meet virtually on Friday, October 18, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourn – at 11:31 a.m.