



Advisory Council on Juvenile Services

Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 18, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

Virtual Teams Meeting

Advisory Council Members present:

Chairman Lynn Hadnot, Vice Chair Melanie Ramsey, Ed Cockrell, Shandra Carter, Homer Flores, Judge, Teana Watson, Lindsey Van Buskirk, Judge Mark Allen, Shanna Floyd, Judge Foy O'Brien, Karina Browning, Jason Davis.

Advisory Council Members not present:

Lou Serrano

TJJD Staff in attendance:

Ashley Kintzer, LaTonya Ferrell, Ryan Bristow, Marqus Boyd, Lynn Jackson, Javier Aguilar, Richard Mann, Anthony Kibble, Patrick Williams, Todd Novak, Alawan Thomas, Jana Jones, Kaci Singer, Daryl Liedecke, Daniel Guajardo, Chelsey Oden, Carmella Sanchez, Danny Butts, Emily Anderson, Neil Eddins, David Hensley, Cameron Taylor, Casey J Koenig, Preston Streufert, Jerry Adams, James Bateman, Susan Scott, Pamela Robertson, Ashley Terrazas, Marqus Butler, David Ellis, Rachel Gandy, Darrin Thomas, Amanda Britton, Kristin Hammock, Ashton Cabler, Scott Friedman, Kevin DuBose,

Other attendees:

Kyle Dobbs, Martin Martinez, Jerome Green (DFPS), Kaila Williams, Amanda Britton (HHSC), Kira Small,

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: July 12, 2024 Meeting

Meeting minutes for July 12, 2024 discussed. Chief Ed Cockrell proposed a correction to remove Judge Natalia Oakes on page 1. Vice Chair, Melanie Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes with the proposed change. Judge Teana Watson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Texas Juvenile Justice Department Announcements/Updates:

Shandra Carter, Executive Director of Texas Juvenile Justice Department provided an update on agency operations. Efforts continue to improve staffing and maintain thresholds for facility

safety by not exceeding 150% capacity. All available resources continue to be leveraged. The TJJJ Board has approved the Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) which includes several exceptional items. Exceptional items include a 15% placeholder for increased wages. The state agency has hired an economist to evaluate the complexities of the work and locations of the facilities in order to obtain a detailed analysis for salary recommendations and needs to absorb the waitlist. Council made aware of movement within state facility leadership and provided with an update on ongoing response work and initiatives surrounding the Department of Justice (DOJ) report which is ongoing. Director Carter stated local departments continue to visit state facilities which has been helpful.

Ashley Kintzer, Director of Probation Services advised the OJJDP grant project is operational with the Meadows Foundation and the initial launch meeting was executed with the Panhandle Region. The next meeting will be conducted with the Northeast. Director Kintzer discussed newly adopted rule TAC 341.304 which became effective October 15, 2024 and the form provided to assist the field with compliance and monitoring review.

Todd Novak, Director of Parole and Re-Entry Services reported the parole system continues to be stable since remapping. Relationship building efforts and outcomes continue to improve between state and local probation departments, along with re-entry planning. Transition planning and services for female offenders continues to be more strained with the closure of the halfway house for girls. Other initiatives include continued efforts for improved safety for officer in the field with the purchase of additional safety equipment and field survival training for staff. Family enrichment has implemented a program (Rise, Resilience, Integration, Support, & Empowerment). A RFP has also been executed for additional online services included drivers education for kids. Collaboration with HHSC continues with efforts targeting community-based housing, peer support, MST services. Supervision contract services continue to be utilized to help contact parole youth who are great distances from parole officers.

Sunset Review Update & Council Objectives:

Rachel Gandy, Chief of Staff provided the council with a review of sunset review action items. The state agency is currently in compliance phase as it relates to management directives and the compliance report is available online. Many of the directives were discussed and vetted with the council. The plan for new facility builds continues with legislative direction to reopen consideration in the greater-Houston area. Direction is to add an additional 200 beds in locations that can be adequately staffed. State and local property partnerships are also been explored as priority. The goal date for new build openings continues to be 2028. Second priority is to incorporate incentives in the funding formula to expand diversion. This effort is driven by statutory language given the agency authority as opposed to directive language.

TDFPS Update:

Lindsey Van Buskirk- DFPS, CPS Director of Field provided the council an update on agency operations. Director Buskirk provided several clarifications regarding how the agency operates, definitions, and important distinctions between Child Protective Investigations (CPI) and Child

Protective Services (CPS), and the functions for each. Expanding regional contracting for youth in conservatorship is ongoing across the 11 regions. The field was provided with liaison list in order to improve communication and collaboration regardless of where a youth be within the system. Jerome Green, Director of Policy and Practice for CPI provided guidance of division processes and systemic pain points between the field and DFPS. The importance of establishing communication and improving education regarding the requirements for both systems will be key moving forward. DFPS has begun some data cross matching work in partnership with TJJD. Early findings reveal a gap in the data wherein only youth who are actual conservatorship were captured in initial data set. Initial report shows the following for juvenile age youth who are in conservatorship:

- 873 Youth had at least one (1) juvenile referral for delinquent conduct
- 89 Youth were currently on probation
- 30 Youth were on deferred probation
- 30 Youth on Conditions of Release
- 10-12 Youth in the Custody of TJJD

Council advised CPI investigations are typically open for 45 days. While disagreements on decision making may occur, communication and efforts for greater education will be important initiatives for better outcomes. Director Carter added executive level collaboration between TJJD and DFPS continues with the legislature.

Regionalization Plan update and Discussion:

Ryan Bristow, Director of Regionalization present the work of the regionalization task force to the council. The regionalization plan was reviewed and discussed in depth. Chief Ed Cockrell made a motion to approve Regionalization plan. Judge Mark Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously to move the plan to the TJJD Board of Directors for consideration.

Subcommittee Updates:

Facility Safety and Best Practices Subcommittee

Chief Melanie Ramsey reported the work of the facility safety and best practices is ongoing. The subcommittee is working to establish its next meeting.

OIG Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation Subcommittee

Kaci Singer provided the council with a review of proposed changes surrounding TAC Chapters 341, 345, 349, 350, and 358. All revisions were previously provided to field for feedback and recommended changes. Motion made to adopt the proposed revisions as presented made by Chairman Hadnot. Motion was seconded by Judge Teana Watson. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

New Business:

Ashley Kintzer, Director of Probation Services discussed the need to reconvene the Planning Funding Subcommittee in order to begin discussions and planning for incentive based funding for diversion expansion. Chief Ed Cockrell stated he would review his records in order to assist with the identifying subcommittee group members.

Other new business included the discussion of a proposed change to the established process governing officer discipline recommendations to the TJJD Board and resolution of support submitted to the Texas Juvenile Detention Association (TJDA). Council decided for all regions to have additional time for discussion before taking formal action. TJJD staff offered to be a part of educating each region regarding the current process and position.

Old Business:

None

Public Comment:

Chief Kyle Dobbs of Fort Bend County provided the council with an overview of the proposed changes to the existing officer discipline process.

Advisory Council Member Updates and Announcements:

None

Next Meeting:

The council will meet virtually on Friday, January 10, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Adjourn – at 11:48 a.m.