

Connecticut Juvenile Training School
Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes, 6/16/15

Present: Karl Alston, Deputy Director, CSSD; Debra Bond, JCTS Clinical Director; Joseph Bruckmann, Public Defenders Office; William H. Carbone, Senior Lecturer and Director of Experiential Education, University of New Haven; Francis Carino, Supervising Assistant State's Attorney; Liz D'Amico, Ph.D., LCSW Behavioral Health Clinical Director; Antonio DePina, DCF Parole Services; Felice Duffy, Assistant United States Attorney, United States Attorney's Office District of Connecticut; Steven Kant, M.D. President and Chief Executive Officer, Boys and Girls Village; Joette Katz, DCF Commissioner; Kristy Ramsey, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Eugene Riccio, Galush & Riccio; William Rosenbeck, CJTS Superintendent; Ann Smith, JD, MBA, Executive Director, AFCAMP

Guests: Robert Francis, RYASAP; Renee LaMark Muir, Tow Youth Justice Institute, University of New Haven; Ken Mysogland, DCF Ombudsman

Attorney Carino acknowledged that with members present, a quorum was established. Meeting began with introductions.

Review of Minutes

The March 24, 2015 meeting minutes were approved and accepted as written.

General Updates

- CJTS grew a pumpkin this past winter which is making the World Record for weight per cubic foot. We will be receiving a plaque for this accomplishment from the Guinness Book of World Records. The seeds from this pumpkin were cultivated and can yield up to \$100 per seed.
- The current census is 83 with 53 new admissions. Last May we were at 138 so we had a drastic reduction. The lower number of admissions is a reflection of our Length of Stay Protocol which helps move kids out a little quicker. Parole admissions and new commitments are down and the congregate care admissions remain flat. More kids are receiving services in the community than ever before. Mr. Carbone commented that there is good stuff going on at CJTS and asked if the reduction in numbers makes a difference in the climate and in the programming. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that with fewer kids we have more time with them where we can be more creative and provide more programming. Although some of the kids are very complex and most that are here need to be here. Even our football team is struggling as we only have 15 players compared to 30 last year.

Pueblo has 4 girls and 3 slotted to be brought in when found. Atty. Carino asked whether judges are clear that they can't order the girls in and the answer is yes.

Mr. Carbone commented that this is remarkable information in light of the raise the age. Commissioner Katz stated that effective October 1, 2015 the automatic transfer age will increase to 15 from 14. Also, New York is still considering whether they should raise the age. North Carolina and Michigan are asking questions how it is going in CT. It was much smoother than we thought. With the new school it makes for a much better adult learning environment.

- On May 5th CJTS hosted a Youth Law Enforcement Day. This was an all-day event which began with the kids and police on opposite sides of the room; however, by the end of the day there was much more of a connection. These relationships can work in the community as it is not a one day event. We plan on having the police officers return in smaller groups whether to watch a football game or some other activity to keep the relationships going. Given the recent events in the country, this was an important day.
- Another positive piece is the new pass protocol. Last year we had over 200 successful passes home.
- This is our third year in a row we brought a number of residents to CCSU where they had an opportunity to tour the campus and sit in on classes.
- So far this year we had eight high school graduations.
- We hosted a career fair which was very positive. Atty. Carino asked if anything stood out to be of importance to the boys. Plumbing positions were more popular and most wanted information on how to go about getting jobs.
- Mr. Rosenbeck shared an article regarding a resident who was on a 4 year Serious Juvenile Offence (SJO), left about a year ago and was awarded an academic district award by the Superintendent of New Haven Schools. This award was presented to him for showing resilience, perseverance, community involvement and the ability to rise above adversity to accomplish goals.

CJTS 5 Month Data Summary

When we were doing the legislative summary, one of the suggestions was to look at trend data as opposed one time data. Dr. D'Amico selected some of the charts and took 5 months in 2014 and compared then to 2015. New Commitments from cities such as Bridgeport and Hartford are down and we have really been able to flatten the length of stay by race and ethnicity. Dr. D'Amico stated that there are many things we can concentrate our attention on, and is open to suggestions from members. Mr. Carbone

asked if the risks and needs are higher for African American kids and if the same criteria is applied. The answer is yes. There is a process in place for length of stay overrides where they are discussed and reviewed by management. What we are finding with African American population is it is more difficult to find placements. For the kids that do go home there is no delay. As of July we will conduct pre-release interviews and talk with the residents about their stay at CJTS and their plans in the community to see if they have a connection. Mr. Alston stated that a few kids in detention stated they would rather come to CJTS than residential because their stay will be shorter. Some kids stated they feel safer at CJTS than in congregate care. Ms. Ramsey stated that the girls at the Pueblo Program have purposely sabotaged their placements as they feel safer at Pueblo and want to stay until they turn of age. We use Multisystemic Therapy, Family Integrated Transitions (MST-FIT) and Re-entry and Family Treatment (RAFT) with the kids and make community connections. Mr. Carbone asked whether the offenses are different and are their complexities different. Ms. Smith asked about the range of treatment options in the communities that are not using incarceration. It was suggested that Dr. D'Amico track admissions and charges where they come from and divide it by the courts. In August Dr. D'Amico is traveling to Virginia to present the Length of Stay Protocol at a conference.

Youth Survey Results

We are conducting exit surveys twice a year. We asked the Boys Club to help as we want these to be anonymous and did not want the staff doing them with the residents. Dr. D'Amico's concern is that some residents struggle with reading comprehension and the language is beyond what the kids can manage, therefore, we need to work on making these surveys easier for them to comprehend.

Food continues to be an issue as kids don't like the healthy food choices. Mr. Ford, our new Director of Food Services revised the menus and participates in student council meetings where the kids are engaged in discussions around good nutrition. Dr. Kant agreed that portion control is extremely hard to do. Mr. Carbone asked whether the kids have input into the menu and yes they have a lot of input. There are choices at mealtime, offering a standard menu approved by a dietician, a healthy choice and an alternative which is usually PB&J and they get a snack at bed time. We keep track of what the kids are eating and we vary our menu around different cultural events. On the other hand our staff are appreciating the healthy choices and are good role models for the kids. Dr. D'Amico stated that we could do a survey just on the topic of food. We include the rehab department for kids with higher BMI's and they have individual care plans.

Ombudsman Report

Ken Mysogland, Ombudsman, works out of Central Office and handles approximately 3,200 complaints from clients and providers and handles all grievances at CJTS and Pueblo. He visits the facility unannounced during all shifts including weekends. He picks up the grievances and randomly talks with the youth. He takes part in unit activities and

uses his role to assimilate to the units as best as he can and is open and available to staff and youth. He talks with the youth to ensure he understands what was written and sends the information to administration. If a youth implicates other kids, he interviews them as well. He reviews CONDOIT to see what is happening with youth who write the grievances. If he determines there is abuse or neglect, he reports it to CareLine and Human Resources. Once there is resolution, he then talks with the youth about his findings in order to close the loop. Starting tomorrow all grievances will be copied to the Office of the Child Advocate and the Public Defender. Atty. Smith asked if the residents know that this will be shared with their attorney's as some may not want that. Mr. Mysogland assured that he will tie this new process into the orientation and discussions with the kids.

Mr. Carbone asked how the youth know they can file a grievance. Mr. Mysogland stated that he meets with youth at intake as part of their orientation. Each unit has grievance forms and a locked box to which Mr. Mysogland has keys. Out of 173 grievances 16 % were found to have merit or partial merit. 85 unique residents filed grievances and 6 were responsible for 32% of the total grievances. 59 unique staff were the subject of grievances being filed on. New staff coming onto the unit get targeted quickly. What we found in both facilities is there are pockets of youth who file most grievances, however, addressing what is underneath the grievance is important. Four units are the most concerning units by data where majority of grievances are filed and issues remain. There are also pockets of staff that are concerning. Pueblo grievances are different as the youth greatly benefit from Ms. Ramsey's availability and responsiveness. Atty. Smith recalled having discussions around the role of the Ombudsman and acknowledged the admirable gains in that process.

JJPOC – Conditions of Confinement

Renee LaMark Muir presented on the study she is working on around conditions of confinement at DCF, CSSD and DOC. Journey House did not meet the definition for this report and therefore will not be included. Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) has a broad mandate and one is to assess state congregate care. For this study, it was decided to break that assessment into state run vs. congregate care that are state funded. Of particular interest in conditions of confinement is use of discipline, graduated sanctions, code of conduct and quality assurance. Interviews with staff from all disciplines will be conducted and video tapes will be viewed to collect data. All were asked to save videos recordings starting on 1/1/2015. Releases are being worked out as we are not the statutory parent for all kids in care. Policies and procedures will be reviewed and compared and the cost benefit analysis will be conducted based on each agency's budget. Another question is the effectiveness of the programs, are they available in each facility and are they in house or contracted. Commissioner Katz clarified that in the scope of this study CJTS is considered a correctional facility and that is not what CJTS is. This is not a prison and kids are not put in cells. Mr. Carbone stated that they will take this under consideration. The JJPOC was established in the 2014 legislative session and is chaired by Secretary of OPM, Ben

Barnes and State Representative Toni Walker. The University of New Haven was contracted to staff this research. Ms. LaMark Muir assured that she will approach the study in a very organized and thoughtful way and will complete it by the beginning of next year for the next legislative session.

Public Comment

No public comments.

Next Meeting Dates

October 6, 2015

Meeting adjourned at 7:20

Minutes respectfully submitted by Irene Yanaros