

DJS State Advisory Board Fatality Review Subcommittee (FRS): Findings / Proposed Recommendations
January 2022

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) Fatality Review Team (FRT) presented the case(s) of youth who suffered a fatality while under DJS supervision. The Fatality Review Subcommittee (FRS) of the DJS State Advisory Board (SAB) developed the following findings and proposed recommendations for the SAB to review and finalize. Below are the key findings and recommendations proposed to the DJS SAB:

Findings:

- Cases involving competency can be difficult to address for youth with repeat system involvement while attainment services are being provided;
- Improved inter-agency coordination between local school systems/schools/MSDE, DJS, DHS, MDH, etc. would support the early identification of youth who may require attainment services in order to receive treatment to avoid further justice system involvement;
- Youth who are knowingly left unattended for extended periods of time are more vulnerable to being targeted by gangs. Additional information/resources to avoid gang involvement/activity are needed for these youth, their families and agency staff;
- Youth enrolled In High School did not have enough credits to reasonably be expected to graduate and the alternative education/credit recovery programs were not effective;
- Youth that move/live between multiple jurisdictions require increased communication and collaboration among multi-agency jurisdiction staff /case management;
- Restrictions to obtain a state ID create barriers to employment opportunities, rehabilitation, and community reintegration.

Recommendations:

- *Collect information to determine improvements for the coordination between education systems and juvenile justice stakeholders to identify competency issues earlier and develop pathways to treatment/attainment services, particularly for youth with several violent offenses. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Identifying existing groups and inter-agency collaboration that determine competency;
 - Reviewing current policy and practices; and
 - Identifying inconsistencies among jurisdictions.
- *Improve the case connection process for youth who move/live between multiple jurisdictions to require increased communication between case management; and
- For youth who are at increased risk for being targeted and initiated into gang activity:
 - Review current tools that identify these youth and adjust as needed,
 - Strengthen and provide additional information/resources to avoid gang involvement/activity,
 - Including the “Ready by 21” plan for youth 14 and over,
 - In working with these youths, include the federal definition of human trafficking as it relates to gang involvement.
- *Open discussion with appropriate State agencies to address and remove the current barriers to obtaining a State ID card;
 - Specifically address the issue of youths not having the needed documentation to obtain a State ID (i.e. SS Card, Birth Certificate, etc.),
 - Contact DHR regarding the “Ready by 21” plan for youth 14 and over.

**DJS is working on these items to report out to SAB on their progress in Spring 2022.*