



**State Advisory Board Meeting - Virtual**  
Tuesday, September 21, 2:00 – 4:00pm

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The meeting will also be streamed live and recorded for the public on YouTube at:  
<https://youtu.be/RDzNaOfSmRI>

**MINUTES**

**Members and Guests in Attendance:**

Rosemary King Johnston  
Lynn Davis  
Lara Weathersbee  
Denise Henderson  
David Phillips  
Kathleen Callan  
Lamar Davis  
Sherlyna Hanna  
Sam Abed  
Crystal Flemming-Bryce  
Christina Church

Senator Susan Lee  
Michael Guilbault  
Jessica Wheeler  
Cory Fink  
Heather Chapman  
Jenny Egan  
Judge Michael Stamm  
Mike Glenn  
Lynn Celestin  
Nick Moroney

**I. Welcome and Introductions** *Rosemary King Johnston*  
➤ Approval of June 15, 2021 meeting minutes

- The minutes were reviewed and approved.

**II. Department of Juvenile Services Update** *Sam Abed / Cory Fink*

- Sec. Abed discussed the COVID outbreak at BCJJC and reported that:
  - Weekly testing is being conducted for unvaccinated staff as well as monthly testing for all staff;
  - Although no one was symptomatic, tests were coming back positive;
  - After some investigation, these tests results were found to be faulty and had been contaminated;
  - Everyone who had taken tests was retested and all the tests came back negative; and

- DJS is working with the lab to ensure nothing else was contaminated and continues to redo tests.

➤ Juvenile Justice Reform Council update

- Sec. Abed reported that:
  - The Council's meetings have primarily focused on the issue of youth charged as adults. The last meeting was held to vote on recommendations made by Jenny Egan on behalf of the Public Defender's Office; and
  - Senator Will Smith issued an op ed regarding juvenile justice that would be of interest to the Board.
    - <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/09/02/sen-smith-marylands-youth-are-ready-for-reform/> .
- Jenny Egan explained her proposed recommendation:
  - The recommendation was to end automatic charging as adults regardless of the crime;
  - The recommendation provides for pathways to transfer youth to the adult system; and
  - The vote was 13 in favor, 3 against, and 3 abstentions.
- Senator Lee commented:
  - Regarding youths charged as adults, is that population typically from communities of color?
    - Jenny Egan responded - yes, approximately 80% of youth charged as adults are African American
  - Are DJS employees mandated to be vaccinated?
    - Sec. Abed responded that while it is not a mandate, there is a requirement for unvaccinated staff to be tested weekly and all staff are tested monthly;
    - It has been a difficult situation because we've found that many staff and youth are not vaccinated. However, although we continue to make efforts to get youths vaccinated, the numbers are lower than we'd like.

➤ Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board update

- Sec. Abed commented:
  - The JSEP Board has been very engaged and has formed workgroups on several issues, Cory Fink is the Executive Director of JSEP operations for DJS and can provide additional updates.
- Cory Fink reported:
  - All Board members are appointed. Grace Reusing is the Chair and Richard Stevenson, who is also the teacher representative, is the Vice Chair;
  - So far, the Board has met twice and their priority has been putting a hiring plan in place for the Superintendent;
  - The Board has also begun the development of an MOU between JSEP and DJS regarding the responsibilities of each agency;
  - A Subcommittee has been formed to develop education standards;
  - Facility visits are being scheduled for Board members;
  - DJS and MSDE are developing an MOU to expand the use of chromebooks;

- Live Streams have been scheduled with staff to keep them involved in the process;
- Four PINS have been transferred from MSDE to start filling positions; and,
- Finally, an education survey has been conducted with youth to determine what they would like to have included in the curriculum and electives.
- Sec. Abed reported:
  - DJS has been very happy with Superintendent Choudhury, who has been working closely and transparently with the Department.
- Rosemary King Johnston
  - Would like to have a schedule of dates for the meetings.

### III. Restitution Subcommittee

*Magistrate Weathersbee*

#### ➤ Subcommittee update

- Magistrate Weathersbee provided an update on the Restitution Subcommittee:
  - The Subcommittee has met bi-weekly throughout the Summer;
  - is in the process of developing policy, legislative and AOC training recommendations; and
  - is formalizing this document to share with the SAB for their review at the October meeting.

### IV. Fatality Review Subcommittee Report

*Rosemary King Johnston / Andrew Tress*

- Andrew Tress and Rosemary King Johnston provided a brief summary of the fatality case for the Board members based on the Findings and Recommendations issued by the FRS.
  - Andrew Tress mentioned that, based on the recommendations that will be shared with the Board, there are additional resources for suicide prevention available from the governor's office. They will also be shared with the SAB.
- Kathleen Callan asked:
  - Was a police report filed? Was there an investigation?
  - After the family declined additional counseling, was the youth offered other individual counseling services?
  - While I understand not going against the family's wishes, I would like to see more interventions with the youth and family.
- Jenny Egan commented:
  - This is a tragic loss and while no blame is being assigned, was the youth put into any seclusion status while in detention?
- Heather Chapman commented:
  - As we move forward, we need to think about our young people entering DJS and how they've already experienced traumatic events;
  - We also need to think about how we can offer more widely available coaching / creative therapies to assist youth in processing their feelings without realizing they are doing so. This is especially necessary while in detention.
  - Sec. Abed stated:
    - Our number one goal is to prevent detention or incarceration for youth involved in the juvenile justice system at any level at all.

- During the pandemic, there has been a detrimental effect on peer-to-peer interactions, there is a music program at the early reporting center which has received positive reviews.
  - There has been an effort to implement more mindfulness services. This has been particularly difficult due to the pandemic, but we continue to try and get them implemented.
  - We've also created support groups that promote youth and staff participation.
- Lamar Davis commented:
  - I appreciate efforts by DJS to reduce placement in detention.
  - It is good that we have seen larger investments on bringing in programs to facilities that encourage creativity.
  - It's important to maintain ongoing staff training and engage youth throughout regularly scheduled meetings.
  - Traumatized youth must be provided suicide prevention techniques, and it's unclear whether staff currently feel equipped to have those conversations.
  - Sec. Abed responded that DJS:
    - Maintains interest in the arts programs.
    - Is working with staff so they can help identify suicide warning signs and the need for mental health services.
    - Staff have been trained in mental health first aid without having to be a mental health professional. There are processes in place for staff to connect them with suicidal services.
- Lynn Davis stated:
  - This youth seemed to do well in early years of schooling but progressively got worse; the youth's low average IQ may have contributed to the stress of feeling unsuccessful in school.
  - While not sure of what services are available in school to connect staff and youth with suicide prevention services, hopes that there is something available.
  - Rosemary King Johnston:
    - Agrees with the comments made by SAB members and added that it is not helpful when youths are sent to completter schools when there is no chance to complete the necessary credits for graduation. The school system should have provided more appropriate and meaningful services.

The findings and recommendations were adopted by the Board, with one abstention from Judge Stamm.

## **V. Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit Update**

*Nick Moroney*

- Nick Moroney provided an update from the JJMU for the Board.
  - The JJMU quarterly report was recently issued.
  - The report noted discrepancies regarding the number of staff who have refused vaccinations, citing that it is dangerous for youth and staff.
  - Also, the kids that are currently incarcerated don't have the options to interact in programs that they used to. While this is helpful from a safety standpoint, it is an issue exacerbated by low staff vaccination numbers.
  - The JJMU: would like to see the Department do more to help with vaccination participation and options;

- is happy with the status of the JJRC and JSEP;
- Hopes that there may be support by the legislature to do away with automatically charging youth as adults. This would be a great step forward and makes sense based on the science;
- Hopes that the SAB will support these efforts; and
- Is pleased with the low population numbers and hopes those efforts continue.
- Sec. Abed responded that,
  - Regarding vaccinations, DJS is in conversation with leadership to identify possibilities to increase those numbers because they are much too low.
- Senator Lee thanked the Department for its vaccination efforts so far, and asked if there are any updates from the Governor's office to make vaccination mandatory?
  - Sec. Abed responded that,
    - At this point in time there isn't any specific information to share, but we are certainly cognizant that vaccination efforts and rates need to increase, and additional options are being explored.
- Rosemary King Johnston
  - Thanked Nick Moroney for his comments, his report, and encouraged the members to read the reports.

## VI. Good of the Order

### *Board Members*

- Rosemary King Johnston
  - Has been asked about resuming in-person meetings. She would like to have meetings in-person, but feels this is not an appropriate time.
  - Suggested waiting until Spring to reassess when in-person may be more feasible
  - Sec. Abed agreed that in-person meetings would be an unnecessary risk at this time.
- Jenny Egan
  - Thanked Rosemary King Johnston and the Secretary for their efforts and utilization of this Board to advise the agency, and had some procedural questions on areas to address in the future
    - RE: programming and mental health services - has the SAB ever established positive youth development programming when youth are in detention?
    - If not, she proposed convening a subcommittee to address that issue and develop procedures for meeting milestones and setting standards.
    - Is there an update on JJRC recommendation to move towards small community-based placements available in every region of the state?
    - Sec. Abed responded that:
      - the Board would be open to a subcommittee on a review of best practices;
      - DJS has developed a reorganization of services report, but it has not been finalized. They are:
        - Currently analyzing what services are available and where there are gaps;
        - Developing an RFP for a different approach for emerging adults - MST / MSEA; and
        - Seeking federal reimbursements for additional services.

- There are no plans to build new facilities but there is planning to rebuild and/ or enhance existing facilities. There is an upcoming meeting with DBM to discuss further plans.

## **VII. Adjournment**

- Andrew Tress discussed the dates for upcoming meetings and will schedule dates for 2022 and share with the Board.
- Rosemary King Johnston adjourned the meeting.

### **Upcoming Meetings / YouTube Livestream Links:**

- 2021
  - 10/19/21 <https://youtu.be/BASgaffuFdc>
  - 11/16/21 <https://youtu.be/REkP6hyzDwM>

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