



State Advisory Board Meeting - Virtual
Tuesday, October 19, 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/BASgaffuFdc>

Minutes

Members / Guests in Attendance:

Rosemary King Johnston
Secretary Sam Abed
Andrew Tress
Lara Weathersbee
Sherlyna Hanna
Christina Church
Lauren Gordon
Scott Beal
Jessica Wheeler
Lamar Davis

Dr. Michael Guilbault
Sarah Kaplan
Judge Stamm
Heather Chapman
Nick Moroney
Nic Ryan
Debora Grinnage-Pulley
Crystal Flemming-Brice
Michael Lore
Jenny Egan

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rosemary King Johnston

- Approval of September 21, 2021 meeting minutes

Minutes were reviewed and approved.

II. Department of Juvenile Services Update

Sam Abed

- Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board update

Sec. Abed - JSEP Update

- The job posting has been released and advertised for JSEP Superintendent; several applications have already been received.
- Once the job posting closes on 10/27/21, interviews will be conducted by a Subcommittee of the Board.
- The Board is also working on the mandated reports for the General Assembly.
- DJS has made a request to expand GED testing sites and State School Superintendent Choudhury is also open to the idea.
- Space is being designated for a testing site at Cheltenham where staff will be identified to train as test proctors.
- Locations are being identified one-by-one; other facilities will be involved in the near future.
- MOUs regarding the use of Chromebooks and operating agreements have been drafted and signed.
- Currently, we are still waiting for all of the contracts for JSES to be identified by MSDE regarding the delivery of education, software, leases, etc. to ensure contracts do not expire and procurement is not needed to renew.

III. Restitution Subcommittee

Magistrate Weathersbee

- Review and vote on Subcommittee recommendations.
- Lara Weathersbee
 - Thanked everyone for their efforts and explained how the Subcommittee came to their conclusions for the proposed recommendations.
 - The general conclusion is that there are disparate consequences for youth and families that are poor versus those that have the means to pay. Carrying debt with the CCU or having civil judgements lodged against an individual will cause long term consequences and secondary effects on quality housing, transportation, etc.
- Recommendations Summary
 - Increased data collection;
 - Legislative changes; and
 - Education for those involved with juvenile court.
- Rosemary King Johnston commented that the Subcommittee wanted to find ways to make the victim whole, while not putting undue and long term burdens on youth who don't have means to pay.
- Sec. Abed requested clarity on Recommendation # 2; DJS should either prohibit the collection of social security numbers or limit the use. (Noted: CP 11-607 requires DJS to obtain the SSN to facilitate collection of payment, which is subject to federal law).
 - Lara Weathersbee responded that collecting the SSN may be the only way to collect that information from the CCU, so if they don't have that information, they wouldn't be able to collect a payment.
 - The court should also order more earning reports for youth that are employed. DJS is collecting that information but it is not clear who has the authority to make further decisions.
- Michael Lore asked whether the Subcommittee is requesting a sponsor for legislation.
- Lara Weathersbee responded that this is not a request for legislation. If the Board should vote to make these recommendations, the elected members of this body have the right to introduce legislation if they so choose.
 - Lara Waethersbee moved to approve the recommendations; it was seconded and approved.
 - Judge Stamm and Magistrate Weathsbee abstained.

IV. Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit Update

Nick Moroney

- Nick Moroney - Requested updates on the following issues:
 - Vaccinations amongst facility staff; the numbers aren't good right now, are there efforts to improve those figures?
 - Sec. Abed responded:
 - DJS has conducted 64 vaccination clinics and vaccinated over 500 staff, but unfortunately, just above 50% of staff are vaccinated despite requiring weekly testing for non-vaccinated staff and monthly for vaccinated staff.
 - DJS is having discussions with MDH and DBM to explore additional options, such as developing incentives for vaccinated staff (i.e. additional hours of leave).
 - This is a personally important issue and DJS is doing everything possible to protect youth and staff.
 - Population increases – overall the numbers continue to go down, but there has been a slight increase at BCJJC, is there a reason for the increase?
 - Sec. Abed responded:
 - The increase at BCJJC is due to recent transfers from YDC to clear out a backlog of pending adult transfer cases.
 - Overall there has been a slight spike, but DJS is committed to its plans to keep kids in the community and avoid detention whenever possible.
 - Mental health resources – additional resources for kids with severe mental health issues?
 - Sec. Abed responded:

- DJS is actively seeking more resources. Hiring is very difficult right now and it's been challenging to keep and retain behavioral health staff.
- Off-site and work/volunteer options - are there plans for kids in placement to go off site as has been done in the past at Silver Oak?
 - Sec. Abed responded:
 - DJS is currently not doing anything off site that engages with the public, but is open to working with organizations to develop opportunities that can keep kids and staff safe from COVID.
 - No other updates at this point, but DJS is interested in looking into additional options.
- Also on population issue – need to move to a position that allows for youth to be held less in buildings and more in the community
 - See above
- Discussions with DBM – is DJS planning to replace facilities or add more?
 - Sec. Abed – everything is on the table but unable to provide additional details at this time.
- Nick Moroney – additional comments
 - Thanked Sec. Abed for efforts on GED expansion.
 - Stated that there has been a lot of support in the various news outlets from the AG, Senator Smith, President Ferguson, and others regarding Juvenile Justice reform. JJMU remains hopeful that this session will yield results, particularly as it relates to charging youth as adults.

V. Good of the Order

Board Members

- Questions / Comments
 - Jenny Egan (chat) – “Recommendation 12. DJS should establish a plan to transition from the current slate of committed facilities to ensure every region has access to nonresidential and residential community-based services that employ evidence-based, culturally competent programming.”
 - Sec. Abed responded that DJS is having discussions and making plans with DBM and in the capital budget to address this high priority issue.
 - Additional updates will be provided when they are available.

VI. Adjournment

- Michael Lore –commented that the deadline for pre-filed bills is approaching, that this is the year for juvenile issues to be on the table, and to please submit any requests soon.
- Rosemary King Johnston commented that Jenny Egan made a proposal at the last meeting to form another Subcommittee; this will be put on the agenda to discuss next month.

Upcoming Meetings / YouTube Livestream Links:

- 2021
 - 11/16/21 <https://youtu.be/REkP6hyzDwM>
- 2022
 - 1/18/22 : https://youtu.be/7F-bgYXx_qA
 - 4/19/22 : <https://youtu.be/cpCpIT4TGRY>
 - 5/17/22 : <https://youtu.be/k0hsRwf324o>
 - 6/21/22 : <https://youtu.be/RonuW3JSb7w>
 - 9/20/22 : https://youtu.be/_73s_5MsxuM
 - 10/18/22 : <https://youtu.be/rQOee6ZTlsw>
 - 11/15/22 : <https://youtu.be/2mjrBLkVHHc>

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