

# North Carolina's Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force

## MEETING MINUTES

### OPENING

The seventh meeting of North Carolina's Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force was called to order at 10:00am on October 17, 2016 at 3010 Hammond Business Place, Room 144, Raleigh, NC 27603 by Billy Lassiter, Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice.

### PRESENT

Task Force and Subcommittee Members: Nakisa Arsefnia, Kenya Beyah-Murphy, Sadric Bonner, Carol Burroughs, Venecia Carr, Duane Cogdell, Emily Coltrane, Debbie Dawes, Natasha Donnelly, Tamara Flinchum, Karla Farabow, Dale Floyd, Vernita Griffith, Dave Hardesty, Buddy Howell, Megan Howell, Pat Hurley, Joy Innis, Rachel Johnson, Billy Lassiter, Brian Matlock, Voris McBurnette, Cynthia Mitchell, Nancy Monroe, Candice Moore, Michael Moore, Mary Murray, Ken Perry, Amy Peters, Keith Philipson, Cindy Porterfield, LaToya Powell, Michael Rieder, Robin Rugh, Joe Simmons, Jim Speight, Jean Steinberg, Brandee Stevenson, Brian Stewart, Angela Taylor, Teneisha Towe, Rick Towner, Cynthia Trickel, Ricky Watson, Jessica Williams, and McKinley Wooten

Guest: Gwendolyn Dilworth, MS, Juvenile Justice Program Specialist, OJJDP

### OPEN ISSUES

After reviewing the agenda, Deputy Commissioner Billy Lassiter opened the meeting with project announcements. Mr. Lassiter reported that North Carolina has been awarded \$1 million in continuation funding by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) under the FY 2016 Second Chance Act Comprehensive Statewide Juvenile Reentry System Reform Implementation Program. He noted that the funds would support development and implementation of a transitional coordinator program to help link youths leaving facilities to school, vocational education, and other needed services. The Division will partner with Communities in Schools on this project.

Mr. Lassiter introduced Gwen Dilworth, OJJDP Juvenile Justice Program Specialist working with the Second Chance Act grant programs, who congratulated the Division on its system reform effort, which she noted may be a model for the country. Ms. Dilworth announced that she is currently developing another solicitation, which will be released next year, to continue to support Second Chance Act (SCA)-funded projects. Deputy Commissioner Lassiter noted that the North Carolina Department of Public Safety has benefitted from multiple grants funded under the SCA. Importantly, the SCA and Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), which funds community-based programs in North Carolina, are up for re-authorization. Given that these programs support critical work, the Deputy Commissioner encouraged attendees to contact members of the North Carolina delegation, which has historically supported the SCA and the JJDP, to encourage their representatives to continue to support them.

Following these remarks, Dr. Jean Steinberg provided an overview of reentry reform implementation efforts. She noted North Carolina was one of six sites to receive a planning grant to develop its package of reforms (October 1, 2014-September 30, 2015); the State was one of three planning grant sites to be awarded an implementation grant (October 1, 2015-September 30, 2016); and, the State was awarded continuation funds to continue its reform implementation efforts (October 1, 2016-September 30, 2017).

Dr. Steinberg also reviewed the four objectives of the reentry reform strategic plan -- (1) the Juvenile Justice Section (JJS) will deliver risk and needs-driven case planning and service linkage, and employ effective supervision practices; (2) the JJS will deliver effective and developmentally appropriate programming, including education and workforce development services, that target criminogenic needs; (3) the JJS will engage and strengthen families of youth involved along the juvenile justice continuum, including reentry; and (4) the JJS will document the effect of its reentry reform strategy on recidivism, education, employment and behavioral health outcomes -- and the key tasks associated with each objective. Dr. Steinberg provided an overview of the Task Force's subcommittee structure which aligns with the reform's four objectives, and introduced the task leaders for each subcommittee.

Dr. Steinberg turned over the meeting to Ms. Cindy Porterfield, Director of Community Programs, who reported on the activities of the Increasing Family Involvement Subgroup under Key Task 5 (implement a family engagement and strengthening strategy). Ms. Porterfield reviewed the research about the positive impact of family engagement on youth outcomes. She also reviewed the recommendations of the Council of State Governments which have informed the work of the Family Engagement Subcommittee. These include drafting a family engagement vision statement, developing a definition of "family," and formalizing a family engagement model. Ms. Porterfield reported that, after its development of a vision statement and "family" definition, the subcommittee was currently reviewing standard operating procedures, policies, and forms/documents along the juvenile justice continuum to develop recommendations for improving family engagement. To date, these recommendations include adoption of (1) the *Statement of Expectations and Rights for Parents of Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth*, (2) the definition of "family," (3) the use of tools (e.g., a structured interview protocol) to help guide a discussion with youths to identify family and natural supports, (4) the practice of collecting family information at disposition and every 90 days while youths are under supervision (including those committed to a YDC), (5) pre-population of family members' identifying information into the service plan, (6) the CLDP leadership team's family engagement products, and (7) publication of newly developed informational materials for parents and youths and placement on a parent portal. Ms. Porterfield reported that the subcommittee is collaborating with the Youth Justice Project to develop informational material for parents and youths about expunction and the rights of youths (e.g., education) and a script for court counselors to use in explaining expunction. Ms. Porterfield closed her remarks with an overview of next steps, which include continuing to develop recommendations for changes in policies and practice to improve family engagement, explore development of a family engagement curriculum, and develop performance measures of family engagement practices.

Dr. Steinberg reported on the work accomplished under Key Task 1 (increase the reliable use of North Carolina's risk and criminogenic needs assessment), Key Task 2 (implement a

comprehensive service plan), and Key Task 3 (implement a service matching tool). With respect to Key Task 1, Dr. Steinberg noted that the North Carolina Assessment of Juvenile Risk of Future Offending had been re-normed through an internal validation study. Results of this study suggested the need to adjust from three risk levels to five. The re-normed tool with five risk levels was implemented on April 1, 2016. Under Key Task 2, Dr. Steinberg reported that a benchmark evaluation of the pilot comprehensive service plan was completed, and focus groups with court counselors who had piloted the service plan were conducted. Information gathered through these efforts suggested that the piloted tool was deficient in content and functionality, leading to the conclusion that it needed to be completely overhauled. As an alternative to developing and testing a new tool, the Comprehensive Service Plan Subgroup and an internal JJS group comprised of court counselors reviewed and evaluated three commercially-available, well-tested comprehensive needs assessment tools with the capacity to generate a service plan. Following this assessment, an instrument was recommended for implementation. Under Key Task 3, Dr. Steinberg noted that, with assistance from SAS and the Government Data Analytic Center (GDAC), work had begun on the development of a comprehensive county-based directory of programs, the first step toward developing the service matching tool. Next steps beyond the development of the service directory include data analytics to develop a model to enable improved need-to-service matching and improved youth outcomes, and to develop an interface between the electronic service plan and the service matching tool.

Ms. Brandee Stevenson provided an overview of the GDAC and its partnership with DACJJ with respect to assisting in the development of the service directory and service matching tool, as well as completing the historical baseline and outcome analyses. Ms. Stephenson noted that next steps include tailoring the Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) taxonomy to classify juvenile service programs to be included in the service directory, and reconciling program information contained in DACJJ's two management information systems. Dr. Steinberg provided comments about the process of tailoring and applying the AIRS taxonomy for the purpose of developing the service directory. She reported that in tailoring the AIRS taxonomy, DACJJ had narrowed it from ten to seven major classes of services and resources, with three levels of increasingly narrowing classification. Dr. Steinberg noted that next steps include incorporating the taxonomy into the service directory template and testing it with a sample of court counselors, completing a directory template for all programs listed in NC-ALLIES, and resolving entity resolution issues for program entries listed in NC-JOIN, completing a directory template for these programs, and compiling these templates to create the first draft of the service directory.

Ms. Debbie Dawes provided an overview of the juvenile reentry reform evaluation plan. This plan consists of a process study to (1) describe current pre-reform reentry policies and practices and (2) document early implementation of the reform effort, and an outcome study to document baseline, pre-reform recidivism, and positive youth outcome measures. Ms. Dawes discussed the research questions that will guide collection of data and reviewed evaluation activities planned for the first year of the study. She reported that among next steps for the process study are administering a web-based survey about reentry to court counselors, and conducting interviews with reentry stakeholders. Completing data discovery and finalizing outcomes measures, executing data sharing agreements, and analyzing outcomes are among the next steps for the outcome study.

Duane Cogdell, Transition Coordinator, reported on the Workforce Development and Education Subgroup's progress on Key Task 4 (implement a workforce development and education strategy). He reported that the subcommittee's end products include core student performance outcome measures, DPS IT support services for secure server access, laptops, and software for YDCs and short-term residential facilities, and the development and implementation of the Transitional Services Model. Mr. Cogdell reported that the North Carolina Community College Career Clusters Guide will be used with youths in YDCs and short-term residential facilities. Use of this guide will take place after standardized training protocols and evaluation processes are developed and implemented. Additionally, a Universal Educational and Vocational Summary Success Plan that will document the educational and vocational needs and progress of youth in facilities has been drafted and is currently under internal review. Mr. Cogdell also reported that a transitional services questionnaire designed to collect information from staff within YDCs and short-term residential facilities about the practice of preparing youths to transition to the community, and the services provided to them, is in development. Mr. Cogdell noted other initiatives including (1) aligning with the Department of Public Instruction policies leading to the review and acceptance of DPS educational plans which offer students existing a YDC or short-term residential placement several options for ongoing educational attainment, (2) collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation on identifying pre-employment transition services available for DPS youths, and (3) establishing partnerships with community-based agencies to support youth in transition.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None.

#### AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

To be determined.

#### ADJOURNMENT

In closing remarks, Deputy Commissioner Billy Lassiter thanked Ms. Dilworth for attending the meeting, and welcomed feedback on the work of the subcommittees. He adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm. Task Force members will be notified of the date of the next meeting. In the interim, subcommittees will continue to meet.

Minutes submitted by: Debbie Dawes, MPA

Approved by: Jean Steinberg, Ph.D.