

North Carolina's Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

OPENING

The fifth meeting of North Carolina's Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force was called to order at 10:15am on October 26, 2015 at 3010 Hammond Business Place, Room 144, Raleigh, NC 27603 by Billy Lassiter, Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice.

PRESENT

Task Force Members Present: Rachel Johnson (representing Sonya Brown), Angela Smith (representing Dave Hardesty), Buddy Howell, Representative Pat B. Hurley, Ann-Marie Iselin, Billy Lassiter, Judge Marcia Morey, Mary Murray, Martin Pharr, Cindy Porterfield, Mike Rieder, Jean Steinberg, and Nicole Sullivan

Other Attendees/Guests: Keith Adams, Catherine Anderson, Ruth Baldasaro, Matt Benson, Kenya Beyah-Murphy, Sadric Bonner, Carol Burroughs, Kristin Byrd, Venecia Carr, Janet Clarke-McLean, Stan Clarkson, Duane Cogdell, John Correllus, Laquita Courman, Sheila Davis, Debbie Dawes, Tamara Flinchum, Lisa Freeman, Felicia Gray-Watson, Kim Howes, Phyllis Jones, Will Jones, Teresa King, Mia LaMotte, Traci Marchand, Voris McBurnette, Kay Meyer, Candice Moore, Lisa Partin, Jameka Patrick, Ken Perry, Keith Philipson (representing Rich Semancik), Kim Quintus, Heather Pane Seifert, Jim Speight, Josh Sperati, Brandee Stevenson, Angela Taylor, David Taylor, Dawn Thomas, Teneisha Towe, Toshina Wiggins, and Eric Zogry

OPEN ISSUES

After reviewing the agenda, Deputy Commissioner Billy Lassiter opened the meeting with project updates. Mr. Lassiter announced that North Carolina had been awarded a \$1.1 million Reentry System Reform Implementation grant by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and thanked Task Force and subgroup members for their contributions to the reentry planning effort.

Mr. Lassiter's comments were followed by Dr. Jean Steinberg, who provided an overview of the reentry reform planning efforts. Dr. Steinberg opened her remarks by reviewing the goals developed by OJJDP for reentry system reform, which include: (1) improve assessment policies and practices, (2) develop a more integrated approach to pre-release services and planning, as well as post-release services and supervision that reflects what research demonstrates improves outcomes, (3) enhance program/policy monitoring, quality assessment, implementation supports, and accountability practices, and (4) enhance youth outcome data collection, analysis, reporting, and decision-making. Dr. Steinberg noted that the technical assistance provider, the National Reentry Resource Center within the Council of State Governments, promoted four underlying principles for reentry reform: (1) base supervision, service, and resource allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and need assessments; (2) adopt and effectively implement programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, and use data to evaluate the results and direct system improvements; (3) employ a coordinated approach

across service systems to address youth's needs; and, (4) tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents. Dr. Steinberg reminded the group of the deliverables completed under the planning grant -- development of a task force, an outcome measurement and evaluation plan, a strategic plan, an implementation plan, a sustainability plan. Dr. Steinberg also reviewed the four objectives of the reentry reform strategic plan, as follows: the Juvenile Justice Section (JJS) will deliver risk and needs-driven case planning and service linkage, and employ effective supervision practices; the JJS will deliver effective and developmentally appropriate programming, including education and workforce development services, that target criminogenic needs; the JJS will engage and strengthen families of youth involved along the juvenile justice continuum, including reentry; and the JJS will document the effect of its reentry reform strategy on recidivism, education, employment and behavioral health outcomes. A breakdown of the key tasks associated with each objective was also provided.

With respect to the Reentry System Reform Implementation Plan, Dr. Steinberg noted that it had been revised since the last Task Force meeting to include several suggestions from Task Force members. She presented the suggestions, which are highlighted in **bold** for each of the key tasks for which revisions had been proposed:

Key Task 2: Implement a comprehensive service plan for use by court counselors and facility staff at all points of contact with the system, including during reentry and post-release supervision periods.

Subtask: Finalize content of plan for use with juveniles in residential placements and on post-release supervision, using a committee **that includes representation from youth and families**, YDCs, community service providers, court services, short-term residential facilities, multipurpose group homes, and transition homes (Eckerd, Methodist Homes, AMIKids).

Subtask: Develop training for judges, public defenders, district attorneys, **and for other stakeholders including the Division of Social Services, the Division of MHDDSAS, Managed Care Organizations, and mental health service providers.**

Key Task 4: Implement a Workforce Development and Education Strategy

Subtask: Embark on a planning process with the private provider under contract to prepare for the opening of 5 new planned transition homes, incorporating reentry enhancements. **Include youth and family voice in any decision making processes.**

Subtask: In partnership with the Department of Public Instruction, develop a process for juvenile court services and local school districts to better engage and work together to link youths to appropriate school setting. **Ensure that youth and family are included in the planning process and that all are held accountable.**

Key Task 5: Implement a Family Engagement and Strengthening Strategy

Subtask: Develop or adapt a training curriculum on family engagement to support staff efforts to engage parents. **Ensure that it incorporates family notification and involvement at crises and key decision points.**

Subtask: Develop recommendations regarding the use of technology to reduce barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare, time constraints) that limit families' ability to visit with youth during placement, **respond to surveys**, or participate in monthly treatment team meetings.

Dr. Steinberg requested a motion for adoption of the Reentry System Reform Implementation Plan, as revised. Deputy Commissioner Lassiter made a motion to adopt the plan, which was seconded by Dr. Martin Pharr. The motion to adopt was approved unanimously.

Leaders of each of the subgroups gave brief updates. Mr. Mike Rieder, facilitator for the Comprehensive Service Plan Subgroup, reported that the pilot test of the comprehensive service plan had ended. He reported that Ms. Candice Moore had developed suggestions for ways to improve the user-friendliness of the tool, based on her review of service plans completed during the pilot test. Additionally, Mr. Rieder noted that Dr. Steinberg and Ms. Debbie Dawes will be conducting a series of focus groups with court counselors involved in pilot testing the service plan to receive feedback on their satisfaction with the content and functionality of the tool, as well as suggestions for ways to improve it. Mr. Rieder reported that SAS, through the GDAC, will be assisting with the development of the new service planning tool.

Ms. Cindy Porterfield reported that the Family Involvement and Strengthening Subgroup continued to meet since the last Task Force meeting in August. Ms. Porterfield distributed and reviewed two draft work products from the subgroup, including the *Parent Questionnaire: Reentry Experiences* and the *Bill of Rights for Parents with Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth*. She invited Task Force members to provide feedback on these draft materials. Ms. Porterfield reported that work will begin on developing a family engagement training curriculum.

In advancing the work of the Workforce Development and Education Subgroup, Dr. Martin Pharr reported that a proposal to enhance and increase career and technical education training and employment opportunities for youth discharged from facilities was being finalized for submission to the U.S. Department of Education on October 30. Dr. Pharr requested that subgroup members meet briefly after the Task Force meeting to schedule future subgroup meetings.

Dr. Steinberg reported on the progress of the Evaluation Subgroup, which has met weekly for the past six weeks. Working with North Carolina's Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC) and RTI, the group has started to develop a memorandum of agreement to share data and outline the scope of work, which will include assistance with the development of the comprehensive service plan and service matching tool, and completion of a baseline outcome study.

NEW BUSINESS

Staff from the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA), Dr. Paul Bellatty, Research Manager, and Dr. Shannon Myrick, Strategic Initiatives Manager, gave a presentation on using predictive analytic tools and statistical data to maximize outcomes for justice-involved youth. Dr. Myrick opened the presentation with a brief description of the organization of Oregon's juvenile justice system:

less serious juveniles are supervised by county-based probation offices, and more serious juveniles (i.e., adjudicated for felony-level complaints) are placed in state-operated facilities housed within OYA (community-based facilities and close-custody facilities). She noted that OYA data collection efforts focus on addressing four fundamental questions: Who are we working with? How can we maximize limited resources? How can we increase effectiveness? How can we engage our partners? Dr. Myrick noted the importance of building a culture that supports the use of data to inform decisions. Also important to OYA's culture of success is the concept of positive human development (PHD) for youth, staff, and partners. This strengths-based approach combines positive youth development with positive staff development to promote "a more positive, proactive focus." Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, PHD is conceptualized as a pyramid where safety and security needs of youth, staff, and partners forms the foundation, followed by caring and supportive relationships, high expectations and accountability, meaningful participation, and community connection. This approach is intended to enhance self-esteem, performance, quality of life, and other positive outcomes.

Dr. Bellatty presented on OYA's experience with using data and research to enhance decision-making within the agency. OYA uses data to address the following questions: What should the capacity of the system be? Are we bringing the right youth into the system and placing them in the right environment? What should be the length of stay in each part of the continuum? What interventions do youth need to maximize opportunities to be successful? How do we hire and support staff to work effectively with youth we serve? How do we create environments where youth can be viewed as assets? How do we integrate youth into their communities? How do we know our investments are effective and achieving desired results? Dr. Bellatty provided several examples of how OYA has used data to inform agency decisions. OYA used cluster analysis to develop more refined information about the youth it serves, grouping males into 6 typologies and females in 4 into typologies. Analyses were conducted to estimate the likelihood of success of each of these groups with respect to placement in each environment type. In this way, OYA developed a process for matching youth, based on their risk and needs, to the best level of service, and demonstrated that OYA could reduce recidivism by improving service matching. Additionally, analyses of recidivism by length of stay helped OYA detect the optimal dose of services. On an ongoing basis, OYA estimates the effectiveness of the services provided by treatment partners and provides them with feedback on their effectiveness. OYA has also used data to identify youth at risk of OYA involvement in an effort to target prevention services to these at-risk youth.

Dr. Myrick closed the presentation with remarks on lessons learned through their reform efforts. Among these, Dr. Myrick stressed the importance of communication, the need to consider system implications and address those proactively, the notion that data and research support professional judgment, the need to commit to learning and evolving, and the foundational role of leadership.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will focus on a review of progress on key tasks within the reentry system reform implementation plan.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm by Deputy Commissioner Billy Lassiter. The next quarterly meeting will occur on a Monday in late January or early February 2016. Subgroups will continue to meet monthly or as needed.

Minutes submitted by: Debbie Dawes, MPA
Approved by: Jean Steinberg, Ph.D.