

Community Advisory Board
April 7, 2009

Attendees

Carlyse Giddins	Mitchell Rock
Rick Shaw	Vicky Kelly
Darryl Dawson	Aimee McFarlan
Kim Pepper	James Mosley
Christopher McIntyre	Yolanda Constant
Keith Zirkle	Jeanne Dunn
Shonna Hillard	Barbara Riley
Alison McGonigal	Karin Eltreich
Susan Burns	Ken Arnold
Lisa DiStefano	Stephanie Guiswite
Anita Robinson	Julia Pearce

The meeting began at 2:40 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Mitchell Rock, Superintendent of NCCDC, was the Chair. He introduced Julia Pearce, Child Placement Review Board, who is a new member on the CAB. She is an important addition to the CAB as she reports on YRS population in her position with the Child Placement Review Board. Also, round table introductions were completed.

Remarks from the Director

Carlyse Giddins, YRS Director, welcomed everyone. She is honored to be the Director of YRS and gave an overview of her experience and background. She has been with this Department for 12 years. She was the Director for the Division of Family Services (DFS) for almost eight years. She was also an administrator with the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention. She expressed pride while acknowledging her new team. Her leadership approach is strength based. She said through team work and collaboration YRS will be successful in enhancing the current juvenile justice system.

Her goal as Director of YRS is to have Delaware's juvenile justice system recognized as one of the best in the nation. Delaware juvenile justice system has a good reputation nationally through Ferris School. While the Director of DFS, the Division worked very hard to be recognized as one of the best in the nation.

The YRS organization chart was distributed and reviewed. Carlyse mentioned that she made minor changes to the structure of YRS. She also provided the group with the Department leadership members:

Vivian Rapposelli, Cabinet Secretary
Laura Miles, Director DFS
Susan Cocyk, Director Child Mental Health
Karryl McManus, Director Division of Management Support Services

Budget Update

Carlyse provided an update on the current budget situation. This is an opportunity to look to see how we can do things differently. The State is currently in a hiring freeze; however, YRS can still hire for secure care vacancies. Community Services has been approved to hire one position since August of last year. There are currently nine full time vacancies and eight casual seasonal vacancies in Community Services. Their staff, including supervisors, are carrying heavy caseloads.

The Director's goal is to manage within our fiscal constraints. Our budget is \$46.6 million. Our general funds appropriation is 92% of our total budget, or \$43.1 million. The bulk of our funds support our youth. So far, we've had to reduce our budget by \$40, 900. To date, we have not been asked to reduce our staff compliment. We will continue to be focused on our commitment to youth.

Shay Bilchik Assessment Report

This report can be found on the Department website link
http://kids.delaware.gov/pdfs/yrs_BilchikJJassess.pdf

Carlyse wanted to give an overview of identified strengths and recommendations on areas to focus on:

- Increase use of alternatives to detention
- Focus on recruitment and retention
- Increase resources for aftercare and transition
- School dropout rate

The school dropout rate in Delaware is one of the highest in the nation. She is hopeful that the Department of Education (DOE) will take the lead on this initiative. DOE participated on the Governor's taskforce about dropouts. They are aware of the high dropout rate.

- Yolanda Constant, parent, asked why there isn't a school in the City like Sara Pyle Academy? Carlyse explained that there are 19 districts in our state and each district plans their own. Ms. Constant said if there were

programs like that in the city there would be a lot more youth in school and finish. Barbara Riley, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, commented that there are pockets of dropouts all over the state. She agrees that we should have more programs like Sara Powell. Carlyse thanked Ms. Constant for being here today as an advocate for youth. As the state moves forward, Ms. Constant will have an important role as a parent.

The long term perspective will be to look at evidence-based programs. YRS is currently doing this through the Juvenile Justice Collaborative (JJC). The CAB can be of help in that area. YRS is currently reviewing and revising all policies, which will eventually be available online. We will also be completing a review and assessment of secure care. We will be documenting all services and programs that are offered to our youth.

YRS has two legislative initiatives:

- Automatic expungement for misdemeanors and felonies
- Consideration in revising the law to avoid posting our youth on the sex offender website

Carlyse said we have a very ambitious agenda for the next four years. She greatly appreciates the support from the CAB.

School Dropout Research

At the last meeting, Terry Senio, Co-Chair, had given a presentation about dropout and an education summary. The group was going to report back on the research that was volunteered to be conducted on programs in other states. There was not a list available of who volunteered. Aimee McFarlan said she would submit her information to Mr. Rock next week. The group agreed to park this issue until the next meeting for report outs and will try to get DOE participants.

Christopher McIntyre, Supervisor of Special Education, asked if we could all use the same definition for dropout. Carlyse explained that DOE has three different measures. It would be helpful if all the districts, DOE and DSCYF had the same definition. Secretary Rapposelli met with Secretary Lowery of DOE regarding the need to collaborate on some issues. These issues are more systemic and it has to be addressed at a State level not at the district level.

Juvenile Justice Collaborative (JJC)

Alison McGonigal, YRS Administrator, gave an update on the JJC (formally JDAI). Ms. McGonigal explained that our Department partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to focus on detention populations and getting the right youth in the facilities. We were getting negative feedback from both the

community and outside agencies. At that point, we decided to change our name and focus. The new Co-Chairs are Secretary Rapposelli and Chief Judge Kuhn. We defined our focus and priority areas in March. We need everyone's support on the subcommittees. The subcommittees are: (A list of the 2009 Priority Areas was distributed)

- **Legislation** – Focus will be on amending the current statute to meet the realities of the system.
- **HB 85** – Mandatory Reporting – this bill was meant to be a mandatory reporting law but it has become a mandatory arrest law.
- **Superior Court** – Superior Court youth continue to account for nearly one-third of the detention populations. Delays in case processing and transfer to adult corrections will be examined. Superior Court youth are 1/3 of our detention population. We have exceeded our bed capacity at YCOP. The first meeting for this workgroup is scheduled for April 9th at 9:30 a.m.
- **Truancy** – the truancy process will be reviewed to address issues that initiate in the school system through barriers that arise during the court process. Director Mosley said in the past police would take the youth to Westside Neighborhood House for the parent to pick up. Susan Burns said there are contacts in each district but they all have different titles. She said they work with youth, parents and schools to work through the barriers about why the youth are truant.
- **Young Offender Program** – an effective program should be developed to meet the needs of very young offenders in an effort to reduce further delinquent behavior and the need for deep-end services. The first meeting for this workgroup is scheduled for April 14th at 9:00 a.m.
- **Community Programs** – an assessment will be completed to review the current capacity of pre and post adjudicated community programs as well as to determine the efficacy of these services. The first meeting for this workgroup is scheduled for April 20th at 1:30 p.m.
- **Risk Assessment Data** – a plan needs to be developed and implemented to effectively collect and analyze data from the RAI. Reliable data is necessary to support the use of the RAI and to illustrate the effectiveness of alternative to detention programs. Other data needs will also need to be addressed.

There are four other areas identified:

- Training/Outreach
- Stimulus package
- Alternative Schools – how to build them so they are effective
- Gun Court – being established in Family Court

Each area will also look at racial disparity across the system.

Role of the CAB

Carlyse spoke to the group about the huge tasks in the juvenile justice system. She said this group has an advocacy role. She expressed the need for the group's participation on the JJC subcommittees. YRS needs support in our agency's strategy. She opened the floor for discussion about what the group sees as their role.

- Advocacy for services needed when our youth leave our care
- Advocacy for legislative changes
- Help expand network of people to help work on these issues

Ms. Constant said we need to keep our youth alive. They are our future and we need to keep them educated. We need to get them early so they can go to college. We need to get them to stop killing each other.

Anita Robinson said in order to focus on helping the youth we have to understand what they are going through. If we don't dig into their lives, we won't be able to fix what's wrong.

Mr. Rock talked about a mentoring program. There are a lot of community centers and churches. The youth are returning back into the same communities and need caring adults to talk to. The youth's success is based on the support system they have when they leave. A mentoring program would be supported by this Division. It would be a good thing to work on because we don't have to depend on another Department. A few members had also suggested midnight basketball, cooking, journaling, scrapbooking and rap writing.

Carlyse said all of this shows what huge issues and tasks we have but we can't do everything. We need to prioritize how we utilize our resources. If mentoring is what we're going to do, we need to develop a plan on how we will get it done. However, we need to keep in mind that there is no money support so we will have to develop strategies to get money if it's necessary. As a group, we agreed to focus on the mentoring program. We will keep it small and let it grow as it becomes successful.

Next steps will be to develop a mentoring subcommittee. Volunteers for this committee are:

- Shonna Hillard, Chair
- Chris McIntyre
- Kim Pepper
- Aimee McFarlan
- Yolanda Constant
- Anita Robinson
- James Mosley

Kim will schedule a meeting for this workgroup to meet prior to the next CAB meeting which is June 1st.

CAB Chair

Mr. Rock solicited the group for a Chair for a two year term. He said it would be for the remainder of 2009 and all of 2010. He explained that it is very hard for us to stay focused when we rotate the Chair. He did thank everyone that took a turn chairing the committee for the past year and a half. He said that Ms. Pepper will support the Chair. Aimee McFarlan volunteered but will need to consult with her supervisor. She will let Ms. Pepper know by the end of this week.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Mission: To support public safety and positive change of children, families, and communities through guidance, education, and empowerment.